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DOI:10.57155/DKXO4045

**JUMPING IN AND OUT OF CONFESSIONS:  
THE ARMENIAN CATHOLIC YOVHANNĒS OF MUSH  
AND HIS BOOK *KEY OF TRUTH***

**Key words:** The Key of Truth, Paulician, Tondrakian, Council of Trent, Antitrinitarian, confession, Armenian Catholic, itinerant false priest, Mekhitarist Congregation.

***Introduction***

The handbook *Key of Truth* (hereafter *KT*) became central to my scholarly interests more than a decade ago when paging through its only codex M6710 preserved at the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts “Matenadaran,” Armenia.<sup>1</sup> I encountered inconsistencies between the manuscript’s actual content and the dominating “Paulician-Tondrakian” hypothesis applied to this manuscript as a lens of analysis for more than a century.

The hypothesis was advanced by the nineteenth-century Orientalist Frederick C. Conybeare, who first studied the manuscript in 1891 in the repository of Mother See of Holy Ējmiatsin, Armenia. He concluded that it was an old Paulician and Tondrakian<sup>2</sup> manual; therefore, he traced the doctrine of the manuscript back to the tenth century. Analyzing the Antitrinitarian content of the manuscript, Conybeare surmised that Paulician and Thondrakian doctrines were not dualistic but adoptionist,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *A Book Called Key of Truth* [Գիրք որ կոչի Բանալի ճշմարտութեան], M6710. Sometime between 1924 and 1936, the former secretary of the Holy Synod of Ējmiatsin, Nikita Kartashev donated this manuscript to the Matenadaran collection.

<sup>2</sup> A ninth-tenth century local Armenian sect ostensibly seconding Paulician tenets. On Paulicians and Tondrakians most recent, see **Carl Dixon**, *The Paulicians: Heresy, Persecution and Warfare on the Byzantine Frontier, c.750–880* (The Medieval Mediterranean, vol. 132), Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Adoptionists rejected Christ’s divinity and coequality with the Father, teaching that Jesus was a mere man who became the Son of God through adoption and grace during his baptism in the Jordan river. The doctrine first appeared in the teachings of the bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata (d. ca. 275), and was revived in eighth-century Spain. Pre-modern Antitrinitarian

and that early Protestantism emerged from Paulicianism.<sup>4</sup> Armenian Evangelical historiographers rapidly picked up Conybeare's hypothesis. In an attempt to work out a foundation myth, they hastened to link the emergence of the Armenian Evangelical Church to the sect professing the teaching of the *KT*, hence to Paulicians and Tondrakians.<sup>5</sup> In 1967 the hypothesis was revived by the scholarly endeavors of Nina Garsoïan, who, with some exceptions, reiterated Conybear's conclusions.<sup>6</sup> Despite some disagreement among the hypothesis advocates regarding the *KT*'s author, commissioner, and copyist, they all considered it an ancient "Manichaean-Paulician-Tondrakian" manual.<sup>7</sup> Today, the hypothesis fascinates modern Pentecostal authors to speculate anew on the subject by connecting the doctrine of the *KT* to their respective Church teachings, consequently, to the mentioned medieval heresies.<sup>8</sup> The "Paulician-Tondrakian" hypothesis has established a chain of ill-grounded assumptions that keeps lengthening. Based on the independent research undertaken in the 2000s, I ventured to eventually extract the *KT* from the orbit of the "Paulician-Tondrakian" hypothesis.<sup>9</sup> Through contextualization of the evidence, I argued *inter alia* that:

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Protestants such as Socinians and Unitarianists reanimated some elements of adoptionist Christology.

- <sup>4</sup> **Frederick C. Conybeare**, *The Key of Truth. A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. **Idem**, *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), v-vi. See also **Miaban (Galust Tēr-Mkrтч'ian)**, "The Letter of Confession of the Blessed Father Anania Concerning False Opinions Related to Him" [*Երանելոյ հաւր Անանիայի Գիր խոստովանութեան. յաղագս սուտ կարծեացն որ վասն նորայ*], *Ararat* 1, 1892, pp. 1–18.
- <sup>5</sup> **Leon Arpee**, "Armenian Paulicianism and the Key of Truth", *The American Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2, 1906, 267–285. **Idem**, *The Armenian Awakening* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1909). **Arsēn Kēōrkizean**, *Paulician-Tondrakian Movement within the Armenian Apostolic Church from the Seventh to Twelfth Centuries* [*Պաւլիկեան-Թոնդրակեցիներու շարժումը Հայաստանեայց Առաքելական եկեղեցւոյ մէջ Է.-րդ դարէն մինչև ԺԲ. դարը*], Beirut, 1970.
- <sup>6</sup> **Nina Garsoïan**, *The Paulician Heresy. A Study of the Origin and Development of Paulicianism in Armenia and Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire*, Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1967.
- <sup>7</sup> Most of the scholars supporting the hypothesis never consulted the actual manuscript. They relied on Conybeare's edition and English translation containing inaccuracies, **Conybeare**, *The Key of Truth*, pp. 1–65, 71–124. In this article all the translations are my own.
- <sup>8</sup> See, for example, **William B. Chalfant**, *History of the Monarchian Christians*, Pentecostal Publishing House, 1998.
- <sup>9</sup> For the results of the research, see **Anna Ohanjanyan**, *The Book "Key of Truth": Historico-Philological and Theological Study* [*«Բանալի ճշմարտութեան» երկը. Պատմաբանասիրական և կրոնագիտական ուսումնասիրություն*], Yerevan: YSU Publishing house, 2015. For summary in English, see pp. 249–271.

- a. The extant manuscript M6710 is a copy made in 1811, while the original was written in 1782 in Taron county of Bitlis province of the Ottoman Empire (modern-day Mush province, Turkey).<sup>10</sup>
- b. The *KT* has no connection to Paulician and Tondrakian doctrines. Although the doctrine it comprises has similarities with those of Paulician or Tondrakian—the denial of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, icons, myrrh, lent, and intersession of saints, it is neither Paulician nor Tondrakian. The *KT* is an eclectic composition that uniquely combines specific ritual formulas of the Miaphysite (non-Chalcedonian) Armenian Apostolic Church, elements of Protestant Antitrinitarian (Socinian, Unitarian, or neo-Arian) Christology,<sup>11</sup> elements of Baptist Sacramentology, as well as certain apocryphal narratives, emerged from the eighteenth-century confessional and religious context.<sup>12</sup>
- c. Even though the doctrine of the *KT* had been spread among the population of the villages of Maruk' and Ch'evirme (Ch'aurma) in the Erzurum province of the Ottoman Empire, where the sects of so-called “torets'is” or Tondrakians had reportedly survived, it is of little possibility those were the same tenth-century Tondrakians,<sup>13</sup> but rather certain local sects labeled with the same name. The name “tondrakian” was commonplace in the pre-modern Armenian parlance, generally denoting the sects rejecting the doctrine, ritual, and hierarchy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, just like the label “Sadducees” denoted either

<sup>10</sup> Ohanjanyan, *The Book “Key,”* pp. 56–67.

<sup>11</sup> The seventeenth-century Protestant Antitrinitarian trends flourished mainly in Poland, Transylvania, and England. See *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists, and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. **Martin Muslow, Jan Rohls**, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2005; **Martin Muslow**, “The Trinity as Heresy. Socinian Counter-Histories of Simon Magus, Orpheus, and Cerinthus,” in *Histories of Heresy in Early Modern Europe. For, Against, and Beyond Persecution and Toleration*, ed. **John Christian Laursen**, New-York: Palgrave, 2022, pp. 161–168. For Socinian doctrine, see *The Racovian Catechism, with Notes and Illustrations*, trans. **Thomas Rees**, London, 1818.

<sup>12</sup> Ohanjanyan, *The Book “Key,”* pp. 71–104.

<sup>13</sup> **Eghishē Y. Melik'ean** “Reverend Simōn Davitean's Diary” (hereafter, Simon Davitean) [Պատմելի Սիմոն Դավիթեանի օրագրութիւնը], in *Hark'-Khnus*, ed. **Eghishē Y. Melik'ean**, Antelias: Catholicoaste of the Great House of Cilicia Press, 1964, p. 212. Based on the *Diary*, some scholars still consider these people Tondrakians. See **Yaşar Tolga Cora**, “Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. **Yaşar T. Cora, Tsovinar Derderian, Ali Sipahi**, London-New York: IB Taurus, 2016, pp. 109–132.

atheism (non-religiosity) or any sect rejecting afterlife. At the same time, various occultists, Christian Kabbalists, and mystics were branded as “Manichaeans.”<sup>14</sup>

- d. The author of the *KT* was false priest Yovhannēs, who was impacted by the early modern Ottoman multi-religious context and whose actions were in line with pre-modern mobility and conversion patterns engendering all types of itinerant priests, charlatans, traveling tricksters, and spies.<sup>15</sup>

As time passed, new evidence came to light that not only reconfirmed these assumptions but also provided an opportunity to approach the material constructively, given that my previous research aimed at deconstructing the sources the “Paulician-Tondrakian” hypothesis was anchored on.

The current article presents and contextualizes new evidence to correct the record about the author of the *KT* Yovhannēs from Mush and to reveal the author's motives behind the book content explaining its overall anti-clerical, anti-Papist rhetorics. It further discusses several early modern sources infiltrated into the *KT* to show the author's close acquaintance with the Catholic literature written or translated into Armenian and published in Constantinople. Finally, it analyzes two doctrinal passages to prove that the *KT* could hardly be written before the eighteenth century, as well as to display the author's twisted confessional identity reflected in the book where next to strong Antitrinitarian Christology, he accepts the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and quotes from the ritual books of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

<sup>14</sup> There is a great deal of uncertainty regarding early modern religious vocabulary. It was difficult for Armenians to define various tenets of Protestant denominations and the teachings of occultists, kabbalists, mystics, and ideas of early modern humanists, freethinkers, deists, and atheists. An excellent example of such ambiguity is the vocabulary utilized in the piece against contemporary Manichaeism, where the author criticizes the “manichaeans” of his time: “[they] suffice to believe that there is only one God, creator of heavens and earth, and [apart from this] they do not accept anything else, neither the resurrection after the doomsday, nor the remission of [sinful] deeds, similar to those of Sadducees, and Persian Sufi Muslims, [and] they are worse than pagans and atheists.” See **Abraham Kretats'i**, *Objections to those Diseased with Manichaean Fallacy* [Առարկությունք ընդդէմ ախտացելոց յախտս մանիքական մոլութեան], Calcutta: Stepannosean Tēr Yovsēp's Print, 1796, pp. 32–33.

<sup>15</sup> See **Natalie Zemon Davis**, *Trickster Travels. A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux/Hill and Wang, 2006. On mobility in Armenian diaspora, see **Sebouh D. Aslanian**, *Early Modernity and Mobility: Port Cities and Printers across the Armenian Diaspora, 1512–1800*, Chapter 3, Yale University Press (forthcoming). I thank the author for making the book accessible to me.

*Between Apostolics and Catholics: Premises for Yovhannēs's Conduct*

Before discussing the new evidence about the author of the *KT*, it is essential to reconstruct the broader picture of inter-confessional clashes between Armenian Apostolics<sup>16</sup> and Armenian Catholics<sup>17</sup> in pre-modern Ottoman society that affected his conduct.

After the Council of Trent (between 1545 and 1563), when Catholic Church enacted reforms to affront the Reformation, it launched a global campaign to gain over Muslims, Eastern Christians, and peoples of Asia into Catholicism for leveraging the loss of Catholics to Protestantism.<sup>18</sup> The Council decided to standardize the rite of the Catholic Church following its decrees by imposing Tridentine Catechism, Missal, Ritual, and Breviary. For this purpose, in 1622, Pope Gregory XV (1621–1623) founded the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, while his successor Pope Urban VIII (1623–1644) launched the *Urbanian College* to train missionaries in languages and doctrine.<sup>19</sup> Their endeavors resulted in the spread of missionaries to preach and convert worldwide, also Armenians in Europe, Ottoman Empire, and Safavid lands.

In the late 1620s, the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Grigor Kesarats'i (d. 1636) heavily advised his former pupil, the then Armenian Catholicos in Ējmiatsin Movsēs Tat'ewats'i (1629–1632), against the Tridentine missionaries to be the “same duophysites” so that the Catholicos who was in amiable terms with newly arrived missionaries knew their true intentions.<sup>20</sup> Despite preventive measures, the number of Catholic Armenians gradually grew in Constantinople.

<sup>16</sup> For the followers of the Latin or Roman Catholic Church after the Council of Trent, I use “Catholics.”

<sup>17</sup> For the followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church, I use the modern-day term “Apostolics.”

<sup>18</sup> For the Council of Trent, see **John O'Malley**, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000. **Idem**, *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> **Peter Guilday**, “The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide (1622–1922),” *The Catholic Historical Review* 6, no. 4, 1921, pp. 478–494.

