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### **HISPANIA, GEORGIA AND THE HISTORY OF EUROPE\***

It is quite evident that Hispania, on the one hand, and Georgia on the other constitute the limits of the world known to the Greeks, both in myth and in what is actually historical. Nevertheless, I would like to illustrate this fact in the light of history, to show how these nations were gradually incorporated into Europe and what place they occupied within it throughout the years, from the time of the Greeks to later times.

Europe is a concept forged over the centuries and it is not an absolutely clear one. There is the geographical Europe and the political one, the cultural Europe and the one that gave rise to them all, the mythical Europe.

The term Europe, as is known, is in its origin mythical. I will come back to this, but you already know that Europa was, before anything else, a nymph of Delphi, the daughter of Telephassa and of Agenor, king of Phoenicia. You also know that Europe, abducted by Zeus, who had taken the form of a bull, was carried away to Crete, where she bore Minos, Sarpedon and Rhadamanthys, just kings in this world or in the other one. Later she fled and disappeared. Her brother Cadmos searched for her everywhere but she was nowhere to be found, and the oracle of Delphi, seeing that Cadmos was unsuccessful, ordered him to cease his search and to found Thebes.

So Europa was a wandering heroine, of divine, Phoenician and Greek lineage, with no fixed abode. Her name was used to indicate that land, ever growing in extent, that we call Europe. There are more of these mythical heroines who have disappeared and whose name is invoked in

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searching for them: the prototype is Persephone, who divided her life between the earth and the underworld and whose mother, Demeter, searched for her.

The Greeks, who engendered the myth of Europa and with whom this myth began to take on the form of a geographical entity, carried the name of Europa to diverse and ever-growing areas. I wrote about this in my address on being introduced into the Royal Spanish Academy of History<sup>1</sup>. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, Europe was central Greece, as opposed to the Peloponnese and the islands. And by the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the name designated the Greek territories of the North. Later, Europe was considered to be limited to the east by the Don. Not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century did a Russian historian, Tatishchev, establish the boundary in the Urals, thereby including Russia. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in 1801, Georgia and the entire Caucasus were absorbed, temporarily, by Russia, and thus they entered the maps of Europe.

But the name of Europe, before that and later, suffered geographical fluctuations. The Greek journeys, from the time of Hecataeus of Miletus' *Description of the Earth*, around 500 BC, soon began to spread the name of Europe to all the lands bordering on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, from the Columns of Hercules to Greece, opposing it to Africa and Asia. It included the entire Roman Empire north of the Mediterranean. And in the Middle Ages its area was augmented with the territories occupied by the Celts, Germans and Slavs.

But the name soon found a competitor in one that referred to a circumstance that was both religious and cultural – this territory was more frequently called Christendom. When Europe spread across the seas, however, the name continued to be restricted to the territory continuing westward from Asia. And from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on, the name of Europe was used more and more because the term Christendom was no longer sufficient: there were Christians outside of Europe, and within it Christianity sometimes encountered critics. Europe was then that Asiatic peninsula, with its islands, that I am talking about.

Hispania and Georgia both belonged to it. In the South of Europe they were the eastern and western extremes, with symmetric geographies, countries situated between high snow-covered mountains to the north and a warm blue sea. They were not only the limits of Europe but also, for the ancients, the limits of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Qué es Europa? ¿Qué es España?, Madrid 2004.

But Europe, as I have said, was not only a geographical reality, it was also, after a certain moment, a cultural unit, to a greater or lesser degree, enriched by Greeks, Romans, Christians, and by other peoples. I will speak of that later. To be sure, it was a geographical reality as well, though not always exactly the same one. In the course of history, Europe grew, but there were also mutilations. At times certain countries, through conquest by other peoples, were no longer within the European and Christian ambit: this was the case, partially or totally, of Hispania, Sicily, Greece, the Caucasus.

Parts of the old Europe that were conquered, sometimes only temporarily, would, with time, once again be Europe and Christian. Hispania and Georgia are both witnesses of this Europe lost and regained. Nations lost, nations later recovered for Europe.

So you can see how Hispania and Georgia, the nations that were the limits of Europe, subject because of this to external pressures and also to reconquests, share, to a varying extent, a common, parallel history. This is my topic today as regards Hispania and Georgia.

