

agreements with their husbands and resentments were rooted in their hostility to the foreigner Franks. They also knew how their father had mistreated, looted, and overtaxed the Armenians of Edessa. He had imprisoned Armenian nobles, confiscated their lands and given them to his Frankish knights. They knew that their father had tricked and threatened their Armenian grandfather (Prince Gabriel of Malatya) to extract more money than the promised dowry of Queen Morphia. Baldwin II, like his predecessor (Baldwin I) was an avaricious and cruel man. The girls certainly knew that their father's cousin and predecessor (King Baldwin I of Jerusalem) had betrayed and driven away his Armenian wife (Queen Arda, daughter of Prince Tatoul) once he had gone through her 12 million-Franc dowry.

Princesses Alidz' proposed alliance with Saracen Zengi was designed to form a military bloc which could erase Frankish presence in Antioch. She wanted to revive the Armeno-Syrian policy of thirty years back. Alidz was supported by Armenians of Antioch who considered

her as one of their own. The girls must have known that the Crusaders had been indirectly responsible for the massacre of Edessa Armenians.

While Melisende was a conscientious ruler, she and her sisters were indifferent to the welfare of the Franks in the Middle East. Their lifelong solidarity was a "sullen hostility to the world in which they lived," according to historian Zoe Oldenburg.

For three decades, starting in 1130, the Queen Melisende, Princess Alidz and Countess Hodeirna were the "newsmakers" of the Crusader world. While Armenian royalty continued its close relationship with the Frankish nobility for two more centuries, often giving their daughters in marriage to the Europeans, they never shone in the Crusader world as brightly as Queen Morphia's remarkable four daughters.

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Գրիգոր Նարեկացի

ՏԱՂ ԾՆՆԴԵԱՆ

Սէր ի յամպոյ ամպ սիրեցեալ
օդոյն ցօղեալ ի նոյն գեղման
վայր իջուցեալ կաթս անձրեաց:



Ի սիրոյ սէր ծանուցեալ,
սիրաբողբոջ տարփմամբ լցեալ,
սիրով ընդ սէր միաբանեալ:

Լուսինն ի լոյս ի լոռան եկեալ,
ճոխ ճեմելով՝ գիշերավարն
ըզկնի ճեմել բարկ աստեղօք:

Առաւօտուն ցօղիկն իջեալ,
ի նոր Սիոն զծայրսն տուեալ,
քաղցր արեւով արուսեկին:

Գարունաբեր, գարնանաշարժ
գեղգեղելով երփնագարդեալ,
նոր հարսանեաց միաբանեալ:

Եկա՛յք նոր մեք զուարճացեալ,
վառ ի վառեալ տիպ ծալ ի ծալ
թփոյն տերեւ յօրինեսցուք: