

**MATENADARAN: MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN
ARMENIAN STUDIES (MEMAS)**

MATENADARAN: MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ARMENIAN STUDIES (MEMAS)

Editor-in-Chief: Aram Topchyan

Associate Editors: Gohar Muradyan, Manea-Erna Shirinian

Editorial Assistants: Anahit Avagyan, Anna Ohanjanyan, Hasmik Kirakosyan

Managing Editor: Ani Shahnazaryan

Web Editor: Hrant Ohanyan

(Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia)

Language Editor: William Walk (Harvard University, USA)

For a complete overview of the Editorial Board and more information regarding the journal, please check <https://www.brepols.net/series/MEMAS> and <https://journalmatenadaran.com/index.php/jmat/about/editorialTeam>

MEMAS is the academic journal of the Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia.

Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)

1.1 (*June 2024*)

BREPOLS

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Higher Education and Science Committee of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Armenia for their support of the publication of MEMAS in open access. Our heartfelt thanks are due to Prof. Michael E. Stone, Prof. Jost Gippert, Dr. Caroline Macé, and Prof. Valentina Calzolari for their valuable advice and willingness to help us in every way. It was Dr. Macé's letter of recommendation that initiated our collaboration with Brepols Publishers. The fruitful cooperation of Dr. Bart Janssens and Loes Diercken, publishing and prepress managers at Brepols, is gratefully acknowledged.

Cover illustration: The Calling of Matthew (Levi), the Tax-Collector, ms. Matenadaran 7651 (13th century), fol. 147r.

© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium.

This is an open access journal made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, for commercial purposes, without the prior permission of the publisher, or as expressly permitted by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organization.

D/2024/0095/263

ISBN 978-2-503-61385-7

DOI 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142184

Printed in the EU on acid-free paper.

Contents

Introduction	7
---------------------	---

Philology

Recovering Hidden Texts: Palimpsests of the Matenadaran and their Disclosure	
Jost GIPPERT	11
The “Thrice-Holy”: An Angelic Liturgical Formula in Jewish and Christian Traditions	
Michael E. STONE	35
Echoes of the <i>Definitions</i> Ascribed to Plato in a Medieval Armenian Compendium	
Gohar MURADYAN	45
The Oracles in an 11th-Century Armenian Manuscript (Yerevan, Matenadaran, No. 9650)	
Erich RENHART	59
Irénée de Lyon, lecteur des Présocratiques ?	
Gabriel KEPEKLIAN	79
David et les modes de division : une analyse comparative du chapitre 21 des <i>Prolégomènes à la philosophie</i>	
Geneviève LACHANCE	93
The Armenian Text of Philo’s <i>De Abrahamo</i> 1-16	
Boris NIKOLSKY	107
Uncovering Theological Inconsistencies in the <i>History</i> of Agathangelos	
Fr. Movses (Davit) SAHAKYAN	121

History

**The Context of Kingship: Armeno-Georgian Claims and Rule in the
12th-13th Centuries**

James BAILLIE

139

Art History

**Newly Discovered Miniature Fragments of the “Etchmiadzin Gospel
Group”**

Seda MANUKYAN

159

Book Review

**Michael E. Stone and Aram Topchyan, *Jews in Ancient and Medieval
Armenia***

Yakir PAZ

185

Introduction

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

The Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia, is the world's most significant repository and centre for the study of medieval Armenian manuscripts. It possesses a collection of around 22,800 manuscripts, amulet scrolls, and manuscript fragments, most of which are in Armenian and around 4,000 in foreign languages: Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Georgian, Karshuni, Coptic, Hebrew, Old Slavonic, Ethiopic, and others.

Together with a multitude of original literary and historiographical sources (including those from the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, 1198–1375), which are of foremost importance for the social, political, and cultural history not only of Armenia, but also of the whole Middle Eastern and Caucasian region and beyond, the manuscript collection of the Matenadaran contains a wealth of translated literature. For instance, from the time of the invention of the Armenian alphabet in the early 5th century CE on, the Armenians translated numerous works from Greek into Armenian. These translations include important compositions by authors such as Philo of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, and Eusebius of Caesarea, the original texts of which are lost today. At the same time, a large number of early Armenian translations exist that do have surviving Greek originals. In many cases, the translations are older than the first extant Greek witnesses and thus can help to reconstruct correct readings of the Greek texts.

For that reason, there is a close relationship between Armenian Studies and the study of Classical Greek, Early Christian, and Byzantine texts. The Matenadaran has always cooperated and fostered connections with hundreds of scholars and students worldwide. Such fruitful collaboration exists not only with many individual scholars from a great range of academic institutions, but also with significant learned societies such as the AIEA (Association internationale des études arméniennes) and the SAS (Society for Armenian Studies, USA).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that there are few international journals specialised in medieval and early modern Armenian Studies. Among them we must mention the *Revue des études arméniennes* and *Le Muséon*; the latter often contains Armenological material, though it is a journal of Oriental Studies in general. To these two periodicals, the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* should be added

Cite this article: 'Introduction', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies* (MEMAS), 1.1 (June 2024), 7–8

<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142258>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142258

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

(but only occasionally does it publish papers on the medieval period), as well as the *Armeniaca. International Journal of Armenian Studies*, founded recently by our Italian colleagues.

Until now, our Institute of Ancient manuscripts has had one single academic periodical, the *Banber Matenadarani* (*Bulletin of the Matenadaran*, first published in 1941), which is mostly in Modern Armenian and thus only accessible to scholars knowing that language.

In light of all the above considerations, it is high time that the Matenadaran launched its own international journal in major Western languages, providing a new, widely accessible venue for research and publication to local and foreign scholars engaged or interested in Armenian Studies and related fields. The members of our editorial board come from various research institutions and universities throughout the world, and we are delighted to announce that MEMAS is collaborating with Brepols Publishers (Turnhout, Belgium).

The periodical will publish one volume consisting of two issues annually. Each paper is double-blind peer-reviewed by two experts. The articles, in English, French, German, and Italian, are submitted and peer-reviewed through the website of the journal: <https://journalmatenadaran.com/index.php/jmat>. Our preferred fields of research are source study, philology, history, theology, codicology, archaeology, and art history from the 5th to the 18th centuries. We hope the new periodical of the Matenadaran will be welcomed by our colleagues worldwide, and they will be willing to offer us the results of their studies for publication in MEMAS.

Aram Topchyan
Editor-in-Chief

Recovering Hidden Texts: Palimpsests of the Matenadaran and their Disclosure*

▼ **ABSTRACT** On the basis of four sample cases, the present article illustrates the prospects of the application of multispectral imaging to the study of palimpsests that are preserved in the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) in Yerevan. Taking into account the different physical structures of the samples, which comprise an isolated fragment (no. 647), two flyleaves (of manuscripts M2154 and M3938), and a fully palimpsested codex (manuscript M2130), it outlines the variety of Old Armenian materials in *erkat 'agir* script that were palimpsested, ranging from a colophon (M3938) via the *History of Armenia* by Movsēs Khorenats'i (M2154) and the *Commentary on the Psalms* by Theodoretus of Cyrrhus (Fragment no. 647) up to the treatise *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus of Lyon (M2130), and the insight into the history of the texts and the Armenian language that can be gained from these materials.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Palimpsest, Movsēs Khorenats'i, Theodoretus of Cyrrhus, Irenaeus of Lyon, colophon, *erkat 'agir*, M2154, M3938, M2130, Fragment no. 647.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

* This publication is part of a project that has received funding from the Volkswagen Foundation (project "Palimpsest Manuscripts of the Matenadaran", grant no. 93304), from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement no. 101019006), and from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy – EXC 2176 "Understanding Written Artefacts: Material, Interaction and Transmission in Manuscript Cultures" (Project no. 390893796).

 Fonts used in this article: "Kaukasia", developed by Andreas Stötzner within the project "Palimpsests of Caucasian Provenance" (Volkswagen Foundation, Grant No. II/79817), and "TITUS Armenian", developed by Jost Gippert, Bamberg, 1992.

Jost Gippert  0000-0002-2954-340X • Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany (Email: jost.gippert@uni-hamburg.de)

Cite this article: Jost Gippert, 'Recovering Hidden Texts: Palimpsests of the Matenadaran and their Disclosure', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 11–33

<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142259>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142259

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.

© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

1. Introduction

In the early centuries of Armenian literacy, manuscripts were usually written on parchment, a material that was extremely well suited for being inscribed with ink but, at the same time, quite expensive, given that it was produced from the skin of animals (sheep, goats, calves). This is the reason why parchment codices were often not simply discarded when their contents were deemed obsolete but prepared for re-use, by rubbing, scratching or washing off the texts they contained and overwriting them with other, more up-to-date texts; a procedure that was widespread across all early Christian cultures and is usually denoted by the Greek term “palimpsest” (lit. “rubbed off again”). In this way, many extremely important texts of the first millennium of our era have been preserved even though they were no longer meant to be read in later times. However, depending on the efficacy of the “rubbing off”, special means are usually needed to recover them.

During the last 25 years, sophisticated imaging methods have been developed that have proven to facilitate the study of palimpsests enormously, namely, multispectral and transmissive light imaging. These techniques have for the first time been successfully applied to two Armenian palimpsests of St. Catherine’s monastery on Mt. Sinai, which had been detected in the erased layer of a bipartite Georgian codex of about the 10th–11th centuries among the so-called “New Finds” of 1975 (now catalogued as Sin. georg. NF 13 and 55); the same codex also contains the only manuscript remains in the Caucasian Albanian language in palimpsested form. The Albanian and the Armenian undertexts of this codex were the object of an international cooperation of scholars running from 1999 to 2008,¹ which resulted in a three-volume edition published in 2008–2010 (Gippert, Schulze, Aleksidze, and Mahé 2008; Gippert 2010). Enhanced photographic methods, especially the application of transmissive light imaging,² have since become available via the “Sinai Palimpsests Project”³ and yielded promising new insights, thus suggesting to extend the research on Armenian palimpsests beyond Mt. Sinai. In the following pages, I intend to illustrate the first results of investigations into the palimpsests of the Matenadaran, which have become possible by a generous grant of the Volkswagen Foundation,⁴ and which are at present

¹ The projects “Caucasian Languages and Cultures: Electronic Documentation” (ARMAZI), 1999–2002, and “Palimpsest Manuscripts of Caucasian Provenance”, 2003–2008, both kindly funded by the Volkswagen Foundation; my thanks are due to Zaza Aleksidze and Jean-Pierre Mahé, who instigated the projects, and Wolfgang Schulze and Manana Tandashvili who participated in the decipherment. Unfortunately, both Zaza Aleksidze and Wolfgang Schulze have passed away meanwhile.

² Cf. Gippert 2022 for a short description of the technique.

³ Cf. <http://sinaipalimpsests.org>.

⁴ In 2017, a multispectral imaging system (“Megavision”) was installed in the Matenadaran within the project “Palimpsest Manuscripts of the Matenadaran”, with kind support by Ken Boydston, Ivan Shevchuk, and Damianos Kasotakis. The processing software systems used are ENVI 5.5 by L3Harris Geospatial (cf. <https://www.l3harrisgeospatial.com/Software-Technology/ENVI>) and HOKU 1.1 developed by Keith Knox (cf. <http://www.cis.rit.edu/~ktpci/Hoku.html>).

carried out in cooperation of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Hamburg, with the Matenadaran.⁵

2. Materials and Methods

According to Arshak Banouchyan (2002, 91), the Matenadaran holds about 1,000 manuscripts plus approximately 4,500 fragments that are palimpsests, while less “optimistic” estimates speak of 50 palimpsest codices with a total of 1,500 folios. A systematic assessment that has been undertaken since 2017 has revealed that there are indeed two different types of palimpsests that have to be envisaged here. In some cases, all or most of the body of a given codex turns out to be palimpsested, with either both the upper and the lower layer being Armenian or with other languages being involved. In other cases, it is only one or a few folios of a given codex that are palimpsested; usually these are folios that were added secondarily in binding, serving as front or back flyleaves. In the latter case, there is no systematic difference as to other parchment folios that were used in binding later codices, except for their having been erased and overwritten, e.g., with owner’s notes. Both types of flyleaves are usually much older than the codices they were bound with and require special attention.

Since 2017, a total of 2064 palimpsest pages of the Matenadaran have been captured with multispectral and transmissive light imaging and processed for being deciphered.⁶ 1988 of these pages are part of the body of larger parchment codices (M196: 3 pages; M963: 318; M1585: 63; M2130: 273; M3822: 40; M5568: 238; M6018: 546; M6141: 110; M6424: 48; M7079: 60; M8193: 166; M8352: 122; M10680: 1); the remaining 76 belong to flyleaves or other types of fragments. In most cases, both the erased layer and the overtext are in Armenian; however, there are also undertexts in Georgian (in M6141, M6705 and the flyleaves of M1071 as well as Fragment VP-037 with a Georgian overtext) and in Latin (in M3822). Table I illustrates the present state of the work.⁷

⁵ Involved have been, apart from the present author, Hasmik Sargsyan and Emilio Bonfiglio as members of the ERC-funded project “The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories (DeLiCaTe)” in the Hamburg Centre, and Gurgén Gasparyan, Ara Gasparyan, Davit Ghazaryan, Hasmik Iritsyan, Albert Mkhitarian, and Gevorg Ter-Vardanean in the Matenadaran. The project members deeply regret Gevorg Ter-Vardanean’s untimely decease in March 2023.

⁶ From 2017 to 2022, Siranush Bardughimeosyan, Mariam Mats’oyan, and Anna Khach’atryan were involved in the work.

⁷ Abbreviations: c = captured, i = identified, t = transcribed; A = *asomtavruli*, B = *bolorgir*, E = *erkaťagir*, N = *nuskhuri*, S = *slanted*, U = *Uncial*.

Table I. Palimpsests of the Matenadaran processed by 12 February, 2024

SHELF NR.	FOLIOS CAPTURED	CONTENTS (UNDERWRITING)	LANGUAGE	SCRIPT	STATE
M196	60c, 60d, 65a	OT (Prov. 2.4–18)	Arm.	E	i
M470	Aa–Db	NT (Act. 25.9–13)	Arm.	E	i
M487	Aa–Bb	unident.	Arm.	ES	c
M963	1a–159b + Aa	NT (Mk., Lk.)	Arm.	E	(i)
M1071	Aa, Ab	OT (Ex. 5.21–6.13 and Joel 2.21–27)	Georg.	A	t
M1306	Aa–Db	Lectionary (21 meheki)	Arm.	ES	t
M1552	Aa–Bb	NT (Lk. 21.16)?	Arm.	E	(i)
M1585	12a–21b, 23a–40b, 43a–45b, 58b	John Chrysostom, Commentaries?	Arm.	ES	(i)
M2130	20a–39b, 54a–94b, 108a–118b, 130a– 158b, 168a–169b, 200a–211b, 218a– 224b, 240a–241b, 266a–267b, 279ab, 311a–315b, 351a– 353b, 396a–397b	John Chrysostom, Commentaries; Irenaeus, Adv. haereses and Epideixis; other homiletic works	Arm.	ES	(i)
M2154	Ba–Gb	Movsēs Khorenats'i, History	Arm.	ES	t
M2166	Aa, Ab	NT (Mt. 10.26–40)	Arm.	ES	t
M3822	145ab, 155ab, 158ab, 161ab, 163ab, 168ab, 170ab, 173ab, 175ab, 175ab, 182ab, 185ab, 192ab, 195ab, 197ab, 203a–204b, 206ab, 212ab, 218ab	Pontificale	Lat.	U	i
M3850	Ga, Gb	NT (Acts 15.40)	Arm.	E	i
M3938	Aa–Bb	Colophon	Arm.	E	t

SHELF NR.	FOLIOS CAPTURED	CONTENTS (UNDERWRITING)	LANGUAGE	SCRIPT	STATE
M4435	Ba-Gb	Lectionary (Gen. 1.5-6 and Ps. 117.26)	Arm.	E	t
M4945	Aa-Bb	Lectionary (Mt. 5.19-20 and Is. 7.10-11)	Arm.	E	(i)
M5167	Aa-Bb	unident.	Arm.	E	c
M5568	1a-119b	Pauline Epistles	Arm.	E	(i)
M6018	1a-273b + Aa-Bb	Lectionary	Arm.	E	(i)
M6141	80a-106b, 112a-117a, 120a-141b	Hymnography	Georg.	N	c
M6424	1a-24b + Aab	OT (Is. 45)	Arm.	E	c
M6531	Aa-Gb	unident.	Arm.	E	c
M6705	Aa-Bb	unident.	Georg.	N	c
M7079	30a-59b	unident.	Arm.	E	c
M8193	1a-5b, 7ab, 9a-18b, 20a-58b, 62a-65b, 68a-92b, 107a-115b	Lectionary (OT, NT)	Arm.	E	(i)
M8352	1a-61b	Gospels	Arm.	E	(i)
M10680	70b	NT (Mt. 28.13-20, Mk. 1.1-2)	Arm.	E	i
M11310	5a	NT (Jo. 1.12)	Arm.	B	i
Fragm. 35	1b	NT (Jo. 7.44-52)	Arm.	E	i
Fragm. 461	2a, 2b	NT (Lk. 4.8-11)	Arm.	E	i
Fragm. 647	1a, 1b	Theodoretus of Cyrrhus, Commentary on Ps. 44	Arm.	E	t
Fragm. VP-011	1a, 1b	unident.	Arm.	ES	c
Fragm. VP-037	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b	OT (Ps. 43.6-44.10)	Georg.	A	i



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Of the listed items, one is exceptional as it is no palimpsest. This is fol. 5a of M11310, a nicely illuminated page containing the beginning of the Gospel of John (see Fig. 1). What seems to be written underneath in *bolorgir* characters is not a palimpsested text but simply the continuation of the Gospel (up to John 1.12), shimmering through from the backside of the folio; this can easily be seen when the image is mirrored with the contrast enhanced as shown in Fig. 2.

3. First Results

To illustrate the prospects of the application of multispectral imaging to palimpsests, I shall briefly introduce four of the other items listed in Table I, namely, Fragment no. 647, the flyleaves of M2154 and M3938, and some parts of M2130.⁸

3.1. Fragment no. 647 consists of a single sheet that was obviously used as a double flyleaf after having been cut out of a larger folio with text in two columns; its overtext is a late note in cursive *bolorgir* script. The visible undertext (see Fig. 3

⁸ For a preliminary analysis of the flyleaves of M1306 containing materials from a lectionary (*chashots'*) for the 21 *meheki* with the legend of St. Eghishē, cf. Gippert 2022.

showing the “recto” in a pseudo-colour image)⁹ consists of 13 lines with an average of 22 letters per line per column. The “verso” (see Fig. 4, with a greyscale image)¹⁰ yields a similar picture but with much lower readability of the erased text, especially in the first lines of the left column. It is a typical characteristic of palimpsests that on one of the two sides of the parchment, usually the hair side, the palimpsested text is much harder to reveal than on the other side. In the given case, this effect might even have been enforced by the use of the folio as a flyleaf which may have been glued to a cover. Thanks to the good preservation of the “recto”, the lower text of Fragment no. 647 has nevertheless been identified with certainty, namely, as pertaining to the *Commentary on the Psalms* by Theodoretus of Cyrrhus,¹¹ more exactly, the commentary on Psalm 44.¹² The text of the “recto” could be established in its entirety, including the assumption that c. 19 lines must have been cut off at the top of the original folio, which must have comprised a total of c. 32 lines per column; the upper lines of the left column of the “verso”, of which only a few characters have remained, could only be reconstructed.¹³ Table II shows the text of the Fragment as it has been read by now;¹⁴ the assignment of the present “recto” and “verso” matches the original distribution. The text of the palimpsest agrees to a large extent with the one edited by Ilia Abuladze in 1944; among the divergences, we may note, e.g., the word order change in the first visible line where ընդ ոտիւք (“with the feet”) follows [կոխան] առնեն (“[they] tread upon”), contrasting with ընդ ոտիւք կոխան առնէ in the edition (Abuladze 1944, 168, l.20).¹⁵ A remarkably “late” orthographic feature is the spelling *կա* instead of *կալ* in line 7 (= 26) of the left column of the verso,¹⁶ possibly induced by the following *ել* (with *ւ* added above the line).

⁹ The red-cyan pseudo-colour image was produced with the HOKU software by the comparison of an ultraviolet image (365 nm) with an image in the red range (630 nm).

¹⁰ The greyscale image was produced with the ENVI software by the comparison of an ultraviolet image (365 nm) with an image in the orange range (560 nm) and further processing.

¹¹ Theodoretus was determined as the author of the *Commentary* by Bernard Outtier (1977, 170–171).

¹² A first edition of the Armenian text of the *Commentary* was provided, in parallel with the 10th-century Georgian translation by a certain Dachi as contained in the so-called “Shatberdi Collection” (ms. S-1141 of the Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi), by Ilia Abuladze in his book on the mutual literary relations between Georgians and Armenians in the 9th–10th centuries (Abuladze 1944, 148–175; cf. his introduction ib., 0182–0193). He did not reveal which Armenian manuscript(s) his edition was based on; however, Outtier 1977, 172 suggests that it was ms. M1204 of the Matenadaran, where the *Commentary* is contained on fols. 16a–50a. In Abuladze’s edition, the passage on Ps. 44 of our palimpsest corresponds to pp. 168–171. Other editions of the Georgian text are found in Gigineishvili / Giunashvili 1979, 364–424, with the passage on Ps. 44 on pp. 389–390, and Jugheli 2008, 449–488. The Greek text of Theodoretus’ *Commentary* (CPG 6202), which is remarkably distinct from the Armenian, will be found in PG 80, 857–1997; the passage on Ps. 44 preserved in the palimpsest corresponds to PG 80, 1188A–1189C.

¹³ My sincere thanks are due to Bernard Outtier who is at present preparing a critical edition of Theodoretus of Cyrrhus’ *Commentary* and kindly placed the given passage at my disposal.

¹⁴ In this and the following transcripts, square brackets [] denote badly readable characters, curly brackets {}, unreadable but supposed characters, and angle brackets <>, reconstructed characters in gaps and lacunae.

¹⁵ The plural form *առնեն* fits better into the given context than the singular *առնէ*.

¹⁶ Bernard Outtier (e-mail of 25 April 2023) kindly informs me that the same spelling occurs also in M1204 at the given position.

Table II: Fragment no. 647

LINE	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
recto		
1=20	[ւոնեն լնդ] ոսիւք . քննջի ծագե-	շը[ն] Թարգարէն[նիւն . ք]{ւնն}[ի ծարկ]
2=21	վ[ւ] տիւծին ուրդին վն : եւ սիւելին	եւ շուշըն . Վրոհիւն եւ քննիւ-
3=22	զարարոնն Յես[ս] եւ լսարար-	[իւ]<ն> [իւ] երկն լեւննն ւուք[ի] նու-
4=23	նոն եւ վարել փոփոխութիւն	{Թեւն} փոփոխ եւ ծարկ . եւ ուրդ-
5=24	եւ նորոգութիւն վարել[ն] չեւ-	{նն լնն} չորդեւ ժողովք տիւծին
6=25	նոսն . եւ ղարարարն նոն .	{ուր . ք} [իւ] վն . ուրդն եւ լսն եւնն . ու-
7=26	Ուրդն եւ լսն վարելարն Թե	{լսն} [եւ] վարար ծարար . եւ փոքն
8=27	սիւելոն . սիւելն կոշի . զար-	{լիւն} [նն] նու ժողովք նու . եւ ծարկ-
9=28	վին ուրդին վն . քննջի լսարար	{նն լնն} եւ շուշըն . քննջի ճոննն
10=29	արարարելն եւ եւնն եւ [լսն]	{լսն} եւ [ն] լսարար վն . յարկ [եւ]
11=30	վարն եւ եւ սիւելոն . ձարար-	{արար} [կ] ու լսարար վարար փո-
12=31	Թեւն ձարար . եւ ղարարութիւն	{փոքն} [ւ] . ղարարութիւն փոք-
13=32	եւն . լսն լսն ձարար ձարար տեւ-	{ուել} . լսն ղարար եւ տար սարարար :
	<բարար լսն ...>	
verso		
1=20	{լսն եւ տարարարար եւ ուր-	լսնն ղարար փոքն [լսն եւ]
2=21	տնն տարար Թե ղարար եւ տար-	արարարար վարարար ղարար-
3=22	սար . լսն ղարար ղարարն նու-	արարար :
4=23	արարար ձարար : {եւ ուր} {լսն արար ղար-	[լսն լսնն ղարար [լսն արար ղարար .]
5=24	լսնն տար ղարարն ղարար [ն] {արար	[լսն] ձարարար [նն] արար [լսն]
6=25	լսն [ե] {Թեւն} [լսնն] {լսնն- արար}-	[լսն] եւ [ու] ղարար եւ Թարարար .
7=26	[լսն . կն եւ ար . եւ [լսն] {լսնն քնն}	[լսն] եւ [ու] Թարար [եւ ղարարար]-
8=27	{լսն} [լսնն] {լսն ղարարարար .}	[ննն] Թարար [լսն] [լսն արար] [լսն .]
9=28	արար արար ղարարար Թարար [լսն] {արարար}	[լսնն] ղարար [լսնն արար] [լսն] ղարար [լսն]
10=29	քնն ղարարարար ղարար [լսն] {լսնն}	արարարար . եւ [լսն] ղարար [կ] ու [լսն]-
11=30	[արարար] ղարարար . [լսնն ու] {նն լսն}	Թարար . ղարարարար . եւ [լսնն արար]-
12=31	եւ ղարար կնն արար [լսնն] {արար արար}	լսնն ուրդին [լսն] . եւ Թարար [լսնն]-
13=32	լսնն ղարարարարար [լսնն] {արարար} [նն]	[իւ] ղարարարարարար ձարար {լսն}

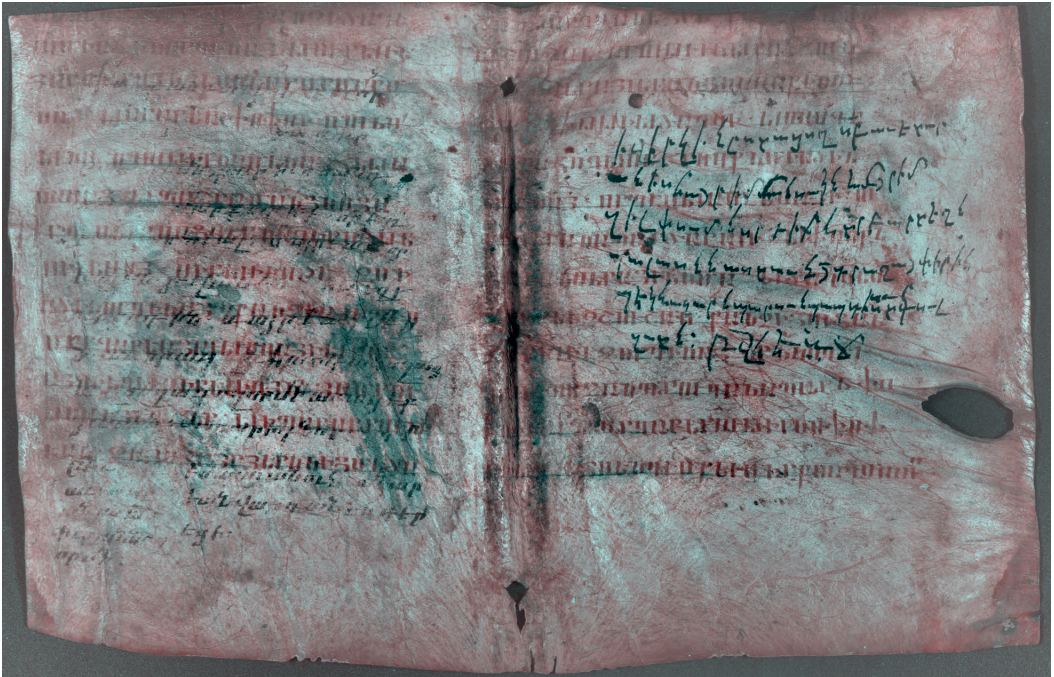


Fig. 3

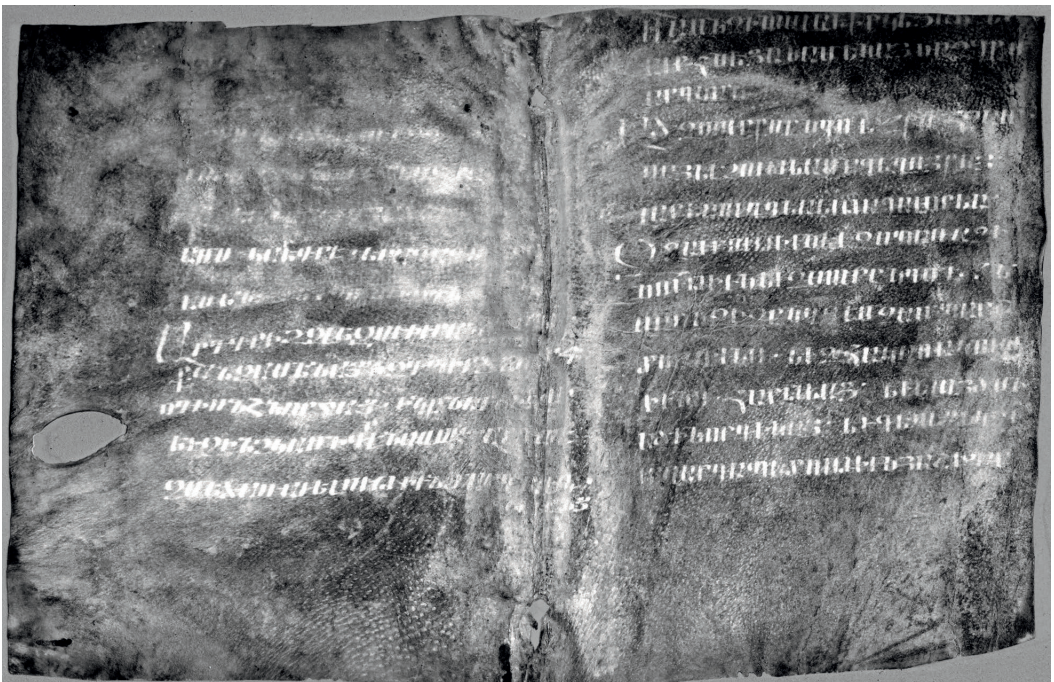


Fig. 4

3.2. Much harder to determine was the undertext of two flyleaves of ms. M2154, a 15th-century miscellany on paper (*Grand Catalogue* 2012, 231). Its parchment folios Բ and Գ are a typical palimpsest, with fragments of a *chashots'* written in bold *bolorgir* letters over a barely readable undertext in slightly slanted *erkat'agir* majuscules, both arranged in two columns. The overtext clearly reveals that the two folios constitute a bifolio, with pages Գաւ = 5 + Բք = 4 representing the recto and Գք = 6 + Բաւ = 3 the verso; the *chashots'* layer consists of a sequence of lections for Maundy Thursday that match the Jerusalem rite.¹⁷ The undertext, which was overwritten horizontally and thus covered to a large extent by the upper layer, has only been determinable for the recto (see Fig. 5 for fols. Գաւ = 5 and Բք = 4); it contains a passage from book III, chapter 33 of Movsēs Khorenats'i's *History*, which is about the Council of Constantinople (381) and the 50 Fathers attending it.¹⁸ The content of the two columns of fols. Գաւ = 5 + Բք = 4, each comprising 27 lines with an average of 14 letters, is displayed in Table III as far as it has been retrievable;¹⁹ it exhibits a few noteworthy differences as to the published text of the *History*, e.g. in omitting *եւ ոչ երկրպագելի* between lines 18 and 19 of the first column (probably by haplography as the text continues with *եւ ոչ փառաւորելի*), or in reading *Հաստատեցաւ* instead of *ստուգեցաւ* in line 13. The most remarkable difference appears at the end of the passage where the palimpsest inserts *սուրբք եւ ընտրեալ* between *յսոն* (sic, for *յիսոն*) and *Հարք*.

In contrast to this, the verso is desolate. Only a few words can be made out on fols. Գք = 6 and Բաւ = 3, namely, *յաւրինելոյն* (or *-ոցն*), *եւ մեք*, and *եւ քարոզ(ք?)* in lines 20–22 of the right column of fol. Բաւ; in other cases, only parts of words are discernible as in lines 1 and 3 of the left column of fol. Գք where we read *-նեցին* and *-ութիւն*. As we cannot determine with certainty whether this was a recto or a verso in the original codex, these words could belong to both the preceding and the subsequent text in the *History*; however, neither chapter 32 nor chapter 34 contains any one of them. If we further consider that the text of the present recto (fol. Բք = 4) ends exactly with the last words of chapter 33, we may hypothesise that what we read about the Council in the palimpsest is just the given chapter from Movsēs' *History*, used as an excerpt in a different environment; as a matter of fact, the chapter is placed in the *History* rather independently between the legends concerning king Arshak II, his bishop Khad, and the Persian king Shapur II, so that it could be used in full for other purposes.²⁰ If we further consider that individual chapters of Movsēs' *History* have meanwhile been detected in the Greek-Armenian palimpsest Suppl.grec 1226 of

17 Sections XXXVIII, 119–120 and XXXIX, 121–122 in the edition by Renoux (1971, 266/128), comprising Is. 61.6, Acts 1.15–26, I Cor. 11.23–32, and Mt. 26.20–21 with Ps. 54.22 and 22.5 in between.

18 The passage covers p. 297, l.10–298, l.3 in the critical edition by Abeghean and Harut'yunyan (Movsēs Khorenats'i 1913).

19 The lines in the fold between Գաւ and Բք are partially covered by a strip of cloth and can only be guessed at; the same is true for parts of the right column of which a strip comprising c. three characters per line was cut off.

20 A shorter account of the Council is found in the *Book of Letters* (*Book of Letters* 1994, 349–350) in the context of the correspondence between the Armenian Catholicos Abraham and the Georgian Catholicos Kyrion (within the latter's reply to the third letter); the section in question is missing in the second redaction of the Letter as published in the older edition (*Book of Letters* 1901, 185; cf. Aleksidze 1968, 104–105 and 162–164).

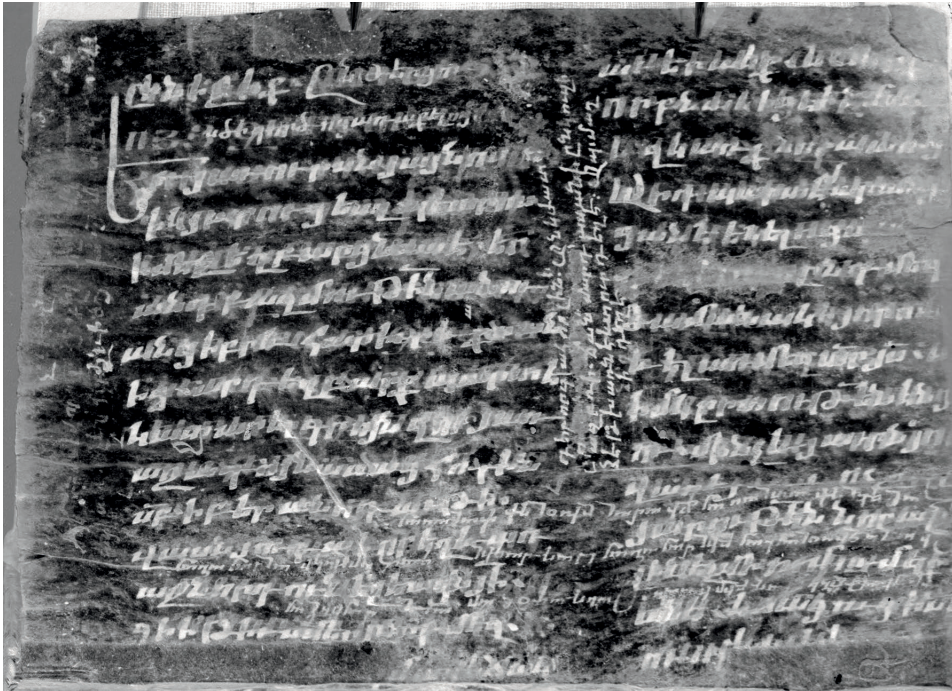


Fig. 5a

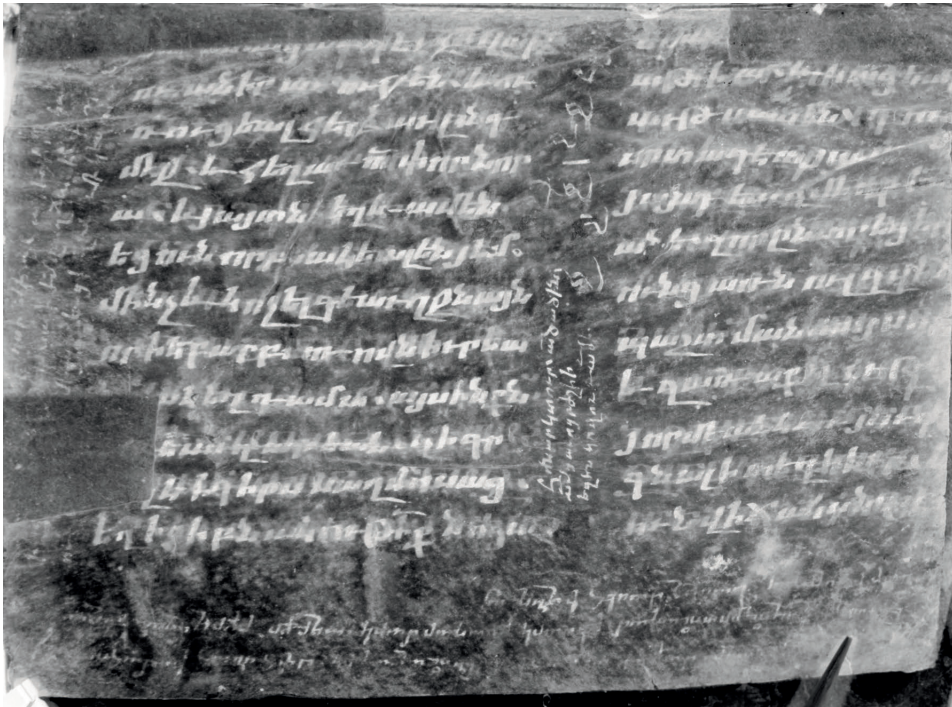


Fig. 5b

Table III: M2154, fols. Գա + Բբ

LINE	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
	< ... ԶԵՐԵՔՔԱ >-	
Գա 1	ԲԵՄԵՆ : ՍԱԴԱՐՉ-	ԷՈՒԹԻՆ Ա[ՆՉ] <ՆԱԻ>-
2	ՈՅՑ ԶԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ	ՈՐ·ԵԻ [ԺՈ] Ա[ՈԱ] <ԵԱԼ>
3	ՏԱ[ՐՍ ՍՈՒՐԵՍ ՈՐՔ ՅԱ-	ՍՈՒՐԵ ՏԱՐՔՆ ԻԹ·<ԱԳ>-
4	ԱԱԳՍ ՈՒՂԱԱՔԱՐՈՒ-	ԱՌՐԵՆ Ի [Բ] ԻԻ[ՉԱ] <Ն>-
5	ԹԵՄԵՆ ԱՐԺԱՍԱՄԱ-	ԴԻՈԱՂՆ ՈՐ [ԿՈՉԵ] <ԱԼ>
6	ՆԵԱԼՔ ԷԻՆ Ի ՄԵԺԱՂԱՍ,	[Է ԿՈՍԺ] ԱՆԴԻ[Ն] <ՈՒ>-
7	ԸՆԴ·ՈՐՍ ԵԻ ԶՄԵԾ·Ն	[Պ] ՈՂԱՍ· [ԴԱՄԱ] <ՍՈՍ>
8	ՆԵՐՍԷՍ ԱԾ·ԵԱ [ԱՌ]	Ի ՏՈՌ [ԱՄԱ] Յ·Ն <ԵՔ>-
9	ԻՐԻ Ի ԲԻՒԶԱՆԴԻՈԱՂՆ	[Ժ] ԱՐԻՈՍ Ի ԿՈՍ[Ժ] <ԱՆ>-
10	ՊԱՏԷՐ ՄԵԾ·ԱԻ [ՊԱ] Ժ-	ԴԻ [Ա] ՆՈՒՊՈՂԱՍ [Ի] <ԺԻ>-
11	[ՈՒՈԱ : ՄԻՆՉԵԻ ԱՂԱՆ]-	ՄՈԹ [ԷՈՍ Ի Ա] Ա[Ե] <Ք>-
12	[ԴԱՌՈՐՈՒԹԵՄՆ Թ] ՈՂ-	[ՍԱՆ] ԴՐԻ· ՄԵ [Ա] <ԻՐՈՍ>
13	ՄԱՆՆ [ՏԱՍԺԱԺ] ԵՑԱՍ-	[Ի Ա] ՆԺԻՈՔԱ· ԿԻ <ԻՐ>-
14	ՏԱԻԱՐՆ [ՈՐ ՅԱԱ] Գ[Ս]	[ԱՍ] Ի [ԵՂ] ՄԷ [· ԳՐԻ] <ԳՈ>-
15	{ԱՄԱԲՐՇԺԻՆ} [ՄԱ]-	[ՐԻ] Ո[Ս] <Ի ՆԻՄԱՆԱՅ>
Բբ 16	{ԿԵԴՈԱՂՆԻՈՍԻ ՏԱՅ}-	Ե[Ա] <ԴԻՈՍ Ի ԿԵՍԱՐՈՒ>
17	{ՏՈՅՈՒ} [ԹԵՄՆՑՆ :]	Գ[ՐԻԳՈ] Բ[ԻՈՍ ԳՐԻ] <ԳՈՐԻ>-
18	ԶԻ [Ո] Չ Ժ[Ր ԻՈՍԺՈ] ԱԱ-	[ՈՍ Ի] ՆԱՆՉԻ [ԱՆ] <ՉՈՒ>
19	ՆԵՐ Զ[ՏՈԳԻՆ Ս] ՈՒՐԵ	[ԱՆ] ՓՂԻՈՔ [ՈՍ Ի] <ԻԿՈ>-
20	ԵԻՈՉ ՓԱՌԱՌՐԵԼԻ	Ն[ԻՈ] Ա[ՈՒ, ԵԱ] Յ<ԱԵ>-
21	ԸՆԴ· [ՏԱԻՐ ԵԻ ԸՆԴ·]	[ՊԻ] ՍԿ[ՈՊ] ՈԱՔ ՄԻ <ԱՆ>-
22	ՈՐԴ· [ԻՈՅ ԱՅՂԱԻ]-	[ԳԱ] ՄԱՅՆ [ՏԱՐԻ] <ԻՐ>
23	ԺԱՐ Յ[ԱՅ ԲՆՈՒ] ԹԵ-	ՅՍՈՒՆ [· ՍՈՒՐԵՔ] <ԵԻ>
24	ՆԷՆ Ե[ԻՍԺԱ] Յ[ԱԿԱՆ]	ԸՆ[Ժ] ՐԵ[ԱԼՏԱՐ] Ք <ՈՐՔ>
25	<Ե> [ԻԾ] ԱՌԱՅ ԵԻ ՊԱՇ-	ՆԶՈԱԿԱԼ ՄԵՐԺ <ԵՑԻՆ>
26	{Ժ} [ԱԻՆ] ԵԱՅ [·] ԵԻ ԱԶ-	ԶՄԱ [ԿԵ] Դ[ՈԱ] Ն [Ե] <Ի ԶԱ>-
27	Դ[ՈՒՄՆ ԻՆՉ] [·] ԵԻՈՉ	ՄԵՆԱ [Յ] Ն ՏՈԳ[Ե] <ՄԱՐԺՍ>

the National Library of France, Paris, where they form part of a lectionary,²¹ we may assume a similar use for the present excerpt.

3.3. A totally different content has been revealed on the two parchment flyleaves of ms. M3938, a 14th-century paper codex containing the Armenian version of works by Thomas Aquinas (*Catalogue* 1965, 1114). Both the front and the back flyleaf are

21 Cf. Gippert forthcoming for the Paris palimpsest.

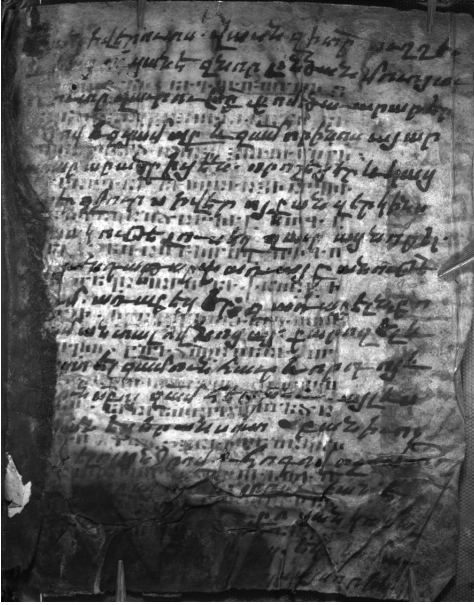


Fig. 6

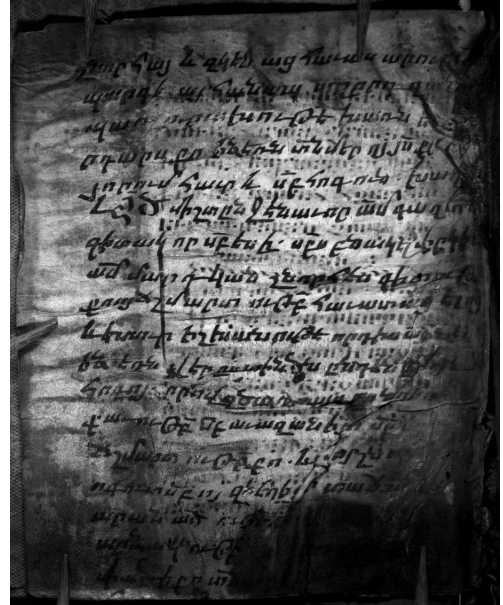


Fig. 7

covered by prayers written in a bold cursive *bolorgir* script; on only one side of each (fols. 1v = 1 and 4r = 4), an erased underwriting in small upright *erkat'agir* letters can be made out, written in one column in at least 14 lines with an average of 19 characters (see Fig. 6 and 7). The equal disposition of the lines suggests that both pages derive from the same original. Due to the bad preservation of the flyleaves, the undertext cannot be established *in toto*; however, the visible elements are sufficient to identify it as part of a colophon of a Gospel codex that was written by a scribe named Grigor in Karin (Theodosioupolis) in the year 681 of the Armenian era (~ 1232 CE). The text as established so far is illustrated in Table IV; it is likely that fol. 4r represents the continuation of fol. 1v and proceeds up to the end of the colophon.

Table IV: M3938, fols. 1v and 4r

LINE	FOL. 1v	FOL. 4r
1	{ԱՇԽ}[ԱՐՄԻՆ] ԵՒ ԴՈՒՌՆ ՄԺԻՅ	: {□□□□}[ԱՐ]{□□□□} ԻՆՉ[ԵՒ] {□□□□}
2	{ԵՐ}Կ[ՆԻՅ ԱՐ] ԸՅՅՈՒՓԵՆՆ ԵՒ	[ՃԱՌԱ]{Ի} ՆԱՆ[Ե] ԼՔՄԱՅՅ Կ[Ա]Մ {□□□□}
3	{□□□□} Պ[Ա]ՐՃՄԱՅՅ ՅԱՌՈՒՐՆ ԲԻ :	{ԻՄ} {□□□□} • ԻՆՔՆ ԵՂԻՅ[Ի] {ՊՐ□□□□}
4	{Ո}[Ր] ԱՐԴԱՐ ԵՒ ԻՐԱՄԱՅԻ ԱՐԴԻ	ՓԱ[Ո] ԱՅ ԱՆՄԱՅ ՆՃԱՐԻՆ [:]
5	{□□□□} ԱՆԴԱՅ ԺԱՐԻՔ [Ե] ԺԳԸ	ԵՒ ԸՆԴ-ՄԻՈՅՆ ՉՈՐ[ԵՔ] Ի[Ն]
6	{Ր}[Ե] ՉԵՈՒՄԲ ԻՄՈԱԳՐԻԳՈ	[ՊԱՐԺ] ԵՍՑԻ :
7	{ԻՐ} ՄԵՂԱՊԱՐԺ ԵՒ ՓԱՆԱՔԻ	Ի Ա[ՈՒՐՆ ՆԱՅ] ՈՅ : Ո Չ[Ա:]

concerning Mt. 24.42–44 as published in the edition of 1826 but in contrast to the latter, which is an abridged version,²³ it is much more verbose, thus agreeing better with the Greek text.²⁴ Considering the paleographic features, it is likely that some more parts of the same original manuscript will be detected among the palimpsested folios of M2130, especially within the same quire.²⁵

A larger bulk of folios of M2130 has turned out to contain in its underwriting parts of the Armenian version of works by Irenaeus of Lyon. In contrast to John Chrysostom's *Commentary*, the palimpsest was in this case produced by turning the underlying folios by 90° or 270°, with one folio of the original yielding a bifolio of the present codex; the overtext was then applied across the lines of the undertext. The original folios must have comprised two columns with 36 lines each; in the re-use, about one half of one of the columns was cut off (see Fig. 8 showing the bifolio consisting of fols. 148v+153r). The undertext, written in a bold slanted *erkat'agir* with an average of 24 characters per line per column, can nevertheless be restored with great confidence, given that wherever it is readable, it agrees quite well with that of the published text version as contained in ms. M3710 of the Matenadaran, which comprises books IV and V of Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* and the same author's "Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching".²⁶ In the palimpsest, we have found passages from exactly these three texts;²⁷ the following parts have been identified so far:²⁸ *Adversus Haereses*, book IV, ch. XXVI.2 [15.2] (fol. 132r, probably continuing on fol. 143v); ch. XLII.4–5 [27.2–3] (fols. 141v+134r); ch. LX.2 [37.4–5] (fol. 353v, with uncertain partner folio); ch. LXI.2–LXII.2 [34.3–6] (fol. 85rv, with uncertain partner); ch. LXVIII.4 [42.4] – book V, ch. I.3 [1.3] (fols. 71rv and 78rv, both with uncertain partner); ch. V.2–VI.1 [5.3–6.1] (fol. 79rv, with uncertain partner); ch. VII.1–VIII.2 [7.2–8.1] (fol. 84rv, with uncertain partner); ch. VIII.2–IX.1 [8.1–9.2] (fols. 146v+155r and 146r+155v); ch. XIV.2–4 [14.2–4] (fols. 150v+151r); ch. XXV.4 [25.5] (fols. 152v+149r); ch. XXVI.1 [26.1] (fol. 80rv, with uncertain

²³ In the edition, the chapter bears the title *Ի քսանհորդոյ չորրորդ ճառէն* (Yovhan Oskeberan 1826, 73); cf. Thomson 1975, 464, according to whom the "Armenian version represented by the published text is a very free rendering". The extracts from the *Commentary* in the *Seal of Faith* do not comprise the passage in question (*Seal of Faith* 1914, 319–323).

²⁴ The corresponding passage is found in PG 58, 704–705.

²⁵ A thorough investigation into the palimpsested witnesses of John Chrysostom's works in Armenian is at present being undertaken by Emilio Bonfiglio within the DeLiCaTe project (cf. note 5 above).

²⁶ For a short description of the manuscript, see *Catalogue* 1965, 1068–1069; cf. the editions by Ter-Mékérttschian and Ter-Minassiantz (Irenäus 1908 and Irenaeus 1910) and the French translation in Irénée 1933–1936. Cf. also S. Irenaeus 1919 and Irénée de Lyon 1965 and 1969. A new edition of *Adversus Haereses*, Book V has recently been prepared by Gabriel Képekian (2020–2021); my sincere thanks are due to the author for sharing his thesis and discussing the palimpsest issues with me.

²⁷ Unless parts of chapters I–III of *Adversus Haereses* will be detected later on in the palimpsest (as suggested by the fragments from these books published in Renoux 1978, 30–73), this might be taken to indicate that the Armenian version was restricted to chapters IV–V (plus the *Demonstratio*) right from the beginning; cf. Képekian 2020–2021, 32 as to this question.

²⁸ References to chapters and paragraphs are given in accordance with the editions by Ter-Mékérttschian and Ter-Minassiantz (Irenäus 1908 and Irenaeus 1910), which also agree with the edition of the Latin text by Harvey (Irenaeus 1857); references to chapter numbers of the editions by Rousseau *et al.* (Irénée de Lyon 1965 an 1969) are added in brackets.

partner); ch. XXX.1–2 [30.1–3] (fols. 148v+153r); ch. XXXV.1–2 [35.1–2] (fol. 86r, with uncertain partner); ch. XXXV.4 *Demonstratio*, ch. 41 (fols. 154v+147r); ch. 51 (fols. 140r+135v); ch. 58 (fols. 133v+142r). As the list shows, the distribution of the passages across M2130 is anything but straightforward; this is a typical effect of the re-use of folios in palimpsests. To illustrate what has been achieved, the text of *Adversus Haereses*, ch. XXX.1–2 as established for the bifolio consisting of fol. 148v+153r is displayed in Table V; note that the two lines between the two folios (lines 22 and 23) are reconstructed *in toto* as they are hidden in the fold.