All this shows that Europe is not only a geographical concept. With time it was extended and consolidated, combining the geographical concept with a religious and cultural one. With Christianity first, as I have mentioned. But also, later, with cultural concepts such as Humanism, the Illustration, science and others. There is not only a European geography; there is also a European culture, which today has spread all over the world.

To be sure, this European culture had its variants: we have the Latin West, the Orthodox East; we have the diverse forms of Christianity - the Catholic South, the Protestant North, the conciliation of the Papacy and the Empire and the various ruptures of this pattern. On the other hand, Europe is not a political concept. A number of attempts at forced unification, from Charlemagne on, have failed; I won't do more than mention them. It is only now, as of only a few years ago, that we are faced with the new phenomenon of the European Community, a political union limited to certain countries and to certain themes, to be sure.

And so, when we speak of Europe, we are using a very vague term, but an important one nevertheless. A term of increasing significance, as we have seen, in geography, in religion and culture, even in politics. But, as I have already pointed out, in its origin we have the myth. Europe, before any of all this that I have been discussing, is a myth. Of this myth, too, the Greeks were the parents. Let me consider this in more detail before going further.

For the very name of Europe was mythical at first, then geographical; it represented, before it designated that geographical space and then later, the different spaces to which I have alluded; it represents, I repeat, a mythical space, that of the wanderings of the nymph Europa through what later were European lands. A mythical Greek space, as you can see. Greece was the creator of the initial forms of the European space, which gradually took shape under the Romans and various other peoples.

If we take into consideration the geographical location of the various Greek myths, we can see that most of them are situated in what we call Greece or, at times, in contiguous territories of Asia or Africa or the Occident. There are some myths that mark the Northern and Southern limits of Europe. For example, there are the myths of the Hyperboreans in the frigid countries of the North, or the pygmies in Africa. But I am going to center especially on those that delimit Europe on the East and the West, specifically the Caucasus and the western lands of Hispania. These are the myths of the Orient and the Occident as they were contemplated from Greece, the limits of their world, which was to become Europe.

The myths of the East, located in what are now the Caucasus and Georgia, are related to the Sun that rises every morning from behind the high mountains, and to the Ocean that surrounds the earth and over which the Sun begins its westward journey. There it will encounter the Ocean again and, in a golden cup, will continue its return through the dark waters on the other side of the world, to rise once again in the East every day.

Aeëtes, son of the Sun and of the nymph Perseis, a daughter of Oceanus, as is already related in the *Odyssey*<sup>2</sup>, was the king of Colchis, the western region of Georgia on the Black Sea. The name Aeëtes, Aietes in Greek, comes from Aia, the Earth. The Sun, after having navigated all night through the Ocean, reaches this land of Colchis. It was replete with prodigies symbolized in Aeëtes and his relatives: he was the brother of Circe and father of Medea, famous sorceresses, and also the husband of Idyia, one of the Oceanides.

To this land came Phrixus, the son of Athamus, with his sister Helle, fleeing from his father, who, deceived by the jealousy of his second wife, Ino, was going to sacrifice him. But they were saved by the ram of the Golden Fleece that was sent by Zeus. This is the Golden Fleece that Phrixus gave to Aeëtes as a gift for having received him in his kingdom and given him his daughter Chalciopé in marriage. This fleece, which

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<sup>2</sup> *Odyssey*, X, 137; See also Hesiod, *Theogony*, 956 ff.

Aeëtes hung from a tree in his forests, was a kind of duplicate of the sun, a magic charm that could produce rain.

In this half mythical, half real geography we also find the Caucasus, the mountains where Zeus had Prometheus, the rebel, chained. It extended down to Ocean, there at the Caspian Lake. It was the end of the world: a solitary mountain chain bathed by the Ocean, the river that surrounded the Earth, and at its foot the fertile land of Colchis. Aeschylus' *Prometheus* describes all this to us: we see how Force and Violence chain the Titan Prometheus to the rock of the Caucasus, and how the daughters of Ocean, the nearby Oceanides, come to console him and weep over his suffering.

But the Greeks, too, came in search of the marvels of this remote land, and especially in search of the fleece that Phrixus had given to Aeëtes. The voyage of the Argonauts, celebrated in poems and sculptures, was the journey that narrates the exploration by the Greek heroes of the eastern limits of the world, visited by the Sun and full of marvels, magic spells and terrors. The hero Jason had to overcome the obstacles of the fire-breathing bulls that defended the sown fields of the king, and of the dragon that guarded the fleece. And Medea became enamoured of Jason and saved him from all these dangers, although to do so she had to sacrifice her brother Apsyrtus. This is the idyll of the barbarian nation with the Greek nation, a forerunner of their entry into Hellenism.

