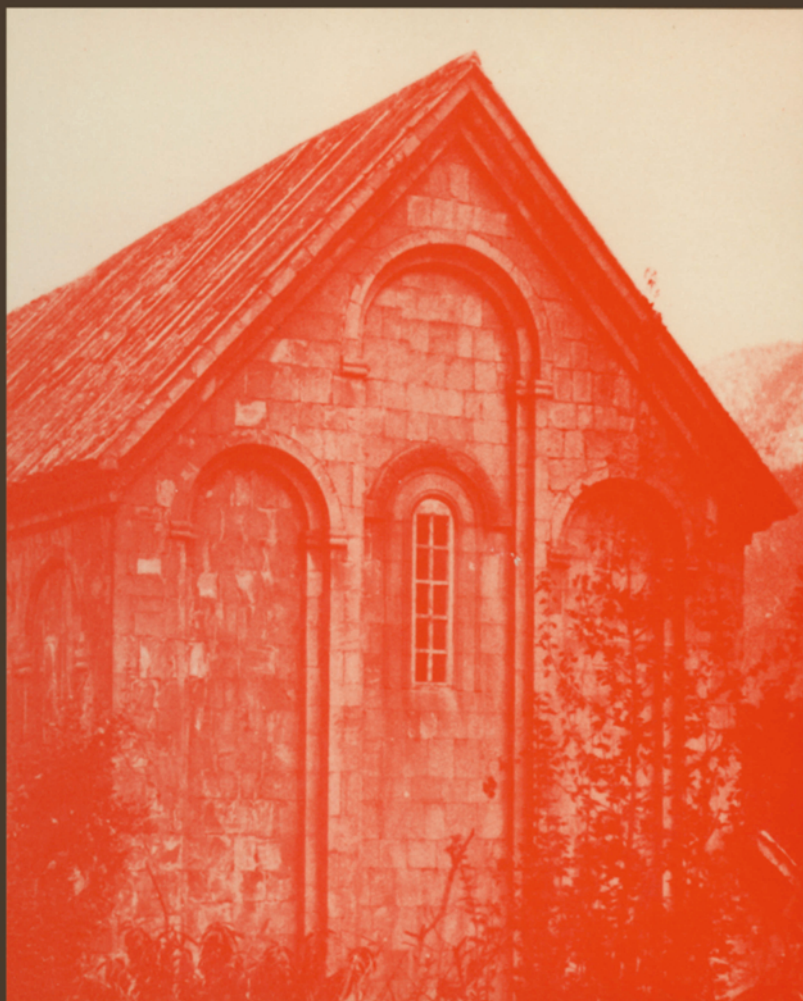


Eastern Turkey: an Architectural and Archaeological Survey

Vol. II

T.A. Sinclair

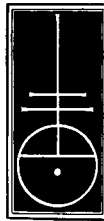


EASTERN TURKEY: AN ARCHITECTURAL
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Vol. II

T. A. SINCLAIR



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III

TAO-KLARDJETI: THE GEORGIAN CHURCHES

The monuments of this beautiful area are virtually all Georgian. Tao-Klardjeti, designated by the names of its two most important principalities, was known in the Middle Ages as one of Georgia's vital regions. Today Georgia consists only in the Soviet republic of that name.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, when many of the churches of Tao-Klardjeti were built, those Georgian principalities whose former territory now lies in Turkey were the only part of Georgia free of Arab domination. The principalities in present-day Soviet territory were ruled either by Abbasid governors appointed from Baghdad or else by local Arab emirs. The freedom of the independent principalities had been gained in the late eighth and early ninth century. In the following two centuries they recovered from the poverty and chaos left by taxation and repression under Arab rule; by the end of the period they were united under one man (David the Great, 961–1000). These years were not, admittedly, the golden age of Georgian medieval history. That was the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, when all of Georgia was united, and the Georgians dominated their Muslim neighbours. But the conditions for the golden age were created much earlier, in the ninth and tenth centuries. The family to which, in this period, the rulers of Tao-Klardjeti's principalities belonged, became the royal dynasty of Georgia's most powerful years. The dynasty continued until the annexation of Georgia by the Russian Empire in 1801.

The former region of Tao-Klardjeti is defined by the Pontic mountains on the west, on the south by the Erzurum plains, and on the east by the plains around Kars. It is mountainous and enclosed; mountain escarpments form sectors of its borders with the plains to its east and south. The valleys are generally deep and steep-sided; yet they are well-watered, and greenery often fills the valley floor. Despite the narrowness of its valleys, the area retains the large scale of Turkish landscape.

The churches of the region are generally set in conspicuous positions in or near present-day villages. Many of these villages are unusually populous and extensive. Being well-watered, the area is for the most part prosperous. It is peaceful and relaxed. The inhabitants are welcoming and respectful.

Village life is disciplined. The area is safe, and probably the safest in Turkey. The way of life and behaviour of the inhabitants are typical of rural Turkey. Yet the people are mostly Georgian by descent; in fact certain of the less accessible villages (some round Artvin and Barhal, some round Şavşat, and one district (“mahalle”) of Şavşat itself) are still Georgian-speaking.

In the Georgian style of church-building the most arresting features are height and simplicity. On the exterior of a church, tall facades are decorated by plain blind arches. On and above doors and windows there is excellent carving, but while its patterns are intricate, the effect is restrained. Generally, there is a tall windowed “drum” rising from the roof, carrying a pointed cap, inside which is a dome. In the three best churches (Öşk Vank, İşhan and Haho) it is the drum where decoration is at its most generous. The interiors, which were once brightly frescoed, are again tall and simple. The designs of the five best-preserved (Öşk Vank, Haho, İşhan, Dörtkilise, Barhal) make their interiors some of the most directly reminiscent of Europe in all the churches of Turkey.

Tao was the whole south part of the region. The finest churches lie in the west part of Tao, near the valleys of the Tortum Çay and Çoruh. Here, despite the green valley floors, the rock of the valley sides is always striking for its shape and colour. It descends chaotically in a series of gashed cliffs and broken slopes; here and there are pinnacles and toothed outlines; disorderly strata bend through the rock; in all its shapes red, purple, orange and brown are infused, streaked and dabbed. Where there are no colours the strata generally dominate the white cliff faces, though some of the taller slopes are a smooth white. The treed floor of a valley also contains green fields or orchards if there is space.

The village houses are large and wooden and shaped like Alpine chalets. They are balconied, and the balcony sometimes continues all round the house; or else part of the upper storey may be left without sides, as a store for hay and for a pleasant place to sit in the summer. Normally, the area occupied by the village is thickly grown with trees, and the houses spread through these, appearing among them.

The best and largest church is Öşk Vank. It is set at the head of a valley leading into that of the Tortum Çay. The cap over its dome rises above the trees of the village. Houses climb the nearest slopes; above again are cliffs and mountains. It is a monastery church and was built by David the Great, the powerful prince under whom the region reached the height of its importance (961 – 1000).

The village of İşhan is a sloping plane of greenery set among white slopes high above the Tortum and Oltu Çay valleys. The church was a cathedral (rebuilt in the ninth century and again in 1032). Its carving, a successful mixture of geometric and leaf patterns, is among the best in Georgian architecture.

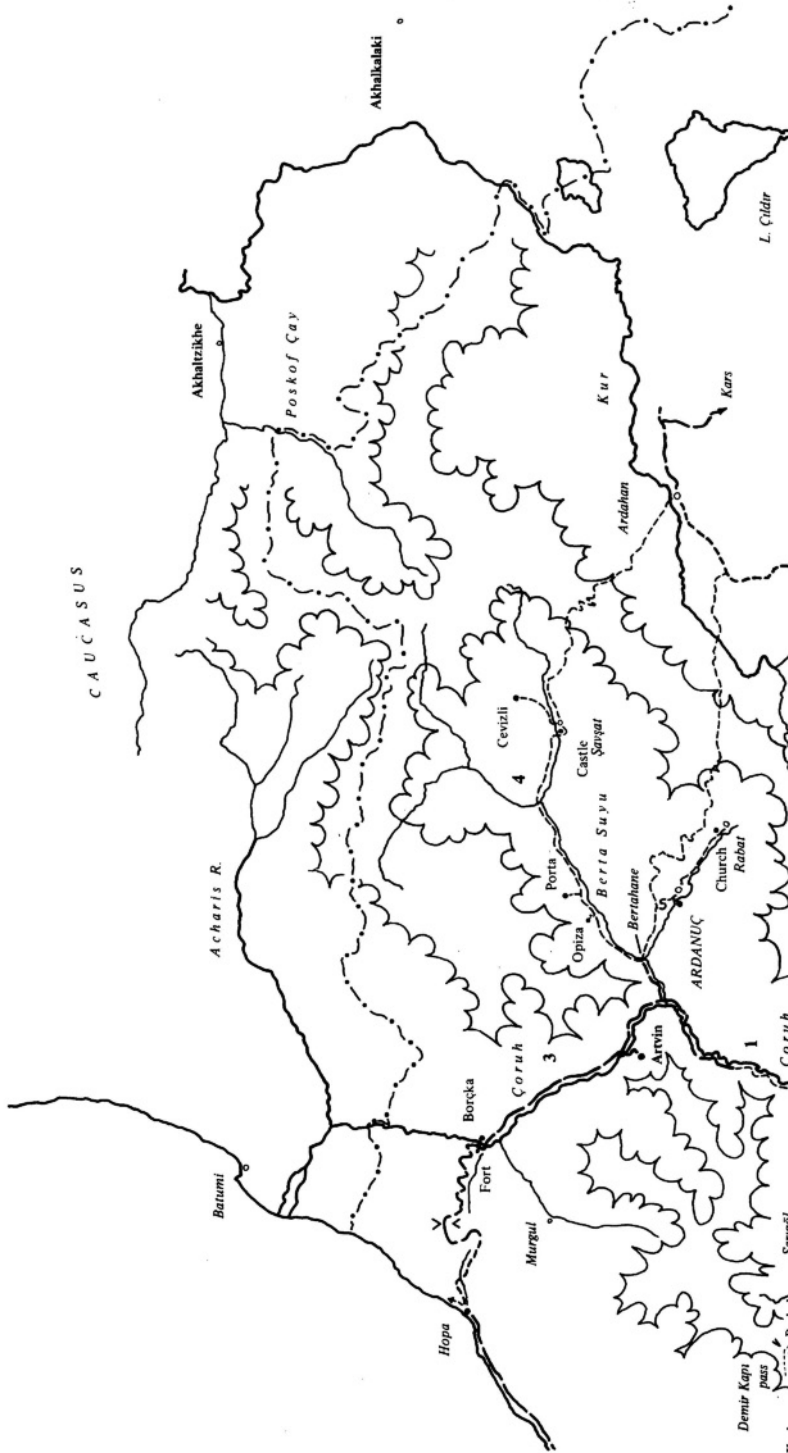
The church at Haho is in a side valley further up the Tortum Çay from

Öşk Vank. It also was built by David the Great. Here the valley is narrow and has steep slopes; the village spreads in a line up and down the valley from the church. Elsewhere the valley floor is covered in orchards and meadows. The church is now a mosque and well preserved.

North of the Tortum Çay valley, in an area including Artvin and Şavşat and stretching to the eastern border of the whole region, the covering of green is spread wider, and some of the slopes are wooded. The area is subject to Black Sea weather, which can penetrate over the hills at the north-east end of the Pontic mountains. The land rises to the east, and the eastern border of the region here is the line of the highest ridges. The two passes over these reach more than 8,000 feet. East again the land drops quickly to the small plain of Ardahan and an open and undulating landscape. In the lower parts of this area (the Çoruh valley particularly) the valleys are still steep, but they are grassed, and patches of wood (mixed deciduous and pine) appear. Higher up, there are fields, meadows on the steeper mountain sides, and green passes above the three line. Here and there, rock crests and bare grey and white slopes are seen.

There is no sudden divide between the landscape of this district and that of western Tao (the Tortum Çay and Çoruh south of their confluence). Instead, a border of mixed landscape separates the two. In the intermediate district lies Ardanuç, the centre of Klardjeti and the ancient capital both of the whole region and of a wider province known as Upper Iberia. As a capital Ardanuç was founded in the early ninth century by Ashot, called the Great, who established the first independent state in a Georgia otherwise occupied by Arab troops. The old town is situated above a gorge, and looks out over a wide valley to eroded slopes and green meadows. Its citadel is a table surrounded by precipices, which rises above the town again.

The remaining district is that of Oltu and Penek. The eastern part of Tao, it is about the same height as the Tortum valley, but separated from it by a high range. The two most important valleys (those of Oltu and Penek) are surprisingly flat and wide. The hills rising off them are bare and steep, but generally more rounded than in the Tortum Çay region. The colours, ranging to blues and pinks, are even more striking, but at the same time generally less hot. Elsewhere, the side valleys are usually steep and narrow. Between the valleys the country is still bare and irregular. Apart from the lowest stretch of the Oltu Çay, the houses of this district are low and flat-roofed; the materials are mostly stone and mud.



CAUCASUS

Akhalkikhe

Poskof Çay

Akhalkalaki

Kars

Ardahan

Cevizli

Castle Şarqat

Beria Suyu

Bertahane

Church Rabat

ARDANUÇ

Arvin

Acharis R.

Batumi

Hopa

Port

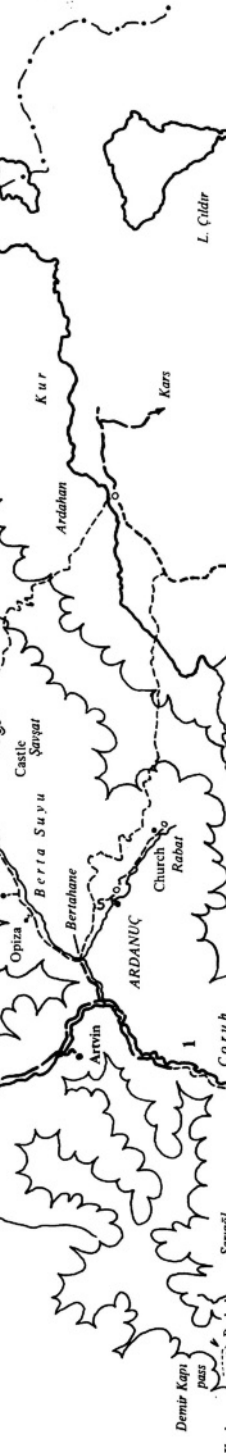
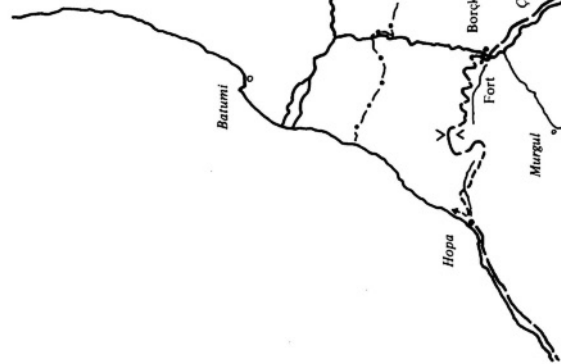
Borçka

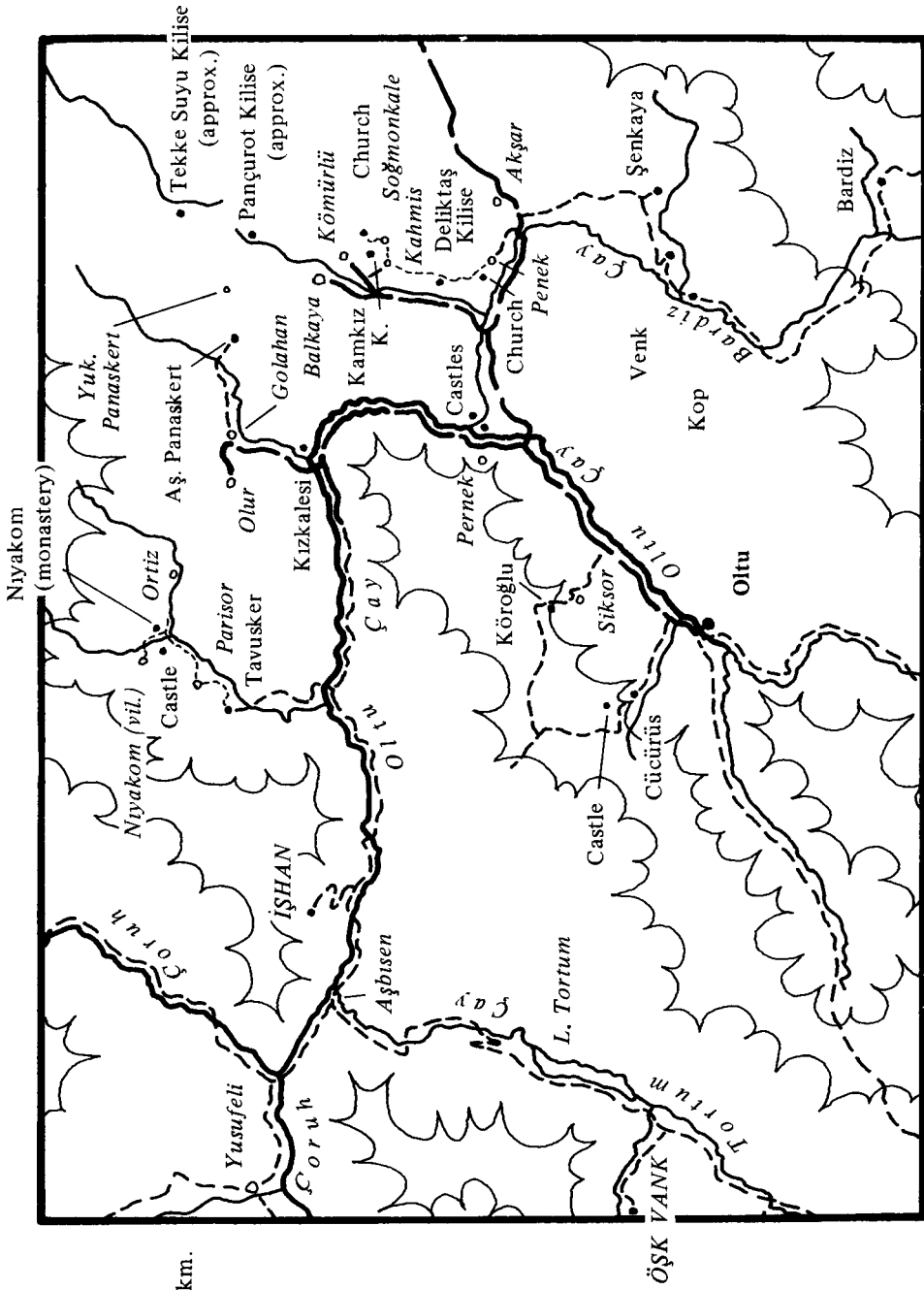
Murgul

Coruh

Demir Kapı pass

L. Çıldır





0 15 km.

