

**EPISTOLARY EXCHANGES, TREATISES AND OPUSCULES:
ARMENIAN SOURCES ON RELIGIOUS POLEMICS
BETWEEN THE ARMENIANS AND THE GREEKS IN THE 12TH
CENTURY**

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It is recognised by historians that, although the separation between the Armenian Church and the Greek Church effectively took place in the early 7th century¹, it was underway before this date and as far back as the councils of Dvin in 506 and 555. Under Arab rule, owing primarily to action taken by the Catholicos Yovhannēs III Awjneg'i, we notice a normalisation of the doctrinal position of the Armenians who, whilst having refused Chalcedonism, also rejected the Eutychian form of Monophysitism². Discussions took place over the following centuries between the two parties, such as between the Catholicos Zak'aria and the Patriarch Photius³ or between the Catholicos-

¹ During the council of Dvin for the election of the Catholicos Abraham I in 607, the bishops announced the official condemnation of the council of Chalcedon: ("And thus, as did the former patriarchs of Armenia and the bishops, priests, princes and lay people, we have done away with the appalling anathemas and rejected all of the heretics: Arius and Macedonius and Nestorius, who we must not remember, and Eutyches and the Council of Chalcedon and the shameful Leo's *Tome*"), quoted in N. G. Garsoïan, *L'Église arménienne et le grand schisme d'Orient* (CSCO 574, Subsidia 100), Louvain 1999, p. 362. The whole work should of course be referred to for the question addressed here.

² J.-P. Mahé, « L'Église arménienne de 611 à 1066 », in *Histoire du christianisme* 4, *Évêques, moines et empereurs (610-1054)*, J.-M. Mayeur, Ch. and L. Pietri, A. Vauchez, M. Venard, Paris 1993, p. 457-547, here p. 478-486.

³ See I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Deux débats théologiques arméno-byzantins après le triomphe de l'orthodoxie. Le concile de Sirakawan (862) et la corres-*

historian Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i and the Patriarch Nicolas Mystikos⁴. With the Byzantine empire's advancement in the Middle East under the dynasty of the Macedonians, annexation policies of small Armenian kingdoms that had been restored in the late 9th and early 10th centuries meant that there was a lot of resentment on the religious front from the beginning of the 10th century onwards⁵. The Turks' presence in Asia Minor further complicated the situation and accentuated the displacement of the Armenian populations, accompanied by their religious superiors⁶, firstly to Cappadocia and then Cilicia. We are placing our study in the context of the emergence of an Armenian principality in Cilicia, in contact with the Greeks, the Franks having settled there due to the first crusade and the Muslims. The Armenians were therefore situated in a very different context to that of Greater Armenia, in an unprecedented geopolitical situation that was particularly rife with interreligious dialogue.

We propose to show the Armenian sources that highlight Armenian-Greek discussions and complete the insufficient and difficult to use Greek sources⁷. We shall also demonstrate that a study

pondance entre Photius et Sahak Mṛut (882), (CSCO 609, Subsidia 117), Louvain 2004.

⁴ I. Augé, « Hovhannēs de Draskhanakert (899-929) en dialogue avec Constantinople », *Bazmavep* CLXVI, 2008, p. 407-424.

⁵ Mahé 1993, p. 512-513.

⁶ After a vacant period, the Byzantines and the Armenians found a compromise in the reinstatement of a catholicos, namely Vahram Pahlawuni, son of Grigor Magistros. Owing to his family's Byzantinophilia, whilst still remaining closely attached to the established Church, he thus represented a good compromise for both the Byzantines and the Armenians. He ordained a lineage of 7 catholicoi who succeeded him to the patriarchal seat between 1066 and 1203, claiming to be descendants of Grigor Lusaworič‘. They travelled to Cappadocia, Commagene and the Euphrates before settling in the Hromkla fortress in the mid 12th century: Mutaſian 2012, vol. 1, p. 478-481.

⁷ The Greek texts have not always received the attention they deserve, despite their significant quantity. See, for example, the Greek edition and annotated translation of three of them in J. Darrouzès, *Trois documents de la controverse gréco-arménienne*, *REB* 48, 1990, p. 89-153. On page 89, the author writes: "There are a number of opuscles in Greek manuscripts with strong similarities between them resulting in a sense of déjà vu which can leave us indifferent to the text and conceal details that may be of interest".

of religious controversy benefits from a joint analysis of sources deriving from the different protagonists in question by focussing on the particularly prolific period of discussion that was the second half of the 12th century.

The first source that we would like to address here is the Armenian version of the letters exchanged between Nersēs Šnorhali and his successor Grigor Tlay, and the court of Constantinople from 1165-1178. The corpus of the letters was written by Nersēs Lambaronac'i, who addresses the reader in a manuscript colophon: at the request of his brother Het'um III, Lord of Lambron from 1170 to 1200, he compiled the letters and combined them with his own remarks⁸. These letters were then edited on numerous occasions and our study is based on an edition published in Jerusalem in 1871⁹ that includes the encyclical letter, the letters exchanged between Nersēs Šnorhali as well as his successor Grigor Tlay, with Constantinople (15 letters in total) and the letters sent by the Catholicos to the Armenians

The Armeno-Greek polemic became increasingly intense with the reign of Alexis I Comnenus and, for example, Niketas Stethatos' unpublished treatise as indicated by G. Dagron, *Minorités ethniques et religieuses dans l'Orient byzantin à la fin du X^e et au XI^e siècle: l'immigration syrienne*, TM 6, 1976, p. 177-216, included in G. Dagron, *Idées byzantines* (Bilans de recherche 8), Paris 2012, t. I, p. 265-301, here p. 300. The treaty is entitled *Κατὰ τῆς βλασφημίου τῶν Ἀρμενίων αἰρέσεως*; the first discourse addresses Christology; the second deals with the distinction between the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ; the third with the *Trisagion* and Peter the Fuller; the fourth and longest seeks to show that Armenian heresy was a summarisation of all previous heresies; the fifth addresses the azyme controversy and reproaches the Armenians for judaizing.

⁸ Garegin I Kat'olikos, *Yišatakarank'je'ragrac'* [Colophons of manuscripts], vol. 1, Antelias 1951, N°281, col. 621.

⁹ *Āndhanrakan t'ult'k srboyn Nersēs Šnorhalwoy*, Jerusalem, 1871. All of these letters have been translated in various different works. Note, firstly, the partial Latin translation: J. Cappelleti, *Sancti Nersetis Clajensis Armeniorum catholici opera*, t. I, Venice 1833, as well as the French translation of all of the letters exchanged with Constantinople in I. Augé, *Églises en dialogue: Arméniens et Byzantins dans la seconde moitié du XII^e siècle* (CSCO vol. 633, subsidia t. 124), Louvain 2011 and the French translation of the letters exchanged between Nersēs and the Armenians in M. Vanérian, *La correspondance de saint Nersēs Chenorhali avec les Arméniens*, Thèse dactylographiée, Montpellier, June 2007.

(19 letters). In this last category, some of the texts directly regard the subject of study as they were sent not only by Nersēs, but also by Grigor Tlay, to the religious people remaining in Greater Armenia asking for their opinion on the peace talks currently in place with the Greeks with the objective of religious union. These doctors of faith, who had remained on historic Armenian territory under Muslim rule, did not traditionally have the same motivations for promoting inter-ecclesiastical dialogue as their co-religionists in Cilicia. They appear to be against any form of rapprochement, considering it a betrayal of their ancestral beliefs. The letters that are of primary interest to us here are those that form the central part of the collection on Armenian-Greek exchanges and their significance becomes clear when we look Greek sources on the same subject. During the active discussion period, from 1165 to 1178, the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus, sent a delegation to the Armenian catholicos at Hromkla on two occasions, brought each time by a certain Theorianos whose exact identity has not been formally established¹⁰. He left a relatively long report on this subject¹¹, in the form of a composite text that falls under several literary genres. As the text's title indicates, it is first and foremost a dialogue on the subject of faith between the various different protagonists although the dialogue is accompanied by other documents and, notably, by letters that make up the Greek version of the letters in Armenian in the collection compiled by Nersēs Lambronac'i. Other original documents can also be found in the account from the Greek delegate, including lengthy comments, diplomatic documents on simultaneous discussions with the Syriacs and a sermon on the subject of slander given to the Catholicos' entourage by Theorianos himself at the request of the latter¹². The

¹⁰ I. Augé, « Les relations arméno-grecques dans la seconde moitié du XII^e siècle: aspects diplomatiques », *Byzantinistica* X, 2008, p. 139-155, here p. 151.

¹¹ Θεωριανοῦ ὀρθοδόξου διάλεξις πρὸς τὸν Καθολικὸν τῶν Ἀρμενίων, *PG* t. 133, col. 119-298.

¹² To our knowledge, the only detailed study of this text was given by C. Kirmizi, *Theorianos embassy to the Armenians: an attempt at reunion of the churches*, Birmingham M. Phil. 2002 (R. J. Macrides). The various elements that make up the text are analysed in appendix A, p. 100-101, which allows us to find our place in this complex document, the literary forms of which are analysed on pages 53-64.

annexed table¹³ clearly illustrates the much more complete nature of the Armenian sources for an understanding of this fundamental episode in religious Armenian-Greek relations as Theorianos only included seven letters in his report. These letters correspond chronologically with the time of his two visits to the seat of the Armenian Patriarch, in 1170 and 1172. The first two letters have been left out, in spite of their importance, as they include two professions of faith by Nersēs and, most importantly, a letter addressed to the Emperor, dated in 1166, in which the newly-instated Catholicos reveals to the Byzantine Emperor how he views the union and the prerequisites that must be met in order for the union to be sustainable¹⁴. Also absent from the Greek version are the last six letters found in the Armenian collection, notably the one sent by Nersēs Šnorhali to the Greek Patriarch Michel Anchialos as well as all the correspondence exchanged during the Catholicossate of Grigor Tlay. The Greek and Armenian records have a total of five letters in common: a systematic comparison between the letters preserved in the two languages shows that the translations are generally reliable, aside from a few minor differences¹⁵. Among these, the discrepancy between the dates can easily be explained by the fact that a letter sent by one or other of the parties is, in its original language, dated at the time it was sent whereas its translation bears the date of its registration in the recipient's chancellery. Among the texts studied here, the highest number of discrepancies are found in the letter sent by Nersēs Šnorhali to Manuel Comnenus at the end of the first embassy of Theorianos in October 1170: the titles differ greatly yet the end of the letter, which is present in the Greek version, is taken from the Armenian version¹⁶. The discrepancies identified cover

¹³ Table taken from Augé 2008a, p. 155, see *infra*, p.

¹⁴ For these reasons, this letter was stated by Lewon Zekiyan to be the "Chart of action for the union": see B. L. Zekiyan, « Saint Nersēs Chnorhali en dialogue avec les Grecs », in *In memoriam Haig Berberian*, Lisbon 1986, p. 861-883.

¹⁵ For a list of discrepancies and their analysis: Augé 2008a, p. 145-149. The best comparative study of the texts is by A. Bozoyan, *Hay-byuzandakan ekelec'akan banakc'ut'yunneri vaveragrērā (1165-1178 t't'.) [Documents on the Armenian-Byzantine ecclesiastical negotiations (1165-1178)]*, Erevan 1995.

¹⁶ See Kirmizi 2002, p. 36-39.

relatively minor points, even if, according to the summary table in annex, two letters, which have not been transmitted in their Armenian version, exist solely in Greek. In the summer of 1171, the Emperor Manuel Comnenus, according to his representative Theorianos, attached a secret letter to his official letter¹⁷ in response to a secret letter from the Catholicos¹⁸. The complete lack of reference to this secret correspondence in the Armenian collection has led some historians to disclaim its existence and consider it to have been completely fabricated by the greek delegate. A careful analysis of the historical context and the difficult position of the leader of the Armenian Christian church certainly gives us more insight into the reasons for his attitude which could appear two-tier at first glance. In his official letter he states his willingness to consult the doctors of Greater Armenia whom he knows perfectly well to be unsupportive of the union. It is thus highly possible that he disclosed his own position in a secret letter in order to both reassure the Emperor of his good intentions and to avoid worrying his co-religionists.

Everything relating to the end of the discussion, notably the last two letters from Nersēs Šnorhali and all of the correspondence sent and received by his successor Grigor Tlay, is only known from the Armenian version which informs us up until the April 1178 meeting of the Armenian Synod of Hromkla for the question of the union. At the end of the Armenian Prelates' meeting, Grigor IV sent two letters to the Emperor and the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople. The latter was also signed by all those who participated in the Synod and marked the end of discussions.

The Armenian records of the Armenian-Greek discussions from 1165-1178 are therefore substantial and include a considerable amount of additional information when compared to the Greek sources available to us. A systematic comparison of the preserved documents

¹⁷ PG t. 133, col. 233b-235a. Joined to this letter is another letter from Michel Anchialos, which was also "secret", col. 224c-232c.

¹⁸ PG t. 133, col. 212: "Καὶ δοὺς ἡμῖν γραφὴν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν εὐσεβέστατον, καὶ ἅγιον, καὶ φιλόχριστον ἡμῶν αὐτοκράτορα, περιέχουσαν τὸ ὅτι Δέχομαι τὴν τετάρτην μεγάλην καὶ οἰκουμενικὴν ἁγίαν σύνοδον ἐν Χαλκηδόνι": "And thus he gave us a letter for the truly devoted, holy and loving of Christ, our autocrat, in which he added this: "I pronounce the fourth great ecumenical council, the holy Council of Chalcedon".

in both languages shows us that the Armenian texts are generally reliable, even if we are obliged, on certain issues such as the question of whether or not the secret letters really existed, to put forward hypotheses that are difficult to prove. Either way, and in order to study the facts exhaustively, it is necessary to focus on the sources preserved in Greek and Armenian. In only studying one set of records we would be losing essential information and run the risk of coming to partial, or even biased, conclusions¹⁹...

The Armenian sources still retain some little-known documents relating to the Armenian-Greek discussions that took place in the second half of the 12th century: the first is entitled *Chapters asked of us by the Romans on the subject of peace with, beside them, the responses*²⁰.

A number of elements seem to indicate, as some historians have already stated²¹, that the text can be situated at the beginning of the Catholicossate of Grigor IV when, in 1176, the latter sent a delegation to Constantinople, led by the priest Kostandin, requesting the dignity of the Archbishop of Hierapolis²². The document's form is the first

¹⁹ See comments made on the records by Darrouzès 1990, p. 96-100.

²⁰ *Glxadrut'iwunk' hořomoc' zors pajajēn ar i mēnj i pets xalahut'ean ənd ors ew lucmunk' arənt'er edeal* in A. Palčean, *Histoire de la doctrine catholique chez les Arméniens et de leur union avec l'Église latine au concile de Florence* [*Patmut'iwn kat'olikē vardapetut'ean i Hays ew miut'ean noc'a ənd hřomēakan ekelec'way i P'lorentean siwnhodosi*], Vienna 1878, p. 260-266.

²¹ See for example B. L. Zekiyan, « Les relations arméno-byzantines après la mort de saint Nersēs Chnorhali », *XVI^e congrès international des études byzantines*, Vienna 1981, *Actes II/4*, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/4, 1982, p. 331-337, here p. 332-333: "It appears to be almost certain that the Armenians' responses to the 'nine chapters', penned by Nersēs Lambronac'i at the request of Grigor Tlay, had been prepared and sent to Constantinople during the priest Constantine's mission in 1176. This becomes evident, not only through Nersēs Lambronac'i's testimony that the Greeks renounced their liturgical and disciplinarian demands following the mission as well as their allusions to these issues, in either the letter from the Catholicos or in the Emperor's response".

²² *Əndhanrakan t'ult'k* (cit. n. 9), p. 166-168. It is interesting to note that, in the Catholicossate entourage, there was a priest of Greek language and rites with important functions as the Catholicos states that he had been his instructor. By looking to obtain a high seat for him in the Patriarchate of Antioch, the Catholicos was surely seeking to strengthen the union.

indication: although the writing of the document has been attributed to Nersēs Lambronac‘i, its preparation was surely collective since the first response is preceded by the reference "The Synod responds"²³. However, the letter sent by Grigor IV to the Emperor, via Kostandin, bears the following address: "To the Emperor of the Romans, crowned by Christ and loved by God, Manuel, you who are seated at the head of all the universe with great honour and authority, I, Grigor, humble Catholicos of the Armenians, and together with all of the Synod of the Armenian Church, we greet you in prayer"²⁴. It is thus probable that the letter from the Catholicos and the text in question here were formulated collaboratively at an Armenian Synod of which there is no trace in any source. The content of the letters, sent firstly by Grigor Tlay and responded to by the Byzantine Emperor, also support this hypothesis. In his letter, the Catholicos raises the issue of Greek demands, asking for their alleviation, and it is highly possible that he deemed it constructive to include a list of Armenian responses²⁵. The imperial response also includes what may be an allusion to the chapters, when Manuel writes: "above all, our Royalty has received the project from your Excellency regarding these issues"²⁶. Nersēs Lambronac‘i's own comments, when documenting the priest Kostandin's mission, insist on a lightening of Greek demands, formulated as follows: "The Armenian Catholicos Grigor, having received these letters and having read them in the company of the bishops and the doctors, is rejoicing greatly as, instead of the nine chapters requested during the authority of the holy Lord Nersēs (which seemed excessive to us), they asked only for the profession of

²³ *Glxadrut‘iwnk‘ horomoc‘* (cit. n. 20), p. 260..

²⁴ *Āndhanrakan t‘ult‘k* (cit. n. 9), p. 166:.'

²⁵ *Āndhanrakan t‘ult‘k* (cit. n. 9), p. 167: "Now that your Holiness knows that the numerous requests [arising] from you distance some from peace [and push them] towards what is an old habit. However, there are many with whom we can not speak as we do with spirituals, but more like the fleshly whom we feed with milk instead of substantial food, as they are not able. It is for this reason that we ask you to lighten the previously established chapters so that divine peace may be restored and that love itself will bring forth and grow what it needs for its own development".

²⁶ *Āndhanrakan t‘ult‘k* (cit. n. 9), p. 170.

faith as the basis for the union; upon examination, they deem it to be orthodox and in accordance with the holy Fathers"²⁷.

Having established that the text had been delivered to Constantinople during the mission led by Kostandin, the future Archbishop of Hierapolis, we must now analyse the content of the text which is preserved only in Armenian. The author responds conclusively to the demands presented to the Armenians a few years before, under the Catholicosate of Nersēs Šnorhali, by the Emperor Manuel Comnenus and delivered by Theorianos²⁸. The number of propositions and the content are absolutely identical and are in the form of a list of nine controversial points of which the first two involve dogmatic issues and the following focus on liturgical problems. The stance taken by the Armenian Prelate is interesting. Regarding the dogmatic issues, its position is clear from its responses to the first two chapters when it asks, firstly, for anathema to be cast on those who speak of one nature in Christ²⁹ and, secondly, to adhere to a given confession on the Christological front³⁰. He confirms his acceptance of the Greek position on the two natures of Christ, whilst remaining loyal to Cyril of Alexandria, his teachings and "The one incarnate nature of the Word". He also resumes these issues regarding the eighth point put forward by the Greeks, on the recognition of the Ecumenical councils of Chalcedon at Nicaea II³¹. If he declares himself willing to accept the council of Chalcedon, on which he considers himself to be sufficiently informed, he asks the Greeks for clarification on certain points, in particular on the need to cast anathema on Dioscoros (point 1) and on the issue of the fifth, sixth and seventh councils (point 8). Although he is not opposed to the possibility of such a recognition, he

²⁷ *Andhanrakan t'ult'k* (citation n. 9), p. 180:

²⁸ *Andhanrakan t'ult'k* (cit. n. 9), p. 156-157. See French translation in I. Augé, *Églises en dialogue* (cit. n. 9), p. 159-160.

