

## THEODORE STUDITES AND THE SO-CALLED *T'ĦROBAY DIDEBULI*

A REVISION OF BHG 1060 PRESERVED IN OLD GEORGIAN  
AND EDITED BY M. G. DŽANAŠVILI\*

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*Abstract.* The manuscript A 500, kept at the the K'. K'ek'eljiis Saġelobis Helnac'ert'a Inst'it'ut'i in T'bilisi and edited in the year 1900 by Mose Džanašvili, contains a revision of BHG 1060, an etiology of the Acahistos-hymn dealing with the story of the siege of Constantinople in the year 626 CE. This Georgian revision is of historiographical value, as it sheds new light on the fall of the emperor Maurice, the alleged flight of his son Theodosios, and Maurice's piously accepted death in the year 604 CE, which is connected to the fact that Maurice had abandoned Byzantine prisoners of war to their fate. The article argues that the Greek *Vorlage* of this Georgian revision has to be con-

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\* The text of this article *mutatis mutandis* follows my paper presented at the International Conference Topical Issues of Ancient Culture and its Heritage, Tbilisi September 23-27, 2014; I would like to note, however, that some of my ideas (published here for the first time) stem from my (unpublished) thesis "Die Flucht des Theodosius zu Husraw II. Abarwēz in der persischen, armenischen und byzantinischen Historiographie" (M. A.). Tübingen: Orientalisches Seminar 2000. Besides many colleagues and friends, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude, on behalf of the whole staff of the Institute of Classical, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University, to Maia Shukhoshvili for the accurate translation of my contribution into Georgian, to Tamara Cheishvili for giving this article a more correct form, and, not least, to Maia Danelia for all her help.

nected to the Iconoclastic controversy at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when one was in search for historical examples in order to cope with the military threat of the capital by the Bulgarian *χαγαν* Krum in the year 813 CE, and the issue of how to deal with refugees and prisoners of war was fervently discussed between Theodore Studites and members of the court of emperor Michael Rhangabe.

To Western European scholarship, *Mose Giorgis je Džanašvili* perhaps still remains best known for his *editio princeps* of the *At'ormet'i t'ualt'at'vis*, the small booklet *De duodecim gemmis* of Epiphanius of Salamis,<sup>1</sup> extant in its entirety only in an Old Georgian version. This edition – based on a Šat'berdi miscellaneous manuscript – appeared in 1897 in the periodical *Sbornik materialov dlja opisanija mestnostej i plemen Kavkasa* (i.e. “Miscellany of Materials regarding the Description of the Region and the Tribes of the Caucasus”<sup>2</sup>) and became a new starting point for all research concerning this text, until in the year 1934, the very year of Džanašvili's death, a book by Robert Pierpont Blake and Henri de Vis under the title *Epiphanius de gemmis. The Old Georgian Version and the Fragments of the Armenian Version* appeared in print that soon became the standard edition of this important text.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime, precisely in the year 1900, Džanašvili had edited in the aforementioned periodical, under the title *Osada Konstantinopolja skifami, koi sut' russkie, i pohod imperatora Iraklija v' Persiju* (i.e. “The Siege of Constantinople by the Scythians, that is, the Russians, and the Expedition of the Emperor Heraclius into Persia”),<sup>4</sup> another text apparently translated from, but no longer extant in the Greek language. Initially, the eminent Georgian scholar gave a short description of the miscellaneous manuscript *in quarto* at his disposal (then belonging to the Church Museum in T'bilisi). It should be mentioned in passing, that he erroneously was counting this manuscript as 471, instead of 500, which, according to Džanašvili, contains the following items:<sup>5</sup> a) teachings of Theodore Studites, and his life,

<sup>1</sup> See Altaner and Stuiber [1966] 1978, 316 (§80.4).

<sup>2</sup> If not indicated otherwise, all translations occurring in this article are mine (A. S.).

<sup>3</sup> For the character and the quality of Džanašvili's edition, see Blake and de Vis 1934, 9-15.

<sup>4</sup> Džanašvili 1900.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Džanašvili 1900, 1. The description of the manuscript by Žordania 1902, 56-57, has been replaced by Bregaje 1986, 248-51 (including bibliographic references for some items).

translated by Giorgi Mt'ac'mideli,<sup>6</sup> *b*) (Gregory of Nyssa's)<sup>7</sup> deeds of the (proto-) martyr Theodore, rendered by the same author,<sup>8</sup> *c*) resolutions of the holy fathers in favour of the image-worshippers,<sup>9</sup> *d*) a homily of John Chrysostom on Passover,<sup>10</sup> *e*) the siege of Constantinople by the Scythians, that is, the Russians, *f*) the expedition of the emperor Heraclius into Persia, and finally, *g*) the appearance of Muḥammad. Supposedly, Džanašvili, then keeper of manuscripts at the Church Museum, was reiterating here an older description of the manuscript, probably by his own hand,<sup>11</sup> since the text he was editing consists in the last three items of his table [i.e. items *e* to *g*], and thus was eventually considered by him as a single unit,<sup>12</sup> a consistent narrative covering the period up to the siege of Constantinople in the year 678 under the emperor Constantine Pogonate and the caliph Mu'āwiya, yet mutilated in the end. Furthermore, Mose Džanašvili gave a *terminus a quo* for the dating of the manuscript by editing the colophon of item *a*, which states that the translation of the text was completed in the year 1042 under the emperor Michael V (who indeed reigned from 1041-42).<sup>13</sup>

Compared to the fate of Džanašvili's edition of the *T'ualt'at'vis*, it took a considerably longer time until Western European scholarship paid attention to this consecutive important edition. It was only in the year 1976 that, in the French periodical *Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de cartvéologie*, the Bollandist scholar Michel van Esbroeck published an article under the title "Une chronique de Maurice à Héraclius dans un récit des sièges de Constantinople" (i.e. "A chronicle from Maurice to Heraclius contained in an account of the sieges of Constantinople"),<sup>14</sup> wherein he was resuming (and simplifying) some of Džanašvili's results (namely, by dating the manuscript to 1042, and by attributing its whole translation to Giorgi Mt'ac'mideli); he further was providing a literal rendering of the

<sup>6</sup> Bregaje 1986, 248-50 (#1-3).

<sup>7</sup> The authorship of this portion not yet was alluded to by Džanašvili 1900, 1; see however Tarchnišvili and Assfalg 1955, 169 with note 7 (indicating only Gelat'i № 8 for this translation).

<sup>8</sup> Bregaje 1986, 250 (#4).

<sup>9</sup> Bregaje 1986, 250 (#5).

<sup>10</sup> Bregaje 1986, 250 (#6).

<sup>11</sup> See K'ek'elije 1986, 155-56.

<sup>12</sup> Since then, scholarship unanimously is following this decision; see Bregaje 1986, 250 (#7).

<sup>13</sup> See Džanašvili 1900, 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> van Esbroeck 1976.

Georgian text according to Mose Džanašvili's edition, and, finally, he undertook a first attempt of source criticism and suggested a probable setting for the lost Greek original. According to Michel van Esbroeck, our text consists of nine parts, some of which derive from otherwise unknown, original Byzantine source material reaching back to a "time not long after the siege of 717."<sup>15</sup> Among the sources he was able to identify, the most prominent one is probably the etiology of the *Acathistos*-hymn (BHG 1060), once widely attributed to the 7<sup>th</sup> century author George of Pisidia, but dated by van Esbroeck on the authority of our text not earlier than the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> In his view, portions of BHG 1060 are framing an account of the reigns of the emperors Maurice (582-602), Phocas (602-10) and Heraclius (610-41) – an account that supposedly derives from a common source behind the narratives of the Byzantine chroniclers Nikephoros Patriarcha, Leo Grammaticus, and Georgios Hamartolos, and is structured by portions of transition consisting in moral considerations.<sup>17</sup>

Michel van Esbroeck has not been aware that, in the meantime, the great Georgian scholar K'orneli K'ek'elije had already identified BHG 1060 as one of the text's sources,<sup>18</sup> had indicated two further manuscripts of the text<sup>19</sup> as well as two further editions,<sup>20</sup> and had distinguished three different recensions<sup>21</sup> – *a*) a "small" one (მცირე),<sup>22</sup> *b*) a "short" one (მოკლე; compiled by St'ep'ane Sananoysje),<sup>23</sup> and, *c*) an "enlarged" one

<sup>15</sup> See van Esbroeck 1976, 78.

<sup>16</sup> See van Esbroeck 1976, *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> See van Esbroeck 1976, 77.