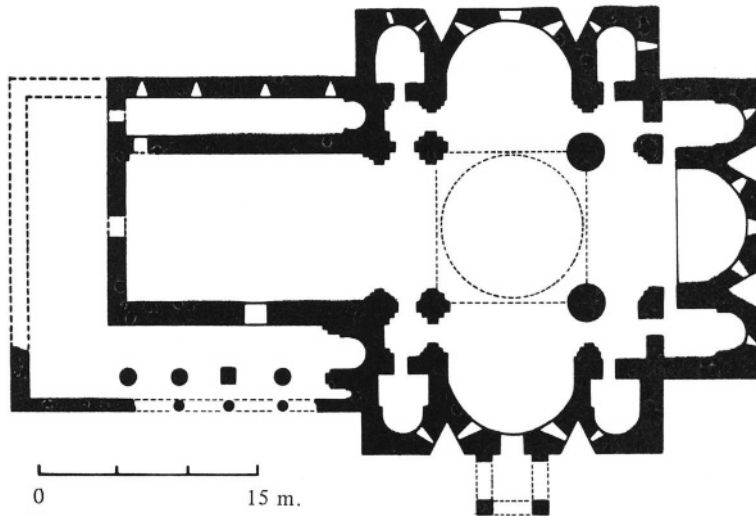
The Oltu Çay valley
 (detail of map for
 whole chapter on
 previous page)

**** Öşk Vank (Georg. ** "Oshki")***Large Georgian church, sculptures*

Erzurum-Artvin rd., 40 km. n. of Tortum, about 3 km. s. of L. Tortum, turn l. at bend in rd., by houses (n. of this point the Artvin rd. goes straight, in an avenue, for about 1 km.) Up a valley with a wide mouth, ** (b) rd. ¼ hr. drive, 2 hr. walk. Minibuses from Erzurum, Tortum Garaji.

A monastery church, begun in 963 by David and his brother Bagrat, who shared power with him between 961 and 966. The church was perhaps finished in 973, or else even later.

The church is cruciform; the dome is upheld by four thick pillars. The transepts and east arm each consist of an apse and apsed rooms on two storeys either side of the apse (Pls. 1, 2).



Öşk Vank. Simplified plan

On the south facade of the south transept, a fine group of sculptured figures, the archangels Michael (l.) and Gabriel (r.) and eagle holding doe in its talons. Figures of the donors (David on the r.), each holding a model of the church, on either side of Jesus (l.) and John the Baptist (r.), on south exterior wall of east arm. Mary, the missing figure, lies on the ground, often covered with hay. On the west facade, animal decoration (low relief) above mullioned window; above these, St. Simeon Stylites, shown here in unusually spare detail. He is on his pillar, praying. Inside the half-open gallery with the boldly zig-zagged roof-line, south of nave, the whole of each pillar is carved.

The west pillar, the most elaborate, has much figure carving, including, again, on the west face of shaft of column, Christ, the Virgin Mary (l.) and John the Baptist (r.). Beneath these, a kneeling figure is probably Grigol, the architect of the church. The figures of Christ, Mary and John the Baptist here are complemented, and a second five-figure group completed, by portraits of David (r.) and Bagrat (l.) carved as the capitals of the east-facing niche in the south-east pillar beneath the dome: the names of John the Baptist and Mary are inscribed right and left of the niche.

The pillars, artificially isolated from the walls by square insets, are the point of reference of the interior. Lighted by the two transept windows and the w. window, they would have been a contrast in tone with the dark transepts themselves. N. B. the carving at the pillars' bases.

Figure sculpture. *S. facade of s. transept.* Both archangels hold sceptres and, probably, orbs, in a memory, perhaps transmitted through lost sculptures, of Byzantine representations of these angels (Pl. 3). N. B. the bowman on the r. arch and the (?) lion l. of the n. transept window.

Donors, s. wall of e. arm. The three middle figures, surrounded by the donors, are a "Deesis", an intercession for the donors' souls. The donors' clothing is richly embroidered, and Byzantine court clothing seems to be meant (both donors held Byzantine court positions). On the other hand, the embroidery patterns are mostly Iranian.

Sculptured column in s. gallery. On capital, tetramorphs, i.e. conflation of four figures, on s., e. and n. faces; Michael and Gabriel on nw. face; other angels. On shaft, besides the Deesis and Grigol (w. face), the patron saints of medicine, Cosmas and Damian, nw. & sw. Above St. Cosmas on the n. face, St. Nino, the nun who converted Georgia to Christianity. Above the capital, on w. side, is St. Simeon. Since so many elements of the sculpture on the church are repeated here, the column is most likely to be intended both as a signature of the architect Grigol and as a summary and reminder of the church's decoration. The figures of John the Baptist, Mary and Christ have been transferred here, as it were, from the se. pillar under the dome. For them are substituted the inscriptions (Christ would have been alluded to in a painted inscription or representation), leaving a Deesis which is complete in all its elements but lacks some of the figures. Grigol in effect borrows some of the figures, and the donors' piety, to represent his own. A visitor has told me that the sculpture on the fine carved column in the s. vestibule has been severely damaged, if not obliterated, by a fire used to burn lime (at any rate the destruction was not deliberate). However the church now has a permanent warden ("bekçi"). (1985)

Bibliography. Takaishvili, AEYPG 45–67 (publ.); Djobadze, BZ 69 (1976), 39–62 (date of ch.); Winfield, JWCI 31 (1968), 38–57 (sculpt.); N. & M. Thierry, BK 8–9 (1960), 19–23 (condit.); Beridze, Tao-Kl. 297–9 (disc.; hist.).

** İřhan (Georg. "Iřkani")

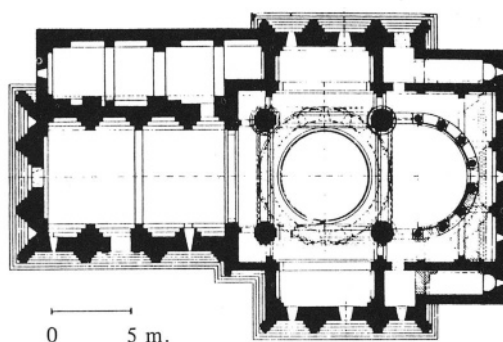
Georgian cathedral. Fine dimensions, very fine carving

(a) by road, 4–5 km. from Ařbisen towards Oltu, after a bridge crossing to r. bank of Oltu ay, tea-house and shop on r., and immediately after these, rd. on l.; about 6 km., climbing, *(b). Church is below fountains by road. (b) on foot, ½ hr. along Oltu rd. from Ařbisen, cross suspension bridge. Take path that starts up water-course to r. of white house, turns r. and up. Once out of the Oltu ay valley a flat place is crossed. Into

a small valley with pinnacles; from this, $\frac{1}{4}$ hr. up through fruit trees. 2 hrs. from bridge. From both ways up there are spectacular views of the mountains surrounding the Oltu Çay valley. (Minibuses from Yusufeli).

The white slopes surrounding the village rise to a wide semi-circle of precipitous rock. Behind the village is a white cliff: to the north-east is a mountain of brown and red. Opposite, the mountains on the far side of the Tortum and Oltu Çay appear in the distance.

The original church of the seventh century was built when the whole of Tao was Armenian. Like Penek, the church was round: a roofed ambulatory encircling an inner church of four lobes (including the apse), themselves surrounding the dome. The church was rebuilt in the ninth century, when it was made cruciform, and again in 1032, when the outer walls were re-faced. Only the apse, arcaded on the ground floor, is from the original church. There are rich displays of carving on the rebuilt exteriors of the south nave wall (Pl. 5), the south wall of the south transept, the east face and the drum. The west arm is still in use as a mosque.



İřhan, cathedral

General form. The apse has been converted to a rectangle by the ambulatory behind its pillars on the ground floor. The rooms, normally either side of the apse, have been put on one storey only and covered by sloping roofs, n. and s. of the ambulatory. That part of the ambulatory e. of the apse is also covered by a low-pitched roof. Corner rooms on the first floor of the e. arm cover the remaining area (defined by these three rooms) of the ambulatory. The corner rooms, with the tall first-floor window in the apse, help light the interior. The dome is carried on four pillars. The s. pair are at the ends of the apse arcade. The w. pair are artificially kept separate from the corners between transepts and nave by means of square recesses.

Carving on exterior. N.B. that this is designed as an ensemble, having unity also with the arcading. Chapel with good carving (windows) to s. of church (built 1006).

Paintings. *Interior of drum and dome.* Centre of *dome*, Exaltation of Cross: gemmed Greek cross, its arms occupying the points of the compass, and fixed in a ring which is held at points between the cross's arms by four angels. Dark blue background, which is sprinkled with stars. Just above the windows of the drum, again at points of compass, chariots, each with two animated charioteers, and drawn by pairs of winged horses. These are the

chariots in the eighth vision of Zaccharias, which, after being held in front of the Lord of all the Earth, headed in the directions of the four winds. Between the northerly chariot and the cross's circle, in the sky, is a personification of the Moon inside a disk; a girl on a bull or ox, reminiscent of representations of Europa. The disk of the Sun is also left.

Drum. Top of each blind arch, medallions of angels, hard to make out. The four un-windowed blind arches contained prophets, but were spoilt by the breaking of portholes through the drum's wall in the refurbishment of 1032 (hence the drum's paintings, and probably those of the dome, date from before 1032). In splayed intrados of the windows, busts of military saints, striped backgrounds.

Transepts. The busts which decorated the intrados of the four windows are badly damaged except for that likely to be of the Georgian queen Nino, who holds the models of a three-aisled basilica, probably because she is copied from the portrait at Dörtkilise. Over e. window of s. transept (opening into the beginning of the apsed chamber s. of the main apse), remains of Annunciation of news of Resurrection to Apostles: heads of 11 Apostles, and some of their clothes, preserved.

W. arm. Some fragments (saints, archangel, floral bands), all high up. (Church, 1981; frescoes, 1975).

Bibliography. Takaishvili, AEYPG 23–44 (publ.; N.B. ch. of “Sukhbechi”, = Soğuk Bahçe, to n., AEYPG 81); N. & M. Thierry, CahArch 24 (1975), 86–105 (repr. N. Thierry, Peintures) (paintings); Winfield, JWCI 31 (1968), 65–66 (fig. sculpt.); N. & M. Thierry, BK 8–9 (1960), 24–26 (condit.: disc.); Beridze, Tao-Kl. 289–91 (disc.).

* **Haho** (*Georg.* “*Khakhuli*”)
Interesting figure carving

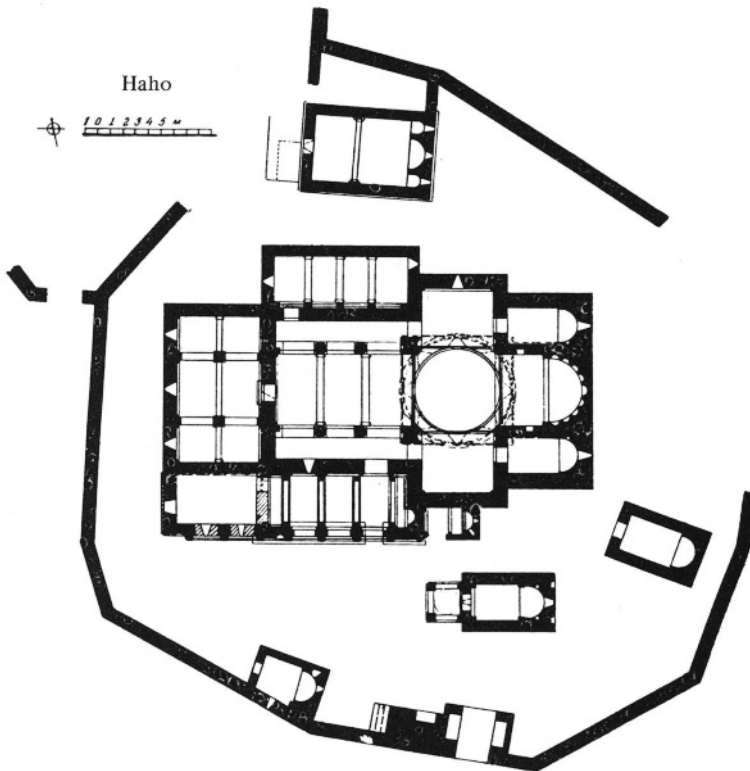
Erzurum-Artvin rd., 24 km from Tortum, turn l. over bridge with pointed arch (medieval). 7 km., 2 hr. walk, *(b) rd. A short way n. up the Tortum Çay valley, then into a broad side-valley. Just inside this is Pehlivan village. At its far end, l. fork. About 1½ km after, turn r. rather than go straight on. From Pehlivan you go along flat valley floor, by orchards and vivid green meadows. Church is ½ km. beyond the “belediye” (municipality) building, on r., set back from road. Now a mosque, normally kept locked: but will be opened if you ask. Rudimentary hotel at Haho. Minibuses from Erzurum, Tortum Garajı.

Founded by David the Great, some time between 961 and 1000. The church belonged to the most famous of the monasteries of Tao-Klardjeti, an important literary centre from the eleventh to the thirteenth century (Pl. 8). The church is entered by a long gallery south of the nave. By the door between this and the church proper are crude but interesting reliefs of (l.) St. George and the Dragon, a griffon, and a lion savaging a bull; and (r.) a saint (? St. Peter holding a key, or possibly Mary), Jonah spewed out by the whale, a cock, a lion. Above the door, the Exaltation of the Cross, which is carried by angels. Inside the church, remains of the frescoes on the apse, above the large fluting to the l. of the window. (R. to l.): John, Matthew, Modesty and Bartholomew. In the dome, a Greek cross (centre) and a peacock (Pl. 9).

Interior. A cruciform church, but unlike those of Öşk Vank and İshan the nave has one-

storey aisles either side. Except at the corners between nave and transepts, they are connected to the nave by arcades, each of three arches on two thick pillars. The nave lacks clerestory windows, and is badly lit. The weight of the dome, falling first on the corners at the joins between the four arms of the church, is taken by the walls (Pl. 9). At their e. ends the aisles are tunnels behind the corners formed by transepts and nave. *Figure sculpture, gallery s. of nave.* The gallery is an addition (12th or early 13th century) matched, n. of the nave, by another. The door frame was originally an exterior porch. The blocks, carved on low relief, to r. and l. of the door have been rearranged, but must be of the same date as the church. Their style is naive and simplified. It distorts physiology, partly to force the important features of the animals on to one surface. N. B. the rounded sculpture (eagle holding a doe: the doe is, however, flatly treated) on the exterior over the s. window of the s. transept (Pl. 10). There are two chapels, one to the n. of the church, one to the se., at whose e. end are two low decorated arches.

Bibliography. Takaishvili, AEYPG 68–75 (publ.); Winfield, JWCI 31 (1968), 58–65 (sculpt.); N. & M. Thierry, BK 8–9 (1960), 14–18 (condit.; paintings); Beridze, Tao-Kl. 292 (disc.).



**** Ardanuç**
Old walled town and citadel

Artvin-Yalnızçam Pass rd., 10 km. after Şavşat turn-off, turn r., after two hairpin bends: main rd. continues up left. 5 km. to new town of Ardanuç, *(a), steep. Road descends to bottom of valley of Ardanuç Çay. Old town is above river, on r., 1 km. before new town. Centre of town in long square, at whose near end is the Kürdevan Turistik Otel. Many minibuses, taxis, from Artvin finish at the terminal beyond the main square. To citadel from new town: from bridge on rd. from Artvin, just outside town, take track diagonally up steep slope of which old town is part. Cross upper part of old town, Ladders to top.

For most of the ninth and tenth centuries Ardanuç was the capital, not merely of Tao-Klardjeti, but of the Georgian region of Upper Iberia, i.e. land stretching from near Erzurum to the Black Sea, and east and north-east to L. Çıldır and the present Soviet border. At the time it was on a trade route from the Black Sea via Artvin and the Yalnızçam Pass to Kars and Persia; Ashot the Great made it his capital perhaps around 820.

The Ardanuç Çay reaches the cliffed valley going down towards Artvin by passing through a high and narrow gorge. At the gorge's entrance, where it leaves the wide valley leading to the Yalnızçam Pass, the river bends sharply leftwards. Above the bend of the river are the old town, on a sloping apron with one side cut off by the gorge, and the citadel, which is precipiced on all sides (Pl. 11). From the citadel one looks down a continuous precipice into the gorge, or up the broad valley above Ardanuç.

Remains of citadel. Mostly early ninth-century. From ladders, if you walk left, you get to a right-angle corner of the wall and the base of a tower: the main gate may have been between the tower and the (re-entrant) wall, with a forewall. Beyond this, behind the wall facing the old town, are a sunken chapel and other rooms, including a cistern. Then a large sloping rock surface, carved smooth, and artificial pond, for trapping rain. At far end, the tower on the r. of the large steps is at least post-11th century, although Georgian. Coming back the other side (away from the old town), on the r. side of a tower inside the wall, a secret entrance. The path leading from this on the outside, after turning back on itself, turns into a narrow ledge made to allow a person to sidle up the cliff but otherwise be invisible. After this the way down must be scrambled.

