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**THE LOST PAGES OF THE HISTORY OF VI CENTURY GEORGIA REVIEW OF
MANANA SANADZE'S WORK THE KING OF KARTLI DARCHIL (THE SON OF
VAKHTANG GORGASALI) AND THE CHRONICLES DESCRIBING HIS LIFE
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The work *The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* by Juansher Juansheriani relates that after the death of King Vakhtang Gorgasali, his eldest son, Dachi, ascended the throne: "And his son Dachi sat on his throne". According to the same work, Vakhtang Gorgasali had two children, twins - a son and a daughter, with his wife Queen Balendukht, who was the daughter of the king of Persia. The queen "passed away during childbirth". Vakhtang "named his son Darchil in Persian and Dachi in Georgian".

Little information has survived to the present day about Dachi of Ujarma, also known as King Darchil. Until recent times, even the years of his reign were not determined. Scholarly and reference literature mentions him as Dachi of Ujarma, the king of Kartli in the early VI century. He was brought up in Ujarma and therefore is known by this epithet. According to Juansher's account, King Dachi completed the construction of the city walls of Tbilisi, which had been started during Vakhtang Gorgasali's reign, and in accordance with his father's will, he moved the capital from Mtskheta to Tbilisi. That is all.

Professor Manana Sanadze has dedicated a special monographic study to the life and deeds of Dachi of Ujarma, titled *The King of Kartli Darchil (The Son of Vakhtang Gorgasali) and The Chronicles Describing his Life* (Tbilisi, 2020).

Recently, M. Sanadze has been actively researching issues related to the history of ancient and early medieval Georgia, especially the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali and his successors, the composition of the opening part of *The Kartlis Tskhovreba (A History of Georgia)*, etc. Notably, the researcher has provided a completely new

dating for the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali.

Specifying the date of Vakhtang Gorgasali's death is crucial for the determination of the years of his reign. In contemporary Georgian historiography, the date of his death is accepted as 502 AD, as proposed by Ivane Javakhishvili. This date is based on Juansher's account, which states that Vakhtang Gorgasali died at the beginning of the second Byzantine-Persian war which took place during his reign. The researcher referred to the Anastasian War fought from 502 to 506 between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Sassanid Empire and dated Vakhtang Gorgasali's death to the fall of 502. Later, researcher Vakhtang Goiladze, based on a Syrian source, dated Vakhtang Gorgasali's death to 491 AD.

According to Manana Sanadze, Vakhtang Gorgasali's reign, instead of the traditionally accepted second half of V century, covers the end of V century and the first third of VI century. She dates his death to 531 AD and links it to his battle with the Persian Shah, Khosrow Anushirvan (531-579). It should also be noted that historian Mose Janashvili, in his *History of Georgia* published in 1906, dated Vakhtang Gorgasali's death to 532 AD, linking this event to the battle with Khosrow Anushirvan, a fact that M. Sanadze also highlights.

Scant information about King Dachi (Darchil) is preserved in *The Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* by Juansher Juansheriani and in the *Chronicle of The Conversion of Kartli*. However, as M. Sanadze has found, the chronicles, which supposedly recount the lives of the Princes of Kartli - Mir and Archil, actually describe the life and deeds of Dachi (Darchil) and his half-brother, Mhrdat

(Mir). The reason for this is that Leonti Mroveli (XI century) mistakenly identified Darchil and his brother Mihrdat as the sons of King Stephanos III of Kartli, Mir and Archil.

After the death of Vakhtang Gorgasali and following the Persian occupation of much of Kartli, Dachi of Ujarma moved to Western Georgia and sought help from the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527–565). Meanwhile, in 532, a peace treaty was signed between Byzantine Empire and Sassanid Persia, known as the Treaty of Eternal Peace.

Earlier, researcher Tamaz Beradze speculated that the provisions of the 532 Byzantine-Persian Treaty of Eternal Peace were reflected in the will of Vakhtang Gorgasali, but he believed that Juansher Juansheriani had mixed the events of Vakhtang Gorgasali's period with those of the Great Persian-Byzantine War of 542-562 AD. New dating of Vakhtang Gorgasali's reign by M. Sanadze has clarified that the provisions of the Treaty of Eternal Peace were indeed reflected in his will.

According to Vakhtang Gorgasali's will, Dachi (Darchil), as his heir, succeeded to the royal throne, while his half-brothers received the principalities ranging from Tashiskari and Tsunda to the lands bordering with Armenia (Kvemo Kartli) and to the lands bordering Greece - Samtskhe, Klarjeti, and Javakheti (Zemo Kartli). They also received the region between Egristkali and Klisura rivers as their inheritance from their mother. According to the terms of the Treaty of 532, Vakhtang Gorgasali's second wife, Queen Elena, and her children inherited the three principalities in the southwestern part of Kartli — Tsunda, Klarjeti, and Odzrkhi. In fact, this territory came under the Byzantine protectorate. The ruler of this part of Kartli, holding the title of patricius (Byzantine governor), was Vakhtang Gorgasali's son, Mihrdat also called Mir.

As it turns out, Dachi of Ujarma was in Egrisi (Western Georgia) between 532 and 542 AD, before the start of military actions between the Byzantines and Persians in Georgian territories. At that time, Kartli was governed by a Persian

official, a Marzpan, appointed by the Shah, who was stationed in Tbilisi. During the period of the treaty, Dachi of Ujarma asked his brother, Mihrdat, to yield him control over the territory between Egristkali and Klisura rivers, while offering Mihrdat the northern part of Javakheti, from the Mtkvari River to Lake Paravani. For Dachi, who was stationed in Egrisi, the territory between Egristkali (the Enguri River) and Klisura (Kelasuri) was more important than the northern part of Javakheti, which lay between the Mtkvari River and Lake Paravani; for Mihrdat, however, the region between the Mtkvari River and Paravani Lake was of greater significance. Therefore, their interests aligned, and the exchange of the territories took place.

M. Sanadze correctly emphasizes that the cause of the military conflict between the Byzantine empire and Persia in VI century was control over the Great Silk Road and associated trade routes. The Byzantine empire sought to maintain control over the northern branch of the Silk Road, which passed from China and Sogdiana through the North Caucasus, Egrisi, and the Black Sea, to the Byzantine territory. Persia, on the other hand, sought to seize control of this route. In order to achieve this goal, both empires needed to gain control over Egrisi, but for Persia, this required first subduing Kartli. The researcher correctly draws attention to the fact that the best way for Persia to subdue Kartli would be by severing its spiritual ties with the Byzantine empire and eradicating Christianity. This would break spiritual, cultural, and ultimately political connections of Kartli with the Byzantine empire, which could only be achieved through converting the Royal Court of Kartli to Zoroastrianism or through abolishing the monarchy. Therefore, Vakhtang Gorgasali addressed Patriarch Peter with the following words: "You should be aware, for it is not the payment of tribute that they demand, but the abandonment of Christ" (The Kartlis Tskhovreba, I, 1955, p. 201).

According to M. Sanadze, the reign of Vakhtang Gorgasali and his successors became unacceptable to Persia because the King of Kartli

had offered the Byzantine empire the right to pass the northern branch of the Silk Road through his kingdom. To facilitate this, Vakhtang Gorgasali conquered and subdued the historical regions of Khunzeti and Tsukhiti in southern Dagestan and built or strengthened a chain of fortresses: Khornabuji, Cheremi, Ujarma, Mtskheta, and Artanuji, in the territory from the sources of the River Samur to the Black Sea. The latter – Artanuji – was connected to the Black Sea through the Nigali Gorge. Earlier, researcher Manana Gabashvili studied the circumstances surrounding the founding of Artanuji. Through Artanuji and the Pontic city of Trapezus, the Kingdom of Kartli was involved in international trade between the East and West, particularly Levantine trade, with the northern key point of this network being Tbilisi, which was also founded by Vakhtang Gorgasali.

