«TABERNACLE OF VINE»: SOME (JUDAIZING?) FEATURES IN THE OLD GEORGIAN VITA OF ST. NINO¹

St. Nino, «Mother of the Georgians», the traditional illuminator of Georgia,² is believed to have brought Christianity to Eastern Georgia around 335 (her memory is celebrated on January 14th); Coptic and Byzantine writers of later dates called her *theognosté*, «she who made God known» to the Georgians.³ The Old Georgian *Vita* of St. Nino forms a part of *Conversion of Georgia* [henceforth: MK],⁴ which served as one of the sources of the *Geor-*

¹ This article is mostly based on two papers read at the Institut für Iranistik (Freiuniversität, Berlin), 10th December 1994, and at the Eighth Caucasian Colloquium, Societas Caucasologica Europaea, University of Leiden, 7th June 1996. Earlier versions of this paper were read by Prof. Konstantin Lerner, Prof. Shaul Shaked, Prof. Michael Stone, by Dr. Mordechai Even-Vered, Mr. Michael Shneider (the Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Mr. Reuven Kipperwasser (Bar-Ilan University), Fr. Gregory [V. M.] Lourié (St. Petersburg), Prof. Ora Limor and Mr. Uri Gershovich (The Open University of Israel). I am very grateful to these persons for their remarks and insights. All the shortcomings are, of course, mine.

² In fact, of Eastern Georgia, Kartli; Western Georgia, Lazica, was Christianized by King Tsate and the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527–565) only in 523, although at least one city, Pytyus (Pityonte, Georgian Bičvinta, Russian Picunda) had a bishop as early as in 325.

³ Cf. now M. VAN ESBROEK, *Nino, Théognosta et Eusthate: un dossier hagiographique oriental des IVe–Ve siècles* (forthcoming). See also M. VAN ESBROEK, *Le dossier de sainte Nino et sa composante copte // Santa Nino et Georgia. Storia e spiritualità cristiana nel paese del Vello d'oro. Atti del I Convegno Internazionale di Studi Georgiani. Roma 30 gennaio 1999 / Ed. G. SHURGAIA (Roma 2000) 99–123* (the volume reviewed by A. Muravjev in *XB* 3 (IX) (2002) 521–523).

⁴ *Mokceṽay Kartliṣa [Mok'c'evai K'art'liṣa] // Jveli K'art'uli agiograf'iuli literaturis jeglebi [Relics of Old Georgian Hagiographical Literature]. I / Ed. I. ABULAJE (Tbilisi, 1964) 81–163.* For a new edition of the text, Cf. the recent Hebrew book by K. LERNER, *The Chronicle The Conversion of K'art'li* (Jerusalem, 2003). It should be observed that in this book no Georgian original appears, and in this article, a computerized version, without references to pages, is quoted. It should be noted as well that the Hebrew translation and indices of the Biblical quotations in K. Lerner's book were prepared by D. Shapira. The older editions and translations: E. C. ТАКАШВИЛИ, *Обращение Грузии // Сборник материалов для описания местностей и племен Кавказа XXVIII* (1900); cf. O. WARDROP, *Life of S. Nino // Studia Biblica et ecclesi-*

gian Chronicle [henceforth: KC].⁵ The two collections are compiled of compositions of different character and date, such as, for example, the oldest Georgian chronicle preserved in MK as a part of it is attributed to one deacon Gregory, and perhaps goes back to the seventh century. The whole of the *Vita* of St. Nino found in MK was edited in the ninth century, but the sources of the compiler go back to material written at least as early as the seventh century.⁶ The question of interrelationship between MK and KC will not be dealt with here; however, it is worth notice that Leonti Mroveli, the redactor of KC proper (which forms only one of the parts of KC⁷), was placed in the eighth

astica 1 (1909) 1–66; D. M. LANG, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London, 1956) 13–39; see also G. PÄTSCH, *Die Bekehrung Georgiens Mokcevey Kartlisay* (Verfasser unbekannt) // *Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de kartvélogie* 33 (1975) 288–337. For theoretizing about a Jewish setting, cf. T. MGALOBlishvili, I. GAGOSHIDZE, *The Jewish Diaspora and Early Christianity in Georgia* // *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus. Iberica Caucasia*. Vol. 1 / Ed. T. MGALOBlishvili (Richmond, 1998) (Curzon Caucasus World) 39–58. Compare also J. VAN OORT, *Judaeo-Christianity: the Rôle of the Hebrew Diaspora in the Origin of Christianity in the Roman North Africa* // *Proceedings of the International Symposium: Early Christianity and Georgia*. Tbilisi, Mtskheta, October 1991 (Tbilisi, 1992) 1–22; J. VAN OORT, *Jewish Elements in the origin of North African Christianity* // *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus. Iberica Caucasia*... 97–105; M. VAN ESBROEK, *La place de Jérusalem dans la «Conversion de la Géorgie»* // *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus. Iberica Caucasia*... 59–74; K. TSERETELI, *Armazian Script* // *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus. Iberica Caucasia*... 155–164. A new, older version of MK was recently found at St. Catahrina.

⁵ *Картлис Цховреба* [K'art'lis C'xovreba]. I–II / Ed. S. QAUXCŠIŠVILI (Tbilisi, 1955); quoted (vol. I) as KC. See also F. BROSSET, *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle* (St Petersburg, 1856); cf. also W. E. D. ALLEN, *History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932; repr.: New York, 1971); G. PÄTSCH, *Das Leben Karli's. Eine Chronik aus Georgien, 300–1200* (Leipzig, 1985); R. W. THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation* / Transl. with Introd. and Comm. (Oxford, 1996). On Georgian literature in general: M. TARCHNISHVILI, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur* (Vatican, 1955); G. DEETERS, *Georgische Literatur* // *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Abt. 1. Bd. 7: *Armenisch und kaukasische Sprachen* (1963) 129–155; K. SALIA, *La littérature géorgienne* // *Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de kartvélogie*. Vol. 17–26 (1964–1969), esp. Vol. 17–18 (1964) 28–61; H. FÄHNRIch, *Die georgische Literatur* (Tbilisi, 1981); R. BARAMIDZE, *Die Anfänge der georgischen Literatur* // *Georgica* (Jena, 1987) 39–43; D. RAYFIELD, *The Literature of Georgia. A History* (Oxford, 1994).

⁶ The Šatberdi MS is from 973 CE. For dating the older strata of this composition, cmp. Z. ALEKSIDZE, *Sur le vocabulaire de la Conversion du Kartli: miap'ori, niap'ori ou minap'ori?* // *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan* / Ed. J.-P. MAHÉ, R. W. THOMSON (Atlanta, GA, 1997) 47–52.

⁷ Only two or three (the first, the second, and probably, the fourth) of the six parts of KC were edited by him.

or the eleventh century,⁸ while the *History of the King Vaxtang Gorgasal*, another composition also found in KC (the third part) and describing the events from the 5th–6th centuries, was written in the eighth or the ninth century. The final redaction of KC was made only in the 18th century in Moscow, by the exiled Georgian *carevicš* (Russian for «prince-of-blood») Vahuš-ti (or, Vaxušti) Bagrationi (Bagration).

As noted by many scholars, the version of the *Vita* of St. Nino in MK, as compared to that of KC, preserved numerous traits going back to the period of the Georgian history in which her Christian tradition was not yet finally fixed. Here some episodes allegedly reflecting this primitive stage of the Georgian Christianity will be dealt with.

Georgian traditions attribute the Christianization of Georgia exclusively to St. Nino and to her pupils, members of the local Jewish community (stressing the role of the female followers). Later, the so-called «Syriac fathers» were credited with establishment of Christian institutions. Nevertheless, the Georgian historical memory could not have ignored the all-too-obvious role played by St. Gregory the Parthian, the Illuminator (*Lousaworičš*; ο φωστήρ) of the Armenians,⁹ and the legendary figure of St. Nino, whose name is attested not earlier than the seventh century, served with the Georgians to combine, or «to telescope», various layers of traditions about the early stages of the Georgian conversion. So she was said to be the daughter of Zaboulon / Zabilon of Cappadocia (who is said to vanquish the *Branjis*¹⁰ at the *Catalaunian Fields¹¹ and to baptize them thereafter!), to be brought up in the Armenian community in Jerusalem, she speaks Armenian and the language of the Jews,¹² has links

⁸ K. KEKELIDZE (K. K'EK'ELIJE), *Jveli kartuli lit'eraturis ist'oria*. I (Tbilisi, 1960) 236ff., dated the work as written in the 1070s.

⁹ The literature on the subject is extensive, cf., e. g., P. PEETERS, *Les débuts du Christianisme en Géorgie d'après les sources hagiographiques* // *AB* 40 (1932) 5–58. As to the term «Illuminator» and its Greek and Georgian parallels foreign to the normal Armenian usage, cf. Н. МАПП, *Крещение армян, грузин, абхазов и аланов святым Григорием (арабская версия)* // *Записки Восточного Отделения* (thereforth *ЗВО*) XVI [1904–1905] (1906) 63–212, s. 151–152.

¹⁰ Apparently, a later distortion for *Franks, cf. Н. МАПП, *Боги языческой Грузии по древне-грузинским источникам* // *ЗВО* XIV (1902) 28; cf. also Н. МАПП // *ЗВО* (1907) 319; the Huns of Attila are meant, of course, contaminated with the later legends about Christianization of Gallia from Cappadocia, cf. *Ibid.* 319–323.

¹¹ *451 CE! KC and MK spell it *Patalan*; was this Zabilon modeled on Bacurius, the Georgian prince and Roman general, the source (*circa* 380 CE) of the information of Rufinus (*circa* 403 CE) on the *captiva* (*St. Nino) who had converted Kartli? For Bacurius, cf. *Rufinus*, 10.11, 1.33 (The *Church History* of Rufinus of Aquileia. Books 10 and 11 / Transl. by Ph. A. AMIDSON, S. J. (Oxford, 1997) 20–23, 88).

¹² Which seems to be Aramaic, though the compiler meant Hebrew, the language of the Bible. KC 95.1 is less implicit about her speaking this language, and one is

to the first Patriarch of Jerusalem, Jubenal (422–458)¹³ and St. Helene¹⁴ (and even some vague ones to St. George the Cappadocian Soldier!), is connected to Armenian virgin martyrs Rip^ʿsimē, Gayanē and others (who are commemorated on October 5th and whose connection to St. Gregory the Parthian is a subject to debates).¹⁵ In other words, she represents simultaneously the Judeo-Christian, Armenian, Cappadocian, Jerusalemite and Byzantine origins of Georgian Christendom. In Georgian scholarship of the last decades there is a tendency to consider frequent references to Jews or Jewish traditions scattered in MK and KC as a proof of millennia-long ties between Jews and Georgians, and these texts were even used, by the Georgian hosts, several years ago, during official visits of high Israeli officials to Tbilisi, to cement the relations between two nations. The view of MK as a Judeo-Christian document of early times has received recently some support from other quarters, too. Nevertheless, in this author's opinion, the Georgian accounts about St. Nino can be understood mostly against the background of the Armenian traditions about the conversion of Armenia — and Iberia and Albania — by St. Gregory and the problematic traditions about the Armenian holy virgins, and I have plans to publish my investigation of this subject on another occasion.¹⁶ However, on this stage the importance of the study of the vocabulary and imagery of St. Nino accounts must be emphasized, and here we have a good parallel with the case of St. Gregory the Parthian as reflected by the testimonies of Agat^ʿangelos / Agathangelos and *Vita Gregorii*.¹⁷ Neverthe-

inclined to think (cf. THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasian History...* 103) that she was *learning* Hebrew.

¹³ Who is said to «have the hope of all Christians in the Church of the Holy Resurrection (Anastasis)» and to pray there; Anastasis, built in 543, was the focus of Chalcedonite sympathizers, cf. В. М. ЛУРЬЕ [V. M. LOURIÉ], Из Иерусалима в Аксум через храм Соломона: архаичные предания о Сионе и Ковчеге Завета в составе *Кебра Негест* и их трансляция через Константинополь [From Jerusalem to Aksum through the Temple of Solomon: archaic traditions related to the Ark of Covenant and Sion in the Kebra Nagast and their translation through Constantinople] // *XB 2* (VIII) (2001) 137–207, s. 176.

¹⁴ According to KC 80–81, St. Nino not only has baptized R^ʿipsimē (see further), but even almost converted St. Helene!

¹⁵ On the Armenian side, [pseudo]Movses Xorenac^ʿi in the tenth century was the first to connect St. Nino (Nunē) with Rip^ʿsimē and Gayanē, apparently under the impact of the already recorded Georgian traditions.

¹⁶ D. SHAPIRA, *Old Georgian Echoes of the Armenian Agathangelos Cycle* (forthcoming).

¹⁷ See, e. g., G. GARITTE, *Documents pour l'étude du livre d'Agathange* (Citta del Vaticano, 1946); G. WIDENGREN, *Sources of Parthian and Sasanian History* // *The Cambridge History of Iran 3* (2): *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods* / Ed. EHSAN YARSHATER (Cambridge—London etc. 1983) 1261–1283; G. WINKLER, *Our Present Knowledge of the History of Agat^ʿangelos and its Oriental Versions* // *Réarm*

less, the St. Nino traditions are no more historical than, *e. g.*, those of the Ethiopian *Kebrâ Negâst*,¹⁸ and they should be studied, as a whole, in a general context of the split with the Armenian Mother Church in the early 7th century, and, as a consequence, of building an alternative, Judaizing, set of traditions claiming for the apostolic status of the Georgian Church.¹⁹

NS 14 (1980) 125–141. This work was composed of several independent parts put together after 456 CE (WINKLER, *Our Present Knowledge of the History of Agatʿangelos...* 125: after 450–451), Agathangelos has Faustos Buzand as one of its major sources (R. W. THOMSON, *Agathangelos: History of the Armenians* (Albany, NY, 1976) xvi). Winkler (*Our Present Knowledge of the History of Agatʿangelos...* 137) stated that these texts «show tendentious insistence on the connections of Grigor with Cappadocia, and this despite the overwhelming traces of ties with Syria... Prior to the Christianization of Armenia through Cappadocia, there must have been a strong missionary activity from Syria which has come down to us only in obscure legendary reports, and which only can be detected through a careful investigation of the vocabulary...».

¹⁸ C. BEZOLD, *Kebrâ Nagast, Die Herrlichkeit der Könige. Nach dem Handschriften in Berlin, London, Oxford und Paris zum ersten Mal im äthiopischen Urtext hrsg. und mit deutscher Uebersetzung versehen* (Münich, 1905); D. A. HUBBARD, *The Literary Sources of the Kebrâ Nagast* (The University of St. Andrews, 1956), a PhD Thesis under supervision of Prof. E. Ullendorf; I. SHAHID, *The Kebrâ Nagast in the Light of Recent Research* // *Mus* 89 (1976) 133–178; cf. also the important study, В. М. ПЛАТОНОВ, *Кебра Нагаст (Основные идеи эфиопского династического романа XIV в.)* // *Палестинский сборник* 28 (91), (1986) 45–50. Cf. now ЛУРЬЕ, *Из Иерусалима в Аксум через храм Соломона...* 137–207.

¹⁹ Judaizing tendencies were prominent in many of the national churches outside the Roman Empire, and in Armenia they were perhaps no less significant than in Aksum: beside legends, of a later date, about Jewish descent of certain noble families, we should enumerate the legendary origin of the Armenian Arsacids from Abraham and Keturah, remnants of royal polygamy, hereditary character of the office of the head of the Church, later called «catholicos», and of the bishops, etc. Both Armenian and Georgian literacy began to flourish around the mid-5th century; until then, their languages of religious education were Syriac or Greek. It was in the context of the struggle against Nestorius and his views that the national scripts were invented, apparently, by St. Mesrop (cf. P. PEETERS, *Jérémie, évêque de l'Ibérie perse* (431) // *AB* 41/1–2 (1933) 5–33). Fighting against the armies of Yazdigird II the Sasanian, the Armenians and Georgians did not participate actively in the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and did not endorse the decisions made there, wrongly identifying them later with the teachings of Nestorius (cf. W. H. C. FREND, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (Cambridge University Press, 1979 (1972¹) 313. It should be remembered that Nestorius' supporters believed that their views were vindicated by the Chalcedon Council.) Another reason for the Armenian rejection of Chalcedon was purely linguistic: the Armenian, at that time, had only one term, *pʿnout ʿiwn*, for both *physis* and *hypostasis*, and only much later a new term for *physis*, *ew ʿiwn* or *koιout ʿiwn*, was coined).

They accepted the compromising Henotikon of the Emperor Zeno (481/2CE) under the Katholikos Babgen (490–515), apparently, in 491 (cf. now also H. Г. ГАРСОЯН, Был ли Собор в Валааршапате в 491 году? // *XB* 2 (VIII) (2001) 116–120), but when the Imperial Church returned to the Chalcedon formula in 518, they rejected it, and in 554 or 555 the Greek Church itself — apparently, on hierarchial basis, — not only her doctrine, was anathematized at the Second Duin Synod under the Katholikos Narsēs II (548–557). Beginning from 591, Persarmenia, Albania and Kartli were under direct Persian domination, and the Byzantine established a Chalcedonite Armenian Catholicosate at Awan, to confront the Monophysite one at Persian Duin (H. Г. АДОНИЦ, Армения в эпоху Юстиниана. Политическое состояние на основе нахарарского строя (Ереван, 1971) 343–344; В. А. АРУТЮНОВА-ФИДАНЯН, Армяно-византийская контактная зона (X–XI вв.). Результаты взаимодействия культур (Москва, 1994) 60–61). In 606–608, the Georgians, under their Katholikos Kyrion, adopted Byzantine Orthodoxy, to which they had been inclined since the late 6th century, and it was then that the deep cultural split between the Armenians and the Georgians began, after Abraham I the Armenian (607–615) excommunicated Kyrion and the Georgians at Dwin in 609. Cf. UXTANĒS EPISKOPOS, Patmout'iwn Hayoc^c, hatouac^c erkrord. Patmout'iwn bažanman Vrac^c i Hayoc^c (Vałaršapat, 1871); *Girk^c T'it'oc^c* [Book of Letters] / Ed. Y. IZMEREANC^c (Tiflis, 1901) (translation of the material relevant for this discussion in: N. GARSOĪAN, L'église arménienne et le grand schisme d'Orient (Lovanii, 1999) (CSCO 574; Subsidia 100) 516–583; see also pp. 355–398); L. MELIK'SET^c-BEK, Vrac^c albyourner Hayastani i hayeri masin (Erevan, 1934); UXTANESI, Ist'oris gamoq'opisat Kartvelta da Somextgan / Ed. Z. ALEKSIDZE (Tbilisi, 1975) [non vid]; ARSENI SAPARELI, Ganq'opisatwis Kartvelta da Somexta [The Split between Georgia and Armenia] / Ed. Z. ALEKSIDZE (Tbilisi, 1980). However, there were also numerous Armenian Chalcedonians, primarily, within the Empire (Byzantine Armenia); though the literature on this subject is vast, one may be referred to the classical article by Н. Я. МАПП, Аркаун, монгольское название христиан в связи с вопросом об армянах-халкидонитах // *ВВ* 12/1–4 (1906) 1–68, now republished in Кавказский культурный мир и Армения (Ереван, 1995) 209–276; А. П. КАЖДАН, Армяне в составе господствующего класса Византии XI–XII вв. (Москва, 1974) 145 ff.; see now АРУТЮНОВА-ФИДАНЯН, Армяно-византийская контактная зона...; cf. also, e. g., V. A. ARUTJUNOVA-FIDANJAN, The Ethno-confessional Self-awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians // *Réarm* 21 (1988–1989) 345–363; see also В. П. СТЕПАНЕНКО, Пакурианы в Византии. К дебатам об этнической принадлежности т. н. армяно-иверских фамилий // *XB* 2 (VIII) (2001) 255–276. An important Armeno-Chalcedonite source from the 7th century is *Narratio De Rebus Armeniae* (see G. GARITTE, La Narratio De Rebus Armeniae (Louvain, 1952) (CSLO 132, Subsidia 4); compare now G. GARITTE, La source grecque des «Trente articles» géorgiens contre les Arméniens // *Handes Amsorya* 1–2 (1976). On Armenian Chalcedonites in the land of Vr'kan (Kartli, Georgia) *marzpanate* who refused to become converted to Monophysism by order, see V. ARUTJUNOVA-FIDANJAN, «Ի Սմբապաթ» or «Ի Սթափան»? («i Smbatai» or «i Spahan»? Sebēos, ch. 25) // From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan / Ed. J.-P. MAHÉ, R. W. THOMSON (Atlanta, GA, 1997) 151–164, esp. 161–162. On Armeno-Georgian Church relations in the 6th century, cf. important remarks in: M. TARCHNIŠVILI, Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire

I

First, Rip^csimē, Gayanē, St. Nino and others 50 (or 49, i. e. 50 except Nino)²⁰ holy virgins, having been expelled from the Roman Empire,²¹ ar-

ancienne de l'église de Géorgie // *Mus* 60 (1947) 29–50, and in: B. MARTIN-HISARD, *Jalons pour une histoire du culte de Sainte Nino (fin IVe–XIIIe s. // From Byzantium to Iran... 53–78, s. 69–70. Under Monothelite Heraclius, the Armenian Church reunited though with the Catholic (629), but after the Arab Muslim onslaught, they relapsed into their national church and again denounced Chalcedon at Dwin in 645. But the final separation followed only the Manazkert Synod of 726, see Адонц, Армения в эпоху Юстиниана... 338; АРТУНОВА-ФИДАНИЯ, Армяно-византийская контактная зона... 62. As a result, and given the traditional rivalry between the two nations, the mere memory of the form of Christianity once shared by Georgians and Armenians (and Albanians) was suppressed in Georgian sources, and in fact, practically all the extant Georgian literature originates after the split. During the reign of Husraw II Parwēz, the Sasanian Empire favored the Monophysites rather than the traditionally tolerated Nestorian branch of Christianity (dubbed «the Church of Persia»), presumably, because of the influence of Šīrīn, the Armenian wife of the King of Kings immortalized by Persian poets (see В. Г. ЛУКОНИН, Древний и раннесредневековый Иран. Очерки истории культуры (Москва, 1987) («Хосров II и Анахита», pp. 177–206) 205), so, in 614, after Jerusalem was captured by the Sasanian Persians, they tried to impose the anti-Chalcedonian leadership on all the Christians in their realm, including those in the territories conquered from the Byzantines. We know next to nothing about the effect this Imperial decision had in Georgia; however, in 625/6, when Heraclius and his «Khazar» allies besieged Tbilisi, the city was defended by its local Georgian Christian ruler subject to Iran, and by a Persian garrison under a Persian officer. It seems that the genuine account of these events was lost, if it ever existed in a written form in Georgian, because for the later Georgian readers the prospect that their ruler had probably abandoned what was seen since then as the core of Georgian identity, was deemed to be offensive (on traces of the pre-Chalcedonite Christianity in Georgia in the context of Jerusalemite traditions, compare interesting remarks in: ЛУРЬЕ, Из Иерусалима в Аксум через Храм Соломона... 177–178 and n. 101; as I tried to demonstrate (D. SHAPIRA, Armenian and Georgian Sources on the Khazars: A Re-Evaluation // *Proceedings of the First International Khazar Colloquium* (in press)), Georgian accounts about the joint Byzantine-«Khazar» siege of Tbilisi drew upon Armenian sources and were composed long after the events they describe, with the intention to conceal the anti-Chalcedonite character of the rulers' Christianity.*

²⁰ Thirty five, in Armenian accounts.

²¹ «After the Synod of Nicea» (325 CE), adds MS B; the reason for expulsion of Christians from a Christian Empire remains obscure. As to the date, that's the date the Georgian text of MK provides. There is pointless to stress again and again that the chronology of the events connected with St. Nino — or even with St. Gregory — is hopelessly wrong, but one could recall that Aristakes, the son of St. Gregory, attended, as Armenia's representative, the Nicean Council in 325. According to the Armenian sources of St. Nino's *Vita*, namely, the History of Agathangelos, the holy virgins fled from Diocletian, whose protégé Trdat was.

rived in Armenia and stayed there, as properly to the «daughters of the bridal chamber of Christ», in the «garden booths» of the Armenian, still pagan, King Trdat. Few days later, the holy virgins were martyred by King Trdat, because of his limitless lust, on the day of Passover (the 15th of the first month, on Friday), and it was only St. Nino who survived among the rose thorns, because at this time the roses and almonds budded (MS B).²² The wording is a contamination of Ecclesiastes 12.5 and Song of Songs, 6.11, 7.13; «almonds» is taken from Ecclesiastes (Song of Songs has «pomegranades»), while the context of Song of Songs' passages may be easily understood as containing references to the «booths» and bridal chamber, with the contexts of Eccl. and Song of Songs 7.13 understood as speaking of (martyr) death.²³ The martyrdom of the virgins in their bride rooms makes them, of course, the perfect brides of Christ, and we will return to this subject later. We can state here but in passing that the very developed flower imaginery in Nino's traditions has many Middle Eastern, including Syriac and Iranian, parallels and deserves a special study. As to the date of the martyrdom, obviously modeled upon the death of Jesus, one should note the remarkable emphasis on the features of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, whose motifs were early contaminated, in the Gospel tradition, with those of Passover (compare Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, with *hossanas* sung and *lulabs* waven).

After her arrival (from Armenia) in Urnisi, Kartli, St. Nino stays for a month with the local Jewish community there, at their *bagini* (sanctuary, synagogue), «because she spoke the Jewish language», as the text puts it; her

²² According to the same MS B, St. Nino experienced a vision of a deacon descending from heaven, with an censer in his hand, which was spreading fragrant smoke; the deacon was receiving the ascending souls of the martyrs. We will return to this later. St Nino asked God why should she be abandoned amongst asps and vipers, but the Voice answered here that likewise shall be her own ascend, when all these thorns around shall become rose-leaves. This account, appearing also in KC 84–85, is ascribed in MK to Salome of Ujarma, one of the early pupils of St. Nino, who was said to be the daughter of Trdat of Armenia and the wife of Rev, son of Mirian of Kartli; she is said to be the authoress of those parts of MK most flavored with parallels to the Agathangelos Cycle; however, she is unknown to the Armenian tradition; moreover, her name is Jewish / New Testamental, a strange feature for a daughter of a pagan king; we even know that the members of dynasty of her father continued to bear pagan names for generations after the conversion; queens and princesses bore Iranian names as well, together with the majority of the bishops, cf. N. G. GARSOĬAN, Prolegomena to a Study of the Iranian Elements in Arsacid Armenia // *Handes Amso-rya. Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie* XC (1976) 176–234 (p. 13–14 n. 34; reprinted in N. G. GARSOĬAN, *Armenia Between Byzantium and the Sasanians* (London, 1985) (Variorum Reprints) Paper N. X).

²³ Prof. Ora Limor kindly call my attention to Isaiah 1:8, וּנְתַתֶּרָה בַּת צִיּוֹן כְּסֹכֶה, בְּכֶרֶם. This wording, from a Christian point of view, fits entirely the setting.

intention was «to learn the strength of their earth» (MS A, Šatberdi). But according to MS B, Čeliši, she first came to Mc^cxet^a,²⁴ the capital city of Kartli; while living there for three years, she was secretly praying in the brambling bush, located outside the walls, and she erected there a cross made of vine twigs (KC ignores this episode). Later this cross became known in Georgia as «the Cross of St. Nino», «the Vine-Cross» or «the Cross of the Branches» (*jvari sasxlevisa*), highly venerated by Georgians;²⁵ as to the spot of Nino's prayer before the vine cross, on its place is now the altar of the Upper Church, being thus considered, together with the «Live-Giving Cross» transferred there later, the most sacred relics of the early Georgian Christianity.

