

Armenia through the Lens of Time

Multidisciplinary Studies
in Honour of Theo Maarten van Lint

Edited by FEDERICO ALPI, ROBIN MEYER,
IRENE TINTI, AND DAVID ZAKARIAN

With the collaboration of EMILIO BONFIGLIO



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Armenia through the Lens of Time

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Note to the Reader

Owing to the nature of this volume, the editors have implemented some general rules concerning the use of non-Latin scripts.

The Armenian script has been used throughout, with the following exceptions:

- 1) Armenian names, titles, and highly relevant or frequent technical terms are transliterated according to the system developed by Hübschmann, Meillet, and Benveniste (HMB) in the form employed by the *Revue des Études Arméniennes*. A summary of this system is given below.
- 2) Bibliographic entries are always transliterated.
- 3) In the Linguistic articles (de Lamberterie, Meyer), owing to the prevalent convention in the discipline, both the Armenian script and the transliteration are used.
- 4) In Calzolari's article, the transliteration system created by the Library of Congress for Western Armenian (<https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/armenian.pdf>) is used to render more accurately the pronunciation of Western Armenian names and words. In these cases, the HMB transliteration is always given at the first occurrence of each item. However, in order to avoid cumbersome double transliterations, the Armenian script has been preferred whenever possible.
- 5) Whenever the choice of transliteration and/or original script is particularly relevant to the point being made by the author, an exception to the general criteria has been granted.

Ա ա	a	Շ ծ	c	Ջ ղ	ǰ
Բ բ	b	Կ կ	k	Ռ ռ	ř
Գ գ	g	Հ հ	h	Ս ս	s
Դ դ	d	Ջ ձ	j	Վ վ	v
Ե ե	e	Ղ ղ	ł	Տ տ	t
Զ զ	z	Ճ ճ	č	Ր ը	r
Է է	ē	Մ մ	m	Յ ջ	c'
Ը ը	ə	Յ յ	y	Խ խ	w
Թ թ	t'	Ն ն	n	Փ փ	p'
Ժ ժ	ž	Շ շ	š	Ք կ	k'
Ի ի	i	Ռ ռ	o	Օ օ	ō
Լ լ	l	Չ չ	č'	Ֆ ֆ	f
Խ խ	x	Պ պ	p	Ռ ռ	u

Other scripts (Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, etc.) are transliterated according to the systems that are most widely accepted by the relevant scholarly communities. The distribution of Latin vs original script follows the same guidelines outlined above.

A final note on manuscripts: the preferred manner of citation has been left to each individual author. For Armenian manuscripts, however, the acronyms developed by B. Coulie (see e.g. *Armenian Manuscripts. Catalogues, Collections, Libraries*, 2nd revised edition, Turnhout: Brepols, 2020) and recommended by the *Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes* (AIEA) are always given.

Academic Biography and Bibliography: Theo Maarten van Lint

A Tetragonal Scholar

Emilio Bonfiglio

The study of ‘things Armenian’, of ‘Armenia’, of ‘the Armenians’ is no easy business. When asked by the public at large, every Armenologist is often compelled to explain where Armenia is, who the Armenians are, what is at stake when dealing with Armenian history, and, not infrequently, even why somebody would choose to devote her or his life to Armenian Studies. This nearly existential, explanatory exercise takes the pattern of a process, explaining again and again what the field of Armenian Studies entails, what one does, and, ultimately, why Armenia and the Armenians matter at all. However, if one wanted to answer all these questions by means of an example, one could look at the development of the life and career of one of the most prominent scholars in the field over the past three decades: Theo Maarten van Lint.

Professor van Lint, or better Theo Maarten, as he asks to be called by his colleagues, friends, and collaborators, was my professor for five years during my studies at the University of Oxford, acting as my supervisor and *co-Doktorvater* for my MPhil and DPhil at the Oriental Institute. De facto, however, for over fifteen years Theo has been more than that, becoming an advisor, a mentor, a fatherly figure, a friend, a lifelong teacher. For these and many other reasons, readers will not be surprised at my delight when the editors approached me and asked me to compile Theo’s bibliography and write a short academic biography for this volume. It has been with both humility and gratitude that I accepted this task, a contribution that I now offer as a small tribute to the life and work of a scholar, teacher, and friend that has had so great an impact on mine and the lives and work of many colleagues.

In the three sections that follow below, I will expand on some aspects of Theo’s early training and career, the main scholarly activities undertaken as Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at the University of Oxford, and a selection of his main scientific trajectories and publications over the past three decades.

1 Early Life

Theo Maarten van Lint was born in Delft, the Netherlands, on 15 June 1957, where he was raised together with Arend Jan and Mario, his two younger brothers, within a close and warm family. Although strictly speaking 'Lint' is the toponym of a municipality located in Belgium, in the province of Antwerp, both Theo's parents, Henk and Coby, were originally from the area around Rotterdam (specifically from Pernis). To their three children, Henk and Coby were very generous and loving parents. Coby, in particular, was a very positive figure, a mother always in good spirits and trying to make the best of every situation. Although a family of believing protestants, Theo's parents were not too strict with regard to religion. For them, the Christian faith was a lived experience rather than an arid set of rules to follow. Beyond the immediate family, Maarten and Cor, who were Theo's maternal grandparents, played a significant role and, beyond their love for practical jokes, did act as a true anchor for the family. As the setting for the inner family nest, the mediaeval city of Delft acted as a nurturing space too. As the third city in the Netherlands to be granted a charter in 1246, the beautiful royal city of Delft, adorned by bridges and canals, aligned with renaissance brick edifices, and displaying a myriad of transparent stained windows that so magically reflect the grey light of Holland, was to be Theo's larger *Heimat* for about two decades. Even much later in life, having already resided in Oxford for years, Theo would still reminisce of the fog and the canals of Delft, of his strolls through the frosty Sunday mornings of a Dutch winter to buy viennoiseries for his family's breakfast.

Before moving to Leiden for university, Theo lived in Delft in two different houses. Both had a garden, the first with a large walnut tree, the other with a pear tree that once, in a storm, came down through the kitchen of the van Lint family with such a force that could only match the energy of Theo's earliest years. Admittedly, as a child Theo was physically very strong and, like many intelligent children, very mischievous too. He would tear plants from their pots, explore the family garden, and rarely stay put. Once it happened that Theo was left alone in the walled garden of the first house, the one with the walnut tree, and although he was only three years old (so I am told), he managed to move a garbage can (or possibly some garden waste) under the fire ladder of the house, which was hanging a metre and a half from the ground. Having succeeded in holding the first step of the ladder, Theo then climbed up to the balcony of his neighbours. When Theo's mother went out to check on her son, seeing Theo nowhere she first panicked until the neighbours' shouts attracted her attention and she could see her Theo sitting on their balcony, eating a fish.

Theo's limitless energy could find rest only when he learnt how to read, which happened some time between the ages of three and four. Once Theo discovered books, he metamorphosed, and a new world opened up to him. Contrary to his earliest years, Theo then turned into an extremely quiet child, channelling his energy into a medium that would open up the family's garden and tear down its walls. Sitting *in angulo cum libro* Theo found peace and happiness, even though that did not come entirely from nothing: as it happens, Theo's family home was full of books, his father Henk read very fast, and his mother Coby enjoyed reading too. Reading and books fuelled a lust for knowledge that in time would bring Theo to dream of worlds that were further and further away from his native Delft. While at *gymnasium*, Theo's teacher of Latin and Greek, Lode Saldiën, a very special man originally from Belgium, profoundly influenced and fostered his pupils' interest for literature. Stimulated by this teacher, Theo soon started developing an unusual taste for all kinds of foreign literatures and scripts. Together with a couple of other students, they would meet up every week to read and discuss masterpieces of world literature, an occupation that gradually increased Theo's fascination for Russian writers such as Dostoevsky, Gogol, and Tolstoy. The discovery of the greatest Russian novelists pushed Theo to learn Russian, under the guidance of Prof. Karel van het Reve, the professor of Slavic Literature at the University of Leiden, because he believed that Russian literature can only be truly appreciated in Russian. While learning Russian for his pleasure and his studies, Theo's skills would soon prove handy also in less academic environments as, for instance, on the occasion of the Soviet volleyball team's visit to the Netherlands, for whom he acted as translator. The recollection of this anecdote gives me a chance to mention yet another passion of Theo's in his early years: his fondness for volleyball. Discovered by a brilliant trainer, Theo was coached to become a talented volleyball player leading to his selection to play for the Netherlands national youth team.

Intellectual curiosity, physical strength, and natural talent were the three key ingredients of Theo's success during his years at the University of Leiden (and are still among his most distinctive traits). There, at the oldest Dutch university, Theo obtained first an MA in Slavic Languages and Literature (1984) and a second MA in Indo-European Comparative Linguistics (1988), and later a PhD in Armenian Studies (1996), for which he received supervision from Jos Weitenberg, the first professor of Armenian Studies in the Netherlands, Theo's mentor and friend of a lifetime. During his years in Leiden, Theo spent his time studying, researching, reading, playing volleyball, as well as conversing and corresponding with friends and colleagues in Spanish, Czech, Italian, French, Armenian ..., translating poetry from Russian and Estonian, travelling through Europe and beyond, and learning about life in general.

It is in this period of his life that Theo had his first encounter with Armenian culture. While in Leningrad for several months as a student of Russian, Theo travelled south to the Caucasus thanks to a trip organised for foreign students. This trip involved spending three days in Georgia, three in Armenia, and three in Azerbaijan. In Armenia, Theo met with some friends of a Jewish friend of his from Leningrad and, enamoured with Russian poetry, asked whether they knew and liked Russian poetry too. When they answered “yes, but we have our own!”, Theo found no rest until he learned the language and had access to its literature.¹

Theo spent his first years as a postdoctoral researcher at the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, between 1996 and 1999, and later at the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster, between 1999 and 2001. Just six years after the completion of his doctorate, however, Theo’s life would change forever when he was appointed Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at the University of Oxford.²

2 Called to Oxford

Theo joined the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Oxford in 2002, taking up the position of Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies as the third in a line of eminent predecessors. Established in 1965, the Oxford Chair of Armenian Studies was, and still is, the only full professorship dedicated to the study of Armenian culture in the whole of the United Kingdom, as well as one of the most prominent and leading centres of Armenological research worldwide.

The first scholar to hold the Calouste Gulbenkian Chair of Armenian Studies was Prof. Charles James Frank Dowsett (1924–1998), who held the chair between 1965 and 1991. Dowsett produced several ground-breaking studies, especially on the 18th-c. Armenian poet Sayat'-Nova and in the field of mediaeval Armenian historiography. Upon Dowsett’s retirement in 1992, Robert William Thomson (1934–2018) was then appointed by the Faculty of Oriental Studies. During his tenure, Thomson would steer the chair of Armenian studies through to the turn of the millennium, until 2001. Thomson had arrived in

1 Theo spent two semesters in Leningrad in 1983. Later, he spent the whole 1989/1990 academic year at the University of Yerevan.

2 I am thankful to Arend Jan van Lint and Anna Sirinian for our vivid chats and precious recollections of certain details of Theo’s earliest years, and especially to Natalie Quinn who gave helpful feedback on these lines.

Oxford from Harvard University, where he had been the first Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies from 1969 to 1992. During his more than fifty years of scholarly activity, Thomson inaugurated a period of remarkable productivity in various areas of Armenian studies, especially in ancient historiography and literature.

The appointment of Theo Maarten van Lint at Oxford felt almost like filling a gap between the research interests of Charles Dowsett and those of Robert Thomson. With a focus on mediaeval literature and especially poetry, Theo would recalibrate the scholarly strength of the Oriental Institute by accommodating new areas of specialisation. Thanks to many fruitful collaborations with colleagues in Syriac, Persian, Arabic, and Byzantine Studies, Theo brought new blood to the study of things Armenian at Oxford, attracting and supervising students that wrote dissertations on a great variety of subjects: Armenian linguistics, gender studies, Patristics, mediaeval historiography, poetry, contemporary Armenian literature, art history, and so forth. Many of Theo's former master and doctoral students now hold professorships and other academic appointments around the globe.³ As professor of Armenian Studies at Oxford, Theo has been particularly successful in integrating the place of Armenian and the Armenian culture also in aligned fields by means of mentorship and supervision. A pertinent example is the 2016 trip to Armenia that was organised by the students of the programme of Byzantine Studies and for whose success Theo's input proved absolutely essential. In addition to his ties with colleagues and other institutions within the University of Oxford, Theo has also benefited from a solid scholarly network that was built over the past decades thanks to projects,⁴ memberships, and affiliations with a number of learned institutions. Among the latter are to be mentioned at least the *Accademia Ambrosiana* and the *Associazione Padus-Araxes* in Italy, the *Deutsch-Armenische Gesellschaft*, the Oxford University Armenian Society, the Armenian Institute in London, the Society of Armenian Studies at Fresno University, and, since 1986, the *Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes* (AIEA).

Within the AIEA, Theo's membership has also involved being a member of the steering committee and holding the office of secretary for several years, as well as the organisation of two major events. The first is the international

3 For details, see the list of contributors to this volume.

4 On a personal note, I would like to mention at least the *Armenia & Byzantium Workshop* initiated in Vienna by myself and Claudia Rapp and now running in partnership with the University of Oxford under the co-organisation of Theo Maarten van Lint and David Zakarian. For this project, van Lint and Zakarian organised the workshop *Armenia & Byzantium. Perspectives on Cultural and Political Relations*, which took place in Oxford on 22–23 March 2019.

workshop on Armenian literature that took place at Pembroke College in 2009. Further to that event and under the auspices of the AIEA, Theo is now preparing a volume in the series *Handbooks of Oriental Studies* (Brill, Leiden) dedicated to Armenian Literature.⁵ The other key event was the organisation of the 14th General Conference of the AIEA. Taking place in the Humanities Buildings, the Radcliffe Observatory, and Pembroke College on 10–12 August 2017, this congress encompassed four keynote lectures and fifteen parallel sessions, bringing together scholars from the four corners of the world.

Next to his appointment at the Oriental Institute, van Lint has also been a Professorial Fellow and member of the governing body at Pembroke College since 2002, where he has also held a number of internal positions such as, for instance, those of ‘Silver Fellow’ and ‘Steward’ of the Senior Common Room. Founded in 1624, Pembroke College has also been the theatre of many activities organised by Theo over the past twenty years. Among the highlights, the exhibition of paintings of the Armeno-Dutch artist Krikor Momdjian, that took place in 2016, between October 13 and November 25, cannot go unmentioned. This exhibition was prepared and accompanied by translation workshops of a selection of poems written by Momdjian which resulted in the publication of two volumes edited by van Lint and a major exhibition of paintings hosted in the Art Gallery of Pembroke College.⁶ The world of Armenian visual arts, however, is not the only one that Theo brought up to Pembroke: thanks to close collaborations between the chair of Armenian Studies and the Oxford University Armenian Society, for years he has made the Chapel of Pembroke College the only place within the University of Oxford where the Armenian Liturgy (animated by the Oxford Armenian choir) would be celebrated and choral and instrumental concerts featuring Armenian music and musicians regularly take place.

Moving on to Theo’s activities in other Oxonian institutions, in 2015 the Bodleian Library hosted one of the major events on Armenian culture in the whole history of the University of Oxford. Together with Robin Meyer, Theo co-curated and co-organised the exhibition *Armenia: Masterpieces from an Enduring Culture*. For this major event, thanks to the combined efforts of the staff of the Bodleian Library and those of the many foreign institutions and private collectors that collaborated for the success of this event, Theo brought

5 Co-edited with myself, this important research tool will cover the entire span of Armenian literature, from Late Antiquity up to the twenty-first century.

6 van Lint, T.M. [editor and co-translator of 43 poems into English of], Momdjian, K., *Wanderings. Pandxtut’ean mēj. In de Diaspora. Poems Banastelcut’iwnner Gedichten*, Alphen aan den Rijn: Momdjian Stichting, 2016.

to public attention the treasures of the Armenian manuscript collections of the University of Oxford, as well as manuscripts, printed books, archival photographs and objects from around the world that document the two and a half millennia of virtually uninterrupted Armenian culture.⁷ Fittingly coinciding also with the reopening of the newly renovated Weston Library, this exhibition was planned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Calouste Gulbenkian Chair of Armenian Studies at the University of Oxford, but also to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. For both occasions, Theo organised a number of events and lectures that took place both at the Bodleian Library and at the Pichette Auditorium at Pembroke College. More recently, together with Meryem Kalaycı, Theo has founded the Oxford Network for Armenian Genocide Research.

3 Studying the Humanities

Theo's curiosity, scholarly interests, and wide-ranging competences, to which I referred in the preceding paragraphs, are reflected in his multifaceted output. While the bibliography appended to these pages offers a list as comprehensive as possible of his main publications, the aim of this section is to direct the readers' attention to three main themes of Theo's production that run sometimes in parallel, but more often overlap: mediaeval Armenian literature (3.1.), Armenian material culture (3.2.), and Armenian Studies at large (3.3.). Given that it is impossible to do justice to every item in the bibliography, this section is designed to equip present and future Armenologists with an overview of the written landscapes painted by Theo over the past decades.

Before sailing into the open sea, two significant aspects of Theo's production deserve to be emphasised. First, plurilingualism, that is the remarkable and (I believe) programmatic determination to publish scholarship in many different languages: Armenian, Italian, German, English, Dutch, French, etc. Second, collaborative work, a key aspect that transpires from the many co-authored and co-edited works that Theo published together with colleagues from Armenian Studies and neighbouring fields. Both tendencies originate in his appreciation of the complexity of the historical data and an understanding of the benefits derived from collaborative work. These principles are guided, on the one hand, by his belief that every language can be rightfully

7 For the catalogue, see van Lint, T.M.—Meyer, R. (eds), *Armenia. Masterpieces from an Enduring Culture*, Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015; and also, van Lint, T.M., "Tracce di una civiltà. L'Armenia alla Bodleian Library", *Alumina* 52 (2016), 28–36.

employed as a vehicular medium of scientific dissemination, and, on the other hand, by the awareness that in dealing with history and the reconstruction of past or contemporary phenomena multiple perspectives ought to be taken into account.

3.1 *Mediaeval Armenian Literature*

Within Theo's scholarly production, almost forty scientific works alone are dedicated to the study of specific authors or topics that pertain to the field of mediaeval Armenian literature. Particularly abundant are works dedicated to mediaeval Armenian poetry and poets and, among the latter, a vast bulk of scholarly production on the writings and life of Kostandin Erzncac'i (1250–1338) stands out prominently. A monk and poet active between the 13th and 14th centuries, Kostandin of Erzncak (modern day Erzincan in Eastern Anatolia) has been among the main *foci* of his scholarly interests since the time of his doctoral studies, when his thesis consisted of a study of Kostandin's text accompanied by an English translation and philological commentary.⁸ Theo's familiarity not only with Kostandin's poetry but also with the mediaeval Armenian culture and society in which he lived and operated is evident from the long list of publications dedicated to various aspects of Kostandin Erzncac'i: his poetics, the reception of his text, as well as the intersection between his literary production and contemporary Persian poetry.⁹

Next to Kostandin Erzncac'i, numerous studies have been dedicated to other significant mediaeval Armenian poets. Among these are to be mentioned at least Theo's detailed studies on the religious poetry of Nersēs Šnorhali (1102–1173), Catholicos of the Armenians from 1166,¹⁰ and on that of Grigor Țlay,

8 van Lint, T.M., *Kostandin of Erzncak. An Armenian Religious Poet of the XIth–XIVth Century. Armenian Text with Translation and Commentary*, PhD thesis, Leiden University, 1996.

9 Among others, see at least van Lint's early "The Poet's Legitimation: the Case of Kostandin Erzncac'i", in Weitenberg, J.J.S. (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Armenian Language and Literature*, Amsterdam—Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1995 (Dutch Studies in Armenian Language and Literature 3), 11–28; "Kostandin Erzncac'u tælærə Poturyani 1905 t'. hratarakut'yamb ew Venetiki 103 t'iv jeřagərə [Kostandin Erzncac'i's Poems in Poturian's 1905 Edition and MS Venice no. 103]", *Patma-banasirakan handes* (1996/1–2), 135–151; and 'Medieval Armenian and Persian Poetry (the Case of Kostandin Erzncac'i)', in Mohammadi, M.M. (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Armenology and Iranology Conference, 10–11 November 2008, Department of Armenian language and literature, University of Isfahan*, Isfahan: University of Isfahan, 2009, 233–248.

10 See, for instance, van Lint's "Seeking Meaning in Catastrophe: Nersēs Šnorhali's *Lament on Edessa*", in Ciggaar, K.—Teule, H. (eds), *East and West in the Crusader States. Context—Contacts—Confrontations II. Acta of the congress held at Hernen Castle in May 1997*, Leuven: Peeters, 1999 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 92), 29–47.

Nersēs' successor and Catholicos from 1173 to 1193.¹¹ His research also includes the exploration of poetry produced in a slightly earlier period, as is the case with the 10th/11th-century poet Vardan Anec'i,¹² as well as incursions in less commonly known poetry of later times, as with the poems of the wandering poet Frik (died c. 1300), who also wrote in non-classical Armenian like Kostandin Erznkac'i.¹³

Next to these authors, for at least a quarter of a century Theo's research and studies have been concerned with the poetic production of what is generally considered the greatest of all Armenian poets, a giant in mediaeval Armenian literature and an author whose significance and importance goes far beyond the boundaries of Armenian literature *tout court*. This is the mystical poet Grigor Narekac'i (c. 950–c. 1903), a prolific writer who spent his life in the monastery of Narek, on the southern shores of Lake Van. Once one of the greatest religious and cultural centres of mediaeval Armenia, one of the brightest of the many Armenian monasteries that for centuries materially and spiritually illuminated the otherwise harsh and arid landscape of eastern Anatolia, Narekavank was forcefully abandoned at the time of the Armenian genocide in 1915, and then razed to the ground in the middle of the 20th century. And yet, as is often the case with Armenian culture, what is destroyed in materiality is made immortal by the word. Annihilated by inhumanity, the name of Narek today remains as a synonym of Grigor Narekac'i's masterpiece, *The Book of Lamentations* (or *The Book of Tragedy*). The rhythmic prose of this long soliloquy addressed by Grigor to God, whose primary themes are the ineffability of man's sin as well as of God, has been the object of countless manuscript copies and printed books. Next to the Bible, the continuous reading of this text has secured the Narek a special place in the heart of all

11 See van Lint, T.M., "The *Poem of Lamentation over the Capture of Jerusalem* Written in 1189 by Grigor Thay, Catholicos of All Armenians", in Stone, M.E., Ervine, R.R., Stone, N. (eds), *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land*, Leuven—Sterling, VA: Peeters, 2002 (Hebrew University Armenian Studies 4), 121–142.

12 See "Vardan Anetsi's Poem on the Divine Chariot and the Four Living Creatures, Tenth-Eleventh Centuries", in Hovannisian, R.G. (ed.), *Armenian Kars and Ani*, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2011, 81–99, and "Geometry and Contemplation: The Architecture of Vardan Anec'i's Vision of the Throne-Chariot. Theosis and the Art of Memory in Armenia", in Bardakjian, K.B.—La Porta, S. (eds), *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition. A Comparative Perspective. Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Robert W. Thomson on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2014, 217–241.

13 See van Lint, T.M., "The Armenian Poet Frik and his verses on Arghun Khan and Bugha", in Hillenbrand, R., Peacock, A.C.S., Abdullaeva, F. (eds), *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran. Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia. Studies in Honour of Charles Melville*, London—New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013, 249–260.

Armenians, prompting many scholars to provide translations into modern languages. Moving in this line, it is no surprise that after years of gestation, Theo would provide a translation of *The Book of Lamentations* into his own native Dutch,¹⁴ a translation that was preceded by decades of meticulous studies and research on the poet and man Grigor and on his poetics.¹⁵

The insight Theo gained through his many studies on the writings and reception of the aforementioned poets has helped him build a solid framework to tackle broader and overarching investigations of mediaeval Armenian poetry and literature in a wider context.¹⁶ The results of this research are illustrated by a plethora of publications focussing on eclectic and yet interconnected topics such as the impact and representation of the Mongol invasions on Armenian poetry, the technical relations between language and metre, words and theology, Biblical symbolism, and the figure and function of mediaeval bards, to mention only a few.¹⁷

Moving from poetry to prose, another towering figure next to Grigor Narekac'i has been central to Theo's scholarly activity: Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni (990–1058). A scholar, poet, and prominent political figure who claimed direct descentance from St Gregory the Illuminator, Grigor served as governor of the

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- 14 The translation project is still ongoing. See the first poems in van Lint, T.M. (ed.), Grigor Narekatsi, *Het Boek der Weeklagging. Gebeden 1 tot en met 15 vertaald en van een inleiding en nawoord voorzien door Theo Maarten van Lint met een voorwoord van Eddy Reefhuis*, Erevan—Amsterdam: Sint Grigor Narekatsi Stichting, 2018.
- 15 See, for instance, at least the early work: van Lint, T.M., "Grigor Narekac'i's *Tat Yarut'ean* (Poem on the Resurrection). The Throne Vision of Ezekiel in Armenian Art and Literature, 1", in Calzolari Bouvier, V., Kaestli, J.-D., Outtier, B. (eds), *Apocryphes arméniens. Transmission—traduction—création—iconographie. Actes du colloque international sur la littérature apocryphe en langue arménienne (Genève, 18–20 septembre 1997)*, Lausanne: Zèbre, 1999 (Publications de l'Institut romand des sciences bibliques 1), 105–127.
- 16 See, for instance, van Lint, T.M., "Medieval Poetic Texts", in Calzolari, V. (ed.), with the collaboration of M.E. Stone, *Armenian Philology in the Modern Era. From Manuscript to Digital Text*, Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2014 (Handbook of Oriental Studies 8.23/1), 377–413, as well as van Lint, T.M., "Mijnadaryan hay ašxarhik sirayin k'narergut'yun. Seferi dereri ew haraberut'yunneri nerkayac'um [Mediaeval Armenian Secular Love Poetry. Presentation of the roles and relations of the sexes]", *Grakanagitakan Handes A–B* (2007), 200–212.
- 17 See van Lint, T.M., "I Mongoli nella poesia armena medievale", *Bazmavep* 168/3–4 (2012), 457–480; van Lint, T.M., "Rhyme, Meter, and Character", in *Adamgirk'. The Adam Book of Arak'el of Siwnik'*, tr. with intr. by M.E. Stone, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 38–40; van Lint, T.M., "The Poet and the Tongue: Some Remarks on Language and Religion in Medieval Armenian Poetry", in Awde, N. (ed.), *Armenian Perspectives. 10th Anniversary Conference of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes, School of Oriental and African Studies*, London, Richmond: Curzon, 1997, 95–103, 386–388; van Lint, T.M.,

Byzantine provinces of Vaspurakan, Tarōn, and Mesopotamia (probably at different times) while also authoring an impressive number of theological works, letters, and translations from Greek. The latter can be taken as representative of Grigor's vast learning and deep familiarity with the Graeco-Byzantine and Islamic worlds. To Grigor Magistros and the interpretation of his complex written production Theo has devoted a vast number of significant studies. These range from the detailed examination of specific letters investigated to shed light on Grigor Magistros' viewpoints on the function of poetry and early historiography, to the sophisticated issue of Grigor's relationship to Hellenism and the place occupied by Armenian culture in the world at large,¹⁸ from polemics between Christianity and Islam to the genres of biblical epics and the poetic model of lament.¹⁹

3.2 *Armenian Material Culture*

Although the research described above has helped Theo build an international reputation as a scholar of literary studies, the last two decades have also witnessed a proliferation of studies that concentrate on central aspects of the material cultures of the Armenians. As in the case of his literary studies, his publications on material culture often go beyond the boundaries of set dis-

[Appendix in] "The Armenian Vision of Ezekiel", in Stone, M.E., Wright, B.G., Satran, D. (eds), *The Apocryphal Ezekiel*, Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000 (Early Judaism and its Literature 18), 155–158; van Lint, T.M., "The Gift of Poetry: Khidr and John the Baptist as Patron Saints of Muslim and Armenian 'āšiqs—āšuls", in van Ginkel, J.J., Murrevan den Berg, H.L., van Lint, T.M. (eds), *Redefining Christian Identity. Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Leuven—Paris—Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 134), 335–378.

- 18 Of the many articles produced by van Lint, see at least van Lint, T.M., "On Poetry, Poetics, and the Gift of a Crosier: An 11th Century Letter by Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros to Catholicos Petros Getadarj", in Ter-Lewondyan, V., Baloyan, S., et al. (eds), *Tonagir. Gitakan žolovacu Lewon Ter-Petrosyani 75-anjaki art'iv* [Festschrift in Honor of Levon Ter-Petrosian's 75th Anniversary] Erevan: Matenadaran, 2021, 358–382; van Lint, T.M., "Vał šrjani patmagrut'unə Grigor Magistrosi stelcagorcut'yunnerum [Historiography of the Early Period in Grigor Magistros' Works]", *Banber Matenadaran* 21 (2014), 97–103; van Lint, T.M., "La cultura armena nella visione del mondo di Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni", in Baffioni, C., Finazzi, R.B., Passoni Dell'Acqua, A., Vergani, E. (eds), *Storia e pensiero religioso nel Vicino Oriente. L'Età Bagratide—Maimonide—Afraate. III Dies Academicus 2012*, Milano: Biblioteca Ambrosiana; Roma: Bulzoni, 2014, 3–22.
- 19 See van Lint, T.M., "Letters to Amir Ibrahim", in Thomas, D.—Mallet, A. (eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, ii: 950–1100, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 707–710; and van Lint, T.M., "Magnalia Dei, The Mighty Acts of God", in Thomas, D.—Mallet, A. (eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, ii: 950–1100, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 710–713.

ciplines, considering every artefact under examination as a witness of human, historical, literary, and artistic facets.²⁰

While Theo has shown a keen interest in Armenian architecture already very early in his career,²¹ his most significant early studies in Armenian material culture are probably those devoted to the analysis of a number of Armenian inscriptions discovered in prominent archaeological sites. These include the Armenian inscriptions in the late antique Palestinian sites of Nazareth and those on Mount Sinai, as well as inscriptions detected in the monastic complex of Noravank', in mediaeval Greater Armenia.²² Especially in the case of Nazareth and Mount Sinai, van Lint's research adds to our knowledge of the very earliest attestations of the Armenian script.

Attention to the history of the Armenian script and the different kinds of Armenian writing supports has manifested in yet another group of publications that could go under the overarching label of 'Manuscript Studies'. Within this macro-category, Armenologists will find studies devoted to the history of the Armenian book and the development of Armenian types,²³ with the majority of publications, however, pertaining to the study of select groups of manuscripts

20 See at least van Lint's co-edited volume with J.J.S. Weitenberg, H.L.M. Defoer, and W.C.M. Wüstefeld, *Armenië. Middeleeuwse miniaturen uit het christelijke Oosten*, Utrecht: Museum Catharijneconvent; Zwolle: Waanders, 2001, and also more recent studies as, for instance [co-author with Landau, A.S.], "Sacred and Religious Objects", in Azadian, E.Y., Merian, S.L., Ardash, L. (eds), *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures. Testimony to a People*, Southfield, MI: Alex and Marie Manoogian Foundation, 2013, 234–289.

21 See, for instance, some very early publications as van Lint, T.M., "Droomreis Armenië: de harmonie der sferen in Gladzor en Noravank", *Meander: reizen op schrift* 19 (2000), 12–17; but also van Lint, T.M., "Armeens christendom. De oudste geschiedenis, relieken, liturgie en kerkarchitectuur", in *Armenië: 1700 jaar Christendom*, exhibition catalogue, Catharijneconvent Utrecht, November 3, 2001—March 3, 2002, Zwolle: Waanders, 2001, 26–53.

22 See van Lint, T.M. [co-author with Stone, M.E., and Nazarian, J.], "Further Armenian Inscriptions from Nazareth", *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 26 (1996–1997), 321–337 [repr. in Stone, M.E., *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies. Collected Papers Vol. II*, Leuven—Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 253), 783–799]; van Lint, T.M. [co-author with Stone, M.E.], "More Armenian Inscriptions from Sinai", *Eretz Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies* 26 (1999, *Frank Moore Cross Volume*), 195*–203* [repr. in Stone, M.E., *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies. Collected Papers Vol. II*, Leuven—Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 253), 697–705]; and van Lint, T.M. [co-author with Stone, M.E.], "Two Unnoticed Armenian Inscriptions from Noravank'", *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 26 (1996–1997), 447–450 [repr. in Stone, M.E., *Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Armenian Studies. Collected Papers Vol. II*, Leuven—Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 253), 801–804].

23 van Lint, T.M., "Armenian ms Book", in Suarez, M.F.—Woudhuysen, H.R. (eds), *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 479–480, and van Lint, T.M.

and their illuminations.²⁴ Of central interest to Theo's research is the study of the realisation of the 'Throne Vision' as described in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, a topic that encompasses both material and literary cultures.²⁵

Finally, standing at the intersection of manuscript, literary, and historical studies is yet another set of studies devoted to Armenian colophons. Celebrated by mediaevalists as repositories and witnesses of the piety of the scribes who copied the many thousands of Armenian manuscripts, Armenian memorials or colophons contain a great number of information concerning the scribes who wrote or copied them, as well as their human and spiritual worlds, the circumstances of manuscript production, and various other data such as ownership, the transmission and circulation of books, and so forth. Within this area of study, Theo has produced many pieces that include one rare phenomenon: that of colophons in verse.²⁶

Theo's interests and research on Armenian art history, codicology and palaeography, illumination, and, more generally, the materiality of the Armenian manuscript books as evidence of the Armenians' uninterrupted creativity over the whole span of the Middle Ages up to Modern and Contemporary times have merged into the catalogue of the historic exhibition held at the Bodleian Library already mentioned above.

3.3 *Other Research Interests in the Field of Armenian Studies*

In addition to studies pertaining to the field of mediaeval Armenian literature and the multifaceted areas of material culture, it is possible to articulate a third,

[co-author with Pehlivanian, M.], "Armenian Type", in Suarez, M.F.—Woudhuysen, H.R. (eds), *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 480.

24 See van Lint, T.M. [co-author with Mathews, T.F.], "The Kars-Tsamandos Group of Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts of the 11th Century", in Asutay-Effenberger, N.—Daim, F. (eds), *Der Doppeladler. Byzanz und die Seldschuken in Anatolien vom späten 11. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*, Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 2014, 85–95.

25 van Lint, Theo M., "The Miniature of Ezekiel's Throne Vision in the Erzka Bible of 1269 (J1925) and its Textual Background", in Bläsing, U., Dum-Tragut, J., van Lint, T.M. (eds), with Assistance from R. Meyer, *Armenian, Hittite, and Indo-European Studies. A Commemoration Volume for Jos J.S. Weitenberg*, Leuven: Peeters, 2019 (*Hebrew University Armenian Studies* 15), 403–421.

26 See, for instance, van Lint, T.M., "Armenian Colophons in Verse, 1641–1660", in Sirinian, A., Buzi, P. Shurgaia, G. (eds), *Colofoni armeni a confronto. Le sottoscrizioni dei manoscritti in ambito armeno e nelle altre tradizioni scritte del mondo mediterraneo. Atti del colloquio internazionale, Bologna, 12–13 ottobre 2012*, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2016 (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 299), 73–84, and van Lint, T.M., "Some Further Observations on Colophons in Verse: The Earliest Two Examples", *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 39 (2020, *Hommage à Agnès Ouzounian*), 169–186.

more heterogeneous group of publications in Theo's bibliography. This latter encompasses a range of Armenological topics that is wider in both chronological scope and geographical extent and whose aims are often complementary to one another.

An important sector of this research is occupied with studies on Armenian history and historiography. These publications target especially Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages (including the relation of Armenia vis-à-vis Byzantium),²⁷ and focus not only on historical facts and figures, but also on how the memory of the latter has been handed down to and by the Armenian tradition, as well as how the Armenian past has been narrated and reinterpreted at a given time and in a specific place.²⁸ Moving to the second millennium, Theo has dedicated his attention also to the development of the Armenian Church, looking at both its internal developments as well as contacts with the wider Christian world and non-Christian faiths.²⁹

Modern and especially contemporary topics have also been dealt with. For this period, I would like to point out at least Theo's research on the Armenian communities of early modern Iran, including studies on the role of the Armenian merchants in the city of New Julfa,³⁰ as well as several publications on poetic production in modern Armenian.³¹ For the latter, his study on Elise

27 van Lint, T.M., "Armenian", in Papaioannou, S. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, 606–620.

28 See at least the articles van Lint, T.M., "The Formation of Armenian Identity in the First Millennium", *Church History and Religious Culture* 89/1–3 (2009), 251–278, and van Lint, T.M., "From Reciting to Writing and Interpretation: Tendencies, Themes, and Demarcations of Armenian Historical Writing", in Foot, S.—Robinson, C.F. (eds), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, ii: 400–1400, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 180–200.

29 See at least van Lint, T.M., "The Magna Charta and the Constitution for the Brotherhood of Erznka of 1280: Texts and Protagonists", in Step'anyan, A. (ed.), *Azatut'yunneri Mec Xartia—800. Taregirk'. Mijazgayin gitažolovi hodvacneri jolovacu / Magna Charta Libertatum (The Great Charter of Liberties)—800. Annual. Proceedings of International Conference*, Erevan: Armenian Association for Global History, 2019 (Patmut'yan harc'er [Problems of History 5]), 94–138; van Lint, T.M., "De Armeense Apostolische Kerk", in Teule, H.G.—Wessels, A. (eds), *Oosterse christenen binnen de wereld van de islam*, Kampen: Kok, 2018, 245–266; and also van Lint, T.M., "Il pensiero simbolico nella storia armena", in Uluhogian, G., Zekiyian, B.L., Karapetian, V. (eds), *Armenia. Impronte di una civiltà*, Milan: Skira, 2011, 165–171. English version as "Symbolic Thought in Armenian History".

30 See van Lint, T.M. [co-author with Landau, A.S.], "Armenian Merchant Patronage of New Julfa's Sacred Spaces", in Gharipour, M. (ed.), *Sacred Precincts. The Religious Architecture of Non-Muslim Communities across the Islamic World*, Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2014 (Arts and Archaeology of the Islamic World 3), 308–333.

31 However, on van Lint's understanding of the Armenian witness for historical reconstruction of other polities, see also van Lint, T.M., "The Treaty of Turkmenchai, 1828. Russian

Č'arenc' deserves a special mention,³² as does a voluminous set of translations of the works of contemporary poet and artist Krikor Momdjian.³³

In closing this section, I would like to remember also Theo's engagement in the field of Armenian linguistics, by mentioning a co-edited volume that commemorates Jos Weitenberg, his *Doktorvater*.³⁴ Last but not least, based on all the research mentioned throughout this whole section, come a set of publications that deal with the future and meaning of the field of Armenian studies and with the role and significance of Armenia and the Armenians within contemporary Europe.³⁵

4 (Not) a Final Word?

The purpose of this brief biography was to offer my own perspective on the development of Theo as a scholar as well as on his academic activities over more than thirty years. In doing so, I selected what appeared to me as the most original aspects of his research and achievements. Believing in the continuation and metamorphosis of life and research, in its constant generation and regeneration, I do not wish to offer here concluding remarks, unless one takes them as provisional. With the birth of Hripsimé Cecilia, Natalie and Theo's daughter, in 2021, a new chapter in Theo's life has just begun. Having commented on Theo's remarkable accomplishments over the past decades, I can only look forward to the many surprises that the next ones will bring. It is with this trepidation and anticipation that I take this opportunity to congratulate Theo

and Armenian Perceptions", in Branch, M. (ed.), *Defining Self. Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2009 (Studia Fennica, Ethnologica 10), 96–116.

32 van Lint, T.M., "Eliše Č'arenc'i Ak'illes, t'e Pyero sterlcagorcut'yan mi k'ani harc'er [A Few Questions about Eliše Č'arenc's *Achilles and Pierot*]", in Egiazarjan, A.K. (ed.), *Egiše Č'arenc i ego vremena* [Eliše Č'arenc' and His Time], Erevan: RAU, 2012, 95–106.

33 van Lint, T.M. [editor and co-translator of 43 poems into English of], Momdjian, K., *Wanderings. Pandxtut'ean meġ. In de Diaspora. Poems Banastelcut'ivnner Gedichten*, Alphen aan den Rijn: Momdjian Stichting, 2016.

34 van Lint, T.M. [co-editor with Bläsing, U., and Dum-Tragut, J., with assistance from R. Meyer], *Armenian, Hittite, and Indo-European Studies. A Commemoration Volume for Jos J.S. Weitenberg*, Leuven: Peeters, 2019 (Hebrew University Armenian Studies 15).

35 See van Lint, T.M., "The Future of Armenian Studies", in Mamigonian, M.A. (ed.), *Rethinking Armenian Studies*, a special issue of the *Journal of Armenian Studies* 7/2 (2003), 208–214, and van Lint, T.M., "Europe beyond Europe: The Case of Armenia and the Armenians", in Deproost, P.-A.—Coulie, B. (eds), *Les frontières pour ouvrir l'Europe*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004, 153–178.

on his 65th birthday and thank him for everything he has given to the field of Armenian Studies and to Armenian communities in general.

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The bibliographical list provided below is as comprehensive as possible. Eventual omissions are unintentional. Entries are classified chronologically and, if applicable, subdivided into: (i) monographs and edited volumes; (ii) research articles, book chapters, reference works, reviews; (iii) popularizing literature and *varia*.

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“The Poetics of Yuri Ivask”, in van Holk, A. (ed.), *Dutch Contributions to the 10th International Congress of Slavists, Sofia, September 14–22*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 199–219.

1989

“Armeens”, in Talen van de Sovjetunie, *Ščipčiki* 3/11 (May), 58–67.

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1997

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[Appendix in] “The Armenian Vision of Ezekiel”, in Stone, M.E., Wright, B.G., Satran, D. (eds), *The Apocryphal Ezekiel*, Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature (Early Judaism and its Literature 18), 155–158.

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Armenia through the Lens of Time

A 360° View

Federico Alpi, Robin Meyer, Irene Tinti and David Zakarian

The study of other languages, literatures, and cultures has been one of the central axes of research in many European and North American universities' humanities faculties in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.¹ In some instances, teaching and research in these areas are carried out by dozens of faculty members, each of whom specialises in a more or less broad subject of the field they are involved in, be that Elizabethan drama, German Romanticism, the *Troisième République*, or the development of Late Latin. One and all are expected to have a good basic understanding of the entirety of their field, but few teach frequently at advanced levels beyond their own area of specialisation.

This holds true, at least at larger institutions, for the historically dominant cultures and languages of the Old World—English, French, German, etc.—and perhaps for languages of classical antiquity like Latin and Ancient Greek; in recent decades, other languages and cultures, like those associated with the Arabic and Chinese spheres of influences, have gained some traction in this regard. Not so for a great number of others.

A case in point is the study of Armenia, its language, culture, and history. First clearly mentioned in the early 6th century BCE, the Armenian Kingdom once encompassed much of the South Caucasus, the Armenian Highlands, Asia Minor, and parts of the Levant. For millennia caught between supraregional superpowers like the Roman, Byzantine, Parthian, Sasanian, and Ottoman Empires, at times autonomous, then dependent again, the Armenian people stand out as a culture that through its sense of identity and community, through the preservation of their common language, customs, and faith has succeeded, against all odds and adversity, in remaining one, even in the geographic diversity forced upon it, most recently by the genocide of the early 20th century. This spirit is powerfully reflected in the words of the Armenian

1 This article has been jointly conceived, developed, and edited by the four authors, who are all equally responsible for its contents. As for the composition of the text, Federico Alpi wrote § 4, Robin Meyer the introductory paragraph and §§ 2, 5, and 6; Irene Tinti § 3; and David Zakarian § 1 and the colophon.

poet Eliše Č'arenc' (1897–1937): Ով հայ ժողովուրդ, քո միակ փրկությունը քո հավաքական ուժի մեջ է—“Oh, Armenian people, your only salvation lies in the power of your unity”.²

Despite its historically significant role, not least as one of the first polities to declare Christianity its state religion in the early 4th century, as well as its strategic importance in the region, the study of Armenian in most universities is tied to specific fields, like history, theology, or linguistics, all dependent on the disciplinary context of the scholar. Only in very few, select places have chairs of Armenian Studies been established, where the entire gamut of topics required by a culture with such a long and complex history can be taught and researched.

One such chair, endowed in 1965 by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, resides at the University of Oxford. Its third incumbent, Professor Theo Maarten van Lint, is one of very few scholars who, by virtue of their position, have had the opportunity—and at the same time the great challenge—to teach a subject in its entirety, from antiquity to yesterday's news, from historical geography to Soviet politics, from ancient grammar and mediaeval poetry to modern cinema and song. Not afforded a dozen and more colleagues to teach in their respective specialties, Professor van Lint has proven himself to be a Renaissance man of Armenian Studies, a master of many and adept of all other subjects in his field. It is for this versatility, this yearning for more knowledge and understanding, and for his passion of passing the very same on to others, that this *Festschrift* is dedicated to him on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

The choice of the title “Armenia through the Lens of Time” arises from the insight that everyone studying Armenia and Armenian gains early in their engagement with their individual subject: whether history, literature, philology, linguistics, or theology, an in-depth appreciation of any of these disciplines with regard to Armenia(n) is only possible if founded on an understanding of their development through time and, of course, in the context of all other disciplines as well as of the wider geographical and cultural context. The development of the modern Armenian languages is incomprehensible without knowledge of Middle and Classical Armenian as well as its geography, its history and contact with its neighbours; much of its art, at any time period, cannot be understood and appreciated thoroughly without knowledge of its diachronic development and recourse to religious and liturgical details of periods past; an

2 From Պատգամ (1933.V.9), which was written as an acrostic, and this message was formed from the second letters of each line of the poem (*Eliše Č'arenc', Erkeri žotovacu*, hator 4rd, Erevan: Hayk. SSR GA Hrat, 1968, 605).

appreciation of its modern politics and conflicts presupposes an understanding of 19th- and 20th-century identity formation processes, to name but one factor; the list could go on.

It is for this reason that a volume like this, which aims to not only honour a multifaceted researcher and teacher, but also to reflect the intricacies of working in such an *Orchideenfach*, must by necessity span as much of the existence of Armenia, from antiquity to modern day, while being multi-disciplinary at the same time. Most of the papers collected here, penned by colleagues, friends, and many former students and mentees of the honorand, to one extent or another showcase this breadth of time as well as the synergy between two or more sub-disciplines within Armenian Studies. Nevertheless, for ease of use, the volume has been subdivided into five parts: Art History, History, Linguistics and Philology, Literature, and Religious Studies. Next to these disciplinary connections, numerous other themes unite the papers, such as the notions of gender and violence at different times in Armenian history (see Calzolari and Zakarian); questions regarding the translation of Armenian texts, notably poetry (see Calzolari, MacFarlane, Meyer, and La Porta); or the notion of Christian martyrdom (see Cowe and Zakarian). In time, they reach from the very beginnings of Armenian literary and scientific production (see de Lamberterie) to contemporary literature, cinema, and art (see Calzolari).

The laureate's breadth of interests and competences is reflected not only in the gamut of papers collected in this volume, but also in the fact that all its editors were together, at one point in time (2013–2014) albeit at different stages of their careers, under his tutelage in Oxford and there were afforded the opportunity to work together on a variety of subjects, from Armenian grammatical writing and Grecising translations to the challenge that are the letters of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni. The atmosphere, collegial bonds, and network that Professor van Lint helped create between these (as well as many other) young scholars bore fruit and, at an Armenian Studies colloquium in Geneva in 2018, inspired the plan that in the end produced this volume.

In what follows, the five parts of this *Festschrift* are introduced thematically, and all contributions are summarised.

1 Art History

The Art History papers explore close cultural links between Armenia and other major centres of Christianity, evincing the Armenians' awareness of and engagement with various developments and innovations in religious architecture, manuscript illumination, and theological thought. The exchange of

knowledge and expertise was accompanied by the creation of unique forms of artistic expression, some samples of which are discussed in the present volume.

One of the lifelong interests of the honorand has been the theological implications and representations of the Vision of Ezekiel in the Armenian tradition, which, alongside the Vision of Isaiah, is discussed in Thomas F. Mathews's contribution. Mathews traces the development of the Christian use of the iconography of the Visions by examining examples from architectural decoration, icons, and manuscripts and by bringing together the salient elements of the rich iconography of the prophets' visionary texts from the earliest surviving works of art and monuments down to the large 9th-century wall mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

In one of the first surviving representations, the angelic Living Creatures of the book of Revelation (4:6–11) appear depicted as handsome young men gazing at the spectator (Rotunda of Thessaloniki, ca. 390s). Another early representation depicts them, in addition to a man, in their animal guise as ox, lion, and eagle (Santa Pudenziana, Rome, 400–410). From the 6th century onwards, a peacock motif becomes recurrent in the representation of the Visions, appearing in manuscripts (Matenadaran [M] 2374, fol. 228^r and 228^v), in mosaics (Nikopolis, Greece; Panagia tis Angeloktisti in Kiti, Cyprus, 6th century), and in the spectacular sculpture of perhaps thirty life-size peacocks with their tails outspread surrounding the altar of Saint Polyeuktos in Constantinople (520–527). The motif of the wheels of the Cherubim is illustrated both in the mosaics of Thessaloniki and later in manuscripts such as the Walters 537 (= BAL 537), fol. 2, dated to 966. From amongst other Armenian sources, Mathews discusses at length perhaps the most important and relatively less studied treatise “Concerning Iconoclasts” (604–607) by Vrt'anēs K'ertol.

In her contribution, Christina Maranci examines the consecration rite of a painted church—*Kanon znkarel ekelec'i awrhnel*—as preserved in the Mayr Maštoc', the Great Ritual Book of the Armenian Church, the critical edition of which was published in 2012 by Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean. The detailed, albeit short, description of the procedure of this rite offers valuable information about the attitudes towards images in mediaeval Armenia and a fresh perspective on image worship and iconoclasm amongst the Armenians. The text of the rite suggests that the interiors of early mediaeval Armenian churches were commonly decorated with consecrated paintings, concurring with the evidence provided by other sources to which Maranci refers during her analysis.

Maranci's contribution introduces an important methodological approach for studying mediaeval Armenian art and architecture which involves treating

the Maštoc' as “a vast library of interpretive tools for understanding imagery and monuments”.

A unique and intriguing artefact is discussed by Gohar Grigoryan Savary in her paper “A Jacobean Shell for Šahuk, ‘Servant of God’”. The object under scrutiny—a scallop shell containing a commemorative coin—is related to the tradition of pilgrimage to the famous sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. While a link between Armenia and the Galician site dedicated to Saint James may seem surprising, the author shows that there is evidence for the presence of Armenian pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela at least from the 12th century—and possibly even earlier. After all, as Grigoryan Savary remarks, “[f]or the Armenians, as for many other pilgrims, Santiago de Compostela was an important place connected with the Apostle James, right after the Armenian cathedral of Saint James in Jerusalem”. The otherwise unknown Šahuk, who is mentioned in the inscription found on the commemorative coin, was therefore connected with pilgrimage to Saint James’s sanctuary on the Atlantic Ocean: there is, however, no certainty whether he indeed went on pilgrimage or acquired the shell in some other way. It is also unclear how Šahuk managed to have a special coin minted just for him, with a unique symbolism and a personal inscription. The various possibilities are carefully described and evaluated in the paper, demonstrating how art history, archaeology, and religious studies can cooperate in advancing historical research.

2 History

The contributions in this section discuss Armenia’s role in the political and religious history of Anatolia, the Caucasus, and Northern Mesopotamia from late Antiquity to the late Middle Ages. The papers expand on Armenia’s entanglement in the political, socio-economic, and religious processes that took place in the wider region.

In his contribution, Phil Booth examines the policies of shah Khusrau II towards Christian communities in Roman Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Egypt in the period between 603 to 628. The area had a dominant Chalcedonian church presence and the far smaller and largely ruralised Severan church, but persecutions against the dyophysites resulted in their miaphysite opponents taking control over many religious centres in the area. However, Booth challenges the widespread modern claim that the period of Persian rule was “an era of triumph for Miaphysite orthodoxy” and provides a more nuanced evaluation of the interaction of different religious fractions. The discussion of a variety of primary sources, which mainly recount the circumstances of the union of Dvin

in ca. 616 and the union of Alexandria in 617, evinces considerable tensions between Roman and Persian miaphysites as well as great divisions within the rival factions.

The contribution by Tara Andrews and Anahit Safaryan, entitled “The Funerary Oration of Barseł *Vardapet*” offers the first critical edition—with an English translation—of the oration delivered by the little-known *vardapet* Barseł on the death of Baldwin, lord of K'esun and Maraš (in Cilicia), upon his failed attempt to storm Edessa in 1146, two years after 'Imad al-Din Zengi had conquered the city from the crusaders. The text is of great interest for the details it offers on the relationship between the Frankish ruler and his Armenian confessor Barseł: the paucity of information on these two characters is duly addressed, and the authors are methodical in pointing out what can be stated and what can only be inferred or speculated about Baldwin and Barseł.

Being part of Matthew of Edessa's famous *Chronicle*, the Armenian text of the oration has been published in both 19th-century editions of the *Chronicle*; additionally, it was published in 1869 as a separate work. None of these editions, however, can be considered critical. Andrews and Safaryan, as part of a larger project, for the first time went through all the necessary steps of recension and collation which are necessary to produce a *stemma codicum*, an essential procedure for producing the critical edition of a text. All these passages are documented in the paper, which also offers insight into how digital tools can assist the work of philologists in Armenian studies and beyond.

David Zakarian's paper deals with the representation of violence against women in T'ovma Mecop'ec'i's *History of Tamerlane and his Descendants*. The work covers the period between 1386 and the 1440s and is one of the most important sources for the study of the Timurid invasions of the Caucasus and adjacent territories and their aftermath.

Zakarian examines the passages which contain accounts of violent treatment of women and identifies the recurring patterns of representation and interpretation of these acts of violence. In particular, he points out that Mecop'ec'i strongly relies on the vivid imagery of apocalyptic writings in order to provide his audiences with role models for emulation and to moralise about the sinfulness of their lifestyles. In this respect, the story of the martyrdom of an unknown woman and her son is the most revealing. As the only substantial text composed by a Christian cleric who was a contemporary of the events, it contains many eyewitness accounts that reveal, *inter alia*, the plight of women during this volatile period of Armenian history.

3 Linguistics and Philology

It goes without saying that papers devoted to Armenian linguistics and philology consider the use of and changes in the Armenian language over time, as well as the documents in which these varieties of Armenian were written down and their individual history. Yet, all papers here assembled are also united by their use or discussion of aspects of translation—be that from ancient Greek into Armenian, Armenian into English or Italian—and the difficulties that go hand in hand with translations. Similarly, the problem of time-depth unites many of these contributions, in that the often uncertain times of composition, manuscript attestation and modern reception bring with themselves issues that require discussion, quite aside from problems concerning manuscript tradition and the cultural differences between the periods mentioned. As in the previous section, the linguistic and philological contributions, too, are ordered chronologically.

Beginning in late antiquity and returning to one of the best-known and most-discussed texts of the so-called Hellenising School (*Yunaban dproc'*), Charles de Lamberterie provides new insights on the translation and adaptation techniques employed in the Armenian version of the *Téchnē grammatiké*, the *Art of Grammar*, attributed to the Alexandrian scholar Dionysios Thrax (*fl.* 2nd century BCE). After reminding the reader of the most common traits of the very divergent Hellenising translations—morpheme-by-morpheme calques of Greek words and variety of expression—de Lamberterie focuses on those occasions where the translator of the *Téchnē* chose to depart significantly from the original, e.g. in choosing different examples taken not from ancient Greece, but rather from the New Testament (Paul is mentioned instead of Socrates), or by providing linguistic material from the Armenian, not the Greek language (the Armenian patronymic suffix -Խաւս is used instead of the Greek original -ίδης). It is these and many other differences between the Armenian and Greek versions that clearly illustrate the unusual nature of the text at hand and its unclear audience, being neither a grammar of Greek translated into Armenian, nor a grammar of Armenian based on Greek precepts.

Federico Alpi, in turn, discusses one of the lifelong interests of the laureate: the oeuvre of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni (c. 990–1058), a prolific Armenian intellectual and influential political figure of the time. This paper examines the prominence of Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* in Magistros's *Letters*, revealing interesting and hitherto unexplored parallels and tendencies. By drawing on Gohar Muradyan's recent study, Alpi discusses in detail how Magistros integrates in his writing references of varying length from Clement's work, categorising them as "long quotations (with occasional abridgements), short

quotations, and allusions (or hints)". The allusions and direct quotes' main purpose is "the embellishment of the letter in accordance with the stylistic rules of Byzantine—and late-antique—epistolography": they are clever and entertaining, displaying Magistros's erudition and shrewdness. While providing some insightful answers, this paper also poses a number of other questions which is indicative of the wealth of the legacy left by Magistros.

Remaining in the Greek sphere of influence on Armenian, Irene Tinti's paper relates the preliminary results of one of the multiple lines of research she is pursuing with regard to the comparatively little-studied Armenian Platonic dossier.

Five Platonic or pseudo-Platonic dialogues survive in ancient Armenian translations (*Timaeus*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology of Socrates*, *Laws*, and *Minos*). At the present state of knowledge, the versions, written in heavily Hellenising Armenian, are attested in their entirety only in one extant manuscript of uncertain date (17th century?), which is kept in the library of the Mekhitarist monastery of St Lazarus, Venice ([V] 1123) and has provided the basis for the (problematic) 19th-century editions. Ever since their rediscovery in 1835, the date and authorship of these texts have been the object of considerable debate, with proposed dates ranging from the 5th to the 11th century CE. Up until now, the very limited and late textual tradition has not helped in delimiting the original timeframe for the translated dialogues.

Tinti describes and analyses the traces of textual circulation and indirect tradition that she has so far been able to identify for one of the dialogues, the *Timaeus*, including some that were previously unknown and are discussed here for the first time. These new data chiefly prove that the Armenian *Timaeus* did not exist in a void; on the contrary, it seems to have had a certain amount of textual circulation in different areas of the Armenian-speaking world. Secondly, the minor witnesses provide reassuring indications as to the reliability of the Venetian manuscript, which, despite being quite recent, seems to preserve in many cases a more conservative state of the text. Lastly, Tinti shows that this type of analysis can provide meaningful clues towards solving the complex puzzle of the Platonic versions' date and attribution.

In her contribution, Anna Sirinian sheds light on some details of an Armenian manuscript (LOW 16586=ms. Arm. 14) of the Wellcome Library, London. Thanks to the digitisation of the document, which made it accessible to the scholarly community at large, Sirinian has been able to examine the colophon and to update—and correct—the information available until now with regard to the copyist and the context of the manuscript. A transcription of the colophon and an Italian translation are included in her paper. In addition, Sirinian reveals that ms. Arm. 14 also contains a handwritten note by *vardapet* Lewond

Pirġalēmean (1829–1891), a pioneer in the study of Armenian colophons. Almost two centuries have passed since the birth of the illustrious *vardapet* Pirġalēmean, but the study of Armenian colophons, as Sirinian demonstrates with her work and with this paper, remains a fruitful field of research.

Moving forward in time, Robin Meyer engages with the 18th-century Georgian-Armenian poet and bard Sayat'-Nova, well known amongst scholars of Armenian language and literature as the author of numerous poems composed in the Tiflis dialect of Armenian. His life and *œuvre*, marked by the complexities of the multilingual Caucasus and its environment, were treated extensively by Charles Dowsett, the first Chair of Armenian Studies at Oxford; an English translation of all of his poetry remains a desideratum, however.

In this paper, Meyer offers a first step in this direction, providing two different translations of one of the bard's most celebrated songs, whilst maintaining as closely as possible the original form and imagery of the Armenian version by means of a resistant translation: syllable count and rhyme are maintained, non-Armenian words borrowed from neighbouring languages are rendered either as non-English words or are defamiliarised by typographical means in order to achieve an effect similar to that created in the original.

Next to the translations themselves, Meyer introduces the poet, his work, and the Tiflis dialect of Armenian and discusses, from a theoretical and practical point of view, the challenges of translation in general and of multilingual poetry in particular.

4 Literature

The section on literature takes the reader from the beginnings of Armenian written culture, with the earliest authors addressed, albeit tangentially, in Alessandro Orenco's paper, to the reception of Siamant'ō's poem in 21st-century cinema and music discussed by Valentina Calzolari.

Careful and often innovative assessments of the historical context and/or pertinent biographical data form the basis for in-depth analyses of the literary texts which are the main focus of each contribution. Thus, all the articles deal, in different ways, with the interactions (whether positive or hostile), influences, and cross-fertilisations between Armenian and neighbouring cultures, and/or with often-fraught interreligious relations, continuing one of the main themes of the present collection.

Both secular and religious literature, prose as well as metre are represented, but poetry—and the contexts of poetic performance—features prominently in this section, as elsewhere in the volume, in keeping with the laureate's own

scholarly and personal interests. The issues involved in translating Armenian texts into modern languages, discussed from a metalinguistic perspective in the philological and linguistic section, also resurface directly, if not always explicitly, in the offerings of some of the authors. The contributions have been broadly organised in chronological order, although the wide scope of some of the articles makes a certain degree of overlapping inevitable. Two of the papers are in Italian, to honour the honorand's love for the language.

Alessandro Orengo's article is devoted to the autobiographical genre, which seems to have developed later and to a lesser extent in the Armenian tradition than in the Graeco-Latin and/or Christian worlds. Although a few 5th-century authors give some autobiographical information in their works, mostly while referring to their literary patrons and/or with the intent of presenting themselves as direct witnesses of the events they are relating, the first true Armenian autobiography dates to the 7th century and is ascribed to Anania Širakac'i. The text survives in two versions and might have been originally conceived as an introduction to Anania's *K'nnikon*. In it, the author details the obstacles he faced in order to improve his education as well as the opposition he encountered from his peers.

After Anania, biographical information can be found in colophons, letters, travelogues, and literary writings, but the next truly autobiographical text that Orengo brings to the reader's attention was authored by Oskan *vardapet* Erewanč'i in the 17th century. Written in the third person, it constitutes the 57th chapter in the *History* by Aṙak'el Davrižec'i, which was published in Oskan's own printing house in Amsterdam. Interestingly, Oskan's autobiography shows a similar structure to Anania's and focuses on the author's efforts to acquire a good education and, once again, the hostility he encountered.

Orengo argues that these similarities do not necessarily suggest that Oskan knew and was consciously imitating Anania, but rather that autobiographical texts might have been associated in Armenia with the authors' desire to give their own version of controversial events, underlining their own successes, as well as criticising their adversaries. This preliminary hypothesis will be put to the test in future research.

Sergio La Porta's contribution focuses on a 14th-century dispute poem between personified wine and an unnamed philosopher, authored by Tērtēr Erewanč'i, a scribe whose biographical details and activities are analysed and contextualised. La Porta offers a critical analysis of the composition, placing it within the historical, cultural, and religious context of the Crimea, where Tērtēr ended up living and where he wrote the miscellaneous manuscript (M 8029) containing the poem. He then provides a diplomatic edition based on the author's own manuscript, with new and better readings as opposed to the pre-

viously available one, which was based on a 16th-century manuscript. Finally, he offers a rhymed English translation, meant to reproduce the sense and the rhyming scheme of the Armenian original rather than providing a literal translation thereof.

Alex MacFarlane's piece draws on their ongoing research on the Armenian translation of the Greek *Alexander Romance* and tracks the slippage between this tale and that of the *History of the City of Bronze*, which has antecedents in Arabic literature. It does so by focusing on short monorhymed poems called *kafas*.

Kafas that repeat or introduce new details have been added to the text of the Armenian *Alexander Romance* itself from the late 13th or early 14th century onwards. Some of these expand on the episode of Alexander's visit to the palace of queen Kandakē of Meroë. MacFarlane traces the process of rewriting that, from the 14th to the 17th century, transformed the palace of Kandakē into the City of Bronze. The paper then turns to a manuscript of the *History of the City of Bronze* with *kafas* about Alexander added at the bottom of select pages to accentuate the tale's lesson about the inevitability of death. The Armenian text of the relevant poems is accompanied by an annotated English translation.

The article contributes significantly to our understanding of the different layers making up the Armenian translation of the *Alexander Romance*; furthermore, it offers insights into the role of Armenian scribes who saw connections between the remote landscapes and moral themes present in both tales and thus re-elaborated and expanded upon the materials they copied.

The still understudied bardic tradition of mediaeval Armenia is discussed by S. Peter Cowe in light of the career of Yohannēs Xlat'ec'i, an Armenian bard active at the court of the Kurdish emir of Xlat' (Ahlat) in the mid-15th century. Particular attention is given to the role of improvisation in performance practice, as well as the inclusivity of local tastes, open to different musical aesthetics. Such tolerance, however, was not reflected to the same extent in the religious sphere. Yohannēs crossed both religious and ethnic boundaries by becoming a famous bard in the Armenian and Kurdish communities. He converted to Islam but soon regretted his decision and reaffirmed his Christian identity, for which he was martyred. Interestingly, a Kurdish woman entertainer played a role in the events that ultimately led to his death.

The account of his martyrdom has survived in the original as well as in a redacted version. Alongside an English translation of the main texts, Cowe provides an in-depth literary, historical, and theological analysis thereof, and shows that the narrative of Yohannēs's martyrdom contains several divergences from the genre of martyrology and offers unique insights into the intercommunal relations of the time.

Despite the fact that both were composed by clerics, the original, plainer and more factual version reflects the mores and values of the community's lay population, while the redaction emphasises the protagonist's spiritual commitment and readiness to engage in religious polemics and reflects a monastic context and audience. Thus, the accounts of Yohannēs's martyrdom give us a tantalising glimpse into intracommunal relations as well.

The final article in this section takes the reader to a significantly later moment in Armenian history, namely the early 20th century. Valentina Calzolari offers an annotated Italian translation of and commentary upon "The Dance", a poem by Western Armenian author Siamant'ō (Adom Yarjanean [Atom Earčanean]), who perished during the Genocide of 1915. This is the first Italian version to be based on the Armenian original and appears here for the first time.

The translation and comment are preceded by a presentation of the poet and the context in which he was active. The text belongs to a collection called *Bloody News from My Friend*, inspired by the letters sent by Dr Diran Balak'ean (Tiran Palak'ean) to his family shortly after the Adana massacres in 1909, which Siamant'ō was able to read. The titular dance refers to a particularly gruesome episode: a German nurse witnesses and describes the terrible fate of a group of twenty young Armenian brides, forced to dance to the sound of drums by their tormentors while burning alive.

Calzolari's historical and literary analysis puts the poem in the wider context of the fate of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, addressing once again the gendered dimension of violence that had been previously discussed by Zakarian in connection with much earlier events. Furthermore, it focuses on the role of the witness and the inherent difficulties associated with testifying and giving literary and aesthetic expression to a catastrophe of this magnitude. The final section deals with the reception of the poem in 21st-century cinema and music, and addresses the (im)possibility of translating these events into images within an aesthetic work. While each strophe is translated and analysed separately in the body of the article, the *Appendix* includes the Armenian text of the poem followed by the complete translation, for ease of consultation.

5 Religious Studies

It is hard to overstate the importance of religion in Armenian Studies. The bond between Armenians and Christianity, still so strong today, is ancient, almost obvious, and surely well-established. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that, since hundreds of years before the baptism of King Trdat in the 4th cen-

tury and down to present day, pre-Christian or non-Christian religions played a key role in Armenian history, as the work of Adontz, Toumanoff, and Russell (to name just a few) illustrates.

On both sides of the watershed marked by the conversion to Christianity, one constant feature in the relationship of Armenia to religion(s) may be observed: the tendency to take into serious consideration the religious thought of others, and meditate upon it, while developing her own. The fact that religion in Armenia—more specifically in Christian Armenia, which is incomparably better documented—developed more through knowledge than through conflict is perhaps one of the correlates of this tendency. Only rarely supported by a strong secular arm, Armenian religious thinkers learned to defend the uniqueness of their faith with the only weapons they could wield: philosophy, theology, and preaching, among others. Thus, they refined these weapons not only by developing their own religious thought, but also by paying due attention to the surrounding religious landscape. This knowledge was vital in order to define and negotiate continuously what lay within as well as what was situated beyond the boundaries of faith.

As a result, any scholar of religion will find this section interesting not only in its own right, for the particular developments of thought just described, but also for what these developments in religious thought have to say about other traditions, past and present. This is evident in the fact that while the contributions in this section cover the period of Christian Armenia, they all show abundant and deep connections with its historical, cultural, and religious context.

In his paper entitled “Ephrem and Persian Martyrs in the Armenian Synaxarion”, Sebastian Brock explores the presence of Syriac saints in the Armenian calendar of commemorations, chief amongst whom is St Ephrem, many of whose works were translated into Armenian at an early stage of Armenian literary production. The entry for Ephrem, based on the Armenian translation of the Syriac *Life of Ephrem*, includes a number of anachronisms and inaccuracies, for instance Ephrem’s status as a monk rather than a deacon or his supposed contact with the Cappadocian and Desert Fathers; these traits betray the age and audience of the translation. In addition to a detailed comparison of the Syriac versions of this life, Brock also outlines which episodes are not found in the Armenian translation, and why. In the ensuing discussion of the Persian martyrs commemorated in the Armenian synaxarion, it becomes evident that the latter is remarkable for its inclusivity, uniting elements of Eastern and Western Christianity through the veneration not only of local saints, but of those from other regions of the world too, including for instance Sts Benedict and Thomas of Canterbury.

Turning to another, quintessentially Armenian Saint, Nazenie Garibian explores the eschatological dimension of the *Vision of Saint Gregory* as preserved in Agat'angelos's *History of the Armenians*. Garibian's detailed analysis of the text with references to all available recensions reveals specific Armenian realities and aspirations of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities dating back to the beginning of the 5th century when the text of the *Vision* was committed to writing. These realities reflected general ideological tendencies of the Christian world related to the Second Coming of Christ, the expectation of which had intensified at the end of the 4th century.

The *Vision* aimed at presenting the Armenians as God's new chosen people, for whom Vałaršapat, the spiritual centre and patriarchal see of the Armenian Church, was to become the New Jerusalem. It was the place where the holy Hrip'simē and her companions shed their blood and where St Gregory received the vision in which he saw the descent of the celestial army guided by the luminous figure of the Only-Begotten. Thus, Vałaršapat transforms into a holy city where the Parousia of Christ was expected.

The contextual study of figurative and written documents from Armenian history has emerged in the last years as a promising avenue of research. Michael E. Stone and Edda Vardanyan show the potential of that type of endeavour with their investigation on "Jacob and the Man at the Ford of Jabbok". As the title goes, the paper focuses on the representation of Jacob in the famous church of the Holy Cross of Ałt'amar, which is discussed in its art-historical and biblical context. The analysis of the elements of the frieze, conducted with attention also to linguistic and Christological approaches, allows the authors to note the presence and meaning of non-biblical elements in Jacob's depiction. These elements, as Stone and Vardanyan note, "are to be understood against the background of Near Eastern culture from antique times and down to the present". In addition to that, the importance of paying attention also to apocryphal texts when discussing figurative material (and vice-versa) is highlighted.

Combining her scholarly pursuits with her literary talent, Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan's paper "Acrostics in Armenian Ecclesiastical Poetry" provides a typological overview of the use of this form of poetry in the Armenian hymnal, the *šaraknoc'*. Next to historical developments, common formulae and topoi, and the relationship between Greek acrostics and their Byzantine Greek counterparts, her contribution details how Armenian authors have overcome certain structural hurdles (e.g. the scarcity of words commencing with the letters *r* or *w*). All observations and explanations are richly illustrated with examples from the hymnal. The paper ends with an acrostic composed in honour of the *laudandus* on the basis of Nersēs Šnorhali's *Instruction for studious youngsters*.

6 Homage

The final chapter of this volume is an homage to ageing and memory penned by James Russell and entitled “*Gemara and Memory*”. Russell paints a picture of how increasing age and one’s ability to remember correlate, and how scholars in particular come to terms with the at times disquieting changes entwined with ageing. While the literary and religious nobility—Shakespeare, T.S. Elliot, Nabokov, Dante, St Augustine, Mani, and many others—are given a moment in the limelight, the focus of this essay lies clearly on age and memory in the Jewish tradition as enshrined in the Talmud. Its message is unequivocal: respect and honour scholars—Talmudic and otherwise—for even in old age and with their memory not quite what it used to be, they have forgotten more than many others have ever known.

7 Further Thoughts

The time depth and range of subjects collected in this volume stand as a monument to the variety of students and colleagues the honorand has, over the years, influenced and indeed helped to become the scholars they are today. His generosity of time and spirit and his kind but consequent insistence on wide reading and careful analysis are emblematic of the kind of scholarship a subject like Armenian Studies requires and demands. Inter- and multidisciplinary are basic requirements for a culture, language, and region that, for almost three millennia, has been at the hotly contested borders between other cultures and languages and has been influenced, changed, and enriched by them.

And yet, while any linguist dealing with Armenian must know about its literary and social background as well as the languages surrounding it, and every historian dealing with one period or another of this culture is acquainted, too, with the periods preceding and following it as well as its archaeological and literary evidence, interdisciplinarity by itself is not enough. The maintenance of these *Kleine Fächer*, these subjects of whose existence the public at large and thus future students and researchers are less aware than of mathematics, psychology, or English literature, can only be guaranteed if they are given sufficient room to flourish on their own, independently from other larger disciplines and outside of the country most closely associated with them. This independence of subject allows scholars to develop a more holistic understanding of the area in which they work and, in creating wider interest in a greater number of research centres, ensures the survival of non-endemic perspectives on the field in question.

As a tribute to Professor Theo Maarten van Lint, and in keeping with long-standing tradition, this 360° view of the contributions composed in his honour ends with a colophon, traditionally a short note of the author(s) and scribe(s) of a manuscript giving some information about them and the time and location of the manuscript's production.



Փառք ամենասուրբ Երրորդութեանն՝ Հայր եւ Որդոյ եւ Հոգւոյն Սրբոյ, որ արժանի արար զմեղուցեալ զապասաւորս բանի Դաւիթ, նաեւ զիմ հոգեւոր քոյրն Իռենէ, եւ զիմ եղբարս հոգեւորս՝ Ռոբին եւ Ֆելդերիկո, հասանել ի վերջին գիծս, ի թուականութեանս Հայոց ի ՌՆՀԱ, ի զահակալութեան Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Գարեգին Բ Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոսի ի վերայ Մայր Աթոռոյ Էջմիածնի եւ Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Արամայ Ա կաթողիկոսի Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ ի վերայ Սրբոց Աթոռոյն Անթիլիասի եւ Ն.Ա.Տ. Նուրհան արքեպիսկոպոսի Երուսաղիմայ ի վերայ Սրբոց Աթոռոյն Սրբոց Յակովբեանց Երջանիկ Առաքելոցն:

Եւ արդ եղև սկիզբն գրոյս թին ի ՌՆԿԹ, երբ տարածեաց յաշխարհս ամենայն մահ տարածամ, եւ անհամար արք եւ կանայք, ծերք եւ տղայք մահուամբ փոխեցան յԱստուած. եւ վաղվաղակի փակեցան դրունսն քաղաքաց եւ երկրաց, եւ բազումք ի տունս եւ յամրոցս իւրեանս ապաստան եղեն: Եւ զի սաստկացեալ էր մահ տարածամն եւ մեղքն Հայոց իշխանաց ծովացեալ, ի Սեպտեմբեր ԻԷ գունդք անարիճաց կատաղաբար հարձակեցան ի վերայ ժողովրդին Հայոց, մանաւանդ ի վերայ նահանգին Արցախայ: Եւ եկին եւ առին զբերդն Շուշի, եւ հայրենագուրկ արարին զբազում Արցախցիս. եւ թշնամին անարէն սկսաւ այնուհետեւ ի բազում տեղիս արձակել զգարս, եւ զոր գտանէին զբազմութիւն մարդկանն վարեցին ի գերութիւն. եւ դամբար ի ձեռն առեալ հրձիգ առնէին զբազում տեղիս. եւ տապալէին քանդէին զեկեղեցիս Աստուծոյ:

Արդ պարտ է յիշել եւ զմտաւ ածել նաեւ զբանսն պատմահարն մերոյ թե «վրդովեցաւ խաղաղութիւն, ամրատացաւ անկարգութիւն. դրդուցաւ ուղղափառութիւն, կայկայեցաւ տգիտութեամբ չարափառութիւն» զի պառակտումն տիրեաց ի Հայս: Վասն այսորիկ յերեսս անկեալ աղաչեմք զքեզ Տէ՛ր Աստուած ողորմեա զբազմամեղ ժողովուրդս Հայոց եւ փրկեա զերկիրս ի չարէն՝ թե ներքոյ եւ թե արտաքոյ, զի քո է արքայութիւն եւ զարութիւն եւ փառք յաիտեանս, ամէն:

Եւ կազմեցաւ զմատեանս այս վասն ԿԵ տանի ծննդեան հոգեւոր հայր մերոյ Թեո վան Լինթի յերկիրն Անգլիոյ եւ Իտալիոյ, համագործակցութեամբ բազում լուսապայծառ գիտնականաց ազգաց ազգաց: Եւ աղաչեմք զսուրբ ընթերցողս յիշել սրտի մտաւք եւ ի մաքրափայլ աղաւթս ձեր

զստացող գրոցս զվարդապետն մերոյ Թեոն եւ զիմաստուն կողակիցն իւր զՆաթալի տիկինն, եւ զԱստուածառաք դուստրն իւրեանց զՀռիփսիմէ եւ զԺնաւդսն իւրեանց եւ զամենայն արեան մերձաւորաց իւրոց՝ կենդանեաց եւ հանգուցելոց, ամէն: Այլ եւ յիշեցէք ի սրբազան յաղոթս ձեր եւ զողորմելիս Դաւիթ, Իռենե, Ռոբին, եւ Ֆեդերիկո, եւ Աստուած, որ առատն է ի տուրս բարեաց, ձեզ ողորմեսցի, ամէն:

PART 1
Art History



The Iconography of the Visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel

Thomas Mathews

1 Introduction

The texts of the Old Testament prophets who forecast Christ's coming constitute a special challenge in Christian iconography. While the historian's account is subsequent to the event he describes, the prophet's Visions construct narratives of events yet to take place. Visions therefore constitute a special category of iconography and the eternal validity of Scripture lifted the Vision out of its historical framework. Thus Isaiah, writing between 742 and 687 BCE, was thought to have foreseen the birth of Christ from a virgin (Isa 7:14): "The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The Hebrew can be read as simply "young woman", but Matthew applies Isaiah's prophecy to Mary's miraculous virginal conception by the Holy Spirit, before she came together with Joseph (Matt 1:18 ff.). Matt 1:23 rephrases Isaiah's text to read: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel". Christian art could therefore illustrate the Nativity either as a series of episodes of the Gospel narratives, or as a single image of the Mother and Child.

Ezekiel, composing his book in response to the Persian destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, pinned the Israelites' hope of restoration on his future Visions of the Lord Enthroned (Ezek 1:1–28) and the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezek 40–48). For the purposes of iconography several details from Ezekiel are important:

From the midst of fire came the *likeness of four living creatures*. (1:5–6)

Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. (1:8)

... each (creature) had the face of a *man* in front, the face of a *lion* on the right side ... the face of an *ox* on the left side, and the face of an *eagle* at the back. (1:10)

... each creature had *two wings, which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies.* (1:11)

... I saw a *wheel* upon the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them, ... like the *gleaming of a chrysolite.* (1:15–16)

The *four wheels had rims and spokes; and their rims were full of eyes round about.* (1:18)

And above the firmament over their heads there was *the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was the likeness as it were of a human form.* (1:26)

Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking. (1:28)

These powerful images of the Cherubim, the Living Creatures, and the wheels are repeated in Ezekiel Chapter 10.¹

The early iconography of Ezekiel's Visions focuses on various aspects worthy of note, especially angels. Ezekiel's "four living creatures" are interpreted as angels and angels are a major part of the rich iconography of his Visions. As for Isaiah, though he does not mention the Archangel Gabriel, Luke narrates how the divine message was communicated through him (Luke 1:26). The iconography of angels, be their rank designated or not, is fundamental to the development of Christian imagery and it became especially popular in the decoration of church apses and domes, manuscripts, and icons.

Since the earliest monuments, angels are represented in a humanising manner abandoning their fierce Biblical identity as ox, lion, and eagle mentioned in Ezekiel. They appear with beguiling human visages to make contact with the faithful and they have human hands to hold the rainbow en-framing the Lord. Their enormous size is also part of their message; they become cosmic figures embracing the whole of Creation, as they embrace the great nave vessel of the church. Angels are part of a complex programme of dome decoration, which must be studied as a totality. In no single monument has this programme survived intact, but the fragments belong to works of the highest quality, some

¹ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (Metzger—May 1977).

of which have already inspired extensive commentary. The tendency, however, has been to discuss the monuments separately which misses the cumulative force of their complementary information. The creation of a complex church iconography was a new attempt to understand man's relationship to the disposition of the powers of the cosmos. The liturgy is like a grand ballet tracing the structures of the new spiritual universe. The challenge is to describe in words what the monuments demonstrate in colour. From being the throne-bearers of Yahweh, angels became the guardians of the Eucharist.

2 Early Churches

The earliest extended dome programme to survive, the Rotunda of Thessaloniki, documents the development of this new celestial iconography in a very exciting way (Figure 1.1).² Here, the four-faced Angel of the prophetic Visions of Ezekiel posed an especially acute problem for the illustrator as it did for the exegete. Accepting the Theodosian dating of Küllerich and Torp in the 390s, the mosaicists seem to have bypassed Ezekiel's account of the wild and savage faces of the Creatures, opting instead to show their appealing forward-facing human faces. In the nearly contemporary apse mosaic of Sta Pudenziana in Rome (400–410), the angelic Four Creatures assume the fearful bestial identities assigned them in Ezekiel—winged man, lion, ox, and eagle—in figures on an even larger scale than that of Christ enthroned below them. Christ, defying art historians' attempts to find antecedents in representations of the Roman emperor, sits in the learned company of his twelve Apostles whose leaders, Peter and Paul, make gestures of speaking with him. In the strict etiquette of the court, no one else was permitted to sit in the presence of the emperor. The antecedents for the Sta Pudenziana mosaic are rather to be found in representations of Socrates and other men of learning discussing philosophy with their followers.³

The dependence of the Thessaloniki mosaic on the Ezekiel prophecy is further emphasised by the human hands of the Four Living Creatures, as Ezekiel says that “under their wings on their four sides they had human hands” (Ezek 1:8). These human hands are especially important here for on their very fin-

2 Küllerich—Torp 2017, 46–51. The preliminary sketch is painted in black directly on the brickwork. Christ's raised right hand is still visible in the mosaic, as well as part of the nimbus and the top of his long cross-staff.

3 Mathews 1993, 109–111.



FIGURE 1.1 Mosaic of the medallion of Christ supported by four angels, Rotunda of Thessaloniki, 390s Killerich—Torp 2017, Figure 38 (page 47)
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gertips the four angels gingerly support a unique 360° rainbow that encircles the representation of Christ with his right arm raised. In nature one never sees more than a fragment of a rainbow. The full circular mosaic rainbow that embraces the whole congregation below must be credited to the artists' imagination and it illustrates Ezekiel's "glory of the Lord" (Ezek 1:28). The charming human faces of the angels regard us with understanding and concern as they support the great golden wheel of the Lord. In Thessaloniki, the rainbow contains a garland of rich fruit, within which is an inner ring featuring 28 smaller gold wheels with black rims and spokes of gold. Though Küllerich and Torp see

this motif as a “circle of silver stars,”⁴ they are more likely golden, or “chrysolite,” wheels with “rims and spokes,” as in Ezekiel’s description. “The Glory of the Lord” was represented in Byzantine art by the rainbow in a symbolism that God Himself had announced to Noah after the great flood when he set the rainbow as a sign of his covenant with mankind and with all the creatures of the earth signifying that he would never again permit a universal flood (Gen 9:9–17).

According to Ezekiel, the Lord Enthroned should be in the centre of the Visions but, once again, the artists showed their independence. Although the mosaic tesserae of the Lord are mostly missing, the drawing of the figure has fortunately been recovered and it shows the Lord not enthroned but standing with a commanding raised right hand. Kiilerich has significantly identified this as the pose of the statue of Constantine as Sun-god Helios which the emperor himself had placed atop a porphyry column in the centre of his circular forum in Constantinople in 330 CE.⁵ The column was still in place when Theodosius evoked the image of Christ in the Rotunda mosaic.⁶

In 2014 a symposium of the Courtauld Institute of Art was held in Athens to examine the extraordinary coincidence of pagan, Jewish, and Christian speculation and piety that came together in the Late Antique mosaics of Thessaloniki.⁷ One of the issues under consideration was the pious practice of “seeing God” referred to in philosophical, mystical, and iconographical expressions.⁸ The philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias in the 2nd century CE speculated that the activity of perception involved an assimilation of the viewer to the person or object being viewed.⁹ The mosaic of the little chapel of Hosios David/Moni Latomou, Thessaloniki (425–450) presents Christ seated on a rainbow within a brilliant mandorla of white and silver light, surrounded by the four Living Creatures of the Ezekiel Visions: man, lion, ox, and eagle (Ezek 1:10).¹⁰ Christ unfurls a scroll bearing the text of Isaiah 25:9–10a which begins with “Behold our God” (Figure 1.2). What it meant to “behold God” was a subject of intense speculation by rabbis as well as by Christian commentators. The mosaic was discussed in the Athens symposium by Laura Nasrallah¹¹ who

4 Kiilerich—Torp 2017, 50.

5 Kiilerich—Torp 2017, 50 and fig. 46.

6 On Constantine’s column, see also Mathews 2009–2010, 5–16.

7 Eastmond—Hatzaki 2017.

8 Nasrallah 2017, 77–79.

9 Magness 2005, 1–52.

10 Mathews 1993, 118–121.

11 Nasrallah 2017, 76–89.



FIGURE 1.2 Mosaic of Christ in the Vision of Ezekiel, apse of Hosios David/Moni Latomou, Thessaloniki, 425–450. Eastmond—Hatzaki 2017, Figure 35 (page 79)

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appealed to Alexandrian optics, which consider the effect of the object on the viewer, implying that gazing upon God would be expected to divinise the devout viewer. It is significant that both Byzantines and Catholics attached special importance to the viewing of Christ in the Sacrament. One should compare the Roman liturgy’s “elevation of the Eucharist,” following the prayer of the consecration, to the Byzantine rite’s Great Entrance procession where the deacons carried the Eucharist on their heads around the church. Viewing the consecrated Bread and Wine conveyed a special blessing on the viewer.¹² The viewer’s experience of the mosaic of Hosios David, even though the space was much more intimate than the grand programmes and enormous domes of the Rotunda of Thessaloniki or, later, of St Sophia in Constantinople, had a similar effect. These can all be considered as examples of what Nasrallah refers to as “the practice of seeing God,” a practice of prayer or meditation in which the devout confronted mental images of God, while at the same time insisting on God’s absolute transcendence. Origen and John Chrysostom, she remarks,

12 On the actions accompanying the Consecration and related passages in Grigor Anec’i, see Jungmann 1951, vol. I, 202–218.

insisted that Ezekiel did not claim to have seen God but only a “likeness” of God, as is of course written in Ezekiel 1:28.

In the Hosios David, Christ’s scroll bears a modified quote from Isaiah: “Behold our God, upon whom we hope and rejoice greatly in our salvation, that he may give rest to this *house*.” It is important to notice this difference: in the prophetic text the word is *oros* (mountain), whereas here it is given as *oikos* (house), referring pointedly to the chapel itself in which the mosaic is found. The unnamed woman who donated the chapel wanted to refer to Isaiah, who was most frequently cited for his prediction of the miraculous birth of Christ from a virgin (Isa 7:14) but also wanted to refer to the “house”, that is the chapel itself. The river below the Vision is the Chebar, mentioned in Ezekiel 1:1, 3. The two figures of prophets flanking Christ are handled very differently. The one on the left is rendered as an older, wilder man, with long grey beard and long unkempt hair, standing bent in a reverential posture and making a listening gesture with his large hands. The figure on the right is an elegant younger man, seated on a stool and holding a codex, his thoughtful gesture of hand to chin accentuating his trim beard and short haircut that recall Roman portraits. It would be reasonable to assume that the two contrasting prophets are on the left Ezekiel and on the right Isaiah whose text Christ holds for the viewer to read, or even St John, as the Four Living Creatures re-appear in Revelation 4:6–8 and both Ezekiel and Revelation 4 clearly discuss the Enthroned or seated God, the Apocalypse borrowing the language and imagery of Ezekiel. The figure is, however, Habbakuk holding a book with the words of Ezekiel’s third chapter.¹³

3 The Development of the Peacock Motif

The 6th century is pivotal for Byzantine iconography: it is the time when the peacock motif multiplies. Life-like blue and gold peacocks and delicate peacock tail feathers had already been employed in colourful profusion in the Rotunda of Thessaloniki, on the so-called Martyrs’ zone. While peacocks are not mentioned in Scripture, the imaginative Byzantine artists seized upon their gorgeous mating display to symbolise the miraculous fertility of the Virgin Mary. An early spectacular example is the church of St Polyeuktos in Constantinople, commissioned by the wealthy heiress of the Theodosian family, Anicia Juliana (520–527). The fourteen niches either side of the nave of this splendid church contained perhaps as many as twenty-eight life-size sculptures

13 This exact iconography is also seen on the reverse side of a two-sided icon with the Virgin Kataphyge from Thessaloniki, dated 1371–1393. See Vassilaki 2004, 198–199.

of peacocks, their tails outspread as in their mating dance. Encircling the niches are the proud hexameter verses of the founder's dedication, around which in turn is found a heavily laden grapevine.¹⁴ It is disappointing that the inscription is exclusively concerned with the generosity of the donor and gives no help with the iconography. But British archaeologist Martin Harrison, who excavated the ruins of the church, argued that the peacocks stood for the Cherubim of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem and he demonstrated at the same time that the measurements of the church in long or royal cubits matched exactly those of Solomon's temple.¹⁵ The Eucharistic associations of the vine were commonplace in Early Christian literature and the location of the peacocks either side of the altar would support a Eucharistic interpretation.¹⁶ The peacocks in Anicia Juliana's church were guardians of the Eucharist.

The peacock had been Juno's bird, which Byzantine artists chose to emphasise the miraculous nature of Mary's divine conception. It was a real stroke of genius that artists seized upon the peacock display, for before she and Joseph "came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 1:18) thus realising Isaiah's prophecy, "Behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a child" (Isa 7:14). This most extraordinary fertility image is used repeatedly in connection with the Annunciation. For example, in two 6th-century illustrations of the "Annunciation to Zachariah and to Mary" attached to the 10th-century manuscript M 2374, fol. 229 recto and verso (Figures 1.3 and 1.4), the annunciate angel Gabriel's wings are covered with peacock feathers full of brilliant "eyes."¹⁷ One might say this is incorrect ornithologically, since in his mating dance the peacock makes this striking display of feathers in his tail, not his wings. However, when Christian art takes up this symbolism in the Angel of the Annunciation, the peacock's tail feathers appear on the angel's wings. The many "eyes" on the peacock's tail can then be understood as signifying the all-seeing angelic wisdom. According to the Physiologus, just as the peacock cries when he sees his ugly feet, so man will cry out to God when he realises his ugly sins; perhaps his hoarse croaking is a call to repentance.¹⁸ Artists wanted to mark Mary's miraculous conception of her divine offspring with the most remarkable fertility imagery they could find, and they assigned her the iconography of the peacock's mating dance. Because of such associations the peacock bird is still commonly cultivated in monastery gardens.

14 Harrison 1989, figs. 31 & 34.

15 Harrison 1986, figs. 98 and 108. Idem, 1989, 137–142.

16 For their location see Mathews, 2016, figs. 6.17 and 6.18.

17 Mathews 1995, 200–215, figs. 1 and 2.

18 *Sancti Epiphanii ad Physiologum*, 1588, 47–49.



FIGURES 1.3–4 The angel Gabriel with wings of peacock feathers in the Annunciations to Zachariah and to Mary, Matenadaran 2374, fol. 229^r and 229^v, 6th century

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A Eucharistic interpretation can also be suggested for the nine mosaic peacocks with tails outspread in Basilica A of Nikopolis in Greece (Figure 1.5).¹⁹ Basilica A stands within the fortification walls of the city and was dedicated to Saint Demetrios by two successive bishops named Doumetios, the earlier around 550 and his son Doumetios II in the last quarter of the 6th century, around 575. The peacock mosaics are located to the south of the narthex, in the *diaconicon*, or sacristy, where the faithful would have left their offerings of bread and wine to be prepared for transfer to the altar by deacons in the procession of the Great Entrance of the liturgy. The mosaic shows an amphora-chalice from which issues a vigorous grapevine surrounded by the semicircle of nine standing peacocks with their tails outspread. The grapevine is used in Isaiah as a symbol of Israel, starting with Isa 5:1–2, “Let me sing for my beloved a love

19 Kitzinger 1951, 81–122; Zachos 2007, vol. II, 35, fig. 17, drawing by Alexandros Philadelphus made on visit to Nikopolis in 1916; Chrysostomou—Kefallonitou 2001, 34 ff.; Zachos 2015, 177–181.



FIGURE 1.5 Mosaic with grapevine issuing from an amphora-chalice surrounded by peacocks, Diaconikon, Basilica A of Doumetios, Nikopolis, 550–575
 COPYRIGHT: KONSTANTINOS L. ZACHOS (ZACHOS 2015, 181)

song concerning his vineyard.” The Lord is the gardener, but in return for his tender care, his vine in Isaiah yields only sour wild grapes. In the New Testament, however, the vine bears a clear Eucharistic message as we find in John 15: 1–8, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser,” and the narrative of the Last Supper refers to the fruit of the vine in Mark 14:22–25 and Luke 22:17–20. In the Early Christian church, the Eucharist was celebrated daily and communion was received both as bread and wine. Since peacocks are not a biblical motif, the art historian must infer their meaning from the context. In nature, the peacock bird does not belong in cultivated vineyards but inhabits the tall grasses of wild marshlands and his extraordinary outspread tail is part of his mating behaviour.

Continuing a liturgical practice since the 4th century “Apostolic Constitutions,” fans, or *rhipidia*, were used in the Divine Liturgy to accompany the Great Entrance. The earliest surviving fans, from the Kaper Koraon treasure, securely dated to 577 by silver stamps, show peacock feathers.²⁰ The other term for such fans is *hexapteryga*, or “six-winged,” alluding to the peacocks’ connection

20 See “Rhipidion” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Kazhdan et al. 1991, vol. 3, 1791) and Evans 2004, 132–133.

with the Seraphim, according, as we will see, to the Vision of Isaiah. The Kaper Koraon *rhipidia*, enriched by the influence of Ezekiel's Vision and the powerful text of the Revelations (Rev 4:6–9), have four “many-eyed” wings, crossed at the top and bottom, with human, lion, ox, and eagle faces (symbols of the four Evangelists). Peacock feathers encircle the *rhipidia* and the wheels of Ezekiel's Visions are on either side. A very similar iconography is to be found in the Rabbula Gospel “Ascension,” from the monastery of St John of Zagba, Mesopotamia, dated 886. We find once again crossed wings, filled with eyes, with the human face and three Beast faces in the centre, with an open hand and four “fire-wheels,” as Weitzman denotes them, based on Ezekiel's Vision.²¹

4 Seraphim and Isaiah's Vision

In Scripture the celestial beings known as Seraphim are mentioned only once in the Old Testament, in the Vision of Isaiah (Isa 6:2), but the four Living Creatures of Revelation 4:6–8 seem intended as Seraphim, and they have six wings: the Prophet describes them as having three pairs of wings and standing above God's throne. John Chrysostom, in his commentary on Isaiah, describes Seraphim as incorporeal (*asomatoi*) powers of the heavenly *demoi* whose name in Hebrew means “burning mouths.”²² The usual epithet for Seraphim was *hexapteryga*, “having six wings,” as we saw in the context of the *rhipidia*. By the 9th century, under the inspiration of Revelation 4:8, artists depicted Seraphim as composite creatures similar to Cherubim, with four or six wings, a face in the centre, and faces of ox, lion, and eagle. The many-eyed wings are derived from those of the Cherubim (see below).²³

The peacock motif, prominent in Early Christian art, exists from classical antiquity to Christian times: paradisiac gardens, springtime renewal related to the regeneration of the bird's feathers, imperial in association with Juno. Peacocks were assigned more strictly Christian symbolism standing for eternal triumph in heaven and heavenly splendour. The “eyes” of peacock feathers were perceived as the many-eyed wings of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Archangels, as we saw in the Matenadaran miniatures of the “Annunciation.” Thus peacocks, in their angelic guise, were present in the earliest works of Christian art and in what are perhaps the two most important episodes of Christ's life, the Annunciation of his coming and the announcement of his death at the Last Supper.

21 Weitzmann 1977, pl. 36, 29 and 101.

22 PG 56, 70.

23 See “Seraphim” in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Kazhdan et al. 1991, vol. 3, 1870).

One of the most striking “peacock-eyed” instances of angel wings is to be found in the apse mosaic of the Panagia tis Angeloktisti in Kiti, Cyprus, a work most probably of the late 6th century, according to Megaw who finds parallels with St Catherine’s monastery in the Sinai and with San Vitale in Ravenna.²⁴ In Kiti, the Virgin Mary holds in her left arm the Christ Child and is flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel, their wings constructed from the tail feathers of the peacock. Artists must have observed actual peacocks very carefully: for the upper third of the angels’ wings they employed the fish-scale pattern seen at the stem of the bird’s tail, while on the lower two thirds of the angels’ wings we find the familiar full “open eye” tail feathers.

5 Cherubim, Ezekiel, and the Cherubikon

Cherubim in the Old Testament served as the throne-bearers of Yahweh.²⁵ Greek authors describe them as fiery, with four faces and many eyes (*polyomata*), praising God, defending the church, and assisting in the Last Judgement. Pseudo-Dionysos emphasised their spiritual qualities in their ability to receive the gift of light and to see and comprehend God.²⁶ According to Chrysostom, the name meant “full knowledge.”²⁷ Images of two gold Cherubim were placed on the Ark of the Covenant (Exod 25:18–22) and in the Temple of Solomon (1 Kgs 6:23–29), as Harrison also observed in the context of St Polyeuktos’ church. These Old Testament Cherubim were cited by John of Damascus among others in polemics against the Iconoclasts, made by human hands yet objects of cult, they justified the veneration of icons.²⁸

At this moment the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine church was enriched by the insertion of the Cherubikon hymn in 573–574 by Justin II to mark the bringing up of the offering of Bread and Wine to the altar. The hymn significantly refers to the participants in the liturgy as representing (in the Greek it is literally “icon-ising”) the Cherubim. Though the actual text is short, the hymn is sung at a very slow tempo, in imitation of the singing of the Heavenly Hosts:

24 The angels hold a sceptre and offer a globe with a cross at the apex. Megaw notes that these features are repeated in the mosaic at St Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinai and help corroborate the 6th century dating of the mosaic. He also notes that the precision and delicacy used to construct the faces in Kiti echoed in the technique used on the faces of San Vitale at Ravenna. See Megaw 1974, 57–88.

25 See “Cherubim” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Kazhdan et al. 1991, vol. 1, 414).

26 Rorem and Luibheid 1987, 50–51.

27 PG 48, 724.

28 Anderson 1980.

Let us who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity—let us now lay aside every earthly care.

So that we may welcome the King of all, who comes invisibly, borne aloft by armies of angels. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.²⁹

Already in the opening words, the hymn, chanted by the congregation as well as the cantors, assimilates them to the Cherubim.³⁰ In many ways this is the dramatic climax of the Byzantine celebration of the Eucharist and the placing of the Bread and Wine on the altar was an essential element in the Eucharistic rite from earliest times. A simple reading of the text cannot convey the drama. The deacons, according to the rubrics, are instructed to place the offerings on a tray and carry it on their heads for all to see while the chanting of the Cherubikon is slowed down to evoke musically the grandeur of the Cherubim. The parading of the offerings through the congregation must be seen as part of the rite of “seeing God.”³¹ Gazing on the Blessed Sacrament was thought to confer special blessings on the devout, and this has been documented in the Latin rite of the mass as well, as already indicated.³² The tangible evidence that we retain of the hymn’s powerful impact on church ritual is the *rhipidia*, their representation of the Cherubim seen to this day in Orthodox churches. Participation in the liturgy involved what we might call play-acting, reinforced by costumes (vestments) and props (*rhipidia*).³³ While the author is not named, the Cherubikon hymn gave a new theatrical climax to the liturgy.

6 Vrt’anēs K’ert’oġ

In the early 7th century, we have a very important Armenian document, Vrt’anēs’ treatise “Concerning Iconoclasts,” which is virtually a new source on the theology of icons. Although it was published in a well-annotated French translation by Sirarpie Der Nersessian in 1945 it has gone quite unnoticed by Byzantine art historians who prefer to believe that the subject was exclusively the

29 Kucharek 1971, 478; see also 477–484.

30 Taft 1975, 53–118.

31 See Nasrallah, *supra*.

32 See the prayers accompanying the elevation of the sacrament immediately after the “Consecration,” when the celebrant raised first the bread and then the chalice over his head for all to see, in Jungmann, 1951, vol. 2, 202–217.

33 A pre-Christian precedent for this ritual can be found in a panel painting of the Archaic period, treating the offerings as too holy to handle. See Mathews 2016, fig. 2.3.

domain of Greek theologians.³⁴ Catholicos of Dvin 604–607, Vrt'anēs K'ert'ol (ca. 550–620) wrote letters to the clergy of his see concerned with their adherence to the “correct” monophysite position. He refers to the Nativity of Christ as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin birth (Isa 7:14) by which she has equivalently dethroned the ancient fertility goddesses of the pagans. In his discussion of a series of icons of the Life of Christ, Vrt'anēs attributes the Nativity to Isaiah: “As Isaiah spoke of the Nativity and Jeremiah (about) the going forth ... and Ezekiel and Hosea the Resurrection.” Numerous are the images in both architecture and the portable works of art of the Enthroned Theotokos, her throne enriched with gemstones and pearls. A less frequent motif associated with the seat of the Mother of God, the wheels of Ezekiel's Vision, is to be found in the Walters Armenian manuscript 537, fol. 2r, dated 966 (Figure 1.6). In this painting, albeit schematically, four “wheels” are placed at the corners of the Virgin's throne. The accompanying inscription quotes the words of Elizabeth at the Visitation, “Blessed are you among women” (Luke 1:42) to which Mary replied, “The Lord has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of low degree” (Luke 1:52).

The “wheels” that Ezekiel included in his Vision of the enthroned Lord presented a puzzle for both artists and commentators. The wheels symbolise the Lord's mobility or omnipresence. Mary's part in salvation history is described in dramatic detail in the lengthy Akathistos Hymn of the 6th century, sometimes ascribed to Romanos the Melode, and many of these details show up in the so-called festival icons that embellish Byzantine churches after Iconoclasm. Ezekiel is more than once cited in Vrt'anēs' treatise. Specifically, in discussing the Cherubim, Vrt'anēs says,

Moses set the example of images for the altar, by God's command; two Cherubim finely fashioned of gold with wings and human form on top of the table of atonement ... And the divine prophet Ezekiel; the Visions that he saw he did not (see) like other prophets or (pronouncers of) oracles, but through the prophecy of one who has seen God he spoke saying: the Lord placed me on a very high mountain, and on it was the likeness of a built city, and he led me inside, and I saw in it a temple, ... And I (Ezekiel) saw the temple decorated (“painted”) all around on the inside and outside (with) cherubim and palm trees ... and the cherubim had human form, two by two all of them, and a palm tree in the middle of the two.³⁵

34 See forthcoming translation of Vrt'anēs, *Concerning Iconoclasts*, by Maranci and van Lint.

35 Maranci and van Lint, forthcoming.



FIGURE 1.6 The wheels of Ezekiel's Vision at the corners of the Virgin's throne, The Virgin and Child Enthroned. Walters Armenian Gospel W 537, fol. 2 recto, 966
 COPYRIGHT: THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM, BALTIMORE

Thus, returning to the association of Cherubim and *rhipidia*, we learn in the *History in Three Parts*, written in 980 by Bishop Uxtanēs of Sebastia, that Vrt'anēs, having compiled a written inventory, showed his successor Catholicos Abraham (*r.* 607–615) the contents of the patriarchal treasure which included “fans.”³⁶ This further confirms our information on the use of these liturgical fans or *rhipidia*, expanding our knowledge to Armenia.

7 St Sophia of Constantinople

Cherubim constituted a very important part of the iconography of the Visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, both in the earliest versions of the subject and in the most famous. The construction of a coherent celestial map of man's salvation is the grand accomplishment of the middle Byzantine system of dome decoration and its definitive realisation is documented in the works under examination here. The Rotunda of Thessaloniki and St Sophia of Constantinople were both extremely ambitious projects. These two largest domes in the history of Byzantine architecture, executed in gold at enormous expense, were very demanding intellectually, involving the best theological minds of the time. About five hundred years apart, they confronted the same grand challenge and the solutions they reached were decisive for the history of Byzantine art. Naturally there are several significant differences between them, which we cannot discuss here. It is important to note, however, that the four angels who support the mosaic rainbow framing an ascending Christ in Thessaloniki are also to be found on the pendentives in St Sophia. They are represented as enormous six-winged Cherubim/Seraphim, their hands hidden beneath their wings. As they are located in the pendentives, far below the medallion of Christ in the dome, they are separated by a zone of windows in the drum. Moreover, the Mother of God, who was entirely missing in the Rotunda of Thessaloniki, takes her place among the Cherubim/Seraphim by being placed over the sanctuary in St Sophia. The enormous Cherubim/Seraphim in the pendentives may be perceived as attending her as well as the Pantokrator. Since she bore Christ within her, when the Theotokos is pictured enthroned, the image may also be understood as an image of Christ enthroned, as Isaiah wrote “upon the throne of David” (Isa 9:7).

Any discussion of the mosaics of St Sophia must start with Cyril Mango's comprehensive monograph.³⁷ On the confusion concerning the identity of the angelic imagery, Mango argues,

36 Arzoumanian 2008, 85–86.

37 Mango 1962.

The *hexapteryga* of the pendentives have been called both cherubim and seraphim by various authors. This uncertainty cannot be definitely resolved, although I would be inclined to ... seraphim. According to the book of Isaiah (6:2–6), seraphim had faces, hands and feet and each of them was provided with six wings ... The cherubim, on the other hand, as described by Ezekiel in his Visions by the river Chebar and at Jerusalem (1:5 ff.; 10:1 ff.), were four in number; each had four faces, four or eight wings, were completely covered with eyes, and moved with wheels. Unfortunately, these distinctions were not observed in Byzantine iconography. ... In Byzantine art six-winged cherubim are the rule rather than the exception, and we even find seraphim with multiple eyes.³⁸

Commenting on the involvement of Gregory the Illuminator in the mosaics, Mango mentions that the Emperor Basil I, responsible for the 9th century programme, traced his own lineage to Gregory the Illuminator, who converted the Armenian royal family to Christianity, according to a genealogy prepared for the Emperor by the learned Patriarch Photios. This may also explain the special attention to Ezekiel and Isaiah in the mosaics of St Sophia. In the great cathedral of Constantinople, Ezekiel is the first prophet in the row of prophets of the north tympanum.³⁹ He also appears, holding a scroll inscribed with Ezek 1:4–5, in the eastern side of the vault of the central bay in a room over the southwest vestibule.⁴⁰ Isaiah is the first in the row of prophets in the south tympanum, his right hand pointing towards the sanctuary, his left holding a scroll with the inscription from Isa 7:14, “Behold the Virgin ...”⁴¹ Both of these prophets, along with Jeremiah, are on a larger scale than the others.⁴² The 9th century programme of St Sophia is therefore also remarkable for its interest in Visions, and, as we saw, Visions were a particular bias of Vrt’anēs. Thus, in this eclectic iconography, especially of the vault, we find Isaiah’s Seraphim, Ezekiel’s tetramorphic four-winged Cherubim, wheels and flames and the rainbow that may derive from Ezek 1:28 or Rev 4:3. Quite aptly Mango refers to the mosaic as having a “composite character,” that is drawn from several scriptural passages.⁴³

38 Mango 1962, 85–86.

39 Mango 1962, 61, figs. 78, 88, 89.

40 Mango 1962, 44.

41 Mango 1962, 58.

42 Mango 1962, diagrams III and IV.

43 Mango 1962, 34.

8 Conclusion

One cannot but express admiration for the considerable number of monuments and works of art that have in one way or another incorporated the Visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel in their iconography, as well as the variety with which the subject was embraced. Fully conscious that the topic chosen for this paper is vast and complex and that the material was not treated in any great depth or completeness, it is perhaps fitting to conclude with two Armenian monuments, just a sampling of the large numbers of religious buildings and artefacts that these two prophets' Visions illuminated down the centuries.

On the western façade of the Church of the Holy Cross on the island of Ałt'amar (915–921) we find a rich programme of sculptural decoration with Christ, angels and the donor Gagik Arcruni. The iconography of this façade has been extensively discussed, though far from completely.⁴⁴ Scholars have chosen to leave out of their discussions the two large angelic creatures with hands raised in the orans position flanking the main central figures. Haloed, with a pair of wings crossed over their nimbus, they have a second set of long wings crossing in front of their body like stoles and a third pair hanging behind. They are therefore “six-winged” or *hexapteryga* Seraphim, their wings covered in the requisite peacock eyes clearly relating them to the numerous hosts that have been depicted with peacock wings.

Christina Maranci's recent study of the Ezekiel Visions in Ani Cathedral and the Church of St Gregory “Abułamrenc” offers a climax for our study of the subject.⁴⁵ The iconography literally wraps around the ceremonial action. This is a long way from the intimacy of the Hosios David where the chamber was intended, according to one legend, for the private prayer of a princess hiding from public scrutiny. In Ani, the Vision was meant to captivate the public as the community assembled with their bishop for the divine service. It is unfortunate that the decoration is so badly damaged to the point of being almost invisible. On the other hand, it is very fortunate that through Maranci's skilled image adjustment software, we are once again able to discern the cathedral's apse paintings which definitely represent the theophanic Vision of Ezekiel and Revelations 4, with the figure of the prophet himself included, as we have seen in Hosios David and as could be seen elsewhere as well. To date these paintings Maranci uses numerous comparanda in Byzantine and Armenian art and she proposes an early 11th century date, the time of the construction of the church. Thus, we

44 See, for example Beledian 2019, 268ff. and Donabédian 2019, 310–315.

45 Maranci 2021.

find that Ezekiel's visions were very important to Armenian art and literature, certainly ever since Vrt'anēs' seminal treatise. The subject of the iconography of the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel is important and far-reaching and deserves lengthy and careful study.

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“Open My Eyes So That I May See Wonderful Things” [Ps 118 (119):18]

Some Art Historical Remarks about the Consecration of a Painted Church

Christina Maranci

1 Introduction

In 2012, Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean published a critical edition of the *Mayr Maštoc'*, the *Great Ritual Book*, based on the earliest known manuscripts.¹ This 921-page volume, including a lengthy introduction and critical apparatus, holds significance not only for scholars of the Armenian Church and its liturgy, but also for those working in a host of other disciplines and neighbouring traditions. Tēr-Vardanean's work particularly should encourage historians of mediaeval Armenian art and architecture, who will find in the *Maštoc'* a vast library of interpretive tools for understanding imagery and monuments. Material objects and spaces play a major role in the performance of the rites, sometimes as objects of consecration themselves. Indeed, the *Maštoc'* contains not only rites of the foundation and consecration (and re-consecration) of a church, but also ritual blessings for crosses, vestments, manuscripts, semantra,² baptismal fonts, church doors, and liturgical chalices and patens. The *Maštoc'* also includes directives and readings for the consecration of a church that is painted: *Kanon znkarel eketec'i awrhnel*.³

In the following brief and preliminary study, I consider this last rite in relation to Armenian art. First, and most fundamentally, the text offers fairly early historical testimony that church interiors were regularly painted, thus confirming written sources and, of course, surviving programmes.⁴ Second, the rite makes clear that the paintings were consecrated, a point which holds significance in discussions of image worship and iconoclasm in Armenia. The direct-

1 Tēr-Vardanean 2012 (hereafter *Mayr Maštoc'*). I wish to thank Father Daniel Findikyan for first bringing this work to my attention.

2 Lit. “hour striker” (ժամահար), and thus translated by Conybeare as ‘rattle’.

3 *Mayr Maštoc'*, 160–161.

4 On the 7th-century testimony of Vrt'anēs K'ert'oł, see Der Nersessian 1973, 380–403 and 405–415; and Mathews 2008–2009.

ives, prayers, and psalm readings of this rite, I suggest below, offer important, and thus far largely neglected, insight into attitudes towards images in medi-aeval Armenia.⁵

2 The Text

Tēr-Vardanean’s critical edition of the text is based on the two earliest manuscripts preserving the rite.⁶ Drawing on a study of the colophon, as well as codicological, paleographical, and linguistic evidence, he dates Venice San Lazzaro MS 457/320 (= V 457/320) to around 960, copied perhaps at Argina but more certainly within the Bagratid kingdom.⁷ Written on parchment in *erkat’agir* by the married priest Giorg, this manuscript preserves in its approximately 240 pages almost all of the euchology. The second manuscript, Yerevan Matenadaran MS 1001 (= M 1001), written in *erkat’agir* but on paper, most likely dates to the early 11th century; Tēr-Vardanean also locates its production within the Bagratid kingdom.⁸ In both manuscripts, the rite appears towards the beginning, on fol. 40^v of MS 457/320 and on fol. 32^r–32^v of MS 1001.

Կանոն զնկարել եկեղեցի արհնել⁹

Յերեկորեայ հսկումն առնեն եւ Գ. ժամուն առաջի սեղանւոյն ասեն սաղմոս ի թիւ ՃԺԸ. [1]. *Երանեալ են ամբիծք ի ճանապարհի. եւ զՏէր յերկնից ի բուն՝* [ՃԽԸ. 1]: Եւ դարձեալ ասեն զսաղմոսն ՃԺԲ. [2]. *Եղիցի անուն Տեսուն արհնեալ:* Եւ արհնութիւն եւ փառս հանեն, եւ տեսոնազրեն զբոլոր եկեղեցին միտոնասն, եւ սարկաւազն քարոզէ. *Վասն ի վերոստ:*

Եւ [ա]յէ զաղաթս.

ԺԹ. *Սուրբ եւ, Տէ՛ր Աստուած մեր, եւ ի սուրբս հանգուցեալ, սրբեա՛լ զպատկերս վկայից քոց զայսոսիկ, զոր այժմ մեք քեզ ստացաք: Ի յիշատակ նոցին ոչ երկրպագելի, իբրեւ զկենդանիս պատուիլ, այլ ի պայծառութիւն սրբոյ եկեղեցւոյ քո, զերկրպագութիւն եւ զփառս քեզ միայնոյ հատուցուք բարերարիդ Աստուծոյ: Դու, Տէ՛ր, սրբեա՛լ եւ արհնեա՛լ զկերպագրութիւնս*

5 For one of the few mentions of this rite by art historians, see Rapti 2014, 66 and n. 36.

6 For discussion of these two manuscripts, see *Mayr Mastoc*’, 50–63. For Venice MS 457, see also Sargisean—Sargsean 1966. For an English translation based on Venice MS 457 and other manuscripts, see Conybeare—Macleay 1905, 34–35. For a critical discussion of Conybeare’s translation, see *Mayr Mastoc*’, 34–40.

7 *Ibid.*, 57.

8 *Ibid.*, 62.

9 *Mayr Mastoc*’, 160–161, without the accompanying footnotes regarding variants between MSS Venice 457/320 and Yerevan MS 1001.

զայս՝ ի պատիւ եւ ի վայելչութիւն եկեղեցոյ քո, եւ շնորեա՛ զվարձս բարիս, որք վաստակեցան ի սմնս, զի քեզ ընծայի յամենայն հաստացեալս պատիւ եւ իշխանական փառս, որում արժանապէս վայել է գոհութիւն եւ արհնութիւն Հար եւ Որդոյ եւ Հոգւոյդ Սրբոյ այժմ եւ միշտ, յ[աւիտեան]:

Եւ իսկոյն ի ժամ մտանեն, եւ ութ ար նասկատիս կատարի:¹⁰

Canon of Blessing a Painted Church

They keep the night vigil, and at the third hour they say at the altar psalm number 118 [Ps 118 (119):1]:¹¹ Blessed are the unsoiled on the path. And to God in the Heavens Entirely [Ps 148:1]. And again they say the psalm 112 [Ps 112:1]: Blessed be the Name of the Lord. And they offer blessings and glory, and they seal (տեսանազրեն) the whole church with miwron, and the deacon proclaims In the Highest. And he says the prayer:

19. You are holy, O Lord our God, who are at rest in the saints, sanctify the images of these martyrs of yours, which we have now obtained for you. In memory of those, not to be worshipped, as if honouring those who are alive, but for the illumination of your holy church, let us offer worship and glorification to you alone, beneficent God. You, O Lord, sanctify and bless these representations (զվերպագրութիւնս) to honour and make splendid your church, and grant good rewards to those who laboured in this because honour and dominical glory is given to you for all the faithful, for which praise and blessing is worthily fitting to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever.

And immediately they enter and the dedication is completed on the eighth day.

3 Art-Historical Remarks

In summary, the participants perform a psalmody (Pss 118 (119), 148, and 112), followed by blessings, anointment, a diaconal proclamation, and the prayer. This

10 The meaning of this last sentence is obscure. Did they introduce the hour, or enter the church? And if the latter, where were they prior to doing so? I read հսկոյն as “immediately” but it could also be a form of հսկումն [vigil]; thus: “they enter the vigil and the dedication is completed on the eighth day.” One notes, though, that “իսկոյն ի ժամ մտանեն” seems to be a formula used through the Maštoc’, see for example *Mayr Maštoc’*, 168. Yerevan MS 1001 gives a slightly different locution, see *Mayr Maštoc’* 161, n. 3. I thank the anonymous reviewer for the corrections to and suggestions upon a draft of this translation, and the paper as a whole.

11 Numbering of the psalms hereafter is given following the Armenian tradition; in the received Greco-Latin tradition Ps 118 corresponds to Ps 119.

would seem thus to be a fairly short rite, with a single prayer and minimal movement around the church. Yet it is important to remember that Ps 118(119) is the longest of the psalms, and that depending on the size of the church and, presumably, the copiousness of the imagery, anointing the “whole church” could take some time. Nevertheless, this rite is much shorter and less complex than the rite of church consecration, which is the subject of a study by Father Daniel Findikyan and which involves multiple units including movement inside and outside the church.¹² Our text, moreover, omits mention of a bishop (unlike the modern version of the same rite), raising the possibility that the anointment and prayer could be performed by a priest.

Liturgical questions I must leave to experts in that field; my focus here is on the significance of the rite for the study of art history. First and foremost, the rite stipulates that sacred images must be consecrated. This involves anointment (*tearṅagrel-* lit. “writing the Lord”)¹³ with *mīwron*. As scholars have observed, this practice is attested already in the time of Catholicos Yovhannēs Ōjnec’i (*fl.* 717–728).¹⁴ In his *Treatise against the Paulicians*, he writes

behold, by means of the words of the apostles, we, believers in the All-Holy Trinity, regard anointment with oil as the instrument of salvation; similarly [when applied] to churches, altars, crosses, and images, we believe divine power enters them. And they are thus distinguished from other similar matter [*nīwt’*], just as we ourselves are distinguished from those who, seized with deception, believe that matter is divine.¹⁵

Two of the Canons of Ōjnec’i also concern the anointing of crosses:

27: If someone makes a cross of wood, or of any other material, and does not give it to a priest to consecrate and anoint with holy *mīwron*, it is not worthy to receive honour and to be offered worship; it is also empty and

12 Findikyan 1998.

13 Attestations of this term date from the 5th century; see the *Nor Baṅgirk’ Haykazean Lezui* (hereafter *NBHL*) vol. II: 862.

14 Der Nersessian 1973, 409. Rapti 2014, 65–66.

15 Der Nersessian 1973, 409. Rapti 2014, 65–66. Որպէս եւ ահաւասիկ մեր բանիւ առաքելոցն հաստացեալքս ամենասուրբ Երրորդութեանն, նկատեմք ասծեալ իւրովն զփրկութեանն գործարանս. զեկեղեցիս, զսեղանս, զխաչս, զպատկերս, եւ հաստամք ընդ նմին ի ներքս զալ աստուածային զարկութեանն: Եւ այսուիկ որոշեալ լինին նորա ի հոմատեսակ յիւրաքանչիւրոցն նիւթոց: Զատանիմք եւ մեր յայնցանէ, որք ի համանգամայն նիւթ Աստուածութեանն կարծեաք խաբեալք գրաւին: (Yovhannēs Ōjnec’i in M.H. 2007, 42. See also Y.Ō. *Matenagrut’iwnk’* 1833, 43–44).

void of divine power, and [such practice] lies outside of the tradition of the Apostolic Church.¹⁶

28: As for those [crosses] which have been consecrated and anointed, they thenceforth become instruments of the divine mystery, these one must honour and worship, prostrate oneself before and kiss: in them dwells the Holy Spirit, through them is dispensed protection of mankind, and the graces of healing the ailments of soul and body ...¹⁷

The texts of Ōjñec'i establish a precedent for the element of anointment as a requirement in the preparation of objects and images for sacred use. While this is not the place for a general discussion of holy *miwron* in Armenia, one may point out that the practice of anointing crosses in particular is mentioned in a number of Armenian texts from the 10th century onward, sometimes in response to accusations of impropriety by the Byzantine and Syrian Churches.¹⁸ “You write dismissively of how we seal the cross,” the (appropriately-named) Catholicos Xaç'ik writes to the metropolitan of Sebastia before embarking on his defence.¹⁹ Responding to the Syrian patriarch John's questions about the consecration of crosses, Gēorg Lořec'i writes that not doing so would be “to worship mere stone or wood,” a practice that is “heathen and

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- 16 Der Nersessian 1973, 409. Իէ [27]. Եթէ որ խաչ արասցէ փայտեայ եւ կամ յինչ եւ իցէ նիւրի, եւ ոչ տացէ քահանային արհնել եւ ածանել զնա միտոնովն սրբով, ոչ է պարտ զնա ի պատիւ ընդունել կամ երկրպագութիւն մատուցանել զի դատարկ եւ ունայն է յաստուածային զարութենէն, եւ արտաքոյ ասանդութեան առաքելական եկեղեցոյ: (Yovhannēs Ōjñec'i in M.H. 2007, 703. See also Y.Ö. *Matenagrut'iwñk'* 1833, 32). Translation (with modifications) from Der Nersessian.
- 17 Der Nersessian 1973, 409. Իը (28). Իսկ զայնսիկ, զորս արհնութեամբ եւ ածմամբ կատարեալ է, որք միանգամ եւ իցեն աստուածային խորհրդոցն զործարանք, պարտ է զնոսա պատուել եւ պաշտել, երկրպագել եւ համբուրել, զի ի նոսա բնակէ Հոգին Սուրբ, եւ նորաք մատակարարէ ի մարդիկ զպահպանութիւնս եւ զշնորհս բժշկութեան ախտից հոգոց եւ մարմնոց: (Yovhannēs Ōjñec'i in M.H. 2007, 703. See also Y.Ö. *Matenagrut'iwñk'* 1833, 32). On Ōjñec'i's Canons see Mardirossian, 2004.
- 18 For the earliest Armenian rite of consecrating crosses, see *Mayr Maštoc'*, 168–192. For scholarly discussion of the anointing of crosses, see, in addition to Der Nersessian 1973, *Mayr Maštoc'*, 57; Findikyan 1998, 101 and note 121; Rapti 2014, 69. For a very early attestation of the “oil of anointment”, see Terian 2008, esp. 104–106. For a recent comprehensive discussion of *miwron*, see Kabařyan 2001; see also Lazarosyan 2008, 60–73. For Narekac'i's famous poem on holy *miwron* (in which one also finds the term *tēaringrel*) see M.H. 2008, 565–598; Mahé—Mahé 2000, 94, 95, 733–769; La Porta 2007, 361–363.
- 19 Step'anos Tarōñec'i (Greenwood 2017), 279. Xaç'ik continues his letter to defend the “baptising” of crosses with water and wine, rather than its anointing with oil.

demonic ... a worship of creations and not God the creator.”²⁰ Nersēs Šnorhali in the 12th century offers a particularly eloquent explanation of the validity of anointing (and worshipping) crosses:

Yet I offered worship and prostration to [the anointed cross], not, as we say, to the material, but rather to the power of the God which is united with it indivisibly ... Because without the finishing of blessing and anointment; [the cross] is only a mere house, and not the nuptial bed and bridal chamber of the word of God ...²¹

The text of our prayer also states that images are not to be worshipped (երկրպագելի), but are made in memory (յիշատակ) of and to honour (պատիւ) those represented within it. The subsequent sentence further stipulates that worship and glorification are owed “to God alone”. These declarations find a context in the robust discourse on image worship and iconoclasm in mediaeval Armenian literature, beginning with the work of Vrt’anēs K’ert’oġ.²² In *Concerning Iconoclasts*, attributed to Vrt’anēs and dated to the 7th century, the text makes clear that images are not themselves divine, but instruments by which the represented figures are recalled in the mind:

58. And through the painting of images we remember them and their senders. And we do not say that this is God but rather the memorial (յիշողութիւն) of God and his servants.²³

66. Thus of what do you speak when you say this is handiwork? Because we come to know the invisible by that which is visible; and pigments and paintings are the memorial of God and his servants.²⁴

The concept of images as memorials is central to the subsequent Byzantine discourse on images, employed by John of Damascus and used in the Second

20 Der Nersessian 1973, 414–415; *Girk’ T’it’oc’* 1901, 345.

21 *Endhanrakan t’ult’k’* 1871, 273. See Nersessian 2001, 88, as well as Der Nersessian 1973, and Rapti 2014, for discussion of Nersēs Šnorhali.

22 For Vrt’anēs and the Byzantine discourse on icons, see most recently on Mathews 2008–2009.

23 Եւ մեր պատկերաց նկարուք զնոսա յիշենք եւ զառաքողսն նոցա եւ ոչ ասենք, թէ սա իցէ Աստուածն, այլ յիշողութիւնն Աստուծոյ եւ ծառայից նորա: (Vrt’anēs K’ert’oġ in M.H. 2004, 498).

24 Արդ, առ այս զինչ ասիցէք, զի եւ սա ձեռագործ է, քանզի յայտնեաք զաներեւոյթն ճանաչենք, եւ դերքն եւ նկարքն յիշողութիւն է Աստուծոյ եւ ծառայից նորա: Ibid., 499.

Council of Nicaea.²⁵ In Armenian literature, it recurs in a treatise attributed to Yovhannēs Sarkawag (1050–1129), abbot of Haḫpat.²⁶ In this text, the author argues that “in seeing the outlines (գծագրութիւնս) we come even more to the recollection (յիշատակ) [of God], bound to pray and give thanks with the mind of the heart, to Him, Himself, the Saviour.”²⁷ In his study of Yovhannēs Sarkawag, K’yoseyan locates the precedents for this concept of “the mind of the heart” (սրտի մտօք) in Vrt’anēs’ declaration that “The writings are only heard with the ears, but the pictures are seen with the eyes and heard with the ears, and understood and believed by the heart,”²⁸ and in Ōjneg’i’s phrase, the “undoubting heart” (աներկբայելի սիրտ), as used in *Against the Paulicians*.²⁹

Towards the close of the rite’s prayer is an exhortation to give “good rewards” to “those who laboured (վաստակեցան) in this.” The term “rewards” (վարձս) holds a range of meanings; in its most literal meaning it can refer to monetary compensation for work.³⁰ Also noteworthy is the term վաստակեցան which seems, in the context of the prayer, to refer directly to those who worked on the church (as opposed to the patron who paid for it). Interestingly, the prayer eschews the term “artisan” (արուեստարան), which is employed, for example, in the foundation rite of the same *Maštoc’*, in favour of a more modest semantic range.³¹ With both վաստակեցան and վարձս connoting those who labour for wages, our rite makes clear the inferior position of those who created the paintings of the church while at the same time beseeching God on their behalf.

This terminology generates a powerful contrast to the concept of God as supreme creator, pursued in the psalmody. Psalm 148, *And To God in the Heavens Entirely*, exhorts all God’s creations to praise him, beginning with the angels and the heavens, celestial bodies, and then the sea, landscape, marine creatures, mountains, trees, wild and tame animals, kings and rulers, and then young and old. Psalm 112, “*Bless the servants (lit. children- mankunk’) of the Lord, and Bless the name of the Lord,*” praises God and exhorts listeners to do so over the course of the day (v. 3 “from the rising to the setting of the sun”).³²

25 See Rapti 2014, 66. See also Mathews 2008–2009 and K’yoseyan 1979.

26 For his writings on relics and images, see Sahagean 1852 and Der Nersessian 1973, 412–413.

27 K’yoseyan 1979, 130.

28 *Ibid.*, 130–131.

29 *Ibid.*, 131.

30 *NBHL*, vol. II, 795.

31 For the foundation rite, see *Mayr Maštoc’*, 85–97.

32 Յարեւելից մինչ ՚ի մոտս արեւու, օրհնեալ է անուն տ(եան)ն.

Verses 5–6 ask, “Who is like the Lord our God who dwells on high, [6] who lowers himself to look on the heavens and earth?”³³ In his commentary, Vardan Arewelc’i (1198–1271) explains these verses:

Residing in the heights, where he rests, and yet is not contained there, he looks down upon the humble, so that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so much higher is God than the heavens. Yet as the wise and the skilled exist by his means, so it is said in other words, that the creations are that much humbler than the creator.³⁴

For those participating in the rite, within a freshly painted church, the phrase “God who dwells on high” would have held immediate meaning. Surviving apsidal compositions dating from the 7th to the 13th centuries, with few exceptions, feature Christ in the semi-dome, whether enthroned, standing, in bust length, or administering Communion to the Apostles.³⁵ Of dome compositions less is known, but one may make special note of the surviving drum paintings from Ałt’amar, which show scenes from the Creation.³⁶ Even for Ałt’amar’s patron, King Gagik Arcruni (who probably counted himself one of the “kings of the earth” of Psalm 112:11) enthroned in his gallery in the church’s south conch, the Creator would have loomed high overhead.

Ps. 118 (119) is an acrostic poem of 22 stanzas corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is sung in rites across Jewish and Christian traditions, and in the mediaeval Armenian liturgy it occurs in many moments, including the present Peace Office,³⁷ ordinations,³⁸ lay burials,³⁹ and the communion of the sick.⁴⁰ Psalm 118 (119) offers a prayer to God, its verses alternately lamenting affliction and persecution, delighting in and praising God, and praying for deliverance. The theme of the divine Creator recurs here, as in v. 73: “Your hands

33 Ով է ն(ր)պ(էս) տ(է)ր ա(ստուա)ծ մեր՝ ի բարձունս բնակեալ [6] եւ զխոնարհս տեսանէ յերկնից եւ յերկրի

34 *Meknuť'wn* 1797, 379: ‘Ի բարձունս բնակեալ՝ ուր հանգչի, եւ ոչ եթէ բովանդակի անդ. եւ զխոնարհս տեսանէ զի որչափ բարձր են երկինք յերկրէ, եւ ա[ստուա]ծ այնչափ բարձր է քան զերկինս. եւ թէպէտ՝ ի ձեռս ն[ր]ա են իմանալիք եւ զգալիք, այլ՝ այսպ[է]ս ասի, զի խոնարհ են արարածք քան զարարիչն. For Vardan’s commentaries, see also Thomson 1995, 53–54.

35 On Armenian wall painting, see now Mat’evosyan 2019.

36 Jones 2007, 72–83.

37 See Findikyan 2004, 502.

38 *Mayr Mařtoc’*, 422.

39 *Mayr Mařtoc’*, 264.

40 *Mayr Mařtoc’*, 250.

made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands.”⁴¹ Noteworthy for present purposes are several verses referring to eyes and vision. Verse 18 asks God to “open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.”⁴² In his commentary on Psalm 118:18, Vardan Arewelc'i compares the opening of the eyes to the veil which rises for those who turn to the Lord with faithful prayers.⁴³ Quite appropriate for our ritual context are verses 55, “I have remembered your name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept your laws,” and 148, which invokes the image of wakefulness: “My eyes anticipated the [dawning] of the morning, so that your words will speak to me.”⁴⁴ According to the directives of the *Mayr Maštoc'*, these lines would have been sung at the opening of the rite, after an all-night vigil and the morning service.⁴⁵ One may observe therefore the particular force of praying for spiritual sight accompanied by the gradually increasing natural light of the church, and increasingly visible painted imagery.

Psalm 118 (119) also laments the limitations of human vision, as in v. 37, “Turn my eyes from beholding vanity; keep me to your ways,” and v. 82, “My eyes awaited your word; I said, when will you comfort me?”⁴⁶ Then the psalmist turns his attention from his own eyes to those of God. Verse 153 asks God to “Look upon my humility and save me/ for I have not forgotten your laws,”⁴⁷ while verse 159 pleads “See how I love your commands/ preserve me, O Lord, by your mercy.”⁴⁸ Again we may observe the particular power of these lines when sung before freshly composed images, particularly those of Christ in the apse.

As commentators have noted, Psalm 118 (119) offers a great range of synonyms for the Torah, in which the psalmist delights. Within the first ten lines are the terms “laws” (յֹրֵטֵינוּ), “testimony” (զվկայութիւն), “ways” (ճանապարհս), “commands” (զպատուիրանս), “righteousness” (զարդարութիւնս), “rights” (զիրաւունս), and “words” (զբանս). These terms of course are consonant with

41 Ձեռք քո արարին եւ ստեղծին զիս, իմաստուն արա զիս՝ եւ ուսայց զպատուիրանս քո.

42 Զարթոն զաչս իմ, եւ նայեցայց ՚ի սքանչելիս օրինաց քոց.

43 *Meknut'wn* 1797, 395–396. Nersēs Lambronec'i interpreted v. 18's “Open my eyes” as instructions for the eyes of the soul to remain open. See Thomson 2001.

44 Ps 118 (119): 55: Յիշեցի ՚ի զիշերի զանուն քո տ(է)ր, եւ պահեցի զօրէնս քո. 148: Կանխեցին աչք իմ առաւօտու, ՚ի խօսել ինձ զբանս քո:

45 For discussion of the Third Hour, and its associations with the Crucifixion and with vesting, see Findikyan 2004, 139.

46 Ps 118 (119): 37: Դարձոն զաչս իմ զի մի տեսից զնանրու(թ)ի(ւն), ՚ի ճանապարհս քո կեցո զիս: Ps 118 (119): 82: Սպասեցին աչք իմ բանի քում, ասացի էրբ մխիթարեցել զիս.

47 Ps 118 (119): 153: Տես զխոնարհութի(ւն) իմ եւ փրկեա զիս, զի զօրէնս քո ես ոչ մոռացայ.

48 Ps 118 (119): 159: Տես զի զպատուիրանս քո սիրեցի, տ(է)ր ողորմու(թեամբ) քո կեցո զիս:

general Christian exhortations to be obedient and faithful to God, and might also reflect a specifically Maccabean strain in Armenian theology.⁴⁹ Yet, as we have noted above, by the 8th century, and particularly in the 10th and 11th centuries, the Armenian discourse on icons focused on the defence and explanation of correct worship. The textual tradition addresses the requirements of anointment, and the kind of worship owed to God, the Cross, *acheiropoieta* (images not made by human hands), and man-made images. When uttered during the consecration of a freshly-painted church, the verses of Psalm 118 (119) in praise of God’s commandments may thus be interpreted specifically in relation to the correct veneration of images—surely an important point to strike when introducing a new programme of imagery. The beholder is encouraged not only to view the representations, but to view them correctly, with an understanding of their function and their limitations.⁵⁰

4 Conclusion

Taken as a whole, the consecration of a painted church, with its opening psalms, ritual anointing, and prayer, exhibits many points of contact with mediaeval defences of sacred images. The prayer’s succinct statement on the function of images as memorials, and on the rendering of worship only to God, reflects a rich Armenian-language literature. The figure of God as superior to earthly creations and creators also find resonance in mediaeval literature.⁵¹ Finally, themes of vision, and of obedience to God, as pursued in Psalm 118 (119), would have gained particular power when performed during a rite of image consecration. Indeed, one can well imagine how the readings and prayers of the rite would have been dramatised within the church setting: after the night’s vigil, with the replacement of lamps and candles with sunlight, the imagery would have been ever more visible, allowing for the participants to engage in an encounter with the visual representation of God.

This consecration rite, however, is not merely a reflection and institutionalisation of a theological discourse. Indeed, one can argue the contrary: as part

49 On the concept of the law (օրէնք), religion, and the Maccabees in Armenian historiography, see Thomson 1975.

50 James R. Russell’s discussion of Armenian mediaeval imagery in relation to the Old Iranian etymology of Armenian “truth”, ճշմարտութիւն, as that which is “seen by the eye” holds particular relevance to a study of the consecration rite (Russell 1998).

51 Indeed, this theme opens the treatise of Vrt’anēs K’ert’ol (M.H. 2004, 493): “All creatures are decorated by vivifying light.”

of the *Maštoc'*, it probably informed the development of mediaeval Armenian attitudes towards images as much or more than treatises and ecclesiastical correspondence. For this reason, among others, it deserves the attention of art historians.

From this brief study, however, many questions remain. One would like to know about the practicalities of this rite: how long did one wait after the production of the paintings before consecrating them? What was the drying time of the paintings? How frequently were paintings added to older foundations and under what circumstances, and how was the rite adjusted, if at all? How can this rite help us to understand when and why some churches contain wall painting and others do not? How might we understand the rite in relation to the iconography and architecture of mediaeval Armenian churches in all their diversity? These questions are made more interesting because of the growing corpus of published wall paintings. Comparative questions remain, too: a study of related rites from the Byzantine, Syriac, and Georgian worlds, should be undertaken by a specialist. Finally, how did this rite evolve from its most ancient iterations to the corresponding version in the 1807 Constantinopolitan *Maštoc'*, or even to that practised today?⁵² It is hoped that successive volumes of

52 The modern rite, as preserved in the 1807 *Maštoc'* printed in Constantinople, is much longer and more elaborate than the earliest known version, as even its title reflects: "The Blessing and Anointing of a Painted Church and an Icon" (*Maštoc'* 1807, 213–215). Like the early version, however, it begins after a night vigil, in the third hour, and proceeds to the psalms 118 (119), 148, and 112. While in the early version, this is followed by the anointment of the church with *mivron*, the episcopal prayer, and the liturgy of the hour, in the 1807 *Maštoc'*, the psalmody is followed by a proclamation, a long episcopal prayer, and a *šarakan*: *Those created in your image* (զոյրս ըստ պատկերի քոս ստեղծելի) After this comes the anointment along with another prayer, followed by censing and kissing the image, and closing with the Lord's Prayer. It is interesting to note that where the early rite expressly forbids the worship of the image, the modern rite does not contain this warning but declares instead that the image was made "in honour and worship of the All-Holy Trinity." The two subsequent prayers make clear, too, the salvific and thaumaturgical properties of the image, "for those who take refuge in the Lord, a guardian of the path, helper to the distressed, healer of the sick, purgatory for the sinful, and encourager to those who doubt." The rite as it is practised today retains much from the 1807 edition, with some additions. Entitled "The Consecration of a Painted Church and of Images," it requires the ritual washing of the image with water and wine and then wiping with a clean cloth, all prior to the prayer and anointment; towards the conclusion of the rite, participants are directed to bow down and kiss the image. The distinctions between these three versions of the rite, and the rather significant development in attitudes towards holy images they seem to suggest, are worthy of further exploration. One therefore looks forward particularly to future volumes of the *Mayr Maštoc'* in order to study the later mediaeval and printed versions of the rite.

Tēr-Vardanean's series will help us to understand the development of this ritual and thereby to trace the evolution of attitudes towards images in the Armenian Church.

Acknowledgments

It is a great happiness to offer this small contribution to a volume in honour of my friend Theo Maarten van Lint. My subject, concerning both the poetry of the Armenian rite and the imagery of Armenian painting, was inspired by Theo's own work, which traverses the disciplines of Armenian studies with astonishing erudition and sensitivity.

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A Jacobean Shell for Šahuk, “Servant of God”

Gohar Grigoryan Savary

1 Introduction

Historical and anthropological studies on mediaeval Christian pilgrimages have revealed certain characteristics in pilgrimage customs that believers of various confessions and nations practised in anticipation of spiritual purification and salvation.¹ One of these was to carry along various gifts while undergoing the long journey. Before returning home, pilgrims would acquire *in situ* a new object in commemoration of the pilgrimage they experienced physically and spiritually along the routes to holy sites. Exceptional protective, healing, and miraculous powers were also ascribed to these emblematic objects, for they had been in contact with the holy.

In recent decades, archaeologists and art historians have also dedicated several studies to exploring items associated with the practice of mediaeval pilgrimage, closely investigating transportable, often minor objects found in many museums and collections or, where possible, at archaeological sites, which has allowed for a more contextualised approach to the subject.² The fact that many pilgrim tokens and mementos have been found in burial places demonstrates that their owners treasured these objects so much that they preferred to have them along with them even while departing from earthly life.³ Pilgrims of high social standing could afford to have items such as icons, manuscripts or decorated crosses. The Armenian queen Mariun, for example, when she went to Jerusalem in the last quarter of the 14th century, had a “holy sign” and two Gospel manuscripts with her.⁴ The material remnants of Armenian pilgrimage tradi-

1 For general studies on (Christian) pilgrimage, see Sumption 1975; Brown 1981; Turner—Turner 1978; Van Gennepe 1960; Ousterhout 1990 etc.

2 For archaeological approaches to Christian pilgrimage, see Droogan 2013; Raja—Rüpke 2015; Kristensen—Friese 2017. For case studies on the material remnants of Christian pilgrimages, see n. 3.

3 Given that the main focus of the present paper will be on shells acquired during pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela, here I give only the examples of those pilgrims' graves, which contained shells buried together with their owners: Vallet 2008; Nagel 2008, 80–82, figs. 7ab; Ktalav 2016; Simonsen 2018.

4 Grigoryan Savary 2021, 225–230, 245–246.



FIGURES 3.1A–B Šahuk's shell, Cilician Armenia, 13th–14th cc. Inv. no. ЧМ-1317
 © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG. PHOTO BY
 VLADIMIR TERE BENIN

tion and the possible relevance of certain objects to pilgrimage practices are still largely understudied. This paper is an attempt to fill that gap and, because of the lack of previous approaches to Armenian pilgrimage art, it also faces a methodological challenge. Therefore, the reader should not be surprised that the terminology and *comparanda* used in this article will make use of Western examples and traditions, which have received more scholarly attention so far. This essay is a search for context, and I would like to dedicate it to Theo van Lint, whose work has enriched our understanding of Armenian culture and spirituality.

The late mediaeval object I will deal with is a scallop shell with a coin attached inside and with silver decorations fixed on the shell's upper part and around its edges (Figures 3.1a–b). The upper silver decoration has a holder from the back side, which allowed the item to be hung on, but also to be used as a ladle. The shell object is preserved in the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg under the inventory number ЧМ-1317 and is also included in the museum's permanent exhibition, displayed at the Winter Palace, in hall 66.

I will first discuss the object's discovery and acquisition history, as well as early scholarship on it, and then analyse its epigraphic and iconographic features. The next part of the article analyses the use and function of Jacobean shells within the context of mediaeval pilgrimage practices, followed by a general reconstruction of Armenian pilgrimage accounts to Santiago de Compostela.

2 Discovery and Early Scholarship of the Berdyansk Treasure

In the early 1890s, a treasure containing various silver objects was found in the Ukrainian port city of Berdyansk, which at that time was a part of the Taurida Governorate (Таврическая губерния) in the Russian Empire.⁵ The information on the Berdyansk treasure was first published in the report of the Imperial Archaeological Commission for the year 1894, prepared by the commission's chairman Count Aleksey Bobrinsky.⁶ The report, accompanied with a black-and-white photograph of the shell, as well as with four photographs of various silver objects from the same treasure,⁷ recorded the following:

A wonderful collection of silver gilt objects of Armenian origin was found in the Berdyansk city. Namely this includes a seashell with a holder and with an Armenian inscription “Manuk, slave of God”, written on the coin attached [to the shell]; two cups; two big badges in form of rosettes; four big round badges; two badges in form of a pointed triangular; 31 oval shape and 33 round badges and fragments of an incense burner executed in the filigree method. Judging from the inscription's script, the objects were likely produced during the 11th–12th centuries.⁸

As will be seen, the reading of the Armenian inscription contained some errors, and the date of production had later to be reconsidered. In the tabular description of the same report, brief information on the Berdyansk treasure (“One big silver gilt badge and other objects of Armenian origin”) is followed with an instruction about the acquisition destination: “Assigned to the Imperial Her-

5 Bobrinsky 1896, 42–43 (Приобретение отдельных предметов древности и коллекций [Acquisition of Antiquities and Collections]), see also 1 (Производство археологических раскопок [Archaeological Excavations]). In this official report, the Berdyansk treasure is mentioned to have been found in 1894. Decades later, however, Iosif Orbeli mentioned 1892 as the year when it was accidentally discovered during field work. See Orbeli 1938, 276–277.

6 Bobrinsky 1896, 34–46, esp. 42–43, fig. 62, see also 168–169.

7 The same photographs showing five of the described silver objects were reprinted by Vasilij Latyshev in 1906. See Latyshev 1906, 52, figs. 293–297.

8 “Замѣчательная коллекція серебряныхъ позолоченныхъ вещей армянскаго происхожденія, найденныхъ въ г. Бердянскѣ, именно: морская раковина въ оправѣ, съ армянскою надписью внутри на жетонѣ, “Манукъ рабъ Божій”, 2 чашечки, 2 крупныя бляхи въ видѣ розетокъ, 4 большія круглыя бляхи, 2 бляхи въ видѣ наугольниковъ, 31 овальная и 33 круглыя бляшки и фрагментъ курильницы филигранной работы. По начертанію буквъ надписи, вещи относятся приблизительно къ XI–XII в”. See Bobrinsky 1896, 42–43.

mitage”.⁹ As instructed, the silver objects found in Berdyansk were acquired by the Hermitage Museum in 1895.¹⁰

In 1909, another black-and-white photograph of the object in question, as well as three pictures of other silverworks from the Berdyansk treasure, were published by Yakov Smirnov, another member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. Smirnov included them in his atlas entitled *Vostočnoe srebro* (Oriental Silverwork), mostly reproducing the information that was reflected in the above-cited report.¹¹

3 Epigraphy, Dating, Iconography, and Attribution

The next scholar to pay attention to this object was Iosif Orbeli, who in 1938 clarified a few erroneous points that had previously been overlooked and proposed some original considerations. Based on stylistic and technical features of the decorated shell, Orbeli suggested a new date—late 12th-early 13th centuries.¹² He also proposed a new reading of the coin inscription: instead of “Manuk, slave of God” he suggested “Šahuk, slave of God” (*Մահուկ, թա՛ւ Բո՛ցա*).¹³ Šahuk is indeed the name written on the attached coin, as can clearly be seen in modern photographs. I would, however, slightly modify Orbeli’s translation of “slave of God”, for the original Armenian inscription reads ՇԱՀՈՒԿ ԾԱՆԱՅ Ա(USՈՒԾՈ)Յ, a more appropriate translation of which would be “Šahuk, *servant* of God”. Between the first and last letters of this inscription, there is a separating cross, a characteristic epigraphic element of Cilician coinage, which helped Orbeli to attribute the shell ladle to Cilician Armenia.

Another inscription can be seen on the surface of the partly preserved silver gilt band, overlaid on the edges of the shell. The three-letter inscription written on the upper right side of that band reads Շահ (*Šah*), which most likely refers to the same Šahuk. If this is not an abbreviation (and indeed there is no

9 Bobrinsky 1896, 168–169.

10 Kramarovski 2019, 330.

11 Smirnov 1909, Pl. LXXVII (No. 139). For three other objects from the Berdyansk treasure, see Smirnov 1909, Pl. LXXVII (No. 140), Pl. CI (Nos. 246, 247). The last two objects are silver plates dating from the 13th–14th centuries (Hermitage Museum, Inv. ԿՄ-1190 and ԿՄ-1191). For their colour reproductions, see Kramarovski 2005, 235 (cat. 266); Kramarovski 2019, 423. I suppose these are the same objects described in the 1894 report as “two cups” (Bobrinsky 1896, 43). The images of other objects of the Berdyansk treasure are reproduced in Darkevich 1976, fig. 123 (1–6).

12 Orbeli 1938, 278–279.

13 Orbeli 1938, 279.

abbreviation sign in the writing of *Šah*), one can suppose that the person was known both as Šahuk and Šah. “-uk” is the diminutive suffix added to the male name Šah (from Persian “šah”, meaning “king”, a personal name in use among Armenians).¹⁴

To my knowledge, the provenance from Cilician Armenia suggested by Orbeli has been accepted by all scholars who considered this object.¹⁵ My examination of the shell ladle brings forth some more details, which confirm Orbeli’s attribution, although a date around 13th–14th centuries seems to me more plausible than late 12th–early 13th centuries.¹⁶ While the valve object itself can in a way be characterised as unique in Armenian material culture (for no other example is known so far), the epigraphy, style and execution of the attached coin in many points coincide with Cilician coinage, among which the above-mentioned use of the cross in the circular inscription. Another parallel with Cilician coins minted during the 13th–14th centuries is that the inscription is separated from the central image by a circle of dots. While the animal depicted on Cilician coins is usually a lion or a lion-like beast, the shell coin contains the image of a wild goat which looks back over its shoulder, thus reproducing the pose of the lions that appear on some Cilician coins.

Both the depiction of the goat on an Armenian coin and the uniqueness of that coin bearing the name of a certain Šahuk raise a series of questions, whose answers, because of the paucity of sources, will probably always remain hypothetical. One of the central questions is the identity of Šahuk. Orbeli had suggested that he could be “a master, a citizen, a merchant, but never a lord or a baron”, apparently considering the diminutive form of the name.¹⁷

Indeed, no ruler named Šahuk, at least a ruler who would have the legitimacy to mint a coin, is known so far. Another possible guess is that he was a well-to-do individual from high social rank, who ordered the royal master

14 The name Šahuk is absent in Hrač'eay Ačařean's monumental *Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names*. Nevertheless, there are other diminutive versions of the name Šah, such as *Šahak*, which is testified in early mediaeval sources and later, or *Šahik*, recorded for the first time in 1041 in an inscription carved on the Holy Saviour church in Ani. See Ačařean 1948, 103–104 (for Šahak), 119–120 (for Šahik). For the inscription of 1041 mentioning Šahik, see also Orbeli 1966, 43.

15 Kakovkin 1975, 195–197; Darkevich 1976, 132; Marshak 1985, 141, 143; Kramarovski 2005, 235; Kramarovski 2019, 330. For Kramarovski's attribution see also below.

16 My dating is thus closer to that suggested by Kakovkin and Kramarovski. Kakovkin dated the shell to the mid-13th century, while Kramarovski to the mid-13th–14th centuries. See Kakovkin 1974, n. 23; Kramarovski 2005, 235; Kramarovski 2019, 330.

17 Orbeli 1938, 280, also 281–282. It is however to be noted that, although not frequently, the diminutive names or epithets are nevertheless testified among Armenian aristocrats.

to issue an individual souvenir coin. While the available evidence seems to be silent about such practices in mediaeval Armenia, the use of royal artists' services by non-royal individuals does not appear unusual if we look at the production of other kind of objects.¹⁸ The quantity of silver used for this object and the fact that Šahuk could afford the issue of an individual coin in a royal style speak for someone who had access to the services of the royal mint. In this regard, Orbeli's suggestion that Šahuk could be a master silversmith is not unrealistic. The diminutive form of his name may further strengthen this suggestion. It appears that a certain number of mediaeval Armenian masters and architects used the diminutive form when signing their names. This was the case of architect, sculptor, and miniaturist Momik, architects Gazan, Šahik, and Grigorik (Grgorik), architect and sculptor Vec'ik, etc. It seems unlikely that they were all given diminutive names at birth. The diminutive suffix of their names could be added later in accordance with the contemporary ethics of their professional activities and religious affinities. In this sense, the double signature of Šah/Šahuk is particularly evocative: his name appears as *Šahuk* in one place and as *Šah* in another (in a less prominent place).

At any rate, the coin, probably along with other silver additions visible on the shell, was manufactured at the private initiative of Šahuk, who attached it to the scallop valve, turning it into a personalised object. His desire of being remembered through this object is reflected in the two inscriptions cited above, one of which clearly underlines his Christian piety. While on Cilician coins the circular legend naming the king is usually accompanied with a central image of the respective king, the coin in question depicts a wild goat, with which Šahuk associated himself. Even though executed in imitation of Cilician coins, the visible iconography and epigraphy of this coin suggest a non-secular context and most likely a non-commercial use. On royal coins, if there is a reference to God, then it is always associated with the sovereign's aim to highlight the idea that the acting king exercises earthly power bestowed upon him by God. Thus, the standard legend ԿԱՐՈՂՈՒԹԵԱՄԲՆ ԱՍՏՈՒԾՈՅ (“By the

18 Thus, in 1323 a certain deacon Yovanēs acquired a parchment manuscript (Hymnal, ms 367/65 of Zmmar [= BZ 367/65]), which was copied and illustrated by the royal artist Sargis Picak in the Church of the Holy Sign, in the capital of Sis (for the manuscript and its colophons, see Kēšišan 1964, 104–106; interestingly—though this might be a pure coincidence—Yovanēs asks to remember, among others, his deceased father, whose name was Šah). Picak offered his artistic services also to other non-royal individuals originating from Cilicia and Greater Armenia. If the services of the celebrated royal miniaturist were available for people who were not necessarily from the courtly *milieu*, the clients of royal silversmiths were probably also not strictly limited to the court members only.

power of God”) appears on the silver *drams*¹⁹ issued by Lewon I (r. 1198–1219), Het’um I (r. 1226–1270) and Zapēl, Smbat (r. 1196/7–1198), Kostandin (r. 1198–1199), and Lewon III (r. 1301/6–1307). Unlike these royal mints, the legend on Šahuk’s coin emphasises its owner’s religious piety, identifying him as “servant of God”.²⁰

The overall pious connotation of the object in question might be helpful to understand the choice of the wild goat and of another animal carved on the shell’s upper part. But before discussing what these beasts could have symbolised for the shell’s owner, a few words should be said about the stylistic attributions that were proposed about the silver decorations.

The metallic addition on the upper part represents a carefully executed relief-like decoration with a central image of a beast which looks back over his shoulder as does the wild goat on the attached coin. The beast looks like a lion but has the pointed skin of a leopard. In his brief mention of this object, Darkevich observed “western European influence” in the stylistic execution of the beast.²¹ More recently, Kramarovski, who attributed the shell object to Cilicia, nevertheless associated its silver decorations (especially two small almond-shaped rivets) with artistic traditions of the northern Black Sea region of the 14th century, contextualising it within the art of the Golden Horde.²² Probably taking into account this very hypothesis, on the museum’s explanatory plaque the provenance of Šahuk’s shell is given as “Cilicia, Golden Horde”.²³ The same provenance appeared also in the entries to recent exhibition catalogues, in which the shell was included.²⁴ While it is not impossible to imagine that silver decorations could have been added in a region that was part of the

19 *Dram* or *tram* is an Armenian term used for silver or gold coins. In the Cilician state these were mainly minted in silver and had a weight of about 2.9 grams. Armenian *dram* is equivalent to *dirham* in Persian and Arabic and to *drachma* in Greek and Latin. On the term *dram* / *tram*, see Bedoukian 1979, 47–48.

20 It would be highly interesting to know how the reverse of Šahuk’s coin looks like, if it were possible to temporarily separate it from the scallop shell.

21 Darkevich 1976, 132.

22 Kramarovski 2005, 236; Kramarovski 2019, 330.

23 The State Hermitage Museum (see Bibliography at the end).

24 Šahuk’s shell, apart from being included into the permanent exhibition of the Hermitage Museum, was also displayed in several temporary exhibitions, a list of which is given below:

2001. *Sokrovišča Zolotoj Ordy (The Treasures of the Golden Horde)*, 14.02–28.12.2001, State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg. The catalogue of this exhibition was not available to me at the time of writing.

2005–2006. *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben: das Weltreich der Mongolen*, 16.06–25.09.2005, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, 26.10–29.01.-

Golden Horde, it can equally not be excluded that this was done in Cilician Armenia (which, incidentally, during the period considered had stronger political ties with another Mongol state, the Ilkhanate of Iran, from where certain artistic and cultural interactions were stimulated). The developed tradition of silversmithing in Cilicia and the similarities of Šahuk's coin with Cilician coinage make this region a more probable candidate than the region where it was found in the 19th century.²⁵ As for widespread stylistic references, these can well be associated with objects originating not only from the Golden Horde but also with many other contemporary artefacts classified within the general phenomenon known as the *Pax Mongolica*, which was also strongly present in the Cilician kingdom and in Greater Armenia.²⁶ Šahuk's shell however, as will further be shown, offered a new reading for both the silver engravings and the coin, thus setting these additions into a new context—now as part of an object that was to express its owner's religious piety and, likely, social ranking.

What motivated Šahuk to choose a wild goat for his individual coin and a leopard/lion for the scallop shell? In many mediaeval Armenian churches, especially near the entrances or windows, one can observe depictions of wild beasts, many of which were interpreted as having protective and salvific powers. These

2006, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde München. For the exhibition catalogue, see Kramarovski 2005, cat. 267.

2019. *Zolotaja Orda i Pričernomor'e: Uroki Čingisidskoj imperii (The Golden Horde and Black Sea Coast: Lessons of the Genghisid Empire)*, 03.04–06.10.2019, Hermitage—Kazan Exhibition Centre. For the exhibition catalogue, see Kramarovski 2019, 330.

25 It is not known how the treasure made its way to Berdyansk, but it is perhaps not unimportant to mention that many Cilician manuscripts and objects that were later found in various parts of the Russian Empire, including especially in Armenia, have had an itinerary similar to this: Cilicia—(Jerusalem)—Crimea—Nor Naxiĵewan / Rostov-on-Don—Ejmiacin—Yerevan. It is not excluded that the Berdyansk treasure too was brought along by the Cilician Armenians to Crimea, from where it could later be moved further along the coasts of the Azov Sea.

26 The renewed interest in the Mongol Empire, sparked by the modern phenomenon of globalisation, resulted not only in profound research into Mongol culture and history but also in many splendid exhibitions dedicated to material culture produced during this period. Many objects, hitherto neglected, less studied or even unknown, were brought into the open, widening our knowledge and perception of the visual and material world of the past. However, for some artefacts the attribution to the Mongol Empire (in case of Šahuk's shell to the Golden Horde) has been made with a general understanding that their production chronologically corresponded to what is known as the *Pax Mongolica*, sometimes overlooking the specific cultural-historical contexts of their production.



FIGURES 3.2A–C Western entrance of the *gavit'* of the Xoranašat Monastery, 13th century
PHOTO BY AUTHOR, SEPTEMBER 2019

functions are easier to discern especially in those depictions which are accompanied with inscriptions, for they often ask for divine protection for those named in the text. In the 13th-century Xoranašat monastery, for example, two inscriptions are written on two beast sculptures, which also serve as capitals for the western entrance of the *gavit'*²⁷ (Figure 3.2). These texts are accompanied with small crosses placed below, in that way filling in the free space remaining on the beasts' bodies. The inscriptions on the two sculpted capitals depicting a lion and a horned animal read as follows, respectively:

Ք(ՐԻՍՏՈ)Ս Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)Ծ ՈՂՈՐՄԻ ՎԱՆԱԿԱՆԻՆ. ԽԱՉՍ ՆՄԱՅ Է:

May Christ God have mercy on Vanakan.²⁸ This cross is for him. (Fig. 3.2a)

Ք(ՐԻՍՏՈ)Ս Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)Ծ ՈՂՈՐՄ/Ի ԳՐԻԳՈՐՈՅ / ԽԱՉՍ ՆՄԱՅ Է:

May Christ God have mercy on Grigor. This cross is for him. (Fig. 3.2c)²⁹

A different approach, but likely with similar protective connotation, can be seen in some animal reliefs of the 14th-century church of *Surb Astuacacin* (Holy Mother of God, known also as Belfry Church or Small Church) in Ełvard. The

27 On the protective connotation ascribed to these beasts, see Mnac'akanyan 1970, 200, also 185–202 (for more examples testified in mediaeval Armenian architecture).

28 This is the well-known theologian Vanakan vardapet, the founder of the Xoranašat monastery and of its renowned school.

29 While this second inscription is easily discernible, the first one mentioning Vanakan is now damaged (Figure 3.2a). During my visit to Xoranašat in September 2019, I could read it only partially. The rest of the inscription is completed according to Vahan Vanyan's article published in 1976, when the overall state of the monastery was still in a better condition. See Vanyan 1976, 43.



FIGURE 3.3 *Surb Astuacacin* (Holy Mother of God) Church in Elvard, 1311–1321, east façade, architect Šahik.

PHOTO BY HRAIR HAWK KHATCHERIAN, JUNE 2015

church’s east façade, for example, shows a scene with a leopard seizing a goat, which is carved above the richly framed window (Figure 3.3).

Whether the goat and the leopard/lion depicted on Šahuk’s shell had a similar protective role is a speculative yet not improbable hypothesis.³⁰ If we recall the non-secular details of Šahuk’s coin that were discussed above, and especially the inscription representing him as “servant of God”, the pious connota-

30 Many references to the symbolic presence of wild beasts can be found in mediaeval Armenian historiography. Step’anos Tarōnec’i Asolik (at the turn of the 11th c.) and Step’anos Orbelean (13th–14th cc.) write about ascetic monks who lived with wild animals, making these beasts to serve them. The theological explanation of these legendary accounts is that by their miraculous submission the beasts testify that the hermits bear in themselves the Christ, the New Adam, under whose submission God had subjected all creatures (Mahé 1993, 514, also n. 535). An association between Adam and his domination over the animals is perfectly visualised on the east façade of the 10th-century Ałt’amar church, where the bust of Adam is surrounded by sculpted beasts and accompanied with an inscription referring to Gen 2:20: ԵՒ ԿՈՉԵ/ԱՅ ԱՂԱ/Մ ԱՆՈ/ԻԱՆՍ ԱՄԵ/ՆԱՅ/Ն ԱՆԱ/ՍՆՈՑ /ԵՒ ԳԱԶԱ/ՆԱՅ—“And Adam gave names to all the animals and wild beasts” (Figure 3.4). Remarkably, the iconography of Adam could easily be confused with that of Christ if there were not the respective legend naming Adam. See Dorfmann-Lazarev 2016, 493–498; Thomson 2019, 230.



FIGURE 3.4 Adam (Gen 2:20), *Surb Xac'* (Holy Cross) Church in Alt'amar, 915–921, east façade, architect Manuēl

PHOTO BY HRAIR HAWK KHATCHERIAN, FEBRUARY 2015

tion of this object becomes more discernible. No less remarkably, all these features appear on a scallop valve—a natural object which from the 12th century on was given an emblematic status, being largely associated with pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, which I will discuss next.

4 A Jacobean Shell for Šahuk

Whether Šahuk was the initial or a later owner of the scallop shell is hard to know. The circumstances of its acquisition will probably always remain unknown, as is often the case with many mediaeval objects of this kind. What is more certain is that the use of scallop shells has a clear connotation to mediaeval pilgrimage practices and more specifically to pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. The tradition of visiting the tomb of Saint James the Apostle was formed in the 9th century after a local hermit called Pelayo had a vision about the whereabouts of the sarcophagus, which would later become the site of the chapel, the church, and then the splendid cathedral of Santiago

de Compostela.³¹ In the 12th century, when the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*³² was produced, the veneration of Saint James gained more popularity, being enriched now with rituals and miracles related to this apostle. Many Jacobean pilgrims were well aware of the miracles described in the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, some even claimed to have experienced them on their road to Santiago and back. The creation of this influential book was accompanied by the appearance of pilgrim hospices on the routes to Santiago and, more importantly, by the construction of the famous cathedral upon the supposed sarcophagus of the apostle. These undertakings further reinforced the tradition and organisation of the pilgrimage to Santiago, making it one of the most desired pilgrimage destinations until today.

From the 12th century on, the scallop valve became the symbol of a successfully fulfilled pilgrimage to the Apostle James' tomb in Santiago.³³ Recent archaeological excavations confirm the 12th century as the *terminus post quem* for the diffusion of scallop or oyster shells as symbols of Jacobean travellers.³⁴ In the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, there are indications of how the oyster shells would be used by the pilgrims, and what it signified as a symbol of spiritual salvation, obtained after the completion of pilgrimage.³⁵ Over time, the local authorities of Santiago started to control the shell sale along the Jacobean routes in order to prevent their unlicensed production and forgeries.³⁶ The exact place where the pilgrims could obtain their shells was also determined: in the square situated in front of the northern portal of the cathedral.³⁷ The tradition of pilgrims' shells inspired the circulation of many stories, legends and customs that were related to the symbolic correlation of Saint James and scallops (or oysters).³⁸ The scal-

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- 31 On the formation of Saint James' cult in Galicia and on the tradition of the Jacobean pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, see Starkie 1965; Herbers 1984; Williams—Stones 1992, etc.
- 32 The manuscript of the Book of Saint James is also known as *Codex Calixtinus* after the name of Pope Calixtus II or simply as *Jacobus* as it appears on the manuscript's incipit page. I have consulted the following edition: Moralejo et al. 1951. For the studies on the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, see Herbers 1984; Moisan 1992; Williams—Stones 1992, etc.
- 33 The two types of the scallop shells used for Jacobean pilgrimage, whose scientific names are *Pecten maximus* and *Pecten jacobaeus*, are distributed in two sea regions: "*P. maximus* distribution is limited to the northeast Atlantic, from northern Norway down to north Africa, while *P. jacobaeus* is present within the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea". See Ktalav 2016, 326, also 333.
- 34 Ktalav 2016, 323–338.
- 35 Ktalav 2016, 325 (with further references).
- 36 Starkie 1965, 71; Plötz 1992, 39; Ktalav 2016, 333.
- 37 Plötz 1992, 39. See also Starkie 1965, 70.
- 38 For several such legends and miracles associated with Saint James, see Starkie 1965, 70–71; Herbers 1992, 11–34; Moisan 1992, 133–145; Ktalav 2016, 325.



FIGURE 3.5 A Jacobean pilgrim, mural painting, ca. 1150, Nativity Church, Bethlehem
PHOTO BY MICHELE BACCI, JUNE 2019

lop shells, often considered by pilgrims as objects with miracle-working power, could however also have practical use. For travellers, they could secure safe passages to hospices or to the holy sites situated on the respective routes. It has also been suggested that they could be used as ladles to drink or eat from. The holder attached to pilgrims' shells was used to hang them from the travellers' clothes, huts, belts, bags, or at home as signs of accomplished pilgrimage.³⁹ In the Nativity church of Bethlehem, for instance, the mid-12th-century mural icon of Saint James the Great depicts in supplicating pose an aristocratic couple, whose bags prominently exhibit their shells (Figure 3.5).⁴⁰

In the shell of Šahuk, too, there is a holder, apparently meant to be used for one of the above-mentioned purposes, perhaps for hanging it on house walls, because it is heavier (with the presence of additional silver decorations) and larger (length 16.6 cm, width 13.3cm, height 5.5 cm)⁴¹ than many pilgrims' shells: this makes the shell less practical for long journeys. In any event, the epigraphic material, which represents Šahuk as a “servant of God”, reveals this object's connection with its owner's religious piety. If this is not a mediaeval forgery, the shell might have been acquired by Šahuk after the completion of a pilgrimage to Santiago: the owner then had it adorned with silver decorations, and added a visual sign of his identity, thus making it a personalised object.⁴² Even if not acquired in Santiago itself, it can still be associated with someone's desire to go on pilgrimage to Santiago.

A comparative regard to archaeological finds of Jacobean shells might be helpful to better understand the functional peculiarities of Šahuk's shell. In this respect, a recent study dedicated to the Jacobean badges found in the Holy Land reveals some interesting parallels. First, some of these shells were found as an accumulation, i.e. accompanied with other small objects, such as coins, crosses, or pottery.⁴³ It is not excluded that the silver objects of the Berdyansk treasure, among them the shell in question, might also have belonged to one individual. Secondly, the physical state, namely the artificial holes (usually two or three) of many pilgrims' valves found in the Holy Land and in Europe, can

39 In Nordic countries, also some of Saint Olav's pilgrims' badges and shells were used as amulets for protecting the home. See Simonsen 2018, 192.

40 Bacci 2017, 130, fig. 35; Bacci (ed.) 2021, 13, fig. 1 (for the images of both the male and female pilgrim).

41 The measurements according to Kramarovski 2005, 235.

42 It is not excluded that the shell was acquired by an elder member of Šahuk's family, from whom then it passed to Šahuk. In some Western societies, for instance, it is known that the shells acquired by Jacobean pilgrims could become a dear object also for their family members, who passed it from generation to generation. See Starkie 1965, 71.

43 Ktalav 2016, 327–333.

be comparable to the holes present on Šahuk's shell if one were to remove the silver additions. Thus, the upper two holes of Šahuk's shell, which are covered with two small rivets on each side, and the central holes, through which the back holder and coin are attached, correspond to the positions of the holes that are usually found on the badges of Jacobean pilgrims, who used the holes for attaching or hanging the shell.⁴⁴

5 Armenian Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela

From these object-centred considerations let us now turn to the historical background of mediaeval Armenian pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. The evidence narrated below is not intended as a reply to the unanswered questions concerning the history of Šahuk's shell. What I hope to do, instead, is to provide a context for the object, reconstructed through some episodes pertaining to the tradition of Armenian pilgrimage to Santiago, during which the religious travellers could have acquired objects such as the shell in question.

In the 10th century, that is only a century after Pelayo had his vision about the whereabouts of the apostle's sarcophagus, an Armenian monk called Simēon came to venerate the saint's tomb in Santiago.⁴⁵ Another pilgrim, Dawit' (later Saint Davinus of Lucca, who died in the mid-11th century and was buried in the church San Michele in Foro in Lucca, Tuscany), went to Jerusalem, Rome, then intended to visit Santiago.⁴⁶ At the end of the 11th century, an Armenian princess went on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela together with her companions.⁴⁷

Despite some obscure details of the above-mentioned accounts, they nevertheless provide an interesting context for reconstructing the origins of the

44 For photographs showing the artificial holes on Jacobean shells, see Spencer 1998, fig. 248a; Vallet 2008, fig. 6; Ktalav 2016, fig. 17.3; Simonsen 2018, fig. 68. It was suggested that the two-hole shells were hung, while the three-hole shells were to be sewn onto the pilgrim's clothes or bags. See Vallet 2008, 244.

45 Ališan 1884, 5–17; P'eč'ikean 1937, 50–52; Dédéyan 1978, 124–125; Dédéyan 1984, 23–25; Matiossian 2005, 197.

46 P'eč'ikean 1937, 52; Dédéyan 1978, 125–126; Dédéyan 1984, 25–26; Bacci 2004, 548–558; Uluhogian 2006, 29–50; Orengo 2018, 88–89.

47 Gulbenkian 1980, 173–178, 194–195 (Gulbenkian considers the princess to be daughter of the last Bagratid king). For some clarifications regarding the Armenian princess and her sojourn in Spain, see Matiossian 2005, 198–203.

Armenian tradition of Santiago pilgrimage. At the time when these pilgrims went to worship the apostle’s tomb, the cathedral of Santiago and the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* were not yet created, and the cult of Saint James was still in its formative period.

After the creation of the *Liber Sancti Jacobi* in the 12th century, the cult of Saint James started to develop quickly, attracting to Santiago numerous religious travellers from all over the Christian world, including the Armenians. In the long sermon on the translation of the apostle’s relics from Jerusalem to Santiago, the Armenians are listed among those nations who came to visit the apostle’s tomb in Galicia.⁴⁸ This sermon composed by Pope Callixtus represents Chapter XVII of Book I of the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*. The latter also contains a so-called *Pilgrim’s Guide* (Book V), which is a collection of various kinds of advice for those who undertook a pilgrimage to Santiago. Later some visitors mentioned that there existed a hospice for the Armenians in the city, for they had been coming to pilgrimage since ancient times.⁴⁹ A guesthouse called “Hospice of Jerusalem” and situated in Santiago’s ancient quarter of Jewish merchants was possessed by the Armenians.⁵⁰ Some scholars of architectural history have even claimed that there are traces of Armenian influence on the early Romanesque structure of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.⁵¹ Due to the presence of an Armenian alphabet composed of 36 letters and engraved on a niche of the Church of Saint Martha in Tarascon (France), it was suggested that in the 12th century an Armenian pilgrim paused at this sanctuary on his way to Santiago.⁵²

In his mid-13th-century report addressed to king Louis IX, the Franciscan friar William of Rubruck writes in detail about an Armenian monk called Sergius, whom he met at the court of the great khan Möngke and who once asked the friar whether the Pope would “furnish him with horses as far as Santiago”.⁵³

In the 14th century, the relationship between Cilician Armenia and the Iberian Peninsula was marked by a special diplomatic and religious event, when during the reigns of the Armenian king Lewon IV (r. 1321–1341) and of the king of Aragon, James II (r. 1291–1327), the relics of Saint Thecla were trans-

48 Moralejo et al. 1951, 199.

49 López Ferreiro 1898, 69–70.

50 Gulbenkian 1980, 199; Matiossian 2005, 214–215. It was also suggested that the Galician city called Arménia and mentioned in the 16th-century *Breviario Compostellano* might have been related to the Armenians. See Gulbenkian 1980, 195–196, n. 96.

51 Conant 1926, 27.

52 Dédéyan—Kévorkian 2007, 907.

53 William of Rubruck (Jackson 1990), 205–206.

ferred from Cilicia to Catalonia.⁵⁴ A few decades later, in the north-western part of the peninsula another noteworthy episode took place, this time with the participation of the last Cilician king Lewon v Lusignan (*r.* 1374–1375). While in Lyon, the king undertook a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, a wish which, according to his confessor-biographer Jean Dardel, he had cherished since his Mamluk captivity in Cairo.⁵⁵ In the last quarter of the 14th century, a knight called Manuël, who was active in the Armenian court until the fall of Sis and who later falsely represented himself as the messenger of king Lewon, asked for financial support from the royal treasury of the Aragonese court on the pretext of undertaking a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.⁵⁶

More detailed accounts are available from the post-mediaeval period.⁵⁷ Leaving Erznkay/Erzincan in October 1489, during the years that followed bishop Martiros Erznkac'i visited some of the most important European sanctuaries, including Santiago de Compostela, where he remained for 84 days.⁵⁸ Between 1587 and 1592, a very similar itinerary through European holy sites was taken by a monk Sargis, who might have been familiar with the travel account of Martiros Erznkac'i.⁵⁹ Arriving at Santiago, Sargis could not see the headless body of Saint James, because the door leading to the apostle's tomb was opened only once every seven years. Nevertheless, the Armenian pilgrim was filled with joy after he learned that the desirable day would arrive in eight months, so he decided to wander through sanctuaries of other cities and villages returning to Santiago eight months later. According to Sargis' account, on the day when the apostle's body was taken out, there were 4,000 priests and so many people that one could not count. They venerated the body of the saint for three days.⁶⁰ Two

54 Calzolari 2017, 137–159; Serrano Coll—Lozano López 2020, 285–310.

55 Jean Dardel (Ch.A. 1906), chapter CXL, 106. The liberation of Lewon v in 1382 was in fact possible thanks to the kings of Castile and Aragon. On Lewon's pilgrimage to Santiago, see also Sáez Pomes 1946–1947.

56 Jean Dardel (Ch.A. 1906, 99–100, on Manuël representing himself as Lewon's messenger), see also 46, 85. For further readings on Manuël's European activities during the post-kingdom period, see Grigoryan Savary 2021, 224–225.

57 Many references to Santiago de Compostela and to the tomb of the Apostle James in Galicia are to be found in Armenian historiography and literature. The presence of “many saints' bodies” in Spain, with a particular emphasis on “the body of Tēr Yakob”, is mentioned in a series of 17th-century Armenian folk songs, in which the beauty of the poet's beloved one is metaphorically compared to various cities and countries. See Mnac'akan-yan 1956, 272–288 (songs Nos 91–94). See also Matiossian 2005, 194–226, esp. 208–210 (for more references found in poetic texts).

58 P'eč'ikean 1937, 55–60.

59 Xaç'ikyan 1970, 125–148, esp. 137–145.

60 Xaç'ikyan 1970, 142, also 133 and n. 14 (for taking out the apostle's body once in seven years).

decades later, when Awgustinos Bajec'i, an Armenian catholic priest from the village Aparaner in Ernĵak (Siwnik'), visited Santiago de Compostela, he confirmed the information that the cathedral's "Door of Mercy" was opened once every seven years.⁶¹ We know of another catholic priest from the same village, called Yovhannēs, who in the 16th century left Naxijewan and visited Santiago twice.⁶²

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, two pilgrimages to Spain were made by a hermit called Paron who led an ascetic life in the convent of Gregory the Illuminator on Mount Sepuh (near Erznkay). Paron was the teacher and caretaker of the later famous chronicler Grigor Daranałc'i. During one of his pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Paron copied a *Vark' haranc'* (*Lives of the Fathers*), which is currently manuscript No. [J] 175 of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.⁶³ In 1610, Daranałc'i added a large colophon to that manuscript, describing the pious life of his beloved teacher. It is in this colophon that we find two mentions about Paron's travels to Spain, most likely to the tomb of Saint James in Santiago, but also to the other two important sites of Christian pilgrimage, Jerusalem and Rome:

And from time to time he would go out travelling to all the pilgrimage sites: many times he went to Holy Jerusalem and twice to the great Rome to the holy apostles Peter and Paul; he also travelled to Spain and to the holy sites of our Armenia's eastern parts. After these pilgrimages he would always return to his convent.⁶⁴

Some time later, Paron repeated his long-haul journey to these places:

And he went from country to country in order to go to the great Rome and Spain and then came once more to Constantinople.⁶⁵

61 "Near the tomb there is a door called "Door of Mercy", which is opened once every seven years. Blessed are those who will be there on that day". For the original text in Armenian, see Xač'ikyan 1970, 146, n. 14.

62 Gulbenkian 1980, 201.

63 For the manuscript's description, see Bogharian 1966, 524–527.

64 Եւ ելեալ երբեմն երբեմն շրջէր յամենայն ուխտատեղիս եւ բազում անգամ ի Սուրբն յերուսաղէմ եւ երկու անգամ ի մեծն Հռովմ առ Սուրբ առաքեալս Պետրոս եւ Պօղոս եւ ի Սպանիա եւ ի մեր հայոց յարեւելից բնաւ ուխտատեղիսն եւ դարձեալ դառնայր անդրէն ի տեղի իւր մենաստանին. See Grigor Daranałc'i (Nšanean 1915), 591–599 (Appendix A), esp. 594–595.

65 ... եւ զնաց յաշխարհէ յաշխարհ ի մեծն Հռովմ եւ ի Սպանիա, եւ դարձեալ եկն ի Կոստանդնուպօլիս. Here Daranałc'i uses the form "come to Constantinople", because he

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I took a close look at a late mediaeval object, consisting of a scallop valve, adorned with silver gilt additions. Aware of the methodological difficulties of studying and explaining minor objects of this kind, I have tried to make use of the available information by describing in the first part how the shell object was discovered, acquired, studied, and exhibited, and then by proposing in the second part a reconstruction of functional and historical contexts.

The emblematic use of scallop shells from the 12th century on, as well as the epigraphic and iconographic evidence visible on this shell, allowed us to associate it with the mediaeval tradition of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Whether Šahuk was its initial owner or acquired the shell only subsequently, is not clear. It is also uncertain whether he was the person who carried the shell ladle to the Azov Sea. The sophisticated combination with his individual coin, that resembles those minted in Cilician Armenia, confirms the previous attributions to that mediaeval kingdom. Furthermore, the historical evidence gathered in this paper shows a continued interest in Santiago pilgrimage by mediaeval Armenian travellers, who could have acquired Jacobean shells during their visits to this renowned Galician site. For Armenians, as for many other pilgrims, Santiago de Compostela was an important place connected with the Apostle James, right after the Armenian cathedral of Saints James in Jerusalem, which is also associated with him. Like many Jacobean pilgrims who desired to visit both cathedrals in Santiago and in Jerusalem, Armenian believers would also have been eager to perform a double pilgrimage to the two important destinations associated with the Apostle James.

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personally met Paron in Constantinople, from where they headed together for Jerusalem. Paron stayed in the Holy City for seven years as hermit and copied the above-mentioned *Lives of the Fathers*. See Grigor Daranałc’i (Nšanean 1915), 598 (Appendix A).

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PART 2

History



From Alexandria to Dvin

Non-Chalcedonian Christians in the Empire of Khusrau II

Phil Booth

1 Introduction

In the period from 603 to 629, the East Roman and Sasanian empires were plunged into a dramatic final confrontation, a period of protracted warfare which witnessed the expansion of the Persians across Roman Syria, Palestine, and Egypt; the Persian-Avar siege of Constantinople; and the final Persian defeat at the hands of a Roman-Turk alliance. A great wealth of scholarship has explored the rich evidence which details the shah Khusrau II's engagement with Christian leaders and culture both before and during the war,¹ and the Christian factionalism which arose around the court at Ctesiphon, as dyophysites and miaphysites competed for preference.² But rather less has been said about his policies within those territories which had long been the Christian heartlands of the Roman Empire.

As the Persians entered into Roman Mesopotamia from 603, and then crossed the Euphrates from 610, they entered into a world divided: between the dominant Chalcedonian church, with its plethora of urban bishops, and the far smaller and largely rusticated Severan church, established from the middle of the 6th century in Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.³ We know that the Chalcedonian Church was decapitated across the conquered territories—in Antioch the patriarch Anastasius II had been murdered in violence in ca. 610; in Jerusalem the patriarch Zachariah was deported to Ctesiphon in 614; and in Alexandria the patriarch John the Almsgiver had fled before the invaders in 619, dying on Cyprus soon afterwards.⁴ No successors were permitted for the entire period of Persian rule and, as we shall see, at least some Chalcedonian bishops were deposed and replaced with miaphysite rivals. But the frequent

1 See e.g. Schilling 2008, 235–298; Payne 2015, 164–197.

2 See below n. 34.

3 See van Roey 1951; Booth 2017.

4 On Anastasius, see esp. *Chronicon Paschale* (ed. Dindorf 1832, 699); on Zachariah, see Strategius (ed. Garitte 1960); on John the Almsgiver, see esp. Delehaye 1927.

modern claim that the period of Persian rule was one of an inverse miaphysite ascent—framed as “an era of triumph for Miaphysite orthodoxy” in one important recent book⁵—is too simplistic. For there was no such thing as “Miaphysite orthodoxy” in the first place, and for some miaphysites, at least, the situation was far from triumphant.

2 The Union of 617

At some point in 617, the Severan patriarch of Antioch, Athanasius the Camel-driver, and several of his bishops were present at the Ennaton, a monastic complex to the west of Alexandria which now served as the seat of the Severan patriarchs of Egypt. Here Athanasius and his entourage entered into union with the representatives of the Severan Alexandrian patriarch Anastasius, thus ending a schism of the churches which had existed since 586, when the Antiochene patriarch Peter of Callinicum had broken communion with his Alexandrian counterpart Damian, on the suspicion that he had lapsed into tritheism.⁶

In recent literature the union of 617 has assumed a somewhat surprising status. It was, as we shall see below, remarkable for various reasons, but perhaps most remarkable of all is that it occurred at a time when the Alexandrian and Antiochene patriarchates existed within separate polities: the former in the Roman Empire, and the latter in the Sasanian Empire. It has now become commonplace to claim that the Sasanians were accepting towards existing Christian communities within the conquered territories, or at least towards the Severans, to whom the Sasanians are sometimes supposed to have lent their active patronage. In this perspective, therefore, the presence of Athanasius and his bishops in Alexandria becomes, for some, indicative of the freedom of movement and communication which the Sasanians permitted their bishops;⁷ while the union itself can even be cited as an example of the “ecclesiastical institution building” which “Iranian patronage” allowed, as an example of the “institutional coordination” between two churches “which the Roman state had kept separate”.⁸

Our knowledge of the union of 617 is dependent on two main narrative sources: first, the *Chronicle* of Michael the Great; and second, the *History of the*

5 Payne 2015, 186.

6 Date: *Chronicle to 724* (Brooks 1960), 146. Studies: Olster 1985; Müller 1994; Jankowiak 2009, 18–23. Schism: see esp. Ebied et al. 1981, 34–43.

7 See Foss 2003, 157, 165.

8 See Payne 2015, 186.

Patriarchs of Alexandria. The latter gives a somewhat impressionistic account of the union.⁹ But the *Chronicle* of Michael is far more detailed. It embeds four related letters. The first is the synodical letter announcing it, with an accompanying list of signatories. Those signatories are, on the Alexandrian side: Anastasius, an Athanasius, a Polycarp, a Theodulus, ‘and the other Egyptian bishops’; and, on the Antiochene side: Athanasius, a Cyriacus, two Pauls, a Sergius, and a Thomas.¹⁰

The second of Michael’s documents is a letter of Athanasius to the bishop Cyriacus of Amida, in which he describes how the union was realised. He recounts how, after numerous fruitless conversations with the “partisans of Damian”, there had arrived in Alexandria, from Arsinoe, “the most magnificent patrikios Strategius”, who then allied with “the glorious patrician Nicetas, with whom we had conferred over the affair from the beginning, but in whom we had lost confidence”.¹¹ Presiding over the union, therefore, were two of the most prominent Roman officials in the region: first, Nicetas, the emperor Heraclius’s cousin, who seems to have assumed, in the 610s, a role akin to that of the Alexandrian Augustalis;¹² and second, the patrician Strategius, a leading member of the Arsinoite aristocracy, known also from various extant documents.¹³

Michael’s *Chronicle* embeds two further letters. The first of these is an encyclical sent from Athanasius, in Alexandria, to the “bishops of the east”, asking them to accept the union; and the second is an extract from a letter of Anastasius to his Antiochene counterpart, celebrating the end of the schism and Nicetas’s role within it, and including a final wish for imperial victories over barbarians. It is certain that Nicetas (and perhaps also Strategius) was a Chalcedonian. But, nevertheless, the Severan patriarch Anastasius is able to celebrate his role in effecting the union, and even to hope for his subsequent victories against Rome’s enemies.

Let us recap, then, something of what Michael’s evidence tells us. The union was not a product of Sasanian patronage. It happened in Roman Alexandria, and its éminence grise was Nicetas, the emperor Heraclius’s cousin. The union, it therefore seems, was an imperial initiative brokered through the emperor’s highest and most trusted representatives. For Constantinople, indeed, it must have represented a significant coup, not simply because two substantial Christian factions had been reunited; but because the Antiochene patriarch, whose

9 Evetts 1904, 480–483.

10 Chabot, J.-B. (ed.) 1899–1910 (hereafter Michael the Great, *Chronicle*) 10.26, vol. 4, 392–399.

11 Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, 10.26, vol. 4, 392–399.

12 See Déroche 1995, 119 n. 66, 142–153.

13 See Palme 1997, 99–100.

territories were now subsumed within the Persian Empire, had submitted to the traditional mediation of the Roman emperor in doctrinal matters. All this raises the question, then, of what Athanasius and his bishops hoped to gain.¹⁴

3 The Ennaton as Refuge

It is probable that the union of the patriarchs was realised at the Ennaton, a complex of monasteries on the coast nine miles west of Alexandria.¹⁵ Indeed, the presence of Athanasius and his bishops at the Ennaton is also known through some remarkable subscriptions to certain Syriac manuscripts. Through these we ascertain that two of Athanasius's bishops—a certain Paul and another Thomas, who must also be amongst the aforementioned Antiochene signatories to the union—completed translations, into Syriac, of the Old and New Testaments while at the complex. Thus, certain manuscripts of Thomas's translation of the New Testament bear a transcription in which “poor Thomas” locates the composition of the text “at the Ennaton (ܐܢܢܐܬܘܢ) of the great city of Alexandria, at the holy Monastery of the Antonians (?—ܐܢܢܐܬܘܢ),” and places it “in the year 927 of Alexander, in the fourth indiction,” that is, in 615/6.¹⁶ From the extant subscriptions to Paul's translations, we can also locate him at the Ennaton in the same period.¹⁷ Of those, perhaps the most fulsome is that for 4 Kingdoms, as contained in a manuscript now in Paris (BN Syr. 27 f. 90):

This book was translated from the Greek tongue into Syriac from the version of the Seventy-Two, by the righteous father Mar Paul the bishop of the faithful, in the great city of Alexandria, by the command and encouragement of the holy and blessed Mar Athanasius, patriarch of the faithful in the Monastery of Mar Zakkai at Callinicum, while they were staying in Alexandria in the time of the God-loving Mar Theodore, head of the monastery of his community, in the year 928, fifth indiction [616/7].¹⁸

14 In what follows I develop an argument first made in Jankowiak 2009, 22–23, who also points to the relative weakness of Athanasius's position in 617, in the context of the Persian encroachment.

15 See Gasco 1991.

16 See Hatch 1937, 149–154.

17 For a useful guide, see Mercati 1941.

18 See de Lagarde 1892, 256 ll. 28–31. On the Syro-Hexaplar manuscripts and de Lagarde's edition, see Baars 1968, 1–27. For Paul's subscriptions, see also, for 3 Kingdoms (February 616): BL Add. 14437, with de Lagarde 1892, 222 n. 54, and Wright 1870–1872, vol. 1, 33; for

Later authorities suggest that our Thomas and Paul were the bishops Thomas of Harqel, bishop of Mabbug, and Paul bishop of Tella¹⁹—two Antiochene, Severan, bishops. But what brought them to Alexandria?

It is tempting to assume, of course, that Athanasius, Thomas, and Paul were present at the Ennaton for the simple purpose of attending the proposed discussions with the Alexandrians. The relationship between their presence and the union is, however, far from clear—that is, it is not obvious that the latter prompts the former rather than vice versa. Michael's *Chronicle* embeds a biographical passage on Thomas of Harqel which provides a potential answer. This informs us that Thomas, like the patriarch Athanasius, was trained at Qenneshre before becoming bishop of Mabbug (Hierapolis), but that during persecutions launched under the emperor Maurice (*d.* 602), he retreated to the Ennaton, where he completed his translation of the New Testament. After this, we read: "At this time, the bishops of Syria, who were persecuted by the Chalcedonians and took refuge in Egypt, returned to their sees, in Syria at the command of Khusrau, king of Persia, who ruled over Syria."²⁰ According to this source, then, Thomas had fled to Alexandria when Maurice had imposed Chalcedonian bishops (thus before 602), and was still there when he completed his translation (in 616, as we ascertain from its subscription). After this, however, he returned to his see, following a reported command of the conqueror Khusrau, who restored the Severan bishops to their sees.

The short *Life of Thomas* contained in Michael's *Chronicle* caps a section of text which, in its preceding sections, describes the fate of orthodox bishops within the conquered territories, and which raises some doubts as to the precise situation of Thomas. This reports that when the Persians conquered "Mesopotamia and Syria", Khusrau dispatched certain bishops "of the east (ܡܘܨܘܪܝܢ)" to take possession of the "cities of Syria". At first, this account continues, he sent to Edessa an East Syrian, who was not accepted, before replacing him with an "orthodox" bishop, named John (although his name seems to have been Isaiah, as we shall see). Then the shah ordered that all of the Chalcedonian bishops in Mesopotamia and Syria be chased from their sees, and that "the Jacobites" be granted all of the church and monasteries of which they had been deprived through the persecution of Maurice.²¹

the Minor Prophets and Daniel (January 617): Ceriani 1874, 114^r col. 2; 151^v col. 1; for Daniel again (616/7): BL Add. 12168, with Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 907.

19 See the evidence collected in Gwynn 1893a and 1893b.

20 Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 10.26, vol. 4, 391. Cf. Bar Hebraeus (ed. Abbeloos and Lamy 1872–1877, hereafter Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*), vol. 1, 267.

21 Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 10.25, vol. 4, 389–390; cf. Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, vol. 1, 263–265.

Amongst the persecuted bishops, we are now told, was Cyriacus of Amida, that is, that same bishop to whom Athanasius would later report the union of 617. But we are then also given the names of some of those “Jacobites” whom Khusrau dispatched to replace the Chalcedonians: Isaiah of Edessa, Samuel of Amida, and another (anonymous) of Tella. Thus, the Jacobite whom Khusrau appointed in Amida was not Cyriacus, but one Samuel. Indeed, we are now informed that the villagers around these towns would not accept the new incumbents, because they had not been ordained by their patriarch, but by “the Metropolitan of the region of Mosul” (ܡܩܬܒܐ ܕܩܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܡܘܨܠ), while the villagers were under the authority of the patriarch Athanasius. The latter, according to Michael, then requested that Cyriacus visit Amida and other places in Mesopotamia, and there perform ordinations, but Cyriacus was unsuccessful, for Samuel of Amida, with the support of Khusrau, opposed him.²²

Michael’s *Chronicle* now offers a famous comment to the effect that “the memory of Chalcedon” disappeared from the Euphrates to the Orient, a comment which those who consider the Sasanians to have patronised “the miaphysites” en bloc have often cited as proof of that point. But it seems quite evident that the same comment attempts to suppress an inconvenient fact: that is, that the so-called “triumph for Miaphysite orthodoxy” was in fact a disaster for those Roman, Severan bishops who had laid claim to those Mesopotamian sees under Maurice. Cyriacus, it is elsewhere claimed, died in A.G. 934 (= 622/3), and although we do not know when Samuel died, or who succeeded him, for some considerable time there must have been two rival Severan claimants to the throne of Amida.²³ At the same time, this must have represented a considerable affront to the authority of the patriarch Athanasius. For the Persians, while expelling the Chalcedonian incumbents, had also passed the power over appointments to a leading miaphysite bishop within Persia—the mysterious “Metropolitan of the region of Mosul” (to whom we shall return).

The same tensions are effaced to a far greater extent in another extant witness: Ps.-Cyriacus of Amida’s *On the Translation the Relics of Jacob Baradeus*. Written at some point ca. 629–ca. 634, this reports that during the patriarchate of Athanasius, the emperor Phocas (and not, note, Maurice) replaced the patriarch’s bishops with Chalcedonians, but that when Khusrau conquered Mesopotamia, and under the influence of his Christian wife Širin, he replaced them with “the orthodox”. The text then provides a list of these appointees which is

22 Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 10.25, vol. 4, 390–391; cf. Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, vol. 1, 265.

23 See *Chronicle of Zuqnin* in Chabot 1927, 150.

more extensive than that of Michael's *Chronicle*—Samuel at Amida, Isaiah at Edessa, Adai at Reshaina, and Zakkai at Tella—before adding, “and he [Khusrau] did the same for every place and city, each adhering in all things to the patriarch” (which should be read as an apologetic statement constructed after the fact). The main part of the text then relates how Zakkai of Tella, in A.G. 933 (= 621/2), sent certain monks to steal the relics of Jacob Baradeus from their resting place in Egypt.²⁴ The details of this vignette—which suggest that Zakkai was a Severan—need not detain us here. But for our purposes it is evident that Zakkai of Tella was still alive when Paul, his Severan rival to the same see, was in Alexandria composing his translations of the Old Testament, calling himself “bishop”, and entering discussions with his co-confessionalists within the Roman Empire.

Let us note one further indication of complications around the see of Tella in this period. Consecutive notices in the *Chronicle to 819*—a pro-Severan, annalistic text associated with the Monastery of Qartmin in the Tūr ‘Abdīn—record how, in AG 916 [604/5], the Persians conquered “the fortress of Tūr ‘Abdīn”; but then how, in AG 926 [614/5], Daniel, abbot of Qartmin, was made metropolitan over Tella, Mardīn, Dara, and Tūr ‘Abdīn.²⁵ If the information is accurate, then it appears that Daniel presided over the old metropolitanate of Dara, now expanded to include Tella.²⁶ The *Chronicle* does not record *who* made Daniel metropolitan, but, given the alleged date of Daniel's elevation, it is of course tempting to associate it with the reported activities of Michael's “Metropolitan of the region of Mosul”.²⁷

It must remain unclear when Paul of Tella, Thomas of Harqel, and others arrived in Alexandria—although wider evidence, as we shall see, suggests a large-scale flight from the Persian advance. But it at once becomes clear that the status of Paul of Tella in 616–617 was far less secure than has often been supposed, and that while at the Ennaton he (like Cyriacus of Amida) faced a rival Severan claimant to his nominal see, and perhaps a new metropolitan in the Tūr ‘Abdīn.

4 Paul of Edessa

Cyriacus and Paul were not alone. In the *Chronicle* of Jacob of Edessa we discover alongside the tables for Olympiads 345 and 346 (= 601/2–608/9) a report

24 Brooks 1926, 268.

25 Chabot and Barsaüm 1916, 10.

26 Palmer 1990, 149–153.

27 See Palmer 1990, 153.

that “[t]he bishops of the region of the east fled before the Persians to Egypt, and with them monks and many people”; while alongside Olympiads 347 and 348 (= 609/10–617/8) we discover a frustrating, lacunose piece of text which reports, “The bishops are expelled ... the Persians from ... to take ... of the Romans ... the east; and he came ... little ... Isaiah is sent to Edessa as bishop from the realm of the Persians.”²⁸ The first piece of text seems therefore to report the flight of eastern bishops to Egypt, in the face of the Persian advance (as known also from the *Lives* of John the Almsgiver);²⁹ while the latter seems to relate to the replacement of Chalcedonian bishops with the candidates from Persia, including the aforementioned Isaiah at Edessa.

From Jacob’s *Chronicle* we also ascertain the name both of the earlier, Chalcedonian bishop of Edessa and of his Severan rival. Thus, alongside Olympiad 345 (601/2–604/5), we read, “The faithful of Edessa had Paul as bishop; but the Chalcedonians appointed Theodosius.”³⁰ This Paul is also known to have fled from the Persians, for Jacob, while acknowledging previous translators in his corrected edition of the Syriac hymns of Severus of Antioch, notes that “[t]hey have been translated from the Greek tongue into the Edessene or Syriac speech by the holy Mar Paul who was bishop of the city of Edessa, while he was on the island of Cyprus, in flight from the Persians.”³¹ We know, in fact, that while on Cyprus Paul translated more than the hymns of Severus, for two manuscripts of the Syriac versions of the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen inform us that the translation was the work of ‘Abbas Mar Paula’, and was completed on Cyprus in A.G. 935 (= 623/4).³²

We perhaps have one more witness to Paul’s activities. This is a dossier of texts embedded in the later *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*, which claim that when the emperor Heraclius was campaigning in Armenia in 625, he had entered into a doctrinal dispute on Christ’s operations with a Severan bishop Paul, and later dispatched an imperial *keleusis* “to Arcadius the most holy archbishop of Cyprus against Paul the highest head of the non-bishops.” We are told that Paul “appeared in those places [in Armenia]”, as though he might be an outsider, and the connection with Cyprus perhaps suggests that he was resident there.³³ If he is indeed identical with the exiled Paul of Edessa, then his

28 Jacob of Edessa (ed. Brooks 1961), 324–325.

29 See e.g. Delehay 1927, 6–13.

30 Jacob of Edessa (ed. Brooks 1961), 324.

31 Brooks 1909, 801.

32 See Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 423, 431–432 (= BL Add. 12153 and 14457). Paul also translated the Ps.-Nonnus scholia; see Brock 1971, 28–29, suggesting his association with Qenneshre.

33 Riedinger 1992, 528–530, 588–592.

conference with Heraclius points to the ongoing attempts of the exiled Severan bishops to court the Roman emperor, and indeed predicts, as we shall see, their later engagement with him following the Persian withdrawal.

The evidence related to Paul of Edessa seems, then, to complicate the evidence presented in Michael's *Chronicle*: first, it suggests that Paul, at least, had fled not from a persecution of Maurice or of Phocas, but from the Persians; second, that he remained in exile in 623/4, and had not been restored following the conquests (as Michael suggests for Thomas of Harqel); and third, that he perhaps courted the patronage not of the Sasanian shah, but of the Roman emperor Heraclius.

It should now be clear that an alternative perspective has opened upon the patriarch Athanasius's presence within the Roman Empire in ca. 615–617. As the Persians had expanded westwards, numerous persons had fled to Egypt, and this perhaps included the bishops present there for the union of 617. But their situation was far more complex than has been appreciated, for at least two of those present, Paul of Edessa and Paul of Tella, faced rival Severan challengers for their sees, challengers who could call upon the support of Khusrau himself. Rather than thinking of the subsequent union of the Antiochenes and the Alexandrians as an example of institutional bridge-building across political divides, we should instead see it as the desperate attempt of Athanasius and his bishops to shore up their position in a context of considerable encroachment upon their perceived prerogatives.

5 Dvin, Mar Mattai, and Tikrit

At the same time that Khusrau had extended his conquests over Roman Mesopotamia and was contemplating the conquest of the Levant, the East Syrians at his court had lost favour. Following the death of the catholicos Sabrišo' (ca. 604), the Church of the East had been divided into rival factions, and henceforth Khusrau had withdrawn his patronage, to the extent that upon the death of Sabrišo's controversial successor, Gregory of Pherat (608/9), the shah refused to approve a new catholicos. In 612, Khusrau gathered a disputation between the East Syrians and their Persian Severan rivals, but the former were defeated, and the catholicosate stood vacant for the remainder of his reign. Instead—under the influence of the Christian Queen Širin, and the archiatros Gabriel of Sinjar—the miaphysites at court became ascendant.³⁴

34 See e.g. Flusin 1992, vol. 2, 106–118; Greatrex 2003.

The significance of this shift has been much debated, but it is important that in interpreting it we not limit our vision to the immediate context of Khusrau's court. For soon after there occurred another dramatic event: an extensive union of certain Persian miaphysites with Armenian bishops to the north. In Ps.-Sebēos's *Armenian History* we discover a long letter which a Council of Dvin drafted in 649, in response to a command of the emperor Constans II to commune with Chalcedon. This recalls how Khusrau II, "after the capture of Jerusalem" (614) summoned "all the bishops of the regions of the east and of Asorestan" (i.e. northern Mesopotamia) to court, in order to debate the faith, in the presence also of Smbat Bagratuni and of "the royal chief doctor" (*sc.* Gabriel of Sinjar). The letter also then places amongst the attendees a somewhat varied cast: Zachariah, the captive Chalcedonian patriarch of Jerusalem (thus after 614); certain unnamed "philosophers" taken captive in Alexandria (thus after June 619); various Chalcedonians "from Greek territory"; Severans and East Syrians, including the catholicos of the latter (thus pre-609); the "chief Jew" (*sc.* the exilarch); and two Armenian bishops, Komitas of the Mamikonēik' and Matt'eos of the Amatunik'. As a result of discussions, the same letter reports, the king turned against the East Syrian catholicos and his bishops, and ordered their churches to be demolished; after, the patriarch Zachariah and the Alexandrian philosophers renounced Chalcedon, and announced the faith of the Armenians to be orthodox. At this point, according to the letter, Khusrau ordered all of the Christians under his dominion to hold to "the faith of the Armenians", and the text adds: "Those who conformed to the faith of Armenia in the regions of Asorestan were Kamyišov the metropolitan (Կամիշօ՞ւ 2Ղ մետրապօլիտ) and ten other bishops, and the pious queen Širin, and the valiant Smbat, and the great chief doctor [Gabriel]."³⁵

What to make of this report? We must, of course, bear in mind that the letter was produced in a particular context in 649, and perhaps never sent, and that it has then been reproduced, again in a particular context, in the narrative of Ps.-Sebēos. The potential for distortion, at various levels, is therefore quite high. Besides the somewhat fantastical list of attendees, the vignette also presents us with several obvious chronological inconsistencies, and those scholars have accepted the basic occurrence of such a council have sometimes dated it to the period 605–609, sometimes to the period ca. 615.³⁶ Whatever the solution, we have several indications that Armenian influence was expanding in this period, in particular under the aforementioned Komitas, who became catholicos in

35 Sebēos (ed. Abgaryan 2005), ch. 46, 228–234, trans. adapted from Thomson 1999, 114–118.

36 See Flusin 1992, vol. 2, 115–116; cf. Jankowiak (forthcoming).

615. Thus, the *History* of Ps.-Sebēos contains a letter of Komitas to the Chalcedonian patriarchal *locum tenens* Modestus at Jerusalem, in response to a request for monies for reconstruction after the Persian sack of 614;³⁷ while the later Georgian chronicle of Arsen Sapareli claims that Komitas brought the catholicos of the Caucasian Albanians back into communion, and then expanded the size of the episcopates of both Albania and Siwnik'.³⁸

Perhaps the most striking example of Komitas's heightened influence, and his expanding communion, is however a letter embedded in the Armenian *Book of Letters*, sometimes called the *Letter to the Persians*.³⁹ The letter is a statement of faith which was sent from Komitas and his synod after an apparent council at Dvin, and which contains some striking echoes of the council described in Ps.-Sebēos. It is notable for three things: first, its acknowledgement of the oversight of Smbat Bagratuni; second, its clear statement of apthartist doctrine (i.e. that Christ's flesh was incorruptible by nature); and third, a subsequent anathematisation of Severus of Antioch, "who said that the flesh was corruptible until the resurrection, and after the resurrection was incorruptible". The letter does not give the list of Armenian signatories besides Komitas. But it includes a list of eight signatories from scattered sees in northern Iraq and northwestern Iran, all under the leadership of the metropolitan "Kamišoy (Կամիշոյ մետրապոլիտ)"⁴⁰—no doubt identical with the Kamišov whose presence, alongside ten bishops, is also alleged at the council which Ps.-Sebēos reports.⁴¹ The letter is not dated, but there also survives an apparent response to it, presented at Dvin to Komitas from two bishops of the region of Asorestan, Maroutha and Peter, and dated to the 27th year of Khusrau, that is, to 616/7.⁴² As Komitas was appointed in 615, the *Letter to the Persians* must have been sent soon after his election.

At the same time that Athanasius the Camel-driver and his bishops were gathering at the Ennaton at Alexandria, then, we find Komitas expanding the Armenian communion into northern Mesopotamia and Iran, in part upon the

37 Sebēos (ed. Abgaryan 2005), ch. 36.

38 Aleksidzé and Mahé 2010, 6.1., 107–108.

39 *Girk' T't'oc'* (ed. Izmiranc' 1901), 212–219. The complete version of the text was published in Tēr Mik'elean 1894–1896, 300–310.

40 *Girk' T't'oc'* (ed. Izmiranc' 1901), 218.

41 On the council, its signatories, and its relation to that in Ps.-Sebēos, see Tēr-Minassiantz 1904, 62–67; Mahé 1993; van Esbroeck 2001.

42 Ed. Tēr-Mik'elean 1892, 290–291. Note, however, that the response contains a pointed anathematisation of Zachariah, Saba, and George, three 'bishops of the Zoulianites [i.e. Julianists]'—perhaps a critique of the council, but perhaps based in a distinction of Julianism from Armenian apthartism.

basis of apthartist doctrine. Since the Council of Dvin in 555—which had also involved the co-operation of Armenian bishops with the Persian bishop ‘Abdišo’—the Armenian miaphysite church had been committed to the doctrine of Christ’s natural incorruptibility, which set it apart from its Severan equivalents in the Roman world.⁴³ That Komitas indeed defended this position finds some confirmation in the Armenian florilegium called the *Knik’ hawatoy* (*Seal of Faith*), which was perhaps assembled under him, and which advocates apthartism.⁴⁴

Whether this doctrine can be called “Julianist” is a matter of some dispute.⁴⁵ But for our purposes what is important is that this position, at least in 617, also involved the anathematisation of Severus of Antioch. It is impossible not to see the repeated emphasis on Severus which we find in the documents from the union at Alexandria—which met at the Ennaton, a place with profound associations with the man himself—as somehow being in dialogue with events in Armenia, that is, with the concomitant rise, under the patronage of Smbat Bagratuni and perhaps also of Khusrau himself, of a miaphysite communion which was confessing apthartism and anathematising Severus.⁴⁶

Was there a connection between the expansion of the Armenian communion and the rivalries over former Roman sees further west, where Severan rivals were contending for the same sees? A possible hint is contained in the statement of Michael the Great that the bishops whose consecrations offended Athanasius the Camel-driver were appointments of the “Metropolitan of the region of Mosul”. It seems certain that Michael is referring to the Monastery of Mar Mattai, whose metropolitans would assume a prominent role in the Severan politics of the Islamic period. Later historians will claim that the metropolitanate was a creation of the Armenian catholicos Christopher (539–545) and will also provide a list of earliest incumbents stretching to 629, with no suggestion that those incumbents were in communion with Antioch.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it is not impossible that its acquisition for the Severans, and elevation as a metropolitanate, were far more recent phenomena than those historians were willing to confess. A report in the *Life of Rabban Bar ‘Idta* suggests that,

43 See e.g. Garsoïan 1999, 135–239.

44 *Knik’ hawatoy* (ed. Tēr-Mkrtč‘ean 1914), with Cowe 2004, 40–42.

45 See e.g. Cowe 1993.

46 Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, vol. 4, 394, 396, 397, 399, 401–402, where the union is also signed in the ‘Monastery of Patricia Caesaria’, perhaps the correspondent of Severus; Evetts 1904, 481.

47 See Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, vol. 2, 87, 103 and Michael the Great, *Chronicle* 11.4, vol. 4, 413 (cf. 427), placing the appointment after the persecution of Barsauma of Nisibis, which strains the chronology; see the comments of Garsoïan 1999, 201–204.

in Khusrau's earlier reign, the monastery had belonged to the Church of the East, but that with the support of Gabriel of Sinjar a certain Severan, Zakkai, had seized control of it.⁴⁸ Gabriel is elsewhere said to have engineered a similar transfer of two other monasteries (Mar Pethyon and that of Sergius/Širin).⁴⁹

Who then was the Persian metropolitan Kamišoy/Kamyišov whom both Ps.-Sebēos and the *Letter to the Persians* present as a crucial player in the union with the Armenians? From John of Ephesus we know that Jacob Baradaeus had created an "orthodox" metropolitanate in Persia under one Aḥūdemmeḥ in the late reign of Justinian.⁵⁰ Bar Hebraeus's *Chronicle* dates its creation to A.G. 870 [558/9], but also claims that Aḥūdemmeḥ was an earlier episcopal appointment not of the Antiochene patriarch but, again, of Christopher, catholicos of Armenia.⁵¹ Aḥūdemmeḥ's successors are then named as Qamišo' and Samuel, who are presented as metropolitans of Tikrit.⁵² Bar Hebraeus places Qamišo's death in A.G. 920 [= 608/9], and implies he was a Severan—but both claims are suspicious. For Qamišo' is no doubt identical with Kamišoy/Kamyišov, the same prominent metropolitan whom Armenian texts present as a protagonist in the *anti-Severan* union of ca. 615–617. Whether the sees of Mar Mattai and of Tikrit were creations of the Armenian catholicos, as per Bar Hebraeus's remarkable claim, must remain uncertain. But that claim nevertheless corroborates the impression of an initial independence of those sees from Antioch.

In the Persian heartlands, therefore, we appear to find the two sees, Mar Mattai and Tikrit, exploiting the conquests of Khusrau II to expand their influence, independent of the Antiochene patriarch. But we also find them competing with each other and adopting quite different doctrinal stances in pursuit of that end. Thus, the bishop of Mar Mattai appoints Severan bishops, and perhaps a new metropolitan, to sees in former Roman Mesopotamia; whereas the bishop of Tikrit, along with various bishops from Sasanian Mesopotamia and northwestern Iran, aligns with the long-standing apthartist doctrine of the Armenians. Just as the idea of a "triumph for Miaphysite orthodoxy" underes-

48 Wallis Budge 1904, 158–165. The same Zakkai perhaps appears in Denha, *Life of Marutha* (ed. Nau 1909a), ch. 3, where he is called a bishop.

49 See *Khuzistan Chronicle* (ed. Guidi 1960), 22; also Denha, *Life of Marutha* (ed. Nau 1909a), ch. 4; *Histoire Nestorienne* (ed. Scher, A. et al. 1908–1919), 86.

50 John of Ephesus (ed. Brooks 1952), 3.6.20, calling Aḥūdemmeḥ catholicos of Persia (cf. Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, ch. 9.30, 10.16).

51 Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, vol. 2, 99, stating that the metropolitan Aḥūdemmeḥ was earlier bishop of Beth 'Arabāye. His extant *Life* (ed. Nau 1909b, 20) makes him bishop and metropolitan of the same see, but does not mention Christopher.

52 Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, vol. 2, 101, 109–111.

timates the tensions which existed between Roman and Persian miaphysites, then, so too does it underestimate the extent to which the latter were themselves divided into rival factions.

6 The Aftermath of War

We know nothing of Athanasius the Camel-driver's activities after the Alexandrian union of 617—although one suspects that he might have remained within Roman territories. But he re-emerges again in the aftermath of the Roman triumph over the Persians in 628, and here we encounter him in two revealing contexts. First, in 628/9, he summons to Antioch the Metropolitan of Mar Mattai, Christophorus, four of his bishops, and three monks, and there appoints one of those monks, Marutha, as a new vicar in Tikrit, with wide-ranging powers over the Persian church—that is, the office later known as the maphrianate.⁵³ According to his *Life*, this Marutha had been higoumen of the Monastery of Širin at Ctesiphon, when Gabriel of Sinjar had arranged its transfer to the Severans; but the same *Life* also claims that he had before that spent a decade in Mar Zakkai at Callinicum—the same place named as the residence of Athanasius⁵⁴—and it is possible that he was somehow a prior acquaintance of the patriarch.⁵⁵ One of Athanasius's first acts at the end of the Last Great War, therefore, was to assert himself over the upstart Severans of Mar Mattai, and to subordinate the entire Persian episcopate through the appointment of a new patriarchal vicar at Tikrit, the former see of Qamišo, leader of the Persian apthartists.⁵⁶

Soon after this, in the winter of 629/30, we encounter Athanasius again, and in a perhaps unexpected context—as an aspirant to the vacant throne of Antioch, that is, the former Chalcedonian throne. According to the narrative and documentation in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Great, Athanasius attended upon the emperor Heraclius at Hierapolis, alongside twelve of his bishops—Thomas of Tedmor, Basil of Emesa, Sergius of 'Arac, John of Cyrrhus, Thomas of Hierapolis, Daniel of Harran, Isaiah of Edessa, Severus of Qeneshrin, Ath-

53 See Denha, *Life of Marutha* (ed. Nau 1909a), 5; Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, ch. 11.4; *Histoire Nestorienne* (ed. Scher, A. et al. 1908–1919), 88.

54 See above n. 18. It was also the alma mater of Cyriacus of Amida (Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, ch. 10.26).

55 See Denha, *Life of Marutha* (ed. Nau 1909a), 3.

56 For this point see also Jankowiak 2009, 54–55.

anasius of Arabissus, Cosmas of Epiphania, and Severus of Samosata.⁵⁷ How such bishops had fared during the period of Persian rule, if not new appointments, is not clear. But let us note that Thomas (who is Thomas of Harqel), and perhaps Sergius of 'Arac, had been at the Ennaton, alongside Athanasius, Paul of Edessa, and Paul of Tella in 615 and 616; and that of those sees in Mesopotamia whose bishops were reported appointments of the "Metropolitan of Mosul", all are absent except Edessa, whose bishop Isaiah now appears allied to Athanasius. Our most reliable sources report that the emperor demanded that Athanasius recognise a confession of the one operation and will in Christ, and that the patriarch refused, and soon entered into self-imposed exile. But what is significant for us is the simple but quite striking fact that Heraclius would consider recognising Athanasius, the Severan patriarch of Antioch, as the sole legitimate claimant to the vacant throne—a fact of some evident disquiet to Chalcedonian contemporaries.⁵⁸ It suggests that there was more to Athanasius's candidature than his possible doctrinal inclinations; it suggests that he was regarded not as some Sasanian stooge, but rather as a devoted servant of the Roman emperor.

7 Conclusion

In this brief paper I have tried, above all, to make two simple points: first, that the presence of Athanasius the Camel-driver and his bishops at Alexandria in ca. 615–617 was bound up with the unwelcome encroachment of Persian-nominated bishops within Athanasius's territories; and second, that the same encroachment occurred within a context in which two Persian metropolitans—one Severan and one apthartist—were competing to expand their influence. Both points complicate current understandings of ecclesiastical politics in Khusrau II's expanded empire, which seems far more fragmented than has hitherto been appreciated. It has often been suggested—in connection both with the suppression of the East Syrian catholicate in 612, and with the patronage afterwards extended to their rivals—that the shah perceived in "the miaphysite church", with its networks across his new enlarged empire, and its frequent friction with the emperor at Constantinople, a more fitting foundation for the establishment of an imperial Sasanian church. But we have seen that this picture is too simplistic. For in the remarkable unions of the period

57 Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, ch. 11.1–3; cf. Theophanes (ed. de Boor 1883), AM 612; *Histoire Nestorienne* (ed. Scher, A. et al. 1908–1919), 88.

58 See Jankowiak 2009, 62–74; Booth 2014, 203–205.

from 615 to 617, the one at Dvin and the other at Alexandria, we see two competing visions of what miaphysite orthodoxy in fact was, and therein the challenge for those observers, whether mediaeval or modern, who would aspire to imagine a “miaphysite church”.

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The Funerary Oration of Barsel *Vardapet*

Tara L. Andrews and Anahit Safaryan

In the late autumn of 1146, disaster befell the Christians of the city of Edessa. They, or at least some of them, had been chafing under Turkish rule since the city fell to ‘Imad al-Din Zengi in December 1144, and an audacious plan had been launched to restore control to its erstwhile Frankish ruler, Joscelin II. While Joscelin’s initial entry into the city went smoothly, his forces were neither able to dislodge the Turkish garrison in the citadel nor to beat back the inevitable counterattack from Zengi’s son, Nūr ad-Dīn, who had succeeded to power upon Zengi’s death earlier that year. The carnage on the battlefield, as Joscelin and his allies attempted forcibly to retreat from the city, claimed the life of many soldiers including Joscelin’s compatriot and ally Baldwin, lord of the nearby towns of Kesun and Marash; the brutal sack of the city which followed claimed the lives of many more.

This second sack of Edessa was a calamity that reverberated throughout Christendom, culminated in the Second Crusade, and left its impact on virtually all of the contemporary histories.¹ Yet of all these works, few give a sense of the personal dimension of loss as effectively as the oration composed by Barsel *vardapet*, Baldwin’s father confessor.

The oration (for, although it was circulated in written form, the style and cadence were well-suited for reading aloud) is arguably the centrepiece of the historical work of Grigor *erēc’*, which itself was a continuation of the *Chronicle* of Matt’ēos Urhayec’i. In this article we set out a new edition of the oration based on six surviving witnesses, along with a new English translation that follows the text, occasionally contorted though it may be, as consistently and faithfully as possible. We also provide a short sketch about the author of the oration, its subject, and the historical background against which it was written.

Many years ago, the honorand of this volume mentioned in passing that he would like someday to work on this oration. We can think of no finer scholar to do so, and present this edition in the hope that he, or a scholar inspired in his honour, will give the text the literary study that it deserves.

1 ME, 374–375, MS, 270–275, WT, 157–161, al-Athīr, 8.

1 The Author and His Subject

Barseł, the author of the oration, is identified by Grigor simply as “the holy and blessed *vardapet* ... who was father confessor to Baldwin”.² Although Grigor says nothing about Barseł’s later career, he is identified by Ališan as the same Barseł who, as abbot of Drazark monastery, had a “Commentary of the *Katholikoi*” (possibly Chrysostom) brought from Constantinople and translated into Armenian.³ In any event, although his presence in the historical record is slight, Barseł was evidently a figure of significance to Grigor who, in addition to devoting so much space to the oration, writes about his death and burial at Drazark in the final entry of the *Chronicle* for the year 1162/3 that “this is the end of this narration and the beginning of this era.”⁴

The subject of Barseł’s letter, Baldwin, is no less shrouded in historical obscurity as to his origins and the majority of his career. Grigor was a resident of Kesun and thus under his rule, and he duly always speaks of “our prince” in flattering terms, but tells us very little about the activities of his rule. Baldwin would have been in power by 1136 or 1137, when according to Grigor he appealed to the Byzantine emperor, Iōannes 11 Komnenos, for assistance against a siege of Kesun (Grigor dates this to 1136, but also writes that the emperor was in the area at the time, when most sources agree that the Cilician expedition did not take place until the following year.)⁵ Although this is, apart from the report of his death, the only record Grigor gives about Baldwin’s activities as lord of Marash and Kesun, our knowledge can be slightly augmented from other sources. Smbat Sparapet writes that Baldwin defeated Lewon, the prince of Cilicia, in 1136, and that the prince of Antioch (Raymond of Poitou, who is erroneously named in the text as Bohemond and who would have only just taken power) captured Lewon three months later.⁶ Michael the Syrian writes that Baldwin began work on the fortifications of Kesun around 1145, which ceased with his death in battle.⁷ There also survives a single charter issued by Baldwin, of uncertain date, confirming the donation of land to the Hospitallers of Jerusalem.⁸ Many Western sources remark on his death in 1146, but are otherwise curiously silent about him.

2 ME, 375: գոր եւ սուրբ եւ երջանիկ վարդապետն Բարսեղ, որ էր հայր խոստովանութեան Պաղտոյնին.

3 Ališan 1885, 516.

4 ME, 428: Այս եղև աւարտումն բանիցս եւ սկիզբն թուականիս.

5 ME, 368–369.

6 SS, 160.

7 MS, III, p. 269.

8 Beech 1996, 48.

As for the relationship between Baldwin and Barseł, or indeed the wider relationship between Baldwin and the Armenians over whom he ruled, the only evidence comes from the oration itself and accompanying comments by Grigor. According to Barseł, Baldwin was fluent enough in Armenian that he could give sermons in both languages (cf. p. 122, ll. 10–12); according to Grigor, Baldwin “loved the Armenian people more than the Franks”.⁹ It is an open question how this alleged preference for Armenians can be reconciled either with his campaign against Lewon of Cilicia in 1136, or with the claim made by Michael the Syrian that “il fit peser fortement le joug sur les chrétiens, au point qu’il en fit même des esclaves” in service to the renewal of Kesun’s fortifications.¹⁰

Baldwin’s family connections are likewise a mystery. Barseł refers in his oration to a brother of Baldwin (cf. p. 130, l. 4), whom Grigor *erēc* subsequently names as the prince of Antioch (that is, Raymond of Poitiers), and it is worth noting, as Beech does,¹¹ that Baldwin’s emergence in the sources as lord of Marash coincides with the arrival of Raymond in Antioch. A blood relationship certainly cannot be ruled out—Raymond’s father, William IX of Aquitaine, was not known for his fidelity¹²—but there is no surviving documentary evidence to confirm Grigor’s claim and the Latin sources are entirely silent on Baldwin’s origin or familial connections. While Beech speculates that Raymond may have brought Baldwin along on his journey to take power in Antioch, one may just as well speculate—especially given the claim of Baldwin’s fluency in the Armenian language—that he was already in the East, perhaps even already installed as lord of Kesun and Marash, and even that he might have had some hand in the nomination of Raymond as a suitable prince of Antioch.

If Baldwin was indeed the brother of Raymond, this seems eventually to have put him in an awkward position; while there remains some question over the precise nature of the feudal relationships between Antioch, Marash, and Edessa, it is possible that Baldwin owed fealty to Joscelin II of Edessa and family loyalty to Raymond, even as these two had fallen (according to William of Tyre¹³) into “open hatred”. Whatever the circumstances of the relationship between the three men, Baldwin died in the attempt to recapture Edessa for Joscelin, while Raymond was unwilling or unable to intervene.

9 ME, 374: զի առաւել սիրէր զազգն Հայոց քան զՓռանգաց.

10 MS, 269.

11 Beech 1996, 46.

12 For issues concerning William’s marital life and references to relevant primary sources, see Harvey 1993.

13 WT, 141.

2 The Text

Of the more than 35 manuscripts carrying the text of the *Chronicle* of Urhayec'i, only eight are known to include the oration of BarseĀ. Six of these are included in the present edition. The seventh (Matenadaran MS [M] 3380) is a descriptor of our manuscript E, and the eighth is available at present only through the intermediary of the Jerusalem edition of 1869. That edition was based primarily on two manuscripts, numbers 1051 and 1107 now held in the library of the Armenian patriarchate in Jerusalem. The editors have unfortunately not recorded which of the two manuscripts contained the oration, and the manuscripts have not, to date, been available for consultation. Under these circumstances we considered it unsafe to incorporate the Jerusalem text into the edition without direct access to the manuscript.

The work of establishing a complete stemma of the manuscripts of the *Chronicle* remains ongoing, but a partial stemma of the six manuscripts used in this edition can nevertheless be drawn, as seen on page 109 below. They can be divided quite clearly into two groups β and ϵ , each with marked textual coherence. The three texts comprising ϵ belong to the "Venice group" of witnesses described in a previous publication.¹⁴ While the Jerusalem text cannot (yet) be placed precisely in the stemma, the variants recorded by its editors lead to the tentative conclusion that its manuscript belongs in group ϵ .

The manuscripts that were consulted for this edition, in approximate chronological order of production, are the following:

- Yerevan, Matenadaran MS (M) 1731 (= F), copied in 1617 by a scribe who identifies himself as "Zatik, son of PoĀtn", probably in Lviv. Zatik also made another copy of the *Chronicle* in the same year, Matenadaran MS (M) 5587, which used a different exemplar and contains the text only up to the year 1097/8. It is from a colophon in this second manuscript that the location where Zatik worked—and thus the location where our manuscript F was copied—can be established. The text of the *Chronicle* has a large lacuna, extending from the entry for 1065/6 up to the point where MS 5587 ends.
- Yerevan, Matenadaran MS (M) 1767 (= B), copied in 1623 in Aleppo, by a scribe called Avetik at the school of Israyel *vardapet* Hamt'ec'i. This was witness P in the 1898 VaĀrařapat edition. The first several pages, which were meant to contain the beginning of the *Chronicle*, are blank; the scribe also left blank pages for lacunae in the text of the *Chronicle* that are common to all texts apart from Matenadaran MS 1896. The *Chronicle* is the only text carried in the manuscript.

¹⁴ Andrews 2016, 165–7.

- Venice, Mekhitarist Library MS (V) 901 (= X), copied in 1669 in Isfahan by two scribes; the scribe responsible for the text of the *Chronicle* was Sargis *erēc*՝. This manuscript was the sole basis for Dulaurier's edition and translation of the oration, published in 1869 along with several other Armenian documents relating to the Crusader era.¹⁵ In almost all respects X appears to be a descriptor manuscript of F; it contains the same large gap in the text, and the texts usually match very closely. However, as we will shortly see, this manuscript has some curious affinities with manuscript A. Due to this complication of the stemma, and given its status as the text from which Dulaurier's edition and translation was made, X has been retained for this edition.
- Matenadaran MS (M) 1896 (= A), copied in 1689 in Amrdolu monastery in Bitlis by Yakob *erēc*՝, at the behest of Vardan Bališec՝i, who was the librarian of the monastery. The manuscript begins with a short history of the Armenian katholikoi up to 1441, followed by the text of the *Chronicle*, the tenth-century history of Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc՝i, and a pair of poems by Simēon Aparanc՝i, who lived at the turn of the seventeenth century.

This is the base text of the 1898 Vałaršapat edition, whose editors believed it to have been copied from a very early (now lost) exemplar, largely on the basis that it preserves two passages of text missing from all other witnesses. From closer examination, however, it is clear that the exemplar for A was also missing these passages; space was left for them when the copy was initially made, to be filled in later, and in one case the new text was physically pasted over an abbreviated text carried in all other manuscripts. It is also clear from a comparison of the texts, especially between A and its close cousin B, that Yakob *erēc*՝ was actively seeking to improve the readings he had to work from.

Intriguingly, there are a few substantial textual similarities between manuscripts A and X; for example, in the passage immediately preceding the oration, the sentence “Ի սոյն ժամանակս ի չորս բաժանեցաւ կաթողիկոսութիւնն. Տէր Վահրամն եւ Տէր Գրիգոր յԵգիպտոս, Տէր Բարսեղն յԱնի, Տէր Պօղոս հայրն Վարազայ ի Սարաշ, Տէր Թորոսն ի Շենի. արոռն արբոյն Գրիգորի ի յԱնի ի չորս բաժանեցաւ.” [“In this period the katholikosate was divided into four: Lord Vahram and Lord Grigor in Egypt, Lord Barseł in Ani, Lord Pōlos the abbot of Varag in Marash, Lord T'oros in Honi. The throne of the holy Grigor in Ani was divided into four.”] has been inserted in both of these manuscripts and no others, repeating information found in the *Chronicle*'s entry for 1085/86 and erroneously equating Barseł *varda-pet* here with the katholikos Barseł of Ani, who died in 1113. It is impossible

¹⁵ Dulaurier 1869, 203–22.

to do more than speculate on the exact nature of the relationship between these manuscripts, separated by 20 years of time and different branches of the tradition and specifically attributed to different scribes, yet linked by a common idea of what the text “should have been” at certain points.

- Yerevan, Matenadaran MS (M) 3520 (= E), a manuscript of unknown provenance dated to the seventeenth century. This was witness Ե in the 1898 Vałaršapat edition. The manuscript opens with the tenth-century *Life of Nersēs the Great* by Mesrop of Vayoc’ Jor followed by the *Chronicle*; these are followed by a text entitled “Questions of Athanasius and Answers of Cyril of Jerusalem” and a “Passing history of the time of the election of Kirakos *kat’otikos*”. It contains only a single colophon, written in a later hand and bearing the date 1785, which does not shed any light on the origin of the manuscript.
- Oxford, Bodleian Library MS (OXL) Arm e.32 (= O), copied in or before 1703 in multiple hands, rotating intermittently throughout the text, without any attribution. The place of this manuscript in the larger stemma is complex, as it may have had up to three different exemplars, but for the majority of Book 3 of the *Chronicle* and the continuation of Grigor, including the oration of BarseĀ, the readings of O align it quite clearly with group β.

Although the editors of the 1898 Vałaršapat edition believed that A was the best copy on the basis of its preservation of two passages of text missing from all other witnesses, it became clear upon examination of the manuscript itself that the exemplar of A was also missing these passages, which were filled in later from another source. Collation of the text has also made clear the extent to which the scribe of A, Yakob *erēc’*, engaged in recension of the exemplar in order to, in his view, improve the readings. Although manuscript B predates A, the omission of the first nine pages of text mean that it could not have been the exemplar. As mentioned, manuscript O bears the traces of several scribes working simultaneously, and the exemplar was changed at least once, presumably because the text of the first exemplar ended shortly after the prophecies of Kozerñ. For the portion of the text thereafter, there is no sign of any further change of exemplar; the text from this point is similar in most respects to that of AB.

As for the group EFX, the witnesses F and X share a large lacuna in the main body of the *Chronicle*, spanning from near the end of the entry for 1065/6 up to the point, within the entry for 1097/8, where many of the other witnesses to the *Chronicle* end. Here we have something of a textual mystery that remains to be solved satisfactorily: while X could almost be excluded as a descriptor of F on the basis of its strong textual affinity, there are a few substantial readings—usually additions of a phrase or a sentence—shared solely with manuscript A. For this reason, as well as the status of X as the basis of Dulaurier’s edition, we have chosen to retain it here.

3 Working Methods

The preparation of this edition is part of an ongoing project to produce a digital critical edition of the full text of the *Chronicle* and its continuation. The work was funded in its initial stages by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Project #159433) and has been further supported by the University of Vienna. One of the aims of the project is to produce a fully digital workflow, automated wherever possible but with the necessary scope for the editor to make the decisions and judgments necessary to produce the critical text.

The initial part of the work is handled using a “continuous integration pipeline” workflow system, borrowed from the world of commercial software engineering.¹⁶ Transcriptions of all available manuscripts have been made using the online tool T-PEN;¹⁷ the pipeline process runs every day to download changes to these transcriptions, assemble them automatically into TEI-XML format, and validate them as such. The transcription files are then collated, section by section, with the CollateX software and the resulting collation is uploaded to the text repository Stemmarest.¹⁸ Once the data is in the Stemmarest system, the editors can review each collated section, modifying the collation where necessary, categorising the variants appropriately, and choosing a lemma reading or providing an emendation where necessary. The data model also allows for arbitrary annotations; these can include identification of persons and places, translations of passages, and identification of references to other works such as the Bible.

An initial version of the typeset text and critical apparatus presented here was produced automatically from the data stored in Stemmarest. At this point we had a problem of abundance: whereas, usually, editors making a critical edition must choose which variants to include, the automatically produced apparatus can include virtually every detail of divergence among the selected text and, in this case, was almost longer than the text itself. Moreover, while the automatically-produced apparatus entries are technically accurate, in some cases there was scope for reorganising them to make them more straightforward to understand. The apparatus presented here is thus a curated version of the automatically-produced one in which some entries have been consolidated (or separated) for readability, and certain entries—those where the variation is trivial (e.g. presence or absence of u/û suffixes or q/| prefixes) and occurs only in a single manuscript—have been excluded.

¹⁶ Andrews, Safaryan, and Atayan 2019.

¹⁷ Ginther 2012.

¹⁸ Andrews 2019.

The almost perfect balance of our working stemma, along with the certain knowledge that some of the scribes (especially Yakob *erēc'*) did attempt to improve the text, means that its establishment was most often a question of judgment. We have adopted a fairly conservative approach to reconstruction of the text, in that we have tended to select the readings that seem from the evidence more likely to be archetypal, even if the readings proposed by other witnesses (especially A) might arguably produce a more fluid text. Several emendations made by Dulaurier, who was working from only one manuscript, have found confirmation in the witnesses that were unavailable to him; a few others, noted in the apparatus, have been retained even when no witness provided outright confirmation.

4 The Oration of BarseĀ Vardapet: Critical Text and Translation

4.1 *Index Siglorum*

- A Yerevan, Matenadaran MS 1896 (1689), transcribed by Tara Andrews
- B Yerevan, Matenadaran MS 1767 (1623), transcribed by Anahit Safaryan
- E Yerevan, Matenadaran MS 3520 (17th c.), transcribed by Tatev Atayan
- F Yerevan, Matenadaran MS 1731 (1617), transcribed by Anahit Safaryan and Tatev Atayan
- O Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arm e.32 (17th–18th c.), transcribed by Tatev Atayan
- X Venice, Mekhitarist Library MS 1485/901, transcribed by Razmik Kazaryan

4.2 *Stemma Codicum*

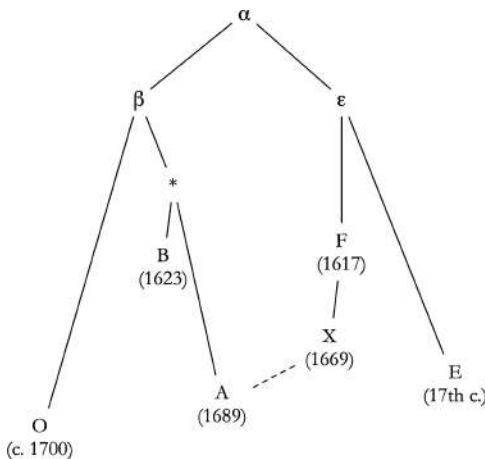


FIGURE 5.1
Stemma of the witnesses to the oration
of BarseĀ vardapet

Բարսեղ նուստ ծառայ աստուծոյ գրեմ մեծակական ողբաւք եւ բազմահառաչ արտասուաւք համարէն հաւատացելոց Քրիստոսի, մանաւանդ մերձակայից մերոց՝ Քեսնոյ, Պհեսնոյ, Ռապնայ, Գերմանիկոյ, եւ որք ընդ սորաւք գեղք եւ աւանք. եւ կրանաստանք իցեն յիրաքանչիւր ազգս եւ
 5 լեզուս, վասն անգիտ կորուսելոյ իշխանին եւ անտէր մեռելոյն Պաղտունին, զոր առակ նշաւակի եւ ցոյց խրատու արար զնա ամենագար արարիչն աստուած ամենայն տիեզերաց. մանաւանդ անգեղջ, սէգ եւ անիրաւ իշխանաց զարաց Հռոմայեցոց, յայտ առնելով ամենեցուն՝ եթէ ակնարկելով կամաց արարչին սպասեալ մնան տարերք եւ արարածք ամենայն. եւ որ
 10 խեթի հայեսցի ոչ տանին գնոսա տիեզերք ամենայն. զի ծով աղաղակէ թէ ոչ է աստ, եւ երկիր գոչէ թէ ոչ ծածկեցաւ ընդ հողով ի ծոց իմ. աւղ եւ ջուր վկայեն հրային մասամբն՝ եթէ ոչ մեք համարձակեցաք բառնալ կամ յայտնել ումեք զառ ի խրատ պատուհասեաւք թագուցեալն աստուծոյ. մահ եւ գերեզման բողոքեն թէ մեք ոչ ըմբռնեցաք, եւ ոչ տեսաք իջեալ ի
 15 կարգս մեռելոյ. եւ ի մէջ կենդանեաց ոչ ուրեք երեւի. ըստ որում սիրելին իմ իշխան, հէքն այն մանուկ, խիզախն ի մարտի, յաղթողն եւ քաջասիրտն ի պատերազմունս բարբարոսաց, մեծագար ըմբիշն եւ անթաքչելի սպառազէն զարականն քրիստոնէից, սիրեցեալ անուն իմ Պաղտին, զոր ձեռք անփոփեցին զհաստայեղց պնդութիւն կարծեցելոյ ձեռաց հզարին, կամ զոր
 20 բազուկ տկար խոնարհեցոյց զանվանելին բազուկս անուանի քաջին, կամ զոր առն ի զարականաց ի թլփատելոցն զարութիւն զարեաց խորտակել իջուցանել յերկիր զյաղթանդամն զայն, զբռուն ոսկերաւք, զբարձրահասակ զսկայազարն մարմին. եւ զոր կատաղեցելոյ գազանի սիրտ ոչ խանդաղատեցաւ զեղեցկութեամբ նորա, եւ ոչ ամաչեաց պատկառելով ի դիմաց

1 աստուծոյ] E F X om. || գրեմ] E X (a.c.) գերեմ; B գրեն || մեծակական] O մեծական 2 արտասուաւք] O արտասուք 3 Պհեսնոյ] E F X պենոյ 4 սորաւք] O սորա || գեղք] E F O գեաւք || եւ] E O X om. || ազգս] E F X յազգս 5 անգիտ] X հանգիտ || մեռելոյն] E F X մեռանելոյն 6 նշաւակի] B նշանակի || զոր առակ նշաւակի եւ ցոյց խրատու] X om. 7 անգեղջ, սէգ] X անգեղջս եր 8 ամենեցուն] F X om. || եթէ] A B եւ թէ || ակնարկելով] A B O ակնարկելոյ 9 եւ] A om. 10 խեթի] A B եւ խեթի; E F հեթի; X հեղի || հայեսցի] X հայեսցիս; A B հայեսցին 11 է] F X om. 13 կամ] X om. || թագուցեալն] E F X թագուցանելն 14 գերեզման] A գերեզմանն; X գերեզմանք 15 մեռելոյ] B մեռելոց 16 իշխան] E F X իշխանք || խիզախն] F X եւ ի զախն || քաջասիրտն] O քաջասիրտսն 19 անփոփեցին] E անփոփեցի զհաստայեղց; X անփոփեցին զհաստ հեղձ || զհաստայեղց] F զհաստայեղց 20 զանվանելին] A X զանվանելի || քաջին] E F X քաջի 21 զարեաց] E X զարաց || խորտակել] E F X խորտակեալ 23 զսկայազարն] X սկազար 24 զեղեցկութեամբ] X զեղեցկութիւն

18–19 զոր ձեռք պնդութիւն կարծեցելոյ ձեռաց հզարին] This is extremely difficult to translate; the editors of the *Vaharsapat* edition proposed the alternative զոր ձեռն կոփեաց զհաստայեղց պնդութիւնն, կարճեաց զձեռն հզարին (“what hand carved the solid fixity, shortened the hand of the mighty one?”).

I Barseł, humble servant of God, write with plaintive lamentation, deep sighs, and tears to all the faithful in Christ, especially those nearby to us in Kesun, Behesni, Raban, Germanike, and the villages and towns around them, and monastic communities of all nations and languages, about the invaluable loss and the forlorn death of the prince Baldwin. The all-powerful creator God of all the universe has made him into a spectacle and object lesson, especially for the impenitent, imperious and iniquitous princes of the Roman armies, by making plain to everyone that the elements and all creatures wait ready to signify the will of the Creator. However one looks, the entire universe does not contain him. For the sea cries out 'He is not here', and the earth calls 'He is not buried underground in my depths.' The air and water along with the fire's part bear witness, 'We have not been emboldened to raise or reveal what God has hidden to anyone, lest we be punished'. Death and the tomb appeal, 'We have not taken him, we have not seen him descending to the ranks of the dead'. And he does not appear anywhere among the living. And so my dear prince, that unfortunate youth, bold in warfare, victorious and stout-hearted in combat against the barbarians, all-powerful champion and soldier of Christ manifestly armed from head to foot, my beloved Baldwin by name: what hands have closed around the hands of the strong one, judging their solid strength? or what weak arm brought down the invincible arm of the renowned hero? or what lamb among the soldiers of the circumcised produced the strength to crush, to fell that strong-limbed one, the one with powerful bones, the tall body with the strength of a giant, to the ground? What enraged beastly heart was not moved to compassion by his beauty, and did not blush with shame before him, did not

նորա. ոչ գթացաւ ի գեղեցկութիւն նորա, եւ ոչ ողորմեցաւ մանկական տիոց վայելչութեան նորա, խնայելով ի հասակ տղայութեան նորա. եւ հիմ ոչ ձայնեաց առ նա զո՛վ որ իցեան դու կամ ուստի հարցանելով զբան, թերեւս մեղկեալ զիջանէր կատաղութիւն գազանութեանն ընդ համեստ, 5 հանճարեղ եւ ընդ իմաստուն պատասխանիս նորա անսայթաքելի լեզուաւ ի բարբառ հայերէն. եւ առ զառ ի բազմաց ծանուցեալսն յիմաստութիւն ի զարութիւն եւ ի հասակ, ի տեսակ եւ ի քաջամարտիկ յաղթութիւն, եւ յամենայն կիրս անցատր կենցաղոյս, ուստի ճանաչի մեծանձնութիւն գովութեան իշխանացն:

10 Աւելորդ վարկանեմ երկայնել զբանս, զի մի ըստգտանիցիմք ի պարսաւադէտ ատողաց նորա. այլ աւաղ ասեմ անբախտ կորստեան նորա եւ անյաջողակ ճանապարհին, զոր բազում անգամ գեկուցաք ոչ գնալ զանդառնալի զճանապարհն զայն, եւ ոչ անսաց բանից մերոց զորոյ առեալ է զփորձ. զի ոչ այլ ինչ պարապէաք խաւսել ընդ նմա, բայց զաւզտա- 15 կարն անձին նորա, եւ զփրկութիւն եւ զխնայումն տառապելոց քրիստոնէից, որում անլուր գտաւ յայսմ ամի միայն. ուստի եւ մեք իսկ զուշակեցաք զկորուստ առաջի նորա բազում անգամ, թէպէտ եւ ցաւ էր մեզ եւ դժուարին էր զայն ասել նմա, զոր այլ որ ոչ իշխէր. սակայն հնարէաք զայն, թերեւս զարհուրեալ երկիցէ եւ փոխեսցէ յայնց բարուց ի խոնարհութիւն 20 ողորմութեանն եւ յանոխակալութիւն քաղցրութեան. զի ոչ անգիտանայր զայն, թէ անողորմ դատաստան լինելոց է յարդար դատաւորէն աստուծոյ ամենայն անողորմ սրտից ի աստ եւ ի հանդերձելումն. եւ ամբարտաւանից հակառակ ոչ մարդ որ է ի մարդկանէ կամ հրեշտակ երկնաւորաց,

1 գեղեցկութիւն] O գեղեցկութեան || ոչ] E om. || ողորմեցաւ] X ողորմեցան 2 վայելչութեան] X վայելչութիւն || տղայութեան] B տղայութիւն; F տղայութեանն || հիմ] X հեմ 3 առ նա զո՛վ] A B նմա զո 4 զիջանէր] E F X զիջանել || գազանութեանն] A X գազանութեան 5 հանճարեղ եւ] F հանճար եղեւ || պատասխանիս] A B պատասխանիսն 6 բարբառ] E F *transp. post* հայերէն || եւ առ] X բարբառեալ || զառ] A om.; O զառի 7 ի] B om. || եւ] B E O om. || տեսակ եւ ի] X տեսակի || յաղթութիւն] A B յաղթութեան 8 անցատր] O անանցատր 10 վարկանեմ] E (a.c.) F O վարկարանեմ || երկայնել] X երկայնեմ || մի] B om. 11 այլ աւաղ ասեմ անբախտ կորստեան նորա] X om. 13 զճանապարհն] O զճանապարհին || զայն] X նորա || անսաց] F O (a.c.) X սաց || մերոց] X նորա 14 է] F om.; A B եւ 16 ուստի] F ուստ 17 զկորուստ] A B O զկորուստ նորա 18 զայն ասել] O զնոյն այսել 19 թերեւս] A զի թերեւս || փոխեսցէ] A B O փոխեսցի || յայնց] E ի յայնց; O յիանց; X ի յանանց 20 ողորմութեանն] A O X ողորմութեան || քաղցրութեան] E F քաղցրութեանն || անգիտանայր] A B O անգիտանալի; E F յանգիտանալի; X անգիտանալին 21 դատաստան] E (a.c.) F X դատաստանն 22 ի] X om.; E F O եւ || հանդերձելումն] X հանդերձեալն 23 հակառակ] F X կակաճակ; E հակաճակ || ոչ] A B om. || որ] A B E ոչ || ի] O om. || ի մարդկանէ] A B om.

20 անգիտանայր] This emendation, proposed by Dulaurier, finds potential support in the reading of ABO and has been adopted.

pity his beauty, and did not have mercy for the splendour of his youthful age, sparing him in his tender years? And why did he not call out to him to ask ‘who might you be or from where?’ Perhaps the fury of savagery would have been softened and calmed through his temperate, judicious, and wise answer infal-
 5 libly spoken in the Armenian language, and he would have been recognised from the profusion of wisdom, for his strength and stature, for his appearance and for his martial success, and for all the attributes of this transitory life by which greatness is remembered in praise of princes. I think I am prolonging
 10 this discourse too much, lest we be accused by fault-finding enemies of his.

But alas I speak of his unhappy loss and unfavourable path, for we warned
 10 him many times not to follow that irrevocable path, and he did not listen to our attempts at persuasion. For we devoted ourselves to saying nothing to him except what was useful to his soul, and that which concerned salvation and
 15 compassion for the misfortunes of the Christians, to which he turned a deaf ear in this year alone. Thus we indeed predicted his destruction to his face many times, although it was painful to us and it was difficult to tell him what no
 20 one else dared. Yet we endeavoured to do it; perhaps he would tremble from fright and would change from those habits to the humility of mercy and to the benevolence of sweetness. For he is not ignorant of the fact that merci-
 25 less judgment shall come from the Righteous Judge, God of all merciless hearts here and in the other life. And it is not any man among men or the angels of heaven who stand against the haughty, but God Himself who is Lord of angels

այլ աստուած ինքնին գլխովին որ տէրն է հրեշտակաց եւ մարդկան. զի
այլ յանցանք մեղինացս բնութեամբ ընդ մեղաւորս դատեն զմարդիկք
եւ ընդ սոքաք ածեն ի դատաստան, յորս է բազում անգամ ընդունել
ողորմութիւն ի տեսնէն, որ սիրողն է մեղաւորաց եւ վասն մեղաւորաց
5 խոնարհեցոյց զերկինս եւ եկն ի խնդիր կորուսեալ պատկերին, մոլորեալ
ոչխարին, դարձուցանել զմեղաւորն յապաշխարութիւն:

Իսկ հպարտութեամբ ամբարտաւանութեան եւ ապառումն կար-
ծրութեան խստութեան սրտի եւ անողորմութիւն զրկանաւք հանդերձ
աստանայի են յանցանք, եւ զորս ըմբռնէին ի հողեղինաց աստի՛ դեւս
10 ի մարդկանէ գործեն. եւ դատաստան ընդ աստանայի եւ դիւաց նորս
ընդունելոց են ի սոսկալի աւուր անաչառ եւ արդար դատաստանին
աստուծոյ. այլ եւ ոչ աստէն ներէ այնպիսի խստացելոցն արդարադատն
աստուած, մանաւանդ զարժանաւորսն բժշկութեան, որք ըստ մասին եւ
ի պատճառէ եւ փոքր ժամանակաւ եւ ապաշաւանաւք ունիցին զաստա-
15 նայական զայս չարիս յանձին, որք տաղտկան աստէն եւ խոստովա-
նութեամբ խայտառակեն եւ հնարին զերծանել ի դիւական մեղաց աստի
ի դէպ ժամանակի. բայց զի ոչ փութան եւ ոչ շտապով ի բաց ընկենուն,
այլ ար ըստ արէ ի նոյն յաւելուն աճեցուցանել զմեղսն. եւ ժամէ ի ժամ
եւ տարւոյ ի տարի անցուցանեն յապաղանաւք, խաբել կարծելով զանխա-
20 բելին աստուած, որոց ոչ ներէ արարիչն, այլ նախ խրատէ պատուհասիւք
արկանելով միանգամ եւ երկիցս, եւ իցէ որոց բազում անգամ. եւ ապա
որք յաւելուն ի խստութիւն սրտից իւրեանց ընդդէմ խրատուն, կորուսանէ
խապառ եւ բառնայ ի կենաց աստի՛ զի մի՛ աճեցեալ բազմացի չարն ի

1 է] E F X om. || մարդկան] B մարդկանէ 2 յանցանք] F X անցան || զմարդիկք] E F
O զմարդիկ 4 վասն մեղաւորաց] B X om. 5 եկն] X եկ || պատկերին] B պատերի;
A պատկերի 6 զմեղաւորն] X զմոլորեալն ապաշխարութիւն || յապաշխարութիւն]
E F ապաշխարութիւն 7 հպարտութեամբ ամբարտաւանութեան] X հպարտութիւն
ամբարտաւ. || ապառումն] A B E F O X սպառումն 9 աստանայի են յանցանք] E F X
տանէին յանցանքն || զորս] F չորս || ըմբռնէին] A B O ըմբռնեն || հողեղինաց] A B հողե-
ղինացս 10 դիւաց] A ընդ դիւաց 12 աստէն] F աստէնն էր || ներէ] E X ներ || խստա-
ցելոցն] X խոստացելոց 14 ունիցին] X ունիցեն 15 յանձին, որք] X յանձն որ 16
խայտառակեն] X խայտառակին || հնարին զերծանել] A հնարեն զերծանիլ || աստի] B
ասի 17 փութան] E փութան || շտապով ի] X փութով || բաց] O բայց 19 տարւոյ] B
տրոյ || յապաղանաւք] X ապա լաւանաւք 19–20 զանխաբելին] X զանխապիանեալքն
20 նախ] X նա 21 երկիցս] X երից; F երիցս 23 աստի] B ասի || չարն] F X չար

5 խոնարհեցոյց զերկինս] Psalms 18:9

5 կորուսեալ] Bart'ikyan notes here the allusion to Genesis 1:27. 7 ապառումն] This emendation was proposed by Dulaurier and has been adopted.

and men. For while these sins of the flesh naturally condemn men as sinners and lead them into judgment on their account, some receive mercy many times from the Lord, who loves sinners and for sinners' sake has bowed the heavens and come in search of the lost image, the sheep gone astray, to return the sinner to penitence.

Now insolent stiff hardness of the heart together with the pride of arrogance, and mercilessness together with injustice are satanic transgressions and they make demons of those men whom they entrap from this earthly place. And these men shall receive judgment together with Satan and his demons on the terrible day of the impartial and righteous judgment of God. But the Righteous Judge God does not pardon such hardened ones from here, especially those who are worthy of the remedy, who—in part, for some reason, for a short while, and with repentance—might take upon themselves these satanic evil deeds. They are disgusted here and shame themselves with confession and hence strive to be freed at the proper time from demonic sins. But if they do not hasten and do not diligently hurl sin far away, but rather add more sins to these day after day, and pass from hour to hour and from minute to minute in delay, imagining that they can cheat the uncheatable God, the Creator does not pardon this. Rather, He first admonishes with chastisements by striking once, twice, and perhaps for some many times. And then those who further harden their hearts against admonishment, He destroys them entirely and removes them from this life, so that the evil does not grow and multiply into

կորուստ նոցին եւ բազմաց. եւ վասն սոցին իրաց վկայութիւնք լի են յամենայն աստուածային գիրս, ի հին եւ ի նոր կտակարանս. որք կամիցին ուսանել յայտնի է զղջացելոցն եւ իսպառ կորուսելոցն արիւնակ, զորս տարադէպ եւ ասելորդ համարեցաք արկանել ընդ գրով:

- 5 Քանզի զիմոյ զանխրատ ոգւոյն, զանտէր մեռելոյն, զանգալի եւ զանգնելի գերոյն, զանգիտ կորուսելոյն զվայելոյ մանկան, զյաղթող եւ զգարաւոր քաջին, զհանճարեղ զիմաստուն եւ զխելաւք իշխանին զկարճարացն կենացն, զնագելի եւ զգեղեցիկ եւ զմանաւոր անուանն զսիրի Պաղտունին ախորժեմ ի պատմել զկորուստն, եւ հրապարակագոյժ առնել խոստովանութեամբ զյանցումն, ոչ զի իսայտառակեցի, այլ զի կատարելապէս թողութիւն ընկալցի յաստուծոյ, զիտելով զայս՝ զի որքան ծածկեալ թաքուցանեմք աստ զյանցանս մեր եւ զգաղտնիս ամաւթոյ վասն ամաչելոյ ի մարդկանէ՝ անդ հրապարակեալ իսայտառակեն այնպիսիքն առաջի հրեշտակաց եւ մարդկան, արդարոց եւ մեղաւորաց որք յադամայ մինչեւ 15 ցայսար յարուցեալ կան սարսափելի ահիւ եւ զարհուրեալ դիմաւք, կորացեալ զլիսաւք, դողալով առաջի ահաւոր եւ սոսկալի բեմին եւ հրապարակաժողով ատենին, առաջի հարն բոլորեցուն եւ միածնի նորա բանին եւ հոգւոյն սրբոյ նորոգողին զարարածս. ուր ոչ բան եւ ոչ գործ եւ ոչ մի մտածութիւն խորհրդոց թաքուցեալ ծածկեցի ի յամենատես 20 զիտութենէ արարչին մերոյ. այն է եղկելի եւ արտասուաց արժանի եւ յախտենից ամաւթ անբժշկելի, քանզի եւ զրաւ լինել սոսկալի եւ ահաւոր դատաստանին, այնու ամաւթով ըմբռնեալ մեղաւորացն ոգիք կան մնան յամաչանս իսայտառակութեանն մինչեւ անեզր եւ անսպառ եւ անբաւ

1 նոցին] A նորին || սոցին] A B նոցին || իրաց վկայութիւնք լի են] X երիք վկայութիւն լինին
 2 ի] X om. || կտակարանս] B կտականս; F կտակարանաց || կամիցին] X կամեցին 5
 զիմոյ] X միով || զանխրատ ոգւոյն] F X զանխրատագոյն || զանգալի] X եւ զանգալի 6
 կորուսելոյն] F կորուսելոցն || մանկան] A B մանկանն 6–7 զգարաւոր] E F X զարաւոր
 7 զհանճարեղ] E F զհանճարել 8 զսիրի] A E զսիրելի 9 Պաղտունին] X Պաղտունիսն; F
 Պաղտունինս || ախորժեմ ի] O ախորժէ; E սխորժեմ ի; F խորժեմ ի; X խորշէ մի || հրապարակագոյժ] E F X հրապարակագոյն || առնել] A առնեմ; E չառնել; F ժառնել 10 խոստովանութեամբ] A B զխոստովանութեամբ || իսայտառակեցի] X իսայտակառիս; F իսայտառակես 11 յաստուծոյ] E F X աստուծոյ 13 իսայտառակեն] A իսայտառակին; X եւ իսայտառակին 15 ցայսար] E եւ ցայսար; X այսար 16–17 հրապարակաժողով] X հրապարակաց ժողով 17 բոլորեցուն] X բոլորելոյն; A բոլորեցունց 18 բանին] F արբանին || ուր] X որ 19 մի մտածութիւն] X միամտածութի 21 յախտենից] E F ախտենից || ամաւթ անբժշկելի] B ամ բժշկելի; E ամ անբժշկելի; F աման անբժշկելի; X ամաւ եւ բժշկելի 23 իսայտառակութեանն] A O X իսայտառակութեան || անեզր] A յանեզր; O եւ յանեզր || անսպառ] A B O յանսպառ || անբաւ] A B O յանբաւ

his own destruction and that of many others. And testimonies abound about these things in all the divine scripture, in the Old and the New Testaments. The example of the repented and the entirely destroyed is evident for whomever might wish to learn, and we have reckoned unsuitable and superfluous to commit it to writing.

For it is about that undisciplined spirit of mine, about the forlorn dead one, about the unattainable and irredeemable captive, about the unfindable lost elegant youth, about the victorious and powerful hero, about the ingenious, wise and sensible prince whose life was short, about the excellent and handsome and so-named Sir Baldwin and his destruction that I wish to speak, and make it known far and wide with a confession of sin, not in order to shame him, but so that he may entirely receive remission from God, knowing that as much as we conceal and cover our transgressions and our shameful secrets out of shame here from men, these very things will be made public and exposed there before angels and men, righteous and sinners who, having arisen from Adam until today, stand in terrific fear and with frightened faces, heads bowed down, trembling before the frightful and terrible bench and assembly of the magistrate—before the Father of all things, His Only-created Word, and the Holy Spirit, the Regenerator of creation. Here no word, no deed, not one flicker of thought can be concealed or hidden from the all-seeing knowledge of our Creator. It has forever been lamentable and worthy of tears and an incurable shame, that when the terrible and frightful judgment is delineated, the souls of

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յաւիտեանսն՝ ըստ բանի հրեշտակապետին մեծի, զոր յորժամ խասէր ընդ Դանիէլ մարգարէին, յայտնի արար յասելն իւրում այսպէս. յարիցեն ոմանք ի կեանս եւ ոմանք յամաւթն յաւիտենից:

Իսկ որքան աստ խայտառակեալ հրապարակեմք խոստովանութեամբ առանց ամաւթոյ եւ կեղծաւորութեամբ թաքուցանելոյ եւ պատճառանաւք
5 զամաւթ բժշկելոյ, որ է ճշմարիտ եւ կատարեալ խոստովանութիւն եւ հաւասար սրբոյ աւագանին, շնորհէ մեզ զթողութիւն մեղաց. եւ թէ արժանաւորապէս ապաշխարիցեմք անդ ամենեւին անյայտեալ կորնչին ի մէնջ, ջնջին մաքրին եւ ոչ եւս ուրեք գտանին ամենայն յանցանքն, քանզի անտես առնէ, ներէ եւ թողու զամենայն անոխակալ եւ ողորմածն աստուած. որք
10 իմաստութեամբ ըստ այսմ արինակի կամաւորապէս խոստովանին զմեղս իւրեանց յայսմ աշխարհիս:

Արդ զայս ամենայն զմտաւ ածեալ իմ, գիտելով զտկարութիւն սիրեցեալ իշխանին՝ հրապարակեմ ի լուր հանուրց եւ արձանացուցանեմ այսու
15 գրով զսխալանս նորա անձին իմոյ վարկանելով զնորայսն. քանզի որք ոչ այսպէս սիրեսցեն զսիրելիս իւրեանց, զկնի մահուանն մոռանալով կամ թաքուցանելով զյանցանս նոցա կամ զերախտիս սիրոյ, շնչաւորք են յանբանից եւ մարմնոյն միայն սիրելիք: Արդ զի մեք ըստ հոգւոյ հոգեւորապէս ոգի նորա պահեալ ունէաք զիսնամ սիրոյ, յորմէ թէ փոքր մի անսացեալ էր նորա մեզ, կենդանի էր այժմ հոգւով եւ մարմնով. եւ զի խստացաւ սրտիւ կորեաւ երկոքումբք անգտանելի: Վասն որոյ ձայնեմ ողբալից ողբերգական ձայնիւ. Լուարուք ազգք եւ ազիւնք եւ լեզուք ամենայն,
20 մանաւանդ թագաւորք, իշխանք եւ ամենայն դատաւորք երկրի, եւ որք ի մեծութեան ըմբռնեալ էք եւ ի վերակացութեան կամ ի ցնորս ինչ կենցաղոյս

1 անբաւ յաւիտեանսն] X անբան յաւիտեանս || բանի] E X բահի || զոր] X զի 2 դանիէլ] A F X դանիէլի || յասելն] X ասեն; E F ասել 3 եւ ոմանք] X om. || յամաւթն] E F ամաւթն 6 բժշկելոյ] F X բժշկելոց || խոստովանութիւն] O խոստովանութեան 8 անյայտեալ] X յայտնեալ; O յանյայտեալ; F յայտեալ || մէնջ] B E (a.c.) մէջ 9 գտանին] X գտանէք; E գտանեն 10 անոխակալ] A B անոխակալն || ողորմածն] O ողորմն 11 կամաւորապէս] E F X կամ որպէս ատորապէս; O կամաւ որպէս 12 յայսմ] X յամենայն || աշխարհիս] A B O աշխարհի 13 ածեալ] X ածեալեմք || իմ] F եմ; O են 14 հրապարակեմ] X հրապարակեմք || հանուրց] E հանուցց; B F հանուց; X հանգուց || արձանացուցանեմ] X արձանացուցանեմք 16 այսպէս] X այդպէս || զսիրելիս] F X զսիրելիքն 17 սիրոյ] B սիր 18 յանբանից] A B անբանից || սիրելիք] F X սիրելիքն 19 ոգի] E O X յոգի || յորմէ թէ] E F X յորում եթէ 20 այժմ] E F O յայժմ 21 խստացաւ սրտիս] X խոստացաւ սրտի եւ || անգտանելի] O անգիտելի 22 ձայնիս] X ձայնեմ || ազգք] O ազգ || եւ] B om. 24 եւ] O om. || ի] A B E X om. || կամ ի ցնորս] X կամացն որս; E F O կամից նորս

2–3 յարիցեն ոմանք ի կեանս յաւիտենից] Daniel 12:2.

the sinners, seized with that shame, exist and remain in shameful opprobrium for an interminable and unbounded and infinite eternity, according to the word of the great archangel who, when he spoke to Daniel the prophet, manifested in order to say this to him: ‘Some arise into life and some into eternal shame.’

Now insofar as we make here a declaration, unmasking ourselves in confession without concealment in shame and hypocrisy and without remedy of shame through excuses, which is a true and complete confession and worthy of the holy font, He grants us remission of sins. And should we repent in a worthy way, all transgressions, entirely annihilated, disappear from us there and then; they are purged, cleansed and are not found anywhere at all, because the benevolent and merciful God makes them invisible, and pardons and remits everything. Those who are wise willingly confess their sins in this world according to this example.

