

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

MATENADARAN: MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ARMENIAN STUDIES (MEMAS)

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

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The Original Text Form and Chapter Order of the *Physiologus*, with an Edition of the Chapter on the Lizard in Π

▼ **ABSTRACT** The oldest textual form of the first recension of the *Physiologus* can be reconstructed thanks to a precise comparison between the Armenian translation, Latin translation γ, and one single Greek manuscript, Π (Moscow, GIM, Sinod. Gr. 467). The strange placement of the chapter on the lizard at the beginning of the collection in both Π and the Armenian translation can be explained by assuming a codicological accident in their common ancestor. The chapter on the lizard is the last in the collection in the Latin version γ of the *Physiologus* and the model of the *Physiologus syrus Leidensis*, and this must have been its original position. The folio on which that chapter was written fell off and was wrongly put at the beginning rather than the end of the book in the ancestor of Π and the Armenian version. The placement of the lizard in the second position, as in the majority of Greek manuscripts, can be interpreted as an attempt at correcting the misplacement that had occurred in the model of Π. In accordance with that hypothesis, all Greek manuscripts (except Π) and the Ethiopic translation as well as Latin x depend upon a unique hyparchetype. This conclusion completely changes our views on the textual history of the *Physiologus*.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Armenian, Latin, Greek, Syriac, translation, codicology, codex, accident, archetype.

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1. Introduction

The *Physiologus* has been the topic of several studies in recent times, witnessing a renewal of the interest in the text of this fascinating and, in many ways, strange

Caroline Macé  0009-0006-2906-9345 • Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Hamburg Universität, Germany (Email: caroline.mace@uni-hamburg.de)

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Christian book on animal lore.¹ A thorny question remains the time of composition of that work, which is, of course, a key issue for determining the milieu in which the *Physiologus* was written.² Whereas it may, indeed, not be possible to solve this question, at least a first necessary step towards answering it is to understand the transmission history of the *Physiologus* better, especially at its earliest stage, in order to assess the oldest form of the text more securely. As we will show below, arguments regarding dating or contextualising the *Physiologus* based on extant editions of the Greek text often disqualify themselves by using states of the text that are far removed from and later than the original text.

A new examination of the Greek witnesses and the Latin and Oriental translations of the first recension of the *Physiologus* led me to the conclusion that, within the first recension, as identified by Francesco Sbordone in 1936, two clearly different text states should be distinguished, which I have called redaction α and redaction β (Macé 2021a, 72–74). Redaction α is preserved in only one Greek manuscript, **II**, discovered in 1894, and, to a lesser extent, in a few other manuscripts, belonging to what Sbordone called *quarta classis* (**AEI**). I had left open the question of the stemmatic relationship of the two redactions (if both are indeed redactions) in my 2021 article. On the basis of the evidence I had then, it was difficult to decide if **AEI** represented a text state which was intermediary between redaction α and redaction β , or whether it was the result of a contamination of the two redactions (Macé 2021a, 74–80). Some new elements allow me to propose an answer to that question and develop a clearer picture of the early history of the *Physiologus* tradition.

2. Sbordone's Stemma of the Tradition of the *Physiologus*

In 1894 Aleksandr Karneev published the text of the *Physiologus*, which he had found in an eleventh century Greek manuscript kept in Moscow. Containing a *nomocanon* and bearing the number “432” in the Synodal Library, it was called **II** by Karneev (1894, 29). The number “432” given by Karneev must have referred to Archimandrite

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- 1 See, for example, the recent article by Pires (2023), as well as the collected studies edited by Isabelle Draelants and Arnaud Zucker (2019), and by Zbyněk Kindschi Garský and Rainer Hirsch-Luipold (2019); for attempts at situating the *Physiologus* into larger literary or theological contexts, see Grant 1999 and Cox Miller 2018. I am neglecting Stavros Lazaris's 2016 monograph, which does not bring much new information and contains several mistakes: see the reviews by Horst Schneider in *Historische Zeitschrift* 308 (2019), 770–71 and Caroline Macé in *Speculum* 94 (2019), 852–53. Despite this efflorescence of scholarly literature, Samuel Vollenweider is right that the *Physiologus* is usually neglected in handbooks of early Christian literature (Vollenweider 2019, 93, n. 2); it is not mentioned in the new *Geschichte des Christentums in der Spätantike* (Gemeinhardt 2022) either. This little book is, indeed, a UFO for historians of Christian literature and thought, still suffering from a bad literary and theological reputation and from its being mistaken for a work of zoology.
 - 2 Samuel Vollenweider, who tends to date the *Physiologus* to the fourth century on the grounds of theological discussions, which had arisen in that century and are echoed, according to him, in the first chapter of the *Physiologus* (on the lion), offers an overview of previous scholarship in favour of an early dating of the *Physiologus* to the third or even second century (Vollenweider 2019, 93, n. 3–4). However, the important article by Valentine A. Pakis is not mentioned in that overview, although it contains some refreshing thoughts on the alleged Egyptian origin of the *Physiologus* (which is dubious according to Pakis) and on a possible influence of Tatian on it (Pakis 2010, 148–57).

Savva's catalogue, of which the second edition had been published in 1858. But that manuscript, Moscow, GIM, Sinod. gr. 432 (Vladimir 317; Diktyon 44057), does not contain the *Physiologus*. As I have shown elsewhere, the manuscript meant by Karneev must have been Moscow, GIM, Sinod. Gr. 467 (Vladimir 318) (Macé 2017). Because of this confusion in numbers, the *Physiologus* text of **II** remained accessible for a long time only through Karneev's edition, which contains some mistakes.

Karneev's article bears the subtitle "Ein Beitrag zur Lösung der Frage nach der Vorlage des armenischen und eines alten lateinischen Physiologus" (1894).³ Indeed, with the discovery and edition of the text of the *Physiologus* contained in **II**, Karneev solved what had presented itself as a riddle:

Somit weichen die armenische und die lateinischen Versionen von allen bis jetzt bekannten griechischen Texten fast vollständig ab [...]. Es lag also, da bis jetzt kein griechischer Text von gleicher oder ähnlicher Gestalt aufgefunden war, die Vermutung nahe, dass darin eine Willkür des armenischen (resp. lateinischen) Übersetzers zu erkennen sei; dagegen blieb die Thatsache der jedenfalls sehr auffallenden Übereinstimmungen zweier verschiedener Übersetzungen (lateinisch und armenisch) gänzlich unerklärbar (Karneev 1894, 28).

The resemblances of the two translations could now be explained because they were based on Greek models that were close to manuscript **II** (Karneev 1894, 29). Gohar Muradyan's new edition of the Armenian translation, on a much larger and better basis than that used by Karneev, confirmed, in agreement with Nikolay Marr (1904), the very close relationship between the Armenian text and **II** (Muradyan 2005, 48–53). The same is true of Francis J. Carmody's edition of Latin version γ (Carmody 1941, 97).

Karneev concluded from his discovery that the text state (which he called a "Redaktion") represented by **II**, the Armenian translation, and Latin γ was a further development of "the already modified recension A" (Greek manuscript **A**, see the list of sigla in Appendix 1) (Karneev 1894, 30) and he added:

Somit müssen wir Pitras Hypothese von der überaus großen Bedeutung des armenischen Textes gänzlich verwerfen [...]. Leider finden wir diese unzutreffende, für den heutigen Stand der Physiologusfrage durchaus antiquierte Ansicht in der sonst so verdienstvollen bibliographischen Übersicht über die slavische Philologie von Dr Fr. Pastrnek wieder. Der Verfasser glaubt nämlich, dass der armenische Text die älteste griechische Fassung wiedergebe [...] (Karneev 1894, 30, n. 1).

This conclusion was accepted by Sbordone, who classified the manuscripts of the first recension into four "classes", the last one being that containing **II** and some

³ The Armenian version was accessible to Karneev thanks to a French translation of the text edited by the Mekhitarist Gabriel Ayvazeian and published by Jean-Baptiste Pitra in 1855; see Muradyan and Topchyan 2021, 281. The Latin translation was known to him through the edition by Charles Cahier (1851–1856); see Boodts and Macé 2021, 111–13.

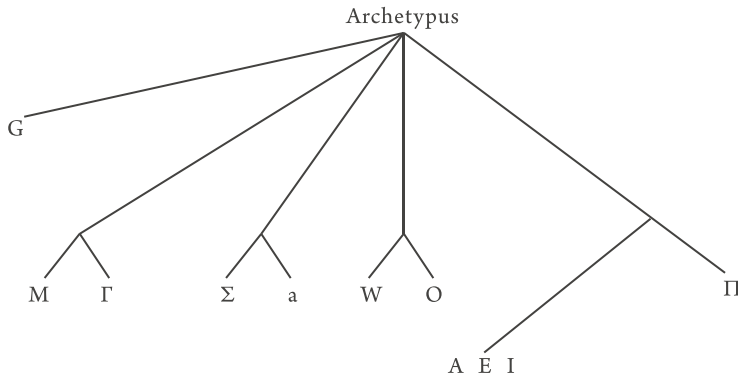


Fig. 2: Offermanns's stemma (redrawn from Offermanns 1966, 11), simplified.

Sbordone neglected “what is certainly the best and probably also the oldest, of all Greek manuscripts of the *Physiologus*” (Perry 1937, 492; 1941, 1113), i.e. manuscript **G**, which is close to Sbordone’s preferred first class **MT**, but without many of **MT**’s mistakes (Perry 1937, 492–93). Perry, however, deplored the fact that Sbordone did not use the ancient translations at all (Perry 1937, 491).

The same criticism was made even stronger by Francis J. Carmody, the editor of the Latin versions of the *Physiologus*, who depreciated Sbordone’s stemma and his edition in the following way:

His critical method is unsound, and his classification of the Greek manuscripts can be shown to be faulty in the light of the indirect tradition in other languages. [...] the frequent agreements between all these versions [Ethiopic, Armenian, Syriac, Arabic, and Latin] and Greek **Π** was proof of the authenticity of many readings in this text which were rejected by Sbordone (Carmody 1941, 96–97).

Despite Carmody’s opinion, manuscript **Π** continued to be considered a later, remote offshoot of the original text believed to be best represented by manuscript **G** (according to Perry). Dieter Offermanns, who edited manuscript **G** (1966), even posited it on a separate branch, on the left side of the **MT** branch (see Fig. 2), and so did Dimitris Kaimakis (1974, 4a), following him. Neither of these two editors made any use of the ancient translations and they did not revise or challenge Sbordone’s stemma in any way.

Although, from a stemmatic point of view, for a manuscript to be on the “left” or “right” side does not mean anything, there was obviously a kind of horizontal hierarchy (rather than a vertical one) implied in Sbordone’s stemma and in the stemmata depending upon his.⁵ The primacy given to **M** by Sbordone, because he considered

⁵ Perry had noted the fact that Sbordone’s four-branched stemma should not have led to a preference for the text of **M** and pointed out that Sbordone’s critical choices were mostly arbitrary: “According to his stemma no one of these four traditions depends in origin on any of the others, but each, in spite of later modifications, goes back more or less independently to the archetype itself. This means that the choice of variants must often be arbitrary, since the readings themselves in many cases cannot be judged on the basis of their intrinsic merits.

it his oldest Greek witness, and to **G** by Perry/Offermanns for a similar reason, is stemmatically without any soundness (Macé 2021a, 80–82). The significance of the agreements between **II**, the Armenian version, and Latin γ was interpreted wrongly by Karneev and Sbordone, as Carmody has already pointed out.⁶

3. The Dates of the Translations

We studied the tradition of the oldest recension of the *Physiologus* in our 2021 book, taking all the ancient and medieval translations of that recension into account (Macé and Gippert 2021). Contrary to what Carmody claimed in the text quoted above, not “all” the versions showed “frequent agreements” with manuscript **II**. Our examination of two chapters (on the pelican and on the panther) indicated that the following translations rather agree with what I have called “redaction β ”, corresponding to Sbordone’s first to third classes, and, at best, represented by the second one, i.e. Greek manuscripts **Σas**: Latin x (Boodts and Macé, 143–47), Ethiopic (Villa 2021, 159–84), Syriac β (Aydin 2021, 198–209 and 210–17), Arabic α (Pirtea 2021, esp. 273–75) as well as the Slavonic translation (Styokova 2021, esp. 365–68). The versions that rather agree with **II** are: Latin γ and b (Boodts and Macé 2021, 209–10), Armenian (Muradyan and Topchyan 2021, 288), Georgian (translated from Armenian: Gippert 2021, 317–43) and Syriac α (Aydin 2021, 209–10 and 217–20).

None of the translations is dated with certainty. There are good reasons, both stylistic and based on early quotations of the Armenian text, to date the Armenian translation to the first half of the fifth century (Sirinian and D’Aiuto 2017, 278 and n. 22; Muradyan and Topchyan 2021, 287). In our 2021 article, Shari Boodts and I did not dare propose any dating for the Latin translations, but the oldest manuscript containing Latin version γ , Bern, Burgerbibliothek, lat. 611, was copied in the first quarter of the eighth century (Boodts and Macé 2021, 118), and the text it contains already presents secondary readings. It must, therefore, already be remote from the archetype (see the apparatus of Boodts’s editions in our 2021 book). Augustine of Hippo (died 430) referred to the chapter on the pelican (Macé 2021b, 420); he may have known it from Greek, but I do not see any reason why Latin translation γ could not have existed at the beginning of the fifth century (or earlier). Latin translation x is often considered older than version γ , but this impression may have arisen because of the poor and archaic Latin language used by the translator of version x , who may not have been a native speaker of Latin (Boodts and Macé 2021, 147). The dating of both Syriac versions to the sixth or seventh century is only deemed “likely” or “reasonable”

[...] Sbordone believes that **MI** contains on the whole the oldest and best tradition, though he offers no proof of this in his preface” (Perry 1937, 492).

⁶ Scott echoed Carmody’s criticism (Scott 1998, 431), but strangely stated that “[t]he younger Latin and Syriac versions, the Armenian, and also the Georgian are derived from the Byzantine recension” (Scott 1998, 431, n. 9), i.e. the second recension, a rather late reworking of the Greek text. Scott drew this wrong information allegedly from Perry 1937, 489, but Perry does not say such a thing, and it is unclear what Scott means by “younger” versions of the Latin and Syriac translations.

by Aydin (2021, 232–33). The Ethiopic translation was traditionally considered the oldest version of the *Physiologus*,⁷ and Massimo Villa considers that a dating in the fifth or sixth century is “not unlikely” (Villa 2021, 162), but other scholars have proposed the seventh century (Scott 1998, 432, n. 18). The Slavonic translation may have appeared in the tenth century (Stoykova 2021, 371), and Adrian Pirtea could identify the milieu of translation of Arabic α as Antioch in the first half of the eleventh century (Pirtea 2021, 269–70). This means that what I had called “redaction β ” must have existed before the date of its earliest translations, already in the sixth century if not before.

From now on, I will focus on the state of the text of the *Physiologus* in Π and the ancient translations close to it. Latin γ and δ were edited by Francis J. Carmody in 1941 and 1939 respectively (on Carmody’s editions and their shortcomings, see Boodts and Macé 2021, 117 and 121–24). Version δ is an expanded edition of Latin γ , probably based on an older and better state of the text of Latin γ than what is preserved in the direct witnesses; it was perhaps revised on another Greek *Vorlage* than that of Latin γ (Boodts and Macé, 133–37). The nature of Latin δ as well as the difficulty of establishing its text with any confidence (Boodts and Macé 2021, 127–28) make it difficult to use for reconstructing the Greek *Vorlage*, this is why it will mostly be neglected here. The Armenian translation was edited and translated into English by Gohar Muradyan in 2005. Both the Armenian and Georgian versions had been edited by Marr in 1904. The Georgian translation is a very important witness to the Armenian one, because, whereas no Armenian manuscript is earlier than the thirteenth century, the Georgian translation was probably made before c. 715 (Gippert 2021, 343–45), and is preserved in a tenth-century codex (Gippert 2021, 310–12). Only one of the two manuscripts containing Syriac version α , Leiden, Universitaire Bibliotheken, Or. 66 Golius, is edited (Land 1875); the other manuscript (Vatican, BAV, sir. 555) contains only five chapters from version α . As Sami Aydin stated (2021, 232), Syriac version α , as preserved in the Leiden manuscript, is a very much reworked and rewritten version, with several expansions, which makes it of little usefulness for the purpose of the present study, except, as we will see, for the question of the chapter order in the *Physiologus*.

4. The Order of the Chapters in the *Physiologus*

Although some scholars claim that the order of the chapters in the *Physiologus* is arbitrary or haphazard (Pakis 2008, 732; Schneider 2021, 37), the agreements and disagreements between the Greek manuscripts and the ancient translations regarding the order of the chapters cannot have emerged by chance. Considered from a stemmatic point of view, these agreements should allow us to reconstruct a probable

⁷ Perry stated: “Der aithiopische Übersetzer hat den griechischen Text getreu, wenn auch nicht sehr intelligent wiedergegeben. Aus diesem Grund, und auch ihrer Vollständigkeit und ihres Alters wegen, ist die aithiopische Version besonders wertvoll als Zeuge für den frühen P[hyiologus]-Text” (Perry 1941, 1116).

primary order. As Nikolaus Henkel pointed out, “Es ist ein wesentliches Ergebnis der Physiologus-Forschung, daß die Übereinstimmung in der Kapitelfolge ein Zeichen der Verwandtschaft zwischen einzelnen Textzeugen ist” (Henkel 1976, 149). However, in that respect as in textual criticism, “Verwandtschaft” is demonstrated only by shared deviations from the primary order and not by a shared inheritance or observance of that order. The problem is, of course, that we do not know for sure what the original order was, even though sequences of chapters in the same order shared by witnesses that belong to different branches of the tradition may point to that archetypal order. This may have been the implicit reasoning behind Sbordone’s choice of an order for his edition, which is exactly the order of manuscripts **E** (as preserved in **A**) and **s** as well as the Ethiopic translation.⁸

Table I offers a comparison of the chapter orders in **Π**, the Armenian-Georgian translation, and Latin **γ**.⁹ The numbers refer to Sbordone’s edition, whose order serves as a basis for the comparison. To help the reader, a list of the traditional English translations of the animal names is given in Appendix 2 in the order they have in Sbordone’s edition.

The most striking difference between Latin **γ**, on the one hand, and **Π** and the Armenian version, on the other, is the position of the chapter on the “solar lizard” (σαύρα ἡλιακή, chapter 2 in Sbordone’s edition). It had already been noted by Karneev: “Nur der erste Artikel (σαύρα) steht ausser der richtigen Reihenfolge” (Karneev 1894, 29). It is easy to demonstrate that the position of that chapter in **Π** and the Armenian version is a deviation or, in stemmatic terms, a mistake. Indeed, in all other known witnesses to the *Physiologus*, direct (Greek manuscripts) or indirect (the translations and the other recensions of the *Physiologus*), the lion occupies the first position, and it begins, even in **Π** and in Armenian, with the words ἀρξόμεθα λαλῆσαι περὶ τοῦ λέοντος, τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν θηρίων [ἡτοι ζώων] (Sbordone 1936, 1, l. 2–3), “We will start talking about the lion, the king of the beasts [or animals]”:

8 Nowhere did Sbordone explain why he chose that order, which is not that of his preferred manuscript **M**, but Perry noted: “The order of the chapters [in **G**] [...] is often closer than **M** to the order of **A** and the Aethiopic, which has been adopted by Lauchert and Sbordone” (Perry 1937, 492). The order of the folios in **E** was very much disturbed when it was copied in **E'**, but was restored by Josef Strzygowski (Sbordone 1936, XXXVII–XL); this restored order is exactly that of **A**. For a synoptic table of the different orders in the Greek manuscripts, see Macé 2021a, 71–72 (Table 2.1).

9 For the Armenian version, see Muradyan and Topchyan 2021, 293–94 (Table 8.1); for the Georgian version, Gippert 2021, 347 (Table 9.1); and for the Latin one, Boodts and Macé 2021, 157–58 (Table 3.1). The order of the chapters varies a bit in the manuscripts of Latin **γ**, but the lion is always the first and the lizard always the last. No manuscript of version **b** (about which see Boodts and Macé 2021, 124–37) has preserved a chapter on the lizard, but Carmody, in his edition of version **b** (1939), included it as the last chapter on the basis of manuscripts of the *Dicta Chrysostomi* version (Boodts and Macé 2021, 127) and others, as a story about the *lacerta* (version **b**, chapter 37), which is clearly related to the chapter on the lizard except for the animal being a bird (*uolatile*) in some of the manuscripts. The fact that the solar lizard is identified as a bird in some versions of the Latin *Physiologus* could provide the beginning of a clue for the otherwise puzzling representation of the lizard as a bird in some sixteenth-century illustrated Greek manuscripts copied in Italy (Lazaris 2021, 207); cf. Henkel 1976, 185, n. 187: “Zur Eidechse als Tier, das fliegen kann”. It should also be noted that in Greek manuscript **a**, copied in Southern Italy in the eleventh century, the lizard is said to have wings (the illustration in that manuscript does not reflect this, however), probably under the influence of the story about the eagle (chapter 6): see below n. 9 in Appendix 3.

Table I: Comparison of the chapter orders in Latin γ , Π , and the Armenian version.

LATIN γ	GREEK MS Π	ARMENIAN
	2 (Lizard)	2 (Lizard)
1 (Lion)	1 (Lion)	1 (Lion)
36 + 37 + 39	36 + 37 + 39	36 + 37 + 39
3–14	3–14	3–14
40 + 15 + 34	15	15
43 + 41 + 44 + 42 + 45–48		
16–28	16–24 (part) + 34 (part) + 27–28 (in disorder)	16–26 + 34 + 27–28
33 + 30 + 29 + 31	33 + 30 + 29 + 31	33 + 30
38 + 35 + 32	32/38	
2 (Lizard)		

Π fol. 192v: ἀρχόμεθα λαλῆσαι περὶ τοῦ λέοντος, τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν θηρίων ἥτοι τῶν ζώων.

Armenian, chapter 2.1 (Muradyan 2005, 87): Սկսցուք ասել վասն առիւծուն, որ թագաւոր է ամենայն գազանաց կամ թէ ամենայն իսկ անասնոց; translation (Muradyan 2005, 141): “Let us begin to speak about the lion, the king of all the beasts or all the animals”.¹⁰

Latin γ , chapter 1, *Incipit* (Carmody 1941, 103): *Incipimus loqui de leone primum, rege omnium bestiarum*.¹¹

There are a few differences between the versions, but we will leave them aside for the time being. The important point here is that this sentence does not make any sense if the chapter on the lion is not the first in the collection. That the sentence was, nevertheless, preserved in Π and in Armenian, although none of these versions starts with the chapter on the lion, supports the conclusion that the displacement of the chapter was accidental and not deliberate.

¹⁰ Compare with the Georgian (Marr 1904, 2): ვიწყო ლომისათვის, რამეთუ შარავანდედ არს ყოველთა მშვეცთა ზედა და ყოველთა პირუტყუთა, “I shall begin on the lion, because he is the king over all the beasts or all the animals”. Both the Armenian and the Georgian texts are available in the TITUS database, <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/arm/physiom/physi.htm> and <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/satberd/satbe.htm>, respectively (accessed on 30 November 2023).

¹¹ Carmody mentions in his apparatus that Y3 (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, lat. 611) reads: *Incipimus loqui de leone rege omnium bistiarum et animalium*; cf. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 230, p. 510: *Incipicemus loqui de leone rege bestiarum et animalium* (images available on e-codices: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/searchresult/list/one/csg/0230>, accessed on 26 November 2023). On this last manuscript, which contains chapters from versions γ and b, see Boodts and Macé 2021, 129–30 (the chapter on the lion in that manuscript belongs to version γ).

The chapter on the lizard is the second in the collection in most Greek manuscripts other than **Π**,¹² as well as in Latin **x** (Gebert 2010, 374–75), in Ethiopic (Villa 2021, 195) and in Arabic **α** (Pirtea 2021, 279); the first four chapters are not preserved in Syriac **β**, and, thus, there is no trace of a chapter on the lizard in that version (Aydin 2021, 234). In contrast to this situation, the chapter on the lizard is the last one in Latin **y**, and this order must also have been the same in Syriac **α**. Aydin showed that the original order of that Syriac translation (and, therefore, of its Greek model) is lost in the Leiden manuscript, and the Vatican manuscript preserves too few chapters to make any assumptions in that respect; however, the copyist of the Leiden manuscript indicated the order that he had found in his model (Aydin 2021, 235, n. 143), and that order is largely in agreement with the order of Latin **y** (see Table II, with differences in bold).

Table II: Comparison of the chapter orders in Latin **y** and Syriac **α**.

LATIN Y	SYRIAC A
1	1
36 + 37 + 39	36 + 39
3–14	3–14
40 + 15 + 34	15
43 + 41 + 44 + 42 + 45–48	
16–28	16–26
	32 + 40 + 34 + 43 + 41 + 44–48
33 + 30 + 29 + 31	28 + 33 + 30 + 29 + 31
38 + 35 + 32	38 + 42 + 35 + 27
2	2

Another confirmation that the original position of the chapter on the lizard must have been at the end of the collection is the fact that in both **Π** and the Armenian translation the chapter ends with these words:

Π fol. 192v: καλῶς οὖν ὁ φυσιολόγος ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς φύσεως ἐκάστου γένους.

Armenian, chapter 1.10 (Muradyan 2005, 87 and 141): Ասա ուրեմն բարուր խախեցաւ բարոյախաւս վասն անուանց իւրաքանչիւր ազգաց; translation: “So Physiologus [բարոյախաւս, lit. ‘the one who speaks about the habits’, see Muradyan 2005, 4, n. 22] spoke well concerning the names of each species”.¹³

¹² The chapter on the lizard is at the twelfth position in **a**, after the panther (Sbordone’s chapter 16); the positions of the lizard and the *caladrius* (Sbordone’s chapter 3) are inverted in **Γ**. The lizard is the second chapter, after the lion, in manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 50, an early tenth-century manuscript containing a paraphrase of the *Physiologus*’ stories. About this last manuscript, see Macé 2021a, 105–06.

¹³ Compare with the Georgian: უკუე კეთილად სამე თქუა სახის-მეტყუელმან ქმულებად სახისად ურთიერთას თესლთად, “So the ‘Physiologus’ [*saxis-metq’umelman*, lit. ‘the one who speaks about the

This sentence, which, however, is not found in the corresponding chapter of Latin γ (at least in Carmody's edition), makes much more sense if the chapter is actually the last in the collection. If the chapter on the lizard was indeed the last one in the original collection, as it is in Latin γ and must have been in Syriac α , it is easier to understand how the accidental misplacement of that chapter may have occurred in the common *Vorlage* of Π and the Armenian translation. In a codex in which the lizard was copied on the last folio, that folio fell off and was mistakenly placed at the beginning rather than the end of the collection. Then, this manuscript, with the lizard now at the beginning, was copied into another codex, which became the ancestor of the model(s) of Π and the Armenian translation. Before discussing the codicological implications and likelihood of this scenario, I would like to proceed further on the philological consequences of this material accident.¹⁴

5. A Proposal for a New Stemma of the *Physiologus* Tradition

If we admit that the lion was the first and the solar lizard the last in the original order of the chapters, then why is the lizard the second chapter in so many witnesses to the oldest recension of the *Physiologus*, including the Ethiopic version and Latin x ? My hypothesis is that in the Greek exemplar upon which all these witnesses ultimately depend, the obvious misplacement of the chapter on the lizard was remedied by putting it immediately after what presents itself as the first chapter. In that hypothesis, all witnesses (except for Π , Latin γ , the Armenian-Georgian version, and Syriac α) descend from a hyparchetype, which itself depends upon a faulty ancestor, where the chapter on the lizard was at the first position, i.e. the very same ancestor (Φ) also shared by Π and the Armenian-Georgian version. Furthermore, Π and the Armenian version share some peculiarities that are found neither in the other Greek manuscripts nor in Latin γ , especially the loss of chapters 35 and 40–48. It is, therefore, necessary to postulate a common hyparchetype (Ψ) for Π and the Greek model of the Armenian translation (Fig. 3).

If this hypothesis is confirmed, it will be clear that the other manuscripts in Sbordone's fourth class cannot belong to the same branch as Π , but depend on the hyparchetype X , in which the chapter on the lizard was moved to the second position. Since Sbordone considered that E was closer to Π than the other Greek manuscripts in the fourth class (Macé 2021a, 75), E should be, in fact, closer to hyparchetype X .

appearance', see Gippert 2021, 342] spoke well of the emergence of the appearance of each species" (Marr 1904, 2). The *Vorlage* of the Georgian translation must have had something like "nature" (Greek φύσις is generally translated by *puwp* "habit(s)" in the Armenian *Physiologus*) and not "names" (անուանց) as in the Armenian manuscripts, because the Georgian translator provides a kind of doublet in ქმნულებზეა სახისაჲ *kmmulebay saxisay* "emergence of the appearance" with სახე-ი generally representing *bark'* in the *Physiologus* (Gippert 2021, 343).

¹⁴ On the concept of "material accident", see Irigoin 1986. I presented some of the material for the present article at a conference entitled "Identifying Models and Copies on the Basis of Material Evidence: At the Intersection Between Manuscript Studies and Philology", held in Hamburg (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures) on 10–11 November, 2022, at the invitation of Giovanni Ciotti and José Maksimczuk.

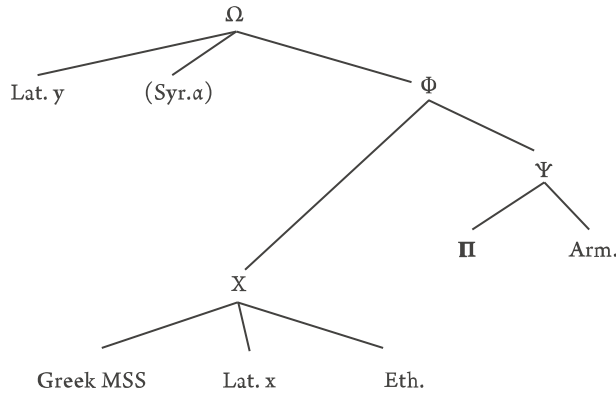


Fig. 3: New schematic representation of the early history of the *Physiologus* tradition.

Amongst the manuscripts of Sbordone’s fourth class, **E** is the oldest and could be the ancestor of the others in that class (except **Π**). This manuscript was copied in the eleventh century in the Stoudion monastery in Constantinople and was later kept in Smyrna until it disappeared during the fire, which destroyed the Christian and Jewish quarters of the city in 1922. It is mostly famous because of its illustrations that were unique in many ways. The dating of the handwriting and illumination has been a subject of debate (summarised in Lazaris 2021, 28–33). Most of **E**’s illustrations are preserved in photographs (Bernabò 1998), but its text is only accessible through a seventeenth-century copy identified by Sbordone (**E**’).

According to this new scenario, we must abandon the terms “redaction α ” and “redaction β ”. Indeed, **Π** together with the Armenian-Georgian translation and Latin **y** are the closest we can get to the original text of the *Physiologus*, and not a “redaction” of it. The nature of what was called “redaction β ” needs to be further refined, but it is a derived state of the text, with some mistakes and also some corrections, as well as rewriting and reorganisation of the text. That state of the text is at best (i.e. before most of the redactional work occurred) preserved in **E** and Latin **x**, whereas the Ethiopic translation probably derived from a state of the text that had already been further modified and redacted (**T**), as in the other Greek manuscripts (**saΣ** in the first place; see Macé 2021a, 82–83). This conclusion emerges from the comparison of the versions of the chapter on the lizard (see Appendix 3). It should be reassessed by an examination of the whole *Physiologus*. In the meantime, the following schema of transmission seems the most probable:

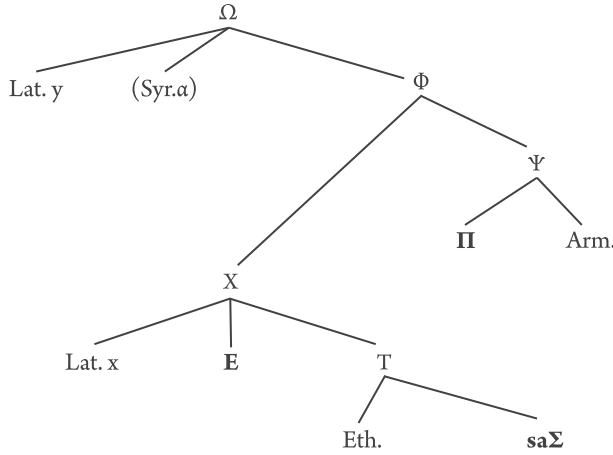


Fig. 4: The *Physiologus* tradition.

6. Codicological Features of the Lost Ancestor of Π and the Armenian Version

The Greek model of the Armenian translation, dated to the fifth century, must have been written in majuscules.¹⁵ At least one mistake of Π can be explained as a misreading of a majuscule. The name of the antelope (chapter 36 in Sbordone's edition, chapter 3 in Π and the Armenian-Georgian version, chapter 2 in Latin γ), which seems to be an invention of the *Physiologus*,¹⁶ can be reconstructed as *autholops* (cf. Arm. ալթողոփոս) on the basis of Latin γ and the Georgian translation, whereas it was disfigured in Π and the Armenian manuscripts (Macé 2021a, 99–100). The reading of Π (fol. 193r), λυθίωψ, can be explained as a misreading of Λ for Α at the initial of the word, and the simplification of -ΩΛΩΨ into -ΙΩΨ.¹⁷

If we imagine that the folio on which the chapter on the lizard was written had come loose and was misplaced at the beginning of manuscript Φ, which was presum-

¹⁵ On the basis of one mistake in the Armenian translation, Anna Sirinian and Francesco D'Aiuto inferred that the Greek model did not use the *nomen sacrum* for σωτήρ, which is an indication of an early dating of that model to the fourth or fifth century (Sirinian and D'Aiuto 2017, 282). About this *nomen sacrum* in early Christian papyri, see Mugridge 2016, 129.

¹⁶ About that name, see the entertaining, albeit unconvincing, notes in Wiener 1921, 68–74. Emmanuelle Kuhry and I are preparing an article on that chapter within the framework of a PPP/PHC Procope Project funded by the DAAD in Germany and Campus France in France. The source of the *Physiologus* for that chapter seems to be a fable of Aesop involving the stag.

¹⁷ The confusion of Λ/A is a typical example of the misreading of uncial script (Irigoin 2003, 15–18). One of the anonymous reviewers of the present article suggested that a false association with the word Αἰθίωψ might also have played a role in this mistake. It is, of course, possible and I am grateful for this suggestion, although the fact that Αἰθίωψ is obviously not the name of an animal makes it rather unlikely in my opinion.

ably a codex,¹⁸ the chapter must have stood alone in that folio, the text probably covering the recto and the verso of the last folio of the codex. If the text had started on a verso (the recto being occupied by the end of another chapter) or if it had covered only a recto with the verso being left blank, the misplacement at the beginning of the book would not have been that easy.

We must further assume that the folios were not foliated, the chapters were not numbered, and there was neither an *incipit* nor an *explicit* for the whole work. The absence of such features seems relatively common in early codices.¹⁹ The reading aids must have been minimal in the supposed models of the Armenian translation and **Π**, because some strange elements in these two witnesses can be accounted for only if no basic guidance for readers (or subsequent copyists) was present. The chapters do not bear any titles in **Π** or in the oldest Armenian manuscripts.²⁰ It is not always clear where a new chapter begins, because the only indication of this in the oldest Armenian manuscripts are the numbers of the chapters in the margins (sometimes added by a second hand) and the majuscule initial letter used in the text. The numbers and initial letters are not always placed exactly where a chapter begins, but rather where the animal is named for the first time. We have exactly the same situation in **Π**: a majuscule letter in red is used to indicate the first letter of the sentence beginning with *ὁ φυσιολόγος ἔλεξεν* or *ἔστι ζῶον* and the like (and the number, also in red, is placed in the margin facing the initial letter). However, that kind of sentence is preceded by a biblical quotation (whose relationship to the rest of the chapter is usually very loose) in many of the chapters.²¹ The initial biblical quotation is, therefore, often considered the conclusion of the preceding chapter in **Π** and the Armenian translation.²² The first chapter to have a number in the margin of **Π** is the one on the sawfish (fol. 193v), which is the fifth in the manuscript but bears the number four (δ), because the preceding two chapters, on the antelope and the fire-stones, were merged together. The first chapter for which a number is given in the margin in the Armenian manuscript M2101 is the third (γ), on the antelope (fol. 70v). It is, therefore, highly probable that the chapters had no titles

18 The codex would have been the usual book form to receive a Christian work in the fourth or fifth century: see e.g. Hurtado 2006, 49. This does not mean that the *Physiologus* was written in the fourth century, but only that the archetype of the tradition (the oldest point we can reconstruct) is likely to have emerged at that time.

19 Mugridge 2016, 71–91. About reading aids in early Christian books, also see Batovici 2020, with previous bibliography.

20 I could see images of M2101 and M2174. On these Armenian manuscripts, see Muradyan and Topchyan 2021, 283–84.

21 On the typical structure of the chapters, see Schneider 2021, 37–39.

22 An example is the first sentence of the chapter on the sawfish in Latin γ (chapter 4.1 in Carmody's edition): *bene Physiologus dixit de abstinentibus in omnia, et non in fine permanentibus* (cf. Mt. 24.13). In Muradyan's edition, a similar sentence is the first of the chapter on the antelope (chapter 3.0), and, in **Π**, it is the last sentence of the chapter on the lion (fol. 193r), just before the beginning of the chapter on the antelope: *ἀλλὰ περὶ πολιτευομένων καὶ μὴ περιμεινάντων εἰς τέλος*. That sentence is omitted in all other Greek manuscripts. In fact, it would fit better content-wise, especially in the form it has in Latin γ, as the final sentence of the chapter on the fire-stones (Sbordone's chapter 37, Carmody's chapter 3, Muradyan's chapter 4; merged with the preceding chapter, on the antelope, in **Π** fol. 193v). Also see Macé 2021a, 77–78.

or numbers in the exemplar(s) of **II** and the Armenian translation, and that the transitions between the chapters were not clearly indicated.

The chapter on the lizard in **II** comprises 625 characters without spaces (*scriptio continua*). If we assume that the text occupied one recto and, at least, a large part of the verso, this amount of text could have been written at a ratio of about 20 characters per line and about 15 lines per page (or the other way around) on each face of the folio. Browsing through Alan Mugridge's Table 11, listing the numbers of letters per line and lines per column in early Christian papyri, the manuscript whose average number of letters and lines would be the closest to what we assume for the chapter on the lizard is n° 334 in Mugridge's catalogue, with an average of 21.5 letters and 15.5 lines, that is, 333.25 letters per page (Mugridge 2016, 509). Manuscript n° 334 is P. Bodm. XIII, a fragment of a papyrus codex dated to the fourth century CE containing parts of Melito, *De Pascha* (CPG 1092).²³ Considering every chapter in the *Physiologus* as having the same length as that on the lizard (which is a simplification: if we look at Carmody's edition of Latin *γ*, several chapters are longer and a few are smaller) and three times adding to the 48 canonical chapters two others where the animals have three natures (the lion, the snake, and the ant), we arrive at 51 chapters, each occupying one folio, i.e. 51 folios, which could constitute a small single-work codex.

For the sake of completeness, I am also mentioning here the only preserved papyrus containing fragments from two chapters of the *Physiologus* (chapters 41 and 42), Florence, PSI XVI 1577, dated to the sixth century (Stroppa 2011, 173–74).²⁴ A column in that papyrus must have contained about 990 characters (17 lines with c. 60 characters per line), according to Marco Stroppa's reconstruction (185). This fragment is, in any case, younger than the model of the Armenian translation, and it also seems to be a rather exceptional manuscript, not a codex, but a *rotulus*, a format that seems related to an educational context.²⁵ This peculiar papyrus does not help much in reconstructing the earliest state of the text and already presents obvious secondary readings,²⁶ but it attests to the diffusion of the *Physiologus* in Egypt and to the varied contexts in which this work was read.

7. Conclusion

Vollenweider considered that the search of an origin might make little sense, although he recognised that the difficulty of identifying an “Urschrift” in the tradition of the

²³ Mugridge (2016, 318) notes that particularly in this papyrus “α is sometimes difficult to distinguish from λ”.

²⁴ See <https://www.psi-online.it/documents/psi;16;1577> (accessed on 26 November 2023).

²⁵ Stroppa 2016, 170; cf. also Stroppa 2019, 43, and, generally about the use of *rotulus* in Christian literary papyri, Stroppa 2013.

²⁶ About the position of this papyrus in the tradition of the *Physiologus*, see Macé 2021a, 84–90. It is very difficult to classify the text of the papyrus because of the fragmentary state of the text it contains; in addition, chapters 41 and 42 are absent from **II** and the Armenian translation.

Physiologus “complicates the chronological fixation” of the work.²⁷ On the contrary, I think that this question is unescapable and cannot be considered insoluble until it has been thoroughly examined. The hypotheses put forward in the present article are far from answering all questions concerning the origins of the *Physiologus* text, but they offer the best explanatory narrative so far to account for the complicated relationships between all the witnesses to the early history of the transmission of that work in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. This narrative will have to be tested on a completely new collation, comparison and philological analysis of all chapters of the *Physiologus*.²⁸ The text of the chapter on the lizard in **II** is edited anew in Appendix 3 with a few philological comments, thus, paving the way for a future new edition.

Muradyan had already “listed objections” against my present hypothesis in her 2005 edition of the Armenian *Physiologus*:

[...] in 28 cases the Latin confirms the readings of the archetype of the Armenian version, that differ from **II**. There are other 28 cases in which the Latin version γ corresponds to the readings of the Greek **II**, differing from the Armenian version, which are supported by other Greek manuscripts [...] We may conclude that the thesis of one common archetype of the Greek MS **II**, of the Latin version in the form of recension γ and of the Armenian version should be refined: it might have had three independent developments already in Greek; two of which became originals for the versions (Muradyan 2005, 57–58).

Indeed, these arguments will need to be addressed, something I cannot do in the framework of the present article. It is clear that **II** presents singular mistakes. The other cases, i.e. where Latin γ and **II** agree against the Armenian version and other Greek manuscripts, should be assessed one by one. Different problems must be taken into consideration in that respect. Firstly, until recently, the text of **II** was accessible to scholars only through Karneev’s edition (1894), which is not exempt from mistakes (Macé 2017).²⁹ Secondly, Carmody’s edition of Latin γ is not totally reliable, and a new edition should be made (Boodts and Macé 2021, 121–22). Thirdly, a greater attention should be paid to the Georgian version when assessing the text of the Armenian translation, because the Georgian version kept original readings of the Armenian text which were lost in all known Armenian manuscripts.³⁰ Finally, cases of polygenesis should be excluded (especially small omissions that can appear independently in unrelated witnesses).

27 Vollenweider 2019, 93–94: “Zusätzlich erschwert wird die chronologische Fixierung durch die für diesen Typ von Literatur charakteristische Vielfalt an Versionen, die es nicht einfach (und womöglich auch nicht sinnvoll) macht, eine „Urschrift“ zu identifizieren”. See Macé and Gippert 2021, 18–19, for an answer to this rather widespread kind of scepticism.

28 This will be the purpose of a joint DFG-ANR research project which Emmanuelle Kuhry and I received and which will start on 1 June 2025.

29 For examples of Karneev’s inaccurate renderings of the text about the lizard in **II**, see Appendix 3.

30 For examples, see Gippert 2021, 338; my edition of the pelican chapter in Macé and Gippert 2021, 433, n. 2 and 3; and the edition of the Armenian chapter on the panther, *ibid.*, 531, n. 5–8; see also Appendix 3 below.

The future will tell whether my hypotheses about the origins of the *Physiologus* stand to reason or not.

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Appendix 1: The Greek Manuscripts Referred to in this Article

For the Greek manuscripts, in addition to the bibliography in *Pinakes* (<https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/>), see Macé 2021a, 53–66.

- a** = Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, E 16 sup. (Diktyon 42678), region of Otranto, eleventh century (?)
- A** = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 2426 (Diktyon 52058), Venice, *anno* 1562
- E** = Izmir, Evaggelikē Scholē, B8 (Diktyon 34075), Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople, *circa* 1065
- E'** = Athos, Panteleēmōnos, 245 (Lambros 5752) (Diktyon 22384), seventeenth century
- G** = New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS, M.397 (Diktyon 46625), Calabria, end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century (?)
- I** = Athos, Ibērōn, gr. 377 (Diktyon 23974), fourteenth century (?)
- M** = Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, A 45 sup. (Diktyon 42172), region of Otranto, twelfth century (?)
- O** = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 95 (Diktyon 47382), Italy, first half of the fifteenth century
- s** = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Seld. Supra 15 (Diktyon 48460), sixteenth century (?)
- W** = Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, theol. gr. 128 (Diktyon 71795), second half of the thirteenth century (?)
- Γ** = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 2509 (Diktyon 52141), end of the fourteenth century (?)
- Π** = Moscow, Gosudarstvennyj Istoričeskij Musej (GIM), Sinod. Gr., 467 (Diktyon 44092), *anno* 1041
- Σ** = Moscow, Gosudarstvennyj Istoričeskij Musej (GIM), Sinod. Gr., 298 (Diktyon 43923), Trebizond (?), second half of the thirteenth century (?)

Appendix 2: Traditional English Translations of the Animal and Other Names in the Order They Have in Sbordone's Edition

1 Lion	17 <i>Aspidochelone</i>	33 Swallow
2 Lizard	18 Partridge	34 <i>Peridexion</i>
3 Caladrius	19 Vulture	35 Dove
4 Pelican	20 Ant-lion	36 Antelope
5 Owl	21 Weasel	37 Fire-stones
6 Eagle	22 Unicorn	38 Magnet
7 Phoenix	23 Beaver	39 Sawfish
8 Hoopoe	24 Hyena	40 Ibis
9 Wild donkey	25 Otter	41 Wild goat
10 Viper	26 Ichneumon	42 Diamond
11 Snake	27 Crow	43 Elephant
12 Ant	28 Turtledove	44 Agate and Pearl
13 Sirens and onocentaurs	29 Frog	45 Donkey and Ape
14 Hedgehog	30 Deer	46 Indian stone
15 Fox	31 Salamander	47 Heron
16 Panther	32 Diamond	48 Sycamore

Appendix 3: The Chapter on the Solar Lizard in Π

A Note on the Witnesses

The text edited below is that of **Π** and not a reconstruction of the oldest state of the text of the first recension of the *Physiologus*. Significant variants in the other witnesses are given in the comments after the text. Only **Π** was collated anew, the other Greek manuscripts, Latin translation γ (Lat. γ), the Armenian and Georgian translations (Arm.-Georg., unless they differ) are quoted according to their respective editions: Sbordone (1936) and Offermanns (1966) for manuscript **G**, Carmody (1941), Muradyan (2005), and Marr (1904). Regarding the Greek manuscripts, I am only considering the most important ones (and **E*** stands for “**AEI**” in Sbordone's apparatus). Latin x (Lat. x) is quoted as in Gebert's edition of one of the two known manuscripts (Gerbert 2010), and the Ethiopic version (Eth.) is mentioned according to the Italian translation revised by Massimo Villa in Zambon 2018, 72–121.

The chapter on the lizard is the only one included in Pseudo-Eustathius' compilation (ed. Allatius, in *PG* 18, 745.24–32), in which not only the story about the animal, but also the moralistic interpretation is preserved. However, Pseudo-Eustathius' text (Ps.-Eust.) is not very usable for text-critical purposes, because the story is summarised and the interpretation is paraphrased.

A Note on the Text

Accentuation and iotacisms (e.g. τύχον/τύχου instead of τοῖχον/τοίχου) or vowel lengths are tacitly corrected (only for animals' names, which function like proper names, orthographic discrepancies are noted); the punctuation and divisions of the text are mine. Otherwise, the text of manuscript **Π** has not been altered: the -ν *ephelkystikon* is kept before a consonant, the accentuation of the *enclitica* and the gravis before a weak punctuation are preserved. The grammar, at times awkward or even faulty, is left untouched.

Edition

Tit. (fol. 192r) Πέτρου ἐπισκόπου Ἀλεξανδρείας

- (1) Ἔστιν καλουμένη σαύρα ἡλιακή, ὡς φησὶν ὁ Φυσιολόγος.
- (2) Ὄταν γηράσῃ, ἐμποδίζεται τῶν δύο ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ πηροῦται μὴ βλέπουσα τὸ τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς. Τί οὖν ποιεῖ τῇ ἑαυτῆς καλῇ φύσει; Ζητεῖ τοῖχον βλέποντα εἰς ἀνατολὰς καὶ εἰσβαίνει εἰς ῥαγάδα τοῦ τοίχου, προσβλέπουσα τῇ ἀνατολῇ, καὶ ἀνατέλλοντος τοῦ ἡλίου, ἀνοίγονται αὐτῆς οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ νέα γίνεται.
- (3) Τοῦτο καὶ σὺ, ὦ ἄνθρωπε. Εἰ τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον ἔχεις ἔνδυμα, βλέπε, μήποτε οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς καρδίας σου ἐμποδισθῶσιν, ζήτησον τόπον νοερὸν ἀνατέλλοντά σοι ἡλίον, | (fol. 192v) τὸν σωτήρα ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, οὗ τὸ ὄνομα ἀνατολὴ καλεῖται ἐν τῷ προφῆτῃ, καὶ οὗτος ὁ ἥλιος τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἀνοίξει τοὺς νοεροὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς σου καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα τοῦ παλαιοῦ νέον ἐν σοὶ γένηται.
- (4) Καλῶς οὖν ὁ φυσιολόγος ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς φύσεως ἐκάστου γένους.

Translation

Tit. Of Peter, Bishop of Alexandria

- (1) There is a lizard called solar, as the Physiologus says.
- (2) When it gets old, it is hindered from both its eyes and is blinded as it cannot see the sun's light. What does it do then by its beautiful nature? It searches for a wall looking to the direction of dawn and it goes in a fissure of the wall, it looks at the dawn, and when the sun rises, its eyes open and it becomes new.
- (3) This also [applies to] you, O man! If you have the old man as garment,¹ look, may the eyes of your heart never be hindered, [but] search for a spiritual place where the sun rises for you, [i.e.]

¹ Cf. Col. 3.9 (NA28): ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ ("for you have put off the garment of the old man with his practices").

our saviour Jesus Christ, whose name is called “dawn” in the Prophet,² and this sun of justice³ will open your spiritual eyes, and the garment of the old will become new in you.⁴

(4) Thus, the *Physiologus* spoke well about the nature of each species.

Philological Comments

Tit. The attribution of the *Physiologus* to Peter, bishop of Alexandria is peculiar to manuscript **Π**, it is not found in any of the other witnesses. The first Peter known as bishop of Alexandria is Peter I (d. 311), but nothing in the few fragments kept of his writings or in his biography (Le Boulluec 2012) would hint at the possibility of him being the author of the *Physiologus*. It is likely that the exemplar of **Π** did not bear any title.

No biblical quotation opens the chapter, which is not exceptional; chapters 36–46, for example, also do not have an introductory biblical quotation. The σαύρα appears once in the Septuagint in a list of impure animals (Lev. 11.30).