Later on, she witnessed the statue of the supreme sword-bearing god of Mc^cxet^a, Armazi,²⁶ having been shattered by rage of God, in accordance to Nino's prayer, during a pagan festival. People fled in turmoil, while Nino

²⁴ The Armenian author of uncertain date, Moses Khorenac'i, mentions [R. W. THOMSON, *Moses Khorenats'i. History of the Armenians. Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources* (Cambridge, Mass.—London, 1980) II. 86] Nunē, one of the scattered holy helpers of Rip'simē, as the one who escaped to Mc^cxet^a, the capital city of the Iberians. She is depicted as an auxiliary to St. Gregory. The question of the genesis of the St. Nino legend and its relation to the Rip'simē / St. Gregory tradition is a complicated one and is still open.

²⁵ One cannot but get reminded of the Mandaean *drafša*, which is a kind of cross with something similar to a *tallith* hung over it.

²⁶ Armazi's idol was erected under Parnavaz, the second Georgian king, in legendary times. The names of many ancient Georgian kings and their officials bore were of Scytho-Sarmatian origin (Ksefarnug, Saumarg, Vaxtang (kings); Radamist (prince), Sharagas, Zevax, Aspaurok (pitiaxš-s); Iodmangan (chancellor), cf. В. И. АБАЕВ, *Скифо-сарматские наречия // Основы иранского языкознания. I* (Москва, 1979) 272–365 (p. 361, n. 33). In Scythian legends, as reported by Herodot, iv 62, their Ares was seen as an antique iron sword on a platform surrounded by a huge wood pile to whom prisoners were sacrificed, with their blood poured over the sword. Such a «temple» was said to have been placed in the capital of every district in the vast territories of Scythia. A legend with similar motifs was told in Western China about the origin of the local Scythian (Saka) Buddhist dynasty to Hsu'eng-tsang, a Chinese pilgrim ca. 640 C.E. in Uḡḡiyāna (M. L. CARTER, *A Scythian Royal Legend from Ancient Uḡḡiyāna // Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 6 (1993) 67–78, p. 69). Though not without some Biblical (Genesis 2) impact, the sword of Armazd in Mc^cxet^a must be of the same Scythian origin. The name of the supreme god of the ancient Georgians, Armazi, is generally taken to be derived from the Iranian Ahūra Mazdā- (Н. Я. МАРР, *Боги языческой Грузии // Записки Восточного Отделения Императорского Русского Археологического Общества* 14 (2–3) (1902); С. С. КАКАБАДЗЕ, *К вопросу о столице Древней Картли (Иберии) Армази-Мцхета // Эллинистический Ближний Восток, Византия и Иран* (Москва, 1967) 112–123). There is however another opinion, deriving the name of this god from Asianic languages [Hittite etc.] (М. СЕРЕТЕЛИ, *The Hittite Land, Its Peoples, Languages, History* (Constantinople, 1924) 84 [Georgian], who was unavailable to me; Ш. И. АМИРАНАШВИЛИ, *История грузинского искусства. I*

found a beryl which was put in the idol's eye. Then she rested on the mountain's ridge near the old castle where stood a booth, *sagrilobeli*, built by king Bratman, under whom Jews first arrive in Mc⁶xet'a, according to MK. The booth, *sagrilobeli*, stood near the tree of *brinj*²⁷ accacia.²⁸ There she prays before the cross she has erected, and it was on the sixth day of the month when Immanuel shew on Mt. Tabor the likeness of His Father to the heads of the living and the dead, it is, the Feast of Transfiguration.²⁹ (We should remind, to return to this later, that at Jesus' transfiguration, he, Moses and Elijah sat in the *booths*.) It is important to note that in the preceding and following scenes, roses, vines and other plants and flowers are frequently referred

(Тбилиси, 1944) 56; А. И. БОЛТУНОВА, К вопросу об Армази // *Вестник древней истории* 4 (1949) 235ff.; Г. А. МЕЛИКИШВИЛИ, К истории Древней Грузии (Тбилиси, 1960). According to M. ANDRONIKASHVILI, *Studies in Iranian-Georgian Linguistic Contacts. I* (Tbilisi 1966) 548, 570, Armazi is an Iranian loan of the Achaemenian epoch, from Old Persian A(h)ūra Mazdā: «the Georgian language avoids congestion of consonants at the end of a word — Vaštasab from Vištāsp, Luarsab from Lōhrasp, Artavaz from Artavazd, Armaz from Aramazd, etc.» (the case of Artavaz from Artavazd is especially important here). The name of the second god, Zaden-i, was connected to the Iranian word *Yazata*-; it seems that the particular Georgian form is from Parthian Plural, (**ya*-)*zadēn*, which is very close in meaning to the Middle Persian *yazdān*, sometimes used in a singular sense.

²⁷ The Georgian word, which means also «rice» and is Persian in origin, can be explained as the result of a mistranslation of Syriac ܪܝܙܐ or Arabic ܪܝܙܐ (*arzā* / *ʾarz* means «cedar», ܪܝܙܐ / *ʾurzā* means «rice»).

²⁸ The tree from which the Biblical tabernacle was built, Hebrew שִׁטָּה, was generally rendered as *accacia*.

²⁹ Cf. Mat 17.1 and parallels: the transfiguration of Jesus took place six days after the events described previously in the New Testament text; on Transfiguration, cf., e. g., H. RIESENFELD, *Jésus Transfiguré...* (København, 1947) (*Acta Seminarii Neotest. Upsaliensis* XVI); J. A. MCGUCKIN, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition* (Lewiston/Queenston, 1986) (*Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 9); M. SAUCHOT, *L'homélie pseudo-chrysostomienne sur la Transfiguration CPG 4724, BHG 1975...* (Frankfurt am Main—Bern, 1981) (*Publications Universitaires Européennes. Sér. XXIII. Théologie* 151); F. BEST, *The Transfiguration. A Select Bibliography* // *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 24 (1981) 157–161; Joie de la Transfiguration d'après les Pères d'Orient / Textes présentés par Dom Michel COUNE (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1985) (*Sp. orientale* 39); F. REFOULÉ, *Jésus, nouveau Moïse, ou Pierre, nouveau Grand Prêtre?* // *Revue théologique de Louvain* 24 (1993) 145–162; B. E. REID, *The Transfiguration. A Source — and Redaction-Cultural Study of Luke 9:28–36* (Paris, 1993) (*Cahiers de la Revue biblique* 32); J. E. FOSSUM, *The Image of the Invisible God. Essays of the influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christianity* (Freiburg Schweiz—Göttingen, 1995) (*Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus* 30). I am extremely grateful to V. M. Lourié for these and other references, as much as for his sensitive and sympathetic reading of two versions of this paper and sharing with me his ideas and knowledge.

to.³⁰ Then, led by a vision of a man of light, St. Nino goes down to the Royal Garden,³¹ where she finds, under cypresses, «a place of vines prepared with love».³² St. Nino works wonders and experiences visions. Then Queen Nana

³⁰ It seems that Nino, whose name alliterates with that of Anahit, the pagan / Zoroastrian patroness of Armenia, was born to explain the customs of the Christianized *Vardavar*, corresponding to the Christian feast of Transfiguration as celebrated in Georgia. This pre-Christian feast was placed in 551 CE on the seventh Sunday after Pentacost (becoming thus the second «Šabhu'oth», Weeks), coinciding, in this way, with the ancient Zoroastrian New Year, *Nawasard*, celebrated by then on August the 6th. The *Vardavar* / *Nawasard* / Transfiguration celebrations are characterized by sprinkling of water, offering branches and flowers to the Virgin Mary and consecration of vines. In some places people used to drink beverages in gardens. J. Russell has noted that «such practices may go to the worship of Anahit and Nanē» (the underlining is mine), noting also the role played by roses in Armenian festivities on that day (the name *Vardavar*, according to Russell, contains this word as its first element, which was, however, frequently used in Iranian as the term for any flower; see J. R. RUSSELL, The Etymology of Armenian Vardavar // *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 13 (1992) 63–69 (p. 69)); cf also S. H. TAQIZADEH, The Iranian Festivals Adopted by the Christians and Condemned by the Jews // *Bulletin of the School of the Oriental and African Studies* 9 (1940–1942) 632–653 (pp. 643–647). V. M. Lourié has noted, however, in a letter, that as to Vardavar, «its Armenian date (7th week after Pent.) corresponds to the ancient (and even modern Nestorian) date of the Twelve Apostle Feast (translated in the 6th century to June 29); so, we have to take *vard-* in another (homonymic) meaning of “(magical) word” combined with a component with a meaning of “fire”. So, *Vardavar* has to be etymologized as “word(s) of fire”, alluding to the Apostolic preaching after the tongues of fire at the Pentecost, and the later (Armenian) etymology through the meaning of “rose” is a pure popular etymology» (В. М. ЛУРЬЕ, Около Солунской легенды. Из истории миссионерства в период монофелитской унии // *Славяне и их соседи*. Вып. 6 (1996) 23–52). I believe Lourié is thinking of the first element of the word *vardapet*.

³¹ Later, after his conversion by St. Nino, King Mirian built in this garden a wooden church (the Lower Church), with the Column of Cross of Light; this church was called «the holy of holies», as in Aksum. Only priests were allowed to enter this church and see the Cross hidden by a curtain (again, a situation very reminiscent of that in Ethiopia). Under King Arč'il and Archbishop Iona this column was transferred to the Upper (Gareubani) Church, whose altar was on the previous place of St. Nino's «brambling bush».

³² The *sagrilibeli* of Bratman as standing near the *Brinj* is mentioned, in MK, in the account of Sidonia. In the version of KC 92.13–14, she sat under the *brinj* [the Armenian version of the Georgian text: *brinč*] (accacia) tree, where king Bartam (Bratman in MK) made shade [*sagrili*]; as in MK, it was there that she made her cross. Then, St. Nino goes down to the Royal Garden (where King Mirian will have later built the Lower Church), where she finds, under cypresses, a place of vines prepared with love. This motif seems to be a variation of the episode from the flight of St. Rip'simē and her companions, when they lived in wine-presses (*sac'nexelt'a venahisat'a*) in the royal garden in Dvin (KC 82.10).

converts in the brumbling bush of St. Nino, and later, King Mirian, while going hunting in the forests, is said to have lost his way in the mountains, darkness has befallen on him, but God turned King's mind to truth and light and he knew God. The King, believed by the people of Mc'xeť'a to be lost and most probably dead, returns to his city in peace, welcomed by the Queen and the people and preceedes directly to the brumbling bush, where St. Nino was praying at that hour as usual. There he acknowledged God, converted and built churches in the brumbling bush of St. Nino and in the place of his garden. More visions are described, with a Column of Light made of a Lebanon cedar descending from heavens to his proper place in the church of the royal garden. The Column of Light, or Life-giving Column, became renown for its many wonders and salvation, later to be hidden from the sight by a wooden box (*kibot*) built by Mirian. Then three crosses are made and erected in the church, and all the inhabitants of the city have seen every night a cross of fire crowned with stars descending from the heaven and standing above the church, etc.; more similar appearances are described in our text later.³³ Then, as is well known, more churches were built in Mc'xeť'a, given the names of landmarks in Jerusalem and its vicinity,³⁴ a practice not unusual on the early stages of Christianization in different countries, with the aim to transform a pagan city into a new Jerusalem.³⁵

In KC 93.17–94.1, it is a *small bush under the pine trees*, **planted /prepared for the Lord* (cf. also THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasian History...* 102, n. 96), *babilo ars mc'ire nañut'a k'ueše saup'lo šezavebuli / šemzadebuli [gamomģeblad]*.

Outside the walls she finds a hidden place in bramble bush (*maqoulovani*) and prays there; the booth of a guard is mentioned. In the KC (94.8) version, it is a thick bramble bush (*brc'ami maqualisa*) outside the city walls, or, in the Armenian version, in tamarisk groves [THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasian History...* 102]. In the consequence, the altar of Upper Cathedral Church (*Samtavro*) was to be built at that place (which became known as *Ninos maqoulovani*, «St. Nino's bramble bush»). She experienced there visions described by quotations from Song of Songs 3:10, 5:12, 2:16.

³³ E. g., after the Cross of Glory was established during the third week of the Passover, across the Aragua, not far from Mc'xeť'a; after the Pentacost, two miracles occurred; the description of the «second miracle» occurred to the Cross is a variation of the «burning bush motive» contaminated with Habbakuk 3:9.

³⁴ See, e. g., TARCHNIŠVILI, *Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire ancienne de l'église de Géorgie...* 29–50 (pp. 49–50).

³⁵ On building of *Zions* in the 5th century, cf. cf. ЛУРЬЕ, *Из Иерусалима в Аксум через храм Соломона...* 172ff. *et passim*; for the Ethiopian parallels to the stories about the 50 virgins martyred (in Edessa by Julian the Apostate), about the always curtained Column of Light, with the text of Abgar' Letter on it, standing in the church of Mary in Roha (Edessa) / Lalibela, cf. *ibid.* 177ff.; Louirié (*ibid.* 178 n. 101) remarks that one is tempted to translate the Ethiopian name of the Column of Light, *'Amdâ Berhân*, into Russian as *Sveti C'xoveli*, Georgian for «Life-giving Column»!

There can be little doubt that these texts are modeled on Agathangelos: thrown into a pit for many (thirteen or more) years by Trdat, because of his refusal to worship Anahit, pagan Armenia's patroness, St. Gregory survived, however. After having massacred the holy virgins, Rip'simē, Gayanē and others (in vat-stores, or wine-presses;³⁶ cf. Lamnt. 1.15, נת דרך ה' לבתולת בת יהודה, and Isaia 1:8 referred to above), King Trdat is punished, while going hunting,³⁷ by being transformed into a likeness of a wild boar (this noble animal was perceived by Iranians as the bearer of the royal *xvarnah*, «glory» or «charisma»);³⁸ he repents, seeks remedy, and St. Gregory heals the King, having baptized him. Thereafter, St. Gregory had a vision, in which he saw the heavens open, and a blaze of glory (*šolokat'*) covers the earth, with Jesus descending with a golden hammer in his hand, with which he struck the earth. Then a golden Column of Glory arose, surmounted by a cross, later called «the Cross of Glory». Three smaller red crosses of light were around the big one, their bases were the color of blood, the columns were of cloud and the capitals of fire; above these St. Gregory saw a great temple with a golden throne surmounted by a cross as well, with a stream flowing from the temple and forming a lake. From the four columns, above the crosses, marvelous vaults fitted into each other, and above these was a canopy (*xoran*)³⁹ of cloud

Cf. also B. M. ЛУРЬЕ, Три Иерусалима Лалибелы. Интерпретация комплекса церковей Лалибелы в свете данных его Жития // *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* XIII (2000) [2001] (= *Miscellanea Aethiopica Reverendissimo Domino Stanislaeo Kur septuagenario professori illustrissimo, viro amplissimo ac doctissimo oblata*) 117–140. On Georgian texts of the Letter of Abgar, cf. now N. ЧКХИКВАДЗЕ, The old Georgian Versions of The Epistle of Avgar: Analysis, Text, Glossary // *Gza sameupo [The Royal Way]* 1/4 (1996) 32–72.

³⁶ The Arabic version published by Marr is more implicit on that point than the present Armenian Agathangelos: *fī ma'sīrati fī-l-karm*.

³⁷ There is vast literature on the sacral and ceremonial aspects of royal hunting in Iran and Armenia, cf. e. g., N. G. GARSOĪAN, The Locus of the Death of Kings: Iranian Armenia — The Inverted Image // *The Armenian Image in History and Literature* / Ed. R. G. HOVANIŠSIAN (Malibu, Calif.—Udenda, 1981) 27–64 (pp. 49ff.; repr. in GARSOĪAN, *Armenia Between Byzantium and the Sasanians...* Paper N. XI).

³⁸ On Trdat's tranformation into a boar, see N. G. GARSOĪAN, The Iranian Substratum of the 'Agat'angelos' Cycle // *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period. Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, 1980* / Ed. N. G. Garsoīan, Th. F. Matthews, R. W. Thomson (Washington, 1982) 151–189 (p. 153ff.; repr. in GARSOĪAN, *Armenia Between Byzantium and the Sasanians...* Paper N. XII).

³⁹ It was observed (МАРР, Крещение армян, грузин, абхазов и аланов... 150) that the text of Agathangelos substituted here the older Armenian *vran* by the newer *xoran*. Both Armenian words go back ultimately to Iranian **vi-dāna*; besides Armenian *vr'an*, Middle Persian *wyḏ'n* / *wyḏn*, Parthian *wyḏ'n*, Christian Sogdian (from Middle Persian) *wyḏ'n*, Baluchi *gidân*, etc., here belong also old Judaeo-Persian (in *Sefer Pitron Torah*) *wyḏ'n*, Classical Persian *ky'n* (*kiyân*), in the sense of «tent» and

in the form of a dome. The larger golden column means the Primacy of Armenia, and the smaller red columns stand for the virgin martyrs Rip'simē, Gayanē and others. Then St. Gregory builds a church on the model of the temple seen in the vision and calls it Ečmijain, «the Only-Begotten has descended». The point of the story to prove that the Armenian National Church, called later «Gregorian», was commissioned by Jesus and is thus independent from the See of Caesarea; no less important is the ascertainment that Armenia became officially converted before the Milano Edict. However, it is evident that while the vision described in Agathangelos is modeled on the vision of Constantine contaminated with the appearance of the Cross under Constantius on May 7, 352, the visions described in the Georgian texts cannot go directly to the latter and are of secondary character, being dependent on the Armenian version.⁴⁰

The oldest account on St. Nino, named, however, simply *captiva*, is found in Rufinus; in MK and KC, too, St. Nino is spoken frequently of as «a captive and foreigner».⁴¹ Rufinus' account was based on the information received from Bacurius, a Georgian prince and a Byzantine general (*comes domesti-*

«tent-like celestial sphere», and *gorân*, used in the sense «a bundle of crops», «so called because of its tent-like sphere», using Navabi's explanation (for *r*, compare Armenian *vr̥xan*). In Judaeo-Persian, along with *wy'n*, other forms are found as well, such as *gy'n* in the Vatican Pentateuch, identical with the *mu'arrab* form *ky'n* (*kiyân*, **giyân*, and the hybride *gwy'n* in the London Pentateuch, both rendering Hebrew *ʾohel*, «tent», with *by'n* in other translation). See D. SHAPIRA, Judeo-Persian Translations of Old Persian Lexica: A Case of Linguistic Discontinuity // Persian Origins — Early Judaeo-Persian and the Emergence of New Persian. Collected Papers of the Symposium, Goettingen 1999 / Ed. L. PAUL (Wiesbaden, 2003) 221–242, spec. 228.

⁴⁰ D. SHAPIRA, Old Georgian Echoes of the Armenian *Agathangelos Cycle* (forthcoming). Cf. interesting insights in B. M. ЛУРЬЕ (иеромонах Григорий), Видение св. Григория Просветителя: сошествие небесной скинии на Новый Сион // <http://hgr.narod.ru> (Список работ); compare now also M. VAN ESBROECK, L'opuscule sur la Croix d'Alexandre de Chypre et sa version géorgienne // *Bedi Kartlisa* 37 (1979) 102–132 (pp. 129–131).

⁴¹ See F. THELAMON, Païens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle. L'apport de l'Histoire Ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée (Paris, 1981) 85–122, where the relevant Latin text is given, translated into French, with a very good analysis; for an English version, see now *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia*... 20–23; cf. also B. MARTIN-HISARD, Jalons pour une histoire du culte de Sainte Nino (fin IV^e–XIII^e s.) // *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan* / Ed. J.-P. MAHÉ, R. W. THOMSON (Atlanta, GA, 1997) 53–78, pp. 62–64; *La Narratio De Rebus Armeniae* / Edition critique et commentaire par G. GARITTE (Louvain, 1952) (CSLO 132, Subsidia 4); cmp. TARCHNIŠVILI, Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire ancienne de l'église de Géorgie... 29–50 (the table on p. 32 is repeated in THELAMON, Païens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle... 92).

corum and *dux limitis*) serving in Palestine between 380–394 CE, who is frequently mentioned in both MK and KC. Numerous episodes occurring in MK and KC (and in [pseudo-]Movsēs Khorenac'i dependent on the relevant Georgian versions) have their exact correspondences, even in their chronological order, in Rufinus. The *captiva* passes her life in praying in her *cellula* («booth, hovel»), her prayer heals a child and then the Queen, the King refuses to convert, but one day he goes hunting and «a thick darkness fell upon the day», his companions flee, he has lost his way, then he vows in his heart to be Christ's servant, the daylight comes back and the king returns happily to his city; he converts, and a church is having been put up; then a wooden column «which so many machines and people had been unable to move, suspended upright just above its base, not placed upon it,⁴² but hanging about one foot in the air».⁴³

Though it is not difficult to see the similarities between the three accounts (the Georgian ones, that of Agathangelos, and that by Rufinus / Bacurius), there are significant differences, too: the oldest source, that on Rufinus, mentions a *wooden* column hanging in the air, but does not mention any Cross or Crosses, who later became so important in the Georgian accounts and in that of Agathangelos; the Georgian traditions are uncertain about the number of the Crosses and even confuse the Cross with the Column of Light and with the wooden column put up in the church.⁴⁴ The Vine Cross of St. Nino is absent from Rufinus, too; however, she is told to dwell in a *cellula*, a word meaning a dwelling place appropriate for a *captiva*, but it may have also some religious overtones; of course, it might easily refer to a booth in a garden. I will not deal here the motifs of the Crosses appearing in a vision,⁴⁵ but rather concentrate myself on some episodes found in MK and absent from Rufinus and Agathangelos.

⁴² For the wording, compare Lament 4:6.

⁴³ The translation by Amidson (The *Church History* of Rufinus of Aquileia... 22).

⁴⁴ Cf., e. g., TARCHNIŠVILI, Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire ancienne de l'église de Géorgie... 36–37.

⁴⁵ Rufinus' account on the conversion of Georgia was inserted into an Armenian translation of *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Socrates, made by Philon of Tirak in 696; there a mention of the «Cross of Mc'xet'a» is already found; see PEETERS, Les débuts du Christianisme en Géorgie... 46–47; P. PEETERS, A propos de la version arménienne de l'histoire de Socrate // *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves* 2 (1934) 647–675 (pp. 650–651); TARCHNIŠVILI, Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire ancienne de l'église de Géorgie... 35. One may suggest that the emphasis on the crosses in these rather early Armenian and Georgian traditions should have been seen *also* in the context of the extensive veneration of the cross in the Persian («Nestorian») Church; on the Georgian-Nestorian context in the mid-5th century, cf. PEETERS, Jérémie, évêque de l'Ibérie perse... 5–33.

I take it for granted that these episodes were intended to be not without some mystical implications. They deal with *garden*, *bramble bush*, *booth*, and *the place prepared with love* in the *royal garden*, all of them without parallels in Agathangelos (though in the last case, a contamination is possible or even inspiring). Now, I would present my attempt at interpretation.

II

Səneh and Sinai

The word translated here as «bramble bush» (*maqoulovani*) which is outside the walls, where St. Nino prayed and erected her Vine Cross, is the Old Georgian word for «burning bush» revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai / Horeb. The Hebrew for «burning bush» is *səneh*,⁴⁶ translated *batos* by the Greek; the botanic identification remains a problem.⁴⁷ It is to be noted that Sinai was extremely closely associated, in Middle Eastern traditions, with Moses' burning bush not only because the vision of the burning bush took place on this mountaine, but also because of similarity in sound. One might take it for certain that the original Hebrew Biblical text played with the alliteration between *səneh* and *Sinai*, and, actually, the name of the mountain may mean «the mountain of the burning bush».⁴⁸ In the Qur'ānic verses, *surah* 23.20, *Sainā* / *Sīnā*, *Sinai*, and *surah* 95.2, *sinīn*, meaning, according to many Islamic authors, both *Sinai* and *burning bush*, show how close both notions were confused, probably not without some Christian and/or Jewish impact. In the latter Christian tradition the «burning bush», *batoj*, became identical with Mt. Sinai, symbolizing the Old Testamental revelation.

In the New Testament, there are two slightly different usages of the word *batoj* [Lk 6.44, *thornbush*, elsewhere in the New Testament — *bush*], rendered by the New Testament Greek, having been based on the Septuagint text, invariably *batos*, which, according to Liddell-Scott,⁴⁹ is «bramble-bush» or «wild raspberry»; the Armenian version, so close to the Georgian one, has in Luke 6.44 (*thornbush*) *moreni*, «blackberry, mulberry», *moreni* being «bri-

⁴⁶ It must be a non-proper Hebrew [*i. e.*, a dialectal] form of **šēn*, «tooth» > «thorny», in Aramaic and Syriac *sanyā*[?].

⁴⁷ Cf. The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic (Massachusetts, 1979) 702: *a thorny bush, perh. blackberry bush*, Löw: *rubus fruticosus*, Meissner: *blackberrybush*; a kind of *Rubus*, *Rubus sanctus*.

⁴⁸ This was, in fact, the view expressed by some medieval Jewish commentators (Nachmanides to Deuteronomy 1.6; Narboni to «Guide to Perplexed», I.1.32; R. David Kimche, *Sepher ha-Šorāšīm*).

⁴⁹ An Intermediate Greek-English Dictionary, founded upon the seventh edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon (1889¹; Oxford, 1991).

er, bramble, blackthorn, pyracantha»;⁵⁰ this *moreni* is used in the Armenian Bible also in Exodus 3.2 (*burning bush*). To the best of my knowledge, it is the Old Georgian tradition only which identifies the «burning bush», *i. e.*, the Greek *batos*, as «bramble bush» (*maqoulovani*).⁵¹

The bramble bush of St. Nino was located *outside* the Royal Garden and *outside* the walls. This must symbolize, from the Christian point of view, the Old Testamental deprival of Grace, as the Royal Garden stands for Paradise: who is the King if not God? This «Old Testamental» wilderness (outside of the walls)⁵² of the Sinai's brambling bush is, however, gracefully shaded by the presence of the cross, and not simply a cross, but a cross of vine, with vine being almost proverbial symbol of Israel. It is in place to remind here that in Eastern Christendom, vines are consecrated at the feast of Transfiguration, being perhaps not only a reflection of the *natural* course of things, but also a hidden allusion to the transfer of Grace from Israel to Israel.⁵³

⁵⁰ On this word, cf. H. HÜBSCHMANN, *Armenische Grammatik. I* (Leipzig, 1897) 394.

⁵¹ Cf. Yerušalmi, Ma'asērōth 1.2, עֲנָבִי סֵנָה.

⁵² Compare Heb 13.12; I owe this reference to V. M. Lourié.

⁵³ Compare the account of Abiathar in the version of MK on the baptism of the princes (Georgian for «baptism, conversion to Christianity» means in fact «illumination, enlightenment», cf. note 9 above) **xolo saxli eliozisi iq'o kalaksa šina dasavalit-sa, iq'o qarsa moguetisasa, mt'quarsa zeda. da iq'o mcirey bagini, samarxvoi mata, romelsa zeda aǧmarta c'midaman nino juari krist'esi**, «but the house of [the Jewish «priest», one of St. Nino's pupils] Eliozi was in the western part of the city, where there was the Zoroastrian gate, near the river Kura (Mt'quari). There was a small house of worship, *their resting place*, upon which St. Nino erected the Cross of the Christ». This *resting place* (*samare*) means in fact «grave» (*samarxi*, «burial place, funeral expenses»; *samarxo*, «lenten fare»), so the Cross of the Christ was in fact erected on Jewish graves (said to be, by a characteristic «Freudian slip», «their place of worship»); the purpose of this erecting a cross was, apparently, redeeming the straying souls of the Jewish dead (an analogy to this Christian practice can be easily seen in the recent arising of a cross, by Catholics, in Auschwitz; I should note, in passing, that this small episode is sufficient to repel, once and forever, the widespread and confusing notion that St. Nino's *Vita* may reflect some historical Jewish past). This place became later known as «the illumination / baptism of the princes». But this cross is a tree, *samotxeyi* in Old Georgian, and this word was used for «Paradise» (like Armenian *draxt*), cf. D. SHAPIRA, *An Aramaic-Irano-Armenian Note // Iran & Caucasus II. Research Papers from the Caucasian Centre for Iranian Studies*, Yerevan / Ed. G. ASATRIAN (Teheran, 1998) 92–101, see 95; on the other hand, in Armenian (*gerezman*), Persian and many Iranian and non-Iranian dialects of the area, the old Iranian word for «Paradise» became to be used in the sense of «tomb, grave», cf. *ibid.* 97, n. 15. So, establishing a cross on the graveyard means in Old Georgian, tautologically, leading to Paradise.

