

KATA OF GEORGIA, DAUGHTER OF KING DAVID IV THE BUILDER, AS WIFE OF SEBASTOKRATOR ISAAKIOS KOMNENOS

by Rafał T Prinke¹

ABSTRACT

Medieval Georgian-Byzantine marriages open a wide range of interpretative problems. The present article focuses on the identity of the husband of Kata, a daughter of David IV the Builder, a Bagratid king of Georgia. After discussing in detail three hypotheses proposed so far, the author argues that the most plausible is that of the sebastokrator Isaakios Komnenos, son of emperor Alexios I and father of emperor Andronikos I.

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Genealogical links between the dynastic and aristocratic families of Byzantium and those of the Christian states in the Caucasus are of special interest to the "subculture" of genealogists pursuing what has become known as "Descents From Antiquity" or DFA. Because of the nature of relevant sources, their scarcity, and linguistic barriers, the literature often presents confusing or mutually exclusive versions of genealogical reconstructions of those families, even in their important (ruling) branches. Tracing a possible line in this maze of misleading hypotheses is often a difficult task. One such line providing Bagratid ancestry to numerous Polish descendants was proposed in a longer paper written in Polish and published online in 1998,² while the present article is an updated and augmented version of just one of the hypotheses analysed there (that Kata of Georgia married sebastokrator Isaakios Komnenos);³ the other major hypothesis was that Helena, wife of Yuri I Dolgoruki, Grand Duke of Kiev, was a daughter of Isaakios and Kata.

¹ The author is an assistant professor at Eugeniusz Piasecki University in Poznań, Poland. Contact details: rafalp@amu.edu.pl

² Rafał T Prinke, "Krew Bagratydów. Genealogiczne związki Rurykowiczów i Komnenów z Bagratydami w XII wieku," in: *Nuntius vetustatis. Prace ofiarowane Profesorowi Jerzemu Wisłockiemu*, eds. Adam Bieniaszewski & Rafał T Prinke (1998), <http://www.bkpan.poznan.pl/biblioteka/JW70/kata.htm>. For Polish genealogical "gateways" see: Rafał T Prinke & Andrzej Sikorski, *Królewska krew. Polscy potomkowie Piastów i innych dynastii panujących* (1997).

³ The arguments presented there were summarized and the theory found acceptable by Christian Settiani, *Continuité des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs: les princes caucasiens et l'Empire du VIe au IXe siècle* (2006), 475, footnote 1.

The identity of the Byzantine husband of Kata, daughter of the Georgian king David IV the Builder (Figure 1), is not obvious. At least three candidates have been proposed in standard literature:

1. Isaakios Komnenos (Figure 2), sebastokrator, son of emperor Alexios I and father of emperor Andronikos I.
The version accepted by Georgian historiography⁴ but treated with skepticism by some Western scholars.⁵
2. Alexios Bryennios, son of Anna Komnene (the author of *Alexiad*) and Nikephoros Bryennios.
The version originated by Du Cange⁶ and accepted by later scholars, including Kunik,⁷ Justi,⁸ Chalandon,⁹ Allen,¹⁰ Vasiliev,¹¹ Toumanoff¹² and Barzos.¹³
3. Alexios Komnenos, son of emperor Ioannes II and brother of Manuel I.
The version given by Grumel¹⁴ – maybe proposed earlier – and accepted by Jurewicz,¹⁵ Sturza¹⁶ and Schwennicke.¹⁷

Figure 3 shows the relationships between these candidate husbands.

⁴ Mariam Lordkipanidze, private communication, January 1997. Prof Lordkipanidze gave me this information in the form of a genealogical table of “accepted” Georgian-Byzantine genealogical links, without sources or discussion of particular filiations.

⁵ Most recently: [Kelsey Jackson Williams, “A Genealogy of the Grand Komnenoi of Trebizond,” *Foundations* \(2007\) 2 \(3\): 172.](#) Note that when Williams wrote this article, he had not seen the arguments made here.

⁶ Du Cange, *Familiae Augustae Byzantinae* (1680), 177.

⁷ А Куник, “Основание трапезунтской империи в 1204 году”, *Учюныя Записки Императорской Академии Наук по первому и третьему отделению* 2 (1854): 710-713.

⁸ F Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (1895), 407-408.