The Orient around the Caucasus was full of mysteries and myths and parallels to those of that occidental land that the Sun reaches in its journey, then to cross the Ocean. Its limits are, on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar, the mountains of Avila and Calpe, crowned by the columns that indicate the end of the world, a parallel with the Caucasus. There they are, around Tartessos and its river, the final lands of Europe and of the human world.

Other Greek heroes also reached them: first Heracles, who defeated the monster Gerion, the three-headed giant whose cattle he stole. As we know, Heracles took the place of Atlas in his hard task of holding up the heavens. And he obtained the golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides, the nymphs of the Occident.

And then there is Odysseus, he who, with his ship gone off course on his return to Ithaca, explored the Mediterranean. He escaped from monsters like the Cyclops and the Sirens, from the dangerous nymphs, Calypso and Circe, who tried to detain him with their love. And he visited the underworld, Hades, at the limits of the earth, to ask the Soothsayer Tyresias how to return to his homeland.

This is a voyage parallel to that of the Argonauts to the Orient: the Greek hero brings back his booty and overcomes all the dangers of the distant lands full of people sometimes human, sometimes from beyond Humanity. The Occident, too, is a land of sorcerers and the dead, and also of paradises.

In the imagination, these journeys complete the Greeks' knowledge of the world of the Orient and the Occident. They are the mythical beginning, both demonic and beautiful, of a later fusion of the two with the world of the Greeks. Or, if you prefer, with these voyages commences a later Hellenization of the Orient and the Occident, their inclusion in the new human world of Europe. The Caucasus and Colchis at one end, Tartessos and the Columns of Hercules, at the other one, plus the lands and the sea between those two extreme points, would, with time, become the outline of the future Europe that later other peoples, beginning with the Romans, would extend.

Note that the Mediterranean and the Black Sea constitute the axis of this world, and there are the lands that limit it in the North, plus the islands. Africa and Asia are excluded; they are not Europe. But the total is surrounded by the Ocean; from it rises the Sun that travels through the heavens toward the Occident and on the return voyage navigates it. Georgia and Hispania are the two boundary markers of this journey.

So then, I repeat, within this framework of Europe, which could be completed with the voyages to the Casiterides, the tin-producing islands in the Atlantic, the limits were Colchis and the South of Hispania, call it *Tartessos*, or call it the *Baetica*. And the Greeks were the people who fostered the fusion of the ancient cultures with their own culture. This is the first phase of Hellenization; with time the others would come.

But here I would like to emphasize one point, which is that in the long process of the creation of Europe throughout different phases, the histories of the two lands of the eastern and western extremes have had much in common. And this is owing precisely to their isolated situation, far from the center, a situation at risk because of the presence around them of different, often inimical peoples. So there have been parallel situations. These two extremes found themselves forced to defend a European status that in other places was taken for granted, with no problems.

This is my topic, as is, also, that of the direct relations that these two extreme worlds that I have spoken of sometimes maintained. I am going to give a summary presentation of how the successive phases of the history of Europe have been experienced and defended by these two extreme ends of Oriental and Occidental Europe.

On the other hand, I am not going to go into themes referring to the oldest periods. For example, the proposed theories of an ancient kinship derived from the hypotheses of a relation between the Kartvelian languages (some say all of the Caucasian languages) with those of Iberia, a hypothesis that nowadays linguists find difficult to maintain, although it is certainly noteworthy that the term *Iberia* is found in both countries in ancient times. And there are also the unanswered questions regarding the relation between Kartvelian and ancient Indo-European as regards certain phonetic features and some morphological structures. Interesting subjects but ones that are beyond the scope of this paper.

Mine, today, is that of the struggle of our two countries to acquire the status of European countries and maintain it throughout the centuries, up to the present time. That more or less mythical community became human and historical within models that were to a great extent common ones: Greek, Latin, Christian and medieval models as well as later European ones. And this when those two ancient ends of Europe of which I am speaking were surrounded by warlike peoples representing other centers of power and other cultures. The main concern of these two extreme countries of Europe, aside from becoming Europeanized step by step, was to defend themselves from these external peoples.