²⁹ Quoted in the title 1, Eutychès, Dioscore, Timothée *Ælure* : *Glxadrut'iwink' hořomoc'* (cit. n. 20), p. 260.

³⁰ *Glxadrut'iwink' hořomoc'* (cit. n. 20), titre 2: Greek demands p. 260, Nersēs' response p. 260-261.

³¹ *Glxadrut'iwink' hořomoc'* (cit. n. 20), p. 264.

demands that he be informed of the circumstances of the assembly meetings and the content of the decisions taken³².

With regards to liturgy, Nersēs Lambronac‘i’s responses, which reflect the Greeks’ demands, only make reference to the dispute’s conventional points such as the question of heortological discrepancies, the way to say the *Trisagion*, the species used for the Eucharist and the confection of the holy Chrism. Although the responses are of primary interest to us, it should be noted that, with regards to theology, the Armenian Prelate appears to be flexible and willing to concede some points as well as having an intelligent line of argument. For the festivals and calendar discrepancies, for example, he explains that it is impossible for him to make any amendments due to the weight of tradition³³ although he notes that only the Nativity and its related ceremonies are concerned. For the Eucharist, he presents the Greeks with a sort of deal, saying that if they forego the use of unleavened bread then he would be willing to do the same for the use of pure wine³⁴. This comment is interesting and clearly demonstrates that, like Nersēs Šnorhali, his senior in the Armenian-Greek negotiations, the Armenian Prelate only envisaged the negotiations on an equal basis and did not intend to have their conduct dictated by the Greeks. This attitude can also be seen upon analysis of the last point raised in the document sent by the Greeks, demanding that the choice of Armenian Catholicos be approved by the Emperor. Nersēs Lambronac‘i’s response is highly interesting and is revelatory of the way in

³² “The definition and the causes [of the meeting] of the fourth council are known by us. [We know] that it is in accordance with the three previous and this is why we have accepted it. And when you provide us with the circumstances of the other [councils], if they are in accordance with the profession of faith given at the previous councils, we shall welcome them gladly”.

³³ *Glxadrut‘iwnk‘ hořomoc‘* (cit. n. 20), title 4, p. 262-263.

³⁴ *Glxadrut‘iwnk‘ hořomoc‘* (cit. n. 20), title 6, p. 263: “We want you to celebrate the Eucharist with fermented bread, wine and water. On this point, we have deemed it fit that your Excellency acts as the see of the apostle Peter and as our weakness and, as such, it renews the commandment of love. As they are, and as are we, the disciples of the apostolic tradition who, like us, give unleavened bread for the sacrifice of Christ. And if God permits you to lower yourself thus and act like us then we are ready, for there is no obstacle to the Church union, to mix water with pure wine, for the glory of God”.

which he perceived the union. Following a rather lengthy consideration of the previous attempts to bring together the Churches, including several examples, he proceeds with the argument that makes his treaty so original: the need for a pure and simple consolidation of the two ecclesiastical hierarchies, Greek and Armenian: “And thus it is necessary, through an indestructible connection, to acknowledge love by marrying the See of Antioch with the Armenian Patriarch as, in uniting this chaste Virgin with this immaculate spouse, we believe that an enduring alliance will exist between our two peoples. And we hope, as our Lord subjected human nature, through his own body, to the power of God the Father, and, as such, in having this holy See and this holy Church for a body, the whole Armenian Church shall be placed under the power of the king of the Romans and combined with the great Church”³⁵. This is a bold claim from the Armenian Prelate, given the importance of the See of Antioch for the Empire. It is important to note that, in the last quarter of the 12th century, the town was the focus of continual struggles between the emperors of the Comnenian dynasty and the Normands who seized control after the first crusade. After having led several military expeditions in the region, in order to submit the princes of Antioch, the emperors managed to reinstate a Greek Patriarch on the town's seat with the election of Athanasius III, from 1165 until his death in 1170³⁶. Without Nersēs Lambronac‘i necessarily having been informed of this, it is certain that he was aware of it, from his knowledge of the Church's history, the importance of the seat and the daring nature of his request. It is therefore written at the end of his text that, if the Greeks did not agree, they should put forward propositions that they themselves deemed appropriate.

