

**Werner Seibt**

**Senacherim – Byzantine seals of Armenian royals of the Artsruni Clan and of other Armenians**

The Artsruni family was able to create a more or less independent kingdom in Southern Armenia in the 10th century. But in the early 11th century serious problems arose, beginning with a defeat by a Turkmenian army in January 1017. Dawit', the eldest son of king Senek'erim Yovhannēs, was sent to the Byzantine emperor Basil II to arrange a closer military cooperation with the Empire, but the result was different. Dawit' was persuaded to become a military commander of the Byzantine army, he was honored with the title Patrikios and invested with the title of Strategos of Kappadokia (1018/1019). At the same time he obtained some domains in the region of Sebasteia. On the other hand, he handed over his personal realm, a part of the kingdom of Vaspurakan, to the emperor -surely to the dissatisfaction of king Senek'erim Yovhannēs and the majority of Vaspurakan's aristocracy. As a result they were ready to join secretly the anti-Byzantine alliance of the Georgian king Giorgi. But Giorgi was defeated in 1021 and 1022. During this time Dawit' collaborated with the rebels around Nikephoros Phokas and Nikephoros Xiphias, but at the end he participated in the killing of Phokas. Nevertheless, Vaspurakan became a Byzantine dukate in 1022, many aristocrats were integrated into the Byzantine army, and still were forced to migrate to Cappadocia together with the king and the royal family, apparently in the winter of 1022/1023.

There is some information about the fate of Vaspurakan's royals during the 11th century in the literary sources, especially by the Armenian Matt'ēos Urhayec'i (Matthew of Edessa), as well as on a series of Byzantine seals, especially with the family name Senachereim, starting already in the early 11th century and reaching till the time of Alexios I Komnenos. Not all seals with the surname Senachereim come from the offspring of King Senek'erim Yovhannēs, and some Artsrunis did not use this "family name".