Table V: M2130, fols. 148v+153r

LINE	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
148v		
1	<ԳԻՋԵԼ ԵՒ ԱՅԼ ԻՄՆ> {ՆԱ} ՈՒՍԵԼՈՎ Ե	ՆՈՐԱ ՅՈՐՄԷ ԳԱՆՅԸՆ Է ԱՉԳԵԱՅ
2	<ԿԵՍՑԷ ԴԻԻՐԱՒ> ԻՎՐԵԱԼԺ ՊԱՐԲԵՍ	Ա[ՅՄՊԷՍ ԱՍԵԼՈ]ԱԻ ԴԱՆԱ ԼՈՒՑՈՒՔ
3	<ՅԻՆ ԱՌԻ ՆՄԱ> [ՆԷ] ԻՔՐ[ԵԻ] ՋԻ ՉԵԻ ԵԻ	ՉԱՅՆ ՋԱՐԱԳՈՒԹԱԵՆՆ ԵՐԻՒԱՐԱՅ ՆՈՐԱ
4	<ՆԱՍԵԼՈՅ ՆՈՐ>Ա ԵԻ ՄԱԻՐԵԼՈՅ ՋՈՐ	Ի ՉԱՅՆԷ [ՉԻԱՎԱՐՈՒԹԱԵՆՆ ԱՐԻ]ՔՄԱ
5	<ՊԱՆԵԼ ԵՒ ՋԳՈ>ԻՇԱՆԱԼԱՐ[ԺԱՆ Է]	ՆԸՆ [ՉԻՈՅ ՆՈՐԱ ՇԱՐԺԵՍՑ]Ի ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ
6	<ԱՐԴ ՊԱՐԺ ԵԻ> [Ա]ՐԺԱՆ Է ՋԱ[ՅՆՊԻ]	ԵՐԿԻՐ ԵԻ [ԵԿԵՍՑԷ ԵԻ ԿԵՐԻՑԷ] ՋԵՐԿԻՐ ԵԻ
7	<ՍԻՍԸՆ ՇՐՔԵԼ Ե>Ի ՈՒՍՈՒՑԱՆԵ[Լ ԵԻ]	ՋԼԸՐ[ՈՒԹԻԻ]Ն ՆՈՐԱ ՋՔ[ԱՐԱ]ՔԸՆ ԵԻ ՋՐ
8	<Ի ՃՇՄԱՐԻՋԸ> [Ն] ԵՐԹԱԼ ԵԼԱ[ՆԵԼ]	ՆԱԿԻ[ՉԱ]ԸՆ Ի [ՆՄԱ ԵԻ ԱՎԱ]Ն [ԱՅ]ՍՈՐԻԿ
9	<ԱՆՈՒԱՆԸՆ Թ>ԻԻ ՋԻ ՄԻ [ՍՈՒՐ ՄԱՐ]	ՈՉ ՆԱՄ[ԱՐ]ԵԱԼ Լ[ԻՆԻ] {ՋԱՐՄԸՆ ԱՅՆ Ի}
10	<ԳԱՐԷԻՑԸՆ Ա>[Ա]ՅՐԻ ԿԱՐԳԵԱԼԺ ՆԱ	{ՅԱՅ}[ՋԸՆՈՒԹԻՒՆՍԸՆ ԸՆԴ- ԱՅՆՈՍԻԿ
11	<ՄԱՐԵՍՑԻՆ Բ>[Ա]ՅՑ ԳԻՋԱՅԵԱԼ ՆԱ[Ս]	{Ո}[ԸՔ] ԱՊՐԵԼՈ[ՅԸ]Ն {ԵՆ ԱՐ}[Դ- ՋԳՈՒՇ]ԱԳ
12	<ՋԱՐԱՊՊԻՍ ՋԻ> ԳԸՐՈՅԸՆ ՋԵԿՈՒ	{ՈՅՆ ԵԻ ՆԱՍՋԱՐԱՎԳՈՅ}[Ն ԵԻ ԱՆԱՐԱՆ]
13	<ՅԵԱԼ ԹԻԸՆ ԱՅ>[Ս]ԻՆՔՆ Է ՋԱԷՑ ՆԱՐ	[Գ Է] Կ[ԱԼ ՄՆԱԼ ԵԻ Ա]ՆՍԱԼ[ԵԼԻ] ՄԱՐ[ԳԱ]
14	<ԻԻՐ ԱՎԹՍՈՒ> [Ն] {ԵԻ ԱՎԹՍՈՒՆ}	[Ը]ԷՈՒԹԱԵՆՆ[ԸՆ] {ԵԻ Ա}[Ճ]ԱՐՄԱՆ ՔԱՆ Թ{Ե}
15	<ԵԻ ԱԷՑ ԿԱԼ Մ>ՆԱԼ ԵԻ ՍՊԱՍԵԼ {ՆԱԻԻԻ}	ՆԱՆ[Դ]ԻՊ[ԵՑ]ՈՒ[ՅԱ]ՆԵԼ[ԵԻ] ՆԸՄԱՅԱՐԱ[Ր]
16	<ԱՌԱՔԻՆ Ի Ջ>[Ա]ՍՈՒՆՍ ԹԱԳԱՒՈՐ	Գ[ԻՋ]ԱՆԱԼ ԴՈՒՋՆԱՔ[Ե]Ա[Յ ԵԻ] ԴԻՊԱԻ

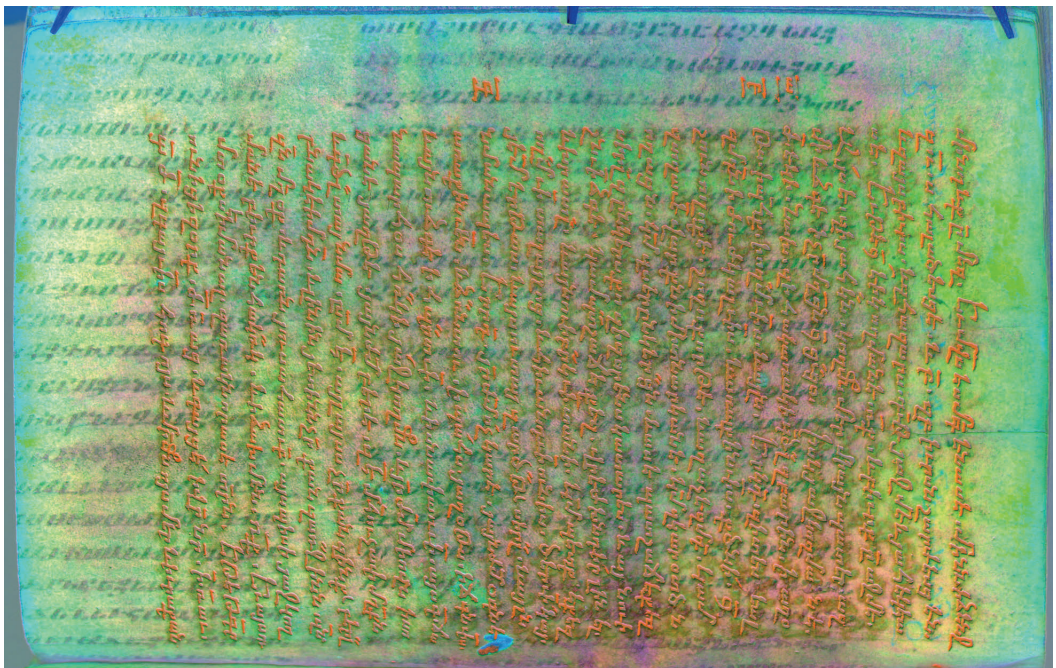


Fig. 8a

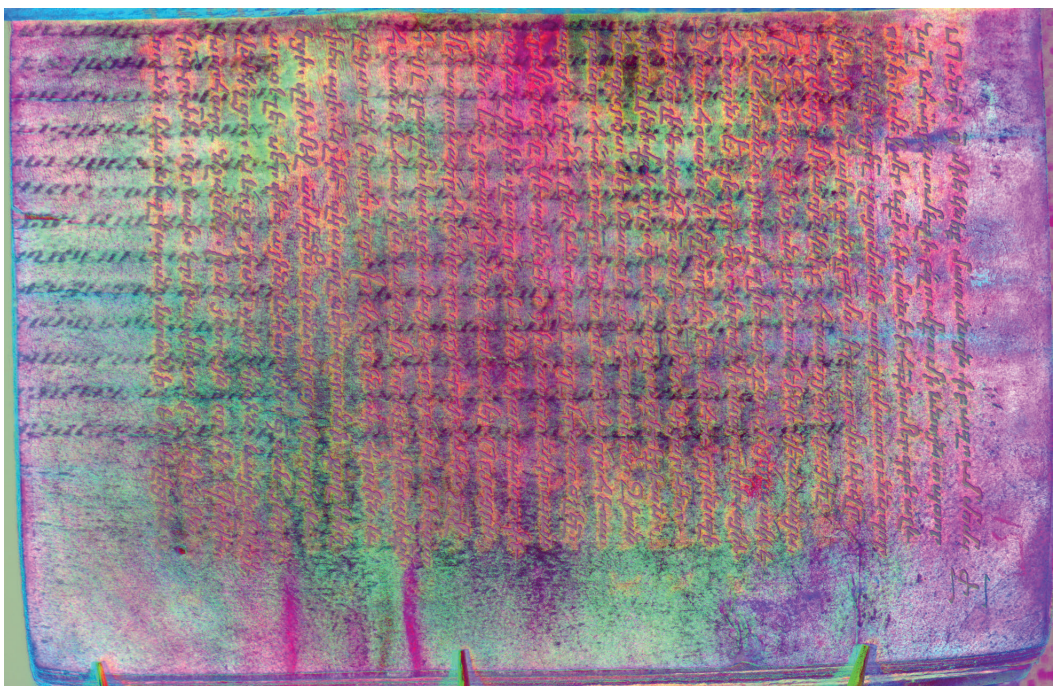


Fig. 8b

LINE	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
17	<ՈՒԹԵՎԵՆԸՆ Բ> ՎԺԻՆՍ ԵՒ ՎՊՎ ՆՈ	ՈՐ ՎՆՈ[ԻՎԵՍ ԻԲ]{ԲՈՒ Զ}[Ի] ԲՎԶՈՒ[Մ ՎՆ]
18	<ՅՎ ԻՇԻԵՑԵՎԼ> [Ե] Ի ԺԻՐԵՑԵՎԼ ԵՒ ԿՎՐ	ՈՒ[Վ]ՆՔ [ԿՎ]ՐԻՆ {ԳԸՋՎ}{Ն}ԻԼ ՈՐՔ [ՈՒ]ՆԻՆ
19	<ԺԵՑԵՎԼ ՆՈՒ>[Վ] ՃԵԼ ԵՒ ՎՍՍԺՎՋԵԼ	[ՉՅՎՈՎ.ՋՎՍՍՑ]ԵՎ[Լ.Թ.]ԻԻԸ[Ս ԵՒ Ո]Չ[ԻՆՉ]
20	<ՉԻՐԵՎԵՆՑ ԻՐ>Ս ԵՒ ՎՃԵՑՈՒՑՎԵՆԵԼ	ՆՈ[ԻՎ]{Չ ԿՎՅ}[ԵՒ] ՄՆՎՅ ՆՈՅՆ ԻԸՆԴԻՐ
21	<ՉԻՐԵՎԵՆՑ ԶԻ>{ՇԻՎՆՈՒԹ.ԻՐ} [ԸՆ]	{ՔՎՆ}[ՉԻ] {ԵԹԵ ԲՎԶՈՒՄ}[Ք] ԵՆ ՈՐՔ ԳԸՋՎ
22	<ՈՐ ԶԿՆԻ ԵԿԵՍ>{ՑԻ ԻՇԻՎՆՈՒԹ.ԵՎ}	{ՆԻՆ ՎՆՈՒՎՆՔԸՆ ՈՐ ՈՒՆԻՆ ԶԹ.ԻԸՆ}
23	<ՆԸՆ ՅՎՆԿՎՐԺ>{ՎԻՐԷՆ ԹՎՓԵՎԼ}	{ՉՈՐ ՈՔ Ի ՆՈՑՎԵՆԸՆ ԿՐԻՑԷ ԶԳԵՑԵՎԼ}
24	<ԵՒ ՅԻՆՔՆ ՎՋՎՐ>[Ե]ՎԼ ԵՒ ՊՎԿՈՒՑԵՎԼ	[ՈՐ ԳՎՅ]ԸՆ [ԻԸՆ]ԴՐԵՑԻ ԵՒ ԶԻ ՈՉ [ՎՎ]{ՄՆ}
25	<ՍՎՐՍԵՑՈՒՍ>[Ց]Է ԶՅՎՈՎ{Ջ}Վ[ՍՎՑԵ]	[ՋՎՐ]{ՎԿՈՒՍ}[Ի Վ]ՆՈՒՎՆՑԸՍ ՈՐ ՈՒ[ՆԻ]{Ն}
26	<ՎԼՍԸՆ ՈՒՐԵԼ>ՈՎՎՆՈՒ[Ն] Ն[ԵՐՊՎ]	{Չ}[Թ.Ի.Չ]ՎՆ[ՈՒՎՆՍ Զ]ՎՅ[ՍՈՐԻԿ] ՎՍԵ{ՄՔ}
27	<ՐՈՒՆՎԿՎԿՎ>Ն Ի ՅՎՈՎ.ՋՎ[ՍՎՑԵ]	[ՉՎՅ]{ԸՍ ՎՅՂ.Վ}[ՎՍ]Ն [ՎՈ.Ի.Ց] {ՎԺԸՆ ԵՐԿԻԻ}
28	<ԼՈՅ ԹՈՒՈՅԸ>[Ն] ԵՒ ԶՍՎ ՃՇՄՎ[ՐԻՋ]	[Ղ.Ի ԵՒ ՆՎԻՎՆ]{Չ}[ՈՒ.Ճ]{ԸՇ}[Մ]ՎՐ[Ը]{ՋՈՒԹ.Ե}
29	<ԳԻՋԵԼ ԳՈՒ.Զ>ԳՎՐՇԸՆ [ՎԻԵ] {ՐՎԺՈՅ}	[ՎՆ]ԸՆ [ԵՒՎՆ.ԹՎՍ Վ]ՆՈ[ԻՆԸԴ.ՈՒ]Ն[Ի]
30	<ԶՎՅՍ ԵՒ ՎՈՎՔ>[ԵՎ] ՎՍ[Է] {ՅՈՐԺՎՄ}	{ՉԻԸ}[ՆԴՐԵՎԼ.Թ.Ի]ԸՆ ՎՅ[Ղ. ՈՉԻՆ] {Չ}
31	<ՎՍՎՍՑԵՆ Ի>[Վ] ՂՎՂՈՒ[Թ.Ի]{Ն ԵՒ}	{Յ}[Վ]{Ղ}{Վ}{Գ.Ս ՎՅՍՈ}{ՐԻԿ ՄԵ}.Ք [Վ]{ԻՃԵՎՔ}
32	<ՎՍՍԺՎՋՈՒԹ>[Ի]ԻՆ ՅՎՅՆ[ԺՎՄ] {ՅՎՆ}	[ՎՍՍԺՎՋ]ԵՄՔ {ՋԻ ՆՎ ԵՒ ՂՎՋԻՆՈՍ}
33	<ԿՎՐԺՎԿԻ ՆՈ>[Ց]Վ Ի ՎԵՐՎՅ ՎՎ{ՍՑԷ ՍՎ}	ՎՆ[ՈՒ]Ն[Ը]{Դ} [ՈՒՆԻ.Չ]ՎԵ[Ց Վ]ՎՐ[ԻԻՐՈ]{Վ}
34	<ՋՎԿՈՒՄԸՆ> ԻՍԿ [ՅԵ]{ՐԵՄ}[ԻՎՅ ՈՉ ՄԻ]	ՎՎ[Թ.Ս][ՈՒՆ ԵՒ ՎԵ]{ՑԻ}{ՑԸՆ.Թ.}[Ի.ԵՒ]
35	<ՎՅՆ ԶՅՎՆԿՎ>ՐԺՎԻՐԷՆ[ԸՆ] {ՆԻՇՎ}	{ԿՎՐԻ.ՔՎ}[Ջ Վ]{ՐԺՎՆԻ Է ՎՎՎՋՎ}
36	<ՆՎԿԷ ԶԻ Գ>[ՎԼ]Ն ՎՅՂ. [ԵՒ ԶԶՎ] {ՄԸՆ}	{ԼՈՅ ՎՎՄՆ.ԶԻ ԵՒ ՎԵՐ.ՋԻՆ.Թ.ՎԳՎԻՈ}{ՐՈՒ}

As stated above, there are not many differences from the published text of M₃₇₁₀. As a lexical divergence, we may note the use of *qaruf* instead of *տոհմ* in col. a, l.36 and col. b, l.9; minor deviations are the placement of *t* after *եւ անվտանգ* in col. b, l.13 or the choice of *ռչինչ* instead of mere *ռչ* in col. b, l.19. In l.14 of col. a, about half of the line was obviously erased before the palimpsesting procedure, within the quotation of the number “666” (*զվեց հարիւր վաթսուն եւ վեց*) alluding to St. John’s *Revelation* (13.8); possibly the scribe thus corrected a dittography if he had written *եւ վաթսուն* a second time instead of continuing with *եւ վեց*.

In contrast to these single cases, the most remarkable feature of the palimpsested text is of a more regular nature: in a very peculiar way, the scribe applies the letter *l̥* not only in word-initial position or within first or last syllables of words that are divided at line breaks, which would be a usual procedure, but everywhere where a *shewa* vowel is likely to have been pronounced. This is true, first of all, of the many cases where an article is suffixed to a given word as in *անուանցրս* (col. b, l.25), *թիւրս* (col. b, l.19), *անունը* (col. b, l.29), *վեցիցըն* (col. b, l.34) or *մարգարէութեանըն* (col. b, l.14), probably also in *զալըն* col. b, l.24); this is a very constant trait in the passages from Irenaeus that have been identified so far, and it even includes cases of the article attached to a word form in *-h* such as *յանապատիրն* (book IV, ch. XLII.5: fol. 134rb, l.20), *յորդիրն* (book V, ch. VIII: fol. 146vb, l.2), or *հոգիրն* (*Demonstratio*, ch. 41: fol. 154va, l.2). Beyond that, the scribe inserts *l̥* regularly where it is etymologically expected as a result of the “syncope” of former *i* or *u*; in our passage, this is visible in *գրտանիլ* and *գրտանին* (col. b, ll.18 and 21, vs. *եգիտ* etc.), *խընդիր* (col. b, l.20), *խընդրեցի* (col. b, l.24),²⁹ and even *գխընդրեալ* (col. b, l.30, vs. *խնդիր*), and also, with an article suffixed, in *գրոցըն* (col. a, l. 12, vs. *գիր*) and *համարըտութեանըն* (col. b, l. 28–29, vs. *համարիտ*). Remarkable examples from the other passages are *մարդըկան* (*Demonstratio*, ch. 41: fol. 154va, l.14, vs. *մարդիկ*) or *սըրբոյ* and *սըրբութեան* (ib., ll. 20 and 33, vs. *սուրբ*). To what extent this feature is systematic and what it reveals with regard to the stratification of Old Armenian requires a more thorough investigation, all the more since it may be crucial for the question when and by whom Irenaeus’ works were translated into Armenian (Képéklian 2020–2021, 31–32).

4. Conclusions

Even though systematic research into the palimpsested heritage of Old Armenian has only just begun, the examples treated in the present article clearly suggest that it will yield many more intriguing finds, with texts of different genres showing up in hitherto unknown shapes and thus opening new insights into the history of Armenian literacy. With the further development of imaging and processing technologies, even endeavours that may seem hopeless at first sight may turn out successful. As an

²⁹ Note that the published text has a different subjunctive form here (*խնդրեցի*).

example, we may take the case of M1585 of which 32 folios have been imaged so far. On only one of them (fol. 35r), two consecutive lines of undertext could be made out, reading [տ]առ [կոտ]որել and [հն]արես[ու].ք . գ, respectively. Assuming that each represents only a part of the given lines, this fragment could be restored to <եւ եթե գմարմինս պատառ. պա>|[տ]առ [կոտ]որել <գամհնայն հարս>|[հն]արես[ու].ք . գ<ի աչնմ երկիւղի...>, a passage that is found in John Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (Yovhan Oskeberan 1826, 404, l.14), which at least gives us a hint as to where to seek for the contents of the other palimpsested folios. However, the most striking question that remains with all these endeavours is the dating of the erased undertexts. Usually, they do not comprise colophons that would tell about their provenance, cases like that of M3938 (which represents just the remnants of a colophon) remaining exceptional, and a paleographical dating on the basis of character shapes alone cannot be reliable as there are not many dated manuscripts in *erkat'agir* that could be used for comparison. In order to determine the actual age of a palimpsested parchment manuscript (or even individual folios), it would be necessary to apply a scientific analysis as it is provided by the so-called radiocarbon (or ^{14}C) dating method. It would mean a decisive step forward if this method could be applied to the palimpsests we are dealing with in the Matenadaran.

References

- Abuladze, Ilia. 1944. ილია აბულაძე, ქართული და სომხური ლიტერატურული ურთიერთობა (IX–X სს.ში). გამოკვლევა და ტექსტები [*Georgian-Armenian Literary Relations of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. Study and Texts*]. Tbilisi: Publishing House of the Georgian Academy of Sciences. <http://dspace.gela.org.ge/handle/123456789/8859>
- Aleksidze, Zaza. 1968. ეპისტოლეთა წიგნი. სომხური ტექსტი ქართული თარგმანით, გამოკვლევითა და კომენტარებით გამოსცა ზაზა ალექსიძემ. *Liber epistolarum. Textum armenicum cum versione georgica edidit et disputatione commentariisque instruxit* [*The Book of Letters. The Armenian Text with a Georgian Translation*]. Tbilisi: Publishing House of the Georgian Academy of Sciences. <https://www.dspace.nplg.gov.ge/handle/1234/359267>
- Banouchyan, Arshak. 2002. "The Armenian and Greek Fragments and Palimpsests of the Matenadaran Collection". In *Rinascimento virtuale. Digitale Palimpsestforschung. Perspektiven des Netzwerks in den Beitrittsländern*, ed. Dieter Harlfinger, Jana Grusková, Daniel Deckers, Koen Vanhaegendoren. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenská, 90–93.
- Book of Letters*. 1901. *Գիրք թղթոց. մատենագրութիւն նախնեաց* [*The Book of Letters. Works of the Ancestors*]. Sahak Mesropean Matenadaran, vol. V. Tiflis: T. Rōtineants' ew M. Sharamē Press. http://greenstone.flib.sci.am/gsd/collect/hajgirqn/book/girq_txtoc1901.pdf
- Book of Letters*. 1994. *Գիրք թղթոց* [*The Book of Letters*]. Second Edition. Jerusalem: Sts. James Press.
- Catalogue*. 1965. *Յոնգակն նկարագրաց Մաշտոցի անվան Մատենադարանի* [*Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran*], vol. I, ed. O. Yeganyan, A. Zeytunyan, P. Antabyan. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. <https://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/Hamarot/Dzeragrats-1.pdf>

- Colophons*. 1984. Հայերեն ձեռագրերի հիշատակարաններ. ԺԳ դար [*Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 13th Century*], ed. Artashes Mat'evosyan. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. http://serials.flib.sci.am/openreader/nyut_hay_jogh_patm_4/book/Binder1.pdf
- CPG = *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*. Cura et Studio Mauriti Geerard. I–V, 1983–1987. Turnhout: Brepols. <https://clavis.brepols.net/clacla/Default.aspx>
- Gigineishvili, Bakar and Elguja Giunashvili. 1979. შატბერდის კრებული X საუკუნისა. გამოსაცემად მოამზადეს ბ. გიგინეიშვილმა და ელ. გიუნაშვილმა [*The Shatberdi Collection of the 10th century*]. Tbilisi: Publishing House of the Georgian Academy of Sciences. <http://gelati.edu.ge/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/შატბერდის-კრებული-X-საუკუნე.pdf>
- Gippert, Jost. 2011. *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mount Sinai. III: The Armenian Layer*. Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi, Series ibero-caucasica, 2/3. Turnhout: Brepols.
- . 2022. “Exploring Armenian Palimpsests with Multispectral and Transmissive Light Imaging”. *Magaghat*. <https://www.magaghat.ai/articles/exploring-armenian-palimpsests-with-multispectral-and-transmissive-light-imaging>.
- , forthcoming. “Palimpsests from the Caucasus and the DeLiCaTe Project”, to appear in *Palimpsests and Related Phenomena across Languages and Cultures*, ed. Jost Gippert, José Maksimczuk, Hasmik Sargsyan. Studies in Manuscript Cultures, 42. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.
- , Wolfgang Schulze, Zaza Aleksidze, and Jean-Pierre Mahé. 2008. *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mount Sinai. I–II*. Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi, Series ibero-caucasica, 2/1 and 2/2. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Grand Catalogue*. 2012. Մայր ցուցակ հայերեն ձեռագրաց Մաշտոցի անուան Մատենադարանի [*Grand Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran*], vol. VII, ed. Gëorg Tër-Vardanean. Yerevan: Nairi Publishing House. <https://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/data/M/Hator-7.pdf>
- Irenaeus. 1857. *Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros quinque adversus Haereses*, ed. William Wigan Harvey. Vols. 1–2. Cambridge: Typis Academicis. <https://books.google.de/books?id=oY9IAAAAMAAJ>
- Irenäus. 1908. *Des Heiligen Irenäus Schrift zum Erweise der apostolischen Verkündigung. Eis ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος*. In Armenischer Version entdeckt. Mit einem Nachwort und Anmerkungen von Adolf Harnack. Ed. Karapet Ter-Mëkërttschian and Erwand Ter-Minassiantz. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 31/1 = 3. Ser. 1/1. Leipzig: J. G. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. <https://archive.org/details/desheiligenirenuo03iiren>
- Irenaeus. 1910. *Irenaeus gegen die Häretiker. Ἐλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως*. Buch IV und V in armenischer Version entdeckt. Ed. Karapet Ter-Mëkërttschian und Erwand Ter-Minassiantz. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 35/2 = 3. Ser. 5/2. Leipzig: J. G. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
- Irénee. 1933–1936. Georges Bayan et Léon Froidevaux. « La traduction arménienne de l' « Adversus Haereses » de saint Irénée ». *Revue de l'orient chrétien*: [I]: 29, 1933–1934, 315–377; [II]: 30, 1935–1936, 47–169; [III]: 30, 1935–1936, 285–340. <https://archive.org/details/revuedelorientch2919331934pari> <https://archive.org/details/revuedelorientch3019351936pari>

- Irénée de Lyon. 1965. *Contre les Hérésies*. Livre IV. Edition critique. I: Texte et traduction. Ed. Adelin Rousseau, Bertrand Hemmerdinger, Louis Doutreleau et Charles Mercier. Sources chrétiennes, 100. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.
- . 1969. *Contre les Hérésies*. Livre V. Edition critique. II: Texte et traduction. Ed. Adelin Rousseau, Bertrand Hemmerdinger, Louis Doutreleau et Charles Mercier. Sources chrétiennes, 153. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.
- Jugeli, Vik'toria. 2008. ვიქტორია ჯუღელი, ნეტარი თეოდორიტე კვირელი. ცხოვრება, მოღვაწეობა, მრწამსი, თხზულებები და მათი ქართული თარგმანები [*St. Theodoretus of Cyrrhus. His Life, Activity, Faith, Works, and Their Georgian Translations*]. I. Tbilisi: Publishing House of the Georgian Academy of Sciences.
- Képéklian, Gabriel. 2020–2021. *La version arménienne du Livre V de l'Adversus haereses d'Irénée de Lyon*. Histoire du texte, édition critique, traduction et notes. Thèse de doctorat, UC Louvain, Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres, Institut des civilisations, arts et lettres – Centre d'études orientales. Louvain-la-Neuve.
- Movsēs Khorenats'i. 1913. *Մովսիսի Խորենացու Պատմության Հայոց* [*The History of Armenia by Movsēs Khorenats'i*], ed. M. Abeghean and S. Yarut'iwnean. Tiflis: Mnats'akan Martiroseants' Press. http://greenstone.flib.sci.am/gsd/collect/hajgirqn/book/movses_patmhayoc_1913.pdf
- Outtier, Bernard. 1977. « La version arménienne du commentaire des psaumes de Théodoret. Premier bilan ». *Revue des études arméniennes* 12, 169–180.
- PG = *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca*. Accurante J.-P. Migne. I–CLX, 1857–1866. Paris. <https://patristica.net/graeca/>
- Renoux, Charles. 1971. *Le Codex arménien Jérusalem 121*. II. Édition comparée du texte et de deux autres manuscrits, introduction, textes, traduction et notes. *Patrologia Orientalis* XXXVI,2 / 168. Turnhout: Brepols.
- . 1978. *Irénée de Lyon, Nouveaux fragments de l'Adversus Haereses et de l'Épideixis*. *Patrologia Orientalis* XXXIX,1 / 178. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Sargisean, Barsegh. 1914. *Մայր ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մատենադարանին Մխիթարեան ի Վենետիկ* [*Grand Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Mekhitarist Library in Venice*], vol. 1. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/287455/edition/263936/content>
- Seal of Faith. 1914. *Կնիք հասարակ ընդհանուր սուրբ եկեղեցւոյ յողորմիւտ եւ Ս. Հոգնկիր հարցն մերոց դասանութեանց յատուրս Կոմիտաս կաթողիկոսի համահասարեալ* [*The Seal of Common Faith of the Holy Church, Collected from the Doctrines of our Orthodox Fathers Inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Days of Catholicos Komitas*], ed. Karapet Yepiskopos. Holy Ėjmiatsin: Mayr At'or Press. <https://digitale-sammlungen.ulb.uni-bonn.de/content/titleinfo/5272252>
- S. Irenaeus. 1919. *Εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος. The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, with seven fragments. Armenian Version edited and translated by Karapet Ter-Mékërttschian and S. G. Wilson. *Patrologia Orientalis* XII/5. Paris: Firmin-Didot. <https://archive.org/details/patrologiaorient12pariuoft>

- Thomson, Robert W. 1975. "The Fathers in Early Armenian Literature". *Studia Patristica* 12, 457–470. <https://archive.org/details/thomson-studies-1964-1982>
- Yovhan Oskeberan 1826. *Յովհաննու Ոսկեբերանի Կոստանդինուպոլսի եպիսկոպոսականի յԱնտարանագիրն Մատթէոս. Գիրք երրորդ թերի եւ ի Թուղթսն Պաւղոսի հատուածք* [*On Matthew the Evangelist, Book III, Incomplete, and Extracts from On the Pauline Epistles by John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople*]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. http://greenstone.flib.sci.am/gsd/collect/armbook/books/yovhan_voskeber3_1826.pdf

The “Thrice-Holy”: An Angelic Liturgical Formula in Jewish and Christian Traditions

▼ **ABSTRACT** In an Armenian parabiblical text dealing with events that traditionally took place from the Fall of the Angels before the Creation, and down to Moses and the Exodus (“*Questionnaire*”), one passage quotes Isa 6:3b as the praise pronounced by the Seraphs, the second of the nine angelic classes. The present article traces aspects of the varied development of this Isaianic formula in Armenian and other Christian traditions as well as in Jewish sources, up until its appearance in *Questionnaire*. This review reveals a complex interweaving of ideas about the celestial liturgy, angelology, numerology, and human liturgy, which have all been associated with the Isaianic formula. The ramifications of this biblical expression of unclear origin have immense implications.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Seraphs, Trishagion, Isaiah 6:3, angelic liturgy, celestial hierarchy, angels, *Sanctus* prayer.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

1. Introduction

The passage which we will discuss here occurs in an unpublished Armenian parabiblical work that has been dubbed *Questionnaire*, which is preserved in the Mash-tots Matenadaran, manuscript M682, fol. 7r (1679 CE). Its full title is: Հարցումն կարճատու ընտրեալ եւ հաւաքեալ ի գրոց [Short Questionnaire, Selected and Assembled from Books]. This work, which I am currently preparing for full publication, deals with events and traditions that took place from the Fall of the Angels before the Creation down to Moses and the Exodus. The first part of the manuscript presents, among other matters, details of the hierarchical ranks of the angels, enumerating and naming nine descending classes of angels. These details are embedded in lists of celestial beings that commence from the Thrones, the angels closest to God, down to the lowest class that interfaces with the human world that are called simply Angels.

Michael E. Stone  0000-0001-6352-0431 • Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel (Email: stone.michael.e@me.com)

Cite this article: Michael E. Stone, 'The “Thrice-Holy”: An Angelic Liturgical Formula in Jewish and Christian Traditions', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 35–44
<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142260>>
DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142260

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

Questionnaire associates a biblical verse with each class. That verse constitutes the particular praise of God that the specific class offered. The list of nine angelic classes ultimately follows the listing of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, familiar from his work *Celestial Hierarchy*.¹ This passage has been published previously, based on another copy, a Miscellany, M286 (16th century), fol. 312r (Stone 2016, 77–81).² Here we publish the passage from M682 (described in Mayr *ts'uts'ak* 2007, 309–316).³ The passage transmits the verse in Isa 6:3, the praise of God pronounced by the Seraphs before the divine throne. That verse had a rich and varied development in Judaism and in Christian traditions from earliest days. We will present some aspects of its usage in the Armenian and other Christian traditions and in earlier Jewish sources.

2. The Formula “Thrice Holy” in Different Traditions

In Part 1 of *Questionnaire*, in section 1.3 we read:

1.3. Երկրորդ՝ Սերովերք. եւ ասեն. սուրբ սուրբ սուրբ Տէր զօրութեանց:

“The second (i.e., class of angels), Seraphs⁴, and they say, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts’”.

The doxology⁵ cited is a quotation of Isa 6:3b, shortened by the scribe to fit into one line, according to his practice in this manuscript. However, in M268 the verse of praise pronounced by the Seraphs is given in full as:

Սուրբ, սուրբ, սուրբ Տէր զօրութեանց. լի են երկինք եւ երկիր փառօք քո:

“Holy, Holy, Holy is⁶ the Lord of Hosts, the heaven and the earth are full of your Glory”.⁷

Many sources describe the angelic, heavenly praise as being the angels’ singing of that particular verse. After all, the prophet Isaiah says that the Seraphic choirs sang these words to one another in the Divine Court (Isa 6:3), so what better information could be adduced as to the content of angelic praise than Isaiah’s prophetic citation of it? The threefold repetition of the word “holy” (ἅγιος) gained this verse the name

¹ As is noted in Stone 2016, 77. The list included in Grigor Tat’ewats’i 1993, 144, might have been intermediary between the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and our text.

² The passage being discussed occurs on page 78 of that volume.

³ *Questionnaire* is listed on pp. 309–310. Another copy of the list, but in ascending order, is found in M537 of the year 1673, fols. 231r–232r. Neither text has been published in full.

⁴ On the Seraphs see: Wegner 2006. They are mentioned in the Bible only in Isa 6:2, 6. See also Hartenstein 2007 for the religio-historical background of Cherubs and Seraphs.

⁵ Gruenwald 2014, 78–79 perceptively remarks concerning re-applications of this verse, that “the biblical opening phrases are, as it were, the doxological constant, while the main body of the doxology is more or less in the form of a free variation on the biblical *Vorlage*”. The accuracy of this statement will become evident in the course of the present article.

⁶ Or: “are you”. In fact this clause is a predicative without any explicit verb.

⁷ This variation on Isa 6 is not biblical and it might have lain behind the form in M682 as well.

Trishagion or “Thrice Holy”.⁸ Whence Isaiah took the concept and the specific text of this praise is unknown, but the idea of prayer to and praise of God by the heavenly beings is older than Isaiah, though the exact words of such praise are not explicitly detailed anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible. Praise as the ceaseless activity of the angels is well known in Armenian texts (Stone 2016, 97, 104).

Examples of praise by the created beings are, of course, already to be found in the Hebrew Bible in texts like Ps 89 (88):6–8 and Ps 29 (28):1–2 and in other similar instances.

The three-fold glorification as a celestial song of praise was taken up and re-formulated in Rev 4:8 and there it became: ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος – “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,⁹ who was and is and is to come!” The Armenian text of the same verse of Revelation reads: Սուրբ Սուրբ Սուրբ, Սուրբ Սուրբ Սուրբ, Սուրբ Սուրբ Սուրբ, Տէր Աստուած Ամենակալ, որ էն էլ է՛ս, էլ որ գալո՛ց էս – “Holy Holy Holy, Holy Holy Holy, Holy Holy Holy Lord God Almighty, who is and are and who is coming”.¹⁰ Thus, the text in Zohrabeian’s Bible (1805) has the “thrice holy” praise thrice, reading սուրբ (“holy”) nine times in all. The other known, ancient, Armenian translation of Revelation, edited by Frëdërik’ Murad, reads: սուրբ, սուրբ, սուրբ Տէր Աստուած Ամենակալ, որ էն էլ էն, էլ գալոց է: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who is and is and is coming”. Here սուրբ occurs three times, as in the Greek text.

The striking, nine-fold repetition of սուրբ (“holy”) in the Zohrabeian Bible where Murad’s text has it three times, as does the Greek of Revelation, is probably to be explained as three times Thrice-holy, making nine in all. The number nine of the angelic classes, descending from Thrones to angels, is already found in the *Celestial Hierarchy* 200C–261D (Luibheid and Rorem 1987). There, Pseudo-Dionysius expounds the nine classes, their names and character, and their descending order. A modern Armenian translation of Pseudo-Dionysius was published a decade ago (Ghazaryan 2013), and there is an edition of the old texts with an English translation (Thomson 1987).

⁸ The name *Trishagion* is derived from Greek *τρίς* (“threefold”) and *ἅγιος* (“holy”). However, the title *Trishagion* usually designates a specific hymn in the Orthodox Synaxis. To avoid confusion, therefore, I refer to the proclamation as it is in Isa 6:3 by the name “Thrice-Holy”. It was early taken into Christian liturgical use and adapted and embellished. A rich study of an instance of this Christian re-use may be found in Martinez 1999, 120. Moreover, Beck 2011 deals with the “Trishagion Hymn” as it developed in the usage of the Greek Orthodox Church. See further Golitzin 2001, 136. On the *Trishagion*, its versions, their diverse interpretations and liturgical usages (Trinitarian and Christological), and about the polemics over them in ecclesiastical traditions, see also Janeras 1967; Klum-Böhmer 1979, 60–69; Brock 1985; Plank 1992. This verse of Isaiah also constitutes the angelic praise according to §2 of the Armenian text called *History of the Discourse* (Stone 2016, 104).

⁹ In the Greek Bible, the Hebrew divine epithet *šēba’ot* “of hosts” is often translated as *τῶν δυνάμεων* (“of the powers, armies”) or *παντοκράτωρ* (“ruler of all, Almighty”). This is, in turn, translated *Ամենակալ* (“Almighty”) in Armenian. In the instance in Isa 6:3, however, Greek has, not unusually, a third rendering, the transliteration *σαβωθ*, while in Rev 4:8 we find *ὁ παντοκράτωρ*. Probably, the Greek text of Isa 6:3 that stood before Revelation contained a variant reading.

¹⁰ The relevant verse is to be found on p. 828. The second է՛ս, which is found in Murad’s text where Zohrabeian reads էս (“you are”) may be taken as “He who is”, that is է with the substantivizing article. Note the shift from 2nd person to 3rd person.

The view that the number nine had special numerological significance and was, indeed, a “perfect number”, was widespread in late antiquity and the Middle Ages.¹¹ Luibheid and Rorem state, concerning Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, that “Dionysius illustrated in his own way the Platonic and Neoplatonic pattern of the three classes, three functions, and three levels. In his eyes, indeed, all reality is hierarchic and triadic. ... Thus, the angelic universe includes three triads, each subdivided into three orders...” (Luibheid and Rorem 1987, 5). Annemarie Schimmel remarks that “this [the idea about 9] is found in mediaeval Christian exegesis, ... The nine orders of angels found in such exegesis (and in Dante) are interpreted as reflections of the perfect 3, which can be completed by the all-embracing divine Unity to form the perfect 10” (Schimmel 1993, 164).¹²

Ten was also regarded as a significant number, and the notion of ten as a completion of a list of nine is doubtless behind some mediaeval Armenian texts that count humans as a tenth class, complementing the usual nine angelic classes with a final category of humans. This idea is to be seen in the writings of Ignatius *vardapet* (12th century) who speaks of nine ranks of angels and one of humans (Stone 2013, 94). In the 13th century, Vardan Arewelts’i says, զի թուեցաւ մարդն յինն դասս հրէշտակացն տասներորդ – “For humans are reckoned a tenth class [added] to the nine classes of angels” (manuscript M1267, fol. 5r) and Mkhit’ar Ayrivanets’i (14th century) speaks of ten classes of angels (Stone 2013, 137, 160).¹³

The “Thrice Holy” proclamation occurs in Rev 4:8, in a passage features of which are adapted from Ezekiel 1. In the said passage, the four Living Creatures that sing the “Thrice-Holy” as praise in heaven are drawn from Ezek 1:5–21, 24, and they play the role of the Seraphs of Isa 6.¹⁴ According to 1 *Enoch* 39:12, “those who sleep not” (that is, the Watchers, a very elevated angelic class) praise God saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Spirits, he fills the earth with spirits”. Johann Maier argued that the use of the “Thrice-Holy” formula in this very early Enoch writing outside the Bible, but its rareness in the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, reflects a change in which an originally arcane tradition came into broader use after 70 CE (Maier 1990, 543–586).¹⁵ In the

¹¹ This was partly because the sum of the digits of the multiples of nine always add up to nine.

¹² Giving some Homeric examples, Schimmel notes that the ancient view, current in the Graeco-Roman world, was that of the “near-perfection of the 9”. Note, for example, Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1.986a and compare also the nine Muses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, 52–62. For a somewhat later view, see “On the Ennead” in Waterfield 1988, 105–107. There is an interesting discussion of the numbers nine and ten in Aṙak’el Siwnets’i, *Adamgirk’* 1.10.12–20: see Stone 2007, 141–142. That is a later source, Aṙak’el Siwnets’i having written his epic on Adam and Eve in 1401–1403. Such symbolism in medieval Armenian writers is discussed in Thomson 1976.

¹³ In another, much earlier, tradition, ten classes of angels are recorded (2 *Enoch* 29:2), but no connection with nine is evident.

¹⁴ These Living Creatures produced sound, see Ezek 1:2, 24, 10:5. There are a number of similar adaptations of the “Thrice-Holy” in the early Christian centuries, of which the *Sanctus* prayer is one. Martinez 1999, 8 fn. 20 discusses the praise of the angelic ranks. On the praises in Revelation chapters 4–5, see Frey 2018, 103–127, and particularly 124–126. Lucetta Mowry has suggested a Jewish liturgical background combined with eastern court practice that served to provide the context for Rev 4–5 (see Mowry 1952, 75–84).

¹⁵ Maier’s article is further discussed by Warren 1994. The main point of Warren’s article is to identify an embedded use of the Thrice Holy formula in the scroll 4QSam^a 2:1–11, that had first been discerned in the Septuagint in

form with “heaven and earth”, the same verse is the praise of the Seraphs and Cherubs that surround God’s throne according to 2 *Enoch* 21:1.¹⁶ The invocation “Holy, holy, holy”, is also to be found in *Para. Ier.* 9:3 (Stone 2021, 20, 32, 47).

Analogously, the Hebrew tradition integrated the seraphic praise of Isa 6:3 into the heavenly liturgy, itself paralleled in human prayer. This process resembled *mutatis mutandis* the development in early Christian texts that ultimately led to the Thrice Holy being the typical praise of the class of Seraphs in the list in *Questionnaire*. Its interest for the present investigation lies in this similarity which we shall trace briefly.

In Hebrew, the “Thrice-Holy” is called the *Qeduša* “holiness” and it occurs regularly in the Jewish daily liturgy. At its heart stands the Seraphs’ praise in Isa 6:3 together with text based upon Ezek 3:12, which latter verse reports the song of the Cherubs before God: “Blessed be the glory of God from his place”. The *Qeduša* was established in the Jewish fixed liturgy from early times, and it came to highlight the complementarity of the human recital of these two verses with angelic prayer (Heinemann 1977, 24, 36; Gruenwald 2014, 208–09).¹⁷ So, in the usual Ashkenazi rite, the *Qeduša* opens with the invocation, “Let us extoll you and sanctify you, according to the counsel of discourse of the holy Seraphs, who sanctify your name in holiness, as was written by your prophets, ‘and they called to one another and said, “Holy, holy, holy ...’ ” (Martinez 1999, 6).¹⁸ The earthly worship here deliberately both resembles and evokes the angelic.

¹ *Clement* 34, dating from the early 2nd century CE, refers to the angelic praise and quotes the Isaianic verse, with substitution of “creation” for “earth”.¹⁹ The *Apotelesmata of Apollonius of Tyana*, which is another recension of the *Horarium* found in the *Testament of Adam*,²⁰ mentions the “Trishagion of the angels”, that is the “Thrice-Holy” which it says that the angels sang in the second hour of the day (Stone 1982, 72).²¹ The details of the angelic “Thrice-Holy” prayer are given in *Hebrew Enoch* (also known as *Hekalot Rabbati*).²²

The “Thrice Holy” occurs in the list similar to the present one, which Grigor Tat’ewats’i (1346–1409/10) included in the *Book of Questions* referred to briefly in

Thackeray 1914. Warren argues on p. 284 that Maier’s dating of the introduction of the Thrice-Holy formula into general usage was too late and it happened rather earlier than 70 CE.

¹⁶ This is the form of the text translated by Andersen 1983, 134.

¹⁷ Gruenwald deals with the connection of the liturgical *Qeduša* (Thrice-Holy) and the early, first-millennium Jewish mystical Hekalot hymns. See further the description of the heavenly *Qeduša* on his p. 293.

¹⁸ The *Qeduša* is referred to in *t Berakot* 1:11. Scholem 1954 remarks that the angelic hymns in the Merkabah mystical text *Hekalot Rabbati* all end in the Isaianic “Thrice Holy”. These hymns are claimed to be the oldest part of the Hekalot literature and can be dated at the earliest to the early Byzantine period. On p. 68, Scholem discusses the mystical effect of the repeated Thrice Holy from the point of view of ecstatic religious experience.

¹⁹ And not “heaven and earth”, as is discussed in the next paragraph. Martinez 1999, 8 refers to the praise of the angelic ranks.

²⁰ This work is probably of the fourth century CE. On it, see Robinson 1982 and Robinson 1989.

²¹ The Christian text conventionally called “Pseudo-Epiphanius” has also been read as reflecting a heavenly liturgy. It is discussed in Dorfmann-Lazarev 2020.

²² Odeberg 1928 lists several instances such as on pp. 56 (“time ... for the saying of the ‘Thrice-Holy’ ”), 71, and 116 (“those who utter ‘Holy’ and those who utter ‘Blessed’ ”). Other cases are listed in his index, s.v. שְׁדוּשָׁה. See also Charlesworth 1983, 1.291–292 and 305.

footnote 1. That list says: “The seventh [class], of the Cherubs: and they say, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts,’ just as Isaiah heard” (Grigor Tat’ewats’i 1993, 144).²³ The Cherubs are the seventh of the nine angelic classes ascending from the lowest, above them are Seraphs and Thrones, which are the closest to the Divinity. Grigor Tat’ewats’i’s list of the angelic ranks in his *Book of Questions* is very like those being published here, but is in ascending order from Angels (lowest) to Thrones (highest). The difference of order may be that of the point of view of the author. The ascending order is that in which the classes are revealed to a seer ascending to the heavens; the descending order, that which the angels encounter as they descend to carry divine messages down to earth or to intervene among humans. Both directions are explicit in Gen 29:12, in the vision of Jacob’s ladder, where the angels’ “ascending” precedes their “descending”.

In documents both earlier and later than *Questionnaire*, seven steps of ascent of souls to the heavens are described.²⁴ This idea is connected with the notion that the earth is surrounded by seven spheres counting from the moon up, and in each of which there is a luminary,²⁵ that is the moon, the sun, or one of the five planets. Beyond the seventh sphere is that of the fixed stars.

3. Conclusions

In most Armenian texts dealing with angelic praise and deriving from Isa 6:3,²⁶ the laudation reads as follows: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. The heavens *and earth* are full of your glory”.²⁷ This variant form of the “Thrice-Holy”, with addition of the words “and earth”, is also found in the *Sanctus* Prayer in the Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Nersoyan 1984, 66–67). It is also attributed to angelic choirs in 2 *Enoch* [J] 21:2.²⁸ It may be assumed plausibly that this form of

23 One would expect “Seraphs” since in Isaiah 6 the Seraphs are explicitly said to be those who sing this particular laudation.

24 See on the seven steps of the ascent of the righteous souls and the seven steps of the descent of the wicked in 4 Ezra 7:80–98 and the discussion in Stone 1990, 243. Compare also *Questions of Ezra* A 19–21 and *Questions of St. Gregory* recension 1. In the latter work, there is a partial list of seven steps in §§24–29 and another complete one in §§42–48 (see Stone 1995; Stone 2018; Stone 1982, and Stone 2022).

25 Lewy 1956, 412–420 discusses the idea of the ascent and descent of the soul through the seven heavenly spheres. The number seven of the spheres is constituted of six for the planets, sun and moon, and one for the fixed stars. On the development of this cosmology, see Bietenhard 1951, index s.v. *Himmel*, and Edward 2000, 100–108.

26 An early Armenian reference to angelic praise of God is in Agathangelos §272, and see Thomson 2001, 79.

27 Agathangelos says that the angels were created with the purpose of offering unceasing praise to the Creator, as noted above.

28 See M268, fol. 312r, published in Stone 2016, 78–80, and M266, fols. 90v–91r, published in the same work on pp. 81–82. A quite different composition, also preserved in M682, mentions the “Thrice-Holy” as sung by the highest class of angels, but does not quote the second half of the verse: Stone 2016, 102–04. The formula is also found in this form in the Greek Trishagion text published by Martinez 1999, 7.

29 Although 2 *Enoch* is accepted as a Jewish work, it would be difficult to infer from this fact that the particular form of the “Thrice-Holy” found in the surviving Slavonic text of the book is, therefore, Jewish. The addition to a biblical quotation of two words from a formula found in the liturgy is quite possible in the course of two translation procedures, from Semitic into Greek or from Greek into Slavonic, or in the course of copying in

the “Thrice-Holy” also occurred in the *Vorlage* of M682 here, and it was apocopated, though of course, the fragment of the formula preserved does not permit a decisive conclusion.

The investigation of the use of Isa 6:3 in M682, a late manuscript, leads us to perceive very early uses and understandings of the verse Isa 6:3. Thence, it leads us into a complex intersection of ideas about cosmology, the celestial liturgy, angelology, numerology, and human liturgy. It is a nice example of the mobility, reinterpretation and re-utilization of biblical expressions, and their many-faceted diversity of meanings and applications.

References

- Andersen, Francis. 1983. “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch”. In *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. Charlesworth, James H., 1.91–221. 2 vols. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Beck, Bruce N. 2011. “‘When Shall I Come and See the Face of God?’ The Exegetical and Historical Genesis of the Trishagion Hymn”. *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 56, 347–385.
- Bietenhard, Hans. 1951. *Die Himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum*. WUNT 2. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Brock, Sebastian P. 1985. “The Thrice-Holy Hymn in the Liturgy”. *Sobornost* 7(2), 24–34.
- Charlesworth, James H. 1983. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Dorfmann-Lazarev, Igor. 2020. “Adam in the Church at Aght’amar (915–921) and in a Pseudepigraphal Homily on Genesis: the Creator’s Companion, a King and a Herald of the Things to Come”. In *Von der Historienbibel zur Weltchronik. Studien zur Paleja-Literatur. Greifswalder Theologische Forschungen (GThF), Band 31*, ed. Böttrich, D. Fahl, and S. Fahl. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 329–332.
- Frey, Jörg. 2018. “‘Mystical’ Traditions in an Apocalyptic Text? : the Throne Vision of Revelation 4 within the Context of Enochic and Merkavah Texts”. In *Apocalypticism and Mysticism in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. John J. Collins, P. G. R. de Villiers, and A. Yarboro Collins. Berlin: De Gruyter, 103–127.
- Ghazaryan, Vigen (trans.). 2013. *Աստվածաբանական երկեր. Դիոնիսիոս Արեոպագոսի (Դիոնիսիոս Արիստոպոսի), Արեոպագիտիկներ* [Theological Works: Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Areopagitica*], with an introduction and notes by Vigen Ghazaryan. Yerevan: Nairi Publishing House.
- Golitzin, Alexander. 2001. “‘Earthly Angels and Heavenly Men’: The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Niketas Stethatos, and the Tradition of ‘Interiorized Apocalyptic’ in Eastern Christian Ascetical and Mystical Literature”. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 125–153.

Greek or in Slavonic, or during the process of transmission and editing of the Slavonic that resulted in the two Old Church Slavonic recensions of 2 *Enoch* preserved in the surviving manuscripts. On the transmission of this work, see Andersen 1983, especially 92–94. For a study of the *Sanctus* and its manifold reverberations, see Winkler 2002.

- Grand Catalogue*. 2007. *Մայր ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մաշտոցի սինաւն* [Grand Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran], vol. 3, ed. O. Eganean et al. Yerevan: Magaghat. <https://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/data/M/Hator-3.pdf>
- Grigor Tat'ewats'i. 1993 (reprint of 1730 edition). *Գիրք հարցմանից* [Book of Questions]. Jerusalem: Sts. James Press.
- Gruenwald, Ithamar. 2014. *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*. Second, revised edition. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 90. Leiden: Brill. <https://brill.com/display/title/8777?language=en>
- Hartenstein, Friedhelm. 2007. "Cherubim and Seraphim in the Bible and in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Sources". In Friedrich Vinzenz Reiterer et al. (eds.), *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings: Origins, Development and Reception*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 155–188.
- Heinemann, Joseph. 1977. *Prayer in the Talmud*. Studia Judaica 9. Berlin & New York: De Gruyter.
- Janeras, Sebastia Vicenc. 1967. "Les Byzantins et le trishagion christologique". In *Miscellanea liturgica in onore di sua eminenza il cardinale Giacomo Lercaro II*. Rome: Desclée & C. Editori Pontifici, 469–499.
- Klum-Böhmer, Edith. 1979. *Das Trishagion als Versöhnungsformel der Christenheit. Kontrovertheologie im V. und VI. Jahrhundert*. München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag.
- Lewy, Hans. 1956. *The Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*. Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie et d'histoire 13. Cairo: French Institute of Oriental Archaeology.
- Luibheid, Colm and Paul Rorem. 1987. *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*. New York & Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Maier, Johann. 1990. "Zu Kult und Liturgie der Qumrangemeinde". *Journal of Jewish Studies* 14, 543–586.
- Martinez, David G. 1999. *P. Michigan XIX. Baptized for Our Sakes: A Leather Trishagion From Egypt (P. Mich. 799)*. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, 120. Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.
- Mowry, Lucetta. 1952. "Revelation 4–5 and Early Christian Liturgical Usage". *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71, 75–84.
- Murad, Frederik. 1905. *Զայննյօթսն Յովհաննիս հին հայ թարգմանյօթին* [The Old Armenian Translation of the Revelation of John]. Jerusalem: Sts. James Press.
- Nersoyan, Tiran. 1984. *The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church*. New York: Delphi Press.
- Odeberg, Hugo. 1928. *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Plank, Peter. 1992. "Das Trishagion: Gotteslob der Engel und Zankapfel der Menschen". *Kirche im Osten. Studien zur osteuropäischen Kirchengeschichte und Kirchenkunde* 35, 111–126.
- Robinson, Stephen E. 1982. *The Testament of Adam: An Examination of the Syriac and Greek Traditions*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 52. Chico: Scholars Press.
- . 1989. "The Testament of Adam: An Updated Arbeitbericht". *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 5, 95–100.
- Schimmel, Annemarie. 1993. *The Mystery of Numbers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Scholem, Gershom G. 1954. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, revised edition. New York: Schocken.
- Stone, Michael E. 1982. *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Patriarchs and Prophets*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences.
- . 1990. *Fourth Ezra. A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- . 1995. "A New Edition and Translation of the Questions of Ezra". In *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: J. C. Greenfield Festschrift*, ed. Z. Zevit, S. Gittin, and M. Sokoloff. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 293–316.
- . 2007. *Adamgirk': The Adam Book of Aṛak'el of Siwnik'*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2013. *Adam and Eve in the Armenian Tradition. Fifth through Seventeenth Centuries*. Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and its Literature 38. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- . 2016. *Armenian Apocrypha: Relating to Angels and Biblical Heroes*. Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and its Literature 45. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- . 2018. "The Armenian Questions of St. Gregory. A Text Descended from 4 Ezra". *Le Muséon* 131, 141–172.
- . 2021. *Armenian Apocrypha: From Adam to Daniel*. Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and its Literature 55. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- . 2022. "The Armenian Questions of St. Gregory, Recension II", *Le Muséon* 135, 323–355.
- . Forthcoming. *Short Questionnaire, Selected and Assembled from Books*. Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and its Literature; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Thackeray, Henry St. John. 1914. "The Song of Hannah and other Lessons and Psalms for the Jewish New Year's Day". *Journal of Theological Studies*, 16, 177–204.
- Thomson, Robert W. 1976. "Number symbolism and patristic exegesis in some early Armenian writers". *Handēs amšoreay* 90, 117–138. Reprinted in Thomson 1994. *Studies in Armenian Literature and Christianity*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum Reprints.
- . 1987. *The Armenian Version of the Works Attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 488–489, Scriptores Armeniaci 17–18. Leuven: Peeters.
- . 2001. *The Teaching of St. Gregory*, revised edition, Avant 1. New Rochelle, NY: St. Nerses Seminary.
- Warren, Andy L. 1994. "A Trishagion inserted in the 4QSam^a Version of the Song of Hannah, 1 Sam 2:1–10". *Journal of Jewish Studies* 45, 278–285.
- Waterfield, Robin (trans.). 1988. *The Theology of Arithmetic Attributed to Iamblichus*. Grand Rapids: Phanes Press.
- Wegner, Thomas. 2006. *Gottes Herrschaft: Ein Analyse der Denkschrift (Jes 6.1–9.6)*. Supplement to *Vetus Testamentum* 108. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Winkler, Gabriele. 2002. *Das Sanctus: über den Ursprung und die Anfänge des Sanctus und sein Fortwirken*. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 267. Rome: Pont. Instituto Orientale.

Wright, Edward J. 2000. *The Early History of Heaven*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zohrabeian, Yovhannēs. 1805. *Աստուածաշունչն մատենան չին եւ Նոր Կտակարանաց* [*The Inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press.

Echoes of the *Definitions* Ascribed to Plato in a Medieval Armenian Compendium

▼ **ABSTRACT** A certain Gregory of Jerusalem compiled an Armenian collection of philosophical texts before 1267. The core of the collection (which is a series of 365 definitions pertaining to logic, natural philosophy, ethics, epistemology, and other related fields) is a translation of a lost or yet unknown Greek collection. Some definitions, often giving two or three explanations for the same terms, are ascribed to Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. The same definitions are arranged in alphabetic order in another collection called “Philosophical Definitions as Questions”. The author of this paper has found parallels for 175 Armenian definitions in works by Plato and Aristotle, as well as in other philosophical and lexicographical texts. 25 definitions have more or less close parallels in the *Ὅροι (Definitions)* attributed to Plato, some being literal translations. These 25 parallel Armenian and Pseudo-Platonic definitions, with English translations, are presented in the article. Three parallels with authentic passages from Plato follow them.

The passage translated from Plato’s *Timaeus* differs from the medieval Armenian version of this work. A brief quotation from the latter in the earliest commentary on the Dionysian *Grammar* by a certain David (probably 6th or 7th century) could possibly shed light on its date, much discussed in Armenology.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Gregory of Jerusalem, definitions, philosophical, lost Greek collection, translation, Plato, spurious, parallels.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

1. Introduction

There still remain unpublished and even unexplored major and minor texts in Armenian manuscripts. Some have been published without sufficient involvement of

Gohar Muradyan  0000-0001-6349-2389 • Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia (Email: g.muradyan@matenadaran.am)

Cite this article: Gohar Muradyan, 'Echoes of the *Definitions* Ascribed to Plato in a Medieval Armenian Compendium', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 45–57

<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142261>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142261

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

existing manuscripts. A recent edition of a series of philosophical definitions is the witness of its lost or still unknown Greek original.

2. The Structure of a Collection of Philosophical Definitions in Armenian

A collection of various philosophical texts compiled by a certain Gregory of Jerusalem is preserved in several Armenian manuscripts (the earliest being M3082, copied in 1267).¹ Some are excerpts with different content from philosophical works, while the main body of the collection consists of a series of philosophical definitions arranged by topic: «Սահմանք փիլիսոփայական» (“Philosophical Definitions”, 159 entries, see Gregory of Jerusalem 2019, 221–238²), «Բարոյականի յեղանակի սահման» (“Ethical Definitions”, 47 entries, see 239–243), «Սահմանք իմաստասիրականք միջակք» (“Intermediary Philosophical Definitions”, 46 entries, see 244–247), «Բանականի մասին սահմանս» (“Rational Definitions”, 58 entries, see 248–253), «Մասունք մարմնայն» (“Parts of the Body”, 22 entries, see 254–255), «Յաղապս տնկոց» (“Concerning Plants”, 13 entries, see 256), and «Երկուսացույ» (“From Gregory of Nyssa”, 9 entries, see 257).³ These texts comprise a series of short definitions of logical, epistemological, and natural-scientific terms. Some are ascribed to Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, often giving various explanations for the same terms. The names of some other philosophers are also mentioned: “Heraclitus” (in the form Հերակլիտես), but this name is found already in Aristotle’s definition that has been cited (232), Theophrastus in the form Թեոփրաստես (240), and Empedocles (256).

