

THE ARMENIANS AND THE HOLY PLACES IN JERUSALEM*

Any definitive history of Greater Syria, including Palestine, must also include an in-depth study of the minority groups that have inhabited the region since ancient times, for they too have played an important role in its historical development. The Armenians constituted one of the minority groups, and yet very little is known of their long and intimate associations with the region. This presentation will, therefore, attempt to trace the significant role which the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem has played in the custodianship of the Holy Places. The topic will be examined against the background of charters and edicts issued by the various conquerors of the Holy City.

It is well known that the history of the Holy Places in Jerusalem and its environs has been a long story of bitter animosities and contentions among rival Christian churches, as well as the cause of much international conflict. As one of the principal custodians of the dominical sites, the Armenian church also was frequently involved in these developments. It is equally true that rival churches, in order to support their claims to the sanctuaries, often forged or fabricated official charters and documents allegedly granted to them by the various ruling authorities.

Throughout the long history of the Armenian communities in Greater Syria the patriarchate of Jerusalem has always been distinguished as the single most important institution. Its position of preeminence among the various hierarchical sees of the Armenian church stemmed, first, from its unique association with the

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dominical sanctuaries in the Holy City and its custodianship, with the Greek Orthodox and Latin churches, of the shrines¹; secondly, from its control of a sizable number of privately owned monasteries and churches in the Holy Land and neighboring countries; and, thirdly, from the great influence which the see exercised over the large segments of the Armenian communities in Greater Syria and even beyond which were under its administrative jurisdiction².

The construction of the dominical sanctuaries at Jerusalem and Bethlehem in the first half of the fourth century induced numerous pilgrims to see for themselves the places hallowed by Christ. This is attested by the fact that by the beginning of the fifth century the number of monasteries and hostels in the Holy City where pilgrims could be housed was over three hundred³. The same period, especially from the fourth to the sixth centuries, witnessed the rise of monasticism and asceticism centered in regularly organized and multiracial monastic institutions. In the earliest days of the Universal Church of Christ the sanctuaries in the Holy Places were used for religious services not by one people alone, but by all Christians. In the course of time national institutions with monastics having a common language and cultural heritage developed in some of these communities, but many had monastic and anchoritic establishments whose congregations represented a multiplicity of races.

Along with the other Christian groups, Armenians began to arrive in Jerusalem in substantial numbers as pilgrims and as residents after the proclamation of Christianity as the official religion of their country in the beginning of the fourth century. They at first shared the multiracial monastic facilities, but in due time, not unlike the others, they founded a number of private monasteries and churches throughout the Holy Land.

The bishopric of Jerusalem was elevated to the dignity of a patriarchate at the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). The wide breach occasioned by the christological decisions of

1. For a study of the historical role of the Armenian church in the custodianship of the Holy Places see AVEDIS K. SANJIAN, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), pp. 168-203.
2. Consult, *ibid.*, pp. 142-167.
3. See A. COURET, *La Palestine sous les empereurs grecs* (Grenoble, 1869), p. 212.

this council did not seriously affect the religious harmony among the heterogeneous Christian communities in the Holy City; rather, for about a century after Chalcedon, all Christians remained under the spiritual authority of the bishop of Jerusalem. The schism between the monophysites and dyophysites at Jerusalem began about the middle of the sixth century. The persecutions of the monophysites, among them the Armenians, reached their climax during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527-565), a staunch adherent of the Chalcedonian creed. The hostility of the Greek political and religious authorities to the monophysites not only split asunder the unity of the Church of Jerusalem but also adversely affected the status of the nonconformists. It was this persecution that caused the Armenian clergy of the Holy Land to sever their ties with the hierarchy of Jerusalem. Many monophysite clergy abandoned their monasteries at Jerusalem and sought refuge in other regions of the Holy Land and in neighboring countries. Henceforward, the see of Jerusalem was split into the Greek patriarchate exercising jurisdiction over the dyophysite Christians regardless of nationality or language, and the independent Armenian hierarchy having authority over the monophysite communities, that is, Jacobite Syrian, Coptic, and Abyssinian.

This was the state of affairs when the Arab Caliph Umar I occupied Jerusalem in 638. It is generally asserted that the Greek Patriarch Sophronius arranged the terms of the city's capitulation. The text of the charter allegedly offered by the caliph to the non-Muslim inhabitants of Jerusalem has been preserved in several versions⁴. The authenticity of this charter seems highly questionable⁵, but its terms essentially reflect the

4. See TABARI, *Annales*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (15 vols.; Leyden, 1879-1901), I, 2405-2406; BELADSORI [AL-BALADHURI], *Liber expugnationum regionum (Futuh al-Buldan)*, ed. Goeje (Leyden, 1866), p. 139; English trans. of Beladkori by P. HITTI, *Origins of the Islamic State*, Columbia Univ. Studies in History, Economics and Law, vol. 68, pt. 1 (New York, 1951); AL-YA'QUBI, *Historiae (Ta'rikh)*, ed. M. T. Houtsma (2 vols.; Leyden, 1883), II, 167. An English trans. of the document will be found in WILLIAM MUIR, *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall* (Edinburgh, 1924), p. 134; and an Italian version in *Annali dell'Islam*, ed. Leone Caetani (10 vols.; Milan, 1905-1926), vol. III, pt. 2, pp. 956-957, A.H. 17, para. 173.
5. See CAETANI, *op. cit.*, pp. 956-957.

Arab policy vis-à-vis the non-Muslim subjects under their dominion generally. Although Arab policy in the main was based upon the principle of legal, political, and social inequality between the Muslim conquerors and the subject peoples, among the latter the *ahl al-kitab* (people of the book or scriptuaries, namely the Christians, Jews, and Sabians)⁶ were given the status of tolerated peoples. In return for Muslim protection (*dhimmah*), these sects were subject to the land (*kharaj*) and capitation (*jizyah*) taxes; and, since only a Muslim could draw his sword in defense of the lands of Islam, the *dhimmis* were exempt from military service. In matters of civil and criminal judicial procedure the tolerated communities were left under the jurisdiction of their own spiritual leaders⁷. In the case of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Christians were granted religious freedom and security for their lives, property, and churches; and in return they were to pay the *jizyah* (or capitation tax) and to assist the Arab rulers in warding off Byzantine troops and raiders. The Greek claim that the Arab conqueror granted a charter to Patriarch Sophronius, entrusting the custody of all the Holy Places exclusively to the Greeks, is based on a later forgery designed to further this community's claims to the sanctuaries⁸.

Equally unauthentic are the edicts which Abraham, the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem, is alleged to have received not

6. For a summary discussion of the status of the scriptuaries under Muslim rule consult G. VAJDA, «Ahl al-Kitab» in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new ed.), pp. 264-266.
7. For the historical evolution of legal and social status of the *dhimmis* under various Muslim rulers consult the following works: ANTOINE FATTAL, *Le Statut légal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam* (Beirut, 1958); A. S. TRITTON, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects* (Oxford, 1930); F. VAN DEN STEEN DE JEHAY, *De la Situation légale des Sujets ottomans non-Musulmans* (Brussels, 1906); also chap. XIV, «The Dhmmis» in H. A. R. GIBB and HAROLD BOWEN, *Islamic Society and the West*, vol. I, pts. 1 and 2 (Oxford, 1950-1957), vol. I, pt. 2, pp. 207-261; CLAUDE CAHEN, «Dhimma» in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new ed.), pp. 227-231; E. STRAUSS, «The Social Isolation of Ahl adh-Dhimmi» in *Etudes orientales à la mémoire de Paul P. Hirschler*, ed. O. Komlós (Budapest, 1950), pp. 73-94.
8. See L. G. A. CUST, *The Status Quo in the Holy Places* (printed for the British Government of Palestine by His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1929), p. 6.

only from the Caliph Umar I but also from the Prophet Muhammad and the orthodox Caliph Ali.

