

History

The Byzantine Thema of Soteroupolis-Anakopia in the 11th Century

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ABSTRACT. A Byzantine Thema was established in Georgian Abkhazia ca. 1033, when the second wife of the Georgian king Giorgi, Elda or Alde, donated her *apanage* to the emperor Romanos III Argyros. Soteroupolis is surely a mediaeval name for Pityous/Bičvinta/Picunda. Probably also the palace of Likhni belonged to this Thema.

About 1044-1045 the Georgian king Bagrat laid siege to Anakopia but could not conquer it. About this time a certain Nicholas with the Title of Protospatharios was Strategos of the Thema. Only ca. 1074 the Georgians seem to have regained Anakopia and the rest of the Thema. © 2012 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: *Byzantine history (11th century), Georgian history (11th century), Abkhazia (11th century), Ana>opia, Soteroupolis/Bičvinta.*

In the 11th century the Byzantine expansion in the East extended all the way to the modern Georgian province of Abkhazia. No war of aggression was necessary, for it was by good fortune that the emperor was able to take possession of an important part of this region.

The Georgian king Giorgi (1014-1027) was married to Mariam, the daughter of the Armenian king Senek'erim Yovhann s of Vaspurakan, his ally, when he planned a war against the Byzantine emperor Basil II. But Giorgi was defeated before the allies could bring support in 1022. Senek'erim lost his kingdom [1, 2], Giorgi lost only small territories but presumably was forced to divorce Mariam and to marry a daughter of the king of Alania as his second wife,

who was probably called Elda (in Greek ; in the old Alanic Narten-epos we find the form Elda, Osetian variants are Aldä, Äldi, in Georgian Alda, Aldi, Alde) [3]; Ioannes Skylitzes says only ...

[4], but the Georgian source Matiane Kartlisa specifies her as "daughter of the king of the Osetians" [5: Georg.295,6f. Cf.; Rus.47; Germ.368], using in a misleading way one and the same denomination for Alans and Osetians [6].

Giorgi had a son with this Elda, Demetre, but apparently after some time (Basil had passed away in 1025), Mariam returned to her husband. When Giorgi died (1027) Elda was living in her *apanage* in Abkhazia in the region of Ana>opia (near the modern town New Athon) with her small son, far from the

ისტორია

სოტერუპოლის-ანაკოფიის ბიზანტიური თემა XI საუკუნეში

ვერნერ ზაიბტი

ავსტრიის მეცნიერებათა აკადემია, ბიზანტიური კვლევების დეპარტამენტი, ვენა, ავსტრია

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიკოს თ. გამყრელიძის მიერ)

ბიზანტიური თემა საქართველოს აფხაზეთში ჩამოყალიბდა დაახლოებით 1033 წელს, როცა საქართველოს მეფის, გიორგის, მეორე მეუღლემ, ელდამ ან ალდემ, თავისი აპანაჟი ძღვნად მიართვა იმპერატორ რომანოს III არგიროსს. სოტერუპოლისი უნდა იყოს პიტიუნტ-ბიჭვინთა-პიცუნდის სახელი შუა საუკუნეებში. საგარაუდოდ, ლიხნის სასახლეც ამ თემს ეკუთვნოდა.

დაახლოებით 1044-1045 წლებში ქართველთა მეფე ბაგრატმა ალყა შემოარტყა ანაკოფიას, მაგრამ ვერ მოახერხა მისი აღება. ამ პერიოდში თემის სტრატეგოსი იყო პროტოსპატარიოსი ნიკოლოზი. მხოლოდ 1074 წლისთვის ქართველებმა, როგორც ჩანს, შესძლეს ანაკოფიისა და თემის დანარჩენი ნაწილის დაბრუნება.

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