

<https://doi.org/10.46991/hc.2023.20.2.018>

The Role of Holy Roman Empire and Papacy in Declaration of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia

Aram Hovhannisyan

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9746-2175>

PHD, Associate Professor of YSU

aram.hovhannisyan@ysu.am

Keywords: Cilicia, political, Rome, Papacy, power, king, archbishop, Armenian Church, state, theology, religion, proclamation.

The article addresses a certain and very important aspect of the relations between Cilician Armenia and Holy Roman Empire – the proclamation of the Armeinan Kingdom of Cilicia and the coronation of Prince Levon II. Based on the information available in medieval Armenian and foreign historical sources, as well as the modern scientific literature of the question, the author has managed to present the international situation from the late 80s of the 12th century to 1198, the Armenian-Roman and Armenian-Byzantine relations and the process of the coronation of King Levon II. The article contains detailed information about the negotiation process between Cilician Armenia and the two powers of the time – the Holy Roman Empre and the Byzantine Empire as well as the final decisions achieved. Special attention has been attached to the religious changes offered by the Catholic Church to the Armenian Prince of Cilicia. The article also addresses the issue of the anointment of Prince Levon II and substantiates the fact that it was performed by Archbishop Conrad Wittlesbach, the representative of the Pope of Rome and the Holy Empire. Armenian Catholicos Grigor VI Apirat blessed him.

**Հոմեական Սրբազան կայսրության և պապական աթոռի դերակատարումը Կիլիկիայի
հայոց թագավորության հռչակման գործում**

Արամ Հովհաննիսյան

Երևանի պետական համալսարանի դոցենտ, պատմական գիտությունների թեկնածու

Հիմնաբառեր: Կիլիկիա, քաղաքական, Հոռո, պապական աթոռ, իշխանություն, թագավոր, եպիսկոպոս, հայոց եկեղեցի, պետություն, դավանաբանություն, կրոն, հռչակում:

History and Culture, Vol.-2(20), 2023, pp. 18-30.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

Received: 26.05.2023

Revised: 26.07.2023

Accepted: 15.12.2023

© The Author(s) 2023

Հոդվածը սկզբում ներկայացվում է միջազգային այն բարենպաստ իրավիճակը, որ ստեղծվել էր Կիլիկիայի հայկական թագավորության համար 12-րդ դարի 90-ական թվականներին: Ներկայացրել ենք նշյալ ժամանակաշրջանի Կիլիկյան Հայաստանի պատմության ամենակարևոր խնդիրներից մեկին՝ հայկական թագավորության միջազգային ճանաչման գործընթացի մանրամասները: Հատուկ ուշադրության է հատկացված Հռոմի պապական աթոռի և Հռոմեական Սրբազան կայսրության հետ հարաբերություններին և նրանց դերակատարմանը Լևոն Մեծագործի թագադրման գործին: Հետազոտությունը իրականացրել ենք միջնադարյան պատմիչների տեղեկությունների և ժամանակակից գիտական գրականության մեջ առկա տեսակետների հիմնան վրա: Վեր ենք հանել Հռոմի պապական աթոռի և Բյուզանդական կայսրության կողմից դավանաբանական պարտադրանքի քաղաքականության մանրամասները, ինչպես նաև Կիլիկիայի հայոց պետության և Հռոմկլայի կաթողիկոսարանի որդեգրած քաղաքականությունը: Ցույց ենք տվել նաև, թե ինչպիսի ծանր պայքար են մղել Կիլիկիայի հայոց պետության ներկայացուցիչները և հոգևորականությունը վերը նշյալ հարցում, ինչպես նաև փոխզիջումային տարբերակները: Հոդվածի վերջում էլ քննել ենք հայոց արքա՝ Լևոն Մեծագործի թագադրման խնդիրը և ցույց ենք տվել, որ Կիլիկիայի հայոց արքա Լևոն Մեծագործը նախ թագադրվել է Հռոմի պապի ներկայացուցիչ՝ Մայնցի արքեպիսկոպոս Կոնրադ Վիտելսբախի, ապա նաև Ամենայն հայոց կաթողիկոս Գրիգոր Ապիրատի կողմից:

**Роль Священной Римской империи и папского престола в провозглашении Армянского
Киликийского королевства**

Արամ Օգաննիսյան

доцент Ереванского Государственного Университета,
кандидат исторических наук

Ключевые слова: Киликия, политический, Рим, папский престол,
власть, король, епископ, армянская церковь, государство,
конфессиональный, религия, провозглашение.

Во вступительной части статьи рассмотрены международные благоприятные условия, которые сложились вокруг Армянского Королевства Киликии в 90-е годы XII столетия. Автор подробно коснулся одного из самых важных вопросов истории Киликийской Армении указанного периода – процесса международного признания Армянского королевства. Особое внимание уделено взаимоотношениям с папским престолом и Священной Римской империей и их роли в коронации Льва Великого. Исследование выполнено на основе сведений, приведенных средневековыми историками, а также имеющихся в современной научной литературе мнений. Обстоятельно освещена как политика конфессионального принуждения Римского папства и Византийской империи, так и политика Армянского государства Киликии и католикосата Рима. Одновременно представлена глубокая озабоченность представителей армянского государства Киликии и

The Role of Holy Roman Empire and Papacy in Declaration of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia
Հռոմեական Մրբազան կայսրության և պապական աթոռի դերակատարումը Կիլիկիայի հայոց
թագավորության հռչակման գործում

духовенства по поводу вышеупомянутого вопроса, а также анализ компромиссных вариантов его решения. В конце статьи мы коснулись проблемы помазания князя Левона II, показав, что оно было совершено сперва представителем Папы Римского архиепископом Майнца Конрадом Виттельсбахским, а затем армянским католикосом Григором Апиратом.