Remains of town. Traces of walls and a gate under the citadel, opposite the gorge. Walls also remain on the level rim of the city opposite the citadel and above the river. To get to the latter walls, go to the former. The walls turn back towards the citadel, up the edge overlooking the gorge. In this sector, on a salient of the cliff, the now low remains of the church founded by Ashot. Somewhere in the town, the domed türbe, in rough masonry, of Sefer and Yusuf Paşa (unknown; marked gravestones), and that of Ali Paşa (prob. late; mutassarif of Ardanuç sancak). (1977).

Bibliography. Marr., Dnev. Po. (incl. photographs); YA 2, pls. CXXXVI. 694 (from front), 695 (back); türbe, YA 2, 957. 2.

1. THE ERZURUM-ARTVİN ROAD

(218 km., 5 hrs.)

The road is the spine of the whole region, and runs continuously up narrow valleys, but the nature of these valleys is very diverse. The Tortum Çay valley to L. Tortum is generally flat-floored but very steep-sided. From L. Tortum it descends quickly in a narrow gorge. To well north of the confluence with the Çoruh (Georg. "Chorokhi") the narrow gorge continues; then the valley widens and its sides become richly vegetated, less steep and much higher. This is the scenery too as far as Borçka.

Various surfaces, some tarmac: see below. Buses, Erzurum-Artvin.

2. THE SOUTH-WEST: WESTERN TAO

In the tenth century monastery building was concentrated in this, the district of the Tortum Çay valley and that of the Middle Çoruh (above its confluence with the Tortum Çay). The Tortum Çay has many tributary valleys, often wider and greener than it. Further downstream, L. Tortum, despite the concealed dam at its n. end, is mysterious and wild; the water is a cold pale blue; the lake is deeply sunk between bare white slopes and cliffs. In fact the valleys around the two river-junctions (Tortum, Oltu, Çoruh) are particularly enclosed and steep. The rivers here run through a region of tall and rocky mountains.

The Çoruh valley above the Tortum Çay confluence is wider, despite its tall sides of steep rock, than the Tortum Çay valley; and its sides are broken by fewer tributary valleys. The valley of the Barhal Çay, to Sarıgöl and a little beyond, is steep and narrow. Barhal and Dörtkilise, being up against the Pontic mountains, are both among pine-covered slopes, whereas the trees in the rest of the district are poplars growing only along streams and rivers, or else the thick cover, mainly of fruit-trees, which spreads through each of the villages.

(a) THE ERZURUM-ARTVİN ROAD. TO THE ARDAHAN JUNCTION

After the Erzurum plain, steeply up to the Gürcü Boğaz ("Georgian Throat") pass. The approach and the pass itself are bleak and wide. On the long descent the road at first stays up, to avoid a deep cleft in the centre of the valley. In the Tortum valley itself, by the time the section immediately south of the lake is reached, the valley is flat and wide between clean, sculpted cliffs, which continues round into the Öşk valley. As it passes the south half of L. Tortum the road goes over tall, winding cliffs. On the far side there are pinnacles by the lake's edge. Further north the lake winds past successive white hills on either side. The valley then narrows and descends past continuous white cliffs. Trees now fill the valley floor and brush cliffs. At the approach to Aşbisen the valley is more open, but from Aşbisen the sides are again cliffs. Beyond the Yusufeli turn the gorge narrows and becomes bare scree. The narrowest section of all, in which solid cliffs come directly down to the river, is now bypassed by a tunnel. Afterwards, in a broader valley, villages appear, and the river meanders.

1. To Tortum, 59 km., 1½ hrs., *(a) for about 20 km., then *(b) (the pass). 2. From Tortum: mainly *(b). 4 km., first Oltu turn; 8 kms., Tortumkale turn (over long bridge on piers); 28 km., Üngüzek turn; at the end of the lake, turn on r. for the Tortum waterfalls

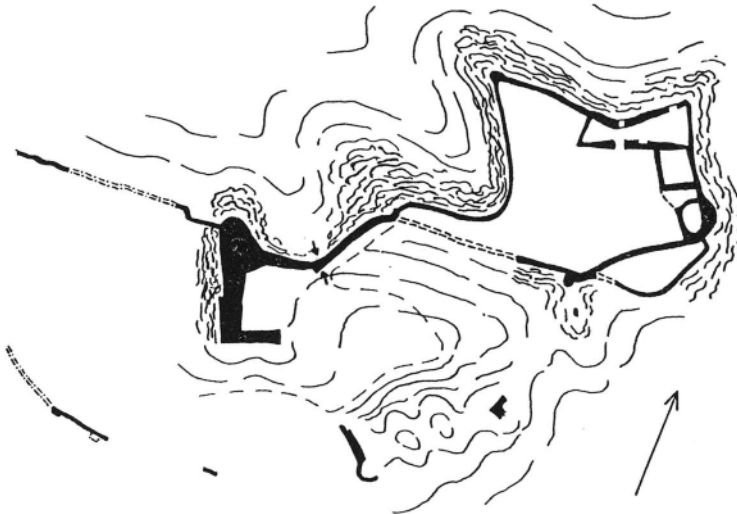
(1 km.); 77 km., Aşbisen, 2¾ hrs. 3. 8 km., Yusufeli turn; 52 km., Ardahan junction, 1½ hrs. ***(a).

+ Tortum Kale
Georgian

***(b)* rd., over a small pass, to village of Tortumkale, where the castle is. 6 km., 1 hr. walk. Buses from Erzurum, Tortum Garajı.

The valley runs at an acute angle of the Tortum Çay valley and joins the latter further down its course from the road junction for the castle. The castle is on a large isolated hill with a rocky mantle (Pl. 12). A dense belt of trees flows past it: there was once a large town here. The castle is dwarfed by the bare valley-sides.

The spine of the hill runs ne.-sw. The ne. end, the highest, is relatively level. The upper enclosure is on the ne. platform, with the lower enclosure to its sw. and s. A small last refuge stands at the upper enclosure's ne. corner (the highest). This enclosure's s. wall, which adjoined the outer enclosure, has fallen down at the w. end, where it made a hairpin with the n. wall (clear join visible). The n. wall e. of the lower enclosure is on the spine of the hill, and a large bastion (? Russian, 19th century) turns its nw. corner. The enclosure's sw. wall ran along the cliff-top on this side, but only fragments are left. A third enclosure came out westwards from the w. end, one wall starting out along the sharp rock ridge from the large bastion. The enclosure perhaps once contained part of the village, and, earlier, acted as a citadel for the town. One climbs past the bastion. (1978*) (In 1978 restoration of the castle was about to begin.)



Tortum Kale. Sketch

Nearby is **Üngüzek**, a Georgian castle. 4 km., village rd. (†)

Tortum-Oltu. 74 km., 2½ hrs. Mainly ******(b). Up wide valley (Narman rd.) which carries you up over exposed hillsides to a pass. After Narman, a descent with a long view of the plain-like valley of Oltu.

(b) THE MIDDLE ÇORUH: DÖRTKİLİSE AND BARHAL

From the Tortum Çay junction, Yusufeli is approached along a near vertical gorge of hard rock. (11 km., ******(a), difficult.) But the Çoruh valley gets wider as it turns left and the Barhal Çay valley joins it. Yusufeli is a small, sleepy town on the Barhal Çay: basic hotels. Taxis from Erzurum: minibuses from Artvin.

*** Dörtkilise**

Fine Georgian monastery church

In Yusufeli, take the road over the concrete bridge over the river, downstream end of town. 6 km., following Çoruh upstream on n. bank, village of Dörtkilise (Tekkale). About 1 km. before the village, an extraordinary steep rock, with castle and church (single nave, poss. paintings), sticks up. Walk by, starting at tea-house. Keep by the stream, climbing steadily, 2 hrs.

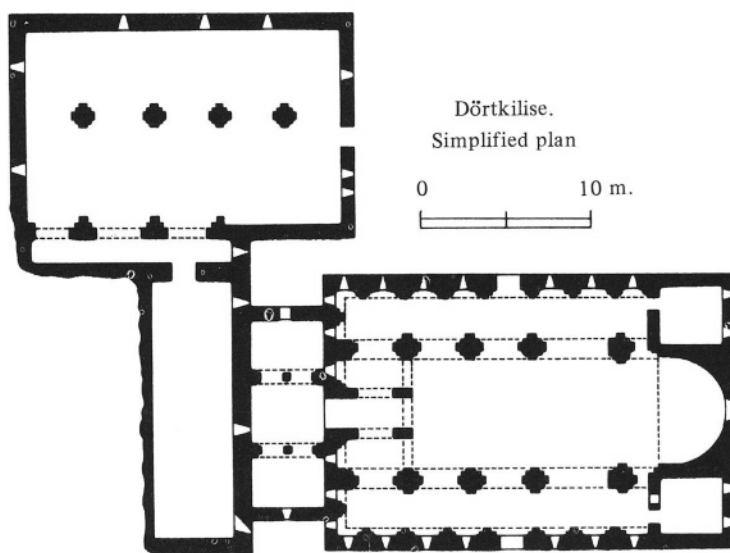
A lonely church, in a silent place: an enclosed valley with a green floor, a full stream and trees. The church floor is heaped with hay and guarded by thorns against bears. It is a tall basilica, of a design more or less exactly copied at Barhal: earlier than the reign of David the Great (961–1000), in which some alterations were made. The present exterior stone facing seems to have been added during the latter alterations: the original work is in stone and brick. There are worn frescoes in the tall apse.

To the west of the basilica, against the slope of the hill, is a rectangular building which was joined, in the time of David the Great, to the church's west wall by an added chamber (which served as a narthex): however there is no door directly from the chamber to the outer building, and the church's west door, originally as large as those in the north and south walls, was covered up. But the outer building can be reached from the large room, whose row of piers carried vaults, to the church's north-west. Either this room or the building to the west was no doubt a refectory. There is a small chapel to the south-east of the church.

The exterior, despite the small patterns carved above some of the windows, has a plain appearance. The repetition of the blind arches, well-proportioned to their facades, and the simplicity of this decoration, are nevertheless striking (Pl. 14). The interior is well-lighted owing to the clerestory windows.

The *frescoes* are in five registers, and may well belong in date with alterations under David the Great. 1. (Semidome of apse.) Originally a Christ in a mandorla; but only outlines and traces are left. 2. Probably lines of angels either side of a throne containing only the Cross. 3. (Preserved in outline only.) In centre, group consisting of the praying Virgin with two white-robed angels either side, and John the Baptist further to r. To either side of central group, Apostles holding books or scrolls. 4. (Contains upper part of window.) In intrados of window, Nana (?), the first Christian queen of Georgia after her conversion. She wears a cloak, and holds a model of the church. On the reveals, r.,

Moses receiving the Tablets of the Commandments from hand of God (top r.-h. corner): his face turned away from God. Mt. Sinai (steep, though its summit is rounded) fills the space left to the r. of Moses. Snake-like wriggles on the mountain represent God's descent in the form of fire. L. reveal, King Melchisedech of Jerusalem, badly preserved except for his face. He holds a board, no doubt in order to present the bread and wine of Abraham. Mountain (balancing Sinai) to l. The window is surrounded by, first, two prophets on each side, then, outside these, two fathers of the church, but of all these the identity of only two can be made out. Little is well preserved of David, to l. of window. Solomon, r., as a young man, raises his r. hand towards heaven. 5. A limited cycle of scenes leading up to and in Christ's life; bottom halves of scenes are destroyed. L., Annunciation to Mary, angel to l. Then Visitation (Elizabeth and Mary). Much-damaged Nativity. (Window.) Baptism (only haloes left). Transfiguration (outlines of Christ and two prophets). Crucifixion (ghost of Cross, outlines of Mary and John). The (?) Descent into Limbo, nearly effaced. Then the angel in front of Christ's empty tomb, appearing to the two Marys, and (below it) the anointers. The (?) tomb, an arcaded building, encroaches on the Apparition of Christ in the Garden of Olives, where only Christ is comparatively well-preserved. (1977)



*** Barhal**

Georgian church. Some good carving

The axial road of Yusufeli, parallel with the Barhal Çay valley, leads via Sarıgöl (22 km.) to Barhal (27 km. in all), along the same valley all the way. ******(b) rd., fine scenery. N. B. the castle on sharp rock, w. side of valley, about half-way to Sarıgöl. At Barhal, where the valley forks and rd. continues along l.-h. valley, broad path goes up r.-h. valley from shop: 10 mins. walk. Now a mosque and the key must be asked for.

In a spacious position well up a valley side, the church commands two valleys and looks across them to steep fir-covered slopes (Pl. 16). A monastery church, of almost exactly the same design as Dörtkilise. However it was built at least a little later than Dörtkilise, either in the 60's or in the early 70's of the 10th century. The monastery must have been completed not long before 973, or else in that year, because the so-called "Parhal Gospel", copied at that date in the monastery of Shatberdi (whose whereabouts are unknown: possibly Rabat near Ardanuç), mentions the monastery of Parhal as newly-built. The ungainly painted Georgian inscription on the south face states that David the Great founded the church. That would square with the remark in the "Parhal Gospel", though the inscription was obviously written after the building of the church. As at Dörtkilise, the now half-destroyed chamber that once covered the w. door is an addition.

Carving. In the *interior*, some of the details are more ornate than at Dörtkilise: the niches on the second pillars from the apse on each side, and the lower windows of the side-rooms by the apse. Also a peculiar arched niche in the apse, under the window. On the *exterior*, the amount and complexity of the carving are again greater than at Dörtkilise. Decoration is put in the blank part of the ground-level blind arches as well as on the window arches. N. B. the particularly rich pattern carving on the e. facade, eye-level, and the birds, 5th blind arch from s. end, n. side. The blind arches in the s. clerestory wall, previously undecorated, were given rough painted ornament (fans, crosses, etc.) when the inscription was painted. Despite its carved decoration the church is overall a plain building, appearing a little awkward because of the slope on which it is set. (1977)

Bibliography. (a) *Tortum Kale*. Hist.: Clavijo, tr. Le Strange, 334; Wakhousht, Description tr. Brosset, 125. *Üngüzek*. Nagel's Guide, 699. (b) *Dörtkilise*. Castle on rock: Takaishvili, AEYPG 87-88. Monastery: Takaishvili, AEYPG 82-88 (publ.); N. & M. Thierry, CahArch 24 (1975), 75-86 (paintings); Beridze, Tao-K1. 301-2 (disc.); N. & M. Thierry, BK 25 (1968), 62-4 (disc.). *Barhal*. Takaishvili, AEYPG 90-101 (publ.); Winfield, JWCI 31 (1968), 57-58 (fig. sculpt.); Beridze, Tao-K1. 304-5 (disc. of date); N. & M. Thierry, BK 25 (1968), 61-62 (disc.).

3. THE NORTH-WEST: ARTVİN AND THE ÇORUH VALLEY

From the Ardahan junction, the deep valley narrows and winds, broadening a little after Artvin. This section of the Çoruh, which is not much above sea-level, is separated from the Black Sea by a range of hills. The pass crossing them is only about 3,000 feet high.

(a) ARDAHAN JUNCTION TO BORÇKA

43 km. ¾ hr. Artvin turn (petrol stations), 16 km.

+ **Artvin.** Vilayet capital. (Hotel, bank.) Late mosques and churches. High above the bank of the Çoruh.

A steep 5 km. climb through the suburbs from the valley to the main street, which runs away from the direction of the river up to a small square. Hotel, l. side of main street. Travellers cheques in İş Bankası. Most buses (for Erzurum and for İstanbul via Hopa) and minibuses leave from the square car park half way up the main street, on r. Taxis for Borçka, from the first leg of the zig-zag rd. to the valley.

The town spreads over the undulations of a gently sloping ledge. Many of the houses

are large, timber-framed and white-plastered. There are one or two houses in an Ottoman Baroque style.

The large + *Çarşı Camii*, off main street to r., 18th (?) century. (? same as *Salihbey Camii*, in which case 1793). + *Balcıoğlu Camii*, ? late 18th century, in a suburb of the town well beyond and l. of the small square. + *Large church* (? Armenian), r. of a road beyond the small square. † *Small church* by the factory near the river and by the bridge upstream from that by the petrol stations. By Russian-style house. (Monuments: information of 1981). The half-ruined castle above the main bridge – by the petrol stations – is in a military area. (1978*)

+ **Borçka**. A town of unusually tall wooden houses spread out along the Çoruh. Small castle. The town was probably that known to Trapezuntine sources as “Bourzo”, which was in Trapezuntine hands for a period before 1364. Some interesting bridges, including one of the 19th century. One third Turkish, one third Georgian, one third Laz speakers.

Low grade hotels. The only entrance to the centre, which is on the river’s e. side, is by the German-built metal bridge. Taxis and minibuses from w. end of bridge, to Hopa and Artvin.

Fort. W. bank of Çoruh, on rocky eminence opposite petrol station by beginning of bridge. Roughly circular, and c. 30 m. in diameter. *Chapel* in e. side, ruined: semi-circular apse is part of defensive walls. Probably Trapezuntine, otherwise Georgian. (c. 1973).

(b) BORÇKA-HOPA

36 km., ***(a), 1½ hrs. Minibuses from Borçka, l. bank of Çoruh. An ascent through woods. The descent is at first steep, down an exposed mountain side with straggling pines. Afterwards through thick deciduous woods.

Bibliography. (a) *Artvin*. Hist.: Wakhousht, Description, tr. Brosset, 115. Monuments: information from staff of the Aya Sofya museum, Trabzon, 1981: Salihbey Camii, YA 2. 957. 1. *Borçka*. Hist.: BW 347–50. Fort, BW 351. Bridges, YA 2. 957. 3.

