

Slave Elites Who Returned Home: Georgian *Vāli*-king Rostom and the Safavid Household Empire

MAEDA Hirotake

Introduction

The Safavid Dynasty employed various means to implement its long-term strategy to integrate the peoples of the Caucasus (hereafter Caucasians) into its state organization, including the forced movement of population inside and outside the region and the arrangement of political marriages between members of local elites and the newly-transplanted Qizilbāsh chieftains. At times, those Caucasians incorporated into the state apparatus would be forcibly removed from their homes to the Caspian coast or the interior of Iran. This is true not only of the elites who were transplanted to the core of the empire, but also of the village peasants and urban residents who were removed by imperial order to new soil far from their homelands. Many of these people spent the remainder of their lives in new social surroundings created by the Safavid government.¹⁾

Among the indigenous peoples of the Caucasus, the Georgians were particularly influenced by this integration policy, since their domain was situated precisely on the edge of the imperial border, to the east of the powerful Ottomans and to the south of the ascendant Russians. At the same time, the Georgians had solidified their own society, which had been based on a centuries-old affiliation to Christianity and the warrior ethic. Not only the Georgians, but also most of the other indigenous peoples of the region continued to resist imperial pressure. In due course, however, human resources would be physically removed to the imperial center in a process of both war and negotiation between the two sides.

During the early reign of Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 1587–1629), the Safavid effort to recruit state elites from newly subjugated peoples created a curious situation which presented indigenous people with opportunities under the auspices of the Safavids. Some local Georgian elites were able to distinguish themselves at the imperial core; and the new Safavid elite drawn from all over Caucasia helped to strengthen imperial centralization. The

Safavid resurgence enabled these elites to regain influence over the lands from which they had been removed. This phase of Safavid expansion intensified tensions within the indigenous society of the Caucasus, which the Ottomans had occupied for twenty years. At the same time, imperial integration policies had a tremendous impact upon the identity of Safavid elites of Caucasian origin.

Under such ambiguous circumstances, the identities of the influential royal *ghulāms* of Caucasian origin were further cultivated, manipulated, negotiated, and reconfigured. This should not be interpreted merely as imperial exploitation of human resources, for the peripheral peoples were not simply victims of imperial integration efforts. They continued to negotiate with their overlords, provide an essential component of the dynasty's ruling elite, and contribute much to the making of the Safavid household empire. Furthermore, Caucasian political conditions significantly influenced the imperial center. The object of this article is to reconsider Safavid history by focusing on the process of the interaction which took place between the Caucasians and the Safavids, a subject which has usually been neglected in the research devoted not only to the Safavids, but also to imported elites of foreign origin—"slave soldiers"—active in Islamic polities.

'Abbās' intense interest in Caucasian affairs ultimately yielded two contradictory results. On the one hand, it nourished many Caucasian statesmen of dual identity who became the ruling members of the extended imperial household, contributing to Safavid victories over the Mughals in 1622 and the Ottomans in 1624. The Safavid state expanded anew, annexing Qandahār and Baghdād, conquests which greatly satisfied 'Abbās, who had long hoped to recover the territories ruled by his grandfather, Shah Ṭahmāsp I. Newly-acquired Baghdād was governed by a powerful royal *ghulām* of Armeno-Georgian origin, Ṣafīqulī (Mirman Mirimanidze), while Qandahār was administered by Ganj 'Alī Khan Zīk, a faithful *amīr* of Kurdish origin, whose political path has often been compared by modern scholars with that of the royal *ghulāms* from rather humble origins of minor tribes.²⁾ On the other hand, confusion soon spread throughout the homelands from where the new Safavid elites had been extracted. 'Abbās had failed to establish full control over the two kingdoms of eastern Georgia. The revolt of Mourāv Beg (i.e., Giorgi Saakadze) in 1625 weakened Safavid authority in the region to a certain extent because Saakadze had at one time been a close ally of 'Abbās, but subsequently assumed the leadership of one of the anti-Safavid movements.³⁾

‘Abbās’ death in 1629 provoked a serious challenge from outside powers, as Ottoman troops joined by Mourāv Beg soon made a move to the eastern frontier. Revolts in provinces such as Gīlān are a testimony to the internal instability. ‘Abbās’ grandson and successor, Shah Ṣafī I, who ascended the throne under these difficult circumstances, lost Qandahār to the Mughals and Baghdād to the Ottomans during his short reign (1629–1642). While later historians tended to judge him as a weak monarch, recent research has found that the period was fairly important to the adjustment and regulation of the Safavid state machinery so that it could function more effectively in administering what remained of the empire. The Georgian rebellion was one of the top priorities for stabilizing Safavid rule over the northwestern frontier and thus required urgent action. Moreover, it was not only an issue regarding the frontier, but also affected the core of the imperial household, because once the Georgians were integrated into the Safavid hierarchy under ‘Abbās, they found themselves embedded within a reconfigured imperial space. However, the Caucasian elites’ relationship with their home country was still open to question.

In fact, no more major expeditions to forcibly “integrate” the Caucasus peoples were recorded towards the end of Safavid dynasty, with the exception of one in the late 1650s. This author repeatedly has contended that the famous military campaign of 1614–1617 should be regarded as one of the last large-scale military expeditions targeting local human resources. The question naturally arises of how “Caucasian elites,” originally foreign to Safavid rule, continued to be included in the household membership of the imperial institutions. It is a fact that they remained integrated within the state administration towards the end of the dynasty, but how was this accomplished? Did their participation in Safavid politics change over time or did it remain fairly constant? To tackle these problems we should pay special attention to local political scene in the Caucasus and its interaction with Safavid politics.

This article will specifically examine the shifting engagement of the Caucasian elites with imperial authority after Ṣafī’s reign and investigate in detail the imperial influence over peripheral society by observing the policy of Georgian *Vālī*-king Rostom (r. 1633–1658), a former leader of the royal *ghulām* corps and the governor of the imperial capital who returned to his native soil as the region’s king (*mep’ē* in Georgian). We will also look at the contrasting reactions of two other “returned” *ghulāms* of Georgian origin and their relationship with Rostom.

Return of the Slave-King Rostom

The revolt of Mourāv Beg revealed the inherent dangers of the royal *ghulam* institution. However, the once-strained relations between the Safavids and Caucasian elites morphed into a fairly stable partnership during Shah Šafi's reign, and it was the Bagratid prince Rostom who greatly contributed to this transformation. Rostom "returned" to Georgia in 1633 as a Safavid governor (*vālī*; i. e., hereditary ruler of the border provinces) and/ or Georgian king and went on to reign for about a quarter-century, until 1658. Rostom was also the official representative of the newly-risen Caucasian elite at the Safavid court. He was the commander of the royal *ghulam* corps (*qullarāqāsī*) and governor (*dārūgha*) of Işfahān, the imperial capital. After his return, Rostom embodied Safavid authority in eastern Georgia. He belonged to two distinct societies within the empire and played a dual role in both spaces. In many respects, he regulated Safavid-Georgian relations, thus ensuring both a place for Caucasians within the imperial household institution and for Safavid authority at home. While remaining a faithful "slave of the shah," he was also manager and architect of the dynamic interplay between the Safavid imperial court and Caucasian local society.⁴⁾

Rostom was an illegitimate son of Davit XI, known as Dautkhan (Dāvūd Khan), who was entrusted with Kartli by Shah Ṭahmāsp and reigned from 1569 to 1578 as the first Muslim-Bagratid king, or *vālī*.⁵⁾ Before being given the honorary name of Rostom by Shah Šafi, he had been known as Prince Khusraw. According to Vakhushti's *Description of the Georgian Kingdom*, Rostom was sixty-seven years old when he ascended the throne of Kartli in 1633.⁶⁾ After Davit XI fell from power in Georgia, Davit's elder brother Simon I (r. 1556–1569, 1578–1600) and his descendants (Giorgi X, r. 1600–1606 and Luarsab II, r. 1606–1614) continued to administer Kartli. In one instance, Rostom and his elder half-brother Bagrat (future Bagrat VII, r. 1616–1619) reportedly fled to the court of Kakheti and finally ended up settling at the court of Shah 'Abbās.⁷⁾ In contrast to Bagrat, whose mother was a royal princess of the Kakhetian branch, Georgian and Persian sources agree that Rostom was illegitimate.⁸⁾ His old age at the time of his return and his status as a bastard son greatly affected his life and behavior.

Little is known about Rostom's early years, but a Georgian source written around 1680 suggests that he was poorly treated at the imperial center.⁹⁾ However, Fazlī's newer information provides more hints. Ros-

tom was already a potential candidate for the Georgian throne when his brother Bagrat VII, *vālī*-king of Kartli, died in 1619. According to Fażlī, “since Georgians never obey the illegitimate prince,” Khusraw Mīrzā, brother of Bagrat Khan inherited the land outside Georgia possessed by his late brother.¹⁰⁾ On this occasion, Bagrat’s legitimate son, the nine-year old Simon II, ascended the throne. Nonetheless, in addition to bestowing upon Rostom his late brother’s estate, the following year Shah ‘Abbās appointed him to the post of governor of Işfahān, who was responsible for the security of the imperial capital. The rise of Georgian *ghulāms* of Kartvelian noble origin also took place during this time.¹¹⁾ Therefore, if we take into account Fażlī’s information, Rostom’s appointment to such influential posts could be a sign of both personal compensation and general support for pro-Safavid forces in eastern Georgia. Recalling that ‘Abbās’ protégée Prince Konstantine (Kūstandīl Mīrzā) had assumed this governorship two decades earlier, we can assume that Rostom was an influential figure at the Safavid court already at the time of his brother’s death.