<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, K'ek'elije (1986, 156) was attributing our version to the 7<sup>th</sup> century poet George of Pisidia; probably since K'ek'elije 1957, the author has also been referred to as "patriarch Sergios" (of Constantinople, who reigned from 610 to 638), see e.g. Bregaje 1986, 250.

<sup>19</sup> K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 230 (no indication in Bregaje 1986, 250).

<sup>20</sup> K'arbelašvili 1903 (*non vidi*); Džanašvili 1912 (*non vidi*); see K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 230. K'ek'elije 1986, 156, n. 6, states that the text of K'arbelašvili's edition of the year 1903 was more complete than that of Džanašvili's *editio princeps* of the year 1900.

<sup>21</sup> K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 230; 1957, 109, 192.

<sup>22</sup> T'bilisi, K'. K'ek'elijis Sašelobis Ĥelnac'ert'a Inst'it'ut'i, A 347 (*olim* Saek'lesio Muzeumi); see K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 230; Tarchnišvili and Assfalg 1955, 170, n. 5 list this manuscript for recension *b*.

<sup>23</sup> T'bilisi, K'. K'ek'elijis Sašelobis Ĥelnac'ert'a Inst'it'ut'i, A 5, A 140, A 162, A 272 (*olim* Saek'lesio Muzeumi); *ibid.*, Gelat'i № 2; see K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 230; Tarchnišvili and Assfalg 1955, 170, n. 5.

(ვრცელი),<sup>24</sup> namely the text which I am referring to in this article. Despite considerable efforts I was not able to obtain (or even locate) more recent Georgian scholarship on this text,<sup>25</sup> and thus the aim of this article is restricted mainly to challenging the conclusions of Džanašvili, K'ek'elije and van Esbroeck, secondly, to highlighting the importance of this text as a source for the history of the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, and finally, to proposing a cultural setting for its composition. In order to facilitate the comprehension of my arguments, four text-samples ("testimonies 1-4") have been included.

I. The first testimonium appears to be organized like a synopsis; however, it should be noted preliminarily that (due to the lack of space) it was impossible to confront the Greek and the Georgian versions exactly according to their respective word order. Hopefully, the relationship between the texts will nevertheless become clear; for the sake of orientation, I have introduced a line count at the left margin. The first column reproduces the text of BHG 1060 according to Migne's Greek Patrology; in the middle column, the text of its literal rendering into Old Georgian is given (although it is not clear to me beyond doubt to which one of K'ek'elije's recensions it has to be attributed; with some probability it will be the first one), and finally, in the third column, the *T'ħrobay didebuli* (by which title I will from now on refer to this text) is printed according to Džanašvili's edition of 1900.

**test 1: Title**

BHG 1060 <sup>26</sup>	T'ħrobay margebeli <sup>27</sup>	T'ħrobay didebuli <sup>28</sup>
Δυήγησις	თბრობა	თბრობა

<sup>24</sup> T'bilisi, K'. K'ek'elijis Saĥelobis Ĥelnac'ert'a Inst'it'ut'i, A 500 (see Bregaje 1986, 250; ed. Džanašvili 1900), A 518, A 674 (*olim* Saek'lesio Muzeumi); see K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 230; Tarchnišvili and Assfalg 1955, 170, n. 6.

<sup>25</sup> The description of A 500 from the most recent catalogue of the former Saek'lesio Muzeumi manuscripts at the K'orneli K'ek'elije Manuscript Institute (Bregaje 1986, 248-51) is my most recent piece of information.

<sup>26</sup> The Greek text is reproduced from Migne, *PG* 92. 1353 D-1372 (see Halkin 1985, Nr. 1060).

<sup>27</sup> The text of this column is reprinted from K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 230 (§ VII.4, without any indication as to the base of manuscripts used; by mistake, the index, *s.v.* თბრობა, is referring to pp. 498-99).

<sup>28</sup> *T'ħrobay didebuli*, p. 1 ed. Džanašvili 1900.

	ᾠφέλιμος	მარგებელი	დიდებული და საკრველი ძულთა მათ წიგნთაგან
	ἐκ παλαιᾶς ἱστορίας	ძველთა თხრობათაგან	
5	συλλεγείσα καὶ ἀνάμνησιν δηλοῦσα	შეკრებული მაუწყებლად საკსენებელისა	საუწყებელთა კსენებად
	τοῦ παραδόξως γενομένου	საკვრველებით- ქმნილისა <sup>29</sup>	სასწაულისა მის ყოვლად დიდებულისა და ზრწყინვალისა
10	θαύματος ἤνικα Πέρσαι καὶ Βάρβαροι	სასწაულისა რაჟამს სპარსნი და ბარბაროზნი	რაჟამს იგი სპარსთა ბარბაროზთა და სკვთთა
15	τὴν βασιλῖδα ταύτην πόλιν περικύκλωσαν οἱ δὲ ἀπώλοντο θείας δίκης	დედოფალსა ამას ქალაქსა ბრძოლად მოადგეს და წარტყუნეს სადმრთოთა ბჭობითა	სამეუფო ესე ქალაქი მოიცვეს ბრძოლად ხოლო საღუთოთა საშჯელითა წარწყმდეს
20	πειραθέντες,  ἢ δὲ πόλις ἀσινῆς συντηρηθεῖσα πρεσβείαις	განშჯილნი  ხოლო ქალაქი ესე უვნებლად დაცული მეოხებითა	იგინი სამიხელად მეყსა შინა და ქალაქი ესე დაცულ იქმნა შეურყვევლად მეოხებითა ყოვლად წმიდისა ლუთის მშობელისადათა
	τῆς Θεοτόκου  ἐτησίως ἐκ τότε ἄδει	ღმრთისმშობლი- სადათა მიერთგან წლითიწლადსა გალობასა შესწირავს	და მიერთგან განეწესა წლითი წლად დღე ესე წინა შაბათი ხარებისად გალობითა
30	εὐχαριστήριον ἀκάθιστον	სამადლობელსა დაუჯდომელ <sup>30</sup>	სამადლობელად რომელსა

<sup>29</sup> საკვრველებითქმნილისა, ed. K'ek'elije.<sup>30</sup> დაუჯდომელად, corr. K'ek'elije.

35 τῶν ἡμέραν                    სახელმდებელი                    დაუჯდომელ  
 κατονομάζουσιν<sup>31</sup>.    დღისა ამას.                    სახელ ედებოს.<sup>32</sup>

I would like to start with presenting my observations with the words on line 14 of the third column. With the term და სკვთთა (“and by the Scythians”) the first difficulty arises: actually, it does not form a gloss to the Greek word βάρβαροι (“Barbarians”) of line 13; it was the Persians and Barbarians, namely the Scythians who were then besieging Constantinople, and consequently one might have expected the conjunction და (“and”) between the words სპარსთა (“by the Persians”) and ბარბაროზთა (“by the Barbarians”). Since Herodotus, the ‘father of historiography’, the word βάρβαροι had been used to design the Persians; in the contemporary classicist and anti-Persian historiography (for example Theophylact Simocates) this custom had re-emerged, and I therefore contradict the interpretation of Džanašvili, who rendered the whole expression in the following manner: *варвары – персы и скифы*, i.e. “by the Barbarians, (namely) the Persians and the Scythians.”<sup>33</sup> Instead of that (and in order to avoid a rendering “by the Persians, Barbarians, and Scythians,” which is untenable to me from a historical point of view), I propose to translate “by the Persian barbarians and the Scythians,” even if I am aware that this rendering does not properly match the meaning of the original Greek text as handed down to us.

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<sup>31</sup> “Useful account from ancient histories (5) gathered, and exhibiting a recollection concerning the miracle (that had) happened marvelously, (11) when Persians and Barbarians had encircled (15) this Royal City – but they had perished experiencing divine judgement; (22) the city, however, preserved unharmed (25) through intercessions of (or: towards) the Theotokos, year for year since then (30) chants the Eucharist *Acathistos* (‘not seated’) (as) one (usually) calls this day.” The grammar of this last colon is not clear to me.

<sup>32</sup> “Praiseworthy account and marvelous memoir of information from ancient books, (8) concerning the most praiseworthy and brilliant-shining miracle, (11) when, by the Persian barbarians and the Scythians, (15) the Royal City was encircled for warfare; but, through divine judgement, they have harrowingly perished at the moment. (22) The city, however, had been preserved undestructibly (25) through intercessions of (or: towards) the most holy Theotokos. Since then, this day requires (განეწესა) (30) year for year on Saturday before Annunciation, (when) chanting for thanksgiving, (that) what is called ‘not seated’ (i.e. *Acathistos*).”

<sup>33</sup> *T ħrobay didebuli*, p. 9 trad. Džanašvili 1900; the translation of van Esbroeck 1976, 79 (*des barbares perses et scythes*, i.e. “Persian and Scythian barbarians”) eludes the difficulty as well.

