

## ՀՐԱՊԱՐԱԿՈՒՄՆԵՐ

### THE ENCYCLICAL FROM EPHREM, CATHOLICOS OF ARMENIA TO SIR GORE OUSELEY, 3 AUGUST 1813 (THE BRITISH LIBRARY MS. OR. 15,957) AND SIR OUSLEY'S VISIT TO ECHMIADZIN AND AN IMPORTANT LITERARY OBSERVATION

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#### DESCRIPTION

Large single leaf; white paper watermarked "C. Willmott 1804" measuring 40.5x23.5cm. (written surface 27x17.2cm.). Double lined margins in fine gold on the left (4.5cm.) and on the right (2cm.). The text is written in clear **bolorgir** in red and black ink consisting of thirty lines. The first five lines are written in red ink, and the rest of the text is in black ink, except the name Edjmiatsin, which is filled in red. The letter is signed and sealed: "In the year of the Lord 1813, in the month of August on the 3<sup>rd</sup>: Hararatian See Holy Edjmiatsin" (in red ink). Below the signature of the Catholicos is placed his seal in purple ink inscribed with his monogram "E [Eutiun] Yeprem Katoghikos, 1259".

Above the page in the top right corner is the accession no. 13 and seal "India Office Library, 1 May 1919". The English abstract by A. G. Ellis dated 26.5.1919 was attached to the manuscript at this stage (see *Contents*). With the manuscript there is also the original preliminary catalogue entry form with the heading:

"Language: Armenian Mss.

1. Loc no. I.O.2936 . Bib. Leydeniana Armenian LVI.
2. Armenian document dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1813. Letter from Ephrem, Catholicos of Armenia, to Sir Gore Ouseley. Located in I.O. 4551 (Guard - book)".

On 16.2.1993 the document was discovered in the India Office collections by Dr. Vrej Nersessian and transferred to the Armenian section and placed under no. Or. 15,957.

#### CONDITION

The manuscript is in excellent condition except for a few holes that are just visible in the lower half of the page. The left margin has the remains of the paper which

fastened the document to a guard book.

## ILLUMINATIONS

In the top margin there is a richly decorated floral pattern in gold. The initial letters ՅԻ [Յիսուսի], i.e. Jesus, is made up of an elaborate design of poppy buds and leaves continued in red. In the left margin is a very precisely drawn dome of the Holy Altar in Edjmiatsin cathedral, with the chandelier hanging from the ceiling supporting four candles. The whole picture is painted in gold.

## A HISTORIC NARRATIVE OF THE EVENTS OF THE TIME

The Encyclical is an important document relating to two significant figures of the first half of the nineteenth century and their diplomatic interventions in the First Russo-Persian War of 1804-1813, namely Yeprem Catholicos of All Armenians and Sir Gore Ouseley.

Yeprem I Dzoragetsi (Ter Hovhannisian) was born in 1748 and died in 1835.<sup>1</sup> He was elected Catholicos of All Armenians in 1809 to succeed Davit' V Enegets (1801-1807) and Daniel I Surmaretsi (1807-1808). Yeprem, before his election to the Armenian catholicate, had been the primate of the Armenian diocese in Russia from 1801 to 1809, and hence played a crucial role in the rapprochement between Russia and Persia that concluded with the Treaty of Golestan on October 1813. In 1822 Catholicos Yeprem fled from Edjmiatsin and took refuge in the Monastery of Haghbat, until which time, as a result of the defeat of Persia in the Second Russo-Persian War and the Treaty of Turkmenchay of 1828, signed by the two parties, the greater part of Eastern Armenia was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1828.

Sir Gore Ouseley (1770-1844) is considered to be one of the finest British diplomats. He started his diplomatic career at the Court of Oude (1798-1804), and subsequently served in Persia and Russia (1810-15), where he negotiated the Definitive Treaty between Britain and Persia, and then by his intervention put an end to the Russo-Persian war.

In 1809 considerable interest was stimulated by the arrival in London of an envoy from the Shah of Persia, Fath Ali, who had come via Baghdad in company with James Morier. Mirza Abul Hasan (later Abul Hasan Khan) had brought with him a Preliminary Treaty drawn up between the Shah and the British Envoy to Persia, Sir Harford Jones, for which he sought ratification. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Wellesley, appointed Sir Gore Ouseley as "the person in England best qualified for that situation" to succeed Sir Harford Jones at the court of Persia in order to negotiate the Definitive Treaty. Sir Gore Ouseley was given the high rank and office of Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, thus becoming the highest-ranking Ambassador ever accredited from Britain to Persia.

His primary objective was to negotiate the Definitive Treaty, confirming and



amplifying the terms of Jone's Preliminary Treaty, which he had brought from London. After protracted and difficult discussions lasting almost the entire winter, the Definitive Treaty was finally agreed by the Shah and signed on March 14, 1812. To mark the occasion Ouseley was decorated by the Shah with the Royal Persian Order of the Lion and the Sun, set in diamonds. The Ambassador dispatched his brother, William Ouseley, to have the treaty ratified. But matters were soon complicated by renewed hostilities between Russia and Persia on the one hand, and between France and Russia on the other.

In June 1812 Napoleon invaded Russia, making Russia and Britain allies once again. Britain was thus obliged to steer a course between antagonizing Russia and violating its commitments to Persia, with its best option being brokering a settlement of the conflict between Russia and Persia. The Russians had been periodically interested in finding a negotiated settlement since the setback of 1805-06 and 1810, when Alexander Tomasov and Mirza Bozorg had sought to arrange an armistice. Yet the Russians were unwilling to make serious concessions in order to end the war, and the Persians were also less than eager to settle since, from their point of view, the war was not going all that badly. Ouseley, however, realised the awkwardness of having Britain's resources deployed against its Russian ally and that the situation for Persia was likely to worsen once Russia was freed from the struggle with Napoleon. He proposed revisions to the Definitive Treaty, scaled down British military involvement, and threatened to withhold payment of the subsidy promised to the Qajars. In February 1812, N. R. Ritschev assumed command of the Russian forces and started peace negotiations with the Persians.