4. THE NORTH: ŞAVŞAT AND ARDANUÇ

(a) THE ŞAVŞAT DISTRICT

The ancient Shavsheti was the high north-eastern part of Tao-Klardjeti. Şavşat was its capital. Cevizli (Tbeti) was its cathedral. There was a group of monasteries (founded at the end of the eight and early ninth centuries) either side of the Berta Suyu (Imerhevi) which upstream is called the Şavşat Dere.

(i) The Artvin-Şavşat-Ardahan road

130 km., 5 hrs., Mainly *(b)

From Erzurum junction, up the wide valley of the Ardanuç Çay. The Berta Suyu valley, by contrast, is narrow, enclosed and rocky-sided from the start (Bertahane). However

trees of vivid green grow in clumps, or straggle. The valley gradually opens out, and the trees become soft-looking and crowded. As Şavşat is approached, the flat-bottomed valley is ended by the cliff of Şavşat castle. After Şavşat, climb a green-meadowed and pined valley to an area with an Alpine landscape: broad valleys shaped by rounded hills, a continuum of meadows and crops, and forests distributed here and there on the slopes. After a dip the road climbs steeply through thinning pines, to the flat pass. From it the entirely different country below can be seen. After the steep descent, the last few miles are across the plain of Ardahan.

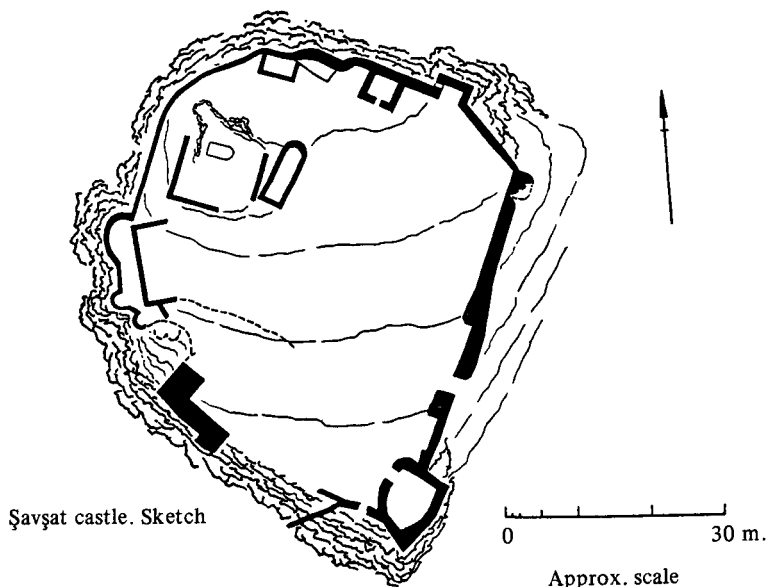
1. To Erzurum junction, 16 km. 2. To Bertahane (a few houses by the bridge), 9 km. (Dolishane turn, 8.5 km.). 3. From Bertahane: Opiza turn 11 km., Porta turn 14 km., Şavşat 52 km., 1½ hrs. ***(a) for 23 km., then mainly **(b). 4. To Ardahan, 53 km., perhaps 3 hrs., **(b). Steep up and down.

(ii) Şavşat and Cevizli

+ Şavşat Castle
Georgian. Powerful site

The road out of Şavşat towards Artvin turns to avoid the castle about 3 km. out of the centre of Şavşat, and zig-zags below it. Entrance above zig-zags, e. side.

All the sides of the site are steep, but inside the walls the ground slopes gently northwards. The n. and e. sides make a rough right angle, but on the w., where there are tall cliffs, the cliffs curve round gradually to the se. corner, where there is a tower. The Şavşat



Dere flows beneath the cliffs on the w., and the castle dominates the downstream valley.

The outer wall follows faithfully the top of the steep faces of the site. An inner wall (traces towards w.) cut off the domestic enclosure on the n., and no doubt the s. enclosure was an outer bailey which was entered first. The tower projecting inwards on the n. wall is perhaps meant as a last defence. The same may apply to the complex of rocks on the nw., inside but separate from the wall. Its wall survives on the w. and s., and the chapel to its e. was no doubt adjacent to its e. wall. Bulky additions have been made on the inside of the wall just e. of the nw. corner. Less bulky additions to the inside and outside, just n. of the entrance. The castle was probably in occupation till the early 19th century; in the last half century of this occupation it was no doubt used by local independent Georgian "begs". The walls, including the additions, may be late medieval (? 14th or 15th centuries).(1977*)

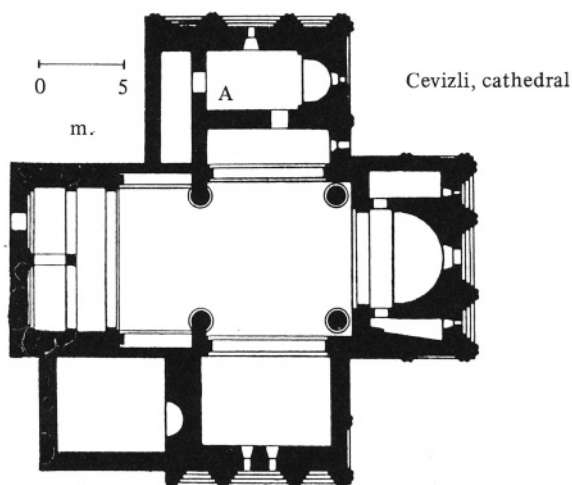
* Cevizli (Georg. "Tbeti")
Georgian cathedral, half-ruined. Fine carving

2 km. from the centre of Şavşat on Artvin rd., * rd. goes down steeply into Şavşat Dere valley (1 km.); r. up valley, 3 km., l. up side valley, 5 km. Minibuses from Şavşat.

First built in the early 10th century, but enlarged perhaps in the early or middle 11th, so that the facades belong to the rebuilding. The shape, after the enlargement, was that of a cross: the part of the nave west of the dome was longer than the transepts. In the north transept a chapel was built, in the enlargement, against the north end of the original north arm (which was probably rounded inside, rather than rectangular as now). Thus the north transept is much shorter than the south, though on the exterior the north and south arms are the same length. West of the dome the nave has now gone; the dome collapsed because a kaymakam had taken stone from it fifteen years earlier. The church was then a mosque, and the collapse was just after a wedding. The central east window and the double window of the south transept (Pl.17) in particular are very finely carved.

The dome was on pillars; the rectangular spaces for the two easterly pillars can be seen by the w. ends of the apse. The e. apse, side rooms (each on two storeys) and the rectangular spaces behind the pillars are neatly fitted into a single rectangular projection on the e. which, on the exterior, balances the dimensions of the transepts. The s. transept has two narrow rooms, one above the other, above its thick w. wall. The equivalent rooms on the n. transept, which extended further w. than the s. one, started from ground level, but are lost: the small chapel was originally reached from inside the church. A diagonal face (at A on the plan here), however, containing a tall niche (shell design at top) is now exposed, which means the first church was a tetraconch inside an octagonal shape (A). Note simpler character of decoration on original n. window of church, now s. side of chapel.

The blind arcading on the e. arm's face is a further addition (it cramps and to a small extent covers the decorated hood above the central window): perhaps late 12th or early 13th century. A small area of the *apse frescoes* (n. wall and semi-dome above) has survived the deliberate blackening: the painting may be contemporary with the changes to the e. facade. The apse composition was an enthroned Christ in majesty, surrounded by arch-angels etc. Part of the lower part of Christ's body; an archangel; a tetramorph (wings, beasts, eagle, etc.); seraph. (1977)



(iii) *The monasteries*

+ **Dolishane**

Small Georgian church. Some sculptures

Gently up (old Artvin rd.), 1½ km., village rd. on r., steep up for 1½ km.

A domed cruciform church, some of whose facing stone is crudely cut. On the window of the s. transept, reliefs of archangels Michael (l.) and Gabriel (r.), both holding orb and staff, the imperial insignia, and wearing decorated clothing. On se. face of drum, high up, damaged relief of the builder, Smbat I, titular king of Georgia 937–958, holding a model of the church.

Patches of the *frescoes* survived in 1967. Apse: Christ, presumably in Deesis composition (with the Virgin and John the Baptist). Below, some of the Apostles, and below again, some bishops and church fathers. Dome: an Ascension, with prophets in the blind arches of the drum, but only fragments of Christ and faces of an angel, St. Peter and one prophet are left. Tympanum of door, s. wall of w. arm, shadows of what was probably a Last Judgement composition: six people beneath an enthroned Christ. Church probably now a mosque. (1967)

Opiza, etc.

Above the west bank of the Şavşat Dere and nearby was the first group of major monasteries in the Georgian region of present-day Turkey. The district of Shavsheti and the northern edge of Klardjeti, which still has some bare and rocky scenery, was attractive

to monks for the very reason that, at the time, it was depopulated and desolated after the reprisals taken by the Arabs against the Georgians for a revolt (late eighth century). The monastery of Opiza was reputedly founded by a Georgian king in c. 500. St. Gregory of Khandzta, who revived Georgian monasticism, resided at Opiza when he first came into the region (780); he then founded his own monasteries. Gregory's foundation of Khandzta is probably Porta. The alternative is a monastery in crude stone on a pointed rock, which has apparently not been re-discovered since the Second World War. By the end of his life Gregory was at the head of twelve monasteries. Both Opiza and Shatberdi (another of Gregory's foundations: possibly Rabat, near Ardanuç) were given land by Ashot the Great (813–826). The present church of Opiza was supposedly built as a burial-place for Ashot's family. At one stage Opiza controlled a group of twelve monasteries.

+ **Opiza.** (From Artvin-Şavşat rd., ½ hr. walk up a defile). The monastery is in Opiza village, at a low saddle joining two valleys. The main church is cruciform, with an unusually long nave. The dome (now demolished) had a multi-gabled cap, and the zig-zag upper rim of the drum remains. At the w. end is a narthex with three niches (for royal burials?) on both its e. and its w. side; abutting both the s. side of the nave and the narthex is a small chapel. On the chapel's s. side is a large refectory, only one of whose three vaults, carried on arcades, remains. (c.1975)

+ **Porta** (new name "Pırnalı": from Artvin-Şavşat rd., c. 4 km., village rd.). The monastery, which stands at the entrance to the present village, is likely to have been the famous Khandzta. St. Gregory originally built a wooden church here (early 9th century), replaced by a stone church at the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries. The present *church*, however, seems to be a replacement again (12th or 13th centuries?). Now dilapidated, it is a rectangle with a dome set in the middle. Single-storey aisles n. and s. of nave were reached both from the short transepts and, via arches, from the nave (as at Haho). The drum and cap over the dome are similar to Opiza. The church stands on a great masonry base, 15 ft. high. To the n. the ruins of, first, a small chapel, then a large refectory with two e.-w. barrel vaults. To se., *bell-tower*, a 16-sided drum on a vaulted rectangle. From the decoration, end of 12th or beginning of 13th century. Well-preserved. *Chapel* (seen first on approach to village), spring comes out of arcaded e. wall. (1967)

(b) *THE YALNIZÇAM ROAD (ARTVİN-ARDAHAN),
AND ARDANUÇ DISTRICT*

(i) *Artvin-Yalnızçam Pass-Ardahan*
154 km. About 5½ hrs. *(b) mainly

At Bertahane, cross the bridge and continue up the Ardanuç Çay valley, which becomes rocky and steep, the river running in a gorge seen from above. After the Ardanuç turn, the road climbs left at the lower end of the broad valley leading rightwards (seen from this point) past Ardanuç to the pass. The road steers slowly rightwards across the salients at the base of the valley, and goes above a hillside opposite Ardanuç. Then through meadows overlooking Ardanuç, afterwards in hairpins through pines. Shortly after the treeline the road comes out high on the side of the Ardanuç valley, now very steep. After more climbing in an enclosed valley, the road traverses the high slopes on the north side of a flat, green, empty saddle: opposite is a region of distant mountains. The road then goes gently down in the valleys between the long, bare, rounded salients outlying the highest

ridge.

1. To Erzurum junction, 16 km. 2. To Bertahane, 9 kms. 3. To Ardanuç turn, 10 km. (at 5 km., Georgian castle built into cliff, opposite side of river. 4. Then 119 km., 4½ hrs. At 14 km., a short cut down to Ardanuç, 6 km., *(b), steep. 6 km. towards Ardahan from the pass, castle on hillock below rd.

(ii) +Rabat

Small domed cruciform Georgian church, rather untidy. Interior is well preserved; some carving on outside, but some of the facing-stone has been pulled away. Perhaps 10th century, poss. mid-11th. In 1904, when the church was visited by the Russian Caucasologist Marr, the church was being used by Armenians.

From Ardanuç, take * road which starts to the n. of the main square, going parallel with it, up the valley going a little s. of e. from Ardanuç. Gorge at times. 13–14 km. to Rabat, at head of valley. Walk back from there along † cart track, n. side of valley, following contour roughly: 2½ km. Minibuses from Ardanuç (1977).

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5. THE OLTU ÇAY AND PENEK AREA: EASTERN TAO

The south half of the plain on which this area is centered is one section of the valley of the Oltu Çay. To the west of the valley are smooth but steep slopes. To its east, the hills are rocky. The castle of Oltu itself is a high, sudden rock above the town and plain. Oltu, and the old town of Tortum, were the two most important centres of Tao.

Going northwards, the plain gradually narrows, but widens again after the Olur turn-off. The important church of Penek lies in a flat region of many-coloured dunes, cut and bent to strange shapes. The church itself is on a large mound with wide views. To the north-west are heavily-eroded mountains; through them drives the wide Kömürlü valley. To the south-east of Penek the mountains come steeply out of the valley floors.

Beyond Penek the road comes through a defile and then gently up through firs to a plateau.

(a) THE OLTU AND PENEK PLAIN AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

(i) Oltu, Penek, the Göle road

Oltu—Göle. 73 km., 1½ hrs. As the Olur turn (17 km.) is approached, on the l., bright hills; on the r., natural tumuli. At the turn, remarkable view of the Penek district. From Olur turn-off; Kömürlü junction, 10 km., Penek turn 16 km., just before mountains rise up (bridge over river).

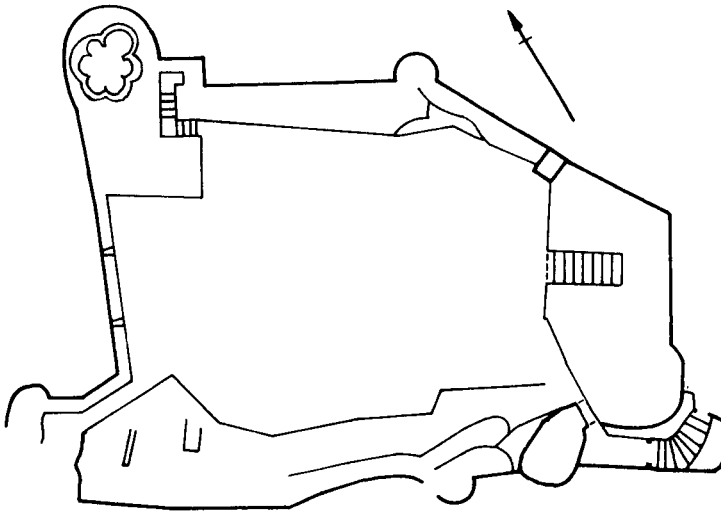
***Oltu**

(medieval "Ukhtik")

The main road runs along the w. side of the river, which is crossed by a road bridge, and a smaller footbridge further downstream. The better of the two hotels is opposite the road bridge. Buses to Oltu from Erzurum.

***Castle.** Cross road bridge, continue past bus station. Entrance on far side. Key sometimes has to be asked for.

The castle is an acute triangle in shape, pointing roughly se. The basic masonry is perhaps of the early medieval period (?9th or 10th century) but could be as late as the early Ottoman occupation. However the castle has been enlarged to suit artillery. The n. corner bastion has been enlarged, the sw. wall thickened at the back and a single large bastion, standing above the rest of the castle, created on the whole of the se. end (the entrance staircase climbs, from an outer gate, round the bastion). In the n. bastion, a Muslim türbe (l. inside the door). The chamber is within the masonry supporting the bastion's platform. Dome over. On the platform is a curious 6-lobed structure with a carved lip.



Oltu, castle. Sketch

This is the remains of a medieval church, whose ne. lobe, a little longer than the others, was the sanctuary. The church was almost certainly put up sometime after the 11th-century Byzantine occupation. At the time of a traveller's visit in 1843 it was recognizable as a church, but had already lost its central dome. The walls lining the entrance staircase as it climbs past the se. bastion are later than the basic masonry and perhaps belong to a 19th-century restoration. The castle was partially restored in the late 1970's and perhaps early 1980's. (1983)

+ The small *Arslan Paşa Camii*, 1664/5. (Cross the footbridge, turn l. after about 100 yds.) A single dome over square prayer-hall, dome covered by pyramidal roof (details of prayer-hall's layout not known); 3-domed portico. Use is made of the different colours of stone in the neighbourhood. The paşa's grave is e. of the mosque. (1977*) Nearby, *Mısrî Zinnün Kümbeti*, perh. 14th century. (1982)

+ *Church* (? Russian, from the period 1878–1914). Now used as a prison. However: a rectangle; drum with cap rises between apse (which is in separate polygon) and rectangle's e. end; rectangular structure (? for gallery) rising through roof at w. end, surmounted by ? belfry, which is now roofless. Prob.(A) two e.-w. rows of piers inside. Doors at w., n., and s. (From the main bridge walk 5 mins. in direction of Göle.) (1977*).

* *Penek* (Georg. "Bana")
Large cathedral, badly ruined

From Oltu-Göle rd., 2 km., ** (b), to Penek, large village; another km., * track, church is on l.

The mound on which the church stands is surrounded by flat cultivated land. But there are tortured and vivid-coloured slopes to the north, and rock in weird shapes can be seen in most directions.