The apocryphal charter allegedly issued by the Prophet asserts that, anticipating the imminent occupation of Palestine by the Arabs, the Armenian bishop led a delegation of some forty monks to Mecca and expressed to the Prophet himself the homage of his community as well as the loyalty of the other monophysite Christians, namely, the Copts, Jacobite Syrians, and Abyssinians, who were dependent upon the Armenians. In return, the bishop is said to have secured Muhammad's guarantee respecting the integrity of their privileges and possessions in the Holy Land⁹.

The charter allegedly issued by Umar to the Armenian patriarch¹⁰ claims that, immediately after Umar's conquest of the city, not only the Armenian bishop but also the monophysite communities voluntarily submitted to Muslim domination, and in return obtained the caliph's guarantee of their security, as well as the integrity of their sanctuaries and properties. After the issuance of the charter, Umar is stated to have collected the prescribed taxes from the Armenian population; and he is said to have impelled the Armenians to assist the Arab authorities in apprehending and expelling the «Greek bandits and spies» from the Holy City.

The Armenian charter which the Caliph Ali is alleged to have granted to the Armenian Patriarch Abraham in A.H. 4 (= A.D. 625) is said to have been secured after Abraham, together with forty ecclesiastics who accompanied him, paid a personal visit to the caliph¹¹.

9. An Armenian translation of the text will be found in T. SAVALANEANC', *History of Jerusalem* (in Armenian; 2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1931), I, 261-262. The author states that the «original» of this charter does not exist in the archives of the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem; rather, he claims, there is a copy of it bearing the signatures of thirty witnesses, including that of the future Caliph Umar I. On the other hand, A. TĒR-HOVHANNĒSEANC', who fails to reproduce the text, asserts that the charter does exist in the same institution, but he does not state whether it represents the «original» or it is merely a copy of it. (See A. TER-HOVHANNĒSEANC', *Chronological History of Jerusalem*, in Armenian; vol. I (Jerusalem, 1890), p. 108.

10. See the Armenian translation in SAVALANEANC', *op. cit.*, I, 268-270.

11. See *ibid.*, I, 270-271, which does not reproduce the text.

All of these documents, including those claimed to have been issued to the Greeks, must have been fabricated in subsequent times to support rival claims to the dominical sanctuaries, and therefore have no historical foundation. Despite this, the three above mentioned documents are referred to in the charters issued to the Armenians by Saladin and the Ottoman Sultan Selim I in the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, respectively¹².

It is certain, however, that with the Arab conquest the Armenian see of Jerusalem attained a stature which perhaps equaled the Greek patriarchate, whose associations with the Byzantine empire rendered it suspect in the eyes of the conquerors. Subsequent to the Arab conquest the Greek Orthodox and the Armenians, as well as the monophysites and other communities, continued to enjoy the privilege of holding services in the dominical sanctuaries of Jerusalem and its environs. The Armenians also owned privately a number of important religious establishments in the Holy Land. But, in consequence of the constant persecutions and coercions of the Greek clergy because of the christological views of the Armenian church and because of the excessive taxes imposed by the Arab rulers, the Armenians lost a substantial number of their private possessions and holdings and their rights to free access to the common dominical sanctuaries were seriously curtailed. Nevertheless they did not cease to occupy a prominent position in the ecclesiastical organization of the Holy City.

The actual extent of the Armenian religious establishments in Jerusalem and its environs in the early centuries of Christianity cannot be easily determined. A widely published document, attributed to a seventh-century Armenian monk, Anastas Vardapet, contains a list of seventy monasteries and churches which the Armenians are said to have owned in that century in Jerusalem and its vicinity¹³.

The list supplies the barest minimum of information regarding the alleged Armenian institutions and is limited solely to recording of their names, locations, and the feudal families in Armenia which provided their endowments. The document as-

12. See SANJIAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 170-171, 174-176.

13. See SANJIAN, «Anastas Vardapet's List of Armenian Monasteries in Seventh-Century Jerusalem: A Critical Examination» in *Le Muséon*, LXXXII, 3-4 (1969), 265-292.

serts that an unspecified number of Armenian monasteries confiscated by the Greeks were eventually recovered by the Armenian princes after payment of a large sum of money to the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. When subsequently the Greek authorities in Jerusalem warned the monophysites — that is, the Armenians, Jacobite Syrians, Copts, and Abyssinians — that unless they adhered to the Chalcedonian doctrine they would not be permitted to sojourn in the Holy City, some five hundred Armenian monastics were advised by Catholicos Hovhannes II (557-574) to abandon their monasteries rather than make doctrinal concessions to the Greeks. Although many of the monks are said to have left for Caesarea in Palestine and Egypt, others remained in their institutions at Jerusalem, despite the persecutions meted out to them by the Byzantine authorities, until the Arab conquest. Under Arab rule the Armenian monastic institutions gradually disintegrated and fell to ruins; some that had been left without administrators were occupied by the Greeks. This disintegration is ascribed to the failure of the catholicoses and princes to dispatch the revenues from the endowments in Armenia and to the heavy taxes imposed by the Arabs. The last section of the text, which appears to have been a much later addendum, asserts that there remained only fifteen monasteries in the hands of the Armenians. These were scattered on the Mount of Olives, in Bethlehem, on Mount Sinai, along the shores of the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River, on Mount Hermon, and on Mount Tabor.

Although some scholars have questioned the authenticity of this interesting document, no one had fully scrutinized its textual characteristics. In a separate study¹⁴ I have shown that, though probably containing a core of truth going back to an earlier document, in the form in which the text has been preserved there are many elements which clearly indicate that it is not reliable. On the other hand, I have shown in the same study that the Armenians did indeed have important religious institutions in the early Christian centuries, albeit not to the extent claimed by the document attributed to Anastas Vardapet.

The existence of these establishments at an early date is confirmed by the fact that in the mid-fifth century the Armenians

14. *Ibid.*

had established a scriptorium in Jerusalem¹⁵, which also emerged as an important intellectual center, where a significant number of religious and canonical works as well as patristic texts written in Greek, Syriac, and Latin were rendered into Armenian¹⁶. Evidence of a fully organized Armenian religious community there is also furnished by the extant Armenian Lectionary, a translation of the Greek Liturgy — or Christian liturgy in general — as it was performed in the Holy City in the fifth century¹⁷. More importantly, it is substantiated by the remains of mosaic pavements with Armenian inscriptions found on the Mount of Olives and in Jerusalem, as well as by one with a Greek inscription which mentions an Armenian¹⁸. Though scholars are not in complete agreement respecting the exact dates of these mosaic pavements, various suggestions have placed them as early as the fifth and no later than the ninth to tenth centuries¹⁹. These artistic remains provide ample and most reliable evidence for the presence of Armenians in Jerusalem and its environs and for the important religious institutions which they had maintained there from the Byzantine period to the time of Arab rule.

The important role of the Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Places was not confined to the periods of Byzantine and Arab rule.

The emergence of the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia in 1080, and its intimate associations with the Crusaders and the subsequently established Frankish principalities of Edessa, Antioch, and Tripoli and the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, marked a significant turning point in the fortunes of the Armenians in historic Syria. The Frankish-Armenian community of interests, the reli-

15. See NERSES AKINIAN, *Classical Armenian and the Mekhitarist School in Vienna* (in Armenian; Vienna, 1932), pp. 69-70.