However, the said above seems to not contradict Ephrem's view in his *Hymns of Paradise*,⁵⁴ where Paradise is typified by Sinai. At the summit of Paradise, seen as a mountain, stands *the Glorious One* (Jesus). Upon the heights (*rawmâ[']*) is where Moses resides. In Ephrem's description, Aharon corresponds to the slopes (*gabbē[']*) of Paradise, while the people of Moses are compared with the lower slopes (*šphūlē[']*) of Paradise.⁵⁵ A text from Ephrem illustrative of this is as follows:

*A symbol of the divisions
in that Garden of Life
did Moses trace out in the Ark
and on Mount Sinai too* (HdP II.13).⁵⁶

This implies that Ephrem ties together «Garden (of Life)», «tabernacle»⁵⁷ and «Mt. Sinai», with the notion of «bramble bush» apparently included into the idea of «Sinai». Apparently, the Biblical festival of Tabernacles was reinterpreted by Christians as that of the Burning Bush. The «tabernacle» he keeps in mind is that connected with both «Mt. Sinai», *i.e.*, that built by Moses in the wilderness, and with the «Garden (of Life)», Paradise, realized as «abode». Now we go straight into the «tabernacles of Paradise», *rajskie kušči*.

III *Miškân and sukkâh*

The booth built by king Bratman / Bartam where St. Nino rested after the statue of Armazi was shattered is designated as *sagrilobeli* [the version of KC called this structure simply *sagrili*, «shade»], which could be seen to be a specific Jewish or Judeo-Christian word taken from an ancient Judeo-Georgian parlance, used by Judaizers (or even Jews?) as a substitute for the Aramaic *m llʔ*, *sukkâh*, the ritual booth built by the Jews at the festival of Tabernacles, or, *Sukkôth*.⁵⁸ The Aramaic word is formed from the root ṬLL, «sha-

⁵⁴ I am very thankful to Christopher Back for calling my attention to Ephrem's material and sharing with me his ideas.

⁵⁵ Similar material is found also in Jewish sources (no Jesus, of course); cf., *e. g.*, Mekhilta d'Rabbi Sim'on b. Jochai: Fragments in Geniza Cairensi digessit apparatus critico, notis, profatione instructit / Ed. J. N. EPSTEIN, E. Z. MELAMED (Jerusalem, 1956) 145 (19.24); Mechilta D'Rabbi Ismael cum variis lectionibus et adnotationibus / Ed. H. S. HOROVITZ, I. A. RABIN (Frankfurt, 1928–1931; Repr.: Jerusalem, 1960) 218 (par. 4).

⁵⁶ ST. EPHREM THE SYRIAN, *Hymns of Paradise* / Trans. by S. BROCK (Crestwood, NY, 1990).

⁵⁷ «Ark», «tent», «tabernacle», all of them stand stand for the same object; on the problem of translation, cf. N. D. OSBORN, Tent or Tabernacle? // *The Bible Translator* 41/2 (1990) 214–221.

⁵⁸ On *sukkâh*, cf. R. PATAI, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth* (London, 1947) (see index); J. RUBENSTEIN, *The Sukka as Temporary or Permanent Dwelling* //

down», which means also «to cover»; the Georgian word *sa-gril-obel-i* is from «shade», *gril-*, thus rendering only one meaning of the Semitic word (shadow). In Semitic and Iranian both «shadow» and «canopy, pavilion» were frequently rendered by the same word;⁵⁹ though from the architectural point of view it is not entirely clear what exactly this *sagrilobeli* was, I suppose that *sagrilobeli* was not different from what is called now in Georgia by the word *talvari*; and in this case, Judeo-Persian *sâyah* would fit perfectly the Old Georgian usage of *sagrilobeli*.⁶⁰

It is not implied here that the Georgian word *sagrilobeli* was coined especially by Jews in order to render their Aramaic word for «ritual booth»; they — or, Kartlian Judaizers — rather adopted an existing Kartvelian word. I suppose that the Jews — or, Kartlian Judaizers — did not use of *talvari*, Modern Georgian *talvari*, because it had already been appropriated by Christians and/or Manichaeans.⁶¹ As a matter of fact, the word *talvari* seems to be more suitable for all the additional religious overtones of «booth».

Hebrew Union College Annual 64 (1993) 137–166; J. L. RUBENSTEIN, *The Symbolism of the Sukkah // Judaism* 43 (1994) 371–387; Y. NAGGAN (GANK), *Arba'at ha-minim ke-qorban ba-halakhah šel ḤaZaL // Da'at* 49 (2001–2002) 5–33, esp. 15–20.

⁵⁹ Sogdian *sayâk* means both «shadow» and «canopy, pavilion», with Christian Sogdian texts rendering Greek σκῆνη by *sy'q* (cf. É. BENVENISTE, «Mots d'emprunt iraniens en arménien // *Bulletin de Société Linguistique* 53/1 (1957–1958) 55–71, see 68 n. 4; Sogdian shares many rare isoglosses with Armenian, and, in our context, it is not without interest to note that «synagogue» is called in Armenian, Georgian and Sogdian «*bagini*[i] of the Jews»). New Persian *sâyah*, «shadow», has not only the normal meaning of «shadow», but that of «canopy, pavilion» as well, cf. W. B. HENNING, *The Desintegration of the Avestan Studies // Transactions of the Philological Society* (1942) 40–56 (= *Acta Iranica* 15; W. B. HENNING, *Selected Papers. II* (Téhéran—Liège, 1977) 151–167) 50 (= 161) n. 1; while the semantics of the Sogdian word have developed perhaps under a Syriac impact, those of the New Persian word were invariably influenced by Arabic *maẓallah*, itself from Aramaic *maṭlâlâ*. But especially itelling is Judaeo-Persian evidence quoted by Henning in the same note: *sâyah* renders Hebrew *sukkâh*, «booth» (Isaiah 1.8, 4.6 etc.) and *mālūnâh*, «hut» (Isaiah 24.20; compare Rufinus' *cellula*!). On other Jewish words for «canopies», «pavillons» and «tents», cf. SHAPIRA, *Judaeo-Persian Translations of Old Persian Material...* 228–229.

⁶⁰ Slavonic *sen'*, «shadow», means also «booth, tabernacle», and is attested in Mt. 17, exactly in the context of a «tabernacle of Moses, Jesus, and Elijah» (the origin of Russian *kušča*, which is the word used to render this concept now is unknown to me); V. M. Lourié drew my attention to the fact that Slavonic *sen'* is also used as a sort of a pavillon/canopy on the relics in the churches. I was unaware of this latter meaning of the word.

⁶¹ On Manichaean missions to Armenia, cf. Henning's remarks in G. HALOUN, W. B. HENNING, *The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light // Asia Major* 3.2 (1952–1953) 184–212, p. 206 and n. 9;

on the mission to Georgia, cf. W. B. HENNING, Two Manichæan Magical Texts, with an Exkursus on the Parthian ending *-ēndēh* // *BSOAS* 12.1 (1947) 39–66, p. 49, n. 1, and HALOUN, HENNING, The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani... 206; S. N. C. LIEU, Manichæism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East (Leiden, 1994) (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World / Ed. R. VAN DEN BROEK, H.-J. W. DRIJVERS, H. S. VERSNEL. 118) 35. Manichæism was spread in Georgia, as well in Armenia; Manichæan Parthian M216b and M2230 texts mention the land Waručân, recounting the story of the conversion of Hbz' the šāh of Warūc; the country was identified with Wlwc'n in Šāhpuhr's Great Inscription, Iberian in the Greek version. Henning (W. B. HENNING, «Waručân-Šāh» // *Journal of the Greater India Society* 11.2 (1945) 85–90) distinguished between the two Waručân-lands; later (cf. HENNING, Two Manichæan Magical Texts... 49, n. 1), Henning tended to see here, nevertheless, Georgia. Cf. now W. SUNDERMANN, Die mittelpersischen und parthischen Turfantexte als Quellen zur Geschichte des vorislamischen Zentralasien // *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of pre-Islamic Central Asia* / Ed. J. HARMATTA (Budapest, 1979) 143–152; 145, W. SUNDERMANN, Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts (Berlin, 1981) (Berliner Turfantexte XI) 45–49; W. SUNDERMANN, «Studien zur kirchengeschichtlichen Literatur der iranischen Manichäer // *Altorientalische Forschungen* 13 (1986) 40–92, 239–317 (pp. 281–282); S. N. C. LIEU, Manichæism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China (Tübingen, 1992²) 106. An Uigur Manichæan text, U237 + U295, P. ZIEME, Manichäisch-türkische Texte (Berlin, 1975) 21 (441–463), 50–51, has *hvza wruž-an il-ig I šad bal-iqda erti*, «The King (and?) šad of Waručân was in the city», translated in LIEU, Manichæism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East... 35. A Sogdian Manichæan text 18224, published in SUNDERMANN, Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts... 45–49, text 3.4, cf. also LIEU, Manichæism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East... 26, 31–32, n. 30 on p. 32ff., mentions a Manichæan mission to Ryb'n, *Rēwân, identified by Sundermann with Maḥōzē d-'Arēwân in Beth-Garmai, but by Russell (J. R. RUSSELL, Manichæan Apostolic Mission to Armenia? // *Proceedings of the Third European Conference of Iranian Studies held in Cambridge, 11th to 15th September 1995. Part 1: Old and Middle Iranian Studies* / Ed. N. Sims-Williams (Wiesbaden, 1998) 21–26 with Erevan in Armenia (who argued that this was the Christian Armenian tradition about Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew that influenced the Manichæan narrative on Mār Gabryāb's mission). In Fihrist, a Manichæan *Risāla Armīnīya* was mentioned, cf. SUNDERMANN, Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts... 45, an apostolic epistle to the Armenian Manichæans. An isolated folio (2 pages) separated from the Berlin codex P. 15997 contains a historical summary of the Manichæan mission in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and to the oases of the Syrian desert, from Šāhpuhr I to Narsē I, cf. M. TARDIEU, La diffusion du bouddhisme dans l'empire kouchan, l'Iran et la Chine après un Kephalaion manichéen inédit // *Studia Iranica* 17 (1988) 154–182 (p. 158 n. 8); a facsimile edition was published in S. GIVERSEN, The Manichæan Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library II: Homilies and Varia. Facsimile Edition (Cahiers d'orientalisme 15) (Geneva, 1987) Pls. 99–100.

In Georgia nowadays *talvari* is used for a vineyard booth, an indispensable feature in every country house.⁶² Another meaning of the word is «trellis», as in Iranian dialects.⁶³ Unlike *sagrilobeli*, which is purely Georgian, Old Georgian *talavari* (Modern Georgian *talvari*) is a Parthian loan word, known also in Armenian as *talawar*.

It is impossible to decide whether the word entered Georgian *via Armeniaca* or independently.⁶⁴ But the meaning attested for the word in the early Georgian literature is somewhat different from the modern («trellis») usage.⁶⁵ In both Armenian and Georgian the word *talawar*, *talavar*, *talavari*, means «tabernacle», especially as the designation of the ritual booth built by Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles, being thus synonymical with *sagrilobeli*. As to the the semantical range of meanings of *talavari*, it seems to be a «Bibleism», copying Hebrew / Aramaic *miškān* / *maškānā*,⁶⁶ meaning both «tabernacle» and «booth; tent; abode».

In an apocryphical composition, the «Book of Adam and Eve»,⁶⁷ whose date and provenance are still disputable,⁶⁸ there is an incident preserved only

⁶² I owe this information to Prof. K. Lerner.

⁶³ As Benveniste (BENVENISTE, *Mots d'emprunt iraniens en arménien...* 67–68), has shown, in different Iranian dialects (Gīlāk", Velātrū, Tājīkī), *tālār* signifies both *une construction de pieux ou de planches destinée à étayer des ceps de vigne* and *une grande salle*. Georgian authors regard *talvar* in Azeri, where it has both meanings, as a Georgian loan word. However, it might be an old Iranian substratum word.

⁶⁴ ANDRONIKASHVILI, *Studies in Iranian-Georgian Linguistic Contacts...* 171, 272–173, derived the Georgian form from Parthian *talvār*, *via Armeniaca*; unattested in J. GIPPERT, *Iranica Armeno-Iberica. Studien zu den iranischen Lehnwörtern im Armenischen und Georgischen. I–II* (Wien, 1993) (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften).

⁶⁵ Cf. Luke 9.33, Matthew 17.4.

⁶⁶ Armenian *talawar* translates the Greek σκῆνη (Hebrew *sukkāh* and *miškān*; the Armenian translation was made from Syriac circa 415, according to the native tradition); Old Georgian has *talavari* for σκῆνη in the New Testament, but *ḡaravi* for *sukkāh*, as in Leviticus 23.42; cf. BENVENISTE, *Mots d'emprunt iraniens en arménien...* 68; Bielsemeier (R. BIELMEIER, *Zu iranischen Lehnwörter im Georgischen und Armenischen // Sprachwissenschaftliche Forschungen. Festschrift für Johann Knobloch / Ed. H. M. Ölberg, G. Schmidt, H. Botlien* (Innsbruck, 1985) (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft 23) 33–42, p. 35) reports of Old Georgian *talari*, «Laube»; as to the form and the meaning, cf. New Persian *tālār*.

⁶⁷ The Armenian name is «Penitence of Adam», cf. M. E. STONE, *The Penitence of Adam / Ed. R. DRAGUET* (CSCO 429–430. *Scriptores Armeniaci* 13–14) (Leuven, 1981).

⁶⁸ Cf. M. E. STONE, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta, Georgia, 1992) (Society of Biblical Literature. Early Judaism and its Literature. Number 03). Cf. also *Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays / Ed. by G. ANDERSON, M. STONE, J. TROMP* (Leiden, 2000) (*Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* 15).

in Armenian and Georgian,⁶⁹ where the word *talavar* / *talavari* appears. The so-called «Books of Adam and Eve» survive in a variety of languages and in diverse forms; none of these books derives from any of the others,⁷⁰ but the Armenian and Georgian⁷¹ versions are of a great importance.⁷² Those two last versions kept a very old and genuine Jewish tradition: when the first human couple was expelled from Paradise, they built a booth (*talavar* in Armenian, *talavari* in Georgian), in the east of Eden (Armenian / Georgian 1:1; Latin, 1:1, without specification of location).

