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„Old Armenian and Caucasian Calendar Systems.

2. Armenian *hoîi* and *sahmi*“

von Jost Gippert (1987).

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„The Annual of The Society for The Study of Caucasia“

1, 1989, 3-12

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OLD ARMENIAN AND CAUCASIAN CALENDAR SYSTEMS
2. ARMENIAN *hoři* AND *sahmi*⁰

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0.1. A comparison of the Armenian and Georgian calendar must not neglect the names of the second and third months of the Armenian year, *hoři* and *sahmi*, for these names have for long been etymologized by deriving them from the Georgian cardinal numbers *ori* and *sami* meaning “two” and “three.”¹ This etymology, tempting as it is, was never discussed with due rigidity in Armenology nor were the arguments that Georgian scholars contributed taken notice of. There are three main questions that have to be dealt with: First, are there any traces of a “numerical month-naming system” in Georgian tradition;² second, is it probable that cardinal numbers were used in Georgian to denote the position of a month; third, can *hoři* and *sahmi* be equated formally with the Georgian *ori* and *sami* or their predecessors? All these questions were treated in an extensive article by P. Ingoroq’va in 1932, the results of which can be summarized as follows.³

0.2. As for the first question, Ingoroq’va points to the text of the “Conversion of Georgia” which contains several data using “numerical” month names such as “the first month,” “the fourth month.” Although it is the ordinal numbers that appear, Ingoroq’va takes them as indicators of an ancient numerical month-naming system in Georgian, because the text is one of the oldest original texts in that language. As for the second question, Ingoroq’va refers to the Old Georgian way of denoting the days of the month. Here, data using ordinal numbers such as *meore dge* and data using cardinal numbers such as *ori dge*, both meaning “the second day (of a month),” are met with side by side; according to the author’s opinion, the latter mode of expression is the autochthonic one.⁴ Further on, Ingoroq’va discusses the names of the days of the week. As in Greek, these are built analogous to the Semitic principle by counting from the “Sabbath,” but differently from Greek, the cardinal numbers are used once again; cp. *ori šabat-tay* with Greek δευτέρα σαββάτων, ‘the second day of the week = Monday.’ As for the last question, Ingoroq’va interprets the forms *hoři* and *sahmi* as representing older **yori* and **saymi*; these forms would be identical with the Kartvelian ancestors of Georgian *ori* and *sami* to be reconstructed by comparison with its sister languages, Svan, Mingrelian, and Laz. Ingoroq’va’s

argumentation cannot be maintained like this, however. As will be shown, too many details deserve additional remarks or corrections so that we have to take up the discussion again.

1. The “Conversion of Georgia,” *Mokcevey kartlisay*, has come down to us in two redactions preserved in one manuscript each. The older one of them, the so called “Šat’berd” version, has to be dated into the second half of the X century which gives us a terminus ante quem for the genesis of the text.⁵ The “Conversion” must indeed be called “original” inasmuch as no exact model for the complete text, Greek or Armenian, has been found. It can be shown, however, that it was compiled by using different sources available at that time. The major part of the text is dedicated to the life of St. Nino, the legendary missionary of Georgia.

1.1. The “Conversion” contains four datings that operate with months denoted by ordinal numbers. They appear in two successive chapters of that part of St. Nino’s vita, which according to the text was written down by one “Salome from Užarma” after the words of St. Nino herself. The first two datings are of Armenological interest, too, because here, St. Nino tells us how she came from Jerusalem to Armenia together with St. Ripsimē and St. Gaianē. First, the chronological background is sketched:

“Then the Lord took part of Greece, and Constantine the Emperor and his mother and all his court adopted faith in him and confessed Christ in the year 5444 since creation and in (the year) 311 since the resurrection of Christ. And all Greece was converted to Christianity. (And) in the year was the Council of Nicaea, and in the eighth year we fled from Greece.”⁶

The text continues with the following details:

“Ripsime the queen and Gaiane the nurse and 50 souls, we marched off in the first month, on the fifteen(th day) and came to the territory of Armenia, to the gardens of Trdat’ the King. There they died in the first month, on the thirt(ieth day), a Friday. But I kept (hidden) in the thorns of the roses, for rose and almond were blooming at that time.”