The majority of these definitions (335 of 365) were borrowed and arranged in alphabetic order in another text bearing the title: «Սահման իմաստասիրական իրր հարցմամբ» (“Philosophical Definitions as Questions”), although it is not written in the form of questions and answers. It omits the names of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics to whom some definitions are ascribed (published in Gregory of Jerusalem 2019, 258–289⁴). This text also contains 84 definitions absent from the collection of Gregory of Jerusalem.

¹ The other manuscripts that contain the whole collection and have been used in this edition are: M464 (1731–1734), 189r–215r, M2269 (18th century), 10r–28r, M8132 (18th century); the following contain only parts of it: M1980 (1391), 245r–265r, Pavia, Bibliotheca Universitaria, ms. Aldini 178 (12th and 14th centuries, hereafter Aldini 178), 114v–116v, M8132 (14th century), 177v–182r, M8444 (17th century), 344r–347v, M2041 (before 1676), 344r–347r, M2771 (1701), 498r–503r, M1980 (1381), 269r–286r.

² Hereafter, only the page numbers of Gregory of Jerusalem 2019 will be indicated.

³ Published in Gregory of Jerusalem 2019. The collection also comprises some minor passages not translated from Greek; these are excerpts from philosophical texts existing in Armenian, partly from David the Invincible’s *Definitions of Philosophy* (the other sources are yet unidentified): “Three definitions of God”, “Concise questions”, “Nature is...” (207–220). From those anonymous texts, only «Սահմանք փիլիսոփայականք» (“Philosophical Definitions”) was published before our edition, with a parallel Russian translation (Arevshatyan 1960). A fragmentary version of the same text was published in Muradyan 2014, 745–747 on the basis of a single manuscript, Aldini 178, which contains about the half of the text.

⁴ First published in Muradyan 2014, 763–782.

3. The Source of the Armenian Philosophical Definitions

It is impossible to point to a specific Greek source of this Armenian compendium, but parallels for many of those definitions (175 in number) exist in the works of Plato and Aristotle, as well as in other philosophical and lexicographical writings by Antisthenes, Theophrastus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Aristotle's anonymous commentator, Themistius, John Philoponus, the Neoplatonists Ammonius Saccas, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Simplicius, Olympiodorus, Priscian of Lydia, and the grammarian Dositheus. There are also passages found in works by the Stoic Chrysippus, Plutarch, Philo of Alexandria, the geometer Heron, Andronicus of Rhodes, Galen, Pseudo-Galen, Nemesius of Emesa, and Homer's commentator Eustathius, as well as in the *Stromata* by Clemens of Alexandria, the rhetorical *progymnasmata* by Hermogenes and Athonius, in Psedo-Zonaras' *Lexicon*, and the *Souda Lexicon*. Ten definitions have parallels in chapter 33 of the *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione verbi* (*Doctrina patrum* 1907, 249–266), and ten more passages are translations of chapter titles from Marcus Asceticus' (5th century) *On Melchizedek*, which are cited in Photius' *Bibliotheca*.

Searching for the mentioned parallels was quite a difficult task. It was necessary to guess the Greek equivalents of the Armenian words and try to find respective passages by using the TLG database. In the end, the originals of 124 Armenian definitions still remain unidentified.

Most of the parallel Greek definitions (more or less verbatim), 43 in number, are found in the *Dialectica* and other works by John of Damascus,⁵ and 25 other, in the *Definitions* ("Οποι) ascribed to Plato (Plato 1900).

4. The Definitions Attributed to Plato

The *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, written in late antiquity, lists "Οποι among "spurious" (νόθοι) works, attributing it to Speusippus (Westerink 1962, 26.4), Plato's nephew and successor as Scholarch of the Academy. "Οποι is a dictionary of 185 philosophical terms, probably written in his Academy shortly after his death. Only the terms defined in its first half are arranged according to three branches of philosophy: natural philosophy, ethics, epistemology and philosophy of language, and it is possible to single out various groups by topic. Definitions 1–20 mostly deal with natural philosophical terms ("eternal", "god", "generation", "the sun", "time", etc.). Entries 21–107 are related to ethics (e.g. "virtue", "justice", "temperance", etc.), politics (e.g. "king", "government", "law", "tyrant"), logic (e.g. "sentence", "definition", "proof"), linguistic topics (e.g. "sound", "noun", "syllable"), and gnoseology (e.g. "knowledge"). The second part (entries starting with 108)

⁵ In a number of manuscripts (at least five: M8132, M8444, Aldini 178, J898, V1598), the main section of the collection, the "Philosophical Definitions", immediately follows John of Damascus' *Dialectics* translated from Greek by Bagarat Mamikonean.

contain topics without any order; some terms already commented on in the first part are here explained once more (Hutchinson 1997, 1677–1678).

A similar repertoire of topics is reflected in the title of the Armenian “Philosophical Definitions”, the longest section in the collection of Gregory of Jerusalem and its *de facto* core. This title, in a sense, can be regarded as a prologue to the whole collection: «Սահմանք փիլիսոփայականք՝ սահմանս դնելով իմաստասիրականի բանի, այսինքն՝ բնականի բանի, բարոյականի և զամենայն գործ տրամաբանականի, և զնիւթն եռակի ունակութեամբ հատեալ և յցեալ ի բնականաց, բարոյականաց, բանականաց սահմանից, բարոք ենթագրել նախ զբանական սահմանս. և ահա ի սահմանէ սկսանելի է» – “Philosophical definitions, setting the definitions of philosophical⁶ reasoning, that is, physics, ethics and all matters of logic, and dividing the material according to threefold practice, and filling it with physical, ethical and logical definitions. It is good to sketch⁷ first the logical definitions. And now one should start with the [definition of the] definition”⁸ (221). The array of topics in the Armenian collection too resembles that of the Pseudo-Platonic *Definitions*.

5. Parallel Passages: “Platonic” Definitions – Armenian Definitions

Below, the Armenian definitions are cited in parallel with the corresponding *Definitions* ascribed to Plato.⁹ Texts differ in the extent to which they resemble the original Greek. There are two explanations for the differences between the texts: either the Greek recension which the Armenian translator used itself differed from the urtext, the Pseudo-Platonic *Definitions*, or they are a result of scribal error/revision.

- 1 “Philosophical Definitions” [1¹⁰]: «Սահման է ըստ Պղատոնի՝ բան ի սեռէ և ի տարբերութենէ»¹¹ (221) – “A definition, according to Plato, is something

6 Φιλιսոփայական (“philosophical”) is an old loan-word from Greek, while its synonym, իմաստասիրական, is a literal rendering of the same Greek word, used in earlier translations.

7 The word ենթագրել is a calque of ὑπογράφω, used in the Armenian translations of the Hellenizing School (late 5th–early 8th centuries), see David the Invincible 2014, 509, 517, 532.

8 This title could be translated back into Greek: *Ὅροι φιλοσοφικοί, ὅρους τιθέμενοι φιλοσοφικοῦ λόγου, ἤτοι φυσικοῦ λόγου, ἠθικοῦ καὶ πᾶν πρᾶγμα διαλεκτικοῦ, καὶ ὕλην τρισσῇ ἔξει τέμνοντες καὶ πληροῦντες φυσικῶν, ἠθικῶν, λογικῶν ὅρων, καλῶς ὑπογράφειν πρῶτον τοὺς λογικοὺς ὅρους, καὶ ἡδὲ ἄφ’ ὅρου ἀρκτέον.

9 The English translation of the Pseudo-Platonic definitions is cited from Hutchinson 1997.

10 This and the following are the numbers of entries within specific groups in Gregory of Jerusalem 2019.

11 There is a continuation: «... և կամ տարբերութեանց մեկնողական էութեանց բանից իրաց: Իսկ ըստ Արիստոտելի՝ բան որ զինչէրն զոյ յայտնելով, զինչ գոյոյն զինչէն հաւասար կարողութեամբ: Իսկ ըստ Չենոնի՝ բան ըստ վերլուծութեան կատարողին յառաջ բերեալ» – “or of differences, words explaining the essences of things. And according to Aristotle, something said that designates ‘what was that’; with the meaning of ‘what was’ equal to ‘what is’. And according to Zeno, ‘something that one utters when analysing’”. Cf. ὁρισμός ἐστι λόγος ὁ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι σημαίνων (Arist. *Top.* 154a.31–32) – “Definition is a sentence designating ‘what was that’”; εἰ γὰρ τὸ ἦν τὸ “ἔστι” σημαίνει, εἴη ἂν ὁ λόγος ὁ τὸ τί ἦν σημαίνων ὁ αὐτὸς τῷ “λόγος ὁ τὸ τί ἐστι σημαίνων” (Antisthenes Fr. 46.4) – “For if ‘was’ designates ‘is’, the phrase ‘what was that’ would be the same as ‘the phrase designating what is that’”. Cf. also “Ὅρος δὲ ἐστιν, ὡς φησιν Ἀντίπατρος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Περὶ ὅρων, λόγος κατ’ ἀνάλυσιν ἀπαρτιζόντως ἐκφερόμενος (Diog. Laert. *Vit.* 7.1.60.7–8) – “A definition is, as Antipater says in the first book of *On Definition*, a sentence which, when analysing, one utters in its exact meaning”.

said, [comprised] of genus and difference”. Cf. “Ὅρος λόγος ἐκ διαφορᾶς καὶ γένους συγκείμενος (Plato 1900, 414d.10) – “Definition: something said, comprised of genus and differentia” (Hutchinson 1997, 1683¹²). The terms *utn* and *սարբերութիւն*, used in the earlier translations of the Hellenizing school, are equivalents of *γένος* and *διαφορά*.

- 2 “Philosophical Definitions” [33]: «Երեսը են զգայութիւն դատողական երևելաց» (225) – “Vision is a sense-perception discerning visible things”. Cf. “Ὀψις ἔξις διακριτικὴ σωμάτων (411c.9) – “Vision: the state of being able to discern bodies” (1678).
- 3 “Philosophical Definitions” [43]: «Յիշումն է փրկութիւն զգայութեանց կամ իմացուածոյ, որպէս Պηատոն»¹³ (226) – “Memory is preservation of sense-perceptions or knowledge, as Plato [says]”. Cf. *Μνήμη διάθεσις ψυχῆς φυλακτικὴ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ ὑπαρχούσης ἀληθείαις* (414a.8–9) – “Memory: disposition of the soul which guards over truth which resides in it” (1682); cf. also *μνήμη γάρ ἐστι ... σωτηρία αἰσθήσεως τε καὶ νοήσεως* (Joann. Damasc. *Exp.* 34.4) – “Memory is preservation of sense-perceptions and knowledge”.
- 4 “Philosophical Definitions” [115]: «Մշտնջենական է, որ յամենայն ժամանակի է և յառաջագոյն էր և այժմ ոչ ապականի» (234) – “Eternal is that which exists at all times and was in the past and in the present is not destroyed” = *Ἄϊδιον τὸ κατὰ πάντα χρόνον καὶ πρότερον ὃν καὶ νῦν μὴ ἐφθαρμένον* (411a.1–2) – “Eternal: existent at all times, including past and present, without being destroyed” (1678).
- 5 “Philosophical Definitions” [116]: «Աստուած կենդանի անմահ, ինքնաբաւ առ ի ներփառութիւն, էութիւն մշտնջենաւոր և բարւոյ բնութեան պատճառ» (234) – “God: immortal living-being, self-sufficient for glory; eternal being and the cause of the nature of goodness”. Cf. *Θεὸς ζῶν ἀθάνατον, αὐταρκες πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν· οὐσία ἄϊδιος, τῆς τάγαθοῦ φύσεως αἰτία* (411a.3–4) – “God: immortal living-being, self-sufficient for happiness; eternal being; the cause of the nature of goodness” (1678). The word *ἰνքնաբաւ* is a calque of *αὐταρκες*, which occurs already in the Armenian version of Philo (Philo 1892, §30; Philo 1962, §30). For *εὐδαιμονία*, the Armenian has the neologism *ներփառութիւն*, which is rather a calque of *ἐνδοξότης* (“glory, gloriousness”).
- 6 “Philosophical Definitions” [117]. «Լինելութիւն խաղացումն էութեանց, փոփոխումն առ էութիւն՝ քայլելով եղանակաց» (234) – “Becoming: movement to being, change into being by passing through modifications”. Cf. *Γένεσις κίνησις εἰς οὐσίαν· μετάληψις οὐσίας· πόρευσις εἰς τὸ εἶναι* (411a.5–6) – “Becoming: change into being; coming to participate in being; passing into existence” (1678).

12 Hereafter, only the page numbers of Hutchinson 1997 will be indicated.

13 There is a continuation: «Իսկ ստոյիկեանցն՝ խոստովան լինել բաղադրութիւն պատուոյ անցելոյ: Իսկ ըստ Արիստոտէլի՝ ունակութիւն գնորից, որպէս պատկերի» – “And according to the Stoics, confession of the gaining of former glory. And according to Aristotle, having mental impression, as of an image”. Cf. *τί μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ μνήμη καὶ τὸ μνημονεύειν, εἴρηται, ὅτι φαντάσματος, ὡς εἰκόνοσ οὐ φάντασμα, ἔξις* (Arist. *Mem.* 451a.14–16) “What memory and remembering is? It has been said that it is the state of impression taken as an image of what the impression is about”.

- 7 6. “Philosophical Definitions” [118]: «Բախտ է բերումն յաներևոյթէն, պատճառ փառաւոր իրի» (234) – “Luck is a passage from the unclear, cause of a glorious event”. Cf. Τύχη φορά ἐξ ἀδήλου εἰς ἄδηλον, καὶ ἡ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτομάτου αἰτία δαιμονίας πράξεως (411b.11–12) – “Luck: a passage from the unclear to the unclear, spontaneous cause of a supernatural event” (1678). The word բերումն is a literal translation of φορά.
- 7 “Philosophical Definitions” [121]: «Դէմք է բնութիւն ընտրողական մարմնոյ» (234) – “Vision is the ability of discerning bodies”. Cf. Ὀψις ἕξις διακριτικὴ σωμάτων (411c.9) – “Vision: the state of being able to discern bodies” (1678). This definition has a parallel in entry 33 (no. 2 above). Instead of “vision”, the Armenian reads “face” (դէմք), since ὄψις has both meanings. In entry 33, the translator used another word meaning face: երեսք.
- 8 “Philosophical Definitions” [122]: «Ուղեղ է ի ջերմութենէ կառուցեալ» (234) – “Marrow is hardened by heat”. Cf. Ὅστουν μυελὸς ὑπὸ θερμοῦ παγείς (411c.10) – “Bone: marrow hardened by heat” (1979). In the Armenian definition, the headword corresponding to Ὅστουν (“bone”) is missing. It is likely that this word was originally translated before being later omitted, since the text entitled “Philosophical Definitions as Questions” (in which the same definitions are arranged in alphabetical order) contains the following definition: Ոսկր է պատճառ ուղղոյ – “Bone is the cause of marrow” (254, Ո.8).
- 9 “Philosophical Definitions” [123]: «Տարր է, որ ժողովէ և քակուէ զշարադիրսն» (234) – “Element is that which composes and resolves complex things” = Στοιχεῖον τὸ συνάγον καὶ διαλύον τὰ σύνθετα (411c.11) – “Element: that which complex things are composed of and resolved into” (1679).¹⁴ The word շարադիրս is a calque of σύνθετα; it is absent from the NBHL, but the related շարադրեմ and շարադրութիւն are attested in earlier translations.
- 10 “Philosophical Definitions” [124]: «Առաքինութիւն է հաստատադրութիւն կամ վեհագոյն բնութիւն մահացուի կենդանութեան՝ ըստ ինքեան գովելի: [125] Բարք է ըստ որում բարի կոչի, հաղորդութիւն օրինաց արդարակ» (234) – “Virtue is the disposition or the highest nature of a mortal living being, which is in itself praiseworthy. A habit is according to which it is said to be good, the just observance of the laws”. Cf. Ἀρετὴ διάθεσις ἢ βελτίστη· ἕξις θνητοῦ ζῶου καθ’ αὐτὴν ἐπαινετὴ· ἕξις καθ’ ἣν τὸ ἔχον ἀγαθὸν λέγεται· κοινωνία νόμων δικαία (411d.1–3) – “Virtue: the best disposition; the state of a mortal creature which is in itself praiseworthy; the state on account of which its possessor is said to be good; the just observance of the laws” (1679). Entry 125 should be the continuation of 124, and the word բարք shouldn’t begin a new entry but rather offer another gloss of the term առաքինութիւն (“virtue”). In the “Philosophical Definitions as Questions” too they form separate entries and are placed apart, according to alphabetical order (258, where Ա 12 = 124; 264, Բ 9 = 125).
- 11 “Philosophical Definitions” [129]: «Արդարութիւն՝ համախոհութիւն անձին նմին և բարեկարգութիւն անձին մասանց առ իրեարս և զիրերօք, բնութիւն է բաշխողական,

14 The preceding literal translation of the Armenian version is closer to the Greek original.

որ ըստ չափոյ յօժարական է երևելեաց նմա արդարական» (235) – “Justice is the unanimity of the soul with itself, and the good discipline of the parts of the soul with respect to each other and concerning each other; a nature that distributes by choice what according to measure appears to it just”. Cf. Δικαιοσύνη ὁμόνοια τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς αὐτήν, καὶ εὐταξία τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλα τε καὶ περὶ ἀλλήλα· ἕξις διανεμητικὴ τοῦ κατ’ ἀξίαν ἐκάστω· ἕξις καθ’ ἣν ὁ ἔχων προαιρετικὸς ἐστὶν τῶν φαινομένων αὐτῷ δικαίων (411d.8–e.3) – “Justice: the unanimity of the soul with itself, and the good discipline of the parts of the soul with respect to each other and concerning each other; the state that distributes to each person according to what is deserved; the state on account of which its possessor chooses what appears to him just” (1679). Համախոհություն is a calque of ὁμόνοια, and բարեկարգություն of εὐταξία.¹⁵

- 12 “Philosophical Definitions” [130]: «Համեստություն¹⁶ է նուաստություն անձին, որ ի նմա ըստ բնութեան լինի ցանկություն, քաջայարմարություն և բարեկարգություն առ ըստ բնութեան ցանկությունս և հեշտությունս, ձայնակցություն է առ անձին առ իշխել և...» (235) – “Temperance is moderation¹⁷ of the soul concerning the desires that naturally occur in it; harmony and good discipline in respect of natural desires and pleasures; concord in the soul in respect of ruling and ...”.¹⁸ Cf. Σωφροσύνη μετρίότης τῆς ψυχῆς περὶ τὰς ἐν αὐτῇ κατὰ φύσιν γιγνομένας ἐπιθυμίας τε καὶ ἡδονάς, εὐαρμοστία καὶ εὐταξία ψυχῆς πρὸς τὰς κατὰ φύσιν ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας, συμφωνία ψυχῆς πρὸς τὸ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι (411e.3–6) – “Self-control: moderation of the soul concerning the desires and pleasures that normally occur in it; harmony and good discipline in the soul in respect of normal pleasures and pains; concord of the soul in respect of ruling and being ruled” (1679). Քաջայարմարություն is a calque of εὐαρμοστία.

- 13 “Philosophical Definitions” [131]: «Արություն է բնություն անձին անշարժ յերկիւղէ, քաջություն պատերազմական, տեղեկություն, որ ըստ պատերազմի իրաց, ժուժկություն է անձին առ ի յսիւս որ և յապառնում խոհականութենէն, քաջախիս յուսություն առ մահուամբ» (235) – “Courage is a nature of the soul unmoved by fear; military confidence, knowledge of the facts of warfare; self-restraint in the soul from fearful and unrelenting thoughts; a joyful expectation in the face of death”. Cf. Ἀνδρεία ἕξις ψυχῆς ἀκίνητος ὑπὸ φόβου· θάρσος πολεμικόν· ἐπιστήμη τῶν κατὰ πόλεμον πραγμάτων· ἐγκράτεια ψυχῆς πρὸς τὰ φοβερά καὶ δεινά· τόλμα ὑπηρετικὴ φρονήσεως· εὐθαρσία ἐπὶ θανάτου προσδοκία... (412a.3–7) – “Courage: the state of the soul which is unmoved by fear; military confidence; knowledge of the facts of warfare; self-restraint of the soul about what is fearful and terrible; boldness in obedience to wisdom; being intrepid in the face of death...” (1679).

¹⁵ See lists of similar calques in Muradyan 2012, 28–42, 54–61.

¹⁶ The more common equivalent of σωφροσύνη, attested in numerous old translated and original texts, is նղախոհություն. It corresponds to the structure of the Greek word: նղ- = σω- (cf. σώζω), χոհ- = φορ- (cf. φρονέω), -ություն = -σύνη.

¹⁷ More literally, նուաստություն means “humiliation”.

¹⁸ This definition is defective.

- 14 “Philosophical Definitions” [133]: «Երկիւղ է ակնկալութիւն չարի» (236) – “Fear is the expectation of something bad”. Cf. Φόβος ἔκπληξις ψυχῆς ἐπὶ κακοῦ προσδοκίᾳ (415e.5) – “Fear: consternation of the soul in expectation of something bad” (1685).
- 15 “Philosophical Definitions” [136]: «Ամպարհաւանութիւն է պատճառ բարոյ ոչի» (236) – “Pretentiousness is the cause of non-existing good”. Cf. Ἀλαζονεία ἕξις προσποιητικὴ ἀγαθοῦ ἢ ἀγαθῶν τῶν μὴ ὑπαρχόντων (416a.10–11) – “Pretentiousness: the state which makes those who lack good or goods pretend to have it or them” (1685).
- 16 “Philosophical Definitions” [143]: «Արդարութիւն է ունակութիւն հասարակութեան բաշխող (236) – “Justice is the state of distributing what is equal”. Cf. Δικαιοσύνη ... ἕξις διανεμητικὴ τοῦ κατ’ ἀξίαν ἐκάστῳ (411d.8– e.2) – “Justice: ... the state that distributes to each person according to what is deserved” (1679). Ունակութիւն is a calque of ἕξις.
- 17 “Ethical Definitions” [18]: «Որպէս Պիատոնը՝ արդարութիւն է ինքնաբար ներգործութիւն անձին մասանց» (241) – “According to Plato, justice is the activity of the parts of the soul by themselves”. Cf. Δικαιοσύνη ... εὐταξία τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλα τε καὶ περὶ ἀλλήλα (411d.8) – “Justice: ... the good discipline of the parts of the soul with respect to each other and concerning each other...” (1679).
- 18 “Ethical Definitions” [19]: «...զոհախոհութիւն: [20] Ձայնակցութիւն է իշխանի և որ ընդ իշխանութեամբ են՝ ըստ Պիատոնի (241) – “Self-control is the concord of the ruler and those being ruled, according to Plato”. Cf. Σωφροσύνη ... συμφωνία ψυχῆς πρὸς τὸ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι (411e.9) – “Self-control: ... concord of the soul in respect of ruling and being ruled” (1679). As a result of scribal error, the headword զոհախոհութիւն (“temperance/self-control”) has become the last word of the previous entry. Ձայնակցութիւն is a calque of συμφωνία.
- 19 “Ethical Definitions” [45]: «Բարեպաշտութիւն է արդարութիւն առ Աստուած սրբութեան (243) – “Piety is justice concerning the holiness of God”. Cf. Εὐσέβεια δικαιοσύνη περὶ θεοῦ... (412e.14) – “Piety: justice concerning the gods...” (1680). Բարեպաշտութիւն is a calque of εὐσέβεια.
- 20 “Intermediary Philosophical Definitions” [23]: «Քաղաքականութիւն է մակացութիւն քաղաքի ւսուցի» (245) – “Political skill is the knowledge of what is useful to the city”. Cf. Πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη καλῶν καὶ συμφερόντων· ἐπιστήμη ποιητικὴ δικαιοσύνης ἐν πόλει (413b.11) – “Political skill: the knowledge of what is admirable and useful; the knowledge of how to produce justice in a city” (1681). Մակացութիւն is a calque of ἐπιστήμη.

In the following cases, the differences between the Armenian and Pseudo-Platonic definitions are more considerable.

- 21 “Philosophical Definitions” [5]: «...Բան յառաքերական է հոսումն ի մտածութեանց՝ ընդ բայից և անուանց, որպէս Պիատոնը¹⁹ – “Uttered word is an emission of thought with verbs and nouns, as Plato [says]” (221–222). Cf. Φωνὴ βεῦμα διὰ στόματος ἀπὸ διανοίας (414d.1) – “Voiced sound: an emission

of thought through the mouth” (1683). See also λόγος ... ὁ μὲν ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ ... ὁ δὲ ἐν τῇ προφορᾷ καὶ χρήσει ῥεῦμα ἀπὸ διανοίας ἐκπεμπόμενον μετὰ φωνῆς (Pseudo-Zonaras, *lambda* 1315.7–11) – “Speech ... one [kind] is in the mind ... the other uttered and applied is an emission of the mind released with voice”.

- 22 “Philosophical Definitions” [29]: «Ἐφαπτομένης τῆς ψυχῆς διὰ τὸν αἰσθητικὸν ὁρᾶται ἡ ψυχή»²⁰, ἢ ἡ αἰσθητικὴ ὁρᾶται διὰ τὸν αἰσθητικὸν ὁρᾶται ἡ ψυχή»²¹ (225) – “Perception according to Plato is experience of the soul through the body, a feeling through the sense organ, or a common experience of the soul and body”. Cf. αἰσθησις ψυχῆς φορὰ, νοῦ κίνησις ψυχῆς²³ διὰ σώματος, εἰσάγγελσις εἰς ὥρας ἀνθρώπων, ἀφ’ ἧς γίγνεται ψυχῆς ἄλογος δύναμις γνωριστικὴ διὰ σώματος (414c.5–7) – “Perception: fluctuation of the soul; movement of mind via the body; an announcement for the benefit of human beings; from which arises a non-rational ability in the soul to recognize things through the body” (1683).
- 23 “Philosophical Definitions” [42]: «Ὅτι τὸ ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ πρώτη καὶ ἀκαταμάχητος ἐπιστήμη, ἢ ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ πρώτη καὶ ἀκαταμάχητος ἐπιστήμη, ἢ ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ πρώτη καὶ ἀκαταμάχητος ἐπιστήμη» (226) – “Knowledge is correct conception linked by causes to the mind, or an expression of original and first causes, or a firm expression which cannot be dislodged²⁴ by reasoning...”. Cf. Ἐπιστήμη ὑπόληψις ψυχῆς ἀμετάπτωτος ὑπὸ λόγου... (414b.10) – “Knowledge: conception of the soul which cannot be dislodged by reasoning” (1683).
- 24 “Philosophical Definitions” [50]: «Ὅτι τὸ πίστις ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ πρώτη καὶ ἀκαταμάχητος ἐπιστήμη» (227) – “Faith is a firm conception.” Cf. Πίστις ὑπόληψις ὁρθὴ τοῦ οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς αὐτῷ φαίνεται· βεβαιότης ἡθους (413c.4–5) – “Faith: the conception that things are as they appear to one; firmness of character” (1681).
- 25 “Philosophical Definitions” [51]: «Ὅτι τὸ ἀπόδειξις ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ πρώτη καὶ ἀκαταμάχητος ἐπιστήμη, ἢ ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ πρώτη καὶ ἀκαταμάχητος ἐπιστήμη, ἢ ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ πρώτη καὶ ἀκαταμάχητος ἐπιστήμη» (227) – “Proof is a deliberative, demonstrative argument drawn from the initial, intermediate and true [facts], or an argument that demonstrates something known through them”. Cf. Ἀπόδειξις λόγος συλλογιστικὸς ἀληθής, λόγος ἐμφανιστικὸς διὰ προγιγνωσκομένων (414e.2–3) – “Proof: true argument

19 There is a continuation: «ἢ καὶ τὸν αἰσθητικὸν ὁρᾶται ἡ ψυχή» (Arist. *Int.* 16a.19–21) – “And according to Aristotle, a sound that has meaning by convention, or has meaning in some of its separate parts”. Cf. Ὅνομα μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ φωνὴ σημαντικὴ κατὰ συνθήκην . . . ἢς μὴδὲν μέρος ἐστὶ σημαντικὸν κεχωρισμένον (Arist. *Int.* 16a.19–21) – “A noun is a sound that has meaning by convention . . . of which no part has meaning separately”; Λόγος δὲ ἐστὶ φωνὴ σημαντικὴ, ἢς τῶν μερῶν τι σημαντικὸν ἐστὶ κεχωρισμένον (Arist. *Int.* 16b.26) – “A sentence is a sound that has meaning, of which some parts have meaning separately”.

20 Cf. Αἰσθησις ἐστὶ πάθος ψυχῆς διὰ σώματος (Pseudo-Galen *Def. med.* 19.378.12) – “Perception is experience of the soul through the body.”

21 Cf. ἡ αἰσθησις, τὸ δὲ πάθος ἐν τῷ αἰσθητηρίῳ (Priscianus *Metaphrasis in Theophrastum* 3.22–23) – “Perception – experience in the organ of perception”.

22 There is a continuation: «ἢ καὶ τὸν αἰσθητικὸν ὁρᾶται ἡ ψυχή» (Arist. *Int.* 16a.19–21) – “And according to Aristotle, a kind of impression, and according to the Stoics, image of the sensible”.

23 Hutchinson omits ψυχῆς.

24 Ἀκαταμάχητος may be a calque of ἀμετάπτωτος, but also of ἀμετάπειστος, (“not subject to persuasion, unchangeable”). Cf. τὴν ἐπιστήμην ὥριστο ὑπόληψιν ἀμετάπειστον (Arist. *Top.* 146b.2).

reasoning to a conclusion; argument that declares something through what is previously known” (1683). The word բաղխոհութիւն in David Invincible’s *Definitions of Philosophy* (chapter 19) corresponds to συμβουλευτικός in its Greek original (David the Invincible 1904, 72.21), which designates the deliberative branch of rhetoric.

Parallels with authentic Platonic works can also be pointed to.

- 26 “Philosophical Definitions” [99]: «Ճարտասանական է բան հաւանութեան արարչագործ, հաւատացուցանալի, յաղագս իրաւանց և անիրաւութեան, հանդերձ բանի և հմտութեամբ փութանակի, որպէս Պիտտոն, կամ անբան կրթութիւն, քաղաքականի մասին ուրուական պատկեր (232) – “Rhetoric is a persuasive speech, producer of belief in regard to right and wrong, along with reasoning and diligent learning, as Plato [said], or unreasonable exercise, an unreal image of a branch of politics”. Cf. {ΠΩΛ.} Ἀλλὰ τί σοι δοκεῖ ἡ ῥητορικὴ εἶναι;... {ΣΩ.} Ἐμπειρίαν ἔγωγέ τινα (Plato, *Gorgias* 462c.1–3) – “Polus: what do you consider rhetoric to be? Socrates: I think it is a sort of experience”; Ἡ ῥητορικὴ ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικεν, πειθοῦς δημιουργὸς ἐστὶν πιστευτικῆς ἀλλ’ οὐ διδασκαλικῆς περὶ τὸ δίκαιόν τε καὶ ἄδικον (454a.1) – “Rhetoric, as it seems, is a producer of persuasion for belief, not for instruction in the matter of right and wrong”; ἐστὶν γὰρ ἡ ῥητορικὴ κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον πολιτικῆς μορίου εἶδωλον (463d.1) – “Rhetoric, by my account, is an image of a branch of politics”.
- 27 “Intermediate Philosophical Definitions” [9]: «Մահ է լուծումն և որոշումն հոգւոյ ի մարմնոյ» (244) – “Death is release and separation of the soul from the body”. Cf. Οὐκοῦν τοῦτό γε θάνατος ὀνομάζεται, λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος; (Plato, *Phaedo* 67d.4) – “Well, then, is this what is called death: release and separation of the soul from the body?”
- 28 “Philosophical Definitions as Questions” [5]: «Հոտ է շոգի ի ջրոյ և ի յաւղոյ գոյացեալ. ջրոյ՝ անաւրամասնագոյն և աւղոյ՝ թանձրամասնագոյն» (274) – “Smell is vapour formed from water and air, thinner than water and thicker than air”. Cf. εἰσὶν τε ὁσμαι σύμπασαι καπνὸς ἢ ὀμίχλη ... ὅθεν λεπτότεραι μὲν ὕδατος, παχύτεραι δὲ ὁσμαι σύμπασαι γεγόνασιν ἀέρος (Plato *Tim.* 66e.2–5) – “All smells are smoke or mist ... hence, thinner than water, but all smells are thicker than air”.

It is worth mentioning that the Platonic citations in the Armenian collection of Gregory of Jerusalem have nothing to do with the old Armenian version of Plato’s dialogues extant in a single manuscript (V₁₁₂₃, probably 17th century), discovered in 1835 and published in Venice (Plato 1877; Plato 1890). The only citation in Gregory’s collection is from *Timaeus*, the last parallel cited above. It differs from the old translation of the *Timaeus*, which reads: Ամենայն հոտք՝ ծուխ և կամ մրրիկ ... Աստուստ անօրագոյնք են քան զջուր, և թանձրագոյն ամենայն հոտք են ի միասին քան զօդ (Plato 1877, 141) – “All smells are smoke or mist ... hence, thinner than water, but all smells are thicker than air”.

The date of the Armenian version of the Platonic dialogues is much debated. It either belongs to the activity of the Hellenizing School (late 5th–8th centuries) or to the hand of Grigor Magistros (950–1058), as he himself claims (Calzolari 2014, 350–

351). In a recent article, Irene Tinti demonstrates that from those dialogues, only the *Timaeus* is cited in Armenian texts, the earliest instance being in the 12th century by Nersēs Lambronats'i (Tinti 2023, 221–222). Some later authors cited a small passage from it: գոշի՝ ի սպիտակի և ի սևաւի – “grey [originates] from white and black” (Plato 1877, 143; Tinti 2023, 225–228). However, I have recently found out that the earliest commentator on the *Grammar* by Dionysius Thrax, David²⁵, also cited this line: ըստ առակի՝ ծայրիցն՝ ի սպիտակէն և ի սևոյն գոշ – “according to a proverb, from the extremities, from white and black, grey [originates]” (Jahukyan 1956, 249²⁶). This spoor of the *Timaeus* in David's commentary could possibly help resolve the problem of the dating of the Armenian Platonic dialogues.

6. Conclusions

It is quite probable that the Armenian collection of various philosophical texts, compiled at least before 1267 (the date of the earliest manuscript, M3082) by a certain Gregory of Jerusalem, is a witness to a lost Greek collection of philosophical definitions. While the majority of the parallel Greek definitions are found in the works by John of Damascus, quite a significant number of them, as we have seen, originate from the *Definitions* attributed to Plato. Some read as direct translations of the respective Greek passages. In most cases, the Armenian definitions partially correspond to their Greek parallels, while in five instances they diverge quite substantially from the original. The non-extant Greek collection of philosophical definitions had contained 25 entries going back to the *Definitions* ascribed to Plato. Several intermediary stages between them can be surmised.

A brief quotation from Plato's old Armenian version of *Timaeus* in the earliest commentary on the Dionysian *Grammar* by the aforementioned David (probably 6th or 7th century) could perhaps prove that the translation of Plato's dialogues antedates it.

References

Adonts', Nicholas. 1915. *Дионисий Фракийский и армянские толкователи* [*Dionysius Thrax and His Armenian Commentators*]. Petrograd: Imperial Academy of Sciences (for an Armenian translation of the study by Olga Vardazaryan and a reproduction of the texts, see Adonts' 2008).

²⁵ Probably a 6th- or 7th-century author who influenced, among others, Step'anos Siwnets'i (7th–8th centuries). According to medieval Armenian tradition reflected, among other sources, in Aṙak'el Siwnets'i's (14th–15th centuries) *Commentary on Grammar*, this was “David the Philosopher” (i.e. David the Invincible): he had first translated the Dionysian *Grammar* and then commented on it (see Aṙak'el Siwnets'i 1982, 73).

²⁶ The commentaries of David and four later commentators were first published by Nicholas Adonts' (Adonts' 1915, 77–124). He restored them from the compilatory commentaries of Grigor Magistros and Yovhannēs Erznkats'i. Later on, Gevorg Jahukyan found three manuscripts containing David's commentary as an independent text (M5596, M1115, and M1746) and published it (Jahukyan 1956).

- . 2008. *Երկեր հինգ հատորով, Գ. Հայերենագիտական ուսումնասիրություններ* [Works in Five Volumes, 3: Armenological Studies], ed. Petros Hovhannisyán. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Yerevan State University.
- Aṙak'el Siwnets'i. 1982. *Յաղագս քերականության համառոտ լուծմունք* [Concise Commentary on Grammar], ed. Levon Khacherean. Los Angeles: Alco.
- Arevshatyan, Sen. 1960. “Два древних философских фрагмента – ‘Ритор, о природе’ и ‘Философские определения’ ” [“Two Old Philosophical Fragments: ‘Rhetor on Nature’ and ‘Philosophical Definitions’ ”]. *Banber Matenadaran* 5, 371–391. <https://banber.matenadaran.am/ftp/data/Banber5/20.S.Arevshatyan.pdf>
- Calzolari, Valentina. 2014. “Philosophical Literature in Ancient and Medieval Armenia”. In *Armenian Philology in the Modern Era, from Manuscript to Digital Text*, ed. Valentina Calzolari, with the collaboration of Michael E. Stone (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8: Uralic & Central Asian Studies, Volume 23/1). Leiden, Boston: Brill, 349–376.
- David the Invincible. 1904. *Davidis Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Commentarium*, ed. Adolf Busse (CAG, XVIII, 2). Berolini: Georgii Reimeri.
- David the Invincible. 2014. *Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge, Old Armenian Text with the Greek Original, an English Translation, Introduction and Notes by Gohar Muradyan* (Philosophia antiqua, vol. 137: Commentaria in Aristotelem Armeniaca: Davidis opera, curantibus Valentina Calzolari et Jonathan Barnes, vol. 3). Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Doctrina patrum*. 1907. *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione verbi. Ein griechisches Florilegium aus der Wende des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Franz Diekamp, Münster: Druck der Aschendorfschen Buchdruckerei. <https://archive.org/details/doctrinapatrumdoodiekgoog/page/n15/mode/2up>
- Gregory of Jerusalem. 2019. «Գրիգորի Երուսաղեմացոյ սահմանք զանազանք» [“Various Definitions by Gregory of Jerusalem”]. In *Հովհան Դամասկացու «Դիալեկտիկա» երկի հայերեն թարգմանությունները* [The Old Armenian Versions of the Dialectics by John of Damascus]. Critical Texts and Study by Gohar Muradyan (John of Damascus, Armenian Translations, Volume 1). Yerevan: Matenadaran, 190–257. https://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/el_gradaran/G.Muradyan-Dialektika.pdf
- Hutchinson, Douglas (trans.). 1997. *Definitions*. In Plato, *Complete Works*. Edited, with Introduction and Notes by John M. Cooper, Associate Editor Douglas S. Hutchinson. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1677–1686. https://cful.letras.ulisboa.pt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Plato-Complete-Works-by-Plato-John-M.-Cooper-D.-S.-Hutchinson-z-lib.org_.pdf
- Jahukyan, Gevorg. 1956. «Դավթի քերականական աշխատության նորահայտ ամբողջական տեքստը» [“The Newfound Complete Text of David's Grammatical Work”]. *Banber Matenadaran* 3, 241–264. <https://banber.matenadaran.am/ftp/data/Banber3/15.G.Djahukyan.pdf>
- Muradyan, Gohar. 2012. *Grecisms in Ancient Armenian* (Hebrew University Armenian Studies 13). Leuven–Paris–Dudley, MA: Peeters.
- (ed.). 2014. *Դավիթ Անյաղթին վերագրուող և նրա անունին առնչուող գրուածքներ* [Texts Ascribed to David the Invincible and Related to His Name], an appendix in *Մասնակազիրք Հայոց* [Medieval Armenian Authors], vol. 20. Yerevan: Nairi Publishing House, 615–782.

- Philo. 1892. *Փիլոնի Հեբրայեցոյ ճառք որոց հելլեն բնագիրք հասին առ մեզ* [*Philo the Hebrew's Sermons the Greek Originals of Which Have Reached Us*]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press.
- . 1962. *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, vol. 4, ed. Leopold Cohn. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Plato. 1877. *Պլատոնի ինստրասիդի տրամախօսութիւնք. Եւթիփրոն, Պաշտպանութիւն Սոկրատայ և Տիմէոս* [*Plato the Philosopher's Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Timaeus*]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press.
- . 1890. *Պլատոնի տրամախօսութիւնք. Զառաքս օրհնաց և Մինոս* [*Plato's Dialogues: On the Laws and Minos*]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press.
- . 1900. “Օբοι. In *Platonis opera*, ed. John Burnet, vol. 5. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900 (repr. 1967), 411–416.
- Tinti, Irene. 2023. “On the Indirect Tradition and Circulation of the Ancient Armenian Platonic Translations”. In *Armenia through the Lens of Time, Multidisciplinary Studies in Honour of Theo Maarten van Lint*, ed. Federico Alpi, Robin Meyer, Irene Tinti, and David Zakarian, with the collaboration of Emilio Bonfiglio (*Armenian Texts and Studies*, vol. 6). Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2023, 213–233.
- Westerink, Leendert G. (ed.). 1962. *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co.

The Oracles in an 11th-Century Armenian Manuscript (Yerevan, Matenadaran, No. 9650)

▼ **ABSTRACT** The Graz Armenian palimpsest (University Library no. 2058/2, a Georgian manuscript of the 10th century with an underlying Armenian text from around the year 800) contains 279 oracle sayings together with the text of the Gospel of John. Its readable part (229 oracles) was published in 2015. The present article offers the oracles of another Armenian manuscript which is kept at the Matenadaran in Yerevan: M9650, dating from the 11th century. Here again, the oracles are added to the verses of the Gospel of John. Having their place in the margins and sometimes in wonderfully designed cartouches, they are arranged in a unique way. We don't know a similar page layout elsewhere. The Syriac corpus of the same genre offers the oracles embedded in the text of John (London, British Library, add. 17,119, 6th/7th centuries). We give here the Armenian text of the oracles found in M9650, an English translation, and a first comparison with the oracles of the Graz palimpsest. Juxtaposing the two texts, we find total uniformity on the one hand and considerable variation in the wording, the formation of text sections and their sequence on the other.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Matenadaran, manuscripts, oracles, Syriac parallels, Gospel of John, divination, palimpsests.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

1. Introduction

About thirty years ago, my respected colleague Bernard Outtier hinted at an Armenian manuscript kept in the Matenadaran, the Research Institute of Ancient

Erich Renhart  0000-0002-8457-7960 • VESTIGIA – Manuscript Research Centre, University of Graz, Graz, Austria (Email: erich.renhart@uni-graz.at)

Cite this article: Erich Renhart, 'The Oracles in an 11th-Century Armenian Manuscript (Yerevan, Matenadaran, No. 9650)', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 59–78

<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142262>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142262

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

Manuscripts in Yerevan: M9650, which contains a series of oracles¹ (hereafter **M**, see Outtier 1993, 181–184). Having worked over years on the Graz palimpsest (Graz, University Library, ms. 2058/2, hereafter **G**, see Renhart 2015 and 2022) with similar oracles, I am now considering **M** for comparison. So far, these two manuscripts are the only ones known worldwide to contain oracles along with the Gospel of John in Armenian. Whereas the Graz palimpsest oracles were published some years ago (Renhart 2015, 115–143), those from **M** remain unpublished. The present article offers a first reading of those curious oracle sayings and gives some preliminary observations by comparing the two series of Armenian oracles with each other. In some instances we will have a look at a similar Syriac version of oracles taken from a very early manuscript kept in the British Library (London, BL, Add. 17,119, dated 6th to 7th centuries, hereafter **S** (see Childers 2020, 97–154).

2. The Manuscript

M is described in the short catalogue (*Catalogue* 1970, 968) as “Gospel of John”, dating from the 11th century. The cataloguers added that it also contains oracles (բախտագուշակ). The writing material is parchment, the dimensions of the book are 19 x 13,7 cm. Lacking its initial part, the manuscript is acephalous: fol. 1r starts with Jn 7,52, and the book lacks its end. The biblical text breaks off on fol. 60v in the midst of the verse Jn 19,17 (hence, two and a half chapters are actually missing). The quire structure appears to be disturbed.² There is one folio missing between fol. 3v (Jn 8,28, oracle no. 116) and fol. 4r (Jn 8,41b, oracle no. 120). Much more text is lacking after fol. 22v (Jn 10,22a, oracle no. 157) and fol. 23r (Jn 12,18b, oracle no. 176). Hence we have the remnants of a book in front of us — we will see that it was never completed as a tool for divinatory practices.

Which category can we assign to the book that is biblical on the one hand and oracular on the other? Clearly, **M** does not show any traces that would indicate a liturgical use. A close view on the main text, though incomplete, reveals that we are confronted with an unabridged biblical text, which is enriched *in margine* by oracles and corresponding numbers. Jeff W. Childers coined the genre as “Divining Gospel book”.³

3. The Text Components

As in the Graz palimpsest, the text of **M** is made of three components:

-
- ¹ The subject of our article is referred to in literature as “oracles” or “sortes”. We have used these terms synonymously, preferring them to “predictions” or “divinations”, which rather describe the process of fortune telling.
 - ² A closer codicological investigation to uncover the book’s original quire structure is needed.
 - ³ See his programmatic book title and discussion in Childers 2020, 51f.

(a) The text body being the Gospel of John, (b) the section numbers, and in association with them (c), the oracle sayings. These elements are stereotypic, appearing throughout except on those pages towards the end of the book, which are not completed. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the oracles were added to the text columns after the copying of the biblical text: nearing the end of the book, we see section numbers in the margins but no oracles added (fol. 46r, no. 226; fol. 50r, no. 237; and fol. 50v, no. 238). Some of the oracles seem to have been added by a second hand or at another time, later than the first hand or at least using a quill different from that of the main text. On the last ten folios, we find neither section numbers nor oracles.

The page layout is of some interest, since so far we do not have knowledge of a similar arrangement elsewhere. The Gospel text is written in one column – a neat slanted *erkat'agir* on 15 lines per page.⁴ At the beginning of every textual unit we find a current number *in margine*, of course, these too in majuscule and having the sign *patiw* above and below them (Gippert 2023, 117). The *oracles* corresponding to the numbers are given two places, immediately next to the numbers within a kind of ornate cartouche and/or at the bottom of the page sometimes framed by rows of dots. Thus, the oracles are not embedded in the current of the Gospel text as in **S**.⁵ Furthermore, the design differs from that in **G**, which has no marginal texts or signs whatsoever. The copyist applied the time-honoured *erkat'agir* (uncial/majuscule) for the Gospel text and the upcoming *bolorgir* (minuscule) mixed with *erkat'agir* for the oracles.

4. The Use of the Book

One of the key terms to understand the purpose of the book is թարգմանություն (‘translation’, but here it rather means ‘interpretation’). The term appears not in **M** but in **G** and repeatedly in **S** together with the oracles. There is no unanimity of how to understand this term (Childers 2020, 155–175). Anyhow, what we can state is that ‘the Divining Gospel required someone not only to work its mechanism but also to interpret its results, doing so with the concrete questions of a living soul in view’ (Childers 2020, 175).

We conceive the Divining Gospel Book **M** as an interactive tool bringing together the *client* having a specific query or matter in mind and the *diviner* who is able to give spiritual guide and answer by using the *book* with its biblical passages and the oracles. Unfortunately, we do not know the method (e.g. using a wheel with numbers, dices or anything else) by which an appropriate number was selected to apply the oracle in order to give an answer or advice.

⁴ The prick marks are clearly visible.

⁵ For an overview of the layout-schemata see Childers 2020, 60–69.

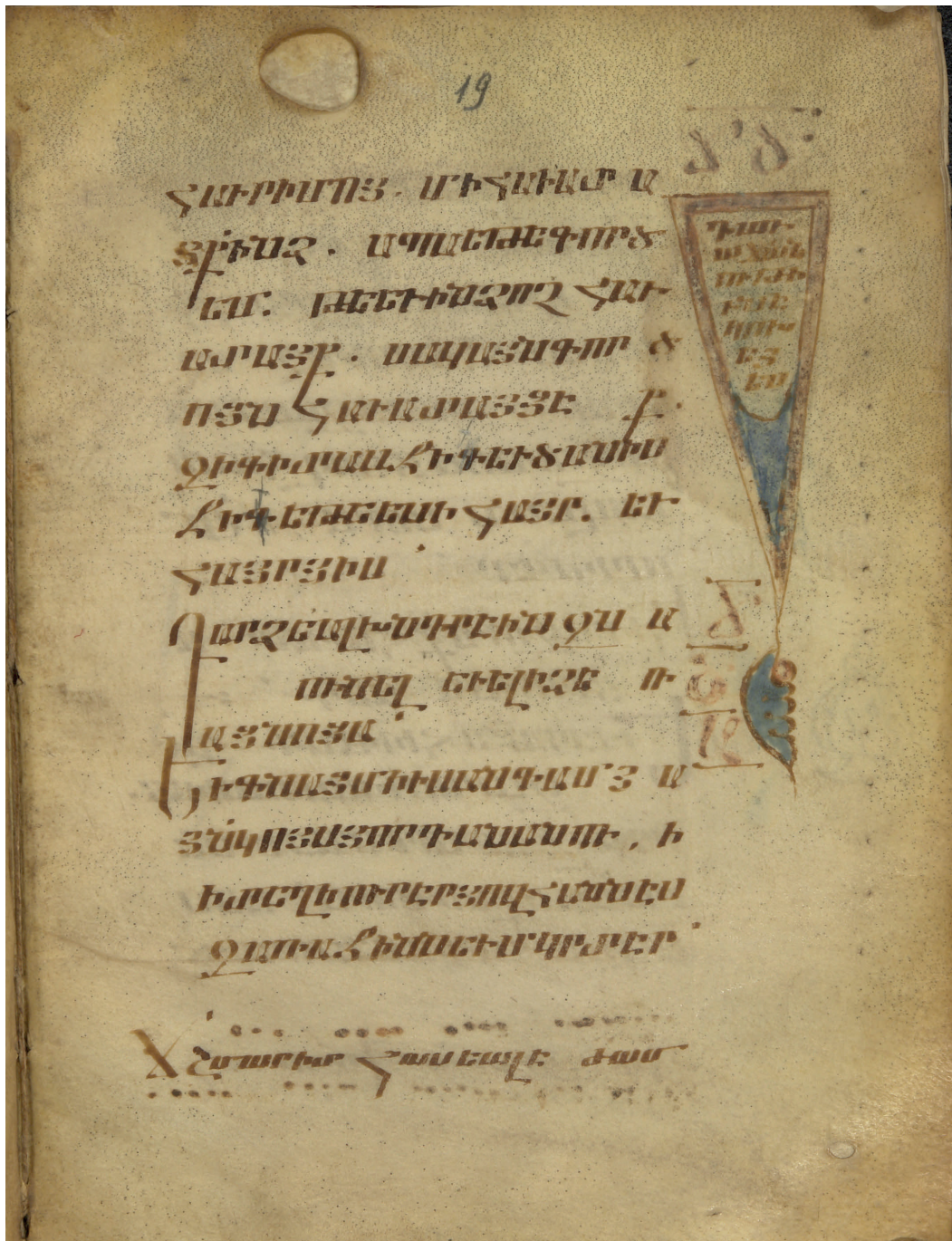


Fig. 1: M, fol. 19r: Jn 10,37–38, sections ՃԾ [150] and ՃԾԱ [151] with the corresponding oracles in the margins and at the bottom of the page. Credit: Department of Digitisation, Matenadaran, Yerevan

5. Edition of the Oracles in M

Our edition gives all necessary data that are to be found in **M**, which would allow a further study of the quite vast⁶ corpus of oracles in connection with the Gospel of John, namely, the Armenian text with an English translation, the section or oracle numbers, and the biblical sections to which the oracles refer to. References are added where the wording of the Syriac witness is close to that of our Armenian oracles.

5.1. A Note on the Translation

The style of our oracles may be considered lapidary. They are very short, some of them comprising only two or three words (in **G** we meet a few oracles with even one single word). The oracles are of utmost vagueness. Having this quality, they are applicable to many different situations and questions. Their shortness, their lack of context, and their imperative character make it difficult to translate these horoscope-like texts.

Some interpreters tried to find allusions in the biblical texts to which those oracles are attached (see Childers 2020, 177–202⁷). Alas, this works only in a few cases, and the allusions do not appear to be always clear and convincing. Additionally, we are facing the methodologic questions that (a) one and the same text is tied to different biblical quotes, (b) the wording of the oracle sometimes changes in the manuscripts, though referring to the same passage of John, and (c) the volume of the biblical context is not in all cases the same due to the differences between the pericopes.

We are inclined to understand թարգմանություն not in the sense of: *the oracle interprets the biblical text*, but rather in the sense of: *the oracle helps interpreting the client's query, and the biblical reference is the authorisation for the whole process*. However, we cannot exclude that some oracles are attached to a certain verse of John because it contains an alluding catch-word or idea. In any case, our translation should not be affected by this.

5.2. Punctuation and Grammatical Tense

We have already noted that it is quite difficult to translate such oracles, since we are missing the context and there is no specificity in wording. Besides that, the oracles were obviously not written by a very literate person. Some notes might explain how we have proceeded with *punctuation* and *grammatical tense*.

⁶ Cf. the numbers of oracles: 279 extant (originally 318) Armenian in **G**; 316 Latin in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 11553; originally 308 Syriac in **S**; 102 readable Armenian in **M**.

⁷ Ch. 7: "Oracles of Biblical Interpretation: Examining the Relationship between Divination, John's Gospel, and the User".

We can observe the following forms of punctuation in **M**:

- no sign at all after the text (e.g. fol. 5v, 8v, 15r, 19r, 45r...),
- a dot *supra lineam* (*mijaket*) (e.g. fol. 2v, 3r, 3v, 7r, 7v, 16v...),
- a double dot (*verjaket*) followed by a horizontal line (e.g. fol. 5r, 6v, 9r, 36v...), which can be understood as part of the decoration as well.

There is much inconsistency in the use of punctuation at the end of the short phrases. Since in many cases it is not clear whether the signs belong to the decoration or not, we have not rendered them in the Armenian text. Also, we have not identified any instance for the use of an accent (*shesht*) or any other sign to indicate exclamation or the like.

As for the grammatical tense, most of the *sortes* in **M** have a verb (except fol. 5v, no. 124, fol. 6r, no. 125, and fol. 173, no. 146). Several of these clauses are imperative. Others are phrased in the present tense, though all these answers seem to point at anything with importance in future. Since divination means giving an answer or advice for the time ahead, we have thought it reasonable to render most of those oracles in the future tense.⁸

Table I: The Oracles⁹

FOLIO NUMBER	ORACLE	TRANSLATION / NOTE	SECTION NUMBER	JOHN
1r	Մի սուտ վկայեր	Do not bear false witness (cf. Childers 2020, 124 ¹⁰)!	ՃԸ 108	7,52
1r	Բարի խաղաղութիւն լինի	There will be good repose.	ՃԹ 109	8,12
1v	Լինի քեզ բարի	It will be good for you (cf. Childers 2020, 124 ¹¹).	ՃԺ 110	8,13–14
1v	Չոր կամիս առնել մի առնել	Do not do what you want to do!	ՃԺԱ 111	8,15–18
2r	Անհնար լինել մի աշխատիր	Do not make efforts, [since] it is impossible!	ՃԺԲ 112	8,19
2v	Ոչ է ժամանակ ձեռնարկելոյ	It is not the time to undertake that. (cf. Childers 2020, 125 ¹²).	ՃԺԳ 113	8,20

⁸ In the corpus of *sortes* translated from Syriac into English, Childers also renders them frequently in the future tense.

⁹ The author is very grateful to Gohar Muradyan and Aram Topchyan for discussing the English version of the oracles with him.

¹⁰ “Do not give false testimony.” (ad Jn 7,72, no. 117).

¹¹ “This matter will turn out well.” (ad Jn 8,12, no. 118). The Armenian can also be translated: “Something good will happen to you”.

¹² “It is not time to begin.” (ad Jn 8,20, no. 122). The Armenian can also be translated: “It is not time to undertake anything”.

FOLIO NUMBER	ORACLE	TRANSLATION / NOTE	SECTION NUMBER	JOHN
2v	Գտանի գոր կամիս	What you want, will be found (cf. Childers 2020, 125 ¹³).	ՃԺԴ 114	8,21
3r	Թող զայդ եւ յայլ ձեռնարկէ	Leave that and undertake something else (cf. Childers 2020, 125 ¹⁴)!	ՃԺԵ 115	8,22–24
3v	Անգոսնիլ ունիս զգոյշ կաց	You'll be neglected, be careful.	ՃԺԶ 116	8,25–28a
4r	...	Note: <i>Text unreadable</i>	ՃԻ 120	8,41b–42
4r	Մի առնէր զիրսդ զայդ	Don't do these things (cf. Childers 2020, 127 ¹⁵)!	ՃԻԱ 121	8,43–44
4v	Ապաշխարեայ եւ լինի գոր կամիս	Repent and what you want will happen!	ՃԻԲ 122	8,45–47
5r	Մի յամառիր ի սիրոյդ	Do not remain obstinate in your love!	ՃԻԳ 123	8,48–50
5v	Փառք եւ խնդութիւն	Glory and joy.	ՃԻԴ 124	8,51–53
6r	Բարի եւ խաղաղութիւն	Goodness and peace.	ՃԻԵ 125	8,54–55
6v	Իրք եղեն եւ խաւսեցան	Things have happened and been spoken (cf. Childers 2020, 127 ¹⁶).	ՃԻԶ 126	8,56–57
6v	Ապրիս ի վշտացդ	You will be saved from sorrows (cf. Childers 2020, 127 ¹⁷).	ՃԻԷ 127	8,58–59
7r	Ծածկեալ գործ յայտնին	Clandestine work(s) will be revealed (cf. Childers 2020, 128 ¹⁸).	ՃԻԸ 128	9,1–5
7v	Բարոյ պատահիս այր դու	You, man, will encounter good (cf. Childers 2020, 128 ¹⁹)!	ՃԻԹ 129	9,6–7
8r	...	Note: <i>Text unreadable</i>	ՃԼ 130	9,8–10
8r	Չոր խնդրես գտանես	You will find what you look for (cf. Childers 2020, 128 ²⁰).	ՃԼԱ 131 ²¹	9,11–12
8v	Արայ գոր կամիսդ	Do what you want!	ՃԼԱ 131 [= 132]	9,13–15

13 “This thing will not be found.” (ad Jn 8,21, no. 123).

14 “Forgo this matter and begin another.” (ad Jn 8,22–24, no. 124).

15 “Do not do this matter.” (ad Jn 8, 43–44b, no. 133).

16 “This matter will turn out and it has been spoken.” (ad Jn 8,56–58, no. 138).

17 “Your matter will be saved from danger.” (ad Jn 8,59, no. 139).

18 “The hidden matter will be revealed.” (ad Jn 9,4–7, no. 141).

19 “You will receive favor.” (ad Jn 9,8–9b, no. 142).

20 “This matter that is sought will be found.” (ad Jn 9,9c–12a, no. 143).

21 There is a confusion in the numbering of the oracles: no. 131 figures two times, no. 133 is omitted.

FOLIO NUMBER	ORACLE	TRANSLATION / NOTE	SECTION NUMBER	JOHN
9r	Հաւատա բարոյ հանդիպիս	Believe, you will meet something good!	ՃԼԲ 132 [= 133]	9,16–17
9v	Մի լինիր անհաստատ	Don't be inconstant (cf. Childers 2020, 128 ²²)!	ՃԼԴ 134	9,18–22
10v	Ի բաց թող մի հակառակիր	Leave hold of, do not oppose!	ՃԼԵ 135	9,23–29
11v	Ճշմարիտ այս լինի	This will become true.	ՃԼԶ 136	9,30–33
12r	Յայտնի այս լինի	This will become evident.	ՃԼԷ 137	9,34–35
12v	Յոր ոչն յուսան լինին	What they don't hope will happen.	ՃԼԸ 138	9,36–38
12v	Աղաթեայ եւ լինի	Pray and it will be!	ՃԼԹ 139	9,39–41
13r	Երթ գկնի	Follow!	ՃԽ 140	10,1–5
14r	Զգուշութեամբ լինի	It will be with wariness.	ՃԽԱ 141	10,6–10
14v	Մի արհամարհեր զհանդերձեալսն	Do not neglect what is coming!	ՃԽԲ 142	10,11– 14
15r	Բոլոր անձամբ մերժեցիր յիրացդ	Wholeheartedly reject those things (cf. Childers 2020, 130 ²³)!	ՃԽԳ 143	10,15– 16
15v	Անհնարին ոչ լինի այդ	That will not be impossible (cf. Childers 2020, 130).	ՃԽԴ 144	10,17– 21
16v	Ուշիմ կաց յարնել (sic) զիրսդ	Be careful when doing those things!	ՃԽԵ 145	10,22– 25
17r	Ամրական հաղորդութիւն	A firm communion.	ՃԽԶ 146	10,26– 30
17v	Հակառակութիւն յուծանի	Opposition will be resolved.	ՃԽԷ 147	10,31
18r	Պատմեալդ քեզ հաստատուն է	What is told to you is certain.	ՃԽԸ 148	10,32– 33
18v	Ակնկալ լինին իրքդ քո	The things you awaited will happen.	ՃԽԹ 149	10,34– 36
19r	Դաւանանութիւն է կոխեցես	It is deceit, crush it!	ՃԾ 150	10,37– 38
19r	Ճշմարիտ հասեալ է ժամ	The true hour has come.	ՃԾԱ 151	10,39– 42
19v	Յոր յուսաս լինի	What you hope will happen.	ՃԾԲ 152	11,1–2
20r	Հաւատայ եւ լինի	Believe and it will happen.	ՃԾԳ 153	11,3–7
20v	Մի մերժիր յիրացդ	Don't deny these matters!	ՃԾԴ 154	11,8–10

²² “Do not be faithless.” (ad Jn 9,12c–16, no. 144).

²³ “With all your soul approach the matter that (comes) from all your heart, and do not doubt it.” (ad Jn 10,17–18b, no. 155).

FOLIO NUMBER	ORACLE	TRANSLATION / NOTE	SECTION NUMBER	JOHN
21r	Յանակնկալութենէ խնդացես	You will rejoice at the unexpectedness.	ՃԾԵ 155	11,11– 15
22r	Մի անյոյս լինիր յիրացդ	Do not be hopeless in these matters.	ՃԾԶ 156	11,16– 19
22v	Յոյս բարի եւ շահ քեզ յա[ստուծոյ]	Good hope and gain for you from God!	ՃԾԷ 157	11,20– 22a
23r	Մեծ փառք գան քեզ	Great glory comes to you.	ՃՀԷ 177	12,20– 25a
24r	Դու առնուս փառս մեծ	You will gain great glory (cf. Childers 2020, 135 ²⁴).	ՃՀԸ 178	12,25b– 26
24v		Note: <i>No text, only number</i>	ՃՀԹ 179	12,27– 29
25r	Վկայեմ շնորի այդ որ տուեալ է քեզ յա[ստուծոյ]	I attest this grace which is given to you by God.	ՃԶ 180	12,30– 34
26r	Արայ զիրար	Do those things (cf. Childers 2020, 136 ²⁵)!	ՃԶԱ 181	12,35– 37
26v	Ծածկեալ իրք յայտնի	Clandestine things will be manifest.	ՃԶԲ 182	12,38– 40
27r	Մարդահաճոյութիւն է իրքդ	This thing is flattery.	ՃԶԳ 183	12,41– 45
27v	Ապրիս ի թշնամեաց	You will be saved from enemies.	ՃԶԴ 184	12,46– 47
28r	Լինի գոր կամիս	What you want will happen.	ՃԶԵ 185	12,48– 50
28v	Ի բարի ինչ ձեռնարկես	You are undertaking something for good.	ՃԶԶ 186	13,1–4
29r	Յայլ խորհուրդ փոխիս	You are switching to another plan/idea.	ՃԶԷ 187	13,5–7
29v	Մի ասեր զայդ ումեք	Do not tell this to anyone (cf. Childers 2020, 137 ²⁶).	ՃԶԸ 188	13,8–11
30r	Անակնկալ իրք լինի	Something unforeseen will happen.	ՃԶԹ 189	13,12– 15
31r	Մի ընդունիր գոր ինչ ասեն քեզ	Do not accept what they tell you.	ՃԶ 190	13,16– 19
31v	Մի ումեք ասես զայդ բանդ	Do not say this word to anybody.	ՃԶԱ 191	13,20– 21

24 “You will not get glory; it turns.” (ad Jn 12,24–26, no. 192).

25 “Do the matter quickly so that you will not lose it.” (ad Jn 12,31–34, no. 194).

26 “Do not tell this (matter) to anyone.” (ad Jn 13,4–7, no. 202).

FOLIO NUMBER	ORACLE	TRANSLATION / NOTE	SECTION NUMBER	JOHN
31v	...	Note: <i>Text unreadable</i>	ՃՂԲ 192	13,22–24
32r	Նենգաւոր է ի բաց կաց ի նմանէ	He is fraudulent, stand apart from him.	ՃՂԳ 193	13,25–29
32v	Պատրաստեայ քեզ յառաջ քան ձեռնարկանելն	Prepare yourself before undertaking something (cf. Childers 2020, 138 ²⁷).	ՃՂԴ 194	13,30
33r	Ի նեղութենէդ խնդութեան հասանես	From this trouble you will gain joy (cf. Childers 2020, 138 ²⁸).	ՃՂԵ 195	13,31–32
33r	Իրբտ հակառակութիւն ունի	This matter is contradictory.	ՃՂԶ 196	13,33–36r
33v	Պարտ է քեզ բարեկամ լինել	You need to be a friend.	ՃՂԷ 197	13,36v–37
34r	Մի տրտմիր վասն իրացդ	Do not grieve because of these matters.	ՃՂԸ 198	13,38–14,4
34v	Խնդալ ունիս	You will have joy (cf. Childers 2020, 139 ²⁹).	ՃՂԹ 199	14,5–8
35r	Ուղղէ գիրսդ	Amend the matter (cf. Childers 2020, 140 ³⁰)!	Մ 200	14,9–12a
35v	Բարի լինի քեզ յիրացդ	Something good for you will emerge from this matter.	ՄԱ 201	14,12b–14
36r	Մի անհաւանիր այլ հաւատայ	Do not disagree but believe!	ՄԲ 202	14,15–17
36v	Դեռ չէ ժամանակ	The time has not yet come.	ՄԳ 203	14,18–19
36v	Զոր ինչ խնդրես գտանես	You'll find what you are looking for.	ՄԴ 204	14,20–22
37r	Թող գայդ իրող եւ յայլ ձեռնարկէ	Abandon that and undertake something else!	ՄԵ 205	14,23–26
37v	Խաղաղ արայ գիրսդ	Do those things calmly.	ՄԶ 206	14,27–28
38r	Լո[ւր] բարի գայ	Good news is coming (cf. Childers 2020, 140 ³¹). Note: <i>Partly unreadable</i>	ՄԷ 207	14,29–15,2
38v	Արայ գոր կամիսդ	Do what you want!	ՄԸ 208	15,3–5
39r	Բարի են իրքդ	Matters stand well.	ՄԹ 209	15,6–8

27 “Before you begin, prepare.” (ad Jn 13,26–27, no. 209).

28 “From scarcity, glory.” (ad Jn 13,28–29, no. 210).

29 “A gift will come, and joy.” (ad Jn 13,38–14,1, no. 214).

30 “Correct your matter and it will turn out.” (ad Jn 14,5–7, no. 216).

31 “Good news and profit come from a foreign country.” (ad Jn 14,21, no. 221).

FOLIO NUMBER	ORACLE	TRANSLATION / NOTE	SECTION NUMBER	JOHN
39v	Բարի է խորհուրդդ արայ	This idea is good, do it!	ՄԺ 210	15,9–12
40r	Թէ հաւատաս կենդանանաս	If you believe, you will revive.	ՄԺԱ 211	15,13–15
40v	Չոր խնդրես գտանես	You will find what you look for (cf. Childers 2020, 141 ³²).	ՄԺԲ 212	15,16
41r	Հրաժարեայ յիրէդ	Abstain from it!	ՄԺԳ 213	15,17–19
41r	Խորհուրդ մեծապէս լինի	It is a great idea/advice.	ՄԺԴ 214	15,20–21
41v	Հաւատալի են բանդ	The words are credible.	ՄԺԵ 215	15,22
42r	Չիրսդ խնդրեայ	Search for that thing! Note: <i>Number unreadable</i>	[ՄԺԶ] 216	15,23–25
42r	Ի նեղութենէդ խնդութիւն լինի քեզ	From this trouble you will have joy.	ՄԺԷ 217	15,26
42v	Յաւտարութենէ բարի գրոյց գայ	From a foreign land comes good news (cf. Childers 2020, 142 ³³).	ՄԺԸ 218	16,1–5a
43r	Կրկին անգամ փորձեսցի այս	This shall be tried again.	ՄԺԹ 219	16,5b–8
43v	Բանք աւտար հասանին առ քեզ	Alien words reach you.	ՄԻ 220	16,9–16
44v	Երիցս փորձեսցես	You should try three times.	ՄԻԱ 221	16,17–18
44v	Ի տրտմութեն (sic) քեզ խնդութիւն	You will have joy from sorrow.	ՄԻԲ 222	16,19–20
45r	Իրքդ քեզ տուեալ են եւ ոչ այլոմ	These things are given to you and not to anyone else.	ՄԻԳ 223	16,21
45v	Չոր խնդրես լինի	What you look for will happen.	ՄԻԴ 224	16,22–23a
45v	Ամենեցուն յայտնի լինի	It will be manifest for everybody (cf. Childers 2020, 143 ³⁴).	ՄԻԵ 225	16,23b–24
46r		Note: <i>No text, only number</i>	ՄԻԶ 226	16,25
46r	Ճշմարիտ են ասացեալդ	What you said is true (cf. Childers 2020, 143 ³⁵).	ՄԻԷ 227	16,26–28
46v	Բաժինք լինի	There will be a share (cf. Childers 2020, 144 ³⁶).	ՄԻԸ 228	16,29–32

32 “What you seek will happen for you.” (ad Jn 15,13–15, no. 229).

33 “From a foreign country comes a good matter.” (ad Jn 16,2b–6, no. 235).

34 “... This matter will be revealed.” (ad Jn 16,23b–25a, no. 242).

35 “Speak a true word.” (ad Jn 16,26–28, no. 244).

36 “There is division/doubt in the matter.” (ad Jn 16,29–30, no. 245).

FOLIO NUMBER	ORACLE	TRANSLATION / NOTE	SECTION NUMBER	JOHN
47r	Բարի խորհրդակից ունիս արայ	You have a good advisor, do it!	ՄԻԹ 229	16,33
47v	Որում ցանկաս լինի	What you desire will happen (cf. Childers 2020, 144 ³⁷).	ՄԼ 230	17,1–2
47v	Ծահ մեծ գայ քեզ	Great gain comes to you (cf. Childers 2020, 144 ³⁸).	ՄԼԱ 231	17,3–6
48r	Գործդ ա[ստուծո]վ լինի	This affair will be accomplished with the help of God (cf. Childers 2020, 145 ³⁹).	ՄԼԲ 232	17,7–8
48v	Հաստատեայ զքեզ ոչ լինի	Make yourself sure, it will not happen (cf. Childers 2020, 145 ⁴⁰)!	ՄԼԳ 233	17,9– 11a
49r	Հանդերձ փառաւք լինի	It will happen with glory.	ՄԼԴ 234	17,11b– 13
49v	Այլ իրք լինի	Something else will happen (cf. Childers 2020, 145 ⁴¹).	ՄԼԵ 235	17,14– 15
49v	Փառք բարձրագոյն գայ քեզ	Greatest glory will come to you (cf. Childers 2020, 146 ⁴²).	ՄԼԶ 236	17,16– 19
50r		Note: <i>No text, only number</i>	ՄԼԷ 237	17,20– 22
50v		Note: <i>No text, only number</i>	ՄԼԸ 238	17,23–...

Index of Words

ականկալ 149
 աղաթեմ 139
 ամենայն 225
 ամրական 146
 այդ 121, 144, 188, 191
 այլ 115, 187, 202, 205, 223, 235
 այս 136, 137, 219
 այր 129
 անականկալ 189
 անականկալութիւն 155

37 “What you desire will be yours.” (ad Jn 17,1–2, no. 248).

38 “Great profit will come to you.” (ad Jn 17,3, no. 249).

39 “This will come from God.” (ad Jn 17,4–7, no. 250).

40 “It is sure and it will not be settled.” (ad Jn 17,8–10a, no. 251).

41 “Another matter will turn out that is better than it.” (ad Jn 17,13–15, no. 254).

42 “Exalted glory that will come.” (ad Jn 17,15–21a?, no. 255).

անգամ 219
 անգոսնեն 116
 անհաստատ 134
 անհաւանիմ 202
 անհնար 112
 անհնարին 144
 անձն 143
 անյոյս 156
 աշխատիմ 112
 ապաշխարեն 122
 ապրիմ 127, 184
 առ 220
 առնեն 111 (bis), 121, 131, 181, 206, 208, 210, 229
 առնում 178
 ասեն 188, 190, 191, 227
 աստուած 157, 180, 232
 արհամարհեն 142
 ատար 220
 ատարութիւն 218
 բաժին 228
 բան 191, 215, 220
 բարեկամ 197
 բարի 109, 110, 125, 129, 132, 186, 201, 207, 209, 210, 218, 229
 բարձր 236
 բաց 135, 193
 բոլոր 143
 գամ 177, 207, 218, 236
 գործ 128, 232
 գտանեն 114, 131, 204, 212
 դաւաճանութիւն 150
 դեռ 203
 դու 129, 148, 149, 157, 177, 178, 180, 190, 194, 197, 201, 217, 220, 222, 223, 231, 236
 եղանիմ 126
 են 113, 148, 150, 193, 197, 203, 209, 210, 215, 227
 երթամ 140
 երիցս 221
 զգոյշ կամ 116
 զգուշութիւն 141
 զկնի 140
 զրոյց 218
 ընդունիմ 190
 թե 211
 թշնամի 184
 թողում 115, 135, 205

ծածկեն 128, 182
 ժամ 151
 ժամանակ 113, 203
 ինչ 186, 190, 204
 իր 121, 126, 143, 145, 149, 154, 156, 181, 182, 183, 189, 196, 198, 200, 201, 205, 206, 209, 213, 216, 223, 235
 լինիմ 109, 110, 112, 122, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 141, 144, 149, 152, 153, 156, 185, 189, 197, 201, 214, 217, 224, 225, 228, 230, 232, 233, 234, 235
 լուծանիմ 147
 լուր 207
 խաղաղ 206
 խաղաղություն 109, 125
 հաղորդություն 146
 խաւսեն 126
 խնդամ 155, 199
 խնդություն 124, 195, 217, 222
 խնդրեն 131, 204, 212, 216, 224
 խորհուրդ 187, 210, 214
 խորհրդակից 229
 կամ 145, 193, 231
 կամիմ 111, 114, 122, 131, 185, 208
 կենդանանամ 211
 կոխեն 150
 կրկին 219
 հակառակություն 147, 196
 հակառակիմ 135
 հանդերձ 234
 հանդերձեալք 142
 հանդիպիմ 132
 հասանեն 151, 195, 220
 հաստատեն 233
 հաստատուն 148
 հաւատալի 215
 հաւատամ 132, 153, 202, 211
 հրաժարեն 213
 ձեռնարկեն 113, 115, 186, 194, 205
 ճշմարիտ 136, 151, 227
 մարդահաճոյություն 183
 մեն 177, 178, 231
 մեծապէս 214
 մերժեն 143, 154
 մի 108, 111, 112, 121, 123, 134, 135, 142, 154, 156, 188, 190, 191, 198, 202
 յամառեն 123
 յայտնեն 128, 137, 182, 225

յառաջ քան 194
 յառնենմ 145
 յոյս 157
 յուսամ 138, 152
 նեղութիւն 195, 217
 նենգաւոր 193
 նման 193
 շահ 157, 231
 շնորհ 180
 ոչ 113, 138, 144, 223, 233
 որ 111, 114, 122, 131, 132, 138, 152, 180, 185, 190, 204, 208, 212, 224
 ուղղենմ 200
 ունիմ 116, 196, 199, 229
 ուշիմ 145
 որք 188, 191
 պատահիմ 129
 պատմենմ 148
 պատրաստենմ 194
 պարտ 197
 սէր 123
 սուտ 108
 վասն 198
 վիշտ 127
 վկայենմ 108, 180
 տամ 180, 223
 տրտմիմ 198
 տրտմութիւն 222
 ցանկամ 230
 փառք 124, 177, 178, 234, 236
 փոխիմ 187
 փորձենմ 219, 221

6. Preliminary Observations

6.1. *Comparison of M and G*

M offers a phalanx of 102 oracles that can be compared with those of **G**. Thus, it contributes considerably to the corpus of such odd sayings. We must be aware that there might be some three to four centuries of difference between our two text witnesses, the only ones so far known within the Armenian tradition tied to the text of John.

Methodologically, we cannot give a comprehensive comparison here. What we present is rather a paradigmatic probe. A broad and in-depth study⁴³ of the material is reserved for the book-length edition of **G**, which is not expected to come forth before three or four years. Our presentation picks out (*a*) three single oracles followed by (*b*) a package group of eight consecutive oracles (sigla: Jn = Gospel of John; no. = section/oracle number).

a Oracles no. 108, 156, and 157

Table II

Jn 7,52	M , fol. 1r	no. 108	Մի սուտ վկայեր
Jn 7,52	G , fol. 127v	no. 123	Մի սուտ վկայիցես ⁴⁴

Jn 11,16–19	M , fol. 22r	no. 156	Մի անյոյս լինիր յիրացդ
Jn 11,16–19	G , fol. 242v	no. 177	Մի անյոյս լինիր յիրացդ

Jn 11,20–22a	M , fol. 22v	no. 157	Յոյս բարի եւ շահ քեզ յաստուածոյ
Jn 11,20–22	G , fol. 242r	no. 178	Բարի յոյս

No. 108, the very first oracle in **M**, is connected with Jn 7,52. This is just the same connection as we find in **G**, and even the wording of the saying is close to identical (except for the verb, which has an imperative form in the Yerevan text and a subjunctive form in the Graz text). What is obviously different is the section or oracle number. With regard to the initial saying we should state that the number of oracles differ in the two manuscripts, the Graz manuscript offering significantly more oracles than the Yerevan manuscript: up to Jn 7,52 the score is 123 vs 108.

No. 156 of **M** is congruent with the parallel of **G** in wording and with regard to the biblical passage to which it is attached.

The immediately ensuing no. 157, however, shows a twofold variation: the oracle in **M** appears to be considerably extended, and the volume of the biblical text to which it is tied differs slightly from that of **G**.

⁴³ This study will also consider the Syriac and other traditions for comparison in a systematic way.

⁴⁴ Quasi identical with Jn 7,52, no. 117 in **S** (Childers 2020, 124: “Do not give false testimony”).

Thus, comparing our witnesses, we encounter identity and divergence in immediate context.

b *Oracles no. 177 to 185*

Table III

Jn 12,20–25a	M , fol. 23r	no. 177	Մեծ փառք գան քեզ
Jn 12,20–23	G , fol. 171r	no. 200	Մեծապէս փառք գան քեզ

Jn 12,25b–26	M , fol. 24r	no. 178	Դու առնուս փառս մեծ
Jn 12,24–26	G , fol. 204v	no. 201	Դու առնուս զփառսդ

Jn 12,27–29	M , fol. 24v	no. 179	–
Jn 12,27–30	G , fol. 204r	no. 202	Մեծ փառք լինին

Jn 12,30–34	M , fol. 25r	no. 180	Վկայեմ շնորհ այդ որ տուեալ է քեզ յաստուծոյ
Joh 12,31–34	G , fol. 257v	no. 203	Մեծ փառք լինին

Jn 12,35–37	M , fol. 26r	no. 181	Արայ զիրսդ
Jn 12,35–36a	G , fol. 257r	no. 204	վաղվաղակի արա զիրսդ

Jn 12, 38–40	M , fol. 26v	no. 182	Ծածկեալ իրք
Jn 12,36b-38	G , fol. 168v	no. 205	Ծածկեալ իրք յայտնին

–	–	–	–
Jn 12,39–40	G , fol. 168r	no. 206	Փրկութիւն բարի

Jn 12,41–45	M , fol. 27r	no. 183	Մարդահանդույթին է յիրքդ
Jn 12,41–43	G , fol. 221v	no. 207	Մարդահանդույթին է յիրսդ

Jn 12,46–47	M , fol. 27v	no. 184	Ապրին ի թշնամեաց
Jn 12,44–47	G , fol. 221r	no. 208	Ապրին իրքդ

Jn 12,48–50	M , fol. 28r	no. 185	Լինի զոր կամիս
Jn 12,48–50	G , fol. 256v	no. 209	Լինին իրքդ քո

This sequence of oracles provides the following insight:

- Whereas the extent of biblical text is identical in both text witnesses (Jn 12,20 to 12,50), the number of oracles attributed is different. Even if we concede that the copyist has not recorded the oracle text for Jn 12,27–29 erroneously (only the number “179” is given), there remains the fact that what we find in **G** no. 206, is totally absent from **M**. Jn 12,38–40 has two oracles in **G** and just one in **M**. This example indicates why the numbers of oracles deviate from each other, the Graz manuscript being more richly endowed with oracles.
- The wording of the oracle texts oscillates from *identical* (nos. 183 and 207) to *slightly modified* (nos. 177 and 200, or nos. 178 and 201) and to *completely different* (nos. 180 and 203).
- Altogether, it is clear that the two manuscripts have a common stratum, despite greater or lesser differences in wording, between the pericopes (the extents of the biblical texts to which the oracles are attached), and between the oracle numbers. Obviously, during the transmission of the corpus of oracles there was some freedom in adding, repeating, or omitting some sayings. And we take it for granted that textual modifications and adaptations had to be carried out according to the requirements of divination in connection with an authoritative, sc. biblical, text.

6.2. A Note on the Relationship between the Armenian and the Syriac Oracles

We added the text of the Syriac oracles to the footnotes when (a) their wording and (b) the biblical reference appeared to be close or comparable. It becomes immediately evident that there is some kind of closeness between the Syriac and the

Armenian witnesses. Again we find identity, close similarity (e.g. no. 108) as well as divergence (e.g. nos. 114 and 144, with contradictory expressions). Though there are deviations in the structure, i.e. in the sequence of numbering, we can still perceive a common stratum behind our corpuses of oracles. This will be the object of further studies.

7. Conclusion and Perspectives

It seems that the book in the given form never came into use. We may derive this conclusion from a number of observations:

- The book as such is a torso. To make it work *in praxi* it would be vital for divining to operate the book with the complete Gospel text and a full series of numbered oracles. Otherwise, choosing the number would already be a game of chance, which would not guarantee results (= answers).
- Apart from the book's fragmentary nature, we can state that it was never completed: oracles are missing on the last ten pages from Jn 17,16–19 onwards.
- The erroneous numbering (numbers are used twice, others are omitted) has not been corrected.
- The book does not show traces of frequent use or textual amendments.

Most probably, the oracles emerged from pre-Christian practices and became enculturated into the new religion by a link to a biblical text. But it was the Christian tradition that through ecclesiastical pressure suppressed and marginalized the practices connected with the use of books considered to be superstitious. **M** is the comparatively late witness to a book genre which was in vogue in antiquity. There are vestiges of divinatory biblical texts extant in the Mediterranean world in Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac etc. Albeit lacunary, **M** offers a second substantial corpus of oracles in Armenian, which is most valuable for further scholarly attention.

Future study will deepen the observations made here by a comprehensive comparative analysis of **G**, **M**, and **S**. This will include a closer linguistic analysis as well.

Another target could be the oracles in M4066 (circa 1283) and ms. Jerusalem, Sts. James Monastery no. 2371 (17th century). The oracles featuring there are tied to sections of the Book of Psalms.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Gospel text of John in **M** bears traces of antiquity and might be of importance: the *adultera*-pericope (Jn 7,53–8,11, see fol. 11r) is not yet inserted into the text corpus.⁴⁵

45 For the Armenian tradition of this pericope, see Herklotz 1927.

References

- Childers, Jeff W. 2020. *Divining Gospel. Oracles of Interpretation in a Syriac Manuscript of John* (Manuscripta biblica 4). Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter.
- Gippert, Jost. 2023. “The Textual Heritage of Caucasian Albanian”. In *Caucasian Albania: An International Handbook*, ed. Jost Gippert and Jasmine Dum-Tragut. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 95–166.
- Herklotz, Franz. 1927. “Zur Textgeschichte von Joh. 7,53–8,11 (Erzählung von der Ehebrecherin) bei den Armeniern”. *Handēs amsōreay* 41 (11–12), 623–642. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/305327/edition/280213/content>
- Catalogue. 1970. *Յուզնգլի ձևագրուց Մուշնոցի անվան Մատենադարանի* [*Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran*], ed. O. Eganyan, A. Zeytunyan, P. Antabyan, vol. 2. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. <https://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/Hamarot/Dzeragrats-1.pdf>
- Outtier, Bernard. 1993. “Réponses oraculaires dans des manuscrits bibliques caucasiens”. In *Armenia and the Bible. Papers Presented to the International Symposium Held at Heidelberg (16–19 July, 1990)*, 181–184. Atlanta: Scholars.
- Renhart, Erich. 2015. *Ein spätantikes Los-Buch. Die Handschrift 2058/2 der Universitätsbibliothek Graz – ein armenisches Palimpsest*. Graz: Unipress. <https://unipub.uni-graz.at/obvugroa/download/pdf/8142551?originalFilename=true>
- . 2022. “Review of Childers 2020”. *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 117 (4–5), 377–380. <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/olz-2022-0114/html>
- . 2022. “The Sinaitic Palimpsest of Graz University Library (Ms. 2058/2)”. *Digital Kartvelology* 1, 50–62. <https://adh.ge/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/kartvelologia-2022.pdf>

Irénée de Lyon, lecteur des Présocratiques ?

▼ **RÉSUMÉ** L'original grec de l'*Adversus haereses* d'Irénée de Lyon est perdu depuis très longtemps. Seules subsistent les traductions latine, complète en cinq livres, et arménienne avec les seuls deux derniers. Dans l'unique manuscrit arménien, nous lisons au chapitre 20.1 du livre V le mot եւթնստեան (« qui a sept branches ») auquel correspondent dans les manuscrits latins les mots *eptamyxos*, *eptomyxos* ou *eptonixos*. Ces adjectifs qualifient respectivement աշտանակ et *lucerna*, mots qui signifient candélabre ou lampe. Nous ne savons pas quel était exactement le mot grec que le traducteur arménien a traduit et que le traducteur latin n'a fait que transcrire, et que certains copistes ont altérés. Cette différence de traitement nous interroge. Si le terme grec signifiait « qui a sept branches », la traduction en latin n'était pas une difficulté. Et si, à raison, le traducteur latin n'a pas traduit, pourquoi l'arménien l'a-t-il fait ? Les compréhensions divergentes du terme grec sont le point de départ de la présente étude. Nous disposons de deux indices pour tenter d'apporter une réponse. D'une part, il existe une seconde occurrence du mot եւթնստեան dans l'œuvre d'Irénée. Elle est située dans l'*Epideixis*, au chapitre 9, où l'auteur christianise la description de la cosmologie païenne en sept cieux concentriques, comme autant de grottes imbriquées. D'autre part, le mot translittéré *eptamyxos* lu dans les manuscrits de la tradition latine, parfois aussi orthographié *eptomyxos* ou *eptonixos*, transcrit possiblement ἐπτάμυχος (« qui a sept cavités »), un mot que la *Suda* associe à l'œuvre cosmologique du mythographe présocratique Phérécyde de Syros (Φερεκύδης). Ces deux faits ont un point commun : la cosmologie. Mais si le latin translittère ἐπτάμυχος (« qui a sept mèches »), cela nous oriente vers les lampes à huile de l'antiquité dont on faisait brûler les mèches. Bien que cette lecture soit compatible avec եւթնստեան աշտանակ, le chandelier à sept branches, c'est-à-dire la *menorah*, elle n'explique pas pourquoi le

Gabriel Kepeklian  0000-0001-7532-3865 • Institut des civilisations, arts et lettres (INCAL), Centre d'études orientales – Institut orientaliste de Louvain (CIOL), Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium (gabriel.kepeklian@uclouvain.be)

Cite this article: Gabriel Kepeklian, 'Irénée de Lyon, lecteur des Présocratiques ?', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 79–91
<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142263>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142263

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

traducteur latin n'a pas traduit précisément ce mot grec et pourquoi Érasme, dans son *editio princeps* de la version latine a préféré ἐπτάμυχος.

Donc si le parallèle cosmologique n'est pas une simple coïncidence, est-il possible qu'Irénée ait connu l'œuvre de Phérécyde ? nous ne pouvons le corroborer et la question demeure, spéculative et ouverte.

▼ **ABSTRACT** The Greek original of Irenaeus of Lyon's *Adversus haereses* was lost very long time ago. Only a Latin translation, complete in five books, and an Armenian translation, with only the last two books, have survived. In chapter 20.1 of Book V of the unique Armenian manuscript, we read the word եւթնստեան ("with seven branches") to which in the Latin manuscripts correspond the words *eptamyxos*, *eptomyxos* or *eptonixos*. These adjectives describe աշտանակ and *lucerna* respectively, words meaning candelabra and lamp. We don't know exactly which Greek word the Armenian translator translated, the Latin translator merely transcribed, and some copyists altered. This difference in treatment raises questions. If the Greek word meant "with seven branches", the Latin translation was not to be a problem. And if, for a good reason, the Latin translator did not translate, why did the Armenian? The divergent understandings of the Greek term are the starting point for the present study.

We have two clues to try to provide an answer. On the one hand, there is a second occurrence of the word եւթնստեան in Irenaeus's work. It is in the *Epideixis*, in chapter 9, where the author Christianizes the description of pagan cosmology in seven concentric heavens like as many interconnected caves. On the other hand, the transliterated word *eptamyxos* read in manuscripts of the Latin tradition, sometimes also spelled *eptomyxos* or *eptonixos*, possibly transcribes ἐπτάμυχος ("with seven cavities"), a word that the Suda associates with the cosmological work of the pre-Socratic mythographer Pherecydes (Φερεκύδης) of Syros. These two facts have one thing in common: the cosmology. But if the Latin transliterates ἐπτάμυξος ("with seven wicks"), this directs us towards the oil lamps of antiquity, the wicks of which were burned. Though this reading is compatible with եւթնստեան աշտանակ, the seven-branched candlestick, i.e. the menorah, it does not explain why the Latin translator did not translate the Greek word precisely, and why did Erasmus in his *editio princeps* of the Latin version prefer ἐπτάμυχος.

So if the cosmological parallel is not a mere coincidence, is it possible that Irenaeus knew Pherecydes' work? We cannot corroborate that, and the question remains speculative and open.

▼ **MOTS CLEFS** Irénée de Lyon, Phérécyde de Syros, *Adversus haereses*, cosmologie, candélabre, menorah, Présocratique, եւրնսստեան, έπτάμυχος.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Irenaeus of Lyons, Pherecydes of Syros, *Adversus haereses*, cosmology, candelabra, menorah, pre-Socratic, եւրնսստեան, έπτάμυχος.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

1. Introduction

C'est à la fin du II^e siècle qu'Irénée écrit en grec les cinq livres de son œuvre Ἐλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως plus connue sous son nom latin *Adversus haereses*. L'original grec est perdu bien avant la fin de premier millénaire. Une traduction latine complète date probablement de la fin du IV^e siècle. Les deux derniers livres existent dans une traduction arménienne du VI^e ou VII^e siècle, leur unique témoin est conservé au Matenadaran sous la cote M3710. Un tel triangle linguistique (grec, latin, arménien) est une configuration stimulante qui, par ses choix, variations ou différences, cache parfois une énigme que le lecteur attentif peut chercher à résoudre. En préparant l'édition critique de la version arménienne du cinquième livre (Kepeklian 2021; Irenaeus 1910), l'expression եւրնսստեան աշտանակ / *candélabre à sept branches* a attiré mon attention du fait de la rareté de l'adjectif եւրնսստեան / *à sept branches* dans les textes en arménien classique, qu'ils s'agissent d'œuvres originales ou de traductions.

2. Le candélabre à sept branches

L'histoire du candélabre à sept branches, que le Talmud interdit de représenter (Goodenough 1953, III, 71), est quasiment légendaire depuis Moïse, qui le fit réaliser selon la description qu'il reçut de Dieu (Ex 25 ; 37), la prise de Jérusalem par le roi babylonien Nabuchodonosor (II R 24, 10) en 587, sa réapparition à Rome pour le triomphe de Titus en 70, jusqu'à son vol par les Vandales de Genseric lors du sac de Rome en 455. Qu'il fût volé par Nebuzaradân (II R 25, 15), le capitaine des gardes de Nabuchodonosor, ou caché par Dieu avec d'autres objets sacrés jusqu'à la restauration eschatologique du Temple (Ginzberg 1998, vol. 3, 159–161), sa signification dans le judaïsme ancien insiste sur la lumière qu'il répand, comme sur sa figure messianique et cosmologique (Dulaey 1983, 6–8).

Les chrétiens ont conservé ce symbole. Même s'il est absent du *Nouveau Testament*, l'Apocalypse y fait quelques références plus ou moins directes (notamment Ap 1, 4, 12–13 ; 3, 1 ; 4, 5 ; 5, 6). La symbolique judaïque du candélabre « devait être évidente aux yeux des premiers lecteurs de Jean » (Dulaey 1983, 9) parmi lesquels Irénée qui avait reçu l'enseignement de Jean de la bouche même de Polycarpe, institué premier évêque de Smyrne par le même Jean.

À la fin du chapitre 20.1 du livre V de la version arménienne de l'*Adversus haereses*, nous lisons (Kepeklian 2021, 236) :

Արդ եկեղեցւոյն քարոզութիւն ճշմարիտ եւ առանց եղծանելոյ եւ հաստատուն է, առ որում մի եւ նոյն փրկութեանն ճանապարհ ի բոլոր աշխարհիս ցուցանի, քանզի սմա հաւատացաւ յոյսն Աստուածոյ: Եւ վասն այսորիկ. Իմաստութիւնն Աստուածոյ, ի ձեռն որոյ ապրեցուցանէն զմարդիկ, յելս ճանապարհաց զովի եւ հրապարակաւ համարձակութիւն բերէ. ի վերայ ծայրից պարսպացն քարոզի եւ ի դրունս քաղաքաց զքաջալերութիւն ասէ: Քանզի ամենայն ուրեք եկեղեցի քարոզելով զճշմարտութիւնն. եւ սա է եւթնստեան աշտանակ որ զԶրիստոսին բարձեալ կրէ զոյսն:

J'en propose la traduction suivante :

La prédication de l'Église est donc véritable et incorrompue et ferme, en laquelle un unique et même chemin de salut est révélé dans le monde entier, car la lumière de Dieu lui est confiée. Et c'est pour cela que « la Sagesse » de Dieu, grâce à laquelle il sauve les hommes, « est louée sur les chemins, porte l'audace sur les places publiques, est proclamée au sommet des remparts et parle avec courage aux portes des villes » (Pr 1, 20–21). Car l'Église prêche partout la vérité, elle est le *candélabre à sept branches* qui porte la lumière du Christ.

L'adjectif եւթնստեան est composé de եւթն / sept, de nuun / branche et de եան / un suffixe d'adjectif. Il signifie donc « qui a sept branches ». Quant au substantif աշտանակ, d'un emploi fréquent, il se traduit par flambeau. La traduction est alors claire, il s'agit du candélabre à sept branches, la *menorah* juive décrite avec précision dans l'*Exode* au chapitre 25 :

Tu feras un candélabre d'or pur ; le candélabre, sa base et son fût seront repoussés ; ses calices, boutons et fleurs feront corps avec lui. Six branches s'en détacheront sur les côtés : trois branches du candélabre d'un côté, trois branches du candélabre de l'autre côté. La première branche portera trois calices en forme de fleur d'amandier, avec bouton et fleur ; la deuxième branche portera aussi trois calices en forme de fleur d'amandier, avec bouton et fleur ; il en sera ainsi pour les six branches partant du candélabre. Le candélabre lui-même portera quatre calices en forme de fleur d'amandier, avec bouton et fleur : un bouton sous les deux premières branches partant du candélabre, un bouton sous les deux branches suivantes et un bouton sous les deux dernières branches – donc aux six branches se détachant du candélabre. Les boutons et les branches feront corps avec le candélabre et le tout sera fait d'un bloc d'or pur repoussé. Puis tu feras ses sept lampes (*Bible de Jérusalem* 1998, Ex 25, 31–37a).

Cette description est reprise au chapitre 37 et légèrement augmentée avec le détail suivant :

avec leurs mouchettes et leurs cendriers d'or pur (*Bible de Jérusalem* 1998, Ex 37, 23).

La Bible évoque le candélabre dans plusieurs autres passages, mais avec moins de détails. L'un d'eux insiste sur l'importance du nombre sept.

Et il me dit : Que vois-tu ? Je répondis : Je regarde, et voici : il y a un lampadaire tout en or, avec un réservoir à son sommet ; sept lampes sont sur le lampadaire ainsi que sept becs pour les lampes qui sont dessus (*Bible de Jérusalem* 1998, Za. 4, 2).

Il ressort ainsi que l'expression եւթնստեան աշտանակ « candélabre à sept branches » est une traduction qui ne s'accorde pas complètement aux textes vétérotestamentaires. Ceux-ci associent le nombre sept à la lumière : « sept lampes » ou « sept becs pour ces lampes » tandis que lorsque les branches sont dénombrées explicitement, elles sont six. En l'absence d'une citation grecque du passage de l'*Adversus haereses*, je me suis demandé s'il serait tout de même possible de savoir ce qu'Irénée avait écrit ? L'étude des traditions indirectes qui suit tente de s'approcher spéculativement de la pensée de l'auteur pour répondre à cette question.

3. L'apport de l'École hellénophile

La version arménienne de l'*Adversus haereses* d'Irénée de Lyon appartient à l'École hellénophile (Mercier 1978, 59–75). Les emprunts directs et les créations de sens nouveaux pour des termes existants y sont rares. En revanche, des procédés d'invention y favorisent un enrichissement lexicographique spécialisé alors qu'il peut aussi exister des termes adéquats propres à la langue arménienne. Gohar Muradyan distingue trois procédés : les calques, les semi-calques et les composés qui tous produisent des néologismes reflétant des structures différentes des mots grecs sous-jacents (Muradyan 2012, 42). Les calques ont un préfixe grec traduit par un préfixe arménien, les semi-calques traduisent le préfixe par d'autres moyens, quant aux composés, ils n'ont pas de préfixe. Par exemple, եւրգործութիւն (énergie) est un calque de ἐνέργεια, ἀναφέρω (apporter) a pour semi-calque ի վերայ բերել et տնտարէնութիւն (économie) est un composé qui traduit fidèlement οἰκονομία.

Nous avons vu plus haut que եւթնստեան est un composé que le traducteur a certainement forgé. S'il l'a fait pour traduire un mot grec, ce dernier doit évidemment signifier « qui a sept branches » et dériver d'un mot comme κλάδος, κλήμα ou encore βλαστός qui signifie « branche », et des témoins devraient pouvoir se lire dans la LXX, le Nouveau Testament ou des écrits théologiques. Or un tel dénominatif grec n'existe pas, du moins dans l'état de nos connaissances. De plus, nous allons voir qu'il n'est pas question de branches mais de lampes ou de lumières. Le mot եւթնստեան est donc un composé purement arménien.

4. La tradition latine

Ce qui surprend de prime abord dans les témoins de la tradition latine de l'œuvre d'Irénée, c'est la présence d'un mot grec, simplement transcrit, là où le traducteur arménien traduit et écrit եւթնստեան.

Il subsiste aujourd'hui neuf manuscrits de la version latine (C = *Claromontanus* = *Berolinensis* lat. 43 – IX^e siècle ; A = *Arundelianus* 87 – 1166 ; O = *Ottobonianus* lat. 752 – 1417 ; Q = *Vaticanus* lat. 187 – ca 1429 ; R = Vat 188 – 1447–1455 ; S = *Salmanticensis* lat. 202 – avant 1457 ; V = *Vossianus* lat. F 33 – 1494 ; H = *Holmiensis* A 140 = *Petavianus* 132 – ca 1510 ; P = *Ottobonianus* lat. 1154 – ca 1530) auxquels il faut ajouter l'édition *princeps* latine d'Érasme (ε = *Princeps* – 1526).

Sans les avoir tous consultés, ce que j'observe est déjà très significatif. Le mot grec est transcrit, mais pas de façon uniforme : dans C, nous lisons *eptamyxos lucerna*¹ ; dans P, *eptomyxos lucerna*² ; dans O, *eptonixos lucerna*.³ Avec l'avènement de l'imprimerie, la tradition latine prend un nouveau tournant. Dans l'*editio princeps* qu'Érasme prépare à partir de trois manuscrits latins⁴, nous lisons *ἐπτάμυχος lucerna* (Irenaeus 1528, 319) et dans une note marginale, *id est septe(m) caliculos habe(n)s*, c'est-à-dire avec sept petites coupes, il s'agit probablement des coupelles dans lesquelles était versée l'huile. Le savant de Rotterdam part de la transcription latine pour proposer une graphie grecque. À sa suite, les grandes éditions savantes feront de même, toutefois avec des orthographes variées : *ἐπτάμυκος lucerna* pour Feuardent (Irenaeus 1639, 466) et Harvey (Irenaeus 1857, vol. 2, 379) ; *ἐπτάμυξος lucerna* pour Massuet (Irenaeus 1710, 317). Dans l'édition critique de la tradition latine (Irénee 1969), le P. Adelin Rousseau opte pour *ἐπτάμυξος lucerna*.

Le traducteur latin n'a pas traduit le mot dont les différentes transcriptions attestées dans les manuscrits montrent que les scribes peinaient probablement à trouver une juste restitution. Mais la note marginale d'Érasme nous apprend que les érudits savaient en donner une interprétation, et l'humaniste hollandais nous oriente vers une autre traduction, éloignée des sept branches.

Après le cardinal *ἐπτά* / sept, nous avons trois possibilités selon les éditeurs : *ἐπτάμυχος* (*Editio princeps*) de *μυχός* / cavité ; *ἐπτάμυκος* (Feuardent, Harvey) de *μυκός* / sale (i.e. muqueux) ; *ἐπτάμυξος* (Massuet, Rousseau) de *μύξα* / mucosité ou mèche d'une lampe, ou, si *μύξα* = *μυκτήρ* / bec. Les deux dernières possibilités sont à rapprocher, la mucosité pouvant être la mèche qui coule du nez. Nous avons donc le choix entre sept *μυξός* / becs ou mèches de lampe, et sept *μυχός* / cavités. Plusieurs sources permettent d'enrichir les dossiers latin et grec. Les unes sont lexicographiques : le *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*⁵, la dernière édition du dictionnaire de Pierre Chantraine (Chantraine 1983, 726) ; les autres scientifiques parmi lesquelles l'étude d'Ysabel de Andia sur la *menorah* (de Andia 2021, 175–176) est particulièrement utile. Il ressort que d'autres auteurs latins ont utilisé l'adjectif grec sans le traduire, à l'instar du traducteur d'Irénee. Par exemple chez Ambroise de Milan, nous

1 Ms. Phill. 1669, Corbie – IX^e siècle – Berlin – folio 230v.

2 *Ottobonianus* lat. 1154 – ca 1530 – Vatican – folio 221r.

3 *Ottobonianus* lat. 752 – 1417 – Vatican – folio 184v.

4 Ces trois manuscrits sont aujourd'hui perdus. Deux provenaient de bibliothèques de monastère, l'un d'eux de Hirschau, et le troisième lui fut envoyé de Rome par l'imprimeur-libraire Johannes Fabri.

5 https://tll.degruyter.com/article/6_3_14_heptamyxos_v2007. (page consultée le 9 septembre 2023).

lisons *in eptamyxo spiritu* / *dans l'Esprit Saint à sept mèches*⁶. Enfin, le mot *ἐπταμύξους* apparaît dans une inscription grecque de l'époque romaine décrivant les chandeliers à sept branches, en tant que mobilier des synagogues (Van Buren 1908, 195–197). Le P. Adelin Rousseau ne donne pas la raison du choix *ἐπτάμυξος*, mais en traduisant en français par « candélabre à sept lampes » (Irénee 1969, 257) il est clair qu'il s'appuie sur la signification de *μύξα*, comme Massuet avant lui. Alors que le *ἐπτάμυξος* candélabre reçoit beaucoup de suffrage, je préfère pour ma part suivre Erasme : *ἐπτάμυχος* n'est-il pas la *lectio difficilior* ?

5. La tradition arménienne

L'adjectif *եւթնստեան* n'est pas un hapax dans les traductions arméniennes des œuvres d'Irénee. Il est employé une seconde fois au chapitre 9 de la *Démonstration de la prédication apostolique*, un ouvrage dont on n'a longtemps connu (Eusèbe de Césarée 2003, 304) que le titre grec *Ἐπίδειξις τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος*⁷ avant la découverte en 1904 du M3710 où il figure à la suite de l'*Adversus haereses* avec le titre Յոյցք Առաքելական քարոզութեանն. La transcription qui suit a été faite à partir du manuscrit car l'*editio princeps* contient quelques erreurs⁸ (Irenaeus 1907, 8). La ponctuation est celle du manuscrit.

Իսկ աշխարհս եւթն պարունակի երկնիք յորս գաւրութի(ւն)ք անթիւք եւ հրեշտակք եւ հրեշտակապետք բնակեն. սպաս պաշտաման տանելով ամենակալին եւ ամենեցունն հաստչի ա(ստուածո)յ ոչ իբրու կարաւտի այլ զի եւ նոքա մի իցեն անգործք [226v] եւ անշահք եւ ապիգարք։ Եւ վասն այսորիկ հոգին ա(ստուածո)յ ներգոյով շատ է եւ յեւթն պաշտամանց ձեւս հաշուեալ լինի յԵսայեա մարգարէէ հանգուցելոց յորդին ա(ստուածո)յ. այսինքն է բանն յըստ մարդն նորա գալստեանն։ Եւ քանզի հանգիցէ, ասէ, ի վերա նորա հոգի ա(ստուածո)յ հոգի իմաստութեան եւ իմացութե(ան), հոգի խորհրդոյ եւ գաւրութեան եւ բարեպաշտութե(ան), լցուցէ զնա հոգի երկիւղի ա(ստուածո)յ։ Արդ առաջինն ի վերուստ երկին, որ ներպարունակէն զայս իմաստութիւնն։ Եւ երկրորդ ի նմանէ իմացութեանն. իսկ երրորդն խորհրդոյ։ Եւ չորրորդն ի վերուստ ի հաշիւ* անկելոյն գաւրութեան։ Եւ հինգերորդն գիտութեան. եւ վեցերորդն բարեպաշտութեան։ Եւ եւթներորդս այս ըստ մեզս հաստատութիւնս լի երկիւղի այսր հոգւոյս լուսաւորչիս զերկինս, զի գաղափարն էամ Մովսէս աշտանակ եւթնստեան հանապազն փայլելով ի ս(ու)րբսն։ Քանզի գաղափար երկնից էամ զպաշտաւնն։ Ըստ որում Բանն նմա ասէ արասցես ըստ ամենայն գաղափարի որոց տեսերն ի լերինն։⁹

6 Ambroise 1866. *De Apologia David*, CSEL 32:2 Ambrose, Opera, Vienne. 9, 49 (CSEL 32, 2, p. 393, lignes 6–7). <https://archive.org/details/corpuscriptoru13wiengoog/page/393/mode/2up> (page consultée le 9 septembre 2023).

7 Ce texte aussi appelé plus brièvement l'*Epideixis* a été rédigé à la fin du II^e siècle.

8 Par exemple, *անթիւք*, le huitième mot du chapitre 9, est manquant.

9 M3710, folio 226r, ligne 19 à folio 226v, ligne 20.

* ܚ ܠܠܫܠܢ n'est pas compréhensible. Il semble que ce soit une mauvaise lecture d'une abréviation du mot ange au génitif : ܠܠܫܠܢܝܬܐ.

Voici une traduction au plus près du texte :

Mais ce monde-ci est entouré de sept cieux dans lesquels d'innombrables puissances, des anges et des archanges séjournent en offrant un culte au Dieu tout-puissant et créateur de toutes choses, non pas qu'il en ait besoin mais afin qu'eux aussi ne soient pas désœuvrés, inutiles et rejetés. C'est pourquoi l'Esprit de Dieu se trouve multiple et est dénombré par le prophète Isaïe en sept formes de culte qui reposent sur le Fils de Dieu, c'est-à-dire le Verbe dans sa venue en tant qu'homme. Car il dit : « L'Esprit de Dieu reposera sur lui, l'Esprit de sagesse et d'intelligence, l'Esprit de conseil, de puissance et de piété, l'Esprit de crainte en Dieu le remplira » (Is 11, 2). Or, le premier ciel à partir du haut, celui qui englobe les autres, <est> la sagesse, et le deuxième <à partir> de lui <est le ciel> de l'intelligence, et le troisième du conseil, et le quatrième, à partir du haut, de la puissance de l'ange qui fut déchu, le cinquième de la connaissance, le sixième de la piété. Et ce septième, notre firmament, est plein de la crainte de l'Esprit qui illumine les cieux. Car Moïse a pris le modèle du candélabre à sept branches qui brille continuellement sur les saints parce que la forme des cieux a reçu le culte, comme le lui dit le Verbe : « Tu le feras d'après tout le modèle de ce que tu as vu sur la montagne » (Ex 25, 40 et Hé 8, 5).

L'intérêt du chapitre 9 réside dans la lecture chrétienne qu'Irénée fait d'une cosmologie en sept cieux concentriques qui n'est pas sans rappeler la description qu'il donne des sept cieux des Gnostiques dans le premier livre de l'*Adversus haereses*¹⁰. Avec sept cieux, Irénée s'écarte de la cosmologie juive qui n'en compte que trois : le ciel atmosphérique, le ciel céleste et le ciel divin. Le troisième ciel, considéré comme le lieu de la présence de Dieu et le domicile des anges, est celui auquel fait référence l'apôtre Paul dans sa seconde lettre aux Corinthiens (*Bible de Jérusalem* 1998, II Co 12, 2) : « Je connais un homme dans le Christ (...) cet homme-là fut ravi jusqu'au troisième ciel. ». Et les anges déchus sont emprisonnés dans le deuxième ciel (Ginzberg 1998, vol. 1, 59). Dans la cosmologie dépeinte par l'évêque de Lyon, l'ange qui était au quatrième ciel fut déchu. La différence est fondamentale comme l'enseignait Jésus à ses apôtres, ce que l'évangile de Luc rapporte ainsi : « Il leur dit : je voyais Satan tomber du ciel comme un éclair » (*Bible de Jérusalem* 1998, Lc 10, 18). Une parole qui fait écho à cette autre dans l'évangile de Jean « C'est maintenant le jugement de ce monde ; maintenant le Prince de ce monde va être jeté dehors » (*Bible de Jérusalem* 1998, Jn 12, 31).

Environ un demi-siècle après la rédaction de l'*Epideixis*, Origène, dans son œuvre *Contre Celse*, défendait qu'en aucun endroit des Écritures, il n'est dit qu'il y ait sept

10 « Ces sept cieux sont, selon eux, de nature intelligente : ce sont des anges, enseignent-ils. Le Démoniaque lui aussi est un ange, mais semblable à un Dieu. De même le Paradis, situé au-dessus du troisième ciel, est, disent-ils, le quatrième archange par sa puissance, et Adam reçut quelque chose de lui, lorsqu'il y séjourna ». Traduction d'Adelin Rousseau de la fin du chapitre 5.2.

cieux (Origène 1964, VI.XXIII). Le chapitre 9 de l'*Epideixis* est donc particulièrement singulier. Nous pouvons encore remarquer que les cieux y sont comptés dans un sens inverse de leur ordre dans les cosmologies égyptienne ou grecque. Irénée donne le premier rang à leur septième et dernier ciel, généralement considéré comme le plus haut.

Il semble que les sources de la tradition arménienne contenant l'adjectif երթնստեան se limitent presque exclusivement aux écrits de l'évêque de Lyon. Cela peut se vérifier par la consultation des deux grands dictionnaires d'arménien classique connus pour donner de nombreuses citations d'œuvres patristiques.

Au début du XVIII^e siècle, l'évêque polonais Stefan Stefanowicz Roszka (1670–1739) est l'auteur d'un certain nombre d'œuvres originales ou de traductions restées inédites à l'exception de sa *Chronique* (Roszka 1964). Son *opus magnum* est un imposant dictionnaire bilingue¹¹. La partie arménien-latin de ce *Thesaurus linguae Armeniorum* (Փսնձ հայոց լեզուի կամ բարբարան) est riche de citations. Le lemme Երթնստեան¹², traduit en latin par *septem ramorum*, y est assorti de la citation suivante : Երթնստեան աշտանակն սա է որ գժրիստոս, attribué explicitement à Irénée de Lyon. Ce que confirme la lecture du texte original dans le livre V de l'*Adversus haereses* : սա է երթնստեան աշտանակ որ գժրիստոսին¹³.