At the time of ‘Abbās’ death in Māzandarān province, Rostom was in charge of Işfahān and in collaboration with *ishikāqāshībāshī-yi ḥaram*, had secured the accession of Şafī I. Rostom was rewarded with an honorary name and the post of *qullarāqāsī*, besides receiving precious gift of a sword.¹²⁾ A Georgian source written by Rostom’s close retainer even goes as far as to state that “the governance of Iran came under the supervision of Rostom.”¹³⁾ As Fażlī’s statement about Bagrat VII’s death indicates, Rostom’s career was deeply influenced by his origins. As a matter of fact, Rostom was sent to Georgia and participated in the important military operation on the occasion of the anti-Safavid uprising there in 1625.¹⁴⁾ It was in this way that his provenance always affected his career. Up to this time, however, it was also true that Rostom built his career exclusively at the Safavid court as an important “Georgian official” serving the imperial monarch. Nonetheless, the disturbances in the region which erupted after the death of Shah ‘Abbās forced Rostom to “return” to and settle on his native soil.

In 1630 Simon II was assassinated by his protector and *vakīl*, Zurab Araghvis-eristavi, one of the most powerful landed nobles of Kartli. King Teimuraz managed to kill Zurab, and the Safavid court rewarded him with the appointment of his son Giorgi to the governorship of Kartli.¹⁵⁾ In fact, Teimuraz allegedly proposed that Zurab marry his daughter and rule Kartli, and also allowed Zurab to assassinate Simon II.¹⁶⁾ At the very least, Rostom understood Simon’s death to have resulted from Teimu-

raz's plot. The exact time of Simon's assassination is not recorded, but G. Zhorzholiani assumes it happened in the autumn of 1630, since we find no Persian-Georgian bilingual documents that the Muslim Bagratid ruler would have customarily issued during the period from 2 August 1630 to 26 March 1633. Teimuraz then proclaimed himself king of Kartli and Kakheti in 1631 and married his daughter Darejan to Prince Aleksandre (future king Aleksandre III) of Imereti, a Bagratid kingdom in western Georgia, on 15 May of the same year. Zhorzholiani's assumption seems to be confirmed by the description in a Persian source which attests to the news of Simon's murder reaching the Safavid court in September of 1630.¹⁷⁾

The political climate in Georgia worsened when, two years later, Teimuraz engineered a revolt with Dāvūd Khan, governor-general of Qarābāgh, through whom he had previously been reconciled with Shah 'Abbās. Their joint revolt in the autumn of 1632 seriously threatened imperial authority, as Iskandar Beg speaks about a challenge being made to the Safavid throne itself. Dāvūd's elder brother Imāmqlī, one of the most powerful *amīrs* and ruler of a vast part of the southern portion of the empire for nearly twenty years, was once given a woman having served in the imperial haram. There was a rumor that the real father of her child was the late shah. Iskandar Beg states that Teimuraz and Dāvūd spread this rumor by sending documents to neighboring aristocrats contending that this true son of 'Abbās had become the new Safavid shah with the help of his foster-father's army of 30,000 troops. This challenge to succession from Georgian soil needed a definitive political solution. So Rostom was appointed *vālī* of Kartli by Shah Ṣafī on 23 October 1632, and what followed was the elimination of the most celebrated Georgian *amīr* of the dynasty, Imāmqlī Khan, and his sons that December.¹⁸⁾

When Rostom was appointed governor of Kartli, Rustam Khan, supreme commander-in-chief of the Safavid army, was ordered to escort him to Georgia and provide for his installation there. Rustam of the Saakadze clan was a son of Bījan Beg, a close retainer of Rostom's brother Bagrat VII. Rostom officially ascended the throne of Kartli on 18 February 1633.¹⁹⁾ Significantly, several Georgian servants of the Safavid court accompanied Rostom on his "return trip," which in itself is worth consideration, since historians typically stress the absolute separation of "slave elites" in Muslim societies from their homeland and kin. In theory, it would follow that the ties of "slave-elites" with their homeland should be completely broken so that they would become entirely dependent upon

the monarch, but in this case, Safavid “slave soldiers” returned to their homeland under the banner of their “old master.” The Georgian historian Parsadan Gorgijanidze writes:

[Shah Şafi] gave the kingship of Georgia [*Sakartvelo*] to Rostom, who was accompanied by Rustam Khan Saakadze [*Sahkadze*] with an Iranian army. The Georgians [*K'art'velni*] who were close to the Shah [*qaen*] were requested to accompany him. Leading the contingent were Bezhan Amilakhori, Zal Ksani-eristavi, Davit Tvaldamts-vrisshvili and his sons, Bakhuta Panvelisshvili, Roin Jaglati, Tamaza Machabeli, Papuna Tsitsishvili, Turmanbeg Turmanidze, Teimuraz Chkheidze *bok'ault'ukhuts'esi* of Imereti, Hsanbeg Baratashvili,²⁰⁾ Melik Sadat, Atabeg Somkhitis melik and his brothers, Otia Edronikashvili of Kakheti, Kakhaberi, Elizbar Svimonisshvili, Demetre and Roin Panvelisshvili.²¹⁾

This military force no doubt helped Rostom to consolidate his authority in Georgia. At least two of the above-mentioned persons, Rustam Khan Saakadze and Papuna Beg Tsitsishvili, are identified in the Persian sources as royal *ghulāms*.²²⁾ Their subsequent careers will be addressed in the next section, but first let us examine Rostom’s political agenda on his native soil. Rostom’s father Dautkhan was in exile at the court of Shah Ṭahmāsp and was able to return home with the Shah’s support. Rostom, on the other hand, had spent most of his life at the imperial court. So the questions stand as to how he strengthened his authority in his “own” society and at what point he was forced to depend upon imperial authority to accomplish that.

A Slave of the Shah as King of Kings

After his “return” to Georgia, Rostom established effective rule over Kartli with military aid from the suzerain empire. Many Safavid officials of Georgian origin who returned to their homeland with Rostom were presented with fiefs there.²³⁾ Although the region would recover and regain internal stability towards the end of Rostom’s reign, at the beginning many local aristocrats were reluctant to accept Rostom’s authority in Georgia, because he was an illegitimate, converted prince who had spent most of his life at the court of the Safavid shahs. Early on during his reign revolts were raised almost annually; that is, in 1633, 1634, 1636, 1637,

and 1638. The revolt of 1642 was especially serious, for it occurred just after the death of Rostom's master, Shah Şafī. Powerful Kartvelian nobles, such as Zaal Araghvis-eristavi and Iotam Amilakhori, plotted to assassinate Rostom, and the patriarch of Kartli and the exiled Teimuraz I joined the conspiracy. Rostom sent Melik Qorkhmaz, who had been informed of the plot, to the court of the new shah 'Abbās II to seek assistance.²⁴⁾

In response, the Safavid court dispatched Ādam Sultan, governor of Tālīshs in Āstārā and a royal *ghulām* of Georgian origin. Ādam was from the Andronikashvili clan, an influential aristocratic family from Kakheti who claimed to be descended from the Byzantine emperors and who himself was a nephew of Rostom through his sister.²⁵⁾ Since the royal *ghulām* Siyāvush Beg was appointed *qullarāqāsī* shortly after Rostom returned to Georgia,²⁶⁾ Rostom therefore no longer supervised the royal *ghulāms* at the Safavid central court. However, Ādam's example clearly attests to a *ghulām* lineage functioning as a guarantee to pro-Safavid forces in the region. So long as the core of the royal *ghulām* institution partly depended on the human resources of the indigenous Caucasian landed nobility, and since Rostom had once occupied the top position of that corps, the "returned" king could rely upon the military power and presence of these imperial elites as one of the principal sources of authority.

Once the large-scale revolt of 1642 was quelled, Rostom's rule in Kartli stabilized. Then in 1648 Teimuraz was defeated again and lost his successor, Prince Davit, in Kakheti, at the hand of Jamāl Khan, a leader of Qazāqlars fighting with Teimuraz's army.²⁷⁾ Since Khānzāda Khānum, a sister of Rostom, was a Qazāqlar's bride,²⁸⁾ Rostom may have exploited his own kinship network which was spread within and beyond the periphery of Georgia and the Safavid imperial household. After Prince Davit's death, Teimuraz attempted to enlist Russian help, but was unsuccessful, and he ultimately never returned to his native Kakheti.²⁹⁾ Rostom was permitted to rule Kakheti at that time and governed the whole of eastern Georgia for a decade.

Rostom's dependency on the Safavids is observed not only in military affairs, but also in the style of his court's documents, which were issued in both the Persian and Georgian languages. These documents symbolized the hybrid nature of Georgian political culture under the Persian monarchy. The Georgian text followed the traditional style of administrative documents in Georgia, while its Persian counterpart adhered to the Safavid court style. The first section of the Georgian text typically reads like this:

Christ! By the will and the providence of God, I, Rostom, king of kings [*mep'et'a mep'e*] and lord [*patroni*], and my wife Mariam, queen of queens and lord, give you this sealed document which is valid forever...³⁰⁾

Most of his documents commence with this phrase or closely-related variants. Rostom styled himself “king of kings” in Georgian in accordance with local tradition, but the Persian text merely states, *ḥukm-i ālā shud ānka*, “a supreme order has been issued as follows.” The institution of bilingual official documents is a clear testimony to Rostom’s descent from previous converted Bagratid kings, who also issued these kinds of document.

Rostom also invited Persian administrators to serve in his government. For example, a family by the name of Vezirishvili, which acquired the rank of *t'avadi* in eastern Georgia in the late 18th century, was reputedly made up of the descendants of Qias (Qiyās) Beg, who settled in Georgia as a *vazir* (top administrator) under Rostom.³¹⁾ Having Persian administrators was a sign of sharing the Persianate culture of the sovereign and a clarification that Georgia was politically subjugated to the Safavid monarch (who is referred to in the Georgian chronicles as *qaen*). These Persian administrators in turn helped assure that the Persian versions of official documents would be issued during their routine work.