The prince Dachi (Darchil) played an important role in carrying out his father's foreign-political agenda. As a co-regent, he was entrusted with the governance of the principality of Hereti. It was Dachi who, together with his father, and sometimes on his own, subdued Khunzeti, Tsuketi, and the “mountains of Kakheti” as described in *The Kartlis Tskhovreba*.

Under the Treaty of 532, Persia, which had established control over Kartli, blocked the Silk Road leading from the sources of the River Samur toward Kartli. Following this, the main goal of Persia was to reach the Black Sea, to directly subjugate Egrisi (known as Lazica in Byzantine sources), and to close the northern route of the Caucasus Mountain pass leading through western Georgia to the Byzantine empire.

In 541, hostilities resumed between Persia and the Byzantine empire in the historical region of Mesopotamia. In this context, the ruler of Egrisi, King Gubaz I, invited the Persians to Egrisi to free his territory from Byzantine rule. As a result, in 542, a Persian army entered Georgia. Due to the significance of the campaign, it was led by the Persian Shah, Khosrow Anushirvan himself. According to M. Sanadze, the battle between Dachi of Ujarma (Darchil)

and his younger brother Mihrdad (Mir) against the Persians invading Egrisi and the subsequent events are reflected in Georgian chronicles. One of these, likely written in Greek, formed the basis for an unknown author's XI-century hagiographical work *The Martyrdom of David and Constantine*. In 2013, M. Sanadze and Goneli Arakhamia published the reconstructed text and relevant research on this VI-century historical chronicle (M. Sanadze, G. Arakhamia, “The VI Century Historical Chronicle in „*The Martyrdom of David and Costantin*”, Tbilisi, 2013).

As it turns out, the hagiographer used the era of the Arabs as a historical backdrop when rewriting the events described in the VI-century historical chronicle. This resulted in the narrative being placed two centuries later than its actual historical timeframe. M. Sanadze, based on relevant excerpts from *The Martyrdom of David and Constantine*, *The Kartlis Tskhovreba*, and *The Martyrdom of Archil by Leonti Mroveli*, has restored the lost pages of VI-century history of Georgia.

M. Sanadze also observes that Leonti Mroveli, when working with the chronicle at his disposal, did not always adhere to the chronology of the original source. She suggests that the hagiographer placed the events against the backdrop of the rule of Mervan ibn Muhammad and the Arab period, which caused a disconnection between the story's actual timeline and its presentation. Moreover, Leonti Mroveli didn't seem particularly concerned with preserving the chronology of the source. For example, if Archil had fled from the Arab general to Egrisi, who is believed to have chased after him, as accounted by Leonti Mroveli, he would not have had time to carry out peaceful reconstruction activities in Egrisi. Therefore, Leonti Mroveli placed Archil's reconstruction activities in Egrisi after the Arab invasion had ended. Furthermore, M. Sanadze reasonably suggests that the fortress being constructed on the border between Guria and Greece as described in the text by Leonti Mroveli, is the one built by Dachi (Darchil) upon his arrival in Egrisi, with the permission and

support of the Byzantine emperor. This fortress-city was located in the extreme southwestern part of the country, on the border between Guria and the Byzantine empire, near the sea. The border of the Byzantine Empire was a day's journey away from this fortress.

It is noteworthy that, during the time of Vakhtang Gorgasali and his successor, Egrisi, as part of the Kingdom of Kartli, consisted of two major areas: Egrisi (comprising Inner Egrisi and Svaneti) and the principalities of Argveti. The latter region was located in the upper reaches of the Rioni River, extended along the left bank of the river, in the middle and lower reaches of the river, and included Guria. Based on the accounts of Procopius of Caesarea and VI-century Georgian chronicles, M. Sanadze has reconstructed the route by which the Persians invaded Egrisi. The old Georgian chronicle, which served as the basis for *The Martyrdom of David and Constantine*, states: "And when the ungodly took the rule of the Persians ... and they attacked the Christians ... they came to Samtskhe and camped near the strongholds". Then it continues: "The pagans rose up in Samtskhe and moved toward the country of Argveti".

