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## **The Dating and Significance of the Orbeli Rebellion: A Reassessment**

The rebellion of the Orbelis – as it has become known – is a pivotal point in the history of 12<sup>th</sup> century Georgia, one that significantly reshaped the entire uppermost echelon of society across the Bagrationid polity. Giorgi III's success in defeating the rebels gave him a brief window of exceptionally high freedom of action as a monarch, one in which he ensured the succession of his daughter Tamar as well as appointing a number of important officials of his choosing to replace defeated rebels. The loss of the Orbeli family in particular from the upper ranks of the Georgian court created space for previously less prominent families to take their place, with the greatest long-term beneficiaries being the Mkhargrdzeli (or, as they are referred to in Armenia, Zakarid) family.

The date of the Orbeli rebellion is largely considered to be a settled matter in scholarship on Georgian history: both the Armenian tradition (Vardan Areweltsi and Stepannos Orbelian) and the Georgian tradition (the Chronicle of Giorgi Lasha and His Time) place it in the year 1177, which is far more corroboration than most dating tends to get for the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, some issues with this dating that may call it into question, which are examined later in this paper.

The detail of the rebellion matters for how we understand it not only as an event in its own right but as an expression of the factions and tensions that underpinned it. Historiographically, Georgian scholars have tended to treat the Orbelis as representative of a class tension of sorts between the interests of the landed nobility and the interests of the Bagrationid monarchy and state. In this view, Georgian monarchs tended to prefer centralising power and control in order to extend their material and military capacity, whereas the nobility preferred to retain a weaker monarchy in order to maximise their own power at its expense, in a zero-sum mechanism. Rebellions are an important point for assessing this interpretation, both because they show the conditions under

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<sup>1</sup> Vardan Arewelts'i, *Compilation of History*, p. 76; Stepannos Orbelian, *History of the State of Sisakan; Met'reveli*, Jones (eds.), *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, p. 202 (Hereafter, KT for brevity).

which elites were prepared to directly challenge reigning monarchs, and because they may reveal factional connections and allegiances that would not have been recorded or seen as worthy of note in more ordinary times.

### **Background to the Rebellion**

To properly examine the significance of the Orbeli rebellion, we should first consider the full course of events as they appear in our various materials. The root of the tensions expressed in the 1170s go back at least to the crisis of the mid-1150s in which, with some variants, the elder son of Demet're I ascended the throne as David V for a period of just a few months before dying unexpectedly. One of David's few known acts as ruler is that he had given the coveted role of amirsp'asalar to Tirkash, a noble whose father had rebelled against Demet're and been executed.<sup>1</sup> Tirkash himself had, after a period serving the Shah-Armen rulers of Khlat and raiding Georgia, been imprisoned.<sup>2</sup> Rumours that David was murdered by the Orbelis who coveted the position of amirsp'asalar survive in some of the Armenian traditions, and certainly other supporters of David V are known to have fled Georgia after his death, indicating that there was a significant factional split.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the circumstances of David's death, his death left not only the role of amirsp'asalar but also his son Demna in the hands of the Orbelis. Whether one sees them noble guardians loyal to his memory (as Stepannos Orbelian portrays them) or cynical murderers maximising their subsequent advantage (as we might expect from Vardan Arewelts'i's text), the Orbelis were clearly some of the most important nobles at Giorgi III's court thereafter. As a Georgio-Armenian family, their significance may partly have been derived from their ability to maintain links to Gregorian Armenian as well as Orthodox Georgian subjects of the Bagrationids, with a seat of power at Lori on the marchlands south of Kartli. It is notable in this regard that the Mkhargrdzeli family, who held a similar range of roles after the 1170s and particularly from the 1190s onwards, similarly had both Georgian and Armenian links. Stepannos Orbelian's portrayal notes the dual Georgian and Armenian naming traditions of the Orbeli family, though he ultimately also provides a semi-legendary origin in which the Orbelis are treated as ultimately being the descendants of Chinese nobles who fled many centuries earlier.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to tell whether long-running tensions formed between the Orbelis and Giorgi III through the 1160s, or whether the crisis was more isolated to the 1170s.

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<sup>1</sup> Vardan Arewelts'i, *Compilation of History*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Mkhitar Gosh, *The Aghuanian Chronicle*, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Stepannos Orbelian, *History of the State of Sisakan*, pp. 193-197.