* * *

Introduction: The history of relations between Cilicia and Christian-Western Armenia is of utmost importance for a better understanding of not only the history of Armenia, but also of the Crusaders. It is known that with the on-going Crusades in the 11th-12th centuries for the Christian West the position of the Armenian state of Cilicia, established in the East was of great significance. The state of Cilicia, getting closer to the leaders of the crusades, tried to take advantage of the favorable international situation to turn the government into a kingdom. And at the end of the 12th century, the role of the Holy Roman Empire the Papal throne played in the creation of the Kingdom of Cilicia was really invaluable. We believe that the investigation of the history of relations between the Armenian Kingdom and the Holy Roman Empire may stimulate the development of modern Armenian-Roman relations.

The article draws attention to both the internal and external conditions created in the second half of the 12th century, that were favorable for the proclamation of the Kingdom of Cilicia. The marriages of the representatives of the Rubinian dynasty with the relatives of the monarchs of the West and the heads of the crusading states, encouraged by the political factor have also been referred to. Marriages that further strengthened the "Christian West" ties of Cilician Armenia, which continued throughout the history of Cilicia.

In the second part we have referred to the negotiations over the proclamation of the Kingdom of Cilicia, particularly, the visit of the Armenian delegations to Constantinople and Rome. The thesis concerning the interests of the Armenian state in getting closer to the Papal seat of the Holy Roman Empire, but not to Byzantium has been substantiated. An attempt has also been made to present all the demands made to the Armenian delegation by the Pontifical See of Rome, together with the Holy Roman Empire during the negotiations.

The third part of the article covers the details of Leon's coronation, in particular, the conditions under which Archbishop Conrad of Mainz consecrated Leon as the Armenian king of Cilicia are commented on. We have also attempted to elucidate the viewpoint widely spread in Armenological Studies, concerning the participation of the Armenian Catholicos in the consecration of the Armenian king.

Proclamation of the Kingdom of Cilicia: Internal and External Conditions: The span of the reign of Prince Levon (1187-1219) is one of the most notable and interesting periods in the history of Cilician Armenia. The Armenian state developed and grew in importance for the western European countries, the Papacy, as well as for the crusader states in the East. Consequently, the relations between the Armenian state and the Holy Empire of Rome and the Papacy considerably intensified under Prince Levon II since, on the one hand, the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was of great importance for the Christian West due to its favorable geographical location, and on the other hand, the leader of the Armenian state was seeking to

obtain a crown and be proclaimed the king of Cilicia with the help of the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. Sadly, the bilateral relations in the period under discussion have not received due attention in scientific literature and a number of questions still call for exhaustive answers. The current research aims to fill the gap.

As is known, Prince Levon II started ruling the Armenian Principality of Cilicia in 1187 when his brother Rouben III (1175-1187) rejected the throne upon his return from captivity. This was the beginning of a new, bright age in the history of the Armeanian state. Right from the start of his rule the Armenian prince established quite friendly and allied relations with both the Papacy, the Holy Empire of Rome, as well as with the Crusader states in the East. In the meantime, the ports of Cilician Armenia grew in importance in the international trade. The ports offered favorable conditions for trade for the Italian city-states like Venice, Genova, Pisa and others which helped further enhance the bilateral relations. Later on, a series of contracts were signed with the Italian city-states that were quite beneficial for both Cilician Armenia and the Italian city-states [Langlois 1863, pp. 22-23, 84-86, 143-146, 151-153, 193-194]. As far as the relations between the Armenian State of Cilicia and the Christian West are concerned, the Armenian Prince attached great significance to them, and perhaps that was the reason he established in-law relations with the ruling families of the leaders of the Crusader states.

He got married to Isabel of Antioche back in 1189. Some time after the latter's death he tied the knot with Sibili, the daughter of Aimery Lusignan, the King of Cyprus in 1210 [Ernoul 1871, p. 410, Rudt-Collenberg 1963, p. 22-25]. Regarding the marriages of Levon II, M. Ormanyanyan writes that the Cilician Prince married Isabelle, the daughter of the brother-in-law of the Prince of Antioche to strengthen the relations with the Latins and to win the support of Antioche through his wife [Ormanyanyan 2001, p. 1741]. The marriages between the Rubenids and Latins did not end here, however. Levon II wedded his daughter Rita (Stephanie) with the King of Jerusalem, John of Brienne. It goes without saying, that all these marriages could prove beneficial for all the countries and could solve all the previous disagreements. Moreover, they were quite beneficial for the Roman Papacy and the Holy Empire since the cooperation between the Christian states was getting stronger in the East. Moreover, it provided an ample ground to form a common front during crusades.