In any case, when Nersēs Lambronac‘i sent the text through the intermediary of Kostandin in 1176, he had surely thought long and hard about the union's functioning and understood that a completely new approach was needed if it was to stand the chance of lasting. The period was favourable to the union, particularly if we take into account the Emperor Manuel who was more open than his predecessors to various propositions. Moreover, the request for the seat of Hiera-

³⁵ *Glxadrut‘iwnk‘ hořomoc‘* (cit. n. 20), title 9, p. 265.

³⁶ Regarding the reestablishment see B. Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States*, VR, London, 1980, p. 177.

polis for Kostandin was also a way of beginning to work towards this, with a Prelate close to the Catholicos on an important seat in the Greek ecclesiastical hierarchy. We get the impression from reading the Armenian sources and, in particular, from reading Nersēs Lambronac'i's opusculum, that a lasting solution that pleased all parties could have been found. The Armenian Prelate's tone is conciliatory yet firm. He wishes to discuss matters and is willing to concede on some points but would like the discussions to take place on an equal footing and for both parties to make concessions in order to reach an agreement. A few years later, when he visited Constantinople following the death of Manuel Comnenus, the situation was entirely different.

To bring this short study to a close, we must address the last documentary record preserved in Armenian relating to these discussions, whilst being sure to reiterate that, for this phase of discussions, the Armenian sources are the only ones to take the dialogue into account as there is no mention in any of the Greek sources. The report is made up of manuscript colophons³⁷ and, most importantly, a narrative text recounting Nersēs Lambronac'i's visit to Constantinople in 1197³⁸.

³⁷ A. Mat'evosyan, *Hayeren jeragreri hišatakaranner (e-žb darer)*, Erevan, 1988, N°292 and N°293 p. 292. The first colophon that Nersēs wrote in the monastery of Skewra, following his return, is accompanied by his *Commentary* of the Proverbs in which he explains how, during his time spent in Constantinople in 646 [1197], he had asked the Greeks to provide the Proverb commentaries existing in their language. As a result, he was able to ascertain that his own commentary was somewhat lacking. The second colophon, the content of which will be addressed further on, is more directly related to the visit as the Armenian Prelate outlines his impressions.

³⁸ These various documents have been identified and, in some cases, reproduced, in N. Akinian's work, *Nersēs Lambronac'i. Keank'a ew Grakan Vastaknerə [Nersēs Lambronac'i, his life and literary works]*, Vienna, 1956. For the narrative text, we have used the edition published in Istanbul in 1861, *Xosakc'ut'iwnk' Surb Nersēsi Lambronac'woy and patriark'in yunac' [The dialogue of Saint Nerses with the Greek patriarch]*. We have checked this edition's conformity with four of the oldest manuscripts (Matenadaran N°732 (1322), N°581 (1371), N°228 (1457) and N°583 (15th century). There is a summary of this text in the *Life* of Nersēs Lambronac'i, written by Grigor of Skewra in 1204: Grigori Skewrac'woc', *Nerbolean i surbn Nersēs*

Nersēs Lambronac‘i goes to the Byzantine capital at the request of the Armenian king Levon and, according to Smbat the Constable, was accompanied by two people: Halkam, the king's maternal uncle and someone named Połos³⁹; one of them may well have been author of the anonymous text on the discussions as the tone used by the latter aims to persuade the reader of his presence during proceedings. In order to do so, he provides specific details, outlines interventions from the various protagonists, either by referring to their name or function, and brings a 'living' aspect to the account. The historian's analysis comments on the rather unusual nature of the occasion as, although visits from high-ranking Armenian prelates may have taken place in the past, religious leaders had for some time avoided travelling in the Byzantine capital for fear of facing pressure to adhere to the Chalcedonian faith. Despite the conciliatory nature of discussions that took place from 1165-1178, Nersēs Šnorhali had therefore always refrained from travelling to Constantinople even though the Emperor had invited him several times in his correspondence. He had always found pretexts to justify his reasons for preferring to receive the Emperor's emissaries at Hřomkla⁴⁰. Despite his reservations, Nersēs

Lambronac‘i [Grigor Skewřac‘i, *Panegyric of saint Nersēs Lambronac‘i*], (Sop‘erk‘ Haykakank‘ ŽE [Écrits arméniens XV]), Venice, 1854, p. 53-55.

³⁹ See G. Dédéyan (intro., trans. and notes), *La chronique attribuée au connétable Smbat*, (Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades XIII), Paris, 1980, p. 72-73. The translated version by Gérard Dédéyan, which is based on the edition published in Venice in 1956, makes no reference to this Baron Połos, although he appears in the manuscript of Ėjmiacin and therefore in the translated version in *Documents Arméniens in Recueil de Historiens des Croisades*, t. I, p. 633.

⁴⁰ At the beginning of the discussions, in 1165, Manuel Comnenus requested that Grigor III send his brother, Nersēs Šnorhali, who still only held the position of his Coadjutor, in order to discuss matters of faith. When the imperial letter arrived at its destination, the situation had changed due to the death of Grigor III and the rise of Nersēs to the position of Catholicos. In his reply to the Emperor, the newly-instated Catholicos cited his considerable responsibilities as the reason for refusing this invitation, not wanting to offend the Basileus. In his entirely rhetorical protest, he stresses that he would have derived great pleasure from such a visit: *Ėndhanrakan t‘ult‘k* (cit. n. 9), p. 110-111. See French translation in I. Augé, *Églises en dialogue* (cité n. 9), p. 117-118.