Within this “Safavidization” process, Georgian forms were preserved and many mono Georgian documents were produced, while Persian-Georgian documents were issued for various purposes negotiated between the authorities and recipients. The Georgian state chancellery also had to adjust itself to the Safavid presence as Rostom’s reign marked the institution of Georgian court titles explicitly patterned after the Safavid model.³²⁾

Thus, Rostom’s return undoubtedly entailed the direct transplantation and implementation of Safavid political culture in Georgia. Although Persian-Georgian bilingual documents had been issued during the reigns of other converted monarchs of Kartli, including Simon I and Simon II, Rostom’s long and fairly stable reign fixed this tradition in the court of the Georgian kings. This was not simply a “return home,” but rather the establishment and further supplementation of an Iranian-Georgian hybrid polity by the king. Naturally, the system was a projection of imperial hegemony.

Exploiting Home Within the Household Empire

Dependency on the sovereign empire reflected the international reality that took hold after the Treaty of Qaşr-i Shīrīn (Zuhab) between the Safavids and the Ottomans in 1639, which limited the possibility for Georgian princes to act independently. The strong influence of neighboring Muslim empires was also present in Samtskhe-Saatabago. Beka Jaqeli, the local ruler there and a contemporary of Rostom, reigned from 1628 until 1651 and assumed the name Safar Pasha. The title *atabagi*, which was customarily used by the local Jaqeli rulers, fell out of use after his reign, from which time Georgian sources refer to them as the *pashas* of Samtskhe. The Jaqelis continued to play an important role in domestic Georgian politics until the second half of the 18th century, when the Ottoman government seriously considered direct rule over the provinces.³³⁾

Rostom's adherence to Safavid authority was a natural choice determined in great part by his early political career. For all the obvious instances of Safavidization, however, indigenous political models and practices were never abandoned and even reemerged, as exemplified by the resurgence of Georgian historiographical narrative during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The starting point for explaining the existence of two simultaneous phenomena which at first glance might seem to be contradictory is that both exhibit the dual identity of Rostom himself, who succeeded in placing the entire (at least eastern) Georgian political landscape firmly within the context of Safavid imperial household institutions.

Rostom is not treated favorably in modern Georgian hagiography, which depicts him as a Muslim and a faithful Safavid agent. However, his authority inside the Safavid court became an important foundation for the strong influence exerted by the later Bagratid princes within the sovereign empire. Here we can see Rostom's deliberate strategy in the interplay that took place between the Safavid and Georgian power brokers, especially in the very sensitive and important issue of how to choose his heir. As O. Patterson has pointed out in his book on slavery, one of the typical features of slave elites in Islamic society was the master's control over their reproduction. In this regard, eunuchs were particularly important because they were deprived of the opportunity to leave their biological offspring, thus theoretically becoming absolutely subservient and loyal to their masters.³⁴⁾ Because Rostom had already reached a certain age (apparently 67 years old) when he returned to Georgia, he was compelled to

adopt a kinsman's son and designate him heir. Thus the sovereign empire may have been able to control its vassal kingdom by utilizing this issue. In fact, Rostom once asked the Safavids to send a successor:

The people of Kartli do not stop fighting and quarreling with each other because I have no son or close relative, so no one can forecast the future [of the throne]. My cousin Teimuraz Mirza has three sons. I ask you to give me Luarsab, namesake of my grandfather, as our step-son so that he should succeed me as king of Kartli.³⁵⁾

Safavid recognition was without a doubt needed and always sought; however, Rostom insisted that the royal blood of the Bagratids was also a precondition. According to Gorgijanidze, Rostom at first tried to entice Prince Mamuka of Imereti, a kinsman of Rostom's spouse Mariam Dadiani, to become his step-son and heir.³⁶⁾ Rostom's marriage with Mariam, a sister of a powerful ruler of Samegrelo (Mingrelia), Levan Dadiani, encouraged the formation of a Kartli-Mingrelia alliance. Because Rostom's main rival and foe in eastern Georgia, Teimuraz I, was in alliance with his son-in-law, Aleksandre III of Imereti, Rostom tried to extend this strategic marital arrangement to target Imereti. Mariam also acted in lieu of her Muslim husband as the protectress of Georgian Christianity in order to relax religious tension.³⁷⁾ Thus this marriage had two meanings within the framework of Georgian politics, one geopolitical, the other socio-religious, both without contradiction to the interests of the sovereign empire. As cited above, after Mamuka's death, Rostom petitioned the Safavid court to dispatch his close kinsman Luarsab. After the request was granted, Luarsab married a daughter of Ādam Sultan, the shah's *ghulam* and Rostom's nephew, to fortify the blood of the Kartli Bagratids. Rostom's major aim was to continue rule by the Bagratids with strong Safavid recognition.³⁸⁾

Rostom also endeavored to maintain his stature firmly within the Safavid royal household. Although continuing to hold the post of governor of the imperial capital, after his appointment to Georgian governor-king, he never again returned nor even temporarily visited the Safavid capital, which had been legally entrusted to his care. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, Western travelers, including Chardin, were already attesting to the tradition of Georgian royal princes guarding the imperial capital. In fact, there seems to be no fixed custom or written promises to this end (although Chardin mentioned existence of such a contract), but the fact of Rostom's legacy being traceable as far back as to the reign of

Shah ‘Abbās was likely acknowledged and interpreted as “tradition” by the Safavid elites. Rostom’s intimacy with the Safavid shahs was described in a Persian royal edict by Shah Ṣafī, in which Rostom was referred to as “my brother” (*akhavī-am*),³⁹⁾ indicating Rostom’s privilege to be included in the shah’s extended family.

Rostom’s multiple identities as the shah’s brother, leader of the royal *ghulām* corps, defender of the imperial capital, slave of the shah, hereditary ruler of a strategic province on the periphery (*vālī*), and king of kings of Georgia all worked to increase and enhance his authority. In a Georgian administrative document, Rostom boasts of being responsible for Ṣafī’s ascension to the throne,⁴⁰⁾ touting himself as a Georgian king returning from the “outside” with prestige gained in his outer-imperial world “foreign career” on the one hand, and on the other, the vengeful opponent of nephew Simon II and rightful blood heir to the Bagratid throne, all to prove his genuine authority inside Georgia. The latter claim fit within the Safavid political context as well.

Rostom’s high prestige at the Safavid court and rather weak profile in Georgia brought about a curious stability in Safavid-Georgian relations. Rostom used a logic of vengeance for his nephew Simon II to consolidate his domestic authority and probably even beyond Georgia’s boundaries. However, unlike his nephew (who took ‘Abbās I’s granddaughter as his bride), the “returned” Rostom searched for his bride within Georgia, not only because of the geopolitical situation, but also due to his outsider status. Rostom managed to remain a continuous member of the Safavid extended royal family while maintaining a comfortable distance. For Rostom, traditional Georgian political culture and that of his suzerain empire could co-exist, if adjusted to and combined with each other’s spheres of influence.⁴¹⁾

The aforementioned Persian-Georgian bilingual documents show the emergence of an original, hybrid political culture in Georgia. Persian sentences were first added to the decrees issued by Georgian rulers during the latter half of the sixteenth century. At first, the Persian text was written opposite the Georgian and the style mimicked official Persian documents. However, following Rostom’s reign, a tendency emerged to perfect the Persian text, the result being an unprecedented form of expression not observed in standard Persian documents. At the same time, from the 1640s onwards, the Persian text began to be placed in the upper margin of the Georgian text side. These changes symbolize a Persianate hegemonic culture being transplanted into Georgia and then “localized.”

It is highly important that the partly Persianized Georgian political culture produced hybrid Georgian elites who became more active towards the end of the Safavid era in Iran.⁴²⁾ We clearly observe the establishment and maintenance of a deliberate distance from the Safavid imperial court by the subjugated Georgian elite society. The fate of the two royal *ghulāms* returning to Georgia with Rostom lies in stark contrast to choices facing the Georgian landed nobility in transition. Thus we should survey their relationships with their homeland as well as Rostom, to further reveal a curious interdependency and the distance between the imperial core and peripheral society characterizing the extended imperial household.

The Georgian Expedition of the *sipahsālār* Rustam Khan

Let us now turn to the activities of the two Georgian *ghulāms* who “returned” to their homeland with Rostom, focusing on their relationships with the *vālī*-king. Like the former leader of the royal *ghulām* corps whom they accompanied home, the two returned *ghulāms* also had to re-acclimate themselves to the social milieu of the local landed nobility to which they once had belonged. Persian and Georgian sources testify to the fact that they both strongly adhered to their Georgian aristocratic origins and remembered well their rather bitter removal to Iran during their youth. Thus, when they returned to their native country, they were forced to come to terms with their old rivals and foes. Significantly, although both men were royal *ghulāms* of Georgian origin, each chose strikingly different ways to navigate through the Georgian social order, demonstrating the complicated relationship that existed between the core Safavid imperial authority and the internal order on the periphery.

Let us first consider *sipahsālār* Rustam Khan, whose father, Bijan Saakadze, was a close retainer of Bagrat VII, the half-brother of Rostom.⁴³⁾ When Rostom (Prince Khusraw) was appointed governor of Kartli, Rustam Saakadze was ordered to lead the Safavid army to Georgia to help Rostom establish his rule. Rustam Khan’s Saakadze family origin is recorded in most of the Georgian sources of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the Persian material support the idea that he remembered his pedigree and behaved accordingly in Georgia. According to the Persian chronicle dedicated to his life written around 1690, he resided at his father’s former estate for a week during the expedition. He reportedly shared his childhood memories with the villagers as follows.