⁹ F Chalandon, *Les Comnène. Etudes sur l'empire byzantin au XIe et au XIIe siècles*, 2 (1912): 5, 8, 9, 10.

¹⁰ W E D Allen, *A history of the Georgian people* (1932), 99.

¹¹ A A Vasiliev, “The foundation of the Empire of Trebizond (1204-1222)”, *Speculum* XI (1936): 4.

¹² C Toumanoff, “On the relationship between the founder of the Empire of Trebizond and the Georgian queen Thamar”, *Speculum* XV (1940): 300; see also his *Les Dynasties de la Caucasia Chrétienne de l'antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle. Tables généalogiques et chronologiques* (1990), 136.

¹³ K Barzos (Varzos), *Ηγεναλογία των Κομνηνων*, 2 vols. (1984) [*non vidimus*]. The findings of Barzos are summarized in the genealogical table in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* [hereafter: ODB] (1991), 1145. His work is probably based on the unpublished dissertation of S de Jongh, *La généalogie des Comnène de Byzance* (Brussels University, 1937). The expected publication of a revised and expanded version of this dissertation, with L Stiernon and K Barzos as editors, was mentioned in 1981 by L L Brook (“The Byzantine ancestry of HRH Prince Charles, Prince of Wales”, *The Genealogist* 2: 43), but it has apparently not been published. In the meantime, the work by Barzos appeared in Greek.

¹⁴ V Grumel, *La chronologie* (1958), 364.

¹⁵ O Jurewicz, *Andronik I. Komnenos* (1962), genealogical table at the back. This book was also published in Dutch translation as *Andronikos I. Komnenos*, Amsterdam (1970).

¹⁶ M D Sturza, *Dictionnaire historique et généalogique de grandes familles de Grece, d'Albanie et de Constantinople* (1983), 276.

¹⁷ D Schwennicke, ed., *Europäische Stammtafeln. Stammtafeln zur Geschichte der Europäischen Staaten, Neue Folge*, [hereafter: ES] (1980-), II.176.



Fig 1. *David IV the Builder, King of Georgia (from a fresco in the Gelati Monastery).*¹⁸

Born in 1073, the only son and successor of George II, he ruled Georgia from 1089 until his death in 1125, upon which he was buried in the Gelati Monastery. David was not only the most successful king in the history of Georgia but also became its patron saint.

¹⁸ Public domain image from:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:David_ashmashenebeli.jpg; photo by Iberieli.



Fig 2. *Isaakios Komnenos, sebastokrator (from a mosaic in the Chora Church, Istanbul).*¹⁹

Born in 1093 as the third son of Emperor Alexios I, he was raised to the rank of sebastokrator in 1122 by his elder brother Emperor Ioannes II, whom he supported in the struggle for the throne. Later accused of conspiracy against the same brother, Isaakios was exiled and after a period of travel was forced to settle in Heraclea Pontica, where he founded the Kosmosoteira Monastery in which he was eventually buried. He was also a poet and may have been the author of Neoplatonic philosophical treatises.

¹⁹ Creative Commons image reproduced under GNU Free Documentation License from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isaac_Komnenos_the_Porphrogennetos.jpg; photo by Darwinek.