Substantially, the word “Scythians” in our context refers to the Turkish Avars, whose *χαγαν* – together with the Persian *sipāhsalār* (“general”) *Rūmīzān* (nicknamed “Šahrwarāz,” i.e. “wild boar of the country”) – had launched a concerted action to the effect that the capital of the Byzantine Empire in the year 626 was besieged from both sides,<sup>34</sup> while Heraclius (by passing Armenia and Iberia and forming an alliance with a rival Turkish tribe, namely the Khazars) was on his way towards Azerbaijan, in order to conquer and destroy the Sasanian holy city of Ganjak (or Šīz).<sup>35</sup> Now, in several instances, the translator, or at least the final redactor or scribe of the *T'ħrobay didebuli* has glossed the word *βζζοοσ* (“by the Scythians”) with the expression *ესე ოგო რუსთა* (“that is, by the Russians”)<sup>36</sup> thus attracting the attention of his future editor Džanašvili, who repeated this very gloss in the title of his edition. Arguably, the author of the Old Georgian translation could not bear the alleged ancestors of the Orthodox Russians being presented on equal footing with the pagan (or barbarian) ancestors of the Muslim Persians.

Some of the words in lines 31-32 from the third column, *viz.* *წონს შაბათო ხარებობა* (“on Saturday before Annunciation”), as an addition to the *textus receptus* of BHG 1060, give the date for the *Acathistos*-feast. Michel van Esbroeck held that this very date was variable at least until the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and that our text provides precious evidence for the reconstruction of its dating history.<sup>37</sup>

Concluding the discussion of this first testimonium, I would like to draw the attention to some of the lexical difficulties by which the Georgian translators had been challenged. In line 7, with the word *სავეწეწეღელისა*, the middle column gives a literal rendering of the Greek word *ἀνάμνησιν* (“recollection”) of line 6, whereas the *T'ħrobay didebuli*, with the word *სვენებდა*, provides the equivalent for the Greek word *μνήμη* (“commemoration”), as it was conveniently in use mainly in the synaxaries. – At first glance, neither of the Georgian translators had been able to find a fitting equivalent for the Greek word *παραδόξως* (“incredibly”; see lines 8-9 of the middle column and 9-10 of the right column respectively). However,

<sup>34</sup> For recent scholarship, see for instance Kaegi 2003.

<sup>35</sup> See for instance Schilling 2008c.

<sup>36</sup> *T'ħrobay didebuli*, p. 14 l. 28-29, p. 42 l. 4-5 ed. Džanašvili 1900; van Esbroeck 1976, 81 [§ 9]; 91 [§ 46].

<sup>37</sup> See van Esbroeck 1976, 77-78.



from late antiquity onwards, this very word seems to have modified its genuine meaning, especially (but not exclusively) in Christian circles shifting towards the meaning “marvelously.” If this observation was correct, both translations were accurate, even if the wording of the *Tʿhrobay didebuli* sounds (at least in my ears) somehow awkward.

Within the limits of this article, I am unfortunately not able to fully discuss all features of the two Georgian versions at length. It will be sufficient here to point towards the possibility of their interdependence. Due to a more frequent occurrence of periphrastic (or hendiadys) patterns aiming at the rendering of a single word expression from the source language (see for instance lines 8-11, or 18-20, of the right column), I would like to attribute the *Tʿhrobay didebuli* to an earlier period. The word-for-word translation of the middle column would then represent a more sophisticated translation technique and thus belong to a later period. In the light of some lexical features shared by both versions, and especially on account of the occurrence of the word *დაუჯდომელ*, the common equivalent for the word *Acathistos* being employed in the predicative case in both versions (see lines 34 and 35, together with note 30), I would like to argue at present in favour of a revision of the *Tʿhrobay didebuli* — text in the right column, resulting in the text of the middle column as its outcome. Anyhow, the question of the translator’s name, as well as the revisor’s, seems to be re-opened – and should be left to the specialists for Giorgi Mtʿacʿmideli’s translation technique.

II. I will now pass to the second testimonium, which I have chosen in order to illustrate the historiographical value of the *Tʿhrobay didebuli*. In the year 590, the Persian king Husraw Abarwēz was fleeing from the usurper Wahrām Čōbīn.<sup>38</sup> Now, when Husraw approached the city of

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<sup>38</sup> For a general outline of the events, see Peeters 1947 (together with the remarks in Peeters 1951, 2, 276), and more recently Schilling 2008b, 235-51 (Chapter 3: “Die *adoptio per arma* des Husraw Abarwēz und seiner Nachfolger:” “1. Husraw Abarwēz in Hierapolis” – “2. Husraw Abarwēz in Antiocheia.”). Wahrām Čōbīn’s name is given in a certain passage of the *Tʿhrobay didebuli* (p. 40 l. 24-25 ed. Džanašvili 1900; trad. van Esbroeck 1976, 90 [§ 45]) with its ‘Greek’ form *Varamos* [ვარამოს < Βάρραμος] supplied with the gloss *ესე იგი არს ზაჰრამს ჩუბინსა* (“himself who is Bahram Čubin”) adequately reflecting the New Persian form *بهرام چوبین* [*Bahrām Čūbīn*] (which is attested throughout the New Persian literature; for one of the most ancient occurrences, see for instance the 10<sup>th</sup> century Tārīḫ-e Balʿamī p. 748 l. 16 [and *passim*] ed. Bahār/Gonābādī 2009). For another

Kirkesium on the border of the Euphrates, he had – as we are told by the 7<sup>th</sup> century author Sebēos – to decide on turning to the Greek border, or taking his way to the (Christian) Arabs.<sup>39</sup> The reasons behind his decision to eventually pass the border of the Byzantine Empire are narrated in great detail by the church historian Evagrius Scholasticus, who (together with his mentor, the Antiochene Patriarch Gregory) had met with the Persian king during the latter's short exile in Byzantium: As Husraw himself was telling Evagrius, he had been praying to the God of the Christians and let his horse (being supposed to lead him by itself to God) take its way.<sup>40</sup> Whether this story was true or rather the Christian interpretation of a pagan custom observed by the Persian king, is not my concern here; as a matter of fact, I clearly can state that there is only one other Greek historiographer extant to tell the same story, yet in a more elaborated form – the 7<sup>th</sup> century author Theophylact Simocates.<sup>41</sup>

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er Old Georgian witness reflecting the New Persian initial *b-* (in *Bahrām*), compare e.g. *K'art'lis čovreba*, vol. 1, pp. 220 l. 11-221 l.4 ed. Qauhč'išvili 1955, even if the form supplied by this witness is ღარამ ზღობი. In testimonium 2 (see below), the gloss ԹԹԵԼ ՎՅ ՅԱՅՆԻԹ exactly reflects the Middle Persian form *W'hl'm [cwpyn]* (see e.g. Zand ī Wahman Yasn #7.5 [p. 142 ed., p. 162 trad., p. 203-4 comm. Cereti 1995] for allusions to Bahrām Čūbīn in the Middle Persian literature). It may be added, that it is not clear, whether the Georgian form *ბჟასრო* (*Huasro*, reflecting the Middle Persian proper name *Husraw*) stems from the Greek (sc. Χοσρόης) or rather from the New Persian (sc. خسرو *Hosrō*), whereas the common Armenian form *Խոսրով* (*Xosrov*) clearly reflects the Middle Persian (*Xwstwb'*) as attested throughout the Middle Persian literary tradition (even if it is sometimes spelled *Xwstwdy* etc.): the New Persian alternates between *كسرى* [*Kisrā*] (deriving from the Arabic) and *خسرو* [*Hosrō*].

<sup>39</sup> Sebēos p. 75 l. 27–28 ed. Abgaryan 1979: եւ խորհեալ ճանապարհի, թէ ո՞ր լաւագոյն իցէ, երթալ առ արքային Տաճկա՞ն, եթէ առ թագաւորն Յունաց (trad. Thomson, Howard-Johnston and Greenwood 1999, I, 18: “and [sc. they carried on their flight – A.S.] deliberating on the road, whether it would be better to go the king of the Arabs or to the king of the Greeks”).

<sup>40</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus p. 234 l. 2-4 ed. Bidez and Parmentier 1898 (the paragraph count reflects that of the Georgian tradition, see testimonium 2): 2. Αφικνείται δὲ κατὰ τὸ Κίρκησιον, ὡς γέ ἐφη (sc. Χοσρόης), 3. τὸν θεὸν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐπικαλεσάμενος 4./5. ἐκείσε τὸν ἵππον ἀπιέναι ἐνθα ἂν πρὸς αὐτοῦ ὀδηγοῖτο (transl. according to Whitby 2000, 308 [§ 17] with one slight modification: “He arrived at Circesium after calling, as he himself says, upon the God of the Christians that his horse should set off for wherever it might be directed towards [Whitby: by] Him”).