Lambronac'i went to Constantinople in 1197, the date of which is given in a manuscript colophon. The discussions had certainly been prepared and one of the embassy's objectives was to raise the issue of religious concerns. An emissary visiting for an entirely different reason may often have been approached to discuss religious matters and the fact that Nersēs Lambronac'i was carrying a letter from the Catholicos demonstrates his willingness if this were to happen. The narration includes a short prologue documenting the arrival of the Armenian emissaries before the Emperor and the Patriarch, the presentation of the letters from the king Levon and the Catholicos as well as customary courtesies⁴¹. The proceedings, which took place in the church of Saint-Sophia, then began and the account becomes a form of interrogation with the Patriarch asking the Armenian Prelate to shed light on a number of conventional issues in the Armenian-Greek dispute, ranging from the crucial question of the nature of Christ to disagreements regarding customary rituals which have already been discussed in the documents analysed above⁴². There is no need discuss the content of the talks at any greater length since the issues raised are quite standard and unoriginal, as are the responses given by the Archbishop of Tarse. It is of greater interest to try and reconstruct the way in which proceedings unfolded and the atmosphere in which they took place, according to the anonymous account.

⁴¹ *Xosakē 'ut 'iwnk' Surb Nersēsī* (cit. n. 38), p. 3: "When the holy Nersēs went to the king of the Greeks (Alexis III Ange – 1195-1203) and greeted him, they (Nersēs and the members of the delegation) gave him the instructions and letters from the Lord Grigoris, catholicos of the Armenians (Grigor VI – 1194-1203) and the king of the Armenians, Levon. And he (the Emperor) welcomed the holy Nersēs with great enthusiasm and showed reverence".

⁴² As was always the case, the Patriarch's first question was on the subject of the incarnation and the natures of Christ. The question was resolved quickly with Nersēs insisting that an agreement had been reached. Important liturgical issues were dealt with next, including the celebration of the Eucharist. Regarding the Armenians' use of unleavened bread, Nersēs Lambronac'i hid behind existing Roman authority, although he was later obliged to clarify his thoughts and set them in Scripture. Next were the conventional issues regarding the *Trisagion* and the confection of the holy Chrism. When the logothete attempted to question the Armenian Prelate on the blessing of the crosses, he refused to answer, undoubtedly finding the question too trivial.

Some evidence suggests that the dialogue took place in a positive environment that allowed each person to express their thoughts and present documents supporting their line of argument. In his manuscript colophon, Nersēs Lambronac‘i even explains that he had brought with him a number of texts relating to the Armenian-Greek controversy, the most important of which were the letters of Photius and the Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople. The protagonists used the texts where they felt it to be necessary, in particular while dealing with the question of the use of pure wine by the Armenians for the celebration of the Eucharist. We are, however, through a careful analysis of the text, able to detect a certain amount of tension and it is likely that the tone was actually far from friendly. The Armenian authors agree to commend Nersēs Lambronac‘i who apparently had no difficulty in standing his ground amongst the mass of Greek theologians. Grigor of Skewra, for example, stated that “assembled by the grace of the Spirit, he answered with as much amiability and intelligence as was possible, especially considering that he was foreign of language and origin and amongst so many intellects”⁴³. The end of the anonymous text is equally as eloquent when the author depicts a monk and Greek princes who go together to congratulate the Armenian Prelate and confirm his victory. The documents served the purpose of displaying the outstanding personality of Nersēs Lambro-nac‘i and his easy victory faced with the mass of Greek theologians. Furthermore, and above and beyond these rhetorical elements, an attentive reader can already detect the hostile nature of the discussions that took place and the difficult position of the Armenian Prelate. The signed colophon by the Archbishop of Tarse, written in Constantinople before his departure, confirms this impression. The tone is disenchanted and the disappointment clearly visible⁴⁴. Although Ner-

⁴³ *Nerbolean i surbn Nersēs* (cit. n. 38), p. 54.

⁴⁴ A. Mat‘evosyan, *Hayeren jeragreri hišatakaranner* (cit. n. 37), N°293, p. 292: “I, Nersēs, humble owner of this book, copied by my son Grigoris, I have brought the holy letters with me to Constantinople, in the year 646 (1197) of the Armenians. And with these letters, we have had a discussion [with them]; we have found them ignorant, reluctant and devoted to the ways of the Hebrews who do not wish to serve God in the newness of the spirit, but rather in the oldness of the letter. We are disappointed in our spiritual words and return full of shame for the hope that we had in their wisdom”.

sēs, when writing his *Chapters* some years earlier, still held some hope for the union, based on the principles of equality, he had now accepted the practical impossibility of its realisation.

