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THE ARMENIAN STORY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. EUPRAXIA OF NICOMEDIA

Justin A. Ajamian

THE AIM OF THIS ARTICLE is to present a translation of the Armenian *Martyrdom* of St. Eupraxia (Euphrasia) of Nicomedia¹, as found in the *Yaysmawurk* [Synaxarion],² with some comments on its content and its differences from other Eastern Orthodox versions of the *Martyrdom*.

In contrast to the Eastern Orthodox calendar, which celebrates Eupraxia of Nicomedia on January 19, the modern Armenian liturgical calendar appears to exclude St. Eupraxia altogether.³ Although the *Yays-*

¹ Bayan, Gevorg, ed. *Le Synaxaire arménien de Ter Israel VI: Mois de Aratz* (Patrologia Orientalis XIX.1 [91]), Paris: Firmin Didot, 1925, 952-954. An English translation is in preparation by Edward G. Mathews, Jr.

² The history of the *Yaysmawurk* is complex, as it developed gradually over a millennium. For an overview of this development see N. Polarian [=Bogharian], *Liturgics* [Միսաղի-սութիւն], New York: St. Vartan Press, 1990, 48-62. After speaking of the 10th-century figure Yovsēp of Constantinople, Nersēs Akinian says that in the 13th century Vanakan Vardapet (1181-1251) commissioned Bp. Israyēl to expand the *Yaysmawurk* by adding Armenian saints. "This work was continued in Cilicia in the same century, by Kirakos Arewelci, Grigor Anawarzeçi, and then in northern Armenia by Grigor Jerenc Xlateçi". See his "Yovsēp of Constantinople, Translator of the *Yaysmawurk* (991)" [Յովսէփ Կոստանդնուպոլսեցիի թարգմանիչ Յայսմաւուրքի (991)], *Handēs Amsōreay* 71 (1957), 1-12. The involvement of Catholicos Grigor the Martyrophile (1065-1125) in translating the lives of saints is discussed by N. Polarian [=Bogharian], "Grigor Martyrophile and Translations of Saints' Lives" [Գրիգոր Վկայասէր եւ Թարգմանութիւնք Վարուց Սրբոց], *Sion* 1967, 430-432.

³ Eupraxia is not to be confused with the two well-known saints of the same name: Euphrasia the Elder (+393) and her daughter, also named Euphrasia (+410). These Euphrasias are connected either with Constantinople, their place of origin, or with Tabenna, the place of their death. Euphrasia the Younger is celebrated on July 25. By the Roman Church she is celebrated on March 13. See Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, Benziger Brothers, 1894, at sacred-texts.com under the month of March, and at OCA.org/FSLivesallsaints. The site www.saintpatrickdc.org/ss/0313.htm#euph, gives her date of death as 420.

mawurk specifies the commemoration of her martyrdom on January 19⁴ and the *Complete Lives of the Saints* [Լիակատար վարք սրբոց] places her remembrance on either “January 18 or 20 of the Armenian calendar; January 19 of the Greek; and Feb. 11 of the Bollandist”⁵, it is not included in any modern Armenian liturgical calendar known to me.⁶

The stories contained in the *Yaysmawurk* are intended to be read aloud just before vespers on the day when the event or person described is being commemorated,⁷ for the edification of the faithful.⁸ The exclusion of Eu-

⁴ See, for example, *Lives of the Holy Women Martyrs* (Lives of the Saints, 7), Buena Vista, Colorado: Holy Apostles Convent Publications, 2001, 29-30 (hereafter, *Holy Women Martyrs*). For online resources, see ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?FSID-100234; www.antiochian.org/book/export/html/17337.

⁵ *Complete Lives and Witness of the Saints* [Լիակատար վարք եւ վկայարանութիւն Սրբոց], ed. Mkrtič Awgerian, Venice: San Lazzaro, 1810, 1124; hereafter, *Complete Lives*.

⁶ These are: the calendars of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America's annual *Domar*, and the online resources of the Eastern, Western and Canadian dioceses of North America, the Catholicosate of Holy Ejmiacin, and the Great House of Cilicia. Interestingly, the *Domar* does include on January 20 the celebration of Bp. Theopompas and Theonas the Magician/Martyr, both of whom are mentioned in the *Yaysmawurk* as sharing a celebration day with Eupraxia.

Although it is not a liturgical book, H. Ajařian, *Dictionary of Armenian Personal Proper Names* [Հայոց Անձնանունների Բառարան], vol. 2, Beirut: Sevan, 1972, 150 does include a mention of the *Martyrdom* as part of its entry for the name Eupraxia [Եւպրաքսիա].

⁷ Unfortunately, today this practice is followed only in the monastic community of the Sts. James Monastery in Jerusalem.

According to Małakia Ōrmanian, *Liturgical Dictionary* [Օրհասկան Բառարան], Antelias: Catholicosate of Cilicia Press, 1957, 162-163, the *Yaysmawurk* takes its name from the opening words of each reading: Յայսմ առուր յիշատակ է [On this day is the memorial. . .]. Ōrmanian points out that the phrase is inaccurate because the readings are arranged according to a fixed calendar, whereas the celebrations are often affected by the movability of the Armenian liturgical calendar.

⁸ As Claudia Rapp says at the beginning of her article, “Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and their Audience,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996), 313-344, we should not assume that a hagiographic account of a woman's bravery in defense of honor and faith would be intended especially for an audience of women. For a short study of special qualities in stories of women's martyrdom see E. Glenn Hinson, “Women among the Martyrs,” *Studia Patristica* XXV (Papers presented at the Eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford, 1991; *Biblica et Apocrypha, Orientalia, Ascetica*), ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone, Leuven: Peeters, 1993, 422-428.

praxia from the modern calendar, despite her inclusion in the *Yaysmawurk*, may point to a change in the definition of what is “edifying to the faithful”.

Alternatively, Eupraxia’s *Martyrdom* may have been excluded from celebration because of some confusion over her identity. In the *Complete Lives of the Saints* her story is relegated to a note in the index of proper names.⁹ In the note, the editor suggests Euphrosyne as a possible variant name for Eupraxia, although no reason is given for considering this as a possibility.¹⁰ The only St. Euphrosyne in the *Complete Lives* (+470) is a transvestite celebrated for having lived thirty-eight years as a monk in a men’s monastery near Alexandria.¹¹

Jerusalem Patriarch Torgom I. Gušakian’s *Saints and Feasts* [Սուրբ ԷԷ Տօհբ]¹² does not include Eupraxia at all, perhaps because she had already disappeared from the calendar by the time he produced his collection.¹³

EUPRAXIA: THE LIMITS OF THE LIFE

All in all, Eupraxia is a sketchy figure. She is clearly distinct from the more famous Euphrasias. They were related to the Emperor Theodosius; the Eupraxia of the *Yaysmawurk* is identified simply as a woman “of great family”.¹⁴ Her life dates not from the days of the Christian Emperor Theodosius, when the other Euphrasias lived, but from the persecutions of “the idolatrous Emperor Maksimian”¹⁵. The *Yaysmawurk*’s Eupraxia

⁹ However, it gives a full life of the Euphrasias of Constantinople and Tabenna.

¹⁰ *Complete Lives*, 1317.

¹¹ On the motif of women dressed as men in monastic literature see J. Anson, “The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif,” *Viator* V (1974), 1-32. On praise for manly virtues in women see Kirsten Berre-Aspegren and Rene Kieffer, eds., *The Male Woman: A Feminine Ideal in the Early Church* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 4), Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1990.

¹² (Durian Matenadaran 16), Jerusalem: St. James, 1939.

¹³ As indicated above, doubt over her identity or the moral value of her story may have influenced him to leave her story out of the collection.

¹⁴ The story of Eupraxia given at www.oca.org describes her as renowned for her beauty, but the Armenia *Martyrdom* does not comment on her physical qualities at all.

¹⁵ It is not clear under which “idolatrous Maksimian” Eupraxia is supposed to have lived. Maximian (285-305) was the colleague of Diocletian, a famous persecutor of Christians. Maximinus Daia (305-313) was an opponent of Licinius and Constantine. Eusebius

comes from Nicomedia (modern Izmit), not from Constantinople.¹⁶ She does not lead an exemplary monastic life in the ascetic heartland of Egypt, like Euphrasia the Virgin, nor does she even aspire to do so, like Euphrasia the Elder. Unlike the younger Euphrasia, who was spiritually precocious (she entered the monastery at some time between the ages of 7 and 12) and performed miracles, the *Yaysmawurk*'s Eupraxia is praised only for the canny stratagem she employed to preserve her purity and attain martyrdom. The Armenian Eupraxia's age is not given. There is no date recorded for her martyrdom in the Armenian story, although the Eastern Orthodox versions of her life assign it either to the year 290 or to the year 303.

So we have in the *Yaysmawurk* the story of a martyrdom achieved in an unknown year by an otherwise unidentified young woman whose story really consists of a single, strange episode.¹⁷ True, the account begins with a paragraph concerning the virgin's fortitude before a tribunal, her beating and imprisonment, and her "disrespect of those who did not believe in Christ". But this information sounds generic. The main emphasis of the *Yaysmawurk* is on the more unusual tale of the ingenious way in which Eupraxia tricks her guard into killing her rather than seducing her as he had been assigned to do.

(*Church History* IX.1-2) describes how he carried on the persecution of Christians in spite of the Edict of Milan. St. Juliana of Nicomedia (+299) and her companions are also said to have lived and died "in the reign of Maximian".

¹⁶ Nicomedia was a city whose Christian community produced numerous saints and martyrs. The martyrs of Nicomedia are celebrated as a group on Dec. 20 in the Armenian calendar. See the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese website: goarch.org/en/Chapel/saints.asp?contentid=347). On the Nicomedian saint Pantaleon (Pantaleemon) the Physician see G. Quispel and J. Zandee, "Some Coptic Fragments from the Martyrdom of St. Pantoleon," *Vigiliae Christianae* 16.1 (March 1962), 42-52.

¹⁷ The episode is also found in stories from a wide variety of other cultures and settings, particularly in the tale of a nun whose purity was threatened during the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614. Severius al-Ashmunein recounts a version of the story, set in Egypt in 750 (*History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* XVIII. Available online at www.tertullian.org/fathers/severus_hermopolis_hist_alex_patr_03_part_3.htm). The history of these related tales has been studied by Campbell Bonner, "The Maiden's Stratagem," *Byzantion* XVI (1942-1943), 142-161. It is also mentioned by Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 13), Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 2007, 41.

EUPRAXIA: THE QUESTION OF SUICIDE AND MARTYRDOM

A recent visit to an Orthodox chat site made it clear to me that Eupraxia's ploy raises disturbing questions for a modern believer reading the story. The young people discussing martyrdom in that forum were confused by the commemoration of her as a saint. Certain aspects of her story troubled them. First, the question of whether suicide (or in Eupraxia's case, induced martyrdom) can be qualified as a noble death for a Christian woman threatened with rape.¹⁸ Is her death a martyrdom, or a suicide? And if the latter, doesn't suicide bar one from sainthood?¹⁹

In Eupraxia's fourth-century world, voluntary death under circumstances like Eupraxia's was not often condemned.²⁰ On the contrary, the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 263-ca. 339) praises women who prefer purity over life. Eusebius was especially impressed by the bravery of the prefect's wife who stabbed herself to death rather than submit to the desires of Maxentius (VIII.xiv.16-17).

Ambrose of Milan (347-397) attributed even more nobility to suicide for the sake of purity. When his sister Marcellina asked him how one should view those who resort to suicide in order to preserve their virtue, he told her the story of a mother and her daughters who drowned themselves to escape violation. Into the mouth of one young woman in the story, named Pelagia, Ambrose put a rousing speech explaining her willingness to embrace death by any means, including at her own hand, because "In

¹⁸ Michael Cholbi, "Suicide", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/suicide/> gives a brief and clear overview of the ambiguous feelings raised by any talk of justified suicide. Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity*, San Francisco: Harper, 1991 gives special attention to suicide or voluntary death in the Old Testament and Jewish tradition, and points out that suicide came to be condemned only after five hundred years of discussion. (98) Even a strict tradition concluded that in order to avoid idolatry, murder, or sexual immorality one might even be *required* to die voluntarily. (106)

¹⁹ For the views of Ignatius, Clement, Tertullian and Origen see *ibid.*, 138-158.

²⁰ H. Tristram Englehardt, Jr., "Taking Moral Difference Seriously: Morality after the Death of God," in Douglas Farrow, ed., *Recognizing Religion in a Secular Society: Essays in Pluralism, Religion and Public Policy*, Quebec City: McGill-Queens University Press, 2004, 116-139, was not thinking of these texts when he said that early Christianity "took it for granted that suicide, hence also aiding or abetting suicide, was forbidden." (117, n.)

truth, if we think of the real meaning of the word, how can what is voluntary be violence? It is rather violence to wish to die and not to be able."²¹

A third authority from the fourth century, St. Jerome (ca 347-420), in his *Commentary on Jonah* (I.12) makes preservation of purity the only legitimate reason for suicide during a time of persecution for the faith: "Thus, in the persecutions it is not allowed to kill oneself, unless chastity is in danger, but one must put one's neck to the executioner."²²

The dissenting voice is St. Augustine's. Under no circumstances does he allow that suicide is a noble choice. In his *City of God* (I.26) Augustine (354-430) specifically denied a woman the right to protect her purity in such a drastic manner. After all, "while the will remains firm and unshaken, nothing that another person does with the body, or upon the body, is any fault of the person who suffers it, so long as he cannot escape it without sin." (I.16) However, even Augustine recognized that a virgin's shame at violation might be overwhelming, "and consequently, even if some of these virgins killed themselves to avoid such disgrace, who that has any human feeling would refuse to forgive them?" (I.17) In the final analysis, though, purity is a virtue of the soul, and

the virtue of holy continence, when it resists the uncleanness of carnal lust, sanctifies even the body, and therefore when this continence remains unsubdued, even the sanctity of the body is preserved, because the will to use it holily remains, and, so far as lies in the body itself, the power also. . . . And therefore a woman who has been violated by the sin of another, and without any consent of her own, has no cause to put herself to death; much less has she cause to commit suicide in order to avoid such violation, for in that case she commits certain homicide to prevent a crime which is uncertain as yet, and not her own. (I.18)

So it appears that in her own day the fact that Eupraxia engineered her own death for chastity's sake would not have been condemned by most, and would have been praised by many. Even the strictest critic of her action would have found it forgivable.

²¹ *Concerning Virgins*, III.7. David Albert Jones, *Approaching the End: A Theological Exploration of Death and Dying* (Oxford Studies in Theological Ethics), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 68-72 describes the differences between Ambrose and Augustine on suicide and martyrdom.

²² The English is taken from Eric Rasmussen's translation of Jerome's *Commentary on Jonah* at www.rasmusen.org/_religion/_Jonah/jonah.htm.

EUPRAXIA: THE QUESTION OF DECEIT

The second question raised by Eupraxia's martyrdom is the question of whether deceit is a permissible means to the martyr's desired end.

Eupraxia is able to achieve her martyrdom by convincing the soldier who is her guard and would-be seducer that she knows a magical way to make him invulnerable to wounds. She is without doubt lying to him quite consciously. Did the end justify the means?

In light of his attitude towards suicide as expressed above, it is not surprising that St. Augustine also came out against the use of deception even for good ends. In his *To Consentius: Against Lying* (31) he says clearly, "It is said unto God, *Thy law is truth*: and consequently, what is against truth cannot be just. Now who can doubt that every lie is against truth? Therefore there can be no just lie."²³ Even the midwives of Exodus 1:16-20 who lied about the birth of the Hebrew boys, and Rahab of Jericho, (Josh 2, 6:25) who saved the lives of the Hebrew spies by lying about them, were not justified in their lying. At best, they may be excused for not fully understanding their sin, since "whether it be ever right, even for the saving of a man's life, to tell a lie, is a question in resolving which even the most learned do weary themselves."⁽³³⁾

When St. Jerome condoned lying under certain circumstances, Augustine objected and carried on a correspondence with Jerome about it.²⁴ Jerome defended the Apostle Peter against Paul's accusation in Gal 2:11-14 that Peter had lied about his faith. Paul too dissimulated, said Jerome, in order to win converts. He went on to add examples from scripture of other holy persons who had lied. His conclusion was that "just men would dissimulate for the sake of their own and others' salvation."²⁵

Writing much earlier, Clement of Alexandria had declared lying in legal settings unethical and unnecessary for a Christian.²⁶ However he felt

²³ *Seventeen Short Treatises of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1847, 458.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Quoted by Perez Zagorin, "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation, Truth-Telling, Lying and Self-Deception," *Social Research*, Fall 1996, 3 (available at www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2267/is_n3_v63/ai_18888995).

²⁶ *Stromata* VII.8 "Being then persuaded that God is always present everywhere, and being ashamed not to tell the truth, and knowing that [not to speak of perjury] even a lie is unworthy of himself, he is satisfied with the witness of God and of his own conscience only. So, while on the one hand he neither lies nor does anything contrary to his agree-

that lying and deceit, or at least not telling the full truth, was advisable when speaking with people who could not comprehend the full truth. A doctor too might lie to a patient for therapeutic reasons²⁷:

Whatever [the Gnostic] has in his mind, he bears on his tongue, to those who are worthy to hear, speaking as well as living from assent and inclination. For he both thinks and speaks the truth; unless at any time, medically, as a physician for the safety of the sick, he may deceive or tell an untruth. . . .²⁸

Although there are clear biblical rules against bearing false witness and numerous proverbs stress the abomination of lying tongues, various biblical characters — including Abraham and David and even Christ — exercised forgivable deception in hostile situations.²⁹ Deception used to prevent a greater evil from happening could be sanctioned too. Rahab's lying to save the lives of the Israelite spies and of her own family (Jos 2:1-7) fell into this category of untruths.³⁰

One might also make the case that Eupraxia told her guard more truth than he could hear. In the Armenian story she says, "You will not be able to kill me, *but even more than that, you will make me live.*" Another Christian would have understood that she was referring to eternal life. Her guard did not.

It would not be surprising, then, if a woman in Eupraxia's situation considered deception to be the lesser of two evils when faced with the loss of her purity. Even Augustine would have allowed that "the learned"

ments, on the other hand he neither takes an oath when it is demanded of him, nor denies [what he has done], being resolute to be clear of lying, even though he should die under torture." (translation of J.A.H. Fenton, www.archive.org/stream/MN41361ucmf_1/MN41361ucmf_1_djvu.txt.)

²⁷ See Nicholas P. Constatas, "The Last Temptation of Satan: Divine Deception in Greek Patristic Interpretations of the Passion Narrative," *Harvard Theological Review* 97.2 (2004), 139-163.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, VII.xiv.

²⁹ Evelin Sullivan's light-hearted *The Concise Book of Lying*, NY: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2001 discusses biblical lying (1-28), lying in mythological stories (29-51) and deception in hostile circumstances (229-253).

³⁰ For a reaction to Augustine's position towards lying and a discussion of "therapeutic lying" in general see Nathan Schlueter, "The Virtue of Lying: Recovering the 'Saving Beauty' of Plato's Poetic Vision," *Logos* IX.1 (Winter, 2006), 72-107.

might well “worry themselves” deciding whether or not to condone her wiles.

EUPRAXIA: THE QUESTION OF MAGIC³¹

In the Armenian story, Eupraxia takes one of her own hairs,³² places it in the palm of her hand, and anoints it with oil to create an “invincibility talisman” for her guard.

To the modern reader in an age where science rules, both Eupraxia’s plan to achieve her martyrdom and her guard’s gullibility seem equally strange. The plan she devises comes from a world where magic is believable, and where young women may possess great secrets.³³ People in her society, as the story shows, thought that it was possible to create such a thing as an invincibility potion or ointment. Her ploy is from the same realm as Medea’s gift to Jason of a magical ointment for himself and his weapons, or David of Sasun’s magical fountain of invincibility.³⁴

The association of hair with strength or power is at least as old as the stories of Samson (Jg 13-16) and King Nisus of Megara,³⁵ whose strength remained intact as long as their hair was uncut. Magical or superstitious use of hair is not unknown. It has been a talismanic substance in antiquity

³¹ The importance of saints’ lives as sources of information on magic was noticed by H.J. Magoulias, “The Lives of Byzantine Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Magic in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries AD: Sorcery, Relics and Icons,” *Byzantion* 37 (1967), 227-269.

³² It may be important that she plucks the hair from her head when the guard is not there to see. Perhaps if he saw her take it from her wallet or pocket, he would be more inclined to think that she was a woman who practised magic regularly, and normally carried magical paraphernalia with her.

³³ On women as practitioners of magic see Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*, London/New York: Routledge, 2003, 175-192, 249-250. It seems the guard was aware that by taking her virginity he might also damage Eupraxia’s magical powers.

³⁴ *David of Sasun* 1.10., tr. Artin K. Shalian, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1964. Robert Bedrosian, “Soma among the Armenians” (rbedrosian.com/soma.htm) discusses David of Sasun’s invincibility fountain.

³⁵ The story of Nisus’s special lock of hair is told in Thomas Bullfinch’s *Mythology* (classlit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/tbullfinch/bl-tbullfinch-age-13.htm).

and in modern times as well.³⁶ The making of invulnerability lotions is also known,³⁷ and even the wrapping of an amulet around the neck is described.³⁸ However, I have not found any exact parallel to Eupraxia's creation of a talisman from hair and olive oil mixed in the palm of the hand.³⁹

Eupraxia's magic trick is equally strange in the Eastern Orthodox version,⁴⁰ but there, the magical object is an herb, not Eupraxia's own hair:⁴¹

The saint prayed tearfully to the Lord that He would preserve her virginity, and God heard her prayer. St. Euphraxia suggested to the barbarian that if he would not defile her, she would give him a special herb that would protect him from the enemy's weapons and death. But this herb, she explained, held its power only when received from a virgin and not from a woman. The soldier believed St. Euphraxia and went with her into

³⁶ Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Religion in the First Christian Centuries), London/New York: Routledge, 2001, 93-94 mentions hanging a woman up by her hair as a way to neutralize her magic powers.

³⁷ *The New York Times*, Aug 9, 1878 included an article on a London chemist who claimed to have invented such a lotion.

³⁸ Dickie, 24-25. On 129-130 he mentions amulets of hair made for hunting dogs, and on 304-307 he describes the common practice of wearing amulets around the neck.

³⁹ Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994, gives numerous spells requiring oil, usually oil over which a spell has been said. Only one of these (306 §18) specifies *olive* oil. In that spell, it is a protective substance for anointing "a person who is slow".

⁴⁰ This is found at www.antiochian.org/book/export/html/17337.

⁴¹ A connection between herbs and Greco-Roman magic is mentioned by Jan N. Bremmer, "Magic in the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*," in Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, eds., *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1), Leuven: Peeters, 2002, 51-70; here 69. Francis C.R. Thee, *Julius Africanus and the Early Christian View of Magic* (Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 19), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984, 248-262 describes the role of herbs in magic as seen through the writings of Julius Africanus (3rd century), but none of the herbs mentioned there is used to cause invulnerability. On p. 284, he mentions the special potency of a spell worked by a virgin.

Protection from wounds, or invincibility in battle is even today listed as a virtue of certain herbs. (For one example, see ezinearticles.com/?St-Johns-Wort---No-Need-For-St-Johns-Medical-Care&id=1757813.)

It may not be so strange that one version of the story uses an herb, while the other uses hair. Bruce Lincoln, "Treatment of Hair and Fingernails among the Indo-Europeans," *History of Religions* 16.4 *The Mythic Imagination* (May, 1977), 351-362 sees a connection between the magical protective powers of hair and of herbs.

the garden. The holy virgin picked the herb, then offered to demonstrate its power. She placed the herb on her neck and told the man to strike her with his sword. With a mighty blow, he cut off her head. Thus, her prayer was answered, and the wise virgin offered her soul to God in 303, safeguarding her bodily purity.

Not everyone who tells the story of Eupraxia has felt comfortable including magic in the saint's martyrdom. A simpler Eastern Orthodox version of Eupraxia's *Martyrdom* does not include either the hair talisman or the potent herb:

The holy Martyr Euphraxia was from Nicomedia. As the daughter of a notable family, she lived during the reign of Emperor Maximian (286-305). This devout maiden, moreover, was adorned with a sound and wise mind. In 290, when Euphraxia was reported to be a Christian before the emperor, she was apprehended. Since the pagans were unable to coerce her into offering sacrifice to their evil deities, she was severely beaten. Remaining steadfast in the Faith of Christ, her tormenters resolved to dishonor her by delivering her to a certain barbarian. Euphraxia, however, outwitted him in the following expedient manner.

The holy maiden promised the barbarian that if he would not defile her, she would give him a certain elixir that would continually make him invincible against every sword and javelin of the enemy. After saying this, she added that if he desired to be sure that what she uttered was the truth, he could experiment upon her own neck. Straightway, she stretched forth her neck as a specimen. The barbarian, believing her, mightily struck her throat and cut off her head. In this manner, empurpled with streams of blood, the blessed Euphraxia safeguarded the inviolate treasury of her bodily purity and received the crown of martyrdom.⁴²

It is obvious that the talisman or herb has been deliberately removed from this version of the story. It makes no sense that the guard would risk killing the young woman who has promised him a "magic elixir" without first receiving it, or at least seeing her apply it to herself before he tested its effectiveness.

Eupraxia's use of a magical charm, even though it is a fake one, may have been troublesome to the editors of this version, just as it was to the young people raising questions about Eupraxia's sainthood in the Orthodox online chat. "Magic" has traditionally been frowned upon by the

⁴² *Holy Women Martyrs*, 29-30.

Church, but magic takes many forms. St. Augustine was against magic, but he appears to have been concerned with magic as "sinful inquisitiveness" into the future working of God.⁴³

Several decades after Eupraxia's death, Basil of Caesarea, in canon 65 of his *Letter to Amphilocus* (Ep. 217) says briefly: "Whoever confesses magic or sorcery shall do penance for the time of murder, and shall be treated in the same manner as he who convicts himself of this sin." Decisive though this canon may appear, it isn't clear exactly what it means by "magic".⁴⁴

In Eupraxia's time, there was still room for some types of magic in the Christian's life. The Emperor Constantine made laws forbidding many kinds of magical practices, but he did not outlaw the making of protective charms either for crops in the field or for the body.⁴⁵ In decisions to condemn a practitioner of magic, many things were considered: the benevolent or malevolent intention of the person was a factor, and the status of the person was important; the Church was harsher towards clergy making talismans than towards lay persons doing the same. The authorities also considered whether the person used magic habitually or occasionally, professionally to make a living or incidentally as a personal recourse in times of illness or stress.

One may conclude that the means Eupraxia used to attain martyrdom did not raise the same questions for her contemporaries that they raise for some today. Even if she had been intending to make a real protective amulet, Eupraxia's action would have fallen into an ethical gray area. She was not doing anything that would have been considered completely forbidden for a Christian woman in her time. In the same setting, lying to her guard and even engineering her own suicide were likewise actions in the "grey area". At the worst, they would have been looked upon with a lenient eye

⁴³ See Fritz Graf, "Augustine and Magic," in *The Metamorphosis of Magic*, 87-103.

⁴⁴ The same is true of *The Teaching of the Apostles* II, where it says, "you shall not practice magic; you shall not practice witchcraft . . . you shall not use potions." Dickie, 274-281 describes the Church's attitude towards clergy who practiced magic, including the making of amulets and talismans, but indicates that a more lenient standard was set for lay-people

⁴⁵ Dickie, 252. Dickie also finds it doubtful that the Church, in spite of canons against practitioners of magic, took action against people whose magical acts were not criminally illegal in the eyes of the secular law (262). Although the condemned bishop Priscillian was specifically accused of making magical unguents, that by itself would not have been sufficient grounds to condemn him (270).

by all but the strictest authorities of her day. At best, her ingenuity and determination to preserve her purity as a Christian woman would have caused admiration among her peers. Her *Life* shows that the latter was indeed the case.

THE MARTYRDOM OF EUPRAXIA THE VIRGIN

(12 Araç / 19 January)

In the city Nicomedia lived the blessed Eupraxia. She was a Christian from a great family in the days of the pagan emperor Maximianus. They placed her before the court and tried to force her to deny Christ and make her sacrifice to the idols, but with firm mind she confessed that Christ was true God. At this, they beat the maidservant of Christ fiercely and threw her into prison. After some time they brought her up out from the prison and questioned her, "Are you going to worship the idols?" But again she confessed Christ, and she chided them for not believing in Christ.

Then they handed the saint over to a soldier to take her to his home and defile her so that she might turn to idolatry. While on the way, Eupraxia entreated God to save her from this trial. When they entered the room, the grace of God shone upon the heart of the virgin, and she said to the soldier, "Do not come near me and I will give you an ointment and if you put it on yourself, no sword will [ever] strike you down". And he believed her and said "Give me that which you promised". Eupraxia answered, "Bring me a little olive oil and bring your sword too, and you will see this amazing deed." So he went off to fetch them.

Then the blessed one removed one hair from her head and put it in a small pouch. When the soldier brought back the olive oil and his sword, Eupraxia took the oil and put it on her palm. She took out the hair and rolled it in the olive oil, and then baring her neck she draped [her neck] with the hair and said to the man, "Now strike me with as much strength as you have in your two hands, and you will learn that you will not be able to kill me, but even more than that, you will make me live." The man was deceived by her words and he struck her down fiercely with his sword and the blessed woman's head fell to the ground and the house was filled with blood and she committed her soul to God, into the hands of angels, on January 19th.

When the man saw what the virgin had done, he began to wail and to tear out his beard crying and, in tears, he said, "Woe to me! How was I tricked into killing this beautiful virgin of a noble family? What answer will I give the king?" He went out stealthily and fled from the king lest they find him and kill him in the place of the woman.

ՅԱՅՍՄ ԱՒՈՒՐ ՎԿԱՌԻԹԻՒՆ ԵՓՐԱՍԵԱՅ ԿՈՒՍԻՆ⁴⁶
(12 Արաց / 19 Յունուար)

Ի քաղաքին Նիկոմիդիեայ էր բնակեալ երանելին Եփրասիա, եւ էր քրիստոնեայ եւ ի մեծ տոհմէ, յաւուրս կուսպաշտ թագաւորին Մաքսիմիանոսի: Կացուցին առաջի ատենին եւ բռնադատէին զնա ուրանալ զՔրիստոս եւ զոհել կռոցն. եւ նա հաստատուն մտօք խոստովանեցաւ զՔրիստոս ճշմարիտ Աստուած. եւ հարին զաղախինն Քրիստոսի ուժգին եւ արկին ի բանդ: Եւ յետ աւուրց հանին ի բանդէն, եւ հարցանէին եթէ. Պաշտե՞ս զկուռսն: Եւ նա առաւելապէս խոստովանեցաւ զՔրիստոս եւ անարգէր զորս ոչ հաւատային ի Քրիստոս:

Եւ սպա ետուն զարբուհին ի զօրական մի, զի տարցէ ի տուն իւր եւ պոռնկեացի ընդ նմա եւ դարձուցէ ի կուռսն. եւ յերթաչն Եփրասիա աղաչէր զԱստուած փրկիլ ի փորձութենէն: Եւ յորժամ մտին ի սենեակն ծագեաց շնորհն Աստուծոյ ի սիրտ կուսին, եւ ասէ ցօրականն. Մի մերձենար յիս եւ տաց քեզ դեղ որ եթէ զնես զայն յանձն քո՝ սուր ի քեզ ոչ գծէ: Եւ նորա հաւատացեալ նմա ասէ. Տուր ինձ զոր ինչ խոստացար: Ասէ Եփրասիա. Բեր ինձ սահաւիկ մի ձէթ, բեր եւ զսուրն քո ընդ քեզ, եւ տեսցես զարմանալի գործս: Եւ նա գնաց ի բերել:

Եւ երանելին հանեալ մագ մի ի գլխոյ իւրմէ եւ եղ ի զրապանակն, եւ զօրականին բերեալ զձէթն եւ զսուրն, եւ առեալ Եփրասեայ արկ զձէթն յափն իւր, եհան եւ զմագն եւ թաւալեցոյց ի ձէթն. եւ մերկացուցեալ զպարանոցն իւր պատեաց զնա մագովն այն, եւ ասէ ցայրն. Արդ ուժգին որչափ եւ ուժգ է հար երկու ձեռամբդ, եւ գիտացես զի ոչ կարացես սպանանել զիս, այլ մանաւանդ կեցուցանես: Եւ խաբեցաւ այրն ի բանս նորա, եւ սրով ուժգին զարկոյց, եւ անկաւ զլուխ երանելի կնոջն յերկիր, եւ լցաւ տունն արեամբ, եւ աւանդեաց զհոգին իւր առ Աստուած ի ձեռս հրեշտակաց Յունուարի ժԹ:

Եւ այրն տեսեալ զոր ինչ արար կոյսն. սկսաւ ողբալ եւ փետտել զմօրուսն, եւ ասել լալով. Վայ ինձ թէ ո՞րպէս խաբեցայ, եւ զայս գեղեցիկ եւ մեծագգի կուսանն սպանի. զի՞նչ պատասխանի տաց թագաւորին: Եւ ելեալ զաղտ փախեաւ ի թագաւորէն՝ զի մի գտցէ եւ փոխանակ կնոջն սպանցեն զնա:

⁴⁶ For textual notes and the French translation, see *Le Synaxaire Arménien*, 952-954. The text there also includes information on the other saints celebrated on the same day.

CHAPTER I THE EARLY PERIOD

The first European settlement in North America was established by the English in 1607 at Jamestown, Virginia. This colony was founded by a group of men known as the "Lost Colony" who were sent to the New World by the Virginia Company of London. The settlement was initially successful, but it faced numerous hardships, including a severe drought and a lack of food, which led to the death of many of the colonists. In 1619, a group of Dutch traders arrived in Jamestown, bringing with them a group of African slaves, marking the beginning of slavery in North America.

The Pilgrims, a group of English Puritans, arrived in North America in 1620 on the ship the Mayflower. They established the Plymouth colony in Massachusetts. The Pilgrims faced a difficult winter, but they were able to survive due to the help of the Native Americans. In 1621, the Pilgrims signed the Mayflower Compact, which was a document that established a form of self-government for the colony. This document is considered one of the first steps towards the development of a democratic system in North America.

The Roanoke colony, established in 1585 on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, was the first English settlement in the southern part of the continent. However, the colony was abandoned in 1586 due to a lack of supplies and a hostile relationship with the Native Americans. The fate of the Roanoke colony remains a mystery to this day. In 1607, the Jamestown colony was established, and it became the first permanent English settlement in North America.

The early period of American history is characterized by the struggle for survival and the development of a unique American identity. The colonists faced numerous challenges, including a lack of resources, a hostile environment, and a distant and often indifferent mother country. Despite these hardships, the colonists were able to establish permanent settlements and lay the foundation for the United States. The early period is a time of great adversity and triumph, and it is a testament to the resilience and determination of the early Americans.

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH'S WOMEN DEACONS¹

Roberta R. Ervine

THIS PRESENT ARTICLE intends to make a modest contribution to our understanding of how the Armenian Church has utilized women deacons over the centuries to meet specific needs within its faith communities.² In presenting this material, I benefit from the work of others before me who have brought together information on the Armenian Church's women deacons: the Mekhitarist scholar Vardan Hačuni and, more recently, M. Kristin Arat and Rev. Fr. Abel Oghlukian.³

¹ This article grew out of an oral presentation made at St. Nersess Seminary on Nov. 28, 2006. I was moved to find that, purely coincidentally, the presentation was made within a week of the death of Elizabeth Behr-Sigel, a pioneering Orthodox theologian and a humble servant of Christ and His mission as carried out through the Church's women.

² Study of women in the diaconate has of late undergone, it seems to me, a somewhat unfortunate renaissance. The historical phenomenon of women in the diaconate has been co-opted by more than one person seeking to persuade a specific church or faith community to institute or re-institute the office in its own present-day context. Since the diaconate is an ordained office, it is perhaps inevitable that the notion of women ordained to the diaconate has become unnecessarily entangled in the tendentious and divisive debate about ordination of women to the priesthood, particularly (but not exclusively) within the Roman communion. The question of whether or not women should be ordained to the diaconate and if so how, when, why and where, is in my opinion a matter of ecclesiastical policy best left to bishops whose responsibility it is to provide for the changing needs of their faithful flock by whatever means are available to them. This was the opinion of the late Catholicos Vazgen I, who felt that it was unnecessary to bring the matter of women's diaconate before the episcopal synod, as a precedent for such ordination already existed; instead, the ordination of women deacons should be at the discretion of diocesan bishops.

³ M. Kristin Arat, "Die Diakonissen der armenischen Kirche in kanonischer Sicht," *Handēs Amsōreay*, 1987, 153-189 (English: "The Deaconess in the Armenian Church," in B.J. Merguerian and J. Renjilian-Burgy, eds., *Voices of Armenian Women: Papers presented at the 1997 international conference of the Armenian International Women's Association*, Belmont, MA: Armenian International Women's Association, 2000, 81-118.) Abel Oghlukian, *The Deaconess in the Armenian Church: A Brief Survey*, New Rochelle, NY: St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 1994. V. Hačuni, "Convents in Armenia" [*Կուսանոցային Հայաստանի մէջ*] *Bazmanēp* 1923, 12-17, 43-47, 72-78; idem, *The Armenian Woman: A Historical Perspective* [*Հայուհին Պատմութեան առջեւ*], Venice:

The Armenian Church has a great advantage over certain other communions in that its women's diaconate is not a theoretical construct.⁴ The names of more than twenty of the Church's women deacons are recorded:

Ustianē the scribe	Ustianē Abelianē
Hripsimē Spentowsky	Šušanik Xarazianē
Nazeni Kēōziumian	Iskuhi Ēnfiējianē
Katarinē Arlufeanē Er kaynabazuk	Ēlmoneay Paruċianē
Ēpriusinē Abamelikianē	Elisabef Israyēlian
Anna Xocaminasianē	Anna Mnačakanian
Sōfi Amatunianē	Hripsimē Mnačakanian
Pepronē Xupianē	Alawni Kēōsēian
Manea Loris Melikianē	Mariam Kēōsēian
Gayianē Šaxnazarianē	Aruseak Mxiġarian
Katarinē Lorlanov	Hripsimē Sasunian
Hripsimē Ťayirianē	

San Lazzaro, 1936. Also worthy of mention is Abp. Łewond Ćepeyan's brief article, "Deaconesses in the Armenian Church" [*Մարկավարուհիները Հայոց եկեղեցու մէջ*], *Hask* 4-5 (1989), 169-172. One should also note the work of Aimé Georges Martimort, *Deaconesses: an Historical Study*, tr. K.D. Whitehead, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986 (translation of *Les Diaconesses: Essai Historique*, Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1982). Although that study is primarily concerned with the Greek and Latin traditions, chapter 8 does include comments on the Armenian and other Churches. In addition, Rev. Fr. Arnak Kasparian published a popular article on the subject of the Armenian Church's women deacons, entitled "One Ought Not Withold the Grace of Ordination as Reader and Deacon from Suitable and Worthy Candidates of the Female Sex in the United States" [*Միացեալ նահանգներու մէջ դպրի եւ սարկաւաղի ձեռնադրութեան շնորհը պէտք չէ գլանալ իրական սեռէ յարմար եւ պատրաստուած թեկնածուներու*], *Nor KeanĠ* 22.29 (June 22, 2000). This article included a chronology of the preceding thirty years' events having to do with women deacons. In his *Frequently Asked Questions about the Armenian Church*, New York: St. Vartan Press, 2004, 63-64 K. Maksouian prefers to designate the woman deacon by the term "nun-deaconess".

⁴ The Annual Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation which took place in New Rochelle, June 26, 2003 had on its agenda the topic of the diaconate, for both men and women. Representatives of the various jurisdictions shared information on the historical development of the diaconate within their respective Churches. A report of the Consultation appears at www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2003/03-133.shtml. For the women's diaconate in the Syrian Church see Sebastian P. Brock, "Deaconesses in the Syriac Tradition," in Prasanna Vazheparampil, ed., *Woman in Prism and Focus: Her Profile in Major World Religions and in Christian Traditions*, Rome: Mar Thoma Yogam, 1996, 205-217.

For some of the women deacons we have descriptions of the activities in which they were engaged; for some, there are data concerning their ordination; for others, the fact of their presence in a given moment or situation is merely mentioned as something taken for granted and requiring no elaboration.