After seeing an angel’s vision, St. Nino leaves Armenia:

“And I went off and came to Ulup’oreta, and I spent the winter with great sufferings. And in the fourth month I went to the mountains of Ĵavaxeti in order to know. where Mcxeta was.”⁷

The fourth dating in question is given some pages later, after St. Nino reports how she observed the Georgian king Mirian worshipping his (Zoroastrian) god Armaz⁸ and how the idols were destroyed by a thunderstorm that she had caused by praying:

“And when the storm calmed down, I went off .. And there was a beautiful acacia tree, high and with many twigs. I went under that tree and I marked it with the sign of Christ’s cross. And I prayed there for six days. When you came up, a crowd of people, and looked for the gods that brought forth suffering, and you didn’t find them, then I was there, for it was the sixth day of the (sixth) month, when Evmanoel showed the Father’s image to the heads of the living and to the heads of the dead.”⁹

1.2. As the Georgian scholar K’. K’ek’elije pointed out, the datings as presented above admit of a coherent interpretation which emanates from the details contained in the last passage mentioned. Here, the text is obviously referring to the miracle of the “Lord’s Transfiguration” revealed in the New Testament.¹⁰ As this miracle led to the institution of a Christian festival on August 6th, we may assume that this date is meant by the “sixth day of the sixth month.” Thus, we arrive at the month of March to be equated with the “first month” of the “Conversion.” By the same reckoning, the “fourth month” converges with the month of June. This interpretation agrees with other information contained in the text such as the rose and almond blooming at the end of the “first month.” It is further supported by some evidence from outside the “Conversion.” There are some later, “metaphrastic” versions of St. Nino’s legend, the most important of which is the one ascribed to the XI century bishop Leont’i Mroveli; it forms part of the great Georgian chronicle, *Kartlis cxovreba*.¹¹ Here, the first two datings are omitted; the “fourth month,” however, is glossed by the phrase “which is June.”¹² Thus, a Georgian year beginning with the month of March and denoting the months by ordinal numbers seems in fact to have existed.¹³

1.2.1. There is another testimony, however, which renders this conclusion rather doubtful. This is the Armenian translation of the Georgian chronicle, *Patmowt'iwn Vrac'*. As the oldest manuscripts of the Georgian text have to be dated as late as the XV century, the Armenian translation, which was probably accomplished some three centuries before, is a witness of utmost importance for establishing the original wording. As for the legend of St. Nino, the Georgian and the Armenian versions diverge to a considerable extent. The latter does not reflect the "metaphrastic" vita of Leont'i Mroveli but an older text standing closer to the "Conversion" inasmuch as it is told in the first person.¹⁴ If we now compare the passages in question we are struck by the fact that it contains but one of the datings, viz., the third one, and that the month is not denoted by the ordinal number here:

Ew im yarowc'eal eki yOwrbanis hayoc', ew jmereal and, ew i yownis amsean eki i leaŋn Ĵawaxet'ic' "and I got up and went to the (town of the) Urbans (in the land) of the Armenians, and I spent the winter there, and in the month (of) June I went to the hills of Ĵavaxeti."

The attestation of the "Transfiguration Day" is rendered as follows:

*Ew im .. eki aŋ caŋovn bŋnč'i .. ew aławt'ec'i and zvec' awr. Ew yawowr meci Gownap'oxowt'ean Teaŋn, yoržam ec'oyc' Tērn zpatkern hawr glxaworac' aŋak'eloc' ew margarēic'n .. "And I .. went to the acacia tree .. and I prayed there for six days. And on the great day of the Lord's Transfiguration, when the Lord showed (his) Father's image to the main apostles and prophets ..."*¹⁵

These details suggest, that the version standing behind the Armenian text is anterior to both Leont'i Mroveli's and the one of the "Conversion" and that the latter also bears some additional adornments.¹⁶ And we have good reasons to believe that just the "numerical month-naming system" contained in the "Conversion" is due to such additions. Taking the model that has to be assumed for the Armenian text as the primary source, we can suppose the following development: At first, only one month dating occurred in

St. Nino's report, viz., the month of "June." This would match other parts of St. Nino's legend as contained in the "Conversion," where the Latin month names of July, March, and May appear.¹⁷ The other datings, however, originated in marginal notes, which later penetrated into the text.

