

## **Valeriy Stepanenko**

### **"Iberies" in Byzantine provincial aristocracy of the 11th century**

Tao-Klardzheti is the historical region, which initially was in the possession of the Georgian family of Bagratides. Today the largest part of Tao is belonging to Turkey, the smallest one -to Georgia. In 1000, part of Tao, possession of kouropalates David, was annexed by Byzantium, later it became a part of the theme Iberia. The local aristocracy of Armeno-Georgian origin was resettled in Asia Minor and the Balkans, and became part of the provincial elites of these regions, obtaining Byzantine titles and posts in provincial administration. At present, the families of Chortvaneli, Pakuriani, Tsotsikii, Vkhatsi and Apokapes are known. The representatives of these families played the leading role in the administration of Asia Minor and Balkan themes of Byzantium. Thus, in 1016, Tsotsikii, son of patrikios Feudates, was the strategos of Dorostolon. In the church of St. John the Baptist in Oshki (Tao) the inscription of 1036 where he is entitled as patrikios is known. Fers (Peris) Tsotsikii, anthypatos patrikios, was the strategos of Cappadocia about 1022. The members of the family of Vkhatsi were: patrikios Smbat, his son Gregory, patrikios and strategos of Larissa and Macedonia (1006), Bagrat, magistros and katepano of the East (Iberia). The family of Pakurianes includes kouropalates Aspietos (later nobelissimos), proedros Mushegos, nobelissimos and archon of archontes Tathul, domestikos of Schools of the West Gregory and others. The family of Chortvaneli, the most numerous, is presented by 30 names. They are: Varazvache, protospatharios and strategos of Edessa (1038), protovestes Tornik Varazvache, protospatharios and strategos Chortvanel Abukharb, patrikios Chortvanel, son of Semran, protospatharios and strategos John Chortvanel. The Apokapes are known from 1014. The sons of Basil Apokapes, Gregory and the one, who remain nameless, were among participants of the wars with Bulgaria. The seals of Michael Apokapes, protospatharios epi tou Chrysotriklinou and katepano of Edessa, of Faresmanos, protospatharios and strategos of Stroumitza, of Basil Apokapes, vestarches and katepano of Vasprakanias, magistros, vestes and doux of (Paris-trion?), and later the doux of Edessa, of protospatharios and strategos Faresman Apokapes, of Simeon Faresman, of Constantine Faresman (?) and others are known. Cursus honorum of Basil, son of Apokapes, is more or less known, if we do not join the biographies of two Basils- the son of Apokapes and the son of Michael.

It is possible to conclude that the majority of the representatives of Tao's families in Byzantium belonged to provincial elite and only Pakurianes for a short period, in 1080-1090, probably because of Gregory, came to immediate surrounding of Alexis Komnenos (nobeliss-

simos Aspriet, nobelissimos Tathul). After the eastern themes were lost for Byzantium in 1071 the former theme Iberia was transferred by Grigory Pakurianes to the king of Georgia, George II (1074), some representatives of Tao's families were known only in the environment of Philaretos Vrahamios, but since 1090 any references to them are finally disappeared.