Thus, the Persians advanced from Samtskhe, crossing the foothills of the Odrzkhe and the ridge of Meskheta-Imerti (Persati), and entered Egrisi through the mountain pass of Rkinisjvari. The Persian army that crossed into Egrisi from Samtskhe headed left through Khanistskali River gorge, toward Petra. At the same time, Khosrow Anushirvan decided to attack Sebastopolis (modern-day Sukhumi) and Pityunta (modern-day Bichvinta) and sent part of his army in that direction. According to M. Sanadze, the goal of the Persian campaign was not only to capture Byzantine fortresses but also to capture sons of Vakhtang Gorgasali — Dachi (Darchil) and his younger brother, Patricius Mihrdat (Mir), who had taken refuge there. It was against this Persian army that the rulers of Argveti, David and Constantine, confronted.

According to *The Martyrdom of David and Constantine*, the Georgians defeated the

vanguard of the Persian army that was heading toward Sebastopolis. It was only after the main Persian army arrived that the resistance of the Argveti princes was overcome. In the unequal battle, the army of the Argveti princes was defeated, and the Persians captured David and his brother Constantine. The Persian commander demanded that they renounce Christianity, but after they refused, the Persians tortured and executed them. The political centre of the Argveti principality — the fortress-city of Tskaltsitela — was plundered and burnt to ashes. Afterward, the Persian army advanced to seize Sebastopolis and Pityunta. The Byzantines, in order to prevent these fortresses from falling into enemy hands, burned Sebastopolis and Pityunta, tore down the walls of their fortifications, and withdrew by sea. The Persian army raided the areas around Sebastopolis and Pityunta but was unable to establish a foothold there due to the destruction of the fortifications by the Byzantines.

This episode from *The Martyrdom of David and Constantine* is recounted as follows: "And the sons of the great King Vakhtang Gorgasali, Archil (Mihr, - B. Kh.) and Darchil, went to the fortress called Anakopia, because they were terrified of the Persians. However, they managed to repel the pagans after a battle with them, with their modest army".

According to Procopius of Caesarea, many Persians perished in the retreat from Anakopia due to difficult terrain, a plague, and a shortage of food. Meanwhile, Khosrow Anushirvan took the fortress of Petra, but due to Byzantine successes in Mesopotamia, he was forced to abandon Egrisi. The Persian army, while retreating from Anakopia, crossed the Rioni and Khanistskali rivers and, passing through Guria, joined the main Persian force at Petra, from where, together with Khosrow, left Egrisi via the Spheri route.

Subsequently, a temporary peace agreement was reached between the Byzantine empire and Persia in 545, and Persia began to strengthen its control over Egrisi. Soon after, the ruler of Inner Egrisi and Svaneti, Gubaz, sided with the Byzantines and sought assistance from the

emperor in expelling the Persians from the region. Fearing that the Byzantines would capture Petra, the Shah sent a large army in 550, led by the renowned commander Mermeroes. From this point onward, the Persians firmly controlled all of Egrisi until 554.

In the final part of her monograph, Manana Sanadze discusses Dachi of Ujarma's activities in Kakheti, recounting that after the Persians had taken full control of Egrisi, Dachi's presence in the region became risky, and therefore he moved to Kakheti. While the Persians were engaged in military actions against the Byzantines in Egrisi, Dachi was relatively safe in Kakheti. His rule extended over Kakheti-Kukheti and Hereti, where he worked to strengthen and develop the left bank of the Alazani River in Hereti. He built the fortresses of Kasri and Lakuasti and converted the population of Nukhpati (Nukha, Shaki) to Christianity. He also attempted to restore influence over Khundzeti and Tsuketi, which had been subdued earlier by Vakhtang Gorgasali. In this context, a Persian army invaded Kakheti to capture him.

King Dachi decided to approach the Persian commander and request peace, protection of the churches, and the "non-requirement of renouncing the faith" (The Kartlis Tskhovreba, I, 1955, p. 245). Thus, Dachi requested that the Persian commander not punish them for renouncing the faith. This reference clearly implies that the kings of Kartli were of Sassanian descent, who had abandoned Zoroastrianism and embraced Christianity. In the past, King Vakhtang himself

had addressed the Persian ruler, saying: "If you fight us for having renounced the faith..." (The Kartlis Tskhovreba, I, 1955, p. 181). The Persian commander, upon hearing that the King of Kartli had refused to renounce Christianity and return to Zoroastrianism, ordered his execution on March 20. According to the researcher, the king's martyrdom occurred sometime between 558 and 564. The martyred king's body was buried in the church he himself had built in Notkori.

The work includes excerpts from The Conversion of Kartli, The Kartlis Tskhovreba, The Martyrdom of David and Constantine, describing the life and deeds of King Dachi (Darchil), as well as relevant passages from works of Procopius of Caesarea, which allow the reader to directly access the primary sources. The monograph is well-illustrated with appropriate maps, which make the content more understandable.

To sum up, we are presented with an exceptionally interesting monographic study offering numerous new insights into the life and deeds of Dachi of Ujarma, son of King Vakhtang Gorgasali, a heroic and martyred king. Some of the arguments presented in the monograph will undoubtedly provoke debate, and certain theses will require further clarification and substantiation in the future, but this is perfectly natural for a scientific work that addresses a relatively less-studied and distant historical period. It can confidently be said that the monograph is a valuable contribution to historical science and will certainly benefit further development of the field.

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**УТЕРЯННЫЕ СТРАНИЦЫ ИСТОРИИ ГРУЗИИ VI ВЕКА
РЕЦЕНЗИЯ НА ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЕ МАНАНЫ САНАДЗЕ «ЦАРЬ КАРТЛИ ДАРЧИЛ» («СЫН ВАХТАНГА ГОРГАСАЛИ») И «ХРОНИКИ, ОПИСЫВАЮЩИЕ ЕГО ЖИЗНЬ» (ТБИЛИСИ, 2020).**

Резюме

В труде «Житие Вахтанга Горгасали» Джуаншера Джуаншериани повествуется, что после смерти царя Вахтанга Горгасали на престол взошел его старший сын Дачи: «И сел на престоле его сын Дачи». Согласно тому же труду, у Вахтанга Горгасали было двое детей, близнецы — сын и дочь, от его жены царицы Балендухт, которая была дочерью царя Персии. Царица «скончалась во время родов». Вахтанг «назвал сына Дарчил по-персидски и Дачи по-грузински». До наших дней сохранилось мало сведений о Дачи из Уджармы, также известном как царь Дарчил. До недавнего времени даже годы его правления не были определены. В научной и справочной литературе он упоминается как Дачи из Уджармы, царь Картли в начале VI века. Он воспитывался в Уджарме и поэтому известен под этим эпитетом. Согласно рассказу Джуаншера, царь Дачи завершил строительство городских стен Тбилиси, начатое во время правления Вахтанга Горгасали, и в соответствии с завещанием отца перенес столицу из Мцхеты в Тбилиси.

Профессор Манана Санадзе посвятила жизни и деяниям Дачи из Уджармы специальное монографическое исследование под названием «Царь Картли Дарчил (сын Вахтанга Горгасали) и летописи, описывающие его жизнь» (Тбилиси, 2020).

В последнее время М. Санадзе активно исследует вопросы, связанные с историей древней и раннесредневековой Грузии, особенно правления Вахтанга Горгасали и его преемников, состав вступительной части «Картлис цховреба» (История Грузии) и т. д. Примечательно, что исследовательница дала совершенно новую датировку правления Вахтанга Горгасали.