The Persian Crown Prince and the Prime Minister were both for continuing the war, but Gore Ouseley contended that although it was possible that Napoleon might subdue Russia, it was inconceivable that he could retain the country, and that when Russia was restored to Alexander, he would undoubtedly avenge himself on the Shah for refusing his present offers of peace; whereas, by acceding to Alexander's offers at this time, the Shah would secure a grateful ally in the Russian Czar. His advice, reinforced by the defeats of the army of 'Abbas Mirza by the Russian general Peter Kotliarevski on October 31, 1812 followed by the fall of the Persian fortress at Lankaran in early 1813, was accepted, and they finally resolved to make peace. Through Ouseley's good offices the Russo-Persian Treaty of Golestan was signed on October 13, 1813 at the village of Golestan in Karabagh, with Ritschev representing Russia and Abul Hasan Khan and Ouseley as representatives of Persia.

## CONTENT

This is the complete text of the Encyclical

Բարձր գերաշուք եւ մեծ դեսպան յաղթող Տերութեան Բրիթանիոյ Տէր Գորոզլի.

Ողորմած տէր աղօթարար ձեր եւ Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի ծառայ Եփրեմ կաթողիկոս ամենայն Հայոց եւ ծայրագոյն պատրիարք արարատեան Աթոռոյս սրբոյն Էջմիածնի: Բագում յարգութեամբ եւ ամենաջերմ եռանդ սիրով մատուցանեմ զողջոյն Քրիստոսական եւ ցանկամ յամենայն սրտէ զի լինիջիք միշտ ի ցանկալի առողջութեան յուրախութեան եւ յամենայն երջանկութեան ի յուրախութիւն եւ ի մխիթարութիւն մեր եւ ի հովանաւորութիւն ամենայն մերազնէից մերոց եղելոց յայդ կողմանս:

Իրաւի՛ մեծ բախտաւորութիւն համարեցայ եւ համարիմ վասն սրբոյն Աթոռոյս արարատեան եւ ամենայն Աթոռայնոցն այժմ եւ յապայն, որ ի յընկալնուլն ձեր զխնդիր մեր եւ սուրբ ժողովոյն մերոյ ի ձեռն պատուելի Վրթանէս Արք Եպս յատուկ հարազատին մեր արարեալ էիք փութով զսկիզբն հոգատարութեան վասն այնր եւ յանձն առեալ ողորմածաբար զի մինչս ցվախճանն ունիջիք շնորհ օգնականութեան յամենայն կողմանէ առ ի արդիւնաւորութիւն բանին զոր մեծ շնորհակալութեամբ գրեալ ծանուցեալ էր մեզ ինքն Վրթանէս Արք Եպսն եւ յատուկ հարազատն ձեր եւ մեր ազնիւ Յարութիւն Օշինովն վասն որոյ եւ մեր ի ձեռն այսու յատուկ գրութեամբ մատուցանեմք ձեզ զմեծ շնորհակալութիւն եւ խնդրեմք դարձեալ զայդպիսի շնորհ բարերարութեան եւ քաղցր ակնարկութեան ձերոյ անսպառ առնել ի մէնջ եւ ի սրբոյ Աթոռոյս արարատեան եւ ամենայն Աթոռայնոցն մերոց որով յիշատակութիւն բարի անուան ձերոյ մնալոց է աստ ի սուրբ տաճար Յիսուսեան իբր արձան պարծանաց մշտնջենաւոր օրհնութեամբ զովութեամբ եւ շնորհակալութեամբ:

Ոմանց թղթոց թարգմանութիւն Ֆարսերէն զոր հրամայեալ էիք առաքել ահա առաքեցաք ըստ այսմ զոր ունիք տեսանել եւ ըստ այնմ շնորհ ունել:

Ողջ լէր եւ ես եմ եւ մնամ յամենայն սրտէ եւ հոգւոյ

ձերդ մեծանձնութեան  
խոնարհ ծառայ եւ Աղօթարար  
Եփրեմ

յամի տեառն 1813 յամսեանն  
Օգոստոսի 3 յարարատեան Աթոռոս  
Սուրբ Էջմիածին

Է  
Եփրեմ կաթողիկոս  
ՌՄԾԹ

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION

High Eminence and Great Ambassador of the victorious Empire of Britain, Sir Gorozli [i.e. Gore Ouseley],

Merciful Lord, yours prayerfully and the servant of Jesus Christ, Yeprem Catholicos of All Armenians and Supreme Patriarch of the Araratian See of Holy Edjmiatsin, with enormous respect and the most sincere affection, I offer you our Christian greetings, and wish with all my heart that you enjoy continuing good



health, happiness and every prosperity, for the joy and solace of ourself, as protector over all our compatriots living in those regions.

Truly, I consider it a great privilege, on behalf of the Araratian sees and all the dioceses of the present and future, that you accepted sympathetically our petition and that of the holy Synod, delivered by the respected Archbishop Vrtanes, our special envoy, and that you acted promptly and graciously in its fulfillment by offering protection. For this success, (of which I was informed by Archbishop Vrtanes and our dear colleague, the honorable Harutiun Oshinov), you will forever enjoy gratitude from all quarters. We hereby, with this special letter, offer to you our great thanks and request, once again, your grace's benevolence and protection. In the Holy Araratian see and all our dioceses, your good name will be remembered in our holy church of Christ as a memorial of pride with eternal blessing, praise, and gratitude.

The translation into Persian of some of the documents, which you had asked to be sent, we are now forwarding for you to see and have.

Blessings on you. I am and remain, with all my heart and spirit, your eminence's humble servant.

Yeprem

In the year of the Lord 1813: in the month of

August on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Araratian See

Holy Edjmiatsin

Inscription on the seal: "E (= God – V.N.) Yeprem Katoghikos, RMCT"  
(Armenian era 1259=AD 1810 - V<sup>2</sup>.N.).

Abstract of Armenian document<sup>3</sup>

[Top left corner - India Office stamp].

"A letter dated Echmiadzin, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1813, from Ephrem, Catholicos of Armenia, to Sir Gore Ouseley, Ambassador of Great Britain to the court of Persia, thanking him for his sympathetic reception of a petition on behalf of the Armenian Church, which had been forwarded by the hand of the Archbishop Vrtanes, and for his prompt action in connection therewith in fulfillment of his promise communicated to the Catholicos in writing through the intermediary of the above mentioned Archbishop and Haruthiun Oshinov. The Catholicos further informs Sir Gore Ouseley that the Persian translations of certain letters, which he had asked for, have been sent".

(initialed) A.G.E.

26.5.19.

#### COMMENTARY

The death of Catholicos Simeon Erevantsi (1763-1780) coincided with the beginning of active Russian and Persian intervention in the affairs of the Armenian Church. By 1800 Persia had consolidated under the Qajar dynasty and begun to strengthen its position in Transcaucasia. In the meantime, Russia, following its



involvement in the affairs of Georgia, was committed to southward penetration into Eastern Armenia. The Persians, who had considered all of Transcaucasia as part of Persia since the Safavid dynasty, sought the cooperation of Armenians and the Armenian Church against Russian expansion. The Russians also considered an alliance with Edjmiatsin crucial for their plan to dominate the same region. However, the Armenian leadership, which during the seventeenth century had been generally pro-Persian and during the eighteenth century pro-Russian, emerged in the nineteenth century as essentially undecided. Both powers, therefore, began to intervene in the election of a new Catholicos, hoping that the victorious candidate would favor their cause.

The election of the Catholicos on the eve of the nineteenth century was one of the most hotly contested in the history of the Armenian Church. The main candidates were Archbishops Yeprem Dzorageghtsi, Davit Enegetsi, Daniel Surmaretsi and Hovsep Arghutants. The conservative faction of the Synod, which favored a church unburdened by political considerations, supported Yeprem. Davit was favored by the Persians, Daniel, who was the newly elected patriarch of Constantinople, was a popular choice but few thought that he would exchange the glamour of being patriarch of Constantinople for Edjmiatsin. The Russians supported Hovsep, who was the primate of Armenians in Russia.

The conservative branch of the Church Synod succeeded when Daniel and Yeprem were voted as the main nominees; but the Russians continued their campaign on behalf of Hovsep and the Persians for Davit. With considerable pressure from outside Daniel and Yeprem were persuaded to drop out of the election in favor of Hovsep', who was elected Catholicos in 1801. However, on his way to Edjmiatsin he fell ill and died in Tiflis before being consecrated. Although most Armenians favored Daniel, the Persians - and to some extent the Russians - both felt Davit' would serve their cause. Thus, when Daniel was elected Catholicos in 1801, Davit, with the support of the two powers, assumed the seat before Daniel could reach Edjmiatsin. For the next six years there were two Catholicoses - a state of affairs which fostered corruption, bribery and loss of Church property.

The Persian role in the Davit-Danielian controversy and the bad policy of several khans in Eastern Armenia combined to alienate Armenians from Persia. At this point Russia began to support Daniel in an attempt to gain Armenian support. This renewed interest in the Armenians was a result of the First Russo- Persian War, which Russia began in 1804. Armenian volunteers in Karabagh aided the swift Russian penetration into the khanate of Ganje and Karabagh by 1807; the Persian losses in the war with Russia reawakened the need for Armenian support. Under the guidance of heir-apparent Prince 'Abbas Mirza, the Persians now tried to shift or at least neutralize Armenian sympathies toward Russia. Khan Hosein Qoli Qajar was sent by the shah to govern Eastern Armenia. In his first act he ejected the usurper Davit and installed Daniel as the rightful Catholicos. When Daniel died



in 1808, the khan accepted the choice of the Armenians, Yeprem, as Catholicos. Although Yeprem was the prelate of Russian Armenians, he had been neutral. 'Abbas Mirza and Hosein Khan then moved to put the affairs of the Church in order and help the Armenians of Eastern Armenia. Erevan became the center of Persian defenses against Russia. Based on this benevolent policy Persia solicited Armenian aid against the Russian might. The policy seems to have worked, because unlike the campaign of 1804, Armenians did not aid the Russian invasion of Erevan in 1808. In return, Armenian Church debts were lowered and creditors were told to be lenient.<sup>4</sup> The Persians reinstated the Armenian endowments and privileges gained during the time of the Safavids, and the Armenian Church began a period of economic reconstruction.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately for Armenians, the eventual Persian defeat and the humiliating Treaty of Golestan (concluded on 24 October, 1813 and ratified in Tiflis in September 1814)<sup>6</sup> began a period of cooling in Armeno-Persian relations. Persians who were anti-Armenian, such as Hasan Khan, brother of the governor, and rivals of 'Abbas Mirza used the Persian defeat as well as the pro-Russian activities of the Armenians of Karabagh and Ganje as a pretext to withdraw from Eastern Armenia. The situation worsened in 1814, when Archbishop Nerses Ashtaraketsi (Yeprem's assistant) became the primate of the Armenian Church in Tiflis and openly began anti-Persian activities there. Although the official benevolent policy of the Persian government did not cease altogether, this marked the beginning of a period of strained relations with the Armenians and particularly the Armenian Church. As a result Persians prompted the swift collection of debts by the state and individuals.

The period from 1814 to 1824 was a low point in Armeno-Persian relations. This ebb forced Catholicos Yeprem to leave Edjmiatsin and seek refuge in the monastery of Haghbat in 1822, which at that time was under Russian control on the Armenian-Georgian border. He did not resign, however, and while he was alive no other Catholicos could be elected. Without the Catholicos in Edjmiatsin, the Church's debts and troubled finances were left in limbo. Thus, the Persians could not legally claim Church property in lieu of debts.

The unsatisfactory terms of the Treaty of Golestan precipitated the Second Russo-Persian War of 1826-28, which, when concluded by the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, paved the path for the annexation of Eastern Armenia by the Russian Empire.<sup>7</sup> The dream of Armenian secular and religious leaders to create an autonomous Armenia under benevolent Russia disappeared. Catholicos Yeprem found Russian control too burdensome and resigned in 1830.

The date of the Encyclical is August 3, 1813, prior to the signing of the Treaty of Golestan. The letter of thanks by the Catholicos suggests that he had petitioned Sir Gore Ouseley to have in his mind the affairs of the Armenian Church when negotiating the treaty. Sir William Gore Ouseley, brother and private secretary of the Ambassador records in his memoirs: "Friday, January 13, 1815. Had a visit



from the Armenian Archbishop, who came to wish me many happy new years, and thank me in the name of his nation for the protection and immunities I had obtained for the Armenians in Persia".<sup>8</sup> Another source confirming the relations of Catholicos Yeprem and Sir Gore Ouseley on the question of securing 'protection' for the Armenians in Persia is manuscript No. 581 of the Four Gospels (AD 1668) now in the Chester Beatty Library, Ireland. On the second unnumbered folio, at the beginning, there is in modern hand the following inscription -

"His High Excellency Sir Gorozli (i.e. Sir Gore Ouseley), the Ambassador of the English, who had come to be ambassador to the Shah of Persia Fatali (i.e. Fath 'Ali-Shah, 1797-1834 - V.N.), while returning to his country with his family, passed by this Holy See of Ararat. He showed much solicitude for us and all our congregation. Because of this, as a token of unforgettable love and perpetual memorial, and as an occasion for blessings on the victorious kingdom of Britain, we offered this small Gospel to His High Excellency June 14, 1814, at Holy Etchmiadsin. (Signed) Ep'rem Patriarch and Catholicos of all the Armenians'. His seal with the date 1259 (= 1810) is affixed".<sup>9</sup>

We have two accounts of this embassy, one written by Sir William Ouseley, the other by James Morier, the Secretary of the Embassy. William Gore Ouseley's entry for 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1812 reads:

"...we passed near Ashtarak, the beautiful village before mentioned, and alighted at the monastery of Armenian Christians, where we were received by the Monks with much hospitality, after a ride of sixteen miles, and nearly as much from Iravan (i.e. Erevan - V.N.). It is styled by the Armenians Edshmiashin, and constitutes, with two others in its vicinity, what the Turks have long called Utch or Outch Kelisia, the "Three Churches"; for this name occurs in the history of Taimur, composed nearly four hundred years ago by Sheikh Ali Yezdi. This monastery has been already well described by ingenious travelers; the view and plan given by Chardin render it unnecessary for me to offer any minute account. We were lodged in commodious apartments furnished with chairs and tables, which now seemed articles of considerable luxury; close to the windows of my room were three very large willow trees growing in the garden, through which flowed a rivulet of limpid water. We were fortunate in meeting here the Padre Serafino, who had been educated at Rome and spoke Italian and French; he had also learned a little English whilst living at Baghdad with Mr. Rich,<sup>10</sup> there resident on the part of our East India Company. At one o'clock, the worthy monks served up an abundant collation. The dishes and plates were of China, and we were feasted with delicious cream, fine bread, butter, cheese and caviar, and profusely regaled with wine. Soon after this repast, it was intimated that the Supreme Bishop, generally entitled



Catholicos or Patriarch, intended to honor me with a visit. I had previously heard that he was in a very infirm state of health, and therefore expressed my wish of saving this venerable prelate any trouble concerning a matter of ceremony, and proposed to wait upon him at his own apartments. This offer proved acceptable; and, in the evening at seven o'clock, I was introduced to the Patriarch in a long and handsome room, at the upper end of which a high arm-chair was placed for me; near this were some other chairs, lower and smaller, but the Patriarch himself and three of his bishops sat on nammeds in the Persian manner, whilst several inferior clergy and monks stood in respectful silence. During this interview, Father Serafino acted as interpreter, for the Patriarch did not understand any language but Armenian although he had traveled in Russia, and passed some time in India. He mentioned Lord Cornwallis<sup>11</sup> with much respect. Lemonade having been presented in beautiful porcelain cups, I returned to my chamber, where, at eight o'clock, our reverend hosts fully evinced their persevering hospitality in a sumptuous dinner, the table being covered with a white cloth of very fine texture and amply furnished with china plates and dishes, napkins, forks, and silver spoons..." William Ouseley concludes the account of his two day visit to Edjmiatsin "I had been induced almost to fancy in some European monastery or college, from the appearance of crucifixes, fat old priests walking in the square, hooded Monks, students in their black gowns, boys reciting their lessons, the singing of psalms, the chiming of bells, and other circumstances".<sup>12</sup>

Sir William Ouseley gave an account of the Ambassador's meeting with Catholicos Yeprem on June, 1814 in equally vivid detail: "After the most honorable reception at Erivan (i.e. Erevan – V.N.) by the almost independent Chief, Hasan Khan Kajar, the Governor of that province, the Ambassador proceeded towards Mount Ararat, and arrived on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1814, at the celebrated Armenian convent of Uch Kalisia...or Ich Miazzin (Descent of the Only Begotten). Here the Embassy was met by the Patriarch, attended by his bishops, priests, and laymen (he being a temporal Chief as well as a spiritual ruler), in robes of gold and silver brocade, with silver enameled tiaras, coriers, crosses, censers, flags (banners), candlesticks, &c. Padre Serafino acted as interpreter, and the procession, after meeting and saluting Sir Gore, went on amidst chanting and peals of bells to the principal church, where the Patriarch offered prayers, and gave his benediction to Lady Ouseley and her children. The party having viewed the splendid ornaments of the church were indulged with a sight of the relics enshrined there, consisting of the spear with which they alleged our Saviour was pierced, to which they attributed miraculous virtue; a finger of St. Kayanne (St. Keyna, or St. Kinnia), a hand of the Armenian apostle, St. Gregory, and the scalp of St. Repsime. In the midst



of the church is a raised space, paved with mosaic, said to be the place where our Lord appeared to St. Gregory. The Ambassador and suite then ascended to the Patriarch's apartment and drank tea. His Holiness was invited to dine with the Ambassador, but as it was a fast-day he was unable to accept the invitation. He however joined the party after dinner, 'and drank claret, port, and madeira, in a very liberal manner'. He has been a great traveler and had been in Calcutta during the Government of Warren Hastings".<sup>13</sup>