<sup>41</sup> Theophylact Simocates p. 167 l. 14-24 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1972 (for a résumé, see Theophanes Homologetes 265 l. 17-21 ed. de Boor 1883).

**test. 2:** How the Persian king Husraw Abarwēz (*regn.* 590-628) came to Byzantium<sup>42</sup>

1. ხოლო მეფემან ხუასრო იხილარად იგი ვარამოსა რომელ არს ვაჰრამ და ყოვლისავე ერთსა შედგომად მისი: 2. მიეცა იწროებასა დიდსა. და მოვიდა ადგილსა ერთსა სივლტოლით რომელსა კირკის ეწოდების. 3. და უღონო ქმნული ხადოდა ღმრთსა ქრისტეანეთასა და იტყოდა ვედრებით: 4. ვითარმედ “სადა იგი სათნო არს და ჯეროვან. მიიყვანე ცხენი ესე ჩემი.” 5. და მიუტევა მას სლვად. ვინადაც ენებოს.

As can be seen from the text above, a third narrative must have existed once, *viz.* the Greek original of the *T'hrobay didebuli*. Since the points of agreement between Evagrius Scholasticus and the *T'hrobay didebuli* in general are rather few, it is tempting to assume that this anonymous Greek author had been able to gather material from some other contemporary, but now lost history – most probably from John of Epiphaneia, who is known to have written towards the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. In any case, a thorough study of the *T'hrobay didebuli* on the basis of a future critical edition will deeply contribute to our knowledge of the late 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century Greek historiography, which was flourishing particularly in the Roman province of Syria – before it became almost entirely restricted to the capital of Byzantium.

III. Examining the third testimonium, I will question Michel van Esbroeck's assumption of a “literal correspondence” between certain passages from Leo Grammaticus and the *T'hrobay didebuli*. Byzantine scholarship has long reached results concerning the real author of the Leo Grammaticus-text different from those presupposed by van Esbroeck. In note 44 I have stated – in accordance with the assumption of Vasilij Grigor'evič Vasil'evskij,<sup>43</sup> the illustrious founder of the periodical *Vizantijskij Vremennik* – that the main branch of the textual tradition is that represented by Symeon Magister, and that certain Middle Byzantine authors depend on his narrative. I thus have constituted a text by treating all those witnesses as if they were manuscripts. For our purpose, however,

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<sup>42</sup> *T'hrobay didebuli*, p. 40 l. 3-10 ed. Džanašvili 1900 (Russian translation *en face*, p. 41; trad. van Esbroeck 1976, 90 [§§ 43b-c]). “1. King Husraw, however, saw this Varamos, who is Wahram, and all the folks (of war) behind him. 2. He escaped from a great danger and came to a place on his flight called Kirkesium. 3. And, having become weak, he prayed to the God of the Christians and said in (his) prayer: 4. ‘Where it is decent and seemly, guide my horse.’ 5. And he let it go, wherever it wanted.”

<sup>43</sup> See Vasil'evskij 1895, and more recently Sotiroudis 1989, 1-14.

the outcome has to be regarded as rather limited. A close relationship of both narratives may be stated for paragraphs 3 to 4, and 6 respectively. On the other hand, there are some peculiarities extant which seem to link the *T'ħrobay didebuli* to another branch of the narrative tradition.

**test 3:** How the emperor Maurice (*regn.* 582-602) and his family were put to death Symeon Magister<sup>44</sup>

1. Ὁ δὲ<sup>46</sup> ἀλάστωρ κινεῖται

πρὸς τὸν φόνον Μαυρικίου,<sup>47</sup>

καὶ ἦχθη Μαυρίκιος<sup>49</sup> δέσμιος  
εἰς τὸν Εὐτροπίου λιμένα.

2. προκολάζων δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ μαίφιφος

τῆ ἑωραία<sup>50</sup> τοὺς πέντε ἄρρενας υἱοὺς  
αὐτοῦ

ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ ἴσφαγιῆναι  
προσάττει<sup>51</sup>.

3. ὁ δὲ Μαυρίκιος φιλοσοφῶν  
τῷ δυστυχήματι<sup>52</sup>

T'ħrobay didebuli<sup>45</sup>

1-2. ხოლო ცნა მან ვითარმედ  
მავრიკ

ცოცხალ არს. იწყო მიეზად მისა:  
რამეთუ ივლტოდა რაჲ იგი:

შეელმეს ფერჳნი მისნი.

განგებითა ლუთისაჲთა.

და ἄდგილსა რასმე კნარცოანსა<sup>48</sup>

დაშთა იგი:

რომლისა წარავლინნა ფოკას

და მოიყვანა

და ბრძანა მახვილითა მოკლვად

მისი: და შვილითა მისთა

და ცოლისა მისისა:.

3. ხოლო მავრიკ ხედვიდა

რაჲ წინაშე მისა

შვილითა თჳსთა მოწყუედასა

<sup>44</sup> Symeon Magister p. 154 l. 5-19 ed. Wahlgren 2008; Symeon Metaphrastes<sup>Sulg</sup> p. 64 l. 7-16 ed. Sreznevskij 1905; Leo Grammaticus pp. 143 l. 20-144 l. 16 ed. Bekker 1842; Theodosios of Melitene pp. 99 l. 18-100 l. 10 ed. Tafel 1859; *Eklogai historion* pp. 332 l. 12-333 l. 26 ed. Cramer 1839; Georgios Hamartolos, vol. 2, pp. 662 l. 16-664 l. 4 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1978.

<sup>45</sup> *T'ħrobay didebuli*, p. 44 l. 4-17 ed. Džanašvili 1900 (Russian translation *en face*, p. 45); trad. van Esbroeck 1976, 91 [§§ 49c-50].

<sup>46</sup> Leo Grammaticus, *Eklogai Historion*: Τότε ὁ.

<sup>47</sup> Georgios Hamartolos: πρὸς τὸν φόνον κινεῖται Μαυρικίου ὁ ἀλάστωρ.

<sup>48</sup> trad. Džanašvili: *ღიზ-მო სჳ ოჲრაჳი*; van Esbroeck 1976: *dans un endroit accidenté*.

<sup>49</sup> Georgios Hamartolos: δὴ κελεύσας ἦχθη.

<sup>50</sup> Georgios Hamartolos: θεωραία ἀναιρεθῆναι.

<sup>51</sup> Georgios Hamartolos: ἐπιτρέπει.

<sup>52</sup> Symeon Metaphrastes<sup>Sulg</sup>: *людомядръствоуж о вѣдѣ* Theophanes Homologetes, Georgios Hamartolos: φιλοσοφῶν τὸ δυστύχημα.

συνεχῶς ἐπεφθέγγετο·  
 "Δίκαιος εἶ, κύριε,  
 καὶ δίκαια ἡ κρίσις σου."<sup>53</sup>  
 4. τῆς δὲ τιθηνῆς ὑποκλεψάσης  
 ἐν ἐκ τῶν πέντε ἱδριῶν,<sup>54</sup>  
 καὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἀντιδιδούσης  
 πρὸς ἀναίρεσιν  
 ὁ Μαυρίκιος  
 οὐ κατεδέξατο,  
 ἀλλὰ τὸ ἴδιον  
 ἐπεζήτησεν ἐλθεῖν  
 καὶ αὐτὸ ἀναίρεθῆναι.  
 5. καὶ οὕτως<sup>55</sup> καὶ αὐτὸς ἀναίρεθῆ<sup>56</sup>

τοῦ ἀθλίου Φωκᾶ προστάξαντος  
 τὰς τούτων κεφαλὰς<sup>57</sup> ἐν τῷ Κάμπῳ  
 τοῦ τριβουναλίου<sup>58</sup> ἀποτεθῆναι<sup>59</sup>  
 καὶ ἐξήρχοντο οἱ τῆς πόλεως,  
 καὶ ἐθώρουν αὐτὰς ἕως οὗ ἐπῶρῆσαν·  
 καὶ τότε συνεχώρησεν  
 αὐτὰς τοῖς ποθοῦσιν ἀποδοθῆναι.<sup>60</sup>  
 6. τὴν δὲ<sup>61</sup>,<sup>62</sup> Μαυρικίου γυναῖκα  
 ἴσυν<sup>63</sup> ταῖς τρισὶ θυγατράσιν αὐτῆς  
 ἴμετ' οὐ πολὺ διαβληθεῖσαν  
 ὡς κατ' αὐτοῦ μελετώσαν<sup>64</sup>

იტყვოდა.  
 მართალ ხარ შენ ოფალო  
 და სამართალ არს საშჯელი შენი:  
 4. მერმე უმრწემესი მშ მისი  
 დამალა დედა მძუმემან  
 და მშ თვისი მოიყვანა და მისცა  
 რათა მოკლან ნაცვლად მისა:  
 ხოლო მავრიკ იხილა რად ესე  
 არა თავსიდვა ყოვლადვე.  
 არამედ მოყვანებად  
 ჰსცა თვისივე იგი შვილი:

5. და მოჰსწყვიდნეს ერთ ზამად  
 ხუთნი ძენი მისნი. და თავადი  
 მავრიკ მახვლითა.