(1) σαύρα **Π**. The name σαύρα (or σαῦρα) ἡλιακή is found in the *Cyranides*, in which three types of lizard (ζαύρα) are distinguished: ζαυρῶν δέ εἰσι γένη τρία. ἡ μὲν ἡλιακή λέγεται, ἡ δὲ χαλκή, ἡ δὲ χλωρά (*Cyranides*, II, 14, see Kaimakis 1976, 139).⁵ Since the *Cyranides* sometimes borrows stories from the *Physiologus* (cf. Macé 2021b, 422), it is possible that, at other times, it may also have borrowed an animal’s name, without the story. This hypothesis is not necessary, however, and the name σαύρα ἡλιακή may have been common at least in Egypt. It is also present in a treatise on venomous animals, attributed to Aelius Promotus (Alexandria, first half of the second century CE; see Nutton 2006), in the chapter on the ἀσκαλαβώτης (gecko), telling that the gecko “looks like the solar lizard, but with a smaller body and a slightly flattened head”.⁶

Ephraim of Salamis obviously refers to the *Physiologus* story in his *Panarion* when he compares the sect of the Sampsaeans (Σαμψαῖοι) to the σαύρα ἡλιακή.⁷

2 Cf. Zach. 6.12 (Rahlfs): καὶ ἐρεῖς πρὸς αὐτόν· Τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ· Ἴδὸν ἄνθρωπον, Ἀνατολὴ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὑποκάτωθεν αὐτοῦ ἀνατελεῖ, καὶ οἰκοδομήσει τὸν οἶκον κυρίου (“and you shall say to him [Jesus, son of Josedek]: this is what the Lord almighty says: behold, a man, Dawn is his name, and he will rise from below him and he will build the house of the Lord”); cf. Lc. 1.78–79: διὰ σπλάγχχνα ἐλέους θεοῦ ἡμῶν, ἐν οἷς ἐπισκέπεται ἡμᾶς ἀνατολὴ ἐξ ὕψους, | ἐπιφάνει τοῖς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένοις, τοῦ κατευθῆναι τοὺς πόδας ἡμῶν εἰς ὁδὸν εἰρήνης (“because of the inner sweetness of the mercy of our God, whereby dawn shall visit us from on high | to reveal itself to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace”).

3 Cf. Mal. 3.20 (Rahlfs): καὶ ἀνατελεῖ ὑμῖν τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά μου ἥλιος δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἴασις ἐν ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ (“and for you who fear my name will rise a sun of justice and a healing is in its wings”).

4 Cf. Col. 3.10 (NA28): καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν (“and you have put on the garment of the new one, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of his creator”).

5 Stavros Lazaris (2021, 208) claims that the solar lizard “n’existe pas”. Indeed, several of the creatures in the *Physiologus* cannot have “existed” anywhere, but this is not relevant. Sbordone (1936, 8, in the *apparatus fontium*) already mentioned the reference to the *Cyranides* (“Hermes p. 60”).

6 Περὶ τῶν ἰοβόλων θηρίων, chapter 14 (Ihm 1995, 50, l. 35–51, l. 1): ἔοικε δὲ τὸ μὲν εἶδος σαύρα ἡλιακή, μικρότερος δὲ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἡρέμα πως ὑποπλατυνομένην ἔχων.

7 Ephraim, *Panarion*, 53, 2, 3 (Holl 1922, 316): ταύτην γὰρ σαύραν οὕτω κυκλήσκουσιν ἡλιακὴν οἱ ἄνθρωποι. χεῖρων δὲ ἢ αἶρεις αὐτῆς τῆς σαύρας, μὴ δὲ τὸ ἀκαριαῖον τῆς ὠφελείας αὐτῆς ἔχουσα. ἐκείνη γὰρ ἀμβλυωπήσασα χρόνῳ ἀναβλέπει διὰ ἡλιακῆς στροφάλλιγος· ἐν φωλεῶ <γὰρ> πρὸς ἀνατολὴν προσέχοντι ἑαυτὴν προσθλίψασα καὶ νηστεύσασα πρὸς ἀνατολὴν <τε> κατανοοῦσα ἀποτίθεται τὴν ἀμβλυωπίαν. This passage was mentioned by

The *Cyranides* provides a likely context for the creation of the story of the *Physiologus*, as it mentions the practice of using a lizard or an amulet representing a lizard to cure people's blindness.⁸

As Sbordone noted in the *apparatus fontium* of his edition (Sbordone 1936, 8), the story of the snake that regenerates its skin and eyes by entering a crevasse (Sbordone's chapter 11, first nature) influenced the chapter on the lizard (or the other way around). The way in which the ageing eagle renews its wings and eyes, which were weighed down by age, is different, but the moralising explanation, although more elaborate, has some exact textual parallels in the chapter on the lizard (Sbordone's chapter 6).

The adjective ἡλιακή is found in all Greek manuscripts (except **Γ**) and in Lat. *y* (*eliace*); cf. Lat. *x* (*aesaure elicae*) and Eth. ("a proposito della lucertola che si espone al sole"; Zambon 2018, 75). In Arm., *arag noy* [արագ նոյ] is a corruption of արեգակնային, as Muradyan noted (Muradyan 2005, 86, n. 3.), or արեգնի, as proposed by Gippert, since Georg. has an adjective related to the sun, but not quite a correct form either (Gippert 2021, 336). Ps.-Eust. simply has σαῦρα.

(2) Arm.-Georg. adds "and" after "Όταν γηράση. Instead of ἐμποδίζεται – φῶς, **a** reads βαρύνονται αὐτῆς αἱ πτέρυγες καὶ ἀμβλυοπεῖ.⁹ The genitive τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν was changed into the accusative or the dative in some manuscripts; δύο is omitted in all Greek manuscripts except **E*** (its equivalent is present in Lat. *y*, Arm.-Georg., and Lat. *x*, but not Eth.).

Instead of Τί οὖν ποιεῖ τῇ ἐαυτῆς καλῇ φύσει (supported by **E***, Lat. *y*, Arm.-Georg. and Lat. *x*), Sbordone edited τί οὖν ποιεῖ ἐν ἐαυτῇ ἡ καλὴ φύσις, which is the reading of **Γ**, supported, with small variants, by **Sas** and **G**; **M** and **WO** omit ἐν ἐαυτῇ ἡ καλὴ φύσις. The whole question is omitted in Eth. (and in Ps.-Eust., whose text is very condensed).

Instead of ζητεῖ, Arm.-Georg. has "it goes to search", which is not supported by Lat. *y*.

Part of the sentence καὶ εἰσβαίνει εἰς ῥαγάδα τοῦ τοίχου προσβλέπουσα τῇ ἀνατολῇ is omitted in Arm. (by *homoioteleuton*, as Muradyan 2005, 86, n. 7 noted), but this must be a mistake in the hyparchetype of the extant Armenian manuscripts and not in the translation, because Georg. has that part of the sentence (and so Lat. *y* and Ps.-Eust.). Eth. does not have something like καὶ εἰσβαίνει εἰς ῥαγάδα τοῦ τοίχου προσβλέπουσα τῇ ἀνατολῇ. Sbordone has put the words προσβλέπουσα τῇ ἀνατολῇ in brackets, because it is omitted in **MT(+G)SWO**.

Instead of καὶ νέα γίνεται, Sbordone's edition has καὶ γίνονται πάλιν ὑγιεῖς (as in the majority of the Greek manuscripts). The reading of **Π** is supported by **E***, Lat. *y*, and Arm.-Georg. The sentence is omitted in Lat. *x*; Eth. follows the reading of the majority of the Greek manuscripts. Ps.-Eust. has καὶ ὑγιῆς ἀποκαθίσταται.

(3) Τοῦτο is the faulty reading of **Π** (and it was kept in **E*!**), tacitly corrected into οὕτω by Karneev, which is, indeed, the reading reflected in Lat. *y*, Arm.-Georg., and Ps.-Eust. (Οὕτω δὲ). Sbordone edited τοῦτον οὖν τὸν τρόπον on the basis of the other Greek manuscripts.

Sbordone in the apparatus of his edition (Sbordone 1936, 8–9). About the systematic comparison of heretics with poisonous animals, see Verheyden 2011 (esp. 167 for this passage).

⁸ See Schneider 2021, 43–45. The passage in the *Cyranides* is translated and commented upon in Grimm-Stadelmann 2020, 345.

⁹ The reading of **a** was obviously induced by the similarities between the chapter on the lizard and that on the eagle (chapter 6, cf. Sbordone 1936, 22, lines 4–5). See n. 9 above.

Lat. x omits the whole sentence from Τοῦτο καὶ σὸν – βλέπε. Eth. reads (in the Italian translation): “Anche tu, o uomo che possiedi l’abito antico”.

Instead of εἰ τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον ἔχεις ἔνδυμα in **Π** and **E***, Sbordone edited εἰ τὸ τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔχεις ἔνδυμα. The reading of **Π** and **E*** is more difficult, but still understandable. It seems that Lat. γ and Arm. confirm the reading edited by Sbordone: *si ergo ueteris hominis indumentum habes* / թէ զիին մարդոյն ունիցիս հանդերձ “if you have the garment of the old man”, but Georg. has something quite different, which is closer to the reading of **Π** and **E***: ძეგლი ოგი თუ ქმნულეზაჲ გაქუნდეს სამოსლად “if you had the old making as garment”. This means that the reading of the Armenian archetype may be an attempt at smoothing a difficult reading closer to the (original) text of **Π** and **E***. The Latin translator may have independently decided to render the text easier to understand, and the expression *ueteris hominis indumentum* is found, for example, in Ambrosius, *Explanatio super Psalmos XII*, cap. 22, § 2.

Instead of βλέπε μήποτε οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς καρδίας σου ἐμποδισθῶσιν, supported by **E***, Lat. γ, Arm., and Lat. x, Sbordone edited καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ τῆς καρδίας σου ἀμβλυσποῦσι on the basis of the other Greek manuscripts (confirmed by Eth.).

Instead of ζήτησον τόπον νοερόν ἀνατέλλοντά σοι ἥλιον, τὸν σωτήρα ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, supported by **E***,¹⁰ Sbordone edited ζητησον ἀνατέλλοντα τὸν ἥλιον τῆς δικαιοσύνης, Χριστὸν τὸν Θεὸν ἡμῶν. The alleged omission of τόπον in **Π**, reported in Sbordone’s apparatus, is, in fact, a mistake of Karneev. Lat. γ reads: *requiras intellegibilem orientem solem dominum Iesum Christum*; Arm., on the other hand, reads: խնդրես տեղի ինչ զիմանալի, ուստի ծագեսցէ քեզ փրկիչն Յիսուս Քրիստոս, “find an intelligible place, whence the Saviour Jesus Christ¹¹ will rise for you”.¹² Thus, Lat. γ does not have τόπον, σοι, and σωτήρα, Arm.-Georg. does not have ἥλιον. But taken together, the differences between the two translations can better be explained as decisions of the individual translators on the basis of a common Greek source closer to the text given by **ΠE***.

Both Lat. x and Eth. represent Greek texts having more similarities to the one edited by Sbordone. Lat. x reads: *Quaere ergo qui oriri facit solem iustitiam, dominum Ihesum Xristum*, and Eth. (in the Italian translation): “cerca vegliando il muro del soccorso, finché non sorgerà per te il sole della misericordia del nostro Signore”.

Sbordone put the relative clause οὗ τὸ ὄνομα ἀνατολὴ καλεῖται ἐν τῷ προφήτῃ in brackets, because it is omitted in **M** (and, by chance, also in **I**), but all the other Greek manuscripts (including **G**) and the translations (Lat. γ, Arm.-Georg., Lat. x, and Eth.) have it.

Instead of καὶ οὗτος ὁ ἥλιος τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἀνοίξει τοὺς νοεροὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς σου καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα τοῦ παλαιοῦ¹³ νέον ἐν σοὶ γένηται, Sbordone edited καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνοίξει τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας σου (Ps.-Eust. has τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ἀναβλέψης ὀφθαλμοῖς). The adjective νοερός appears only in **Π**, Lat. γ (*intellegibiles oculos cordis tui*), and Lat. x (*intellegibiles oculos cordis*).

¹⁰ Instead of τὸν σωτήρα ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν in **Π**, Karneev wrote τὸν Σωτήρα Χριστόν, without any mention in his apparatus..

¹¹ Georg.: ახალი მკნელი ზუენი “our new saviour”.

¹² Translation by Muradyan (2005, 141). As she noted (2005, 87, n. 15), զիմանալի is a correction by Marr on the basis of the Georgian version: საგონებელი (M2 101 has զարմանալի).

¹³ Karneev added ἀνθρώπου in brackets

It is omitted in Arm.-Georg.¹⁴ Possibly, the original reading was that represented by Lat. γ: τοὺς νοερούς ὀφθαλμούς τῆς καρδίας σου. The mention of οὗτος ὁ ἥλιος τῆς δικαιοσύνης in **II** is at another place in all other Greek manuscripts, but at the same place as in Lat. γ, and Arm.-Georg. The sentence καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα τοῦ παλαιοῦ νέον ἐν σοὶ γένηται is omitted in all other Greek manuscripts, Lat. x, and Eth. (in Ps.-Eust. as well, but the text is a paraphrase).

(4) Καλῶς οὖν ὁ φυσιολόγος ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς φύσεως ἐκάστου γένους. As has already been mentioned above, this sentence is present only in **II** and Arm.-Georg.

Abbreviations

- CPG Maurits Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, 5 vols. Turnhout: Brepols 1974–1987
 Jacques Noret, CPG, III. 2nd edn. Turnhout: Brepols 2003
 Maurits Geerard, Jacques Noret, *Supplementum*. Turnhout: Brepols 1998.
<https://clavis.brepols.net/clacla/Default.aspx> (accessed on 20 November 2023)
- MLP *The Multilingual Physiologus: Studies in the Oldest Greek Recension and Its Translations*, ed. Caroline Macé and Jost Gippert. Turnhout: Brepols, 2021.
- NA28 *Novum Testamentum graece post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle*, ed. Barbara and Kurt Aland, 28th edn Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012. <https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel/>
- PG Jacques-Paul Migne. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca*, I–CLXI. Paris, 1857–1866.
- Rahlfs *Septuaginta, id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXXX interpretes*, ed. Alfred Rahlfs. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1953. <https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel/>

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¹⁴ About the meaning and importance of the adjective νοερός in the *Physiologus*, see Macé 2021c, 503 and n. 40.

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A New, Critical Edition of Armenian Deuteronomy, Forty Years after Its “Diplomatic” Predecessor

*Reflections and the Results of New Collations**

▼ **ABSTRACT** This paper serves to introduce a new critical edition of Armenian Deuteronomy, forty years after the diplomatic edition was prepared as a doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto. It deals with the challenges involved, such as how to reconstruct the underlying Greek source text and linguistic issues that are to be taken into account in collation, notably certain preferences in word order. The last half of the paper advances the rewards that repay the preparation of such a critical edition, including the recovery of an early form of the Greek source text, and, in the case of Deuteronomy, an appreciation of the contribution of the translator in shaping the theological message of the book.

▼ **KEYWORDS** critical edition, Deuteronomy, preferred word order, Septuagint, theology of the Armenian translation of the Bible, translation technique, collating manuscripts.

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1. Introduction

If we were offered an early fifth century manuscript (MS) of the book of OG¹ Deuteronomy, it would be an exciting day, even if bits of it were illegible for one

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¹ I am aware that this paper contains terminology and abbreviations that may not be familiar. OG = Old Greek, the earliest translation of the Old Testament into Greek. It is often used as a synonym for “Septuagint”, or

Claude E. Cox  0009-0004-8292-350X • McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton (Ontario), Canada,
(Email: c.cox@sympatico.ca)

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reason or another. Something like this may help in envisioning the place of the Armenian translation in the textual criticism of the OG text. This version, like other secondary versions,² is not in Greek and, for that and for several other reasons, there are bits of it whose source text cannot be precisely reconstructed. I say “reconstructed” because, in collating a secondary version in the pursuit of the original OG, it is not a question of collating the translation as it stands but of collating the source text from which it has come. This is an important distinction. The analysis provided here rests on the remaking of an edition of Armenian Deuteronomy (Arm Deut), of taking a diplomatic edition and having it rise like a phoenix into an edition that presents an eclectic text, a fully critical edition, after the space of forty years. This exploration begins with the desideratum of critical editions of texts; continues into the challenges of producing an eclectic text from which the source text can be reconstructed; finally, it sets out the rewards of this entire enterprise.

2. The Desideratum: A Critically Established, Eclectic Text

The diplomatic edition of Armenian Deuteronomy was prepared as a doctoral thesis (1979), under the tutelage of John W. Wevers, and was published in 1981, as *The Armenian Version of Deuteronomy* (Cox 1981). Sample passages from some 100 MSS were collated against Wevers’ edition of the OG; text groups were established, five, and a MS chosen from MSS that preserve the “purest” form of text to serve as base MS for collation. A stemma was prepared that showed three main groups (*a b c*) and two groups descended from the third (i.e., *d e*, from group *c*). Groups *b c* (*d e*) are all descended from the earliest form of text, *a*. Representative MSS were chosen from the five groups and their variations from the base MS provided in an apparatus, two MSS from groups *a b* and one each from *c d* and *e*. An additional group *a* MS was cited from time to time. The text was compared with the Peshitta to eliminate the Peshitta as a possible source text or aid in the translation of the OG into Armenian. Collations of the newly edited text were made against Wevers’ critically established text (Wevers 1977). It was determined that the Armenian version is related to OG groups *b n d t* and somewhat closer to groups *b n* than to *d t*. Agreement with hexaplaric³ readings

LXX, which, when understood in its narrower sense, refers only to the translation of the Books of Moses, the Pentateuch, which were translated from Hebrew to Greek by the Jewish community in Egypt in the early third century BCE. M = Masoretic text, the Hebrew text. In reality, “Masoretic text” refers to the Hebrew text that the Masoretes worked on in the late first millennium CE, but it is often used anachronistically of the form of text that became the Masoretic text.

² The Armenian version is a “secondary” version, because it is a translation of a translation. The “primary” versions of the Hebrew Bible are the OG, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Latin Vulgate. The Old Latin, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Georgian, and Arabic are secondary translations, all having the OG for the most part as their source text.

³ Hexapla = third century multi-columned comparison of the OG against the Hebrew, prepared by Origen. The OG stood in the fifth of its six columns. Origen used particular signs to indicate where the OG was longer than the Hebrew; where the OG was shorter — by words, phrases or more — he added what was lacking from the sixth column, which is attributed to one Theodotion, marking what he had added with an asterisk before and a metobelus (:) after. This conflated text is called “hexaplaric”, and the entire enterprise “the Hexapla”, after

was determined to be 30%. The conclusion was drawn that the source text of Arm Deut was a Byzantine type of text that is a secondary witness to the Hexapla.⁴

In the lists of evidence for variant readings in the Göttingen editions, “Arm” and other secondary versions stand at the end, after papyri, MSS, and patristic evidence, because they are not in the original language and, by and large, their textual character remains unclassified. “Unclassified” because of the lack of critical editions of their texts (this remains true as well of the patristic evidence, which most often lacks critical editions). In the case of the Armenian, it is the old edition of Zohrabeian that has served as its representative. This edition is “head and shoulders” above many of the text editions of its day. Published in 1805, it incorporated the textual evidence of all the MSS that were available to Zohrabeian at the St Lazar monastery in Venice (Zohrabeian 1805). He chose as a base MS one that was complete and finely copied but whose textual character was unknown at the time (V1507, dated 1319). It was an early day in the development of a scholarly approach to textual criticism. Unfortunately, in Deuteronomy his base MS preserves a rather developed text: the text belongs to a subgroup (*cII*) of group *c*. (As is the case with the LXX, MSS may change their textual affiliations from book to book. So it is that Zohrabeian’s base MS preserves an excellent form of text for the book of Pss.) However, Zohrabeian had at his disposal eight other MSS, some of which attest a purer form of text (Zohrabeian 1805, XII–XIV). Major variations among these MSS from his base MS are recorded in an apparatus.

The Göttingen editions of the OG employ Zohrabeian’s text, there being none other more suitable; that is true of Deuteronomy as well. Wevers, the editor, collated Zohrabeian’s text and apparatus, as Arm^{txt} and Arm^{app} when they differ. The fact that Zohrabeian’s apparatus records many variants means that they are then recorded by Wevers for the sake of completeness. Some of these relate to inner-Armenian corruptions, so, in order to evaluate their worth, an understanding of the Armenian textual tradition is required. Few have that training. Unique Armenian readings are rendered into Latin by Wevers.

Göttingen editors were expected to handle the secondary versions; few had experience with the non-translation literatures of these languages. And there were fewer tools than are available now. In 1979 the personal computer and the internet — so taken for granted now — did not exist. The Matenadaran had no website. For undertaking a critical edition of the Armenian, there are now the following important

its supposed six columns. Its LXX/OG column became widely copied and affected much of the OG textual tradition, including the Armenian version. The Armenian version and manuscripts of it, by way of signs in the text itself and marginal readings, is an excellent witness to Origen’s work, so important for understanding the developing Greek textual tradition.

⁴ For details, see Cox 1981, 298–99. In the explanation of signs and symbols employed in his edition, Wevers places Arm (i.e., the Armenian version) with group *oII* (MSS 29, 58, 72, and 707). The translation has some sort of relationship with MS 72, but the relationship with individual MSS was not worked out for this paper. The siglum *O* and *ol* et al. denote Origen’s recension, the former the main group of witnesses and the latter other witnesses with significant hexaplaric content. The complete list of text groups is as follows: *O* and its sub-groups *ol* and *oII*; *C* and its sub-groups *cI* and *cII*, catena MSS; groups *b d f n s t y z*; “mixed” or “unclassified” MSS, of which there are ten in total.

resources. First, the Göttingen edition and Wevers' collations (1977), albeit of Zohrabeian, are in hand and immensely useful. Second, the text and apparatus of *Armenian Deuteronomy* (Cox 1981), where there is a base MS better than Zohrabeian's and an apparatus with evidence presented on the basis of the textual groupings of Armenian MSS. Third, there is the edition of the Armenian text prepared by Andranik Zeytunyan (2002). In spite of its title, it is not an eclectic text but, rather, largely reproduces the text of Zohrabeian. However, his apparatus has been most helpful in the light of the limited collations of the entire text in *Armenian Deuteronomy*. Zeytunyan collated some 41 MSS, including five used in *Armenian Deuteronomy*. He does not say on what basis he selected these MSS and, since he does not determine what text groups they belong to, the support for variant readings is simply a list. Zeytunyan used a cut-off date of 1700, unfortunate because sometimes late MSS preserve an early text form. MS BFBS (British and Foreign Bible Society) is an example, dated 1667. Further, he uses an idiosyncratic method of assigning sigla for the MSS, consisting of a capital letter (i.e., A, etc.) and a subscript number (so, A₉, et al.). There are occasional mistakes but, since more evidence is always better than less, I have found his edition to be a real advantage. Further, he provides quotations of Arm Deut from several Armenian historical works and commentaries, helpful to have. Fourth, in the 40-year interval several crucial digital resources have become available. *Accordance* and programs like it have put powerful concordancing resources at one's fingertips where the Greek text is concerned. The large Greek-English lexicon, Liddell-Scott-Jones (LSJ), has been supplemented now by GE (Montanari 2015).⁵ On the Armenian side, Armenian E-Bible was announced in 2017.⁶ It presents the Bible in classical Armenian according to the 1895 Constantinople edition, with an English translation (the KJV) in parallel columns, and offers click-on-the-word parsing and concordancing. The site also provides various Armenian dictionaries online. None of these resources was available forty years ago.

3. The Challenges of Reconstructing the Greek Source Text of Armenian Deuteronomy

There has long been a supposition that the Armenian Bible was first translated from Syriac and then revised to a Greek text, based on some ambiguity in the historical record. For Deuteronomy that was already excluded at the diplomatic edition stage. Then, there is evidence among the texts and manuscripts of some books of an earlier stage of translation, designated Arm 1 (perhaps some Syriac input), and a later stage, Arm 2, each with its own translation strategies, the latter being much more word-for-word, literal to the point of reproducing syntax. This too is a complex issue. The translation of Deuteronomy evinces characteristics of Arm 1, so that question

⁵ This lexicon does not replace LSJ but, for one thing, it employs newer editions of texts. For the LXX it uses not the critical editions published in Göttingen but the diplomatic edition Rahlfs 1935.

⁶ <https://arak29.org> (.) As for dictionaries on the site, I mention Ghazaryan 2000.

can be set aside too.⁷ The challenges that remain in reconstructing the Greek source text are created by the need to deal with the differences between the source text language and target text language *as languages* and the identification of elements that belong to the translator (tr.), for example, stylistic improvements. These are not mutually exclusive, because sometimes stylistic improvement may represent positive interference upon the text from the standpoint of preferences in the target language.

3.1. *Linguistic Differences between Greek and Armenian, Manifested in Armenian Deuteronomy*

The list that follows grows out of trying to meet the challenges of determining readings in the source language while taking into account the way the two languages “do things”. This is a randomized list of differences frequently encountered in collating Armenian Deuteronomy against the OG.⁸

- Armenian does not mark for gender, or rarely does so. For example, the same word can represent αὐτός, αὐτή, αὐτό.
- Armenian does not have a future indicative tense *per se* but, rather, employs the subjunctive mood to express the future. This becomes a challenge when variant readings in the OG involve the subjunctive versus the future indicative.
- Greek has two demonstrative pronouns and adjectives, “this” and “that”, whereas Armenian has three, “this” (սս), “that” (ηω), and “that over there” (իւ). The translator often uses the farther demonstrative where the OG has the “near” one.
- Greek may employ a verb in the singular number when the subject is a neuter plural; not so Armenian.
- Armenian has many words that are morphologically plural but have a meaning that is singular. For example, շէնք *shenk* “building”, where -k’ is the marker of plurality, nominative. The issue becomes confusing in the accusative case, where -s is the marker of plurality but is also the shortest form of the nearer demonstrative adjective. For example, լեռիս *lerins* can be either “mountains” (acc. pl.) or “of/to this mountain” (gen./dat. sing.).
- In Armenian a form of the subjunctive may be used to express the imperative. Which is that form in a particular context?
- Armenian does not have an equivalent for the emphatic negation οὐ μή.
- Many Greek verbs involve a simple verb to which is affixed a preposition, as in ἀκούω “I hear”, but then εισακούω, ἐπακούω. This is not so true of Armenian. The Armenian translation may employ the same equivalent for all three. Which stood in the source text? Consider also the verb προπορεύομαι, whose πρό- element is often represented by a preposition following the verb, but, where not, the trans-

⁷ See now, succinctly, “1.4.7 Armenian Translations: Secondary Translations”, in Lange and Tov 2016, 370–75.

⁸ See “The Use of the Armenian Version for the Textual Criticism of the Septuagint”, in Fernández Marcos 1985, 25–35. The list that follows draws together observations made specifically from comparing Armenian Deuteronomy with the OG in Wevers’ edition.

lator adds an equivalent (ստաջի *araji* “before” + pronoun [20.4]; յարայագոյն *yarajagoyn* “before” [31.6]). They have no expressed source text.

- Armenian participles may be used as finite verbs.
- Armenian has no equivalent for the slight adversative, *δέ*. There are stronger adversatives, but most often the Armenian translator uses *եւ* (= *καί*).
- Armenian may employ an undeclined pronoun at the head of a relative clause, *որ* — compare Hebrew *’asher* — which greatly simplifies syntax: ὅσοι ἄν, οὓς, οἷς can all be represented by simple *որ* (or *zor*, with *z-*, the accusative marker). But what stood in the source text?
- Armenian has a “participle of necessity”, formed with the infin. + an *-ots’* ending, and used with a copula verb to express what must take place or is expected to take place. It is often used in Deut, but does not exist in the Greek version. Its appearance is a matter of style and nuance.
- Greek has a range of synonyms. For example, *ἐναντι*, *ἐναντίον*, and *ἐνώπιον* all mean “before”. More generally, it may be difficult to differentiate among synonyms in the OG, because the Armenian translator used the same equivalent for both, or all three, in the example just given.
- In Deuteronomy, the OG may employ an additional pronoun to express reflexivity, e.g., *ἡμεῖς αὐτοί* “we ourselves”. Armenian has a separate reflexive pronoun, but collocations like *ἡμεῖς αὐτοί* are rendered simply with, for example, *մեր mek’* (= *ἡμεῖς*). It might be supposed that, in this situation, *αὐτοί* was lacking in the source text, but that is not likely so. Example: 4.16.
- Whereas Greek may feature a preposition that has a series of nouns dependent upon it, in that case Armenian may repeat the preposition before each item. This does not mean that the source text had those prepositions.
- Armenian may have two verbs, even three, together, *asyndetically*. For its part, the OG may attest a circumstantial ptcp. + finite verb, the Armenian two finite verbs (e.g., 11.28, 31); the source text did not have two finite verbs.
- In a list of two items (or three?) that have possessive pronouns, whereas the OG has a pronoun with each noun, Armenian may employ only one, which suffices for both. In such a case, the lack of a possessive pronoun does not mean that the source text was lacking one. See 11.25; 12.6, 17; 12.31; 13.6; 33.19.

4. Linguistic Preference? Matters of Style?

The single most significant issue to emerge in the preparation of a critical edition of Armenian Deuteronomy and its re-collation against the OG is that of preferred word order in Armenian. This manifests itself primarily in two situations. The first involves a group of verbs (*αἰτέω*, *δίδωμι*, *εἶπον*, *εἰσάγω*, *ἐντέλλομαι*, *ἐξάγω*, *περιαιρέω*, and *ὑπεροράω*), where the following word order obtains: verb + expressed subject + indirect pronominal object (or, rarely, a dir. obj.), rendered into Armenian with the object transposed to a position immediately after the verb.

The second collocation involves the clause *ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται* (or *ἢ*) “(that) it may be well with you”, rendered as *q̄h p̄ur̄h ȷ̄gh̄ p̄l̄q̄ zi bari lits’i k’ez*, again with the pronoun transposed to a position *after* the verb or, put differently, with the predicate adjective and verb together. The consequence of these transpositions is that the result sometimes sees Arm convene with the main Hexaplaric witnesses (*O Syh*⁹), so that, if the transpositions were *not* already in the source text of Arm, an understanding of its textual affiliations is skewed if they are so regarded. In fact, it seems more likely that they are often attributable to Armenian style and preference and belong to the translator.

4.1. OG Verb + Subject + Indir. Obj. > Arm Verb + Indir. Obj. + Subj.

The cases of the transposition involving the verb *εἶπον* are instructive; *εἶπον* occurs 102x in Deut. The formulation *εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς με* occurs 13x; in all instances the prep. phrase *πρὸς με* > *ghu — ts’is*, a single syllable — is transposed, to produce *uuuug ghu Sṭp asats’ ts’is Tēr* (“said to me the Lord”; so 1.42). In all cases the transposition is unique to Arm. Wevers does not cite the first 8x (1.42; 2.2, 9, 31; 3.2, 26; 4.10; 5.28) but does cite the last 5x (9.12, 13; 10.1, 11; 18.17). In no case is there any Greek textual evidence; this suggests that the translator made all these changes in conformance with Armenian style.¹⁰ At issue here is the fact that these single-syllable personal pronouns are enclitics, a consideration that may have escaped those collating the Armenian against the OG. Armenian word order is sometimes preferential, even if it is flexible. Hans Jensen’s remarks are most helpful, though when, in his examples, the Armenian is mirroring the Greek source text, less compelling. He does cite this example from the Gospel of John: *ἐτοιμάζω τόπον ὑμῖν* > *uquunruuuntnū ḏl̄q̄ un̄t̄h̄ patrastem dzez teghi* “I am preparing for you a place”, where the translator has moved the (indir.) object to a position immediately after the verb.¹¹ The translator of Deut acts on this preference. In the light of the example provided by *εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς με*, each such transposition must raise the question: Does it have an equivalence in the source text, or is it attributable to the translator’s intervention in the interest of good style?

In some cases the transposition is already attested in Greek witnesses. To take the case of the verb *δίδωμι*, there are six examples of the OG word order in Deut, e.g., *ἦν ἔδωκεν κύριος αὐτοῖς* > *qnr̄ tun l̄ngu Sṭp* “which gave to them the Lord” (2.12). All six attest the transposition in the Armenian, and in five cases there is evidence for the

⁹ The Syro-Hexapla (Syh) is a translation of the hexaplaric text into Syriac and a major resource.

¹⁰ There are two instances that stand apart from these thirteen, where the two-word subject (*κύριος ὁ θεός*) in the Greek is modified by an articulated genitive, itself with a pronominal possessive pronoun; there then follows an indirect object. This is more easily visualized than described: *ὃν τρόπον εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ὑμῖν* “as said the Lord God of our fathers to us” (1.21; the same formulation occurs at 27.3). The Armenian translation retains this word order: *nr̄uṭu uuuug un̄t̄r Uunnuw̄d h̄w̄rgn̄ ḏl̄r̄ng ḏl̄q̄*. (Greek is unaccented when a reading is a variant to the original OG).

¹¹ Jensen 1959, § 417–20, esp. § 418.

transposition among Greek witnesses, if little (8.18; 10.4) and mixed (9.10, 11). The six passages in question are:¹²

- 2.12 W. does not cite Arm; no Greek witnesses attest the transposition.
 8.18 (ὅτι αὐτός) σοι δίδωσιν] tr 626 529 118'-537 318 Arm Syh = M
 9.10 (ἔδωκεν) κύριος ἐμοί] μοι κυριος A F M 376-ol' 422 d f. 458 t.(76 inc) y 18'-83-630' 55 59^{Lat}cod 104 Arm Bo
 9.11 (ἔδωκεν) κύριος ἐμοί] μοι κυριος (+ ο θεος 527) A F M 15'-oII⁽⁻⁷²⁾ 422 f. y 55 59 Arm = Compl¹³
 10.4 (ἔδωκεν αὐτάς) κύριος ἐμοί] μοι κυριος 44 Arm
 11.17 κύριος 2^{o14}] ad fin tr b n^{Lat}cod 100 Arm.

In 2.12 Arm is alone in attesting the transposition; W. does not cite it and it is unlikely to reflect a source text. In the case of 8.18, a few scattered Greek witnesses attest the transposition, but the list includes MSS 118'-537, group *b* MSS. At 9.10 the support for the transposition includes groups *d* *t*, also the hexaplaric group *ol*. In the next verse (9.11), group *oII* is of interest as a congener for Arm, but there is no MS from *b d n t*. At 10.4, only one Greek MS attests the change of word order, a group *d* MS, 44. (We note that in 10.4, there remains the direct object αὐτάς between the verb and the indirect object; it is an option for it to remain there after the verb). At 11.17 groups *b n* attest the transposition. That Arm alone has the transposition at 2.12, casts doubt at 10.4, where this one Greek MS attests it. The agreement is collated, but one is aware that the support is weak. Generally speaking, in Deuteronomy, Arm seems most closely related to groups *b d n t* and that knowledge comes to bear in situations like this: if the transposition in the Armenian is attested by Greek witnesses with which it usually convenes, this increases the likelihood that it existed in its source text. A “likely” reconstruction is possible.

4.2. Transposition in the Translation of the Expression: ἵνα εὖ σοι γένηται (or ἦ) > զի բարի լիցի քեզ (zi bari lits'i k'ez)

4.2.1. The collocation εὖ γίνομαι occurs six times in Deut with the 2nd pers. personal pron. in the dat., σοι, occupying a position between the predicate adv. and the verb. 5x the expression is εὖ σοι γένηται and Arm renders it with the σοι > քեզ in a position after the verb, so բարի լիցի / լիցի քեզ. The five instances are, together with evidence for the transposition, as cited by W.:

- 4.40 426 Arm = M
 5.16^{Lat}cod 100 PsHi Ep XI 1 Ruf Or princ IV 3.4 Arm = M
 12.25 O Arm Syh = M

¹² For a delineation of the MS groups and abbreviations, see Wevers 1977, 44–49.

¹³ i.e., the Complutensian Polyglot, whose Greek text is of importance.

¹⁴ The little circle means the first occurrence of such-and-such — in this list, κύριος.

- 12.28 O^{-376} Arm Syh = M
 22.7 O^{-376} Arm Syh = M
 6.18 Arm.

In the sixth case of εὖ σοι γένηται , Arm places σοι *before* εὖ , perhaps for emphasis; εὖ γένηται are again not separated: (qh) $\text{քեզ բարի լիցի / լինիցի}$. Here is the support for that transposition in W.: only Arm.

4.2.2. In Deut there are six occurrences of this same expression but with the verb εἰμί , as εὖ σοι ἦ (ἔσται 19.13), or as ἵνα εὖ ἦμῖν . Arm places the σοι (ἡμῖν) after the verb thus: $\text{բարի լիցի / լինիցի քեզ (մեզ)}$. The location and support for the transpositions in these cases are:

- 5.33 Arm(*faciat tibi*) Syh
 6.3 A F V 58–72 C'' $f s^{-30'}$ y 28 55 59 319 407 646 Arm = Compl M
 6.24 (εὖ) ἡμῖν / ἦ tr B F 15'–426 44–106*–107' 56'–75 74–134^{mg}–799^c 71'–318 128–630' 509 Arm Syh = Compl Ra¹⁵
 10.13 O Or III 551^{Lat}cod 100 Hil Ps II 15 CXVIII dalet Arm Syh Vulg = M
 19.13 O Arm Syh = M.

In the case of the sixth occurrence of the expression using εἰμί (at 15.16), the indir. obj. (αὐτῷ) follows the verb, so it is already “transposed”, and Arm follows that word order: (ὅτι) $\text{εὖ ἔστιν αὐτῷ παρὰ σοί} > \text{(qh) բարի իցէ նմա առ քեզ}$. A number of Greek witnesses rearrange the word order to reflect the common one:

$\text{ἔστιν αὐτῷ}] \text{αυτου εστι } 458; \text{ tr B } n^{-458} = \text{Ra.}$

4.2.3. Finally, in two instances εὖ is used as a predicate adv. with the verb ποιέω and the dir. obj. σε positioned between the adv. and the verb, so εὖ σε ποιήση (OG: ποιῆσαι) “that he might do you good” (Brenton 1851–; cf. *NETS* 2007) (8.16) and εὖ σε ποιήσει “he will treat you well” (30.5). The collocation εὖ ποιέω τινά (acc.) means “treat someone well” in classical Greek; less frequent is εὖ ποιέω τινί (dat. of person): so LSJ s.v. ποιέω A.III., B.2, and 3, with examples. In both instances Arm places the obj. after the verb, a word order attested by the following witnesses.

- 8.16 O Arm Syh: cf. M
 30.5 O d t Arm(*erit tibi*) Syh = M

Arm at 8.16 is $\text{եւ բարի արաւցէ քեզ}$. The pronoun քեզ may be either acc. or dat. Here it is most likely dative, “and that he might do good to you”. Greek ποιέω can take a double acc., but is that true of ωνηύει ? See further, 8.16. For our purposes, it is enough

15 i.e. Rahlfs 1935.

to record the transposition. Of even more interest is 30.5, where the OG is *καὶ εὖ σε ποιήσει* “and he will treat you well”, and Arm is *եւ բարի եղիցի քեզ* “and it will be good for you” (W.: *erit tibi*). The transposition = M, but not the translation. In this instance the translator has adapted the translation of the phrase to its common form with *եղիցի*, the aorist subjunctive or second subjunctive of *լիլիս*. The translator may be indicating with this unique rendering a stylistic intervention in the translation, namely, variation.

4.2.4. The question is: Are these transpositions part of the source text of Arm, or were they brought about by the preference in Armenian to have the copula verb and pred. adv./adj. together? The pronoun in the posterior position? A glance at the list of examples might lead one to conclude that Arm is a first rate witness to the hexaplaric text. This proves not to be so. In the 12 instances of transposition, Arm joins O and Syh some 6x = M (in order, from first item until last through the three lists: 12.25, 28; 22.7; 10.13; 19.13; 30.5). In the remaining six cases: once Arm = M is attested by one O group MS (4.40); another Arm = M is otherwise only attested by patristic citations (5.16), weak co-attestation. In the four last examples: once Arm transposes the indir. obj. *before* *εὖ γένηται*, uniquely ≠ M (6.18); once the transposition is widely attested, = M, but, among O group MSS, has the support of only two (6.3); twice Arm is supported by the Syro-Hexapla for a transposition, but has a different translation (5.33; 30.5); twice Arm does not have the support of any Greek witnesses (6.8; 8.16 [W.: “cf. M”]). In Deut generally, the congeners of Arm are groups *b d n t*. These appear only once — and then only *d t* — in support of the transposition (30.5). The conclusion I draw is that the agreements with the main hexaplaric witnesses O Syh = M may be coincidental and derive from there being a preferred order of words in representing the Greek *εὖ σοι γένηται*. This conclusion is consistent with the translation of *εὖ* + indir. obj. + *γένηται* outside of Deut.¹⁶ For example, the transpositions occur in the Armenian translation of Judith, where there is no hexaplaric text. It seems to me that the only instance of transposition among the twelve that should be cited with respect to the OG in Deuteronomy is that at 30.5, where OG groups *d t* attest it.

5. Differences between the OG and Its Translation into Armenian that are the Result of the Translator’s Flexible Strategy

It is a paradox that the less literal a translation is, less word-for-word, but more flexible or fluid, “better”, the more difficult it is to reconstruct the source text. In this respect, the translation of Deuteronomy is highly literate and features a multitude of interventions by the translator in order to enliven the text, make its message clear, have its syntax conform with that of non-translation Armenian, provide variety of expression,

¹⁶ These data are provided in an excursus at 12.25, in the Notes that accompany the critical edition of the Armenian text of Deuteronomy.

improve its style, and interpret its content. The following list itemizes characteristics of the translator's interventions to produce such a translation. Differences between the Armenian and the OG and the apparatus in Wevers are not evidence of a different source text. Aspects of the translator's approach to translation include the following.

- The translation adds many small words of different types: personal pronouns, numerous times (15x cited, e.g., in chapter 4, namely, 4.4 ["you" pl.], 30 ["you" sg.], 38 ["you" sg.]); various particles, adverbs, and conjunctions such as *արի* "now" (1.28; 26.15; 31.28), *սիս* "look!" (1.8; 2.4); *այլ* "but" (2.36; 14.20; 15.10, 14); *զի* "for" (1.8; 14.1; 17.16; 18.2); *անսի* "from there" (6.23; 7.19); *անդէն* "to there" (24.19); *ուր* "where" (5.22); demonstratives, *սա* "that one, he" (33.29), "that" (15.22; 25.8); *իսկ* "really", a flexible little particle that has no real equivalent in English, but lends a certain emphasis (e.g., 1.19; 3.21).
- The translator sometimes omits recapitulative pronouns or adverbs (e.g., *τοῦτο* in 14.8).
- The translator may not repeat possessive pronouns in parallel collocations (e.g., 2.25 || 11.25).
- The translation employs varied equivalents for Greek words: e.g., *ἀφίστημι* occurs 6x, and has three equivalents (*զանգիւնեցուցանել*, *մերժել*, and *սպստամբել*, see 1.28; 4.9; 7.4; 13.10, 13; 32.15); the little adv. *ἐκεῖ* "there" is rendered with *ի վերայ նորա* "upon it" (14.22 1°); *անդ* "there" (14.22 2°; 16.6 2°); and *ի նմա* "in it" (16.6 1°).
- The translator simplifies the text by simplifying the syntax. So, e.g., *ἐν πάσιν τοῖς ἔργοις σου, οἷς εἰπὴν ποιῇς* "in all your works, *whatsoever* you do" > *յամենայն գործս քո քոր անդիցես* "in all your works *that*¹⁸ you may do" (14.28).
- Prepositions are repeated before parallel items governed by one preposition in the OG: there are numerous examples (1.17; 2.37; 3.21, 27; 6.8, 14; 7.18; 11.6, 19; 13.12; 28.37; 31.9; 34.11). This is also a characteristic of style in some non-translation Armenian literature.¹⁹ On the other hand, the tr. may omit several prepositions after the first of a series of parallel prepositional phrases in the OG (14.25).
- The translator introduces slight abbreviations of the text. In the following two examples, an attributive modifier involving a prepositional phrase is reduced to an adjective: *τὰς πόλεις τὰς ἐν τῇ ὄρεινῃ* "the cities that are in the hill country" > *քաղաքս լեռնականս* "the mountain cities" (2.37); *ὁδὸν τὴν εἰς Βασάν* "the road that (is) to Basan" > *ճանապարհն Բասանու* "the road of Basan" (3.1).
- The tr. changes a post-positive attributive adj. to its cognate abstract noun: *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τῆς ἀγαθῆς* "on the good land" > *ի վերայ երկրին բարութեան* "on the land

¹⁷ The unaccented Greek, as already noted, indicates a variant reading. In this case, the critically established text is *ἄν*.

¹⁸ This is accusative, so the attraction of cases of the Greek is not reflected.

¹⁹ For example, in the history of the fifth-century writer P'awstos Buzand, as reproduced in Thomson 1989, 163: *յամենայն ի շէնս եւ ի գեղս, յամենայն կողմանս Հայոց առ հասարակ* ("in all inhabited places and in villages, in all the areas of Armenia, throughout").

of goodness” (8.10; similarly, 11.17); τὸν θησαυρὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀγαθόν “his good treasury” > զգանձս բարութեան իւրոյ “the treasury of his goodness”²⁰ (28.12); see also, πλήρεις πάντων ἀγαθῶν “full of all sorts of goods” > լի ամենայն բարութեամբ “full of all goodnesses” (6.11).²¹

- The tr. makes many small changes of various kinds (some of which can be considered as explanatory), slight abbreviations, exegetically motivated, or as an unexpected equivalent. None derives from a source text different than that of the source text more generally. Here are diverse samples, occasionally with an annotation. The Greek text is to the left, before the square bracket if there is one; the Armenian variation to the right. “Arm” attests each reading uniquely, unless otherwise noted. If there is a translation into Latin, that is from Wevers’ edition.

- 1.41 κατὰ πάντα ὅσα “in accordance with all that”] րալէս *sicut* “as”.
- 2.9 κληρονομεῖν “to inherit”] ի ժառանգութիւն “for an inheritance” *in hereditatem* Latcod 100 Arm Bo = M. Also 4.36.
- 2.34 κατελίπομεν] + αὐτων Or Cels IV 58.
- 2.36 οὐ (προσέ)λθομεν]] յոր *in quam*. Explanatory.
- 3.18 ἐνοπλισάμενοι προπορεύεσθε πρὸ “arming yourselves, go before” > վառելարուք անցք անաջի “arm yourselves, pass before”. Slightly different, visually.
- 3.20 καὶ κατακληρονομήσουσιν] զի ժառանգելոցին *ut possideant* “so that they may take possession of”.
- 3.28 τοῦ λαοῦ] ժողովրդեան իմոյ “of my people” *populi mei* Aeth. Adds emphasis.
- 4.22 ἐγὼ γάρ] եւ արդ եւ անախի “and now, look, I” *et nunc ego ecce*. More dramatic.
- 5.10 εἰς χιλιάδας] ի հազար ազգս “to a thousand generations”; W.: *generationes* Aeth Arm Co = Targum.
- 5.25 ὅτι ἐξαναλώσει “for (this great fire) will consume”] զի մի սատակեցէ “for (this great fire) will not consume (us)” *enim* (Aeth: *et*) *ne consumat* Aeth Arm. Exegetical clarification.
- 8.5 ὥς εἴ τις παιδεύσει ἄνθρωπος “as a certain person might discipline” (*NETS*)] րալէս այր որ իր խրատէ “just as some man who teaches”; W.: *quemadmodum homo (vir aliquis* Arm) *qui docet* Latcod 100 Arm.
- 11.2 τὰ παιδιά ὑμῶν “your children”] վասն որոցն քոց “on account of your sons” *propter filios tuos* Arm.
- 11.29 ἐκεῖ] *iordanem* Aeth ընդ Յորդանան Arm.
—A clarification; no source text. As for Ethiopic, it, in fact, transposes the adv. to a position after αὐτήν. See W.
- 12.22 ἔδεται] կերիցին “they shall eat” *edent* Arm.
—Change of number of the verb to accommodate compound subject.

²⁰ This is a typical stylistic feature of classical Armenian described in works on grammar as վերացական թանձրացականի փոխարեն (“the abstract instead of the concrete”).

²¹ This example is different from the previous ones, because ἀγαθῶν is a substantivised adjective, so the translation by a noun is normal. However, had the translator wanted, he could have used the adj. բարի, which can also be substantivized.

- 15.12 զ] + կին *mulier* Arm. Clarification.
- 15.17 πρὸς τὴν θύραν ἐπὶ τὸν σταθμὸν “against the door upon the doorpost”] ի վերայ սեւնց դրան “against the doorpost of the door”. W.: τὴν θύραν] *postes ianuæ* Arm. The translator collapses two prepositional phrases into one, which makes for an economy of words.
- 15.21 μῶμος πονηρός “serious defect”] + զինչ էլ գուցէ “whatever at all”.
- 16.5 οὐ δυνήσῃ (θῦσαι) “you shall not be able (to offer)” > մի ժտեցես զինուլ “you shall not dare to offer”.
—The translation makes it clear that the admonition is to be taken seriously.
- 16.10 ἰσχύει “(according as your hand) is strong” > կարող իցէ “(as much as your hand) will be able”.
—An interpretation: strength is understood to be ability.
- 17.12 ὁ ἄνθρωπος “the man” > մարդ որ “any man/a man”.
—Clarification: the admonition applies to absolutely everyone.
- 18.14 ἀκούσονται “listen to” > անսան “obey, give ear to, yield”.
—Interpretation: “listen to” means more than simple listening; it means obey, yield to.
- 19.15 (κατὰ πᾶσαν) ἀδικίαν “injustice” > (ըստ ամենայն) ապիրատութեան “wickedness”
—Interpretation: “injustice” is “wickedness”.
- 20.19 τὰ δένδρα αὐτῆς “its trees” > զծառատունկ նրա “its cultivated trees”
—Clarification: by “trees”, cultivated trees is meant.
- 24.5 ἐξελεύσεται (εἰς τὸν πόλεμον) “will go out to war” > մտցէ (ի պատերազմ) “will enter (into a war)”. W.: *ingredietur* Arm.
—The translator employs a different verb.
- 28.30 ἔξει αὐτήν “shall have her” > հանիցէ ի քէն “shall take her away from you”. W.: αὐτήν] + *a te* Arm.
—Clarification; more dramatic statement.
- 28.32 δεδομένοι “given” > մատնելալ “handed over”
—Clarification: not just “given to” but “handed over to”, better contextually.
- 32.36 ἐν ἐπαγωγῇ / καὶ παρειμένους] էլ մատնելալ ի գերութիւն “and handed over into captivity”; W.: *et traditos in captivitatem* Arm.
—An exegetical interpretation that introduces the Exile. The transposition is rooted in style, the desire to have all three participles modified by the prepositional phrase: εἶδεν γὰρ παραλελυμένους αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐκλελοιπότες ἐν ἐπαγωγῇ καὶ παρειμένους “For he saw them paralysed, both failed under attack and enfeebled”. (*NETS*) “Paralyzed”, “failed”, and “enfeebled” are participles in the Greek. The prepositional phrase ἐν ἐπαγωγῇ stands between the second and third participle. In the Armenian version, the Greek becomes Չի ետես զնսա յովժեալս և լքեալս և մատնելալ ի գերութիւն “For he saw them enfeebled, and discouraged and delivered up to captivity”. The prepositional phrase ἐν ἐπαγωγῇ, rendered “under attack” in *NETS*, has been translated as ի գերութիւն “to captivity”, and transposed, so that it modifies all three participles, which now follow one another, uninterrupted by the prepositional phrase. It stands at the end.