Having said this, I should add that there is much we do not know about women deacons in service to the Armenian Church. One huge gap in our knowledge, for example, is that we know nothing about women deacons in the Armenian Church before the 9th century. How much the Armenian experience paralleled that of the Byzantine or Syrian Churches, both of which had a vital diaconate including women, we may never know. Nor do we know the total number of women deacons who functioned in any given time period.

What does seem clear is that the women's diaconate was a very flexible branch of ordained ministry, and that its nature changed over time in response to changes in cultural norms and community needs. In these pages, I would like to set forth such details as have come to my attention to date concerning the development of women's diaconate within the Armenian church. The Armenian Church's past experience in its formulation and beneficial functions may prove useful to the modern Church as well.

Armenian women in the diaconate have offered centuries of service both illustrious and humble—and certainly various. As the evidence will show, the Armenian Church's women deacons have been useful. We will present the data in purely chronological order, although an equally good case could be made for presenting it by region.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD: IX/XTH - XIVTH CENTURIES

Specific historical information concerning Armenian women deacons can be divided into two periods. The first begins in the 9th or 10th century, depending on how one dates Venice ms. 457, a *Maštoc* [Ritual].⁵ It would be very helpful if we knew where the manuscript came from, as it was produced in the days when Armenians lived in two quite different kingdoms: the Arçrunid kingdom of Vaspurakan and the Bagratid kingdom centered on Ani were both flourishing. However, these unknowns do not diminish the interest that this *Maštoc* holds for the history of Armenian women deacons.

⁵ The dating range is supplied by the cataloguers. See following note.

The *Maštoc* contains the text of a service for the dedication of an individual to celibate life in a convent.⁶ Following the basic outline of the service, there is a notation saying

For the women, one should bestow the habit using the same rite, but the Deaconesses shall bare [the candidate's] head⁷ and shall cover her forehead to the eyebrows with a black veil.⁸

In other words, by the time when this *Maštoc* was written, there were women deacons in the region where this *Maštoc* was used, and their presence could be assumed at the induction of other women into convented life.

In the later 11th century, the Armenian kingdoms went through enormous upheaval. Large numbers of Armenians were uprooted—and some uprooted themselves—from their ancestral lands in historic Armenia and dispersed across a swathe of territory that extended from Cappadocia to Cilicia; the region that today comprises Syria, Lebanon, and Pales-

⁶ Barseł Sargisian and Grigor Sargisian, *Grand Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts in the Mekhitarists' Library in Venice* [Մայր Յուդակ Հայերէն Ձեռագրաց Մատենադարանին Մխիթարեանց Ի Վենետիկ], vol. 3, Venice: San Lazzaro, 1966, cols. 27-33. Citation from col. 32.

⁷ The *New Lexicon of the Armenian Language* [Նոր Բառգիրք Հայկազեան Լեզուի] cites this passage in its entry for the word հոլանի [bareheaded], but with the addition bare [her] head and loosen [her] belt [հոլանի եւ դոտելոյժ. . .] or alternatively bare [her] head and [remove her] belt [հոլանի եւ անգօտի. . .]. In addition to the *Maštoc*, the lexicographers cite Nersēs of Lambron, but the abbreviation for the work to which they refer is not included in their list of primary titles. In any case, modesty would certainly require that the removal of a woman's everyday head covering and the loosening of the belt cincturing her normal garments not be performed by a male.

⁸ *Venice Catalogue* vol. 3, col. 32: Իսկ կանա[ն]ց պարտ է սքեմ տալ եւ զնոյն կատարել կարգս. բայց հոլանի սարկաւազուհիքն արասցեն, սեւ փակեղամբ ծածկե[ս]ցեն զճակատն միշեւ յաւնսն: The translations of Oghlukian and Arat show some unclarity in the understanding of the verbal phrase հոլանի . . . արասցեն: Oghlukian, 14 reads: "One should give women the schema and perform the same rite. But let the deaconesses perform this bare-headed and cover their brow with a black veil to the eyebrows." Arat, 170 prefers the following: "Und den Frauen soll man das Habit geben und denselben Ritus anwenden, aber die Diakonissen sollen sie entkleiden und sie sollen mit einem schwarzen Schleier die Stirn bis zu den Augenbrauen verhüllen." F.C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum*, Oxford, 1905, 156 translates, "To women however we must give the monastic habit and observe the same rite, only the deaconesses shall undress them. They shall veil their foreheads with a black veil, as far as the eyebrows."

tine/Israel. What became of the women deacons in this shifting period, we do not know. But as things in both the homeland and Cilicia settled into a new pattern of existence, the women deacons emerged again. This time, however, they seem to have been cast as a revival harking back not to the indigenous Armenian institution, but to New Testament roots. In addition, differing opinions are expressed in this period concerning the validity of the women's diaconate.⁹

Nersēs of Lambron (1153-1198), one of the Cilician era's most prodigious characters, authored among many other things a *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*, which includes a discussion of the Armenian Church's hierarchy.¹⁰ In the course of this Lambronaci could be construed as citing St. Basil's authority for closing the diaconate to women:¹¹

⁹ Both Arat and Oghlukian mention that Pōlos Tarōneçi (1050?-1123) did not approve of women deacons. Arat bases this statement on one by Haçuni, "Convents", 72. Oghlukian gives an extended translation of a segment from the *Letter* having to do with women on the altar (16-17). I have not had access to this text (Pōlos's *Letter against Theophistes* [Թուղթ ընդդէմ Թէոփիստէ հռոմ փրիխտփային] Constantinople 1725) to verify the context. N. Polarian [=Bogharian], *Armenian Writers* [Հայ Գրողներ] Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1971, 207-208 notes that there are two recensions of the *Letter* and that the text in SJ1272 (dated 1290) has interesting sections missing from the printed edition.

¹⁰ Nersēs authored his *Commentary on the Liturgy* [Խորհրդածութիւնք սրբազան պատարագի] in 1176 or 1177 when he was around twenty-three years of age (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1842; Venice: San Lazzaro, 1847). Nersēs had been ordained a priest in 1168 by his great-uncle, Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali, and was consecrated bishop of the major metropolitan See of Tarsus by Catholicos Grigor Tlay at the age of 21. The *Commentary's* longer title in the Venice edition, "Discussion on the Orders of the Church and Commentary on the Sacrament of the Liturgy" [Խորհրդածութիւնք ի կարգս եկեղեցոյ եւ մեկնութիւն խորհրդոյ պատարագի] signals the inclusion of comments on the Church hierarchy—absent from the 1842 Jerusalem edition—as well as on the liturgy itself. G. Hakobyan, "Nersēs Lambronaci's *Commentary on the Liturgy*," [Ներսէս Լամբրոնացու Պատարագի Մեկնութիւնը], *Ejmiacin* 1968.10, 46-51; 1969.4, 39-44; 1970.2, 43-48 discusses the portions of the *Commentary* that deal with clerical orders, but does not mention the lines cited here. The French translation of the *Commentary* by Isaac Kéchiçian (*Nersès de Lambron [1153-1192]: Explication de la Divine Liturgie*. Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 2000) also does not include the material on clerical orders.

¹¹ Sargis Palian, "Armenian Monasteries," [Հայկական Վանքեր], *Drazark Annual*, 1968 mentions that when Nersēs was around 37 (in 1190, just 8 years before his very early death), his mother Šahanduxt and his two sisters, Šušan and Talița, entered the Lambron convent as founding members of that congregation. Also see Haçuni, "Convents", 72.

Monasticism is not only lower than the priesthood, but it is lower than the diaconate as well, since St. Basil writes that the former is also open to women. The diaconate, however, is not at all [open to them].¹²

However in 1184, about ten years after Nersēs Lambronaçi had penned his *Commentary on the Liturgy*, an equally famous Armenian thinker defended the practice of ordaining women to the diaconate. His name was Mxifār Goš. Born and educated in Ganjak in the Armenian homeland, he traveled in Cilicia, studying for a time in the monastic complex on Black Mountain.¹³ When he returned home, Mxifār was asked by Catholicos Stepanos of the Caucasian Albanians to write a lawbook for the latter's use.¹⁴ In chapter 225 (*On Clerical Orders and the Royal Family*), Mxifār described women deacons and noted their usefulness in specific contexts:¹⁵

There are also women ordained as deacons, called *deaconesses*, for the sake of preaching to women and reading the Gospel. This makes it unnecessary for a man to enter [the convent],¹⁶ or for [a nun] to leave it.

¹² *Commentary on the Liturgy*, Venice 1847, 53: Եւ փոքր է կրօնաւորութիւնն ոչ միայն քան զքահանայութիւնն, այլ եւ քան զսարկաւազութիւնն. զի սա եւ կանանց է ճամարձակելի, որպէս եւ սուրբն Բարսեղ զրէ: Իսկ սարկաւազութիւնն եւ ոչ բնաւ:

¹³ On this complex, which included monasteries and hermits of varying confessions, see J.J.S. Weitenberg, "The Armenian Monasteries in the Black Mountain," in K. Ciggaar and M. Metcalf, eds., *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean I* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 147), Leuven: Peeters, 2006, 79-93; numerous references to Black Mountain are also found in Andrew Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, esp. 27-29, 81 n.39.

¹⁴ See the Armenian text published by H. Tōrosyan, *Mxifār Goš, Armenian Lawbook [Միլիթար Գոշ, Գիրք Դատաստանի]*, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences Press, 1975 and the translation and study of Robert W. Thomson, *The Lawcode (Datastanagirk) of Mxifār Goš* (Dutch Studies in Armenian Language and Literature 6), Amsterdam / Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000. The relevant material appears in translation on 278 and 285. Thomson's translations differ slightly from the ones used in this article.

¹⁵ It has been tempting to consider the Armenian homeland as the more conservative region, and Cilicia as the more liberal or cosmopolitan in terms of religious and cultural attitudes. Mxifār's *Lawbook* would seem to indicate that the institution of the deaconess was revived in the conservative homeland before it was in cosmopolitan Cilicia.

¹⁶ The bracketed words are found in recension C (Tōrosyan, 400).

When priests perform baptism [of mature women],¹⁷ the deaconesses approach the font to wash the women with the water of atonement¹⁸ behind the curtain.

Their vestments are exactly like those of nuns, except that on their forehead they have a cross; their stole hangs from over the right shoulder.¹⁹

Do not consider this new and unprecedented,²⁰ as we learn it from the tradition of the holy apostles; for Paul²¹ says, "I entrust to you our sister Phoebe, who is a *deacon* of the church." [Rom 16:1]²²

The appeal to early Christian precedent is obvious, as is Mxifār's awareness that not everyone using the *Lawbook* would be familiar with the office of deaconess. His description is of a women's diaconate that functions within contexts specifically concerning women: first, within the private confines of a convent and second, in the public administration of sacraments involving women, where laity within a conservative culture might be scandalized if the sacramental actions were performed by a man.

While Goš's description seems clear enough at first glance, there are several interesting questions raised by it. First, Mxifār tells us that the deaconess was expected both to preach and to read the Gospel, thus implying that she would necessarily possess a certain level of theological education. But his rationale—that thanks to the presence of a deaconess within, no man would have to enter the convent, nor any nun to leave it—is certainly

¹⁷ The bracketed words are found in recension C (Torosyan, 400).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; recension C adds "and the priest chrismates them" [և քահանայն օծանէ].

¹⁹ *Ibid.*; recension C reads Եւ կարգ է սարկաւագուհեացն ամենայն ինչ հաւատաւորացն, բայց ի վարս պինդն, իսպ ունենայ ի վերայ ճակատին ի կիսաթիկնոց՝ յաջմէ կողմանէ ուսոցն:

²⁰ *Ibid.*; Recension C adds, "O holy brethren".

²¹ *Ibid.*; Recension C omits the name of Paul.

²² Torosyan, 136-137 (Recension A): Եւ եւ ի կանանց սարկաւագունք ձեռնադրեալք, որք կոչին սարկաւագուհիք, վասն քարոզելոյ կանանց եւ ընթեռնուլ Աւետարան, զի մի մտցէ անդ այր, եւ մի նա արտաքս քան զվանսն ելանիցէ: Բայց յորժամ մկրտութիւն առնեն քահանայքն, զան յաւազանն, զի զկանայսն նոքա լուանան ջրով քաւութեանն՝ ներքոյ վարագուրին: Սքեմ է նոցա ամենայն ինչ հաւատաւորաց, բայց ի ճակատն իսպ լինի, եւ քուշկէն ի յաջմէ կողմանէ ի կախ ունելով: Մի ինչ նոր եւ անկարգ վարկցիս զայս, քանզի ի սրբոյ առաքելոյն աւանդութենէ ուսանիմք, քանզի սսէ՛ յանձն առնեմ ձեզ զՓրէ քոյ՛ մեր, որ է սպասաւոր եկեղեցւոյն:

strange as it stands. Presumably nuns took communion in the course of divine liturgy; thus, either a priest had to enter the convent to celebrate the eucharist, or the nuns had to leave the convent to attend the liturgy.

Moreover, while it might appear at first reading that Mxifar describes the deaconess's activities as limited to the confines of the convent, he prescribes her presence at the baptism of women, which cannot always have taken place in a church located within a convent. Thus, the woman deacon must herself have been coming and going, transiting between private and public sacramental venues.

Together with the description in chapter 225 of the *Lawbook*, one should also consider the information provided by Mxifar in chapter 229. Here, the discussion is one of hierarchical precedence and prerogative, specifically concerning who has the right to defrock whom; effectively, the pecking order of the hierarchy.

Now if anyone who has been in clerical orders is to be dismissed, this is how it should take place: deacons and priests are dismissed by the bishop, for it is he who ordained them. *Deaconesses are dismissed by the deacons* (italics mine);²³ lay brothers, nuns and monks, and whoever else may be ordained by a priest, are released by the priest; bishops, by those who ordained them; and a catholicos may be dismissed either by another catholicos, or by the bishops who consecrated him. A vardapet is dismissed by presiding vardapets. A vardapet may not dismiss a priest, defrocking him, but may only remove him.²⁴

This information also raises more questions than it answers. From the point of view of church discipline were deaconesses a subset of deacons at this time and accordingly chosen when necessary by male deacons who

²³ Torosyan observes in n. 148 (p. 587) that the location of the previous citation (ch. 225) in a passage devoted to the male deacon implies the ordination of women deacons by male deacons, and that this "cannot be correct".

²⁴ Torosyan, 141: Արդ եթէ արժանաւոր ոք աքսորանաց իցէ, որք միանգամ յեկեղեցական կարգէ իցեն, ըստ իրաւանց այսպէս լիցի. սարկաւազք եւ քահանայք լուծցին յեպիսկոպոսէ, զի նա է ձեռնադրող նոցա. սարկաւազուհիք՝ ի սարկաւազաց. եւ աշխարհականք, եւ հաւատաւորք, եւ կրանաւորք եւ որք միանգամ ի քահանայէ ձեռնադրին՝ ի քահանայէն. եպիսկոպոսունք՝ յիւրաքանչիւր ձեռնադրողաց. եւ կաթողիկոս՝ կամ ի կաթողիկոսէ եւ կամ յիւրոց ձեռնադրողաց երիսկոպոսաց. իսկ վարդապետ՝ ի վարդապետաց հրամանատուաց: Այլ վարդապետաց ոչ է ըստ իրաւանց զքահանայ աքսորել՝ առնելով զկարգն, բայց միայն որոշել:

performed some type of ordination ritual constituting them as deaconesses? Were they under the authority of a male deacon who was himself under the direct authority of the bishop? What would have been a deaconess's relationship to her diocesan bishop? Were there any instances in which a woman deacon actually underwent dismissal in the manner described, or was Mxitar simply offering a theoretical construct to be applied should the need arise?

Shortly after the time when Nersēs of Lambron could state categorically that there was no women's diaconate, the possibility of women deacons serving in Cilicia still existed: in the year 1216 a Maštoč was produced in the coastal Cilician city of Bayas which contained the prayers for the ordination of a woman deacon.²⁵

Women deacons, then, were serving in at least some locations in the Armenian homeland, and possibly also in the Cilician Armenian kingdom.

In 1226 the kingship of Cilicia was transferred from the Rupenid dynasty to the Hefumians, upon the marriage of the Rupenid King Lewon I/II's daughter Zabēl to Hefum of Lambron. In 1265 Smbat the Constable, Hefum's older brother, produced two compilations of legal material. In these he brought together traditional Armenian jurisprudence and the legal

²⁵ V 199 ('*Venice Catalogue* vol.3. no. 323, 70-79), ff 49v.b-50r.b: "Ordination of women deacons, who are [called] deaconesses. Ps 44 is said—"My soul poured forth. . ." And [the celebrant] says over her the prayer "Lord benevolent and compassionate, who made everything by the word of your command and who through the bodily incarnation of your only son rendered male and female equal through holiness . . .". [Չեռնադրուիլին սարկաւազ կանանց, որ են սարկաւազուհիք: Ասի Սաղմոս ԽԴ. Բղխեաց սիրտ իմ զբան. եւ ասէ ի վերայ նորա զազաւթս, Տէր բարերար եւ բազմազուիթ, որ արարեր զամենայն բանիւ հրամանաւ քով, եւ ի ձեռն մարմնաւոր անսեռութեան միածնի քո սրբութեամբ հաւասարեցուցեր զարուն եւ զէգն:] The cataloguer seems to have found the existence of this canon troubling. He notes that the canon is not in the oldest Rituals, and says "Probably, long after the 10th century, that is in the 12th or 13th, this was created and introduced into the Rituals. Or perhaps the prayer existed, without the *infelicitous* heading, 'laying on of hands'. Considering that the Prayer or Blessing contains no laying on of hands, but merely a request to God that he may select his 'maidservant for the service of the needs of the Church'. 74 b. Interestingly, as recently as 1986 a folio comprising the same ritual prayers was also discovered, serendipitously, in a stack of loose manuscript pages in the San Lazzaro library. On the basis of its *erkatagir* script, the Mekhitarist fathers tentatively dated it to the 11th or 12th century (Arat, 172). The question of whether the folio predates the 1216 Maštoč cannot be definitively answered. It is also not clear whether it derives from Cilicia, or from elsewhere.

thinking of the Crusaders with whom the Cilician Armenians had intermarried and developed social relationships.²⁶

In his *Lawbook* Smbat's description of the woman deacon refers back to that found in Mxifâr Goš's *Lawbook*. However, Smbat adds several interesting and significant new details:

With the priest's permission, deaconesses can also be ordained and proclaim sermons to women and read the Gospel where men should not enter . . . and wash children and women in the water of atonement. . . .

This office was long ago abandoned by Armenian women. Yet this is what the Apostle described [when he said], "I entrust to you our sister Phoebe, who is a *servant* of the church."²⁷

In contrast to Mxifâr, Smbat seems to place deaconesses under the authority of priests, rather than of male deacons. Like Mxifâr, he assumes that not everyone will be familiar with the female diaconate, but he implies that the lack of deaconesses is due to a lack of interest on the part of Armenian women themselves, rather than to any policy or prejudice on the part of the Church's male authorities.

Some thirty years after Smbat, and a little more than a century after Mxifâr, women deacons continued to function in the Armenian homeland. In 1299, the energetic bishop of the eastern province of Siwnik, Stepanos Orbēlian (1260?-1304), wrote a history of his region filled with fascinating church-historical and sociological details. Though he was often in opposition to the ecclesiastical policies espoused by his counterparts in Cilicia, where ecumenical rapprochement was being pursued in ways of which he

²⁶ Smbat translated the *Assizes of Antioch* (Ł. Ališan, *Assises d'Antioche*, Venice: San Lazaro, 1876) and compiled a *Lawcode*. The critical edition of the latter was prepared by J. Karst, *Sempadscher Kodex aus dem 13. Jahrhundert oder Mittelarmenisches Rechtsbuch*, Strassburg, 1905, 2 vols. The Armenian text and a Russian translation by A. Galstyan appeared in Erevan in 1958.

²⁷ *Lawbook* ch. 60 (Karst, 85). The ellipses omit a description of the deaconess's garb ("like that of the nuns" and "with a cross on the forehead and the stole on the right shoulder"). [Եւ թէ հրամայէ քահանայն, նա եւ սարկաւազուհիք այլ կարեն ձեռնադրել, որ եւ նոքա եւս կարեն քարոզ ասել կանանց, եւ աւետարան կարդալ, ուր եւ այլ մարդ չմտէ: Եւ սքեմ նոցա հաւատափորացն եւ կարեն լուանալ տղայք եւ կանայք քաւութեան ջրովն. եւ իսաչ ուննան ի ճակատն եւ քուշ կենայ ի յաջ թեւն. եւ ի Հայոց կանանց վաղ է ջնջած այս կարդա: Բայց այս այն է զոր զրել է առաքեալն՝ թէ յանձն առնեմ վեղ զՓիլէ՛ քոյր մեր՝ որ է սպասար էկեղեցւոյն:]

could not approve, Stepanos had no problem with women deacons, and he neither looked upon them as an innovation nor justified their restoration as a lapsed but worthy institution.

There are women who become deaconesses to preach in nunneries. They dress like nuns, wearing a cloak and having a small cross on their forehead, with a short stole on the right side, passing beneath the arm through the vestment or through the belt. She ascends the altar, preaches, and reads the Gospel. Not among the group on the altar, but alone, or in a corner. She will not touch the sacred Mystery at all, as do the male deacons.²⁸

Like Mxifar a century before, and like Smbat in Cilicia, Stepanos places the deaconess in the role of preacher and Gospel reader;²⁹ her function at baptism is not mentioned.³⁰ Also like Mxifar, Stepanos specifies her insignium of office as a stole on the right side. Stepanos differs from his predecessors, however, in offering very specific details as to the liturgical role of the woman deacon. The woman deacon served on the altar, as did her male counterpart—and the bishop does not limit her liturgical service to convent churches only—albeit she stood apart from the male deacon(s), presumably for the avoidance of any perceived impropriety. She is distinguished from them also in that she does not touch the sacred Elements. It is not clear whether Stepanos is reflecting a prohibition,³¹ or whether he is simply making a statement of fact.³²

²⁸ *History of the Province of Sisakan* [Պատմութիւն նահանգին Սիսական], ed. K. Šah-nazareanč, Paris: 1860, vol. 1, 153. The description forms part of his chapter (27) on the orders of the Church: Իսկ ի կանանց սարկաւազուհիք լինին զի ի կանանց վանս քարոզեն. զգեստ է նոցա հաւատաւորացն, փիլիոն արկանել եւ ի ճակատն խաչ ունել եւ փոքրիկ ուրարն յաջմէ ի ներքոյ բազկին զհանդերձէն կամ զգօտւոյն ի կախ ունելով ելանէ ի բեմն եւ քարոզէ եւ ընթեռնու աւետարան ոչ յամբօխին ի վերայ բեմին. այլ առանձինն կամ յանկեան ուրեք. բայց ի սուրբ խորհրդոյն սպասաւորութիւն ընաւ մի հպեցի որպէս արու սարկաւազունքն:

²⁹ The verb *karozem* has several meanings, including “to preach”, “to declaim”, “to announce” and “to sing”. It may be that the word *karozel* here refers to declaiming the deacon’s parts of the liturgy, rather than to preaching.

³⁰ It is impossible to know whether a decrease in baptisms of adult women meant that there was no need for them in this role at the time, or whether the function still existed but wasn’t relevant to the point the bishop was making in this paragraph.

³¹ In the 12th-century Armenian homeland an interest in dietary regulations, and purity laws had been evident and may still have been significant. (See Charles Dowsett, *The*

The catalogue of manuscripts from Tabriz published in *Handēs Amsōreay* in 1905 includes a *Maštoč* dated 1321, from Tafew. Its main colophon mentions women deacons as part of the mystical paradise that is the Church:

[The Church] makes the earthy race of human beings appear greater in honor than the angels, through its various ranks and degrees: subdeacons, deacons, priests, and deaconesses. Through the physical oil, it offers to all the faithful the divine spirit that He gave to the Apostles, once again by breathing [upon them].³³

Penitential of David of Ganjak [CSCO 216, 217; *Scriptores Armeniaci* 3,4], Leuven: 1961.) Even as recently as a decade ago, older women in Jerusalem Armenian society manifested a becomingly medieval concern for the ritual purity of younger women taking communion.

³² The existence of deaconesses appears to have been possible in 14th century Cilicia as well, but the information on *Maštoč*es from this century is confused. Two manuscripts are adduced by Oghlukian, following Arat. (1) Oghlukian 20 follows Arat 172 in mentioning a *Maštoč* dated 1314, from Cilicia, that contains the ordination rite for women deacons. Oghlukian gives the number of this ms as MM 199, which appears to be an editorial error. Arat gives no number but describes it as an Ejmiacin manuscript, citing Hačuni "Convents", 73 and "Armenian Woman", 152 as well as Jean Mécérian, *Histoire et institutions de l'Église Arménienne: évolution nationale, doctrinale, spiritualité, monachisme* (Recherches publiées sous la direction de l'Institut de lettres orientales de Beyrouth 30), Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1963, 219-220. The Matenadaran catalogue does include a *Maštoč* dated 1314 from Skewra (MM2787) but this may not be the manuscript to which the sources refer; Arat mentions in a footnote that the Matenadaran curator G. Tēr Vardanyan was unable to verify the existence of the manuscript mentioned by Hačuni and by Mécérian. (2) Oghlukian 20 notes the existence of a *Maštoč* from Tafew produced "in the same year" (i.e., 1314); Arat, by contrast, mentions a *Maštoč* from Tafew dated to 1321. It would seem quite likely that Oghlukian's paragraph has again suffered an editorial error, but the date 1314 is also found in Hačuni "Armenian Woman", 152. Arat, who in a note mentions the date given by Hačuni as erroneous, gives the date of the Tafew *Maštoč* in question as 1321. She also states that G. Tēr Vardanyan was unable to identify either manuscript with anything in the present Matenadaran collection. For more on the 1321 manuscript, see the following note.

³³ Y. Ajařian, "Catalogue of Manuscripts of Tawriz: I. Catalogue of manuscripts of the library of Łalay or Berdafal," [*Յուշակ ձեռագրաց թուրիլի Ա. Յուշակ ձեռագրաց մատենադարանին Ղարալի կամ Բերդաթաղի*], *Handēs Amsōreay* XIX (1905), 201-213; 308-316; 370-375; here, 314 : Սա գմարդկան աղ չողեղինաց, գերապատիւ քան զհրեշտակս երեւեցուցանէ, ի զանազան կարգս եւ յաշտիճանս. կէս սարկաւազաց, սարկաւազաց, քահանայից եւ սարկաւազուհեաց: Սա զհոգին աստուածական զոր վերստին փշմամբ ետ առաքելոցն, նիւթական իւղովն ընձեռէ ամենայն հաւատացելոց:

Although the Cilician kingdom came to an end in 1375, and the Armenian homeland found itself under pressure from Mongols, Tatars, Turks, the existence — or the possibility — of women deacons continued. The Maštoč Matenadaran collection contains at least seven manuscripts from the period between the fall of Cilicia and the end of the 16th century which contain the ordination rite for women deacons. Those that bear specific dates are: MM3508 (1434, in Kaffa); MM6450 (1443, at Suxaray Monastery in Tarberunik); MM960 (1498 in Pörjafał).³⁴ While there are three or four more mss that have been dated to the 16th century,³⁵ none of them records a specific date or place of production.³⁶

³⁴ One more ms from the fifteenth century is undated (MM4961).

³⁵ MM 954, 970 and 5153. In addition, MM 4363 is listed by Oghlukian (p. 49 n. 46) as a 16th century manuscript, whereas the *Catalogue of Manuscripts of the Maštoč Matenadaran* dates it to the 17th. Oghlukian expresses thanks to the Matenadaran's erudite curator of manuscripts, Gëorg Tër Vardanyan, for providing the list of relevant manuscripts and their dates.

³⁶ There is also an interesting entry in the 14th-century manuscript MM 8198. The manuscript includes a series of questions and answers, found immediately following several pieces by Vardan Aygekçi (1170?-1235). It may be that the responses to the questions are his as well, (a comparison with other statements he may have made about women would help to determine this), though it seems unlikely. Among the questions is the following, on f. 119v: Q. What is the reason why women do not attain to the degree of priesthood, or to other order[s] of the Church's hierarchy? A. Firstly, because in the beginning God gave priesthood and kingship to Adam alone, for [only] he set names for all the creatures—which is the function of a priest—not the woman,³⁶ and He made all the flocks and cattle and all things submit under [Adam's] feet. Secondly, because a priest's function is free and [he] is not under obligation to anyone:³⁶ it is written in the canonical writings that "we do not permit [anyone] to set servants in the Church hierarchy, unless he be manumitted by his lord's will, as was Onesimus." [Հրց. Իսկ թէ գրնչ պատճառ է որ կին ոչ գայ յաստիճան քահանայութեան. եւ կամ յայլ կարգ ժառանգաւորութեան եկեղեցոյ: Պի. Նախ զի ի նախնումն Աստուած զքահանայութիւնն եւ զթագաւորութիւնն միայն Ազգամա ետ, զի նա եղ անուանս ամենայն կենդանեաց որ է գործ քահանային, եւ ոչ կնոջն. եւ հնազանդ արար ի ներքոյ ոտից նորա զիսաչն եւ զառջառն եւ զամենայն ինչ: Երկրորդ, զի գործ քահանայութեանս է ազատ, եւ ոչ ընդ ումեք հարկի ներքոյ. որպէս զրեալ է ի գիրս կանոնականս թէ զժառայս ի ժառանգութիւնն եկեղեցոյ կարգել ոչ հրամայեմք. բայց թէ ազատեալ լինի կամաւ տեսան որպէս Ռնեսիմոսն այն:] The response's emphasis on the connection between naming and priesthood is an ancient one. The *Book of the Cave of Treasures*, tr. E.A. Wallis Budge, London: The Religious Tract Society, 1927; repr. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2003, 53 has the voice of God announcing in the angels' hearing, "Adam, behold; I made thee king and priest and prophet and lord and head and

THE MODERN PERIOD: XVIIITH-XXIST CENTURIES

Women deacons within religious communities

When written information on women deacons, outside of the evidence presented in copies of the *Maštoč*,³⁷ resumes during the 17th century, it does so in a relative flood. Women deacons burst onto the scene again in the context of a great reform movement within the Catholicosate of Ejmiacin begun by Movsēs Tafewači, whose taking office as dean of the cathedral there in 1627 was strongly opposed by the reigning catholicos of the day. Movsēs would be elected catholicos himself in 1629. Though he reigned for only three years, his time in Ejmiacin sparked a revival not only in the Armenian homeland, but also in Armenian communities as far away as Jerusalem.

governor of everything which hath been made and created.” On the importance of Adam’s giving the names also compare Philo *Leg Alleg.* II.v.14-vi.18.

The emphasis on the rank of priests as “freemen” has a close parallel in Grigor Tafewači’s (1344?-1409) *Book of Questions* [Գիրք Հարցմանց], Constantinople, 1729 [1730]; repr. Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1993, 589: “. . . baptism is a function of priesthood. And priesthood is free and not under subservience to anyone, whereas the woman is man’s servant and “feet”. Given this [status of] subservience, it is not right for the servant to perform the function of the master. As it was also written in the book of the Nicene canons, “we do not permit [bishops] to set servants in the hierarchy of the Church, unless he be manumitted by his master’s will, as was Onesimus.” . . . [զի մկրտութիւնն է գործ քահանայութեան. եւ քահանայութիւնն է ազատ եւ ոչ ընդ ումեք հարկի ներքոյ. իսկ կիինն ծառայ եւ ոտք է առն. վասն այսր հարկի ոչ է պարտ ծառային անել զգործ տեառն: որպէս եւ գրեալ է ի գիրս նիկիական կանոնացն եթէ զծառայս ի ժառանգութիւն եկեղեցոյ կարգել ոչ հրամայեմք. բայց թէ ազատեալ լիցի տեառն կամօք որպէս Ռեսիմոսն աշն:] The context in Tafewači is a long discussion of baptism practices among schismatic groups. Although the topic does not concern us here, it is important to bear that context in mind; the respondent in 8198 seems to be extrapolating the specific into a general principle. Tafewači’s statement against women’s priesthood may not have extended to deaconesses, since the 1321 *Maštoč* from Dafew mentioned above clearly names them.

³⁷ Oghlukian, 49 n. 46 lists two manuscripts from the 17th century containing the ordination liturgy: MM907 (no specific date or place) and MM953 (1656, Isfahan). Oghlukian has translated the brief rite as recorded in MM 907 (Oghlukian, 21). As mentioned in Arat, 172, two Jerusalem manuscripts from the 17th century also contain the same canon: SJ2002 (ca. 1638) and SJ846 (though the latter number appears to be an error). In a note to the same page, she also mentions two 18th-century manuscripts, one in Antelias and another taken from Hačuni *Armenian Woman*, 153 dated to 1704-1710.

St. Catherine's, New Julfa³⁸

During the silent period prior to Movsēs' activities, a great tragedy had occurred. In 1604 the community of Juła was transferred *in toto* to Persia, where the Shah desired the community to re-establish itself. He relocated the Armenians to an area near Isfahan which they named New Julfa (Nor Juła).

Among the positive changes Movsēs made even before his election to the catholicosate was, in 1623, the building of a convent next to the S. Yovhannēs Church in New Julfa for the benefit of this traumatized community.³⁹ The convent included a church for the use of the monastic women. The new complex was named for St. Catherine, the woman intellectual saint of Alexandria, martyred in the 4th century. The choice of name made clear the future catholicos's intentions for the community: it was to comprise, at least in part, women dedicated to education.

This congregation was, in fact, a carry-over from one which had already existed in Old Julfa: three women from the original community — Urukšana, Taguhi and Hripsimē — were founding members of the new one.⁴⁰ It was a community proud of its tradition; new members took the names of their predecessors, by and large. And the community had a long life, spanning three and a quarter centuries.

For the present purpose, the St. Catherine's convent community had three particularly interesting features: first, its mission. The community ran two schools and later oversaw a factory as well, combining intellectual

³⁸ The St. Catherine's sisterhood is mentioned by Hourī Berberian in her article "Armenian Women", *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, vol. 2, Leiden: Brill, 2005, 10-14; here, 10.

³⁹ In his paper "New Armenian Communities in Safavid Iran and Their Relations with the Mother See of Ejiaciin," read at the conference *Where the Only Begotten Descended*, Ann Arbor, April 1-4, 2004, Vazken Ghougassian attributed the building of St. Catherine to Movsēs' disciple and later bishop of Isfahan, Xaçatur Kesareci. M.S. Esayean, "New Julfa's St. Catherine Convent" [*Նոր Զուղայի Ս. Կատարինի կուսանոցը*], *Hay Xosnak*, 1933, 157 and "New Julfa's S. Catherine Convent" [*Նոր Զուղայի Ս. Կատարինեան Անսոցարը*], *Sion* 1944.9-12, 192-199; here, 192 say that the convent was built with funds provided by Xoja Eliazar Lazarianc.

⁴⁰ Esayan, *Hay Xosnak*, 157 says that the museum of the convent's Amenaprkič church possessed an oil painting showing two of the three nuns. There is nothing in his description to indicate that these two women were dressed as deacons.

and practical technical education. Ultimately, the sisters broadened the scope of their educational vision to include an orphanage.

Second, it is clear that at least during the years between 1839 and 1851 the women making permanent profession to the community received the first four clerical ranks before being clothed in the monastic *schema*. In 1851 the prelate of the day, Archbishop T'addēos Begnazarian, began ordaining them to the diaconate as well.⁴¹ Not one of them, or two of them—as one might expect, if their intended function was to serve the altar within the community itself after the manner implicitly described by Mxiřar Goř in his *Lawbook* of six centuries previous—but almost all of them (fig. 1). The abbess of the community was always a deacon. A *kon-dak* issued to the community in 1839 listed the number of women in the community as sixteen.⁴² A letter written by the community in the same year confirms this. It is bordered by busts of the sixteen community members; a depiction of the convent is at the top of the page (fig. 2).⁴³

The last abbess of St. Catherine's, Elisabēf Israēlian (fig. 3), travelled to Jerusalem in 1944 when her brother was elected as Patriarch Kiwreř I (1944-1949).⁴⁴ She hoped to persuade him to allow her to move to Jerusalem and begin a community there similar in organization and mission to St. Catherine's, New Julfa. Despite the presence of a large school in need of trained staff within Jerusalem's Monastery of the Sts. James, the Patriarch refused her request on the grounds that he might lay himself open to accusations of nepotism.⁴⁵ Dn. Elisabēf returned to New Julfa.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Also see idem, "New Julfa's S. Catherine Convent" [Նոր Ջուլֆայի Ս. Կատարինեան Անապատը], *Sion*, 1945.1-2, 23-27; here, 23.

⁴² Esayan, *Hay Xosnak*, 158-159.

⁴³ See fig. 2. The letter describes the mission of Sister Varvara to India and the unfortunate loss of the funds she had collected there.

⁴⁴ According to the biography of the newly-elected patriarch, published in *Sion* 1944.9-12, 165-170, Elisabēf had been ordained a deacon by Abp. Nersēs Mēligfangian, "prelate of Atrpatakan".

⁴⁵ This was told to me by the late Bishop Guregh Kapikian, who had been a disciple of Kiwreř I, and received the latter's name at his own ordination. Dn. Elisabēf's visit inspired Esayan's two-part article, "New Julfa's S. Catherine Convent", mentioned in notes 39 and 41, above.

St. Stephen, Tiflis⁴⁶

The women's monastic community of St. Stephen in Tiflis differed from that of St. Catherine's, New Julfa in several important ways. The Tiflis congregation was housed in a private monastery constructed by the Bahbutian family on its estate lands. Thus the family exerted considerable influence over the community and its activities. It may be assumed that it was their intention that the community, as is stated in its informal canons, would devote itself to liturgical service outside the convent. The nurturing and training of women deacons was the core of this mission: in 1933, the community comprised eighteen members, twelve of whom were ordained deacons.⁴⁷

Noted for their musical skills and training, the deaconesses of St. Stephen were in demand at services in the larger community, particularly funerals (whence, we are told, a good portion of their income derived). It was possible to be a member of the community without becoming a deacon; however, this was clearly a lesser good: if a member of the congregation was a deacon at her death, her entire estate became the congregation's property. If she had not attained the diaconate, half her property was returned to her family, while her funeral expenses were defrayed from the remaining half.⁴⁸

Among the deacons of St. Stephen, Tiflis, were several women of good family, whose personal income helped to insure the solvency of the community. One of these was Hripsimē Tahirianc, the last abbess of the congregation. (fig. 4)⁴⁹ She served on the main altar of the Cathedral of

⁴⁶ I have not had access to X. Xučean, *History of St. Stephen's Convent in Tiflis* [Թիֆլիսի Ս. Ստեփանոս կուսանոց անապատի պատմութիւն], Tiflis: 1914. Arat, 174-175 refers to it several times.

⁴⁷ Katarinē Artufeanc Erkaynabazuk, Epriusinē Abameliķeanc, Anna Xojaminaseanc, Sōfi Amatuneanc, Pebronē Xupianc, Manea Loris Meliķeanc, Gayianē Šaxnazarianc, Hripsimē Tayirianc, Ustianē Abeleanc, Šušanik Xarazeanc, Iskuhi Enfiējianc, Elmoneay Paruŋjianc. The names are given in Meliķ Pēylikĵian, "The Armenian Convent of Tiflis" [Հայ կուսաստանի Թիֆլիսի], *Hay Xōsnak*, 1933, 82. The remaining six women had the rank of *dpir*.

⁴⁸ Oghlukian 36-39 gives the text of a letter in which the community's Abbess Yustianē described the regulations of the convent to Bp. Nersēs. The information concerning disposal of a nun's estate is found on 36.

⁴⁹ The photograph shown in fig. 4 appeared in H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and Studies*, I. *The Russian Provinces*, originally published in London: 1901, 252. The deaconess had

Sts. James in Jerusalem (fig. 4), and she is remembered in Ejmiacin, where her dedicatory inscription on the doors of the cathedral is still clearly legible (figs. 5-6).⁵⁰ Hripsimē Tahirianc is also remembered as the treasurer of a collection campaign on behalf of Jerusalem's Monastery of the Sts. James.

Katarinē Łorlanov, another deacon from Tiflis, is mentioned as having made a gift to the Srs. James Monastery.⁵¹ In 1864 she visited the Monastery for a second time, bringing with her a set of thirty-one copes worked with gold crosses.⁵²

The Kalfayan community, Istanbul

The Kalfayan sisterhood of Istanbul came into being in 1866, the most recent of the Armenian religious communities of women to include deacons (fig. 9).⁵³ Its stated mission was the care and education of orphans.⁵⁴ The first member of the sisterhood to be ordained to the diaconate,

come to Ejmiacin in 1892 for the consecration of Khrimian Hayrig Catholicos, and she gave the photo to Lynch.

⁵⁰ Oghlukian, 30 also notes an embroidered depiction of the cathedral at Ejmiacin, presented by her to Khrimian Hayrik.

⁵¹ Mkrtič Aławnuni, *Members of the Brotherhood and Visitors to Armenian Jerusalem [Արարանք եւ Այցելութիւն Հայ Երրուսաղէմի]*, Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1929, 83, 225-226.

⁵² On her first visit to Jerusalem, Katarinē had requested ordination as a deacon from Patriarch Yovhannēs Izmirlian (1850-1860), who declined her request, maintaining that such an ordination was not part of the Armenian Church's tradition. (Tigran Sawalanian, *History of Jerusalem [Պատմութիւն Երրուսաղէմի]*, Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1931, vol. 2, 1131-1132.; also cited in Arat, 174, n. 276.)

⁵³ A series of articles in the Patriarchate of Istanbul's publication *Šotakat*, 1966 marked the centennial of the sisterhood's foundation and included a copy of the catholicosal *kontak* issued on the occasion, an illustrated history of the sisterhood, and a description of celebratory events.

⁵⁴ *The Costumes of Armenian Women*, Tehran: International Communicators, [n.d.] has a modern reconstruction of a deaconess's vestment, together with the photo of a deaconess from Istanbul, 19th c. reproduced from G. Mesrop, *History of the Armenian Church [Պատմութիւն Հայ Եկեղեցւոյ]*, Istanbul: Paros, 1913-1914, 226 (description on 227, derived from Malakia Örmelian, *National History [Ազգասպաստութիւն]*, I.B. Beirut: Sevan, 1959, 644-646). (The relevant excerpt from *The Costumes* is online at www.hyeetch.nareg.com.au/culture/textile_p4.html, and a doll wearing this costume is available from aasadolls.com/USarmenian/Deaconess.html.)

Aławnuni Kēōsēian, was ordained under Patriarch Mesrop Naroyan in 1932; the last, Hriṗsimē Sasunian, was ordained by Patriarch Šnorhk Galustian in 1982.⁵⁵ Inscriptions on the collective tombstone of the sisterhood name three of the nuns buried there as “archdeaconess”. (figs. 20-21)

In addition to their educational work, the Kalfayan sisterhood served in liturgical capacities both within their own community and outside it. The deacons Aławni and Mariam left such a positive impression on the faithful in Jerusalem, when they made a pilgrimage there in 1933, that a poem was written and dedicated to them on that occasion.⁵⁶

When another deaconess from the community made the pilgrimage to Sts. James in the 1960's, she was invited to serve on the altar by then Patriarch Elišē Tērtērian.⁵⁷

Deacon Hriṗsimē Sasunian, who was born in Damascus in 1928 and entered the Kalfayan community in 1953, was ordained a subdeacon in 1966 and a deacon in 1982 by Patriarch Šnorhk Galustyan.⁵⁸ She visited the Western Diocese of America in 1986, where she served the liturgy in a different parish of the diocese on each Sunday of her visit. At one time she had functioned as the head of the Kalfayan Orphanage, and in the year of her American visit she was serving the Patriarchate as an accountant, in addition to serving the Sunday liturgy in various parishes of the capital.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ This date, together with the date of her ordination as subdeacon in 1966, is taken from the *Baikar* article written on the occasion of her visit to the Western Diocese of America, referred to below. In a letter to Rev. Fr. Arnak Kasparian, dated Feb. 22, 1985, the Patriarch Šnorhk Galustian of Istanbul, stated that he had ordained her to the diaconate in the previous year. Fr. Kasparian also kindly shared the copy of a letter from the parish council of St. Thomas Armenian Church in Tenafly, New Jersey, responding to criticism for having allowed Dn. Hriṗsimē to serve on the altar of the church. Thus, not all hierarchs were equally receptive to women deacons at that time. Figs. 10-12 show the ordination to the diaconate of the Kalfayan nun Mother Mariam. Fig. 17 shows the sisterhood with Patriarch Šnorhk.

⁵⁶ Melkon Asatur, “Pilgrim Nun” [*Մայրսպիտակու ուխտաւոր*], *Sion* 1933.5, 97.

⁵⁷ According to an oral communication of the late Bp. Guregh Kapikian, a member of the Sts. James Brotherhood, her visit and the dignified manner of her altar service left a very positive impression on the congregation.

⁵⁸ In a letter to M.K. Arat, the Patriarch stated that on that occasion he used the ordination canon for a male deacon. Arat, 179, n. 320. Figs. 13-16, 18, 19 show Deacon Hriṗsimē in various liturgical settings.

⁵⁹ According to *Baikar*, Oct. 9, 1986, 7, these were: St. James, Los Angeles (August 3); St. Peter, Van Nuys (August 10); Holy Mother of God, Yetem (August 17) and St. Gregory the Illuminator, Pasadena (August 24). The biographical sketch accompanying this an-

Figs. 13-16, 18 show photographs of a Kalfayan deaconess serving on the altar.⁶⁰

Lebanon

At the present time three women deacons serve the Bird's Nest Orphanage in Byblos (Jbail), Lebanon, under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia.⁶¹

*Women Deacons not in the context of a known convent community*⁶²

Tiflis

As mentioned above, the women's community of St. Stephen, Tiflis, ceased to exist before 1939. However, the presence of a women deacon in Tiflis is still attested in that year. The Russian priest Nikolai Zernov visited the Church of St. Stephen and confessed himself favorably impressed by the woman deacon who brought the elements to the altar in the Great Entrance.⁶³

nouncement states that at the time, Dn. Hripsimē was the only remaining member of her order.

⁶⁰ It will be seen in the photographs that the deaconesses wear the stole not over the right shoulder, which was a distinguishing characteristic of the female deacon's garb in the earlier centuries, but over the left as male deacons do. Unfortunately, I do not have details concerning the location(s) at which these photographs were taken. Such information may yet emerge.

⁶¹ Phyllis Zagano, "Grant Her Your Spirit," *America* 192.4, Feb. 7, 2005 describes their ministry. In a verbal communication, Prof. Zagano said that she had a letter confirming the diaconal status of the three. The group was also mentioned by Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Chiftjian in an article dated 2000 and entitled, "Should Women be Accepted into the Priesthood?" published online at armeniancross.com/TheChurch/Chiftjian/AnAuthor/Articles/A025.html. A picture showing two of the women (though not with diaconal garb) is available at www.armenianorthodoxchurch.org/x04/index.htm.

⁶² In addition to the women mentioned in this article, there is another unidentified Deacon Hripsimē. In 1655 a hymn was written at her request and in memory of her and her sister Mariam, according to Hačuni, "Convents", 75-76. Arat 173, n. 246 adds that she was unable to locate this in the Mekhitarist Library of San Lazzaro.

⁶³ This statement is made in Yedvard Gulbekian, "Restoring Women to Their Proper Role in the Armenian Church," *Outreach* 8 (October 6, 1985), 12. (This article was also

Astrakhan

While there is no known record of a religious community of women in Astrakhan, the cathedral of the Holy Theotokos in that city was apparently served by women deacons. In the Ejmiacin museum collection are two diaconal stoles donated to the cathedral in memory of Deaconess Hripsimē Mnačakanian by her sister, Deaconess Anna.⁶⁴ (figs. 7-8) The inscription on one of the stoles reads,

this stole is a memorial for the soul of Hripsimē Mnačakanian, Deaconess nun at the Cathedral of the Holy Theotokos in Astrakhan, 1837.⁶⁵

The inscription on the second stole, whose design is identical to that of the first but reversed, reads in a similar fashion:

of Anna, Deaconess nun at the Cathedral of the Holy Theotokos in Astrakhan, this stole is a memorial of Anna Mnačakanian to gethsemane for the soul of her deceased sister.⁶⁶

Bursa

Until her death in 1877, Deacon Nazeni Gēoziumian served the village of Sēolēoz in the Diocese of Bursa. In fact, she was ordained together with its priest, Father Nicholas. Deacon Nazeni headed a school for girls; when it was closed, she continued teaching in her home, and when it was reopened, she returned to her former position.⁶⁷

printed in an Armenian newspaper; a photocopy of the article was given to me, but without the name of the paper or a date of publication.)

⁶⁴ It is unclear whether the word “sister” implies consanguinity, spiritual relationship, membership in a community, or is simply an honorific.

⁶⁵ Յիշատակ է ուրարս վասն հոգևոյ Հռիփսիմէ Մնացականեանի կուսան սարկաւազուհի սր Աստուածածնի տաճարին որ յԱստրախան 1837:

⁶⁶ Աննայի կուսան սարկաւազի ի դուռն Սրբոյ Աստուածածնի տաճարին որ յԱստրախան. Յիշատակ է ուրարս Աննայ Մնացականեանէ գեթսեմանին վասն հոգին հանգուցեալ քեան իւրոյ: There may be a date at the bottom of one side of the stole, but it is not legible in the photograph. The name “gethsemane” here presumably refers to an area within the cathedral.

⁶⁷ Abraham Y. Avazian, “An Armenian Deaconess in Sēolēōz,” [Աւագ սարկաւազուհի մը ի Սէօլէօզ], *Hay Xōsnak*, 1933, 82.

Poland/Ukraine⁶⁸

In 1648 an Armenian known as Stepan Spendowski emigrated to Jazlowiec,⁶⁹ where he became “mayor for life”. In 1676 he was named to the nobility,⁷⁰ and distinguished himself in battle against the Tatars. When the Tatars later took the town, Armenians who were fortunate enough to be able to leave did so.⁷¹ Stepan, his wife and his daughter Hripsimē went to Jerusalem, where Hripsimē took a vow of celibacy and “devoted herself to Christ’s Tomb”. Following her father’s death, she and her mother returned to Jazlowiec, where Hripsimē was ordained a deacon.

Deacon Yustianē

At around the time that St. Catherine was founded in New Julfa, a scribe named Deaconess Yustianē was producing manuscripts. On 32v of MM 39 (a devotional collection of prayers and lives of the fathers) she signs herself *Ustianē Sarkawag*.⁷² Another of her manuscripts, a *Book of Hours* (MM4930) is dated to 1653. On 231v she writes, “O readers, when you read this book, remember the poor and insignificant Ustianē, together with my parents and all my kin. Remember my brother Fr. Mkrtič the

⁶⁸ The information given here concerning Deacon Hripsimē and her family derives from *Ararat*, 1902, 296-297.

⁶⁹ Jazlowiec, in Podolia, was part of Poland until the 18th century. Its Armenian episcopal see had been established by 1250.

⁷⁰ An online history of Jazlowiec (www.aerobiologicalengineering.com/wxk116/sjk/jazch3.html) praises Spendowski highly: “The former hero of Jazlowiec, Bohdan Sefarowicz, mayor of the Armenian community for life, once again took arms in defense of his homeland. Having organized the Armenian home guard, he kept close watch on approaching enemy units and immediately intervened whenever danger threatened. His military actions were so effective that the town remained free from marauding units of Turks and Tartars throughout the hostilities. It was for this heroic stand that he was elevated by the Polish king to the rank of nobility and given the name Spendowski and Koniecpolski’s coat of arms.”

⁷¹ According to the town history cited above, Spendowski was already dead at this time.

⁷² *Grand Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts in the Maštoč Matenadaran*, vol. I, Erevan: Academy of Sciences Press, 1984, 135-142. Her colophons appear on 140-141. Her other colophon mentions the word *Anapat* [Desert] which may denote a monastery, but seems more likely to be referring to title of the work she copied. Oghlukian, 27 mentions this manuscript and lists other female scribes.

priest and his sons Awag and Yovhanēs, and the little Karaypet, and Xasafun, who has gone to be with the Lord.”⁷³

Argentina

On December 29, 2002 His Eminence Archbishop Kisak Mouradian, Primate of Argentina, ordained Maria Ozkul to the diaconate, together with her younger brother, Michel.⁷⁴

CONCLUSION

While historical information about them is still incomplete, it is evident that the Armenian Church's women deacons have served their faith communities in a variety of ways, both within and outside of convent compounds. Women's issues, education, care of the orphaned and service to the bereaved have been among their areas of mission, as has the performance of liturgy both in specifically women's settings and in the greater community, where they have been found on the altar in the context of cathedral, parish and convent worship alike.⁷⁵

⁷³ Vazgen Hakobyan, *Armenian Manuscript Colophons, XVIIth Century* [Հայերեն Ձեռագրերի Հիշատակարաններ, Ժ. դար], vol. 3, 555-556: Ով ընթերցողք, յորժամ ընթեռնուք ատենայդիրս, յիշեցէք գեղկել[ի] եւ չընչին Ուստիանէ, ծնողօք իմովք եւ ամենայն արեանց մերձաւորաց, յիշեցէք եղբայր իմ [աէր] Մկրտիչ քահանայն եւ որդիքն իւր Աւագն եւ Յովհանէսին, եւ փոքրիկ Կարայպետն եւ Խասաթունն, որ փոխեալ է առ Տէր: ԹՎԻՆ ՌՃԲ [1653]

⁷⁴ Further details are not known to me. The information given here was made available to me by Dn. Allen (Eghia) Jendian of Fresno, California, who received it from Rev. Fr. Eghishe Nazarian, serving in Argentina. As mentioned in n. 1, the late Catholicos Vazgen I felt that it was unnecessary to bring the matter of women's diaconate before the episcopal synod, as a precedent for such ordination already existed; instead, the ordination of women deacons should be at the discretion of diocesan bishops. (Kasparian, 5)

⁷⁵ Public statements in the late 20th and early 21st century concerning the women's diaconate include the resolution of the Eastern Diocesan Assembly meeting in Racine, Wisconsin in 1986, calling for the ordination of qualified women to the diaconate. (The text of the resolution appears in Barbara Merguerian, "Oriental Orthodox Traditions and the Armenian Apostolic Church," in Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether, eds., *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006, 518-523; here, 521. It is also cited by Kyriaki Karidoyanes Fitzgerald, "Orthodox Women and Pastoral Praxis: Observations and Concerns for

the Church in America," *St. Nina Quarterly* III.2, from a diocesan news release of July 7, 1986, entitled "Diocese of the Armenian Church of America Seeks Ordination of Women to the Diaconate".) In a May, 2001 interview with the magazine *AIM His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II* envisioned the community of nuns then forming in Ejmiacin as a potential source of women deacons: "The nuns that we will be training will be able to become deaconesses."



(fig. 1)

The sisterhood of St. Catherine's, New Julfa
Sion 1945, p. 26



(fig. 2)

Document of St. Catherine's Convent, New Julfa
Hay Xosnak 1933, p. 83



(fig. 3)

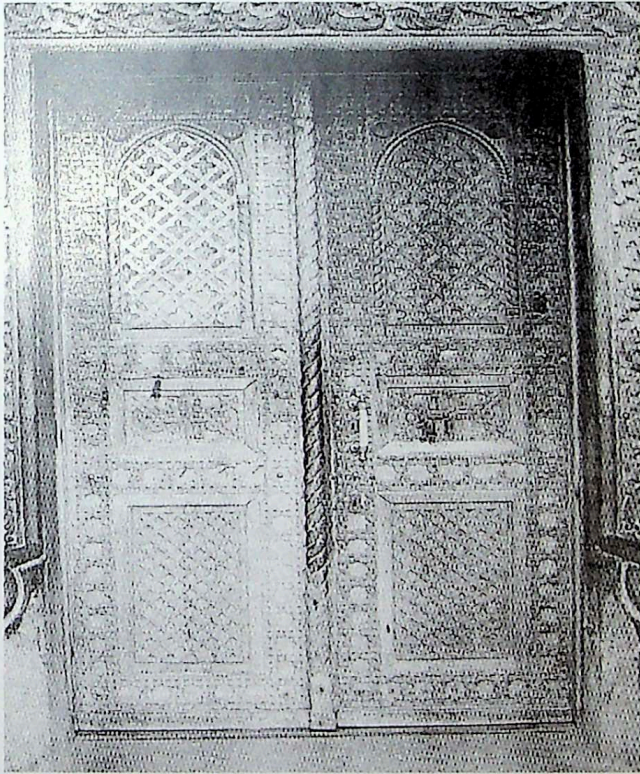
Elisabēt Israēlian, abbess of St. Catherine's, New Julfa
Sion 1944, 165



(fig. 4)

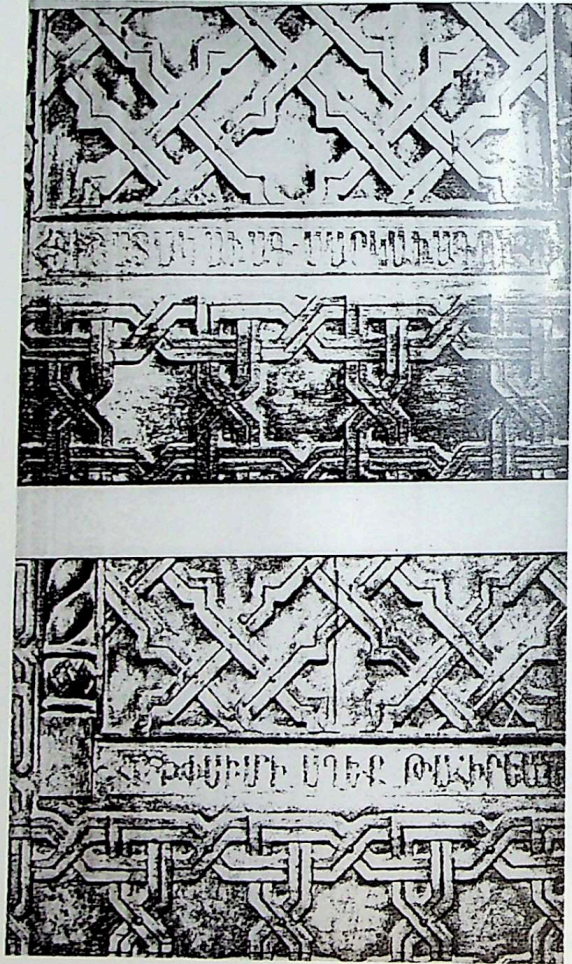
Dn. Hripsimē Tayireanč

H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and Studies*, vol. 1, p. 252



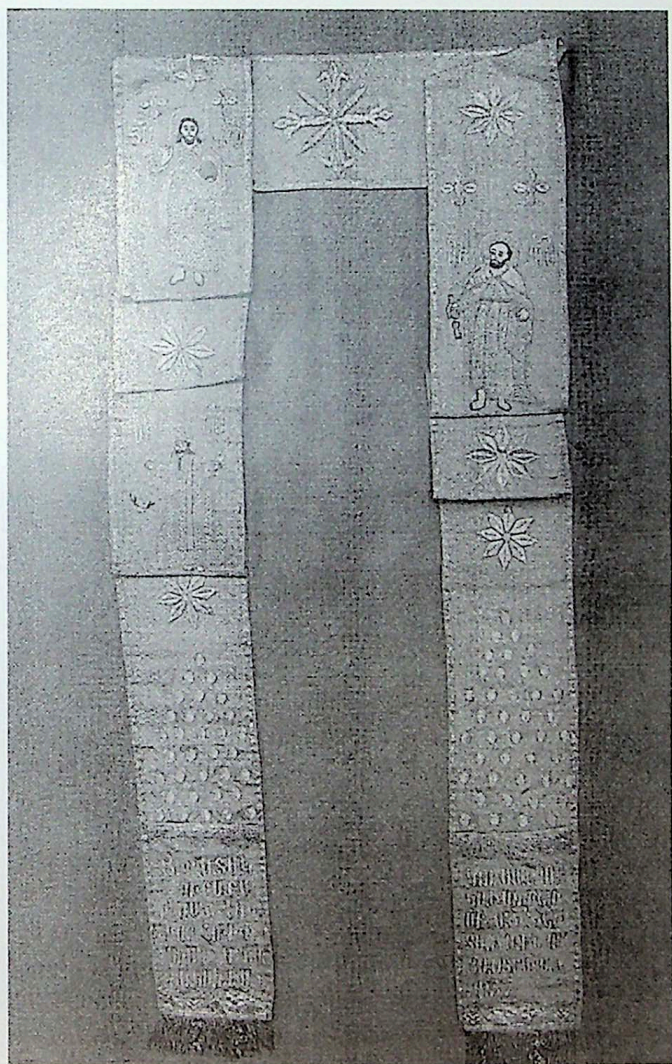
(fig. 5)

Ejmiacin door, with Dn. Hripsimē Tayirianč's inscription



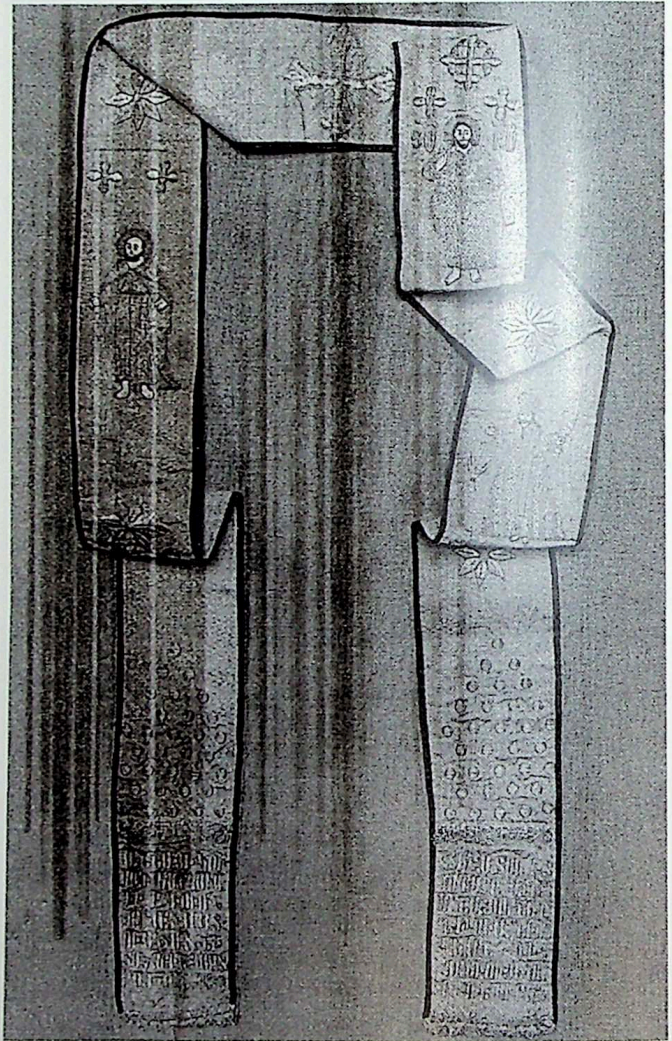
(fig. 6)

Memorial Inscription of Dn. Hripsimē T'ayiriané (detail)



(fig. 7)

Stole given by Dn. Anna Mnačakanian
to the Cathedral of the Theotokos, Astrakhan (1837)



(fig. 8)

Stole given by Dn. Anna Mnačakanian
to the Cathedral of the Theotokos, Astrakhan

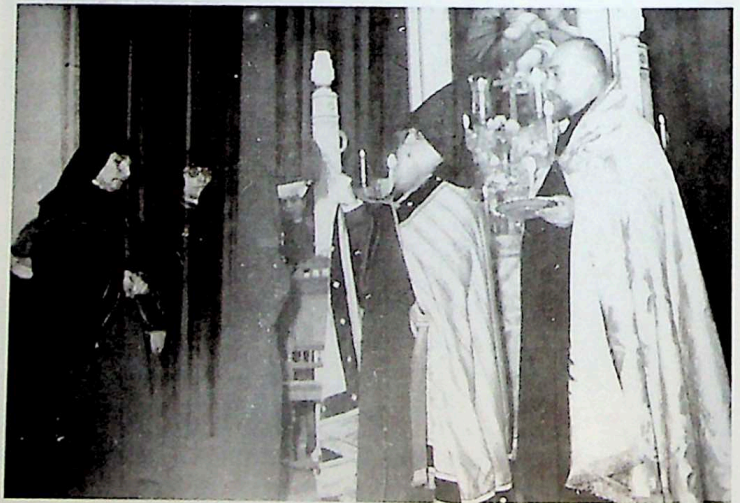


(fig. 9)
The Kalfayan sisterhood



(fig. 10)

Ordination to the diaconate of Kalfayan nun Mother Mariam, Nov. 2, 1955



(fig. 11)

Ordination to the diaconate of Kalfayan nun Mother Mariam, Nov. 2, 1955



(fig. 12)

Ordination to the diaconate of Kalfayan nun Mother Mariam, Nov. 2, 1955



(fig. 13)

Dn. Hripsimē on the altar, 1984



(fig. 14)

Dn. Hripsimē on the altar, 1984



(fig. 15)

Dn. Hripsimē on the altar



(fig. 16)

Dn. Hřipsimē reading the Gospel



(fig. 17)

The Kalfayan sisterhood with Patriarch ŠnorhĶ Galustian



(fig. 18)

Dn. Hripsimē, Great Entrance, Easter 1998

Lraber 16/04/1998, p. 6



(fig. 19)

Easter Procession, Istanbul 1998. Dn. Hripsimē in right foreground

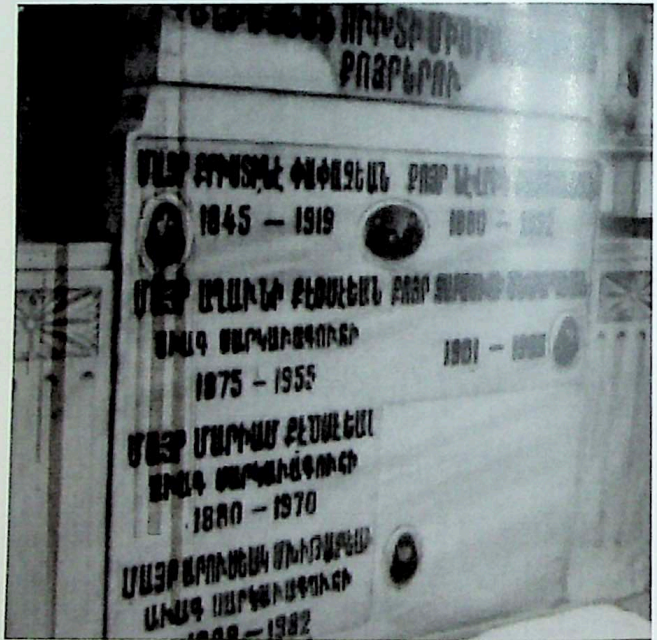
Lraber 1998/8/65 ; 16/04/1998, p. 6



(fig. 20)

The tomb of the Kalfayan sisterhood, Istanbul

(author's photo, 2006)



(fig. 21)

Tomb of the Kalfayan sisterhood, Istanbul (detail)
 (author's photo, 2006)

PETROS SIWNEC'I,
PRAISE TO THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

Edward G. Mathews, Jr.

MARY, THE BLESSED VIRGIN and the Mother of God (Arm., Աստուածածին/*Astuacacin*, lit., 'Bearer of God', = Gr. *Theotokos*),¹ has been the object of an immense number of homilies, panegyrics and hymns composed by many fathers of the Armenian Church.² It has even been estimated that over eighty percent of Armenian churches and monasteries have been dedicated to Mary as *Astuacacin*. It is a unique feature of an Armenian Church to have an icon of the Virgin Mary holding the divine infant over the main altar. There does not seem ever to have been a time when Armenia did not recognize Mary as *Astuacacin*. Yet, despite this importance of Mary to the history and spirituality of the Armenian Church, Armenian Mariology has been an essentially neglected field. Until only very recently, Mary had been virtually ignored in Western language Armenian Studies. For French speakers Prof. Tamar Dasnabédian has almost single-handedly reintroduced Mariology into modern Armenian studies; she has been very diligent in producing translations of Armenian texts on Mary as well as studies on various aspects of Armenian Mariology.³ In English, however, there remains an almost complete dearth of

¹ I have retained throughout this article the traditional epithet "Mother of God" for *Astvadzadzin*, despite its being non-literal and somewhat anachronistic; see the perceptive discussion of D.F. Wright, "From 'God-Bearer' to 'Mother of God' in the Later Fathers," in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary* (Studies in Church History 39), Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004, 22-30.

² See the exceptional bibliography of Classical Armenian texts on Mary in T. Dasnabédian, *Le Panégyrique de la Sainte Mère de Dieu de Grigor Narekaci*, Antelias: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1995, 371-403. This bibliography also contains Armenian translations of Greek and Syriac texts. I would like to express here my most profound thanks to Prof. Dasnabédian for giving me a signed copy of her book.

³ In addition to T. Dasnabédian, *Le Panégyrique de la Sainte Mère de Dieu de Grigor Narekaci*, already mentioned, see eadem, *La mariologie arménienne*, Antelias: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1995, and eadem, *Sur la Mère de Dieu*, Antelias: Armenian Ca-

study — and apparently, though I hesitate to say it, of interest. Not a single title, for example, can be found in either Thomson's recent bibliography or its Supplement.⁴ The obvious result of such a lack of publication by scholars of Armenian theology is that there is no Armenian representation in English reference works on Mary from the last century. This includes histories of Marian devotion,⁵ as well as general encyclopedic works devoted to Mary.⁶ The most recent such publication, which claims to be a complete resource book on Mary, makes only a passing — and misleading! — reference to an ancient feast of Mary in the Armenian *Lectionary*,⁷ but no reference at all to any Armenian author on Mary or even a general synopsis of Mariology in Armenia.

tholicosate of Cilicia, 1996, to name only the most important. She has been even more prolific in her studies composed in modern Armenian; for example, Դ. Dasnabédian, *The Mother of God in the Dogmatic Theology of the Armenian Church*. Antelias: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1999, and eadem, *Tiramayr*, Lisbon: Bibliothèque Arménienne de la Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, 1998. This last volume provides texts of a number of previously unedited Armenian writings on Mary, including some translated texts that seem to survive only in their classical Armenian translations.

⁴ R.W. Thomson, *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD* (Corpus Christianorum), Turnhout: Brepols, 1995; and idem., "Supplement to *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD* : Publications 1993-2005," *Le Muséon* 120 (2007), 163-223.

⁵ Such otherwise comprehensive studies as T. Livius, *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries*, London: Burns and Oates, 1893; H. Graef, *Mary, A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963; J. Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998; L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999, contain no reference whatsoever to Armenia or to any Armenian author. A standard work in ecumenical circles, A. Stacpoole, ed., *Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue*, London: Moorehouse, 1982, also makes no mention of Mary in Armenia.

⁶ D. Attwater, *A Dictionary of Mary*, New York: P.J. Kenedy, 1956, contains three entries: "Armenia, Shrines of," pp. 14-15; "Bzommar, Our Lady of," p. 37, and "Swoon of Our Lady, The," p. 281, but all three of these entries are modern Armenian Catholic devotions. M. O'Carroll, ed., *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, rev. ed., Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983, contains only one brief entry on "Gregory Narek (sic)," pp. 159-160.

⁷ S.J. Shoemaker, "Marian Liturgies and Devotion in Early Christianity," in S.J. Boss, ed., *Mary: The Complete Resource*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 130-145. Shoemaker makes reference to A. Renoux, ed., *Le codex arménien Jérusalem 121* (2 vols., *Patrologia Orientalis* 35.1 and 36.2), Turnhout: Brepols, 1969-1971, I:166-172 and II:354-357, in support of an early Jerusalem feast of the Memorial of Mary, but nowhere in

It is primarily — and only in a very small way — to begin rectifying this egregious lacuna in modern Mariological studies that this brief work is being offered here. It is to be hoped that this single translation constitutes but the first step in a much larger project,⁸ and one harbors even greater hope that it may also arouse interest in Armenian Mariology among Christians of all denominations: religious, lay and scholar alike. It is to all those people that this article is dedicated.

The work that we have translated below is perhaps the earliest native Armenian text devoted to Mary. The author of this work, Petros Siwneçi, or Petros of Siwnik, is something of an historical enigma. The primary bibliographical details that we have for his life are provided by the 13th-century Metropolitan and historian of Siwnik, Stepannos Ōrbēlean. Metropolitan Stepannos no doubt had access to archival material available nowhere else, but the data he provides are nonetheless chronologically impossible. For instance, he records that Petros was among the group that included Eznik and his companions, whom Maštoç sent to Constantinople (c.420) to find and translate works into Armenian. Subsequently, Petros attended the Council of Chalcedon (451), and later also attended the first council of Dvin (505/506). Then, only after all this, he became a student of Movsēs Kertolāhayr (†c.530)! Ōrbēlean even suggests that Petros was witness to all the troubles that led to the schism between Siwnik and Armenia toward the end of the sixth century. All of this would, of course, span a period of nearly two hundred years, which is manifestly impossible.

Scholars have attempted by various means to resolve these chronological impossibilities, but on the basis of the undeniable fact that Petros was a signatory at the second council of Dvin in 555/556, the most likely scenario is the following.⁹ Petros was probably born around the turn of the

these two volumes, and certainly not on the pages that Shoemaker cites, is there even a mention of such a feast.

⁸ This translation is but the first piece of what I hope will eventually become an entire volume devoted to Armenian works on Mary; it will include all the major homilies and treatises on Mary from the classical period, along with a lengthy introduction on the history and development of Armenian Mariology.

⁹ Stepannos Ōrbēlean, *History of the Sisakan Province* [Պատմութիւն Նախանդին Սիսական] c.22, ed. K. Šahnazarian (2 vols.), Paris: E. Thunot, 1859, vol. I, 131-133; trans., M. Brosset, *Histoire de la Siounie par Stephannos Orbelian*, St. Petersburg: Académie impériale des sciences, 1864, 52-53. The early secondary work is found in N. Akinean, "Petros Episkopos Siwneaç," *Handēs Amsōreay* 17 (1903), 245-252; 18 (1904), 18-22, 77-83, 105-113; B. Sargisean "Petros Siwneçi," *Bazmavēp* 62 (1904), 65-71; N. Akinean and P. Tēr-Polosean, "Litarary Studies 1. Petros Bishop of Siwnik" [Մատենագրական

fifth-sixth century; most scholars now designate the year of his birth at "c.500". He grew up in Siwnik where he did, in fact, become a student of Movsēs Kertolahayr. Petros apparently won great renown as a student and theologian for Ōrbēlean unabashedly describes him as "incomparable among men . . . a valiant orator and an invincible philosopher, full of wisdom, perfect in virtue, and pre-eminent among the teachers of Armenia, as well as a grammarian and translator."¹⁰ Due, no doubt, to such abilities, he became bishop of Siwnik in 548, succeeding Macarius. Again, there is no doubt that he was one of the bishops in attendance at the second Council of Dvin, as he is mentioned and/or was signatory to several letters preserved in the *Girk' Tltoc'*.¹¹ He seems to have died in 558, approximately two years after the close of the Council.

For all this apparent renown, however, very few writings have come down to us under the name of Petros Siwnec'i.¹² In his short chapter on Petros, Ōrbēlean records the information that Petros composed writings against the Chalcedonians and against adherents of later councils, and that he commented on the obscure and difficult words in both the Old and New Testaments. He also "delivered learned homilies on the Birth of Christ". One of these homilies, translated below, which was most likely written while Petros was bishop of Siwnik, is the only one of these 'learned homilies' that appears to have survived.¹³

Հետազոտութիւններ Ա. Պետրոս Սիւնեաց Եպիսկոպոս], *Handēs Amsōreay* 89 (1975), 257-274; N. Polarean [=Bogharian], *Armenian Writers [Հայ Գրողներ]*, Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1971, 44-46; but the real critical work has been done by G. Garitte, *La Narratio de rebus Armeniae* (CSCO 132), Leuven: Peeters, 1952, 212-216, and, especially, N.G. Garsoïan, *L'Église arménienne et le grand schisme d'orient* (CSCO 574, Subsidia 100), Leuven: Peeters, 1999, 296-302, on which the following brief resumé is based.

¹⁰ անհամեմատն ի մարդկանէ . . . քաջ հռետորն եւ անյաղթ փիլիսոփայն, լի իմաստութեամբ եւ կատարեալ առաքինութեամբ, նախաթող վարդապետաց Հայոց, քերթող եւ թարգմանիչս

¹¹ For example, he is both signatory to and is named in the title of the Oath of Union, cf. Y. Izmireanc, ed., *Book of Correspondence [Գիրք Թղթոց]*, Tiflis, 1901, 72-75. For other references, see Garsoïan, *L'Église arménienne et le grand schisme d'orient*, 301.

¹² For a complete list, see Polarean, *Armenian Writers*, 44-45; nearly all of these are collected in G. Tēr Mkrtčean, "Petros Bishop of Siwnik" [*Պետրոս Սիւնեաց Եպիսկոպոս*], *Ararat* 35 (1902), 88-98, 183-203.

¹³ Only two other very short fragments seem to have survived; see Tēr Mkrtčean, "Petros Bishop of Siwnik," 203.

It is not the place here to rehearse a history of Mariology, but it is nonetheless interesting to note that this homily of Petros was composed during the same general period when Marian devotion was in its ascendancy in Constantinople.¹⁴ Any direct influence though remains to be determined, as does any influence from the famous homilies on the Theotokos composed by Proclus, 5th-century Patriarch of Constantinople, whose writings were well-known in Armenia. His famous *Tome*, composed soon after the Council of Ephesus, was quickly translated into Armenian,¹⁵ as were some of his homilies on the Theotokos; these latter were perhaps even known to Petros.¹⁶

While Petros' *Homily* was manifestly delivered on the Feast of the Nativity — or more accurately, the Feast of the Theophany — its attention is rather directed to the figure of Mary in her new role as the Mother of God and portal of the divine into this world. This is no surprise, as it became common in the post-Ephesus Christian world that the Feast of the Theophany was also celebrated as the Feast of the Mother of God. As Proclus himself said, "Had the Word not dwelt in a womb, the flesh would never have sat on the throne."¹⁷

But the greatest interest in this short homily may lie in the many images or types of Mary that Petros finds throughout the Bible, particularly from the Old Testament. It was perhaps logical that after Ephesus, when the role of Mary had been brought into question, exegetes would search for scriptural foundations in her support, but this feature of Marian homilies and treatises became rather commonplace only in later 8th-century

¹⁴ A. Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds its Symbol," *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1978), 79-108.

¹⁵ The fundamental study remains K. Sarkissian, *The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church*, London: SPCK, 1965, 119-128. For the importance of the *Tome* in the wider Christian world, see L. van Rompay, "Proclus of Constantinople's 'Tomus ad Armenos' in the Post-Chalcedonian Tradition," in *After Chalcedon. [Essays] offered to Albert van Roey*, Leuven: Peeters, 1985, 425-449.

¹⁶ See N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 66), Leiden: Brill, 2003. Some of the homilies of Proclus on the Theotokos were translated into Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, Arabic, Georgian, and Slavonic; see F.J. Leroy, *L'Homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople: Tradition manuscrite, inédits, études connexes* (Studi e Testi 247), Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1967, 44-66.

¹⁷ Homily I, "On the Holy Virgin Theotokos," 3, in Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 139.66-67.

Byzantine texts, such as in the works of Andrew of Crete, Germanos of Constantinople, and John of Damascus;¹⁸ it is found only rarely in earlier texts.¹⁹ This fact alone should make this homily of Petros of interest to Mariologists.

In fact, Petros seems to be taking Luke's advice, as is already suggested by the subtitle, and "beginning with Moses and all the prophets", he is interpreting "in all the scriptures the things concerning" Mary.²⁰ It is a very deliberate and sustained *modus operandi* that I have yet to discover among any other early writings on Mary, even if many of the particular images are already to be found in other writers.²¹ Not every single one of the images can be precisely identified, but the general biblical thought behind it is nonetheless evident, and I have tried to indicate each as closely as possible. There has been no attempt made here at finding parallels in other writers.

¹⁸ M.B. Cunningham, "The Meeting of the Old and the New: The Typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine Homilies and Hymns," in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary* (Studies in Church History 39), Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2004, 52-62. A number of later Armenian texts such as Nersēs Šnorhali's hymn, "Mary, Mother of God" [*Մայր Աստուծոյ Մարիամ*] in *The Verse Writings of Nersēs Šnorhali, Catholicos of Armenia* [*Տե. Ներսէսի Շնորհալու շարճ Կաթողիկոսի Բանք Չափաւ*], Venice: San Lazzaro, 1928, 399-401], and the hymn, "You are like the tree of frankincense" [*Խրնկի ծառիդ նըման էս*], attributed to Grigor Vardapet Ostanči [N. Polarian (=Bogharian), *Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts*, Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1966-1991, I.377] also show these same characteristics.

¹⁹ The most famous exception is, of course, Proclus' Second Homily, "On the Incarnation", where he chides unbelievers to "give heed to the books of the prophets. Inspect them and see the entire mystery ordered into theology; behold the entire miracle of the virgin birth hidden in the shadows," and then proceeds to marshal several Old Testament foreshadowings of Mary: Constat, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 173.150-152 and following for the types. A brief list of these types can also be found in N. Constat, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995), 177.

²⁰ See Luke 24:27.

²¹ For example, Sebastian Brock, *Bride of Light: Hymns on Mary from the Syriac Churches* (Mōrān 'Eth'ō, 6) Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1994, 10, notes that Syriac writers interpret a number of Old Testament images and figures in terms of Mary, but as his translations in that volume show, they are widely dispersed throughout numerous works, never all concentrated in a single poem or hymn; see also his Index V: "titles and Types of Mary," 169-170.

The following English translation is, to my knowledge, the first ever modern translation of this homily.²² I have departed slightly from the current scholarly practice of translating the text very literally. In this case, while I have tried to remain as faithful as possible to the text, I have also tried to give the translation the flavor of a homily as it might be delivered to a twenty-first century English-speaking congregation. I thank here all my colleagues at St. Nersess, Roberta R. Ervine, Abraham Terian and the Daniel M. Findikyan, all of whom read over my translation at some point and rendered extremely useful feedback. My apologies to each of them for any remaining errors.

²² The text is here reprinted, with new formatting and with some minor typographical corrections, from Tēr Mkrtčean, "Petros Bishop of Siwnik," 88-98. While no published translation of this panegyric exists, I would like here to thank my friend and colleague, Roberta R. Ervine, for allowing me to make use of her partial, unpublished draft translation. I have parted from her translation in several places.

**ԵՐԱՆԵԼԻՌՅՆ ՊԵՏՐՈՍԻ ՍԻՒՆԵԱՅ ԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍԻ
ԳՈՎԵՍՏ Ի ՍՈՒՐԲ ԱՍՏՈՒԱԾԱԾԻՆՆ ԵՒ Ի ՄԻՇՏ ԿՈՅՆ
ՄԱՐԻԱՄԸՍ ՅՈՐՁՈՐՁՄԱՆ ՆՈՐԻՆ.
ԵՒ Ի ՍՈՒՐԲ ԳՐՈՑ ԼՈՒԾՄՈՒՆՔ ՆՈՑԻՆ,
ՀՈԳԵՒՈՐ ԻՄԱՍՏԻՒՔ:**

Բազմութիւնք քրիստոսասէր ժողովոյս արարէք զաւրս զայս տաւն նորասքանչ ուրախութեամբ եւ բերկրեսցուք ի սմա մեծահրաշ ցնծութեամբ: Զի ահա երկինք ձայն աւետաւոր առ երկիրս գոչեն եւ զծագումն փառաց ի Բեղղեմ քարոզեն: Յանկալի է մեզ այսաւր ջրհորն Դաւթի, յորում գետն Աստուծոյ յորդահոս իջիւք բղխեալ՝ զտիեզերս արբուցանէ: Արդարեւ ասեմ թէ յառաջացոյց աւրինակն զճշմարտութիւնն տպաւորեաց, քանզի տեառնամայրն ջրհոր ինքնաբուղի կենդանի ջրոյն եղեւ, ուստի ոչ իջխեաց ըմպել որ զնայն պահէր, զի կուսականն մարմին անաղտ սրբութեամբ կնքեցաւ, յորմէ արդարութեան արեգակն ծագեաց եւ ճառագայթաւէտ լուսով զաշխարհս լուսաւորեաց:

Արդ զի՞նչ ասացից կամ զի՞նչ խաւսեցայց, զի միտք եւ լեզու զարժանաւոր պատիւ կուսական տաւնիս ընծայել ոչ կարեն: Զի ոչ բան զմարդասիրութիւնն Աստուծոյ չափել կարէ եւ ոչ թիւ զբազմամեծար յարգանս Մարիամու ի համար բերել զաւրէ: Բա՛րէ, ո՞ այլ այսպիսի լուաւ սքանչելիս, եթէ տէրն եւ ստեղծիչն ի յաղախնոյ եւ ի կաւեղէն ստեղծուածոյ տղայաբար յանձն էառ ծնանիլ. այո՛, այո՛, քանզի կամելով զնախահայրն եւ զառաջին կոյսն կանգնել ի զլորմանէն՝ իսկապէս ծրարեցաւ յորովայնին, ճշմարտապէս եղեւ այսաւրածին մանուկ: Յաղագս որոյ եւ մեք ի վեր քան զբան զաւրս պատուեսցուք, եւ բարձր քան զերկինս զերկիրս իմասցուք եւ հրաշափառ քան զարեւելս զկոյսն տեսցուք, եւ առաւել քան զհրեշտակս՝ զհովիւսն մեծարեսցուք, եւ ընտիր քան զքերովբիման զմսուրն ծանիցուք: Նաեւ Երուսաղէմ քաջ ի բաց քան զհրեղէն կառսն պայծառացաւ:

Եւ զայս ոչ եթէ մտածաւրէն ինչ ճարտասանս խաւսից ի մէնջ աշխատասիրեցաք յարմարել, զի զսոյն եւ աստուածագիր մատեանքն յառաջաձայնեալ քարոզեցին: Քանզի որոյ էութիւնն յարարչագործութեան անդ ի հրեշտակաց եւ ի մարդկային բնութեանս զբանաւորութիւնս արար, զնա ինքնագոյական Հայր այսաւր իբրու յինքենէ ծնանի, զոր նոյն ինքն Հայր բերանով

Դաւթայ խաւսերգեաց, թէ Որդի իմ ես դու եւ ես այսաւր ծնայ զքեզ:

Արդ՝ յորում աւուր ստեղծիչն աւուրց եւ բանից յանձն էառ ծնանիլ վերստին, աղէ, եկ բեր դու ինձ ասել, թէ ո՞ր բան յառաջ մատուցեալ զայնպիսի աւուր բաւական լիցի պատմել գովութիւնս: Եւ եթէ բարձր զերկիրս քան զերկինսն իմասցուք, միթէ սնափառութեամբ ինչ պարծեցայ, ա՛ւն անդր. ո՞չ ապաքէն սպասաւորական հոգեացն եղեն երկինք բնակետդ, իսկ երկիրս բոլորիցն Աստուծոյ սեպհական քաղաք, զոր եւ մարգարէն իսկ յայտնապէս հնչէր, թէ Սա է Աստուած մեր, ընդ որում ո՛չ համարեսցի այլ: Յետ այսորիկ յերկրի երեւեցաւ եւ ընդ մարդկան շրջեցաւ:

Եւ զի բազմափառ քան զարեւելս զկոյսն Մարիամ տեսաք, միթէ բա՞ն ինչ մեծամտութեամբ ի վեր քան զարժանն զանցուցաք, քա՛ւ լիցի: Զի յոյժ պատուական են արեւելք վասն տուրնջենային հրոյն ընդ այն ծագելոյ, այլ ո՛չ իբրեւ գտեառնամայր աղախինն, յորում ամենեցունցն Աստուած բնակեաց եւ արեգակնարար ի նմանէ յաշխարհս ծագեաց:

Եւ զի առաւել քան զքերովբիմսն զմսուրն եղաք, միթէ տհասութեամբ ինչ զաննմանս բարբառեցաք: Ո՞չ ահա յորմէ վեցթեւեանքն հիացեալ ի բացուստ սարսեն՝ սա այսաւր ի մսուր անդ որպէս ի հայրական ծոց բազմի:

Ուստի եւ մարգարէական շնորհացն բերանք՝ դիտելով զամենայն ճախր առեալ ճահողաբար՝ զներքինն ընդ վերինն կապակցէին, մանաւանդ զի եւս առաւել քան զգերիվերոյսն զստորինս պարագրեցին: Զի յորոյ երեսաց երկինք որպէս մոմ հալին՝ նա այսաւր ի յայրին ամփոփեալ զսպի: Ընդ որ եւ առակաւոր բանն զարմացեալ հիանայր, թէ Զի՞նչ երկիր իցէ յորում լոյսն ազանիցի: Զի ի հայրենի ծոցոյն որպէս հուր փայլակնացաւ եւ ի խաւունս երկրին անվնաս ծրարեցաւ, ըստ նորին կանխասացութեանն, թէ Երկիր եւ ի նմանէ ելցէ հաց եւ ի ներքոյ նորա որպէս [զ]հուր շրջեցաւ, զոր միւս մարգարէն յայտնապէս մեկնէ, թէ Հաներ զհաց յերկրէ, այսինքն զմարմին իւր ի Մարիամայ սրբոյ կուսէ:

Բա՛րէ, անպատում երանութիւնքն զկուսական որովայնն փակեցին, զոր մարգարէութեան հոգին բերանովն Դաւթայ՝ լեառն սուրբ անուանեաց. Հիմունք նորա, ասէ, ի լեառն սուրբ նորա: Արդարեւ յայսմ լերին տնաւրիներեալ անբաժանելի միաւորութեամբ երկու աշխարհքն հիմնաւորեցան՝ աստուածութիւնն եւ մարդկութիւնն: Վասն որոյ մի՛ ոք իշխեսցէ զծնիցեալն ի սուրբ կուսէն

սոսկ մարդ ասել, զի ինքն իսկ հիմունս արկ ի նմա բարձրեալն: Որպէս եւ հրեշտակն քարոզեաց, թէ Որ ի նմայն ծնեալ է՝ ի Հոգւոյն սրբոյ է: Ասէ՛ Սիրէ՛ Տէր զգրունս Սիրոնի քան զամենայն յարկսն Յակովբայ: Անսկիզբն Բանն Աստուած կրկին անգամ դրունս Սիրոնի զկուսական մարմինն յաւրինեաց, զի յասելն հրեշտակին զողջոյնն՝ ընդ լսելիսն ի ներքս վազեաց Բանն եւ իննամսեայ ժամանակաւ ի մարմին զինքն թանձրացուցեալ, ընդ որ ամենայն մահկանացուք ծնանին՝ ընդ նոյն եւ անմահացուցիչ Տէրն ոչ զգուեցաւ ելանել:

Ո՛վ մեծի խորհրդոյն, մտանէր եւ ելանէր եւ զգրունս կուսութեանն փակեալ պահէր: Արդ՝ որպիսի՞ աւրինակաւք զքեզ յառաջ բերեալ գովեսցուք սուրբ Աստուածածին: Զի ահա եղեր՝

Դրախտ Աստուածատունկ.

Այգի վայելուչ.

Մորենի Անկիզելի.

Լեռոն Սուրբ.

Վէմ Զրածին.

Գաւազան Մաղկեալ.

Սափոր Ոսկի.

Տուփ Անուշահոտ Խնկոց.

Տապանակ Կենդանագիր Կտակին.

Զրհոր Կենդանի Զրոյն.

Բոյս Բարի.

Տեղի Շափիղայի.

Քաղաք Աստուծոյ.

Պարտէզ փակեալ.

Աղբէւր Կնքեալ.

Բլուր Կնդրկի.

Հովիտ Շուշանի.

Երկիր Մարաւոտ.

Ամպ Թեթեւ.

Անապատ Անկոխ.

Դուռն Աղիւտեալ.

Տոմար Անընթեռնելի.

Երկիր Բանաւոր.

Առաւաւտ Խաղաղութեան:

Արդ՝ զայս ամենայն մարգարէիցն պարք նախաձայնեցին: Իսկ մեք սկսցուք մեկնել կարգաւ զքսան եւ զչորս վկայութիւնս սրբոցն որ վասն քո:

- [Ա]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Դրախտ Աստուածատունկ. քանզի աստուածաբոյս մարմինն ի միջի քում որպէս զծառն կենաց արմատացեալ, զոր ընդ բոցեղէն սրոյն զաւրութիւն բարձրելոյն անհպելի զքեզ տաղաւարեաց:
- [Բ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Այգի Վայելուչ, յորում կամաւորութեամբ հաւր ճշմարիտ որթն տնկէր: Կապեցէ, ասէ, գէշ իւր զորթոյ եւ զյաւանակ իւր զգնդակէ որթոյ: Որթ զԱստուած Բանն ասէ եւ զնդակ՝ զմարմին նորին, զոր եւ ինքն իսկ Միածինն ասէր, թէ Ես եմ որթն ճշմարիտ:
- [Գ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Մորենի Սխրալի, որ աստուածութեանն հրով վառեալ ոչ այրեցար:
- [Դ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Լեռն Սուրբ, յորում ստեղծիչն Մովսէսի նորահրաշ տնաւրէնութեամբ առազաստեալ վարագուրեցաւ:
- [Ե]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Ապառաժ Վէմ, ուստի յորդահոս վտակն խաղացեալ՝ զհամահրաւէր աւետիսն աշխարհի հնչէր. Եթէ ոք ծարաւի իցէ եկեցցէ առ իս եւ արբցէ:
- [Զ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Գաւազան Մաղկեալ, ուստի յարմատոյն Յեսսեայ բղխեալ յարադալար ծաղիկն, որում յառաջացոյց յաւրինակ քահանայապետին եղեւ ցուպ, որ ի խորանի անդ առժամայն բողբոջեալ սաղարթէր:
- [Է]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Սափոր Ոսկի, որ ոչ զմահկանացու ընչընչուկն կրեցեր, այլ զանմահացուցիչ կերակուրն, զոր աստուածեղէն բերանն հրատարակեալ ասէ. Հարքն ձեր կերան զմանանայն յանապատին եւ մեռան, իսկ որ զմարմին իմ ուտէ՝ զմահ մի՛ տեսցէ յաւիտեան:
- [Ը]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Տուփ խնկահոտ իւղով լցեալ, ուստի նարդոսն մեծագնի բուրեալ եւ աստուածային անուշահոտութեամբ զտիեզերական տունս լցոյց:

- [Թ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Տապանակ Շարժուն, յորում Բանն մշանջենաւոր եղեւ կենդանազրեալ եւ նորոգելով եւս զջարդեալսն փոխանակ մովսիսակերտ քարեղինացն չորս բանաւոր տախտակս զաստուածական աւրէնս դրոշմեաց:
- [Ժ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Տուն կենդանի Զրոյն, զորմէ մարգարէն ասէր, թէ Զուր ի տանէ Տեառն ելցէ եւ արբուսցէ զվիճակն հեթանոսաց, զոր եւ Միածինն ասաց, թէ Ես եմ ջուրն կենդանի:
- [ԺԱ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Բոյս Բարի, ըստ սրբոյն Յակովբայ, որ արծարծեալ ի մահիճսն առ կենարարն Քրիստոս զբանն տպաւորեաց, թէ Ի շառաւիղէ ելեր որդեակ:
- [ԺԲ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Քաղաք Աստուծոյ, ըստ երանելոյն Դաւթայ, որ յառաջն երգեաց թէ փառաւորեալն խաւսեցաւ վասն քո քաղաքդ Աստուծոյ:
- [ԺԳ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Տեղի Շափիղայի, զի իբրեւ ակն պատուական աստուածախառն մարմինն գոյանայր ի քեզ, որ եւ եդաւն իսկ որպէս զքար ընտիր ի հիմունս Սիովնի:
- [ԺԴ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, ըստ ամենիմաստնոյն Սողոմոնի Աղբեր կնքեալ, ընդ որ ամենալցոյց գետն բղխեալ՝ զկուսութեանն կնիք ո՛չ ելոյծ:
- [ԺԵ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Պարտէզ փակեալ, որ զբազմաբեր ձիթենին վերընձիւղեցեր, յաղագս որոյ Եսայիաս մարգարէացաւ, թէ Մնացեալն Յակովբայ նորատունկ սիրելի. ծաղկեսցէ Իսրայէլ եւ լցցի երկիր պտղով նորա:
- [ԺԶ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Հովիտ Անվար, ուստի իբրեւ շուշան վայրենի տէրունական մարմինն բուսաւ, զորմէ հոգելից մարգարէն ճառեաց, թէ Եղէց ցաւդ Իսրայէլի եւ ծաղկեսցէ որպէս շուշան:
- [ԺԷ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Բլուր Խնկոյ, յոր Տէրն մտեալ անմահութեանն հոտովն զմահկանացու նիւթն համեմէր եւ ծնեալ յաշխարհ կենդանեաց եւ մեռելոց՝ յաւիտենական

ծխէր կեանս, զոր մարգարէութիւնն կանխաւ գուշակէր, թէ Բուրեսցի հոտ նորա որպէս կնդրկի:

- [ԺԸ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Երկիր Մարաուուտ, զորոյ զբնութիւն ոչ իշխեաց վթարել լուծումն արուի. ուստի մարգարէն զՔրիստոս ի նմա բոյս յապառափի երգեաց ասելով՝ Պատմեցաւ մեզ իբրեւ զմանուկ, իբրեւ զարմատ ի ծարաւուտ երկրի:
- [ԺԹ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Ամպ Թեթեւ, ըստ յառաջասացութեան մարգարէին, թէ Ահա՛ւասիկ Տէր նստեալ ի վերայ Թեթեւ ամպոյ եկեսցէ յԵդիպտոս: Եւ արդարեւ ամպ ցամաք, զի ոչ գիջացեալ ծանրացար ի ցանկութենէ առն:
- [Ի]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Անապատ Անկոխ, յորում ոչ սոսկ ոք մարգարէ զվկայութեանն զործէ խորան, այլ զմեծն եւ զկատարեալն եւ զանձեռագործ խորանն, այսինքն զտիրական մարմինն առանց սերման առն ստեղծ ինքեան, զոր ի լուսազգեստ արգանդին հարեալ սաղմէր, զոր եւ հոգեհնչող քնարն հնչէ, թէ Յարեւու եհար զխորան իւր:
- [ԻԱ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Դուռն Աղխեալ, ընդ որ հրեշտակաց Տէրն մուտ եւ ել եւ զկուսական արգանդդ ոչ ելոյծ, յաղագս որոյ Եգեկիէլ մարգարէացաւ, թէ Դուռնն որ յարեւելս կոյս է՝ ոչ ոք մտցէ ընդ նա եւ ելցէ, բայց Տէր Աստուած Իսրայէլի մտցէ եւ ելցէ եւ դուռն փակեալ կայցէ:
- [ԻԲ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Տոմար Անընթեռնլի, զի թէպէտ եւ գիտէր Յովսէփ զդպրութիւն, զի ունէր այլ կին, եւ չէր անփոյթ ի մարմնոյ խառնութեանց, սակայն զնա ո՛չ իշխեաց ընթեռնուլ, որպէս մարգարէն ասաց, թէ Տացի թուղթս այս յայր մի, որ գիտիցէ դպրութիւն եւ մի՛ կարասցէ ընթեռնուլ զնա:
- [ԻԳ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Երկիր Բանաւոր, զի աստուածընկալ որովայնդ անմատոյց լուսոյն ոչ միայն աթոռ, այլ ճշմարտութեամբ եղեւ մայր, զոր եւ ոմն ի շնորհալից վարդապետացն զրեաց, թէ Նորագործ աստուածապէս ճարտարապետեալ՝ զերկիրս երկին արար:

[ԻԴ]. Ուրա՛խ լեր Մարիամ, Առաւաւտ Գեղեցիկ, յորում խաղաղութիւնն մեր զարմանալի յաւրինամբ արար զերկոսինն մի, եւ ըստ սրբոյն Չաքարիայ՝ արեզակնաբար ի մեզ ծագեցաւ, փարատել զխաւար մեղաց:

Արդ՝ զի՞նչ եւ այլ առակ աւրինակաց ի մէջ առեալ սուրբ Աստուածածնիդ կարասցուք ընծայել: Զի ո՞չ ապաքէն ելեր ըստ բանս. ո՞չ ապաքէն գեր ի վերոյ գտար հակացս. ո՞չ ապաքէն անցեր ըստ մարդկային միտս, զի Հոգին սուրբ էջ առ քեզ եւ զաւրութեամբ վերնոյն տաղաւարեցար: Եւ այս յաւէտ յիրաւի:

Զի զԱստուած ընկալար.

զի Աստուած յղացար.

զի զԱստուած երկնեցեր.

զի զԱստուած ծնար.

զի զԱստուած անպարագրելի ի գիրկս բարձեալ կրեցեր.

զի զԱստուած կաթնաբուծեցեր.

զի զԱստուած սնուցեր.

զի զԱստուած զգուցեր:

Եւ որոյ երկինք աթոռ են եւ երկիրս պատուանգան ոտից նորա, եւ զբնաւ իսկութիւն նորա եւ ոչ երկինք երկնից բաւական են տանել՝ դու զնա իբրեւ զտղայ խանձարրապատ առնէիր:

Տինա եւ զի՞ կայ իմ ընդ այսպիսի մրցման կռուելոյ, ընդէ՞ր վարանեալ տարակուսեն զիս երանութեանն ցոյցք. զի ահա՛ երկինքն, որ ի Սինէական լերինն բոցազարդ հրով զսանդարամետացն հիմունս դղորդեալ սասանեցուցին, եւ ձեռքն, որ զերկինս եւ զերկիր արարին, այժմ ի մէջ անցեալ իբրեւ զպարմանի՛ բաժակ ի մատուենս բերեալ՝ աղջկան միոյ մատուցանէ:

Արդ՝ այս գովութիւն ոչ այլ ինչ է, այլ քոյին իսկ մարգարէութիւն, թէ Յայսմհետէ երանիցեն ինձ ամենայն ազգք: Արդ՝ աղաչեմք զքեզ, սուրբ Աստուածածին, լե՛ր բարեխաւս առ Որդիդ քո եւ Աստուած մեր միշտ փրկել ի փորձութենէ՛ զ՛ի ձեռն քո ի նա հաւատացեալ ժողովուրդս եւ փառս մատուցանել ծնիցելոյդ ի քէն. այժմ եւ յաւտեանս յաւիտենից, ամեն:

**The Blessed Petros, Bishop of Siwnik',
Praise to the Holy Mother of God
and to the Ever-Virgin Mary,
according to her Title and from the Holy Scriptures,
with their explanations and their spiritual meaning**

You many Christ-loving people who are gathered here have made this day a feast filled with a joy never before attained, so let us celebrate on this day with wondrous exultation. For behold, the very heavens cry out this good news to the earth and they proclaim the dawn of glory in Bethlehem. Today, our longing is for the well of David,²³ into which the river of God pours forth so abundantly and which inundates the entire universe. Indeed, I say to you that this type, which was revealed right at the beginning, is a prefiguring of the truth, for the Mother of our Lord herself became a well which poured forth living water,²⁴ from which that one who was her protector did not dare to drink.²⁵ For her virgin flesh was sealed with spotless purity, and from her the Sun of Righteousness shone forth²⁶ and with His radiant light He gave light to the world.²⁷

Now, what might I say, or what might I speak? For neither mind nor tongue is capable of rendering honor worthy of this feast of the Virgin. There is no word that can measure the love that God has for mankind, nor can any calculation possibly provide an account of the surpassing honor of Mary. Who has ever heard of such wonders, that the Lord and Creator took upon Himself to be born as a child from His handmaid and from the clay vessel that He had created? Yes! It is indeed so! For in His desire to raise up that progenitor and first virgin from the fall, [God] has truly en-

²³ This phrase refers to the well of Bethlehem in 2 Sm 23:15; see further, below, in this paragraph.

²⁴ Cf. Jn 4:10-11.

²⁵ The allusion here is to 2 Sm 23:16, where David refused to drink from the well of Bethlehem. But Petros is applying this passage to Joseph, who was given in marriage to protect Mary, but "would not drink" from his wife. From this line and others below, it is clear that Petros held to the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity. See also §§ 1, 3, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, below.

²⁶ Mal 4:2.

²⁷ Jn 8:12, 9:5.

closed Himself in the womb; He has truly become the Child born on this day!²⁸ For this reason let us honor this day beyond all speech; let us consider the earth to be more exalted than the heavens, and the Virgin to be more glorious than the East.²⁹ Let us give greater veneration to the shepherds than to the angels, and let us acknowledge the manger to be more elect than the cherubim. In the very same way was Jerusalem so much more resplendent than fiery chariots.

We have not endeavored to arrange these [words] as some sort of grand, eloquent piece of rhetoric of our own, for it is the divinely-written Scriptures that long ago proclaimed this very thing. For then, out of His own creative Being, [God] made intelligence for angels and for mankind. Today, that Self-existent Father has begotten — from His very self — Him of whom that same Father, through the mouth of David, sang: “You are my son; today I have begotten You.”³⁰

Now, on this day when You who created both days and words took upon Yourself to be born again, come and bring me those words that I should speak. For what word might we bring forth that would be capable of recounting the praises of a day such as this? If we were to consider the earth to be higher than the heavens, would I have committed a boast with any sort of false vanity?³¹ For shame! Did not the heavens become the encampment of the ministering spirits, while this earth became that special³² city of the God of all, about whom the prophet openly uttered, “This is our God, beside whom no other is to be reckoned!”³³ After this, He appeared on earth and walked about among human beings.

And should we envision the Virgin Mary as more glorious than the East, have we in our presumption gone beyond what is proper? God for-

²⁸ From this, it is clear that this panegyric was delivered on the Feast of the Theophany.

²⁹ This refers to the Garden of Eden which was planted *ընդ արեւելիս* “in the east”; see Gn 2:8.

³⁰ Ps 2:7, quoted in Acts 13:33, and Heb 1:5, 5:5. (All references to the psalms are numbered according to the Armenian text.)

³¹ I have preserved the discordant I/we pronouns that Petros has used here.

³² This adjective, *սեպհակաւն*, is somewhat difficult to translate; it is the adjective used in the Bible to describe that special relationship God has reserved for His people; see Ex 19:5, Dt 7:6, 14:2, 26:18, Ti 2:14, 2 Pt 2:9, et al. Here it means that city which is God’s own special property.

³³ The text as cited here is not any biblical text that I can discover. Parallels in thought, if not in exact wording, can be found in Is 45:5-6, 46:9, and Hos 13:4.

bid! The East is surpassingly honorable because it is there that the fire of the daytime dawns. But it is not at all like the Mother of the Lord, that maidservant in whom the God of all things dwelt, and from whom He, like the sun, dawned upon the earth.³⁴

And should we posit that the manger is greater than the cherubim, have we in our ignorance acclaimed things that are not alike? Is not this One Who is today lying in the manger as in the bosom of His Father, at Whom those six-winged [creatures]³⁵ tremble and marvel from afar?

Thus, even the mouthpieces of prophetic grace examined these things and fittingly took wing and compared the things here below with those above and, most importantly, they described these things here below as being more exalted than those on high. For that One at Whose presence the heavens melt like wax³⁶ is today enclosed and confined in the cave.³⁷ It was at this too that that proverbial phrase was wondering and marveling: "Where is the land in which the light will dwell?"³⁸ For from the bosom of the Father³⁹ He flashed forth like fiery lightning and in the folds⁴⁰ of the earth He was safely wrapped up, according to that which was spoken long ago: "As for the earth there will come forth bread from it, but underneath it is turned up as by fire."⁴¹ Another prophet clearly interprets this as,

³⁴ Cf. Mt 4:16, quoting Is 9:2.

³⁵ Cf. Is 6:2, Rv 4:8.

³⁶ Ps 96:5 Arm (97:5 RSV). Interestingly, in all versions that I have been able to check, the text reads 'mountains' not 'heavens'. There is, unfortunately, nothing like a critical edition of the Armenian Psalter.

³⁷ Though there is no such mention in the New Testament, that Jesus was born in a cave is a common topos in the Apocryphal literature, first found in the *Protevangelium of James*, 19; see J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1993, 64. For the Armenian tradition and for further references, see A. Terian, *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, esp., 40-59.

³⁸ Jb 38:19

³⁹ Cf. Jn 1:18

⁴⁰ The printed text reads *խաւառւն*, which clearly makes no sense here; it must be a mistake of the typesetter. The text has here been emended to *խաւառւնս*, which could easily have been misread as *խաւառւն*, and is very likely the original reading; it is, nonetheless, certainly a much better reading. I thank here my colleague and friend, Roberta R. Ervine for suggesting this particular solution.

⁴¹ Jb 28:5

"You brought forth bread from the earth,"⁴² that is, His body from the Holy Virgin Mary.

O, what unspeakable blessings sealed that virginal womb which the spirit of prophecy, through the mouth of David, called "a holy mountain": "Its foundations," he said, "are on His holy mountain."⁴³ Truly, there are established on this mountain, disposed in an inseparable union, two worlds: one of divinity and one of humanity. For this reason, let no one dare to call that One born from the Holy Virgin a mere man, for that Exalted One Himself laid that foundation in her. As the angel proclaimed, "That which is born of her is of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁴ [Scripture] says, "The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob."⁴⁵ The Word of God, which has no beginning, fashioned a second "gate of Zion" from her virginal flesh, for when the angel greeted her the Word sprang into her ear,⁴⁶ and for a period of nine months He gave Himself form within her body. That Lord who bestows immortal life felt no disgust at entering [human] life through that same means by which all mortals are born.

O, what a great mystery! He entered in and came forth, yet the gate of her virginality was kept locked.⁴⁷ Now then, what sort of images shall we bring forth to give you praise, O Mother of God? Behold, you have become

the Paradise planted by God;
 the Pleasant Vineyard;
 the Burning Bush that was not consumed;
 the Holy Mountain;
 the Rock that poured forth water;

⁴² Ps 103:14

⁴³ Ps 86:2

⁴⁴ Mt 1:20

⁴⁵ Ps 86:2

⁴⁶ It was a common notion in Syriac and Byzantine Mariology that Mary conceived the Word through her ear; see R. Murray, "Mary, the Second Eve in the Early Syriac Fathers," *Eastern Churches Review* 3 (1971) 372-384, N. Constatas, "The *Conceptio per Aurem* in Late Antiquity. Observations on Eve, the Serpent, and Mary's Ear," paper presented at the General Meeting of the North American Patristic Society, Chicago, May 30-June 1, 1996, and idem., *Proclus of Constantinople*, 273-313.

⁴⁷ See, above, note 26.

the Rod that budded;
 the Golden Urn;
 the Vessel of Fragrant Incense;
 the Ark of the Covenant with the Living Tablet;
 the Well of Living Water;
 the Good Plant;
 the Place of Sapphires;
 the City of God;
 the Enclosed Garden;
 the Sealed Fountain;
 the Hill of Frankincense;
 the Valley of Lilies;
 the Parched Land;
 the Swift Cloud;
 the Untrod Wilderness;
 the Bolted Gate;
 the Book that cannot be read;
 the Spiritual Earth;
 the Dawn of Peace.

Now, the choirs of the prophets had already foretold all these [names] of you. So then, let us begin by providing, in order, an explanation of these twenty-four testimonies concerning you that were [uttered] by those holy ones.

1. Rejoice,⁴⁸ Mary, O Paradise planted by God,⁴⁹ for that flesh which was sown by God has, like the tree of life, taken root within you.

⁴⁸ This phrase, *αἰψὺ ἡρα*, translates the Greek *χαίρε* (*chaire*) which is the greeting of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in Lk 1:28. To begin litanies with this phrase was a common rhetorical device, called a *charetismos*, in Byzantine homilies and poems on Mary. See, for example, D.M. Montagna, ed., *La lode alla Theotokos nei testi greci dei secoli iv-vii* (Facultas Theologica "Marianum" de urbe Dissertationes ad Lauream 2), Roma: Edizioni "Marianum", 1963 for numerous examples, and M. Jugie, ed., *Homélies Mariales Byzantines* (Patrologia Orientalis 16.3[79]), Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1921, 531-532[107-108], 537-538[113-114], and idem., *Homélies Mariales Byzantines II* (Patrologia Orientalis 19.3[93]), Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1925, 336-337[218-219], 455[337]. Many more could be adduced.

⁴⁹ Gn 2:8.

And the power of the Most High,⁵⁰ with His flaming sword,⁵¹ has made you His tabernacle not to be approached.⁵²

2. Rejoice, Mary, O Pleasant Vineyard,⁵³ in whom the True Vine of the Father willingly planted himself. "He will bind," [Jacob] said, "his foal to the vine and the colt of his ass to the choice vine."⁵⁴ He calls God the Word 'the vine' and His flesh 'the choice vine', for even the Only-Begotten Himself said, "I am the true vine."⁵⁵
3. Rejoice, Mary, O wondrous Burning Bush, who were ablaze with the fire of Divinity but not consumed.⁵⁶
4. Rejoice, Mary, O Holy Mountain,⁵⁷ on which the Creator was once concealed from Moses by a marvelous dispensation,⁵⁸ but in you He has [now] veiled Himself as in a bridal chamber.
5. Rejoice, Mary, O Flinty Rock from which an abundant stream flowed,⁵⁹ and which gurgled the good news as an invitation to the whole world: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."⁶⁰
6. Rejoice, Mary, O Rod that budded,⁶¹ from whom sprouted forth the root of Jesse, an ever-blooming flower who, after the example

⁵⁰ Lk 1:35

⁵¹ Gn 3:24

⁵² Cf. Gn 3:24.

⁵³ Is 27:2

⁵⁴ Gn 49:11

⁵⁵ Jn 15:1

⁵⁶ Ex 3:2

⁵⁷ While Petros no doubt has the just quoted Ps 86:2, foremost in mind, the phrase "God's holy mountain" recurs some fifteen times in the Psalms and the Prophets.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ex 33:20-23.

⁵⁹ Dt 8:15

⁶⁰ Jn 7:37

⁶¹ Heb 9:4; Nm 17:8-10

of the high priest's [i.e., Aaron's] became a staff, and then immediately germinated and sprouted forth in the temple.

7. Rejoice, Mary, O Golden Urn,⁶² which contains nothing that bestows mere mortal nourishment, but only immortal, just as the Divine Mouth Himself proclaimed: "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died, . . . but whoever eats my flesh shall never see death."⁶³
8. Rejoice, Mary, O Vessel filled with Fragrant Oil,⁶⁴ from whom precious nard comes forth, and who fills every house in the world with the divine fragrance.⁶⁵
9. Rejoice, Mary, O Moveable Ark,⁶⁶ in which the eternal Word became a Living Tablet that renewed and replaced the shattered stone [tablets] made by Moses, and then inscribed the divine laws in the four Spiritual Booklets.⁶⁷
10. Rejoice, Mary, O House of Living Water,⁶⁸ of whom the prophet said, "Water will come forth from the house of the Lord and will water the lot of the gentiles."⁶⁹ This the Only-Begotten also said: "I am the living water."⁷⁰

⁶² Heb 9:4; Ex 16:33-34 Arm.

⁶³ Jn 6:49,50,54

⁶⁴ Cf. So 1:3.

⁶⁵ Cf. So 1:12.

⁶⁶ The exact expression is not used, but the ark was clearly transported by the people as they wandered in the desert until it was installed in the temple in Jerusalem. Cf., for example, Ex 25:14, Nm 10:35, Dt 10:8, 31:9,25, Jo 1-8, passim.

⁶⁷ These four booklets are, of course, the four Gospels.

⁶⁸ Sg 4:15, Jer 2:13, 17:13

⁶⁹ Jl 3:19 Arm, although the text here cited by Petros differs from the text in the Armenian *textus receptus* (= Zohrab Bible) which reads *զձորն զհճակացն* "the valley of lots", instead of "the lot of the gentiles".

⁷⁰ There is no such exact quotation, but see Jn 4:10.

11. Rejoice, Mary, O Good Plant, according to the holy Jacob who, while sitting up in his bed⁷¹ thus foretold this word about Christ, the Giver-of-Life: "From a shoot you have come forth, my Son."⁷²
12. Rejoice, Mary, O City of God, according to that blessed David, who long ago sang out: "The Glorious One has spoken of you, O City of God."⁷³
13. Rejoice, Mary, O Place of Sapphires,⁷⁴ for when the gem of that honorable flesh 'mixed with God' came to exist in you, He too was set just like a precious stone in the foundation of Zion.
14. Rejoice, Mary, O Sealed Fountain,⁷⁵ according to the all-wise Solomon, through whom flowed that river which fills all things but who did not lose the seal of her virginity.
15. Rejoice, Mary, O Enclosed Garden,⁷⁶ who caused the fruitful olive tree to bud once again, on account of which Isaiah prophesied: "The remnant of Jacob is a beloved new shoot, Israel shall blossom and fill the earth with its fruit."⁷⁷
16. Rejoice, Mary, O Uncultivated Valley, wherein the flesh of the Lord, like a wild lily, took root. Concerning this, the spirit-filled prophet spoke: "I will become as dew to Israel, and he will blossom forth as the lily."⁷⁸

⁷¹ Cf. Gn 48:2

⁷² Gn 49:9 Arm

⁷³ Ps 86:3. Note that the Armenian differs here from the Hebrew, Greek and the Syriac versions, all of which read, "Glorious things are said of you, O City of God."

⁷⁴ Jb 28:6

⁷⁵ So 4:12

⁷⁶ So 4:12

⁷⁷ Is 27:6

⁷⁸ Hos 14:5

17. Rejoice, Mary, O Hill of Incense,⁷⁹ to which the Lord came with the perfume of immortality and brought its scent to [all] mortal substance. When He was born on the earth He emitted the scent of eternal life to both the living and the dead, which that prophecy of old foretold: "His perfume shall smell like frankincense."⁸⁰
18. Rejoice, Mary, O Parched Land,⁸¹ whose nature the moisture of a male was unable to spoil, whence the prophet sang of Christ in her as a plant in the rocky ground, saying: "He was recounted to us like a child, like a root in the parched land."⁸²
19. Rejoice, Mary, O Swift Cloud, according to that ancient saying of the prophet: "Behold, the Lord will come to Egypt sitting upon a swift cloud."⁸³ And [Mary is] truly a dry cloud, for she was not moistened and weighed down by desire for a man.
20. Rejoice, Mary, O Untrod Wilderness, in which no mere prophet made [His] tent of witness, but [God] created for Himself this great and perfect tent 'not made by human hands'. This is the flesh of the Lord which she conceived in her radiant womb without the seed of a man. About this one that lyre which echoed with the Holy Spirit declared: "He has established his tent for the sun."⁸⁴
21. Rejoice, Mary, O Bolted Gate, through whom the Lord of the angels entered and came in without violating your virginal womb. It is concerning this that Ezekiel prophesied: "The gate in the east is untouched, let no one enter or exit through it, for the Lord God of Israel shall enter and exit, but the door shall remain shut."⁸⁵

⁷⁹ So 4:6

⁸⁰ Hos 14:6, Arm

⁸¹ Is 32:2, 35:6,7, 41:18

⁸² Is 53:2

⁸³ Is 19:1

⁸⁴ Ps 18:6

⁸⁵ Ez 44:1-2

22. Rejoice, Mary, O Book that cannot be read, for even though Joseph knew his letters—for he had had another wife and had not been indifferent to the mingling of flesh—he was nonetheless unable to read it, as the prophet said, “He will give these books to a man who will know his letters but he will not be able to read it.”⁸⁶
23. Rejoice, Mary, O Spiritual Earth, for your womb which has received God is not only a throne of inapproachable light but you have truly become a mother, just as a certain one of the grace-filled teachers once wrote: “As the divine master-builder building a new work, He has made this earth into heaven.”⁸⁷
24. Rejoice, Mary, O Beautiful Dawn, in whom is our Peace. For in marvelous fashion He has made the two one,⁸⁸ and according to the holy Zechariah, “[The dawn] has shone forth on us like the sun to disperse the darkness of sin.”⁸⁹

Now, what other examples might we present to you, O Holy Mother of God? Are you not truly beyond all words? Have you not truly been found to be above all beings? Did you not truly transcend mortal thought, when “the Holy Spirit came down upon you and overshadowed you with the power of the Most High?”⁹⁰ Truly, this is indeed so.