Later on, various leaders of the Cilician State, including the representatives of the Hetumid and Lusignan dynasties established in-law relations with the leaders of western European countries, as well as with the representatives of the crusader states in the East.

Naturally, these marriages had a political bias. From the first days of his reign Levon II started seizing more and more lands and growing in power. This idea is well supported by several medieval historians. Particularly, according to Michael the Syrian, Levon II was able to unleash victorious wars against the Byzantines and Seljouks seizing 72 castles [Asori 1870, p. 500]. Wilhelm Tyuratsi reports that seeing he had become the supreme leader and still did not own anything, the Armenian Prince sent his delegates to Emperor Henry asking him for a crown [Guillaume de Tyr, 1859, p. 215]. Similar information can be found in the works of Kirakos Gandzaketsi [1961, p. 156]. Indeed, the success Levon II had in both domestic and foreign policies allowed him to think about being proclaimed as a king, something the whole nation was looking forward to. The negotiations over Levon II's coronation started towards the end of the 1180s and the start of the 1190s and not in the second half of the 90s of the 12th century. They started with

The Role of Holy Roman Empire and Papacy in Declaration of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia
Հռոմեական Սրբազան կայսրության և պապական աթոռի դերակատարումը Կիլիկիայի հայոց
թագավորության հռչակման գործում

the correspondence and negotiations between the Armenian Principality of Cilicia and Catholicosate of Hromkla on the one hand, and the representatives of the Holy Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire and Roman Papacy, on the other hand. Pope Clement III (1187-1191) viewed Cilician Armenia as the main ally of Rome and Crusade. Besides, in the 90s of the 12th century, the relations between Cilician Armenia and Roman Papacy entered a new stage – it was a time when the crusade principalities in the East were growing weak losing certain lands while the Armenian Principality of Rubenids in Cilicia was growing more and more powerful and hence, could become a reliable ally for the Crusade [Halfter 2009, pp.69-70] : It should be noted that towards the end of the 1180s and 1190s the negotiations between Cilician Armenia with the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire were held by the high-ranking Armenian clergy, namely by Archbishops Nerses of Lambron (Lambronatsi), Hovhannes Ssetsi and Gevorg Skevratsi. Indeed, the role of the first two archbishops in the proclamation of the Armenian Kingdom and the coronation of Levon II cannot be overestimated.

On July 4, 1187, Salah Ed-Din defeated the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Battle of Hattin and conquered most of the crusade states in the East. Under these new conditions, the Roman Papacy and western Europe started to view the Armenian State of Cilicia and the Armenian Army as the pioneer in the fight against the Muslim world (Ibid.). L. Ter-Petrosyan writes that the idea of getting a royal crown first occurred to the Armenian Prince in 1189 when Pople Clement III sent letters to Levon II and Catholicos Grigor IV Tgha asking them to support the participants of the Crusade that were heading for the East [Ter-Petrosyan, vol. II 2007, p. 180]. Here we share L. Ter-Petrosyan's viewpoint. This idea can be further supported by the writings of G. Mikayelyan who believes that the Armenian Prince attempted to make use of the arrival of Frederik the Redbeard in the East and get the royal crown from the Emperor himself [Mikayelyan, 2007, 149]. Actually, the state of Levon II was the only undefeatable Christsian Principality with its military potential in the East of the time.

Both L. Ter-Petrosyan and G. Mikayelyan share the idea that Levon II's aspirations for the crown emerged towards the end of the 80s of the 12th century or at the start of the 1190s and were accompanied by vigorous correspondence. Historian Ibn Al-Athir also provides interesting information in this regard. He claims that Levon II did not meet with either Frederik the Redbeard in person (1152-1190), or his son Henry IV (1190-1197) but provided the crusaders with food, fodder and shelter in the territory of Cilicia as a result of secret negotiations [Ibn Al-Athir 1981, p. 275]. Besides, the Armenian Prince was to provide the Crusade Army with military organizational support. It goes without saying that the Armenian Prince of Cicilia expected certain favors from the Christian West in return.

Hence, Levon II demonstrated certain caution towards the Crusades, on the one hand not to complicate the relations with the Sultanate of Egypt since he could turn into a target of vengeance for Salah ad-Din. On the other hand, he tried to meet the demand of the Holy Roman Emperor to get a crown and be proclaimed a king. Vardan Areveltsi supports this claim reporting that upon receiving the letter from the Armenian Catholicos Grigor IV Tgha, Frederik the Redbeard writes that he has a crown and a gown [Areveltsi 1862, p. 138-139, Der-Nersisian 1969, p. 645]. Otherwise stated, the leader of the Crusade

offers the Armenian Principality of Cilicia to support them in return for a crown and proclamation of a kingdom. This information provided by Vardan Areveltsi is important since it comes to prove that the negotiations over Levon II's crown actually started 8-10 years before his coronation.

In fact, while the Armenians had some expectations from Frederik the Redbeard or his descendents, Salah ad-Din, who was at the height of his power at that time, could easily invade the Armenian Principality at any moment. Moreover, the Armenian Catholicosate, Hromklan, was in the territory of Egyptian Sultanate.

In May 1190 the Army of the Crusaders reached the borders of the Armenian Principality of Cilicia. Chroniclers write that Levon II's delegates offered a friendly reception, support and warm welcome. However, their hopes were not fulfilled.

Although Levon II had royal ambitions, they never came true because of the death of Frederik the Redbeard. Certainly, most Armenians were profoundly shocked by the death of the Emperor. Levon II of the Rubenid Dynasty, however, held a different opinion on this issue. Neither the death of the emperor, nor the disease-inflicted demise of the Crusade army in Cilicia had an adverse effect on his ambitions. Though the Army of the Crusaders experienced a most disastrous failure, Levon II remained involved in the events unfolding around the third Crusade. A number of records support the idea. The Cilician army, in particular, supported Richard the Lionheart in 1191 (1189-1199) in his conquest of Cyprus and occupation of Aqqa. Naturally, these steps of the Armenian Prince could not go unnoticed by the leaders of the western Europe and Roman Papacy.

It should also be noted that the negotiations between the Armenian state of Cilicia and the Holy Roman Empire went on after the death of Frederik the Redbeard. The death of Salah ad-Din, the Sultan of Egypt in 1193, proved beneficial for the Armenian state. This was followed by the split-up of the Ayyubid Sultanate into small states. Moreover, the Sultanate of Rum was going through times of domestic disturbances which further contributed to the military status of Levon II. Under these circumstances, Prince Levon II tried to take advantage of the favorable international situation and bring up the issue of his coronation once again.

Toward the end of the 12th century both the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire, which still had the Armenian Principality of Cilicia in its composition, were interested in granting a crown to Prince Levon II. Nevertheless, Armenians attached more attention to the strengthening of the relations with the Christian west. This is well supported by the evidence of researcher Moller who states that the Armenian envoy in Milan visited Henry VI and though the medieval historians have not left much information concerning the details the negotiation process, it is well known that the talks with the Armenian clergy were not crowned with success [Levon I, 2019, p.154].

Unfortunately, little is known about the cause of the failure of the talks. However, one can guess that, apparently, they were connected with religious matters. However, the Armenian State of Cilicia and Levon II himself did not give up. What is more, it was decided to continue the negotiations with both the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire simultaneously.

Negotiations over the Proclamation of the Kingdom of Cilicia: The year of 1196 proved a turning point in the history of the Armeian State of Cilicia since in order to achieve success, the representatives of the institutions responsible for the foreign policy of the Armenian state launched active negotiations with

The Role of Holy Roman Empire and Papacy in Declaration of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia
Հռոմեական Սրբազան կայսրության և պապական աթոռի դերակատարումը Կիլիկիայի հայոց թագավորության հռչակման գործում

some of the most powerful states of the time. That is to say, they started bilateral negotiations with both the Christian West and Byzantine Empire. Records about the Armenian delegates, embassies and negotiation process can be found in the works of several medieval historians. Particularly, in those of Smbat Sparapet who writes that in 1196 an Armenian delegation left for the capital of the Byzantine Empire-Costantinople. Though the Armenian delegation received a warm welcome and reception, the religious-political negotiations did not yield positive results and the Armenian delegation headed by Nerses of Lambron returned to Cilicia empty-handed. The thing is that the Greek clergy demanded a series of religious concessions in return for the crown for Levon II which was unacceptable for the Armenians [Smbat Sparapet 1956, p. 207]. This information is important in a sense that it is the only one among the Armenian sources which records the negotiations for the Armenian crown held by the Armenian delegation in Costantinople.

After these events the Armenian elite turned its face to the West. It goes without saying that the West would need the support of the Armenian State of Cilicia during the next crusade and they agreed to give a crown to Prince Levon II, though they also introduced their own conditions.

We believe that at that moment it was more beneficial for the Armenian State of Cilicia to establish closer relations with the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Papacy since the Byzantine Empire had lost its previous power and was not able to support the Armenian State of Cilicia. Hence, the elite of the Armenian State of Cilicia sent a delegation to the Roman Empire, according to Kirakos Gandzaketsi. The historian writes that Levon II sent a delegate to the world-famous city of Rome to meet the Emperor and the Pope to obtain their permission to bear the crown since Levon II did not wish to obey anyone else for the crown [Gandzaketsi 1961, p. 153]. Though the historian fails to specify the exact date of the visit of the Armenian delegation and the subsequent negotiations, we can only guess that it took place approximately between 1196 and 1197. Most probably, the sides agreed to continue the bilateral negotiations in Cilicia where the representatives of the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Papacy were to specify the conditions to coronate Levon II as the king of Cilicia.