<sup>20</sup> **Grigor Kesarats'i**, *A Letter to those in Ējmiatsin* [Թուղթ Գրիգորի Կեսարացոյ առ էջմիածնեցիս], M1771, f. 309v–312v. See also, **Nersēs Akinean**, *Armenian Catholicos Movsēs III Tat'ewats'i and His Time* [Մովսէս Գ. Տաթևացի հայոց կաթողիկոսն և իր ժամանակը], Vienna: Mehkitarist Publishing House, 1936, pp. 363–371; **Arshak Alpōyachean**, *Patriarch Grigor Kesarats'i and His Time* [Գրիգոր Կեսարացի պատրիարք և իր ժամանակը], Cairo, 1936, pp. 158–166. For the amiable relations between Movsēs Tat'ewats'i and Catholic missionaries, see **Christian Windler**, “Ambiguous Belonging: How Catholic Missionaries in Persia and the Roman Curia Dealt with *Communicatio in Sacris*,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Catholic Global Missions*, ed. **Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia**, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018, pp. 205–234.

Depending on the situation on the ground, Jesuit, Capuchin, and Dominican missionaries would switch between accommodative and confronting proselytizing strategies, mostly gravitating towards conquering the Armenian Apostolic Church from within.<sup>21</sup> Armenian clergymen educated in the *Urbanian College* were inserted into the Armenian Apostolic Church to form a “catholic nucleus,” as Timothy Ware defines it,<sup>22</sup> by preaching Tridentine doctrine and ritual norms from pulpits and, after growing in numbers, to smoothly unite Armenian Apostolics with Catholic Church. To implement this project, prominent Catholic Armenians such as Khach’atur Aṛak’elean (1666–1740),<sup>23</sup> Petros T’iflisets’i,<sup>24</sup> and Mkhit’ar Sebastats’i (1676–1749) united their efforts for not only preaching clandestinely in Armenian communities and encouraging crypto-Armenian Catholics to participate in the Armenian Church worship and Sacraments (Baptism, Matrimony, Burial),<sup>25</sup> but also translating and disseminating Tridentine doctrinal and spiritual literature.

<sup>21</sup> For interacting and proselytizing strategies, see **Cesare Santus**, “Conflicting Views: Catholic Missionaries in Ottoman cities between Accommodation and Latinization,” in *Catholic Missionaries in Early Modern Asia. Patterns of Localization*, ed. **Nadine Amsler, Andrea Badea, et.al.**, London and New-York: Routledge, 2020, pp. 96–109.

<sup>22</sup> **Kallistos (Timothy) Ware**, “Orthodox and Catholics in the Seventeenth Century: Schism or Intercommunion?,” *Orthodox Journal*, March, 2018  
<https://journal.orthodoxwestblogs.com/2018/03/01/orthodox-and-catholics-in-the-seventeenth-century-schism-or-intercommunion/> [accessed on 15.08.2022]

<sup>23</sup> A student of Urbanian College in 1682, dispatched to Constantinople in 1694 for missionary work, actively participated in book publishing at the underground print in Constantinople. He left for Venice after 1701 and died there. See **Grigor Zarbhanalean**, *History of the Armenian Literature* [Հայ գրչութեան պատմութիւն], Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1905, pp. 312–315.

<sup>24</sup> A former student of Urbanian College and Dominican missionary to the East. He was the head of Armenian Catholics in Constantinople after 1701, and translated Catholic spiritual books from Latin. See **Step’anos Roshk’a**, *Chronicles or Ecclesiastical Annals* [Ժամանակագրութիւնք կամ տարեկանք եկեղեցականք], Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1964, p. 192.

<sup>25</sup> Common worship with Tridentine Catholics is known as *communicatio in sacris* or *communicatio in divinis*. It was common occurrence not only between Catholics and Eastern Christians, but also between Protestants and Catholics in the Ottoman and Safavid realms. For cases among Eastern Christians, see **Timothy Ware**, *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, pp. 17–23, 36–7; **Emmanuel Lanne**, “Quelques questions posées à l’Église orthodoxe concernant la ‘communicatio in sacris’ dans l’eucharistie,” *Irénikon* 72, no. 3–4, 1999, pp. 435–452; **Mardiros Abagian**, “La Questione della ‘communicatio in sacris’ nel secolo XVIII e la formazione del Patriarcato Armeno Cattolico,” *Bazmavēp* 139, no. 1–2, 1981, 129–184; 141, no. 1–4, 1983, 215–234; 146, no. 1–4, 1988, 155–174; 147, no. 1–4, 1989, 244–258; 148, no. 1–2, 1990, 146–162; no. 3–4, 1990, 413–419; 149, no. 1–2, 1990, 461–476; 150, no. 1–4, 1992, 202–216. **Cesare Santus**, *Trasgressioni Necessarie. Communicatio in Sacris, Coesistenza e Conflitti tra le Comunità Cristiane Orientali (Levante e Impero Ottomano,*

Armenian Apostolic Church attempted to counteract the Catholic campaign by delineating the borders of its doctrine and rite. In the meantime, it sought the support of Ottoman authorities against “Frankish” subjects. The terms “orthodox,” “schismatic,” and “heretic” became an inseparable part of public discourse, given that each faction would define itself as “orthodox” against the “schismatic others.” Missionaries and Armenian Catholics would call themselves “orthodox” (*ughghap’ar*), whereas Armenian Apostolics would be labeled “schismatics”, in rare cases, “heretics.” Armenian Apostolics would self-define as “the followers of Lusavorich’s faith” (*lusaworch’adawan*), “the followers of Lusavorich’s religion” (*lusaworch’akron*), “those born from Lusavorich’s (*lusaworch’atsin*), at times “orthodox followers of Lusavorich’s faith” (*ughghap’ar lusaworch’adawan*), “those professing one nature [in Christ]” (*miabnadawan*).<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, Apostolics would brand Armenian Catholics as “akhtarma” (Trk. *aktarma*, lit. *converted*), Papists (*papadawan*, *papapasht*, *papahawat*), Franks, directing their hatred somewhat against converted Armenians rather than against Catholic missionaries of other ethnicities.

Inter- and cross-confessional polemics transpired on all levels—from the lowest to the highest social clusters, from encounters in day-to-day life to sophisticated polemical treatises. Abundant polemical literature capitalized predominantly on “trueness” and shaped the discourse around such topics as “true faith,” “true practice,” “one, holy, apostolic and catholic (i.e., universal) church,”<sup>27</sup> “true

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XVII–XVIII secolo), Rome: Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises de Rome et d’Athènes, 2019, pp. 309–376. For cases among Protestants, see **Felicita Tramontana**, “An Unusual Setting. Interactions between Protestants and Catholics in the Ottoman Empire,” in *Protestant Majorities and Minorities in Early Modern Europe* (ReFo500 Academic Studies, vol. 53), ed. **Simon Barton**, **Michal Choptiany**, **Piotr Wilczek**, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2019, pp. 189–211; **Christian Windler**, “Katholische Mission und Diasporareligiosität. Christen europäischer Herkunft im Safavidenreich,” in *Religion und Mobilität*, ed. **Henning P. Jürgens**, **Thomas Weller**, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2010, pp. 183–212.

<sup>26</sup> The neologism *miabnadawan* was coined to replace *miabnak* (Miaphysite) since on the lips of doupophysites the latter usually acquired a negative connotation of Monophysitism. See **Simēon Erewants’i**, *The Book of Acquittal* [Գիրք որ կոչի պարտազճար], St. Ėjmiatsin: Ėjmiatsin Press, 1779, p. 1. For the terms denoting the Armenian Apostolics in the early modern, see **Anna Ohanjanyan**, “Intra-Armenian Polemics and Confession-Building in Ottoman Constantinople: The Case of Gēorg Mxlayim Ōlli (1681/85–1758),” in *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries*, ed. **Tijana Krstić**, **Derin Terzioğlu**, New-York: Gorgias Press, 2022, p. 492.

<sup>27</sup> For the historical development of this formula, see **Jaroslav Pelikan**, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine. Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*, vol. 4, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 69–126.

catholicity.” The Latin Church defined itself as “Catholic,” that is, “universal,”<sup>28</sup> something utterly unacceptable for Eastern Churches; therefore the latter strove to define the “true” meaning of “catholicity.”<sup>29</sup> Among the doctrinal issues the “old good” controversies on the natures of Christ, *Filioque* (lit. and from Son)<sup>30</sup> and papal primacy were still at stake, while in establishing “true practice,” each party would prove the exclusivity of their respective tradition on keeping the lent, performing Baptism and Eucharist, carrying out devotions, and in like manner.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, when some graduates of *Urbanian College* overtly antagonized Apostolics as “schismatics” attempting to segregate the Catholic Armenian segment in Constantinople,<sup>31</sup> and disseminating Tridentine spiritual literature among Armenians, the Apostolic Armenian elite launched a counterattack. Theological debates escalated, and serious accusations went both ways inciting political implications that ended in dramatic events such as the kidnap of the Armenian Patriarch and the execution of notable Catholic Armenians.<sup>32</sup> Intra- and inter-communal conflicts were typically handled by the Ottoman administration. The last word was after Ottoman officials of different calibers—from judges (*kadı*), governors (*bey*, *beg*) to grand viziers.<sup>33</sup> In general, judges would offer (*teklif*) to

<sup>28</sup> For general topics tackled in polemics between Catholics and Protestants, see **Svorad Zavarský**, “Preface,” in *Themes of Polemical Theology across Early Modern Literary Genres*, ed. **Lucy R. Nicholas**, **Andrea Riedl**, **Svorad Zavarský**, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. xiii–xiv.

<sup>29</sup> Polemical literature from the century addressing all these issues is copious. In the Armenian milieu good samples are the treatises of the Armenian Apostolic polemicist Gëorg Mxlayim Ōghli (1681/85–1758) titled *True Meaning of Catholicity* [ճշմարիտ նշանակութիւն կաթոլիկէութեան], Constantinople: Martiros Sargsean Print, 1750, and *Catholicity of the Followers of Lusavorich’s Faith* [կաթոլիկէութիւն լուսաւորչադասանչաց], W1243 and M6458.

<sup>30</sup> For the doctrine of *Filioque*, see **Edward A. Siecienski**, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. For medieval Armenian discourse, see **Sergio La Porta**, “The Filioque Controversy in Armenia,” *Saint Nerses Theological Review* 8, 2004, pp. 86–116.

<sup>31</sup> Sargis Shahitts’i Gasporean was the one sowing discord. He was the bishop of Bethlehem anointed by Eghiazar Aynt’ap’ets’i (d. 1691) in Jerusalem, 1676. Detained by the Ottoman authorities in 1714, he embraced Islam, then fled to Rome, where he died in 1731. See his biography in **Grigor Galemk’ërean**, *Biographies of Two Armenian Patriarchs and Ten Bishops* [Կենսագրութիւններ երկու հայ պատրիարքներու, և ժամանակին կաթողիկէայք], Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1915, pp. 64–99.

<sup>32</sup> **Ohanjanyan**, “Intra-Armenian Polemics,” pp. 491–496.

<sup>33</sup> On same administrative ruling in other dominions of the Empire, for instance, see **Pál Fodor**, “The Ottomans and their Christians in Hungary,” in *Frontiers of Faith. Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities, 1400–1750*, ed. **Eszter Andor**, **Isván György Tóth**, Budapest: Central European University, 2001, pp. 137–147.



Christians involved in conflicts to convert to Islam for fear of galleys (*tershane*) or execution. Conversion to Islam in the Empire was a continuous and rapid process by pronouncing *shahada* (Islamic declaration of faith), imposed not only from above but equally encouraged within horizontal relationships.<sup>34</sup> Reneging on Islam was considered betrayal, blasphemy resulting in the renegade's execution.<sup>35</sup> A second chance was rarely bestowed, and only on condition of circumcision—a life-wrecking stigma for a Christian.

The confessional situation for Ottoman Armenian communities grew even direr in the eighteenth century. It was almost a century since the Armenian Catholic Mekhitarist Congregation was founded in 1701.<sup>36</sup> In 1740 the Armenian Catholic Church, with its first Patriarch-Catholicos Abraham-Petros Artsivean (1740–1749)<sup>37</sup> in charge, was established, by which Armenian Catholics became an official side of polemics. Besides openly converted Catholic Armenians acting under the aegis of Popes, there were crypto-Catholics and not converted pro-Catholic Armenians lured by the privilege of Western education and trade licenses granted by papal authorities. Add opportunists, impostors, and people suffering from a deficit of certainty, jumping from one confession to another, trying on new identities and occupations, and the picture will be explicit.

When with the Catholicos Simēon Erewants'i's (1763–1780) blessings and Sultan Abdul-Hamid I's (1774–1789) edict Zak'aria Kaghzvants'i (1773–81, 1782–1799) occupied the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople, he started to ameliorate the school of the Patriarchate in Kum Kapı deteriorated during the tenure of his predecessor Grigor Pasmachean (1764–1773). He further opened schools in the Armenian quarters of the city, and commenced a campaign against Catholic

<sup>34</sup> **Tijana Krstić**, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Good examples of such conversions are found in the early modern neo-martyrologies. See **Hrach'ēa Acharean, Yakob Manandean**, *Armenian New Martyrs (1155–1843)* [Հայոց նոր զկաները (1155–1843)], Vagharshapat, 1903.