These samples of the Armenian translator's strategy show that it is unwarranted to think a different source text is involved than the witnesses we see more generally across the OG text and apparatus in Wevers' edition. Rather, the flexibility of this strategy is responsible for some of the challenges that arise in collating the Armenian for the purpose of recovering the original text of the OG.

6. The Rewards that Repay the Effort in Undertaking the Preparation of a Critical Edition of Armenian Deuteronomy

6.1. The Recovery of an Early Form of Text

The first and ultimate aim of preparing a critical edition of a text is to recover its earliest form, whatever the purpose for which that text is to be used. In this case, the text is to be employed in the recovery of the earliest form of OG Deuteronomy. Since the translation was made in the early fifth century — the same period as the significant and well-known MS Alexandrinus, the Greek source text is relatively early, if it can be recovered. I was surprised to find that occasionally whole verses or more of the Armenian translation went by without the register of a variant reading from the critical edition of the OG: yes, the Armenian text is worthwhile recovering; it is early and a witness to a relatively pure form of the Greek text.

6.2. A Critical Edition of the Armenian Reveals that Readings Preserved in Medieval Greek MSS Derive from an Early Date

Most of the MSS of Greek Deuteronomy are medieval. When their textual variants are also found in the Armenian translation, the antiquity of those readings is confirmed. They are given not only a time, but also a place of currency. The other side of the coin is that, though MSS of OG Deuteronomy may be late, variant readings may well have emerged much earlier. Of course, we know that "late" MSS can preserve an early form of a text.

6.3. A Critical Edition of the Armenian Confirms that the Collation of a Diplomatic Edition of the Text was Worthwhile

The conclusion arrived at in Wevers' work with respect to the Armenian — on the basis of Zohrabeian — finds basic confirmation in a critically established form of the same text. In part this is because Zohrabeian not only reproduced a MS, but also provided a generous apparatus where he recorded readings from other MSS that differed from his base MS (i.e., the text he reproduced). The conclusion set forth in the 1981 diplomatic edition of the Armenian was that its source was a Byzantine form of text, as preserved in (Greek) groups *b d n t*, and somewhat influenced by the

Hexapla.²² The following is a comparison of the results of collations in 1981 — first line begins with “91”, and now — the second begins with “61”.²³ The latter figures are provisional, and will likely find some adjustment as the new edition and its collation take final shape, but there is a basis for general comparison. The figures are located below sigla for the various Greek text groups and subgroups (*oI* and *oII* are subgroups of *O*).²⁴

<i>O</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>oI</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>oII</i>
91	87	78	65	52	52	51	46	33	32	30	14
61	102	107	91	92	39	53	41	36	17	23	7

Some observations. Armenian Deuteronomy’s closest congeners remain *b d n t*, but now *d* has replaced *b* by a slight margin as its closest text form among the four. Most dramatically, the relationship with the main *O* group is diminished, and this fact may serve to underline the impression that hexaplaric content in Arm Deut comes largely through hexaplaric elements that are part of the *b d n t* text groups.

6.4. A Critical Edition of the Armenian Permits the Identification and Elimination of Extraneous Readings from the Göttingen Edition Apparatus

There are two types of variants from the lemma (i.e., the printed text) in the Göttingen edition of Deuteronomy that can be set aside when a critical edition of the Armenian is brought to bear. First, because of the nature of Zohrabean’s edition — a relatively “poor” base MS, textually, and citations of the Armenian denoted as Arm^{txt} and Arm^{app}, of which there are many, the apparatus in the edition of the OG records a great number of differences that are now recognized as inner-Armenian corruptions of one kind or another. Second, there are many variant readings unique to the Armenian. These are of two types, those that are a reflexion of the difference

²² Again, summarily, Cox 1981, 298–99. For information on the “Byzantine” type of text, see Wevers’ text histories that accompany his editions of the Greek text of the five books of Moses. The volume on Genesis has separate chapters on the groups *b d n t*, and those on Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers have chapters on the Byzantine text. The volume on Deuteronomy (Wevers 1978) contains a chapter devoted to the *n* group. Arm Deut has a relationship with MS 72 of the *oII* subgroup, and that seems to be the basis for Wevers’ placement of Arm Deut with that group in his “Key to signs and symbols”.

²³ The newer collations did not take into account +/– καί and δέ; divergent spellings of proper names or vocabulary; transpositions with respect to the two types of transposition treated in detail in this essay; + / – the definite article. The collation count was extended to five text groups, because *b n d t* are four in themselves; attestation by a “group” was counted when half or more MSS of a text group attested that variant reading.

²⁴ The tabulation sets out the number of agreements between the Armenian and its source text — identified by the various text groups in the Greek, the top line of the three — in descending order of number of agreements, from left to right. The text groups begin with *O*, main Hexaplaric or Origenian text group. It has two sub-groups *oI* and *oII*. *C* identifies the Catena group of MSS. The other sigla, *b d n*, etc., are text groups, that, in the list of sigla in Wevers, appear in alphabetical order, *b* through *z*. The line that begins with 91 presents the agreements of Arm with the text groups in 1981; the line that begins with 61 presents the agreements based on the critical edition of the Armenian. The letters *b d n t* are in italics, calling attention to the largest numbers of agreement. These four manuscript groups are related and attest a form of the Byzantine type of text.

between Greek and Armenian style (e.g., the addition of personal pronouns) and various types of clarifications and exegetical intrusions that the translator has made. In the reconstruction of the source text beneath the Armenian translation, a great many of these may be set aside as belonging to the exegetical analysis of an Armenian text that has been adapted for a reading audience, and contributing to an understanding of how the OG was read — fascinating (!), but not part of the textual criticism of the OG.

In the course of collating the new critically established text against the Göttingen text, a list of more than 550 such items was drawn up for removal from Wevers' apparatus, often designated "not in critical text", i.e., the Armenian critical text. That's quite a "spring cleaning".

7. Conclusion

The translation is far from a word-for-word translation. This was a surprise. It is far less such than the Armenian translation of Job, whose OG source text could hardly be less such in relation to its Hebrew source text, but is, rather, extremely flexible in its translation strategy. Armenian Job follows its Greek source text closely. The translator of Armenian Deuteronomy is highly skillful in making the text come alive, with the addition of many particles, the simplification of the syntax, variations in vocabulary, some striking non-equivalents, small clarifications and the like. There is also an exegetical perspective. For example, the phrase "the land that the Lord our God is giving (δίδωσιν) to you" occurs many times, many, and the translator always renders it with the future tense, because the event lies in the future from the standpoint of the participants; it has not yet been given to them. In addition, Armenian has a way of expressing what really should take place in the future, a verbal consisting of a participle with a special ending and a copula verb.²⁵ The phrase already occurs in 1.20: ὁ ὁ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν δίδωσιν ὑμῖν. Its translation (v.20) employs the common future, formed with the aorist subjunctive, գոր Տէր Աստուած մեր տաւցէ ձեզ (*zor Tēr Astuats mer tats'ē dzez*) "that the Lord our God will give to you". A few verses later, the translator uses the other form, գոր Տէր Աստուած տաւոց է մեզ "that the Lord God will surely give us" (1.25). This nuance really doesn't have an equivalent in English; it is exaggerated in the English translation just provided. Now, throughout Deuteronomy this adjustment is made and often cited, if there are other witnesses, secondary witnesses, that also employ a future tense. However, it never existed in the source text. The knowledgeable user may know that, but maybe not.

The Armenian translation of Deuteronomy turns out to be a most interesting text with, on the one hand, its embedded Hebraisms inherited from the Greek source text and, on the other hand, the positive interference exerted upon the translation to make it more accessible and attractive to its target audience.

²⁵ Sometimes called a "participle of necessity". See Jensen 1959, § 266; Cox 1984 and cf. Thomson 1989, 77.

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A Note on Armenian-Caucasian Albanian Contacts

*The Words for “Bishop” and “Maid”**

▼ **ABSTRACT** The paper discusses two possible borrowings between Classical Armenian and Caucasian Albanian (CALb.). It is argued that CALb. *iskapōs* is borrowed from Arm. *(e)piskapōs* attested in two of the earliest Armenian inscriptions and modern Armenian dialects. The similarity of CALb. *axal-* “nurse” and Arm. *ałaxin* “maid, female servant” is probably not due to chance.

▼ **KEYWORDS** loanwords, language contact, Ancient Greek language, Classical Armenian, Caucasian Albanian, inscriptions, literary language.

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1. Introduction

The prolonged contact between speakers of Armenian and Caucasian Albanian (CALb.) since late antiquity has led to a series of borrowings from the former into the latter language. Table I lists examples of probable loanwords that have been identified so far.¹

* Many thanks to P. Dardano (Siena), J. Gippert (Hamburg), M. Giorgieri (Pavia), A. Scala (Milan), and the two anonymous reviewers for their useful advice. All faults and shortcomings are my own responsibility. Although MEMAS usually uses the LOC (*Library of Congress*) system of transliteration, for this article (except the references) it was necessary to follow the HMB (*Hübschmann-Meillet-Benveniste*) system.

¹ Cf. Gippert et al. 2008, vol. 2, 80–81; Gippert 2011; Schulze 2015; Schulze 2018; Schwartz 2023, and Gippert and Schulze 2023, 219.

Daniel Kölligan  0000-0002-3134-8398 • Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Institut für Altertumswissenschaften, Lehrstuhl für vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft, Würzburg, Germany, (Email: daniel.koelligan@uni-wuerzburg.de)

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Table 1: Armenian loanwords in CALB.

CALB.	← ARM.
<i>marmin</i>	<i>marmin</i> մարմին “body, flesh”
<i>avel</i> “much, many”	<i>aweli</i> ւաւելի “more”
< <i>žd</i> >	<i>žolovowrd</i> ժողովուրդ “people, assembly, congregation” ²
<i>hačex</i> “right (hand)”	<i>aǰuǰ</i> “right (hand)”
<i>kor-</i> “back” ³	<i>kor</i> կոր “crooked, bent” ⁴
<i>kala</i>	<i>kał</i> կալ “lame” ⁵

Other forms look conspicuously similar to Armenian correspondents, but deviate in aspects that make a direct borrowing at least questionable; note e.g. the different vowels in CALB. *garazman* “grave” and Arm. *gerezman* “id.”.⁶ Beside loanwords, numerous calques, for instance, in word-formation, bear testimony to the influence of Armenian on CALB., e.g., *ayzi-d’ip-* [land-writing] “land taxation” ~ Arm. *ašxar(h)a-gir-, b’eğown-powl* [sun-eye] “sun” ~ Arm. *areg-akn*, Georg. *mzis-tual-i*, *p’a-hüwķ* [two-heart] “wavering” ~ Arm. *erk-mit, sa-hüwķ* [one-heart] “harmless” ~ Arm. *mi-a-mit*, etc. (cf. Gippert et al. 2008, vol. 2, 21–22).

Since these words are visible for us only in the Bible text, it is impossible to decide whether they were *ad hoc*-creations rendering the Armenian forms and remained artificial or had also gained currency in general language use. The same might apply to the loanword *marmin* and probably *žolovowrd*, which Gippert et al. (2008, vol. 2, 81) describe as having a “notable religious connotation”, and which might have been restricted to ecclesiastic language. But the other terms listed above belong to every-day language and basic vocabulary, for example, *avel* “much” and *hačex* “right”, and if the explanation of *iškāpos* proposed in section 2 is correct, it would equally speak in favour of a complex and long situation of bilingualism. The usual direction of borrowing was clearly from Armenian as superstrate language to Caucasian Albanian. However, in section 3 a possible case of the inverse direction shall be discussed.

² The form is always written abbreviated as *žd* in the CALB. palimpsest, so the identification is not guaranteed.

³ Cf. *kor-biyesown / kor-ihesown* “to return”, *il’ow-kor-biyesown* “to answer”, lit. “to return word(s)”, *kowl-kor-biyesown* “to recompense”, lit. “to return hand(s)”.

⁴ Cf. also CALB. *kori-baksun /-besun* “to bend” < “to become / make crooked”.

⁵ Cf. however also Georg. *kel-ob-* “to limp”, *m-kel-ob-el-i* “lame, limping”. CALB. *mow’ak* “worker” could be borrowed from Iranian, cf. NPers. *mušāq*, Arm. *mšak*, Georg. *mušaki*, cf. Gippert and Schulze 2023, 216–217.

⁶ Cf. the recent discussion of these forms by Schwartz 2023, Gippert 2023 and 2024. As pointed out by one of the anonymous reviewers, the Armenian dialect of Julfa (Jula) has *g’arezman* which might preserve an older variant preceding vowel assimilation, if it is not a recent borrowing from New Persian *garizmān*; cf. also Achařyan 1971–1979, vol. 1, 542–543.

2. CALb. *iskapōs*

CALb. *iskapōs** “bishop” is attested as *iskaosown* (GEN) in a marginal gloss to 2. Tim. 4:1 and on the Mingēčaur pedestal, probably written in 557 CE, in the ergative form *iskaposen* (cf. Gippert et al. 2007, vol. 2, 86–87): its vowel /a/ instead of /o/ seen in the standard corresponding forms Arm. *episkopos* and Georgian *episkoposi* from Gr. ἐπίσκοπος finds a match in the Armenian variant (*e*)*piskapos* (ԵՍԻՍԿԱՍՈՍ), recently discussed by Clackson (2020), attested in the earliest Armenian inscriptions: in the Tekor inscription, dated between 478 and 490 CE (cf. Greenwood 2004, 79–81, no. A1), the form *piskapos* stands at the left margin of the inscription at the beginning of the line with no space to its left.⁷ This makes it questionable if one should indeed read *episkapos* (or even correct the reading to *episkopos*) and assume that the first letter is missing due to mistake or for some other reason. Probably, the form should be taken at face value, i.e., *piskapos*. Beside this, in the later Mastara inscription from 640–50 CE (cf. Greenwood 2004, 84, no. A10), one reads *episkaposi* in line 2. These forms might indicate that before the standard Greek form *episkopos* was generalized in the literary language, Armenian had at least two further variants, *piskapos* and *episkapos*. The latter is continued in a number of modern Armenian dialects showing its local survival,⁸ and such a variation does not seem unusual in the process of the accommodation of loanwords.⁹ While the sound change /o/ > /a/ is likely to be an inner-Armenian development (cf. again Clackson 2020), the aphaeresis of the initial vowel may have occurred already in Greek. In fact, *πίσκοπος* occurs as a surname in Modern Greek, it is found as place name e.g. on Crete near Αγία Ρουμελή, in the compound Πισκο-πιανό (Ηρακλείου) on the northern coast of Crete between Heraklion and Malia, and in literary texts such as the twelfth century “Story of the donkey, the wolf and the fox” (Γαδάρου, λύκου και αλουπούς διήγησις ωραία): l. 202 πάγω σαν ηγούμενος, σαν *πίσκοπος* γυρίζω “I stride like an abbot, I walk around like a bishop” (cf. Kriaras 1969–1994, s.v.). While aphaeresis is common in Modern Greek, cf. βρίσκω “to find” < εὐρίσκω, (ἐ)ντόπιος “local”, (ἐ)ξυπνός “awake”, δέν “not” < οὐδέν, etc. (cf. Hatzidakis 1892, 74, 321–322), examples for ancient Greek are more difficult to find, except in the context after a vowel, where it occurs frequently, for instance, in papyri, e.g. τὰ ’πιγεγραμμένα (for ἐπιγεγραμμένα, POxy. 1453.27, 30/29 BCE) (cf. Gignac 1976, 1.319). Apart from these cases, the phenomenon is probably hidden by the normalizing effect of written transmission, and only exceptionally may we catch a glimpse of lexicalized forms showing it. One such case could be the lemma νῆς in Hesychius (ν 527) glossed as τὸ ἔνης, ὅπερ ἔστιν εἰς τρίτην, Δωριεῖς [δὲ] νῆς λέγουσι (cf. Beekes and Beek 2010, 424), i.e. the

⁷ Cf. the photograph in Der Nersessian 1977, 55.

⁸ E.g., Araratyan *yebiskabos*, Jula / Julfa *yepiskapos*, Marala *yepaskapōis*, Salmast *yepiskapos*; in Western Armenian dialects: Polis *ebisgabos*, Xarberd *yebisgabos*, Alaškert *yebiskabos*, etc. Cf. Acharyan 1971–1979, vol. 2, 29.

⁹ Cf. e.g. variants of German *Felleisen* “knapsack” from Ital. *valigia* “suitcase” such as *Fellis*, *Felles*, *Fellentz*, *Velleis*, or of *Hängematte* “hammock” from Taino (Haiti) → Span. *hamaca*, Germ. *Hamacca*, *Hamach*, Pl. *Hamacos*, *Amaknen* (cf. <https://www.dwds.de/> s. vv.). In the case of Armenian (*e*)*piskapos* one might consider an influence of *kapem* “to bind”, as one of the anonymous reviewers points out.

genitive of ἔνῃ (ῥῆμα) “the day after tomorrow”, based on PIE **h₁eno-* “that one”. Since both **h₁eno-* and **h₁no-* would result in Gk. ἔνο-, the Doric form, if one can trust Hesychius that it existed, must be due to aphaeresis. Another case often mentioned in the literature is σκορακίζω “to despise” which was explained already in antiquity as a delocutive form going back to the curse (ἐ)ς κόρακας “To the ravens (with you)!” (cf. e.g. Lejeune 1987, 223), but which could derive from a noun **skoro-* “critique, blaming” from PIE **sker-* “to cut” (cf. Kölligan 2018, 66, n. 12).

In any case, the colloquial variant πίσκοπος could be the source for Arm. *piskapos*. Armenian would then have had a form similar to those attested in the early Germanic languages, ON *biskup*, OE *bisceop*, OHG *bischof*, etc. (in contrast to Gothic *aipiskaupus* directly taken from literary Greek) which because of its initial /b/ Kretschmer (1951, 103–04) explains as borrowed from another colloquial Greek variant, viz. ἐβίσκοπος, attested e.g. in Lydia (Διογᾶς ἐβίσκοπος Ἀμμῷ πρεσβυτέρα μνήμης χάριν) (cf. Körte 1902, 31), compare also other forms showing the same voicing of /p/, e.g., from Thera (IG XII 3, 905) Ἐβικτοῦς, from Phrygia (MAMA X 396) Ἐβικτητος, and from Paros (IG XII [5] 378) Ἐβάφρᾱς, etc., while EWAhD II.112 prefers the hypothesis that the Germanic forms were taken from Romance languages, cf. Span. *obispo* (with rounding of /e/ due to the following labial?), Port. *bispo*, Ital. *vescovo*, where the form without initial vowel is probably due to the definite article (*l*)o, i.e. **l'obispo* > *lo bispo*. Another possibility might be a voicing dissimilation of the two labials (**[e]pi-skopo-* > **[e]bi-skopo-*) in the Germanic languages and/or influence of the prefix **bi/bi-* (Germ. *bei*).¹⁰ In any case, it seems that both in Greek and Armenian next to the standard forms ἐπίσκοπος / *episkopos* there were various colloquial forms coexisting with and, in the case of Armenian, later replaced by this form in the standard language. The Armenian form closest to CALb. *iskapos* is the variant *piskapos*, the only major difference being the word-initial labial stop, which may have been lost due to its generally weak auditive distinctness¹¹ combined with the presence of a second labial stop in the same word. One may stress that so far it is only Armenian — apart from CALb. — that attests a form with /a/ (also contrast Syr. *ēpīsqōpā*), which makes the assumption of an Armenian influence onto the CALb. form likely.¹²

3. Armenian *alaxin* and CALb. *axal-*

The discussion about the origin of Armenian *alaxin* աղախին “maid, female servant” (cf. for its meaning e.g. Gen. 12.16 *carayk' ew alaxnayk' daniayp lu աղախնայք παῖδες*

¹⁰ Dissimilation also seems to be at work in Old Georgian *ebiskopoz/s* next to *episkopoz/s* (ratio of attestations: 1:4), strengthened by the tendency to avoid three glottalised stops within a single word (cf. Gippert 1993, 106, 253). An instance of the complete loss of an initial stop by dissimilation is Georg. *etrati* < **tetradi* from Gr. τετράδιον.

¹¹ Cf. the classical study of Miller and Nicely (1955) and its repetition by Lovitt and Allen (2006).

¹² Cf. Gippert et al. 2008, vol. 2, 81: “Only CA *iskapos* ‘bishop’ shows a special shape vs. Gk. ἐπίσκοπος, Arm. *episkopos* and Georg. *episkopos-i*, which may indicate a deeper integration into the spoken language, probably in connection with an early date of borrowing”.

καὶ παιδίσκαι, Lk. 12.45 *zcaraysn ew zalaxnays* զծառայսն եւ զալախնայս τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰς παιδίσκας) is summarized up to 2010 by Martirosyan (2010, 24–25). One can identify two basic approaches, viz. (a) to take it as a loanword from a non-Indo-European language, and (b) to assume an IE origin:

(a) Marr (1915, 22, n. 1) derived *alaxin* from Arm. *alx* (-i-, Bible+) “lock; ring; furniture, possessions; group of wayfarers, crowd”, taking the latter to have meant “house” originally.¹³ D’jakonov (1971, 84; 1980, 359; 1985, 598) further connected both *alx* and *alaxin* with a reconstructed Hurritic form **all-ahḫe* “household”, Urart. *alae* “lord/lady”, and Akkadian *alahḫinu(m)* supposed to mean “miller” (cf. also Greppin 1983, 266). Recently, Simon (2022, 70) has discussed this proposal again, concluding that the connection with *alx* is uncertain, both due to the different meanings of the Armenian form (“ring button, lock; baggage, goods; crowd”) and due to the fact that one would rather expect Arm. **alax* than *alx*. He points out that “The meaning, the Hurrian origin, and Diakonoff’s morphological analysis of *allahḫe/innum* are uncertain”.¹⁴ Also, as a designation of some kind of official, probably a miller, a semantic connection with *alaxin* seems not very promising. Therefore, Simon proposes a Hurrian adjective **allahḫinni* “belonging to the lady” (cf. Hurr. *alla* “lord/lady”, Urart. *alaeue/i-* “lord”), which would seem to provide a better semantic fit and be a correct form in Hurrian. Since this source for the Armenian word is reconstructed on the basis of the Armenian form itself, this etymology is possible, but not certain. An alternative proposal has recently been made by E. Alleva (Università di Pavia),¹⁵ who takes *alah(h)inni* to derive from the root *al-* “to speak”, to which the suffix *-ahḫ-* (used only with verbs) was added and the suffix for professions *-ini*. The form would thus mean “he who speaks (on behalf of someone else)”. In this case, there would be a considerable semantic gap between the Hurrian and Armenian forms, which makes a borrowing less likely.

(b) Meillet (1936b, 73) proposed to derive *alaxin* from *alam* “to grind”, with *-x-* functioning as a suffix as in *glowx* զլուխ “head” beside Lith. *galvą* etc. (cf. Meillet 1936a, 36). Olsen (1999, 470, 770, 776, 836) suggested a connection with the root of Lat. *alō* “to feed, raise”, via a form **(h₂)lḥ-k-ih₁no-* with a complex diminutive suffix as in PDE *lamb-kin*. Arm. /x/ would then be caused by preaspiration in the context /Hk/. In both explanations the existence and possible prehistory of the suffixes is difficult to ascertain.

A different proposal might be to connect the Armenian form with a CALb. word for “nurse” attested once in the Gospel palimpsest in 1 Thess. 2.7 in the ergative form *axalnen*:

¹³ Cf. also Acharyan 1971–1979, vol. 1, 118b.

¹⁴ NB the precise meaning of Akkad. *allahḫinu* is unclear, cf. Black et al. 2000, 10: “*alahḫinu(m)*, *alḫenu*, NA *lahḫinu* ‘miller’? Ass.; NA (an official in temple service); OA *rabi a.* (an official)”, hence it is not evidence for the existence of the Hurrian form.

¹⁵ Mauro Giorgieri p. c.

<i>axal-n-en-hačinke</i>	<i>bân 'i-ba-hanay-ağ-en-ke</i>	<i>ğar-m-owx</i>
nurse-STEM-ERG-as	great-make: PRS-REL-REF:F:SG-ERG-REL	child-PL-ABS ¹⁶

Arm.

<i>Orpēs</i>	<i>dayeak</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>snowc'anic'ē</i>	<i>mankowns</i>
որբէս	դայեակ	մի	որ	սնուցանիցէ	մանկունս
Like	nurse	one	REL	nourish.3SG	child.ACC.PL

Greek

ἐὰν	τροφός	θάληπ	τὰ	ἐαυτῆς	τέκνα
when	nurse.NOM.SG	cherish.SBJV.3SG	ART.ACC.PL.N	self.GEN.SG.F	child.ACC.PL

“like a nursing mother taking care of her own children” (tr.: English Standard Version)

Since the origin of CALb. *axal-* is unknown (cf. Gippert and Schulze 2023, 220), one could in principle assume a borrowing in either direction:

- a. Arm. *alaxin* → CALb. **alax(i)n-* > *axal(i)n* with metathesis of /x/ and /l/ and subsequent inflexion following the model of stems in *-al-n-*: *axal-* belongs to a small group of words with the non-past participle suffix *-al-*, which add the stem formant *-n-* before the ergative case ending, cf. *ba-al* “doing/doer”, ERG *baal-n-en*, *b'akexal-n-* < **b'akexal* “opposition”, *qa-bital-n-* < **qa-bital* “veil”, *bal'-baqal-n-* < *bal'-baqal* “servant”.¹⁷
- b. In the opposite direction, the CALb. ERG *axalnen* may have been the source of the Armenian NOM *alaxin* (GEN *alaxnoy*). In this case one has to assume
 1. a metathesis of /x/ and /l/ (**axalnen* > **alaxnen*), which may have been triggered by the semantically close form *atij* / *atjik* աղիկ “girl” (*t-j*: *x-t* → *t-x*),¹⁸ cf. Gr. *παιδίσκη* and Lat. *puella* meaning both “girl” and “female slave”. Metathesis in loanwords in Armenian can also be seen in other cases, cf. Arm. *t'snami* թշնամի “enemy” < Iran. **duš-maniḡ-* (cf. Olsen 1999, 450); Arm. *xlowrd* խլորդ (Lev. 11.30) “mole” ultimately from Syr. *xuldūdā*

¹⁶ Cf. Gippert et al. 2008, vol. 2, 59. NB the verb stem is *bân'i-biyesown* “make great, nourish”.

¹⁷ Cf. Gippert et al. 2008, vol. 1, II–23. Regarding the representation of Arm. *η* /*l*/ as CALb. /*l*/ as in *kala-* ← *kal* “lame” (cf. Table I) cf. further instances pointed out by one of the reviewers: *kalamb* → Udi *kalamb* “cabbage”, Lezg. *kəlamp* “radish” (cf. Vinogradova and Klimov 1979, 156, 158; Greppin 1991, 82), Arm. *mangal* “sickle” → Udi *mangal* (Achařyan 1971–1979, vol. 3, 251b; Vinogradova and Klimov 1979, 157), Arm. *plinj* “copper” → Udi *piling* “copper” (Achařyan 1971–1979, vol. 4, 89; Vinogradova and Klimov 1979, 156).

¹⁸ A. Scala, p. c. A metathesis of /x/ and /l/ is also seen in *maxal* մախալ “sack, bag” for which Achařyan 1971–1979, vol. 3, 228a reports a variant *malax* մալախ in *The Lives of the Holy Fathers* (Վարքա պրքոց հայրանւնց).

“field-mouse” via **xldur(a)*,¹⁹ and Arm. *patasxani* պատասխանի “answer” from Iran. **patsaxani* < **pati-saxwan-iġa-*.²⁰

2. loss of the first nasal (**alax[n]en*), probably caused by its double occurrence in the same syllable (dissimilation),
3. raising of /en/ > /in/ (**alaxen* > *alaxin*) as a phonological process and/or as an adaption to other nouns in -in, cf. NOM *marmīn* մարմին “body”: GEN *marmnoy*, and *darbin* դարբին (-nac’) “blacksmith”.²¹

Other case forms that so far are not attested in our limited corpus of CALb. might have provided further starting points for the creation of the Arm. paradigm, e.g., a GEN.PL **axal-n-oy* could have been reinterpreted as a GEN.SG in Armenian (*alaxnoy*) and have given rise to the NOM *alaxin* following a model like *marmīn* “body”: GEN *marmnoy*. Also the other inflectional forms of Arm. *alaxin* can be explained by inner-Armenian models: the plural in -ayk’ follows *kin* “woman”, PL *kanayk’*: *alaxin*: x = *alax(i)nayk’* (cf. Olsen 1999, 463), and for the forms in -eay- (e.g. Agathangelos § 186 *zaxaxneays* զախախնեայս) one may compare other nouns in -eay- designating persons, e.g. *p’axsteay* փախստեայ “fugitive” (*p’axowst* փախուստ “flight”), *k’ristoneay* քրիստոնեայ “Christian”, and especially the semantically close *paštōneay* պաշտօնեայ (-ēic’) “servant” (*paštōn* “service”; cf. *ibid.*, 381–382).

Loanwords designating nurses and midwives are e.g. Arm. *dayeak* դայեակ “nurse” < MP *dāyag* (PIE *d^heh₁-* “to suckle”), OLith. *mamkā*, *momkā* “wet nurse” (CIG₁ 78 *Mamka* ‘Amme .. die das Kind .. fäuet’) borrowed from Polish or some East Slavic variety, cf. OPol. *mamka*, East Sl. *mamka* (ORuss. *mamka*, Russ., BRuss., Ukr. *mámka*),²² and Lat. *maia* “midwife” (Cypr. Gall., Gl., Romanian *maie* “old woman, grandmother”) borrowed from Gr. *μαῖα*, and Lat. *iatromea* < Gr. *ιατρόμαια* “professional’ midwife” (CIL 6.9477, 9478). One may add the late Latin *paraba/olānī* “sick-nurses (esp. of infectious diseases)” (*Cod. Just.* 1.3.17, 18 *paraba/olanin*), based on παράβολος “reckless person, person exposing themselves to danger”.²³

While Arm. *alaxin* “handmaid, female servant” and CALb. *axal-* “nurse” are not a perfect semantic match, it is conceivable that the meanings may develop into one another in a situation where acting as a nurse is one of the duties of a female servant, or vice versa, nurses may take on further duties.²⁴ Whatever the direction of borrowing, Arm. *alaxin* and CALb. *axal-* may belong to this group and should probably be discussed together.

19 *ibid.*, 885.

20 Cf. *ibid.*, 901. In CALb. cf. *čaxar* “temple” beside Arm. *tačar* տաճար, OP *tacara-* “palace”.

21 Probably borrowed from Urartian, cf. Hurr. *tabrinni-* “id.”, cf. Yakubovich 2009.

22 Cf. Hock 2020 s.v.

23 Cf. Bowersock 2010 on this both charitable and violent group.

24 NB in ancient Rome, “the *τιθήνη/tithēnē* or *τίτθη/tithē* [...] was usually a slave” (Wiesehöfer 2006). For modern times one may compare the *aleksandrinke*, Slovene peasant women migrating to Alexandria between the 1850s and 1950s to serve as domestic workers, often wet nurses, cf. Hladnik 2015.

4. Conclusion

The long-term contacts between speakers of Armenian and Caucasian Albanian are reflected in Armenian loanwords and calques in the latter language. Among these, the form *iskapōs* is of special interest, as it seems to reflect a non-standard variant of the Armenian word for “bishop”, (*e*)*piskapōs*, attested in early Armenian inscriptions and modern dialects. Together with basic vocabulary items like words for “right (hand)” and “much/more”, they show that contact was not restricted to the Armenian literary standard, which soon ousted such variants in favour of the form closest to the Greek source word. In the case of Arm. *alaxin* “female servant” and CALb. *axal-* “wet nurse” (ERG *axalnen*), the direction of borrowing cannot be determined definitely. Since so far the discussion about Arm. *alaxin* has not settled the question of its etymology, it might be worthwhile to take CALb. *axal-* into account.

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Translation of the Genitive Absolute in the Armenian *Alexander Romance*

Exploring the Shift from Sensus de Sensu to Verbum de Verbo Approach

▼ **ABSTRACT** This article discusses the translation techniques employed in rendering the Greek genitive absolute in Book I of the Armenian *Alexander Romance*, amidst the transition from *sensus de sensu* to *verbum de verbo* translation approach. Through a comparative analysis of corresponding passages in the Armenian and Greek texts, six primary techniques are revealed – three leaning towards descriptive interpretations and three favouring a more literal rendition. These techniques align closely with those found in other translations labelled pre-Hellenising. The findings not only enhance our understanding of translation practices in the fifth and sixth century Armenia, but also provide valuable insights for the broader field of translation studies. Also, the results add evidence to the discussion of the still obscure question of continuity between the classical, pre-Hellenising, and Hellenising translations.

▼ **KEYWORDS** *Alexander Romance*, genitive absolute, translation technique, Armenian, Hellenising School, pre-Hellenising translations.

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of translation is probably as old as human language, and some of the earliest documented discussions regarding various manners and methods of translation trace back to classical antiquity. In his treatise *De optimo genere oratorum*

Rok Kuntner  0009-0007-4208-8273 • Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Institut für Altertumswissenschaften, Lehrstuhl für vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft, Würzburg, Germany, (Email: rok.kuntner@stud-mail.uni-wuerzburg.de)

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(14), Cicero mentions two translation approaches — “ut interpretes” (like an interpreter) and “ut orator” (like an orator).¹ The former merely aims to convey the literal meaning of the words from the source language to the target language, while the latter additionally strives to capture their character and impact. The practice of translating “ut interpretes” seems to have been common for handling legal texts, while translating “ut orator” was better suited for literary prose and poetry (see Brock 1979, 69–70).

The dilemma, which technique to apply, logically arose for translating the Bible, which possesses both legal and literary character. This dilemma might be reflected in the inconsistent nature of the Septuagint translation(s) (71–73). However, it appears that, eventually, the more literal approach to translating the Holy Scriptures prevailed. Jerome, the author of the Latin *Vulgata*, when confronted with the issue of translation technique, which he discussed in his letter to Pammachius, declared (*Letters* 57.5): “me in interpretatione graecorum, absque scripturis sanctis, ubi et verborum ordo mysterium est, non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu” (“in translating from Greek, except for the Holy Scriptures, where even the order of the words is a mystery, I render sense for sense and not word for word”).²

In the West, Jerome’s approach largely established the principles for translating the Holy Scriptures in the ages to come.³ Before Jerome, however, the competition between the two approaches — *sensus de sensu* and *verbum de verbo* — was widespread. It arose in virtually every literate society with a tradition of translation practice long (or rich) enough for the prevailing approach to undergo critical scrutiny. The potential reasons for a shift in the translation approach were numerous and differed from age to age and from culture to culture.

Differences between the renderings of Hebrew in the Septuagint and Aquila as well as between the renderings of Greek in the Syriac Peshitta and the Philoxenian/Harclean translation are just two well-known early examples for a shift from predominantly *sensus de sensu* to predominantly *verbum de verbo* translation approach.⁴

In Armenian literary history, a similar shift occurred, with the line most commonly drawn between the classical and Hellenising translation schools.

The Armenian translation of the Bible, produced in the early fifth century, established a standard for the *classical* translation approach, marked by precise and transparent renderings of Greek⁵ into clear, idiomatic Armenian, prioritising sense over form (Cuendet 1929, see also Muradyan 2012, 191–201). The natural flow of

¹ See the Loeb edition (Hubbell 1949).

² Hieronymus 1845 (Latin text); Schaff and Wace 1893 (English translation).

³ See further Brock 1979, 69–70.

⁴ An even freer approach than that of the Peshitta is characteristic for Tatian’s *Diatessaron*, a harmonised version of the Gospel accounts dating back to the second century.

⁵ Stanislas Lyonnet presented a compelling argument in his monograph (1950) that there likely existed an older Armenian translation of the Gospels, produced from a Syriac text (Arm. 1). The nature of its Syriac source has been a subject of debate, with discussions revolving around whether it was a harmony of the Gospels (Lyonnet 1950) or an Old Syriac version of the separated Gospels (Vööbus 1950). In the first half of the fifth century, still during the same period, the initial translation (Arm. 1) underwent a thorough revision on the basis of a Greek source (or sources), giving rise to the Armenian vulgate type of text (Arm. 2). This revised version is most notably represented by the Zohrabian edition (1805, see Metzger 1977, 167.).

language, the beauty of diction, and the refined style of the Old Armenian Bible prompted the French orientalist Mathurin Veyssière de La Croze (1661–1739) to label it as the Queen of the Translations (Hacikyan et al. 2000, vol. 1, 97). A similar approach was also employed in the Armenian translations of the greater part of patristic literature.

In classical translations, Grecisms occur only as exceptions;⁶ however, in the corpus of the Hellenising School, they are consistently present across all levels of linguistic analysis (see Muradyan 2012). It doesn't appear, however, that this shift toward a literal translation technique and the standardisation of vocabulary was primarily driven by the desire to enhance clarity in interpreting the Holy Scriptures or to resolve a theological dispute, which might have been among the main motivating factors behind revisions of the Syriac Bible (see Wright 1894, 13–17 and Baumstark 1922, 185–89). This is evident from the content of the Hellenising corpus, where one encounters grammatical, rhetorical, and philosophical treatises, such as Dionysius Thrax's *Grammar*, Aelius Theon's *Progymnasmata*, and various works by Plato, Aristotle, and Philo. On the other hand, there are few works of religious significance, and, crucially, no programmatic revision of the Bible translation.⁷ The bulk of the Hellenising corpus consists of texts with technical, often scientific, content suitable for higher education. Therefore, it seems plausible that these texts were translated both to aid students in better understanding the Greek originals, and to develop a native technical terminology and abstract vocabulary — essential for the evolution of scientific genres in Armenian (see Calzolari 1989 and Muradyan 2014, 322–23).

The texts traditionally categorised as Hellenising, however, do not form a homogeneous group. The differences among them have been considered in numerous attempts to periodise the School's activity.⁸ In the course of the history of research, several texts characterised by a more moderate Hellenising approach than that of the majority of the Hellenising translations have been identified. In many respects, these texts are closer to classical translations, and they are now labeled *pre-Hellenising*.⁹ In terms of translation technique, they exhibit many syntactical and few morphological and lexical Grecisms. Particularly noteworthy is the near absence of stereotypical preverbs calqued on Greek. Besides differences in translation technique, the Hellenising and pre-Hellenising texts also differ in terms of their content. The majority of the texts associated with the pre-Hellenising corpus — the *Sermons* of Gregory of Nazianz (Lafontaine and Coulie 1983), the *Asketikon* and the *Sermons* of Basil the Great (Uluhogian 1993), the entire Armenian corpus of Athanasius of Alexandria

6 On the lexical level, Grecisms often manifest as loanwords, particularly in terms associated with the Church as an institution. Examples include նախկոպոս from ἐπίσκοπος, կաթողիկոս from καθολικός etc. Syntactical Grecisms occur sporadically.

7 See Manandean 1928; Akinean 1932; Arevshatyan 1973, and Terian 1982 for detailed studies of the Hellenising School corpus and its classification; an overview is given in Arevshatyan 1973, 186–88. For brief introductions into the Hellenising School, see Mercier 1978; Calzolari 1989; Kölligan 2014, and Muradyan 2014.

8 Most notably Manandean 1928; Akinean 1932; Arevshatyan 1973, and Terian 1982.

9 *Pré-héllenophile* in French, see Lafontaine and Coulie 1983, 137. For previous designations, see Muradyan 2014, 16–17, and for a brief introduction into the topic, see Muradyan 2004.

(Calzolari 2000; Muradyan 2004 and 2014, 326), the *Sermons* of Gregory of Nyssa (Muradyan 2004 and 2014, 326), and a *Letter to Theodore* by John Chrysostom (Scala 2005, 240) — are primarily theological in nature. This stands in stark contrast to the grammatical, rhetorical, and philosophical treatises characteristic of the Hellenising School.

The Armenian version of the legendary narrative recounting the adventures of Alexander the Great, attributed to Pseudo-Callisthenes and commonly referred to as the *Alexander Romance*, is one of the earliest translations of this literary work.¹⁰ While it is traditionally placed into the Hellenising corpus (see Manandean 1928; Akinean 1932; Arevshatyan 1973, and Terian 1982), recent scholars have reevaluated its connection to this group. Notably, due to similarities in style and translation technique, it has been linked with the pre-Hellenising translations (Cowe 1996 [implicitly]; Traina 1997; Mancini Lombardi and Uluhogian 1998; Muradyan 2004 and 2014). However, it is crucial to note that this classification, while presented with persuasive arguments, relies on limited research. A thorough and comprehensive examination of the translation technique remains an important area for further scholarly exploration.¹¹

The present article examines the approach taken by Armenian translators in rendering the distinctively Greek grammatical construction of the genitive absolute. The focus is primarily directed towards the evidence in the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*.

2. The Genitive Absolute in Classical, Hellenising, and pre-Hellenising Translations

In its basic and most frequent form, the genitive absolute is a grammatical construction in Greek consisting of a noun and an appositive participle, both in the genitive case. With no reference word in the main clause,¹² the genitive absolute often denotes phenomena or actions that condition or accompany the activity of the main clause, thereby conveying adverbial meaning. In English, as well as in many other modern languages, the genitive absolute is typically rendered as an adverbial clause, commonly expressing temporal, conditional, causal, or concessive relationships. In the earliest pieces of original Armenian literary production, there are no instances of the genitive absolute. The first authors to make use of it in their original works are the historiographer Movsēs Khorenats'i (Jensen 1959, 134–35; Topchyan 2002, 77;

¹⁰ The Armenian translation of the *Alexander Romance* was very popular in medieval Armenia and had a considerable influence on Armenian historiography, see Topchyan 2011.

¹¹ I aspire to contribute to bridging this research gap in my forthcoming PhD thesis, currently in preparation at the University of Würzburg, Germany, under the guidance of Prof. Daniel Kölligan (University of Würzburg), Prof. Christian Tornau (University of Würzburg), and Prof. Giusto Traina (Sorbonne université). For the chapters concerning translation technique, I draw inspiration from studies such as Lafontaine and Coulie 1983, focusing on *Sermons* by Gregory of Nazianz, Uluhogian 1993, examining *Asketikon* by Basil the Great, and Calzolari 2000, which explores a portion of the Armenian corpus of Athanasius of Alexandria.

¹² For exceptions already in Greek literature of the fifth century BC, see Schwyzler 1950, 399–400.

Uluhogian 1989, 56; Muradyan 1993; Weitenberg 2002, 70)¹³ and the neo-Platonic philosopher David the Invincible (Weitenberg 2002, 69–70). Both are already influenced by and possibly affiliated with the Hellenising School.

In the Armenian translation of the Bible, occurrences of the genitive absolute are predominantly resolved in three ways.¹⁴

1. As an adverbial clause — temporal clauses are mostly introduced by the conjunctions *իրրեւ* or *մինչ(դեռ)*, e.g. Lk. 4:42 *եւ իրրեւ տիւ եղեւ* for *γενομένης δὲ ἡμέρας*, Mk. 14:22 *եւ մինչդեռ ուտէին* for *καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν*. Causal clauses are mostly introduced by the conjunctions *իրրեւ* or *(քան)զի*, e.g. Mk. 11:11 *եւ զի էր երեկոյացեալ ժամն* for *ὅψ' ἤδη οὕσης τῆς ὥρας*.
2. As a simple or compound sentence, most commonly joined together by the coordinating conjunction *եւ* or separated by adequate punctuation, e.g. Mk. 8:1 *դարձեալ ժողովորդ բազում էր եւ ինչ ոչ ունէին ուտել. կոչեաց զαշակերտսն իւր եւ աւել ցնуса* for *πάλιν πολλοῦ ὄχλου ὄντος καὶ μὴ ἔχόντων τί φάγωσιν προκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς λέγει αὐτοῖς*.
3. As a prepositional phrase with *ընդ* or *ի* and a substantivised infinitive in the accusative (for the Greek participle) and the agent in genitive, e.g. Mk. 5:2 *եւ ընդ ելանելն նորա ի նաւէ անտի* for *καὶ ἐξελθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου*, Mk. 6:22 *եւ ի մտանել դստերն Հերովդիայ եւ ի կաքաւել* for *καὶ εἰσελθούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἑρῳδιάδος καὶ ὀρχησαμένης*.

In the instances under (1) and (2), the opposition between the perfective (aorist participle) and the imperfective aspect (present participle) is maintained and evident in the selection of either an aorist or imperfect finite verb in Armenian. However, this opposition dissolves in the instances under (3), as there only exists an infinitive formed from the present stem in Armenian.¹⁵ Occasionally, alternative *ad hoc* renderings of the Greek genitive absolute can be identified in the Armenian translation of the Bible:

The Greek phrase *ἡγήμενόντος* ... “when ... was governor” is translated into Armenian with *ի դատաւորութեան* ... “in the (time of the) governorship (of)”, e.g. Lk. 2:2 *ի դատաւորութեան Ասորոց Կիրենեայ* for *ἡγήμενόντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου*, Lk. 3:1 *ի դատաւորութեան Հրεաստանի Պիղատոսի Պննացւոյ* for *ἡγήμενόντος Ποντίου Πειλάτου τῆς Ἰουδαίας*. The manner in which the action of the main clause is carried out can be emphasised by incorporating a noun in the instrumental, e.g. Mk. 16:20 *քարոզէին ընդ ամենայն երկիր Տեառն զորձակցութեամբ* for *ἐκήρυξαν πανταχοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου συνεργοῦντος*.¹⁶

¹³ For a more detailed study of Hellenising elements in the *History* of Movsēs Khorenats'i, see Topchyan 2002.

¹⁴ The examples provided below are sourced from Uluhogian 1989.

¹⁵ See also Bănăţeanu 1937, 113–15 (temporal clause), 118 (causal clause), 124–25 (prepositional phrase), 136–37 (compound sentence).

¹⁶ The examples are sourced from Bănăţeanu 1937 and Uluhogian 1989.

As Gohar Muradyan (2012) has suggested, the following passage from the Acts of the Apostles is the only instance in the Armenian translation of the Bible to include a calqued genitive absolute:

Acts 1:10 եւ մինչդեռ պշուցեալ հայէին ընդ երկինս երթալոյն նորա, եւ ահաւասիկ արք երկու երեւեցան նոցա ի հանդերձս սպիտակս for καὶ ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν πορευομένου αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο παρειστῆκεισαν αὐτοῖς ἐν ἐσθήσεσι λευκαῖς.

If this is the only instance of a calqued genitive absolute in early Armenian literature, then the technique employed by the translator is certainly striking. However, in my opinion, it could hardly be seen as a deliberate attempt to render the genitive absolute literally. I am more inclined to assume a sort of misinterpretation of the Greek original as the underlying cause of it. The Armenian translator might have analysed εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν πορευομένου αὐτοῦ as a noun phrase dependent on ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν (“they were gazing at him departing into heaven”), although it was most likely not intended by the author of the original text. This would be possible based on the analogy with Greek instances where an animate object of a verb of perception takes the genitive form.¹⁷ Examples of a genitive object of a verb of (acoustic) perception are attested in the Greek New Testament, and these are sometimes rendered in Armenian by a prepositional phrase using the ablative case or even literally by a genitive:

Lk. 2:46 յեր ի նոցանէ եւ հարցանէր զնոսա for ἀκούοντα αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπερωτῶντα αὐτούς; Heb. 3:7 երբ ձայնի նորա լուիցեք for ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε.

Thus, for Acts 1:10, one might arguably consider either an original երթալոյն նորա rendering a supposed genitive object of ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν, or an original ablative *յերթալոյն նորա (< *ի երթալոյն նորա), which could have subsequently been corrupted to երթալոյն նորա and perceived as genitive. This corruption, if it indeed took place, may have arisen from a common mistake in Armenian text transmission, involving the interchange of word-initial patterns յի- and ե-, which were likely near-homophones at some point in time.

Should this alternative explanation be correct, there is no clear instance of a deliberately calqued genitive absolute in the Armenian translation of the Bible. And even if the assumption of Muradyan is correct and the evidence in Acts 1:10 as

¹⁷ Admittedly, the construction is predominant with verbs of acoustic perception and understanding, such as ἀκούω, ἀκροάομαι, αἰσθάνομαι, πυνθάνομαι, συνίημι etc. It is by far less common with verbs of visual perception, such as ὁράω, βλέπω etc. To my knowledge, there are four occurrences of ὁράω/βλέπω τινος in Classical Greek literature, Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.11, Plat. *Rep.* 558, Arist. *Ran.* 815, and Arat. *Phaen.* 430, and it is questionable whether all of them can be considered clear instances of this syntactic construction (see Kühner and Gerth 1898, 357–59, 361–62 and Schwyzer and Debrunner 1950, 106, 392, n. 1). As for the verb ἀτενίζω, it often occurs with prepositional phrases εἰς τινα/τι and πρὸς τινα/τι, sometimes with dative, and never with accusative or genitive (see LSJ 1996, s.v. ἀτενίζω). In the New Testament, there are instances of a direct object in the genitive only with verbs of acoustic perception, such as ἀκούω (also εἰς-, ἐπ- and παρακούω), ἐπακροάομαι, and no instances of a direct object in the genitive with verbs of visual perception. See Blass, Debrunner and Rehkopf 1979, 142. Therefore, πορευομένου αὐτοῦ is a genitive absolute and couldn't have been originally intended as a genitive object of ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν. However, it could arguably have been perceived as one by the Armenian translator.

an instance of a deliberate calque can be taken at face value, it remains an isolated occurrence in a relatively large text corpus and thus of very limited significance for the translation technique at large. In both cases it seems reasonable to conclude that calquing was not among the methods employed by the Bible translators for rendering the Greek genitive absolute. Instead, it appears that the translators closely adhered to the principles of the *sensus de sensu* translation approach. In the case of the genitive absolute, this technique necessitated a significant degree of interpretation on the part of the translator. A genitive absolute can formally embody various adverbial dimensions (temporal, causal, concessive, etc.), and the translator had to contextually select the most appropriate one.

The shift from the *sensus de sensu* to the *verbum de verbo* translation approach by the Hellenising School resulted in the most profound transformation in the treatment of the Greek genitive absolute. The emphasis shifted towards prioritising form over content, and the imitation of the structure of the source language took precedence over clarity in the target language. Consequently, a hitherto (all but) non-existent grammatical construction was introduced into Armenian, entirely modeled on the Greek genitive absolute, for example:

Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* Arm. 94 զհարդ զհշերի էլոյ եւ որացն փակելոցն /.../ յիրաւ եկին մտին for Gr. 5.90.11–13 πῶς οὖν νυκτὸς οὐσης καὶ τῶν πυλῶν κεκλεισμένων /.../ ῥαδίως εἰσελθόντες.

Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* Arm. 83 խոստովանեցելոց պատրաստաբար նոցա թափաւորն հրամայեաց նոցա զրով զհաւատս տալ for Gr. 1.25.44–45 τῶν δὲ συνθεμένων ἐτοιμῶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔγγραφον αὐτοὺς ἐπιδιδόναι τὴν πίστιν ἐκέλευσεν.¹⁸

While the translators of the Hellenising School exhibited a very strong tendency to calque the genitive absolutes,¹⁹ the texts of the so-called pre-Hellenising group present a more diverse picture. Within these texts, there is a varied combination of classical and Hellenising approaches, encompassing all the previously mentioned techniques and introducing some new, partially hybrid solutions. Thus far, the following techniques for rendering the Greek genitive absolute have been identified in the pre-Hellenising text corpus:²⁰

18 The critical editions employed for the above examples are as follows: Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* Arm. = Manandean 1938, Gr. = Bolognesi and Patillon 1997; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* Arm. = Tēr-Movsēsean 1897, Gr. = Hansen 1995. Additional instances illustrating the Hellenising treatment of the Greek genitive absolute can be found in Muradyan 2012, 161–67.