16. See A. G. ABRAHAMYAN, *Brief Outline of the History of Armenian Colonies* (in Armenian; 2 vols.; Yerevan, 1964-1967), I, 264, 266-267.

17. Consult A. RENOUX, «Un MS. du lectionnaire arménien de Jérusalem (Cod. Jérus. arm. 121)» in *Le Muséon*, 74 (1961), 361-385, and «Lectionnaires arméniens et commémoration de la sépulture du Christ le Vendredi Saint» in *L'Orient syrien*, vol. 7, no. 4 (1962), 463-476.

18. These mosaic pavements are described in M. AVI-YONAH, «Mosaic Pavements in Palestine» in *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, 2 (1932), 136-181, and 3 (1933), 26-73, nos. (of entries) 117-120, 132.

19. Consult SANJIAN, *Armenian Communities in Syria*, p. 315, note 19; IDEM., «Anastas Vardapet's List...», pp. 288-290.

gious bonds which united them, and finally intermarriage among the Armenian nobility in Cilicia and the ruling classes of the Crusaders — all these contributed to the sizable increase of Armenians in these territories.

With the establishment of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1187), many Christians, mostly Armenians, from Cappadocia, Edessa, Cilicia and northern Syria, flocked into Jerusalem, some to establish permanent residence there and others performing pilgrimages²⁰. As a result of this influx and because of the close relationship between the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem and the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, the Armenian position in the Holy Places, the privately owned Armenian religious institutions and secular community in Jerusalem enjoyed a period of prominence and prosperity, perhaps never attained before or after. Almost all the Latin queens and a substantial number of the princesses were either Armenian or of Armenian blood²¹. The kingdom had in its service an infantry corps of Armenians²². In addition to a sizable number of ecclesiastics, there was a considerable secular community as well. These colonists had a number of hostels, or inns, and they also occupied several quarters in the city, one of which was known as «Ruga Armenorum» as late as the year 1222²³. The *Assises of Jerusalem* show that the Armenians of Jerusalem constituted a major element of its population and that they were engaged in all spheres of economic activity. Moreover, William of Tyre mentions that King Baldwin II had enacted a law granting to the Armenians and other Christians trade privileges, tax exemptions and other incentives to promote their settlement in Jerusalem²⁴. And Queen Melisend had brought many architects from Cilicia to build or restore churches in the Holy City²⁵.

20. SEE SAVALANEANC', *op. cit.*, I, 342.

21. See F. MACLER, *Les Arméniens en Syrie et en Palestine* (Marseille, 1919), pp. 11-12.

22. See JACQUES DE VITRY, *The History of Jerusalem*, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London, 1896), p. 79.

23. See *Palestine of the Crusades, Survey of Palestine* (Dept. of Antiquities), Jerusalem, 1946; also *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, pp. 2344-2346.

24. See *Guillaume de Tyr et ses Continuators*, par Paulin, vol. I (Paris, 1879), Bk. 12, p. 456.

25. See KEVORK HINTLIAN, *History of the Armenians in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1976), p. 23.

With the arrival of the Crusaders and the establishment of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem a far-reaching change took place. As the cleavage between the Franks and the indigenous Christians became more and more pronounced, the Latin element gained *praedominium* (paramountcy) in all the Holy Places at the expense of the other Christian sects, notably the Greek Orthodox, whose patriarch finally retired to Constantinople.

Yet during and after the Latin rule in Palestine, the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem enjoyed, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the active interest of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia whose royal family and princes bestowed on it munificent gifts. Moreover, a number of Armenian princes and prelates from Cilicia visited Jerusalem and secured significant privileges for the local community from the Frankish authorities. Among these, Catholicos Grigor III Pahlawuni (1133-1166) attended the Latin church council held at Antioch in 1141, and then accompanied the papal legate Albericus on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he was given a place of honor at the second Latin council. In consequence of the considerably enhanced bond of friendship between the Latins and the Armenians which was consummated on this occasion, the Armenian community not only secured important privileges guaranteeing the continued prosperity of the institutions which it already possessed, but was able to increase the number of its monasteries and hostels in the Holy City²⁶.

In 1165 the Armenians erected the large monastery and cathedral of St. James on Mount Zion, consisting of a complex of sanctuaries, which became the principal headquarters of the Armenian ecclesiastical institutions in the Holy Land²⁷. The accommodations of the monastery were considerably enlarged for the benefit of the local monastics as well as for the countless Armenian pilgrims who annually arrived in the Holy City. Since the twelfth century the cathedral and its monastery have remained in the possession of the Armenian patriarchate, although the Greeks periodically laid claims to them, especially after the Ottoman conquest of Jerusalem.

26. See H. VINCENT and F. M. ABEL, *Jérusalem; Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, vol. II, pt. 3, *Jérusalem Nouvelle* (Paris, 1922), p. 522.

27. For an authoritative summary history and description of the architecture of the cathedral of St. James, consult *ibid.*, pp. 516-561.

Saladin's occupation of Jerusalem in 1187 and the fall of the Latin kingdom marked another turning point in the fortunes of the various Christian communities. Unlike the Franks, who celebrated their entry into the Holy City a century earlier with a frightful massacre of the Muslims, the Ayyubid conqueror allowed the Christians to leave the city upon payment of the poll tax. He later not only reduced the amount of the ransom but allowed them to depart even though they could not pay the necessary amount²⁸.

Unlike the Latins, the Armenians of Jerusalem, comprising some five hundred monks and one thousand families, were neither expelled nor taken as slaves by the lieutenants of the sultan²⁹. As an avowed enemy of the Latins and ever suspicious of the Greeks, Saladin seems to have found it expedient to endow the Armenians of the Holy Land with greater privileges, as attested by the extant charter that he granted to them. The Armenian Patriarch Abraham and his leading clerical associates are said to have hastened to pledge their loyalty to the victorious Saladin and to pay him the prescribed poll tax. The patriarch requested the sultan to reaffirm all privileges previously guaranteed to the community in the charters allegedly granted to the Armenians by the Prophet and by the Caliphs Umar and Ali³⁰.

The text of the charter³¹ issued by Saladin — which has all the earmarks of being authentic — reconfirmed the «sacred and benevolent acts» of his revered predecessors. The sultan enjoined that not only his successors but also the Muslims generally should faithfully honor the pact granted by him. He guaranteed absolute religious freedom to the Armenians and their monophysite dependents, as well as the integrity of their possessions and prerogatives in the Holy Places and other privately owned institutions and sanctuaries, which are mentioned by name. These included the monasteries of St. James, the Holy Archangels, the Holy Saviour, the Holy Sepulcher, Golgotha, and also their churches at Bethlehem and Nablus. The sultan's protection

28. See IBN KHALDUN, *Kitab al-I'bar wa-Diwan al-Mubtada w-al-Khabar* (Cairo, 1284 A.H.), V, 311.

29. See TER-HOVHANNESIAN, *op. cit.*, I, 154.

30. See details *ibid.*, I, 152-159, and in SAVALANEAN, *op. cit.*, I, 403-408.

31. Armenian translations of this charter will be found in SAVALANEAN, *op. cit.*, I, 409-413; and TER-HOVHANNESIAN, *op. cit.*, I, 160-163.

of the Armenians and their possessions was not limited to the Holy City and its environs, but extended throughout his entire domains. Saladin proclaimed that none of their sanctuaries and places of worship should be destroyed; on the contrary, should the Armenians and their followers suffer difficulties or should Armenian churches need restoring the Muslims were to assist them. It was made amply clear, however, that this injunction in no way meant that the Muslims supported Christianity; rather, all assistance was to be an expression of pity and mercy, and in deference to the pact granted the Armenians by the Prophet. In the contingency of war, the Armenians were to be exempted from additional taxation. In conclusion, Saladin affirmed that all Muslim believers should, on pain of divine punishment and the Prophet's anathema, always faithfully honor the charter.