Enemies attacked us here. They killed my father and robbed us of everything we had. Only one cow remained. We three brothers and our mother saw no opportunity to stay in this country and left this land of infidels. We put on clothes of pilgrims for submission and departed to the Safavid court.⁴⁴⁾

Rustam Khan, general commander-in-chief of the Safavid armed forces who never forgot his painful childhood, decided to take revenge on his return, according the following Georgian account.

All the *t'avadis* and *aznauris* in Kartli presented themselves and kissed the feet of Rostom. However, Parsadan Tsitsishvili was an exception. He was afraid of the Commander [*sardar*, *sardār* in Persian; i. e., Rustam Khan] because they were foes. The outraged Commander then plundered Tsitsishvili's territory and took away many captives.

No source mentions the exact relationship between Rustam Saakadze and Parsadan Tsitsishvili; however, Tsitsishvili was known as a strong enemy of another member of the Saakadze clan, Giorgi Saakadze (i. e., Mourāv Beg). The Tsitsishvilis were an established *t'avadi* family, while the Saakadzes were a new *aznauri* house whose power was based in inner and southern Kartli. Quite reasonably we can assume that Rustam Khan Saakadze took revenge upon Parsadan Tsitsishvili as his father's enemy. In response, the *vālī*-king Rostom acting as the ruling monarch of Georgia censured Rustam Khan's action in a strong tone:

King Rostom was angered by this incident and he sent a messenger to the Commander (*sipahsālār* Rustam Khan) to tell him that Georgia was already devastated and that he was now destroying that which remained. Then would he [King Rostom] be the master [of the kingdom]? Their relationship deteriorated and both sent separate reports to the emperor [*qaen*]. A royal edict was received. The Commander was ordered to go in the direction of the Vān fortress with his army. The governor-general of Shirvān led the army of Qarābāgh to protect King Rostom. When the Commander left Georgia, Parsadan Tsitsishvili and those who had fled all came [to Rostom's court].⁴⁵⁾

According to this description, while King Rostom never permitted his "former subject" to take personal vengeance for the past, the *sipahsālār*

Rustam Khan expressed his anger publicly. One contemporary Persian source, while not mentioning this particular confrontation, does frequently refer to Rustam Khan's reports on the local situation in Georgia.⁴⁶⁾ It states that having received news about a victory, Shah Ṣafī dispatched an astronomer to Rustam Khan in May and permitted him to act "independently."⁴⁷⁾ However, it adds that the Shah had inquired from Rustam in June about the next direction the army would take, and after receiving the Commander's report, ordered Rustam to proceed to Vān, where he arrived during that summer.⁴⁸⁾ While the Persian source implies that Rustam Khan smoothly finished his operation in Georgia and moved on in a different direction to perform a new task, the Georgian narrative is valuable for informing us of tension that arose between the Georgian king and a son of his former subject. In fact, a manual from the late Safavid period reveals that Rustam Khan Saakadze, as *sipahsālār* and *divānbeḡī*, was superior to King Rostom, *vālī* and *dārūgha*, in terms of the Safavid courtier pecking order.⁴⁹⁾ Nonetheless, neither felt constrained to act entirely within the Safavid order and often behaved according to the "legacy of the Georgians." We clearly observe that their "past identity" was recognized and exploited by Safavid courtiers of Georgian origin.

It is not a mere reflection of that identity that was exploited in their present situation. Rustam Khan's adherence to his previous "identity" never satisfied his "former master." King Rostom's reaction also made his former subject angry.⁵⁰⁾ In this paradoxical situation, we clearly observe the existence of a "Georgian internal order" and a local political scene in which the new ruler had to set priorities in protecting those who were most valuable to him. As ruler of Georgia, Rostom's priority was to stabilize internal politics and conciliate the great nobles. Rustam Khan's behavior was a tremendous obstacle to these objectives. Parsadan Tsitsishvili and his son Nodar later opposed King Rostom on several occasions, but they managed to avoid a purge. These men were powerful enough that Rostom could also find benefit from protecting them.

Conversely, the *sipahsālār* Rustam Khan seemingly had no intention of following the order of his "old homeland." According to the chronicle of Rustam Khan, three fatherless brothers had been plundered down to their last cow during their escape from the land of the "infidels." Thereafter, they regarded the act of robbery as the most serious of crimes and vowed not to permit it any longer. Rustam's younger brother 'Alīqulī often told this story to his colleagues among the elite Safavid courtiers.⁵¹⁾ Rustam Khan was appointed to the post of *divānbeḡī*, the supreme judge

of the central court, during the last days of ‘Abbās I’s reign. The post was for many years hereditary in the Khan family throughout seventeenth century, when Rustam’s younger brother, Rustam’s son and grandson occupied the post. Apparently this family tale enshrined their strong sense of justice, but also stressed their dependency upon imperial authority by leaving their former kingdom and acquiring new imperial identity.

In fact, we find no information about Rustam Khan’s commitment to Georgian local politics nor about the activities of his direct descendants in Georgia. In the Georgian documents, however, we do find several person of Saakadze family bearing the names, Rostom, Aliquli, and Iese (‘Īsā in Persian is the same name as that of the youngest brother of Rustam Khan). In one Georgian source Rustam Khan *sipahsālār* is mentioned to have received much gold, silver, and money from an influential Georgian noble. Rustam’s younger brother, ‘Alīqulī, was said to have had Georgian writers (des gens de lettres).⁵²⁾ Bijan, the author of the chronicle of Rustam Khan, wrote that he collected the information from old servants of the family from “people of this land and that land” (*mardum-i ānjaī*). Naturally, they could have had ties with many of their native Georgians in the homeland; however, it is also a fact that we do not find any information about the activities of their direct descendants in Georgia, at least from local materials, thus suggesting their final break with the Georgian political order.

Papuna Beg Tsitsishvili’s Return Home

The other royal *ghulām* who returned home with Rostom, Papuna Beg, adopted a rather different approach to his native soil. Contrary to Rustam Khan *sipahsālār*, he chose to reintegrate himself into Georgian society. Papuna Beg belonged to the Kartvelian *t’avadi* clan of the Tsitsishvilis. His family name is attested to by the Safavid shahs as *Sīsīughlī* of a Persian royal order. Parsadan Gorgijanidze also refers to the return of Papuna Beg at the time of Rostom’s accession. The Tsitsishvilis were originally based in Panaskenti in southwest Georgia and subsequently moved to Kartli during the second half of the fourteenth century.⁵³⁾ Zakaria Panaskerteli, called Zaza, was an able commander and ruled the Mdzovreti and Nichbisi basins during the reign of Bagrat V (1360–1393). Zaza was succeeded by his son Tsitsi, a servant of Kostantine I (r. 1407–1411) and the namesake of the clan. Already during the first half of the fifteenth century, Satikhhatun, sister of Taqa Panaskerteli, became the consort of Vakhtang IV (r. 1442–1446).⁵⁴⁾ Like the neighboring Baratashvilis, the

Tsitsishvilis established their powerful rule over southern Kartli during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Accordingly, they could have had close contacts with the Safavids from very early on. Due to the fact that Papuna Beg was a royal *ghulām* who had once left his homeland and then returned from “exile in a foreign country,” contemporary documents describing his activities reflect his ambivalence about belonging to “both sides.” We observe his strategy to resettle within Georgian society in five royal Persian edicts and a Georgian document.

Safavid Royal Edicts⁵⁵⁾

No.	Date	Shah	Contents
1	Sep.-Oct. 1641 (Jumada II 1051)	Şafi I	Based on a request by Papuna, the shah orders the <i>vazīr</i> of Shirvān to grant him a stipend.
2	Feb.-March 1649 (Safar 1059)	‘Abbās II	Papuna complains that the payment of his stipend had been delayed. The shah orders the <i>vazīr</i> of Shirvān to investigate the case and if the complaint proves to be true, to settle the amount owed.
3	Nov.-Dec. 1658 (Rabi I 1069)	‘Abbās II	‘Abbās I grants five <i>aznauri</i> families and 50 peasant families owned by Parsadan Tsitsishvili in Kartli to Papuna’s father Kaykhusraw. This edict, reaffirmed in Feb.-March 1652 (Rabi I 1062), orders Rostom to comply. Papuna requests once again that the edict be confirmed, and the shah orders Shāhnavāz, the new <i>vālī</i> of Kartli, to comply with it.
4	Sep.-Oct. 1667 (Rabi II 1078)	Sulaymān	Land disputes arise between Kaykhusraw’s son Papuna Tsitsishvili and Mirimanidze family (Qorkhmaz, son of Malek Atabeg Mirimanidze, Zākim Beg and Kamāl Beg, both descendants of Malek Mirman Mirimanidze). According to a royal edict issued on 29 July 1636 (26 Safar 1046), Zākim Beg was to transfer a part of the land to Papuna Tsitsishvili. The edict was reaffirmed in Jan.-Feb. 1652 (Safar 1062) and Papuna is now requesting again reaffirmation of the edict.
5	Aug.-Sep. 1691 (Zul-Hijja 1102)	Sulaymān	Papuna’s son Zaal Beg has come to the royal court seeking confirmation of Edict No. 3; and the shah orders the <i>vālī</i> of Kartli, Naẓār ‘Alī Khan, to comply.

Edict No. 1 officially permitted Papuna Tsitsishvili a livelihood in Georgia and justified the royal *ghulām*’s legal “return” to his native soil. The document never refers to his Georgian origins, but only his special assignment to closely serve Rostom, ex-chief of the royal *ghulām* corps, who was by that time the reigning monarch in Kartli. It reads:

A royal edict was issued. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Beg, a haven of *vazīr* and superior official, an existence like the Sun, and *vazīr* of Shirvān, should pay a pension to the amount of 11 *tumān* 7,300 Tabrīz *dīnārs* from the beginning of the Year of the Snake to Bābāna Beg Sīsīughlī [Papuna Beg], a royal *ghulām*. The sum will be collected from the tax revenue of the *vazīr* [Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Beg].