19 Classical renditions also occur in the Hellenising translations, e.g. Philo, *De Abrahamo* 8 իբրով միայն ճշմարտութեամբ իցէ մարդ պն, որ բարեացն ալն ունի և սպասիցէ և ի վերայ բարի յուսոյն անցեալ հաստատելալ իստի for gr. ὡς μόνου πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὄντος ἀνθρώπου τοῦ τὰ ἀγαθὰ προσδοκῶντος καὶ ἐλπίσι χρησταῖς ἐφιδρυμένου. See Philo 1892; the Greek text follows Cohn 1962. The Armenian edition is not critical, see Nikolsky 2024, 108.

20 The examples are drawn from Uluhogian 1975 and 1989, which specifically address the Armenian version of Basil the Great's *Asketikon*. It is important to note that these papers predate the critical edition, and only the folia in the main manuscript A (M5595) are referenced. For the critical edition, see Uluhogian 1993.

1. Translation by an adverbial clause — temporal clauses are mostly introduced by the conjunction յորժամ, e.g. Basil, *Asketikon* Arm. A 34 յորժամ նուն քելանիցի “when the foot breaks” for Gr. ὀκλάσαντος τοῦ ποδός “as the foot slackened”.²¹ Causal clauses are mostly introduced by the conjunction (քան)զի, e.g. Basil, *Asketikon* Arm. A 95 զի առաքելալ աւել for Gr. τοῦ ἀποστόλου λέγοντος.
2. Translation by an independent clause, e.g. Basil, *Asketikon* Arm. A 228 գիրք սովորութիւն ունին /.../ կարգել for Gr. τῆς γραφῆς ἔθος ἔχουσης /.../ τάσσειν.
3. Translation by a prepositional phrase, mostly with a temporal meaning, e.g. Basil, *Asketikon* Arm. A 33 ի սկիզբն զհշերդն for τῆς νυκτὸς γενομένης.
4. Translation by a past participle in the nominative and an agent in the genitive or, rarely, in the nominative — a regular Armenian construction, e.g. Basil, *Asketikon* Arm. A 33 առաքելոյ հրամայելալ for τοῦ ἀποστόλου προστάσσοντος.
5. Literal rendering by an artificial genitive absolute, e.g. Basil, *Asketikon* Arm. A 14 ժամանակի երբեմն ի վերայ եկելոյ for καιροῦ ποτε συνεμπεσόντος.
6. Rendering by the construction *սկսան լսելով* — a substantivised infinitive in the instrumental and an agent in the genitive, in most cases in formulaic phrases such as Basil, *Asketikon* Arm. A 90, 176, 213, 216, 234, 241 սկսան (or առաքելոյ) աւելով for τοῦ κυρίου (or ἀποστόλου) λέγοντος.²²

3. The Genitive Absolute in the *Alexander Romance*

As noted in the closing lines of the Introduction, the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance* has been associated with pre-Hellenising translations. Section 2 concludes with a brief overview of the translation techniques used to render the Greek genitive absolute in one of the pre-Hellenising translations that has undergone thorough examination — the *Asketikon* by Basil the Great. The aim of the present section is to provide evidence from Book I of the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*, with the primary question being to what extent the classification of this text as a pre-Hellenising translation is justified. The examination of the genitive absolute — a construction absent from the earliest Armenian literature and later incorporated as an imitation of the Greek language — serves as an effective means to assess the degree of Greek influence on the language of this translation.

The Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance* has survived in five recensions: Arm. A, Arm. A' (“intermediate version”), Arm. B, Arm. G, and the “short version”. Of these, Arm. A and Arm. A' exhibit the highest number of correct readings, while the latter three are adaptations and thus of limited relevance for the present purposes.²³

²¹ Greek ὀκλάσαντος (“slacken”) was read as **κλάσαντος (“break”) by the Armenian translator.

²² For an attempt to trace the origin of this construction through its individual stages of development, see Uluhogian 1989, 60–63. For additional examples from various pre-Hellenising (and some Hellenising) texts, see Muradyan 2012, 164–67.

²³ Preliminary comparisons of individual readings in Arm. A, edited by H. Simonyan (1989, 69–363), with corresponding Greek passages in Gr. A (Par. Gr. 1711, the sole Greek witness of the a-type text, see Kroll 1926), and Gr. β (Bergson 1965), have revealed that this recension, despite numerous interpolations, still contains

Consequently, only Arm. A and Arm. A' were employed for this survey. In this context, an Armenian reading is considered reliable and as such included in the survey, if two conditions are met: (1) Arm. A and Arm. A' are in agreement; (2) there is an attested genitive absolute in the corresponding Greek (α or β) passage.²⁴ In such cases, one can reasonably assume that the reading in question was produced by the original translator and not by subsequent redactors or copyists.

In Book I, I have identified fifty-nine reliable instances of the genitive absolute. These were rendered as follows: seventeen times by an adverbial clause, six times by a simple or compound sentence, three times by a prepositional phrase, twenty-one times by a participle in the nominative and an agent in the genitive (or nominative), ten times by a calqued genitive absolute, and once by the *utlounu uulhnu*-construction. Below I provide some illustrative examples for each of the techniques used.

1. Translation as an adverbial clause: temporal clauses are introduced by the conjunction մինչդեռ and իբրև, e.g. Arm. A 78 մինչդեռ գնայր շրջեր Աղեքսանդրոս for Gr. β 1.31 περιπατούντος τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου. Arm. A', M 1664, 65b (= Arm. A 134) իսկ իբրև եղև Աղեքսանդրոս թագաւոր for Gr. α 1.47 γεναμένου δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρου βασιλέως. Causal clauses are introduced by the conjunction զի, e.g. Arm. A 95 զի ուղին դժուարին լինէր for Gr. α 1.34 τῆς ὁδοιπορίας δυσχεροῦς οὐσης. In the following case, the translator extended his liberty and decided to emphasise both the causal and temporal dimension by introducing an entirely new main clause not warranted by any of the Greek witnesses: Arm. A 6 քանզի դիպեցաւ ի ժամանակին, յորում ի բաց խաղացեալ գնացեալ էր ի պատերազմունիս Փիլիպոս for Gr. α 1.4 ἀποδημούντος Φιλίππου πρὸς πόλεμον τυγχάνοντος. Alternatively; this “addition” in Armenian might be due to the fact that there are two participles in Greek. Thus, յորում ի բաց խաղացեալ գնացեալ էր could be there to translate ἀποδημούντος, while քանզի դիպեցաւ ի ժամանակին could present an attempt to render τυγχάνοντος.
2. Translation as a syndetic or an asyndetic compound sentence, or as a series of independent simple sentences, e.g. Arm. A 125 եւ նա աւել, ոչ է առնել նմա պատասխանի /.../: եւ բարկացեալ արքայն աւաց for Gr. α 1.45 τῆς δὲ λεγούσης

the highest number of correct readings (cf. Cowe 1996; Mancini Lombardi and Uluhogian 1998; Traina 1997; Topchyan 2019 and 2020). The so-called “intermediate version”, a slight adaptation of the initial translation, denoted in the present paper by the siglum Arm. A', often provides valuable variant readings (see Topchyan 2019 and 2020). Since this text (included in the collation of the new forthcoming critical edition by Gohar Muradyan and Aram Topchyan) has neither been separately edited nor consistently collated in Simonyan's edition of Arm. A, I utilise the manuscripts M1664 and M10448. The text Arm. B, represented by M10151 and edited by Simonyan (1989, 364–445), is, for the most part, significantly different from the Greek texts of α and β type. Contrary to Simonyan's observations (1979; 1989, 26, and 1998), it appears to be an adapted and abbreviated redaction of the ancestor of Arm. A (Cowe 1996; Mancini Lombardi and Uluhogian 1998; Traina 1997; Topchyan 2019 and 2020). Arm. G, edited by Simonyan (1989, 446–89), is a short folklore version of the Armenian *Alexander Romance*. The so-called “short version”, a critical edition of which is also being prepared by Muradyan and Topchyan, appears to be a mechanical abridgement of the initial translation (see Topchyan 2020).

²⁴ In certain instances, the genitive absolute in question is formally an absolute construction, however, with a reference word present in the main clause; it functions as a *participium coniunctum*. Such anomalous cases sporadically occur even in Greek authors of the fifth century BC, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon (see Schwyzler 1950, 399–400.), but become more frequent in post-classical texts.

μη χρησιμοδοτεῖν αὐτῷ /.../ ὀργισθεῖς ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος εἶπεν. Arm. A 134 եկն զսլաւին առնուլ զկռուղին: Ասաց թագաւորն for ἐπελθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ στεφανωθῆναι τὸν τῆς πάλης στέφανον εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος.

3. Translation as a prepositional phrase, featuring the preposition *ի* with a substantivized infinitive in the accusative or locative (for the Greek participle) and the agent in the genitive, e.g. Arm. A 96 *ի զալ Պարսից* for Gr. α 1.34 ἐρχομένων τῶν Περσῶν. Arm. A 96 *ի խնդրելն մեր զնա եւ յաղաչել զստրուածսն* for Gr. α 1.34 ζητούντων δὲ ἡμῶν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀξιούντων τοὺς θεούς. In the following case, the translator used a simple prepositional phrase, featuring the preposition *լսան* with a noun in the genitive, neglecting the participle, which can be perceived as a verb of being: Arm. A 80 *ստամբալեացն ընդ միմեանս թշնամացաւր ւսան անրաւ քաղնութեանց* for Gr. β 1.31 διχοστατήσουσιν εἰς ἀλλήλους διαφερόμενοι, ἀπείρου ὄχλου τυγχάνοντος.
4. Rendering by a past participle in the nominative and an agent in the genitive, e.g. Arm. A 104 *այսպէս ընթերցեալ Աղերսանիւրի, երկուցեալ զարհուրեցան զարքն* for Gr. A 1.37 οὕτως ἀναγινώσκοντος Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐδειλαίνοντο τὰ στρατεύματα. Arm. A 121 *եւ խնդիր արարեալ Աղերսանիւրի /.../ եւ նա սսաց նմա Մելանարսու նշանաւորն* for Gr. β 1.42 (α has a lacuna) τοῦ δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρου ζητούντος /.../ λέγει αὐτῷ Μελάμπους ὁ σημειολύτης. As illustrated by both examples, the transformation of a genitive absolute into a *participium coniunctum* takes place only on a formal level, i.e. the absolute construction is syntactically retained, but the translator makes no effort to rephrase the sentence in a way that the subject of the participle and that of the finite verb would be the same.
5. Literal rendering by an artificial genitive absolute, e.g. Arm. A', M1664, 2a (= Arm. A 1) *եւ սնաց մկրտելոցն եւ ի ծովու նաւր /.../ կորնչէին*²⁵ for Gr. β 1.1 βαπτιζομένων αὐτῶν τὰ ἐν τῷ πέλαγῃ πλοῖα /.../ ἀπώλοντο. Arm. A 99 *հաւար կռուղ եղելոյ զքաղունս սպանին ի Մակեդոնացւոցն* for Gr. α 1.35 κραταιᾶς μάχης γενομένης πολλοὺς ἀναιρουῖσι τῶν Μακεδόνων. Arm. A 132 *եւ սալաւուց մնացելոց քարոզեաց Աղերսանիւրս* for Gr. A 1.46 ὀλίγων δὲ καταλειφθέντων ἐκήρυξεν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος.
6. Rendering by the *mkamli suliq* construction, only found once: Arm. A 27 *այսպէս սսելով Փիլիպոսի* for Gr. β 1.13 οὕτως εἰπόντος τοῦ Φιλίππου.

In the twenty-three cases under (1) and (2), the contrast between the perfective and imperfective aspect in Greek is faithfully reproduced in Armenian — present participles are translated with finite verbs in the present and imperfect tenses, while aorist participles find their counterpart in finite verbs in the aorist tense. This also appears to hold true for the instances under (3), two of which involve prepositional phrases with an infinitive, derived from the present stem, serving as translations for Greek present participles. However, establishing with certainty that such phrases were

²⁵ Arm. A gives *ի սնաց մկրտելոցն*, likely a *lectio faciliior*, produced by a copyist who would rather see ***ի սնաց մկրտելն*, a reading which would make more sense from the Classical Armenian point of view.

indeed understood as imperfective is challenging due to their indiscriminate use in classical translations, as discussed earlier.

In stark contrast, the opposition between the perfective and imperfective aspect in Greek is forfeited in the thirty-three cases under (4), (5), and (6).

4. Conclusions

The examples from Book I of the Armenian *Alexander Romance* reveal the translator's inclination toward renderings by means of participles. The thirty-three instances under (4), (5), and (6), representing 56% of all fifty-nine cases, can be considered as one group, since in the vast majority of cases the absolute construction is retained, even though the instances of a participle in the nominative and an agent in the genitive, in standard use, share the subject of the main clause. All thirty-three instances indicate the translator's tendency to imitate the style and reproduce the form of their Greek source to a degree untypical of classical translations, and often at the expense of clarity.

Conversely, the twenty-six instances under (1), (2), and (3), representing 44% of all fifty-nine cases, seem to show a contrary, albeit somewhat weaker, tendency favoring clarity in the content over fidelity to form.

In the Armenian *Alexander Romance*, faithfulness to established approaches appears to compete with the innovative Hellenising trends. The cited examples suggest that, in terms of translation technique, the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance* aligns strongly with the other translations identified as pre-Hellenising.²⁶ The study of various techniques for rendering the genitive absolute thus allows us, to a certain extent, to retrace and better understand the individual steps in the transition between the *sensus de sensu* and *verbum de verbo* approaches. However, certain questions pertaining to the circle that produced the translations of the pre-Hellenising type still remain open.

The diverse range of techniques employed to render a single grammatical construction, without apparent criteria governing the choice in each instance, appears to indicate an absence of a standardised set of norms. Against this backdrop, it seems unlikely that the pre-Hellenising translation approach was codified in a programmatic work or handbook, similar to the *Grammar* of Dionysius Thrax with its Armenian appendix. The latter seems to have influenced the style of some Hellenising translations,²⁷ and it has been argued that it served as a handbook for the translators (Manandean 1928). However, it appears more likely that the style reflected in the pre-Hellenising translations resulted from an increasing tendency towards prioritising form over sense among a certain group of translators schooled in the established translation norms.

²⁶ An observation that should be critically reevaluated on the basis of further inquiries into the translation technique on all levels of linguistic analysis: syntax, morphology, and lexicon.

²⁷ A significant influence of the Armenian appendix of the *Grammar* of Dionysius Thrax has been observed in the translation of the *Progymnasmata* by Aelius Theon (Bolognesi 2000, 125).

In this light, it is possible to view the pre-Hellenising circle as the core of the Hellenising School in its early, formative period when various innovative techniques were still being tested, but standardisation had not yet taken place. Nevertheless, while it is appealing to see a continuity of knowledge transmission and technique development, there are still too many unknowns, and no cogent reasons have been put forward to assume a direct link between the pre-Hellenising tendencies and the Hellenising School. Hence, additional investigation in both fields is required.

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The Diplomatic Correspondence of the Armenian King Levon I with the Egyptian Sultan Al-Malik Al-`Adil (1208–1209)

▼ **ABSTRACT** A conflict over the inheritance of the throne of Antioch, in which a number of Eastern Mediterranean countries were involved, started in 1201 and lasted until 1216. The two main opponents were Bohemond IV, Count of Tripoli, and Levon I, King of Cilician Armenia, who was trying to place his nephew, Raymond-Ruben, on the throne of Antioch. Bohemond IV had powerful allies in this struggle: the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium and the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo. Meanwhile, King Levon tried to get the support of the Pope, which, however, was clearly not enough in 1208 to tackle with a hostile siege. Therefore, the Armenian king took a bold step by sending a message to al-Malik al-`Adil, the sultan of Egypt (1200–1218) and the senior member of the Ayyubid dynasty. According to the valuable information provided by two historians (Anonymous of Edessa and Kamal al-Din Ibn al-`Adim), in 605 AH (1208–1209), in response to the request of King Levon, al-Malik al-`Adil sent letters to Kay Khosrow, the Seljuk sultan of Iconium, and al-Malik al-Zahir, the Ayyubid ruler of Aleppo, persuading (or forcing) them to make peace with the Armenian side. According to the reconciliation established between parties, the Seljuks of Rum and the Ayyubids of Aleppo stopped their joint attack against Cilicia. In its turn, the Armenian side had to fulfil some of their demands. The main demand was “not to interfere in the affairs of Antioch”. Therefore, Levon made no such an attempt during the next eight years (from 1208 to 1216), and there was a relative peace around that issue. Nevertheless, his dream was accomplished in 1216. This was the last stage of the 15-year-long conflict, in which all the mentioned states took part again, and diplomatic correspondence, including messages between al-Malik al-`Adil and Levon I, this time too had a decisive role. It clearly

Vahan Ter-Ghevondian  0009-0004-7212-4683 • Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia, (Email: vterghevondian@gmail.com)

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demonstrated that the Egyptian Sultanate and Cilician Armenia relations were maintained during this period on the level of the monarchs, and that the correspondence of 1208–1209 was not something accidental or unique.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Levon I (Levon the Great), Raymond-Ruben, al-Malik al-`Adil, Kay Khosrow (Khusraw) I, Cilician Armenia, Princedom of Antioch, Egypt, Ayyubids, Roman Church, Hospitallers, Gaston (Baghras) fortress.

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1. Introduction

Cilician Armenia was declared a kingdom at the end of the twelfth century (1198). The newly established Armenian state experienced a great military and political rise. Levon the Great, both as a prince (1187–1198) and as a king (1198–1219) expanded the borders of his state at the expense of neighboring countries. As a result, the Armenian Kingdom became one of the most powerful political entities in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to the *Chronicle* of the thirteenth century Syrian historian Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), “Lion became very powerful after the death of Kelej Arslan,¹ and he took seventy-two citadels, some from the Turkaye,² and some from the Greeks.³ And in all his wars he appeared as a conqueror” (Bar Hebraeus 1976, vol. 1, 344).

As early as 1194, one of the terms of the peace treaty signed between Cilicia and Antioch (Smbat Sparapet 1956, 204) after a conflict between them⁴ stipulated that Raymond, the son of Prince Bohemond III, should marry Alice, the daughter of Stepané, Prince Levon’s brother.⁵ In 1200 and 1201, Raymond and then his father, Prince Bohemond III, died one after the other. Thus, Raymond-Ruben, son of Alice and Raymond, the grandson of Levon’s brother remained as the only legal heir to the Princedom of Antioch. To prevent such a development, his uncle Bohemond IV, Count of Tripoli (1187–1233), immediately took possession of Antioch and created a single state from two crusader political entities — the County of Tripoli and the Princedom of Antioch.

Such a situation was absolutely unacceptable to King Levon. This was the beginning of a long-term conflict for Antioch. The Armenian king, for his part, aimed to create another powerful union, that of Cilicia and Antioch, becoming the leading ruler of the northern part of the Eastern Mediterranean. In other words, Raymond-Ruben’s ascension to the throne meant the establishment of a *de facto* united state of

¹ In the year AD 1192.

² The Seljuks of Asia Minor.

³ The Byzantine Empire.

⁴ Of which Cilician Armenia came out victorious.

⁵ Later, in 1209, Raymond-Ruben, born from this marriage, was declared heir to the throne of Cilicia by Levon I (see Smbat Sparapet 1956, 204).

Cilicia-Antioch. The other countries of the region were worried about the creation of such a kingdom and tried to prevent the unification of Cilicia and Antioch. So the main opponent of Levon, Count Bohemond IV of Tripoli (Bohemond the One-Eyed), received tangible help from two states bordering with Cilicia — the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium (Konya) and the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo (Halab). An anti-Cilician alliance began to form in 1201 (see *Acta Innocentii PP. III* [1198–1216] 1944, 560) and became formal in 1203. This conflict lasted a decade and a half and is often referred to in historiography as the “Antiochene War” (1201–1216).⁶ In its turn it consisted of a series of intermediate wars, military clashes, establishment of alliances and counter-alliances, and intensive diplomatic correspondence. The conflict was considered finished in 1216 when Antioch passed to Raymond-Ruben and his patron Levon I.

One of those intermediate wars was that of 1203–1206 between the Armenian Kingdom and the Ayyubid Principality of Aleppo, which did not bring victory to either side, but a peace treaty was signed and the military clashes ceased for two years.⁷ Having secured the temporary neutrality of Aleppo, Levon I continued the struggle for the throne of Antioch. The military-political and religious elite of that city were also divided into two hostile camps. The majority of the political upper class, the Greek patriarch and the Templars were from the camp of Bohemond the One-Eyed, while the Latin Patriarch and the Hospitallers assisted Raymond-Ruben. Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) also supported the candidacy of Levon’s nephew as the legitimate heir to the throne.

It should be noted that starting from 1199, a very active correspondence between Innocent III and the leaders of Cilicia (the King, Catholicos, and Archbishop of Sis) began. The Pope tried to direct the Armenian Kingdom to the solution of all-Christian problems (such as the liberation of Jerusalem and the Holy Land) (see *Acta Innocentii PP. III* [1198–1216] 1944, 201), and King Levon was trying to get the support of the Roman Church for Raymond-Ruben’s enthronement (554–55). Pope Innocent’s positive attitude undoubtedly influenced the position of the Latin Patriarch and the Hospitallers. As for the Templars, they were in an irreconcilable long-term dispute with the Armenians regarding the possession of the strategically important Gaston (Baghras) fortress, so they preferred to be part of the anti-Cilician camp.

The Armenians had already tried twice (in 1201 and 1203) to enthrone Raymond-Ruben. A similar attempt was made in 1208. Relying on their supporters in Antioch (among whom the Latin patriarch Peter of Angoulême was the leader), King Levon and his nephew entered the city with the Armenian army. In the Cathedral of St Peter,

⁶ Usually 1216 is regarded as the end of the conflict (see Cahen 1940, 596–623), but, for example, Jochen Burgtorf (2016, 196) brings it up to 1219. In the first case, the year when military operations between the countries of the region were over is chosen as an endpoint, while in the second case, the moment when the question of the ownership of Antioch was finally resolved (it passed back to Bohemond IV). However I prefer to follow the traditional point of view, considering that the events of 1219 had much less international impact and were a result of mainly internal changes in the Principality of Antioch.

⁷ The truce was signed for eight years, but it lasted only for two (Burgtorf 2016, 201).

Raymond-Ruben was solemnly consecrated as the Prince of Antioch (see *Acta Innocentii PP. III [1198–1216]* 1944, 589–90). However, that success was short-lived. Bohemond IV entrenched himself in the citadel with his followers and after a few days was able to expel Raymond-Ruben from the city (Grousset 1936, 279–80).

The entry of the Armenian army into Antioch reactivated the anti-Cilician alliance of the three states, the first move of which was the attack of the Seljuks of Iconium on the mountain fortresses belonging to Armenians in the north of Cilicia. Meanwhile, the Seljuks received the military support of Al-Malik al-Zahir from Aleppo (see Ibn Wasil 1957, 187).

Being in a hostile environment, the Cilician leadership had to take urgent steps and involve extra-regional powers, which would be able to influence the situation. By 1208 it was clear to Levon I that the Papal intervention was not sufficient to solve his problems and that it was far more important to disrupt the military alliance against him. Before that, Levon had tried to wage wars separately against the County of Tripoli, the Seljuks of Iconium, and the Ayyubids of Aleppo to repel them from his realm, but this provided only a temporary solution, because after staying away for two-three years, they attacked Cilicia again at the first opportunity; the entry of the Armenian army into Antioch in 1208 was just such an occasion.

It is worth noting here that since 1208, the intensity of the letters between Rome and Cilicia decreased. There were two reasons for this. First, Levon I, feeling strong enough, began to expel the Catholic clergy from his country (see Brocardus 1906, 486–90), and second, the fate of the Gaston (Baghras) fortress, which had already become a bone of contention between the Armenian Kingdom and the Templars, had brought bitterness into Rome-Cilicia relations.

Therefore, the Armenian King took a bold step by sending a message to al-Malik al-'Adil, the sultan of Egypt (1200–1218) and the leading figure of the Ayyubid dynasty. We find information about it only in two thirteenth century historical works — the *Chronicle* of the Anonymous of Edessa and the *History of Aleppo* by Kamal al-Din Ibn al-'Adim.

2. A Letter Sent from Sis to Cairo

The most powerful member of the anti-Cilician coalition of three states was the Sultanate of Iconium (Konya), or the Rum Sultanate, which tried to invade Cilicia at every opportunity. Back in 1188, Kilij (Kelej/Kılıç) Arslan II (r. 1156–1192) divided the country among his sons as a hereditary domain. The inevitable result of this division was the internal struggle and the weakening of the Sultanate until the second ascension of Kay Khosrow (Khusraw) I (r. 1192–1196 and 1205–1211) to the throne (see Gordlevsky 1941, 29). After that, the Sultanate of Rum became very powerful and gradually spread its influence over the neighboring countries until 1243, when in the famous battle of Köse Dağ it received a heavy blow from the Mongols and was subsequently subjugated.

The Seljuks were especially attracted by Cilicia's mountain fortresses, which were of great defensive importance. In the *Chronicle* of the Anonymous of Edessa, there is a remarkable chapter entitled "About Cilicia and the Ingenuity of Prince Levon", which provides information about the Armenian-Seljuk armed conflicts of 1208–1209 and the mediation of the Sultan of Egypt. The chronicler says that in the year 1520 of the Greeks (1209), Sultan Khosrowshah⁸ gathered an innumerable army for the purpose of raiding Cilicia. When Prince Levon of Cilicia saw that Kay Khosrow was about to enter his country, he made a cunning plan. One of his nobles was sent to the Sultan and pretended to be angry with his sovereign Levon. Strongly accusing him before the Sultan, he assured that if he was given an army, he would enter the Armenian land and hand over the famous fortresses to the Sultan. Kay Khosrow believed and gave him prominent and noble men from his army as well as a great deal of gold. As he led them to the ambush site, the ambushers, undetected by the Turks, attacked and massacred them. The commanders were captured and chained. Hearing this, Kay Khosrow became furious and gathered troops in order to take revenge on the Armenians and demand compensation. He entered the land of Armenians and began to raid and plunder it. Having captured the fortress called Berdus, he wanted to attack the depths of the country, but through the mediation of al-Malik al-'Adil, peace was made between them, and the sultan returned to his country (see Anonymous of Edessa 1982, 171–72).

It is noteworthy that one of the main Armenian historians of the Cilician era, Smbat Sparapet (Smbat the Constable), speaking about the same events, does not mention in any way the intervention of the sultan of Egypt or the participation of any third country (Smbat Sparapet 1956, 215):

And Sultan Khosrow Shah, the son of Kilij Arslan, became the ruler of the land of the Romans as monarch and started to threaten King Levon... He came with a great force against Berdus, seized it by fighting and captured its lord Grigor ... and after that Berdus was excluded from Armenian power, and that was the year of the Armenians 657 [1208].⁹

Two other Armenian historians of that epoch, Kirakos of Gandzak (Kirakos Gandzakets'i 1961) and Vahram Rabuni (Vahram Rabuni 1869), do not refer to the sultan's raid at all.

It should be noted that the famous Arab historian of the early thirteenth century, Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233; see Ibn al-Athir 1981), who provides plenty of information about Cilicia-Syria relations, is also silent in this case. Therefore, the account of another author of the same era, Kamal al-Din Ibn al-'Adim, who adds important details to the information of the Syrian historian, is even more valuable. We find the following lines in his work: "And so Kay Khusraw ibn Kilij Arslan went to the

⁸ Kay Khosrow I.

⁹ The translation of the passages from Armenian and Arabic sources, where there is no reference to an English edition, is mine.

country of Ibn Levon,¹⁰ and at the same time asked al-Malik al-Zahir for help, and he [al-Zahir] sent an army under the command of Sayf al-Din ibn `Alim al-Din, and he was accompanied by Aybek Futays. [They] gathered in Marash and besieged Burnus¹¹ in 605,¹² then captured it and also captured a number of fortresses from the country of Ibn Levon". The continuation of this passage is of exceptional importance:

And Ibn Levon sent a letter to al-Malik al-`Adil, seeking support from him. And al-Malik al-`Adil [in turn] sent letters to Kay Khusraw and al-Malik al-Zahir. And Kay Khusraw hurried to make peace with "Ibn Levon" on the condition that he returns the fortress of Baghras to the Templars, also not interferes in the [affairs] of Antioch and returns the property left [by Kay Khusraw] during the reign of Rukn ad-Din,¹³ his brother (Ibn al-`Adim 1968, 159–60).

Unfortunately, we do not have the full text of King Levon's letter, so we should examine the historian's words carefully when he retells its contents. It is especially important what word Ibn al-`Adim uses when describing the purpose of the letter. The following is written in the original Arabic text: *Fa-rāsilu "Lawun" al-Malik al-`Adil, wa iltaja'a ilayhi ...* (Ibn al-`Adim 1968, 160). The verb *iltaja'a*, which I have translated "seek support", literally means "seek shelter", "seek refuge". Of course, it is difficult to draw conclusions based on one word only, but we may assume that Levon I could even formally recognize the supremacy of the sultan of Egypt. This did not oblige him to do anything, as Malik al-`Adil's domains had no immediate borders with Cilicia.

It is also worth noting that Kay Khusraw, upon receiving al-Malik al-`Adil's letter, hurried to make peace with "Ibn Levon". The key word here is "hurried" (*ibtadara* in Arabic). This can be interpreted as a sign of caution on the part of the sultan of Rum to avoid collision with a powerful opponent at all costs. As we have seen, after conquering the basin of Lake Van in 1207, the senior Ayyubid ruler had become a direct neighbor to the Seljuks of Iconium from the east.

The thirteenth century Arab historian Ibn Wasil (d. 1298) discusses these same events, referring to another reason for the cessation of the Seljuk invasion:

In that year, the Seljuk Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw ibn Kilij Arslan, the lord of the land of Rum, arrived in Marash to go to the land of the Armenian king Ibn Lawun. And al-Malik al-Zahir sent a detachment of soldiers to him under the command of Sayf al-Din ibn `Alam al-Din ibn Jandar and `Izz ad-Din Aybak Futays. And Ghiyath al-Din entered the land of Ibn Lawun and stayed there, and

10 By "Ibn Levon" the Arab historians mean someone from the Levonid dynasty, which is the same as the Rubenid dynasty, because they call it not after Prince Ruben I (1080–1095), but after Prince Levon I (1129–1137); see Ter-Ghevondian 2019, 113–50.

11 Berdus.

12 July 16, 1208 – July 6, 1209.

13 The property that Kay Khosrow had left in Cilicia when he was in exile from his country (before 1204) as a result of the conflict with his brother Rukn al-Din (1196–1204). Running away from the Sultanate of Iconium and avoiding retaliation, Kay Khosrow first took refuge in Aleppo but quickly escaped fearing that he would be caught and handed over to his brother. From there he went to Cilicia, but did not stay there long because of the same fear and was forced to leave the large amount of money he had to the Armenian King (see Ibn al-`Adim 1968, 160).

fought for a fort known as Baghrkus¹⁴ and captured it with an *aman*,¹⁵ and stayed there and rebuilt the fort. He also captured a number of other fortresses and destroyed them. Then Ghiyath ad-Din returned [to his country], because it was snowing, but he had [already] captured many forts (Ibn Wasil 1957, 187).

We should try to understand whether the correspondence between the leaders of Cilician Armenia and the Ayyubids was something exceptional. In his historical work, the Coptic author Abu al-Makarim (d. 1208) mentions an Armenian delegation arriving in Egypt in 1186–1187 and bringing the letters of the Cilician prince Ruben III and the Catholicos Gregory IV addressed to Saladin. It was an attempt to ameliorate the state of the Armenian community in Egypt, which had suffered much during Saladin's rise to power (since the Armenian regiment remained loyal to the last Fatimid caliph). According to the historian, at the request of the Armenians, Saladin and his brother Sayf al-Din Abu Bakr interceded in their turn and sent letters to the relevant officials to receive the bishop (head of the Armenian delegation) with honour and give two Armenian churches back to them — al-Zuhra and al-Bustan (Abu al-Makarim 1895, 7, 10).

In 1190, there was a critical moment when during the Third Crusade a large German army under Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155–1190)¹⁶ entered Cilicia, while in the north of Syria, Saladin's troops were waiting for them. The small Armenian state was in the focal point of the Crusader-Moslem clash, which could greatly damage Cilicia. This explains why the Catholicos Gregory IV (with the knowledge of Prince Levon) wrote a warm response to the emperor's letter, welcoming the arrival of the crusaders (see Vardan Bardzrberdts'i 1861, 136), but at the same time sent two letters to Saladin, trying to gain his alliance and friendship. Some Arab historians describe this state of affairs, calling the Armenian Catholicos "Caliph of the Armenians". Among them, the first to be mentioned is the famous judge of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries Baha' al-Din Ibn Shaddad (d. 1234), who wrote a biography of Saladin (Ibn Shaddad 2002, 114, 116–17, see also Ter-Ghevondian 2017, 100–21).

Thus, we can see that the leaders of Cilician Armenia had enough experience in corresponding with the Ayyubids before the events of the early thirteenth century. The next question that arises is the following: why did King Levon hope that his request could receive a positive response? Here we need a brief summary of the events of the late twelfth century. Before his death, Sultan Saladin divided the giant state into four parts between three of his sons and his brother. Al-Afdal received Southern Syria and Palestine, al-'Aziz got Egypt, and al-Malik al-Zahir received Northern Syria. Jazira and Diyar Bakr went to the Sultan's brother al-Malik al-'Adil Abu Bakr, who, as a skilled politician, took advantage of the internal strife between his nephews (1196–1199) and united Egypt, South Syria, Palestine, and Jazira under his power. Only al-Malik al-Zahir was able to maintain the power in Aleppo at the cost of accepting the supremacy of his uncle. After all these events, the political

¹⁴ A corrupt form of the name Berdus.

¹⁵ A letter of guarantee promising safety to those who surrender willingly.

¹⁶ Though soon he was drowned in the Saleph (Seleucia) river, and the army was led by his son.

situation in this part of the Middle East stabilized in 1200–1201. However, almost at the same time, the atmosphere began to heat up in the north-west of Syria, and the “Antiochene War” broke out, as noted above.

3. The Role of Cairo-Iconium and Cairo-Aleppo Relations

Sultan al-Malik al-ʿAdil certainly was not interested in contributing to the conquest of Antioch by the Armenians, but the strengthening of the Seljuk Sultanate of Iconium was even more dangerous for his state. In the first decades of the thirteenth century, the Sultanate had become so powerful that it could be a serious opponent to the Ayyubids, at least in north Syria and the Lake Van region. Those years were important from the viewpoint of the activation of the regional policy of the Ayyubids. It was then that the positions of the Egyptian Ayyubids in Jazira (Northern Iraq) expanded and strengthened. They finally took possession of Khilat (Akhlāt) and the basin of Lake Van — territories that even Saladin had not conquered. All this coincided with the temporary capture of Antioch by King Levon and Raymond-Ruben.

Al-Malik al-ʿAdil additionally had serious problems with the County of Tripoli and even initiated a campaign against Bohemond IV: “... The Hospitallers’ various campaigns, launched from their castles at Margat and Krak des Chevaliers¹⁷ against Hamah, Homs, and Latakia, had enraged al-ʿAdil, ... who held Bohemond responsible for the order’s actions, led a campaign against Tripoli in 1208/1209, and forced Bohemond to ransom himself and his city” (Burgtorf 2016, 202).

We should try to understand why the Sultan of Egypt, upon receiving King Levon’s letter, appealed not only to the Seljuk Sultan, but also to his nephew al-Malik al-Zahir, whose domains were formally considered subordinate to Cairo. He demanded to end the war and make peace with the Armenians. The Ayyubids of Egypt, who were at the peak of their power in those years, sought to restrain their clansmen of Aleppo at every opportunity. The Aleppo branch had survived independently for about 15 years (or 22 years, if calculated from 1186) and even opposed Egypt in its efforts to subjugate southern Syria, especially Damascus in 1196–1201 (see Humphreys 1977, 103–22). In his letter-demand, Al-Malik al-ʿAdil made it clear to his nephew that he should not participate in the adventurous activities of the Seljuks of Asia Minor, but should provide military force for an all-Ayyubian campaign if necessary. Ibn al-ʿAdim also alludes to the same fact (Ibn al-ʿAdim 1968, 168–69). Interestingly, according to the same historian, five years before that, when military clashes were taking place between Cilician Armenia and the Aleppo branch of the Ayyubids, al-Malik al-Zahir’s uncle, al-Malik al-ʿAdil, in response to his request, had sent auxiliary armed forces to him (157). As we can see, during those years, Cairo-Aleppo relations were variable and depended on the current international situation. In any case, prevention of the Seljuq sultans of Asia Minor from becoming too powerful was a priority in al-ʿAdil’s policy.

¹⁷ Or Hisn al-Akrad.

In order to understand better the internal relations of the Ayyubid state, it is necessary to keep in mind that Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul, while accepting the supremacy of Egypt, sometimes allowed themselves much liberty in their actions. Depending on the situation, from time to time the rulers of those states/principalities even conducted an autonomous foreign policy without agreement from Cairo. By using a modern word, it can be inferred that the Ayyubid Sultanate, especially after the death of Saladin, more resembled a confederation than a monolithic entity.

The contradictions between Cairo and Aleppo were expressed not only in the case of Cilicia. As noted by the historian Bar Hebraeus (referring to the year 1209), when Muzaffar ad-Din Gökborni, the Lord of Erbil, wrote to the Lord of Aleppo al-Malik al-Zahir, and to the Sultan of Iconium, urging them to expel al-Malik al-'Adil from Jazira, both agreed with readiness (Bar Hebraeus 1976, vol. I, 365–66).

Levon I was most likely well aware of the internal relations between the various representatives of the Ayyubid dynasty, and his task was to ensure at all costs that the supreme Ayyubid monarch would restrain his nephew, ruler of Aleppo, thereby neutralizing an active member of the anti-Cilician alliance.

4. Conclusions

To sum up, we can state that, according to the valuable information provided by two historians, in response to King Levon's request, al-Malik al-'Adil sent letters to Kay Khosrow and al-Malik al-Zahir in 605 AH (1208–1209), persuading (or forcing) them to make peace with the Armenian side. As a result of the reconciliation of the parties, the Seljuks of Rum and the Ayyubids of Aleppo stopped their joint attack against Cilicia. In its turn, the Armenian side had to satisfy some of the demands of the three participants of the anti-Cilician alliance. In particular, King Levon had to: a) hand over the fortress of Gaston (Baghras) to the Templars, b) not interfere in the affairs of Antioch, and c) return the property left by Sultan Kay Khosrow in Cilicia (see Ibn al-'Adim 1968, 160). Of these requirements,¹⁸ Levon complied only with the last one as a sign of commitment to the Sultanate of Iconium (see Cahen 1940, 614).

Regarding the Gaston fortress, not only the Templars and the states of the anti-Cilician bloc, but also the Pope were very interested in its surrender. But Levon was intransigent and did not fulfil that demand, even at the cost of worsening relations with the Roman Church. At least in 1211–1212, Wilbrand of Oldenburg who visited Cilicia, testifies in his travelogue that Gaston was part of the Armenian Kingdom (Wilbrand of Oldenburg 2012, 74, 79).

¹⁸ Anne-Marie Eddé adds two more conditions to the mentioned requirements: 1) release of all Muslim prisoners who were in the territory of Cilicia and 2) assurance of no longer attacking the principality of Aleppo (Eddé 1999, 83). In fact the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia did not take any hostile steps against Aleppo after that, until its participation in the Mongol campaign of 1259–1260. As for the captives, they were released and sent to Aleppo, but only 8 years later, in 1216, after the Cilician army had entered Antioch, and when once again the Armenians had to ensure Aleppo's neutral position in the Antioch issue.

As to the main condition, namely, “not to interfere in the affairs of Antioch”, it is true that such an attempt was not made in the next eight years (from 1208 to 1216), and there was a relative peace around the issue of Antioch. However, King Levon was waiting for a more favorable moment to accomplish his long-standing dream of making Raymond-Ruben the Prince of Antioch. During those eight years, important changes took place in the internal life and international relations of the countries participating in the “Antiochene War”. Levon I’s dream was accomplished in 1216, ending a 15-year-long conflict in the north-eastern Mediterranean. This was the last stage of that conflict, in which all the aforementioned states took part, and once again the diplomatic correspondence, including messages between al-Malik al-’Adil and Levon the Great, played a decisive role and significantly affected the final result of the conflict. It clearly demonstrates that the Egypt-Cilician Armenia relations were maintained during that period on the level of the monarchs, and that the correspondence discussed in this paper was not accidental or unique.

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La Livorno degli Armeni

*Mercanti semisedentari e viaggiatori di passaggio fra convivenza, coabitazione e lingue**

▼ **RIASSUNTO** Nel 1591, e poi nel 1593, gli Armeni vengono invitati, con altri popoli, a stabilirsi a Livorno, per incrementare i commerci della città. Qui viene a crearsi una colonia, non grande, ma di cui fanno parte anche persone socialmente importanti. I mercanti cittadini, poi, spesso sudditi ottomani o persiani, si organizzano in modo da avere un loro rappresentante, Armeno o Italiano, che funga anche da interprete. In effetti, il problema della lingua spesso riguarda gli Armeni di Livorno, tanto che, tra seicento e settecento, abbiamo testimonianze di persone che, pur vissute a lungo in città, non sono in grado di esprimersi fluentemente in italiano. D'altra parte, almeno alcuni di questi Armeni decidono ad un certo momento di integrarsi nella società locale, e la cosa è anche rispecchiata nelle loro scelte onomastiche: se tra seicento e settecento i nomi che li caratterizzano sono o di origine armena o di tradizione genericamente cristiana, con l'ottocento compaiono sempre più di frequente nomi che seguono la moda locale. In conclusione del lavoro si accenna alle notizie che, su Livorno, danno viaggiatori e mercanti che hanno modo di visitare la città durante il XVII secolo, e si menzionano i riferimenti che su Livorno si trovano nei manuali di mercatura armeni redatti o stampati in quello stesso periodo.

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Alessandro Orenco  0000-0002-0766-2942 • Università di Pisa, Dipartimento di Civiltà e Forme del Sapere, Pisa, Italia, (Email: alessandro.orenco@unipi.it)

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▼ **ABSTRACT** In 1591, and then again in 1593, Armenians were invited, along with other peoples, to settle in Leghorn (Livorno) and boost the city's trade. Thus, a colony was created that, although not large, included socially prominent people. Later on, the city's merchants, often Ottoman or Persian subjects, arranged to have a representative of their own — either an Armenian or an Italian — who could also act as an interpreter. Indeed, language(s) and communication were often a problem for Leghorn's Armenians: between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, evidence exists of people who, despite having lived in the city for a long time, were unable to express themselves fluently in Italian. On the other hand, at least some of these Armenians eventually decided to integrate into the local society. This is also reflected in their naming practices: whereas between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Leghorn Armenians bore either Armenian or generally Christian names, by the nineteenth century they increasingly adopted names that followed local fashion(s). The final section of this paper addresses the information about Leghorn conveyed by travellers and visiting merchants in the seventeenth century, as well as references found in Armenian merchants' manuals written or printed in the same period.

PAROLE CHIAVE Livorno, colonie armene, Armeni in Italia, secoli XVII–XIX, lingua italiana, lingua armena, viaggiatori armeni.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Leghorn (Livorno), Armenian colonies, Armenians in Italy, seventeenth –nineteenth centuries, Italian language, Armenian language, Armenian travellers.

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1. Introduzione

Nel corso del XVI secolo ci sono tre momenti in cui l'autorità, ducale e poi, dal 1569, granducale, invita gli Armeni a stabilirsi in Toscana ed in particolare a Livorno. Il primo è rappresentato dal privilegio che il duca Cosimo I Medici concesse, nel 1551, agli Ebrei ed ai mercanti levantini, perché essi venissero a trafficare a Firenze e nello stato (Cascio Pratilli e Zangheri 1994, 82–83). Tra questi mercanti sono espressamente indicati gli Armeni, la cui menzione sarebbe stata conseguenza dell'incontro tra l'allora duca ed il *kat'oghikos* Step'an V Salmastets'i, avvenuto a Firenze nel 1549 (secondo alcuni nel 1548).

Gli altri due momenti, strettamente collegati fra loro, sono rappresentati dai privilegi che, nel 1591 e poi nel 1593, il granduca Ferdinando I Medici concedeva ai mercanti che avessero voluto stabilirsi a Livorno ed a Pisa, per incrementarvi i commerci. Come è noto, infatti, queste *Livornine*, benché rivolte in particolare agli Ebrei, erano formalmente indirizzate

A tutti voi mercanti di qualsivoglia nazione, Levantini, Ponentini, Spagnoli, Portughesi, Greci, Todeschi et Italiani, Hebrei, Turchi, Mori, Armeni, Persiani et altri (Frattarelli Fischer e Castignoli 1987, 17; 21).

2. La colonia armena di Livorno nel seicento e nel settecento

Tuttavia, i secoli d'oro della presenza armena a Livorno sono il XVII e, in gran parte, anche il XVIII, periodo in cui la città è veramente un centro internazionale, ed ospita comunità provenienti dai più diversi paesi d'Europa e del bacino del Mediterraneo. In quest'epoca gli Armeni sono attivi nei commerci come quello della seta ed altre stoffe più o meno pregiate, del corallo, dell'ambra, talvolta anche delle pietre preziose, spesso portate dall'oriente come capitale di base. Inoltre, come avviene anche in altri centri dell'Europa occidentale, essi sono collegati tanto al commercio quanto allo smercio del caffè: tra la fine del seicento e gli inizi del secolo successivo sappiamo di diverse botteghe del caffè gestite da Armeni e spesso di loro proprietà, site tanto nella zona del duomo quanto in altri punti della città. Nel sei e settecento la colonia armena di Livorno è una comunità vitale, agevolata da un costante ricambio delle persone che ne fanno parte, cosa, questa, che favorisce la conservazione dei caratteri culturali nazionali, nonostante cominci già a manifestarsi la tendenza all'integrazione o senz'altro all'assimilazione da parte di membri di famiglie ormai sedentarizzate o che hanno intenzione di stabilirsi in città. Tuttavia, forse anche in conseguenza della limitata estensione della città, non c'è a Livorno un vero quartiere armeno e le case ed i palazzi da essi posseduti si collocano in punti diversi dell'agglomerato urbano (Ciorli 1998ab e Ciorli 2006). Ricordiamo, a titolo di esempio l'enorme palazzo posseduto da Antonio Bogos Celebi (Ant'on Pōghos),¹ consistente in un intero isolato,² che fu costruito tra il 1664 ed il 1666 e nel quale fu anche installato un bagno turco (la *stufa*) (Köhlbach 1980; Kévorkian e Mahé 1988, 229–35 passim; Paolini 1991, 3; 11; Pesciatini 1998), che rimase attivo anche dopo la morte del proprietario, avvenuta nel 1674. Per fare un altro esempio, i fratelli Shehrimanean (Sceriman) possedettero, dagli inizi del settecento, un palazzo di tre piani, posto sulla via Ferdinanda (oggi via Grande) di fronte alla Gran Guardia. Né gli Armeni benestanti si accontentarono di avere case e palazzi in città: per limitarci ai dintorni di Livorno, ricordiamo almeno la villa *Al Buffone*, sita a Montenero, che fu dei Mirmanean (Mirman) dalla metà del seicento all'ottocento (Ciorli 1986, 73–83).

Rimanendo all'aspetto urbanistico, in posizione decisamente centrale era collocata anche la chiesa nazionale, di rito cattolico. Iniziative per edificarla si erano avute fin dalla seconda metà del XVII secolo, ma, per una serie di problemi, e attraverso vicende, per così dire, non sempre trasparenti, l'impresa si concluse solo nel 1714, con la consacrazione della chiesa, intitolata a san Gregorio Illuminatore.

¹ Si tratta dell'Antonio Bogos che tra l'altro, nel 1666, patrocinò il restauro del campanile della basilica di san Piero a Grado, presso Pisa. Su questo personaggio, e sulle vicende legate alla sua eredità, si veda Buono 2023 e Buono 2024.

² Il palazzo si trovava su via dei Mulini a Vento e via delle Commedie.

La vitalità della colonia armena di Livorno è provata anche dal fatto che, già nel 1624, essa dispone di un interprete ufficiale che, due anni dopo, ottiene la nomina a console, mentre intorno alla metà del secolo è documentata addirittura la presenza di due comunità armene. Ciascuna di esse ha un proprio rappresentante ufficiale ed inoltre esse, costituite, una da sudditi ottomani, l'altra da persiani e georgiani, risultano essere non solo distinte, ma anche, talvolta, contrapposte (Castignoli 1979). Questa situazione doveva in qualche modo essere ancora attuale alla fine del secolo, se nell'accordo per un'autotassazione, finalizzata a raccogliere fondi per l'erigenda chiesa, accordo che membri della comunità sottoscrivono nel 1697, si vincolano al pagamento tanto gli Armeni occidentali che quelli orientali.³

Tuttavia, nonostante questa divisione interna, è interessante notare il fatto che risulta che la comunità armena di Livorno esercitava un'attività di controllo e patrocinio sugli affari interni della sua omologa di Genova, quest'ultima sostanzialmente venuta a formarsi a seguito di privilegi ottenuti nel 1623-1624. La cosa emerge da documenti d'archivio, per esempio del 1646 e del 1659.⁴

D'altra parte, è proprio nel seicento che la città labronica viene scelta da Armeni come luogo ove installare tipografie per la stampa di libri nella loro lingua, segno che, per chi si sobbarcava una tale impresa, i connazionali presenti in città costituivano una garanzia di appoggio, sia economico, sia anche pratico. Tra questi stampatori basti qui ricordare il *vardapet* Oskan Erewants'i.⁵

Se si cerca di stabilire la consistenza numerica della comunità armena di Livorno, ci si trova di fronte ad una certa quantità di dati, che tuttavia non permettono di tracciare un quadro demografico completo. Per esempio, una relazione conservata presso l'archivio della congregazione de Propaganda Fide ci fa sapere che, nel 1668, a Livorno ci sono circa trecento Armeni, alcuni sposati con donne italiane, altri celibi, ma con domicilio in città, ed altri ancora ivi presenti solo per qualche tempo. La relazione continua dicendo che gli Armeni che frequentano la città labronica sono i più ricchi e i più influenti della loro nazione, ma anche che, tra loro, non sono mai mancati ecclesiastici scismatici, venuti ad esortare i connazionali a non aderire alla chiesa di Roma.⁶ Da altra fonte (Pardi 1918, 38-39) sappiamo che in quel periodo la popolazione complessiva della città doveva aggirarsi sulle diciassette persone.

La popolazione armena sarebbe però presto diminuita, se il censimento del 1689 registrava a Livorno soltanto 63 Armeni cattolici e 7 scismatici (Pardi 1918, 41): tra le cause di questo calo, a parte l'eventualità di differenti criteri di calcolo, vanno ricordate una situazione politica meno favorevole agli stranieri, l'epidemia di febbri

3 *Che siano Armeni tanto di Ponente, che di Levante*: Ulurlean 1990, 211.