In addition to permitting the Armenians and their monophysite communities complete religious freedom, Saladin is said to have acceded to the pleas of the Armenian patriarch to refrain from converting the cathedral of the Holy Sepulcher into a public domain. It is also claimed that he sold this cathedral to the Armenians³². This can be explained by the fact that prior to the Latin occupation of Jerusalem a large portion of this sanctuary had belonged to the Armenian church.

Whereas the Armenians had secured the integrity of their privileges and possessions in the Holy City and elsewhere, the Christian inter-community struggles for paramountcy in the Holy Places continued unabated. The Latin-Greek Orthodox rivalry for control of the dominical sanctuaries began as early as 1188, when the Byzantine Emperor Isaac Angelus allied himself with Saladin to secure the privilege. Nevertheless, for a century or so, even after the fall of Jerusalem, Latin supremacy was maintained. As attested by the treaties made with the Muslims, the Crusaders sought to secure the position of the Latins exclusively and barely tolerated the performance of other rites in the Holy Places. The Franciscan order, established in Jerusalem in 1230, was the official representative of Roman

32. See M. CARLO GURMANI, *Question sur la propriété de St. Jacques à Jérusalem* (Jerusalem, 1867), pp. 23-24. The author reproduces the following quotation from the *Annales de l'Abbaye d'Anchin*: «Armeni Christiani, magno dato censi pretio Sepulchrum dominicum sua ecclesia et domini Templum a Saladino redemerunt».

Catholicism in the Holy Places. With the fall of Acre in 1291, however, undisputed Latin supremacy came to an end. The ever deepening estrangement between Rome and the church of Byzantium, and particularly the sacking and plunder of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204, accentuated the rivalry between the two parties in Jerusalem, which henceforth became their battlefield³³.

The Mamluks' occupation of Palestine and Syria, and their periodic invasions of Cilicia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, had the most adverse effects upon the large Armenian settlements in Greater Syria as well as in the Cilician kingdom and the Holy Land.

In Syria itself, the prominent position which the Armenians occupied under the Latins was dealt a severe blow under the Mamluks. It may be assumed that many of the captives and slaves from Cilicia and northern Syria were gradually assimilated with the Muslim populations in the Mamluk dominion to escape the anti-Christian discriminatory restrictions and burdensome taxation. It is not unlikely that a substantial segment of the Armenians inhabiting the Levantine coast took refuge in the Lebanese mountains and eventually were assimilated with the Maronite community. It seems equally probable that others joined with the Latins who returned to Europe, particularly to the Italian cities. And, finally, the drought, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes that punctuated almost the entire Mamluk era and reduced the population of Syria and Egypt to about one-third of its former size³⁴, must have taken a heavy toll of the Armenian communities in the Levant. In consequence, the once prosperous and multitudinous Armenian population was appreciably diminished. Whereas under the Latins members of this ethnic group were found almost everywhere from the Taurus Mountains to Egypt, under the Mamluks they were represented by small enclaves in Cilicia, in northwestern Syria³⁵, Aleppo, Latakia, Damascus, Mount Lebanon, and in the Palestinian towns

33. See CUST, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

34. See PHILIP K. HITT, *History of Syria* (London, 1957), p. 638.

35. For specific references to historic and modern Armenian settlements in northwestern Syria, see PAUL JACQUOT, *Antioche* (3 vols.; Beirut, 1931).

of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jaffa, Ramle, Gaza, and so forth³⁶. This state of affairs continued until the Ottoman conquest of historic Syria in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The records involving the control of the Holy Places and inter-community rivalries and disputes are much more abundant beginning with the dominion of the Mamluk sultans of Egypt. Under Mamluk rule the seemingly loyal and trustworthy Armenians, and their monophysite communicants enjoyed relatively greater freedom in the exercise of their religious rites. The special privileges granted to them enabled not only the preservation but also the extension of their sanctuaries, monasteries, and other possessions, after due payment, of course, of regular taxes and bribes³⁷. In the first half of the thirteenth century, in particular, the Armenians succeeded in restoring their long-neglected sanctuaries and institutions and were able to construct new edifices. These were made possible through the generous contributions of Armenian pilgrims, who came to the Holy Land in ever increasing numbers, and through the munificence of the Armenian kings and royalty of Cilicia.

The Mamluk administration of the Holy Land, however, did not always exhibit a spirit of tolerance towards the Armenians and other Christians. Tax collectors constantly harassed and coerced the monasteries demanding lawful and illegitimate levies. Ecclesiastical edifices lost their splendor because permits for construction and restoration could not be obtained³⁸.

As an example of the predicament which had befallen the Armenians mention might be made of the difficulties encountered by the *vardapet* Karapet of Tosp, who visited Jerusalem on a pilgrimage towards the end of the thirteenth century. In the colophon of an Armenian manuscript he refers to the Armenian monastery of the Holy Saviour on Mount Zion which had been confiscated by the local Muslims and converted into stables. Karapet recovered the monastery by paying 4,000 piasters; he made three journeys to Egypt to obtain a permit from the sultan for its restoration, and two trips to Cilicia, presumably to secure

36. For the communities in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, consult SANJIAN, *Armenian Communities in Syria*, Index.

37. See SAVALANEANC', *op. cit.*, I, 462, 542.

38. See *ibid.*, p. 514-515; also TER-HOVHANNESSEANC', *op. cit.*, I, 207.

funds for the purpose³⁹. In 1353 the same monastery, which had been destroyed by invasions and brigandage, was restored by the patriarchate. Yet the local Muslims, who had objected to the construction, managed to obtain an edict from the sultan of Egypt rescinding the permit, and the victorious multitudes demolished the monastery⁴⁰.

Under the Mamluks the Armenians also suffered encroachments at the hands of the other Christian communities, notably the Georgians. In 1312, for instance, the king of Georgia sent an emissary to Sultan Malik Yusuf of Egypt, requesting that the Armenian monastery of St. James at Jerusalem be turned over to the Georgian community. The Armenian Patriarch Sargis hastened to Cairo armed with charters substantiating the Armenian ownership of the monastery. He obtained an edict reconfirming their ownership⁴¹. Seven years later, however, the Georgians and Latins jointly appealed to the Sultan Malik Zahr Barquq claiming from the Armenians not only the monastery of St. James but also the chapel of Golgotha in the Holy Sepulcher. Once again the Armenians sent a delegation to Cairo and succeeded in thwarting the projected usurpation. The text of the decree certifying their sole possession of these sanctuaries⁴² indicates that another envoy had arrived from Georgia to pursue the Georgian objectives. Documents preserved in the archives of the Armenian patriarchate substantiate the fact that a similar attempt by the Georgians to seize the monastery in 1512 had also failed⁴³.

Whereas the Armenians successfully withstood all Georgian attempts to annex their monastery of St. James, their endeavors to protect the church of Golgotha proved less successful. According to the available evidence, the Georgian efforts to obtain Golgotha began as early as the 1330's. Upon the protests of the Armenians Sultan Malik Muhammed issued an edict in 1334 enjoining the local Muslim officials to observe the status quo⁴⁴.

39. See text of the colophon of MS. No. 540 of the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem in NORAYR BOZARIAN, *Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts* (in Armenian), vol. II (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 560.