One could suggest that in the archetype of this composition, the first human couple were bereft of the Divine Glory of *šəkhînâh*, which was their garments, according to Jewish midrashic texts. This Jewish tradition was known to Armenian sources, sometimes regarded as «heterodox». In the Paulician treatise «The Key of Truth» it is stated:⁷³ «furthermore he [Jesus] then put on that primal raiment of light which Adam lost in the garden», *naes and zgec'aw zlousi-ēn patmoučann zarjajôin zor koroy's Adamn i draxtin*.⁷⁴ This reference to «that primal raiment of light» in the context of Adam's story in the Paulician tradition is important, as, according to Garsoïan, *ib.*, pp. 155, 233, the oldest strata of the Paulician tradition treats «the story of Adam and Eve in its traditional form», on the one hand, and represents the «original Christianity received from Syria», on the other. It is also plausible to suggest that the *miškân*, *talavar*, was supposed to substitute the *šəkhînâh* (which is formed from the same root) that they had lost.

⁶⁹ For the Armenian text, cf. STONE, The Penitence of Adam...; for the Georgian text, cf. C. K'URČIKIDZE, Adamis Apokrifuli cxovrebis kartuli versia // *Philological Studies* 1 (1964) 97–136 [Georgian] and J.-P. MAHÉ, Le Livre d'Adam géorgien // *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religion* / Ed. R. van den Broek, M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden, 1981) 227–260.

⁷⁰ STONE, A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve... 6.

⁷¹ It is not unprobably that there existed an Armenian intermediary for the Georgian composition which was older than the extant Armenian, though the evidence for an Armenian *Vorlage* of the Georgian is not strong, cf. STONE, A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve... 38, n. 106; 39.

⁷² The Georgian version was even taken to be the best witness to the Adam Book, cf. STONE, A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve... x–xi, 69; J.-P. MAHÉ, Notes philologiques sur la version géorgienne de la Vita Adae // *Bedi Kartlisa* 41 (1983) 51–65 (p. 65).

⁷³ Cf. N. G. GARSOÏAN, The Paulician Heresy. A Study of the Origins and Development of Paulicianism in Armenia and the Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire (Paris, 1967) 153 n. 6.

⁷⁴ On the meaning of that last Armenian word and its etymology, cf. SHAPIRA, An Aramaic-Irano-Armenian Note... 95 & 97, n. 15.

Building this *talavar*-booth thus was an attempt to return to the conditions of the lost Paradise,⁷⁵ where the righteous ones «sit, when their crowns are on their heads, enjoying from the Divine Splendor»,⁷⁶ «in their booths»,⁷⁷ as it is obvious from the next description of Adam and Eve's quest for food, being not just a «housing solution»: Adam and Eve are not described in this composition as *Kulturträger* of any sort or civilizing inventors.

In the Babylonian Talmud we are told that «the Holy One Blessed Be He, will make seven booths for every single righteous one».⁷⁸ It was noted that the mention of «wreaths»⁷⁹ in Jubilees' description of the first Feast of Tabernacles, held by Abraham, is striking as it implies soteriological dimensions of booth-dwelling.⁸⁰ In traditions about the Rechabites, the righteous heterodox Hebrews, legends about whom were very early connected with the traditions about the Lost Tribes, we have some soteriological hints as reflected in the mention of «tabernacle»: in the Aramaic Targum to Jeremiah the Hebrew word for tents, *ʾohel*, in which the Rechabites dwell, is rendered by *maškanâ*,⁸¹ exactly as in Bar Koni report about the Proto-Mandaeans⁸² and in their own genuine tradition, cf. changing of *sukkâh* by *ʾohel* in Damascus Document VII 14–16.⁸³

⁷⁵ Note that Bartman's *sagrilobeli* was placed outside the Royal Garden, on a mountainous (Azazel-like?) ridge. In the Islamic lore, especially, among heterodox groups of Western Iran and Kurdistan, Adam and Eve are said to be settled by Gabriel, in the Garden, in a green tent (*khaimah*).

⁷⁶ Cf. Berrakhoth 17a: «The righteous are sitting and enjoying from the Splendor of *šəkhinâh*», צדיקים יושבין ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהנים מזיו השכינה.

⁷⁷ TB Baba Bathra 75. Hence the otherwise badly attested *rajskie kušci*?

⁷⁸ Baba Bathra 75: עתיד הקב"ה לעשות שבע חופות לכל צדיק.

⁷⁹ Hebrew עטרות*: «...they should celebrate it and dwell in booths and set wreaths upon their heads and take leafy boughs and willows from the brook», Jubilees, XVI 31. stephanos tēs zwēs (Rev. 2.10, 2 Tim. IV 8) is known also from the Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 15b.

⁸⁰ Cf. R. H. CHARLES, *The Book of Jubilees* (London, 1902) 118, n. 30. For this work, see now C. J. VANDERKAM, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield, 2001).

⁸¹ Vulgata uses *urbes tabernaculorum* for ערי מסכנות in Exodus 1.11; it means, Hieronimus did not discern here between *מִסְכֵּן and *מִשְׁכֵּן (because of his difficulty to discern between *s* and *š*?) and for him מִשְׁכֵּן is always «a tabernacle». On how to render the two Hebrew words into English, cf. N. D. OSBORN, *Tent or Tabernacle? // The Bible Translator* 41.2 (April 1990) 214–221.

⁸² Bar-Koni's account on Manichaeism is to be found in H. POGNON, *Inscriptions mandates des coupes de Khouabir* (Paris, 1898) 125–131 and in A. SCHER, *Theodore bar Konai, Liber Scholiorum* (Paris, 1912) (CSCO srip. syri, ser. II. 66) 311–318.

⁸³ For the text and translation cf. now M. BROSHI, *The Damascus Document Reconsidered* (Jerusalem, 1992).

The Jewish commentator Rashi to Hosea 12.10, «[I] will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles»,⁸⁴ makes clearer the point about the eschatological functions of *sukkâh* when he writes «I will arise from your midst savants ... as in the days of the first *mō'ēd* (period / tabernacle) when Jacob was a pious man, tabernacle-dweller»⁸⁵ and the Targum has «I will make you to dwell in *mišknayyâ'* (Plural)⁸⁶ ». So in the World to Come the pious ones will dwell in Tabernacles. It is worth notice that the Messiah will give to the Gentiles «a small commandment, the commandment of *sukkâh*» (*mišwah qallah ... u-sukkâh š'mâh*),⁸⁷ thus the deed attributed to St. Nino may reflect this particular Jewish tradition. The parallels from the Jewish Intertestamental literature are important for better understanding of St. Nino's *sagrilobeli*. The Talmudic parallels are also important, as they preserve ancient traditions, but may seem less relevant. However, the spiritualization of «tabernacle» is to be found also in the Mandaean tradition. As is well known, all the Mandaean cult is held by crowned priests called «kings»,⁸⁸ *malkiia*, in ritual huts *mašknia*,⁸⁹ nowadays called *mand'*. The Proto-Mandaeans were called *mšknay'* by Theodore bar Koni.⁹⁰ But *miškân* has several meanings in Hebrew whence the Mandaean form derives: it is not only an old [and Aramaic] word for «tent», or a word for «tabernacle» (clearly similar in meaning to «Tabernacle of the Congregation», *ʾohel mō'ēd*), it is also a general and archaic term for «dwelling place» and even for «palace» (like New Persian *tâlâr*). Aramaic Targums used *ma lâlâ* for both *ʾohel* and *miškân*; this Aramaic word, formed from roots for «to cover» and «shade» was suitable for contexts where

⁸⁴ עד אושיבך באהלים כימי מועד.

⁸⁵ אעמיד מתוכך תלמידים חכמים כימי מועד הראשון שהיה יעקב איש תם יושב אהלים; *mō'ēd* is obviously Feast of Tabernacles.

⁸⁶ אותבינך במשכנין כיומי קדם.

⁸⁷ Cf. Abodah Zara 3a.

⁸⁸ «Angels» or «apostles» also seem to be a propriate rendering based on a popular etymology, especially possible in Mandaic, with a very complicating re-grouping of roots in this Aramaic dialect. In this context, I dare to make a suggestion: were not the presupposed links of Jesus' community with the Proto-Mandaeans or with one of similar sects using similar semantics the reason why his pupils called themselves «apostles»? Cf. also D. SHAPIRA, *Anuš* and *ʾUθrâ* Revised: Notes on Aramaic-Iranian Linguistic Interaction and Mystical Traditions // *Kabbala: International Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 6 (2001) 151–182.

⁸⁹ The Mandaic *maškan* / *maškna*, «a cult-hut» was studied by G. FURLANI, *I Termini Mandei per Tempio, Santuario e Chiesa* // *Studi Orientalistici in Onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida*. Vol. I (Roma, 1956) 341–360 (pp. 348–352, *inter alia*).

⁹⁰ Cf. K. RUDOLPH, *Die Mandäer*, I. Prolegomena: Das Mandäerproblem (Göttingen, 1960) 32, n. 5; cf. now D. KRUISHEER, «Theodor Bar Koni's Ketâbâ d-Eskolyon as a Source for the Study of Early Mandaism // *Ex Oriente Lux. Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap* 33 (1993–1994 [1995]) 151–169.

«Clouds of Glory» and «canopy», *ḥuppâh*, were used. It is exactly in this sense that the word *sagrilobeli* is used in the Old Georgian *Vita Nino*, one of the oldest Georgian texts, from *gril-*, «shade» (like the Aramaic *mīll*?, Arabic *maẓallat-un*, Hebrew *sukkâh* and *səkhâkhâh*), comparable in function to that of *talavari*.

In Nestorian writings *ganōnâ*[?],⁹¹ formed from a root meaning «to cover»,⁹² «a wedding chamber»,⁹³ is closely connected with the Tree of Life and the Spring of Paradise; the descriptions of the wedding hut in the Acts of Thomas (whose Manichaean relations are well established) and of the Mandaean bride chamber are identical; the original word for *νυμφών* in the Manichaean Psalms, where we now have the Coptic **MANΨΕΛΕΕΤ**, must be **ganōnâ*[?].⁹⁴

This word, in the form of *gnwn*?, is found in Mandaic;⁹⁵ one notes that this connection to the Tree of Paradise might have been inspired by Song of Songs 1:17, «the beams of our house[s] are cedar, and our rafters of fir / cypresses»,⁹⁶ *qōrōth bâttēnū ʿarâzīm, r^ehītēnū b^erōthīm*, where the notion of *hieros gammos* is obvious.⁹⁷ It must be noted that *ganōnâ*[?] means «a covered hid-

⁹¹ I had presupposed that the *talvar* word in Parthian must be identical in meaning also with the Syriac *ganōnâ*[?], and indeed, as Professor W. Sundermann (Berlin) kindly informed me, he found [after our conversation on this Parthian word] a new Manichaean Parthian version of the New Testament fragments where the Parthian *talwâr* stands for the Syriac *ganōnâ*[?].

⁹² At least, as a popular etymology by contamination with an existing root; according to G. WIDENGREN, *Culture Contact, Cultural Influence, Cultural Continuity, and Synkretism. Some Views on My Previous Work // Religios Synkretism in Antiquity. Essays in Conversation with Geo Widengren* / Ed. B. A. PEARSON (Missoula, Montana, 1975) 1–20; p. 3, Akkadian *ganûnu* < Sumerian *ganun* > Syriac *ganōnâ*[?].

⁹³ The motif of Heavenly Bridegroom is stressed in the Armenian version of KC and in Teachings of St. Gregory, cf. R. W. THOMSON, *The Teaching of St. Gregory: An Early Armenian Catechism* (Cambridge, Mass. 1970) § 441, and THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasian History...* 88.

⁹⁴ Cf. G. WIDENGREN, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism* (Uppsala—Leipzig 1946) (King and Savior II) 118–120.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.* 120, n. 1.

⁹⁶ Both trees mentioned in this verse play important role in the accounts of St. Nino discussed in Part I of this paper.

⁹⁷ About *ganōnâ*[?], referring to *hieros gammos*, cf. also W. B. HENNING, *A Sogdian God // BSOAS* 28.2 (1965) 242–254, esp. 242–244. In a Jewish wedding, the two to be married are standing under a Chuppah, *ḥuppâh*, which imitates a tent, being the word used by texts quoted above in our context of tabernacle (it stands as a synonym for *sukkâh*); in Revelation 21.2–3, Jerusalem, which is the tabernacle, descends like a bride adorned for her bridegroom; cf. TB Sukkah 2ab; cf. also the forthcoming Hebrew article by Michael Shneider, «*Hieros Gammos* in Potiphera House: “Joseph and Asenath”, the Merkabah Literature and Sefer ha-Bahir».

ing place», some kind of *sukkâh*, and, on the other hand, one should observe that in Old Georgian, the word for «tree» is used simply for «Paradise».⁹⁸

Important is that both the Song of Songs context and that of the Adam Book and Manichaean⁹⁹ Parthian fragments to be referred to below speak about a human couple, a man and a woman, in a context with nuptial, if not sexual, overtones. The imaginery of a wedding as a royal ceremony is common in the Eastern-Mediterranean tradition, and I believe that the designation of Mandaean priests serving in their tabernacles as «kings» might *also* have something to do with it, as the bridegroom is called «king» in all the Near-Eastern languages.

I believe that this episode with **talavar* in the Armenian / Georgian versions of the Book of Adam and Eve is old and original. The better translation of the Parthian *talavar* would be «tabernacle, trellis», while in the Nino episode some other overtones may be traced. Nino was, after all, «the bride of Jesus», and there are indications that our **talavar* word, being used in Georgian as synonymous with *sagrilobeli*, has had also some nuptial semantics. We will deal with this aspect also when we arrive to the third episode, that of the place «prepared with love», or, «prepared for flowers», *siqarulod šemzadebuli*.