<sup>36</sup> For Mkhit'ar's biography, see **Father Minas Nurikhan**, *The Life and Times (1660–1750) of the Servant of God Abbot Mechitar, Founder of the Armenian Mekhitarists of Venice (San Lazzaro)*, trans. **Rev. John McQuillan**, Venice, St. Lazzaro Island: Mekhitarist Press, 1915.

<sup>37</sup> For the Antonite order and Abraham Artsivean, see **Khach'ik vardapet At'anasean**, *The Life and Deeds of Catholicos Abraham-Petros I Artsivean* [Վարդ Աբրահամ-Պետրոս Ա. Արծիւեան կաթողիկոսի], Beirut: Armenian Catholic Press, 1959; **Isahak Srapean**, “The Foundation of the Antonite Order” [Հիմնականքն Անտոնեան միաբանութեան], *Handēs Amsōrēay* [Հանդէս Ամսօրեայ] 16, no. 9, 1902, pp. 287–295; **Gabriella Uluhogian**, “Abraham Petros Ardsivian, Primo Patriarca Armeno Cattolico,” in *Collectanea Armeniaca*, ed. **Rosa Bianca Finanzi, Anna Sirinian**, Biblioteca Ambrosiana: 2016, pp. 185–196.

Armenians deeply infiltrated into communal life due to Pasmachean's lenient policy. Zak'aria adopted a "soft strategy" against them by forbidding their burials (*meṛelat'agh*) by the Armenian Church officials.<sup>38</sup> When the Catholic and pro-Catholic Armenians accused the Patriarch before the Sultan of spying for Persian shahs, Zak'aria went as far as to hand the Sultan an appeal letter affirmed by the secret council of notable Armenians in 1778, accusing pro-Catholic Armenians of close relations with Europeans. He particularly pointed out their clandestine visits to Latin churches and secret hosting of Latin officials in their houses to perform Sacraments. Sultan Abdul-Hamid I was harsh on his pro-European Christian subjects: they were forbidden from attending Catholic Churches or participating in Latin rites, and since the Patriarchs had the prerogative to punish those not abiding by the rules, naturally, Zak'aria's appeal was successful. On the demand of the Sultan, Catholic Armenian faction would have to come to terms with the Patriarch by signing an agreement (*hiüccet*) on professing Armenian Apostolic faith, which despite Zak'aria's efforts, never materialized.

Consequently, the Ottoman authorities started persecuting Armenian Catholics in Constantinople, Erzurum (Karin)<sup>39</sup> and elsewhere by exiling, jailing, sending to galleys, and expropriating them. Many would embrace Islam to avoid persecution, hoping to later flee to Rome. Sometime after the persecutions started, by the meddling of the Austrian consulate Zak'aria was temporarily deposed. In 1782, he regained the office of the Patriarch. Exercising cautiousness, he sufficed with the excommunication of the Armenian Catholic segment from the Apostolic Church and community, which led to their final estrangement forcing them towards Latin-rite Churches.<sup>40</sup> As we will see below, it was amid Zak'aria's campaign that the author of the *KT*, a Catholic Armenian Yovhannēs from Mush, abandoned the Christian faith and converted to Islam.

<sup>38</sup> Armenian Apostolic clerics performed burials of Latinizing Armenians as Catholics were forbidden to perform burials for Ottoman Christian subjects (*dhimmis*). The refusal of burials or baptisms was a punishing instrument conditionally weaponized by Armenian Patriarchs against the Catholic Armenian segment. The latter would baptize their children in the Greek Church in such cases. See **Komitas Kēōmiwrchean**, "Concerning the Recent Controversy within our Nation against each other because of Catholicism," [Վասն յետին ժամանակիս ազգիս մերոյ հակառակութեան որ ընդ միմեանս վասն կաթօլիկութեան], *Kat'oghikē Ardza-gank'* [Կաթողիկէ Արձագանք] 117, 1913, p. 663.

<sup>39</sup> Erzurum was one of the most significant missionary stations and commercial hubs since late seventeenth century. See **Jaques Villotte**, *Voyage d'un missionnaire de la compagnie de Jésus en Turquie, en Perse, en Arménie, en Arabie et en Barbarie*, Paris: Chez Jaques Vincent, 1730, pp. 195–233.

<sup>40</sup> **Awetis Pērpērean**, *History of Armenians*, Constantinople: Pōghos K'irishch'ean Print, 1871, p. 3.

*The Life and Deeds of Yovhannēs from Mush According to Father Mēhērean's Account*

Several sources speak about the author of the *KT*, of which the important ones are:

- e) The colophon of the *KT*,<sup>41</sup>
- f) The confessions of sectarians professing the doctrine of the *KT* who, during the Russo-Turkish war in 1828–1829, migrated from the village Ch'evirme of the Ottoman Empire to Third Arkhveli, a neighboring village in Eastern Armenia administered by Imperial Russia. They took the only codex of the *KT* with them, which was confiscated by the Holy Synod of Ējmiatsin in 1837,<sup>42</sup>
- g) The travelogue of Mekhitarist father Pōghos Mēhērean (1729–1814) summarized by another Mekhitarist Barsegh Sargisean (1852–1921),<sup>43</sup>
- h) The correspondence of the Patriarch in Constantinople Zak'aria Kaghzvants'i and Armenian Catholicos in Ējmiatsin Ghukas Karnets'i (1780–1799),<sup>44</sup>
- i) The reports of the American Board's (A.B.C.F.M.) missionary Josiah Peabody (1807–1873) about the sectarian villagers of Ch'evirme in the Erzurum province written between 1852–1855,<sup>45</sup>
- j) The diary of the Armenian Evangelical Baptist missionary Simon Davitean, preaching with Josiah Peabody in the Erzurum province.<sup>46</sup>

The new evidence about the author of the *KT* is found in Pōghos Mēhērean's travelogue. Scholars, including myself, fell short of consulting the original travelogue. Instead, they relied on Barsegh Sargisean's two-page summary of Mēhērean's story where Sargisean not only concealed important details but

<sup>41</sup> M6710, f. 58r. I give the manuscript folios according to today's pagination indicating the original pagination in brackets. On this particular folio, the original page number is missing.

<sup>42</sup> National Archive of Republic of Armenia, fund 56, list 1, folder 56. Alek'sandr Erits'yan published some of the confessions. See Alek'sandr Erits'yan, "Tondrakian Armenians in our Days" [Թոնդրակեցի հայր մեր օրերում], *Pordz* [Փորձ] 10, 1880, pp. 91–132. For all the confessions, see Ohanjanyan, *The Book "Key,"* pp. 223–232.

<sup>43</sup> Barsegh Sargisean, *A Study of Menicaean-Paulician Tondrakites' Sect and the Letter of Grigor Narekats'i* [Ուսումնասիրություն մանիքեա-պաղիկեան թոնդրակեցոց աղանդին եւ Գրիգոր Նարեկացոյ թուղթը], Venice: St. Lazzaro Press, 1893, pp. 101–103.

<sup>44</sup> Vardan Grigoryan, "New Evidence about the Author of the "Key of Truth" Priest Hovhannes" [Նոր տեղեկություններ «Բանալի նշմարտութեան» երկի հեղինակ Հովհաննես երեցի մասին], *Banber Matenadarani* [Բանբեր Մատենադարանի] 5, 1968, pp. 333–344.

<sup>45</sup> Josiah Peabody, "Letter from Mr. Peabody," *The Missionary Herald, Containing the Proceedings of the American Board*, December 1852, pp. 356–360.

<sup>46</sup> Simon Davitean, *Diary*, pp. 186–213.

unintentionally (or not) misled his readers by connecting Mēhērean's different accounts about the false bishop Yovhannēs of Boṛchimasur,<sup>47</sup> and the author of the *KT* Yovhannēs from Mush. Even after its publication between 2005–2007 by Gēorg Tēr-Vardanyan in the journal “Bazmavēp” (Polyhistor),<sup>48</sup> Mēhērean's complete travelogue remained unknown to me. Having it at hand today, I intend to correct the record about the author of the *KT*.

Pōghos Mēhērean was personally acquainted with the author of the *KT* Yovhannēs and played not a minor role in his conduct. Mēhērean wrote that while he was in Karin (Erzurum) between 1773–1780, priest Vardan from Mush, an Armenian Catholic, sent a youth (*patani*) named Yovhannēs<sup>49</sup> to Karin to see Pōghos Mēhērean.<sup>50</sup> According to priest Vardan, the youth Yovhannēs, was himself a priest's son and a reciter in St. Karapet Monastery of Mush. He had recently converted to Catholicism (*norog eghew ughghap'ar*) and was willing to visit the Mekhitarist Monastery (*kami gnal i vans dzer*). Mēhērean disapproved of the youth: although his reading skills were excellent, his eyes gave away his silliness. Yovhannēs remained in Karin at the place of masters (*paron*) Ghukas and Nortunkean Mik'aēl, who funded his travels to Constantinople and Venice. Then, he was sent to Constantinople with Mēhērean's letter to the prior at hand. In his letter, Mēhērean informed that he disapproved of Yovhannēs, but the notable Armenian Catholics in Karin forced him to meddle for him. If, after proper interrogation, Mekhitarists in Constantinople found him capable, only then should they send him to Venice. Another letter of the exact nature Mēhērean wrote to the prior in Venice

<sup>47</sup> Yovhannēs, the prior of the Boṛchimasur monastery in Taron (Mush) province, was a false bishop without a consecration certificate. Committing simony, Yovhannēs ordained more than fourteen Armenian Catholic priests. Upon learning this, Mēhērean started an investigation, eventually banning all the false priests from performing Holy Sacraments in Karin (Erzurum) and elsewhere. Afterwards, Patriarch Zak'aria captured Yovhannēs of Boṛchimasur, who got away by confessing his sins, became fugitive, wandered about near Manazkert, and voluntarily stood before the Armenian Catholicos in Sis Ep'rem I Ajapahean (1771–1784). He repented there, was consecrated a bishop by Catholicos Ep'rem, and assumed back his duties. For Mēhērean's narrative on Yovhannēs of Boṛchimasur, see Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean, “The Story of Life of Father Pōghos Mēhērean,” [Պատմություն վարուց հայր Պողոս Մեհերեանի] *Bazmavēp* [Բազմավեպ] 1–4, 2006, pp. 30–36, 40–46.

<sup>48</sup> Tēr-Vardanean, “The Story of Life,” *Bazmavēp* 1–4, 2005, pp. 412–488; 1–4, 2006, pp. 5–106; 1–4, 2007, pp. 8–148. For Mēhērean's biography, see pages in *Bazmavēp* 1–4, 2005, pp. 412–415.

<sup>49</sup> There is a marginal inscription in pencil on the respective folio of the travelogue that reads: “Yovhannēs from Mush, the sectarian, the apostate.”

<sup>50</sup> Father Pōghos Mēhērean was from Mush, too. His name at birth was Melgon, and he called himself “Tarōnats'i,” see Tēr-Vardanean, “The Story of Life,” *Bazmavēp* 1–4, 2005, pp. 414–415.

“the most venerable abbot Step‘anos.”<sup>51</sup> When Mekhitarists in Constantinople sent Yovhannēs to Venice, he revealed his “diabolic mind,” so he was driven away back to Constantinople.<sup>52</sup> Upon his return to the city, Yovhannēs opened a college (*dpratur*)<sup>53</sup> (most probably, in Beyoğlu (Bera) district)<sup>54</sup> where he started to “educate children,” then he got married at the hands of a priest from Arabkir. According to Mēhērean “when the persecutions [of Catholic Armenians] escalated, he [Yovhannēs] was captured and brought before Patriarch Zak‘aria,” meaning that Yovhannēs was persecuted as an Armenian Catholic. Zak‘aria wanted to send him to galleys, but Yovhannēs managed to get away by reciting the Armenian Apostolic “confession of faith.”<sup>55</sup> Four-five months later, Yovhannēs appeared in Beyoğlu,

<sup>51</sup> Refers to Step‘anos Melgonean (1750–1799), the successor of Mkhitar Sebastats‘i as the chief abbot of Mekhitarist Congregation. During his tenure, a group of Mekhitarist monks separated and left for Trieste, then for Vienna. **Sebouh D. Aslanian**, “The ‘Great Schism’ of 1773: Venice and the Founding of the Armenian Community in Trieste,” in *Reflections of Armenian Identity in History and Historiography*, ed. **Houry Berberian, Touraj T. Daryaei**, UCI Jordan Center for Persian Studies, 2018, pp. 83–131. Again, during his tenure the Secretary of *de Propaganda Fide* Nicolaus Lercari (1743–1757) inquired after the Armenian Catholic ritual books to check their content for deviations from the Tridentine rite. **Ghewond Tayean**, *Main Archive of the Mekhitarists in Venice, St. Lazzaro (1707–1773)* [Մայր դիւան Մխիթարեանց Վենետիկոյ ի սուրբ Լազար (1707–1773)], Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1930, p. 145.