6. ხოლო უკუნადასკნელ ცოლსა  
 მისსა  
 სამთა თანა ასულთა მისთა

<sup>53</sup> Symeon Metaphrastes<sup>bulg.</sup>: Πραβι σ̄ჯδι твои.

<sup>54</sup> Leo Grammaticus, *Eklogai historion*, Georgios Hamartolos: βασιλικῶν παιδιῶν.

<sup>55</sup> Leo Grammaticus, *Eklogai historion*, Georgios Hamartolos: οὕτω.

<sup>56</sup> Theodosios of Melitene: αὐτὸς ἀνηρέθη; Leo Grammaticus, *Eklogai historion*, Georgios Hamartolos: ἀπετμήθη τὴν κεφαλὴν.

<sup>57</sup> Theophanes Homologetes: τὰς τούτων κεφαλὰς ἐκέλευσε τεθῆναι.

<sup>58</sup> Symeon Metaphrastes<sup>bulg.</sup>: на поли Трибуналіи (*fortasse* Трибуналіи *legendum est*)

<sup>59</sup> Theophanes Homologetes: ἡμέρας ἱκανάς.

<sup>60</sup> Georgios Hamartolos add. οἱ δὲ δεξάμενοι κατέθεντο αὐτὰς ἐν τοῖς πρέπουσι τόποις. τὴν δὲ Μαυρικίου γυναῖκα σὺν ταῖς τρισὶ θυγατράσιν αὐτῆς ἐν μοναστηρίῳ καθείρξεν [...]. ὁ δὲ γε ἀλάστωρ Φωκάς μετ' ὀλίγον χρόνον καί.

<sup>61</sup> om. *Eklogai historian*.

<sup>62</sup> om. Georgios Hamartolos.

<sup>63</sup> Georgios Hamartolos: ἄμα.

ἀνεἶλεν ἐν τῷ μῶλῳ τῶν Εὐτροπίου.<sup>65</sup>

თავი წარჰკვეთა უწყალოდ  
მახვილითა<sup>66</sup>.

The story deals with the murder of Maurice and his family in the year 602<sup>67</sup>. In the course of the tumultuous events of Maurice's overthrow, the fate of his eldest son and heir Theodosius immediately had become a matter of rumours.<sup>68</sup> Until the year 607 (or 608 at the latest),<sup>69</sup> the usurper

<sup>64</sup> om. Georgios Hamartolos.

<sup>65</sup> "1. Then the avenging spirit moved towards the slaughter of Maurice, and Maurice was brought in fetters to the harbour of Eutropius. 2. In order to chastise him beforehand, this bloodthirsty one (sc. Phocas) ordered his five male sons to be slaughtered in front of him, in (his full) view. 3. Maurice, however, by such misfortune (caused to) philosophically reasoning, immediately shouted: 'Just art Thou o Lord, and just is Thy punishment'. 4. When the nurse was stealing away one of the children [*var.* royal children] and giving in its stead her own one for slaying, Maurice could not bear (this), but requested his own one to come and be slain itself. 5. Thus, he eventually was slain [*var.* beheaded] as well; when the wretched Phocas was giving orders to exhibit their heads in the campus of the Tribunals, those of the city were coming about and inspecting them until they were decayed: only then, he conceded to hand them over to those longing for them. 6. Maurice's wife, together with her three daughters, who, not long afterwards, were calumniated for having conspired against him, he slew in the mole of Eutropius."

<sup>66</sup> "1-2. [Phocas,] however, became aware that Maurice (still) was living; he began to search for him. When [the latter] was fleeing, his feet hurt by God's approval and, somewhere in a hollow, he fell down. Phocas sent (soldiers) for him, and he was brought (in his presence). He gave orders to slay him with the sword, as well as his children and his wife. 3. However, when Maurice was observing how his children were slaughtered in front of him, he shouted: 'Just art Thou, o Lord, and justice is Thy punishment.' 4. Now, the nurse was concealing his youngest son; she brought her own one and presented him in order that they might kill him in his stead; Maurice, however, saw this: by no means he was able to bear it, and thus caused his own child to be brought. 5. Therefore, they beheaded his five sons together with Maurice himself by the sword. 6. Eventually, they merciless cut off the heads of his wife and her three daughters with the sword."

<sup>67</sup> For parallel accounts see e.g. Theophylact Simocates pp. 301 l. 15-26, 304 l. 20-305 l. 17, 309 l. 6-12 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1972; *Chronicon Paschale* pp. 693 l. 11-16, 694 l. 1-10 ed. Dindorf 1832; Theophanes Homologetes pp. 290-91 ed. de Boor 1883; George Cedrenos p. 709 l. 12-20 ed. Bekker 1838-1839; John Zonaras p. 197 l. 2-10 ed. Büttner-Wobst 1897; Michael Glykas p. 511 l. 5-9 ed. Bekker 1836 (*Greek*); John of Nikiu p. 184 l. 12-16 ed. Zotenberg 1883 (*Ethiopic*); *Vita Mauricii*, pp. [367] l. 5-[369] l. 15 ed. Nau 1910 (*Syriac*); Euty-chios (Sa'īd b. Baṭrīq) p. 215 l. 16-19 ed. Cheikho 1909, p. 118 l. 4-6 ed. Breydy 1985 (*Arabic*); *K'art'lis Chqorebay* p. 223 l. 1-2 Qauḥčišvili 1955 (*Georgian*). For recent scholarship, see Olster 1993; Shlosser 1984; a special study replacing Vailhé 1910 is lacking.

<sup>68</sup> Maurice is known to have had six male children; that his female kindred initially was placed in a convent for virgins is known from John of Nikiu, p. 184 l. 12-14 ed. Zotenberg

Phocas was trying to gain intelligence on pretensions of Theodosios having managed to escape to a monastery on the Egyptian frontier.<sup>70</sup> The

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1883 (for a parallel account [Georgios Hamartolos], see note 60): *ωρόν: λλσμο: γν: υλλω: ρς: γνυ: νησ: ληησ: εφ: ωφτδφ: σνλ: ε: ρφφ: λσ: εφωε: γσφ: λσφη: γσφ: ωλγσφ: φγφ: σνλ: ε: λφδφγ: ωλνλλτ: ρλρδφν: ωδφ: λδρφγ: λσδνλ: σσγσφ: ωλδνλ: λσφ: ωλνλ: ωντ: ρνλ: ρφδ:* (transl. according to Charles 1916, p. 165 [§ CII.7-8], with slight modifications: “And when they [sc. the soldiers – A.S.] had learnt where he [sc. Maurice – A.S.] was, they proceeded to him according to the commands of Phocas, and put him to death with his 5 [male] children, in the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of his reign. And they stripped the empress Constantina and her 2 daughters and the wife of her son Theodosius of their imperial robes, and clothed them in servants’ apparel, and placed them in a convent for virgins.”). Already in the most ancient sources (e.g. Gregory, *Registrum* vol. II, p. 110 l. 5-9 ed. Norberg 1982) only five of Maurice’s sons are listed by name among the victims of the year 602. Thus, it is not astonishing that rumours arose to the effect that one child, allegedly Maurice’s eldest son Theodosios, had been able to escape towards the Persian court (e.g. John of Antiochia frg. 218f. ed. Müller 1870; see however Theophylact Simocates p. 309 l. 12-22 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1972, who states that Theodosios reportedly came to Colchis [!] and that he died on his further way to the “Barbarian deserts,” i.e. the Persian kingdom).