The second account of the embassy is provided by James Morier: "On the 15<sup>th</sup>, we pitched our camp at Utch Klisseh, or the three churches, as it is called in Turkish, although there are four in number. The principal church is called by the Armenians Etchmiatzin, which one of the monks explained to us as "the descent of the only begotten son"; a name given because they believe that Jesus Christ here appeared to St. Gregory, who was the first Armenian patriarch.

As we approached the place, the Ambassador was met by the Patriarch, who headed a long procession of fat and rosy monks, all dressed in black hoods, making an exhibition completely novel to us. The Patriarch's state consisted of three red horses, covered with velvet housings, embroidered in gold à la Turque; of three Shatirs or tuning footmen; of a man bearing a flag; of a monk carrying a long silver-mounted stick; and of a small crowd of hooded servants. He exhibited a fine florid face that wore all the marks of good living; and there was a frankness and benignity of expression about it which was prepossessing. His manners and general appearance were those of a perfect gentleman; and this was not to be wondered at, for he was a great traveler and had long frequented the court of Russia, where he was held in high estimation. Of this, indeed, he exhibited a proof; for one of the first things that stuck us in his appearance was a large star of the Russian order of St. Anne, with which he had been decorated by the Emperor, and which now glittered on his purple robe.

As we approached his church, long rows of bishops, priests, deacons, and chaunters were prepared for the procession to pass through; and then they set themselves in motion, with their flags, crucifixes, large candles, and all their superb dresses, singing à gorge-deployé, parts of their service, which we could not understand. The church was then opened, and we all entered en masse. The Ambassador and Patriarch, women and children, Armenians and Englishmen, Turks and Persians, all jostling one another, whilst the bells commenced a dreadful din, and the priests and chaunters continued their chorus as before. A short service was sung, when the Patriarch with a golden cross in his hand, waved it at the Ambassador and his party, and gave us his benediction".<sup>14</sup>



On their second visit to Holy Edjmiatsin James Morier recounts that: "My principal object in this excursion was to inspect the library of the monastery, where I heard that treasures of literature lay buried, which no stranger had yet explored. ... I found no difficulty in gaining the Patriarch's permission to inspect the library. As for himself, he seemed completely ignorant of its contents, and all that he knew about the books was that formerly there were a great many more. He conducted me to it himself through a dark narrow passage, contiguous to his own apartment. The books were ranged in thick rows along the sides of a small dark chamber, abundantly covered with dust, and apparently not much disturbed by their present possessors. I asked in vain for a catalogue; the majority of the books were treatises on religion, lives of saints, and copies of the Evangelists. As a scarce book, they produced to me an old volume of Pope's Homer. They had several Armenian manuscripts of the gospel, but none worthy of remark. It was difficult, from the extreme ignorance and indifference of my guides, to extract the smallest information about the books, how, when, and by whom collected, and what were their particular subjects. It is more than probable that the library contains nothing valuable to any but Armenian priests, and from the specimen of that class which I had before me, it appeared to be a matter of little consequence whether the books existed, or whether they were sent to light the baths of the Mussulmans".<sup>15</sup>

For reasons not explained clearly, the friendly relationship between the Patriarch and the visitors seems to have deteriorated. This is implied by this passage:

"A day or two after, by way of apology, he sent me a superb letter, gilded and ornamented, to accompany a small tin box full of what he was pleased to call antiquities, in the pursuit of which, he had heard that all Englishmen were mad. These consisted of 1<sup>st</sup>, a figure riding on fish, cut upon coral, which he was pleased to call the portrait of an ancient king of Armenia, Samson by name, which however happened to be a Neptune; 2<sup>nd</sup>, a snuff-box of composition stone, mounted with gold rims and hinges, worth about ten shillings, and about as old as his Eminency himself; 3<sup>rd</sup> three Sassanian coins, and one large silver Spanish dollar, well worn down in the pocket of some Armenian priest. Of course my acknowledgments were equal to the value of the present, and we were all great friends again".<sup>16</sup>

Prior to his departure from the Holy See on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1819, Sir Porter puts into his diary this final entry:

"October 30<sup>th</sup>. - Yesterday being a fast to all within the walls excepting myself, this morning I breakfasted most substantially with the patriarch himself; but "the salt and the seasoning" were certainly his discourse, intelligent, mild, and full of urbanity. I left a little memorandum with him, of the English traveler's gratitude, and he presented me with a few curious old



coins picked up in the neighbourhood, and a ring, which I value particularly for the sake of the venerable donor. His blessing accompanied the last gift, his blessing to my child, for I told him I had one; and good authority tells us that the "prayer of the righteous man availeth much". I took my leave of the brotherhood at noon, and mounting my horse, was again on our way".<sup>17</sup>

In 1985 I catalogued for Sotheby's an Encyclical of Catholicos Yeprem addressed to Sir Porter. The letter is a reply to one received by the Catholicos Yeprem dated 20 January 1820 and received in Constantinople on 22 March 1820. The reply of the Catholicos is dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1820.<sup>18</sup>

#### THE EDJMIATSIN SCRIPTORIUM AND AN IMPORTANT LITERARY OBSERVATION

The picture presented by James Morier of the library is unfortunately a true picture of the sad neglect at that time, deplored also by Armenian writers, and his severe comments on the ignorance and indifference of the monks are also justified.