40. See details in TER-HOVHANNESIAN, *op. cit.*, I, 209-210.

41. See *ibid.*, I, 202-203.

42. See *ibid.*, I, 204-205.

43. See *ibid.*, I, 231-233, 241-246.

44. See text of the edict *ibid.*, I, 206.

About a century later, however, the Georgian King Ivané took advantage of the visit to his country of an Egyptian merchant, Gha'ibi, who was known to be influential in the counsels of the sultan of Egypt. He showered Gha'ibi with gifts and bribes, and promised the sultan an annual supply of expensive gifts, servants, and concubines; exemption of Muslim nationals from taxation in Georgian territories; and a treaty professing Georgian-Egyptian friendship — on condition of course that the sultan would transfer the ownership of Golgotha to the Georgians. These enticing offers induced the sultan to accede to his wishes. Learning of this the Armenian Patriarch Martiros immediately left for Egypt in 1424 and recovered the sanctuary after much difficulty. Before a year had elapsed, Ivané succeeded, through the same means, in regaining possession of it; and once again Martiros journeyed to Cairo, and after expending much money in bribes recovered it for the second time. A year later Ivané's gifts and bribes, again induced the sultan to grant the sanctuary to the Georgians. When Martiros went to Egypt for the third time, he was told by some high-ranking Egyptian officials that he could in no way match the Georgian king's material inducements. It became amply evident to the patriarch that the sultan was using the sanctuary as a pawn to enrich his coffers at the expense of both parties. And as the financial resources of the Armenian patriarchate were almost completely depleted he lost all hope of retrieving the revered sanctuary. At the suggestion of the sultan, therefore, the patriarch acquired in its stead the Triforium of the Holy Sepulcher, which was converted into a church in 1439 and named the Second Golgotha⁴⁵. The victory of the Georgians did not last long, however, for soon after the fall of their kingdom in 1440 their monasteries and sanctuaries in the Holy City, including Golgotha, came under the control of their Greek co-religionists⁴⁶.

As we have seen, long before the advent of the Ottomans in the Holy Land, the Greeks, Latins, and Armenians had emerged

45. The details of this episode will be found in HANNÉ, *History of the Holy and Great City of God, Jerusalem, and of the Holy Dominical Places* (in Armenian; 3rd printing; Constantinople, 1782), pp. 200-203; SAVALANEAN, *op. cit.*, I, 533-535; TER-HOVHANNESIAN, *op. cit.*, I, 222-229.

46. MAŁAK'IA ORMANIAN, *Azgapatum* (in Armenian; 3 vols.; Constantinople-Jerusalem, 1912-1927), vol. II, col. 1506, and vol. III, col. 2454.

as the principal custodians of the Holy Places, with the monophysite Copts, Syrians, and Abyssinians possessing minor privileges in the sites owned exclusively by the Armenians.

Under four centuries of Ottoman dominion, the strongest and almost continuous challenge to the Armenians and their holdings in the Holy Land came from the Greek community, despite the fact that the charters issued in March 1517 to the Armenian and Greek patriarchs by the Ottoman conqueror of Jerusalem, Sultan Selim I, did no more than sanction the status quo.

The charter granted to the Armenian Patriarch Sargis⁴⁷ indicates the allegiance which the Armenian congregation of Jerusalem immediately expressed to the Ottoman sultan. On the basis of ancient edicts, among which special mention is made of those granted by the Caliph Umar I and Saladin, Selim guaranteed the integrity of the Armenians' age-old possessions within and without the Holy City, as well as those of their dependent monophysite communities. The charter makes specific mention of certain, presumably major, institutions and sanctuaries owned exclusively by the Armenians, such as the monastery of St. James, the churches and monasteries of the Holy Archangel and the Holy Saviour, the church of St. John in the forecourt of the Holy Sepulcher, a church at Nablus, and other unspecified monasteries, hostels, dwellings, cemeteries, orchards, and olive groves in and near Bethlehem. Among the principal Christian shrines, the Holy Sepulcher, the church of St. Mary at Gethsemane, and the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem are all considered Armenian possessions. Finally, the charter prohibits members of the imperial family, government ministers and officials, and others (presumably the Christian communities) from disturbing the ecclesiastical rites of the Armenians and their dependents or molesting their monasteries, sanctuaries, and other possessions.

On the other hand, the charter which Selim I granted at the same time to the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem⁴⁸ also secured the integrity of the Greek monasteries, churches, and other pro-

47. The Turkish-language Armenian-script text appears in SAVALANEANC', *op. cit.*, II, 880-889; a classical Armenian translation of same will be found in TER-HOVHANNESIANC', *op. cit.*, II, 222-229.

48. *Ibid.*

perties within and without the Holy City⁴⁹. The edict also proclaimed the primacy of the Greek patriarch among the ecclesiastical leaders of the Holy City, a position which the Greek incumbents always sought to assert under Ottoman dominion. The charter guaranteed to the Greek community fifteen private monasteries and churches the limits of Jerusalem within, among them the «Georgian monastery of St. James» in the forecourt of the cathedral of the Holy Sepulcher, which should not be confused with the Armenian monastery of St. James on Mount Zion. Among the Greek holdings outside of the city the charter mentions a church on Mount Zion and «Christ's Prison» (which in later times they unsuccessfully sought to identify with the Armenian monastery of the Holy Saviour); the Georgian monastery of the Holy Cross and St. Elijah; the church of St. George in the village of Bayt-Jala; and unspecified monasteries, churches, olive groves, and cemeteries in other villages. Of the principal Christian sanctuaries it specifically mentions as Greek possessions the four upper and lower arches in Golgotha, the Holy Sepulcher, and the large central church opposite the Tomb of Christ; the Sepulcher of St. Mary at Gethsemane; and the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem.

In view of the fact that both charters list the Sepulchers of Christ and St. Mary and the Grotto of the Nativity it must be assumed that the privileges to these sanctuaries were actually shared by the two communities. Neither charter defines these privileges or alludes to joint ownership, but no other explanation can be found for the specific references to the sanctuaries in both documents. The particular sanctuaries in the Holy Sepulcher which are designated as Greek possessions but which do not appear in the Armenian charter were undoubtedly held exclusively by the Greek church.

The significance of these two charters rests on the fact that they not only represented the first such imperial edicts issued by

49. Along with the Georgians and Serbians, the charter also mentions the Abyssinians as dependents of the Greek patriarchate. This discrepancy is not easy to explain, unless it is a later addition, since the Armenian charter just summarized, as well as numerous other edicts preserved in the archives of the monastery of St. James, attest to the inclusion of the Abyssinians among the monophysite churches which have always enjoyed the protection of the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem.

the Ottoman sultans to the two communities, but also constituted the juridical bases of the communities' status and holdings in the Holy Land. Time and again these charters figured prominently in the inter-community controversies which followed the Ottoman conquest.

From the second half of the sixteenth century until the nineteenth century time and again the paramountcy in the Holy Places alternated, although generally the Greek Orthodox secured the balance of power in their favor. Since the Latins were subjects of powers with whom the Ottoman empire was constantly engaged in war, the sultan's Greek and Armenian subjects in particular were treated with favor at the expense of the «Franks». During these centuries the possession of the Holy Places almost always remained in the forefront of international politics⁵⁰. The European powers, especially France, supported Latin interests; the Orthodox cause was championed by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and, beginning in 1774, by Russia. The Armenians, deprived of such political protection, had to rely on their own resources, particularly their patriarchate and influential secular magnates in the Ottoman capital. The Porte generally was inclined to defend its subject communities from Latin encroachments in the Holy Places, but the Catholics nonetheless could, through monetary inducements, secure concessions. During this period of international contention the smaller Christian communities in the Holy City, such as the Georgians and Serbians, either lost much of their holdings or dropped out altogether, because they were unable to bear the exactions of the Turkish government which was intent on making the utmost out of the dissensions and rivalries of the Christians.

In 1847 the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem, which had been dormant since the fall of the Latin kingdom, was revived under the aegis of France, and assumed direction of all Roman Catholic interests in the Holy Land. This development coincided with the intensification of Latin attempts to gain predominance in the Holy Places, particularly at the expense of the Greek Orthodox, with the aid of the Catholic powers. The Treaty of Paris of

50. See W. FITZGERALD, «The Holy Places of Palestine in History and Politics» in *International Affairs*, 26 (1950), 1-10.

1856⁵¹, concluded after the Crimean War, left the position of the contesting communities in the Holy Places as it was. The sultan guaranteed the protection of his subject Christian communities and freedom from discrimination on account of race or religion. It was understood that this guarantee did not permit any of the signatory powers to interfere with the sultan's relations with his subjects. And Russia gave up her claim to be the lawful protector of the Christians in the Ottoman empire. Ownership of and rights in the Holy Places remained unchanged. Realizing that the intricate questions affecting these sanctuaries could not be left to the jurisdiction of local officials at Jerusalem, the sultan declared that all matters relating to the Holy Places were to be referred to the Sublime Porte itself⁵².

Despite this, controversies among the three major custodians of the Holy Places continued during the remaining period of Ottoman dominion, but the official policy respecting the maintenance of the status quo prevented, in the main, the aggrandizement of any one rite at the expense of the others. What privileges and possessions each community had at the conclusion of the Crimean War they continued to enjoy up to the fall of the empire and during the British mandatory administration in Palestine. Indeed, the status quo in the Holy Places still governs the relations of the principal custodians.

As L. G. A. Cust rightly said:

«The history of the Holy Places is one long story of bitter animosities and contentions, in which outside influences take part in an increasing degree, until the scenes of Our Lord's life on earth become a political shuttlecock, and eventually the cause of international conflict. If the Holy Places and the rights pertaining thereto are an "expression of man's feelings about Him whose story hallowed these sites", they are also an index of the corruptions and intrigues of despots and chancellories during eight hundred years. The logical results have been the spirit of distrust and suspicion, and the attitude of intractability in all matters, even if only of the most trivial importance, concerning the Holy Places»⁵³.

51. See text in J. C. HUREWITZ, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record, 1535-1914* (Princeton, N.J., 1956), pp. 153-156 (see Article IX).

52. See CUST, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

During the four centuries of Ottoman dominion the rivalry and interminable struggles among the major guardians for aggrandizement at the expense of each other were marked by an almost fanatical zeal and frequently were attended by violence. The community disputes invariably involved the local and central authorities, who were called upon to adjudicate between contending Christians. The role which the Ottomans played in these cases was sometimes motivated by considerations of justice, law, and order. More often than not, however, the Ottomans played one community against the other. Quite frequently they were influenced by factors extraneous to the merit of the issues, chiefly the possibility of financial gain and the requirements of international diplomacy.

The status quo in the Holy Places as enunciated in the 1850's and as reconfirmed time and again in subsequent years was the sum of a historical evolution whose beginnings are traceable to the early centuries of Christianity, and as a result it established a most complicated network of rights and privileges. This was made more problematical by the difficulty of defining and regulating possessory rights, the doubtful validity of earlier contradictory edicts⁵⁴, and the mutual distrust, suspicion, and jealousy of the rival communities. Yet the Ottoman government was able to maintain the status quo, and no appreciable change in the holdings and privileges occurred after 1850.

From the standpoint of political protection and material resources, the Armenian community was, of course, considerably weaker than the much more powerful Latin and Greek rites. As head of the monastic congregation of St. James and as chief custodian, the primary function of the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem was to safeguard not only the private institutions of his relatively small community but also its age-old privileges in the commonly held sanctuaries. In this most difficult task the patriarch relied upon the moral and material support of the local monastics and secular community, the other hierarchical sees of the Armenian church, pilgrims, and the Armenian people as a whole.

54. For an interesting study of the legal questions involving the custodianship of the dominical sanctuaries in the Holy Land, consult B. COLLIN, *Le Problème juridique des Lieux Saints* (Cairo, 1956).

The frequent economic insolvency of the Armenian patriarchate stemmed largely from external rather than internal factors, primarily from the financial policy of the Ottoman state. At the root of this policy was the system of tax farming, which by its very nature encouraged corruption. Officials, whether on the central, provincial, or local level, aimed principally at deriving, through all the means at their command, the maximum amount of revenues from the institutions and inhabitants under their jurisdiction. Insofar as the Holy Land was concerned, the Christian ecclesiastical institutions constituted, if not the principal, at least one of the most important sources of revenue for these functionaries. They exploited these institutions not only by encouraging their intercommunity rivalries but quite frequently by precipitating crises with a view to securing bribes and gifts. The tax farmers seldom displayed qualms about the use of coercive measures in pursuit of their extortionary objectives, since they could flout even the imperial injunctions with impunity. What encouraged the central and local functionaries to persist in these practices was their conviction that the devout magnates and pilgrims of the Christian communities in the empire, and even beyond, would always continue generous contributions in support of the dominical sanctuaries and religious establishments in the Holy Land. Indeed, these Christian institutions expended enormous sums of money to guarantee their privileges and possessions, which they virtually purchased time and again from avaricious officials. It is remarkable that in spite of the prevailing political maladministration and widespread corruption these institutions were ever able to survive.

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Յ. Գ. Դ. դարեն մինչև այսօր, Հայ Եկեղեցին, իբրև տէրունական սրբատեղիներու իրաւատէրէն մին, կարեւոր դերը մը գրաւած է Երուսաղէմի եւ Բեթ-ղեհէմի մէջ, համահաւասար Յոյն Օրթոտոքս եւ Լատին եկեղեցիներուն: Այս ուսումնասիրութեան նպատակն է ուրուագծել սոյն կարեւոր հանգամանքին պատմական հոլովոյթը, հիմնուելով Ս. Քաղաքը գրաւող զանազան իշխանապետերուն կողմէ Երուսաղէմի Հայոց Պատրիարքութեան տրուած Հրովարտականքուն վրայ:

Դ. դարու առաջին կէսին Երուսաղէմի եւ Բեթղեհէմի տէրունական սրբավայրերուն վրայ կառուցուած եկեղեցիները խթան կը հանդիսանան ամենազգի բազմաթիւ ուխտաւորներուն՝ այցելելու Քրիստոսի կեանքով նուիրագործուած սրբատեղիները: Սկզբնական շրջանին, այս սրբավայրերը կը պատկանէին Տիեզերական Եկեղեցիին ու վրոնական պաշտամունքները կը կատարուէին անխտիր՝ զանազան ազգութիւններուն պատկանող կրօնաւորներուն համահաւասար մասնակցութեամբ: Ժամանակի ընթացքին, սակայն, կը կառուցուին նաեւ առանձին ազգային կրօնական հաստատութիւններ: Հայաստանի մէջ քրիստոնէութիւնը պետական կրօնը հռչակուելէ ետք, բազմաթիւ Հայեր եւս կու գան Երուսաղէմ, իբրև ուխտաւոր կամ մշաւունք քնակել, եւ շատեր կը միանան բազմազգի վանական հաստատութիւններուն: Ինչպէս ուրիշներ, ժամանակ մը վերջ՝ Հայերն ալ Ս. Երկրին մէջ կը հաստատեն իրենց սեփական վանքերն ու եկեղեցիները:

Չ. դարուն, այսինքն՝ Գաղիէի Տիեզերական Ժողովի դոմարումէն դար մը վերջ, Բիւզանդական պետական եւ վրոնական իշխանութիւններուն միաբաններու դէմ շղթայազերծած հալածանքը՝ պատճառ կը դառնայ Երուսաղէմի քրիստոնէայ համայնքներուն խաղաղ գոյակիմակին խախտումին, որով Ս. Երկրին հայ վրոնաւորները կը հարկադրուին իրենց կապերը խզել Երուսաղէմի կրօնական նուիրապետութենէն: Բազմաթիւ միաբանայ կրօնաւորներ, ասոնց կարգին նաեւ Հայերը, կը լքեն Երուսաղէմի մէջ գտնուող իրենց վանքերը եւ վաւապատանին Ս. Երկրի ուրիշ շրջաններու եւ կամ հարեան երկիրներու մէջ: Այնուհետեւ, Երուսաղէմի նուիրապետական Աթոռը մը բաժնուի երկուքի, Յունաց Պատրիարքութիւնը իշխանութիւն վայելելով բոլոր երկարանայ քրիստոնէաներուն վրայ, եւ Հայոց անկախ եպիսկոպոսական Աթոռը ատանանքով միաբանայ համայնքներու՝ ներառեալ Ասորի, Ղպտի եւ Հապէշ համայնքները՝ վերատեսչութեան իրաւասութիւնը:

Այս էր կացութիւնը, երբ 638 թուականին Աբաբ Նալիֆա Օմար Ա. կը գրաւէ Երուսաղէմը: Բանատրական հետադարձութիւնները հաստատուած են՝ թէ յիշեալ Նալիֆային Յունաց Սովորոնիոս Պատրիարքին տուած Հրովարտականքը, ըստ որում Երուսաղէմի բոլոր սրբատեղիները սեփականութիւնը կը դառնային միայն Յունաց Եկեղեցիին, վանքական չէ: Նոյնպէս անվաւերական են այն Հրովարտականքը, որոնք վճռուի թէ տրուած ըլլան Հայոց Պատրիարքին՝ Մուհամմէտ Մարգարէի եւ Օմար ու Ալի խալիֆաներու կողմէ, որոնց համաձայն՝ հայ եւ միւս միաբանայ համայնքներուն սրբատեղիներուն մէջ՝ Պատրիարքին վայելած իրաւունքները եւ այդ վանքներուն ու եկեղեցիներուն սեփականատիրութիւնը իրաւապէս կը հաստատուէին:

Ստորջ է, սակայն, թէ Ս. Երկրին Արաքներու կողմէ գրաւումով՝ Երուսաղէմի Հայոց պատրիարքական Աթոռը կը գրաւէ Յունաց Պատրիարքութեան հետ

գրեթէ համահաւասար դերը մը: Հայ Եկեղեցին կը պահպանէ միւսնոյն ատեն Ս. Երկրին զանազան վայրերուն մէջ իր ունեցած սեփական կրօնական հաստատութիւնները: Սակայն, Յոյն Եկեղեցիին անդադրում բռնութիւնները եւ արար իշխանութիւններուն պարտադրած ծանր տուրքերը պատճառ կը հանդիսանան, որ Հայերը կորսնցնեն իրենց սեփական կրօնական հաստատութիւններէն շատերը, ինչպէս նաեւ հասարակաց սրբատեղիներուն մէջ իրենց վայելած իրաւասութիւններուն մէկ կարեւոր մասը: Այսուհանդերձ, Հայոց Եկեղեցին չի դադարի Ս. Քաղաքի կրօնական վեանքին մէջ կարեւոր դերը մը գրաւելէ:

Կիլիկիոյ մէջ հայկական Թագաւորութեան հաստատումը եւ անոր անբաժարելիութիւնները Եգիպտոս, Անտիոքի ու Տրիպոլիոյ խաչակիր իշխանութիւններուն եւ մանաւանդ Երուսաղէմի իշխակրաց Թագաւորութեան հետ՝ անկիւնադարձային նշանակութիւն մը կ'ունենան այս շրջաններուն մէջ գտնուող ստուարաթիւ հայկական գաղթավայրերուն ճակատագրին վրայ, անմախքեթաց բարձրաւանգ մը նշանակելով: Թէեւ Լատին Եկեղեցին գերակշիռ դերը մը կ'ապահովէ սրբատեղիներուն մէջ, Երուսաղէմի Հայոց Պատրիարքութիւնը մը շարունակէ վայելել Կիլիկիոյ հայկական Թագաւորութեան հովանաւորութիւնը եւ նիւթական օժանդակութիւնը, յատկապէս ԺԲ. եւ ԺԳ. դարերուն: 1165 թուականին կը կառուցուի Ս. Յակոբեանց Տաճարը եւ վանքը:

1187 թուականին, Սուլթան Սալահատինի վողմէ Երուսաղէմի գրաւումէն ետք, Լատինները կ'աժ Ս. Քաղաքէն կը վտարուին եւ կամ իբրեւ գերի մը տրուին Սուլթանին զօրավարներուն: Նոյն բախտին չեն անթարկուի Երուսաղէմ բնակող շուրջ 500 հայ կրօնաւորներն ու 1000 հայ ընտանիքները: Ընդհակառակն, Աբրահամ Պատրիարք Սալահատինէն կը ստանայ Հրովարտականք մը, որով կը հաստատուին սրբատեղիներուն մէջ Հայոց վայելած իրաւունքները եւ ազգապատկան եկեղեցական հաստատութիւններու սեփականատիրութիւնը: Այս Հրովարտականքը՝ որուն վաւերականութիւնը վասկածելի չի թուի ՄԱԿ՝ իբրեւ Հայոց սեփականութիւն մը յիշուին ո՛չ միայն Ս. Յակոբեանց, եւ ուրիշ եկեղեցիներ Բեթղեհէմի եւ Նապլուսի մէջ: Փրկչի վանքերը, Գողգոթան, եւ ուրիշ եկեղեցիներ Բեթղեհէմի եւ Նապլուսի մէջ:

Եգիպտոսի տիրող Մամլուքներու կողմէ Պաղեստինի եւ Սուրիոյ գրաւումը, ինչպէս նաեւ ԺԳ.-ԺԷ. դարերուն անոնց Կիլիկիոյ Թագաւորութեան դէմ պարբերական յարձակումները՝ շատ աննպաստ կացութիւն մը կը ստեղծեն պատմական Սիւրիոյ, Կիլիկիոյ եւ Ս. Երկրի հայկական գաղութներուն համար, որոնք, զանազան պատճառներով, հետզհետէ կը նօսրանան: Եւ այս կացութիւնը կը յարստանէ մինչեւ Օսմանցիներու կողմէ Սիւրիոյ, Պաղեստինի եւ Եգիպտոսի գրաւումը՝ 1516-1517 թուականներուն:

Չորս հարիւր տարուան օսմանան տիրապետութեան շրջանին, հայկական իրաւունքներուն եւ սեփական կալուածներուն սպառնացող մեծագոյն եւ գրեթէ տեւական ոտնձգութիւնները եկած են Յոյն Օրթոտոքս համայնքին կողմէ: Եւ ասիկա՝ հակառակ անոր, որ 1517 թուականին Սուլթան Սէլիմ Ա.ի կողմէ Յոյն եւ Հայ Պատրիարքութիւններուն տրուած Հրովարտականքը վերահաստատուած էին՝ իւրաքանչիւր Եկեղեցիին արդէն վայելած իրաւունքները ու սեփականութիւններուն անձեռնմխելիութիւնը:

Սարգիս Պատրիարքին տրուած Հրովարտականքը, մասնաւորապէս, կը յիշատակէ Օմար Նալիֆայի եւ Սուլթան Սալահատինի Հրովարտականքը, որ, մը ի հաստատութեան Հայոց դարաւոր իրաւունքներուն եւ վաւերանքներուն անձեռնմխելիութիւնը: Իբրեւ Հայոց սեփականութիւն կը յիշուին Երուսաղէմի Ս. Յակոբեանց, Ս. Հրեշտակապետաց եւ Ս. Փրկչի վանքերը, Նապլուսի մէջ եկեղեցի մը, ինչպէս նաեւ ուրիշ վանքեր, իշխանատուներ, բնակելի վայրեր, գերեզմանատուներ եւ այլններ՝ Բեթղեհէմի եւ շրջակայի մէջ: Իբրեւ հայապատկան սրբատեղիներ կը յիշատակուին

նաև Ս. Յարության Տաճարը, Գեթսեմանի Ս. Աստուածածին եկեղեցին եւ Բեթ-ղեսէմի Ս. Ծննդեան եկեղեցին: Նկատի առած՝ որ այս սրբատեղիները իրենւ յունական սեփականութիւն կը յիշուին Յունաց Պատրիարքին տրուած հրովարտա-կին մէջ եւս, ուրեմն, պէտք է հետեւցնել՝ թէ Յոյներ եւ Հայեր համահաւասար իրաւունքներ վայելած են այս սրբավայրերուն մէջ:

1847ին Երուսաղէմի մէջ վերահաստատուած Լատին Պատրիարքութիւնը կը ստանձնէ Ս. Երկրի Կաթողիկէ հաստատութիւններու շահերուն պաշտպանութիւնը, որ կը զուգարկի Լատին եկեղեցւոյ ճիշդերուն՝ սրբատեղեաց մէջ դերիւնսան դիրք ապահովելու, յատկապէս Յոյներու դիրքը տկարացնել ջանալով: Սակայն, խրիմի պատերազմէն ետք՝ 1856ին ստորագրուած Փարիզի Դաշնագիրը պարզապէս կը վե-րահաստատէ statu quo-ն, այսինքն՝ իւրաքանչիւր համայնքի նախօրօք վայելած իրաւասութիւնները:

Հակառակ ասոր, Յոյն, Լատին եւ Հայ եկեղեցիներու միջեւ դարաւոր մրցակ-ցութիւնն ու պայքարը կը շարունակուին մինչեւ օսմանեան տիրապետութեան վախ-ճանը. սակայն statu quo-ն պահպանելու պետական քաղաքականութիւնը թոյլ չի տար, որ այս համայնքներէն ո'րեւէ մէկը յաջողի իր իրաւունքները ընդարձակել՝ ի վնաս միւսներուն: Այս կացութիւնը տիրած է ո'չ միայն մինչեւ 1918 թուականը, այլ նաև Պաղեստինի Բրիտանական Հոգատարութեան ժամանակաշրջանին, եւ վը շարունակուի մինչեւ այսօր:

Յատկապէս օսմանեան տիրապետութեան շրջանին, թէ՛ Երուսաղէմի տեղական եւ թէ՛ Պոլսոյ կեդրոնական իշխանութիւնները յաճախ կը հարկադրուէին իրաւա-րարի դեր կատարել քրիստոնեայ հակամարտ համայնքներուն միջեւ: Այսպիսի պա-րագաներուն, անոնք երբեմն առաջնորդուած են արդարութիւնը եւ օրէնքը յարգել տալու նպատակէն: Աւելի յաճախ, սակայն, այդ իշխանութիւնները քրիստոնեայ համայնքները իրարու դէմ կը հակադրէին՝ նիւթական շահեր ասպնջովելու նկա-տումներով, իսկ երբեմն ալ որոշումներու կը յանդէին՝ միջազգային դիւանագի-տական պահանջներէն թելադրուած:

Երուսաղէմի Պատրիարքութեան տնտեսական վիճակին յաճախակի քայքայումը՝ աւելի արդիւնք էր արտաքին՝ քան ներքին ազդակներու, մասնաւորաբար օսմանեան տէրութեան ելեւմտային քաղաքականութեան, որուն հիմը կը կազմէր հարկահաւա-քումի իրաւունքի վաճառման դրութիւնը, որ՝ իր բնոյթով՝ կը քաջալերէր վաշա-ռակերութիւնը եւ շարաշահութիւնը: Օսմանեան կեդրոնական, նահանգային եւ տե-ղական պաշտօնատարներ զլիսաւորաբար շահագրգռուած էին՝ իրենց ենթակայ հաս-տատութիւններէն եւ բնակչութենէն առաւելագոյն եկամուտը կորզելու հարցով: Ինչ կը վերաբերի Ս. Երկրին, այս պաշտօնատարներուն համար քրիստոնեայ կրօ-նական հաստատութիւնները կը ներկայացնէին, ինչ որ զլիսաւոր՝ դէթ ամէնէն վա-րեւոր եկամուտի աղբիւրներէն մէկն: Անոնք այս հաստատութիւնները շահատակու-թեան կ'ենթարկէին ո'չ միայն միջեկեղեցական հակամարտութիւնները քաջալերե-լով, այլ նոյնիսկ տաղնապներ կը ստեղծէին եւ բռնական միջոցներու կը դիմէին՝ իրենց հարստահարական նպատակներուն դոհացում տալու համար, որովհետեւ դի-տէին՝ թէ անպատիժ պիտի մնային կայսերական հրահանգներուն չանսալու պա-րագային եւ թէ ջերմեանդ մեծատուններ եւ ուխտաւորներ, կայսրութեան տարածքին եւ այլուր, պիտի չզլանային առատաձեռն նուիրաբերումներ ընել՝ ի պաշտպանութիւն սրբատեղիներուն: Յիրաւի, այս քրիստոնեայ հաստատութիւննե-րը, ներառեալ Հայերը, հակայական դոմարներ տրամադրած են պահպանելու հա-մար իրենց իրաւունքներն ու կալուածները, զոր կրկին ու կրկին «զնած» են: Զար-մանալի չէ՞ որ, հակառակ տիրող վարչական մեքենային բոլոր թերութիւններուն եւ համատարած կաշառակերութեան, այս հաստատութիւնները յաջողած են իրենց դոյութիւնը պահպանել:

SOME COMMENTS

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE GEORGIAN ALPHABET

Two recent books dealing with Georgian art (Neubauer 1980, Alpayo-Novello 1980) have mentioned, albeit in passing, the Georgian alphabet and, especially, its origin. Edith Neubauer, a professor of art history at the University of Leipzig and an active scholar in both Georgian and Armenian art has said, in her recent book on Georgian architecture (1980, 12), that «das georgische Alphabet und die Schriftsprache haben ihren Ursprung in vorchristlicher Zeit». This is, indeed, a statement hard to support firmly, yet an idea the spirit for which is found abundantly among the Georgians. It reflects their apparent nationalistic need to separate themselves from the impact of fourth and fifth century Armenian culture influence, a force we have reason to believe was strong. And, it is solidly an Armenian tradition¹ that they themselves graciously provided the Georgians with their alphabet. This idea is flattering to the Armenians; the Georgians find it anathema.

G. Lafontaine, in a book devoted to medieval Georgian art, touched recently also on the question of the Georgian alphabet [1980, 45 (in Alpayo-Novello 1980)]. Lafontaine's view was a tentatively expressed statement that the Georgians owed the Armenians at least partial credit for the creation of the Georgian alphabet, a view that differs from Neubauer's but is within the mainstream of thinking as expressed by Junker (1925) and Deeters (1955, 60-62, 65), though modifications and variances are

1. The principal citation for Mesrop's creation of the Georgian alphabet is found in Koriwn's *Life of Mashtots* (Վարդ Մաշտոցի), section 15: եւ առնոյր կարգեալ նշանադիրս վրացերէն լեզուին.