[Papuna] has requested his annual stipend. In the register book of the royal *ghulāms*, it is recorded that he should be at the side of Rustam Khan [King Rostom], [who holds] the rank of a ruler, haven of a noble person, an essence of greatness and righteousness, respectful personality, a successor of a great family of rulers, a brave man serving the crown, a governor and a man of fortune, brother [*akhavī*], and *vālī* of Georgia, and not make any error... The government secretariat has received a document from above-mentioned high ranking person [Rostom] to confirm that [Bābāna] does his necessary service and commits no transgression in Georgia. According to custom, on the basis of the confirmation by the above-mentioned high ranking person, [the annual stipend] shall be delivered. He shall be issued a receipt as proof of the payment. This is a royal order, so it is obligatory. There is no need to issue a new order every year. The document bears the royal seal, so it is valid. This edict was written in Juamada II of 1051 [between September 7 and October 5, 1641].

This document (Edict No. 1) testifies to Papuna's position as a royal *ghulām* and guarantees a stipend from Shirvān. He was also ordered to serve Rostom, and a report from the latter was needed to receive the stipend. In spite of the presence of Safavid bureaucrats there, Georgia had not been fully incorporated into the Iranian system of governance. At the very least, the imperial center had no right to distribute land inside Georgia, and we have so far no evidence of the existence of Safavid crown land, known as *khāṣṣa*, in Georgia. Therefore, Papuna resided in Georgia and simultaneously received a stipend from Shirvān, a neighboring Caucasian whose land had been directly incorporated under the Safavid administration. Rostom's authority guaranteed this transaction. While the Persian edicts justify Papuna's stay in Georgia, at least from the Safavid point of view, a unique Georgian document informs us about Papuna's twofold strategy and hidden intention not evident in the Persian edicts.

Papuna Tsitsishvili's Reentry into Georgian Landed Nobility

A Georgian document records a legal case involving Papuna in a dispute with his old enemies, members of the Tsitsishvili clan at the court of the Georgian king. On 21 June 1640 the *vāl*-king Rostom settled this dispute between Manuchar Tsitsishvili, *sakhlt'ukhts'esi* of the clan, and his close relative (*ganaqop'i*, or “the divider”) Papuna Tsitsishvili.⁵⁶ Each party accused the other and testified to his own innocence a total of seven times. On the first occasion Papuna and his brother Khokhona accused Manuchar's brother Baadur of setting fire to their house in Samtsevrishi, which burned down even while their grandmother was still inside. If Manuchar and his brothers, Baadur and Kaia, failed to prove their innocence, they would have to pay damages of 200 *marchil*. Manuchar, Baadur, and Kaia then accused Papuna and his men, claiming that Papuna's father Kaykhusraw had gathered an army at the upper reaches of the Kura River above Mtskheta, an ancient capital of Georgia and location of the headquarters of the Georgian orthodox church, and tried to attack them in Leteti. Baadur and his brothers became aware of the plot and escaped the raid. Should Papuna fail to make his case, he would have to pay his adversaries 500 *marchil* or 3 peasant families.

From the contemporary description of this episode, it is clear that this internal quarrel had broken out when 'Abbās I devastated Kartli and Lursab II became his hostage, at which time “the people of Kartli remained without a ruler” (*k'a(r)t'uelni upatronod darch'en*).⁵⁷ In the sixth exchange, Papuna and Khokhona described in detail their adversaries' role in how they had been forced to leave their native land and depart for “the land of *qizilbash*.” Since on the way one of their brothers had died, they demanded compensation for his death. Manuchar and his brothers rebutted that Papuna's father Kaykhusraw had once reconciled with their family through the mediation of Zakaria, the patriarch of Mtskheta, but he betrayed them just three days later. We have no further information regarding this event, but if Manuchar's statements are to be believed, then it is clear that Papuna's father Kaykhusraw tried to usurp the leadership of his clan with the help of the Safavid authorities precisely at the time when 'Abbās invaded Georgia.

It would seem that this litigation constituted a sort of initiation rite for reintegrating Papuna into Georgian society by reconciling him with his fellow clans. It is interesting that this trial transpired at the court of Rostom and is attested to in a monolingual Georgian document. Once

Papuna separated himself from local Georgian aristocratic society then returned there with King Rostom, it became necessary for him to make his demands according to Georgian custom and law. While Papuna's monolingual Persian edicts confirmed his status as a royal *ghulam* and guaranteed him a stipend from outside Georgia, as soon as he began to seek compromises with his kinsmen, the documentation was issued only in Georgian. Such a two-pronged strategy was adopted by Papuna in order to recover his esteemed place among the Georgian landed nobility. Rostom's dual status within the Safavid court and inside Georgian society strongly determined this political strategy. In both cases, Papuna was backed by Rostom, first in the "Persian manner" then in the "Georgian manner." For Rostom to intervene and help Papuna regain his position within Georgian society would potentially enhance his own authority. Unlike Rustam Khan Saakadze, who sought personal vengeance at the head of a Safavid army and thus defied the established Georgian social order, Papuna adhered to Georgian traditions so as to find a rightful place within that social order, by asking the local king to render judgment on issues pending. From these facts we can confirm once again Rostom's dual sense of social identity as an important Safavid official and the hereditary ruler of Georgia.

Other Persian documents shed light on Papuna's position in Georgian society, showing that he relied on imperial authority without hesitation whenever negotiating with powerful rivals. Two of those documents, in particular, suggest that the Safavid government also tried to establish direct control over the Georgian elite to a certain extent. In 1658 'Abbās II reconfirmed the privileges bestowed on Kaykhusraw by 'Abbās I (document #3).

Bābāna Beg, a temple of bureaucratic superiority, son of Kaykhusraw Beg Sīsīughlī, has presented a royal order [*savād-i hukm-i ashraf*] issued in Rabi I 1062 [Feb.–March 1652]. Its content may be summarized as follows. The edict [*parvāncha*] of the world-conquerer who is now in heaven finds honor to be issued. Among the *aznauri* families and peasants in Kartli province who formerly belonged to Pārsadān Sīsīughlī, five *aznauri* families and fifty peasants were granted to Kaykhusraw Beg Tsitsishvili. Georgian rulers with respect and dignity should be aware of this decision and take no action opposed to it or intervene to recoup their earnings.

As already mentioned, Parsadan Tsitsishvili was one of the most influential nobles in Kartli during the first half of the seventeenth century. Even Shah ‘Abbās recognized his legitimacy and entrusted the rule of Kartli temporarily to him in 1615. His son Nodar (d. 1658), whose mother was a Kakhetian princess, also exerted conspicuous influence in Georgian politics and even once revolted against Rostom.⁵⁸⁾ We have already met Parsadan as an old foe of Rustam Khan *sipahsālār* (of Saakadze clan). Papuna tried to protect such privileges through his connections with the Safavid authorities, for the opponent was actually more powerful than his close relatives.⁵⁹⁾

The other Persian document of note, an edict issued in 1652 (Edict #4 in the table), was significant because it concerns two influential Kartvelian nobles who had close ties with the Safavid Empire.⁶⁰⁾ Upon his return to Georgia, Papuna Tsitsishvili raised allegations not only against his close and distinguished kinsmen, but also against the Mirimanidze clan, an influential Armeno-Georgian aristocratic house which had produced many powerful *ghulām* representatives.⁶¹⁾ According to the edict, both sides had presented royal edicts issued by Tahmāsp I and ‘Abbās I, as well as by Georgian rulers (Here it should be noted that when the young Papuna quit Georgia, he seems to have taken all these documents with him). Šafi’s decree (Edict #4) states that on 29 July 1636 a part of the disputed land was transferred to Papuna from Zākim Beg Mirimanidze.⁶²⁾ Thus, after his return with Rostom in 1633, Papuna attempted to restructure his social position and material property in Georgia by means of a wide array of connections. Papuna again asked that the edict be reconfirmed in September–October 1667, which coincided with the enthronement of Sulaymān. Because Mirimanidze was immediately connected to the Safavid government through the royal *ghulāms* belonging to his family, Papuna would have had to be concerned about any political change occurring in the Safavid status quo.

Thus the timing of issue is also to be considered. Edict #3 coincides with 1658, the year Rostom died and his step son Vakhtang succeeded to the throne of Georgia. Then in 1691, Papuna’s son Zaza came before the Safavid court and asked for confirmation of his right [Edict #5], probably coinciding with 1688, the year of another change in Georgian kingship. Thus Papuna’s direct interest in the Georgian internal order had to take account of the way in which that order was wrapped in Safavid authority from above and occasionally directly intruded upon, in attempts to reorganize it to better fit a Safavid context, but far short of anything resem-

bling national integration or imperial unification. Though such interests needed recognition from the ruling monarch, such recognition also guaranteed Safavid ideological and material assistance. On the other hand, most of the related documentation was written only in Georgian; and even when the litigation was brought under the shah's jurisdiction, Georgian documents would be submitted into evidence. Accumulated precedents which reflected historical experience were essential while multi-layered authority functioned in Georgian society under Safavid suzerainty.

This state of affairs also proves that Georgian internal order and Safavid authority never functioned separately, and continued to adjust to each other within the dynamics of inter-dependency. All of these documents and the timing of their promulgation reflect Papuna's flexible position in Georgian society and his strategy to take advantage of his lifetime of experience in order to reenter the social order of his homeland. It also demonstrates how the Safavid sphere of influence was extended over a "peripheral" society in Caucasia.

The Effects of Empire and its Limitations

The two royal *ghulāms* who accompanied Rostom back to Georgia shared similar backgrounds. Papuna Beg Tsitsishvili departed the country after his father came out on the losing end of an internal struggle for the leadership of his clan, while Rustam Khan Saakadze also went before the court of the Safavid shahs after his father was killed in Georgia, possibly due to conflict with a neighboring aristocratic family. Both Papuna and Rustam, with their brothers, fled to the Iranian court to seek protection and ended up becoming royal *ghulāms*. With Rostom's return to Georgia, however, they adopted sharply contrasting attitudes and strategies in dealing with their homeland society: one abandoning it altogether, the other resettling and regaining his social position. These opposite reactions clearly demonstrate the ambiguity involved in being a member of the Georgian landed nobility while serving as a slave of the Safavid shah, but this dual identity was not always contradictory.

The four families investigated in the previous study of the present author also provide ample evidence for this theme.⁶³) Otar Baratashvili-Orbelishvili and his brothers maintained close contacts with their relatives in Georgia. Their cousin Qaplan, who once served at the Safavid court, was successful in recovering his domain, much like Papuna Tsitsishvili. The Safavids permitted Qaplan to hold the fiefs of his father and uncle,

Otar's father. Qaplan and his cousins maintained ties and formed political alliances to support Rostom's successor Vakhtang V (Shahnavaz Khan), a son-in-law of Qaplan. The example of the Mirimanidze house shows the remarkable closeness between a family in Georgia and the royal *ghulāms* it produced, by regularly offering a brother of the clan's leader to become a Safavid *ghulām*.

The family's connection was so strong that the leader of the clan in Georgia became the legal successor, *vārath*, of the property of his brother, a royal *ghulām* at the imperial court, and a person serving the shah (*gaen-seuli*) was referred to in a document attesting to the sale of land in Georgia as a family member.⁶⁴⁾ Thus, the Mirimanidzes in Georgia and the shah's servants who had kinship ties to that family continued to be close. The Safavid shahs were confident about the strength of these bonds. For example, when a dispute did arise inside the family over the issue of property succession, the investigation was entrusted to two royal *ghulāms*, one related to the Mirimanidzes, the other of Armenian origin who was the governor-general of Shirvān.⁶⁵⁾

Oddly enough, among these four families, there is no instance of a Safavid royal *ghulām* returning to Georgia and becoming the leader of his clan; and there is no direct information attesting to the property they possessed after returning. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in the majority of cases, Safavid royal *ghulāms* of Georgian origin had left their original social order for good. They did, however, exert influence upon their native "peripheral" society through their high position at the imperial court, but any direct impact on Georgia from abroad would have been limited. That being said, Papuna's case should not be regarded as exceptional. A Bagratid prince of weak authority returned from the imperial center and effectively used the ties he had cultivated with imperial resources—including manpower—once he had left his homeland. Pro-Safavid forces or those who possessed strong ties with Georgian elites at the Safavid court took control of leadership positions inside Kartli; and some of them recovered their fiefs and were reintegrated into Georgian society. At the same time, the internal dynamics of Georgian nobility was preserved under the watch of the Safavid government, particularly through Rostom's express policy. Papuna successfully reintegrated himself into the Georgian landed nobility, and thus followed in the political footsteps of his master.

Papuna's example demonstrates the flexible strategy deployed by the royal *ghulāms*, who are usually portrayed as faceless followers of the

emperor, and also reflects certain dynamic aspects of center-peripheral relations. Close attention should also be paid to the strategy applied by the imperial government. Papuna's return was realized through Safavid permission, and he was even ensured a Safavid income from neighboring Shirvān while recovering his fief and social status in Georgia. Significantly, Safavid policy did not exclude the possibility that their servants might have multiple identities. To be sure, in the long run, the empire endeavored to centralize its rule over peripheral societies. Georgian society, perched on the edge of the empire with its Christian traditions, suffered heavy human losses through the acts of ambitious Safavid shahs, like Ṭahmāsp and 'Abbās. However, once the storm had dissipated, each side sought compromise, and throughout the Safavid era, even the results of direct interventions can be regarded as a source for bargaining inside peripheral society and for accumulating power by local aristocrats like Papuna, who was determined to defend his father's rights that had been conferred upon them by Shah 'Abbās.

Conclusion

The socio-political structure of the Georgian landed nobility endured many interventions from neighboring empires, as disintegrated and fragile Georgia became the source of military and administrative elites for those empires. Thus, on one hand, the royal *ghulam* institution was a channel connecting the Safavid imperial household with the Georgian landed nobility. The royal *ghulams* undoubtedly built networks and mediated with their kin back in the homeland with the goal of bringing them smoothly under Safavid hegemony and making them faithful followers of the empire. On the other hand, a certain distance remained between the two societies. Surviving sources do not attest to frequent and regular return of royal *ghulams* to their home society. We should therefore not overestimate the influence exerted by the Safavid administration on Georgian society. Safavid power was recognized as a "super authority" over the inner political dynamics of Georgia. Georgian royal princes acted as mediators and directly controlled society, while the Safavid shahs were the protectors of the whole imperial system, including the peripheral society of Georgia.

For all of its strong dependency upon the Safavid government, Georgian society was never reorganized in order to be unified with the Iranian power structure. Therefore, the royal *ghulam* institution was independent from the local society which supplied its manpower. The well-known Ot-

toman institution of *devshirme* was a major factor in occupied regions being firmly integrated into imperial society, although it neither achieved full assimilation of local society. The Safavid case was seemingly much looser in terms of integration, and it attempted no institutional intervention, but did provide stability both to the imperial core and peripheral society. Instances of returned *ghulāms* exemplify both the effectiveness and limitations of Safavid power over Caucasian society.

Papuna Tsitsishvili occupied the post of commander-in-chief (*sardar*) at the court of Kartli during the last years of King Rostom's reign.⁶⁶⁾ Like his master, Papuna belonged to and lived in a dual political society. The interdependency of the two societies naturally experienced repeated revision and adjustment throughout the decades. Eastern Georgia finally became a part of the empire, but with its autonomy largely intact. Contemporary Georgian self-identity was affected by the Safavid experience insofar as the unique Safavid invitation to become state elite made Georgians aware of their "peripheral" position vis-à-vis the empire. Put another way, the center-periphery dynamic stimulated their "foreignness," on the one hand, while absorbing the differences in cultural terms over the decades, on the other. This should not be regarded as a simple case of dual agency. This contradictory nature is clearly observed in the political life of King Rostom, who successfully embedded Georgian royal blood in the core of the Safavid household empire.

We must therefore further investigate the process of the interplay which occurred between the Safavids and Caucasian elites in order to clarify their actual relationships. Such a research direction will surely contribute to better understanding the nature of the state institution of the Safavid dynasty in the seventeenth century. In this context we clearly observe both the continuation and deviation of the royal *ghulām* institution in the appointment of Giorgi XI (Gurgīn Khan) as governor of Kirmān in 1699. Caucasian Muslim converts continued to contribute to the military strength of the dynasty, yet the actual "partnership" and shared responsibility had definitely changed during second half of seventeenth century. This development will be investigated in a separate study.

Notes

- 1) Hirotake Maeda, "Innovation of the Political System under the Safavid Dynasty: The Historical Role of the Gholams," *Shigaku=Zasshi* 107-12, 1998, pp. 1-38 (in Japanese, 前田弘毅, 「サファヴィー朝期イランにおける國家體制の革新: 「ゴラーム」集團臺頭の歴史的意義について」『史學雜誌』);

- idem*, “Shah ‘Abbas I’s Policy towards the Caucasus: The Rise of a Foreign Elite,” *Shigaku=Zasshi* 113-9, 2004, pp. 1-37 (in Japanese, 「シャー・アッバース一世の對カフカス政策：「異人」登用の實像」『史學雜誌』).
- 2) Sussan Babaie, Kathryn Babayan, Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe, and Masumeh Farhad, *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran*, London-New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004, pp. 28-29.
 - 3) Giorgi Saakadze (?-1629) was an influential Georgian politician and warrior. See Givi Jamburia, *Giorgi Saakadze*, Tbilisi, 1964; Hirotake Maeda, “Breaking through “Boundaries”: An Analysis of the Activities of a Georgian Warrior Who Served the Safavid Dynasty,” *Rekishigaku Kenkyu* 881, 2011, pp. 22-33 (In Japanese, 「「境界」を突破するもの：サファヴィー朝に仕えたグルジア武人の活動から」『歴史學研究』). Saakadze became the symbol of “national resistance towards Oriental tyranny” in modern nationalist Georgian historiography. Fażli, an Iranian author and contemporary of Saakadze, attributes his revolt to dissatisfaction with the rewards he was given by the Shah. Saakadze desired to be the governor of Qandahār or Baghdād for his outstanding contribution in two victorious campaigns for the Safavids, but both were given to others. Fażli Khūzānī al-Isfahānī, *Afzal al-tavārikh*, vol. 3, University of Cambridge, Ms.Dd. 5.6, fol. 491b.
 - 4) Rostom’s seal reads, “I, King Rostom, confirm (I am) dust on the feet of the emperor (*qaenis p’ekht’a mtueri, Rostom Mep’e vamtkits’eb*.” Ana Bakradze, *Masalebi k’artuli sp’ragistikis istoriisat’vis*, Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1978, p. 44.
 - 5) Zhorzholiani’s work is dedicated to the life and activity of King Rostom. Despite being written in the methodology and framework of Georgian national history and based on Georgian sources available during the Soviet era, it nevertheless represents the most comprehensive and reliable study of this unpopular figure in the history of Georgia. Gulkan Zhorzholiani, *Sak’art’velo 17saukunis 30-50-ian tslebshi*, Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1987.
 - 6) Vakhushti Bagrationi, “Aghtsera samep’osa Sak’art’velosa,” *K’art’lis ts’khovreba*, IV, ed. S. Qaukchishvili, Tbilisi: Sabchota Sakartvelo, 1973, p. 438. Cf. N. G. Gelashvili and I. K. Pavlova, “K voprosu o naznachenii Rostom-Khana na kartliiskii presto,” *Sak’art’velos ssr mets’nierebat’a akademiis mats’ne: Istoriis, ark’eologiis, et’nograf’iisa da khelovnebis istoriis seria*, 4, 1987, pp. 88-94.
 - 7) In the spring of 1581, the Safavid court demanded that the Georgian kings of Kartli and Kakheti take oaths to their loyalty and send their sons to the imperial court as hostages. Prince Konstantine, son of Aleksandre II and Prince Luarsab, son of Simon I were sent together with their sisters to the Safavid court (Qāzī Aḥmad Qumī, *Khulāsat al-tavārikh*, ed. Eḥsān Eshrāqī, 2 vols., Tehran, 1980-85 (1359-63), pp. 714-716). According to Iskandar Beg, on this occasion Aleksandre II of Kakheti demanded the transfer of his brother Iese (‘Īsā) from the Safavid side. Simon I also asked Aleksandre to hand over his brother Davit, who had fled to the court of Aleksandre II. Both promised the imperial authority to take good care of their brothers, but eliminated them after a while (Iskandar Munshī, *Tārikh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi ‘Abbāsī*, ed. Īraj Afshār, 2 vols., Tehran, 1971/72 (1350), pp. 271-272). However, according to Turkish and European sources, Davit XI later sought Ot-

toman aid and appeared in Istanbul in 1585. There Davit translated a medical book into Georgian. He was reunited with his son in Istanbul. Though the name is not mentioned, Zhorzholiani surmises that the son was Rostom (Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, p. 22; Mzia Surguladze, “Davit XI,” *K'art'uli istoriuli moghvatseni*, Khelnatserta erovnuli centri, <http://qim.ge/davit%20XI.html>).

- 8) Beri Egnatashvili, “Akhali K'art'lis ts'khovreba, pirveli tek'sti,” *K'art'lis ts'khovreba*, II, ed. S. Qaukhchishvili, Tbilisi, 1959, p. 404; Fazlī Khūzānī, *Afzal al-tavārikh*, vol. 3, fol. 408a.
- 9) Giorgi Saakadze, the hero of the epic, boasted that he had recommended to the shah that Rostom (Khusrow Mirza) be released from poverty (Ioseb Tbileli (Saakadze), “Didmouraviani,” *K'art'uli Poezia*, vol. 5, ed. L. Menabde, Tbilisi: Nakaduli, 1976, p. 72).
- 10) Fazlī Khūzānī, *Afzal al-tavārikh*, vol. 3, fol. 408a.
- 11) Maeda, “Shah 'Abbās I's Policy towards the Caucasus,” pp. 20–23.
- 12) Muḥammad Ma'sūm b. Khwājagī Iṣfahānī, *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, ed. Īraj Afshār, Tehran, 1989/90 (1368), p. 47.
- 13) Parsadan Gorgijanidze, *P'arsadan Giorgijanidzis istoria*, ed. S. Kakabadze, Tbilisi, 1926, p. 30: *eranis sak'me rostom mep'is ekit'khoda*. German scholar Roemer included Rostom as one of the most important Safavid politicians of Ṣafī's early reign (Hans R. Roemer, “The Safavid Period,” *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, eds. Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 281).
- 14) The expedition aimed at rescuing the captured Anduqapar Amilikhori and his wife, a daughter of Imāmquḷī Khan, governor-general of Fārs. The Safavid army, including Rostom, succeeded in liberating the captives. Georgians rebels, however, ambushed them on their return trip, and the Safavids suffered the great loss of men like Shāhbānda Khan Turkmān, governor-general of Āzarbāijān. Qazāq Khān Charkasī, governor-general of Shirvān and an influential *ghulām* of the Circassian faction, was also taken captive, but was saved from execution due to his friendship with Teimuraz I of the Safavid court and later was able to escape (Iskandar Munshī, *Tārikh-i 'ālam-ārā*, pp. 1028–1030).
- 15) Iskandar Beg Turkmān shahīr ba Munshī va Muḥammad Yūsuf Muvarra-kh, *Zayli tārikh-i 'ālam-ārā-yi 'Abbāsī*, ed. Soheylī Khwānsārī, Tehrān, 1938/39 (1317), p. 72.
- 16) Teimuraz had once entered into a dispute with Zurab over the rule of Mukhran after he gave it to his son Davit (Datuna) against Zurab's wishes. Then Zurab acted as the protector of young Simon II.
- 17) Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, pp. 12–16. Muḥammad Ma'sūm, *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, p. 98.
- 18) Muḥammad Ma'sūm, *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, pp. 144, 147; Iskandar Beg, *Zayli tārikh-i 'ālam-ārā-yi 'Abbāsī*, pp. 109–117. This story is not attested to as a true story, for Imāmquḷī made an appearance at court and was then executed with most of his sons without any evidence of conspiracy or rebellion. Imāmquḷī himself probably had no intention of changing the Safavid throne. Iskandar

Beg wrote that Dāvūd was once reprimanded by Shah Šafī in the previous year for the way he was ruling over Qarābāgh. In any case, due the gossip that was apparently being circulated, the imperial authority decided to execute not only Imāmquī but all of his sons with the exception of Ughūrlū, who was blinded and later became a well-known poet (Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṭāhir Naṣrābādī, *Tazkira-yi Naṣrābādī*, ed. Vaḥīd Dastgerdī, Tehran: Forūghī, 3rd ed., 1982/83 (1361), p. 35).

- 19) Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, p. 40.
- 20) A Son of a Rostom's sister. D. Kldiashvili and M. Surguladze (eds.), *Pirt'a anotirebuli lek'sikoni (XI–XVII ss.): K'art'uli istoriuli sabut'ebis mikhedvit*, Tbilisi: Metsniereba, vol. 1, pp. 395–396.
- 21) Gorgijanidze, *P'arsadan Giorgijanidzis istoria*, pp. 31–32; Anonymous, *Ts'khovreba Sak'art'veloysa (Parizis k'ronika)*, ed. Giuli Alasania, Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1980, p. 92. These two chronicles convey mostly the same description.
- 22) Andronikashvili clan, Baratashvili clan, and Somkhiti's melik family produced prominent Safavid *ghulāms*.
- 23) Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, p. 43.
- 24) Qorkhmaz was initially among the conspirators. It is difficult to believe at first glance that a person from such a pro-Safavid family like the Mirimanidzes (Somkhiti's melik family) participated in the intrigue. Whether he was really a participant who then changed his mind or an insider from the beginning is not certain, but in either case, it shows the ambivalent loyalty of the Georgian landed nobility towards Safavid authority and the strong internal cohesion of their own society.
- 25) Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṭāhir Vaḥīd Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Jahānārā-yi 'Abbāsī*, ed. Seyyed Sa'īd Mīr Moḥammad Šādeq, Tehran: Pazhūheshgāh-e 'olūm-e ensānī va moṭāle'āt-e farhangī, 2004/05 (1383), p. 377; Gorgijanidze, *P'arsadan Giorgijanidzis istoria*, pp. 43, 52. Adam was first mentioned in the Persian chronicles just after the accession of Shah Šafī, when he suppressed the revolt in Gīlān and was appointed governor of Šūfis of Gīlān (Muḥammad Ma'sūm, *Khulāsat al-siyar*, p. 70). There was a namesake Adam Andronikashvili recorded in Teimuraz I's writings. According to that description Adam was a son of Kahaber Andronikashvili who was murdered with King Aleksandre II and Prince Giorgi in 1605 by Prince Konstantine. 'Abbās wanted to recruit Adam as his servant, though Teimuraz desperately resisted the shah's order. No precise information exists on Adam's two identities, but there it could be assumed that 'Abbās played a pro-Safavid function in betrothing Rostom's sister to Adam?
- 26) Muḥammad Ma'sūm, *Khulāsat al-siyar*, p. 176.
- 27) Mīrzā Muḥammad Ṭāhir, *Tārikh-i Jahānārā-yi 'Abbāsī*, pp. 446–447; Muḥammad Yūsuf Vāla Qazvīnī Iṣfahānī, *Irān dar zamān-e Shāh Šafī va Shāh 'Abbās-i duvvum: Khuld-i barīn*, ed. Moḥammad Rezā Naṣīrī, Tehran: Anjoman-e āthār-e moḥāfez-e farhangī, 2001/02 (1380), pp. 449–451.
- 28) Faḏlī Khūzānī, *Afzal al-tavārikh*, vol. 3, fol. 493a.
- 29) He sent his grandson Erekle to the Russian court around 1651, based on an agreement negotiated between Torochanov, Moscovit ambassador to Im-

- ereti, and Teimuraz I. Torochanov arrived in October 1651 to the court of Aleksandre III, the ruler of Imereti and son-in-law of Teimuraz I (Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, pp. 82–83).
- 30) Vladimir Puturidze (ed.), *K'art'ul-sparsuli istoriuli sabut'ebi*, Tbilisi: Sakartvelos SSR metsnierebata akademiis gamomtsemloba, 1955, p. 126.
 - 31) Ioane Bagrationi, *Shemoklebit' aghtsera Sak'art'velosa shina mts'khovrebt'a t'avadt'a da aznaurt'a gvarebisa*, ed. Zurab Katselashvili, Tbilisi: Dial, 1997, p. 31.
 - 32) Bagrationi, “Aghtsera samep'osa Sak'art'velosa,” p. 32.
 - 33) Gotcha Djaparidze (Gocha Japaridze), Karlo Kutsia, Megi Metreveli, Giorgi Sanikidze, and Mikhail Svanidze (eds.), *Islami: Ents'iklopediuri ts'nobari*, Tbilisi, 1999, pp. 33–34. Tsisana Abuladze, “Bek'a III Sap'ar-P'asha (1625–1651),” *K'art'veli istoriuli moghvatseni*, qim.ge/beqa%20III,%20safarfasha.html
 - 34) Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1982, p. 318.
 - 35) Gorgijanidze, *P'arsadan Giorgijanidzis istoria*, pp. 40–41.
 - 36) *Ibid.*, p. 38.
 - 37) For example, there were Russian painters working in the Georgian churches from 1637 to 1652. Originally they had been invited by Teimuraz I to Kakheti, but they also did fresco paintings at Sioni cathedral in Rostom's capital of Tbilisi in 1650 (Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, pp. 55, 110). Mariam was said to have been the fiancé of Luarsab II, who was executed by 'Abbās I.
 - 38) If we consider the example of Mamuka, there is the question of whether Rostom esteemed Kartli blood first and foremost or not. Inviting Prince Mamuka was clear proof that Rostom preferred to make a strategic choice based on pragmatism, since it made it possible to exert effective pressure on the Imeretian king, a son-in-law of Teimuraz I.
 - 39) Vladimir Puturidze (ed.), *Sparsuli istoriuli sabut'ebi Sak'art'velos tsignt'sats'avebshi*, tsgni I, nakvet'i 1, Tbilisi, 1961, p. 30; Anonymous, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, ed. and tr. V. Minorsky, London, 1943, p. 18.
 - 40) Tedo Zhordania, *K'ronikebi da skhva masala Sak'art'velos istoriisa da mtserlobisa, shekrebili, k'ronologiurad datsqobili da akhsnili T' Zhordanias mier*, vol. II, Tbilisi (Tbilisi), 1897, p. 462.
 - 41) Georgian historians interpret this as an endeavor not to contradict two veins of logic (Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, pp. 100–121). Gabashvili called Rostom's pro-Safavid policy one of compromise (*kompromisuli politika*) (Valerian Gabashvili, *K'art'uli p'eodaluri tsqobileba XVI–XVII saukuneebshi*, Tbilisi, 1958, p. 304).
 - 42) It is important to note that the two languages were written on different sides of each folio during the late 18th century (Grigol Beradze and Karlo Kutsia, “Towards the Interrelations of Iran and Georgia in the 16th–18th Centuries,” *Caucasia between Ottoman Empire and Iran, 1555–1914*, eds. Raoul Motika and Michael Ursinus, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000, pp. 123–124).
 - 43) On his origins, see Hirotake Maeda, “On the Ethno-Social Background of Four *Gholām* Families from Georgia in Safavid Iran,” *Studia Iranica*, 32, 2003, pp. 257–262.

- 44) Bijan, *Tārīkh-i Rustam Khan*, British Library, MS. Add. 7655, fol. 8a. On the details of this source, see: Giorgio Rota, *La Vita e i Tempi di Rostam Khan, an edition and translation of the manuscript British Library Add Ms 7,655*, Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009.
- 45) Gorgijanidze, *P'arsadan Giorgijanidzis istoria*, p. 32.
- 46) Muḥammad Ma'šūm, *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, pp. 153, 161, 163, 165.
- 47) Muḥammad Ma'šūm, *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, p. 161. Maulānā Kamāl, a son of Shah 'Abbās' chief astronomer Maulānā Jalāl Munajjim, was sent to serve Rustam Khan.
- 48) Muḥammad Ma'šūm, *Khulāṣat al-siyar*, p. 166.
- 49) *sipahsālār* occupied a seat superior to that of the *vālīs* at the supreme council. *Divānbeḡī* was officially in charge of *dārūgha*'s activity in Iṣfahān.
- 50) The situation could have been much more complicated. In the broader picture, however, King Rostom and Rustam Saakadze were close allies in both arenas of Safavid and Georgians politics. Around the time when Rostom ascended the throne with the help of Saakadze, Rustam's younger brother 'Alīqulī became the executor of his father-in-law Imāmquī Undiladze, governor-general of Shīrāz, whose younger brother made an alliance with Teimuraz, Rostom's main foe in Georgia. Parsadan Gorgijanidze's description is marked by a strong tendency to praise his former lord King Rostom.
- 51) Bijan, *Tārīkh-i Rustam Khan*, fol. 8a.
- 52) Kldiashvili and Surguladze, *Pirt'a anotirebuli lek'sikoni*, vol. 4, pp. 89–108; Ioseb Tbileli, "Didmouraviani," p. 89; Jean Chardin, *Voyages de Chevalier Chardin, en Perse, et autres lieux de l'Orient*, ed. L. Langrès, 10 vols., Paris, 1811, vol. 10, p. 72.
- 53) Those who remained in southwest Georgia were also recorded (Davit Berdzenishvili, "P'anaskertelt'a p'eodaluri sagvareulos istoriidan: Tserak'vis uts'nob tsartserast'an dakavshirebit'," *Sak'art'velos istoriuli geograp'iis krebuli*, t. I, Tbilisi, 1960, pp. 95–111).
- 54) Davit Gvritishvili, *P'eodaluri Sak'art'velos sots'ialuri urt'iert'obis istoriidan: K'art'lis sat'avadoebi*, Tbilisi: Sakhelgami, 1955, pp. 121–132. The Tsitsishvili clan extended its influences over the right bank of the Kura River—that is, Upper and Lower Kartli Province—at the time when the central authority was in decline during the 15th century. Over time, Mzovleti came to be called the land of the Upper Tsitsishvilis (*zemo Sats'its'iano*) and Lower Nichvisi, land of the Lower Tsitsishvilis (*k'vemo Sats'its'iano*). Seven distinguished families dominated the Upper Tsitsishvilis and four families ruled the Lower Tsitsishvilis. Each family head of both lands was regarded as a first rank *t'avadi*, while the rest of the family members occupied the second and the third ranks. In total, the Tsitsishvilis ruled over 1,034 families from Karsani to Tashiskari in the middle of 17th century.
- 55) Puturidze, *Sparsuli istoriuli sabut'ebi*, tsgni I, nakvet'i 1, pp. 41–42 (no. 18); *ibid.*, pp. 60–61 (no. 25); *ibid.*, pp. 73–75 (no. 29); nakvet'i 2 (1962), pp. 18–20 (no. 6); *ibid.*, pp. 40–42 (no. 15).
- 56) Isidor Dolidze (ed.), *K'art'uli samart'lis dzeglebi*, 8 vols., Tbilisi, 1963–85, vol. 4, pp. 76–83.

- 57) Isidor Dolidze, *K'art'uli samart'lis dzeglebi*, vol. 4, p. 77.
- 58) Nodar later came back to Kartli and was pardoned by Rostom. He was known as a man of letters and dedicated to Queen Mariam the tales of Bahram Gur [*Baramguriani/Didi Baramiani*]. The beginning of the tale in question refers to the works of Nizāmī, Khusraw Deflavī, Navāī, and Jāmī (Gorgijanidze, *P'arsadan Giorgijanidzis istoria*, p. 39; *K'art'uli sabchot'a ents'ik'rop'edia*, ed. I. Abashidze, 11 vols., Tbilisi 1975–87, vol. 11, p. 236).
- 59) Luarsab II gave Kaykhusraw Tsitsishvili, Papuna's father, a village called Tsavkisi, which had been confiscated from Parsadan Tsitsishvili. Then Kaykhusraw successfully gain permission to rule from Shah 'Abbās before his assassination. The political situation of Kartli was indeed extremely fluid during the early 17th century. Papuna resumed the ownership of this village and was confirmed by Rostom on 4 April 1633, just after his return to Georgia (Kldiashvili and Surguladze, "Ts'its'ishvili" (unpublished manuscript, a part of *Pirt'a anotirebuli lek'sikoni XI–XVII ss.*)).
- 60) We do not know the specific reason why Papuna asked the Safavid court to recognize his rights in 1652. However, it could have certainly been connected with the struggle among the successors for Rostom's throne, which continued until Vakhtang was recognized as heir in 1654 (Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, pp. 79–80).
- 61) Maeda, "On the Ethno-Social Background," pp. 253–257.
- 62) A Persian royal edict issued regarding the internal conflict over the right of inheritance within the Mirimanidze clan appointed Mihrāb (Merab), a relative of this family and a centurion of the *ghulām* corps in the Safavid administration, as mediator in collaboration with Khusraw Khan, an Armenian *ghulām*, governor-general of Shirvān province and father of the famous Allāhverdi Khan II (Puturidze (ed.), *Sparsuli istoriuli sabut'ebi*, pp. 50–54). These facts show once again that the *ghulām* institution of the Safavid dynasty was not totally independent from local elite politics in the Caucasus, though it was not always directly connected with that society.
- 63) Namely the Baratashilis, the Mirimanidzes, the Saakadzes, and the Undiladzes. See, Maeda, "On the Ethno-Social Background of Four *Gholām* Families."
- 64) The position of Şafīqulī, governor-general of Baghdād, was succeeded to by his maternal uncle Biktāsh, while his property (at least part of it) was inherited by his brother Atabagi.
- 65) See Note 62.
- 66) Queen Mariam was said to have been summoned to Işfahān, but sent Papuna Tsitsishvili *sardar* as a messenger carrying a lock of her gray hair to show that she was too old to marry the shah (Zhorzholiani, *Sak'art'velo 17saukunis 30–50-ian tslebshi*, p. 98). Papuna later became *sakhlt'ukhuts'esi* at the court of Kartli, thus exerting great influence there (Kldiashvili and Surguladze, "Ts'its'ishvili").