But now we turn to the traditional Jewish *Midrâš* to Song of Songs 5.1 (ed. Donsky 1980, p. 126), «I came to my garden, my sister, my bride...»; the *Midrâš* explains the word «garden» as if it means «tabernacle» and connects it with the Divine Glory, *šəkhîṇâh*. The word used here for «tabernacle» is from the same root as the word «garden», like the Nestorian-Syriac and Mandaic terms discussed above, while the normal Jewish word for «tabernacle» is from the same root as the word *šəkhîṇâh*:

בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי אֵלָא לְגַנִּי — לְגַנִּנִּי לְמָקוֹם שֶׁהִיא עֵקְרִי מִתַּחֲלָה וְעִיקְרִי
הַשְּׂכִינָה לֹא בַתְּחִילָה הָיְתָה מִשְׁכָּן

«I came to my garden... but «to my garden» means «to my tabernacle / bridal chamber», to the place where My origin used to be from the beginning. But was not the origin of the *šəkhîṇâh* from the beginning among the the Terrestials?» Later on, the text of the *Midrâš* makes it clear that *šəkhîṇâh* it means is actually *miškân*, the tabernacle. This Jewish tradition has several Christian parallels, and it explains easily why St. Nino built her booth in the garden. Actually, the word in question means also «bridal chamber» and is well attested in Syriac (cf. above). Jewish texts, too, do play on this meaning of the word, as well as on the words «my sister, my bride».¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Cf. SHAPIRA, An Aramaic-Irano-Armenian Note... 92–101.

⁹⁹ References to Adam are found in the Manichaean text in Greek called «Mani Cologne Codex», 48,15–50,7, cf. A. HENRICH, L. KOENEN, Der Kölner Mani-Kodex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780). Edition der Seiten 1–85 // *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 19 (1975) 1–85 (pp. 48–51).

¹⁰⁰ WaYiqra Rabbah 9.6, BaMidbar Rabbah 13.2.

In another Passage in Ephrem, HdP III.5, 13; XV.8, the Tree of Knowledge is described as the *sanctuary curtain or veil*, or, better, *the inside of the palace* (Syriac *appay tar'â[']*¹⁰¹), while the Tree of Life is the *inner sanctuary* or *holy of holies* (HdP III.5, 14; Syriac *qədūš quḏṣē[']*; compare the *tree of the Life-giving Column of Light* installed — and wrapped in a veil — in the *holy of holies* of the Mc'xe't'a church or in Aksum and Lalibela!). We remember that building a **talavar*, a *sukkâh*, was caused by the first human eating from the Tree of Knowledge, and in Mc'xe't'a, the altar of the church was built on the place of the *brinji* tree. The Tree of Knowledge is half-way up the mountain of Paradise, while the Tree of Life is at the summit of Paradise (HdP III.2). Paradise symbolizes both the Temple and the Church, and *vice versa*, of course: Tabernacle is equal to Paradise.¹⁰²

The Manichaean milieu in Georgia was already referred to. Warūcân (Iranian for Georgia) is mentioned in an early Manichaean text in Iranian. In a Manichaean Parthian text, which one may call «a Manichaean *Qəduššâh* / Sanctus»,¹⁰³ we find: *qwf'n d'lwmg ʔwd x'ns'r'n wyhm ʔstyg ʔpdn ʔwd tlw'r pd twgry'ng wyšmn'd ʔhynd*, «the mountains, the trees and the springs, the wide strong palaces ʔpdn¹⁰⁴ and *tlw'rs*¹⁰⁵ will be joyful in You, O the Blessed One!».¹⁰⁶

In another text¹⁰⁷ we have: *tlw'r bg'nyyg nywgr'n wyndynd ... ʔwš cym ʔst kyrbg cy c'r*bxtn gryw...* «the well-doers found a divine *tlw'r* ... and because of this, that is the merit, which has to redeem the soul»,¹⁰⁸ *tlw'r b'myn nxwyn ptbg* (13) *cyhrg ʔst'nynd u wyšm'nynd o* (14) *nyšgyn pdmwig pdmw-*

¹⁰¹ In Iranian and Aramaic [and in Hebrew of Esther], the word for gate means also palace.

¹⁰² As it is also in Breshit Rabbah 48.10 (*sukkâh* of Isaiah 4.6 understood as Paradise) and Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Be-Šallah (*haqdamah*).

¹⁰³ M. BOYCE, A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian (Leiden, 1975) (Acta Iranica, 2^e Série 2) VII. 104 (M 10 R 10 – V 22; E. WALDSCHMIDT, W. LENTZ, Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus (Berlin, 1926) (APAW, phil.-hist. Klasse) 126; cf. D. SHAPIRA, Manichaios, *Jywndg Gryw* and Some Other Manichaean Terms and Titles // Irano-Judaica IV / Ed. SHAUL SHAKED, AMNON NETZER (Jerusalem, 1999) 122–150.

¹⁰⁴ On this word, cf. now SHAPIRA, Judaeo-Persian Translations of Old Persian Material... 227–228.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. also W. B. HENNING, The Book of Giants // BSOAS 11 (1943–1946) 52–74 (= Acta Iranica 15. W. B. Henning Selected Papers II (1977) 115–138) 73.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Psalms 114:4,6.

¹⁰⁷ bc, see BOYCE, A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian... 110–111, M33 II R i with M 367 V, W. B. HENNING, Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan III // Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 27 (1934) 846–912, h 55–66; 912, n. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. SHAPIRA, Manichaios, *Jywndg Gryw*... 122–150.

cynd u (15) *jywynd yʷwydʷn ʷndr whyšt o rwcš ʷst*, «they receive (*ʷstʷnynd*) as their Nature (*cyhrg*) the original splendour¹⁰⁹ of the radiant Palace (*tlwʷr bʷmyn*) and are joyful. They put on the resplendent (*nyšgyn*) Garment, and live for ever in Paradise». ¹¹⁰ Written by Roščad, the text gives the promise of original splendor (which Adam and Eve were deprived with their expulsion from the Garden of Eden) after the return to Paradise. There the primeval splendorous *tlwʷr* will be granted back for ever.

The most striking example of spiritualization of *tlwʷr* is found in another Manichaean Parthian text, quoted by Boyce in the *Introduction* to her Hymns' edition, when the goal of the departed soul is a tabernacle of Logos in the Eternal Paradise, as described in this Parthian text, T II D 138 37–46: «Lay hold upon salvation and freedom from hurt. They prepare for you a tabernacle of the spirit.¹¹¹ Enter into the kingdom befo're the Father of greatness, and in his presence become endued with your own piety, stillness and purity».

It seems that the same idea as that of the righteous ones sitting in the splendid Gardens that we meet in an-Nadīm's account about the Manichaean Paradise. The wording in the Fihrist's Arabic account of the Manichaean Paradise,¹¹² «the Gardens of Light», sounds as if an-Nadīm has quoted an original Manichaean text *verbatim*: *yʷty ʷlšdyqwn mn ʷlgnʷn ʷly dhlk ʷlnwr fyglswn fyh thm ytʷglwn ʷly mgmʷ ʷlʰh fyqwmwn ʰwl tlk ʷlghym*, «then the Electi will come from the Gardens of Paradise to that light, in which they will be seated. They will hasten to the gathering deities and stand around the Hell».

We have to remember that the whole concept of Paradise¹¹³ is an Iranian one, while Persian Gardens are renowned for their specific atmosphere; they

¹⁰⁹ *nxwyn ptbg*; **patitapataka*, M. BOYCE, *Sadwes and Pesus // BSOAS* 13 (1949–1951) 908–915; p. 915, n. 3, where Henning is quoted.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 915, Appendix (12). This text appeared as «bp» in M. BOYCE, *Ātaš-zōhr and Ab-zōhr // Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1966) 100–118, see 120–121; the context speaks about the first human couple and the Fallen Angels / Watchers, known from the Henochic tradition.

¹¹¹ The underlining is mine. The translation is by Boyce (M. BOYCE, *The Manichaean Hymn-cycles in Parthian* (Oxford, 1954) (London Oriental Series 3) 19, cf. n. 3); the underlined words are *tlwʷr wʷcʷfryyd*, while *wʷcʷfryyd* is rendered, *ib.*, p. 196, as «created by word, spiritual» (Henning).

¹¹² F. G. FLÜGEL, *Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften* (Leipzig, 1862) 72; translated in B. DODGE, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture. 2 vol. (New York—London, 1970) Vol. II. 797.

¹¹³ An Iranian loan, meaning «a garden», «an enclosure», «fenced-in [garden]», **pari-daēza* > Greek *parádeisos*. New Persian *pālēz*, Armenian *pʷartʷēz*, Kurdish *pārʷēs*, Hebrew *pardēs*, Aramaic *pardēsā*, Arabic (Pl) *farādis* > *firdaus*; Old Turkic *borduz*, «orchards, melon plantations», K. H. MENGES, *The Turkic Languages and Peoples. An Introduction to Turkic Studies* (Ural-Altaische Bibliothek, Fortsetzung

must have some indispensable features, including running water (including artificial canals), lawns, trees and some outdoor buildings.¹¹⁴

This Parthian word in question, *tlwʾr*, is mostly rendered as «palace», so Boyce in 1949–1951,¹¹⁵ but in her Dictionary in 1977¹¹⁶ — «hall, tabernacle». Benveniste recognized the Armenian word as of Parthian origin,¹¹⁷ but adopted Boyce's translation: *tlwʾr bʾmyn* — «radiant Palace».¹¹⁸ Otherwise, Benveniste used this word considering Armenian words for «tent». Gropp translated «Halle»;¹¹⁹ the word survived until these days as the Persian *tal-wârah*¹²⁰ (from **talwârag*), «a trellis, a scaffold», being maybe connected semantically to Arabic *ʿarš*, *ʿarīṣatun*, «a tabernacle, a trellis, a pavillion»,¹²¹

der «Ungarischen Bibliothek» / Hrsg. von O. PRITSACK, W. SCHLACHTER XV) (Wiesbaden, 1968) 167 [according to him, the word in Iranian itself is an old «Mediterranean» loan, cf. Basque *barac*, «garden», with bibliography]. Of course, *pardēs* in Hebrew does not mean «Paradise», nor does *pʿartʿēz* in Armenian (The Middle Persian word for the Garden of Paradise is *bōstān* [literally «the place of fragrance», whence Aramaic, Hebrew and Arabic *bustān*], used, e. g., in Bundahishn Ch. 30). On some Aramaic, Armenian and, especially, Georgian terms for «Paradise», cf. SHAPIRA, An Aramaic-Irano-Armenian Note... 92–101.

¹¹⁴ Cf. V. SACKVILLE-WEST, *Persian Gardens // Legacy of Persia* / Ed. A. J. ARBERY (Oxford, 1953) 259–291. It is worth noting that the Arabic *rauḍatu ʿl-firdaus* is completely Iranian, although unattested in Iranian proper: *rauḍah* means «a cultivated wadi along a rivulet», from the Later Middle Persian *rōdah/g*. On *gardens* in Manichaean eschatology, cf. W. B. OERTER, *Das Motiv vom Garten. Betrachtungen zur manichäischen Eschatologie // Manichaica Selecta. Studies Presented to Professor Julien Ries on the Occasion of his seventieth Birthday* / Ed. A. VAN TONGERLOO, SØREN GIVERSEN (Lovanii, 1991) 263–272.

¹¹⁵ BOYCE, *Sadwes and Pesus*... 915.

¹¹⁶ M. BOYCE, *A Word-List of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* (Louvain, 1977) (Acta Iranica 9a) 86.

¹¹⁷ É. BENVENISTE, *Éléments Parthes en Arménien // Réarm NS 1* (1964) 1–39 (p. 28, n. 99). Cf. also BENVENISTE, *Mots d'emprunt iraniens en arménien*... 67–68.

¹¹⁸ It seems that this translation was depending on the meaning of *ʾpdn*. Compare SHAPIRA, *Judaeo-Persian Translations of Old Persian Material*... 227–228.

¹¹⁹ G. GROPP, *Mitteliranische Glossare und Index zu «Waldschmidt-Lentz» // Neue Methodologie in der Iranistik* / Ed. by R. N. FRYE (Wiesbaden, 1974) 7–48 (p. 19).

¹²⁰ New Persian *tâlâr*, «hall», is another continuation of our Mlr word. It seems that Gropp (GROPP, *Mitteliranische Glossare und Index*...) thought of this word when he translated *talwâr* as «Halle». A reference to the *tâlâr*-word was made in ANDRONIKASHVILI, *Studies in Iranian-Georgian Linguistic Contacts*... 273.

¹²¹ Compare Arabic *ʿarš* = σκῆπη, *ʿarīš*, «Bude, Gestalt», see Th. NÖLDEKE, *Lehnwörter in und aus Athiopischen* // IDEM, *Neue Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* (Strassburg, 1910) 31–65, pp. 51–52. Cf. W. LESLAU, *Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic)* (Wiesbaden, 1987) 71, who quotes South Arabian *ʿars2*, «shed, hut», and Soqotri *ʿarīš*, «hut». For the usage of Arabic *ʿarš* in the sense of «booth, tabernacle», cf. M. J. KISTER, «A Booth like the Booth of Moses...». A Study

itself from Aramaic, cf. the Hebrew *ʿarīsâh* and also another Hebrew by-form for «espalier», *ʿarīs* (according to Maimonides, «trellis»¹²²); these Semitic words are used also, especially the Arabic ones, as renderings of the Persian *taxt*, meaning both «a royal throne» and «a lecticulus» (cf. Syriac *ʿarsōnīthâ*, Luke 5.19).¹²³ It seems that one of the reasons in choosing *talwâr* for Aramaic *maṭlâlâ* was sound association (*tal l̥ lâl*)¹²⁴.

of an Early *Ḥad īth* // BSOAS 25 (1962) 150–155: according to the early Muslim tradition, the Prophet refused to allow his followers to have built any *masgid* but «a booth like the booth of Moses, from a grass and wood ... with a covering of Moses», because the Day of Judgment is at hand (*ʿarīš ka-ʿarīš Mūsā thumām wa-khašab fa-l-ʿamr ʾaʿgal min dhālika*). This *ʿarīš Mūsā*, as described in the available sources, was a kind of trellis, in fact, a *sukkâh*, covered with palm branches but without ceiling; as to the uncovering of Moses, the *ḥadīth* says that «when [Moses] stood up his head touched the ceiling». Cf. also G. R. HAWTING, *Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca* // *Studies on the First Centuries of Islamic Society* / Ed. G. H. A. JUYNBOLL (South Illinois UP, 1982).