Our sources tend to hint at tension: the Georgian chronicles have Ivane holding back Giorgi, both literally and metaphorically, in his war against Eldiguz, and Stepannos Orbelian explicitly mentions distrust between the two men.<sup>1</sup> These, however, are vignettes of human interaction, not more concrete maneuverings or actions. All of our material on this period post-dates the 1170s in its writing, and thus tends to see the preceding period in the light of what followed it, with few concrete discussions of events that would definitively show a growing crisis. As such, we cannot reasonably determine whether visions of tension in the chronicle portrayals of the 1160s reflect the contemporary or the post-1170s picture.

This brings us to the 1170s. The conventional reading of the narratives says that the Orbelis, likely hoping to install Demna as a more pliant ruler, rose up in 1177. As mentioned above, Georgian scholars have tended to see this as part of a wider tension between the Georgian state and monarchy on the one hand and the senior nobility on the other. Therefore, the assumption is often given that Demna was a simple figurehead at most, and that the Orbelis sought to effectively impose their own rule upon Georgia.<sup>2</sup> Certainly it is true that the Orbelis themselves have greater prominence in our source material – but given that all of our material is either from the Georgian victors for whom de-emphasising Demna was important, or from Armenian writers for whom the Georgio-Armenian Orbelis were a more interesting topic than a failed Georgian throne claimant, this should be considered unsurprising.

The rebels' initial attempt to capture Giorgi III at a place called Saxate failed: he fled to Tbilisi. Appointing the Kipchak general Kubasar as his new amirsp'asalar, Giorgi managed to wait the plotters and their army out and bring certain rebels, especially the Armenian general Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, over to his side. The balance of power thus tilted, Giorgi was able to counterattack, with his forces besieging Lori and with his allies the Grigolisdzes defeating the rebel eristavi in Kakheti. As Ivane Orbeli failed to secure rapid support from the Eldiguzids, eventually Demna was scared into surrendering himself personally by sneaking out of the castle. The Orbelis surrendered, and some time shortly thereafter were executed or blinded. There is, however, a major problem with the reading conventionally given for the Orbeli rebellion – namely that the conventional dating is inconsistent with other statements made in our sources. To these we can now turn.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 198; KT, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Met'reveli, *The Golden Age*, p. 124.

## The Dating of the Rebellion

Whilst kartvelologists have almost unanimously endorsed the 1177 dating of the rebellion, there has been some discussion on the issues around it previously.<sup>1</sup> The first particular chronological issue is around Liparit' Orbeli's flight to Persia. Stepannos Orbelian and the unnamed Georgian chronicler of the History and Eulogy of Monarchs both have Liparit' fleeing to Persia during the Orbeli rebellion, and specifically to the court of Atabeg Eldiguz, one of the most powerful regional potentates near to Georgia in Giorgi's reign.<sup>2</sup> We know, however, that Eldiguz was dead by 1177. The Islamic sources make this very clear: the typically accepted year of his death among scholars of the Seljuks, as used recently by Bařan and attested by Persian and Arabic chronicles, is 1175.<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Athir puts Eldiguz' death even earlier, in 1173.<sup>4</sup> This problem has been visited before by scholars, in particular by Minorsky, whose proposal was simply that Liparit' must have in fact fled much earlier in the 1170s.<sup>5</sup>

This, however, cannot pass with as little comment as it is given in conventional treatments. The implication of this assessment is that there was almost half a decade between the eristavi of Kartli – the governor of the central province in Georgia, the brother of the amirsp'asalar, and thus one of the most senior figures in the realm – fleeing to the court of Giorgi's greatest regional rival, and the rebellion led by his brother. This implies a scenario in which the middle of the 1170s was dominated by a cold war situation where the rift between the Orbelis and Giorgi was so obvious that one of the most senior officials in the realm had been forced into exile, but neither side was willing to force the issue. We get no sense of this period existing in any of our chronicle materials: both the Georgian and Orbelian sources quite clearly discuss Liparit' fleeing as if it was part of the general course of events of the war, possibly after the conflict had turned against the Orbelian side.