For you received God;
 For you conceived God;
 For you were in labor with God;
 For you gave birth to God;
 For you held in your arms God who cannot be circumscribed;
 For you gave suck to God;

⁸⁶ Is 29:12

⁸⁷ This quotation is not to be found anywhere in the Bible, but it is found *verbatim* in the text of the Armenian Divine Liturgy; see Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, ed., *The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church*, New York: St. Vartan Press, 2001, 29. The manner in which Petros introduces this quotation suggests, however, that he knows that this is not a biblical citation.

⁸⁸ That is, “dawn and peace” are now one.

⁸⁹ Lk 1:78-79; again the text of Petros differs from Zohrab.

⁹⁰ Lk 1:35

For you gave nourishment to God;
For you caressed God;

And you wrapped in swaddling clothes like an infant that One to whom the heavens are as a throne and the earth as a footstool,⁹¹ whose Essence the heavens of the heavens cannot at all contain.

So then, why should I be standing here in any struggle or contest? How could these expressions of your blessedness leave me wondering or in any doubt? For behold, the heavens with their fiery flames on Mount Sinai caused the foundations of Sheol to quake and to totter. And those hands⁹² which made heaven and earth now comes forward like a young man bearing a chalice in his fingers, and offers it to a young girl.

Now, this praise of mine is nothing other than that prophecy which you uttered, namely that "Henceforth all nations will call me blessed."⁹³ So I beseech you, O holy Mother of God, to intercede with your Son and our God that, through your intercession, He may always deliver from temptation these people who believe in Him and that they might give glory to the One who is born of you, now and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

⁹¹ Is 66:1 quoted in Acts 7:49; cf. also, Mt 5:34-35.

⁹² Pseudo-Ephrem the Syrian, following Armenian exegesis already found in Agafangelos, states explicitly that God's "hands" were the Son; see E.G. Mathews, Jr., *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis attributed to Ephrem the Syrian* (CSCO 573), Leuven: Peeters, 1998, 3, and note ad. loc.

⁹³ Lk 1:48

A MUSICOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE HYMN TO
ST. HRIP'SIMĒ AND HER COMPANIONS,
*ANJINK' NUIREALK*¹

Krikor Pidedjian

INTRODUCTION

ARMENIAN LITURGICAL MUSIC is the richest repository of the Armenian people's musical creativity, comprising, in addition to the divine liturgy, over a thousand *šarakans* [=hymns], and innumerable works in the *tal*, *ganj*, and *metedi* forms. Each contains within it the historical and theological information relevant to a specific feast and is the expression not only of a pure faith but of a considerable linguistic expertise as well. Specialized works and studies on this body of musical literature were produced in earlier days by such notable figures as Hambarjum Limonjian, Hambarjum Čerčian, Elia Tntesian, Nikolayos Tašjian, and of course Komitas Vardapet, who not only studied but enriched and popularized the genre. In more recent times, the work of Roperi Afayian and Nikolayos Tahmizian aroused great interest. However, much yet remains to be done in order to make the treasures of Armenian music accessible to Armenians and to others. The present study offers a musicological analysis of one of the great jewels of Armenian liturgical music, in a way that will be comprehensible to the layman and of interest to the specialist as well.

The study was inspired by the 2001 celebration of the 1700th year of Armenia's christianization and the 2003 celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the building of the cathedral at Holy Ejmiacin. Saints Hripsimē and Gayanē and their companions were the catalyst for King Trdat's adoption of Christianity through St. Gregory the Illuminator. To offer a musical analysis of the superb hymn written in their honor by Catholicos Komitas

¹ This article is an abridged translation of the author's volume, *The Hymn "Anjink Nuirealk"* [«Անձինք նուիրեալք» Շարականը], New York: Sis, 2003. A presentation of the study's contents took place at St. Nersess Seminary on March 19, 2007, as part of the Monday evening lecture series.

Atceci (616-628)² seemed a fitting tribute to the commemoration, as well as an opportunity to acquaint readers with several music-theoretical matters such as the three systems of notating Armenian music; that is, the traditional or *xaz* notation, Papa Hambarjum Limonjian's notation, and European notation.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ARMENIAN MUSIC PRIOR TO THE 7TH CENTURY

Since the hymn *Anjink nuirealk* is a 7th century composition it seems appropriate, before addressing its musical characteristics, to speak briefly concerning Armenian music prior to the 7th century. A short overview will enable us to better understand and appreciate the hymn in its proper musical context.

Although one might expect that music in such an early time period would be in a simpler and more primitive state of development, such is not the case with reference to Armenian music. As an ancient race, Armenians necessarily developed their musical culture from deep antiquity. By the 7th century, then, Armenian music had already attained a certain level of complexity.

It appears that the Armenians inherited a certain degree of musical achievement from their ancestors among the Hittites, Urartians, and Phrygians, which they proceeded to develop along original lines. Musical instruments found in inscriptions and excavations have made it possible to reconstruct to a certain extent the sounds, scales, modalities and range of this ancient music.

Vocal music is one of man's most primal forms of expression. Although Armenian historians have been dilatory in offering us details of early Armenian musical achievements, there are nonetheless enough mentions of vocal music to tell us that in venues such as the theater, ancient Armenians practiced solo and choral singing as well as instrumental music. Nikołos Tahmizian put it well when he said,

As we know, Armenia, unlike other eastern countries, enjoyed in antiquity a shining age of hellenistic culture and civilization, which flourished most abundantly, perhaps, in the first century before the common era, during the reigns of Tigran the Great and Artawazd II. In this period, hellenistic theaters operated in Armenia, where the tragedies and comedies

² See the following article by A. Terian for a brief biography of Catholicos Komitas.

presented were musical dramas not so different from *Fidelio* and *Carmen*, produced with the use of speech, solo, chorus, and musical instruments.³

The fragments of “songs of Golfn” preserved by Movsēs Xorenaçi attest to the existence of professional music in the fifth century.⁴ Nikołos Tāhmizian writes,

In the way of life of both commoner and noble the role of the minstrel expanded. It is worth noting that according to the twelfth canon of the fourth Council of Duin, “certain of the nobility and the common cavalry, upon reaching a village, forsake the village and take their lodging in a monastery and in the dwellings of the saints, and with minstrels and hired [entertainers] pollute the sacred places of God, which is a terrible thing for Christians to hear of, let alone to do.”⁵ Yovhan Mamikonian attests that one of the Arcruni princes even bestowed two income-producing villages upon a favorite minstrel.⁶ It is clear, then, that talented musicians in this period attained notable fame in their native land. Moreover, the minstrel art, amassing traditional Armenian poetry and popular songs, incorporated into itself lively elements of ancient epic and “Golfan” song, at the same time enriching itself with the musical feats of eastern countries that bordered on ancient Armenia. By the 6th-7th centuries (prior to the Arab invasions), the reputation of its significance, and the fame of its practitioners, had gone beyond the borders of Armenia and won appreciation from the musicians and music-lovers of Sasanian Persia, one of the foremost countries of the era.⁷

After Christianity had put a stop to pagan music, people continued to practice, cultivate and enjoy the music of minstrels, albeit not to the same degree as formerly. Yet one ought not to conclude that such music was reduced to the status of a mere footnote to the new, Christian musical art.

³ *Sovetakan Aruest*, Feb., 1968, 3.

⁴ For example, Movsēs Xorenaçi, *History of Armenia [Պատմութիւն Հայոց]*, I.xxix, II.lxi.

⁵ Vazgen Hakobyan, ed., *Armenian Book of Canons [Կանոնագիրք Հայոց]*, vol. 2, Erevan: Academy of Sciences Press, 1971, 200-215; here, 211-212.

⁶ Yovhan Mamikonian, *History of Tarōn [Պատմութիւն Տարօնի]*, Erevan: 1941, 156-157.

⁷ *Ibid.*

The opposite seems to have been true. The popularity of secular music with all classes of people was sufficiently great that Church fathers introduced secular musical elements in their own creations. Among later famous musician clerics are numbered Grigor Narekaçi (951-1011)⁸ and Nersēs Šnorhali (1100-1173)—though the latter expressed a low opinion of the minstrels' "devilish music".

Christianity brought with it a music based on three types of song: the psalms, prophetic songs of blessing, and "spiritual songs". This was the pattern established by the Apostles — that is, "speaking in your hearts with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singling and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." (Ep 5:19) With the advent of Armenian as the language of worship, Łazar Pärpeçi tells us, "[Men and women] ran with joy from partaking in the great Mystery; being dismissed to their several homes, old and young sang hymns and melodies in every place — in the squares and in the streets, and at home. The churches were resplendant; the martyria of the saints were enhanced. . . ."⁹

Armenian clergy-poet-musicians, from Catholicos Sahak (348-438) onwards, created a variety of Armenian "spiritual songs", called *kčord*, *kčurd*, *kačurd*, *šarakan*, *ganj*, *tal* and so on. Although in the past erroneous statements have been made to the effect that Armenian church music was similar to Syriac and Byzantine Church music, the music of the Armenian Church is as Armenian as the Armenian language itself, following the tonal patterns of the language and its poetic idiom, and using the modalities of secular Armenian music. As Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935) said, "The Armenian language has its own intonation, and hence its music corresponds [to that]."¹⁰

Thus, by the 7th century Armenian music had attained a considerable level of development.

⁸ Nikolos G. Tāhmizyan, *Grigor Narekaçi and Armenian Music, V-XV Centuries* [Գրիգոր Նարեկացին եւ Հայ երաժշտութիւնը Ե-ԺԵ դդ.], Erevan, 1985, 17.

⁹ Łazar Pärpeçi, *History of Armenia* [Պատմութիւն Հայոց], Venice: San Lazzaro, 1933, 51-52.

¹⁰ Aleksander Šahverdyan, *Observations on the History of Armenian Music* [Հայ երաժշտութեան պատմութեան ակնարկներ], Erevan: 1959, 382.

THE PURPOSE OF THE HYMN [ՏԱՐԱԿԱՆ]

Were we to approach the *šarakans* as specialized works of art, we would be overlooking their first and primary purpose, their actual *raison d'être* — which was to acquaint the faithful, through the medium of music, with the stories of sacred Scripture, the teachings of the Christian religion, the lives of the Church's saints, and the creed of the Armenian Church, as well as the history of the Armenian people as a Christian nation. The reader must be aware that these songs were created to further a particular agenda. For this purpose, the artistic merit of the song was not of the first order of importance, although as it was an offering to God, the musicality of the song would necessarily be of the best quality that the composer could produce.

The Church's music is evaluated on the basis of its ability to vitalize the relationship between the believer and God. This fact brings us face to face with the question of the art involved in its performance. In this connection Nikołos Tahmizian wrote,

In this regard, one of Nersēs Šnorhali's injunctions to priests is of exceptional interest. In it he, as a gifted artist himself, explains that a true, vital performance of any song or chant has the capacity to elevate it to the status of a wholly new creation: "Do not inattentively run through the sacramental words of prayers which you offer, like so much water through a pipe, whether [the words be those of] psalms or lections from holy scripture, or hymns of service, or the priestly prayers of the Divine Liturgy or other assigned rites. Instead, perform them with great attention and if possible with tears and great awe, as if you were newly producing them from your heart and mind."¹¹

Yovhannēs Erznkaçi (1240?-1293) also takes note of the performance of spiritual texts, and remarks that sacred music attains its goal when the mind of the singer (and that of the listener) is lifted above physical realities.¹²

¹¹ *General Epistles of St. Nersēs Šnorhali* [Ընդհանրական թուղթ Սրբույն Ներսիսի Շնորհաբլույ], Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1871, 64. The saintly patriarch is exhorting priests not to allow secular wedding music to be performed outside the church while a wedding is being performed within. (Translation taken from the forthcoming publication of the *Epistles of St. Nersess* by St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.)

¹² Nikołos Tahmizian, *Hask Taregirk*, IX (1999-2001), 165.

Since the *šarakans* are liturgical hymns produced by a deep religious experience, during the liturgy they fill the church with an atmosphere specific to the meaning of the day being celebrated, and in addition to their teaching and educational function, they create for those in attendance a special state of spiritual elevation, in which they awaken feelings of worship, an inclination to prayer, and a warmth of faith. On the power of an artistic performance to change the spirit of its hearers, I would like to quote an assertion made by my own teacher Shahan Berberian, when he attended the Christmas Eve service at the newly erected St. John the Baptist Church in Paris in 1909:

I had come from Istanbul, a student. These were the songs of Christmas Eve, and they carried on with the diaconal melodies that I had known since childhood. But when the time for the Book of Daniel came, where from below the singers on the bema are answered with the "Bless the Lord . . ."—suddenly, there arose from the choir a voice . . . broad, tranquil, sweet but inexorably soaring through the melody . . . and I was rocked anew by the tremor of a new emotion, arising from a new revelation. That voice brought with it not only that unique, golden ray, that light of an Armenian morning, that timbre at once strong and moving that was Shahmuradian's voice (for it was he who sang, and I was hearing him for the first time) — but it carried with it as well the revelation of a deeper beauty, the beauty of Armenian sacred music; thanks to the Armenian Church's singing, it was for me a revelation of a New Style. Bright and clean, tranquil and deep, strong and heartfelt, with broad wings in its upward flight, anointed with an inexpressible sublimity. . . . "So this is what our religious music is," thought I; "How little we have understood it!"¹³

In other words, the hymn is like a golden bridge, joining the believer to God. Through it the believer enters into intimacy with God. Through it the deepest recesses of his soul open, and he lifts his truest desires to God. In it he finds comfort and spiritual rest. In it he praises God. And finally, through the *šarakan* he receives spiritual fulfilment. Komitas Vardapet's words are apt here: "As church music becomes more widespread, it produces in the people a pure zeal, and it powerfully unites them around the Church."¹⁴

Thus, although the *šarakans* present themselves to us as artistic creations of high literary and musical merit, one ought never to forget that they

¹³ *Hask*, July-August 1974, 215.

¹⁴ Lewond Tayian, *Komitas Vardapet: A Scholarly View* [Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ. Ուսումնասիրական Տեսութիւն], Venice: San Lazzaro, 1936, 5.

are to the same degree — and in fact, even more — works of faith. As Nersēs Varžapetian, Patriarch of Istanbul (1874-1884) so beautifully put it, “The prayers and the hymns of the Armenian Church are written in the language of the Holy Spirit, the language of the angels, and the language of the pure, human heart. Through them, we receive from the ever-flowing fount of the Spirit’s grace a spirit of love, a spirit of wisdom, a spirit of humility and of confidence.”¹⁵

THE HYMN *ANJINK NUIREALK* IN MUSICAL CONTEXT

Komitas Ałčeci’s hymn *Anjink Nuirealk* is a *šarakan*, one of the great jewels of the *Hymnary*; it is composed in the fourth mode (inverted 74/DaKen).

A definition of the term “šarakan” and a word about musical modes

What is a *Šarakan*?

For the benefit of the reader who is not a specialist in medieval music perhaps we should define the terms *šarakan* and *fourth mode* (74). First, as I have written elsewhere, a *šarakan*

is a song in a specific style. The *šarakan* is formulated following typical, precise, fixed and enduring principles, word structures, and rhymes, which constitute the substance of its fundamental structure. Within that greater structure, the *šarakan*’s substructures follow the substructures of its written text, tying the elements of the fundamental structure together in a more individualized manner while remaining within the regulated confines of the tonal mode.

The *šarakans* used in the Armenian Church are contained in a large and impressive volume called the *Šaraknoč* or *Šarakan* [Hymnary]. The earliest *šarakans* were composed by Catholicos Sahak and Mesrob Maštoč (5th century), while the last hymnodist was Kirakos Vardapet Erzntkači (15th century). Thus, the *Šaraknoč* comprises the best poetic-musical works of a full millenium. The great good fortune that these works have reached us with a large measure of accuracy is due to the fact that they have been used in a manner governed by strict rules.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Hask* January-February 1943, 161.

¹⁶ Grigor Pitedjian [Pidedjian], “Grigor Narekači, Hymnodist?” [*Գրիգոր Նարեկացի, Շարականագիր*], *Ejmiacin* (1999), 79-80.

Until the 7th century, the use of *šarakans* in the church was unregulated. For this reason, their number grew so great that those serving in a church in a specific area did not know the hymns being sung in churches within a different area. Confusion was inevitably created. The histories of Kirakos Ganjakeci (1203-1272) and Vardan Arewelci (1200?-1271) tell us that in the days of Catholicos Nersēs III Išxanci, surnamed “the Builder” (641-661), an unseemly disarray resulted at one celebration of the Feast of the Transfiguration. During the morning service the clergy accompanying the Catholicos, on one side of the choir, began the antiphonal singing of the second part [*Harċ*] of the canon specific to the feast; clergy on the opposite side were unable to offer the response, and although several different hymns were tried, neither side understood the other’s singing. Pursuant to this debacle, the Catholicos convened a general synod attended by seventeen bishops and numerous *vardapets*, among whom was the noted musician and hymnologist Barseġ Ĵōn, abbot of the monastery at Ani. In order to prevent such confusion from happening again, the synod appointed Barseġ to sift through and arrange the plethora of *šarakans*. The resulting collection is known by his name, as the *Jonēntir Kċurdaran*.¹⁷

In the 8th century, Stepanos Siwneci too worked for the regulation, orderly classification and development of Church music. It was he who divided the *šarakans* into groups based on their content and their use in the Church, and according to the musical modes already in use. He set up the nine parts of the liturgical *canon*, naming each based upon the wording of the psalm which accompanies the *šarakan*, as follows: 1) *Ōrhnuġiwn* 2) *Harċ* 3) *Gorjk* 4) *Mecacuscċē* [Magnificat] 5) *Olormea* 6) *Tċr Yerknici* 7) *Ĵašu* 8) *Mankunk* 9) *Hambarji*. For example, 5) *Olormea* [have mercy] is based on the wording of Ps 50/51:1 “Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to your lovingkindness”; 6) *Tċr Yerknici* [Lord from the heavens] is based on the wording of Ps 148:1, “Praise the Lord from the heavens”; 8) *Mankunk* [young people] is based on the Armenian wording of Ps 112:1, “Praise the Lord, young people.”

Generally, the *šarakan* has three verses, or multiples of three, all sung to a single melody. As the use of a three-verse structure implies, each verse may be dedicated to a member of the Holy Trinity.

¹⁷ For more on Barseġ Ĵōn, see Nikoġos Tāhmizyan, “Barseġ Ĵōn and the Flowering of Specialized Musical Creativity in 7th-Century Armenia,” [*Բարսեղի ծօնը եւ Մասնագիտացուած Երգաստեղծութեան Մարկուսը Հայաստանում է. դարում*], *Banber Er-evani Hamalsarani* 1973.1.

What is a musical *mode*?

A *mode* is a melody based on a specific scale of tones. The relationship of the tones to one another and their function within the scale determine the nature of the *mode*. The two most important tones in any scale are called the *tonic* and the *dominant*. Although the same terminology is used in European music, the understanding of *tonic* and *dominant* in Armenian music differs from that in European music: in both musical understandings, the *tonic* is the first note in the scale; however whereas in European music the *dominant* is always the fifth note in the scale, in Armenian music this is not necessarily the case. In addition, the Armenian scale may have more than one *tonic* and more than one *dominant* tone.

There are eight *modes* in Armenian sacred music: four of them are named *jayn* and four are named *kolm*, and they are abbreviated as follows:

First <i>jayn</i>	U ²	Ayb Dza
First <i>kolm</i>	U ⁴	Ayb Ken
Second <i>jayn</i>	F ²	Ben Dza
Second <i>kolm</i>	F ⁴	Ben Ken
Third <i>jayn</i>	7 ²	Gim Dza
Third <i>kolm</i>	7 ⁴	Gim Ken
Fourth <i>jayn</i>	7 ²	Da Dza
Fourth <i>kolm</i>	7 ⁴	Da Ken

Each of these modes has its own inverted [*darjuac*] mode.

In addition to these modes, there are also *šarakans* written in two types of *steli*. (*Steli* is a slow and highly ornamented song style.) As mentioned earlier, *Anjink Nuirealk* is a *šarkan* written in the fourth mode (inverted fourth *kolm*, 7⁴/DaKen).

ANJINK NUIREALK AS POETRY

Catholicos Komitas did not confine himself to the three-verse formula when composing his *šarkan* in honor of St. Hrišimē and her companions. Not even three verses times three would do. Instead, he chose the form of an alphabetical acrostic, following the order of the letters from A to K in thirty-six verses, raising the art of hymnography to a new level. His composition would later inspire others, including Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali.

In addition to its exceptional form, *Anjink Nuirealk* also possesses exceptional lyric beauty. As Manuk Abelian wrote,

Here, the heavenly heroic martyrdom of Hripsimē and her companions resounds, the same valiant struggle that has its source in Agafangelos. Komitas, however, offers neither a paraphrase nor a whole history, but a new creation, a chain of exquisite, individual images over whose every link a spirit of joyous, festive celebration presides.¹⁸

The poetry clearly communicates the virgins' Christian stance towards life, in the light of which all worldly feelings, life's enjoyments and allure are vain and fleeting; all that truly endures is the heavenly "unfading crown":

They rejected the requirements of this corporeal life,
For they knew it to be fantasy and false opulence.
They took no enjoyment in pampered luxury;
They understood temporal wealth to be an empty thing.

The exceptional beauty of the virgins is also stressed. Not only does it enthrall the king, but the pagans, the populace, and the angels as well. And when over this matchless beauty a struggle begins between the king and the virgins — the pagans and the Christians — the valor displayed by the virgins, armed with their faith, is so spell-binding that even God bends down to watch the fight and their victory:

Amazing it is, and beyond the miraculous
Thoughts and words of angels and of men,
That the God Who Is, in His almighty power,
Bent down to watch the virgins' display [of courage].

The valorous relaxed their mighty bows,
And feeble women took up their arms;
The king resplendant in power and glory
Was shamed, defeated by a young girl.

Although the virgins, through their victory, were awarded "the heavenly crown", their martyrdom made them "salvation's sacrifices" for an

¹⁸ Manuk Abelian, *History of Ancient Armenian Literature [Հայոց Հին Գրականության Ժեան Գատմունքի վերջին հատված],* vol. 1, Beirut: Sevan, 1955, 386.

“unknown land” (i.e., Armenia). To put it another way, Catholicos Komitas paints their martyrdom as the cause of Christianity’s spread in Armenia.

Each individual verse of this poem, in its expressive simplicity and unforced beauty, is a pearl; not only of history, but of feeling; not only religious, but idealistic. Across the centuries, all those who have made the acquaintance of this *šarakan* have been enchanted by both its poetic and its musical beauty — beauty, that indescribable reality that can be felt and experienced but not defined.

ANJINK NUTREALK AND ITS MUSICAL MODE

If one looks at the text of the *šarakan* as it appears in the *Šaraknoč* (see fig. 1), one immediately notices that in the margin, near the beginning of the *šarakan* are the abbreviations *Օրհ* and *ԴԿ*.

ԿԱՆՈՆ

ՍՐՐՈՑ ՀՌԻՓՍԻՄԵԱՆՑ

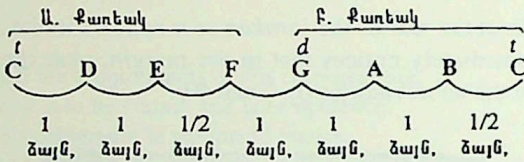
ԼՆՁԻՆՔ նը-կրեալք սիրոյն
քրիստոսի, երկնաւոր նահատակք
եւ կուսանք իմաստունք. ի պար-
ծանքս ձեր բարձրացեալ տօնէ մայր
սիրոյն զբարեբօքքն իւրովք. Բար-
բառք երկնաւորք լըցին զերկիր.
քանզի հոս անուշից բուրեցայք
ի քրիստոս. ողջակէզք բանաւորք
եւ զոհք փրկութեան, եւ որոջք
անարատք ընծայեալք անտունջ:
Գեղեցկութիւնք մարմնաւոր պայ-
ծառութեան ձերոյ յիմարեցոյց
ըզթագաւորն եւ պակեան հեթա-
նոսք, ի գեղ սքանչելի անտուա-
ծատուր կուսանանցն տարիացեալ
զըւարթունքն ընդ մարդկան տօ-

Օրհ
ԴԿ

(fig. 1)

In other words, the *šarakan* is the “*Ōrhnuṭiwn* hymn in the *canon* for St. Hripsimē, and it is composed in the mode called *fourth kolm*. The notations above the individual words indicate to the singer or choirmaster that the melody is the inverted variant of the mode.

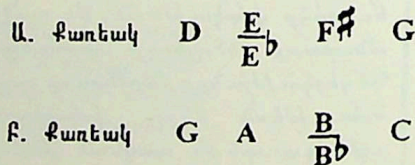
At this point, one should briefly describe the scale of the *fourth kolm*'s inverted variant. Those with a basic musical education will be familiar with the *major* and *minor* keys of European music, whose scale is an octave composed of two consecutive sets of four notes. The C major scale, for example, looks like this:



(fig. 2)

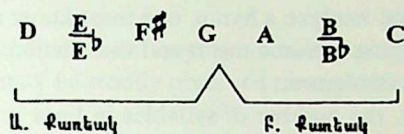
The C is the *tonic* of this scale, while the fifth note (G) is the *dominant*. The final note (F) of the first set of four notes is separated from the first note of the second (G) by a whole interval.

In Armenian music, by contrast, the scale is formed not of two *consecutive* sets of four notes, but of two *conjoined* sets. Thus the scale is composed of seven notes, rather than eight. And as has been said before, there may be more than one *tonic* in an Armenian scale, while the *dominant* note is variable. The scale of the inverted 74 mode, for example, is composed of the following two sets of four notes:



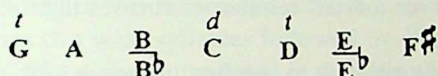
(fig. 3)

The two sets are joined together to produce the inverted 74 scale, as follows:



(fig. 4)

In contrast to the European scale, this one has no interval at all between the two tetrachords. The last note of the first set of four has become the first note of the second set, creating a seven-note scale (D-C). The *tonic* of this scale is G, but D functions as a secondary tonic.¹⁹ The *dominant* is C. For a musician accustomed to the European scale, it might be easier to express the inverted 7-4 scale in the following way:



(fig. 5)

In this scale, the third note may be used as either B-natural or B-flat, according to the required rules of the melodic formulae. The same is true of the E.²⁰

CHARACTERISTICS OF ŠARAKANS COMPOSED IN INVERTED 7-4

It has to be said here that the tradition was such that medieval musicians did not bother to specify the type of basic mode, plain or inverted. They took it for granted that a good hymnologist would recognize the grouping and the total picture of the notation [xaz] of the *šarakan* and the kind of mode.

According to the arrangement of the *xazes* and their total picture, *Anjink Nuirealk* was composed and sung, as has been mentioned, in the inverted 7-4/Da Ken mode.

¹⁹ Four of the Armenian modes have a dual tonic: ԱԿ, ԱԿ inverted, ԴԿ, ԴԿ inverted.

²⁰ It should be noted that the Armenian scale, unlike its European counterparts, is not a "well-tempered" scale. See Nikolos Tahmizian, *Komitas and the Armenian People's Musical Heritage* [Կոմիտաս եւ Հայ Ժողովուրդի Երաժշտական Ժառանգութիւնը], Pasadena, CA: Drazark Press, 1994, 160-168 for an illuminating discussion of this point.

To understand and analyze a hymn, one must know about the specifications of the given hymn's poetic meter and the relationship between poetic rhythm and melodic structure.

In hymnography, the number of syllables in lines or sections is a structural fundamental. Rhythm is produced by the location of accented syllables. It is here that notation takes on crucial importance.

The inverted 74 mode has three basic metrical variants.²¹ The first variant is a *šarakan* each of whose lines comprises two sections, each containing two strongly stressed syllables, no matter how many syllables the line may contain. The second variant comprises *šarakans* whose lines contain an invariable number of syllables, independent of the number of stressed syllables in the line.²² The third variant comprises *šarakans* whose lines contain variable numbers of syllables as well as variable numbers of stressed syllables (or a fixed number of stresses that falls on normally unstressed syllables).²³

Anjink Nuirealk belongs to the first group. A look at the first verse of the *šarakan* reveals that the lines possess varying numbers of syllables, while each segment of each line contains two stresses that fall on the syllables which would naturally be stressed in normal speech:

<i>Անձի'նք նուիրեա'լք</i>	<i>սիրո'յն Քրիստոսի',</i>	(5+5 syll.)
<i>Երկնաւո'ր նահատա'կք</i>	<i>եւ կուսանք իմաստո'ւնք.</i>	(6+6 syll.)
<i>Ի պարծանըս ձե'ր</i>	<i>բարձրացեա'լ սօնէ'</i>	(5+5 syll.)
<i>Մա'յր Սիրո'յն</i>	<i>ղըստերօ'քն իւրո'յք:</i>	(3+6 syll.)

²¹ In this connection, see L.H. Yakobyan, "The Melodies of the Songs in the *Šarakanoc* and Their Sub-classifications" [*Շարակնոցի Երգերի Եղանակները եւ Նրանց Ստորաբաժանումները*], *Ejmiacin*, 1992.4-5.

²² The *Mankunk* hymn for the feast of St. Lewond and his companions, composed by the 11th-12th century hymnographer Yovhannēs Sarkawag Vardapet, an alphabetical acrostic, falls into this category, although it evidences some instability in the number of syllables. In his *Oskeporik, Gems of Armenian Song* [*Ոսկեփորիկ. Հայ Երգի Գոհարներ*], Los Angeles: April Press, 1994, 52, Nikolos Tahmizyan remarks on the relationship between *Anjink Nuirealk*, Yovhannēs Sarkawag's hymn, and Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali's hymn for St. Vardan and his companions, "Marvelous New Victor" [*Նորահրաշ պսակաւոր*].

²³ The *Ōtorameay* hymn for the Feast of the Seventy-Two Disciples of Christ is an example of a hymn in this category. For a more detailed examination of the second and third categories of inverted 74 *šarakans* and for parallels with Arabic and Persian music, see Krikor Pidedjian, *The Hymn "Anjink Nuirealk"*, 68-80.

A similar pattern of lines with varying numbers of syllables but a fixed number of stresses may be readily observed throughout the *šarakan*.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POETIC METER AND XAZ NOTATION IN *ANJINK NUIREALK'*

Having described briefly the characteristics of *šarakans* written in the inverted 7-4 mode, we may now turn to the way in which the poetic meter of *Anjink Nuirealk'* and the parallel structure of its accompanying melody are expressed in musical *xaz* notation.

Manuk Abelyan and others after him have observed that the primary, underlying metrical unit of this *šarakan's* text is the anapest, a tri-syllabic unit which comprises two weak syllables followed by a strong one (- - /). In musical notation, this might be translated in the following manner:



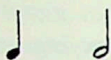
(fig. 6)

So, all things being regular, a line of *Anjink Nuirealk'* would be notated like this:



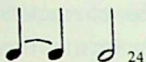
(fig. 7)

It is clear that because *Anjink Nuirealk'* belongs to the first variant of inverted 7-4 *šarakans*, whose number of syllables per line is variable, not every line comprises multiples of three syllables, since this style of composition was in its infancy. Nonetheless, the hymnographer is cognizant of the underlying anapestic form and tries to accommodate it by lengthening certain weak syllables so that they carry the same weight as a pair of weak syllables would. The second phrase of the first line of the hymn, for example, reads *սիրոյն Քրիստոսի*. The first word of the phrase, *Սիրոյն*, comprises only two syllables, one weak and one strong:



(fig. 8)

The person supplying the *xaz* notation to this phrase, as we will see a little later in this study, makes it clear in the notation that the first syllable is to be lengthened, creating the following effect:



(fig. 9)

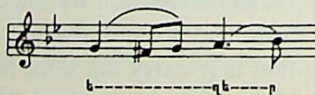
In certain cases, the hymnographer chooses to ignore the anapestic structure altogether. There are numerous instances where the weak syllable of a two-syllable word is *not* lengthened. The most notable example of this is the very first word of the hymn: *Անձի՛նք*.²⁵ The *xaz* above the first syllable is a *րիւճ*, indicating that the syllable is not to be lengthened:

²⁴ A similar instance can be found in the ninth verse, in the second phrase of the second line. There, in place of a three-syllable word, there is the two-syllable word *կանալքն*. There the notation places the "circumflex" [*սլարոյղ*] *xaz* above the first-syllable, indicating that it should be lengthened.

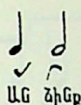
²⁵ A second instance can be found in the third line of the sixteenth verse. There the first syllable of the phrase's first word, *երէր*, is not lengthened. Rather, the *xaz* above it is a *րիւճ*, indicating that it is not to be lengthened.



This example was chosen here because one of the choral arrangements of *Anjink Nuirealk* presented in the appendix to this article is that of Komitas Vardapet. When R. Atayan printed this in *Ejmiacin* 1961.2, pp. 26-28, the word *երէր* was lengthened:



Undoubtedly, had Komitas Vardapet seen this phrase, he would have corrected it. After all, he was among the first to speak of the difference between the *paroyk* and the *րիւճ*. He would have corrected the notation to something equivalent to the notation of *անձի՛նք*:



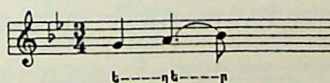
(fig. 10)

There are also instances where, instead of a three-syllable anapestic word, the text of the *šarakan* has a word with four syllables. The first two words in the thirty-first verse provide an example of such an occurrence. There, instead of two three-syllable words, there are a three-syllable and a four-syllable word. Following the natural rules of stress, these two words can be notated like this:

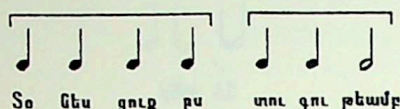


(fig. 11)

However the hymnographer, Catholicos Komitas, in order to maintain proximity to the desired meter, has given the third syllable of the first word, *-ցուք*, a weaker stress. The musician who later added the *xaz* notation, in order to draw the performer's attention to this exception, notated the syllable with a *púš*, to indicate that it should not receive a fully double length, as befits the stress, but rather a single one. When sung, the line preserves its allotted number of beats, by the stratagem of sacrificing the stress:



Indeed, the authoritative musicologists Elia Tntesian (1834-1881) and Nikolayos Tašjian (1841-1855) did so.

(fig. 12)²⁶

A similar situation is found in the second line of the tenth verse. Here, the opening words of the line are *քանզի հասեա՛լ*. In terms of musical beats, the fact that the stress falls on the last syllable of the second word creates a phrase with five beats rather than four. In this case, however, each syllable is given its full weight when sung, and the anapestic form is simply eliminated altogether. As the *xaz* notation indicates, the phrase is sung as follows:



(fig. 13)

²⁶ A second example, and one incorrectly interpreted by R. Afayian (*Armenian Xaz Notation*, 204) is found in the third line of the sixth verse. There, the third word in the line, *սպասեբարգմեալք*, contains not three syllables, but four. The resulting anomaly should be notated as follows:



or, alternatively,



The musician who added the *xaz* notation chose not to place the *erkar* [long] *xaz* above the second syllable of the third word in the line, *մահու*, where the natural stress of the phrase falls, thereby indicating that it should not be stressed, decreasing its value from two beats to one and immediately moving to the next syllable:



not as:



(fig. 14)

or as:



(fig. 15)

The above may serve as general examples of how issues arising from anomalies in the poetic meter and its accompanying melodic line are resolved following the assigned *xaz* notations. Since it is a member of the inverted 7-4 category of *šarakans*, extra syllables are naturally to be found in lines of *Anjink Nuirealk*. These are not to be artificially forced into the anapest pattern by shortening the stressed syllables to half value except in instances where the *xaz* notation specifically indicates that this should be done.

Now, we shall turn to a closer analysis of the opening verse of the *šarakan*, looking first at its metrical-rhythmic structure and then offering a comparative look at its melody.

METRICAL ANALYSIS OF ANJINK NUIREALK (FIRST VERSE)

It may be helpful, first of all, to have before us a copy of the verse in question as it appears in the *Šaraknoc*:

ԱՆՋԻՆՆԻՅԻ նը-խրեալք սիրոյն
բրխտտոսի, երկնաւոր նա՛հատտակք
էւ կուտանք իմաստունք. ի՛ պար-
ծանըս ձեր բարձրացեալ տօ՛նէ՛ մայր
սիսիւ գըտտերօքըն իւրակք:

(fig. 16)

The natural stresses of the verse, according to the norms of the spoken language, may be schematized as follows:

— | — — | — | — — |
Աճձիճք Երւիրեալք սիրոյն Քրիստոսի,

— — | — — | — — | — — |
Երկնաւոր Եահատակք եւ կուսանք իմաստունք.

— — | — | — — | — |
Ի պարծանըս ձեր բարձրացեալ տօնէ

| — | — — | — — |
Մայր Սիովն դըստերօրքն իւրովք:

(fig. 17)

When translated into musical notation, this metrical pattern would appear as indicated below:

Աճ ձիճք Երւ րի եալք սի րոյն Քրիս տո սի,

Երկ Եաւ րոր Եա հա տակք եւ կու սանք ի մա ստունք

Ի պար ձա Եըս ձեր Բար ձրա ցեալ տօ Եէ

մայր Սի սիւն դըս տե րօ րքն իւ րովք:

(fig. 18)

As has already been said, this *šarakan* is composed on a metrical pattern based on stressed syllables, notwithstanding the strong presence of anomalous phrases within it. Although Armenian music, it should be said, does not possess the European musical features of *time* and *measure* with their attendant accentuation, it may be clearer if below we use both a time signature and a division into measures in order to spell out how closely the poetic text fits with the anapestic meter — and, as we shall see, Komitas Vardapet, too, used this method when notating and arranging the *šarakan*:

The diagram shows a musical score in 4/4 time, divided into four measures per line. The text is in Armenian. Question marks are placed above certain notes to indicate anomalies in the anapestic meter.

Line 1: 4/4 time signature. Measures: 1. 4/4 (with a question mark above the first note) | 4/4 | 4/4 (with a question mark above the first note) | 4/4. Text: ԱՆ ձիճք | ԵՐ լի բեալք | սի բոյն | Զրիս տա սի.

Line 2: 4/4 time signature. Measures: 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4. Text: Երկ նա լոր | նա հա տակք | Եւ կու սանք | Ի մաս տուճք.

Line 3: 4/4 time signature. Measures: 4/4 | 4/4 (with a question mark above the second note) | 4/4 | 4/4 (with a question mark above the second note). Text: Ի պար ծա | Երս ձեր | բարձ բա ցեալ | տա ցէ

Line 4: 4/4 time signature. Measures: 4/4 (with a question mark above the first note) | 4/4 (with a question mark above the first note) | 4/4 | 4/4. Text: մայր | Սի ովն | դրս տե բո | քըն իւ բովք:

(fig. 19)²⁷

It is plain to see that with the exception of the six places indicated by question marks, the first verse is indeed in 4/4 time. To arrive at a resolution of those six anomalies, one must turn to an analysis of the *xaz* notation.

²⁷ From the point of view of the Armenian pattern of stresses, the following division would have been a better way to notate the first measures:

Alternative notation for the first measures of the first line, showing a different division of the 4/4 time signature.

4/4 time signature. Measures: 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4. Text: ԱՆ | ձիճք | Եր լի | բեալք

However, in order to emphasize the anapestic structure the first syllable was not separated in the above diagram.

Background: the development of Armenian musical notation, from the medieval xaz to modern European notation

As the page from the *Šaraknoč* given at the beginning of the previous section showed, the *xaz* notation for this *šarakan* is simple, or light. Before turning to an analysis of the specific *xazes* employed in its notation, a brief overview of Armenian musical notation in general will not be out of place.