Указание даты смерти Вахтанга Горгасали имеет решающее значение для определения лет его правления. В современной грузинской историографии датой его смерти принято считать 502 год н. э., как это предложил Иванэ Джавахишвили. Эта дата основана на рассказе Джуаншера, в котором говорится, что Вахтанг Горгасали умер в начале второй византийско-персидской войны, которая произошла во время его правления. Исследователь ссылался на Анастасиеву войну, которая велась с 502 по 506 год между Восточной Римской империей и империей Сасанидов, и датировал смерть Вахтанга Горгасали осенью 502 года. Позднее исследователь Вахтанг Гойладзе, основываясь на сирийском источнике, датировал смерть Вахтанга Горгасали 491 годом н. э. По словам Мананы Санадзе, правление Вахтанга Горгасали вместо традиционно принятой второй половины V века охватывает конец V века и первую треть VI века. Она датирует его смерть 531 годом н. э. и связывает ее с его битвой с персидским шахом Хосровом Ануширваном (531-579). Следует также отметить, что историк Мосе Джанашвили в своей «Истории Грузии», изданной в 1906 году, датировал смерть Вахтанга Горгасали 532 годом н. э., связывая это событие с битвой с Хосровом Ануширваном, на что также обращает внимание М. Санадзе.

Скудные сведения о царе Дачи (Дарчиле) сохранились в «Житии Вахтанга Горгасали» Джуаншера Джуаншериани и в «Хронике обращения Картли». Однако, как обнаружил М. Санадзе, летописи, якобы повествующие о жизни князей Картли — Мира и Арчила, на самом деле описывают жизнь и деяния Дачи (Дарчила) и его единокровного брата Михрдата (Мира). Причина этого в том, что Леонтий Мровели (XI век) ошибочно идентифицировал Дарчила и его брата Михрдата как сыновей царя Картли Стефаноса III, Мира и Арчила. После смерти Вахтанга Горгасали и после персидской оккупации большей части Картли, Дачи из Уджармы перебрался

в Западную Грузию и обратился за помощью к византийскому императору Юстиниану I (527–565). Между тем, в 532 году был подписан мирный договор между Византийской империей и Сасанидской Персией, известный как Договор о вечном мире.

Ранее исследователь Тамаз Берадзе предполагал, что положения Византийско-персидского Договора о вечном мире 532 года были отражены в завещании Вахтанга Горгасали, но он считал, что Джуаншер Джуаншериани смешал события периода Вахтанга Горгасали с событиями Великой персидско-византийской войны 542-562 годов н. э. Новая датировка правления Вахтанга Горгасали М. Санадзе прояснила, что положения Договора о вечном мире действительно были отражены в его завещании.

Согласно завещанию Вахтанга Горгасали, Дачи (Дарчил), как его наследник, наследовал царский престол, а его единокровные братья получили княжества от Тапискари и Цунды до земель, граничащих с Арменией (Квемо Картли) и земель, граничащих с Грецией — Самцхе, Кларджети и Джавахети (Земо Картли). Они также получили в наследство от своей матери область между реками Эгрицкали и Клисурса. Согласно условиям договора 532 года, вторая жена Вахтанга Горгасали, царица Елена, и ее дети унаследовали три княжества в юго-западной части Картли — Цунду, Кларджети и Одзрхи. Фактически эта территория попала под протекторат Византии. Правителем этой части Картли, носившим титул патриция (византийского наместника), был сын Вахтанга Горгасали.

Как оказалось, Дачи из Уджармы находился в Эгриси (Западная Грузия) между 532 и 542 годами нашей эры, до начала военных действий между византийцами и персами на грузинских территориях. В то время Картли управлял персидский чиновник, марзпан, назначенный шахом, который находился в Тбилиси. В период действия договора Дачи Уджармского попросил своего брата Михрдата уступить ему контроль над территорией между реками Эгрисцкали и Клисурса, предложив Михрдату северную часть Джавахети, от реки Мтквари до озера Паравани. Для Дачи, который находился в Эгриси, территория между Эгрицкали (река Ингури) и Клисурой (Келасури) была важнее северной части Джавахети, которая лежала между рекой Мтквари и озером Паравани; для Михрдата же большее значение имел регион между рекой Мтквари и озером Паравани. Поэтому их интересы совпали, и состоялся обмен территориями.