The Armenian historian Arakel Davrizhetsi (d. 1670) in his *History*,<sup>19</sup> published during his lifetime in Amsterdam, in 1669 recorded the pillage of the Edjmiatsin scriptorium. The library was ravaged for the last time in 1804, and its manuscripts and other relics were put on sale, and auctioned off in the markets of neighboring countries. During the catholicate of Yeprem, Nerses Ashtaraketsi (1770-1857) ran the affairs of the See of Edjmiatsin, as attested by Rev. Henry Martyn in his Memoir. "The monastery, and consequently the whole of the Armenians, are under the direction of Nestus (i.e. Nerses – V.N.), one of the Bishops, for the Patriarch Ephraim is a mere cipher, and most of his time is in bed".<sup>20</sup> Rev. Martyn also wrote of those sad events in a letter to Count Nikolai Petrovich Rumyantsev: "We are unfortunate...for in our life time the very rich library of the Araratian See of Holy Ejmiac'in...has been pillaged". In 1821, when Yeprem he had taken refuge in Haghbat monastery, on the advice of Nerses Ashtaraketsi, thousands of precious documents were transferred to Haghbat for preservation. The 'evaluation' and 'classification' of these valuable documents were entrusted to three young deacons (among them Mesrop Taghiadian). They were instructed to select and preserve only those documents which had economic/financial contents (deeds, wills, contracts, privileges) and the rest, as recorded years later with regret and sorrow by Taghiadian were "collected and set fire".<sup>21</sup>

The situation improved soon after the annexation of Eastern Armenia by Russia in 1828. In 1837, by the decree of the Synod Bishop Hovhannes Shahkhatunian prepared the first list of the manuscripts and books in the Edjmiatsin collection, which in Russian and French translation was published by M. Brosset in 1840. This catalogue lists the descriptions of 312 manuscripts. The second catalogue, 'Grand Catalogue of manuscripts of the library of the Holy See',



compiled by Bishop Daniel Sahnazarian and published in 1863 and known by the name of its publisher Karinian, contains descriptions of 2340 manuscripts. In order to better ensure the safety and subsequent research of the manuscripts, the collection was moved from Edjmiatsin to Erevan in 1939. It was first housed in the Alexander Miasnikyan National Library in 1957, and from there it was moved to its present location in 1959. According to 1981 statistics, the Matenadaran had 16,089 manuscripts, of which 13,623 were in Armenian, and 2,466 in other languages. This was a spectacular recovery from the time of Morier in spite of the ravages of time.<sup>22</sup>

But Morier's statement that there were several manuscripts of the Gospel, but none worthy of remark, would be seriously questioned by all students of medieval art, for some of the finest illuminated manuscripts were preserved in Edjmiatsin. The willingness of the monks to show their visitors the treasures of the monastery, which included the Spearhead, a fragment of the Ark, and a relic of St. Gregory but not the valuable manuscripts could be explained by their desire to protect these from theft.

The next traveler who had the opportunity to see Catholicos Yeprem is Sir Robert Ker Porter. On his first visit to the Holy See on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1817, he gives an account of his audience with the Catholicos in these terms:

"The patriarch Ephreme is a venerable man, about seventy years of age, but unimpaired health and a serene countenance, give him a much younger appearance. He has a high reputation for learning and piety and enhances the value of both, by much of the useful sort of knowledge, which can only be gained in the world at large. He has traveled over the chief countries of Asia and passed some time at Calcutta, during the government of Earl Cornwallis. The situation he fills is that of head over all the religious institutions of the Armenian Church, in whatever parts of the globe they may be found. He is elected by convocation of monks from the different monasteries: their assembly is called the Synod of Cardinals, and they select the demanded patriarch, from among the most venerated bishops of the church. He holds this supreme dignity till death, the intrigues of envy, or his own misconduct, displaces him: the two latter modes of translation, I trust, seldom happen".<sup>23</sup>

Sir Porter revisited Edjmiatsin in October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1819. He described his meeting with the Catholicos in these terms: "*October 29<sup>th</sup>* - Ephreme, the venerable patriarch, received me with every kindness I had anticipated, a sort of parental welcome, no doubt belonging to the sacred character when so secluded from the world at large, which, from that circumstance, inclines him to consider all who approach him with the feelings of a hospitable man and a Christian father. It being Friday, he was obliged to allow me to dine alone. But he gave orders to the steward of his household, who was also a monk, to make me a suitable repast, and to do its honour".<sup>24</sup>



At this point in his account Porter makes a very important literary observation, which has gone unnoticed. He remarks that one of the monks "volunteered a psalm; the words of which, he told me, were his own, but the music English. Of course I accepted as graciously as it was offered; and *when sung, it turned out to be our national air of "God save the King", but most woefully mutilated in its long journey.* However, the good-humoured benevolence of the smiling monk, who evidently only sought to amuse me, sweetened his notes; and I enjoyed the simple, and often very sensible remarks of both brothers, during a conversation which occasionally referred to subjects of my late travels" (italics added – V.N.).<sup>25</sup>

My suggestion is that the song which the monk volunteered to perform is no other than the song called in Armenian «Տէր կեցո զու զհայ», regarding the authorship of which there has been considerable debate, and this casual observation of Sir Porter will assist in solving the problem once and for all. The Armenian writer Mikayel Nalbandian (1829-1866) in one article called «Մեռելահարցոյն» (Merelahartsuk, 1859) ascribes the poem to Taghiadian (1803-1858).<sup>26</sup> This wrong attribution was made on the basis that the song, which had first appeared in 1820 in the journal Հայելի Կալկաթեան (Hayeli Kalkatian), was twenty-seven years later, in 1847, reprinted by Taghiadian in the journal he founded called Ազգասէր (Azgaser, 1845, 1848; later renamed Ազգասէր Արարատեան, 1848-1852).<sup>27</sup> In his reprint Taghiadian places the initials Հ.Կ. (H.K., i.e. Hayeli Kalkatian) indicating his original source Հայելի Կալկաթեան. Nalbandian has totally ignored this annotation and attributed its authorship to Taghiadian calling it "a true national song". Ever since this error has been repeated, beginning with Minasarian in his edited Քնար Հայկական (Knar Haykakan, St. Petersburg 1868).