Consecration of Levon as the Armenian King of Cilicia: Archbishop Conrad von Mainz was appointed as the envoy of the Crusade in 1197. In the month of November of the same year Henry VI died. However, the negotiations over the coronation of the Armenian Prince went on and the German princes in the Holy country granted Conrad of Wittlesbach with the right to conduct the coronation of Levon II. According to Smbat, in November Levon II delegated Archbishop Hovhannes of Ssi to Aqqa for the crown that the Roman Emperor, who was staying there at that time, had offered him [Smbat Sparapet 1956, p. 207]. Meanwhile, the Archbishop delegated by the Pope of Rome also arrived. As a result, an agreement was reached concerning the negotiations over the unification of the churches which underscored the differences between the churches, especially with regard to their different calendars and rituals [Moeller 2019, p. 154]. P. Halfter who is the author of a rather profound and in-depth research in the history of the relations between the Popes and Cilicia, brings forward a hypothesis according to which Conrad of Wittlesbach, the Archchancellor of Germany and Archbishop of Mainz, during his stay in Beirut from

October 25 to November 9 decided to crown Prince Levon II [Halfter 1996, pp. 218-219]. Rensiman maintains that the Roman Emperor consented to crown Levon on condition that the latter recognized the supremacy of the Empire and participated in the Crusade [Runciman 1969, p. 85]. We can agree to this viewpoint since the West had planned to organize new crusades in the future and the presence of allies like Cilicia would be most welcome.

In fact, Levon II held simultaneous negotiations both with the Roman Papacy and with the Holy Empire. The acclaimed researcher Rene Grousset writes that to achieve his goals Levon II turned to the highest authorities of the West - the Pope of Rome and the Empire since he sought to include the Armenian State of Cilicia in the family of the western states [Ter-Petrosyan 2005, p. 338].

Seeking to enhance the role and significance of the Catholic Church in the East, Pope Celestinos (1191-1198), in his turn, supported Levon. He did not spare his efforts to make sure that the Prince would get the crown from the Holy Empire rather than from Byzantine. Actually, the strengthening of the Armenian-Roman clerical relationship has always been accompanied with the worsening of the relations with the Byzantine church. The idea that the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy attempted to make use of the complicated relations between Cilicia and Byzantine to attract the leader of the Armenian state and the country to their side, which actually happened, cannot be excluded. Shortly afterwards, the Archbishop Conrad of Mainz launched negotiations with Armenians and demanded that the Armenian side give a written undertaking to adopt a number of religious rituals.

As can be seen, the Armenian Principality of Cilicia and the Armenian clergy constantly faced the problem of making religious concessions-not an easy task to solve. It goes without saying that the Armenian Prince, regardless of his power within the borders of the country, could not solve this issue single-handedly. Hence, the need to discuss the issue with the high-ranking clergy. Besides, to make the necessary concessions they would need not only the consent of the Cilician Clergy, but also that of the Catholicosate of Hromkla and the Dioceses of Armenia itself. Soon a general meeting was convened in the town of Tarson which brought together the high-rank Armenian clergy. Towards the end of the meeting it was decided to turn down the suggestion of the Pope of Rome which meant that the coronation of the Armenian Prince could be postponed.

As far as Prince Levon II was concerned, he was quite conscious of the fact that such a reply would leave him crownless. Hence, according to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, he managed to persuade 12 bishops. Most probably they were on good terms with the Armenian Prince and gave a written undertaking over the changes presented by the representative of the Pope [Gandzaketsi 1961, p. 149]. Gandzaketsi writes that Armenians agreed to make concessions over the following points:

1. To celebrate Dominical Feasts on fixed dates which put an end to the seven-day system of the Armenian calendar.
2. To conduct the Morning Service in the church rather than in the gavit (narthex)
3. To celebrate the Birth and Resurrection Eve with fish and oil instead of dairy products (Ibid.).
4. To teach Latin to Armenian youth, etc.

The delegates of the Pope agreed to crown Levon II as the Armenian King of Cilicia. P. Halfter mentions that the Armenian King Levon II accepted the supremacy of not only the Holy Roman Empire, but also the dominance of the Pope of Rome [Halfter 1996, pp. 265-269]. The researcher elaborates on his

**The Role of Holy Roman Empire and Papacy in Declaration of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia
Հռոմեական Սրբազան կայսրության և պապական աթոռի դերակատարումը Կիլիկիայի հայոց
թագավորության հռչակման գործում**

idea saying that by his coronation the Armenian King accepted his inferior position to the Holy Roman Empire (Ibid.). This dependence was quite formal in nature and aimed to clarify the place of Cilician Armenia in the family of the eastern monarchs of the Crusade (Ibid.). L. Ter-Petrosyan adds to P. Halfter's viewpoint saying that the Armenian King agreed to recognize the secular and not the religious supremacy of the Pope of Rome [Ter-Petrosyan 2007, p. 191]-an idea shared by Grousset, as well. The latter points out that we should not be misled by this religious union. He believes that the recognition of the supremacy of the Pope of Rome was merely an oral concession which made it possible to preserve the political alliance with the Latins [Grousset 1949, p. 394].

Granting royal crowns to the princes of Cyprus and Cilicia, Henry VI sought to win loyal vassals in the East [Runciman 1969, p.85] on the eve of the planned Crusades or to counterbalance the influence of France in the countries of Levant [Mutafian 2002, p. 85]. As far as the Byzantine Empire and Aleksios III (1195-1203) are concerned, he sought to have at least a small impact on Cilicia and get a strong ally against the seljuks of the Middle Asia in the face of Levon II since the victories of the latter against the Rumi Sultanate could not have gone unnoticed by the leaders of the Empire. Hence Levon II accepted crowns both from the Roman Empire and from the Byzantine Empire and was coronated by two emperors.

Historian Smbat tells an interesting story, according to which though Levon II was sincerely happy to receive the crown sent by Aleksios, still he was crowned with the one sent from the Western Emperor [Smbat Sparapet 1956, pp. 207-208].

We believe that the difference between the crowns of the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire was quite considerable since it had long been known that the Armenian Prince of Cilicia was more interested in being crowned by the Roman Emperor and hence, he smartly avoided being coronated with their crown. Additionally, neither King Levon, nor the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia would benefit politically. Linking the destiny of the Armenian state with the gradually weakening Byzantine Empire would not be a wise or a promising move.

Another interesting viewpoint is expressed by G. Mikayelyan. He notes that by accepting both crowns Levon II aimed to indicate the reputation of his power, as well as to neutralize the potential violations of the Roman and Byzantine Emperors towards the sovereignty of Cilicia [Mikayelyan 2007, p. 158]. Besides, the Armenian historians also point out the difference in the content of the two crowns. They claim that Levon II presented himself as the vassal of the Holy Roman Empire, rather than that of the Byzantine Empire. The fact that he introduced himself as “The King of Armenians due to the Catholic Church and Roman Empire” or “King by the mercy of God and the Roman Empire” (Per eandem et Romani Imperii gratiam Rex Armenorum եւ Die et Romani Imperii gratia Rex Armenie) [Mutafian, p.130, Morgan 1919, pp.187-188]. Chevallier writes that apart from religious issues Levon II expressed willingness to recognize the supremacy of the Holy Roman Empire [Chevalier 2007, p. 29].

There are different opinions and viewpoints concerning the coronation of Levon II in the works of medieval historians and in professional literature. In particular, most of the Armenian sources argue that the Levon II was crowned by the Armenian Catholicos [Rabouni 1856; Samvel Anetsi 2014; Colophon of

Armenian Manuscripts 1988, p. 180]. However, other sources mention that he was coronated by the representative of the Pope of Rome [Short Chronologies 1956, vol. II, p. 180, Chronoques d' Amadi 1891, p. 90]. Interestingly, Smbat Sparapet who witnessed the events of the time describes the participants-the archbishops, princes and guests of the coronation in utmost detail, but, strangely enough, fails to mention anything about the conductors of the ceremony. He mentions Catholicos Grigor VI Apirat only as being one of the guests [Smbat Sparapet, 1956, p. 209]. Certainly, this abstention from sharing information raises many questions and it is not excluded that the Armenian Sparapet possessed certain information which, however, he did not wish to record. This may well be the cause of a huge number of controversies in professional literature which may be grouped several categories:

1. Researchers such as T. Boase [1978, p.19] who while speaking about the coronation ceremony of Levon I, choose not to specify the conductor of the service.

2. Researchers [Cahen, 1840, Runciman, 2005, p. 91, Halfter, 1996, p. 237, Chevalier, pp. 27-28, Ormanyan, 2001, p. 1809, Alishan, 1885, p. 472 and others] who believe that Levon II was crowned by the Representative of the Pope of Rome and was blessed and anointed by Grigor VI Apirat.

3. Researchers like A. Syurmeyan who states that Levon II was crowned by both the Representative of the Pope of Rome and by the Armenian Catholicos [Syuremyan 1945, p. 22].

We believe that this last version could also be close to the reality since it would help avoid the dissatisfaction of the people.

Anyway, Levon II reached his goal finally. On January 6, 1198 the ceremony of the coronation of Levon II started in St. Sophia Cathedral in the city of Tarson. The service was conducted by Nerses of Lambron. Conrad Archbishop, the Representative of the Pope of Rome, crowned Levon as the King of Cilicia in the presence of the Armenian Catholicos.

Interestingly, historians like Michael Asory [Asori 1870, p. 504] and Hetum [Short Chronologies 1956, pp.103-104] observe that the Armenian King was crowned with both Roman and Byzantine crowns, which seems rather doubtful. Though there is sufficient evidence that the Byzantine Empire sent a crown to the Armenian Prince, it is not likely that another coronation ceremony was held since the Byzantine crown, like the one sent from Hungary and other countries, were of symbolic nature.

Hence, Levon II of the Rubenid Dyansty became “an Armenian King by the mercy of God and the Roman Empire”. Soon afterwards facing the new situation and not wishing to break ties with Cilician Armenia Byzantine Emperor Aleksios III (1195-1203) recognized the kingdom of his former vasal.