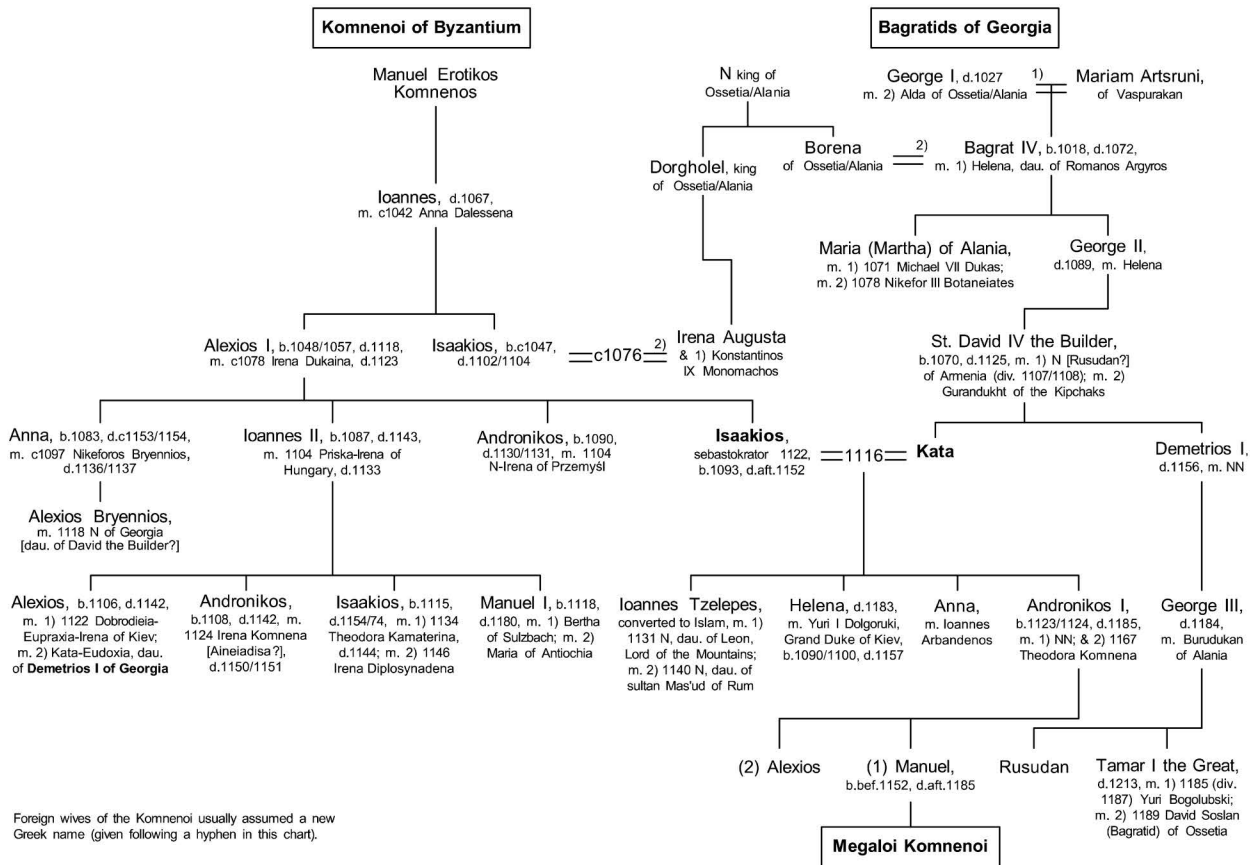


Fig 3. Komnenoi and Bagratid relationships

All the authors who presented their opinions on this particular point quoted only two source fragments to support them:

1. In the contemporary *Lives of George II and David II*, included in the corpus of Georgian chronicles *K'art'lis Tskhovreba*, the anonymous author noted under the year 1116:

*The same [1116] year [king David] sent his daughter Kata to Greece to become the daughter-in-law of the Emperor of Greece. Before that he had sent his oldest daughter Tamar to be the queen of Shirvan; and they both, like stars, one in the east, the other in the west, illuminated the world with the beams borrowed from the sun of their father.*²⁰

2. In the Byzantine chronicle by Zonaras from the 12th century, the fragment describing the death of emperor Alexios I (15 August 1118) contains the following passage:

*... and mounting his horse, he [the son of the dead emperor] went out of Mangana with his entourage, and as he went out many others joined him. Just after he had gotten out of the enclosure of Mangana, the Absagia met him. They were those who had been sent from there [i.e., Absagia] with the girl who was brought from Absagia and who was being married to the elder of the Caesar's sons.*²¹

Some important observations can be made even without deeper analysis of these sources:

- The work of Zonaras is a history written probably in the mid-12th century, while the text from *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* is a contemporary chronicle of the rule of David the Builder.
- Zonaras does not mention the name of the girl from Absagia (Georgia)²² and her appearance in that context is purely accidental.
- Only *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* undoubtedly refers to king David's daughter named Kata.
- Kata was sent to Byzantium in 1116, while the marriage of the Georgian girl mentioned by Zonaras took place in the second half of 1118, so about two years later (Zonaras uses present tense to stress the fact that the marriage and the death of Alexios I took place at the same time).
- *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* identifies the husband of Kata as a son of the emperor of Greece. Vasiliev rejects such identification, stating that "the Georgian chronicler

²⁰ M-F Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, vol. 1, part 1 (1849), 360 (this is an edition of "King Vakhtang's redaction" from the beginning of the 18th century accompanied by French translation); E. Taqaishvili, ed., *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* (1906), 298 (an edition of "Queen Mariam's redaction" from the second quarter of the 17th century which was discovered at that time); *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* (1973), IV, 158, lines 9-12 (modern critical edition). Translation based on the quotations in A A Vasiliev, "The foundation...", *op.cit.* p.4, and C Toumanoff, "On the relationship...", *op.cit.* p.306.