Le dictionnaire de Venise possède un lemme très proche : Երթնստեայ. Sa définition renvoie au commentaire d'Ephrem sur l'*Exode* relatif à la description de la *menorah* (NBHL 1836–1837, vol. 1, 708b) : Երթնստեայն (կամ երթնստեան) աշտանակն. Mais elle ne cite pas Irénée. L'évêque de Lyon était inconnu à ces auteurs, comme la lecture des notices introductives du dictionnaire nous l'apprend. Nous lisons ainsi Իրեն: Որ երեսի լինել Իրենէոս ոմն մատենագիր, գոր 'ի վկայու 'ի կոչեցաք' 'ի փոխ առեալ 'ի հատուածոց բառարանի ստեփաննոսի լեհացոյ (NBHL 1836–1837, vol. 1, 13a). Ce que je traduis : « Iren. qui semble être Irenēos, un écrivain, que nous avons appelé [ainsi] dans les citations empruntées aux articles du dictionnaire de Step'annos le Polonais ». Les Mékhitaristes de Saint Lazare de Venise possédaient un exemplaire du *Thesaurus linguae Armeniorum* et l'utilisaient comme source pour leurs travaux lexicographiques ; mais leur bibliothèque ne contenait aucun manuscrit des écrits de l'évêque de Lyon. Aujourd'hui, l'exemplaire du *Thesaurus* se trouve à Vienne, catalogué V 6. Il est particulièrement précieux car il s'agit de l'original de la main de Roszka. Ce dernier pouvait avoir lu Irénée dans l'un ou l'autre des manuscrits latins conservés au Vatican lorsqu'il y faisait ses études. Mais il est plus probable qu'il ait eu accès à un exemplaire de la version arménienne, car les citations qu'il donne dans son dictionnaire sont bien trop proches du texte du M3710 pour être une rétroversion du latin vers l'arménien classique. Je présenterai cela dans un futur article.

¹¹ Roszka, Step'annos, ca 1700–ca 1730. Փսնձ Հայոց լեզուի կամ Բարբարան Ստեփաննու (Trésor de la langue arménienne ou dictionnaire de Step'annos). Ce dictionnaire n'a jamais été publié.

¹² BzAn 424A, folio 167v, col a.

¹³ M3710, folio 186r, lignes 22 à 23.

6. Le triangle

Le triangle linguistique (grec, latin, arménien) formé par les différentes traditions de l'œuvre d'Irénée de Lyon révèle donc un désaccord sur la transcription d'un mot grec que les scribes latins ont copié de façons variées et sa traduction arménienne au moyen d'un composé. Faut-il en conclure que le traducteur latin n'a pas su traduire, alors que son homologue arménien y est parvenu ? Ou bien faut-il considérer que le latin a fait le choix de ne pas traduire, parce que le mot ne devait pas être traduit ? Ces questions nombreuses sont-elles toutes purement spéculatives ?

Je penche pour l'hypothèse suivante : le traducteur latin, à une époque où la langue grecque est encore parlée en Occident, possède une bonne culture grecque du fait même de sa profession. S'il ne traduit pas, c'est parce qu'il juge que ses futurs lecteurs comprendront le mot grec. Il ne pouvait en effet pas imaginer le recul considérable de la pratique et de l'enseignement de la langue grecque en Occident deux siècles plus tard (Lemerle 1971, 9–10). Les circonstances pour lesquelles on s'abstient de traduire peuvent apporter une réponse satisfaisante à notre énigme. Le mot n'était pas intraduisible, comme le montre le traducteur arménien qui a su rendre ce terme spécialisé. Il ne s'agissait pas non plus d'un jeu de mots, rebelle à la traduction. En revanche, il pouvait s'agir de propos rapportés comme au chapitre 15 du premier livre de l'*Adversus haereses*,¹⁴ ou d'un nom propre pour lequel, même s'il était possible de le traduire, le traducteur n'en aurait rien fait, et ce peut encore être le cas du titre d'une œuvre fameuse. La transcription est alors fort possiblement le fait du traducteur lui-même, et non celui d'un copiste.

Phérécyde de Syros (Φερεκύδης) est un mythographe présocratique grec du VI^e avant J.C. connu pour une œuvre cosmogonique perdue : Ἑπτάμυχος. Les fragments restants (*Suidae Lexicon* 1928–1938, Phi 214, s.v. Φερεκύδης, vol. IV, 713) permettent de comprendre que le titre évoque sept cavités, grottes ou profondeurs qui se rapportent à un discours cosmogonique. La figure des sept cavités fait penser aux sept cieux profonds et hémisphériques.

Ce qui est à rapprocher de l'occurrence du mot եւթնստեան dans l'*Epidexis* et la description des sept cieux de la cosmologie christianisée d'Irénée. Si nous revenons alors au §20.1 du livre V de l'*Adversus haereses*, la dernière phrase :

Քանզի ամենայն ուրեք եկեղեցի քարոզելով զճշմարտութիւնն. եւ սա է եւթնստեան աշտանակ որ գՔրիստոսիւն քարձեալ կրէ զյոյսն:

pourrait ne plus se traduire : « Car l'Église prêche partout la vérité : et elle est le candélabre à sept branches qui porte la lumière du Christ », mais « Car l'Église prêche partout la vérité, elle est l'Ἑπτάμυχος qui porte la lumière du Christ ». Le terme Ἑπτάμυχος, choisi à dessein par Irénée de Lyon, serait alors une antonomase prenant la signification cosmologique du système armillaire des sept cieux, comme autant de cavités imbriquées, au-dessus desquels rayonne la lumière du Christ.

14. Dans les propos de Marc le Magicien rapportés par Irénée, nous trouvons plusieurs mots grecs translittérés pour le lecteur latin.

Les lecteurs d'Irénée savent l'étendue de sa culture (Bastit 2021). Pour rédiger la partie hérésiologique de l'*Adversus haereses*, il a mené une enquête minutieuse et utilisé le vocabulaire propre des gnostiques. Toute son œuvre est à l'aune de ces connaissances acquises par un travail approfondi. N'a-t-il pas fait ses études à Smyrne, une cité fondée par les Grecs où l'enseignement des sciences était très réputé ? Il est ainsi probable qu'Irénée ait connu l'Ἐπτάμυχος, l'œuvre alors fameuse de Phérécyde de Syros. Clément d'Alexandrie, Père de l'Église de culture grecque contemporain de l'évêque de Lyon, cite explicitement deux fois le présocratique dans le sixième *Stromate* (Clément d'Alexandrie 1999, 169–171).

Encore un argument. Si le traducteur arménien avait connu de l'œuvre cosmologique présocratique ne serait-ce que le titre, peut-être aurait-il inséré une petite note à destination de ses lecteurs qui ne pouvaient certainement pas la connaître. Cette hypothèse peut être avancée, car c'est ce que nous observons au chapitre 13 de l'*Adversus haereses*. Pour expliquer que le nom Œdipe évoque sa difformité (Οἰδίπους / pieds enflés), le traducteur a ajouté au nom Եդիպոդայ / Œdipe le qualificatif վիշապոտին / au pied de dragon. Le traducteur latin avait ici seulement nommé le héros grec.

7. Conclusion

Au terme de cette enquête spéculative, nous ne saurions trancher de façon certaine ; mais il est très probable qu'Irénée ait connu Phérécyde de Syros et sa cosmologie. Je pense que si le traducteur latin n'a pas traduit Ἐπτάμυχος, ἐπτάμυξος ou ἐπτάμυχος, c'est à dessein. Le traducteur arménien aura, quant à lui, fait son métier de traducteur et forgé l'adjectif եւթնստեղծ, un composé qui ne calque pas exactement le mot grec que la tradition latine a conservé.

Ainsi le lecteur arménien comprend qu'il s'agit du candélabre à sept branches alors que le terme grec n'évoque pas la moindre branche. Quant au lecteur latin, s'il connaît l'œuvre de Phérécyde de Syros, il pourra penser qu'il y a là une allusion à la cosmologie.

Références

- de Andia, Ysabel. 2021. « Le candélabre à sept branches, image de l'Église selon Irénée de Lyon ». Dans *Le fruit de l'Esprit : Études sur Irénée de Lyon*. Éditions du Cerf, 175–201.
- Bastit, Agnès. 2021. « Irénée de Smyrne (vers 130–vers 200). Essai de reconstitution d'un itinéraire et de ses contextes ». Dans *Irénée entre Asie et Occident*, éd. Agnès Bastit. Collection des Études augustinienes. Série Antiquité 210. Paris: Institut d'études augustinienes, 17–48.
- Bible de Jérusalem*. 1998. École Biblique de Jérusalem. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.
- Chantraine, Pierre. 1983. *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Clément d'Alexandrie. 1999. *Les Stromates*. *Stromate VI*. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes, par P. Descourtieux. Sources chrétiennes, 446. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.

- Dulaey, Martine. 1983. « Le candélabre à sept branches dans le christianisme ancien ». *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques*, 29, no 1–2, 3–26.
- Eusèbe de Césarée. 2003. *Histoire ecclésiastique*. Traduction de Gustave Bardy revue par Louis Neyrand. Sagesses Chrétiennes. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.
- Ginzberg, Louis. 1998. *The legends of the Jews*, vols. 1 & 3. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Goodenough, Erwin. 1953. *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, vol. 3. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Irenaeus. 1528. *Opus eruditissimum Divi Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis in quinque libros digestum, in quibus mire reteggit et confutat ueterum haereseon impias ac portentosas opiniones, ex uetustissimorum codicum collatione quantum licuit emendatum opera Des. Erasmi Roterodami, ac nunc eiusdem opera denuo recognitum, correctis ijs quæ prius suffugerant additus est index rerum scitu dignarum*. Basel: Johannes Froben.
- Irenaeus. 1639. *Irenaei lugdunensis Adversus Valentini, & simulum Gnosticorum Haereses, Libri quinque*. Lutetiae Parisiorum, cum privilegio christianissimi regis. <https://archive.org/details/sanctiirenaeilugooovari/>
- Irenaeus. 1710. *Sancti Irenaei opera omnia*, ed. René Massuet. Paris: Coignard. <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb11204225>
- Irenaeus. 1857. *Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros quinque adversus Haereses*, ed. William Wigan Harvey, tom. II. Cantabrigiae, typis academicis. <https://archive.org/details/sanctiirenaeilooirengoog/>
- Irenäus. 1907. *Des Heiligen Irenäus Schrift zum Erweise der apostolischen Verkündigung. Eiz ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος*. In Armenischer Version entdeckt. Herausgegeben und ins deutsche übersetzt von Lic. Dr. Karapet Ter-Mëkërttschian and Lic. Erwand Ter-Minassiantz mit einem Nachwort und Anmerkungen von Adolf Harnack. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 31 band heft 1. Leipzig: J. G. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. <https://archive.org/details/texteunduntersuc31akad/>
- Irenaeus. 1910. *Irenaeus gegen die Häretiker. Ἐλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπὴ τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως*. Buch IV und V in armenischer Version entdeckt. Ed. Karapet Ter-Mëkërttschian und Erwand Ter-Minassiantz. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, 35/2 = 3. Ser. 5/2. Leipzig: J. G. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
- Irénée de Lyon. 1969. *Contre les hérésies, Livre V*. Édition critique d'après les versions arménienne et latine sous la direction d'A. Rousseau moine de l'Abbaye d'Orval avec la collaboration de B. Hemmerdinger, L. Doutreleau s.j., Ch. Mercier, tome II, Texte et traduction. Sources Chrétiennes, 153. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.
- Kepeklian, Gabriel. 2021. *La version arménienne du Livre V de l'Adversus haereses d'Irénée de Lyon*. Histoire du texte, édition critique, traduction et notes, thèse. Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain (forthcoming in 2024 as a monograph in the series CSCO, vol. 711, Scriptores Armeniaci 34, Louvain: Peeters).
- Lemerle, Paul. 1971. *Le premier humanisme byzantin: Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au Xe siècle*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Mercier, Charles. 1978. « L'école hellénistique dans la littérature arménienne ». *Revue des Études Arméniennes* XIII, 59–75.
- Muradyan, Gohar. 2012. *Grecisms in Ancient Armenian*. Leuven–Paris–Dudley, MA: Peeters.

- NBHL. 1836–1837. Gabriël Awetik'eān, Khach'atur Siwrmēlean, Mkrtich' Awgerean. *Նոր բառարանը հայկազգեսն լեզունի* [New Dictionary of the Armenian Language]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. <https://archive.org/details/NorBagirkHaykazeānLezui1836/>
- Origène. 1964. *Contre Celse*. Tome III, Livres V et VI. Sources Chrétiennes, 147. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.
- Roszka, Step'anos. 1964. *Ժամանակագրությունը լսած տարեկանը եկեղեցականը* [Ecclesiastical Chronicle or Annals]. Vienna: Mekhitarist Press.
- Suidae Lexicon*. 1928–1938. Ed. Ada Adler. 5 vols. Lexicographi Graeci 1. Leipzig: Teubner (repr. Munich & Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2001). <http://www.stoa.org/sol>
- Van Buren, A. W. 1908. "Inscriptions from Asia Minor, Cyprus, and the Cyrenaica". *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 28, 180–201.

David et les modes de division : une analyse comparative du chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes à la philosophie**

▼ **RÉSUMÉ** Le chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes à la philosophie* de David contient une discussion originale sur les modes de division. Une telle discussion ne se trouve ni dans les *Prolégomènes* d'Ammonius ni dans ceux d'Élias, mais elle est présente dans le commentaire d'Élias sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre et dans les *Prolégomènes* du Pseudo-Élias. Une analyse comparative de ces textes montre que David n'a probablement pas écrit ses *Prolégomènes* et son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* à la même époque. L'analyse révèle également que David a utilisé au moins deux sources différentes pour ces textes. Même si David se distingue d'Élias dans ses *Prolégomènes*, il a été profondément influencé par lui (ou par ses sources) lors de la rédaction de son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. Qui plus est, même s'il partage de nombreuses ressemblances avec le Pseudo-Élias dans ses *Prolégomènes*, David appartient clairement à une lignée exégétique différente de la sienne.

▼ **ABSTRACT** David's chapter 21 of the *Prolegomena to Philosophy* contains an original discussion on the modes of division. Such a discussion is not found in either Ammonius' or Elias's *Prolegomena*, but is present in Elias's commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and in Pseudo-Elias's *Prolegomena*. A comparative analysis of these texts shows that David probably did not write his *Prolegomena* and his commentary on the *Isagoge* during the same period of time. It also reveals that he used at least two different sources for these texts. Even though David distinguishes himself from Elias in his *Prolegomena*, he was deeply influenced by him (or his sources)

* Ce travail a été soutenu par la FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, UIDB/00310/2020.

Geneviève Lachance  0000-0003-2507-5802 • Centre of Philosophy (CFUL), Hphil, University of Lisbon, Portugal (glachance@edu.ulisboa.pt)

Cite this article: Geneviève Lachance, 'David et les modes de division : une analyse comparative du chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes à la philosophie*', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 93–105
<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142264>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142264

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

when writing his commentary on the *Isagoge*. However, even though he shares many resemblances with Pseudo-Elias in his *Prolegomena*, he clearly belongs to a different exegetical *lignée* than him.

▼ **MOTS CLEFS** David l'Invincible, *Prolégomènes à la philosophie*, chapitre 21, modes de division, Ammonius, Elias, Pseudo-Elias.

▼ **KEYWORDS** David the Invincible, *Prolegomena to Philosophy*, chapter 21, modes of division, Ammonius, Elias, Pseudo-Elias.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

1. Introduction

A compter du chapitre 18 des *Prolégomènes à la philosophie* (chapitre 15 de la version arménienne), David délaisse le thème de la définition de la philosophie pour passer à celui de la division. La définition et la division de la philosophie représentent les deux thèmes majeurs des *Prolégomènes* – comme en fait d'ailleurs foi le titre remanié de la version arménienne¹ – et donneront naissance à la structure bipartite si caractéristique de l'œuvre. Cette structure bipartite, ainsi que de nombreux autres éléments tant philosophiques que formels, est également apparente chez Ammonius et chez Elias. En effet, David partage de nombreux points communs avec Ammonius, perçu par certains comme l'instigateur du genre des prolégomènes à la philosophie (Roueché 1990, 114–116), et surtout avec Elias, avec lequel il est constamment confondu dans la tradition manuscrite (Westerink 1961, 130–131).

Il est pourtant un aspect sur lequel David se distingue d'Ammonius et d'Elias. En effet, avec le Pseudo-Elias, un commentateur néo-platonicien sur lequel nous savons très peu de choses et dont le *terminus ante quem* a été établi aux alentours de 640 (Mueller-Jourdan 2020, 131–132),² David est l'un des rares auteurs à avoir inclus dans ses *Prolégomènes* un chapitre *méthodologique* sur les différents modes de division (διαλεκτικοὶ τρόποι [բաժանման յեղանակք]). Ammonius et Elias proposent bel et bien une telle division de la philosophie, mais ne discutent jamais de la méthode selon laquelle celle-ci est réalisée. Toujours avec le Ps.-Elias, David est également l'un des premiers commentateurs à avoir présenté une liste de *huit* modes de division. Il se distingue en cela des philosophes qui l'ont précédé ou qui lui sont contemporains, entre autres Sextus Empiricus, Alcinous, Serge de Reshaina, Ammonius, Philopon, Stéphane, Proclus, Boèce, l'Anonyme de bar Shakko et Elias, qui ont tous discuté

1 Le titre est passé de *Prolégomènes à la philosophie* (τὰ προλεγόμενα τῆς φιλοσοφίας) en grec à *Définitions et divisions de la philosophie* (Մտնմանք եւ տրամաւտնոյթիւք խնամաւտնոյթիւք) en arménien. Cf. Calzolari 2009, 39.

2 Wolska-Conus 1989, 69–82 a assimilé la figure du Ps.-Elias à celle de Stéphane d'Alexandrie, entre autres sur la base d'un fragment contenu dans les *Dialogues* de Sévère bar Shakko (ci-après nommé « l'Anonyme de bar Shakko » [cf. Baumstark 1900, 192–197]). Or, l'auteur du fragment contenu dans l'œuvre de bar Shakko ne peut être identique au Ps.-Elias, car il présente une liste de modes de division différente de ce dernier. Sur la question, voir : Roueché 2012. Cela ne veut pas pour autant dire que le Ps.-Elias ne puisse être assimilé à Stéphane : il ne peut simplement pas l'être à partir du fragment de bar Shakko, comme l'a fait Wolska-Conus.

des modes de division dans différentes parties de leur œuvre, mais en ont proposé un nombre inférieur. L'apport de David à la réflexion sur les modes de division est important et aura une influence sur de nombreux auteurs postérieurs : à partir de lui, une liste de huit modes de division sera communément acceptée par des auteurs tels que Jean Damascène ou Nicéphore Blemmydès.

Comme le thème des modes de division permet à la fois de relier David à la tradition philosophique qui l'a précédé et de le distinguer de cette dernière, une analyse comparative du chapitre dit *méthodologique* – chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes à la philosophie* (chapitre 18 de la version arménienne) – gagne à être menée. En effet, une telle étude, effectuée tant d'un point de vue linguistique que philosophique, sera à même de préciser le contexte exégétique dans lequel David a évolué et de nous aider à évaluer sa singularité. Quels liens David entretenait-il avec ses prédécesseurs ? En particulier, quels sont ses rapports avec Ammonius, Elias et le Ps.-Elias, trois auteurs qui nous ont laissé des *Prolégomènes* et des commentaires sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre (Ammon. *in Isag.* 1891, 1–16; Eliae *in Isag.* 1900, 1–34; Dav. *Prol.* 1904, 1–79) ?³ L'analyse du chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes* de David nous permettra d'éclairer ces points restés encore nébuleux et de révéler certains aspects étonnants du travail de ce philosophe que l'on qualifiait d'Invincible.

2. Modes de division : liens entre David et Elias

Le chapitre 21 (= Dav. *Prol. Arm.* 18) des *Prolégomènes à la philosophie* s'ouvre par un résumé des chapitres précédents : la philosophie est divisée en une partie théorétique (elle-même divisée en sciences naturelles, mathématiques et théologie) et en une partie pratique. Contrairement à Ammonius et à Elias, David ressent aussitôt le besoin d'examiner selon quel mode précis une telle division a été réalisée. Dès les premières lignes du chapitre, donc, David propose une liste de huit modes *selon lesquels tout objet est divisé*, qu'il attribue en passant à « certains » (τινες). Une telle attribution peut laisser présumer que David n'est pas à l'origine de la liste qu'il présente. Or, avant David et le Ps.-Elias, nous ne retrouvons aucune autre liste comprenant huit modes de division. Seule la liste proposée par Elias dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* s'en rapproche, mais elle ne comporte que sept éléments.

Chaque *tropos*, ou mode de division, est présenté à tour de rôle et accompagné de multiples exemples (*Prol.*, 65.16–66.23 – Dav. *Prol. Arm.*, 136.9–29). Les huit *tropoi* décrits par David sont les suivants :

- 1 Division du genre vers les espèces (p. ex., division de « animal » en « rationnel » et « irrationnel ») ;

3 Olympiodore, maître présumé d'Elias et de David, aurait également écrit un commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre. Dans son commentaire, David cite trois fois le nom d'Olympiodore (16.3, 31.34 et 64.32) ; Elias et Pseudo-Elias n'en parlent pas. Il est également possible que Stéphane ait écrit un commentaire à l'*Isagoge*. Cf. Stéph. *in De Int.*, 4.11–36.

- 2 Division de l'espèce vers les individus (p. ex., division de « être humain » en « Socrate », « Alcibiade » ou « Platon ») ;
- 3 Division du tout vers les parties (parties semblables : division d'une veine en plus petites veines ; parties dissemblables : division de la tête en oreilles, nez et yeux) ;
- 4 Division d'un terme homonyme vers ses différentes significations (division du terme « chien » en « chien terrestre » [canin], « chien aquatique » [loutre ou poisson] et « chien céleste » [constellation]) ;
- 5 Division de la substance en accidents (p. ex. division de « être humain » en « noir » et « blanc ») ;
- 6 Division de l'accident en substances (p. ex., division des « choses blanches » en « neige », « cygne », etc.) ;
- 7 Division de l'accident en accidents (p. ex., division des « choses blanches » en « chaudes » et « froides ») ;
- 8 Division de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte (p. ex., division de « médecine » en « livre médical », « emplâtre médical », etc.).⁴

Le traducteur arménien apporte plusieurs modifications au passage 65.16–66.23 qui, à l'exception d'une seule,⁵ n'ont aucune répercussion importante sur le sens. Par exemple, le texte grec présente quelquefois le premier élément de chaque *tropos* au pluriel, alors que l'arménien les présente toujours au singulier.⁶ Au contraire, le texte grec présente toujours le second élément au pluriel, alors que l'arménien le présente quelquefois au singulier.⁷ De telles différences sont difficiles à expliquer – une division doit normalement se faire de l'unité vers la multiplicité – et ne correspondent à aucune variante grecque notée dans l'apparat critique de l'édition de Busse (Dav. *Prol.* 1904, 65). De plus, comme cela a été observé plus d'une fois par les traducteurs des

4 Nous reprenons ici la traduction de l'expression ἀφ' ἑνὸς πρὸς ἓν proposée par P. Mueller-Jourdan 2007, 78.

5 Cette différence concerne le mode de division « du tout vers ses parties ». Le texte grec dit : « ... parce que les parties qui portent le même nom que les autres parties et le tout sont appelées parties similaires... parce que les parties qui n'ont pas le même nom que les autres parties et le tout sont appelées dissemblables... » (καὶ γὰρ ὁμοιομερῆ λέγεται τὰ ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ ὁμωνύμως λεγόμενα... καὶ γὰρ ἀνομοιομερῆ λέγεται τὰ μὴτε ἀλλήλοις μὴτε τῷ ὅλῳ ὁμωνύμως λεγόμενα [65.27–66.03]). L'arménien dit plutôt : « qui [les parties] sont semblables au tout... parce qu'elles ont la même nature que le [tout]... qui [les parties] sont différentes parce qu'elles ne sont pas semblables au tout ni les unes aux autres... » (որք նմանաձայնաբարք են բոլորին. վասն զի զինքն բնութիւն բոլորին ունին ... որք են աննմանք, վասն զի ոչ բոլորին եւ ոչ միմեանց նմանք զոն (Dav. *Prol. Arm.*, 136.14–17). Le critère confirmant la similarité des parties entre elles et des parties avec le tout est différent : en grec, les parties doivent avoir le même nom que les autres parties et le tout, tandis qu'en arménien, elles doivent avoir la même nature (i.e. la même définition). La traduction arménienne est également moins précise en ce qui concerne le critère de dissemblance. Il est à noter toutefois que dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*, David varie quant au critère de similarité : en 155.5–13, il fait allusion à deux critères, c'est-à-dire « le même nom » et « la même chose ».

6 Par exemple, (2) ἀπὸ εἰδῶν εἰς ἄτομα (ի տեսալէ յանհասու) ; (3) ἀπὸ ὅλων εἰς μέρη (ի բոլորէ ի մասունւն) ; (6) ἀπὸ συμβεβηκότων εἰς οὐσίας (ի պատահմանէ յէություն).

7 Par exemple, (6) ἀπὸ συμβεβηκότων εἰς οὐσίας (ի պատահմանէ յէություն). En arménien, le deuxième élément des *tropoi* (5) ἀπὸ οὐσίας εἰς συμβεβηκότα (յէությունէ ի պատահումն) et (7) ἀπὸ συμβεβηκότος... εἰς συμβεβηκότα (ի պատահմանէ ի պատահումն) est bien au singulier, mais il se rapporte à un nom d'action, donc la marque du pluriel n'est pas nécessaire. Je remercie Agnès Ouzounian pour cette remarque.

Définitions et divisions de la philosophie,⁸ le traducteur arménien modifie fréquemment les explications et exemples présentés par l'auteur du texte grec. Ainsi, le traducteur arménien ignore certains exemples (66.11 ; 66.15) ou en modifie l'ordre de présentation (66.1 ; 66.7), il altère certaines parenthèses explicatives (65.26–30 ; 66.2–5) ou les ignore totalement (65.22–23 ; 66.9–10 ; 66.11–13 ; 66.15–17 ; 66.19–20). Encore une fois, ces différences n'ont aucun équivalent dans l'édition de Busse et sont probablement l'œuvre du traducteur (Dav. *Prol.* 1904, 65–66).⁹ Enfin, il est à noter que le traducteur arménien ne ressent pas le besoin d'adapter le texte qu'il a sous les yeux en modifiant les prénoms grecs (Socrate, Platon, Alcibiade) par des prénoms arméniens (65.24–25). Il se distingue ainsi de certains auteurs chrétiens comme Jean Damascène ou Nicéphore Blemnydès, qui préfèrent quant à eux utiliser les prénoms « Pierre » (Πέτρος) ou « Paul » (Παῦλος), plus usuels à leur époque.¹⁰ Le traducteur arménien n'hésite toutefois pas à adapter le texte grec au contexte arménien dans plusieurs autres passages du texte de David.¹¹

En présentant une liste de huit modes de division, David se distingue de tous les commentateurs qui l'ont précédé ou qui lui sont contemporains, à l'exclusion bien sûr du Ps.-Elias. Il s'inscrit toutefois dans une tradition bien établie. Déjà au deuxième siècle de notre ère, Alcinous distinguait cinq modes de division (genre en espèces, tout en parties, terme en ses différentes significations, accident en sujets et sujet en accidents) et Sextus Empiricus, trois (genre en espèces, tout en parties, terme en ses différentes significations).¹² L'origine des modes de division demeure inconnue, mais il n'est pas impossible qu'elle soit très ancienne et qu'elle remonte aux Stoïciens (Chase 2003, 142).¹³ Chose certaine : ils sont utilisés par les philosophes de tout acabit, qu'ils soient sceptiques (Sextus Empiricus), médio-platoniciens (Alcinous), aristotéliens (Alexandre d'Aphrodise) ou néo-platoniciens.

Chez ces derniers, l'usage des modes de division est sans conteste populaire et généralisé. Par exemple, dans leur commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre, tant Elias (67.22ff), David (154.22ff) que le Ps.-Elias (91.29ff) discutent du mode de division de l'étant (τὸ ὄν) et optent pour la même solution : l'étant est divisé comme « ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte ». Toutefois, il semble que les différents philosophes néo-platoniciens n'étaient pas toujours en accord les uns avec les autres sur la question des modes de division. Ainsi, dans son commentaire au *De Interpretatione* d'Aristote, Ammonius divise le discours apophantique en « affirmation » et « négation » tout en soulignant qu'une telle division se fait « du genre vers les

8 C'est-à-dire les traducteurs de la version arménienne des *Prolégomènes à la philosophie*, dont le titre est : *Définitions et divisions de la philosophie*. A ce jour, il existe une traduction anglaise (Kendall and Thomson 1983) et italienne (Contin 2014). Une traduction française sera bientôt proposée par V. Calzolari (Brill).

9 La version arménienne « se situe plus nettement du côté de la famille représentée par V [i.e. *Vaticanus gr.* 1470], sans pour autant coïncider d'une façon absolue avec l'état du texte témoin par V lui-même » (Calzolari 2009, 59).

10 Al-Farabi utilise les prénoms « Zaïd » et « Umar ». Cf. Dunlop 1951.

11 Cf. Calzolari 2009, 48.

12 Sextus Empiricus : *Esquisses pyrrhoniennes* 2.214ff; Alcinous : *Didaskalia*, V. Cf. Aydin 2016, 212.

13 Dans son commentaire au *Timée* de Platon, Proclus souligne l'origine stoïcienne du mode de division « d'un terme homonyme vers ses différentes significations » (*in Tim.* I, 224.17ff).

espèces » (66.17ff). Ammonius adopte ici la même position que celle de Porphyre (d'après le témoignage de Boèce [17.26ff]). Quelques décennies plus tard, Stéphane réévaluera l'exégèse d'Ammonius et proposera un autre mode de division pour le discours apophantique, soit la division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » (4.11ff et 17.16ff). Ammonius et Stéphane s'opposent ici l'un à l'autre, mais également à Alexandre d'Aphrodise, qui avait quant à lui divisé le discours apophantique selon un mode différent, soit « d'un terme homonyme vers ses différentes significations » (Ammon. *in De Int.*, 15.16–30).

Comme David a proposé un nombre plus élevé de modes de division qu'Elias, qui plus est que son commentaire est deux fois plus long que ce dernier, il est permis de penser que David a vécu à une époque postérieure à celle d'Elias ou qu'il était un contemporain tardif de ce dernier (Wildberg 1990, 37). De plus, comme Elias n'a pas inclus de chapitre *méthodologique* dans les *Prolégomènes* qui lui sont attribués,¹⁴ il est également permis de penser qu'il n'a pas eu d'influence sur David ou, dit autrement, que David n'a pas utilisé les *Prolégomènes* d'Elias comme source à son propre texte. Dans la rédaction du chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes*, donc, David ne dépend pas d'Elias : soit il dépend d'une source secondaire (qui ne peut être Ammonius ni Elias), soit il fait preuve d'originalité. David peut-il avoir été le premier à proposer une liste de huit modes de division de la philosophie ?

Le chapitre 19 du commentaire de David sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre nous fournit un élément de réponse. En effet, dans ce dernier chapitre, David s'attaque à la question de la division de l'étant (τὸ ὄν). Contre toute attente, il affirme que l'étant peut être divisé selon six (ἕξ [ὑπερ]) modes de division : (1) du genre vers les espèces, (2) de l'espèce vers les individus, (3) du tout vers les parties, (4) d'un terme homonyme vers ses différentes significations, (5) de la substance vers les accidents et (6) de l'accident vers la substance. Il termine son analyse en présentant un septième mode de division, soit la « division de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte », et opte pour ce dernier *tropos* pour diviser l'étant (154.13–159.23). Bref, David oublie la liste de huit modes de division qu'il avait présentée plus tôt dans les *Prolégomènes* et opte maintenant pour une liste de sept *tropoi*, laquelle exclut pour une raison inconnue le mode de division de l'accident vers les accidents. Une telle différence est étonnante, d'autant plus que les *Prolégomènes* se veulent une introduction au commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* et ce dernier, la continuation des *Prolégomènes*.

Que s'est-il donc passé entre les *Prolégomènes* et le commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre pour que David change subitement d'idée et passe d'un nombre de modes de division à un autre ? Un élément de réponse peut être trouvé dans le commentaire d'Elias au même texte : en 67.2–71.23, entourant la question de la division de l'étant, Elias propose exactement six (ἕξαχῶς/ἕκτον) modes de division, en ajoute un septième (ἑβδόμος), puis divise l'étant selon la « division de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte ». Quoique l'ordre de présentation des modes de division soit différent, David et Elias suivent un chemin similaire : ils présentent

¹⁴ Le commentaire d'Elias sur l'*Isagoge* a été transmis de manière anonyme. L'attribution à Elias des *Prolégomènes* et du commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* repose uniquement sur deux scolies (Wildberg 1990, 143).

tous les deux six modes de division, en rajoutent un septième, puis divisent l'étant selon ce dernier. Une telle similarité laisse présumer que David et Elias suivent une source similaire ou que l'un a été influencé par l'autre. Comme Ammonius présente une liste de trois *tropoi* en lien avec la division de l'étant dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* (81.7ff), et que le Ps.-Elias continue à utiliser une liste de huit *tropoi* dans son commentaire à la même œuvre (chapitre 35, 91.29–93.13), David ne peut dépendre d'Ammonius ni du Ps.-Elias dans le chapitre 19 de son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. Il est donc probable que David ait suivi Elias (ou sa source) dans ce passage précis. Si David a bel et bien écrit les *Prolégomènes* avant le commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* – comme nous avons toutes les raisons de le penser puisque le cours d'introduction précédait le cours portant sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre – il appert que la liste du commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* revêt un caractère plus définitif que celle des *Prolégomènes*.

La présentation de deux listes différentes nous informe sur le *modus operandi* de David. *Tout d'abord*, David fait preuve d'un certain laisser-aller ou manque de précision dans ses *Prolégomènes* et son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. Sur le thème des modes de division, il propose une liste différente et ne semble pas se souvenir dans le commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* de ce qu'il a dit préalablement dans les *Prolégomènes*. Il est à noter ici que la traduction arménienne du commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* de David est plus précise : le traducteur a perçu la différence entre les deux passages et a ajouté le mode de division manquant, soit « de l'accident vers les accidents ». Toutefois, le traducteur arménien n'a pas modifié le texte portant sur le nombre de modes de division présentés, qui est resté à *six*. Nous pouvons donc être sûrs que le mode de division de l'accident vers les accidents a été rajouté ici par le traducteur arménien et qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une corruption dans le texte grec (Muradyan 2014, 173–175).¹⁵ *Deuxièmement*, le laisser-aller de David peut n'être qu'apparent et s'expliquer par des facteurs d'ordre chronologique. Ainsi, un laps de temps important peut s'être écoulé entre la rédaction des *Prolégomènes* et du commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. Comme ces deux textes nous ont été transmis ἀπὸ φωνῆς et qu'ils résultent vraisemblablement de notes de cours prises par des étudiants, il est possible qu'ils reflètent deux étapes différentes dans la pensée et l'enseignement de David. Bref, David peut avoir changé d'avis entre le moment où il donna son cours d'introduction et celui où il commenta l'*Isagoge*.¹⁶ *Enfin*, il est également possible que David ait suivi deux sources distinctes dans la rédaction des *Prolégomènes* et de son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. La première source ne serait ni Ammonius ni Elias : David l'aurait incluse dans ses *Prolégomènes* pour combler les lacunes observées dans les *Prolégomènes* d'Ammonius et d'Elias, mais ne l'aurait pas retenue par la suite dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. La seconde source ne serait ni Ammonius ni le Ps.-Elias, mais pourrait être Elias ou Olympiodore (considéré comme le professeur d'Elias et de David). Cette source a

15 Nous retrouvons un autre exemple d'un tel ajout dans les *Prolégomènes* (68.6) : David oublie de classer le mode de division « du genre vers les espèces » parmi « ce qui est divisé comme une chose », mais le traducteur arménien le rajoute : նրախնիս ի տնոյն, ի տնաւիկս (136.36).

16 L'hypothèse selon laquelle David aurait écrit le commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* avant les *Prolégomènes* est également possible et mériterait une étude distincte.

une autorité suffisante pour que David oublie la première liste de *tropoi* présentée dans ses *Prolégomènes*.

Du fait qu'il varie dans sa réponse d'un texte à l'autre, il semble moins vraisemblable que David ait été le premier à proposer une liste de huit modes de division et qu'il ait ainsi fait preuve d'originalité. Il serait en effet plus probable qu'il ait suivi une source anonyme dans ses *Prolégomènes* et Elias (ou sa source) dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. L'inverse – c'est-à-dire qu'Elias ait suivi David – semble également moins probable. Si tel est le cas, il appert que David accorde une plus grande autorité à l'interprétation d'Elias (ou de sa source) et qu'il ne répugne pas à la restituer fidèlement. Bien qu'il semble indépendant d'Elias (ou de sa source) dans le chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes*, sa dépendance à ce dernier est confirmée dans le chapitre 19 du commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. David et Elias proviennent vraisemblablement d'une même lignée interprétative.

3. Modes de division : liens entre David et le Ps.-Elias

Lorsqu'il étudia pour la première fois le commentaire anonyme sur l'*Isagoge* de Porphyre, L. G. Westerink fut tellement frappé par sa ressemblance avec le commentaire de David qu'il émit l'hypothèse suivante : le commentaire anonyme a été rédigé par David et représente une version antérieure du commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* qui a été préservé sous son nom (Westerink 1961, 130). Westerink remarqua également les liens importants qui unissaient ce commentaire anonyme à celui d'Elias. Ce n'est qu'une fois qu'il édita le commentaire anonyme que Westerink révisa son jugement et attribua ce dernier à un auteur différent. Cet auteur fut nommé « Pseudo-Elias (Pseudo-David) » (couramment désigné par l'appellation abrégée « Ps.-Elias »). A l'heure actuelle, l'ensemble des chercheurs s'accorde pour distinguer le Ps.-Elias de David et d'Elias : bien qu'il partage de nombreux points communs avec ces derniers, le Ps.-Elias est un commentateur différent, qui vécut probablement au sixième ou septième siècle à Alexandrie, Constantinople ou Thessalonique. Les rapports entre David et le Ps.-Elias demeurent toutefois mystérieux. En effet, les travaux actuels n'ont pas encore permis de déterminer si David avait été influencé par l'exégèse du Ps.-Elias (ou l'inverse) ou s'il lui était antérieur ou postérieur. Au départ, l'opinion générale tendait à placer le Ps.-Elias après David, mais plusieurs chercheurs ont depuis remis en question une telle hypothèse.¹⁷

L'analyse comparative des *Prolégomènes* de David, d'Elias et du Ps.-Elias confirme l'identité distincte de chaque auteur. Dans le cas qui nous occupe, c'est-à-dire la question des modes de division, la différence entre les trois auteurs est même évidente. *Tout d'abord*, le Ps.-Elias se distingue d'Elias (et d'Ammonius) en ce qu'il inclut dans son cours introductif un chapitre sur les modes de division (chapitre 20). Il se rapproche toutefois de David, qui est le *seul* autre auteur néoplatonicien à incorporer

¹⁷ Cf. Westerink 1967, XVI; Marcovich 1975, 31–34; Blumenthal 1981, 188–192; Mueller-Jourdan 2007, XVI–XXVI.

une telle discussion dans ses *Prolégomènes*. Deuxièmement, le Ps.-Elias se distingue également d'Elias dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* : au chapitre 35, lorsqu'il est question de la division de l'étant, le Ps.-Elias donne une liste de huit *tropoi*, Elias de six ou sept. Ce dernier fait donne à penser que le Ps.-Elias ne dépend pas d'Elias dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*. Enfin, le Ps.-Elias se distingue de David en ce qu'il ne change pas d'avis sur la question des modes de division : dans son commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*, le Ps.-Elias demeure fidèle à l'interprétation qu'il a donnée dans ses *Prolégomènes* et continue à parler d'une liste de huit modes de division. Bref, contrairement à David, il ne semble pas suivre deux sources différentes dans l'un et l'autre texte.

Le Ps.-Elias présente donc à la fois des similarités et des différences avec David. Qui plus est, certaines ressemblances entre le Ps.-Elias et David ne se trouvent que chez ces deux auteurs à l'exclusion de tout autre. Qu'en est-il ? David et le Ps.-Elias ont-ils été influencés l'un par l'autre ? Ont-ils utilisé une source similaire ? Dans l'affirmative, comment expliquer leurs différences ? L'analyse comparative du chapitre 21 des *Prolégomènes* de David et du chapitre 20 des *Prolégomènes* du Ps.-Elias nous permet de répondre à ces questions en jetant un éclairage nouveau sur ces deux philosophes. En effet, quoiqu'ils soient les seuls commentateurs néoplatoniciens à présenter une liste de huit modes de division dans leur chapitre *méthodologique* respectif, David et le Ps.-Elias présentent plusieurs différences de nature théorique ou philosophique. Ces différences relatives à la question des modes de division, qui n'ont pas encore été mises en lumière dans le cadre d'une analyse comparative, permettent pourtant de bien distinguer David du Ps.-Elias et de déterminer leurs rapports respectifs.¹⁸ Ces différences théoriques touchent un mode de division précis : la division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » (ἀφ' ἐνὸς πρὸς ἕν).¹⁹ Elles sont au nombre de trois.

Tout d'abord, David est d'avis que parmi la liste des huit modes de division, seulement trois sont de nature « authentique » ou « véritable » (κυρίως [սուրկապէտ]) : la division « d'un genre vers les espèces », la division « du tout vers les parties » et la division « d'un terme homonyme vers ses différentes significations » (66.24-68.2). David se rapproche ici d'Ammonius (*in De Int.*, 15.16) et de Stéphane (*in De Int.*, 4.11), qui maintiennent également que seuls trois modes de division sont « véritables » (κύριος ou κυρίως). Ces trois modes de division composent une liste *canonique* : ils font partie de la liste de chaque auteur de l'Antiquité tardive qui a discuté des modes de division – Sextus Empiricus, Alcinoüs, Serge de Reshaina, Proclus, Ammonius, Philopon, Boèce, l'Anonyme de bar Shakkō, Stéphane, David, Elias, Ps.-Elias, Al-Farabi.²⁰ Quant au Ps.-Elias, il parle également du fait que certains modes de division sont illégitimes (νόθοι). Bien qu'il ne les énumère jamais explicitement,

18 Pour une analyse comparative de certains passages d'Ammonius, d'Elias, de David et du Ps.-Elias portant sur des notions ou concepts autres que les modes de division, voir Contin 2017, 57-67 et 101-254.

19 L'arménien traduit cette expression problématique par ի միոյ՛ն եւ սոս մի / ի միոյնքն եւ սոս մին (8.9, 136.8, 138.21-23, 140.1, 142.26, 146.28, 148.6, 152.31).

20 Sur l'utilisation des modes de division par les commentateurs et philosophes anciens, voir : Magee 1998, XLIV-XLVIII.

le Ps.-Elias semble pourtant distinguer quatre modes « véritables » : ainsi, aux trois présentés par David, il ajoute la division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » (40.12–21).²¹ Or, pour David, ce *tropos* n'est pas réellement un mode de division, mais plutôt un type d'énumération (ἀπαρίθμησις).²² David et le Ps.-Elias diffèrent donc d'opinion quant à la nature du mode de division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » : pour le premier, elle est un *tropos* inauthentique, pour le second, authentique.

Deuxièmement, David et le Ps.-Elias conçoivent la division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » différemment. En effet, pour David, ce qui est divisé ἀφ' ἐνὸς πρὸς ἓν est conçu en soi (καθ' ἑαυτό [ῥουν ἡνῖεω]) – l'arménien rajoute ici « selon la substance » (ῥουν ἡνῖεω [κατ' οὐσίαν])²³ et « comme une chose » (ὡς πᾶγμα [ἡνῖεω ἡ]) (68.3–19); pour le Ps.-Elias, il est également conçu en soi (τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰ), mais comme un vocable (ὡς φωνή) et non comme une chose (39.34–40.10). David conçoit donc la division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » sur un autre plan que le Ps.-Elias : selon lui, cette dernière se rapporte à des objets du monde réel et non au langage. Ces objets sont multiples et, en cela, ressemblent aux individus. En fait, David semble rapprocher la division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » de la division « d'une espèce vers les individus » : toutes deux sont inauthentiques, car elles se rapportent à des objets innombrables (ἀπειροί [ἡνῖεω]) et indéfinis (ἀπερίληπτοι [ἡνῖεω]) qui ne peuvent être soumis à la division. Le Ps.-Elias semble quant à lui rapprocher la division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » de la division « d'un terme homonyme vers ses différentes significations », seul autre mode de division classé sous la rubrique « comme un vocable » (ὡς φωνή) et qui est considéré comme authentique.

Enfin, le Ps.-Elias choisit le mode de division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » comme *tropos* de prédilection pour diviser la philosophie en partie pratique et théorétique. Le Ps.-Elias choisit ce mode de division spécifique sur la base d'un argument linguistique : tant la philosophie pratique que la philosophie théorétique tirent leur nom de la philosophie (40.31–42.7). Quant à David, il rejette cette dernière division et, sur la base d'un argument d'autorité, soutient que la philosophie est divisée comme un tout en ses parties, plus précisément en ses parties semblables (68.21–71.20). David et le Ps.-Elias répondent donc d'une manière tout à fait différente à l'une des questions principales des *Prolégomènes* : comment la philosophie est-elle divisée ? Cette différence, qui est capitale, confirme

21 « Pourtant, si on se donne pour tâche de parler avec précision, tous ne sont pas vrais. (...) Le mode qui divise à la façon d'une espèce divisée en individus n'est pas vrai. (...) Mais le mode qui divise la substance en accidents n'est pas vrai (...). A nouveau, le contraire n'est pas vrai non plus, à savoir le mode qui divise les accidents en substance. (...) A son tour, le mode qui divise comme un accident en accidents n'est pas vrai. (...) Ces modes-ci sont illégitimes. Ceux qui restent (οἱ λοιποὶ) en revanche sont de nature exacte. » (40.12–30 [trad. Mueller-Jourdan])

22 L'arménien ne traduit pas ce terme grec. Il dit plutôt : « Mais, ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte n'est pas dit un mode de division... » (Այլ էլ ոչ ի միողէն էլ առ մին ասի յեղանակ բաժանման [138.21]).

23 Cette formulation est à rapprocher de celle de Jean Damascène : « en soi, c'est-à-dire selon la substance » (καθ' αὐτό ... ἡγουν ου κατ' οὐσίαν) (*Dialectica*, 6, 45–46).

une fois de plus que David et le Ps.-Elias ne peuvent être la même personne. Elle démontre également qu'ils suivent une ligne exégétique distincte. En ce qui concerne la question des modes de division, David n'a pas été influencé par le Ps.-Elias ni par les sources suivies par ce dernier.

Les rapports entre David et le Ps.-Elias sont toutefois encore plus complexes. Le chapitre 22 des *Prolégomènes* de David (chapitre 19 de la version arménienne) nous présente un bon exemple de cette complexité. Suivant le chapitre méthodologique, le chapitre 22 contient la réponse de David à la question : « Selon quel mode la philosophie est-elle divisée en partie pratique et théorétique? ». Comme nous l'avons mentionné plus tôt, David présente une réponse différente par rapport à celle du Ps.-Elias : la philosophie est divisée « comme un tout en ses parties (semblables) ». Or, avant de donner cette réponse définitive, David suit un chemin argumentatif pour le moins labyrinthique : il analyse tous les modes de division selon lesquels la philosophie peut être divisée, présente des arguments montrant que le mode de division « d'un tout vers ses parties » ne peut être choisi (70.12–30) et, comme le Ps.-Elias, choisit le mode de division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » (70.30–33). Plus précisément, dans la première partie de son argumentation, David choisit le même mode de division que le Ps.-Elias et rejette le mode de division « d'un tout vers ses parties ». Il fait ensuite volte-face, rejette le mode de division choisi par le Ps.-Elias et opte pour le mode de division « d'un tout vers ses parties » (70.33–71.17). David suit donc la même interprétation que celle du Ps.-Elias dans la première partie de son argumentation pour ensuite la rejeter dans la seconde partie. Un tel fait donne à penser que David connaissait l'interprétation du Ps.-Elias ou de sa source, mais qu'il s'y opposait. Il l'aurait reproduite dans ses *Prolégomènes* pour pouvoir ensuite mieux la critiquer. Si l'interprétation *fautive* reproduite par David est bien celle du Ps.-Elias, alors le Ps.-Elias est antérieur à David. Si cette même interprétation provient de la source utilisée par le Ps.-Elias, alors David s'oppose directement à une interprétation connue et acceptée dans les cercles néoplatoniciens. D'une manière ou d'une autre, David appartient à un courant exégétique spécifique qui l'oppose au Ps.-Elias et l'en distingue nettement.

4. Conclusion

Nous savions déjà que David et Elias entretenaient des liens multiples. En ce qui concerne les modes de division, l'analyse comparative a montré qu'ils adoptent une interprétation similaire dans leur commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* et suivent une même ligne interprétative. Or, dans ses *Prolégomènes*, David se distingue non seulement d'Elias (qui demeure silencieux sur la question des modes de division), mais également de lui-même (David adopte une position différente dans chacun des deux textes). Une telle variation peut être expliquée de plusieurs manières – l'interprétation la plus probable étant celle selon laquelle David a suivi Elias (ou sa source) dans le commentaire sur l'*Isagoge*, et une source différente dans ses *Prolégomènes* – mais elle laisse surtout apparaître une discontinuité entre deux textes qui composent normalement une unité.

Ces deux textes ne semblent pas avoir été écrits l'un à la suite de l'autre ou être issus d'une même période d'enseignement. Une étude comparant de manière exhaustive les *Prolégomènes* et le commentaire sur l'*Isagoge* de David gagnerait ainsi à être menée afin de préciser les causes potentielles de cette variation – qu'avait remarquée le traducteur arménien – et de déterminer la présence de toute autre différence.

Les liens entre David et le Ps.-Elias demeuraient quant à eux plus nébuleux. L'analyse comparative, qui s'est concentrée sur la question des modes de division, a permis de montrer qu'en dépit de leurs nombreuses ressemblances, David et le Ps.-Elias suivent une ligne exégétique différente : ils partagent une conception dissemblable du mode de division « de ce qui provient d'un terme unique et s'y rapporte » et répondent d'une manière distincte à la question « Selon quel mode la philosophie est-elle divisée en partie pratique et théorétique ? ». David semble également être au fait de l'interprétation du Ps.-Elias (ou de sa source), car il la reproduit dans le chapitre 22 de ses *Prolégomènes* pour ensuite la rejeter. Il est donc possible que le Ps.-Elias ait vécu à une période antérieure à celle de David ou qu'il utilise une source plus ancienne (que David utilise également, mais avec laquelle il n'est pas toujours en accord). Dans les études à venir sur les *Prolégomènes* de David, il importera dorénavant de toujours garder à l'œil l'exégèse du Ps.-Elias, car celle-ci diffère non seulement de celle d'Elias, mais semble également précéder celle de David.

Références

- Ammon. in *De Int.* 1897. Ammonius, In *Aristotelis De Interpretatione Commentarium*, ed. Adolfus Busse. CAG 4.5. Berlin: Reimer, 1–272.
- Ammon. in *Isag.* 1891. Ammonius in *Porphyrii isagogen sive quinque voces*, ed. Adolfus Busse. CAG 4.3. Berlin: Reimer, 1–16.
- Aydin, Sami. 2016. *Sergius of Reshaina Introduction to Aristotle and His Categories, Addressed to Philotheos*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Baumstark, Anton. 1900. *Aristoteles bei den Syrern vom V.–VIII. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Blumenthal, Henry J. 1981. "Pseudo-Elias and the *Isagoge* commentaries again". *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 124, 188–192.
- Calzolari, Valentina et Jonathan Barnes (éds.). 2009. *L'œuvre de David l'Invincible et la transmission de la pensée grecque dans la tradition arménienne et syriaque (Commentaria in Aristotelem Armeniaca)*. Leiden: Brill.
- Chase, Michael. 2003. *Simplicius, On Aristotle's Categories 1–4*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Contin, Benedetta. 2014 (trans.). *David l'Invincible, Le Definizioni e divisioni della filosofia*. Palermo: Officina di studi medievali.
- . 2017. *David l'Arménien et l'école d'Alexandrie, Recherches sur la formation du vocabulaire épistémologique des œuvres grecques et arméniennes*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale.
- Dav. Prol. 1904. *Davidis Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Commentarium*, CAG 18.2. Berlin: Reimer, 1–79.

- Dav. Prol. arm. 1960. Դավիթ Անյաղթ, *Մահմաւիթ իմաստաստիքոյ յօդուսն* [David the Invincible, *Definitions of Philosophy*], edited, with a Russian translation, introduction and notes, by Sen Arevshatyan, Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
- Dunlop, Douglas Morton. 1951. "The Existence and Definition of Philosophy. From an Arabic Text Ascribed to al-Fārābī". *Iraq* 13 (2), 76–94.
- Eliae in Isag. 1900. *Eliae in Porphyrii Isagogen et Aristotelis Categorias Commentaria*, ed. Adolfus Busse. CAG 18.1. Berlin: Reimer, 1–34.
- Kendall, Bridget and Robert W. Thomson (trans.). 1983. *Definitions and Divisions of Philosophy by David the Invincible Philosopher*. Chico: Scholars Press.
- Magee, John. 1998. *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii, De Divisione Liber*. Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill.
- Marcovich, Miroslav. 1975. "Pseudo-Elias on Heraclitus". *The American Journal of Philology* 96 (1), 31–34.
- Mueller-Jourdan, Pascal. 2007. *Une initiation à la philosophie de l'Antiquité tardive: Les leçons du Pseudo-Elias*. Fribourg: Cerf.
- . 2020. « À propos de l'auteur des *Leçons sur l'Isagogè de Porphyre* (Westerink éd. 1967), éléments d'enquête et examen ». Dans *Introduction générale à la philosophie chez les commentateurs néoplatoniciens*, éd. Min-Jun Huh. Turnhout: Brepols, 123–149.
- Muradyan, Gohar (ed. and trans.). 2014. *David the Invincible, Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge*, Old Armenian Text with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes. Leiden: Brill.
- Roueché, Mossman. 1990. "The Definitions of Philosophy and a New Fragment of Stephanus the Philosopher". *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 40, Vienne: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 107–128.
- . 2012. "Stephanus the Philosopher and Ps. Elias: a Case of Mistaken Identity". *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 36 (2), 20–38.
- Westerink, Leendert Gerrit. 1961. "Elias on the *Prior Analytics*". *Mnemosyne* 14 (2), 126–139.
- Wildberg, Christian. 1990. "Three Neoplatonic *Introductions to Philosophy*: Ammonius, David and Elias". *Hermethena* 148, 33–51.
- Wolska-Conus, Wanda. 1989. "Stéphanos d'Athènes et Stéphanos d'Alexandrie. Essai d'identification et de biographie". *Revue des études byzantines* 47, 5–89.

The Armenian Text of Philo's *De Abrahamo* 1-16

▼ **ABSTRACT** This article discusses textual problems of the Armenian translation of Philo's *De Abrahamo* (§1–6). The prevailing opinion that ms. V1040 is the *codex optimus* is questioned. A preliminary study of errors in the Armenian manuscript tradition allows to determine the place of V1040 among other witnesses and show that the correct Armenian text can be reconstructed only through a careful examination of all manuscript readings. The studied material also confirms Hans Lewy's view that all known manuscripts of the Armenian translation of *De Abrahamo* go back to one archetype, which had already suffered considerable textual corruption.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Philo of Alexandria, translation, Armenian literature, manuscript tradition, textual criticism, reconstruction of the original, Hellenising School.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

1. Introduction

The old Armenian translations of the works of the Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE – c. 50 CE), who wrote in Greek and explained the Pentateuch in the terms of Greek thought, date from the early period of Armenian writing, the beginning of the so-called “Hellenising School” of translation, which sought to translate Greek texts as literally as possible, even preserving many grammatical features.¹ Some

¹ Abraham Terian assumes that the *terminus ad quem* for the Armenian translation of Philo is determined by its use in the *History* of Eghishē (Elisaeus), whom Terian places at the end of the 6th century (see Terian 1981, 6–7). However, Eghishē is traditionally considered (and himself says) to be a 5th-century author. Many scholars do not question this dating, which means that the Armenian translations of Philo can be much earlier. Additionally, some neologisms from Philo's translations are found in the *History* of Lazar P'arpec'i, who lived at the turn of the 6th century. Accordingly, these translations have been dated to the second half of the 5th century (see Muradyan 1990 and 2012, 2–3, n. 9).

Boris Nikolsky  0000-0002-0760-8639 • École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (ENS), Lyon, France
(borisnikolsky@gmail.com)

Cite this article: Boris Nikolsky, 'The Armenian Text of Philo's *De Abrahamo* 1-16', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 107–119
<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142265>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142265

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

of the translated works have survived only in the Armenian versions,² which arouses more interest towards them. They have been published several times, although no critical editions exist to this day. The first edition of Philo's works extant only in Armenian was undertaken by John Baptist Aucher (= Awgerean) in the 19th century (Aucher 1822 and 1826), from a manuscript kept in the Mekhitarist library of the Monastery of St. Lazarus in Venice (V1040); Aucher also occasionally consulted another Venetian manuscript (V1334), as well as one from the library of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem (J333). Abraham Terian reproduced the text of Philo's *De Animalibus* from this edition, supplementing it with a preface, translation, and commentary (Terian 1981). He is now preparing a critical edition of *De Providentia*. Furthermore, some manuscripts disregarded by Aucher were used in the works of Charles Mercier (Mercier 1979: French translation of the Armenian *Questions and Answers on Genesis*) and Joseph Paramelle (Paramelle 1984).³

The only edition of the Armenian text of the other group of works – those that have survived not only in Armenian translation but also in the Greek original – is the Venetian edition of 1892 (Philo 1892). It was based on V1040, and readings of another Venetian manuscript, V1334, were occasionally given in the footnotes. No editor's name is mentioned in this book, which includes the Armenian texts of *De Vita Contemplativa*, *De Abrahamo*, *Legum Allegoria* 1–2, *De Decalogo*, and the fragments from *De Specialibus Legibus*. From the afterword we may infer that it was sponsored by F. C. Conybeare. The publication of a text from one manuscript would hardly be sufficient in itself, but even this work is error-ridden and done inattentively, as Paola Pontani has pointed out in her dissertation (Pontani 1998, *passim*). One of these works, *De Vita Contemplativa*, was republished a few years later by Frederick Conybeare (Conybeare 1895). Although Conybeare used two additional manuscripts now in the Matenadaran collection, M2100 and M2057, he left the text of the Venetian edition almost unchanged, limiting himself to adding a critical apparatus (see Sirinian 2011, 21, n. 55). Moreover, in the 130 years since this edition, much progress has been made in the study of Philo's Greek text, so that Conybeare's work is largely out of date (Terian 2019b, 1–12).

The Armenian translations of Philo need careful study and above all, new editions. The examination of translation technique, the grammatical scrutiny of the translations in comparison with the Greek original, the analysis of the lexicon employed in the translations, and the compilation of dictionaries – these important tasks can only be accomplished when we have critical texts.

Often the readings of the Armenian translation prove to be important for the establishment of the Greek text. This was already pointed out by Leopold Cohn (Cohn and Wendland 1902, XXI). He was informed about the Armenian text by Conybeare, who was using the Venetian edition. However, without authentic and

² *De providentia*, *De animalibus*, *De deo*, *Quaestiones in Genesin*, and *Quaestiones in Exodum*. For a complete list, see Vardazaryan 2006, 30; Terian 2019a, 317.

³ See also English translations of Philo and Ps.-Philo: Marcus 1953; Muradyan and Topchyan 2013, 750–803, 807–881.

reliable information about the Armenian text, it is impossible to take it seriously into account when publishing the Greek original.

Together with Gohar Muradyan, I have started preparing a critical edition of *De Abrahamo*. The work is still in its initial stage, but we can already draw several conclusions that are important for the accurate reconstruction of the original Armenian text. Scholars have different opinions about the quality of V1040 that served as the basis of the Venetian edition. Mercier doubted its merits and insisted on the necessity of re-editing the texts of the Venetian edition (Mercier 1969, 9–15). On the other hand, Folker Siegert (Siegert 1989, 355–356) and Abraham Terian believe that manuscript V1040 is a reliable witness. Terian calls this manuscript *codex optimus* and is convinced that it is superior to all other Armenian manuscripts of Philo. He believes that the proposed emendations have for the most part only complicated the passages that appeared to be corrupt (Terian 2015, 145–146). In this paper, I shall endeavour to show by examples from the first chapters of *De Abrahamo* that there are plenty of examples of correct readings preserved not in V1040, but in one of the other manuscripts. Also, there are many examples of erroneous readings in all the extant manuscripts together. In these cases, conjectures are necessary, and they are often quite obvious.

2. The Manuscripts

The Armenian text of *De Abrahamo* has come down to us in 9 of the 28 Armenian manuscripts containing Philo's works listed by Terian in the preface to his edition of *De animalibus* (Terian 1981, 14–21). Here they are in chronological order:

- Yerevan, Matenadaran 1500, 1282 (M1500)
- Venice, Mekhitarist Library 1040, 1296 (V1040), which served as the basis of the 1892 Venetian edition.
- Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate 333, 1298 (J333)
- Bzommar, Armenian Monastery 121, 13th–14th centuries (BZ121)
- Yerevan, Matenadaran 2100, 1325 (M2100)
- Yerevan, Matenadaran 2057, 1328 (M2057)
- Yerevan, Matenadaran 4275, 14th century (M4275)
- Venice, Mekhitarist Library 1334, 14th century (V1334); readings of this manuscript are sometimes given in the notes of the 1892 edition.
- Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate 1331, 14th century (J1331)

We have in our possession photographs of eight manuscripts, all but J1331. We have collated them and prepared a preliminary version of the critical text of the first 16 paragraphs of Philo's work, and our text differs in many respects from that of the 1892 Venetian edition. In some cases, we have corrected the editor's misreading of V1040, sometimes we have adopted readings from other manuscripts disregarded by him, and finally, in some instances we have considered the readings of all the manuscripts to be erroneous and offered a conjecture.

3. Corrupt Passages in V1040 and the Venetian Edition

I will not discuss all the differences between our text and the 1892 edition (hereafter Ven.). Some of them are not so important; they relate to phonetic or graphical variants, or to the use of articles. I will focus on the most significant issues concerning grammar, phrase structure, word usage, and syntax.

§2.

Ven. p. 33, 12–13:

Այլ վասն զի սոցա են ինչ որ աշխարհիս են մասունք, և են ինչ որ երկինք –

Gr. ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τούτων τὰ μέν ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου μέρη, τὰ δὲ παθήματα.

One of the most obscure passages in the Armenian translation. In the first and second paragraphs, Philo explains why the Book of Genesis is entitled Γένεσις (lit. “emergence, appearance, birth”), although only the beginning of the book is devoted to the emergence of the world (which is how Philo interprets the meaning of the title of this book). Philo’s reply is that all the rest of what is spoken about in this book are the parts of the world (μέρη) and the processes that take place in it (παθήματα), and these subjects are secondary to the world as a whole, so the book was named after its most important part. In all manuscripts of the Armenian translation, we find the unexpected word երկինք – “heaven” instead of παθήματα. The Venetian editor left երկինք in the text but wrote in a note that παθήματα was usually translated as կիրք, կարիք etc. However, he did not notice that the solution is in the margin of the same manuscript V1040. Either as a variant reading or correction, the word կիրք that the editor wanted to see is written here. It could be the scribe’s own conjecture or the reading of a manuscript with which the scribe of V1040 checked his text. Thus, we can easily restore the correct reading: երկինք appeared as a result of an erroneous transposition of consonants of են կիրք. The phrase originally was: սոցա են ինչ որ աշխարհիս են մասունք, և են ինչ որ են կիրք. Before the error occurred, the verb են was repeated in both dependent clauses.

Ven. p. 33, 14–15:

նմա զբոլոր զիրսն վերագրեալ նուիրեաց –

Gr. αὐτῷ τὴν ὅλην βίβλον ἀνέθηκεν.

By this phrase Philo explains that when giving his book the title “Genesis”, Moses devoted it to the world as a whole, the origin of which he describes at the beginning, and not to its individual parts and processes that are further discussed in it. The verb ἀνέθηκεν is rendered here by two Armenian verbs; such rendering by doublets is one of the characteristic features of the Armenian translations of Philo, and of the translations of the Hellenising School in general (see Terian 1981, 10; Muradyan 2012, 201–215; Olivieri 2000, 235–247, and Kölligan 2014, 117–130). The second verb, նուիրեաց, conveys the sense “brought as a gift, dedicated” of ἀνέθηκεν. The first verb, in a participle form dependent on the second verb, contains the prefix վերա-

usually rendering the Greek ἀνα-. We would expect to see here a literal rendering of ἀνατίθηναι and be faced with a common type of doublet, in which one member “is a more formal rendering, while the other reflects the sense” (Muradyan 2012, 207–208). Instead, all manuscripts contain the word վերագրեալ – a translation of the Greek ἀναγράφω (in §1 վերագրեցելոց rendered the Greek ἀναγραφέντων – of “written down” divine laws). Here վերագրեալ is not appropriate. This error is easily corrected by replacing just one letter: the expected literal translation of ἀνέθηκεν would be վերադրեալ (cf. *NBHL* s.v. վերադրեմ).⁴ The error could be caused by the similar forms of the letters գ and դ.

Another error in the same phrase, գիրսն, which should correspond to the Greek τὴν βίβλον, has been pointed out by the Venetian editor: գիրսն, the accusative plural of գիր(ք), makes sense in this context (գիրսն վերագրեալ – “having written down these things”), and that was perhaps the reason of its persistence in the manuscript tradition. The correct version, however, is found in one of the manuscripts, M4275, which gives the form գգիրսն.

§4.

Ven. p. 34, 3–4:

յաղապս ալմոցիկ որք պատահեն յորդորել և ի նմանանախանն ածել –

Gr. ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοῦς ἐντυγχάνοντας προτρέψασθαι καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ὅμοιον ζῆλον ἀγαγεῖν.

Philo discusses the purpose of the accounts of the patriarchs' virtuous life in Genesis. In his opinion, Moses endeavoured not only to glorify the patriarchs themselves but also to instruct the readers by their virtues. This aim is expressed in Greek by the preposition ὑπὲρ with infinitive clauses.

The text in V1040 and all the other manuscripts as well as in Ven. is unclear. First, the syntax is questionable. In the Greek original, the preposition ὑπὲρ governs the substantival infinitives τοῦ προτρέψασθαι and ἀγαγεῖν, while τοῦς ἐντυγχάνοντας depends on these infinitives: “for the sake of directing the readers and leading them to such zeal”. However, in the Armenian text, the preposition յաղապս – “for the sake of” is not associated with the infinitives, but with the closest expression ալմոցիկ որք պատահեն, rendering the Greek τοῦς ἐντυγχάνοντας, and the meaning is changed: “for the sake of those who happen to instruct and lead them to such zeal”.

It is hardly possible that the translator himself could have allowed this inconsistency. The Armenian text can easily be corrected by replacing just one letter and changing the erroneous genitive ալմոցիկ to the correct accusative ալմոսիկ. The scribe's error is primarily due to the fact that he did not understand the complex syntax of this sentence and assigned the pronoun ալմ to the nearest word – a common scribal mistake. The phonetic proximity of the sibilants u and g could be an additional reason for this error.

⁴ This emendation has been proposed by Gohar Muradyan.

The second error concerns the word recorded in V1040 as նմանանախանձ, which should have rendered the Greek phrase τὸν ὅμοιον ζῆλον. The adjective նմանանախանձ cannot be the correct equivalent of this expression; it corresponds to (and serves as) the usual translation of the Greek ὁμόζηλον. Obviously, we must restore the variant նման նախանձ. The error can be corrected with the help of manuscripts M2057, M1500, and M4275, which contain a reading with the article ն (նմանախախանձն) that corresponds more accurately to the Greek τὸν ὅμοιον ζῆλον. Thus, the correct reading is նման նախանձն.

§6.

Ven. p. 34, 29–31:

առ ամբողջութիւն բոլորակ վիճակութեան կցորդութիւն կենաց բարեաց –

Gr. πρὸς ὁλοκλήρου μετουσίαν ζωῆς.

Philo continues speaking of the virtuous life of the patriarchs: they committed no sins of their own free will, and if they happened to make any mistake, they addressed their prayers to God. So they attained to the full perfection of their life (πρὸς ὁλοκλήρου μετουσίαν ζωῆς – “for partaking of the perfect life”). The syntax of the Armenian translation of this expression, as recorded in V1040 and published in Ven., is obscure and obviously broken. The preposition առ (= Greek πρὸς) governs the word ամբողջութիւն, but for this reason կցորդութիւն is left out of the construction. This inconsistency can easily be corrected if we assume that in the archetype of all manuscripts known to us there was a typical error: the scribe could not cope with complex syntactic constructions and preferred to coordinate the neighbouring words (cf. the first of the two errors noted in §4). Instead of ամբողջութիւն we should read the genitive form ամբողջութեան, dependent on կցորդութիւն, which should be governed by the preposition առ: առ ամբողջութեան կցորդութիւն – “for partaking of the perfection”.

So this error already was in the archetype of all extant manuscripts. However, there are also other errors in this phrase, which can be corrected by other manuscripts unknown to the Venetian editor.

First, it is worth paying attention to the inexact correspondence of ամբողջութեան բոլորակ վիճակութեան կենաց to the Greek original. Before us is one of the many cases of doublet translation: ամբողջութեան and բոլորակ վիճակութեան stand together and are not connected by a conjunction, as it often happens. Such a paired translation should not in itself raise questions. However, we see that the Greek adjective ὁλοκλήρου, dependent on ζωῆς, is translated here by a noun pair governing կենաց. This cannot be a scribe’s error: apparently, the translator misunderstood the form ὁλοκλήρου as the substantival adjective τὸ ὁλόκληρον governing ζωῆς: “perfection of life” (perhaps because of the difference between its ending and that of ζωῆς).

If we now turn to the paired translation of ὁλόκληρου, we see that of its two parts, one conveys the meaning and the other serves as an exact formal rendering of the word, such as the translation of ἀνέθηκεν as վերադրեալ նուիրեաց in §2 discussed above. Nevertheless, in place of the expected word-formation calque ὁλόκληρον, we

find an expression with the adjective բոլորակ վիճակութեան, which would correspond to the Greek όλου κλήρου. On the other hand, manuscript M4275 shows us another reading that is probably correct: it is the hapax բոլորավիճակութեան, an abstract noun formed from the adjective բոլորավիճակ and an exact calque of the adjective όλόκληρος.

Comparison with other manuscripts draws our attention to another error in V1040 and Ven. The word կենաց is followed by բարեաց, which has no correspondence in the Greek original: while the Greek text speaks of a “perfect life”, the Armenian translation for some reason adds “good”. In other manuscripts, we see that բարեաց is written in different places. M2057 offers the same reading կենաց բարեաց as V1040, in M4275, these two words are in the opposite order (բարեաց կենաց), and finally, in M1500 բարեաց is inserted above the line, between բոլորակ and վիճակութեան. This strange treatment of բարեաց by the scribes is explained very simply. In the next sentence, at the beginning of §7, we find the expression կցորդութեան բարեաց rendering the Greek μετουσίᾳ ἀγαθῶν – “partaking of the good”, where բարեաց is used substantively and depends on the same noun կցորդութիւն – “involvement, participation” in something (as ամբողջութեան բոլորավիճակութեան կենաց in our case). It would be natural to assume that one of the scribes correlated these two neighbouring passages and added բարեաց here as a variant or parallel, and then it got into the main text of the later manuscripts, appearing in various places.

Thus, the correct reading should be: առ ամբողջութեան բոլորավիճակութեան կցորդութիւն կենաց.

§7.

Ven. p. 35, 2–3:

յայս իբրև ի կուռ ճանապարհ առաքինասէրն հասանէ հոգի –

Gr. ταύτην οἶα λεωφόρον ὁδὸν ἢ φιλάρετος ἀνατέμνει καὶ ἀνοίγει ψυχῇ.

The reference here is to hope, which serves as the first step towards the possession of the true good, that is, virtue. In the Greek text we see a comparison of hope with the road leading to virtue: the soul striving for virtue builds hope as if it were a road to it. The Armenian text in V1040 and Ven. does not correspond to the Greek original. The prepositional construction with ի (յայս իբրև ի կուռ ճանապարհ) presupposes that the road itself is the goal: “the soul comes to it as to a well-trodden path”. The reading of the Armenian text has been further distorted by Conybeare, informing Cohn that of the two verbs ἀνατέμνει and ἀνοίγει only the second one has remained here (“ἀνατέμνει καὶ om. Arm”, writes Cohn in his critical apparatus).

In the other manuscripts (in all but V1040 and M2057), the direct object յայս, corresponding to the Greek ταύτην, is written instead of յայս. Furthermore, manuscripts M2100, M4275, and M1500 do not have the preposition ի before կուռ ճանապարհ. Their reading զայս իբրև կուռ ճանապարհ accurately renders the Gr. ταύτην οἶα λεωφόρον ὁδόν. However, the phrase զայս իբրև կուռ ճանապարհ առաքինասէրն հասանէ հոգի is impossible, both because of its meaning (the soul does not “reach hope like a road”, since both hope and the road are means to a

different end) and syntax (հասանի requires the dative or prepositional objects, not the accusative). These problems are easily solved by correcting հասանի to հատանի, a verb that usually renders the Greek τέμνειν and therefore corresponds here to the Greek ἀνατέμνει.⁵

The correct phrase should be: զայս իբրև կոռն ճանապարհ առաքինասէրն հատանի հոգի. The erroneous reading հասանի instead of հատանի had appeared already in the archetype of all manuscripts known to us. The scribes then decided to correct the syntactic inconsistency and changed զայս and կոռն ճանապարհ to յայս and ի կոռն ճանապարհ.

§ 11

Ven. p. 35, 31–36, 2:

զրոյ և յիշատակի արժանի է քաջայոյսն, ոչ այնր որ ի քարտէսս ի ցեցոյ ապականեցելոյ, այլ այնր որ յանմահում բնութեանն –

Gr. γραφῆς καὶ μνήμης ἄξιος ὁ εὐελπὺς, οὐ τῆς ἐν χαρτιδίοις ὑπὸ σιτῶν διαφθαρησομένοις, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐν ἀθανάτῳ τῇ φύσει.

Ven. repeats the meaningless ի ցեցոյ ապականեցելոյ (“by the moth that is destroyed”) of V1040; we find the same in J333 and M2057. This participle form was reported to Cohn by Conybeare, who understood it as a genitive singular, and Cohn added this Armenian reading to his critical apparatus. In his view, the Armenian form ապականեցելոյ may correspond to διαφθαρησομένης found in two Greek manuscripts (C and K, where it is written above the line as a variant), an error resulting from assimilation of the case of the participle to that of γραφῆς and μνήμης rather than of χαρτιδίοις. Another manuscript, M2100, however, helps us restore the correct reading by suggesting իցէ ցոյց ապականեցելոց. Behind this seemingly absurd variant (իցէ is a subjunctive of the verb “to be”, ցոյց means “show, sign”) lies ի ցեցոց ապականեցելոց (ի ցե was interpreted by the copyist as իցէ, and then he corrected the incomprehensible combination of letters ցոց to the word ցոյց⁶). The participle ապականեցելոց should not be understood as the genitive-dative-ablative of the aorist participle ապականեցեալ, but as the invariant form of the future participle with which the translator tried to convey διαφθαρησομένοις and which should refer to the locative քարտէս. In the archetype of the other manuscripts, the final g in both words was mistakenly turned into j because of the similarity of the majuscules the mss. were written in: ԅ and Յ. Thus, the correct reading should be: ի քարտէսս ի ցեցոց ապականեցելոց – “in the books that will be destroyed by moths”.

⁵ This emendation has been proposed by Gohar Muradyan.

⁶ This explanation of the error has been suggested to me by Petr Kocharov.

§16

p. 36, 29–33:

Իսկ որ առանց միխթարութեան խրատտութեան և առանց հրաման առնող եղեալ է քաջայոյս, նա է գրով, բայց դարձեալ ինքնուսումն արինաւք առաքինութեամբս այսորիկ խրատեալ է գոր բնութիւնս եղ –

ὁ δ' ἄνευ παραινέσεως δίχα τοῦ κελευσθῆναι γενόμενος εὐελπὶς ἀγράφῳ μὲν νόμῳ δὲ πάλιν αὐτομαθεῖ τὴν ἀρετὴν ταύτην πεπαιδευται, ὃν ἡ φύσις ἐθηκε.

The first, minor error in V1040 and Ven., the superfluous և connecting առանց միխթարութեան խրատտութեան and առանց հրաման առնող, should be corrected according to M2100 and J333, where it is missing. But the Armenian text also poses two major problems to us.

First, the phrase նա է գրով (“he is in writing”), which we find in V1040 and J333, cannot be correct; the same is written in M2100, but with the transposition է նա գրով. In manuscript M2057, an attempt is made to give the phrase some meaning: its scribe changed նա է գրով to նա է գովելի – “he is laudable”. But here we need a very different word: անգրով, mentioned in a note by the Venetian editor as the usual translation of ἀγράφος. Obviously, we must assume that in the exemplar of the entire group, M2100, M2057, V1040, and J333, անգրով was erroneously changed to նա է գրով. The error was due to the obscurity and complexity of the syntax, which literally reproduced the Greek original. The Armenian որ renders here the Greek article introducing a long clause (ὁ δ' ἄνευ παραινέσεως δίχα τοῦ κελευσθῆναι γενόμενος εὐελπὶς). The scribe treated որ as a relative pronoun introducing a dependent clause and tried to create the main clause by adding the verb “to be” (t): անգրով in a sentence with complex conjunctions, referring to արինաւք (meaning “by unwritten laws”) and separated from it by several words, was unclear to him, and he took the initial ան as a corruption of նա, a deictic pronoun in the main clause, correlated with որ in the dependent clause. Thus, the correct variant would be անգրով, բայց դարձեալ ինքնուսումն արինաւք.

The second problem seems not to be completely solvable: առաքինութեամբս (in the instrumental case) այսորիկ (in the genitive case) should correspond to the Greek τὴν ἀρετὴν ταύτην. Either the instrumental (առաքինութեամբս այսորիկ) or the genitive (առաքինութեանս այսորիկ) case should be restored for both words. Perhaps the second option is more likely: it is easier to explain the transformation of առաքինութեանս այսորիկ into առաքինութեամբս այսորիկ under the influence of the neighbouring արինաւք, after which առաքինութեամբս could be understood as an apposition to it.

Nevertheless, neither առաքինութեամբս այսորիկ nor առաքինութեանս այսորիկ correspond to the Greek accusative τὴν ἀρετὴν ταύτην – “retained” accusative of the internal object of πεπαιδευται – “brought up in that virtue”. The instrumental case must be understood in the same way as արինաւք: “brought up by the law, by that virtue”, and the genitive must depend on արինաւք: “brought up by the law of that virtue”.

We can only speculate about the reasons for this error. Maybe the genitive was already in the Greek manuscript, or the translator did not understand the meaning of the accusative and therefore changed it to genitive. However, given the translator's desire to translate the Greek syntax as accurately as possible and, on the contrary, the tendency of scribes to correct the syntax whenever it was unclear to them, we can rather assume that he had used the nominative-accusative form, and without the Greek text it was completely incomprehensible to Armenian readers. Therefore, the scribe resorted to the most obvious correction, making it dependent on the neighbouring word.

4. Conclusions

Thus, V1040 has many errors. Some of them can be corrected with the help of other manuscripts. It is hardly right to say that V1040 is comparable in quality only to manuscripts copied from the same exemplar, and that even these are surpassed by the care and accuracy of the Venetian text.

In order to compare V1040 with other manuscripts, we should get some idea of the manuscript tradition of the Armenian *De Abrahamo* as a whole. It is interesting to compare the first 16 paragraphs with the conclusions of Hans Lewy, who prepared an edition of *De Jona*, a work attributed to Philo, extant only in Armenian, and included it in his collection (Lewy 1936). Working on a text surviving in both Greek and Armenian allows us to draw more reliable conclusions, since with the help of the Greek original we can more accurately distinguish between correct and incorrect readings, which makes it easier to analyse the recension and to group the manuscripts.

Lewy compared six manuscripts, five of which match ours (*De Jona* is found in M1500, M2057, V1040, J333, and M2102, which is a continuation of our M2100). He divided the manuscripts into two groups: two recensions going back to two exemplars. To the first recension (α), Lewy assigned M1500 and M2057 (as well as M2104, which does not include *De Abrahamo*). In the second group (β), he included V1040, J333, and M2100/2102. According to Terian, this second group shows almost no traces of later revision of the text, and it is even doubtful whether this group can be called recension in the full sense, since, as he believes, it may reflect a very ancient state of the text (Terian 1981, 24).

The study of the first 16 paragraphs of *De Abrahamo* has led me to a conclusion that partly differs from that of Lewy. The manuscripts of this work can indeed be divided into two groups. The most obvious proof of the discrepancy between the two recensions is the absence of a large part, §§9–27, from several manuscripts, namely M1500, M4275, and V1334, while it is present in M2057, V1040, J333, and M2100. The difference between the two groups can be seen in many other cases as well, and both recensions may offer erroneous readings. For example, in §1 τὴν πρόσρησιν is rendered correctly as զանաւորիւնն with the article in M2100, M2057, J333, and V1040, and erroneously, without the article, in M1500 and M4275 (in M4275, someone has then inserted the article, having checked this passage against a

manuscript of the other group). A few lines below, in the same first paragraph, the Greek κατ' εἰρήνην ἢ πόλεμον is translated as ըստ խաղաղութեան կամ պատերազմի, but in M2100, M2057, J333, and V1040, a second ըստ (կամ ըստ պատերազմի) is erroneously added. In §2, again we find a common error in M2100, M2057, J333, and V1040: τὴν βίβλον is rendered զիրսն. Only M4275 has the correct reading (զգիրսն); M1500 also contains an error, but it is different from that in the above-mentioned four manuscripts (իրսն).

We can thus distinguish two recensions: α (M1500, M4275, and V1334) and β (M2057, V1040, J333, and M2100). This division generally corresponds to that of Lewy, but I have assigned M2057 to the β group rather than α. Neither of these recensions has a testable advantage over the other: both go back to exemplars that contained errors, and the readings of both can equally be correct or incorrect.

As we see, the group to which V1040 belongs is in no way superior to group α. Moreover, even within group β, the readings of V1040 are often inferior to those of other manuscripts. In many cases, only M2100 has retained the correct reading. As examples of significant errors shared by all other manuscripts in this group, we can cite զանմարմնական զդացութիւնսն և զանմարմինս in V1040, J333, and M2057 instead of the correct զանմարմնական զդացութիւնսն և զիմանալիսն (= τὰς ἀσωμάτων οὐσίας καὶ νοητὰς) in M2100 (§13), and further (§17), փոխեաց in V1040, J333, and M2057 instead of փոխադրեաց in M2100 (=μετέθηκεν). Thus, in group β we can distinguish two subgroups: β¹ – M2100 and β² – V1040, J333, and M2057.

There is no sufficient material to determine the exact relationship between V1040, J333, and M2057, but we can already conclude that V1040 cannot be considered the *codex optimus*.

Working with the Armenian manuscripts of *De Jona*, Lewy suggested that their common archetype contained already a sufficient number of errors: “All the manuscripts are proved by their common omissions and mistakes to be derived from a single archetype which had already suffered considerable textual corruption” (Lewy 1936, 7). Terian, extremely trustful of the text of the extant manuscripts, strongly disagreed with Lewy, assuming that this negative assessment of the archetype results from Lewy's (incorrect) reconstructions of the Greek text of *De Jona* (Terian 1981, 22–23). For a true test of the supposed quality of the archetype, a detailed study of the manuscript tradition of the texts surviving in both Greek and Armenian is necessary. Only in this way we can distinguish reliably enough a correct reading from an erroneous one and judge the reliability of a hypothetical archetype reading. However, the first 16 paragraphs of *De Abrahamo* suggest that Lewy was apparently right: the text of the archetype contained many errors that need to be corrected.

References

- Aucher, John Baptist (ed.). 1822. *Philonis Judaei sermones tres hactenus inediti: I et II de providentia et III de animalibus*. Venice: St. Lazarus Press.
- (ed.). 1826. *Philonis Judaei Paralipomena Armena*. Venice: St. Lazarus Press.

- Cohn, Leopold and Paul Wendland (eds.). 1902. *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*. Vol. IV. Berlin: G. Reimer.
- Conybeare, Frederick Cornwallis (ed.). 1895. *Philo about the Contemplative Life, or the Fourth Book of the Treatise Concerning Virtues*. Oxford: Clarendon Press (repr. New York: Garland, 1987).
- Kölligan, Daniel. 2014. "Graeca in Armenia: Anmerkungen Zur Hownaban Dproc' ". In *Strategies of Translation: Language Contact and Poetic Language*, vol. I. *Akten Des Workshops Köln, 17–18 Dezember 2010*, ed. José Luis García Ramón and Daniel Kölligan. Pisa, Rom: Serra, 117–130.
- Lewy, Hans. 1936. *The Pseudo-Philonic De Jona*. London: Christophers.
- Marcus, Ralph (trans.). 1953. *Philo Supplement. I. Questions and Answers on Genesis. II. Questions and Answers on Exodus*. Loeb Classical Library. London, Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- Mercier, Charles. 1969. "La version arménienne du *Legum allegoriae*". In *Armeniaca. Mélanges d'études arméniennes publiés à l'occasion du 250^e anniversaire de l'entrée des Pères Mekhitaristes dans l'île de Saint Lazare*, 9–15. Île de Saint Lazare-Venise.
- (trans.). 1979. *Philon. Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesim I et II e versione armeniaca*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf.
- Muradyan, Gohar. 1990. «Խորենացու երկու աղբյուրի թվագրման շուրջը» ["On the Date of Two Sources of Khorenats'i"]. *Patma-banasirakan handes* 4, 94–104. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/191655/edition/174087>
- . 2012. *Grecisms in Ancient Armenian*. Leuven, Paris, Walpole (Mass.): Peeters.
- and Aram Topchyan (intr., trans., comm.). 2013. "Excerpts from Philo of Alexandria's *Questions and Answers on Genesis* and *Questions and Answers on Exodus*; Pseudo-Philo, *On Jonah* and *On Samson*, translated from Old Armenian with an Introduction and Commentary". In *Outside the Bible, Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, ed. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman, 3 vols. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 750–803, 807–881.
- NBHL. 1836–1837. Gabriël Awetik'ean, Khach'atur Siwrmëlean, Mkrtich' Awgorean. *Նոր բառարանը հայկազանի լեզուի* [*New Dictionary of the Armenian Language*]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. <https://archive.org/details/NorBagirkHaykazeenLezui1836/>
- Olivieri, Maurizio. 2000. "Influenze di lessici greci nelle traduzioni armene di Filone". *Eikasmos* 11, 235–247.
- Paramelle, Joseph, avec la collaboration de Enzo Lucchesi (éd.). 1984. *Philon d'Alexandrie. Questions sur la Genèse II, 1–7*. Texte grec, version arménienne, parallèles latins. Genève: Édition P. Cramer.
- Philo. 1892. *Փիլոնի Հեթրոսյեզույ նաոք թարգմանեալք ի նախնեաց մերոց, որոց հելլեն բնագիրք հասիւն առ մեզ* [*Sermons by Philo the Jew, the Greek Originals of which Have Reached Us*]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. http://greenstone.flb.sci.am/gsd/collect/haygirq/book/piloni_charq.pdf
- Pontani, Paola. 1998. *La traduzione armena del De Abrahamo di Filone Alessandrino: contributo all'edizione critica e studio linguistico-filologico contrastivo (greco-armeno): tesi di dottorato di ricerca in armenistica*. Milano: Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore.
- Siebert, Folker. 1989. "Der armenische Philon". *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 100, 353–369.

- Sirinian, Anna. 2011. "‘Armenian Philo’: A Survey of the Literature". In *Studies on the Ancient Armenian Version of Philo's Works*, ed. Sara Mancini Lombardi and Paola Pontani. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 7–44.
- Terian, Abraham (ed). 1981. *Philonis Alexandrini De animalibus*. Chico (Calif.): Scholars Press.
- . 2015. "The Armenian Textual Tradition of Philo's *De Decalogo*". *The Studia Philonica Annual* 27, 143–153.
- . 2019a. "Armenian Philonic Corpus". In *A Guide to Early Jewish Texts and Traditions in Christian Transmission*, ed. Alexander Kulik. New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 317–329.
- . 2019b. "Philo about the Contemplative Life: Conybeare Revisited". *The Studia Philonica Annual* 31, 1–12.
- Vardazaryan, Olga. 2006. *Филон Александрийский в восприятии армянского средневековья* [*Philo of Alexandria as Comprehended in Medieval Armenia*]. Yerevan: Lusabats' Press.

Uncovering Theological Inconsistencies in the *History* of Agathangelos

▼ **ABSTRACT** This paper analyses the theological inconsistencies in two prayer-texts from the 5th-century *History [of Armenia]* by Agathangelos (*Agat'angeghay Patmut'iwn [Hayots ']*). Were these inconsistencies manifest in the original composition or arose during later editing and transcription? Through an examination of all the editions of the work, the author argues that the controversial passages in the two prayer-texts may not be original, despite their longstanding presence. They create tension and challenge the coherence between theological tenets within the prayers and throughout the *History*.

To restore coherence in Agathangelos' *History* and gain a better understanding of the theological context in which it was produced, this paper proposes a new, more accurate critical edition with a particular focus on doctrinal issues.

Similar inconsistencies, though with varying impact, identified in another significant Armenian literary source of the 5th century, *The Epic Histories* by P'awstos Buzand (*Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*), are also discussed in this study.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Agathangelos, history, theology, manuscripts, recensions, inconsistencies, critical edition, P'awstos Buzand.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (2204)

1. Introduction

The *History* of Agathangelos,¹ also known as *The Book of St. Gregory*, is a canonical work in the genre of classical Armenian historical writing. It narrates the life and

¹ This book was once thought to have been written by a person named Agathangelos, but now some scholars believe that the word "Agathangelos" in the title symbolizes St. Gregory the Illuminator. The name is derived

Fr. Movses (Davit) Sahakyan  0009-0003-0282-5719 • Gevorgian Theological Seminary, Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia (Email: fr.movses@gmail.com)

Cite this article: Fr. Movses (Davit) Sahakyan, 'Uncovering Theological Inconsistencies in the *History* of Agathangelos', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (2204), 121–136

<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142266>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142266

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

deeds of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the man credited with converting the Armenian people to Christianity and establishing it as the state religion. The *History* combines diverse thematic elements such as accounts of historical events, the royal lineage, internal affairs, and relations with neighbouring countries, as well as insights into social-political structures. It also has a wealth of information about ancient Armenian culture, pagan religion, folk beliefs, geography, and the economy. The work includes Christian liturgical and theological content as well, an aspect that remains undervalued despite its depth. Notably, the following episodes are of significant theological import:

- 1 St. Gregory's response to Trdat's demands to worship Anahit (ch. V, §§52–67)
- 2 St. Gregory's response after the first torture (ch. VI, §§71–73)
- 3 St. Gregory's prayer during the second torture (ch. VII, §§75–98)
- 4 The nuns' prayer before fleeing Rome (ch. XIII, §§144–148)
- 5 St. Hrip'simē's prayer at the sight of evil men (ch. XV, §§169–172)
- 6 The nuns' pleas and the divine answer (ch. XVI, §§174–175)
- 7 St. Hrip'simē's prayer when forcibly taken to the palace (ch. XVI, §§178–179)
- 8 St. Gayianē's exhortation to St. Hrip'simē (ch. XVII, §§185–188)
- 9 St. Hrip'simē's last prayer before martyrdom (ch. XVII, §§193–196)
- 10 St. Gregory's first exhortation after rescue from the pit (ch. XXI, §§226–242)
- 11 St. Gregory's second exhortation (ch. XXII, §§247–258)
- 12 St. Gregory's final exhortation (ch. XCIX, §§716–721)
- 13 St. Gregory's vision and its interpretation (ch. CII, §§731–755)
- 14 Bishop Leontius' letter to Trdat (ch. CXVI, §§820–826)
- 15 Baptism of the royal family (ch. CXVIII, §§832–834)
- 16 Brief creed at the end of the *History* (§§1–20).

Upon closer examination of these episodes, it becomes apparent that two of the prayers, namely those of St. Gregory during the second torture and St. Hrip'simē at the sight of evil men contain theological inconsistencies. Below, I'll try to determine whether they were originally present in *Agat'angeghay Patmut'iwn* or arose later as a result of scribal error or revision.

from the Greek words ἀγαθός (“good”) and ἄγγελος (“angel” or “messenger”) and should be translated as “messenger of good news” or “evangelist” (i.e., the Illuminator). Thus, *Agat'angeghay patmut'iwn* might be understood as *The Story of the Evangelist*. As for the identity of the author (or perhaps editor), it is supposed that he was an Armenian clergyman who lived in the second half of the 5th century. For more information, see Sargisean 1890, 1–9, 232–264, 313–323; Tashean 1891, 80–81; Malkhasyants' 1944, 11–13; Agathangelos 1976, xvi, xxiv–xxvi; Agat'angeghos 1977, 8–14; Agatangelos 2004, 13–14; Thomson 2010, 103–108, and Musheghyan 2012, 200–201.

2. Inconsistencies in St. Gregory's Prayer during the Second Torture

In 1909, a critical edition entitled *Agat'angeghay Patmut'iwn Hayots'* was published in Tiflis. It was prepared by Galust Tēr-Mkrtch'ean and Step'anos Kanayeants' on the basis of 55 manuscripts.² Shortly after its publication, the work – unparalleled in both its scope and thoroughness – was widely acknowledged by scholars. As the only critical edition of Agathangelos' *History*, it has been heavily relied upon for subsequent studies and translations (see Agathangelos 1976; Agat'angeghos 1977, and Agatangelos 2004). In 2003, it was reprinted in the multiple-volume series *Medieval Armenian Authors* (*Միջին դարի հայ գրողներ*). Despite having been published over a century ago, the critical edition has garnered praise from modern scholars.³ Yet, neither Tēr-Mkrtch'ean and Kanayeants', nor the translators or researchers who worked with the text noticed theological inconsistencies in it.

In both the critical edition and subsequent translations, the extensive prayer attributed to St. Gregory at the time of the second torture (ch. VII, §§75–98) exhibits trinitarian inconsistencies in three passages, where it depicts God the Father as being crucified,⁴ sometimes even referring to both the Father and the Son as having

2. The critical edition of Agathangelos' *History* was based on a variety of manuscripts, some of which were available to the editors, while others were known to them indirectly. The latter (10 manuscripts) were cited in previous editions of the work. Also, Tēr-Mkrtch'ean and Kanayeants' queried the Fathers of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice about manuscripts and studied their publications, as in the case of the significant Vienna palimpsest no. 56. After collecting the information, they identified three groups of manuscripts. The first group comprises 20 manuscripts from the 16th to 18th centuries, all of which differ from each other but share a common non-extant exemplar. The second group consists of 10 manuscripts from the 9th and 12th to 19th centuries. The lost exemplar of the first group should also be included in this group. The main difference between these two groups is the preface. In the first group it is shorter than in the second. Probably, some folios of the exemplar were lost at some point, which caused the formation of the first group from the second. The third group consists of six manuscripts from the 13th to 17th centuries, including M1912, M1479, and M1859, which form the basis of the current analysis. This is a branch of the second group, but unlike the first group, its formation was not accidental. Rather, it was a result of intentional editing, primarily of the style. The changes are most noticeable in the last section of the work, which describes the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity. In addition to these manuscripts, Tēr-Mkrtch'ean and Kanayeants' also studied manuscripts of homiliaries (Ճառքնսիր) containing Agathangelos' *History*, as well as eight other manuscripts from the 15th to 18th centuries. However, their knowledge of these eight manuscripts was incomplete, and it was impossible to assign them to one of the three aforementioned groups. For a detailed description of the manuscripts, see Agat'angeghos 1909, v–liv.

3. For instance, Gabriele Winkler writes: “The most important publication is, of course, the critical edition by two learned scholars from Armenia, Tēr-Mkrtč'ean and Kanayeanc', which appeared in Tiflis in 1909. This editorial masterpiece with its abundant variant readings and notes, also lends itself to the study of the development of the Armenian language in the mediaeval period. However very little use has been made of it so far” (Winkler 1980, 128).

4. This ideology shares similarities with the heretical doctrine of patripassianism, which emerged as a theological deviation from the Universal Church in the 3rd century. During this period, proponents of patripassianism rejected the concept of the Holy Trinity, specifically denying any personal distinction between the Father and the Son. They perceived two Persons, the Father and the Son, as one. This led to the notion that the Son is the Father and that the Father was incarnate and died on the cross (Tēr-Minaseants' 2013, 223–225, 227–229). In contrast, according to the doctrine of the Universal Church, the Father and the Son, while remaining one God, possess distinct personal properties. The Father is the Father, and the Son is the Son. Therefore, it was the Son who was crucified, not the Father. The Armenian Church had no affiliation with patripassianism, therefore, the presence of such ideas, particularly when juxtaposed to other prayers within the work, suggests an issue with the text itself.

been crucified simultaneously. Such an understanding of the crucifixion is not only considered spurious by the Armenian Church, which has no historical association with this idea, but also deviates from theological concepts presented elsewhere in the work.

In chapter VII of the critical edition, we find an account of St. Gregory's second torture. During this torture, a punishment for his refusal to worship idols, he is hung upside-down by a single foot and forced to inhale the fumes of burning dung for seven days. Despite enduring unbearable pain, he continues to pray. The three problematic passages are within this lengthy prayer, which covers various theological topics. The first passage reads:

"85. ... But we must honor them as is commanded by you, yet not exchange you for fear of mortal men. For they are only able to torture the body, whereas *your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ*,⁵ can cast everyone into eternal torments, with soul and body into the inextinguishable fire and the undying worm.

86. But, *Lord*, give me power to endure the affliction and pain of my torment, and have mercy on me as on the *thief who shared with you the sufferings of your cross*...

87. Give me, *Lord*, grace to endure these bitter torments... May those who hoped in you not be ashamed, those who once boasted in *your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent by you; whom you sent to death for our sins* ..." (Agathangelos 1976, 96–99).

§85 and §87 indicate that St. Gregory is directing his prayer to God the Father, as he mentions in both paragraphs that the addressee of his prayer has a Son, who is Jesus Christ: "... your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ" (§85) / "... boasted in your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent by you; whom you sent to death for our sins" (§87).

Yet, in §86 it is said: "But, Lord, ... have mercy on me as on the thief who shared with you the sufferings of your cross". Who is this "Lord" that suffered on the cross?

Throughout the pericope (§§85–87), St. Gregory consistently addresses God the Father in the second person and refers to the Son in the third person. Nowhere in this entire episode does the author change the addressee of his prayer, which indicates that the addressee of the whole passage, who is referred to as "Lord" at the beginning of §86 and §87, is the same person – the Father of the only-begotten Son.

Also, in §86 it is said of this "suffering Lord": "You make your sun rise over the evil and the good, and you bring rain on the just and on sinners". This quote comes from the Gospel of Matthew where Christ speaks of the "Heavenly Father" and not of the "Incarnate God" (cf. Matthew 5:43–48).

Moreover, a careful analysis of §§85–87 reveals that the author not only claims that the Father of the only-begotten Son (God the Father) suffered on the cross, as seen in §86, but also that God the Father has sent his Son to be crucified, as stated

⁵ The italics are mine.

in §87. This contradiction not only challenges the theological coherence of the entire prayer attributed to St. Gregory, but also of this specific episode.

Upon further examination, the general composition of *Agat'angeghay Patmut'iwn* shows that the original text was compiled by a knowledgeable theologian who would likely not have formulated orthodox ideas only to contradict them later with heretical ones. To see the orthodoxy of the entire work and the level of the compiler's theological knowledge, one only needs to read the entire prayer (ch. VII, §§75–98), where it is clearly noted that, while being the same God, the Crucified One and His Father are distinct persons. One such passage is:

“80. You sent *your only-begotten Son* into the world, light from light, life from life, *who came to put on the likeness of our flesh from the virgin*, in order by his own likeness to raise us to the divinity, *who became like us*. He was born from the virgin in the flesh and became man and was incorporate like us, yet he is and remains in the glory of his divinity. He is the same, who was and is and remains forever with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. But because he loved mankind, therefore he became like us, that he might bring us to abundance by the grace of his divinity, which is the will of *his begetter*. And he fulfilled his will. He glorified the saints by his own endurance...” (Agathangelos 1976, 88–91).

In this fragment from the same prayer, the orthodoxy of the utterance is clear and unquestionable. Therefore, a question arises: how could successive passages of the same prayer-text be theologically so contradictory?

Comparison of the readings preferred in the critical edition with those in three other manuscripts, namely M1912, M1479, and M1859, is key to answering this question.

As stated above, the problematic passage (§§85–87) depicts God the Father as both the Crucified One and the one who sends God the Son to crucifixion. This inconsistency arises in §86, when St. Gregory says: “But, Lord, ... have mercy on me as on the thief who shared with you the sufferings of your cross”. M1912, M1479, and M1859 have a different reading:

CRITICAL TEXT		M1912, M1479, M1859	
... on the thief who shared with you the sufferings of your cross	... աւագակին, որ ընդ քեզ էր կցորդ չարչարանաց խաչի քոյ	... աւագակին, որ ընդ միաձնիդ քո էր եւ կցորդ էր չարչարանաց խաչին	... on the thief who was with your only-begotten [Son] and shared the sufferings of the cross
(Agathangelos 1976, 97)	(Agat'angeghos 2003, 1347)	(Agat'angeghos 2003, 1347, n. 39–40)	(The translation of this and other passages of M1912, M1479, and M1859 is mine)

The critical text states that the thief was a partaker in the sufferings of the Father, thus suggesting that He suffered on the cross. In contradiction to this, M1912, M1479,

and M1859 suggest that though the prayer is addressed to the Father, the one who suffered was the Son, which is the orthodox stance consistent with the theological bent of the rest of the composition.

It must be emphasized that these three manuscripts are not only among the oldest of the 55 studied by Tēr-Mkrtch‘ean and Kanayeants‘, but also considered to be among the most important ones (see Agat‘angeghos 1909, xli and xliv–xlv). In all three problematic passages of St. Gregory’s prayer, they present divergent readings.

The second passage containing trinitarian inconsistencies is found in §§93–94 of the critical edition:

“93. ...Grant me, Lord, to receive the crown with those ... whose deaths are glorious before you, that I too may become worthy to be raised to the presence of *your beloved Son* when he will carry off those who long for him to the rays of his light...

94. But now, Lord, strengthen your servants for your name’s sake... *You who laid down your life for your sheep*, do not abandon your flock but lead them to the true path”. (Agathangelos 1976, 105–107).

This second part of the prayer, too, is addressed to God the Father, because in §93 the prayer emphasizes the existence of his Son, saying “your beloved Son”. The problem is that, according to §94, the addressee of the prayer (the Father) has sacrificed himself for his subjects: “You who laid down your life for your sheep”. Such a doctrinal position contradicts both the rest of the prayer and the doctrines of the Armenian Church presented in Agathangelos’ *History*. In the above-mentioned three manuscripts, however, the subject of the passage is not the Father, but the Son.

CRITICAL TEXT		M1912, M1479, M1859	
You who laid down your life for your sheep	... որ եղեր զանձն քո ի վերայ խաշանց քոց	... ի ձեռն սիրելոյ (սիրելի) որդոյ քո, որ եղ զանձն իւր ի վերայ խաշանց իւրոց	... through your beloved Son, who laid down his life for his sheep
(Agathangelos 1976, 107)	(Agat‘angeghos 2003, 1352)	(Agat‘angeghos 2003, 1352, n. 33, 36)	

Once again, we observe that the variant reading aligns with the general theology of the prayer.

The third problematic passage of St. Gregory’s prayer is found in §§96–97:

“96. You who are bountiful to all, grant us to become martyrs for your divinity... For *you came and died on behalf of your creatures and joined our mortal nature to your immortality*. Therefore, let us be martyrs unto death for your life, that we may be joined to the number of your martyrs. For what other return indeed can we make for the blessings (that come) from you, unless we give up our lives for your

commandments to the good-will of your desire ... that we may lose our lives and again find them on the day of resurrection, when we sit on your right hand clothed in innocence among the lambs of the group on the right-hand side, your servants, in the joy of your saints, who have loved your divinity and *your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ*? He was the true lamb and *offered himself to you as a sacrifice* for the sins of the whole world, that he might be a reconciler and intercessor between you the creator and the creatures...

97. So, benevolent Lord, who came and was humbled and took the form of mankind and gave yourself to every endurance ... sweeten the heart of all men for your service" (Agathangelos 1976, 108–113).

In §96 the Lord sacrifices himself for his subjects and unites human mortality with his divine immortality. However, as the passage progresses, it becomes apparent that this sacrificial Lord is actually God the Father, who has a Son: "your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ". Additionally, this passage refers to the Lord's Son, the true lamb, being sacrificed as well, which, once again, results in a contradiction and disrupts the theological coherence of the whole prayer.

The three manuscripts differ from the critical text in more ways than one. The beginning of §96 focuses specifically on the Son, rather than the ambiguous Lord. Furthermore, the most problematic phrase "your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ" is absent entirely⁶, and the pericope reads in a completely different way:

CRITICAL TEXT		M1912, M1479, M1859	
You who are bountiful to all, grant us to become martyrs for your divinity ... in the joy of your saints, who have loved your divinity and your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ? He was the true lamb and offered himself to you as a sacrifice	Այլ որ առատանասդ ամենեցուն՝ տո՛ւր մեզ, զի լիցուք վկայք Աստուածութեանդ քոյ ... յուրախութիւն սրբոց քոց, որ սիրեցին զԱստուածութիւն քո եւ զմիածին Որդիդ, զՏէր մեր Յիսուս Քրիստոս. որ եղև զառն ճշմարիտ եւ մատոյց զանձն իւր քեզ պատարագ	Որ առատանասդ ամենեցուն (առ ամենեւեան)՝ տուր մեզ, Տէր, Միածին Որդիդ Աստուծոյ, շնորհս ի Հոգւոյդ (ի Հոգւոյն) Սրբոյ ... յուրախութիւն սրբոց քոց, որ սիրեցին զԱստուածութիւն քո, զի եղեր զառն ճշմարիտ եւ մատուցեր զանձն պատարագ հաւր	You who are bountiful to all, Lord, only-begotten Son of God, grant us the graces of (your) Holy Spirit ... in the joy of your saints, who have loved your divinity, since you became the true lamb and offered yourself as a sacrifice to the Father
(Agathangelos 1976, 109, 111)	(Agat'angeghos 2003, 1354–1355)	(Agat'angeghos 2003, 1354,	

⁶ In the very important Vienna palimpsest no. 56, the problematic line is missing as well (see Galēm̄k'earean 1911, 105–107). Tēr-Mkrtch'ean and Kanayeants' speak of their indirect familiarity with this witness (see Agat'angeghos 1909, xii, xxxv). While they have certainly used the palimpsest in some other passages, it has clearly been disregarded in this section. The line is also absent from M1481 (= 'b'), on the importance of which see Agat'angeghos 1909, xxix.

CRITICAL TEXT	M1912, M1479, M1859
	n. 17–19; 1355, n. 8, 10–15)

Additionally, in these three manuscripts all of the verbs of this section referring to the Son are in the second person, directly addressing him, which aligns more consistently with §97. Conversely, in §96 of the critical text, the verbs are in the third person, and it remains puzzling why St. Gregory addresses the Father in §96, while from §97 to the end of the entire prayer, the addressee is clearly the Crucified One (i.e., the Son). The version found in the three manuscripts not only makes more sense but also follows a more coherent linguistic pattern by explicitly signaling the shift in addressee during the prayer.

3. Inconsistencies in St. Hrip'simē's Prayer before the Evil Men

Another instance of trinitarian inconsistency arises in the first paragraph of St. Hrip'simē's prayer uttered before “many evil men” (ch. XV, §§169–172). When encountering the men who are going to take her by force to the palace, St. Hrip'simē cries out in a loud voice, assumes the form of a cross by stretching out her arms and prays as follows:

“169. Lord God almighty, who fashioned your creatures through *your only-begotten and beloved Son*, and formed the order of the visible and invisible creatures through your holy Spirit ... You who then worked salvation through the symbol of the cross, now work (the same) *through the true cross, on which you hung and shed your blood* for the healing of our woes” (Agathangelos 1976, 174–177).

The initial lines of the excerpt make it clear that the prayer is addressed to God the Father (“through your only-begotten and beloved Son”), who then is described in the final sentence as being crucified: “through the true cross, on which you hung and shed your blood”. However, in M1479 and M1859 the final sentence differs from the critical text. These manuscripts identify the Son as the crucified one.

CRITICAL TEXT	M1479, M1859		
... through the true cross, on which you hung and shed your blood	... ճշմարտութեամբ խաչիդ քոյ, յոր ելեր եւ հեղեր զարիւն քո	... ճշմարտութեամբ սուրբ խաչին, յոր ել միածինդ քո եւ եհեղ զարիւն իւր	... through the true holy cross, on which your only-begotten Son hung and shed his blood
(Agathangelos 1976, 177)	(Agat'angeghos 2003, 1387)	(Agat'angeghos 2003, 1387, n. 27–28)	

4. The Problematic Passages in other Versions of Agathangelos

The issue of theological inconsistency discussed above extends beyond the Armenian manuscripts that were studied and included in the critical edition. The contradictions, heretofore unnoticed by scholars, are also evident in the old translations of the Armenian Agathangelos.

In particular, the four problematic passages of St. Gregory's prayer display identical inconsistencies in the critical edition of the Greek translation,⁷ as well as in the Arabic translation.⁸ The same is also true for the prayer attributed to St. Hrip'simē in the critical edition of the Georgian translation of the *Martyrology of Hrip'simē and her Companions*⁹ (see Lafontaine 1973, 204–205, 208–209, 210–211, 237–238; Ter-Ghevondyan 1968, ԳԳ–ԳԷ, ԳԸ, ԳՎ–ԳԸ, ԾԾ–ԾԿ, and Muradyan 1982, 46–49).

At the same time, in the critical apparatus of the Greek translation, certain manuscripts offer consistent readings for the second problematic passage (§§ 93–94) of St. Gregory's prayer, which clearly suggest that it was the Son, not the Father, who was crucified.¹⁰

Additionally, the two prayer-texts in question can also be found in manuscripts of another Greek recension of Agathangelos' *History*, known as the *Vita Gregorii*¹¹. Unlike most manuscripts of the Armenian original, the prayers in the *Vita* recension exhibit orthodox theology and do not contain any controversy (Garitte 1946, 25–26, 38–39; Ter-Ghevondyan 1973, 225–226, 235; Marr 1906, 78).

Furthermore, the Syriac version and its Karshūnī translation, which are based on both the *Vita* and the Armenian text, feature the prayer attributed to St. Hrip'simē without any trinitarian inconsistency (van Esbroeck 1977, 312–313 and 1971, 43–44).

There is evidence that the four controversial passages may not have been original despite their longstanding presence in the Armenian *History*. First, there are no trinitarian inconsistencies in several Armenian manuscripts. Second, we have Greek manuscripts in which the inconsistencies occur in only three out of the four excerpts. Finally, these same prayers do not exhibit inconsistencies in other recensions of Agathangelos' *History*.

7 The Greek version was translated from Armenian between the 6th and 7th centuries. It is preserved in twelve manuscripts dating from the 9th to 13th centuries, which were used in the critical edition prepared by Lafontaine (1973).

8 The Arabic version is believed to have been translated from Greek in the 9th–10th centuries. It is preserved in a manuscript known as ms. Sinai ar. 395 (dated to 1328/1329). Further information can be found in Ter-Ghevondyan 1968.

9 The *Martyrology of Hrip'simē and her Companions* was translated from Armenian into Georgian before the 8th century. The critical edition of the Georgian text is based on eight manuscripts dating from the 17th to 19th centuries (see Muradyan 1982).

10 In the readings of ὁ θεὸς τὴν ψυχὴν σου ὑπὲρ τῶν σῶν προβάτων, we see ὁ ἀποστείλας τὸν υἱὸν σου θείναι (QZ) instead of ὁ θεὸς (CLOVa); ψυχὴν (QW) instead of ψυχὴν σου (CLOVa), and τῶν προβάτων (QZ) instead of τῶν σῶν προβάτων (CLOVa) (Lafontaine 1973, 208, § 41, n. 18).

11 For a comparison of the two recensions, see Thomson 2010, 8–24.

Clearly, if any of the manuscripts not containing the contradictions (i.e., M1912, M1479, or M1859) had served as the basis for the critical edition, the inconsistencies in the four excerpts could have been entirely avoided. Têr-Mkrtch'ean and Kanayeants' themselves state that those three manuscripts are considered to be among the best. Yet, their text was primarily based on the fifth of the extant editions¹² simply because it was accessible to them and widely used (see Agat'angeghos 1909, x, xi, xliii). They certainly knew that their work, despite its importance, was incomplete. There remained a great trove of manuscripts that Têr-Mkrtch'ean and Kanayeants' did not have the opportunity to examine. Thus, for them this edition aimed not to be the culmination of restoring the original text of Agathangelos' *History*, but the inaugural attempt (Agat'angeghos 1909, liv). Therefore, it is imperative to compile a new critical edition of Agathangelos' *History* with a broader manuscript base.¹³

4. Similar Inconsistencies in the *Epic Histories*

Another classical work from the same period (5th century), the *Buzandaran patmut'iwnk'* (*The Epic Histories*) attributed to P'awstos Buzand/Biwzand (Faustus Buzand or Faustus of Byzantium), also contains two passages with trinitarian inconsistencies. The first can be found in the prayer uttered by the priest Zvit' before his martyrdom (Book IV, ch. LVII), and the second is in the prayer of the hermit Mambrê during the Eucharist (Book V, ch. XXVIII).

According to the narrative, when during the reign of Shapur the Persians devastated the Armenian realm, queen P'arandzem and many others were taken captive. Among them was the presbyter of the city of Artashat, Zvit'. After the queen's cruel death, the priest was offered conversion to Zoroastrianism to save his life, but he opted instead for martyrdom. Just before his death, the priest begins to pray to God the Creator. In his prayer, he states that the Creator became human, appeared on earth, and walked among people, which implies that the Creator became incarnate:

"Our Creator who didst create the heavens and earth and sea out of nothing, and didst create us from dust ... Then *Thou didst come down Thyself, become man, manifest Thyself on earth, and walk among men*. And Thou didst bestow upon Thy creatures Thy perfect wisdom... To Thee be glory and power and dominion, *and to Thy Only-begotten beloved Son Jesus Christ*, and to Thy vivifying Holy Spirit, before all eternity, and now, and ever and unto eternity of eternities, Amen" (P'awstos Buzand 1989, 177).

¹² It is important to note that this fifth edition (Tiflis, 1882) is merely a reprint of the fourth (Venice, 1862), which in turn is a reprint of the third edition (Venice, 1835), cf. Agat'angeghos 1909, xi.

¹³ Antoine Meillet, Grigoris Galëmk'earean, Norayr Biwzandats'i, and more recently, Aram Topchyan have all criticized this edition of Agat'angeghay *patmut'iwn Hayots'*. They have suggested that it should be revised, or a new critical edition should be prepared (see Meillet 1910, 457–481; Galëmk'earean 1911, 68; Biwzandats'i 1911, 161, and Topchyan 2005, 144–153).

The person of the Holy Trinity who became incarnate is God the Son. Therefore, it can be said that God the Creator became man or was crucified if the Son is regarded as both God and Creator. This seems to be the case, for instance, in chapter V of Book IV, where the author describes the Son of God as “the Begotten and the form [կերպարանք] of the invisible God, the Only-begotten of the Father, the Creator of all creatures [միածին ծնունդ Հայր, արարիչ ամենայն արարածոց]” (P’awstos Buzand 1989, 119). Similarly, in chapter XIII of Book IV, the author describes the Son as one, “who created all things out of nothing, who is the father of orphans and the arbiter of widows, who came down for our sake into poverty, who does not abandon the poor but feeds them through his compassion” (P’awstos Buzand 1989, 137).

In the prayer of Zvit’, the addressee is described as God the Creator who was incarnate, but then, in the concluding doxology it appears that the Creator is not the Son but the Father of the “Only-begotten beloved Son Jesus Christ”. This results in the same theological inconsistency found in Agathangelos and contradicts the theology of the *Buzandaran patmut’iwnk’* writ large, where the Father and the Son, being One God and One Creator, are presented as distinct persons, and the Incarnate One is the Son, not the Father. For instance, in chapter XIV of Book III, it is explicitly stated that the Son is the Creator, distinct from his Father:

“You have forsaken God your benefactor who created you out of nothing and strengthened you, and have not acknowledged Him in your folly. He came to seek you when you were betaking yourselves beyond recall to perdition. For, *although He was the Only Begotten Son of God, He came down to make His Father known to His creatures*. And so, although they did not listen to Him and *tortured Him to death*, He endured, even though He hid His might from no one so that He might be the cause of life for all. (P’awstos Buzand 1989, 88).

The second inconsistency is in the prayer uttered by Mambrē during the Eucharist (Book V, ch. XXVIII). In this chapter, the author speaks about a sodality in a hermitage. One of the brothers refuses the holy communion because he does not believe it to be the blood of Jesus Christ, but merely wine. However, one day during the liturgy, a miracle occurs: the doubtful brother sees Christ standing on the altar with blood spurting forth from His stigmata into the communion cup. Immediately prior to this vision, the priest performing the liturgy raises his hands above the altar and begins to pray as follows:

“Lord God of Hosts, who hast created all out of nothing and created man living and incorruptible from the dust of the ground. And they transgressed Thy Commandments and fell into death because of their transgression ... but through the providence and *grace of Thy Only-begotten Son, Thou didst renew Thy creatures by a second birth...* Thou didst speak to us *through Thy Only-begotten Son through whom Thou didst create this world*. He who is the image of Thy glory and the form of Thy essence, who bears all things through the word of His power... O *valiant shepherd, who hast gone forth to seek the lost sheep and gavest Thy life for Thy sheep...*” (P’awstos Buzand 1989, 208–209).

Once again, an orison is addressed to God the Father, who has an “Only-begotten Son”. Clearly, the author speaks of the Father in the second person (as the addressee), and of the Son in the third. The inconsistency arises in the last line, which reads: “O valiant Shepherd, who has gone out to search for the lost sheep and gave Thy life for Thy sheep”. This refers to the Gospel of John, where Jesus proclaims himself to be “the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11), but in the context of the whole prayer, God the Father becomes the one who laid down his life as Shepherd.

Nina Garsoïan writes on this prayer:

“It was noted by Fr. Gat’rčean that the text underlying much of this prayer was drawn from the Armenian version of the *Liturgy of St. Basil*... Only phrases from the underlying text are cited at the beginning of the prayer, but they are followed by two more extensive quotations separated by an interpolation not found in the liturgical text. These references to the liturgy end with the second quotation, which is followed in turn by a series of Scriptural citations... More recently, Fr. Renoux has gone still further to show that the underlying text corresponds to an early version of the Basilian Anaphora, known as the *Anaphora of St. Gregory the Illuminator*, preserved in a few Armenian manuscripts, and of which this passage of BP is an important early attestation – all the more so, in that the scene described at the point at which it is cited in BP is precisely the one at which the recitation of the Anaphora would occur in the canon of the Mass... None of the translations of BP has noted the origin of this prayer, although Malkasyanc’ observed that it contained “some” Scriptural passages” (P’awstos Buzand 1989, 321).¹⁴

Upon comparing the Armenian *Liturgy of St. Basil* and the *Anaphora* attributed to St. Gregory the Illuminator with the prayer of Mambrē, it becomes apparent that these liturgical sources do not contain the trinitarian inconsistency, as they lack the concluding doxology: “O valiant Shepherd...” (Gat’rčean 1897, 132–134 and Renoux 1970, 92–100), which means that this must have been added to the prayer later due to careless editing. The same can be said about the prayer of Zvit’, the content of which, because of its concluding line (“To Thee be glory and power...”), does not align with the theology of the rest of the prayer. Thus, it can be concluded

¹⁴ The prayers of Zvit’ and Mambrē are identical in all editions of the *Buzandaran patmut’iwnk’*, including the original edition of 1730 (*Buzandaran patmut’iwn* 1730, 265–267, 330–331) and subsequent Venetian editions (P’awstos Buzandats’i 1832, 175, 223–224; P’awstos Buzandats’i 1933, 181–182, 227–228), as well as K’erovbe Patkanyan’s edition with the Eastern Armenian translation by Step’anos Malkhasyants’ (P’awstos Buzand 1987, 270–272, 340–342), and the most recent Armenian edition in the *Medieval Armenian Authors* (P’awstos Buzand 2003, 373, 397). The content of the prayers is also the same in the translations of the work: the English translation by Nina Garsoïan (P’awstos Buzand 1989, cited in this paper), the Russian translation by M. Gevorgian (Favstos Buzand 1953, 135–136, 171–172), the German translation by Max Lauer (Faustus von Byzanz 1879, 140, 178–179), and the Italian translation by Marco Bais and Loris D. Nocetti (P’awstos Buzand 1997, 149–150, 179–180). All of these versions contain the same trinitarian inconsistencies. Though Malkhasyants’ and Garsoïan have discussed the prayer-texts from a philological point of view, they have not addressed the problem. In the French translation by Jean-Baptiste Emin, the prayer of Mambrē is even omitted due to its “lack of historical significance”, while the first prayer has the same content (Faustus de Byzance 1869, 293).

that the inconsistencies present in these prayer-texts are likely due to later editing or scribal error.

5. Conclusion

The *Agat'angeghay Patmut'iwn* is a significant work that offers valuable historical information on the 3rd- and 4th-century Armenia. As such, it offers a unique opportunity to deepen our understanding of the Christian culture and theology of the Armenian Church during this period. However, despite containing profound doctrinal insights, the *History* of Agathangelos, just as another important literary source of the 5th century, the *Buzandaran patmut'iwnk'*, exhibits trinitarian inconsistencies. The presence of such contradictions within a work containing deep orthodox theological insights is not only surprising but also calls for investigation into whether these problematic passages were originally part of the text or are interpolations from a later period.

An examination of the manuscripts of Agathangelos' *History* suggests that the aforementioned inconsistencies were likely a result of scribal error or later revision. This raises further questions as to why later scribes and academics have not noticed and adequately addressed them.

As already stated above, there is a need for a new critical edition that will consider the logical continuity of the text, particularly from the theological perspective. This is crucial to restore the coherence of this important literary source, ensure a more accurate representation of the theological knowledge contained in it, and contribute to a better understanding of the context in which it was produced.

References

- Agat'angeghos. 1882. *Ագաթանգեղոսի Պատմություն* [*The History by Agathangelos*]. Tiflis: Hovhannēs Martiroseants' Publishing House.
- Agat'angeghos. 1909. *Ագաթանգեղոսի Պատմություն Հայոց* [*The History of Armenia by Agathangelos*]. Ed. Galust Tēr-Mkrtch'ean and Step'anos Kanayeants', Tiflis: Aragatip Mnats'akanyan Martirotsyants' Publication.
- Agat'angeghos. 1977. *Պատմություն Հայոց* [*History of Armenia*]. Modern Armenian translation, introduction, and commentary by Aram Ter-Ghevondyan, Yerevan: Soviet Writer Press.
- Agat'angeghos. 2003. *Պատմություն Հայոց* [*History of Armenia*]. In *Մանկանագիրք Հայոց* [*Medieval Armenian Authors*], vol. 2. Antelias (Lebanon): Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1289–1735. https://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/MH/MH-hator-2.pdf?_gl=1*_1vk4jtrj*_ga*MTIxMDU1NTkxMS4xNzE1Mjc2NTk4*_ga_TQF3S187V5*MTcxNTI3NjU5OC4xLjAuMTcxNTI3NjU5OC4wLjAuMA.
- Agathangelos. 2004. *История Армении* [*History of Armenia*]. Russian translation, introduction, and commentary by K. S. Ter-Davtyan and S. S. Arevshatyan. Yerevan: Nairi Publishing House. <https://www.vehi.net/istoriya/armenia/agathangelos/ru/index.html>
- Agathangelos. 1976. *History of the Armenians*. Translation and Commentary by Robert W. Thomson. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Biwandats'i, Norayr. 1911. «Քննություն Մալխասեան հրատարակութեանց Ագաթանգեղոսի եւ Ղազարայ Փարպեցւոյ» [“An Examination of Malkhasean's Editions of Agathangelos and Ghazar P'arpets'i”]. In Յուշարձան. Գրական ժողովածոյ առթիւ 100-ամեայ յոբելինի հաստատման Մխիթարեան միաբանութեան ի Վիեննա (1811–1912) եւ 25-ամեայ տարելըջանի «Հանդէս ամսօրեայ» ուսումնաթերթի (1887–1911) [Monument: Collection of Papers on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Mekhitarist Congregation in Vienna (1811–1911) and the 25th Anniversary of the Academic Journal *Handēs amsōreay* (1887–1911)]. Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 161–174.
- Buzandandaran Patmut'wn. 1730. *Բուզանդարան պատմություն, շարագրեալ Բուզանդայ մեծի պատմագրի* [The Buzandaran History, Composed by the Great Historian Buzand]. Constantinople. http://greenstone.flib.sci.am/gsd/collect/armenian/Books/buzandaran_patmutyan1730/book/index.html#page/1/mode/2up
- Esbroeck, Michel van. 1971. “Un nouveau témoin du livre d'Agathange”. *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 8, 13–171.
- . 1977. “Le résumé Syriaque de l'Agathange”. *Analecta Bollandiana* 95, 291–358.
- Faustus de Byzance. 1869. *Bibliothèque historique en quatre livres*. Traduite pour la première fois de l'Arménien en français par Jean-Baptiste Emin. Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie publiée en français par Victor Langlois, tome 1. Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, Fils et Cie, 201–310. <https://books.google.fr/books?id=oLQFAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Faustus von Byzanz. 1879. *Geschichte Armeniens*. Aus dem Armenischen übersetzt und mit einer Abhandlung über die Geographie Armeniens eingeleitet von Dr. M. Lauer. Köln: Verlag der M. DuMont-Schauberg'schen Buchhandlung. https://books.google.am/books?id=QxvWIGzaigUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ru&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Favstos Buzand. 1953. *История Армении Фавстоса Бузанда* [The History of Armenia by Faustus Buzand]. Russian translation and commentary by M. A. Gevorgyan, ed. S. T. Eremyan, introduction by L. S. Khachikian. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. <https://www.vostlit.info/Texts/rus14/Buzand/frameText3.htm>
- Galēm'k'earan, Grigoris. 1911. «Ագաթանգեղոսի կրկնագիր բնագիրը». In Յուշարձան. Գրական ժողովածոյ առթիւ 100-ամեայ յոբելինի հաստատման Մխիթարեան միաբանութեան ի Վիեննա (1811–1912) եւ 25-ամեայ տարելըջանի «Հանդէս ամսօրեայ» ուսումնաթերթի (1887–1911) [Monument: Collection of Papers on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Mekhitarist Congregation in Vienna (1811–1911) and the 25th Anniversary of the Academic Journal *Handēs amsōreay* (1887–1911)]. Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 67–160.
- Garitte, Gérard. 1946. *Documents pour l'étude du livre d'Agathange*. Studi e Testi 127. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.
- Gat'rchean, Yovsēp'. 1897. *Սրբազան պատարագամատոյցք Հայոց* [Holy Mass-Books of the Armenians]. Ed. Father Yakovbos Tashean. Vienna: Mekhitarist Press. <https://archive.org/details/GatrcheanPatarag/page/n7/mode/2up>
- Lafontaine, Guy. 1973. *La version grecque ancienne du livre arménien d'Agathange*. Publications de l'Institut orientaliste de Louvain 7. Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain, Institut orientaliste.

- Malkhasyants', Step'anos. 1944. «Ժամանակագրական խնդիրներ հայոց հին մատենագրության մեջ» [“Chronological Problems in Old Armenian Literature”]. In *Տեղեկագիր ՀԳԱ հասարակական գիտությունների* [Bulletin of Social Sciences of the Armenian Academy of Sciences] (6–7), 7–24. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/117226/edition/106901/content>
- Marr, Nikolai. 1906. «Крещение армян, грузин, абхазов и аланов святым Григорием (Арабская версия)» [“The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhazians, and Alans by Saint Gregory (Arabic version)”]. In *Записки Восточного отделения Императорского Русского Археологического общества* [Notes of the Eastern Division of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society] 16, 63–211. http://www.orientalstudies.ru/rus/images/pdf/journals/ZVORAO_16_1906.pdf
- Meillet, Antoine. 1910. “Remarques sur le texte de l'historien arménien Agathange”. *Journal Asiatique* (Dix. Sér.) 16, 457–481.
- Muradyan, Paruyr. 1982. *Ագաթանգեղոսի հին վրացերեն խմբագրությունները* [The Old Georgian Versions of Agathangeghos]. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/348023/edition/320649/content>
- Musheghyan, Albert. 2012. «Ագաթանգեղոսի պատմությունը. ստեղծման հանգամանքները, գրության ժամանակը և հեղինակի հարցը» [“The History of Agathangelos: The Circumstances of Composition, Date, and the Problem of Authorship”]. *Patma-banasirakan handes* 1, 196–222. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/193566/edition/175894/content>
- P'avstos Buzand. 1987. *Հայոց պատմություն* [History of Armenia]. Ed. K'erovbe Patkanyan, Modern Armenian translation and notes by Step'anos Malkhasyants'. Yerevan: Yerevan State University Press. <https://archive.org/details/pavstbuzand/mode/2up>
- P'awstos Buzand. 1989. *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand (Buzandaran Patmut'iwank')*. Translation and Commentary by Nina G. Garsoïan. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press.
- . 1997. *Storia degli Armeni*. Introduzione e Cura di Gabriella Uluhogian, Traduzione di Marco Bais, Loris Dina Nocetti, Note di Marco Bais. Milano: Mimesis.
- . 2003. *Պատմություն Հայոց (Բուզանդարան պատմությունը)* [History of Armenia (Buzandaran Histories)]. In *Մատենագիրք Հայոց* [Medieval Armenian Authors], vol. 1. Antelias (Lebanon): Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 273–428. https://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/MH/MH-hator-1.pdf?_gl=1*_15e8w2g*_ga*MTIxMDU1NTkxMS4xNzE1Mjc2NTk4*_ga_TQF3S187V5*MTcxNTI3NjU5OC4xLjEuMTcxNTI3NzY5My4wLjAuMA.
- P'awstos Buzandats'i. 1832. *Փաւստոսի Բուզանդացոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց ի չորս դպրութիւնս* [The History of Armenia by Faustus of Byzantium in Four Books]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. http://lib.yzu.am/rare_bk/a4268aa76ofc8193724bbbdac890a78.pdf
- P'awstos Buzandats'i. 1933. *Փաւստոսի Բուզանդացոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց ի չորս դպրութիւնս* [The History of Armenia by Faustus of Byzantium in Four Books], 4th edition. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. https://haygirk.nla.am/upload/1512-1940/1901-1940/pavstosi_patmutiun_1933.pdf

- Renoux, Athanase (Charles). 1970. "L'anaphore arménienne de saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur". *Eucharisties d'Orient et d'Occident* (Lex Orandi) 47 (2), 83–108. <https://archive.org/details/eucharistiesdor10002unse/mode/2up>
- Sargisean, Barsegh. 1890. *Ագաթանգեղոս եւ իւր բազմադարեան գաղտնիքն* [Agathangelos and His Centuries-Long Mystery]. Venice: St. Lazarus Press. https://books.google.am/books?id=1wguAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=ru&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=o#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Tashean, Yakovbos. 1891. *Ագաթանգեղոս ւն Գեորգայ ստորի եպիսկոպոսին և ուսումնասիրություն Ագաթանգեղայ գրոց* [Agathangelos to Bishop George the Assyrian and a Study of Agathangelos' Work]. Vienna: Mekhitarist Press. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/292411/edition/268462/content>
- Ter-Ghevondyan, Aram. 1968. *Ագաթանգեղոսի արաբական նոր խմբագրությունը (արաբերեն բնագիր և ուսումնասիրություն)* [The Newly Discovered Arabic Recension of Agathangelos (Arabic Text and Study)]. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
- . 1973. «Ագաթանգեղոսի արաբական խմբագրության նորահայտ ամբողջական բնագիրը» [“The Newly-found Complete Text of the Arabic Version of Agathangelos”]. *Patma-banasirakan handes* 1, 209–237. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/189263/edition/171866/content>
- Tēr-Minaseants', Yeruand. 2013. *Ընդհանուր եկեղեցական պատմություն* [General History of the Church], vol. 1 (first published in 1908). Etchmiadzin: Publishing House of the Mother See.
- Thomson, Robert W. 2010. *The Lives of Saint Gregory: The Armenian, Greek, Arabic, and Syriac Versions of the History Attributed to Agathangelos*. Ann Arbor (Michigan): Caravan Books.
- Topchyan, Aram. 2005. «Ագաթանգեղոսի «Պատմության» Վիեննայի կրկնագիր ձեռագիրը» [“The Vienna Palimpsest of Agathangelos' History”]. *Patma-banasirakan handes* 2, 144–153. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/192764/edition/175128/content>
- Winkler, Gabriele. 1980. "Our Present Knowledge of Agat'angelos and Its Oriental Versions". *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 14, 125–141.

The Context of Kingship: Armeno-Georgian Claims and Rule in the 12th-13th Centuries

▼ **ABSTRACT** This paper aims to examine the political situation in which the major Armeno-Georgian elite families of the later 12th and early 13th centuries held and maintained positions of power under the broad hegemony of the Georgian Bagratid dynasty. It reassesses some aspects of recent historical research and provides context based upon a brief analysis of other rulers within the Bagratid hegemony, especially in the case of the polity of Shirvan. The paper argues on the basis of these assessments that we should see claims of royal status by Armeno-Georgian elites as being accepted within the wider political frameworks of the Bagratids, rather than being a potential problem or threat to that system. Attempts to use royal and heroic ancestries not only helped secure their holders' claims to rule in particular regions, but were also visibly celebrated as reflecting positively on the Georgian monarchs as senior rulers. The necessity for such families as brokers between the Armenian highlands and the Georgian court created a situation, mirrored in some other relations between the Bagratids and their neighbours, where it made sense for both parties to secure those relationships by accepting and indeed expanding ancestry claims and noble titulature.

▼ **KEYWORDS** 12th-13th centuries, the medieval Caucasus, political history, Georgia, Armenia, prosopography, Zak'arean (Mkhargrdzeli), Ōrbelean, Bagratid.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper will be to consider the question of the relationship between the Bagratid monarchs of high medieval Georgia and the most senior among the Armeno-Georgian nobility of the 12th century, in particular the family known as

James Baillie  0000-0002-7120-1606 • Institute for Iranian Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria (Email: james.baillie@oeaw.ac.at)

Cite this article: James Baillie, 'The Context of Kingship: Armeno-Georgian Claims and Rule in the 12th-13th Centuries', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 139–156

<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142267>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142267

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

the Zak'areans, Zak'arids, or Mkhargrdzeli in different historiographical traditions.¹ Broadly speaking, the term Zak'arean/Zak'arid is more associated with Armenian historiography and Mkhargrdzeli with Georgian, though this distinction is by no means always simple (Pogossian 2019, 248–253). For most of the 12th century and into the early 13th, the Bagratid court in Tbilisi was the centre of political life across the Caucasus, including for these families. This paper discusses the Caucasus in its broadest sense, including the South Caucasus or Transcaucasus between the upper and lower Caucasus range, parts of the North Caucasus that today sit within the Russian Federation, and the “Subcaucasus” region, a term proposed by B. L. Zekiyan, mostly denoting the Armenian highlands (Zekiyan 2008). All of these areas were tied closely in the high medieval period to the political fate of the South Caucasus, with a broad Georgian-led hegemony over the Caucasus regions between at least the 1120s and 1220s. It was in this environment that the Zak'arid dynasty came to particular prominence.

In general, the historical study of this period especially among Georgian scholars has tended to lean towards emphasising the role of class and material distinction, and downplaying the role of ethnicity, in the relationship between the 12th-century monarchs and Armeno-Georgian nobles. Mariam Lordkipanidze for example tends to portray Mkhargrdzeli actions as synonymous with those of a presumptively unified state, regarding victories attributed to them in chronicle material as simply those of “Georgian troops” (Lordkipanidze 1987, 151). Where Georgian-Armenian families gained power, in this reading, it was by pursuing integration and efficacy within a centralised Bagratid monarchy: the Armenian part of their identity is not treated as relevant. A zero-sum struggle for power at the expense of the monarchy is meanwhile often an assumed goal of the whole noble class in Georgian historical research (Lordkipanidze 1987, 127–133). In this understanding of the period, when elites challenged royal rule, it was in the role of an overmighty subject or separatist lord working on lines more determined by class than historical or ethnic identity.

Some scholars, notably in recent years the Armenologist Sergio La Porta, have given a considerably more fluid picture of the potential political outcomes. La Porta has very importantly and clearly brought into focus the question of the claims made by Armeno-Georgian princes and the context of Armenian societal fluidity in the 12th century. In this approach, he has argued that the political possibility of a fully separate and self-consciously Armenian kingdom was very real even in the later 12th century. Framing especially the Ōrbelean rebellion of the 1170s as an attempt at this goal (La Porta 2008–2009), he suggests that claims of Bagratuni ancestry and royal titulature made by the Ōrbelean (Orbeli) and Mkhargrdzeli clans effectively prepared the ground for the potential construction of an independent Armenian polity outside the Bagratid hegemony.

¹ Much of the following argument relies upon sections of the *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, which are dual referenced. KT has been used to abbreviate the English edition, *Kartlis Tskhovreba* 2013, and ჯგ, for the two-volume Georgian edition, *Kartlis Tskhovreba* 1955 and 59. For this paper as a whole, I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. John Latham-Sprinkle and Dr. Samuel Cook in helping with proof-reading and suggestions.

Both of these readings, whilst differing sharply in their interpretations of the actions of the Zak'arids, share certain assumptions. In particular, they both take as axiomatic the assumption that the Bagratids would have aimed to reduce and erode any alternative claims to royal power. Conversely, both readings tend to assume a *de facto* state where autonomous "independence" would have been a desirable goal for elite actors compared to their positions within a Georgian-led political world.

In this paper, I wish to set out an alternative, third proposition, based in particular on comparison between the Armeno-Georgian nobility and Georgia's interactions with its other neighbours in Shirvan and the North Caucasus. The case I wish to make is that the Armenian cultural traits of the Ōrbeleans and Zak'arids, and probably also their ancestral and royal claims, were a necessary and useful feature not just for them but also for the Georgian monarchs they served. In this reading, we should not see cultural homogenisation as innately desirable for Georgian monarchs or their subjects, and nor should we necessarily equate the public presentation of rulership on the part of the Bagratids' immediate vassals as in some way subverting or weakening the efficacy of a senior monarch's rule: indeed these were very probably positives for both parties.

Few of the key terms in this discussion are without contest. Ethnic identity in ancient and medieval Caucasian contexts has often been derived backwards from modern nation-states, in an attempt to fit medieval peoples neatly into modern boxes and decide which state's history should own particular concepts or figures (Zekiyan 2008, 329; Rapp 2017, 16). This paradigm, in turn, has led to a counter-view that insists upon the essential fluidity of ethnic identity and emphasises how certain families were able to change their presentation in different circles over the decades, as Antony Eastmond argues for the Armeno-Georgian families (Eastmond 2017, 22–23). Alison Vacca, discussing the early medieval Caucasus, similarly emphasises fluidity along with the importance of local concerns and the lack of overarching identity categories forming a unified base for political mobilisation (Vacca 2017, 72). This malleability, however, was not unbounded, nor were cases of change as simple as moving between identity groups wholesale. Pogossian, in discussing Eastmond's work, suggests that there is a certain modernity in the use of "fluidity" as a concept framework for discussing identity in the medieval Caucasus (Pogossian 2019, 247). Though the modernity of the term does not necessarily negate its utility, and we should not be too quick to assume that limited evidence and a less modern technological landscape inherently mean a less fluid social world, Pogossian's caution towards an unbounded notion of fluidity is very valuable. In particular, in using ideas of fluidity we need to account not only for the potential in shifting between identity groups and presentations, but also the barriers and costs to doing so, and the ways in which identities could be leveraged in interactions with power structures and elite networks. As we shall see, claiming certain identities was a matter upon which serious social and political efforts were expended, and therefore it was perhaps comparatively difficult outside elite circles.

Here I aim to discuss ethnicity with a recognition that the concept *itself* is somewhat fluid but at the same time integral to understanding the premodern Caucasus.

Rather than the way medieval peoples in the Caucasus approached these identities being truly malleable, it perhaps makes more sense to think of identity as layered, with certain layers becoming more or less prominent and certain traits contributing to them more or less critically depending on the observer and circumstance. Producing or changing those various traits – claimed ancestry, language, faith, home locations, cultural practices, political allegiances – that contributed to observations of ethnicity could however require social, political, and financial investment. Less common mixtures of these traits did not necessarily lead to a truly fluid or unclear sense of ethnic identity, but could sometimes be a desideratum or lead, not to an overall fluidity, but to sharper specific situational variation in how certain layers were emphasised. The aim of chroniclers in deploying such terms was nonetheless often not a matter of precise description, especially in describing groups: for example, when Kirakos Gandzakets'i says that "all the Georgian troops" along with Ivanē and Giorgi Lasha mourned Zak'arē, he can only plausibly mean all the troops in the army, including Armenians, Ossetians, and other ethnic groups: a term can be a shorthand for a political structure or ethnic identity alike (Kirakos Gandzakets'i 1986, 149). In general, I therefore aim to take a broad view of the appropriateness of certain terms: when considering a given ethnonym or identity, I take an inclusive view of who it could have meant and consider potential presentations and interactions with power structures, rather than trying to produce more restrictive sets of criteria.

Such a viewpoint is especially important to understanding power relations. When evaluating the power structures and social claims around medieval elites, a purely genealogical approach or the presentation of a noble house or individual's initial background can only be part of the picture. Changes in presentation and cultural traits over time were not merely facades laid over an unchangeable "real" core identity, and even some clearly outlandish ideas in medieval texts should, as we will see, be taken seriously as socio-political claims (even if they should not be taken literally as genealogical statements). Our understanding of identity for these purposes is, therefore, intended to be an investigation into the ways particular elites would have culturally appeared to their contemporaries, rather than an attempt to ascertain their families' ultimate genealogical origins. In any case, such origins can rarely be put together with any sort of completeness especially because of the poor records of women in these families. This should be taken into account with regard to terms like "Armeno-Georgian" that here indicate a mix of relevant social, political, and cultural traits for the families broadly conceived, rather than being a purely genealogical statement.

The intersection of ethnicity and power lies at the core of this paper's considerations, and we should recognise that these two complex concepts modified one another. Power – in the sense of historical actors' capacity to influence the world around them – was shaped by, and shaped in turn, how elite ethnicities and claims interacted with the networks of other power brokers and actors that formed their political worlds. Some thoughts on how a more complex subdivision of power might influence our framing of this period are offered towards the end of this paper. Perhaps the most important initial observation to make is that the mechanisms of

power in this period were more centred on persons and connections, and less on formal rule, law, and political infrastructure, than we as modern observers are used to imagining. This tends to lead to a focus on “states” over other elite actors (cf. Latham-Sprinkle 2022, 50). It is partly to avoid imported assumptions that I refer to the Bagratid-centric systems of power in the 12th-century Caucasus as a hegemony and a polity, rather than as a country, state, kingdom, or nation: these terms provide, in my view, a reasonable sense of overarching political structure whilst carrying fewer assumptions likely to be imported from the common usage of terms like “state” elsewhere.

This paper seeks to comment on and reframe more recent historical research, and to bring in comparisons from Georgian and international English scholarship. The discussion will thus use certain exemplifying authors, rather than provide the full sweep of 20th-century historical study. If this leaves certain lacunae, especially in consideration of the Armenian and Russian language scholarship or if there are pertinent epigraphic or colophon materials regrettably absent, then hopefully the following discussion will nonetheless provide a framework for other scholars to bring those materials into the study of the Zak’arid period.

2. The Armeno-Georgian Families

We must start not with the Zak’arids, but with their predecessors, the Ōrbelean family: these two families dominated Georgian-Armenian relations between the 1120s and 1220s, and had a number of shared characteristics. First among these are the families’ identities, which have a number of further impacts on their position among the elites of the Caucasus. Both show a mixture of Georgian and Armenian cultural traits, and should be classified accordingly. There has been a tradition in Georgian and Armenian scholarship classifying these families as Georgian or Armenian respectively, but attempts to place them into a single, precise ethno-national category have been largely unconvincing unless one sees their identity solely as a matter of *longue durée* genealogical background. Even then an attempt based on pure genealogy often relies upon the lack of recorded relationships via the women of the region’s elite families, who may have crossed between cultural contexts more often for marriage as notably happened in the case of Ivanē’s daughter T’amt’a (Kirakos Gandzakets’i 1986, 128). We see some elite families having feet in multiple worlds from the 13th-century evidence of Step’annos Ōrbelean’s *History*, which explicitly notes that through marriage ties the Ōrbelean family took names from both Georgian and Armenian traditions, though he ultimately regards their origins as Chinese (Step’annos Ōrbelean 2015, 197).

Here we should give a brief aside on the “Chinese” origin tale of the Ōrbeleans. This story is essentially a copy of the similar and better known tale about the Mamikoneans, and may be an attempt to imply a shared lineage (La Porta 2012, 90–91). In Step’annos’ conception, the term “Chenk” did undoubtedly mean China: he gives a very clear description of where he believes the country to be, east of Khazaria,

and as Bedrosian has noted, this is in line with other Armenian descriptions and terminology that explicitly reference China (Bedrosian 1981). An alternative theory that this was a garbling of a toponym for a region near Lazica has been raised (see, for example, Pagava 2020, 48). This cannot be entirely dismissed as a distant origin for the Mamikoneans' tale, but it is clear that by the time of Step'annos the tale referred to China itself.

Fabulous ancestry was a tool for the Mkhargrdzelis as well: they are given Kurdish (possibly meaning Median), Achaemenid, and Arsacid origins by different chroniclers (La Porta 2012, 78–80; KT, 275; *ǰǰ* II, 110). Some scholars have taken the claim of Kurdish ancestry as literal: in the middle of the last century, the Georgian scholar Shota Meskhia presented the Mkhargrdzeli as a family of Georgianised Kurds (Shah-nazaryan 2001). Much like the Mamikonean story, we can never entirely disprove or discount the possibility that there is a grain of truth beneath these statements (Eastmond 2017, 22). However, we lack records of the family far back enough to substantiate such a claim, and as discussed below there are a variety of reasons why such an identity may have been adopted for political reasons. Therefore, we should primarily regard both these ancestries as intentional, politically useful constructions (Pogossian 2019, 247–248; Margaryan 1997, 40). Later, the Zak'arids adopted progressively more Bagratuni titulature until eventually claiming ancestry from that family in their inscriptions (La Porta 2012, 90–91).

The exoticised ancestries of these families likely had significant political motivations, drawing parallels with other regional elites. The Georgian Bagratids, too, had their own ancestry tale, claiming to hail from the line of David (KT, 257, 249; *ǰǰ* II, 69, 50). Their heroic ancestry, however, was biblical and therefore provided a clear aura of religious legitimacy: there is no similar line to be drawn from the Kurdish Mkhargrdzeli or Chinese Ōrbelean backgrounds. Rather, these backgrounds tapped into literary and cultural tropes regarding ancient or distant peoples as sources of authority, and prowess-driven ideas around familial legacies of conquest and adventure. Another purpose, which these ancestries would also have served, may have been to elide questions of origin that would pigeon-hole them as “purely” Armenian or Georgian, improving their ability to operate and use legitimating rhetoric across both cultural contexts by placing themselves outside of either.

Coming back to consider the question of their ethnicities more widely, then, we see both families utilising heroic origin stories whilst functioning across primarily Kartvelian and Armenian cultural and linguistic contexts. As we shall see later, this may in fact have been a significant source of power for both families. It is also important to recognise that their identities may have been subject to both chronology and circumstances, especially when we consider the Zak'arids' identities. Hayrapet Margaryan has argued that the Zak'arids were initially Armenian minor nobility, and La Porta's suggestion that they were of *azat* origin and rose through military service seems very likely (Margaryan 1997, 40; La Porta 2012, 81–82). It is worth noting, however, that by the end of the century the family had been integrated into the upper tiers of Georgian noble society for quite some time, which must have included linguistic and cultural integration with the Georgian nobility and, by the end of

Tamar's reign, religious conversions. That their ancestors might have been treated as solely Armenian rather than Georgian need not lead us to suggest that in the late 12th century. Zak'aria or Ivanē Mkhargrdzeli were seen in precisely the same light as their grandparents or great-grandparents or that they had the same level of reliance upon other actors for their positions.

The theory that they were in a category of "military" families who the Bagratids sought to promote as opposed to "older noble" ones who they sought to rein in feels somewhat difficult to fully substantiate (La Porta 2012, 81–86). Whilst it is true that we most often see the Mkhargrdzelis in command roles, the fundamentally military nature of the Georgian nobility reflected in the chronicle records means this is just as true for members of families with long-standing positions in the upper aristocracy. The "History and Eulogy of Monarchs" in *Kartlis Tskhovreba* makes it clear that the noble *eristavis*, who usually held their offices in a semi-hereditary way, were key to the raising of troops (KT, 249; jg II, 50). Nor can we argue backwards and suggest that the Mkhargrdzeli allegiance to the Bagratids was based on their lack of a strong noble claim to fall back upon: whilst some members of older elite families clearly were in tension with the Bagratids in this period, in cases when allegiances became visible during rebellions, it is equally true that many *eristavi* families did support their monarchs. La Porta rightly and importantly comments on the erosion of *naxarar* systems in Armenia leading to new possibilities for families of the lower noble rank such as the Zak'arids, and we do see a significant social fluidity in Georgia too (La Porta 2012, 77). However, the effect of this on noble-royal relationships was complex, with trade-offs whereby traditional Georgian nobles probably gained both stability for their lands and potential sources of loot from Georgian interventionism, even if this meant a greater diversity of potential holders of certain elite offices. The Georgian material provides few clear indications of the sort of general incursions on noble rights that might indicate a broader opposed policy or struggle between statist/royal and oligarchic/noble factions.

In line with the introductory discussion above with regard to identity being situational, we can see that different aspects of the identities of these families could be emphasised or not in different circumstances. For example, the Armenian religious identity of the Mkhargrdzelis is most clearly forefronted in the Georgian chronicles in Ivanē Mkhargrdzeli's conversion narrative. Conversely, it is rarely mentioned in passages related to their military victories (KT, 264–265; jg II, 85–89). Upon the death of Zak'aria, his wealth, bravery, holdings, and the status of his mourners are all foregrounded, with a side-mention of his faith coming rather later (KT, 275; jg II, 110).

This leads us back to the more general question of how the Zak'arids operated with regard to their power: as Armenian scholars have concluded, they operated with significant autonomy in certain respects such as military actions, but without being treated as fundamentally sovereign (Shahnazaryan 2022). As we shall see later, the concept of essential sovereignty and total autonomy of action as an expectation for the power aims of such elite families may translate poorly to the 12th-century context. Zak'arid activities during the 12th and early 13th centuries covered a wide

range of governance functions in Georgia itself, but militarily their own conquests tended to focus on regions that were largely Armenian by both language and faith. A list of their conquests in the Georgian material includes Dvin, Amberd, Bargushat, Bjini, and Gelakun, whereas Vardan Arewelts'i lists Shirak, Anberd, Ani, Bjni, Dvin, Kars, Getabakk', and Ch'arek' in that order (KT, 203; յԹ I, 368; Vardan Arewelts'i 2007, 82). These conquests formed most of the basis of some sort of political entity that answered directly to the Zak'arids. There was at least one exception: Kars was surrendered directly to Tamar, but perhaps the fact that this had to be explicitly negotiated suggests that in general the Zak'arids had been capable of taking and holding other areas much more in their own right (KT, 301; յԹ II, 143–144).

Indeed in Zak'arid governance we see a reflection of some features of royal rule, such as the appointment of ministerial-style positions and hearing petitions at court (Step'annos Ōrbelean 2015, 185). We cannot say whether this was a common feature of many nobles' courts in this period, but it certainly indicates that the Zak'arids' power was in certain spheres held locally rather than being integrated into a system running through the Bagratids themselves. Appointments to offices in the Zak'arid domains, meanwhile, quite probably did still include some degree of nominal oversight from the senior monarch: both Giorgi Lasha and Ivanē Mkhargrdzeli are jointly mentioned by Step'annos Ōrbelean as appointing Liparit Ōrbelean in Siwnik' and Vasak Xach'enets'i in Vayots' dzor (Step'annos Ōrbelean 2015, 205). We should not take this as necessarily meaning that the Georgian monarch had a significant role in choosing candidates for such a role, but it could simply mean that endorsement from the senior ruler was still a nominally important legitimising feature.

We can also note that these Armeno-Georgian rulers were certainly not treated simply as Georgian *eristavis*, the regional “dukes”. This system of governance was not expanded or regularised outside Kartvelian-speaking regions, and if anything, our sources hint at a tendency to retain local elite structures within the Bagratid hegemony. For example, when Tamar appointed Ivanē of Akhaltsikhe as ruler of Kars, he was given the title of emir which probably continued existing local titulature, as opposed to being made an *eristavi* (KT, 267; յԹ II, 92). These differences were probably not just in name only: given the varied cultural positions and resources of different political units, and that the capacity for central oversight was limited anyway, it may have made strategic sense to vary the terms under which land could be held.

This retention of local structures probably created significant opportunity for a family like the Zak'arids, as it relied upon effective communication between the Georgian Bagratid centre and the other regions within the hegemony of the Georgian monarchs. Where there was a cultural and linguistic divide between the Georgian monarchs and their nominal subjects, this meant that effective and reliable brokers of power and information were vital. Having subordinate rulers who were in a better position to negotiate with, and perhaps be accepted by, local lords across parts of the Caucasus and Subcaucasus was probably a far more efficient way of projecting authority than any attempt to produce a more integrated system of governance. Medieval polities lacked systems of mass education, rapid communication, or indeed fully centralised monopolies of force. It was therefore important to work with existing

understandings of culture and legitimacy, rather than to impose particular norms consistently across a political sphere. Given the linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity of regions within the Bagratids' hegemony, being able to reach across those boundaries was of paramount importance. Thus, families who could place themselves as brokers between the court and localities were able to turn their brokerage into an effective source of power.

This situation of brokerage as power, however, does not *prima facie* explain why both the Ōrbeleans and Zak'arids were so keen to claim royal titulature and ancestries, especially of the royal Armenian dynasty of the Bagratuni. The answer is important for understanding whether those families were keen to obtain independence from Georgian rule. The Ōrbelean inscriptions from the period do prominently use the title of *spasalar*, indicating that whilst their claims of Bagratuni ancestry mattered for their legitimacy, perhaps so did their claims to high status within the Georgian Bagratid system. Determining what wider political programme this indicates, however, requires examination of the political situations these families found themselves in the late 12th and early 13th centuries.

The Ōrbeleans' use of Armenian royal attributes is tied by La Porta to their rebellion of the 1170s (La Porta 2008–2009). It probably happened in 1177, and this date appears consistently in our sources, although there are some difficulties with how 1177 corresponds to the deaths or ages of majority of certain important figures, leaving an outside alternative of 1174 (Baillie 2022). La Porta suggests that the rebellion was largely driven by the Ōrbeleans' aim of independence, and that Giorgi III's behaviour was probably a crucial trigger point (in the first half of the 1170s, he had frustrated their ambitions of rulership in the city of Ani and sided with an alternative faction around the city's bishop Barsegh) (La Porta 2008–2009, 138–139). The Ōrbelean faction eventually took up arms, nominally in favour of Demna, Giorgi's nephew and son of his elder brother David V. In Georgian studies, it is also suggested that the Ōrbeleans were essentially seeking independence (e.g., Lordkipanidze 1987, 131).

This reading poses two questions: first, why Demna was necessary at all, and second, why the source material lacks clear indications that the Ōrbeleans were seeking to achieve independence. Demna was still a young man at this point, in his early twenties: whilst neither the Georgian material nor Step'annos Ōrbelean's pro-Orbeli account has much incentive to talk much about any of his virtues, we certainly know that he had a very good claim to be king and one arguably better than Giorgi III, his uncle. If the Ōrbeleans wanted full independence, it might have been an odd move to attempt to enthrone someone whose rule would be at least as legitimate as Giorgi's and who as a young man might have been in a very good position to solidify his reign without the Ōrbeleans' help. It is true that the Georgian court chronicles and Step'annos' much later account might have an incentive to downplay the idea of a Bagratuni-realm separatism, but a motive to downplay separatism does not necessarily prove that such separatism existed. La Porta's suggestion that the "half the kingdom" demanded according to a contemporary Armenian colophon must refer to the Bagratuni regions is plausible, but is also speculative (La Porta

2008–2009, 150). Given that Demna's rebellion clearly had notable support in the eastern regions of Georgia, Ivanē could equally have been negotiating for that eastern part of the Georgian realms rather than for the Bagratuni regions. This would be a much more conventionally understood halving of the Bagratid kingdom at this point, as references to the "Imiers and Amiers" either side of the Likhi ridge were a phrasing used several times in the Georgian material covering this period. Whilst the thesis that the Ōrbeleans wished to be kings of a separate polity cannot be ruled out on the basis of the sources, it is nevertheless far from the only available reading.

The Ōrbeleans' defeat, besides condemning the family to a crushing fall from power, led to significant changes in the upper echelons of the court. The Georgian monarchs had a strong tendency throughout this period to give senior court roles to the Ōrbeleans and Zak'arids (perhaps most especially the senior military post of *amirspasalar*), but two figures without Zak'arid or Ōrbelean lineages held the role in the years after 1177: the Kipchak general Q'ubasar who was appointed during the 1177 rebellion, and Gamrek'eli, appointed early in Tamar's reign. However, by the end of the 1180s the Zak'arid family held the *amirspasalar* role again and would do so along with several other key offices throughout the rest of Tamar's reign and beyond. This may well indicate that ensuring the loyalty and cohesion of the combined Bagratid forces was assisted by having leaders who could communicate effectively and be seen as legitimate by both the Armenian and Georgian military contingents. This may also be in recognition of the Zak'arids' relative seniority within the overall Bagratid hegemony: as the primary brokers in the Armenian highland regions, they may have been given a visible seniority over for example the regional *eristavis*.

From the 1170s, the mantle of Georgia's primary broker in the Armenian highlands (as well as of other core political offices) thus moved to the Zak'arids. The most notable members of the family in this period were Sargis and then his sons Zak'aria and Ivanē, though other branches of the family also attained a degree of prominence. The Zak'arids undoubtedly put considerable effort into establishing their legitimacy and visibility across much of the Armenian highlands. This may have been developed with greater claims over time: late in Giorgi III's reign, the name of Sargis appears alongside the king's as a sponsor of the monastic church at Haghartsin, suggesting that already at this point some concerted work to establish the family's presence was ongoing (Chitishvili 2018). A generation later, by 1215, his son Ivanē was able to present himself as heir to the royal Bagratuni line in his own right (La Porta 2008–2009, 159).

The story of the Zak'arids' rise is often portrayed as one of the promotion of loyalists, with an abstract conception of loyalty appealed to as a mechanism for explaining their consistently strong alignment with Giorgi III and his successors after abandoning the Ōrbelean cause. Lordkipanidze for example explicitly mentions members of the family as being "loyal" or "faithful" on multiple occasions (Lordkipanidze 1987, 143, 163). This, however, jars somewhat with any suggestion that the Zak'arids' progressively more expansive claims to be the heirs of Armenian kings might have pointed to independence. Certainly, we see no indication of separatist murmurings or mistrust of the Zak'arids in the Georgian chronicles, despite their having both

greater material assets than their Ōrbelean predecessors and a monarch whose military presence was heavily limited by her gender. This, too, points to the need for a reconsideration of how the use of titulature interacted with the wider political structures of the Caucasus.

To return to our initial premise, then, we have a picture where the Zak'arids succeeded and extended the position of the Ōrbeleans as key court officials to the Bagratids and key brokers between their court and the nobility of the Armenian highlands. There was one rebellion where power was directly and militarily contested, but whether it represents an attempt at "separatism" in the sense of creating a polity that did not nominally answer to the Bagratids court is very far from clear. Much of the question, as a result, depends on whether we see the power claims of the Zak'arids and Ōrbeleans as *inherently* pointing towards the groundwork for an independent state. To this end, it is instructive to consider not just the Bagratid-Zak'arid dynamics, but also the Bagratid political world more widely and how the Georgians in this period seem to have interacted with other neighbours, subordinates, and satellites.

3. A Wider Picture: Other Bagratid Satellites

The Armenian highland was not the only area under a broad Georgian hegemony in the 12th century. At various times rulers in the eastward river plains of Arran and Shirvan, Muslim *beyliks* to the south most notably in Erzurum, and North Caucasus leaders were all tied into a social-political hegemony centred on Georgia. Georgian military adventuring stretched even further, with armies reaching well into northern Iran on some eastwards expeditions and as far as the western Pontus when intervening in the Byzantine civil wars after 1204. This wider network of regional ties would have been very familiar to the Armeno-Georgian families who are the focus of the present paper, and can provide some useful additional context on how the social-political systems of the time could form particular arrangements and understandings of sovereignty and rulership.

Shirvan, the predominantly Muslim polity in the lowlands north of the Kura and Araxes, is perhaps the most sizeable parallel available. Whilst there is far less extant material on the relationship between Shirvan and Georgia than on Georgian-Armenian relations, the broad picture is that a Georgian-Shirvan alliance was formed maritally early in the 12th century, and that after a brief Georgian occupation of Shirvan in the mid-1120s, the subsequent rulers of both polities tended to maintain a state of alliance. The Georgians intervened militarily on behalf or at the behest of the shahs on certain occasions, most notably during Giorgi III's reign when the Georgians campaigned in the Derbent region and then during Tamar's reign when the shah brokered an alliance between Tamar and the Eldiguzid Amir Miran, attempting to set him up as ruler of Ganja in Arran, between the Kura and the Araxes (KT, 255; յԹ II, 63). It is likely that Shirvani soldiers also fought in Georgian armies, though this is recorded only in occasional very general statements (KT, 202; յԹ I, 367).

The Shirvani-Georgian relationship differed in a number of clear ways from that with the Zak'arids. The rulers of Shirvan never integrated as heavily into the Bagratid court – none of them ever took up a formal post as one of the *ukhutsesis*, the Georgian vizier-level titles (whereas the Ōrbeleans and Zak'arids practically dominated the list of these positions). Their intermarriage with the Bagratids early in the century might have been repeated given Shah Aghsartan's apparent status as a marriage candidate for Tamar early in her reign, although this was dismissed both on grounds of religion and consanguinity – nonetheless the seriousness with which the suit is taken in the Georgian material may indicate a relatively strong sense of potentially equal royal status, which we do not see clear examples of for the Zak'arids (KT, 247; jg II, 45). These differences have led some scholars to represent Shirvan as an allied polity and the Zak'arid domains as being “within” medieval Georgia, although in reality we should probably think of this more as a matter of degree in the relationships than essential difference in kind.

Despite these differences, there are some extremely interesting points of comparison when we consider the question of territories and claims. In particular, the issue of titlature arises. The Georgian chronicles are very clear that the shahs of Shirvan were known and understood as such, indeed tending to use Shirvanshah or similar terms instead of the personal names of the shahs in many cases (KT, 254; jg II, 61–62). However, the charters of Georgian monarchs also use the term Shirvanshah as a standard part of their titlature (*Georgian Historical Documents* 1984, 77). This appears to present an immediate problem: if the Georgian monarch was claiming to be the shah of Shirvan, then this would represent a direct challenge to the actual Shirvanshah's authority and control over that title, leading to direct tensions or even contests over who could hold the role. This problem, however, may be more apparent than actual: we see no indications in major late 12th or 13th century sources that anyone at the time actually considered it an issue. The Georgian-Shirvani alliance remained reasonably secure throughout the 12th century, and we see a claim that Giorgi III considered the Shirvanshah Aghsartan as being equivalent to one of his *didebulis*, a general category term for the most senior of the upper nobility (KT, 235; jg II, 17).

We should not view the overlap of titlature as a problem, and we might instead see it in a few different ways. First, nominal hierarchy resolves the issue in part, with the Georgian monarch being in a sense the shah of the shah of Shirvan. This ties with the Georgian rulers' title of *mepe mepisa*, which is to say “ruler of rulers” – *mepe* being an ungendered term for a regnant monarch. Second, kingship itself need not necessarily be cleanly understood as confined to a single individual: if kingship is a *state of being* more than a legal entity, a status of a person as much as an office that they hold, then this produces more possibilities for such actions to be shared in certain respects. Third, rather than as staking out certain defined territories or legalistic statements of fact, we might see titlature as producing a claimed scope within which actions could take place. A Georgian claim to the title of Shirvanshah might not be realistic for direct rulership of Shirvan, but it certainly provided theoretical cover for any intervention in that region that a Georgian ruler might want to effect at any point.

We also see a wider tendency to attribute royal status to Georgian satellite rulers. Even during the expedition to the North Caucasus that the Georgian chronicles place late in Mepe Tamar's reign, where the peoples involved probably covered less territory than an average Georgian *eristavi*ate, the Durdzuks are said to have not only one but multiple kings, whilst still being clearly shown as subordinate (KT, 276; *ႁ႔* II, 111).

In addition to these specific cases, we have some general statements in the Georgian chronicles suggesting that the power of vassals was largely talked up as something positive, rather than a threat to stability. We have for example a statement that, in Tamar's reign, "landowners ... became *aznauris*, *aznauris* became *didebulis*, and *didebulis* became rulers" (KT, 242; *ႁ႔* II, 34). This again suggests that the Bagratids did not have a strong position against the claims of higher titlature by subordinates. Rather, it might have been beneficial for them to present themselves as having the nominal allegiance of as many surrounding rulers as possible. It also suggests the active promotion of subordinates to higher rank rather than presenting them in the most subordinate position. A related sentiment was more specifically applied to rulers as well in another pertinent quote, when the Georgian chronicles list a number of subordinate polities that were "granted independence" by Tamar and whose "kings reduced to poverty she helped to acquire wealth" (KT, 303–304. *ႁ႔* II, 147). Whilst Armenia is not specified in the list, which perhaps indicates its greater integration into the polity, the general promotion of neighbouring rulers' co-option into the Bagratid system does further suggest a system in which active promotion of subordinates and their claims was seen as a positive-sum interaction for both parties.

This politics of recognition may have had multiple benefits to the Bagratids. In a world where being able to broker relationships with localities was important when drawing resources from those places, elevating the status of the brokers both painted the Bagratids in a stronger light as their sovereigns and secured those brokers' status in the areas where the Bagratids needed them to act on their behalf. The prominent presence of a wide variety of ethnic and cultural groups owing them allegiance may also have been a stabilising factor, which ensured that all major ethnic groups had routes to broker communication with the court and that the monarchs had diverse potential sources of military manpower outside an over-reliance on any single ethnic group. This may well have been crucial during the 1170s rebellion, when Giorgi III appointed the Kipchak general Q'ubasar as his senior military commander, probably to ensure the loyalty of the Kipchak troops that he needed for securing his reign. Considerations of this kind were also important to make rebellions less likely as a whole.

What we can suggest, considering the Georgian material and relations with other political units within the Bagratid hegemony, therefore, is that there was a tendency to accept and indeed promote royal claims by subordinate rulers. This makes more problematic the issues around whether the Ōrbelean claims in the 1170s were a separatist political programme, and how we should see the Zak'arid equivalent claims in the following decades. Political programmes these undoubtedly were, but we may

need to reconsider the role they played given what this wider picture suggests about the goals of different political actors.

4. A Re-Assessment

Having considered the other neighbours of Georgia in this period, we can return to our core question and rethink a little the relationship between the Bagratid court and its most prominent brokers in the Armenian world.

The concepts of statehood, polity formation, and independence, in this period, are somewhat complex. We should not necessarily assume a legalistic framework that precluded overlapping claims or prevented those claims from being acknowledged. The Georgian rulers' claimed status as kings of kings should perhaps be taken not just as an aggrandising term, but also as a statement about how they expected their rule to function and to be seen. This was a model of overlordship different from Byzantine imperial models, and one much more suited to the diverse ethno-political landscape that the Bagratids sought to rule.

From the perspective of their subordinates, we should also not assume that "independence" in the sense of not acknowledging any higher ruler or interacting with their court and social-political structures was necessarily desirable even if kingship *per se* was a desideratum. There were multiple facets to holding power in these societies: the level of *autonomy* of action, which we can here define as the ability to act without reference to other political actors, was only one of them. Autonomy of action should also be considered alongside the extent of *impact* of action, which is to say the scale upon which actions could be taken, and alongside *security* of action, the extent to which actions could be taken without endangering the recognition and resources that an actor needed to wield power. Indeed, it might be reasonably argued that in the 12th century prioritising security of action was the first and foremost concern of both rulers and their subordinates, followed by the extent of impact of action, with total autonomy of action being a more abstract and less direct concern. We see very few steps taken by Bagratid rulers or their subordinates that were clearly designed to maximise their autonomy of action. For rulers, this could have meant a more integrated approach to governance, in which powers or succession were more centrally controlled. As mentioned earlier, however, the Georgian system of *eristaviates* was not expanded into primarily Armenian speaking or primarily Muslim regions.

For the Bagratids' subordinates, we see almost no attempts to establish autonomy of action by actually breaking out of the Bagratid system as opposed to trying to change who was in charge of that system. The rebellions or plots of the Ōrbeleans, of Iuri Bogolyubsky's supporters in the 1180s, or of Ivanē Abuletisdze in the 1130s, all focused first and foremost on who would rule the system, not on trying to break it. Claimants who were the focal points of rebellion generally had strong familial claims to rule and most of them might plausibly have been seen as at least as potentially strong as those they were replacing. The prize of ruling any imagined

tiny independent polity was unlikely to be worth the cost of losing access to the Bagratid court and assurances of military support, beside the huge personal risks of rebellion. The closest example we see is Guzan T'aoskareli's attempt to pull parts of southwestern Georgia into the orbit of the Sokmenids of Khlat (KT, 251; jg II, 55–56). The necessity of the Sokmenid element in the plans suggests the importance of having an alternative power structure to move towards, rather than simply becoming independent in itself, and this would not have been a possibility for elites whose bases of power were not close enough to another potential ruler. His failure illustrates the stark risks as well: the fact that he was only blinded rather than executed was presented in chronicle materials as a merciful outcome (KT, 262; jg II, 81).

The extent of impact of action was also a factor in favour of avoiding system disintegration. "Independence" would mean sacrificing the potential for advancement within the Georgian system, and therefore the ability to draw upon resources and support from within that system. The Zak'arids held Georgia's most senior military posts for most of the final decade and a half of the 12th century and the first decades of the 13th, giving them access to significant additional military manpower. It is likely that the Zak'arids drew upon formal Georgian military resources significantly for the conquests of their own domains in the Armenian highlands, and even were this not the case, having a large secure border to the north had obvious strategic advantages. For major campaigns such as the one into northern Iran late in Tamar's reign, leadership of Georgian forces enabled the Zak'arids to project power in ways that would have been closed to them as independent rulers (KT, 274; jg II, 107). This leadership within the Georgian hegemony, therefore, gave them the ability to access loot and wider regional prestige that would in fact have been less accessible outside the Bagratid system. This is likewise true for their Ōrbelean predecessors – hence the importance of Demna, whether or not one regards him as a puppet, for he was the key to retaining access to the wider elites and resources of the Caucasus while still removing his uncle from power. Being a poorer and more isolated ruler with nominally complete autonomy might very well have been a step down, not up, from being a ruler who could exchange allegiance to the *mepe mepisa* for a very significant increase in land, expansion prospects, social prestige, and overall security.

Conversely, as we have seen, not being "independent" in the sense of not acknowledging any higher sovereigns did not necessarily mean sacrificing the ability to hold royal styles and titulature. It did not even necessarily require varying those things heavily according to context: the examples of royal titulature we have covered are largely taken from the Georgian material.

This, then, brings us back to the thesis advanced in the introduction. Rather than thinking of independence in the form of maximised autonomy being an assumed necessary or even likely goal of political leaders in this period, we should focus first on their maintenance and scale of power. These were goals which tended to run counter to maximising their autonomy of action, both for Bagratid monarchs, whose power ran through networks of regional power-brokers, and for their subordinates, for whom that brokerage provided access to resources and prestige available within the Bagratid political world.

5. Conclusions

This paper has briefly suggested some thought tools and frameworks that might better explain the Zak'arids' position within the hegemony of 12th-century Georgian rule. Rather than seeing them as either entirely joined to Bagratid power, or seeking an imagined autonomy as an assumed goal, we should instead focus on their actions in securing and extending, more than deepening, their ability to project power in the region.

The use of royal status by the Zak'arids was not necessarily a threat to the royal status of others, and did not necessarily preclude subordination within a hierarchy of rule. Indeed, it may have been beneficial for the Bagratids to be able to strengthen their own claims to the role of *mepe mepisa* by having the Shirvan shahs, Zak'arids, and other regional rulers recognise their position at the head of a social hierarchy whilst also acting as brokers and guarantors of Bagratid rule. This allowed both the Bagratids and their subordinates to maximise the extent of impact of their power and to best ensure its stability. These were likely more important goals than the abstract notions of total hegemony or autonomy.

The concept of brokerage as a core part of the political structures of the medieval Caucasus is one that has considerable further potential beyond the specific areas covered in this paper, especially in its application to eristavates and further neighbouring polities. Also, approaching epigraphic evidence from this point of view may provide some interest in explaining the selection of titlature used therein, and when applied to literary materials may help explain how the idealised relationships that they represent fit into the context of their composition. The relevance of brokerage may extend, too, beyond the period covered by this paper: the fracturing of the Bagratid system after the Mongol conquests of the 13th century may have been influenced by the Mongols' interactions with these existing networks.

As a final note, this paper suggests the importance of treating elite families in the context of the wider Bagratid political world, one where in many cases they had significant influence over matters of policy and central roles in the socio-political structures. The less nakharar-centred systems of the Armenian highlands in the 12th century meant that, in the absence of traditional political structures, potential regional rulers may have found a mixture of foreign and local sources of legitimacy more valuable than was the case previously. Looking at how social networks could provide power and agency in a fluid system helps us to move beyond the heavy concept frameworks of state and formal power that have been the focus of 20th century historical research, and provide a stronger and more diverse picture of contemporary political agency in the 12th and 13th centuries.

References

- Baillie, James. 2022. "The Dating and Significance of the Orbeli Rebellion: A Reassessment". *Chronos* 3, 12–23. <https://chronos.ihe.tsu.ge/index.php/journal/article/view/41>

- Bedrosian, Robert. 1981. "China and the Chinese According to 5th-13th century Classical Armenian Sources". *Armenian Review* 34 (1-133), 17-24. <https://archive.org/details/ChinaAndTheChineseAccordingTo5-13thCenturyClassicalArmenianSources>
- Chitishvili, Natalia. 2018. "Haghartsin Monastery". In Antony Eastmond et al., *Crossing Frontiers Project*. <https://sites.courtauld.ac.uk/crossingfrontiers/crossing-frontiers/armenia/haghartsin-monastery/>
- Eastmond, Antony. 2017. *Tamta's World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Georgian Historical Documents*. 1984 – ქართული ისტორიული საბჭოთები IX-XII სს. [*Georgian Historical Documents, 9th-12th Centuries*], ed. T. Enukidze, V. Silogava, and N. Shoshashvili. Tbilisi: Metsniereba.
- Kartlis Tskhovreba*. 1955 and 59. ქართლის ცხოვრება [*The Life of Kartli*], vols. 1-2, ed. Simon Q'aukhchishvili. Available via TITUS database, ed. Jost Gippert and Dali Chitunashvili. Tbilisi. <https://titus.fkdg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/kcx1/kcx1.htm>
<https://titus.fkdg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etca/cauc/mgeo/kcx2/kcx2.htm>
- Kartlis Tskhovreba*. 2013. Ed. Roin Met'reveli and Stephen Jones, trans. Dmitri Gamq'relidze, Medea Abashidze, and Arrian Chant'uria. Tbilisi: Artanuji Publishing. <https://archive.org/details/kartlis-tskhovreba-english-2014/>
- Kirakos Gandzakets'i. 1986. *History of the Armenians*, trans. Robert Bedrosian. New York. <https://archive.org/details/KirakosGanjaketsisHistoryOfTheArmenians>
- La Porta, Sergio. 2008-2009. "Lineage, Legitimacy and Loyalty in Post-Seljuk Armenia: A Reassessment of the Sources of the Failed Örbelean Revolt against King Giorgi III of Georgia". *Revue des études arméniennes* 31, 127-165.
- . 2012. "The Kingdom and the Sultanate were Conjoined: Legitimizing Land and Power in Armenia During the 12th and Early 13th Centuries". *Revue des études arméniennes* 34, 73-118.
- Latham-Sprinkle, John. 2022. "Treason and Sovereignty in the Medieval Caucasus". *Chronos* 3, 50-63. <https://chronos.ihe.tsu.ge/index.php/journal/article/view/44>
- Lordkipanidze, Mariam. 1987. *Georgia in the XI-XII Centuries*. Tbilisi: Ganatleba Publishers.
- Margaryan, Hayrapet, 1997. « Autour des Hypotheses de l'Origine Kurde de la Maison Princièrre Arménienne des Zak'arides ». *Iran and the Caucasus* 1, 25-46. https://brill.com/view/journals/ic/1/1/article-p25_3.xml
- Pagava, Karaman. 2020. "On Relatedness of Medieval Georgian Families Baghwashi and Orbeli". *Proceedings of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences: Series of History, Archaeology, Ethnology and Art History* 2, 34-49.
- Pogossian, Zaroui. 2019. "Women, Identity and Power: A Review Essay of Antony Eastmond, *Tamta's World*". *Al-'Uşūr al-Wuṣṭā* 27, 233-266. <https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/alusur/article/view/6786/3562>
- Rapp, Stephen. 2017. "Georgia before the Mongols". *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, 1-39.
- Shahnazaryan, Artashes. 2022. « Չարախյան Հայաստանի իրավական կարգավիճակը՝ ըստ վրաց-հայկական աղբյուրների » ["The Legal Status of Zak'arid Armenia according to Georgian-Armenian Sources"]. *Lraber hasarakakan gitut'yunneri* 3, 27-46. <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/366584>

- Step'annos Ōrbelean. 2015. *History of the State of Sisakan*, trans. Robert Bedrosian. New Jersey: Long Branch. <https://archive.org/details/HistoryOfTheStateOfSisakan/mode/2up>
- Vacca, Alison. 2017. "Conflict and Community in the Medieval Caucasus". *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 25, 66–112. <https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/alusur/article/view/6999/3736>
- Vardan Arewelts'i. 2007. *Compilation of History*, trans. Robert Bedrosian. New Jersey: Long Branch. <http://www.attalus.org/armenian/vaint.htm>
- Zekiyan, Boghos Levon. 2008. "Culture, Policy and Scholarship in the Subcaucasian Region: Some Critical Remarks and a Methodological Survey". *Iran and the Caucasus* 12.2, 329–361.

Newly Discovered Miniature Fragments of the “Etchmiadzin Gospel Group”*

▼ **ABSTRACT** The study of fragments attached to later manuscripts often brings to light the early stage of Armenian miniature art and creates a basis for new research. Of the over 11,000 Armenian manuscripts kept in the Matenadaran, more than 2,200 contain older fragments used as guard-leaves, of which around 300 are illuminated. Most miniatures are marginal, but there are also fragments containing early examples of Canon Tables and headpieces, as well as portraits of the Evangelists, saints, and military commanders. Rare examples of scenes from the Life of Christ have also been found.

No comprehensive study concerning the reuse of Armenian manuscript fragments as guard-leaves has been carried out. This paper discusses the fragments attached to mss. M5027, M9310, M49, and M2818. It will raise new questions and offer new insights into the history of Armenian miniature art.

My goal is to identify, through a comparative analysis, the probable place and time of the creation of these various fragments and form a better idea of the early stage of the development of Armenian miniature art (9th–11th centuries).

▼ **KEYWORDS** Etchmiadzin Gospel, Queen Mlk'ë Gospel, Lazaryan Gospel, Matenadaran, Mekhitarist Congregation, Siwnik', manuscript fragments, Canon Tables.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

* This paper was presented at the international conference “*À la mémoire de Sirarpie Der Nersessian (1896–1989)*” held on December 13–14, 2019 in Paris.

Seda Manukyan  0009-0007-3554-7160 • Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia (Email: sedamanukyan89@gmail.com)

Cite this article: Seda Manukyan, 'Newly Discovered Miniature Fragments of the “Etchmiadzin Gospel Group”', *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 159–181

<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142268>>

DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142268

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

1. Introduction

This paper will examine several fragments attached to mss. M5027, M9310, M49, and M2818. These guard-leaves are compared with similar examples on which we have more detailed information. Though the small number of the surviving early manuscripts does not allow a comprehensive study, it is possible to conjecture, on the basis of better known examples, when and where these fragments were written and illustrated. The task to identify the scribes and painters of the fragments is more difficult.

The study was aided by the Codex Etchmiadzin (M2374, dated 989), a manuscript which bears remarkable resemblance to the fragments we examine, as well as several early manuscripts that resemble the aforementioned codex in style. They will henceforth be referred to as the “Etchmiadzin Gospel group”.

It is impossible to make any judgement on the earliest stage of Armenian miniature art, for no manuscripts created in the first centuries after the invention of the Armenian alphabet in the early 400s have survived. The first examples are from either the late 6th or early 7th century (Der-Nersessian 1973b, 527). These are fragments attached to the Codex Etchmiadzin, whereas the first illuminated manuscript whose exact year of creation is known is the Lazaryan Gospel (M6200, dated 887).

2. Early Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts (9th–12th Centuries)

Having looked through the manuscript catalogues of the Matenadaran, the Mekhitarist congregations of Venice and Vienna, Sts. James Cathedral in Jerusalem, as well as those of Bzommar, Antelias, and New Julfa, which possess smaller collections, we can say that the number of Armenian manuscripts from the 9th–12th centuries surpasses 200, 50 of which, however, are not illuminated. Bearing in mind that this is not an accurate picture, we may note that the majority of these manuscripts are from the 12th century. Merely 4 of them (of which only 2 have miniatures) date from the 9th century. There are 10 illuminated manuscripts from the 10th century and a comparatively large number, 18, from the 11th century. As to the size of the codices, the largest ones are those from the 11th century, with an average of 39×30 cm, while the manuscripts from the 10th century are on average 32×24 cm. In later centuries, the codices diminish in size.¹

The era of Arab rule (8th–9th centuries) had a negative impact on Armenian manuscript art, and the number of manuscripts from this epoch is rather small. In all likelihood, most fragments that are attached to later codices and do not have an exact date belong to this period. An excellent example is the Gospel of Queen Mlk'ē (Venice, ms. 1144/86, see Sargisean 1914, 374–392), possibly dated to 862, which seems to be a product of the royal school of manuscript copying and was created

¹ Arpine Simonyan, a researcher at the Matenadaran, has measured the size of the early manuscripts and catalogued the results.

according to the tastes of the kings and nobles of the time (Der-Nersessian 1947, 269). After Gagik I Artsruni had become king of the Armenian region of Vaspurakan in 908, he or his wife Mlk'ē gave this Gospel as a gift to the Holy Cross monastery of Varag. As long as it was kept there (until the beginning of the 13th century), it may have served as an exemplar for various other Gospel illuminations.

We can supplement the scant information regarding the early stage of Armenian miniature art with the help of the fragments that were reused as guard-leaves.² Among those depicting the Life of Christ, there are instances of miniatures being cut out from earlier manuscripts and attached to the covers of later ones. There is also one such manuscript where the Crucifixion is painted directly onto the cover.

Long ago, Alexander Svirin noted that most of the fragments used as guard-leaves belong to older manuscripts – not only Armenian, but also Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, and Slavonic ones (Svirin 1939, 14).³ According to Astghik Gevorgyan (1998, 65–70), only a few of those fragments kept in the Matenadaran are illuminated⁴ (barely over 10, all of which are pieces of 10th or 11th century manuscripts attached to later ones from the 13th–17th centuries). In her book dedicated to Armenian miniature art of the 11th century, Tatiana Izmaylova mentions three manuscripts from the Matenadaran that contain older fragments as guard-leaves, M10147, M963, and M4435 (Izmaylova 1979, 208–214).

Thus, the known specimens of the 9th–10th centuries are supplemented with guard-leaves that shed light on Armenian miniature art of that time (as well as of later centuries, which is another matter). The picture will be more complete if we add the more than 2,000 separate fragments to the guard-leaves. It is natural to suppose that the school of miniature painting, which created the Codex Etchmiadzin, must have produced other similar examples. Undoubtedly, already in the 9th–10th centuries, a cultural tradition had been established in Armenia, on the basis of which the Codex Etchmiadzin and other related manuscripts were created.

3. The "Etchmiadzin Gospel Group"

Two specimens display the most similarity to the Codex Etchmiadzin: M9430, two folios registered as a separate manuscript, and the guard-leaves of M5027 (Fig. 1a–d⁵), which bear a striking resemblance not only to the Codex Etchmiadzin but also to the Gospel of Queen Mlk'ē. Other examples that have features in common with the former are some newly discovered fragments attached to mss. M49 (Fig. 3a–b),

2 I am grateful to the late Dr. Gëorg Tër-Vardanean, at whose suggestion I started this study of the illuminated fragments of the Matenadaran.

3 See also Chétanian 2008, 69–187, Kisileva 1980, 3, 44–109, Vardazaryan 2012, 141–143, and Poghosyan 2015, 211–217.

4 For a study on specific illuminated fragments, namely those attached to M8287, see Izmaylova and Gevorgyan 1973, 256–262.

5 All the fragments, except those attached to M5027, are paginated separately from the manuscripts themselves and numbered U, P, Q, etc. In our numbering, U=1, P=2, Q=3 and so on.

M2818 (Fig. 4a–d), and M9310 (Fig. 2a–c) as guard-leaves. The last of them also shows interesting parallels with ms. J2555, which has acquired the name “Second Codex Etchmiadzin” (Narkiss 1980, 30–32).

For a comparative study, I have chosen these recently uncovered fragments and the known early manuscripts, taking into consideration their textual, stylistic, and iconographic aspects. For example, the Canon Table on one of the fragments attached to M5027 has been compared to the Canon Tables of the Codex Etchmiadzin and M9430.

There are other 10th-century manuscripts that have similarities with the Codex Etchmiadzin in style and iconography, providing one a sense of the style of lesser-known scriptoria. A perfect example is the T'argmanch'ats' (Translators') Gospel kept in Baltimore (ms. Walters 537, dated 966, see Der-Nersessian 1973a, 1–5) and W697 kept in Vienna (probably 10th century). However, the Canon Tables in the last two manuscripts have lost certain architectural features and become more decorative.

As for J2555, though it has similarities with the Codex Etchmiadzin, there are also striking differences between the two manuscripts. J2562 (Four Gospels, 10th or 11th century) too should be classified as related to this group. It contains four Canon Tables, a tempietto, and portraits of the Evangelists.

Considering the great distances between scriptoria, it is an impossible task to restore the complete picture of Armenian miniature art in the 10th–11th centuries (Izmaylova 1979, 18). However, a detailed comparative study of the available examples and fragments will allow us to form a better idea of this early period of manuscript illumination.

The fragments that have come down to us stand witness to the wanton destruction of Armenian cultural heritage by various invaders. For example, Step'annos Ōrbelean (1250–1303) writes that in 1170, during the capture of Baghaberd by the Seljuks, many items of church property from the Tat'ev and other monasteries, gold and silver objects, crosses etc. together with 10,000 manuscripts were “taken captive and dispersed over the earth” (Step'annos Ōrbelean 1910, 335–336). We can assume that much of the loot was destroyed, and perhaps some of the fragments in question had been part of those manuscripts.

4. Description and Comparative Analysis of the Manuscript Fragments

4.1. *The Guard-Leaves of M5027*

M5027 was probably copied in Vaspurakan in 1590 by the scribes Ohanēs Srets'i, Yovhannēs, and Mkhit'ar (?). The recipient is Yakob Kronawor. Two fragments of one folio with illustrations on both sides are sewn to this codex as guard-leaves, one to the front and one to the back (Fig. 1a–d). Two Canon Tables are depicted on them, cut off at the bottom, with the remainder (the lower part of the pillars with the bases) sewn to the back of the codex. Both Canon Tables are two-arched, each consisting

of three five-row semi-arches. The arches are painted with narrow red and yellow stripes, with a wider green space between them on 1v adorned with yellow geometric and vegetal patterns.

Two-arched Canon Tables are common in early manuscripts – such an image can be seen not only in the Codex Etchmiadzin but also in the Lazaryan Gospel. In the fragment of M5027, there is a bird on top of each arch. The upper edge of the folio together with a part of the birds' necks (and heads in the case of 1r) is cut off, and there are vegetal motifs between the birds and on their sides. On 1v, a bird can also be seen sitting on a stylised branch to the left of the two arches (the right side of the arches together with the branch and the bird is cut off). Each pair of lunettes of the Canon Tables is of the same reddish purple hue. The capitals, with volutes and abaci, are also identical to each other. The pillars of the Canon Tables seem to be of marble, and they stand on three-stepped bases (Fig. 1b and d). The arches of the first Canon Table (1r) are very similar in decoration to those of Canon X in the Codex Etchmiadzin (see Table I). The arches of the second one (1v) have similarities with the tempietto of the same codex in the floral pattern and the headpiece. According to Astghik Gevorgyan (who refers to the opinion of Artashes Matevosyan), both the penmanship and the ink colour of the Eusebian Canons on these fragments suggest the hand of Yovhannēs, the scribe of the Codex Etchmiadzin (Gevorgyan 1998, 67). However, a comparative analysis, particularly an in depth comparison of the letter shapes, which I conducted in collaboration with the late Gëorg Tër-Vardanean, showed that the scribes are different. The study on the paints I intend to carry out next will provide a more comprehensive answer to this question.

The fragments in question also have obvious similarities to M9430, which actually consists of two folios (with three Canon Tables and a tempietto on them) but is registered as a separate manuscript (see Table I). However, the fragments of M5027 and M9430 cannot belong to one manuscript, for they contain the same Eusebian Canons. The tempietto of M9430 resembles that of the Codex Etchmiadzin in both decoration and style. On its arch, a bluish floral motif can be seen. It also appears, in dark green, on the arches of the verso. The birds, too, are coloured dark green on both pages. Similar birds can be seen on the fragments attached to M5027. The fragments of M9430 and M5027 have almost identical bird illustrations and vegetal designs. The outlines of the capitals on the fragments of M9430 are thicker, and the hand of the painter more confident. It is difficult to determine whether they are a product of the same school or painted by the same person, but one thing is clear: both belong to the so-called "Etchmiadzin Gospel group".

The marble pillars on the guard-leaf of M5027, together with their capitals and bases, are identical to those of the Codex Etchmiadzin and M9430. The two-arched form of the Canon Tables is the same too, though here one pair is coloured red and the other purple, which reminds us of the lunettes of the Canon Tables in the Queen Mlk'ë Gospel (see Table I).

The bird illustrations also share a few similarities in style. Here, too, the arches are decorated with vegetal and geometric patterns, although they do not repeat the decoration of the arches in M9430 and the Codex Etchmiadzin. The decoration of the

first Canon Table of M5027 is identical to that of the Codex Etchmiadzin, but here the painter's hand feels less confident.

These fragments share similarities not only with the Codex Etchmiadzin but also with the Gospel of Queen Mlk'ē – especially one element in the arches of the fragment of M5027, the colourful lunettes, one filled with red and the other, most likely, purple, though we cannot say exactly, since the colours are extremely faded and, at spots, wiped off. The similar lunettes in the Gospel of Queen Mlk'ē are coloured orange.

When comparing these images, one cannot overlook the inscription on the colourful arches. It is obvious that in the Gospel of Queen Mlk'ē, these letters (the canon number etc.) were added after the colouring of the lunette, while on our fragment, as it seems, they were written before that, because the background of the letters is not coloured. There are also similarities in the floral patterns of the same Canon.

There is a piece of information that may help us identify the place where this fragment was created. According to Levon Chookaszian, the commissioners of the Queen Mlk'ē Gospel were the Bagratunis, since Gagik I Artsruni was married to the daughter of Smbat Bagratuni's brother Shapuh. It means that the codex, a product of the Ani school, could have been taken to Vaspurakan from Bagratuni lands (Chookaszian 1994–1995, 310–313). Thus, there is a possibility (unsupported by sufficient evidence) that the complete manuscript of the fragment we examine was created in Ani, and the lunettes were painted according to the example of the Queen Mlk'ē Gospel or the tradition of that region. We can further suppose that the manuscript of our fragment was created before the Codex Etchmiadzin, in the 9th century, on the basis of an earlier manuscript, which could have served as an archetype for the Codex Etchmiadzin as well.

4.2. *The Guard-Leaves of M9310*

Two illuminated folios (plus two folios of text) are attached to M9310 as guard-leaves (Fig. 2a–d); the lower right corners of the illuminated folios are torn. The codex was created in 1579 in the village Yghuērts of the historical Siwnik' region. It was copied and illuminated by the priest Israyēl and his student Isayi Trapizonts'i for the monk Yovhannēs.

The guard-leaves are attached to the front of the manuscript. The arch of the first Canon Table (1r) consists of six wide and narrow stripes in red, yellow, blue, and green. There is an equal-armed cross (heavily damaged) on the lunette with a two-layered circle around it. Below the circle, on both sides, there are two small arches with an equal-armed cross in each, outlined in black and filled in with red. Each of the small arches is formed of three stripes, red, yellow, and black. The black ones consist of small triangles. There is a light ochre waving line on the dark green wide semi-circle of the arch. This line against the green background has assumed a more complicated design on the lunette, to the left and right of the central cross. The same waving pattern can also be seen on the pillars. Their dark blue-green hue is faded but on the first two pillars light ochre and red waving lines are clearly seen. The pillars,

which are neither too long nor too narrow, rest on stepped bases. The bottom steps are cut off. The capitals of the columns, with volutes and abaci, are drawn with red lines and contain dotted patterns. The yellow of their interiors is faded in parts.

Above the arch of the first Canon Table (Canons I and II), there are two roosters and a stylised vegetal motif in their midst, all badly damaged. The roosters are blue and green, with partially red necks. Green is the dominant colour of this Canon Table.

Altogether the Canon Tables are four in number (1r, 1v, 2r, 2v: Canons I–II, III–IV, V, VI–VII), followed by the first page of the Gospel of John, with a headpiece on it (3r). On the verso of the page, a medium-sized red circle is painted, with the letter Ϡ (2) in it. The Canon Tables are followed by the Gospel of John, which means that the fragments were sewn together randomly, and preference was given to the ones which were better preserved. The next folio also contains a part of the Gospel of John (Dr–v). All the edges of both illuminated folios and the lower margin of folios 3–4 (together with a part of the text) are cut off.

The Canon Tables on 1v and 2r are similar to each other in decoration. Their pillars, coloured dark blue and with zigzagging yellow lines on them, are narrower than those of 1r. What catches the eye most on these Canon Tables is the repeating butterfly-shaped turquoise vegetal pattern along the arch. In the centre of the lunettes of the Canon Tables, there is a cross in yellow, with its bottom arm longer than the others. Below the cross, on the left and right, there are two small arches with gratings inside each. On 1v, two roosters are sitting on the arch, and on Br, two peacocks. The design of the Canon Table on 2v, with two peacocks sitting atop arches ornamented with waving and zigzagging lines, is quite similar to the previous ones. One distinction is the dominant light green coloration of the arch, lunette, and pillars.

On the left side of the upper margin of the opening page of the Gospel of John, there is a letter inside a brown circle, smaller than the one on the verso of the page. Such circles appear frequently in 10th–11th century manuscripts. One's attention is drawn to the decoration of the headpiece on the upper right side of the page: a rectangle in a blue frame and colored green. Inside it, there are two horseshoe-shaped small arches framed in red and colored yellow. This is one of the oldest examples of title pages known to us. The title is written in the left arch: "ԱԻԵՏԱ(սի!)ՐԱՆ ԸՍՏ ՅՈՎՀԱՆՆՈՒ" [Gospel according to John], and the right one contains a red cross. The symbol of the Evangelist is missing.

An example of a decorated headpiece, in the shape of a longish rectangle, can be seen in the Vehap'ar Gospel (MS M10780, probably, 10th–11th centuries). It has floral patterns on both sides, against a simple blue background. Interestingly, decorated headpieces mainly appear starting from the second half of the 11th century. These are longish rectangles, with floral or animal motifs, a cross on the top, and the symbol of the Evangelist as the initial letter.

An interesting form of cross appears inside the arches of two fragments attached to M9310. The bottom arm is longer than the others, and there are triangular protrusions on the edges of the arms. Other examples that have a similar design are the equal-armed crosses on the small arches of the first Canon Table and the cross on the headpiece of the Gospel of John. It is worth noting that the crosses of this

manuscript differ from those of the Codex Etchmiadzin and J2555, but there is an interesting similarity between the pillar designs of M9310 and J2555 (as well as of W697; see Table I).

The crosses on the fragments of M9310 recall similar ones in Coptic manuscripts. This shape can also be seen in manuscripts No 586 and 516 of the Morgan Library, New York, but with more stylised cross-arms (Leroy 1974, 2–3).

The waving line on the arch of the first Canon Table also appears, for instance, in the Greek manuscript no. 847 kept in the Nationalbibliothek of Vienna, dated to the 6th century and attached to a contemporary Latin manuscript (see Table I). The same line can also be seen on the pillars of this manuscript. Besides that, there are zigzag patterns on different parts of the pillars (Nordenfalk 1938, 57, Taf. 40–46), which occur in our first Canon Table as well. This design also appears on the pillars of the fifth Canon Table of the Rabbula Gospels (Nordenfalk 1938, 139).

Another feature that stands out in our fragments is the stylised butterfly-shaped vegetal pattern on the arches of two Canon Tables (1v and 2r). It can be found both in Armenian and Latin manuscripts. The motifs on the arch of the tempietto of W697 (Buschhausen 1981, Fol. 6r) bear some resemblance to our pattern (see Table I). It also appears in the Canon Tables of W697, along with a zigzag motif in several spots. This design can also be seen on the arch of the Latin manuscript no. 256 (8th century) kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Zimmermann 1916, Pl. 11–12, see Table I).

On the basis of these observations, we can suppose that the “mother” manuscript of the fragments attached to M9310 was copied in the 9th century. Its painter was familiar with either Greek examples or Armenian manuscripts reflecting the Greek tradition.

Also, as pointed out above, there are some similarities between our fragments and the “Second Codex Etchmiadzin” kept in Jerusalem (J2555), the Canon Tables and some illustrations of which, according to Mesrop Tēr-Movsisean, follow the Greek tradition – this is attested to both by the style of the pillars of the Canon Tables and by the Greek inscription on one of the miniatures (Tēr-Movsisean 1908, 105).

As to the provenance of our fragments, let us turn now to the codex to which the fragments are attached. It has been mentioned above that M9310 was copied in Yghuērts. Step’annos Ōrbelean writes: “Being aware of the vanity of this transitory life, he set up a memorial to himself ... and gifted two villages to [the church of] Saint Grigor, which the great P’ilippē had built in the district of Haband, namely, Aghuerts and Yubakankhor. He himself wrote an ineradicable and immortal memorial in the year 392 of the Armenian Era [A.D. 943]...” (Step’annos Ōrbelean 2015, 141).

Thus, we learn that Prince P’ilippē, son of Vasak, gifted those two villages to Saint Grigor, the main church of the Monastery of Tat’ev. Taking into consideration the stylistic similarities between the fragments of M9310 and the Codex Etchmiadzin, we should not exclude the possibility that the former were copied and illuminated in one of the scriptoria of Siwnik’, and the latter was an archetype for the copyist/painter. Later on, the fragments were sewn to a manuscript created in the same area. This conjecture is further supported by the fact that the district of Bgheno, where the

Codex Etchmiadzin was copied, is believed to have been situated on the right bank of the river Vorotan where the Monastery of Tatev is (which later sources, too, mention either in the district of Haband or Tsghuk). Another piece of evidence is that Step'anos Ōrbelean refers to a Bgheno fortress and a Bghean village in the district of Tsghuk, as well as a village called Boghyan in the Haband district (Barkhudaryan 1958, 46).

4.3. *The Guard-Leaves of M49*

There are two more manuscripts that contain older fragments belonging to the "Etchmiadzin Gospel group". One of them is M49 (works by Dionysius the Areopagite). It is copied in Gladzor (?) and dated 1282 (Fig. 3a–b).

One of the two fragments of the same folio is attached to the front, and the other, to the back of this codex, with a Canon Table on each side. The upper halves of the arches and pillars are on the first fragment, and the lower halves, on the second (1r–2v, 1v–2r). Both Canon Tables are two-arched and consist of 6–7 rows. The colours of the first one are badly faded. There is a floral motif between the arches, and the pillars stand on three-layered bases, two of the layers being red, and the middle one uncoloured. The pillars, decorated with red and green waving patterns, are of medium width and have Corinthian-like capitals with quasi-Ionic volutes and abaci on the top. It is evident that the other Canon Table, though poorly preserved, does not differ much from the first one. Overall, the illustrations are not sufficiently clear. The colours, amongst which red is the most frequently used, are unmixed. There are red wave-like patterns along the arches. The impressive size of the fragments suggests that they were cut out from a large manuscript.

The codex to which the fragments are attached was proofread by Esayi Nch'ets'i, the head of the University of Gladzor, and we cannot rule out that it might have been copied in Gladzor. Furthermore, the similarities of the guard-leaves with the Codex Etchmiadzin might indicate that the fragments, too, were created in a scriptorium in Siwnik', according to established traditions.

4.4. *The Guard-Leaves of M2818*

In this group, there is a manuscript of special interest, M2818, which contains remarkable fragments (3r–4v) attached to it as guard-leaves (Fig. 4a–d). It is difficult to find out when and where these fragments were copied and illustrated, for there is no other example of this kind known to us. M2818 is a Gospel from the 16th century. The fragments attached to it represent four beautifully drawn Canon Tables that are outstanding for the intricacy of their vegetal and, particularly, geometric motifs and patterns. Unfortunately, the bottoms of the Canon Tables are cut off, and the lower parts of the pillars together with the bases are missing.

A splendid Canon Table is painted on the recto of the first old guard-leaf (3r, Canons VII–VIII). The Canon Table has two arches, each consisting of three semi-circular layers which stand out for their fascinating geometric decoration. The upper

one is formed of colourful triangular patterns against a dark blue background, the second one, of a sequence of light brown triangles, and the third one, of five green and brown small semi-circles with a pair of two smaller arches inside them. Between the small arches there is a repeating red three-leafed motif, perhaps a lily flower.

The triangle patterns which frequently occur in the Christian tradition have taken interesting forms in Armenian manuscripts. For comparison with this Canon Table, we can take the Annunciation in M4818, where the Holy Virgin sits on a stepped throne, the several rows of which are filled with triangles. The frame surrounding this scene is also filled with triangular motifs.

On the arches of our Canon Table, two roosters sit in the middle, opposite each other, and a crane (?) stands on each projecting end of the red decorated architrave on the top of the pillars (the right end together with body of the bird is cut off). The capitals have a rectangular shape, and the pillars consist of two-coloured (brown and green, green and red, dark and light brown, brown and green, brown and red) triangles. The architrave ends, as it seems, with a snake's head. A similar image can also be seen in M3784. It is worth noting that Asatur Mnats'akanyan links such images of snake-heads to totemic ideas, regarding the snake as a guardian animal (Mnats'akanyan 1955, 390).

The second Canon Table on the verso of the folio (3v) is interesting for its specific design, the symbolism of which will be discussed below. The upper part of the fragment represents seven big round red frames filled with lighter red (the first one on the left is almost wholly cut off together with the margin). A two-sided motif, with three red petals on both sides (one on the top, within a yellow arch, and the other under the red frame), is drawn across the upper part of the red frame. The big arches of the Canon Tables consist of two wide layers, brown and ochre. The capitals are adorned on both sides with acanthus-like leaves, and there are interweaving lines of different colours on the pillars.

According to Asatur Mnats'akanyan, the yellow architrave stretched across the arches generally signifies soil. As for the red round figures above the arches, he rightly considers these to be pomegranates that are in the process of sprouting. This whole scene, in his view, symbolizes spring (Mnats'akanyan 1955, 119).

The symbolism of the pomegranate can also be seen in Armenian commentaries on Canon Tables, where, however, the main symbol is the pomegranate tree instead of the fruit. The trees are depicted with three branches sprouted in one bundle: the Old Testament and the Ark of Moses pointing to the New Testament and enclosing the sweetness of the fruit inside the bitter peel (see Ghazaryan 2004, 260). Perhaps the pomegranate replaced the Tree of Life. After entering the Christian tradition from folkloric beliefs, it was depicted mainly in Canon Tables.

On the third fragment (4r), we see six birds above the Canon Table, and beneath them, a row of pomegranates (altogether 14). Between each pair, there is a small cross within an arched frame, resembling a *khach'k'ar* (cross-stone). The left and right pillars of the Canon Table are decorated with dark brown lily-like figures (the decoration of the central pillar is faded and unclear). In the centre of the arches, we see the blue "mother" lily, turned upside down and with a triangular shape. This,

to my ken, is a unique image. The symbolism of the lily also appears in Armenian commentaries on Canon Tables.

For instance, Step'annos Siwnets'i (8th century) speaks of a blooming lily in the fifth Canon Table – an opening bud surrounded by flowering branches (see Ghazaryan 2004, 39). According to the commentaries on Canon Tables, the lily symbolizes the ancestors of Christ, but in the Christian tradition, it is also a symbol of the innocence and purity of the Virgin Mary.

The verso of the second fragment is no less special than the recto. On the top of the Canon Table, we see a row of semi-circular or crescent-like red figures, with small blue spheres inside red-yellow circles in the middle and on the edges of them. It is interesting that a smaller and differently coloured version of this pattern appears on the tempietto of the Codex Etchmiadzin, as well as on the arch of Canon I of W697 and on the west wall of the Cathedral of Talin (the patterns of the last two are more like acanthus leaves). Another parallel can be found on folio 10r of ms. LOB5111 (7th century), kept in the British Museum (see Nordenfalk 1938, Taf. 1).

One layer of the arches is decorated with original dark and light blue rectangular patterns. The capitals, too, are rectangular and stepped, and the pillars are decorated with two interweaving thick lines (green and black), resembling vine stems.

Though the margins and, as noted above, the lower parts of these folios are cut off, yet the large arches and pillars make us assume that they belonged to a big manuscript (perhaps from the 10th century). It has already been mentioned that these fragments stand out for the unusual decoration of Canon Tables. After penetrating Christian culture from ancient times, the imagery of those fragments found its place in the illumination of the Gospels and took on a new symbolism. However, there is no definitive explanation for those symbols. Over the centuries, they have taken on multifarious meanings, so it is difficult to draw clear conclusions.

As Asatur Mnats'akanyan notes (Mnats'akanyan 1955, 119), the commissioner of the "mother" manuscript of our fragments possibly tried to express the idea of growth and permanence of his family through the imagery of those Canon Tables.

5. Conclusions

This paper is an attempt at a comparative analysis of miniatures, in particular, Canon Tables preserved in recently discovered fragments and surviving early manuscripts that were copied and illuminated in different scriptoria. I have also tried, when possible, to conjecture as to the place and time of the creation of those illuminated fragments. On the basis of stylistic and iconographic similarities between the newly found fragments and some of the oldest extant manuscripts, I have proposed a conventional family of manuscripts called the "Etchmiadzin Gospel group". Nevertheless, due to a lack of evidence, it has been impossible to identify the painters or scribes of these fragments.

Interestingly, some experts in Canon Tables have not discussed their symbolism, believing that the only purpose of illumination was aesthetic. However, the

decoration of Canon Tables doubtlessly includes symbols that were used for communicating certain ideas. This is corroborated by Armenian commentaries on the Canon Tables that have come down to us. At the same time, the illuminated fragments in question suggest that there is no self-evident interpretation of miniatures, and it always depends on the personal approach of the painter and commissioner of a given manuscript. Accordingly, we could say that in the Armenian tradition certain means to interpret the symbols were developed. Some scholars (Buschhausen 1976, 17–19; Wessel 1978, 928–963) have touched upon this subject but quite superficially. Carl Nordenfalk thought that the purpose of decorated Canon Tables was to endow manuscripts with beauty and solemnity (Nordenfalk 1938, 125). On the contrary, Thomas Mathews and Avedis Sanjian stress the importance of interpreting the symbolism of Canon Tables (Mathews and Sanjian, 166–176).

It has been concluded that the structure and imagery of the Canon Tables in the miniature art of different nations followed a standard pattern that is best preserved in the Codex Etchmiadzin (see Ghazaryan 2004, 34). Armenian scribes and painters were probably familiar with contemporary Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopian (especially the Abba Garima Gospels), and Byzantine examples. Yet they developed a unique Armenian tradition, which is remarkably represented in the Canon Tables discussed in the present paper. The supposed influence on the Armenian miniatures has been exaggerated, but this issue needs further study.

Although it is not known when and where these fragments were illuminated, there is some basis that can help us discern, roughly, the region and time period in which they were created. It is possible that the Canon Tables were painted in Siwnik' or Ani, the centre of the Bagratuni Kingdom. There are no surviving illuminated manuscripts from the early period of Ani, but we can find interesting details in the Canon Tables of the Gospel of Haghpat (M6288, dated 1211), particularly on folios 12v, 13r, and 14v. Some specific details of the imagery, such as the pomegranates on the headpieces, the motifs surrounding them, the triangular and acanthus patterns on the architrave, the stepped pillar bases of one of the Canon Tables, suggest that the painter Margarē could have been familiar with the Codex Etchmiadzin or another manuscript belonging to that family.

Table I: A Comparison of Miniature Fragments

M5027, Gospel, fr. 1r 	M2374, Etchmiadzin Gospel, fr. 5r 	M9430, Gospel, fr. 2r 
--	--	---

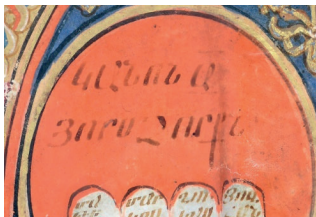
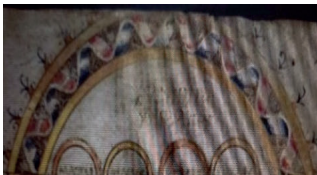
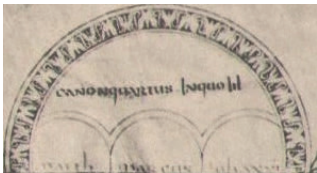
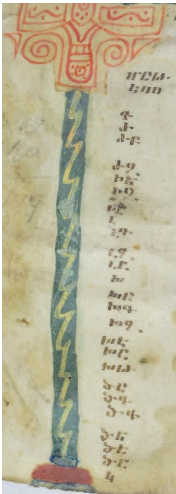
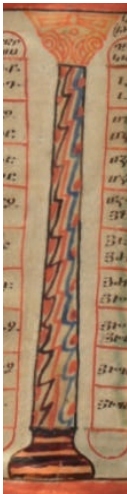
M5027, Gospel, fr. 1v 	M5027, fr. detail 	V1144/86, Gospel of Queen Mlkē, fr. detail 
M9310, fr. detail 	No. 847, Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, fr. detail 	
M9310, fr. detail 	No. 256, Bibliothèque nationale de France, detail 	W697, Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna, fr. detail 
M 9310, fr. detail 	J2555, Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, fr. detail 	W697, Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna, fr. detail 



Fig. 1a–b: M5027, fr. 1v and 268r

Thanks to Hrayr Hawk Khacherian for the photos.



Fig. 1c–d: M5027, fr. 1r and 268v



Fig. 2a



Fig. 2b



Fig. 2c



Fig. 2d

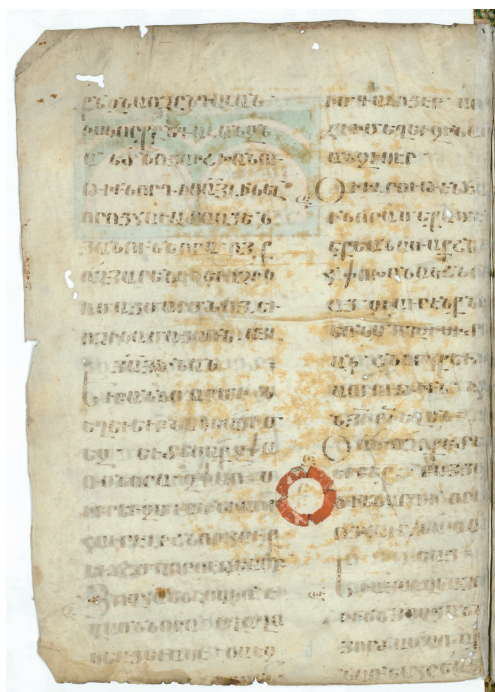


Fig. 2e

Fig. 2a-e: M9310, fr. 1r-3v



Fig. 3a-b: M49, fr. 1v-2r



Fig. 4a



Fig. 4b



Fig. 4c



Fig. 4d

Fig. 4a-d: M 2818, fr. 3r-4v

References

- Barkhudaryan, Sedrak. 1958. «Էջմիածնի ավետարանի գրչության վայրը» [“The Place Where the Codex Etchmiadzin was Copied”]. *Banber Matenadaran* 4, 43–59. <http://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/data/Banber4/4.S.Barkhudaryan.pdf>
- Buschhausen, Heide und Helmut. 1976. *Die illuminierten armenischen Handschriften der Mechitaristen Congregation in Wien*. Vienna: Mechitaristen-Buchdruckerei.
- und Helmut. 1981. *Das Evangeliar Codex 697 der Mechitharisten-Congregation zu Wien. Eine armenische Prachthandschrift der Jahrtausendwende und ihre spätantiken Vorbilder*. Berlin: Union Verlag.
- Chétanian, Rose Vadteni. 2008. *Catalogue des fragments et manuscrits grecs du Matenadaran d'Erevan*. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Chookaszian, Levon. 1994–1995. “Remarks on the Portrait of Prince Lewon (M8321)”. *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 25, 299–327.
- Der-Nersessian, Sirarpie. 1947. «Ակնարկ մը Ս. Ղազարու ձեռագիրներուն վրայ» [“An Essay on the Manuscripts of San Lazzaro”]. *Bazmavep* 11–12, 269–279. [http://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20AMSAGIR/Bazmavep/1947\(11-12\).pdf](http://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20AMSAGIR/Bazmavep/1947(11-12).pdf)
- . 1973a. *Armenian Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery*. Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery.
- . 1973b. «La peinture arménienne au VII siècle et les miniatures de l’Evangile d’Etchmiadzine». *Études Byzantines et Arméniennes*, vol. 1, 525–532.
- Gevorgyan, Astghik. 1998. «Էջմիածնի ավետարանի հետ աղերսվող պատառիկները» [“Fragments Related to the Codex Etchmiadzin”]. *Etchmiadzin* 7, 65–70. <http://etchmiadzin.asj-oa.am/id/eprint/10303>
- Ghazaryan, Vigen. 2004. *Մեկնություններ խորհուրդ [Commentaries on the Canon Tables]*. Vagharshapat: Publishing House of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.
- Izmaylova, Tatiana. 1979. *Армянская миниатюра XI века [Armenian Miniature Art of 11th century]*. Moscow: Publishing House Iskustvo.
- and Astghik Gevorgyan. 1973. “Фрагменты миниатюр на защитных листах рукописи Матенадарана 8287” [“The Fragments of Miniatures on the Guard-Leaves of Manuscript M8287”]. *Banber Matenadaran* 11, 256–262. <http://www.matenadaran.am/ftp/data/Banber11/10.T.Izmaylova.pdf>
- Kisileva, Lyudmila. 1980. *Каталог рукописей и фрагментов латинского алфавита хранящиеся в Матенадаране [Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Fragments in the Latin Script Kept in the Matenadaran]*. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
- Leroy, Jules. 1974. *Les manuscrits coptes et coptes-arabes illustrés*. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner.
- Mathews, Thomas F. and Avedis K. Sanjian. 1991. *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel*. Dumbarton Oaks Studies 29. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
- Mnats'akanyan, Asatur. 1955. *Հայկական զարդարվածք [Armenian Ornamental Art]*. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
- Narkiss, Bezalel. 1980. *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem*. Oxford: Phaidon Press.
- Nordenfalk, Carl. 1938. *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln*. Göteborg: O. Isacson boktryckeri a.–b.

- Poghosyan, Ruzan. 2015. «Մատենադարանի երրայերեն պատառիկ-պահպանակները» [“The Hebrew Fragments of the Matenadaran”]. *Banber Matenadarani* 22, 211–217.
- Sargisean, Barsegh. 1914. *Մայր ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մատենադարանին Մխիթարեան ի Վենետիկ* [Grand Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts of the Mekhitarist Library in Venice], vol. 1. Venice: St. Lazarus Press.
- Step'annos Ōrbelean. 1910. *Պատմութիւն նահանգին Սիսական* [History of the State of Sisakan]. Tiflis: Aghaneants' Printing House.
- Step'annos Ōrbelean. 2015. *History of the State of Sisakan*, trans. Robert Bedrosian. New Jersey: Long Branch.
- Svirin, Alexander. 1939. *Миниатюра древней Армении* [Miniature Art of Old Armenia]. Moscow-Leningrad: Publishing House Iskusstvo.
- Tēr-Movsisean, Mesrop. 1908. «Հնագոյն Աւետարան Երուսաղէմայ հայոց Ս. Յակոբայ վանուց» [“An Old Gospel of the Saint James Monastery of Jerusalem”]. *Bazmavep* March-April, 103–109. [http://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20AMSAGIR/Bazmavep/1908\(3\).pdf](http://tert.nla.am/archive/NLA%20AMSAGIR/Bazmavep/1908(3).pdf)
- Vardazaryan, Olga. 2022. *Ցուցակ Մաշտոցի անվան Մատենադարանի եկեղեցապալիներէն և ռուսերէն ձեռագրերի* [Catalogue of the Church-Slavonic and Russian Manuscripts of Mashtots Matenadaran]. Yerevan: Matenadaran.
- Wessel, Klaus. 1978. *Kanontafeln, Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, B. III. Stuttgart: Hiersemann.
- Zimmermann, Ernst. 1916. *Vorkarolingische Miniaturen*. Berlin: Im Selbst verlage des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft.

▼ **ISSUE** Volume 1.1 (June 2024)

Michael E. Stone and Aram Topchyan, *Jews in Ancient and Medieval Armenia: First Century BCE to Fourteenth Century CE*, Oxford University Press, 2022

In this pioneering book, Michael Stone, a world-renowned Armenologist and expert in Second Temple literature, and Aram Topchyan, an authority on Armenian historiography, undertake the first comprehensive exploration of the history of Jews in Armenia spanning from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Through skillful integration of an extensive array of diverse sources – including historical records, inscriptions, colophons, biblical commentaries, and more – authored in multiple languages such as Armenian, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, their collaborative effort delivers a rich and detailed study, which not only illuminates the presence of Jews in Armenia but also elucidates the intricate interactions between Jews and Armenians more generally.

The book is comprised of four chapters: 1. “Ararat” and Armenia in the Bible and Associated Traditions; 2. Jews in Armenia in the Ancient Period (First Century BCE to Fifth Century CE); 3. The Middle Ages; 4. Other Armenian-Jewish Connections.

As the authors note, Stone is responsible for chapter 1; chapter 2, sections 2.1 and 2.14–15 (linguistic issues); chapter 3, sections 3.4–5 (The cemetery in Elegis) and chapter 4, while Topchyan wrote most of chapter 2 (sections 2.2–2.13 and 2.16); chapter 3, sections 3.1–3 (Jews in Dvin and Kapan), and 3.6 (The Inscription of the Church Spitakawor Astuatsatsin).

In the following, I will only have the opportunity to highlight a selection of the intriguing discussions presented within this book.

In the first chapter, Stone traces the different references to Armenia in the early Jewish traditions, focusing mainly on the various translations and interpretations of the “Mountains of Ararat” in Genesis 8:4, many of which expose some knowledge of Armenia. In Jewish Hellenistic sources, the Mountains of Ararat were identified with Armenia. However, in most of the Aramaic translations as well as in rabbinic literature the mountains of Ararat were identified with the mountains of Qardo, i.e., Gordyene,

Yakir Paz  0000-0001-8641-2839 • Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel (Email: yakir.paz@mail.huji.ac.il)

Cite this article: , *Matenadaran: Medieval and Early Modern Armenian Studies (MEMAS)*, 1.1 (June 2024), 185–188
<<https://dx.doi.org/10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142269>>
DOI: 10.1484/J.MEMAS.5.142269

This is an open access article made available under a CC BY-NC 4.0 International License.
© 2024, Brepols Publishers n.v. Published by Brepols Publishers.

modern Kurdistan. Interestingly, the Palestinian Targum combines both traditions and identifies one of the mountains of Ararat as Qardo and the other as Armenia.

Stone also offers an ingenious solution to a crux in 4 Ezra: the enigmatic toponym “Arzareth” designating a land in northern Mesopotamia. He suggests that this toponym goes back to a transliteration of the Hebrew ארץ אררט “the land of Ararat”. Stone corroborates this syncopated orthography by referring to a 13th century Hebrew inscription found in the Jewish cemetery of Elegis (discussed in chapter 3), which contains the words בארץ ארת, and which has been interpreted by David Amit as an orthographic variant of בארץ אר[ר]ט (“in the Land of Ararat”).

The second and most extensive chapter deals with the presence of Jews in Armenia spanning from the 1st century BCE to the 5th century CE. Central to this exploration is the account found in the *History of Armenia* (4.55) attributed to P’awstos Buzand (5th century). This narrative recounts the invasion led by Shapur II into Armenia in 368/9, during which seven Armenian cities – Artashat, Valarshapat, Eruandashat, Zarehawan, Zarishat, Van, and Naxchawan, inhabited exclusively by Armenians and Jews – were conquered and sacked. P’awstos claims that 95,000 Jewish families, along with tens of thousands of Armenian families, were captured and deported to the Sasanian Empire. Topchyan, through a meticulous examination of the historical context, contends that while the numbers are undoubtedly inflated, the report remains historically credible. Furthermore, potential corroboration may be found in Ammianus Marcellinus’ account of the invasion and sack of Artashat, despite his omission of any mention of Jews. Topchyan adds that “if there were not considerable numbers of Jews in Armenia at the time of the Persian expedition of 368/9, P’awstos would not have mentioned them at all” (p. 26). He also suggests that the term “Jew”, used by P’awstos, should be understood to refer both to Jews and Judaizers.

One could also add further evidence for the reliability of P’awstos’ account. According to him, the destination of the deportees was Asoristan and Khuzestan, where they were to be settled. This accords with what we know of the regions to which Shapur II deported captives from various conquered lands, as documented in Syriac and Arabic sources. The credibility of P’awstos’ narrative holds significant implications for scholars studying Sasanian Jews, necessitating an examination of the potential repercussions of the substantial influx of Jews into the Sasanian Empire on local Jewish communities and their traditions.

Topchyan proceeds to scrutinize P’awstos’ assertion regarding the arrival of Jews in Armenia through deportations orchestrated by Tigran II during his conquest of Palestine. Discrepancies between P’awstos’ narrative and Josephus’ account have led scholars to question its reliability. However, Topchyan compellingly demonstrates, by juxtaposing it with Movses Khorenats’i’s depiction of the deportations in his *History of Armenia* (5th century), that P’awstos had amalgamated two distinct events – the deportation of 70 BCE and a subsequent deportation in 40 BCE during the Parthian-Armenian invasion of Syria and Palestine. Despite these discrepancies, Topchyan argues for the underlying credibility of P’awstos’ account. He convincingly concludes that “during his military campaigns Tigran II took substantial numbers of

Jews captive and brought them to Armenia. The settlement of Armenian cities by way of *synoikismos*, that is, the practice of shifting multitudes of peoples from the conquered countries, was typical of Tigran II's policy. Information about this practice is also contained in Greco-Roman sources" (p. 36). Topchyan also posits that a portion of the Jewish population reached Armenia as a result of the deportations by Tigran II from places with sizable Jewish communities, including Adiabene, Mygdonia, Gordyene, Osroene, Iberia, and Syria.

Chapter 3 discusses the presence of Jews in Armenia during the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, once again only scant evidence has come down to us, such as an undated Armenian colophon which states that "in the city of Dvin from that earthquake 62,000 people died among the Armenians, among the Jews, and among the Persians" (p. 74). This note, referring to the earthquake of 893, informs us *en passant* about the existence of a Jewish community in Dvin, one of the capitals of medieval Armenia. Another curious nugget of information is found in a note by the anonymous continuator of the *History* by T'ovma Artsruni (9th–10th centuries), where we are told that after the assassination of Prince Grigor Derenik Artsruni in 887, his wife Sophie "prescribed rites of mourning and arranged in groups Jewish singers, and had them chant the laments of the kings of Israel" (p. 77).

The most significant and unexpected evidence concerning Jews in Armenia emerges from a Jewish cemetery discovered in the village of Eghegis, situated in the Vayots' Dzor district of the Siwnik' region. Investigated in 2000–2001 under the leadership of Michael Stone and David Amit, this cemetery yielded sixty-four tombstones, twenty of which bear inscriptions in Hebrew and Aramaic dating from 1266 to 1346 CE – a period marked by prosperity in the region under the rule of the Orbeleans. These inscriptions include biblical citations in Hebrew, along with standard Jewish funerary formulas, showcasing a remarkable familiarity with rabbinic sources that attests to a high level of Jewish education. Given the presence of Persian names and titles among certain Jews, such as "Mar Khawaja Sharaf al-Din son of the elder, Khawaja Zaki", it appears that a portion of the Jewish population may have been Persian, possibly of high rank.

In the fourth and concluding chapter, Stone explores additional instances of Armenian-Jewish interactions. First, Armenian pilgrimage to the Holy Land is discussed. Of special importance is the fact that the earliest evidence of Armenian script is found in a 5th-century graffito in Nazareth written by two Armenian pilgrims – Babgen and Anania. Interestingly, these same two individuals also inscribed their names on rocks close to the site of Mount Sinai. Next, references to Armenia in ancient Jewish literature are presented. Noteworthy is the mention of R. Jacob Armeniya in the Palestinian Talmud, as well as a R. Armeniya mentioned both in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds. This would likely indicate that they came from Armenia. Finally, in a 10th-century Judeo-Arabic document from the Cairo Geniza (possibly a copy of a 9th century composition), published by David Sklare, there is a list of places which the author argues could be designated as being Armeniya. The knowledge of specific toponyms suggests the author's familiarity with Armenia and its urban

centers, indicating a probable origin in Northern Mesopotamia for both the author and the document's readership.

In sum, this comprehensive study, meticulously researched, expertly analyzed, and presented with remarkable clarity and lucidity stands to greatly enrich experts in both the fields of Armenian studies and Jewish history, and a broader audience alike.

In their introduction the authors soberly state (p. xiii):

It is, indeed, impossible at present to write a continuous history of Jewish presence in Armenia, since there is no evidence of sustained Jewish settlement in the Land of Ararat. Nonetheless, there are episodic sources existing in Armenian, Arabic, Hebrew, and other languages that attest the presence of Jews there. If we think of the history of Jews in Armenia as a dark tunnel, then the extant sources cast light upon patches of the tunnel, without illuminating it to all its length. It is to the elucidation of these patches of illumination that the present book is dedicated.

Yet this book does much more than just shed light on certain patches of the tunnel. Rather, it reveals the tunnel's contours with remarkable clarity, enabling us to gauge its length and complexity. The vivid illumination of these patches reveals, thanks to the diligent efforts of the authors, that the history of the Jews in Armenia was far richer than previously believed. Hopefully, future discoveries will allow us to cast new light on other patches of this fascinating history.