Up to 1212 King Levon I always emphasized his allegiance to the empire in his records while there was never any vasal relations with the Pope even when Levon pursued political goals with that. In general, The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was never an inferior kigdom to the Pope [Halfter 1996, pp.193-198, Mutafian 2002, pp.130-131]. M. Chevallier is absolutely right in writing that the Armenian king committed himself to recognize the supremacy of the Holy Empire, which, as it seems, did not significantly restrict the activity of the Armenian state, but found its reflection in mostly official documents of King Levon I [Chevalier 2007, p.29]. It is noteworthy that immediately after the coronation ceremony of King Levon I, when the papal nuncio was to return to Rome, the Armenian King and Catholicos Grigor Apirat sent a letter of appreciation to Pope Innocent III [1198-1216). Unfortunately, only the Latin translations of these letters have reached our days. P. Halfter notes that the Latin historians

**The Role of Holy Roman Empire and Papacy in Declaration of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia
Հռոմեական Սրբազան կայսրության և պապական աթոռի դերակատարումը Կիլիկիայի հայոց
թագավորության հռչակման գործում**

and the existing documents view the anointment of Levon by Conrad as the Armenian King a glorious victory of the Catholic Church [Halfter 1996, pp. 243-245]. Anyway, the decade-long strife of the Armenian people to establish statehood was crowned with success and Prince Levon II was crowned as King Levon I.

As a matter of fact, it can be stated that during the time period under discussion both the Byzantine Church and the Catholic Church of Rome demanded that the Armenian Church should make religious concessions and Levon I gave preference to the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire which, from our perspective, was a correct and justified decision. The coronation of Prince Levon by Conrad Wittlesbach symbolized the departure of the Armenian state from the influence of the Byzantine Empire and its strife to get closer with the Latin East. Anyway, the fact that the Armenian King received a crown from the two powerful emperors of the time, according to G. Mikaelyan, witnesses the high reputation of the power of the Armenian King [Mikayelyan 2007, p. 161]. However, it should also be stated that Levon never broke ties with the Byzantine Empire, which, we believe, was also a very wise political decision.

A lot of interesting facts and stories about the relations between the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and the Roman Church, as well as about the foreign policy of the kings of Cilician Armenia can be found in the works of the Latin author Brocarduc. He writes, “By joining the Roman Church, Armenians gave an oral and written promise of a religious unity and though they obtained a reputation and glory with the help of the Roman Church, they turned their backs to the Catholics taking back the lands and monasteris that they had handed to Latin clergy” [Brocarduc 1906, pp. 486-491]. Although this information comes to prove that obtaining the crowns and agreeing with certain religious changes set forth by the Roman Church, Levon did not fulfil the religious compromises, however it is no less important to note that throughout the history of the Kingdom there was a close cooperation between the Armenians and Latins and the latter possessed lands, churches, their own courts, commercial representatitves, their own districts across the whole territory of Cilicia and had a certain impact on the system of governance of the Armenian State of Cilicia.

Besides, as K. Mutafyan writes, Levon demonstrated flexible politics since the supremacy of Rome did not force withdrawal from the independent Armenian Church and the dominance of Rome was preferred to that of Byzantine with whom Armenians had some disputable issues [Mutafyan 2001, p. 404]. R. Grousset’s observation is worth mentioning in this regard. He writes that neither the Armenian clergy of Cilician, nor the ruling elite wished to reject their faith and accept both versions [Grousset 1949, p. 394]. Largely speaking, the spread of Catholicism among the Armenian people did not go beyond announcements and insignificant borrowings in Cilican Armenia under Levon the Great. Hence, the coronation of King Levon I was carried out by two leading Christian powers-the Emperor and the representatives of the Pope of Rome.

Taking advantage of the favorable international situation towards the 90s of the 12th century and through well-balanced diplomacy, Prince Levon II obtained the crown by the Roman Empire and the Papacy. The fact that Cilican Principality changed into a kingdom is the reflection of its growing power

and international reputation on the one hand, and the enormous personal efforts by Prince Levon himself, on the other hand. Through the coronation of Levon the Catholic states of Europe, Crusade principalities, the Byzantine Empire and the Muslim countries in the East recognized the political reputation of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia.

Conclusion: Researching the history of the reign of Levon II provides an opportunity to formulate fundamental questions and make conclusions concerning the relations between the Armenian State of Cilicia, the Papal seat of Rome and the Holy Roman Empire and their coronation of Prince Levon II. Prince Levon II entered the political arena under difficult international conditions which, however on the other hand were rather favorable for the Armenian State of Cilicia. The latter was able to create a powerful army and achieved great success in the field of foreign policy. Consequently the international reputation of the Armenian State of Cilicia grew.

This can be accounted for by Levon's ability to establish friendly relations with almost all the strong powers of the time: the Byzantine Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Sultanate of Egypt and other countries. Nevertheless he gave priority to the Holy Roman Empire and the Papal seat, and for that reason, when the issue of his coronation was put forward, the Armenian prince turned to the Papal seat.

After some negotiations, the Papal seat agreed to crown the Armenian prince as the Armenian king of Cilicia, and that was a great success for the Armenians.

The Pope's representative Konrad Wittelsbach anointed Prince Levon II as the Armenian king, and after this a new page opened in the Armenian-Roman relations.

Bibliography

- Alishan, Ghevond (1885).** *Sisouan, Homography of Armenian Cilicia and Levon the Great (in Armenian)*. Venice, St. Lazarus.
- Boase, T. S. R. (1978).** *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*. Scottish Academic Press, London.
- Brocarduc, (1906).** Directorium ad Passagium Faciendum. *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, doc. Arme'niens*, t. II, Paris.
- Cahen, C. (1840).** La Syrie du Nord a l'epoque des Croisades et la principaute franque d' Antiock, Paris, Available at <https://books.openedition.org/ifpo/6189>
- Chronoliques d' Amadi et de strambaldi, (1891).** Paris, Imprimerie nationale.
- Colophon of Armenian Manuscripts of 12th century* (1988). **(in Armenian)**. Yerevan, AAS Publishers.
- Der-Nersisian, Sirarpi (1969).** The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia. In Kenneth M. Setton, A History of the Crusades, **Madison-Milwaukee-London, 1966**, pp. 630-659.
- de Tyr, Guillaume (1859).** L'Estoire de Eracles empereur et la conquest de la terre d'Outremer, *Recueil des historiens des Croisades, Hostoriens cccidentaux*. Paris, Imprimerie imperial.
- Chronique D'Ernoul et de **Bernard Le Tresorier (1871)**. Paris, Vve de J. Renouard.
- Grousset, R. (1949).** *L' Empire du Levant, Histoire De la Question D' Orient*. Paris.
- Halfter, P. (1996).** *Das Papstum und die Armenier im fruhen und hohen Mittelalter: Von den ersten kontakten biz zur fixierung der kirchenunionim*. Jaher 1198, Wien.

Պատմություն/ History

The Role of Holy Roman Empire and Papacy in Declaration of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia
Հռոմեական Սրբազան կայսրության և պապական աթոռի դերակատարումը Կիլիկիայի հայոց
թագավորության հռչակման գործում

- Halfter, Peter (2009).** L'E'glise arme'nienne entre la papaute' et les Byzantins aux XII et XIII sie`cles. In L'E'glise arme'nienne entre Grecs et latins, Fin XIe - milieu XVe sie`cle, Paris, Geuthner, pp.63-78.
- Ibn Al-Athir (1981).** Complete History (in Armenian). *Foreign Sources about Armenia and Armenians*, vol. 1, Yerevan, Academy of Sciences of Arm. SSR Press.
- Gandzaketsi, Kirakos (1961).** Armenian History (in Armenian) ed. by Melik-Ohanjanyan A., Yerevan.
- Langlois, Victor (1863).** *Le tresor des chartes d' Armen'ie*. Venise, Typographie de Saint-Lazare.
- Levon I (2019).** *Ein armenischer Konig im staufischen Outremer*. Halle (Zalle).
- Asori, Michael (1870).** *Armenian Chronology* (in Armenian), Jerusalem.
- Chevalier, Marie-Anna (2007).** Sur L'Histoire Des Relations De E` Armenie Cilicienne avec les orders Religieux-Militaires (in Armenian). Editions De L' Universite, D` Etat D` Erevan, YSU Press.
- Mikayelyan, Grigor (2007).** *History of the Armenian State of Cilicia*. (in Armenian). Yerevan, YSU Press.
- Moeller, Stefan (2019).** The Armenian King Levon I, *Ein armenischer Konig im staufischen Outremer*. Halle/Saale, Kulturstiftung Sachsen-Anhalt.
- Morgan, J. (1919).** *Histoire du peuple Armen'nien*. Paris. Berger-Levrault librarires- Editeurs.
- Mutafian, Claude (2001).** *Cilicia at the Crossroads of Empires (in Armenian)*. Yerevan, Nairi Publishers.
- Mutafian, Claude (2002a).** *La diplomatic arme'nienne au Levant a` Iepoque des croisades XII-XVI sie`cle*. Paris, Paris 1.
- Mutafian, Claude (2002b).** *Reserches sur I` Armen'nie cilicienne*. Paris, Pais 1.
- Ormanyan, Maghakia (2001).** National History, (in Armenian) Vol. I, Echmiadzin.
- Runciman, Steven (2005).** A history of the Crusades (in Armenian). In L. Ter-Petrosyan, The Crusadors and Armenians, vol. 1, Yerevan, Print Info.
- Rudt-Collenberg, W. H. (1963).** *The Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans, The Structure of the Armeno-Cilician dynasties*, Paris, Klincksieck, First edition.
- Samvel Anetsi et al (2014).** *From Adam to 1776 (in Armenian) with the support of K. Matevosyan*. Yerevan, Nairi Publishers.
- Smbat Sparapet, (1956).** Yearbook (in Armenian). Venice. St Lazaro.
- Short Chronologies of the XIII-XVIII centuries (1956). Vol. II, Yerevan, NAS RA.
- Syuremyan, Artavazd (1945).** The Armenian-Latin relations in the light of Greek-Latin relations (in Armenian). Echmiadzin Journal , N 1-2, pp. 16-23.
- Ter-Petrosyan Levon (2005).** Crusaders and Armenians, Vol. I, The Empire of Levante (in Armenian). Yerevan, Print Info.
- Ter-Petrosyan Levon (2007).** *Crusaders and Armenians (in Armenian)* vol. II, Yerevan, Print Info.
- Rabouni, Vahram (1856).** The History of the Rubenids (in Armenian). Paris, Shahnazariants Publishers.
- Areveltsi, Vardan (1862).** Historical Compilation (in Armenian). Venice, St Lazarus.