4 Sulla comunità armeno-genovese nel seicento si veda Fioriti 2023, 149-75. Sui contatti con la comunità livornese rimandiamo in particolare alle pp. 163-65.

5 La storia della stampa armena a Livorno è stata oggetto di diversi studi. Per una prima informazione rimandiamo ad Orenco 1996.

6 *Liburni sunt Armeni quasi .300. quorum aliqui cum filiabus Italicis sunt matrimonio iuncti, alij vero sine uxore ibi sunt habitati, & alij tantum per tempus ibi sunt commoraturi, complures enim veniunt illuc & redeunt, & sciendum est, quod ij qui hunc portum & Venetias frequentant, sunt ditiores & potentiores inter Armenos, Inter quos Liburni semper non defuerunt ecclesiastici Armeni heretici, qui eos instruerent & exhortarentur, ut permanerent in suis erroribus, & caveant ab ecclesia Romana* (SOCG, vol. 223, f. 331r; cfr. Orenco 1996, 161).

maligne del 1684, che causò diverse migliaia di vittime, e l'attrazione che sugli Armeni cominciava ad esercitare Marsiglia, dopo che, nel 1669, era stata dichiarata porto franco.

Con la progressiva integrazione degli Armeni di Livorno, a partire dal settecento, poi, diviene sempre più difficile stabilire la consistenza della colonia, e sempre più spesso s'incontrano dati discordanti fra loro, su cui non è il caso di soffermarsi in questa sede.⁷

3. La situazione linguistica e l'attività culturale degli Armeni di Livorno fra seicento ed ottocento

Può invece valer la pena spendere qualche parola sulla situazione linguistica degli Armeni di Livorno.⁸ In linea teorica, essi potevano conoscere: la varietà di armeno parlata nella regione da cui provenivano; altre lingue ivi parlate (turco, persiano, arabo⁹ etc.); l'armeno antico (*grabar*); l'italiano o sue varianti locali. Naturalmente la conoscenza di queste lingue sarà stata diversa non solo a seconda degli individui, ma anche delle epoche considerate.

Quanto al *grabar*, o a quello che si riteneva tale nel periodo in questione, esso è sempre e solo stato la lingua della liturgia (o delle lapidi cimiteriali e commemorative), sicché possiamo supporre che la sua conoscenza sia stata prerogativa quasi esclusiva degli ecclesiastici, i quali probabilmente avevano anche una qualche cognizione di latino e talvolta di arabo. Circa quest'ultima lingua notiamo che, quando nella seconda metà del settecento, la comunità armena è coinvolta in una serie di iniziative del granduca Pietro Leopoldo I, tendenti a trasferirne il controllo dall'autorità religiosa a quella politica, nel decreto del 1785 un articolo, il XXXV, prevede esplicitamente che, nella chiesa dei Greci ed in quella degli Armeni ci sia sempre un sacerdote "che possieda la lingua Araba per comodo delle Confessioni" (Ufurlan 1990, 228).

Sulla conoscenza del latino, da parte di ecclesiastici armeni, le notizie e le valutazioni sono discordi: lo stesso Oskan, che è noto come traduttore da ed in questa lingua, viene talvolta indicato da occidentali, membri del clero, incaricati di valutarne l'ortodossia, come una persona che non domina perfettamente il latino, e questo

⁷ Per esempio, in una nota redatta nel 1811, si dice che, verso la metà del secolo precedente, vivevano nella città labronica trentatré famiglie armenie, ridottesi a trentaquattro persone alla fine del secolo stesso, ed a diciassette intorno al 1807 (Macler 1904, 12–13 ed Ufurlan 1990, 139, nota 2), mentre un documento ufficiale del 1810 parla di sessantadue persone nella comunità (Ufurlan 1990, 133). Per un'epoca successiva, il parroco Ufurlan riferisce che, ai suoi tempi, la comunità armena contava diciannove uomini ed altrettante donne (161). A titolo di confronto, ricordiamo che, nel 1881, risultavano censite in città circa 79000 persone (Pardi 1918, 94). Dobbiamo ancora dire che, durante l'ottocento si registra qualche sporadico (e spesso temporaneo) arrivo dalla madrepatria (Ufurlan 1990, 155, nota 7), ed anche qualche partenza (139, nota 2; 164, nota 16).

⁸ Abbiamo discusso la questione in Orengo 1997.

⁹ Sulla conoscenza dell'arabo da parte degli Armeni presenti a Livorno, in particolare per quanto riguarda i sacerdoti, si veda Bellatti Ceccoli 2008, 71, 81, 95, 103–04, 307 ed inoltre 309–13 passim. Per un caso di ripetuto uso del turco osmanli fra mercanti, sensali ed artigiani armeni, greci ed ebrei si veda Calafat 2015.

anche quando si trova già in Europa. Se poi in questo giudizio ci sia un elemento pregiudiziale nei confronti dello straniero dall'ortodossia dubbia, non sapremmo dirlo. Ci pare quindi più interessante considerare il rapporto fra le diverse varietà di armeno fra loro e con l'italiano, rapporto che cercheremo di analizzare secolo per secolo.

Nel seicento, come si è già visto, è documentata la presenza di due comunità distinte, una di Armeni provenienti dalla Persia o dalla Georgia, l'altra di Armeni provenienti dall'impero Ottomano: è più che probabile che essi parlassero dialetti diversi, anche se è noto che in tale epoca esisteva una sorta di koinè sopradialettale, scritta, ma probabilmente anche orale, che permetteva la mutua comprensione a persone provenienti da zone distinte del mondo armenofono (Ishkhanyan 1973; 1979 e 1984, Parnassian 1985): è quella lingua che un grammatico dell'epoca, Yovhannēs Holov (Ioannes Agop), in testi pubblicati nel 1674 e 1675, definiva *civilis*, o *k'aghak'akan* (Holov 1674, 3 e 1675, 1). Poco dopo, nel 1711, la stessa definizione si incontra del *Thesaurus* di Schröder (Schröder 1711, 301-02).

Quanto alla conoscenza dell'italiano, abbiamo una serie di informazioni: per esempio sappiamo, e lo abbiamo già ricordato, che nel 1624 quindici mercanti armeni chiedono di avere un proprio console che funga loro anche da interprete (Frattarelli Fischer 1998), mentre nel 1642 una analoga richiesta riguarda un tal Diodato Armeno, probabilmente di origine persiana, "tanto antiquato in questa città, che ha la lingua franca" (Castignoli 1979, 46 ed anche Frattarelli Fischer 1998). Dunque, se l'insieme dei mercanti, comprensibilmente, non conosce a sufficienza l'italiano, c'è qualcuno nella loro comunità che invece ha acquisito notevoli capacità al riguardo. Ma questo caso dovette essere, tutto sommato, un'eccezione, se anche un mercante come Sefer (o Safer) di Gasparo, che risiedette a Livorno per diversi anni e vi sposò la figlia del viceprovveditore della dogana, cioè di una delle massime autorità cittadine, al momento di far testamento, nel 1629, preferisce ricorrere ad un interprete, anch'egli peraltro un Armeno (Frattarelli Fischer 1998). Possiamo dunque affermare che, almeno nella prima metà del XVII secolo, la presenza di interpreti, italiani o armeni, è una costante, e dei loro servigi si avvalgono tanto i mercanti di passaggio, quanto quelli residenti.¹⁰

Con la seconda metà del secolo, però, divengono probabilmente più frequenti i casi di Armeni che si sedentarizzano: come abbiamo già ricordato, negli anni sessanta vi si stabilisce definitivamente Antonio Bogos Celebi e vi installa un bagno turco, mentre a partire dallo stesso periodo la famiglia Mirman risulta proprietaria di beni immobili siti in città e nei dintorni (Ciorli 1986, 76-77; 82, nota 3 e anche Castignoli 1998). È probabile che, per personaggi di questo rilievo, l'integrazione sia anche linguistica. Peraltro già per quelle epoche sappiamo di Armeni che partecipano alla vita culturale livornese, o almeno ci provano, come quel tale Elia di Saffar Armeno

¹⁰ In generale, però, gli Armeni che, sposandosi, si sedentarizzano, non appartengono all'élite, come proverebbe l'origine delle loro mogli. Da un'analisi dei registri dei matrimoni celebrati a Livorno fra il 1676 ed il 1682, si trovano cinque casi che riguardano Armeni, quattro dei quali sposano vedove, il quinto una schiava turca affrancata e convertita (cfr. Frattarelli Fischer 1998).

che, nel settembre 1692, recita sue composizioni all'Accademia, suscitando grandi risate fra il pubblico, pare, per la sua scarsa padronanza della lingua italiana (Pera 1888, 144 e nota 4).

Possiamo dunque affermare che, nel seicento, la conoscenza dell'armeno, nella colonia di Livorno, è una costante, coerentemente con la dinamica di tale presenza; tutt'al più sarà da notare, da parte di qualche persona, ormai intenzionata a stabilirsi in città, il desiderio di conoscere anche l'italiano.

Queste due tendenze, stabilizzazione e integrazione fino all'assimilazione da un lato, conservazione della lingua nazionale dall'altro, si ritrovano anche per buona parte del settecento, secolo in cui gli Armeni di Livorno sono soprattutto sudditi ottomani, quindi dialettalmente più omogenei fra loro.

Un buon esempio della conservazione delle caratteristiche nazionali ce lo offre questo fatto. Il *vardapet* Stefano Cacciadur (Step'an Khach'aturean) fu parroco della chiesa armena di Livorno dal 1727 al 1769, quindi per oltre quaranta anni. Ciononostante, ancora alla fine della sua esistenza terrena (mori a 102 anni), dimostrò di avere difficoltà ad esprimersi in italiano. La cosa è ricordata dall'Ughurlean (Ughurlean 1990, 115), ma ci è meglio nota da una cronaca redatta da Grisonio Visna¹¹ e conservata manoscritta presso la biblioteca Labronica di Livorno. Il testo contiene la descrizione dei festeggiamenti che si tennero nel maggio 1766, in occasione della visita del nuovo signore di Toscana, Pietro Leopoldo, e di sua moglie, Maria Luisa. Alle pagine 119-20 il Visna ricorda come, fra le autorità venute ad ossequiare le loro altezze reali, ci fosse anche il parroco Cacciadur, che si rivolse a loro con queste parole:

Io baciato mano vostra Sig. Madre, e fatto dodici figliuola: ora baciato mano vostra fatto voi altrettanto: Sanità, lunga vita, Paradiso.

Limiti personali di un centenario, si dirà, ma tuttavia il fatto ci permette di intravedere, all'interno della comunità livornese, una piccola comunità armena, nella quale era possibile vivere per lungo tempo, esercitandovi per giunta una funzione pubblica come quella di parroco, ignorando quasi del tutto la lingua del luogo.

D'altra parte, anche nel settecento l'integrazione e l'assimilazione continuano: è per esempio noto che, fra gli abituali frequentatori delle conversazioni erudite che, tra il 1753 ed il 1754, si tennero a casa del proposto della collegiata (la massima autorità religiosa di Livorno), c'erano anche il figlio ed il nipote di quell'Adeodato Agà de Mathus (Astuatsatur Agha de Mat'us) che più di ogni altro, coll'impegno personale, l'uso delle sue amicizie, le sue stesse finanze, aveva voluto la costruzione della chiesa armena, tanto da meritarsi il titolo di "Fondatore" (Pera 1888, 318-19; Gremigni 1996, 69; 83, nota 23; Cagianelli 2009, 218).

¹¹ Grisonio Visna, *Memorie delle dimostrazioni d'ossequioso Giubbilo fatte in Livorno a nome dello stesso Pubblico, come pure a nome del Corpo delle Nazioni ivi Abitanti, nella prima volta che fu onorato dalla presenza delle AA.RR. i SS. Pietro Leopoldo Arciduca d'Austria, Principe R. d'Ungheria, Granduca di Toscana ecc... e Maria Luisa, Infanta di Spagna Granduchessa ecc... nuovi sovrani della Toscana, nel mese di Maggio 1766. Raccolte minutamente dal Dott. Grisonio Visna Livornese, con un Sommario d'altre Memorie precedenti alla venuta delle LL.AA.RR. in Toscana, che servirà come di Prefazione*, manoscritto conservato presso la biblioteca Labronica di Livorno.

Una spia per indagare la progressiva integrazione degli Armeni di Livorno ce la offre l'antropomastica. Scorrendo diverse liste di nomi, presenti nell'opera dell'Ughurlean, che, ricordiamolo, nel 1891 pubblica la prima storia della comunità armena di Livorno, si può affermare che, per il seicento ed in parte anche per il secolo successivo, l'onomastica (quasi esclusivamente maschile) è costituita o da nomi di generica tradizione cristiana, o da nomi manifestamente orientali. Parziale eccezione costituiscono un Carlo Astuatsatur (per l'esattezza Karolos Astuatsatur), il cui figlio sarebbe morto nel 1720 ed uno Stefano Ranieri (Step'an Raniëri), morto nel 1721 (Ughurlean 1990, 99, nota 49). Carlo, e tanto più Ranieri, sono nomi piuttosto insoliti per un Armeno, ma la presenza di una doppia denominazione fa sospettare che essi fossero usati in ambiti diversi: quello tratto dal repertorio nazionale, all'interno della comunità, quello italiano, probabilmente nei contatti con l'esterno. Questo del doppio nome con doppia funzione è un espediente che spesso si riscontra in piccole comunità alloglotte e che è noto anche in ambito armeno.

Con la seconda metà del settecento, però, e poi nell'ottocento, l'onomastica degli Armeni di Livorno si adegua completamente a quella italiana e ne segue le mode. Consideriamo un momento quanto avviene nel settecento. Interessante è la presenza di una famiglia Salvat'orean (cui in italiano corrisponderà Salvatori o Salvadori) almeno dal 1783 (Ughurlean 1990, 125), dato che un tale cognome sembra presupporre un avo dal non armeno nome di Salvatore, magari un Yarat'iwn che ha "tradotto" così il proprio nome. Comunque stiano le cose, resta il fatto che la presenza di un cognome Salvatori/Salvadori per una famiglia armena comprova la generalizzazione della forma italiana.

Data questa situazione di progressivo adeguamento all'onomastica locale, nulla di strano se nel 1844 è ricordato un Salvatore Scerbetian (137), o se gli ultimi rampolli di casa Mirman, nati nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento, si chiamano Augusto ed Alfredo (168-69).

In generale, tuttavia, il vero punto di discriminare è l'ottocento: in quest'epoca, come già si è detto, i trasferimenti dall'oriente, o anche solo i contatti con la madrepatria sono ormai rarissimi, sicché solo il parroco ed i suoi coadiutori finiscono con l'essere veramente Armeni (ed armenofoni), mentre l'integrazione dei discendenti degli Armeni è un fatto sempre più compiuto, come prova fra l'altro il caso di Armeni livornesi (o di origine livornese) titolari di impieghi statali (Gregorio Alessandri) (Ughurlean 1990, 135) o addirittura ministri di Toscana (Pietro Adami) (158; 163 nota 8), oppure liberi professionisti, per esempio avvocati (Giovanni Adami) (154).

È questa la situazione che l'Ughurlean trova, quando, nel 1879, viene nominato parroco della parrocchia armena di Livorno. Lasciamo a lui la parola:

L'armeno che nasce oggi a Livorno non si distingue affatto da un Italiano: non conosce la lingua armena, si chiama Alfredo o Gualtiero, il suo cognome è diventato Alessandri o Adami, non gli piacciono gli inni sacri armeni, non conosce la storia del suo paese, festeggia le feste latine, si confessa da un sacerdote latino, fa i digiuni dei Latini, seguendo le loro quattro tempora con astinenze di tre giorni. Riceve la cresima quand'è un ragazzo ed è membro delle confraternite delle chiese latine, con le quali deve cantare alle funzioni (Ughurlean 1990, 161).

Naturalmente questa situazione non poté certo cambiare, nonostante l'impegno del parroco stesso il cui operato, secondo quanto lui stesso ci dice, "ha mirato a mettere ordine nella chiesa e ad interrompere le consuetudini, estranee ad essa, che vi si erano infiltrate, cercando, nei limiti del possibile, di celebrare secondo i riti armeni e badando a non permettere ad elementi estranei di intromettersi nelle nostre cose" (156). Anzi, per quanto riguarda il fatto più strettamente linguistico, l'iniziativa di far stampare la traduzione di alcune preghiere armenie ed il testo armeno in caratteri latini di alcuni canti (156) dimostra quanto la lingua avita fosse ormai estranea ai membri della comunità, mentre il tentativo, fallito, di organizzare corsi di armeno (164, nota 15) prova quanto poco interesse ormai si avesse per essa. D'altra parte, il processo di assimilazione era ormai irreversibile: giudicato a distanza di quasi un secolo e mezzo, l'operato dell'Ughurlean, generoso fin che si vuole, ci pare anacronistico, e la comunità di cui egli aveva la cura risulta essere, già al suo tempo, né più né meno che una parrocchia livornese, la cui armenità è ormai un fatto storico, non una realtà ancora viva.

4. Livorno nei resoconti dei viaggiatori armeni

Fin qui abbiamo visto la colonia armena di Livorno, per così dire, dall'interno, ma la città, soprattutto per la sua importanza in ambito mercantile, è anche oggetto di attenzione da parte di alcuni viaggiatori armeni che attraversano la Penisola, lasciando un resoconto della loro esperienza. Limitiamoci a quelli del seicento. Questi vanno divisi in due categorie: ci sono persone, di solito ecclesiastici, dirette a Roma, ed i loro resoconti non parlano di Livorno, ma, in ambito toscano, forse anche in funzione del percorso che seguono, di Firenze e Siena e delle loro chiese. Questo è ad esempio il caso del domenicano armeno Ōgostinos Bajents' (o Bajets'i),¹² che percorre la Penisola verso il 1610, ed anche di Simëon Lehats'i,¹³ armeno di Polonia che viaggia per l'Italia tra il 1611 ed il 1612, attento, è vero, alle imprese dei Cavalieri di Santo Stefano ed al numero di schiavi presenti nel territorio granducale, ma non a Livorno. Peraltro l'epoca in cui viaggiano questi due personaggi è quella in cui la trasformazione di Livorno in "città",¹⁴ ed in città internazionale, è ancora in fieri.

La seconda categoria di viaggiatori-scrittori è invece costituita da mercanti, e questi sì che nominano la città labronica. Questo è il caso di Zak'aria Agulets'i,¹⁵ che viaggia per l'Europa fra il 1658 ed il 1660. Nel suo diario egli cita varie volte Livorno, tra l'altro nell'indicare la distanza e nell'elencare le tappe del viaggio da Amsterdam

12 Per il testo armeno si veda Patkanean 1884; per una traduzione francese rimandiamo a Brosset 1837. I passi relativi alla Toscana si trovano rispettivamente in Patkanean 1884, 16 e Brosset 1837, 244-45.

13 Per il testo armeno rimandiamo ad Simëon Lehats'i 1936. Per una traduzione inglese si veda Bournoutian 2007. Il riferimento a Firenze si trova in Simëon Lehats'i 1936, 173-74 ed in Bournoutian 2007, 156-57 rispettivamente.

14 Nel 1606 Livorno viene indicata come "città": si veda Vivoli 1846, 7-117 passim (epoca XIII).

15 Per il testo armeno si veda Zak'aria Agulets'i 1938; per una traduzione inglese Bournoutian 2003. I passi cui facciamo riferimento si trovano rispettivamente in Zak'aria Agulets'i 1938, 12, 15-18, 54-55 e in Bournoutian 2003, 25-26, 28-30, 62-63.

alla città labronica, sulla scorta delle informazioni che ha ottenuto dal capitano della nave su cui ha viaggiato.

Probabilmente è un mercante anche Gabriël T'okhat'ets'i¹⁶ che nel marzo 1695 fa scalo per tre giorni a Livorno, dove è giunto da Venezia via Bologna, e da dove proseguirà per Marsiglia. Nel luglio dello stesso anno, sulla via del ritorno, ripasserà dalla città toscana. Pur nella stringatezza della sua informazione ci tiene ad avvertire il lettore che, da Livorno, Marsiglia è raggiungibile sia passando per Genova, se si vuol far tappa in questa città, sia direttamente via Tolone.

5. Conclusioni

Finora abbiamo visto una colonia armena formarsi a Livorno nel corso del XVII secolo, ed in qualche misura conservarsi vitale anche nel secolo successivo. Abbiamo discusso delle competenze linguistiche dei suoi abitanti, delle loro attività culturali e, in generale, della loro integrazione o, senz'altro, assimilazione alla società livornese. Abbiamo poi avuto anche modo di considerare, seppure più di sfuggita, come Livorno sia nota a viaggiatori armeni, di solito mercanti, che, nei seicento, viaggiano per l'Italia. Nulla di strano, quindi, che la città labronica compaia anche nei manuali di mercanzia armeni redatti nel seicento, come l'*Ashkharhazhghov* ("Compendio") di Kostand Jughayets'i, solo recentemente pubblicato (Kostand Jughayets'i 2021), o il *Gandz Ch'ap'oy, kshroy, t'woy ew dramits' bolor ashkharhi* ("Tesoro di misure, pesi, numeri e monete di tutto il mondo"), di Ghukas Vanandets'i, pubblicato ad Amsterdam nel 1699.¹⁷ Ma questo forse è un altro discorso.

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¹⁶ Il testo armeno è pubblicato in Hakobyan 1956. Le parti cui ci riferiamo si trovano alle pp. 406–07.

¹⁷ Per il testo rimandiamo alla riproduzione reperibile on line al link <https://digilib.aaa.am> (sito visitato il 28 novembre 2023). Su questa operetta si veda Kévonian, 1975.

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“Medieval Violence” and Legal Issues of Everyday Life in Cilician Armenia (Late Twelfth–Fourteenth Centuries)

▼ **ABSTRACT** In the lawcodes used in the Armenian state of Cilicia, there are numerous definitions of violence, which are important to be considered in the medieval context. These are in the codes of Mkhit'ar Gosh (c. 1120/30–1213) and Smbat the Constable (1208–1276). In particular, there are cases of violence defined in the matrimonial law and clauses regarding various aspects of everyday relations. What examples of violence can be found in the sources related to the history of Cilician Armenia, and how are these cases legally defined? How can these definitions reflect the multifaceted episodes of daily life in Cilician Armenia? These are the main questions discussed in this article.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Mediterranean trade, Cilician Armenia, medieval violence, episodes of everyday life, lawcode, Venice, Mkhit'ar Gosh, Smbat the Constable.

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1. Introduction

Since the end of the twelfth century, when the Armenian state of Cilicia was proclaimed as a kingdom, King Levon I the Great (ruled as Prince Levon II in 1187–1198 and as King Levon I in 1198–1219) concluded trade agreements with the Republics of Venice and Genoa, which were later joined by Pisa, Florence, the southern French cities of Montpellier and Marseille, as well as Catalonia and others. Cilician Armenia became an important arena of international geopolitical, economic relations and cultural flows. In Cilician cities, especially Ayas (in European sources mentioned as Laiazzo, Laias, etc.), Armenians lived side by side with the multi-ethnic population from Western European cities: Greeks, Syrians, Jews, Arabs and others (Langlois 1863; Lane 1973, 80).

Zohrab Gevorgyan  0000-0002-5286-7592 • Institute of History of the Armenian Academy of Sciences; American University of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia, (Email: zgevorgyan@aua.am)

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The social changes and the development of cities in Cilicia inevitably led to the challenge of having new laws and codes for the state. There were at least two lawcodes used in Cilician Armenia from the end of the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries: the first was the *Lawcode* of Mkhit'ar Gosh (twelfth century; it was not intended especially for Cilician Armenia), and the second was written by Smbat the Constable (Gundstabl) in the mid-thirteenth century. The latter seems to be based on Mkhit'ar Gosh's *Lawcode*,¹ the *Assizes of Antioch*,² and the Byzantine law (see Smbat Gundstabl 1918, 6–7).

In the medieval Armenian society, the evolution of the *Armenian Canon Books*³ (eighth century) to the codes of Mkhit'ar Gosh and Smbat the Constable is an example of legal transformations from the dominance of Church law to relatively secular law. It is not about direct textual changes, but about transformations of legal culture between the times of creation of these codes. With the strengthening of the state system in Cilician Armenia, we can see a balancing process of religious or secular influences on laws, which does not mean that the codes of Mkhit'ar Gosh, Smbat the Constable and others were completely devoid of strong religiousness, but that it is simply a matter of certain proportion and combination of religious and secular laws (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 12–16).

The entire legal and state management system in Cilician Armenia was built on the concept of internal and external syntheses. It was even reflected in the terminology of the names of state offices, officials, and various types of taxes and laws. For example, the offices in Cilician Armenia had names in Armenian, French, and other European languages: *mareschal* (մարաշախտ, *marajakht* in Armenian), *seneschal* (սենեշախ, *seneskal* in Armenian), *constable* (գունդստաբլ, *gundstabl* in Armenian), *bailo* (բայլ, պայլ, *bayl*, *payl* in Armenian), *chancellor* (ջանցլեր, *jants'ler*), etc. (Bornazyan 1973, 61).

In modern historical science, the history of emotions and mentality, as well as the environmental history gain more importance. They make the study more vivid and multi-perspective, enabling deeper understanding of historical changes and the continuity between different times.

The study of the history of violence is special in terms of the following questions. What was called violence in different times and societies? How was violence formulated both at the level of personal perceptions and in legal documents? How have perceptions and legal definitions of violence changed over time? The history of violence becomes relevant in modern societies from the viewpoint of historical,

1 According to another opinion, Smbat did not rely on Mkhit'ar's lawcode, and the many similar laws in these two codes are a result of the fact that both authors used the Law of Moses (Smbat Sparapet 1958, XXII–XXIII).

2 The *Assizes of Antioch* was a collection of laws used in the Principality of Antioch. It was probably compiled in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Smbat the Constable translated the *Assizes of Antioch* from Old French into Armenian in the mid-thirteenth century (Kurdian 1962, 134–37).

3 The *Armenian Canon Books* (*Կանոնագիրք հայոց, Kanonagirk' Hayots'*) was compiled by the Catholicos Yovhannēs Ōdznets'i (717–28) as the first formal collection of ecclesiastical canons of the Armenian Church (Hovhanessian 2016–2017, 74). For a diplomatic edition, see *Canon Books* 1964 and 1971. For recent scholarship, see Shirinian, Muradyan and Topchyan 2010 and Harutyunyan 2014.

traditional perceptions of violence on the one hand, and definitions of violence in the internal codes of states and international law on the other.

In the codes of Mkhitar Gosh and Smbat the Constable, there are many examples of definitions of violence that need to be considered in medieval context, because in different times, including the Middle Ages, perceptions and definitions of violence may be different compared to those of modern societies. Moreover, these perceptions and definitions may be radically different in different societies of the same time, depending on cultural, religious, legal, and other traditions.

The examples of legal definitions of violence in the lawcodes of Mkhitar Gosh and Smbat the Constable are particularly connected with the matrimonial law, which reflects various aspects of everyday relationship. There are direct and indirect definitions of both physical and psychological violence and their legal consequences. The main research questions of this article are:

1. What examples of violence are there in the sources related to the history of Cilician Armenia?
2. How these cases are legally defined?
3. How can these definitions reflect the social relations and everyday coexistence in Cilician Armenia?

The article also aims to draw a parallel between the state laws of Cilician Armenia on the one hand and the Byzantine law and codes used in the Crusader states on the other.

The general purpose of the study of violence in Cilician Armenia is to shed light on its perceptions at the state, public, and individual levels. No comprehensive research has been carried out on the history of violence in Cilician Armenia, especially from the viewpoint of comparing the legal traditions of other neighboring medieval states. In the notes of his fundamental study on Smbat the Constable's *Lawcode*, Josef Karst referred to the formulations of violence (Karst 1905, 123, 125, 129), but this issue still needs a multifaceted analysis in a new historical approach.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, the intense political relations eventually led to legal interactions as well. The novelty of this research is to present, through the lens of the history of violence, the context in which the combinations of internal and external legal traditions in Cilician Armenia came about. This research is also of importance from the perspective of studying the transformations of legal traditions in the Armenian environment during the absence of statehood in Cilicia after 1375. Moreover, it is directly related to the legal and cultural changes taking place in other surrounding environments.

The lawcodes of Mkhitar Gosh and Smbat the Constable, as well as the Genoese and Venetian notarial documents drawn up in Cilician Armenia, served as primary sources for this study.

2. Intentional and Unintentional Murder

In which laws of the mentioned codes can we see definitions of “violence”? From those examples, I have tried to pick out episodes of relations in which the word “violence” is directly mentioned, for instance, *between men and women, teachers and pupils, children, humans and animals, doctors and patients*, etc. There are also cases of violence *towards servants and workers, suicide*, etc. Such instances in the lawcodes make it possible to form a certain idea about the daily relations, possible disputes, and regulations in Cilician Armenia. The fact that those cases are included in the state codes is evidence of their importance in the governing system of Cilician Armenia.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the cities in Cilician Armenia developed not only quantitatively but also in terms of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. In Ayas, Sis, Korikos, and other cities, the increase in population inevitably led to many challenges such as the necessity of new laws. Therefore, it was no coincidence that in the middle of the thirteenth century, Smbat the Constable compiled a new and updated code after the example of Mkhit'ar Gosh's *Lawcode* and the *Assizes of Antioch* (cf. Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 15).

Let us look at the definitions of violence in the mentioned forms of relations — at first, the teacher-pupil relationship, which is addressed both by Mkhit'ar and Smbat. Mkhit'ar, defining voluntary and involuntary forms of murder, writes:

Or a *vardapet* may strike his pupil moderately for punishment, or a father his son, or a mother her daughter, or a mother-in-law the bride, or a brother his brothers, or a master his servant, or the mistress her maid, or somebody someone else, whence mortal harm is caused (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 289).

This law is about “moderate” hitting of somebody by someone, e.g., the pupil by the teacher for the purpose of discipline, and if, as a result, the pupil dies, then it is considered a non-intentional murder. The same applies to others, and the key word here is “moderate”, because in the definitions of premeditated murder of the same law, Gosh lists cases of direct intent to kill.

In the law related to the same issue, Smbat the Constable clarifies in more detail that if during the lesson the teacher beats the student in such a way that the latter dies, then he is the same kind of murderer as others and should no longer have the right to be a clergyman. However, the teacher's religious status and the fact that the student is beaten while being taught are considered mitigating circumstances. But, if the murderer is laic, for example, when a father beats his son to death, then he should suffer a severe punishment (Smbat Gundstabl 1918, 26; Smbat Sparapet 1958, 32). Another law in the codes of Mkhit'ar and Smbat refers to the cases when a son beats his parents (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 159; Mkhit'ar Gosh 1975, 59).

Both Mkhit'ar's and Smbat's codes contain laws regarding children or teenagers hitting or hurting each other (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 141–42; Smbat Sparapet 1958, 139–40). If a child commits the murder, the age of that child is important for determining the punishment. In the lawcode of Smbat, if the murder is committed by a child older than 12, the punishment is the same as in the case of an adult, while for children

under 12, only half of the punishment is given, and if the child is even younger, a fine is imposed (Smbat Sparapet 1958, 139–40). Gosh's lawcode has almost the same content. He just indicates the child's exact age (10 years) below which only a fine is imposed. He also adds the following to that law: "Although in other crimes the canons bid that below fifteen the sins of childhood are not be remembered, in the matter of blood we have reckoned the law to be thus" (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 141). If children accidentally or intentionally hurt each other while playing and get fractures, then the injuring party should also pay the expenses required for treatment. In Gosh's *Lawcode*, treatment costs are called "doctor's fee", while Smbat speaks of "medicine price" (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 141–42; Smbat Gundstabl 1918, 68; Smbat Sparapet 1958, 140).

As stated in Smbat's *Lawcode*, it had to be thoroughly investigated and found out whether the murder was intentional or not: Եւ զկամաւ սպանութիւններն աշխարհական պարոնայք զիտնան, և զակամայն եկեղեցին ("Laic princes should know the voluntary murders, and clergymen the involuntary" (Smbat Gundstabl 1918, 26).

What was the meaning of the verb զիտնան (*gitnan*), which literally means "to know"? Perhaps here it has a procedural meaning, i.e., the trials of intentional murders were part of the functions of laic noblemen, and unintentional were judged by clergymen. Since the supreme judge in Cilician Armenia was still a high ranking clergyman, it is possible that only the procedure of examining the intentional murder was trusted to laics before the trial. In any case, there is a clear legal distinction between laics and clergymen.

Most definitions of violence in the codes of Cilician Armenia referred to relations between women and men and the legal status of women. These are the matrimonial ties, infidelity, rape, kidnapping of women or other cases of violence in various situations.

3. Violence as Punishment for Rape, Adultery, Bestiality, and Sodomy

E.g., the following law of Mkhitar Gosh's *Lawcode* is about punishment for rape: "... If someone find a young virgin who is not betrothed to a man, and by force sleeps with her, let the man who slept with her give the girl's father fifty double-drams of silver, and let her be his wife; and he will not be authorized to divorce her all his lifetime" (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 145). Thus, regardless of the form of punishment, rape was clearly defined as a crime.

Another law of Mkhitar Gosh's *Lawcode* is about different forms of adultery: "Concerning statutes for adulterers and other malefactors". It states that an adulterer, even if the adultery "is willingly and by the invitation of the woman, ... is worthy of death". However, "in accordance with our Gospel let his blood be ransomed". And although "other judges think it right to cut off the private parts of those men, ... the law commutes that canonical punishment for a payment" (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 144).

Mkhit'ar Gosh refers to sodomy⁴ as well. In the law “Concerning the statutes for which reasons a wife may leave her husband”, it is written that when a wife discovers her husband’s evil passion for sodomy or bestiality, or his pollution with foreigners,⁵ let her be authorized to leave him” (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 135). However, the perpetrator is given a chance to avoid punishment for a one-time act of sodomy and bestiality, which can be explained by the fact that he was married, and the goal might have been to keep the family together. But if the act was repeated, the wife had the right to leave her husband and take half of his property. Later (in Chapter 28), Mkhit'ar says that, in some judges’ opinion, an adulterer with a married woman deserves the same punishment (cutting of the private parts) as those who commit sodomy or bestiality.

A punishment for adultery is also defined in the *Lawcode* of Smbat. Here too, according to the law, it had to be found out who the seducer was, the woman or the man. If the woman, her nose was to be cut off as a punishment, and if the man, his penis (but not testicles). Bestiality is mentioned as well, and in that case both his penis and testicles were to be cut off (թէ ընդ անասուն բռնեն, կտրեն գերկութն զձուքն եւ զձեռն, եւ ապա յեկեղեցին տան որ քաւէ — “if they catch him with an animal, they should cut both his testicles and penis and give him to the church for penitence”; see Smbat Gundstabl 1918, 52–53; Smbat Sparapet 1958, 96).

For crimes of sexual nature, castration or other types of severe punishments were widespread in both the Roman and Byzantine laws, as well as in the Crusader states of the East and in Western Europe. In particular, “the canons of Nablus resemble Byzantine legal issuances, and suggest the direct or indirect influence of the *Ecloga* ...⁶ on some of the punishments. This influence may have come via the local Greek Christian population. Castration as punishment appears in the *Ecloga*, though not specifically for the offenses for which the Nablus canons prescribe it. The punishment for adulteresses in Nablus — having the nose cut off — resembles that in the *Ecloga*, where the same punishment was applied to men as well for various offenses” (Karras 2020, cf. Kedar 1999, 313–14).

It is noteworthy that castration, amputation of nose or another part of the body for committing adultery are included in both Mkhit'ar's and Smbat's codes (see Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 144 and Smbat Sparapet 1958, 96), just as the canons of Nablus also provided castration or other maiming for other sexual crimes, in particular those across religious lines, for example, canons 12–13: “If a man is proved to have knowingly lain with a Saracen woman, let his penis be cut off, and let her nose be cut off. If a man

4 See Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 135, 144. The corresponding word in the Old Armenian text is արնուագիտություն (Mkhit'ar Gosh 1975, 40, 46, 101). Here it clearly means sexual intercourse between two men. Thomson notes that sodomy and bestiality (անասնագիտություն/անասնապրծություն) are often correlated. Most likely, the *Book of Canons* by St Basil the Great, where different kinds of sexual relations were interconnected (see Carden 2004, 134–36), was also a basis for Mkhit'ar Gosh.

5 i.e. Muslims.

6 The *Ecloga* (from Greek ἐκλογή, “selection”) is a compilation of Byzantine law issued in 726 or 741 by the Emperor Leo III the Isaurian (Freshfield 1926, X; Humphreys 2014, 2). The canons of Nablus were the twenty-five canons of the council that Patriarch Warmund of Jerusalem and King Baldwin II of Jerusalem convened in Nablus on 16 January, 1120. It constitutes the only extant body of Latin ecclesiastical legislation promulgated in the First Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187) (see Kedar 1999, 310).

rapes his own Saracen woman, let her be enslaved to the fisc, and let his testicles be cut off" (Karras 2020, 973). Mkhit'ar, too, clearly specifies the case of adultery with foreigners.

Benjamin Z. Kedar compares the laws of Nablus and the *Ecloga*, which condemn homosexuality; in both cases the punishment is severe, but different. In the case of Nablus, both sides, active and passive, are condemned to be burned, and in the case of the *Ecloga*, "Both active and passive partners to a lascivious act should be punished with the sword. The passive partner, if under the age of twelve, should be spared" (Kedar 1999, 314).

Also, a brief law of Smbat's code refers to the cases when a man wore woman's clothing and a woman wore man's clothing. Of course, this law did not directly refer to homosexuality, and the punishment was only damnation (Smbat Gundstabl 1918, 56; Smbat Sparapet 1958, 106; Karst 1905, 132).

4. Interactions and Borrowings between Medieval Codes

Benjamin Z. Kedar has briefly analysed the issue of interactions and borrowings between the Armenian codes, *Assizes of Antioch*, canons of Nablus, and Byzantine law, but he has not come to a conclusion as to whether these forms of punishment were transferred to the Crusader states from Byzantine law through Armenian laws or it was Smbat the Constable who borrowed them directly from the *Assizes of Antioch* when translating it. In this regard, it is necessary to quote that part of Kedar's analysis, because his point of view is persuasive.⁷

This is also true regarding, for instance, the laws on dowry. It is difficult to decide which lawcode could have more influence on the other, or to what extent the primary source was significant. Smbat the Constable translated the *Assizes of Antioch* from Old French into Armenian. The Armenian translation is the only version that exists today, since the original is lost (La Porta 2020, 183–84). Two types of women's property are mentioned in the Armenian translation: *tuayr* (տուայր) and *proyk* /*proyg* (պոյկ/

7 "Though conceivable, these possibilities seem rather far-fetched, lacking as they do documentary support. An Armenian influence is somewhat more likely. The Armenian law compiled by Smbat (Sempad) the Constable (1208–1276) imposes on adulterers virtually the same punishments as the canons of Nablus – that is, death or at least castration for the man and rhinotomy for the woman, a combination that, as I have shown, does not appear in the Byzantine codes. There is evidence that these punishments were in fact inflicted: Burchard of Mount Sion, who traveled in Little Armenia in the 1280s, reports that he witnessed there the rhinotomy of a priest's adulterous wife and the castration of the man with whom she had been apprehended. The chronological sequence allows one to assume that Smbat, who translated into Armenian the Frankish Assises d'Antioche, copied the adulterers' punishments from the canons of Nablus. But it is also possible that the canons as well as Smbat betray the influence of some unidentified variant of Byzantine law. Still another possibility is that such a variant first influenced the Armenians and then, through Armenian mediation, the Franks: let us remember that King Baldwin II, one of the conveners of the Council of Nablus, ruled the largely Armenian Edessa from 1100 to 1118 and there married an Armenian princess, and that his predecessor, Baldwin of Boulogne, punished the leaders of an Edessan conspiracy by cutting off feet, hands, noses, ears, tongues, and lips, as well as by castration and exile, that is, the gamut of punishments characteristic of the *Ecloga* and its derivatives" (Kedar 1999, 320–21).

սրոյի, see *Assises d'Antioche* 1876, 21, 47, 49, 55). The latter means “dowry” and is a loanword from Greek (προίξ, προίκα in Modern Greek). The term was probably taken from Byzantine law. The Latin equivalents of “dowry” (*dos*, *docium*, *dotale*) can be found in the documents of Genoese notarial agents, drawn up in the Cilician Armenian city of Ayas during the second half of the thirteenth century (Balletto 1989, A. No. 14, B. No. 25). Since the Old French version has not survived, it is hard to say what word for “dowry” was written there, which Smbat the Constable translated and later used in his *Lawcode* (Smbat Gundstabl 1918, 50, 57; Smbat Sparapet 1958, XXVI; Karst 1905, 140). Either it was in Old French, or the Greek word was used, which Smbat simply transliterated into Armenian.

Julius Kirshner has demonstrated that *dos*, the Roman term for dowry, had reappeared in the Italian legal language of the twelfth century and gradually ousted the German *Morgengabe*, a substantial gift given to the bride in the morning after the consummation of the marriage (see Kirshner 2015, 265) — the groom’s marriage present to the bride. According to Kirshner, the “victory” of the Roman tradition of the *dos* institute as a dowry over the German *Morgengabe* had enormous consequences for social relations and economic activities, as well as for the disposition and devolution of property (Kirshner 2015, 131). The existence of *Morgengabe* shows that, according to the custom existing in Western Europe until the twelfth century, the bridegroom gave a gift to the bride instead of receiving a dowry (Kirshner 2015, 131, 265).

With regard to the changes of terms for dowry in different laws, it is interesting that in his Armenian translation (late twelfth century) of the Syro-Roman *Code*, the Armenian writer, scholar, philosopher, state and church figure Nersēs Lambronats’i used the terms *proyg* (= *dos*) and *tuayr* (= *donatio*) (see Sukiasyan 1978, 289).

The document quoted below shows that these terms circulated in the daily life of Cilician Armenia. The passage is from the will of a Genoese man named Januino de Domo. It was drawn up in Ayas on September 27, 1277 and contains details about the division of matrimonial property with Januino’s wife Alice: “Item volo, iubeo et ordino quod Alixia, uxor mea [h]abeat et habere debeat omnia iura et rationes suas, de quibus fit mencio in instrumento dotali in litteris armenis. Reliquorum bonorum meorum, mobilium et immobilium, mihi heredem instituo Anfelixiam, filiam [m]eam”. In this will, Januino instructs the notary agent to fix that his wife Alice has all the rights to her own dowry and property (Alice’s Armenian identity is revealed by the fact that her dowry document was written in Armenian: *in litteris armenis*). Then he appoints their daughter Anfelixia as the main heir to all his movable and immovable property (Balletto 1989, A. N 25). It can be assumed that the *instrumentum dotale* (“dowry document”) of the Armenian woman comes from the Roman law, and in the Armenian original of the document, the term *proyk*/*proyg* (already found in the codes of Smbat and Gosh) would probably have been used.

In the preface to his translation of the *Assises of Antioch*, Smbat writes that “The text was presented by the reposed-in-Christ Sir Mencil the Constable to his son Sir Simon, who, because of my desire for the assizes, presented it to me, and I worked and translated them into the Armenian language ... because our nation followed the assizes by custom, and the Armenian court was ruled by it...” (Kurdian 1962, 135).

In fact, especially by the end of the twelfth century, the close ties between Cilician Armenia and the Principality of Antioch were noticeable not only in the relations of political elites, but also from the legal point of view. From Smbat the Constable's words that "our nation followed the assizes by custom, and the Armenian court was ruled by it", we can assume an intense relationship between the two states during the previous decades. Whatever the case, those connections ended when in 1268 the Mamluks conquered the Principality of Antioch.

5. Venetian, Genoese and Other Merchant Communities in the Legal Environment of Cilician Armenia

Venetian, Genoese, and other communities were established in Cilician Armenia in the same way as in other places of the Mediterranean: the Byzantine Empire, the islands Cyprus, Crete, Rhodes and elsewhere. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Venice and Genoa signed many treaties with the kings of Cilician Armenia, which allowed their merchants to have preferential conditions for setting up commercial communities in Cilician cities. They received areas for construction of churches, consulates, shops, baths, markets, residential houses, and other buildings. According to Genoese notary documents drawn up in Ayas, the number of trade representatives mentioned there had increased considerably: 340 in 1274, 213 in 1277, 220 in 1279, and in a certain period it amounted to 684. Most of them were from Genoa and other Ligurian cities (see Otten-Froux 1988, 152; Racine 1992, 190). More than 102 were members of Genoese noble families, whose names are scattered in various sources related to Cilician Armenia. Among them were Grimaldi, Tartaro, de Nigro, Doria, Lercari, Panzano, Guisulfo, Picamilio, Lomelini, Pinello, Turro, Rubeus, Usodimare, de Mari, de Murta, Cicada, Pelavichino, Spinola, Bestanio, Squarciafico, and others (see Balletto 1989, 185, 189, 192, 197, 199, 200, 383, 396, 401, 407–08, 411–14, 416, 420–21; Balletto 1986, 43, and Otten-Froux 1988, 152–53). In addition to the names of merchants, many other persons of different professions are mentioned in the Genoese notarial documents drawn up in Ayas during three years (1274, 1277, and 1279): twenty notaries (*notarius*), two secretaries (*cancellarius*), two scribes (*scriba*), seven commercial intermediaries (*censarius*), four bankers (*bancherius*), seven teachers of grammar (*magister*, *doctor gramatice*), two physicians (*magister medicus*), three pharmacists (*speciarius*), five barbers (*barberius*), three shipwrights (*calafato*), one candlemaker (*candelarius*), two blacksmiths (*ferrarius*), eight carpenters (*magister axie*), one master of knives and swords (*custurerius*), two thread spinners (*filatrix*), three cloth merchants (*draperius*), five furriers (*pelliparius*), six tailors (*sartor*, *taliator*), one wool shearer (*accimator*), one shoemaker (*calegarius*), one baker (*panerius*), eleven shopkeepers (*tabernarius*), one crossbowman (*balistarius*) etc. (Balletto 1989, 173, 176–77, 179–83, 189, 192–93, 198–99, 398, 401, 405–06, 412, 414–15, 419–20).

In a society with such a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural population, along with intense cultural, economic, and political flows, there would also be interactions between

legal traditions of different origins. A very interesting example of the implementation of laws in the daily life of Cilician Armenia is the Genoese notary document from Ayas dated March 31, 1279. It is a non-marital cohabitation contract signed between Jacobus Porco, a Genoese resident of that city, and a local woman named Cerasia. The fact that the document referred to a Genoese resident of Ayas and a local woman already implies that the law had to correspond to the legal regulations of both Cilician Armenia and the Genoese community. According to this notarial document, which contains the punishment of amputation, Cerasia promised to live with Porco in his house as a good wife (*tanquam bona femina*), to be satisfied with the food, clothes, and shoes given to her and to do housework. In his turn, Porco was obliged to take care of Cerasia's various needs and pay her an amount of 400 Armenian new drams.⁸ The noteworthy part of the contract is that if Cerasia suddenly dared to have physical contact with another man, she would be severely punished: her nose, hand, or leg would be cut off (... et, si forte in aliquo de predictis contrafacere, volo et exnunc tibi licenciam plenariam do et concedo quod possis mihi nassum incidere, sive manum vel pedem ad voluntatam tuam) (Balletto 1989, B. N 108, 117; Epstein 2004, 411–12). In fact, this punishment fully corresponds to those applied in the above-mentioned laws of the codes in Cilician Armenia and the Crusader states.

Smbat the Constable, who was the brother of King Hethum I (reigned 1226–1269) and the military minister of the state, compiled his *Lawcode* at a moment when the population from Western European cities was rapidly increasing in the cities of Cilician Armenia. Over time, the country rapidly became more multinational and cosmopolitan, and the new society naturally required changes in the state laws. Certainly, Smbat compiled the new code by combining different laws that would be as general as possible for the various ethnic communities, especially because the codes that Smbat probably used (the assizes of Antioch and Jerusalem, Byzantine law, etc.) also had a lot in common (Kedar 1999, 315). In the notarial documents from Ayas of the years 1274, 1277, and 1279, the native towns of the 80 persons are also mentioned: Rapallo, Noli, Savona, Chiavari, Voltri, Portofino, Recco, Ventimiglia, Varazze, Albaro, Arenzano, etc., which are located in Italy along the coasts of the Ligurian Sea and the Gulf of Genoa (Balletto 1989, A. N 12, 15, 39, 44, 48, 62, 64, 66–68, 77, 89, 84, 91–93, 97. B. N 30, 34, 38–39, 42, 46, 54, 58–59, 63–64, 66, 69, 71, 76, 79, 88, 108, 117, 121, 124, 128).

There were many marriages of local women with Venetian and Genoese merchants living in Cilicia. This is evidenced by their wills drawn up in Ayas. The Genoese and the Venetians even ordered that in case of death they should be buried in the cemeteries adjacent to the Venetian (St Mark) or Genoese (St Lorenzo) churches of Ayas (see *Felice de Merlis* 1973, 52–67; Balletto 1989, B. N 102, 119, 124). In other words, most of them settled permanently in Ayas and had special residence statuses as in other communities of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: *habitatores*

⁸ The Armenian new dram was minted during the reign of Levon II (1269–1289) and was one of the most used monetary units in the international trade. It was a silver coin weighing 2.9 grams (Alishan 1885, 385).

and *burgenses*.⁹ The commercial privilege of 1288 granted to the Genoese by King Levon II proves that the state laws of Cilician Armenia were combined with the legal regulations applied in the Genoese or Venetian communities. This agreement stated that if a Genoese resident of Cilician Armenia died without heirs, his property would pass to the Genoese consulate in Ayas except for the part he had received from his wife¹⁰ or Armenian authorities, which was to be returned to the Cilician state (Langlois 1863, 158).

6. Matrimonial and Other Issues of Everyday Life

Here are some examples of legal definitions of violence in laws. Particularly, in Mkhit'ar Gosh's *Lawcode*, the word "violence" (*brnut'iwn*) is literally present in a number of laws related to various issues (Mkhit'ar Gosh 1975, 85, 89–90, 100, 121, 352, 385). One of the laws on marriage concerns the cases when a husband, continually quarrelling with his wife, insults, strikes, beats, hurts, or mutilates her¹¹ (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 137–38; Mkhit'ar Gosh 1975, 42). This law defines the rights of not only the woman but also her children, if the stepfather had accepted them from the beginning of their marriage. Furthermore, if the woman complained, this law opened a court case, and the husband had to pay a double fine to the wife's family for maiming her. If the insults and beatings continued, the woman could leave her husband. The law does not state that the wife could leave him only through divorce, but she had the right to depart even without the processing of divorce, because it required time during which the woman's life could be in danger.

The definitions of violence in the codes also concern various cases of economic and daily relations. For instance, the law in the code of Mkhit'ar Gosh regarding the mortgage of a house or any other property states: "It does not permit you to enter and take a pledge lest there occur some force, but [it should be done] willingly. The thing taken, furthermore, shall not be from his necessary belongings" (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 199). In the old Armenian text, the equivalent of "force" is the same *brnut'iwn*. (Mkhit'ar Gosh 1975, 352). This law is related to such a case when a person owes a debt, something is pledged, and the debtor is poor — the creditor has no right to

⁹ For more details on these civil statutes in the overseas commercial communities, see Thiriet 1959, 269 and Otten-Froux 1981, 375–77.