1.2.2. This assumption can be motivated as follows. According to the Armenian tradition manifested in Agathangelos's history, St. Ripsimē and St. Gaianē came to death on the days of 26 and 27 *hoři*, resp. These dates were rendered as 26 and 27 September in the Greek version of the "History," and the Old Georgian translation gives 26 and 27 *stulisay*.¹⁸ There has been, however, a secondary arrangement in the Greek ecclesiastical calendar by which the holy women together with St. Gregory the Illuminator became associated with the 30th of September.¹⁹ This association spread into the Georgian tradition, too, as can be seen by the fact that the Old Georgian version of the Martyrology of St. Ripsimē and St. Gaianē is headed in the manuscripts with the date of *ttuesa sek'denbersa L*, "in the month of September, 30(th)."²⁰ As September was the first month of the Byzantine "indictional" year, it is this date of a "30th of the first (,a') month" which might have been added as a marginal gloss to the model of St. Nino's legend as contained in the "Conversion." Thus, the "first month" can only secondarily have been equated with the month of "March." And indeed, it is only the "Conversion" which speaks of "rose and almond blooming at that time;" cf., however, the Armenian Patmowt'iwn: *Ew mnac'i es i nerk'oy vardeneac', or oc ēr calkeal* "And I kept (hidden) amidst the rose trees, which were **not** blooming."²¹ The assumption that the martyrdom of St. Ripsimē and her companions should have taken place in an autumn month rather than the month of March, further agrees with the fact mentioned in all versions that St. Nino after hiding in the roses went to the town of Urnisi and spent the **winter** there.

1.2.3. A marginal gloss of different character can be responsible for the "fifteenth of the first month" being given as the date of the Saints' flight only in the Šat'berd text of the "Conversion." If we presume that the "first month" is due to an adaption to the date of the "martyrdom" (= September), the number "fifteen" may have been introduced as an emendation of the "eighth year after the conversion of Greece." There is indeed a contradiction in the datings noted in the text: The adoption of Christianity by Constantine the Great might well have been in 311 AD; the Council of Nicaea, however, did not take place seven years but fourteen years after this event, viz., in 325. It was for this reason

that the later (Č'eliši) variant of the "Conversion" changed the year of 311 into 318.²² As the Saints' flight is said to have happened one year after the Council of Nicaea, we exactly arrive at a space of fifteen years counting from 311.

1.2.4. As for the mention of the "Transfiguration Day" on the "sixth day of the sixth month," we first have to note that it is only the Č'eliši version which explicitly states the number of the month, the Šat'berd text speaking of the "sixth day of **the** month" only.²³ If we further compare the "metaphrasis" of Leont'i Mroveli, we are led to the assumption that the "sixth month" is due to a perseveration of the number "six:." Here, we are even told that the event took place in the "sixth hour" of the "sixth day and this month."²⁴ And it is the Armenian Patmowt'iwn again which suggests that the original text contained the number just once, viz., in the statement that St. Nino "prayed for six days." In any case, a later marginal gloss naming the "6 August" as the date of the "Transfiguration Day" is likely to have penetrated into the text in a corrupted form to give the attested indications.²⁵ And it is equally probable, now, that the equation of the month of "June" with the "fourth month" became necessary as an adjustment after the "first month" and the "sixth month" had been introduced into the text.

1.3. Thus, Ingoroq'va's and K'ek'elije's assumption of an Old Georgian "numerical month-naming system" revealing itself in the "Conversion of Georgia" can hardly be maintained. In particular, the attestations do not allow for the conclusion that the method of denoting months by (ordinal) numbers was an archaic feature of Georgian. They cannot be used for arguing in favor of the hypothesis that the Armenian *hoři* and *sahmi* should have been borrowed from Kartvelian stock.

2.1. As long as no authentic usage of numbers for denoting the months of the year has been attested in Old Georgian, we cannot decide with any certainty, of course, whether cardinals or ordinals would have been used for this purpose in any Kartvelian language loaning *hoři* and *sahmi* to Armenian. In this connection, we are indeed left alone with Ingoroq'va's arguments cited above, which referred to the mode of naming the days of the week and of expressing the day of a month in Old Georgian. As for the latter feature, however, Ingoroq'va's opinion that the usage of cardinal numbers is the autochthonic one cannot be taken for granted. If we take as examples the attestations of the old month names within hagiographical literature, datings operating with ordinals and

datings using cardinals are met with in nearly equal quantities.²⁶ There is a preponderance, however, according to the value of the number in question: Ordinals seem to be preferred with numbers below ten, cardinals with higher numbers.²⁷ Before trying to evaluate this remarkable fact, we have to consider that nearly all the hagiographic texts must be traced back to Greek models. Bearing this in mind, the disproportion can be motivated by the following suggestions: In Greek, it was the ordinal numbers that were commonly used. They were not written explicitly in every case, though; with higher numbers, the “symbolic” writing using letters such as $\alpha\alpha'$ for “21” was preferred. The translators who endeavored to keep near to the original wording retained the ordinals as they were. Wherever they came upon a “symbolic” denotation, they were free, however, to use their own mode of expression. Thus, Ingoroq’va’s assumption that the cardinals reflect the proper Georgian diction has a good deal in its favor.²⁸ But, of course, it is not a decisive argument for *hoři* and *sahmi* being loans from Kartvelian.

2.2. Lastly, the hypothesis is problematical with regard to the sound equivalences involved. If we want to identify the Armenian month names *hoři* and *sahmi* with the Georgian numerals *ori* and *sami*, we have to cope with the most significant difference between them, which consists in the sound *h* occurring in the Armenian forms only. As Old Georgian possessed a *h*- sound of its own, there is no reason why the Georgian numerals should not contain this sound, too, if they really were the models for the Armenian names. In this connection, we have to deal with the proposal made by Ingoroq’va, again, that the borrowing had taken place in Proto-Kartvelian times. Ingoroq’va’s assumptions match the *communis opinio* inasmuch as the number “two” must be reconstructed as **yori*.²⁹ Some caution is necessary, however, in the case of “three,” which he reconstructs as **saymi*. The attested forms of this numeral are *sami* in Georgian, *sumi* in Mingrelian and Laz, and *semi* in Svan. Here, we have the crucial correspondence of Georgian *a* and Svan *e*, which is opposed to the more regular correspondence of Georgian *a* and Svan *a* or *a*, reflecting a Proto-Kartvelian **a*. As the conditions that led to a Svan *e* in cases like *semi* have not yet been stated with certainty,³⁰ Ingoroq’va’s reconstruction of a word internal “diphthong” *ay* can be regarded as a possible solution of the problem.³¹ There would even be some evidence in favor of this solution if Ingoroq’va’s assumptions made for the Armenian *hoři* and *sahmi* would prove correct. It is hardly tenable, however, that these forms replace older **yoři* and

**saymi*. In the former case, this would presuppose that the Middle Armenian change of *y-* to *h-* should have manifested itself in a word occurring as early as, e.g., in Agathangelos's history.³² In the case of *sahmi*, attested in Agathangelos as well,³³ Ingoroq'va assumes a development of *-ay-* to *-ah-* for which no parallel whatever has thus far been attested. In other words, we should expect the Armenian names to appear as **yoři* and **saymi* if they were really borrowed from the Proto-Kartvelian forms as proposed by Ingoroq'va. As long as such attestations are wanting, any attempt of deriving *hoři* and *sahmi* from Georgian or from a previous stage of this language remains undemonstrated.

NOTES

⁰ The first part of this article appeared in the *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 8, 1987, pp. 63-72. A third part devoted to the month names of the Caucasian Albanians will be printed in the following issue of that journal. [Additamentum: The third part appeared in *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 9, 1988, pp. 35-46.]

¹ The etymology was first proposed by M. Brosset J^e in his "Extrait du manuscrit arménien no 114 de la Bibliothèque royale;" cf. *Journal asiatique*, Sér. 2, 10 = 21, 1832, p. 528 sq.

² A statement like R. Schmitt's ("Auch ist mir kein Rest solcher numerischer Monatsnamengebung aus dem südkaukasischen Raum bekannt," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 6, 1985, p. 96) can hardly be a convincing argument.

³ "Jvel-kartuli c'armartuli k'alendari, 2," in: *Sakartvelos muzeumis moambe*, 7, 1931-32, pp. 304-315.

⁴ Cf. Schmitt, op.cit., note 50, who obviously means the Modern Georgian rule. His example, by the way, is the wrong one: Just as in French, the first day of the month is an exception, being the only day to be denoted by the ordinal number today ("1 July" = *p'irveli ivlisi*, but "2 July" = *ori ivlisi*; cf., e.g., K. Tschenkeli, *Einführung in die georgische Sprache* 1, Zürich 1958, p. 237).

⁵ For convenient information, cf. the German translation by G. Pätsch (*Bedi Kartlisa* 33 1975, pp. 288-337). The text was last edited in the collection *Jveli kartuli agiografiuli lit'erat'uris joglebi* (Monuments of Old Georgian hagiographic literature), 1, Tbilisi 1963, pp. 81-163, with both versions printed synoptically.

⁶ This is the reading of the older version; the younger text (the so called "Č'eliši" version) gives the years 5841 and 318, for which cf. below.

⁷ For the text passages quoted so far, cf. p. 114 sq. of the edition and p. 308 sq. of the translation. In the Šat'berd text, the datings read as follows: *ttuesa p'irvelsa atxutmet'sa / ttuesa p'irvelsa oc da atsa, dgesa p'arask'evsa / ttuesa meotxesa*, the Č'eliši variant omits the first dating and renders the second without the number of the day: *masve ttuesa p'irvelsa, dgesa p'arask'evsa* "In the same (!) first month, on a Friday."

⁸ This is the Georgian form of the name of Ahura Mazda, cf. *Aramazd* occurring in Armenian tradition.

⁹ For this passage, cf. p. 122 of the edition and p. 313 of the translation. The Šat'berd text gives the ordinal number only once: *dge iq'o meekuse twsay mis* "the day was the sixth of the month" whereas the Č'eliši version reads as follows: *tue iq'o meekuse, da dge iq'o meekuse twsa mis egretve* "the month was the sixth, and the day was the sixth of the month as well."

¹⁰ Matthew 17, 1-13; Mark. 9, 2-13; Luke 9, 28-36.

¹¹ Cf. the edition by S. Q'auxčišvili, *Kartlis cxovreba*, 1, Tbilisi 1955, pp. 72-124; a German translation by G. Pätsch appeared in 1985 (*Das Leben Kartlis*, Leipzig pp. 131-180). Two other "metaphrastic" versions were published in *Jveli kartuli agiograpiuli lit'erat'uris jeglebi* 3, Tbilisi 1971, pp. 7-83. They do not contain the datings in question.

¹² *Cxovreba*, p. 85 l. 5 sq.: *tuesa meotxesa, romel ars ivnisi.*

¹³ Cf. K'. K'ek'elije, "Jveli kartuli c'elic'adi," in: *Et'iudebi jveli kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oriidan* 1, 1956, pp. 121-124. Differing from Ingoroq'va, this author concluded that the year beginning with the month of March was a feature of the IX-X centuries.

¹⁴ Cf. I. Abulaje in his edition of the Patmowt'iwn Vrac', *Kartlis cxovrebis jveli somxuri targmani*, Tbilisi 1953, p. 025 sq.

¹⁵ For the quotations, cf. p. 80 and 85 sq., resp., of Abulaje's edition.

¹⁶ That the legend as preserved in the "Conversion" cannot be regarded as being as "archaic" as its contents suggest, was first pointed out by N. Marr in 1897 ("Xiton gospoden v knižnyx legendax armjan, gruzin i sirijcev," in *Sbornik statej učnikov .. Viktora Romanoviča Rozena*, Sanktpeterburg 1897, p. 721). Marr drew attention to the fact that the text contains a New Persian sentence using the Arabic word *rasūl*.

¹⁷ Cf. p. 134 l. 40 / 148, 17 / 148, 25 of the edition in *Jveli kartuli agiograpiuli lit'erat'uris jeglebi* 3, Tbilisi 1971.

¹⁸ Cf. 2.1.2.a) of my article "Die altgeorgischen Monatsnamen" (to appear in the Proceedings of the 3rd Caucasian Colloquium, Oslo 1986) for the attestations. [Additamentum: The article appeared in: *Studia Caucasologica I*. Proceedings of the Third Caucasian Colloquium, Oslo, July 1986, ed. F. Thordarson, Oslo 1988, p. 87-154; the page in question is p. 100.]

¹⁹ Cf., e.g., P. Peeters, "St. Grégoire l'Illuminateur dans le Calendrier lapidaire de Naples," *Analecta Bollandiana* 60, 1942, p. 92 referring to the Greek synaxary.

²⁰ Cf. the edition by I. Abulaje in the *Xelnac'erta inst'it'ut'is moambe* ("Herald of the Institute of Manuscripts"), 2, 1960, p. 163, repr. in the author's "Works" (*Šromebi*), 4, Tbilisi 1985, p. 91.

²¹ Cf. p. 79, l. 10 sq. of Abulaje's edition of the Patmowt'iwn; the "metaphrasis" of Leont'i Mroveli agrees with the Patmowt'iwn (p. 84, l. 9 sq. of the edition in *Kartlis cxovreba* and p. 141 of Pätsch's translation).

²² Cf. note 6. above.

²³ Cf. note 9. above.

²⁴ Cf. p. 92, l. 16 sqq. of the edition in *Kartlis cxovreba: xolo odes ikmna ese, žami iq'o meekuse, da dge meekuse da twsa mis, odes igi evmanoel ..* "And when this happened, it was the sixth hour, and the sixth day and (!) of the month, when Evmanoel .."

²⁵ It is an interesting coincidence that according to the gospels of Matthew and Mark, the Lord's "transfiguration" happened "after six days," too. - If we can assume that the marginal gloss in question was written in Greek, we can perhaps motivate the actual text of the Šat'berd version and of the "chronicle" by a misunderstanding of the abbreviated writing ζ (= 6) αὐ'του for ζ αὐγούστου (μηνός). — For an evaluation of the fact that the "Transfiguration Day" is mentioned in the text, cf. below.

²⁶ There are 17 and 19 occurrences, resp., in the material investigated in my "Monatsnamen." Six examples with cardinals in a construction reflecting the Latin "calendae"-formula must be added.

²⁷ Numbers below ten, denoted by ordinals: 10 examples / cardinals: 5; numbers beyond 20, denoted by ordinals: 1 example / cardinals: 9.

²⁸ Cf. the modern usage, too (cf. note 4., above).

²⁹ Cf., e.g., G.A. Klimov, *Ėtimologičeskij slovar' kartvel'skix jazykov*, Moskva 1964, p. 149 s.v. *jor-.

³⁰ Cf. the discussion of the problem in K.H. Schmidt, *Studien zur Rekonstruktion des Lautstandes der südkaukasischen Grundsprache*, Wiesbaden 1962, p. 28-30. For a more recent treatise cf. I. Melikišvili, "Kartvelur enata ori izolirebuli bgeratpardobis axsnisatvis," in *Tanamedrove zogadi enatmecnierebis sak'itxebi* (Questions of contemporary general linguistics) 6, 1981, p. 70 sqq.

³¹ It has to be noted that word internal "falling diphthongs" such as -ay- are not found in the phonology of the Kartvelian languages.

³² Cf. § 210, p. 216 of Thomson's edition. — For the sound change y- > h- cf. J. Karst, *Historische Grammatik des Kililisch-Armenischen*, Straßburg 1901, p. 34sq. (§ 23).

³³ Cf. § 815, p. 352 of the same edition.