Now as I consider all this, knowing the weakness of the beloved prince, I declare his failings for all to hear and I inscribe them in this letter by taking them upon my own self. For those who would not show love for their dear ones in this way, who would forget them after death or conceal their sins or the benefit of love, they are living in irrationality and are only friends of the flesh. Now since we were maintaining our affection by keeping spiritual watch over his soul—and if he had heeded us a little in this, he would be alive now in spirit and in body; since he was obstinate at heart, he has been unfindably lost in both—I therefore call out plaintively with a tragic voice: Listen, people and generations and all nations, especially kings, princes and all judges of the earth, and you who have been caught up in grandeur and in superintendence or in

առաջնորդութեան. լուարուք եւ ի միտ առէք զսխալանս յանցանաց սիրեցելոյ եւ փառաւոր իշխանին, զոր մեք ի դիմաց նորա եւ բերանով իբր նա այսպէս առաջի անկեալ արտասուաւք:

5 Նախ աստուծոյ գիտողին զմեղս իմ, եւ ապա ձեզ ամենեցուն, ով իշխանք եւ իշխանակից ընկերք իմ եւ եղբարք, զաւրք ամենայն հեծելովք եւ հետեւակաց, որոց եւ բազում պակասութիւն անիրաւութեան առ ձեզ արարի. եւ ռամիկք ժողովուրդք ամենայն, որք հակառակապէս ընդ հնա-
 10 զանդութեամբ անկեալ էիք, կարկամեալ մեղաւք անարժան ձեռաց իմոց. ուստի յանթիւ յանհաշի յանվճար յանողորմ գրկանաց ձերոց եւ յանիծից զկեանս իմ արարեալ կորուսի կորուստ որ բազում ողբոց եւ արտասուաց է արժանի. զի ոչ երբէք զմտաւ ածի զաստուածային բանս, զոր հանապազ
 15 բողոքէին հնչելով յանլուր եւ ի խցեալ մեղաւք լսելիս իմ, զայսոսիկ առ իս ասելով. մի՛ տացես ումեք ի կեանս քո անիծանել զքեզ, զի որ ստեղծ զնա աստուած լսէ հեծութեան սրտի նորա. եւ դարձեալ զմիս եւս զպատուիրանսն, զոր վասն նենգութեանն եւ վասն չցանկանալոյ իրաց եւ ընչից ընկե-
 20 րին՝ զեղից ազարակաց եւ սահմանաց, եւ վասն ամենայն ցեղ գրկանաց եւ վասն ի սրտէ հնազանդութեան քան զմեզ վեհագոյն իշխանաց՝ որպէս աստուծոյ մտերմութեամբ եւ ոչ որպէս մարդոյ, եւ վասն չանիրաւելոյ զոք, զորքս եւ զայրիս եւ զճանապարհորդս կողոպտելոյ. վասն ի յանիրաւութենէ
 եւ ի գրկանաց եւ յափշտակութենէ չմեծանալոյ, կամ ի շինուածս մեծա-
 մեծս շինելոյ եւ կամ պարիսպս քաղաքի կանգնելոյ յաւտար արտասուաց, յորբոց յայրեաց եւ ի հարկատու շինական մարդկան լալազին հառա-
 չանաց, եւ վասն չպարսաւելոյ զընկերսն բամբասանաւք եւ նախատելի բանիսք աղարտելոյ եւ վասն չպարծելոյ յանձին զաւրութիւն ի մեծութիւն եւ

1–2 սիրեցելոյ] F X սիրեցելոց 2 իբր նա] O ի բերան 3 այսպէս] A B om. 5 իշխանակից] A իշխանակիցք 6 եւ] A B O om. 7 ռամիկք] X ռամիկ || հակառակապէս] X հակառակ կայ 9 յանթիւ] E F X անթիւ || յանհաշի յանվճար] B rep.; X անհաշի եւ անվճար || ձերոց] A մերոց || յանիծից] A B անիծից 10 արարեալ] O տարեալ; F X արեալ || կորուսի կորուստ] X կորուսից կորուստի || բազում ողբոց] X բազումս զբոց 11 է] A B om. 12 բողոքէին] X բողոքին || լսելիս] F X լսելիք 13 ի կեանս] F X ինքեանս || անիծանել զքեզ, զի որ] B om. 14–15 զպատուիրանսն] A B E պատուիրանսն 15 իրաց] E F X յիրաց 17 վասն ամենայն ցեղ գրկանաց եւ] X om. || հնազանդութեան] F X հնազանդութիւն; O մտերմութիւն || զոք] X զտրքա 19 զորքս] F զտրքս || վասն] A B O եւ վասն || ի յանիրաւութենէ] F յանիրաւութեան; X անիրաւութեան 20 յափշտակութենէ] X ի յափշտակութենէ || չմեծանալոյ] O զմեծանալոյ 21 շինելոյ] X լինելոյ || պարիսպս] F X պարիսպ || կանգնելոյ] X եւ կանգնելոյ || յաւտար] B աւտար; O յաւատար 22 յորբոց յայրեաց] A B որբոց այրեաց 23 զընկերսն բամբասանաւք] X om. 24 նախատելի բանիսք աղարտելոյ եւ] X om. || զաւրութիւն] A զաւրութիւն եւ

10 արարեալ] Dulaurier has emended this to կեանց յիմարեալ.

some illusion of command of worldly affairs; listen and understand the sinful failings of the beloved and glorious prince, which we, in his aspect and as if with his mouth, thus fall forward in tears to proclaim.

‘First to God who knows my sins, and then to all of you, O princes and my princely companions and brothers, soldiers with all the cavalry and of the infantry, whom I have failed with great injustice; and all the common people, who in contrast were fallen in submission, bowed down with the sins of my unworthy hands, a loss which deserves many laments and tears. For I never considered the divine words, which constantly made resounding appeal in these deaf ears of mine closed by sin, saying this to me: Never cause a person to curse you in your life, and other commandments besides, which are about duplicity and about not coveting the affairs and things of one’s neighbours—their villages, their fields and borders—and about all sorts of extortions, and about submission from the heart to princes more eminent than us, faithfulness like to God and not like to men, and about not sinning against anyone, not despoiling orphans or widows or travellers; about not growing rich from injustice, extortion, rebellion, or by building grand buildings and erecting city walls out of the lamentation of others, from the tearful groans of orphans, widows and tributary peasants, and about not boasting about one’s own power in greatness and in wisdom, and about not judging the smaller mote (that is, sin) of strangers and

յիմաստութիւն, եւ վասն չդատելոյ զաստարաց փոքրագոյն շիւղ անուանեալ
յանցանս եւ զանձին մեծամեծ գերանս անտես առնելոյ, եւ վասն չարհա-
մարելոյ զարէնս արարչին եւ զարս սուրբս եւ զառաջնորդ եկեղեցոյ, եւ
ոչ դատաւոր դատաւորացն մեզ աստուծոյ նստեալ անզգամութեամբ, եւ
5 վասն ոչ ի ցաս ցանկութեան ըմբռնելոյ մտաք եւ ի հեշտախտութիւնս
աղտեղանալ մեղաց շաղախութեամբ, եւ վասն զար կատարածին իմոյ
զմտաւ ածելոյ հանապազ եւ հնարել զելանելն յաշխարհէ աստի, եւ վասն
զուխտելն իմ աստուծոյ բազում անգամ կատարելոյ. զայսոցիկ զամէ-
նից սխալանաց զյանդիմանութեան բանս որ գրեալ կայ աստուածային
10 գիրս, այնքան յաճախապէս լուայ ի քարոզչաց ոմանց, մինչ զի զամե-
նայն ի բերան առեալ այլոց նստեալ վարդապետէի կրկին լեզուաք, զոր
անհատակոտոր, անսայթաքելի եւ յարմարական միշտ բարբառէ, զորս
եւ ասեմ իսկ ըստ կարգի զխորագիտութիւն մտաց իմոց ի հանդիսաւոր
խոստովանութեանս իմ աստուծոյ եւ ձեր առաջի, զի գիտասցիք եւ դուք՝
15 թէ յիրաւի բարկացաւ ինձ աստուած աններելի. գիտէի, թէ որ անողորմ
սպանանէ զոք՝ եւ ի վճարել պատերազմին եւ ի խաղաղանալ զաւրացն,
այլ եւս սպանութիւնս ստիպէ ունել ծարաւութիւն ոտից եւ ձեռաց, եւ որք
նենգութեամբ գնան առ ընկերս եւ առ զարս եւ նենգաւոր լեզուաք խասիին
կամ զործեն զանարէնութիւնս. ասացաւ յարարչէն՝ թէ որ հեղու զարիւն
20 մարդոյ փոխանակ արեան նորա հեղցի արիւն նորա, եւ արք արիւնահեղք
եւ նենգաւորք մի հասարակեցցեն զաւուրս իւրեանց, եւ զարս արիւնահեղս
եւ զնենգաւորս ընդ պիղծս համարի եւ կորուսանէ տէր. գիտէի զի գրեալ
է, մի ցանկանայցես իրաց ընկերին քո եւ մի յանիրաւութենէ մեծանայցես,

1 յիմաստութիւն] A B O իմաստութիւն 3 զարս սուրբս] X զարութեամբ || սուրբս] E
F սուրբ || զառաջնորդ] A B զառաջնորդս 4 դատաւոր] F X om. || մեզ աստուծոյ] F X
մերոց || աստուծոյ] A B յաստուծոյ 5 ոչ] X *transp. prae* վասն || ցաս ցանկութեան] F
ցասացանկութեան; B ցասաց անգութեան || ի հեշտախտութիւնս] B հեշտ աշխատութիւնս
6 աղտեղանալ] A B ախտանալ 7 հնարել] A B հնարելն || յաշխարհէ] B E F աշխարհէ
8 իմ] X իմոյ || զայսոցիկ] X զայսոսիկ 9 զյանդիմանութեան] A յանդիմանութեան; F
զյանդիմանութեանն || աստուածային] A յաստուածային; B յաստուածայինս 10 լուայ]
X կուր || մինչ] O մինչեւ 12 անսայթաքելի] F անսայթաքելի; X եւ նա թագելի 13 մտաց]
O մնաց 14 խոստովանութեանս] E F խոստովանութեամբ; X խոստովանութիւնս 15
ինձ] X om. || որ] A (a.c.) om.; B աստուած 18 զարս] E F զարարս; X զարարս 19
յարարչէն] E F արարչէն || որ] X որպէս 20 նորա] X om.; E նոցա 21–22 նենգաւորք մի
... եւ զնենգաւորս] X om. 22 պիղծս] B պիղծ; X նենգաւորս պիղծ || համարի] A համարէ ||
գիտէի զի] A om. 23 ընկերին] A B ընկերի

20 որ հեղու ... հեղցի արիւն նորա] Genesis 9:6 21 նենգաւորք մի հասարակեցցեն զաւուրս
իւրեանց] Psalm 55:23

neglecting one's own great beam, and about not despising the law of the Creator and the holy men and the elders of the church, and our not having been roguishly seated as judge of judges by God, and about not being seized mentally by the pangs of desire and not to be stained with voluptuousness or contamination of sin, and about bearing in mind the day of my eternal destiny and to endeavour to ascend from the world here, and about fulfilling the oath I made to God many times. I have heard these words of admonition against all these faults, which are written in the holy scripture, so frequently from some preachers that having learned it all by heart I was seated lecturing to others in two languages, always using an unmutilated, sure, and suitable idiom. And indeed I speak in turn about the sagacity of my mind in solemn confession before God and before you, so that you too will know that God was justly and intolerably provoked by me. I knew that he who mercilessly kills someone, either in the act of war or in the appeasement of soldiers, cannot resist the all-consuming thirst for still more killing, and such men act deceitfully toward their comrades and soldiers and speak with deceptive language or commit iniquities. I was told by the Creator that "He who sheds the blood of a man, in exchange for his blood his [own] blood will be shed," and "bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," and "the Lord reckons bloodthirsty and deceptive men as foul and destroys them." I knew that it is written, "Do not covet the things of your neighbour and do not enrich yourself from wickedness, lest you leave

զի մի՞ ի կէս աւուրց թողցես զնոսա. եւ զայն եւս գիտէի՝ եթէ ապարանքն մեծամեծք գեղեցիկ շինուածքն եւ քաղաքն, որ յանիրաւութենէ եւ ի զրկանաց եւ յայլոց ի հառաչանաց եւ յարտասուաց սկսաւ ի շինել, ոչ եւս են բնակելոց ի նոսա. գիտէի եւ զասացեալն ի Պաւղոսէ վասն անհնազանդելոց իշխանաց իրեանց կամ հակառակ եղելոյ կամաց նոցա, զի ոչ մարդոյ՝ ալլ աստուծոյ հրամանին հակառակ կան, վասն որոյ եւ դատաստան ընդունելոց են ի տեսռնէ աններելի, աստ եւ ի կատարածի. գիտէի զի ոչ է պարտ պարսաւել դատել կամ բամբասել զոք. եւ ոչ պարծանս տալ անձին մեծութեամբ կամ իմաստութեամբ զասացեալն ի տեսռնէ. մի՞ դատիք զի մի՞ դատիցիք. եւ եթէ՝ կեղծաւոր, հան նախ զգերանդ յականէ քումմէ, եւ որ զհետ այսոցիկ բանս. եւ զի մի մի կարգ անկեալ թուիցեմ զամենայն յանցանաց յանդիմանութիւնս որ գրեալ կայ յաստուածային գիրս, զոր եւ զամենայն գիտէի, եւ գիտութեամբ եւ արիւնաւք եմ մեղուցեալ աստուծոյ:

Վասն որոյ անկանիմ առաջի աստուծոյ եւ խոստովանիմ զամենայն զմեղս իմ, մանաւանդ զամբարտաւանութեան, զխստութեան եւ զանողորմութեան զրկանաւք հանդերձ. մանկութիւն, իշխանութիւն եւ պատրանք սնտոի կենցաղոյս խաբեցին զիս. ոչ անյուսութեամբ ունէին զսխալանս կամ ի նոսին հաստատել անզոջանալի զմիտս. ալլ ի բաց լքանել թողոյ զամենայն պատրանս խաբէութեան կենցաղոյս կամէի, սակայն ոչ փութացայ մինչեւ զվերջին կորստական զայս խրատ պատուհասի ընկալայ ի տեսռնէ, որովհետեւ զյառաջագոյն խրատ քաղցրութեանն ոչ ի բժբշկութիւն համարեցայ. եւ արդ դատախազ եւ ինձէն լինիցիմ դատապարտ անձին իմոյ եւ արդարացուցանեմ զարարիչն, զի թէ փոքրագոյնիւքն զոր էած ի վերայ իմ, հարուածս վիրաց մարմնոյ եւ տարածամ մահու բարձումն կենակից կնոջ ծննդաւք իւրոց, եւ որ սոցին նմանս

1 աւուրց] A B աւուրս || եթէ] A B զի 2 որ] O որոյ || ի] X om. 3 յայլոց] B այլոց; E F այլ; X յայլ; B այլոց || ի] E X om. || յարտասուաց] B E X արտասուաց || սկսաւ] X om. || ի] A B om. 4 բնակելոց] X բեկելոց || գիտէի] B գիտէին 7 աններելի] A om. || է] A B էր 8 բամբասել] B բամբասիմ || տալ անձին] E F տան լանձին 9 զասացեալն] E O զասացեալսն 9–10 զի մի դատիցիք] A B om. 10 դատիցիք] O X դատեցիք || զգերանդ] E զգանդ; F զանդ; F (a.c.) անդ 11 այսոցիկ] B այսորիկ || բանս] X բանս եւս || զի մի մի] O X զի մի ի; E զի մի մի ի; F զմի մի ի 12 յաստուածային] O X աստուածային 13 գիտութեամբ արիւնաւք] X *transp.* || եւ] A om. 14 անկանիմ] F X անկանիմք 15 զամբարտաւանութեան] F X զամբարտաւանութեանն || զխստութեան] X զխոստովանութիւն 17 անյուսութեամբ] E F անուսութեամբ 18 հաստատել] A B հաստատեալ || անզոջանալի] E F X զոջանալի 19 կամէի] X կամէին 20 փութացայ] E F X փութացայց 21 ի] B om. 22–23 դատապարտ անձին] X դատապարտին 24 էած] O ածի; B E F X ած || հարուածս վիրաց] F X հարուածով իրաց 25 իւրոց] B E F O X իւրեանց 25–126.1 նմանս] O նմանեց աստարաց

9–10 մի՞ դատիք ... յականէ քումմէ] Matthew 7:1–3

them in half the days.” And moreover, I knew that the magnificent palaces, the beautiful buildings and the city, which I began to build out of wickedness and injustice and from the lamentation and tears of others, no longer have inhabitants in them. I also knew the sayings of Paul about those who are insubordinate to their princes or oppose their will, that they fly in the face of the command not of man but of God, and as a result they must receive intolerable judgment from the Lord God, here and in the hereafter. I knew that it is not right to blame, judge or speak ill of others, nor to glory in one’s one greatness or wisdom according to what the Lord said, “Do not judge, lest you be judged” and “Hypocrite, first pull the beam from your own eye,” and such words along these lines. And I could enumerate and sum up all of the reprimands for sin that are written in the holy scripture, all of which I knew, and in doctrine and in law I am a sinner before God.

‘Because of this I fall down before God and confess all my sins, above all those to do with pride, cruelty, and mercilessness together with injustice. Youth, nobility and the frivolous illusion of this life deceived me; they were not treating my faults with despair or causing my mind to remain unrepentant about them. Rather, I intended to abandon and leave aside all the illusion of the trickery of worldly affairs, but up to the fleeting end I did not hurry to receive this admonishment from the Lord, because I did not take the previous mild advice as a remedy. And now I myself shall denounce my guilty person and I exculpate the Creator, for although I had been admonished through minor things which He has brought upon me—blows of bodily wounds and the premature removal from life to death of my wife with her children, and bodily chastisement of oth-

յատարաց մարմինս խրատ խրատեալ էր իմ, փոխադրելով ի բարիս՝ ոչ հասանէի աններելի չարիս. այլ զի գանեցայ եւ ոչ խրատեցայ, հարայ եւ ոչ բժշկեցայ, խստացուցանելով զապառուսն կարծրութիւն ամբարտաա-

5 ըութեան արտիս. անգիտանալով թէ քաղցրութիւնն աստուծոյ յապաշխարութիւն զիս կոչէ ողորմութեամբ ներելով անզգամութեան իմոյ. ոչ յիշեցի, ոչ զմտաւ ածի մինչեւ զքաղցրութիւն ողորմութեան արարչին ի ցասումն բարկութեան անձին իմոյ դարձուցի:

Եւ արդ զիտեմ զայս թշուառականս, զի ոչ որպէս մեռեալ ի մահու յիշատակելոց եմ, եւ ոչ որպէս կենդանի ի կեանս երեւելոց. որքան տէրն կենաց եւ մահու բարկացեալ է ինձ, ուստի եւ հրեշտակք ի յերկինս դարձուցին զերեսս իրեանց յինէն ի բառնալ յինէն աւզնականութեան եւ ողորմութեան արարչին. եւ մարդիկ ամենեքեան իսպառ ատեցին զիս, հայր իմ եւ մայր իմ մահուամբ թողին զիս եւ որդիք մարմնոյ. կենակից, ընկերք եւ զարք ամենայն անողորմք եղեն ի վերայ իմ. մերձաւորք եւ բարեկամք եւ ըստ սննդեան ծանաւքք եւ որդիք մերժեցան, աստարացան ի սիրոյ իմոյ, եւ ոչ ամենեւին յիշեն զիս. որպէս այլազգոյ գարշեցան հեռացան ամենեքեան յինէն, եւ լքեալ թողին զիս անյիշատակ մեռեալ եւ անզնելի գերի ի մէջ այլազգեաց, եւ մոռացեալ եղէ ես որպէս մեռեալ ի սրտէ ամենեցուն, եւ ընկղմեալ խորտակեցայ որպէս խեցեղէն անաւթ կորուսեալ:

Եւ արդ ո՞ր է յոյսն իմ, եւ կամ զի՞նչ վճարումն անբերելի տառապանաց աստի. եւ ո՞չ որ իցէ որ ողորմեսցի ի թշուառացեալ հիքոյս, զի երեւեցայց ընդ կենդանիս կամ ընդ մեռեալս յիշատակեցայց ի մարդկանէ. եւ ոչ որ եղեւ. ամենեքեան ատեցին զիս իսպառ, քանզի ահա խոստովան եղէ հանուրց եղբարց եւ տիեզերաց հրապարակատես հանդիսիս եւ անպատկառելի համարձակութեամբ զվէրս անձին իմոյ՝ եւ ոչ բժշկեցայ, ոչ ազատեցայ. վասն որոյ դարձուցանեմ զբանս աղերսալից խոստովանութեան իմոյ առ տէրն իմ եւ արարիչն եւ առ անոխակալ հայրն ամենեցուն եւ աստուած. եւ

1 յատարաց] X եւ յատարաց || մարմինս] B մարմին; F մարմինն || խրատ] F X սխրաց
 2 հասանէի] F (a.c.) հասանէլի; X հասանելին || աններելի] A յաններելի; F աններելին ||
 հարայ] X յարա 3 կարծրութիւն] A O կարծրութեան 5 ողորմութեամբ ներելով] A B
 ողորմութեամբն իրով 6 ողորմութեան] E F X ողորմութիւն || ցասումն] E F O ցասում
 9–10 կենաց եւ մահու] A B *transp.* 11 յինէն] X *om.* || աւզնականութեան] B աւզնութիւն
 12 արարչին] O արարչէն 13 իմ] A B O *om.* || մարմնոյ] X մարմնոց 14 մերձաւորք] O
 մերձաւոր || եւ] E O X *om.* 15 ըստ սննդեան] F X զսննդեան || աստարացան] X եւ աստարացան
 16 ամենեւին] X յամենեքեան; E F յամենեքին || այլազգոյ] A B յայլազգոյ 16–17
 հեռացան ամենեքեան յինէն] A յինէն ամենեքեան եւ հեռացան 17 անյիշատակ] E F X
 անյիշատակս 18 եղէ] B եղեւ || մեռեալ] O *om.* 19 անաւթ] B ամաւթ; X զանաւթ 20
 անբերելի] A B յանբերելի 21 ողորմեսցի] E F O ողորմեսցէ || ի] A B *om.* || հիքոյս] E F X
 հոգոյս 22 կամ] F X եւ կամ 23 ատեցին] X ստեցին || եղէ] X եղեւ 25 բժշկեցայ] O
 բուժեցայ || ազատեցայ] X ազատեցայ զքսաս 26 վասն որոյ] X *om.* || աղերսալից] F X
 աղերսից 27 եւ] E F արեւ || արարիչն] E F X արարիչ || եւ աստուած] A յաստուած

ers similar to this—I was not managing to translate unpardonable evils into something good; rather, I was scourged and not chastised, I was beaten and not cured, in that the insolent hardness of the haughtiness of my heart was made obstinate, ignorant of the fact that the mildness of God was calling me to penitence through His mercy, pardoning my wickedness. I did not remember, I did not consider the matter until the mildness of the Creator’s mercy turned to wrathful indignation against my person. 5

‘And now I know this unfortunate fact, that I shall not be remembered in death like the dead, and I shall not appear in life like the living. Just as the Lord of death and life is provoked by me, so also the angels in heaven have turned their faces from me in removal from me of the support and mercy of the Creator. And all of mankind entirely despises me; my father and mother as well as the children of my flesh have abandoned me through death; wife, comrades and soldiers are all mercilessly against me. Near ones and dear ones and childhood acquaintances and sons have rejected me, estranged themselves from my love, and not one of them remembers me. Everyone abhorred me and withdrew from me as though from a stranger, and they deserted and abandoned me like a forgotten, dead and irredeemable captive amid strangers, and I was forgotten as if dead from everyone’s heart, and sinking, I was dashed to pieces, destroyed like a clay vessel. 10 15 20

‘And now where is my hope? or else what is the redemption for the intolerable tribulation here? And is there no one who might take pity on this immiserated wretch, so that I may appear among the living or be remembered among the dead by men? And there was no one; everyone despised me completely, because, behold, I confessed the wounds of my soul to all my brothers and to the universe with a public spectacle and with immodest sincerity and I was not cured, I was not freed. Because of this I turn my words full of supplicating confession back to my Lord and Creator, to the benevolent Father of all, God. I 25

ըստ նմանութեան անառակ արբշիռ մանկանն անկեալ առաջի ողորմած մարդասիրին գոչեմ՝ ասելով. հայր երկնաոր, մեղայ յերկինս եւ առաջի քո. մատանոյ, կաշկաց եւ անճառ պատմունճանի չեմ արժանի. այլ ամենայն հողեղինաց մի՛ գատեր որոշեր զիս միայն ի կորուստ. եթէ կենդանի իցեմ

5 յայտնեա, հան զիս ի կորստենէ, զի խորք անդնդոց յայտնի են առաջի քո եւ ի մեռելոց կարող եւ յարուցանել տէր, զի երթեալ ասպաշխարեցից մինչեւ ի լրումն կենաց մեղապարտ շնչոյս. զի յայժմ ծանեալ ճշմարտապէս եւ զիտացի զանհանդուրժական ցասումն բարկութեան արարչիդ, եւ զի ահ մեծ է անկանել ի ձեռս աստուծոյ կենդանոյ:

10 Իսկ եթէ մեռեալ իցեմ մեղաք եւ վճարեցայ ի կենաց մարմնոյ, շատ լիցի ով անոխակալ աստուած, այսքան ժամանակս ատուրց մեղուցեալ ոգւոյ իմոյ մնալ ի տագնապի եւ ի տանջանս, անյիշատակ եւ աննուէր, յայտնեսցես զիս ողորմութեամբ, թերեւս լիցի յիշատակ կամ ողորմութիւն ողորմելի հիքոյս, եւ մի նորարինակ տանջանաւք տանջեր զիս ի մէջ մեռե-

15 լոց եւ կենդանեաց. զի տէր եւ մահու եւ կենաց, եւ ակնարկելոյ հրամանի քո սպասեալ մնայ մահ եւ կեանք յայտնել կամ թաքուցանել զիս. զիտեմ տէր, զի անչափ եւ աններելի բարկացուցի զքեզ մեղաք իմովք յաստուածայինս եւ ի մարդկայինս. կամաւ եւ ակամայ, խորհրդով, բանիւ եւ գործովք, հոգւով, շնչով, մարմնով եւ մտաւք. եւ ամենայն զգայութեամբ վարակեալ

20 կապեցայ ի տոռունս մեղաց զամենայն ատուրս կենաց իմոց. վասն որոյ դարձեալ անկանիմ առաջի քո, ով ողորմած անոխակալ եւ մարդասէր աստուած. գթա յիս յանտէր մեռեալս եւ խնայեա ի ստեղծուածս ձեռաց քոց. եւ մի՛ վստահանաս զկորուսեալ ծառայս քո ի մարդկան ողորմութիւն, զի ցամաքեցաւ սէր իմ յամենայն սրտէ, եւ շիջաւ գութ իմ յամենայն մտաց, եւ

1 անառակ] X անառակութեան; O առակ || արբշիռ] B եւ արբշիռ 2 եւ առաջի քո] O om. 3 չեմ արժանի] E F X om. || ամենայն] A B յամենայն 4 զիս] B զի || կորուստ] E F X կորուսաներ 5 զի խորք] X զխորք 7 ի լրումն] X իրումն || կենաց] A om. || յայժմ] A B O յայնժամ || ծանեալ] A ծանեա; E F X ծանեալ 10 շատ] X գատ 11 ով] X ոչ 12 տագնապի] A B O տագնապ 14 հիքոյս] E F X հոգոյս || տանջանաւք] X om. 14–15 մեռելոց] E F X ի մեռելոց 16 մահ] X om. 17–18 յաստուածայինս] F X յաստուածային 18 մարդկայինս] E F X մարդկային || կամաւ] O X կամայ || ակամայ] O յակամայ; B ակամաւ || գործովք] A X գործով 19 մարմնով] E մարմնոյ || զգայութեամբ] E F X զգաստութեամբ || վարակեալ] A B վարկեալ; E F O X վարարկեալ 20 տոռունս] X տունս; B տուունս 21 ով ողորմած] X բազում ողորմ աստուած 22 գթա յիս] A (a.c.) B O X (a.c.) գթայ յիս || ձեռաց քոց] X ծառայս քո 23 վստահանաս] A վստահանար || ողորմութիւն] X ողորմութեան 24 գութ իմ] B գութին

19 վարակեալ] This emendation, proposed by Dulaurier, has been retained here, though the exemplar of AB proposes a different one.

call out in the manner of a dissolute tipsy youth fallen down before the merciful benevolent one, saying, Heavenly Father, I have sinned toward heaven and before You. I am not worthy of Your ring, Your boot or Your ineffable garment. But do not separate and excommunicate me alone of all terrestrial beings to destruction. If I am alive make it clear, pull me from destruction, for the depths of the abyss are apparent before You and You, Lord, are able to resurrect from the dead, so that as I go I might repent up until the end of the sinful breath of my life. For now I have truly understood and perceived the intolerable indignation of the wrath of the Creator, for it is a great fright to fall into the hands of the living God.

If indeed I am dead in sin and I have finished my corporeal life, let it be enough, O benevolent God, for my sinning soul to remain in trouble and torment, forgotten and unconsecrated, for this span of days. May You reveal me in mercy, perhaps let there be remembrance or mercy for this miserable wretch, and do not torment me with extraordinary torments amid the dead and the living. For You are the lord of death and life, and death and life wait ready for the indication of Your command to reveal or to bury me. I know, Lord, that I have exasperated You immensely and intolerably with my sins toward divine beings and toward human beings, intentionally and unintentionally, in thought and word, and in act, spirit, breath, body and mind. Closed in by all my senses, I was tied in the bonds of sin all the days of my life. Therefore I fall before You again, O merciful, benevolent and philanthropic God, pity me, forlorn and dead, and spare this creature from Your hand. Do not commit Your lost servant to the mercy of men, for love for me has withered from every heart, and compassion

բարձաւ անուն իմ ի մարդկանէ, եւ կորեալ յիշատակ իմ յերկրէ կենդանեաց. քո ցասուցեալ ընդ իս՝ ոչ այլ ոք ողորմի ինձ, քանզի քեզ սպասեալ մնան արարածք ամենայն ճշմարիտ ողորմածիդ եւ անյիշաչար մարդասիրիդ. յնվ վստահանամ զիս. հայր իմ եւ մայր իմ թողին զիս, եղբայր իմ մոռացաւ

5 զգութ սիրոյ իմոյ զոր առ նա ցուցի, այլ զհարազատ եղբայրութեան մերոյ, եւ զբաղեալ կապեցաւ ի ցնորս աշխարհի եւ ի հոգս երկրաւորս՝ հետեւելով յիմ յարինակ յընդարձակ անզգուշական եւ սայթաքելի ճանապարհն. որ ոչ ժամանէ եթէ կամիցի անձն իւր հոգալ կամ յիշել, թող թէ զանգինս գերեալս եւ զանգիստ կորուսեալս:

10 Արդ մի մերժեր իսպառ եւ մի անտես առներ եւ մի թողուր զիս ի կորստեան, աստուած աստուած իմ, եւ մի դարձուցաներ գերեսս քո յինէն. մի սրտմտութեամբ խրատեր եւ մի բարկութեամբ յանդիմաներ. մի մտաներ ի դատաստան ընդ դատապարտեալ ծառայիս եւ մի թողուր զիս աներեւոյթ տանջանաւք արինակ տիեզերաց. վկայութիւն դնեմ վկայութեամբ երկնի եւ երկրի, հրեշտակաց եւ մարդկան, այլ ոչ եւս գնալ զանառակ կորստական ճանապարհն եւ ոչ եւս անցանել զպատուիրանաւ քո, եթէ զայս անգամ ողորմեսցիս եւ թողցես զանչափ անիրաւութիւն երկրորդ անառակիս, եթէ հասցէ ինձ միսանգամ լինել ընդ կենդանիս. ապա թէ իսկապէս մեռեալ դատապարտեսցայ, եւ այն քեզ

15 պարտ է ողորմել, մարդասէր եւ միշտ ողորմած աստուած, զի ի դժոխս ոչ ոք խոստովան լինի առ քեզ եւ ոչ մեռեալք արհնեսցեն զքեզ. ցոյց զիս արդարոց եւ յայտնեալ արժանատր ծառայից քոց զանարժան ոգիս, որով զտից մաղթանաւք զողորմութիւն. քանզի գիտեմ, զի ցայժմ ոչ ոք ամենեւին յիշէ զանյիշատակս ի բարիս. քո տէր տրտում զուով

20 ընդ իս եւ երեսս դարձուցանելով բարկութեամբ, բարկացան երկինք եւ երկիր, հրեշտակք եւ մարդիկք ի վերայ իմ, եւ ամենայն արարածք խեթիս եւ խոժոռ դիմաւք հային ընդ իս, զի թէ մահ փախեալ յինէն եւ

1 մարդկանէ] X մէջ մարդկանէ || յիշատակ իմ] B յիշատակին || յերկրէ] E յերկէ 2 քո] X քոց || ցասուցեալ] A B O տէր ցասուցեալ || իս] B om. || ողորմի] O ողորմե ի || քեզ] X om. || քեզ սպասեալ] F զսպասեալ || մնան] X մնար 3 ողորմածիդ] F X ողորմածես || մարդասիրիդ] E F X ի մարդասիրիդ 5 զոր] O om. || առ նա ցուցի] E F դառնացուցի || այլ] A om.; X այր || զհարազատ] O զհագարապէտ || եղբայրութեան մերոյ] X եղբայրութեանն իմոյ 6 աշխարհի] E F յաշխարհի || հետեւելով] F հելտելով; X հեշտալով 7 յիմ] A B X իմ || յարինակ] A (p.c.) X արինակ || յընդարձակ] O X ընդարձակ 8 ժամանէ] O ժաման || կամիցի] O om. || անձն] A B O զանձն || զանգինս] A B O զանգին || գերեալս] E F գերելս 10 Արդ] B այլ 12 խրատեր] O om.; A խրատեր զիս 13 դատապարտեալ ծառայիս] X ծառայի 15 հրեշտակաց] X ի հրեշտակաց; O հրըտակ || մարդկան] X ի մարդկան || այլ ոչ] X այլ եւ ոչ 16–17 զպատուիրանաւ] X զպատուիրանս 17 եւ] X om. 19 այն] A B O այնպէս 20 ողորմել] X ողորմիլ || ողորմած] X ողորմածդ 21 արհնեսցեն] B անհեսցեն 22 զիս] F X զի || յայտնեալ] F X յայտնեսց || արժանատր] A արժանատրաց; E յարժանատրաց 23 ցայժմ] A այժմ *transp. post* յիշէ; B այժմ; O յայժմ 26 մարդիկք] B O մարդիկ; E մարդիք

for me has been extinguished from every mind. My name has been removed from men, and my memory has been lost from the land of the living. Since You have been provoked against me, no one else pities me, for all creatures wait ready for You, the truly merciful and forgiving philanthrope. To whom can I entrust myself? My father and my mother abandoned me, my brother forgot the tenderness of my love which I showed to him, forgot about our authentic brotherhood, and he was bound up and occupied with the madness of the world and worldly cares, following my example, my free, imprudent and inconstant way. He doesn't have the time he wants to take care of or be mindful of his own self, let alone this invaluable captive and precious lost one.

Now do not reject me entirely, do not neglect me, do not leave me in perdition, God, my God, and do not turn Your face from me. Do not admonish me indignantly and do not reprimand me angrily. Do not enter into judgment against this condemned servant and do not leave me as an example to the universe with invisible punishment. I testify with witness of heaven and earth, angels and men, that I will no longer walk the dissolute and perishable path and no longer violate Your commandments, so that this time You might take pity and tolerate the immeasurable iniquity of this second prodigal one, if it happens that I come to be once more among the living. But if I am truly condemned to the dead, then it is right for You, the philanthropic and eternally merciful God, to take pity, for in Hell no one acknowledges You and the dead will not glorify You. Show me to the righteous and reveal this unworthy spirit to Your worthy servants, through whose prayers I might find mercy. For I know, that up to now no one at all remembers this forgotten one benevolently; since You, Lord, are grieved at me and have turned Your face away in anger, the heavens and the earth, angels and men raged against me, and all creatures looked askance and with stern countenance at me, for death fled from me and life with-

կեանք հեռացաւ. երկիր զարհուրեալ յահաւոր քո հրամանացո՛ղ ոչ ընկալաւ զիս ի ծոց իւր եւ ոչ ետ տեղի գերեզմանի. զի կարդացցեն զանուն կորուսելոյս ի հողս ուրեք. արդ եթէ անգգայ եւ անբան տարերք այսբան գարշեցան, մերժեցան եւ ի բաց ընկեցին զիս յարարածոց աստի, ո՞վ այլ ոք ի մարդկանէ

5 իցէ որ ողորմեսցի ինձ:

Արդ դարձիր տէր ի բարկութենէ եւ դարձո գերեսս քո ի մեղաց իմոց, հաշտ ակամբք եւ քաղցրութեամբ հայեսցիս ընդ իս. այո տէր, այո տէր հայր սուրբ, այո փրկիչ աշխարհի, այո ողորմած եւ մարդասէր հոգիդ սուրբ, ողորմեա ինձ ողորմելոյս. ով երրորդութիւն սուրբ, բարեխասութեամբ

10 սուրբ աստուածածնիդ եւ աղաչանաք առաքելոց եւ մարգարէից եւ համարէն սրբոց, որք ի սկզբանէ աշխարհի հանդ եղեն քեզ, գթա յիս եւ վերաբերեալ յայտնեա զկորուսեալս, կենդանի կամ մեռեալ, մեռելոց եւ կենդանեաց աստուած, եւ քեզ փառք յաւիտեանս ամէն:

Արդ գայս աղերսալի խոստովանութեան եւ մաղթանաց բանս կերպարանեալ գրեցաք ի դիմաց անտէր գերոյն եւ անյիշատակ մեռելոյն սիրեցելոյ իշխանին սիրի Պաղտունին. եւ ոչ դադարեմք սովին ձայնի բողոքել՝ գոչելով առ աստուած եւ առ սուրբս նորա, մինչեւ գթացեալ ողորմեսցի եւ բժշկեսցէ զվշտագնեալ միտս մեր, որ պատուհասեալ եհար զնա վասն մեղաց նորա եւ մեր: Այլ եւ դուք որ լսէք գայս ամենայն ամբաստանութեան բանս, զոր ի դէմս նորա եւ վասն նորա գրեցաք հրապարակա-

20 յայտ անպատկառելի եւ հանդիսաւոր խոստովանութեամբ, որպէս արէն է ճշմարիտ խոստովանողաց ըստ պատուիրանաց արարչին, այսպէս աստկայ ցուցանել զյանցանս խոստովանութեամբ առաջի գիտողին զխորհուրդս եւ զգործս ամենայն մարդկան, մինչեւ քաղցրացեալ թողցէ զամենայն. սակայն դուք մի յուրաստ կայք եւ անհոգս լինիք, ով իշխանք, իշխեսցեալք եւ զարք ամենայն, եթէ ձեզ ներեսցէ անբուն ակն աստուծոյ

1 կեանք] F X կեանքն || երկիր] E եկիր || ընկալաւ] E F X ընկալ 2 կարդացցեն] O կարդացցեն են 3 հողս] X հողոյս; A B հող || անգգայ] F անգգաց || անբան] X անբանք 4 բաց] E F բայց || յարարածոց] F X յարարածոցս; O արարածոց || աստի, ո՞վ] F աստի ոչ 5 որ] F O X om. 6 բարկութենէ] E F X բարկութեան || դարձո] B դարձոյց 7 հաշտ ակամբք] E F X հաշտ ակամբք; B հաշտակամբ 10 աղաչանաք] O աղաչաք 12 վերաբերեալ] O ի վերայ բերել || զկորուսեալս] F X *transp. prae* յայտնեա || մեռելոց] O մեռեցոց 14 խոստովանութեան] O խոստովանութիւն; A խոստովանութեանս 14–15 կերպարանեալ] B կերպարանեաց; X կերպարանել 15 գերոյն] A B գերելոյն; E F գերոյծ; X գերոյս 16 սիրեցելոյ իշխանին] X սիրեցելոյն || սիրի] A սիրելի || սովին] E նովին || ձայնի] O om. 18 զնա] X om. || զնա վասն] O զնան 19–20 ամբաստանութեան] X ամբարտաւանութիւն 20 նորա եւ վասն] X om. 20–21 հրապարակայայտ] O X հրապարակայ այդ 22 ըստ] E ընտ; F X ընդ 23 աստկայ ցուցանել] A B E F X աստկացուցանել 25 մի յուրաստ կայք] O ուրաստ կանայք || անհոգս] A B յանհոգս || անհոգս լինիք] O անհասք սիրելիք || լինիք, ով] X լինելով 26 իշխանք, իշխեսցեալք] O իշխան իշխանացեալք || զարք] X զորս; F զորք || անբուն ակն] O անբունական

drew. The earth, astonished by Your frightful commands, did not receive me into its bosom and did not give me a place in a tomb, so that they might say the name of this lost one over a grave somewhere. Now if the insensible and dumb elements thus abhorred, rejected and cast me far away from creation here, who else is there among men who will have pity on me? 5

'Now turn, Lord, from anger and turn Your face from my sins, look at me with kindly eyes and mildness. Yes Lord, yes Lord holy Father, yes redeemer of the world, yes merciful and benevolent holy spirit, have mercy on me, this wretched one. O holy Trinity, with intercession of you the holy Mother of God and with the prayers of the apostles and martyrs and all the saints, who were pleasing to You from the beginning of the world, take pity on me and reveal this lost one elevated, living or dead, God of the dead and the living, and glory to You forever, Amen.' 10

Now we have fashioned and written these words of supplicating confession and entreaty in the manner of the forlorn captive, the forgotten dead one, the beloved prince, Sir Baldwin. And we do not cease to appeal with his voice, calling out to God and to His saints until, moved to compassion, He might have mercy and might cure our afflicted mind, which has been struck with punishment because of his sins and ours. As for you who hear all these words of imputation, which I wrote in his place and for his sake with a publicly displayed, immodest and solemn confession, as is allowed from true penitents according to the commandments of the Creator, thus to harshly expose transgressions with confession before the One who knows the thoughts and deeds of all men until, relenting, He forgives everything: nevertheless do not be in denial or indifferent, all you princes, rulers and soldiers, to whether the sleepless eye of God the judge might grant you pardon. Now that you have observed the punish- 15 20 25

դատաստանացն. ի նորայն հայեցեալ պատուհաս կորստեան, զմտա
 ածէք զաստուածասաստ սպառնալիսն. ողբասցէ, ասէ, նոճին, զի անկա
 մայրն. լուարուք եւ ի տեառնէ զսոցին նման բանս, զոր առ անխրատն եւ
 առ անլորն Իսրայէլ բարբառեցաւ յասել զայս. համարիք թէ այն Գալիլեա-
 5 ցիք եղեն մեղաւորք քան զամենայն Գալիլեացիս, որոց զարին Պիղատոս
 խառնեաց ընդ զոհն նոցա. կամ նոքա ութուտասանքն՝ զոր աշտարակն
 եսպան, համարիք եթէ նոքա պարտապանք եղեն քան զամենայն մարդիկք
 որ բնակեալ են յերուսաղէմ. ոչ, ասեմ ձեզ այլ եթէ ոչ ապաշխարիցէք ամե-
 նեքեան, նոյնպէս կորնչիցիք:

10 Եւ արդ գիտելով զայս ամենայն, զգուշացարուք անձանց ձերոց, ով
 բռնաւորք եւ իշխանք. զի բռնաւորաց՝ բռնաւորագոյն եւ անաչառ դատաս-
 տան լինելոց է աստ եւ ի կատարածն. դուք որ ոչ գրոց լսել կամիրք եւ ոչ
 այսպէս հրապարակէք զյանցանս ձեր խոստովանութեամբ. քանզի այս
 բանք նմա ի պարծանս եւ ի բժշկութիւն գրեցաւ եւ կենդանեաց յարինակ
 15 զգուշութեան եւ յանդիմանութիւն, եւ նորայն թողան յանցանքն ամենայն
 եւ բժշկեցաւ հանապազորդ խոստովանութեամբն եւ յետոյ արեամբն ի մեծ
 պատերազմին:

Ամբարտաւանութիւն եւ ստութիւն նորա բժշկեցաւ այն ար անչափ եւ
 սաստիկ խոնարհութեամբ, որով զիջանէր առ ամենեսեան, առ զարս
 20 հեծելոց եւ հետեակաց քաղցրագոյնս եւ ախորժականս եւ ողորմագին
 բանս բարբառելով. որդիս աստուծոյ եւ եղբարս հարազատս զամենե-
 սեան անուանէր, իշխանս եւ տէրս եւ քաջագունս յանուանէ կոչէր. մարգէր

1 դատաստանացն] A արդար դատաստանացն, որ || ի] O om. || պատուհաս կորստեան] O պատուհասակ որստեան 2 զաստուածասաստ սպառնալիսն] A B զսպառնալիսն աստուածասաստ || նոճին] X ոճին; B E F O սոճին || անկա] F (a.c.) X անկան 3 առ անխրատն] B առյան. խրատն; X անխրատն. || եւ] O om. 4 առ] A B om. || Իսրայէլ] X լեալ; F եալ || յասել] A B ասել || համարիք] B համարի 4–5 այն Գալիլեացիք ... զամենայն Գալիլեացիս] X այլ Գալիլեացիքն || Գալիլեացիք] E F Գալիլեացիքն 5 Գալիլեացիս] A B Գալիլեացիսն || զարին] A O զարինն; E F զարիան 6 զոհն] F X նոցա զոհն || զոր] F X զոր || զոր աշտարակն] B զորոց շտարակն 7 համարիք] B համարի || քան զամե- նայն] X քանզի ամենայն || քան] O om. || մարդիկք] E մարդիք; O մարդիկ 8 այլ] X om. || ապաշխարիցէք] O ապաշխարեցէք 9 կորնչիցիք] F X կորնչիք; A B O կորնչի- ցիք 11 բռնաւորք] F X թունաւորք || անաչառ] E անաչառ; F ան ոչ առ 12 որ] F X om.; E ոչ || գրոց լսել] X եւ add. 13 այսպէս] E F X այնպէս 15 յանդիմանութիւն] A (p.c.) O յանդիմանութեան || նորայն] X նորա 16 խոստովանութեամբն] E F խոստովա- նութեամբ || արեամբն] E O արեամբ 18 բժշկեցաւ հանապազորդ խոստովանութեամբն եւ յետոյ արեամբն ի մեծ պատերազմին: Ամբարտաւանութիւն եւ ստութիւն նորա] X om. 19 խոնարհութեամբ] A O խոնարհութեամբն || զարս] E F X զար 22 եւ] X om.

2–3 ողբասցէ, ասէ, ... զի մայրն] Zechariah 11:2 7–9 համարիք թէ այն Գալիլեացիք ... նոյնպէս կորնչիցիք] Luke 13:1–5

ment of the lost one, consider the threat of divine wrath. The cypress, it is said, shall wail, for the cedar has fallen. Hear also words from the Lord similar to these, which Israel cried out to the undisciplined and to the deaf to say: 'Do you believe that those Galileans whose blood Pilate mixed with their sacrifices were sinners above all the Galileans? Or those eighteen whom the tower killed, do you believe that they were debtors above all men who lived in Jerusalem? No, I say to you that if you don't repent, every one of you will perish like that.'

And now, knowing all this, look after yourselves, O tyrants and princes, since for tyrants a violent and austere judgment shall be fulfilled here and in the hereafter against you who do not wish to heed the scripture and thus do not disclose your transgressions in confession. Since this speech was written for his [Baldwin's] glory and remedy and as an example of admonition and reprimand for the living, all those sins have been forgiven and he has been cured through constant confession and afterward through blood in the midst of battle.

His haughtiness and falseness was cured on that day with infinite and excessive humility, by which he yielded to everyone, speaking very sweet and agreeable and mild words to the cavalry and infantry troops. He was calling them all sons of God and true brothers, he was calling princes and lords and heroes

զգարսն ամենայն, յորդորէր, սրտապնդէր. քաջալերէր իբրեւ զյաղթող ըմբիշ եւ զքաջ նահատակ շուրջանակի զարացն անցանէր, ուժգին եւ ահարկու ձայնի ամրացուցանէր զարսն ամենայն, ձայնէր առ ամենեւեան յանուանէ զանուն քաջութեան. վաշ ով քաջք, վաշ բախտին եւ աւուրս
 5 շնորհի, որ աստ նահատակի փոքր մի եւ յաղթեցաք. մի՞ զանգիտէք ի նոցանէ, ահա ար հանդիսի եւ մահ երանելի, վասն Քրիստոսի ի վերայ քրիստոնէից մեռանել. եւ իբրեւ այսպէս զարացուցանէր հաստատէր զարտաքոյ կողմանս բանակին. դարձեալ ի միջոց անդ զարացն մտանէր. զլքեալսն երկիրդի եւ զխուսափեալսն թաքստեանս յառաջ քարշէր եւ
 10 զքաջասիրտսն զովէր. զի բաց ընկեցեալ գէնսն յանարի արանցն, կամ որք ունէին կարկամեալ ցամաքեալ ձեռս յափշտակէր կորզէր, ի յարիացելոցն մատուցանէր ի ձեռին. ոմանց տայր, յոմանց առնոյր, եւ դարձեալ առիծաբար խրոխտանաւք այլ վայրս հասանէր. ահաւոր գոչմամբ եւ բարձրաճիշ աղաղակաւ զգիշերն ողջոյն եւ զտին ամենայն լնոյր զմիջոց բանակին, զի ոչ ունկն պարապէր զայլ ուրուք լսել զձայն քաջութեան, կամ ակն՝
 15 տեսանել զարագընթաց սլացումն հաւասար եւ նման սիրի Պաղտունին. մինչեւ պակասեալ հատաւ ի ձայնէ եւ ի բնական ուժոյն զարութենէ հանդերձ երիվարան, եւ ժանգանալ կարմրութեամբ գոլորշեաց սրտին սանձապատ զրահից բերանոյ նորա, որպէս ասի յոմանց. արդ խստութիւն
 20 հպարտութեան նորա այսու արինակաւ ջնջեալ մաքրեցաւ:

Իսկ անողորմութիւն սրտին այնր աւուր ողորմութեամբ որովք աղէխարշեալ խորովէր ի վերայ տառապելոցն կորստեան. ուստի եւ ղեգերելովն ընդ նոսա՝ ինքն կորուսեալ եղէ. եւ զրկանացն յանցումն, որով զամենեսեան զրկէր առանց ողորմութեան, եւ ինքն զրկեալ գտանէր յայն ար

1 զգարսն] E O զարսն 3 ձայնի] O ձայնի || զարսն] A B X զգարսն || ձայնէր] X ձայնէ
 4 զանուն] E զանունք || վաշ ով] X վաղով || քաջք] A O քաջո 6 ի նոցանէ] X om. || երանելի] X ել աւել 7 իբրեւ] X om. 8 անդ] X անտի 9 թաքստեանս] A B O թաքստեան || քարշէր] X քարոզէր 10 զքաջասիրտսն] B E (a.c.) X զքաջասիրտսն || գէնսն] A զգէնսն; E F գէնս || յանարի արանցն] F X յանարիանցն 11 յափշտակէր] F X յափշտակեալ էր || ի յարիացելոցն] A եւ արիացելոցն; A (a.c.) յարիացելոցն; B եւ յարիացելոցն 13 այլ] A B O յայլ 14–15 զմիջոց բանակին] X միջոցն բանակէին; F զմիջոցն բանակէին 15 ոչ] O որ || ուրուք] X ուրեք 16 սլացումն] X լացումն || նման] X նմին || սիրի] A սիրելի 17 ձայնէ] B ձայն || ի] X om. || բնական] E F X բանական || զարութենէ] E F X զարութեան 18 երիվարան] X երիվարն 20 մաքրեցաւ] A B մաքրեցան 21 այնր] X այնմ' || աւուր] A B աւուրք || որովք] F X որով 22–23 ղեգերելովն] E F X ղեգերովն 23 յանցումն] E անցումն; F անդումն 24 ողորմութեան] B ողորմութեամբ || գտանէր] A B O գտաւ

18–19 եւ ժանգանալ կարմրութեամբ գոլորշեաց սրտին սանձապատ զրահից բերանոյ նորա] This is not an easily intelligible passage; Dulaurier clarifies here that “L’auteur veut dire que Baudouin, frappé à mort, teignit de son sang, qu’il rejetait par la bouche, la visièrre de son casque.”

by name. He was training, exhorting, inspiring all the soldiers; as the victorious champion and brave hero circulating among the troops he was emboldening them, fortifying all the soldiers with a vehement and frightful voice. He was calling out to everyone by name in the name of courage: 'Courage O heroes, take courage in fortune and this day of grace, for if you lead the charge a little here then we shall be victorious. Do not be afraid of them; behold a day of reckoning and a glorious death, to die for Christ on behalf of the Christians.' And like this he was strengthening the resolve of the outer flanks of the camp, then he was going back in among the soldiers. He was drawing forward those who, disheartened with fear, had previously fled and hidden and he was praising the brave-hearted ones; he was seizing and snatching, casting away the weapons from the timid men or those who had twisted and withered hands and putting them into the hands of the courageous ones; he was giving to some, taking from others, and then with lionlike bravado he was arriving at another place. The whole night and all the day the area of the camp was filled with fearful clamours and a shrill cry, for no ear was at rest to hear anyone else's voice of courage, nor any eye to witness a swift flight equal and like to Sir Baldwin; until, failing, he was cut off from his voice and from the strength of his natural power together with his horse, and the bridle cover of his armour was rusted with the redness of the vapours of his heart coming from his mouth, as was said by some people. Now in this way the harshness of his arrogance was purged and purified.

Indeed the mercilessness of his heart up to that day was afflicted with mercy, afflicted with grief over the loss of the miserable ones; and because of this he himself, having been frequently in company with them, became lost. As for the sins of extortion by which he was depriving everyone without mercy, he found

ի մարտի անդ յամենայն աւգնականաց իւրոց. քանզի լքեալ թողին զնա
 ընկերակից իշխանք եւ զաւրք ամենայն ի մէջ մեծ պատերազմին եւ ելին ի
 մարտէ անտի, եւ ոչ ոք ողորմեցաւ նմա դառնալ գիտել՝ թէ ուր իցէ գլխաւոր
 իշխանն եւ մեծ զաւրականն մեր. եւ յայտ անտի է զի ոչ այլ ոք ի զաւրաց
 5 նորա կորեալ կամ ըմբռնեցաւ ընդ նմա եւ ոչ ամենեւին ետես ոք զնա. եւ ոչ
 ի վատութենէ զաւրացն ունիմ ասել զայս կամ կամելոյ զկորուստ նորա, այլ
 զի հարկ էր այնպէս բազմաժամանակեայ զրկանացն եւ անիրաւութեանն
 յայնմ աւուր զրկանաւք եւ անիրաւութեան որ առ նա ի զաւրացն գտանել
 բժշկութիւն, որպէս վերագոյն ասացաք:

10 Իսկ բազմաց արիւնն՝ որ հեղաւ յաւուրս նորա ի գալ յայս երկիր վատշուէր
 եւ սուտ նենգաւորին Վասլին, միով արեամբն իւրոյ անձինն, զոր յաւա-
 րութեամբ սրտի ետ հեղուլ ի վերայ քրիստոնէից. որք ելին եւ ազատե-
 ցան ի պատերազմէ անտի. զոր եւ ինքեանք յայտնապէս խոստովանին
 զերծեալքն ամենայն, աստուծոյ ունել նախ շնորհ. եւ երկրորդ ի մարդկանէ
 15 սիրի Պաղտունին՝ զազատութեանն իւրեանց: Եւ արդ եթէ կատարեցաւ
 մահուամբ ի պատերազմի անդ, թողութիւն ընկալաւ ի տեառնէ ամենայն
 յանցանաց իւրոց. եւ ի սոսկալի աւուր դատաստանին եւ հատուցման ամե-
 նայն արդարոց ընդ բարեպաշտ իշխանսն եւ ընդ քաջ նահատակսն պա-
 կելոց է յաստուծոյ. զի այսպէս գիտեմք եւ հաւատամք զպատերազմաց մահ
 20 որ յանարիւնաց սրոյ մեռանի ոք ի քրիստոնէից. եւ եթէ կենդանի իցէ՝ եւ

1 աւգնականաց] F աւգնականացն; E X յաւգնականաց 2 մէջ] F մէջ || պատերազմին] B
 պատերազմն 4 եւ] B *om.* || զաւրաց] E F զաւրացն 5 կորեալ] B կորեալ || կամ] X եւ
 կամ || ոք] O *pn*; A B *transp. prae* ետես 6 կամ կամելոյ] X կամաց || կամելոյ] E կամեոյ;
 F կամեոց 7 անիրաւութեանն] E F անիրաւութեան որ առ նա; X անիրաւութենէ որ առ
 նա 8 յայնմ] B F X այնմ || առ նա] F X բառնայ || գտանել] E F X գտանէ 9 որպէս]
 O թողութեամբ որպէս || վերագոյն] X վեհագոյն 10 երկիր վատշուէր] X յերկիր վատ
 լսէր 11 իւրոյ] X իւրով || զոր] E զաւր 13 ինքեանք] E F ինքեանքն 14 երկրորդ] E F
 X երկրորդն || ի] E F O *om.* 15 սիրի] A B սիրելի || զազատութեանն] E F X զազատութեան
 16 ընկալաւ] B ընկաւ 17 իւրոց] B իւրեանց 19 յաստուծոյ] E F O աստուծոյ || գիտեմք] B
 E O գիտեմ 20 յանարիւնաց] E F X անարիւնաց || մեռանի ոք] E F մեռանիւնք; X մեռանին

10–11 Իսկ բազմաց արիւնն ... միով արեամբն իւրոյ անձինն] There is a verb missing in this sen-
 tence. Bart'ikyan has paraphrased with էլ ինչ ասեմ ...; Dulaurier has inserted հատուցաւ, “fut
 racheté”. We have chosen here to leave the sentence incomplete. 11 Վասլին] Dulaurier iden-
 tifies this Vasil as the lord of Barzraber, mentioned by Grigor in his narrative of the rise of the
 Rubenid T'oros around 1144, seemingly on the basis that this Vasil was allied with the Byzantines
 against the Armenian prince, and perhaps on the basis that no other candidate Vasil appears in
 the sources for this time. Doubt could be entertained about whether “Vasil” is the original read-
 ing here—a figure such as Zengi or Nūr ad-Dīn would seem to fit the context better—but the
 archetype, at least, certainly read ‘Vasil’.

himself deprived of all his auxiliaries on that day there in battle, inasmuch as [his] companion princes and all his soldiers had abandoned him in the middle of the great battle and left the field, and no one had compassion enough to return to find out where the leading prince and our great soldier might be. And it is clear thence that no one else from his army was lost or captured with him and no one at all saw him. And this I have to say—that it was not because the soldiers were idle or that they wanted his loss, but that it was necessary thus for the long-ago injustice and iniquity to find a cure on that day through the injustice and iniquity which the soldiers committed toward him, as I said above.

Indeed the blood of many that flowed in his days upon the coming to this land of the wicked and lying deceiver Vasil with the blood of himself alone, which he willingly let flow on behalf of the Christians, who left and were liberated from battle there. The escapees themselves also all clearly acknowledge that they firstly had grace from God, and their freedom secondly from Sir Baldwin. And now if he was crowned with death in battle there, he received remission from the Lord for all his sins, and shall be crowned by God on the dreadful day of judgment and restitution to all the righteous, together with the pious princes and the brave champions. suffered by a Christian from the sword of the

յայտնեցի անուն քաջութեան նորա, տարածեցաւ եւ տարածի արւ ըստ արե՛ ընդ տիեզերս ամենայն մինչեւ ի կատարած աշխարհի:

Եւ արդ զայս ամենայն երկարապատում բանս զոր գրեցաք վասն նորա, մին որք ի պարսաւադէտ ատողաց նորա եւ յաւարասէր մախողաց ըստգտա-
 5 նիցէ զմեզ բամբասելով, զի այս մորոսաց է եւ հացկատակաց. եւ որք առ կենդանութեան խասեսցին կամ գրեսցեն զայսպիսի բանս, եւ ոչ որ վասն անտէր մեռելոյն եւ անգիտ կորուսելոյն որ խասեսցի. զի որքան ի կեանս էր ոչ երբէք լուսւ նա բան քաղցրութեան կամ գովեստի ի մէնջ, այլ պատուհասի. յանդիմանութեան որովք կսկծեցուցանէ աստուած հանա-
 10 պագորդ զմիտս նորա. եւ թէ պատեհ էր եւ յառնէր նա ի մեռելոց կամ յայտնէր կենդանի, ոչ ունէր տեսանել նա զայս գիր, եւ զոր վասն պատե-
 րագմին եւ կորստեան նոցա աւուրն գրեցաք. ոչ ի տասանց կամ ի քսանից, այլ յամենեցուն միապէս զսոյն լուսաք. մանաւանդ յատողաց նորա եւ ի նոցին իսկ ի զարացն հռոմայեցոց. այլ այն ինչ յայտնի է պատճառ բանից
 15 մերոց յերկարութեան՝ սիրէաք զնա հոգեւորական սիրով, որպէս արլէն է ծառայից աստուծոյ, ըստ որում եւ նա զմեզ. եւ զկնի մահուան նորա հարկ էր մեզ փոխանակ անչափ սիրոյ նորա հատուցանել սէր կորուսանելոյն ի կենաց աստի. որ յանտիրոքացոց քաղաքէն մինչեւ ի սահմանս Մելտենոյ ձգէր իշխանութիւն նորա, եւ տեղի ոչ ուրեք երեւեցաւ գերեզմանի նորա.
 20 այնքան զարաց եւ աշխարհաց տէր եւ անուանի երեւելի իշխան, եւ այժմ ի մեռեալս ոչ յիշատակի, ոչ ի կենդանիս երեւի. ոչ զանգակ որ նմա հնչեցոյց, ոչ յիշեցաւ անուն նորա յեկեղեցի ուրեք, եւ ոչ նուէր պատարագի կամ մասն յիշատակի ողորմութեան ել նմա յերկրէ աստի. ուլ մի կամ դանգ ինչ

1 տարածի] F X տարան ի 2 ամենայն] X om. || մինչեւ] B մինչ; X մի եւ || կատարած] A B կատարածի 4 ատողաց նորա] F X ատողացն || յաւարասէր] X խաւարասէր || մախողաց] A B մախողացն 5 այս մորոսաց է] X յայսմ արոսացէ 6 խասեսցին] X խասեսցեն 7 որք] O քո; B որք || խասեսցի] X խասեսցեն; F խասեսցին 8 երբէք] A B *transp. post* լուսւ || լուսւ] F X լուսան || նա բան] F X բանք || կամ գովեստի] X գովեստ || ի] E F O om. || ի մէնջ] A B *transp. prae* բան 9–10 կսկծեցուցանէ աստուած հանապագորդ] A (a.c.) կսկծեցուցանէ անհանապագորդ; A կսկծեցուցանէաք հանապագորդ; B կսկծեցուցանէ հանապագորդ 10 մեռելոց] F X մեռելոցն || կամ] E F Վլամեր 11 յայտնէր] A յառնէր; X յայտնի || զոր] X om.; O զորս || զոր վասն] E F զվասն 12 կամ] F X կամ ոչ 15 յերկարութեան՝ սիրէաք] X յերկարութիւն սիրէ || արլէն է] E X յարլէն է; F յարլինէ 17 անչափ] X այնչափ 18 քաղաքէն] X քաղաքն 20 աշխարհաց] F X աշխարհացն || իշխան] A B իշխանս || այժմ] E F X յայժմ 21 զանգակ] B զանգակի 22 յիշեցաւ] E F X յիշեցոյց 23 մասն] A om.

23 դանգ] Bart'ikyan notes here that a dang is the smallest division of a dram. Dulaurier sees here “allusion à la coutume de convier les pauvres aux funérailles, et de leur distribuer des aumônes en aliments et en argent, comme nous l'avons vue pratiquée à la mort du prince Kogh-Vasil” (cf. ME, p. 324).

impious. And if he were alive and if the reputation of his bravery were made public, it would have spread and continue to spread day after day through all creation, up to the end of the world.

And now as for all these long-winded words that I wrote about him, let none of his naysayers or plunder-loving envious ones accuse us by claiming that this is foolish and toadying. That would be true of him who would speak or write such words to the living, but not of him who would speak about the lordless dead one and unfindable lost one. For as long as he was alive he never heard a word of mildness or praise from us, but of chastisement, admonition with which God daily caused pain to his mind. If it had been fit that he would arise from death or emerge living, he would not have seen this letter, and what I wrote about the war and the day of his loss. We heard these things not from ten nor from twenty people, but from everyone in like manner, especially from his enemies and indeed from his own Roman soldiers. But the clear occasion for our lengthy speech is this—we loved him with a spiritual love, as is appropriate for a servant of God, just as he loved us. And after his death it was necessary for us, in exchange for his immeasurable love, to repay love to the one lost from life here, His dominion stretched from the city of Antioch up to the borders of Melitene. yet no place anywhere offered itself for his tomb; so great a lord of troops and territory and an eminently renowned prince, and now he is not remembered among the dead nor apparent among the living. Not a bell tolled for him, nor was his name remembered in a church anywhere, and no mass or service was dedicated to mercy for his memory here on earth; not a kid-goat,

որ կարի աղքատագունիցն հասանէ. ոչ ոք է որ յիշէ գնա, եւ ոչ ոք որ ողորմի նմա. ի կենդանութեանն իւրում ոչ հանգեալ, ոչ վայելեաց ի սմա, այլ ի տղայական տիոցն սկսեալ ի տագնապի, ի ցնորս եւ ի տառապանս անցոյց զժամանակս մանկութեան իւրոյ, ի դիւաց, ի թշնամեաց եւ ի խստերախ մարմնական տէրանց եւ դաւաճանող ընկերակից իշխանաց. եւ այժմ ի կատարածի կենաց իւրոց կորեալ անյիշատակ, ջնջեցաւ բարձաւ անուն նորա եւ սէր յամենայն աշխարհէ եւ ի սրտէ յընտանեաց եւ յատարաց:

Զայս ամենայն դառն եւ անհնարին կորուստ յորժամ տեսանեմ հասեալ ի վերայ նորա, հեղձամղձուկ եղեալ ցնդիմ յարտասուս, եւ ոչ գիտեմ զինչ արարից կամ որպէս աւգնեցից, ձեռն կարկառելով ընկղմեցելոյ սիրելոյն. զայլ ոք ոչ տեսանելով ցաւակից մեզ յայտոսիկ՝ յաստուած ապաւինեալ վատահացայ, որ միայն է անոխակալ եւ մարդասէր, որ ոչ կամի զմահ մեղաւորի եւ ոչ խնդայ ընդ կորուստ ուրուք. եւ զրեցաք զայս գիր խոստովանութեան եւ աղերսի ի դիմաց նորա եւ մեր, եւ ոչ դադարեմք յարածամ գոչել այսու յամենայն տեղի առաջի ողորմած հզարին, որ բարկացաւ նմա եւ մեզ, մինչեւ հաշտեցի ողորմութեամբն իւրով եւ յայտնեցէ զնա մեռեալ կամ կենդանի: Այլ եւ զձեզ աղաչեմ զամենեսեան, ով մարդիկ որ լսէք զողբերական բանս զայտոսիկ. մի լքեալ ձանձրանայք եւ տաղտկացեալ հրաժարէք անտես առնելով զպաղատանս մեր որ վասն նորա՝ առ ծուլութեան կամ ատելութեան նորա, այլ սրտի մտաւք արարէք թողութիւն նմա. եւ մի ընդ կորուսելոյն ոխս մթերեալ պահէք, այլ եւ աղաւթս արարէք առ հասարակաց դատաւորն եւ արարիչն ամենեցուն աստուած, զի ողորմեցի նմա եւ թողցէ զամենայն յանցանս նորա, զոր առ աստուած կամ առ մարդիկ մեղուցեալ իցէ. եւ ամենագար արարիչն աստուած, բարեխասութեամբ սուրբ աստուածածին եւ աղաչանաւք ամենայն սրբոց, ողորմեցի նմա եւ թողութիւն արասցէ ամենայն յանցանաց նորա մեծամեծաց եւ փոքունց. եւ զձեզ արհնեցէ հոգւով եւ մարմնով, եւ երկնից արքայութեանն արժանի արասցէ ընդ ամենայն սուրբս ի Քրիստոս Յիսուս ի տէր մեր, որում փառք յաւիտեանս ամէն:

1 որ] E F ոչ || որ ողորմի] X ողորմի 2 կենդանութեանն] A B X կենդանութեան 4 իւրոյ] E F X իւր || ի թշնամեաց] X թշնամեաց 5–6 դաւաճանող ընկերակից ... կենաց] X դաւաճանողն 5 այժմ] E F յայժմ 7 եւ] X om. || աշխարհէ եւ] O յաշխարհէ || յընտանեաց եւ յատարաց] A *transp.* 9 յարտասուս] E F X արտասուս 10 որպէս] X որ || ընկղմեցելոյ սիրելոյն] E ընկղմեցելոյն; F X ընկղմեցելոցն 11 յայտոսիկ] E այտոսիկ; F X այտորիկ 12 վատահացայ] F X վատահացեալ 13 ընդ կորուստ] X զկորուստ || զայս] O զայս 14 աղերսի] X աղերս || մեր] B մեր 15 այսու] A B յայսու 16 ողորմութեամբն] E X եւ ողորմութեամբն 18 ձանձրանայք] F ձանձրանայ; E ձանձրանայր 20 կամ] A B անգամ 21 ոխս] E F որս; A O նորս; B om. || մթերեալ] E F մբերեալ; A X բերեալ; B մթե եալ 22 առ հասարակայ] B առ հասակայ; X հասարակայ 24 ամենագար] B O զամենագար

21 ոխս] This emendation, proposed by Dulaurier, has been adopted.

not a penny reaches even the poorest. There is no one who remembers him, and no one who pities him. In his life he never relaxed or enjoyed himself, but beginning from his earliest days he passed the time of his youth in anguish, in madness and in tribulation brought about by demons, by enemies and by intractable worldly masters and treacherous comrades among the princes. And now at the end of his life he has been lost unremembered; his name and affection for him has been effaced and removed from the entire world and from the hearts of both intimates and strangers. 5

When I see all this bitter and terrible loss that has overtaken him, I am suffocated and melt in tears, and I don't know what I shall do or how I shall help, stretching out my hand to my sunken beloved one. Seeing no one else commiserating with me in this, I have confided and put my trust in God, who alone is benevolent and philanthropic, who does not wish for the death of a sinner and does not rejoice at the loss of anyone. And we have written this letter of confession and supplication on his behalf and ours, and we do not stop ceaselessly calling out thus to every place before the merciful and powerful one, who was angry at him and at us, until He is pacified with His mercy and reveals him dead or alive. And now I beseech you, every one of you men who hear these tragic words. Do not give up, grow weary and disgusted, renounce and disregard our entreaty concerning him, either out of idleness or aversion to him, but pardon him with all your heart. And do not continue to bear a grudge against the lost one, but pray to God, the judge and creator of everyone alike, that He may have mercy on him and pardon all his sins, whether he sinned against God or against men. And the all-powerful creator God, with intercession of the holy Virgin and with the prayers of all the saints, shall forgive him and grant pardon for all his sins great and small. And He shall bless you in soul and in body and make you worthy of the kingdom of heaven with all the saints in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom glory forever, Amen. 10 15 20 25

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Violence against Women in T'ovma Mecop'ec'i's *History of Tamerlane and His Descendants* (15th c.)

David Zakarian

1 Introduction¹

T'ovma Mecop'ec'i's *History of Tamerlane and His Descendants*² is one of the most important historical sources for the study of the Timurid invasions of the Caucasus and adjacent territories. Moreover, it is a valuable source for the socio-political history of Armenia and, to a lesser degree, of Georgia, also providing significant insights into the history of the Aqqouyunlu and Qaraqoyunlu Turkic tribes, which were formidable powers in the region in the period described in the work. The narrative begins with the first Timurid invasion of the Caucasus, which happened in 1386, and finishes in about 1440s with the devastation of Georgia by Jahanshah Qaraqoyunlu. Mecop'ec'i's *History* is the only text of considerable length which was composed by a Christian cleric who was a contemporary of the events. It contains a large number of eyewitness accounts and anecdotal evidence and reveals the perspective of a Christian monk and his immediate circle on the conquest and control of Armenia, Georgia, and of neighbouring regions by various foreign powers.

There is abundant evidence suggesting that Timur and his descendants' conquest and rule was characterised by excessive violence.³ One Armenian colophon, preserved in the Gospel manuscript at the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg (SABE VP 1010–465), copied and illuminated by a certain scribe Cerun in Ostan in 1395, insightfully describes the tactics that were used by the Timurids. In particular, he stresses that those who would submit themselves to

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- 1 It is a great pleasure and an honour to have had the opportunity to contribute to Professor Theo Maarten van Lint's *Festschrift* both as an editor and an author. I feel specially privileged to be able to call him my teacher and my friend.
 - 2 For the Armenian text, Levon S. Xaç'ikyan's 1999 critical edition of the text will be used (hereinafter *TM*, followed by the chapter and page number); all the translations of this and other texts into English are mine unless otherwise indicated.
 - 3 See, for instance, Anooshahr 2012, 276–277. For a very different perspective on Timurid history, see Binbaş 2016.

the Timurids voluntarily would be spared, while those who dared to confront and resist them were always punished for their audacity:

... this was copied in the city of Ostan under the auspices of the Surb Astuacacin [Holy Mother of God] and the Saint Step'annos [Stephen] the Protomartyr, during the pontificate of *tēr* Davit' in Aht'amar [Davit' III, Armenian Catholicos of Aht'amar (1393–1433)] and the conquest of Lank T'amur [Timur], who appeared from the East this year and conquered the entire world. He would provide great rewards to whoever obeyed him, and whoever disobeyed him, he would trample upon them and subject their land to devastation.⁴

The Timurids were apparently inspired by the example of Chinggis Khan's "use of selective and theatrical violence against cities that rebelled",⁵ and Mecop'ec'i's *History* is replete with such descriptions of violence inflicted on the Armenians and the representatives of different ethnic groups that inhabited the Armenian plateau at the time. Religion appeared to play a minor role in the Timurid strategy of conquest,⁶ for their ultimate goal was to force the enemy into submission in order to extract the payment of tribute and to exploit all the seized resources, both human and material. Mass murders, enslavement, and forced migration of large groups of people were instrumental in the depopulation of Armenia and Georgia⁷ and the emergence of new diasporic centres, especially in eastern Europe, in this period.⁸

There are several passages in T'ovma Mecop'ec'i's *History* which contain descriptions of violence perpetrated against women. The examination of these episodes will, on the one hand, reveal certain recurring patterns of violent treatment of Armenian women living under foreign rule; on the other hand, it will allow us to observe how these calamities were interpreted by the Armenian cleric and were incorporated in his narrative to fit the main aims of his work.

4 Yuzbashian 2005, 248: ... գրեցաւ սա ի քաղաքիս Ոստան ընդ հովանեաւ Սուրբ Աստուածածնին եւ Սրբոյն Ստեփաննոսի Նախապկային, ի հայրապետութիւնն Ախթամարա տէր Դաւթի եւ յաշխարհակալութիւնն Լանկ Թամուրի որ երեւեցաւ յայսմ ամի ի յարեւելից կողմանէ եւ տիրեաց ընդ ամենայն տիեզերս, եւ ով որ հնազանդէր նմա բազում պարգեաւ պարգեւէր նմա, եւ ով որ ոչ հնազանդէր՝ զնա առ ոտն հարկանէր եւ զաշխարհ նորա աւար հարկանէր.

5 Manz 2020, 90.

6 For a brief discussion of Timurid religious policies, see Anooshahr 2012, 275–278.

7 See, for instance, Mesxian 1954, 358–360 and *TM*, VII, 18–19.

8 See, for instance, Ayvazyan et al. 2003, 277 (Poland), 440 (Romania), 587–588 (Ukraine).

2 Mecop'ec'i's *History* and Its Objectives

In the introductory paragraph of his *History* Mecop'ec'i unequivocally states that his intention is to educate the present and future generations by providing an accurate account of the events that are happening at present, that happened in the past, and that featured “the wicked, faithless kings of the East who brought destruction to the Armenian people in recent times”; Mecop'ec'i believes that it is essential that the *vardapets* (the doctors of the church) “give an account of the past, speak about the present, comprehend the future, and issue warnings.”⁹

Mecop'ec'i's narrative consists of eyewitness accounts and stories that circulated in his milieu, which are presented in a way that informs his readers about the important events that shaped his time. He also provides interpretations of these events and endeavours to teach lessons, which will instil Christian values into his audience. One of his primary goals is to defend the Armenian Church against the proselytising activities of the Catholic missionaries and the Catholic Armenian *Fratres Unitores*, who had been active in the area since 1330.¹⁰ Another issue Mecop'ec'i wishes to address is the divisions within the Armenian Church.¹¹

Being a learned cleric himself, it is not surprising that Mecop'ec'i's narrative is imbued with numerous allusions to biblical passages. The apocalyptic element is especially ubiquitous, for all the calamities are presented as a divine punishment which befell the Armenian people as a consequence of a multi-

9 *TM*, I, 2: Պարտ է գիտել ոսոմնասիրաց եւ բանասիրաց անձանց, զի ժամանակն բաժանի յանցեալն, ի ներկայն եւ յապառնին: Եւ վարդապետաց եկեղեցոյ պիտոյ է վասն երիցն գիտելոյ. վասն անցելոյն պատմել, վասն ներկային խօսել, վասն ապագային իմանալ եւ զգուշացուցանել: Նոյնպէս եւ մեզ պարտ է սակաւ մի համառօտաբար վասն ներկային, զոր ի մերում ժամանակիս եղեւ, պատմել, զոր չար թագաւորքն անհաստք Արեւելից կորուստ բերին Հայկազեան սեռիս ի վերջին ժամանակիս եւ ամենայն օտարացել ազգաց ցուցանել. For a more detailed discussion of the main aims of T'ovma's work, see Bais 2017, 461–477.

10 The Catholic Armenian congregation of the *Fratres Unitores*—in Armenian *Miabanolk'* or *Miaban etbayrk'*—was established in the village of K'rna of Naxijewan in 1330 through the efforts of the Armenian monk Yovhan, his uncle Gorg, and Gorg's wife Elt'ik. The emergence of this congregation, encouraged by proselytising activities of the Dominican friars in the region, not only led to a large number of conversions to Catholicism and the weakening of the influence of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the area but also contributed to the development of Armenian theological thought (for more details, see La Porta 2015).

11 Bais 2017, 11.

tude of sins and an unrighteous lifestyle.¹² In particular, the narrated events are interpreted with the help of images and vocabulary borrowed from the books of Revelation, Daniel, and others.¹³ The adversary is virtually always Satan, the Antichrist (Նեոն), which, as a rule, performs its evil deeds through the leaders of the conquering army.¹⁴

Mecop'ec'i also creates role models for emulation. He includes in his narrative several accounts of the martyrdom of Christians, particularly focusing on the deaths of the Armenian clergy at the hands of local rulers.¹⁵ These stories eulogise the sacrifice of pious monks and priests; they intend to teach a moral lesson to the present and future generations and serve as a reproach to the indolent and deceitful clergy who are repeatedly chastised in his narrative.

It is within this context that we need to look into Mecop'ec'i's description of violence towards women, for he deploys the same approach and applies the same criteria to the interpretation of these episodes.

- 12 For instance, *TM*, LII, 162–163: Եւ այս ամենայն եկն ի վերայ մեր վասն մեղաց մերոց եւ չար գործոց, մանաւանդ ի ծուլութենէ երիցանց, եւ ի խաբէութենէ կրօնաւորաց եւ ի չար գործոց անհաստ եւ սուտանուն հաստացելոց, ի գրկօղ եւ անիրաւ տանուտերաց, ի պիղծ եւ զազիր առաջնորդաց, զոր ոչ կարենք ընդ գոռվ արկանել զաղտեղութիւնս մեր եւ նոցա. զի ծածկագիտին յայտնի է ամենայն (“And all of this befell us because of our sins and our evil deeds, especially on account of the indolence of priests and the deceitfulness of monks, and the evil deeds of faithless and falsely-called believers, the oppressive and iniquitous landlords, foul and indecent leaders; I am unable to express in writing our and their foulness, for everything is known to the one who knows all secrets”). See also *TM*, LXII, 193: Եւ այն իշխանն, որ կործանեաց զաշխարհս մեր, այժմ իշխան եւ տէր է կարգեալ ի վերայ աշխարհիս մեր վասն մեղաց մերոց պատուհասի եւ ի բարկութենէն Աստուծոյ (“And that prince who destroyed our land has now become the prince and the lord over our land as a punishment for our sins that was from the wrath of God”).
- 13 In addition to references to Judgement Day and the Lamb of God discussed below, see also *TM*, LII with frequent allusions to various books from the Old Testament and *TM*, LXIX, 216 mentioning Gog and Magog (Ezek 38 and 39; Rev 20).
- 14 *TM*, XXIX, 104: Կարապետ Նեոնին անողորմ բռնաւորն [Թամուր] (“the precursor of Antichrist, the merciless tyrant [Timur]”); *TM*, XXXII, 109: չար վիշապն եւ Նեոնի կարապետն Թամուր (“the evil dragon and the precursor of Antichrist Timur”); *TM*, LXIII, 142: ի չար բռնաւորէն եւ ի Նեոնի պիղծ եւ անօրէն կարապետէն [Սքանդարէն] (“by the evil tyrant and the foul and iniquitous precursor of Antichrist [Iskandar Qaraqoy-unlu]”).
- 15 See *TM*, XXII, 60–65 (martyrdom of Grigor Xlat'ec'i, Yakob Ovsanc'i, Łazar Bališec'i, and T'ovma from the monastery of Putlik); LXI, 189–191 (martyrdom of a landowner, Zak'aria, and Muratšah of Arckē).

3 Brief Mentions of Violence against Women

As mentioned above, Mecop'ec'i's *History* is full of descriptions of violence perpetrated by the conquering powers, some of which are quite graphic. For instance, there is a gruesome image of someone being put into a copper cauldron and cooked alive by the founder of the Timurid Empire Timur the Lame: in this manner, he punished a general who betrayed him.¹⁶ Likewise, there is a mention of the massacres of inhabitants of Damascus and Baghdad in 1401, when Timur ordered that in each city his army decapitate 700,000 people and build fortresses of flesh by piling the severed heads one on top of the other.¹⁷ The numbers are apparently exaggerated for the sake of effect, but the phenomenon itself seems to match the general practice of the Timurids. In many cases, we also encounter a different pattern of action, when men are slaughtered and women and children are driven into slavery.¹⁸ The same pattern of conquest, with certain differences, was also deployed by the Turkic tribes that often challenged the hegemony of the Timurids in the region.

There are several brief mentions of acts of violence inflicted on women in Mecop'ec'i's *History*. These accounts are incorporated in the general picture of

16 *TM*, IV, 9: Եւ [Թամուր] հուր ետ վառել. Եւ եղին [զէդիլն] կենդանոյն ի պղնձի սանն Եւ եփեցին գնա առաջի նորա Եւ ամենայն բազմութեանն (“and he [Timur] had a fire kindled, and they placed [Édil] alive in a copper cauldron and cooked him in the presence of himself and of the entire multitude”).

17 *TM*, XXVIII, 100–102: Եւ հրաման եղեւ ի նմանէ [Թամուրէն]՝ եթէ, «ԷճՌ. (700,000) մարդ կայք առ իս, ԷճՌ. (700,000) գլուխ այսօր Եւ վաղիւն առ իս բերջիք, Եւ է. (7) բերդ շինեսցիք. եւ որ ոչ բերիցէ գլուխ՝ նորին գլուխն հատցի. Եւ որ ասիցէ. «Յիսէի եմ», ի նոսա ոչ որ մերձեսցի»: Եւ բազում զօրացն, սուր ի վերայ եղեալ, կոտորեցին զամենայն քաղաքն Եւ պակասեալ լինէին այր մարդն, Եւ գլուխ գտանել ոչ կարէին, Եւ կտրէին զգլուխս կանանց Եւ զհամարն ի տեղն բերէին ամենայն զօրքն: ... Այս եղեւ ի Դամասկոս:

Դարձեալ [Թամուրն] առաքեաց զզօրս իւր գնալ ի Բաղդաստ քաղաք, Եւ նոյն թուով Եւ համարաւ ԷճՌ. (700,000) մարդ ի Բաղդաստ մտալէզ բերդ շինեցին (“And there came an order from him [Timur]: ‘You are 700,000 people by my side. Today and tomorrow, you shall bring me 700,000 heads and build seven fortresses. Whoever does not bring a head, then his head will be severed. And if they say: I am Christian, do not approach them.’ And the large army, armed with swords, slaughtered the entire city. The number of men diminished, and they could not find heads, so the entire army severed the heads of women to get the required number. ... This happened in Damascus.

Again he [Timur] dispatched his army to the city of Baghdad and they built a fortress of flesh with the same number and quantity of 700,000 people”).

18 For the gendered treatment of the enemy in different times and geographical contexts, see, *inter alia*, Valentina Calzolari’s contribution to this volume with regards to the Armenian Genocide, as well as Zakarian 2021, pp. 194–207, in connection with the 4th- and 5th-century confrontations between the Armenians and Sasanian Iran.

devastation and affliction that the Armenians endured and, as in other cases, are presented through imagery borrowed from apocalyptic literature. There is no particular emphasis on the gender of the victims of the violence but rather on the excessiveness and gratuitousness of violence itself. The perpetrators of violence are either the Timurids or the local Muslim overlords, primarily the Kurds and the Qaraqoyunlu Turkmen tribesmen.

The main motive that emerges from these accounts is that of women and their children being led into captivity while men are slaughtered. This pattern is especially common when describing the invasions of the Timurids. The first such example is found in Chapter XVI, when Mecop'ec'i relates the conquest of the fortress of Van during Timur's first incursion into Armenia in 1386–1387. The Kurdish emir of Van, Ezdin, and the city's Christian population refuse to surrender the fortress to Timur, but after a siege of forty days, Van passes into the hands of the Timurids, who carry out an appalling massacre of the local population. For T'ovma this was a tragedy bearing a resemblance to doomsday:

Alas, this disaster and the bitter affliction! Here could the fear and the dread of the Day of Judgement, the weeping and lamenting of the entire fortress be witnessed, for an order had come from the evil tyrant [Timur] that women and children be taken into captivity and that [male] believers and unbelievers be pushed down from the fortress. They immediately carried out his evil command and began to push everyone down. So much did the pile of corpses rise that those hurled last did not die.¹⁹

Mecop'ec'i's account confirms scribe Cerun's aforementioned words that the Timurids would cruelly crush any sort of resistance. Women and children are spared, but they are enslaved and driven into foreign lands.

With a similar evocation of Judgement Day, Mecop'ec'i describes the devastating military campaign in the province of Arčēš of another Timurid, whom T'ovma calls Jōngay, claiming that he was Šahrux's son, that is Timur's grandson. By order of this Jōngay the landlords of the area are murdered, many a man is converted to Islam, while women and children are driven into captivity.²⁰

19 *TM*, XVI, 38–39: Ասանդ աղէտիս եւ դառն կսկծիս: Աստ է տեսանել զահ եւ գերկիւղ աւուրն դատաստանին, զլալումն եւ զողբումն ամենայն բերդին, զի հրաման եղէ ի չար բռնաորէն զկանայս եւ զմանկունս առնուլ ի գերութիւն, եւ զհաւատացեալ եւ զանհաւատ ի բերդէն ի վայր ընկենուլ: Իսկ նորա առժամայն կատարեցին զչար հրամանս նորա. սկսան առհասարակ զամենեսեան ի վայր ընկենուլ: Եւ այնքան բարձրացաւ մեռեալն, մինչ զի վերջին անկեալքն ոչ մեռանէին ...

20 *TM*, XLIX, 153–154: Եւ չար զասակն եւ որդին կորստեան [որդի Շահնուհին Ջօնգայ

In 1394 the same fate awaited the women of Amit' (Amid / Diyarbakir). Timur conquered the city: "with ineffable and unutterable sufferings he killed the grandees with sword and fire," and the lay population of the city, men and women alike, were enslaved and sent to various parts of Timur's vast dominions.²¹

According to Mecop'ec'i, the Qaraqoyunlu conquerors' treatment of captive women was not dissimilar. In 1422 Iskandar Qaraqoyunlu punished the resisting, mainly Christian, inhabitants of the fortress of Ahunk' near Xlat' (Ahlat) by having many of them killed, while women and children were enslaved. Some of them were later ransomed, apparently by their next of kin, and managed to return to their homes.²² The practice of selling women is also mentioned in

անուն] ոչ գնաց զկնի նոցա, այլ յետ դարձեալ եկն ի յերկիրն Արճիշու: Եւ բազմութիւն քրիստոնէիցն՝ կարգաւորաց եւ աշխարհականաց, ի յերինս եւ ի բլուրս, ի ծերպս եւ ի ծակս վիմաց փախուցեալ կային: Եւ նոցա շրջապատեալ զլերամբն, իբր զարծի, որ որսայ զթռչունս երկնից, գոչէին, ձայնէին, երիվարան արշաւէին, զսիրտս արանց եւ կանանց ճմլեցուցանէին, իբր զօր դատաստանին սուկալի եւ սարսափելի պատուհասի հասին, զմեծամեծքն սպանանէին, զոմանս թլպատէին եւ ի հաստոցն բեկէին, եւ զկին եւ զորդի ի հարանցն յափշտակեալ գերի առեալ տանէին ("And the evil child and the son of destruction [son of Šahrux called Jōngay] did not follow them but returned to the land of Arčēš. And a multitude of Christian clergymen and laymen had been fugitives in the mountains and hills, in caves and holes in the rocks. And they surrounded the mountain like an eagle hunting birds of the sky. They roared, screamed, and attacked with horses, and the hearts of the men and women sank as if they [the Chaghatay] had arrived like the terrible and frightful Judgement Day. They killed the grandees; they circumcised others and changed their faith and, snatching the wives and children from their fathers, they led them into captivity").

21 *TM*, XXIII, 65–66: Դարձեալ ի ՊԽԳ. թվականին, շարժեցաւ պիղծ բռնաւորն Խորասանայ եւ եկն Բաղդատայ ճանապարհան, աւերեաց զԲաղդատ եւ զամենայն Ասորեստանեայս եւ զամենայն Միջագետս Դիարբակին: Եկն յԱմիթ քաղաք, էառ գնա, եւ զմեծամեծսն սրով եւ հրով, անասելի եւ անպատմելի չարչարանօք սպանին, եւ զփոքունսն՝ զայր եւ զկին, զերեցին ամենայն աշխարհան իւրեանց ("Again in the year 843 [= 1394] the foul tyrant of Xorasan was on the go and coming from the road of Baghdad he destroyed Baghdad and the entire Assyria and the entire Mesopotamia of Diyarbakir. He came to the city of Amit', took it, and with unspeakable and indescribable sufferings killed the grandees with sword and fire, and the commoners, men and women, were enslaved [and dispersed] throughout their country").

22 *TM*, XLIII, 138–139: Իսկ Սքանդարն, որ նստաւ թագաւոր ի Թաւրէզ շահաստանին, ՊՀԱ. թվականին եկեալ զօրօք իւրովք ի վերայ Խլաթայ, եւ աւերեալ զերկիրն ամենայն՝ նստաւ ի վերայ բերդին Աղուանից ... Եւ առ ժամայն առին գնա. եւ սուր ի վերայ քրիստոնէիցն եղեալ ճԾ. ոգի սպանին ի ժողովորենէն, որ անդ ժողովեալ էին, եւ Կ. ոգի մին զարշաղէմ քրիստոնէի գենուկ տունն՝ ի Ծղաքայ, ի յԱղուանից եւ յայլ գեղորէից. եւ զայլ բազմութիւն կանանց եւ տղայոց առեալ տարան գերի, կորուսին զբազումս. եւ էր, զի սակաւ գնեալ արծաթով ի յետ դարձուցին ("In 871 [= 1422] Sk'andar [Iskandar], who became the king in the *šahastan* of Tabriz, came upon Xlat' with his troops and having

Chapter LXII, when the local Muslim overlord of Amuk fortress P'ir-Ali sells Christian women at the price of 200–300 *t'ankay* (silver coins).²³ To understand the actual value of this amount of money, it should be mentioned that in 1449 a *Hymnal* was purchased by an Armenian called Yohanēs at the price of 3 *t'ankay*;²⁴ yet, Grigor Narekac'i's *Book of Lamentation* was purchased at the price of 30 *t'ankay* in 1392,²⁵ while 3000 *t'ankay* was the sum of money required to restore the dome of the church that had collapsed.²⁶

Besides being commodified and sold into slavery, women were also subjected to physical violence perpetrated by the conquering powers. Mecop'ec'i relates an episode when Timur and his army enter the city of Sebastia (Sivas) by reassuring its people with the words “Fear not, for whoever slays you by the sword will have their swords in their hearts.” Yet, when the city gates opened and people came out towards them “with joy and exultation as if released from prison”, Timur

immediately sent an evil command to his troops to take captive the poor, to torture the rich and to seize their hidden treasures, to tie the women to the tails of horses and let the horses run. And he gave an order to assemble the countless and numberless sons and daughters in the middle of the plain and like sheaves of grain to thrash them without mercy.²⁷

destroyed the entire country, besieged the fortress of Aġank'... And they immediately captured it and taking out their swords they killed 150 Christians among the people who had assembled there. And they had 60 people murdered by a vile Christian in Ġak', Aġank', and other villages. And they took a multitude of other women and children as captives, and they killed many. There were others who were ransomed and turned back for a small amount of silver”).

- 23 This was the Armenian variant of the Mongol *tanga* (see Darley-Doran 2012 and Davidovich 2001, 130–132).
- 24 Sanjian 1969, 215: “I [bought this manuscript] for four *T'amuri t'ankay* from the Ć'alat' [Chaghatay], in memory of myself and of my parents, [and] for the enjoyment of my children ...”
- 25 Sanjian 1969, 110: “and I [Simeon] paid 30 *t'ankay* and secured it [Narekac'i's *Book of Lamentation*].”
- 26 Sanjian 1969, 214: “And he, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, obtained a permit from the baron, offered 3000 *t'ankay* to the barons and chieftains, and restored [the dome] ...”.
- 27 *TM*, XXIX: “Մի երկնչիք, զի ով զձեզ սրով սպանանէ՛ սուր նոցա ի սիրտս նոցա մտանէ»: Եւ նոցա, բացեալ զքաղաքն, ելին ընդ առաջ նորա ուրախութեամբ եւ ցնծութեամբ իբր ազատեալք ի բանտէ: Եւ առժամայն չար հրաման եհաս ի վերայ զօրաց իրոց, զի զաղքատսն գերի առցեն, եւ զմեծատունսն չարչարեսցեն եւ զթաքուն գանձս նոցա առցեն, եւ զվանայսն յագիս ձիոցն կապել եւ արշաւել. եւ զորդիս եւ զղստերս ժողովեալ ի դաշտավայրի միոջ անթիս եւ անհամար, եւ հրաման ետ, իբրեւ զորայս կամ նասայլից, կասել զնոսս անողորմութեամբ.

In this episode, Mecop'ec'i foregrounds the violence perpetrated against women and the youth in order to emphasise the scale of the destruction and the extent of the barbarity of the Timurid army.²⁸

Finally, Mecop'ec'i describes a distressful event which he personally witnessed on the island of Lim on Lake Van. Another lord of the fortress of Amuk, Haĭibēk, raided the island and extorted large sums of money from the Christian Armenians who had found refuge there. Not only did they rob the refugees of their possessions but they also subjected women and children to brutal physical abuse.²⁹

4 The Woman and Her Son

The longest and most important reference to violence in which a woman is the protagonist is found in Chapter XII of the *History*, which is fully dedicated to the story of the martyrdom of an unnamed mother and her son. Mecop'ec'i readily deploys biblical imagery and interprets their tragic demise as a sacrifice. The woman's deed is extolled, and she is presented as an exemplary role model for emulation.

According to Mecop'ec'i, the unnamed woman kills her beloved son and commits suicide when she realises that they will be captured by the raiding troops of Timur. Mecop'ec'i describes her as “a God-fearing and faithful woman from the province of Muž,” a “pitiable, chastity-loving, and God-fearing” mother,³⁰ and her son as “precious and attractive ... with the face of an angel,

28 The image of someone being tied to the tail of a horse and dragged until they die is not new in Armenian literature, for already in the fifth-century anonymous *Epic Histories* (*Buzandaran Patmut'iwk'*) (hereinafter *BP*) the Armenian bishop of Aluank' (Caucasian Albania) Grigorios is said to have been killed in the same manner by the pagan people of the north: եւ կալան ձի մի ամեհի, կապեցին կախեցին զմանուկն Գրիգորիս զագոյ ձիոյն, եւ արձակեցին ընդ ծովեզեր դաշտին հիսիսական ծովուն մեծի, արտաքոյ իրեանց բանակին ի դաշտին Վատնեայ: Եւ այսպէս սպանին զառաքինի քարոզն Քրիստոսի զմանուկն Գրիգորիս (“And they caught a wild horse, hanged and bound young Grigoris to the tail of the horse, and drove him over the plain along the shore of the great Northern Sea, the plain of Vatneay [which lay] outside their camp. And in this way they slew the virtuous preacher of Christ, the youthful Grigoris”) (*BP*, II:vi).

29 *TM*, XLVII, p. 149: Եւ յահէ նոցա կամէաք, զի ծովն ընկղմէր զմեզ տեսանելով եւ լսելով զաղէտ եւ զճիչ կանանց եւ որոց նոցա, վասնզի հարկանէին զամենեսեան եւ բրաժեծ առնէին (“And out of fear of them we wished that the sea would drown us, having witnessed and heard the clamour and screaming of women and their children, for they were hitting everyone and beating them with sticks”).

30 *TM*, XII: կին մի երկիւղած եւ հաւատարիմ ի Մուշ գաւառէ (p. 29); ողորմելի մայրն՝ սրբաւերն եւ երկիւղած (p. 30).

seven or eight years old.”³¹ The author interprets the woman’s killing of her beloved son by using the biblical reference to the Lamb of God³² and comparing this act to God’s sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ. Mecop’ec’i also explains that by this deed the woman is “returning her debt to the Heavenly Father, who sacrificed his Divine Son, the impeccable Lamb, killing him upon the four-winged cross which was erected on the holy Golgotha.”³³ The woman then kills herself by jumping off the cliff while at the same time “glorifying the name of Jesus Christ.”³⁴ Mecop’ec’i explains this act by making use of other allusions to biblical imagery. He asserts that for the woman this sacrifice of her son and of her own life was clearly motivated by her religious beliefs because in this way they

would not be deprived of Christ and join Satan, but ... would join God and become a more pleasing sacrifice than that of the father of the faith, the great Abraham, and that of the mother Šamunea, who offered her seven sons as a sacrifice to God, exhorting them to die voluntarily for our God Messiah.³⁵

It is evident that the allusions here are to Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of his beloved son Isaac,³⁶ and to the seventh chapter of the second book of the Maccabees, in which a mother and her seven children are martyred during Antiochus’s persecution.³⁷

31 *TM*, XII, pp. 29–30: որդի մի յոյժ պատուական եւ բաղձալի, եւ դէմք կերպարանացն իբրեւ գերեսս հրեշտակի, գոյով ամաց իբրեւ եւթանց կամ ութից.

32 This imagery of the Lamb of God is found in Rev 5:1–14; Exod 12:1–28; John 1:29, and 1 Cor 5:7.

33 *TM*, XII, pp. 30–31: առեալ սուր ի ձեռն իւր գենեաց գորդին ցանկալի եւ իբրեւ զգառն անմեղ պատարագեաց գառինն Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի՝ փոխադարձ առնելով Հօրն երկնաորի, որ զԱստուած Որդին, զանարատ գառն իւր պատարագեաց գենեալ ի վերայ քառաթեւ խաչին՝ բարձրացեալ ի վերայ սրբոյն Գողգոթայի.

34 *TM*, XII, p. 31: Եւ ինքն՝ մայրն այն, սակաւ մի յառաջ ընթացեալ՝ ել ի վերայ բարձրաանդակ վիմի, ի վայր ընկեց զինքն եւ եհան զոգին գոհութեամբ, փառաւորելով զանունն Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի.

35 *TM*, XII, p. 31: Եւ զայս վասն այնորիկ արար, զի մի երկուքն զրկեցցին ի Քրիստոսէ եւ սատանայի բաժին լինիցին, այլ Աստուծոյ լինիցին բաժին եւ հաճոյական պատարագ առաւել, քան զհօրն հաաստոյ մեծին Աբրահամու եւ քան զմայրն Շամունեալ, որ զԷ. որդիսն պատարագ մատոյց Աստուծոյ, յորդորելով զնոսա յօժար կամօք մեռանել վասն Աստուծոյն մերոյ մեսիայի.

36 Gen 22:1–19.

37 This story is further discussed and interpreted in 4 Maccabees, especially in chapters 8 to 12. For the use of the books of Maccabees in early Armenian historiography to provide an

Mecop'ec'i interprets the sacrifice of the Armenian mother as “more pleasing” to God than Abraham's and the Jewish woman's sacrifices apparently because the Armenian woman kills her son with her own hand while in Abraham's case Isaac does not die, and the seven sons of the Jewish woman are killed by their torturers.

In addition to this intertextual interpretation of the death of the mother and her son, Mecop'ec'i also creates a link between the Old Testament tradition and Armenian Christianity. Gregory the Illuminator, the first patriarch of Armenia, who converted the Armenian King Trdat III (IV), his household, and the nobles to Christianity at the beginning of the 4th century, thus initiating the conversion of Armenia, is described as “from amongst the corporeal grandsons of the father of faith,” that is of Abraham.³⁸

To dispel any doubts over the veracity of his account Mecop'ec'i assures his audience that “the hermit father Dawit' the monk, the spiritual brother of the blessed hermit Bart'ulimēos of [the congregation of] the Holy Apostles in Łazar monastery” was an eyewitness to this wondrous manifestation of true faith.³⁹

The inclusion of this story early in the *History* enables Mecop'ec'i to provide a representative example of a great Christian virtue that he will reinforce in the subsequent narrative. In this episode, he takes a clear stance against conversion and the betrayal of the patrimonial religion by using the privilege of the omniscient narrator to ascribe these thoughts to the woman who made the ultimate sacrifice for her faith.

interpretation of historical events and to create role models for emulation, see Thomson 1975.

38 *TM*, XII, p. 32: [...] զհաստոյ որդիք մեծին Աբրահամու եւ Լուսաւորչին Գրիգորի, որ էր ի մարմնատր թռանցն հօրն հաստոյ (“the children of faith of the great Abraham and Gregory the Illuminator, who was from amongst the corporeal grandsons of the father of faith”).

39 *TM*, XII, p. 32: Եւ զայս մի՛ ոք երկբայութեամբ եւ կարծեօք դիտեսցէ, զի մեր իսկ վարդապետօք եւ աշակերտօք գնացաք ի սուրբ Կարապետն, եւ դարձեալ եկաք ի Մուշ, եւ բերաք զտեսօնն եւ զլսօնն՝ զճգնատր հայրն զԴաւիթ կրօնատրն, զհոգետր հարազատ սուրբ ճգնատրին Բարթողիմէոս ի սուրբ Առաքելոցն Ղազարու վանացն, եւ ի նոցանէ զճշմարիտն ստուգեցաք, եւ ձեզ յիշատակ օրհնութեան Աստուծոյ թողաք (“And let no one consider this with hesitation and doubt, for we, the *vardapets* and students, went to Saint Karapet and again came to Muš, and fetched the hermit father Dawit' the monk, the spiritual brother of the blessed hermit Bart'ulimēos from the Łazar monastery of the Holy Apostles, who saw and heard it. From them, we ascertained the truth and left you a memory of the blessing of God”).

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, T'ovma Mecop'ec'i's representation and interpretation of violent acts perpetrated against women are done in a way that is conducive to achieving the main goals of his work. In the episode with the woman and her son, T'ovma eulogises their sacrifice made for the preservation of their faith, thus setting an inspiring example of a true Christian virtue. All the other mentions of violence towards women emphasise the enormity of the catastrophe that befell Christians as a result of their and their religious leaders' iniquitous lifestyle. These stories aim at reminding his audience about the forthcoming time of doom and warning them about the consequences of their unrighteous way of living.

The vivid imagery in these stories draws on the tradition of apocalyptic writings. While men are regularly murdered on a whim, women and children are turned into a commodity: displaced from their homes they become slaves in foreign lands and are exploited in various ways. For Mecop'ec'i all these events that led to the destruction of the land and its people are seen as a punishment for the multiple sins committed by every member of society, an idea which he reiterates several times in his narrative.

This pattern of conquest and its formulaic interpretation by the mediaeval Armenian cleric was not unique in any way, but the discussion of these passages allows us to understand the major cause of the depopulation and Islamisation of several regions of historical Armenia, as well as the burgeoning of many Armenian diasporic centres in Eastern Europe in the late 14th and first half of the 15th centuries. The devastating effect of the Timurid invasions, the harsh policies of the local Muslim overlords, and the constant fighting of different factions over the lands inhabited by Armenians brought about their mass exodus, which resulted in a great demographic catastrophe from which the Armenians were to recover in the coming centuries.

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PART 3

Linguistics and Philology



De la Grèce à l'Arménie, et d'Homère à la Bible

Transpositions culturelles dans la version arménienne de la grammaire de Denys de Thrace

Charles de Lamberterie

1 Introduction

Le traité grec de grammaire le plus ancien qui nous soit parvenu est l'ouvrage intitulé *Téchnē Dionysiou grammatikoû*, que l'on date traditionnellement – à tort ou à raison – du II^e siècle avant notre ère et que l'on attribue à un auteur connu sous le nom de «Denys le grammairien», dit aussi *Dionýsios Thrâx* «Denys le Thrace» (ou «Denys de Thrace»)¹. Cet ouvrage est, malgré ses dimensions restreintes – il appartient au genre du «compendium technique», florissant à l'époque hellénistique –, véritablement fondateur dans la discipline, et l'influence en a été considérable, aussi bien dans le monde grec proprement dit que dans les pays où les lettres grecques ont été cultivées; c'est le cas notamment de l'Arménie ancienne, où les commentateurs de la grammaire de Denys de Thrace ont été nombreux. Dans cette abondante littérature grammaticale arménienne, qui a été l'objet de nombreuses études², je me limiterai à examiner ici quelques aspects de la version arménienne de la grammaire de Denys (ci-après: *DTArm*), en partant de l'édition classique de Nicolas Adontz (1915), ouvrage écrit en russe, longtemps difficile d'accès mais disponible, depuis maintenant un demi-siècle, en traduction française (1970)³. Du côté de la philologie grecque, je m'appuierai sur l'excellente traduction anno-

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- 1 Je n'entrerai pas ici dans le détail des débats relatifs à la datation et à l'authenticité de la *Téchnē*. On trouvera un bon état de la question dans l'introduction de l'ouvrage édité par V. Law et I. Sluiter (1995), ainsi que dans les contributions de R.H. Robins et de J. Lallot que contient le même volume. Il en ressort que dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances le problème n'a pas reçu de solution. Voir aussi, dans le même sens, l'ouvrage de Callipo 2011, 9-50.
 - 2 Le meilleur spécialiste de la question dans les dernières décennies a été sans conteste le linguiste arménien Gevorg B. Ĵahukyan (1920-2005), qui a consacré à cette littérature une série de travaux depuis les années '50 du XX^e siècle. On en trouvera une bonne synthèse dans son ouvrage de 1978 (Ĵahukyan 1978, 258-299).
 - 3 Voir la référence donnée dans la bibliographie. Je laisse ici de côté les questions philologiques et historiques (date, lieu et paternité de la version arménienne et des commentaires armé-

tée de la *Téchnē* que l'on doit à Jean Lallot (1989), avec reproduction du texte grec tel qu'il est donné dans l'édition des *Grammatici Graeci* par Gustav Uhlig (1883).

Par la force des choses, la version arménienne de la *Téchnē* n'est pas, à proprement parler, une traduction du texte grec, mais plutôt une adaptation de ce dernier à la langue arménienne: l'objectif que se fixe le traducteur est d'appliquer à sa propre langue, l'arménien, la méthode qu'emploie Denys pour décrire la langue grecque. Mais il est évidemment confronté à la difficulté que constituent les différences entre les deux langues, ce qui l'amène à hésiter constamment entre deux manières de faire:

- (a) Tantôt il prend acte de ces différences, ainsi dans le chapitre consacré aux lettres de l'alphabet (ch. 6, Περὶ στοιχείου «De l'élément», 42-43 L. = Յաղագու ստույի *Yatags tari*, *DTArm* 4):

Γράμματὰ ἐστὶν εἴκοσιτέσσαρα ἀπὸ τοῦ α μέχρι τοῦ ω.

Il y a vingt-quatre lettres, de alpha jusqu'à omega.

Գիր է երեսուն եւ վեց յայբէ ցրէ:

Gir ē eresun ew vec' y-aybē c'-k'ē

Il y a trente-six lettres, de ayb à k'ē.

- (b) Tantôt, à l'inverse, il entreprend de conformer sa langue au modèle grec, ce qui l'amène à créer des formes arméniennes artificielles dans les cas où les catégories grammaticales du grec sont inconnues de l'arménien (genre grammatical, nombre duel pour les noms et les verbes, distinction du subjonctif et de l'optatif, etc.). Cette manière de faire est particulièrement développée dans les tableaux donnés en supplément à la grammaire proprement dite⁴. Ainsi le traducteur attribue-t-il au verbe կոխեմ *kop'em* «frapper», qu'il donne comme modèle de conjugaison en regard du grec τύπτω, des formes de duel կոխում *kop'om*, կոխոս *kop'os*, կոխոյ *kop'oy* pour les trois personnes en regard du singulier կոխեմ *kop'em*, կոխես *kop'es*, կոխի *kop'ē* à

niens, etc.), qui n'intéressent pas directement mon propos. Sur la version arménienne de la *Téchnē*, voir maintenant la contribution de Clackson 1995.

4 «Supplementa artis» dans l'édition de Adontz 1970, 38-55.

l'indicatif présent (*DTArm* 45); c'est sans doute une pure invention de sa part, mais cela lui permet de conférer à l'arménien une sorte de perfection – *une* forme pour *une* fonction – dont la langue grecque est dénuée, puisqu'elle n'a pas de forme de duel pour la première personne et que la forme *τύπτετον* est commune à la deuxième et à la troisième personne.

2 Procédés de traduction

Les procédés de traduction mis en œuvre dans la version arménienne de la *Téchnē* se caractérisent par deux traits principaux.

2.1 *La Yunaban dproc' «l'école hellénistique»*

L'ouvrage est connu pour appartenir au courant intellectuel que l'on appelle traditionnellement *Yunaban dproc'* «l'école hellénistique» (ou «helléno-philie», ou «hellénisante», peu importe l'équivalent dont on use en français). Je n'ai pas l'ambition de donner ici une vue d'ensemble de cette «école», qui en réalité n'a guère d'unité. Il semble bien, en outre, que l'influence de l'hellénisme sur la langue arménienne soit antérieure à cette «école hellénisante», au point que l'on puisse parler d'une «école pré-hellénisante» qui englobe même les plus anciennes traductions du grec, comme celle du Nouveau Testament. Telle est, en tout cas, la conclusion à laquelle aboutissent nombre de travaux récents, et dont le bien-fondé demanderait une discussion détaillée qui n'a pas sa place ici⁵. Disons seulement que les textes de l'«école hellénistique» se caractérisent, pour l'essentiel, par une manière de traduire le grec en arménien qui relève plus du calque systématique que de la transposition, en sorte que le résultat est une langue largement artificielle, bien loin, au départ, de la langue réelle, mais qui parfois s'y est intégrée : aujourd'hui encore, une large part du vocabulaire savant de la langue arménienne trouve là son origine.

Le cas le plus net à cet égard, et le plus connu, est celui des prépositions et des préverbes, dont la richesse est considérable dans la langue grecque et qui servent aussi, comme préfixes, à former les innombrables composés nominaux que le grec a forgés au fur et à mesure que se développaient les vocabulaires

5 On trouvera une bonne synthèse sur la question dans le chapitre introductif de l'ouvrage de Gohar Muradyan (2012, p. 1-27). Voir aussi, dans le même sens, Tinti 2016 et Meyer 2018-2019, 69-73. Le livre de G. Muradyan fait référence aux travaux, anciens et récents, relatifs à l'«école hellénistique», ce qui me dispensera de les citer ici.

techniques. En regard de cette masse imposante, l'arménien classique est bien pauvre : il n'a que six prépositions (*առ ar*, *զ- z-*, *ընդ and*, *ըստ ast*, *ի / յ- i / y-*, *ց- c-*), dont seules les cinq premières peuvent fonctionner comme préverbes, à quoi il faut ajouter deux préverbes de faible productivité qui n'existent pas comme prépositions, à savoir (*հ*)*ան- (h)an-* et *նի- ni-*, liés entre eux par le fait qu'ils indiquent respectivement un mouvement vers le haut et vers le bas⁶. On ne peut que souscrire au jugement de Meillet : « Dès les plus anciens textes, les préverbes ne tiennent en arménien presque aucune place »⁷. Et il en va de même pour l'emploi des mêmes éléments au premier membre de composés nominaux. Les représentants de l'école hellénistique se sont appliqués à remédier à cette pénurie, qui, rendant malaisée la traduction des composés verbaux et nominaux du grec, interdisait du même coup à la langue arménienne de disposer d'un vocabulaire savant. Les faits sont bien décrits par Adontz dans son ouvrage fondateur, et l'analyse qu'il en donne reste encore valable aujourd'hui :

Les spécialistes de la philologie arménienne savent bien ce qui fait l'originalité de la langue hellénophile. Cette originalité est si manifeste qu'elle permet de repérer aisément toute œuvre de l'école hellénophile et elle apparaît non seulement sur le plan de la grammaire, en particulier dans la syntaxe, mais aussi sur celui du lexique, adapté à la morphologie grecque. Le lexique arménien se distingue du lexique grec principalement par l'absence de mots composés au moyen de prépositions-préfixes. Dans leur zèle à rapprocher les deux langues, les représentants de l'école hellénophile s'efforcèrent de suppléer cette lacune en recherchant, pour chaque préposition grecque, un équivalent arménien. À cette occasion, ils ne

6 Je me permets, sur ce point, de renvoyer à mon article des *Mélanges* en l'honneur de Nina Garsoïan (Lamberterie 1996[97]), où j'ai cherché à montrer que le préverbe que l'on pose traditionnellement sous la forme (*հ*)*ան- (h)am-* est en réalité (*հ*)*ան- (h)an-*. Cette étude vient en complément à celle que j'avais consacrée au préverbe *ni-* (Lamberterie 1986, 49-57), en examinant notamment le cas du verbe *ներկանում nerkanem* « teindre, colorer ». C'était, au départ, un composé du verbe usuel *արկանում arkanem* « jeter » (*nerkanem* < **ni-arkanem* « plonger dans une cuve »), mais la conjugaison en a été remaniée dès les débuts de la tradition. À l'indicatif aoriste, on attendrait une forme de 3^e sg. **neark* « il teignit » (< « plongea dans un bain de teinture ») < **ni-ark* (pour le traitement, comparer *երկամ erkeam* « âgé de deux ans » < **erki-am*), mais on a *ներկ ernerk* en regard de la 1^{re} sg. *ներկի nerki* (< **nearki* < **ni-arki*) d'après le modèle de *բերի / եբեր beri / eber* (de *բերում berem* « porter »), *տեսի / տեսու teshi / etes* (de *տեսանում tesanem* « voir »), etc. Cela prouve que synchroniquement ce verbe n'était plus senti comme un composé de *arkanem* (aor. ind. 3^e sg. *ark* « il jeta »).

7 Meillet 1962, 113 (< Meillet 1910-1911, 122). L'exemple cité dans la note précédente montre bien la justesse de cette doctrine.

se contentèrent pas de faire appel aux prépositions disponibles mais en créèrent de nouvelles en adaptant des matériaux locaux plus ou moins connus.

Et l'auteur de dresser une liste de ces équivalents: ապա- *apa-* et բաց- *bac'*- en regard de ἀπο-, art- de ἐκ-, ներ- *ner-* de ἐν-, մատ- *mat-* et յար- *yar-* de παρ-, վեր- *ver-* de ἀνα-, մակ- *mak-* de ἐπι-, դեր- *der-* de ἀντι-, etc., soit vingt-six unités au total dans son relevé⁸. Mieux encore, voici ce qu'on peut lire dans le chapitre de la *Téchnē* consacré à la préposition (ch. 18, Περὶ προθέσεως, 60-61 L. = Յաղագս նախադրութեան *Yatags naxadrut'ean*, *DTArm* 30):

Εἰσὶ δὲ αἱ πᾶσαι προθέσεις ὀκτὼ καὶ δέκα.

Les prépositions sont en tout dix-huit.

Եւ նն ամենայնն (sc. նախադրութիւնք) յիսուն:

Ew en amenayn-n (naxadrut'iwkn') yisun.

Et < les prépositions > (*naxadrut'iwkn'*) sont en tout (*amenayn-n*) cinquante (*yisun*).

Après avoir fourni la liste de ces cinquante unités, l'auteur de la version arménienne ajoute une indication qui ne correspond à rien dans l'original grec mais qui lui est propre, à savoir que l'arménien a des « postpositions », ստորադասք *storadask*⁹. Ici encore, il met tout en œuvre pour conférer à sa langue la plus grande dignité, au point que l'infériorité de l'arménien se change en supériorité.

8 Adontz 1970, CLXX-CLXXII (citation p. CLXX). – Voir maintenant l'ample exposé de G. Muradyan (2012, 28-53).

9 Ce mot apparaissait déjà dans le chapitre 6 de la *Téchnē* pour désigner les voyelles « postpositives » (ստորադասք *storadask'*) *i* et *u*, gr. ὑποτακτικά (42-43 L. = *DTArm* 5). Quant à l'adjectif dérivé ստորադասական *storadasakan*, il traduit ὑποτακτικόν au sens spécifique de « subjonctif » (54-55 L. = *DTArm* 22, etc.), et c'est le terme qui s'est imposé en ce sens dans la terminologie grammaticale de l'arménien.

En regard de նախադրութիւն *naxadrut'iwkn'* « préposition », on attendrait plutôt en arménien, pour désigner la « postposition », un substantif ստորադասութիւն *storadasut'iwkn'*, qui est, de fait, attesté dans des ouvrages plus récents de grammaire (références *NBHL* II, 748; mais, curieusement, les auteurs du Thesaurus donnent ce mot comme l'équivalent d'un lexème յետադասութիւն *yetadasut'iwkn'* qui ne figure qu'ici et n'apparaît pas dans le dictionnaire à la place où on l'attendrait).

Il s'agit, on le voit, d'un jeu intellectuel d'une grande subtilité sur le thème du même et de l'autre, avec une pointe de fierté patriotique, comme si le traducteur arménien voulait proclamer à la face du monde que sa langue est à même de rivaliser avec le grec.

2.2 *La pēspisut'īwn «variété»*

L'un des traits caractéristiques de la littérature arménienne ancienne est la fameuse *վիսպիսութիւն* *pēspisut'īwn* «variété» (ou «variation»). Cette recherche de la variété à des fins esthétiques est chez les lettrés arméniens une constante depuis les débuts de la tradition, aussi bien dans les textes originaux que dans les textes traduits, car déjà l'arménien mesropien – en entendant par cette expression la toute première période de la langue classique, constituée par un corpus de textes datables de la première moitié ou du milieu du v^e siècle¹⁰ – use largement de ce procédé littéraire, comme le montre ce passage de l'Évangile (*Lc 3:11*)¹¹:

Օ Էջօն ծոօ քիտօնաս մետաճոտ տօ մի Էջօնտ, քաի օ Էջօն քրօմաքա օմօիօք քօի-
էիտօ.

Ոյր իցենն երկու հանդերձք՝ տալէ զմին այնմ ոյր ոչն գուցէ. եւ ոյր կայցէ
կերակուր՝ նոյնալէս արաւսցէ:

*Oyr ic'en erku handerjk' tac'ē z-mi-n aynm oyr oč'-n guc'ē. ew oyr kayc'ē
kerakur noynpēs arasc'ē.*

Celui qui a deux vêtements, qu'il en donne un à celui qui n'en a pas; et celui qui a de la nourriture, qu'il fasse de même.

En regard du participe (avec article) du verbe «avoir» que présente le grec à trois reprises, l'arménien exprime ici, comme à son ordinaire, la possession par le verbe «être» accompagné du génitif du possesseur, en l'occurrence le pronom *oyr* «celui de qui», génitif de l'interrogatif en fonction de relatif dans une

10 Sur l'arménien mesropien, voir en dernier lieu Adjarian 2018-2019 (avec présentation par Jean-Pierre Mahé).

11 Sur ce texte, voir Lamberterie 2006, 216-218, avec citation d'autres exemples comparables dans l'Évangile.

D'autres exemples du même procédé chez Eznik et dans la traduction de la Bible sont relevés par Adjarian dans l'article cité à la note précédente, p. 451 (cf. aussi Lamberterie 2006, 224-225).

proposition relative à valeur indéfinie, éventuelle ou générale. On voit que le traducteur s'est ingénié à varier l'expression de la copule, en utilisant d'abord le verbe « être » proprement dit (*ic'en*, subjonctif présent à valeur de généralité ou d'éventualité), puis un substitut plus étoffé de ce dernier : d'abord գուցէ *guc'ē*, du verbe défectif գոյ *goy* « il existe, il y a », et enfin կայցէ *kayc'ē*, du verbe կաւմ *kam* « se tenir, se trouver ».

Le traducteur de la *Téchnē* s'est appliqué à suivre ce type de modèle et à cultiver la *pēspisut'īwn*. C'est ainsi, par exemple, que pour rendre le mot grec σύμφωνον « consonne » il recourt soit aux composés à premier membre prépositionnel բաղաձայն *bat-a-jayn* ou շաղաձայն *šat-a-jayn*, soit au composé nominal ձայնակից *jayn-a-kic'* (second membre *-kic'* « joint à »), soit encore au dérivé ձայնորդ *jayn-ord*, alors qu'en revanche φωνήεν « voyelle » est rendu constamment par ձայնաւոր *jayn-a-wor* (avec un second membre de composé *-wor*, litt. « porteur de », suffixalisé pour former des adjectifs ou des substantifs de sens possessif)¹². Tous ces mots, bien entendu, ont été forgés pour les besoins de la traduction. Le summum est atteint pour la traduction des mots grecs οἷον, ὡς « comme, par exemple », qui sont, comme on peut s'y attendre, particulièrement fréquents dans la *Téchnē*. Ici, le traducteur arménien donne libre cours à son esprit d'inventivité. Tantôt il s'abstient de les traduire : ainsi, dans le chapitre sur l'adverbe (ch. 19), Եւ հաստատութեան, յայտ *Ew hastatut'ean, hayt* en regard de τὰ δὲ βεβαιώσεως, οἷον δηλαδὴ « et < les adverbes > de confirmation, comme *dēladē* 'évidemment' » (*DTArm* 34 = 62-63 L), et bien d'autres cas semblables. Tantôt, à l'inverse, il use à l'extrême de la *pēspisut'īwn*, si bien que l'on aboutit à une longue liste d'équivalents¹³, à savoir des mots composés qui comportent au premier membre les thèmes pronominaux որ- *or-*, (հ)ի- (*h*)i-, զի- *zi-* et au second les lexèmes adverbialisés -բար *-bar*, -գո(յ)ն *-go(y)n*, -զան *-zan*, -կէն *-kēn*, -պէս *-pēs*, soit որբար *orbar*, որգոն *orgon*, որգոնակ *orgunak*, որզան *orzan*, որկէն *orkēn*, որպէս *orpēs*, որպիսի *orpiši*, etc., soit près d'une vingtaine d'unités au total.

12 On trouvera les références dans l'« index graeco-armeniacus » joint par Adontz à son édition (1970, 67-76). Le suffixe -որդ *-ord* a chance d'être, lui aussi, un ancien second membre de composé (voir en ce sens Olsen 1999, 419-420, 527-532, 631).

Avec un sens très sûr de sa langue, le traducteur de la *Téchnē* rangeait -կից *-kic'* et -որդ *-ord* au nombre des « postpositions » de la langue arménienne (v. ci-dessus 2.1 et n. 8) ; il percevait parfaitement le phénomène connu dans la linguistique moderne sous le nom de « grammaticalisation » (« la morphologie d'aujourd'hui est le lexique d'hier »).

13 Adontz 1970, 75 et 76.

3 Transpositions culturelles de la Grèce à l'Arménie

Dans la présente étude, je m'intéresserai à un aspect particulier des divergences entre l'original grec de la *Téchnē* et la version arménienne. L'œuvre de Denys comporte, on le sait, nombre de références à l'histoire, à la mythologie et à la littérature grecques. Le plus souvent, le traducteur arménien les transpose dans son monde à lui. Dans sa remarquable édition, Adontz signale un certain nombre de ces transpositions, qu'il s'agisse des différences textuelles entre l'arménien et le grec (« armenius discrepans ») ou des exemples pris par le grammairien (« exempla substituta »). Je n'ai pas l'ambition d'en dresser ici un relevé complet ; je me limiterai aux exemples les plus significatifs, dont les plus nombreux se trouvent dans le chapitre de la *Téchnē* consacré au nom (ch. 12, Περὶ ὀνόματος, 48-55 L. = Յաղագրութիւնս Կաթողիկոսի, *DTArm* 12-22).

3.1 *Le nom : de Socrate à Paul*

Cela commence dès la première phrase de ce chapitre (48-49 L. = *DTArm* 12-13) :

᾽Ονομά ἐστί μέρος λόγου [...] κοινῶς τε καὶ ἰδίως λεγόμενον, κοινῶς μὲν οἶον ἄνθρωπος ἵππος, ἰδίως δὲ οἶον Σωκράτης.

Le nom est une partie du discours [...] qui s'emploie avec (valeur) commune ou particulière : commune, par exemple 'homme', 'cheval' ; particulière, par exemple 'Socrate'.

Անուն է մասն բանի [...] հասարակաբար եւ յատկապէս. Հասարակաբար որոշուած մարդ, եւ յատկապէս որոշն Պաւղոս :

Anun ē masn bani [...] hasarakabar ew yatkapēs. Hasarakabar orgunak mard, ew yatkapēs orgon Pawłos.

Le nom est une partie du discours [...] avec (valeur) commune ou particulière : commune, par exemple 'homme' (*mard*) ; particulière, par exemple 'Paul' (*Pawłos*).

La version arménienne s'écarte ici de l'original grec sur deux points (« armenius discrepans », Adontz). L'un, purement textuel, est que l'arménien ne traduit ni λεγόμενον ni ἵππος, sans qu'on puisse expliquer clairement cette divergence : choix délibéré du traducteur, ou *Vorlage* différente du texte grec connu par ailleurs ? L'autre, qui relève de la transposition culturelle, est que le philosophe le plus illustre de la Grèce est remplacé par le personnage le plus « philosophe »

du Nouveau Testament, celui qui est allé à Athènes prêcher – avec l'insuccès que l'on sait, ce qui n'est pas sans rappeler Socrate – le Christ ressuscité.

Ce développement sur le nom propre est repris un peu plus bas (52-53 L. = *DTArm* 18). Le texte grec présente ici deux noms propres, à savoir "Ομηρος, Σωκράτης, alors que la version arménienne n'en contient qu'un, à savoir Մարկոս *Markos*, ce qui nous renvoie, ici encore, au Nouveau Testament: le poète par excellence est remplacé par un évangéliste, avec la conséquence implicite que sa Muse inspiratrice cède la place à l'inspiration du Saint Esprit, si souvent figurée dans l'iconographie des évangélistes arméniens.

3.2 *Le patronyme: d'Achille à la famille des Mamikonean*

Après cette définition générale du nom, l'auteur de la *Téchnē* en vient aux différentes espèces de noms (48-49 L. = *DTArm* 13): εἶδη δὲ δύο, πρωτότυπον καὶ παράγωγον, arm. տեսալք եւ երկուք, նախագաղափար եւ ածանցալիւն « il y a deux espèces < de noms >: primaire (*naxagalap'ar*) et dérivé (*acanc'akan*) », et « sept espèces de dérivés » (εἶδη δὲ παραγώγων ἐστὶν ἑπτὰ, arm. տեսալք եւ ածանցալիւնացւոյ երբն). La première d'entre elles est le patronymique (48-49 L. = *DTArm* 13-14):

Πατρωνυμικὸν μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ κυρίως ἀπὸ πατρὸς ἐσχηματισμένον, καταχρηστικῶς δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ προγόνων, οἷον Πηλείδης, Αἰακίδης ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς.

Le patronymique est, au sens propre, le < dérivé > formé sur le < nom du > père, et aussi, par catachrèse, sur celui des ancêtres, par exemple, 'Péleïde' et 'Éacide' pour Achille.

Հայրանունալիւն է որ ի հարէ իսկ ձեւացեալ է. իսկ պիտակապէս որ ի նախնեացն, հիբար Համազասպեան Սանուէլ:

Hayranunakan ē or i hawrē isk jewac'eal ē. isk pitakapēs or i naxneac'-n, hibar Hamazaspean Manuel.

Le patronymique (*hayranunakan*) est, au sens propre (*isk*), le < dérivé > formé sur le < nom du > père (*i hawrē*), et aussi, par catachrèse (*pitakapēs*), sur celui des ancêtres (*i naxneac'-n*), par exemple (*hibar*) 'Manuel, fils (ou 'descendant') de Hamazasp' (*Hamazaspean Manuēl*).

Il y a ici, du point de vue de la morphologie dérivationnelle, concordance entre le grec et l'arménien: le suffixe -ίδης (dial. -ιδᾶς) signifie non seulement « fils de », mais aussi « descendant de, issu de la lignée de » (en l'occurrence « petit-

fil de», puisqu'Éaque est le père de Pélée), et il en va de même en arménien pour le suffixe *-ean*, qui aujourd'hui encore est le plus usuel pour former des noms de famille. Il s'agit, en l'occurrence, de la grande famille noble des Mamikonean, qui a tenu un rôle important dans l'histoire de l'Arménie et dont il est si souvent question chez les historiens de l'Arménie ancienne. Comme par un fait exprès, cette famille est évoquée constamment dans le *Buzandaran* («Recueil d'histoires épiques»), c'est-à-dire dans l'ouvrage de la littérature classique dont la tonalité épique est la plus affirmée. Je renvoie, sur ce point, à la magistrale traduction commentée du *Buzandaran* que nous devons à Nina Garsoïan¹⁴, ouvrage qui comporte une précieuse prosopographie (p. 343-434) où l'on relève les noms de Hamazasp Mamikonean (p. 378), Hamazaspean Mamikonean (p. 378), Hamazaspuhi Mamikonean (p. 379), Manuël Mamikonean (p. 387-388). Notre amie commune (au récipiendaire du présent volume et à moi-même) N. Garsoïan a en outre dressé une liste des formules épiques du *Buzandaran* (p. 586-596), en soulignant le fait qu'elles s'enracinaient dans une tradition de littérature orale. Le traducteur de la *Téchnē* avait parfaitement conscience de tout cela, et c'est la raison pour laquelle il a pu transposer de cette manière la référence à l'*Illiade* que comporte le texte grec.

3.3 *Le possessif: des chevaux de Nélée au coursier de David, du manteau d'Hector au manteau royal*

La deuxième espèce de dérivé est le possessif (50-51 L. = *DTArm* 14):

Κτητικὸν δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ ὑπὸ τὴν κτήσιν πεπτωκός, ἐμπεριειλημμένου τοῦ κτήτορος, ὅσον Νηλήϊοι ἵπποι, Ἐκτόρεος χιτῶν, Πλατωνικὸν βιβλίον.

Le possessif est le < dérivé > qui relève de la possession, le possesseur étant inclus, par exemple 'les chevaux de Nélée', 'le manteau d'Hector', 'un livre de Platon'.

Իսկ ստացական է որ ընդ ստացիւքն ստորանկեալ է, ներբալառեալ ի ստացողէն. որոքն Դաւթեան երիւարն, արքունի պատմութեանն, Պաւսական գիրն:

Isk stac'akan ē or and stac'iwk'n storankeal ē, nerbakaREAL i stac'olē-n. orgon Dawt'ean eriwār-n, ark'uni patmučan-n, Pawłosakan gir-n.

14 Garsoïan 1989.

Le possessif (*stac'akan*) est le < dérivé > qui relève de la possession, le possesseur étant inclus : par exemple 'le coursier de David' (*Dawt'ean erivar-n*), 'le manteau royal' (*ark'uni patmučan-n*), 'le livre de Paul' (*Pawłosakan gir-n*).

Les deux premières expressions que présente le texte grec sont des citations approximatives des syntagmes de l'*Illiade* Νηλήϊαι ἵπποι # « les cavales de Nélée » (11,597) et # Ἐκτόρεον δὲ χιτῶνα (2,416). Du côté de l'arménien, je me réfère, ici encore, à la définition que donne N. Garsoïan du mot *patmučan* dans l'index joint à sa traduction du *Buzandaran* : « robe bestowed by the king on an official or magnate to honor him » (Garsoïan 1989, 552-553). Nous sommes ici en plein dans le monde iranien dont relèvent les dynasties royales arméniennes, et ce n'est pas un hasard si les mots երիւար *erivar* et փառսմուճան *patmučan* apparaissent ensemble dans le *Livre d'Esther* (6:7-9)¹⁵ :

Ἄνθρωπον ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς θέλει δοξάσαι, (8) ἐνεγκάτωσαν οἱ παῖδες τοῦ βασιλέως στολὴν βυσσίνην, ἣν ὁ βασιλεὺς περιβάλλεται, καὶ ἵππον, ἐφ' ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπιβαίνει, (9) καὶ δότω ἐνὶ τῶν φίλων τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν ἐνδόξων καὶ στολισάτω τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀγαπᾷ, καὶ ἀναβιβασάτω αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν ἵππον.