The second chronological issue, and this is one that Minorsky does not consider, is the age of Demna. The prince, handed over to the Orbelis upon his father's death, must therefore have been born by 1155 and was probably born in 1154 or 1155 given Stepannos Orbelian's presentation of him as a babe in arms at the time. By 1177, then, we should expect him to have been around 22 years of age. Stepannos Orbelian's discussion of the causes of the rebellion, though, very explicitly presents Demna reaching

<sup>1</sup> ჯავახიშვილი, *თხზულებანი თორმეტ ცომად*, Vol. II, p. 329; Lordkipanidze, *Georgia in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, pp. 132-133; Rayfield, *Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia*, pp. 103-105.

<sup>2</sup> Stepannos Orbelian, *History of the State of Sisakan*, p. 199; KT, p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> Bařan, *The Great Seljuqs*, p. 139; *The History of the Seljuq State (Akhbār al-dawla al-saljūqiyya)*, pp. 111-112; *The History of the Seljuq Turks from The Jāmi' ai-Tawārikh*, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period*, p. 211.

<sup>5</sup> Minorsky, *Caucasica II*, pp. 875-877.

his majority as being a primary cause of the rebellion breaking out at this point.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-two is far older than seems to have generally been treated as the age of majority in this period: for example, Giorgi Lasha, born in 1191, is generally thought to have been co-crowned in 1207 or 1210, thus aged 16 or 19. On the other hand, a date three or four years earlier than 1177 would have Demna's rebellion at around the age of eighteen which might be a more plausible time.

This is not the only explanation that has been raised for the timing of the rebellion: the contemporary sources note, though do not explicitly cite as a reason, the fact of Ivane Orbeli being passed over as a potential ruler for Ani after its capture in the early 1170s (the second time that the city had been captured by the Georgians in Giorgi's reign). This, too, however, occurred decidedly before 1177 according to our material, in the first half of the decade, so it cannot have been an immediate trigger for an 1177 rebellion.

An alternative chronology that fits with our statements in the sources can be outlined. Ivane cannot have rebelled before Giorgi's second capture of Ani, as just noted: this was in 1174 according to Vardan Arewelts'i. If the chronicles are correct in presenting Liparit's flight to Eldiguz as being coterminous with the rebellion, then the rebellion cannot have happened after Eldiguz' death in 1175. This would suggest a window of 1173-5, and most likely 1174, as being the year of the rebellion. This, in turn, fits far better with our other piece of difficult evidence, around the age of Demna: if he was born in around 1155, then 1173 would have been the year he turned eighteen, a much more plausible coming-of-age trigger that might have forced the issue of his potential rights and inheritance to the forefront.

The largest problem faced by this alternative chronology is the obvious one of, this being the case, where the widely agreed upon date of 1177 fits into the picture. It is difficult to tell how independent our reporting of this date is between sources, and this would be a useful piece of analysis for a future scholar: certainly it is quite possible that Stepannos Orbelian had access to both the Georgian Chronicles and Vardan Arewelts'i's text when writing his own later account, so we should not assume that these dates are a simple matter of independent sources corroborating one another. The core problem of where 1177 fits into the mixture, however, is a genuine issue for a re-dating of the rebellion: the most plausible explanation to fit the thesis comes from Vardan Arewelts'i's text, which places its 1177 dating after discussing not only the rebellion but also the purge and execution of the Orbelis.<sup>2</sup> It may, therefore, be the case that if the main body of the rebellion did not happen in 1177 but instead in 1173-4, but the dating

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<sup>1</sup> Stepannos Orbelian, *History of the State of Sisakan*, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> Vardan Arewelts'i, *Compilation of History*, p. 76.

of 1177, rather than being any sort of error, correctly identifies the point at which the defeated and imprisoned Orbelis were executed.

Georgian monarchs did not consistently execute their opponents, and there is no need to assume that the executions happened immediately after the rebellion: for example, Demet're only imprisoned Ivan Abuletisdze's son Tirkash for his raids against Georgia, as we noted earlier.<sup>1</sup> It is also not clear that his execution of Tirkash's father came immediately after the plot against him in circa 1130: the Chronicle of Giorgi Lasha dates the execution to the twentieth year of Demet're's reign, which would be 1145, fifteen years after the attempted rebellion.<sup>2</sup> Tamar is explicitly noted for her forgiveness to enemies, and certainly exiled or forgave rebel elites more often than she had people maimed or executed, but we should not necessarily expect that the converse norm was one of complete purging, and forcing opponents into exile as a routine matter was not an absolute innovation on Tamar's part.<sup>3</sup> This gives some potential credence to the idea that there may have been a time delay between the rebellions and the execution of the key rebels. The trigger for Giorgi to undertake such a purge may have been his strategy to ensure that the route to the throne was clear for Tamar, whose coming of age and co-coronation in the later part of the decade could then go ahead with the faction that had supported Demna permanently silenced.

There are reasonable objections to be made to the above alternative chronology: it is a theory rather than a certainty, as the attested 1177 date in multiple sources still has a strong *prima facie* case. This alternative reading does, however, resolve the outstanding issues of Demna's age at the time of the rebellion, and the chronicles' presentation of Liparit's flight to Eldiguz being during the rebellion itself: additionally, it provides a possible alternative origin for the 1177 date and suggests how it may relate to an 1173-1174 date for the rebellion conflict itself. There are a number of consequences both of this dating discussion and of the rebellion's wider impact which we should now consider.

### **Outcomes and Implications**

After the Orbeli rebellion, a number of important shifts happened in the elite social-political structure of Georgia, all of which were made possible by the rebellion. Firstly, a number of new appointments were made, some of which represented the long-term elevation of families to the uppermost echelons of Georgian political society (the Mkhari-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> KT, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> KT, pp. 262-263.

grdzeli clan and the Grigolisdzes of Hereti in particular). As noted above, the Mkhargrdzelis formed something of an analogue to the Orbelis, as a fellow Armeno-Georgian noble family. The Grigolisdzes, who became eristavis of Hereti and replaced the K'olonk'elisdze family, seem likely to have been local Heretian aznauris. Other appointments included Kubasar's term as amirsp'asalar, a post in which he served until early in Tamar's sole reign.

The alignment between the ethnic or regional identities of these people and the roles they were appointed to is notable and needs explanation. Selection of 'weaker' external groups who are consequently more reliant on monarchs for their position has been theorised, but is hard to fully corroborate: given the reputation of the Kipchaks under David IV as likely to rebel, making one of their number the amirsp'asalar is unlikely to have been seen as a way to get a dependent, low-risk subordinate.<sup>1</sup> If Giorgi III was keen to reduce the power of elites, too, it would have made sense to push hard for Hereti not to go to a family with the deep roots in the area that the Grigolisdzes possessed. This pattern of appointments, in short, makes little sense if interpreted through the lens of a Georgian state keen to maximise its own power at the expense of that of the senior nobility.

What best links all of these cases, instead, is an issue of connectivity. We know that for some formal functions, such as raising troops, and likely more so for informal control, Georgian monarchs relied upon a distributed system in which they called upon their senior nobility who in turn called upon local notables, nobles, and generals.<sup>2</sup> It was, therefore, likely a necessity for these functions that. The need to have a highly promoted family with Armenian roots and links may thus have been a necessity given the importance of Armenian lands and peoples in Bagrationid territories – and eristavial families needed an effective set of local connections to fulfil their necessary functions in the Georgian hierarchy.

After this issue of appointments, the second and perhaps greater key outcome was at the royal level: the rebellion allowed Giorgi to effectively (and brutally) remove Demna from the potential line of succession, clearing the way for Tamar to be the obvious heir apparent.

Here, though, we must return to the chronology: for this is why it is not simply a trivial question of historical timings. If we take the conventional view – that the rebellion was in 1177 and Liparit's flight far earlier – then a number of conclusions should follow. It implies that Giorgi's plans for Tamar's accession were the most likely trigger point for the rebellion, as argued by Nikolaishvili.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, Ivane Orbeli's failure

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<sup>1</sup> KT, pp. 189-190.

<sup>2</sup> KT, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> Nikolaishvili, *Byzantium and the Georgian World c. 900-1210*, pp. 175-176.

to become ruler of Ani and Demna's own coming of age could not have been as significantly important if three to four years were allowed to elapse between these events and the rebellion itself. This would imply that concerns strictly related to the prospect of Tamar's succession – most obviously, her femininity – are more likely to have been important concerns for the rebels.