In 1947 Grigor Harutyunian published an article on the literary career of Taghiadian, in which he repeats the same attribution regarding which the literary critic Arshak Alpoyatjian (1879-1962) also published his "Letter to the Editor" pointing out the error of Nalbandian.<sup>28</sup> A decade earlier Alpoyatjian had published a substantial article<sup>29</sup> presenting his case as to why Taghiadian could not have been the author of "Տէր կեցո" and also observing that the wording of the song bears close resemblance to the British anthem 'God Save the King'. In the same article he suggests that the author of the Armenian song is probably the English speaking editor of the Հայելի Կալկաթեան, Hovhannes Ter Hakobian. The observation of Alpoyatjian is confirmed by Sir Porter in 1820, who, when hearing it being performed, commented it has "our national air of "God save the King", but most woefully mutilated in its long journey".

Here are the texts of the two anthems

**God save the King Տէր կեցո**<sup>30</sup>

Տէր, պահէ՛ մեր Արքան

Տէր կեցո զու զհայ



Արի՛ մեր մեծ Արքան,  
 Պահէ Արքան  
 Տուր անոր յաղթանակ,  
 Երջանկութիւն եւ փառք  
 Իշխել շատ ժամանակ  
 Պահէ Արքան

Ելի՛ր Տէր Աստուած մեր,  
 Յրրուել իր ոսոխներ  
 Ամօթահար  
 Դաւերն անոնց քրքրէ  
 Պահէ վատ հնարքներէ  
 Այս կը յուսանք Քեզմէ  
 Պահէ՛ մեզ յար.

Պարգեւէ՛, Տէր Անոր  
 Քու գերընտիր շնորհ,  
 Ապրի թող Ան  
 Պաշտպանել մէր օրէնք,  
 Արդարութիւնն՝ իր գէնք  
 Որ սրտագին երգենք  
 Պահէ՛ Արքան:

Եւ առա զնոսա պայծառս,  
 Կեցո ըզՀայս  
 Չողորմութիւն վերին  
 Հաճեա՛ ձօնել նոցին,  
 Չի նովիմք մարթասցուք  
 Ապրիլ յասդիս

Ո՛վ Տէր մեր, Տէր փութա՛,  
 Չազգ մեր համայն փրկեա՛  
 Ի քըշնամեաց.  
 Կափո՛ զաշրս նոցուն,  
 Հա՛տ զարմատոյն ըզբուն,  
 Եւ զազգ մեր պարտասուն  
 Արա՛ հրգօր:

Ի քո իջեալ տեղի  
 Չաթոռ Հայրապետի  
 Մեր հաստատեա՛  
 Չերկայնութիւն կենաց  
 Հօր մեր աստուածազգեաց  
 Շնորհեա՛ պետին մեր հարց  
 Որ զմեզ հովուէ,

Աջովդ համատարած  
 Չազգ մեր արտահալած  
 Փոյթ գումարեա՛  
 Յաշխարհի Արարատեան  
 Ի վայր մեր ծընընդեան  
 Որ այժմ է սեպիական  
 Օտար ազգաց

Առաքեա՛ ի բարձրանց  
 Չհամակցութիւն կամաց  
 Ի մերազնեացս  
 Չոմըն ի մէնջ յարո  
 Պաշտպան ազգի մերոյ,  
 Տուր նրմա ցուպ հուժկու  
 Հովուել ըզմեզ:

The conclusions to draw are

(a) In 1820, when this song was published in Calcutta, Taghiadian was 17 years old and was in Edjmiatsin. He went to Calcutta in 1824, four years after the



song's appearance.

(b) This song without any doubt, as Sir Porter had also recognized, was an adaptation of the English national anthem 'God save the King'.

(c) Taghiadian could not have authored this song. The adaptor of the song into Armenian is most probably Ter Hakobian, the editor of the journal Հայկիկ Կալկաթաւի.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The date 1853 given in *Azgapatum* is a misprint.

<sup>2</sup> 1810, the date on the seal, is the date of his election to the catholicate.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander George Ellis, Curator for Arabic manuscripts and books in the British Museum, made the abstract. The Encyclical entered the collections of the India Office Library on 1 May 1919.

<sup>4</sup> Persian hostility towards Ejmiatsin for its pro-Russian orientation became increasingly apparent during the catholicate of Davit V and Daniel I when Persia thrust the catholicate into enormous debts due to the increased burden of taxation.

<sup>5</sup> George Bournoutian, *Eastern Armenia in The Last Decades of Persian Rule 1807-1828*, Malibu, California, 1982, pp. 27-50; "The Armenian Church and the Political Formation of Eastern Armenia," *Armenian Review*, 26, 3 (1983), pp. 7-17; Robert Hewsen, *Russian-Armenian Relations, 1700-1828*, Cambridge, Mass., 1984.

<sup>6</sup> Ehsan Yarshater, ed. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. XI, fasc. I, see "Golestan Treaty," pp. 86-89.

<sup>7</sup> George Bournoutian, *The Khanate of Erevan under Qajr Rule, 1795-1828*, Costa Mesa, Calif. 1992; Hewsen.

<sup>8</sup> James Reynolds, *Biographical Notices of Persian Poets: With Critical and Explanatory Remarks by the Late Right Honourable Sir Gore Ouseley to Which Is Prefixed a Memoir of the Late R. H. Sir Gore Ouseley*, London, 1846, ccxii-ccxiii.

<sup>9</sup> S. Der Nersessian, *The Chester Beatty Library, A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts, with an Introduction on the History of Armenian Art*, Dublin, 1958, vol. I, pp. 103, 105-106.

<sup>10</sup> Claudius James Rich, 1786-1809, was a diplomat, archaeologist and collector.

<sup>11</sup> Earl of Cornwallis, 1738-1805.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Edward Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa. Part I: Russia, Tartary and Turkey*, London, 1810, p. 444; Vrej Nersessian, "Claudius James Rich: Diplomat, Archaeologist and Collector", *Exhibition Notes*, London, 1986.