<sup>52</sup> The reason behind Yovhannēs’s return is unclear: Mēhērean wrote his travelogue blaming it on Yovhannēs’s sectarian mindset in 1811, when Yovhannēs was dead. **Tēr-Vardanean**, “The Story of Life,” *Bazmapēp* 1–4, 2006, pp. 86.

<sup>53</sup> It is uncertain how could someone like Yovhannēs run a college in the heart of the city for years. It might have been thanks to the generosity of notable Armenian Catholic families, such as the Nortunkeans, setting the tone for the developments within Armenian Catholic communities. See **Mik‘aēl Ch‘amch‘ean**, *History of the Armenians* [Հայոց պատմութիւն], vol. 3, Venice: Giovanni Piazzo Print, 1786, pp. 751.

<sup>54</sup> The European part of Constantinople separated from the old city by the Golden Horn. It was also known as Bera (Pera) district, with the historical part of Galata inhabited by Italians and Genoese since the late Middle Ages. European missionaries to Constantinople and most Catholic Armenians were located in Beyoğlu. See **Elisabetta Borromero**, “Les catholiques à Constantinople: Galata et les églises de rite latin au XVIIe siècle,” *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 107–110, 2005, pp. 227–243  
<https://journals.openedition.org/remmm/2811> [accessed on 21.10.2022]

<sup>55</sup> Probably, he recited the Armenian liturgical version of the Nicene Creed adding the name of Pope Leo I and his Tome to the anathema of heretics recited right after the Creed. This was how the inquisition took place in the church of Holy Mother of God of the Armenian Patriarchate in Kum Kapı. See **Anna Ohanjanyan**, “Creedal Controversies among Armenians in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Eremia Č‘ēlēpi K‘ēōmiwrčean’s Polemical

where Apostolic Armenians captured him. On their way to the Patriarch, Yovhannēs abandoned Christianity, converted to Islam, and took the name Abdullah. After his conversion, Yovhannēs got involved with Apostolic Armenians persecuting Mēhērean and a wealthy Armenian Catholic merchant from Karin Aghayek agha to deceitfully capture and bring them to the feet of Patriarch Zak‘aria. Armenian Catholics learned about this plan and informed Mēhērean, who escaped and hid in the house of master (*paron*) T‘eop‘ile for forty days. Later, Abdullah caught the merchant Aghayek agha, demanded five satchels of money, and took him to *kadi* as his debtor. When the *kadi* ordered to present the promissory note (*murhak*), Abdullah did not have it; instead, he had two witnesses present during the conversation between Abdullah and Aghayek when the latter promised to return the debt. Those were false witnesses sent by Apostolic Armenians. When *kadi* learned about it, he got angry and jailed one of the false witnesses and Abdullah.

In eight days, Patriarch Zak‘aria released the false witness, while Abdullah remained in jail for eight months. In jail, when Armenian Apostolics scolded Armenian Catholics, Abdullah stated that “even though I do not belong to any faith,” the only true faith is the Catholic one. After some time, a certain abbot Moses, a convert to Islam, managed to bail Abdullah out of jail. In Mēhērean’s opinion, it was after these events that Abdullah became a sectarian. Getting out of jail, he went to visit his wife in Beyoğlu, then he left her, went to Karin, from there to Mush, and told the governor of Mush (*bdeshkh*) that he was a convert wishing to become “an Armenian again” (to restore in Christianity). The governor got furious and wanted to punish him, but instead, he sent him to mullahs to be interrogated. The latter told the governor that the Islam Abdullah professed had nothing to do with the Islam they knew. Abdullah left Mush behind, went to Khnus, and introduced himself to the *kadi* of Khnus, who allowed (!) him to convert to Christianity. Abdullah became Yovhannēs again, went to the village Maruk‘,<sup>56</sup> married for the second time. Then he revisited the *kadi* and told him that he wanted to become a priest, but no one was willing to ordain him since he reneged on Christianity. *Kadi* forcibly brought the bishop of Koba (Kop‘) monastery in Bulanukh (Bulanık) and made him ordain Yovhannēs a priest.<sup>57</sup>

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Writing against Suk‘ias Prusac‘i,” *Journal of Society for Armenian Studies* 27, 2020, pp. 39-40.

<sup>56</sup> Maruk‘ or Maruf was a village in Khnus county of Erzurum province and a cross-provincial hub. The road to the neighboring Mush county of Bitlis province (with Bulanık canton, Kop‘ center), passed through the village Maruk‘.

<sup>57</sup> According to Barsegh Sargisean, the *kadi* should have been a Manichaean-Tondrakian to allow Yovhannēs’s conversion to Christianity. **Sargisean**, *A Study*, p. 103. Most probably,

Afterwards, Yovhannēs started to preach his sect in Maruk<sup>6</sup> and neighboring villages. Shortly after, the Catholicos in Ējmiatsin Ghukas Karnets<sup>7</sup> became aware of the sect. Yovhannēs was captured, brought to Ējmiatsin and put in jail.

In several months Yovhannēs tore his haircloth into pieces, made a rope, and descended over the gates to escape. On his way, he met shepherds who thought he was a thief. Upon learning he was a fugitive, they caught him and turned him over to the Catholicos's men, who bound him to a donkey to return to Ējmiatsin. Under the pretense of seeing his needs, Yovhannēs escaped, returned to Maruk<sup>6</sup>, and continued to spread his “poison.” When Yovhannēs's patron Muslim governor was exiled from Khnus to Karin, Yovhannēs took his family and followed him. The Armenians in Karin refused to accept him as a priest and forbade him to enter the church. When his patron governor was decapitated in 1801, Muslims caught Yovhannēs and accused him of apostasy. Yovhannēs decided to again turn Muslim along with his sons. According to Mēhērean, his wife did not convert and stayed behind in her father's house in Khnus.<sup>58</sup>

Pōghos Mēhērean imparts this much about the author of the *KT*. Other sources come to prove and complete Mēhērean's story. Reverend Step'anos Iwt'uchean confirms Yovhannēs's name: “Yovhannēs Shushdak<sup>59</sup> Vart'apetean.”<sup>60</sup> Iwt'uchean was a Protestant Armenian, well-acquainted with the reports of American missionaries to the Ottoman lands. He might have found the name in one of their reports; however, the name “Yovhannēs Shushdak Vart'apetean” is not a real name. It has to be “Yovhannēs *shushtak vardapet*,” literally, “widower priest Yovhannēs who took celibacy,” hence, the last name “Vart'apetean” should not be considered as such, and all that is left is just the name “Yovhannēs.”<sup>61</sup> The fact that Yovhannēs

though, the *kadi* was simply an Armenian or a Christian convert abundantly bribed by Yovhannēs.

<sup>58</sup> For the entire piece, see **Tēr-Vardanean**, “The Story of Life,” *Bazmapēp* 1–4, 2006, pp. 85–88.

<sup>59</sup> *Shushtak vardapet* (շուշտակ վարդապետ) is a widower priest who afterwards took celibacy. See **Hrachya Acharyan**, *A Dictionary of Armenian Dialects* [Հայերէն գաւառական բառարան], Tiflis, 1913, p. 842.

<sup>60</sup> **Step'anos Iwt'iwchean**, “The Origin and Development of Evangelism among Armenians” [Ծագումն եւ ընթացք Աւետարանականութեան ի Հայս], *Biwrakn* [Բիւրակն] 200, 1892, pp. 233–237.

<sup>61</sup> The incomplete colophon mislead scholars to the point where a non-existent person named Yovhannēs Vahagnuni was invented and presented either as the author, copyist, or commissioner of the book. The confusion was due to Conybeare's inaccurate translation of the first two sentences of the colophon. The copyist's words “...ամենապայծառ յոհաննէսին վահագունոյ (...amenapaytsar Yohannēs in vahagunoy): Քանզի տոբա մեծաւ ջերմեռանդութեամբ խնդրեցին ի մէնջ. իսկ վասն խնդրելոյն նոցին հաճախեաց ի սիրտ իմ սերն նշարտութեան. Վասն որոյ ոչ կարացի թագուցանել զնորի սուրբ Հոգւոյն. Այլ ըսկապ կար-

opened a college in Constantinople after returning from Mekhitarist Congregation in Venice is hinted at in American missionary Josiah Peabody's reports. In 1852 Peabody informed that in Taron (Mush) county, he and his fellow missionaries met a handful of former Armenian priests who converted to Protestantism. They told him that they were a man's pupils who significantly impacted them years ago.<sup>62</sup> Yovhannēs's pupils became priests in various villages (in the lands nearing Nicaea lake (modern-day Iznik Gölü)—Gurley, Yenikeni, Ortakeni, Benli, Kurtbelenk),<sup>63</sup> but it is uncertain whether Apostolics or Catholics ordained them. Whatever the case, they ended up converting to Protestantism. The same missionary informs that Yovhannēs allegedly visited Europe and learned Protestant teachings, while reverend Simon Davitean states that according to the recollections of Ch'evirme villagers, after he escaped from Ējmiatsin, Yovhannēs traveled to London.<sup>64</sup> No other source testifies to his visit to London, however, Yovhannēs had been in Venice, perhaps traveled throughout Europe, besides he lived in the European part of Constantinople, so he could not avoid meeting and conversing with various Protestants, especially those from Reformed Churches in Bera.<sup>65</sup> It is possible that after his first conversion to Islam and release from jail, he traveled to Europe, returned to Ottoman lands, and was ordained a priest. The correspondence between Patriarch Zak'aria and Catholicos in Ējmiatsin Ghukas Karnets'i confirms Yovhannēs's activities after his ordination described in Mēhērean's travelogue. For

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զաւ գրել զսուրբ խորհրադարսան եւ զբանալի նշմարտութեան վասն սիրոյն խնդրողաց եւ ընդունողաց (M6710, f. 58v), Conybeare translated as "... of the all glorious John Vahaguni. For they with great fervour were elected by us. But because of their being elected the love of truth abounded in my heart. Wherefore, I could not hide the grace of Holy Spirit. But I began to write out in order the holy Sacramentary and the Key of Truth for love of those who ask and receive" (Conybeare, *The Key*, pp. 124). The first two sentences, however, should be translated as "... of the all glorious eminent Yohannēs. For they with great fervor implored us. And upon their imploring, the love of truth abounded in my heart." My suggestion is to replace the word "vahagunoyñ" with "vehagunoyñ" given copious orthographical mistakes in the manuscript, so that to reconstruct the expression as "to the most glorious eminent Yovhannēs" (ամենապայծառ յոհաննէսին վեհագունոյ (*amenapaytsar Yohannēs in vehagunoyñ*) which would be a notice about the author of the *KT* Yovhannēs from Mush. See Ohanjanyan, *The Book "Key,"* p. 63.

<sup>62</sup> Mr. Coen, "Armenians," *The Missionary Herald*, December 1852, pp. 358–359.

<sup>63</sup> Josiah Peabody, "Letter," p. 359.

<sup>64</sup> Simon Davitean, *Diary*, p. 195.

<sup>65</sup> On Protestants in the Ottoman Empire, see Markus Friedrich, Alexander Schunka, *Orientbegegnungen deutscher Protestanten*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Preis, 2012; Tramontana, "An Unusual Setting." On Reformed Protestants from Geneva in Bera, see Windler, "Katholische Mission und Diasporareligiosität," p. 191. For Antitrinitarians in Ottoman lands, see Işván György Tóth, "Old and New Faith in Hungary, Turkish Hungary, and Transylvania," in *A Companion of Reformation World*, ed. Ronie Po-Chia Hsia, Blackwell Publishing, 2004, pp. 205–220.



the first time, Yovhannēs's name appears in Ghukas Karnets'i's letters on July 13, 1778, where the prior of Karin, Minas informs the Catholicos about the spread of Yovhannēs's sect, meaning that in 1778 Yovhannēs had already settled in Khnus, got married and was ordained a priest. In his letter from May 11, 1791, to Patriarch Zak'aria, Catholicos Ghukas mentions Yovhannēs, who several times "jumped out" (*ostneal er*) of Armenian faith and Christianity in general, then, through the meddling of Khnus governor (*beg*) was ordained and was spreading "his sect—not only Catholicism (*akht'armayut'ean*) but something resembling that of Tondrakians (*zmerdzavors t'ondrakets'vots'*)."<sup>66</sup> With the assistance of Isogh pasha of Bayazed, Yovhannēs was arrested and brought in chains to Ējmiatsin while the villagers of Khnus underwent catechization to win them back to the Armenian Apostolic faith.<sup>67</sup> Josiah Peabody reports that at least fifteen households belonged to Yovhannēs's sect. Apparently, Catholicos Ghukas refers to those people in his letter to the prior of the Monastery of St. Karapet in Mush. The prior was the one to catechize the sectarians of Khnus, and therefore the Catholicos wished to know how the process went, meanwhile to inform that despite Yovhannēs had repented, he was reluctant to let him leave. Yovhannēs had been chained for six months in Ējmiatsin. After they unchained him, he was allowed to attend the church on weekends under the surveillance of a guard. One of those days, he became a fugitive. According to Vardan Grigoryan, his escape was before November 1791. In November, the Catholicos sent an inquiry to the monk Yovhannēs of St. Karapet monastery in Mush and his legate (*nuirak*) in Mush Grigor *vardapet* (doctor of theology) about Yovhannēs's whereabouts. In 1791–1792 monk Yovhannēs of St. Karapet wrote to the Catholicos that sectarian Yovhannēs had repented. At the same time, Grigor *vardapet* informed that upon the Catholicos's demand, Yovhannēs could arrive in Ējmiatsin to confess his faith. Ghukas Karnets'i demanded a document proving Yovhannēs's repentance verified by local people and notables, which he received in the spring of 1792. The locals inquired the Catholicos to send a letter of blessing for Yovhannēs, but the pontiff exercised cautiousness. He demanded that Yovhannēs visit Ējmiatsin accompanied by two priests and two notables from Khnus to prove repentance in person, to pronounce confession of faith, and promise not to return to his sect. This visit never happened.<sup>68</sup> There is no mention of Yovhanes's second conversion to Islam in the correspondence between the Catholicos and Patriarch. Instead, in the letter from October 1793, Catholicos informed the Patriarch that the Muslim governor (*beg*) of Karin had strangled him because of his fraudulent conduct. Josiah Peabody reported Yovhannēs's second conversion. According to his reports, Yovhannēs had moved to Karin. He converted to Islam with his family, and

<sup>66</sup> Grigoryan, "New Evidence," p. 339.