Conversely, the 1174 dating reverses many of these assumptions. It lets us follow Stepannos Orbelian's testimony in assuming that Demna's coming of age, not that of Tamar, was the primary trigger for rebellion, and it brings Ivane's failure at Ani far closer to the date of the rebellion, making those features potentially more key to our explanation. Centring Demna more as a trigger point may suggest that elite concerns were more focused on the relative initial strength of his claim at the time of his majority, rather than just seizing on his cause some years later when the prospect of Tamar as ruler came more sharply into focus. All Bagrationids in the twelfth century played heavily on dynastic connection for legitimacy, hence the practice of co-coronation and the heavy use of familial linkages in art containing monarchs.<sup>1</sup> Demna's claim may in fact have been the opposite of the conventional reading of puppet rulership – an attempt to ensure a ruler with a clearer dynastic legitimacy than Giorgi, and thereby best ensure the continued stability of a system in which the Orbelis were well established players.

Rather than seeing Demna as necessarily a simple puppet figure, as many scholars have done, these strands together could suggest perhaps a more complex relationship between Demna and the Orbelis than has often been hypothesised. Rather than trying to be simple powers behind the throne or generally weaken the monarchy, the Orbelis may have been most keen to clear their specific "lane" and gain a freer hand in operations in Armenia, much as the Mkhargrdzelis later succeeded in doing. An 1174 date increases the chance that the Orbelis' failures or frustrations in Ani may have played a significant role. Demna's cause, too, might have been seen as having more advantages simply from a stability perspective. There was no especially good reason for anyone to assume that Demna would in the long term be a weaker ruler than Giorgi and then Tamar, and if anything the opposite assumption might have been made – he had a clearly stronger patrilineal claim to the throne and, as a man, could have maintained a more traditional style of military leadership.

The outcome of the rebellion does not, in short, neatly fit with the conventional reading where the Orbelis were representative of a general tendency towards conflict between the monarchy and powerful nobility. Instead of generic ideas of noble-royal power struggle, we should consider the individual 'lanes' or loci of power around which power contests might occur. Many aspects of power that shaped such contests

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<sup>1</sup> KT, p. 201; Eastmond, *Royal Renewal in Georgia: The Case of Queen Tamar*, pp. 289-291.



were probably inarticulate in nature, involving personal connectivity or regional links or aspects of personal identity, rather than being strictly articulated functions of state office-holding.

## Conclusions

The primary conclusion from the analysis presented here is that the dating of 1177 given in the chronicle materials for the Orbeli rebellion should, contrary to most current readings, not be treated as an unassailable matter of historical fact. If we reimagine our chronicle evidence without the presence of this particular date, historians would very likely conclude from the contextual evidence that the rebellion took place in 1174. Whilst the 1177 date is well attested and we cannot come to a final conclusion on this matter, the 1174 reading should still be taken seriously as a separate option. The multiple testimonies of Liparit's flight taking place during the rebellion, and Stepannos Orbelian's suggestion of Demna's coming of age as the rebellion's trigger point, should not be ignored or dismissed out of hand. Furthermore, there are alternative possibilities for the introduction and memorialisation of the 1177 date that do not necessarily preclude the majority of the rebellion's military action having occurred earlier in the decade.

This reinterpretation changes a number of variables in how we should see the matter of succession and what we might consider the most important factors in motivating elites to join or oppose it. The suggestion made by Stepannos Orbelian that it was Demna's majority that triggered the rebellion makes more sense if the rebellion was earlier in the 1170s, and may suggest a preference for Demna's greater legitimacy as a stabilising option being more important, rather than the rebellion being essentially reactive to Giorgi III proposing to crown his daughter.

The wider prosopographical context of the rebellion, too, should let us reconsider some of its impacts on the power structures of Georgia. Contrary to conventional assessments that have focused on the concept of an ongoing power struggle between elites and the monarchy, the turnover of leaders around the Orbeli rebellion does not suggest that it was primarily focused on installing pliant loyalists who would be more easily controlled by Giorgi III: instead, the key pattern is one of connections to particular local areas, elite constituencies or ethnic groups, which suggests the importance of such connectivity to the workings of the Bagrationid polity.

In the broad sweep of High Medieval Georgian history, the Orbeli rebellion is one of the best recorded points of conflict within the upper echelons of Caucasus society. Whilst the rebellion only represents a single data point, by looking at both the detail

of the events and the nature of the participants – as regards their gender, dynastic backgrounds, and their social and regional links – we can get a sense of the high importance of those elements and how they interacted with articulated office-holding, which can in turn provide an insight into alternative ways of looking at the power balances within Georgian elites in this period and thereby create openings for further reassessments of this critical period of Georgia’s history.

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ჯეიმს ბეილი

## ახალი თვალსაზრისი ორბელთა აჯანყების დათარიღების და მნიშვნელობის შესახებ

რეზიუმე

სტატიაში ახლებურად არის შეფასებული მატიანეში დაცული ცნობა XII საუკუნის ბოლოს მომხდარი ორბელების აჯანყების თარიღისა და მნიშვნელობის შესახებ, როდესაც ორბელების ცნობილი გვარი წარუმატებლად ცდილობდა დაეცვა საკუთარ ბიძასთან, გიორგი III-თან დაპირისპირებული უფლისწული დემნას პრეტენზიები საქართველოს ტახტზე. მატიანეებში აჯანყების თარიღად ჩვეულებრივ 1177 წელია აღიარებული, მაგრამ ეს არ შეესაბამება ქართულ და სომხურ წყაროებში დამოწმებულ ზოგიერთ ცნობას, მათ შორის აჯანყების მონაწილეთა ასაკისა და გარდაცვალების დროის შესახებ. ამ ცნობების განხილვის საფუძველზე, აჯანყების დასაშვებ ალტერნატიულ სავარაუდო თარიღად სტატიაში შემოთავაზებულია 1174 წელი.

ნაშრომში ასევე საუბარია, თუ რა მნიშვნელობა აქვს დათარიღებას აჯანყებისა და მისი მიზეზების გაგებისთვის. თარიღით განისაზღვრება, რომ ეს აჯანყება ან სავარაუდოდ დაკავშირებული იყო დემნას სრულწლოვანებასთან, ან ის იყო რეაქცია გიორგი III-ის სურვილზე, როდესაც ის თამარის მემკვიდრედ აღიარებას აპირებდა. აჯანყებასთან მიმართებაში ქართველ დიდებულთა შეხედულებებისა და დაჯგუფებათა დამოკიდებულების ინტერპრეტაცია შესაძლებელია ნაწილობრივ მოხერხდეს აჯანყებულთა ბრძოლის

მიზეზთა ახსნის საფუძველზე. თუ დემნა იყო აჯანყების მნიშვნელოვანი მიზეზი, მაშინ მეტად სავარაუდოა, რომ აჯანყებას მემკვიდრეობის მამის ხაზით მომდინარეობის იდეოლოგიამ შეუწყო ხელი; ამაზე პირდაპირ შეიძლება მიუთითებდეს ის ფაქტი, რომ ორბელები 1170-იანი წლების დასაწყისში ვერ გახდნენ ანის მმართველები. პირიქით, თუ აჯანყება თამარის მემკვიდრედ გამოცხადებისთვის საფრთხეს წარმოადგენდა — ამ შემთხვევაში ალბათ უფრო მეტად უნდა ვივარაუდოთ აჯანყებისთვის უკვე დამკვიდრებული და გვიანი თარიღი — მაშინ, მემამბოხეების შეხედულებების ჩამოყალიბებაში მნიშვნელოვანი როლი თამარის სქესს უნდა ეთამაშა.

როგორც XII საუკუნის ტრანსკავკასიის ელიტარული საზოგადოების ერთ-ერთი ყველაზე თვალსაჩინო და კარგად დოკუმენტირებული გარდატეხა, ორბელთა აჯანყება გადამწყვეტია ჩვენთვის იმ სოციალური კავშირებისა და იდეოლოგიების გასაგებად, რომლებიც საფუძველად ედო ბაგრატიონთა პოლიტიკას. ზოგადად, ითვლება, რომ აჯანყების შედეგად გიორგი III-ის მეფობის ბოლო პერიოდი გამოირჩევა მის მიერ თანამდებობებზე დანიშნული უაღრესად ერთგული პირების სიმრავლით. ამ სტატიაში მოცემული ანალიზი წარმოადგენს ალტერნატიულ გაგებას, რომელშიც მოვლენების ახსნისას უპირატესობა ენიჭება დანიშნულ პირთა სოციალური კავშირების მნიშვნელობას. მოვლენების თარიღების ზემოხსენებულ დეტალურ ანალიზთან და შედეგად მიღებულ აჯანყების სავარაუდო მიზეზებთან დაკავშირებით, შეგვიძლია გამოვთქვათ ახალი ვარაუდი ორბელების აჯანყების და მის საფუძველში არსებული სოციალური კავშირების შესახებ. ამას ემყარებოდა საქართველოში დავა ხელისუფლებისათვის XII საუკუნის ბოლოს.