First of all, an acquaintance with the names and forms of all the *xazes* would be helpful. The table of *xazes* with their shapes and names, as included in the *Jeřac Šaraknoč*, is reproduced below:

ԱՆՈՒԱՆՔ ԽԱԶԻՑ ՇԱՐԱԿԱՆԱՑ	
չէշո՛.	ոլորակ՞.
փուշ՝.	խունճ՞.
փութ՝.	ծունկ՞.
պարպկ՛.	ճնկներ՞.
երկար՛.	ձակորճ՞.
սուղ՞.	էկորճ՞.
սուր՛.	կրկներկար՞.
թուր՛.	հուհայ՞.
թաշո՞.	փաթութ՞.
բենկորճ մեծ՛.	ղարկ՝.
բենկորճ փոքր՛.	խում՞.
վերնախաղ մեծ՞.	քարքաշ՞.
վերնախաղ փոքր՞.	խեկորճ՞.
ներքնախաղ մեծ՞.	կեսերկար՞.
ներքնախաղ փոքր՞.	խոսրոլային՞.
կուս՛.	կրկնոլորակ՞.
մենկորճ՛.	~ ~ ~ ~ ~

(fig. 20)

Xaz notation is one of the three musical notation systems in which the vocal works of Armenian church music have reached us. Although our understanding of this notation system is incomplete, it is nonetheless possible to say with relative certainty that its use extends back to the 8th century when, as has been mentioned, Stepanos Siwneci organized and greatly enriched the Armenian Church's sacred music. I say "with relative certainty" because a fragment of a 9th-century manuscript with abundant *xaz* notation survives (fig. 2). From this it is possible to infer that *xaz* notation originated prior to the 9th century.

(fig. 21)²⁸

Between the 10th and 13th centuries, music underwent a phase of brilliant development. During this time period, it became one of the branches of university study. Its importance reached such a degree that it became one of the four prerequisites for receipt of “higher philosophical education”. Schools of music were established in conjunction with monasteries, among them Arkakalin, Dprevank, Drazark, Kamrajor, Kaputkar, Hnjuč, Narek and, at a later date, Tašew. Among the Fathers who developed the science of *xaz* notation were such prominent figures as Grigor Ġzik (Ay-rivaneči), Anania Narekači, Xaçatur Tarōneči, Nersēs Šnorhali, Grigor Xul, Gēorg Skewrači, Tōvma Mecopeči, and Grigor Xlafeči.

The system of *xaz* notation went through several stages in its development. The 12th-14th centuries were a time of growth and dissemination. After the 14th century, however, difficult political circumstances led to the destruction or closure of monasteries and centers of learning, and the complex art of *xaz* notation experienced a gradual decline. By the 18th century it was a forgotten specialty, and the system of notation had become unreadable.

²⁸ The manuscript fragment is reproduced from Ķristapōr Stepani Kušnarian et al, *An Overview of the History of Armenian Music* [Արևարկ Հայ Երաժշտութեան Պատմութեան], Erevan, 1963, 16a.

Despite the fact of its increasing unreadability, *xaz* notation was faithfully copied in manuscripts dating from the 16th-18th centuries, and was included in printed editions of the *Šaraknoč* from the 17th century onward. At the present day there are over 2000 notated manuscripts, as well as numerous fragments, the greatest number of which are to be found in the Maštoč Matenadaran in Erevan.

The two chapters devoted to music in the unpublished *Mathematics* [Մաթեմատիքա] of Mxifār Vardapet Sebastaci (1676-1749) have been published by Lewond Tayjian. The first of these deals with Armenian music ("Concerning Music, Which Is the Fourth Branch of Mathematics" [Յաղագս երաժշտութեան որ է չորրորդ մասն Մաթէմատիքայի]), while the second concerns Latin music ("Concerning Music as Practiced among those with the Latins" [Յաղագս երաժշտութեան ըստ որում են առ Լատինսն]). Prior to his adherence to the Church of Rome and his founding of what was to become the Mekhitarist brotherhood in Venice (following its move from Istanbul to Greece and finally to Italy), Mxifār had been acquainted with Armenian sacred music in his home area of Sebastia and in Ejmiacin. In his days *xaz* notation was still in use, albeit at the level of a dimming recollection, and thus his comments on the music of his time are valuable indicators of the state of music in that era.

Concerning the *xazes* Mxifār says the following:

The *šešt* elevates and gives upward accent to [šeštē] the syllable above which it is placed.

The *puš* is a *grave* which lowers and brings down [the tone].

The *paroyk* is a *circumflex* that raises and at the same time lowers the sound.

The *erkar* lengthens [erkarē].

The *sul* shortens [slē] and damps the syllable over which it is placed.

The *sur* causes "anger". The *tur* "sharpens" the syllable and makes it "like a blade" [tur].

The *cunk* brings the sound "to its knees" and makes the syllable "like a knee" [cunk].

The *tašt* makes the syllable "like a brass bowl" [tašt].

The *olorak* "twists" [olorē] and spins the syllable above which it is set.

The *xunj* makes the syllable "pronounced" [xunjē].

The *vernaxal* causes the syllable to move upward [vernaxalē].

The *nerknaxal* causes the syllable to make a downward movement [nerknaxatis].

The *benkorj* makes the syllable into a "bent ρ " [korj ben].

The *xosrovayin* lengthens [the syllable] in a turning manner.

- The *cnker* doubles the *cunk*.
 The *ēkorj* makes the syllable “bent” [*korj*].
 The *jakorj* makes the syllable a “bent á” [*korj jay*]
 The *xumb* “groups” [*xmbē*] the syllable.
 The *pátut* “winds up” [*pátutē*] the syllable.
 The *karkáš* makes the syllable a *karkáš*.
 The *huha* “stirs up” [*huhayecúcanē*] the syllable.
 The *zark* strikes [*harkanē*] and “beats” the syllable.²⁹

Obviously, Church music had by this time lost its scientific basis and character, and had become a musical tradition passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

It was with the intention of preventing further deterioration in this state of affairs and forestalling greater corruptions and misunderstanding that the renowned Istanbul musician Papa Hambarjum Limonjian (1768-1839) devised a unique system of notation then put to use in transcribing Church hymns. This system became the second to gain currency.

Limonjian's concerns are best described in his own words:

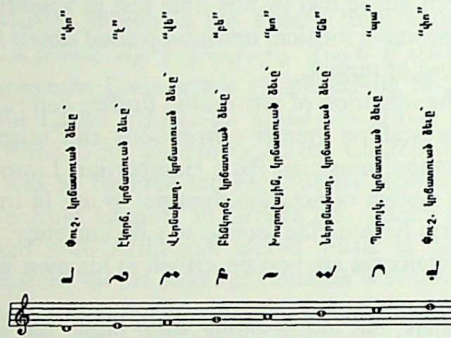
Unfortunately, this awe-inspiring vocal music has become a game and, until now, a plaything in the mouths of pompous choristers who think the melodies they are singing according to their own whims — and in a most unfitting manner — have been passed down directly to them by Nersēs Šnorhali. They do not take into account that our Church music is beautiful and sublime by virtue of its simplicity. Therefore, what need is there to introduce into it superfluous ornamentation and to imitate a gypsy or a Jewish cantor, in order to show off the quality of their voice? By employing such means, don't we not only fail to invite the people to warm enthusiasm, but make them culpable as well?³⁰

Hambarjum Limonjian was known as the foremost musicologist of his day, and was deeply versed not only in Armenian hymnology but also in the music of the Greek Church, Turkish dervishes and European tradition. It was in recognition of his wide-ranging musical expertise that he received the title of “Papa”; that is, “master”.

²⁹ Lewond Tayian, *Abbot Mxitar, Musician* [*Մխիթար Աբրահամյան Երամիշտ*], Venice: San Lazzaro, 1954, 17.

³⁰ Aristakēs Hisarlian, *History of Armenian Musical Notation* [*Պատմություն Հայ Չայնա-դրուժեանն*], Istanbul: M. Hovakimian Press, 1914, 56-57.

It was thanks to the patronage of the highly placed Yovhannēs Čēlēpi Tiwzian family that Limonjian was able, in 1813-1815, to create the new notation system. As the purpose of Limonjian's notation system was to record Church music, it did not have the capacity to notate instrumental or polyphonic works; its range was limited to that of the human voice. The system is illustrated below (together with its accompanying European musical scale):



(fig. 22)

Taking seven symbols from the Armenian *xaz* notation and assigning one to each of the notes in the European scale, Limonjian created the system of Armenian musical notation now known by his own name. The names for the notes in its scale are expressed in shortened form as

փո է վե բե խո նե պա փո

(fig. 23)

To indicate that a tone should be raised a half step, a small *erkar* is placed above the note (there is no sign to indicate that a tone should be lowered a half step; all half tones are indicated on the basis of the tone below):

փո^է կիսվեր կամ բե^էկորե կիսվեր

(fig. 24)³¹

³¹ Further details on the adaptations of the Limonjian notation for higher or lower registers, as well as the indicators of duration, are given in Pidedjian, *Anjink Nuirealk*, 99-100. For

the reader's further information, we offer here a comparison of the intervals in the European scale with those in the Armenian scale, as prepared by Komitas Vardapet and published in Abēl Öhlugian [=Oghlukian], *Literary Pieces from Komitas Vardapet's Prolific Pen* [Գրական Նշխարք Կոմիտաս Վարդապետի Բեղուն Գրչէն], Montreal: 1994, 92:

ԱՐԵՒԵԼԵԱՆ ԵՒ ԱՐԵՒՄՏԵԱՆ ԿԻՍԱԶԱՅՆ ԵԼԵՒԷԶ

Թիւ	Ձեւ	Տանկ. անոց	Հայկական անոց	Համառոտ	Երոսական	Տար	Տեւետեան	Լատին
1.	Լ	Եքդեան	Փուշ	Փօ	Ré	Ա	բա.	D
2.	Մ	Փէս Հիսար	Փուշ կիսվեր	Փօ կիսվեր	Ré dièse	—	—	Dis
3.	Ն	Աշիբան	էկործ	է	Mi	Ե	—	E
4.	ՆՆ	Փէս Աղէմ	էկործ կիսվեր	է կիսվեր	(Mi dièse)	—	—	(Eis)
5.	ՆՆՆ	Արաք	Վերնախաղ	Վէ	(Fa)	Է	—	(F)
6.	ՆՆՆՆ	Գէվէչտ	Վերնախաղ կիսվեր	Վէ կիսվեր	(Fa dièse)	—	—	(Fis)
7.	ՆՆՆՆՆ	Բաստ	Բենկործ	Բէ	Sol	Ը	—	G
8.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Չէրդիւլէ	Բենկործ կիսվեր	Բէ կիսվեր	(Sol dièse)	—	—	Gis
9.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Դիւզեան	Խոսրովային	Խօ	La	Ի	լի.	A
10.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Բիրդի	Խոսրովային կիսվեր	Խօ կիսվեր	(La dièse)	—	—	(Ais)
11.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Սիդեան	Ներքնախաղ	Նէ	Si	Ո	—	(H)
12.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Փուսելիք	Ներքնախաղ կիսվեր	Նէ կիսվեր	(Si dièse)	—	—	(His)
13.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Ջարգեան	Պարոյկ	Պա	Do	Օ	—	C
14.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Հիջազ	Պարոյկ կիսվեր	Պա կիսվեր	Do dièse	—	—	Cis
15.	ՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆՆ	Նէվա	Փուշ	Փօ	Ré	Ա	բա.	D

A comparison of the two scales showing the differences between the numerical values of the corresponding vibrations was charted by Nikolos Tahmizyan, *Komitas and the Armenian People's Musical Heritage*, 166:

Limonjian's students, in particular Aristakēs Yovhannēsian, perfected his work, and as it was put to use the notation gained wide acceptance.³²

Ազիսակ Ջայնաստիճանաց

192	թիզ շարկեամ	սո	192
184	թիզ քուսելիք	սի	180
176	թիզ սեկեամ		
168	սիմպիլե	լա տիէզ	170
160	մոմալո	լա	160
152	շէճնազ	սոյ տիէզ	152
144	կերտաճիլե	սոյ	144
138	մամար	ֆա տիէզ	136
132	էլիճ		
126	աճէճ	ֆա	128
120	ճիւշէթի	սի	120
114	ճիւար	ռէ տիէզ	114
108	ճէլիւ	ռէ	108
102	ճիճազ	սո տիէզ	102
96	շարկեամ	սո	96
92	քուսելիք	սի	90
88	սեկեամ		
84	թիքոթի	լա տիէզ	85
80	տիկեամ	լա	80
76	զէլիլիլե	սոյ տիէզ	76
72	բաստ	սոյ	72
69	կէլէլոն	ֆա տիէզ	68
66	արաք		
63	քէն աճէճ	ֆա	64
60	աքաճ	սի	60
57	քէն ճիւար	ռէ տիէզ	57
54	նիկեամ	ռէ	54
51	քէն ճիճազ	սո տիէզ	51
48	քէն շարկեամ	սո	48

Արիւսակ ճիլիլեք - ճոճնաճիլեք

Անիստիճան ճիլիլեք - ճոճնաճիլեք

³² Recent works on Armenian notation include the very helpful volume published by Aram Kerovbian, *Father Minas Bēškian's Music: Succinct Information on the Origins of Scales, Melodies and Xaz Notation (1815)* [Հ. Մինաս Բժշկեանի Երաժշտութիւնը, որ է

In 1873, at the invitation of Catholicos Gēorg IV Kostandnupolseci, the Constantinopolitan musicologist, composer and hymnologist Nikołayos Tašjian came to Ejmiacin and recorded the entire body of the Armenian Church's sacred music according to the Limonjian system. At the Catholicos's behest this was published and its use made mandatory in all churches, winning quick acceptance because of its simplicity. (Komitas Vardapet found it so simple to use that it was his notation of choice for recording any piece of music; a kind of musical shorthand, if you will, though it needs no abbreviations.)

As Armenians became accustomed to European musical forms, and particularly as polyphony became more widely accepted in churches, Armenian church music began to be recorded in European musical notation, using the five-line staff. At the present there are very few places — Istanbul being a notable exception — where musicians still understand and use Limonjian's notation system. In the final analysis, one of the virtues of the Limonjian notation was the way that it prepared Armenian music for the transition to European notation. With its adaptation to European musical notation, Armenian church music moved from being a mode of expression used exclusively in the church (or at home by the faithful for their own spiritual devotions) to being music adapted for concert presentation. This was, effectively, a revolution,³³ and ultimately it rescued Armenian sacred

Համառօտ տեղեկութիւն երաժշտական սկզբանց ելելէջութեանց եւ նշանագրաց իսպիլց (1815), Erevan: 1997.

³³ Like all revolutions, the transformation of Armenian liturgical music gave rise to a struggle between conservative and progressive elements in the community. Let me give two examples. The first struggle centered on the founder of Armenian polyphony, Křristařor Kara-Murza (1853-1902), who in 1886 scored the Divine Liturgy for four parts and used it in the church of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Baku. In 1892 he accepted the post of Director of Music at Ejmiacin, and proceeded to use his arrangement there as well. Conservative clergy, unable to brook this novelty, lodged a complaint with the catholicos of the day, Xrimian Hayrik, and Kara-Murza found himself at the center of a war of words both inside the monastery and outside it, in the press: "The church is a holy place, not a theatre"; "There is one God; church music should have one voice. Polyphony is polytheism!" (Ařot Patmagrian, *Armenian Song Through the Ages* [Հայ Երգը Դարերի Միջից], Beirut: 1977, 586.) The second struggle centered around Komitas Vardapet, who settled in Istanbul in 1910. His 300-voice choir, "Gusan", was prepared to give its maiden concert on Dec. 4 of that year when the patriarchal vicar, Łewond Vardapet Durian [=Tourian] issued a formal letter forbidding the choir to present the first part of its intended program, comprising liturgical music, on the grounds that it was contrary to the Church's laws for sacred music to be performed on a secular stage. The concert went ahead as planned. This was not the only occasion when the great musicologist and cleric

music from being an arcane discipline mastered only by a dwindling circle of musical specialists, and made it a part of the world's musical heritage, accessible to and readable by all.

Anjink Nuirealk and xaz notation

A list of the *xazes* present in the notation of *Anjink Nuirealk* is given below. The name of the *xaz* is given in the left-hand column, its shape is given in the middle column, and the number of beats associated with it is given in the third column:

ԱՆՈՒՆ ԻԱԶԱՆԻՆ		ՏԵՒՈՂՈՒԹԻՒՆ
երկար	/	երկու բախում
զարկ	✓	երկու բախում
թուր	յ	երկու բախում
խունճ	~	մէկ բախում
ծունկ	՝	մէկ բախում
կուռ	^	մէկ բախում
շեշտ	՛	մէկ բախում
ոլորակ	o	մէկ բախում
պարոյկ	^	երկու բախում
փուշ	✓	մէկ բախում

(fig. 25)

We should note the following two details: 1) the first *xaz* in the list, the *erkar*, doubles its *length* when it falls on the final syllable of a verse (or the syllable receives its natural stress plus the extra duration of the *erkar*) and

faced opposition: the recording he produced of liturgical music performed by Paris opera star Armenak Šahmuratian, with himself accompanying on the organ, was termed “sac-rilege” by conservatives, and Komitas Vardapet received yet another letter, this time from the Religious Council of the patriarchate, informing him that his “sale” of the Armenian Church's sacred music had been submitted to the Catholicos for suitable action. (*Ibid.*, 31) The letter provoked a sharp response in Komitas Vardapet's defense on the part of more progressive persons.

2) the fifth and sixth *xazes* in the list, the *cunk* and the *kur*, occur only once each.

At this point, we are ready to return to the question of how the six anomalies noted with question marks in the chart of the first verse in *Anjink Nuirealk* (see p. 103) have been resolved in the *xaz* notation. We will also comment on how the hymn's time signature was set to 4/4.

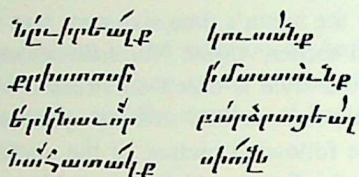
As was mentioned earlier, *Anjink Nuirealk* belongs to the inverted 7-4 class of *šarakans*, whose style is based on stressed syllables; each part of each line in the hymn possesses two stressed syllables. With this in mind, one may construct the following picture of the verse; this time, however, the *xaz* notation from the *Šaraknoc* has been added to the chart, to facilitate an examination of the ways in which the writer of the notation has resolved the anomalies:

The figure shows 16 measures of music with lyrics in Armenian. The notation includes notes, rests, and *xaz* symbols (checkmarks, question marks, and slanted lines) indicating syllable durations. The lyrics are: 1. Ան ձիւնք, 2. ցը չի բեալք, 3. սի թոյն, 4. քրիս տո սի, 5. երկ ցաւ որ, 6. ցա հա տակք, 7. եւ կու սանք, 8. ի վառ տունք, 9. ի պար ձա, 10. ցըս ձեք, 11. բարձ բա ցեալ, 12. առ ցէ, 13. վալք, 14. Սի ոյն, 15. դըս տե քո, 16. քըն իւ բովք:

(fig. 26)

The reader has no doubt observed that, unlike European notation, where every syllable bears a note, not all syllables in the verse above have a corresponding *xaz*. This is not the result of an oversight or of carelessness on the part of the person providing the notation. On the contrary, it is a regular feature of *xaz* notation. For example, when a *xaz* denoting short duration (such as a *šešt* or a *puš*) occurs a single syllable or above the first syllable of a word, and there is nothing above the subsequent syllable or syllables, it indicates that the same duration applies either to all the unmarked syllables that precede the next *xaz*, or until the penultimate syllable.

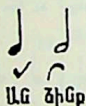
ble of the word, whichever comes first. A *šešt* or a *pūš* may simply be omitted in instances where it is easily understood to apply and notation would be otiose. Words in the first verse of *Anjink Nuirealk* that fall under this rule are the following:



(fig. 27)

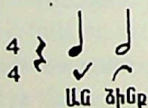
The Six Anomalies

The first anomaly requiring further explanation by means of its *xaz* notation is the first word in the verse: Անձինք. Here, instead of the trisyllabic anapestic foot, one encounters instead a “truncated” foot, a disyllabic word. By using a *pūš* and a *paruyk*, the supplier of the *xaz* notation for this word has clearly assigned to the word the following meter:



(fig. 28)

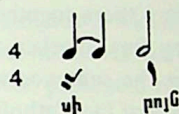
Thus, the performer is advised to take the first phrase as incomplete, and to resolve the anomaly by notating it in this manner:



(fig. 29)

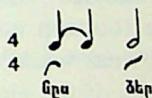
The second anomaly is the word *սիրոյն*, which falls in the third measure. According to the natural cadence of the spoken language, the first syllable of the word, *սիր-*, is weak, while the second syllable, *-ոյն*, receives the stress. In this case, in order to preserve the 4/4 count of the measure or the anapestic form, the person providing the *xaz* notation has

assigned a *zark* to the first syllable, indicating that it should be lengthened by receiving an additional beat. Over the second, stressed, syllable he has placed a *tur*, which is a *xaz* indicating a double beat; thus, he has reinforced its natural value, and has confirmed that the anapestic meter should be maintained:



(fig. 30)

The third anomaly is found in the tenth measure, which contains only two syllables: the final syllable of the word *սլարժանըս* (*-նըս*) and the monosyllabic word *ձէր*. The former is a weak syllable, while the latter is stressed. Here too, in order that the singer may understand the stress that the composer intends the weak syllable to have, a *paruyk* has been placed above it indicating that *-նըս* should receive two of the measure's four beats, while the remaining two naturally fall on the monosyllabic *ձէր*, making up the full 4/4 measure.



(fig. 31)

The next instance requiring elucidation is measure twelve, which contains only the two-syllable word *սօնէ*, whose first syllable is unstressed while its second syllable is stressed. In this case, as in the previous example, a *paruyk* is placed above the weak syllable, indicating that it should be lengthened. In addition, a *but* has been placed above the strong second syllable, *-նէ*. Although the *but* belongs to the group of *xazes* that carry only a single beat, as one can see in the fifteenth measure it also has a second function when found above a syllable in the final position at the end of a sentence or phrase. To quote the explanation of R. Afayian:

We see that the final sign of the first phrase is the *but*, while the final sign of the second phrase is the *erkar*. A comparison of numerous songs

demonstrates that this is a regular pattern. That is, the mid-cadenza of a song [is marked] by a *erkar*. . . . Thus the *but* and the *erkar* are specifically signs of a cadenza.³⁴

In the case of *Anjink Nuirealk*, this usage of the *but* differs in musical traditions from a variety of musical centers. When speaking of tying sentences together quickly, or tying them together following a breath, Komitas Vardapet said, "After every final marker, it is possible either to take a pause, or to continue by tying the sentence to the next, as one may prefer."³⁵ According to the tradition of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, we were to hold the ending to the full extent of its value (with very few exceptions), rather than shortening it and passing on directly to the next sentence, which would have left the listener with the impression of haste. The twelfth measure should be read as follows:



(fig. 32)

The last anomaly to be addressed falls in measures thirteen and fourteen. In measure thirteen the stressed monosyllabic word *ճալր* naturally possesses two beats. Measure fourteen comprises the two-syllable word *Սիրոյն*, whose first syllable is weak while the second is strong, thus occupying three beats (1+2=3). Thus of the eight potential beats contained in these two measures only five are actualized, while three remain unused. By reducing the value of the syllable *ճալր* by one beat and joining the two measures together, the hymnographer has chosen to create a single, complete 4/4 measure in place of the two incomplete ones. The person supplying the *xaz* notation indicates the elision to the singer by placing a *púš* above *ճալր*. The combined phrase is read as follows:

³⁴ Թ. Աֆայան, *Armenian Xaz Notation* [Հայկական Խազային Նոտագրութիւնը], Erevan: 1959, 195-196.

³⁵ Oghlukian, 120.



(fig. 33)

After analyzing the issues of stress and musical meter in the first verse of the *šarakan* by means of its medieval *xaz* notation, then, *Anjink Nuirealk'*'s opening verse may now be presented in its accurate and final form:

4
4
ՍԵ ձիԵք
Երկ Եա ւոր
Երկ Եա տակք
Եւ կու սանք
Ի մաս տուԵք.

Սի պար ձա
Երս ձեր
բարձ բա ցեալ
տո Եէ

մայր Սի ովն
դըս տե բո
քըԵ Իւ բո
վք:

(fig. 34)

MELODIC ANALYSIS OF ANJINK' NUIREALK' (FIRST VERSE)

Having concluded the above scientific analysis and established the final picture of *Anjink Nuirealk'*'s metrical structure, insofar as concerns the first verse, we may turn our attention to a comparative study of the hymn's melody.

Four readings of the first verse

Here I present my own reading of the first verse, made in 1961 in Antelias, having Komitas Vardapet's copy as my guide. The immediate context was the arrangement of this *šarakan* for a mixed choir; musician-conductor Sargis Hampoyian performed it with his "Šořakat" choir on June 7, 1961 in a concert devoted to Armenian Sacred Music given at Beirut's State Conservatory Music Hall. Also having at my disposal the authoritative renderings of Etia Tntesian, Nikolayos Tařjian and Komitas Vardapet, I include them below, with the intention of presenting a deeper and more fundamental analysis of the melody through a comparative study of the renderings. Since Tntesian and Tařjian's readings were made using Papa Limonjian's notation, I have also transcribed them in European five-line notation to make them more easily understandable.

Pidedjian's reading:

Աճ--ձի--ճը-- Եր--ւի--րեա--լք սի--րո--լն Քրիստո--սի
 Երկ-ճա--ւո--ր Եա--հա--տակք Ե--ւ Կու--սա--ճը ի-մաստուճը.
 ի պա-ր-ձա--ճը--ս ձև--ր բարձ-րա-ցեա-լ տօ--ճէ
 մայր Սի--ովն դըստե--րօ--րըն ի--րո--վր:

(fig. 35)

The reading of Etia Tntesian follows, first in Limonjian's notation and then in European transcription:

The final reading is that of Komitas Vardapet:

Աճ---ծի---նք Գը---ի---րեա---լք սի---րո---լն Քրիստոս---սի
 երկ-հա---ւո---ր Գա-հա---տակր Ե-ւ կոտ---սա---նք ի-մաս-տու-նք.
 ի պա-ր-ծա---նք-ս ձև---ր լարձ-բա-ցեա-լ տո---նլ
 մայր Սի---նովն դըստև---րո-վքն իւ---րո---վք:

(fig. 40)

Here I would like to reiterate a remark previously made in my work, *Grigor Narekaci, Hymographer?*. If a musician without knowledge of hymnography were to compare the readings given above, it is probable that, seeing the many differences in their notation he would come to the conclusion that they represented three different songs. A musician versed in the art of the *šarakan*, however, would maintain that quite the opposite is true. The *šarakan* is not an individualized work, as is the case in European music, where for two songs to be equivalent they must be identical syllable for syllable and note for note. A musician versed in the *šarakan* would observe that all the readings present the same song; a song expressed in the inverted 74 mode is expressed, albeit through the use of different idioms.

Now that we have before our eyes the *šarakan* under examination, and before we proceed to the melodic analysis, it is apropos to recall the essence of what was discussed more fully earlier concerning the inverted 74 mode, by depicting it below in European notation on a five-line staff:

(fig. 41)

The two *tonic* notes in this mode are G and D. The *dominant* is C. The two notes with variable pitch are B-natural and F-sharp. In *Anjink Nuirealk*, specifically, B-flat and B-natural are often interchanged, giving the hymn a unique character and color and acquiring a special value.

Analysis of the melodic form

Although *Anjink Nuirealk* is a 7th-century composition and its *xaz* notation is light and simple, it has a highly organized strophic structure. It has already been observed that the poetic text has four sentences, and that each sentence has two parts, each of which possesses two stresses—regardless of the number of syllables in the line. Catholicos Komitas Ałceci composed the *šarakan*'s melody by approaching each quatrain as two, two-line units and arranging the melody in such a way that the second unit is a repetition of the first, differing only in its ending. Below are the two units of the first verse:

Առաջին Միաւոր

Ան---ծի---նը քը-ւի--րեա---լք սի-----րո--լն Գրիս-տո---սի
 երկ-նա---ւո---ր Գա-նա---տակր ե--ւ կու-սա---նը ի-մաս-տուը.

Երկրորդ Միաւոր

ի պա-ր-ծա---նը-ս ձե---ր րարծ-րա-ցեա-լ տօ---նե
 մայր Սի---ովն դըս-տե---րօ-----քըն իւ-րո---վը:

(fig. 42)

Each musical unit comprises two phrases, and each phrase comprises two musical measures.

Melodic structure of the first musical unit

The divisions of the first phrase, for example, are very clear:

The image shows a musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody consists of the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4-A4 (beamed eighth notes), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter). Above the staff, a bracket labeled 'Ա. Նախադասութիւն' (A. Preliminary sentence) spans the entire phrase. Below the staff, two brackets divide the phrase into 'Ա. երկնատան' (A. Second half) and 'Բ. երկնատան' (B. Second half). Below the notes, the lyrics are written with hyphens indicating syllable placement: ԱՆ---ծի---նք, ԵՂ---ի---րեա---լք, սի---նք---ըն---կն, Քրիստոս---սի

(fig. 43)

After following the minor line the melody of the phrase's first half transitions from F-sharp to the opening G of the second half, where B-natural is used in place of B-flat in the quadruplet rising from G to C, and in the return downwards to G. In opposition to the minor of the first half, this creates a major quality for the continuation of the melodic line.

My reading of this line resembles that of Komitas Vardapet, since, as already mentioned, I took his copy of the *šarakan* as my guide. It is also the same as the Antelias musical tradition. Tašjian and Tntesian, however, have chosen to read the word *նուիրեալք* as containing an $-ը-$ between the final two letters: *նուիրեալըք սիրոյն*. Thus, they have elevated $-ըք$ *սիրոյն* to a full anapestic measure. In light of this, it is noteworthy that in the 17th century, as has already been mentioned, Pahtasar Dpir erased what he considered to be an extraneous vowel from his manuscript, thereby shortening *նուիրեալէք* to *նուիրեալք*. In the printed *Šarakanoc* not only is the $-ը-$ missing, but there is a *zark* above the first syllable of *սիրոյն*, clearly indicating to the singer that he should allot it two beats rather than one. In Tašjian and Tntesian's reading, the force of the *zark* has been lost.

Tntesian, Komitas Vardapet and Pidedjian all rest the phrase on the first tonic, G. Tašjian, however, instead of carrying the melodic line of the word *սիրոյն* from B-natural to C, takes it to the second tonic (D), interpreting the *tur* as a higher jump. Executing a turn around the C, he concludes the phrase on B-natural in order to transition to the next phrase, which moves towards the dominant. Examples of such differences in idiom are many throughout the *šarakan*. Tašjian is not in error; rather, he has

Բ. Միառոպ

Բ. Նախադասութիւն

Վայր Սի-----ոզն զըս-տե-----րօ-----բըն իւ-----րո-----վք:

(fig. 45)

As can be seen, the ending of the first half of the phrase is identical to the corresponding ending in the first musical unit. The second half commences in G major and then, by employing B-flat, moves into a beautiful, minor melodic line.³⁷

First, it is instructive to look at the metrical foundation of the phrase's ending, as read by each of the four musicians in our comparison³⁸:

³⁷ It is important to remember that there are limits to the applicability of European musical terminology to the music we are discussing. For instance, in European terminology, *major* and *minor* indicate only the structure of an ascending and descending scale. In Armenian music, however, the terms *major* and *minor* also encompass concepts of state or mood, a character and a color. In the final analysis, the *šarakan* is a 7th-century musical composition, whose creator terms like *major* and *minor* would not have carried their modern definitions. It is we who, in an attempt to render the value of past beauty intelligible, make use of our current musical vocabulary.

³⁸ A caveat is in order here. Komitas Vardapet's reading is provided on the basis of R. Afayian's reconstruction; hence it is impossible to know what part Afayian's own musical sense has played in the reconstruction and how much was Komitas Vardapet's intention.

Տնտեսեան՝

դըս տե րօքն | իւ րովք: ||

Քաջեան՝

դըս տե րօքն | իւ րովք: ||

Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ՝

դըս տե րօքն | իւ րովք: ||

Փիտեճեան՝

դըս տե րօ | քըն իւ րովք: ||

(fig. 46)

With the exception of Pidedjian, all the readings have eliminated the $-ը-$ between the last two consonants of *դաստերօքըն* and have extended the first syllable of the final word, *իւրովք*. In the *šarakan*, however, the $-ը-$ is universally included, clearly indicating that it is to be sung with the value of a full beat. At the same time, a *šēšt* has been placed above the *իւ* of *իւրովք*, signifying that it should be held for only a single beat's duration, not for two. (A similar configuration occurs in measure 20.)

I reiterate the fact that *Anjink Nuirealk* belongs to a category of *šarakan*s composed on the basis of stressed syllables, with each phrase being divided into two parts; each part contains two stresses, of which the second bears the characteristics of a final cadenza. With this in mind, one may look at the *xaz* notation of the half-phrase in question here:

✓ ˆ ˆ ˆ ˆ

դըստերօքն իւրովք

(fig. 47)

Missing from this notation is a very important—if not the most important—*xaz*; the *tur*, which is used in all the verses of the *šarakan* to indicate the first stress in the final half of a phrase in this position. In other words, the very *xaz* that should denote the end of the phrase and confirm that the melodic line rises over the course of two full beats—the *tur*—is absent.

According to the metric structure of the line, the final syllable of each word should receive the stress:

դըստե՛րօքն իւրո՛վք
(fig. 48)

The notation of *-րովք* is correct; that of *-րօքն* is incorrectly represented. Instead of the *xunj*, the *tur* should have been used in this position. In that case, however, how should the syllable *իւ-* be read? As it stands, that syllable bears a *kur*, indicating that it should receive one beat. And where should the *xunj* have been placed? At this point, the *-ը-* between the two final consonants of *դըստերօքն* becomes essential for the reason given below.

If one places the *tur* above the syllable *-րօքն* and the *kur* above the syllable *-իւ*, then a location must be sought for the addition of an *-ը-* to accommodate the *xunj*. Such an addition is not possible at the beginning of the word *իւրովք*, which already starts with a vowel. Thus, one is forced to return to the word *դըստերօքն*, at the end of which one indeed finds the opportunity to insert the required *-ը-* between the final consonant of the word and the definite article *-ն*. It then becomes possible to notate the two words in a way that accommodates all the necessary *xazes*:

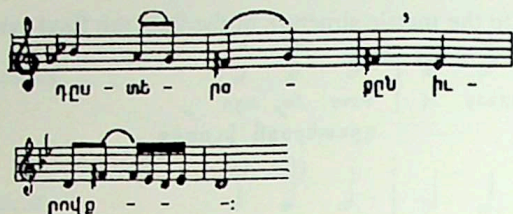
Վ Վ) ~ ր ~
դըստե՛րօքն իւրո՛վք
(fig. 49)

In the printed *Šaraknoč* the line is notated in this manner:

դըստե՛րօքն իւրո՛վք.
(fig. 50)

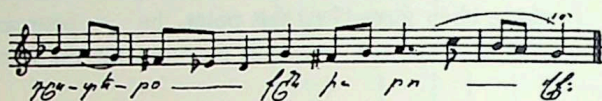
I also have at my disposal two additional, anonymous versions of *Anjink Nuirealk*'s musical notation, which are presented below. Both make use of the inserted *-ը-* at the end of *դըստերօքն*. The first is taken from *Holy Women, Saints of the Armenian Church*³⁹:

³⁹ New York: St. Vartan Press, 1988, 17-18.



(fig. 51)

The second is found in *Treasury of Armenian Songs*⁴⁰:



(fig. 52)

In locations where a stressed syllable is followed by a two-syllable word without the possibility of inserting an *-ը-*, the *paruyk* is used above the first syllable of the two-syllable word. An example of such a case occurs at the end of the thirty-first verse:

սիրողաց իւրեանց :

(fig. 53)

Here, because of the restrictions of the language, the composer has been unable to insert an *-ը-* between the end of the word *սիրողաց* and the beginning of *իւրեանց*. By employing a *paruyk* indicating two beats above the first syllable of *իւրեանց*, he has resolved the metrical anomaly of the missing syllable.

Indeed, over the full range of the *šarakan*'s thirty-six verses there are sixteen different *xaz* sequences used to notate the end of phrases, despite the fact that all of them are sung to the same melody. This variety of notation is due first of all to the varying number of syllables in the lines and the resultant patterns of weak and strong stresses. In addition, a certain number of errors in notation increase the number of variants in the printed *šarakan* even further. The sixteen variant notations appear as follows:

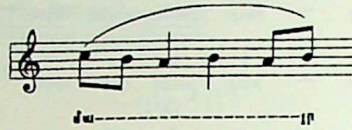
⁴⁰*Treasury of Armenian Songs* [Գանձարան Հայկական Երգերու], ed. Ašot Patmagrian, book 6, Cairo: Osketař Press, [n.d.]

1. փուփ փուփ փուփ — շեփտ երկար
2. փուփ — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
3. շեփտ — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
4. փուփ փուփ — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
5. — — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
6. — — — փուփ շեփտ երկար
7. փուփ երկար փուփ շեփտ երկար
8. փուփ — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
9. երկար փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
10. փուփ շեփտ — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
11. շեփտ — — շեփտ փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
12. փուփ — — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
13. փուփ փուփ — փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
14. շեփտ փուփ փուփ պարոյկ երկար
15. — փուփ փուփ փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար
16. փուփ շեփտ փուփ փուփ շեփտ երկար

(fig. 54)

As this study draws to a close, something should also be said, briefly, concerning the notation of the first word in measure 13, which immedi-

ately precedes the phrase we have just finished examining. The word *ճաջը* is notated in the *Տարակո՛ւ* with a *ճե՛տ*. Tntesian has chosen to read it as follows:



(fig. 55)

This is clearly an error. In order for the monosyllabic word to merit such extended duration, it would have to have been notated with a *krknerkar*. This is not the case.

Finally, Tntesian and Դաճյան end the *ճարակոն* on the tonic D, whereas Komitas Vardapet and Pidedjjan conclude it on the tonic G. Both alternatives are acceptable.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has given me deep spiritual satisfaction to prepare this study on the doubly great occasion of the 1700th anniversary of the Armenian state's conversion to Christianity (301-2001) and the 1700th anniversary of the Dedication of the Mother Cathedral of Ejmiacin (303-2003), and through it to present the masterful artistry of the gifted poet and musician Catholicos Komitas Alceci in as accurate a manner as possible, based on the fundamentals of *xaz* notation.

In the course of preparing this study, I have become deeply and firmly convinced that this *ճարակոն* dedicated to St. Hripsimē and her companions, *Anjink Nuirealk*, is no less than the spiritual outpouring of one who possessed a deep faith, a noble sensibility, and a great musical talent.

APPENDIX

Two more elaborate arrangements of *Anjink Nuirealk* are included here. The first is Pidedjjan's four-part arrangement, with piano accompaniment, of verses 1, 9 and 16. This is followed by Komitas Vardapet's three-part arrangement of verses 1 and 16, reconstructed by R. Afayian.

ԱՆՋԻՆ-Ք ՆՈՒԻՐԵԱԼՔ
(Նարական)

Կոսթ եւ Երամշտուրի՛ն՝
Կոմիտաս Ազգեցի Կարողիկոսի (?-628)
Զայնագրեց եւ մշակեց՝ Գրիգոր Փիլունեան

Adagio maestoso

S. Ան--ծի--նք ցը--ի--րեա--լք սի--րո--յն Քրիս--տո--սի

A. Ան--ծի--նք Քրիս--տո--սի

T. Ան--ծի--նք սի--րո--յն Քրիս--տո--սի

B. Ան--ծի--նք Քրիս--տո--սի

Piano

Երկ--նա--ւո--ր ցա--հա--տակք Էւ կո--սա--նք Ի--մա--տու ցք

Երկ--նա--ւո--ր ցա--հա--տակք Էւ կո--սա--նք Ի--մա--տու ցք

Երկ--նա--ւո--ր ցա--հա--տակք Էւ կո--սա--նք Ի--մա--տու ցք

Երկ--նա--ւո--ր ցա--հա--տա--կք Էւ կո--սա--նք Ի--մա--տու ցք

A tempo

Քու-լա-ցա-ն Կո-րո-վի-ր հաս-տա-նի-զ ա-ղե-ղանց
 Քու-լա-ցա-ն Կո-րո-վի-ր ա-ղե-ղանց
 Քու-լա-ցա-ն Կո-րո-վի-ր հաս-տա-նի-ր ա-ղե-ղանց
 Քու-լա-ցան Կո-րո-վի-ր ա-ղե-ղանց

A tempo

Եւ տը-կա-ր Կա-նալըն Վա-րե-ցա-ն զի-նու.
 Եւ տը-կա-ր Կա-նալըն Վա-րե-ցա-ն զի-նու.
 Եւ տը-կա-ր Կա-նալըն Վա-րե-ցան զի-նու.
 Եւ տը-կար Կա-նա-լըն Վա-րե-ցա-ն զի-նու.