< Voici comment il faut traiter > l'homme que le roi désire honorer. Les serviteurs du roi apporteront un manteau de lin dont le roi se revêt et un cheval que le roi monte. On les donnera à l'un des amis du roi choisi parmi les notables; celui-ci revêtira du manteau l'homme que le roi aime, et il lui fera monter le cheval.

Զայրն զոր արքայ կամի փառսմուճան, բերցեն զփառսմուճանն զարքունի, եւ զերիվարն յորում արքայ հեծանէր, եւ տացեն առնն այնմիկ սիրելոյն արքայի ի փառսմուճաց անտի. եւ զգեցուցեն զփառսմուճանն առնն այնմիկ զոր արքայն սիրէ, եւ հեծուցեն զնա յերիվարն արքունի:

Z-ayr-n z-or ark'ay kami p'araworel, berc'en z-patmučan-n z-ark'uni, ew z-erivar-n y-orum ark'ay hecanēr, Ew tac'en arn-n aynmik sirelwoy-n ark'ayi

15 La version arménienne présente ici de notables différences avec l'original grec, et il semble que le traducteur n'ait pas très bien compris le texte grec qu'il avait sous les yeux. J'ai essayé de rendre tant bien que mal ces différences dans la traduction, sans être sûr d'aboutir à une solution satisfaisante.

i p'araworac' anti. Ew zgec'usc'en z-patmučan-n arn-n aynmik zor ark'ay-n sirē, ew hecusc'en z-na yerivar-n ark'uni.

⟨Voici comment il faut traiter⟩ l'homme que le roi veut honorer (*p'araworac'*). On apportera le manteau royal (*z-patmučan-n z-ark'uni*) et le coursier que le roi montait (*z-erivar-n y-orum ark'ay hecanēr*), et on les donnera à cet homme aimé du roi parmi les notables. On revêtira du manteau (*zgec'usc'en z-patmučan-n*) cet homme que le roi aime, et on lui fera monter le coursier royal (*hecusc'en z-na y-erivar-n ark'uni*).

On a ici tout le cérémonial de la cour de l'Empire achéménide, qui a été un modèle pour les rois arsacides qui ont régné sur l'Arménie. Ici encore, le lien avec la littérature historiographique arménienne, et notamment avec le *Buzandaran*, est manifeste. Dans la version grecque du *Livre d'Esther*, le roi de Perse s'appelle Ἀρταξέρξης, nom qui dans la traduction arménienne devient Արտաշէս *Artaşēs*. Ce dernier est emprunté à l'histoire de l'Arménie, et l'on trouve précisément, dans la prosopographie dressée par N. Garsoïan, un Artășēs Mamikonean (Garsoïan 1989, 356-357), qui est le père du Manuël Mamikonean cité ci-dessus. Le système onomastique auquel fait référence le traducteur de la *Téchnē* est donc d'une parfaite cohérence.

Le «coursier de David» évoqué dans la version arménienne de la *Téchnē* n'apparaît pas comme tel dans la Bible grecque et arménienne, mais voici ce qu'on peut lire dans le récit, au *Deuxième Livre des Règnes*, de la révolte d'Absalom contre son père David (15:1):

Καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἐποίησεν ἑαυτῷ Ἀβεσσαλωμ ἄρματα καὶ ἵππους καὶ πεντήκοντα ἄνδρας παρατρέχειν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ.

Եւ եղև յետ այնորիկ եւ արար Աբիսողոմ կառս եւ երիվարս, եւ յիսուն այր սուրհանդակ առաջի իւր:

Ew etew yet aynorik ew arar Abisotom kařs ew erivars, ew yisun ayr surhandak araji iwr.

Et voici ce qui arriva ensuite. Absalom se procura des chars et des coursiers (*kařs ew erivars*), et cinquante hommes (*yisun ayr*) comme estafettes (*surhandak*) devant lui.

Et il faut évoquer aussi, bien entendu, les célèbres écuries du roi Salomon, l'autre fils de David (3 R 10:26):

Καὶ συνέλεξεν Σαλωμων ἄρματα καὶ ἵππους (v.l. ἵππους). καὶ ἦσαν τῷ Σαλωμων τέσσαρες χιλιάδες θήλειαι ἵπποι εἰς ἄρματα καὶ δώδεκα χιλιάδες ἵππων (v.l. ἵππέων).

Եւ ժողովեաց Սողոմոնի կառու եւ հեծեալս. Եւ էին Սողոմոնի քառասուն հազար ձիւ մատակը կառաց, եւ երկուսասան հազար երիվարաց:

Ew žotoveac' Solomon kar's ew heceals. Ew ěin Sotomoni k'arasun hazar jik' matak' karac', ew erkotasan hazar erivarac'.

Et Salomon rassembla des chars et des cavaliers (*kar's ew heceals*). Et Salomon avait quarante mille juments (*k'arasun hazar jik' matak'*) pour ses chars (*karac'*), et douze mille coursiers (*erkotasan hazar erivarac'*).

Quant au « livre de Platon » qui en arménien devient le « livre de Paul », on est évidemment là en continuité avec le passage, cité plus haut, où Socrate était remplacé par Paul. Les écrits de Platon, le plus célèbre des prosateurs grecs, mettent en scène Socrate, et Paul est l'écrivain le plus connu du Nouveau Testament; il peut même se mesurer avec Platon pour ce qui est de la profondeur de la réflexion (que l'on pense notamment à la *Lettre aux Romains*).

3.4 *Le comparatif: d'Achille, Ajax et les Troyens à David, Saül et les Philistins*

La troisième espèce de dérivé est le comparatif (50-51 L. = *DTArm* 14-15):

Συγκριτικὸν δέ ἐστι τὸ τὴν σύγκρισιν ἔχον ἑνὸς πρὸς ἓνα ὁμοιογενῆ, ὡς Ἀχιλλεὺς ἀνδρείοτερος Αἴαντος, ἢ ἑνὸς πρὸς πολλοὺς ἑτερογενεῖς, ὡς Ἀχιλλεὺς ἀνδρείοτερος τῶν Τρώων.

Le comparatif est le < dérivé > qui met en comparaison un seul < individu > avec un seul congénère, comme 'Achille est plus courageux qu'Ajax', ou avec plusieurs étrangers, comme 'Achille est plus courageux que les Troyens'.

Բաղդատական է որ հասարակութիւն ունի եզ առ մո նմանաւեր, որոնքն Դաւիթ արուորագոյն քան զՍաուղ. կամ միոյ առ բազումս այլաւերս, որպէս Դաւիթ արուորագոյն քան զԳեթացիսն:

Baldatakan ē or hasarakut' iwn uni ez ar mu nmanaser, orgon Dawit' aruoragoyñ k'an z-Sawul. kam mioy ar bazums aylasers, orpēs Dawit' aruoragoyñ k'an z-Get'ac'is-n.

Le comparatif (*batdatakan*) est le <dérivé> qui met en comparaison (*hasarakut'iwñ*) un seul (*ez*) <individu> avec un seul (*mu*) congénère (*nmanaser*), comme 'David est plus courageux que Saül' (*Dawit' aruoragoyñ k'an z-Sawut*), ou un seul (*mioy*) avec plusieurs (*bazums*) étrangers (*aylasers*), comme 'David est plus courageux que les habitants de Gueth' (*z-Get'ac'is-n*)¹⁶.

Nous avons, ici encore, un bel exemple de transposition culturelle: la guerre d'Israël contre les Philistins, telle qu'elle est racontée dans la Bible au *Premier Livre des Règnes*, est comparée à celle des Achéens contre les Troyens, et la rivalité entre Saül et David est assimilée à celle d'Ajax et d'Achille. Le passage de *Illiade* auquel fait allusion Denys appartient au « catalogue des vaisseaux » (2, 768-769):

ἀνδρῶν αὖ μέγ' ἄριστος ἔην Τελαμώνιος Αἴας,
ὄφρ' Ἀχιλεὺς μῆνιεν· ὁ γὰρ πολὺ φέρτατος ἦεν.

Parmi les guerriers (*sc.* achéens), le meilleur était de loin Ajax, fils de Télamon, tant que durait le courroux d'Achille; car ce dernier était bien supérieur à tous les autres¹⁷.

16 On remarquera ici l'usage systématique de la *pēspisut'iwñ*: (a) le grec συγκριτικός est calqué par le mot artificiel բաղ-դատական *bat-datakan*, selon l'usage propre à l'école hellénistique, tandis que σύγκρισις est traduit par հասարակութիւն *hasarakut'iwñ*, dérivé de l'adjectif usuel հասարակ *hasarak* « commun, égal »; (b) le numéral « un » apparaît sous trois formes, à savoir եզ *ez*, մի *mu* et մի *mi*. Seule la dernière d'entre elles a une existence réelle dans la langue (sur l'étymologie de *mi*, voir *EDArmIL* 467-468, avec références). Ces trois formes ont ici la même fonction, mais dans d'autres passages de la littérature grammaticale la trilogie *ez, mi, mu* sert à calquer la trilogie εἷς, μία, ἓν du grec; c'est évidemment un pur artifice, puisque l'arménien ignore le genre grammatical. L'origine des termes *ez* et *mu* reste obscure: pures créations *ad hoc*, ou formes dialectales que les grammairiens auraient utilisées pour coller au modèle grec? Tout ce qu'on peut dire, c'est que l'interprétation de *mi* comme un féminin vient de la ressemblance avec μία et que, de la même manière, *ez* fait penser à εἷς.

17 Entendez: le « meilleur des Achéens » est Achille, mais tant qu'il reste à l'écart du combat contre les Troyens et donc ne fait pas la preuve de sa vaillance, ce titre revient à Ajax; mais à partir du moment où Achille renonce à sa colère et se lance dans la bataille, il se révèle supérieur. On trouve un écho de ces vers dans *l'Odyssée* (11, 550-551): Αἴανθ', ὃς περὶ μὲν εἶδος, περὶ δ' ἔργα τέτυκτο # τῶν ἄλλων Δαναῶν μετ' ἀμύμονα Πηλείωνα « Ajax, qui, par sa beauté et par ses exploits, l'emportait sur les autres Danaens, après l'irréprochable fils de Pélée. »

Et le passage biblique auquel fait allusion la version arménienne est le récit de la lutte de David contre Goliath. Elle commence par un défi que lance Goliath aux hommes d'Israël et à leur roi Saül (1 R 17:4):

καὶ ἐξήλθεν ἀνὴρ δυνατὸς ἐκ τῆς παρατάξεως τῶν ἀλλοφύλων, Γολιαθ ὄνομα αὐτῷ ἐκ Γεθ.

Եւ ել այր զայրաւոր ի ճակատէ այլազգեաց, Գողիաթ անուն նորա ի Գեթաւ.

Ew el ayr zawrawor i čakatē aylazgeac'-n, Goliad anun nora i Get'ay.

Un homme vaillant (*ayr zawrawor*) sorti du front de bataille des Étrangers (*i čakatē aylazgeac'-n*). Il s'appelait Goliath et était de Gueth (*i Get'ay*)¹⁸.

Ce qu'il y a de remarquable ici, c'est la manière dont le traducteur de la *Téchnē* a su mettre à profit les références culturelles. Dans la Bible hébraïque, les ennemis d'Israël sont les Philistins, ethnonyme qui dans la Bible grecque est rendu par ἀλλόφυλοι «étrangers» (> arm. այլազգիք *aylazgik'*). L'origine de cette dénomination reste quelque peu obscure¹⁹, mais en tout cas notre lettré arménien l'a visiblement exploitée, avec une agilité intellectuelle qui force l'admiration, pour en faire un synonyme du terme ἑτερογενεῖς qui figure chez Denys (> arm. այլասերք *aylaserk'*). On a l'impression d'une sorte de clin d'œil aux lecteurs cultivés, comme si notre auteur écrivait pour les *happy few* capables d'identifier une référence qu'il se garde bien de donner explicitement.

La suite du récit biblique va dans le même sens. Le jeune David relève le défi, et Saül l'accable de ses sarcasmes en le jugeant incapable de se battre (1 R 17:33). Mais, à la surprise générale, David triomphe de Goliath, l'homme de Gueth (17:50). Il est alors acclamé par les femmes d'Israël, qui entonnent un chant à sa gloire (18:7):

Ἐπάταξεν Σαουλ ἐν χιλιάσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ Δαυιδ ἐν μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ.

Եհար Սաուլ զհազարս, եւ Դաւիթ զբերս:

18 Le gentilece Գեթաւի *Get'ac'i* cité dans la version arménienne de la *Téchnē* n'apparaît pas dans ce passage, mais on en compte une bonne dizaine d'exemples dans la Bible.

19 On trouvera un bon état de la question dans l'introduction à la traduction commentée du *Premier Livre des Règles* (Grillet—Lestienne 1997, 74-76).

Ehar Sawut z-hazars, ew Dawit' z-bewrs.

Saül en a battu des milliers (*ehar Sawut z-hazars*), et David des myriades (*ew Dawit' z-bewrs*).

Ce qui rend Saül jaloux de David (18:10 sqq.). Sans doute l'aurait-il été encore bien davantage s'il avait su que, quelques siècles plus tard, un lettré arménien tirerait parti de cette comparaison pour traduire un passage de grammaire grecque consacré au comparatif.

3.5 *Le « nom homonyme » : des deux Ajax aux deux Jean*

Le même chapitre de la *Téchnē* sur le nom comporte, un peu plus bas (52-53 L. = *DTArm* 19), un développement consacré au « nom homonyme » (gr. *ὁμώνυμον*, arm. *համանուն համանուն* *hamanun*). Il s'agit des cas où plusieurs personnes portent le même nom, ce qui entraîne le besoin d'apporter une précision pour les distinguer, à savoir le patronyme. Denys prend pour exemple les deux Ajax de *Illiade*, à savoir « Ajax fils de Télamon et Ajax fils d'Oïlée », *Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος καὶ ὁ Ἰλέως*. Ici encore, le traducteur arménien transpose et cite des personnages de la Bible: *Յովհաննէս Զարարեան եւ Յովհաննէս Զերեդեան* « Jean fils de Zacharie » (*Yovhannēs Zak'arean*), à savoir Jean Baptiste, et « Jean fils de Zébédée » (*Yovhannēs Zebedean*), l'apôtre Jean. C'est là une allusion précise à des passages de l'Évangile :

(a) *Lc* 3:2 ἐγένετο ῥήμα θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ

եղև բան Աստուծոյ ի վերայ Յովհաննու որդոյ Զարարիայ յանապատի անդ

elēw ban Astucoy i veray Yovhannu ordwoy Zak'ariay y-anapati and

La parole de Dieu fut adressée à [litt. « fut sur »] Jean fils de Zacharie (*i veray Yovhannu ordwoy Zak'ariay*) au désert (*y-anapati and*).

(b) *Lc* 5:10 Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην υἱοὺς Ζεβεδαίου

զՅակովբոս եւ զՅովհաննէս զորդիսն Զերեդեայ

z-Yakovbos ew z-Yovhannēs z-ordis-n Zebedeay

Jacques et Jean, les fils de Zébédée.

Le syntagme « fils de » (*ordi* + génitif du nom du père) que comporte le texte biblique est remplacé, dans la version arménienne de la *Téchnē*, par le suffixe de patronyme *-ean*, ce qui correspond à un usage régulier dans la langue classique, à preuve, dans l'Évangile, *սաւր զՍիմոնիսեան Յուդայէ Սկարիովտացոյ asēr z-Simovnean Yudayē Skariovtac'woy* (*Jn* 6:71) « il parlait de Judas l'Isariote, fils de Simon » en regard de *ἔλεγεν δὲ τὸν Ἰούδαν Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτην* dans le texte grec²⁰.

3.6 *Le double nom : d'Alexandre (Pâris) à Eliazar (Awaran)*

Après l'homonyme vient le synonyme (*συνώνυμον*, arm. *փառանուն p'atanun*), puis le juste nom [litt. « ce qui porte (bien) son nom », *φερώνυμον*, arm. *բերանուն beranun*], puis le double nom (52-53 L. = *DTArm* 19):

Διώνυμον δὲ ἐστὶν ὀνόματα δύο καθ' ἑνὸς κυρίου τεταγμένα, οἷον Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ καὶ Πάρις...

Le double nom, ce sont deux noms propres appliqués à une même personne [litt. « deux noms appliqués à un seul nom propre »], par exemple Alexandre, celui qui < est appelé > aussi Pâris...

Երկանուն է անուանք երկու ի վերայ միոյ իսկի դաստալք, որոնք եղիագար որ էւ Աւարան.

Erkanun ē anuank' erku i veray mioy iski dasealk', orgon Eliazar or ew Awaran.

Le double nom (*erkanun*), ce sont deux noms propres appliqués à une même personne [litt. « deux noms (*anuank' erku*) appliqués (*dasealk'*) à un seul nom propre » (*i veray mioy iski*)], par exemple Eliazar, qui < est appelé > aussi Awaran...²¹

20 On pourrait comprendre aussi « Judas, fils de Simon l'Isariote », si l'on adopte la leçon *Ἰσκαριώτου* dans le texte grec. Comme en arménien la forme *Skariovtac'woy* peut être aussi bien un ablatif (s'il s'agit de « Judas l'Isariote, fils de Simon ») qu'un génitif (s'il s'agit de « Judas, fils de Simon l'Isariote »), les deux interprétations sont *a priori* possibles; mais l'ordre des mots de l'arménien, qui n'est pas celui du texte grec, invite à préférer la première solution.

21 Le mot *isk*, dont l'emploi usuel dans la langue classique est celui d'une conjonction ou d'un adverbe (« en réalité, au juste » > « or, donc, mais », etc.), se rencontre aussi comme thème nominal (*gén. iski*, la forme que l'on a ici), et chez les grammairiens il sert couram-

L'exemple que donne Denys est celui du personnage de l'*Illiade* connu sous les deux noms de Ἀλέξανδρος et de Πάρις, fréquemment attestés l'un et l'autre à partir du chant III du poème²². Dans la version arménienne, le texte de référence est le *Premier Livre des Maccabées* (2:1-5):

Ματταθιας υἱὸς Ἰωαννου τοῦ Συμεων ἱερεὺς [...]. (2) καὶ αὐτῷ υἱοὶ πέντε, Ἰωαννης ὁ ἐπικαλούμενος Γαδδι, (3) Σιμων ὁ καλούμενος Θασσι, (4) Ἰουδας ὁ καλούμενος Μακκαβαῖος, (5) Ἐλεάζαρ ὁ καλούμενος Αὐαραν, Ἰωαθης ὁ καλούμενος Ἀπφους.

Մատաթի Շմաւոնէան՝ որդի Յովհաննու, քահանայ [...]. (2) Եւ նորա էին որդիք հինգ. Յովհաննէս, որ անուանեալ կոչի Կադդիշ, (3) Շմաւոն, որ անուանեալ Թարսսի, (4) Յուդա, որ անուանեալ է Սակաբէ, Եղիազար, որ անուանեալ է Աւարան, Յովնաթան, որ կոչեցաւ Սափուտ:

Matat'i Šmawonean ordi Yovhannu, k'ahanay [...] (2) *Ew nora ēin ordik' hing. Yovhannēs, or anuaneal koč'i Kaddiš,* (3) *Šmawon, or anuaneal T'arssi,* (4) *Yuda, or anuaneal ē Makabē, Eliazar, or anuaneal ē Awaran, Yovnat'an, or koč'ec'aw Sap'ut'.*

Matat'i, de la famille de Šmawon, fils de Yovhannēs, prêtre [...]. Et il avait cinq fils: Yovhannēs, surnommé (*or anuaneal koč'i*, litt. «qui est appelé du nom de») Kaddiš; Šmawon, nommé T'arssi; Yuda, qui est nommé Makabē; Eliazar, qui est nommé Awaran; Yovnat'an, qui fut appelé Sap'ut'²³.

ment à traduire κύριον au sens de «(nom) propre», par une filière sémantique «juste» > «approprié» (voir *NBHL s.u.*); cf. d'ailleurs le passage de *Téchnē*, cité ci-dessus (3.2), où *isk* traduit l'adverbe κυρίως «proprement, au sens propre».

22 L'ensemble du dossier est bien présenté par G.S. Kirk dans son commentaire (1985) du v. 16 du chant III: «Paris (as we tend to call him) is mentioned here for the first time in the poem and is named not Paris but Alexandros. This is by far his commonest appellation (45× *Il.*, including 21× in this Book, against 13× (including Dusparis) and only 3× in this Book for Paris). There is no difference in the nuance of the two names, and when Paris is used for the first time at 325 it is without any special comment or implication. The poet must, of course, have found it useful to have two such metrical alternatives at his disposal.» (p. 266-267).

23 Texte arménien cité dans l'édition critique de H.M. Amalyan (1996). On notera l'usage de la *pēspisut'iw*n dans les expressions relatives à la nomination: seules deux d'entre elles (3 et 4) sont identiques, alors que les trois autres comportent de menues différences visiblement volontaires, pour éviter une répétition monotone.

Le traducteur arménien de la *Téchnē* savait pertinemment que le double nom est un mode de désignation usuel dans les généalogies bibliques. L'exemple n'a donc pas été choisi au hasard.

3.7 *Le surnom : de Poséidon, l'Ébranleur de la terre, à Jean, la voix qui crie dans le désert*

Le surnom (ἐπώνυμον, arm. մականուն *makanun*, 52-53 L. = *DTArm* 19-20) est un cas particulier du double nom : le personnage est désigné d'abord par son nom propre, et ensuite par un trait qui le caractérise, ce que nous appelons l'épiclèse. Les deux exemples que cite Denys sont ceux des dieux Poséidon, qu'on appelle aussi Ἐνοσίχθων « Ébranleur de la Terre », et Apollon, qu'on appelle aussi Φοῖβος « Brillant ». De fait, ces substituts sont usuels dans la littérature grecque, ainsi que bien d'autres qui ne sont pas mentionnés ici. L'exemple donné dans la version arménienne est ձայն գոչման Յովհաննէս *jayn goč'man Yovhannēs* « la voix du cri, Jean », allusion transparente au passage de l'Évangile qui applique au Précurseur, Jean Baptiste, le verset d'Isaïe (40:3) ձայն բարբառոյ յանապատի *jayn barbaroյ y-anapati* « la voix du cri dans le désert », en regard de φωνή βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ « la voix de celui qui crie dans le désert » dans l'original grec. La citation d'Isaïe figure dans les quatre Évangiles (*Mt* 3:3 = *Mc* 1:3 = *Lc* 3:4 = *Jn* 1:23), mais c'est chez Matthieu que la situation est la plus nette (3:1-3):

Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις παραγίνεται Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστῆς κηρύσσων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας (2) καὶ λέγων. Μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. (3) Οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ῥηθεὶς διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος,
 Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ·
 Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου,
 εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ.

Յաւորան յայնոսիկ գայ Յովհաննէս մկրտիչ բարբառել յանապատի
 Հրէաստանի, (2) եւ ասել, Ապաշխարեցէք, զի մերձեալ է արքայութիւն
 երկնից. (3) Զի սա է վասն որոյ ասացաւ ի ձեռն իսայայ մարգարէի, որ
 ասէ, Զայն բարբառոյ յանապատի. Պատրաստ արարէք զճանապարհ
 Տեան, եւ ուղիղ արարէք զշաւիղս նորա:

Y-awurs-n y-aynosik gay Yovhannēs mkrtič' k'arozel y-anapati-n Hrēas-tani, (2) *ew asel, Apašxarec'ēk', zi merjeal ē ark'ayut'wn erknic'*. (3) *Zi sa ē vasn oroy asac'aw i jern Ēsayay margarēi, or asē, Jayn barbaroյ y-anapati. Patrast ararēk' z-čanaparh Tearn, ew ulit' ararēk' z-šawits nora.*

En ces jours-là, Jean Baptiste vient proclamer dans le désert de Judée (2) et dire: 'Convertissez-vous, car le royaume des cieux est proche'. (3) Car c'est de lui qu'a parlé le prophète Isaïe, qui dit: 'Voix du cri dans le désert. Préparez le chemin du Seigneur, et rendez droits ses sentiers.'

Texte dont on trouve un écho dans l'Évangile de Jean, où c'est Jean Baptiste lui-même qui, questionné par les prêtres et les lévites sur son identité (Դու ո՞ր ես... զի՞նք ասես քոյնք քոյնք *Du ov? es... zi? ases vasn k'o* « qui es-tu, toi? ... que dis-tu de toi? », 1:22), leur répond: Ես ձայն բարբառոյ յաւանապատի *Es jayn barbaroy yanapati* ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ (1:23) « c'est moi < qui suis > la voix du cri dans le désert ». La traduction arménienne de la *Téchnē* constitue donc, en quelque sorte, un commentaire de ces passages de l'Évangile: l'auteur sait que Matthieu et Jean ont attribué cette appellation à Jean Baptiste, ce qui justifie d'y voir un ἐπώνυμον. Ici encore, le traducteur fait usage de la *pēspisut'ivn*, en remplaçant le mot բարբառ *barbar* (gén. բարբառոյ *barbaroy*) « cri, parole » du texte biblique par son synonyme գոչիւն *goč'ivn* (gén. գոչիւնս *goč'ivn*) « cri, clameur »²⁴; le choix n'a pas été fait au hasard, car ce mot est le dérivé nominal du verbe գոչել *goč'em* « s'écrier », qui est employé dans le récit de la Passion à propos des dernières paroles du Christ sur la croix: գոչեաց Յիսուս ի ձայն մեծ *goč'eac Yisus i jayn mec* ἀνεβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ (*Mt 27:46*) « Jésus s'écria d'une voix forte ».

3.8 *Signature du traducteur arménien, vardapet et expert en définitions*

Le chapitre de la *Téchnē* consacré au verbe est bien moins riche en exemples que celui sur le nom, si bien que les discordances entre l'original grec et la version arménienne y sont moins nombreuses. On peut relever cependant le cas des verbes « dérivés de composés » (gr. παρασύνθετον, arm. յարաբարի *yarabard*, 54-55 L. = *DTArm* 23): les deux exemples donnés dans le texte grec sont ἀντιγονίζω « je suis du parti d'Antigone (Ἀντίγονος) » et φιλιππίζω « je suis du parti de Philippe (Φίλιππος) », ce qui dans la version arménienne est transposé en վարդապետել *vardapetem* « j'exerce la profession de *vardapet*, j'enseigne » et en սահմանաբանել *sahmanabanem*, mot dont le sens et la formation appellent une discussion.

Le premier de ces deux verbes est bien attesté dans la littérature classique, et il est inutile de rappeler l'importance du titre de *vardapet* « maître, docteur » dans l'histoire de la culture arménienne, aujourd'hui comme hier. Cette men-

24 Dans le passage d'Isaïe, le mot բարբառ *barbar* « cri » est à comprendre comme l'équivalent d'un nom d'agent « quelqu'un qui crie » (gr. βοῶντος), par une métonymie d'un type banal en arménien. Mais le traducteur de Denys l'a interprété dans son emploi usuel.

tion constitue donc, en quelque sorte, une « signature » du traducteur de la *Téchnē*, qui est lui-même un maître de grammaire et indique sa profession. Mieux encore, il s'inscrit ainsi dans la glorieuse tradition de Grégoire l'Illuminateur, l'évangéliste de l'Arménie, et de Mesrop-Maştoc', l'inventeur de l'alphabet arménien et le fondateur de l'école des Saints Traducteurs. Je pense, en effet, qu'en donnant ce verbe comme exemple il fait implicitement référence à deux passages célèbres de la littérature classique.

(a) Dans l'*Histoire d'Arménie (Patmut'own Hayoc')* d'Agathange, lorsque le bienheureux Grégoire entreprend l'instruction chrétienne du roi Trdat, de sa cour et de tout le peuple d'Arménie, il s'adresse à son auditoire en ces termes (§ 257) : ամենուայց շնորհօք Հոգւոյն բան ի գործ արասցուք վարդապետել ձեզ *amenusoyc' šnorhōk' Hogwoy-n ban i gorc arasc'uk' vardapetel jez* « avec la grâce de l'Esprit qui enseigne tout, nous allons mettre en œuvre la parole pour vous instruire ». C'est ainsi qu'est introduit le grand « enseignement » (ou « catéchisme ») de saint Grégoire (Վարդապետութիւն Սրբոյն Գրիգորի *Vardapetut'own Srboy-n Grigori*), qui couvre plus de la moitié du livre (§ 259-715).

(b) Dans son *Histoire d'Arménie (Patmut'own Hayoc')*, Movsēs Xorenac'i expose les difficultés auxquelles est confronté Mesrop dans son apostolat (III, 47) : Եւ ի վարդապետել երանելւոյն Մեսրոպայ՝ ոչ փոքր կրէր վտանգս *Ew i vardapetel eranelwoy-n Mesropay oc' p'ok'r krēr vtangs* « Et lorsque le bienheureux Mesrop enseignait, il endurait de grandes souffrances », faute de pouvoir célébrer la liturgie en arménien et donc de diffuser la religion chrétienne dans la population²⁵. C'est ainsi qu'il fut amené à inventer un alphabet pour traduire les textes sacrés en arménien, ce qui est bien un travail de grammairien.

Quant au second verbe, սահմանաբանել *sahmanabanem*, c'est, sauf erreur, un néologisme, un mot créé par le traducteur de la *Téchnē* qui n'est même pas signalé dans le *NBHL*, non plus que le nom composé սահմանաբան *sahmanaban* dont il est le dénominatif. Comme le mot սահման *sahman* « borne, limite » a souvent dans la littérature grammaticale le sens de « définition », sur le modèle du grec ὄρος qu'il sert à traduire, ce verbe signifie proprement « je suis expert (le second membre de composé -բան *-ban* est l'équivalent habituel du grec -λόγος) en définitions ». Ici aussi, on doit y voir une « signature ». Cela nous montre que, malgré la réputation de discipline austère et rébarbative qu'a souvent la grammaire, un maître de grammaire peut avoir le sens de l'humour ; c'était du moins le cas dans l'Arménie médiévale²⁶.

25 Voir la note ad loc. de J.-P. Mahé dans sa traduction du passage (Mahé—Mahé 1993).

26 Merci à Agnès Ouzounian et à Robin Meyer pour leur relecture attentive.

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The Cauldron of the Titans

Quotations from Clement of Alexandria in the Letters of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni (990–1058)

Federico Alpi

The life and work of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, who was born around 990 in Bjni, close to Ani, the capital of the Armenian Bagratid Kingdom located just west of the present border between Turkey and the Republic of Armenia, and died in 1058 in Taron, west of lake Van, can be considered both a late and a prime example of the Armenian appropriation and creative transformation of Greek learning, fusing Hellenistic erudition with the Irano-Armenian matrix of Grigor's cultural world.¹



1 Introduction

These words, by the scholar to whom the present volume is dedicated, perfectly summarise the most important facts about Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni. I had the pleasure to work on this Armenian prince, lay philosopher, and literary author under Professor van Lint's tutorship, and it is therefore somewhat natural for me to deal with Grigor Magistros in this contribution. As evidenced by van Lint,² the fusion of Hellenistic erudition with the Irano-Armenian heritage is particularly evident in Grigor's *Letters*.³ Furthermore, as Gohar Muradyan

1 Van Lint 2016, 197.

2 *Ibid.*, 203–205.

3 The *Letters* are a collection of Grigor's correspondence with various personalities of his time, amounting to a total of around 88 epistles (the division and total number of the letters varies slightly between the two editions: see *infra*). The letters were collected and copied as a literary work, in the tradition of late-antique and Byzantine epistolography. As far as I can tell,

has made clear in an important article,⁴ the Hellenistic erudition manifested by Grigor is often related to material drawn from the *Protrepticus* of Clement of Alexandria, a work of which no Armenian translation is known to have existed and that Grigor may therefore have read directly in Greek. In the *Letters*, many passages of the *Protrepticus* are quoted *verbatim*, while others are just the object of passing allusions; finally, some episodes are completely reworked and re-interpreted by Grigor Magistros. Interestingly, the Armenian prince occasionally reveals the sources of his quotations, but he never mentions Clement of Alexandria (nor the *Protrepticus* as a work).

Of course, the *Protrepticus* is not the only means by which Grigor ventured into the vast *repertoire* of Greek literature: he also refers to episodes reported by other Greek authors and works; in many other cases, his knowledge of ancient Greek literature is mediated by Armenian authors or by Armenian translations, such as Dawit' Anyalt' or the Armenian versions of the *Alexander Romance* and of Pseudo-Nonnus's *Commentary*.⁵ The use of Clement's work, however, is preponderant, as Gohar Muradyan has remarked by asserting that the quotations from the *Protrepticus* are "particularly significant".⁶ Her new edition of Grigor's work for the series *Matenagirk' Hayoc'*⁷ (= GM) allows us to further quantify this significance: in this edition, we can find 34 references to the *Protrepticus* in Grigor's *Letters*, to which one (or two, the second one being doubtful) can be added, for a total of 36. This makes the *Protrepticus* the second most-quoted work in the whole epistolary, just after the *Definitions* by Dawit' Anyalt' (37 references) and slightly ahead of the *History of the Armenians* by Movsēs Xorenac'i (32 references).⁸ The *Protrepticus* therefore plays a key role with respect to Grigor's knowledge of the Greek world (and indeed his literary production), even though the Pahlawuni prince does not acknowledge this explicitly.

Grigor's epistolary is the first work by a single author to have received such a treatment in Armenian literature.

4 Muradyan 2013. See also, on the same issue, Muradyan 2014 and Muradyan 2017.

5 Muradyan 2013, 33–40 and 63–65.

6 Muradyan 2014, 23: հատկապես նշանակալի են գուգահեռները, երբեմն էլ բառացի քաղվածքները քրիստոնեության ջատագով Կղեմես Աղեքսանդրացու 'Խրատ հեթանոսներին' երկից.

7 Muradyan 2012. Previously, Grigor's letter had been published by Kostaneanc' 1910. Here I will use Muradyan's edition.

8 I have counted the references on the basis of the notes referring to quotations or to *loci paralleli* in Muradyan's edition. Biblical references (by far the most frequent ones) have been excluded for this purpose. The additional references to the *Protrepticus* (not marked in Muradyan's edition) will be discussed below.

This special relationship between the Armenian author and Clement's work raises at least three questions: one philological, one pertaining to literature, and one historical. As far as the philological question goes, we should investigate what type of source text Grigor used, in what language, and in what condition that text was. This is a particularly interesting point to analyse, given that the Greek text of the *Protrepticus* has reached us through a single manuscript, *Parisinus graecus* 451 (P), which was copied between 913 and 914 for Arethas, the renowned Byzantine scholar (and Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia) by a scribe with an Armenian name: Baanes.⁹ All other known witnesses of the Greek text depend on P and, as I will argue below, there are hints that Grigor used a text from a different branch of the tradition. The philological question, namely to what extent Grigor Magistros's quotations can contribute to our understanding of Clement's reception and use in Armenia—about which very little is known at the moment—is a topic of research in itself, but it can also be useful in order to address issues of textual criticism related to the Greek text.

It is clear that dealing with such a topic requires the collection of a wide array of data and a careful, deep analysis: it is a matter that cannot be dealt with in a short contribution like the present one. More importantly, before using Grigor's quotations of the *Protrepticus* to engage in textual criticism, it is imperative to answer at least the second question raised by the extensive use of Clement's work in Grigor's *Letters*, a question related to literature: in what way does the Armenian author employ the Clementine material? What is his literary purpose in this and how does he integrate the quotations or the general allusions to the *Protrepticus* into his work? This is an important point in order to define the boundaries of the possible quotations and the level of alteration to which they may have been exposed: it would be incautious to build any hypothesis concerning them before tackling this issue.

The third question, which is more related to history, is why Grigor used so much Greek material in his letters and for what reason—if any—did he rely on the *Protrepticus* to such an extent. The first part of this question (“Why so much Greek material?”) is clearly related to the eastward expansion of the Byzantine

9 The *Protrepticus* has been published in a critical edition by Stählin 1905 (reprinted in 1936 and later revised as Stählin—Treu 1972), by Butterworth 1919 (for the Loeb Classical Library, reprinted several times) and again by Mondésert 1949 and Marcovich 1995. For a critical review of this last edition (whose “changes of the text become somewhat problematic”), see van Winden 1996, 311. While acknowledging van Winden's judgement, in this contribution I will also use the text established by Marcovich, since—regardless of its limits—it takes account of all previous editions. Other relevant editions include Klotz 1831 and Dindorf 1869.

Empire in the second half of the 9th century, which put Armenians and Greeks directly in contact again, as the control of the Caliphate over Upper Mesopotamia and Armenia grew thinner. This produced a situation where Armenians and Eastern Romans interacted extensively in politics, military matters, culture, and religion.¹⁰ It is well known—as van Lint recalls—that as a result of this phenomenon many influential Armenians were co-opted into the imperial political and military system. However,

[w]hat has not been traced is the impact of Greek learning on those nobles and their families who were co-opted into the Byzantine reward system. Did this lead to an increase in familiarity with Greek philosophical thought, Greek poetry and historiography, and with Greek epistolography in Armenia?¹¹

To this sub-question van Lint gives a positive answer, while underlining that much remains to be done.¹² Following this direction, I have already discussed elsewhere further elements that reveal the direct influence of Byzantine epistolography on Grigor's *Letters* and, therefore, on the recipients of the letters themselves.¹³ As for the other sub-question (i.e. "Why the *Protrepticus*?"), it is clear that any answer will have to be based on deeper philological knowledge of the textual tradition of that work, both in Greek and in Grigor's Armenian quotations: we first have to understand what sources Grigor was actually using, before making any statement as to why he used precisely those.

To sum up, the philological question requires extensive treatment and partly depends on the literary question, while a complete answer to the historical question is impossible without first addressing the philological one. It is clear therefore that, in this contribution, we can only try to tackle the central, literary issue: how is the material from the *Protrepticus* employed in Grigor's *Letters*?

10 It is not my intention to provide even a concise bibliography on Armeno-Greek interactions in the 9th–11th centuries. As a general introduction, however, as regards military and political interactions, see Dédéyan 1975, Cheynet 1990 and Cheynet 2014; as regards cultural interaction, in addition to the contributions by Muradyan and van Lint mentioned above, see Lemerle 1971 (for the Byzantine context) and, for the Armenian context, the three books by T'amrazyan on the school of Narek (T'amrazyan 2013, T'amrazyan 2015 and T'amrazyan 2017), as well as Mahé—Mahé 2000. For the religious aspect see Dorfmann-Lazarev 2004.

11 Van Lint 2016, 199.

12 Van Lint 2016, 210.

13 Alpi 2018.

2 Quotations, Abridgements, and Allusions: An Overview

In her article, Muradyan presents several examples of Grigor's references to the *Protrepticus*. Some are described as resembling the Greek text "nearly verbatim",¹⁴ while others are recorded as abridgements which either maintain "the main idea of the story"¹⁵ as it appears in Clement's work or, alternatively, give the idea that Grigor "confused the information of his source";¹⁶ finally, Muradyan notes that in some cases we have "just a hint" at the *Protrepticus*.¹⁷ Given our aim here, it might be useful to maintain and expand Muradyan's categories, by further developing their rationale and by assigning each reference to one of those categories. With respect to length and to adherence to the Greek text, therefore, we find long quotations (with occasional abridgements), short quotations, and allusions (or hints).

The category of short quotations is the easiest to define and is rather self-explanatory. It includes single sentences or short portions of text (usually with no more than one finite verb) that closely resemble the Greek text of the *Protrepticus*. One brief and clear example will be sufficient here to account for the level of similarity: in letter 27 Grigor laments the difficult times through which Armenians are going,¹⁸ and attacks those who conspired for the destruction of the Armenian kingdom, because "the snake will bite he who destroys the walls of the motherland" (cf. Eccl 10:8). He then adds: "And what wonder is there, if the Tyrrhenian barbarians profess a cult of shameful passions, where even the Athenians and people elsewhere in Greece and Attica [do so]?"¹⁹ After this rather abrupt sentence, he goes on to recall that even Moses was moved to

14 Muradyan 2013, 41.

15 Muradyan 2013, 50.

16 Muradyan 2013, 44.

17 Muradyan 2013, 49.

18 In Grigor's lifetime, in 1045, the Armenian kingdom of Ani was annexed by the Byzantine Empire after a short war and amidst internal rivalries (for a detailed chronology see Shepard 1975). Grigor was deeply involved in these events, cf. van Lint 2014, 12–14.

19 See below for the Armenian text. Here and elsewhere, unless otherwise stated, translations are my own. Grigor's epistolary, however, presents such difficulties that it is not always possible to produce a faithful translation: his frequent use of puns, foreign or distorted words, and an unusual (often Hellenising) syntax are, for the time being, formidable obstacles to a clear understanding of his text. Only a comprehensive lexical and syntactical analysis of the *Letters*, ideally culminating in a full glossary of terms used by Grigor Magistros, can lead to a more accurate interpretation of his text. However, no such analysis is available as yet, and it remains a major *desideratum* in Armenian Studies. For this reason, all my translations should be considered provisional and open to later revisions.

anger by the misconduct of his people. This curious reference to “Tyrrhenian barbarians” in the middle of the paragraph is, as Muradyan noted, a word-by-word quote from the *Protrepticus*:

Եւ զի՛նչ զարմանալիք են, եթէ տիրոռենացի դուժքն ամաւթալեաց պաշտան տանին ախտիցն, ուր եւ արթնացիք իսկ, եւ այլում Ելլադայ եւ Ատտիկէ:

GM, lett. 27,29

Καὶ τί θαυμαστὸν εἰ Τυρρηνοὶ οἱ βάρβαροι αἰσχροῖς οὕτως τελίσκονται παθή-
μασιν, ὅπου γε Ἀθηναίους καὶ τῆ ἄλλῃ Ἑλλάδι (αἰδοῦμαι καὶ λέγειν) αἰσχύνῃς
ἐμπλεως ἢ περὶ τὴν Διῶν μυθολογία;

Protr. 20.1

Longer quotations are similar in form, but generally include more sentences and—because of their length—they are often abridged or somehow adapted to suit Grigor’s discourse. This does not prevent the single sentences or syntagms that form the quotation from being immediately identifiable as coming from the Greek text of the *Protrepticus*, as we can see in letter 80. Here we find an account of Dionysus’s murder by the Titans, which reads as follows:

When he [Dionysus] was still a little child, the Titans deceived him with tricks and acts of deception. They cut him into pieces, put him in a cauldron, and placed it upon Hephaestus [i.e., on the fire]; they also pierced some of the pieces with skewers, keeping them over the bonfire. From the smell of roasted meat, father Aramazd [i.e., Zeus] became aware of what had happened, struck the Titans with a thunderbolt, and placed Dionysus’s members in a box, which he entrusted to his son Apollo. The latter then seized the box, took it to Parnassus, and put it there somewhere.²⁰

The Armenian text again closely follows the *Protrepticus*, even though some passages are shortened or left out (the portions of text present in the Armenian are highlighted in the Greek):

Արդ սա մինչ տակաւին մանուկ տղայն էր, պատրանաւք խաբմամբ
խաղուց խաբեցին Տիտանքն, եւ զենեալ յաշմամբ, ի սան ամանեալ,

²⁰ See also the translation by Muradyan 2013, 41.

եղին ի վերայ Հեփեստեայ, իսկ յանդամոցն ի շամփուրս հարեայ, ի վերայ ունելով հրատին: Զոր ի ճենճերաց հոտոյն ազդ եղեայ հարն Արամազդայ, շանթի զՏիտանսն տանջէր, եւ զանդամսն Դիոնեայ ի տապանակի եղեայ, Ասորհոնի որդւոյ իւրոյ յանձն առնէր. իսկ նրա առեայ ի Պառնասոս տարեայ, ահա ուրեմն եղեայ:

GM lett. 80,7–8

Τὰ γὰρ Διονύσου μυστήρια τέλεον ἀπάνθρωπα· ὃν εἰσέτι παῖδα ὄντα ἐνόπλιω κινήσει περιχορευόντων Κουρήτων, δόλω δὲ ὑποδύντων Τιτάνων, ἀπατήσαντες παιδαριώδεσιν ἀθύρμασιν, οὗτοι δὴ οἱ Τιτᾶνες διέσπασαν, ἔτι νηπίαχον ὄντα, ὡς ὁ τῆς Τελετῆς ποιητῆς Ὅρφεύς φησιν ὁ Θράκιος·

κῶνος καὶ ρόμβος καὶ παίγνια καμπεσίγυια,

μῆλὰ τε χρύσεια καλὰ παρ' Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων.

Καὶ τῆσδε ὑμῖν τῆς τελετῆς τὰ ἀχρεῖα σύμβολα οὐκ ἀχρεῖον εἰς κατάγνωσιν παραθέσθαι· ἀστράγαλος, σφαῖρα, στρόβιλος, μῆλα, ρόμβος, ἔσοπτρον, πόκος. Ἀθηνᾶ μὲν οὖν τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ Διονύσου ὑφελομένη Παλλὰς ἐκ τοῦ πάλλαιν τὴν καρδίαν προσηγορεύθη· οἱ δὲ Τιτᾶνες, οἱ καὶ διασπάσαντες αὐτόν, λέβητά τινα τρίποδι ἐπιθέντες καὶ τοῦ Διονύσου ἐμβαλόντες τὰ μέλη, καθήψουν πρότερον· ἔπειτα ὀβελίσκοις περιπεύραντες «ὑπέιρεχον Ἡφαίστοιο.» Ζεὺς δὲ ὕστερον ἐπιφανείς (εἰ θεὸς ἦν, τάχα που τῆς κνίσσης τῶν ὀπτωμένων κρεῶν μεταλαβών, ἧς δὴ τὸ «γέρας λαχεῖν» ὁμολογοῦσιν ὑμῶν οἱ θεοί) κεραυνῶ τοὺς Τιτᾶνας αἰκίζεται καὶ τὰ μέλη τοῦ Διονύσου Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ παιδί παρακατατίθεται καταθάψαι. Ὁ δέ, οὐ γὰρ ἠπέιθησε Δί, εἰς τὸν Παρνασσὸν φέρων κατατίθεται διεσπασμένον τὸν νεκρόν.

Protr. 17.2–18.2

Allusions, in turn, are more difficult to assess. For example, even though Athena is mentioned in the *Protrepticus*, it is obvious that we cannot consider each and every reference to Athena in Grigor's *Letters* as an allusion to the *Protrepticus*. A more substantial argument is needed. Muradyan presents a perfect case of such a substantial argument when she notes that in a very brief allusion Grigor mentions Persephone by the extremely rare name of Pherephatte, which is present in the *Protrepticus*:²¹

Ոչ թողից շատել եւ զխարդաւանական երկպառակութիւն մղութեանն, որ առ Փերսիստեայ ի ձեռն հարն գործիր, ոչ եւս Քիւսակահին Բրաքսիդեայ որ առ Թեոպոմպոսի Ղակեդոնացոյ

GM, lett. 36,6

21 Cf. Muradyan 2013, 49–50.

[Grigor lists famous examples of deceit and betrayal] ... I will not avoid mentioning the deceitful, double act of depravity which was perpetrated against Pherephatte by her father, and [the deceit] of the *Biwtakan Brak'sideay* against Theopompus the Lacedaemonian.²²

Compare this with *Protr.* 16.1–2:

Κυεὶ μὲν ἡ Δημήτηρ, ἀνατρέφεται δὲ ἡ Κόρη, μίγνυται δ' αὖθις ὁ γεννήσας οὐτοσὶ Ζεὺς τῇ Φερεφάττῃ, τῇ ἰδίᾳ θυγατρὶ, μετὰ τὴν μητέρα τὴν Δηῶ.

Given the many other cases in which the *Protrepticus* is the source of Grigor's references, we can be fairly sure that also the rare form Pherephatte comes from there.²³ In this regard, we can add a further example, not noted by Muradyan, which arguably—on the same grounds—depends on the *Protrepticus*:

Եւ զի՛նչ զարմանալիք այս. մի՛ եւ պարսաւ որ իմասցի, իբրո՞ւ ոստայնանգութիւնս, որք զպաստառակն խաշարս եւ անհոյծս եւ ազայտս յանգեն, անհարթութեամբ կեամատարագ կարկատեալ խեղկեալ մատանց մանուածով, եւ զպատկանեալն պոռփիւղիկոն Թեսմոյփաւոնեացն այպանեն եւ որք զկնի նառեանն լիզոնի Ակիւրրափաւրեացն սիողէն նրբաքարշիւքն քանոնիկոն հարթութեամբ հոյծեալ.

GM, lett. 26,21

The Armenian text is far too complex to produce a reliable translation. In the context of the letter, Grigor is using a series of examples to show that philosophy, like any other art, can be of good or bad quality:²⁴ the passage above is one such example. What Grigor seems to be saying is:

What is there to wonder about this? No one is going to learn through a thick rope, [it is?] just like the weaving arts: [there are] those who complete thick, large and thin carpets[?] by intertwining a sort of wicker in disorderly fashion, stumbling with their weaving fingers, and who make fun of the *poip'iwrikon*[?] fitting for the *T'esmoyp'awreac'n* [= Thesmo-

22 See also the translation by Muradyan 2013, 49.

23 Theopompus the Lacedaemonian is also a reference to the *Protrepticus*, specifically an allusion to *Protr.* 42.2, as already identified by Muradyan: on this and *Biwtakan Brak'sideay* see *infra*.

24 For this interpretation see also van Lint 2016, 208.

phoriae], and those who after the *naʿeann ligoni* of the *Akiwrrap’awreac’n* [weave?] the *sp’otē*, with thinly woven [threads?], regular and evenly polished.

The words left untranslated are *hapax legomena*, and their meaning is unknown: to make any sense of the text, an extensive treatment of each word would be required.²⁵ However, here we can focus on *T’esmoyp’awreac’n* and *Akiwrrap’awreac’n*: the former is clearly a reference to the famous festival of the Thesmophoriae, which Clement of Alexandria mentions several times in the *Protrepticus*;²⁶ the second is extremely similar to the less-famous festival of the Scirophoriae, which is mentioned in *Protr.* 17.2:

Ταύτην τὴν μυθολογίαν αἱ γυναῖκες ποικίλως κατὰ πόλιν ἐορτάζουσι, Θεσμοφόρια, Σκιροφόρια, Ἀρρητοφόρια πολύτροπως τὴν Φερεφάττης ἐκτραγωδοῦσαι ἀρπαγην.

As we can see, the Clementine passage is closely connected to the Thesmophoriae and to the episode of Pherephatte, which Grigor knew: this makes the similarity even more striking. It is conceivable that *Akiwrrap’awreac’n* is here a corruption of “*Skiw(r)rap’awreac’n*”, i.e., “Scirophoriae”, caused by the oddity of the name and by the similarity of the characters for *s* (*u*) and *a* (*u*) in Armenian.²⁷

Other allusions are clear because Grigor makes passing references to episodes of the *Protrepticus* which he also mentions elsewhere in his letters as

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- 25 The passage intriguingly alludes to carpets of varying thickness, which may be a reference to the terminology of “wide” and “subtle” writings that is attested in Armenia at least from the Eleventh century, see Shirinian 2019, 324–325 and Shirinian 1998. It is too obscure, however, to allow any further assessment. An attempt to interpret the unknown words in this passage has been made by Ačaryan 1922: see the following notes.
- 26 Ačaryan proposed to interpret the word as “temple” (Ačaryan 1922, 184), from the Greek Θεσμοφόριον, but the plural of the Armenian term and the unusual meaning of the Greek word seem to make the festival of the Thesmophoriae a more acceptable explanation for *T’esmoyp’awreac’n*.
- 27 Unfortunately, this does not help us identify the other words of unknown meaning used here by Grigor. Ačaryan tried to explain them (Ačaryan 1922), and proposed we interpret *poip’iwrikon* as some sort of cloth woven with purple, *ligoni* as “wreath” (from the Greek λύγος) and *sp’otēn* as a mistake for *sp’oten*, itself the 3rd person plural of an otherwise unattested form with *s-* of the verb *p’otem*, *p’otp’otem*, with the meaning “to weave”, while *naʿeann* is left unexplained. Given the unusual exchange (at least in Grigor’s letters) of *-ēn* and *-en* (the 3rd person plural ending) and, in turn, the abundance of Greek words, I wonder if *sp’otēn* here could be a corrupt form of *stotēn*, i.e. “τὴν στολήν”, “the garment”, generated by the error of palaeographic origin *st>sp’* (uun>uφi).

verbatim quotations or abridgements. Consider this reference to the Titans' killing of Dionysus, reported by Muradyan:

... եւ զաման տիտանեան, յորում զյաւշեալ զանդամսն Դիոնիսիոսի եղին

GM, lett. 34,2

[*Grigor enumerates a series of famous pots or cauldrons*] ... and the titanic cauldron in which they put the torn members of Dionysus.²⁸

Again, following the same principle, there is another allusion concerning which some considerations can be made, in addition to those proposed by Muradyan:

զիարդ համարձակիր ընդ վիմիդ հաստատուն, կամ կարէ կարկաստել կեղծաորելով բան զարէն կորիբանդականին տիտանեան դաշեկաց:

GM, lett. 20,17

[*Grigor consoles Catholicos Petros I, who had to defend himself against an unnamed calumniator*]. How did he [dare to] rush against you, o stable stone, or how can he weave a discourse by dissimulating, like the Corybantic one by [literally: “of”] the titanic tutors?

The “titanic tutors” are again the Titans, who dared kill Dionysus, who had been entrusted to them, as in *Protr.* 17.2–18.2, mentioned above;²⁹ the adjective “Corybantic” may come from *Protr.* 19, a paragraph dedicated to the Corybants, and in fact Muradyan points to *Protr.* 19.4:

Καβείρους δὲ τοὺς Κορύβαντας καλοῦντες καὶ τελετὴν Καβειρικὴν καταγγέλλουσιν· αὐτῷ γὰρ δὴ τούτῳ τῷ ἀδελφοκτόνῳ τὴν κίστην ἀνελομένῳ, ἐν ᾗ τὸ τοῦ Διονύσου αἰδοῖον ἀπέκειτο, εἰς Τυρρηγίαν κατήγαγον, εὐκλεοῦς ἔμποροι φορτίου.

28 Muradyan 2013.

29 Martirosyan 2010, s.v. “*titan*”, links *titanian* in this passage to the Armenian word *titan*, “nurse”: while the meaning is fitting, the reference to the episode of the Titans and Dionysus is too explicit, especially because in lett. 34,2 Grigor uses *titanian* unequivocally with the sense of “pertaining to the Titans”. Given that *titanian* with the meaning of “pertaining to nurses” also exists, however, it is perfectly conceivable that Grigor used the term precisely with this ambiguity in mind, creating a pun that fits the canons of Byzantine epistolography nicely.

They [i.e., those initiated into the Corybantic mysteries] call the Corybants “Cabeirs”, and the initiation “Cabeirian [ritual]”; these two brother-slayers in fact [i.e., the Corybants], carrying away the box in which Dionysus’s member had been put, took it to Tyrrhenia ... traders of noble wares!

Muradyan’s suggestion is reasonable, and in this case “Corybantic” would be an adjective created by Grigor as a synonym for “inhuman, barbarous, terrible”, on the basis of this episode. However, there is the possibility that the adjective itself may have been borrowed from the *Protrepticus*, and not invented by Grigor. In that case the source for the adjective could be *Protr.* 19.2: “οἴονται γὰρ δὴ ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ απορρυσθέντος τοῦ Κορυβαντικοῦ τὸ σέλινον ἐκπεφυκέ- ναι”. Given that this sentence occurs just a few lines before the Corybants are said to bring a box containing Dionysus’s member to “Tyrrhenia”, it is very likely that Grigor (or his source) confused the Dionysus-carrying (and self-mutilating) Corybants and the Dionysus-slaughtering Titans. If that is the case, one might also advance the hypothesis that “Corybantic” in the Armenian passage above results from the misinterpretation of Κορυβαντικός as an appellation of Dionysus: the Armenian passage could therefore be simply translated “like [the deceit of] the Corybantic [i.e. Dionysus] by the titanic tutors”.³⁰

We have just seen that, as far as allusions are concerned, Grigor may often be hinting at two (or more) different sections of the *Protrepticus* in the same passage. Sometimes, the sections are quite distant in the Greek text, in which case the allusion is double, or even triple; let us reconsider letter 36,6:

Ոչ թողից չասել եւ զխարդաւանական երկպառակութիւն մոլորեանն,
որ առ Փերափտեայ ի ձեռն հարն գործիր, ոչ եւս Բիւտականին
Բրաքսիդեայ որ առ Թեոպոմպոսի Ղակեդոնացոյ:

I will not avoid mentioning the deceitful, double act of depravity which was perpetrated against Pherephatte by her father, and [the deceit] of the *Biwtakan Brak'sideay* against Theopompus the Lacedaemonian.³¹

The reference to Theopompus, as noted by Muradyan, is drawn from a *Protrepticus* passage (42.2) that Grigor quotes almost *verbatim* elsewhere, in letter

30 The association might have also been caused by the following sentence in *Protr.* 19.3, “ἐκ τοῦ Διονύσου αἵματος σταγόνων βεβλαστηκέναι νομιζουσαι τὰς ροιάς”, based on the conflation between αἶμα τοῦ Κορυβαντικοῦ and αἶμα τοῦ Διονύσου.

31 See *supra*.

16,4,³² while we have already seen that the mention of Pherephatte is an allusion to *Protr.* 16.1–2. This leaves out *Biwtakan Brak'sideay*, where *Biwtakan* is likely an adjective of origin (“from Bithynia”?) and *Brak'sideay* a personal name. The identified allusions, unfortunately, offer no assistance in clarifying who *Brak'sideay* might be: the reference, given the context, should be to someone who devised some sort of trick or deceit. Bearing this in mind, one might think of *Protr.* 53.5, where the famous sculptor Praxiteles is mentioned:

Ὁ Πραξιτέλης δέ, ὡς Ποσειδίππος ἐν τῷ Περὶ Κνίδου διασαφεῖ, τὸ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἄγαλμα τῆς Κνιδίας κατασκευάζων, τῷ Κρατίνης τῆς ἐρωμένης εἶδει παραπλήσιον πεποιήκεν αὐτήν, ἵν' ἔχοιεν οἱ δεῖλαιοι τὴν Πραξιτέλους ἐρωμένην προσκυνεῖν.

Praxiteles, as Poseidippus clarifies in *On Cnidus*, made the statue of Aphrodite of Cnidus in the shape of Cratine, his beloved one, so that the poor fellows [i.e., the inhabitants of Cnidus] would worship the woman loved by Praxiteles.

This is clearly a reference to a trick, and the name of Praxiteles is reasonably similar to *Brak'sideay*: it is conceivable that Grigor's allusion may point to this episode. However, this would not explain why the person mentioned by Grigor is called *Biwtakan*, and the evidence is not conclusive: after all, Grigor may also have had other works in mind here; for all these reasons, the allusion to *Protr.* 53.2 should be considered a mere hypothesis for the time being.

Bearing this in mind, it is now possible to arrange all 34 references to the *Protrepticus* found by Muradyan in Table 8.1, according to the aforementioned criteria. To these we can add the references noted above (the first is marked with an asterisk; the hypothetical allusion is marked with two asterisks).

3 Amusement and Fiction: The Fleeting Boundaries of Allusion

One of the purposes of the several quotations or allusions referring to the *Protrepticus*, as mentioned above and discussed in more detail elsewhere, is the embellishment of the letter in accordance with the stylistic rules of Byzantine—and late-antique—epistolography.³³ Mythological, epic, and Classical

³² For Muradyan's discussion of the passage in lett. 16,4, see Muradyan 2013, 52–53.

³³ Cf. Alpi 2018.

TABLE 8.1 References to the *Protrepticus* in Grigor Magistros's *Letters* (based on Muradyan 2012)

Long quotations		Short quotations		Allusions	
<i>Letters</i> (letter number, sentence)	<i>Protrepticus</i> (chapter.section)	<i>Letters</i> (letter number, sentence)	<i>Protrepticus</i> (chapter.section)	<i>Letters</i> (letter number, sentence)	<i>Protrepticus</i> (chapter.section)
9,107	72.1-2	12,1	19,3	6,15-16	19.4
9,108	72.4-5	15,5	11.1	6,15-16	42.3
9,111	74.3-5	27,29	20.1	6,19	17.2
9,112	77.2	34,2	11.1	15,16	1.1
16,4	42.1-5	34,2	18.1-2	20,17	17.2
26,48-51	1.1-2	47,2	54.2	20,17	19.2
30,10-11	1.1	71,4-5	11.1	26,21*	17.1 (or 19.3)
47,1-2	48.1-6	80,10	19.3	31,3	26.2
80,8	17.2-18.2	9,106	71.2-3	36,6	16.1-2
		9,110	74.1-2	36,6	42.2
		9,109	73.3	36,6**	53.5
				42,1-2	17.2-18.1
				47,1	39.5
				61,24	19.4
				61,24	18.2
				81,1	11.1

references are abundant in the letters of Byzantine authors of virtually any century, and their recurrent presence in Grigor's letters testifies to the spread of that model in 11th-century Armenia. Of course, not all the Greek material in Grigor's *Letters* depends on Clement of Alexandria: in addition to the borrowings from Clementine works,³⁴ certain themes are also drawn—as Muradyan noted—from the *Book of Chries* (*Girk' Pitoyic'*), from the Armenian version of the Pseudo-Nonnian *In IV Orationes Gregorii Nazianzeni Commentarii*, and from other Greek sources that are impossible to identify at the moment.³⁵ In

34 Muradyan, in addition to the references to the *Protrepticus*, notes three (possibly four) references to Clement's *Stromateis*: see Muradyan 2013, 46 (with a proposed reference at p. 71, note 86) and GM lett. 6,101 and lett. 46,14. Also, Grigor's mention of "brilliant [pearls] taken from the sea [the Attic Greek word θάλαττα is used here by Grigor]", associated with (gold) *nomismata* in GM, lett. 26,8 (արդ ընծայեմ քեզ նպաստ ոչ զնսմիզմստայն արաբացի, եւ ոչ զնարապիսանն ի թալաստայ արասիլիսեայ) is suspiciously reminiscent of a passage in Clement's *Paedagogus* (120.1), where pearls and gold are mentioned side by side: a few lines above (*Paedagogus*, 118.1), the Attic form θάλαττα is also present in a similar context: "Λίθους δὲ πελίουσ ἢ χλωρούσ καὶ τῆσ ἀπεξεωμένησ θαλάττησ τὰ ἐκβράσματα".

35 See Muradyan 2013, 55, 57, 59, 63, 65, and 68 for references to Pseudo-Nonnus; Muradyan

none of these cases, however, do we find the kind of lengthiness and level of adherence to the source text that can be observed in quotations from the *Protrepticus*. These other cases are in fact allusions, not quotations, and should be regarded as being on a par with the passing hints to Clementine works in the rest of the *Letters*: regardless of their provenance, such hints and allusions are embellishments, meant to display Grigor's erudition and to satisfy the Byzantine taste for *châris* in letter-writing.³⁶ We are dealing, admittedly, with a peculiar type of allusion, since an allusion presupposes that the author has a particular text in mind, which the reader must have read and recognised;³⁷ in our case it seems that Grigor is often alluding to *episodes* rather than to specific *texts*; but this does not significantly alter the mechanism: in any case, the Armenian prince engages his readers in a literary game whose purpose is to strengthen the internal ties the members of the learned élite.³⁸

In some cases, literary amusement is pushed to the extreme, and allusions become something different: in a couple of letters, almost entirely translated by Muradyan, Grigor indulges in tales for which no evident parallel can be found in Greek literature. In letter 31 an unnamed musician who is labelled the "son of Parmenides" is kidnapped by a "swift flying eagle" (արծիւ սրաթել) and then saved by fishermen, only to be brought to the temple of "stranger-slaying" (սսսարսսսսսս) Artemis; fortunately for him, the fishermen convince the priest (or priestess, բազմսսսսսս: Armenian has no grammatical gender) to spare his life. In letter 74 another musician called Pałētin, described as pupil of Eunomios, engages in a sort of dance with Demeter, sends sparkling flashes from his shoes, and finally receives honour in the "assembly of the Thomians" (ի ժողովին թոմացոյն).³⁹ Although some Clementine material is present, these can hardly be considered allusions. It is true that the *Protrepticus* (42.3) contains the plot of *Iphigenia in Tauris* by Euripides, where the human sacrifice of strangers to Artemis is described, and Grigor, who in letter 16,4 makes an abridgement with literal quotations from that section of the *Protrepticus* (i.e., 42.1–4, but without including Artemis), most probably took the concept from

2013, 36–37 for references to the *Girk' Pitoyic'*; Muradyan 2013, 58–65 for references whose source is unclear.

36 Cf. Grünbart 2004, 364: "La χάρτις, il fascino di una lettera, si manifesta nell'uso di citazioni, proverbi ed *exempla* mitologici adatti".

37 Cf. Pasquali 1994, 275: "Le reminiscenze possono essere inconsapevoli; le imitazioni, il poeta può desiderare che sfuggano al pubblico; le allusioni non producono l'effetto voluto se non su di un lettore che si ricordi chiaramente del testo cui si riferiscono".

38 On this function of epistolography see Papaioannou 2010, 191–192. See also Bernard 2015, 185–186 on the role of humour and jokes in that context.

39 For an almost full translation see Muradyan 2013, 70–71, note 86, and 50–51 respectively.

there. The “assembly of the Thomians” instead, as Muradyan notes, is merely Grigor’s misunderstanding of the *Θαυμασίων συναγωγή*, i.e., the “Collection of Wonders”, a literary work by one Monimos⁴⁰ which Clement mentions in that same passage (*Protr.* 42.4). In other words, Grigor Magistros here mixes up material extrapolated from Greek, Christian (e.g. the fishermen as saviours) and possibly Armenian sources (the “swift flying eagle”)⁴¹ into something new and, in a sense, original.

Regarding these episodes, Muradyan tentatively supposes that “some stories ‘in Greek style’ are Grigor’s original composition”.⁴² She may well be right: Grigor himself confesses, at the end of letter 31, that the Parmenides episode is “an allegorical tale, that we philosophised in the ways of the rhetors”.⁴³ It is an imitation of a myth, whose importance lies in the general atmosphere being conveyed, more than in the accurate reproduction of a source text (or episode). This is, after all, the very essence of the “ways of the rhetors”, since “Saper leggere e scrivere ed essere eloquenti (ovviamente al grado più evoluto) richiede che ci si faccia anche traduttori, interpreti, parafrasti, trasformatori di testi e in generale imitatori”.⁴⁴

The abundance of narratives for which a Greek background is often difficult to detect or absent⁴⁵ might also be explained by the fact that fables, tales,

40 Probably the philosopher of the 4th century BCE.

41 Muradyan notes that Clement of Alexandria uses the adjective *δξύπτερος*, corresponding to the Armenian *սրաթև*, “swift-flying, swift winged” in an otherwise unrelated passage of the *Stromateis* (II, 15, 67 and V, 8, 81, edition: Stählin—Früchtel—Treu 1985), describing an eagle. A relationship with the word used by Grigor is certainly possible, as is—one may add—the parallel with the etymologically correspondent *ώκυπέτης*, “swift-flying”, which is used by Hesiod in the *Works and Days* (Hes. *Op.*, 212, edition: West 1978) and Gregory of Nazianzus in his poems (*Carm. II.2*, I, 160, edition: Migne 1862, col 1463). The most probable source for *սրաթև*, however, is the famous epic fragment preserved by Movsēs Xorenac’i about the Alan princess Sat’enik and her lover king Artašēs, who crosses a river “like a swift-winged eagle” (“*որպէս արծնի սրաթև*”, Movses Xorenac’i *Patm.*, II, 50, 11, edition: Muradyan—Yuzbashyan 2003; translation in Thomson 1978, 192); on the same topic see also Martirosyan 2013, 96. This would be another perfect example of how, as van Lint remarked, Grigor is capable of “fusing Hellenistic erudition with the Irano-Armenian matrix” of his world (van Lint 2016, 197, cf. *supra*).

42 Muradyan 2013, 72.

43 GM, lett. 31,10: “սյտոբիկ բանք առակականք իմաստասիրեալ ի մէնջ հռետորական”.

44 Barchiesi—Conte 1989, 82: “to know how to read and write and to be eloquent (to the most advanced degree, of course) requires one to become a translator, an interpreter, a paraphraser, a transformer of texts and, more generally, an imitator”.

45 The examples, in Grigor’s *Letters*, are many: from the tale of a Persian princess, a fish and a pearl in letter 14,13–17, to the architect who builds a palace on the Indian seashore in let-

and myths, especially one with exotic settings, became increasingly common in 11th-century Byzantium.⁴⁶ Grigor, who indulges in many more similar tales with Greek, Iranian or even Indian settings⁴⁷ for the benefit of his Armenian or Byzantine-Armenian readers, may have been receptive to this new trend and may have included (or adapted) episodes from different literary traditions, which are impossible to identify at the moment; after all, the famous *Book of Syntipas*, one of the best-known Byzantine collections of fables, was translated from Syriac into Greek by Michael Andreopoulos, towards the end of the 11th century, for an Armeno-Greek patron, Gabriel, Duke of Melitene.⁴⁸

4 The Authority (and Reliability) of Quotations

Many allusions to the *Protrepticus* or to other, often unidentifiable, material in the letters could therefore have the sole function of amusing the reader. The situation with long or short quotations, however, is arguably different. Certainly, they serve the purpose of displaying Grigor's erudition, but their length and their adherence to the Greek text of the *Protrepticus* suggest that they also had a more practical use, and that their source text enjoyed a particular status. As for the function of the quotations, it may be observed that in many cases they serve an argumentative purpose: this is most evident in the many quotations contained in letter 9, addressed to the Muslim prince Ibrahim and intended as an apologetic and polemical work.⁴⁹ Such quotations are drawn from a section of the *Protrepticus* where Clement uses various (and at times spurious) quotes from Classical poets and philosophers in order to argue that, despite its polytheistic facade, pre-Christian Greek theological thought understood the concept of one, almighty God.⁵⁰ In letter 9 Grigor employs these quotations

ter 14,21–25; from the tree producing human fruits in letter 15,11–15, to the fish who fights alongside the Amazons in letter 14,18–20.

46 See Krönung 2016, 448–456.

47 See note 45 above.

48 See Conca 2004, Toth 2014, and Toth 2016.

49 On the exchange between Grigor Magistros and Ibrahim, see van Lint 2010 and van Lint 2016, 205–206.

50 As scholarly works have made clear, this collection in fact pre-dates Clement himself, and its core was probably developed in a Judaeo-Christian environment, from where it was included in the pseudo-Justinian *De Monarchia*, cf. Denis 2000 and Simonetti 2011; on the relationship between this collection and Clement's work, see Azzarà 2004. The quotations by Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, in any case, appear to be exclusively dependent on Clementine material.

in order to reply to a question that Ibrahim has posed him, namely whether pagan philosophers affirmed the existence of one God, or of the Trinity.⁵¹ In his answer, Grigor uses the variety of theological positions of the “philosophers” (including poets like Hesiod) to show that their testimony, even if it contains hints about monotheism, cannot be used to argue against the Trinity.⁵² Even the passage on the Tyrrhenians mentioned above, in letter 27, is used as a maxim on the ingratitude and fallacy of nations, placed on the same level of a biblical reference:

And what wonder is there, if the Tyrrhenian barbarians profess a cult of shameful passions, where even the Athenians and people elsewhere in Greece and Attica [do so]? Therefore, what wonder [is there] or why should I marvel, given that even the great Moses suffered contempt from those whom he was leading to salvation, [to the point of] bringing the godly meekness to indignation, [he] who broke into pieces—because of the sin in front of God—even the letters inscribed by God, written on stone with the immortal finger?⁵³

In almost all cases, the quotations from the *Protrepticus*—whether long or short—are no mere literary amusements: they are used for “philosophising”, իմաստասիրել, a word that—as Muradyan correctly noted—means, for Grigor, “to examine whatever topic by bringing forth examples”.⁵⁴ Such is the case, for instance, with the passage on Dionysus in letter 71,4–5 (taken from *Protr.*, 11.1), which is used in a discussion about wine, or with that in letter 80,10

51 GM, lett. 9,36: “Եթէ արտաքին իմաստասէրք մի Աստուած ասացին զոլ եթէ երրորդութիւն”.

52 Because “they did not know the unity of God nor the Trinity: however, they did worship the number three”, see GM, lett. 9,115: “սոքա ոչ միութիւն Աստուծոյ ծաննաւ եւ ոչ երրորդութիւն, սակայն զերրորդն թիւ պատուեցին”.

53 GM, lett. 27,29–30: “Եւ զինչ զարմանալիք են, եթէ տիռռեանցի դուծքն ամաութալեաց պաշտան տանին ախտիցն, ուր եւ աթենացիք իսկ, եւ այլում Ելլադայ եւ Ատտիկէ: Արդ այժմ զինչ սքանչանս, կամ զիմրոզ զարմացից, եթէ մեծին Մովսէսի յիւրոցն հասանէր փրկելոց փոխարէն անարգանս եւ ի սրտմտութիւն շարժեալ զաստուածային հեզութիւն, որ եւ զտառս աստուածային մակադրեալն ի վիմէ գծագրեալ մատամբն անմահի, մանրեալ մեղաւ Տեառն Աստուծոյ առաջի”.

54 Muradyan 2014, 30: “Իմաստասիրել՝ բայը Գրիգորի բառապաշարում ավելի հաճախ նշանակում է ոչ թե՛ ‘գբալվել փիլիսոփայությամբ’, այլ քննարկել որևէ թեմա, օրինակներ բերելով Աստվածաշնչից եւ այլ գրքերից” (“the verb ‘to philosophise’, in Grigor’s lexicon, often means not ‘to engage in philosophy’, but rather to examine whatever topic by bringing examples from the Bible or from other books”).

(taken from *Protr.* 19.3) on pomegranates.⁵⁵ Only the quotation in letter 16,4 (about sacrifices to Zeus and about the Spartan king Theopompus) seems to be a purely erudite reference serving no clear argumentative purpose.

This use of the material from the *Protrepticus* suggests that Grigor regarded the text he was drawing from as an authoritative one; this also explains the adherence of the quotations to the source text, a feature that is shared with other authoritative works mentioned in the letters, such as Movsēs Xorenac'i's *History of the Armenians* and Dawit' Anyakt's *Definitions*.⁵⁶ Conversely, works of practical use—such as the *Book of Chries* or the Pseudo-Nonnian *Commentary*—are only echoed here and there, and they never appear to be quoted literally.⁵⁷ As we have seen, they offer material for allusions or even (unconscious?) reminiscences, not for quotes: as such, they can be ascribed to the model of “evolved” literature, which is not “authored” in a standard sense but is rather developed through time.⁵⁸

Conversely, in the case of quotations, Grigor Magistros transmits a sometimes abridged but overall precise translation of passages from the *Protrepticus*, to the point that in some cases his testimony is relevant even for textual criticism. He is careful to follow his source, even if he never names it. Let us consider a passage from letter 9 (GM lett. 9,108), containing a Pythagorean fragment from the *Protrepticus* (*Protr.* 72.4). The fragment, which is written in Doric Greek, is also present in Pseudo-Justin (*Cohortatio ad Graecos*, 19.2 = *Coh.*) and in Cyril of Alexandria (*Contra Iulianum Imperatorem*, 1, 42 = *C.Iul.*).⁵⁹ It has also been published by Mullach in 1960.⁶⁰

55 There are, of course, many other examples which cover many of the quotations listed in the table above: letter 30,10–11 (on music), letter 34,2 (on cauldrons), letter 47,1–2 (on the veneration of idols), and letter 15,5 (on trees).

56 These works are very often quoted word by word: see, for instance, letter 15,10 (for a quotation from Movsēs Xorenac'i) and letter 21,34 (for a quotation from Dawit').

57 See, for instance, the reference about Medea and Pelias taken from the *Book of Chries*, as documented by Muradyan (Muradyan 2013, 36–37): it only has a loose resemblance to the wider account of the *Book of Chries*, with which there are no precise syntactical parallels. Only the topic and the general information provided by Grigor allow us to posit with a good degree of certainty that the *Book of Chries* is indeed the source of the episode.

58 Kraft 1975, p. 185.

59 The *Cohortatio* has been published in a critical edition by Marcovich 1990. Riedweg, the editor of the last and most scrupulous edition of the work by Ps.-Justin, proposed to change the title to *Ad Graecos de vera religione*: see Riedweg 1994. Against this proposal (but otherwise in praise of Riedweg's edition, against that of Marcovich), see Simonetti 1996. For the edition of the *Contra Iulianum imperatorem* see Burguière—Évieux 1985 and Riedweg—Kinzig 2016: while taking the former into account, I have used the latter here for our comparison with Clement's text.

60 See Mullach 1860, 501–502. The fragment was later considered a Hellenistic fabrication

Իսկ պիրթագորականքն այսպէս ասեն. Աստուած մի է, եւ զաա ոչ, որպէս ոմանք կարծեն, արտաքոյ յարդարման զարդուս է, ի սմա. բոլոր ի բոլորում շրջանակի, ակնածու ղէտ ամենայն սերման ծննդեան, խառնումն բոլորեցուն, էլով գործաւ իւրոյ զաւրութեանն եւ գործոց, սկիզբն շնչացութիւն բոլոր շրջանակիս եւ ամենեցուն շարժումն.

3 ակնածու] ակնածի C Kostaneanc' 4 բոլորեցուն էլով] բոլորիցն ունէլով B C Kostaneanc'

But the Pythagoreans instead speak as follows: “God is one, and he does not—as some suspect—reside outside the order of this world, but is rather in it; he is all in the whole circle, he is overseer and sentinel over every generation, the mixture of all things, being the builder of his own strength and of his own deeds, beginning and breath of the whole circle and movement of all things”.

Οὐκ ἀποκρυπτέον οὐδὲ τοὺς ἀμφὶ τὸν Πυθαγόραν, οἱ φασιν· “ὁ μὲν θεὸς εἷς, χοῦτος δὲ οὐχ, ὡς τινες ὑπονοοῦσιν, ἐκτὸς τᾶς διακοσμῆσις, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτᾷ, ὅλος ἐν ὄλω τῷ κύκλῳ ἐπίσκοπος πάσας γενέσις, κρᾶσις τῶν ὄλων αἰώνων, καὶ ἐργάτας τῶν αὐτοῦ δυνάμιων καὶ ἔργων, ἀρχὰ πάντων, ἐν οὐρανῷ φωστήρ, καὶ πάντων πατήρ, νοῦς καὶ ψύχωσις τῷ ὄλω κύκλῳ, πάντων κίνασις”.

1–2 χοῦτος] P¹ Mondésert, Marcovich : οὔτος Wilamowitz *rec. edd. cet.* : αὐτὸς *Coh.*, *C. Iul.* 2 αὐτᾷ] P¹ *edd.* : ἐαυτῷ *Coh.* (*codd.*, Marcovich : αὐτῷ Riedweg) : αὐτῷ *C. Iul.* 3 ἐπίσκοπος ... γενέσις] P¹ *edd.* : ἐπισκοπῶν πάσας γενεσίας ἐστὶν *Coh.* : ἐπ. πάσας γενεάς ἐστὶ *C. Iul.* | κρᾶσις] *post* κρᾶσις *add.* ἐὼν *Coh.*, ὡν *C. Iul.* | αἰώνων] Stählin *ex Coh. et C. Iul.*, *rec.* Butterworth, Marcovich : ἀεὶ ὡν P¹ Mondésert 4 αὐτοῦ] Victorius, *rec.* Mondésert, Marcovich : αὐτοῦ P¹ *edd. cet.*, *Coh.* (*codd.*, Riedweg : αὐτοῦ Marcovich), *C. Iul.* (αὐτοῦ *coni.* Migne, *rec.* Burguière) | δυνάμιων] M², *edd.* : δυνάμιων *corr. ex* δυνάμεων P¹ | ἀρχὰ πάντων] Marcovich *ex Coh. et C. Iul.* : ἀπάντων P¹ *edd. cet.* 5 τῷ ὄλω κύκλῳ] Klotz *rec. edd. pler.* : τῷ ὄλω κύκλῳ P¹ Mondésert : τῶν ὄλων κύκλων *Coh. et C. Iul.* πάντων] P¹, *edd.*, *C. Iul.* : ἀπάντων *Coh.*

In this passage, several points of accordance can be observed between the Armenian text and *Parisinus graecus* 451 (P), that is the manuscript from which the extant direct tradition of the *Protrepticus* originates (see *supra*). The most noticeably similar readings (regardless of their being correct or not) are the following: *ἐν quu* is closer to the transmitted reading *χοῦτος* than to *αὐτὸς*, as we

in Thesleff 1961, 122, and published as such (in the form it appears in the *Cohortatio*) in Thesleff 1965, 186. Consequently, it is not included in the collections of Pre-Socratic *fragmenta* by Diels—Kranz 1964 and Gemelli Marciano 2007.

read in *Coh.* and *C. Iul.*, on the basis of which the emendation οὔτος was proposed by Wilamowitz (note that the accusative mark Գ-, in Armenian, has no justification here, and is very likely an error that occurred in the Armenian transmission); Ի սմու reflects ἐν αὐτῷ (as in P), against the reflexive form ἐαυτῷ of *Coh.*;⁶¹ finally, the genitive/dative singular բոլոր շրջանակիս is more in accordance with τῷ ὅλῳ κύκλῳ (again as in P) than with the plural τῶν ὅλων κύκλων of both *Coh.* and *C. Iul.* The difficulties posed by the dative in Greek⁶² are ignored in the Armenian word, where genitive and dative coincide.

However, there are also substantial differences with the text of P, concentrated in the final sentence of the passage. Grigor's Խառնումս բոլորեցուն, ելով գործաւելիք իրոյ զաւրութեանն եւ գործոց ("the mixture of all things, being the builder of his own strength and of his own deeds") has the participle ելով ("being"), which corresponds to [ἀεί] ὢν, partly in accordance with P (since ἀεί is left out) and against the text of *Coh.* and *C. Iul.*, where we read αἰώνων,⁶³ the reflexive Իրոյ presupposes the Greek αὐτοῦ instead of αὐτοῦ, as we read in P (and in *Coh.* and *C. Iul.* as well).⁶⁴ Most interestingly, Grigor has the term սկիզբն ("beginning"), which does not appear in P (probably because of a scribal error) but only in *Coh.* and *C. Iul.*;⁶⁵ the following portion of the Greek text is omitted in Grigor's quotation, which continues from ψύχωσις (accurately translated as շնչացութիւն, "breath") until the end of the sentence. In other words, the Greek text presupposed by Grigor's quotation is κράσις τῶν ὅλων ὢν, ἐργάτας τῶν αὐτοῦ δυνάμειον καὶ ἔργων, ἀρχὰ [πάντων ...], notably different from that of P; the lack of ἀεί in the translation is not particularly significant in itself, nor is the reflexive pronoun Իրոյ (= αὐτοῦ) instead of αὐτοῦ:⁶⁶ however, the presence of սկիզբն (= ἀρχὰ) can hardly have been invented on the basis of a text like that of the *Parisinus graecus* 451.⁶⁷

61 Since Armenian lacks a grammatical gender, of course, Ի սմու could also stand for ἐν αὐτῷ, as we read in Cyril.

62 On the basis of this, τῷ ὅλῳ κύκλῳ was proposed by Klotz and accepted by Stählin and Marcovich.

63 This word is therefore accepted by Stählin and Marcovich, as an emendation of ἀεί ὢν.

64 Note that a few words before, αὐτός was translated with the equally non-reflexive Armenian pronoun սու.

65 Hence Marcovich proposes to correct the text of P.

66 This could be the outcome of a lucky error (a misreading of the breathing) or a successful—and rather easy, given the context—*divinatio*. It is obvious that the divinity should be the source of its own power: as noted in the apparatus, Pietro Vettori (Victorius) also printed αὐτοῦ (already in the 16th century): was he motivated to do so by the same considerations?

67 In this case, the Armenian text would represent an element in support of Marcovich's conjecture—unless, of course, one advances the hypothesis that սկիզբն is a some-

Another passage, which is placed just before the Pythagorean fragment both in Grigor's letter 9 (GM lett. 9,107) and in Clement's *Protrepticus* (72.1–2), offers a further point of interest. In this case we are dealing with a fragment of Cleanthes, the Stoic philosopher of the 3rd century BC. The fragment, other than in Clement of Alexandria—in the *Protrepticus* and (with minor differences) in his *Stromateis* (*Strom.* v, 110), is only present in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* by Eusebius of Caesarea (*Praep.* XIII, 13.37), a work which incorporates large portions of the *Protrepticus*.⁶⁸ The Greek text has also been published in the first volume of von Arnim's *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*.⁶⁹

Իսկ Կղէանթէս Պէգեսացի՝ արդար, իրաւակ, արժանաւոր եւ սուրբ, իշխան անձին ունի զինքն, պիտանացու, գեղեցիկ, հզար, աներկիւղ, պատուական, անհպարտ, խնամածու, հեզ, ի յամենայնէ անբիծ, միշտ նոյնպէս կայ մնայ.

Cleanthes *Pēgesac'i* [calls God] “orderly, just, pious and holy, he is the only lord over himself, useful, beautiful and hard, fearless, esteemed, without arrogance, careful, gentle and deprived of any blame, he always remains the same”.

- 1 **Κλεάνθης δὲ ὁ Πηδασεύς, ὁ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς φιλόσοφος, ὃς οὐ θεογονίαν ποιητικήν, θεολογίαν δὲ ἀληθινήν ἐνδείκνυται, οὐκ ἀπεκρύψατο τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ ὅτι περ εἶχεν φρονῶν·**
 |τάγαθὸν ἐρωτᾷς μ' οἶόν ἐστ'; Ἄκουε δὴ· *inc. Strom., Praep.*
τεταγμένον, δίκαιον, ὄσιον, εὐσεβές,
 5 **κρατοῦν ἑαυτοῦ, χρήσιμον, καλόν, δέον, αὐστηρόν, αὐθέκαστον, ἀει συμφέρον, ἄφοβον, ἄλυπον, λυσιτελές, ἀνώδυνον, ὠφέλιμον, εὐάρεστον, ἀσφαλές, φίλον, ἔντιμον, <εὐχάριστον,> ὁμολογούμενον**

what loose rendering of the *πατήρ* which appears in the passage otherwise ignored in the Armenian. This is possible, even though the lexical similarity between Greek and Armenian in this passage would argue against such a loose translation. Additionally, it should be noted that P also contains (in ff. 163^v–187^v) the *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, where we read *ἀρχὰ πάντων*: in theory, this could have been a possible (if unlikely) source for an emendation based solely on the contents of P.

68 Book 5 of the *Stromateis* was edited by Stählin in 1906 (Stählin 1906) and revised several times up to the final edition of 1985 (Stählin—Früchtel—Treu 1985), and then, in 1981, by A. Le Boulluec and P. Voulet (Le Boulluec 1981). For the *Praeparatio evangelica* see the editions by Mras 1983 (a revision of Mras 1956) and by des Places (des Places 1983).

69 Von Arnim 1905, 126–127.

- 10 εὐκλεές, ἄτυφον, ἐπιμελές, πρᾶον, σφοδρόν,
 χρονιζόμενον, ἄμεμπτον, αἰεὶ διαμένον.
 Ἄνελεύθερος πᾶς ὅστις εἰς δόξαν βλέπει,
 ὡς δὴ παρ' ἐκείνης τευξόμενος καλοῦ τινος.

1 Πηδασεύς] Wilamowitz *ex Strab. XIII 6n*, *edd.* : πισαδεὺς P¹ : Ἀσσεύς Ménage : Τρωαδεύς Meineke 8-9 ἀσφαλές, φίλον, ἔντιμον] P¹, *edd.*, *Praep.* : *om. Strom.* II ἄμεμπτον] P¹, *edd.*, *Praep.*, *Strom.* : *cum v.l. ἀμίμητον Strom.* | αἰεὶ] Klotz, *rec.* Marcovich : αἰεὶ P¹ *edd. cet.*

No variant readings are recorded in Muradyan's edition of the Armenian text. As is evident, in this case Grigor makes an abridgement of his *Vorlage*, retaining only the parts highlighted in bold but maintaining the order of God's attributes, sometimes expanding them in the translation through the use of periphrases. This is the case with κρατοῦν ἑαυτοῦ, rendered as իշխաւն աւձին ունի զհնրն (literally "he has himself as ruler over his own self"); ἄμεμπτον, translated as աւրբո՞, "blameless", and reinforced by ի յաւննայիւն; and αἰεὶ διαμένον, paraphrased with two finite verbs, միշտ նիշուլիս կայ մնայ (literally "he always stays remains the same"). What is interesting to note, however, is that Cleanthes is called *Pēgesac'i* (Պէգեսացի), i.e., "from Peges" in Grigor's text, while the direct tradition of the *Protrepticus* (which relies only on a *codex unicus*, P, and its copy M, see above) has the corrupted form *πισαδεύς*. In all other works where this fragment is present, it is introduced without any reference to Cleanthes's origin. The mistaken reading has led philologists to conjecture either Pedasos (<Πηδασεύς), Assos (<Ἀσσεύς) or even the Troad (<Τρωαδεύς) as Cleanthes's birthplace. Grigor's testimony seems to support Pedasos, since *Pēgesac'i* (Պէգեսացի) is an easily explainable corruption of *Pēdasac'i* (Պէդասացի), given the similarity of *g* (գ) and *d* (դ) in Armenian. It is highly unlikely that even someone as erudite as Grigor would correct a reading similar to that of P (*πισαδεύς*) into *Pēgesac'i* or even *Pēdasac'i*. Not even Arethas, who had commissioned P and revised it on several occasions, emended the text here: it is difficult to imagine that 11th-century Armenian scholars were more acquainted with Stoic philosophers than him. Realistically, Grigor's *Vorlage* had the correct reading Πηδασεύς,⁷⁰ allowing us to conclude that Grigor's text is not dependent on P; rather, it represents a previous stage, or a separate branch of the tradition.

70 This would confirm Wilamowitz's conjecture. Marcovich, in his edition, erroneously credits Sylburg instead of Wilamowitz as the author of the conjecture; the 1592 edition by Sylburg and Heinsius, to which Marcovich refers, reads Πισαδεύς, just like P.

5 Conclusions: More Questions Than Answers?

In conclusion, we have seen that Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros, in his *Letters*, makes extensive use of material taken from the *Protrepticus* of Clement of Alexandria, albeit without ever naming that work or its author: the *Protrepticus* is indeed one of the most widely quoted individual works in the whole epistolary. The references to this Clementine work are used in accordance with the principles of Byzantine epistolography, which requires a frequent use of allusions, *exempla* and mythical references. In Grigor's case such allusions may come from Armenian literature, from Scripture, or from Greek literature: in the last case, they often take the form of allusions to (or even quotations from) the *Protrepticus*. However, there are also several other cases where the episodes to which Grigor is referring are unknown: some of them may be his own invention, others might be related to lost Greek or Armenian material or (perhaps more probably) to other literary traditions. Further investigation is needed in this direction.

As for the relationship between Grigor Magistros's work and the *Protrepticus*, a good number of quotations can be found in which there is a very close correspondence with the Greek text as preserved in *Parisinus graecus* 451, copied in the beginning of the 10th century and serving as the archetype for the direct tradition of that work. There are hints, however, that Grigor's *Vorlage* did not depend on the *Parisinus*, or even on a copy of it: a tempting hypothesis is that Grigor could access a manuscript now lost, belonging to a different (and extinct) branch of the Greek tradition, but this is already a step into uncharted territories. There are simply too many things that we still do not know: was Grigor translating directly from the Greek, or was he using an extant Armenian translation of which no other trace has reached us? Was he drawing on a complete text of the *Protrepticus* or on an abridgement of it? Was he relying on a manuscript with a content comparable to that of *Parisinus graecus* 451—which also includes the *Stromateis* and the *Paedagogus* by Clement of Alexandria, as well as Pseudo-Justin's *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, Eusebius's *Praeparatio evangelica*, and other works—or did he have a different selection at hand? As we have seen, addressing these issues means tackling the philological question, for which much research still remains to be done.

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On the Indirect Tradition and Circulation of the Ancient Armenian Platonic Translations

Irene Tinti

To Theo, in whose office I spent many hours working on the Armenian Timaeus and in the company of our mutual friend, Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni



1 Introduction¹

The Ancient Armenian translations of five Platonic dialogues (namely the *Timaeus*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology of Socrates*, *Laws*, and *Minos*), anonymous and undated as well as still lacking a critical or even reliable edition,² constitute

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- 1 The present article relates some of the results of a research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation through an *Ambizione* grant (<http://p3.snf.ch/project-168147>) and based at the *Unité d'arménien*, University of Geneva. The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the SNSF.
 - 2 The available editions (Suk'rean 1877; Zarbhanalean 1890) often alter the text of the only complete manuscript to normalise the language and/or make it adhere more closely to the Greek, and these changes are not always explicitly signalled. On this issue, cf. at least Aimi 2008–2009, 18–19 and 2011, 17–18. Aimi herself has prepared critical editions of the *Apology of Socrates* (2008–2009) and the 5th book of the *Laws* (2016a) for her Master's and doctoral thesis, respectively, but her laudable efforts remain at present unrevised and unpublished; the present writer has been able to consult them by kind permission of the author. For a recent contribution providing useful data towards a critical edition of the *Euthyphro*, see Scarpellini 2016 (based on Scarpellini 2011–2012). Previous works devoted to philological analyses of the dialogues are listed in Tinti 2012a, b and 2016a, as well as in Aimi 2008–2009, 2011, 2014, 2016a. Given this documentary situation, any serious analysis of the five translated dialogues still needs to be chiefly conducted on the basis of the extant (and known) manuscript witnesses. The present writer is in possession of colour photographs of the main codex, V 1123, taken from the original (with permission from the Mekhitarist Congregation) by herself, Dr Madalena Modesti, and (now Dr) Chiara Aimi during a research trip to St Lazarus in 2010.

a substantial and comparatively little investigated dossier.³ Written in heavily Hellenising Armenian, at the present state of knowledge these texts are attested in their entirety only in one manuscript of uncertain date (17th–18th centuries?),⁴ currently kept in the library of the Mekhitarist monastery of St Lazarus, Venice ([V] 1123). Before reaching Italy in 1835, this codex had belonged to Armenians living in New Julfa and Madras.⁵ A second Platonic codex, which could have contained either the same dialogues or other Platonic translations, had also been on its way to Venice from Madras, but was lost in a shipwreck near the Cape of Good Hope.⁶

The present writer was engaged for several years in a series of interrelated research projects (respectively based in Budapest, Oxford, and Geneva), whose ultimate goal was to reach reasonable and motivated conclusions on these translations' authorship and date. In particular, her main purpose was to establish whether the traditional attribution to diplomat and scholar Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni (ca. 990–1059) could be substantiated with any compelling evidence.⁷

As part of this wider investigation and while trying to ascertain whether the Platonic translations had left any traces in dated Armenian texts that could help narrow down a timeframe and establish a relevant *terminus ante quem*, she was able to detect a few direct quotations that are unmistakably drawn from the known Armenian version rather than translated anew from the Greek. To the best of her knowledge, some of these have never been presented or discussed before, at least in the context of Platonic scholarship.

3 The Platonic section takes up nearly 600 manuscript pages in the only complete codex (see below).

4 Aimi 2016a, 27. Cf. also Čemčemean 1998, 556. This exemplar is a composite codex whose final section, clearly of different origin, contains Armenian versions of Proclus's *Institutiones Theologicae* and of a commentary on the same text: see Aimi 2016a, 18 ff.

5 Cf. Conybeare 1889 and 1891; Aimi 2008–2009, 14; 2011, 18.

6 Conybeare 1891, 193 calls it “another copy”, thus suggesting that it contained the same dialogues as the surviving one, but, as Aimi 2011, 15 rightly points out, it might just as easily have been a companion book, including a different set of dialogues.

7 For a detailed analysis of the relevant scholarly literature and extensive bibliographic references, see Tinti 2012b (now to be integrated with the information provided in Benati 2018); cf. also Tinti 2012a and 2016a. See also the bibliography listed in Aimi 2014, 298, note 13 and in the other works by Aimi cited above (note 2), as well as in Calzolari 2014, 350–351 and 2016, 54 and 63. The possible authorship of the Armenian translation of the *Timaeus* is briefly discussed in Jonkers 2017, especially 390 ff., although the text contains a few inaccurate details (see notably 390; cf. below). The present writer is currently working on a publication detailing her conclusions on the topic. For additional references on Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, see the article by Federico Alpi in the present volume.

The purpose of the present article is therefore to present briefly and systematically all traces of textual circulation so far detected for the Platonic versions, including both the aforementioned quotations and textual excerpts attested in manuscripts other than V 1123. In so doing, the author hopes to inaugurate a line of research that will, in time, bring new data to light and contribute to a better understanding of the fortune and reception of the Armenian Platonic dossier in Armenian literature. To that end, a comprehensive analysis of the texts and passages in which the Platonic quotations have been inserted as well as of the function they serve in the new context will be needed. This, however, exceeds the scope of the present contribution, which will focus instead on three basic elements, namely: what the ensemble of these data can tell us about the diffusion of the Armenian Platonic versions; what the minor witnesses and indirect tradition can tell us about the reliability of the sole (and late) complete manuscript, V 1123; and, finally, whether this type of analysis can provide meaningful clues towards solving the complex puzzle of the Platonic versions' date and attribution.

2 Potential Significance of the Data and Methodological Remarks

As anticipated, the surviving direct tradition of the Armenian Platonic dossier as a whole is extremely limited and comparatively late. However, that in itself does not necessarily say much about the dialogues' fortune and circulation (or lack thereof) in Armenian milieu. As is well known, even pivotal 5th-century texts are nowadays attested in very few and/or late witnesses, even though they were certainly well-known in the past.⁸

Luckily, new evidence has emerged in recent years that can help us rescue—at least partially—the Platonic versions from the void in which they previously seemed to have existed, as well as to get a glimpse at a state of the text that is certainly closer in time to their composition (whenever one might choose to situate that event).

It should be pointed out immediately that all traces of textual circulation so far detected concern the *Timaeus*, while no secondary or indirect witnesses are known for the other four translated dialogues.

In theory, this could be interpreted as a clue in favour of a different date and/or origin of the *Timaeus* as opposed to the other Platonic versions, especially because the notion that the *Timaeus* differs somehow from the rest of

⁸ See e.g. Orenego 2010, 449–450. Cf. also Coulie 2014, notably 156 ff.

the dossier has been occasionally brought forward in the relevant scholarly literature.⁹ We cannot address the latter claim here, even though it is worth mentioning that the present writer has not been able to detect, in her own investigations, any substantial linguistic features or translation strategies that systematically differentiate the *Timaeus* from the rest.

More pertinently for our purposes, the lack of data for the other four dialogues does not necessarily imply a different origin or date of the texts involved. First of all, as noted above, this line of research is still very much in its infancy and no conclusions on the actual circulation of the five texts, or lack thereof, can be drawn (yet) on the basis of a mere handful of references and secondary witnesses. Secondly, even in (Western) Classical milieu, the *Timaeus* was especially popular among Platonic dialogues; as a matter of fact, one of the textual passages that had a certain amount of circulation in Armenia(n) (see below) happens to be one of the most frequently cited Platonic passages in Christian texts overall.¹⁰

Naturally, when trying to reconstruct the fortune of the Armenian Platonic translations we need to make sure that the traces we identify pertain specifically to the Armenian versions of the dialogues, since direct translations were not the only way Platonic themes and ideas could enter the Armenian tradition. The most obvious sources of Platonic elements were the Greek texts themselves, which could have been read in the original (cf. Tinti 2016b), but anthologies, commentaries, and secondary references in Greek or Armenian authors could constitute additional or alternative points of entry. Therefore, in order to identify undisputed traces of textual circulation in Armenian contexts, a thematic similarity or even generic lexical parallels are not sufficient:¹¹ we need to detect either a precise textual match with the Armenian versions of the dialogues, or at least shared elements that could not have arisen independently solely on the basis of the Greek texts, or by chance.

The traces of textual circulation so far detected can be divided into two categories: excerpts from the *Timaeus* that were circulating independently from the main text, and direct quotations or undisputable references to the Armenian version of the dialogue in the writings of Armenian authors.

9 See Tinti 2012b, especially 225–226, for details and references.

10 Cf. Tinti 2012b, 273, note 146, with references.

11 Cf. e.g. Tinti 2012b, 228ff. for a detailed textual comparison between the Armenian *Timaeus* and passages from the *Definitions of Philosophy* by David the Invincible.

3 Excerpts from the Armenian *Timaeus*

As previously brought to the attention of the international scholarly community,¹² a section from the Armenian version of the *Timaeus*, corresponding roughly to one page of text in the Venetian codex (see below), has been transmitted in several of the manuscripts containing the *Book on Nature* by Iṣox,¹³ a Syrian working in Cilicia in the 13th century. As the title suggests, this work is a treatise on natural philosophy, discussing astronomical, geographical, meteorological, botanical, mineralogical, and medical problems among other topics. It is written in Middle Armenian and is not divided into chapters. However, three additional chapters “On Animals”, “On Taste” and “On Colours”, which do not belong to the treatise, are associated with it in part of the manuscript tradition. Unlike the first two, the chapter “On Colours” is never attributed to Iṣox in any manuscript.¹⁴

Stella Vardanyan correctly identified the source of this passage by comparing it with Suk'rean's (1877) edition of the Armenian *Timaeus*,¹⁵ and critically edited it on the basis of seven manuscripts from the Matenadaran,¹⁶ the most ancient of which dates to the 15th century,¹⁷ although the excerpt is attested in several other witnesses.¹⁸ Therefore, unlike most of the dialogue, this passage—corresponding to section 67 d 5–68 d 2 in the Greek¹⁹—is attested in multiple manuscripts, at least one of which is considerably older than the Venetian codex.

A detailed textual comparison would exceed the purpose of the present article, but it is worth pointing out that, generally speaking, the text as edited by Vardanyan does not diverge dramatically from the corresponding section of the Venetian manuscript (59.17–60.21,²⁰ corresponding in turn to 142.24–143.27

12 Cf. Tinti 2012b, 220–221.

13 Cf. Thomson 1995, s.v.

14 Jonkers 2017, 390 mistakenly states that Iṣox himself had added the chapter “On Colours”.

15 Vardanyan 1979, 70 ff.

16 Vardanyan 1979, 104–105.

17 Jonkers 2017, 390 is likely misinterpreting a similar sentence in Tinti 2012b when he says that the most ancient manuscript of the *Book on Nature* itself dates to the 15th century.

18 These are presently kept both at the Matenadaran and in other libraries: cf. Tinti 2012b, 221 and note 8, with references.

19 Here and elsewhere, for the Greek text and its variants, see the critical editions by Burnet 1902, Serrano Cantarín—Díaz de Cerio Díez 2012, and Rivaud 2021, as well as the studies by Jonkers 1982 and 2017.

20 Here and elsewhere, specific sections of V 1123 are indicated by page and line rather than by *folio* and line (as is the case with other manuscripts); this practice reflects the page numbering present in the manuscript itself, possibly added by the 19th century editor(s).

in Suk'rean 1877). The overall correspondence cannot be attributed to Vardanyan's adapting the text of the excerpt to make it adhere more closely to the dialogue, since, beside not hiding any divergences between the two, she duly puts in brackets any elements drawn from the translated dialogue that have been inserted into her own text for the sake of clarity.²¹

Even more importantly, by examining both the Venetian manuscript and Vardanyan's edited excerpt in comparison with the Greek, the text of the former, albeit attested centuries later, does not appear to be significantly more corrupted. As a matter of fact, not only does the Venetian manuscript preserve elements and/or textual segments that are absent from the other witnesses,²² but also some variant readings that are clearly preferable.

Consider just the following example, drawn from 59.33–60.1 in V 1123 (= 143.3–4 Suk'rean 1877; 68 a 5–6 Greek; 104.22–105.1 Vardanyan 1979):²³

παντοδαπῶν ἐν τῇ κυκλήσει αὐτῆ γιγνομένων χρωμάτων

for in this mixture colours of all kinds come into being²⁴

պէսպէս գոյնք՝ գալարմամբս այսմիկ լինելով (V 1123)

for by this twisting colours of all kinds come into being

պէսպէս գոյնք գալարմամբս այսուիկ շինելով (Vardanyan 1979)

for by this twisting colours of all kinds are made

Here, while the excerpt as edited by Vardanyan includes the reading այսուիկ, which is probably preferable to այսմիկ, the Venetian manuscript preserves the instrumental infinitive լինելով, which is not only, arguably, *lectio difficilior* from an Armenian standpoint when compared with the alternative reading շինելով, but also undoubtedly a better match for Gr. γιγνομένων, since the bilin-

21 As mentioned above, Vardanyan was working with Suk'rean's 1877 edition of the *Timaeus* rather than with the Venetian manuscript (see the parallel texts in Vardanyan 1979, 70–72). She does not reintegrate into her text all segments that appear to be missing from it, either: compare for instance 59.24–25 in V 1123 (142.32–33 in Suk'rean's 1877) with Vardanyan 1979, 70, lines 13–14.

22 Such as, for instance, a sentence that has likely been lost due to *saut du même au même* in the excerpt: cf. Vardanyan 1979, 104, line 9–10, corresponding to 59.19–20 in V 1123.

23 Cf. also Tinti 2012a, 165.

24 Here and elsewhere, all translations from Greek and Armenian are by the present writer.

gual correspondence between լիւիւմ and γίγνομαι is remarkably consistent in the translation (cf. Tinti 2012a). Of course, the excerpt was transmitted separately from the entire dialogue and no longer associated with the *Timaeus* or even with Plato: that would have prevented any further cross-checking with the source and thus favoured the genesis of textual corruptions such as this one. In fact, one might even argue that, since the passage was being taken out of its original context, whoever copied it first as an autonomous text might have felt less bound to reproduce it exactly in the first place. In that regard it is perhaps significant that the final sentence of the excerpt is dramatically—if overall accurately—shortened and resumed with respect to the corresponding one in the *Timaeus*.²⁵

Be that as it may, overall, a comparison between the—admittedly short—excerpt as attested in multiple and/or earlier manuscripts and the complete translation as attested in V 1123 is rather reassuring as to the quality and reliability of the text preserved in the latter. An additional example will be discussed below (§ 4).

A second textual excerpt that had circulated independently from the rest of the *Timaeus* was identified by Chiara Aimi in the early 2010s.²⁶ This is attested in manuscript (M) 437 of the Matenadaran (f. 253^v, second column, lines 16–43), and corresponds to lines 13.31–14.15 in V 1123 (= 91.11–32 Suk'rean 1877; 27 d 6–28 c 2 Greek). It focuses on the difference between “being without alteration” and “becoming”, that is, “being subject to change”, which is one of the central themes of the dialogue (cf. Tinti 2012a).

The presence of a section from the *Timaeus* in this manuscript was already known,²⁷ but Aimi seems to have been the first to bring it to bear in the scholarly debate on the Armenian Platonic translations. By comparing it with the extant version of the *Timaeus*, she was able to establish that it was indeed a section of the same translation.²⁸ She described the fragment in Aimi 2016b and provided a diplomatic edition thereof in her doctoral thesis.²⁹

25 Compare Vardanyan 1979, 105, line 22 with V 1123, 60.21–23 (143.27–29 in Suk'rean's 1877).

26 Cf. Tinti 2012a and b, Aimi 2014.

27 Cf. Eganyan—Zeyt'unyan—Ant'abyan—K'eōškerean 2004, 675–690; see also Cowe 2010.

28 Cf. Aimi 2016a, 36 ff.

29 Aimi 2016a: 38. Aimi kindly shared a reproduction of the relevant section in ms. M 437 with the present writer. A comparison between the latter and Aimi's transcription reveals—beside intentional adjustments such as the insertion of majuscules—occasional discrepancies: cf. e.g. թուիցիւն in 253^v, second column, line 20, which Aimi gives as թուիցի. Conversely, she gives the corresponding reading in the Venetian manuscript (14.1) as թուիցիւն, whereas the latter actually reads թուիցի.

The excerpt is especially important because, at the present state of knowledge, M 437 constitutes the earliest confirmed manuscript witness for a comparatively extensive section of the *Timaeus*. In fact, on the basis of a few notes and colophons, Cowe (2010) dates the codex to the early 1280s.³⁰ Its main copyist, Esayi, is generally identified with Esayi Nč'ec'i, who died in 1338 and was a leading figure at the school of Glajor. Based on the proposed date, Cowe suggests that the manuscript could have been copied either at Arak'eloc' Vank', near Muš, or more likely at Glajor itself, whose exact location is still under dispute.³¹

The manuscript was probably conceived as a textbook, and primarily contains propaedeutic explanations to the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Philo, Basil of Caesarea, David the Invincible, Evagrius, and Pseudo-Dionysius. These are interspersed with shorter texts of various contents (but often characterised by an interest in Western Classical culture), which seem to have been inserted as fillers to complete a group of 10 folios or a quire.³² Among these fillers, in the final section copied by a certain Sargis, the excerpt from the *Timaeus* can be found, clearly marked as such in the manuscript (ՊԼ: Ի սիմիլ տրաւմ: or “Plato, from the dialogue *Timaeus*”).³³

The surviving excerpt currently takes up three quarters of a column in M 437 (roughly corresponding to half a page in the Venetian manuscript) but Aimi points out that the following sheet was replaced in the 17th century.³⁴ This is potentially meaningful, since the Platonic section—which ends with an incomplete sentence—could have been substantially longer (according to Aimi, perhaps up to seven times longer than it is now). We do not know at present whether the excerpt was taken directly from a manuscript containing the complete translation,³⁵ or whether it had been previously separated from it, as is the case with the chapter “On Colours”, and circulated independently, perhaps in miscellaneous volumes (but see below).³⁶

30 On the date of the manuscript, cf. also Aimi 2016b, with references. See in particular 272, note 1.

31 Cf. Mathews—Sanjian 1991, 17–21; Aimi 2016a, 35, and 2016b, 274, note 5; Pogossian forthcoming (courtesy of the author), with a discussion of the political significance of different locations in Vayoc' Jor.

32 Cowe 2010, 8.

33 See 253^v, second column, line 16.

34 Aimi 2016b, 274, note 9.

35 On the potentially direct knowledge of the Platonic versions in Glajor circles, see Aimi 2016a, 41 ff., drawing on Tinti 2012b, 274.

36 Cf. Cowe 2010, 14, note 80: although his remark concerns a different filler text present in the manuscript, a similar reasoning, i.e. that the use as a filler might suggest that the text “was already excerpted from its putative original context (...) in the copyist's exemplar,

From a philological standpoint, a comparison between the excerpt as attested in M 437 and the corresponding section in the much later V 1123 confirms the impression of overall reliability of the latter, provided by the chapter “On Colours” (see above). The divergences between the two witnesses are truly minor—in fact, less substantial than in the previous case—and in several instances the Venetian manuscript actually appears more conservative.³⁷

4 Quotations in Armenian Writings

As for references to the extant *Timaeus* in writings by Armenian authors, several years ago the present writer first presented two virtually identical quotations,³⁸ corresponding to lines 14.16–18 in V 1123 (91.33–35 Suk'rean 1877; 28 c 3–5 Greek), that she had been able to detect in the *Homily on the Prodigal Son*³⁹ and the *Commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon*,⁴⁰ both by Nersēs Lambronac'i, who was active in Cilicia and died in 1198.⁴¹

When compared with the extant Armenian *Timaeus* (and with the Greek), the relevant lines in these two texts appear in a slightly altered form (see the elements in bold below):

τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ παντὸς εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον καὶ εὐρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν·

thus, finding the maker and father of this Universe is a difficult matter, and, having found him, it is impossible to tell everyone

խսլ արդ՝ զհայրն եւ զարարիչն ամենեցուն՝ **գտանել գործ է:** եւ գտել ամենեցուն պատմել անհնար է (*Timaeus*, V 1123)

but finding the father and maker of all things is a difficult matter. And, having found him, it is impossible to tell everyone

which may then have been a miscellany composed of diverse materials” could apply to the Platonic excerpt as well. On this possibility, see below, § 4.

37 Cf. Aimi 2016a, 39–40.

38 Tinti 2012b, 268 ff.

39 Oskean 1928, 133.

40 Tanielian 2007, 545.

41 Cf. Thomson 1995 and 2007, s.v.

բայց գհայրն՝ եւ զարարիչն ամենեցուն գործ է գտանել եւ զտեալ ամենեցուն, պատմել՝ անհնար է (*Prodigal Son*, Oskean 1928)

but finding the father and maker of all things is a difficult matter, and, once everyone has found him, it is impossible to tell;

with a slight change in punctuation, the sentence can be (better) translated as below:

բայց՝ գհայրն եւ զարարիչն ամենեցուն գործ է գտանել, եւ զտեալ՝ ամենեցուն պատմել անհնար է (*Wisdom of Solomon*, Tanielian 2007)

but finding the father and maker of all things is a difficult matter, and, having found him, it is impossible to tell everyone

Without repeating here the textual analysis presented in Tinti 2012b, which addressed the potential significance of these minor divergences and the likelihood that two almost identical, yet independent translations could have been made of the same passage, we will just repeat the relevant conclusion, namely that Lambronac'i undoubtedly quoted, twice, a passage ultimately drawn from the extant Armenian *Timaeus*, possibly with a slight mnemonic interference with a passage from the biblical *Book of Proverbs*, 20:6.

These two quotations are of the utmost importance because, at the present state of knowledge, they constitute the earliest undisputed *termini ante quem* for the Armenian version of the *Timaeus*, which must have been realised before Lambronac'i's death in 1198.

As remarked (with further details and references) in Tinti 2012b,⁴² these are not the only allusions to the *Timaeus* (or indeed to other Platonic writings) in works by Lambronac'i. Most notably, the *Commentary on the Ecclesiastes*,⁴³ which according to Tanielian (2007) dates back to the same years as the *Commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon*,⁴⁴ namely towards the end of the author's life (1193–1198), includes a non-literal, less than precise reference to the contents of the dialogue.

Thus, on the one hand, Lambronac'i quotes the exact same passage of the *Timaeus* twice, in different works; on the other, in yet another work, he refers to the *Timaeus* in more generic and, more importantly, less accurate terms. One

42 Tinti 2012b, 272 ff.

43 von Sachsen 1929, 7.

44 Tanielian 2007, 83.

cannot help but wonder whether this might be of some significance, namely whether Lambronac'i even had access to the entire dialogue, or whether he knew just this one fragment, which, as anticipated, is the most popular quotation from the *Timaeus* in Christian authors, thanks to its obvious theological implications. In fact, we will see shortly that other references to it (more or less matching the extant translation) are attested in Armenian texts.⁴⁵

At the present state of knowledge, it is virtually impossible to answer this question with any certainty. Even if he did have access to the dialogue at some point, he might not have actually been in continuous possession of the text, and therefore he might have jotted down his own recollections of it, or taken the inaccurate piece of information from commentaries and secondary literature, without being able to check it on the *Timaeus* itself. If he did know just this one fragment, his source might have been one as yet undiscovered earlier quotation in an Armenian author, or, perhaps more likely, an excerpt that circulated independently from the entire version. In that regard, it is worth stressing that, tantalisingly, the relevant lines (corresponding to 28 c 3–5 of the Greek) follow immediately the section included in the mutilous excerpt attested in manuscript M 437 (corresponding to 27 d 6–28 c 2). Of course, based on Cowe (2010)'s proposed date (early 1280s), the Glajor manuscript would postdate Lambronac'i's lifetime by almost a century,⁴⁶ but we could imagine that Lambronac'i had access to an earlier miscellany including the same excerpt. That would substantiate the notion that the passage had circulated independently even before being used as a filler in M 437 (see above).

Besides the quotations in Lambronac'i, other textual references to the extant *Timaeus* exist that, to the present author's knowledge, have never been brought to bear in the scholarly literature concerning the Armenian Platonic translations.

Not surprisingly, the famous passage about the “father and maker” has had some fortune in later texts. For instance, it is quoted in a section explicitly attributed⁴⁷ to a discourse/ homily by 13th century author Vahram (Rabuni)

45 See Tinti 2012b, 273, note 146 (with references) for a freer allusion, clearly not matching the extant Armenian *Timaeus*, in the Armenian version of the *Apology of Aristides*.

46 It is perhaps worth pointing out that Tanielian 2007's edition of the *Commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon* uses as its main source manuscript M 421, dating back to the year 1292.

47 *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 46, 507. Cf. K'yoseyan 1995, 223. This page marks the beginning of a section entitled “On the Holy Trinity, One Divinity, and the Salvific Providence of Christ, pronounced by Lord Vahram *Vardapet*”.

vardapet,⁴⁸ included in Grigor Tat'ewac'i's (1340–1411)⁴⁹ *Oskep'orik* (“Book of Golden Content” or “Gold-filled”).⁵⁰

K'yosesyan (1995) had already recognised the *Timaeus* as the source of these lines, and pertinently mentioned the relevant page in Suk'rean's 1877 edition,⁵¹ but this passage does not appear to have been included in any discussion on the fortune of the Platonic versions before. In any case, it should be pointed out that K'yosesyan does not seem to differentiate between literal quotations from the Armenian Plato, such as this one, and more generic references; that could explain why the special significance of these lines has gone unnoticed so far.

The relevant passage (minus the abbreviations used in the 1746 edition) reads as follows:

Որպէս պրատոն ասէ թէ՛ զհայրն եւ զպատճառն ամենայնի գտանել զործ է. եւ գտեալ՝ պատմել անհնար է:

As Plato says that: finding the father and cause of everything is a difficult matter; and, having found him, it is impossible to tell.

If we compare them with the corresponding lines from the Armenian *Timaeus* (see above), a couple of differences are immediately apparent (in bold in the text above), namely singular ամենայնի for plural ամենեցուն, and, most notably, the use of պատճառ (“cause”) instead of արարիչ (“creator”, “maker”). We might ascribe both divergences to an imperfect quotation from memory, especially since the word պատճառ is used elsewhere in the Armenian *Timaeus*,⁵² but this choice in particular could be due to the author's preference for what amounts to a key word (“cause”) in the preceding lines.

Still, the text is otherwise a good match for that of the dialogue, and, interestingly, follows its word-order rather than the one attested in Lambronac'i, which suggests that the quotations in the latter's writings were likely not the source of this one. Whether Vahram Rabuni drew them from the Armenian *Timaeus* itself, from an excerpt, or from other secondary literature, cannot be ascer-

48 Cf. Thomson 1995 and 2007, s.v.

49 Cf. Thomson 1995 and 2007, s.v.

50 *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 46, 546, lines 15–17. Cf. K'yoseyan 1995, 238.

51 See K'yosesyan 1995, 268, note 108; 258, note 19.

52 Cf. e.g. 14.24 in V 1123, corresponding to 29 a 6 Greek.

tained at the moment, although another, less literal reference to Plato immediately follows in the text,⁵³ and one is attested earlier in the same chapter.⁵⁴

It should also be pointed out that the same passage about the “father and maker” is quoted, more freely, in an earlier section of the *Oskep'orik*,⁵⁵ and, interestingly, one that is not ascribed to Vahram *vardapet*. This reference to the *Timaeus* had also been spotted by K'yosesyan (1995).⁵⁶

The relevant lines (minus any abbreviations and orthographic peculiarities in the 1746 edition) read as follows:

Եւ ի վերայ ամենայնի պղատոն կնքէ ասելով. (որպէս զհայրն՝ եւ զարարիչն իմանալն դժուարին է եւ պատմելն անկարելի):

And about everything Plato concludes saying: ([like] knowing the father and maker is difficult and telling is impossible).

In this case, the pair “father and maker” appears as in the Armenian *Timaeus*, but the vocabulary is otherwise quite different; overall, the quotation in itself is less than precise and does not provide any compelling clues about Tat'ewac'i's (as opposed to Vahram *vardapet*'s) possible knowledge of (and access to) the extant translation of the dialogue.

Whilst other explicit references to Plato in the *Oskep'orik* are not more helpful in this regard,⁵⁷ the text actually includes a literal quotation from a different passage of the *Timaeus*.⁵⁸ This line is not ascribed to Plato in the text itself, and its source has thus not been recognised by K'yosesyan.

The relevant bit (minus any abbreviations present in *Oskep'orik* 1746) reads as follows:

Որպէս զոշն ի սեւէ եւ ի սպիտակէ:

As grey (originates) from black and white.

The corresponding line in the *Timaeus* (60.14–15 in V 1123; cf. 68 c 3–4 Gr. and 105.15 in Vardanyan 1979) reads:

53 *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 46, 546, lines 17–19. Cf. K'yosesyan 1995, 238.

54 *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 46, 517, lines 22–24. Cf. K'yosesyan 1995, 227.

55 *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 10, 113, lines 1–3. Cf. K'yosesyan 1995, 47.

56 K'yosesyan 1995, 258, note 19.

57 See *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 4, 29, line 10; cf. K'yosesyan 1995, 12. Also, *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 7, 66, lines 17–19; cf. K'yosesyan 1995, 28.

58 *Oskep'orik* 1746, ch. 44, 479, line 8; cf. K'yosesyan 1995, 210.

φαιὸν δὲ λευκοῦ τε καὶ μέλανος

and grey (originates from a mixture) of white and black⁵⁹

Էւ գոշ ի սպիտակի Էւ ի սեւի (V 1123)

and grey (originates from a mixture) of white and black

Գոշ՝ ի սեւէ Էւ ի սպիտակէ լինի (Vardanyan 1979)

grey originates from black and white

This sentence concerning the colour grey as a mixture of black and white may be brief, but it is nevertheless significant, not least because it includes the lexical element գոշ, a comparatively rare variant of գորշ, with a phonetic development *rš* > *š* that, although attested earlier, became widespread only in Middle Armenian.⁶⁰

The source passage belongs to the section “On Colours”, which knew some degree of textual circulation independently from the rest of the translated dialogue, as detailed above. As a matter of fact, the textual comparison shows that the quotation in the *Oskep’orik* follows more closely the excerpt as edited by Vardanyan than the Armenian *Timaeus* as attested in the complete Venetian manuscript.

Interestingly, according to the examples provided in the thesaurus *Nor bargirk’* 1836–1837,⁶¹ the same passage is also quoted, more extensively, in a miscellaneous text, probably later than the 12th century.⁶²

Շէկ՝ որ է խարտեաշ, Էւ գոշ՝ ի խառնմանէ լինի: Գոշ ի սեւէ Էւ ի սպիտակէ լինի:

59 See the extended text below.

60 Cf. Karst 1901, 94 ff. At the present state of knowledge, գոշ with the meaning of “grey” does not seem to be attested as such in any dated text before the 12th century (see also below). Together with other lexicographical data, this detail is being included by the present writer in her analysis of the date of the Armenian Platonic versions.

61 S.v. գոշ.

62 The text is indicated by the abbreviation Ոսկիփոր. In the *Nor bargirk’* 1836–1837, the examples simply labelled Ոսկիփոր(իկ) can be drawn from any one of several miscellanies, mostly later than the 12th c. (see *Nor bargirk’* 1836–1837, 17).

Red, that is yellow and grey, originates from a mixture. Grey originates from black and white.

The extended text in the *Timaeus* (60.13–15 in V 1123; cf. 68 c 3–4 Gr. and 105.14–15 in Vardanyan 1979) reads:

πυρρόν δὲ ξανθοῦ τε καὶ φαιοῦ κράσει γίγνεται, φαιὸν δὲ λευκοῦ τε καὶ μέλανος

and red originates from a mixture of yellow and grey, and grey, (from a mixture) of white and black

իսկ շէկ ի խարտեշի՝ եւ ի գոշի խառնմանէ լինի՝ եւ գոշ ի⁶³ սպիտակի եւ ի սեւի (V 1123)

and red originates from a mixture of yellow and grey, and grey from (a mixture of) white and black

իսկ շէկ՝ ի խարտեշի եւ գոշի խառնմանէ լինի: Գոշ՝ ի սեւէ եւ ի սպիտակէ լինի (Vardanyan 1979)

and red originates from a mixture of yellow and grey. Grey originates from black and white

The comparison between all these versions seems to suggest that the text of the unidentified miscellany, at least as it is quoted by the *Nor bargirk'* 1836–1837, is partially corrupted. The transition from գոշի to գոշ ի (in bold above) could obviously occur very easily (and it has occurred even in V 1123 in the second part of the sentence).⁶⁴ If գոշ was interpreted as a nominative, that in turn would have favoured the correction of խարտեշի into խարտեաշ, for the sake of symmetry, and the consequent restructuring of the sentence, with the insertion of որ է to explain the juxtaposition of two nominatives.

Be that as it may, the second part of the quotation is the most significant for our purposes, since, once again, it is clearly a better match for the

63 See following note.

64 The manuscript reads: եւ գոշի սպիտակի եւ ի սեւի, with no space between գոշ and the following ի; furthermore, the sign which usually precedes the preposition ('ի) is absent. Missing spaces and signs are by no means rare in V 1123, and not necessarily significant, but it is worth noting that the preposition is otherwise consistently written as 'ի in this sentence.

text as attested in the excerpt “On Colours”. In theory, both the quotations (in Tat’ewac’i’s *Oskep’orik* and in the unidentified miscellany) and the excerpt could belong to a different branch of the textual tradition than the one attested in the Venetian manuscript, but it is perhaps more likely that the two quotations ultimately derive from the excerpt itself (which does not necessarily mean that they derive from the surviving manuscript, of course).

Overall, taking into account the inherently miscellaneous nature of Tat’ewac’i’s *Oskep’orik*,⁶⁵ it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the Platonic references in the text may derive from excerpts and quotations included in other secondary literature rather than from the complete translation itself, although that cannot be ruled out, of course.

In any case, as far as the state of the text is concerned, it is worth noting that V 1123 seems once again closer to the Greek (and thus, possibly, to a more genuine form of the Armenian version), at least in the second part of the sentence, than the earlier witnesses. Even setting aside the inversion between white and black, which could occur rather easily in either manuscript tradition (Greek or Armenian),⁶⁶ the presence of the ablatives (սւնէ and սպիտակէ) instead of the genitives (which match the Greek) in the other witnesses seems to reflect an attempt to normalise the Armenian.⁶⁷

Although a lexicographical investigation is beyond the scope of the present contribution, it is also potentially significant that the comparatively rare word գոշ (“grey”) is attested in other late texts that explicitly refer to the colour as a mixture of black and white, and thus are possibly influenced, directly or indirectly, by the *Timaeus* (or by the excerpt that circulated independently).⁶⁸

65 Cf. K’yosesyan 1995, v–vi.

66 It should be pointed out, though, that it does not seem to be attested in this particular passage in the Greek manuscript tradition (see Burnet 1902, ad loc., Serrano Cantarín—Díaz de Cerio Díez 2012, ad loc., and Rivaud 2021, ad loc., as well as Jonkers 1982 and 2017), so it could be surmised that the word order as attested in V 1123 is closer to the source text (with the caveat that the relevant variant could have existed at some point, and simply not be attested in the extant witnesses).

67 As for the first part of the sentence, it is debatable whether իսկ շէկ՝ ի խարստէշի եւ գոշի խառնմանէ լինի of the excerpt, which reflects *πυρρόν δὲ ξανθοῦ τε καὶ φαιοῦ κράσει γίγνεται* but also happens to be more natural in Armenian, is to be considered preferable to իսկ շէկ ի խարստէշի՝ եւ ի գոշի խառնմանէ լինի of the *Timaeus*, which is symmetrical to the prepositional phrases of the second part.

68 In that regard, the *Nor bargirk’* 1836–1837 mentions for instance a relevant occurrence in the Armenian version of John of Damascus (13th century), but a search in the digital library *Digilib* also reveals one in the *Commentary on Grammar* by Vardan Arewelc’i (13th century). Further investigations are needed in this regard.

5 Preliminary Conclusions and Perspectives for Further Research

Let us summarise the acquisitions presented above and try to draw some preliminary conclusions on the three points we set out to discuss.

First of all, what can the ensemble of these data tell us about the diffusion of the Armenian Platonic versions?

Even at this preliminary stage in the investigation, it is clear that, contrary to what has long been assumed, the Armenian *Timaeus* at least did not exist in a void. Rather, it seems to have had a certain amount of textual circulation, at least in the form of excerpts from two different and distant sections of the text, and subsequent quotations most likely drawn from the same sections. At the present state of knowledge, we cannot rule out that other parts of the dialogue might have had some amount of independent circulation and/or been quoted by subsequent authors. At the same time, we cannot say for certain that the other four Platonic (or Pseudo-Platonic) versions did not leave any traces in Armenian literary tradition. What we can say with confidence is that sections of the *Timaeus* at least seem to have been known in vastly different areas of the Armenian speaking territory, such as Cilicia and Glajor, from the 12th century onwards.

Secondly, what can the minor witnesses and traces of indirect tradition tell us about the reliability of V 1123, the sole (and late) complete manuscript?

The relevant data actually provide some reassuring indications as to the value of the Venetian manuscript as a witness, since the latter, despite being quite recent, seems to preserve in many cases a more conservative state of the text.

Thirdly, can this line of enquiry provide meaningful clues towards solving the complex puzzle of the Platonic versions' date and attribution?

As stated above, Lambronac'i's quotations provide a definite *terminus ante quem* to the late 12th century, for the *Timaeus* at least. In that regard, it might also be interesting to note that Lambronac'i was a direct descendant of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, who, about a century and a half earlier, according to his own testimony, could not find any Platonic versions and thus personally authored a translation of the same dialogue (among other texts).⁶⁹ This in itself is of course not enough to support an attribution of the extant *Timaeus* to Grigor. Still, even without suggesting that Lambronac'i was necessarily aware of Grigor's (potential) authorship, it is tempting to imagine that the family link and/or family tradition might have favoured his awareness that such a trans-

69 Cf. Muradyan 2012, letter n. 50, 330.

lation existed, and perhaps prompted his desire to consult it. To shed further light on this point, it could be worth investigating any potential links between the books known to have been available to (and have been used by) Magistros and Lambronaç'i respectively, to see whether any (other?) meaningful links between their respective libraries can be established.⁷⁰

This is all of course, at this stage, mere speculation. However, tantalisingly, not only is the first author to quote a line from the Armenian *Timaeus* a descendant of Magistros's, but all traces of textual circulation so far detected post-date the latter.⁷¹ Of course, a negative argument—i.e. the lack of earlier traces of textual circulation—cannot stand on its own, but it could potentially back up and solidify a conclusion reached by other means.

Finally, it is worth repeating that our enquiry into the fortune and circulation of the Armenian Platonic translations is still very much a work in progress, and one which will hopefully be made easier by the gradual cataloguing of manuscript collections and the digitisation of manuscripts and/or of reliable editions. The creation of searchable texts in particular will make it easier to compare different passages and detect textual parallels even in the absence of an explicit attribution to Plato, to the *Timaeus*, and perhaps even to the other translated dialogues.

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⁷⁰ The present writer owes this suggestion to an anonymous reviewer, to whom thanks are due.

⁷¹ Previous attempts at establishing earlier *termini ante quem* do not stand up to closer scrutiny: see Tinti 2012b, 227 ff.

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Per la storia di un manoscritto armeno in Inghilterra

(London, Wellcome Library, ms. 16586)

Anna Sirinian

Per chi studia i manoscritti di qualsiasi civiltà, il *web* costituisce ormai una fonte d'informazioni preziosa: sebbene nulla sostituisca l'esame *de visu*, la possibilità tuttavia di analizzare *online* le riproduzioni digitali di un numero sempre maggiore di manoscritti non può che ampliare enormemente le possibilità d'indagine, favorendo l'acquisizione e la rapida diffusione di dati sempre più numerosi, utili a consolidare ipotesi già formulate o ad aprire nuovi percorsi di ricerca, con effetti inimmaginabili anche solo pochi anni fa.

Fra le altre biblioteche e istituzioni di conservazione che ospitano manoscritti armeni, anche la Wellcome Library di Londra, nata per volontà e dalle collezioni librerie del magnate, farmacista e filantropo sir Henry Solomon Wellcome (1853-1936), ha intrapreso a partire dal 2010 un'opera di digitalizzazione dei suoi materiali librari rari e di pregio, tuttora in corso, in linea con i suoi ideali di istituzione di libero accesso¹. Specializzata nella storia della medicina, la Biblioteca si apre in realtà a molte altre discipline, secondo le ampie vedute del suo fondatore, che concepiva tale scienza come parte integrante della storia dell'umanità, inclusiva anche di aspetti antropologici, archeologici ed etnografici. Particolarmente interessanti sono le sue collezioni di manoscritti orientali, non solo di argomento medico, provenienti da tutta l'Asia, frutto di una intensa attività di acquisizione alla quale erano deputati gli stessi agenti della compagnia farmaceutica di Wellcome nel corso dei loro viaggi d'affari².