Just think about it. The origin of the European peoples does not matter; their languages do not matter. The peoples of the Caucasus, those of the Kartvelian languages in the South, those of the North and others whose relation with these languages cannot be proven represented a mosaic of non-Indo-European languages. And alongside these was, and is, the Armenian people, which is Indo-European as is its language and which must have arrived there, let us say, around 2000 BC. Likewise, Hispania, in its turn, was occupied by non-Indo-European peoples and languages, beginning with the Iberians and the Basques and, as from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC more or less, by various Indo-European peoples: the Celts and other related peoples, among them the Lusitanians. Perhaps, as seems possible if one studies the toponymy, especially the names of rivers, older Indo-European peoples had already occupied part of the Peninsula.

What I want to point out is this: both peoples, in the East and in the West, belonging to various linguistic families, were equally influenced by cultures that came from the Orient. First, in Hispania, the influence of the Phoenicians; later, both in Hispania and on the shores of the Black Sea, the influence of the Greeks. The latter was the influence that in the long run carried more weight: indigenous and Phoenician names were Hellenized, Greek names were imposed; the Greeks brought models for ceramics, for

the organization of cities, for the entire cultural life, including the use of the Greek alphabet with its contribution to the formation of other new ones for various languages.

It is the Greek models, having spread, from Mycenaean times and later from the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, through various areas of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, which in turn had an influence in Italy on Etruscans and Romans, both as regards writing and on the culture in general. The ones who created the bases of the first historic phase of Europe, after the mythical one. There were also Greek models in Egypt and the North of Africa, but generally speaking, they remained outside the historical context of these regions, which never became part of Europe.

The Greeks, as is known, were an important cultural and even ethnic element in Colchis. On the Propontis and on the southern coast of the Black Sea, beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, the founding of the colonies of Miletus and Megara was begun, then others continued on the coast of what is now Bulgaria and Romania and also on the coast of Colchis. Sometimes they were real colonies, sometimes simple depots or places for occasional commercial intercourse. In Colchis, colonies or trading settlements like Naessus, Pityus, Dioscurias (modern Sokhumi), Phasis (modern Poti), Apsaros, Rizus (modern Rize, in Turkey) are mentioned. There is an abundance of Attic ceramics as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. And we see the Greek influence in the creation of kingdoms, like Kartli, which the ancients called Iberia, of cities, of the Georgian alphabet.

We know the dates in Hispania better. We know of the voyage of Coeleus of Samos, the Greek Columbus, to Hispania in 638 BC. We know of the founding of Massilia by the Phocaeans in 600 BC, and of the founding, beginning with Masalia, of Greek colonies in Spain. And of the Phocaeans' visit to Arganthonios (540 century BC). And I have personally<sup>3</sup> studied the Greek toponymy in Spain: sometimes they were Greek names given by mariners on board of the ships, like *Calpe* (jug/pitcher) given to the Peñón de Ifach and the rock of Gibraltar; at other times they were Hellenizations of Phoenician or Punic names like *Gádeira* or of indigenous names, like the name of Tartessos itself, with a Greek suffix. We have a multitude of data, some in Hecataeus, some in Avienus' *Periplus* and in others.

The world of the Spanish Mediterranean coast and of Andalusia was already known by Stesichorus in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, by Hecataeus, by Scylax's *Periplus* and others.

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<sup>3</sup> See my articles on this subject in *Emerita*, 68, 2000, 1-18 and in *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 74, 2000, 25-33.



In short, the first historical phase of the peoples of the Caucasus and those of Mediterranean Hispania was the phase in which Greek elements were beginning to appear. Peoples of various languages and cultures were entering a new world, the Greek world, a world later followed by the Roman one, which in turn was influenced by the Greek world. Now there were defensive wars against the Romans, which ended, in one case, Hispania, in conquest, in the other in various states of dependence on Rome. In any event, Roman culture was absorbed. Cultural influences prior to the Greek and Roman ones were forgotten.

To be sure, in Hispania there had been Phoenician cities that brought both Phoenician influences and oriental ones in general: later came the great empire of the Carthaginians with its capital in Cartago Nova, Cartagena. And the Celts and other neighboring peoples arrived. But it is into the Roman sphere that the Peninsula was incorporated, a sphere that at a certain point became Christian. And this did not change with the end of the empire and the great invasions: the Goths, especially, became romanized, and they created the great unity of Christian Hispania that was later expressed in the languages derived from Latin.

It was the Greek-Latin-Christian line that prevailed. There were differences, of course: the Greeks had arrived as merchants, establishing new cities and markets (Emporion, market, was the name of the first Greek colony in Spain, precisely the one where the Romans disembarked); the Romans, in contrast, arrived to make war against enemy or rebellious peoples.

First against the Carthaginians, when the Scipios disembarked in Emporion, Ampurias, in 218 BC; against the peoples of the meseta, later of the whole center and North of Spain: the rebellious Lusitanians, Celtiberians, Cantabrians and Asturians. For the Romans they were defensive wars. They argued that the Carthaginians had invaded Italy and that what they, the Romans, were doing was to sever their communications from Italy into Hispania. They argued that the peoples of the interior of Hispania, following their ancient customs, were invading the rich Romanized peoples of the plains and that they, the Romans, were defending them.

The capture of Cartago Nova in the year 209, of Numancia in 133, the end of the Cantabrian wars in 29 BC were the culminating moments. But these wars, which had begun as defensive actions against the enemies of Rome, ended with the conquest of all of Hispania. It was reduced first to a Roman province, to various provinces later, until the complete integration of Hispania into Rome in the various phases of its history, including the history of Christian Rome.

And the end was, as I have said, the conversion of all Hispania to a single nation under the Christian monarchy of the Goths. And with languages derived from Latin, among them Castilian, which would later become Spanish. Only one non-Latin language survived: the Basque language and this only in a small region.

As it happened, in the South of the Caucasus, in the kingdoms of Colchis, Iberia, and Albania, events occurred that were similar to a considerable extent and that brought the various peoples into the Roman cultural sphere after having had the influence of Greek culture. But there are also different situations.

As in Hispania, the peoples of the South of the Caucasus had known, more or less since the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the same date as for the Greeks, the invasions and superior power of various peoples of Asia, and this did not cease for many centuries, during which, meanwhile, the ancient Georgian kingdoms endured. I am referring to the Cimmerian and Scythian invasions, like those that the Greeks suffered from Asia, and to the tribute that for a time the kingdoms of the Caucasus paid to the Persian Achaemenides, who were also enemies of the Greeks, as we know.

Alexander did not reach the Caucasus, but more or less legendary accounts speak of a king of Mtskheta sent by him and defeated by Parnavazi, who had united Iberia-Kartli and Colchis for the first time, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

But the decisive moment was the confrontation of the peoples of the Southern Caucasus with the Romans. These reacted, as they did in Hispania, against rivals such as Armenia and the Kingdom of Pontus. And neighboring peoples such as those of the Caucasus were involved. In this context there is a long series of events impossible to discuss in detail here: the invasion by Pompey in 65 BC that of Canidius Crassus in 37 BC; later, part of the Caucasus, became a Roman protectorate, and Colchis was even a Roman province under the name of Lazicum. Other territories also maintained good relations with Rome, as witnessed by the visit of Pharasmanes II, King of Iberia, now known as Kartli, to Antoninus Pius in Rome. But later Kartli came under Persian dominance, until Prince Vakhtang achieved its independence in 502.

Without going into detail, the fact is that the Caucasus, its different kingdoms, fluctuated between the power of Rome, later that of Byzantium and of Persia. This is true of religion also: the religions of Mitra and Zoroaster battled against Christianity, accepted in Iberia as a state religion in 317 (dates and details vary), introduced by King Mirian and his wife Nana. Later, as I have said, came submission to Persia and then independence.

A hard struggle that of the different Caucasian kingdoms to maintain their independence, losing it at times, restoring it at others, sometimes supported by Byzantium, which at other times assaulted it. Then towards the end of Antiquity, Rome retreated before the Persian Sassanides, losing Armenia. Actually, it was not until very late that Georgia was unified as an independent state by Bagrat at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. And then came the invasion of the Seljuk Turks, who in 1071, at Manzikert, on the Euphrates, defeated the Christian armies of Byzantium, Armenia and Georgia: almost all of Anatolia, almost all of the Caucasus were lost.

But at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, King David IV, of the same Bagrationi family, regained a united Georgia after terrible battles. He no longer paid tribute to the Seljuks and created one single state with a church dependent on it.

Note the similarities and differences with Hispania. The adherence to Rome was, in the Caucasus, unstable, in perpetual strife against the Sassanide and Safavide Persians, with the intervention of various kingdoms that often changed their alliances. Internal Union came later than in Spain, in the reign of Tamar and her successors, from 1184 to 1213, when Georgia expanded.

In Hispania union had an early date, under the Visigothic monarchy as I have said. But the invasion of the country in 711 by the Muslims reduced it to small isolated kingdoms in the mountains of the North: the new unity of Spain did not come until 1492 with the capture of Granada. But by the 13<sup>th</sup> century there were already powerful Christian kingdoms, like Leon, Castile and Aragon, that were gradually unified.

The basic situation was the same: Christian peoples and kingdoms of Greco-Latin tradition that defended themselves bravely against foreign cultures. Georgia was attacked, first by Zoroastrian Persians, then by the Islamized Shiite Persians, then by the Seljuk Turks, later by the Mongols, from 1220 until the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century when George the Brilliant stopped paying them tribute. Even later came the war with the Ottoman Turks and then came the Russian occupation.

A nation united and Christian, which in Spain had already existed in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, here was much slower in coming, and again and again this nation was overpowered or fragmented by the invasion of infidels, by Byzantines and Russians also. This is a minimal summary.

Thus as regards Georgia. But Hispania, after its early unification, suffered its own terrible problem, as I have said: the Muslim domination over almost eight centuries. It was finally liberated by the Catholic Monarchs.

In the Caucasus there were infinite alternatives, as said, before the definitive unification, and there are still, today, Muslim Nations.

Another difference is the preservation in Georgia of non-Romance languages in contrast to the predominance in Hispania of languages derived from Latin; only the Basque language is not Indo-European. But central to both places was the preservation of their basic cultural traditions: of a Greco-Roman-Christian culture that defended itself from various foreign aggressions, basically Muslim from a certain time on.

In the midst of these conflicts, in our nations, the two extreme ends of Europe, literatures were created that cultivated various literary genres: from the *chansons de geste* to the Christian writings on saints and martyrs, and to historical, moral and novelesque writings, and also to the lyric. And great edifices were built - churches, cathedrals and convents that still adorn our towns and countryside in Spain and Georgia. Thus at the ends of Europe were maintained the same values, and new cultural creations appeared, the fruit of common traditions and as well as of independent innovations.

In Georgia we find the great churches of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in Svanetia, more than 2000 meters high. In Kutaisi, Bagrat III built the most important cathedral, and then there are the monuments of Gelati and those of Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Iberia. And there is the female monastery of Samtavro, with the tomb of King Mirian and his wife Nana. It would be impossible to attempt a complete catalog.

I was considering all this one day when I was visiting Ani in what is now Turkey, that phantom city, part Byzantine, part Armenian part Georgian. Today it is a field of ruins surrounded by walls and full of the remains of religious and military structures. From the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century it was an Armenian capital, then, threatened by the Seljuks, it fell into the hands of the Byzantines, who had come as allies. But in 1064, it was taken by the Seljuks, who made it dependent on the Emir of Erzerum. Nevertheless, the kings of Georgia, time and again in the years of their splendour, conquered it and filled it with beautiful Georgian monuments.

With the arrival of the Mongols, beginning in 1220, Ani was left abandoned, a lovely reminder of the courage of the Georgian peoples and of their capacity as builders and artists.

Remember: by these times, in the Orient, the Seljuks defeated the Christian armies - Byzantines, Armenians, Georgians - at Manzikert, then conquered Anatolia, finally Constantinople. Contrariwise, in the West, the Almoravids and Almohads were defeated in Spain, Toledo and Sevilla were reconquered, then, finally, Granada.

I am not going to continue with this parallel account of the two histories. Spain, at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, undertook the new route of the discoveries and conquests in America and of the political and religious struggles in Europe. But it is perfectly clear that the Turkish problem remained an important one for Spain in the Mediterranean. The battle of Lepanto in 1570 is the best known moment of this conflict.

Once Byzantium had fallen, Georgia was left as an isolated Christian enclave and once again it had to go through centuries of infinite conflicts with its Persian and Turkish neighbors and of internal strife. I will say something about this when I speak of contacts of Georgian kings with the kings of Spain in an appeal for help. As is known, later Georgia was to turn for help to its Russian neighbors, who were also Christian, coming, as they did, from the same Byzantine and Christian cultural roots. Under Catherine II there was a Russo-Georgian treaty in which the Russians granted this help. But Czar Paul I decreed the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian empire.

So Georgia, as is known, was subjugated to Russia, first to the czars, later for many years, after a brief parenthesis from 1918 to 1921, to the Communists. It did not achieve independence until the fall of the latter, in 1990. It is a story that ended well, but it is too long, too distressing. I only mention it to emphasize the central fact that Georgia, in the good times and in the bad ones, maintained its position as the eastern marker of the European border. As it is even today. Spain, for its part, after all sorts of troubles and wars, has had a narrow escape from Communism. As Georgia, it has remained a part of the same Europe.

It was necessary to learn that help is not always given gratis, as can be seen in the case of Ani, which I have described. In the history of Spain there have also been cases like this, for example the French invasion of 1808. But this takes me too far from my topic.

I want to close this paper by relating briefly two episodes corresponding to two moments in which these two countries, Spain and Georgia, separated in space but joined by coordinates that proceed from common, historical roots, renewed at various times, had, exceptionally, a direct relation within this common history.

The first episode. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the translation from Latin into Spanish of the *Barlaam and Josafat*, the Christianized version of the life of Buddha, was undertaken.

There is a well-known line of transmission of literary texts that have come to the West from India via Iranian translations in Pehlvi, later of others into Arabic, of versions of the latter, and finally into Latin and Cas-

tilian, or directly into Castilian. The *Calila e Dimna*, the last text derived from the Indian *Pañcatantra*, is a good example. But there is also a variant of this line in which the Indian source, without doubt via a Pehlvi version, reached Georgia, and from there, via Greek, it reached Latin and Castilian in the West. This is the case of the *Barlaam and Josafat*, I have just mentioned (which does not mean that there is no other route: there already existed an Arabic version in the 8<sup>th</sup> century).

There is nothing strange about this. Indian literature, especially the novelesque-moralistic kind, was read in Sassanide Persia and then, sometimes via an intermediate Syriac version, in the Arabic Damascus of the Ummayyads, and later in the Arabic Bagdad of the Abbasids. Pehlvi, then at times Syriac, but above all Arabic are the line by which this literature was transmitted either to Latin, the culture language of all of Europe (in the case of the *Barlaam* already in 1048<sup>4</sup>), or to Castilian, the western language with which the Arabs had the closest contact.

In Spain, the two lines that begin with Indian and Pehlvi, met, one of them through Arabic and the other through European Latin, frequently, in both cases, via a Greek intermediary. But in our case, before the Greek one there was a Georgian translation.

In effect, there is a long series of Greek versions of the *Barlaam* in libraries of Athos, the Greek islands, Venice, the South of Italy, Paris<sup>5</sup>. And Georgia provided the model for all of them. And a Latin version of the Greek was, in turn, the source of the Castilian version.

Spain and Georgia were in contact, frequently warlike but also cultural, with the non-European peoples of which I have spoken, especially Persian and Arab. And this is the crux of the matter. Here is the shortcut in the case we are studying: from Georgian to Greek, from Greek to Latin and then to Castilian. At other times the Greek was translated into Arabic and from Arabic into Castilian.

But to return to the *Barlaam*, it is, as I have pointed out, a Christianized version of the Indian legend of Buddha: its essential moments are well known, namely, the miraculous birth of the prince, his isolation from the world in the palace, his feeling of repulsion the day after the great festivities in the palace, the flight, the encounter with the sick man, the old man

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<sup>4</sup> This is the oldest Latin translation that is known in a manuscript from Naples, VIII B 10 of the National Library. See in Erytheia, 22, 2001, 3447, regarding Martínez Gázquez's edition of this manuscript.

<sup>5</sup> See Bádenas P., Erytheia, 17, 1996, 139-177. Bádenas has translated this Greek text into modern Spanish (Madrid, Siruela 1993).

and the corpse, the meditation, the temptations, the illumination under the tree, the preaching, the death.

But it was a novelized version, the so-called *Lalitavistara*, that was transmitted to numerous Greek manuscripts that give us the Christianized version: the pagan father, the augury that the child (Josafat in this version) would be converted to Christianity, his flight from the palace, his conversion at the hands of the hermit Barlaam, his discourse against the world, his life in the desert, the temptations, his death.