¹²² Kīṭayim 6:3: מקלעת שריי גפן.

¹²³ Arabic *ʿarš* was considered by many authors as «royal canopy».

¹²⁴ As to an etymology of *talwâr*, I see the problem in the first element *tl-*. The second element is clear, it is a *vrddhi* grade from the Iranian *var-*, «to cover», as in the word *vara*, «covering, shelter» (already in BENVENISTE, *Mots d'emprunt iraniens en arménien...* 69; cf. ANDRONIKASHVILI, *Studies in Iranian-Georgian Linguistic Contacts...* 273, who derived the word in question, tentatively, from Ossetic *talm*, «*Ulmus*»; on this word cf. АБАЕВ, Скифо-сарматские наречия... 225–226); however, it hardly can be sustained; Benveniste speculated also on a probable link with Sanskrit *tâla-*, «*palmier, arbre*»). As to *tl-*, the Parthian L is very rare, being mostly from *R, but in some cases from (Parnian?) Š, so in the first part of the word in question one can see an irregular, East-Iranian, rendering of *tâš-, «to build, to plane, to cut stones or wood». Cf. Parthian ʿzgwʾl, *izgâl* — from *uz-gauš, A. GHILAIN, *Essai sur la langue parthe, son système verbal d'après les textes manichéens du Turkestan Oriental* (Louvain, 1939) (Bibliothèque du Muséon 8) 66; B. C. РАСТОПЧЕВА, Е. К. МОЛЧАНОВА, *Парфянский язык // Основы иранского языкознания. Среднеиранские языки* (Москва, 1981) 147–232, p. 180; N. SIMS-WILLIAMS, *Eastern Middle Iranian* // *Compendium Linguarum Iranicarum* / Hrsg. R. SCHMIDT (Wiesbaden, 1989) 165–172, p. 167, commented on this shift: «non-Sogdian forms (in New Persian loan words from East Iranian Languages), however, include ... *ispagol* «seed of the fleawort», literally «horse-ear» with ... L < *š ...»; *ibid.*, p. 171: «L < *Š, ʿzgwʾl- «to hear», with L < *š as in Sangliči and Sariqoli ... Such forms as these have been plausibly attributed to the otherwise unknown language of the Parnians, a tribe of the «Scythian» Dahae...», quoting W. B. HENNING, *Mitteliranisch, Iranistik, Handbuch der Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung, vierster Band* (Leiden—Köln, 1958) 92–94. Thus, one would derive *tl-* from *taš, affirming this etymology by a semantic comparison to Aramaic *maṭlâlâ*, «shelter, hut, booth», used as Aramaic for Hebrew *sukkâh* (cf. M. JASTROW, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York, 1950) 768a), from *tallēl*, «to cover» [a *sukkâh*, i.a.]. It seems

Thus, the Parthian *talwâr* was used, on semantic and etymological grounds, as an Iranian¹²⁵ equivalent of Aramaic **maškənâ / maṭlâlâ*. It is not impossi-

that this Aramaic verb was used also for «to cover with wood», «to screen» (compare the Targum to 1 Kings 6.9, *wyspn ʔt hbyt*, cf. Jastrow, p. 537b) [Hebrew *ṭall* "th, «*tal-lith*, *talles*, praying shawl», «*a covering», is from the same root, with additional contamination of the roots for «to hang», *tâlâh* and *ṭalal*; as to *ṭallēl*, the Hebrew word used in Nehemia 3.15 is an Aramaeism]. As an alternative etymology of *talwâr*, a comparison to the second element of the Manichaean Middle Persian *bʾrg tš*, «a strong wall» (cf. W. B. HENNING, A List of Middle Persian and Parthian Words // *BSOS* 9/1 (1937) 79–92, p. 88), may have been suggested. Here the order of the two elements is inverted; however, the derivation of *bʾrg* from Avestan *vara-* is questionable, cf. I. M. ORANSKIĬ, Notes Irano-Slaves. Vieil Iranien VAR- / Russe Dialectal VAR // *Acta Iranica* 5 (Monumentum H. S. Nyberg) (1975) 139–143, p. 10. On the other hand, *tala* might be an old Iranian word: Finnish *tala*, Livonian *talzēD*, «šalaš, labaz», «Laube», were seen as an Indo-Iranian loan word (A. J. JOKI, Uralier und Indogermanen. Die ältesten Berührungen zwischen den uralischen und ingermanischen Sprachen (Helsinki, 1973) (Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Toimituksia 151) 324), but Gamkrelidze & Ivanov (Т. В. ГАМКРЕЛИДЗЕ, В. В. ИВАНОВ, Индоевропейский язык и индоевропейцы, реконструкция и историко-типологический анализ праязыка и пракультуры. Т. I–II (Тбилиси, 1984) 933, n. 2) saw here a Baltic loan word (Prussian *talus*, «ground»). Professor W. Sundermann informed me that while the second element of *talwâr* might be *-var-*, «cover», the first element perhaps is the Semitic *ṭall-*, thus accepting my comparison to the Aramaic *maṭl°lâ*[']; however, such hybrid Semito-Iranian word looks to me unlikely. Prof. Sh. Shaked, by an oral communication, proposed to reconstruct *talawara* as **tarna-vara-*, «a moisten / freshy covering». I think this is a convincing etymology, keeping in mind what *talwâr* was; as to semantics, compare Song of Songs 1.16, *ʔaph ʕars ʕēnu rāanânâh*, «our trellis is fresh», which comes immediately before *qōrōth bāttenū ʔarāzīm, rəḥīṭ ēnū bərōthīm*, «the beams of our house[s] are cedar, and our rafters of fir». «Freshy shelter» seems to fit in a proper way the nature of the modern Georgian *talvari* as known. On Song of Songs function in Early Christian exegesis, cf. M. W. ELLIOT, The Song of Songs and Christology in the Early Church (Tübingen, 2000) (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentums).

¹²⁵ In passing, I would like to draw attention to a Persian phrase put in the mouth of the Georgian king and found in the St. Nino's *Vita*. The phrase reads:

hei hei raitmeboy xoZat stabanub rasul psar zad

hey hey raytmeboy xožat stabanub rasul psar zad,

rightly glossed «O, rightly You say, [O] blessed queen, messenger of the Son of God», reconstructed as **hey hey rā(s)t mē b/gōw" xuja(s)ta šāh bānūg rasul (i) puser (i) "zad*, where one has to compare the graphic forms: raytmeboy / *ra[s]t me boi and stabanub / *Sah banug. The phrase is in post-Islamic [and dialectal?] New Persian, as it contains the Arabic *rasul*; the shift *b/g (mē b/gōw)* is known from several Iranian dialects; the shift *st > t (rā[s]t)* is less known; on the contrary, there exists the shift *st > s*, cf. Sh. SHAKED, Items of Dress and Other Objects in Common Use: Iranian Loanwords in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic // *Irano-Judaica* III / Ed. Sh. SHAKED, A. NETZER (Jerusalem, 1994) 106–117 (pp. 112–114). The form **banug* is actually Middle Iranian (*bānūg*) rather than New Persian (*bānū*).

ble that the Parthian Manichaean fragments where the word is used are reworking of an Aramaic original of the Book of Adam and Eve. Thus, St. Nino's booth was indeed a substitute for the paradisaical Temple (like that seen by St. Gregory in his vision), an idea going back to Jewish sects of the Second Commonwealth Period, who opposed the establishment of the Jerusalem Temple, with this sectarian notion becoming so central in Christianity.

IV

Vine, Love, Flowers...

Now, let us turn to the third motif, the place «prepared with love», or, «prepared for flowers», *siqarulad / saquailed šemzadebuli*, where the Lower Church was built after king Mirian's conversion (in KC 94.1, where the setting was slightly reworked, it became «the place of a small bush under pine trees, planted for the Lord» [*saup'lo šezavebuli*]¹²⁶). In my opinion, this is a reference to a *locus* in the Biblical Song of Songs, 3.10, *rāšūph 'ahabhâh* (King James' version: *being paved with love*), generally taken in the exegesis to refer to Solomon's Temple or to the Church. Both the immediate context and the whole setting of this episode in St. Nino's *Vita* fit the assumption that what we have here is a hidden Biblical quotation, one of so many in this work. However, the standard Old Georgian text of the Song of Songs reads here «love» (*siqaruli [asultagan ierusalimisata]*), not «flowers». We should turn to other old versions of the *locus*. The understanding of the verse by the Septuagint has no specific interest, because it renders the verse, one would say, mechanically, *lithostrwton, agapēn* ..., as the common post-Biblical meaning of the verbal root RÍP is indeed «to pave», and thus it was rendered by the Pešittā, *rāšiph bərahmtēh*, going clearly after the Septuagint.

Long after the bulk of this paper was completed, I found a treatment of this phrase in a new book by RAYFIELD, *The Literature of Georgia...* 52, where J. GIPPERT, *Zum Status des Mittelpersischen im südlichen Kaukasus* (forthcoming), is quoted; there is a misprint in the reconstruction given in this otherwise fascinating book, namely, *khugasta* instead of **khujašta* or **khuḡasta*; the translation given is: «rightly thou speakest, fortunate Queen and emissary of the Son of God». According to Rayfield and Gippert, the phrase proves that the language of the rulers of Georgia at that period [or, at the period of interpolation; the codex is dated by 1000] was New Persian. Cf. also J. GIPPERT, *Marginalien zur Nino-Tradition // Summe der Orthodoxie, Sonderheft. Festschrift für Fairy von Lilienfeld 3* (Berlin, 1997) 126–130. This passage was dealt with as early as in 1892 by N. Marr; cf. Н. МАРР, Хитон Господень в книжных легендах армян, грузин и сирийцев // *al-Muṣaffariyya*. Сборник статей учеников профессора барона Виктора Романовича Розена ко дню двадцатилетия его первой лекции (СПб., 1897) 67–94.

¹²⁶ Thomson (THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasian History...* 102) noted that «this expression is difficult».

But if one turns to two other translations based on *later* Jewish exegesis and closer in time to St. Nino's period, then, exactly as expected, one finds that the Aramaic Targum renders *râṣūph ʿahabhâh* by *ʔlîl min ʿilawêh* [*yath pârukhtâ*], «covered (as a shadow) from above [by curtain]»,¹²⁷ and the Vulgate, which reflects Jewish understanding, reads *caritate constravit*, which is especially close to the Georgian reading.

It is to be observed that the verb used in the Targum is *ʔl"l* (from the same root as *ma l'îlâ*, etc.), thus bearing specific connotations in the whole complex of perceptions about *tabernacle*. In other words, in this MK passage we have a reference to a Georgian translation of Song of Songs older than the extant one; this translation reflects Jewish exegesis, paralleled in the Targum and in the Vulgate. As to the reference to «flowers» in the Georgian variant reading, it is a later one, caused by phonic and graphic similarity (*siquarulad / saquauiled*),¹²⁸ albeit we should recall again the flower imagination of the St. Nino Cycle.

To sum up: the three episodes dealt with here treat the perception of the *tabernacle / booth*; there are traces of Judaizing (or Jewish?) traditions in the Old Georgian *Vita* of St. Nino; in several cases, translations of the Biblical verses presented in this work are different from those known to us from any other Old Georgian translation, with the impact of Jewish exegesis manifest in other cases. And most important, all these features are younger than those found in the relevant account of Rufinus and Agathangelos. It seems to me plausible to suggest that these traditions, reworking the Agathangelos Cycle, while adding new elements unattested there, being, at the same time, a result of a delicate contamination with Rufinus' account on the nameless *captiva*, testify to the emergence of an anti-Armenian, ethno-oriented, tendency in the Georgian Church. And, as in so many other cases, Judaizing (or, pseudo-Judaizing) overtones served to the end of consolidating of a national church.

¹²⁷ The Jewish Aramaic translation of *ahabhâh* by *pârūkhtâ*], «curtain» (of the Temple) may be *not only* exegetical, but may reflect a genuine linguistic tradition. It was noted by earlier scholars that in this context the Hebrew word does not mean «love», but designates rather some sort of ornated skin, cf. Arabic *ʔihâb*, «skin», *ʔahhaba*, «to prepare, to equip».

¹²⁸ However, it was perhaps also influenced by Song of Songs 5.13 and 6.2. The Georgian Biblical texts are based on multiple sources and have undergone constant revision and retranslation for textual and doctrinal reasons; among the oldest sources were Syriac, Armenian, then Greek; it was suggested that some of the Biblical books were translated from the Massoretic Hebrew text, especially Ezekiel, cf. RAYFIELD, *The Literature of Georgia*... 7.

РЕЗЮМЕ

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**«СКИНИЯ В ВИНОГРАДНИКЕ»:
НЕКОТОРЫЕ (ИУДЕЙСКОГО ПРОИСХОЖДЕНИЯ?)
ОСОБЕННОСТИ
В ДРЕВНЕГРУЗИНСКОМ ЖИТИИ СВЯТОЙ НИНЫ**

Автор рассматривает три эпизода из *Жития св. Нины* (сохранившегося в составе *Обращения Грузии*), связанных с восприятием «хижины / кущи / скинии». В некоторых случаях в трактовке этих эпизодов обнаруживаются отчетливое влияние иудейской и ранней иудео-христианской экзегезы, причем, иногда это влияние проявляется в особой редакции библейских цитат, более не известной из древнегрузинских переводов Библии. Представляется важным отметить, что эти элементы грузинского *Жития св. Нины* более поздние, чем параллельные им традиции, представленные у Руфина и Агатангелоса. По мнению автора, наиболее вероятное объяснение факта использования этих иудейских (или мнимо-иудейских) традиций в грузинской переработке агиографических традиций цикла Агатангелоса и сохраненного Руфином предания о безымянной «пленнице» заключается в желании укрепить тенденцию Грузинской церкви к самостоятельности и независимости от церкви Армении.