Modesta solo per quantità rispetto ad altre assai più consistenti, la collezione armena conta quindici elementi, notevoli tuttavia per contenuti e miniature. Grazie al valido catalogo uscito nel 1986, in forma di articolo, a cura di Vrej Nersessian, successivamente confluito nel maggiore *Catalogue* del 2012 dedicato ai

1 Se ne veda il sito internet <https://wellcomecollection.org/pages/YE99nRAACMAb7YE> (ultima consultazione: 8 marzo 2022).

2 Cf. Allan 1981 e 2003; Nersessian 2012, 25.

manoscritti armeni della British Library e di altre biblioteche del Regno Unito, ne conosciamo la composizione: oltre a quattro Vangeli – uno dei quali, il ms. arm. 1, è l'elemento più antico, datato all'anno 1495 – ne fanno parte altrettanti codici miscellanei, un Glossario medico, due Messali, un Rituale, due Innari e un Omiliario³.

Di uno dei due Innari, il ms. 16586 (= LOW 16586), pergamenaceo, dell'anno 1679, il sito della Wellcome Library rende disponibile, con quella di alcuni altri fogli, la riproduzione digitale del colofone (ff. 289^v-290^r), al termine del quale compare un'annotazione finale in inchiostro di colore violaceo⁴. Grazie a quest'immagine (Figura 10.1), è possibile precisare, come vedremo, alcuni particolari su questi due testi – colofone e nota – rispetto alla loro edizione nel *Catalogue* di Nersessian, contribuendo così a ricostruire la storia del manoscritto⁵.

1 Il colofone (ff. 289^v-290^r)

Trascriviamo per primo il testo del colofone, corredandolo della traduzione italiana e di alcune note⁶:

Փառք ամենասուրբ Երրորդութե(ա)նն՝ հար եւ որդոյ եւ հոգոյն սրբոյ, 289^v
այժմ եւ յաիտեանս յաիտենից, ամէն:

Շնորհիւ եւ ողորմութեամբ <եւ> կարողութեամբ ամենազարին Ա(ստուծոյ), յանգ ելեալ աւարտեց(ա)ւ հոգիաբուղիս ս(ուր)բ երգարանս որ կոչի Շարակնոց <ի> լա եւ ընտիր արինակէ: Գրեց(ա)ւ սա ի գիւղաքաղաքն Մարգուան, ընդ հովանեաւ Ս(ուր)բ Ա(ստուա)ծածնի տաճարիս, ձեռամբ յոգնամեղ եւ անարհեստ գրչի Միքայել երիցու, թվին ՌՃԻԸ, ի վայելումն⁷

3 Allan 1981, 12 riferisce per la collezione armena di 16 mss., numero tuttavia che risulta essere 15 nei successivi studi specifici di Nersessian 1986, 2003 e 2012 (= il *Catalogue*). Della collezione fanno parte anche 6 antichi libri a stampa.

4 <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/r8wfkzzf> (ultima consultazione: 8 marzo 2022). Nel sito è possibile reperire anche altre cinque immagini del manoscritto 16586 o ms. arm. 14, secondo la numerazione presente in Nersessian 1986, tra le quali le due pagine iniziali recanti, a sinistra, una miniatura a piena pagina raffigurante Gioacchino ed Anna e, a destra, l'inizio dell'inno dedicato alla nascita di Maria, in armeno la «Madre di Dio» (Fig 10.2): <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/j4tg4dsp> (ultima consultazione: 8 marzo 2022).

5 Nersessian 2012, 537-538 (n. 102); il testo del colofone riprende quello pubblicato precedentemente dallo stesso Nersessian 1986, 336-337 (n. 14).

6 Le parentesi tonde indicano gli scioglimenti di abbreviazione, mentre le uncinate le integrazioni; la punteggiatura e l'uso delle maiuscole/minuscole sono nostri.

7 եւ անարհեստ գրչի Միքայել երիցու, թվին ՌՃԻԸ, ի վայելումն] *inadvertenter om.* Nersessian.

որդեակին իմոյ Թորոս դպրի, զոր Տ(է)ր Ա(ստուա)ծ բարով վայել տացէ եւ ընդ երկայն աուրս արասցէ մինչեւ ի խորին ծերութի(ւ)ն հասուցանէ. ամէն: Այլ եւ կրկին անգամ յիշեցէք զվերոյգրեալ Միքայել երէցս հանդերձ ծնաւորիք, հայրն իմ Առաքելն, մայրն իմ Նազլուն⁸, հօրեղբայրն իմ մահտեսի Եսային, ամուսինն իմ Գուհարն, զաւակք իմ Նազլուն, որ հանգուցեալ է առ Ք(րիստո)ս, Հեղինէ, Մարիամ, Կատարինէ, եւ փոքր Մարիամ, եւ սոքա եւս հանգուցեալ են առ Ք(րիստո)ս, եւ ուստերք իմ Առաքելն, որ Ե ամաց եղեալ եւ սա եւս փոխեցաւ առ Ք(րիստո)ս: Եւ յետ սոցա ծնաւ Թորոս դպիրն եւ Սարգիս դպիրն եւ քոյր սոցա Աննան, որ կան ի մարմնի. խնդրեմ եւ հ(ֆ. 290^r)այցեմ յապէնիազ Արարչէն՝ անփորձ եւ անսասան պահեսցէ, մինչեւ ի խորին ծերութի(ւ)ն հասուցանէ. ամէն:

Ք(րիստո)ս Ա(ստուա)ծ մեր, որ առատն է ի տուրս բարե(ա)ց, գծողի սորա եւ ընթերցողի <ողորմեսցի>՝ եւ ձեր⁹ յիշողք յիշեալ լիջիք առաջի ատենին Ք(րիստո)սի: Ամէն:

Հայր մեր որ յեր(կինս):

Gloria alla Santissima Trinità, al Padre e al Figlio e allo Spirito Santo, ora e nei secoli dei secoli, amen. Per grazia e misericordia e potenza dell'onnipotente Dio, fu terminato e completato questo santo Innario ispirato dallo Spirito Santo che si chiama *Šaraknoc*՝ (copiato) da un esemplare accurato e scelto. Questo (libro) è stato scritto nella cittadina di Marzuan¹⁰, sotto la protezione di questa chiesa della Santa Madre di Dio, per mano dello scriba dai molti peccati e imperito Mik'ayēl *erēc*¹¹ nell'anno 1128 (= 1679), a vantaggio del mio figliolo T'oros *dpir*¹²: che il Signore Dio gli permetta di buon grado di goderne, e glielo accordi per lungo tempo, fino a farlo giungere alla vecchiaia avanzata, amen! E di nuovo ricordate me, il summenzionato Mik'ayēl *erēc*՝, con i genitori, mio padre Arak'el, mia madre Nazlu, mio zio paterno Esay *mahtesi*¹³, mia moglie Guhar, le mie figlie Nazlu, che riposa in Cristo, Hehinē, Mariam, Katarinē e la piccola Mariam – anch'esse riposano presso Cristo –, e i miei figli Arak'el, che all'età di cinque anni è passato anche lui a Cristo, e dopo di loro è nato T'oros *dpir*, e Sargis *dpir* e la loro sorella Anna, che sono in vita. Prego e supplico

8 մայրն իմ Նազլուն] *add. supra lineam et in marg. dextero librarius idem.*

9 *Sic pro դսք.*

10 Capoluogo dell'Armenia Minore, circa 60 km a nord-ovest di Amasia.

11 *erēc*: titolo ecclesiastico designante un prete secolare.

12 *dpir*: titolo di basso rango nella gerarchia ecclesiastica, attribuito ai lettori e ai cantori.

13 *mahtesi*: appellativo riservato a coloro che avevano compiuto un pellegrinaggio nei Luoghi Santi di Gerusalemme.

l'indefettibile Creatore che li custodisca lontano dalle prove e senza turbamenti fino all'avanzata vecchiaia, amen.

Cristo Dio nostro, che è generoso nell'elargire il bene, (abbia pietà) dello scriba di questo (libro) e di chi lo legge, e voi che ricordate sarete ricordati davanti al tribunale di Cristo¹⁴, amen.

Padre nostro, che sei nei cieli.

Come nella stragrande maggioranza dei manoscritti armeni, il colofone si rivela di fondamentale importanza per ricostruire la storia del codice: oltre alle coordinate topico-croniche (il luogo di copia: la cittadina di Marzuan; l'anno: 1679), esso ci trasmette il nome dello scriba e probabile miniatore, Mik'ayēl *erēc'*, nonché del destinatario del libro, suo figlio T'oros *dpir*, insieme ad altre notizie relative in particolare alla loro numerosa – e sventurata, per numero di precoci decessi – famiglia. Nel catalogo di Nersessian, a causa dell'involontaria caduta della pericope contenente il nome di Mik'ayēl¹⁵, come scriba del manoscritto è erroneamente indicato suo figlio T'oros, che è invece, come si è visto, il destinatario del codice copiato in realtà da suo padre. Ecco dunque che la lettura diretta del colofone, grazie all'immagine pubblicata in rete, ha permesso di restituire all'Innario la vera identità del suo copista nonché probabile pittore, sul quale torneremo.

2 L'annotazione finale (f. 290^r)

Al termine del colofone una nota manoscritta anonima, in inchiostro violaceo semievanescente ma integralmente leggibile, recita:

1884 փրկչական թուին եղած հայկական թուականն է հետետեալն
– 1334
1128 Շարականին թուականը

0206 երկու հարիւր վեց տարեկան ձեռագրեալ Շարական:

14 Nel colofone ricorrono molti elementi formulari tipici del linguaggio di questo genere di componimenti, come l'espressione finale «chi ricorda sarà ricordato»; su questi aspetti mi permetto di rinviare a Sirinian 2014 e 2017.

15 Si veda *supra*, nota 7. L'omissione coinvolge anche la data presente nel colofone, tuttavia Nersessian riesce a ricostruirla con precisione basandosi sull'annotazione seguente, sulla quale si veda poco oltre.

La data armena dell'anno 1884 secondo l'era del Nostro Salvatore è la seguente:

– 1334

1128 la data dello *Šarakan*

206 *Šarakan* manoscritto di 206 anni fa.

Si tratta di un calcolo relativo all'antichità dell'Innario rispetto al 1884, anno in cui chi ha scritto la nota l'ha esaminato: il nostro codice risultava avere allora 206 anni.

Ora, la grafia dell'annotazione e il caratteristico colore dell'inchiostro nonché, naturalmente, il suo contenuto non lasciano dubbi, a nostro parere, circa l'identità del suo estensore: si tratta del *vardapet* Lewond P'irġalēmean (1830-1891), pioniere degli studi sui colofoni dei manoscritti armeni. Convinto del valore dei dati storici in essi racchiusi – che ne fanno fonti storiche e topografiche supplementari di grande importanza, accanto alle opere degli storici armeni, anche in considerazione del naufragio della documentazione archivistica armena andata quasi totalmente perduta nel corso della travagliata storia del popolo armeno –, P'irġalēmean viaggiò a lungo per ricercare e repertoriare i colofoni armeni attraverso le comunità monastiche dell'Armenia storica, trascrivendone un gran numero e realizzando le prime raccolte sistematiche di questi componimenti¹⁶. Nelle pagine dei manoscritti da lui esaminati il religioso usava lasciare sue annotazioni, che risultano, per chi le abbia incontrate almeno una volta, di immediato riconoscimento per la grafia e il frequente uso dell'inchiostro violaceo. Chi scrive ha avuto occasione in passato di imbattersi in altre annotazioni di P'irġalēmean – sempre in inchiostro violaceo, ma accompagnate in quel caso dalla sua firma – nel corso dello studio dei «nuovi» manoscritti armeni rinvenuti alla fine dell'anno 2000 al Pontificio Collegio Armeno di Roma¹⁷. Tali annotazioni erano state apposte dal religioso in un *Maštoc'* o Rituale (Roma, Pontificio Collegio Armeno, ms. 62 [= ROL 62]), copiato ad Arčēš, a nord-est del lago di Van, nel 1432, e in due Vangeli (Roma, Pontificio Collegio Armeno, mss. 73 e 52 [= ROL 73, ROL 52]), vergati rispettivamente nel 1463 a Eġrdot, nella regione del Tarōn, e nel 1680 ad Aġbak, a sud-est del lago di Van. In tutti e tre i casi, grazie alla presenza delle note di P'irġalēmean, è stato possibile risalire alle trascrizioni dei loro

16 Sulla figura di Lewond P'irġalēmean e sui suoi viaggi alla ricerca dei manoscritti armeni e dei loro colofoni, si veda il recente articolo di Awetean 2018, con la precedente bibliografia.

17 Sirinian 2003 e 2005.

colofoni incluse negli scritti dello studioso – ancora in gran parte inediti, come diremo – e conoscere i luoghi in cui i codici erano custoditi prima del loro arrivo a Roma, ove attualmente sono conservati: il dotto monaco, infatti, insieme alla trascrizione del colofone del manoscritto da lui visto riportava scrupolosamente nei suoi quaderni anche l'anno e il luogo in cui lo aveva esaminato. Egli dunque aveva visto il *Maštoc'* nel 1881 nel monastero di Gomk', nella regione di Balēš'/Bitlis, mentre entrambi i Vangeli erano stati da lui reperiti nel 1882, nella chiesa dedicata alla S. Madre di Dio del monastero di Arark', nella città di Van¹⁸.

Come è noto, le trascrizioni di colofoni realizzate da P'irġalēmean hanno acquistato nel tempo una notevole importanza per il fatto che il religioso ebbe modo di visitare le collezioni monastiche dell'Armenia storica prima dei massacri hamidiani (1894-1896) e del genocidio del 1915, testimoniando così l'esistenza di manoscritti andati in seguito distrutti, perduti o, talvolta, riaffiorati altrove perché condotti in salvo in altri paesi, come nel caso dei tre codici del Pontificio Collegio Armeno di Roma. Nel corso della sua vita, tuttavia, P'irġalēmean riuscì a pubblicare solo una parte delle sue trascrizioni di colofoni nella raccolta uscita a Costantinopoli nel 1888 col titolo significativo di *Nōtark' Hayoc'* (= I notai degli Armeni); le altre giacciono ancora in forma manoscritta nei codici M 6332, M 4515, M 6273 e M 9027 di Yerevan¹⁹.

Ora, al contrario dei tre casi precedenti, la nota di P'irġalēmean contenuta nell'Innario della Wellcome Library non trova alcun riscontro nelle sue raccolte manoscritte di colofoni²⁰, privandoci così della possibilità di risalire al luogo esatto in cui il manoscritto era conservato prima del suo arrivo in Inghilterra. Come spiegazione di tale assenza possiamo supporre che il *vardapet* non abbia ritenuto il colofone del codice significativo per la raccolta di dati storici cui miravano le sue ricerche. Nelle note che si leggono nei citati manoscritti del Collegio Armeno, in effetti, il religioso ribadisce di aver copiato i relativi colofoni ի պէսսս պատմութեան (Pont. Coll. Arm., ms. 62, f. 174^v), appunto

18 Sirinian 2003, 83-86, per i mss. 62 e 73 (si noti che il secondo codice possiede due sottoscrizioni di P'irġalēmean, redatte nelle due occasioni in cui vide il codice, la prima nel 1869 e la seconda nel 1882), e Sirinian 2005, 238, per il ms. 52.

19 I primi due manoscritti formano le due parti della raccolta da lui intitolata *Nšxark' patmut'ean Hayoc'* [Frammenti di storia armena]; gli ultimi due, oltre ai colofoni, contengono altri materiali storici di diversa natura.

20 Ringrazio vivamente il dott. Khachik Harutyunyan per avere effettuato per me la ricerca, risultata infruttuosa, di eventuali dati relativi al ms. 16586 della Wellcome Library all'interno delle raccolte manoscritte di colofoni di P'irġalēmean conservate al Matenadaran.

«a fini storici», oppure վասն հասուկտոր պատմութեան որ կայր ի սնա (Pont. Coll. Arm., ms. 73, f. 305^r) «per le sezioni storiche contenute in esso». Sotto questo stretto punto di vista, il colofone del nostro Innario non offre dati ‘evenemenziali’ rilevanti: contrariamente alla consuetudine spesso seguita da questo tipo di componimenti, non vi sono riportati, ad esempio, né il nome dell’autorità religiosa (del *kat’olikos* o di altri dignitari ecclesiastici locali) né di chi deteneva allora il potere politico nella regione, né è presente un *excursus* sulla condizione in cui versava il territorio in cui sorgeva il monastero al momento della copia del libro²¹. È probabilmente per questo che, nonostante il fatto che esso contenga ai nostri occhi altre informazioni soprattutto topograficamente interessanti – i numerosi antroponimi, la descrizione di un folto gruppo familiare, la testimonianza di un alto grado di mortalità infantile, ma anche l’uso di un noto repertorio di formule –, il religioso lo abbia scartato. Di certo tuttavia, come per i tre manoscritti del Pontificio Collegio Armeno, così anche per l’Innario della Wellcome Library la nota di P’irġalēmean attesta che si tratta di un codice che era custodito, almeno fino al 1884, in una delle comunità monastiche dell’Armenia storica, ed è scampato allo sterminio e alla distruzione che di lì a poco si sarebbero abbattuti su uomini e cose²².

Concludiamo con qualche ultima considerazione sul copista Mik’ayēl *erēc’* il quale, nonostante il consueto epiteto di umiltà di «imperito» (*anharest*) che usa nel suo colofone, mostra, dall’esame della sua grafia regolare, compatta e precisa, di essere uno scriba provetto²³. Apprendiamo dal terzo volume della raccolta di colofoni armeni del XVII secolo curata da Vazgen Hakobyan che un personaggio con lo stesso nome e lo stesso titolo copiò, trent’anni prima del nostro Innario, nel 1648, sempre nella chiesa della S. Madre di Dio di Marzuan, un *Maštoc’* (Rituale)²⁴. Come fonte della notizia, Hakobyan indica una delle raccolte inedite di Lewond P’irġalēmean, che questa volta, dunque, ha

21 Tale *excursus* è di solito introdotto nei colofoni dalla formula ի դրան եւ ի նեղ ժամանակիս... («in questo tempo amaro e angoscioso...») o simili; su questo e altri elementi formulari ricorrenti in questo genere di componimenti si veda *supra*, nota 14.

22 Su questo tema si veda il recente volume di Tēr-Vardanyan 2015.

23 La copia di un Innario implicava oltretutto la scrittura dei segni della notazione musicale armena, detti *xaz*: si veda la fitta pagina (f. 263^r) di solo testo del ms. 16586 pubblicata nel sito della Wellcome Library <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/eqj4p35z/items?canvas=1> (ultima consultazione: 8 marzo 2022). Nel nostro caso, l’identica tonalità e diluizione del colore nero dell’inchiostro del testo armeno e della notazione musicale fa pensare che neumatore del codice sia stato, contestualmente alla trascrizione, il copista stesso, Mik’ayēl *erēc’*.

24 Hakobyan 1984, 318 n. 504.

eseguito la copia del colofone – simile al nostro anche nel lessico usato – riferendo di aver veduto il manoscritto «il 29 dicembre 1864, ad Amasia, presso un confratello»²⁵. Al contrario dell’Innario della Wellcome Library, dunque, in questo caso possediamo la trascrizione di P’irġalēmean del colofone – dovuta forse al fatto che in esso è menzionato il *kat’otikos* P’ilippos I Aġbakec’i, in carica ad Echmiadzin negli anni 1633-1655 –, sappiamo che il manoscritto si trovava ad Amasia in possesso di un religioso, ma non siamo più in grado, almeno per ora, di identificarlo dal momento che, come la maggior parte di quelli visti da P’irġalēmean, risulta oggi, a nostra conoscenza, perduto. Non è possibile quindi confrontarlo con l’Innario della Wellcome Library per approfondire l’ipotesi che si tratti di un lavoro giovanile del nostro scriba Mik’ayēl, né sapere se il manoscritto fosse miniato, per avvalorare altresì l’ipotesi che Mik’ayēl sia stato al contempo scriba e pittore dei suoi codici.

Se l’attribuzione a Mik’ayēl del Rituale dell’anno 1648 rimane incerta²⁶, una notizia invece sicura sull’attività di questo scriba la offre il *Catalogue* di Nersessian, dal quale apprendiamo che Mik’ayēl (ivi erroneamente considerato, per i motivi predetti, non come scriba del manoscritto, ma come membro della famiglia di religiosi menzionata nel colofone²⁷) copiò un secondo Innario nello stesso luogo, la chiesa della S. Madre di Dio di Marzuan, e nello stesso anno, il 1679, di quello della Wellcome Library, dedicandolo questa volta al secondogenito Sargis. Tale Innario è conservato oggi ad Ann Arbor, presso la Michigan University Library²⁸. Che entrambi i manoscritti siano opera di Mik’ayēl lo dimostra il fatto che essi condividono la stessa grafia e lo stesso identico colofone, tranne che nel punto in cui è segnalato il destinatario, il primogenito T’oros nell’Innario della Wellcome, il secondogenito Sargis in quello della Michigan University Library²⁹. Infine, l’Innario conservato negli Stati Uniti, così come quello della Wellcome Library, risulta essere miniato con testate e ornamenti marginali in blu e rosa: anche in questo caso è molto probabile che la sua decorazione sia da attribuirsi al copista³⁰.

25 1864 ղել(տեմբերի) 29, յԱմասիայ, մի եղբոր քով, cf. L. P’irġalēmean, *Nšxark’ patmut’ean Hayoc’* [Frammenti di storia armena], I = Yerevan, Matenadaran, ms. [M] 6332 (cf. *supra*, nota 19), p. 449 n. 799.

26 Ricordiamo che la raccolta, in tre volumi, dei colofoni armeni del XVII secolo pubblicata da Hakobyan si ferma all’anno 1660.

27 Nersessian 2012, 538.

28 Si tratta del ms. Mich. 156 (= ANN 156), descritto in Sanjian 1976, 385-386. Ringrazio il dott. Pedro Alvarez della Michigan University Library per avermi prontamente procurato alcune immagini digitali del manoscritto.

29 *Ibid.*

30 Si noti tuttavia che l’Innario della Michigan University Library è privo della miniatura

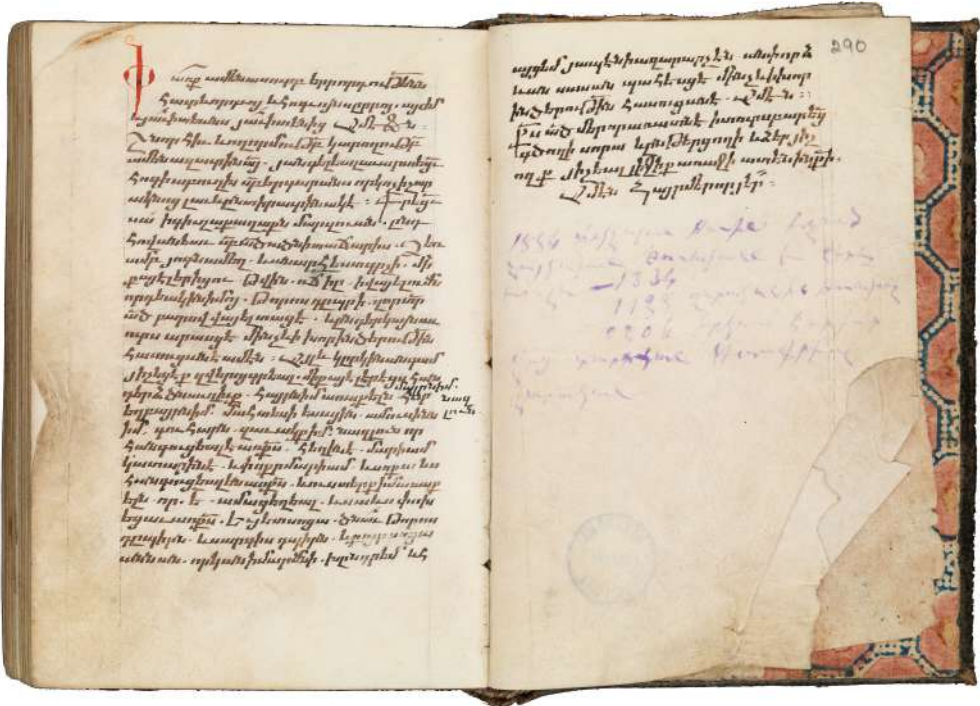


FIGURA 10.1 London, Wellcome Library, ms. 16586, ff. 289^v-290^r: il colofone del manoscritto (an. 1679) e l'annotazione (an. 1884) del vardapet Lewond Pirlalêmean
 LICENCE: ATTRIBUTION 4.0 INTERNATIONAL (CC BY 4.0) [HTTPS://WELLCOME
 COLLECTION.ORG/WORKS/RSWFKZZF/ITEMS](https://wellcomecollection.org/works/rswfkzzf/items)

Altre notizie sullo scriba, e probabile miniatore, Mik'ayèl *erec'* di Marzuan vissuto nel XVII secolo per ora non ne abbiamo: il suo nome non compare nei principali repertori da noi consultati³¹. Per poterne ricostruire l'attività, confidiamo nei futuri sviluppi delle ricerche sui manoscritti armeni nonché nell'incremento delle banche dati e della loro digitalizzazione, che non potranno che condurre a nuovi risultati nella conoscenza del ricco e variegato patrimonio manoscritto del popolo armeno.

iniziale a piena pagina raffigurante Gioacchino e Anna, che, almeno allo stato attuale, rappresenta l'unico corredo figurativo 'maggiore' dell'Innario della Wellcome, cf. *supra*, nota 4.

31 Ačařyan 1942-1962; Covakan 1992; Geōrgean 1998.



FIGURA 10.2 London, Wellcome Library, ms. 16586, ff. 2^v-3^r: i santi Gioacchino e Anna e, sulla destra, l'incipit dell'inno per la Natività di Maria

LICENCE: ATTRIBUTION 4.0 INTERNATIONAL (CC BY 4.0) [HTTPS://WELLCOMECOLLECTION.ORG/WORKS/J4TG4DSP/ITEMS](https://wellcomecollection.org/works/J4TG4DSP/ITEMS)

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Multilingualism in Poetry

How to Translate Sayat'-Nova?

Robin Meyer

1 Introduction

In the preface to his translation of Ovid's *Epistles*, the English poet John Dryden (1631–1700) records his thoughts on translating poetry as follows:¹

Sir John Denham [writes] in his admirable Preface before the Translation of the second *Æneid*: “Poetry is of so subtil a Spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all Evaporate; and if a new Spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a Caput Mortuum”. I confess this Argument holds good against a litteral Translation, but who defends it? Imitation and verbal Version are in my Opinion the two Extrems, which ought to be avoided [...]

DRYDEN 1680, preface

He continues by suggesting that the translator, besides being expert in source and target language, must seek ‘to give his thought either the same turn if our tongue will bear it, or if not, to vary but the dress, not to alter or destroy the substance’. Translation, its form, and its function have remained topics of academic and philosophical interest but were elevated to the rank of a separate academic discipline only in the 1960s—notably by the works of Nida (1964) and Catford (1965)—despite long-standing engagement with these and related topics and scholarly discussions thereof.²

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- 1 As it was the laureate who introduced me to the joys and abysses of Armenian literature and linguistics, and guided me through them when I was an undergraduate and then a graduate student, it seems only fitting that my paper, presented in his honour, should combine his interests in poetry with my linguistic ones. I am and shall always be very grateful for his teaching and his friendship. On this occasion, further thanks are due to Federico Alpi, Tamsin Blaxter, and David Zakarian for providing critical yet constructive feedback on the first draft of this paper; and to Agnes Korn and Murad Suleymanov for their help in finding some Turkic etyma. All errors and omissions are, of course, mine.
 - 2 A collection of such musings is presented in Venuti (2012).

Some more recent approaches advocate a more radical strategy rather than Dryden's golden mean: while he had argued for taking into account what can be expressed in like fashion in source and target language alike, these approaches reject adopting the means and conventions of the target language by 'domesticating' the source text, and propose ignoring, expanding, breaking them. Such often inevitably experimental and outlandish translations—at least from a traditional point of view—seek to 'match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing [their] own' (Lewis 1985, 41). This strategy, termed 'abusive fidelity' by Lewis and 'resistancy' by Venuti (1995, 24), derestricts the translator by allowing them to translate not only the content, but also the means of the original.

The application of this strategy to 18th-century Armenian multilingual dialect poetry and its challenges are the subject of this paper. It endeavours to deliver two things: a discussion of the principal theoretical challenges of translating poetry in general and the above-mentioned type in particular; and to provide a practical example of how such a challenge may be tackled by a resistant, non-'domesticating' approach. The example chosen for this purpose is Sayat'-Nova's *T'amam ašxar pətut ēka*.

Section 2 begins with a discussion of the *ašut* Sayat'-Nova, a Georgian-Armenian bard of the late 18th century, one of whose poem-songs is discussed later; this section provides a brief overview of his life, œuvre, and use of language, and outlines why his work is interesting for translation studies. Section 3 presents, in necessary brevity, the key tenets of translating poetry, and discusses some of the issues surrounding translations of poetry written in non-standard variants and / or composed in multilingual settings. Following on, section 4 uses the above-mentioned poem as a case study; next to the original text and a non-poetic base translation as well as a brief discussion of the poem's linguistic features, two different translations are offered, which seek to account for the poem's linguistic diversity in different ways. Finally, section 5 briefly summarises the findings of this paper.

2 Sayat'-Nova

2.1 *His life*

The details of Sayat'-Nova's life are not straightforward to retrieve, resulting in much uncertainty as regards even elementary facts such as his birth year, birth place, and name. For this reason, the details presented here are only those which have a reasonably solid evidential background.³

3 In his work on Sayat'-Nova, Dowsett presents facts on the one hand, and conjectures and

Conventionally, his birth is dated to 1712, though other dates have been mooted (Dowsett 1997, 31–35). Evidence suggests he was born as Arut'in in or near Tbilisi whence came his mother Sar(r)a; his father Karapet was of Syrian origin and fled to Georgia to escape religious, ethnic, and likely economic tension; he was educated at Sanahin monastery. Of humble origins, it is possible that prior to becoming a professional *ašut*, he may have learned a trade.⁴ According to his own testimony, Sayat'-Nova was an accomplished troubadour by age 30, playing stringed instruments including the *kemancheh*, *chonguri* and the *tar*; the absence of any praise for a musical mentor in his poetry is taken as an indication that he was a self-taught musician.

The nature and size of Sayat'-Nova's œuvre suggest that he held a court position, as do references in his poems.⁵ This was, it appears, not at the court of Erekle II directly, who during Sayat'-Nova's time as a bard was king of Karkheti with a seat at Telavi, but of his son, the later king of Kartli and Karkheti, Giorgi XII. When Sayat'-Nova's tenure at court began is not clear; its end, however, came in 1759 as the result of a scandal.⁶ Soon thereafter, he took holy orders and became a *k'ahanay*, a married parish priest, in Anzal at the Caspian Sea—a role which did not suit him particularly well. The 'most reluctant priest in Armenian records' (Dowsett 1997, 25) stayed there for an undetermined number of years, but moved to the monastery of Halpat not long after the death of his wife Marmar in 1768, taking monastic vows; here, he was active as a scribe amongst other occupations, as is evident from a small number of colophons.⁷ He died, aged about 82, in Tbilisi in 1795, most likely during raids by the troops of Āghā Mohammad Khān-e Qājār, *šāhānšāh* of Iran (r. 1789–1797) in his campaign to re-subjugate Georgia.

myths on the other (1997, 1–45, 46–75). Even the facts are, however, based in no small part on interpretations of the bard's poetry and marginal notes on manuscripts of his poetry, some in the poet's own hand, others in that of family members.

- 4 Dowsett maintains that he may have been a weaver or dyer based on the frequent cloth metaphors in his poetry, admitting himself, however, that these are not uncommon (1997, 9); at another point, he suggests he may have been a merchant, too (1997, 63–64). These interpretations may be overzealous.
- 5 In one poem, for instance, the bard refers to himself as the serf of Gurgun Khan, a byname of the Crown Prince of Kakhethi (Baramidze 1963, 28; for the use of the name as a byname of the crown prince, cf. Allen 1932, 351 fn. 4). The later collection of his poetry by his own son, Ioane, was commissioned by his old patron's son, Teimuraz.
- 6 Cf. the detailed discussion in Dowsett (1997, 76–130).
- 7 Such colophons occur in, for instance, Matenadaran MSS 4270 (1765/6) and 10838 (1760), in both of which the scribe Step'anos mentions his former alias (cf. Dowsett 1997, 22–24).

2.2 *His Œuvre*

As a courtly troubadour in multilingual 18th-century Georgia, it is unsurprising that Sayat'-Nova's œuvre is similarly diverse with 68 poems in Armenian, 35 in Georgian, 124 in Azeri, and 6 in Russian.⁸ His bardic poems, intended for courtly entertainment, almost all fall in the category of romantic poetry, as observed by Dorfmann-Lazarev: 'Quasi tutta l'opera di Sayat-Nova che ci è pervenuta è costituita da poesia amorosa. Le sue metafore sono fluide, il loro significato cambia talvolta anche all'interno di uno stesso poema' (2004, 90). Rather than doing injustice to the technical complexity and the varied imagery of his work owing to restrictions of space here, the reader is advised to consult the detailed accounts of Dowsett (1997, esp. 235–397) and Yang (2016, 163–203) on these matters. The importance of his work can, however, be summarised succinctly in the words of Dowsett:

[...] within Armenian literature, beside Gregory of Narek and K'u'č'ak Nahapet, Sayat'-Nova ranks high. Indeed, through his songs, frequently performed, in the life of the Armenian people, like Burns among the Scots, he can be said to rank highest of all.

For the songs of Sayat'-Nova remain popular throughout all the Armenian communities in the world, be it that of Erevan in the Armenian Republic, or that of Chicago in the Diaspora [...] He is recited and sung everywhere.

1997, 234

Some of the typical literary and technical elements of his poetry are discussed below, section 4.2, with reference to the poem treated there.

2.3 *His Language*

Sayat'-Nova's language is remarkable in two ways for the modern reader: he writes in the Tiflis dialect of Armenian, historically spoken in Tbilisi, occasionally mixing elements of Eastern and Western Armenian variants;⁹ and he makes prolific use of lexical material from other languages of the region, most notably

8 The numbers are based on the poems published in Baxčinyan (1987); Dowsett's accounts differ slightly. For more on the Georgian poems, cf. Baramidze (1963), Dowsett (1997, 398–421); on the Azeri ones, least studied though most numerous, Gaysaryan (1961), Dowsett (1997, 422–434); on the Russian ones Dowsett (1997, 435–449). Dowsett notes repeatedly that, having never learned Russian to any meaningful extent, Sayat'-Nova's Russian output is not comparable in quality to the rest of his work. For a general discussion of Sayat'-Nova and his works within the bardic tradition of the region, cf. Yang (2016).

9 Already Ačařean (1911, 52) remarks that this dialect was at the brink of disappearing because

Farsi, Turkish and Georgian—languages, incidentally, in which he also composed poetry.¹⁰ While this is not the place to present the linguistic ins and outs of the Tiflis dialect,¹¹ it is worth pointing out some of the key features of this dialect in as much as they affect reading and comprehension.

Phonologically, word initial /ɛ/ has been raised to /i/, resulting in perhaps unexpected spellings: MEA ես [es] ‘I’ ~ Tif. յիս [yis], MEA երբ [erb] ‘when’ ~ յիբ [yip]. A similar raising and orthographic change can be observed for /o/ > /u/, thus MEA որ [or] ‘who, which’ ~ Tif. վոր [vur], MEA որդի [ordi] ‘son’ ~ Tif. վորդի [vurdi].¹² Diphthongs like /aj/ and /uj/ have monophthongised to /ɛ/ and /u/; the new /ɛ/ sound is distinguished orthographically from the inherited /ɛ/ <ե>, with /ɛ/ <aj/ rendered as <է>, thus MEA այլ [ayl] ‘this’ ~ Tif. էն [ɛn], այլ [ayl] ‘other’ ~ Tif. էլ [ɛl]; պսոյս [ptoyt] ‘around’ ~ Tif. պըսսսս [pətut].

As regards morphology, the Tiflis dialect groups with that of Erevan and other Eastern dialects in forming the present indicative periphrastically with a present participle in -ում [-um] and a form of the copula եմ [em], so for instance նստում իս [nstum is] ‘you sit’.¹³ The formation of the future is analogous to that in MEA, but has not undergone phonological reduction and univerbation; thus MEA կշինես [kšines] ‘you will make’, but Tif. կու շինիս [ku šinis].¹⁴ The nominal system is very similar to that of MEA, too, with only minor differences. The plural formant is the morph -ներ- [-ner-], which in the nominative plural undergoes regular sound changes and is expressed as -նիր [-nir]. The only remarkable difference is the use of an ablative ending -անն [-emen], e.g. in շարխանն [č‘arxemen] ‘from a wheel’.

of the dominance of Russian and Georgian on the one hand, and the modern literary variant of Armenian on the other.

- 10 For a discussion of other dialect features in Sayat'-Nova, including loans, cf. Hovhannisyan (1990). For details on Armenian as part of the Caucasian *Sprachbund*, cf. Chirikba (2008). To my knowledge, no extensive study of the contact linguistics of the Tiflis dialect has been conducted, wherefore information on non-Armenian lexical material in Sayat'-Nova's works must be sought in other sources, e.g. the dictionary of K'oč'oyan (1963) or dedicated discussions such as Mirzoyan (1967).
- 11 For a recent overview of Armenian dialects with descriptions and bibliography, cf. Martirosyan (2019); descriptions of the Tiflis dialect can be found in Petermann (1866) and Ačařean (1911, 52–60).
- 12 A related change /ɛ/ > /i/ and /o/ > /u/ can also be observed in final syllables, thus MEA քեզ [k'ez] ‘you’ ~ Tif. քիզ [k'iz], MEA քո [k'o] ‘your’ > Tif. քու [k'u].
- 13 Contrast the use of the particle կը [kə] and a finite form of the verb, e.g. սիրեմ [sirem] ‘I love’ used for the present indicative in Western Armenian.
- 14 For a brief account of the development of the marker կու [ku] and its variants, cf. Karst (1901, 299–309).

TABLE 11.1 Examples of loanwords and their origins in Sayat'-Nova

Armenian	Meaning	Origin
ավազ [avaz]	'song, voice'	NP <i>âvâz</i>
բահար [bahar]	'spring'	NP <i>bahâr</i>
բեհեշտ [behešt]	'paradise'	NP <i>behešt</i>
գուլ [gul]	'flower, rose'	NP <i>gol</i>
միզան [mizan]	'scales'	NP <i>mizân</i> (< Arab. <i>mizân</i>)
դողրու [doġru]	'correct, right'	Tk. <i>doġru</i>
դովա [dova]	'prayer'	Tk./NP <i>duâ</i> (< Arab. <i>du'â'</i>)
թամամ [t'amam]	'complete, entire'	Tk. <i>tamam</i> (< Arab. <i>tamām</i>)
ջավահիր [ĵavahir]	'jewel, gem'	Az. <i>cavahir</i> (cp. Tk. <i>cevher</i> , both < CP <i>gowhar</i> via Arab. (= NP) <i>jawhar</i>)
յաշիլ [yašil]	'green'	Az. <i>yaşil</i>
խաբար [xabar]	'news, message'	Az. <i>xəbər</i> (cp. Tk. <i>haber</i> , both < Arab. <i>ḵabar</i>)
ճաղ [čaġ]	'chandelier'	Geo. <i>čali</i>

For speakers of MEA, however, it is not phonological and morphological differences which make the poetry of Sayat'-Nova challenging to understand, but rather its lexis. It is difficult to determine whether the frequent loans from Farsi, (Azeri) Turkish, and Georgian are an expression of the poet's own polyglot nature as well as the poetic form, or a typical feature of Tiflis dialect.¹⁵ Table 11.1 gives a small sample of the loanwords found in Sayat'-Nova's poetry.¹⁶ While the sample is by no means representative, it is worth observing that Georgian loans make up the smallest constituency by far.

It is this multilingual nature of Sayat'-Nova's language that makes it so challenging to render into another language. Before turning to practical considerations of how to cope with this challenge, however, the difficulties of translating multilingual poetry must be considered more abstractly.

15 Armenian is, of course, a language strongly marked, in past and present, by language contact with, in particular, Iranian languages (cf. Meyer in press); MEA has been heavily influenced also by Russian, on the lexical as well as the phonetic level (cf. Łaragyulyan 1981).

16 It ought to be added at this point that, in many instances, it is not clear whether a loanword is from Farsi or Turkish, since the same word occurs in both in the same or almost the same form, both of which could yield the Armenian word. Since these are dialect loanwords, even Ačārean and Nersisyan (1979) and Martirosyan (2010)—the standard Armenian etymological dictionaries—are of no help.

3 Translating Multilingual Poetry

Translating any text from its source language into a target language has its difficulties at the best of times: finding the *mot juste*, matching or replacing idioms and metaphors, periphrasing concepts that do not exist in the target language culture, etc. Further complications arise when the source text has other formal properties—a particular verse structure; rhyme, alliteration, or assonance; and so on—or makes use of more than one source language (and its culture), even if to different degrees, e.g. through code-switching, non-standard loans, or cultural references. How can such texts like poems or songs be translated while maintaining at least the intended effect of the original if not the means of causing it?

Inevitably, this is not a neutral process in which the entirety of the original can be maintained in all respects. It is the task of the translator to find 'diejenige Intention auf die Sprache, in die übersetzt wird, [...] von der aus in ihr das Echo des Originals erweckt wird' (Benjamin 1923, 16), but in so doing they need to process, analyse, and decompose content and form of the original and recompose it to fit the target language and its potential formal requirements. What is lost is the naive, innate art and expression of the poet, which is, at best, substituted by the art and expression of the translator.¹⁷ In the particular context of multilingual poetry, the translator faces further challenges since

[o]ne of the greatest aporias of multilingual translation is the impossibility of translating the heteroglossy and heterogeneity of the translator's own language found in the original. This can only partly be mastered by compensatory strategies like 'materilingual' estrangement or like italics as a marker for the strangeness of one's own language in the original.

KNAUTH 2011, 9

One approach that seeks to meet this challenge is a 'resistant' or 'foreignising' translation, i.e. one that does not accept the prevailing constraints—formal,

17 Cf. Jakobson's observation on this matter: 'In poetry, verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text. [...] any constituents of the verbal code [...] are confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast and carry their own autonomous signification. Phonemic similarity is sensed as semantic relationship. [...] paronomasia [...] reigns over poetic art, and whether its rule is absolute or limited, poetry by definition is untranslatable. Only creative transposition is possible' (1959, 238).

linguistic, or cultural—in the target language, but stretches or transgresses them, using means and material from the source language or by different methods entirely.¹⁸ Without producing a literal translation, the source text is rendered in such away as to maintain as much of the original culture and author's expressiveness as possible, putting the onus of comprehension, 'making sense of the foreign' on the reader. An expressive, if perhaps trivial example of 'domestication' vs 'foreignisation' is the first German translation of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932; tr. into German by H.E. Herlitschka, 1933):

Henry *Foster* had had his machine wheeled out of its lock-up and, when Lenina arrived, was already seated in the cockpit, waiting. [...]

London diminished beneath them. The huge table-topped buildings were no more, in a few seconds, than a bed of geometrical mushrooms sprouting from the green of park and garden.

In the midst of them, thin-stalked, a taller, slenderer fungus, the *Charing-T Tower* lifted towards the sky a disk of shining concrete.

Henry *Päppler* hatte seinen Helikopter aus dem Verschlag herausrollen lassen und saß bereits im Führersitz, als Lenina erschien. [...]

Berlin schrumpfte unter ihnen zusammen. In wenigen Augenblicken glichen die riesigen Flachdachbauten nur noch einem Beet geometrischer Pilze inmitten des Grüns der Gärten und Parkanlagen.

In ihrem Zentrum stand ein höherer, schlankerer Pilz mit dünnem Stiel, der *Anhalter Flugturm*, und hob seinen flachen Hut aus hellem Beton gegen den Himmel.

In this 'domesticating' translation, names (based on historical figures) and locations (all in italics above), have been adapted for a German readership who would be less familiar with the geography of London and the history of Britain than with that of Berlin and Germany, respectively;¹⁹ a 'foreignising' approach would leave the original names unaltered. While in most if not all modern translations, this degree of 'domestication' is avoided, the same is not true on other levels, e.g. metaphor, idiom, or indeed sentence structure. Nevertheless,

18 Cf. Venuti (1995) and, for a critical discussion of this approach, Myskja (2013); the idea itself is not a new one and advocated already in Schleiermacher (1813). As noted by Al-Omary (2013), there is a strong cultural-political and socio-historical context to this kind of translation, which seeks to minimise the 'domestication' of foreign cultures to the expectation of the anglophone world.

19 More recent translations of the novel by Eva Walch and Uda Strätling do not follow this approach.

'foreignisation' can be applied not only to elements with semantic content, but also to more formal aspects, e.g. a rhyme scheme, or for linguistic features, e.g. evidentiality marking.

While this approach allows the translator to maintain as much of the source text as possible in terms of linguistic structures, imagery, and cultural references, the question of multilingualism remains. Simply put: even the most faithful translation cannot maintain ad-hoc borrowings or clearly identifiable, non-standard loanwords from the source language which would impact comprehension in translation. A further problem is that of the audience: a multilingual poem or song written and performed for an equally multilingual audience has different requirements than such a poem composed in a monolingual context. In both cases, the elements and structures from the non-dominant languages will be noted; only in the first scenario, however, will they be comprehensible and potentially affective. In the second case, comprehension cannot be assumed, and while the 'foreign' material may have an effect, it is in all likelihood one of estrangement only.

Assuming a multilingual audience in the source language, transposing this setting on the target community is at times difficult. In the context of English as a target language, there is no single second language shared by the whole speech community: British English speakers may know French or Welsh, those in the United States of America Spanish, those in India Hindi or Urdu, etc. A translation hoping to be faithful to the original by being 'foreignising' or resistant while transposing one multilingual setting into another must, therefore, be community-specific; a translation for an American audience would differ from that for a British one.²⁰

A non-target-specific approach avoids such transposition, opting instead for other means of rendering non-dominant language materials and structures in the target language, e.g. by manipulating the translated word (e.g. anagrams, phonological changes) or its typographic representation (e.g. *italics*, *ḅəʀɔʀɪɪm*, *ḅḅḅḅḅḅḅḅḅ*, *displaced*, *rotated*, *script*). This method ensures universal comprehensibility in the target audience while, at the same time, reproducing the notability of the loanwords in the source language.

Both approaches, whether linguistic or typographical, aim to make the poem comprehensible and appreciable by the target audience while diverging from the source composition as little as possible in language, structure, and assumed

20 There are, of course, poems and translations which are not intended to be understood in the traditional sense, e.g. dadaist compositions or those purposely employing a great number of lexifier languages; for a survey of such works in the French tradition, cf. Robertson (2017).

intended effect. The following case study endeavours to showcase both approaches, one replicating a multilingual setting by transposing it to the cultural context of a specific target language variety, the other using typographical means to render non-dominant language material.

4 A Case Study: *T'amam ašxar pətut ēka*

The bardic poetry of Sayat'-Nova lends itself ideally to this kind of translation. The piece chosen for this purpose, poem 26 in Baxčinyan's collection, was originally composed in the Tiflis dialect of Armenian and is replete with loanwords from other languages of the region as outlined above. The choice of this particular poem is owed not least to Dowsett's assertion that 'the song is one of the poet's finest' (1997, 152).

Next to the original text of the poem in Armenian script and transliteration, a literal translation is provided, which does not aim to follow poetic conventions but only to clarify the meaning of the poem. The particular lexical and dialectal challenges presented by the poem are then discussed briefly with a view to explaining the possible resolutions, two attempts at which are offered thereafter: a 'targeted' poetic translation into British English, seeking to find French analogues for the Farsi, Azeri and Turkish loanwords used in Armenian; and a broader typographical version, in which these loanwords do not have different linguistic origins, but follow different typesetting conventions.

4.1 *Armenian Text and Reference Translation*

The original text of Poem 26 as printed in Baxčinyan (1987, 46) as well as a transliteration can be found on pp. 257–258. What follows below is a literalist, non-poetic translation of this poem which aims to provide a background for the other translations to follow.

I have been around the entire world, I did not even leave out Abyssinia,
my darling.

I have not seen the like of your face, you are the pinnacle of all, my
darling.

Whether you wear simple things or gold, you make it fine, my darling.
Because of this anyone seeing you says 'Ah! Ah!', my darling.

- 5 You are a precious jewel, be lucky for anyone holding you!
Whoever finds you doesn't sigh 'Aaah ...', woe unto anyone losing you!
It's a pity that she died so soon, be the light for the one birthing you!

Had she lived, she would have given life to another painting like you, my
darling.

You are, from the beginning, made from finest steel: gold ornament is
drawn on you.

- 10 A thread of coral is drawn through a strand of your hair.
Your eyes, golden drinking glasses, a glass is drawn from a wheel.
Your eyelashes are arrows and scalpels, a sharp short knife, my darling.

Your face, let me say it in Farsi, is like the sun and the moon.

The embroidered shawl on your fine back is like a golden girdle.

- 15 The pen does not rest in his hand, you have set the artist mate.
When you sit, you are a mulberry bird, when you stand, Raxš,²¹ my
darling.

I am not that Sayat'-Nova,²² who builds on sand.

I wonder what you want from us, would that I get news from your heart.

You are fire, your dress is fire; which fire am I to withstand?

- 20 You have covered the Indian painting with a veil, my darling.

4.2 Challenges

The two approaches to translation have been set out above. Linguistically and structurally, the Armenian of Sayat'-Nova is not so different from English that formal breaks or extensions of English syntax are required. The imagery and cultural background inevitably differ, but are not beyond comprehension. As regards non-'domesticating' translation, therefore, the key questions regard the perspective on the audience and multilingualism. The translator needs to consider whether the translation seeks to render the poem in English so that they might be understood as by a contemporary of Sayat'-Nova, or as by a native speaker of MEA. The latter perspective would entail leaving many loanwords opaque as they are not part of the common modern Armenian vocabulary, either.²³ Following the principle of Benjamin (1923) quoted above, the translations attempted below attempt to echo the effects intended by the author

21 Raxš is the stallion of Rostam, one of the epic heroes in Ferdowsi's *Šāhnāme*.

22 Sayat'-Nova puns on Arab. *nawwās* 'waverer' here, suggests Dowsett (1997, 153); given that the form of his name used in the original, Սայաթ-Նովասին [Sayat'-Novasin] would otherwise be inexplicable, this seems like a plausible solution.

23 Dowsett (1997, 234) states that most speakers of the modern variants of Armenian do not fully understand Sayat'-Nova's poetry owing to its lexis; he goes on to muse whether this

for his original audience. For the same reason, the form of the target language chosen was the standardised written form of British English rather than another variant more analogous to Tiflis dialect.

As for the poet's multilingualism, the problem is more complex: as stated repeatedly, he frequently uses lexical material borrowed from (Azeri) Turkish, Farsi, and Georgian; since these languages have been in contact with one another as well, many of the words borrowed could stem from more than one language (see Table 11.1 above). For the purpose of the translations below, the phonetically closest form in the contact languages has been assumed as the donor form;²⁴ in cases where no clear origin could be determined, Turkish was assumed to be the source language.

The translation in section 4.4 below uses different typographic means to differentiate these origins: Turkish borrowings are mirrored along the vertical axis (հւշիւղ); specifically Azeri Turkish words are mirrored along the horizontal axis (ՎՃԵԼ); Farsi borrowings are printed in Fraktur (Ֆարսի); no Georgian loans occur.

By contrast, the translation aiming to transpose the multilingual context of Sayat'-Nova's Tiflis for a modern audience of British English speakers cannot be as consistent. Going by multilingualism acquired at home, the 2011 Census reports that Polish followed by Panjabi and Urdu are the most common languages spoken beside English or Welsh (Office for National Statistics 2013). At schools, however, French and Spanish remain the most commonly studied languages, even though the field is changing and numbers are declining. Accordingly, it seems probable that, even if to a limited degree, the foreign language most accessible to the majority of British English speakers is French, wherefore the translation uses French as the lexifier for those words borrowed from other languages by Sayat'-Nova.²⁵

The poem consists of five quatrains with 16 syllables in each verse.²⁶ The first three verses of each quatrain show an end-rhyme; in the first quatrain, this rhyme is extended to the fourth verse and each subsequent fourth verse

lack of complete understanding in any way affects or diminishes the appreciation of his poetry given the role musical accompaniment and euphony play.

24 Since Armenian has borrowed very actively from its contact languages, only words not commonly used in Armenian are here treated as loanwords.

25 This is, of course, somewhat simplifactory and may go against the principle of resistant, 'foreignising' translation advocated above, does however ensure a degree of comprehensibility not otherwise available. When weighing up faith to the original in substance against the original's intended effect and comprehensibility, the latter two are given priority here.

26 Dowsett (1997, 274 fn. 99, 286 fn. 139) gives plausible arguments that the song actually consists of five sextains, with verses 3–4 of each stanza being repeated.

ends in the same word as that of the first quatrain. This rhyme scheme and the frequent epiphoras have been maintained in the translations; the number of syllables per verse had to be adjusted to 20, however.

Խաղ ԻԶ

Թամամ աշխար պըտուտ էկա, չը թողի Հաբաշ, նազանի.
 Չը տեսա քու դիզարի պես՝ դուն դիփուներն բաշ, նազանի.
 Թե խամ հաքնիս, թե զար հաքնիս, կու շինիս դումաշ, նազանի.
 Էնդու համա քու տեսնողըն ասում է վա՛շ, վա՛շ, նազանի:

5 Դուն պատվական ջավահիր իս, է՛րնեկ քու առնողին ըլի.
 Ով կու գըթնե՛ անխ չի քաշի, վայ քու կորցընողին ըլի.
 Ափսուս, վուր շուտով մեռիլ է, լուսըն քու ծընողին ըլի.
 Ապրիլ էր, մեկ էլ էր բերի քիզի պես նաղաշ, նազանի:

10 Դուն էն գըլխեն ջուհարդար իս, վըրետ զարնըշան է քաշած.
 Դաստամագիտ թիլի մեչըն մե շադա մարջան է քաշած.
 Աշկիրըտ օսկե փիալա՝ չարխեմեն փընջան է քաշած.
 Թերթերուկըտ՝ նիտ ու նաշտար, սուր դալամթըրաշ, նազանի:

15 Էրեսըտ, փարսեվար ասիմ, նըման է շամշ ու դամարին.
 Բարակ միչկիտ թիրման շալըն նըման է օսկե քամարին.
 Դալամըն ձեռին չէ կանգնում, մաթ շինեցիր նաղաշքարին.
 Յիփ նըստում իս՝ թուփի դուշ իս, յիփ կանգնում իս՝ դաշ, նազանի:

20 Յիս էն Սայաթ-Նովասին չիմ, վուր ավզի վըրա հիմանամ.
 Աջաբ միզիդ ինչ իս կանում, սըրտետ մե խաբար իմանամ.
 Դուն կըրակ, հաքածըտ կըրակ, վո՛ւր մե կըրեակին դիմանամ.
 Հընդու դալամքարու վըրեն ծածկիլ իս մարմաշ, նազանի:

Xat 26

*T'amam ašxar pətut ēka, č'ə t'oli Habaš, nazáni.
 Č'ə tesa k'u didari pes, dun dip'unen baš, nazáni.
 T'e xam hak'nis, t'e zar hak'nis, ku šinis tumaš, nazáni.
 Ēndu hama k'u tesnotən asum ē váš, váš, nazáni.*

5 *Dun patvakan javahir is, érnek k'u arnotin əli.
 Ov ku gət'ne áx č'i k'aši, váy k'u korc'ənotin əli.*

*Āp'sus, vur šutov meril ē, lusən k'u cənotin əli.
April ēr, mek ēl ēr beri k'izi pes nataš, nazáni.*

*Dun én gəlxen juhardar is, vəret zarnəšan ē k'ašac.
10 Dastamazit t'ili meč'an me šada marjan ē k'ašac.
Ač'kirət ōske p'iala, č'arxemen p'əñjan ē k'ašac.
T'ert'erukət nit u naštar, sur talamt'əraš, nazáni.*

*Ēresət, p'arsevar asim, nəman ē šamš u tamarin.
Barak mič'kit t'irman šalən nəman ē ōske k'amarin.
15 Łalamən jerin č'ē kangnum, mat' šinec'ir natašk'arin.
Yip' nəstum is, t'ut'i luš is, yip' kangnum is, taš, nazáni.*

*Yis ēn Sayat'-Novasin č'im, vur avzi vəra himanam.
Ajab mizid inč' is kamum, sərtet me xabar imanam?
Dún kərak, hək'acət kərak, vur me kəračin dīmanam?
20 Həndu talamk'aru vəren cackil is marməš, nazáni.*

4.3 *Version I: A Bilingual Approach*

The world en entier I've been around, did not even miss Africa, ma chérie.

Yet I did not see the likes of your visage—you're le sommet of all, ma chérie.

You can dress en loques, you can dress en lin—for you will make it de soie, ma chérie.

And thus it is that whoever does behold you keeps saying 'Woe! Woe!', ma chérie.

5 You are an exquisite joyau—let there be a blessing for the one who holds you.

Whoever finds you does not sigh 'Ahh ...'—let there be woe for the one who loses you.

It is a shame she died so young—let there be light for the one who gave birth to you.

For had she lived longer, she would have borne yet another œuvre d'art, ma chérie.

You are altogether un cimenterre orné—arabesques d'or on you are drawn.

- 10 Through a strand de tes cheveux coiffés a single filament of coral is drawn.
Your eyes, a golden calice; from a tour de bijoutier a glass goblet is drawn.
Your eyelashes, they are arrows and bistouris and sharp-edged canifs, ma chérie.
- Your face, I cannot but say it in French, unto le soleil et la lune is like.
The T'irma shawl around the small of your back unto a golden girdle is like.
- 15 Le stylo does not rest in his hand, against le peintre you've made a checkmate strike.
Whenever you sit down, you are un perroquet; when you stand up, Raxš, ma chérie.
- I am not that Sayat'-Nova, not un indécis, no, who would build upon sand.
Je me demande what you want from us; would that des nouvelles from your heart were at hand.
You are fire, your dress is fire—which one of these fires am I to withstand?
- 20 Over la peinture from India you have cast un voile délicat, ma chérie.

4.4 *Version II: A Typographical Approach*

- The ԵՐԻՌԵ world I've been around, did not even miss Africa, **մյ ծարձից**.
Yet I did not see the likes of your **թաճ**—you're the **թճ ԿՐԵՆ** of all, **մյ ծարձից**.
You can dress in **րաճ**; you can dress **ԿՐԵՆՄ ի**—you will make it **ԵՐԻՌԵ**, **մյ ծարձից**.
And thus it is that whoever does behold you keeps saying 'Woe! Woe!', **մյ ծարձից**.
- 5 You are an exquisite **ԵՐԵՅ**—let there be a blessing for the one who holds you.
Whoever finds you does not sigh 'Ahh ...'—let there be woe for the one who loses you.
It is a shame she died so young—let there be light for the one who gave birth to you.
For had she lived longer, she would have borne yet another **մաճերթից**, **մյ ծարձից**.

- You are altogether *browz bəlləwəjəd ənni s—znpəmmno* *blōg* on you are drawn.
- 10 Through a strand of *your neatly coiffed hair* a single *γjəwəwɛɛ* of coral is drawn.
- Your eyes, a golden *chalice*; from the *wheel* of a *glazier* a glass goblet is drawn.
- Your eyelashes, they are arrows and *scalpels*: and sharp-edged *pocket knives*, *my darling*.

- Your face, I cannot but say it in Persian, unto *mwz ənt* and *room ənt* is like.
- The *Tirma* shawl around the small of your back unto a golden girdle is like.
- 15 *γjə bəw* does not rest in his hand, against *the artist* you've made a check-mate strike.
- Whenever you sit down, you are *ə bəmoɔ*; when you stand, you are *Raxš*, *my darling*.

- I am not that *Sayat'-Nova*, not *təjəwəw ənt*, no, who would build upon sand.
- γ moɔqɛi* what you want from us; if only *ə wəzəzəɛ* from your heart were at hand.
- You are fire, your dress is fire—which one of these fires am I to withstand?
- 20 Over *γjə bəjəwɛɛ* from India you have cast *liəw əjizjəwɛɛ nɛ*, *my darling*.

5 Final Remarks

This paper has attempted to illustrate that, in order to better reflect the intended effects and perception of multilingual poetry, a 'foreignising' or resistant approach to translation serves the translator and audience best. Non-dominant language elements can be rendered as lexical material taken from a contact language of the target language or through different typographical means. In each case, the purpose of using non-dominant language material is to simulate the difference between dominant / non-dominant language employed in the original without diminishing comprehensibility. For the same reason, that is preserving as much of the original as possible, the same rhyme scheme and set of epiphoras has been maintained; rather than using a stress-based meter,

verses contain a specific number of syllables. All imagery has been modelled as closely as possible on the original.

While the oeuvre of Sayat'-Nova holds an eminent place even in 21st-century Armenia and the diaspora, his songs have not received the same attention as the works of other prominent literary figures like Xaç'atur Abovyan or Eliše Č'arenc' in that no translation of his complete works exists in English or indeed French.²⁷ A complete translation into English must therefore be a *desideratum*. As has been shown above, however, such a translation must seek—by one means or another, and not necessarily those suggested here—to relate the poet's words to the English reader in as close a fashion as possible to that envisaged in the Armenian, Georgian, or Azeri Turkish original. Inevitably, this entails making difficult decisions as to what is given primacy: a close but poetic rendition of the poet's words, or of his intended effects on his audience? As the two variants above illustrate, the choice is an aesthetic one, and might differ across Sayat'-Nova's oeuvre, and have a different appeal to individual readers and translators.

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PART 4

Literature



Come e perché scrivere un' autobiografia in Armenia, nel medioevo e più tardi

Alessandro Orengo

L'autobiografia non era ignota agli autori pagani e cristiani dell'antichità, Greci o Latini che fossero¹. Fra i primi, e limitandoci al periodo imperiale, possiamo fare i nomi di Elio Aristide, Galeno, e poi, nel IV secolo, Libanio e Giuliano imperatore².

Nell'ambito cristiano la rappresentazione dell'io ha antecedenti biblici, come il profeta che annuncia la parola di Dio, o Giobbe che si sottomette alla sua volontà, o ancora il salmista che ne implora la misericordia. Trattati autobiografici non mancano poi nelle epistole paoline e, più tardi, in alcuni scritti di Gregorio di Nazianzo, fra i quali, in particolare, il *Carmen de vita sua* resta comunque essenzialmente pagano per il suo desiderio di muovere accuse ed approntare scuse, insomma di regolare qualche conto rimasto in sospeso. Fra gli autori cristiani la vera novità è rappresentata da Agostino, in cui l'autodifesa si fa riconoscimento della propria colpa: è da questo periodo che, in questo genere letterario, diviene topico ammettere quanto di male si è compiuto prima della conversione.

Sotto diversi punti di vista la cultura armena è tributaria di quella classica, ma in questa dipendenza non pare rientrare l'uso dell'autobiografia, per lo meno nei secoli immediatamente successivi alla cristianizzazione del paese. Se si scorrono le opere armene del V secolo, in particolare quelle degli storici³, si nota che i vari autori parlano di sé, quando lo fanno, per due ragioni: per dire che hanno scritto su impulso o richiesta di un'autorità superiore e per con-

1 Una prima versione di questo contributo è stata letta, in francese, alla XIV conferenza generale dell'*Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes*, tenutasi ad Oxford dal 10 al 12 agosto 2017.

Salvo diversa indicazione, i testi armeni sono citati sulla base di quelli pubblicati nel *Mate-nagirk' Hayoc'*, di cui abbiamo mantenuto la divisione interna. In particolare, si vedano M.H. 2003 per Koriwn e Łazar P'arpec'i; M.H. 2005 per Anania Širakac'i; M.H. 2012 per Grigor Magistros.

2 Sull'argomento si veda Gasparini 2013 ed anche i vari contributi pubblicati in Baslez et al. 1993.

3 Per una più puntuale analisi di questi testi si veda Orengo 2020.

fermare l'attendibilità di quanto dicono con l'essere stati testimoni oculari degli avvenimenti da loro narrati. Facciamo solo un paio di esempi. Koriwn scrive la biografia del suo maestro, Maštoc': ora, nella «Vita di Maštoc'» (*Vark' Maštoc'i*), l'autore fa capolino solo pochissime volte, all'inizio (cap. 1), per dire di aver redatto il testo a seguito di un ordine di Yovsēp' (Hołoc'mec'i) e per presentarsi lui stesso come il più giovane dei discepoli di Maštoc'; alla fine (cap. 29), per ribadire il suo discepolato e dichiararsi testimone oculare dei fatti narrati. Un terzo riferimento a sé stesso si trova al cap. 20.5, dove Koriwn si presenta ancora come uno dei discepoli di Sahak e Maštoc' mandati in missione nel paese dei Greci ed a Costantinopoli. Il passo è ben noto, perché è quello che permette di assegnare a lui la stesura dell'opera tutta, giuntaci anonima nell'unico manoscritto antico che ce l'ha tramandata: si tratta di M 2639, in realtà esemplato nella seconda metà del XVII secolo.

Sostanzialmente lo stesso fa Łazar P'arpec'i nella sua «Storia degli Armeni» (*Patmut'wn Hayoc'*): nell'introduzione al testo si limita a dire di aver scritto per assecondare la richiesta di Vahan Mamikonean (1.5; 4.6) e poi aggiunge di essere stato allievo dello zio di quest'ultimo, Ałan Arcruni (4.6). Più avanti nell'opera (61.4) afferma di essere stato testimone della condotta irreprensibile di alcuni *naxarar* prigionieri. Nella «Storia» non c'è altro. Non così nella «Lettera» (*T'utt'*) che Łazar indirizza a Vahan Mamikonean: qui lo scrittore è prodigo di informazioni sulla sua vita, che però ci vengono presentate in un ordine cronologico non sempre chiaro. Se il genere epistolare cui questo testo appartiene può aver spinto Łazar a parlare di sé stesso, questo autore è comunque il solo, fra quelli vissuti in quest'epoca, che per noi non sia un semplice nome o quasi.

Finora abbiamo notato solo spunti autobiografici: per avere una vera autobiografia dobbiamo attendere ancora un paio di secoli, ed arrivare ad Anania Širakac'i.

Costui, scrittore poliedrico vissuto nel VII secolo (ignoriamo le date esatte della sua nascita e della sua morte), merita particolare attenzione per essere stato il primo, e per lungo tempo l'unico dotto armeno a dedicarsi alle discipline del quadrivio, probabilmente all'interno di un progetto che aveva come scopo il redigere o raccogliere una serie di testi che le concernessero sia da un punto di vista teorico che pratico. Secondo un'ipotesi che gode di un certo seguito, questi testi avrebbero formato il *K'nnikon*⁴, un'opera estesa e di difficile riproduzione, dato il genere di lavori che conteneva. Questo fece sì che presto essa fosse smembrata e riassunta, anche se, almeno per qualche tempo, non

4 Si veda Mahé 1987.

doveva essersi persa neppure la redazione integrale: in effetti, ancora nell'XI secolo Grigor Magistros sembra riferirsi alla versione integrale, di cui chiede una copia al *kat'otikos* Petros Getadarj⁵.

Quanto all'opera di Anania che, sfruttando la denominazione datale dagli editori moderni, possiamo chiamare «Autobiografia» (*Ink'nakensagrut'ivn*)⁶, va intanto detto che essa ci è giunta in due redazioni, una lunga ed una breve, situazione questa che riguarda anche altri scritti dello Širakac'i, come la «Geografia» (*Ašxarhac'oyc'*), o la «Cosmologia» (*Tiezeragitut'ivn*). In questi ultimi due casi il compendio naturalmente può essere dovuto ad esigenze didattiche: questa spiegazione si adatta meno bene allo scritto autobiografico, a meno che non si voglia accogliere l'ipotesi per cui esso sarebbe stato una sorta di introduzione alla *K'nnikon*, per cui avrebbe subito gli stessi cambiamenti ed adattamenti che si riscontrano in altri testi facenti parte di questa raccolta.

Veniamo al contenuto dell'autobiografia, che presenta una struttura piuttosto interessante: intanto Anania ci parla di sé e ci dice come, non trovando in patria libri di filosofia né qualcuno che fosse in grado di insegnargliela, sia partito per l'estero, e come finalmente, dopo aver vagabondato per un po', abbia trovato nel paese dei Greci, a Trebisonda, gli uni e l'altro, nella persona e nella casa di un tal Tiwk'ikos, un Greco che però conosceva l'armeno. Finita la sua formazione pluriennale presso di lui, Anania decise di tornare in patria.

A questo punto la narrazione autobiografica si interrompe, per dar spazio alla biografia di Tiwk'ikos, e poi riprende con Anania che, tornato in Armenia, vi apre una scuola, ma viene presto calunniato da alcuni suoi discepoli che, improvvisatisi a loro volta maestri, lo tacciano di ignoranza. Al nostro ora non resta che difendersi, come aveva fatto due secoli prima Łazar P'arpec'i.

Se vogliamo riassumere quanto abbiamo detto fino ad ora, possiamo affermare che l'autobiografia è, per Anania, un modo per presentare la propria storia, ma soprattutto per esporre le difficoltà affrontate sia per ottenere, a quanto pare senza uno sponsor, le conoscenze di cui sentiva la mancanza, sia anche per rispondere alle calunnie di cui era stato l'oggetto. Come vedremo, questa modalità d'uso dell'autobiografia non resterà isolata nel panorama armeno.

5 Si tratta della lettera 21 nell'edizione Muradyan, pubblicata in M.H. 2012, 267-272. Traduzione parziale in Mahé 1987, 197-199, che qui seguiamo nell'interpretare l'armeno *qúnruaqnyúú úunúwú* «il nuovo libro» che Grigor chiede al *kat'otikos* alla fine della sua lettera come un riferimento alla copia del manoscritto che si sarebbe trovata presso Petros. Questa stessa interpretazione è accolta anche in van Lint 2014, 16-17, nota 42.

6 Per una prima informazione su questo testo ci permettiamo di rinviare il lettore a Orengo 2015, dove tra l'altro si trova una traduzione italiana dello scritto ed una serie di riferimenti bibliografici ulteriori. Si veda anche Orengo 2020.

Proseguendo nella nostra ricerca di riferimenti autobiografici negli scritti armeni, possiamo senz'altro dire che se ne trovano, e abbondanti, nei memoriali che i copisti pongono alla fine, e talvolta anche all'interno, dei manoscritti da loro realizzati. D'altronde non è certo un caso che una delle edizioni della versione lunga dell'«Autobiografia» di Anania Širakac'i si trovi in una raccolta di colofoni⁷. Questo è comunque un campo che necessita di un'ulteriore indagine, e, se da un lato è certo che i copisti danno spesso informazioni su loro stessi e sulle loro famiglie, al momento non sapremmo dire se, andando oltre, essi talvolta ci offrano qualcosa di simile ad una vera autobiografia.

Informazioni del genere non mancano poi, naturalmente, neppure in opere più propriamente letterarie: basti qui ricordare Grigor Magistros che, nei suoi scritti, e soprattutto nelle lettere, ci parla spesso di sé. Ma una cosa è dare informazioni, un'altra è redigere una vera autobiografia. Per questo non tratteremo qui di Grigor e degli altri (epistolografi, ma per esempio anche ecclesiastici o mercanti autori di relazioni di viaggi) che hanno agito come lui, e passeremo direttamente ad un testo che si presenta come una vera autobiografia, redatta però nel XVII secolo: quella di Oskan *vardapet* Erewanc'i.

Questo personaggio è ben noto: Oskan Ļičenc' era nato a Nuova Giulfa nel 1614, membro di una famiglia originaria di Erewan. Aveva iniziato i suoi studi nella sua città natale, ma nel 1634 era andato a Ējmiacin dove, in questo stesso periodo, aveva incontrato un monaco domenicano, il calabrese Paolo Piromalli, che era divenuto il suo maestro.

Più tardi, dopo essere rimasto qualche anno a Lvov, era ritornato in patria, e quindi era definitivamente partito per l'occidente nel settembre 1662, con l'incarico di rilevare la tipografia di Amsterdam chiamata *Surb Ējmiacin ew surb Sargis Zōravar* [Santa Ējmiacin e san Sergio Stratelate], che all'epoca apparteneva a suo fratello Awetis. Non è qui il caso di presentare la storia di questa stamperia nelle varie sedi (Amsterdam, Livorno, Marsiglia) in cui essa operò quando ancora Oskan era vivo. Basti ricordare che dai suoi torchi, fra il 1666 ed il 1668, e grazie al lavoro di Oskan, uscì la prima edizione a stampa della Bibbia armena⁸, e che il nostro diresse questa istituzione, ora di persona, ora attraverso intermediari, per poi morire a Marsiglia il 14 febbraio 1674.

La biografia di cui vogliamo parlare costituisce il capitolo 57 della «Storia» (*Patmut'wn*) di Arak'el Davrižec'i⁹, un libro pubblicato ad Amsterdam nella

7 Mat'evosyan 1988, 18-20.

8 La bibliografia sull'argomento è ormai piuttosto estesa: per una prima informazione ci si può riferire a Kévorkian 1986.

9 Per questa autobiografia si veda Arak'el Davrižec'i 1669, 629-638; per una traduzione francese rimandiamo a Brosset 1874 [1979], 596-600.

stamperia diretta da Oskan, che d'altro canto è considerato l'autore di questo breve scritto che lo riguarda. Esso ha come titolo: «Storia della vita di Oskan *vardapet* Erewanc'i, lo stampatore di questo libro e di altri» (*Patmut'iwñ kenac' Oskanay Vardapeti Erewanec'woy tpagroli groys, ew ayloc'*). L'autore, che parla di sé stesso alla terza persona, ci dà notizie sui suoi genitori e sui primi studi fatti ad Isfahan, o per meglio dire, a Nuova Giulfa. Ci dice anche che inizialmente i suoi genitori si erano opposti al suo desiderio di frequentare la scuola del *vardapet* Xač'atur, ma che poi avevano finito per accettare la decisione del loro figliolo. Successivamente il nuovo *kat'otikos* Movsēs l'aveva portato con sé a Ējmiacin, dove aveva continuato la sua formazione, fino al momento in cui aveva dovuto seguire il *vardapet* Xač'atur a Erewan e più tardi ad Isfahan. Tempo dopo il nuovo *kat'otikos*, P'ilippos, aveva nuovamente voluto Oskan a Ējmiacin, ed è allora che sarebbe avvenuto l'incontro con quello che possiamo considerare il suo Tiwk'ikos, ossia col *vardapet* Pōłos, Paolo Piromalli, per quanto, a differenza di Anania, Oskan sembra ammettere che i suoi maestri precedenti non erano poi così scarsi, pur non essendo al livello di padre Paolo. A lui Oskan si legò a tal punto da rinunciare a seguire qualsiasi altro maestro, e grazie a lui imparò un po' di latino e la grammatica, che tradusse in armeno e di cui fece anche un compendio: ritorneremo più avanti su questo aspetto della formazione e dell'opera dello Erewanc'i. Egli si dedicò poi anche alle altre scienze, ma ad un livello più superficiale. Tutto questo gli valse la persecuzione da parte del *kat'otikos* e dei suoi confratelli e connazionali, che ormai lo consideravano uno straniero. Ed in effetti è in questa situazione che cominciò a tradurre dal latino, prima la grammatica, come abbiamo già ricordato, poi altre opere. Anche Yakob, il nuovo *kat'otikos*, lo dispreggiò, almeno in un primo momento, ma alla fine lo mandò ad occuparsi della stamperia che il fratello di Oskan, Awetis, aveva rilevato ad Amsterdam. A questo punto il nostro autore ci elenca tutti i suoi successi, la situazione che trovò e cosa riuscì a fare, per finire col menzionare la «Storia» di Arak'el Davrižec'i, ossia il libro in cui si trova la stessa autobiografia, circa il quale egli tiene a precisare che non l'ha semplicemente pubblicato, ma che ne ha rivisto e corretto il testo. L'autobiografia si conclude con un nuovo lamento circa i tormenti che Oskan continua a subire da parte di uomini pedanti, adulatori ed altezzosi, siano essi ecclesiastici o laici, vicini o lontani.

I dati che Oskan ci presenta possono essere confrontati con quanto lui stesso ci dice in altre opere da lui stampate, nonché con la testimonianza di altri personaggi vissuti ai suoi tempi, a cominciare dallo stesso Paolo Piromalli. Quel che esce dal confronto è una figura di Oskan talvolta reticente circa i fatti, o quanto meno propenso a presentare nel modo a lui più favorevole cose che potrebbero essere interpretate anche in maniera diversa.

Facciamo solo un esempio. Come accennavamo, Oskan, che, ricordiamolo, parla di sé alla terza persona, ci dice che, arrivato a Էյմիացին, «incontrò un *vardapet* latino [ossia cattolico], di nome Pōlos, d'origine italiana» [հանդիպեցաւ վարդապետի միոյ դաղմաստացոյ, որոյ անունն էր պօղոս, ազգաւ տալիսան], un uomo assai dotto «per quanto, dal punto di vista della lingua, un po' debole circa la nostra parlata» [թէպէտ ի լեզուէ սակաւ ինչ տկար մերովս բարբառով]. In altre parole, sembra che padre Pōlos non conoscesse troppo bene l'armeno. Con tutto ciò Oskan ne divenne discepolo e, grazie a lui, imparò un po' di latino e soprattutto la grammatica (quella che noi chiameremmo grammatica generale), «che tradusse nella nostra lingua [in armeno]¹⁰ e di cui fece un compendio» [զոր եւ թարգմանեաց ի մերս, յորմէ եւ ժողովեաց զկարճառօր քերականութիւն մի]. Da questo appare chiaramente che, a dire di Oskan, fu lui a tradurre in armeno la grammatica e a compendiarla. Tra l'altro, questo è ripetuto poco più avanti, forse in riferimento ad un'epoca successiva: Oskan «cominciò a tradurre dal latino in armeno la grammatica che aveva imparato» [սկսաւ թարգմանել զուսեալ քերականութիւն ի Դաղմաստացոյն ի Հայս]. La medesima informazione ritorna anche nel memoriale della redazione breve della grammatica¹¹, che Oskan stesso pubblicò ad Amsterdam nel 1666. Qui in effetti lo Erewanc'i dice: «col mio lavoro ho tradotto dal latino in armeno e quindi ne ho fatto una compilazione in un compendio: per il piacere di coloro che amano lo studio, ho raccolto le cose più necessarie ed importanti» [աշխատեալ թարգմանեցի ի բարբառոյ դաղմաստացոյն ի հայս, եւ անտի եւս ծաղկաքաղ արարեալ կարճառօտիք, ի զբօզանս ուսումնասիրաց զյաւէտ պիտանացոսն, եւ զկարեւորսն հասարեցի]¹².

Tuttavia, questi stessi avvenimenti sono descritti in maniera un po' diversa da padre Piromalli. Costui, nel 1637, redasse per Propaganda Fide un rapporto sui successi da lui ottenuti in Armenia nel periodo che va dal giugno 1634 al gennaio 1637¹³, ed in questa relazione, seppure da un lato egli ammetta che, in un primo momento, non dominava perfettamente l'armeno¹⁴, aggiunge anche

10 Già da tempo abbiamo individuato in un'opera di Tommaso Campanella il probabile originale di questa traduzione dal latino: si vedano per esempio Orengo 1991, 141-144 e Orengo 2003.

11 Come è noto, della grammatica di Oskan abbiamo due redazioni, una lunga, giuntaci grazie a diversi manoscritti, ed una breve, da lui stesso pubblicata.

12 Oskan 1666, 111.

13 Testo pubblicato in Longo 2000. Si vedano anche Longo 1999 e Orengo 2003.

14 *Se ben la lingua non l'havevo ancor sciolta, Dio, ch'aggiuta l'opra sua, diede gratia a quelli d'intender sanamente quel ch'io con troncato parlar andavo balbutendo* (Longo 2000, 344).

di aver poi recuperato in questo ambito, *con l'esercizio [...] del parlar et indefessa lettura de' libri*¹⁵. Inoltre, e questo ci interessa ancor di più, il Piromalli dice di aver tenuto corsi di grammatica, in armeno, sia secondo la tradizione locale (quella dei commentari alla traduzione armena di Dionisio Trace), sia utilizzando un testo da lui stesso preparato, precisando anche che, in quel periodo, Oskan era fra i suoi discepoli. Anche se non sono chiari i rapporti fra questa grammatica del padre calabrese e quella tradotta (e successivamente compendiata) da Oskan, viene il sospetto che in effetti si tratti della stessa opera, magari frutto di una collaborazione fra i due, e della quale entrambi avrebbero rivendicato la paternità. Il compendio, invece, è certamente opera del solo Erewanc'i.

Ma, tornando all'autobiografia di quest'ultimo, non è tanto il contenuto dell'operetta che a noi qui interessa, quanto piuttosto la sua struttura, scandita da queste tappe: infanzia, desiderio di imparare, ricerca di maestri, poi l'incontro col buon maestro, ostilità da parte dei connazionali e finalmente il successo, come stampatore e come traduttore, pur nel perdurare di una manifesta avversione da parte di falsi dotti, di tutti i tipi. Questa è più o meno la struttura che abbiamo incontrato in Anania, senza che da ciò si debba concludere che Oskan conoscesse il testo dello Širakac'i. Siamo invece propensi a credere che fosse questa la struttura che ci si aspettava da un'opera di questo genere.

Detto ciò, cosa può avere spinto Oskan a redigere e pubblicare questo breve lavoro? Probabilmente le stesse ragioni che, a nostro avviso, secoli prima avevano mosso Anania. In un testo come la «Storia» di Ařak'el, su cui ha un controllo praticamente completo dato che ne è non solo lo stampatore, ma anche l'editore, in una posizione, all'interno del volume, che è più o meno quella dei colofoni nei manoscritti, avendo anche la possibilità di raggiungere un numero significativo di lettori, Oskan sente il bisogno di esprimere la propria opinione circa una serie di fatti che lo hanno coinvolto e che ancora lo coinvolgono, forse di giustificarsi, certo di accusare i suoi nemici, di elencare i suoi successi ed il suo trionfo, per quanto misto, costantemente, a preoccupazioni.

A quanto pare, per lo meno a quanto possiamo affermare arrivati a questo punto della nostra ricerca, queste erano le finalità e le modalità per cui si scrivevano autobiografie in Armenia.

15 Longo 2000, 344.

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*In vino consolatio**A 14th-c. Armenian Dispute Poem on Wine*

Sergio La Porta

1 Introduction¹

Sometime near the middle of the 14th century, a scribe named Tërtër Erewanc'i penned a dispute poem between Grape/Wine and Philosopher. The poem is preserved in M 8029, a manuscript both commissioned and copied by Tërtër. Unfortunately, we do not have the exact date of when he copied that manuscript, but as the other manuscripts commissioned and copied by him date between 1336 and 1341, it is likely that this manuscript too was produced then. It was certainly completed before 1376 when it was purchased by a tailor named Aslan Kafac'i.² We know something of the life of Tërtër, who also calls himself Tirac'u, from the colophons he wrote in the manuscripts he copied.³

Tërtër was born and raised in Erewan; his parents were Sargis, a priest, and Goharmelik'. He also had three sisters, Xatëres, Mamaxat'un, and Saraxat'un. After both of his parents died, Tërtër, being without a wife, moved northwards to the Crimean peninsula where he seems to have circulated among different places.⁴ In 1336, he copied a manuscript in the monastery of the Holy

1 It is a pleasure to submit this small contribution in honour of Prof. Theo van Lint in recognition of his sagacity, conviviality, and poetic sensibility. I would also like to thank my colleague Federico Alpi for his very useful comments.

2 Xaç'ikyan 1950, 521.

3 I have been able to find four manuscripts copied and commissioned by Tërtër where he also provides personal information in his colophons. These are: M 1654, M 8029, M 8030, and M 8281. For M 1654, I have relied upon the colophons as printed in the expanded catalogue of the Matenadaran, Egeanean 2009, 763–770; for the other three, I have accessed the colophons in Xaç'ikyan's 1950, 286–288, and 328–329. He calls himself Tirac'u in M 1654 on fols. 18^r, 45^v, 61^r, 89^r, 105^v, 189^v, 200^v, but Tërtër on fols. 71^r and 200^r; in M 8029 he calls himself Tërtër on fols. 139^r, 171^v, and 235^v; in M 8030 he calls himself Tërtër on fols. 327^v and 328^v and Tirac'u on fols. 328^r; and in M 8281 he calls himself Tërtër on fols. 176^r and 197^r.

4 On the vibrant and important Armenian communities in the Crimea, see Mik'ayelyan 1964, Mik'ayelyan 1989, Balard 1996, Buschhausen—Buschhausen—Korchmasjan 2009, and Alpi 2018. According to Mnac'akanyan 1976, 865, Tërtër had studied at the monastery of Tel(e)nik' under Yakob vardapet.

Mother of God (S. Astuacacin), also known as Šahanšah after its original patron, in Surxat' (Staryi Krym).⁵ At S. Astuacacin, Tērtēr befriended the monastery's senior priest and abbot, Simeon (Simewon), who had been ordained in Sis, as well as one of its ascetics named Zak'arē. In 1341, Tērtēr is found at S. Grigor Lusaworič' (Gregory the Illuminator) in Azak (= Tana/Azov); while he copied M 8029 in the "new city" of Kawksu, possibly between these two other sojourns.⁶ In both the colophon of 1336 and that of 1341, he comments that he crossed the sea and went up "to the city, to Frank Caffa" (ի քաղաքն էլայ՝ ի Ֆրանկ Կաֆան) before moving on to his respective destinations. The Crimean peninsula at the time was in the control of the ruler of the Golden Horde, Özbek Khān (reg. 1313–1341).⁷ Tērtēr mentions him in his two dated colophons from 1336 and 1341. In the latter colophon he also notes that Özbek, whom he extols as "all-blessed" (ամենաբարձնեալ), ruled conjointly with his son Tinibeg, described as "renowned" (բարեհամբաւ). Tinibeg reigned only briefly after his father's death as he was murdered and supplanted by his younger brother, Janibeg, in 1342.

Tērtēr may have been from a family of some means. He himself was able to commission the manuscripts he copied, and his sister Saraxat'un married a certain Paron Sučah, with whom she had two sons, Paron Amir and Ēldemir. In a colophon, Tērtēr also commemorates a Paron Shrvan and (his wife?) Mrut'xat'un and (their children?) the purely-raised Ĵuhar and Tawniē. Erewanc'i does not designate this last group as his relatives, but they do follow the evocation of his nephews and brother-in-law, so they possibly were related to the latter. The title *paron* (baron) was in use as an honorific title among wealthy and noble Armenians in Cilicia in particular⁸ and suggests that Tērtēr's sister was able to marry into a wealthy family that lived in, or had possibly emigrated from, Cilicia.

Tērtēr clearly remained attached to his birthplace. In his colophons, he refers to Erewan as an "honourable city" (պատնուական) and notes its proximity to Xor Virap, Ējmiacin, and Mt. Sararad (i.e., Ararat), where Noah landed. Inter-

5 According to Tērtēr, Šahanšah was assisted by his in-law Paron Sargis for its construction, M 1654, f. 95^v.

6 V112, a gospel dated to 1358, was also copied in Kawksu (here spelled Kōk'su), which was still referred to as a "newly built city" (նորաշէն քաղաք). The scribe of that manuscript records that he wrote the text in the monastery of S. Grigor Lusaworič', so it is possible that Kawksu is to be identified with a district of Azov.

7 The relatively stable rule of Özbek Khān is considered to have securely established the official adoption of Islam as the dominant faith within the Golden Horde, Golden 1992, 298; Manz 2011, 165; Bulliet 2011, 532–533.

8 Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 2:272.

estingly, in the colophons to M 1654 (1336) and M 8029, he locates Erewan in *Vrac'stan*, “Georgia,” while in M 8030 (1341), Xaç'ikyan's text reads *Hayastan*, “Armenia,” instead of *Vrac'stan*, in the analogous place. It is uncertain whether this is due to Xaç'ikyan's misreading of the text, or whether Tërtër changed his formulation for some reason. Nonetheless, Tërtër acclimated himself to his new home during the five-year period between the writing of these two colophons. In the earlier colophon, although he describes Լրիմ/Surxat' (i.e., Staryi Krim) as “famous” (սննսանի) and “a metropolis” (մայրաքաղաք), he remarks that he has come to a “foreign land” (սստար աշխարհ) and “a Mongol land” (երկիր Սոդալի). In M 8029, which is undated but likely composed between the two dated colophons, he similarly reports that he came to the new city Kawksu, “to this northern land” (երկիր հուստական [sic]), and “to this Mongol land.” In 1341, however, he no longer says that he came to a foreign, Mongol, or northern land; instead, he remarks that he came to the “unparalleled” (սննսան) city of Azak.

As evidenced in the manuscripts he copied and commissioned, Tërtër shows an affinity for paraenetic literature, eratapokriseis, prayers, and, not surprisingly, poetry. Among his favourite authors are Vardan Aygekc'i, Grigor Narekac'i, and Nersēs Šnorhali. Although all the works he produced were miscellanies, in his colophons he designates M 1654, M 8029, and M 8030 as “this book of Vardan” (գիրքս Վարդանի) or as “this Vardan-book (գիրքս Վարդան),” referring to Vardan Aygekc'i's *Counsels*. In one colophon to M 1654, he exclaims that it was “the great love for this book of Vardan” (բազում սէր գրոցս Վարդանան) that encouraged him to produce the codex. Other works included in M 8029, in which his poem is found, are selected homilies and counsels, including those of Vardan; the *History of Peter the publican*; *Questions of Athanasius of Alexandria to an old doctor*; Nersēs Šnorhali's *I confess with faith*; Vardan Aygekc'i's *Profession of faith*; the *Vision of Grigor Lusaworič*; Dionysius the Areopagite's *Letter to Timothy*; *Questions of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Answers of Elišē*, vardapet of the Armenians; selections from the *Lives of the Fathers*; Moses the monk's *Letter to Amon*; spiritual questions and answers; *Questions of Arjan and the Answers of Eznik of Kotb*; selections from Grigor Narekac'i's *Book of Lamentation*; odes (by Yovhannēs Erzknac'i, Step'anos Siwnec'i, and anonymous composers); Tërtër's poem; and a list which counts the number of years that have passed from a biblical personage and event until the Armenian era or an ecclesiastical council.⁹ Tërtër's dispute poem conforms well to the generally didactic nature of this compilation.

9 In the two-volume catalogue of the Matenadaran, this last text is labelled Դարազուխք (“Completion of centuries”), but there is no title given in the manuscript. The text ends

2 The Poem

2.1 Structure

Tërtër's stichic poem, entitled "Grape and Philosopher" (Խաղողն եւ իմաստասէրն),¹⁰ consists of 219 lines of verse, including the author's colophon that occupies lines 212–219. Despite the title, Grape only appears at the beginning; subsequently, Wine (Գինին) takes over. It is possible that Grape's lines are to be understood as witnessing its transformation from a fruit to a liquid.

Tërtër introduces each speaker with the phrase, "Grape says" (Խաղողն ասէ), "Philosopher says" (Իմաստասէրն ասէ), or "Wine says" (Գինին ասէ), often in an abbreviated manner. Each character speaks in blocks of lines that have end-rhyme in *-i* [-ի: 1–9, 16–36, 43–53, 178–219¹¹], *-ean/-iwn/-eamb* [-եան/-ին/-եամբ: 10–15, 159–170, 159–170], *-ar* [-ար: 37–42], *-ay* [-այ: 54–68], *-ac* [-ած: 69–76], *-ēn* [-էն: 77–87¹²], *-aw* [-աւ: 88–98], *-ot* [-ոտ: 99–114], *-in* [-ին: 115–120¹³], *-is* [-իս: 121–143], *-ē* [-է: 143–158], *-or* [-որ: 171–177]. The metre is generally octosyllabic, but Tërtër is not completely consistent in the length of his lines.¹⁴ A number of lines have seven syllables, six lines have nine syllables, four have six, and one line has ten. The total number of lines is roughly divided equally between the speakers: the "Philosopher" has 105 lines, and Grape/Wine have 106, Tërtër's colophon has the remaining eight lines. These lines, however, are not necessarily distributed evenly through the poem:

– Grape:	9
– Philosopher:	6
– Wine:	9
– Philosopher:	12
– Wine:	6

abruptly in mid-word on the bottom of fol. 230^v. The next page (231^r) is a liturgical poem attributed to Yovhannēs Erzncac'i Pluz. It thus seems that at least one folio is missing from the manuscript.

10 The line literally says: "It is: Grape and Philosopher" (Խաղողն եւ իմաստասէրն է), but the copula arguably introduces the title.

11 With half-rhyme in *-in* in line 194.

12 With half-rhyme in *-n* in line 87. This example is interesting as it marks a change between speakers: lines 77–86 are spoken by "Wine"; lines 87–98 by "Philosopher". The rest of the stanza spoken by "Philosopher" ends in *-aw*. In every other instance, each speaker consistently uses one rhyme, and one would expect line 87 also to end in *-aw*. One wonders whether this break in the pattern is due to the line which is a praise of the eucharistic sacrifice.

13 With half-rhyme in *-i* in lines 115 and 118.

14 The syllable count does not include the phrase that introduces each speaker.

– Philosopher:	11
– Wine:	15
– Philosopher:	8
– Wine:	10
– Philosopher:	12
– Wine:	16
– Philosopher:	6
– Wine:	22
– Philosopher:	16
– Wine:	12
– Wine (again):	7
– Philosopher:	34
– Colophon:	8

Tērtēr did not write his poem in a “high” or “classicising” style, but in a popular register, using what are commonly referred to as “middle Armenian forms.” Among them we may note the occasional loss of medial *-u-* in polysyllabic words,¹⁵ reduction of *-ես* to *-ե*,¹⁶ change of *-իւ-* to *-ոյ-*,¹⁷ confusion of unvoiced and voiced consonants,¹⁸ disappearance of *[-v-]*,¹⁹ use of *էն* for *այն*,²⁰ use of *հայնց*,²¹ use of *նայ* as a conjunction,²² use of *զերդ*,²³ use of *աստնու(ն)ր*,²⁴ use of *հարբենամ* for *արբենամ*,²⁵ use of *հեռենալ* for *հեռանալ*,²⁶ use of *-վի* for the passive,²⁷ use of the *կու-* prefix,²⁸ use of first person plural ending

15 E.g., *տեսնու* for *տեսանէ*, l. 64; *պակսեցաւ* for *պակասեցաւ*, l. 95; *ելնէ* for *ելանէ*, l. 172; *քաղքիս* for *քաղաքիս*, l. 173; *ելնեն* for *ելանեն*, l. 174; cf. Karst 1901, 42–43, and 268, 290 for the change from *-նւ* to *-նու*.

16 *լերդն* for *լեարդն*, l. 97, *լել* for *լեալ*, l. 157, *ստեղծեց* for *ստեղծեաց*, l. 181, cf. Karst 1901, 69–70.

17 l. 63, *հոյր-ն* for *հիւր-ն*, see Ačarean 1938, 307–308. Madoyan 1989 transcribes it as *հայրն*, “father,” but it is clearly *հոյրն*.

18 *ըմբելի* for *ըմպելի*, l. 43, *ըմբելոյ* for *ըմպելոյ*, l. 55, *ըմբեալ* for **ըմպեալ*, l. 193, cf. Karst 1901, 75–76; *աչաւքս* for *աչաւքդ*, l. 122, cf. Karst 1901, 80–81.

19 *դժար* for *դժուար*, l. 37, cf. Karst 1901, 94 (§123).

20 l. 140, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 1:225–226.

21 l. 98, cf. Karst 1901, 249, 252.

22 ll. 58, 150, cf. Karst 1901, 257.

23 ll. 9, 59, 66, 106, 129, 172, cf. Karst 1901, 257, and Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 1:214.

24 ll. 121, 127, 142, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 1:83.

25 ll. 59, 65, 70, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 2:24.

26 l. 143, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 2:34.

27 *լցվի*, l. 24, cf. Karst 1901, 295.

28 *կու հայիս*, l. 122, cf. Karst 1901, 301–304.

-նք instead of -մք,²⁹ use of the verbal stem -ենա,³⁰ the use of the compound մարդամիջի,³¹ the use of սիր,³² the form ձենիւ for the instrumental of դուք and of քենէ and քենիւ/քենով for the ablative and instrumental of դու,³³ the use of կարդէք for կարդար.³⁴ There may also be three apocopated forms likely made for metrical reasons and dialectal forms.³⁵ There are two loan words in the poem, both from Persian: մուշրուպայ (*mušrupay/mušrubay*), meaning a “drinking vessel,” derived from مشربة (*mišrabat*),³⁶ and մակար (*makar/magar*), from مگر (*magar*), “perhaps.”³⁷

2.2 Content and Context

Tërtër’s poem is very much concerned with the role of wine in this world. Wine extols its ability to give comfort, provide hospitality, solve disputes, and help in matters of love; the Philosopher cites numerous examples of the discord inebriation and alcoholism cause. Tërtër does evoke the blood/wine that spurted out of Christ’s side when he was pierced from the lance as well as the liturgical function of wine as an element of the eucharist, but there does not appear to be a mystical dimension to the poem. Wine is often credited with bringing about unity or union, but these instances do not allow themselves to be interpreted beyond their literal context. Wine is equated with Christ in only a very limited fashion. In lines 159–162, Wine reminds the Philosopher that Christ, who is co-essential with the Father, came to the wedding feast at Cana, and so too does wine come to the bridegroom, the king, and the holy. Tërtër does not further develop, however, the similarities or identity between wine and Christ. In lines 82–83, he plays on the notion of spiritual intoxication among the disciples at Pentecost as well as on the coenaculum as the place of the Last Supper and the descent of the Holy Spirit, and on Peter and Christ both being called “the stone” or “rock,” but does not carry this rich image any further.³⁸ Likewise, when

29 լինինք, l. 132, cf. Karst 1901, 309.

30 կամենայ, l. 55; կենայ, ll. 58, 64; խմենայ, ll. 108, 124, cf. Karst 1901, 283–284.

31 l. 216, from մարդամէջ, cf. Malxasyanc’ 1944–1945, 3:275.

32 l. 218, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 2:279.

33 l. 1. 31, 34, 143, 184, 185, 189, 201, 203, 206, 219; cf. Karst 1901, 224.

34 l. 216, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 1:387.

35 սիրէլար for սիրելարար, l. 42; հարարակի for հրապարակի, l. 48 (this could also be a dialectal form or simple error); ամինչ for ամենայն ինչ, l. 84 (this similarly may reflect a common dialectal form).

36 l. 135, gen. in -նի, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 2:151; Steingass 1892, 1245.

37 l. 157, cf. Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 2:99; Steingass 1892, 1302.

38 On the spiritual intoxication of the apostles, see Grigor Tat’ewac’i 1741, 265–266; on mystical wine, see van Lint 1996, 61–66.

the Philosopher concedes defeat, he acknowledges wine's participation in the holy mysteries, but does not postulate any union with Christ that the partaker of wine may achieve. And despite the many evocations of love, Tērtēr's poem does not truly explore the erotic. Wine simply helps people get along and married couples to enjoy each other's love. There is no sense of the homoerotic, either, and the figure of the cup-bearer (Pers. *sāqī*) nowhere appears. Nor do Tērtēr's emphasis on the material world and his awareness of mundane pains and ills lead to a meditation on the ephemerality of this life and the need to enjoy it.

The restraint and focus displayed in Tērtēr's poem underscore its didactic purpose. On the one hand, the poem defends the practice of drinking wine in that it brings people together, gives them joy and comfort, and is essential in Christian ritual. On the other hand, and consonant with the paraenetic literature Tērtēr copied, it cautions against the over-consumption of wine and brings into relief the great social, physical, and spiritual damage it can cause. In its content and structure, as well as in its lack of eroticism or mysticism, Tērtēr's poem differs starkly from the famous Arabic wine poems known as *khamriyya*, as well as from Persian odes on love and wine. It also differs from Syriac wine poems of the 13th century, some of which explore themes of divine union, spiritual intoxication, and, in the case of Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē, are willing to employ the eroticism of the *khamriyya*.³⁹

Tērtēr's poem, therefore, cannot be classified in the genre of the wine poem; rather, as a poetic debate between Grape/Wine and Philosopher, it loosely belongs to the genre of the dispute poem. Dispute poetry has a long history in the Near East, figuring among the popular literary forms of ancient Mesopotamia. In Armenia, Syriac dispute or dialogue poems attributed to Ephrem were translated among his other hymns.⁴⁰ The earliest written example of a dispute poem composed originally in Armenian is the *Discourse on Wisdom Composed as a Diversion* by Yovhannēs Sarkawag Imastasēr (1129).⁴¹ The debate here occurs between the author and a blackbird chick. As Cowe has argued, this poem is didactic in nature and should be understood as a spiritual exhortation. Yovhannēs's poem may have inspired Tērtēr to adopt the form of a debate between a human and a non-human character to convey moral instruction. Nevertheless, formal differences between the two remain. Yovhannēs's interlocutors are himself and an animate creature, not a character "Philosopher" and an inanimate object. Moreover, his poem is unrhymed and each line consists of 16 syllables; it also presents a more sophisticated argument and poetics.

39 Taylor 2010.

40 On the dispute poem in Armenia, see La Porta 2020.

41 Cowe 1994–1995.

Neither Yovhannēs's nor Tērtēr's poem strictly adheres to the definition of a dispute poem. Dispute poems, as summarised by Jiménez, have five constituent elements: They are 1) poems or poetic texts, that 2) are tripartite in structure, 3) contain few narrative elements, 4) usually feature inanimate protagonists, and 5) discuss the supremacy of one of the interlocutors over the other. Since they use human characters and prioritise instruction over precedence, both poems arguably represent a development of the classical form of the dispute poem rather than an example of it. Yovhannēs's and Tērtēr's literary articulation of the dispute poem therefore likely rests on a familiarity with an oral tradition of performed dispute poems that is only later inscribed into or preserved by the literary record.⁴² The exact context for the recitation of the poem remains unknown. It is possible that Tērtēr intended the poem to be acted out in front of an audience given the character cues, but he may have had an individual reader of the manuscript in mind; or he may have conceived of both situations.⁴³ Tērtēr's poem occupies the liminal area between the literary and oral traditions. His use of a more familiar register of language, though not completely colloquial, would have made it easier for a literate, if not highly educated, reader/reciter to understand and grasp the thrust of his praise of wine as well as his warnings about its dangers. In trying to instruct his readers through the use of more popular literary forms and language, Tērtēr reflects one of the pedagogic trends in Armenian monasteries that became common in the 12th–14th centuries. Other examples of this trend are the fables composed and compiled by Mxit'ar Goš and Vardan Aygekc'i, and the increasing use of the question and answer format in the monastic schools.

On a broader scale, Tērtēr's debate about the nature of wine classes it among other disputation texts involving intoxicants. An ancient Egyptian ostrakon from the 12th or 11th c. BCE preserves the title of what is apparently a debate between Wine and Beer.⁴⁴ In the T'ang period (8th–10th c. CE), a certain Wang Fu composed *Chajiu lun*, a prose dialogue between Mr. Tea and Mr. Wine mediated by Mr. Water.⁴⁵ In the 13th century CE, the Syriac poet Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē composed a dispute poem between Cup and Wine.⁴⁶ The earliest

42 La Porta 2020, 313–315, 325–327.

43 van Lint 1996, 20–22.

44 Jiménez 2017, 129n352; Stauder 2020, 122–123.

45 Jiménez 2017, 137–138. The debate is found in seven manuscripts in the Buddhist caves of Dunhuang. As a number of East Syriac documents were also found in the caves, Jiménez plausibly speculates that the Syriac tradition may have brought the genre this far. Benn 2005, 215–221; Chen 1963, 271–287.

46 Brock 1991, 112–114; Brock 2008, 382; Jiménez 2017, 136. Although Taylor 2010 mentions dispute poems and discusses Khāmīs's wine poems, he does not refer to this particular poem.

of the Goliardic dispute poems between Wine and Water are preserved in Latin from the early 13th century, although they are certainly older, and in the vernaculars of western Europe.⁴⁷ In the *Dialogus inter Aquam et Vinum*,⁴⁸ Water blames Wine for Noah's and Lot's disgrace similar to the Philosopher in Tértér's poem. The accusation is, of course, a natural one for poets steeped in biblical tradition, and recurs not only in the European Christian debates between Water and Wine, but also in Zalman Sofer's (*fl.* first half of 15th c.) poetic debate between water and wine, *Zera Gefen* (Seed of the Vine), written in Hebrew and Yiddish.⁴⁹ Yüsuf Emiri, a panegyrist of the Timurid prince Bâysonğor Mirzâ (d. 1433), composed a Chaghatay dispute between Hashish and Wine (*Bang o Çağır*), "after the manner of the Persians but in the language of the Turks, no one yet having done so," in the 15th century.⁵⁰ A century later, Fuzûlî (d. 1556) wrote a *mesnevi* disputation poem in Azeri Turkish also between Hashish and Wine called *Beng-ü Bâde*.⁵¹ Aynur and Schmidt have studied a 17th-century prose debate between Opium, Berş, Hashish, Boza, Wine and Coffee, which "may have been considered to belong to the canon of Bektashi literature."⁵² Two contest poems by the 17th-century Yemeni Jewish poet Şâlôm Şabazî between Qât and Coffee end with Wine as the settler of the dispute. In one, however, the author then extols the superiority of wine.⁵³

This overview of dispute poems in which wine is a protagonist attests to the chronological and geographical popularity of the theme. Tértér's poem cannot be textually linked with any of these other examples, but, given the ethno-religious diversity of the Crimea in the first half of the 14th century, encompassing Turkic Christians and Muslims, Armenians, Greeks, Georgians, Jews, Catalans, Genoese, Venetians, Caucasian and Balkan slaves, among oth-

47 Hanford 1913, 315–367; Jiménez 2017, 147; see also Cecilia 2020.

48 Wright 1866, 87–92; Hanford 1913, 322–327; see also Walther 1920, 46–53. The poem may have been composed in the time of Emperor Frederick I (d. 1190), Hanford 1913, 328.

49 Hanford 1913, 358–360, stanzas 2 and 8; Zinberg 1975, 41.

50 The poem is preserved in the British Museum, ms. Add. 7914, fol. 329–337, Rieu 1888, 291; Bodrogligeti 2012; Eckmann, 1964, 320–321, who also notes two other examples of this debate in Chaghatay from the 15th century by Yaqīnī and Aḥmadī; Jiménez 2017, p. 142; Aynur 2020, 287–293, for more examples.

51 Jiménez 2017, p. 142; Aynur 2020, 287.

52 Aynur—Schmidt 2007, quote on p. 55. In addition to comparing their text to Amiri's and Fazûlî's poems, they also look at another anonymous and undated Ottoman dispute between opium, berş, hashish, boza, wine, and bal suyu (honey drink), 69–73. Jiménez 2017, p. 142.

53 Tobi 2008, 301–310.

ers,⁵⁴ Tērtēr may have been familiar with other examples of dispute poems.⁵⁵ More importantly, though, his poem illustrates how Armenians partook of and adapted this broader literary phenomenon for didactic purposes.⁵⁶ Tērtēr's making Philosopher one of the disputants, rather than another inanimate object or liquid, underscores human responsibility in using an intoxicant. The poem reflects and tries to negotiate the experiential tension within Christian society between wine's liturgical and theological preeminence, and moralists' admonitions against its dangers. Many ecclesiastical canons, both translated and originally composed in Armenian, decry drunkenness. In the 12th century, Dawit' Ganjakec'i in his *Canonical Counsels* (*Xratk' kanonakank'*) discusses the punishments to be meted out to priests who burp because of drunkenness, "for the drunkard is to be counted as a wild beast" (զի արբեցողն ընդ գազանս է համարեալ).⁵⁷ Mxit'ar Goš (d. 1213), too, in his *Law Code* (*Datastanagirk'*) condemns drunkenness and confirms that whoever bears the signs of intoxication should "abstain from each one's ministry" (ի բաց կալ արժան է յիրաքանչիւր սպասարութենէ).⁵⁸ Tērtēr's cherished author, Vardan Aygekc'i, composed a counsel against drunkenness as well.⁵⁹ It was not only sermonising clergy who cautioned against intoxication. The poet, Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i (14th–15thc.), who exclaims to his beloved: "Make me crazy with sweet wine—I was imprisoned in your breast" (Անուշ գինով զիս խել արիւր՝ որ ի ծոցըդ զնսանեցայ), also penned an admonitory poem regarding drunkenness in which he complains, "Wine is the mother of all sins, / To which every book bears witness" (Գինին է մայր ամէն մեղաց, / Որ ամենայն գիրք վրկայէ).⁶⁰

Islamic law and cultural norms added a further layer of complexity to wine's valence in Armenia, the Caucasus, and Crimea. As the production of wine was forbidden to Muslims, non-Muslims were in the business of making and distributing it. Wine formed one of the major sources of Genoese trade in the Black Sea region, and they used it not only for consumption but also as a means of payment with Mongol rulers.⁶¹ Armenians and Georgians participated in the

54 See, e.g. Balard 1978, 1:269–289; Vászary 1988; Karpov 2013; Khvalkov 2017; and Alpi 2018.

55 On social interactions between the communities, see Balard 1978, 1:310–327.

56 On didactic adaptation in mediaeval Armenian poetry, see Pifer 2021, chs. 6–7.

57 Dawit' Ganjakec'i 1961a, 29; 1961b, 24.

58 Mxit'ar Goš 1975, 130; Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 268, and n. 1331, where examples of earlier canonical prohibitions against clerical drunkenness are given.

59 See, e.g., J936, 239–243.

60 See Russell 1987, 7–9 (on the poet), 94–97 (translation and notes on first poem), 120–121, 133–134 (translation and notes to the second with another example).

61 Balard 1978, 2:842–846.

economy of alcohol in the Safavid period and there is no reason to think they did not do so earlier.⁶² Tērtēr's use of a Persian loanword to refer to a drinking vessel underscores how Armenians joined in a regional culture of drinking and of the material objects associated with the practice.

Although the Qur'ān (5:90–91) and Islamic jurists forbade the drinking of wine (نخمر),⁶³ the practice was common among Muslim elites, and particularly among the Mongol elite. Nonetheless, religiously observant Muslims could point to intoxication among Christians as an example of their moral depravity and their faith's inferiority to Islam, a charge it would be difficult for Christians to refute.⁶⁴ At the end of the century, Grigor Tat'ewac'i attacked Islam for forbidding wine, accusing Muslims of contradicting the prophets.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, he counsels his students how to answer "an ignorant Muslim or tyrant" (տգլխ ւնարդ ի Տաճկաց կամ բռնաւոր) who asks whether wine is permissible (Arm. հալալ, *halal*, rendering Arabic حلال) or forbidden (Arm. հարամ, *haram*, rendering Arabic حرام): "In measure it is permissible and unmeasured it is haram, which is drunkenness. For many evils derive from it, that is from wine and drunkenness, for our soul and body. ... Therefore, drunkenness is prohibited, for drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (1Cor. 6:10), our scripture says."⁶⁶ Tat'ewac'i then proceeds to argue that wine is permissible by nature, but the act of being drunk is forbidden; a conclusion not very different in essence from that put forth in Tērtēr's poem.⁶⁷

62 On the drinking of wine among Muslim elites and the role of Armenians and Georgians in wine production, see Matthee 2005, ch. 2.

63 See also 2:219, 4:43, but cf. 16:69, where it is praised. Dissensions also among jurists arose over what constituted wine, see Wensinck 1997, 994–997.

64 Cf. the treatment of Iwanē Mxargrjeli's failed siege of Xlat'/Akhlāt in 1209 in which Iwanē, the general of the Georgian forces, was captured in front of the walls of the city due to inebriation. The episode is repeated in a dozen Arabic sources which derive pleasure from the means of his capture and use it to emphasise the superiority of Islam, La Porta 2013, 270–271.

65 Kiwlēsērean 1903, 153. Tat'ewac'i's polemic against Islam originally formed part of his *Book of Questions*, but was omitted in the edition printed in Constantinople in the 18th century so as not to offend the authorities.

66 չափաւորն հալալ է եւ անչափն հարամ է, որ արբեցութիւն է: Զի բազում չարիք ի նմանէ, այսինքն ի զինոյն եւ յարբեցութենէն յառաջ զան ի հոգի եւ ի մարմին մեր ... : Վասն որոյ արգելեան է արբեցութիւն, զի արբեցողքն զարքայութիւն Աստուծոյ ոչ ժառանգեն՝ սաէ Գիրն մեր, Kiwlēsērean 1903, 156.

67 Cf. also Grigor Tat'ewac'i's sermon against drunkenness in which he discusses the four types of intoxication and gives various opinions on drinking in Christianity, Grigor Tat'ewac'i 1741, 265–267. Many of his general points are similar to Tērtēr's and he also cites the examples of Noah and Lot, but no discernible textual link exists between the two texts and Tat'ewac'i does not seem to have been aware of the poem.

There is no indication, however, from Tērtēr's colophons that he or other Christians faced official censure from the ruling elite about wine drinking. If Tērtēr was sensitive to Muslim opprobrium with respect to drinking wine, such criticism most likely stemmed from the non-elite Muslim population. More than external pressure, debates about (over-)drinking within his own community arguably motivated his defence of the blessings of wine.

3 Edition and Translation of the Poem

To my knowledge, Tērtēr's poem has been published in full only once before, by A. Madoyan, and never translated.⁶⁸ Mnac'akanyan referred to Tērtēr's poem in his *Medieval Armenian Folk Songs (Haykakan mijnadaryan žotovrdakan erger)*, but did not provide a transcription of it.⁶⁹ In his contribution on Armenian literature to volume III of the *History of the Armenian People (Hay žotovrdi patmut'yun)*, he included five lines of the poem and a brief discussion of its contents.⁷⁰ Four of the five lines correspond to ll. 178–181 of the poem in M 8029, but the fifth line differs and does not appear anywhere else in the text. Mnac'akanyan may, therefore, have relied upon a different version of the poem. The poem is cited in the *Dictionary of Middle Armenian (Mijin hayereni bararan)* as the only witness to the loanword մուշրուսայ.⁷¹ In their bibliography, the editors give M 5837 as the reference for the poem. The abbreviated catalogue of the Matenadaran does not list Tērtēr's poem as one of the contents of the manuscript, but that may be an oversight and this text may be the one Mnac'akanyan cited. M 5837 is a copy of Amirdivlat' of Amasia's *Bžškarān (Medical Book)* completed in 1629 and bears no obvious connection with anything that Tērtēr copied, although one could see how his poem may have been included with a medical treatise given the emphasis on the negative impacts on health Philosopher attributes to wine. The editors do not explain why they relied upon this version of the text composed some three centuries later than the presumed autograph found in M 8029. I include a new transcription of the poem from M 8029 so that the reader can check the text and because it differs slightly from that of Madoyan's. I did not have access to M 5837 and my modified diplomatic edition relies solely on the text found in M 8029.⁷² I have

68 Madyoan 1989; see van Lint 2014 for an overview of publications and studies of Armenian poetry.

69 Mnac'akanyan 1956, 53, 613.

70 Mnac'akanyan 1976, 865–866.

71 Łazaryan—Avetisyan 1987–1992, 10, and note 36 above.

72 I would like to thank the faculty and staff of the Matenadaran for providing me with digitised images of the relevant folios of this manuscript.

resolved all abbreviations in the text and indicated the letters supplied by putting them in italics. Any editorial emendations have been placed between < >; folio numbers have been inserted in the margin. A corrector, probably Tērtēr himself, went over and made some corrections to the text; I have noted these in the apparatus as corr. I have also provided line breaks and numberings; punctuation and rubrication follow that of the manuscript.

Caveat lector: I have opted to express the sense of the poem in rhyming lines rather than provide a strictly literal translation, in part in order to render aspects of Tērtēr's poetics and jaunty spirit for readers in English.⁷³ For ease of reading, I place the names of the characters in italics on a separate line in the translation, although I have maintained the line-numbering of the Armenian.

3.1 *Text*

227^v

Խաղողն եւ իմաստասէրն է

Խաղողն ասէ: Երբ⁷⁴ ամէն միրք հասանի

համովըս⁷⁵ զարդեմ ամէնի.

քան զամէն միրք եմ⁷⁶ ցանկալի.

հընձան⁷⁷ մտեմ ու յեկեղեցի.

5 եւ ի սեղան թագաւորի.

մշակն որ վաստակի.

այն արն եւ ինքն միսիթարի.

շուտով առնու ուրախ լինի.

լինքն քարշէ զերդ սիրելի:

10 **Իմաստասէրն ասէ. յաղթէիր քո բնութեամբ.**

կամ ունէիր քո քաղցրութեամբ.

բորբոքիս յեռանդութեան.

եւ դեղ լինիս յիմարութեան.

անառաջնորդ պողընկութեան.

15 եւ անխտիր խառնակութեան.

73 I would like to thank my colleague Dr Michael Pifer for stimulating conversations and suggestions about the poem and its translation. Any errors, of course, remain my own.

74 **Երբ**] written over in black ink as Երբ, corr.

75 համովըս] -ը- suprascr. corr.

76 եմ] suprascr. corr.

77 հընձան] h- suprascr. corr.

Գինին ասէ. ես այնաք յերկիր եկի.
 որ սգաւորաց մխիթար լինի.
 եւ սեղանն զարդարի.
 եւ սիրելին զհիւրն ընդունի. 228^r

20 հարասնիքն յորդորի.
 պասքեալ մարմինն արբուցանի.
 եւ ոխակալն յանդիմանի.
 ուր կայ խռով շուտով հաշտի.
 սեղանն ամեն բարով լցվի:

25 **Իմաստասէրն:** գինի դու չես խիստ գովելի.
 ւ⁷⁸ ոչ ես սրբոց մեծարելի.
 լավ մարդ ւ ամէն առաքինի.
 ամենեւին զքեզ չընդունի.
 դու լկտոց ես սիրելի.

30 արբեցողաց մեծ գովելի.
 մարդիք⁷⁹ քէնով խիստ մոլորի.
 յամէն բարոյ ինքըն⁸⁰ թափի:
 Թէ դեկան հազար ունի.
 աղքատ քէնով շուտով լինի.

35 ըզմայրն յորդոցըն⁸¹ չընդունի.
 աստարականքըն⁸² սիրելի.

Գինին ասէ. էր խասիս դառն ու դժար.
 կարկէ զբանըդ քո յերկար.
 մելքիսեղեկ կենաքն յերկար.

40 Եւ աբրահ(ամ) սուրբ եւ արդար.
 զիս ի դէմ բերին յերկար.
 եւ ընձայեցին սիրելար⁸³:

Իմաստասէրն: ըմբելի եղեր նոյի.
 իսայտառակիչ⁸⁴ նահապէտի.

78 ւ] n- del.

79 մարդիք] -իք suprascr. corr.

80 ինքըն] -ը- subscr. corr.

81 յորդոցըն] -ը- subscr. corr.

82 աստարականքըն] -ը- subscr. corr.

83 See note 35 above.

84 իսայտառակիչ] -յ- subscr. corr.

- 45 Եւ կրսեր իր զաակի.
 պատճառ եղեր անիծողի.
 խաղք արարէր զինքն ամէնի.
 պատմել ի մէջ հպարակի.⁸⁵
 աստուածախասս մեծ հզարի.
 50 խէլացն շետուր նորայ տեղի.
 մերկացուցեր ծիծաղելի.
 անիծիցն անպատմելի.
 պատճառ եղար դու ի յերկրի.

228^v **Գին**ին|ին ասէ. ընդ իս ամէն մարդ միանայ.

- 55 Եւ ըմբէլոյ զիս կամենայ.
 Եւ տիսիլն զուարճանայ:
 Թագաւորն ուրա<խա>նայ
 ծառայքն ամէն նայ կենայ.
 զերդ ածէ ու հարբենայ
 60 Բաշխէ շատ տուրք եւ լիանայ.
 այրն ու կինն երբ միանայ.
 Եւ նոցա սէրն շատանայ.
 Թէ կամի հոյրն⁸⁶ որ գնա
 երբ զիս տեսնու ի տեղն կէնայ:
 65 աղքատն երբ հարբենայ
 զերդ թագաւոր ուրախանայ:
 զիւր տրտմութիւնն մոռանայ.
 այն արն եւ ինքն շատ խնդայ:

Իմաստասէրն: սողոմ չար սնուցած.

- 70 դստերքն զղովտ հարբեցուցած:
 պողընկութեան խորհուրդ ածած.
 քան զամենայն մարդ յիմարած.
 երկու դստերքն յղացած.
 կասկածն յիւր սիրտն չէր ընկած.
 75 թէ չէիր դու անդ իմած.
 չէր այս վնասս յերկիր գործած:

85 See note 35 above.

86 See note 17 above.

- Գին/ին:** չերկնչիս դու յարարչէն
 յամենեցուն պարգևողէն.
 որ զիս էհան ի սուրբ կողէն.
 80 Բըխեաց առատ աղբիւր արէն.
 Բաշխած յաջոյ կենարարէն:
 Ի հրաշալի վերնատանէն:
 արբելոց աշակերտէն.
 ամինչ է ի սուրբ ի վիմէն.
 85 Ի հրաշալի պատարագէն
 ի քրիստոսի սուրբ յարենէն:

- Իմաստասէրն:** մեծ եւ հզար է պատարագն.
 որ ի քեզ հաստատեցաւ:
 Բալյց առանց քեզ աղմուկ չեղաւ.
 90 Ի պատուիրանացն շատ լուծաւ.
 արինադիրն խաբեցաւ.
 որդին ի հայրն վիճեցաւ.
 կինն ի յառնէն բաժանեցաւ.
 Ի վաստակոյ ձեռնն լուծաւ.
 95 աչացն պակսեցաւ.
 յերկար գլուխն ցաւեցաւ.
 լերդն ի փորն խաշեցաւ.
 հայնց որ ի հող մահու իջաւ:

229^r

- Գինին:** որ ազահ է ու արբեցող.
 100 եւ հաւաստի եմ սպանող.
 ով խելացն չէ կարող.
 եւ այնպիսեացն եղայ փորձող:
 որ ըմբելոյ զիս չէ կարող.
 նմայ չվայլեմ որ չէ խմող.
 105 որ ի բերանն ինքն է փաղող.
 եւ չարայիսաւ գերդ շուն հաջող:
 եւ իմաստնոցն եղայ սիրող.
 երբ որ խմէնայ բարոյ լինի գործող:
 եւ աղքատաց լինի բաշխող.
 110 եւ սիրելեացն իրոյ գովող:
 բարբառող եւ նորոգող.
 եւ ի պաշտանն լինի հընչող.
 եւ թէ լինի ոք հեր<ձ>ուածող.
 պատասխանոյ լինի տուող:

115 **Իմ**աստասէրն: թէ քննելի զինքն կամի.
անքննելի է քո բարին.
վասն մեր սուրբ խորհրդին.
որ աստուծոյ որդիք լինի.
ի հրեշտակաց դասն դասին.
120 անանց փառաւքն պսակին.

229^v

Գինին: յիշեցոյ աստնուրիս.
զոր քո աշխարտ կու հայիս.
եւ մի յինէն կեղծաւորիս.
որ յերակ խմէնայ զիս.
125 բազում սիրէ զիւր սիրելիս.
յերակ ես փառք եմ աշխարհիս:
փառք ու պատիւ աստնուորիս:
զսիրտն ուրախ առնեմ զերկրիս.
իմ խմողն կարմիր զերդ զիս.
130 մի յաճախիր որ չմոլորիս:
թէ շահիլ կամիս դու զիս.
երբ լինինք ի հարսանիս.
քո ինչ բան կայ ի յեղջիրիս.
զիս էր ածէք ի կուժ կաւիս.
135 կամ ի պղընծի մուշրուպանիս.
ի յարծաթ առէք դուք զիս.
կամ ի յոսկի ամանանիս.
Թէ աղքատ ես եւ չունիս.
երկու փողոյ ի յապիկիս.
140 Էնով խմէ յերակ դու զիս.
յամէն նեղոյ ի գատ լինիս:
ու առողջ լինիս յաստնուորիս:

Իմաստասէրն: հեռենայ պարտ է ի քենէ.
զի ով գքեզ յերակ խմէ:
145 զպատուիրան տեառն չպահէ.
եւ զմահու արն չյիշէ.
ոչ տէր մեղայ անձինն ասէ.
ոչ զժամհարին ծայնն չլսէ.
Թէ ջանայ որ աղաւթէ.
150 նայ քունն ի յաչքն գայ մտէ.
սիրտն դողայ ու զվիզն ձգէ.
զափն ի ճակտին յերակ դնէ.

առաւաւտոյն յոյսըն ծագէ,
սիրտն ու գլուխն խիստ ցաւէ,
155 թէ կերակուր բերին չուտէ,
զարն ի բանէն ի զատ պահէ,
մակար չէիր լել դու ի | յորթէ,
մեք խմէաք ի պաղ ջրէ:

230^r

Գինին: այն որ ընդ հարն է յէութեան.
160 վաւն իւր անճառ խոնարհութեան.
Եկեալ կամաւ իշխանութեամբ,
ի հարսանիս ուրախութեամբ,
փեսային ի ցնծութիւն
թագաւորին ի սրբութիւն.
165 գինին սրբոցն յուրախութիւն.
Եւ հարսանեացն ի ցնծութիւն.
որ խմէ զիս գոհութեամբ.
Ես նմայ գեղ կենդանութեան.
բայց որ խմէ անգոհութեամբ.
170 Ես նմայ դեղ յիմարութեան.
գինին ասէ, ով զիս անչափ առնու ի փոր.
Ելնէ կանչէ զերդ ուխտաւոր.
թէ ես⁸⁷ եմ քաղքիս թագաւոր.
Երկու մանուկ ելնեն աղուոր.
175 ու իր մուրուացն տան ոլոր.
ձգեն ի խոր փոսու ի բոլոր.
ու զգլուխն անեն զինչ զգխթոր:

Իմաստասէրն: գինի զքեզ դարովեցի.
քաղցր եւ անուշ բաժակ բարի.
180 Ես մեղա սուրբ արարչին.
որ զքեզ ստեղծեց բաժակ բարի.
յերակ դու փառք ես ամենի.
փառք եւ պատիւ թագաւորի.
քէնիւ հազար չար խափանի.
185 ուր կայ խռով քէնիւ հաշտի.
հայրն հազար փառաւք բազմի.
Ես քեզ ընդէ՞ր մեղադրեցի.

87 եւ] suprascr. corr.

- 190 ինչ դու բաժակ ես գովելի.
 մարդ որ քենիս ինք մոլորի.
 ինքն իւր անձինն վատ լինի.
 մարդն չար ու դու բարի.
 շնացողի ու արբեցողի.
 չէ արժանի ըմբեալ գինի.
 230^v ազահի ու արբեցողին
 195 որ *աստուծոյ* չեն պիտանի.
 նոցա քացախ տուք եւ լեղի.
 որ շուտ իւրեանց լերդն ճայթի:
 դու լաւ ես քահանայի.
 թագաւորի եւ իշխանի:
 200 գինի դու չես մեղադրելի.
 քենիս *արհնի* տէրն ամէնի.
 մեր մահու կեանքն ուրախ լինի.
 քէնիս պսակն զարդարի.
 մկրտութիւնն յարինի.
 205 *քրիստոս* յերկնիցն խոնարհի.
 քէնիս ի մեղաւորի.
 ի ձեռն *սուրբ* պատարագի:
 ննջեցելոց մեղքըն ջնջի:
 եւ դասք դիւացըն հալածի.
 210 *աստուած* փառաք փառաւորի.
 եւ գթութեամբ մեզ ողորմի:

 Զտէր տէր գրիչս ողորմելի.
 ծով քահանայ մեղաք ի լի.
 որբ եւ այրի. խեղճ ու լալի.
 215 որ զգինոյս գովքս գրեցի.
 ինչ որ կարդէք ի մարդամիջի
 զիս յիշեցէք վանց *քրիստոսի*.
 պիթ իմ մեղաց գիրն ջնջի.
քրիստոս ձենիս ինձ ողորմի:

3.2 Translation

Grape and Philosopher

Grape Says:

When all fruit have reached their time
 And have ripened on the vine,

Mine becomes the most desired
 B'cause its presence is required
 5 Both at court and at the altar.
 E'en the weary farmer
 May in me find soothing slumber.
 I bring joy and comfort to his life
 As he holds me like his wife.

Philosopher says:

10 You conquer them with your nature
 Seizing them in a grip of pleasure.
 You kindle in them a demon passion
 So that they lose all sense of discretion.
 You lead to feckless fornication
 15 Those stupefied by your intoxication

Wine says:

For these reasons I was born,
 To give comfort to those who mourn,
 And the gracious table to adorn,
 For the beloved to receive his guest,
 20 And to let weddings do the rest!
 To satisfy all those who thirst
 And to reproach them who cause hurt,
 For let quarrelers no longer be hostile
 But o'er a bounteous table reconcile.

Philosopher:

25 Wine! You are worthy of neither honour nor praise
 By them who walk in the holy one's ways,
 Rather the good man, filled with virtue,
 Knows that he should completely reject you!
 The lewd hold you in admiration,
 30 While the drunk praise you in celebration.
 Because through you a man goes far astray
 As his money and wealth quickly fly away.
 All his goods go straight out the door
 As you leave your beloved washed up and poor.
 35 A son turns his back on his mother
 And seeks solace in the arms of an unknown other.

Wine says:

- Why, you say such bitter and difficult words!
 Be silent now and let me be heard.
 Melchizedek, with his longevity,
 40 And Abraham, in his righteous purity,
 Brought me out repeatedly
 As well as presented me lovingly.⁸⁸

Philosopher:

- But when Noah had too much wine
 He was left hanging out to dry.⁸⁹
 45 And you know what happened to his younger son—
 Well, he became the jest of everyone.
 In public they thought him worthy to shun
 And even to curse his next generation.⁹⁰
 That prophet of great acclaim
 50 Even his mind you overcame,
 Leaving him naked and ashamed.
 To inspire unspeakable curses
 Constitutes the entirety of your purpose!

Wine says:

- Everyone unites with me,
 55 As they want to drink in harmony,
 Showing their joyful faces jovially.
 The king rejoices⁹¹ in his cups
 And all the servants come right up
 When he fetches me and drinks his fill
 60 He lavishly distributes gifts at will.
 When a man and wife join conjugally
 Their love will increase mightily.

88 Cf. Gen 14:17–20. I have emended the text in line 40 to read աբրահամ (Abraham) instead of աբրահ (Abrah); it is also possible that Tērtēr intended աբրամ (Abram) as the encounter between Abraham and Melchizedek occurred before Abraham received his full name. Trisyllabic Abraham, however, fits better with the metre.

89 Cf. Gen 9:20–27.

90 This is a reference to the fact that although it was Ham who saw Noah's nakedness, it was his son Canaan whom Noah cursed.

91 “rejoices,” ուրախանայ; the text reads ուրանայ, “denies,” which does not make sense here, and the trisyllabic ուրախանայ, “rejoices,” fits better with the meter.

If a guest⁹² gets up before it's time
 He'll keep his seat if you bring out wine!
 65 When the pauper imbibes liberally
 He comes to rejoice royally
 For all his troubles melt away
 And laughter fills his entire day.

Philosopher:

Sodom's ill-bred daughters
 70 Got that poor Lot slaughtered
 They led their father into bed
 When he was smashed out of his head.⁹³
 Both of them became impregnated
 Because he was so inebriated.
 75 If you at that time had not been downed
 This wrong in the world would not be found.

Wine:

Do you not fear the Creator,
 Who is the supreme Benefactor?
 Who drew me from that holy side,⁹⁴
 80 From which generous spring the law derived,
 Which his vivifying right hand did provide.
 From that wondrous room⁹⁵ disseminated,
 From the disciple among the intoxicated,⁹⁶
 E'erything from that holy stone,⁹⁷
 85 From the miraculous sacrifice that does atone
 From the blood of the anointed one.

92 "guest," հյրն; Madoyan 1989 transcribes as հայրն, "father," but it is clearly հյրն, see note 16 above.

93 Cf. Gen 19:30–38.

94 Cf. John 19:34.

95 "room," վերնաստուն, lit. "upper house" or "upper room," a reference to the coenaculum where the Last Supper took place and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

96 A reference to Peter among the disciples at Pentecost, Acts 2:5–15. When the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, certain onlookers believed them to be drunk. Peter exclaimed that they were not drunk. Here Tērtēr plays with the idea of the apostles being spiritually intoxicated, cf. e.g., note 67 above and the use of Persian مست in the poems of Rūmī.

97 Tērtēr uses the image of the upper room and the stone or rock to allude to the Last Supper and Pentecost, to Peter, whose name means rock (Matt 16:18, John 1:42), and to Christ, who

Philosopher:

Mighty and great it is celebrated,
 The sacrifice that you initiated,
 But by your presence strife has proliferated
 90 While many of the commandments dissipated.
 The legislator was deceived,
 And son against father did angrily grieve;
 Woman split from man,
 While work fell from his hand,
 95 His eyes grew ever more bleary,
 And his aching head made him weary,
 His liver dissolved, worn and shot,
 Then he fell dead, brought to naught.

Wine:

For that one who is a greedy drinker
 100 I am certainly a killer,
 And for him who is unable to be smart
 I will surely try his heart.
 For him who cannot hold his drink
 He will think that I do stink:
 105 Vomit in his mouth, wallowing like a swine
 Barking like a dog, me he will malign.
 I am a lover of the wise
 When he who drinks me acts civilised,
 To the poor he becomes a provider,
 110 And of his family he is an admirer.
 In worship his voice resonates;
 It exclaims, rises, and renovates—
 And if anyone becomes a dissenter,⁹⁸
 He knows how to give an answer!

Philosopher:

115 But if one wants something tangible
 Your good is simply inscrutable.

is called the stone or rock (πέτρῃ) in Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, and 1 Cor 10:4. Having first evoked Peter, he now switches to Christ.

98 “dissenter,” ἑτερ[ᾶ]νοῦσθῆναι: the text reads ἑτεροῦσθῆναι, which could also be: ἑτεροῦ ἀσθῆναι,

It is on account of our holy mystery
 That we are sons of God spiritually
 Classed among the angelic hierarchy
 120 And crowned with His unfading glory.⁹⁹

Wine:

Remember this world right here
 That before your eyes appears
 and with me always be sincere.
 With every drink one pours
 125 He loves his beloved more and more.
 Of glory and of honour I am replete
 And of this world, I am the pulse and beat
 That I make the heart of this land complete.
 Like me the drinker's face is red
 130 But don't overdo it when you are to wed
 For if do, you will be misled
 And won't be of much use in the wedding bed!
 You have a cup of horn for display,
 So why then bring me in a pot of clay?
 135 A bronze vessel¹⁰⁰ can deliver,
 But more fitting is one of silver,
 A goblet made of gold, suits me even better.
 But if you're poor and don't have one,
 A two-cent glass will get it done,
 140 With a swig infuse your veins
 And free yourself from every pain,
 And health in life you will attain.

Philosopher:

Far from you one should remain,
 For he who takes you in his veins

possibly "bringing from last year." This makes little sense and the line seems to refer to the refutation of a heretic or dissenter.

99 These lines are somewhat cryptic, but I understand the Philosopher to say that Wine should not take credit for the spiritual work of the liturgy, which is a divine mystery; rather, Wine should keep in mind the more tangible problems it causes. Wine then turns to the physical world.

100 "vessel," մուշրուպանիս: a loanword from Prs. مشربة, see above note 36.

145 The Lord's commandments does forget
 And does not recall the day of death.
 His manifold sins he does not confess,
 Nor the clocking of the clapper¹⁰¹ does he address.
 Even when he tries to pray,
 150 Sleep upon his eyes does weigh,
 His heart trembles, he pulls his cheek,
 He rubs his temples, and shakes his feet
 The light of morn dawns vividly,
 But his heart and head hurt terribly,
 155 If they bring him food, he doesn't eat,
 He keeps the day and his word discrete,
 Perhaps,¹⁰² if from the vine you did not arise,
 Only cold water we would imbibe!

Wine:

As He who is with the Father essentially
 160 On account of His ineffable humility,
 Willingly and with authority,
 Came to the nuptial festivity,¹⁰³
 To the bridegroom the wine comes merrily,
 And to the king it comes piously.
 165 To the holy it comes joyfully
 While to the wedding feast in gaiety.
 To him who drinks with gratitude,
 I am the stuff of beatitude,
 But he who drinks me ungratefully,
 170 I am the poison of stupidity.

Wine says:

He who ingests me immoderately,
 Like a pilgrim exclaims with audacity
 That I am the king of this great city!
 Then two fine young men approach,
 175 Grab and twist his beard in reproach,¹⁰⁴

101 "the clapper," ժամհար, the semantron that calls people to prayer.

102 "Perhaps," մսկար, a loanword from Prs. مَسْ, see above, note 37.

103 A reference to the wedding at Cana, John 2:1–11.

104 See also the contribution by M.E. Stone and E. Vardanyan in this volume.

They cast him into a deep, dark pit
And make his head some sort of nut to split.¹⁰⁵

Philosopher:

Wine—I have done you a disservice,
Maligning your sweet and fragrant purpose.
180 I have sinned against the Creator,
Who keeps your good cup in His favour.
Your honour flows through one and all,
The glory and pride of every royal hall.
A thousand evils you do obstruct,
185 And quarrelers to peace you do conduct,
The Father is glorified majestically,
So why did I slander you viciously
When indeed you are a cup most praiseworthy?
A man who goes astray through you,
190 Himself is to blame for lacking virtue,
And it is the man who is evil, for you are true.
Wine should not be given out
To the fornicator and the lout;
To the greedy and the sot
195 Who are no use at all to God,
Only give vinegar and bile¹⁰⁶
So that their liver will soon expire.
But you are good to the hierarch,
To the prince, and to the monarch.
200 Wine, you are not to blame
For you the Lord of all proclaim.
You bring joy to our life of dread,
When the crown is placed upon our head,¹⁰⁷
When baptism you do attend,
205 When Christ from heaven does descend

105 This is a very liberal translation. Literally the text says: “they make his head like a gallnut (գիւղոր).” Tērtēr would likely have been familiar with the process of making iron-gall ink from smashed up gallnuts. The verse may mean, then, that they split his head open.

106 “vinegar,” քացախ, and “bile,” or “gall,” լեղի: cf. the wine offered to Jesus on the Cross in Matt 23:34 and Luke 23:36.

107 This is to be understood as referring to the wedding ceremony where crowns are placed on the heads of the bridegroom and bride.

Through you to the sinner mercifully
 By means of the holy liturgy.
 The sins of the dead are fully erased
 And legions of demons completely effaced,
 210 God is glorified with eternal praise,
 For through His mercy we are saved.

I, Tēr tēr, miserable scribe,
 Lazy priest filled with sin,
 Anguished, crying, widow and orphan,
 215 Composed this praise of wine.
 You who read this in humanity
 Remember me to Christ's monastery,
 My sins I need to erase completely,
 May Christ, through you, have mercy upon me.

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“My City Which Is of Bronze”

The City of Bronze Encroaching on the Alexander Romance

Alex MacFarlane

1 Introduction

In legend, Alexander III of Macedon surpasses his history: he reaches the edges of the world, encounters impossible creatures, and sees wondrous sights. One of these is the palace of Kandakē (also Kandaki, K'andakinē), fictional queen of Meroë. It is constructed of fine metals, precious stones, and rare woods. In a separate tale, Amir Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr journeys across the Maghreb and finds the City of Bronze, a splendid city of bronze, gemstones, and statues capable of movement, in which a dead queen still sits on her throne. Tablets inside and outside the city are inscribed with the message that even wealthy rulers become dried bones. At the end of his life, Alexander learns the same lesson: he will go into the ground empty-handed.

These two tales took different routes into Armenian literature, and they continued travelling after their translations: Kandakē's city becomes the City of Bronze, while the lessons learnt by Alexander and Amir Mūsā share the pages of a single manuscript. The proximity of these two tales attests to their shared geography. Both contain a narrative cartography in which the remote edges of the world are the setting for the marvellous and the instructional: monstrous creatures and motile statues and the important lesson that amassing power in life means little after death. The way that the City of Bronze enters and interacts with the story of Alexander enriches its world, and even helps to draw out the moral heft already present in the legend. In turn, Alexander's dying lesson about mortality heightens Amir Mūsā's story.

This article follows the connections between Alexander and the City of Bronze in Armenian literature. It is concerned with two tales. The first, the legendary history of Alexander—known in Armenian as *The History of Alexander of Macedon* and more widely in scholarship as the *Alexander Romance* (to which it will be referred throughout)—was translated into Armenian from a Greek *Vorlage* in or soon after the 5th century. Starting in the late 13th, early 14th century with the work of Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i and continuing in the 16th century primarily with Kat'olikos Grigoris Alt'amarc'i and his pupil Zak'aria Gnunc'e'i,

the Armenian text was accompanied by short monorhymed poems called *kafas* that repeated or added new details to the tale.¹ Later the *Alexander Romance* is abbreviated, altering details of the story in some ways and integrating its *kafas* into the narrative sequence.²

The second tale, the *History of the City of Bronze*, has antecedents in Arabic literature that go back to at least the 9th century, with roots in multiple narratives that cohered into mediaeval versions.³ It is most famous now for its appearance in the *1001 Nights* sequence. The first translation from Arabic to Armenian was made in the late 10th century for David III of Tayk' and included *kafas* to translate the rhyming poetic inscriptions found by the tale's protagonist, as well as his lamentations upon reading them (whence the word *kafa*, from the Arabic for rhyme, *qafiya*). In the early 13th century, a *vardapet* Arak'el made a second translation, which is perhaps the version that in turn was edited and expanded upon in the 16th century by Grigoris Ał'tamarc'i, who—as with the *Alexander Romance*—composed additional *kafas* for it.⁴

The earliest Armenian version has the City of Bronze in the north (rather than its more famous location in the Maghreb), perhaps reflecting the early Arabic tale, long before its inclusion in the *1001 Nights*.⁵ Deeper traditions in Iranian and Central Asian literature place a potential bronze city in the north.⁶ In terms of narrative function, however, its cardinal direction is not relevant: it is remote. The same is true of Kandakē's city Meroë, to be found in modern Sudan but placed in the *Alexander Romance's* uncertain geography along his route from India back to Babylon. Anywhere in the far west, north or along the map's less defined far-off regions is sufficient.

Starting with Alexander's visit to Kandakē, this article tracks how her city becomes the City of Bronze between *Alexander Romance* manuscripts and a 17th-century *tataran* (anthology of poetry and hymns) that includes some Alex-

1 A good introduction to this well-travelled text is Stoneman 2008, though it is sparse on the Armenian tradition. On the role of the *kafas*, see Simonyan 1975, Maranc 2003–2004, and MacFarlane 2019. The Armenian edition of the *Alexander Romance* is Simonyan 1989, with a new edition in preparation by Aram Topchyan. There is an English translation in Wolohojian 1969 (text, without *kafas*), while an Italian translation of the late 13th-century, early 14th-century manuscript V 424 accompanies its facsimile in Traina et al. 2003 (text and *kafas*, with lacunae where the manuscript is damaged). V 424 is held in the monastery of the Mxit'arists on San Lazzaro degli Armeni, in the Venetian lagoon, Italy.

2 The third text in Simonyan 1989 is an abbreviated *Alexander Romance*.

3 Fudge 2006, 91–96; Traina 1999.

4 Russell 1983, 255.

5 Russell 1983, 257–258.

6 Russell 1983, 251.

ander *kafas* copied separately, without the prose narrative. It then considers a different kind of interaction, in another 17th-century *tataran* that contains the tale of the City of Bronze with Alexander *kafas*—many about Alexander’s death—added to the bottom of some pages.

2 Initial Encroachments

The City of Bronze comes closer to the world of the *Alexander Romance* with every layer of reinscription. In the Greek *Alexander Romance*, it is not present.⁷ In the Armenian *Alexander Romance* narrative and *kafas* accompanying it, two separate locations need to be considered: the lengthily described city of Kandakē—which is also described in the Greek versions—and a brief mention of the City of Bronze.

Kandakē’s city is described in the narrative as having a marvellous appearance: a brilliant gold roof, thrones of onyx and beryl, tables of ivory, Numidian columns, human figures built of bronze, sculptures of elephants and chariot-drivers, a river like another Pactolus⁸ and ripely fruiting trees.⁹ A subsequent passage adds further details:

On the following day, Kandakē took Antigonos¹⁰ hand and showed him the bright and resplendent rooms of cerulean stone, and it seemed as if the sun and the moon [were] in the walls because of the golden marble boards. There was a great temple of unrotting wood, incombustible in fire. And a house was built, the foundation of which was not constructed on the ground, but on great pieces of four-cornered wood built with wheels, pulled by twenty elephants. If the king went somewhere to make war on a city, this was [his] home.¹¹

7 Nawotka 2017, 226.

8 A river now called Sart Çayı, in western Turkey.

9 Simonyan 1989, 308.

10 Alexander is pretending to be Antigonos, acting as his own messenger.

11 Simonyan 1989, 309. Իսկ միսս ատորն, առեալ Կանդակէ գձեռն Անտիգոնէ՝ ցուցանէր նմա սենեակս պայծառս եւ լուսաճաճանչս յաղագոյն քարէ, մինչ զի զարեգակն ի տախտակի եւ զլուսինն անգամ ի ձեռն կճեայ ոսկեղէն տախտակացն յորմս կարծեալ ի ներքս: Եւ ի նա էր տաճար մի մեծ յանփուտ փայտից եւ անայրելի ի հրոյ: Եւ տուն շինեալ էր, որոյ ոչ էր կառուցեալ հիմն ի վերայ երկրի, այլ ի վերայ մեծամեծ չորեքանկինի փայտից կոփելոց կառուցեալ անուարո, քարշեալ ի քսան փղոցն: Եւ թէ որեք երթեալ թագաւորն ի քաղաք տալ պատերազմ, այն լինէր յարկ:

A *kafa* by Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i in the late 13th, early 14th century makes the elephants into the foundation of the marvellous structure in its first six half-lines:

Այս էր տաճարն կանդակէ,
որ չէր հաստել ի [հի]մանէ,
այլ անհնարէն կառուցեալ է,
ի քսան փղաց շարժմանէ,
յոր հիացեալ աղէքսանդրէ
ասաց վեհիցն այս զեւ շա[տ]է¹²

This was the palace of Kandakē,
which was not set on a foundation,
but was impossibly constructed
on twenty elephants in motion.
Alexander marvelled at it,
he said, “This is truly, greatly sublime.”

In *kafas* surviving from the 16th century, the description of the palatial buildings is repeated, though some details are mixed up.

Զարքունիսըն Կանդակէ
տեսնաւէր մեծն Անտիգոնէ,
Որպէս զխորան Սովսէսի
կամ զտաճարն ի Սողոմոնիւնէ,
Յոր սեղան կազմեր ի նա
սուրբ հոգովըն Բերիելէ,
Զենման անարատ գառին
եւ անճառ բանին ի հաւրէ:¹³

The great Antigonos saw
the palace of Kandakē,
like the tabernacle of Moses
or the temple of Solomon.
On that altar was prepared for him
by the saintly, holy Beriel,
for the sacrifice of the innocent lamb
and the ineffable Word of the Father.

Վերոյ չորս անփուտ փայտից
հաստատեալ զհիմն ի քարէ.
Զեղունքն էր մարգարտաշար
եւ որմաք փայլմամբ ի սարդէ,
Գահոյքն ի շափիւղայից,
կարկեհան բիրտէ ի շիկնէ,
Բազմոցն պալարակապ
եւ հիւսեալ յոսկի տաղանդէ:¹⁴

Above, four unrotting pieces of wood
strengthened the foundation of stone.
The ceiling was strung with pearls
and with resplendent walls of cedar,
the thrones [were] of sapphires
[and] ruby crystal of a red hue,
the seat embossed
and woven with a talent of gold.

Սեղանքն ի փղղոսկրէից
եւ կազմեալ նա ի զոճազմէ,
Խարիսխ եւ սիւնքըն խոյակք,
սեւ աթոռք ի հընդկականէ,

The altars [were] made of ivory
and it was adorned with lapis lazuli,
the columns—base and capital—
the black seats of Indian [origin],

12 V 424 f.103^v (Traina 2003); Simonyan 1989, 309 n. 8.

13 Simonyan 1989, 309–310.

14 Simonyan 1989, 310.

Պատկեր նրկարեալ մարդոյ
էր անթիւ ի բազմութենէ
Եւ կառք գերազէն ճախաւք,
ծիրանապաճոյն ի կայծէ:¹⁵

the images painted of men
were innumerable in their multitude
and the chariot, suitably magnificent,
purple-adorned with carbuncles.

Հանդերձ ձիաւար կառաւք
կարծիս ունել յընթացէ,

The rider with a chariot,
you would think him able to go to the
races.

Խորանաշատ կամարաւք,
զերդ գարնան աղեղն ի յամպէ.
Որով աստուածոց պատկերք
խուժադուժ ի յարեան գունէ,
Ծառաւք եւ ծաղկով, պլտղաւք,
վարդ, շուշան ի կանաչ թըփէ:¹⁶

The great pavilion with arches,
that arc like spring, from a cloud,
in which icons of savage gods
are the colour of blood,
with trees and flowers, fruits,
rose, lily of a verdant bush.

Իսկ ի միւս արն առեալ
դըշխոյին զձեռն Անտիգոնէ,
Ցուցեալ լուսաճանճ սենեակս
յաւդային անդամանդ քարէ,
Զարեգակն ի տախտակի
Եւ զլուսինն ի տասն ու հընգէ,
Տանտէրք մոլորականք
հըրճուէին ի բարկ աստեղէ:¹⁷

On the following day
the queen took the hand of Antigonos,
showed him the resplendent rooms
of ethereal diamond stone,
the sun and the moon
in the fifteen panels,
the wandering lords
leaping for joy from the powerful star.

Եւ գետք ոսկեգոյն բըխմամբ
ծիծաղաճաւալ ոռոգէ:¹⁸

And the gold-hued rivers flowed forth
[and] water [all] with laughter.

Such space has been given to these lengthy and at times repetitive descriptions because the City of Bronze is, like Kandakē's palace, exquisite.¹⁹ Its beauty is such that men hurl themselves from the ramparts to be within it. Those who

15 Simonyan 1989, 310.

16 Simonyan 1989, 310.

17 Simonyan 1989, 310–311.

18 Simonyan 1989, 311.

19 The following excerpts from the *History of the City of Bronze* are taken from the manuscript M 7709, discussed later in this article, and checked against a version of the story printed in Tiflis in 1911 (P.P.K'. 1911), which is very close to the manuscript. The 1911 Tiflis printing is digitised as EAP180/1/4/48 <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP180-1-4-48> [accessed 16 February 2022]. For a recent English translation of the Arabic tale in the *1001 Nights*, see Lyons—Lyons 2010, 518–546.

enter safely find astonishing architecture: an arch of “red precious stones, that were like nothing we could engrave”²⁰ and, beyond its threshold, “four columns within the palace—one blue, one purple, one red, one green—and over those columns a dome plastered with gold. In that cupola they saw no stony edifice, no wooden, but all was gold and silver.”²¹ Within the cupola they find the dead body of the city’s queen, seemingly nameless, though in the Arabic tale she is known by names including Tadmura and Tarmazayan. Surrounding her are numerous treasures, including “a gold lion like a living creature, and luminous stones put in the lion, so that at night, the stones gave more light than the sun.”²² The moral of the tale requires the queen and her city’s inhabitants to all lie dead within its walls, while Kandakē, her family and (presumably) her subjects flourish. The details of Kandakē’s palatial buildings originate in the Greek *Alexander Romance*—with roots, perhaps, in real sights of India encountered by Alexander and subsequent Greeks who visited the region²³—but it is not difficult to see how the similarly stunning, jewel-set structures could, later, be taken to be one and the same.

Indeed, that proximity is potentially present in the *kafa’s* comparison of Kandakē’s palace to Solomon’s temple—not the temple itself, but its architect. Solomon did not construct the City of Bronze, but he is integral to the frame of the narrative about the quest that takes Amir Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr—the tale’s protagonist—to the city. The impetus for the quest is the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān hearing about a remote region where the people dwelling there sometimes fish up brass bottles containing jinn imprisoned and sealed within them by Solomon. At the very end of the tale, after leaving the City of Bronze—and learning its moral lesson—Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr at last reaches that remote region and has the people there bring him twelve of Solomon’s brass bottles, which he takes back to the Caliph. Though Solomon is not directly connected to the City of Bronze, he is instrumental to its presence in the tale. Additionally, Allegra Iafraite points to further Solomonic links in the Spanish location that likely underlies the City’s location: the real Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr conquered both North Africa and Spain, including Toledo, while an early Arabic version of the tale has it set around Toledo, a city that claimed possession of

20 M 7709, f.185^v. կարմիր ակունք էին. որ գնմանութիւն գրել ոչ կարացար:

21 M 7709, f.185^v. չորք սին կայր ի մէջ դարալ[ա]սին. մէկն լուրջ. մէկն ծիրանի. մէկն կարմիր. մէկն կանանչ. եւ գունալէթ մի ի վերայ սեանցն. ի լուսկոյ ծեփած. յայն դուպպան ո[չ] քարեղէն շէնք տեսար. եւ ոչ փայտեղէն. ամէնն ոսկի եւ արծաթ էր.

22 M 7709, f.185^v–f.186^v. եւ ոսկի առիւծ մի զուգած էր քան զկենդանի. Լուսատու ակունք դրած էր ի յառիւծն. երբ գիշեր լին[է]ր ակներն լոյս տային քան զարեգակ.

23 Szalac 2014.

Solomon's table until Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr took it (according to some reports).²⁴ The choice of metal is also notable: as with the Armenian word պղինձ, which can mean copper or its alloys bronze and brass, the Arabic نحاس is similarly broad in its metallic meaning, so that the city's name could be translated from both languages as the City of Bronze, the City of Brass or the City of Copper.²⁵ The bottles and the city are made of the same substance. Iafrate describes the story's varied elements as “some quite evidently, others in a more allusive way, certainly meant to create a network of references that would resonate with the audience, evoking and strengthening a distinctive Solomonic setting”²⁶—I suggest that this same technique of allusion is at play in the poet's comparison of Kandakē's palace to Solomon's temple, laying the foundation stones of an eventual equation between Kandakē's dwelling place and the City of Bronze.

Solomon's temple is a distinct structure, but it too may belong to the “network of references” that construct the above association. Also known as the First Temple of Jerusalem, his temple replaced the tabernacle of Moses—mentioned in the same *kafa*—as the dwelling-place of God. Its construction is recorded in the Book of Kings (3Kings in the Armenian Bible, 1Kings in Bibles used in the Western church, due to the use of different translations), and while ostensibly a real temple, it is described in opulent terms: “He ornamented the inside of the house with cedar vaults and beams, and engravings all of cedar, and no stone was visible.”²⁷ (3Kgs 6:18). Much is gilded, from the altar to the walls and floor: “All the house he anointed with gold ...”²⁸ (3Kgs 6:22). Decorative features run throughout: “All the walls of the house he engraved with cherubs and palm trees, and images visible on the interior and the exterior.”²⁹ (3Kgs 6:29). These too are overlaid with gold. Some of these details recall Kandakē's palatial complex—the cedar wood in 16th-century *Alexander Romance kafas*, the foliate details and the abundance of gold—though these are by no means unique details. Some of the words used vary, suggesting no direct inspiration from the Biblical passage. For ‘cedar’, the 16th-century *Alexander Romance kafa* has սարդ, while the edited text of 3Kings 6 uses եղենափայտ and մայր. Otherwise, the trees mentioned are different: the *Alexander Romance* mentions plane trees and trees without

24 Iafrate 2016, 262–264.

25 Iafrate 2016, 264.

26 Iafrate 2016, 263–264.

27 Zohrapian 1805, 2:142. Եւ դրուագեաց զտունն ՚ի ներքոյ եղենափայտիս զկամարսն եւ զկողակս, եւ զդրոշուածս զամենայն յեղենափայտից. եւ ոչ երեւէր քարն.

28 Zohrapian 1805, 2:143. Եւ զամենայն տունն օծ ոսկով ...

29 Zohrapian 1805, 2:143. Եւ զամենայն որսն տանն շուրջանակի քանդակեալ գրեաց զըշտ քերոբս եւ ըմաննիս, եւ դրոշուածս հայելիս ՚ի ներքսագոյնն եւ յարտաքինն:

specifying their species, while 3 Kings 6 references palm trees, cypress-wood and juniper-wood. While the comparison of Kandakē’s palatial complex to Solomon’s temple does not evince any textual borrowing, it can be interpreted as not only an attempt to elevate the palace’s appearance in Christian terms, but to evoke and draw comparison to the impressive architecture associated with Solomon.

Fantastical elements of the First Temple’s story are not connected to Kandakē or the wider *Alexander Romance* in Armenian (or Greek), but it is notable that this temple—like most features of Solomon’s life—attracted the unreal. Consider the shamir, used in the First Temple’s construction: either a living worm or a stone capable of working metal by affect, rather than the conventional use of a tool. The shamir is known in the Talmud and Midrash, and is also alluded to in Quran 34:14. The story of the shamir’s acquisition is filled with wonders typical of Solomon.

The point here is not—yet—to draw a direct line between Kandakē’s palace and the City of Bronze, but to allude. Both existed in the same narrative register of the ancient, the splendid, the (sometimes) holy. The poet of the *kafas* utilised this register when writing about a particular structure and drew inspiration from its many constituent tales—Iafate’s “network of references”.

The Armenian narrative introduces the City of Bronze separately in a later, short letter Alexander writes to his mother Olympias about the edges of the world, associating it with a city there: “Sailing to that place, we found the city Areg [the City of the Sun]. *It seemed to me that it is the one they call the City of Bronze*, which has a circumference of 120 *stadia*, and within it fourteen towers built of gold and emerald. Each of them had sixty stairs, and overhead was a chariot with horses of gold and of emerald. It was not easy to see them because of the mist. The pagan priest of the sun was Ethiopian.”³⁰ It is not clear when the italicised line was added to the text.³¹ This is after Alexander’s visit to Kandakē’s city, after meeting the Amazons, when he is again—for a short time—traversing lands inhabited by impossible species: dog-headed and headless men. The details of this City of Bronze recall not only the marvelous City of Bronze in its own tale, but the palatial complex of Kandakē in the

30 Simonyan 1989, 326. Եւ նաւել առ սովաւ գտաք զԱրեգ քաղաք: Ինձ այսպէս թուի, թէ սա է, որ ասեն Պղնձէ քաղաք, որ է շրջաչափումն ասպարհասց հարիւր եւ քսան, եւ աշտարակք էին ի նմա չորեքսասան՝ ոսկով եւ զըմբրիխտով շինեալ: Մի-մի ի նոցանէ ունէր աստիճանս վաթսուն եւ ի վերայ անցեալ կայր կառք ձիովք յոսկոյ եւ ի գմրխտէ: Եւ տեսանէ զնոսա ոչ էր դիրեաւ վասն շամանդաղին: Եւ քորմն արեգականն երովպացի էր. For the City of the Sun in the Greek tradition, see Nawotka 2017, 226.

31 Wolohojian 1969, 185; Traina 2003, 159; Russell 1983, 251.

Alexander Romance with gold and precious stones and a spectacular sculpted horse-drawn chariot, though they are separate places.

For now, Kandakē's palace and the City of Bronze remain distinct, though both fit well into the remote regions of the *Alexander Romance*'s narrative map. Two manuscripts from the 17th century reveal that direct links between Alexander and the City of Bronze were made.

3 Kandaki in the City of Bronze (M 7726)

The first manuscript is M 7726, a *tataran* of unknown origin, held in the Mesrop Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (the Matenadaran) in Yerevan, Armenia. It is small: 10.6 × 7.5 cm, a size that would fit in the hand. It contains 70 *kafas* about Alexander, with no header to indicate authorship, only the opening line of the twenty-fifth *kafa* in red ink. The old catalogue of the Matenadaran appears to ascribe authorship to Grigoris Alt'amarc'i, based on the sequence of names in the catalogue's brief summary (Grigoris Alt'amarc'i follows a Yovhannēs, who is named in a red-ink header in the section of poems before the *kafas* about Alexander).³² The anthologist of M 7726's *kafas* is mainly concerned with the meetings between Alexander and other rulers. The *kafas* deal with three such encounters: first, 24 *kafas* about Alexander and the Achaemenid king Darius, then 15 *kafas* about Alexander and the Indian king Poros, and thirdly, 10 *kafas* about Alexander and the fictional queen Kandakē. The remaining *kafas* describe Alexander's death.

Several *kafas* in M 7726 unite Kandakē and the City of Bronze. Both she and the city are first mentioned in one of the Poros *kafas*, in a line that reads: "Kandakē in the city of bronze."³³ Her next appearance is when Alexander goes to meet her. In these short poems, her home is given no detailed elaboration, no lustrous details as in the narrative and *kafas* discussed earlier. Instead, these *kafas* give a straightforward rendition of Kandakē and Alexander's encounter, but they explicitly place Kandakē within the City of Bronze. The relevant *kafas* are as follows.

Ըղըրկեց արըընձէ քաղաքն
Առ Կանդակիէ մեծ տիկին

He sent her to the City of Bronze,
to Kandaki the great queen.

32 Eganyan—Zeyt'unyan—Ant'abyan 1970, 597. The new catalogue has not yet reached this manuscript. In addition to the Alexander *kafas*, M 7726 contains the *History of the Youth Farman* and various *tal* (poems and songs).

33 M 7726 f.36r. Կանդակէ արըընձէ քաղաքին:

Պարզեք զանազան երես
Խալիաթ հագոյց տանողին:³⁴

He gave various gifts,
he made the bearer wear a robe of hon-
our.

Աղեկասանդր զպատկերն փոխեաց
Ջերդ դեսպան որ մարդ չճանաչէ

Alexander changed his likeness
to a messenger's so that no man would
recognise him.

Գընաց ի պըղընձէ քաղաքն
Առ Կանդակին մեծ տիկին:³⁵

He went to the City of Bronze
to the great queen Kandaki.

Enraged, Kandakē demands to know why he has dared to use trickery to come to her city.

Աղեկասանդրու պատկերն
նըկարեաց ունէր ի թըղթին
Հայեաց ընդ երես նորին
Բարկացաւ սըրտիւ դառնագին:

Alexander's likeness,
she had a painting of from a letter.
She looked upon the same face,
she became bitterly angry.

Այ բիճ եւ չարեաց ծընունդ
Անըզգամ դու ի բնութիւնէդ
Էր վըստահացար եկիր
Իմ քաղաքն որէ պըղընձէ:³⁶

“Oh bastard and evil one,
you are insane!
Why were you so bold to come
to my city which is [made] of bronze?”

Later, after Kandakē has counselled him not to trust in his fate, Alexander tells his troops that there is no way to conquer her city.

Ելաւ իւր հեծելն եկաւ
Եւ զպատճառն ասաց Կանդակիէ
Չըկար առնելոյ(յ) ճարակ
Այն քաղաքն որէ պըղընձէ:³⁷

He set out and came to his cavalry,
so that he could say about Kandaki:
“There is no way of taking
this city which is [made] of bronze.”

The City of Bronze is only a place, but its presence in Alexander's itinerary signifies a textual proximity of great interest. Though the palace of M 7726's Kandakē is not detailed, it is wondrous by appellation: made of bronze. The two cities

34 M 7726 f.37^r. The ‘her’ in the first line is Kandakē's daughter-in-law, who Alexander has freed from captivity.

35 M 7726 f.37^v.

36 M 7726 f.37^v.

37 M 7726 f.37^v.

in the Armenian *Alexander Romance*—Kandakē's palace and the City of the Sun (identified with the City of Bronze)—are one. The collection of *kafas* in M 7726 provides no context for this narrative closeness, but all but one of these *kafas* about Kandakē are also found in the abbreviated *Alexander Romance*, where Alexander visits K'andakinē in the City of Bronze.³⁸ As in the *kafas* in M 7726, the city is not lavishly described: the episode focuses on the upheavals of how Alexander and K'andakinē meet and then part. The altered story of the abbreviated *Alexander Romance* and its *kafas*—its updated cartography—is presumably a source for M 7726's collection of *kafas*, in which this pivotal meeting between king and queen takes place in a city made of bronze.

4 Alexander at the Base of the City of Bronze (M 7709)

M 7709, the second manuscript linking Alexander and the City of Bronze, presents a different proximity. It too is a *tataran*, dating to 1608–1658 and created in Kaffa (Feodosia, Crimea) by a Xaç'gruḥ (Xaç'atur *k'ahanay*), and it measures 14 × 9.5 cm.³⁹ It includes the tale of the City of Bronze interspersed with its own *kafas*—then, in the lower margin of this tale, some *kafas* about Alexander have been written. The difference in handwriting styles suggests that these Alexander *kafas* are additions to the manuscript by a separate scribe, especially as on one page a faded red *kafa* belonging to the City of Bronze tale is rewritten in what appears to be the same later hand.

The Alexander *kafas* added to M 7709 are a non-chronological selection, with subjects such as the last Egyptian Pharaoh Nectanebo II's seduction of Olympias, Alexander and his army's encounter with plant-men in a remote region of the world, the young Alexander refusing to give Macedon's tribute to the envoys of Darius, and the deaths of Alexander and Darius. Many are found in other manuscripts. The choice of *kafas* appears random, but it is not so. Part of the association is found in the narrative of the City of Bronze—not unique to this one manuscript—which says, of the first city visited by Amir Mūsā, that “Alexander built it”.⁴⁰ *Kafas* about him fit at the base

38 Simonyan 1989, 471–474. The *kafa* absent in the abbreviated *Alexander Romance* is the one beginning Աղէկսանդր զպատկերն փոխեաց (“Alexander changed his likeness”). The City of Bronze in the *Alexander Romance* is also discussed in Traina 1999, 377–380.

39 Eganyan—Zeyt'unyan—Ant'abyan 1970, 592. The manuscript contains many *tal* and several tales, including the *History of the Youth Farman*, the *History of the City of Bronze* and the *History of the Girl and the Boy*.

40 M 7709 f.182v. զայս աղէկսանդր շինեաց

of the narrative’s pages. Of even greater interest is the subject accounting for many of the *kafas*: Alexander’s death.⁴¹

The culmination of the *Alexander Romance* and *kafas* dwelling on Alexander’s mortality is that despite his impressive deeds and accumulation of wealth in life, he meets his mortal end and goes empty-handed into the grave. Many *kafas* were written for the drawn-out death sequence at the end of the narrative, which begins with ill omens, progresses to the poisoning of Alexander, and then follows his final days as he declines in health and eventually dies. M 7709 reproduces a number of these *kafas* at the base of the City of Bronze tale: an appropriate location for Alexander’s death, as Amir Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr will eventually arrive at the dead body of the city’s nameless ruler, who had amassed so much in her life.

Many of the *kafas* added to M 7709 about Alexander’s death show him finally learning this lesson in his last days.

գիշերս երազի տեսա	In the night, I saw in a dream,
մեծ կար[]ի գլխի[]	much [hail fell] to [my] head.
նա յիմ լացս առեր զհոգիս.	It made my soul weep,
աչ[]եղոյր ատասուիս:	[my] eyes poured tears [of blood].
Ասեն մի վախեր ար[They say, “Do not be afraid!
]ն լաւ է շատ ծիծաղիս.	It is better that you [weep than] laugh a
	lot.
դիժարդ ի դիրին դառնալ.	Difficulty will turn to ease.
երազիս ի յաստընվորին: ⁴²	You dream in this world.”

Alexander fears his dreamt death, and though his men (the ‘They’ of the poem) tell him not to be afraid, many of them are co-conspirators in the scheme to poison him. In a later *kafa*, Alexander addresses his wife Hroksinē (Roxana), who in the *Alexander Romance* is the daughter of Darius. In the *Alexander Romance* narrative, he tries to sneak away to end his life in private, but Hroksinē follows him and convinces him to return to his rooms. The *kafas* give no indication of this story, showing only Alexander’s distress at the loss of his life—the loss of his crown, symbol of his achievements.

41 For a thorough study of the relationship between the Alexander *kafas* and the City of Bronze narrative in M 7709, with a translation of all *kafas*, see MacFarlane 2021 and forthcoming.

42 M 7709 f.189^v–190^r. Translation of this badly damaged *kafa* makes use of the version at Simonyan 1989, 602 n. 393.

Ողորմ ու լալի դարձայ
 դարեհի դուստր հռքսինէ.
 յերկնից ի անդունդս անկայ.
 կորուստ ի գլխազս ի գլխէ:⁴³

“I became pitiable and lamented,
 daughter of Dareh, Hroksinē.
 I fell from heaven into the abyss.
 The loss of the crown from the head.”

Hroksinē responds.

թողոյ մոռան կամիս
 աշխարհի կայսր աղէկսանդրէ
 ես ալ մեռանիմ հետ քեզ.
 զիս ի քո գիրըզ հաւաքէ:⁴⁴

“You will abandon [and] forget me,
 lord of the world, Alexander.
 But I will die with you.
 Invite me to your bosom.”

Արքայն պատասխան արար
 թէ էլաւ հոգիս դու լըռէ
 սիրտս վառեցաւ հրով
 մի նեղեր աստուած վկայ է

The king replied:
 “My soul is perturbed, be silent!
 My heart is aflame with fire,
 do not oppress [me], God is [my] wit-
 ness,

Թէ ես գիտացել էի
 որ մահուս արն մօտել է
 շու[տ]ով դառնայի առ մայրս
 որ այրած սիրտ [ըզ]ն[ա] կուզէ:⁴⁵

for I have learned
 that my mortal day is upon me
 [and] I will soon return to my mother,
 for whom my burning heart is longing.”

Alexander’s emotional state is dwelled on here, including his love for his mother (a theme elaborated upon in the *Romance*) and his anguish that he will return to her dead.

The person who added the Alexander *kafas* to M 7709 was less concerned with the straightforward narrative of Alexander’s decline and death. For instance, one *kafa* in the sequence as it appears in *Alexander Romance* manuscripts—about Alexander allowing his concerned army to see that he remained alive—is not included in M 7709.⁴⁶ Alexander’s emotional response to these events is clearly a greater priority to the copyist. The next *kafa* in the *Alexander Romance* manuscript sequence, which is a more contemplative piece presented from Alexander’s perspective, is added to M 7709 across two folios.

Աուրքս էի ի շուք նման
 կամ ըստուեր երագի նըման

I spent my days as if in shade
 or shadow, as if in a dream.

43 M 7709 f.190^r.

44 M 7709 f.190^v.

45 M 7709 f.191^r.

46 Simonyan 1989, 340.

ծակիկ⁴⁷ է զարնան նման.
մանուշկի կամ վարդի նման⁴⁸

It is like a spring flower,
like a violet or rose.

Հալեցայ մսի նման
ու շիջա ճրրագի նման.
մըսնուս արեւի նման.
ու զընասս ի հող ' ի ի զընտան:⁴⁹

I was consumed like flesh,
and extinguished like a lamp.
You set like the sun
and you go into the earth, to a prison.

The tone is mournful: Alexander expresses regret at spending his life in a dream-like state, only to be (inevitably) extinguished like a lamp and set like the sun. This message is continued soon thereafter, though a *kafa* in-between first curses the man who poisoned Alexander, comparing him to Cain and Judas, willing that he meet the same sinners' death.⁵⁰ After that, the *kafas* return to reflecting on the illusory nature of life.

Այս կեանս է յերազ նման.
զինչ զարթնու լինի փոշիման

This existence is like a dream,
from which he awakens [and] becomes
regretful.

ի քուն զինչ իշխան գիտէ.
երբ զարդնու աղքատ ու անբան:⁵¹

In sleep, he knew himself a prince;
when he awoke, a foolish beggar.

In the illusory dream of life, he is a prince—only in dying does he awake to realisation. Then, in the second half of the next *kafa*, is life's ultimate end: the earth, a grave.

այսպէս աղէկսանոր եղել.
որ մտաւ ի նեղ գերեզման:⁵²

So Alexander
entered a narrow grave.

The *kafas* continue. The dead king is not always named: these *kafas* come after six about Alexander confronting the emissaries of Darius, who foresee the Achaemenid king's downfall. On intervening pages there are *kafas* that directly name Darius and mourn his death. The two *kafas* here, however, are associated

47 For ծակիկ, read ծաղիկ.

48 M 7709 f.191^v.

49 M 7709 f.192^r. The version in Simonyan 1989, 340 has a consistent second-person point of view rather than switching from the voice of Alexander to an exhortative addressor.

50 M 7709 f.192^v and f.193^r.

51 M 7709 f.193^v.

52 M 7709 f.194^r.

with Alexander in the *Alexander Romance* narrative, and in M 7709 it is possible to read this assemblage of death *kafas* as intentionally bringing both kings together: here, at the base of the City of Bronze, both Alexander and Darius die.

Արքայիս տապանն եկի
որ ունէր շատ մի հայրէնիք.
Այ[] քդա որ զաշխարհս ունէր.
սա պառկել լու փող մի ունի:⁵³

I came to the tomb of this king,
he who had a great patrimony.
This man who had subdued the world,
he laid down and has a narrow passage.

Յիրմէն ես հարցունք եղայ.
այդ տեղ այնց եղաւ քեզ հերիք.

I requested from him,
“This place, how did it become sufficient for you?”

դարձաւ պատասխան []
թէ հերիք ու շատմ աւելիք:⁵⁴

A reply came,
“It is enough and even more than enough.”

At last, Alexander has learnt his lesson: death—and its narrow grave—must suffice, even for this great king.

The *kafas* about Alexander’s death added to M 7709 do not all focus on the emotional and moral path of Alexander towards the grave, though the majority do. It is possible to protest the crime of murdering Alexander and curse his killer—but the main lesson to be taken from these events is the inevitability of a death and the implications of that mortality on the conduct of one’s life. The physical proximity of these moral conclusions to Amir Mūsā’s own journey on the pages of M 7709 speaks to their perceived similarity: proof that at least the person adding the Alexander *kafas* to this copy of the City of Bronze tale saw these stories as relevant to each other, placing Alexander’s death at the tale’s base like another architectural feature on these well-adorned walls. Here are two stories that use the remote regions of the world, well-populated with marvels, as a space for instruction. The glories are great, but death comes for us all.

53 M 7709 f.201^v.

54 M 7709 f.202^r.

5 Conclusion

Over time, the City of Bronze encroached on the *Alexander Romance* in Armenian literature. Starting as a suggested city in the Armenian *Alexander Romance*, it became the city of Kandaki in M 7726: a minor detail amid the anthologist’s interest in Alexander’s royal encounters but placed decisively on the map. In the lower margins of M 7709, the lesson of the City of Bronze tale is heightened by the addition of *kafas* about Alexander, particularly his drawn-out death sequence in which he finally learns the same lesson as Amir Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr.

This path through the Armenian *Alexander Romance* and its *kafas* towards the City of Bronze points to the fluidity of a shared narrative landscape, in which the edges of the world are populated with marvels and morals: a grand city, a dead ruler’s empty hands. This landscape stretches far beyond the Armenian versions of the *Alexander Romance* and the City of Bronze tale discussed here. In the Syriac version of an *‘ajā’ib* (marvel literature) text called *The Marvels Found in the Great Cities and in the Seas and on the Islands*, dated to the period between the 15th–early 17th centuries CE, the first marvel is a familiar city: “Alexander built a city of brass on some island in the country of Andalus, the width of which is four months. And he placed many treasures in it. And it is a great and sealed city, and there are no gates in it.”⁵⁵ Other examples of Alexander’s textual proximity to the City of Bronze abound. This literary landscape in the interconnected mediaeval and early modern worlds of the South Caucasus, Middle East, Anatolia, and Black Sea littoral (and beyond) is bigger than the regions traversed by Alexander and Amir Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr. Their separate journeys—and the encroachment of the City of Bronze on the *Alexander Romance* in the Armenian narrative and *kafas*—are only small parts of Armenian literature’s place in its complex cartography. Much mapping awaits.

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55 Minov 2021, 33.

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Between *Gusan* and *Ašut*

Yohannēs Xlat'ec'i and the Porous Borders Negotiated by the Medieval Armenian Bard

S. Peter Cowe

1 Introduction

Various studies have illumined the social status and performance practice of Armenian bards in the Late Antique period, registering their commonalities within the broader Parthian cultural ambience,¹ as well as the characteristics of the new florescence of the art in the early modern period from the 16th century in Anatolia and Southern Caucasia largely in a Turkic language milieu,² in which the significance of interchange is underlined by a number of Christian Armenian exponents apprenticing themselves to Muslim masters.³ The earlier exemplar (*gusan*) is characterised by the oral exposition of myth, legend, and heroic exploits,⁴ while the second (*ašut*) by the declamation of prose romances, in keeping with a heightened emphasis on the theme of love⁵ and the composition, inscription, and rendition of various genres of song.⁶ In contrast, despite clear indications of continuity of bardic activity in Armenian society, the primary features of this interim period have been less systematically studied.⁷

At the same time, these versatile, professionally trained master-craftsmen possessed a valuable skill-set continually in demand in different geographical (urban gatherings, countryside, etc.) and social settings (court, weddings, and

1 Boyce 1957, 10–45.

2 Levonyan 1944; Baxč'inyan 1987; Yang 2016, 41–101. The incorporation of the region under Ottoman control in the 1520s introduced a new reality. Nahapet K'uč'ak (*d.* 1591), one of the earliest Armenian exponents of the art, operated in the Van region, but now composed largely in Turkish. Some later Armenian *ašuts* actually became Muslim Sufis, writing in Turkish and Kurdish, on which see Bayrak 2005. For a study of *āšuts'* contemporary status, see Korovinis 2017, 113–140.

3 Yang 2016, 61–62.

4 Garsoïan 1989, 30–35 and Thomson—Howard Johnston 1999, xxxix, xlv–xlvi, liii–liv, lix–lx.

5 See K'ot'anjyan 2003.

6 Yang 2016, 102–111; Kardaş 2018, 48–50.

7 See, for example, Ördoyan 1991.

other festivities) over this wide era.⁸ Moreover, granted the ubiquity and centrality of entertainment in such ambiances, we observe the ability of bards to cross various social, religious, and ethnic boundaries in practising their art. Thus, as we read of this type of performers earlier regaling Armenian kings and dynasts,⁹ later representatives were employed at foreign courts such as Sayat' Nova in the service of Erekle II of Kartli in the 1750s or T'uĵĵar at the Sublime Porte under Sultan Abdülmeçid I (r. 1839–1861).¹⁰ Meanwhile, we might parallel those exploits in the mediaeval period by comparing the career of Yohannēs Xlat'ec'i, an Armenian bard active at the court of the Kurdish *amīr* of Bitlis in the first half of the 15th century.¹¹

2 Historical Contextualisation

Xlat' (Ahlat, Khilāt) is a city located on the north-western shore of Lake Van administratively in the district of Bznunik' in the region of Turuberan of Greater Armenia¹² until Late Antiquity. As part of the Arab settlement policy to consolidate Umayyad rule in Southern Caucasia the Qays tribe was relocated there in the early 8th century and gradually established an emirate by the end of the next, following the decline of central 'Abbasid power. Thereafter the city falls under the sway of the Hamdanid dynasty that frequently intermarried with members of the Kurdish community, which had been amassing in the region and thereafter began to administer it under the Marwanid dynasty (990–1085) that held power sequentially under Armenian, Byzantine, and Seljuq suzerainty.¹³ These developments gave rise to a long history of Armeno-Kurdish symbiosis in this area of Lake Van.¹⁴

Thereafter Xlat' became the capital of the much larger Shah-i Arman state (1100–1207) established by the Turkmens in the aftermath of the Seljuq invasion of Anatolia, whose territory also incorporated most of the Bitlis and Van provinces to the south and east. The state's nomenclature indicates that the Armenian population was demographically dominant, a feature that remained

8 Cowe 1995; Kardaş 2018, 44–45.

9 Patkanean 1887, 450–464.

10 Yang 2016, 78–79; Cowe 1995, 32; Meyer's contribution to this volume.

11 On this figure, see Ačaryan 1946, 651–652 and Ōrmanean 1927, col. 2089. For Armenian bards operating at Kurdish and other Islamic courts, see further Kardaş 2018, 47.

12 Hewsen 2001b, 49–50.

13 Hewsen 2001a, 124–134.

14 For the transition between Kurdish and Armenian aristocratic identity, see Cowe 2015, 82.

constant up to the modern era.¹⁵ After a short period under Ayyubid reign and Georgian suzerainty Xlat' was annexed to the Mongol Empire in 1243, at which point the princess T'am't'a, daughter of Ivanē, an ethnic Armenian *atabeg* of Chalcedonian creed at the Georgian court, and wife of the Ayyubid prince Malik Ashraf was appointed ruler.¹⁶ The city then reached its heyday as capital of the Ilkhanid province of Arminiya (1258–c. 1335) and a centre of international trade.¹⁷

In the interim, the city of Bitlis had charted a parallel trajectory until its emergence as the seat of a Kurdish emirate in 1182 that maintained its local hegemony over the territory under varying suzerainty¹⁸ until its replacement by an Ottoman *sanjak* in 1847. With the uncertainties of Jalayarid rule in Xlat' after the demise of Mongol power, a process of emigration began to take advantage of the greater security Bitlis provided. That culminated in the latter city's assumption of the former's regional primacy and its physical absorption within the confines of the Bitlis emirate by 1349.¹⁹ The main element in the latter was the Rusaki (Ruzagi) confederation consisting of a core group of around twenty tribes.²⁰ The territory under the emir's control embraced a few smaller emirates (e.g. Xlat', Muš, Xnus) ruled at various points by members of the emir's family, though Xlat' was normally under the emir's immediate jurisdiction.²¹

The period encapsulating the martyrdom of Yohannēs Xlat'ec'i was rather tempestuous and characterised by instability at every administrative level. The Kurdish principalities were frequently wracked by turmoil because of internal rivalries. However, when they would periodically unite in common cause against their suzerain, as in 1420 when Sharaf al-Dīn of Bitlis rebelled on the death of the Qaraqoyunlu ruler Kara Yusuf, the Kurds' refusal to pay tribute provoked the latter's son Jahan Shah to capture Xlat' and besiege Bitlis to compel compliance, thereby inflicting great hardship on the Christian population. Though the Qaraqoyunlu had gained regional suzerainty in the 1360s, governed from their centres in Tabriz and Baghdad, their hold was tenuous and ended in 1468. They too were plagued by internal dynastic strife, which manifested itself at the transition of power between the deceased's sons, while at other times between the generations. Moreover, the intervening century of Qaraqoyunlu

15 Cowe 2015, 81.

16 Eastmond 2017, 124–171.

17 Sinclair 2001, 166.

18 Sinclair 2001, 174.

19 Sinclair 2001, 160.

20 For its internal configuration, see Sinclair 2001, 156.

21 Sinclair 2001, 155.

rule was punctuated by a series of three expeditions each by Timur Leng and his son Shah Rukh based in Herat, challenging their right to suzerainty that caused widespread devastation. Moreover, from 1447 onwards the Qaraqoyunlu state became embroiled in intensive strife with the Aqqoyunlu confederation for regional hegemony that further added to the insecurity.

3 The Bitlis *Amīrs'* Perspective on the Armenian Community

Naturally, this context of volatile power contestation is crucial in considering the Kurds' and, more particularly, the Bitlis *amīrs'* approach to the Armenian community. Certainly, the rulers tolerated the robust monastic construction programme in the city of Bitlis over the 15th century, and the abundant database of manuscripts copied in this period testifies to the degree of continuity and financial support those institutions enjoyed. From a religious viewpoint, it is also important to note that the Kurds are one of the most heterogeneous polities of the Near East, different groups embracing both Sunni and Shi'a branches of Islam, as well as following various Sufi orders, Alevism, and the syncretic movement of Ahl-i Haqq (Yarsan) established in the 14th century, most of whose adherent base comprises Kurds. While this profile suggests the tribes were very adaptable with regard to creed, it is clear that actual policies varied according to specific rulers and conditions. Thus, the *amīr* Ibrahim in the late 14th century was punished by Timur's son Miran Shah for his injustice to Christians. Meanwhile, the historian T'ovma Mecop'ec'i praises his brother and successor Sharaf for his care of his Christian subjects.²² At the same time, it appears that much of the hardship experienced by the Christian population was the result of collateral damage in raiding expeditions one Kurdish emirate might launch against the territory of a neighbour in ongoing internecine struggles.²³ Consequently, such perspectives provide a certain counterbalance to the rather negative perception of the Kurds that emerges in some contemporary martyrologies.

²² Xaç'ikyan 1999, 110–111.

²³ Sinclair 2001, 173–174.

4 Mediaeval Armenian Bardic Tradition

From the meagre information we have of Armenian bards in this period it appears that they continued to compose and perform orally either individually or in groups, in which latter case, apart from vocals and instrumentals, it seems they produced extemporised skits based on traditional motifs. From the continued attacks in ecclesiastical diatribes censuring them for undermining social morals it is clear their repertoire contained material regarded as bawdy and lascivious in those quarters. From the unsuccessful attempts to ban them from such gatherings we learn that one of their main venues was rites of passage, in particular the festivities accompanying baptisms and weddings. Consequently, we may conclude they maintained a number of parallels with the corresponding Kurdish tradition, only transitioning to the *âşık* model typified by written song lyrics in the 16th century in the aftermath of Ottoman annexation of the western expanse of the Armenian Plateau within a Turkic language milieu.

5 Kurdish Music²⁴

Most traditional Kurdish music is vocal,²⁵ although Kurds are familiar with a range of instruments. Similarly, performance is usually solo *a cappella*, especially in the older repertoire,²⁶ text and melody being transmitted orally. Under Arabic influence the metre employed is quantitative (*al-ʿarūḍ*), a common verse type being composed in ten-syllable lines,²⁷ while the melodies in the north of Kurdistan (northern Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey) reveal the influence of Persian and Arabic modes.²⁸ Widespread themes include work, love, nature, and the hardships of the migrant. Performance practice also involves different kinds of improvisation.²⁹ Significantly, it appears there was no particular musical style characterising Kurdish courts, which presumably facilitated Yohannēs' entrée in Xlat'.

Strikingly, the inception of the Kurdish literate poetic tradition in Kurmanji³⁰ is marked by a contemporary of the Armenian bard, Ali Heriri (1425–

24 For a detailed study, see Miller 2009.

25 Merati 2015, 310.

26 Merati 2015, 42, 310.

27 Merati 2015, 311.

28 Merati 2015, 312. The author emphasises that Kurdish music is one of the most diversified traditions of the region.

29 Merati 2015.

30 On this form of Kurdish, see Haig—Öpengin 2018.

ca. 1495), whose compositions treat love of country, the beauty of nature, and female attractions.³¹ Similarly, the first major prose text is the famous overview of Kurdish history provided by the *Sharaf-Nāma* of a later *amīr* of Bitlis Sharaf al-Dīn in 1597.³² Meanwhile, only in the 17th century was epic-romance (*bayt*)³³ introduced and transmitted by the *bakhši*, a counterpart of the *aşık*, performing to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, the most accomplished exponent of which was Ahmad Khani (1651–1707), whose magnum opus *Mem ū Zīn* dates from 1694.

6 Yohannēs Xlat'ec'i as a Bard to Two Communities

The anonymous martyrology introduces readers to a twenty-year-old Christian Armenian youth, Yohannēs, born and raised in the city of Xlat', though the epithet *xoylu* adduced by two of the manuscripts, which seems to represent a secondary addition that nevertheless transmits possibly authentic local information concerning the bard, suggests his forebears had resettled from Xoy. The frequent traffic passing between the commercial hubs of Tabriz and Bitlis via Xoy adds a further level of plausibility to the datum.

Tantalisingly, the author underscores the youth's professional bardic training without expatiating on the conditions of his apprenticeship or the master with whom he studied. It clearly included instruction on improvisation,³⁴ an important aspect of performance practice in general, which the bard aptly applies later in the narrative to compose a moving lament on his situation. Similarly, the degree of popularity he attained not only in the Armenian community but in Kurdish circles and even in the entourage of the *amīr* of Bitlis Sayf al-Dīn implies he was bilingual and accomplished in both repertoires. Consequently, the account is noteworthy for the insight it affords on the bard's social importance in straddling the ethno-religious divide and enjoying the ruler's patronage.

The author adds that the youth also possessed a familiarity with Armenian liturgical music and would freely incorporate elements of this repertoire into his performance even before Muslim audiences.³⁵ Their comfort level with this

31 Merati 2015, 16.

32 Merati 2015, 16; Izady 2005.

33 Merati 2015, 126–132.

34 Merati 2015, 49, 107, 116; Kardaş 2018, 42–43.

35 It is noteworthy that although most of the compositions of Nahapet K'uč'ak, the first documented Armenian *aşut*, are secular verses in Turkish, he also produced a few Chris-

corpus clearly speaks to the degree of exposure they possessed to the spiritual culture of the majority Armenian community. At the same time, the narrative makes no mention of his having attained one of the minor clerical orders like *dpir* (“clerk”), in which capacity he would have received a specialised training in the various modes of the chant. Likewise, granted the writer’s clerical background, it is highly unlikely that such a detail would have been omitted had he had access to the relevant information. Consequently, it is more plausible that Yohannēs acquired his control of the material from frequent church attendance, once more in a purely oral environment. From this we can also deduce his being a devout Christian.

The one liturgical text marked out for comment is the Great Doxology (*Park’ i barjuns*: ‘Glory to God in the Highest’), a Paleo-Christian composition originally in Greek, the nucleus of which is provided by the angelic proclamation (as specified by the redactor at 348.3) at Jesus’ birth at Luke 2:14 to which further verses were subsequently added. In Armenian practice the hymn is sung near the conclusion of Matins.³⁶

At the same time, Yohannēs’ easy familiarity with the conventions of Muslim composition allows him to prevaricate, after his acceptance of Islam, with certain officials who press him to share table fellowship with them during a strict Armenian fast by maintaining that he had determined to devote himself for several days to Khidr, regarded as the source of poetic inspiration in that tradition, thereby earning himself some reprieve before he was again pressured to declare his religious identity. Emerging out of a somewhat complex, murky background, this rather elusive figure acts as a guardian and initiator into mystery in different Muslim contexts. Significantly, al-Khidr functions as the equivalent of St John the Precursor in the guise of Sultan Surb Karapet of Muš, the protector and patron of Armenian bards.³⁷

It is also noteworthy that a pivotal role in the narrative is played by a Kurdish professional female singer and dancer.³⁸ Such a figure is attested in the Near East from early times and her social and artistic significance in the Middle Ages is affirmed in both Christian and Muslim sources. In Armenian she is referred

tian hymns (Cowe 2018, 154). The situation exhibits parallels with Komitas’ reference to Armenian deacons singing liturgical passages in the homes of the elite *amira* class in Constantinople (Barsoumian 2001, 167–170).

36 See Polarean 1990, 15 and Findikyan 2004, 363–367 and the literature cited there. References such as 348.3 indicate textual variants cited in the apparatus at the designated page and line.

37 van Lint 2005, 335–378; Yang 2016, 68–70.

38 Yang 2018, 16–17; Schäfers 2018.

to by the term *varjak* in authors from Movsēs Xorenac'i onwards in his description of pre-Christian Armenian culture. However, one of the most detailed descriptions is provided by Simēon, bishop of Ałjnik', of the 10th century who discusses such figures' provocative appearance and gestures. The Muslim individual mentioned here whom the redactor denotes as a *qawal*,³⁹ a performer frequently encountered at religious feasts, is also presented as an accomplished singer. She was involved in a competition with Yohannēs, which indicates the presence already in the 15th century of this aspect of bardic life, which was subsequently to assume even greater importance.⁴⁰

The description of the youth's conversion is important in terms of his manifest public transition from one religious community to the other. The legal requirement for this move is recitation of the *šahādah* before two adult Muslim witnesses, a rite which, though not recorded in the martyrology, was probably enacted before the *amīr* in front of the castle on the morning after his incarceration. The spectacle which is narrated is the youth's subsequently being paraded through the entire city to great fanfare astride a black steed. The significance of this act is not so much directly religious as social, as an emphatic testimony to Muslims, but especially to the Christian community, that this great celebrity, their erstwhile coreligionist, has now categorically adopted Islam and identifies with that creed, bearing in mind the Muslim prohibition on *ḍimmīs* possessing or riding horses.

The currency of this practice in different parts of Anatolia in this period is substantiated by Yovhannēs Erznkac'i's anti-romance *Yovhannēs and Aša* of around the 1280s in which with mock autobiographical reference the protagonist, a *vardapet* from a monastery near Erznka (Erzincan), falls passionately in love with the daughter of one of the prominent Muslim figures in the city and is likewise preparing to be paraded round the town, when the narrative encounters a major volte-face that transports the couple towards a Christian wedding in church.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the completion of the bard's conversion is envisaged by the *qāḍī* as demanding circumcision, a necessary provision under the Shāfi'ī tradition of Islamic jurisprudence that was normative in Kurdish society. However, the youth's repeated blasphemy compelled him to issue the death sentence.

39 Merati 2015, 316; Kardaş 2018, 46–47.

40 Yang 2016, 90–98.

41 Srapyan 1962, 163–171; Cowe 2005, 399–403.

7 The Original Martyrology

The narrative appears fairly close to the actual circumstances and was probably written soon after the events occurred.⁴² In keeping with this, it represents a relatively simple account that progresses largely according to human agency apart from the explanation for the youth's ability to extricate himself from the clutches of some men attempting to throw him to his death over the castle ramparts, which is attributed to invisible divine intervention. The work manifests several typical characteristics of the genre such as the protagonist's initially successful career until an issue is raised by a group of Muslims that necessitates the choice between conversion or dying a painful death, associated with trial appearances and the interchange of scenes of violence and inducement to persuade the figure to apostatize.⁴³ The latter, however, resists this coercion and makes a creedal confession, which swiftly ushers in the final death sentence, usually by stoning. A dazzling light then suffuses the place of execution by night to authenticate the martyrdom, which generally is also visible to representatives of the Muslim community as a vindication of Christian piety preceding the Christians' solemn burial of the martyr's relics.

At the same time, some important divergences from the norm in this work underscore its veracity. Thus, while the threat to burn the protagonist's corpse is a frequent component of the genre, customarily it is not acted upon, however it features here at the conclusion of the narrative. Similarly, the mob, a random assemblage of the urban Muslim populace, tends to exercise powerful agency throughout the process, quickly becoming incensed by the martyr's intransigence and not infrequently intervening to intercept and kill him or her before the *qāḍī* or *amīr* has delivered the final verdict.⁴⁴ Here, in contrast, it is significant that the term *ambox* is absent, being substituted by reference to the collective as "infidels". This may partly reflect the demographic situation on the ground by which the Armenians constitute the majority population in both the urban and rural contexts of this emirate, so that Muslims represent a minority.

Likewise, there is a certain tension between the author's employment of typical images like the group's rushing "like a rabid dog" to attack the martyr at one point in response to one of his Christian affirmations and its more fundamental perspective of exhorting him to accept Islam and live. This latter element is probably to be understood by reference to the youth's celebrity

42 Ter-Dav't'yan 1980, 154; Ter-Dav't'yan 1994, 389–393; Ter-Dav't'yan 1998, 108–111, 278; Ter-Dav't'yan 2011, 346–348.

43 Cowe 2011, 308–309.

44 For examples of this conduct, see Thomas—Mallett 2013, 208, 217, 348, 479.

status as a singer throughout the region, whose popularity embraced both the Armenian and Kurdish spheres. Indeed, the enormously contradictory conduct towards Yohannēs manifested by Sayf al-Dīn, the *amīr* of Bitlis, is probably to be explained in terms of the appreciation in which he held the youth and his musical skill.

This similarly explains the “infidels” readiness to apply medicaments to salve Yohannēs’ wounds and their tangible though short-lived relief at his expressed willingness to go before the *qāḍī* which they construed as his final acquiescence to actualise his acceptance of Islam by undergoing circumcision, in contrast to the youth’s goal to expunge his previous confession by suffering martyrdom in exactly the same spot.

Although the author does not identify himself in the narrative nor make any indirect allusions that might help clarify his background, it is plausible that the work was penned by a clergyman in the environs of Xlat’. That he had close affinities with the local lay Armenian community is suggested by a number of traits antithetical to the monastic provenance of the redactor of his work, as we shall see.

The first of these relates to his very humane handling of the protagonist Yohannēs, who is depicted with all his fickleness and frailties, exhibiting a great degree of individuality rather than conforming to ecclesiastical expectations as a paragon of virtue. Thus, the blandishments the youth was exposed to in prison of attaining a higher social status than that permitted for religious ‘minorities’ were sufficient to persuade him to recant. Still, the same day he experiences a twinge of conscience that motivates him to contemplate martyrdom as the cost of reassuming his Christian identity. Nevertheless, some weeks intervene between his conversion to Islam and his martyrdom, during which period his commitment to his new faith is tested by two Muslim magnates. The latter are presumably well versed in the broad contours of the Armenian liturgical cycle and therefore approach Yohannēs in the course of a pre-Lenten fast⁴⁵ to ascertain whether he has any scruples about attending the mosque and then dining with them. This might have been the perfect occasion for a public announcement of his change of heart, however the youth prevaricates and finds an excuse to decline the invitation. Consequently, the real test occurs at a date determined by the *qāḍī*, on the Saturday before Lent.

The second factor is the author’s genuine appreciation of Yohannēs’ musical talent that encompasses both his natural vocal attributes as well as his virtu-

45 On this traditional Armenian form of fast that proved so controversial in inner-ecclesiastical discussions, see Ermilov 2010, 79–97.

osity in performance that is so universally spellbinding on his audience in a wide range of venues.⁴⁶ This relates not only to his regular repertoire that also included certain ecclesiastical hymns which he performed with great skill, but also the improvised lament on Gospel themes he created to encapsulate his feelings of contrition on reconsidering his apostasy that had the effect of turning everyone to tears.

Meanwhile, the third aspect is the writer's valorisation of Yohannēs' parents' attitude to their son's martyrdom, arguing that this circumstance represents his wedding feast and that, as he had tasted the spiritual cup of self-giving, the community was to wear festive white and partake of the fleshly cup to celebrate the occasion. Clearly, the bride and groom's sharing of a cup of wine as an integral part of the Armenian wedding ceremony will have informed this interpretation, as well as the imagery of the wreath or fillet the couple wear during the sacrament, which mirrors the athlete's crown that devolved upon the martyr in Paleochristian iconography.⁴⁷

8 The Influence of Scripture and Hymnography

The author's religious training finds robust expression in the texture of his composition.

Thus, he develops the parents' blessing of their son before leaving to his impending martyrdom to assume something of the format of the priestly dismissal at the liturgy on the conclusion of the Final Gospel, inclusive of the gesture of making the sign of the cross (cf. variant at 351.4).⁴⁸ Likewise, the text is redolent with diverse images drawn from the hymns appointed for the feasts of martyrs.⁴⁹ These include the protagonist's depiction as "honourable" (սասնուական) and "worthy of boasting" (սանծալի) as well as a variety of martial metaphors portraying the individual as a soldier fighting "in a virile manner" (արիաբար) against the enemy, conquering adversaries in war, joyfully drinking the "cup of death", obtaining the "unfading crown" (cf. Wis 4:2; 1 Pet 5:4; 1 Cor 9:25) through their "perseverance" (համբերութեամբ), and

46 This contrasts powerfully with the ascetic monastic perspective with which the redactor is so profoundly imbued.

47 One of the first instances of the transference of the image from the athlete to the martyr is preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea's account of the martyrs of Lyons in 177, on which see McGiffert 1995, 211.

48 Nersoyan 1970, 57.

49 *Šarakan* 1853, 801–852.

attaining the “luminous dwellings” Christ prepares for his saints (cf. John 14:6, 23). Finally, the hymnographers emphasise the tone of rejoicing that marks the church’s celebration of the martyrs’ voluntary self-oblation on their feast day (այսօր սօճեմք զսօճ) .

Additionally, the author displays his knowledge of Scripture, especially as this relates to the precedents of St Stephen the Protomartyr and Jesus’ Passion. Thus, the former narrative underlies the formulation of the central passage where Yohannēs raises his eyes to the heavens (cf. Acts 7:55) in a vision of Christ’s advent with a host of angels (ibid., cf. Matt 16:27, 25:31; Luke 9:26). Meanwhile, the “infidels” “rushed at him” (Acts 7:54), while he called out “in a loud voice” (Acts 7:60, cf. Matt 27:50; Mark 15:8; John 11:43). Similarly, Yohannēs is depicted as “commending his spirit” like Jesus on the cross (Luke 23:46; John 19:30), and it is “after three days” have elapsed that his community approaches him (Matt 20:19; 27:63), since some of them have “fled” (Matt 26:56; Mark 14:50) “for fear of” antagonists (John 20:19). Likewise, the youth sells his “goods and possessions” and gives to the poor (Matt 19:21–22; Acts 2:45), while his lament concludes with Jesus’ sobering words on the consequences of denial (Matt 10:33; Luke 12:9) and the necessity of giving an account for one’s actions (Rom 1:20), a theme also apposite to the self-reflection demanded of the community in their preparation for entering Lent.

9 Date

The manuscripts of both the original account and the redaction state the martyrdom occurred on the 16th of the Armenian month of Meheki (= February 22) of the year *PJZ* (886) of the Armenian era (= 1437 CE). However, the martyrology also contains the pertinent information that that date, which was a Saturday, immediately preceded the beginning of Lent. As Armenian Easter fell on March 31 that year, the date in question would have been February 10. Nevertheless, in the following year Easter fell on April 13, which would mean Lent began on Sunday February 23, so that the preceding Saturday would equal February 22, thus matching the other data. Consequently, it appears that the martyrdom under discussion must have occurred in the year 1438.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ For the argument, see Manandean—Ač’arean, 1903, 291–292.

10 The Work's Textual Transmission

This martyrology is very rare, its original form being witnessed by three full manuscripts and one abbreviation.⁵¹ The complete text is represented by manuscript M 2711, a miscellany copied in 1480 at the Holy Cross Monastery of Varag by the priest Karapet; M 992, a homiliary of 1651 copied in Edessa by the scribe Małak'ea; and M 3783, a menologium of 1704 copied in T'ok'at' (Eudocia) by the scribe Gēorg T'ok'at'ec'i that adduces a number of textual lacunae and an abbreviated conclusion, while the epitome appears in M 1507, a 17th-century menologium copied by the scribe Azaria. All four witnesses were collated by Manandean and Ač'arean as the basis for their critical text, which is followed in the English rendering below. A second text, which is a redaction of the former, was produced by a certain T'ovma *vardapet* and is preserved in manuscript M 5313, copied in 1465 at Van by the priest Vardan.⁵² This date therefore provides a broad *terminus ante quem* for T'ovma's redaction, which in turn implies a comparatively earlier dating for the original text.

The manuscripts' generic classification reveals much about the milieu through which the work transitioned. Typologically the earliest is M 2711, which as a miscellany contains elements from widely disparate subject matter, only one facet of which is hagiographical. Congruent with this, M 992 represents a collection of homilies and similar texts, the final section of which comprises a collection of 15th-century martyrologies largely from the Van region.⁵³ Granted that the present work's redaction features a similar collection including two martyrologies in common also in final position (which may actually be an addition to the codex's original structure)⁵⁴ it appears that this latter was probably the format in which the work originally circulated. The rationale for the corpus of martyrologies under discussion to function as a hagiographical addendum is obvious from M 5313. Since it adduces the recension of the Armenian menologium finalised by Grigor Xlat'ec'i,⁵⁵ who himself suffered martyrdom in 1425, we can deduce that scribes sought to update the volume by appending more recent material. In time, copyists integrated those data into the body of the menologium according to the date of their feast day, abbreviating the narrat-

51 For the critical edition of the Armenian, see Manandean—Ač'arean, 1903, 284–291, and, for a Russian translation, see Ter-Davt'yan, 1994, 389–393, and 1998, 108–111 and 278.

52 For the Armenian edition, see Manandean—Ač'arean, 1903, 292–298.

53 These include those of Grigor Xlat'ec'i and Mirak' Tavrižec'i.

54 Since the original manuscript was copied in 1465, those of Siruni Hizanc'i (1476) and Mirak' Tavrižec'i (1487) must be later additions.

55 Avdalbegyan 1982.

ive to adjust it to its new liturgical setting, in which it would be one of several commemorations requiring to be enunciated during vespers on the eve of the feast.

11 The Text of the Work's Redaction

Also of significance is the occasional alignment the redactor's text shares with that of M 992 and M 1507, which sometimes probably maintains the original text where M 3783 witnesses a later addition, as at 349.20. Meanwhile, his textual agreements with individual manuscripts, in contrast, demonstrate scribal interventions to impact the narrative in various ways. Thus, his reading with M 2711 at 347.4 creates a doublet description of the martyr's parents, categorising them as not only "pious" but also "God-loving". However, most of the redactor's singular affiliations are with M 992, which anticipates some of his own recensional tendencies. In this way, the original text's enthusiasm for the youth's attractive voice and appreciation for his training is muted by the omission at 347.6 and 8, while the technical term *xał* to describe the bard's light secular composition is replaced by a more neutral designation as *ery* ("song") at 347.6, directing attention away from non-religious facets of the narrative. Similarly, the youth's contemplation of the idea of martyrdom, an expression that might appear too nonchalant, is replaced by his committed "desire to die" (349.9), while his confession of the Trinity (350.4) is theologically nuanced by balancing the reference to the three distinct persons by affirming their unitary Godhead, thereby rendering Yohannēs at once more stereotypical as a martyr and his theological acumen more refined, as would be more fitting for a more discerning clerical and monastic readership, in contrast to the wider lay congregation the original addressed.

Although the redaction is relatively intact, there is at least one section where the text of M 5313 must be deemed secondary (350.16). When the Muslim magnates report to the *qāḏī* on the results of their encounter with Yohannēs, one expects the latter's response (cf. Եւ խոսաւ Եւ "and he said" in the original version) to their statement, however the redaction repeats the introduction to their previous remarks (Եւ խոսաւ Եւ "and they said"). It is therefore they who decide on their next actions rather than the judge, as the authority figure to whom they had appealed, who thus remains silent. The decision itself is also problematic, since instead of the original plan of biding time Ի պահսն իրեանց ("until *their* fast") which would refer to the commencing of Great Lent, a point reinforced several times later in the narrative, it reads Ի պահքն մեր ("until *our* fast"), which would imply the opening of Ramadan, an issue never alluded to there-

after and therefore inconsequential for the account. The impression is thus of an isolated scribal intervention at some juncture in the work's transmission history. In contrast, the *qāḏī*'s resolution to time the youth's circumcision to coincide with the start of Lent is clearly calculated to wreak the most powerful psychological damage on the Christian community, then at its most vulnerable, by showcasing one of their celebrities' manifest transference of religious allegiance during the season of deepest soul-searching and introspection.

12 The Redaction's Authorship and Perspective

Data in M 5313 ascribe authorship to a certain T'ovma *vardapet* without further definition. And indeed, evidence of two such figures exists as copyists of manuscripts M 2152 and M 917 of the early 15th century. However, in the introduction to his critical edition of the work of the well-known contemporary historian T'ovma Mecop'ec'i (*b.* 1376–1379, *d.* 1446) Xaç'ikyan attributes our redaction to him on stylistic and linguistic grounds.⁵⁶ Further confirmation is provided by the number of martyrologies T'ovma reports in his main history, in which he employs a set of themes and *topoi* that recur here, which reinforce the plausibility of his authorship. One striking feature is the concept of the martyr's "requiting" Christ or returning to him the gift of life he had bestowed on the faithful by submitting to death in his name. This theme is enunciated in several of the martyr hymns in phrases such as "they shared the cross with your son Christ ... they 'exchanged' (փոխանակեցին) their life for you",⁵⁷ and "they shed their blood in exchange (փոխանակ) for your blood, O Lord".⁵⁸ T'ovma then develops the *topos* in his history while describing the martyrdom of Grigor Xlat'ec'i in which the Kurds "sorely afflicting him, butchered and sacrificed him as an innocent lamb ... in exchange for (փոխանակ) the lamb Christ".⁵⁹ Similarly, the redactor places a speech in the protagonist's mouth stating that "I will requite (փոխադարձ արարից) him. Because Christ suffered for us, I will suffer for him" (351.2).

Although the redaction excises various portions of text, it is significantly longer than the original. Clearly, different types of addition serve divergent

56 Xaç'ikyan 1999, LI–LII. See also Zakarian's contribution to this volume.

57 *Šarakan* 1853, 823.

58 *Šarakan* 1853, 839.

59 Xaç'ikyan 1999, 62.

purposes. Some at the most basic level afford stylistic editing, often creating rhetorical parallelism, as in describing the youth as “*nourished and trained*” in the musical arts (347.5). Others gloss rather bald or obscure statements to offer clarification: thus, the female Kurdish singer is specified as active “in the same city” (348.1), while the hardship the bard indicated his parents have endured is spelled out as “in parenting me” (350.22–351.1), and the undetermined place where his parents and other members of the community congregated near the conclusion of the narrative is highlighted as being that “of the martyrdom” (352.27).

More particularly, the redaction evinces a notable ‘spiritualisation’ of the original narrative that is more conducive to a lay environment and hence provides us with a valuable opportunity to examine the parameters of permissible diversity in effecting such a theological revision of the account. In the process of rendering it more edifying for a monastic readership, the redactor has deleted more secular aspects, frequently substituting protreptics to an idealised application of Christian ethics. This project is immediately visible in the treatment of the bard’s innate talent and musical training in which T’ovma follows the standard pejorative ecclesiastical portrayal of bards by removing details of the youth’s “sweet voice” and attractive performance style (347.6). Similarly, his wide circle of devotees is reduced to the Kurdish *amîr* (347.8), thus largely eliding the Armenian community, while his main venue is contemptuously vilified as the latter’s drinking bouts (347.9). In view of this, the redactor dismisses the bard’s profession as an “empty art” and his career in entertainment as “useless and harmful” (348.1–2). Hence, instead of introducing some hymns into his secular repertoire primarily with the intention of heightening rapport with his audience through their attractive melody (348.3–4 and 4), Yohannēs is presented as a committed proselytist, boldly preaching about Christ and praising the Trinity to his Muslim audience (348.2–3 and 4) like the contemporary controversialist martyr Vardan Bališec’i. Consequently, in his subsequent interchange with the *amîr*, he gives the latter a lesson in the Christian view of marriage more befitting a priest (348.13).

Similarly, reflecting on his hasty acceptance of Islam, the original author depicts the youth applying his skill in improvisation to his psychological situation to fashion a simple effective lament culminating with the dread anticipation of judgment, twice emphasizing its impact on hearers as moving all to tears (349.13–14 and 350.1–2). Here, too, rather than laud the bard’s technical skill, the redactor portrays his lament as the result of his sincere contrition that finds expression in profound weeping and lamenting. Dispensing with most of the original content, the redactor replaces it with an alternative illustrating the tradition of lament composition from the curriculum of monastic schools that

manifests a rather different aesthetic.⁶⁰ Much more rhetorically elaborated, it begins with a series of paradoxes, followed by the parallel invocation of the members of the Trinity, and culminates with the conventional trope of evoking all of creation in terms of the denizens of the heavens and earth to give ear to his plaint, which is couched in the form of a *sortes* cataloguing the stages in his downfall (350.1).⁶¹ Finally, the redactor transforms the physical aspect of the feasting and merriment the youth's parents organise in celebration of his crowning, replacing that with spiritual jubilation as the Christian congregation joins in an act of praise and thanksgiving (352.28–29 to 353.3).

Emblematic of the fundamental shift of focus in the redaction is the reformulation of the one instance of divine intervention alluded to above where the original author presents Yohannēs as withstanding the efforts of a group of men to hurl him over the battlements through invisible divine assistance. Here the revised form ascribes agency directly to God (348.15–16) consonant with a long tradition of *paraenesis* on humility in monastic literature, such as that penned by the 10th-century abbot Anania Narekac'i, who offers the following advice:

Humility means that when people congratulate you and reward you, you should not ascribe it to your own worth, but should glorify and give thanks to God and say, "This is thanks to your mercy, not something I deserve."

Humility means that, when you practise virtue, you do not consider I did that by myself with my own ability, but with assistance from God. As the Apostle says, "Not I, but the grace of God in me."⁶²

1Cor 15:10

In consequence, the youth embodies the stereotypical traits of the martyr from the very outset, manifesting perfect assurance and full commitment to his holy mission, something completely at odds with his inexperience and vacillation in the original account, which appears far more true to life. This generates a series of additions to the dialogue where the protagonist emerges as a defender of the faith, continually forthright and vociferous in his critique of Islam (348.11 and 12, 351.15). Similarly, the men's offer of status to undermine the youth's resolve is suppressed (349.2) together with the original comment on his easy malleability (349.7) and the infidels' compulsion (349.7–8) and the

60 Cowe 1995, 39–40.

61 Xaç'atryan 1969, 91–144, 214–249.

62 T'amrazyan 2009, 342–346.

youth's later reference to his mounting a horse to symbolise his renunciation (351.9). Moreover, his capitulating response in jail is redefined as a ruse to dupe the men temporarily into thinking their tactics have yielded fruit. Hence, in the process of granting his subject the desirable qualities of resolution and determination, while preserving the overall contours of the earlier account, the redactor is constrained to interpret Yohannēs' motivation as deception, thereby subverting the consistency of his presentation by enduing him with such an uncharacteristic trait (349.3) that unflatteringly pairs him with his Kurdish traducers, whom the redactor accordingly classifies as "deceptive" (348.5–6).

Another facet of the redactor's approach is an enhanced identification with scriptural precedents, primarily Stephen and Jesus. Thus, in an act of piety like the former, Yohannēs kneels (351.14: Acts 7:59) in order to be vouchsafed the divine vision, which the redactor develops significantly to include Stephen himself and the other martyrs along with the Trinity and the angels (351.11–13). Likewise, far from being a frozen tableau, the scene which meets his eyes is animated with motion, as Christ urges the martyrs in glory to come forward to get a better view as Yohannēs prepares for the climax. This detail appears to depend on another paean to martyrs, Catholicos Komitas' festal hymn on St Hrip'simē and her attendant virgins from 618, which bears the lines:

It is a wonder beyond the miraculous
In the thoughts and words of angels and humankind;
For God the existing One with almighty power
Bent down to view the virgins' spectacle.⁶³

The final stich (խոնարհեալ *տեսանէր զհանդէս* կուսանացն) seems to have inspired T'ovma's rendering զվկայիցն քաջալեր տալի զալ *տեսանել* զարի եւ զքաջ վկայն *ի հանդիսական ստենին* ("gave encouragement to the martyrs to come and see the virile and brave martyr in the contest arena"). Likewise, the redactor heightens parallels with Christ, as at 349.10–11 where the youth's expression on dying "today and tomorrow" echoes Jesus' words at Luke 13:32–33 in a similar vein. Moreover, the martyr's confession of Christ "as true God" clearly alludes to the formula at John 3:33 and 17:3 at 352.10. Finally, the reference to the Christian community going to recover the martyr's body "at dawn" (352.26) recapitulates the role of the myrrhbearers (Matt 28:1; John 20:1).

63 *Šarakan* 1853, 574–575.

As mentioned above, the redaction belongs to a series of more overtly theological treatments of martyrdom emanating from the Van region in this period when the thriving monastic communities there played an important role in sustaining intellectual life after the demise of the pivotal academic centre of Tat'ew at the turn of the 15th century. One facet of this is the pursuance of questions of causality into the supernatural realm, invoking Satan as the source of evil and the adversary of humanity from its very origins in the Garden of Eden (348.5–6 and 351.15) in parallel with the approach adopted in the martyrology of Catholicos Zak'aria II of Aht'amar (1393) on the role of evil in the divine economy and that of T'amar (1397) where the author emphasises the importance of theodicy, underscoring the absence of the divine sphere from implication in evil. With less theological precision, we also observe T'ovma Mecop'ec'i employing the theme in his history to brand Leng Timur, the primary agent of mayhem, as "Satan's son".⁶⁴ Here the reference gains in currency as the allusion refers to the devil's etymological core as the slanderer who is therefore the instigator of the process to calumniate Yohannēs before the *amīr* (348.5–6).

13 The Redactor's Erudition

As some of our previous comments have indicated, the redactor patently much surpassed the original author in erudition. This emerges notably with regard to the handling of the Kurds. Significantly, two witnesses to the earlier text (M 3783 and M 992) cite the ethnic group purely by that term at 348.5–6, while M 2711, perhaps inserting a marginal gloss, also associates them with the Medes, which is the designation the redactor prefers. Moreover, the latter's addition of the epithet "snakelike" to illumine their previous reference as "deceptive" reveals his awareness of the recondite lore connecting them with the mythological dragon Aždahak, whom Movsēs Xorenac'i records in Book I of his *History*.⁶⁵

The redaction is also notable for its use of the *recherché* term հանդիսադիւրիւր to designate Christ's role in the upcoming proceedings in Yohannēs' vision (351.9). The term is calqued on its Greek equivalent ἀγωνοθέτης ("adjudicator at the games") and may have been coined by Step'anos Siwnec'i for his translation of Ps. Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, which appears to mark its first appearance. Granted the importance in which the Dionysiac corpus was held

64 Xač'ikyan 1999, 2.

65 Thomson 1978, 110–128.

in the curriculum of monastic academies and the major space devoted to it in Grigor Tat'ewac'i's magnum opus of 1397, its currency in this work by a graduate of one of those institutions is understandable. Indeed, as the Christianisation of Proclus' Neoplatonic system, the corpus exercised a profound influence over the development of apophatic theology throughout the Mediterranean basin and beyond and constituted the primary focus of the Armenian intellectual tradition at this period. Hence, it is hardly a surprise that the same volume influenced the author's replacement of the original less sophisticated terminology interpreting the vehicle for Yohannēs' vision as the "eye of the soul" to the philosophically more refined expression the "contemplation of the intelligible mind" for the *cognoscenti* (351.9).

14 Policing Religious Norms

Martyrdom is obviously one of the prime acts distinguishing one religious community from another, and therefore it is incumbent on the related literary genre to highlight that distinction to foster internal solidarity and cohesion and maintain integrity by 'othering' the second polity in terms of creed and practice. This means accentuating the priority of religion as a criterion for corporate identity formation in contrast to competing differentials and frequently reinforcing one side's *esprit de corps* by denigrating the other's morals and way of life. As we have already seen, this imperative informed the original author's working method. Here, too, we note the degree to which the redactor develops this discourse, bifurcating Yohannēs' audience into believers and non-believers (347.7), expanding the incidence of "infidel" to denote the Kurds (e.g. 348.15 and 351.14), and extending the ubiquitous epithet "impure" to mark Muslims in general (348.13). Meanwhile, though the youth's original retort to the *amūr's* accusation of fornication casts this charge of impurity back at the speaker and other unspecified "leaders", in the redaction the term is piquantly altered to the singular, establishing a tauter parallel with Christ and thereby creating an unmistakable allusion to Muḥammad, that would more directly incur the charge of blasphemy (348.12). The intensity of this expression is then exacerbated at the crux of the narrative after the youth is granted an authenticating vision. In his response the redactor balances Yohannēs' original proclamation of his belief in Christ's divinity with a parallel denunciation of Islam in the following terms: "Your leader is impure and all his youths. Cursed is Satan and all his debauched demons" (351.15). The first phrase Muḥammad and his "youths" (մսւլմնւք) seems deliberately to target one of the blasphemy formulae "against Muḥammad and his companions" and therefore suggests the

author's familiarity with the legal background in *Shariah*.⁶⁶ The continuation appears to rest on traditions associating Muḥammad with the Antichrist and therefore the harbinger of Satan.⁶⁷ Such anti-Islamic polemic is congruent with the contemporary generation of controversialist manuals and Christian apologetics in Armenian monastic academies⁶⁸ and reflects a wider currency of such debates.⁶⁹

Clearly, such works were responding to an awareness at the time of a significant incidence of apostasy as reflected in T'ovma's history,⁷⁰ one also incorporated in the redactor's activity. The symbolism of the rose as a cipher for the martyrs' voluntary death gained popularity in literature on the subject, as exemplified by the phrase "your rosy shedding of blood" in the hymnic repertoire.⁷¹ Building on the literary paradox of spiritual fruit appearing in winter when the agricultural cycle is dormant that was employed, for example, with regard to Vardan Bališec'i's martyrdom of January 4, 1421 (յերեկոյացեալ ձմեռային եղանակիս "in this evening-like wintry season"), the original author wrote in similar terms that God had made a rose blossom ի ձմեռնացեալ ժամանակիս (lit. "in this wintered time"). Developing his initial expression, the anonymous writer of Vardan's martyrology dilates in like vein յայսմ սառուցեալ եւ ցամաքեալ ... ժամանակիս ("in this frozen and congealed ... time"), a phrase with which the redactor may have been directly familiar. The latter thus introduces his version at 353.5 with the phrase ի սառնացեալ եւ ի ցրտացեալ ժամանակիս ("in this freezing and chilly time"). However, his continuation indicates he understands the image figuratively in arguing that the marvel consists in God not making an affront of the Christians in the eyes of the Muslim community, as would have been the case if a high-profile celebrity like Yohannēs had remained true to his conversion (353.5–6). Hence, the meteorological reference probably points to the author's perception of a cooling of religious fervour and commitment within the church at the time. Significantly, T'ovma Mecop'ec'i employs the metaphor in a very similar manner to account for Grigor Xlat'ec'i's

66 The technical terms are *sabb al-rasul* (blasphemy on the Prophet) and *sabb al-sahabah* (blasphemy on [his] companions). See also Keller 1997, 657–658, 690, 811–812, 822.

67 Such views concerning Muḥammad were in circulation among Christians from at least the 9th century.

68 Tat'ewac'i inserts a section on the theme in his *Book of Questions* of 1397, while his pupil Matt'ēos Julayec'i devotes an unpublished treatise to an apologetic answering questions posed by Muslims in c. 1392. See also, more generally, Thomson 1986.

69 See, for instance, Vardan Bališec'i's debate with *amīr* Shamshaddin of Bitlis in Manandean—Ač'arean 1903, 232–243.

70 Xač'ikyan 1999, 41.

71 *Šarakan* 1853, 840.

single-minded devotion to literary activities rather than the theological instruction characteristic of *vardapets* because of “the chilly disposition of the students of our nation” (վասն ստոնացեալ բարոց ոստմնականաց մերոս ազգիս).⁷²

15 Pragmatic Considerations of Kurdish Rule

The majority of the redactor’s interventions were motivated by religious concerns; however, one appears to be determined by issues of practical politics. The question relates to the identity of the authority figure the bard encounters in the castle—the *amīr* Sayf al-Dīn or his son? As noted above, the original writer ascribes both Yohannēs’ sharp exchange there and his appearance next day to affirm his adoption of Islam as occurring in the presence of the *amīr*. In contrast, the redactor divides the role, assigning to the *amīr* prior adulation of the singer and attendance at the youth’s ‘conversion’, while the intermediary interlude in the castle is ascribed to his unnamed son. A number of other factors differentiate the two accounts, but it appears that the key matter hinges on the interpretation of two related adverbs *սւնդրեալաբար* (“stealthily”) and *զաղտնաբար* (“clandestinely”). The former relates to Yohannēs’ apprehensions about what might happen to him alone in prison overnight in the original narrative, presumably reflecting the youth’s thoughts concerning his false accusation and the subsequent attempt to kill him, which the men might actually realise now with no witnesses around. Naturally, the redactor’s protagonist is fearless and therefore does not engage in this type of internal dialogue. Therefore, the somewhat modified adverb is reassigned as a pivotal element in the Kurdish men’s scheme, which is to encompass the bard’s downfall in a surreptitious manner. To probe the internal consistency of both accounts it is necessary to view them in isolation.

Although the original martyrology does not elucidate the role of the four men the bard meets when responding to the *amīr*’s summons to an audience, it is patent from the intelligence the *amīr* reveals concerning his alleged illicit sexual relations with a female Muslim entertainer that they are presumably to be identified with the four adult male witnesses *shariah* requires to bring a charge of *zinā*’ (fornication). Their purpose was to gain revenge on the youth as disgruntled supporters of the defeated Muslim singer by provoking the *amīr* to destroy him. The *amīr*’s initial verdict suggests he accepts the veracity of

72 Xaç’ikyan 1999, 60.

the testimony without the further investigation the *qāḍī* might have initiated. Despite plausible awareness of the *shariah* penalty of a hundred lashes to be administered to unmarried parties in such cases, he presumably assumes the youth has feelings towards the girl and so wishes to facilitate their union by having Yohannēs Islamicise so that the couple can be legally married. This would be all the more important a consideration since *shariah* also stipulates that someone engaging in fornication may only marry another fornicator.⁷³ However, the bard's unexpectedly severe disparagement of Islam provoked his summary judgment of blasphemy, the penalty for which he then beckons the accusers to execute by putting the youth to death in the accepted manner by hurling him over the parapet.⁷⁴ Yohannēs' subsequent acceptance of Islam would probably have reconciled him to the *amīr* who thereafter disappears from the narrative.

In contrast, the adverb "clandestinely" that marks the men's plot in the redacted version likely influenced their decision to bypass the *amīr* either because of his high esteem for the bard which might call their project into suspicion or his insistence on more formal trial proceedings. Consequently, they appealed instead to his son, who might be less enthralled by the Armenian's skill and more open to heed their suit, while perhaps less concerned with adhering to due process. The latter figure is presented rather negatively throughout the scene from the opening 'trick' question he poses, presumably because he has already been informed about a liaison by the false accusers (348.7). Moreover, as there is no mention of the female singer and the possibility of marrying her, the legal basis for Islamicising is undercut, albeit ironically it is precisely discourse on the law which features most prominently in the son's two speeches (348.9–10 and 14) in which the term recurs three times. This, of course, paves the way for Yohannēs' more developed discussion of Christian law and its focus on purity. Ultimately, the *amīr*'s son indicates that non-compliance would lead to a painful death, which he then attempts to enact immediately afterwards.

The impression is therefore left that the rationale for introducing the extraneous figure of the *amīr*'s son is to exculpate the father from responsibility for pronouncing the youth's death sentence and hence in a measure precipitating his martyrdom particularly in the redactor's more polarised, rancorous version of the debate. The perception that the latter sought to mollify the ruler

73 For a 14th-century legal collection from the Shafī school, see Keller 1997, 660.

74 Note that the east side of the fortress in Bitlis looked onto a deep gorge. The *amīrs* employed it for conducting the death sentence, in consequence of which it was named the *kanli kale* ("bloody tower").

if not actively to curry favour with him is reinforced by the redactor's elevation of his status at 347.8 from mere *amīr* to *amīr-in-chief* (ամիրապետ).

Moreover, by avoiding giving cause for community antagonism against their *amīr* the redactor was thereby freeing them from any potential repercussions from that quarter against either the Armenian population or the church. If this is so, his procedure appears an intriguing exercise in self-censorship.

16 Translation

The apparatus is largely given over to documenting the variants introduced by the redactor in terms of changes, additions, and omissions. In this way his activity can be fairly easily reconstructed.



Inscription: On this Day the Martyrdom of the new Martyr of Christ the Youth Yohannēs

This honourable martyr Yohannēs worthy of boasting was [martyred] as the offspring of pious parents from the city of Xlat' in the district of Bzunnik' in the year 886 of the Armenian era [= 1437 CE]. He had been trained in the musical art of bardic songs and had such a sweet voice and sang so attractively that he was a marvel to those who saw and heard him. He was also beloved in the eyes of all, especially the *amīr* Sefedin and [hence] frequently found himself in his presence.

1 On this] M 3783 "the same". || the] M 992 om: M 1507 M 5313 add "commemoration and". || the new Martyr of Christ] M 3783 om. 2 Yohannēs] M 1507 M 5313 pr "whose name is called": M 992 adds "whose epithet is called 'from Xoy'": M 1507 adds "whose epithet is called 'of Hoy'. He died at the hands of the infidels to the glory of Christ." 4 pious] M 5313 follows M 2711 in adding "and God-loving". 5 been] M 5313 "nourished and". 6 songs] M 3783 *xat*, M 5313 follows M 992 in reading *erg*. || had such ... so attractively] M 5313 follows M 992 in om. 7 him] M 5313 adds "believers and non-believers". 8 all, especially] M 5313 follows M 992 and M 2711 in om. || *amīr*] M 5313 *amīrapet*. 9 presence] M 5313 adds "at drinking bouts and all venues".

There was also a woman who sang and danced before the same *amīr*. That foul woman was worsted by the youth before the public as the youth Yohannēs would include in his performance the song ‘Glory in the Highest’ with a beautiful melody as well as the sweet sound of other hymns and amaze everyone.
 5 Still, the deceitful nation of the Medes, who are also [called] Kurds, provoked the *amīr* to put him to death.

So one day the *amīr* summoned him to an audience at the castle and said, “I’ve ascertained that you once had illicit relations with the female Muslim singer, and therefore you must now accept Islam and marry her or die an excruciating
 10 death.”

However, the servant of God Yohannēs boldly replied and said, “That act befits you and your leaders, but is far from us Christians, as being servants of Christ; for Christ is pure and loves the pure.”

Then the infidel was filled with wrath and ordered four men to cast him
 15 down from the castle, but they were unable, because the saint overcame them through God’s invisible help. Instead, they beat him harshly and severely with

1 also] M 5313 adds “in the same city”. || a woman ... and danced] երգեցիկ եւ խաղացող: M 5313 դասալ եւ երգիչ. || before the same *amīr*] M 5313 om. 1–2 That foul ... the public] M 5313 “and when they would come before him [the *amīr*] to sing the empty art of that useless and harmful activity, that foul one would be vanquished before all the public”. || That foul woman] M 3783 “that foul woman”: M 992 “the foul one” (basis for M 5313 reading). 2–3 as the ... his performance] M 5313 “When he would orate about Christ and sing praise to the all-holy Trinity”. 3 song] M 5313 adds “of the angels”. 3–4 with a beautiful melody] M 5313 “incorporating [it] in a melody and in songs of [his] art”. 4 as well ... other hymns] M 5313 om. || amaze everyone] M 5313 “He would sing before all with bold assurance”. 5–6 Still, the ... to death] M 5313 “However, the slanderer Satan, who from the beginning was the killer of humanity and instructor in evil, cast envy and hatred into the heart of the snakelike and deceptive nation of the Medes [and] they calumniated him before the *amīr*’s son to destroy him clandestinely”. 5 Medes, who are also [called]] M 3783 M 992 om. 7 the *amīr*] M 5313 follows M 992 in reading “he” (i.e. the *amīr*’s son for M 5313). || said] M 5313 “posed him a trick question and said”. 7–8 I’ve ascertained that] M 5313 om. 8 you once ... Muslim singer] M 5313 “did you once have illicit relations with the Muslim *qawal*?” 9–10 and therefore ... excruciating death] M 5313 “Our law teaches us that someone in that situation must come to our law and practice our law or die”. 11 said] M 5313 adds “God forbid, son of the *amīr*”. 12 leaders] M 5313 “leader”: i.e. Muḥammad. || is far from us Christians] M 5313 om. 12–13 as being servants of Christ] M 5313 “I am a servant of Christ”. 13 pure] M 5313 adds “it is not right for the servants of Christ to approach the impure, but to live by Christ’s law until they obtain the wreath of blessing with the priests at the door of our churches”. 14 wrath] M 5313 adds “and as if aflame with fire”. || and] M 5313 adds “said, ‘Join our law, otherwise right this minute I am going to make you perish by a bitter and excruciating death.’” || ordered] M 5313 pr “and right then”. 15 castle] M 5313 adds “to his death”. || they were unable] M 5313 “the infidels (following M 992) were unable to overwhelm him”. 15–16 the saint ... invisible help] M 5313 “because God’s invisible help overwhelmed them”.

bastinado, bound him hand and foot, and put him in prison. Meanwhile, by night they cajoled him, promising him status so as to relax his grip on his faith. And so he said, “Tomorrow let your will be done,” afraid that they would stealthily finish him off by night.

In the morning they took him out to the *amīr* and forced him to mount a horse and paraded him around the whole city. As he was a youth of twenty and easily swayed in everything, the same day he regretted the impure laws, which the infidels had forcibly foisted on him, and repenting in his mind, he conceived the idea of dying for Christ’s name. So he sent one of the Christians to the priests with the message “Give me communion in Christ’s body so tomorrow I can undergo martyrdom for His name.”

However, they did not take it seriously, calling him an unbeliever and apostate. But he wore and wasted away internally and out of the bitterness of his heart composed a lament to turn one to tears on his account and went about the city with his girdle untied in a simple shift, calling woe and alas on himself and saying, “Woe to you, apostate Yohannēs. You have sorried the priests and made your parents sit in mourning and embittered your dear brothers and companions. You have forgotten the font that bore you as a son of God, you abandoned the Gospel that illumined you with preaching. You departed from Christ’s eyes and your guardian angel departed from you. And now what reply will you give to Christ your God on the day of judgement, on which he says in the holy Gospel, ‘He who will deny me before men, I will deny him before my Father in heaven.’”

2 faith] M 5313 “they softened him”. 3 he] M 5313 adds “deceived them and”. || Tomorrow let ... be done] M 5313 “Let it be so”. || afraid] M 5313 om. 3–4 stealthily] M 5313 om. 5 morning] M 5313 adds “when it dawned”. 6 whole] M 5313 om. || city] M 5313 adds “and joyfully made a big celebration”. || As he was a youth] M 5313 “the pitiable youth”. 7 and easily swayed in everything] M 5313 om. 7–8 the impure ... on him] M 5313 om. 8 in his mind] M 5313 om. 9 conceived the idea of dying] M 5313 follows M 992 in reading “he wished to die”. 10 communion in Christ’s body] M 5313 “the body and blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ”. 10–11 so tomorrow ... undergo martyrdom] M 5313 “for today and tomorrow I die”. 12 seriously] M 5313 adds “flatly rebuffing him”. 13–14 and out ... his account] M 5313 “weeping and lamenting with compunction and self-reproach”. 18–20 You have ... from you] M 5313 om. 20 now] M 5313 follows M 992 and M 2711 in om. 23 heaven] Matt 10:33, Luke 12:9.

He composed a lament like this and more and wept the whole time and moved those who heard him to tears. Afterwards he sold all his belongings and possessions and gave [the proceeds] to the poor and needy. Then he went [and stood] in front of the church and confessed the all-holy Trinity and Christ's incarnation and, lamenting and weeping, he confessed his sins before all the priests and indicated [the place of] his grave in front of the holy altar and said, "Bury me here." Then he entrusted himself to God and the holy church and readied himself in all purity and when he attained the Fast of the First Fruits, he spent the five days in abstinence.

At that point, two of the leading men of the infidels approached him and said, "Come, let's go to our place of prayer and eat and drink together, otherwise you'll die at our hands." But he replied, "I've promised these many days to the holy Khidr, so I can't come."

They were filled with such rancour that they went to the *qāḍī* and reported about him, "He is a true Christian and has betrayed us and our religion." He replied, "Keep quiet until their fast [begins] and we'll circumcise him that very day. And if he resists, we'll put him to death excruciatingly."

They kept quiet until the final day of the week of Mardi Gras and that same day they went and seized him, punching him as they led him away. When his parents saw this, they began to lament bitterly and wail as they followed behind him. He said to them, "O parents with divineline affection, don't weep for my death, weep rather for my perdition. But, I beg you, don't begrudge your hard-

1 He composed ... and more] M 5313 "Moreover, what reply will you give to your tearful and pitiable parents and the priests and your guardian angels who nourished me with Christ's law, while I dishonoured Christ's law. Woe and alas is me. I am the servant and creation of God and have become a God-renouncer. I forgot the holy Gospel, which bore me as a son of God, I trampled underfoot the divinised body and blood of God's Son, who cleansed me. I antagonised the Holy Spirit that dwells within me. Hear, O heaven, and the powers in you, the ranks of angels, the spirits of the righteous, and the luminaries. Give ear, O earth, and the animals and green plants in you. Come, lament my pitiable self, for perdition is no slight matter, but great and fearful. Because I disparaged God's image, I have lost my soul, and after the loss of my soul, I abandoned God, my Creator. Woe to me and the day of my birth. Woe to me on the day of judgement." 1-2 and wept ... to tears] M 5313 "saying this, he moved all the townspeople to lament." 2-3 and possessions] M 5313 follows M 992 and M 3783 in om. 4 Trinity] M 5313 follows M 992 in adding "and the one Godhead". 5 incarnation] M 5313 pr "holy". 5-6 lamenting and ... the priests] M 5313 "he confessed before the priests, weeping and lamenting all his sins". 10 him] M 5313 follows M 992 in om. 11 said] M 5313 follows M 992 in addition "to him". || and drink together] M 5313 om. 12 you'll die at our hands] M 5313 "tomorrow we are going to put you to death". 14 and] M 5313 adds "calumniated [him] and". 16 replied] M 5313 "they said". || their fast [begins]] M 5313 "our fasting". 20 wail] M 5313 adds "plaintively". 21 He] M 5313 pr "Turning back, he saw them and". || O] M 5313 adds "fleshly". 22-35.1 hardships] M 5313 adds "in parenting me".

ships and give me [your] blessing, for today I'm going to be a martyr for Christ like James."

His parents extended their arms, made the sign of the cross, and blessed him and said, "God the empowerer empowers you. Go in peace and may Christ himself be with you." 5

The infidels took him to the *qāḏī* and he in turn sent him to the *amīr* with the message "Have him renounce again and undergo circumcision."

When he reached the castle gate, he stood his ground and said, "Where are you bent on taking me? Here I mounted Satan's horse and renounced Christ. This is where I'm going to die." 10

Raising his eyes, he saw Christ with the eye of the soul coming with many angels and ranks of martyrs, bringing him an unfading wreath. He encouraged and reinforced him for the fight and promised him the luminous dwellings. This made his face assume a radiant glow, and he lifted up his hands heavenward and said, "I believe in Christ, my God, maker of heaven and earth." Then running from their hands, he fell to the ground and, making the sign of the cross over the soil, he thrust some in his mouth and said, "Kill me for Christ's sake right here." 15

Then the infidels rushed at him like a rabid dog and beat his head with sticks and stones until his brain tissue oozed out and he collapsed among them as dead, so that many of them claimed he had died. However, he suddenly regained consciousness, got to his feet, sat down, and anointed his face with 20

1 I'm going] M 5313 "I wish to go to Christ". 1-2 to be ... like James] M 5313 "and like James I wish to be a martyr for Christ". 2 James] M 5313 adds "I will requite him. Because Christ suffered for us, I will suffer for him. Christ was dishonoured for me, I will be dishonoured for him. The immortal God the Word died for me, I am going to die for him". 4 God the empowerer empowers you] M 5313 "Christ God the empowerer of the heavenly and earthly confirms you with his almighty power". 9 I mounted Satan's horse and] M 5313 follows M 992 in om. || Christ] M 5313 om. 11 his eyes] M 5313 "suddenly his head, the crown of his person". || Christ] M 5313 "the all-holy Trinity, the earliest martyr with the endurance of martyrs, and Christ, the adjudicator of all". || with the ... the soul] M 5313 "with the vision of his intelligible mind". || coming] M 5313 "to assist, he was strengthening the infirm". 11-13 with many ... luminous dwellings] M 5313 "Therefore he summoned the ranks of angels to come forward, he rewarded the righteous with their due, and gave encouragement to the martyrs to come and see the virile and brave martyr in the contest arena, while he pleaded the wreath, fashioned the crown, readied his place of repose, [and] showed [him] his dwelling". 14 This made ... radiant glow] M 5313 "the infidels saw that the form of his image became beautiful [and] the cheeks became inflamed on his face like fire, the vision of [his] eyes became radiant, and [his] nostrils registered the sweet fragrance of Christ, the immortal king". || and] M 5313 adds "he knelt down". 15 and] M 5313 adds "cried out in a loud voice and". || I believe ... and earth] M 5313 "Christ is my creator and I believe in him. Your leader is impure and all his youths. Cursed is Satan and all his debauched demons." 16 from their hands] M 5313 "into the middle of the crowd". 21 as dead] M 5313 om.

his blood and said, “See the incorrupt cup, which I have drunk and the honourable death, which has befallen me today.”

And the infidels said, “Don’t worry. Just say the word and we’ll restore you to health with medications.”

5 Once more he confessed Christ as God and, making the sign of the cross again over the soil, he thrust it in his mouth and, crossing himself over his heart, he called in a loud voice and said, “Strike me and kill me, for I am a servant of Christ.”

10 When the infidels saw the brave martyr’s perseverance, they left him and went to the *qāḏī* and said, “That impostor won’t stop confessing Christ as God.” The latter said, “Why didn’t you kill him?” They said, “We did kill him, but he revived again.” So the *qāḏī* ordered them to go and stone him. They went and remonstrated with him [the martyr] and coaxed him to do as the judge wished. So he said, “Let’s go to the judge.”

15 Relieved at that, they led him to the *qāḏī*. However, the powerful soldier and courageous dueler for Christ, disregarding his enervation and physical pain, climbed up and reached the spot where he had mounted the horse of renunciation and called to the Christians close by, “Here I mounted the black horse and here I’ll die for my Christ.”

20 Seeing his true faith, the infidels struck him with sticks and stones and battered every part of his body. Thereby he gave up his spirit to God by the hands of angels. The infidels took the body of the blessed youth and set it on fire.

25 That night a bright light shone over him and the infidels hung their heads in shame. After three days the *amīr* gave permission to remove his relics and grant them burial. Meanwhile, the Christians who had fled for fear of the infidels, congregated around his pious parents and came to the place, and his parents removed their weeds of mourning and put on white. And they began offering thanks to God with great praise and said, “Rejoice today with us, all of you, for

1 incorrupt] M 5313 om. || which] M 5313 “I have tasted”. || drunk] M 5313 adds “and the pomegranate juice from which I have drunk”. 3 And the infidels] M 5313 follows M 992 in reading “When the infidels saw [this] they ...” 9 they left him] M 5313 follows M 992 in reading “they were amazed”. 10 God] M 5313 follows M 992 in pr “true”. 14 Let’s go] M 5313 follows M 992 in reading “let me go”. 15 *qāḏī*] M 5313 “judge”. 21 Thereby] M 5313 follows M 992 in om. || he] M 5313 follows M 2711 in adding “sweetly”. 22 body] M 5313 “honourable relics”. 23 fire] M 5313 adds “in the city centre”. p. 297. 24 bright] M 5313 follows M 992 in reading “intense”. 25 permission] M 5313 follows M 992 in adding “to the Christians”. 26 infidels] M 5313 adds “at dawn”. 27 place] M 5313 adds “of martyrdom of the honourable martyr”. 28 weeds of mourning] M 5313 “blackened garments”. 28–29 offering thanks ... great praise] M 5313 “giving glory to God with praise and thanksgiving and lauded [him] in a loud voice”. 29 and said, ... you, for] M 5313 om.

this is our son's wedding feast. Exult, you priests and all people, for our son has drunk the spiritual cup. [So] let us drink the fleshly cup and make merry." And they rebuked those who wept or expressed regrets. And the holy bishop Step'anos took the remains of his relics together with a multitude of priests and people and they praised God who in this time of winter had made a rose blossom for us with sweet fragrance. And they bore them and placed them in church below the sanctuary where he himself had marked the spot with psalms and hymns to the glory of the Creator. 5

1 feast] M 5313 "day". || Exult] M 5313 pr "come". || you] M 5313 adds "sacred". || all people] M 5313 "the multitude of all the brethren together". 2 drunk] M 5313 "tasted". || and make merry] M 5313 om. 3 they rebuked ... expressed regrets] M 5313 "and if anyone wept over him, his parents would rebuke [them] to cease weeping and lamenting [and join] their great festivity". || bishop] M 5313 "archbishop". 4 a multitude of] M 5313 om. || priests] M 5313 pr "honourable". 5 and people] M 5313 "with all the multitude of the city". || and] M 5313 adds "with exultation and joy". || God] M 5313 "the all-holy Trinity". || this] M 5313 adds "freezing and chilly". || of winter] M 5313 om. 5-6 made a ... sweet fragrance] M 5313 "not made us an affront before infidel nations". 6 in] M 5313 adds "the holy". 7 sanctuary] M 5313 adds "steps of". || spot] M 5313 adds "of his grave". 7-8 with psalms ... the Creator] M 5313 om. 8 Creator] M 5313 adds "The holy martyr of Christ died on the 22nd of the month of February on the feast of the 150 hierarchs of Constantinople, on Saturday of Mardi Gras, at the sixth hour of the day".

17 Conclusion

The Van region in the late mediaeval period provides a fecund area for research on Armenian cultural creativity and interchange in several different artistic domains and in rapport with a variety of ethnoreligious communities (Arab, Mongol, Kurd, etc.) over several centuries.⁷⁵ During this period the Armenians represent the majority population in both urban and rural environments and are in many ways the most stable demographic and an important economic factor, contrasting colourfully with volatility in the regional administration resulting first from internal dynastic struggles engendered by the lack of firm conventions of succession and secondly contested suzerainty at a higher level between the Timurids and Turkmen that persisted until Ottoman annexation in the 1520s. One facet of the emerging symbiosis is the activity of Armenian stonemasons whose cross-cultural receptivity is manifest in Ani in the integration of *muqarnas* into ecclesiastical structures.⁷⁶ Once engaged in Arcruni construction projects,⁷⁷ Armenian architects and masons were now responsible for the well-known *türbes* in Xlat' during the Mongol period and other largescale projects under Kurdish rule.⁷⁸

As this text indicates, entertainment is a second sphere that would unite the two lay communities. Indeed, the contemporary savant Arak'el Siwnec'i underscores the porousness of borders in this domain by employing the Turkish nomenclature *awzan* to denote mediaeval Armenian bards, thereby implying the term's acceptance in Armenian parlance in this period.⁷⁹ This rapport permitted the protagonist Yohannēs to exploit his innate talent and training to create a niche career for himself. Indeed, it is ironic that, but for his subsequent martyrdom, he would have remained so melded into his social fabric as to have passed completely into oblivion.

The very reference to his apprenticeship, however, indicates the youth belonged to a pre-existing tradition stretching back several generations, albeit he may be the first to receive literary documentation. Consequently, it is important to situate him within the larger contours of Armenian involvement in Kurdish musical culture, as not only were Armenians among the first to research Kurdish music academically,⁸⁰ but were also active in its dissemina-

75 Taylor 1994, 94–103.

76 Pancaroğlu 2017.

77 Cowe 2020, 244–248.

78 Cowe 2015, 86; Sinclair 2001, 167–168.

79 Cowe 1995, 43; Yang 2016, 43, 46.

80 See Solomonean 1982 for the transcription of twelve Kurdish melodies published in 1903.

tion,⁸¹ one of the most famous of those practitioners being Karapetê Xaço from the early 20th century.

Further parallels and exchanges between the two cultures include their mutual borrowing from the Iranian heroic tradition as primarily oral inheritors and continuators of the *Šāhnāma*.⁸² In this connection, it is noteworthy that Armenian forms of this literature largely developed in the Van region, also the provenance of most of the Kurmanji versions.⁸³ Moreover, both traditions of oral transmission, some of which are bilingual, also share a particular penchant for elaborating episodes from the Rostam cycle. In addition, contact between their indigenous epic genres emerges in the transference of the originally Indo-European typology of twin brothers founding a city from the Armenian work *Sasna Çrêr* (Daredevils of Sasun) to the Kurdish epic cycle *Şaraf-Nāma*.⁸⁴

In this connection it is also striking that while in the oldest stratum of the Armenian epic *Covinar*, the mother of the twins Sanasar and Baghdasar, is married to the king of Nineveh, a figure who is subsequently updated to the 'Abbasid Caliph of nearby Baghdad, in the oral variant transmitted by Manuk Harutyunyan of Moks, the *mise-en-scène* of the incident is indigenized in Armeno-Kurdish relations in the Lake Van region. In keeping with this, *Covinar* is presented as the daughter of king Gagik I of Vaspurakan to the south and east of the lake. There the young woman is espied strolling with her ladies-in-waiting by the son of the Kurdish *amîr* of Ostan and, although his father's immediate reaction is to say, "Son, we are Kurds, she is Armenian—how can this be?" the marriage proposal is accepted on condition that the girl retains her Christian religion.⁸⁵ Though this particular union is precluded by the historical details of Gagik's death in c. 943 and the inception of the Kurdish emirate in the 14th century, it remains a testimony to the Arcruni policy of intermarriage with the surrounding Muslim aristocracy as that was emblazoned on the popular memory and evoked in later oral tradition.

Narrowing our focus to Yohannēs' martyrology, we observe that it is precisely the bard's enormous popularity with both the Armenian and Kurdish population that distinguishes his situation from so many Armenian martyrs of this period. Indeed, the crowd is unprecedentedly insistent that he approach the

The presentation Komitas delivered on Kurdish music at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin should also be noted.

81 Kardaş 2018, 47.

82 Merati 2015, 133; Cowe 2018, 142. For the epic's impact on Armenian literature in Erzincan, see Srapyan 1962, 209.

83 Arakelova (online). Some Kurdish versions were also propagated by Armenian singers.

84 Harut'yunyan—Bart'ikyan 1975.

85 Abelyan—Melik'-Öhanjanyan 1936, 607–648.

qāḏī, repent, and accept Islam so as thereby to continue his career. In this context clearly appreciation for the youth's voice and musical skill prevailed over his Christian protestations. At the same time, Yohannēs is sufficiently conversant with Muslim cultural lore to appeal to the figure of al-Khiḏr, while the *amīr* has obtained sufficient exposure to Armenian liturgical music to value the inclusion of certain chants in a mainly secular programme, and the *qāḏī* is aware of the primary events on the Armenian ecclesiastical calendar. Nevertheless, this commonality should not obscure the presence of religious sensibilities on both sides, which ultimately bring about the youth's harrowing death.

While musical performance like sports events can unify diverse demographics, competition tends to encourage the formation of partisan loyalties by which certain fans identify with their representative so absolutely across various perceived divides that the party supporting the defeated candidate experiences such an overwhelming sense of disgruntlement and injustice that they seek to vent their frustration on the winning figure and their fanbase. This appears to account for the small group of the Kurdish female singer's supporters bringing their suit against Yohannēs. Moreover, beyond the immediate circumstances, the initiative seems to reflect more widely held perspectives regarding the appropriate social status of the administratively subordinate religious confession that was expected to maintain a lower profile and not appear too obtrusive. Clearly, success in major public events under the *amīr*'s patronage was viewed as disrupting that status quo and therefore required intervention to reestablish social norms.

As already indicated, the genre of martyrology is likewise evoked by the death of individuals and groups for maintaining their faith across religious divides. Consequently, the purpose of such works is not only to document the course of events but also to underline the presence of characteristics validating the figure's standing as a martyr and often to rhetorically enhance the person's portrayal to function more effectively as a model for community emulation. In these ways, those texts also seek to subvert the dominant narrative of the faith's inauthenticity circulating within the hegemonic polity by co-opting some of their representatives as witnesses at different points in the account who testify to the martyr's innocence and the reality of divine manifestations (e.g. the brilliant light resting on the martyr's physical remains) that authenticate both the individual and his or her faith.

At the same time, we are exceptionally fortunate in this case to gain an entrée to two very distinct versions of this genre depicting both a lay and monastic perspective on events. Moreover, granted that the latter represents one of the primary voices in Armenian written literature from its very inception, it is particularly important to note the striking contrasts between that account

and that of the original text that appears to powerfully embrace the stance of the lay community. Granted that many non-monastic texts derive from technical spheres like medicine, astronomy, and law or various poetic genres, it is valuable to possess this type of narrative text. Such works highlight Armenian literature's multifaceted structure and the need for a more nuanced conceptualisation and reading to allow for insights into the thought patterns and priorities of the general public that still tend to be relegated to the margins until their expanding expression through the medium of printing from the 17th century.⁸⁶

Patently, many different kinds of relation and interchange continually existed between those two milieux, but are often difficult to pursue because of lack of source materials.

Inevitably, T'ovma *vardapet's* redaction maintains the monastic community's dismissive attitude to entertainment and therefore to the celebrity the youth had attained,⁸⁷ although here, too, more moderate opinions were increasingly expressed by various writers.⁸⁸ Similarly, the monastery's almost exclusive monopoly of higher education meant erudition in scripture, patristics, history, and theology, insights from which were woven into a much richer tapestry that could nuance the narrative impact to illumine the protagonist and denigrate the antagonists, thereby appealing to the taste of more discriminating readers demanding a different rhetoric and aesthetic. Yet at times this had the effect of distancing the narrative further and further from its roots in contemporary corporate reality.

Significantly, when we contrast the situation of the parish priest and the *vardapet*, we observe the greater responsibility incumbent upon the latter to engage at a higher level with both the spiritual and physical realms for the benefit of their community. Much has already been stated concerning the former of those, however the latter was equally crucial in securing peace and protecting the local Armenian polity and its religious foundations. Consequently, we are lucky that T'ovma *vardapet's unicum* manuscript survives to afford us a vignette into his retouching of the *amīr's* involvement in the youth's affair. Anticipating potential negative repercussions and deflecting reprisals, his redactional interventions are calibrated to placate the ruler in a politically volatile atmosphere where adverse reactions might be expected at any point. The dialogue between the two writers that emerges therefore affords us a valuable matrix out of which

86 Cowe 1995, 38; Cowe 2018, 148–153; Cowe 2019, 82–85, 87–98, 117–119.

87 The ambience is hardly commensurate with the image of the street musician busking purveyed by Ter-Dav'tyan 2011, 347.

88 Ördoyan 1991.

to construct more nuanced paradigms within which to interpret the activities, circumstances, and motivations of mediaeval authors of martyrology.

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«La danza» di Siamant'ō fra letteratura e arti contemporanee

Da Ararat di Atom Egoyan a Defixiones, Will and Testament di Diamanda Galás

Valentina Calzolari

1 Adom Yarjanean [Atom Earčanean] (Siamant'ō)*

«La Danza» costituisce un celebre poema di Siamant'ō, che figura tra le personalità di spicco del panorama letterario armeno-costantinopolitano dei primi del Novecento. Siamant'ō è il *nom de plume* di Adom Yarjanean, nato a Agn [Akn] (Eğın, oggi Kemaliye, nel distretto di Erzncan) nel 1878, e vittima del genocidio degli Armeni dell'Impero ottomano nel 1915. Dopo aver ricevuto un'istruzione elementare nella nativa Agn presso il collegio Nersēsean, dove ebbe come precettore Karekin Sruantseants' [Garegin Sruanjteanc'] (1840-1892), in seguito al trasferimento della famiglia a Costantinopoli nel 1892, Siamant'ō continuò i suoi studi nella capitale, dapprima presso la scuola di Mirijanean [Miričanean], a Kum Kapı, e successivamente (dal 1894) alla scuola di Țet'ēos Bērbērean [Țet'ēos Pērpērean], a Scutari (oggi Üsküdar). Nel 1896, epoca dei massacri degli Armeni delle province orientali d'Anatolia, perpetrati dal sultano Abdül Hamid II¹, Siamant'ō lasciò Costantinopoli per trasferirsi in Egitto e, in seguito, in diverse città europee. Nel 1897, a Ginevra, stabilì dei contatti stretti con l'Unione degli studenti armeni d'Europa e aderì alla Federazione Rivoluzionaria Armena (FRA) che aveva, nella città elvetica, il quartier

* Con Theo M. van Lint ho condiviso non solo numerose collaborazioni scientifiche, ma anche la “scoperta” della lingua e della letteratura armeno-occidentale ai corsi estivi dispensati dall'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia. La passione per la poesia armena è un tratto che caratterizza il festeggiato; ad essa si aggiunge quella per la lingua italiana. È in italiano che desidero rendergli omaggio, offrendogli questa traduzione inedita, commentata, de «La Danza» di Siamant'ō, un poeta a lui ben noto. Facendo eco alle discussioni che abbiamo avuto sui legami fra letteratura e cinema, aggiungerò alcune considerazioni sulla ricezione del poema nelle arti contemporanee, andando dal film *Ararat* di A. Egoyan all'album *Defixiones, Will and Testament* di Diamanda Galás.

1 Adjémian – Nichanian 2018; Georgeon 2003.

generale occidentale e la redazione del periodico *Drōshag* [*Drōšak*]². Verso il 1900, Siamant'ō si stabilì a Parigi, dove seguì i corsi di letteratura dispensati dalla Sorbona. Nel 1904 si trasferì di nuovo in Svizzera per ricevere delle cure presso il sanatorio di Leysin, dove restò per quasi due anni. Durante il soggiorno svizzero, egli intensificò i contatti con la redazione di *Drōshag*, che incoraggiò il suo talento poetico.

Nel 1908, dopo il colpo di stato dei Giovani Turchi contro il potere dispotico del sultano, Siamant'ō, come numerose altre personalità armenie in esilio, tornò a Costantinopoli, rispondendo al richiamo della speranza di libertà, ivi compresa la libertà di stampa, associata all'avvento del regime costituzionale³.

Nel 1909 si recò a Boston, dove rimase sino al 1911. Sede della più vecchia comunità armena degli Stati Uniti, creata in seguito all'esodo degli Armeni nel periodo successivo ai massacri hamidiani, il Massachusetts offriva un ambiente armeno fertile di scambi intellettuali e politici⁴. A Watertown, Siamant'ō collaborò con la redazione di *Hayrenik'*, periodico della FRA avente una vocazione letteraria oltre che politica, coerentemente con i principi del partito che attribuiva una grande importanza alla letteratura come strumento di propaganda. È a Boston che fu pubblicata, nel 1910, la prima edizione delle sue *Opere complete*⁵.

Nel 1913 il poeta visitò l'Armenia orientale e la città di Tiflis, allora capitale culturale dell'*intelligentsia* armena, in compagnia di Simon Zavarean, uno dei tre fondatori della FRA. Siamant'ō ritornò infine a Costantinopoli, passando ancora una volta per Ginevra. Nel 1913, anno della celebrazione dell'anniversario dell'invenzione dell'alfabeto armeno, il suo lungo poema dedicato a *San Mesrob* [Մեսրոպ Մեսրոպ] fu oggetto di una lettura pubblica in occasione di una serata letteraria. Tale lettura fu accompagnata da una prolusione di Daniël Varuzhan [Varužan] (1884-1915) su «La poesia di Yarjanean» (Եարյանեանի բերդորդութիւնը)⁶.

Nella notte fra l'11/24 e il 12/25 aprile 1915, Siamant'ō fu vittima della retata che colpì centinaia di Armeni della capitale⁷. Nei primi due numeri dell'incompleto «I ricordi di uno scrittore» (Գրագէտի մը յիշատակները), pubblicato nel giornale armeno *Hayasdan* [*Hayastan*] di Sofia sotto lo pseudonimo maschile di Vigēn [Vikēn], la scrittrice Zabēl Yesayean [Esayean] (1878-1943?) racconta le

2 Dasnabédian 1988; Mouradian – Urjewicz – Weill 1992; Nalbandian 1967; Ter Minassian, A. 1973; Ter Minassian, A. 1999; Ter Minassian, T. 1999.

3 Georgeon 2003; Georgeon 2012.

4 Mirak 1983.

5 Siamant'ō 1910a.

6 Gazanjean 1993, 8-16.

7 La data dell'11-12 aprile si riferisce al calendario giuliano in vigore nell'Impero ottomano nel 1915; la data del 24-25 aprile si riferisce al calendario gregoriano.

apprensioni che regnavano fra gli scampati agli arresti, la mattina del 12/25 aprile, in modo particolare per la sorte di Siamant'ò:

[...] Domenica mattina, una mattina luminosa e soleggiata, mi ero preparato a ricevere ospiti. Solo uno di essi arrivò. Avevamo deciso di andare a vedere degli sportivi dell'associazione armena di ginnastica. Il signor Larents' [Larenc'] apparve più presto del solito; immediatamente vidi sul suo volto pallido e preoccupato che c'erano delle novità.

– Non hai incontrato Siamant'ò?, chiesi.

– No, disse in modo laconico.

Sempre la sera prima avevamo deciso di fare, dopo la visita all'associazione *Marmnamarz* [Ginnastica], una passeggiata in collina insieme ad alcuni amici scrittori.

Restammo di ghiaccio e in silenzio per un attimo. Il fatto ci opprimeva con tutto il suo peso. Larents' sapeva già ed io ero torturato dal non sapere.

La presenza di mia moglie ci rendeva inquieti; i nostri sguardi si incrociavano gli uni gli altri, con una angoscia triste e considerevole.

– Cosa succede?, mi affrettai a chiedere, quando ci trovammo per un attimo soli.

– Sono stati arrestati, disse, ieri sera.

– Chi?

Enumerò una serie di nomi. In un primo momento, credemmo che gli arresti fossero stati effettuati solo a Scutari. Sentivamo molto bene tutta la gravità della situazione, ma, con vane parole, volevamo darle un limite. [...] Oggetto principale delle nostre preoccupazioni era Siamant'ò. Sapevamo quanto fosse sensibile; la sua immaginazione fervida l'avrebbe torturato più di chiunque altro.

Mi ricordai di un avvenimento insignificante, che riceveva improvvisamente, in tali condizioni, un significato spaventoso. Una certa Lucrezia, affascinata dalla figura di Brotteaux in *Gli dei hanno sete*⁸, aveva preso e teneva in tasca [il libro]. Alcuni giorni prima degli arresti, mi mostrava il libretto ridendo:

– In questi giorni di guerra mondiale, è forse possibile leggere un libro diverso? Chi sa in qual giorno e in quale ora interromperemo la lettura e gireremo la pagina...⁹

Hayasdan, 2, 16/30 aprile 1915

8 France 1912. Il romanzo *Les dieux ont soif* doveva verosimilmente già esistere in traduzione armena all'epoca di Yesayan; conosco un'edizione della traduzione armena apparsa a Costantinopoli nel 1925; Frans 1925.

9 Qui e altrove, la traduzione dei testi armeni è mia.

Deportato ad Ayaş, Siamant'ō fu ucciso dopo alcuni mesi di detenzione, nel mese di agosto. Aveva al suo attivo la pubblicazione di cinque raccolte di poesie e altri componimenti sparsi.

2 Opere

Le prime raccolte di poesie sono caratterizzate da un tema ricorrente, ovvero l'evocazione dei massacri subiti dagli Armeni. Frequenti scene di morte e di orrore ne riempiono le pagine, unitamente ai numerosi accenti tesi a sottolineare l'eroismo degli Armeni: *Eroicamente* (Դիւցազնօրէն, Siamant'ō 1902), *I figli di Armenia* [o *Gli Armeni*] (Հայորդիները, Siamant'ō 1905-1908), *Torçe di agonia e di speranza* (Հոգեվարքի եւ յոյսի ջահեր, Siamant'ō 1907), *Notizie rosse dal mio amico* (Կարմիր լուրեր բարեկամէս, Siamant'ō 1909). Diversa è l'ispirazione delle poesie di *Invito della patria* (Հայրենի հրավեր, Siamant'ō 1910b), che costituiscono «Dodici appelli agli Armeni in esilio» (Տասներկու կոչ սարսափի Հայութեան), formulati da Siamant'ō all'epoca del suo soggiorno statunitense, affinché gli interpellati tornassero in patria. Nonostante gli avvenimenti drammatici del 1909, restava viva la convinzione di poter trovare una «patria» nell'Impero ottomano, il cui governo andava in realtà radicalizzandosi in posizioni panturchiste.

Siamant'ō figura inoltre tra i poeti costantinopolitani che parteciparono alla corrente letteraria del «paganesimo poetico», inaugurata e sviluppata da Varuzhan (1884-1915) con la raccolta dei *Canti pagani* (Հէթանոսական երգեր, Varuzhan 1912) e altri poemi¹⁰. Siamant'ō collaborò alla rivista *Nawasart* [Նասասարդ] – fondata dallo stesso Varuzhan nel 1913 –, il cui titolo richiama il nome della festa omonima dedicata alla triade dell'Armenia precristiana formata da Aramazd [Ahura Mazdā], Anahit e Vahagn. Fra le poesie scritte secondo questa ispirazione, si ricordi «Preghiera alla dea Anahid in un giorno di Nawasart» [Նասասարդեան աղօթք առ դիցուհին Անահիտ]¹¹. Fra le ultime opere, va ricordato il già menzionato poema *S. Mesrob* (Siamant'ō 1913). Lo stile retorico, ricco di immagini e di enfasi, fu notato già dai suoi contemporanei: per esempio da Varuzhan, nella prolusione sopra ricordata, e, con delle riserve, da Ōshagan [Ōšakan], nella sezione dell'ottavo volume del *Panorama della letteratura armeno-occidentale* dedicata a Siamant'ō¹².

10 Si vedano le lettere di Varuzhan del 2 febbraio e del 4 ottobre 1908 ad Arshag Ch'obanean [Aršak Č'opanean]: Nichanian 2007, 153-154; cf. Beledian 1989.