The second half of the 12th century was a period rife with discussions between the Armenians and the Greeks, discussions of which there are numerous traces in the Armenian sources. Their depth is even more apparent in view of the preserved Greek sources which are much less complete. The discussions that took place between 1165-1178 are only partially included in Theorianos' account whilst Nersēs Lambronac'i's visit to Constantinople was ignored entirely.

This debate, dated in 1197, constitutes one of the last attempts to negotiate as the Armenians had by now turned their attention more to the Latins. The opening period, represented by the reign of Manuel Comnenus and the original propositions from Nersēs Lambronac'i on the subject of ecclesiology, was now over. It is important to note, however, the following peace talks with religious authorities of the Nicea Empire in the following century: there are records of exchanges between the Patriarchs of Constantinople Germain II (1222-1240) and Manuel II (1244-1254) on the one hand and the king Het'um I (1226-1270) and the Catholicos Kostandin I (1221-1267) on the other hand.

**ՆԱՄԱԿՆԵՐԻ ՓՈԽԱՆԱԿՈՒՄՆԵՐ,
ՀԱԿԱՃԱՌՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐ, ՄԱՆՐ ԵՐԿԵՐ. ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱԿԱՆ
ՍԿԶԲՆԱՂԲՅՈՒՐՆԵՐԸ ՀԱՅԵՐԻ և ՀՈՒՅՆԵՐԻ ՄԻՋև
ԴԱՎԱՆԱԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ ՎԵՃԻ ՄԱՍԻՆ**

Իգաբեկ Օմե

ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ

Հայերի և հույների միջև, հատկապես ԺԲ դարում ծավալված եկեղեցական փոխհարաբերությունների ընթացքում, ստեղծվել են բազմաթիվ բնագրեր հայերեն կամ հունարեն լեզուներով: Հոդվածում քննարկել ենք մի քանի հայկական սկզբնաղբյուրներ: Դրանցից ամենակարևորը 1165-1178 թթ. կողմերի միջև փոխանակված նամակների ժողովածուն է, որը կազմել է Ներսես Լամբրոնացին: Բացի այդ, պատասխանով հանդերձ պահպանվել է «Գլխադրությւնը հոռոմոց, զորս պահանջեն առ ի մենջ ի պետս խաղաղութեան» երկը: Վերջապես, հասել է թղթերի ժողովածուն (ՊԽՄ), ուր մի շարք թղթեր ունեն պատմական բացատրու-

թյուններ, և 1197 թ. Կ. Պոլիս ուղարկված Ներսես Լամբրոնացու
դեսպանագնացության նկարագրությունը:

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Author	Recipient	Armenian version ³¹	Greek version ³²
Nersēs Šnorhali	Alexis Axouch, Byzantine Duke of Cilicia and, through him, the Emperor Manuel Comnenus	p. 87-107	
Manuel Comnenus	The Catholicos Grigor III. When the letter reached its destination, his brother, Nersēs Šnorhali, had succeeded him	p. 107-109	
Nersēs Šnorhali	Manuel Comnenus	p. 109-120	
Nersēs Šnorhali who paired his previous letter with a profession of faith	Manuel Comnenus	p. 120-143	
Manuel Comnenus	Nersēs Šnorhali	p. 144-145	Col. 120a-121a
Nersēs Šnorhali	Manuel Comnenus	p. 145-153	Col. 212d-224c
Manuel Comnenus. This letter was accompanied by a list of	Nersēs Šnorhali	p. 154-157	The letter is found in col. 236B The chapters asked for by the

³¹ The references are to the edition specified *supra* note 9: *Ēndhanrakan t'ult'k srboyn Nersēs Šnorhalwoy*, Jerusalem, 1871.

³² The references are to the edition quoted note 11: *Patrologia Graeca* 133, col. 119-298.

nine points on which the Greeks ask the Armenians to reconsider			Greeks are documented in the dialogue by Theorianus col. 270a-c
Manuel Comnenus. The “secret” letter, transmitted only by Theorianus in the Greek version	Nersēs Šnorhali		Col. 233b-235a
The Patriarch of Constantinople Michael of Anchialos	Nersēs Šnorhali	p. 157-159	Col. 236d-240a
The Patriarch of Constantinople Michael of Anchialos. Transmitted only by Theorianus	Nersēs Šnorhali		Col. 224c-232c
Nersēs Šnorhali	Manuel Comnenus	p. 160-161	Very brief summary given in col. 276c-d
Nersēs Šnorhali	The Patriarch of Constantinople Michael of Anchialos	p. 161-165	
Grigor Tlay	Manuel Comnenus	p. 166-168	
Manuel Comnenus	Grigor Tla	p. 169-175	

The Patriarch of Constantinople Michael of Anchialos	Grigor Tła	p. 175-180	
Grigor Tłay	Manuel Comnenus	p. 181-192	
Grigor Tłay	The Patriarch of Constantinople, successor to Michael of Anchialos and his Synod	p. 192-199	