But how did this version come into Greek? In one of the Greek manuscripts, the Marcianus Greek VII 26, Euthymius the Iberian is credited with translating a Georgian text into Greek. The Georgian intermediary is not surprising: located on Athos was the Monastery of the Georgian Iberians, founded in 980 AD, with a vast library with manuscripts from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Iberia and Persia were bordering lands and the relations between Georgia and Byzantium were many and close. And Byzantium in turn maintained a close relation with Italy, from which comes the Latin version, later Castilianized.

Only one detail remains to close the circle: where the Christian element entered the legend. Without doubt it was not in Georgia but earlier, in Persia. It has been suggested that this step was taken within the Manichaean sect, which had such extensive diffusion there. So we might say that in the Christian circles of Persia the Indian legend was probably Christianized and from there entered the Greek and Latin world, Spain included.

This is the first example that I wanted to present of how, in spite of everything, there was a channel of communication that reached Spain from Georgia by way of Greek. The second example, and with this I will finish, consists of the appeals for help that Georgia addressed to the Kings of Spain. To a greater or lesser extent, we know of these appeals and the replies thanks to the discovery, by Don José Manuel Floristán, in the archives of Simancas, of a copious correspondence relating to this matter<sup>6</sup>.

A minimum of context is necessary here. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 and of Trebizond in 1461 had left Georgia practically in the hands of Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Taking advantage of their rivalry, the Georgians at times achieved partial reconquests, with the assistance of one side or the other. But the peace between the two empires, in 1555, implied the apportionment of Georgia between the two, although the Turks had

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<sup>6</sup> See Floristán J. G., Un documento griego en cifra en el archivo de Simancas, *EClás*, 27, 1985, 299-305; Gil L., Floristán J. M., Cartas de los reyes georgianos Simeón I de Kartli a Felipe II y Timuras I de Kakheti a Felipe IV, *EClás*, 27, 1985, 307-345; Gil L., Fuentes para la Historia de Georgia en bibliotecas y archivos españoles, Madrid, Editorial Complutense 1993.

the better share. The Georgians, on the other hand, were divided: there was the kingdom of Kartli, the old Iberia; the kingdom of Kakheti, bordering on Persia; the kingdom of Imereti, and others. Kakheti accepted the rule of the Persians and, after a long struggle, Kartli did the same.

But at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century almost all of Georgia was dominated by the Turks. Kartli was the kingdom that most energetically defended its independence. Later, Teimuraz of Kakheti also turned to the king of Spain.

It was an impossible situation. And the Georgian kingdoms began to seek the help of Spain, the nation that had defeated and expelled the Muslim, the most powerful nation in all Christendom. 'Oh Philip, most divine of the princes', wrote Simeon I of Kartli to Philip II: *W çn£ktwn qeiÒtate F...lippe*. For the letters are in Greek. Actually, the Georgians followed the model of the archbishops and Greek nobles who wrote to the Pope and to the king of Spain asking for help.

Summarizing very briefly, in 1495 an embassy sent by Constantine II to the Catholic Monarchs arrived in Granada, complaining of their isolation and requesting an alliance against the Turks to liberate Constantinople. The reply of our Monarchs is not explicit: that the bearers of the reply will respond to the petitions. There is another petition to Charles V, probably from Luarsab I of Kartli, in 1548, urging him to undertake the 'Levant enterprise'. The reply: that it will be considered that the king should wait.

There is, especially, the letter from the son of Luarsab, Simeon I of Kartli, to Philip II, in 1596, in which he requests assistance for the coalition against the Turks, which was formed by him, Alexander of Kakheti and Abbas of Persia. The reply consisted of good words, with no firm commitment.

Later, in 1628, Philip IV replied to a similar petition from King Teimuraz of Kakheti: 'I, for my part, will help and will be present in the form explained by the person whom I will send there shortly.'

To summarize: Spain, in spite of the victory at Lepanto in 1570, was not in any condition to fight beside the Georgians against the Turk. It had its own battles to fight with the Turkish galleys in the Mediterranean.

At least Georgia and Spain knew that they were on the same side that they were fighting for the same cause. But Spain, which was concentrating its efforts in a Europe for the most part hostile, had to accept the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. In its turn, Georgia, in the long run and much later, had to accept the Russian Protectorate, and then occupation, for want of any other possibility. Almost three centuries were to pass until the two countries reencountered each other, in freedom, within Europe. Europe, which they had defended for so long and to which they had never stopped belonging.