11 Siamant'ō 1914.

12 Ōshagan 1980², 215-277 (in particolare 230-231, nota, su *Notizie rosse dal mio amico*).

2.1 *Notizie rosse dal mio amico*

Le «notizie rosse» sono quelle trasmesse dal medico Diran Balak'ean [Tiran Palak'ean]¹³ dalla Cilicia, dove egli si trovava per prestare le proprie cure agli Armeni feriti durante i massacri del 1909¹⁴. Non è a Siamant'ō che egli inviò le sue missive, bensì alla propria famiglia, a Costantinopoli. Venutone al corrente, Siamant'ō si recò presso la casa dei Balak'ean per leggerle; ne trasse ispirazione in seguito per scrivere le poesie che compongono la raccolta, pubblicata già nel 1909¹⁵. Non sfuggano i tempi rapidissimi di redazione e di pubblicazione del volume, nonché la possibilità stessa di poter pubblicare a proposito dei massacri. Questa fu una delle conseguenze delle “libertà” garantite dal regime costituzionale e dal nuovo governo dei Giovani Turchi, la cui responsabilità nei massacri fu tuttavia al centro degli interrogativi degli Armeni sin dal primo propagarsi delle notizie venute dalla Cilicia¹⁶. Il nuovo regime permise la creazione di commissioni di inchiesta, nonché l'invio di una delegazione ufficiale in Cilicia, al fine di prendere conoscenza diretta della situazione e di occuparsi della sorte degli orfani. La commissione armena comprendeva anche Z. Yesayean, Surēn Bart'evēan [Part'ewēan] e Arshaguhi T'ēotig (Jezvējean) [Aršakuhi T'ēodik (Čezvēcēan)], autori, rispettivamente, di *Fra le rovine* (Աւերակներուն մէջ), *Il terrore della Cilicia* (Կիլիկեան արհաւիրքը), *Un mese in Cilicia* (Ամիս մը ի Կիլիկիա), tutti pubblicati in tempi brevi a Costantinopoli (rispettivamente, nel 1911, 1909, 1910)¹⁷. Nella stessa vena, vanno ricordati *Il libro rosso* (Կարմիր գիրքը) del poeta Rūpēn Sewag [Rūbēn Sewak] (1910) e il poema «Alle ceneri della Cilicia» (Կիլիկեան մոխիրներուն) di Varuzhan (1909), incluso nella raccolta *Cuore della razza* (Յեղին սիրտը). L'opera di Siamant'ō si colloca nel solco di queste risposte letterarie ai massacri di Cilicia¹⁸.

Fra le dodici poesie di *Notizie rosse dal mio amico*, «La danza» è probabilmente la più conosciuta. Un'infermiera tedesca vi racconta l'episodio agghiacciante di alcune giovani spose (հարսներ) armene costrette a ballare, nude, al suono dei tamburi; cosparse di petrolio, esse sono infine arse vive e obbligate a danzare, fra le fiamme, un'ultima danza di morte. La poesia ha conosciuto numerose traduzioni, che hanno reso possibile la sua diffusione anche al di

13 Medico armeno originario di Tokat, laureatosi a Leipzig.

14 Kévorkian 1999.

15 L'allusione all'amico non pare dunque essere un espediente letterario; Balakian – Yaghlian 1996, 14-15. Le lettere sono andate perdute: ibid.

16 Kévorkian 1999.

17 Yesayean 1911; Bart'evēan 1909; T'ēotig (Jezvējean) 1910.

18 Peroomian 2008.

fuori dell'ambito dei locutori armeni. Conosco una sola traduzione italiana; essa è stata tuttavia effettuata non sulla base del testo originale armeno, bensì di un'antecedente traduzione inglese¹⁹, per di più dalla resa intenzionalmente e dichiaratamente libera²⁰. In appendice a questo lavoro sarà pubblicata, in forma integrale, una traduzione italiana inedita, accompagnata dalla riproduzione del testo dell'edizione dell'*opera omnia* apparsa a Boston nel 1910²¹. Nelle righe che seguono saranno offerte alcune considerazioni sulle diverse strofe del poema, tradotte e riportate una ad una.

2.2 «La danza»

La poesia si presta a diverse osservazioni, in modo particolare sul rapporto fra testimonianza e rappresentazione. Osserveremo in primo luogo che l'*incipit* inizia con una congiunzione coordinante (եւ «e») (v. 1-3):

E soffocando le lacrime nei suoi occhi blu,
Su un campo di ceneri dove la vita armena stava ancor morendo,
Così raccontò la Tedesca, testimone oculare del nostro terrore.

Lo stesso procedimento si ritrova in altre poesie di Siamant'ō e proietta chi legge, o ascolta, in *medias res*²². Nel caso de «La danza», il lettore/uditore “vede” attraverso gli occhi dell'infermiera tedesca, il cui racconto è riportato dal poeta sotto forma di discorso diretto, ponendo il lettore/uditore in contatto immediato con la testimone stessa e facendone un interlocutore diretto. Il preambolo che introduce il resoconto della testimone (v. 1-3), insieme ai versi immediatamente successivi (v. 4-8), crea un effetto di *mise en scène*. La drammaturgia può essere identificata nell'*entrée sur scène* progressiva di diversi attori. Per prima si ode la voce del narratore onnisciente, ovvero il poeta; egli si fa por-

19 Traduzione effettuata da Riccardo Venturi, sulla base della versione inglese di Balakian – Yaghlian 1996, 41-43: <https://www.antiwarsongs.org/canzone.php?lang=fr&id=39350> (ultimo accesso, 18 agosto 2020).

20 Sulle scelte stilistiche adottate da Peter Balakian nella resa in inglese della traduzione letterale dall'armeno effettuata da Nevarit Yaghlian, si veda Balakian – Yaghlian 1996, 30-31.

21 Siamant'ō 1910a, 143-146 (facsimile riprodotto a Delmar nel 1979). Tutti i passi delle opere di Siamant'ō citati in questo articolo sono tratti da questa edizione.

22 Cf. «La loro canzone» (Իրենց երգը), v. 1 Ու իրենցմէ մին գոչեց... (Siamant'ō 1910a, 170); «L'albero di more» (Թթենին), v. 1 Ու ինչպիսի անողոր մխիթարութեան մը համար էր որ... (ibid., 180); «Strangolamento» (Խեղդամահ), v. 1 Ու գետնափոր նկուղին մէջ քառասուն անձ... (ibid., 184); etc. Notiamo, per inciso, che la congiunzione «e» del v. 1 di «La danza» lascia intendere che l'episodio raccontato doveva trovarsi al centro di un più lungo discorso, dal quale esso sarebbe stato stralciato.

tavoce dell'amico che ha raccolto la testimonianza dell'infermiera tedesca, di cui la poesia parla in un primo momento alla terza persona («Così raccontò la Tedesca etc.»). Il poeta non descrive di suo pugno l'episodio delle giovani spose arse vive, ma ne fa l'oggetto del racconto di un terzo, introducendo in tal modo la figura della testimone. Non ci può essere testimonianza in assenza di qualcuno che possa raccoglierla. Il resoconto dell'infermiera, già rilasciato all'amico e riportato dal poeta, si rivolge ad un «voi» (v. 4, cf. v. 12 e 14) che ingloba, grazie alla mediazione della poesia, ciascun lettore/uditore che, ad ogni lettura e declamazione del resoconto stesso, riceve la testimonianza. È interessante notare, poi, nel gioco creato dai pronomi personali e aggettivi possessivi dei primi versi, la presenza del pronome «noi», cui rinvia l'espressione «del nostro terrore» (v. 3). Esso è correlato al «voi» cui si rivolge la testimone. L'aggettivo «nostro» (riferito al «terrore») ha un valore esteso: l'episodio narrato va in effetti al di là del caso puntuale delle venti giovani spose, per acquisire un valore più generale, prima di tutto in riferimento agli Armeni, e poi, come scopriremo, all'umanità intera. Il terrore descritto dalla poesia riguarda ogni persona, armena e non armena, che ne riceve il resoconto. Nessuno può/deve restarvi indifferente.

Sempre a proposito del gioco dei rapporti legato all'uso dei pronomi personali e degli aggettivi possessivi, si noterà anche l'insistenza sul pronome «io», più volte pronunciato dalla testimone (v. 5-6, 8 *et passim*). La lingua armena non esige l'esplicitazione del pronome personale con funzione di soggetto; tale ripetizione contribuisce dunque a creare un'enfasi, volta a sottolineare il carattere di testimonianza oculare della storia narrata, ma anche a creare un effetto drammatico, esprimendo l'idea che l'infermiera avrebbe preferito, in realtà, non trovarsi nella sua posizione di testimone (perché proprio io?):

Questa storia inenarrabile che vi racconto,
 Io, con questi miei occhi umani impietosi,
 Dalla finestra della mia casa sicura affacciata sulla geenna,
 Digrignando i denti e con un'ira terribile...,
 Con questi miei occhi impietosamente umani, io vidi.

I versi sopra citati esprimono un *topos* ricorrente della letteratura della Catastrofe, ovvero il riferimento al carattere indicibile e inenarrabile della testimonianza, e introducono un paradosso (il racconto, detto impossibile, è in realtà offerto all'interlocutore). Come è possibile trasmettere l'immagine dell'orrore? La questione della rappresentazione è centrale in questi versi e nella poesia nel suo insieme. Essa è intimamente legata alla presenza di numerosi termini che fanno riferimento all'aspetto visivo, a cominciare dagli «occhi». Nessuna

protezione è garantita alla testimone, il cui sguardo è attratto niente meno che dalla geenna²³. Impietosi sono gli occhi che hanno assistito allo spettacolo insostenibile visto dalla finestra. Con queste prime parole la testimone avverte il suo interlocutore (il «voi» nel quale i lettori/uditori possono identificarsi) che sta per condurlo verso una discesa agli inferi. Oltre al riferimento alla geenna, l'allusione biblica all'inferno come luogo in cui i denti digrignano (cf. Lc 13:28; Mt 8:12; Mt 22:13; Mt 24:51; Mt 25:30) contribuisce alla caratterizzazione della visione come ad uno spettacolo infernale. Nella Bibbia, il digrignar dei denti fa inoltre allusione, più in generale, alla manifestazione della collera (Gb 16:9; Salm 35:16 e 37:12; Lam 2, 16; Ac 7:54). Nei versi in questione, esso può essere interpretato come un'allusione all'inferno, ma anche alla collera della testimone. È suo il digrignar dei denti.

Il racconto diretto del testimone, introdotto da un preambolo, inizia con la localizzazione degli avvenimenti²⁴:

Era nella città Giardino, ridotta a un mucchio di cenere.
I cadaveri erano stati ammassati sino alla cima degli alberi,
E dalle acque, dalle sorgenti, dai ruscelli e dalla strada,
Del vostro sangue il mormorio di rivolta...
Ecco che nelle mie orecchie grida ancor vendetta.

L'espressione «nella città Giardino» o, secondo un'altra traduzione possibile, «nella città di Bardēz [Partēz]» (Պարտէզ քաղաքին մէջ), richiede alcune parole di spiegazione. La città di Bardēz non si trova in Cilicia, bensì più a nord, nella regione di Kars²⁵. Come nome comune, l'armeno պարտէզ (pronunciato [bardez] secondo la pronuncia dell'armeno occidentale) significa «giardino»: alberi, acque, sorgenti possono fare riferimento ad una simbolica città giardino, nella quale i flutti di acqua sono stati sostituiti da rivoli di sangue. Ma esso può essere considerato anche come l'equivalente del turco Bahçe, che significa a sua volta «giardino» e che è il nome di una città di Cilicia nei pressi di Adana. E' l'ipotesi suggerita da Rubina Perroomian²⁶.

23 Nella letteratura apocalittica giudaica e nel Nuovo Testamento la geenna indica il luogo della dannazione eterna.

24 Un procedimento simile si constata in «La croce» (Խաչը), appartenente alla medesima raccolta (Siamant'ō 1910a, 160-164).

25 La poesia potrebbe essere stata redatta in riferimento ai massacri degli Armeni d'Anatolia orientale perpetrati dal sultano Abdül Hamid II (1894-1897), sui quali si veda Adjemian – Nichanian 2017 e Adjemian – Nichanian 2018.

26 Perroomian 2008, 399.

L'immagine delle rovine della città ridotta in cenere²⁷ è accompagnata dall'accenno alla rivolta del sangue armeno, presente in altre poesie delle raccolte precedenti. Gli elementi della natura – acque, sorgenti, ruscelli, ma anche la strada – esprimono solidarietà alle vittime, facendosi portavoce del loro «mormorio di rivolta». Alla voce degli elementi esterni si aggiunge quella della testimone narratrice, che porta impressa nelle sue orecchie l'eco del grido di vendetta. Il termine «vendetta» è una parola chiave della poesia. Esso va associato ai riferimenti alla giustizia dei versi successivi. Da osservare che, mentre il racconto è espresso al passato, il verbo «grida» (lett. «dice»), il cui soggetto è «il mormorio di rivolta» del sangue armeno, è al presente, indicando la perennità del grido anche dopo la morte, nonché il carattere indelebile dell'eco rimasta incisa nelle orecchie dalla testimone. Il grido di rivolta non può lasciare le sue orecchie, come la visione della geenna non lascia i suoi occhi (vedi *infra*).

Dopo questo secondo preambolo (v. 4-13), questa volta della testimone e non del poeta onnisciente, il discorso diretto si rivolge nuovamente a chi ascolta. Come si è detto sopra, non può esserci testimonianza senza qualcuno che la riceva; benché «inenarrabile» (անպատմելի) e insostenibile, la storia sarà – deve essere – raccontata; l'interlocutore (ivi compreso ogni lettore/uditore) non deve sfuggire:

Oh! Non abbiate timore²⁸, quando vi racconterò²⁹ questa inenarrabile storia...

Anche in altre poesie della raccolta, l'appello rivolto dal testimone oculare è un elemento cruciale. Si ricorderà l'esempio della poesia «Lutto» (Մուգ), dove l'io narrante invita un «tu sconosciuto» ad ascoltare:

Tu, a me sconosciuto dal mesto volto, e [ancora] tu, [voi], amici dell'anima che attraversate le strade dei banchetti odierni, ascoltate queste mie parole di solitudine e di lutto³⁰.

27 Il motivo delle ceneri si ritrova, oltre che in «Alle ceneri della Cilicia» di Varuzhan (*supra*), anche in «Un pugno di cenere, casa natale» (Ափ մը մոխիր հայրենի տուն..., da *Torce di agonia e di speranza*): Siamant'ō 1910a, 84-85.

28 Ovvero: «non fuggiate per il timore», non sottraetevi al racconto.

29 Lett. «quando vi racconto», con verbo al presente.

30 V. 1-3 Դուն թախծաղէմ անծանօթս կամ դուն հոգիի բարեկամ, / Որ խրախճանքի այսօրուան ճամբաներէն կ'անցնիր, / Ոնկնդրեցէ՛ք սա մենութեան եւ սուգի խօսքերուս: (Siamant'ō 1910a, 139).

Tale invito a soffermarsi per ascoltare richiama l'esortazione rivolta dalla città di Gerusalemme, personificata, al passante preso a testimone, in Lam 1:12: «... o voi che passate di qui! Osservate, guardate...!». La figura del testimone è cruciale anche in «La croce», il cui *incipit* recita:

Ancora un episodio terrificante... ma le mie mani tremano... / Queste mie povere mani, che han visto tanto orrore quanto i miei occhi, tremano... / Ma perdonami, oggi, mio amico intimo di vecchie speranze, / Perdonami, giacché vengo ancora una volta a turbare la tua mestizia, / Una volta ancora voglio essere lo specchio del sangue armeno, /della mia razza orfana, presentata al tuo cospetto, e dell'umanità traditrice; / Voglio dispiegare davanti a voi lo specchio che riflette l'orrore, anche se le mie mani fremono come un ramo secco³¹.

Il poeta si fa portatore dello specchio che riflette l'orrore. La rappresentazione dell'indicibile non può essere né integrale né diretta; essa non può essere che riflessa e mediata³².

Al di là del suo aspetto fattuale e circostanziale, la testimonianza de «La danza», al cui resoconto nessuno deve sottrarsi, assume un valore più generale. Non è una vicenda puntuale che interessa i soli Armeni, ma una storia con una portata generale che la testimone, e il poeta con lei, intendono far conoscere a «tutti i cuori di questo mondo». È l'umanità intera ad essere chiamata a testimone di fronte alla manifestazione del Male dell'uomo contro l'uomo:

Che gli uomini intendano il crimine dell'uomo contro l'uomo!
Sotto il sole di due giorni, sulla strada per il cimitero,
Il male dell'uomo contro l'uomo,
Che tutti i cuori di questo mondo conoscano!

Solo dopo questa lunga introduzione inizia il resoconto vero e proprio. Da un riferimento cronologico preciso («sotto il sole di due giorni») la poesia slitta

- 31 V. 1-8 Քստմնելի դրուագ մը ես... բայց ձեռքերս կը դողդոջեն... / Աչքերուս չափ սարսափ տեսած այս խեղճ ձեռքերս կը դողդոջեն... / Բայց ներքէ ինձ այսօր ալ, հին յոյսերու բարեկամս մտերիմ, / Ներքէ՛ ինձի, որ նորէն զամ ձեր թախիծը խոռովել, / Անգամ մը ես ես կ'ուզեմ հայելին ըլլալ հայ արիւնին. / Քու առջեղ զետեղուած՝ եւ որք ցեղիս եւ դասանան մարդկութեան, / Զարհուրանքներ արտացոլող հայելին բանալ ձեր առջեւ, / Թէեւ ձեռքերս սարսուան, չորցած ճիւղի մը նման... (Siamant'ō 1910a, 160).
- 32 Molto ci sarebbe da dire sul tema dei limiti della rappresentazione della Catastrofe. Mi limiterò a citare Beledian 1995; Beledian 1999. Sui lavori di Beledian, mi permetto di rimandare a Calzolari 2021.

verso un'indicazione cronologica avente un significato metaforico. La scena si svolge di domenica. Giorno dell'evocazione della Resurrezione e della Redenzione dell'umanità, nella cultura cristiana, essa è, nell'episodio raccontato, «inutile». Non ci sono né resurrezione né redenzione là dove regna il male dell'uomo contro l'uomo:

Codesto mattino dalle ombre di morte era una domenica,
 La prima inutile domenica che sorgeva sui cadaveri;
 Mentre nella mia stanza, dalla sera all'aurora,
 Curva sull'agonia di una giovane donna pugnalata,
 Con le mie lacrime bagnavo la sua morte...
 D'improvviso, da lontano, una cupa animalesca marmaglia,
 Insieme a venti giovani spose, frustandole furiosamente,
 Con canzoni oscene, si arrestò in un vigneto.

La poesia evoca dei personaggi sofferenti, vittime, ma con una diversa sorte: da un lato, la giovane donna agonizzante, oggetto delle cure e della compassione dell'infermiera (v. 23 «con le mie lacrime bagnavo la sua morte»); dall'altro, le venti giovani spose trascinate dalla «cupa animalesca marmaglia», sulle quali nessuna lacrima può essere versata. Il contrasto fra le due situazioni rende ancor più drammatica la sorte delle venti donne. Con un procedimento circolare, i versi seguenti contengono una nuova evocazione dell'inferno e riportano l'attenzione verso l'episodio centrale de «La danza»:

Io, lasciata la povera ragazza moribonda sul suo giaciglio,
 Mi avvicinai al balcone della mia finestra che dava sull'inferno...

Essi introducono poi un ulteriore livello di enunciazione. In effetti, il resoconto, alla prima persona, della testimone riporta sotto forma di discorso diretto le parole degli aguzzini. È un elemento importante sul quale ritorneremo:

Nel vigneto, la cupa marmaglia si dilagò come una foresta.
 Un selvaggio gridò alle giovani spose: «Dovete danzare!»
 «Dovete danzare, quando il nostro tamburo risuonerà».
 E le fruste cominciarono a schiacciare con ferocia
 Sui corpi delle donne armene che anelavano alla morte;
 Le venti giovani spose, mano nella mano, iniziarono la loro danza circolare...
 Dai loro occhi le lacrime stillavano come [da] piaghe.

La scena successiva introduce un duplice gesto di maledizione e di rivolta. Alla maledizione rivolta dalla giovane armena agonizzante contro l'universo intero si aggiunge il gesto della testimone, che può essere inteso come un gesto di ribellione e, nel contempo, probabilmente anche come un gesto di maledizione:

Ah! Io, quanto invidiai la mia vicina ferita,
Giacché udii che con un rantolo tranquillo,
Maledicendo l'universo, la povera bella armena
Diede alla colomba della sua anima di giglio ali per le stelle...
Invano scossi i miei pugni verso la folla.

Si noti l'opposizione fra «la vicina ferita» e la testimone, espressa, ancora una volta, dal pronome personale «io» esplicitato. Meglio la morte piuttosto che essere testimone dei fatti visti e narrati.

Il tema della maledizione va letto in collegamento con il tema della giustizia umana, assente. Inutile è il gesto dell'infermiera, come si apprende dai versi successivi che introducono nuovamente, con un discorso diretto, gli ordini degli aguzzini:

«Dovete danzare», ululava la marmaglia infuriata,
«Fino alla morte dovete danzare, voi, belle infedeli,
Con il vostro seno scoperto, dovete danzare, sorridendoci e senza
lamentarvi
Non ci sono né fatica né pudore, per voi,
Schiave siete, dovete danzare, nude e le membra scoperte,
Fino alla morte dovete danzare in modo licenzioso e lubrico».

Fra le numerose osservazioni che si potrebbero esprimere sui versi sopra citati (per esempio sul vocabolario che esprime il carattere selvaggio e brutale degli aguzzini)³³, mi soffermerò su di un termine in particolare: «schiave» (ստրուկներ). Il termine è semanticamente pregnante e va interpretato alla luce delle nostre conoscenze sui diversi trattamenti inflitti rispettivamente agli uomini

33 Si noti per esempio l'espressione խոժան անասնական, dove անասնական deriva da անասուն «animale»; l'aggettivo վայրենի «selvaggio»; i verbi դրոսալ «tuonare» e ոռնալ «ululare», detto delle bestie, per indicare le urla degli aguzzini. Si notino ancora մղեգին, մղեգնորէն «furioso, furiosamente», o ancora la similitudine fra le spade degli aguzzini e i serpenti (օձերոն պէս «come serpenti»), che contribuisce, per associazione, a sviluppare l'immagine dell'inferno.

e alle donne durante il genocidio, ma verosimilmente già messi in pratica durante i massacri anteriori. È solo da pochi anni che uno studio del genocidio degli Armeni è stato affrontato da un punto di vista *gender*, per lungo tempo ignorato. Le violenze e l'umiliazione sessuale, esercitate soprattutto nei confronti delle donne, costituiscono una delle pratiche genocidarie che hanno caratterizzato non solo il genocidio degli Armeni, ma anche il genocidio dei Tutsi, negli anni '90, o ancora, in questi ultimi anni, degli Yazidi del Sinjar³⁴. Se gli uomini armeni furono in gran parte eliminati sin dall'inizio del genocidio, le donne armene furono spesso vittime di violenze sessuali e divennero schiave all'interno di harem e case di prostituzione, o ancora in case turche o curde, dove finirono come serve o come mogli, forzate, di mariti turchi o curdi³⁵.

I versi successivi introducono di nuovo l'elemento degli occhi, creando un'opposizione fra gli occhi dei torturatori e quelli della testimone. Impietosi sono gli occhi che costringono l'infermiera ad assistere alla scena, tanto che ella vorrebbe privarsene (si veda l'ultimo verso del poema); al contrario, assetati dello stesso spettacolo sono gli occhi degli aguzzini:

«I nostri occhi sono assetati delle vostre forme e della vostra morte».
 Le venti giovani spose dal bell'aspetto crollarono a terra spossate...
 «Alzatevi in piedi!», gridarono, brandendo le loro spade nude come serpenti...
 Poi, qualcuno portò alla marmaglia del petrolio con una brocca...
 Oh giustizia umana! Possa io sputare sulla tua fronte!

La descrizione, che comprende un discorso diretto – l'incitazione dei carnefici alle donne armene –, è interrotta da un commento della testimone che costituisce una delle chiavi di volta della poesia. Esso fa riferimento alla giustizia umana, assente.

34 Sul tema, si veda almeno Ashraph 2017; Ernot 2014-2015. Il legame fra crimini sessuali e pratiche genocidarie è stato giuridicamente riconosciuto per la prima volta soltanto nel 1998, dal Tribunale penale internazionale per il Rwanda (cf. art. 2 della Convenzione per la prevenzione e la repressione dei genocidi, del 9 dicembre 1948): si veda, per esempio, Fourçans 2012. Nel 2018, il premio Nobel per la pace è stato attribuito, ex aequo, alla yazida del Sinjar Nadia Murad, ex schiava sessuale dell'ISIS (Murad – Krajeski 2017), e al medico congolese Denis Mukwege, «For their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict»: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2018/murad/facts/> (ultimo accesso, 18 agosto 2020).

35 Tra gli altri, cf. Bjornlund 2008; Derderian 2005; Ekmekçiöğlü 2013; Kurt 2016; Sanasarian 1989; Sarafian 2001; Üngör 2012; Tachjian 2009; Tachjian 2014.

Contrariamente a quanto accade in altri scritti sui massacri o sulla Catastrofe del 1915, la protesta espressa dalla poesia non è diretta contro Dio³⁶, bensì solo contro la giustizia umana. Al verso successivo, nel quale la descrizione della testimone prosegue, si legge un verbo semanticamente pregnante ai fini dell'interpretazione della poesia. Esso pare introdurre una dimensione religiosa. Laddove la giustizia umana tace, è un'altra forma di giustizia che è implicitamente evocata:

Le venti giovani spose in fretta furono unte (օծեցին) con questo liquido³⁷.

Il verbo օծել ha il duplice significato di «ungere» e di «consacrare». È dunque il verbo usato per indicare l'unzione del sacramento, e non il più comune քաշել «ungere» (spesso in composizione con իւղով «di olio»), ad essere stato scelto da Siamant'ō. L'«unto» (օծեալ) per antonomasia è Cristo. Il liquido che procura la morte diventa, contro le intenzioni dei carnefici, l'elemento dell'estrema unzione; benché l'espressione non sia evocata esplicitamente, le giovani spose paiono diventare delle vittime sacrificali. Secondo questa interpretazione, che propongo a livello di ipotesi, la morte delle giovani donne pare trovare un senso nella dimensione religiosa implicitamente contenuta nell'uso di questo verbo³⁸. È, del resto, in quanto «infedeli» che esse sono torturate e uccise.

All'unzione religiosa della tradizione giudeo-cristiana sottolineata dal verbo օծել si oppone l'allusione alle fragranze orientali evocate dai torturatori, che contribuisce a generare un divario ulteriore fra le vittime armene, «unte», e i loro persecutori:

«Dovete danzare!», gridò, «ecco per voi una fragranza che nemmeno l'Arabia possiede...»

Poi, con una torcia infiammarono i corpi nudi delle giovani spose.

E i cadaveri carbonizzati si arrotolarono nella danza sino alla morte.

36 Le accuse a un Dio assente si trovano per esempio nel primo volume de *Il Golgota armeno* di Krikoris Balak'ean [Grigoris Palak'ean], apparso a Vienna nel 1922 (Balak'ean 1922).

37 Da notare che, letteralmente, il verso recita: «unsero in fretta le venti giovani spose con questo liquido» (քսան հարսներն շտապով այդ հեղուկովն օծեցին), il cui soggetto implicito è costituito dagli aguzzini. Inverto, nella traduzione, il rapporto soggetto/oggetto, in modo da poter conservare all'inizio del verso, come nel testo armeno, il riferimento alle donne, e non agli aguzzini.

38 Sulla morte degli Armeni, durante il genocidio, come sacrificio e martirio ne *Il Golgota armeno* di Balak'ean menzionato sopra, si veda Calzolari 2006.

L'ultima danza delle giovani spose è una danza di morte. Al climax dell'orrore espresso progressivamente dal racconto, e dalla rappresentazione che esso contiene, si oppone la sua brusca interruzione. La testimone chiude improvvisamente, con la forza della tempesta, la finestra su quest'ultima immagine insostenibile. La poesia termina, a sua volta, bruscamente:

Per il terrore chiudendo i battenti della finestra come una tempesta,
Avvicinandomi alla mia morta solitaria chiesi:
«Come posso cavarmi questi miei occhi, come cavarli? Dimmi! ...»

Se la finestra è stata chiusa, l'immagine, quanto a lei, resta indelebile negli occhi, «impietosi», che la testimone vorrebbe togliersi. Si noti che l'ultimo verso con il quale si chiude il poema non è affidato al narratore onnisciente (al preambolo iniziale non corrisponde una conclusione, e la cornice narrativa non è chiusa in modo simmetrico), ma alla testimone. A chi si rivolge l'ultima domanda: «Dimmi?» Alla vittima armena che più non può rispondere, ma anche all'interlocutore cui l'infermiera ha affidato il suo racconto e, insieme a lui, a tutti coloro che l'hanno letto o udito, e che non potranno trovare la risposta impossibile.

L'eclisse del poeta onnisciente alla fine della poesia enfatizza il ruolo centrale del testimone, in questo caso straniero, e il suo legame intrinseco con la giustizia. La descrizione non è finalizzata tanto ad esprimere lutto e compassione per vittime, quanto a portare gli avvenimenti al tribunale della giustizia, al quale il testimone occidentale è per primo convocato dal poeta. In proposito, è interessante confrontare brevemente «La danza» con «Alle ceneri della Cilicia» di Varuzhan (*supra*). Anche in questo caso, il poeta si reca sul luogo dell'orrore (ceneri e fiamme) in compagnia di uno straniero, che è invitato a guardare e a farsi a sua volta testimone oculare delle sofferenze degli Armeni (v. 1 «Straniero, saliamo sulla montagna dirimpetto a noi» [...]; v. 4 e 7 «Straniero, affrettati» [...]; v. 14 «guarda!» [...]; v. 28 «straniero, vedi?»)³⁹. Ma nella seconda parte della poesia, lo straniero è esortato piuttosto a *chiudere gli occhi* e ad *ascoltare* le parole del poeta, che sottolineano l'insufficienza della rappresentazione e dell'immagine, ed invitano al lutto: (v. 43-44) «Straniero, ti supplifico, chiudi gli occhi e soltanto ascolta la mia voce»⁴⁰.

39 Varuzhan 1909, 121-126. Per un'analisi e una traduzione francese della poesia di Varuzhan, si veda Nichanian 2007, 187-209 e 438-442.

40 v. 1 Օտարական, բարձրանանք սա դիմացի լերան վրայ [...]; v. 4 e 7 Օտարական ըշտապէ [...] v. 14 նայէ' [...] v. 28 Օտարական, կը տեսնես [...] v. 43-44 Օտարական, կ'աղաչեմ, / Փակէ՛ աչքերդ ու միայն եղիր ձայնիս ունկընդիր (Varuzhan 1909, 121-123).

Ne «La danza», l'immagine che si fa spettacolo è prioritaria; lo spettacolo stesso è sottoposto a sguardi diversi. Siamant'ö intende mostrare l'opposizione fra lo sguardo della «marmaglia selvaggia» e lo sguardo urbano della testimone tedesca. Aguzzino e testimone sono gli unici soggetti della poesia, gli unici di cui si possono seguire gli occhi, mentre le vittime sono unicamente l'oggetto del duplice sguardo (i loro occhi non vedono, ma stillano lacrime). Se la testimone anela a cavarsi gli occhi, al contrario, assetati sono gli occhi degli aguzzini.

Per trasmettere la sete e la brama (licenziosa, ma anche brama di morte) dei carnefici, Siamant'ö fa ricorso ad un linguaggio poetico ricercato, ricco di allitterazioni e ripetizioni. Studiosi di ambito disciplinare diverso hanno osservato la discrepanza fra il tentativo di esprimere l'orrore e la ricercatezza poetica, in altri termini, il tentativo di estetizzare l'orrore. Secondo Rubina Peroomian, specialista della letteratura armena della Catastrofe già menzionata sopra, «The result is a powerful tension created by the contrast between the dark scenes of murder, torture and death and the rich poetic style and language»⁴¹. Ella si chiede, poi, se sia possibile conciliare «poetic excellence» e immagini dell'orrore: «Is it not a sin to draw pleasure from such horrendous scenes (pleasure in the Aristotelian sense...)?». La studiosa conclude osservando che questa opposizione binaria è inerente alla letteratura del genocidio: «the greater the contrasts, the deeper impact they produce» (ibid.). Diversamente, Sylvie Rollet, specialista di arti visive, affronta la questione partendo dal concetto dell'estetica del kitsch, che ella considera funzionale anche per proporre una lettura del film *Ararat* di Egoyan. Rollet usa il termine «kitsch» per fare allusione non tanto all'uso comune di «cosa di cattivo gusto, dozzinale, volgare», ma per indicare qualcosa di «déplicé»⁴². Commentando il contrasto fra le scene descritte e la ricercatezza del fraseggiare del poema, letto in traduzione inglese, la Rollet osserva che Siamant'ö è caduto, suo malgrado, nel kitsch⁴³. Esso è legato alla percezione del poema ed è insito nel tentativo stesso di voler «convertir l'abjection en art», facendo della lingua degli aguzzini «matière à transfiguration poétique»⁴⁴. Diverso invece, sempre secondo la Rollet, sarebbe l'uso del kitsch nel film di Egoyan, che mette in scena l'episodio delle donne arse vive in una delle scene centrali di *Ararat*. Senza prolungare l'analisi di «La danza», sulla quale certo ci sarebbe ancora molto da dire, spostiamo l'attenzione sulla sua ricezione nelle arti contemporanee, a cominciare proprio da *Ararat*.

41 Peroomian 2008, 401.

42 Rollet 2014, 145.

43 Rollet 2014, 147.

44 Ibid.

2 Ricezione de «La danza» nel cinema e nella musica contemporanea

2.1 *Ararat* di Atom Egoyan (2002)

Molto è stato scritto sul cineasta armeno-canadese Atom Egoyan e in particolare su *Ararat*, la cui complessità, deliberata, è cifra della complessità della Catastrofe e della trasmissione del trauma post-catastrofico⁴⁵. Ricordiamo che *Ararat* non intende essere un film sul genocidio avente per scopo la ricostruzione storica dei fatti; esso è piuttosto un film che si interroga sulla trasmissione intergenerazionale del trauma sino alla quarta generazione di Armeni in diaspora. Al cuore di quest'analisi della trasmissione si trova la questione della memoria e dell'oblio, senza tralasciare l'amnesia negazionista del discorso ufficiale turco. Inerente alla questione della memoria, e della post-memoria nel senso proposto da Marianne Hirsch⁴⁶, si trova la questione della rappresentazione, ivi compresa la rappresentazione insita nelle immagini e nei racconti ereditati dagli Armeni, di generazione in generazione. Tale questione è affrontata tramite diverse strategie di montaggio e di scrittura filmica, e in modo particolare attraverso l'espedito del «film nel film». Fra i vari personaggi di *Ararat* si trova infatti la figura di Edward Saroyan, figlio di una sopravvissuta del genocidio e cineasta alle prese con un progetto di film coltivato per tutta la vita. Saroyan vuole mostrare al pubblico occidentale (canadese) l'orrore scegliendo l'episodio emblematico della presa della città di Van⁴⁷; egli si basa su fonti esterne (la testimonianza del medico americano Clarence Ussher)⁴⁸ e sui racconti della propria madre. Il film di Saroyan vuole essere un film storico di grande afflato epico, che non esita a concedersi alcune licenze poetiche di rilievo al fine di introdurre degli elementi simbolici considerati come fondamentali, per esempio la vista, impossibile, del monte Ararat dalla città di Van. Un'altra licenza poetica è costituita dall'inserimento, all'interno di un episodio cruciale della presa di Van, nel 1915, di alcune scene ispirate al poema «La danza», che si riferisce ai massacri del 1909.

È a proposito del film di Saroyan e del suo pathos eccessivo, espresso con i mezzi classici del cinema hollywoodiano, che si può parlare di «kitsch». Secondo la Rollet, in *Ararat* ciò corrisponde ad un'intenzione esplicita del cineasta, che intende mostrare, tra le altre cose, le modalità narrative con le quali il racconto della Catastrofe è stato trasmesso di generazione in genera-

45 Si veda per esempio Baronian 2013; Eckner 2011; Hogikyan 2015; Nichanian 2004-2005; Romney 2003; Rollet 2009a; Rollet 2009b; Wilson 2009.

46 Hirsch 2014.

47 Ter Minassian, A. 2017.

48 Ussher 1917.

zione. Secondo Egoyan, citato da Rollet, il kitsch farebbe parte di tale racconto e, nello stesso tempo, della percezione con la quale esso è stato ricevuto e percepito dagli Armeni delle ultime generazioni⁴⁹. Secondo la Rollet, il kitsch è inoltre legato alla dimensione spettacolare, in particolare agli effetti di repulsione/attrazione che le scene de «La danza» ispirano⁵⁰.

Non mi soffermerò ulteriormente sull'analisi del kitsch, né sull'analisi del «film nel film» e dei diversi livelli narrativi di *Ararat*, sui quali ci sarebbe molto da osservare. Mi limiterò a ricordare che un elemento comune alle due imprese artistiche (la poesia di Siamant'ö e il film di Egoyan) consiste nella volontà di interpellare il pubblico occidentale. Anche il film di Egoyan, come la poesia di Siamant'ö, mette in scena, come personaggio chiave, la figura dell'interlocutore chiamato a prendere coscienza delle atrocità subite dagli Armeni. In *Ararat*, l'interlocutore occidentale è simbolizzato dalla figura del doganiere canadese che interroga il personaggio di Raffi, di ritorno dalla Turchia. Raffi è un giovane armeno che cerca di capire le ragioni che hanno portato il padre a rischiare di perdere la vita pur di farsi giustiziere di un ambasciatore turco (egli sarà effettivamente ucciso dalla polizia durante questo tentativo di attentato). È andando in Anatolia, alla ricerca delle tracce, obliterate, della presenza armena nelle terre d'origine, che il più giovane dei protagonisti del film trova il «fantasma di suo padre». Ed è commentando ad alta voce le immagini filmate in Anatolia che Raffi esprime a sua madre quanto ha sentito sul posto. Ma è alle orecchie del doganiere, prima ancora che alla madre, che il resoconto di Raffi arriva.

Arrestato alla dogana, il ragazzo mostra le immagini riprese in Turchia e risponde all'interrogatorio dell'ufficiale canadese; così facendo, è la storia degli Armeni e della violenza genocidaria subita che egli racconta. Raffi diventa, in *Ararat*, l'equivalente dell'infermiera tedesca e, con lei, del poeta, che interpellano l'interlocutore occidentale, affinché questi non si sottragga (più) alla verità. Nel momento più drammatico per la sua sorte personale, all'ufficio della dogana, Raffi non cerca di dare spiegazioni che potrebbero toglierlo d'impaccio, ma afferra alcune pagine della sceneggiatura del film di Saroyan e prende a leggerle al doganiere. Egli comincia con la lettura di alcuni estratti de «La danza» di Siamant'ö, senza citarne la fonte, sopprimendo il preambolo per iniziare direttamente con il resoconto dell'infermiera tedesca⁵¹. Il racconto, letto da Raffi, è udito dal doganiere e, nello stesso tempo, è illustrato, per lo spetta-

49 Rollet 2014, 144.

50 Rollet 2014, 158, sulla base di Stern 2004, 112.

51 Un'ulteriore licenza poetica, oltre a quella menzionata in precedenza, è costituita dal fatto che, nel film, l'infermiera racconta l'episodio a Clarence Ussher (vedi *supra*), a Van.

tore, con le scene del film di Saroyan che mostrano la ronda delle donne armene della poesia di Siamant'ō, vista e descritta, nel film, dall'infermiera tedesca.

Il ruolo del testimone occidentale, che *deve* sapere, è legato al concetto di riparazione e di giustizia, che costituisce una delle chiavi di volta per la comprensione di *Ararat*. Basti ricordare che in chiusura del film, prima dei titoli di coda, alcune parole ricordano che il genocidio degli Armeni era, al momento dell'uscita del film – ed è ancora –, negato dalla Turchia e dunque impunito. Anche l'album doppio di Diamanda Galás, *Defixiones, Will and Testament*, dove «La danza» occupa la parte centrale, si basa sull'esigenza di far conoscere e di chiedere giustizia. Esso aggiunge, tuttavia, un diverso livello, assente sia nella poesia di Siamant'ō che in *Ararat*.

2.2 *Defixiones* di Diamanda Galás (2003)

Diamanda Galás è una compositrice, vocalist e pianista statunitense di origine greca⁵². Figlia di una madre originaria del Mani, nel Peloponneso, e di un padre originario del Ponto, sin da piccola ella aveva udito parlare della Grande Catastrofe dei Greci pontici alla fine della Grande Guerra. Iniziando a studiare la storia dei Greci del Ponto, prese ad interessarsi anche alla storia degli Armeni e degli Assiri, ai quali dedica il suo sontuoso progetto musicale. La Galás è nota per la sua ricerca e sperimentazione vocale d'avanguardia. Alla stregua di Demetrios Stratos⁵³, ella usa la voce come uno strumento, con una capacità tecnica ed espressiva fuori dall'ordinario (estensione di tre ottave e mezzo). La Galás è conosciuta anche per il carattere militante e provocatorio delle sue opere, composte ed eseguite a sostegno di alienati, prigionieri politici, malati di AIDS demonizzati dalla società nord-americana degli anni 80⁵⁴. Nel 2003, ella incise il doppio album *Defixiones, Will and Testament*, dedicandolo «to the forgotten and erased of the Armenian, Assyrian, and Anatolian Greek genocides which occurred between 1914 and 1923» e inserendo, tra altri testi, *La Danza*. Non mi dilungherò qui a spiegare il termine e la pratica delle *Defixiones*, mutuata dalla tradizione greco-romana antica⁵⁵. Mi limiterò a ricordare, con Diamanda Galás, che, fra le altre cose, «*Defixiones* refers to the warnings

52 Chare 2007; Chare – Ferrett 2007; Mavrikakis 2008; Moore 2002; Pope – Leonardi 1997.

53 Vocalist di origine greca naturalizzato italiano e scomparso prematuramente nel 1979. La Galás fu la prima laureata del premio internazionale Demetrios Stratos per la sperimentazione musicale, nel novembre 2005.

54 Nel 1991, ella incise dal vivo nella chiesa di St John the Divine, a New York, *Plague Mass*, in omaggio ai numerosi morti colpiti dalla piaga dell'AIDS, album che le valse numerosi strali.

55 Si veda almeno Guarducci 1987.

on Greek gravestones against removing the remains of the dead. Will and Testament refers to the last wishes of the dead who have been taken to their graves under unnatural circumstances»⁵⁶. Un aspetto peculiare delle *defixiones* consiste nella presenza di formule incantatorie, spesso delle maledizioni, incise su sottili tavolette di piombo (*tabellae defixionum*). *Defictae*, ovvero trafitte con un chiodo, sono le sottili lamine di piombo sulle quali sono incise le formule; *defictae*, ovvero, metaforicamente, immobilizzate, sono le persone oggetto delle maledizioni.

Il libretto del duplice album comprende scritti di autori diversi, oltre a Siamant'ö: Paul Celan, Henri Michaux, Pierpaolo Pasolini, Adonis, Gérard de Nerval, César Vallejo, Freydon Bet-Abram, Sevda Zinçiri, etc. Le musiche sono composte ed eseguite al pianoforte dalla stessa Galás, ma a volte riprendono canti e musiche di origine diversa. Si trovano, tra l'altro, dei *Rebetiko* (per esempio di Dido Soteriou) dei Greci del Ponto.

I primi trentacinque minuti del primo disco sono dedicati a «La danza» di Siamant'ö. Essi si aprono con un'interpretazione personale, da parte di Diamanda Galás, del *Tēr Otormea* «Signore abbi pietà» (nella versione armena di Makar Yekmalian, 1856-1905), celebre canto liturgico della messa armena. L'interpretazione è a tratti interrotta da brani eseguiti al pianoforte; la musica, i canti e i testi sopra menzionati, declamati dalla Galás, si intrecciano, a diverse riprese, con la recitazione de «La danza», eseguita in armeno da Shakeh Kadehjian. La Galás stessa recita alcuni versi in armeno, in modo particolare l'ingiunzione degli aguzzini: *սխ'սք է սսսրէք* «dovete danzare». La lunga interpretazione, costellata da degli «Aman!» di commiserazione e maledizione, condivide, con la poesia di Siamant'ö, l'accusa scagliata contro l'universo e contro la giustizia umana, che manca all'appello. La Galás aggiunge tuttavia una diversa dimensione, grazie alla sua voce. La performance vocale disturba e scuote chi la ascolta, esprimendo l'orrore e reclamando vendetta, ma riprende anche la tradizione delle prefiche della regione del Mani, ben note all'artista, e in generale degli *Amanedhes*, improvvisazioni musicali dei Greci di Smirne, associate al genere della lamentazione⁵⁷. Il testo de «La danza» riceve, nell'interpretazione della Galás, un aspetto assente sia nel poema di Siamant'ö che nel film *Ararat*: l'espressione del lutto e del pianto.

Nel disco e nelle numerose performances live della Galás, il testimone occidentale è interpellato. La Galás lo invita non solo al tribunale della giustizia (come Siamant'ö e Saroyan/Egoyan), ma anche alla com-passione. Il Male

56 <https://diamandagalas.bandcamp.com/album/defixiones-will-and-testament> (ultimo accesso, 18 agosto 2020).

57 Holst-Warhaft 2016; cf. Schwartz 1997.

dell'uomo contro l'uomo reclama giustizia e, nel disco della Galás, richiede la partecipazione al dolore. La dimensione della vendetta e della maledizione prende i toni del lutto.

Altre competenze permetterebbero di approfondire l'analisi di *Defixiones, Will and Testament*. Come ultima considerazione, penso sia possibile sin d'ora osservare che se l'immagine e la rappresentazione, filmica e a parole, rivelano la loro insufficienza di fronte alla Catastrofe, la voce e il canto offrono forse un altro mezzo per esprimere l'indicibile.

**Appendice: Testo armeno e traduzione italiana inedita di Պարը
«La danza» di Siamant'ò**

ՊԱՐԸ

Եւ արցունքներն իրեն կապոյտ աչքերուն մէջ խեղդելով,
Մոխրադաշտի մը վրայ ուր հայ կեանքը դեռ կը մեռնէր,
Այսպէս պատմեց մեր սարսափին ականատես Գերմանուհին.

– Այս անպատմելի պատմութիւնը որ ձեզ կ'ընեմ,
Ես իմ անգութ աչքերովս այս մարդկային,
Իմ անվտանգ տնակիս գեհեճաղի լուսամուտէն,
Ակռաներս կրճտելով ու զայրոյթէս զարհուրելի...
Այս աչքերովս անգթօրէն մարդկային, ես տեսայ:
Մոխրակոյտի վերածուած Պարտէզ քաղաքին մէջն էր:
Դիակները դիզուած էին մինչեւ կատարը ծառերուն,
Եւ ջուրերէն, աղբիւրներէն, առուններէն եւ ճամբէն
Ձեր արիւնին կարկաչիւնն ըմբոստաձայն...
Դեռ ականջիս իր վրէժն ահաւասիկ որ կը խօսի...

Օ՛, չի սոսկաք, երբ անպատմելի պատմութիւնս ձեզի պատմեմ...
Թող մարդերը հասկնան, մարդուն ոճիրը մարդուն դէմ,
Երկու օրուան արեւին տակ, գերեզմանին ճամբուն վրայ
Մարդուն չարիքը մարդուն դէմ,
Թող աշխարհիս բոլոր սրտերն իմանան... :
Այդ մահաշուք առաւօտը կիրակի էր,
Դիակներուն վրայ ծագող դեռ առաջին եւ անօգուտ կիրակին,
Երբ սենեակիս մէջը, իրիկունէն մինչեւ արշալոյս,
Դաշունահար աղջկան մը հոգեվարքին վրայ ծռած՝
Արցունքներովս անոր մահը կը թրջէի...
Յանկարծ հեռուէն սեւ խուժան մը անասնական,

Քսան հարսներ իրենց հետ՝ մոլեգնորէն մտրակելով,
Շուայտութեան երգերով, այգիի մը մէջ կանգնեցան:

Ես կիսամեռ խեղճ աղջիկն իր խշտեակին վրայ լքած,
Դժոխհայեաց պատուհանիս պատշգամին մօտեցայ... :
Այգիին մէջ սեւ խուժանն անտառացաւ:
Վայրենի մը՝ հարսներուն. – Պէտք է պարէ՛ք, որոտաց,
Պէտք է պարէ՛ք – երբ մեր թմբուկը հնչէ:
Եւ մտրակներն սկսան մահակարօտ հայ կիներուն՝
Մարմիններուն վրայ կատաղութեամբ մը շառաչել...
Քսան հարսներն ձեռք ձեռքի, իրենց շուրջպարն սկսան...
Աշուրներէն իրենց արցունքը վէրքերու պէս կը հոսէր,
Ահ, ես որչափ նախանձեցայ իմ դրացի վիրաւորիս,
Որովհետեւ լսեցի որ հռնդիւնով մը հանդարտ,
Տիեզերքն անիծելէն, խեղճ հայուհին գեղադէմ,
Իր տատրակի շուշան հոգուն դէպի աստղերը թեւ տուաւ...

Ունայնորէն կռուիներս ամբոխին դէմ շարժեցի:
«Պէ՛տք է պարէք», կ'ոռնար խուժանը մոլեգին,
«⁵⁸Մինչեւ ձեր մահը պէ՛տք է պարէք, դո՛ւք անհաւատ գեղեցիկներ,
Կուրծքերնիդ բաց՝ պէ՛տք է պարէք, մեզ ժըպտելով եւ անտրտունջ...
Յոգնութիւնը ձեզ համար չէ, ոչ ալ ամօթը ձեզ համար,
Ստրուկներ էք, պէ՛տք է պարէ՛ք, եւ մերկանդամ եւ հոլանի,
Մինչեւ ձեր մահը պէ՛տք է պարէք պագշոտորէն եւ ցոփութեամբ,
Մեր աչքերը ծարաւի են ձեր ձեւերուն եւ ձեր մահուան...»:

Քսան հարսներն գեղադէմ, գետին ինկան պարտասած... :
«Ուտքի՛ ելէք», գոռացին, մերկ սուրերնին օձերու պէս շարժելով...
Յետոյ մէկը սափորով մը քարիւղ բերաւ խուժանին...
Ո՛վ մարդկային արդարութիւն, թո՛ղ ես թքնեմ քու ճակատիդ...
Քսան հարսներն շտապով այդ հեղուկովն օծեցին...

«Պէ՛տք է պարէք, որոտաց, ահաւասիկ ձեզի բուրմունք մը, որ Արաբիան
խկ չունի...»:
Յետոյ ջահով մը բռնկցուցին մերկ մարմինները հարսներուն:
Եւ ածխացած դիակները պարին մէջէն, դէպի մահը գորեցան...

58 Le virgolette, omesse nell'edizione di riferimento, sono state qui aggiunte per regolarizzare la punteggiatura; vedi anche v. 49 e 53.

Զարհուրանքէս՝ պատուհանիս փեղկերը՝ պոթորկի մը պէս փակելով՝
 Իմ մենաւոր մտնելիս մօտենալով հարցուցի.
 Ի՞նչպէս փորել այս աչքերս, ի՞նչպէս փորել, ըսէ՛ ինձ... :

«*La danza*»

E soffocando le lacrime nei suoi occhi blu,
 Su un campo di ceneri dove la vita armena stava ancor morendo,
 Così raccontò la Tedesca, testimone oculare del nostro terrore.

– Questa storia inenarrabile che vi racconto,
 Io, con questi miei occhi umani impietosi,
 Dalla finestra della mia casa sicura affacciata sulla geenna,
 Digrignando i denti e con un'ira terribile...,
 Con questi miei occhi impietosamente umani, io vidi.
 Era nella città Giardino, ridotta a un mucchio di cenere.
 I cadaveri erano stati ammassati sino alla cima degli alberi,
 E dalle acque, dalle sorgenti, dai ruscelli e dalla strada,
 Del vostro sangue il mormorio di rivolta...
 Ecco che nelle mie orecchie grida ancor vendetta.

Oh! Non abbiate timore, quando vi racconterò questa inenarrabile storia...
 Che gli uomini intendano il crimine dell'uomo contro l'uomo!
 Sotto il sole di due giorni, sulla strada per il cimitero,
 Il male dell'uomo contro l'uomo,
 Che tutti i cuori di questo mondo conoscano!
 Codesto mattino dalle ombre di morte era una domenica,
 La prima inutile domenica che sorgeva sui cadaveri;
 Mentre nella mia stanza, dalla sera all'aurora
 Curva sull'agonia di una giovane donna pugnalata,
 Con le mie lacrime bagnavo la sua morte...
 D'improvviso, da lontano, una cupa animalesca marmaglia,
 Insieme a venti giovani spose, frustandole furiosamente,
 Con canzoni oscene, si arrestò in un vigneto.

Io, lasciata la povera ragazza moribonda sul suo giaciglio,
 Mi avvicinai al balcone della mia finestra che dava sull'inferno...
 Nel vigneto, la cupa marmaglia si dilagò come una foresta.
 Un selvaggio gridò alle giovani spose: «Dovete danzare!»
 «Dovete danzare, quando il nostro tamburo risuonerà».
 E le fruste cominciarono a schioccare con ferocia

Sui corpi delle donne armene che anelavano alla morte;
Le venti giovani spose, mano nella mano, iniziarono la loro danza circolare...
Dai loro occhi le lacrime stillavano come [da] piaghe.
Ah! Io, quanto invidiai la mia vicina ferita,
Giacché udii che con un rantolo tranquillo,
Maledicendo l'universo, la povera bella armena
Diede alla colomba della sua anima di giglio ali per le stelle...

Invano scossi i miei pugni verso la folla.
«Dovete danzare», ululava la marmaglia infuriata,
«Fino alla morte dovete danzare, voi, belle infedeli,
Con il vostro seno scoperto, dovete danzare, sorridendoci e senza lamentarvi.
Non ci sono né fatica né pudore, per voi,
Schiave siete, dovete danzare, nude e le membra scoperte,
Fino alla morte dovete danzare in modo licenzioso e lubrico.
I nostri occhi sono assetati delle vostre forme e dalla vostra morte».

Le venti giovani spose dal bell'aspetto crollarono a terra spossate...
«Alzatevi in piedi!», gridarono, brandendo le loro spade nude come serpenti...
Poi, qualcuno portò alla marmaglia del petrolio con una brocca...
Oh giustizia umana! Possa io sputare sulla tua fronte!
Le venti giovani spose in fretta furono unte con questo liquido.

«Dovete danzare!», gridò, «ecco per voi una fragranza che nemmeno l'Arabia possiede...»
Poi, con una torcia infiammarono i corpi nudi delle giovani spose.
E i cadaveri carbonizzati si arrotolarono nella danza sino alla morte.

Per il terrore chiudendo i battenti della finestra come una tempesta,
Avvicinandomi alla mia morta solitaria chiesi:
«Come posso cavarmi questi miei occhi, come cavarli? Dimmi!...»

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PART 5
Religious Studies



Ephrem and the Persian Martyrs in the Armenian Synaxarion

Sebastian Brock

1 The Armenian Synaxarion and Its Versions¹

Originally modelled on the Greek Synaxarion, or calendar of saints, almost all provided with a short biography, the Armenian Synaxarion (*AS*; Arm. *Yaysmawurk*¹) is transmitted in several somewhat different forms, the three oldest dating from the 13th century. Although the editor, Gevorg Bayan, of the most accessible edition (in the *Patrologia Orientalis*)² attributed his text to the form compiled by a monk named Ter Israel (*d.* 1249), in fact the manuscript he used (Paris, Arm. 180 [= P 180]) belongs to the second version, attributed to Kirakos Arewelec'i (*ASK*), and dated 1269. Also wrongly attributed to Ter Israel is the edition printed in Constantinople in 1834, whose text really belongs to the third version, commissioned ca. 1287 by the future Catholicos Grigor VII (1295–1307) (*ASG*), though it seems not to have been completed until the mid-14th century; in Bayan's edition, the 1834 edition is cited as 'B'. The genuine version of Ter Israel (*AST*) for January has now been published by Petrosyan (2008),³ while the entry for Ephrem has conveniently been excerpted in the collection of texts on Ephrem published by Ter Petrossian and Outtier.⁴ In his planned bilingual edition, E.G. Mathews has so far produced five volumes, covering January to May; his text is based on Bayan's edition.

2 The Presence of Syriac Saints

In view of the close links between the Armenian and Syriac Churches at certain periods, it is not surprising that the Armenian Synaxarion should include some

1 Abbreviations: *AMS* = *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, ed. Bedjan; *AS* = Armenian Synaxarion ed. Bayan; *ASG* = Armenian Synaxarion ed. Grigor; *ASK* = Armenian Synaxarion ed. Kirakos; *AST* = Armenian Synaxarion ed. Ter Israel; *PO* = *Patrologia Orientalis*; *SC* = *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. Delehaye 1902.

2 Bayan 1909–1930.

3 Unfortunately, this version was not available to me.

4 Ter Petrossian—Outtier, 1985, 98–100 (text), 57–58 (translation). They also provide the entry

fifty or more commemorations which have specific Syriac connections. As will be seen from the Table below, two areas in particular are rather well represented: saints/events connected with Edessa; and the Persian martyrs of the 4th and 5th centuries.

Many of the entries for Syriac saints and martyrs immediately betray the fact that they have a Greek source by the presence of Hellenised forms of Semitic names; the Greek source in question will usually turn out to be related to the printed text of the Constantinopolitan Synaxarion, though in a few cases an entry must be derived, perhaps directly, from a Syriac source. In the case of Ephrem the situation is different since, in contrast to the short entry in the Constantinopolitan Synaxarion, the Armenian counterpart has an extended entry, most of which is evidently taken from the Armenian translation (made in 1101) of the 6th-century Syriac *Life*, to which some floating items have been added at the end.

3 Commemorations with Syriac Connections

In Table 17.1, the following information is provided for each entry: the date in both the Armenian and Julian calendars; the commemoration; the counterpart in the Constantinopolitan Synaxarion edited by Delehayé (*sc*);⁵ in the case of the Persian martyrs, besides *sc*, the fuller Greek translation is noted (Greek 1, 2 etc.) where it exists, as edited by Delehayé in PO 2; the Syriac Acta, as edited by Bedjan in his *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* II and IV (*AMS*); and the Armenian Acta where they exist, as listed in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis* (*BHO*). It should be noted that the dates in *sc* are sometimes different, but this information is not included here.

TABLE 17.1 Commemorations with Syriac connections

Navasard = August/September (PO 5:3, 1909)

6/16	Icon of Abgar	<i>sc</i> 893–904
12/22	Martyrdom of Thomas	<i>sc</i> 113–115
21/1	Aithalas	
27/6	Abdios	

in the Synaxarion of Kirakos, 101–105/59–61, and that of the fourth version by Grigor Xlat'ec'i (1401), 105–108/62–65.

5 Delehayé 1902.

TABLE 17.1 Commemorations with Syriac connections (*cont.*)***Hori* = September/October (PO 6:2, 1910)**

16/25	Heliodorus, Dosas	SC 594–595		AMS II, 316–322
20/29	Dadas, Kasdoa	SC 89–90		AMS IV 141–163
26/5	Mamelchtha	SC 111–112		
27/6	Relics of St Thomas			

***Sahmi* = October/November (PO 15:3, 1920)**

5/14	Sadoth	SC 150	Greek 4	AMS II, 276–281
19/28	Abraham and Mary	SC 173–175		AMS VI, 465–499
25/3	Akepsimas,	SC 189–191	Greek 10–13	AMS II, 351–396 BHO 23

***Trē* = November/December (PO 16:1, 1922)**

4/12	Miles	SC 221–222		AMS II, 260–275 BHO 773
7/15	Guria, Samona, Habib	SC 225–226 ⁶		BHO 364–365
14/22	bp Nerses	SC 241–243		AMS II, 284–286
16/24	Jacob <i>intercisu</i> s	SC 259–260		AMS II, 539–558 BHO 395
19/27	" "			
23/1	Anania	SC 269		AMS IV, 131–133

***K'atoc'* = December/January (PO 18:1, 1924; Mathews, *January*)**

1/9	Barsamias, Sarbilos	SC 434		AMS I, 95–130
3/11	Aitalaha, Apsai	SC 300		AMS IV, 133–137
4/12	Thaddaeus (also 14/22)	SC 911–912		
7/15	Jacob of Nisibis	SC 388–390		BHO 407–411
16/24	Addai ⁷			BHO 9
23/31	Abgar			BHO 9
24/1	(Ephrem, in) Basil			BHO 166

***Arac'* = January/February (PO 19:1, 1925; Mathews, *February*)**

3/10	Behnam and Sara			AMS II, 397–441
6/13	Jacob of Nisibis	SC 388–390		BHO 407–411
15/22	Anastasius the Persian	SC 413–414		

6 In Delehaye's Ba; the miracle at the end derives from the Narrative of Euphemia. All the Syriac texts are edited in Burkitt 1913.

7 The foundational Syriac text for Addai and Abgar is the Teaching of Addai, the source of BHO 9.

TABLE 17.1 Commemorations with Syriac connections (*cont.*)

21/28	Ephrem	SC 429		
15/1	Barsauma ⁸			
<i>Meheki</i> = February/March (PO 21:1, 1930; Mathews, <i>March</i>)				
4/10	Thaddaeus			
10/16	Marutha	SC 469–470		BHO 720
12/18	Sadoth	SC 478	AMS II, 276–281	
14/20	Abdios	-		
21/27	bp John, pr. James	SC 186–187	AMS II, 186–187	
<i>Areg</i> = March/April (PO 21:2, 1930; Mathews, <i>April</i>)				
12/20	Jonas, Barachisias	SC 567–570	Greek 1–2	AMS II, 567–570
16/24	bp Abda, Hormizd, Sayeni, dcn Benjamin	SC 574–575		AMS IV, 250–253 BHO 7
20/28	Pherbouthé [Tarbo]	SC 585–586	Greek 3	AMS II, 254–260
22/30	Gushazat	SC 607		AMS II, 241–248
23/31	Hakob, dcn Aza	SC 607–608		AMS IV, 137–141
29/6	120 martyrs	SC 587		AMS II, 291–295
30/7	Barsimios [Badimas]	SC 593	Greek 9	AMS II, 347–351
<i>Ahekan</i> = April/May (PO 21:3, 1930; Mathews, <i>May</i>)				
1/8	‘Abdisho’	(SC 594)		AMS II, 322–324
6/13	Simeon bar Sabba’e Pusik	SC 601–602 SC 607		BHO 1118 AMS II, 208–232
7/14	1000 martyrs	SC 607		
22/29	Bata	SC 645–648		
23/30	Thesbia			
<i>Mareri</i> = May/June (PO 21:4, 1930)				
9/16	‘Abdisho’, bp of Kashkar	SC 687–688		AMS II, 332–347
10/17	‘Abdisho’ [Bokhtisho’] Isaac, Simeon	SC 687		AMS II, 507–535
25/1	Marutha	SC 469–470		BHO 720
19/5	Jacob of Serugh [B]			

8 A translation of the Syriac *Life* is available in Palmer 2020.

TABLE 17.1 Commemorations with Syriac connections (*cont.*)**Margac' = June/July (PO 21:5, 1930)**

4/10	Barba'shmin	SC 753–754	
14/20	Manuel, Sabel, Ismael		AMS II, 296–303

Hrotic', Aveleac' = July/August (PO 21:6, 1930)

8/14	'Abdelmasih of Sinjar		AMS I, 173–201	BHO 4
16/22	Geranduxt [Golinduxt]	SC 815–818		

In the present contribution in honour of Theo van Lint, my main focus of attention will be the entries in the Armenian Synaxarion on Ephrem and on those Persian Martyrs who are of Syriac origin.

4 The Commemoration of St Ephrem

St Ephrem (*d.* 373), many of whose works were translated into Armenian at an early date, is commemorated on the 21st Arac' (28th January). Although this is the Greek, rather than the Syriac, date for the Commemoration, the Armenian entry is unrelated to the brief note that is accorded to the saint in the Constantinopolitan Synaxarion; instead, the Armenian entry provides a fairly extended biographical notice. Ephrem in fact already features a little earlier, in the Commemoration of St Basil on 24th K'aloc' (1st January), in connection with his visit to Basil in Caesarea. As the basis, the text in Bayan's edition is used (the version of Kirakos).

As will quickly be seen from the analysis of the sources for the different episodes in the entry on Ephrem, most of the information given is derived from the Armenian translation of the Syriac *Life of Ephrem*. The Syriac *Life* is a product of the 6th century which, in order to meet readers' expectations, portrays the saint anachronistically as a monk, rather than a deacon, and as having connections with both the Cappadocian Fathers (through his visit to Basil) and the Desert Fathers (through his visit to Egypt), despite the fact that both journeys never took place, and each can be traced to the mention of an unnamed 'Syros' in two works by Basil⁹ and in the *Life of Bishoi* (Pisoos),¹⁰ wrongly identi-

9 The true identity of this 'Syrian' is Eusebius of Emesa, as shown by van Rompay 1992.

10 Thus, in the margin of the *Life of Bishoi* in Deir al-Surian Syr. 30, f.150^r, the anonymous 'Syrian' is identified as Ephrem.

fied as Ephrem. This Syriac *Life* comes down to us in three main manuscripts,¹¹ each representing a somewhat different form. The Syriac text has recently been re-edited,¹² though the witness of the Damascus manuscript is only provided in those sections where it is considerably different from the other two main manuscripts; this is unfortunate since it is clear that the Armenian translation, which was commissioned by the Catholicos Grigor II V kayasēr, and made in 1101,¹³ seems to be more closely related to the Damascus manuscript than to either of the other two main witnesses.¹⁴

4.1 *The Main Episodes and Their Parallels in the Life of Ephrem*

In his edition and translation, Mathews has conveniently divided up the text into sections (1–14), and these are subdivided, where appropriate, as 1a, 1b, 1c etc. For each section of the Synaxarion entry an outline of the contents is given, followed by an indication of their source, either in the Armenian translation of the Syriac *Life*, or elsewhere. References to the *Life* employ the section numbers found in both editions, along with Amar's use of subdivisions A, B, C etc.

- 1a: Ephrem originated from Amid. In the *Life* (1A) only his mother is from Amid; his mother, however, does not feature in AS.
- 1b: His father is a pagan priest who offered sacrifices to an idol on behalf of Ephrem; the demon speaks from the idol telling the father to throw Ephrem out of the house. This is based on *Life* 2B.
- 1c: Ephrem goes to Nisibis where he is received by Jacob, the bishop, who baptised him and made him a monk. This corresponds to *Life* 3AB, where, however, it is only stated that Ephrem joined the catechumens.
- 2a: Ephrem is falsely accused of fathering a child, the true father, also called Ephrem, having thus instructed the mother. Based on *Life* 4BC.
- 2b: Summoned before the bishop, Ephrem simply says "I have sinned". Based on *Life* 4D
- 2b: When the child is born the girl's father hands him over to Ephrem to look after. Based on *Life* 4E.
- 3: When the church was crowded, Ephrem takes the infant up on the ambo/bema and asks him "Who is your father?" The infant replies "Ephrem is my father, but not the one holding me, but Ephrem the archdeacon". Based on

11 Vatican Syr. 117 of the 12th century (V), Paris Syr. 235 of the 13th century (P), and Damascus, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate 12/17 of the 12th century (D).

12 Edited by Amar 2011.

13 Ter Petrossian—Outtier 1985.

14 See Brock 2017.

- Life* 4HI, where the Armenian *Life* alone has the expansion “but not the one holding me”.
- 4a: Entry to Edessa, where he resides on the mountain and rids the people of heresies. The arrival in Edessa corresponds to *Life* 10A, his residence (with monks) on the mountain beside the city to *Life* 13. The reference to heresies perhaps looks forward to *Life* 30 (the nine heresies he finds on his return to Edessa from visiting Basil).
- 4b: A hermit has a vision of a vine sprouting from (Ephrem’s) mouth, bearing continual fruit which the birds consume. Adapted from *Life* 15, where it is Ephrem himself who has the vision when he was a small child. The Syriac *Life* here refers to the Testament of Ephrem (also translated into Armenian), where the motif indeed appears. It also features in the alphabetical collection of *Apophthegmata* (Ephrem 1) and in the Syriac translation of Palladius’ *Lausiac History*.
- 5: Ephrem’s writings: Commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, homilies on repentance, on dominical feasts and on martyrs, and hymns. *Life* 16AB only mentions his Commentary on Genesis and Exodus, but other writings are specified in *Life* 35.
- 6a: Ephrem visits Egypt and provides rules for the hermits. The visit to Egypt features in *Life* 21–22, 24, but only his teaching is mentioned (24A), without any reference to rules.
- 6b: On the voyage to Egypt they encounter a ferocious beast who tries to wreck their ship; Ephrem’s prayers, however, slay it and it floats on the water ‘like a hill’. This is based on *Life* 21GH where, however, the Syriac lacks ‘like a hill’, found in the Armenian *Life* (though using another word).
- 7: Ephrem’s visit to Basil in general corresponds to *Life* 20 and 25, with detailed correspondences as follows:
- 7a: His vision of Basil as ‘a fiery column’ is taken from *Life* 20B.
- 7b: Ephrem is shocked by the splendour of Basil’s vestments in the Liturgy: based on *Life* 25CD.
- 7c: Basil sends for Ephrem three times: abbreviated from *Life* 25H–K.
- 7d: Ephrem says he will come after the dismissal: cf. *Life* 25M, where it is only after Basil calls him again by name.
- 7e: Ephrem perceives that the Holy Spirit was speaking through Basil when he taught the people. This is based on *Life* 25F.
- 7f: They greet each other: *Life* 25O.
- 7g: Basil ordains Ephrem as deacon and his interpreter as priest: thus *Life* 25U. AS omits all reference to the miraculous gift of knowledge of Greek.
- 8a: Ephrem returns to Edessa and cleanses the city of heresy: Based on *Life* 30, where various heresies are named.

- 8b: Ephrem asks that he should be buried with the poor of the city. This is deduced from the *Life* 42B, where he is buried thus “as instructed”.
- 9: Ephrem’s death on 28th January. In the *Life* 40 only the Vatican manuscript and the Georgian translation specify a date (June 15th, February 1st, respectively). 28th January is the date of the Constantinopolitan Synaxarion, and is also found in the Maronite Synaxarion.¹⁵ This is where *AS* ends its dependence on the *Life*.
- 10: Ephrem’s homilies on Antichrist, the Second Coming and Judgement. These are not specified in the *Life*, but are perhaps based on an awareness of various eschatological texts attributed to Ephrem.
- 11: When Ephrem wished to see Edessa, he prayed that he would encounter someone who would speak to him and provide him with spiritual benefit. In fact, he encounters a prostitute, and he complains to God. As they stare at each other, Ephrem asks her “Why are you looking at me?” She replies, “I do so quite rightly since I was created from a man, whereas you should be looking at the ground from which you were created”. Ephrem then realised that his prayer had been met. The central features of this episode are also found in the *Life* 11, but there the woman is washing clothes in the river, and Ephrem’s prayer is not mentioned. The theme is a floating one, and is also found in Sozomen (*Ecclesiastical History* III.16) and Theodoret (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.4), as well as in the Syriac *Life of Jacob of Nisibis*. It is unclear what the precise source for *AS* was here.
- 12: On entering Edessa, Ephrem took up lodgings. A prostitute in a neighbouring house asks, through a window, for a blessing, and offering to send over some food. Ephrem replies “Three stones and some mud, to block up your window”. In her response the woman says she was considering lying with him, to which Ephrem says he is willing, provided he can decide where to do this. She agrees but on being told “On the street in the middle of the city”, she is puzzled: “Won’t we feel shame with people looking on?”, to which Ephrem says “If we are ashamed before people, how much more should we be ashamed before God”. At this the woman repents, receives instruction from Ephrem and enters a women’s monastery. This has no parallel in the *Life*, but like the previous section, is a floating theme with a central stable core, but which is otherwise adaptable to different contexts. Closest to *AS* is the third of the *Apophthegmata* concerning Ephrem in the Alphabetical series of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*:¹⁶ when a prostitute was wanting to seduce him, Ephrem tells

15 Amar 1993, 140; in his note 94, Amar lists the various dates given in the Syriac calendars.

16 The section from the *Paterica Armeniaca* is given in Ter Petrossian—Outtier 1985, 121 (text), 77 (tr.).

her “Follow me”. Reaching a crowded place, he suggests this would be a good place; her response and the lesson drawn by Ephrem are quite close to the wording in *AS*, the outcome is different: the prostitute simply goes off *apraktos*, without having achieved what she desired. Associated again with Ephrem, but given a completely different context, the basic account turns up in the section on Ephrem (54) in the Arabic *Chronicle of Seert*,¹⁷ the woman is the sister of Bardaisan (who died in 222!); knowing that Ephrem wanted to get hold of a heretical Gospel by Bardaisan, she offers to lend it to him if he agrees to lie with her, and to return it once he had read it. Ephrem agrees, and on receiving the book he glued all the pages together; and then sets off with the woman, and suggests a public location. At this point it is the woman who is allocated the *a fortiori* response: “Would anyone in the world have sex with his own wife in a public place? How much even less if it is a strange woman!”. Ephrem points out that he has kept his part of the bargain.

- 13: The penultimate section recounts Ephrem’s virtues and ascetic life, and states that he established regulations for monastic communities; this last detail reflects 6a, above: in both cases there is no clear source for such a piece of information.
- 14: Ephrem is said to have known beforehand when he would die, and so was able to bid them all farewell before departing this life.

4.2 *Ephrem in the Entry on Basil on January 1st*

Ephrem also features in sections 20, 21, 25 and 26 of the Commemoration of St Basil on 1st January in *ASK*. Sections 20 and 21 draw on much the same material that was used in the Commemoration of Ephrem, as can be seen from Table 17.2 below; the wording and details, however, are often considerably different.

TABLE 17.2 Parallels from the *Life of Ephrem* in the *ASK* Basil and *ASK* Ephrem

	<i>ASK</i> Basil	<i>ASK</i> Ephrem	<i>Life</i>
Ephrem sees pillar of light ¹⁸ and is told “This is Basil”	20	7a	20B
He is shocked by Basil’s splendid vestments	20	7b	25CD

¹⁷ Ed. Scher 1910, 298–299.

¹⁸ *AS* Ephrem and the *Life* have ‘fire’; ‘light’, however, features in the versions of the Armenian Synaxarion of Ter Israel and Grigor Xlat’ec’i. This will go back to a misreading of Syriac *nura* ‘fire’ as *nuhra* ‘light’, no doubt helped by an awareness of Arabic *nur* ‘light’.

TABLE 17.2 Parallels from the *Life of Ephrem* in the *ASK* Basil and *ASK* Ephrem (*cont.*)

	<i>ASK</i> Basil	<i>ASK</i> Ephrem	<i>Life</i>
When Ephrem sees fire flash from Basil as he prays, he recognizes him as the pillar of fire	20	cf. 7e	cf. 25F
Basil sends for Ephrem	21	7c	25HJ
Ephrem summoned by name	21	7d	25KL
They greet each other	21	7f	25N
Basil prays and Ephrem speaks in Greek	21	–	25U
Basil ordains Ephrem as priest	21	7g (deacon)	25U (deacon)
Ephrem returns to the wilderness	21	–	–

Sections 25 and 26, which have no parallel in the Commemoration of Ephrem, concern the woman who wrote her sins down on parchment (*Life* 39):

25: All but one of her sins are erased by Basil's prayer: *Life* 39B.

26a: Basil sends her to Ephrem to erase the last sin: *Life* 39C.

26b: Ephrem tells her to return in haste to Basil who will do this: *Life* 39F.

26c: She arrives to find Basil had died: *Life* 39G

26d: The woman complains and throws the parchment onto Basil's body: *Life* 39H.

26e: A deacon seizes it and opens it to find everything had been erased: *Life* 39H.

4.3 *The Other Versions of the Armenian Synaxarion*

The entry on Ephrem in the Ter Israel version (*AST*) is quite a lot shorter, though it includes one episode in the *Life* (14, a monk's vision of an angel with a book of which only Ephrem is worthy), which also features in Grigor, but is absent from Kirakos. Ter Israel (again with Grigor) attributes the vision of the vine to Ephrem's parents, rather than to Ephrem himself as a child (*AS* 4b = *Life* 15).

Grigor's version (*ASG*) is considerably longer. As just noted, it has the vision of the angel with the book, based on *Life* 14. Two further elements derived from the *Life* are to be found: Ephrem accompanies Jacob bishop of Nisibis to the Council of Nicaea (*Life* 5), Basil's consulting Ephrem on the wording of the doxology and on Genesis 1:2 (*Life* 26, 27). The two floating episodes concerning prostitutes, whose position indicates that they are clearly later additions in Kirakos (*ASK* 11–12; similarly *AST*), have been integrated into the main narrative, placed between the false accusation (*ASK* 2–3) and Ephrem's vision of

Basil as a column of light (*ASK* 7a [fire]). Both *AST* and *ASG* refer to Ephrem's miraculous gift of speaking Greek during his visit to Basil (*Life* 25U), an episode about which *ASK* is silent. *ASG* alone has Basil go on to ordain Ephrem a priest, though this will be taken from the passage on Ephrem in the entry on Basil for January 1st.

Neither Ter Israel nor Grigor have anything about Ephrem's father expelling him from the house on the instructions of the demon; likewise, the voyage and visit to Egypt is absent from them both.

4.4 *What the Armenian Synaxarion Has Left Out from the Life*

Finally, it is worth considering briefly what elements in the *Life* have been passed over in silence in the Armenian Synaxarion. This applies to the following episodes, from which it can be readily seen that none would be of much interest to an Armenian congregation, apart perhaps from *Life* 33 which, however, is very brief and clearly modelled on Acts 3:1–10:

- Life* 18–19 how Ephrem was stoned by the pagans in Edessa, and then goes on to list his disciples.
- Life* 24 concerning his eight years spent in Egypt.
- Life* 29 concerning an episode in Samosata on his return from visiting Basil.
- Life* 31–32 his writings against Bardaisan.
- Life* 33 he heals a paralytic.
- Life* 34 Basil wants to make him a bishop, but Ephrem feigns madness.
- Life* 36, 37 an invasion of Huns, and persecution from Valens.
- Life* 38 his poem on the faith of the people of Edessa.
- Life* 41 Ephrem's assistance during famine in Edessa shortly before his death.

5 Persian Martyrs

The following summary entries, arranged in alphabetic, rather than calendrical order, aim to provide a preliminary indication of the likely sources for the Persian martyrs who feature in the Armenian Synaxarion. A considerably more detailed comparison with the relevant texts is quite likely to be worthwhile, but this would be out of place here.

Abda (bishop) and companions, 24 March. The account in *AS* is considerably longer than that in *SC*, and introduces two persons, Hormizd and Sayeni, who are totally absent from *SC*, and do not feature in what survives of the

Syriac Acta. *AS* is thus very probably based directly on *BHO* 7 (whose Syriac counterpart is not preserved in full).

‘Abdelmasih, 14 July. Since this martyr convert from Judaism is unknown in Greek, *AS* will presumably derive from the Armenian Acta (*BHO* 4), rather than from the Syriac version (recently re-edited by Butts and Gross 2016).

Abdios, 6 September and 20 February. Bishop of Nergul in the time of Yazdgard [II] and Theodosius II. Ordered by a Zoroastrian priest to worship the sun and fire, he refuses and is tortured; he died in prison. He is unknown to *SC* and to Syriac sources, but Nergul can be identified as Nahrgur/Nahrgul, one of whose bishops in the early 5th century was ‘Abdisho’, of which Abdios might perhaps be a deformation.¹⁹

‘Abdisho’ (1), 8 April. The reference to Shapur’s 53rd year at the beginning of the entry in *AS* indicates that this ‘Abdisho’ belongs to ‘the Captivity’ (see also under Heliodorus), but although his name features in *SC* 594, the rest of the narrative in *AS* is absent in *SC*, but is ultimately based on the Syriac account in *AMS* II, 322–324.

‘Abdisho’ (2), 16 May. This ‘Abdisho’ is bishop of Kashkar, and the account in *AS* is based on *SC* 687–688.

‘Abdisho’ (3), 17 May. The names of his companions, Isaac and Simeon, indicate that the ‘Abdisho’ here is a corruption of Bakhtisho’, and that the entry in *AS* is based on *SC* for 15 May.

Aitalaha (1), 1 September. He is said to have been martyred after lengthy tortures. His identity is unclear, and the spelling of his name *Ayiat’alas* unusual. Could this conceivably be a re-identification of the mysterious Ia, known only in Greek (*SC* 35–36), and the Greek translation of her *Life*?

Aitalaha (2), 3 November. This Aitalaha (a deacon) features in the entry in *AS* on Akepsimas.

Aitalaha (3), 11 December. The name of his companion, Apsei, immediately indicates that *AS* derives from a Greek source (no doubt *SC* 300–301), the Syriac name being Ḥophsi.

Akepsimas, 3 November. Evidently based on *SC* 189–191, though *AS* also introduces a woman, Hezanduxt, who features in the Greek Lives (Delehay’s x–xii.39). Though *AS* might have introduced her directly from one of the long Greek accounts, it seems more likely that *AS* was based on a Greek synaxarion which also contained reference to her.

Anania, 1 December. Based on *SC* 269.

Anastasius the Persian, 22 January. Although the beginning of the account in *AS* is close to that in *SC* 413–414, the later part is different, and probably is

¹⁹ Fiey 1968, 255.

ultimately derived from the Greek *Acta*. Anastasius is not known from Syriac sources.

Apsai (Hophsai). *See* Akepsimas.

Aza (deacon). *See* Hakob.

Barachisias. *See* Jonas.

Barba'shmin, 10 June. The quite detailed entry corresponds closely to the Syriac *Acta* (*AMS* II, 296–303). Since Barba'shmin is unknown to *SC*, *AS* must either be based directly on the Syriac *Acta*, or derive from a lost Greek translation.

Barsimios, 7 April. Described as a monk and abbot in Beth Lapat, he was denounced to Shapur, and was eventually beheaded by Nerses, a renegade Christian. These details indicate that Barsimios is a corruption of Badimas, for whom the entry in *SC* 593 on 9 Apr. is evidently the source for *AS* here.

Bata, 29 April. The entry will be based on *SC* 645–648, since Bata is unknown in Syriac sources.

Behnam and **Sara**, 10 January. The brief entry mentioning that they were killed by their father Sennacherib, must go back ultimately to knowledge of the Syriac *Acta* which have recently been re-edited by Mellon Saint-Laurent and Smith 2018, according to whom the Syriac *Acta* only date from the 12th century.

Benjamin. *See* 'Abda (2).

Dadas, 29 September. Based on *SC* 89–90.

Dosas. *See* Heliodorus.

Gerandukht, 22 July. The account in *AS*, which corresponds to *SC* closely, indicates that the name is a corruption of Golinduxt, a convert from Zoroastrianism who was a virtual martyr in the time of Khosroes. She is otherwise only known from Chalcedonian sources (including a lost *Life* in Syriac).²⁰

Gushtazat, 30 March. Based on *SC* 607.

Hakob (Jacob), 31 March. The entry in *AS* has more details than *SC*, and so must derive from a lost longer Greek account.

Heliodorus, 25 September. The entry in *AS* is probably based on *SC* 594 (9 April!; similarly Delehay's *Mv* on 20 Aug), which must go back to a lost Greek translation of the Martyrs 'of the Captivity' in *AMS* II, 316–324.²¹

Hormizd. *See* 'Abda (2).

Isaac. *See* 'Abdisho' (3).

Ismael. *See* Manuel.

Jacob *intercisus*, 24, 27 November. Probably based on *SC* 259–260.

²⁰ See Brock 2021, 273.

²¹ Cf. also Brock 2021, 269–270.

Jacob (priest). *See* John.

John (bishop), 27 February. The entry is evidently based on *sc* 186–187 (1 November!).

Jonas and companions, 20 March. The account evidently derives from *sc* 567–570, which is itself based on the longer of two Greek texts (Delehayé 1905, no. 1) devoted to them. The Syriac counterpart is *AMS* II, 39–51.

Kasdoa. *See* Dadas.

Mamelchtha. 5 October. Based on Delehayé's Cb, which goes back to the Greek *martyrion*, edited by Lequeux 2013. She is not known from any Syriac sources.

Manuel and companions, 20 June. The entry will be based on *sc*, since these three martyrs are unknown in Syriac sources.

120 Martyrs, 6 April. Cf. *sc* 587.

1000 Martyrs, 14 April. Cf. *sc* 607

Miles, 12 November. The account in *AS* is probably based on that in Delehayé's Cd, which itself must be based on a lost Greek translation of the Syriac *Acta*. The source of *BHO* 773, Greek or Syriac, remains to be investigated.

Nerses (bishop) and companions, 22 November. The account of these martyrs from Beth Slokh is probably based on *sc* 241–243, which in turn probably goes back to a lost Greek translation of the Syriac *Acta*.

Pherbouthe, 28 March. The Greek form of her name (Tarbo in Syriac) indicates that the entry derives from a Greek source; since *AS* includes a reference to her beauty and the lust of the Magian official, absent from *sc* (4 April), but present in the Greek *Life*, it will have been based on a lost fuller summary than that in *sc*.

Pusik, 13 April. Based on *sc* 607.

Sabel. *See* Manuel.

Sadoth, 14 October and 18 February. The two accounts, of which that for February is the fuller, are almost identical. *AS* (February) is longer than *sc*, and so must go back to a lost longer Greek account that included his beheading in Beth Lapat.

Sayeni. *See* 'Abda (2).

Simeon bar Sabba'e, 13 April. Based on *sc* 607 (cf. Delehayé's D, 601–602).²²

Simeon. *See* 'Abdisho' (3).

Thesbia, 30 April. She is said to have been tortured and martyred in Persia with her sister and servants. She is unknown to Syriac sources.

²² The Syriac Martyrdom and History were edited by M. Kmosko (1907).

6 Main Findings

This rapid examination of the parallels and probable sources for the entries on the Persian martyrs in the Armenian Synaxarion suggests that the following four main categories should be considered:

1. Based very closely on *sc*. This probably applies to the majority of entries, but this requires confirmation from a more detailed examination than has been possible here.
2. Based on a Greek synaxarion with slightly fuller texts than those in *sc*. This applies in particular to Akepsimas, Hakob, Pherbouthé and Sadoth.
3. Based on the Armenian Acta: thus probably 'Abda and 'Abdelmasih (similarly Ephrem, above, based on the Armenian *Life*).
4. Based directly on Syriac: thus Behnam and Sara, and probably Barba'shmin. This will also apply to the monk Barsauma, after whom the famous Syrian Orthodox monastery near Melitene was named.

In several cases it seems likely that *sc* (followed by *AS*) imply the existence of a lost Greek translation of the Syriac Acta: thus Heliodorus, Miles, Nerses (and possibly Barba'shmin). Two entries, Abdios and Thesbia, are of otherwise unknown martyrs. Finally, it is interesting to note that *AS* has taken over from *sc* two martyrs of the late Sasanian Empire who otherwise are only attested in Chalcedonian sources: Anastasius the Persian and Golindux (Gerandux).

7 Conclusion

The Armenian Synaxarion is remarkable for its inclusive nature. Thanks to contacts with the Latin West at the time of the Cilician Kingdom, quite a number of Western saints are included, among whom one might note especially St Benedict and St Thomas of Canterbury. In this way the Armenian Synaxarion can be seen as embracing both Eastern and Western Christianity, and indeed within the former, including representatives of the Church of the East and of the Chalcedonian Orthodox tradition, as well as its own Oriental Orthodox.

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“Descent of the Only-Begotten Son”

Contextualising the Vision of Saint Gregory

Nazenie Garibian

1 Introduction

The *Vision of Saint Gregory the Illuminator* is considered to be the oldest witness of this genre in Armenian literature. It constitutes one of the key components of the historiographical account composed in the 5th century, which relates the circumstances of the official conversion of Armenia to Christianity at the beginning of the 4th century.¹ In the story, the *Vision* appears in relation to the building of the Mother-Church Kat'olikē and the martyria of Hrip'simian virgins in Vaḥaršapat. In the medieval tradition, the *Vision* had several interpretations and served as justification for different purposes, some of which are highlighted in modern Armenian studies. Thus, the *Vision* was first analysed as the symbolic model for the architectural typology of the Mother-Church Kat'olikē.² Another research has revealed its importance in the defence of Armenian orthodoxy.³ More recently, scholars have gone further into the apocalyptic and prophetic aspects of the *Vision*, showing its direct association with the Armenian revolt against the Sassanian Empire in 450–451.⁴ I presented elsewhere in a detailed study a theological interpretation of the *Vision* related to the layout of the four sanctuaries of Vaḥaršapat,⁵ as well as a comparative analysis of its literary content, its terminological formulas, and iconographic constructions in order to detect its sources of inspiration.⁶ The latter appears to reflect the historical figures and realities of 4th-century Jerusalem.

In this paper contributing to the honours offered to our colleague and dear friend Theo van Lint, I will focus my attention on the eschatological dimension

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- 1 The references to the several versions and ancient translations of this source will be presented successively. For the combined English translation of the principal known redactions, see Thomson 2010. Cf. also Thomson 1976.
 - 2 Sahinyan 1956a–b, 1961 and 1966, taken up by the majority of later studies.
 - 3 See Thomson 1998; Id. 1999, 123 and 760. See also van Esbroeck 1995.
 - 4 Thomson 2014; La Porta 2014.
 - 5 Garibian de Vartavan 2003–2004; Id. 2009, 232–255.
 - 6 Garibian 2014.

of the *Vision of Saint Gregory* and the implications it had in the political and religious state of Armenia in the 5th century.

2 The Texts of the *Vision*

The *History of the Conversion of Armenia* (hereafter *HC*) has come down to us in several versions, recensions, and rewritings, translated into various languages. All these documents are divided into two groups which are marked with the general sigla *A* (*Agat'angelos*) and *V* (*Vita*). The texts of the first group derive from the so-called “national” recension, the author of which calls himself *Agat'angelos* (*Aa*);⁷ those of the second group conform to the oldest Greek translation (*Vg*) made from a supposed Armenian version of a *Life of Saint Gregory*.⁸ The original common source of all these texts, most probably composed between 410 and 428 under the supervision of the Catholicos Sahak the Great (387–428/438),⁹ has not been preserved. It is quite possible that it was deliberately abandoned to make way for the new version (*Aa*) amplified and reframed after the Armenian revolt of 450–451.¹⁰ However, this source would have been the first written work of Armenian historiography.¹¹

The *Vision of Saint Gregory* is also known in several versions in different translations. It appears in much shorter form in the versions *Vg* (*Life* in Greek translation) and *Va/Var* (*Life* in Arabic translation from the Greek),¹² while missing from the recensions *Vo* (*Life* in Greek from an Ochrid manuscript, containing parts from the *Agat'angelos'* text)¹³ and *Vs* (Syriac translation of *Agat'angelos* which drew upon both traditions).¹⁴ The existence of the *Vision* in the two main versions of the *HC*, as well as the direct relevance of its content to the circumstances of the conversion of which it constitutes the theological crux, supports the proposition that this composition featured in the narrative

7 For the recent critical text, see *Agat'angelosi Patmut'wn Hayoc'* [The History of Armenia by *Agat'angelos*], in the *Matenagirk' Hayoc'* series, listed as *APH* in the bibliography here. In this paper, we use the commonly admitted paragraph numbering.

8 Garitte 1946, 18–19; Thomson 2010, 11.

9 Garibian de Vartavan 2009, 218–219; Garibian 2014; Ter-Lewondyan 1973; Mahé—Mahé 2012, 93.

10 Thomson 2010, 11, n. 15 and 80; idem 2014.

11 See Garibian 2014 for the reasons and circumstances. Lāzar P'arpec'i (Introduct., 1) also mentions that the book of *Agat'angelos* is the first written history of Armenia.

12 For the texts, see Garitte 1946 and Ter-Lewondyan 1973.

13 Garitte 1965.

14 Van Esbroeck 1971. For further information and references see Thomson 2010, 8–12.

from the beginning¹⁵ or, at least, in a revised version very close to the date of the original archetype, probably composed in 431–432.¹⁶ Yet, the *Vg-Va* version of the *Vision*, which deviates by several details from the “national” redaction of Agat’angelos, belongs to the passages considered among the oldest ones, most probably going back to the lost original Armenian text of the *HC*.¹⁷ On the other hand, the Arabic translation of *Va/Var* also presents certain differences compared to its Greek model.¹⁸ They are therefore taken into account in the following general description of the content of the *Vision*.

3 The Content of the *Vision*

The *Vision*¹⁹ appeared to Saint Gregory during night-time when he was praying in the dwelling-place of the martyred virgins (i.e. the winepress), where he, too, had found an abode. The Holy man hears a great sound of thunder and a noise like the tumult of sea waves. Then he sees the vaulted structure (*xoranašēn yarkn*²⁰) of the firmament of heaven open and the heavenly waters rain down on the earth. A Messenger of God in luminous appearance and with fire-wings goes down; he asks Gregory to look up to see the wonders that he will show him.²¹ At the end of the vision, the Messenger reveals to him the symbolic meaning hidden in every detail of the revelation.

Gregory then sees through the tear in the sky the upper waters divide into two parts and pile up like valleys and mountain peaks. With the unreal light that fills the earth from above, the innumerable troops of the inhabitants of the intelligible world—the anthropomorphic fire-winged creatures that fill the entire space—descend like particles of dust shining in the rays of the Sun. They

15 See more in Garibian 2014.

16 See the discussion in Garibian de Vartavan 2009, 219–222. It is also possible that this text was initially composed as a separate work and then has been included in the *HC*. However, unlike S. La Porta (2014), we suggest the years 410–428 as its *terminus ante quem* for the reasons that will be presented below.

17 For the most ancient passages, see Garitte 1946, 292–293, 299–300, 308–310, 334. See also Garibian de Vartavan 2003–2004 and 2009, 235.

18 On the comparative analysis of some of these divergent details see Garibian de Vartavan 2003–2004.

19 *Aa* § 731–755, *Vg*, 77–82, *Va*, 54–62.

20 The word *xoranašēn* means “in the shape of a tent”, the *yarkn* can signify a construction, a house or a floor and a roof.

21 The descent of this messenger is not indicated in *Vg* and *Vo*, but his presence is understood from the rest of the story. It is this same person who explains the symbolism of the *Vision*; he thus cannot be identified with “Providence” as suggested by Thomson (2010, 338).

are led by a splendid and fearful appearance of man, the “Providence in person” (the “Power of the *Pantocrator*” according to *Va*) flying like a fleet-winged eagle. Coming down in the middle of the city, he begins to strike the ground with the golden hammer, breaking mountains, hills, and rocks and transforming them into a plain land.

Then, in the centre of the city, near the royal palace, Gregory sees (in the *Vg-Va* versions this scene precedes the descent of the “Providence”) a golden base surmounted by a pillar of fire bearing a luminous cross. Three other pillar-crosses of lesser height stand on red bases; they are arranged according to the cardinal points. In the *Aa*, the four crosses are united by admirable arches, on which a divine construction in cloud in the form of a vaulted ciborium (canopy) rises. The vaults of the latter shelter the images of 37 virgin martyrs. The whole vision crowns a divinely formidable throne of fire bearing the Sign of the cross. In the Greek and Arabic versions, the ciborium and the throne are absent, and the three pillars are grouped apart from the first one and are linked together by three chains. An abundant spring gushes out creating a vast sea, which immediately covers the entire plain up to the horizon. The earth thus takes on the colour of the sky. Innumerable multitudes of fiery altars surmounted by luminous crosses stand on the plain, twinkling like stars.

In the end there appears a numberless flock of black sheep (goats in *Aa*), which pass with their lambs through the rain and immediately become bright and sparkling. But some sheep (a group of them according to *Va*) turn back and transform into wolves, which devour the flock.

According to the explanations of the winged Messenger, the sound of thunder and the rain bear God’s mercy and compassion towards his creatures and also symbolise the baptism of all men. The unreal light depicts the preaching of the Gospel, which fills the regions of the North. In this manner, the opening of the gates of heavens and the waters behind them announce Christ’s philanthropy, which will allow the inhabitants of these Northern regions to ascend to heaven. The army of the celestial troops descended because of the delicious perfume of pink flowers, which rose up from the blood of the martyred virgins. From now on, the angels will live among men.

The pillar of fire symbolises the universal Church; its luminous cross is the great priesthood among peoples in the image of Christ: it foreshadows the High-priest who will teach the faith in the Trinity to the people. In this place a temple of God, a house of prayer—the *Ecclesia Mater*—which will host the pontifical see, will be built. The ciborium rising above the arches symbolises the celestial City, the heavenly Jerusalem, the gathering place (*žotovaran* translating the Greek term *ekklesiasterion*) of the congregation of the Kingdom of Heaven. Above this universal and eternal Church stands the throne of God as

a sign of his essential height and of his presidency over the whole universe. On the spots of the other three pillars three martyria will be built for the rest of the virgins' bodies. The red bases represent their sufferings and their shed blood while the crosses symbolise their passion, which is worthy of the Passion of Christ. The three pillars carrying crosses imitate the Crucifixion scene (*Va*) and the three chains, which connect the pillars, signify the faith in the Trinity (*Vg*). The Trinity makes its appearance through the luminous nimbus of the cross who is the Holy Spirit glorifying the Son. As for the multiple altars adorned with crosses, they bring the general atonement for all and announce the glorification of the name of Christ in all places on Earth. However, not everybody will be saved: certain groups symbolised by the sheep transformed into wolves will deny the received baptism and the pact of union with the Church. But those who will resist the temptation to go astray by following them can receive wings and ascend to the kingdom of Christ.

According to the Messenger, all this means that divine grace is granted to this country because the holy virgin martyrs opened the way with their passion. Their images under the vaults represent the form of the cross of Christ with which they entered glorious eternity. They went up to heaven and thus set up a path for the inhabitants of this country. On the other hand, the colour of the sky, which seized the plain of the Northern regions, is the sign of the union of heaven and earth and the descent of the Kingdom from above.

4 A Theological Interpretation of the *Vision*

The symbolism of the *Vision* stands on two theologically important events: the martyrdom of the Hrip'simian virgins and the descent of the celestial beings on earth, led by the Providence. Both are theophanies, that is manifestations or interventions of the divine nature in the sense-perceptible world. According to the martyrial theology, Saints executed for the faith are immediate witnesses to the divinity of Christ.²² During their life and especially at the time of their violent death, they are rewarded with a direct contact with the divine world: either they see Christ or hear the voice of God, or they are filled with the Holy Spirit.²³ The texts of the *HC* report such manifestations that accompany the capture, the torture, and the killing of the Hrip'simian virgins. While an escort arrived at the virgin's dwelling-place to lead Hrip'simē to the king's palace:

²² Delehaye 1933, 9–10; Grabar 1946, I, 28–30.

²³ Ibid. See also Delehaye 1921, 287 ff.

... there occurred a fearfully loud thundering from heaven which terrified the whole throng, and a voice which said to them: Be strong, stand firm, be of good cheer, because I am with you.²⁴ (*Aa* §175 compare with *Va*, 24)

... there was a thunder, with the result that many royal [servants] died. And a voice spoke from the thunder: “Be strong, I am with you”. (*Vg*, 44)

... Immediately a light came upon them, and a voice came to them saying: “I have heard your prayer. And just as I saved you from Diocletian, so also I shall save you from this one”. (*Vs*, 96)

With the power of the Holy Spirit Hrip'simē succeeds in repelling the advances of king Trdat who wants to dominate her by force:

But she, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, struggled like a beast (...) and she vanquished the king, which would hardly have been possible by [natural] force. (*Aa* §181 compare with *Vg*, 45, *Vo*, 77; *Va*, 26)

Or, encouraging her protégé not to renounce her vow of chastity, Gaianē comforts her with the prospect of martyrdom, which will allow her to see Christ:

Be of good cheer, stand firm, and you now will see Christ for whom you long. (*Aa* §185; *Va* has “whom you loved”)

Fight bravely and hold out, my child, for soon you will see Christ whom you desired. (*Vo*, 78)

Further in the Armenian text, the other virgins give up their souls after having addressed Christ in prayer that suggests a theophany.²⁵

The second theophany comes through the opening of the visible sky, which allows Saint Gregory to see not only the image of the intelligible realities hidden behind the waters, but also the inhabitants of the Kingdom of God that descend from it.

The two theophanies are necessarily interconnected: Saint Gregory could not have come out of the Deep Dungeon and evangelised the Armenians if the virgins had not been martyred. According to the ideology developed in the

24 All the English quotations follow (with some readjusting) the translation of Thomson (2010).

25 *Aa* §§193–197, 200–201, 207; *Vo*, 83–84; *Va*, 32–33.

4th century, the testimony of blood was considered as a decisive element for the victory of the Church.²⁶ As such, the voice of God had announced to the Hrip'simian virgins that they were chosen for this mission in Armenia:

I have brought you to this place, so that here my name might be glorified before the heathens of the Northern regions. (*Aa* §175)

But on the other hand, it is Saint Gregory who reveals to the Armenians the providential reason and the theological importance of this martyrdom, which are confirmed by his theophanic vision:

So come, we shall tell you, brethren, of the Creator's love for creation shown to you, which was revealed to me as an awesome vision. The Godhead condescended to his holy martyrs and raised them up to the incomparable, indescribable and unequalled height of the kingdom of heaven. He revealed to me the vivifying gift that he intends to bestow on you. (*Aa* §731)

As the Messenger of the *Vision* also explains, it is the martyrdom of the virgins, that caused the opening of heaven from where the mercy of God is spread on the inhabitants of the earth. This mercy, this "vivifying gift", which will allow people to access the Kingdom of Heaven, is granted to them only through the testimony of the martyred virgins:

Behold, the gates of heaven have been opened and the waters above have been opened, so that there be no impediment for men of this world to rise up. For the holy martyrs who were martyred here have made a road for these Northern regions, since they have gone up and arranged paths for others. (*Aa* §741)

However, the blood shed by the first Armenian martyrs is interpreted as having entailed far deeper and more important implications than it had in the conversion of the country and the victory of the Church; this act becomes a providential agent for the salvation of people and their access to the Kingdom of God:

They were valiant in the shedding of blood, so that by their martyrdom they might bring you to God. (*Aa* §720)

26 See Bardy 1960, 98.

In this way, the theological problem of the martyrdom of the virgins becomes comparable to that of the Incarnation of the Logos, as developed in the 4th century.²⁷ Just as God sent among men His only Son, who agreed to die on the cross and then to be resurrected, thereby affirming Redemption and eternal life, likewise God sent the virgins to “these Northern regions” to witness, through their passion, to the divinity of Christ and to the immortality so that the inhabitants of this country could receive the grace of being saved and become citizens in the Kingdom of God.

This seems all the more true, since the symbolic parallelism as well as the iconographic *mimesis* between the Passion of Christ and the passion of the virgins are developed in an evident way in the texts of the *Vision* according to the two main recensions:

The crosses represent the Passion of the Martyrs, who imitated the Passion of the Lord and died for him. They lived in God and were crucified with Christ [...] For they killed their earthly bodies and hung [them] from the Lord’s cross; they became fellow-sufferers with their Lord, and likewise will share in his glory and power. (*Aa* § 747)²⁸

The three chains which linked the columns [are] their faith, which through the consubstantial Trinity made them worthy to share in the Passion of the Saviour and our God. Hence the three crosses indicate the Cross, which carried [Christ] on behalf of the human race ... (*Vg*, 82)

The schema with which you saw the columns linked, this is their faith in the sole Trinity, which made them worthy to share with Christ God in his Passion. Now the three fixed crosses are the image of the cross on which Christ was raised for the salvation of the human race between the two thieves ... (*Va*, 59)

This comparison opens the way to interpret the *Vision* in terms of its eschatological significance, because Redemption is only possible after the end of time and the Second Coming of Christ. The detailed analysis of the texts of the *Vision* indeed shows such a tendency from several terminological and iconographic elements, the most essential of which we will present here.

27 Garibian de Vartavan 2009, 244 ff.

28 Ibid., 242–255; Garibian 2014. On the pattern of the Passion of Christ imitated by the martyrs see Delehaye 1921, 19.

First, it is the opening of the sky that allows the visible world to unite with the intelligible one: the colour of the plain changing to blue-sky signifies this union. The personified Providence striking the earth announces the end of time and of the kingdom of darkness, as well as the resurrection of the dead:

He stuck the wide expanse of the solid ground, and great and immeasurable rumblings sounded in the underground depths. (*Aa* § 735)

The description of the celestial beings coming down in appearance of a luminous army is one of the commonplaces of apocalyptic imagery. Attracted by the sweet scent of the martyrs' blood, these beings foreshadow the angels who will dwell among men, as announced by the Messenger of the *Vision*. However, to obtain eternal life, humankind needs an intercession with Christ the Judge: yet another indissoluble act of the spectacle of the Second Coming, that by their martyrial death the virgins gained the privilege to accomplish:

They are alive with God and intercede for those who commemorate them, and we pray to have their intercession with God. Because they died for God, they can turn the death of many into life. (*Aa* § 718)

... so that they through their intercession may relieve you from the afflictions and scourge that befell you. (*V0*, 106)

Moreover, to repent for the guilt of murdering the virgins and to be purified in order to deserve their intercession, Saint Gregory exhorts people to build burial places for their remains, as recommended and shown in the *Vision*:

... hasten and build martyria in order to give repose to the martyrs of God, so that they may give you respite from the torments of your punishments, and that you may be saved from the terrible and cruel judgments that have been prepared and promised for the future, and that you may become worthy of the kingdom of Christ. (*Aa* § 730)

... let us bring together the bodies of the holy women, so that salvation may be granted to you through them, and let us build churches over them, so that you may be worthy to become offspring of his divinity, and your sins may be erased and your evil deeds obliterated. May he make you worthy to be crowned with his saints ... (*Va*, 72)

The status of intercessor is confirmed in the *Vision* by the place that the thirty-seven virgins occupy between the vaults of the ciborium and the "divine

throne” which personifies the Trinity. The description of this throne reproduces the well-known iconography of the Second Coming in Early Christian art.²⁹

Similarly, the scene where the sheep transform into luminous lambs represents the just chosen to join the Kingdom of heaven. They receive wings and mingle with the luminous army of angels as they ascend while the sheep changed into wolves are carried away by a torrent of fire, as will happen to the sinners and unholy men. To greet the coming down of Christ, the luminous sheep fly up to the capital in cloud of the first pillar, as the Messenger explains:

the capital of cloud is to receive the just when they will fly up to meet the Lord at his coming. (*Aa* § 744)

According to him, the “Divine Providence” shaking the earth cleanses it of all errors precipitating the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem. The latter is represented in the appearance of the ciborium: “The canopy above represents the type of the celestial city, the gathering-place (*žotovaran*) of the unity of the kingdom of heaven” (*Aa* § 748).

The eschatological character of the *Vision* is also manifested by the image of the pillars of fire and of cloud, which is inspired by the Apocalypse of John: “Then I saw another mighty angel coming down out of heaven. [...] His face was like the Sun and his legs were like pillars of fire” (Rev 10:1).

According to the biblical interpretation, this kind of pillar symbolises the divine word which guides mankind as God guided the people of Israel through the desert: “During the day, Yehovah went in front of them in a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and during the night he went in front of them in a pillar of fire to give them light ...” (Exod 13:21).

Finally, the luminous appearance of the cross is abundantly present in the *Vision*. Its image is inspired by the Vision of the cross that occurred in Jerusalem in 351, which was interpreted by the bishop of the city Cyril as the authentic sign of the Parousia, the announcement of the imminent Coming of Christ.³⁰ Therefore, the descent of the celestial army guided by the man personifying the Providence (or the divine Power) that Saint Gregory saw, foreshadows the descent of Christ on the Last day. This is why later, in the Middle Age, this figure is identified with Christ, consequently changing the name *Kat'olikē* of the Mother-Church to *Ej-Miacinn*—“The Only-Begotten descended” (or “Descent of the Only-Begotten”).³¹

29 See for example the well-known 5th century mosaic from Arian Baptistery in Ravenna.

30 Drijvers 1992, 134–138; 1999 and 2004, 159–162; Wilkinson 2003.

31 Garibian de Vartavan 2003–2004.

Yet, according to the Christian conception of the end of time, this capital event cannot commence until the preaching of the Gospels has reached every corner of the Earth.³² This idea is represented in the *Vision* by the image of the light, which as a source springs in the middle of the plain and fills all the space symbolising the preaching of the Gospels and the Redemption of the peoples through baptism (*Aa* § 751).

Thus, the two theophanies—the martyrdom of the virgins and the descent of the celestial beings—combine, through the eschatological *Vision* of Saint Gregory, to announce the Second Coming of Christ and the salvation of all mankind. These mysteries will be fulfilled through the baptism of the Armenians and of the inhabitants of the Northern regions.

5 The Founding of a New Jerusalem in Vałaršapat in the 5th Century and Its Theological Justification

Set in the historical context of the first quarter of the 5th century (the date on which the *Vision* would have been written down), the theological analysis of the two theophanies connected in the *Vision* clearly reveals two tendencies, which are linked to the conception of the Armenians of this period of the role and importance of their conversion.

The first is to mark the sacred nature of the sites where these theophanies are manifested. The first pillar of the *Vision* stands on the exact spot where the “Providence” has landed and struck the earth with the hammer, while the other three pillars appeared precisely in the places where the virgins had been martyred. The theophanies thus transform these sites into holy places. However, the blood of the virgins shed in imitation of Christ’s Passion purified not only each place of their martyrdom but also all the space extended between the four pillars since in the *Vision*, the heaven opened above the whole city, the divine light was diffused on the entire land and the blow of the hammer flattened the whole surface on which the pillars of fire appeared. Besides, according to the “national” version of the *HC* (i.e. *Aa*) the ciborium symbolising the heavenly Jerusalem covers the space between the pillars since it rises on the arches, which connect them.

This space, doubly sacred through the blood of the martyrs and through the vision of Saint Gregory, defines the new Christian Vałaršapat, the perimeter of which matches with that of the Upper city. To consecrate this new city, four

³² Matt 24:14. See Garibian 2014.

shrines—a Mother-Church (house of God) and three martyria—must be built on the spots of the pillars, according to the instructions of the Messenger of the *Vision*. It is currently established that the layout of the martyria around the Mother-Church Kat’ohikē dates back to the years 406–417 when the Catholicos Sahak the Great undertook their construction following the invention of the relics of the Hrip’simian virgins.³³ This layout reproduces the sacred topography of Christian Jerusalem, as formed during the 4th century by the perimeter of its first four major churches: the architectural complex of Resurrection (including the Anastasis, the Cross, and the Martyrium or the Basilica of Constantine) at Golgotha place, the basilica of Agony with the Cave of the Arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, the basilica of Eleona on the Mount of Olives, and the Mother-Church of Apostles on Mount Zion. These churches commemorated the places of Jesus’ theophany and the descent of the Holy Spirit.³⁴

Indeed, Saint Sahak invokes the *mimesis* of the “living iconography” of the holy places in Jerusalem to definitively fix his See in Vałaršapat and to obtain recognition of the supremacy of this city as the holy centre, the spiritual metropolis of all Armenia to the detriment of the southern See of Aštišat.³⁵ This *mimesis* endowed the “copies” of the holy places with the same value of sanctity and the same divine power, as had their original models.³⁶ In this way, apart from the parallelism of the martyrdom of the virgins with the Passion of Christ, mentioned above, one finds several other figures and elements in the *Vision*, which reflect in diffraction an image composed according to iconographic benchmarks and literary formulas from the Hierosolymitan sources. The description of the crosses in the *Vision* recalls the first monument of the Cross on Golgotha hillock, which shone with a blazing and unreal glow in the eyes of the believers, but it also refers to the *Letter of Cyril of Jerusalem to Constantius II*, to his *Catecheses*, and to the *Vision of Constantine* from the tripartite version of the *Legend of the True Cross*.³⁷ These sources are among the first

33 Garibian de Vartavan 2009, 272–282.

34 Ibid., 195–203.

35 Garibian de Vartavan 2005. On the rivalry between these two centres of Christianization of Armenia and the very ancient existence of holy places in Aštišat, see Garsoġian 1989, 449–450 and Garibian de Vartavan 2009, 210–211.

36 On the relationship between the “copies of the holy places” and their originals, see Vikan 1998; Ousterhout 1990. On the various forms that these copies took, see the contributions in Lidov 2009.

37 Find more in Garibian 2014. On the *Vision of Constantine* and the versions of the *Legend of the Cross*, known in Armenia, see Garibian 2013.

works translated into Armenian after the Bible and therefore enjoyed considerable popularity.³⁸ They also served as models for the composition of the *HC*.³⁹

Then, the place where the first pillar appeared is assigned to the future Mother-Church Kat'olikē, which is supposed to evoke, by its name and by its central position, the complex of Resurrection on Golgotha. The symbolism of the three other cross-pillars, which according to the Greek-Arabic version are linked by chains as “the image of the cross on which Christ was raised between the two thieves”, also, seems to refer to the same iconographical source. Their distribution according to the cardinal points, which takes up the Trinitarian iconography of the Crucifixion, bears the signs of influence from the early Hierosolymitan liturgy of the exaltation of the Cross, on Good Friday, which took place in the Basilica of Constantine at Golgotha.⁴⁰ On the other hand, their East-North-West position, according to the *Vg* version, could allude to the main gates of Jerusalem mentioned by the pilgrims: that of Benjamin in the East, that of Neapolis (or Saint Stephen) in the North, and that of David in the West.⁴¹

The *mimesis* of the “living iconography” of Jerusalem is also noted in the liturgical field. Planning to systematise and standardise the Armenian rites and the festive calendar, Sahak the Great sent to the Holy Land (between 417–428) some disciples of the Exegetical (թարգմանչաց) school freshly founded in Vałaršapat, in order to translate and bring back the main liturgical books: the Breviary and the Great Lectionary.⁴² As “sacred copies” of holy places, these books are received and used almost without changes. As a result, the annual feasts and rites that took place in Vałaršapat as well as in the whole of Armenia were linked to those of the Holy City not only by identical prayers, readings, and chants, but also by the evocation of the names of the shrines and the processions between them. From this date on, all the sources originated in Jerusalem acquired a supreme authority in the observance of the feasts as in theological discussions.⁴³

In this way, Christian Vałaršapat became perfectly comparable, even interchangeable with the Holy City, its holy places and its holy liturgy. It could there-

38 Garitte 1963; Bihain 1963; Ter-Petrosyan 1984, 9; Thomson 1985.

39 See Garibian 2014.

40 Ibid. It also refers to the creation of Adam in Jerusalem according to the *Cave of Treasures*, 1.11–16 (Ri 1987).

41 According to Eucherius, the bishop of Lyon, *The topography of Jerusalem*, 5, dated between 444–456, see Maraval 1996, 169.

42 Renoux 1976, 1989, 415–512, and his many other publications on this subject. For the prayers and songs see also Findikyan 2010 and 2016; Garibian de Vartavan 2011. More recently, Mahé 2018, 62–64.

43 Terian 2008, 17.

fore claim the title of “New Jerusalem”, a claim that characterises the second tendency detected in the two theophanies in question. The *Vision of Saint Gregory* would thus have received the noble mission of providing the theological justification for this undertaking, the providential affirmation of which is granted by Heaven and transmitted by the Messenger.

This claim is also highlighted in the work of Koriwn, one of the first disciples of Maštoc' and the author of his biography (written in 443,⁴⁴ henceforth *VM*). Describing the circumstances of the invention of the Armenian alphabet, which he presents as a prodigious incarnation of the Trinity, a grace given all at once and by one person,⁴⁵ he does not forget to clarify that it is the province of Ayrarat and the city of Vałaršapat which become (for the second time after the martyrdom of the virgins and the vision of Saint Gregory) the centre of the distribution of this grace:

On their part they streamed in and were thrilled to come from all regions and districts of the land of Armenia to the flowing spring of divine knowledge. For in the district of Ayrarat, at the royal and high-priestly centers, there gushed forth for the Armenians, the House of T'orgom,⁴⁶ the grace of God's commandments. The (following) prophetic (word) should have been recalled there:⁴⁷ “And there shall be a spring gushing forth for the House of David.”⁴⁸ (*VM*, XII, 2–4)

It is by a similar paraphrase that Eusebius of Caesarea speaks about the Holy Land and Jerusalem:⁴⁹

... he has selected two places in the eastern division of the Empire, the one in Palestine—since from thence the life-giving stream has flowed as from a fountain for the blessing of all nations ... (*LC*, IX.15)

44 As was the custom in the Christian world for inventions and translations of relics, Koriwn most likely received the order to write the *Life* of the Holy Man on the occasion of the transfer of his remains to the crypt of the church built three years after his death (see *VM*, XXVII, 9).

45 See Mahé 1992a and 2018, 46–50.

46 This biblical figure, like his brother Ashkenaz, from this time was considered as the ancestor of the Armenians.

47 Isa 30:25; Zech 13:1.

48 The English translation of Koriwn's passages by Abraham Terian, who kindly shared these quotes from his forthcoming book *The Life of Mashtots' by His Disciple Koriwn* (the volume will be issued in 2022, by Oxford Early Christian Texts. Oxford University Press).

49 Eusebius of Caesarea, *In praise of Constantine* (henceforth *LC*), see Drake 1976.

... in our own province of Palestine, and in that city from which as from a fountain-head the Saviour Word has issued forth to all mankind ... (*LC*, XI.2)

This image is faithfully resumed by Agat'angelos:

From every region and province of Armenia they excitedly came to the opened source of the grace of the knowledge of Christ. For in the province of Ararat, at the royal residence, there flowed forth for the Armenian house of Torgom the grace of the preaching of the gospel of God's commandments. (*Aa* § 776)

And we also find it in the miraculous appearance of the *Vision* of Saint Gregory:

There gushed forth an abundant spring, flowing over all the plains [...] as far as the eye could see. [...] this light which filled the land is the preaching of the gospel, which also fills the northern region. (*Aa* §§ 739, 742)

The texts of the *Vision* therefore allow us to define not only the chronological framework but also the providential intentions of this mimetic claim.

6 The Eschatological Significance of the New Jerusalem in Vałaršapat

In the 4th century Jerusalem regained the preeminent status as both the centre of the universe and the "Mother of all the churches"⁵⁰ through the discovery of the relics of the Cross, and through the Vision of the cross. According to the theological interpretation developed by Cyril of Jerusalem, the one confirmed the mystery of the Passion and the Resurrection of Christ, the other authenticated the relics of the Wood and announced the Second Parousia. With the discovery and the vision of the Cross, reality and Truth joined in Jerusalem, which thus embodied both the biblical past and the eschatological future.⁵¹ Therefore, although Christ did not say when and where he would descend, the city of his revelation and his Ascension received all the rights to become also the site of the accomplishment of the Providential History and the Second Coming. This is all the more so since the vision of the Cross by itself attested to

50 Dignity offered to the Holy City at the 1st Council of Constantinople in 381, see Drijvers 2004, 175–176.

51 *Ibid.*, 159–162; Baert 2004, 51.

the imminent promise of this event, the expectation of which was also intensified towards the end of the 4th century.⁵² In this context it is noteworthy that the *Cave of Treasures*, an apocryphal source dating back to the 5th century,⁵³ situates the creation of mankind in Jerusalem, on the very site of the Crucifixion, and on Friday.⁵⁴

Likewise, the supreme dignity of Valaršapat as a spiritual centre analogous to Jerusalem, from which the preaching of the divine word was spread in Armenia and in the “Northern regions” and which was gratified by an eschatological vision, is revealed to Armenians through the discovery of the relics of the holy martyrs at the beginning of the 5th century. Confirming their passion similar to the Passion of Christ, these relics become comparable to the relics of the Cross, since they authenticated the received tradition of the circumstances of the conversion of Armenia. As for the *Vision of Saint Gregory*, reported by this tradition, not only did it announce the Second Parousia by the images of the luminous crosses and the descent of celestial beings, but it especially projected the conditions predefined by the Economy of Salvation, as Gregory explains before telling his vision: “He revealed to me the vivifying providence that he intends to bestow on you” (*Aa* § 731).

It is through the conversion of the Armenians and the inhabitants of the northern regions that the way to the Kingdom of Heaven will be opened for the just who are saved.

Apart from the *Vision*, the eschatological meaning of the conversion of the Armenians is also noticeable in two other passages of the *HC*. The first reports the hasty arrival of the wife of Saint Gregory⁵⁵ in Armenia because she heard about “the wonders of holy martyrs and of Gregory, which bear witness to the coming of Christ” (*Vg*, 95). The second describes a miraculous vision of the cross, which appears during the baptism of the Armenians in Bagawan:

... a wonderful sign was revealed by God. [...] The waters of the river stopped and then turned back again, a bright light appeared in the likeness of a shining pillar.⁵⁶ [...] Above it was the likeness of the Lord’s cross. The light shone out so brightly that it obscured and weakened the rays of the sun. (*Aa* § 833)

52 Drijvers 2004, 159–162.

53 Leonhard 2001.

54 *Cave of Treasures* 1, 2–16 (see Mahé 1992c, xiv–xv).

55 Her name was Yulita, according to *Vg*, 97.

56 Compare with the ancient ceremony of the Baptism of Christ taking place at the bank of Jordan, on the feast of Epiphany (see Maraval 2002, 213, 11.4).

Taking myron and oil, he poured them into the river, making the form of a cross. A great miracle occurred: the river reversed its course, staying calm, and the currents stood still. [...] A fiery column appeared in the midst of the waters having the form of a cross. (*Vg*, 167)

This claim derives from the geographical conception—both classical and biblical, which was also adopted by the Armenians and their northern Christian neighbours. According to this conception the Caucasus (which includes the northern lands of Armenia) was considered as the North-North-East limits of the known world (or rather of the civilised world).⁵⁷ Seen under the light of the Gospel telling about the conditions necessary for the end of time, this position of extreme periphery is accepted by the Armenians as a privilege, a “vivifying gift” because it granted them a role of immense importance in the Economy of Salvation: their conversion followed by that of the Iberians and the Alouanians⁵⁸ precipitated the end of time and the advent of Christ. Armed with this connection of ideas and equipped with the Antiochian exegetical model according to which the Bible presented an account of historical events since the Creation until the end of the world predestined by the Providence, the intellectuals from the circle of the “exegetes-translators”, guided by their masters Saints Sahak and Maštoc’, developed a new attitude towards Armenian history. After the conversion of the country to Christianity, the latter received the full right to be considered as a continuation of the biblical story.⁵⁹ This perspective also allowed them to reframe the perception of the Christian identity of the Armenians who from then on could be seen as a new chosen people with whom God concluded a New Covenant.⁶⁰ From this point of view, the term *uxt* (“pact”, “covenant”, “congregation”, “engagement”) recurrent under various formulas in the Armenian literature of the 5th century⁶¹ also seems to express this biblical connotation.

This is also why, we think, it would seem to Saints Sahak and Maštoc’ that there was an urgent need to complete the illumination work of Saint Gregory with a second evangelical mission targeting the regions which remained pre-

57 See more in Mahé 2006a.

58 From Alouania—the Caucasian Albania; we prefer this transcription, closer to “Aluank’” of Armenian sources to that proposed by J.P. Mahé—“Albanétie”, which refers to a Georgian form. Yet, in Georgian sources this country is always called Rani or Heret’.

59 Mahé 1992b.

60 Calzolari 2003–2004 and 2010.

61 *uxti mankunk’* (servants of the pact, covenant), *uxti mankunk’ ekelec’woy* (servants of the covenant of the Church), *uxt ekelec’woy* (covenant of the Church), *uxt miabanut’ean* (pact of union, congregation). For different uses and meanings, see Shirinian 2001–2002.

dominantly pagan or threatened with forced conversion to the Zoroastrian religion. This attempt led Maštoc' to the conviction that in order to successfully carry out this task the Armenian language had to be endowed with a special alphabet which would make it possible to fight, by a new written culture based on the Bible and the knowledge of true God, against the traditional orality, the vehicle of paganism.⁶² On the other hand, the alphabet served as a fundamental factor, a “functional model” to safeguard the cultural unity of the Armenians divided between the two Empires.⁶³ The Armenian alphabet is thus perceived and received by contemporaries as another “gift of God” comparable and measurable only to the Tables of the Law offered to Moses and the people of Israel. It is another pledge which a century later succeeds the *Vision of Saint Gregory* and which confirms the pact of union with God:

At that time our blessed and pleasant land of Armenia became truly wonderful, where at the hands of two associates [Sahak and Maštoc'—NG], as if suddenly, Moses the teacher of the Law with the prophetic order, progressive Paul with the whole apostolic group, along with the world-sustaining Gospel of Christ, came to be found in the Armenian tongue, became Armenian-speaking! (VM XI, 8)

In this passage Koriwn adapts one of the essential theological formulas of the Church defined by Saint Paul: “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph 2:20). Thus, the Word of God in Armenian erects the Church of Christ solidly and deeply on the Armenian soil.

On the other hand, the invention of the alphabet seems to be a project all the more decisive since alongside the translation of the Bible and the important works of the Christian literature which depended on it, it also made possible the writing down of the national history starting from the conversion of the country to legitimise its integration within the Holy Scripture. This is why the first properly Armenian literary work had to be of the historiographical genre and that it had to relate the narrative of the conversion of Armenia.⁶⁴ The second Armenian original work that fits into this perspective is that of Koriwn: by explicitly drawing parallels between Moses, Paul, and Maštoc', he presents the activity of his teacher as a new apostolic vocation⁶⁵ which was to complete the evangelization of the “Northern regions”.

62 See Mahé 1992a; 2006b and 2018, 29–35.

63 Zekiyán 2004.

64 On the arguments of this dating, see Garibian 2014.

65 Mahé 1992b and 2006b.

Yet, precisely like the *Vision of Saint Gregory*, the invention of the alphabet, which very early qualified as a theophanic vision,⁶⁶ also carries an eschatological message, since it offered all Armenians the possibility of knowing God's plan from the beginning to the end and of recognizing themselves in this economy:

For a land unfamiliar even with the fame of those regions where all the miracles wrought by God had been performed, soon learned all the things that had taken place and all the God-given traditions: not only those that had been venerated through time, but also those that were long before, from eternity, and those that are to come later—the beginning and the end. (*VM XI, 10*)

The echo of the founding of the New Vaḫaršapat “in the image and likeness” of Christian Jerusalem still resounds in the other source from the end of the 5th century, the *History of Armenia* written by a third-generation disciple of the “exegetical school” of Vaḫaršapat, Łazar P'arpec'i:⁶⁷

... the magnificent, famous, and illustrious province of Ayrarat [...] desirable land, incomparable and overflowing with the gifts of God [...] the capital of Armenia [...] which is a model of profusion, in scripture's words “the land of the Egyptians and God's paradise” [...] the city of Vaḫaršapat, the residence of Arsacid kings [...] the angelic (հրեշուսական) foundation of the holy house of God, the great church Kat'olikē and the martyria of the blessed ascetic virgins ... (*ŁP', I, §§ 7–8*)

P'arpec'i also continues to develop the parallel between the invention of the alphabet and the evangelising mission of Saint Gregory, stressing however the important role of the catholicos Sahak, the great grandson of Gregory:

... So too may this task be arranged by the wisdom of your virtue, and do you accomplish it. Just as the holy champion of Christ, Gregory, was preserved unharmed in his torments [...] and he was given to Armenia to illuminate our understanding, so too for you, his descendant, has been preserved and granted the lot of inheritance for this glorious task—to

66 See Movsēs Xorenac'i (listed in the bibliography here as *MX*), III, § 53. For an English translation of Xorenac'i's work the reader can consult Thomson 2006.

67 See Łazar's *History* (henceforth *ŁP'*), in the *Matenagirk' hayoc'* series; English translation by Thomson 1991.

make a beginning to this improving work and become an imitator of your saintly ancestor who led Armenia from ignorance to the true knowledge of God. (*LP*, I, § 11)

Intending to legitimise this “emulation”, P'arpec'i introduces another theophanic vision with an eschatological allure, which appeared to Saint Sahak in the Mother-Church Kat'olikē on Holy Thursday, before the evening service, at a time when he was not yet consecrated catholicos of Armenia. Reserving the detailed analysis of this *Vision* for another publication, I will only refer here to its direct connection with the Armenian eschatological aspirations of the period of Saints Sahak and Maštoc'. The most ancient core of the text of this *Vision* (*LP*, I, § 17) dating back to the 5th century⁶⁸ is closely related to Saint Gregory's *Vision*.⁶⁹ Its imagery also recalls the Early Christian iconography of the Golgotha Cross-monument and that of the Second Coming. In the same manner a celestial messenger in human appearance comes down from heaven to explain the vision that revealed not only what was to happen in the immediate future, but also all that would happen until the end of the world,⁷⁰ as he had done for Sahak's ancestor Gregory. Yet, while the latter perceived through the eyes of his spirit the intelligible image of celestial Jerusalem which offered him the sacred model for the foundation of the New Vařaršapat, Saint Sahak sees the intelligible image of the celestial liturgy which would later inspire him during the decision to reform the Armenian liturgy. We have seen that both imitated the examples of the holy places in Jerusalem.

In light of the theological analysis of the *Vision* and of its contextualization in the historical framework of the 5th century, it would seem that the definitions “Northern region” and “Northern peoples” used abundantly in the *HC* texts and particularly in the *Vision*, refer not only to the northern provinces of Armenia, but also to the Caucasus or more precisely to the neighbouring kingdoms which had also accepted Christianity. This assumption is supported by the texts of *Vg-Va* where the kings of Lazes, Iberians, and Alouanians are specifically mentioned during the convocation of the general assembly of

68 Sargsean 1931–1932; Akinean (1948, 40–41) considers the oldest layer as originally being part of the *History* of P'arpec'i. Muradyan (2014) suggests that the date of the *Vision of Sahak* could have gone back to the years 482–484.

69 The Trinitarian symbolism of the *Vision of Sahak* is mentioned by Yovhannēs Mayragomec'i (7th century) in his *Commentary on the Church* (*Verlucut'ivn Kat'olikē ekelec'woy*, listed in the bibliography here as *VE*).

70 The 35 and 350 years are regarded as the same time in the *Vision*; they are mythical numbers echoing the 3.5 years of the Antichrist rule before the Second Advent of Christ (Muradyan 2014, 319–320). The scholar also mentions the *Catechesis* of Cyril of Jerusalem as one of the possible sources of Sahak's *Vision*.

princes and nobles by King Trdat in order to make them part of his decision to embrace Christianity.⁷¹ They are mentioned again alongside Trdat during the solemn reception of Saint Gregory after his return from Caesarea and at the time of the baptism of all.⁷² Finally, after his enthronement in the church of Aštišat, Gregory sends missionary priests and bishops to their respective countries.⁷³ In fact, this view of the united conversion of the Caucasian nations and its apocalyptic importance reflected in the Greek and Arabic versions of the *Life* agrees with the historical data on the role that Maštoc' played in the creation of the alphabets for the Iberians and the Alouanians, whose religious and secular authorities must have had the same concerns as those of Armenia: make the Second Parousia possible by accomplishing the Christianization of their respective peoples. We should not forget that this is also the period when the first writing of the *History of the Conversion* or rather the *Life of Saint Gregory* was born. We can therefore conclude by supposing that the foundation of the Christian Vałaršapat would have the intention of creating not the Armenian, but rather the "Caucasian" New Jerusalem.

7 Conclusion

The convergence of all these arguments and their overlap with the analysis of the *Vision* allow us to perceive, in the endeavours of the Armenian authorities at the beginning of the 5th century, the possibility of yet another reason which would have motivated the foundation of the "Caucasian Jerusalem" in Vałaršapat. It was a question of preparing the ground to welcome the Second Coming of Christ, the purpose of which would have been once again inspired by the Hierosolymitan example. Since the Gospels specify neither the time nor the place of this Descent, it could just as easily happen in Vałaršapat, this New Jerusalem of the Caucasus—one of the extremities of the world, the Christianization of which is the condition *sine qua non* for the Parousia of Christ.

According to the "théorie d'ascendance" widespread in the Christian thought of the time,⁷⁴ the *mimesis* of the Hierosolymitan iconography was applied to

71 Vg 92, 98; Va, 85, 86; Vs 219, which does not name the three countries but says in this passage: "Then the kings and nobles and judges gathered together and said ...", which suggests the kings of the neighbouring countries.

72 Vg 159, 164; Va 147, 152.

73 Vg 163, 170; Va 151, 158. Vb, 128 mentions here only the Alouanians.

74 This theory expresses the tendency to successively relate the terrestrial realities according to the biblical conception "in image and likeness" (*icono-mimesis*) and applying the prin-

the Armenian realities with the “superlative” principle showing the Armenian cases in a superior level compared to their models.⁷⁵ Always following this principle, one could suggest that it was this possible choice of place of the Descent that would be shown by the Providence to Saint Gregory. Moreover, according to the received tradition about the conversion, this vision appeared a few decades before the vision of the cross in Jerusalem. Again, it was to prepare this event that the Providence himself through his messenger would have shown to Saint Gregory the type and the layout of the new holy city with its holy places, as well as the site of the new Temple of God—Mother-Church Kat’olikē. And surely it was to confirm this providential intervention that another eschatological vision would have been shown a century later to Saint Sahak. This attitude is also perceivable in the case of Maštoc’ and the invention of the Armenian alphabet which in comparison with Moses and the Tables of the Law is put by Koriwn in a more favourable position.⁷⁶ Thereafter, one could presume that it is to affirm this new Covenant with the converted inhabitants of the “Northern regions” and to finally approach the accomplishment of the History of Salvation, that God was supposed to have presented first the Armenians, then the Iberians and the Alouanians with the prodigious alphabets: benevolence operated through Saints Sahak and Maštoc’. Thus, according to the architects of this new Covenant with God, it would necessarily be this Caucasian New Jerusalem—the capital of the newly chosen people, purified and sanctified by two successive theophanies and founded in the image of the Upper city, which would have been the most worthy of all places to receive from heaven Christ in his glory.

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ciple of superiority for all that is new compared to its ancient model, see Sansterre 1972; Dagron 1996, 20–21 and 291. Eusebius of Caesarea also applies it to praise the advantages of the new chosen people—the Christians, and the New Temple of God—the Church, compared to the old people and Temple, see Garibian de Vartavan 2009, 48–57.

75 See more on these comparisons in Garibian 2014.

76 See Mahé 2006a and 2018, 49–50.

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Jacob and the Man at the Ford of Jabbok

A Biblical Subject in the Vine Scroll Frieze of the Church of the Holy Cross of Att'amar (10th c.)

Michael E. Stone and Edda Vardanyan

1 Introduction

This modest gift of learning is offered to Theo Maarten van Lint on the occasion of his 65th birthday. It has been a joy to prepare this tribute for Theo, a scholar—brilliant and multi-faceted, sensitive and erudite—and a cherished friend. *Ad multos annos.*

Recent decades have been exciting for those fascinated by the way the biblical heritage, nurtured by Jews, Christians, and Moslems, has grown and developed during past centuries. It is, of course, so foundational that it is inextricably woven into the warp and woof of Jewish and Christian cultures, Eastern and Western, and is expressed in ways obvious and subtle.¹

Here we shall examine how the scene of Jacob's struggle with the "man" on the banks of the Jabbok stream, was viewed in mediaeval Armenian culture. This event took place before Jacob crossed the river at the ford and took his first steps in the Land of Israel after more than two decades' absence. He left his uncle Laban's home in Mesopotamia at God's bidding, communicated by an angel (Gen 31:13). He brought all his company—his wives, his children and his flocks up to the river. Fearful of Esau's wrath, he offered a prayer for safety concluding, "I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies" (Gen 32:10). He took steps to forestall Esau's wrath and, after nightfall, sent his family and flocks over the river (Gen 32:23). Next, Genesis paints the picture of Jacob, alone in the empty camp after all those he loved and all he owned had crossed over.² Then, a "man,"

1 Throughout his scholarly life, Theo van Lint himself has had a sustained interest in biblical dimensions of Armenian culture as his works, such as those about Ezekiel chap. 1, show. The ways biblical traditions were taken up by Islam are rather different and are the object of growing interest these days.

2 It is intriguing that previously, when he was fleeing from Esau to Laban's house in Meso-

later implicitly identified as God/an angel (see Gen 32:20), wrestles with him and only prevails when he wounds Jacob's thigh.

In this paper, we shall consider in detail the Armenian reading of this incident. It is one chapter in the tale of how that culture expressed biblical tradition and reshaped it. Combining our skills, we wish to explore the interface between two genres, creative biblical retelling and iconography, focusing particularly on features they present that are not explicable from the biblical text. This is done in the context of the study of the band of relief sculptures around the Church of the Holy Cross in Alt'amar (915–921), but its implications are far wider.

Recent decades have seen the publication of the surprisingly numerous Armenian pseudepigrapha known today. Over fifty works in various genres deal just with Adam and Eve; there is a whole volume of compositions about Abraham and similar clusters gathered around other biblical events or figures, such as Noah, the Tower of Babel, Joseph, and Moses.³ Many writings, perhaps even more than are already known, lie undiscovered and unedited in manuscripts. This vigorous growth of biblical pseudepigrapha is characteristic of mediaeval Armenian creativity and, in extent, is almost without parallel in other Christian cultures.

Of course, these Armenian pseudepigrapha teach us much about antecedent Jewish and Christian traditions that Armenians preserved and transmitted. For the present undertaking, however, this is less relevant than such questions as: How did these pseudepigrapha function for Armenians, clerics and laypeople alike? What was their role in Armenian religious and cultural life? What do they tell us about how mediaeval Armenians read/knew the Bible?

potamia, Jacob overnights at Luz and there he received a dream revelation of angels (Gen 28:12–15) and a divine promise of success. He renamed the place Bethel, which means “house of God.” In the present pericope, on his return to the land of Israel, angels greet him (Gen 32:1) and the mysterious figure, the “man,” physically attempts to prevent him from crossing over. After the struggle, Gen 32:20 relates the following, “Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.’” He left the land through “the House of God” (Bethel), and returns to the land via “the Face of God” (Peniel). These incidents are already related to one another in Hos 12:4 “He strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favour. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with him” (Revised Standard Version, henceforth RSV; the New Revised Standard Version will appear as NRSV).

- 3 The first collection of such texts was *Yovsēp'eanc'* 1896; it was translated into English by J. Issaverdens in 1901. Michael Stone has published seven volumes of collected texts over the last forty years, and an eighth one is currently in press: see the Bibliography. Other pseudepigrapha have been published in single volumes and journals. Recently the Armenian apocalyptic literature received serious attention in Bardakjian—La Porta 2014.

Answering such questions may reveal to us why the Armenians wrote so many pseudepigrapha and what their impact was on Armenian culture.⁴

From a different perspective, we can enquire whether the inclusion of a non-biblical element in a Bible retelling and the inclusion of such an element in the iconography of a biblical scene, both witnesses to the same phenomenon. In both instances there is a canonical description and a non-canonical expansion. *Prima facie*, we assume that both images and texts witness a common understanding of a biblical incident and a shared extra-biblical or para-biblical culture. This article aspires clearly to illustrate this phenomenon in mediaeval Armenian study and retelling of the Bible.

2 The Church of the Holy Cross at Ałt'amar and Its Iconography

The Church of the Holy Cross at Ałt'amar, erected by King Gagik of Vaspurakan as a palatine church, is an exceptional monument of Armenian art. Its decoration is its most striking feature: bas-reliefs cover the exterior of the church and they are unusually dense and are divided into several registers.⁵

Recent studies stimulate a reconsideration of the sculptured decoration of the Church of the Holy Cross at Ałt'amar. The so-called vine scroll frieze (Figure 19.1) plays an important role in this context and, contrary to preceding interpretations, it features Old Testament personalities in a document of religious art.⁶ Here the hypothesis that this vine scroll frieze represents the image of the elect people, “the House of Israel,” as Isa 5:7 puts it, comes into play.⁷ With Jesus, who calls himself “the true vine” (John 15:1–7), the vine ceases to represent only the people of Israel, and comes to indicate the Kingdom of God.⁸ In Christian art from its beginnings, the motif of the vine is endowed with a profound symbolic meaning.⁹ The vine frieze of Ałt'amar fits exactly into the cultural history of this motif. In it, the heroes of the Old Testament are ranged in the order of the history of the people of Israel, from the patriarch Abraham down to the birth of Christ. Each figure in it has its own cycle, composed of a sequence of episodes.

4 Some thoughts about these questions are to be found in Stone 2017 and Stone 2019.

5 For the description of the sculptured decoration of the Church of the Holy Cross at Ałt'amar, see Der Nersessian 1965 and Davies 1991.

6 Vardanyan 2014; Vardanyan 2019.

7 See Ps 80 (79):9–16; Isa 27:2–3; Jer 2:21; Ezek 19:10–14.

8 For the Church Fathers, the allegory of Israel becomes that of the Church, the new “chosen people”: Danielou 1961, 43–48; Murray 2004, 95–130.

9 Jensen 2000, 59–63; Rordorf 1969–1970; Donabédian 1990–1991, 275–277.



FIGURE 19.1 Church of the Holy Cross at Alt'amar (915–921), south façade
© PHOTOGRAPH BY ZAVEN SARGSYAN

The analysis of the cycles of the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac, as well as that of King David, has shown that the biblical episodes represented in the vine frieze are interpreted christologically; they prefigure the coming of Christ, “the true vine” (John 15:1–7) and convey a messianic message. These scenes require a complex interpretation, because their meaning is expressed in the terms of a symbolic, even cryptic, language, drawing at the same time both from Scripture and from apocryphal writings, together with a profound knowledge of the great exegetes of the Bible. The cycle of the patriarch Jacob takes its place among the Old Testament cycles and one scene of the Jacob cycle is the subject of this article.

In the vine frieze, the Jacob cycle is on the south wall of the church, following that of Isaac (Figure 19.1). We are interested in the last scene of this cycle.

According to our hypothesis about the content of this frieze, this scene is to be recognized as Jacob's struggle described in Gen 32:24–32.¹⁰ It represents two men fighting face to face. The left-hand figure, which is not bearded, is the “angel” that is wrestling with Jacob. He is in a rather fixed stance and grasps Jacob's beard with one hand and his ankle with another. Jacob, the figure to

¹⁰ Cf. Vardanyan 2017, 117.



FIGURE 19.2 Jacob's Struggle. The vine frieze of the Church of the Holy Cross at Alt'amar
© PHOTOGRAPH BY HRAIR HAWK KHATCHERIAN

the right, is more dynamic, showing movement through his raised right leg and while waving a staff in his left hand. Between them is a dog which, with expressive movement, is biting Jacob's left leg (Figure 19.2).¹¹

3 Jacob Wrestles with the Man

In night's darkness "Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak" (Gen 32:24). The "man" could not defeat Jacob, so he smote his hough (his popliteal fossa: see below), because of which the Israelites do not eat the hamstring muscle of animals (see Gen 32:25, 32). Here, Genesis introduces two name midrashim: in this portentous context "the man" renames Jacob as "Israel" for "you strove with God and with humans and prevailed" (Gen 32:28).¹²

11 See the description in Der Nersessian 1965, 16; Davies 1991, 61.

12 This may both refer to Jacob's vicissitudes in Laban's house and imply a prediction of his success in his encounter with Esau.

Jacob names the place where this happened Peniel, for “I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved” (Gen 32:30).¹³

There are unclear points in this narrative:

1. Who was “the man?” Hints make it evident that the “man” was an angel or some other supernatural being: he has to leave at daybreak, he refuses to divulge his name, he blesses Jacob, and he renames him. Conventionally he is called an “angel” though this is not said of him explicitly in the text of Genesis (see Gen 32:24–39).¹⁴
2. Where was Jacob damaged? The place of injury is designated by Hebrew כֶּבֶךְ יֵרֶךְ , a term particular to this passage in the Bible (Gen 32:25, 32). In the NRSV it is translated “hip socket”¹⁵ while RSV, following the King James version, gives “thigh” for it in the phrase “thigh was put out of joint”.
3. Why did the “man” wrestle with Jacob? Was it to prevent him from entering the Land? A tension apparently exists between the meaning of Jacob’s new name, Israel, “you have striven with God and with human and have prevailed” and the angel wounding Jacob in the wrestling match on the border of the Land. Yet, it appears that paradoxically, the wounding was not defeat but victory, for Jacob succeeded in crossing the river and Esau received him peaceably.
4. The name change. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, which is said to mean “he has struggled with God and with human and prevailed” (Gen 32:28).¹⁶ The Alt’amar relief portrays the moment of the struggle and the damaging of Jacob’s hough (popliteal fossa) and his hamstring muscles (Gen 32:24–25). The change of a name at divine behest is also recorded

13 See note 2 above. The danger inherent in seeing God’s face is mentioned elsewhere, see Exod 33:20, 23; cf. Num 14:14; 1 Cor 13:12. In Judg 6:22 Gideon says, “I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face”. Quite often “the Lord” and “angel” alternate in the same context. That is the case here.

14 Such a mysterious “man” is also mentioned in Gen 37:15–17. Angels are referred to as “man” in, say, Dan 9:21 “the man Gabriel.” Judg 13:3–6, 10 is another example, where an angel is called “a man” by a human. In Judges the angel’s response to the query about his name is that “it is too wonderful.” In Gen 32:29 the angel diverts Jacob’s attention from the question.

15 Similarly, the JPS translation. Ginzberg 1909, 389 also speaks of the “sinew of the ham which is upon the hollow of the thigh.” Note that this is also the implication of the readings of the Targums and of the Peshitta. The hip joint, the common English language interpretation today, is not even hinted at in these ancient translations.

16 In the onomastic tradition in Armenian, for “Israel” we find: “see-er of God or the mind sees God”; Wutz 1914, 899; “God-see-er” or “enough for God”; Stone 1981, 136–137 has “vanquisher of God” or “see-er of God”. Vanquisher of God surely reflects the biblical name *midrash* mentioned above in the text.

in connection with Abraham (Gen 17:5) and Sarah (Gen 17:15) where, like here, it is part of a blessing.¹⁷ There are three things relating to names here that highlight their importance: the “man” refuses to tell Jacob his name,¹⁸ the “man” renames Jacob in blessing him, and Jacob commemorates the event by naming the place.¹⁹

4 The Christological Meaning of Jacob’s Struggle and the Alt’amar Relief

The crucial point of this struggle is the vision of God (“the man”) who blesses Jacob. The episode is determinative since in the course of it, Jacob receives the name Israel, first occurring here in the Bible.²⁰

It is important to observe that in the Alt’amar vine frieze, one of the principal themes is theophany. In the Abraham cycle, a central role is played by the three “men” who appeared to Abraham.²¹ In the Isaac cycle this theme is illustrated by Isaac’s theophanic vision by the Well of the Oath.²² So theophany typifies the presentation of the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The vision of God is also a central theme in the exegesis of this passage. It is from this same vision that Philo illustrated the virtues of the knowledge of God, virtues which were given by the Creator to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.²³ For Jacob the reward of this vision is his new name “Israel,” which means “God-see-er.”²⁴

This interpretation is taken up by Christian exegetes.²⁵ For them Jacob is above all a figure of Christ who overcomes the Adversary and is gifted with the

17 Joshua’s name was changed but it was Moses who changed it (Num 13:16).

18 See above n. 14. We learn from these two passages that such mysterious “men” kept their names secret. In the Animal Apocalypse in 1 Enoch 83–90 animals serve as symbols of humans, while humans signify angels or heavenly beings.

19 This is found quite often in Genesis. Aetiology comes to mind, but that is too simplistic.

20 Harl 1986, 242–244, note on Gen 32:23–33. On the meaning of the struggle in Jewish tradition, see Schwartz 2004, 359–360, 364–366.

21 Vardanyan 2014, 718–723, fig. 7.

22 Vardanyan 2019, 397–404, fig. 14.9.

23 Philo, *De praemiis et poenis*, §§ 24–48 (Colson—Whitaker 1950–1959, henceforth Philo, vol. VIII, 326–341). See also note 16, above.

24 Philo, *De praemiis et poenis*, § 44 (Philo, vol. VIII, 336–339); cf. Philo, *De mutatione nominum*, §§ 81–82 (Philo, vol. V, 182–183); Philo, *De somniis* I, § 129 (Philo, vol. V, 366–367). See also Pax 1955, 156.

25 Patristic interpretation of Gen 32:24–32 is studied exhaustively by Dulaey 2001, 149–165.

vision of the Father.²⁶ For Justin, the name “Israel” means, “he who overcomes a Power,” for through the Christ-Jacob, he says, the Christians are the “blessed Israel.”²⁷ This last formulation is exactly the meaning of the vine scroll frieze of the Church of the Holy Cross of Ałt’amar.²⁸

In early Christian art, the idea that Jacob received a vision of God at Peniel goes back to very early times. One of the oldest examples is the scene on an ivory reliquary of the fourth century from Brescia.²⁹ On it, in a frieze consecrated to this patriarch, the scene of his struggle (Gen. 32:24–32) is associated with the Ladder of Jacob (Gen. 28:10–19) (Figure 19.3). The vision of God forms the background of two scenes of Jacob’s life which are chronologically distinct.³⁰ On the Ałt’amar relief the similarity of the two figures is notable and it highlights the equality between them—they wear similar tunics and in the struggle their strengths seem to be balanced. Indeed, the “angel” seems to be slightly superior: his feet are firmly anchored to the ground; he holds off his opponent with his hands alone, seizing his heel with one hand and his beard with the other. One might say that the angel does not wrestle, but simply resists Jacob’s action.

Ambiguity about the nature of Jacob’s opponent already exists in the biblical text, where in Gen. 32:25 and 29 he is named successively “man” and “God.”³¹ For Jacob, this “man” bears within himself the presence of God: he considers this experience to be a vision of God “face to face” and he names the place “Face

26 According to the theologians, as Jacob, he has overcome the powers, but as Israel, he is the one “who sees God, through his divinity, for only the Son can claim to see the Father”: cf. Origen, *Commentary on John*, I, 260 (Blanc 1966, 188–189); Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, I, 57, 1–2 (Marrou 1960, 212–213).

27 Justin, *Trypho*, § 125 (Bobichon 2003, 520–523).

28 On the Ałt’amar relief, Jacob is shown brandishing his staff (cf. Gen 32:11). In Christian exegesis, generally the staff is one of the symbols of Christ’s Cross (Reijners 1965, 107–118). Here too, Jacob’s staff plays an important role. Justin speaks of the significance of Jacob’s staff in a chapter totally devoted to scriptural prefigurations of the “wood of the Cross”, cf. Justin, *Trypho*, § 86, 2 (Bobichon 2003, 420–423). In the case of the Ałt’amar relief, the allusion to the Cross is particularly meaningful, for the Church of Ałt’amar is devoted to the cult of the Holy Cross.

29 The reliquary is preserved in the Museo di Santa Giulia at San Salvatore in Brescia: see the reproductions in Crippa—Zibawi 1998, pl. 56–60.

30 See the remarks in n. 2 above on the relation of these two scenes. The reliquary is richly decorated on four registers which continue on all its sides. On the right side, the lower frieze is devoted to Jacob. It shows Jacob’s meeting with Rachel by the well and the scenes of the struggle of Jacob combined with Jacob’s Ladder. The Christological interpretation of this reliquary is discussed by Dulaey 2001, 167–168.

31 See the discussion in section 3 above.



FIGURE 19.3 Reliquary from Brescia (4th c.), right side. The scene of Jacob's struggle is located in the lower frieze devoted to Jacob, at the right end ROBYB89, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS: [HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:LIPSANOTECA_DI_BRESCIA_\(LATO_DX\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lipsanoteca_di_Brescia_(lato_dx).jpg)

of God” or “Visible-form-of God” (Gen 32:31).³² Like many commentaries,³³ a number of early Christian images follow this interpretation, of which the Brescia reliquary and the scene as given in the Vienna Genesis (6th century) are the

32 In the French translation of the LXX in Harl 1986, 242–244 we read: “Et Jacob donna à ce lieu le nom de Forme-visible-de-Dieu. «Car j’ai vu Dieu face à face et mon âme a été sauvée»”.

33 See, for example, Philo, *De mutatione nominum*, § 14 (Philo, vol. v, 148–151); Philo, *De somniis* I, § 129 (Philo, vol. v, 366–367); Philo, *De praemiis et poenis*, § 44 (Philo, vol. VIII, 336–337).

best examples.³⁴ At the same time, following Hosea 12:3–5,³⁵ where the prophet says first that Jacob had striven with God and next that he strove with the angel, the greater part of biblical exegesis identifies Jacob's adversary as an angel.³⁶ This interpretation is found widely in mediaeval representations of this scene, where the "man" is a winged angel.

The speculations of the Church Fathers on the nature of Jacob's adversary are very varied. According to Origen, "the angel" designates the function of one sent.³⁷ In his view, the angels that are called "men" are to be identified as "angels" because of their mission and not of their nature.³⁸ In Justin's view, the one who strove with Jacob is the pre-existent Word, one of whose names is Israel, and "he named the blessed Jacob with it."³⁹ For Clement of Alexandria, moreover, the "Face of God" is the *Logos*.⁴⁰ Finally, for others the "Face of God" is Christ (cf. John 14:9, 2 Cor 4:6, and Col 1:15).⁴¹ Armenian authors from the fifth century on also meditated about the identity of Jacob's adversary. Elišē speaks of him as "Appearance of God" and as "the bodiless become human with a body."⁴²

It is interesting to observe that the vine scroll frieze of Alt'amar contains several scenes with angels.⁴³ As in our segment representing Jacob's struggle, all the angels shown in the frieze resemble humans and have no wings. This equivalence is stressed by the angels' clothing, tunics like those of the human protagonists, and they can be recognized only by their gestures and attributes. In the case of Jacob, the representation of his adversary as it appears in our

34 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ms. Theol. gr. 31, fol. 12^r; Zimmermann 2003, 129–133, fig. 23. It is interesting that in the same manuscript, close to Gen 32:7–8 (fol. 11^r), Jacob receives the messengers who are represented as angels. Here, the angels illustrate the word "messenger," cf. Revel—Dufrenne, 1972, 122–123.

35 Hos 12:3–5: "In the womb he tried to supplant his brother, and in his manhood he strove with God. He strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favour; he met him at Bethel, and there he spoke with him. The LORD the God of hosts, the LORD is his name!"

36 Cf. Harl 1986, 243, note on Gen 32:25.

37 It is intriguing to observe that the Hebrew *mal'ak* "angel" is derived from an old root *l'k* "to send" and in the Bible, on occasion, the word should be translated "messenger".

38 Origen, *Commentary on John*, II, 144–148 (Blanc 1966, 302–305). Here he refers to Gen 18:2, 19:1; Heb 13:2, concerning Abraham's guests and Sodom; Josh 5:13–14; he cites Hag 1:13; Mal. 3:1, and Mic 1:2.

39 Justin, *Trypho*, § 125, 5 (Bobichon 2003, 523).

40 Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, I, VII, 57 (Marrou, 1960, 212–213).

41 See Dulaey 2001, 154–165.

42 Khachikyan et al. 2004, 178–179: Մարդացաւ մարմնով անմարմինս.

43 Angels figure, for example, in the cycles of Moses, Elijah, etc. The studies dealing with these cycles are under preparation.

relief is more than relevant, for it corresponds fully to the passage of the narrative “a man strove with him.” What can be identified is the set of actions by which he stops Jacob.

5 Pulling the Beard

5.1 *Near Eastern Cultural Tradition*

In the relief, the angel seizes Jacob’s beard, a detail absent from Genesis but prominent in the image. Its meaning is revealed by copious textual evidence, of which a selection, varying in context and date is given here.

Among the Ancient Near Eastern peoples, a beard was a sign of a handsome, manly and powerful man. In Egyptian and Mesopotamian iconography, kings are always shown with beards. In the description of El, father of Gods and humans, from Ugarit, we read: “(Thou) art great indeed, O El, and wise, Thy beard’s gray hair instructs thee.”⁴⁴ Correspondingly, to seize or pull someone’s beard, to pluck out hairs or to cut it, was not just an indignity—and certainly it was that—but it showed the puller’s superiority to the one whose beard was pulled. This changed in Roman Late Antiquity: Greeks, philosophers and religious sages were bearded in the Late Antique world, but the Roman emperors down to Hadrian were represented as clean shaven, as was Alexander the Great.

In the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the beard remained a marker of power and manliness. This was so not only in late antiquity, but is witnessed during the following millennium, and beards returned to imperial portraits from Hadrian’s time on.

In Ancient Israel, shaving or cutting off the beard engendered shame. In 2 Sam (4 Reigns) 10:4–5 we read that King David had sent envoys to Hanun the king of the Amorites and Hanun showed his disrespect to them and he “shaved off half the beard of each.” This so shamed them that David said to them, “Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return.”⁴⁵ The same idea of a beard being cut off being a disastrous event recurs in Jeremiah’s

44 Pritchard 1969, 133.

45 2 Sam 10:5. In Leviticus a number of texts forbid shaving off the edges of the beard: see Lev 19:27, 21:5. This was, it seems, a mourning custom, a view strengthened by Isa 15:2 and its image of the king of Assyria as a razor, “the Lord will shave with a razor ... the head and the hair of the feet, and it will take off the beard as well.” The shaving of the feet occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible and is presumably hyperbole in Isaiah’s usage. Similar to Isa 15:2 are Isa 50:6, Jer 41:5, 48:37, Ezek 5:1, Ezra 9:3, cf. 1 Esd 8:71 which refers to the plucking out hair from the beard in mourning. Nazirites do not shave or cut their hair, see Num 6:18–19. 1 Cor 11:5–6 shows that the shaving of women’s heads was a sign of disgrace.

prophecy against Moab in Jer 41:5 where he says, “every head is shaved and every beard cut off.” Further instances can be cited, from Isa 15:2 and Deutero-Isa 50:6.

The apocryphal Epistle of Jeremiah 31, satirising Babylonian priests, says, “and in their temples the priests sit with their clothes torn, their heads and beards shaved, and their heads uncovered.” Here the shaven head and cut or pulled beard⁴⁶ are signs of lack of self-respect, defeat and of neglect.⁴⁷ In the Jewish Greek apocryphon *Joseph and Asenath*, of which an Armenian version exists, according to 28:14, Asenath is giving instructions to Joseph’s brothers and, “stretched out her right hand and touched Simeon’s beard and kissed him” and forbids him to act. This is an unusual description of touching a beard as a sign of intimacy, yet it also expresses Asenath’s authority, and the instruction that she gave was acceded to by Simeon and Levi.⁴⁸

Later, the Talmud in Treatise b. Shabbat 152a pronounces that the beard is an ornament of the face, while a strange story in b. Baba Batra 58^r uses the threat of cutting or pulling the beard to oppose necromancy and relates the following: “There was a certain magician who used to rummage among graves. When he came to the grave of R. Tobi b. Mattenah, (R. Tobi) took hold of his beard. Abaye came and said to him: ‘pray, leave him.’ A year later he (the magician) again came, and he [the dead man] took hold of his beard, and Abaye again came, but he [the dead man] did not leave him till he [Abaye] had to bring scissors and cut off his beard.” Further ancient sources could be adduced. Thus, both the dignity of the beard and the insult implied by pulling, plucking or cutting it off are consistent from antiquity on.⁴⁹ In some contexts, the significance was further reaching, marking victory over an opponent, his humiliation or even his replacement in power.

In a citation supposedly from Ben Sira, though not in any text we have of the book, we read: “A thin-bearded man is very astute; a thick-bearded one is a fool.

46 A different evaluation of touching or holding a beard is to be observed in 2 Sam 20:9, where Joab takes Amasia by the beard and kisses him. Here the taking of the beard apparently indicates intimacy, though the passage is strange in the context of biblical usage and is unique in the Bible.

47 Compare Ezra 9:3 and also Jer 41:5 and 1 Esd 8:71.

48 *Joseph and Asenath* was written in the Hellenistic Diaspora (perhaps in Egypt) in the last century BCE or the first centuries CE by a Greek-speaking Jew. In the Armenian version (Burchard 2010, 145) we read: եւ ձգեաց զձեռն իւր Ասենեթ եւ կալաւ զմարմացն նորա. In Stone (2012), 45, in an Abraham text, the beauty of a grey beard is praised.

49 In Horowitz and Rozenbaumas’s article of 1994 instances are adduced that show that cutting or damaging a beard is sometimes linked with or reckoned equal to spitting in someone’s face. See also in Ačarean—Manandean 1903, sect. 25, where the suffering of a “new martyr” is described: “certain ones slapped (him) and plucked out (his) beard and spit in (his) face.”

The one who blows in his glass is not thirsty. He who says, ‘With what shall I eat my bread?’ Take his bread from him. The one who parts his beard no one can overcome.”⁵⁰

Josephus (first century CE), *Jewish Antiquities* 2:233–236 relates the infant Moses’s *lèse majesté*—he threw Pharaoh’s crown to the ground. In the same story, as it is told in the Greek *Palaea* (9th century CE), the infant Moses both casts off Pharaoh’s crown and pulls his beard.⁵¹ The same incident occurs in §§ 8–10 of an Armenian apocryphon, *Of Moses and Aaron*⁵² but regarding the beard alone, without mention of the crown.⁵³ Pharaoh is furious and wishes to kill him. The court sages intervene, pointing out that Moses is a baby, and he is put to a test which vindicates him but causes his speech defect. The pulling of the beard means the same as casting off the crown; it is a profoundly insulting claim to the throne; which is why in these stories Pharaoh wishes to execute the infant Moses.⁵⁴

Attitudes to beards in the East are rather strikingly illustrated by two quotations from Western Christian chroniclers. In the thirteenth century CE, Jacques de Vitry in his *Brief History of Jerusalem*, speaks of the Syrian Christians, who,

do not shave their beards as do (i.e., not shave) the Saracens, Greeks, and almost all Easterners, but cherish them with great care, and especially glory in them, holding the beard to be a sign of manhood, an honour to the face, and the dignity and glory of man. Like as eunuchs, who are quite beardless, are thought to be contemptible and effeminate by the Latins, so these (the Easterners) think it to be the greatest disgrace not only to have their beards shorn, but to have a single hair pulled out of them.⁵⁵

Much later, in the fifteenth century (ca. 1480–1483), the acute and painstaking diarist, Felix Fabri of Ulm in Germany, on pilgrimage in the Holy Land, remarks:

50 Cited by Wright 2014, 183–193. The special virtue of a parted or divided beard is witnessed in other sources, some much later than the Talmud: many divided beards of holy men are mentioned in Hetherington 1974.

51 Translated by William Adler in Bauckham—Davila—Panayotov 2013, 589–590 with important references in his notes to the text. A variant of the story is also related in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 2.234–236.

52 Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Marsh. 438 (= OXL Marsh. 438), fols 55^r–57^r, edited and discussed in Stone, 2021, 134–153.

53 For a detailed discussion of this incident see in Stone, 2021, 144. This text is likely later than the sculpture in Alt’amar, but the tradition is ancient.

54 Another variant of this incident is to be seen in Rabbinic literature.

55 See Jacques de Vitry (H.J., 67–68).

Should any pilgrim form a friendship with any Saracen, he must beware of trusting him too far, for they are treacherous; and he must especially beware of laying his hand on his beard in jest, or touching his turban, even with a light touch and in jest: for this thing is a disgrace among them, and all jests are at once forgotten thereat, and they grow angry. Of this fact, I, Brother Felix Fabri, have had experience.⁵⁶

Let us examine two Armenian examples, relatively close in date to the Alt'amar relief. In Ch. 33 of *The Lawcode* of Mxit'ar Goš (1184), we can read his statutes concerning “for those who fight and pluck out beards.”⁵⁷ Thus a statute in Mxit'ar's law code, which is later than the Alt'amar sculpture, legislates for the exact situation represented in the relief.⁵⁸ Half a century later, the poet Frik (ca. 1234-ca. 1315), berating himself for his sins of pride and arrogance, says:

Greatly have I twisted a man's beard,
The burden came upon me, the slave,
Greatly have I gloried in my gold.⁵⁹

Frik had treated someone pridefully and so pulled his beard.⁶⁰ In this stanza he is expressing his regret at his high-handed action. In other Armenian sources,

56 Stewart 1905, 252. Observe also the comment of Samuel Rosanelli, cited in Horowitz—Rozenbaumas 1994, 1066–1067: “Les Arabes ne se saisiraient jamais de la barbe d'un entre eux lors une querelle car ils la tiennent pour sacrée et ils prêtent serment par elle. Ainsi en est-il également pour les juifs. Les juifs pieux ne la toucheraient même pas de peur un seul cheveu en tombe au sol et souille la vénérable barbe.” On p. 1067 these authors cite a text saying the same six hundred years earlier. We forego adducing further sources discussed by these authors, for they are much later than the period that interests us. The article is, however, fascinating and illuminates the shared attitudes towards the beard in this broad cultural realm of Jews, Muslims and eastern Christians.

57 See Thomson 2000, 147: Chapter 33 “Concerning the Statutes for those who fight and pluck out beards”: “*If men come to blows and one happens to be immature yet audaciously plucks out the beard* (փետտիցէ զմորոս) *of the mature one*, let the sentence be as follows: to have his hair cut in double amount, and to be beaten as is worthy, especially because he dishonoured the noble. But if the attacker is powerful or noble, let it be half the fine for the [loss of] one faculty.”

58 A similar passage is found in Grigor Tat'ewac'i's *Summer Volume* in his exegesis of the prohibition, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exod 20:13). He says that it includes ոչ փետել զգերս, կամ մորոս. զի այսպիսիքս մասունք են մարդասպանութեան գործով. “nor to pull out the hair or the beard, for such actions are a part of the act of murder,” Grigor Tat'ewac'i (G.K., 21). Grigor lived from ca. 1344–1409 and so is notably later than Mxit'ar Goš.

59 Stone—Bourjekian 2001, 47–56.

60 For the text of the poem see Tirayr 1952, 239.

we find the removing of beards or their pulling with the same very negative connotations.⁶¹ Thus, the Alt'amar relief highlights the angel's power by having him pull Jacob's beard. This, of course, stands in some tension with the biblical text in which Jacob's new name, Israel, is said to mean: "for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." (Gen 32:28).⁶²

Space does not permit us now to discuss the texts relating to Jacob's knee in further detail. The incident is strange and raises questions. The Alt'amar sculptor faced this complex of traditions and chose to represent the moment of the actual struggle. Seizing the beard, somehow damaging the thigh or knee both hint at "you have struggled with God", the expression taken from the renaming that is the climax of this incident. "Struggling with a human and overcoming" is perhaps a prolepsis of Jacob's successful meeting with Esau, but overcoming the Divine remains a mystery as is the identification of the "man." So, the scene encapsulates the exegesis and concretises its meaning.

Looking at the history of scholarship of the biblical apocrypha of the Old and New Testaments since the early twentieth century, it can be seen that the focus has broadened from the close-up study of works from the Second Temple Period and now it also embraces the history of the traditions embodied in those works and connected with their supposed biblical authors. We can discern two tendencies. One is the study the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha first as works in the (usually) Christian manuscripts and traditions that transmitted them, that is to study them first in their later religious and cultural contexts. Only then can their Jewish ancestor writings be considered. This approach is the so-called "New Philology." The second still infant tendency, of which this article is a partial outcome, is to study the traditions built upon these apocryphal works and the biblical characters giving rise to them in the cultural traditions that transmitted them. The complex Adam apocryphal material as it developed in Armenian, for example, should be studied as part of Armenian religious and cultural tradition. The meeting of such developments with art, expressed through iconography in particular, adds another dimension of this complicated picture. To understand central aspects of mediaeval Armenian culture, it is imperative to investigate these Armenian apocrypha, their form, function,

61 Nšanean 1915, 120. The sixteenth-century *Chronicle* by Grigor Kamaxec'oy speaks of the shaving of beard and tonsure in punishment. Much earlier, in the tenth century, tonsure, long hair and beard elongation become subjects of dispute between Bishop Xosrov Anjewac'i and Catholicos Anania Mokac'i: see Boisson—Mardirosian 2014, 831–832. This dispute took place in the context of Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian polemic. See the clear discussion by Cowe 1991, 6–7.

62 This is discussed in section 3 above.

and social and religious role. What we have said of Armenian, is also true of other national or language traditions as well. This fascinating task is only at its beginning.

5.2 *Christological Tradition and Art*

In the Christian world the sacral significance of the beard was formulated by certain Fathers of the Church. Clement of Alexandria considered the beard as a sign of power and authority; he equates it with wisdom and experience.⁶³ Bear in mind that Jacob's struggle is a crucial moment not only for him, but also for the whole *Sacra Historia*, for when he was named Israel, Jacob took on the role of the father of the elect people, so, it is not surprising that in the Alt'amar scene, Jacob is represented with an impressive beard.

In general, as we have shown above, any violence towards the beard is offensive and humiliating. In a Christian environment, this attitude is reflected in *Acts of Philip*, an apocryphon of about the 6th century.⁶⁴ Pulling the beard is also a warning sign. A passage in the 2nd-century apocryphon, *Acts of John*, is very telling. In this story, John says that, with James and Peter, he was present at the Transfiguration of Christ upon the mountain. In order to see the event better, John approached Christ, despite having been told to keep his distance. He was frightened by Christ's completely changed appearance, and Christ reproached him for his disobedience: "... and he, turning about, appeared as a small man and caught hold of my beard and pulled it and said to me, 'John, do not be faithless, but believing, and not inquisitive.'" There, where Christ had seized John's beard, he was in pain for thirty days; then John told his master again, and Christ said, "Let it be your concern from now on not to tempt him that cannot be tempted."⁶⁵

In plastic art, pulling someone else's beard is attested from Antiquity⁶⁶ and in Christian art, multiple forms⁶⁷ of this theme are widespread both in the East and the West.⁶⁸ Here we shall examine this act not as an expression of physical

63 Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, III, ch. III, 18–19 (Mondésert—Matray 1970, 44–47). It is well-known that Clement's writings both show a great knowledge of ancient traditions and also attempt to harmonise them with Christianity.

64 Bovon et al. 1997, 1251.

65 Hennecke 1975, 266.

66 A striking example is on the Ludovisi sarcophagus (250 CE, Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Altemps (Altemps Palace), Rome), which shows the victory of the Romans over the barbarians. Here a Roman soldier is pulling a barbarian's beard.

67 Cf. Garnier 1989, 92–94, 358–359.

68 Pulling the beard in art has been the subject of many studies: Jacoby 1987 wrongly thinks that this motif did not exist in antiquity and that in Europe it developed from the ninth



FIGURE 19.4 Christ and the Apostle John. Fresco of the Basilica of the Forty Martyrs in Saranda, ALBANIA (5TH–6TH CC.). FROM: ENDOLTSEVA—VINOGRADOV 2016.

strength, but as a sign of relative position of the two figures, as in the texts cited above. Here are several examples of this theme in art.

On the Basilica of the Forty Martyrs in Saranda (Albania, 5th–6th cc.) there is an early Christian fresco which constitutes one of the first examples of beard-pulling. The fresco is in the crypt and is dated to the early sixth century.⁶⁹ In it two men with haloes are pulling each other's beards (Figure 19.4). The figures have been identified recently by scholars as Christ and the Apostle John, while the scene is that described above in the *Acts of John*.⁷⁰

In Cappadocia (in Gülşehir, Karsi kilise), a fresco of the thirteenth century representing hell contains a group: a demon is pulling the beard of three ecclesiastics situated in the lap of Judas Iscariot, the traitor⁷¹ (Figure 19.5). This icon-

century under the influence of Muslim art (on p. 78 she cites Alt'amar). Endoltseva—Vinogradov 2016 expand the area in which this motif is known to be used.

69 Vitaliotis 2008, 409–410.

70 Endoltseva—Vinogradov 2016, 93–97. The previous interpretation also related to incidents in the apostles' lives. I. Vitaliotis identifies it as the Call of Matthew: Vitaliotis 2008, 409–410.

71 Judas is represented in profile with a rope around his neck, held by the devil. Judas points to an inscription which quotes mocking words, parodying those of Christ to the Elect (Matt 25:34), addressed to heretical bishops: Jolivet-Lévy 2001, 275, pl. 158, 160.



FIGURE 19.5 A demon is pulling the beard of three ecclesiastics in Hades. Fresco of the Karsı kilise, Gülsheir, Cappadocia (13th c.), detail
FROM: JOLIVET-LÉVY 2001



FIGURE 19.6 Council of Chalcedon. Fresco of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria (14th c.), detail
FROM: FILOW 1919

ography occurs on Byzantine documents. The October Volume of the *Menologium* of Simeon Metaphrastes, copied at the beginning of the twelfth century,⁷² contains initials with images, all devoted to the victory of the saints and martyrs over death. In this series, the initial of the life of Epimachos, represents him stamping on and pulling the beard of a defeated figure.⁷³

The iconography is known in Balkan art, where it serves to show the victory of the orthodox bishops over the heretics. It is used most in pictures of the Council of Chalcedon.⁷⁴ Examples are to be found in the fourteenth-century fresco of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria) (Figure 19.6)⁷⁵ and in the fresco of the Church of the Holy Trinity, in Cozia

72 Vatican Library, ms. Vat. gr. 1679, fol. 336^r.

73 Cf. Walter 2000, 56–58, 62–63, figs. 3–6. According to his martyrology, St Epimachus opposed the pagan judge of Alexandria, who persecuted the Christians. With immovable faith, he continued preaching during his interrogation and ordeal. At the very moment of his death, a miracle takes place and contrary to the judge's expectations, all the pagans convert to Christianity (*Acta Sanctorum*, Oct. t. XIII, ed. van Hecke et al. 1883, 720–724). Epimachos's act in this illumination stresses that victory.

74 Walter 1970, 258.

75 The fresco shows the orthodox bishops seated in several rows before Emperor Marcianos.



FIGURES 19.7A–B Capitals of the Basilica of the Notre-Dame-du-Port at Clermont-Ferrand, France (12th c.); a) The punishment of Adam and Eve; b) Appearance of the angel to Joseph (Matt 1:19)

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(Romania).⁷⁶ The motif was widely diffused in mediaeval Western art. The iconography is found on many Romanesque capitals. The capital of the Basilica of the Notre-Dame-du-Port at Clermont-Ferrand (France),⁷⁷ shows the punishment of Adam and Eve (Figure 19.7a). Adam grasps Eve by her hair, which act shows that he blames Eve for the loss of paradise and that he wishes to kill her. An angel, who dominates the situation, seizes Adam's beard, showing that he is acting contrary to divine will. Another capital of the same Basilica has the scene of the Appearance of the Angel to Joseph (Matt 1:19) (Figure 19.7b).⁷⁸ The

The heretics, standing, are grouped at the left. The last bishop in the first row pulls the long beard of the heresiarch. See Filow 1919, 28–30, pl. LIII; Walter 1970, 79–80, figs. 37, 117. A. Grabar observes that the occurrence of this iconography of orthodoxy in Bulgaria in the fourteenth century is the result of the growth of heretical sects in that period: Grabar 1928, 279–280. He says that the frescoes of the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul at Tarnovo faithfully preserve motifs of early Hellenistic art, *ibid.*, 271–281.

76 Here too, an orthodox bishop pulls the beard of a heretical one. The church dates from the fourteenth century, but the frescoes were re-painted during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Walter 1970, 97–99. Electronic source: Asociația Focus Oltenia.

77 Electronic source: Art-Roman.

78 Endoltseva—Vinogradov 2016 (fig. 11.1), find this scene in a relief of unknown date and provenance, in the Abkhazian State Museum (Sukhum).

angel pulls Joseph's beard, in order to forestall his intention of repudiating Mary when he discovers her pregnancy. The angel's action is the visual expression of the wrong which Joseph is about to perform and it is intended to prevent him from opposing the divine will, as happened in the case of Adam.⁷⁹

So, in relation to the image on the Aġt'amar relief, we can now say that in this image, which we take to represent Jacob's struggle with the "angel," the beard-pulling indicates Jacob's submission to divine power, which is represented by the angel. This signifies that the situation is dominated by a supreme power, exactly like the word of Christ in the episode of the *Acts of John*: the command "not to tempt him that cannot be tempted."

6 The Wound

On our Aġt'amar relief, a dog is biting Jacob's leg, and that bite makes explicit Jacob's pain resulting from the struggle.

That Jacob received a wound in the struggle is an important point in Gen. 32:25–31.⁸⁰ In Hebrew the site of the wound is בִּכְף־רֵגְלוֹ. In the Greek Bible the angel touches τοῦ πλατύς τοῦ μηροῦ αὐτοῦ, "the flat place of his thigh" (Gen 32:26).

6.1 Linguistic Approach

It is worth observing that the Hebrew כֶּף means "thigh" and not "hip". The word כַּף designates a hollow and is used for the palm of the hand and the sole of the foot. The phrase כֶּף־רֵגֶל means then "indentation of the thigh." The human thigh has an indentation at its posterior side above the knee joint. That indentation is called the popliteal fossa and it is often known as "hough" (Scottish) or "knee pit."⁸¹ It is at the lower end of the posterior aspect of the thigh, above the knee joint; everyone is familiar with it, though we can only glimpse our own.

Anatomists describe the fossa as 'framed' or created by the insertions of the hamstring muscles, which stretch from the pelvic bones above to the leg bones below; and by the two-headed origin of the gastrocnemius muscle of the lower

79 On the symbolism of the capitals of Notre-Dame-du-Port at Clermont-Ferrand, see Bawschet—Bonne—Dittmar 2012, 229.

80 Harl 1986, 243, note on Gen 32:26.

81 Derived from Latin *popliteus* "knee" and *fossa* "ditch, trench." OED, s.v. "Hough" gives: 'The hollow part behind the knee-joint in humans; the adjacent back part of the thigh.' "Knee pit" is an analogy on "armpit," so OED.

leg, which stretches down the back of the leg to form the Achilles tendon of the ankle. The hamstrings and gastrocnemius muscle give the back of the leg most of its power; even mild damage to them is disabling, until they heal. Perhaps more importantly, the great nerves and arteries of the thigh and leg lie deep to, and are protected by, these strong muscles, but become superficial—close to the skin—in the popliteal fossa, making them vulnerable to piercing injury. Intriguingly, the Armenian Bible uses the word սմնլսզիլ which means “hamstring” in its translation of the term in Gen 32:26. Many medical sources refer to hollows at the back of the lower limb; the popliteal fossa is the largest of them and ‘contains’ vital arteries and nerves;⁸² It is rather likely that it is to the popliteal fossa that the Hebrew expression refers.

In Gen 32:32 in NRSV we read: “Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the hip socket, because he struck Jacob on the hip socket at the thigh muscle.” However, “hip socket” does not closely reflect the Hebrew כֶּֿרֶךְ־יָרֵךְ, for as we have seen, the word יָרֵךְ does not mean “hip,” but thigh, and indeed was thus translated in the RSV. In light of the discussion above, we propose that most probably we should translate something like: “... do not eat the hamstring muscle that is on the hough (popliteal fossa) because he struck Jacob in the hough, in the hamstring.” The Armenian version, as noted, translates the term in Gen. 32:25 as “hamstring.”⁸³ The ancient tradition which the Armenian Translators knew, approximated the original meaning of the expression.⁸⁴ This is reflected in an Armenian apocryphal text which says, “he seized Jacob’s hamstring muscle. He twisted the joint below the knee and lamed him.”⁸⁵

6.2 Christological Approach

Mediaeval representations often show the wounding of Jacob. On the Brescia sarcophagus, the angel’s action is not very explicit: he holds out his

82 I (MES) am grateful to Professor Jonathan Stone, Professor of Anatomy in the University of Sydney, who proposed this to me and assisted in the technical aspect of the formulation of this presentation.

83 See *NBHL* s.v. and Bedrossian 1875–1979 s.v.; *NBHL* defines it as tendons behind the knee.

84 In the *Commentary on Genesis* attributed to Step’anos Siwnec’i, it is also called սմնլսզիլ “hamstring.”

85 The text occurs in Stone 2012, 74 (text), 77 (translation). This is our translation in light of the considerations above. The attack was on Jacob’s զիւն “thigh” in Elišē’s *Commentary on Genesis*, Khachikyan et al. 2004, 178–179, the earliest surviving Armenian commentary on Genesis. M. Papazian’s translation of ազդր as “hip” on p. 179 of Khachikyan et al. 2004 is probably influenced by the NRSV, for it also means “thigh.” The thigh is also the interpretation of the Alt’amar relief.

hand towards Jacob's leg (Figure 19.3). But, usually, following the biblical text, the wound is on Jacob's ham or thigh.⁸⁶

Jacob's wounding was the object of various speculations in Patristic literature. Some see in it a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings in the Passion.⁸⁷ Others link it to the symbolism of the Cross.⁸⁸ These approaches again connect Jacob with Christ. In any case, our relief shows the location of the bite by the dog, which is at the knee.

So far, only one text accords directly with this image. This is an apocryphal narrative concerning the patriarchs, *The Memorial of the Forefathers*.⁸⁹ According to this text Jacob's wound is on "the joint below the knee." Here is this work's description of the event:

And Jacob, smitten with fear, tried to kill him, lest he kill him. And when it became light, the Lord said to him, "Leave me, for behold, it has become light." And Jacob said to him, "I will not leave you until you say your name." A[nd] he said to him, "Why do you ask about my name? My name is wondrous. But you will not be called Jacob, but Israel will be your name, for you resisted God. Leave me." And Jacob did not leave him go until he seized Jacob's hamstring. He twisted the joint below the knee and lamed him. And then he disappeared from Jacob. And Jacob, coming to his senses, gave glory to God.⁹⁰

Although the manuscript is late, it is significant that the text survived in a Vaspurakan manuscript of the fifteenth century.⁹¹

Here we shall discuss several hypotheses which associate the detail in question to the theme of the sacred genealogy.

In the Bible there is a connection between "knee" and "birth". Some examples are: the maidservant gives birth on barren Rachel's knees (Gen 30:3); Joseph's children are brought to Jacob's knee to receive the blessing (Gen 48:12) and the

86 Cf. Weitzmann—Bernabo 1999, figs. 435–437.

87 Dulaey 2001, 154–157.

88 Dulaey 2001, 156.

89 The text bears the title "Ի տոյն անոր յիշատակ նախահարցն. Աբրահամու. Իսահակայ եւ Յակոբայ."

90 "... եւ Յակոբ ոչ թողոյր զնա ի բաց. մինչեւ կալաւ զամուլաշլէն Յակոբայ: ոլորեաց զծալելիսն ի ներքոյ ծնկանն. եւ կաղացոյց զնա. եւ ապա աներեսոյթ եղև ի Յակոբայ. եւ Յակոբ ի միսս իւր եկեալ տար լիստս Աստուծոյ:" Stone 2012, 74 (text), 77 (translation).

91 Yerevan, Matenadaran, ms. (M) 1665 (Miscellany of the year 1445), fols. 173^v–182^v. The manuscript was copied in the village of Tayşol (Vaspurakan), by Step'annos *erēc'* for the priest Karapet.

sons of Makir, son of Manasseh, are born on Joseph's knee (Gen 50:23). Job 3:11–12 relates an important instance, “Why have I found knees to receive me?” Here the expression reflects the custom of making the new-born child known by putting it on its father's knees. It is interesting that in Armenian Job 3:11–12, the word γόνατα “knees, lap” is translated either *ծունկը* “knees”⁹² or *ծնունդը* “birth.”⁹³

It is interesting to note that for certain Fathers of the Church Jacob's wound (on his thigh, as in the biblical text) refers both to the birth and Passion of Christ. According to them, it indicates that Christ, who is going to suffer the Passion, is to be born from the descendants of Jacob. For them, then, the thigh is a euphemism for the sexual organs. Thus, Jacob's wounding is related to his progeny.⁹⁴

The possibility cannot be dismissed that the iconography of Ałt'amar is also related to the idea of the sacred genealogy and indicates that Jacob is an ancestor of Christ. This is the more so since this theme plays a significant role in the Old Testament cycles of the vine scroll frieze.⁹⁵ Finally, the connection of the ideas of “knee” and “birth” is familiar in Armenian iconography. One can cite two examples, though they are distant from Ałt'amar in both time and place. The fourteenth-century bas-relief on a tympanum at the monastery of Noravank', shows the Virgin and Child in majesty (Figure 19.8). It includes the image of a lion resting its head and part of its body on the left knee of the Virgin. The infant Jesus is presented in such a way that he is sitting partly on his mother's knee and partly on the lion. Thus, this image, which exalts the incarnation of the Word, highlights that the mother and child have issued from the tribe of Judah (indicated by the lion), thus fulfilling the messianic prophecy (see Gen 49:9). The other example is to be found in the contemporary Bible of Yesayi Nč'ec'i (1318).⁹⁶ A full-page illumination presents the Tree of Jesse, a symbolic image of the genealogy of Christ, following the prophecy of Isaiah on the birth of the Messiah from the stump of Jesse, father of King David (Isa 11:1–2). In this composition the portrait of David as the ancestor of

92 Cox 2006, 64: “Ընդէ՞ր դիպեցան ինձ ծունկը, եւ ընդէ՞ր դիեցի գտիհնս.” According to Cox this is the original reading: *ibid.*, p. 280.

93 Zōhrapean 1805, 476: “Ընդէ՞ր դիպեցան ինձ ծնունդը, կամ ընդէ՞ր դիեցի եւ գտիհնս մօր իմոյ.” On the semantic connection between the two ideas, see Ačaiyan 1973, 472–473, s.v. “Ծունկ” and 457–458, s.v. “Ծիհն.”

94 Dulaey 2001, 158.

95 Cf. Vardanyan 2014, 713–716; Vardanyan 2019, 395–396.

96 Yerevan, Matenadaran, ms. (M) 206, fol. 258^v. The Bible was copied at Gladzor and illuminated by T'oros Tarōnac'i.



FIGURE 19.8 The Virgin and Child in majesty. Bas-relief on a tympanum on the monastery of Noravank', Armenia (14th c.), detail

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Christ is inserted into the trunk of the tree, at a joint, a place designated in Armenian by the words ծունկ and մայրան.⁹⁷

7 The Dog

The preceding studies of the Old Testament cycles of the vine scroll frieze, uncovered the meaning of certain representations of animals included in the scenes. These animals do not represent their species but have a purely symbolic meaning. The Aht'amar vine scroll frieze treats them as code ciphers representing natural or cosmic elements. It has already been stressed that the semantic significance of the animals in the frieze goes far beyond the explanations of the *Physiologus* or other mediaeval bestiaries, and often draws upon ancient mythological and oriental sources.⁹⁸

In the scene of Jacob's struggle, a dog is depicted which is a way of indicating Jacob's pain from the struggle. Moreover, in the coding of the animal ciphers in the frieze, the dog has a complex meaning. The dog appears more than once, and on each occasion two features characterise it: (1) it accompanies an angel who has appeared to humans; (2) it is always found with an angel in scenes which take place at night, and the night plays an important role in the symbolic meaning of the said scenes.⁹⁹

The dog has an important place in the mythologies of various civilizations. In many myths and legends, the dog is a companion of the gods and goddesses in their heavenly journeys, their protector and an intermediary between gods and men.¹⁰⁰ The dog itself is considered a psychopomp, it guides souls to the kingdom of the dead; it is also guardian of the kingdom of the dead in many mythologies.¹⁰¹

In Armenian mythology too, there was a connection between the dog and the dead. Many sources speak of the *aralēz*, mythical beings issuing from the god, which descended from heaven to lick the wounds of heroes in order to

97 Cf. *NBHL*, 1.1027, s.v. “Ծունկն/Ծունկ բուսոյ,” *NBHL*, 2.201, s.v. “Մայրան.”

98 Vardanyan 2014, 712; see the examples there on pp. 724–725, 729–730; Vardanyan 2019, 389–391.

99 In the frieze the dog also features in the cycles of Moses and John the Baptist. A full study of these cycles is under preparation.

100 Duchaussoy 1972, 135–139.

101 The most famous are Egyptian Anubis, jackal- or dog- headed god of the dead and guide of souls and the Greek Cerberus, the monstrous triple-headed god who guards Hades. However, similar canine-looking beings are found in many other mythologies.

resuscitate them.¹⁰² It is important to note that the legends concerning them were particularly current in the region of Van.¹⁰³

Because of its function as psychopomp, the dog appears on many early Christian funerary monuments. A dog is frequently represented beside the dead, on sarcophagi and in catacombs.¹⁰⁴ In Armenia this cult is expressed on funerary stelae of the early Christian period, many of which bear the image of a cynocephalic saint.¹⁰⁵

All these designations connected with death and the chthonic world are related to the night. In ancient mythology, the deities of whom a dog is an attribute are connected with the night and the moon.¹⁰⁶ In certain Armenian sources, the word *gišer* (գիշեր ‘night’) is interpreted as deriving from *geš* (գեշ ‘death’), as in the *Commentary on Genesis* by Timot’ēos *vardapet* (10th–11th cc.).¹⁰⁷

Thus, the dogs in the frieze of Alt’amar represent a polyvalent image in which the diverse symbolisms related to this animal are combined. In their role as companion, dogs accompany angels and serve as intermediaries between this world and the beyond. Their presence in night-time scenes make them a symbol of the night and of darkness (խուսար), and it is precisely “darkness” that applies equally to night and to death. In the scene of Jacob’s struggle, in addition to the pain Jacob experienced,¹⁰⁸ the dog signals that the combat was at night.

Indeed, in the Bible, the scene takes place at night for “a man wrestled with him until daybreak.” (Gen 32:24). Philo gives this night-time a more profound symbolic meaning than simply the time of the day. It is the darkness of Jacob’s previous life, dispersed now under the light of the vision of God:

102 Their name is associated first and foremost with the legend of Ara Gelec’ik (the Handsome). Movsēs Xorenac’i, Eznik of Kolb, P’awstos Buzand, Sebēos, and Dawit Anyal’ (the Invincible) speak of the dog-like legendary beings who revive the dead. The dog is also present in the legend of Sanatruk as an instrument of divine Providence (Movsēs Xorenac’i, *History*, 2.36). On the other hand, in the Artavazd legend, dogs gnaw through his chains to free him and his liberation means the end of the world (Movsēs Xorenac’i, *History*, 2.61).

103 Sruanjteanc’ 1874, 52–53 (ch. 14).

104 Crippa—Zibawi 1998, pl. 6; *DACL* III/1 (1913), 1323–1325, s.v. “Chien,” fig. 2795.

105 This relates to the lunar triad, Artemis, Selene and Hecate: Duchaussoy 1972, 135–139.

106 Grigoryan 1912, 60–63, 73, figs. 1–9.

107 Akinean 1952, 15.

108 Compared with the other images of dogs in the frieze, this one looks like a wolf. Perhaps the reason is that only in this scene does the dog attack and do damage. It is interesting that in the Armenian folk traditions, the wolf is one of the evil demons of the night, which idea is echoed in the *Book of Laments* of Gregory of Narek (69.2), Mahé 1983, 260–262.

For having been in touch with every side of human life and in no half-hearted familiarity with them all, and having shirked no toil or danger if thereby he might descry the truth, a quest well worthy of such love, he found mortal kind set in deep darkness over earth and water and the lower air and ether too. For ether and the whole Heaven wore to his eyes the semblance of night, since the whole realm of sense is without defining bounds, and the indefinite is close akin, even brother, to darkness. In his former years the eyes of his soul had been closed, but by means of continuous striving he began though slowly to open them and to break up and throw off the mist which overshadowed him. For a beam purer than ether and incorporeal suddenly shone upon him and revealed the conceptual world ruled its charioteer. That charioteer, ringed as he was with beams of undiluted light, was beyond his sight or conjecture, for the eye was darkened by the dazzling beams. Yet in spite of the fiery stream which flooded it, his sight held its own in its unutterable longing to behold the vision.¹⁰⁹

Christian commentators also insist on the nocturnal character of the struggle. Origen's formulation is: "If you ask why God, when he talks with him in the nighttime dream does not say to him, 'Israel, Israel,' but 'Jacob, Jacob,' it is doubtless because it was night and he was then only worthy of hearing God's voice in a dream and not yet directly."¹¹⁰ Others, including Cyril of Alexandria, compare the morning star with the light of truth.¹¹¹

8 Conclusion

This analysis has considered the scene of Jacob's wrestling with the angel and its meaning. The scene is to be understood as part of a broader reading of the vine scroll frieze Old Testament images as imbued with Christian ideas, all leading towards Christ and redemption. There are non-biblical elements in the scene, particularly but not only, the beard-pulling, which are to be understood against the background of Near Eastern culture from antique times and down to the present. An example of combined symbolic and mythological meaning was conveyed by the dog, which symbolises both the pain of Jacob's wound and

109 Philo, *De praemiis et poenis*, §§ 36–38 (Philo, vol. VIII, 332–335).

110 Origen, *Homilies on Genesis*, 15.4 (Doutrelau 1976, 360–361).

111 Dulaey 2001, 165.

also the night-time in which the event took place, as well as the dog's relationship with people. The multiple interpretations of the knee, bitten by the dog, are explored, again bringing to light aspects both of iconography and of textual interpretation.

The more general point of this paper is to show how apocryphal elements in a scene can be understood by having recourse to textual material that exhibits the same elements, and vice versa. This method will enrich the understanding of art historians and also students of para-biblical texts, in order properly to perceive the Armenian biblical understanding which informs both.

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Acrostics in Armenian Ecclesiastical Poetry

Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan

Wenn einmal die Zeit gekommen sein wird, eine allgemeine Geschichte der literarischen Kunstformen und Spielereien in ihrer großen internationalen Ausbreitung, ihren genetischen Zusammenhängen und ihren mannigfaltigen Erscheinungsformen zu wagen, so wird die Akrostichis ein ansehnliches Kapitel beanspruchen.

KARL KRUMBACHER¹



1 Introduction

Still as a postgraduate student, inspired by Karl Krumbacher's investigations on acrostics in Greek-Byzantine ecclesiastical poetry, I felt inspired by his vision of creating a critical history of the acrostic in world literature. My idea was to pursue this form of *technopaignia* in Armenian literature.

Now, finally, a suitable occasion has presented itself to give expression to this long-cherished wish—and what could be better than to dedicate the results of this first approach as a festive gift to a person who has a fine philological flair for Armenian mediaeval literature and the appropriate disposition to understand its linguistic and formal games.

In doing so, I am following the tradition of Armenian-English collegial relationships with a sense of humour, wit, and charm, passed down in the correspondence between Charles Dowsett, the first Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at the University of Oxford (1965–1991) and my father Geworg Abgaryan (1920–1998), an Armenologist at the Matenadaran, the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan. The latter included an acrostic in his scientific book review of Dowsett's volume on the bard Sayat'-Nova.

¹ Krumbacher 1904.

The early Christian Armenians, who were familiar with pre-Christian ancient oriental, Mesopotamian and biblical poetry and with Greek-Byzantine ecclesiastical poetry in particular, enjoyed the use of plays on words and letters in almost all of its main forms from the very beginning of Armenian literature in the 5th century CE.

We encounter one of the early acrostics in the Armenian version of Ahiqar, dated to the fifth century CE: “My son, they gave the wolf cub an education and said: now say A (ayb), B (ben), C (gim) and he says: Ayc (goat), Boyc (food), Gařn (lamb)”.²

The present study should serve as a basis for a systematic analysis of acrostics in Armenian literature, beginning with ecclesiastical poetry, namely the *Hymnarium* of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the *Šarakanoc*’, in order to continue future investigations on this topic in the collections of hymns (*Ganjaran*, *Tataran*, *Ergaran*) as well as in mediaeval poetry and prose in general, in which even historiographical and grammatical works should be included.

2 Akrosticha in the Hymnal *Šarakanoc*’

The first recorded acrostics in the *Hymnarium* are alphabetical which, in full or incomplete form, represent the most common form of acrostics. The first complete and dated abecedarian poem comes from the pen of Komitas Ałc’ec’i († 628) in the hymn to the martyr Virgin Hřip’sime and her 40 companions. The *incipit* “Anjink’ nuirealk’” of the *šarakan* with its 36 stanzas developed into the common term for this special type of acrostic in Armenian mediaeval literature. The literary *terminus technicus* “*cayrakap*” emerged only later and is a partial calque on the Greek umbrella term “acrostic”. Thus, the earliest name for the alphabetical acrostics was *Anjink*’, a designation shared also by the last *šarakan* of the *Hymnarium*, penned by Kirakos Erznkac’i (ca. 1270–1356) and dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God Maria. This *šarakan*, “Arewelk’ gerarp’i”, which consists of 36 stanzas, each of which begins, in sequence, with the 36 letters of Armenian alphabet.³

To make the creation of such acrostics easier, neologisms were created especially, as evidenced by the Lexicon⁴ of the Armenian language, the *Nor Bargirk*’

2 Martirosyan 1969, 171.

3 Santurĵyan 2000, 58–68.

4 Cf. *NBHL* I, 902–904.

Haykazean Lezui, next to entirely new forms, variants of some lexemes were adapted for this purpose, mostly for those letters which were rarely found word-initially:

R (Ր):

րամ / րամեմ (instead of երամ / երամեմ), ընական / ընական (instead of Որ-էն-ական, i.e. belonging to Yahweh), ընասոս (instead of Որ-էն-ասոս, seeing Yahweh), րախ / րախական / րախանամ / րախակից / րախարար / րախացուցիչ (instead of ուրախ / ուրախական / ուրախանամ / ուրախակից), րագարդ / րակերպեալ / րակերտ (instead of հրագարդ / հրակերտ / հրակերպեալ), րախնական / րախնան / րախնանաբար / րախնանագոյն / րախնանամ / րախնանարան (instead of իրախնական / իրախնան / իրախնանաբար / իրախնանագոյն / իրախնանամ / իրախնանարան), րահետ (instead of արահետ), րուպ (instead of տրուպ), etc.

W (Ի):

իւթ (instead of հիւթ), լիւծեալ (instead of հիւծեալ), լիսեմ (instead of հիսեմ), and լիւր (instead of իւր), etc.

Charles Dowsett composed the following parody on the ingenuity of Armenian mediaeval writers in the above-mentioned correspondence, which I would like to release, for the first time, on this occasion:⁵

Ode to Initial R

Րաբունի հայ Գետրոզ Աբգարեան,	Armenian Rabbi Geworg Abgarjan,
Րաշտ է թէ երգիծաբան եմ,	Clearly, I'm a satirist,
Րափիղ Բարոնեանի եւ Վոլտերի,	Friend of Paronean ⁶ and Voltaire,
Րաբրլէի'ին նման վտանգաւոր,	Dangerous like Rablelais,
Րոլանդսոնին նման ծաղրանկարիչ –	Caricaturist like Rowlandson ⁷
Րահմաթ յաւակնութեան իմում:	God's mercy be with my claim,
Րահետ սակայն կարող էիր գրել թէ՛	You could call it “groundbreaking”,

⁵ Letter to Gevorg Abgaryan from 10/02/1994.

⁶ Hagop Baronian (West Armenian pronunciation) or Yakob Paronean (1843–1891) is a famous West Armenian writer, who lived and acted in Konstantinopel.

⁷ Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827), an English painter and caricaturist.

Րէօսլէյնով բացատրեցի զանուն Ռաւսլինի	that I have explained Roslin's ⁸ name through <i>roeslin</i> . ⁹
Րոտմամբ սրտի, որովհետեւ	With the beating of the heart (I did it) because
Րակերտ էր արուեստագէտ, Րենական ճրիւք պարգեւեալ, Րամարէն այնպէս զովեալ.	He was a wonderful artist, Endowed with divine talents, Therefore praised by everyone.
Րոտել պէտք էր Րոտին անգլիացի, Րուպ բամբասող, Րաւդոսով զարկեալ.	One should comfort me, The unworthy Englishman, Gossiping sweetly, Obsessed with Rhodes,
Րոմով արբեցաւ անտարակոյս. Րոտէ նա քեզ սակայն 'ողորմեա':	Drunk with rum undoubtedly But he comforts you, have mercy on me!

The category of name acrostics similarly contributed to the emergence of a hymnographical nomenclature. The origin of the genre name *Ganj* is connected to the *incipit* of the non-canonical sacred poems by Grigor Narekac'i forming the name GRIGOR.

Following the ethical topos of the “figure of modesty” (*tapeinosis*) in mediaeval Christianity and diametrical opposition to the modern perception of individuality, the author hid his name in acrostics. In contrast to the custom of individualization that emerged in the course of the Enlightenment, in which an author would mark their own works with their name in order to protect them by copyright for the future, the mediaeval author counted himself as “one of the us”, as an insignificant unit in the community of believers. In modern times, the acrostic turned into a means of avoiding political censorship.

Like the adornment of Armenian churches, the preoccupation with ‘gimmicks’ (form games with the magic of numbers and letters) remains modest and limited in the canonical *Hymnarium* of the Armenian Apostolic Church, especially after the ecumenical and local synods reducing the ornamental music and poetry in the fourth (Synod of Laodicea, 363/64) and seventh (Synod of Dvin, 645) centuries.

In the corpus of the *Šaraknoc'*, however, there is a host of acrostics that testify to the spread of this form in Armenian hymnography, especially before the

8 T'oros Roslin (13th century), the most famous representative of the Cilician school of miniature painting.

9 Professor Charles Dowsett pointed to similarities with the Middle High German (Mittelhochdeutsch) word *roeslin* “small rose”; see Dowsett 1973, 218.

introduction of the Byzantine canon. A new wave of enthusiasm for acrostics emerges in the 11th–13th centuries in the poetry of Nersēs Šnorhali, Aristakēs Grič', and others.

The reawakening of this tradition and new influences from oriental ornamental poetry seem to give this genre a new impulse for the flowering of acrostic art in Armenian lyric poetry even beyond the church.

Before introducing the acrostic poems in ecclesiastical poetry, I would like to make a general comment on the authorship of the canons or the *šarakans* of the *Hymnarium*.

Not all attributions to certain authors can be reliably verified. Just as the sacred buildings in Christian architecture, which were initially built as small chapels and martyrions, were expanded and developed over the centuries, so the *šarakans* of the 1500-year *Hymnarium* of the Armenian Apostolic Church experienced several stages of “Reconstructions” around the original core of a hymn.

As a result of these redactions in the 7th, 8th, 12th, and 13th centuries by Barseł Čon, Step'annos Siwnec'i, Nersēs Šnorhali, Grigor Xul and Geworg Skewrac'i, the hymnographic canons today offer several chronological layers and therefore multiple attributions to authors and editors of different epochs.

3 Complete Alphabetical Acrostics

The complete alphabetical acrostics, including the verse or line acrostics found in the *Hymnarium* are attributed to Yovhan Mandakuni (ca. 403–490), Komitas Ałc'ec'i († 628), Sahak Jorap'orec'i († 703), Yovhannēs Ōj nec'i († 728), Yovhannēs Sarkawag (1045/50–1129), Nersēs Šnorhali (ca. 1100–1173), Grigor Skewrac'i (1160/70–1230), Nersēs Lambronac'i (1153–1198), Yovhannes Erznkac'i Pluz (1220/30–1293), and Kirakos Erznkac'i (1270–1356).

1. Ա–Բ / A–K' (Yovhannēs Erznkac'i Pluz)

Canon 40: Կանոն սրբոյն Գրիգորի մերոյ Լուսաւորչի / Canon of Saint Gregory, our Illuminator (“On going down into the pit”) / *Ōrhnut'iwn*¹⁰ *šarakan* / Plagal Tone / Mode 4,¹¹

10 For the structure of the hymnographic canon, see Drost-Abgarjan 2020, 449. *Ōrhnut'iwn šarakan* is the first ode in the composition of the Armenian canon and is named after the *incipit* of the model biblical ode “The Song of Triumph”, Exod 15,1–19 (ἄσσωμεν/ Cantemus / “I will sing unto the Lord”).

11 *Šarakan* 1861, 196–204.

2. Ա–Ք / Ա–Կ' (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 50: Երգ տեառն ներսիսի Հայոց կաթողիկոսի, ասացեալ յաղագս մեծի ուրբաթու գիշերին անտարանացն / Song of Lord Nersēs, the Catholicos of the Armenians on the Gospels to the Night of Great Friday / Plagal Tone 4;¹²
3. Ա–Ք / Ա–Կ' (Grigor Skewrac'i)
Canon 73: Կանոն Ճննդեան Յովհաննու Մկրտչին / Canon of Birth of John the Baptist / *Ōrhnut'wn* šarakan / Plagal Tone 1;¹³
4. Ա–Ք / Ա–Կ' (Komitas Alc'ec'i)
Canon 78: Կանոն Սրբոց Հռիփսիմեանց / Canon of Saint Hrip'simē and her companions / *Ōrhnut'wn* šarakan / Plagal Tone 4;¹⁴
5. Ա–Ք / Ա–Կ', line acrostic (Yovhan Mandakuni or Yovhannēs Ōj nec'i)
Canon 78: Կանոն Սրբոց Հռիփսիմեանց / Canon of Saint Hrip'simē and her companions / *Hambarji*¹⁵ šarakan / Plagal Tone 4;¹⁶
6. Ա–Ք / Ա–Կ', line acrostic (Yovhannēs Imastasēr Sarkawag)
Canon 104: Կանոն սրբոց Ղևոնդեաց / Canon of Saint Lewond and his Companions / *Mankunk'*¹⁷ šarakan / Plagal Tone 4;¹⁸
7. Ա–Ք / Ա–Կ' (Nersēs Šnorhali), hymnographical *Hexameron*¹⁹
Canon 105: Plagal Tone 3;²⁰
 - a. Ա–Զ (Monday): Երգ տեառն ներսեսի վասն երկրորդի ասուր արարչութեան(ն) եւ վասն երկնային զօրացն / Song of Lord Nersēs on the Second Day of Creation and on the Heavenly Hosts;
 - b. Է–Լ (Tuesday): Երգ վասն երրորդի ասուր արարչութեանն. եւ վասն երրորդի դարուն. եւ ի Յովհաննէս (Մկրտիչ) / Song on the Third Day of Creation and on the Third Age and of John (the Baptist);

12 *Šarakan* 1861, 258–268.

13 *Šarakan* 1861, 405–411.

14 *Šarakan* 1861, 432–439.

15 *Hambarji* šarakan is the 8th ode of the hymnographical canon, an evensong named after the *incipit* of the model Psalm 120:1 (Էրա / Levavi / “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills”). The numbering of the psalms in the Armenian Bible follows that of the *Sep-tuagint*.

16 *Šarakan* 1861, 439–442.

17 *Mankunk'* šarakan is the 7th ode in the composition of the Armenian canon and is named after the *incipit* of the model Psalm 112:1 (παῖδες / Servi / Praise ye the Lord, praise o ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord).

18 *Šarakan* 1861, 577–580.

19 Drost-Abgarjan 2009, 21–47.

20 *Šarakan* 1861, 584–595.

- c. Խ–Ղ (Wednesday): Երգ վասն չորրորդի ատուր արարչութեանն. և վասն չորրորդի դարուն. և վասն անտեսաց Աստուածածնին / Song on the Fourth Day of Creation and on the Fourth Age and on the Annunciation of the God-bearer / Theotokos (*Astuaacacın*);
- d. Ծ–Ո (Thursday): Երգ վասն վեցերորդի ատուր արարչութեանն. և վասն հինգ(երրորդի) դարուն և ի սուրբ Առաքելալսն Քրիստոսի / Song on the Fifth Day of Creation and on the Fifth Age and on the Holy Apostles of Christ;
- e. Զ–Վ (Friday): Երգ վասն վեցերորդի ատուր արարչութեան. և վասն վեց(երրորդի) դարուն և ի խաչելութիւնն Քրիստոսի / Song on the Sixth Day of Creation and on the Sixth Age and on the Crucifixion of Christ;
- f. Տ–Ք (Saturday): Երգ վասն եօթներորդի ատուր արարչութեան(ն). և վասն եօթ(ներորդի) դարուն և ի խորհուրդ հանգստեանն / Song on the Seventh Day of Creation and on the Seventh Age and on the Mystery of Rest.
8. Ա–Ք / A–K', line acrostic (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 107 / Tone 3:²¹
- a. Ա–Լ: Երգ երրորդ ժամու ատուրն / Song of the Third Hour of the Day after the psalm *Have mercy upon me, o god* (Ps 50);
- b. Խ–Ո: Երգ վեցերորդի ժամուն / Song of the Sixth Hour of the Day;
- c. Զ–Ք: Երգ իններորդ ժամու(ն) / Song of the Nine Hour of the Day.
9. Ա–Ք / A–K' (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 124: Տեսան ներսիսի ասացեալ վասն ննջեցելոց / Canon of Nersēs sung on the Departed / Plagal Tone 2/3:²²
10. Ա–Ք / A–K' (Kirakos Erznkac'i)
Canon 133: Արեւելք գերարսիին / The Splendid Sunrise (Անձիսք սուրբ Աստուածածնին²³ / Anjink' of Saint God-bearer or Շարական վերափոխման²⁴) // Šarakan of Dormition, Plagal Tone 4.²⁵

21 *Šarakan* 1861, 598–601.

22 *Šarakan* 1861, 692–700.

23 In the Eǰmiciacın edition of the *Šarakanoc'* without heading, cf. manuscript no. 400 in Venice.

24 In the Jerusalem edition of *Šarakanoc'* (1936), S. 993.

25 *Šarakan* 1861, 747–553.

4 Partial Alphabetical Acrostics

This type of alphabetical acrostic seems to consist of fragments of earlier poems in full alphabetical order. They consist usually of the first three to five letters of the Armenian alphabet, from A (Ա) to G (Գ), D (Դ), or E (Ե). Apparently, these fragments were used as building blocks for the composition of a canon by later editors. Similar to the *Kontakia* of Romanos the Melodist (6th century), this form of Armenian hymns, which may have been popular and widespread from the beginning, is not included in the ecclesiastical canon of liturgical chants.

A reference to this fact can be found in the collection of the apocryphal *šarakan* by Sahak Amatuni. In his edition of the hymns outside of the text corpus of *Šaraknoc'*, five more alphabet-letter stanzas (ten in total) have survived in the *Tēr-yrknic' šarakan* of the *Canon of the Finding of the Holy Cross* (No. 96) by Sahak Jorap'orec'i from the 7th century than is the case in the print editions of the Hymnal (here only five).²⁶

Partial or incomplete acrostics can be found under the following authors' names: Sahak Jorap'orec'i, Nersēs Šnorhali, Nersēs Lambronac'i and Petros Getadarj (†1058).

1. Ա-Դ / A-D (Anania Širakac'i, Movsēs Xorenac'i²⁷ or Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 22: Կանոն եօթանասուն եւ երկու աշակերտաց առաքելոց Քրիստոսի / Canon of Seventy-Two Pupils and Apostles of Christ / *Man-kunk'* šarakan / Stefi Tone;²⁸
2. Ա-Ե / A-E (Nersēs Lambronac'i)
Canon 76: Կանոն որդւոց եւ թոռանց սրբոյ Գրիգորի Լուսատւչին / Canon of the Sons and Grandsons of St Gregory the Illuminator: Aristakēs, Vrtanēs, Yusik, Grigoris and Daniel / *Hambarji* šarakan / Plagal Tone 4);²⁹
3. Ա-Ե / A-E (Sahak Jorap'orec'i)
Canon 93: Կանոն վեցերորդի ատուրն (վերացման խաչին) / Canon of the Sixth Day (of Exaltation of the Holy Cross) / *Ōrhnout'own* šarakan, Tone 2);³⁰

26 Amatuni 1911, 134 (cf. Santurjyan 2000, 62).

27 Without going into the polemic about Movsēs Xorenac'i's life dates (there is still no convincing consensus about it), I follow the ecclesiastical tradition that assigns him to the 5th century (cf. the chronology of the life dates of the authors of *šarakans*, e.g. in the Ējmiacin edition, 1861, p. 784, where Movsēs is introduced with the year 441 CE).

28 *Šarakan* 1861, 106–107. Stefi is a variation of the fourth Plagal Tone, which is characterised by a special ornamental melody. This mode was introduced by Nersēs Šnorhali (for solemn occasions), cf. Hakobyan 1992, 83–85.

29 *Šarakan* 1861, 425–426.

30 *Šarakan* 1861, 500–501.

4. Ա–Ե / A–E (Sahak Jorap'orec'i)
Canon 96: Կանոն Գիւտի սուրբ խաչին / Canon of the Finding of the Holy Cross / *Tēr yerknīc*³¹ šarakan, Tone 2;³²
5. Ա–Ե / A–E (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 102: Կանոն սրբոց հրեշտակացն Միքայէլի եւ Գաբրիէլի եւ ամենայն երկնային Զօրացն / Canon of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and of the Heavenly Hosts / *Tēr yerknīc*' šarakan, Tone 4;³³
6. Ա–Գ / A–G (Petros Getadarj)
Canon 122: Կանոն համօրէն ննջեցելոց ի Քրիստոս / Canon of All the Departed in Christ / *Tēr yerknīc*' šarakan, Tone 4).³⁴

To illustrate the second group of alphabetic acrostics, I would like to introduce the last-mentioned hymn in the German translation by Hermann Goltz and myself, which we carried out as part of the DFG (German Research Society) project “Translation of the Hymnarium of the Armenian Apostolic Church”.³⁵

From the second stanza it develops into a line acrostic.

Ահագին է օր դատաստանին.
եւ դողումն առաջի բեմին.
սարսափին հրեշտակք, սասանի
երկիր.
*ըզնընջեցեալսըն մեր մի անտես
սունէր.*³⁶
յահագին ատուր դատաստանին.
բարեխօսութեամբ սուրբ աստուած
ծածնին:

Ա (*Ahagin*)
Furchtgebietend ist der Tag des Richtspruchs
und Zittern vor dem Bema,
es erschrecken sich die Engel, erschüttert wird die Erde,
*unsre Entschlafenen nicht übersieh
am furchtgebietend Tage des Richtspruchs
auf Fürsprache der heilig Gottesgebälerin.*

31 *Tēr yerknīc*' the 6th ode in the composition of the Armenian canon, is named after the *incipit* of the model Psalm 148:1 (Τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν / “Praise ye the Lord from the heavens”).

32 *Šarakan* 1861, 516.

33 *Šarakan* 1861, 516.

34 *Šarakan* 1861, 682.

35 Now in print in the collection of East Christian patristic texts *Patrologia Orientalis* in the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, Brepols Publishers.

36 Italics mine.

Բանին դրունք երկնից
բարբառին հրեշտակք.
բանին գերեզմանք բորբոքին
զեհեան.
*ըզնընջեցեալսըն մեր մի անտես
առնէր.*
յահագին ատոր դատաստանին.
*բարեխօսութեամբ սուրբ աստուա-
ծածնին:*

Գալարին երկինք որպէս մագա-
ղաթ.
գերագոյն գոչէ փող գաբրիէլեան.
գերապանծ լուսով զարդարին
արդարքն.
*ըզնընջեցեալսըն մեր մի անտես
առնէր.*
յահագին ատոր դատաստանին.
*բարեխօսութեամբ սուրբ աստուա-
ծածնին:*

Բ (*Banin*)
Geöffnet werden die Tore der Him-
mel, Kunde geben Engel,
geöffnet werden die Gräber, es lodert
die Hölle,
*unsre Entschlafenen nicht übersieh
am furchtgebietend Tag des Richts-
pruchs
auf Fürsprache der heilig Gottesge-
bälerin.*

Գ (*Galarin*)
Eingerollt werden die Himmel gleich-
wie Pergament³⁷
überlaut ruft die gabrielische
Posaune,
mit überrühmlich Licht geschmückt
werden die Gerechten,
*unsre Entschlafenen nicht übersieh
am furchtgebietend Tag des Richts-
pruchs
auf Fürsprache der heilig Gottesge-
bälerin.*

5 Acrostics with Author's Name: Name in Nominative without Epithet

1. ՆԵՐՍԷՍ / NERSĒS (Nersēs Lambronac'i or Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 55: Կանոն նոր կիրակէին / Canon of the New Sunday / *Ōrhnut'awn* šarakan / Plagal Tone 3/4;³⁸
2. ՆԵՐՍԷՍ / NERSĒS (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 67: Կանոն երկրորդ ատուրն (Պենտեկոսէին) / Canon of the Second Day (of Pentecost) / *Ōrhnut'awn* šarakan / Plagal Tone 2;³⁹
3. ՍՏԵՓԱՆՆՍՍ / STEP'ANNOS (Step'annos Aparanc'i, 9th / 10th century).
Canon 90: Կանոն Երրորդ ատուրն (Վերացման խաչին) / Canon of the Third Day (Exaltation of the Holy Cross) / *Ōrhnut'awn* šarakan, Tone 3;⁴⁰

37 Isa 34:4.

38 *Šarakan* 1861, 297–298.

39 *Šarakan* 1861, 384–386.

40 *Šarakan* 1861, 492–494.

4. ԽԱՉԱՏՈՒՐ / XAČ'ATUR (Xač'atur Tarōnec'i, 12th/13th century)
Canon 103 / Šarakan¹²: Շարական զգեստու պատարագին / Šarakan of Vestment for the Sacrifice Office, Plagal Tone 4;⁴¹
5. ՎԱՐԴ(ԱՆ) / VARD(AN) (Vardan Vardapet?)
Canon 103 / Šarakan¹⁸: Շարական Կիրակոսի եւ Յուդիտայի / Šarakan of Kirakos and Yuditay, Plagal Tone 2.⁴²
6. ՆԵՐՍԷՍ / NERSĒS (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 105: Երգ (տեառն ներսիսի) առաջնոյ անոր միաշարքին. եւ ի խորհուրդ արարչութեանն. եւ Յարութեան Քրիստոսի / Song of Nersēs of the First Day of the Week and on the Mystery of Creation and the Resurrection of Christ;⁴³
7. ՆԵՐՍԷՍ / NERSĒS (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Canon 107: Երգ իններորդի ժամու / Song of the Ninth Hour of the Day / Tone 2;⁴⁴
8. ՍԱՐԳԻՍ / SARGIS (Sargis Sewanc'i, †1022)
Canon 119 / Hetewak 6: Կանոն համօրէն ննջեցելոց ի Քրիստոս / *Harc'* series of the Canon of All the Departed in Christ / *Ołormea* šarakan / Plagal Tone 2;⁴⁵
9. ՅԱԿՈԲ / YAKOB (Yakob Sanahnec'i †1085 or Yakob Klayec'i †1286)
Canon 121: Կանոն համօրէն ննջեցելոց ի Քրիստոս / *Harc'* series of the Canon of All the Departed in Christ / *Ołormea* Šarakan / Plagal Tone 3.⁴⁶

6 Author Name in Nominative with Epithet

Akrosticon Signature ԿԻՐԱԿՈՍ ՎԱՐԴԱՊԵՏ / “Kirakos Vardapet”
(Canon 133)

6.1 *Akrosticha with the Introduction of the Author's Name with the Epithet Տեառն (“of the Lord” / τοῦ κυρίου)*

Only Nersēs Šnorhali has this epitheton in the *Šarakanoc'* (cf. Canons 50, 105, 124):

1. Երգ տեառն ներսիսի Հայոց կաթողիկոսի / Song of the Lord Nersēs, the Catholicos of the Armenians (Canon 50);

41 *Šarakan* 1861, 557–558.

42 *Šarakan* 1861, 566–568.

43 *Šarakan* 1861, 583–584.

44 *Šarakan* 1861, 600–601.

45 *Šarakan* 1861, 665–666.

46 *Šarakan* 1861, 672.

2. Երգ տեանն ներսէսի / Song of the Lord Nersēs (Canon 105);
3. Տեանն ներսիսի ասացեալ վասն ննջեցելոց / On the Departed by the Lord Nersēs (Canon 124).

7 Acrostics with the Name of the Addressee of the Hymn

1. ՅԱԿՈՒԲԱՅ / YAKOBAY (“For Yakob” of Nisibis)
Canon 100: Կանոն սրբոյն Յակովբայ Սըծբնայ Հայրապետին / Canon of Patriarch St Jacob of Nisibis / *Ōrhnut’iwn* šarakan with *Hetewak* by Nersēs Klayec’i or Yovhannēs Erznkac’i;⁴⁷

7.1 Author Names with Name of the Genre: ԵՐԳ (“Song, Chant”) or ԲԱՆ (“Word, Logos”)⁴⁸

With copula է and demonstrative pronoun (in adjectival function) ԱՅՍ:

1. նԵՐՍԵՍԻ Է ԲԱՆ ԱՅՍ (*Nersesi ē bans ays*) (Nersēs Šnorhali)
“of Nersēs is this Word / Logos”
Canon 50: Նորին Երգ մեծի Ուրբաթու Ցերեկին / Song to the Great Friday Vesper of the same / Tone 3 (in 4 parts: before the readings from Matt 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66 and John 19:17);⁴⁹
2. ՅՈՒՀԱՆՆԻՍԻ Է ԵՐԳ (Yovhannēs Erznkac’ Pluz)
Yohanisi ē erg, “of Yovhannēs is (the) Song”.
Canon 103 / Šarakan¹⁴: Շարական եօթն Խոտաճատակացն / Šarakan of the Seven herbivorous men / Tone 2;⁵⁰
3. նԵՐՍԵՍԻ ԵՐԳ (Nersēs Šnorhali)
Nersesi erg, “Song of Nersēs”
Canon 103 / Շարական սրբոց Վարդանանց / Šarakan of Vardan and his Companions²² / Plagal Tone 4.⁵¹

Since *technopaignia* had been forbidden in canonical ecclesiastical poetry, the talented hymnographers enjoyed realising their literary fantasies outside the canonical *Hymnarium*.

47 *Šarakan* 1861, 528–529.

48 Compared to the variety of genre names in Byzantine poetry, e.g. in the same Romanos Melodos (ὠδή, ἄσμα, ποίημα, ἔπος, ἔπη, ὕμνος, ψαλμός, εὐχή, προσευχή, δέησις, θρήνος), we only have these two genre names in the *Šarakan* (cf. Krumbacher 1904, 630–636).

49 *Šarakan* 1861, 269–273.

50 *Šarakan* 1861, 560–563.

51 *Šarakan* 1861, 571–573.

One of the most beautiful examples of an alphabetical acrostic is the famous liturgical song of the Sunrise, *Arawōt Lusoy*, by Nersēs Šnorhali, the master of acrostic art in mediaeval Armenian poetry. He deserves an extra chapter in the history of the acrostic that has yet to be written. This chant, however, is not included in the *Šaraknoc* but is part of the Armenian Horologion, *Žamagirk*,⁵² and sung in the night office of the Armenian Church (գիշերային ժամ). I take the liberty of providing this masterpiece of ecclesiastical poetry together with its Latin translation, which partially reproduces the acrostic character of the original (verses 8, 22, 23 and 31).⁵³

Ejusdem S. Narsetis Patriarchae Hymnus praecatorius ad sanctissimam Trinitatem

(Line acrostic)

Առաւօտ լուսոյ.
արեգակն արդար.
առ իս լոյս ծագեալ:

*Aurora lucis,
sol juste,
in me lucem praetende.*

Բըղխումն ի հօրէ.
բըղխեա ի հոգւոյս.
բան քեզ ի հաճոյս:

*Processe a patre,
fac ut procedant ab anima mea,
verba tibi placita.*

Գանձդ ողորմութեան.
գանձիդ ծածկելոյ.
գըտող զիս արա:

*Thesaurus tuae misericordiae,
thesauri tui absconditi,
inventorem me fac.*

Դուռն ողորմութեան.
դասանողիս բաց.
դասեցո վերնոցն:

*Ostium misericordiae,
fidem profitenti aperi,
adjunge me superis.*

Երբեակ միութիւն.
եղելոց խնամող.
եւ ինձ ողորմեա:

*Trina unitas,
creaturarum provisor,
et mei misere.*

52 *Žamagirk* 1975, 29–32.

53 The author of the Latin translation is unknown. I published it for the first time on the basis of an unpublished Book of Hours from Venice in 1792, which has come down to us in Matenadaran manuscript (M) 117 (5a–6a), cf. Abgarian 1983, 607–608. In contrast to the original text, the names of reverence are written with lowercase, in order to avoid confusions with the acrostic.

Զարթիր, տէր, յօգնել.
զարթո ըզթմրեալս.
զուարթնոց նըմանիլ:

*Exurge, domine,
in adjutorium excita somno oppressum,
ut vigilantibus similis fiam.*

Էդ հայր անսկիզբն.
էակից որդի.
է միշտ սուրբ հոգի:

*Pater, qui ab aeterno subsistis,
coessentialis fili,
existens semper sanctus spiritus.*

Ընկալ զիս, գրթած.
ընկալ, ողորմած.
ընկալ, մարդասէր:

*Suscipe me, clemens,
suscipe, misericors,
suscipe amator hominum.*

Թագաւոր փառաց.
թողութեանց տըրող.
թող ինձ ըզյանցանս:

*Rex gloriae,
veniae largitor,
remitte mihi delicta.*

Ժողովող բարեաց.
Ժողովեա եւ զիս.
Ժողովս անդրանկաց:

*Congregator bonorum
agrega me
in coelum primogenitorum.*

Ի քէն տէր հայցեմ.
ի մարդասիրէդ.
ի՞նձ բըժշկութիւն:

*A te, domine, peto,
hominum amatore,
sanitatem.*

Լեր կեանք մեռելոյս.
լոյս խաարելոյս.
լուծանող ցաւոյս:

*Esto vita mortuo,
lux mihi in tenebris,
leva dolores.*

Խորհըրդոց գիտող.
խաարիս շնորհեա.
խորհուրդ լուսաւոր:

*Cogitationum gnarus,
accubenti largire,
consilium lucidum.*

Ծընունդ հօր ծոցոյ.
ծածկելոյս ստուերաւ.
ծագեա լոյս փառաց:

*Procedens e sinu patris,
latenti mihi sub umbra,
praetende lumen gloriae.*

Կենարար փրկիչ.
կեցո ըզմեռեալս.
կանգնեա զգըլորեալս:

*Vivifice redemptor,
vivifica mortuum,
erige lapsum.*

Հաստեա հաստով.
հաստատեա յուսով.
հիմնեցո սիրով:

*Corroborata fide,
confirma spe,
funda charitate.*

Ձայնիս աղաչեմ.
ձեռօքս պաղատիմ.
ձիր բարեաց շնորհեա:

*Voce mea deprecor,
manibus exquiro,
charisma bonorum largire.*

Ղամբարամբ լուսոյ.
ղեկավար ճարտար.
ղօղեալս ամրացո:

*Lampade lucis,
naucerus optime,
nectantem me, muni!*

Ճառագայթօ փառաց.
ճանապարհ ինձ ցոյց.
ճեպել ի յերկինս:

*Splendor gloriae,
notam fac mihi viam,
qua properem in coelum.*

Միածինըդ հօր.
մոյծ զիս յառագաստ.
մաքուր հարսանեացդ:

*Unigenite patris,
Introduce me in thalamum
Mundarum nuptiarum.*

Յորժամ գաս փառօք.
յահագին ատուրն.
յիշեա զիս քրիստոս:

*Quando venies cum Gloria,
In tremenda ille die,
memento mei, Christe.*

Նորոգող հնութեանց.
նորոգեա եւ զիս.
նորոգ զարդարեա:

*Renovator veterum,
renova et me,
rursus me exorna.*

Շնորհատու բարեաց.
շնորհեա զքաւութիւն.
շնորհեա զթողութիւն:

*Largitor bonorum,
largire expiationem,
largire remissionem.*

Ուրախացո տէր.
ոգույս փրկութեամբ.
ոյր վասն եմ ի սուգ:

*Laetificia domine,
salute animae,
cujus causa conturbor.*

Չար մըշակողին.
չար սերմանց նորին.
չորացո զպըտուղն:

*Maligni agricolae
malorum seminum
fructum extermina.*

Պարգելիչ բարեաց.
պարգևեա իմոց.
պարտեացս թողութիւն:

*Donator bonorum,
dona meorum
remissionem debitorum.*

Ջուր շնորհեա աչացս.
ջերմ հեղույ զարտօսր.
ջընջել ըզյանցանս:

*Aqua oculos,
ut fervidas fundant lachrymas
ad delenda delicta.*

Ռետիւնըք քաղցու.
ռամ հոգւոյս արբո.
ռահ ցոյց ինձ լուսոյ:

*Resina dulcedinis,
duram animam pota,
indica mihi lucis viam*

Սէր անուն յիսուս.
սիրով քով ճըմլեա.
սիրտ իմ քարեղէն:

*Amor, Jesus nomen,
amore tuo emolli
petreum cor meum.*

Վասըն գըթութեան.
վասն ողորմութեան.
վերըստին կեցո:

*Pro clementia,
pro misericordia,
salva me denuo.*

Տենչալոյդ տեսլեամբ.
տուր ինձ յագենալ.
տէր յիսուս քրիստոս:

*Desiderabili tuo aspectu,
da mihi saturari,
domine Jesu Christe.*

Րաբունդ երկնատր.
րոտեա զաշակերտս.
րամից երկնայնոց:

*Rabbi coelestis,
Agrega me discipulis
Chori coelorum.*

Տօղ արեան քո, տէր,
ցօղեա ի հոգիս.
ցընծասցէ անձն իմ:

*Rore domine, tui sanguinis,
asperge animam meam,
exulted spiritus meus.*

Իիծեալըս մեղօք.
իիծեալ աղաչեմ.
իւսել ինձ բարիս:

*Extenuatus a peccatis,
exinanitus obsecro
accumules bona.*

Փըրկիչ բոլորից,
փութա զիս փըրկել
փորձութեանց մեղաց:

*Salvator universorum,
festina ad me salvandum,
a tentationibus peccati.*

Քառիչ յանցանաց,
քաւեա զօրհնաբանս,
քեզ երգել ըզփառս:

*Expiator delictorum,
expia tui laudatorem,
uti tibi cantem gloriam.*

Աստուածածնին բարեխօսութեամբ. *Per intercessionem dei genetricis*
յիշեա, տէր եւ ողորմեա: *Memento domine et miserere.*

I would like to end my academic congratulations with an acrostic poem for the honorand, which I have woven from the alphabetic octosyllabic quatrains of Nersēs Šnorhali's didactic poem Տեառն ներսիսի Խրատ ոստմնականաց մանկանց ի դիմաց այբեւբնից տառից ռոսանաւոր տաղիւ չափոյ (Instruction for studious youngsters on behalf of the letters of the alphabet in metric rhymed verse by Lord Nersēs).⁵⁴

These personified letters teach students the wisdom of life by quoting biblical proverbs. This is a musico-poetic tradition fired by playful impulses that continues even to nowadays, for example in the song *Do-Re-Mi* in the famous film *The Sound of Music* by Robert Wise (1965).



*Instruction for Studious Youngsters on Behalf of the Letters of the
Alphabet in Metric Rhymed Verse by Lord Nersēs*

Acrostic: THEO MA(A)RTEN VAN LINT

ԹՈՅՆ

Թէ միտ դընես, ասէ, բանին
Իմաստութեան Սողոմոնին,
Ոչ կարօտիս իմում խրատին,
Քանզի նովաւ խոսի Հոգին:

T'O

It says: If you perceive
Solomon's wise sayings,⁵⁵
You don't need my advice anymore
Since through him the Holy Spirit
speaks.

ԵՉՆ

Երկնաւորացըն տայ ցանկալ,
Ի զերկրայնոցս ի բաց դատնալ,
Ուսմամբ գրոց զլաւորճանալ,
Իմաստութեամբ ուրախանալ:

EČ'

Let's strive for heavenly things,
To turn away from the earthly,
To have fun by studying the scriptures,
And to be in wisdom delighted.

54 *Nersēs* 1928, 369–379. This translation of the selected stanzas of the poem into a European language is presented here for the first time.

55 Allusion to Proverbs of Solomon 1:2.

ՈՅՆ

Ով դու, ասէ, մանուկդ ի բոյս,
 Նըման առ քեզ զԵղիսեոս,
 Որ ի մաշկեակըն հըպելոյս,
 Եթող ըզսէր ըստորնայնոյս:

ՄԵՆՆ

Մատուցանէ քեզ օրինակ
 Զորս ի մանկանց բարեաց ունակ
 ԸզԴանիէլ մանուկ յըստակ,
 Որ եւ ցանկայր նըմա հրեշտակ:

ԱՅԲՆ

— առաջին ըզքեզ, տըղայ,
 Հանէ յիմաստըն գերակայ.
 Երրորդութեանըն մերձակայ
 Լինիս երիւք ստեղամբք նորս:

ՐԷՆ

Րաբունաբար վարդապետէ,
 Քեզ ըզբարիս ուսուցանէ,
 Հնազանդ լինիլ ծերոց, ասէ,
 Որպես օրէնըն պահանջէ:

ՏԻՒՆՆ

Տայ քեզ խըրատ բան հոգեոր,
 Պահել զհոգիդ քո զգուշաւոր,
 Մի գոք հըպել արատաւոր,
 Եւ մի ունել չար մերձաւոր:

ԷՆ

Երանութեանց նախնի գոլով՝
 Զքեզ հրախիլէ դարեան երգով,
 Առ ի չարեաց հեռանալով
 Խորհել յօրէնս տեսոն սիրով:

ՕՅ

It says: O Thou, young offspring,
 Resemble, act like Elisha,
 Who at the touch of the mantle,
 Left the desires of the lesser.⁵⁶

MEN

It offers to you an example
 Of men who are capable of good,
 Daniel the clearly (seeing) young man,
 To whom even the angel looked up.⁵⁷

AYB

(Ayb), the first (letter), boy,
 It shows you the sense the highest,
 Of Trinity, set out nearby,
 Dwell with its threefold key bars.

RE

It teaches you like a rabbi,
 It guides you to good deeds,
 It says: be obedient to the Elders,
 As it is demanded by law.

TIWN

It gives you spiritual advice,
 To keep your soul moderate,
 Do not touch anybody blemished,
 And do not have evil as a neighbour.

Ē⁵⁸

Being an ancestor of blessedness,
 (Ē) invites you with the Song of David:
 To keep thee far from a falsehoods
 To judge by the Law of the Lord through
 love.⁵⁹

56 cf. 2 Kgs (= Armenian 4 Kgs) 2:8, 13, 14.

57 Dan 3:49.

58 The Armenian version of the God's name "Yahweh".

59 Rom 4:6.

ՆՈՒՆ

Նայեաց եւ տես, ասէ, զՅովսէփի
Ըզհրէշտակաց նըմանն ի դէպ.
Պահեա եւ դու զքեզ անվրէպ,
Յեզիպտուհւոյն ախտից հանդէպ:

NUN

It says: Look and see Joseph,
Who is fit to be like unto angels:
Keep yourself infallible as well,
In front of a wicked Egyptian woman.⁶⁰

ՎԵԻՆ

ՎԱրք զաշխարհիս այս
ծանուցեալ
Թէ է ներհակ ուսման եղեալ.
Զի որ ախտի գհոզին զանգեալ,

VEW

It has recognized the behaviour of this
world
To be against education,
For whose spirit has fallen through sick-
ness

Նա ի շնորհաց հոգւոյն զատեալ:

Has separated himself from the graces
of the Spirit.

ԼԻՒՆՆ

—, լուր, ասէ, հօր քո խրատու.

LIWN

(Liwn) says: Listen to your father's
advice

Լեր օրինաց մօր քո հըլու
Վարդապետին հնազանդ կաց դու,
Յորմէ շահիս բան լուսատու:

Obey your mother's law
Be obedient to the teacher
From whom you gain the light-
spreading word.

ԻՆՆ

Ի նանրութեանց, ասէ, դարձիր
Եւ սուտ խաղօք մի՛ ըզբաղիր.
‘Դ անմիտ մանկանց մի՛
նախանձիր,
Այլ իմաստնոց նըմանեցիր:

I

It says: Turn away from vanity,
Not to occupy yourself with fake games,
Do not envy the stupid boys,
But resemble those of wisdom.

Նախանձելի մարդկան լինիս,
Թէ զվերագրեալս ի միտ ունիս.

Envidable can you become,
If what is written above you will keep in
mind.

.....
Անանց կենաց ժառանգ լինիս:

.....
Then you will inherit immortal life.

⁶⁰ What is meant here is Aseneth (Gen 41:45, 50).

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Homage



Gemara and Memory

James Russell

“... who created great suicidal dramas on the apartment cliff-banks of the Hudson under the wartime blue floodlight of the moon & their heads shall be crowned with laurel in oblivion”¹ wrote Allen Ginsberg in his elegy *Howl* for his generation—one that he declares was destroyed by madness. Madness can itself cause loss of memory; and posterity often forgets those cast aside as mad, since nobody needs seriously to engage an idea or art form if it has been devalued by being labelled as crazy.² The stage in the verse is lit by wartime blue floodlight because the time evoked is World War II; it is the West Side of Manhattan that is blacked out, because Ginsberg has just been expelled from Columbia College, his circle of friends has dispersed, shattered by the scandal of a murder, and it seems likely the thought and art of the Beats will be consigned to oblivion. The poem, however, celebrates and crowns them, fighting back against Lethe, and the litany, a latter-day lamentation for a lost and destroyed holy city, becomes a book of memory.

“Howl, howl” cries king Lear, betrayed by family and friends, his plans come to naught, his kingdom gone, his one faithful daughter Cordelia murdered (if she is his “poor fool”, or maybe the wretch hanged is the court fool himself, whose madness against the black backdrop of the political world, be it royal court or marketplace or academia, is sanity). He is an old man, as he delicately avers, no longer in his right mind: but his dementia does not degrade him, it is a means of elevation, and the play makes of him a kind of hero he had not expected or imagined he would ever be. Thus senility creeps up, always a surprise. This is how the Bard paints dementia in tragedy; in another late play, *The Tempest*, this time a comedy, the aged Prospero gives up dominion over his little magical island, but it has been one of exile; and he is not made to lose

1 Ginsberg 1956, 15.

2 This can be a political tool: the Sasanian Empire imprisoned its enemies, including the fourth-century Armenian Arsacid Aršak II, in the proto-Orwellian prison of *Andimīšn*, Armenian *anyuš berd*, “the Fortress of Oblivion”. They dropped down the black memory hole, their names erased and all mention of them forbidden. The Soviet state confined dissidents to mental hospitals, and America well within living memory imprisoned homosexuals and others in asylums, torturing them with electroconvulsive shock therapy or literally erasing their memory with lobotomies.

his mind. Instead he obliterates memory by *drowning* the aid to its contents, the source of his knowledge—his magical *book*. Lethe is a river, not a bonfire.³ The court mage John Dee was Shakespeare's model, and his library at Mortlake was the largest private collection of England in the Elizabethan age. *Mort*, in the lake, if you please: the dissolution of the mind was anciently imagined as water, and it came together with death. Phlebas the Phoenician in *The Waste Land* of T.S. Eliot has drowned, and with death by water comes oblivion—he has forgotten his mercantile travels, that are the sum of his cares.⁴ How does memory break down and the black tide of forgetting overwhelm the mind? The cells of the brain are eaten away. What remains?

Here is the rumination of a poet on the process: ... И при слове «грядущее» из русского языка/ выбегают мыши и всей оравой/ отгрызают от лакомого куска/ памяти, что твой сыр дырявой.—“And at the mention of things to come, out of the Russian language/ rush the mice and in their swarm/ gnaw out the choicest piece/ of memory, your holey cheese”. The oncoming future is *griad-*, it summons the verb of gnawing *gryz-*, and the future of the brain is to become a Swiss cheese: that is how senile dementia happens. But what is left? The poet Joseph Brodsky, a Russian Jew deeply imbued with faith in the presence of God in the world and the meaning of life, ends his poem ... От всего человека вам остается часть/ речи. Часть речи вообще. Часть речи.—“What's left to you all of the man as a whole is a part/ of speech. A part of speech, that's all. A part of speech”.⁵ God created His world by the act of speaking: Jews declare

Barukh she-amar ve-hayah ha-'olam,
barukh hu

בְּרוּךְ שֶׁאָמַר וַהֲיָה הָעוֹלָם. בְּרוּךְ
הוּא

Blessed is the One who spoke and the world was, blessed is He!

-
- 3 The 19th-century German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine warned that those who burn books will burn men. Christian Europe had already been burning both Jewish books and Jews for centuries: in 1242, cartloads of volumes of the Talmud were consigned to the flames in front of Notre Dame de Paris. This essay, at whose core is the Talmud, could be written only because of the failure of Christendom, and in latter days, of Nazism, to incinerate both memory and its human vessels.
- 4 Eliot in his ingrained bigotry makes money the chief concern of the Phoenician, i.e., the crypto-Jew. But in the storytelling tradition of the Phoenicians themselves, as best as I can reconstruct it, everybody has to make a living, but the most profound motivation of travel is the love of one's family: see Russell 2018.
- 5 Brodskij 1977, 95.

John the Evangelist said the *logos* is with Him and is Him. And as λογικὰ πολιτικά ζῶα (*logikà politikà zôia*), social living beings endowed with language and reason, we are a part of that *logos*. (The social aspect implies morality and ethics, qualities that can be linked to memory and forgetting; we shall consider it presently.) Poetry comes from language, structured by its grammatical parts of speech, and as Brodsky said at his trial, to the displeasure of his atheist judge, a poet is the recipient of a Divine gift and need not belong to a trade union of wordsmiths to be employed. If only a part is left, but what a part it is, one may be sure that where the rest has gone is back to God. In English each actor on the stage has a speaking *part*; and the singer of the American democratic dream, Walt Whitman—the bard whose gay mantle Ginsberg was to inherit—offered the meaningful consolation that as life, the great play, goes on, “you may contribute a verse” (in *O me, O life*, in *Leaves of Grass*). Poetry is a human right as it were: having an identity is not just being endowed with language, but employing it in free expression. But for all that there comes the time after the verse has been pronounced, the man grows old, with age comes oblivion, one gropes for words, and one by one the provinces of the lattice of electrical impulses that lights the mind black out. How strange that *Festschriften*, which are offered to savants to mark the threshold of the stage of their lives when all this will happen, is about to happen, is happening, fastidiously avoid the very mention of what for the scholar is the ultimate degradation: the failure of precision, the defection of reasoning, the loss of memory.

Memory is what scholars absolutely must have. Lethe, which is both oblivion and the river causing the same that flows through Hades, was born of Nyx, “Night”, and Eris, “Strife”: forgetting is not just not having the facts at one’s fingertips, it is dark, jumbled, the inability to assemble them. Even with one’s mind in sound working order, it is no easy task to commit to memory all that one needs to know even now, and it was harder still when books were more expensive and thus scarcer. Scholars sought to limit the range of subjects and texts one might reasonably need to know,⁶ but even so they needed methods of memorization. Tradition accords credit for the invention of orderly mnemotechnics, the *ars memoriae*, to the classical Greek poet Simonides: the practitioner associated a subject with *topoi/loci*, “places”; its details, with *phantasmata/imagines*, “images”.⁷ One then effected the process of committing to memory a rational, sequential discourse by moving through these. There was no teleprompter at the Forum: a Roman senator preparing for a debate on the

6 See Blair 2010.

7 Weinrich 2004, 10.

floor might repair some days earlier to an abandoned house, there to memorise his planned oration by walking through the rooms and mentally attaching the order of subjects and precise wording of the speech to the geography of the place and its furniture. It was an effective method, and endured through mediaeval times.⁸

Ab initio mnemonics relied upon the arbitrary association of visible places and things to abstract words and ideas. It was a short step to the development of visual allegory, whereby the thing was not incidental to the idea but was made to have a symbolic connection to it: in mediaeval Christian picture-books, the pilgrim's scrip and staff, for instance, were not arbitrarily chosen objects associated with faith and hope, but by their own functions represented these divine virtues.⁹ Metaphors, not only of good but of evil, might acquire animation. *Negotium perambulans in tenebris*: T.S. Eliot perceived that the spotted leopard of the *Inferno* of Dante was not merely a static image of sin; its lethal, slinking, agile gait enhanced its meaning as a three-dimensional metaphor. The memory palace became a *tableau vivant*, a theatre. When you stare long enough into the abyss, Nietzsche reminds us, it looks back at you. The animate images began to act independently of their imaginer: that is, at least, one way to appreciate the experience of synaesthesia, the state of perception in which things, colours, sounds—the panoply of the senses—affably spring to life as metaphors, the metaphors then marrying the ideas they represent. This mental activity can be an affliction in its extreme expression; but it is of relevance here as it has been studied also as a benefit, an aid to memory and a vehicle for its augmentation.¹⁰

Verbal patterning, such as alliteration and rhyme, is another *aide mémoire*: that is why in the bygone days of education, children learned poems by heart in school.¹¹ The twelfth-century scholar Adam of Lille, who wrote a treatise

8 It works. During the process of initiation into the three Degrees of the fraternal order of Freemasons in the late 1980s I was required to memorise verbatim the contents of three books of teaching. I practised by associating each paragraph with a park or building on the bicycle ride from the Columbia campus, where I worked, along Riverside Drive to Washington Heights, where I lived. The building on 158th Street and Broadway where my aunt Gloria, ♪"t, had lived long before, is still photographically clear in my memory, and is indissolubly associated with the metaphorical teaching about the builder's tools.

9 See Hagen 1990.

10 See Luria 1968.

11 That works, too. When I was in Iran, the niece and nephew of a colleague would bring to my hotel at breakfast time calligraphic samples of the two couplets of Hafez or Sa'di they had themselves just memorised for the day. In my own youth I had been required in high school Russian class to learn by heart poems of Pushkin and Lermontov. It is not a bad system, but then the Soviets and Persians are supposed to be adversaries of the free

on penance (it is fused with mystical ecstasy) employing a visual mnemonic device of the six wings of the seraph of Ezekiel's and Isaiah's visions, was also a poet, so the names of his types alliterate, "allowing a mnemonic affect" thereby as well.¹² Mediaeval Europeans employed numerous complex pictures and diagrams as a further visual complement to the *ars memoriae*, inscribing words or phrases to be memorised upon the various parts of a drawn figure, such as a winged angel holding different objects. It makes simple sense that the more complicated a philosophical or theological scheme is, the more useful a map of it all will be to the teacher and learner, with those supernatural creatures painted at their stations and places. Mani, the visionary heresiarch of the third century, devised a hybrid cosmology teeming with the plagiarised heavens, hells, and their denizens, of Christianity, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. Long after his Gnostic cult had receded into merciful obscurity in the Near East—oblivion is at such times a blessing—its founder retained renown in later Persian literature as the gifted painter of a didactic picture-book of his populous cosmos with its freeways, parking levels, and toll booths, called in Parthian the *Ardahang*. This *chef d'oeuvre* was thought to be lost until a mediaeval Chinese copy on a long silk banner was discovered in a private Japanese collection a few years ago.¹³ Its worlds are stacked in a vertical hierarchy, rather than arranged concentrically as they would be, for instance, in a Tibetan Vajrayanic mandala. Although the late copy reflects the influence of Buddhist religious art (which again serves an educational and mnemonic purpose, as well as a meditative one), it yields also somewhat the impression of a long Kabbalistic "tree" (Hebrew *ilan*) of the four worlds of emanation, the ten Sefirot of creation, and their pathways and aspects. Prof. Yosef H̄ayyot (Jeffrey Chajes), the pre-eminent authority on such Jewish mystical *ilanot*, reasonably associates their origin with the proliferation of Christian cosmological (and mnemonic!) diagrams in the mediaeval period.¹⁴ But Kabbalah displays an at times decidedly gnostic character and its linguistic and sephirotic theory have their closest analogues not in mediaeval Europe but in much older Indian conceptions of *mantra* and *yantra*. One may propose that the roots of Kabbalistic iconography go deeper, back to the Late Antique period that spawned both the colourful Manichaean *Ardahang* and the spare, black-and-white line-diagrams of the Jewish dissident sect in Mesopotamia that came to be known as Mandaean (Aramaic,

world—or as Montaigne shrugged after an admiring comparison of the Brazilian natives to his sanguinary fellow Europeans, "But what's the use? They don't wear trousers".

12 Alan of Lille, *On the Six Wings of the Seraph*, in Carruthers—Ziolkowski 2002, 84.

13 See Gulácsy 2016.

14 See, e.g., H̄ayyot (Chajes) 2016–2017.

“Gnostics”)—from whose ranks Mani emerged. It was at that time (around the third century CE) and place (in the cities and bazaars of Parthian Mesene) that Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians might encounter and engage in conversation on a daily basis Buddhists and Hindus, for whom *mantra* and *yantra* were commonplace notions, not rare arcana. But this is for another discussion. Let us not forget our train of thought, and return to forgetfulness.

What happens to the memory that is lost when you get old and die? The Romantics believed that forgetting happened first at birth, when one lost the wisdom of pre-existence, though in childhood there were still afterglows of it, intimations. Thus they mourned birth (*genesis*) as “but a sleep and a forgetting” (William Wordsworth); but with the death of the body—what the Neoplatonists called *apogenesis*—came the rebirth of the soul, and with it, recollection of what was forgotten, presumably augmented by whatever useful knowledge one had gained in the course of his earthly travail. Amniotic fluid to anamnesis, if you wish. A late watercolour painting by William Blake, which is as intricately crowded with figures and details as a Manichaean *Ardahang*, has been interpreted (though some dispute vehemently such a decipherment) as symbolically portraying this process, as a spatial map of the round of time and space, of genesis and apogenesis of the soul.¹⁵ Blake’s near contemporary Percy Bysshe Shelley composed his long poem *Adonais* as a dirge, but its Romantic-Neoplatonic spirit makes it nearly celebratory of the young god’s passing—a very different sort of lament from Ginsberg’s, though both were young when they composed their elegies and really didn’t know a damn thing about death.¹⁶ The divine youth whose Phoenician name means “Lord”¹⁷ dies and rises, but without experiencing the slow horror of disintegration in infirmity, and the Romantic poet celebrates: “The One remains, the many change and pass;/ Heaven’s light forever shines, Earth’s shadows fly:/ Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,/ Stains the white radiance of Eternity,/ Until Death tramples it to fragments”.¹⁸

15 See Russell 2012, with the suggestion that a graphic interpreter of the prologue to Pushkin’s *Руслан и Людмила* did the same thing.

16 Ginsberg lived on and became wiser: in the cycle “Don’t Grow Old” (1976) his painfully decrepit father (the poet Louis Ginsberg) delivers a sardonic, realist riposte to Wordsworth’s poem: what’s behind the mysterious veil? A glue factory. See Ginsberg 1984, 652.

17 Jews employ a form of the word, *Adonai*, to replace the Tetragrammaton, which cannot be pronounced except by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies and whose pronunciation is in any case forgotten, and besides the Temple itself is long gone, with none to remember even how it looked. Oblivion upon oblivion.

18 Shelley 1901, 316, stanza 52. On 5 July 1969 in Hyde Park, London—that is, a month and

It is easy to imagine this Adonis at rest, like Shelley's recumbent body exposed at his memorial in Oxford to the avid male gaze, skin smooth marble, shaggy locks and parted lips inviting kisses and caresses, the *pietà* of an English boy—*non angli sed angeli*, said an admiring pontiff of a gang of slaves—with no dominating Mary to spoil the reverie. Philip Larkin did a BA at Oxford but never belonged to the epicene *jeunesse dorée*. In later life he laboured in Hull, unmarried, portly, bespectacled, bald. His poem *The Old Fools* responds to a detail of Shelley's verse, but the modern poet who saw London burn under war-time blue floodlight, for whom death was not sleep but the machinery of mass murder—was not susceptible to the Romantic afflatus, Neoplatonic optimism, or the One, heavenly white radiance and all. When the kaleidoscopic dome shatters, for Larkin only bleak entropy ensues. "At death, you break up: the bits that were you/ Start speeding away from each other forever/ With no one to see. It's only oblivion, true:/ We had it before, but then it was going to end,/ And was all the time merging with a unique endeavour/ To bring to bloom the million-petalled flower/ Of being here. Next time you can't pretend/ There'll be anything else. And these are the first signs:/ Not knowing how, not hearing who, the power/ Of choosing gone".¹⁹ Alzheimer's patients often will recall scenes of their younger lives in detail, and this activity, a sort of emergency final deployment of the *ars memoriae*, lifeboat of a sinking ship, affords them pleasure. Larkin goes on in his poem to evoke the inner life of the mind of the elderly as a recollection of old, known rooms and their furnishings, with familiar people moving through them. Such memory, heartbreaking, is but the palliative of a "hideous, inverted childhood"—Wordsworth's schema turned upside-down.

The opposite of such a process of entropy, the leaching away of meaning and connection, is the activity of a form of memory that forges synaesthetic connections, those arrays of superlinks that travel far beyond the normal crossroads and junctions of the active brain. They can be associated typologically to the mode of writing called the hypertext, which expands like a web, scorning the narrow constraints of the sequacious line. It is not coincidental that Vladimir Nabokov, the author of the greatest hypertext of Russian-American literature, the complex, multiply resonant, associative novel *Pale Fire*, was himself a synaesthete.²⁰ But the greatest and first of all hypertexts is the vast Oral Law of

change over fifty years before now and three hundred miles and change over five thousand away from here—Mick Jagger recited this stanza at a memorial for Brian Jones. Then, as it should always be at such times, the Stones readied their guitars and played music.

19 Larkin 1974, 19.

20 His stand-in in *Bend Sinister* is a professor of philosophy named Adam Krug whose name itself seems as expansive and all-inclusive as the synaesthetic, mnemonist mind—Adam

Judaism, the Talmud, each of whose sections bears the misnomer in translation “tractate”: the literal meaning of the Hebrew *massekhet* is “web”. Arachnid architectural form evokes well the digressive yet interlinked character of Talmudic reasoning and discourse. None of it was set down in writing until around the fifth century CE; so consigning the array of text to memory was a matter of considerable anxiety and care, and some Rabbis had recourse to a kind of magic, invoking the *Sar Torah*, “Master of Torah”, and the angel Yofiel (“The Lord is my lovely”, as it were) and others, to enable the earnest student to remember what he was learning.²¹ The early concept of the *massekhet* as an organising principle for knowledge is prescient—ironically, since reliance upon the world-wide web of the present time can militate against the cultivation and preservation of individual memory and the activity of independent reflection and intellection. Artificial intelligence does not exist; even if it may at some future point be devised, the effect on natural cognition, which we are only beginning to understand, will probably be harmful.

The core of Talmud is *Mishnah*, whose title means “repetition”; the *Mishnah* and its commentaries constitute the *Gemara*, at the end of each chapter and volume of which the reader pronounces:

hadran 'alakh

הדרן עלך

We will return to you

The Pentateuch itself is reread in an annual or triennial cycle in the synagogue. As Vladimir Nabokov was wont to remind his readers and pupils alike, for a good reader there is no reading, only re-reading. Rereading is how one learns thoroughly, and remembers. *Mishnah Avot* (English, “Ethics of the Fathers”) 3:8 has this warning:

*Rabbi Dosta'i be-Rabbi Yanna'i mi-shum
Rabbi Me'ir 'omer: kol ha-shokheah
davar 'ehad mi-mishnato, ma'aleh 'alav
ha-katuv ke-'ilu mithayyev be-nafsho,
she-ne'emar, raq hishshamer lekha u-
shemor nafshekha me'od, pen tishkah 'et
ha-devarim 'asher ra'u 'enekha*

רבי דוסתאי ברבי ינאי משום רבי
מאיר אומר: כל השוכח דבר אחד
ממשנתו, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו
מתחייב בנפשו, שנאמר: רק השומר
לך ושומר נפשוך מאד פן תשכח את
הדברים אשר ראו עיניך

is the archetype of man; *krug* (Russian *круг*, “circle”), the perfected entirety of space. At the dacha of his stolidly, decently bourgeois friend Maximov, Krug avers that loyalty is a golden fork. His host huffs that he prefers the dictionary definition.

21 See Swartz 1996, 57–60.

R. Dostai of R. Yannai says citing R. Meir, Scripture regards everyone who forgets one thing from his study [*mishnah*, “review, repetition”] as though he were guilty of a mortal offence. As it is written: [Deut. 4:9] ‘Only guard yourself, and guard yourself very much, lest you forget the things that your eyes saw.’

Lethe, whose cause is lassitude, deserves no leniency.²² But there are other reasons, as we have seen, that even the most assiduous and erudite scholar can forget. The tractate of the Babylonian Talmud that deals with the rules of prayer and associated matters, *b. Berakhot* 8b has this instruction of R. Yehoshua b. Levi to his sons:

<p><i>We-hizzaheru be-zaqen she-shakhah talmudo mihamat ’onso, de-amrinan luhot we-shivre luhot munnahot ba- ’aron</i></p>	<p>והזָהִירוּ בְּזִקְנָם שֶׁשָּׂכַח תְּלִמּוּדוֹ מִחֻמַּת אוֹנְסוֹ. דְּאִמְרִינֵן לְיָחִוּת וְשִׁבְרֵי לְיָחִוּת מוֹנְחוֹת בְּאֶרֶן</p>
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And be careful with an old man who forgot his learning [*talmud*] because of compulsion, since we say that the tablets and the shattered fragments of the tablets lie in the Ark [of the Covenant].

The root *’-n-s* means to force, compel, or rape; the phrase here may best be understood to mean “because of circumstances beyond his control” (thus the Schottenstein edition). Rashi explains, *she-ḥalah ’o she-nitrad be-doheq mezonot hizaheru bo li-khvodo* “that he was sick or that he was driven by the pressure of making a living [*mezonot*, lit. “foods”], be careful that you accord him honour”. That is, if an aged Torah scholar forgets his learning by reason of the infirmity of age (or the exigencies of material destitution, another predicament of the elderly), one must still respect him as one did when his faculties were sound. אַל-תְּשְׁלִיכֵנִי לְעֵת זְקִנָּה כְּלוֹת כּוֹחִי אֶל-תִּעֲזָבֵנִי (*Al tashliheni le-’et ziqnah, ke-khalot kofi ’al ta’azveni*)—“Do not cast me away in the time of old age, when my strength is wasted away do not abandon me,” pleads king David (Ps. 71:9). *Gemara* reaffirms the sentiment but goes further, establishing an ethic for the

22 The Classical parallel here would be the *syntrophoi* of Odysseus, the companions on the long nostos, the homeward journey, who succumbed to the sweet oblivion of the Lotus-eaters, the seductive *pharmaka* of Circe. For Odysseus not to forget his identity and purpose is a moral obligation, in as much as it defines what his character is, and a moral one, as well, since he must get home to Penelope and Telemachus and set things right on Ithaka. On ethics and morals in memory see the note on Avishai Margalit *infra*.

treatment of people afflicted by dementia (or poverty). One must treat them with respect and honour; and this principle continues to inform Jewish writing on moral philosophy.²³ It is difficult to read R. Yehoshua's advice without the feeling that an enfeebled old man is pleading with the heartless young: remember me as I was, not as I am.

But what of the reference to the tablets that R. Yehoshua offers by way of justification in Torah for his precept? God Himself wrote upon the first two tablets of the Ten Commandments: Moses carried them down the mountain, smashed them when he saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, and went back up, this time to carve the second pair by himself. The broken pieces of the first set may be metaphorically understood as the physical infirmity of old age; the two intact tablets, the hale and hearty youthful body. But as a cheerful Californian friend of mine is wont to say, echoing American advertisements, Wait, there's more! Or, in this instance, less: the original tablets are not just in pieces. They are blank. The Divine letters that once blazed upon them as black fire are gone. Where did they go? As R. Alexandri teaches in *b. Pesahim* 87b, three things returned to their original source (חֲזָרוּ לְמִטְעָתָן, *hazru le-matṭa'tan*): Israel, the silver of Egypt, וּכְתָב לִיְהוָה (*u-khtav ha-luhot*) “and the writing of the tablets”. He says, לִיְהוָה נִשְׁבְּרוּ וְאוֹתֵיהֶן פּוֹרְחוֹת (Tanna: *luhot nishberu ve-'otiyot porehot*)—“A *Baraita* teaches: the tablets were shattered and the letters fly up”. That is, when the first two stones of the Ten Commandments were broken, the letters returned to God. It was not to be the last time: when his Roman tormentors wrapped one of the ten martyrs of the Hadrianic persecutions (*Asarah Harugei Malkhut*) in a Torah scroll and burnt him alive, R. Ḥanina b. Teradyon declared that he saw the parchment consumed but the letters rising upwards unharmed.²⁴ Death may shatter the multicoloured kaleidoscopic dome to fragments, allowing the white radiance of eternity to pour in, but where do those bright bits of the mosaic go? Shelley does not

23 An example is Margalit 2002. The author suggests there are *thick* strands of memory, such as relations to one's near and dear, which impose *ethical* obligations; and *thin* strands, such as concern for humanity in general, which shape one's *moral* stance in life. This may be argued as an arbitrary position; but if one accepts the formulation of the shaper of ecology, the German Jewish philosopher Hans Jonas (revolted and recoiling against his teacher, the Nazi professor and academic administrator Martin Heidegger), that the novelty of the conception of the God of the Hebrew Bible is that He was believed to evince *concern* for His Creation, then ethical and moral compassion is Divine. שְׂכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֵרֵבִים זֶה בָּזֶה (Kol Yisrael 'arevim zeh ba-zeh)—“All Israel are responsible for (or, involved with) one another,” (Shevuot 39a) runs the maxim—not a recipe, perhaps, for personal privacy, but surely a clarion call for social responsibility and engagement.

24 See Boustán 2005, esp. 230–231.

say. Nowhere, says Larkin. To the glue factory, says Louis Ginsberg. For Dante, the white radiance of eternity is more like radioactivity than illumination: the unmediated light of the Empyrean in his *Paradiso* melts memory and obliterates the capacity of speech.²⁵ The Torah says, the letters—and the bits of crystal of many hues, the treasure-houses of an old sage's mind—do not scatter meaninglessly into a black entropic void, but return to the Master of the Universe. And the old man who has used those gifts well and appropriately, having accepted the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven (על מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם, *ol malkhut shamayim*), is to be treated with love and respect. It is a Talmudic ethical guide to the predicament of dementia.

When the letters are released, the memories sundered, return to their origin, then what? God's memory, St Augustine argued in *De Trinitate*, is His whole Creation; and forget God as the sinner might, God does not forget him. There is thus an economy of memory neither increasing nor decreasing, just as there is, as physicists propose, of energy. Past, present, future: God encompasseth (or as the founder of an English pub felicitously misunderstood it, Goat and Compasses, and painted the rebus accordingly on the sign, from which the synaesthetic mind leaps to Blake's Ancient of Days inscribing the cosmos with a compass, and the practitioner of the *ars memoriae* of Western mysticism ponders then the emblem of the Square and Compass). But neither that energy, nor that memory, is subject to the dissolving chaos of entropy. The Californian science fiction writer Philip K. Dick hypothesised in the monumental *Exegesis* of his mystical vision, "The Jews theorize that the resurrection of the dead is accomplished through God's memory (of them); suppose, via our long term DNA coded memory we *ourselves* are units of God's (the total organism's) memory system?"²⁶ It is God's precise and total memory of everything and everyone that ever existed, including all their memories, thoughts, emotions, the contents of their souls, that makes resurrection possible, that makes it more than cloning.

25 Weinrich 2004, 37.

26 Dick 2011, 240. Or to paraphrase a hymn, with an Armenian reference of the Sasanian era our laureate may enjoy, "Kein' *anyuš berd* ist unser Gott!" Americans did not have a category into which Edgar Allan Poe might be inserted and did not appreciate his work until Baudelaire explained it. Melville suffered similar long oblivion, and needed to be rediscovered. Science fiction is a convenient place of exile for more recent writers whose thought and creativity resist easy definition, and branding them with the somewhat disreputable genre relieves the establishment of the need to take them seriously. Philip K. Dick was a novelist and writer of short stories, but also a mystic, a philosopher, and a cultural critic and political dissident, obscure during his life and even now better understood in France than here.

But for us, who face bereavement and dissolution, what consolation except that faith, that God created all by His word and in every instant renews the work of creation (מעשה בראשית, *ma'aseh bereshit*)? The great Russian Jewish writer (of science fiction, again) Isaac Asimov in his story “The Last Question” imagines the Universe winding down as successive generations of scientists ask increasingly sophisticated computers whether entropy can be reversed—the ensuing chaos of the pattern be ordered. Just as the world blinks out, the still small voice is heard, saying:

Wa-yehi 'or

וַיְהִי אֹר

Let there be light!

And there was light. But Asimov might have appended this Hasidic tale, which asks how much, really, do you have to read and memorise and then worry about forgetting? After all, didn't even Solomon burn most of his books?²⁷ And didn't even Ecclesiastes sigh, so long ago, that there were too many books? Anyway, the story: There was a simple woodcutter in the forest who did not know how to read, and the Mishnah says an ignorant man cannot be truly pious, so the man betook himself to a Rabbi to learn to read. They opened the Bible and the Rabbi read: “And God said ...” The woodcutter interrupted. “God SPOKE?”—“Yes,” replied the Rabbi, slightly irritated. “Now if we may continue ...”—“God SPOKE!” cried his unlettered pupil in delight. “He really TALKED!” He jumped from his chair and ran outdoors, dancing back into the forest, shouting for joy, never to be seen again.

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27 See Russell 2011.

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