<sup>69</sup> The fall of Alexandria to Nicetas, Heraclius’ military commander in Egypt during the civil war against Phocas, took place in this very year, see Olster 1993, 121 (with bibliography). In Sophronius’ poem (see next note) Phocas is referred to (XXIX l. 99, p. 131 ed. Gigante 1957) as a *κρατερός* (“powerful”) and *θεῖος βασιλεύς* (i.e. *divus Augustus*); at least in Alexandria and its environments these epithets are conceivable for Phocas not longer than early in the year 608; the papyrus Vindob. G 21350 provides evidence that, at least until 08.01.610, Arsinoiton polis, a small town in the Fayyūm, was loyal to Phocas (Palme 2002, 160-65, No. 27, Table 16; for the numismatic evidence, see Grierson 1950). Perhaps as early as 605 or 606, Sophronius was fleeing from the Holy Land towards Egypt, fearing the Persian military campaigns threatening the Eastern Roman provinces (for a most plausible date for the outbreak of the Persian-Byzantine war, see note 72).

<sup>70</sup> Sophronius of Jerusalem p. 128 [s. *apparatu*] ed. Gigante 1957: *τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀνακρεόντινον κατὰ στοίχους* (l. *στοίχους*) *εἰς τὸν πάππου Μηνᾶν* (l. *πάππον Μηνᾶν*) *τὸν οἰκονόμον τοῦ ἐννάτου Ἀλεξανδρείας* (ed. *Ἀλεξανδρείας*) *συκοφαντι θέντα* (l. *συκοφαντηθέντα*) *ἐπὶ Φακᾶ* *ὅτι Θεοδόσιον* (em. Matranga; ms. *Θεοδόσιος*) *τὸν υἱὸν Μαυρικίου ἐδέξατο* (“From [Sophronios] himself a [further] Anacreontic poem in verses, on the father Menas, the steward of the Ennatos [-monastery in the vicinity] of Alexandria, who was calumniated before Phocas for having hosted Theodosios, the son of Maurice.”). On this certain Menas, see (besides Sophronius’ Anacreontinon XXI, p. 130 ed. Gigante 1957) Leontinos’ of Neapolis *Vita Johannis Eleemosynarii*, p. 90 l. 16 ed. Gelzer 1893 (*Μηνᾶς ὁ ἀπὸ οἰκονόμων τῆς ἁγιωτάτης ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων μεγαλοπόλεως* – “Menas, the ex-steward of the most holy Church from the megalopolis of the Alexandrines”). Apparently, the usurper Phocas was fearing a possible encounter between Theodosios and Heraclius the elder, the Carthage exarch (for the circulation of

later Greek historiography unanimously follows the official representation of Heraclius' historian Theophylact Simocates, who was stating that he had carried out investigations in this matter himself.<sup>71</sup>

Right from the outset, the result was clear: Since the year 604<sup>72</sup> the Persian king Husraw had been presenting a pretender called Theodosios,<sup>73</sup> in

coins struck by the Carthage mint – a) silver coins showing Theodosios [*avers*] and Maurice together with his wife Konstantina [*revers*]; b) gold *solidi* showing Theodosios [*avers*] and the motto AMENITAS DEI, as well as an image of Victoria, the goddess of victory [*revers*] – see Shlosser 1984, 55-58). At that time, and probably since 605, Heraclius the elder was undertaking a conspiracy against Phocas – the very year, when the revolt of the Cappadocian eparch Theodore took place (Olster 1993, 69-75, and especially 72: “There was, therefore, not a set of conspiracies, but only one conspiracy in 605.”): To the sources of Theodore's revolt in 605 belongs a narrative, preserved by John of Nikiu (p. 186 l. 2-4 ed. Zotenberg 1883) but neglected by Olster 1993, 69-75. Despite its corruptly transmitted text (see already Charles 1916, 167 [§ CVI.1-2] note 1 etc.), this account can be read as a hint towards a close link between the Carthage exarch Heraclius on the one hand, and the Cappadocian eparch Theodore on the other – yet as evidence for their alliance during Theodore's revolt: Obviously, Phocas was trying to gain control over his political opponents in the provinces by means of taking hostage their female relatives. At present, I propose the following emendation of the Ethiopic text: ረኅወ፡ ኅበ፡ ህባረ፡ ቀጳዶቅዮ፡ ከሙ፡ ያምጽአዎን፡ ኅቤሁ፡ ለ(ብአሲተ፡ ከከ) እሙ፡ ለቴዎዶሮስ፡ መስፍን፡ ወላብአሲተ፡ ሕርቃል፡ ዘየባቢ፡ እሙ፡ ለከርቃል፡ ዘዮንአስ፡ ምስላ፡ ወሊታ፡ ዋውዮ፡ ድንግል፡ (“He [sc. Phocas] sent [orders] to the province of Cappadocia, that there should be brought to him [*in.*] the mother of the eparch Theodore, as well as the wife of Heraclius the elder, [i.e.] the mother of Heraclius the younger, together with her daughter[-in-law], the virgin Fabia”).

<sup>71</sup> Theophylact Simocates p. 309 l. 22-27 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1972.

<sup>72</sup> For a detailed discussion of the divergent sources, see Olster 1993, 81-100.

<sup>73</sup> The most ancient Christian oriental sources focusing on Iranian history, and especially the Eastern Syriac chronicle conveniently called the “Anonymus Guidi” or “Khuzistan Chronicle” (here p. 20 l. 18-24 ed. Guidi 1903), are to be regarded as the most accurate witnesses of the Persian national tradition, i.e. the (now lost) *Xwadāy-nāmag* (“Book of Lords”) from the late Sasanian period, surviving in Firdausi's national epic, the famous *Šāhnāme*, as well as in uncountable other chronicles depending on some now lost Arabic versions from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (the best-known among them being at-Ṭabarī [in Arabic] and Bal'amī [in Persian], the most neglected, however, the anonymous *Nihāyat al-irab fi aḥbār al-Furs wa'l-'Arab*, ed. Dānešpažūh 1996 [in Arabic], and its Persian rendering *Tagāreb al-omam fi aḥbār molūk al-'Arab wa'l-'Ağm*, ed. Anzābī-Nežād and Kalāntarī 1994, see e.g. Schilling 2008a). For some passages from the *Xwadāy-nāmag* preserved in the Georgian historiography and referred to in the sources as to the ominous ህኔጻጻጻጻ ጌጋጌጌጌጌ (e.g. *K'art'lis čovreba*, vol. 1, p. 220 l. 5-6 ed. Qauḥčišvili 1955), see Džavaḥišvili [1921] 1977, 191; Toumanoff 1947, 171; K'ek'elije [1960] 1980, 254; in general, see Rapp 2003, 113-18; Rapp 2014a, 5, and most recently Rapp 2014b.



order to legitimate his war against Byzantium under the pretext of a military campaign on behalf of Maurice's eldest son and former co-regent. Alongside with the rejection of this pretext, the old-wives' tale about the interchange between Maurice's youngest child<sup>74</sup> and that of its nurse, which was spreading in the Eastern provinces, and especially in Egypt,<sup>75</sup> had to be disproved. Thus, a rewritten version stating that Maurice himself had been preventing the nurse from changing the children was put into circulation<sup>76</sup> – to the effect, that Maurice's attitude eventually was considered as that of a holy one.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Note that (in the light of § 4 from testimonium 3) the *T'ħrobay didebuli* follows this very tradition (ϣθβϛϣθβϛ δϣ θοβο, "his youngest son"), whereas the witnesses of the Symeon Magister-text (έν εκ τών πέντε [βασιλικών] παιδιών, "one of the five [royal] children") remain as unspecific as the main text, Theophylact Simocates p. 305 l. 3-17 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1972 (έν τι τών βασιλικών μειρακίων, "one of the royal lads"): van Esbroeck's assumption of a "litteral correspondance" between both *T'ħrobay didebuli* and Leo Grammaticus (van Esbroeck 1976, 76 l. 2), i.e. Symeon Magister, is untenable. If there was a close link between the *T'ħrobay didebuli* and Georgios Hamartolos (see below, testimonium 4, and note 89), the text of note 49 would explain (by an argument of *aberratione oculi*), how the author of the *T'ħrobay didebuli* was able to date the murder of Maurice's female relatives directly after that of Maurice. In general, it would be tempting to assume a common source (as van Esbroeck (1976, 77) did), perhaps the ominous 8<sup>th</sup> century chronicle of Traianos Patrikios, "but little is gained by doing so" (as Cyril Mango put it once with respect to another context).

<sup>75</sup> Within the Egyptian historiography, it is the 10<sup>th</sup> century chronicle of the Melkite patriarch Eutykhios (Sa'īd b. Baṭrīq), which has preserved this story (p. 215 l. 16-19 ed. Cheikho 1909, p. 118 l. 4-6 ed. Breydy 1985). Despite the skeptical attitude of Olster 1993, 16, n. 17, the "odd detail that Maurice's son escaped to Mount Sinai and became a holy monk" can be traced back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century author Anastasius Sinaiticus, who (Diegesis XXIX) retells the story of a certain George Gadametes: allegedly, this George was witnessing in his youth how the corpse of a recently deceased young monk had disappeared from among a community of brethren at Mount Sinai. According to the explanation of some of those brethren (*ibid.*, p. 77 l. 13-21 ed. Nau 1902), this monk had been Maurice's youngest son, who, after being rescued by his nurse from Phocas' hands, was dedicating his life to God, and consequently, soon after his death his body was relocated towards the "land of the living."