<sup>67</sup> Grigoryan, "New Evidence," p. 340.

<sup>68</sup> Grigoryan, "New Evidence," p. 341.

his Muslim sons still lived in Karin when missionaries visited there in 1855.<sup>69</sup> The Arkhveli sectarians stated that around 1801, Yovhannēs “turned Turk (*tachkats’ eal*), became full of maggots (*ordnalits’ leal*), and his life was taken (*zrkeal e i kenats’*).”<sup>70</sup> All the sources testify to Yovhannēs’s death shortly after his second conversion, still the exact date of his death remains uncertain—either 1793 or 1801.

Presented details shine a light on the covert aspects of Yovhannēs’s life that had enormous impact on his identity, motives, and the content of his handbook. He seems to be an epitome of a pre-modern Armenian who fell in and out of love with Catholicism, of whom Yovhannēs’s contemporary Gēorg Mkhlayim<sup>71</sup> wrote:

For being lured by their [i.e., Catholics] words, for realizing that there is no foundation and truth in Papists’ religion, some people become English (*inkliz*) [i.e., Protestant], others turn into Sadducees [i.e., atheists], and when the tribulation and persecutions [of Muslims] befall, at an instance they apostate from their faith.<sup>72</sup>

What Mkhlayim did not mention is that disappointment in a certain confession could drive people also into heresy, false priesthood and imposture.

Mass false priesthood was exclusively a pre-modern phenomenon. Knowledgeable, well-educated priests, regardless of confession, were a rarity in the regions and peripheries of the Ottoman Empire. At times performing rituals was the only thing a provincial priest would be capable of. The deterioration of the state of priesthood gave rise to the institution of itinerant false priests (*ch’erets’*), even bishops (*ch’episkopos*), specifically in the remote provinces of the Empire. The institution of false priests was rooted in simony: representatives of this institution would be ordained priests or bishops by deceit and the power of money. They would forge documents and certificates, wander from village to village, house to house, collect alms, ordain priests for money, and continuously change faces and roles to mislead the ignorant populace.<sup>73</sup> They recognized no boundaries: they could pretend to be a Catholic, an Apostolic, a Protestant, a sectarian, a visionary hermit, or whatever they willed.<sup>74</sup> In addition, they acted within a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural

<sup>69</sup> Josiah Peabody, “Letter,” p. 359.

<sup>70</sup> National Archive of RA, fund 56, list 1, folder 59, f. 49.

<sup>71</sup> For his bibliography, see Armen Ter-Stepanyan, “Gevorg Mkhlayim [Գևորգ Մխլայիմ], *Ējmiatsin* [Էջմիածին] 5, 1984, pp. 36–44; Ohanjanyan, “Intra-Armenian Polemics,” pp. 489–519.

<sup>72</sup> Gēorg Mkhlayim Ōghli, *A Book of Dispute against Duophysites* [Գիրք վիճաբանութեան ընդդէմ երկաբնակաց], Constantinople, 1734, pp. 83–84.

<sup>73</sup> For itinerant false priests among Armenians, see Henry Shapiro, “On Some Issues in Grigor Daranaghts’i’s “Chronicle” [Գրիգոր Դարանաղի, «Ժամանակագրություն»], *Ējmiatsin* 2, 2016, pp. 57–68.

<sup>74</sup> For a detailed portrayal of such priests, see Simēon Erewants’i, *The Book of Acquittal*, pp. 243, 246.

rural population where their actions could bring about short-lived sects or heresies, most of which remained unknown to us. In this respect, one can not help but acknowledge the flexibility and artfulness of false priest Yovhannēs as a notorious representative of this institution. Nevertheless, his name would have been fallen into oblivion if not for the handbook he penned.

*Yovhannēs's Handbook at the Backdrop of Pre-Modern Confessional Debates*

Yovhannēs authored his handbook in 1782 in Taron (Mush). The copy of it survived to our day thanks to his fellow sectarians of Ch'evirme village who migrated to Third Arkhveli in Eastern Armenia during the Russo-Turkish war in 1828–1829.<sup>75</sup> According to them, Yovhannēs composed (*sharadreal ē*) the handbook, and just before his second conversion, he trusted it to his fellow sectarian Mesrob Budaghean, then converted and died. Decades later, during migration, Mesrob gave the book to sectarian Kirakos Avdalean. The latter passed it to his illiterate son Tono who preferred to hand it down to his co-villager sectarian priest Gēorg Sargsean, a migrant in Third Arkhveli.<sup>76</sup> The Holy Synod confiscated the book from Gēorg Sargsean during the inquisition in 1837.

Interestingly, the confiscated manuscript is a copy made in 1811.<sup>77</sup> One of the sectarians recalled the name of the possible copyist, whom Simon Davitean considered the “author” of the book:

Yovhannēsean Sargis from Karin,<sup>78</sup> one of the old evangelicals,<sup>79</sup> came to Kharsa (Kars?). In Russian country, he was jailed three times because

<sup>75</sup> According to missionary reports, the sectarians were persecuted both by the Armenians and Muslims equally, which might be the reason behind their migration to Eastern Armenia. See **Simon Davitean**, *Diary*, pp. 194.

<sup>76</sup> National Archive of RA, fund 56, list 1, folder 59, f. 49.

<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting that the date on the title page was distorted a couple of times, but even an unarmed eye of a codicologist is capable to detect the initial date, which is “1811, and according to Armenian Era 1260.” **Ohanjanyan**, *The Book “Key,”* pp. 62–63.

<sup>78</sup> The conversant refers to the sectarian preacher Suvar (not Sargis) Yarat'iwnean, who, during the Russo-Turkish war migrated to the Third Arkhveli village, where Russian authorities arrested him for sectarianism.

<sup>79</sup> Armenian Evangelicals, as Simon Davitean, were inclined to consider the members of Yovhannēs's sect as old Evangelicals (*awetaranakan*) pioneering for the “awakening,” which did not correspond to the truth. However, later, most sectarians in Ch'evirme converted to American Protestantism, while those in Third Arkhveli either confessionally assimilated with “Prigun” (Jumper) Molokans or embraced the Armenian Apostolic faith. See **Alexander Eritsev**, “On the Sect of Armenian Tondrakians” [О секте тондракских армян], in *Proceedings of the Fifth Archeologic Congress in Tbilisi, 1881*, ed. **Countess Uvarova**, Moscow, 1887, pp. 187–192. **Eghshē Y. Melik'ean**, *Statistics of Khnus (Hark') County and the Connections of Tondrakian Sect with Protestantism in Khnus* [Վիճակագիր հինուս (Հարք) գաւառի եւ թոնդրակեցոց աղանդին եւ բողոքականութեան կապը ի հինուս], New York: Yepard Press, 1943, pp. 30 and n. 10.

of the truth. He talked about the book Key of Truth, which should have been an ancient book according to his story. The author of the book, Yarut'iwn Arsheants' Mamikonean, wrote it and gave it to Syrian (*babelats'i*) Mohreants' Grigor. The date of the book is 985 of the year of the Savior. The material (*t'ught'*) is parchment, and the script is Mesropean [i.e., Armenian].<sup>80</sup>

The story about the ancient origin of the book was probably invented to give it weight and authority. The material of the manuscript is not parchment, but plain, yellowish paper, while the script is actually "mesropean," that is, Armenian (not Arabic). For the most part, it is written in Classical Armenian. Only several prayers are written in eighteenth-century modern Armenian,<sup>81</sup> just like the sectarians stated:

This priest [Yovhannēs] had a book called Key of Truth. In this book, there were many things written about the fallacies of the Armenian Church as well as prayers in spoken (modern) Armenian (*ashkharhabar*) [written] for their [sectarians'] use.<sup>82</sup>

As mentioned previously, the content of the *KT* is an eclectic mix of doctrinal elements borrowed from diverse confessions. Its Christology is Antitrinitarian (resembles Socinianism or Unitarianism); Christ is accepted as the Only Begotten of the Father (μονογενής),<sup>83</sup> born from the Virgin Mary. Meanwhile, he is "a new creation," "newly created Adam," a mediator, intercessor, and savior.<sup>84</sup> That said, at the end of the prayers the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are mentioned. Mary's *postpartum* virginity,<sup>85</sup> intercession of saints, icons, fasting, and church hierarchy are denied.<sup>86</sup> The baptism of infants is rejected and replaced by a naming ceremony on the eighth day of a child's birth.<sup>87</sup> The actual change of eucharistic elements into Christ's body and blood is accepted, but the rite of Holy Eucharist resembles that of Protestants. In the book Yovhannēs speaks against Latin, Greek, and Armenian Churches, in particular, expressing strong anti-Papist views. He strives to restore the

<sup>80</sup> **Simon Davitean**, *Diary*, pp. 204.

<sup>81</sup> The spoken language (*ashkharhabar*) in the eighteenth century was Armenian mixed with plenty of Turkish loanwords. In written texts, Armeno-Turkish gradually took the place of Classical Armenian (*grabar*); therefore, writings in pure Classical Armenian were highly esteemed.

<sup>82</sup> **Simon Davitean**, *Diary*, pp. 195. The prayers are indeed written in the eighteenth-century spoken (or modern) Armenian (*ashkharhabar*), and resemble those in **Yakob Nalean**, *A Book Titled Catechism for Instruction* [*Գիրք կոչեցեալ քրիստոնէական ուսանելի*], Constantinople: Astuatsatur Kostandnupōlsets'i Press, 1737, pp. 8, 11, 13, 133. Cf. **M6710**, f. 3r (3), 24r (78), or 24v (79), and **Cobnybeare**, *The Key*, pp. 2, 24, 25.

<sup>83</sup> **M6710**, f. 39r (108).

<sup>84</sup> **M6710**, f. 12r (20).

<sup>85</sup> **M6710**, f. 46r (124).

<sup>86</sup> **M6710**, f. 17v (55).

<sup>87</sup> **M6710**, f. 21r–v (68–69).

“true universal church,” consisting of Christ’s apostles and the faithful, where the head is not the Pope or Catholicos but Christ.<sup>88</sup>

A manuscript in the Library of Mekhitarist Congregation in Vienna titled *A Book Against Orthodox*<sup>89</sup> *Clergymen* encloses elaborate polemics with Catholics, penned by an Armenian Apostolic priest from Ortaköy<sup>90</sup> quarter in Constantinople, Yovhannēs Tēr-Tadēosean.<sup>91</sup> It starts with a dispute about whether the Armenian Apostolic Church should be called schismatic. The author introduces the opinions of various Catholics, among them a certain false priest Yovhannēs from Erzurum. I quote the entire passage below:

For whenever a layman asks whether the Armenian Church is heretical or orthodox, everyone does not watch what they speak as if [they are drunk] on wine. Behold, their foolish words are detected, for every tree is known by its own fruit according to the sayings of Christ (Luk. 6:44).

First, the opinion of the students (*ordwots*’) of the college is that the Armenian Church is not heretical as a dissected member of the Church, but it is not proper to participate with them in the things divine, that is the Church Sacraments. Such is the opinion of *vardapet* Yunan oğlu Pōghos who is gluttonous beyond measure. And the opinion of Don Giorgio from Galata (*gaghatats*’i) is that the Armenian Church is heretical, like a dissected member of the Church.

Although Mekhitarists do not have an opinion on the Armenian Church’s faith, they are, however, fearing that the fountains of mammon will be shut, hence at times, they take the side of the [Apostolic] Armenians, and other times [they take the side] of those separated from us who are clergymen only nominally [i.e., Armenian Catholics]. And this way, they [Mekhitarists] seem reasonable in the eyes of both [the Apostolics and Catholics] and easily wander from house to house. “Lord has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you” (Ps. 52:6/53:5)

**The bear-strangler (*arj kheghdogh*) only nominally priest Yovhannēs from Erzurum’s opinion is that the Armenian Church is external to the Church as there is no salvation through it. O, false priest, instead of coming here to convert the orthodox Armenian nation to the Nestorian faith, why would not you go to Erzurum to convert your wife,**

<sup>88</sup> M6710, f. 24v (79).

<sup>89</sup> The word “orthodox” denotes Catholics in this context.

<sup>90</sup> Ortaköy was a famous “cosmopolite” quarter of Constantinople near to Bosphorus where Armenians, Greeks, Turks, and Jews lived side by side, organized in communities.

<sup>91</sup> W285. I express my sincere gratitude to father Paulus Kodjanian for hosting me at the Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna in 2019 and for providing me with digital copy of the manuscript.

whom you make turn Turk (Muslim) by beating [her]? Indeed, why do not you fix your missal (*khordatetr*) at first, which resembles mixed meals collected as the leftover at the times of closed altar? It does not come as a surprise since such a universal church deserves such a missal that likens neither to the Armenian missal nor to Greek or Frankish ones. Ne sizden, ne bizden (Trk. neither from you, nor from us).<sup>92</sup>

The son of Murtach'ay, priest Anton says the following, "The Armenian Eucharist (*srbut'yun*) is *osman sikkesi* [Osman's coin] while Franks' Eucharist is royal *sikke* [coin]." Here we ask what the *osman sikke* is and what is the imperial one? The royal *sikke* [coin] is the one that is produced and marked by order of the king, while the *osman sikke* [Osman's coin] is produced without [imperial] order and in secrecy.<sup>93</sup> Is not it so? Yes!

Then, answer to me, o [you], deviated from Christian religion and from faith in Christ who [i.e., Christ] never observed [the Eucharist] at The Upper Room (*vernatun*) the way you observe it now.<sup>94</sup>

Presumably, "the bear-strangler Yovhannēs" is the sectarian Yovhannēs, whom Tēr-Tadēosean knew in person. Besides, he saw the book *KT*, which he called a "missal" (*khordatetr*), resembling neither the missal of Armenian Apostolics nor those of Greeks and Catholics. Notably, the copyist of the *KT* calls it "holy sacramentary" (*khordaran*)—something similar to a missal.<sup>95</sup> It is not incidental that Tēr-Tadēosean names Armenian, Greek, and Latin Churches, as Yovhannēs, too, names these three in a row (always in sequence "Latin, Greek and Armenian"). Further, Tēr-Tadēosean likens the doctrinal eclecticism of the *KT* to mixed meals and leftovers.

Nevertheless, even such eclecticism fails to conceal that the book reflects the discourse of the time concerning not only orthodoxy and orthopraxy but mainly "true catholicity and universality." That is why Tēr-Tadēosean ridicules the doctrine of the "universal church" enclosed in Yovhannēs's "missal." Even the title of the book speaks of Yovhannēs's search for "truth" when he formulates his objectives "to restore the true Church through the power of the Heavenly Father [to] open the closed

<sup>92</sup> These and the following highlights are mine.

<sup>93</sup> The Ottomans adopted Islamic tradition accepting that *sikke* (coin) and *hutbe* (prayer in ruler's name) were the symbols of sovereignty and special divine gifts. The "royal *sikke*" symbolized royal power, and was issued in gold and silver. As for "osman *sikke*," seemingly here it refers to various anonymous copper or silver coinage circulating among Ottomans wrongly assigned to Osman I (1299–1324). Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 16, 56, n. 27.

<sup>94</sup> W285, f. 4r–5r.

<sup>95</sup> M6710, f. 58r (initial pagination is missing).

door of truth with the keys of truth.”<sup>96</sup> The *KT* is saturated with theological vocabulary specific to early modern religious debates. For instance, from Yovhannēs’s point of view, his followers are “orthodox” (*ughghadawan*): perhaps, he bore the term in mind as a former Armenian Catholic when he wrote, “Let the God with the intercession of His beloved Son redeem all the **orthodox** from the same temptation.”<sup>97</sup>

Interestingly, Tēr-Tadēosean defines the doctrine of Yovhannēs’s “missal” as Nestorian, not Tondrakian. Whatever name one wills to label the doctrine of the *KT*, it is nothing but the pure product of Yovhannēs’s personal experience, the books he read, and the people he conversed with. As a son of an Armenian Apostolic priest and a reciter at the famous St. Karapet monastery in Mush, Yovhannēs must have had at least some knowledge of Armenian Church doctrine and rites. As a Catholic convert, during the time spent in Constantinople, he had a chance to page through the doctrinal and spiritual literature translated by Armenian Catholics to tailor his handbook in line with the literary fashion of the time. His first conversion to Islam and detention for eight months became a pivotal point in his life. It is impossible to trace his engagements and the gradual change of his convictions unless more new sources come out. All one can deduce from the extant sources is that besides Apostolics, Catholics, and Muslims, he might have communicated with Protestants during his life in Constantinople and Europe. As a result, he weaved together various confessional elements (some having alleged similarities like Antitirniatian and Islamic views)<sup>98</sup> and incorporated them into his handbook.

### *The Eighteenth-Century Sources and Practices Addressed in the Key of Truth*

Although the *KT* heavily draws upon the biblical text, particularly the New Testament, there are traces of sources and ideas proving the book’s eighteenth-century origin. The book’s title is fashioned following the title style of the pre-modern Armenian Catholic translated literature not peculiar to the medieval Armenian literary tradition. Yovhannēs titled his handbook “A Book called Key of Truth” (*Girg*<sup>99</sup> or *koch’i banali chshmartut’yan*) similar to the titles of the books composed

<sup>96</sup> M6710, f. 5v (7).

<sup>97</sup> M6710, f. 15v (27).

<sup>98</sup> On connections of Antitirnitarianism and Islam, see **Martin Muslow**, “Socinianism, Islam and the Radical Uses of Arabic Scholarship,” *Al-Qantara* XXXI, no. 2, 2010, pp. 549–586.

<sup>99</sup> The philologists of Latinizing school in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries (particularly, Urbanian College alumni) invented and put in circulation “girg” (գիրգ) as the singular form for the plural “girk” (գիրք). **Vazgen Hambardzumyan**, *History of the Latinizing Armenian [Լատինաբան հայերենի պատմություն]*, Yerevan: Nayiri Printing Press, 2010, pp. 36, 269–270; **Gohar Muradyan**, “Latinizing Armenian (Latinaban hayerēn)” (forthcoming). I thank Gohar Muradyan for drawing my attention to this

or translated in the same century, such as “A Book of Contemplative Prayers called Key of Devotion” (*Girg mtatskan aghot‘its‘, banali jermegandakert*) (1701), “A Book called Key of Knowledge” (*Girk‘ or koch‘i banali gitut‘ean*) (1788), “A Pamphlet called Lamp of Wisdom” (*Grk‘uks koch‘ets‘eal chrag imastut‘ean*) (1727), “A Tract called Fruit of Vanity” (*Tetrak or koch‘i ptugh zrajanut‘ean*) (1733), “A Book called Path of Linguistics” (*Girk‘ or koch‘i shawigh lezuagitut‘ean*) (1788), and many others.

The book’s structure is in line with the style of early modern polemical/apologetical treatises. It starts with “A word to beloved readers,” in which the author tells about the difficult times and his torments inciting him to embark on composing such a handbook.<sup>100</sup> The foreword is followed by the chapters enclosing the doctrine and ritual of Yovhannēs’s “only true universal church,” the brief Antitrinitarian confession of faith,<sup>101</sup> and the catechism written in the form of questions and answers. On the margins of the manuscript, the chapters and verses from the Bible are indicated, something peculiar to the early modern manuscript and printed book production but not medieval book culture.<sup>102</sup> At the end of the *KT*, an incomplete colophon is placed.

The sources Yovhannēs utilized are similarly grasped from pre-modern Catholic theological and spiritual literature. One of them is the catechism titled “Christian doctrine,” published in Amsterdam in 1667.<sup>103</sup> The founder of Mekhitarist Congregation, Mkhit‘ar Sebastats‘i, extensively utilized it when he wrote his catechism.<sup>104</sup> Yovhannēs had it at hand while shaping his catechetical chapter, as seen in the comparative table below:

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argument and providing me with her unpublished article.

<sup>100</sup> M6710, f. 3r–v (2–3).

<sup>101</sup> For the text of brief confession of faith, see M6710, f. 25r (80); Conybeare, *The Key*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>102</sup> For the study of the content of the manuscript, see Ohanjanyan, *The Book “Key,”* pp. 71–104.

<sup>103</sup> *Doctrina Christiana: Armenice, in Latinum versa*, Amstelodami: Imp. auctoris, et typis Armeniorum, 1667.

<sup>104</sup> It had two editions—one in Classical Armenian, the other in eighteenth-century spoken modern Armenian.



«Վարդապետութիւն քրիստոնեական» “Christian Doctrine”	Մխիթար Սեբաստացի, «Գիրք Քրիստոնեականի վարդապետութեան» Mkhit‘ar Sebastats‘i, “A Book of Christian Doctrine”	Հովհաննես Մշեցի, «Գիրք որ կոչի բանալի ճշմարտութեան» Yovhannēs from Mush, “A Book called Key of Truth.”
<u>Յաղագս երրորդութեան</u> <u>On Trinity</u>	<u>Վասն այն բաներուն որ շատ</u> <u>հարկաւոր են քրիստոնեային</u> <u>գիտենալ և հաւատալ</u> <u>On the things important for a</u> <u>Christian to know and to</u> <u>believe in</u>	<u>Յաղագս քրիստոնեականի</u> <u>վարդապետութեան</u> <u>On Christian doctrine</u>
Դու քրիստոնեա՞յ ես: Այո՛, քրիստոնեայ եմ շնորհօքն Քրիստոսի: Are you a Christian? Yes, I am a Christian by the grace of God!	Հարց. Դու քրիստոնեա՞յ ես: Պատասխանի. Հրամբես (գրք. Այո՛—Ա.Օ.), քրիստոնեայ եմ շնորհօքն Քրիստոսի: Question: Are you a Christian? Answer: Yes, I am a Christian by the Grace of God!	Հարց. Դու քրիստոնեա՞յ ես: Պատասխանի. Այո՛, քրիստոնեայ եմ շնորհօքն Քրիստոսի: Question: Are you a Christian? Answer: Yes, I am a Christian by the grace of God!
Զի՞նչ նշանակէ ասելն քրիստոնեայ: Նշանակէ գալն՝ որ հաւատալ ի Քրիստոս թէ է՝ Աստուած և ունի գորէնս նորա (էջ 4): What does it mean to be a Christian? It means that one believes that Christ is indeed God and keeps His laws (p. 4).	Հարց. Քրիստոնեայ ասելն ի՞նչ ասել է: Պատասխանի. Քրիստոսի օրենքին և հրամանին հնազանդ և հետևող ասել է (էջ A 4ա): Question: What does it mean to be a Christian? Answer: It means to be obedient and a follower of Christ’s law (p. A4).	Հարց. Քրիստոնեայ ասելն զի՞նչ ասել է: Պատասխանի. Այն ասել է, որ գտէրն մեր յիսուս քրիստոս ճանաչէ թէ զինչ է և պատուիրան նորա պահէ (50ա(134)): Question: What does it mean to be a Christian? Answer: It means that one understands what our Lord Jesus Christ [indeed] is and keeps His commandment (f. 50r (134)).

While the borrowings are apparent, the text’s transformation and ideas’ alteration are easily noticed, too—holding Antitrinitarian views, Yovhannēs had to alter all the passages about the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Although the rest of the questions and answers in Yovhannēs’s catechetical chapter differ from those in the mentioned catechisms, it is clear that he consulted printed catechisms to tailor his chapter.

Another source is the book *Theophilos*, printed in Armenian Catholics' underground print in Constantinople in 1702.<sup>105</sup> It is written as a dialogue between a *vardapet* and a certain Theophilos. In the first part, comprising the catechism of the Catholic faith, the *vardapet* explains to Theophilos the Catholic teaching on purgatory, indicating two judgments after death—particular and universal.<sup>106</sup> The *KT* denies and refutes the teaching of purgatory. A marginal note is placed next to the lines refuting purgatory, “See in the book Theophilos” (*Tēop ‘ilos grkojn tes*).<sup>107</sup> Other marginal notes refer to “a book on purgatory” (*k’awarani grk’ojn*),<sup>108</sup> but it is unclear to what specific book the readers’ attention is drawn.<sup>109</sup> The Catholic doctrine of purgatory, shaped in the twelfth century, became popular in the fifteenth century. After the Council of Trent the refashioned doctrine grew into a “confessionally defined topic,”<sup>110</sup> commonly debated by Protestant polemicists.<sup>111</sup> The fact that the *KT* addressed post-Tridentine disputes on purgatory reveals that the doctrines Yovhannēs criticized or sided with were derived from pre-modern confessional debates. In this regard, two passages speaking on Baptism and Eucharist are to be singled out as solid proofs for the early modern origin of the *KT*.