¹⁰ In the Genoese or Venetian notarial documents (*Felice de Merlis* 1973 and Balletto 1989), there is no mention of women who had come to Cilician Armenia from Genoa, Venice or other places of the Western European Mediterranean.

¹¹ "If a man, filled with demonic passion, continually dishonors his wife with insults, if there are step-children and for that reason he is mad, let the judgment be as follows. If at the beginning he accepted them, he is obliged to endure them; but if not, let him send them back to his wife's family. But if he acts because of his foul character, breaks [a bone] or mutilates her, let the sentence be the same as for the outsiders, to pay the fine due the wife's [family]; and let it be double — for they should reckon them not as concubines but as their own flesh — and that, when they repent. But if they remain in the same obstinacy and there is a fear that perchance by striking her he may kill her, after much admonition and remonstrance let her depart" (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 137–38, cf. Mkhit'ar Gosh 1975, 42).

enter the debtor's house and forcibly take the pledged goods, if the goods are for basic needs.

Especially from the second half of the thirteenth century, as a result of the rapid development of international and internal trade in Cilician Armenia, such laws of a social-economic nature became more and more in demand. The development of commercial relations changed the forms of material property, which became more diverse both quantitatively and qualitatively. In Cilician cities, the number of economically active population from Western Europe and other places increased, which required detailed forms of laws that would regulate as many different situations and disputes as possible.

7. Restrictions in the Acts of Violence in the Laws Concerning Disabilities and Poor Health

In the codes of Mkhitar Gosh and Smbat the Constable, definitions of violence and legal regulations are related to different cases of public relations. Both authors have a noticeable tendency to refer to various situations of public life. In one of the laws, where the word "violence" is used, Mkhitar mentions cases when a person with mental problems commits suicide. The law clearly states that since relatives often lie, saying that the deceased person was mentally retarded, it should be examined carefully whether the suicide was committed due to a mental problem or by violence:

... It is necessary for the cleric to investigate whether he was truly insane and did this; because often a relative of the afflicted one, wishing to arrange that a liturgy be offered for him, lies, saying that he was not of sound mind, so that they may offer the liturgy. So it is necessary to investigate lest perchance he did this by human violence or in some other way (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 221).

How could that "medieval investigation" be carried out? If the case had to be examined, it would require special officials or "detectives", who would interrogate the parties thoroughly and disclose the whole case. This would also imply a certain medical involvement in the process, which would ultimately reveal whether the person who committed suicide really had mental problems or not.

Another law of Mkhitar's *Lawcode* strictly condemned the collection of taxes, clothing, food, and drink from hospitals (infirmaries) by force. The law apparently applied to government officials who might have acted by abuse of authority:

Some persons exercise authority over poor-houses and forcibly demand taxes ... and food and drink, and they set their own officials over them, and oppress them with service and labor, and they torment without scruple the miserable brothers, to whom it was rather more necessary to bring cures and for all Christians to bind their wounds.

Such persons, according to Mkhitar, "who do not practice mercy", deserve "to be judged by merciless judgment" (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 254).

Thomson has translated the word *unqwpwling* (*tkaranots'*) of the old Armenian text as "poor-house", but the word *tkar* also means "sick, disabled" both in old and modern Armenian. In the *NBHL*, *tkaranots'* is first of all explained as "hospital" ("place for sick people"). Thomson argues that if the word meant hospital, "the ill could hardly perform labour" there. However, it is clear from the context that the ill were rather taken care of than performed any labour in those houses. Besides that, the *NBHL*, as Thomson himself states, notes the usage of the word *tkaranots'* only here, while in the *Armenian Canon Books* we read the more usual *hiwandanots'* ("hospital") in our passage as well. Moreover, there is direct evidence of the existence of a hospital in Cilician Armenia. In particular, in the territory of the capital city Sis, a lapidary inscription was found in 1833. It refers to a medieval hospital founded in 1241 by Queen Zabel (Isabella, Queen of Armenia in 1226–1252) (see Alishan 1885, 223).

8. Conclusions

In conclusion, the following may be highlighted:

- a. The word "violence" occurs in many laws of the codes used in Cilician Armenia, which relate to various cases of everyday life, social and matrimonial relations, etc. Legally calling different actions as "violence" and describing the character of those actions, Mkhit'ar Gosh and Smbat the Constable in fact defined medieval perceptions of violence in Cilician Armenia in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries. Particularly, Mkhit'ar specified as violence not only the beating but also the dishonoring and insulting of a woman (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 137–38). According to the examples, there can be two types of violence, physical and psychological. The existence of various forms of violence and the legal punishment aimed at their prevention defined in the codes indicates the tendency to settle major and minor social conflicts in the society of Cilician Armenia. Those legal regulations became especially relevant from the second half of the thirteenth century, when the population of the Cilician cities increased, and they became multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-confessional environments.
- b. The definitions of violence in the codes of Mkhit'ar and Smbat, on the one hand, and the real everyday cases mentioned in the notarial acts drawn up in the city of Ayas on the other hand, give a certain idea of how the state laws were adapted to the society of Cilician Armenia. The examples of marital and non-marital contracts between Italians and the local women show that there was a combination of the state laws of Cilician Armenia and those applied in the Genoese and Venetian communities. That combination was most likely due to the close interactions between the Cilician codes, the *Assizes of Antioch*, and the Byzantine and other laws. In this regard, Smbat the Constable's translation of the *Assizes of Antioch* can be regarded as a precedent.
- c. The formulations of violence and punishments in the Armenian codes, the canons of Nablus, and the *Ecloga* are sometimes almost identical, which witnesses to not only mutual interactions and influences between them but also to direct or

indirect existence of a common legal environment. It is difficult to state how the codes of different states interacted, and in this respect, the following questions need to be addressed: did Byzantine law influence the codes applied in the Crusader states through the mediation of Cilician Armenia or vice versa? Which codes had a more significant influence: the codes used in the Crusader states or those of Cilician Armenia? Otherwise, we can assume that the legal borrowings and interactions between these states occurred in parallel with the development of their political relations.

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A *Gusan* Gestalt Shift

Differing Perceptions of the Bard in Movsēs Daskhurants'i's History of the Caucasian Albanians

▼ **ABSTRACT** This paper seeks to reinscribe the debate regarding the Christianisation of the *gusans* (bards), from one concerned with an essentialised notion of “Christian-ness” to one which better accounts for the multifarious notions of “Christian” in medieval Armenia. That is, the contrary conceptions of the *gusan*, in literary and material sources, are surveyed and taxonomised. By way of a close reading of Movsēs Daskhurants'i's *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, supplemented by an exegesis of the *gusan* in other canonical Armenian histories, the *gusan*, as a polemical category in clerical literature, is shown to represent the antithesis of Christian piety. However, the spoor of a more general assimilation of the *gusan* into Christian society, specifically that of the gentry and laypeople, is evidenced by other material sources and texts. The intention of this paper is to offer a new approach with which to think about the *gusan*, and Armenia's pre-Christian heritage writ large.

▼ **KEYWORDS** *gusans*, Daskhurants'i, Caucasian Albania, oral tradition, Christianisation, pre-Christian Armenia.

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1. Introduction

Armenia's medieval historians were tightrope-walkers *par excellence*, their writings negotiating the tension of reliance between the two sources of the early Armenian historical record — epic tradition and church chronicle (Van Lint 2012, 187). The two tended toward contraries: oral vs written, pagan vs Christian, Iranising vs Hel-

William Walk  0009-0008-5235-3496 • Harvard University, Boston (MA), USA, (Email: lwalk@g.harvard.edu)

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lenising, demotic vs haute.¹ As the fifth-century development of the written language by St Mesrop Mashtots' was coextensive with evangelisation efforts, early Armenian letters were of an unimpeachably Christian aspect (Thomson 1996, 495). Naturally, this corpus of literature was *partis pris*. In its piety, it was ill-representative of its own milieu, one still intimate with Parthian mores. And, in matters of strict chronology, it did not bear witness to pagan Armenia, nor to the century that followed King Trdat's conversion (Van Lint 2012, 180). The epic tradition, one that predated Christianity and continued to be cultivated by the *gusans* (bards or entertainers) long into the Middle Ages, was both a wellspring of pre-Christian and early Christian memory and reflective of Armenia's continued cultural proximity to Iran. Thus, historians, at once desirous of faithfully forging the image of the Armenian past, and heavily influenced by ecclesiastical narratives, were unsure whether and to what extent to make use of *gusan* odes.² Herein lies the tension of reliance. However, scholarship on the *gusans* has recently inverted this form of inquiry. Rather than investigating the extent to which medieval historians drew from bardic tales, an approach implicitly conceiving of the *gusans* as the fixed antithesis of ecclesiastical chroniclers, scholars have begun analysing the Christianisation of the *gusans* themselves (Van Lint 2012, 188–90).

In this pursuit, Movsēs Daskhurants'i's (Kaghankatuats'i's) lesser-studied *History of the Caucasian Albanians* has become the focus. A hybrid work, of which Daskhurants'i is the compiler and editor if not author, certain of its passages — the eponymous Juanshēr cycle — are conjectured to be products of *gusans* from the court of Mihrānid noble Juanshēr,³ dated to the mid- to late seventh century, with a *terminus ante quem* at 682 CE (Howard-Johnston 2010, 104).⁴ These sections, singing in the bard's voice, seemingly depart from *gusan*-calumniating literary tropes, both praising Juanshēr as an upright Christian ruler while also detailing his love for minstrelsy. They even include an acrostic lamentation (*oghbk'*) intoned over his grave, one heavy with Christian sensibility and attributed to a certain court-poet Dawt'ak. The Juanshēr cycle has been referenced as “the result of the Christianization of Armenian culture, having ‘sloughed off’ its ‘patrimonial culture’” — that is to say, the first Christianised *gusans* (Van Lint 2012, 190). This paper contends such a sublation of *gusan* and Gospel should be understood more tentatively. Through both a comparative analysis of the treatment of minstrelsy in *The History of the Caucasian Albanians* vis-à-vis other canonical histories, and a close reading of the Juanshēr cycle,

1 NB: These contraries are to be read with our own native skepticism. Of course certain sources, foremost the *Buzandaran*, defy such a basic taxonomy. However, this author maintains that these binaries have heuristic value and produce a more spruce and succinct language.

2 Perhaps the most famous instance of this ambivalence can be found in the section Ի Պարսից Առասպելաց in the final pages of book 1 of Movsēs Khorenats'i's *History*. The *Patmahayr* addresses his patron, writing Չի՛նչ քեզ առ այսոքիկ կարաւտուրիւն առասպելք սուտք, կամ զի՛նչ պէտք անմիտ եւ անհանճար բանից յարմարանք: Yet, in spite of his posturing, he continues to draw from these sung epics. See Movsēs Khorenats'i 1913, 89.

3 On confusion over the naming of the Mihrānid line in Daskhurants'i's *History*, see Vacca 2017, 130–32. Toumanoff clarifies the Albanian succession, the Mihrānid line of Gardman replacing the Arsacids in 628, with Varaz Grigor, the father of Juanshēr, ascending to the throne; see Toumanoff 1961, 99.

4 For a further discussion of dating Daskhurants'i's *History*, see Howard-Johnston 2020, 360.

it will be argued that Daskhurants' *History* actually reproduces church literature's caricature of the un-Christian *gusan*. That is, as a polemical category, the *gusan* has not been Christianised. However, the text's diversity of sources, and concomitant inconsistencies, make a unified hermeneutics of the *gusan* quite difficult. Thus, this paper's purpose is to reinscribe the debate concerning *gusans* from one treating their "Christianisation" in absolute terms, to one dealing with the complexities and contradictions manifest in medieval Armenian notions of what constitutes a Christian.

2. Literary Representations of the *Gusan*

Like their songs, the *gusans* have a history quite literally *avant la lettre*. The word *gusan* comes from the Parthian *gōsān*, and so too does the *gusan's* poetic inheritance, centuries of cultural exchange with Persia resulting in Iranian epic tales grafting onto the Armenian folk tradition. The meaning of the term *gusan* is slippery, and it is semantically misleading to understand it solely as "bard". As observed by Mary Boyce, medieval Armenian writers used *gusan* to refer to any "entertainer" — be it a singer, court-poet, or buffoon (Boyce 1957, 13). The earliest mentions of the word *gusan* in Armenian sources are from three Old Testament passages. Ecclesiastes ii, 8 reads, "I got me male-singers (*gusans*) and female-singers",⁵ Psalm lxvii, 26 follows, "the princes went forth, giving thanks, and in their midst [were] *gusans* and panegyrists",⁶ and 2 Samuel xix, 35 questions, "Can I hear any more the voice of singing-men (*gusanats'*) and women?"⁷.⁸ In the Bible, *gusans* are merely male troubadour-types. However, negative uses of the word, and less flattering representations of the *gusan's* vocation, soon followed. In Hovhannēs Mandakuni's *Admonitory Sermons* (*Ճարձկանական խոսքեր*) xiii, a fifth-century text, the author curses "dissolute and *gusan*-mad drunkards", cads who sacrifice salvation for *gusan* and grape (Boyce 1957, 14). Vardan Arewelc'i's *Commentary on Genesis* takes after Mandakuni, the exegete asserting that "the grandsons of Cain invented the art of the *gusan*, and the granddaughters rouge and Kohl" (Boyce 1957, 14). In both instances, the *gusan* signifies fleshpot and fleshly pleasure — the fallen world that exists beyond the cloister's walls. *Gusan*, then, is a rhetorical proxy, one used by clerical commentators to refer to those things in Armenian culture which are distinctly un-Christian and thus not becoming of the priestly class.

Boyce also notes that *gusan* was used by translators of the Hellenising School as a cognate for the Greek *μῦθος*. Its concomitant associations with the theater produce yet another genre of pejorative usage targeting lay-entertainment. In the *vita* of St Porphyrius, for example, the holy man is spoken of as a quondam "diabolical singer-*gusan*" (Boyce 1957, 14). His improbable ascent, from fallen *gusan*-hood to

5 Armenian Bible 1895: Արարի ինձ գուսանս եւ երգեցիկս.

6 *ibid.*: Կանխեցին իշխանք հանել զօրհնութիւն, ի մէջ գուսանաց եւ գովչաց.

7 *ibid.*: Կամ թէ լսիցե՞մ տակաւին զձայն գուսանաց եւ վարձակաց.

8 Only two of these Biblical pericopes were mentioned, those from 2 Samuel and Ecclesiastes, in Boyce 1957, 13.

divine glory, is what merits a hagiography. And such perspectives do not show signs of disappearing by the late medieval period, let alone by the time of Dawt'ak. As late as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, pastors were begging their flocks to repent with words such as these: "I have sinned by (attending) comedies, I have sinned by entertaining *gusans*" (Boyce 1957, 15).⁹ As a matter of foregrounding the discussion of Daskhurants'i, it should be noted that the writings of many churchmen, long after Juanshēr's reign and the collation of the *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, continued to position the *gusan* as someone antithetical to Christian values — a shibboleth of error.

The clergy's fear of the corruption caused by the *gusan* was not only expressed rhetorically, but also instantiated itself in canon law. Legal texts and thou-shalt-nots of such figures as the twelfth-century scholar Mkhit'ar Gosh sought to limit the presence of *gusans* within clerical precincts (Mxit'ar Goš 2000, 254). Referring to the rights of traveling squires to lodge at monasteries, Mkhit'ar groans, "with minstrels (*gusans*) and singing-girls they feast in the house of holiness and worship, which is horrible for Christians to hear, let alone see".¹⁰

Clearly, then, there is a disagreement between the church and the nobility regarding the place of *gusans*. The cleric makes it most evident that a *Christian*, however that may be interpreted, must forswear these diversions. Such wrangles between the aristocracy and the clergy seem to have been long standing. Deliberations at the Fourth Council of Dvin (648 CE) resulted in a similar writ prohibiting *azats* (lesser nobility) from living in monasteries and sullyng them with *gusans*.¹¹ The drafting of these anti-*gusan* strictures not only reveals the church's belief in the ungodliness of the vocation but also their anxiety about the *gusans*' sustained popularity amongst the upper classes.¹² These seventh-century developments in Armenian canon law were directly relevant to the Caucasian episteme in which Juanshēr ruled,¹³ the Armenian primate possessing great influence over the Albanian See.¹⁴ They are also

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- 9 Also see Vardan Arewelts'i, above, and Mkhit'ar Gosh, below, for late medieval perspectives on the *gusans*.
- 10 Mkhit'ar Gosh 1975, 385: Եւ գուսանաւք եւ վարձակաւք ի սրբութեան եւ ի պաշտամանց տուոնն ընթրիս ուտեն, որ սոսկալի է քրիստոնէից լսել, թող թէ տեսանել.
- 11 For information on the anti-*gusan* rulings at Dvin see endnotes in P'awstos Buzand 1989, 529.
- 12 It can be surmised that *gusans* appealed across social castes, illiterates enjoying the sung epics, and wealthy *nakharar* courts patronising *gusan* composition and performance. For information on the importance of *gusans* in *nakharar* courts see *ibid*.
- 13 A note here must be made of the ethnic situation in Albania in the fourth through eleventh centuries. Albania was heterogeneous, with the Kura River dictating (very roughly) its main ethnic divide, its right bank being majority Armenian-speaking and left bank being majority Albanian-speaking. The shift of the Marzpanate's administration from Chor (Derbend) to Partaw in 552 resulted in an Armenification of the Albanian elite. Furthermore, a textual analysis of "The Tale of Vach'agan" from Daskhurants'i, documents from the early Catholicosate of Partaw, and the Canons of Aghuen indicate that Armenian was long the primary language of the church hierarchy. The seventh century, that of Juanshēr, can be characterised by a de-ethnisation and Armenification of the remaining Albanian element on the Kura's right bank. A similar Georgianisation can be observed on the left bank during this period, a potential object of future study for this author; see Hakobyan 2023, 482–83.
- 14 Despite a brief schism in the sixth century between the Armenian See and the churches of Albania and Siwnik' (Syunik), the churches remained in dogmatic communion. Following the Arab invasions, that is, during the reign of Juanshēr, a detente occurred. The Albanian church officially returned to the bosom of the Armenian See with the 704 Council of Partaw. Furthermore, due to the region's complex ethnic and political make-up,

redolent of an anti-*gusan* canon recorded in book 1 of Daskhurants'i's *History*, from amongst those devised by the church of Albania at the Council of Aghuen (488 CE).¹⁵ The law, canon number twelve, reads: "Of those who mourn for the dead, let the head of the household and the *gusans* be bound, brought to the royal court, and punished; and let not their families dare to lament afterwards"¹⁶ (Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 52). This writ prohibits the employment of *gusans* as professional lamenters. Their histrionics-for-hire were frowned upon by the Albanian clergy. However, with illuminating irony, a few dozen pages later in the *History* one finds the court-poet Dawt'ak's elegy to Juanshēr. It is unlikely that there was a change in church law regarding minstrelsy in the intervening centuries between the Council of Aghuen and Juanshēr's reign, especially given the anti-*gusan* ruling at the Fourth Council of Dvin. This bare inconsistency within the text, anathematising those who grieve with *gusans* and then later including a *gusan*-penned lament, is a foretaste of the deeper epistemic complexities within *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*. Already, one must acknowledge that multiple, contradictory conceptions of "Christian" are at play within the work.

The *gusan* as a signifier of sin is a trope that recurs across the canonical Armenian chronicles. In *The Epic Histories*, a fifth-century text attributed to P'awstos Buzand, which narrates Armenian history from the death of Trdat (around 330 CE) to the division of Armenia in 387 CE, *gusans* appear three times. In each instance, they create a calamitous mise-en-scène. In the first, the two erring sons of St Husik — Pap and At'anaginēs — drink wine in the bishop's residence "with harlots, singing girls, *gusans*, and buffoon, scorning the holy and consecrated place and trampling it underfoot" (P'awstos Buzand 1989, 93–94).¹⁷ The two brothers, minutes into their reverie, are struck down by God. *Gusans*, like harlots, are marks of wickedness and augers of damnation. In another scene, Arshak, the king of Armenia who is captive of the Persians,¹⁸ sits upon a banqueting couch and is "gladdened with *gusans*" (P'awstos Buzand 1989, 199). However, this diversion soon agonises him, and he grabs a coring knife and commits suicide. Foregrounded are both the ignobility of the king, and the

and the strong presence of Armenians on the right bank of the Kura, particularly in Gardman and Partaw, the centers of seventh-century Albanian administrative and ecclesiastical authority, the Church of Albania can never be considered to have been completely out of the umbra of the Armenian church. Finally, Juanshēr himself, per Daskhurants'i, sought to consolidate the position of the Armenian Church in Albania, see Dum-Tragut 2023, 304, 312–13, 318.

15 The canons of the council of Aghuen, "Vach'agan's canons", bear strong resemblance to those of the Armenian councils of Ashtishat (356) and Shahapivan (444), indicating strong Armeno-Albanian ecclesiastical unity during the fourth and fifth centuries, see *ibid.*, 299.

16 Movsēs Kaghankatuats'i 2010, 132: Եւ այնք որ կոծ դնեն, գտանուտէրն եւ զգուսանսն կապեցսն եւ դուռն արքունի տարցն եւ պատուհաս ի վերայ դիցն, եւ ընտանիքն զհետ արտասուել մի իշխեցսն.

17 P'awstos Buzand 2003, 303: Եւ ըմպէին անդ զինի բոգաւք եւ վարձակաւք եւ գուսանաւք եւ կատակաւք, զսուրբ եւ զնուիրեալ տեղաւքն քամահեալ՝ կոխան առնէին. Such a scene recalls the law code of Mkhit'ar Gosh and the rulings of the Fourth Council of Dvin, suggesting that nobles cavorting with *gusans* in place of prayer was not an uncommon occurrence.

18 *ibid.*, 389: Եւ եղ առաջին նորա ընթրիս ըստ օրինաց թագաւորաց, եւ եղ առաջին նորա զինի որպէս օրէն էր թագաւորացն. սթափեաց զնա, եւ մխիթարեաց, եւ ուրախ առնէր զնա գուսանաւք.

uselessness of the ersatz-joy provided by the *gusans*' wine-song.¹⁹ In the final tableau of *The Epic Histories*, one redolent of Juanshēr's assassination in Daskhurants'i's narrative, the evil king Pap, having recently executed the God-fearing Catholicos Nersēs, sits with a Roman courtly assembly holding "a festive cup of wine in his hand" and gazing "upon the varied troop of *gusans*". Little does he know that he is caught in an intrigue, soon to be assassinated the minute he puts the cup to his mouth and fixes his eyes on the *gusans* (P'awstos Buzand 1989, 214).²⁰ Pap, under whose suzerainty the country "turned back to the ancient worship of demons" (212, in reference, perhaps, to his Arianism), is a victim of his own regime of voluptuousness. The *gusans* are again a centerpiece of the dramatic representation of the impious king. That is, they are a rhetorical trope, both marks of weakness and portents of woe.

This same notion of the un-Christian *gusan* exists in less overt ways in other histories. Through detecting these more subterranean critiques of the *gusan*'s practice, one can better grasp the signifiers that refer to, or connote, the *gusan*. In the mournful conclusion of Movsēs Khorenats'i's *History*, a work of much-debated provenance, limning Armenian history from Creation down to the death of Mesrop Mashtots' in 440, the writer complains that the post-Gregoriid clergy, in addition to being proud, slothful, frivolous, etc., are "lovers of buffoonery" (*katakergut'eants'*) (Moses Khorenats'i 2006, 348).²¹ *Katakergut'iwn*, commonly translated as "comedy", connotes the madness of burlesque theater. For Khorenats'i, it is a profane pastime, one wholly improper for the God-fearing clergy. This excoriation of lay-entertainment, as glossed by Boyce's philological syzygy of *gusan*/μῦθος, reflects the image of the un-Christian *gusan*.²² Meanwhile, Ghazar P'arpets'i's *History*, written around the turn of the sixth century but chronicling the events of the fourth and fifth centuries, has an even more subtle invective. In one scene, the Mamikonean nobleman Vasak, having finished spying on the Persian army, pointedly mocks the *shahanshah*'s soldiers for being "donkey-driving poetasters" (*k'ert'ak'agh ishavarean*),²³ pagan yokels who spend their time story-telling instead of preparing for battle (Łazar P'arpec'i 1991, 178). Redolent of the negative connotation of the term *katakergut'iwn*, this inventive passage goes even further, suggesting the Persians' lack of *k'ajut'iwn* ("valiancy, daring")²⁴

19 Such scenes represent the nobleman's loss of *p'ark'* (փառք) and *k'ajut'iwn* (քաջութիւն), terms under the umbra of Persianate influence, which signify an individual's divine right to rule. Roughly, *p'ark'* (like the *farr* of the *Shahnameh*) corresponds to glory and *k'ajut'iwn* to valiancy, daring. For glosses of those words and a brief commentary on their pre-Christian inheritance, see Garsoïan's endnotes in P'awstos Buzand 1989, 534–35, 552.

20 P'awstos Buzand 2003, 402: Եւ մինչ ղեռ թագաւորն Պապ զուրախութեան զինին ունէր ի մատունս իւր, եւ նայէր ընդ պէսպէս ամբոյս զուսանացն, ահեակ ձեռամբն յարմուկն՝ յոր յեղեակ բազմեալ էր, ունէր տաշտ ոսկի ի մատունս իւր, իսկ աջ ձեռնն եղեալ էր ի դաստապան նրանին, զոր կապեալ էր յաջու ազդերն իւրում. եւ մինչ ղեռ բերանն ի բաժակին էր յըմպելն, եւ աչաւքն յառաջ կոյս պշուցեալ հայեր ընդ պէսպէս ամբոյս զուսանացն, հրաման լինէր ակնարկելով զաւրացն Յունաց.

21 Movsēs Khorenats'i 1913, 364: Վինակաւորք հպարտք, դատարկակացք, գրարանք, ծոյրք, ատեցողք, արուեստից եւ վարդապետական բանից, սիրողք վաճառաց եւ կատակերգութեանց.

22 Cf. the grouping of the *katak* ("jokester" or "buffoon") with the *gusan* by Buzand (footnote 17). Also note the occurrence of the term *katakagusan* ("comedic bard", "jongleur"), see Acharyan 1977, vol. 1, 598.

23 Ghazar P'arpets'i 2003, 2318: Եւ եկեալ քաջն ի գունդն հայոց՝ պատմեաց նոցա, թէ գունդ բազում է, բայց յորովք ի նոսա անպիտանք են եւ քերթաքաղ իշաւարեան.

24 Cf. footnote 19.

and foreshadowing their defeat. Across these various canonical histories and church documents, the caricature of the *gusan* unfolds: a portrait of impiety, indolence, and foreign influence. With this genealogy of the image of the un-Christian *gusan* in Armenian literature, and a philological precis of corresponding polemical vocabulary (comedy, burlesque, etc.), one can better undertake an archeology of their representation in Movsēs Daskhurants' work.

3. Daskhurants' *History of the Caucasian Albanians*

Daskhurants' *History of the Caucasian Albanians* is an assemblage of texts, which preoccupies itself with the regional history of Caucasian Albania, a Christian kingdom whose lands lay on the east and west banks of the Kura River.²⁵ However, as a work of prose, Daskhurants' *History* self-consciously constitutes itself within the Armenian literary milieu, explicitly responding to past works of Armenian historiography (Dowsett 1962, 263).²⁶ The text itself was well-known to later Armenian writers.²⁷ While it was compiled anywhere between the late tenth and early twelfth centuries, it includes many excerpts written in the seventh century (Howard-Johnston 2010, 106). Among these seventh-century passages is the Juanshēr cycle, which comprises part of the contents of book 2. Aleksan Hakobyan argues that one can distinguish between the Juanshēr cycle and the other portions of the text on the basis of genre. Where the rest of the *History* is written in the desiccated prose of the chronicler, the Juanshēr cycle is mannered, romantic, and digressive. Yet, although there is a continuity in theme and sensibility across the Juanshēr cycle, there are also noticeable stylistic variations within it. One section makes liberal use of simile, another biblical quotation, yet another classical allusion. Thus, Hakobyan splits the romance into four “clusters”, each by a different author, of whom one, Dawt'ak, is named (Howard-Johnston 2010, 108–09).²⁸ This paper will not concern itself with distinctions between these clusters. However, one must recognise the fragmentary nature of Daskhurants' collation, both within the Juanshēr cycle and across the entire *History*. Indeed, in

25 Albania also had its own autochthonous language, known only by a few inscriptions and two palimpsests from St Catherine's Monastery, which reveal Biblical pericopes. The pericopes for the most part indicate a heavy reliance upon the Armenian Bible — for example, a mirroring of the peculiar rendering of the three languages of the cross as Hebrew, Dalmatian (as opposed to “Roman” in the Greek, Syriac, and Georgian versions), and Greek. The relative lack of Albanian textual sources indicates that Armenian remained the primary language of clerical and administrative affairs, especially after the shift of power from Derbend to Partaw and Gardman in the sixth century; see footnote 15 and, for more on the Albanian language specifically, Gippert 2023, 99, 111–12.

26 Daskhurants' liberally draws from the Armenian historiographical tradition, following Eghishē, Khorenats'i, the Armenian version of Hippolytus, and epitomising Agat'angelos; see Movsēs Dasxuranc'i 1961, 1, 9, 21 (the footnotes), and Howard-Johnston 2020, 353.

27 Daskhurants' history was known amongst other Armenian historians, including Ukhtanēs, Step'anos Ōrbelean, Mkhit'ar Gosh, Mkhit'ar Ayrivanets'i, and Kirakos Gandzakets'i, with Gandzakets'i and Gosh disagreeing over the author's toponymic, Kirakos referencing him as Kaghankatuats'i, and Mkhit'ar as Daskhurants'i; see Movsēs Dasxuranc'i 1961, xvii–xviii.

28 Ultimately from Hakobyan 1987, 203–07.

its kaleidoscopic form, it might be better reflective of the manifold perspectives on Christianity and minstrelsy in the medieval Caucasus.

As exemplified by the inconsistency between the dictate of the twelfth canon of the Council of Aghuen and Dawt'ak's public lamentation over Juanshēr, the hermeneutics of the *gusan* in Daskhurants'i's *History* is knotted. Although the Juanshēr cycle's voice is that of the bard, it, ironically, replicates the anti-*gusan* comportment of church scrivenings and canonical histories. Various situations meant to illuminate the piety of Juanshēr do so by forging his image contra that of the *gusan*-lover. Tired of fighting on behalf of the Persians, Juanshēr writes to Constans II in the hope of becoming a vassal of Rome (Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 113–16). Receiving the emperor's blessing, he treats the news circumspectly. Rather than indulging in "immoderate speech or drunken orgies or comedies (*katakergut'iwink'*)", he opts for "discrete entertainments" (117). That is, he "shuts himself in [his room], passing the night without sleep, and meditating on the good of his country".²⁹ As encountered in Khorenats'i's *History*, the word *katakergut'iwink'* includes in its semantic umbra diverse notions of lay-entertainment (signifying vaudeville theater and the *gusan*/μῦθος). Juanshēr rejects these amusements, and instead whispers prayers alone. It is through fashioning his image in opposition to that of the banquet-goer and *gusanaser* (*gusan*-lover) that he is cast as a virtuous Christian ruler. These scenes do not describe the "Christianisation" of the image of the *gusan*, nor the sloughing of patrimonial culture. The text reads similarly to polemics and church histories, using the *gusan* and the broader notion of minstrelsy as the antipode of Christian kingliness.

The romance of Juanshēr concludes with his assassination. And, like the murder of Pap, the event is foreshadowed by Juanshēr's lapse into lubricious attitudes. Late in his reign, the Cross of Mashtots' (which he had fashioned with his own hands) is discovered in the province of Gis (Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 141). Such a find, although auspicious, carries with it insinuations of religious deviance in the realm. The text relates that around the time of the discovery, members of the Albanian aristocracy were going against church dictates and engaging in marriages which polluted the bloodline (137).³⁰ Thus, when the cross is unearthed, its symbolic import as the tool "with which Mashtots' converted Albania from erring idol-worship"³¹ seems one of contemporary as well as historical significance. In this anxious environment, preparations are made for the consecration of the cross. Juanshēr, attendant elsewhere in the Caucasus, requests that the clergy wait for his arrival to carry out the ceremony. However, displaying odd behaviour for an allegedly devout ruler, Juanshēr "idles" for too long and the patriarch decides to go ahead with the proceedings in his absence

29 Movsēs Kaghankatuats'i 2010, 238: Անդ այնուհետև ոչ լինէր գործ անկարգ խաւսից կամ արբեցութիւնք կամ կատակերգութիւնք, այլ չափաւոր վայելմունք: Որ եւ զգիշերն զայն փակեալ զինքն ի քնոյ՝ անցուցանէր խորհելով զաշխարհին իւրոյ զաւգուտն:

30 Catholicos Ukhthanēs, at a later period, also curses this race-polluting behavior of the Albanian *nakharrars*, see Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 229.

31 Movsēs Kaghankatuats'i 2010, 281: գոր սրբոյն Մաշտոցի իւր իսկ ձեռամբն արարեալ էր, որով դարձուցանէր իսկ զաշխարհն Աղուանից ի կոյցն մոլորութենէ:

(141).³² The narrative then further contorts. Juanshēr travels to Sisakank' (Siwnik'), ignoring the prelate, who, fresh from consecrating the cross, is "revengefully" driving out "deceptive errors" (142). Periphrastic as the narrative may be, these two parallel events certainly gesture at some infraction or infidelity on the part of the truant Juanshēr. Why is the patriarch suddenly "revengeful", and the purportedly pious leader so apathetic about the miraculous occurrence in his kingdom?³³

This is the turbulent context in which the reader then glimpses Juanshēr's celebrated coterie of *gusans*: the king enjoying the annual festivities "land-surveying in the company of skilled minstrels (*gusanawk'*)" (Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 142).³⁴ Rakish behavior of this type seems the obvious reason as to why the patriarch has grown so peeved. And the text suggests as much, relating two lines later that Juanshēr is stripped of "his glories by the snares of vice, for he transgressed the commandments of the Lord".³⁵ In a country beset by the incursions of Islam, Juanshēr is passing his days surrounded by *gusans*. These lines, when properly contextualised, read as a legible castigation of Juanshēr. The king's misdemeanor, never explicitly referenced, can reasonably be attributed to his indifference to church affairs and generally languorous behavior — one punctuated (rhetorically or otherwise) by his cavorting with *gusans*. Juanshēr suffers for these wrongdoings, succumbing to the assassin's blade while walking in his garden one night because "the power of the Most High had abandoned him" (144).³⁶ Was his death, like that of Pap, the result of a fall into decadence? It is quite plain that Juanshēr's sudden indolence and explicit love for *gusans* is a large part of the text's reconstruction, and post hoc rationalisation, of his murder. Indeed, the development of the *gusan*'s un-Christian image is central to the rhetorical structure of the *History*. On the evidence of these pages, the *gusans* remain a polemical category, their "Christianisation" far from complete.³⁷

4. A Separate Hermeneutics

This argument, and this hermeneutics of the *gusan*, however thorough, are still haunted by the opposite tug of the tension of reliance. The dialectic's other extreme is seen, intermittently, across the Armenian literary canon. Khorenats'i, despite his rearticulation of the caricature of the *gusan*, did not solely portray oral tradition as a

32 *ibid.*: Այլ նորա հեղգական ծուլութեամբն ոչ ժամանէին հասանել յամբոկ գործոյն.

33 *ibid.*, 282: զպատրանաց ինչ ցնորս վիժխնդրութեամբ վանէր.

34 *ibid.*, 283: Եւ եղև ի ժամանակին յայնմիկ խաղալ, գնալ մեծի իշխանին Ջեւանշէրի ի կողմանս լեռնականացն ի զբաւսանս բոլոր տարեկան աւուրց հրճուականն անցուցանելով երկրպագութեամբ, յոգնայարդար գուսանաւք ներբողեալ տարփողականն Ջեւանշէր՝ զօրապետն տենչահասակ.

35 *ibid.*, 283: Բայց ապա ըղձալի հոշակաւորն ի ձեռն խարդաւանող ախտին, զի ընդդէմ Աստուծոյ երկասիրէր պատուիրանին, թափուր եւ ունայն գոլով եւ մերկ ի յայնցանէ երեսէր փառաց.

36 *ibid.*, 285: Բայց զի զաւրութիւն Բարձրելոյն հեռացեալ էր ի նմանէ.

37 Another reading of this, should we accept Zuckerman's surmise, is that this bipolar treatment of Juanshēr is a result of these two episodes being by different hands. The "Juanshēr's Elegy", which comprises of the scenes leading up to the murder, is heavily laudatory, while the "History of 684", which includes the account of Juanshēr's assassination, is apocalyptic and dark, see Zuckerman 2007, 406–08.

devilish millstone. In his *History* he relates that accounts of Parthian Armenia “were collected ... from ballads [*i gusanakanēn*] and are found in the royal archives”, this active preservation of *gusan* odes indicating an interest in the medium within writerly (and thus, inevitably, clerical) circles (Moses Khorenats’i 2006, 92).³⁸ Not only does he attest to these archives, he also transcribes the pagan song of Vahagn, and liberally references the storytellers of Goght’n (187). Ghazar P’arpets’i, in an interesting volte-face of his own, narrates a confrontation between Vahan and the Persian potentate Shapuh. Shapuh, by way of a complement, likens the exploits of the Armenian leader not to “those of men of these times”, but to “those of the earlier heroes ... in epic stories [*vēpk’*]” (Łazar P’arpets’i 1991, 216).³⁹ P’arpets’i’s audience, Christian as they may have been, surely understood the import of Shapuh’s words: like the brave men of Persian fable, Vahan possesses the highest trait of daring (*k’ajut’iwn*). As seen in both Khorenats’i and P’arpets’i, aspects of the oral tradition remain legible to Armenia’s Christian readership, and, more intriguingly, retain a positive valence. As in Khorenats’i, *gusans* are also referenced as reliable historical sources in the *Primary History*, the gnomic writings at the beginning of Sebēos’s *History*, which the compiler claims are by the hand of “Agat’angelos the scribe” (Hewsen 1975, 91–92). In one of the passages, a legate from the Chinese emperor comes to Khosrov’s court and converses with the narrator, assuring him of the Chinese lineage of the Mamikoneans: “The minstrels [*gusank’*] of our country also reference in their songs Mamik and Konak as being two brave men and foremost blood brothers, sons of the *nakharar* Kaṛnam, who was second in the kingdom of China”.⁴⁰ Here too, in a passage attached to an ostensibly pious *History*, *gusans* hold a distinguished position as repositories of cultural memory.

Perhaps the most complex and complete picture of the *gusan* arises in the anonymous tales by Pseudo-Shapuh Bagratuni (more accurately referred to as the Anonymous Story-teller). In this peppy work, Pseudo-Shapuh includes the tale of Derēn, an Artsruni prince whose largesse and folly result in the loss of his noble standing. Minstrels are a central part of the portrait of Derēn’s dissipation: “When it was morning the habitues used to come: trumpet-players, lyre-players, harp-players, and actors, and they played before him. He had no thoughts or care for his nobility like his ancestors, but only ate and drank” (Thomson 1988–1989, 204). Yet, the tale should not be read as an excoriation of Derēn, nor of the *gusan*. Indeed, his love of minstrelsy, and desire to share these delights with others is conceived of as his most imperial quality. Dispossessed of his lands in Vaspurakan, Derēn comes to Mosul where he chances upon a group of wealthy men who have heard about his famous hospitality, and that he “has many singers and bards [*gusans*] perform until evening,

38 Movsēs Khorenats’i 1913, 47–48: ի փոքունց ոմանց եւ յաննշանից արանց, ի գուսանականն այս գտանի ժողովեալ ի դիւանի արքունեաց.

39 Ghazar P’arpets’i 2003, 2350: որոյ իւր իրք եւ արարածք չեն որպէս զայսր ժամանակի մարդկան, զոր մեր տեսեալ եւ գիտեմք, այլ իբրեւ զառաջին քաջացն, զոր ի վէպսն պատմեն եւ խեմք.

40 The translation is by the hand of the author, from Sebēos 2005, 461: Ասեն ... գուսանք և ի մերում աշխարհին յերգս իւրեանց զՄամիկն և զԿոնակն, արս երկուս լեալ քաջս և զխաւոր եղբարս հարազատս, որոյիք Կանոնամայ նախարարին, որ էր երկրորդ ի թագաւորութեանն Ճենաստանի.

and does not permit anyone to go home. Such is his custom". They are astonished and say, "How does he have the means to do that?" (206). It is his generosity and spendthrift nature that brings Derën to unwittingly giving succor to the future caliph, an act that results in his return to the throne of Vaspurakan. The comportment of this *Anonymous Tale* is slightly askew of the other histories referenced in this work. As Thomson noted, it is unlearned, even pop (181). The stories are to be read for their flash and pithy exchanges, not for their slavish rendering of *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*. In this way, a rare lay-perspective of the *gusan* is accounted for. It is not, perhaps, wholly positive. As a raffish character, Derën is, before all else, meant to entertain, not edify. Indeed, later in the *Tale*, a newly-married Derën woos the emir of Hēr's daughter, an action which results in his murder (221). Yet, one can see, squatting behind the rambunctious caricature, an admiration for his *joie de vivre*, one associated with his love of minstrelsy.

Architectural writing and material culture also participate in this separate hermeneutics. T'ovma Artsruni, a man of the early tenth century, describes in a lush passage the ornamentation of Gagik's palace on Aght'amar (Thomson 1997, 228).⁴¹ The palace, as seen by the admiring T'ovma, "is extraordinary and astonishing ... For [the pictures] include gilt thrones, seated on which appears the king in splendid majesty surrounded by shining young men ... and also lines of minstrels [*gusans*] and girls dancing" (Thomas Artsruni 1985, 357–58).⁴² Evidently, the depiction of royals cavorting with *gusans*, a scene identical to that in the Juanshēr cycle, does not negate the palace's kingly and edifying qualities. Indeed, T'ovma celebrates the scene as one indicative of Artsruni pomp, akin to that of the House of David. As with most of the Aght'amar complex, Gagik's palace no longer stands. However, other depictions of *gusans*, these from the late medieval period, have been preserved. In the town of Shōsh (Fig. 1) near modern day Shushi in Arts'akh, there is a group of fifteenth-century cross-stones (Russell 2004, 1142–1143, 1162). Incised into one is a portrayal of two horsemen bearing aristocratic oriflammes, returning from the hunt, opposite a group of seated women preparing *harisa* for a feast. In the center of the scene is a cross legged bard, a *gusan*. This scene, of hunting, feasting, and minstrelsy, is of the echt-Persian type. James Russell, writing of the Shōsh cross-stone, by way of explanation, notes a greater persistence of Mazdean iconography in Arts'akh compared to other regions of Armenia (Russell 2004, 1142). Yet the cross-stone, sitting in a church graveyard, does not seem to have been quarantined for its impiety or lack of Christian rectitude. Neither of these two depictions of *gusan* and gentry seem to manifest contradicting notions of Christian-ness — Gagik remains a Solomonic king and the Shōsh *khach'k'ar* a pious headstone. Perhaps this is in part because both works, a royal palace and a squire's tomb, are more representative of the worldview

41 For further reading on Gagik Artsruni's self-referential art on Aght'amar see Jones 2007, 53–95. For a *tour d'horizon* see Pogossian and Vardanyan (eds) 2019.

42 T'ovma Artsruni 2010, 289: Եւ է կարգ շինուածոյ տաճարին ահեղ իմն եւ զարմանալի ... Վասն զի եւն ի նմա ոսկեզարդ զահոյք, յորս բազմեալ երեսի արքայ նագելի ճոխութեամբ, շուրջ զիւրեաւ ունելով պատանեակս յուսատեսակս, սպասաւորս ուրախութեան, ընդ նմին եւ դասս գուսանաց եւ խաղս աղճկանց զարմանալոյ արժանիս:



Fig. 1: Tombstone from Shōsh. Photo by Hrair Hawk Khatcherian (from Khatcherian 1997, pl. 45).

of the second estate than that of the first. But irrespective of this, in both instances the *gusan* can be seen to be reinscribed into a separate, more favorable notion of Christian-ness.

Daskhurants'ī's text, too, has traces of evidence that allow a reading more sympathetic to the notion of a Christianised *gusan*. An appropriate place to begin this more textured approach, yet again, is the Council of Aghuen. In the *History*, the council is framed as the means of resolving a dispute that arose in the late fifth century among "bishops and priests and nobles", indicating that the power to shape the normative notion of "Christian" was restricted to certain privileged groups (Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 54).⁴³ Reading the anti-*gusan* stricture in this context, then, obviates the fact that such negative comportments toward minstrelsy were not reflective of society-wide beliefs. There is little means of investigating lay-religion in Caucasian Albania, however, so such an assertion will necessarily remain broad. Daskhurants'ī's text also elides the conceits of Persian epics with a Christian sensibility. One such circumstance arises in book 1, when the champion of the Armenians, Babik, is given a warrant with the royal sign of the boar (associated with the deity Vahagn⁴⁴ and the transmutation of king Trdat) and through it is invested with Christ's divine glory (Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 64). Later, partaking in the Persian pastime of the hunt, he sinks into the mud and miraculously discovers a church (65). Within the Juanshēr cycle itself, lyrical phrasing recalls pre-Christian metaphor and styling, such as the line "swift to strike as an eagle" (110), one reminiscent of the song of Artashēs —

43 Dum-Tragut emphasises the political nature of this conference, and its role in setting a first vs second estate wrangle, see Dum-Tragut 2023, 299.

44 For an analysis of the representations of Vahagn in early Armenian literature, see Garsoïan 1982, 151–74. Caucasian Albania, to a greater extent than Armenia, was oriented toward Iran, see Toumanoff 1959, 35–36.

“crossing the river like a swift-winged eagle” (Hacikyan et al. 2000, vol. 1, 53). James Russell, writing of Movsēs Khorenats’i’s and T’ovma Artsruni’s own imitation of this pre-Christian chanson, surmises that historians were influenced stylistically by listening to *gusan* odes (Russell 2004, 157–58, 161). These techniques, together with the Juanshēr cycle’s pious diction (Juanshēr always going into battle knowing “that the Lord was with him” [Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 110]), syncretise the aforementioned contraries between oral tradition and church chronicle.

Most telling, however, is the *mise-en-scène* of the Juanshēr lament. Soon after the assassination, Albania’s notaries gather and hold a public funeral, during which “an orator (*chartasan*) called Dawt’ak” addresses the crowd.⁴⁵ Dawt’ak is clearly an established figure in Juanshēr’s retinue, one who “had spent a long time at the royal court”. He is admired for his mastery of the *gusan*’s craft, being an “expert in imaginative exercises” and “advanced in declamatory poetry”. His elegy, sung “in acrostic form”,⁴⁶ is thick with Christian allusion. In the weft of the poem’s first lines one sees the Christianisation of the poet’s vocation, Dawt’ak asking the “inventive spirit of the word of God” to compose with wisdom his “melancholy song”⁴⁷ (145). God is now breathing afflatus into the *gusan*. Throughout the lament, Biblical and epic tropes intertwine: Isaiah and Cain are invoked; the noble Persianate ideal of *p’ark’* is twice referenced (146, 148). A Christian self-abasement also recurs, one line bemoaning how “we angered the Creator by our deeds, and He plunged the supreme power [of the land] into predation” (146),⁴⁸ another how “we learned the vanity of fame and how none may remain on earth”⁴⁹ (148). Both *gusan* and king alike are sinners, equal in Christ. However, other lines recall Juanshēr’s loss of divine favor in more pointed terms, the elegy reading “his protectors abandoned him and help from above departed him”⁵⁰ (146). A puckish exegete would see in these lines not Christian self-abnegation, but rather a subterranean reference to Juanshēr’s impious habits and his *gusan* galère (thus the self-abnegation could be read as Dawt’ak’s self-criticism of his own *gusan*-hood). This interpretation, however, is tentative to the point of self-indulgence, and all such arguments should be ancillary to a more profound recognition: that in Daskhurants’i’s *History*, for the first time, a *gusan*’s words are reshaping the terms of scholarly debate. While a thoroughgoing textual analysis does

45 Movsēs Kaghankatuats’i 2010, 287: Յայնժամ ճարտասան ոմն ի մէջ անցեալ, որ տեղեակ էր արհեստական իմաստից, Դաւթակ անուն կոչեցեալ, հնարագիւտական վարժիւք յաջողակ եւ վերժանական քերթութեամբ յառաջադէմ: Որ եւ յառատաբար ի բանիցն պանդունս ճարտարութեամբ նուագէր, քաջապէս հրատարակող լեզու ունելով նման երագագիր գրչի: Մա յորովիւք աւուրբք ժամանեալ յամէր ի դրան արքունի.

46 *ibid.*: ըստ ալփափետաց գլխակարգութեանց.

47 *ibid.*, 288: Աստուածային բանին արուեստաւոր հոգի, // Յարիներա՛ իմաստիւ գտխրական երգմունս.

48 *ibid.*, 290: Բարկացուցաք զԱրարիչն գործովք մերովք, // Եւ մատնեաց ի կորուստ զնախագահ տէրութիւնն.

49 *ibid.*, 293: Քեւ զնոտութիւն նորին նոր ուսեալ, // Թէ չունի երբէք ումեք աստ մնալ.

50 *ibid.*, 290: Ի բաց մեկնեցան ի նմանէ պահապանքն, // Եւ աւգնութիւնք վերնայինք հրաժարեցան ի նմանէ.

not support the notion of a “Christianised *gusan*”, in the lament of Juanshēr its spectre still haunts the text, inviolate if not irrefutable.⁵¹

5. Conclusion

As with the reading of any medieval Christian text, the to-what-extenting of a group’s “Christian-ness” is a difficult business. The “un-Christian *gusan*” as a rhetorical trope, one illuminated through an archeology of Armenian church polemics, canonical histories, and canon law, remains present in Daskhurants’i’s *History*. This trope is even used to rationalise the downfall of Juanshēr — something modern historians attribute to his breaking of an *omertà* with the caliph after involving himself in the assassination of Constans II (Howard-Johnston 2010, 119–20). As also noted, there is ample evidence of the subsumption of Christian symbolism into the *gusan* ode. Yet, what Daskhurants’i’s text begs is not a maximalist or absolutist reading, but rather a microscopist’s approach and a microscopist’s heedful conjecture. *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, in its tangle of narratives, presents the caricature of the un-Christian *gusan* and nothing coherent to the contrary. However, it also begs a reinscription of the debate itself. The best means of elucidating this point lies within Daskhurants’i’s *History*, in the passages proceeding the Juanshēr cycle. In the years after the king’s death, further attempts are made to convert the “Huns” of the northern Caucasus, whose pagan praxis includes tree-worship and the creation of small devotional objects. In one episode, after subduing the Huns, Albanian missionaries cut down a sacred tree and manufacture it into a cross (Movsēs Dasxurançi 1961, 163–64). They then seize the objects of faith and crush them “into the shape of the Lord’s cross” (165).⁵² It is an uncomfortable scene, the felling of trees and pulverising of talismans demonstrating a coercive approach to conversion. However, it also offers an honest picture of “Christianisation” — the new faith, one evangelised by force, is of the same substance as the old.⁵³ A transmuted belief retains the spoor of things past, something apropos of Hunnic Christianity and the *gusan*. What is compelling about Daskhurants’i’s *History* is not only its recreation of the rhetorical category of the unholy *gusan*, but also the cacophony of voices in which it speaks. And maybe some of them, however quietly, have begun to reinscribe the very terms of this discourse.

⁵¹ Another useful insight, albeit one which is beyond the scope of this paper, are the ways in which Juanshēr is consciously associated with Sasanian power structures by Daskhurants’i. Perhaps his appetite for the hunt and love of minstrelsy are devices, like his much emphasised relationship with Yazdegerd, by which to position him as an heir to Iranian authority. For a further discussion of this point, see Vacca 2017, 131–32.

⁵² Movsēs Kaghankatuats’i 2010, 324: եւ ինքն իւրովք ձեռաւքն խորտակէր յանդիման ամենեցուն անելով եւ զայս նշան տէրունական խաչին.

⁵³ This theme of syncretism, in Armenia’s case that of Iranian influence, is dealt with at length in Russell 1987, 515–28. See also Garsoian 1982.

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Armenian Amulet Scrolls in Collections of Paris*

▼ **ABSTRACT** This paper describes the Armenian amulet scrolls kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) and in the private collection of Garig and Varvara Basmadjians in Paris. It is based on the author's research carried out in 2016, when he was a recipient of the "Sirarpie Der-Nersessian Association" scholarship. Before listing and describing those items, the author refers to the etymology of the word *hmayil* ("amulet scroll"), mentions the other Armenian names of amulet scrolls, provides general information on what they are, lists the most important libraries where those scrolls are kept, and classifies the miniatures (of the fifteenth–nineteenth centuries) found in them into 5 groups.

▼ **KEYWORDS** amulet scroll, manuscript, The National Library of France, Basmadjians' collection, Janine Altounian's collection, unique miniature, Saint Cyprian, Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Evil Eagle.

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1. Introduction

Hmayils (amulets) — collections of spells — differ from other medieval Armenian manuscripts by their scrolled shape and distinctive miniatures. They contain "magical" prayers aimed to preserve their holders from various misfortunes (cf. Meshcherskaia 1981, 96).

The root of the word *hmayil/hamayil* is *hmay-* ("magic, enchantment, augury"), a borrowing from Pahlavi (*humāy-* = "blessed" or "a bird of good omen", see Achařyan 1971–1979, vol. 3, 103; cf. Mackenzie 1971, 44); *homāyūn* means "auspicious, fortunate" in New Persian. Scribes also called these collections of spells *kiprianos*, *kēprianos*

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Davit Ghazaryan  0009-0000-1645-6625 • Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia, (Email: davit.ghazaryan@matenadaran.am)

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or *niatagir*.¹ As a rule, amulets including the story of the patriarch Cyprian are called *kiprianos*. The story relates that Cyprian was a sorcerer, who had many demons and devils as servants. Later he converted to Christianity (Ghazaryan 2014, 243–64).

The roll is the oldest form of magical miscellany, and its roots go back to ancient magic traditions. People used to believe that rolled prayers or maledictions are not affected by spiteful influences from outside and thus acquire great power (Meshcherskaia 1981, 96). This is why the oldest form of Armenian amulets or magical miscellanies is a roll or a long strip. The form of printed amulets is inspired by the old handwritten examples. From 1659 to 1731, 18 amulet scrolls were published by four printing houses (Ghazaryan 2013, 142–47 and 2018, 73–85). In the early period of Armenian book printing (1512–1800), one does not find any amulet in the form of a book.

The miniatures in amulet scrolls are somewhat elongated; their dimensions are dictated by the size of the scrolls. The fact that the manuscripts of this type were usually illuminated by the scribes themselves, who were not professional miniaturists, resulted in a non-natural depiction of human figures — in some amulet scrolls they are hardly recognizable. As a rule, the miniatures in amulet scrolls have no perspective or coloured background. The natural colour of the parchment or paper served as background, and, to show a perspective, some miniaturists set up the human figures under arches or represented them one behind the other. Many images in amulets differ from traditional Armenian miniatures by the simplicity of execution, which is typical of Armenian paintings in folk tradition. However, one can also find unique examples of miniature art in those scrolls.

The miniatures of amulets are connected with their content and the texts of invocations. They also represent images of the authors or personages to whom the texts are dedicated or related. Those miniatures can be divided into five main groups: figurative representations, decorated headings, ornamented letters, and marginal ornaments. In the miniatures of amulet scrolls, dogmatic adherence to the Biblical canons is not traced. This demonstrates some of the artists' creativity. Since the miniatures are simple and, sometimes, even primitive and lacking skill, it can be concluded that most of the scribes illustrated the amulet scrolls themselves.

The earliest examples of Armenian amulet scrolls known to us belong to the fifteenth century (Ghazaryan 2012a, 142–47). Being held by private owners and repeatedly re-read for ritual purposes, they were worn, deprived of their original appearance and came down to us partially, with significant losses. This has caused certain difficulties to me during my study of those amulets. Also, some of them are still in use today and inaccessible to scholars, because people keep them for protection and luck.

The biggest collection of Armenian amulet scrolls is in the Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran in Yerevan (Armenia), which holds 568 items. There are amulet scrolls in the collections of the Holy Savior Monastery in New Julfa (Iran, 57 items, see

¹ The name *niatagir* occurs only in the amulet scroll No. 544 of the Matenadaran (1716, commissioner – Yakob, son of Petros Kaghzvanets'i).

Minasean 1983–1984; Ghazaryan 2019, 460–67), the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin (Armenia, 46 items, see the *Catalogue of Holy Etchmiadzin* 1952/April, 59–60; 1961/December, 59; 1962/August, 63; 1963/May, 61–62; 1970 / December, 58–59; 1971/May, 61–62; 1971/November, 46; 1975/November, 60–63), the Libraries of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice (44 items) (see Feydit 1986; Ter-Vardanean 2013, 62–98) and Vienna (11 items) (see Oskean 1963, 383–85, 879–80; Szekula 1983, 378–79, 1000), the History Museum of Armenia in Yerevan (13 items), The British Library in London (13 items) (see Nersessian 2012, vol. 2, 1077–1110 and vol. 1, Plate XXVIII) and in other state and private collections.²

2. Three Collections in Paris

There are 16 handwritten Armenian amulet scrolls in three collections in Paris: a) The National Library of France (Bibliothèque nationale de France [BnF], 7 items; for 6 of them, see Kévorkian and Ter-Stépanian 1998, 295–303); b) The private Musée arménien de France (6 items, see Vardanyan 2012, 333–70);³ c) The private collection of Garig and Varvara Basmadjians (3 items + 1 old-printed amulet, see Ghazaryan 2017, 124–51).

As a recipient of the “Sirarpie Der Nersessian Association” scholarship in 2016,⁴ I studied most of them (except the collection of the Musée arménien de France). Also, I examined an amulet of the private collection of Janine Altounian, which is now kept in The National Library of France.

These amulets, dated from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, were written and illuminated in different places: Bakhchysarai (Crimea), Smyrna (Zmiwřnia), Istanbul, and others. The place of origin of some items is unknown.

2.1. The Amulet Scrolls in the National Library of France

There are 7 amulet scrolls in the collection of the National Library of France.

1. BnF Arménien 97, date – 1643, scribe – Reverend Grigoris, commissioner – Margar, size – 288.4 × 6.8–7.2 cm. The amulet scroll is incomplete, a part is missing and the edges are worn at the beginning. It contains 10 prayers and 2 miniatures: *The Cross* and a *Rosette*. There are a headpiece and 4 ornamented letters in the amulet: ornithomorphic (2), vegetal (1), and nodal (1). The colour palette is poor: red (light and dark), green, and black.

² See, for instance, Uluhogian 1984, 605–14; Russell 2013, 105–91; Ghazaryan 2011; 2012b; 2015a–b; Ghazaryan and Sargsyan 2016; 2017, and 2020.

³ The museum was closed due to legal issues, and I didn't have an opportunity to study the collection. It is still closed.

⁴ I am grateful to the “Sirarpie Der Nersessian Association” and to Anna Layloyan-Yekmalyan, without whose support this study could not have been accomplished.

2. BnF Arménien 98, date – eighteenth century (before 1730), size – $182.4 \times 8-8.3$ cm. This manuscript is incomplete; the edges of the paper are worn, parts of the text are damaged, and a large part is missing at the end. At the beginning, the paper has become yellowish from oil. The miniatures' colours have penetrated through the paper because of moisture and are seen on the backside. The amulet was partly repaired at the beginning of the twentieth century. It contains one incomplete prayer ("In Faith I Confess..." by Nersēs Shnorhali) and 7 miniatures: *The Lord*; *The Original Sin*; *Flowers in a Vase*; *The Annunciation*; *Adoration of the Magi*; *Nersēs Shnorhali*, and *Presentation at the Temple*. The decorations include a headpiece and an ornamented letter (ornithomorphic). The colours of the amulet are red, yellow, green, rose, white, black, and silver. The marginal parts are coloured yellow.
3. BnF Arménien 99, date – eighteenth century (before 1732), commissioner – Ovanes, son of Maskhud (1732), size – 802×7.9 cm.⁵ The amulet scroll contains 23 prayers and 17 miniatures: *The Lord*; *The Original Sin*; *The Annunciation*; *Adoration of the Magi*; *Presentation at the Temple*; *Entry into Jerusalem*; *Wise and Foolish Virgins*; *Nersēs Shnorhali*; *The Lord*; *The 12 Apostles*, *Prayer to the Virgin Mary*; *Virgin with the Child Jesus*; *Saint Stephen the Protomartyr*; *Saint John the Baptist with the Haloed Jesus in His Arms*; *Saint Gregory the Illuminator*; *The Sacrifice of Isaac*; *Saint Sargis on Horseback*, and *Saint Shiat Chides the Devil*. There are 4 ornamented letters in the amulet: ornithomorphic (3) and vegetal (1). The colours used by the unknown artist (possibly the scribe himself), are red, yellow, green, orange, rose, white, brown, black, and bronze. The margins of the scroll are coloured yellow.
4. BnF Arménien 100, date – 1766, commissioner – Yakob, son of Ghazar Toghramaji, size – 674.6×12 cm. The amulet scroll is incomplete, a part is lost and the edges are worn at the beginning. It contains 30 prayers. Spaces are left for 12 miniatures, which have never been painted. There are only graphical black ornamented letters in the amulet: ornithomorphic (15), vegetal (7), and ornithomorphic with a human face (1). The margins are decorated with two lines; the one closer to the edge is red, and the other is bronze (the bronze colour is worn and has partially become green).
5. BnF Arménien 101, date – seventeenth century, later owner – Yovanēs, size – 447.3×6.9 cm. The amulet scroll, containing 11 prayers, is incomplete (a small part is lost at the beginning). It was restored in the eighteenth century, the missing part of the paper was added, and the text was rewritten. The 10 miniatures include: *Flowers in a Vase under an Arch*; *a Vegetal Decoration under an Arch*; *Nersēs Shnorhali*;⁶ *Virgin with the Child Jesus*, and *6 Rosette-Crosses*. There are also 4 headpieces and 10 ornamented letters: ornithomorphic (1), vegetal (4), nodal

⁵ The paper has become yellowish from moisture. The bronze colour of the miniatures is partially-missing. The amulet was restored in the eighteenth century; the 9th and 10th pieces were sewn together with a white cotton thread, and a paper with a French text was sewn with the same thread along the verse of the last two pieces. The scroll was again partially restored in the mid-twentieth century.

⁶ The gold colour of this miniature has partially peeled.

(2), and geometric (3). The colour palette of the miniatures is rich: red, blue, green, yellow, orange, rosy, white, brown, grey, black, and gold. The margins are coloured orange (the left) and yellow (the right).

6. BnF Arménien 102, date – seventeenth century, commissioner – Aṙak'el, size – 587.6 × 7.8–8.4 cm. Parts of the amulet scroll are missing at the beginning, the middle and the end.⁷ It contains 30 prayers, some of which are incomplete. The manuscript is illuminated with 24 miniatures: *Presentation at the Temple*; *The Lord*; *The 6 Apostles*; *The Lamb of God*; *The 6 Apostles*; *Crucifixion*; *Virgin with the Child Jesus*; *Saint John the Baptist*; *Saint Stephen the Protomartyr*; *Saint Gregory the Illuminator*; *Kneeling Jesus Praying on the Mount of Olives*; *The Sacrifice of Isaac*; *Saint Cyprian Heals by Reading*; *Saint Paul Chides the Snake*; *The Archangel Chides the Evil Crow* (which is on a branchless, leafless, and rootless tree); *Saint Peter Chides the Devil*; *Saint Nicholas Thaumaturgus*; *Saint George on Horseback Slaying the Dragon*; *Saint Sargis and His Son Martiros on Horseback*; *Saint Demetrius on Horseback*; *Saint Andrew the General on Horseback*; *Saint Theodore the Soldier on Horseback*; *Saint Menas on Horseback*, and *Saint Mercurius on Horseback Slaying a King*. There are a headpiece and ornamented letters in the amulet: ornithomorphic (3), vegetal (13) and nodal (7). The colours are red, blue, green, yellow, orange, rosy, brown, umber, black, and gold (mainly peeled).
7. BnF Arménien 348, date – 1865, scribe – Yarut'iwn Prusats'i, son of Yakob Vank'ian, commissioner – Yarut'iwn (the scribe) and Petros (his brother), 2776.7 × 11.2–11.7 cm.⁸ This amulet (Fig. 9) is the longest among the 900 Armenian scrolls all over the world. The typical size of an Armenian amulet is 600–800 cm, except the amulets of the New Julfa school. The size of the amulets from this school is between 88.9 and 168.9 cm (see Ghazaryan 2019, 462). There are not too many Armenian amulets longer than 1000 cm (about 20 are from 1000 to 1600 cm, one is 2264.8 cm (Matenadaran, No. 41, date – 1836, place – Astrakhan, scribe and painter – Movsēs Yovhannisean Khzlarts'i, commissioner – Yovsep).

The amulet contains 73 prayers and 31 miniatures: *God the Father*; *Nersēs Shnorhali*; *Adoration of the Magi*; *The Baptism*; *The Lord*; *The 12 Apostles*; *The Lamb of God*; *The Risen Jesus in the Chalice and the Instruments of Torture*; *Crucifixion*; *The Tomb of the Lord*; *Resurrection*; *Virgin with the Child Jesus*; *Saint John the Baptist and The Lamb of God*; *Saint Stephen the Protomartyr*; *Saint Gregory the Illuminator*; *Angel with a Trumpet* (Fig. 10); *Archangel Gabriel Takes the Soul of a Deceased Man*; *Seraphim*; *The Sacrifice of Isaac*; *Gregory of Narek*; *Saint George on Horseback*; *Saint Sargis and his Son Martiros on Horseback*; *Saint Matthew the Evangelist*; *Saint Mark the Evangelist*;

⁷ The paper has become yellowish from moisture. The colours of the miniatures have also changed. At some places the text is faded and hardly readable. The edges are worn, and some parts of the text are missing. The amulet was restored in the twentieth century; a paper was glued along the back side, and a piece (11.1 cm) from the end of the scroll, containing miniature 24 and prayer 30, was cut and glued at the beginning.

⁸ The edges are worn, and the paper has become yellowish from moisture. The red ink of the text is partly seen on the back side. During a restoration in the mid-twentieth century, a paper was glued along the verso of the amulet.

Saint Luke the Evangelist; Saint John the Evangelist; Solomon Chides the Lord of Demons; Saint Cyprian; The Glorious Holy Cross; Saint Jacob, and The Prophet David with a Lyre (Fig. 11). At the end of the scroll, one can see a coloured etching – *The Holy Trinity*. The colour palette of the miniatures is rich: red, blue, green, yellow, orange, rosy, violet, white, brown, grey, black, and gold. 3 lines, black, red, and black, are drawn in the margins.

2.2. *The Amulet Scrolls in the Basmadjians' Collection*

There are 4 amulet scrolls in the private collection of Garig and Varvara Basmadjians. It was formed during the years when they were students in Armenia and were not yet married. Interested in Armenian culture, they collected works of art. Garig Basmadjian, born in 1947 in Jerusalem, was a poet, translator, publisher, editor, amateur artist, art-historian, and curator. His literary heritage is summed up in the collection entitled *Avartakhagh (The Final Play)* and published in Yerevan in 2005 (see Basmadjian 2011, 58–60). Varvara Basmadjian is an art-historian and curator. She was born in Constantinople, and later her family settled in Paris. Garig and Varvara Basmadjians started their life together in Paris. Their private collection was growing and they decided to open a gallery in 1977. It was first named “Gorky Gallery” in honour of the famous Armenian artist Arshile Gorky. Two years later, this gallery dedicated to the Armenian art in France, was renamed “Basmadjian gallery”. Garig had organized about 60 exhibitions before his mysterious disappearance in 1989. The gallery existed until 2003.

The three handwritten amulets of the Basmadjians described below are in a very good condition despite some minor losses at the beginning. They all are very interesting not only thanks to the variety of prayers but also the vivid miniatures in rich colours.

1. Date – 1680, place – Bakhchysarai (Crimea), scribe – Deacon Petros, commissioner – Ulukhan, son of Khoja Awetis, size – 656 × 7.5–7.6 cm. The amulet scroll contains 28 prayers. An unknown artist (perhaps the scribe himself) illuminated it with 6 miniatures: *The Cross; Nersēs Shnorhali (the Gracious)* (see Fig. 1); *Gregory of Narek; Virgin with the Child Jesus; Crucifixion, and Archangel Gabriel* (Fig. 2). Among the miniatures of the amulet, one can also see a vignette-headpiece, 2 other headpieces, and 17 ornamented letters: ornithomorphic (5), vegetal (7), nodal (4), and vegetal with a human face (1). The colours are red, blue, green, yellow, orange, and black. The marginal parts are coloured with light yellow.
2. Date – 1711, place – Smyrna (Zmiwŕnia), scribe – unknown, commissioner – Papay, size 823.6 × 9.3–9.9 cm. The amulet scroll contains 23 prayers and 23 miniatures, some of which are repeated: *Annunciation; Adoration of the Magi; Nersēs Shnorhali; Virgin with the Child Jesus; Crucifixion; The Lord; The 12 Apostles; The Risen Jesus in the Chalice; The 12 Apostles; Saint John the Baptist; Saint Stephen the Protomartyr; Saint Gregory the Illuminator; The 6 Apostles; The Lamb of God; The 6 Apostles; Archangel Gabriel Takes the Soul of a Deceased Man* (see Fig. 3); *The Sacrifice of Isaac; Saint George on Horseback Slaying the Dragon* (Fig. 4); *Saint*

Sargis and His Son Martiros on Horseback; Saint Peter Chides the Demon; Gregory of Narek, and Gregory of Narek and Saint Mark the Evangelist. The colour palette of the miniatures is quite rich, comprised of red, blue, green, yellow, orange, rose, violet, black, silver, and gold.⁹ The amulet scroll is also decorated with ornamented letters: ornithomorphic (16) and vegetal (1).

3. Date – 1711, place – Istanbul, scribe – Kiraykos, commissioner – Ōhanēs, size – 646.8 × 10 cm. The amulet scroll contains 14 prayers and 19 miniatures:¹⁰ *The Original Sin; Annunciation, Adoration of the Magi; Nersēs Shnorhali; The Magi; Crucifixion; The Lord; The 6 Apostles; The Lamb of God and 6 Apostles* (Fig. 5); *Virgin with the Child Jesus; Saint John the Baptist; Saint Stephen the Protomartyr; Saint Gregory the Illuminator; The Sacrifice of Isaac; Saint Sargis on Horseback; Archangel Gabriel Takes the Soul of a Deceased Man; Saint George on Horseback Slaying the Dragon, and Saint Peter Chides a Demon* (Fig. 6). The decorations of the amulet also include a headpiece and 9 ornamented letters: ornithomorphic (1) and geometric (8). The colour palette is rich: red, blue, yellow, orange, white, brown, black, bronze, and silver (which is rarely used in the miniatures of Armenian manuscripts). On the first three pieces, the unknown artist has also decorated the margins with a black stylized vegetal belt.
4. Old-printed amulet: date – 1724, place – Constantinople (printing house of Astuatsatur Kostandnupolsets'i), illustrator – Grigor Marzvanets'i,¹¹ commissioner – Hoṛomsim), size – 580.4 × 9.8–10 cm. It has come down to us with losses at the beginning and in the middle.¹² Though some parts are missing, this amulet remains the longest printed example I have ever seen. It contains 28 prayers and 21 etchings: *The Family Tree of Christ; Nersēs Shnorhali; The Lord; The 12 Apostles; The Lamb of God; The Risen Jesus in the Chalice and the Instruments of Torture; the Tomb of the Lord* (Fig. 7); *Crucifixion; Virgin with the Child Jesus* (Fig. 8); *Saint John the Baptist; Saint Stephen the Protomartyr; Saint Gregory the Illuminator; Archangel Gabriel Takes the Soul of a Deceased Man; Seraphim; The Sacrifice of Isaac; Gregory of Narek; Saint Matthew the Evangelist; Saint Mark the Evangelist; Saint Luke the Evangelist; Saint John the Evangelist, and Solomon Chides the Lord of Devils.* There are also a vignette-headpiece, a headpiece, and ornamented letters: ornithomorphic (3), zoomorphic (5), and ornithomorphic with a human face (1). The etchings are coloured red, blue, yellow, orange, rose, brown, and bronze. The bronze of the coloured images has partly peeled.

9 The edges at the beginning of the amulet scroll are worn. The silver and gold colours of the miniatures are partly missing. The paper has become yellow from moisture. The manuscript was restored in 1809 and has some repairs from the late nineteenth century.

10 The scroll is incomplete, a little part of it is missing at the beginning. The edges are worn, the first three miniatures are damaged, and at some places the silver and gold colours are missing. The manuscript was partly repaired in the late nineteenth century.

11 Some illustrations are signed by him: "GM" (ԳՄ), "GR" («ԳՐ»), "GD" («ԳԴ»).

12 The edges at the beginning are worn. The amulet had been partly restored in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its parts had been confused. During my study (in April 2016), I took apart its pieces and rearranged them, so that the scroll can be restored in the correct order. However, it has not been restored yet and consists of 21 separate pieces.

3. Some Examples of Miniatures

It is worth saying a few words about several most typical or unique miniatures found in the above-mentioned amulet scrolls. Some of these examples are remarkable for their artistic value and unusual features not only among the miniatures of amulet scrolls but also in the whole Armenian art of manuscript illumination.

BnF Arménien 99: *Presentation at the Temple* (Fig. 12), which is one of the episodes of the *Festive Cycle*, frequently found in the illustrations of amulets. In this scene, Jesus is presented not as a 40-day-old baby but as a 6–7-year-old child. Under the arch, which symbolizes the temple or the church, one can see 3 personages: Mary, Jesus, and Simeon. The image depicts the meeting of people with God.

BnF Arménien 99: *Wise and Foolish Virgins* (Fig. 13), a scene typical of the Artsakh school of miniature painting (see, for example, M316, 6r; M4820, 4v, M6319, 1c; Hakobyan 2014, 87, 112–13, 140–41). In this sample, the artist represents Jesus in front of a group of women at night. Those women are the wise virgins. They are awake, waiting for Jesus, and are saved by the Lord.

BnF Arménien 102: *Saint Cyprian Heals by Reading* (Fig. 14). One can see images of Saint Cyprian already in the earliest amulet scrolls of the fifteenth century. In some of them, Cyprian is depicted together with Justina the Virgin, in others, without her. In the second case, we have different versions: Cyprian with the Devil, Cyprian represented with a Wooden Staff, with the Four Gospels, or with the Bible in his hand. In this miniature, Bishop Cyprian is reading the Holy Scriptures and healing a sick man. According to a legend, Cyprian was formerly a pagan sorcerer, who was converted to Christianity by Justina the Virgin. After becoming a Christian, he conveyed the word of God to people and thereby healed them (see Ghazaryan 2014, 243–64). This image depicts one of such episodes from the life of Cyprian.

Finally, I would like to mention an extraordinary miniature, in which the imaginary world of a mystic prayer is represented. BnF Arménien 102: *The Archangel Chides the Evil Eagle* (in the image, it is more like a crow, which sits on a branchless, leafless, and rootless tree [Fig. 15]).

The miniature precedes the following prayer:¹³

Prayer against all kinds of pains and all troubles from demons and sorcerers, and heresies and all evils – There was a tree on the earth, which had no branches, no leaves and no roots. An eagle lived on it, which had no head and no wings and no feet. Those angels and archangels asked the eagle and said: “What art thou, sitting on the tree that has no branches, no leaves and no roots?” The evil eagle says: “I

13 «Աղոթք ամենայն ցեղ զանի եւ ամենայն ցաւոց դիւազ եւ կախարդաց եւ աղանդաց եւ ամենայն չարեաց – Ծառ մի կայր ի մեջ երկրի, որ ոչ ճեղ ունէր եւ ոչ տերեւ եւ ոչ արմատ: Արծիւ մի [քնակ]եալ էր ի վերա նորայ, որ ոչ գլուխ ունէր եւ [ոչ թևք] եւ ոչ ոտք: Հարցմունք եղեն արծիւին ա[յդ հր]եշտակք եւ հրեշտակապետքն եւ ասեն. «[Զ]ի՛նչ ես, որ նստեալ] ես ի ծառդ, որ ոչ ճեղ ունի եւ ոչ տերեւ եւ ոչ ա[րմ]ատ»: Ասէ պիղծ արծիւն. «Երդամ նստիմ ի գլուխն մարդուն, զմիսն ուտիմ եւ զղեղն ծըծեմ, զաչից լուսն պակասեցնեն»: Լսեցին զայս հրեշտակք եւ հրեշտակապետքն, հրամայեցին եւ ասեն. «Կապենք զքեզ, չար եւ անիծեալ, ի ԳՃԿԵ. (365) սրբովքն, որ կան ի սիրտ արեքականն, ոչ հրեշտակք գիտեն եւ ոչ հրեշտակապետք, բայց միայն Հայր»:

go and sit on the head of a man, eat his flesh, suck his brain and impair the light of his eyes". The angels and archangels heard this, ordered and said: "We tie thee, evil and cursed one, by the 365 saints, who are in the heart of the sun; they know neither the angels, nor the archangels, but only the Father."¹⁴

This text is illustrated by an unknown painter or the scribe himself as follows: an archangel on the left side of the miniature is talking with a bird sitting on a tree. The tree has no branches, no leaves and no roots, as it is written in the text of the prayer, and the evil bird has no wings and no feet. This prayer can be found in almost the half of the Armenian amulet scrolls, but this illustration of the text is unique.

4. Conclusion

My purpose was to provide brief preliminary information on the Armenian amulet scrolls kept in two collections of Paris. As we have seen, most of them are in the National Library of France and some others form part of the Basmadjians' private collection. Among these items, I referred with a special emphasis to the longest Armenian amulet scroll, 2776.7 cm in length, a unique sample, which had formerly been in the private collection of Janine Altounian and is now housed in the BnF. All this very interesting material has never received proper scholarly attention and deserves detailed study within the wide context of the Armenian amulet scrolls in general. In the near future, I hope to carry out further research, which will also include the collection of the Musée arménien de France — so far, it has not been accessible to me. The miniatures found in the amulet scrolls, of which I mentioned several remarkable examples, are another fascinating and little-studied subject worthy to be considered by experts, especially art historians.

¹⁴ Or "neither the angels, nor the archangels know them, but only the Father".



Fig. 1: *Nersēs Shnorhali*, 1680, Bakhchysarai (Crimea),
scribe – Deacon Petros

The first eight miniatures are from Garig and Varvara Basmadjians' collection. Thanks to Hrair Hawk Khacherian for the photos, which are part of Davit Ghazaryan's personal archive.



Fig. 2: Archangel Gabriel, Bakhchysarai (Crimea), scribe – Deacon Petros



Fig. 3: Archangel Gabriel Takes the Soul of a Deceased Man, 1711, Smyrna (Zmiwŋnia), scribe – unknown



Fig. 4: Saint George on Horseback Slaying the Dragon, 1711, Smyrna (Zmiw̄nia), scribe – unknown



Fig. 5: *The Lamb of God and 6 Apostles*, 1711, Istanbul, scribe – Kiraykos



Fig. 6: Saint Peter Chides the Devil, 1711, Istanbul, scribe – Kiraykos



Fig. 7: *The Tomb of the Lord*, Printed in 1724, Constantinople, illustrator – Grigor Marzvanets'i



Fig. 8: Virgin with the Child Jesus, Printed in 1724, Constantinople, illustrator – Grigor Marzvanets'i



Fig. 9: The longest Armenian amulet scroll, 1865, scribe – Yarut'iwn Prusats'¹⁶

¹⁶ This and the following two photos of the amulet scroll (BnF Arménien 348) were taken by Davit Ghazarian when it was still in the collection of Janine Altounian.



Fig. 10: Angel with a Trumpet, 1865, scribe – Yarut'iwn Prusats'i



Fig. 11: The Prophet David with a Lyre, 1865, scribe – Yarut'iwn Prusats'i



Fig. 12: *Presentation at the Temple*, eighteenth century (before 1732)



Fig. 13: *Wise and Foolish Virgins*, eighteenth century (before 1732)



Fig. 14: *Saint Cyprian Heals by Reading*, seventeenth century



Fig. 15: *The Archangel Chides the Evil Eagle*, seventeenth century

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“Don’t Forget about the Silver Covers!”

*Newly Discovered Silverwork by the Armenian Silversmiths of Kayseri (Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries)**

▼ **ABSTRACT** A seventeenth to eighteenth-century workshop of Armenian silversmiths from Kayseri, Cappadocia, is notable for having produced repoussé silver covers for religious manuscripts, liturgical objects, and luxury household articles. These objects were manufactured in silver, gold, or silvered copper, and were occasionally further embellished with colorful enamels and/or gems. Nearly seventy objects from this workshop have been identified; about a third are inscribed with the name of the silversmith and the date and place of production (Kayseri). Uninscribed objects created in this same workshop have been identified on the basis of technical and stylistic comparisons with the inscribed ones. This article will summarise the history of this workshop, discuss examples of the objects produced, and explain the iconography, which inspired the silversmiths. I will then introduce some newly identified objects from the workshop, a dish and bowl set in the collection of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum (Southfield, Michigan). The materials, technique of manufacture, and style confirm their origin in this Armenian atelier. The surprising inspirations for the motifs and iconography used in these pieces will also be explained. This article also includes the results of my provenance research as well as the fascinating findings of the Manoogian Museum’s scientific analysis of the objects. Possible future research will be proposed. It is hoped that

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Sylvie L. Merian  0009-0000-2552-2882 • The Morgan Library & Museum, New York (NY), USA,
(Email: smerian@themorgan.org)

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by dissemination of further information about this workshop, more objects will be discovered, analyzed, and properly identified.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Kayseri, silversmiths, silver bindings, liturgical objects, silverwork, enamel, numismatics, Chinese porcelain, Dutch woodcuts, Christoffel van Sichem.

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1. Introduction

I had the great honor and privilege of meeting Professor Sirarpie Der Nersessian in Paris on two occasions. She was kind and gracious, and it was she who referred me to Professors Nina Garsoïan (Columbia University) and Thomas Mathews (The Institute of Fine Arts, New York University) to pursue my studies on Armenian manuscripts. After I began my graduate studies at Columbia with both of them, I met her for a second time in the mid-1980s. Over tea, I excitedly told her about my research in Armenian binding techniques (not decoration). She asked me if I had done any research on the attached silver plaques that embellish the covers of some manuscripts. I sheepishly answered, “Well, no, not really...” She nodded politely as we continued our conversation, but as I was leaving her apartment, she called after me in the stairwell, “And don’t forget about the silver covers!” I owe my interest in Armenian silverwork to Professor Der Nersessian’s (not so) subtle encouragement!

In this article I will begin by giving a brief overview of a remarkable workshop of Armenian silversmiths in Kayseri, Cappadocia. The Kayseri craftsmen specialised in plaques made for embellishing religious manuscripts; they also produced liturgical objects as well as personal, luxury domestic items. These artisans often added detailed, dated inscriptions on their wares, allowing us to identify the makers by name, as well as the dates and place of production. Uninscribed objects can be identified by stylistic and technical comparisons with the dated examples. Specific sources of inspiration for the compositions and iconography used by these silversmiths will be explained.

I will next present two objects, a bowl and dish in the collection of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield, Michigan (Fig. 1) which I have identified as originating from this Kayseri workshop. I will explain the reasons for this determination, describe the sources for the imagery used, and present examples of related objects. I will also discuss the provenance history for the bowl and dish. The conclusion will introduce possible future research on other objects from this workshop inspired by the study of the Manoogian objects.

2. The Armenian Silversmiths of Kayseri

This atelier was first identified in an 1895 article describing silver covers in the collections of the Venice and Vienna Mekhitarist Congregation, which included spine pieces inscribed in Armenian with the date, place of manufacture (i.e. Kayseri), and

the silversmith's name (Anonymous 1895).¹ While twenty-one objects can be firmly attributed to this workshop by their inscriptions, stylistic and technical comparisons link nearly fifty more uninscribed pieces to the same atelier, totaling nearly seventy identified objects.² The workshop specialised in producing liturgical objects, such as silver plaques to cover sacred books, pyxes, and altar crosses, but they also made luxury household articles, such as *hamam* bowls (used in the public baths — the *hamam* — for washing and rinsing) and jeweled boxes.³

The objects are usually silver or gilt silver, and might be decorated with colourful enamels; some are even embellished with jewels.⁴ Technical and stylistic similarities are readily apparent. The dated objects range from 1653 to 1741.⁵ Three family names occur in the inscriptions: Malkhas, Shahpaz, and Shahmir or the variant Shahamir; they were likely related by marriage. Their names suggest that they were probably Armenians from Iran, and may have immigrated to Kayseri to escape the wars between the Ottomans and the Safavids in the mid- to late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Jennings 1976, 31; Merian 2013, 142–43).

The plaques were not die-struck or made with moulds; they were all individually produced by the repoussé method, in which a sheet of silver is placed on a malleable substance such as pitch or wax and the designs are pushed out from the back with hammers and punches. Details are added on the front by the use of special tools. The Musée arménien de France (MAF) includes two sets of dated, inscribed silver book covers, which are missing the manuscripts they once enveloped, enabling us to see the reverse and easily identify the technique used in its fabrication. The inscription on one set (accession no. 400; Figs 2 and 3) indicates that it was made in Kayseri by the "unworthy hands" of the silversmith Malkhas M[ahtesi] Yakob, in Kayseri in the year 1660 (Merian 2011).⁶

1 For a bibliography of articles on this workshop up to 2013, see Merian 2013, 130, n. 8 and n. 9. For two recent Armenian publications on silver covers from Kayseri, see Malkhasyan 1996 and 2022, 100–16.

2 See Merian 2013, 170–81 (Table 1) for a list of items found up until 2013. I have identified more objects since 2013, the most recent being a pair of silver covers on a 1606 manuscript of the Four Gospels in the Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cologny, Switzerland (Cod. Bodmer 34); see Grigoryan 2020, Figs 1–2. See also <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en> for the complete digitised manuscript (consulted June 14, 2020).

3 See Kürkman 1996, 234–35 for a *hamam* bowl in a private collection. For four other bowls (three with *hamam* scenes) and one dish, all of which I believe were made in this Kayseri workshop, see Christie's 23 April 2015, lot 202; Sotheby's 5 April 2006, lot 193; Sotheby's 9 April 2008, lot 300; Sotheby's 14 April 2010, lot 278; and Tajan 1 July 2019, lot 218. For a jeweled and enameled silver box in the James and Ana Melikian Collection (Phoenix, Arizona), see Gulácsi 2012, 3, 97, and 100–01, Figs 38a–d.

4 For some jeweled examples, see the Morgan Library & Museum's MS W7 (AD 1653), the Metropolitan Museum acc. 16.99 (AD 1691), The Walters Art Museum, acc. no. W540 (undated), and accession no. 41 (undated) in the *Gandzaturun Alek' ew Mari Manukean* (Etchmiadzin, Armenia), published in Malkhasyan 2011, 14–15, 47 (no. 27) and Fig. 2. It is described as possibly being from Constantinople, eighteenth century, but I believe it is from Kayseri.

5 Two sets of silver covers are dated 1653: The Morgan Library & Museum's MS W7, made by Karapet and Yakob, and Princeton University Garrett Armenian MS 4 (formerly MS Garrett 20), by Shahmir M[ahtesi] Karapet. The latest dated liturgical object (1741) known is MS M10356 with two silver covers by Shahmir M[ahtesi] Yakob. The "M" presumably stands for *mahtesi*, an honorific title used by a person who has made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

6 See also <https://www.le-maf.com/item/reliure-devangile/> and <https://www.le-maf.com/item/reliure-devangile-2/> (consulted Oct. 11, 2020).

3. Inspiration for Iconography

Where did the silversmiths get their ideas for the motifs and iconography used for their religious objects? Remember that the silversmiths, although literate, were craftsmen, not theologians. It is unlikely that they would have invented new religious iconography for these pieces. In some cases they copied imagery directly from illustrations in the Armenian manuscripts brought to their workshop. For example, the miniature of the Presentation from acc. no. W540 in The Walters Art Museum (Fig. 4), a Gospel book dated AD 1475, served as the direct inspiration for the central scene in the silver covers of acc. no. W542 (Fig. 5). It is certain that at some point acc. no. W540 was in the Kayseri workshop, because it too has a set of custom-made Kayseri covers, in this case gilt silver with enamel and jewels (Evans and Merian 1994, 121, 150–51 [cat. 9] and 152 [cat. 11]).⁷ This Presentation scene was repeated in other decorative plaques, such as one nailed on the front cover of a Gospel manuscript copied in 1700 (Fig. 6).⁸ Its back cover depicts the Ascension of Christ (Fig. 31).⁹

In other cases, the silversmiths were inspired by woodcuts and engravings found in illustrated printed books imported from Western Europe, such as the first Armenian printed Bible (Amsterdam, 1666), as well as other illustrated books. Kayseri was on an important trade route. Consequently its population was exposed to imported objects including European illustrated, printed books. The silversmiths must have had access to a copy of the 1666 Armenian printed Bible, which was filled with around 160 previously published Dutch woodcuts by the artist Christoffel van Sichem. Iconographic evidence from other silver covers makes clear that they also sourced images from Dutch-language books containing van Sichem illustrations, rather than only Armenian-language books with van Sichem images.¹⁰

At least twelve religious-themed van Sichem woodcuts inspired the Armenian silversmiths of Kayseri in their liturgical silverwork, a number of which have already been published.¹¹ One example used multiple times is a van Sichem woodcut

⁷ Both W540 and W542 can be viewed in their entirety (including the covers) at these links: <https://manuscripts.thewalters.org/?search=w.540> and <https://manuscripts.thewalters.org/?search=w.542> (consulted Aug. 11, 2020).

⁸ Other examples include a *Gandzaran* manuscript with silver covers formerly in the James and Ana Melikian Collection (Phoenix, Arizona), now with Sam Fogg Ltd. (London). These covers have the same Presentation scene on the front and the Ascension of Christ on the back (Gulácsi 2012, 102, Figs 39a–b). Another set formerly in the S. Sevdjian collection with the same Presentation on the front but with the Coronation of the Virgin on the back was published in Macler 1924 (text p. 64, plates Fig. 258). Its current location is unknown.

⁹ Morgan Library MS M1108 (Mathews and Wieck 1994, 145 [cat. 1], 115, 121, Figs 81, 92 and Plate 47). At the time of the 1994 exhibition “Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts”, the manuscript was co-owned by rare book dealers Bruce Ferrini (Akron, Ohio) and Sam Fogg Rare Books, Ltd. (London). The Morgan Library acquired it in 1998. The silver and enameled plaques attached to the front and back covers of the manuscript are depicted on the front and back covers of *Treasures in Heaven Symposium Papers* 1998.

¹⁰ Evans and Merian 1994, 115–23; Merian 2013, 130–41; 2018a–c; 2019, and 2021.

¹¹ For a list of eleven van Sichem woodcuts used by the silversmiths from the 1666 Armenian Bible as well as Dutch-language books, see Merian 2013, 182–85 (Table 2). The twelfth one which should be added to this Table is the van Sichem woodcut of the Last Supper, the inspiration of which decorates a gold pyx dated 1687 by Sedrak and kept in the Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon; see Merian 2018b and 2018d. Note that in Merian 2013

depicting a scene from the Old Testament book of Isaiah, in which the angel of the Lord is seen purifying Isaiah's lips with a hot coal, while God observes from his throne above (Isaiah 6:6–7). This woodcut was originally published in at least three printed books: the Dutch *Bibels tresoor* of 1646, the Dutch language *Biblia Sacra* of 1646/1657, and the Armenian Bible of 1666 (Fig. 7). The silversmiths often duplicated imagery that they admired or that was marketable. For example, the Purification of Isaiah scene seems to have been quite popular and was repeated in at least six different book covers (for three examples, see Figs 8, 9, and 10).¹² Even though the iconography and decorative motifs are the same, they are not exact replicas and thus were not produced by the use of moulds. The plaques are different sizes, and the figures are positioned slightly differently in the six examples I have so far examined. Four of them are plain silver, and two include colourful enamels, as in Fig. 8.¹³

4. Bowl and Dish in the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum

This brings us to a bowl and dish set in the collection of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum. The Museum, founded by the Armenian-American businessman and philanthropist Alex Manoogian, officially opened in 1992.¹⁴ The two objects appear to be silver, enhanced by gilding and coloured enamels (Fig. 1). They were donated to the Museum in the mid-1980s by Louise Manoogian Simone († 2019), the daughter of the Museum's founder. She had been told that they once belonged to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but no documentation was provided to the Manoogian Museum. For reasons which will be discussed below, it was at first believed that these pieces might be thirteenth-century Cilician. I have concluded that this set was in fact produced in the Armenian atelier of Kayseri, most likely in the eighteenth century. The repoussé technique replicates that of other pieces from this workshop, a fact that is easily visible in the interior of the bowl and the underside of the matching dish. The style of the figures and the motifs are remarkably similar to other objects from the Kayseri workshop. Furthermore, the method of working the details of the figures and motifs is the same, and even the enamel colours are similar.

the compositions described as the Vision of Isaiah should more precisely have been labeled as the Purification of Isaiah.

¹² Fig. 32 depicts the front cover of the manuscript seen in Fig. 8 (Private Collection, Virginia, USA).

¹³ The other three covers with the same purification of Isaiah iconography include two in the Armenian Mekhitarist Library of San Lazzaro, Venice: MS 1968 (AD 1671) and MS 2061 (undated). The third, with coloured enamels and dated either 1671 or 1691 (the inscription is unclear in the photograph), is presumably now in a private collection; see Christie's 11 Oct. 1988, lot 278.

¹⁴ See www.manoogianmuseum.com. Alex Manoogian also provided the funding for another museum building which houses the treasures of Etchmiadzin, Armenia (dedicated in October 1982). That building was named after him and his wife (*Gandzatur Alek' ew Mari Manukean*). However, the museum in Etchmiadzin and the one on Southfield (MI) are completely separate and have no connection other than having had the same benefactor. I thank Lucy Ardash, Director of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield for clarifying this information.

Bowl (accession no. L1988.9): The bowl's diameter is 101 mm, and its height is 53 mm. It was formed with a foot at its base, with a diameter of 46 mm. Two pairs of designs are visible on the exterior of the bowl; all have been repousséed from the interior of the bowl (the interior shows the concavities created by the repoussé technique, similar to what is visible on the interior of the covers in Fig. 3). The lower portion of one design consists of two unusual, half-nude standing female angels; the angels hold an oval-shaped floral wreath formed of tiny four-lobed florets and leaves within which is a two-part ligatured inscription of Armenian letters, divided by a central cross (Fig. 11). This might represent a staff surmounted by a cross, or a processional cross. Their feet rest on the outspread wings of a large standing bird (an eagle?), facing left, placed on the foot of the bowl. The background consists of yellow, bubbly enamel. Above the wreath are the torsos of two more half-naked female angels on either side of an architectural structure resembling a church cupola, surmounted by a cross, enhanced by enamel. The other design pair (Fig. 12) consists of a heart-shaped motif bordered with leaves and the same tiny florets seen on the first design, but enclosed within a tiny dotted border. The heart includes the same central ligatured inscription, again divided by a cross. Touches of turquoise blue enamel enhance the florets, and the background is the same yellowish, bubbly enamel. Above each heart is an equal-armed cross placed within the rim's border. The rim motif around the bowl (Figs 11 and 12) consists of a larger, repeated four-petalled flower with a light blue or turquoise enamel background alternating with brick red (the red enamel is unusual in the atelier's repertoire). This flower border is also enclosed by two rows of small dots. The exterior of the bowl is further enhanced by gilding (see Fig. 13 for the interior view showing the two alternating designs).

The bottom of the well of the bowl (the central interior portion) includes a motif of a repoussé, square-headed "bearded" lion with a human-like face. His head is on the left and an S-shaped tail is visible on the right (Fig. 13). His right front paw is raised and appears to hold a cross with two horizontal crossbars, visible behind him. Below the lower crossbar is a small raised dot. On the left of the lion, near his beard, is a small raised motif which looks like a lower-case Latin letter <h> or lower-case Armenian <h>. The background consists of brownish-yellow enamel. Surrounding the lion is a circular border of the same flower border as the rim, enhanced by slightly chipped turquoise enamel. Although difficult to confirm, it is possible that the round portion at the bottom of the bowl with the lion and its border might have been a separate, round repoussé piece that was soldered to the rest of the bowl (Fig. 14). On the underside of the bowl (on the interior of the foot) the numbers 30.95.8 are painted with a red pigment (Fig. 15). These numbers were already present on the bowl when it was donated to the museum in the mid-1980s; they are not visible when the bowl is displayed.

Dish (accession no. L1988.10): The repoussé and enameled dish measures 150 mm in diameter, with a maximum height of 22 mm where the edge of the dish curves slightly upward (Fig. 16). The central design consists of the same lion that appears in the bowl, although here the circular border surrounding the lion consists of the tiny florets and leaf border, and the background enamel seems to be a mottled

mixture of predominantly greenish-blue with yellowish-brown. The <h> to the left of the lion is clearly discernible (see Fig. 27 for detail). The four heart-shaped motifs surrounding the central lion at the top, bottom, left and right, are the same as those in the bowl, and include the same ligatured letters. The background enamel is again a mottled greenish-blue and yellowish-brown, with the yellowish-brown colour being predominant. The dish includes a border on the rim composed of the four-petalled flower also used on the bowl's rim, with light blue/turquoise and brick red enamel, and an equal-armed cross above each heart, enhanced by gilding. The underside of the dish includes the numbers 30.95.9, painted with the same red pigment as on the bowl, and are not visible when the dish is displayed (Fig. 17).

5. Similarities with Other Kayseri Silverwork

The two Manoogian Museum pieces have evident similarities with other works from this Kayseri atelier. The repoussé technique is used in all the pieces; the concave areas are clearly visible when the underside of the objects is viewed (Figs 3, 13, 14, 17). The enamel colours on the Manoogian objects are very similar to those of other enameled pieces, such as the light blue or turquoise enamel used on many of the objects, and the yellow and white enamels which frequently show bubbling (compare Fig. 1 with Figs 12, 18, and 19).¹⁵ Most striking is the remarkable similarity of the figural styles; for example, the wide-open, staring eyes of most figures (humans, angels, cherubs, saints, etc.), as well as those of some animals, were all formed by the same type of tiny circular or almond-shaped punch tools (compare Figs 2 and 11). The eyes usually include an extra dot punched in the centre to indicate the iris of the eye. The lips of these figures were usually formed by a circular or oval punch tool with an additional horizontal line, like the lowercase Greek letter theta (θ) (compare Figs 2, 6, and 11). Sometimes the "theta" mouth is partially hidden in bearded figures. The birds found on a number of the pieces are formed in a similar manner — the feathers are indicated

¹⁵ Enamels are produced by grinding up coloured glass into a powder. The powder is positioned on the metal in the pattern desired, and then the entire metal object is heated so that the pulverised glass melts and fuses to the metal base, forming the shiny enamel. The bubbling might have occurred because perhaps the white or yellow powdered glass had a slightly different melting point than the other colours. Another technique used in enameling is *cloisonné*, in which the enamel powder is placed in small compartments formed by tiny strips of metal. The *cloisonné* technique was used on numerous pieces from the Kayseri workshop, such as the borders of Morgan MS W7, dated 1653 (Fig. 18); the covers dated 1687 on a *Tōnats'oyts'* (*Calendar of Feasts*) manuscript in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, MS J3437 (formerly Sevadjan no. 12); a *Parzatumar* manuscript, accession no. 41 (undated) in the *Gandzatur Alek' ew Mari Manukean* (Etchmiadzin, Armenia), published in Malkhasyan 2011, 14–15, 47 (no. 27) and fig. 2; one pyx and three incense containers in the Kalfayan Collection (which I believe are all from Kayseri and are datable to the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries), published in *Kalfayan Exhibition* 2010, 126–29 (cats. 73–76); an altar cross in Christie's 26 April 2018, lot 187; and a recently acquired altar cross in the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac in Paris, inv. no. 70.2018.10.1.1–3. See <https://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/action/show/notice/433742-croix-dautel/page/1/> (consulted Jan. 1, 2021). I thank Mme Hana Chidiac of the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac for informing me about this cross.

by engraved V- or diamond-shapes (Figs 11 and 19). See Table I for comparative details of the eyes, mouth, and birds.

6. Other Examples of the Bowl and Dish

As mentioned previously, the silversmiths often replicated popular iconography and motifs in multiple pieces, such as the Purification of Isaiah and the Presentation compositions mentioned earlier. It should not be surprising that they produced duplicates of the bowl and dish.

A related set was sold in London (Christie's 21 April 2016, lot 198), where they are called a cup and saucer (Fig. 20) (Manginis 2016, 181, Fig. 6, 183). Although a near duplicate of the Manoogian pieces, there are some notable differences. The enamel colours differ from the Manoogian Museum pieces, as the Christie's set uses only turquoise, dark blue, and green enamel, which is chipped in places. The Christie's catalogue did not indicate the diameter of the bowl, only the height of 58 mm, comparable to the height of the Manoogian bowl (53 mm). One interesting difference is that, unlike the Manoogian bowl, the Christie's bowl includes a pair of handles in the form of a rampant lion *regardant* (looking behind), which may have been a later addition.¹⁶ The diameter of the Christie's dish is 150 mm, exactly the same as the Manoogian dish.

A similar bowl was sold at Bonhams in 2008 (Bonhams 10 April 2008, lot 244); it did not include a matching dish (Figs 21, 22). This one seems to be plain silver, without any enamel (it is described in the catalogue as being silver and niello), and is 105 mm in diameter.¹⁷ This dimension is consistent with that of the Manoogian bowl (101 mm). The Bonhams catalogue did not provide its height. This bowl has the same rampant lion handles like the one sold at Christie's in 2016. Another difference with the Manoogian object is that the exterior design of the Bonhams bowl depicts only the female angels with the ligatured inscription (it does not include the heart-shaped motifs) — the angels are clearly visible in the repoussé seen in the photograph of the interior of the bowl (Fig. 22). The Manoogian bowl has two of these angel motifs, alternating with two of the heart-shaped designs; all four include the same ligatured inscription. The Christie's bowl, this Bonham's bowl, and the Manoogian bowl all include the lion motif at the bottom (compare Figs 13, 22, 27), although the Bonhams bowl does not incorporate the <h> near the lion's beard (Christie's 21 April 2016, lot 198).¹⁸ It does, however, include the dot just below the lower crossbar of the

¹⁶ In the available photographs, they seem to be soldered directly over the heart-shaped motifs. It seems unlikely that the original silversmiths would have placed them there, interrupting the unity of these motifs and perhaps even damaging the enamel, if they had intended to include these handles.

¹⁷ Niello is a metallic alloy of sulfur, silver, copper, and lead that is placed in the grooves of engraved metal objects, usually silver, which is then heated. If this bowl is indeed silver and niello, it would be the only object from the Kayseri workshop known to me produced with niello.

¹⁸ The Christie's 21 April 2016 catalogue did not provide a photograph of the interior of the bowl, but the text states that it includes a lion and cross.

	Musée arménien de France; covers; acc. no 400 (dated 1660)	Morgan Library & Museum; MS M.1108 (back); (circa 1700)	Morgan Library & Museum; MS W.7 (dated 1653)	Manoogian Museum dish; acc. no. L1988.10	Manoogian Museum bowl; acc. no. L1988.9
Eyes and mouth (theta)					
Eyes and mouth (theta)				No other living figures on the dish, only the lion	
Bird (dove or eagle)				No bird on the dish	

Table 1: Comparison of details between different Kayseri objects

cross. These small differences are consistent with the silversmiths' practice of making multiple copies of their products but with subtle alterations of imagery, decorative motifs, or borders, as well as enhancements occasionally using different materials: some might be plain silver, others gilt-silver, and still others might include enamels or gems. These additional decorative enhancements would have increased the final price of the product. Note that neither Bonhams nor Christie's recognised that these objects were made in Kayseri.¹⁹

Yet another similar bowl and dish set was sold at Bonhams on 24 April 2018 (Fig. 23); it was then resold at Oriental Art Auctions on 11 December 2018 (hereafter this set will be referred to as the Bonhams/Oriental set) (Figs 24–26).²⁰ The only dimension provided in the two auction descriptions is the diameter of the dish (169 mm), a bit larger than the Manoogian and Christie's dishes (both 150 mm). This set (which both auction houses call a cup and saucer rather than a bowl and dish) still has some traces of turquoise, blue, and green enamel. It has some notable differences from the Manoogian, Bonhams 2008, and Christie's 2016 pieces: the centre of the Bonhams/Oriental bowl does not include the round piece with the repoussé lion — instead, it is plain silver (Fig. 25). Only the dish contains the lion in the centre. It lacks the <h> on the left found in the Manoogian and Christie's dishes but does include the dot found just below the lower crossbar of the cross held by the lion. The Bonhams/Oriental set appears to be in worse condition than the other examples — the repoussé seems flatter and the lion's face is significantly smoother with his eyes missing the irises, causing him to present a somewhat disturbing blank stare. His beard is considerably flatter than that of the lions in the Manoogian or Christie's sets, and the ribs visible in those sets are not evident in the Bonhams/Oriental set. These differences could perhaps have been caused by damage or wear, affecting the condition. The possibility of damage invites speculation that the absence of the lion in the bowl might be due to a major repair. Regrettably, I have only seen photographs of these pieces; without direct examination it is difficult to determine if the bowl had indeed undergone repair.

7. The Lion

As mentioned previously, the silversmiths were inspired by different art forms and objects they encountered, such as Armenian manuscript illumination and woodcuts or engravings from printed books. A fascinating source has been identified for the raised, repoussé lion motif in the centre of the three bowls and three dishes (Figs 13,

¹⁹ Christie's 21 April 2016, lot 198 states that the objects were from Ottoman Turkey, second half of the eighteenth century, and Bonhams 10 April 2008, lot 244 states the bowl as being from Turkey, eighteenth century. Manginis 2016, 180–83 thought that the Christie's set might have been from India.

²⁰ The same scratches appear on the upper right of the dish in the photographs from the two auction houses (compare Figs 23 and 24). See Bonhams 24 April 2018, lot 204; and Oriental Art Auctions 11 December 2018, lot 524. Indeed, the Oriental Art Auctions listing even quotes the Bonhams 24 April 2018, lot 204 description, word for word.

16, 20, 22–23, and 27). In these objects, the inspiration was the reverse of a Cilician silver coin with the same lion image (Fig. 28), the half double *dram* of King Levon I (r. 1198–1219) (Saryan 2013).²¹ It was probably not very difficult to procure a Cilician coin in Kayseri, which is not very far from the region of Cilicia. This connection to the lion on the coin led the Manoogian Museum to their initial view that their bowl and dish might be thirteenth-century Cilician.

The 21.6 mm diameter silver coin includes a field mark on the left of the lion that looks like an <h>, which had been carefully copied on some of the lion motifs of the Kayseri work. The meaning of this field mark is unknown, but it might be an identification mark of the different coinage dies.²² And just to make life more interesting, there is another silver object with exactly the same lion motif as the coin and the bowl and dishes. This round, medallion-type object, formerly in the K. J. Basmadjian collection, measures 53 mm in diameter (Basmadjian 1936, 150) (Fig. 29).²³ Basmadjian also noticed the similarity of the lion with the lion on the coin. As his piece was mounted on a handle, he thought it was perhaps a silver *knik'* (stamp or seal) of King Levon I, and thus an object from the Cilician period. However, as it is a near duplicate of the lions in the bowls and dishes, it is evident that this piece was also produced in the Kayseri workshop. The Manoogian lion in the well of the bowl is slightly smaller, with a diameter of 46 mm, and the floret/leafy border around the Basmadjian piece's lion exactly matches those found around three of the Kayseri lions in the bowls and dishes.²⁴ The current location of Basmadjian's object and the remainder of his collection is unknown — he died in Paris in 1942.²⁵ Since I have been unable to examine the item, I do not know for certain if it was done in repoussé, although it appears to be from the photograph in Basmadjian's 1936 book. If it is indeed made in repoussé, it could not have been used as a stamp or seal (even for wax as Basmadjian theorised), because the raised areas would have gotten damaged and flattened very quickly with repeated stamping. Furthermore, stamps or seals are usually cut in intaglio, where the design is engraved into the metal or stone and not presented in relief as a repoussé object would be.²⁶ I believe that the Basmadjian object was either some type of separately sold medallion or perhaps the central portion for a bowl or dish that was never completed, and that it was also

21 The description of the bowl in Bonhams 10 April 2008, lot 244, recognised that the source of the lion motif was a Cilician coin but did not correctly identify which one.

22 Personal communication with Levon Saryan, email dated May 21, 2013.

23 I thank Levon Saryan who alerted me to this object and sent me photocopies of the relevant pages in the Basmadjian book.

24 The Manoogian dish (Fig. 16), the Christie's 21 April 2016 dish (Fig. 20), and the Bonhams/Oriental Art Auctions dish (Figs 23 and 24) all include the border of tiny florets and leaves. The lions in the Manoogian bowl (Fig. 13) and in the Bonhams 10 April 2008 bowl (Fig. 22) are surrounded by the border composed of the larger four-petalled flowers.

25 Basmadjian (1864–1942) was a pharmacist from Constantinople who settled in Paris. I thank my colleagues on the AIEA (Association internationale des études arméniennes) listserv for their helpful comments on Basmadjian.

26 Wooden stamps, such as the woodblocks used for printing woodcuts or for printing fabric, are cut in relief.

made in the Armenian atelier of Kayseri.²⁷ In any case, these Kayseri lions were clearly inspired from the Cilician coin of King Levon I. We cannot know why the silversmiths chose to use this imagery — was it perhaps an intentional way of looking back at a renowned period of Armenian history, by that point long past? Or might it have simply been done at the request of the client?

8. A Related Chinese Porcelain Bowl

Next we have an unexpected connection with a Chinese porcelain bowl from the Musée arménien de France, in Paris (Fig. 30).²⁸ It measures 112 mm in diameter and 58 mm in height (the Manoogian bowl is slightly smaller: 101 mm diameter × 53 mm height). The bowl's exterior has exactly the same iconography as we have seen on the metal bowls, although the motif only appears once on the outside of the porcelain bowl; it consists of the same composition of the nude torsos of two female angels on either side of a cupola surmounted by a cross. Below them, two half-nude standing female angels are gesturing to or holding a wreath within which is the same Armenian ligatured inscription as in the Kayseri silverwork. The rim on the exterior of the porcelain bowl consists of a blue line further embellished with gold leaves. The interior design consists only of an interior border of gold vine-shoots over a dark blue background. We do not have any evidence at this point if the porcelain bowl ever had a matching dish/saucer, or if other exemplars exist. There must have been multiple pieces produced — it would be logical that this was part of a larger set, as it is unlikely that a client would commission only one small porcelain bowl to be custom-made in China with an Armenian inscription.

Porcelain from China was made for the Armenian market in the eighteenth century, and Armenians are believed to have played an important role in its distribution ([Shaw] 2010a; Shaw 2010b, 29; Manginis 2012 and 2016). This is one such piece, dated by ceramic specialists to the late eighteenth century (Beurdeley 1962, 155, cat. 28; Beurdeley and Raindre 1986, 234, cat. 327). George Manginis was the first to recognise the similarity between the Christie's silver and enamel bowl and the porcelain bowl (Manginis 2016, 183). Obvious connections appear between the Kayseri silver bowls and the Chinese porcelain bowl. We cannot be sure which object served as the model — was the porcelain bowl made first, and the designs copied by the silversmiths, or vice versa? In my opinion, the silversmiths were inspired by the porcelain bowl (my reasoning is discussed in the "Inscriptions" section below). We can only speculate on how Armenian silversmiths in Cappadocia were exposed to this bowl — was it sent to them by a client as a model for metal pieces, or did they procure it through other means? Kayseri was on a trade route, so acquisition through trade is certainly probable.

²⁷ Another, perhaps far-fetched possibility for the original function of this medallion-like piece: might it have been removed or cut out from a bowl or dish and sold separately, perhaps even centuries after its fabrication? Could it perhaps even be the missing lion of the Bonhams/Oriental bowl?

²⁸ See the website of the Musée Arménien de France: <https://www.le-maf.com/item/bol-3/>

9. Inscriptions

The seven similar metal objects found so far (four bowls and three dishes) all include the same two-part, Armenian ligatured inscriptions (also found on the Chinese bowl), which are difficult to decipher. These inscriptions are not abbreviations of words, but complete words with ligatured, or connected letters. One vertical stroke, for example, might form parts of two (or more) connected or overlapped letters. Some of the letters used in the word might not appear in the same order as when the word is written normally. In the Armenian tradition, the use of ligatured letters is not uncommon and is found in various contexts (personal seals and ceramic dinner ware, for example).²⁹ It is called *kapgrut'yun* (կապրուտյուն), and the letters themselves are called *kapgir* (կապգիր) (Abrahamyan 1973, 187–94).

Inscriptions formed of conjoined letters may be difficult to read. The Bonhams 10 April 2008 auction catalogue proposed an interpretation of the inscriptions on its Kayseri bowl (Figs 21–22), later repeated in other auction catalogues selling similar objects. However, each inscription is described by Bonhams as being a three-letter *abbreviation*, not as a ligatured word with all letters present. The first monogram on the left has been deciphered as the name Ghukas (Luke), which is correct. The catalogue states that the monogram is an abbreviation using only three letters [GH]KS (ԴԿՍ), corresponding to GHUKAS (ԴՈՒԿԱՍ).³⁰ However, all six Armenian letters in the name are actually present, although conjoined. The Ghukas inscription on the Chinese bowl (Fig. 30) is the easiest to read, and can be compared with the Kayseri bowls and dishes (Figs 11–12, 16, 20–21, 24).

The second monogram on the right is more challenging. Upon careful examination of the Chinese bowl, we notice some strange curled marks on the lower portion of the right monogram, which do not correspond to anything used in any Armenian letters, neither majuscule nor minuscule. Chinese craftsmen produced

29 Pages stamped in ink with personal seals to show ownership are not unusual in Armenian manuscripts or printed books; they are also used on official documents. These stamps may show an institution's or a person's full name, an abbreviation of the name, or a ligatured name. The Vatican Library includes a remarkable manuscript (MS Borg. Arm. 65) composed of numerous scrolls (they have been cut and bound in codex form), some of which include hundreds of stamps made from personal seals. Some names and words are composed of ligatured letters, others of abbreviations, and still others combine both forms in one seal. The entire volume has been digitised: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.arm.65 (consulted Sept. 8, 2020). For porcelain, a number of examples exist, such as three exemplars of a blue and white dish with the ligatured name Nazarët' (ՆԱԶԱՐԷԹ); these were produced in Iran, not China, but were influenced by Chinese styles. One plate is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; see Crowe 2002, 240, no. 423. Another is in the collection of the Armenian Mekhitarist Library of San Lazzaro, Venice, and a third was previously in the Haroutune Hazarian collection and was sold at Christie's 12 Oct. 1999, lot 388; the catalogue states that it is from Kirman (or Kerman, in southeastern Iran) and dates from circa the second half of the seventeenth century. This plate is now in the Kalfayan Collection in Thessaloniki: *Switzerland-Armenia* 2015, 278, 312 (cat. 158). Other ceramic pieces with Armenian ligatured monograms are also known; see *Armenian Ceramic Art* 1982, [1], and Crowe 2002, 205 (no. 354) and 206 (no. 356). I thank Tina Hazarian for providing me with precious information about her father's ceramics collection, and Roupen Kalfayan for confirming that the Nazarët' plate in their collection is indeed the ex-Hazarian plate.

30 Bonhams 10 April 2008, lot 244. This is repeated in Christie's 21 April 2016, lot 198, in Manginis 2016, 183, Bonhams 24 April 2018, lot 204, and Oriental Art Auctions 11 December 2018, lot 524.

made-to-order items for their clients and were presumably given something (an object or a document?) to copy from for the inscriptions and/or decoration. It would not be surprising that they might make errors since they did not know the Armenian alphabet or language. The second word formed of conjoined letters (with the strange errors) has been interpreted in the auction catalogues as a three-letter abbreviation for Catholicos (ԿԹԿ for Կ[Ա]Թ[ՈՂԻ]Կ[ՈՍ], *Kat'oghikos*), the supreme head of the Armenian church. Therefore it was decided that this must be the monogram of Catholicos Ghukas Karnets'i (Catholicos Luke of Karin [Erzurum]), Catholicos of All Armenians from 1780 to his death in 1799. These related pieces were thus dated to that period, under the assumption that this Catholicos must have commissioned them.³¹

Another possibility is that it could have been commissioned by *Kat'oghikos* Ghukas Ajapahean (Catholicos in 1731–1737) of the Great House of Cilicia.³² In either case, the monogram's meaning is problematic since it is definitely not a three-letter abbreviation for *Kat'oghikos*.³³ The letters are difficult to interpret because of errors by the Chinese artists who (mis)copied it onto the porcelain bowl. In any case, it could also denote something else, perhaps even the date in the Armenian Era (using Armenian letters for numerals, as is usual).³⁴ It might be impossible to decipher this second monogram, although we can be certain from the first that it was made for someone named Ghukas. More research might help us determine if this inscription is indeed the monogram of *Kat'oghikos* Ghukas Karnets'i or *Kat'oghikos* Ghukas Ajapahean; it would be instructive to compare their personal seals with the ligatured form found on the silver objects and the Chinese porcelain bowl. Their seals might be found on official documents (such as *kondaks*, or official edicts or decrees) in Holy Etchmiadzin or in Antelias.³⁵ Multiple copies of the imported and presumably expensive Chinese bowl could have been produced as part of a larger set. If the bowl(s) were made for a Catholicos, might there exist other exemplars, perhaps in private or public collections, or possibly even in Etchmiadzin or Antelias? Finding more examples at either of the two Sees and researching the seals of both Catholicos would add further evidence that it was commissioned by a Catholicos.

³¹ This idea was first proposed in Bonhams 10 April 2008, lot 244, and was repeated in Christie's 21 April 2016, lot 198; Manginis 2016, 183; Bonhams 24 April 2018, lot 204; Oriental Art Auctions 11 December 2018, lot 524.

³² I thank the late Gevorg Ter-Vardanyan, Chief Curator of the Matenadaran, Yerevan, and Seda Manukyan, PhD candidate at the Matenadaran, Yerevan, for their valuable input on the decipherment of this inscription and for their suggestion that it could be Catholicos Ajapahean.

³³ Abrahamyan 1973, 198 states that the usual abbreviation for the word *Kat'oghikos* (ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ) is ԿԹԻ, not ԿԹԿ.

³⁴ If the second ligatured word is actually a date, it could begin with the word *t'vakan* or *t'uakan*, which means date, followed by the year in the Armenian Era using Armenian letters. According to Abrahamyan, the abbreviation for *t'vakan* is a conjoined T'V (ԹՎ), which is visible in the ligatured word. See Abrahamyan 1973, 190, 197. Additionally, in some of the Kayseri metal pieces, the strange curled marks on the bottom of the monogram have been joined together to form what looks like the letter R (Ր or ռ). This Armenian letter symbolises the number 1000, which would be the first letter/numeral of a date in the Armenian Era in the eighteenth century CE.

³⁵ The headquarters of the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia has been located in Antelias, Lebanon since 1930.

There is clearly a connection between the Chinese porcelain bowl and the Kayseri silver pieces. This brings up another question: which came first? The ligatured name Ghukas (ՂՈՒԿԱՍ) is fairly easy to decipher on the Chinese bowl, and may give us a clue to the answer (Fig. 30). All the letters are included in the ligature, although some overlap onto each other. Since the word is ligatured and the letters are all connected, even sometimes overlapping each other, the same symbol Ա is used to express both the Ա and the Ս. Note that the Armenian majuscule letter A (Ա) differs from the letter S (Ս) only by the addition of a small "hook" on the lower right side of the S (Ս). Now let us compare the Chinese bowl (Fig. 30) with the Armenian metal bowls, focusing on the same ligatured word Ghukas (ՂՈՒԿԱՍ) on all of them (Figs 12, 16, 20–21, 23). None of the Kayseri pieces include the hook for the Ա in this ligatured word. This is an error on the part of the Armenian silversmiths, who certainly knew the Armenian language and were literate, but occasionally made spelling errors in their inscriptions (Merian 2013, 125).³⁶ It would certainly be easy to make a mistake when copying a strangely formed (ligatured) word made with connected letters (and remember that the letters were being impressed from the underside of the silver — therefore in mirror image!) If the Chinese painters decorating the porcelain bowl were copying the Armenian silverwork, which was missing the hook for the A (Ա), they could not have possibly known how to correct the letter by adding the little hook missing in the letter Ա (vs. Ս). Therefore, I believe that the Chinese bowl predates the Kayseri pieces because of the correct Armenian A (Ա) in the porcelain bowl within the first word Ghukas (ՂՈՒԿԱՍ).

If this hypothesis is correct, and the Chinese porcelain bowl (determined by ceramic specialists to date from the late-eighteenth century) was produced earlier than the metal work and was the inspiration for the silversmiths, then the Kayseri bowls and dishes would date to the late-eighteenth century, or later. This would imply a later, revised date range for the atelier. Known and securely dated objects found thus far from the Kayseri workshop date from 1653 to 1741 (although the workshop could certainly have existed before 1653 or after 1741). However, a Chinese porcelain bowl produced for *Kat'oghikos* Ghukas Ajapahean (Catholicos from 1731 to 1737) would imply a date within the already established period for this workshop. The matter remains open until further research can be done on the inscriptions.

Another question remains — if indeed the Chinese bowl was a commission for Catholicos Ghukas (either one), why would it be decorated with clearly female, *bare-breasted* angels? This seems to be rather unusual iconography to choose for the head of the Armenian Church. Furthermore, angels are generally depicted as winged, sexless figures, modelled after humans, although usually somewhat feminine in appearance. They are not depicted topless. The winged beings on this Chinese bowl have very distinct breasts, which were further replicated by the silversmiths in their work. This may be another example of a misinterpretation by Chinese artists

³⁶ Note that in other inscribed silver pieces, the Kayseri silversmiths did not use ligatured letters — the words were fully spelled out with the occasional use of common abbreviations. Thus far I have not seen conjoined letters in any work from this atelier except for these four bowls and three dishes.

who did not fully understand what object or document they were (presumably) copying to decorate the porcelain bowls. Were the angels they were copying so feminine-looking that they decided to exaggerate the feminine features? Or were they perhaps attempting to copy *putti* (small winged infants/angels generally shown nude or half clothed), while misunderstanding the youth of the *putti*?

10. Purpose

What was the purpose of these metal objects made by the silversmiths? Were they all part of a larger set that was eventually dispersed? Thus far, four similar bowls and three dishes have been found, all clearly from the Kayseri workshop; however, in my opinion there are enough variations between them to conclude that they were not part of one large set. For example, the Bonhams/Oriental bowl does not have the lion motif in the well, while all the other three bowls and dishes do. Another bowl (Bonhams 10 April 2008) has four angel motifs on the exterior instead of the usual combination of two angel and two heart motifs. Three bowls with their dishes have been enhanced with enamels whose colours differ in each pair (Manoogian Museum, Christie's 2106, and Bonhams/Oriental), while the Bonhams 10 April 2008 bowl has no enamel, and might have been enhanced by niello. More decorative consistency would be expected if these objects had all been part of a coherent set.

What exactly was their purpose then? The Chinese porcelain bowl, Fig. 30 (which may have originally had a matching dish), was certainly an imported, luxury, utilitarian item suitable for drinking or eating, and was probably commissioned for or by someone named Ghukas, perhaps one of the two Catholicoi. In contrast, it is highly unlikely that the silver and enameled Kayseri sets were used for consuming food or drink: the raised, repoussé portions would not be appropriate for serving food as they could easily be damaged, the enamels could get chipped (as indeed they are), and the concave parts of the repoussé would have trapped food particles. It seems more likely that these pieces were expensive, decorative items used for display, and they were probably sold separately to different clients. The ligatured inscriptions, difficult to read anyway, were probably considered decorative motifs by the silversmiths and their customers. It seems unlikely that the pieces found thus far, which are extremely similar but not equivalent, could have formed part of a much larger, matching set.

11. Provenance

As previously mentioned, when the Manoogian Museum received the bowl and dish from Louise Simone, each object had numbers painted in red and placed in areas, which were not visible when displayed (Figs 15 and 17). These looked suspiciously like museum accession numbers to me. Since there had been mention of prior ownership by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, I contacted my colleagues there to find out if they had any departmental or archival records matching these accession numbers. I was informed that they were indeed Metropolitan Museum

accession numbers and that these two objects once belonged to the Department of Medieval Art and the Cloisters, acquired as part of the bequest of Theodore M. Davis in 1915, but were deaccessioned in 1980.³⁷ They were sold in New York (Christie's 20 November 1982, lot 258) to an unnamed person for \$500.³⁸ It is not known why the Metropolitan Museum deaccessioned them, but the Christie's catalogue describes them as Armenian, eighteenth century — perhaps these objects were deaccessioned as they were considered too late to be in the Medieval Department. In any case, the information provided by my colleagues at the Met enabled me to reconstruct some interesting provenance background.

We have already determined that the Manoogian bowl and dish were produced in the Armenian silversmiths' workshop in Kayseri, probably in the late-eighteenth century. There is no information about their whereabouts until they were acquired by Theodore M. Davis (d. February 1915). We have no records on where, when, or from whom he acquired them. Davis, a wealthy American lawyer (b. 1838), sponsored excavations in Egypt's Valley of the Kings between 1902 and 1914. He amassed a huge art collection, which was bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum after his death, but his will was contested by his family for fifteen years. The court ruled in the Museum's favor, and the collection was accessioned in 1930 (Adams 2013); thus the accession numbers begin with 30.³⁹ The bowl and dish then became part of the Department of Medieval Art and the Cloisters at the Metropolitan Museum. They were sold in the Christie's auction of 20 November 1982 to an unknown person, and were subsequently acquired by Louise Manoogian Simone who gifted them to the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum before 1988.

12. Surprising Analysis Results

The Manoogian Museum was keen to determine exactly when their bowl and dish were produced. Were they Cilician, or not? To answer this question, in 2011 the Museum had the two objects analysed in the Conservation Science Laboratory of the Detroit Institute of Arts, hoping that the results might help date them. They were analysed by X-ray fluorescence (XRF), a non-destructive method of elemental analysis used to identify the metal and enamel compositions. Analysis of the enamels was conducted in order to eliminate the presence of modern colourants; the results indicated that they did not include any modern components, only chemical substances, which could have theoretically been used in the thirteenth century (but also later).

³⁷ According to the departmental files from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. My grateful thanks are due to Helen C. Evans and Christine Brennan of the Department of Medieval Art and the Cloisters at the Metropolitan Museum for searching their records and providing me with the information regarding the accession numbers, the deaccessioning of the bowl and dish, and the subsequent sale of these two objects at Christie's.

³⁸ It is highly unlikely that Louise Manoogian Simone bought them directly from the 1982 Christie's auction, because she would have certainly informed the museum of that fact upon donation. The Manoogian Museum was unaware of the connection with a Christie's auction until this research was conducted.

³⁹ For details on some of the more impressive objects and paintings from his collection, see *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* March 1931. The Armenian silver dish and bowl are not included in this publication.

The lab determined that the technique used in the plating process was mercury gilding, also called fire gilding (DeRoo 2011). This technique uses an amalgam of mercury with gold (or mercury with silver) to plate base metals with either gold or silver. Unfortunately, this information was not useful for determining a date of manufacture, since the materials and processes for mercury gilding or silvering were utilised not only in the medieval period, but up to modern times, and have been “used since antiquity and throughout a very wide geographic area, ranging from England to China” (DeRoo 2011). However, they did discover something unexpected: the Manoogian Museum’s bowl and dish are not pure silver — they are actually copper covered with a layer of silver. The silver was plated onto the copper by the mercury silvering method, and was additionally gilt.⁴⁰ This led me to question whether other Kayseri objects (especially the silver bindings) were actually silver. Had they been made of copper covered with silver?⁴¹ They appear to be silver and we have always assumed that they were silver; they might not be.

13. Possible Future Research

It would be extremely informative to conduct XRF analysis on other objects made in this workshop and compare the results with the data on the Manoogian Museum pieces. To my knowledge, with the exception of the Manoogian Museum’s pieces, such analyses have not been conducted on any Armenian silver bindings and certainly not on objects from the Kayseri workshop. XRF analysis would determine if these objects are in fact silver, silvered copper, or something else, and what the enamel components are. If the metal is indeed silver, what grade of silver? If some objects are determined to be copper-based, were the clients aware of this? If they are silver, does this indicate that objects used for sacred purposes were perhaps made of more expensive precious metals, while non-religious objects used cheaper materials? Or did the workshop manufacture items composed of different metals, with the choice simply depending on the client’s preference (this is the most likely scenario), and what he was willing to pay? Copper objects, even if plated with silver, would be less expensive than wares made entirely of silver. Were some perhaps manufactured with a copper base due to silver shortages in the Ottoman Empire? Economic crises

⁴⁰ When the dish and bowl were in the possession of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, they knew that the objects were made of silvered copper, as this fact was noted in their departmental files, and they were also described as such in the Christie’s 20 November 1982 auction catalogue. But Louise Simone (and consequently the Manoogian Museum) was unaware of this determination as she probably bought them through an intermediary.

⁴¹ The official standard for silver in the Ottoman Empire was 0.900 (900 parts per 1000), as determined from an assay conducted by the assay office. If the assayed object was verified to meet the standard, it would be stamped with a small *tuğra* mark (official calligraphic monogram of the reigning sultan) and/or another mark called a *sah* (which was used after 1839 with the beginning of Sultan Abdülmecid’s reign). Silversmiths were not permitted to sell items as 0.900 silver if they didn’t have the *tuğra* or the *sah* mark; this was to discourage artisans from cheating their customers, and protect customers from unscrupulous silversmiths. This unsurprisingly led to the production of counterfeit *tuğra* marks (see Kürkman 1996, 17–39, 48–53, 58–63, 111–18). Thus far I have not found any *tuğra* or *sah* marks on any Armenian plaques from Kayseri, nor on the Manoogian pieces.

occurred in various periods when the Empire did not have enough silver for currency, and craftsmen were limited to certain daily allocations. At other periods, by official decree, lay people and religious institutions had to relinquish their high-grade silver to the government (in exchange for a payment); at times there was even the forced seizure of silver artifacts (Kürkman 1996, 37–39, and 277 [Document 13]).⁴²

14. Conclusion

A distinctive style and the silversmiths' clever inclusion of detailed inscriptions on some of their products enable definitive identifications of objects from this workshop. These inscriptions, which function like manuscript colophons, centuries later inform curious researchers of precious details regarding the objects' creation, and answer those all-important questions: who, where, and when. Furthermore, the inscriptions must have served as effective publicity. Prospective customers, whether clerics, potential donors to religious institutions, or laymen simply in the market for luxury household gifts, would be instantly informed as to where they could procure similar items.

The style of inscribed works similar to uninscribed ones enables us to classify them as having been produced in this Kayseri workshop, allowing us to assign at least a range of production dates to them. By comparing the Manoogian Museum's dish and bowl with known objects made in the Kayseri atelier, their place of origin and an approximate date for when they were produced (eighteenth century) has been determined. Pinpointing a more specific date will require further research; one inscription on the Manoogian objects has not been satisfactorily deciphered. Scientific analysis was inconclusive for determining the date of production, but yielded an unanticipated, interesting result regarding the base material. Knowledge of the objects' composition might also have important implications on how they should be conserved.

The silversmiths were adept in many metal-working techniques, such as repoussé, *cloisonné*, enameling, and gilding, and they used a variety of materials (silver, gold, copper, enamels, precious and semi-precious gems). Quite probably, they were also skilled jewelry makers.⁴³ The silversmiths were inspired by many disparate sources: Armenian manuscript illumination, western European woodcuts and engravings,

42 For example, in January 1789 an edict by Sultan Abdülhamid I decreed that non-Muslim subjects had to submit the following amounts of silver to the state: the Greek community, 5000 *oka*, the Armenians, 4000 *oka*, and the Jews, 3000 *oka*. As late as 1817, another edict declared that the Greek church had to turn in 6000 *oka* of silver, the Armenian church, 4000 *oka*, and the Jews had to relinquish 3000 *oka*. The *oka* (or *okka*) is a unit of weight. According to Kürkman's calculations, 1 *oka* = 1.28 kg. Marchese, Breu and the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul (2015, 355) bring up an interesting theory — it is possible that some church artifacts were purposely made with a lower grade of silver (less than 0.900), and were therefore not stamped with *tugra* or *sah* marks. During times of silver shortages, the churches would not have been forced to turn them over to the government, since the lower grade of silver was not acceptable.

43 Although I have not yet found any examples of jewelry fabricated in this workshop, it is logical that they would have produced and sold this type of merchandise.

medieval Cilician coinage, and even imported Chinese porcelain. The breadth of these sources is a clear indication of widespread trade connections.

The materials used might reveal evidence of economic difficulties, such as periods of silver shortages. Future research on possible silver marks (such as assay, *tuğra*, or *sah* marks) might also shed light on the historical backdrop during the atelier's existence.⁴⁴ Scientific analysis by XRF on manuscript covers or other objects will provide information about the basic materials used, and unexpected results may raise more questions. Such analyses can also impart a broader knowledge of seventeenth–eighteenth century materials and techniques used in ateliers in the Ottoman Empire. It would be particularly interesting to determine the composition of the other metal bowls and dishes similar to the Manoogian Museum's objects, but as these are presumably in private collections, it may never be possible.

New objects are frequently being discovered and identified as having been produced in the Kayseri workshop, such as the bowl and dish in the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, which inevitably leads to more questions, more research, and more discoveries.⁴⁵ Professor Der Nersessian, I did not forget!⁴⁶

44 It may be difficult to discover these marks as it is often impossible to examine the underside of the silver covers if they are still attached to the manuscripts, for example.

45 As this article was going to press I was informed by Garo Kürkman that he discovered two silver comb embellishments and two *hamam* bowls from the same workshop (they have similar stylistic and technical details), dated 1910, 1912, and 1914. He also acquired direct information from descendants of the early twentieth-century silversmiths who produced these items; their family is from Kayseri. We look forward to further information and publications on this exciting discovery, which will change the *terminus ante quem* for this workshop; it now seems to have existed from around 1653 until at least 1914. I thank him profoundly for sharing this precious information.

46 I would like to thank many people who helped in various ways, from stimulating discussions to providing photographs and permission to publish. My grateful thanks are due first to the indefatigable Anna Leyloyan-Yekmalyan for organizing the conference in memory of Sirarpie Der Nersessian during the challenge of a nationwide strike. At the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, my deep thanks are due to Lucy Ardash, Director, for drawing my attention to the bowl and dish and encouraging me to continue this research, as well as Richard Manoogian, Edmund Azadian†, and Robert Hensleigh (photographer). I also thank: Roger Wieck, Maria Fredericks, Maria Molestina, Marilyn Palmeri, Graham Haber†, Eva Soos, Janny Chiu, Kaitlyn Krieg (The Morgan Library & Museum); Helen C. Evans and Christine Brennan (Metropolitan Museum of Art); Frédéric Fringhian (Musée arménien de France, Paris); Hrair Hawk Khatcherian; Gevorg Ter-Vardanyan† and Seda Manukyan (Matenadaran, Yerevan); a private collector (Virginia, USA); Father Vahan Ohanian (Mekhitarist Congregation of San Lazzaro, Venice); Jay Moschella (Boston Public Library); Eugenio Donadoni and Cosima Stewart (Christie's, London); Oliver White and Priya Singh (Bonhams, London); Hana Chidiac (Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris). My thanks are also due to the following people for fruitful discussions, helpful comments, and their patient help in answering many questions: Levon Avdoyan, Tina Hazarian, Roupen Kalfayan, Lola Koundakjian, Garo Kürkman, Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Erin Piñon, Vanessa Pintado, Levon Saryan, and Leon Tatevossian. I also thank the anonymous reviewers of this article for their input, as well as Aram Topchyan for his careful editing. Any errors in this article are my own, of course.



Fig. 1: Dish and bowl with ligatured inscriptions. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.9. and L1988.10. Photography by Robert Hensleigh.



Fig. 2: Silver cover (exterior), depicting the Last Supper (front), central spine piece with inscription, and Coronation of the Virgin (back); silversmith Yakob Malkhas, Kayseri, AD 1660. Credit: Copyright Musée Armenien de France-Paris. www.le-maf.com. Accession no. 400. Photography by Hrair Hawk Khatcherian.



Fig. 3: Silver cover (interior), depicting the Last Supper (front), central spine piece with inscription, and Coronation of the Virgin (back); silversmith Yakob Malkhas, Kayseri, AD 1660. Credit: Copyright Musée Armenien de France-Paris. www.le-maf.com. Accession no. 400. Photography by Hrair Hawk Khatcherian.



Fig. 4: Presentation; Gospels dated AD 1475, fol. 8v. Credit: The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, acc. no. W540.



Fig. 5: Presentation; silver plaque on front cover of Gospels dated AD 1488, Kayseri, seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. Credit: The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, acc. no. W542.



Fig. 6: Presentation surrounded by 24 prophets; silver and enameled plaque from Kayseri on the front cover of Gospels dated AD 1700. Credit: The Morgan Library & Museum. MS M1108. Purchased on the L. W. Frohlich Charitable Trust, in memory of L. W. Frohlich and Thomas R. Burns, in recognition of their interest and contributions to the art of the written word, 1998.



Fig. 7: Purification of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:6–7); woodcut by Christoffel van Sichem in the Armenian Bible (printed in Amsterdam, 1666), p. 189 (upper left), second pagination. Credit: Library of Congress, African and Middle Eastern Division, Armenian Rarities, BS95 1666 Armen Cage. PDF: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003550072/>



Fig. 8: Purification of Isaiah surrounded by 24 prophets; silver and enameled plaque from Kayseri on the back cover of Gospels copied in AD 1682. Credit: Reproduced with the kind permission of a Private Collection, Virginia (USA).



Fig. 9: Purification of Isaiah surrounded by 24 prophets; silver cover from Kayseri on the front cover of a Ritual (*Mashtots*) copied in AD 1698; silver covers by silversmith Karapet Malkhas, Kayseri, AD 1704. Credit: Reproduced with the kind permission of the Boston Public Library, MS q Arm.1. Photography by Sylvie L. Merian.



Fig. 10: Purification of Isaiah surrounded by 24 prophets; silver cover (front), central spine piece with inscription, and Christ predicting the fall of Jerusalem with 12 Apostles (back). Silversmith Karapet Malkhas, Kayseri, AD 1691. Credit: Armenian Mekhitarist Library of San Lazzaro, Venice, Metal no. 198. Photography by Hrair Hawk Khatcherian.



Fig. 11: Bowl (exterior) with angel motif and ligatured inscription. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.9. Photography by Robert Hensleigh.



Fig. 12: Bowl (exterior) with heart motif and ligatured inscription. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.9. Photography by Sylvie L. Merian.



Fig. 13: Bowl (interior) with lion motif. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.9. Photography by Robert Hensleigh.



Fig. 14: Bowl with lion motif seen from underneath (exterior, bottom). Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.9. Photography by Sylvie L. Merian.



Fig. 15: Bowl (underside) with old accession number (30.95.8) of former owner, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.9. Photography by Sylvie L. Merian.



Fig. 16: Dish (interior). Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.10. Photography by Robert Hensleigh.



Fig. 17: Dish (exterior, bottom) with old accession number (30.95.9) of former owner, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.10. Photography by Sylvie L. Merian.



Fig. 18: Christ surrounded by music-making angels; silver, enameled, jeweled back cover on a Songbook (*Ergaran*) manuscript copied in AD 1418; silversmiths Karapet and Yakob, Kayseri, AD 1653. Credit: The Morgan Library & Museum. MS W7. Gift of Julia Parker Wightman, April, 1993.

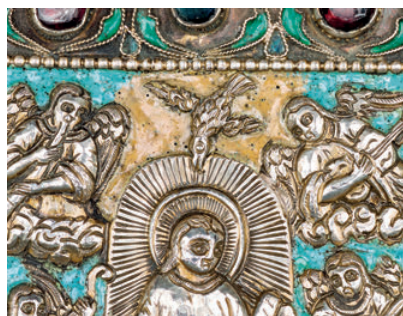


Fig. 19: Detail of the back cover of MS W7, with Christ, angels, bird, and bubbly enamel (cover dated AD 1653). Credit: The Morgan Library & Museum. MS W7. Gift of Julia Parker Wightman, April, 1993.



Fig. 20: Silver and enameled bowl (with rampant lion handles) and dish. Christie's, 21 April 2016, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds*, London, lot 198. Credit: © 2016 Christie's Images Limited.



Fig. 21: Silver bowl (with rampant lion handles), exterior. Bonhams 10 April 2008, lot 244. Credit: Reproduced with the kind permission of Bonhams, London.



Fig. 22: Silver bowl (with rampant lion handles), interior with lion motif. Bonhams 10 April 2008, lot 244. Credit: Reproduced with the kind permission of Bonhams, London.



Fig. 23: Silver and enameled dish and bowl. Bonhams 24 April 2018, lot 204. Credit: Reproduced with the kind permission of Bonhams, London.



Fig. 24: Silver and enameled dish (interior) and bowl (exterior). Oriental Art Auctions 11 December 2018, lot 524. Credit: https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/67238451_a-rare-armenian-enamelled-silver-cup-and-saucer



Fig. 25: Silver and enameled dish and bowl (bottom of dish and interior of bowl showing repoussé). Note that the bowl does not include the lion motif. Oriental Art Auctions 11 December 2018, lot 524. Credit: https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/67238451_a-rare-armenian-enamelled-silver-cup-and-saucer



Fig. 26: Silver and enameled dish and bowl. Oriental Art Auctions 11 December 2018, lot 524. Credit: https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/67238451_a-rare-armenian-enamelled-silver-cup-and-saucer



Fig. 27: Detail of lion motif in the Manoogian Museum dish. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. L1988.10. Photography by Robert Hensleigh.



Fig. 28: Cilician silver coin of King Levon I (r. 1198–1219). Crowned lion on reverse of half double *dram* coin. Credit: Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, acc. no. 1988.188.1. Photography by Robert Hensleigh.



Fig. 29: Silver medallion (?) with lion motif, from the K. J. Basmadjian Collection. Credit: Basmadjian 1936, 150.



Fig. 30: Chinese porcelain bowl with Armenian inscription and angel motif. Credit: Copyright Musée Armenien de France – Paris. www.le-maf.com. Accession no. 1016.



31: Ascension of Christ with 12 apostles; silver and enameled front cover, Kayseri, on a Gospels copied in AD 1700. Credit: The Morgan Library & Museum. MS M1108. Purchased on the L. W. Frohlich Charitable Trust, in memory of L. W. Frohlich and Thomas R. Burns, in recognition of their interest and contributions to the art of the written word, 1998.



Fig. 32. Christ predicting the fall of Jerusalem with 12 Apostles; silver and enameled front cover on Gospels copied in AD 1682. Credit: Reproduced with the kind permission of a Private Collection, Virginia (USA).

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Azat A. Bozoyan (ed.), *Պատկերապաշտության և պատկերամարտության խնդիրը Հայաստանում և Բյուզանդիայում (ազգային ինքնության պահպանման համատեքստում). հոդվածների ժողովածու [The Problem of Iconoclasm and Iconolatry in Armenia and Byzantium (in the Context of Identity Preservation): Collection of Articles]*, Yerevan: “Gitutyun” Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences, 2024.

An English-language review of an Armenian book may be rare, equally rare are the mostly meritorious articles contained in the book; so too the number of copies available in print — only a hundred.¹ The editor, Azat Bozoyan, details in the preface (5–19) the scholarly desiderata for complementary sources on Iconoclasm and the circumstances leading to the realisation of the project — in addition to an article of his own in which he further specifies the historiographical problematics of the primary sources on the subject (“Byzantine Primary Sources,” 41–52). The project called for a teamwork. It was on June 10 and September 23–24, 2024, when an expanded working conference was convened, where participants read their respective reports and laid plans to publish the book.

Gabriel H. Nahapetyan, in his equally introductory article “Certain Problems of Source Studies in the Historiography of the Iconoclasm Period: Problems of Byzantine Iconoclasm and Veneration of Images in the Works of George Ostrogorsky” (20–40), lays down the issues besetting earlier researchers, George Ostrogorsky in particular, and the lacunae the book intends to address. Ostrogorsky’s thesis, that the issue of icons was a subject of discussion in Byzantium and the Christian world

¹ A preferred rendition of the title would be *The Problem of Iconodulia and Iconoclasm in Armenia and Byzantium...* (“iconolatry” is mainly derogatory, implying worship of icons or images, generally understood as a form of idolatry; whereas “iconodulia” implies veneration of icons or images). Arm. պատկերապաշտություն blurs the distinction.

Abraham Terian  0000-0001-9806-8748 • St Nersess Armenian Seminary, New York (NY), USA
(Email: terian@stnersess.edu)

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long before Emperor Leo III decreed in the year 730 that all religious icons be destroyed, finds ample support in the East, where iconodulia was invariably linked to incarnational theology in Christological controversies — before the issue was politicized by the Emperor (r. 717–41).

Thereafter the book is divided into four parts. In “Part I: Historical Observations”, Nahapetyan resumes the historical aspect in two parts, under the title “Geopolitical Changes in the Caucasus from the Beginning of the seventh Century to the Beginning of the eighth Century” (53–127). In Part (a), under the subheading “The Question of Armenia’s Foreign Policy Orientation in the seventh–eighth Centuries”, he surveys the Arab conquest of the Armenian Highlands and the rest of the South Caucasus in c. 645, soon after the fall of Sasanian Persia. The Arab incursions further north, after establishing the administrative Emirate of Arminiya, were hampered by the Khazars who also threatened the rule of the Caliphate in the South Caucasus. To counter the threat, the Arabs empowered the Armenian princely dynasty of the Bagratids and dealt a decisive blow to the Khazars in 737. Within this historical context, Nahapetyan raises the question in Part (b): “Why did Iconoclasm emerge in Aghuank’ and Siwnik’ at the beginning of the seventh century?” (83). He begins with a description of a weakened Armenian Church due to heretical movements such as the *Phantasiae* (Arm. *Erewut’akank’*, a resurgent Docetic movement, uncharacteristic of the Armenian Church as a whole), allowing the hierarchies of Georgia, Aghuank’, and Siwnik’ yet another reason to want to secede from the Armenian Church while providing grounds for the spread of iconodulia, only to be confronted with the consequent rise of Iconoclasm by the end of the century and the ensuing reactionary polemics waged by the iconodules; a cycle which repeated itself eventually within the Armenian Church.

Part II is entirely the work of the V. Rev. Fr. Zakaria Baghumyan, an archpriest of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, under the title “The Treatment of the Issue of Icons in Armenian Literature” (128–212), where after a brief historical introduction to contextualise the Armenian sources dated to the period before and during the Arab domination, he follows chronologically to treat the subject as reflected in native works: by Vrt’anes K’ert’ogh and Hovhan Mayragomets’i (sixth–seventh centuries), and the Catholicoi Sahak III Dzorap’orets’i and (St.) Yovhan III Odznets’i (in office 677–703 and 717–28, respectively). He follows up the subject in sources from the eleventh–twelfth centuries, concluding with the liturgy of consecrating images in the Armenian *Euchologion*, distinguishing the four distinct canons for the consecration of various kinds of images: of a church and its frescoes, those of saints in general, those of Christ, and those of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In “Part III: Canonical Works during the Period of Iconoclasm”, Sargis Melkonyan addresses the subject with a title of his own: “The Canons and Statements of Faith Adopted at the Councils of Elvira (early fourth century), Quinisext (691/2), Hieria (754), and Nicaea II (787) Regarding Images” (213–98). His article consists mainly of the texts of the canons mandated at the respective councils, with parallel Armenian translation. Since non-Armenian readers are capable of accessing these

canons in multiple western publications, this part of the book is relevant mainly to Armenian readers.

The final, “Part IV: Numismatics and Art,” is comprised of two articles: “The Issue of Images in the Middle Ages according to Numismatic Evidence” by Armine Zohrabyan (299–328, including 23 illustrations); and “Iconoclasm and the Early Medieval Armenian Art Forms” by Zarouhi Hakobyan (329–43, including 6 illustrations). The former underscores the practice and significance of messaging through coinage — albeit all Byzantine and Islamic and drawn mostly from Brubaker and Haldon’s edition, and the latter the constancy of Armenian art in favor of iconodulia, placed within a brief historical context — both Armenian and non-Armenian. The book ends with a rich bibliography (344–78).

All contributors to the volume are engaging in their articles mainly because they follow a chronological scheme. They all provide a genuine service to the Armenian reader. The first half of the book (Parts I–II) merits translation for the benefit of the non-Armenian reader, to become acquainted with the Armenian sources bearing on the subject. However, “Identity Preservation” remains a rather elusive subject, especially in Parts III–IV.

The editor and his collaborators are to be commended for managing a major task set forth in the preface.

A List of Armenological Publications of 2024*

Monographs, Text Editions, Translations, Albums, and Collected Papers

- Ayvazyan, Armen. *Երևանի հերոսամարտը (1724 թ. հունիսի 24 – սեպտեմբերի 23)* [The Epic Defence of Yerevan (June 24 – September 23, 1724)]. Yerevan: Public Institute of Political and Social Research of Black Sea-Caspian Region.
- Bakhchinyan, Henrik. *Գրիգորիս Աղթամարցու բանաստեղծական ժառանգությունը* [The Poetic Heritage of Grigoris of Aghtamar]. Yerevan: VMV Press.
- . *Նարեկացիագիտական էջեր* [Pages in the Study of Gregory of Narek]. Yerevan: VMV Print.
- Bozoyan, Azat (ed.). *Արևելյան աղբյուրագիտություն* [Studies in Oriental Sources], vol. 5. Yerevan: “Gitutyun” Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
- (ed.). 2024. *Պատկերասպառնության և պատկերամարտության խնդիրը Հայաստանում և Բյուզանդիայում ազգային ինքնության պահպանման համատեքստում* [The problem of Iconoclasm and Iconolatry in Armenia and Byzantium (in the Context of Identity Preservation): Collection of Articles]. Yerevan: “Gitutyun” Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
- Chookaszian, Emma. *The Gospels of Queen Keran*. Yerevan: Author’s edition.
- Galichian, Rouben. *Armenia and Its Borders*. Yerevan: Author’s edition.
- Collette, Carolyn P. *The Armenian Imaginary in the West, 1100–1900: Crusades, Romances, Missionaries*. Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer.
- Denzel, Markus A. (ed.). *Das Armenische Kaufmannshandbuch des Lukas Vanandec’i (1699). Armenier im östlichen Europa – Armenians in Eastern Europe, Band 7*. Dresden: Sandstein Verlag.
- Dolukhanyan, Aelita. *Столица армянских Багратидов – Ани в оценке иностранных арменоведов и путешественников* [Ani, the Capital of the Armenian Bagratids in the Assessments of Foreign Armenologists and Travelers], translated into Russian by Gayane Harutyunyan. Yerevan: Lusakn (first published in Armenian in 2023).

* This list may be incomplete.

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- Hambardzumyan, Hayk. *Հացն ու զինին. որսը, խնջույքն ու սննդային կոդերը «Սասնա ծռեր» էպոսում և հայ միջնադարյան գրականության մեջ* [Bread and Wine: Hunting, Feast, and Culinary Codes in the Epic The Daredevils of Sassoun and in Medieval Armenian Literature]. Yerevan: Matenadaran.
- Hakobyan, Ararat. *Պետականության վերականգնման գաղափարը հայոց պատմության հոլովոլայթում (XVI դ. կեսեր – XX դ. սկիզբ)* [The Idea of Restoring the State in the Evolution of the History of Armenia]. Yerevan: “Gitutyun” Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
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- Kazaryan, Gevorg. *Ուղղափառ հայր* [The Eastern Orthodox Armenians]. Yerevan-Athens: Author’s edition.
- Khachmanyan, Sofi. *Կաթողիկոսի հանդերձանքի պատկերագրությունը հայ միջնադարյան մանրանկարչության մեջ* [The Iconography of the Catholicos’s Vestments in Medieval Armenian Miniature Painting]. Yerevan: “Areg” Publishing House.
- Kozmoyan, Armanush. *Իրանագիտական հետազոտություններ* [Studies in Iranology]. Yerevan: “Gitutyun” Publishing House of the Armenian Academy of Sciences.
- Kyoseyan, Hakob (ed. and trans.). *Գրիգոր Տաթևացի, Մեկնություն Եսայու մարգարեության* [Grigor Tatevatsi, Commentary on the Prophecy of Isaiah]. Yerevan: Author’s edition.
- (ed. and trans.). *Եկեղեցու հայրերն ու վարդապետները վեցօրյա սրբազանությունն* [The Fathers and Teachers of the Church on the Six Days of Creation]. Yerevan: Author’s edition.
- (ed.). *Եսայի Նշեցի, Ծառք* [Esayi Nchets’I, Sermons]. Yerevan: Author’s edition.
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- Manoukian, Abel H. *The Deaconesses of the Armenian Church*, translated by David Zakarian. Studia Oecumenica Friburgensia 113. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag.
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- Anniversary of the Founding of “Vache and Tamar Manukyan” Library (6 October, 2022)].*
 Etchmiadzin: Publishing House of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.
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 Introduction, Facsimile, Transcription, and Annotated Translation. Ed. and with a Foreword by Jesse S. Arlen. New York: Tarkmanean Press.
- Sargsyan, Armen (ed.). *Արցախի ժողովրդագիտությունը. բանահյուսություն* [The Demology of Artsakh: Folklore], vol. 13. Yerevan: “Armav” Publishing House.
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