A tempo

Նոհի-սի-մէ մեծ խոր-հու-րոյ և ա-նու-ց ցան-կա-լի.
 Նոհի-սի-մէ մեծ խոր-հու-րոյ ցա-ց-կա-լի.
 Մեծ խոր-հուրոյ և ա-նու-ց ցա-ց-կա-լի.
 Մեծ խոր-հու-րոյ ցան-կա-լի.

A tempo

ը-ն-տրեա-լ ի լե-րկ-րի և-ի դա-սեա-լ ընդ հրեշ-տակս.
 ը-ն-տրեա-լ ի լե-րկ-րի և դա-սեա-լ ընդ հրեշ-տակս.
 ը-ն-տրեա-լ ի լե-րկ-րի և դա-սեա-լ ընդ հրեշ-տակս.
 ը-ն-տրեա-լ ի լե-րկ-րի և դա-սեա-լ ընդ հրեշ-տակս.

Ե-ղև-ը ր օ-րի-նա-կ սրբ-րու-թեա-նց կու-սա-նաց,
 Ե-ղև-ը ր սրբ-րու-թեա-նց կու-սա-նաց,
 Ե-ղև ր սրբ-րու-թեա-նց կու-սա-նաց,
 Ե-ղև-ը ր սրբ-րու-թեա-նց կու-սա-նաց.

Կար-դա-պե-տու-թիւն ար-դա-նց ար-դա-րո-ց:
 Կար-դա-պե-տու-թիւն ար-դա-նց ար-դա-րո-ց:
 Կար-դա-պե-տու-թիւն ար-դա-նց ար-դա-րո-ց:
 Կար-դա-պե-տու-թիւն ար-դա-նց ար-դա-րո-ց:

rit.

ԱՆՁԻՆՔ ՆՈՒՒՐԵԱԼՔ

Հեղինակությունը կամփոստ կարողիկոսի (Է դար)
Գրի առավել և զաշենակեց եռանայն խմբի համար
ԿՈՄԻՏԱՍ ՎԱՐՂԱՊԵՏ (27 Ապր. 1916 թ.)

Moderato 1-76

Բնագրից վերականգնեց Բ. Աբալյան

The musical score consists of three systems of three vocal lines each. The first system includes the tempo marking 'Moderato 1-76' and the composer's name 'Krikor Pidedjian'. The second system includes the arranger's name 'B. Abalyan' and the title 'Անջինք Նուիրեալք'. The lyrics are in Armenian and are written below the notes. The score is in a key with one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

Անձինքը ցըրեալք սիրուն քիստոսի.
 Անձինքը ցըրեալք սիրուն քիստոսի.
 Անձինքը ցըրեալք սիրուն քիստոսի.
 Երկնաւոր ցառաւոր և կուսանք իմաստունք.
 Երկնաւոր ցառաւոր և կուսանք իմաստունք.
 Երկնաւոր ցառաւոր և կուսանք իմաստունք.

ի պար--ծա--նը--ս ձե--նը--ր Բարձ--րա--ցեա--լ սո--նը

ի պար--ծա--նը--ս ձե--նը Բարձ--րա--ցեա--լ սո--նը

ի պար--ծա--նը--ս ձե--նը Բարձ--րա--ցեա--լ սո--նը (b)

Մայր Սի--նդն դըս--տե--րով--քն իւ--րո--վը:

Մայր Սի--նդն դըս--տե--րով--քն իւ--րո--վը:

Մայր Սի--նդն դըս--տե--րով--քն իւ--րո--վը (b)

Հոփ-սի--մէ, մեծ խոր--հու--րդ եւ ա--նու--ն ցան-կա--լի.

Հոփ-սի--մէ մեծ խոր--հու--րդ եւ ա--նու--ն ցան-կա--լի

Հոփ-սի--մէ մեծ խոր--հու--րդ եւ ա--նու--ն ցան-կա--լի (b)

ըն--ծա--յեա--լ ի յերկ--րի և--լ դա--սեա--լ ընդ հրեշ--տա--կս.
ըն--ծա--յեա--լ ի յերկ--րի և և դա--սեալ ընդ հրեշ--տա--կս.
ըն--ծա--յեալ ի յերկ--րի և և դա--սեալ ընդ հրեշ--տա--կս.

և--ծա--յե--ր օ--րի--նա--կ սրբ--բու--րեա--ն կու--սա--նաց.
և--ծա--յե օ--րի--նակ սրբ--բու--րեա--ն կու--սա--նաց.
և--ծա--յե օ--րի--նակ սրբ--բու--րեա--ն կու--սա--նաց.

վար--դա--պե--տու--թիւն ա--րա--նց ար--դա--րո--ց:
վար--դա--պե--տու--թիւն ա--րա--նց ար--դա--րո--ց:
վար--դա--պե--տու--թիւն ա--րա--նց ար--դա--րո--ց:

THE POETICS OF A CHURCH
AND THE STRUCTURE OF A HYMN:
THE SHARAKAN ANJINK' NUIREALK'
BY CATHOLICOS KOMITAS

Abraham Terian

TO FULLY APPRECIATE the much-loved hymn or *šarakan* known as *An-jink' Nuirealk'* (*Devoted Souls*, translated below) by Catholicos Komitas of Ałčĕk (in office 609/10-628), it is necessary to consider it in its historical context. Besides, the hymn has to be considered along with the church he commissioned and for the dedication of which it was composed. Reviewing the early history of Armenian hymnody, however, which owes much to the larger Eastern Church, is beyond the scope of this short introduction to the hymn.¹

It was a tempestuous time for the Armenian Church when Catholicos Komitas came to office early in the seventh century, following the separation of the Georgians from the Armenian fold in 608 on account of Chalcedon, and the death of Catholicos Abraham of Ałbañanik in the following year. Besides the military threats of Khosroes II of Persia (reigned 591-628), there were constant and determined attempts by the Byzantine Church to impose Chalcedonian Christology upon the Armenians. When the Persians attacked Armenia in 571/2, trying once again to force the nation to accept Zoroastrianism, Catholicos Yovhannēs II of Gabeñanĕk (in office 557-574) together with certain of the nobility took refuge in Constantinople. The Byzantines considered this an opportune time to coerce the Armenians into accepting the dictates of Chalcedon.² A synod was

¹ The hymnody of the Eastern Church was influenced by Jewish tradition and Syrian practice of singing psalms and then hymns with texts in verse form — constructed on the Hebrew principle of parallelism and refrains with popular tunes. Of special significance are the hymns of St Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373). See, e.g., Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1940, 68.

² Gérard Garitte, *La Narratio de rebus Armeniae* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 132; Subsidia 4), Leuven: L. Durbecq, 1952; repr. Peeters, 2003, 210-213. The *Narratio* is a pro-Chalcedonian text originally composed in Armenian ca. 700 and known

convoked and the Armenians were persuaded to accept the demands of their hosts, only to recant them upon returning to Armenia following the death of the Catholicos in Constantinople in 574.

This led the Emperor Maurice (reigned 582-602), himself of Armenian descent, to help install a rival Catholicos, Yovhannēs of Bagaran (d. 611), and to try harder to win the Armenians over — especially after the Byzantine settlement with the Persians in 591, which ceded to Byzantium most of the Armenian territories under Persian control.³ The response to Maurice by Catholicos Movsēs II of Elivard (in office 574-604), “I shall not cross the Azat River; I shall not eat the baked bread of the Greeks, nor shall I drink their hot water” (a sarcastic reference to the Byzantine Eucharist with its leavened bread and mixed chalice), did not put an end to the imperial attempts at reunion.⁴ These continued under Emperor Heraclius (reigned 610-641), who exerted relentless pressure to win the Armenian Church over to Chalcedonian Christology.

The tension of the period is captured in several of the letters compiled in an epistolary of ecclesiastical correspondence known as the *Book of Letters* [*Girk' Ītōc'*], especially in those between the Armenians and the Georgians.⁵ The initial compilation was put together probably by Yovhan

only in a Greek translation, describing the relations between the Armenian and Greek churches in the 6th-7th centuries.

³ The central-domed church in Avan (a northeastern suburb of Erevan), constructed at this time, was the see of the rival Catholicos.

⁴ For the quote, as reported by the Georgian Catholicos Arsēn (in office 860-887), see Garitte, *Narratio*, 226-227; for the nearly identical Greek text of the *Narratio*, see 40 and comments; also 242-244. The Azat River marked the boundary between Persian and Byzantine Armenia.

⁵ Norayr Polarian [=Bogharian], ed., *Book of Letters* [Գիրք թղթոց], Jerusalem: St James Press, 1994, 316-364; cf. Y. Izmireanč, ed., *Book of Letters* [Գիրք թղթոց] (Sahak Mesropean Matenadaran 5), Tiflis: R ōtineanč and Šaradzē, 1901, 164-195, 671-672. Polarian's edition, 221-230, includes certain letters of this period that are not found in the Tiflis edition (cf. *Armenian Classical Authors* [Մատենադարանի Հայրոց] vol. 4, *Seventh Century*, Antelias: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2005, 5-42). See also Leif Frivold, *The Incarnation: A Study of the Doctrine of the Incarnation in the Armenian Church in the 5th and 6th Centuries according to the Book of Letters*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1981; Zaven Arzoumanian, trans., *Bishop Ukhtanes of Sebastia: History of Armenia, Part II: History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians*, Fort Lauderdale: [s.n.], 1985; Gorun Kojababian [Babian], *Relations between the Armenian and Georgian Churches according to the Armenian Sources, 300-610*, Antelias: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2001; and Nina G. Garsoïan, *L'Église arménienne et le Grand Schisme*

Mayragomeci, the sacristan of the Cathedral in Duin in the days of Catholicos Komitas. Another compilation was formed also at this time, known as *Seal of Faith* [*Knik Hawatoy*], containing the primary sources used in formulating the Armenian faith in a dogmatic response to the Chalcedonians.⁶ Clearly, the turbulent times were giving rise to a period in which the national Church was reasserting itself theologically.

This was also a period in which church architecture thrived in Armenia. The construction of the Church of St Hripsimē in the ancient capital Vałaršapat, today's Ejmiacin, in 618, and others there and elsewhere in the land, marks the beginning of this distinctive period. By all counts, the church is considered the best of the central-domed Armenian churches of that time still standing today.⁷ The square floor-plan of the church encloses an interior in the shape of a cross, with the huge dome placed above the intersection of the two equal lines of the cross and modifying the interior space with the semi-circles of apses at the sides. The symmetry inside and out, both horizontal and vertical, on both sides of centrally dividing lines — virtually within a cube — creates an exceptional harmony of form that results from balanced proportions all around. Known for its structural design and beauty, the church is a UNESCO World Heritage Site at present. Its dedicatory inscription on the front (western) wall states: "I, Komitas, keeper of the Church of St Hripsimē, was elevated to the throne of St Gregory, and I built the sanctuary of these holy martyrs for Christ."⁸ The cruciform church lends itself well to liturgical celebration, just as it em-

d'Orient (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 574, subs. 100), Leuven: Peeters, 1999, 506-583.

⁶ Karapet Tēr-Mkrtčian [=Tēr-Mkertchian], ed., *Seal of Faith* [Կնիք Հաւատոյ], Ejmiacin: Mother See Press, 1914; repr. Leuven: Peeters, 1974, under the title *Le Sceau de la Foi*; Antelias: The Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1998; and again in 2005, in the series *Armenian Classical Authors*, IV, 49-311; cf. 345. For an affirming argument on the antiquity of this creed, see Gabriele Winkler, *Über die Entwicklungsgeschichte des Armenischen Symbolums* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 262), Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2000, 203-211. She observes: "Aufgrund des Vokabulars bei der Menschwerdung in diesem Credo ist jedoch davon auszugehen dass es nicht vor Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts aufgekomen ist." (204)

⁷ Other central-domed churches of the period are found in Sisavan and Garnahovit, Armenia; cf. the church of Avan (see n. 3, above) and that of St Gayanē near Ejmiacin.

⁸ The inscription, now partly obscured by the addition of the belfry in 1790, reads: ԵՍ ԿՈՍԻՏԱՍ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԱՊԱՀ ՍՐԲՈՅ ՀՌԻՓՍԻՄԷԻ ԿԱՐԳԵՑԱՅ ՅԱԹՈՌ ՍՐԲՈՅՆ ԳՐԻԳՈՐԻ ԵՒ ՇԻՆԵՑԻ ԶՏԱՃԱՌ ՍՐԲՈՅ ՎԿԱՅԻՑՆ ՔՐԻՍՏՈՍԻ:

bodies the Christian spirit and the theology of the Cross, a theology in stone, not unlike that of the *xačkars*, the ubiquitous yet individually unique stone crosses of medieval Armenia.

Equally beautiful is the hymn associated with the church, *Anjink Nuirealk* by Catholicos Komitas, one of the most arresting hymns in the *Šaraknoč*, the ancient hymnal of the Armenian Church.⁹ Composed in alphabetic acrostic (each stanza beginning with a letter of the Armenian alphabet) and full of alliteration, this abecedarian hymn is the earliest of its genre in Armenian hymnody. Believed to have been written on the occasion of the transfer of the relics of St Hripsimē and her martyred companions to the newly completed church named for her, the hymn has survived intact just like the architecturally magnificent church. Unfortunately, however, the author makes no direct reference to the newly built church, and allusions to the occasion are scant at best. In two remotely suggestive stanzas, saints are said to be “heavenly structures founded on earth” (xxiii.1) and “the sacred foundation-stones laid on earth,” of which material “the Universal Church is built” (xxix.1, 3). The association may be viewed as a fitting image for the occasion, most likely celebrated with the Eucharist at the site where the virgins suffered martyrdom (xxxi).

That the occasion was a commemoration service honoring the martyred virgins is clear from the outset (see especially xxxiii and xxxv; cf. iv and xvi, where Hripsimē is mentioned by name). There is no good reason to reject either the traditional attribution of the hymn to Komitas or the long-held belief about the occasion for its composition. The earliest allusion to this hymn and its author is found in the seventh-century *History* of Sebēos, quoted below.¹⁰ The attribution is repeated in all known lists of authors of *šarakans* (e.g., that of Sargis Ereč in the thirteenth century),¹¹ and affirmed in the scholarly literature of the last century.¹²

⁹ *Hymnal of Spiritual Songs* [Շարական, Հոգեւոր Երգոց], Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1936; repr. New York: St. Vartan Press, 1986, 573-582; cf. *Armenian Classical Writers*, VIII, 283-286.

¹⁰ Sebēos, *History*, ch. 37; see *Armenian Classical Authors*, IV, 516-517.

¹¹ *Armenian Classical Authors*, VII.13.

¹² See, especially, Manuk Abelyan's perceptive analysis of the hymn in *History of Ancient Armenian Literature* [Հայ Հին Գրականութեան Պատմութիւն], 2 vols., Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1944-1946, I, 365-369. Also noteworthy is Krikor Pidedjian's recent study of the musical notation of the hymn: *The Anjink Nuirealk Šarakan* [Անձինք Նուիրեալք Շարականը], New York: SIS, 2003, especially pp. 81-127. For an English abridgment of that study, see the article of Krikor Pidedjian, in this number.

However small the literary legacy of Catholicos Komitas, it has drawn considerable attention because of the hymn *Anjink Nuirealk*. To his plume belong also two letters: *Letter to the Persians* [*Āult i Parss*] or *A Document on Faith* [*Hawatoy gir*], a dogmatic writing sent in response to requests from Armenian bishops in Persia;¹³ and *Response to the Letter of Modestos* [*Pataxani ttoyn Modestosi*], who was *locum-tenens* of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, following the fall of Jerusalem to Khosroes II in 614. (The correspondence between Modestos and Komitas is preserved in Sebēos' *Armenian History*.)¹⁴

Also preserved in Sebēos' *History* is a brief description of the building of the Church of St Hriṣimē. This is worth quoting in its entirety, for it includes some imagery reflected in the hymn attributed to Komitas and helps authenticate his authorship.

In the 28th year of the reign of Apruēz Xosrov [616/7] the Catholicos Komitas demolished the chapel of St Hriṣimē in the city of Valaršapat, because the building was too low and dark which St Sahak had built, the patriarch and Catholicos of Armenia [387-439], son of St Nersēs [Catholicos 353-373].

Now while they were taking down the wall of the chapel, unexpectedly there was revealed the luminous and incomparable royal pearl, that is, the virginal body of the holy lady Hriṣimē.¹⁵ Because they had torn it apart, dismembered it limb from limb [cf. Agathangelos, *Aa* 198], St Gregory had sealed it with his ring [cf. *ibid.* 760]; as had also with his ring the blessed Sahak Catholicos of Armenia, not daring to open it. He

¹³ The letter elaborates on the Trinity and the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus; text in *Ararat* 29 (1896) 531-536. The same letter, without its prologue, appears in the *Book of Letters*, 400-413, ed. Polarian; cf. 212-218, ed. Izmireanč.

¹⁴ Modestos' plea for financial assistance to rebuild ruined holy sites in Jerusalem, addressed to Komitas, was side-stepped in the response. The correspondence constitutes chs. 35-36 in Sebēos' *History* (text in *Armenian Classical Authors*, IV, 453-565); see Robert W. Thomson, trans., *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos: Part I: Translation and Notes; II: Historical Commentary* by James Howard-Johnston, assistance from Tim Greenwood (Translated Texts for Historians 31), Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, I, 70-76 (116-121); cf. II, 208-210. Another work attributed to Komitas, a dialogue on church orders and the Dominical feast-days, with Pyrrhus I, Patriarch of Constantinople (in office 638-641), is obviously of a later date (for its text, see *Armenian Classical Authors*, IV, 312-326; cf. *Sayings of Komitas* [*Զրոյցք Կոմիտասայ*] in *Book of Letters*, 483-497, ed. Izmirianč).

¹⁵ Cf. xi.1, where Hriṣimē is the "pearl". In xv.2 the "Pearl" is Christ.

[Komitas] too sealed it with his own ring, who was worthy to seal with the third ring such a pearl, a thrice faithful [witness].

O pearl, not born from the sea, but a pearl born of royal descent, raised in the bosom of holiness and dedicated to God. "The just had desired to see you" [Mt 13:17], and the blessed Komitas "was passionately fond of you" [Sg 2:5].¹⁶

The height of the blessed one was nine palms and four fingers.¹⁷ The whole northern region, stirred [by the discovery], came to worship; and healing of all [kinds of] illnesses was effected for many sick people. He built the church and left the blessed one in the open, because of the humidity of the walls, until the mortar dried. Then she was enclosed in her resting-place.

He also raised the wooden roof of the holy cathedral [at Vafaršapat], and repaired the unstable wall. He built the stone roof. This occurred in the years of Yovhanik, priest of the monastery¹⁸ of the holy cathedral.¹⁹

The martyrdom of the virgins is very much on the mind of the author of the hymn, who no doubt was thoroughly familiar with the details of their death as found in the Armenian version of Agathangelos' *History* (Aa 137-210), and for whom their death is pivotal in Armenia's conversion to Christianity. But their death is woven into the life-story of St Gregory, at whose hands the conversion came about at the dawn of the fourth century. A synopsis of Agathangelos' *History* is essential to place the virgins' martyrdom in historical context.

St Gregory, of Parthian descent and noble birth, was the son of Anak who upon the instigation of the Sasanian usurpers of the Iranian Arsacid throne murdered the Arsacid king of Western Armenia, Xosrov or Chosroes (II Kaġ, reigned 279/80-287).²⁰ During the ensuing blood feud, the in-

¹⁶ Thomson is correct in seeing here an allusion to the hymn by Komitas in honor of Hripsimē (citing Niccolò Tommaséo, *Storia di Agatangelo, Versione Italiana*, Venice: San Lazzaro, 1843, 209-222).

¹⁷ Thomson observes that Yovhannēs Draxanakertċi (XVII.28) and Asolik (II.3) follow Sebēos; Vardan Arewelċi has ten palms and four fingers (61).

¹⁸ Arm. "vanac' erec'," according to Thomson (on the authority of the *Nor Baġirk' Haykazean Lezui*), "refers not to the abbot, but to a senior rank" (75 n. 487).

¹⁹ Ch. 37; Thomson's translation, with my revisions.

²⁰ Xosrov's regnal years were hitherto problematic; for a consensus in scholarship, see Cyrille Toumanoff, "The Third-Century Arsacids," *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s. VI (1969), 233-281.

fant Gregory was whisked off to Caesarea of Cappadocia where he was educated and converted to Christianity. He returned to Armenia as a missionary cloaked in royal service, to serve under Xosrov's son, King Trdat (IV the Great, reigned ca. 298-330).²¹ Once his true faith became known, for refusing to venerate the statue of Anahit in the famous temple at Erēz (Erznka or Erzinçan), the king subjected him to various tortures to force him to revert to paganism. The identity of the unyielding Saint was discovered during these ordeals, and he was thrown into a snake-infested pit and left for dead.

Miraculously, he survived for some fifteen years;²² a woman kept him alive by dropping bread to him. Meanwhile the Emperor Diocletian (reigned 284-305) fell passionately in love with Hripsimē, a Christian virgin living in a convent in Rome, who refused to marry him. Fearing the consequences, her superior Gayanē led her and seventy-odd companions to seek refuge in Armenia, and eventually in the vineyards around the capital Vaŋaršapat. At the emperor's request the fugitive nuns were found by King Trdat, who also fell madly in love with Hripsimē.

Failing to persuade her to marry him, he commanded that she and her companions be killed. Thereupon the king was visited by divine retribution and was struck with insanity, while the whole city suffered because of him. He is described as "being transformed into a wild boar," as was Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel. It was repeatedly revealed to Trdat's sister Xosroviduxt, in dreams, that only St Gregory's intercession could heal her brother. Rescued from the pit after much doubt about his survival for all those years, the Saint hastened to bury the remains of the martyred nuns and to heal the king.

Thereafter the pagan shrines were overthrown, and St Gregory was sent to be consecrated as bishop at Caesarea. Upon his return he built the first churches in Armenia, baptized the king, and converted the entire realm. Occasionally, the hymn draws on certain parts of this history; these instances are noted below.

The Armenian text that follows is without the vocal *shewas* (ě) that were added to accommodate the traditionally handled musical notes ac-

²¹ On the much debated beginning of Trdat's reign, which is invariably linked to that of the Christianization of Armenia, see the sources cited in Abraham Terian, *Patriotism and Piety in Armenian Christianity: The Early Panegyrics on Saint Gregory* (AVANT 2), Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Press, 2005, 21 and 63 (n. 26).

²² The number of years is given variously in the Armenian version of Agatangelos: thirteen (122, 124, 132), fifteen (215, 233), "many years" (217). So also in the other versions.

companying the hymn's text. That these chant-facilitators are secondary is demonstrable by the orthographic inconsistencies in the Šaraknoč's text of the hymn.²³ For example, not all accusatives beginning with *z-* and followed by a consonant have a preceding *shewa*,²⁴ nor are all definite articles [-*n*] following the plural nominative ending [-*k*] or the genitive plural ending [-*č*] preceded by *shewa*.²⁵ Some plural nominatives have a *shewa* preceding the -*k* ending, whereas most plural nominatives have no such vocalization in the text.²⁶ Similarly, some plural accusatives and datives have *shewa* preceding the -*s* ending, and others are without.²⁷ Moreover, two words have three *shewas* inserted in them,²⁸ and many more words have two *shewas* inserted.²⁹ Other orthographic irregularities with the use of the *shewa* abound.³⁰

Equally noteworthy is the fact that in four words with a diphthong followed by a vowel, the -*o-* of the diphthong is modified to -*ě-*; but not in a fifth instance.³¹ Lastly, the traditional title given to this hymn in the Šaraknoč, *Proper for the Hripsimian Saints* [*Kanon Srboč Hripsimeanc*] is also secondary, and is consequently deleted in favor of the opening words of the composition.

²³ See above, n. 9.

²⁴ See xxiii.4 (twice), xxxi.1, xxxiii.1, 4, xxxvi.1; cf. iii.2, vii.1, 4, x.4, xi.4, xii.2, xiii.4, xiv.2, xx.1, xxvii.2, 3, xxxi.3, xxxii.4, xxxiii.4. Note especially *qywarqbcu* (xxxii.1) and *rqywarqbcu* (xiii.4, xxxiii.4).

²⁵ Cf. -*ph* in iii.4, ix.2, xxii.4, xxxv.2, and -*ph* in i.4, 31; -*gh* in iii.3, vii.4, xxiv.1, 3, xxviii.4, xxx.2, xxxii.4, xxxv.3, xxxvi.3, and -*gh* in v.1, xiii.1.

²⁶ See iii.1; v.3, xiv.2, xviii.1, xix.2, xxxvi.3. Interesting variants are those that end with -*bcu* (xxi.2 and xxvi.1); cf. -*bcu* in xxi.3, xxvii.4, xxxi.2, xxxiv.1 (twice), 2, 4.

²⁷ Cf. -*ru* in i.3, xiv.1, 2, xv.3 (twice), xix.3, xx.3, xxiii.4, xxv.2, xxvii.2, xxviii.1, xxix.4, xxx.3, xxxi.1, xxxiii.1, and -*ru* in vii.1, x.3, xi.3, xiii.4, xiv.1, 3, xvi.2, xviii.3, xx.4, xxi.1 (twice), xxii.3, xxviii.1, 4 (twice), xxxi.4 (twice), xxxii.2, xxxiii.3 (twice), xxxv.1, 2. Note especially *ghrghru* in xxiii.2 and xxvi.2, and *ghrghru* in vi.2.

²⁸ Words with triple *shewa* are found in xxvii.2 and xxxi.3.

²⁹ Words with double *shewa* are found in i.4, v.3, xi.4, xiii.1, xiv.2, xix.3, xx.3, xxxi.3.

³⁰ Cf. *qwrqr* (xxxii.2) and *qwrqr* (vi.1); *ghrr* (xxii.2) and *ghrr* (xxxiv.3). There are but two stanzas without the use of *shewa*: viii and xxxiv.

³¹ See i.1, iii.4, xii.1, xxx.2; cf. xxx.4.

DEVOTED SOULS

- i. Souls devoted to the love of Christ,
Heavenly martyrs and wise virgins:
Mother Zion rises in your honor
To celebrate with her daughters.
- ii. Heavenly utterances filled the earth
Since you became sweet fragrance for Christ,
Rational sacrifices and salutary offerings,
Unblemished lambs presented to God.
- iii. The charm of your physical fairness
Maddened the king, and pagans were stunned;
Owing to the virgins' superb, God-given beauty,
The enthralled angels celebrated with humans.³²
- iv. The creative Power has returned
And Eden is adorned with divine plants again;
For the tree of life planted in Paradise
Has borne fruit unto us: the blessed Hriṣimē.³³
- v. The pain of the deadly curse is gone
And in God's image Adam is thriving again;
A ransom for Eve, her daughters,
Martyrs and virgins, are offered to God.³⁴

³² Referring to King Trdat's infatuation with Hriṣimē, and to his eventual madness for having killed the virgins. Note the allusion to Gn 6:1-2: angels being attracted to "the daughters of men".

³³ Allusion to the Genesis account of God planting a garden in Eden (2:8-16). In patristic interpretation the "tree" is usually equated with the Cross, and the fruit with Christ. A more common association of saints with the "divine plant" is with reference to Jn 15:5, the vine and the branches; see below, xix.1.

³⁴ Allusion to the promised restoration after the Fall (Gn 3). The notion of ransom is repeated in xv.3-4.

- vi. Hosts of angels celebrated with humans,
And in heaven women were counted as bearers of arms;
Confronting death with virginity, they triumphed,
Being crucified with the Creator born of the Virgin.³⁵
- vii. What a wonder — yea, greater than miracles!
Beyond the thoughts and words of angels and humans!
For God, the Self-existent, in His almighty power,
Stooped down and witnessed the valor of the virgins.³⁶
- viii. Like-minded companions in earthly lives,
Co-equal martyrs united in spirit,
They marched in unison to the battle site,
Armed with faith and able to withstand.³⁷
- ix. Valiant men with tight bows became limp
While frail women blazed as with arms;³⁸
The king, acclaimed in power and glory,
Was put to shame, defeated by the young virgin.
- x. Multitudes of nations and tribes together
Cannot overcome a single martyr,
For unseen help comes to one's aid
To thwart openly the secret war.³⁹

³⁵ Images of angelic hosts or armies recur in xxviii.4 and xxx.2-4; for such biblical imagery, see, e.g., 4 Kgs 6:17; Mt 26:53. The traditional image of the martyr as a warrior, as e.g. in 2 Mac, is commonplace in early Christian literature; the imagery recurs in vii.3-4; ix.2-4; x.1-4; xxv.3-4; xxiii.3-4. Of women warriors in the Bible, Deborah stands out in the Old Testament (Jgs 4) and Judith in the book that bears her name in the Old Testament Apocrypha. The rest echoes the words of Paul in Rom 6:6 and Gal 2:20, about being "crucified with Christ".

³⁶ The expression that God and/or Christ suffers anew with the suffering saints, is akin to the Theopaschite doctrine which gained acceptance since the Second Council of Constantinople (553); cf. Acts 9:4, on Paul persecuting Christ in the person of his followers.

³⁷ Martyrdom as a contest between the forces of good and evil is a *topos*; for more, see above, n. 35.

³⁸ Cf. 1 Kgs 2:4.

³⁹ A further thought on the cosmic war; cf. Eph 6:12.

- vi. Hosts of angels celebrated with humans,
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³⁸ Cf. 1 Kgs 2:4.

³⁹ A further thought on the cosmic war; cf. Eph 6:12.

- xi. For a single precious pearl
All pagans leaped for joy;
The West came over to the East,
To preach openly the wondrous revelation.⁴⁰
- xii. Kings heard and were filled with joy,
They resolved to catch the renowned one in hiding;
They promised tangible gifts — good as one's word —
While secretly plotting to steal from one another.⁴¹
- xiii. She manifested a pregnancy of spiritual thoughts
And birth-pangs that hastened the salvation of the world;
For heaven's will, the command from on high,
Brought the gift of salvation gently down.⁴²
- xiv. The virgins gave birth to many generations,
And young mothers appeared in the assemblies of the old;
In the sacred bosom of prayer and fasting
They were nurtured in faith, in the knowledge of Christ.⁴³
- xv. Women, honorable in citizenship and lineage,
Countless traders for the hidden Pearl,

⁴⁰ The "pearl" here is not the Gospel message (for the "pearl" as a parabolic symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven, see Mt 13:45-46) but the messenger, Hripsimē (see the next stanza). The author seems to be taking the messenger for the message, putting forth a duality of thought; cf. below: the virgins, fleeing persecution in the West, are seen as preachers of the Gospel — taking its message to the East (xv.1-2 and xxxii.1-4).

⁴¹ Referring to King Trdat's desire to keep Hripsimē to himself, instead of turning her over to Emperor Diocletian, who wanted her for a wife (Agathangelos, *Aa* 137-196).

⁴² Amplifying the thoughts in xi.1-2 (see above, n. 40). On the virgins' obeying a heavenly command, see below, xxxii.1. "The world" here is the "unknown world" of xv.4, on which see below, n. 44.

⁴³ A more elaborate description of the faithful Armenian women, seen here as spiritual descendants of the Hripsimian virgins, is found in *Concerning Vardan and the Armenian War* [Եղիշէի վասն Վարդանայ եւ Հայոց Պատերազմին], ed. E. Tēr-Minasyan, Erivan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1957, 201-202; cf. Robert W. Thomson, trans., *Elishē: History of Vardan and the Armenian War* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 5), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982, 246.

Submitted themselves as payment for many
And became the ransom for an unknown world.⁴⁴

xvi. Hripsimē, great mystery and desirable name,
Chosen on earth and ranked among angels,
You became an example of sanctity to virgins,
A profound lesson to righteous men.⁴⁵

xvii. All souls long to be like you all,
United in sanctity and the love of Christ;
For through your death you paved us a way,
For all people indeed, to ascend to God.⁴⁶

xviii. Master guides to spiritual knowledge,
Soaring in light bodies and mind,
Over the waves of life's long journey
You sailed safely and reached unto Christ.⁴⁷

xix. Branches of the True Vine, of Christ,
And clusters squeezed for the heavenly Planter;
In your solitude you were trampled, in the winepresses,
That you may rejoice with the immortal cup.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Amplifying further the thoughts in xi.1-4, with possible allusion to Rom 5:7. The women in this stanza are the virgins whose martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel of the Kingdom ("the hidden Pearl"; Mt 13:45-46) resulted in the redemption of Armenia. "an unknown world" (cf. xiii.1-4). The pre-Christian identity of the Armenian people is overlooked in view of the conversion to Christianity (see Terian, *Patriotism and Piety in Armenian Christianity*, 13-18). The notion of ransom is introduced in v.3-4.

⁴⁵ The parallelism seems to underscore the institution of convents and monasteries.

⁴⁶ Martyrs as pavers of the way to heaven are seen as following in the footsteps of Christ (cf. Mt 7:14).

⁴⁷ Sailing as a metaphor for spiritual journey is a *topos* in patristic thought.

⁴⁸ Cf. iv.1-4; note the Eucharistic imagery here and the allusion to Jn 15:1. These lines are inspired by the *History* of Agathangelos (*Aa* 197-210), where the virgins are said to have taken refuge in the vineyards around the city, where they were martyred (cf. below, xxxi.1-2). Chapels were built there by St Gregory, over their graves (*Aa* 757-776). On these memorials built in Valaršapat, see A. Khachatryan, "Données historiques sur la fondation d'Edjmiatsin à la lumière des feuilles récentes," *Handēs Amsōrya* 76 (1962), 100-106, 227-250, 425-452.

- xx. They rejected the necessities for physical life,
Knowing that it's a dream and its elegance false;
They craved not for luxurious comforts,
Mindful that fleeting greatness is but vain.
- xxi. In the spiritual fields of prayer and fast
They labored tirelessly and with hope,
Endured temptations and trials of every kind
And inherited the wreath that withers not.⁴⁹
- xxii. They made the nuptial chamber of virginity desirable,
Restoring it anew with blood and fire;⁵⁰
They surrendered to swords and torches
And entered the nuptial chamber with lit lamps.⁵¹
- xxiii. Heavenly structures founded on earth
And monuments of light erected in heaven;
Through their example they showed others
The coveted way to heavenly Jerusalem.⁵²
- xxiv. O prudence of the wise virgins,
Whom negligence or sleep did not overcome!
They stayed awake, ready for the heavenly wedding,
To enter the nuptial chamber of the immortal Groom.⁵³
- xxv. None among them was of ill reputation,
Nor had the reproach of being called foolish.
Together they — in the spirit of fortitude —
Were brave in one accord; so they rejoice together.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Allusion to 1 Cor 9:25.

⁵⁰ Echoing Jl 2:30, quoted in Acts 2:19.

⁵¹ Associating the torching of St Hripsimē (Agathangelos, *Aa* 198) with the lit lamps of the "wise virgins" in the parable of Mt 25:1-13; echoed again, below, xxiv-xxv.

⁵² The association of saints with churches, the heavenly structures on earth, is fitting imagery for the occasion (see the introduction). On the heavenly Jerusalem and its eventual descent to earth, see Rv 21:1-8; an appropriate reference for the author's bridging the heavenly and the earthly realities contemplated.

⁵³ Further thoughts based on the parable of "The Ten Virgins"; cf. xxii.4 and xxv.1-2.

- xxvi. They held bravely together as they journeyed,
Fleeing far away, from earth to heaven.
They arose and taught us how to enter that rest
Through much tribulation.⁵⁵
- xxvii. Through ardent prayers and love for God
They asked for means to bring redemption —
To dispel the darkness of demonic folly from the world
By the radiance of the Light emanating from the Father.⁵⁶
- xxviii. They revealed every pathway of virtue
To the children of men, that they may forsake the world,
That through the certainty of spiritual life they may rise
To the heavenly armies of incorporeal angels.⁵⁷
- xxix. These are the sacred foundation-stones laid on earth
Which the prophet foresaw and predicted early on.⁵⁸
Of this same material the Universal Church is built,
Towering in glory, in honor of the Cross.
- xxx. For your sake, O blessed martyrs,
Hosts of angels — watchful incorporeals —
Rushed from heaven to earth, and humans were integrated
Into the regiments of the soldiers of Christ [our] God.⁵⁹
- xxxi. Let us truly celebrate in their winepresses,
For we shall be drunk with the immortal cup;
For they dispense healing for soul and body
And heavenly gifts to those who love them.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ The last of the thoughts based on the parable (see the preceding note).

⁵⁵ Possible allusion to Acts 14:22.

⁵⁶ In patristic thought, Christ, the Light of the world (Jn 8:12 and 9:5), is identified with the primordial light of Gn 1:3.

⁵⁷ Cf. vi and xxx, on joining the heavenly armies.

⁵⁸ Referring to Is 28:16.

⁵⁹ Both parts of the stanza are contemplated earlier; cf. vi and xxviii.

- xxxii. By the Teacher's command, by some unseen decree,
They moved from the West and came to the East;
By the light of their angelic life of virginity
They dispelled the darkness of demonic folly.⁶¹
- xxxiii. Let us commemorate them joyously,
That we may partake of their redemption;
Let us ask the Creator for heavenly gifts,
To be assigned with them in dwellings of light.
- xxxiv. Those who aspired to greatness were utterly destroyed
While high-born women triumphed mightily —
Golden censers lit by the fire of the Spirit,⁶²
Fervent in Christ and ranked with angels.
- xxxv. Rising from glory unto glory,⁶³ they thrive in honor,
All thirty-seven of them in glory —
That's the number of the blessed virgins crowned
With wreaths that wither not, eternally, forever.
- xxxvi. May the saints' petitions on our behalf
Be savory to you, O Christ [our] God,
Who are the joy and gladness of all the righteous,
To grant forgiveness for our many sins.

⁶⁰ That the virgins took shelter in a vineyard and were martyred near the wine-presses, is based on Agathangelos (cf. above, xix and n. 48). Note the eucharistic imagery throughout.

⁶¹ Commensurate with the thought that the virgins, hailing from the West, proclaimed the Gospel in the East; cf. above, xi.3-4. On the virgins' obeying a heavenly command, see above, xiii.3.

⁶² Allusion to Acts 2:3-4a.

⁶³ Allusion to 2 Cor 3:18.

