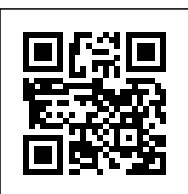


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In 654 AD when Byzantian Emperor Constans II threatened to pillage Armenia, Catholicos Nerses III and Sparabed Mushegh Mamigonian begged him not to. Ignoring the Armenian pleas, the emperor led 20,000 soldiers to Dvin and placed Maurianos as governor of Armenia. In all the churches of Dvin, the Chalcedonian Christology (Dyophysitism), which Armenians had rejected for two centuries, was preached and mass was celebrated. The catholicos, bishops and nakharars received Holy Communion with the emperor. After the departure of the emperor, Theodore Rshtuni, former chief "nakharar," made an alliance with the new caliph in Damascus. With Arab help he drove the Byzantines out of Armenia. The caliph made Rshtuni ruler of Armenia.

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