Yovhannēs speaks extensively on “true baptism,” dedicating chapters to the proper age for it and the proper rite. According to him, infant baptism has to be denied because Christ was baptized at the age of thirty; secondly, an infant is

<sup>105</sup> *Theophilos that is Conversation of Theophilos with the Vardapet on the Truth and Devotion* [Թէօփիլոս, ալիսինքն խօսակցութիւն Թէօփիլոսի ընդ վարդապետին յաղագս ճշմարտութեան եւ ջերմեանդութեան], Alikorna (Livorno), 1701. The title page sets the printing lieu in Livorno, but the book was published in Constantinople at the underground printing press of Armenian Catholics in Beyoğlu. See **H. M. Davtyan**, “Armenian Catholics’ Secret Print in Constantinople” [Կ. Պօլսի հայ-կաթոլիկների գաղտնի տպարանը], *HSSR GA Teghekgagir hasarakakan gitut’yunneri* [ՀՍՍՌ ԳԱ Տեղեկագիր հասարակական գիտությունների] 1, 1965, p. 36; **Raymond H. Kévorkian**, “L’imprimerie Surb Ējmiacin et Surb Sargis Zōravav et le Conflit entre Arméniens et Catholiques à Constantinople (1695–1718),” *REĀ* 15, 1981, pp. 401–416.

<sup>106</sup> See **Theophilos**, pp. 27–29.

<sup>107</sup> M6710, f. 55r (144).

<sup>108</sup> Conybeare translated the Armenian word *k’avarani* as “place of expiation” mentioning the word “purgatory” only in the footnote. However, in theological context as such the word *k’avarani* has always designated the doctrine of purgatory. See **Conybeare**, *The Key*, pp. 122 and n. 2.

<sup>109</sup> M6710, f. 56r (146). It could be the same Theophilos, or the book translated by Petros T’iflisets’i, *Inferno Opened* [Դժոխք բացեալ], Venice: Stefano Orlando’s Print, 1753.

<sup>110</sup> **Tomáš Malý**, “Early Modern Purgatory: Reformation Debates and Post-Tridentine Change,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 106, no. 1, 2015, p. 242. For the discussion at Ferrara-Florence, see **Joseph Gill, S.J.**, *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp. 85–130, 270–304. For social implications in the Middle Ages, see **Jaques Le Goff**, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. **Arthur Goldhammer**, Scholar Press, 1990.

<sup>111</sup> **Malý**, “Early Modern Purgatory,” pp. 242–272.

ignorant of the Christian faith and can not confess it publicly, which is a condition for Baptism.<sup>112</sup> To prove his point, Yovhannēs capitalizes on the *Litany of the Catechumen* in Armenian Missal (*Pataragamatoys*'), which reads: "Let none of the **catechumens** (*erakhay*), none of the little faith and none of the penitent or unclean draw near to this divine mystery."<sup>113</sup> "Erakhay" in the *Litany of the Catechumen*—and theological texts in general—stands for "the catechumen" (κατηχούμενος), a person who, regardless of age, accepted Christianity but is not baptized yet, and while waiting for baptism is not allowed to draw near the "divine mystery," that is to take Communion at the Eucharist. Yovhannēs paraphrases the *Litany* by using the phonetically similar word "erekhay," meaning in this case and context "an infant,"<sup>114</sup> to: "None of the **infants**, and none of the little faith and none of the penitent or unclean is worth to draw near to the holy divine mystery."<sup>115</sup> By so doing, he either intentionally or out of ignorance instructs his followers that the Armenian Apostolic Church once accepted that infants are not to "draw near to divine mystery"—the Sacrament of Baptism, as they are "infidels" and "brute" due to their young age.<sup>116</sup> Notably, the Armenian Apostolic Church has always accepted infant baptism. Besides, the *Litany of the Catechumen* is recited at the Sacrament of Eucharist, not Baptism. Therefore, either Yovhannēs was well-aware of technical terms and exploited phonetical nuances to adjust the *Litany* to his quasi-Baptist views, or, which is hardly possible, he was utterly ignorant and genuinely believed that in the *Litany*, "erakhay" stood for "an infant," and that the *Litany* referred to the Sacrament of Baptism.

Speculating further on the baptismal rite, Yovhannēs polemicizes against Latin, Greek, and Armenian Churches, which all accept infant baptism pointing specifically to Papists. In this respect, he criticizes post-Tridentine Catholic reforms of baptismal practice:

I ask you again, you, apostate Popes and your followers, [why do you] with various means baptize children<sup>117</sup> who are still in their mother's womb, who

<sup>112</sup> M6710, f. 49v (133), 51r (136).

<sup>113</sup> Մի ոք յերախայից (*mi ok' yerakhayits*'), մի ոք ի թերահաւատից, եւ մի ոք յապաշխարողաց և յանմաբից մերձեցէ յաստուածային խորհուրդ: *The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church: English Translations, Transliteration, Musical Notation, Introduction and Notes*, New York: St. Vartan Press, 2005, p. 23.

<sup>114</sup> These two words could be used interchangeably, and could denote both "catechumen" and "infant," especially in vernacular Armenian, but not in theological texts, and definitely not in the *Litany of the Catechumen*.

<sup>115</sup> Մի ոք յերեխայից (*mi ok' yerekhayits*'), և մի ոք ի թերահաւատից, և մի ոք յապաշխարողաց և յանմաբից չէ արժան մերձենալ ի սուրբ աստուածային խորհուրդ: M6710, f. 49r (132).

<sup>116</sup> M6710, f. 49r (132).

<sup>117</sup> Conybeare preferred to translate the Armenian word "erekha" as "catechumen," which is at odds with the context here. *Conybeare, The Key*, p. 116.

have not come into the world yet, or are stillborn, some of them you baptize in [their mothers'] womb, and some conditionally (*tēakaw*) when [they are already] dead; those are diabolic [things] and not divine.<sup>118</sup>

Intrauterine fetal baptism was forbidden in the Catholic Church before the sixteenth century due to the prevalence of Thomas Aquinas's (1225–1274) theological views denying fetal baptism (*Summa*, P. 3, Q68, A11).<sup>119</sup> For the first time, it was practiced after the Council of Trent in 1573 in Frankfurt, which a midwife performed.<sup>120</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century, the necessity of fetal baptisms became central because of Jansenist views concerning the effects of original sin on unbaptized children. Jansenists revived St. Augustine's views on the Catholic doctrine of *Limbo of Infants*, according to which unbaptized children ending up in the fringes of the Hell (*limbus puerorum* or *limbus infantum*) share common positive misery of damned—a doctrine long dismissed by Thomas Aquinas.<sup>121</sup> In 1680 French obstetrician François Mauriceau (1637–1709) invented a syringe for intrauterine fetal baptisms, while Catholic Church directed its efforts towards the theological training of midwives so that they could perform the rite in line with Tridentine decrees.<sup>122</sup> At first intrauterine fetal baptism was a rare and local occurrence. It became widely allowed during the rule of Pope Benedict XIV (1740–1758). An admirer of Enlightenment, Benedict XIV—the Pope of scientists—closely cooperated with the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Bologna.<sup>123</sup> He legitimized conditional intrauterine baptisms administered by midwives<sup>124</sup> and

<sup>118</sup> M6710, f. 49r (132).

<sup>119</sup> **Thomas Aquinas**, *Summa Theologiae. Latin text, English translation, Introduction, Notes, Appendices and Glossary*, ed. **James J. Cunningham**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 115–118.

<sup>120</sup> **Karen Scheuermann**, “Midwifery in Germany: Its Past and Present,” *Journal of Nurse-Midwifery* 40, no. 5, 1995, pp. 439.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas Aquinas described the *Limbo of Infants* as a state of positive happiness without suffering. For the development of the doctrine, see **KKP Vanhoutte**, *Limbo Reapplied. Radical Theologies and Philosophies*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 35–86.

<sup>122</sup> **Scheuermann**, “Midwifery in Germany,” p. 439. **M. Karamanou, G. Creatsas, T. Demetriou, G. Androutsos**, “Practising obstetrics in the 17th century: François Mauriceau (1637–1709),” *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 33, no. 1, 2013, pp. 20–23.

<sup>123</sup> **Rebecca Messbarger**, “The Art and Science of Human Anatomy in Benedict's Vision of the Enlightenment Church,” in *Benedict XIV and the Enlightenment: Art, Science, and Spirituality*, ed. **Rebecca Messbarger, Christopher Johns, Philip Gavitt**, Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2016, pp. 93–119.

<sup>124</sup> Benedict XIV allowed conditional baptism, meaning that if water was poured on the head of the fetus, the baptism was considered administered. If the water was poured on other parts of the fetus or the fetus was fully enclosed in the womb, in case a child survived, baptism should

popularized them by ordering the Sicilian inquisitor Francesco Emmanuelle Cangiamila (Francesco Valenza) (1702–1763) to standardize the baptismal rite.<sup>125</sup>

The theologians of Eastern Churches could not neglect such a “precarious” practice, let alone Protestants, given that Luis XIV (1638–1715) dismissed and exiled all the Protestant midwives and obstetricians due to their confession.<sup>126</sup> The issue appeared in the agenda of Armenian Apostolic polemicists after Benedict XIV’s reforms around the 1750s and was discussed predominantly in the theological circles of Constantinople.<sup>127</sup> In his anti-Catholic polemical treatise penned in 1751, under the title “On unbaptized children,” Constantinople-based famous polemicist Gēorg Mkhlayim Ōghli writes:

Heretical teachers (*vardapets*) of Latins teach that unbaptized children of Christians go to hell, which they name with an unusual (*noradzayn*) and the ridiculous word “limbo” (*limpos*), and because of this reason, they throw themselves into a new heresy by teaching that upon emergency not only priests but also laymen, also women, and also pagans and Jews can perform the baptism, and the baptized one should not be rebaptized. And for this reason, they teach verbally all the midwives [to utter] these four words, that “I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” and there is no midwife who would not boast that, “I have baptized ten or twenty infants.” And when we ask them, “Pronounce the baptismal formula,” they utter it in

have been conditionally repeated in the church. As for stillborns, they were baptized with the words, “If you are alive,” to ensure that the baptism would be conferred only in case there was life in the fetus.

<sup>125</sup> **Michael Obladen**, *Oxford Textbook of the Newborn: A Cultural and Medical History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, p. 67. Cangiamila advocated for popularization of Cesarean section and fetal baptism in the uterus. In 1745 his book titled *Embryologia Sacra* was published. For his biography, see **Mario Condoirelli**, “Cangiamila, Francesco Emanuele,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 18, 1975

[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-emanuele-cangiamila\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-emanuele-cangiamila_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/) [accessed on 11.08.2022]. **José Pardo-Tomás, Álgar Martínez-Vidal**, “The Ignorance of Midwives: The Role of Clergymen in Spanish Enlightenment Debates on Birth Care,” in *Medicine and Religion in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. **Ole Peter Grell, Andrew Cunningham**, Ashgate, 2007, pp. 53–55. For his book see **Francesco Cangiamila**, *Embriologia sacra o tratado de la obligación que tienen los curas, confesores, médicos, comadres, y otras personas, de cooperar a la salvación de los niños*, Palermo, 1745.

<sup>126</sup> **Louis XIV: Declaration du Roy, portent défenses a ceux de la Réligion Prétendue Reformée, de faire des fonctions de Sages-Femmes**, Lyon: Jullieron, 1680, pp. 1–4, cited in **Obladen**, *Oxford Textbook*, p. 66.

<sup>127</sup> In 1754 the Patriarch of Constantinople, Yakob Nalean (1741–1749, 1752–1764), touches upon the issue of fetal baptisms. Following Thomas Aquinas’s argument, Nalean denies it by naming all theological concepts antagonizing such baptism. **Yakob Nalean**, *Theological Training*; M3764, f. 29v–30r. The manuscript is Nalean’s autograph, penned in Constantinople. Nalean structured the treatise following Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*.

such a distorted and twisted (*tsur u mur*) way that not only you but also angles cannot understand them. And in case there is a risk of death for a child while in the womb of the mother, they say that water has to be sprinkled on the place of delivery (*tsnndkan teghin*) by enema (*hōgnayov*) or tumbula (Trk. pump, syringe), and to baptize it [fetus] [right] in there.<sup>128</sup>

In the fourteenth century, Armenian theologian Grigor Tat'ewats'i (1346–1409) criticized Catholic baptisms performed by women, allowed by Urban II (1088–1099) in case of “necessity.” However, it referred mainly to the cases when a newborn child was in danger of death, and in no way was it about intrauterine baptism.<sup>129</sup> Mkhlayim calls the intrauterine and conditional baptism of stillborns “new rite” (*nor araroghut'yun*), neopraxia, hinting that before the 1750s, this type of baptism was rarely practiced. Based on such evidence, it is safe to assume that Yovhannēs's critics of the intrauterine fetal baptism in the *KT* could have been written only after Benedict XIV's baptismal reforms that resonated with Constantinopolitan Armenian theologians around 1750.

We encounter a similar case when we close-read the passages dedicated to the Sacrament of Eucharist. Yovhannēs writes down the *Words of Institution* (*Verba*) Christ uttered (*This is my body, This is my blood*) at the Last Supper, then he proceeds to the *Epiclesis* (ἐπίκλησις)—the liturgical invocation of Holy Spirit to consecrate the eucharistic elements to transform them into Christ's body and blood:

For behold, our mediator and intercessor Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, took the bread in his hands, blessed it [as] the Evangelists declare. That is to say, by imploring [he] besought the Almighty Father to transform (*pokharkests'ē*) the bread into his honorable body. That is why [the Evangelist] says “He blessed,” that is, he besought the Lord so that the bread is transformed truly into his body, which indeed was transformed by the Spirit of the heavenly Father, and when he saw that the bread was transformed into his body, he instantly thanked (*guhats'aw*) the Almighty Father that had transformed [it to] his body and blood.<sup>130</sup>

The marginal inscription next to this text reads: “And here he [Christ] truly distributes [the Eucharist].” What this passage reveals to a theologian's eye is not simply Antitinitarian Christology, where Christ is a mere mediator, while the Father is the one to orchestrate the change of the eucharistic elements. This passage,

<sup>128</sup> Gēorg Mkhlayim Ōghli, *On the Sacraments of Christ's Church* [Յաղագս քահանայադործութեանց եկեղեցւոյ Քրիստոսի], W733, f. 27.

<sup>129</sup> Grigor Tat'ewats'i, *A Book of Questions* [Գրք հարցման], Constantinople: Astuatsatur Kostandnupōlsets'i Print, 1729, pp. 588–590.

<sup>130</sup> M6710, f. 49r (132).

together with the marginal inscription, reflects the important confessional topics in pre-modern eucharistic debates—the issue of actual transformation of eucharistic elements during the Divine Liturgy and the exact moment of consecration of bread and wine. Unlike the Protestants, Yovhannēs accepts the actual transformation, unlike the Tridentine Catholics, and in accord with Eastern Christians, he states that the consecration is not through the utterance of the *Words of Institution* but through the *Epiclesis*.

It is worth noting that the polemics around transformation intensified in the face of spreading Protestantism as most Protestant denominations rejected the change of bread and wine during the Eucharist into Christ's body and blood. Although, like Catholics, the Armenians (and Greeks) have accepted the actual transformation of the substance (*goyats' ut' iwn*) of eucharistic elements while stating that the accidents (*patahmunk' ew vorak*) of bread and wine remain unaltered,<sup>131</sup> the situation grew grimmer in the seventeenth century when Tridentine Catholics tried to impose the term “*transubstantiatio*” on all Eastern Churches against the Protestant doctrine denying the transformation of eucharistic elements. Already in the seventeenth century, forced by the confessional situation, the Greeks had gradually replaced their usual term “μεταβολή” (*metabole*) with “μετουσίωσις” (*metousiosis*), while the Armenians along with old «փոխարկում» (*p'okharkum*) started to utilize also the terms «գոյափոխութիւն» (*goyap'okhut' iwn*) or «անդրափոխութիւն» (*andrap'okhut' iwn*) in the eighteenth century.<sup>132</sup> As to the exact moment of transformation of the elements through consecration that in Tridentine Missals appeared to be the utterance of the *Words of Institution*, it has not become a topic of theological debates in the Greek Church until the fourteenth-fifteenth century.<sup>133</sup> In the case of Armenians, it became ominous only around the seventeenth century in the face of Tridentine missionaries and Protestants since in medieval debates the eucharistic disputes revolved primarily around the unmixed chalice, and unleavened bread. Yet in the fourteenth century, Grigor Tat'ewats'i evasively voiced the matter mentioning that the conditions for an actual change of eucharistic elements are the presence of a priest, bread and wine, invocation (*Epiclesis*), and *Words of Institution*.<sup>134</sup> In the pre-modern era, we find the same Gēorg Mkhlayim dedicating chapters to prove that

<sup>131</sup> See Tat'ewats'i, *A Book of Questions*, p. 597.

<sup>132</sup> See Margarita Voulgaropoulou, “Orthodox Confession-Building and the Greek Church between Protestantism and Catholicism: The Mission of Marquis Nointel to the Levant (1670–1673),” in *Entangled Confessionalizations?*, pp. 521–562. For discourse in Armenian milieu, see Ohanjanyan, “Creedal Controversies,” pp. 32, n. 97.

<sup>133</sup> Ware, *Eustratios Argenti*, 121.

<sup>134</sup> Tat'ewats'i, *A Book of Questions*, p. 597.

*Epiclesis* was the very moment of consecration—a practice imprinted even in the old-rite Latin missals.<sup>135</sup>

Third... all other missals of the Greeks which they follow nowadays are [designed] like that [i.e. accepting the invocation as the moment of consecration], and all the old missals of Franks are [designed] like that, even though today they made changes [in them]. And the issue of transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ that in their old missals was put after the [words], “Take, eat” [i.e., Words of Institution], today in their new missals they placed it before [the words] “Take, eat,” and they profess that the transformation into Christ’s body and blood occurs when [uttering] “Take, eat.” Forth, this opinion of theirs first and foremost contradicts Christ who changed [bread and wine] into his body and blood not when [he uttered] “Take, eat,” but at the moment of [him] blessing [the elements]...<sup>136</sup>

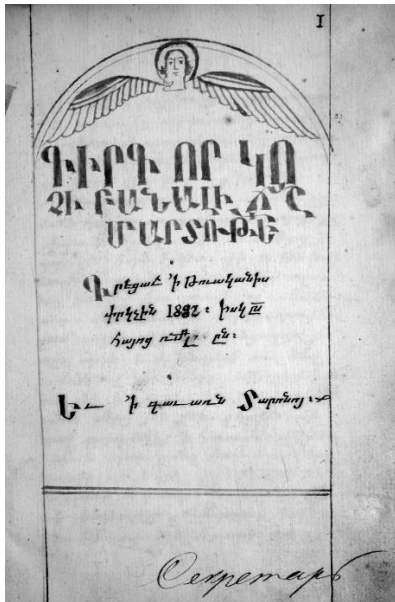
The fact that Yovhannēs was aware of pre-modern debates on the Eucharist and tried to address them in his handbook as much as his capabilities allowed him demonstrates his efforts to stay relevant to the confessional discourse of his time. The selected sources and passages introduced above are coupled with bits and pieces of other doctrinal ideas corresponding to theological realities around him. Moreover, the traces of other pre-modern sources cropping up here and there in the *KT*, such as the versified *Book of Adam* by Aṙak’el Siwnets’i,<sup>137</sup> additionally come to prove Yovhannēs’s acquaintance with his contemporary printed literature, which contributes to the assumption that the *KT* was part and parcel of the eighteenth-century multi-confessional patchwork.

<sup>135</sup> Mkhlaym, *On the Sacraments*, W733, f. 85–97.

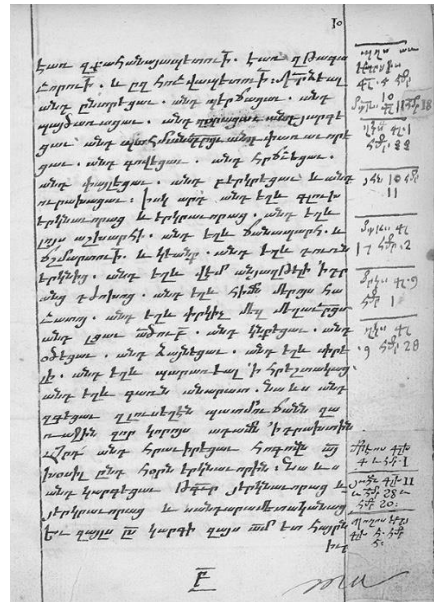
<sup>136</sup> Mkhlaym, *On the Sacraments*, W733, f. 88.

<sup>137</sup> Aṙak’el Siwnets’i, *Book of Adam* [Աղաճգիրք], Constantinople: Astuatsatur Kostandnupōlsets’i Print, 1722.

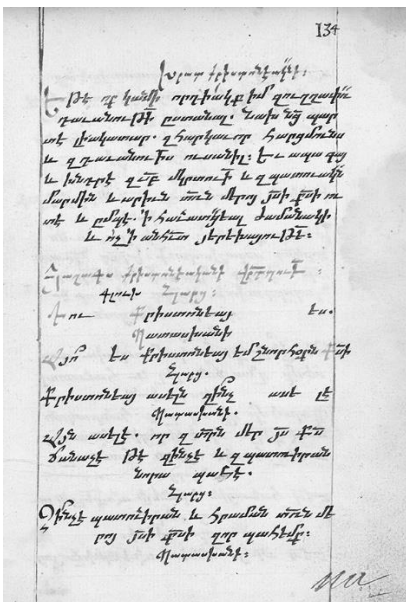




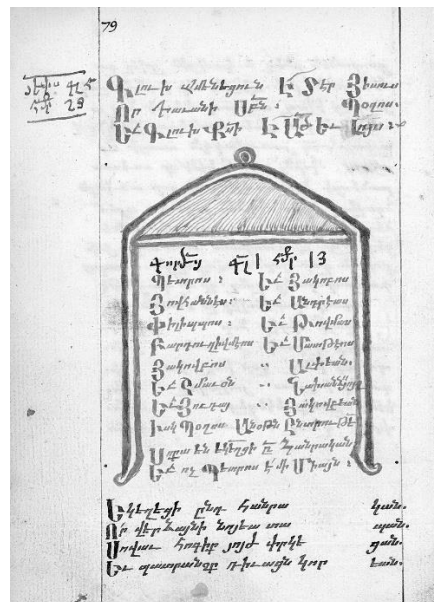
M 6710, f. 2r



M 6710, f. 7r



M 6710, f. 50r



M 6710, f. 24v

## ԱՆՆԱ ՕՀԱՆՋԱՆՅԱՆ

**ԴԱՎԱՆԱՆՔԻՑ ԴԱՎԱՆԱՆՔ ԱՆՑՆԵԼՈՎ. ՀԱՅ ԿԱԹՈՒԼԻԿ  
ՀՈՎՀԱՆՆԵՍ ՄՇԵՑԻՆ ԵՎ ՆՐԱ ՀԵՂԻՆԱԿԱԾ  
«ԲԱՆԱԼԻ ՃՃԱՐՏՈՒԹԵԱՆ» ԳԻՐՔԸ**

**Բանալի բառեր՝** Բանալի ճշմարտութեան, պավլիկյան, թոնդրական, Տրենտի ժողով, հակաերրոդաբանական, դավանանք, հայ կաթոլիկ, շրջիկ չերեց, Մխիթարյան միաբանություն:

Հոգվածում ներկայացվում և վերլուծվում են «Բանալի ճշմարտութեան» երկի հեղինակ Հովհաննես Մշեցու վերաբերյալ նոր տեղեկությունները, որոնց լույսի ներքո վերարժևորվում է գրքի բովանդակությունը և վերջնականապես հերքվում շուրջ մեկ դար գիտական շրջանակներում գերակայող «պավլիկյան-թոնդրական» վարկածը: Նոր տեղեկությունները բացահայտում են Հովհաննեսի ինքությունն ու ծավալած գործունեությունը Կոստանդնուպոլսում, իսկ նրա հեղինակած գրքի բովանդակային որոշ դրվագների, ինչպիսիք են ներարգանդային մկրտություններին և հաղորդության ծեսի՝ գոհության աղոթքին վերաբերող հատվածները, ուշ միջնադարի (ԺԷ-ԺԸ դդ.) դավանաբանական վեճերի ծիրում դիտարկելը թույլ է տալիս ապացուցել, որ «Բանալի ճշմարտության» երկը շարադրվել է ԺԸ դ.-ում և կրում է դարի պատմադավանական իրողությունների ազդեցությունը:

АННА ОГАНДЖАНЫАН

**ПЕРЕХОДЯ ИЗ ОДНОЙ КОНФЕССИИ В ДРУГУЮ:  
АРМЯНО-КАТОЛИК ОВАНЕС ИЗ МУША И ЕГО  
КНИГА «КЛЮЧ ИСТИНЫ»**

**Ключевые слова:** Ключ Истины, павликианский, тондракийский, Тридентский собор, антитринитарный, конфессия, армяно-католик, странствующий лжесвященник, Конгрегация Мхитаристов.

В статье представлены и анализируются новые сведения об Ованесе из Муша, авторе книги «Ключ истины», в свете которых переоценивается содержание книги и окончательно опровергается «павликианско-тондракий-

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ская» гипотеза, господствовавшая в научных кругах почти целое столетие. Новые данные проливают свет на личность Ованеса и его деятельность в Константинополе, а рассмотрение содержания его книги в контексте конфессиональных споров Позднего Средневековья (XVII-XVIII вв.), в особенности отрывков, относящихся к внутриутробным крещениям и благодарственной молитве в обряде Евхаристии, позволяет доказать, что книга «Ключ истины» написана в XVIII веке и несет в себе отпечаток историко-религиозных реалий своего времени.