In the Crimean war the church was fortified by the Ottomans: we can see fragments of a wall going round the base of the mound. The fortification was carried out well after worship in the church was abandoned. That had happened, no doubt, in the mid-17th century, certainly by the mid-18th. Probably the church stood up by its own strength, rather than through use as a mosque, in between times. It is known that in 1881 only the dome was missing, but by 1902 the church was already in more or less its present very incomplete state. It may have been mined for its stone by the occupying Russian forces, perhaps partly in order to build the church at Oltu (A).

There may have been a predecessor to the present church, but this one at least appears to have been built about 900. The bishopric was one of two in Tao (the other was İshan). The marriage of the Georgian king Bagrat IV (1027–72) took place here, and in or near the church were buried Vakhtang IV (1442–5) and his wife.

The inner part of the church, whose four arms were centred on the dome, was enclosed by a circular wall tangential with the apses. Outside this again the outer wall formed a ring-shaped ambulatory (Pl. 19). The inner part rose up above the roof of the ambulatory. At ground-floor level, semi-circular arcades took the place of solid wall at the ends of each arm. There were then rooms in the corners between, on three storeys. Only the e. apse, the apsed ground-floor rooms either side of it (they appear to be underground owing to fallen masonry) and part of the outer wall and circular vault survive. However, the triangular rooms formed by the inner of the circular walls and the apse are also left. The arches of the fine arcade in the apse are now filled in (capital, Pl. 22). Grape and leaf

carving, exterior blind arcade, survives in the spandrel just to r. of the buttress behind the apse. (1977)

(ii) *Near Oltu*

† **Cücürüs**, church and castle. *Church*, in the village, c. 5 km. wnw. of Oltu. Rectangular nave, semi-circular apse and side-chambers. The roof is off, but the w. end has been converted into a house. The church looks recent (A). A small single-nave *chapel* with one rib in the nave and an inscribed apse at the e. end. Adjacent to the s. side the remains of a second chapel can be seen, which looks to be contemporary with the first. Most likely monastic.

The small *castle*. About 2 km. n. of the village. It has a single circuit of elongated shape running n.-s. The n. end is taken up by a tower, rounded on the exterior and closed at the back. Elsewhere, there are bulges rather than towers in the walls. Entrance in s. side. The castle stands on top of an eminence in a valley. (1983)

† **Köroğlu**, small castle. It is at the top of a large and extraordinary nipple of rock. Except at the n. end, where the wall stands above ground, only the foundations survive. The rock can be climbed on the n. side. (1983)

(iii) *North of Penek*

+ **Kamkız Kalesi**. Simple Georgian castle, with commanding views. Perhaps the important Kalmakhi (8th century). It was the seat of an Ottoman sanjak in the late 16th century, but not afterwards. The castle overlooks the wide Kömürlü valley from a great height. A single circuit (a rough rectangle, lying e.-w., in shape), surviving to the original height only on the s. Cistern in middle, chapel, now ruined, at n. end.

(a) From Kömürlü turn-off, about 7 km. to turn for Türkmen village of Kahmis (houses are half-underground), *road, 2 km. On foot, steeply up, ¼ hr. north.

(b) From Penek, 1 hr. walk to Deliktaş Kilise, finger-like ruin of church. Condition in 1977: a six-lobed building, but only one apse left now (13th century?). Once "Kahmis-Altı", misunderstood by Russian investigators before the First World War as "Kiağlis-Altı"). Keep along track and just to l. of rising ground, and, near the church, through landscape of coloured pyramids. Another hour to Kahmis, again keeping just to l. of steep ground defining valley. (1977*)

+ **Soğmonkale** ("Salomankale"). Small Georgian rock-cut church (11th century?). A dome on "pendentives"; in these some frescoes of Evangelists can be made out (15th-century?). Funerary chapels to l., connected to church by corridor with steps, and r. (1977)

Up from Kahmis, † track, ¾ hr. walk, Soğmonkale village. Church is just behind pinnacles at back of village. Fine views, particularly the view through pinnacles back towards Deliktaş Kilise.

† **Pançurot Kilise**. Small chapel, probably belonging to a monastery. Walls now rise only to a height of c. 6 m. Rectangle on exterior. Single nave. On a narrow ridge of hills. (1974)

(Reached from Balkaya, to which there is a road turning n. off the Oltu-Göle rd. not far w. of Penek. 10 km. walk up the Balkaya valley, northwards from the town. Balkaya is c. 3 km. from Deliktaş Kilise (p. 26).

(iv) The Bardiz Çay valley

The town of Bardiz lies at a junction of valleys well towards the south (upstream) end of the Bardiz Çay valley. A rather difficult route, constituting a northern variant of the main route, between Erzurum and Kars passed through the town: it came northwards over a pass from the Karaorgan valley, itself a tributary valley to the Pasinler plain, and at Bardiz turned east. At Bardiz a further minor route went northwards up the Bardiz Çay valley, and this route could be used as a means of passage, avoiding Oltu, between the Ardahan-Göle area, the Pasinler plain, and Erzurum. Owing to the three-way junction at Bardiz it was important to maintain a castle at Bardiz. The site was also suitable for a town because it lay in a relatively easy part of the Bardiz valley within a broad cirque of mountains.

Further downstream the Bardiz valley is extremely steep from the village of Venk to its point of debouchment into the Penek valley, and the town of Şenkaya (medieval church) lies among meadows well above it. But above Venk the valley's floor broadens out. Bardiz itself lies nearly at the centre of a broad cirque of mountains.

From Oltu-Göle rd.: cross iron bridge a few km. e. of Penek turn, 2 km. short of Akşar. ******(b), steep, high above valley; 14 km., in full view of town, Senkaya turn (1 km. more). From here, 7-8 km. (steep down), Venk; another 4½ km., ******(b), Kop; 31 km. in all, Bardiz.

† **Şenkaya** (former name "Örtülü"), now a Kurdish town. Church.

† **Venk** (chapel formerly "Örtülü Vank"). Turkish village. Chapel, half-ruined, is in valley above village, to l., ½ hr. walk. (1977)

+ **Kop**. Georgian church on high rock (information of 1977).

There are also said to be churches at: 1. **Kinepos**: tetraconch; two square side-chambers convert bulk of church into rectangle, though apse projects in shallow polygon; w. apse inscribed in a rectangle. Other chapels to n. (9th or 10th century ?); 2. **Bobisgeri**: tetraconch (9th or 10th century ?), but drum carried by four columns in central square space (information of 1984).

† **Bardiz** (a "bucak": new name "Gaziler", roughly "Heroes"). Small castle (Saltukid) and small Ottoman mosque. † *Castle* is successor of a Georgian castle, but this one built almost certainly by the Saltukid (Erzurum dynasty) Melik İzz ed-Din (1145-74) in 1153. Stands on a high rock, of roughly e.-w. alignment, between the village and the Bardiz Çay. More or less a rectangle, but the walls at the sw. corner are aligned as if rotated anti-clockwise (slight bends in each of the s. and w. walls.). High, thick walls. Rectangular bastion, of slight projection, ne. corner. There were short bastions either side of the simple entrance passage in the middle of the n. wall, but the easterly now destroyed. Well-preserved polygonal tower, facing w. at s. end of w. wall. (1974) † *Mosque*. 1784. Dome on square. Portico lost. (1974)

(b) THE OLTU ÇAY VALLEY

The Oltu Çay flows out of the main Oltu-Penek valley and down another, wide and steep-sided (Pernek castles on r.), with fields. The valley narrows, and past the Olur turn it is intimate in character. It then deepens, and descends, with occasional views over the next stage of the valley, treed and patched with meadows, and with wild rocky sides. For the last few kms., bare coloured valley sides.

Oltu-Aşbisen, 93 km., perhaps 2¾ hrs. 1. Göle junction, 17 km. 2. Then 3 km., Kız Kalesi (on r.), about 1 km. before large village of Pernek (on l.); 25 km., Olur turn. 3. To Aşbisen: 51 km., ***(b), 2 hrs., narrow, twisting. After 18 km. (1 km. beyond Uçama), Tavusker rd., large bridge over river.

+ **Pernek.** Two small Georgian castles. *Kız Kalesi* ("Girl Castle"), on an isolated hill in the broad valley. A single ring of walls. Fairly complete. Chapel. It must have had a dome over the easterly compartment of the nave. *Oğlan Kalesi* ("Boy Castle") is back up the valley. From Kız Kalesi, cross valley to bridge over river by house, and walk on far side of river to castle (20 mins. from Kız Kalesi). The bulk of the castle, and the entrance, are well up the very steep hillside, connected to the horizontal and easily visible wall at the base of the slope by an extremely steep wall. (1977*)

† **Kızkalesi.** This castle is not to be confused with Kız Kalesi at Pernek. It is at or just by the Olur turn on the Oltu Çay road. No details. (1974)

† **Aşağı Panaskert** (Lower Panaskert). Castle; no details. (1974) (From the Olur turn on Oltu Çay rd. (above), 5 km. n. to Golahan. R. again, and 7 km. ene.) (1974)

† **Tekke Suyu Kilise.** Small chapel. Rectangle on the exterior. Single nave. Only the n. wall and part of the apse are upright, however. (1974) (From Aşağı Panaskert (see above), walk one hr. n. to Yukari Panaskert (Upper Panaskert), then a further 2 hrs.) (1974)

+ **Niyakom.** Georgian monastery, the main church probably 9th or 10th century. It lies in a region of extremely steep-sided and enclosed valleys whose rivers flow into the Oltu Çay. Of the two approaches to Niyakom, that starting from Olur is over grassed but treeless country, whereas the chain of valleys including that of Tavusker, sometimes densely treed on their floors, have anything from bare expanses to meadows on their sides. The monastery remains are on a small flat area in a wide section of a valley, on the n. side of the stream: ½ hr. walk, via a small gorge. Village of Niyakom short way upstream.

The s. side of the monastery survives: (w. to e.) the nearly circular belfry over the entrance (late: the niches were for statues); two chapels just inside; the main church's narthex; the church. The narthex is evidently later than the church, which is a rectangle with three apses on the e. Four pillars, near the n. and s. walls, survive. They seem to have supported squinches and ultimately a dome. (1977)

South of the monastery, overlooking the main stream, is a small *castle*. Small inner house (c. 10 ft. square), now roofless, in uphill corner of roughly rectangular enclosure. An intermediate wall is below the inner one, its corner indented to make room for an underground room, possibly a store. (1977*)

(a) Via Olur: 9 km., then ½ hr. drive to Ortiz ***(b), dolmuş jeeps at Olur. Take road going up out of Olur, and keeping l.; over a pass. From Ortiz walk w., 1½ hrs. along main valley, path first by stream and then above and on its r. Where valley turns corner l., lone house; downstream from this, follow river, crossing it twice. On r., the small gorge.

(b) From Oltu-Aşbisen road: 8 km. along *(b) rd. to Tavusker, first following Oltu Çay, then turning n. through chalky cliffs.

† **Tavusker**, an important town in Georgian medieval times. Remains of a *polygonal church* 1. of rd. about 500 yards before the main stream is crossed. Cross main stream, then side stream on left. Above, on l., is small monastery chapel. (1977)

Continue on foot up main valley to Parisor, 2 hrs. From the e. bank of the river, impressive view of enormous white slopes and cliffs above Tavusker. Narrow section of valley; some tricky walking along narrow paths and a log bridge. Then, at a mill, path goes up to left. From Parisor to turn-off up small gorge, 1½ hrs.

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(ii) Near Oltu. *Cücürüs*, Edwards 23–26. *Köroğlu*, Edwards 26–27.

(iii) North of *Penek*. *Kamkız Kalesi* (called “Saloman Kale” in the refs.). *MAK* XII. 80–82 (chapel) and pls. XIII. 23 (castle), XIII. 24 & XIV. 25 (chapel). Ottoman sanjak: Kırzioğlu, *Kafkas-elleri* 232, 234, 245–6. *Deliktaş Kilise*. *MAK* XII. 85–88 (publ.). *Soğmonkale* (cave-church called sometimes “Kala” in refs.) *MAK* XII. 82–84, figs. 55 & 56, pl. XIV.26; N. & M. Thierry, *BK* 25 (1968), 64–65. *Pançurot Kilise*. N. & D. Gutschow, *AM Iran* 4, 237–47.

(iv) Bardiz Çay valley. Maunsell, *MRETA*, 121–3 (geog.). Churches: mostly Beridze, *Tao-K1*., with his refs. to Takaishvili, *Kola-Oltisi* (the latter inaccessible to me). *Şenkaya*. *Tao-K1*. 301. (with further refs.). *Venk*. *Tao-K1*. 306 (*Kola-Olt.* 40–41). *Kinepos*. *Tao-K1*. 295 (*Kola-Olt.* 74–76). *Bobisgeri*. *Tao-K1*. 283–4 (*Kola-Olt.* 43–5). *Bardiz Castle*. Ünal, *AÜEFAD* 6 (1964), 85, 128–9 (ref. in Sözen, below) (publ.); Kırzioğlu, *Kars Tar. I.* 388 (date), 390–1; Sözen, *AKM*, 200–201 (disc.; plan). *Mosque*. *YA* 4. 2797. 1; Kırzioğlu, *Kars Tar. I.* 391.

(b) Oltu Çay valley. *Pernek*. Edwards 32–5. *Kızkalesi*. Gutschow 244. *Aşağı Panaskert*. Gutschow 244. *Tekke Suyu Kilise*. Gutschow 243–4. *Niyakom, monastery*. Beridze, *Tao-K1*. 313–4 (further ref.; disc. of date); Winfield, *JWCI* 31 (1968), 66 (inscr. and sculpture found nearby). *Tavusker, polygonal church*, Beridze, *Tao-K1*., 308–9 (further ref.); Mepisashvili and Tsintsadze, *Arts of Ancient Georgia*, 122 (remains and situation).

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Georgians are a lively and talented people who speak a language neither Indo-European nor part of any other major language group. At the time when most of the churches in the region were built, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the area was peopled by Georgians who were racially all of a piece with those living in other Georgian lands. At that period these roughly corresponded to present-day Soviet Georgia, whose capital is Tbilisi (Tiflis). Soviet Georgia is at the western end of the region between the Caucasus and the Soviet frontier. The rest of this region consists in Soviet Armenia (to the south of Soviet Georgia; the population was also Armenian in the early Middle Ages) and Soviet Azerbaijan, which is the region's eastern end.

Tao-Klardjeti thus lay in the south-western part of Georgia, which was known as Upper Iberia: Iberia was the classical name for Georgia. To the north and adjacent to the Black Sea was Abkhazia, known in the late Middle Ages and afterwards as Imereti. The Abkhazians were not strictly Georgians, but more distant relations. However, in the tenth and eleventh centuries Abkhazia played a vital part in Georgian history, and it was eventually united with Georgia under one king. East of Abkhazia lay the province which was geographically at the centre of Georgia, that of Tiflis. Generally, but not always, it was Georgia's political centre too.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the centre of Georgian political life was not, however, Inner Iberia, but Upper Iberia. Most of Georgia, including Tiflis, was in Arab hands. Upper Iberia, though generally not united, was in the hands of rulers independent of the Abbasid empire and of the petty emirs who took its place. These rulers were members of the famous family of the Bagratunis, who were Armenian and not Georgian in origin. The family was related to the Bagratunis who in 886 became the ruling family of one of the Armenian kingdoms.

Upper Iberia was divided into principalities in hereditary ownership, with a minor nobility beneath each hereditary lord. Two or more of these districts could be owned by one man, but the titles to the districts were independent. There was no hierarchical relationship between one principality and another. Nor was there a hierarchical level above that of the barons who owned them. At that level genuine power stopped. Admittedly, in the greater part of the

ninth and tenth centuries there was a titular king of Iberia, and the barons were nominally his vassals. The title of King was revived in 888 after being abolished in the sixth century, and before 888 one or two of the powerful barons had been called King. But in practice, the obligations of vassalage to the king were no more than nominal. The king himself owned very little land directly.

Quite apart from the independent status of the principalities and the absence of a king with genuine power over their rulers, another circumstance militated against the gradual piecing together of a whole province under one man's authority. In the inheritance of land under the feudal system, the rule of primogeniture was at this time not always kept. In other words, territory held by a prince could be divided between his sons or other relatives according to the wish of the prince. If land were divided, the different domains which resulted could only be re-united or brought together with land elsewhere through a suitable marriage, another legacy, or through illegal snatching by another prince. Division and amalgamation of small units of land in these three ways are very much the history of this area from the arrival of the Bagratunis there in the late eighth century to 1000 A.D.

Despite the clear bias of the political structure towards division, there were two rulers of the period under whom the greater part of the province was united and became a genuine state. These were Ashot the Great (813–826) and David the Great, who ruled jointly with his brother Bagrat (the other co-founder of Öşk Vank) from 961 to 966 and on his own till 1000. David was the only ruler of the province in this period with an influence on events in Anatolia as a whole. When he died, the Byzantine Empire was engaged in gradually annexing most of Armenia, and David's land was, for a short time, also occupied. Not long after, the annexed provinces of Armenia and most of Anatolia were lost to the Turks.

Upper Iberia, the province which in the ninth and tenth centuries was generally divided between different Bagratuni princes, was defined as follows. Tao-Klardjeti, through its steepness and impenetrability, was the stronghold, and lay in the west half. To the north, Upper Iberia contained the land between the present Turkish frontier and the so-called Little Caucasus, which is a range running east and west about fifteen miles north of the border. The eastern boundary was a line drawn northwards along the Allahüekber Mountains as far as L. Çıldır and then northwards from there. Thus to the south-east of this boundary, and to the south of the province, lay Armenia. To the west was the Byzantine empire, and in fact Byzantine control extended to the lower Çoruh valley as far upstream as Borçka and to the Murgul Su valley. Borçka (gr. "Bourzo" or "Soteriopolis") was a Byzantine military post.

How did the Bagratunis arrive? The principalities of which Upper Iberia was made up are important in this connection. The Bagratunis were originally based in the province of Sper (with the towns of İspir and Bayburt),

immediately to the west of the large and important district of Tao. To the north, Tao consisted in the valleys of the Barhal Çay, the middle Çoruh, and the Oltu Çay with the dependent northerly streams. Thus the northern boundary ran over the mountains to the north of the Barhal Çay and the particularly steep range cut through by the Çoruh north of Su Kavuşumu, which continues eastwards south of Ardanuç. Tao's western boundary ran along the Kaçkar Dağ to the west of the Barhal Çay, but then crossed the Çoruh and followed the mountains between the Çoruh and Tortum Çay southwards. It was here that Tao adjoined the Bagratuni territory of İspir.

Until the Armenian revolt against the Arabs of 771-72, Tao had been Armenian and in the hands of the family of the Mamikonians. The first church at İşhan, which was designed on an Armenian model, was built while the Mamikonians still held Tao. In the Arab retaliation which followed the revolt, the Mamikonians were virtually wiped out. The Bagratunis were able to take a portion of Tao in the south-west known as "Upper Tao" (the name is confusing to the modern reader, but accurate). This was based on the Tortum Çay, and Tortum Kale was its capital. It is not clear if it extended eastwards into the upper reaches of the Oltu Çay river system. Lower Tao comprised the lower valley of the Oltu Çay, with its dependent valleys, and the plain-like Oltu-Penek valley. Oltu was its capital, and it included İşhan, Tavusker and Penek. The remaining part of Tao, the middle Çoruh and the Barhal valley, was known as "Asispori". Lower Tao and Asispori were taken by the then prince of Upper Iberia.

Possibly around 780 Adarnase, another Bagratuni prince, begged a Georgian prince, though not that of Upper Iberia, for land, agreeing in turn to be his vassal. He was given the small provinces of Artani and Erusheti, within Upper Iberia. Artani is the thin region, centred on Ardahan, stretching from the Arsiani mountains (those just west of Ardahan) to L. Çıldır. Its south boundary ran along the low hills overlooking Ardahan on the south: the line continued as far as L. Çıldır. To the south of Artani lay Kola, the district covering the undulating country which runs from Tao on the west towards but not as far as L. Çıldır to the east. Its capital was Göle (Geor. "Kola"). Erusheti was basically the continuation of Artani north to the present Soviet frontier, though the small region of Poskof and the Poskof Çay, and the small hammerhead projection of the Turkish frontier into the USSR at this point, belonged to Samtskhe, another fief, otherwise wholly in the present-day USSR, north of Erusheti, and with its capital at Akhaltzikhe. Erusheti was the west part of a duchy called Javakheti, whose east part went eastwards from both Artani and Erusheti, south of Samtskhe but north of L. Çıldır.

Adarnase had a daughter Latavr. She married Juansher, a son of the same prince, Archil, from whom Adarnase had begged land. Archil was the prince of Kakheti, which is in the east of Soviet Georgia, and is part of the plain through which the river Kura (which rises near Göle) flows. He also seems to

have been the heir of Stephen, the last of the princes of a family which held Upper Iberia. However, both Archil and Stephen were executed in the dreadful reprisals against the Armenian princes after the revolt of 771-2, in which Georgians had also taken part. Archil's territorial holdings were divided between three heirs, one of whom was Juansher, Latavr's husband. When Juansher died, Adarnase inherited Juansher's third through his daughter. He then came into possession of the remaining two thirds when the other heirs died.

Adarnase had acquired much, but not all, of Upper Iberia. Apart from Upper Tao, the region held by his relatives, he had the whole of the area later called Tao-Klardjeti (including Nigali, the district of the middle Çoruh between Tao and the Byzantine frontier at Borçka; perhaps Artvin was the capital); he had his previous domain of Artani and Erusheti; he also held Achara, the area of the river-system of the Acharis river, which flows parallel to the present Turkish-Soviet frontier on the far side of it. (A strip of Achara was in fact in present-day Turkey.) However, he did not hold Samtskhe, the area mentioned previously, which is east of Achara and centred on Akhaltzikhe. Nor did he hold the east part of Javakheti. These were gained by his son Ashot, who took over his principality in 813. Ashot also acquired Kola and Trialeti, a province continuing both Samtskhe and Javakheti eastwards. He was also appointed king of Iberia by the Abbasid Caliph, which means he must have stood in some relation of vassalage to him. With this position came Kartli, the province of Tiflis.

Ashot moved the political centre of Georgia to Ardanuç. At first he resided in Tiflis and Bardaa (well east of Tiflis). But, apparently because of a revolt or the suspicion of one, he was forced to flee to Byzantine territory. Thereafter he moved to Ardanuç, which was remote enough to be safe from the Arab governor now in Tiflis. The two districts of Klardjeti and Shavsheti had been devastated by Muslim forces after the revolt of 771-2. Klardjeti is the very steep land rising from the Çoruh to the escarpment overlooking Ardahan; it is based on the deep valley of the Ardanuç Çay and defined to north and south by the two high mountain ridges either side of the valley. Shavsheti is the district further north, which rises eastward from near the Çoruh as it passes Artvin, starting at about Bertahane. It, in its turn, is based on the Berta Suyu-Şavşat Dere. The new state founded by Ashot on his return to Georgian territory was, it seems, confined at first to these two districts, remote, steep and devastated as they were. Ardanuç itself had to be rebuilt. This time, however, the state was independent of the Arab caliph. Later on, Ashot was able to recover the rest of his Upper Iberian lands, of which Ardanuç was now the capital.

It was in Ashot's reign that monasticism first flowered in Upper Iberia. There was already a monastery at Opiza, in Shavsheti. To Opiza came the monk Gregory (in Georgian, Grigol). First staying two years at Opiza, Gregory eventually founded four monasteries. The first was Khandzta;

another was Shatberd; and a monastery at Cevizli (Tbeti) seems to have been founded at this time too. Gregory was the friend and good conscience of Ashot, and the foundation of several monasteries in a short time should be seen as taking place with royal approval and protection. Gregory's disciples founded a further seven monasteries, and Gregory became superior of them all.

With the addition of Upper Tao, which must have been acquired from the cousin Bagratunis soon after Ashot's death, Upper Iberia continued as several independent domains, being divided and regrouped among princes all of whom were descendants of Ashot and therefore Bagratunis. This state of affairs continued until David the Great, who reigned in the late tenth century. If these principalities were not united, at least they were all in Bagratuni hands together, and not preyed on by the great empires. On the contrary, the Bagratunis seemed to have survived and grown strong because each empire needed them in its struggle against the other. The Byzantine emperors would grant favours to the Bagratuni princes whose land lay just beyond the borders of the empire, to prevent them allying with Arab rulers or even acting on their behalf. One of their instruments was the bestowal of Imperial appointments, in particular the title of Curopalates, which originally meant superintendent of the emperor's palace, but which was now one of the three most important positions in the Byzantine hierarchy. Among the Bagratunis of Iberia it implied, apparently, a certain pre-eminence, and was semi-hereditary.

The period during which most of the churches of the area were built, including David the Great's reign, was one of increasing prosperity. If independence from the Byzantine and Arab empires did not mean political unity, at least there were no heavy taxes, and no punitive expeditions, nor does there seem to have been serious military encroachment on the area by either empire. A particularly important result of being free of the two empires was the development of Ardanuç as a great trading city. It was on a route from the Black Sea at Hopa, via Borçka and Artvin and the Yalnızçam Pass, to Ardahan, from which one branch went east to the present Soviet Georgian regions, then mainly in Arab hands, and the other went to Kars and the rest of Armenia. Ardanuç grew rich on the customs revenues from merchandise passing through it.

In the period from the death of Ashot the Great to the end of David the Great's reign, one of the main beneficiaries of the freedom of the area from the two empires must have been the church, which from the early eighth century was administratively independent of the Orthodox. At the same time, the church and its organisation throughout the region were presumably a stable element in life, which unified the area and countered the divisive effect of the grouping and re-grouping of land under different political masters. The church was wealthy, and the donations of princes helped further. The first churches to benefit were the cathedrals of İřhan

(ruined by the ninth century and rebuilt under Bagrat, Duke of Tao and Klardjeti, 889-900) and Penek (Bana: apparently a complete reconstruction by the first true King of Iberia, Adarnase, in 888-923). A cathedral at Cevzli (Tbeti) was built by another Ashot (the Immature), who was the Duke of Tao from 908 to 918. The present church is later.

Later in the tenth century, money was put into monasteries. Monasteries, as elsewhere, could be or become immensely wealthy. They were part of the feudal system in the sense that they could have their own serfs, and these could be donated to carry out duties specified in a charter. The small church of Dolishane was a royal donation of the 940's or 950's. Haho and Öşk Vank are both state foundations, and mark an exceptional expenditure by a man who had a reputation for piety and benefited from a century and more of peace and increasing prosperity in the region. Barhal and Dörtkilise are certain also to have been founded under baronial or royal patronage, the former under David the Great. At any rate, Dolishane, these two, Öşk Vank and Haho constitute a second wave of monastic building. This was followed in the last decades of the tenth century by a burst of literary activity (copying of Gospels and liturgical texts) in both the new monasteries and in those whose foundation had been inspired by St. Gregory of Khandzta. Some of the books copied in the tenth century survive in the museums of Soviet Georgia.

The last four of the monasteries in question signal a move to a new area for monastic building, part of Tao: Upper Tao and Asispori (the valley of the Çoruh and Barhal Çay). This area was a natural site for new monasteries. Tao had no monasteries, and certainly no Georgian ones, as it had only become Georgian less than two centuries earlier. At the same time, the move of the area of building marks a change in monastic habits and in the initiative for foundations.

At least the majority of Gregory of Khandzta's monasteries were semi-eremitic, perhaps in the Syrian fashion (groups of hermits celebrating some services together). They were founded in high and remote places in Shavsheti and Klardjeti, and the inspiration for their building came from monks. The Tao monasteries, on the other hand, were by and large state foundations, and it is likely they were all founded as cenobitic monasteries on the Greek model. Moreover, Tao seems to have been a region of small towns and of denser population than Shavsheti and Klardjeti. Some of the monasteries were built in the towns, though admittedly Dörtkilise lies in a remote enough position. Beside the two local capitals of Oltu and Tortum Kale and the two bishop's seats of Penek and İřhan there was almost certainly (to judge from later evidence) a town at Haho, and the existence of one at Öşk Vank is likely too, since the place lay in fact on a route which bypassed the then very difficult traverse above L. Tortum. (Besides these, there were probably towns at Namrun and Bardiz.)

Upper Tao and Asispori were favoured for the foundation of monasteries partly because David the Great, the most liberal donor of this period, did not

hold Lower Tao, and perhaps partly because the towns of Upper Tao were in less open situations than those of Lower Tao. On the other hand those monasteries that were founded in Lower Tao (for example that at Niyakom) were outside towns and thoroughly secluded. A further reason for the choice of Upper Tao was no doubt that David the Great's capital was at Tortum Kale.

David the Great began to exercise sole power in Upper Iberia in 966, after ruling jointly with his brother Bagrat (961-966). He was the most influential ruler the province had known, and acquired several districts of Armenia. Bagrat had been given the title of Curopalates at his and David's joint accession. When Bagrat died, David took over the title of Curopalates and the whole of their joint inheritance.

His land was as follows: first, Upper Tao. Lower Tao, the region of İřhan, Tavusker, Penek and Oltu, belonged to the king of Iberia, who in David's time neither owned nor controlled much territory, though he at least possessed some of Kartli (Inner Iberia). There is then an important gap in David's territory, Ardanuç, though David seems to have held parts of Klardjeti. Ardanuç belonged jointly to two other Bagratuni princes. Shavsheti was David's, but not Nigali or Achara, which were to the west and north of Shavsheti. They had been taken by the King of Abkhazia, which lay north of Achara. To the east, David had a solid chunk of territory: Kola, Artani, Erusheti and the other half of Javakheti. He may have taken the west part of Samtskhe too. He also held (a new departure for Georgians) Phasiane or Basean, basically the plain of the Araxes east of Erzurum, whose capital was Hasankale. It had been given to a previous prince of Tao by the Byzantine empire in 952. David's capital, as has been suggested above, was no doubt the former town of Tortum, beneath Tortum Kale.

David lent troops for the counter-attack against the Byzantine rebel Bardas Skleros (979). For the first time, a Georgian prince was strong enough to play a decisive part in Byzantine affairs. David was, for one thing, the first ruler since Ashot the Great to unite all but a small part of Upper Iberia. He was therefore the first Upper Iberian prince since Ashot who faced no competition from inside the province: the part of Upper Iberia not belonging to David was held by Abkhazia. David profited, too, from a long period of expanding prosperity. He is the only Upper Iberian prince whose coins we have. He was, finally, a man of outstanding charisma and intelligence, even of vision.

David had no children: he had left all his land, under duress, to the Byzantine emperor, Basil II. However, he had also left it, beforehand, to Bagrat III, the King of Abkhazia. David himself had helped to put Bagrat on the throne.

David died in 1000. To claim his inheritance Basil came quickly, first to Havchich, south of Erzurum. Here he gave an audience to Bagrat, his father the titular king of Iberia, and many Armenian noblemen. He then came to David's Iberian possessions: the Armenian possessions had been taken back as a matter of course. In Upper Iberia Basil took David's castles by force,

installed Byzantine garrisons, and led away the minor nobility of David's principalities, settling them elsewhere in Byzantine territory. It was an occupation for military reasons rather than annexation. Nevertheless, Basil occupied precisely what had been bequeathed to him. He did not take Lower Tao, which stayed in the hands of the King of Iberia, Gurgen, Bagrat's father: that he kept Lower Tao is evident from the inscription of 1006 on the chapel at İřhan, which attributes the building to Gurgen. He did not take Ardanu. And he did not take Achara and Nigali, which were Bagrat's. At Havchich, Bagrat had been given the title of Curopalates, and this had no doubt persuaded him not to compete with Basil for the inheritance.

In 1008 Gurgen died. In virtue of his title Gurgen had possessed Kartli, which bordered Abkhazia on the east. He also owned Lower Tao. Bagrat therefore acquired these. At last parts of east and west Georgia had come together. Bagrat took Kakheti, too (this is south-east of Kartli). Lastly, he annexed Ardanu from its two owners, whom he imprisoned. He now possessed the titles of King of Iberia and Curopalates.

Bagrat died in 1014. His son Giorgi re-occupied in 1015 the land taken by Basil, and later intervened in a dispute between the official king of Armenia (Hovhannes-Smbat) and his brother. He imprisoned the former and forced him to give up three fortresses, perhaps in Samtskhe. It was for this, apparently, that in 1021 Basil II pursued him, plundering and killing, from Oltu through Kola to L. ıldır, where an indecisive battle was fought. The pursuit continued, perhaps north, through Samtskhe to Trialeti, east of Upper Iberia. Basil retired, having apparently reacquired for the empire Kola, Artani and Javakheti. In a short second campaign, Giorgi was defeated, and this time Basil seems to have managed to restore his former control over David's hereditary dominions. But with weaker emperors, it is likely the Byzantine soldiers were forced out or withdrawn.

Giorgi died in 1027, and the country fell into disorder. The kings battled continuously against rebellious barons and Byzantine pretenders to Klardjeti. Georgia disregarded the danger from the Turks. The Georgians were still fighting among themselves when the Turks approached from Erzurum and ravaged Tao in 1056. Alp Arslan came through Tao and Klardjeti in 1060, going on to the present-day Soviet Georgian lands. In 1073 the Georgians were completely defeated. In a period when the Turks were becoming direct political masters of the greater part of Anatolia, Georgia was allowed to remain a vassal kingdom after the submission of their king in 1080 to the Seljuk Sultan.

This was a low point for the Georgians. Their territory was not only subject to the Sultan, but also partly occupied by Turks and overrun yearly by Trkmen nomads. Moreover, some of the Georgian barons themselves were in revolt against the King.

The low fortunes of the Georgians were completely reversed by David II, surnamed the Builder. He came to the throne in 1089 when he was 16.

He first of all dealt with his barons. He then built a new kingdom. Based in Abkhazia, he took in 1104-5 Kakheti, the low-lying land south-east of Tiflis, which just previously was an independent principedom. After this he moved westwards from here, clearing the Turks from the land, via Kartli, Samtskhe and Javakheti. He reached Tao and Klardjeti in 1116, though the Georgians seem to have been unable to retake Bardiz or Oltu in the twelfth century. He invaded Shirvan, the region east of Kakheti, in 1117, which took him to the Caspian. Tiflis, which had been Muslim for four hundred years, was captured in 1122. And David took over Armenian territory when, in 1124, he annexed Ani and even İspir.

The Georgians were helped in these exploits by two circumstances: the death of the Great Seljuk sultan Malik Shah in 1092, and the victories of the Crusaders over the Seljuks in Anatolia and Syria starting in 1097. Nevertheless, David was a brilliant soldier and a fine statesman. He built up an extensive and prosperous kingdom, independent of the Turks.

Upper Iberia shared in the benefits of unity and peace. New church building went ahead: for example, the additions at Haho and later the new church at Porta (Khandzta ?). A second wave of literary activity started both in the monasteries of Tao, Klardjeti, and Shavsheti, and elsewhere. The most important places in the new kingdom were, however, no longer in Tao and Klardjeti. These were now border provinces. The new centres were elsewhere: Mtskheta, near Tiflis; Kutaisi, just south of the Caucasus, in Abkhazia; and the district of Kakheti. It was in these regions that David continued the tradition of building, and they constituted the new centre of the kingdom.

The greatest era of Georgian history was under the legendary Queen Tamara (1184-1213). In her reign, the kingdom was not only independent and prosperous, but powerful. Its unity and security were increased by the capture of Kars and of certain Muslim cities (such as Ganja and Dvin) on the borders of Persia. These cities then stood in a loose relation of vassalage to Georgia. The Georgians were also able to raid well into Persia and to help in the setting up of the empire of Trebizond in 1204, by acting as hosts to the future emperor, then a refugee, and sending forces to Trebizond itself.

In Tamara's reign also the feudal system of Georgia was perfected. Many of its elements seem a simple mirror of elements in West European feudalism. The basic relation was that of vassalage, repeated down the scale of society from the king (or queen) to the lowest level. A member of this society held not precisely land itself, but the right to use certain land from his "patronus", his overlord in the stratum immediately superior to him.

Just beneath the king were the "eristavs" or dukes, who held the different provinces as regional governors from the king. If we look back at the Upper Iberia of David the Great and before, some of the princes who held districts such as Klardjeti and Shavsheti were dukes, nominally standing in this relation to the Kings of Iberia, though in practice they were at that time entirely independent. Some of them were princes whose position of prince of a

province like Tao or Javakheti were of older standing, from before the time of a kingdom and allegiance to a king. The area of a particular dukedom does not seem to have stayed fixed, though this was no doubt due to the process of division and re-amalgamation by inheritance and illegitimate seizure described above. The dukes' positions were in theory not hereditary and the king nominally had control over the successions: in practice dukes defied him if the kings tried to appoint someone other than their heirs. The serfs, the lowest level of society, were actually bound to their masters. Some of them, however, had charters exactly prescribing their duties.

Another aspect of feudal government in Georgia which had a western counterpart was the king's council and administration. The king was surrounded by a Cabinet of six ministers: a Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and others. They presided over an elaborate bureaucracy: each minister had his own department. The king maintained his own troops in the form of town garrisons. His revenue was derived mainly from his own land and in part from various incidental duties and ad hoc taxes.

The church was the part of society least similar to its European counterpart. Although its wealth and authority resembled those of the church in Europe, the Georgian kings almost always deferred to it, and it remained un-subordinated to the monarchy.

The Georgian kingdom did not stay independent and powerful for long. It was defeated by and subjected to the Mongols. There was a brief revival in the first part (1318-27) of the reign of Giorgi the Brilliant when the king had the ear of the Mongol regent in Anatolia, Çoban. But afterwards, Georgia began to break up, being further weakened by the Black Death and by Timur. The monasteries of Tao, Klardjeti and Shavsheti, with their great wealth in land and church ornament, survived these troubles until the secession of Upper Iberia. This came about in 1465 under the Jakelis, the family which had held Upper Iberia as a fief from the kings since the 13th century. Confusingly, the region came to be called "Samtskhe". Georgia's fragmentation was recognised in its division in 1493 into three kingdoms, of which none included "Samtskhe". These were Imereti (roughly the former Abkhazia), Kartli and Kakheti.

Georgia was in no position to defend itself against the Turks, who took over the new "Samtskhe" as part of their struggle against the Persian Empire. Ottoman forces first made incursions into "Samtskhe" in the first three decades of the sixteenth century. For a time (during the reign of Selim I, 1512-20), Samtskhe was a vassal of the Ottoman empire, but for the most part it preserved its independence in those decades, and the Ottomans were for the time being deterred from attacking it as a whole by the state of readiness into which it would be put by its "atabegs". They eventually attacked it to reinstate the atabeg deposed in 1535 by the King of Kartli, and finally beat the combined Georgian feudal levy in 1545. Garrisons were put into most of the strategic castles, and Samtskhe became an Ottoman

vassal again. When the Ottomans' own candidate for atabeg made an alliance with Persia, they annexed Upper Tao (1550), successfully besieged Ardanuç in 1551 and annexed Klardjeti, Shavsheti and Artani in the same year.

Till 1588, Samtskhe was a battleground between two empires. In that year, the Ottomans were driven out, perhaps managing to maintain garrisons in a few key places. However, they came back in 1625, when the last Christian atabeg was poisoned.

From this time on, for two and a half centuries, Samtskhe was Ottoman territory. All the towns were made into the seats of sanjaks, though some (in particular Shavsheti) were hereditary. Most of the sanjaks were governed from Çıldır (16th century) or its successor Akhaltzikhe (early 17th century onwards), but Upper Tao (sanjaks of Tortum and Namrun at least) belonged to the province of Erzurum. Government by a pasha sitting at Akhaltzikhe by itself brought little change, since the pashas were appointed from the Jakeli family. But the Ottoman administration spread into the minor nobility, and unlike the rest of Georgia, Samtskhe lost its feudal structure and forms. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, Klardjeti and Shavsheti (always the least accessible areas) belonged to "begs" whom the administration could not control.

The monasteries of Tao, Shavsheti and Klardjeti started to decline when the Jakeli atabegs, even before the appearance of the Ottomans, first started sequestering their land. In the mid-sixteenth century, the Ottomans continued the process, taking the precious ornaments too. By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, nearly all the monasteries were deserted and the minor nobility had become Muslims. By the mid-seventeenth century there were few priests left, although the peasants by and large were still Christians. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, much of Samtskhe was Muslim. The areas where Christianity survived were the least accessible; those of Yusufeli and Barhal, Ardanuç, Artvin and Şavşat. The reason for the final abandonment of the monasteries and the conversion to Islam was simple: under a fanatical pasha (1625-35), the first in a resumed Ottoman overlordship, the church organisation in Samtskhe broke down and the area was cut off from those parts of Georgia where the church was still effective. On the other hand, in the mid-eighteenth century, Georgian was still the first language. Turkish was little known except, understandably, among the nobility.

As for the rest of Georgia, Persia took Kartli and Kakheti, in the teeth of a series of fierce rebellions, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The line of the Bagratunis survived, with the titles of King of Kakheti and King of Kartli, as a succession of hereditary viceroys of the Shah. Imereti, the remaining part of Georgia, was in a state of virtually continuous civil war. Under King Irakli (1747-98), Kartli and Kakheti and other areas were united, and the kingdom was at first relatively independent.

The Russians first moved into Georgia in 1770, during the Russian-Turkish war of 1768-74, which changed the border very little. The Georgians did a

great deal more fighting against the Turks than the Russians themselves; but owing to the attacks of the Persians they had nevertheless become dependent on Russia, and in 1783 Irakli signed away most of his sovereign rights to the Russian empress. After a cruel spoliation of Georgia by Persia in 1795, it only remained for the son of Irakli's successor to recognize in a manifesto in 1801 that Kartli and Kakheti were part of the Russian Empire. Imereti followed soon after.

The Russian border with Turkey was now not very different from the present border. The war of 1828-29 left it little changed: the Turks, keeping Batum itself, lost only some forts on the Black Sea north of Batum and the important towns of Akhaltzikhe and Akhalkalaki. In the war the Russians invaded Turkey, bypassing the western half of "Samtskhe", the region of the Georgian churches of Turkey: but it was after the war that the Turks tightened their grip on the place, expelling the powerful family of begs which then held it.

In the war of 1877-78, Russian troops, after invading Ardahan, marched via Penek to Oltu. They then withdrew after being attacked by the Turks at Oltu. Later on, in the winter, the Russians fought their way over the Yalnızçam Pass and took Ardanuç. Their aim was to attack Batum along the Çoruh as well as from the east; but they were held up by blizzards and by local Laz and Adjars (the people of Achara), and the treaty which ended the war, which in fact gave Batum to them, prevented the Russians from taking it by force. More important, they were given much of the Ottoman territory in Georgia. The new border ran parallel to the Çoruh, just south-east of it, until it crossed the Çoruh gorge a few miles south of the confluence with the Ardanuç Çay. It then went south (crossing the Oltu Çay just east of İşhan) as far as Narman, and then turned roughly south-east. Russia had acquired not only the districts of Kars and Ardahan, which lay between the old Tao, Klardjeti and Shavsheti and the present Soviet frontier, but also Artvin, Şavşat, Ardanuç, all of the Penek and Olur areas, and Oltu. It was during this period that the population of Artvin, Ardanuç, Oltu (and Ardahan) became almost completely Armenian, because Armenians moved to the Russian Empire from the Ottoman.

In the 1914-18 war, the Turkish advance on Sarıkamış in dreadful conditions of snow and cold in the winter of 1914-15 was through that part of Georgia which still remained to the Ottomans. From Erzurum one force went to Tortum, and then after driving the Russians from Oltu, reached the small pass just south of Göle on the Penek-Göle road. The main attack, however, was along a little-known track on the high ridges to the south-east of Narman and Oltu. In the Turkish retreat after the fearful losses at Sarıkamış, Russian soldiers advanced, with little resistance, from Ardahan over the Yalnızçam Pass to Ardanuç and then Artvin. The Turks were also in retreat down the narrow valley which comes into the Penek-Oltu valley from Kop at a point just east of Penek. They were then quickly pushed back, and the Russians reoccupied Oltu.

There was a break in the fighting in the former Georgian country until the Russian attack on Erzurum, very early in 1916. The main Russian attack had been along the valley of the Aras, from the east, but the forts along the Deve Boyun ridge, immediately east of Erzurum, resisted. Other Russian forces had fought their way past Tortum and up past the Gürcü Boğaz. These forces also occupied the mountains just east of the pass. The Turkish forts on the pass were strong, but no attack from this direction had been expected. When the forts were taken, the Turkish troops evacuated Erzurum without waiting for the city to be attacked.

In 1917, after the March revolution in Russia, the Russian front in Turkey, now well to the west (beyond Erzincan and Trebizond), began to crumble. In Georgia itself, power was seized by the local revolutionary Social Democrats. They were Mensheviks rather than Bolsheviks; in sympathy with the new Russian government, they were also independent of it. Georgian troops replaced Russian troops at the front. After the November 1917 Bolshevik revolution, however, the Turks pushed back the front, advancing along the Black Sea coast and along the Çoruh valley through İspir as well as by the Erzincan-Erzurum-Kars route to the south. They occupied the present Turkish part of Georgia and Batum in March and April 1918. It was then that the Armenian population of Artvin, Ardahan, Ardanuç and Oltu began to be eliminated: there are no Armenians there now.

The Turks, however, advanced no further in this direction. In April 1918, a Transcaucasian government was established. The state of Transcaucasia was a fragile compound of Georgians, Armenians and Tatars. From 11th-14th May, the government of Transcaucasia attempted to negotiate with the Turks at Batum. German officials were present: Germany was Turkey's ally in the war. Two weeks later (26th May), Georgia declared its independence. Georgian leaders had secretly arranged with the German representatives that a future Georgia would enjoy Germany's protection. Eventually, some German troops were sent to Georgia. Turkey could not attack the protegee of its ally. In any case, its ambitions were in Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Georgian republic acquired everything east of the old 1878-1914 border, which meant roughly Artvin, Ardanuç, Oltu and all the territory east and north of these. British forces moved in April 1919 into the areas of Kars and Ardahan after disbanding the unofficial Muslim government which had taken control of them. The British also occupied the border zone (Artvin, Ardanuç), where the "government" had had guerilla support.

But the Georgian republic could not secure League of Nations recognition as a separate state, and did not get the active help from Western powers which could have saved it from annexation by Russia. The British troops were withdrawn in July 1920; the Red Army invaded Georgia from Baku (on the Caspian) and across the Caucasus in May 1921. Just before the Russian invasion, the Turks, seeing the weak position of the Georgian republic, had demanded the cession of Ardahan and that part of Turkish Georgia which they had lost in April 1919. The Georgian government probably agreed and

could not in any case have refused. The Turks marched into Ardahan, then Artvin, then down the Çoruh to Borçka and Batum, arriving just before the Russian forces. The present border between Russia and Turkey was established at the Treaty of Kars in the same year, 1921.

This is some of the story from medieval times of Turkish Georgia and the Georgians. Can we say how a feudal state came to exist at all in Upper Iberia and other Georgian lands? More important, what is the origin of the Georgians and can they be related to any other people?

The land occupied by the various Georgian medieval kingdoms seems to have been inhabited continuously by one race, with whom it is hard to link any other people as far as racial origins go. If we take the language, Georgian seems to be in a small group which is all on its own. It is not related to any of the languages of the regions surrounding Georgia, except those of certain adjacent regions, including Laz. To this extent, the Georgians are related to no other group of peoples. Yet certain other peoples, arriving in Georgian country, have been superimposed on the natives. In particular, after the fall of the Hittite empire in about 1200 B. C., Anatolian peoples older than the Hittites seem to have fled to the Caucasus from the "Peoples of the Sea", the Hittites' conquerors. After these mixed with the population already there, tribal groupings seem to have been formed which fought against the Assyrians (12th and 9th centuries B. C.) and the Urartian kingdom. "Katarza" in the Urartian records looks like the forerunner of Katarzene or Cholarzene, the Classical name for Klardjeti. The Diavehi (its Assyrian name) seems to have been a federation of kingdoms in the Kura basin, and probably stretched from the medieval Kola (the district of Göle) to the immediate neighbourhood of L. Çıldır. Its name survives in "Djavakheti".

The Cimmerians and Scythians, invading Georgia and Anatolia in 730 B.C., seem to have occasioned the movement of more tribal federations from Anatolia to Georgia and to have weakened and broken up those already on Georgian soil. Many "Georgian" tribes found themselves, by the time of Herodotus (early fifth century B. C.) under the control of the rising Persian empire. However by 400 B. C. they had thrown off the Persians. Soon after, the tribes began to regroup into three different nations, each with a language different from but related to that of the other two. One was the region of the Black Sea coast east of Trabzon and its continuation (called at the time Colchis) from the present Turkish border north to the Caucasus: its language was Laz. Another was the Svans, who occupied an area immediately south of the Caucasus, towards its west end. And the third was Iberia, whose people were eventually called the Georgians. Their land was a rough crescent taking in, by and large, the districts considered essentially Georgian. It was, in other words, Upper Iberia, East Javakheti, Trialeti, Kartli and Kakheti. Tao was Georgian at this time: it was later taken by Armenians, only to be

retaken by Georgians in the eight and ninth century A.D. The new nation had a semi-mythical founder, King Pharnabazus, who organised his kingdom into provinces, each with a governor, appointed by the king, at its head. These were the dukes or "eristavs", and here is the beginning, however rudimentary and hidden by legend, of feudalism in Georgia. In effect, a class of tribe chiefs had been subordinated to one of their number. The reduction of these chiefs to the position of royal appointees was no doubt a borrowing from the satrap system in Persia. By the time of Strabo (first century A.D.) there was a minor nobility class beneath the "eristavs".

The Roman occupation of Georgia started in 65 B.C. with Pompey's invasion, but the monarchy continued as a "client" of Rome. Iberia was still a monarchy and still a Roman "protectorate" when it was converted to Christianity in the early fourth century A.D. The King at the time was Mirian, later St. Mirian. He was a newcomer from Persia. He founded a new dynasty in Georgia, the Chosroids, and it was into the family of the descendants of this dynasty that Adarnase, the first Georgian Bagratuni, married.

In the years following the conversion, however, the Roman empire was weakening. Iberia was given up to Persia by the treaty of 363 and the King became a vassal of the Persian king. A century and a half later there was an attempt by King Vakhtang Gorgaslan to break free of Persia with the help of Byzantium and in concert with Armenia. This failed, and the king had to escape to Byzantium. However, Vakhtang holds an important place in the history of Upper Iberia. He was the founder of Ardanuç, and was the first to treat Upper Iberia as a separate but integral principality. His two youngest sons were made archdukes (still subject to the king) of a certain area in the south-west of Iberia: the oldest son received the kingship and ruled the rest of Iberia more directly. Now the area held by the archdukes was Upper Iberia less Tao, which was part of the Armenian territory lying to the south of Upper Iberia: in other words, it was at the division of Iberia by Vakhtang Gorgaslan that the apanage was created, much of which was inherited by Adarnase, the first Bagratuni prince in Iberia. It was no coincidence that this apanage was contiguous with Byzantine territory, which lay to its west. The mother of the two archdukes who received the apanage was Vakhtang's second, Roman, wife.

Iberia remained more or less continually under Persian sovereignty until the time of the Arab invasions. The Arabs took most of Iberia in 646. One of the gaps in the Persian domination of Iberia occurred, ironically, after the Persian king had shown his strength by abolishing the Georgian monarchy (579 or 580). The Georgian nobles, no doubt tired of the direct rule of Persia, petitioned the Byzantine emperor to restore a king to them. The emperor gave them Guaram, who was descended from one of the youngest sons of Vakhtang Gorgaslan and in consequence held the fief of Upper-Iberia-minus-Tao. Guaram was also the first Curopalates in Iberia. No doubt Iberia as a whole passed for a short time into the Byzantine sphere of influence,

but it was partitioned soon after. Even then the two empires, Persia and Byzantium, fought for territory in it and influence over it. The same struggle continued between the Byzantines and the Arabs. There were kings of Iberia, but they were often appointed by whichever side was in control or wished to gain control. It was a weak, chaotic kingdom. Most of it was directly administered by the Arabs anyway. The persecutions and devastations which followed the disastrous rebellions of the Armenians and Georgians in 771–72 left it without a king and at its weakest. It was heading for this condition when Adarnase, the first Bagratuni in Iberia, came to an Iberian prince and begged for land.

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IV THE PONTUS

The valleys of the main Pontic chain's north face are divided from one another by steep, high and thickly wooded ridges. Thus the district has naturally been cut up into small districts communicating with each other only with difficulty. Travelling in the Pontus was easiest along the coast: even taking into account the succession of narrow coastal plains the easiest form of communication was by sea until the recent building of the coast road. Thus it was natural that the majority of the market towns should stand at the mouths of their respective valleys, though two or three of the towns lie half-way up some of the longer valleys. The lay churches and the castles of the Trapezuntine Pontus, therefore, lie mostly along the coast – with some striking exceptions. The monasteries on the whole were found along the coast, but some lie inland, this time in deliberately secluded and inaccessible positions.

The district containing the tiny Trapezuntine empire's most solidly loyal population was the valley now called the Değirmendere which rises behind the capital. Here, as it happens, ran the most frequented crossing of the Pontic chain, the track connecting Trebizond with the interior of Asia Minor, and carrying the commercial traffic from Trebizond to Erzurum and then Iran. In tributary valleys of the Değirmendere lie also the three great monasteries of the empire: Sumela, Vazelon and Peristereota.

To the west the shore and most of the valleys were solidly Greek, though from the early 14th century some of the valleys were being penetrated by Turcomans. Along the shore lay several cities connected by strings of castles and small fortified towns. Beyond Giresun (Greek "Kerasous") the emperors, admittedly, yielded local political sovereignty to Turkish emirs.

Beside the coast and coastal valleys descending northwards the only other imperial possession was what is now the Gümüşhane basin – in the Middle Ages no town of Gümüşhane existed. The Gümüşhane basin has a drier climate than the north face of the main Pontic mountains. Most of it is lower and hotter than the adjoining flat country, the Bayburt plains to the south-east and the upper Kelkit basin to the south. The Gümüşhane basin's main valley, that of the Harşit, is bare except at the very bottom near the river,

where orchards or poplar plantations are grown. From the crumbling slopes, yellow or whitish in colour, rise brown crags, cliffs, spikes and fists. The valleys joining the Harsit are mostly steep-sided and narrow, and apart from the heights of the Pontic range the same dry, crumbling landscape predominates. In the Middle Ages this steep and compartmentalised district was the territory of a local aristocracy. Within it the local noblemen were very much their own masters, though they were the nominal subjects of the emperors and took part in the empire's factional struggles. They fortified the district's daunting crags with castles: the castles are the district's best-preserved monuments, and those with the most powerful clue to the distinctiveness of its history.

Greek settlement of the valleys, as opposed to the coast, in fact extended eastwards only as far as Rize. Beyond was the country of the Laz, where the emperors seem to have contented themselves with maintaining castles or other fortified settlements along the coast. In certain valleys of the interior, beneath the Kaçkar mountains, lived a mysterious people who were later to be identified as the Hemşinli and who in the period of the Trapezuntine empire seem to have been organised as a small principality. The emperors seem never to have attempted to incorporate the little principality within the empire. In fact neither it nor the Laz posed any danger: there was an effective barrier to the south. This was the spires and buttresses of the Kaçkar range, the highest section of the Pontic mountains.

TRABZON

The city was founded in perhaps the sixth century B.C. by colonists from Sinope (Sinop), itself a colony of the city of Miletus on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor. A large rock rises about 800 yards from the sea and descends northwards nearly all the way to the shore. To either side are ravines. The gentle gradient of the land on all sides of the rock is due to the steep, flat-topped hill called Boztepe ("Grey Hill"), which rises at some distance to the south-east. The settlement of the sixth century B.C. may have occupied only part of the rock's upper surface.

The city was transformed when in A.D. 129 the Roman emperor Hadrian built a harbour at the northern end of the great rock. The city was now the terminus of a great military road leading eventually to the Euphrates frontier. The Romans built, or re-fortified, what became the upper citadel and middle city enclosure (A & B) at the southern end of the rock. The wall built by them was simply the city wall: it is likely that any habitation further down the rock was not protected. The expansion of the city over the gently sloping land to the east of the rock may have taken place at this time; it is possible



Trabzon

that the long, straight street (Meraş Caddesi – c) leading over this ground from the bridge over the easterly ravine is also due to the Romans: it may have been part of a grid-plan.

For the Byzantines in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages Trapezòus was no doubt important as a port and (from the 9th century) a theme capital, but in the aggregate not much seems to have been contributed to the city's stock of permanent buildings. This rather bleak period in the city's building history was punctuated in the early 11th century by the Byzantine emperor Basil II, though in the late ninth century there had been constructed, on the land east of the rock, the basilica of St. Anne. Basil was responsible for a number of churches; though the structures put in place then have not survived, some of the churches in question have successors which do. Basil II used the city as a base for several of his expeditions to Armenia and Georgia. At the time the port must have been flourishing for more than half a century as the point of loading and unloading on the route which led eventually to Iran via Erzurum.

During the period of the Trapezuntine empire the "Upper Citadel" (A) at the south end of the rock became a residential and administrative enclosure. In the "Middle City" (B) the church of the Panaghia (4) became the emperors' cathedral and coronation church. Later on (early 14th century) the "Lower City" was created by walling off the remainder of the rock and part of the ground to the west. The main harbour was no longer, however, at the northern end of the rock but at its present site in the bay about a mile to the east, where the table of land next to the coast, above steep slopes descending to the sea, gave it some protection. Between the sea to the north and the straight street now called Meraş Caddesi were the quarters granted to the Genoese and Venetian merchant communities who organised so much of the east-west trade through Trebizond in the 14th and 15th centuries. The Genoese fort ("Leontokastron" – 16) at the corner between the harbour and the north-facing part of the coast still stands.

Under the Comnene emperors easily the greatest number of churches now to be seen in the town were constructed. The emperors both endowed new monasteries and, more importantly, financed the enlargement of existing ones. In particular they undertook the construction of larger churches such as that of the monastery of Haghia Sophia on the coast two miles to the west of the town, and the present church (now a mosque) of St. Eugenios to the south-east of the great rock. Late in the period of the empire Trebizond received an influx of Armenians. These seem to have been emigrants partly from the declining city of Ani and from the district of Sivas, which was the scene of fighting year after year in the second half of the 14th century, beginning with the end of the reign of Eretna. The most important building work of the Armenians of Trebizond in this period is the monastery of Kaymaklı on a height to the south-east of the town.

After the Ottoman capture of Trebizond in 1461 the Upper Citadel and Middle City were taken over by the military, though not much re-fortification was needed. Trebizond is remarkable for the circumstance that the Ottomans chose on the whole not to build new mosques, but to convert churches. This policy is perhaps connected with the deportation of several thousand Greeks from the city soon after the conquest. Little fresh building, in fact, either of mosques or of churches, took place at all until the 19th century.

The first mosque in that century seems to have been the Çarşı Camii of 1839 (12) by the bezesten in the market area east of the rock. In the mid- and late 19th century a remarkable number of new churches rose, some in place of medieval ones, and none of any great distinction. The port, of course, was busy in the middle years of the 19th century. From 1829 several foreign consuls were stationed here. Scholars visited the capital of the one-time empire, which had been publicised and romanticised by the German Fallmerayer in the 1840's. The city was mapped by Lynch (1890's). Nevertheless none of the monuments was accurately planned before the First World War, nor were many of the surviving frescoes accurately described. The exceptions were the frescoes of the Theoskepastos nunnery, now more or less lost, and those of the monastery of St. Sabbas in the cliffs of Boz Tepe. These were photographed by the French scholar Millet, whose detailed descriptions were published in 1929. The planning of the churches had to wait until 1958, and the plan of the walls on the great rock was only recorded accurately by gradual work during the 1960's and 1970's.

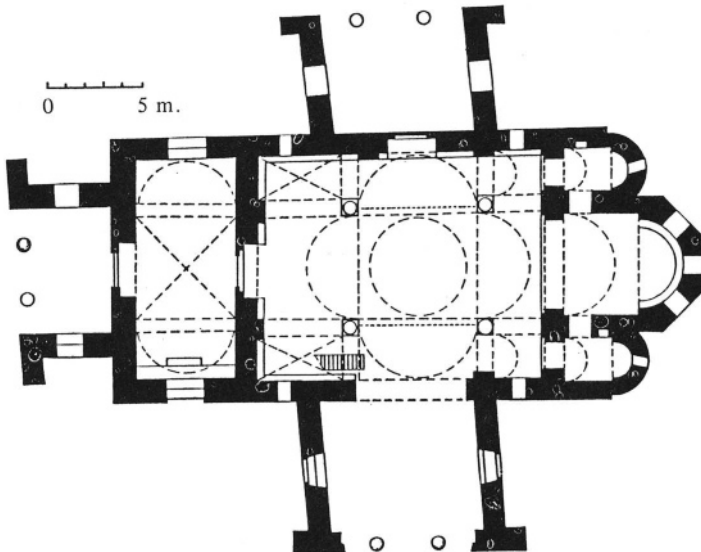
Trabzon is now a fairly prosperous and comfortable harbour town (Pl. 34) with a small university. It would undoubtedly have been choked by traffic if the shore road, which passes underneath the fort of Leontokastron (19) in a tunnel, had not been built. To make this road a few churches were knocked down: others have been allowed to fall down. Nevertheless if Trabzon is compared to other cities a remarkable amount has survived; this is due, no doubt, to the Ottoman policy of converting churches to mosques and to the large numbers of churches remaining in use until 1923.

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Hotels. Best is Usta. Those on s. side of Park Meydanı (n) are average but good value. Post office, n. side of Meraş Caddesi (m), about half-way along. **Transport.** Note the one-way system: Meraş Caddesi (m) westwards and through the middle city; eastwards traffic comes through the middle city past the vilayet office and the Orta Hisar Camii (4) and then along the much narrower street s. of Meraş Caddesi. Many buses and dolmuşes start from Park Meydanı. Bus station ("garaj") for buses to other cities is to s. of harbour. Steamers from İstanbul dock on w. side of harbour. (1979)

***** Aya Sofya. Byzantine church.**
Frescoes; interesting sculpture

By taxi dolmuş from s. side of Park Meydanı (n): 4 km. Road does a dog-leg when it reaches the hospital, left then right. Dolmuş may put you off just before road turns half left to go up hill, in which case walk 300 yds. or so straight ahead, then look r. Closes at 5.30 p.m.



Aya Sofya, church

The platform on which the church stands was the enclosure of a monastery to which the church eventually, and perhaps always, belonged. The church dates from the reign of Manuel I, Emperor of Trebizond 1238-63. Of the rest of the monastery only the bell-tower (1427) survives: it also contains frescoes, but is locked. The church, apart from its conversion, perhaps in the 16th century, to a mosque, has been used twice as a military store (19th and 20th centuries), and as a hospital for cholera victims. Its use as

a mosque caused the covering of the frescoes, first with whitewash and then with another layer of plaster: damaging some of those that survive, this nevertheless preserved all of them. Between 1957 and 1962 a British team cleaned off the whitewash and plaster and restored those frescoes or parts of frescoes which were left underneath. A mosque for the locals has been built elsewhere.

The essence of the church's design (see pls. 23, 26) is a rectangle in the middle of which stand four pillars supporting the drum beneath the dome (frescoes on the inside of the drum and on the pendentives, i.e. the four sloping sections transmitting the thrust of the drum to the pillars). Vaults then extend in four directions from the arches beneath the pendentives (cross-in-square plan). Off this main rectangle of the church are, on the east, the chancel; large porches on the north and south; on the west, a narthex (entrance hall: fine frescoes); and a west porch through which the narthex is entered.

The frescoes, though not all of them survive, are in distinct groups: in the church proper, a Passion sequence, a sequence showing the birth and presentation of the Virgin, and scenes from Christ's last days on earth. The narthex shows many of Christ's miracles; the frescoes of the north and (perhaps) south porch (and some of the sculpture on the south face of the south porch) showed Old Testament scenes; and in the west porch is a Last Judgement.

S. porch. Little left of the frescoes, but a portrait in the niche, w. side of entrance arch of porch (on a plaster layer over the original). Sculptures on the s. outside face (Pl. 24): on the long frieze just above the arches, right to left, (1) (long stone) Paradise and (probably) the creation of woman (lying in the foliage), (2) Eve tempted by the serpent, (3) Adam (r.) receiving the apple from Eve, (4) trees symbolising Paradise, with which the series left of arch starts. Then: (1) the angel at the gate of Paradise (gate has shell design), (2) the angel walking towards Eve, (3) Eve naked and penitent, (4) Adam, perhaps digging, (5) Eve, and probably Adam, sit meditating on their sin, (6) Abel murdered by Cain (probably).

Dome. At top, a faint and damaged Pantocrator (Christ as Ruler of all). Below him, an inscription from Psalm 101. Below this a chorus of angels in two streams, one on each side of the dome (Pl. 25). Those in the front row are prostrated, those in the middle row are in the act of prostrating themselves and those in the back row are leaning forward. The paucity and stillness of the figures in the two front rows set off the crowded back row and its urgent forwards movement. *Drum* (i.e. vertical cylinder directly beneath dome). Between windows, apostles, in windows themselves, prophets. The four Evangelists hold their own Gospels, the prophets scrolls. E. window, David (s.) and Solomon (n.). S. of it, St. Paul. Going clockwise: Nahum and Zachariah, St. John (damaged); Joel (e.), Ezekiel (w.); St. Luke (damaged);

Zephariah (e.: but rubbed off) and Jacob; St. Simeon Zelotes; Hosea (e.) and Micah (w.) (only heads and shoulders); St. Bartholomew. Next window space, St. Philip. Two windows from e. window: Malachi (e.) and Elias (w.) (badly damaged); then St. Matthew; St. Peter, next to St. Paul.

Pendentives. Four New Testament scenes and an Evangelist sitting at a desk, beside each: all four Evangelists are round the e.-w centre line. *South-west.* Baptism and St. Mark. The Baptist leans forward from the left. The water round Christ is not shown. The three figures to right are angels. Mark's emblem should be a lion, not the eagle here. *South-east.* The Anastasis and St. John. Left of and facing Christ (centre, holding a cross) are David and Solomon. Christ pulls up Adam, behind whom is Eve, and then probably Abel. (Christ's fluttering coat signifies his rapid descent, but is also one of a series of down and leftward diagonals, a repetition which is helped by the arrangement of colours in the picture.) The winged lion to St. John's left is really St. Mark's emblem. *North-east.* Crucifixion and St. Matthew. The figures to the left of Christ have been destroyed. Christ is dead, since his eyes are closed. Either side of his head are angels. John kneels to his right. Right of St. Matthew is his symbol, an angel flying. *North-west.* Nativity and St. Luke. In centre, Mary, Joseph's hand to her left. Christ to her right, then heads of ox and ass. Above Jesus (top of picture), the star; above the animals, angels. Of St. Luke's emblem, the bull, only one leg survives. *Chancel* (in front of main apse). Christ's last days on earth. On vault, Ascension. Christ in a circle ("mandorla") lifted by angels; n. side, Virgin in middle and 3 Apostles on either side; s. side, angel in middle and 3 Apostles either side. On n. wall, upper picture, incredulity of St. Thomas. Jesus, a little left of centre, indicates his right side with his left hand, and raises his right hand at Thomas, whose hand reaches towards Jesus (but his head missing). R., 8 Apostles. The door behind Christ indicates an interior. Lower picture, Appearance of Christ on the shores of Lake Tiberias. R., boat with 3 Apostles in it. Centre, 3 Apostles on the shore, the foremost of whom receives a loaf of bread from Christ, in whose hand is a fish. Below the three, remains of Peter's head (he is plunging into the lake). The fish by the foremost of the three's left foot are being cooked (as the Bible states). On the s. wall, the Mission of the Apostles (Christ appears to the Apostles on the Mount of Galilee). Christ, centre, with arms outstretched. Angels to Christ's right and left. Bottom of surviving part of picture, four Apostles kneeling towards Christ. The other eight would presumably have been shown. On arch, w. side of chancel, 3 medallions, Christ (centre) and two saints survive. *Semi-dome of apse.* Virgin and child enthroned, and archangels Michael (n.: holding orb and sceptre) and Gabriel.

The side chapels. Sequence concerning the Virgin and Joachim and Anne, her parents. *S. chapel.* Vault, n. side. Joachim and Anne bring gifts. They were unable to have a child and brought offerings to the Temple to pray

for one. These were rejected by the high priest on the ground that Joachim had no child. Joachim and Anne (l.) on left; temple and priest on right. S. side, both Joachim and Anne then prayed for a child, separately (shown in the picture): an angel brought to each of them, separately, the news that they were to have a child, but the angels in this picture are not, of course, bringing the news. In the semi-dome, the Virgin and Child: the heads of Joachim and Anne (s.) either side of her are preserved. *N. chapel*. Vault, s. side. The annunciation by the angel (l.) to Anne (centre). N. side. The meeting of Joachim and Anne after each has been told of the child to be born. They embrace in the centre; a servant girl looks out from a curtained doorway. *Se. vault of "square" of church* (w. of s. chapel), n. side. Birth of the Virgin. Anne reclines on the couch, left of centre. In the centre, two figures stand looking towards her, the left of which seems to be holding the baby. *S. side, vault and wall*. Presentation of the Virgin. (Difficult to make out.) Zacharias, left of centre, bends forward to receive the Virgin (centre) in front of the three pillars of the Temple. Behind the Virgin, Anne, her hand over the Virgin, and Joachim. At top of pillars, angel Gabriel flying down to Virgin, left of the pillars (separate scene).

N. wall. There would have been paintings in three rows here. Above door in middle row, fragment of Crucifixion. The skull (bottom) indicates that Adam was buried below Golgotha. Above it, part of the cross and Christ's feet. L., lower parts of three figures, probably the three Marys; right, legs of male figures. Lower picture: lower part of Anastasis. R., a robed angel leans forward. Christ's feet are in front of the angel, and below them is a devil, bound. Tympanum (half-circle directly above door); four hermit saints. (Later than most of the frescoes, since the tympanum is probably an addition and the painting less good. Perhaps the 15th century.) Under-side of door-arch. The two Sts. Simeon Stylites, the younger on the e. In "pulpits" at the top of columns: they were hermits who lived at the top of columns. (The paintings, once again, late.)

The **west section** of the church proper (w. of line of w. pillars). A Passion sequence. *Middle vault* (w. of dome). S. side, lower picture. Fragment of Jesus's Washing of the Disciples' Feet. Upper picture: Last Supper. Christ is at l. (halo). St. John's head is on His shoulder. Judas is on near side of table, r. end. N. side, upper picture: the Agony in the Garden. Bottom l., Jesus, kneeling, bends down in prayer. An angel flies down towards him. R. of the angel, part of a separate scene: Jesus raising His hand to rebuke the Disciples for sleeping. *Nw. section* (nw. of nw. pillar). Wall, topmost level: fragments of Judgement before Pilate. (L., figure pouring from a jug into a basin). Below, fragments of a Denial by Peter. (L.) at bottom, a fire, and in front of it a figure warming himself.