<sup>76</sup> I am referring to paragraphs 3-4 of testimonium 3. The official representation stems from Theophylact Simocates (p. 305 l. 3-17 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1972), who, in the year 602, was dwelling in Egypt (*ibid.*, 310 l. 28-311 l. 9), where he presumably made (or at least was able to make) the acquaintance of the original form of the old wives' tale as attested by Anastasius Sinaiticus (see above, note 75).

<sup>77</sup> See the following two notes.

The closest parallel to the narrative behind the *T'ħrobay didebuli* (and related texts) is therefore to be found within the hagiographical tradition and especially in a short life of Maurice preserved in Syriac.<sup>78</sup> According to both narratives,<sup>79</sup> Maurice was asked in a vision whether he would prefer being punished for his sins in this life or in the other (see testimonium 4). Needless to say, Maurice chose the former; in doing so, he was gaining a place – if not in paradise, yet at least in the Greek synaxaries of Constantinople, a calendar included into an 11<sup>th</sup> century Old Russian Gospel manuscript once belonging to a certain Ostromir, *posadnik'* of the city of Novgorod, and even in a Georgian synaxary of the Holy Land.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> The Eastern Syriac *Life of Maurice (Vita Mauricii)*, ed. Nau 1910), which is preserved by a Western Syriac manuscript, represents the most elaborated, yet rewritten account. Unfortunately, the original version has not come down to us in Syriac; however, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century Arabic historiography of the “Church of the East” (i.e. the *Chronicle of Se'ert*, here pp. [199] l. 6-[200] l. 2 ed. Scher 1907-1919; in general see Wood 2013) it is stated that it was Maurice's “youngest” child (and which else could be imagined as being still in the keeping of a nurse?) “called Theodosios” (أفلت الصغير منهم واسمه تيداسيس) who managed to escape to the Sasanian court: Thus, this text combines both traditions, viz. the legend of Maurice's youngest child escaping to Egypt on the one hand, and the legend of Maurice's eldest son Theodosios escaping to the Persian court on the other (for an Eastern Syriac account reflecting more accurately the Persian tradition, see note 73).

<sup>79</sup> On the one hand, see *T'ħrobay didebuli*, p. 42 l. 19-25 ed. Džanašvili 1900, which resumes a 9<sup>th</sup> century extract by either Theophanes Homologetes (p. 285 l. 4-16 ed. de Boor 1883), or rather Georgios Hamartolos (vol. 2, pp. 659 l. 21-660 l. 10 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1978), from the early 7<sup>th</sup> century account of John of Antiochia, frg. 218d (see testimonium 4, and note 89); on the other hand, see *Vita Mauricii*, pp. [366] l. 7-[368] l. 2 ed. Nau 1910 (see note 87).

<sup>80</sup> For Maurice's commemoration in the hagiographical sources (Calendrier palestino-géorgien pp. 86-87 ed. Garitte 1958 [28. Aug.]; de la Grande Église, pp. 116-117 ed. Mateos 1962; *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* col. 264 l. 30-33 ed. Delehay 1902 [s.v. Μαρκιανός]; Остромирово Евангелие 1056-57 года, pp. 242<sup>v</sup>-243<sup>r</sup> ed. Vostokov' 1843 [28. Nov.]), see Wortley 1980; Grumel 1966; Adontz 1965.

**test. 4: How the emperor Maurice saw a dream-vision**

	Theophanes Homologetes <sup>81</sup>	Georgios Hamartolos <sup>82</sup>	T'ħrobay didebuli <sup>83</sup>
	τοῦ δὲ Μαυρικίου τὸν Θεὸν ἰκετεύοντος τοῦ ἐλεηθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, ἐν μιᾷ κοιμωμένου αὐτοῦ εἶδεν	τοῦ δὲ Μαυρικίου τὸν Θεὸν ἰκετεύοντος περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῶν σφαγέντων, εἶδεν	და გამოუცხადა ღმრთმან ძილსა შინა მავრიკს. ვითარმცა ოყო ოგი ხალკის წინაშე ხატსა
5	ὄπτασιαν, εἰς τὴν χαλκὴν πύλην τοῦ παλατίου τῆ εἰκόνι τοῦ σωτήρος ἑαυτὸν παρεστώτα, καὶ λαὸν <πλεί- στον> παρεστώτα αὐτῷ καὶ	ἐνύπνιον τοιοῦτον, ὡς ὅτι, λαοῦ πλείστου παρεστώτος τῆ εἰκόνι Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ χαλκῇ πύλῃ τοῦ παλατίου,	მაცხოვრისასა და ხატით გამო- ჰვიობვიდა მას. ვითარმედ “სადა გნებავს რათა მოიღო საშჯელი ცოდვო- სათს შენისა. ამას ცხობრებას ანუ მერ-
10	φωνὴ γέγονεν ἐκ τοῦ χαρακτήρος τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ λέγουσα·	φωνὴ γέγονεν ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνος λέγουσα· “ὅτε Μαυρίκιον.” ὃν καὶ κρατήσαντες παρέστη-	ცხობრებას ანუ მერ-

<sup>81</sup> Theophanes Homologetes, p. 285 l. 4-16 ed. de Boor 1883: “When Maurice was praying to God for his soul being treated merciful upon, one (day), when he was lying (in bed), he saw (5) a vision: He himself was standing in the *Chalce* entrance hall of the palace near the icon of the Saviour and <many> folks were standing about, and (10) a voice occurred from the replica of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, saying, ‘Bring Maurice here’. Having laid hold (15) of him, the servants of (divine) justice were standing about at the porphyry keystone there, and the divine voice said to him: ‘Where do you wish that I shall reward you, here or in (20) the aeon to come?’ Having heard (these words), he said: ‘O philanthropical Lord, (Thou) righteous judge, rather here, and not in the aeon to come.’ And the divine (25) voice ordered that Maurice, his wife <Konstantina>, his children, and his whole kindred, were handed over to the soldier Phocas.”

<sup>82</sup> Georgios Hamartolos, vol. 2, pp. 659 l. 21-660 l. 10 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1978: “When Maurice was praying to God for his sin concerning those slaughtered, he saw (5) this dream-vision: to a mass of people standing near the icon of Christ in the *Chalce* entrance hall of the palace a voice occurred from the icon, saying, ‘Bring Maurice here’, (10) on whom they laid hold of and were (thus) standing in front of the icon. And the divine voice said: ‘Where do you wish, o Maurice, that I shall reward you, here or in (15) the aeon to come?’ Having heard (these words), he was trembling and said: ‘O philanthropical Lord, here, and not there.’ Immediately, [the voice] ordered that he himself, his (20) wife, his children, and his whole kindred, were handed over to the stratelates Phocas.”

<sup>83</sup> *T'ħrobay didebuli*, p. 42 l. 19-25 ed. Džanašvili 1900 (Russian translation *en face*, p. 43); trad. van Esbroeck 1976, 91 [§§ 48-50]: “And God gave a revelation through a dream-vision to Maurice, when he was in *Chalce* in front of an icon (5) of the Saviour; and through the icon (God) asked him: ‘Where do you like to receive punishment for your (10) sin, in this life or in that one?’ He answered: ‘In this one’. And again, from the icon (15) the revelation occurred: ‘Now, behold, you will be handed over to the soldier Phocas for punishment here.’”

- 15 “δότε Μαυρίκιον.” καὶ  
 κρατήσαντες αὐτὸν οἱ δίκης  
 ὑπηρέται παρέστησαν τῷ  
 πορφυρῷ ὀμφαλίῳ τῷ  
 ἐκεῖσε. καὶ ἔφη πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ  
 θεία φωνή· “ποῦ θέλεις  
 20 ἀποδώσω σοι; ὦδε, ἢ ἐν τῷ  
 μέλλοντι αἰῶνι;” ὁ δὲ  
 ἀκούσας ἔφη· “φιλάνθρωπε  
 δέσποτα, δικαιοκρίτα, ὦδε  
 μᾶλλον, καὶ μὴ ἐν τῷ  
 25 μέλλοντι αἰῶνι.” καὶ  
 ἐκέλευσεν ἡ θεία φωνή  
 ἐκδοθῆναι Μαυρίκιον καὶ  
 <Κωνσταντῖναν,> τὴν  
 γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ τέκνα  
 καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν συγγένειαν  
 αὐτοῦ Φωκᾶ τῷ στρατιώτῃ.
- σαν κατενώπιον τῆς  
 εἰκόνοσ. καὶ φησιν ἡ  
 θεία φωνή· “ποῦ θέλεις,  
 ὦ Μαυρίκιε, ἀποδώσω  
 σοι; ἐνταῦθα ἢ ἐν τῷ  
 μέλλοντι αἰῶνι;” ὁ δὲ  
 ἀκούσας καὶ γενόμενος  
 ἔντρομος εἶπεν·  
 “φιλάνθρωπε κύριε, ὦδε  
 καὶ μὴ ἐκεῖ”. καὶ εὐθὺς  
 ἐκέλευσεν ἐκδοθῆναι  
 αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα  
 αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ  
 πᾶσαν τὴν συγγένειαν  
 αὐτοῦ Φωκᾶ τῷ  
 στρατηλάτῃ.
- მესა მას: “ ხოლო მან  
 მიუჯო: ვითამედ  
 “ აქავე:” და კუალად  
 მიერ ხატით გამო  
 ვიდა განწიხებდა.  
 ვითარმედ “ აპა ესე-  
 რა მეცეცე კელთა  
 ფოკას მკედრისათა.  
 დასამჯელად  
 აქავე:”

IV. I will conclude this paper by finally deepening some of my observations. The pious attitude with which the Greek author of the *T'hrobay didebuli* describes the life of Maurice – even if he had at his disposal precious source material deriving from the “purist” 6<sup>th</sup> (and 7<sup>th</sup>) century historiography<sup>84</sup> – brings him closely in line with a specifically hagiographical perspective on salvation history.<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, I was not able to show within the limits of this paper that this very attitude extends towards the lives of all legitimate emperors as narrated in the preserved parts of our text. The conclusion seems to be obvious: our author was living in tumultuous times, when the Byzantine emperors, at least according to our author’s view, did not follow the path of orthodoxy. – ‘Military disasters can be prevented by the aid of the Theotokos, and, through the icons, God’s will becomes manifest’ would be the summary of our author’s historical lesson. Accordingly, he depicted how the emperor Maurice saw his dream-vision in front of an icon of the Saviour at *Chalce*, the palace’s bronze-roofed entrance hall, whereas the parallel accounts are

<sup>84</sup> See above, note 41. For the *T'hrobay didebuli*'s relevance concerning the description of Husraw Abarwēz' magical palace at Ganjak (Šiz), which is mainly attested within the hagiographical tradition. See Schilling 2008c, 317, n. 27.

<sup>85</sup> See already van Esbroeck 1976, 76, who stated that “the compiler, above all, has worked as a hagiographer.”



“Barbarian’s” treatment of the Byzantine prisoners of war<sup>89</sup> (as well as their offering of human sacrifices<sup>90</sup>) was still fresh in the memory of the

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<sup>89</sup> From Theodore Studites’ *Parva catechesis* (pp. 220-24 ed. Auvray 1891) it is known, that Byzantine hostages or prisoners of war were not allowed by the Bulgarian *χάγαν* Krum (803-14) to observe certain dietetic rules connected with Lent (see Ivan Dujčev’s article “San Teodoro Studita ed i Bulgari” [i.e. “Saint Theodore Studites and the Bulgarians”], which first appeared in the 1962 volume of the “Bulletino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano” [i.e. “Bulletin of the Italian Historical Institute for the Middle Ages and the Muratori Archive”] and soon was reprinted in Dujčev 1965, 193-205). Based on a thorough study of Theodore Studites’ letter to a certain Byzantine patrician (and probable Bulgarian prince) called Theodore (Epistle CLXIII, ed. Migne, PG 99) the great Bulgarian scholar has elucidated the background of Theodore Studites’ attitude against the extradition of Bulgarian refugees dwelling at Byzantium in 812 (see Theophanes Homologetes pp. 497 l. 16-499 l. 15 ed. de Boor 1883), and has argued in favour of a dating of Theodore’s further literary activity concerning this issue within the period of his third (and final) exile, lasting from Easter 815 until his death in the year 826, and otherwise forming “a period of struggle against iconoclasm” for Theodore (I am quoting I. Dujčev’s words, *ibid.*, 202). Note that both (p. 42 l. 1-18 ed. Džanašvili 1900 [Russian translation *en face*, p. 43]; trad. van Esbroeck 1976, 91 [§ 46-47]) and Georgios Hamartolos (vol. 2, p. 659 l. 6-13 ed. de Boor and Wirth 1978) link Maurice’s refusal of redeeming Byzantine prisoners of war from the *χάγαν* of the Avars (who consequently were slaughtered) with his piously accepted overthrow by Phocas, which is closely connected to his vision at Chalce: compare the wording of Georgios Hamartolos (testimonium 4, lines 2-3: *ἰκετεύοντος περὶ τῆς ἀμαρτίας τῶν σφαγέντων* [Maurice was “praying for his sin concerning those slaughtered,” *viz.* by the *χάγαν*]) with that of Theophanes Homologetes (*ἰκετεύοντος τοῦ ἐλεηθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ* [Maurice was “praying for his soul being treated merciful upon”]); the *T’Ħrobay didebuli* alludes to a punishment of Maurice’s sin (*ცოდვისათჳს შენობს*) on occasion of the revelation from the icon (testimonium 4, lines 9-10), and (p. 42 l. 3 ed. Džanašvili 1900) states that Maurice’s overthrow happened “in recompense for his error” (*დასაშჯელად ცთომის მისთვის მისის*) consisting in not having redeemed these prisoners of war. On the other hand, (testimonium 4, lines 4-5 [right column] / l. 6-7 and l. 5-6 [left and middle columns]) the *T’Ħrobay didebuli* reflects Theophanes Homologetes’ designation of the icon at Chalce (*βασιλῆα μαρτυροῦσσαν*, i.e. *τῆ εἰκόνι τοῦ σωτήρος*, “to the icon of the Saviour”) more precisely than Georgios Hamartolos’ (*τῆ εἰκόνι Χριστοῦ*, “to the icon of Christ”). On account of those (and similar) details, the *T’Ħrobay didebuli* appears to fluctuate between both narratives, by modifying the story’s fictional character in order to substantiate the impact of image-worshipping: Thus, Maurice is not dreaming that he was standing in front of an icon, but a dream-vision appears to him when he was standing in front of an icon. On the other hand, one must not forget that, ultimately, the 7<sup>th</sup> century author John of Antiochia (frg. 218d ed. Müller 1870, see note 79) might have been the main source of inspiration.

<sup>90</sup> See Dujčev 1965, 218-19 (with a presentation of the sources and discussion).

public. Arguably, it was one of Theodore Studites' followers (if not Theodore himself) who, from ancient historical records (ძუელთა მათ წიგნთაგან: testimonium 1, line 4), attempted to meet those needs.<sup>91</sup>

Anyhow, during the process of adaptation, the commemoration of the siege of Constantinople in the year 626 (BHG 1060) was both inflated and updated. Even two centuries later, the composition as a whole could be considered as a worthy contribution to the education of the Kartvelian elites and, thus, the manuscript in its entirety was rendered into their language. But, by now, times had changed; in the view of our translator, whose culture and wide range of reading is attested to by his knowledge of Persian matters, the Scythians (who perhaps had been already identified with the Bulgarians or Slavs in the Greek text) now had to be identified with the Russians. The reason behind this oddity, as well as many other features of the *T'hyrobay didebuli*, must, at present, remain obscure.

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<sup>91</sup> According to Theophanes Homologetes (pp. 497 l. 16-499 l. 15 ed. de Boor 1883. See Dujčev 1965, 194-97, the imperial *silention* from 04.11.812, presided by the emperor Michael Rhangabe, was discussing the issue of refugees dwelling at Byzantium on the basis of biblical quotations (John 6,37; Tim. 5,8; Ps. 119,6), and I wonder if Theodore Studites and the members of his party did not have a textbook with historical precedents at hand, which (at a later time?) was rewritten with the purpose of strengthening their theological arguments by means of historical reasoning. In order to provide evidence in favour of this opinion, it would be decisive to confront the ideology of the transitional portions from the *T'hyrobay didebuli* (see above, note 17) with the positions referred to by Theophanes Homologetes (who is known to have been hostile towards Theodore Studites and his party (see Dujčev 1965, 195, with n. 3) and in this light, Theophanes Homologetes' re-touches occurring in testimonium 4 [i.e. the generalizing purpose of Maurice's prayer, see above, note 89] can be explained in a plausible way).





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