ԱՆՁԻՆՔ ՆՈՒԻՐԵԱԼՔ

- i. **Անձինք** նուիրեալք սիրոյն Քրիստոսի,
Երկնաւոր նահատակք եւ կուսանք իմաստունք,
Ի պարծանս ձեր բարձրացեալ տաւնէ
Մայր Սիրովն դստերաւքն իւրովք:
- ii. **Բարբառք** երկնաւորք լցին գերկիր,
Քանզի հոտ անուշից բուրեցայք ի Քրիստոս,
Ողջակէզք բանաւորք եւ զոհք փրկութեան
Եւ որոջք անարատք ընծայեալք Աստուծոյ:
- iii. **Գեղեցկութիւնք** մարմնաւոր պայծառութեան ձերոյ
Յիմարեցոյց զթագաւորն եւ պակեան հեթանոսք.
Ի գեղ սքանչելի աստուածատուր կուսանացն՝
Տարփացեալ գուարթունքն ընդ մարդկան տաւնեցին:
- iv. **Դարձեալ** վերստին արարչագործ գաւրութիւն
Եւ դարձեալ եղեմ աստուածատունկ զարդարի,
Քանզի ծառն կենաց տնկեցաւ ի դրախտին՝
Բերելով մեզ պտուղ գերանելին Հռիփսիմէ:
- v. **Երկունք** մահաբերք անիծիցն լուծան
Եւ Ադամ վերստին աստուածակերպ ճոխանայ,
Փոխանակ Եւայի՝ դստերք նորա,
Մարտիրոսք եւ կուսանք՝ ընծայեալք Աստուծոյ:
- vi. **Զաւրք** հրեշտակաց ընդ մարդկան տաւնեցին
Եւ կանայք ի յերկինս գրեցան զինաւորք,
Կուսութեամբ ընդ մահու պատերազմեալք յաղթեցին՝
Խաչակից լինելով կուսածին Արարչին:
- vii. **է** զարմացումն եւ ի վեր քան զհրաչս
Խորհրդոց եւ բանից հրեշտակաց եւ մարդկան,
Քանզի էնն Աստուած ամենազաւր գաւրութեամբն
Խոնարհեալ տեսանէր զհանդէս կուսանացն:

- viii. **Ընկերք միամիտք մարմնական կենցաղոյս,**
Նահատակք հաւասարք եւ հոգւով միացեալք,
Միաբան ընթացեալք ի տեղի ճակատու,
Զինեցան հաւատով եւ կացին յանդիման:
- ix. **Թուլացան կորովիք հաստածիդ աղեղանց**
Եւ տկար կանայքն վառեցան զինու,
Թագաւորն պերճացեալ զաւրութեամբ եւ փառաւք՝
Ի մանուկ ի կուսէն պարտեալ՝ ամաչէր:
- x. **Ժողովեալ բազմութեան ազգաց եւ ազանց,**
Ոչ գաւրէին առ մի նահատակ,
Քանզի հասեալ ի թիկունս աներեւոյթ ազնութիւնն
Խորտակեաց յայտնապէս զգաղտնի պատերազմն:
- xi. **Ի վերայ միոյ պատուական մարգարտի**
Խաղացին ցնծալով ամենայն հեթանոսք,
Արեւմուտք յարեւելս ընթացեալ հասին
Քարոզել յայտնապէս զչքնաղ տեսութիւն:
- xii. **Լուան թագաւորք եւ լցան խնդութեամբ,**
Որսալ յանձն առին զգաղտնի մեծութիւնն.
Պարգեւել իրերաց խոստանային բանիւք
Եւ ծածուկ հնարիւք դողանալ ի միմեանց:
- xiii. **Խորհուրդք հոգեւորք յղութեանցն յայտնէր**
Եւ երկունք փրկութեան աշխարհի ճեպէին,
Քանզի կամք վերին հրամանին քաղցրացեալ՝
Իջուցին ի վերուստ զպարգեւս փրկութեան:
- xiv. **Ման կուսանք ազգս բազումս**
Եւ մարք մանկունք զհրապարակս ծերոց,
Ի գիրկս սրբութեան աղաւթից եւ պահոց
Աճեցին հաւատով զարգացեալք ի Քրիստոս:
- xv. **Կանայք պատուականք քաղաքաւ եւ ազգաւ,**
Վաճառականք առատք անյայտ մարգարտին
Եղին զանձինս գրաւականս բազմաց
Եւ եղեն փրկանք անծանաւթ աշխարհին:

- xvi. Հռիփսիմէ՛ մեծ խորհուրդ եւ անուն ցանկալի,
Ընտրեալ ի յերկրի եւ դասեալ ընդ հրեշտակս,
Եղեր աւրինակ սրբութեան կուսանաց՝
Վարդապետութիւն արանց արդարոց:
- xvii. Զեզ նմանիլ կարաւտին ամենայն հոգիք,
Միացեալք սրբութեամբ սիրոյն Քրիստոսի,
Զի մահուամբ ձերով մեզ ճանապարհ հորդեցիք՝
Ելանել ամենայն մարդոյ առ Աստուած:
- xviii. Ղեկավարք ճարտարք հոգեւոր հմտութեամբ,
Թեթեւաբեռն մարմնով եւ մտաւք սլացեալք,
Ընդ երկայն ասպարէզս ծովածուփ կենցաղոյս
Անվնաս նաւեցիք եւ հասիք առ Քրիստոս:
- xix. Զչմարիտ որթոյն Քրիստոսի շառաւիղք
Եւ ողկոյզք ճմլեալք երկնաւոր մշակին,
Կոխեցայք ճգնութեամբ ի հնձանս ձեր,
Զի ուրախ լինիջիք անմահական բաժակաւն:
- xx. Մերժեցին զկարիս մարմնական կենցաղոյս,
Զի ծանեան եթէ երազ է եւ սուտ պաճուճանք,
Ոչ հեշտացան ի գրգանս փափկութեան,
Իմացան եթէ սնոտի է անցաւոր մեծութիւնս:
- xxi. Յանդաստանս հոգեւորս աղաւթից եւ պահոց
Վաստակեալք յուսով զամենայն ժամանակս,
Ժուժկալեալք փորձութեանց եւ պէս պէս լլկանաց
Եւ եղեալք ժառանգորդք անթառամ պսակին:
- xxii. Նախանձելի յաւրինեցին զառագաստ կուսութեան՝
Նոր նորոգեալ արեամբ եւ հրով,
Մատնեցին զանձինս սուսերաց եւ ջահից
Եւ անչէջ լապտերաւքն հետեւեալ մտին յառագաստն:
- xxiii. Ծինուածք երկնաւորք ի յերկրի հաստատեալք
Եւ արձանք լուսեղէնք ի յերկինս կանդնեալք,
Ինքեանք ելին եւ ալլոց ցուցին
Զճանապարհս ցանկալի զվերինն Երուսաղեմի:

- xxiv. Ո՛վ զգաստուլթիւն իմաստուն կուսանացն,
Որոց ոչ յաղթեաց հեղգուլթիւն եւ քուն, [հարսանեացն,
Այլ արթունք եւ պատրաստք մնալով երկնաւոր
Զի մտցեն ի յառազաստ անմահ Փեսային:
- xxv. Զունի ոք ի նոսա անուն չարութեան
Եւ ոչ նախատինս յիմար կոչելոյ,
Քանզի միով պնդութեամբ հոգւով արութեան
Միաբան քաջացան, առ հասարակ ցնծասցեն:
- xxvi. Պարակցեալք քաջագէն բռնութեամբ՝
Ի յերկրէ ի յերկինս տարադէմ դնացին փախստեայք,
Ինքեանք ելին եւ մեզ ուսուցին
Բագում նեղութեամբ մտանել յայն հանգիստ:
- xxvii. Զերմեռանդն աղաւթիւք եւ սիրովն առ Աստուած
Հայցեցին զհնարս փրկութեան,
Բառնալով զխաւար դիւապաշտ մոլորութեանց յաշխարհէ,
Պայծառացեալք լուսովն որ ի Հաւրէ ծագեցաւ:
- xxviii. Ռահս յոլովս առաքինութեան
Յայտնեցին որդւոց մարդկան վերանալ յաշխարհէ,
Անստերիւր հոգեւորական վարուք
Ելանել ի բանակս երկնաւորս անմարմին հրեշտակացն:
- xxix. Սոքա են քարինք սուրբք՝ հիմնեցեալք ի յերկրի,
Զոր կանխաւ տեսեալ գուշակեաց մարգարէն,
Ի նոյն ի նիւթոյ շինեցաւ կաթողիկէ Եկեղեցի՝
Բարձրացեալ փառաւք ի պարծանս Խաչին:
- xxx. Վասն ձեր, երանեալ նահատակք,
Զաւրք հրեշտակաց անմարմին զուարթնոցն
Ի յերկնից ի յերկիր հեղան, եւ մարդիկ խառնեցան
Ի գունդս զինուորաց Քրիստոսի Աստուծոյ:
- xxxi. Տաւնեսցուք ստուգութեամբ ի հնձանս նոցունց,
Զի արբեալք լիցուք անմահական բաժական.
Քանզի բաշխեն զբժշկութիւն հոգւոց եւ մարմնոց
Եւ զպարգեւս երկնաւորս սիրողաց իւրեանց:

- xxxii. *Րաբունւոյն հրամանաւ աներեւոյթ ազդմամբ
Յարեւմտից յարեւելս եկեալ հասին,
Զի լուսով հրեշտակական վարուք կուսութեան՝
Փարտեցին զիսաւար դիւապաշտ մոլորութեանցն:*
- xxxiii. *Յնծութեամբ տաւնեսցուք գլխատակս նոցունց,
Զի եւ նոցին հաղորդեսցուք փրկութեան՝
Խնդրելով յԱրարչէն զպարգեւս երկնաւորս
Եւ զդասիլն ընդ նոսին ի յարկսն լուսեղէն:*
- xxxiv. *Իրծեալք մաշեցան յուսացեալք ի մեծութիւն
Եւ կանայք վեհագինք գերագանցեալք յաղթեցին.
Բուրվառք ոսկեղէնք հրով Հոգւոյն վառեցան,
Չահագգեստեալք ի Քրիստոս եւ դասեալք ընդ հրեշտակս:*
- xxxv. *Փառաց ի փառս բարձրացեալ պարծին
Ի պատիւ եւ ի փառս երեսուն եւ եաթեանքն,
Քանզի այս է թիւ երանեալ կուսանացն
Որք անթառամ պսակեցան յանվախճան յաւիտեան:*
- xxxvi. *Քեզ, որ ցնծութիւնդ ես, Քրիստոս Աստուած,
Եւ ուրախութիւն ամենայն արդարոց,
Քաղցրասցին վասն մեր աղաչանք սրբոցն՝
Շնորհելով զթողութիւն մեր բազում յանցանացն:*

BOOK REVIEWS

Michael E. Stone, Dickran Kouymjian, Henning Lehmann. *Album of Armenian Paleography*. Aarhus University Press, 2002. Pp. 554. Hardcover, sleeved. ISBN 87 7288 556 4.

Reviewed by Roberta R. Ervine

As a tribute to the memory of St. Mesrob Maštoč, inventor of the Armenain alphabet, this volume has spared neither effort nor expense to create a volume of exceptional quality and beauty, representing in all its glory the development of that alphabet, which is, as Dickran Kouymjian calls it in the opening lines of his essay, discussed below, “a sacred locus of interest and celebration” (13). The joint Preface to this extremely large and immaculately produced tome outlines the producers’ rationale for its creation. As they state, it is intended as a tool for future scholarly analysis, and is likewise intended to encourage new research on the Armenian scripts. Thus, the collection of 200 examples of manuscript hands reproduced here is designed to offer dated examples of Armenian script; almost exclusively, manuscript hands are represented for purposes of comparison. Selection of the 200 samples was made from among more than 600 sample pages drawn from the collections not only of the three major repositories of Armenian manuscripts in the world—the Maštoč Matenadaran, Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Erevan, the Armenian Patriarchal Library in Jerusalem, and the Library of the Mekhitarist Fathers on the island of San Lazzaro in Venice—but also from the collections housed in Baltimore, Dublin, Leiden, London, Paris, Tübingen and Vienna. In addition to representing a broad cross-section of the manuscript collections in existence, the compilers also attempted to illustrate the broad spectrum of Armenian writing, with emphasis on the development of *erkatagir*, *bolorigir*, and the intermediate mixed script. The Preface also points out differences of opinion between the compilers.

The Preface is followed by a Table of Contents, a list of abbreviations, and a transliteration table (Hübschmann-Meillet system).

Dickran Kouymjian authored the first of two major essays accompanying the plates. In his “History of Armenian Paleography” he first describes

the beginnings of Armenian paleography, from Yakob Tašan's work *An Overview of Armenian Paleography* (Azgayin Matenadaran 28), Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1898 and Garegin Yovsēpean's *Album of Armenian Paleography* (in *Šolakať*, 1913). After briefly discussing the early classification of Armenian scripts, Kouymjian offers 23 individual descriptions of works and writers specifically concerned with the development and understanding of the alphabet, including Dionysus of Thrace (and his commentators), handbooks like Gēorg Skewřaci's intended for scribes, the 17th-century grammar writers Franciscus Rivola and Clemente Galano, the 19th-century scholar Garegin Zarbhanalean, and the 20th-century author of *Armenian Paleography*, Stepan Melik-Baxšyan. The most detailed sections are those devoted to Yakovbos Tašan, Garegin Yovsēpean, Hračēay Acharean, and Ašot Abrahamyan.

Introducing his outline of script classification and terminology is Kouymjian's detailed description of the unique Armeno-Greek papyrus (illustrated on p. 62), whose writing is dated to somewhere between the early fifth and the mid-seventh century. The types of script (erkaťagir, bolorgir, nōrgir and řelagir) are then carefully described, and certain difficulties in their classification are mentioned. As the concluding remarks say, the writers of the book ultimately decided simply to present the script samples chronologically rather than to presume to resolve those difficulties. In doing so, they have exhibited an admirable scholarly neutrality towards what has sometimes been a contentious subject.

The second major essay is Michael E. Stone's "The Development of Armenian Writing". After briefly explaining the "Limitations Inherent in the Nature of the Data", he provides a historical analysis of each letter of the Armenian alphabet, individually. Every statement made about a change in a given letter's form is accompanied by a reference to a script sample illustrating that feature. For eight of the letters, diagrams of the various forms are given. At the conclusion of the alphabet, a chronological listing of the dates when, in the samples here supplied, distinctive forms first occurred. Stone then analyzes the chronological spread of each of the main script types, again based on the samples in this volume, conclusively demonstrating that the scripts' periods of usage overlap. After a brief synopsis of the relationship between the script types, he points out that a more nuanced understanding of the development of the scripts is possible through morphological analysis, in combination with stylistic considerations.

Between the two essays and the plates themselves an extensive bibliography has been inserted. It should also be said that throughout the essays, footnotes are given in the vertical margin of each page, facilitating

footnotes are given in the vertical margin of each page, facilitating their integration with the text.

Representing the earliest period of Armenian writing, from which there are no surviving manuscripts, the plates begin with four inscriptions on stone: the Komitas inscription from the Hripsimē Church in Ejmiacin (618), the inscription from Mastara Church's southern wing (640), an inscription of Grigor Mamikonean from Aruj (668) and the inscription of Uxtatur from a column in Talin Cathedral (783). In addition to the excellent photograph provided of each inscription, its location, dimensions and the scale of reproduction in the photograph, notations of important facts and bibliographical references are given, as well as a complete transcription.

The presentation of each manuscript sample requires a full two pages. At the top of the left hand page is given the manuscript data, followed by relevant bibliography, notations on the significance of the manuscript, and a transcription of a specific section of the script. The lower portion of the page is devoted to a computer-generated alphabet of the sample's script, clearly showing the exact forms of the letters employed. At the bottom of the page is a ribbon showing a close-up photograph of a section of the script. On the facing page is a large photograph of the sample page. The photographs are of exceptional quality and the color reproduction is excellent. The samples date from 1144 to 1895.

Since most collections of manuscript illustrations focus on miniature illuminations and other colorful features, this grouping of 200 samples is striking by its simplicity. The letters, in and of themselves, constitute their pages' ornamentation, in a seemingly endless array of subtle variations on a single theme. The impression left on the reader is of an extraordinary play of form.

Following the manuscript samples is a set of five archival document pages, comprising a bull from Ejmiacin to the patriarch of Constantinople (1800), and letters—one by Xaçatur Abovian to a clergyman (1830), and three addressed to Garegin Yovsēpean by Stepanos Malxasianc, Ťoros Ťoromanian and Antoine Meillet respectively (1909, 1910, 1911).

A series of useful tables and indexes completes the volume. These include a twenty-page chronological table of alphabets, displaying all the forms of each letter in vertical columns; a vector table showing the amount of time during which a given letter form was used; a chronological table of the plates; an index of the manuscripts grouped by their collections; and two indexes of selected manuscripts. An index of scribes, writers and pa-

trons is followed by one of modern writers. A glossary of Armenian paleographic terms concludes the end matter.

While not everyone will be able to afford a personal copy of this extraordinary book, it is one that any serious student of Armenian culture (and many others beside) will want to peruse carefully. Even by the exacting standards of its producers, this is a magnificently conceived and executed opus.

Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, ed. and tr., *Archbishop Nersēs Lambronaci, Commentary on Wisdom of Solomon: Introduction, Translation, and Diplomatic Edition of the Armenian Text*. New York: Skewra Press, 2007. Pp. xiv, 633. Hardcover.

Reviewed by Edward G. Mathews, Jr.

Nersēs, the maternal great-nephew of his namesake the great Catholicos, hymnist and ecumenist Nersēs Šnorhali, was consecrated Bishop of Lambron and Tarsus at the very young age of twenty-two. There is little question not only that Nersēs was one of the great figures of Cilician Armenia, but that he remains one of the greatest theologians and biblical commentators of the Armenian Church. It is a very sad fact, however, that it must also be said that he is also one of the least appreciated figures in the contemporary field of Armenian studies. There is no modern edition of any of his works and very little secondary work. Only one monograph (mostly a translation) has appeared in English and only two in Armenian. Very few of his works have been translated into any modern language—and only one of his biblical commentaries. This unfortunate situation makes the present work of Bp. Tanielian all the more welcome.

The present volume is a reworked version of (then) Fr. Tanielian's doctoral dissertation, completed at Columbia University in 2003, under the direction of Dr. S. Peter Cowe who also wrote the foreword to this volume. More than a simple text and translation, Bp. Tanielian has managed to squeeze a great amount of material into a single volume. He divides his work into three major parts. Part I is the introductory material (pp. 11-118), divided into eight sections:

1. Biographical Introduction (11-32)
2. Wisdom Literature in Hebrew, Patristic and Armenian Traditions (33-42)
3. Biblical Exegesis in the Armenian Tradition (43-48)
4. The Author's Theological, Philosophical, Spiritual, and Social Perspective (49-82)
5. Parallel Topics discussed in the Commentaries on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Wisdom of Solomon (83-88)
6. Textual and Linguistic Questions (89-98)
7. Physical Description of the Manuscripts (99-104)
8. Textual Analysis of the Manuscripts (105-118).

All these sections contain what is essentially the most detailed and up-to-date treatment currently available. This reviewer only regrets that he did not include such a treatment of the entire literary legacy of Nersēs Lambronaçi, including the current state of editions and translations. Unfortunately, the brief discussion of the Commentary material, listed below, does not constitute an adequate treatment even of those works.

Part II contains Bp. Tanielian's annotated English translation (119-284), which is a careful, literal translation of the Armenian text. The text is very nicely laid out with bold paragraph numbers corresponding to the paragraph numbers in the text. The biblical text being commented on is italicized at the beginning of each paragraph, followed by the translation of Nersēs' commentary proper. Bp. Tanielian notes all the biblical sources (in the text) and other quoted texts (in the notes). Also in the footnotes, he includes numerous discussions of various questions such as textual matters, problems with Armenian words or underlying Greek words, as well as parallels or quotations from other literature.

Bp. Tanielian's translation is followed immediately by four appendices, which demonstrate both the importance of the Bible in Armenian tradition, in general, and the widespread use of the Wisdom of Solomon, in particular, in Armenian Literature and Liturgy:

Lambronaçi's Commentaries on Scripture (285-286)

Armenian Biblical Commentators (287-292)

Wisdom of Solomon in Earlier Armenian Literature (293-294)

Readings of Wisdom of Solomon in the Armenian Lectionary (295-298).

These appendices are followed by a full bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and three indices: Scriptural Citations and Allusions (317-324), Persons (325-332), and Topographical Names (333-334).

Part III contains Bp. Tanielian's diplomatic edition of the Armenian text that he compiled from twenty-one manuscripts (pp. 339-633). As his base manuscript he has used Manuscript 4211 from the Matenadaran in Yerevan, a large manuscript in two columns which also contains Nersēs' commentaries on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. This manuscript was written at the monastery of Hromkla in 1292, just before it was besieged and fell to the Mamluks. In the apparatus, Bp. Tanielian includes nearly 6200 variant readings from the other twenty manuscripts, most of which come from

the Matenadaran, the St. James Monastery in Jerusalem, or the Mekhitarist Monastery in Venice. The text is preceded by an Explanation of Signs and Abbreviations employed in the Critical Apparatus (337), and some Editorial Remarks (338).

Bp. Tanielian is to be commended for making available to both scholars and interested lay persons the first critical text and the first English translation of an important work of one of great figures of the Armenian Church. Biblical commentaries were at the heart of the great medieval monastic education system and only a very few are available outside of manuscript repositories. It is to be hoped that Bp. Tanielian will continue his work and make available more of these essential works of Lambronaci, and that his work will also inspire others to "pick up the ball" and make other works from this great tradition available as well.

Hidemi Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005. Pp. 579. Hardcover. ISBN: 1-59333-148-7.

Reviewed by Roberta R. Ervine

One assumes that this volume will be reviewed primarily by syriacists. However, in light of the special interest it represents for armenists, particularly to those working in the area of Cilician studies, it seems appropriate to review it in an armenological publication as well.

Writing in the heyday of the Hefumian dynasty, Barhebraeus (1225/6-1286) was almost exactly contemporary with the great Armenian thinkers Mxitar Ayrivaneçi (1222-1290?), Vahram Rabun (1215?-1290?), and Yovhannēs Erznkaçi Pluz (1240?-1293). Thus his writings shed particular light on the broader intellectual milieu in which these *vardapets* of the Church studied and taught. In addition, and much to his credit, Takahashi has made an effort to place Barhebraeus in this broader context by referring to a great many Armenian sources, both ancient and modern.

This book represents the introduction and appendices of Takahashi's substantial dissertation.¹ While modestly stressing the difficulties of pursuing Syriac research in Japan, the writer has done us the favor of publishing this carefully researched work in spite of his misgivings about its deficiencies.

The study falls into two parts: the first offers a resume of biographical information on Barhebraeus and occupies pp. 1-117; the second is dedicated to an extensive bibliography of the Syriac sage that fills pp. 119-408. Separate indices for parts I and II are also provided.

Part I is preceded by a very minutely divided table of contents and a list of abbreviations for periodical and serial publications. The biographical study is divided into two main sections: 1) Barhebraeus' life and 2) his works. Section 1 deals first with the sources, then with biographical data: birth, education, ecclesiastical career. Then a consideration of Barhebraeus' linguistic skills is offered, followed by an overview of his formative contacts with the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church. The final segments of the biographical examination evaluate Barhebraeus in terms of each of

¹ The remainder appeared as *Aristotelian Meteorology in Syriac. Barhebraeus, Butyrum Sapientiae, Books of Mineralogy and Meteorology* (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus 15). Leiden: Brill, 2004.

his many fields of interest: pastoral and educational work, mystical praxis, philosophy, ecumenism, and medicine.

While the study brings together an immense amount of hitherto scattered information, it presents this in a readable format that should satisfy the learned without intimidating the non-specialist. The clear headings and neat divisions of the material add to its accessibility. Much space is saved in the extensive notes by using shortened citations; these refer to the bibliography found at the end of the volume. This causes some awkwardness for those who like to check every reference as they read—especially when the bibliographical entry then refers the reader to a periodical or serial abbreviation not to be found in the listing at the front of the volume—in these cases the reader is referred to S.M. Schwertner's *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, which is not on everyone's bookshelf. However, the abbreviations certainly make the size of the volume less formidable than it would be otherwise.

Following the biographical material concerning Barhebraeus' life and activities, a listing of his works is given, arranged by topic: theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, historiography, belles lettres, letters, grammar/lexicography, exact science, oneiromancy, medicine and liturgical works. The subsequent overview follows the categories and sub-categories of the initial list. All the variant titles of a work are given for ease of identification. (Full bibliographical data on each work is to be found in Part II of the book). Description of the works includes a summary of any debates over authorship/authenticity, as well as other relevant matters.

A tentative chronology of the works is proffered in I.2.3, anchored around works with known dates. There are extensive notes on problems of dating.

The next subsection characterizes Barhebraeus' writings as compilations and abridgements. Here, Takahashi contrasts the sage's talent for using abridgement to improve a work, with the approaches of other Syriac writers. Persian and Arabic sources used by Barhebraeus are outlined in I.2.5. In addition to a list of his translations from Arabic, there is a listing of those writings known to have been modeled on Muslim works. I.2.6 offers evidence that, albeit certain works were requested by specific individuals or groups, the broader motivation for Barhebraeus' writings was "to transplant the knowledge available in his time to Syriac soil."

Takahashi speculates that the desire to see this knowledge in Syriac, at a time when Arabic was much more current, had to do with Barhebraeus' perception that the Mongol invasions (with the consequent "pax mongolica") marked a real break in Arab domination. Baghdad had fallen; the

last Abbasid Caliph was dead. Christians in the region had reason to feel that a new day was dawning. Takahashi cites Barhebraeus' reference to Hulagu Khan's mother Sorghotani as the new "Empress Helena." Interesting mention is made in this connection of a ms. (Vat. syr. 559, copied at Mar Mattai in 1260) apparently identifying Hulagu Khan and his Christian wife Doguz Khatun as "Constantine and Helena".

Barhebraeus could not have foreseen, any more than his contemporaries could have done, that this new world order would be of short duration. The very real hope that a Christian state—or even a Christian empire—might emerge under Mongol rule, particularly as the Mongols were anxious to establish an alliance with the Latin Christians to oppose the Mamlukes, was a viable one until the accession to power of Ghazan Khan in 1295, an event which took place nine years after Barhebraeus' death. In such a realm, Syriac might have hoped to regain its prestige and supplant Arabic; Barhebraeus' work, Takahashi argues, may well have been designed to provide a corpus of up-to-date scientific literature in preparation for that eventuality.

Comparisons of Barhebraeus with western thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus and Pico della Mirandola are also made at this juncture. Takahashi adds his own, less synchronous comparisons; one of them is to Cicero, who made a concerted effort to translate Greek learning into Latin.

The subsection entitled "The Legacy of Barhebraeus" (I.2.7) deals with the development of Barhebraeus' work subsequent to his death. The minor additions to his work by Joshua b. Khairun and Joseph the Iberian in the 15th century, Isaiah and Addai of Ber Sbirina (16th century) are mentioned. The use made of Barhebraeus by David of Emesa (ca. 1500) and others is also mentioned. Takahashi notes that the decline in Syriac literature left Barhebraeus' writings as, effectively, the standard texts in several fields and, ironically, led to the translation of his works into Arabic. The number of manuscripts of Barhebraeus' works to be found in various East Syrian and Maronite libraries is mentioned, as are Arabic versions of his works in the Coptic milieu. The use of his writings in Europe, and particularly the influence of his *Grammar* on early European studies of Syriac, is outlined.

Takahashi closes the first part of his study with a statement of hope that the present time, too, may be one of Syriac renewal, in which Barhebraeus' works may play a positive role.

Part II, the bibliographic portion of the volume, commences with a nod to J.M. Fiey's extensive bibliography of Barhebraeus, published in

Patrologia Orientalis in 1986, in honor of the bicentennial of Barhebraeus' death. The reader's expectations are unjustifiably dampened by Takahashi's avowal that his research of Barhebraeus' bibliography has not been systematic, particularly as regards studies that are not specifically devoted to Barhebraeus and his writings. However, he appears to have erred rather on the side of commission than of omission; his bibliography exceeds Fiey's by more than 200 pages. Editions, excerpts, translations and studies are all included (in that order) and are usually given in order of publication. Takahashi has also made a conscious effort to update the information in Baumstark's *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*.

Regarding the information Takahashi provides concerning specific manuscripts, more disclaimers are made. However, exhaustive information on each listed ms is provided: older numeration if any, folio numbers, script, copyist, provenance, commissioner and other pertinent / interesting details are provided. The compiler indicates that to facilitate the identification of names that appear in varying forms (e.g., John, Yohannan, Iwanis) an index to Part II has been compiled, with each occurrence of a variant spelling referenced by section marker and sub-number.

The bibliography itself is carefully divided and sub-divided. Like the rest of the volume, the bibliography is extensively footnoted. Section A (bio-biblio-graphic sources) has an interesting section listing manuscripts personally associated with Barhebraeus himself.

The index of manuscript collections, covering 101 collections, indicates which mss. Takahashi has personally seen, and gives the sources for his information on the others. The Index to Part I includes authors modern and ancient, place names, collections, works, subjects, proper names and scribes. The Index to part II lists persons mentioned in the bibliography, with regularization of their names.

The volume is rounded out with a bibliography of pre-modern authors, and one of modern authors / editors. Here, the information previously divided up between relevant bibliographical entries is brought together into an easily browsable format, with full references to Part I.

Considering the use he has made of the Armenian sources at his disposal, one might wish that Takahashi had had access to a more complete selection (e.g., he uses only Bedrossian's online translation of Kirakos Ganjakeci; he knows Sirarpie Der Nersessian's writings only via Setton's *History of the Crusades*). But at least, in addition to providing a very useful compendium of material on a major Syriac author, Takahashi has made a first step in the integration of Armenian and Syriac sources for Barhebraeus' period. Much remains to be done in this area, but it is to be hoped

that an armenist or two will be as bold in their search for Syriac connections as this syriacist has been in researching Armenian connections.

The Historical Atlas of Eastern and Western Christian Monasticism. Edited by Juan María Laboa. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2003. Pp. 272. Hardcover. ISBN: 0-8146-2778-1.

Reviewed by Edward G. Mathews, Jr.

This large, coffee-table style book is a translation of the previously published *Atlas historique du monachisme d'Orient et d'Occident*, published by Milan's Jaca Books in 2001. Liturgical Press commissioned Matthew J. O'Connell and Madeleine Beaumont to translate into English all the French, Italian, and Spanish articles from this original edition. Most of the articles were originally composed by the main editor, but several other scholars have made significant contributions.

Beginning with a brief overview of pre-Christian monasticism, in order to highlight the universality of this phenomenon, this volume provides a bird's-eye view of nearly every facet of monasticism as it manifested itself in various regions and at various times throughout the history of the Christian Church. In fact, this is one of the most noticeable features of this book is the comprehensive treatment of the various cultures in which Christian monasticism has flourished: eastern and western, Irish and Slavic, eremitism and coenobitism, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, even ecumenical ventures. Of course, this means that the treatment of each of these cultures receives only a few pages, but this book is not intended as a comprehensive history of monasticism.

The other remarkable feature of the book is the photography, all in brilliant color. Not only are there representative samples of monasteries from all traditions, but included are a number of pictures of monks in their communal and festal gatherings, and performing their various tasks, pictures of the diverse treasures that the monks have produced, such as manuscript illuminations, frescoes—interior and exterior—icons of course, even plans and layouts of monastic establishments, as well as some stunning photographs of the actual landscapes and locations of monasteries.

There are, to be sure, only a half-dozen or so pictures dedicated to each subject, but the editors have done a fine job of not repeating the same old traditional material. For example, in the chapter on Armenian monasticism (pp. 160-165) one does find a picture of the famous monastery of Sanahin or (later in the volume, p. 221) St. Hripsimē, but instead of the common pictures of Xor Virap, Tafev, or Halbat, one finds pictures of the less well-known—but no less interesting—monasteries of Tanahat and

Kiranc. One thus meets new friends as well as the old ones. Although the volume is accorded the title of *Atlas*, these pictures almost relegate the maps to a marginal addition to the volume; they are generally inserted to depict locations of regional monasteries rather than to show any historical development or influences.

While not a book for scholarly detail—in fact there can be found several dated and erroneous descriptions such as Ephrem being the father of Syrian eremiticism—the book is nonetheless of great usefulness for a quick and reliable overview of monasticism in all its facets, regional features, and chronological developments. The photographs alone, many new and all in clear brilliant color, are make a serious and attentive perusal of the volume well worth the while. The editors and publishers are to be commended for having produced such an interesting and useful book.

Michael B. Papazian, *Light from Light: An Introduction to the History and Theology of the Armenian Church*. New York: SIS Publications, 2006. Pp. 200. Paperback.

Reviewed by Michael Daniel Findikyan

It is inestimably easier to write hundreds of densely-footnoted pages on a highly-focused topic than to author a broad, textbook-style resource that targets a wider, non-specialized readership without being either superficial, outdated, incomplete or trite. For this reason, general surveys on the Armenian Church are scarce indeed. More often than not the history such books offer is a *mélange* of warmed-over folklore unchecked by serious scholarship; their theology but a rehash of clichés, at best only partially supported by Armenia's authentic patristic, liturgical and canonical heritage, and at worst uncritically assimilated from Catholic and Protestant handbooks.

It is only one of Michael B. Papazian's several noteworthy accomplishments in *Light from Light* to have achieved a fresh and thoughtful synthesis that is readable, engaging and original. The author, associate professor of philosophy and chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Berry College in Rome, Georgia, proceeds chronologically. In nine chapters, Papazian relates the Armenian Church's perception and knowledge of her God as that understanding matured and became more refined over the centuries. Papazian spells out the central teachings of the Church—the person of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures, the Church, the sacraments, the councils, prayer—in plain and straightforward language and always in historical context. The author's approach does justice to Armenia's history, but also to the actual enterprise of theology. For Papazian, as for the Armenian Church, theology is not a discipline or system of tenets to be mastered and transmitted. It is the story of a people's living and ever-unfolding encounter with the living God in and through Jesus Christ.

Papazian's presentation also avoids what seems to be for Armenians the irresistible tendency nowadays to dismember the Christian and the so-called "national" aspects of the Armenian Church into contrasting poles ever in need of reconciliation. For Papazian there is no boundary between what is "Armenian" and what is "Christian". In one of the most original sections of the book, the author presents, in about five pages, a remarkable explanation of the essentials of the Christian religion: the gist of the Gospel, as it were. Of course he quotes liberally from the four Gospels, but

also from the Armenian theologian Stepanos of Siwnik and the Armenian *šarakans* [hymns]. All of this falls into his chapter entitled, "The First Christians of Armenia".

Of particular interest is the author's concise and readable explanation of the Armenian Church's Christology, informed by the latest scholarship on this complicated subject with its intertwined theological, historical and political aspects. Also remarkable is Papazian's excursion into the Armenian Church's attitude toward war, a topic that, to my knowledge, has never been seriously elucidated. While narrating the fifth-century Armenian battle against the Zoroastrian Persians, Papazian scans the writings of the principal historian of the era, Elišē (Yeghishé), and concludes that in this era, the Armenian Church was more in line with the western notion of "just war" than the eastern patristic concept of war as a necessary evil. The author also scours the Armenian tradition for insights into other contemporary issues. He calls attention, for example, to Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali's explicit condemnation of the death penalty.

Also welcome is the author's exposé on "The Sacramental Life of the Armenian Church", though I would add a line or two of clarification on certain liturgical matters. Papazian states that chrismation is conducted as a separate sacrament only when a Christian baptized in another church is to be received into the Armenian Church. In point of fact, the Armenian Church chrismates those baptized in certain other denominations not as a separate sacrament of conversion, but as a completion of a baptismal rite that, lacking unction with holy chrism, is considered deficient by the Armenian Church. The Armenians seem to have been the first to require couples to be married in the church; this was decreed at the Armenian Synod of Duin in 719 AD, a century or more earlier than neighboring Christian traditions. The cup of wine offered to the bride and groom at the end of the ceremony is not a vestige of holy communion, but a separate rite that entered the Armenian Church relatively late by way of Byzantine influence. The Armenian Church possesses a ceremony for second marriage. But the penitential spirit that pervades the Byzantine rite of second marriage is notably absent from the Armenian rite, possibly because the Armenians' turbulent history made second marriage a more common occurrence. The sacrament of anointing, which fell out of use more than 600 years ago, is not to be confused with the rite of anointing the dead, a remnant of which lingers on in the funerary unction of deceased clergy. The sick were anointed with simple blessed oil, while the dead were anointed with holy *myron*.

The book contains three helpful appendices: "The Armenian Apostolic Church and Other Christian Churches"; a bibliography with suggestions for further reading; and a glossary. The author might consider adding an index to the next edition.

Light from Light should be required reading for anyone who considers himself or herself a child of the Armenian Church. Adult candidates for baptism or chrismation, couples preparing for marriage, church school teachers and senior students, deacons, altar servers, choir members and lay leaders of the Armenian Church should master its content. Others who seek a survey of the Armenian Church will also profit from Papazian's fine work.

Saints-Sanctity-Liturgy: For Robert Francis Taft, S.J. at Seventy, Symposium Papers and Memorabilia, Mark M. Morozowich, ed. Fairfax, VA: Eastern Christian Publications, 2006. Pp. 242. Paperback.

Reviewed by Michael Daniel Findikyan

Robert Taft is the most widely-published scholar writing on liturgy in the world today. The current book represents a commemorative volume of the events organized by his friends and colleagues on the occasion of Fr. Taft's seventieth birthday in 2002. The editor, Rev. Dr. Mark Morozowich, a former student of Taft, is currently Assistant Professor of Liturgical Studies and Associate Dean for Ministerial and Seminary Studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

The volume is divided into four sections. The first contains tributes from Hèctor Vall Vilardell, S.J., then Rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, where Taft has lived and worked for more than forty years, and where the birthday celebrations were held. Homage is also offered by another former student of Taft's, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, now Apostolic Nuncio in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan; by Rev. Dr. Borys Gudziak, Rector of the Theological Academy of Lviv, Ukraine, as well as other hierarchs and academics.

Part Two comprises two papers presented at the birthday festivities. Fellow Jesuit and longtime friend Richard P. McBrien, S.J., Cowley-O'Brien-Walter Professor of Ecclesiology at the University of Notre Dame, presents a very readable introduction to the topic of sanctity and sainthood entitled, "The Call to Holiness in the West". Reflecting on the same topic as probed in Taft's own writings, Dr. Stefano Parenti, yet another Taft disciple, reminds us that "Sanctity is a gift, not a conquest." Parenti is Professor of Eastern Liturgy at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of San Anselmo in Rome.

Part three includes Taft's full *curriculum vitae* and bibliography, as well as lists of the 22 doctoral dissertations directed by him, and of the 192 scholarly papers he had presented through 2005. Also to be found are three interviews with Fr. Taft that deftly illustrate the scholarly acumen, undaunted outspokenness, biting wit, and inner fire that animate and drive his work, and for which Taft is so well known.

These qualities emanate as well from three of Taft's most incisive discourses, which are reprinted as part four of the volume: a homily delivered at the Baccalaureate Mass at the College of the Holy Cross on May 24,

1990 on receiving the degree Doctor of Ministry *Honoris Causa*; and two lectures delivered at the University of Toronto in December, 2000 when Taft received the Doctor of Divinity *Honoris Causa*: “Remembrance and Hope,” and “The Problem of ‘Uniatism’ and the ‘Healing of Memories’: Anamnesis, not Amnesia”.

As a former student of Fr. Taft myself, I found that the pages of this volume, along with the photographs that pepper it evoked fond memories of this extraordinary scholar, priest, teacher, visionary and friend; invaluable lessons learned from him; a plethora of quotable quotes that no one but Taft could dare utter; peripatetic tutorials in *Liturgiewissenschaft*, ecumenism, art history and *haute cuisine* conducted while walking the streets of Rome; and countless razor-edge quips that still make me laugh. To those who would like to meet the colorful man whose work has advanced virtually every facet in the historical study of the liturgy, this album is highly recommended.

Zaven Arzoumanian, *Studies in Armenian Church Origins, Doctrine and Worship*. Los Angeles: Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, 2007. Pp. 120. Paperback.

Reviewed by Michael Daniel Findikyan

In academic circles Rev. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian is best known for his published studies on the history of the Armenian Church in the seventh and in the twentieth centuries. Most Armenians know him as an erudite teacher and pastor. His most recent work is a collection of eleven short essays, six of which are also presented in Armenian. Some of the essays are reprints of writings that originally appeared in other publications. The topics span the early history of the Armenian Church (“The Origins of Armenian Christianity”, Saints Hripsimeh and Gayaneh, Shrines and Excavations”, “The Formation of the Armenian Church in the Fifth Century”) and offer historical-theological reflection (“Tradition in the Armenian Church”, “The *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti* of St. Cyril of Alexandria”, “Thy Kingdom Come”, “To Canonize the Armenian Martyrs of the 1915 Genocide”). Interesting are a series of three historical-theological introductions to the Armenian Sunrise, Peace and Rest services from the Daily Office. The author’s interest in liturgical study is also revealed in his helpful outline, “Groupings of the Feasts in the Armenian Church”.

The most interesting essays are those in which Fr. Arzoumanian explores contemporary issues facing the Armenian Church. In “Tradition in the Armenian Church” the author seeks to establish what elements of the church’s sacred tradition are mutable as opposed to other aspects that must be preserved unalterably. In particular, the author discusses the Armenian Church’s longstanding practice of admitting only celibate clergy to the higher ordained ranks. He proposes that “the rule of celibacy and the allowance of the married clergy to attain higher ranks should converge—it will do no harm to the national character of the Armenian Church.” As for the wrenching issue of the language of the liturgy, the author is more cautious, ruling out the use of the vernacular.

The author’s conclusions are hardly irrefutable, but his reasoned yet creative approach to the issues is refreshing.

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