²¹ Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum*, vol. 3, XVIII, 28, 17-19, in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, eds. M Pindar & M Büttner-Wobst, 49 (1897): 761. The translation from original Greek was kindly provided by Eugene N Lane, Dept. of Classical Studies, University of Missouri, who also pointed out that the Latin translation in the printed edition is very misleading. Michael DiMaio, Jr., the author of the English translation of an earlier part of Zonaras' history was also very helpful in interpreting this passage.

²² The names Absagia, Abasgia, Abkhazia and Alania are used interchangeably in Byzantine sources of the period for both Iberia and the whole of Georgia. See A A Vasiliev, "The foundation..." *op.cit.* (1936), 4, n. 2.

errs in supposing Cata's bridegroom to be the Emperor's son instead of his grandson."²³ Toumanoff tries to find some justification for that opinion indicating that the word "sdzlad" used in the chronicle – the nominative case form of which is "sdzali" – indeed means "daughter-in-law" but the Georgian language has no term for "granddaughter-in-law". Therefore, he continues, the passage saying that she became a daughter-in-law of the emperor "cannot be taken to equate categorically with a statement to the effect that her husband was a son (when we know that he was a grandson) of the same."²⁴ He fails, however, to tell us where we know that from! At the same time – and in the same footnote – he says that "the Georgian chronicles are as a rule quite exact in describing genealogical relations". Thus both authors accept Du Cange's opinion as unshakable and adapt the sources to suit it.

- Zonaras calls the husband of the Georgian girl "the elder of the Caesar's sons" but does not specify which Caesar. In this case *kesar* (*caesar*) obviously does not mean emperor (*basileus*) but is an aristocratic rank title which by that time had lost much of its earlier importance. After ascending to the throne, Alexios I reformed the Byzantine hierarchy, introducing a new system based on the title of *sebastos* (an equivalent of the Roman *augustus*) and creating its derivatives such as *sebastokrator* or *protosebastos*. In the 12th century the new title of *despot* pushed the rank of *kesar* even further down the hierarchy ladder.²⁵ Nikephoros Bryennios, the husband of Anna Komnene and father of the supposed husband of Kata, indeed received the title of *kesar* from Alexios I in about 1111,²⁶ but it was also held by others – including the youngest son of the emperor, Isaakios Komnenos, who was made *sebastokrator* only by Ioannes II, four years after the death of their father.²⁷

It seems obvious, therefore, that the two source fragments quoted above refer to two different events and two different Georgian girls, one of whom was Kata, daughter of David the Builder.

Such an interpretation must have made other authors propose Alexios, son of the later emperor Ioannes II, as the husband of Kata (see above – version 3), and assume that the wife of Alexios Bryennios was another Georgian, maybe also a daughter of King David.²⁸ It is difficult, however, to understand why the king of Georgia – at that time a powerful independent state – would give his daughter as wife to a son of a Byzantine aristocrat on a relatively low level of the palace hierarchy. She may well have been a distant relative or an aristocrat from some other Georgian family but we shall not deal with her identity here.

Sturdza – and also ES (following Sturdza and a supplement by Szabolcs de Vajay) – accept Kata as the second wife of Alexios (son of Ioannes II), following his marriage to Dobrodieia-Eupraxia, daughter of Mstislav I, grand duke of Kiev, without giving any date for that marriage.²⁹ Earlier proponents of that version – Grumel and Jurewicz – did not know of that first marriage, ascribing Kata as the only (and hypothetical) wife

²³ A A Vasiliev, *op.cit.* (1936), 4, n. 4.

²⁴ C Toumanoff, *op.cit.* (1940), 307, n. 2.

²⁵ J V A Fine, Jr., *The late medieval Balkans* (1994), 621-628.

²⁶ ODB, 331.

²⁷ O Jurewicz, *op.cit.* (1962), 31; ODB, 1146.

²⁸ M D Sturdza, *op.cit.* (1983), 274.

²⁹ M D Sturdza, *op.cit.* (1983), 276; ES II.177.

to Alexios.³⁰ Chalandon, Loparev and Papadimitriou accept Dobrodieia as the only wife of Alexios,³¹ while the later Baumgarten – and Dworzaczek following him – give her as a husband Andronikos Komnenos, the younger brother of Alexios, which seems to be a simple mistake.³² The wife of Andronikos was probably Greek, maybe one Aineiadisa,³³ while the marriage of Dobrodieia and Alexios is additionally confirmed by more recent research.³⁴ Because that marriage took place in 1122, Kata could not have been his second wife as her marriage is dated to 1116. There was, however, another Kata (known as Eudoxia in Byzantium) who married Alexios as his second wife and who most probably was a daughter of King Demetrios I, so our Kata's niece.³⁵ We cannot see Kata as the wife of his brother Andronikos, either, since the latter's marriage was still later – in 1124. This approach to identifying Kata's husband assumes that "son of the emperor" means one of the sons of Ioannes II. As we have seen, however, neither Alexios nor Andronikos is plausible as Kata's husband (and Ioannes II's next son Isaakios was barely one year old, while the future emperor Manuel I had not yet been born).

Thus the only remaining possibility is to treat the source with due respect – especially as there is no ground for doubting it. *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* refers to the husband of Kata as a son of the emperor ruling in 1116 – which points to one of the sons of Alexios I. The marriage of Ioannes II with Priska/Piroska (St Irene), daughter of Valdislav I the Saint, king of Hungary, which lasted from 1104/1105 until her death in 1133, is well documented and need not be taken into account. So we are faced with the choice between the *sebastokrator* Andronikos and the youngest Isaakios. One of them married in 1104 a daughter of Volodar duke of Przemysl, who assumed the name Irene in Byzantium. The only source fragment referring to that marriage comes from *Nestor's chronicle* or *Laurentian latopis*:

*In the year 6612 [1104]. The daughter of Volodar was given in marriage to a prince, son of Alexios, in Tsarograd, in the month of July, on the 20th day.*³⁶

³⁰ See above, notes 14 and 15.

³¹ F Chalandon, *op.cit.* (1912), II, 13; X Loparev, "Брак Мстиславны (1122 г.)", *Византийский Временник* IX (1902): 418-446; С Пападимитриу, "Брак Мстиславны с Алексеем Комнином", *Византийский Временник* XI (1904): 73-98.

³² N Baumgarten, "Généalogies et mariages occidentaux des Rurikides Russes du Xe au XIIIe siècle", *Orientalia Christiana* IX, 35 (May 1927), V.26 and p. 25. This is most probably a mistake of Baumgarten, who cites the articles by Loparev (Лопарев) and Papadimitriou (Пападимитриу) without any further comments.

³³ ES II.177.

³⁴ P Gautier, "L'obituaire du Typikon du Pantocrator", *Revue des études byzantines* 27 (1969): 249.

³⁵ Jean-François Vannier, "Notes généalogiques byzantino-géorgiennes." In *Eupsychia. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler. Byzantina Sorbonensia* 16 (1998), tome II, 680-681 and charts on pp. 684 and 687. Confusion between the two Katae arose because a scholium to the *Chiliades* of Ioannes Tzetzés identified the Kata mentioned in the *Chiliades* (line 596) as the wife of "porphyrogennetos Alexios" (i.e. son of Ioannes II). Some historians, thinking that "our" Kata was meant, assumed it was a mistake because Alexios had another wife at the time (Dobrodieia-Eupraxia of Kiev). See: Paul Gautier, "La curieuse ascendance de Jean Tzetzés." *Revue des études byzantines* 28 (1970): 208-209, footnote 5. Gautier was himself confused but suggested Kata may have been the second wife of Alexios, which Vannier later confirmed and, following Barzos, identified her as a daughter of Demetrios I.

³⁶ Полное собрание русских летописей I (1962), 119. Tr. auct. from the quotation in O Jurewicz, *op.cit.* (1962), 39.

Baumgarten – and Dworzaczek following him – assume that the prince in question was Isaakios, citing his own earlier article as the authority.³⁷ Chalandon is of the same opinion,³⁸ while Du Cange and Barzos do not identify any wives of the two brothers.³⁹ More recent authors ascribe Volodarevna unanimously to Andronikos.⁴⁰ Jurewicz, following Baumgarten's version, presents some arguments favouring Isaakios⁴¹ which we will briefly discuss:

- Isaakios *"was almost the same age as John, as he helped him to win the throne, and later competed with him."*
Now it is known that Ioannes II was born in 1087, Andronikos in 1090 or 1091, and Isaakios in 1093, so all brothers were of similar age.
- Isaakios *"from early childhood enjoyed much greater paternal love than Andronikos."*
This argument was not backed up by any source or authority, so must be treated as purely rhetorical.
- *"Alexios I did not have any political hopes in connection with Andronikos, who died childless at a young age."*
This argument is based on a false premise. Andronikos died in 1130 or 1131, so must have been about 40, and had at least two sons, one of whom died young.⁴²
- In 1164 Andronikos, son of Isaakios, *"escaped [...] from prison to the duchy of Halicz, where he was greeted with open arms by Yaroslav Osmiomysl, [...] most probably his maternal cousin"*.
Yaroslav Osmiomysl was a grandson of long dead Volodar and son of Vladimirko, who died ten years earlier and who had been supported by emperor Manuel I, from whose prison Andronikos escaped. It is therefore difficult to suppose that such distant and possibly long forgotten relationships could have any influence. The situation is much better explained by the fact that Yaroslav Osmiomysl's wife was most probably a step-daughter of Andronikos' sister, presumably named Helena, who married Yuri I Dolgoruki.⁴³

Escaping to Halicz, Andronikos may have also been motivated by quite different reasons – especially political (he attempted to organise an army of Kumans and return to Byzantium as its commander). Wandering through many other countries during his exile, he also visited Georgia, where he was equally cordially greeted by king George III.⁴⁴ This warm reception suggests

³⁷ N Baumgarten, *op. cit.* (1927), III.6 and p.16; W Dworzaczek, *Genealogia. Tablice* (1959), 31.

³⁸ F Chalandon, *op. cit.* (1912), II, 13.

³⁹ Du Cange, *op. cit.* (1680), 189; Barzos, *vide supra* - note 13.

⁴⁰ M D Sturza, *Dictionnaire...* (1983), 275; ES II.175. Both these synthetic works contain references to particular tables but not to individual genealogical facts so I was not able to ascertain on whose research the identification of Andronikos as the husband of Volodar's daughter is based.

⁴¹ O Jurewicz, *op. cit.* (1962), 41.

⁴² K Barzos, *vide supra* - note 13; ES II.175.

⁴³ M D Sturza, *Dictionnaire...* (1983), 275; ES II.175. For further dicumentation in favour of this relationship see R T Prinke, "Krew Bagratydów..." (1998).

⁴⁴ M-F Brosset, *op. cit.* (1849), 396-397; K'art'lis Tskhovreba, *op. cit.* (1973), 384; O. Jurewicz, *op. cit.* (1962), 85-86; A A Vasilieva, *The foundation...* (1936), 5; C Toumanoff,

that Andronikos' mother was Kata – an aunt of that king. Yaroslav Osmiomysl was at that time hostile towards Byzantium, while Georgia was a traditional ally of the Empire in their fight against Seljuks. Also constant local wars (at that time it was against the Muslim rulers of Southern Azerbeidzan⁴⁵) in that area would hinder obtaining military help to win the Byzantine throne.

- "He participated in councils of Ruthenian boyars [... so] had to know their language." He also mutilated Greek with "barbarian accent."

He may well have used an interpreter. But even if he knew Ruthenian, it does not follow that he had learnt it from his mother. The "barbarian accent" is not necessarily Ruthenian – it could also be Georgian or any other language. On the other hand, it is known that Andronikos was brought up at the imperial court with the children of Ioannes II, and in their education "particular attention was paid to good knowledge of ancient Greek literature, theology and other humanistic sciences."⁴⁶ It is thus impossible to imagine that he would not know the Greek language perfectly – one may rather suspect some kind of physical defect impairing correct pronunciation.

None of the arguments presented by Jurewicz is convincing enough to attribute Volodarevna as the wife of Isaakios rather than Andronikos. The latter was older and in 1104 may have been about 14, while Isaakios only 11. Thus everything confirms the version accepted by Georgian historiography that it was Isaakios, son of Alexios I and father of Andronikos I, who became the husband of princess Kata in 1116. Soon we shall present one more very important argument, and it is possible that Georgian researchers have even more. In the meantime we may consider the political context of that marriage.

David the Builder fought against Seljuks from 1101 on, winning successive regions of Georgia until he unified the whole country in 1123 after conquering Tbilisi and Dmanisi. In the year 1116 of special interest to us here, he concluded a successful campaign and conquered Tao, which must have been noticed with appreciation in Constantinople.⁴⁷ At the same time Alexios I unsuccessfully attempted to regain lost lands and in the same year 1116 tried to conquer interior Anatolia and Ikonium.⁴⁸ In such a situation an alliance with Georgia, sealed with a dynastic marriage, was an obvious and mutually advantageous decision.

It must also be remembered that empress Maria (or Martha) of Alania (b. c.1050, d. aft. 1103), wife of Michael VII Dukas and Nikephor III Botaniates, was a daughter of Bagrat IV, king of Georgia, and aunt of David the Builder. She adopted Alexios I and played a key role in his ascent to the throne of Byzantium, acting as co-regent during the early period of his rule. Alexios even considered marrying her, and she had considerable influence on him even later when she was a nun.⁴⁹ Moreover, Alexios'

"On the relationship..." (1940), 302 (*And there came once before him [king George III] Andronikos Komnenos with a wife of dazzling countenance and with beautiful children and sister's sons, father's brother's son of the great Manuel caesar and king of all the Occident and Greece.*)

⁴⁵ M Lordkipanidze, *Essays on Georgian history* (1994), 135-142; O Jurewicz, *op. cit.* (1962), 85-86.

⁴⁶ O Jurewicz, *op. cit.* (1962), 44.

⁴⁷ M Lordkipanidze, *Essays...* (1994), 116-121.

⁴⁸ M Angold, *Cesarstwo bizantyjskie 1025-1204. Historia polityczna* (1993), 164 (the English edition: *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204: a political history*, London, 1997, 165).

⁴⁹ M Angold, *op. cit.* (1993), 120-122; ODB, 1298.

brother and companion in his fight for the throne – the *sebastokrator* Isaakios Komnenos – married another Georgian Bagratid princess (a close cousin of Maria of Alania), with whom he had eight children.⁵⁰ The marriage of the emperor's son Isaakios (a namesake of the emperor's brother) to another member of the Georgian royal family appears to be the logical consequence of the political and family situation of Alexios I.

In his article devoted entirely to the problem of relationship between the founder of the Trebizond empire – Alexios I Megas Komnenos – and the queen of Georgia, Tamar I the Great, Cyril Toumanoff⁵¹ questioned the earlier interpretation of the only known source term describing that relationship. That term is "*pros patros theia*" (*προς πατρος θεια*) used in the chronicle of Michael Panaretos, usually interpreted as "paternal aunt."⁵² Toumanoff rejects the suggestion of Kunik,⁵³ accepted by Gerland⁵⁴ and regarded by Vasiliev⁵⁵ as probable, that *sebastokrator* Manuel, the father of Alexios, married the sister of queen Tamar – Rusudan. He is right in pointing out that in such a situation Tamar should have been called "maternal aunt" (*προς μητρος θεια*). At the same time, in an attempt to find another relationship, he proposes to assume that several other terms appearing in sources are incorrect or imprecise (one example has already been mentioned above). It would certainly be wiser to treat the term used by Panaretos as imprecise, as indeed was the course taken by later authors, including Barzos, who is rather unwilling to create hypothetical links, and who accepted that Rusudan was the mother of Alexios I.⁵⁶ Both Sturdza and ES have Alexios' mother as an unnamed daughter of "David IV king of Georgia,"⁵⁷ who obviously is not David the Builder but his grandson, who ruled Georgia for only six months (the numbering of Georgian kings is not standardised – David the Builder bears numbers II, III or IV in the literature).⁵⁸ Nothing is known about this supposed daughter of the younger king David, but he had a son Demna, who later justifiably pretended to the throne of Georgia and was supported by part of the aristocracy,⁵⁹ so may well have given his sister to Manuel Komnenos.

Because Panaretos calls Tamar "*paternal aunt*" of Alexios I, it is reasonable to accept Toumanoff's conclusion that the mother of Alexios I was not Tamar's sister, as in such a case the closest relationship term would have been "maternal aunt" (*προς μητρος θεια*). Toumanoff pushes the relationship of the two monarchs one generation backwards and suggests that it can be explained only by the marriage of Andronikos I (father of Manuel and grandfather of Alexios I) and a hypothetical aunt of queen Tamar and sister of king George III. Although the sources do not mention her, such a possibility had already been put forward by Vasiliev⁶⁰ and accepted by Jurewicz.⁶¹

⁵⁰ K Barzos, *vide supra* - note 13; M. Angold, *op. cit.* (1993), 118.

⁵¹ C Toumanoff, "On the relationship..." (1940).

⁵² J P Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt* (1827), 41-43.

⁵³ A Куник, *op. cit.* (1854), 713.

⁵⁴ E Gerland, *Geschichte des lateinisches Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel* (1905), 34-35.

⁵⁵ A A Vasiliev, "The foundation..." (1936), 8.

⁵⁶ K Barzos, *vide supra* - note 13.

⁵⁷ M D Sturdza, *Dictionnaire...* (1983), 275, 280; ES II.175.

⁵⁸ Respectively in Toumanoff, *Les dynasties...*(1990), in *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 3 (1979), 1055 (or *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd edn., vol. 6 (2003), 153), and in M Lordkipanidze, *Essays...* (1994).

⁵⁹ M Lordkipanidze, *Essays...* (1994), 144-148.

⁶⁰ A A Vasiliev, "The foundation..." (1936), 4-7.

More recent literature does not share this view, however.⁶² But the introduction of Kata as the mother of Andronikos I resolves the problem in an elegant way, without recourse to creating persons otherwise unknown to sources. Even though it extends the meaning of “aunt” to still another generation, the arguments used by Toumanoff are all equally applicable and can be further supported by another one.

Two source passages from *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* are of utmost importance in this context:

[Describing the foundation of the empire of Trebizond by Alexios I Komnenos, grandson of Emperor Andronikos I Komnenos, the chronicler says:] “... and [queen Tamar] gave them [the lands regained from Byzantium] to her relative Alexios Komnenos, Andronikos' descendant, who, himself, had at that time taken refuge with Tamar”⁶³

[Writing about the first marriage of Tamar, the chronicler names various candidates for her hand, including Alexios (illegitimate son of Andronikos I from his union with Theodora Komnene), who was rejected because he and Tamar were] “too closely related”⁶⁴

Toumanoff quotes both of these passages but fails to draw any conclusions from them, moving on to his analysis of the relationship term in Panaretos. It is, however, quite clear that *K'art'lis Tskhovreba* stresses the descent of *both* Komnenoi (Alexios I and his illegitimate uncle) from Andronikos himself – not from his supposed Georgian wife, thus suggesting that it was Andronikos who provided the key link to the relationship. This is especially obvious in the case of the illegitimate son by Theodora (a daughter of his cousin *sebastokrator* Isaakios, brother of emperor Manuel I), who would not be in any way – and certainly not “closely” – related to Tamar, had the Bagratid blood not run in the veins of Andronikos I. This is the decisive argument announced earlier to support the view that Kata was the wife of Isaakios and mother of Andronikos I. What is more, these passages also indicate that Andronikos was a son of that marriage and not from some other possible union. Figure 3 shows the relationships proposed above, together with some other links between Komnenoi and Bagratids.

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⁶¹ O Jurewicz, *op. cit.* (1962), 86-87.

⁶² K Barzos, *vide supra* - note 13; ES II.175.

⁶³ M-F Brosset, *op. cit.* (1849), 464-465. The text is identical in the *Life of the queen of queens Tamar* written by one Basili, probably a priest at her court. This chronicle was discovered in 1923 and published in Russian translation in *Памятники эпохи Руставели*, Ленинград (1938), 39-76. This translation comes from Toumanoff, “On the relationship...” (1940), 302.

⁶⁴ M-F Brosset, *op. cit.* (1849), 412-413; *K'art'lis Tskhovreba*, *op. cit.* (1973), 416. The text is identical in both redactions. See also: М. Д. Лордкипанидзе, *История Грузии XI-начала XIII века* (1974), 147.

Abbreviations

ES: *Europäische Stammtafeln*, ed. Detlev Schwennicke.

ODB: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander P Kazhdan.

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