<sup>13</sup> Reynolds, pp. cviii-cix.

<sup>14</sup> James Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople between the Years 1810 and 1816*, London, 1818, pp. 323-324.

<sup>15</sup> Morier, pp. 332-333.

<sup>16</sup> Morier, p. 334.

<sup>17</sup> Porter, vol. II, p. 638.

<sup>18</sup> Vrej Nersessian, *Sotheby's Catalogue*, Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1985, lot. 169.

<sup>19</sup> Xanlaryan ed., *Arakel Davrizhetsi, Patmutiun (History)*, Erevan 1990, XXIV, pp. 251-255.



- <sup>20</sup> John Sargent, *Memoir of the Rev. Henry Martyn, B. D. Late Fellow of St. John's College Cambridge*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London, 1919, p. 47S; S. Hananyan, “Հենրի Մարտինը Էջմիածնում 1812 թռին” (Henry Martyn in Ejmiac'in in 1812), *Edjmiatsin* 3-4 (1948), pp. 58-6.
- <sup>21</sup> Mesrop Taliadian, *Ճանապարհորդություն Ի Հայս* (Travels in Armenia), Calcutta, 1847, pp. 333-334; Hovhannes Mkrian, *Կենսագրություն Մեսրոպայ Դաւթեան Թաղիադեանց* (Biography of Mesrop Davit Taghiadians), Tiflis, 1886; Ruzan Nanumyan ed., *Մեսրոպ Թաղիադեան, Գեղարունեստական Երկեր* (Mesrop Taghiadian, literary works), ed. by Erevan, 1965.
- <sup>22</sup> Levon Khatchikyan, “Մատենադարանը Անցելալում Եւ Սովետական Իշխանութեան Տարիներին” [The Matenadaran in the past and during the Soviet years], *Banber Matenadarani* 4 (1958), pp. 7-23.
- <sup>23</sup> Robert Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylon during the Years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820*, vol. I, London, 1821, pp. 186-194.
- <sup>24</sup> Robert Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylon during the Years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820*, Vol. II, London, 1822, pp. 634- 35.
- <sup>25</sup> Porter, vol. II, p. 635.
- <sup>26</sup> Mikayel Nalbandian, “Մեռելահարցուկ,” *Հիսիսափայլ* (1859), pp. 681-688.
- <sup>27</sup> A. Kirakosyan, ed. *Հայ Պարբերական Մամուլի Մատենագիտություն (1794-1967)* (Bibliography of the Armenian press, 1794-1967), Erevan, 1970, no. 681.
- <sup>28</sup> Grigor Harutyunian, “Նորայայտ Նիւթեր Մեսրոպ Թաղիադեանի Մասին” (Newly discovered materials on Mesrop Taghiadian), *Edjmiatsin* 3-4 (1947), pp. 55-58; Arshak Alpoyatjian, “Նամակ Խմբագրութեան” (Letter to the editor), *Էջմիածին* 9-10 (1947), p. 95.
- <sup>29</sup> Arshak Alpoyatjian, “Կրկնուած Սխալներ. ‘Տէր Կեցո Դու Զհայս’ Երգին Հեղինակը” [Repeated errors: the author of the song “Ter Ketso Du Zhays”], *Արմատիր Տարեգիրք*, 1<sup>st</sup> year (Cairo 1937-1938), pp. 117-121.
- <sup>30</sup> *Սոխակ Հայաստանի Ազգային Լիակատար Երգարան*, Բաքու, 1912, էջ 264-265:



**ԵՓՐԵՄ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍԻ ԿՈՆԴԱԿԸ ԵՒ  
ԳՐԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՐԵՒՈՐՆ ՆԿԱՏԵՂՈՒԹԻՒՆ ՄԸ  
(Ամփոփում)**

**ՎՐԷԺ ՆԵՐՍԷՍԵԱՆ**

Հեղինակը լոյսին կը բերէ Եփրեմ Կաթողիկոսի Սըր Կոր Ուզլիի յդած 30 Օգոստոս 1813ի կոնդակը, որով էջմիածնի Կաթողիկոսը՝ ԺԹ. դարասկիզբի ուսուցարսկական առաջին պատերազմի աւարտին, կը դիմէր Բրիտանիոյ դիւանագէտին՝ շնորհակալութիւն յայտնելով անոր՝ Հայ Եկեղեցւոյ դիմումին ընդառաջելուն համար: Բրիտանացի դիւանագէտը միջնորդած էր պարսից պալատին եւ Հայ եկեղեցւոյ առնչուող խնդրի մը:

Կոնդակը կարեւոր փաստաթուղթ մըն է Հայ-բրիտանական քաղաքական յարաբերութիւններու առումով:

Հեղինակը սակայն, կը կատարէ նաեւ գրական նկատողութիւն մը՝ մեկնելով ճանապարհորդ Սըր Ռոպըրթ Քըր Փորթըրի ճեպագրութեան 29 Հոկտեմբեր 1819ի դրուագէն: Այնտեղ, Փորթըր կը խօսի Եփրեմ Կաթողիկոսին իր այցելութեան ընթացքին դպիր/արեղայի մը երգած երգին մասին, որուն բառերը կը պատկանէին արեղային, իսկ երաժշտութիւնը՝ անգլիական էր: Փորթըր կը նշէ որ երաժշտութիւնը աղաւաղուած տարբերակն էր God Save the Kingի երաժշտութեան:

Ներսէսեան հաւանական կը նկատէ որ երգուածը “Տէր Կեցո”ն ըլլայ, որով ապացոյց մը եւս կ’աւելնայ այդ օրհներգին հեղինակին ինքնութեան յստակացման առնչութեամբ: Ըստ Ներսէսեանի, այդ օրհներգին հեղինակը չէր կրնար Թաղիադեանն ըլլալ, այլ՝ Յովհաննէս Տէր Յակոբեանը: