Armeniaca

International Journal of Armenian Studies

Vol. 3   October 2024

**Edizioni
Ca'Foscari**

Armeniaca
International Journal of Armenian Studies

Editors-in-chief
Aldo Ferrari
Alessandro Orengo
Zaroui Pogossian
Anna Sirinian

Armeniaca
International Journal of Armenian Studies
Annual journal

Table of Contents

HISTORY

REPORTS

Romanization Tables

Armenian romanization table

ա	a	յ		y
բ	b	ն		n
գ	g	շ		š
դ	d	ո		o
ե	e	չ	*	č'
զ	z	պ		p
է	ē	ջ		ǰ
ը	ə	ռ		ṙ
թ	* t'	ս		s
ժ	ž	վ		v
ի	i	տ		t
լ	l	ր		r
խ	x	ց	*	c'
ծ	c	ւ		w
կ	k	փ	*	p'
հ	h	ք	*	k'
ձ	j	օ		ō
ղ	ł	ֆ		f
ճ	č	ու		u
մ	m			

* Please always use **left single quotation mark** ' (U+2018; ALT+3) to render aspirated consonants.

Russian romanization table

а	a	р		r
б	b	с		s
в	v	т		t
г	g	у		u
д	d	ф		f
е	e	х		x
ё	ë	ц		c
ж	ž	ч		č
з	z	ш		š
и	i	щ		šč
й	j	ъ	*	"
к	k	ы		y
л	l	ь	*	'
м	m	э		ė
н	n	ю		ju
о	o	я		ja
п	p			

*   Please always use right double quotation mark " (U + 201D; ALT + ⇧ Shift + 2) to render the 'hard sign' and right single quotation mark ' (U + 2019; ALT + ⇧ Shift + 3) to render the 'soft sign'.

Archaeology

Old Data and New Investigations
The Urartian and Orontid Fortress of Körzüt in Muradiye Plain, Turkey

Roberto Dan
ISMEO Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente, Roma

Abstract   This article presents an important archaeological site located on the north-eastern shore of Lake Van, Turkey. The site was one of the first to be associated with the kingdom of Urartu, thanks to the grandeur of its characteristic architecture and the pottery visible on the surface. Körzüt is composed of a vast fortified complex, within which there were certainly a temple, palatine structures, storage rooms, a settlement, and a necropolis. Presumably contemporary hydraulic works have been documented near the site. Körzüt has been the subject of numerous illegal excavations in past and present times, which over the years have brought to light a considerable amount of epigraphic material. This has allowed us to attribute the construction of the complex to King Minua, between the end of the ninth and the beginning of the eighth century BCE. Numerous recent illegal excavations on the site have led to emergency excavations. These investigations have led to the discovery of important remains, which are discussed and contextualised in this paper, together with what was already known in terms of epigraphic and architectural evidence. Furthermore, Körzüt can be added to the list of settlements that were also used in the post-Urartian era in the years in which the Armenian Highlands was dominated by the Orontid dynasty.

Keywords   Körzüt fotress. Cuneiform Inscriptions. Urartu. Orontid. Turkey.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 History of Studies and Investigations. – 3 Inscriptions of Minua in the Muradiye Area. – 4 The Architectural Structures. – 5 The Hydraulic Works for the Supply of the Muradiye Plain. – 6 Recent Archaeological Investigations in Körzüt Fortress: A New Building and an Old Temple. – 7 Conclusions.

Open access

1   Introduction

This article discusses an important archaeological site already known in the literature, whose architectural, epigraphic and pottery evidence has allowed it to be reliably dated to the era of the kingdom of Urartu. It is located on the north-eastern shore of Lake Van in Turkey and is locally known as Körzüt Kalesi,[1] literally the Körzüt fortress.[2] The site is one of the first to have been identified as Urartian thanks to the spectacular nature of its military architecture and the finds collected on the surface. The site is located at the southern end of the Muradiye/Berkri plain, approximately 3 km north of the village of Uluşar, in the Muradiye district of Van province in eastern Turkey [fig. 1]. The Muradiye plain is a fertile area of approximately 9100 hectares, irrigated by the River Bendimahi (Sinclair 1987, 264). In ancient times the plain must have been much more extensive than it currently appears. This is due to the rise in the water levels of the lake which has occurred in recent centuries and which has had considerable effects on the north-eastern area of the current lake, especially that which corresponds to the Muradiye plain.[3] The toponym Körzüt represents an alteration of the original Armenian name of the village of Uluşar, namely Gortsot, which over time changed to Kortsod/Kordzot/Körzkürt until it became the currently employed toponym. Recently it has been proposed that the name of the site in Kurdish was Pértak (Işık, Genç 2021, 4). In all eras this has been an important transit area that connected the eastern shore of Lake Van with the northern shore and was located on the road that gave access to the Ararat depression.[4] This contribution was made possible by the recent advancement of knowledge of the site resulting from new emergency excavations, which have confirmed certain theses proposed in the past and brought to light completely new aspects of the site.

1   Coordinates: 38°54′48.82″N 43°44′40.94″E; altitude: 1759 metres a.s.l.

2   Other local variants of the site's name are Arapzengi/Arab-ı Zengi and Zengibar Kalesi (Burney 1957, 47; Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, 276).

3   On the changes of the water level in Lake Van, cf. Trémouille, Dan 2022.

4   For a preliminary study of travel routes in this area during the Urartian period, cf. Gökçe, Kuvanç, Genç 2021.

2   History of Studies and Investigations

The oldest mention of the discovery of Urartian inscriptions connected to the Körzüt site and surrounding area date to 1892, and refer to the scientific mission conducted by Müller-Simonis and Hyvernat between 1888 and 1889 (1892). In fact, the volume contains a catalogue of cuneiform inscriptions (541-66) divided in two sections, the first devoted to the inscriptions already known (I-LXVIII) and the second to unpublished specimens (I-XXX), for a total of 98 epigraphs. Among these, Hyvernat reports some inscriptions from Khorzot/Kordzot (Körzüt: XVIII, XX) and Guzek (Güşak: XIX) (564), some of which were not seen directly by the scholar. In the same period Belck reported the discovery of four inscriptions from Güsack (Güşak), two from the village church (one of 32 lines and one of ten),[5] and another two from other churches, not seen directly by him (Belck, Lehmann 1892a, 125). Belck mentioned the Körzüt fortress in 1891, associating it with Urartu (1892b, 480), but it was only in 1956 that it entered the scientific literature thanks to Burney, who visited it during his pioneering reconnaissance around Lake Van, when a first schematic plan of the site was created **[fig. 2A]**.[6] The site was described by Burney in these words: "this is the most impressive of the fortresses visited, because part of the wall still stands 8 metres high on the outside" (1957, 37,

---

5   Probably is CTU A 5-36.

6   This plan has an incorrect orientation, being rotated by approximately 90°.

47-8, fig. 6, pls 5b-c.; cf. Burney, Lawson 1960, 177; Burney 1998, 143, 146, 149-50, fig. 14.1).[7] During these surveys, approximately 3,000 potsherds were collected, of which 71 came from Körzüt itself and were studied and published a few years later by Russell (1980, 50, pl. 6). The site was later reinvestigated by Tarhan and Sevin, who produced a more accurate plan of it **[fig. 2B]**,[8] as part of the reconnaissance activities directed by Afif Erzen in eastern Turkey, which took place in 1969 and 1972-3 (Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, 277, pl. 1). Also, part of the expedition was philologist Dinçol, who published some cuneiform inscriptions from the site and its surroundings (1976). The site was subsequently listed as number 19 in the catalogue of Urartian sites published by Kleiss and Hauptmann (1976, 11). Other inscriptions were published by Başgelen and Payne in 1985 and 2009 (Başgelen 1985, 17, fig. 6; Başgelen, Payne 2009). In 2008, Körzüt was visited again as part of research activities conducted in the region by Özfırat (2010, 227-8).[9] The author of this contribution visited the site twice, on 7 August 2008 and 1 August 2010, as part of the research activities concerning Urartian inscriptions in eastern Turkey, directed by Salvini on behalf of the Institute for the Studies of the Aegean and Near Eastern Civilisations of the National Research Council (ICEVO-CNR). In 2008, and subsequently in 2018, Salvini (2008; 2018) republished all the epigraphs known from the site and its surroundings up to that point, which formed the *Corpus dei Testi Urartei* – henceforth CTU. In 2016 the first overall study of the site was published (Dan, Vitolo 2016a), followed a few years later by a second short descriptive contribution by Danışmaz (2020, 84-6). The continuation of illegal excavations on the site finally led to rescue excavations being carried out in 2016 under the supervision of the Directorate of the Van Museum.[10] Illegal excavations had in fact exposed the remains of the tower temple of Minua many years ago, which led to the reuse of the temple stones, including the inscribed ones found in numerous surrounding villages. Furthermore, these illegal excavations brought to light the remains of a palace building with multiple rabbets on the facade and a large storage room. These new investigations are discussed in a specific section of this contribution. In 2017, during a survey in these territories a new inscription of Minua was discovered in the village of Güsak/Topuzarpa/Anguzek.[11] This inscription too originally came from the Körzüt

---

7   Site no. 212 among those registered by Burney.

8   This plan also has an incorrect orientation: the fortress is rotated by almost 90° compared to its correct position.

9   Site inventory number N71/13.

10   On the results of these excavations, cf. Kuvanç, Işık, Genç 2020 and Uslu 2021.

11   On the field activities in general, cf. Gökçe, Kuvanç, Genç 2021; on the new inscription, cf. Işık, Genç 2021.

fortress. In 2023, new emergency excavations were conducted by the Directorate of the Van Museum, uncovering the tower-temple from which the epigraphs dispersed around the site came, and leading to the discovery of three new inscribed blocks still *in situ*.
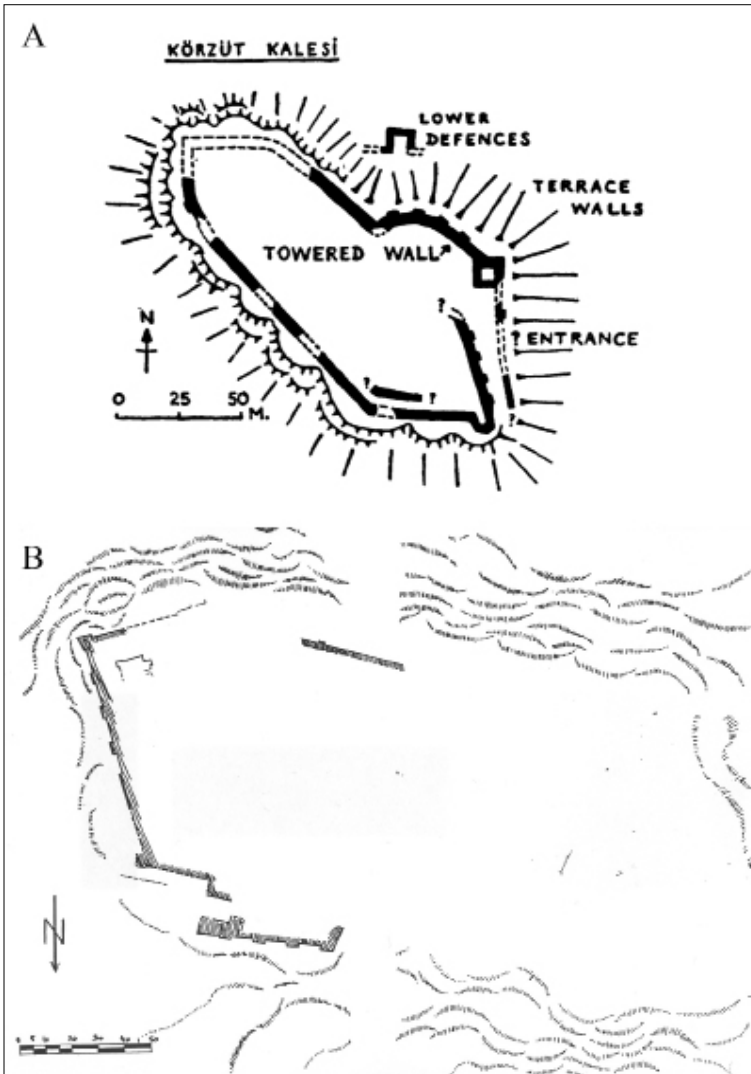
Figure 2 Plans of the Körzüt site (A: from Burney 1957: fig. 6; B: from Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, pl. 1).

3 Inscriptions of Minua in the Muradiye Area

Over the years, numerous fragments of Urartian cuneiform inscriptions have been identified in the area of the Muradiye plain, in particular in the surroundings of the Körzüt site [figs 1, 3]. All the inscriptions date to the reign of Minua, son of Išpuini (r. 810-785/0 BCE),[12] i.e. the end of the ninth and the beginning of the eighth century BCE. At the current state of research, the reign of Minua is the period in which the greatest number of inscriptions on stone and rock were produced. Overall, 26 inscriptions pertaining to building blocks or stelae come from Körzüt area, excluding the Karahan stelae from this count. The greatest number of epigraphs – ten – were found in the village of Körzüt/Uluşar, which is the closest to the site. Seven inscriptions come from the village of Güşak/Anguzek/Topuzarpa. Six equally distributed epigraphs come from the villages of Berkri/Muradiye and Köşk [fig. 3], while one comes from the village of Tharr. The only three inscriptions from the Körzüt site were discovered in 2023 following emergency excavations conducted on the site. The excavations and epigraphs discovered on this occasion are discussed in a specific section of this paper. Most of these inscriptions probably came from the Körzüt fortress, although some almost certainly came from other known Urartian sites in the area, i.e. epigraphs not directly associated with the tower-temple of Körzüt, but pertinent to a second structure which perhaps was located at the site known as Muradiye fortress (Burney 1957, 48; Burney, Lawson 1960, 183-5; Burney, Lang 1971, 139). The most conspicuous group of epigraphs (CTU A 5-2 A-E), which contained most of what can be reconstructed from the annalistic texts of King Minua, must originally have been located on the facades of some temple structures, one of which was certainly built inside the Körzüt fortress.[13]

---

12 The chronological references of the kings of Urartu are taken from Salvini 2008, 23; 2018, 18.

13 The reconstruction of the original positioning of the stones was published for the first time by Dinçol (1976); subsequently, Salvini presented a new version of the layout of the blocks (1980), recently revised (2008, 184-5). The updated graphic rendering of the temple façade proposed in this article, contained in the third volume of the CTU, is the work of the present author.

Table 1 Urartian inscription of king Minua, son of Išpuini, from the area of Muradiye
plain.[14] In the following table the inscriptions are ordered on the basis of their codes
in the CTU. For the reconstruction of the position of the texts on the façade of the
Körzüt temple-tower, cf. [fig. 16]

CTU Code	Concordance	Findspot and context	Place of conservation	Original location	Bibliography
A 5-2A Stone-1	/	Körzüt village	Van Museum	Körzüt left side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-1)
A 5-2A Stone-2	/	Körzüt village	Walled in a house	Körzüt left side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-2)
A 5-2A Stone-3	/	Körzüt village	Walled in a house	Körzüt left side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-3)
A 5-2A Stone-4	/	Körzüt village	Walled in a house	Körzüt left side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-4)
A 5-2A Stone-5	/	Körzüt village	Walled in a house	Körzüt left side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-5)
A 5-2A Stone-6	/	Körzüt village?	VANTAM Research Center	Körzüt left side tower-temple	/
A 5-2A Stone-7	/	Körzüt village	Van Museum	Körzüt left side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-6)

14   The many stelae from Karahan are not included in this list because they come from
an open-air sanctuary that is not directly connected to the site discussed in the text.

CTU Code	Concordance	Findspot and context	Place of conservation	Original location	Bibliography
A 5-2B Stone-1	CICh 25, UKN 34, HchI 18b, KUKN 51	Berkri altar in church	Istanbul Archaeological Museum	Körzüt right side tower-temple	/
A 5-2B Stone-2	/	Köşk village	Walled in a house	Körzüt right side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-7)
A 5-2B Stone-3	/	Köşk village	Walled in a house	Körzüt right side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-8)
A 5-2B Stone-4	/	Köşk village	Walled in a house	Körzüt right side tower-temple	Dinçol 1976 (Stone-9)
A 5-2C Stone	CICh 30, UKN 38, HchI 20, KUKN 55	Tharr village	Istanbul Archaeological Museum	Körzüt right side tower-temple	/
A 5-2C Stone	/	Körzüt village	Walled in a house	tower-temple	/
A 5-2D Stone	CICh 23, UKN 32, HchI 19a, KUKN 49	Güşak altar in new church	Van Museum	tower-temple	/
A 5-2D Stone	CICh 24, UKN 33, HchI 19b, KUKN 50	Güşak altar in old church	Unknown	tower-temple	/
A 5-2E Stone	CICh 26, UKN 35, HchI 18a, KUKN 52	Berkri (Dzorovank)	Unknown	Körzüt right side tower-temple	Dinçol, Kavaklı 1978 (Muradiye-1)
A 5-16 Stele	CICh 47, UKN 57, HchI 32, KUKN 74	Berkri	Unknown	Körzüt?	/
A 5-33 Stele	CICh 56, UKN 65, HchI 41, KUKN 82	Güşak church	Van Museum	Körzüt?	/
A 5-35 Stone	CICh 58, UKN 67, HchI 42, KUKN 84	Körzüt in a mill	Unknown	Körzüt?	/
A 5-36 Stone	CICh 70, UKN 66, HchI 58, KUKN 83	Güşak in new church	Unknown	Körzüt?	/
A 5-36 Stone	/	Körzüt	Unknown	Körzüt?	Başgelen 1985, 17; Başgelen, Payne 2009
A 5-100 Stone	/	Körzüt village	Unknown	Körzüt?	Başgelen, Payne 2009
/	/	Güşak in church	Van Museum	Körzüt?	Işık, Genç 2021
/	CICh 173 a-b, HchI Inc. 6	Güşak	Berlin	/	Unpublished
/	CICh 173 a-b, HchI Inc. 6	Güşak	Berlin	/	Unpublished

CTU Code	Concordance	Findspot and context	Place of conservation	Original location	Bibliography
/	/	Körzüt	In situ	Körzüt tower-temple	Unpublished (discovered in 2023)
/	/	Körzüt	In situ	Körzüt tower-temple	Unpublished (discovered in 2023)
/	/	Körzüt	In situ	Körzüt tower-temple	Unpublished (discovered in 2023)

The main text reported information about an expedition of the Urartian army north of the River Araxes:

> [Through the protection of the god Ḫaldi Minua, son of Išpuini], says: when I lay [lit. gathered/compiled] the foundation of the gate of the god Ḫaldi, when I built the gate of the god Ḫaldi, I prost[rated] before the god Ḫaldi. I pr[ay]ed to the god Ḫaldi. I ca[me] to the [la]nd [of the Erkuaḫi]; I went to war [against the tribe Erkuaḫi, I conquered the city Luḫiuni of the land of the [Er]kuahi, I devastated the land Etiuni. Minua, [son of] of Išpu[ini], says: the city Lu[ḫi]uni, ci[ty of the royalty of the Erk]uahi, [which nobody had (ever) besieged (before)], the god Ḫaldi gave it to Minua, son of Išpuini. He took Luḫiuni [and] pu[t the land] Etiuni un-der tri[bu]te. 50 myr[iad + x thousand and x hundreds of men and women, peo]ple [per year]; some I killed, some I deported alive. 1,733 horses, 7,616 oxen, 15,320 sheep arrived from there to the ki[ng], save for what the soldiers [plundered when I occupied? the land]. Through the protection [of the god Ḫaldi Minua, son of Išpuini, says: the harem(?) of the city Ṭuš]pa [where] no king before[?] had brought so many women, inde[ed Minua], son of Išpuini, [from] the city Luḫiuni [did it]. [A group(?) of women and men] from the city Ṭušpa [are *gurdari* of the women in the city Aelia of the land Diruni; *gurdari* city 'Alṭuquia of the land Ṣiadḫini. Through the greatness of the god Ḫal[di] I am Minua, son of [Iš]puini, strong king, [great king, king of the Bia lands, lord] of Ṭušpa-City. (CTU A 5-2 A-F)[15]

Of particular interest is the beginning of the text, in which King Minua speaks of the construction of the temple structure dedicated to the god Ḫaldi, the greatest divinity of the vast Urartian pantheon, which was located right inside the site of Körzüt and which is discussed below. Another erratic inscription by King Minua might refer to the same temple structure, i.e. a stele found walled up in a private

---

15 The English translation of CTU A 5-33, which has some parts that are difficult to interpret, especially in the final lines, is taken from `http://oracc.org/ecut/Q006900/`.

building in the village of Güşak (CTU A 5-33), once disappeared but recently rediscovered (Işık, Genç 2021, 4-5), which provides the possible name of the fortress, not present in the previous texts:

> For the god Ḫaldi, the [or, resp., his] Lord, Minua, son of Išpuini, erected this stele. When he built a gate of the god Ḫaldi he built [also] a fortress to perfection. He gave it the name 'City of the god Ḫaldi' [ᵈḪal-di-i pa-a-ta-ri]. He planted this vineyard, [and] he planted an orchard. 'Vineyard of Minua' is [its] name. Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi,
>
> [I am] Minua, son of Išpuini, strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City. Minua says: when they harvest the vineyard, they shall sacrifice one ox and 3 sheep for the god Ḫaldi, they shall offer the fruit[s] both at the gate of the god Ḫaldi and in front of the stele. When they gather the new grapes, a libation[?] shall be offered for the god Ḫaldi and the gate of the god Ḫaldi, a [li]bation[?] for the goddess 'Arubani, and a libation[?] for the god Ḫaldi in front of the stele. (CTU A 5-33)[16]

Although this is yet to be verified, it could be hypothesized that the 'city of Ḫaldi'[17] was the Körzüt fortress itself, certainly the most important site in the area currently known (Dan 2012, 174), as indeed already tentatively proposed by Salvini.[18] Of three other inscriptions of similar content discovered in the villages of Uluşar (CTU A 5-35; IV A 5-100) and Köşk (A 5-36), again attributable to King Minua, the former may be considered inscriptions of the foundation of the fortress, probably located on the main entrance door of the fortress, while the last one adorned some prestigious building and is important because it also mentions the 'city of Ḫaldi':

> For the god Ḫaldi, the [or, resp., his] Lord, Minua, son of Išpuini, built this building to perfection. He also built a fortress, and he gave it the name 'City of the god Ḫaldi'. Through the greatness

---

[16] English translation of CTU A 5-33 available at http://oracc.org/ecut/Q006931/.

[17] It is interesting to note that a text by Išpuini (c. 830-20 BCE), son of Sarduri (CTU A 2-9A), father of Minua, is known in which the construction of a 'city of Ḫaldi' is mentioned; it comes from Karahan area, not far from the Muradiye plain. This circumstance suggests that it could have been the same city, perhaps founded by both sovereigns in the period of coregency (Salvini pers. comm., 2008), which is believed to have occurred between 820 and 810 BCE.

[18] Salvini, analysing the possible localization of some toponymies mentioned in the inscriptions of Körzüt and Karahan, advanced a preliminary hypothesis of association between the toponymies of Ḫaldiei URU and Arṣuniuni, and the fortresses of Körzüt and Muradiye, without proposing exact identifications (Salvini 1995, 123), although he later identified Arṣuniuni with the site of Kevenli (2008, 70). On the different proposals related to the ancient name of Körzüt, cf. Dan 2020, 183.

of the god Ḫaldi [I am] Minua, strong king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City. (A 5-36)[19]

All the inscriptions from the Muradiye plain area date to the time of Minua; there is evidently no doubt as to who built the fortress. Recently Salvini presented an interesting analysis of the palaeography of the cuneiform inscriptions from the time of Minua, which are the largest in number among all those of the kings of Urartu that have come down to us. All the texts from Körzüt and surrounding areas are characterized by a homogeneous ductus attributable to what Salvini calls canonical texts, with a ductus that anticipates that of the time of his son Argišti (I) and grandson Sarduri (II) (Salvini 2012, 318-20). This circumstance allows us to hypothesize that the construction of Körzüt and the organization of the Muradiye plain occurred in a mature/late phase of his reign, probably in the early years of the eighth century BCE.[20]

4   The Architectural Structures

The site is characterized by the presence of a large fortress, a settlement and a necropolis [fig. 4]. The fortress was built on a large natural basalt hill, 50 m high, which dominates the surrounding plain known as Arapkale Tepe (Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, 276). The dimensions of this rock outcrop are approximately 310 m from north to south and approximately 100 m from east to west at the widest points[21] [fig. 5]. Currently, important remains of the fortification walls are visible on the eastern side of the hill, the most easily accessible, while on the western side there are visible remains of walls and foundations dug into the rock, which skilfully exploit the natural conformation of the land, according to the traditional canons of Urartian architecture. On the southern side, a natural ditch defends the access to the Arapkale hill. The most impressive fortifications are located on the south-eastern side of the hill [figs 6-11], where a stretch of walls approximately 60 m long still has a height of approximately 7 m, with

---

19   English translation of CTU A 5-36 available at http://oracc.org/ecut/Q006934/.

20   There is a problem relating to the ductus of Upper Anzaf, where inscribed stones of Minua with different ductus appear to coexist in the same building. Compare the images of the inscriptions CTU A 5-42 with more recent ductus and fuller wedges and CTU A 5-43 with archaic ductus. CTU A 5-43 is included in the arrangement made by Salvini of the inscriptions (2012, 318), while the blocks under the code of CTU A 5-42 are not reported in this systematization.

21   Tarhan and Sevin reported measurements of 250 metres east-west and 100 metres north-south (1976-7, 277, tab. 1), the orientation of the plan being incorrect. Uslu reports measurements of 325 × 110 metres (2021, 126).

nine courses of blocks. The drystone masonry is composed of large, well-squared blocks of basalt rock.[22] It may be said that the fortifications of Körzüt are among the most impressive built in the Kingdom of Urartu. The dimensions of the blocks are similar only to those in the so-called 'Sardursburg', the monumental propylaeum leading to the capital Ṭušpa built by King Sarduri (I) in the mid-ninth century BCE.[23] The walls, 4 m thick, were built using a technique that involved the construction of external facings with large squared stones, with an internal fill of loose material. The walls are reinforced by the presence of four large bastions/buttresses between 5.35 and 5.15 m wide, projecting 1 m from the wall and spaced between 7.15 and 7.65 m apart [fig. 7]. Successive courses of blocks are placed up to 5-6 cm (Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, 279) further inwards than those immediately below to ensure greater stability. This technical measure was necessary not only because of the wall's notable height, but also because this was a retaining wall for the hillside. It is not possible to know if this was the original height of the stone wall or if it was surmounted by a mud brick upper wall, in accordance with a characteristic practice in Urartian architecture. The largest stone blocks are 2.10 m wide and 1.20 m high, with a depth of approximately 1.10 m. On some blocks [fig. 11], the unremoved lifting tenons are still visible.[24] These were protrusions in the stone left by the stonemasons to which the ropes were attached for the transport and installation of the blocks, a technique used by the Urartians throughout their history. In fact, the lifting tenons are also visible in the walls of Karmirblur in Armenia, a fortress built in the seventh century BCE (Dan, La Farina 2012, 257, figs 7, 11). On the south-eastern side of the hill, at the end of the visible part of the large fortification wall, after the last buttress, a section of wall 10 m long with a different orientation from the main one constitutes part of the main access door to the fortress. This 5.80 m-wide wall constitutes the eastern side of a quadrangular area of approximately 9 by 10 m, probably a sort of

---

22 For a study of the building stones laid in several fortresses in the region, including Körzüt, cf. Karabaşoğlu, Karaoğlu, Kuvanç 2021, 208, 210, fig. 4e-f, pl. 1.

23 This is the oldest Urartian building currently known and was located at the western end of the Van cliff (Bilgiç 1959, 44-7; Naumann 1968, 53-7, fig. 4; Tarhan 1985, 305-6, dis. 10, fig. 11-13; Dan 2010, 51, 53, fig. 3). It has been interpreted differently on several occasions: as the base of a temple, a monumental propylaeum giving access to the fortress, or a mooring pier for boats (Naumann 1968, 53-7; Salvini 1995, 141; 2001, 302-4; 2002, 71-5), on which King Sarduri (I) engraved six duplicates of a text in the Assyrian language (CTU A 1-1A-F).

24 Burney 1998, 150, fig. 14.1; these tenons were mistakenly interpreted by Tarhan and Sevin as one of the earliest examples of Urartian ashlar (1976-7, 281). The possible use of ashlar, even if it is probably a condition of incompleteness in the processing of the blocks, can be limited exclusively to the seventh century BCE. On the Urartian ashlar masonry, cf. Dan 2015a; 2015b, 49-52.

courtyard in front of the actual entry door.[25] On the western side, which is not fully comprehensible, there are remains of walls, currently preserved for three courses of blocks (Burney 1957, 48, fig. 6; Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, 281-2; Dan, Vitolo 2016a, 133, figs 11-12). Despite the uncertainty relating to the exact definition of the structural system of the door, it may be hypothesized that it was an entrance in which one section of the surrounding wall passed parallel in front of another, so the doorway passed between the two surrounding walls.[26] Examples in Urartu of this type of 'chicane' gate are present at Armavir-blur in Armenia and Qal'eh Aladagh, in Iranian Azerbaijan (Hejebri-Nobari 1997, 76). Another well-preserved stretch of wall is located on the south side of the rocky spur. This too, approximately 35 m long, is reinforced by the presence of three buttresses jutting out 1 m from the wall. The buttresses are between 3.50 and 5 m wide and spaced between 9 and 8.40 m apart. On the western side, as mentioned previously, which is most protected by the natural conformation of the hill, there are remains of rock foundations and stretches of low walls. The foundations have the characteristic stepped shape [fig. 12], which is identifiable in most Urartian fortresses, in particular in the capital Ṭušpa, near Van. These drystone walls would probably have been surmounted by mud brick standing walls. Among the rock foundations on the western side of the site, a channel for rainwater drainage is clearly distinguishable. The blocks in these foundations, clearly smaller in size than those of the eastern fortifications, have been progressively removed and reused in the construction of houses in the nearby villages. Remains of buildings made of mud bricks are visible in many parts of the site, exposed by the washing away of the hill caused by weathering or as a result of the illegal excavations identifiable in many points of the site. In particular, a large room made of mud-bricks was unearthed; it was probably a rectangular storeroom used for storing food. On the surface, in fact, remains of characteristic Urartian *pithoi* have been found.[27] In the southern part of the hill, in correspondence with a large illegal excavation, remains of well-squared basalt blocks emerge.[28] This

---

25 8 × 10 metres according to Tarhan and Sevin (1976-7, 282).

26 It was not possible to find the remains of two bastions at the sides of the gate reported by Sinclair (1987, 267).

27 On Urartian *pithoi*, cf. Dan 2016, 597-8. An almost entire Urartian *pithos*, probably discovered in Körzüt, is kept in the warehouse of the Van Museum (Genç, Işık pers. comm., 2010). It might have come from this illegally excavated room. On this storeroom and the *pithoi* fragments on the surface of the site, cf. Dan, Vitolo 2016a, 134, figs 16-17.

28 According to Tarhan and Sevin, this would have been the cella of the temple and a part of its facade, of which the side of a corner measuring 2.03 metres long was recognizable (1976-7, 283). Today the situation, due to the abandonment and degradation of the site, is extremely difficult to interpret. The Urartian temple was called *susi*

is the actual location of the Urartian tower-temple, as hypothesized already in 2016 (Dan, Vitolo 2016a, 134-5, fig. 18), and subsequently confirmed by excavations carried out in 2023 in this area, which led to the discovery of the remains of the structure and three epigraphs still *in situ*. The blocks with the cuneiform inscriptions of King Minua dispersed in the villages of Uluşar, Köşk and Tharr undoubtedly came from here. The quality of the workmanship of these blocks clearly marks an improvement in the construction techniques used for these structures. This circumstance suggests the hypothesis that the Körzüt temple was built after that of the Upper Anzaf fortress, the blocks of which were much less refined (Belli 1999, 24-8, figs 14-16). Near this building, the presence of bumps created by the accumulation of rubble indicates the presence of another rectangular construction, the plan of which can be partially traced on the ground. Near the temple area, at the precipice on the southern side of the hill, remains of the foundations of stepped rock walls are visible. Scattered across the surface of the site, Burney recognized remains of medieval-era structures (1998, 150). On the east/south-east side of the hill that houses the fortress, the remains of a vast unfortified settlement were found, which seemed to extend over an area of around 8 or 9 hectares, with the remains of large houses rather distant from each other (1957, 47-8; Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, 285-6). In the south-west area, the remains of another non-fortified settlement area develop, with an area of approximately 1 hectare. Remains of stone-built buildings are visible on the ground. The structures appear highly irregular and rather close together, with walls approximately 1 m thick on average (285-6). Currently these residential areas cannot be dated, although occupation in the Urartian period is probable. The surface pottery was studied by Özfırat, who identified the typical Middle Iron Age pottery of the region and Urartian palace pottery with red slip (2010, 228). During the exploration of the site conducted by the author, two characteristic Urartian 'T-shaped niches' carved into the basalt rock were seen on the southern side of the spur on which the site stands; these can be added to the list of these rock structures known in numerous Urartian sites, especially in the Van area[29] **[fig. 13]**.

---

in antiquity, which means tower. On the *susi/isitu* equivalence based on a back-translation from Assyrian to Urartian of an inscription from the fortress of Aşağı Kevenli (CTU A 5-44), cf. Salvini 1979, 581-2. The Urartian temple was a single-celled rectangular structure with sides measuring between 10 and 15 metres overall, of considerable height. For further information on Urartian tower-temples, cf. Dan 2015b, 39-41.

29   On these niches, cf. Işık 1995, 16, figs 60-1.

Figure 5   General view of the site from southwest
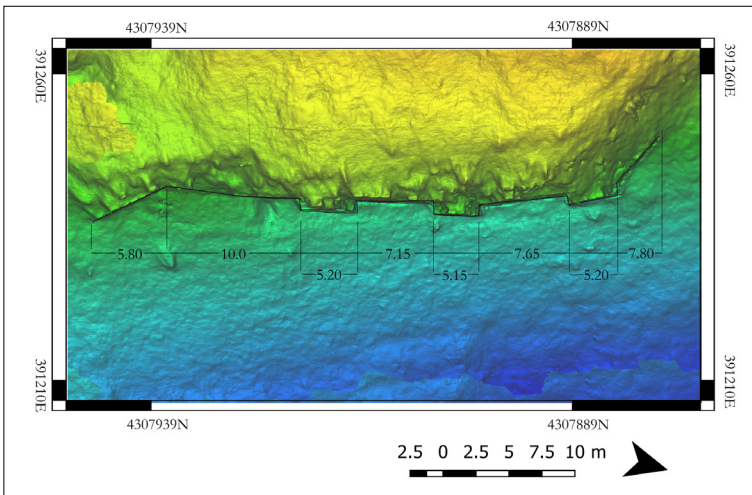
Figure 7 Digital Elevation Model and measurements of the eastern wall (© O. Gasparro)
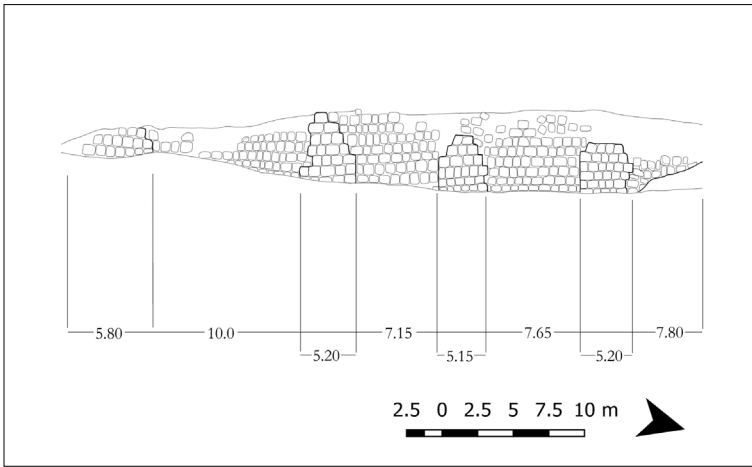
Figure 8   Drawing and measurements of the eastern wall (© O. Gasparro)
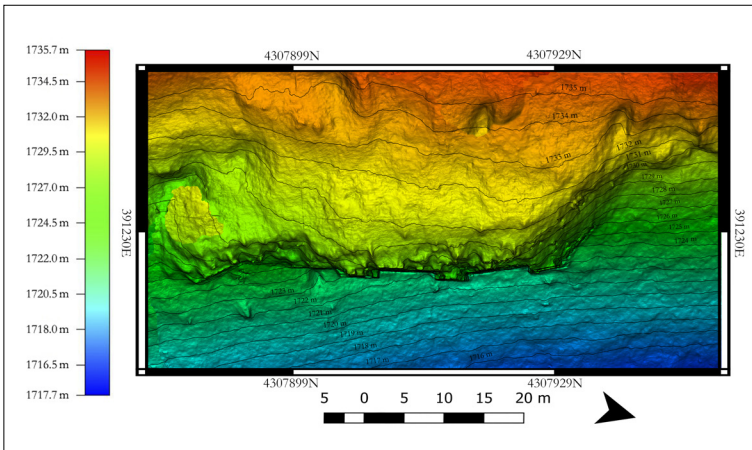
Figure 9   Digital Elevation Model of the eastern wall (© O. Gasparro)

Figure 10 View of the eastern fortification walls

Figure 11 Detailed view of one of the buttresses. Note the lifting tenon on the left side of the buttress

Figure 12 Rock-cut foundation steps in the south-western side of the site and the Muradiye plain in the background
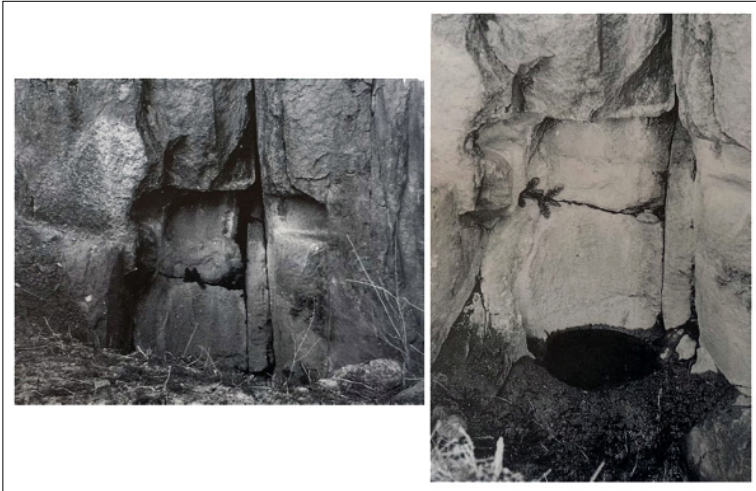
Figure 13 T-shaped rock-cut niches in the southern part of the site (adapted from Işık 1995, figs 60-1)

5 The Hydraulic Works for the Supply of the Muradiye Plain

The efforts made by Minua for the water supply of the Körzüt fortress and the Muradiye plain were notable [fig. 14]. We are informed of these construction activities by some ancient inscriptions. In this regard, an inscription found near Muradiye (CTU A 5-16) refers to the construction of a canal and to another found near Karahan (A 5-24), and the construction of a second canal near the city Minuaḫinili. The main work was undoubtedly the Süphan Gölü, from whose southern side a canal branches off on which some dams perhaps dating back to the Urartian era have been identified.[30] The canal reaches the plain where it branches into several sections. Part of this dense network of canalisation is still partially visible today. Another hydraulic work attributed to the Urartians is the Süs Barajı, now completely dried up, which is located in the western foothill area of the Köseveli Dağı, about 1.30 km south-east of the Körzüt fortress. The remains of the previously described ancient settlement extended between the basin and the southern slopes of the Körzüt fortress (Belli 1997a, 115-17). Two other works are located on the eastern flank of the İsabey Dağı; these are the Kızkapan Göleti (2000, 93) and the Kelle Barajı (92), both dated on an architectural basis to the seventh century BCE; these works were used for the water supply of the Körzüt fortress. In fact, the waters of the River Mezarlik, on which they were built, were channelled into an artificial canal that still runs around the northern slopes of the hill that houses the fort. Only further investigations will provide more detailed information on the dating of these works, but it seems probable that some can reasonably be attributed to the Urartian era.

---

30 Belli 1991, 114-15; 1992, 481; 1994a, 80, 82; 1994b, 9-10; 1995, 27; 1997b, 645.
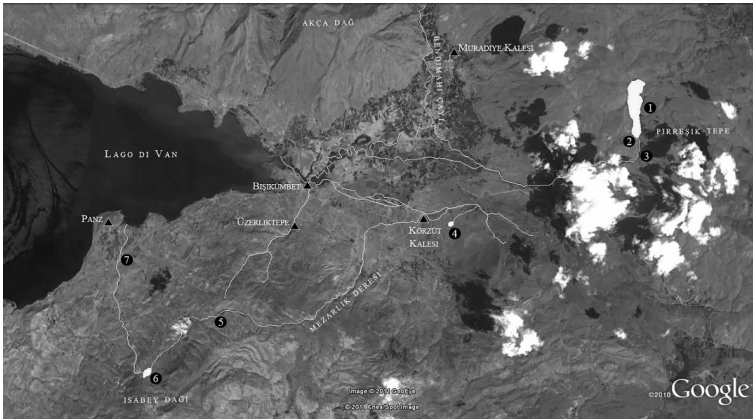
6　Recent Archaeological Investigations in Körzüt Fortress: A New Building and an Old Temple

As already mentioned, the site had never been subjected to archaeological excavation until 2016 as a consequence of the systematic lootings, also documented in scientific contributions (Dan, Vitolo 2016a). The most evident result of these illegal activities is the partial destruction of the tower-temple: over the years, the inscriptions that adorned its façade have been scattered and found mounted in the walls of private houses in the villages of Berkrı, Güşak, Köşk and Tharr, located not far from Körzüt. In around 2010, a huge excavation (about 15 × 7 m) in the northern portion of the site exposed a large rectangular room with stone-based brick standing walls in which the remains of Urartian *pithoi* were found.[31] Other illegal excavations not far from this area were conducted in 2015, uncovering the remains of a stone wall with the northern part of a gate characterised by multiple rabbets. To avoid the complete destruction of the building, the Van Museum Directorate performed a salvage excavation to expose the structure.[32] The excavation area measured about 12 × 8 m (approximately 100 square m). The excavation revealed the presence of a single rectangular room measuring 8.10 × 6.91 m [fig. 15]. The single entrance has a width of about 1.3 m and a depth of about 2 m. The gate is flanked by multiple recesses with sides

---

[31]　I would like to thank Bülent Genç who told me of the transfer of an almost entire Urartian *pithos* from the Körzüt site to the old museum in Van.

[32]　On these excavations, cf. Kuvanç, Işık, Genç 2020; Dan 2021, 26-8; Uslu 2021.

measuring about 0.25 m. Part of the south side of the gate is broken and only one of the three original rabbeted stones is still *in situ*. In the short corridor there is a beautiful rectangular basalt step (1.30 × 1.57 m), partly broken by the illegal excavations. The lower parts of the walls consist of four courses of worked stones, with a mud-brick upper portion. In the eastern wall, in correspondence to the gate, three courses of stones are visible, while in the back wall four may be seen. The best-preserved parts of the wall, especially in correspondence to the gate on the east side, are about 2 m high, but the original bricks have largely been washed away over the millennia and what remains of the walls is little more than debris. Flat stones were used to divide the stone foundation from the upper mud-brick portion, as is usual in Urartian architecture.[33] The walls were built using regular medium-sized stones, well worked on the outer faces, with rather coarsely finished horizontal surfaces and interstices filled with small stones. The drystone walls are double-faced, with medium-sized stones in the outer parts and an internal fill of soil and stones. The average thickness of the eastern wall, the only one completely exposed on both sides, is about 2 m. It is clear that this was an important Urartian era building whose dating is indicated by the presence of multiple rabbets. Unfortunately, the fact that the excavations were limited to the interior of the room – plus a small rectangular area in front of the doorway, pertaining to another room – means that we lack information about the structure's external characteristics (the possible presence of external and corner buttresses, for example). Only in the western part of the building was it possible to determine the width of the wall, which was 3.80 m. It is in any case clear that this was not an isolated building, but that this room was part of a complex. Due to the destruction of the area by illegal excavations, very few finds were collected. The most interesting include a fragment of blue painted plaster, typical of many Urartian sites, and pottery that can be attributed to the Middle Iron Age/Urartian period, but also Late Iron Age/Orontid and Medieval glazed pottery. In addition, a Byzantine coin was identified (Kuvanç, Işık, Genç 2020, 118, figs 13-14). The excavators defined the structure in question as an Urartian temple, which would make Körzüt the oldest Urartian site currently known to feature the coexistence of two temple structures. This interpretation assumes that rabbeted passages or niches are always associated with temples in Urartian architecture.[34] It is

---

33 Cf. this detail in Kuvanç, Işık, Genç 2020, fig. 7.

34 We must consider that the interpretation of these multiple rabbets, which is a cultural element resulting from a progressive and constant Assyrianizing process of the territories beyond the Taurus and the Zagros, is far from being fully explored. For the purposes of this paper, it is important to remember what Roaf has written on the use of the multiple-rabbets: "Elaborate niches and façades with multiple rabbets are also

clear that this proposal is difficult to sustain, on one hand because of our imperfect knowledge of Urartian palace structures. On the other hand, one of the comparisons used to support this interpretation, that is the building of Girik Tepe, features multiple rabbets on doors and niches and certainly cannot be defined as a temple, but rather as a small palace (Dan, Vitolo 2016b, figs 4-5, 7-8). In addition, further comparisons between the Körzüt structure and other buildings of difficult interpretation, such as the so-called temple of Ḫaldi at Arin-berd/Erebuni (Kuvanç, Işık, Genç 2020, 119), do not seem to be decisive for this attribution. The Körzüt building is only partially excavated, devoid of inscriptions, and its overall characteristics are not known due to the incompleteness of the excavations and the absence of relevant finds inside. At the same time, the parallels for the Körzüt building suggested by the authors, taking up old hypotheses of Ussishkin and Forbes concerning the possible influence of the Levant and northern Syria on Urartu (124), have little substance, as likewise the chronological speculation based on these. At Körzüt there was certainly a temple dedicated to Ḫaldi, as evidenced by the various inscribed stones illegally excavated from the site, which adorned the façade of the temple itself. There is currently no epigraphic or architectural evidence of the existence of a second temple at this site. The excavated structure was part of a palatine context of some importance, as evidenced by certain architectural details, such as the multiple rabbets and the stone threshold. However, the data are too scarce to postulate the existence of other types of temple buildings in Urartian architecture in addition to the classical tower-temple, whose development independently of other architectural traditions has recently been shown.[35] Recurring attempts to demonstrate the existence of other types of temple structure in Urartian architecture have been made; we recall the type of double temple suggested by Tarhan, near Çavuştepe and Ṭušpa, the capital of Urartu (2007), a hypothesis which is interesting but far from certain. The most important aspect of these excavations, more than the interpretative remarks on the function or chronology of individual buildings, is undoubtedly the clear evidence of the continued use of the Urartian sites, in the period defined as post-Urartian, and later at various times during the Middle Ages. The continuation of illegal excavations in the area of what had already been indicated in 2016 as the tower-temple from which came the inscriptions that today are

characteristic of religious buildings in Mesopotamia from the Ubaid period on, but they also occur in secular buildings (e.g. the Throne Room of the Southern Citadel in Babylon). Doubly recessed niches are often represented on fortification walls depicted on the Assyrian and Urartian reliefs" (1998, 65).

35   On the origin and evolution of the Urartian tower-temple, cf. Dan 2017.

scattered in the villages around the site, made new excavation interventions necessary to save what remained of the structure. The excavations, which took place in 2023 and are currently unpublished, documented the existence of a temple largely destroyed by illegal excavations, but of which the first Urartian inscriptions ever found on the site were still preserved *in situ*. The inscriptions belong to the left side of the façade[36] of the tower-temple of Minua and constitute duplicates of the known epigraphs that ran on the right side of the temple façade (CTU A 5-2 B) [fig. 16]. One of the blocks of which images are circulating is an exact copy of one of the epigraphs published by Dinçol and said to come from Muradiye (Muradiye-1) (Dinçol, Kavaklı 1978, pl. XV), which therefore also came from the right side of the same temple.[37] Excavations have documented the existence of fragments of blue paint within the cella, a phenomenon seen extensively in Urartian temples, of both the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. The temple of Körzüt appears, due to its architectural characteristics and the nature of the epigraphs, to be more recent than the other known temple of Minua, namely that of Upper Anzaf.[38] The blocks of which the latter is made are roughly worked; the only well-finished ones were those bearing the inscription, whose surface emerged from the block to then be plastered in such a way as to cover the rough uninscribed parts and the other blocks. The position of the inscriptions at the corners of the temple (and on a block inscribed on two faces), rather than on the facade and in the corridor as in Körzüt, testifies to the greater age of the Anzaf temple. The epigraphs on the facade and in the corridor, although variable elements in Urartian architecture, became a constant feature of subsequent tower-temples. Furthermore, investigations were also conducted in the necropolis area of the site, where looted chamber tombs were discovered (Kuvanç, Işık, Genç 2020, fig. 5).

---

36   It concerns the first three missing blocks in the reconstruction presented by the author of this contribution in Salvini 2008, III: 110.

37   On these new inscriptions, cf. Trémouille, Bonfanti, Dan, forthcoming.

38   On this temple, cf. Belli 1999, 24-8, figs 14-16.

Figure 15   Aerial photo and a view of the gate of the building excavated in 2016
(adapted from Uslu 2021, 124, 133, fig. 8)

LEFT SIDE OF THE TOWER-TEMPLE

BUTTRESS

RIGHT SIDE OF THE TOWER-TEMPLE

CORRIDOR

CORRIDOR

BUTTRESS

LEFT SIDE:
1. Inscription discovered in 2023
3. Inscription discovered in 2023
3. Inscription discovered in 2023
4. CTU A 5-2A - Stone-1 - Dinçol-1
5. CTU A 5-2A - Stone-2 - Dinçol-2
6. CTU A 5-2A - Stone-3 - Dinçol-3
7. CTU A 5-2A - Stone-4 - Dinçol-4
8. CTU A 5-2A - Stone-5 - Dinçol-5
9. CTU A 5-2A - Stone-6
10. CTU A 5-2A - Stone-7 - Dinçol-6

RIGHT SIDE:
11. CTU A 5-2B - Stone-1
12. CTU A 5-2B - Stone-2 - Dinçol-7
13. CTU A 5-2B - Stone-3 - Dinçol-8
14. CTU A 5-2B - Stone-4 - Dinçol-9

Figure 16 Reconstruction of the façades of the Urartian tower-temple with the old inscriptions and new ones discovered in 2023

7 Conclusions

The Muradiye region was an area of great importance in Urartu. The vast, fertile plain was among the territories that can be considered as part of the original core of Urartu, together with the eastern and northern shores of Lake Van more generally. It is therefore not surprising that such a central, important area – also for subsequent developments in Urartian politics – was equipped with a large economic-administrative centre. In this regard, the Körzüt fortress must have had considerable importance in the Urartian era. It was clearly built with a dual function: to protect the road that ran from the north towards the capital, and to exploit the fertile Muradiye plain **[fig. 1]** (Burney, Lang 1971, 139). It must be taken into consideration that the plain in the Urartian era was certainly wider, given that the water level of Lake Van was certainly lower and the ancient road that led towards Van did not run directly alongside the lake in Urartian times. Körzüt also constituted an important bridgehead for the expeditions of Minua and his successors towards the Ararat Valley. It may have been built by Išpuini and finished by his son Minua, as has been speculated in the past (Tarhan, Sevin 1976-7, 284-5), or during the period of coregency, or by Minua alone. In any case, while the attribution to Išpuini is based only on architectural comparisons of tenuous foundation, the epigraphic evidence indicates Minua as the probable commissioner of the fortress. Furthermore, as we have seen, the epigraphic data allow us to associate the construction of the fortress with the later reign of Minua and therefore probably date it to the beginning of the eighth century BCE. This might perhaps be identified with the 'city of Ḫaldi' which, as we have seen, is mentioned in several texts by Minua himself. Körzüt was certainly one of the most important fortresses, as well as being one of the oldest currently known built by the Urartian rulers. Archaeological excavations could now provide important information on the conformation and use of the site over time, not only with the continuation of the Urartian era, but also in subsequent epochs. Recent excavations have finally allowed us to architecturally define some of the buildings on the site, namely a probable palace building (excavated in 2016) and the remnants of the tower-temple (excavated in 2023) already known from the inscriptions scattered in the territory of the Muradiye plain. The discovery of these new remains finally *in situ* provides confirmation of what has been known for some time, namely the existence of a tower-temple built by King Minua in this place. Particularly important is the discovery of late Iron Age pottery, attributable to a chronological horizon that can be defined as Orontid/Achaemenid. This is further confirmation that most of the large Urartian centres, including Körzüt, were reused in the post-Urartian era by the first indigenous

dynasty of the Armenian Highlands.[39] It is to be hoped that, in addition to these emergency excavations, which are certainly very important, we will proceed in the future with excavations in undamaged areas so as to be able to have a clear architectural picture of the site – and above all to document uncompromised stratigraphy which sheds light on the multiple phases of the site's occupation.

Bibliography

CICh   Lehmann-Haupt 1928-35
CTU   Salvini 2008; 2018
CTU IV   Salvini 2012
HchI   König 1955-57
KUKN   Harutjunjan 2001
UKN   Melikišvili 1960

Başgelen, N. (1985). "Doğu Anadolu'dan Demir Çağına Ait Bazı Yeni Bulgular I. Kitabeler – Kaya Tünelleri" (Some New Findings From the Iron Age of Eastern Anatolia I. Inscriptions – Rock Tunnels). *Arkeoloji ve Sanat*, 28-31, 15-18.

Başgelen, N.; Payne, M.R. (2009). "Körzüt'ten Urartu dönemi'ne ait bir kale yazıtı" (An Inscription From a Fortress Belonging to the Urartian Period). Sağlamtimur, H. et al. (eds), *Altan Çilingiroğlu'na Armağan. Yukarı Denizin Kıyısında Urartu Krallığı'na Adanmış Bir Hayat*. Istanbul: Arkeoloji Sanat Yayınları, 125-32.

Belck, W.; Lehmann, C.F. (1892a). "Ueber neuerlich aufgefundene Keilinschriften in russisch und türkisch Armenien". *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 24, 122-52.

Belck, W.; Lehmann, C.F. (1892b). "Mittheilung über weitere Ergebnisse ihrer Studien an den neugefundenen armenischen Keilinschriften". *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 24, 477-88.

Belli, O. (1991). "Van bölgesi'nde Urartu baraj ve sulama sisteminin araştırılması, 1989" (He Investigation of the Urartian Dam and Irrigation System in the Van Region, 1989). *Araştirma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 8, 111-35.

Belli, O. (1992). "Van bölgesinde Urartu baraj ve sulama sisteminin araştırılması, 1990" (The Investigation of the Urartian Dam and Irrigation System in the Van Region, 1989). *Araştirma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 9, 479-504.

Belli, O. (1994a). "Urartian Dams and Artificial Lakes Recently Discovered in Eastern Anatolia". *Tell Aviv*, 21, 77-116.

Belli, O. (1994b). "Recently Discovered Urartian Dams in the Van Region". Çilingiroğlu, French 1994, 9-30.

Belli, O. (1995). "Neue Funde Urartäischer Bewässerungsanlagen in Ostanatolian". Dittmann, R.; Hauptmann, H. (eds), *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Vorderasiens*. Berlin: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 19-48.

Belli, O. (1997a). "1994 Yılında Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nde Urartu Baraj ve Sulama Sistemi'nin Araştırılması" (The Investigation of the Urartian Dam and Irrigation

---

[39] On the continuity of use of Urartian sites in the post-Urartian, Orontid/Achaemenid era in the Van region, cf. Dan 2023, 157-204.

System in the Eastern Anatolia Region in 1994). *Araştirma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 14(2), 111-38.

Belli, O. (1997b). "Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nde Keşfedilen Urartu Barajlarına Bir Bakiş" (A Look at the Urartian Dams Discovered in the Eastern Anatolia Region). *Belleten*, 60, 631-80.

Belli, O. (1999). *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*. Istanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.

Belli, O. (2000). "1998 Yılında Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nde Urartu Baraj, Sulama Kanallarının ve Araştırılması" (The Investigation of the Urartian Dams and Irrigation Channels in the Eastern Anatolia Region in 1998). *Araştirma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 17(2), 89-100.

Bilgiç, E. (1959). "Birkaç Yeni Urartu Kral Kitabesi" (Several New Urartian Royal Inscriptions). *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi*, 9(1), 44-7.

Burney, C.A. (1957). "Urartian Fortresses and Town in the Van Region". *Anatolian Studies*, 7, 38-53.

Burney, C.A. (1998). "The Kingdom of Urartu (Van): Investigations into the Archaeology of the Early First Millennium BC within Eastern Anatolia (1956-1965)". Matthews, R. (ed.), *Ancient Anatolia*, *Fifty Years' Work by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara*. London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 143-62.

Burney, C.A.; Lang, D.M. (1971). *The People of the Hill. Ancient Ararat and Caucasus*. London: Phoenix.

Burney, C.A.; Lawson, G.R.H. (1960). "Measured Plans of Urartian Fortress". *Anatolian Studies*, 10, 177-96.

Carruba, O. (ed.) (1979). *Studia Mediterranea Piero Meriggi Dicata*, vol. 1. Pavia: Aurora Edizioni.

Çilingiroğlu, A.; French, D.H. (eds) (1994). *Anatolian Iron Ages 3. The Proceedings of the Third Anatolian Iron Ages Colloquium Held at Van, 6-12 August 1990*. Ankara: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara.

Çilingiroğlu, A.; Sagona, A. (eds) (2007). *Anatolian Iron Ages* 6. *The Proceedings of the Sixth Anatolian Iron Ages Colloquium Held at Eskişehir, 16-20 August 2004*. Leuven; Paris; Dudley (MA): Peeters. Ancient Near Eastern Studies 20.

Dan, R. (2010). "Ricerche sui siti Urartei della provincia di Van e dintorni". *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, 52, 49-97.

Dan, R. (2012). *Tra l'Eufrate e l'Arasse. Ricostruzione del paesaggio insediativo del regno di Biainili/Urartu* [PhD dissertation]. Sapienza Università di Roma.

Dan, R. (2015a). "Some Remarks on Urartian Rusticated Masonry". *Metsamor. The Chronicle of Fifty Years of Excavations*. Yerevan: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia, 141-50.

Dan, R. (2015b). *From the Armenian Highland to Iran. A Study on the Relations between the Kingdom of Urartu and the Achaemenid Empire*. Roma: Scienze e Lettere. Serie Orientale Roma 4.

Dan, R. (2016). "Vorratsgefäße (pithos) – Urartäisch. Archäologisch. 1. Archaeological context. - 2. Materials and production. - 3. Sizes and decorations". *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, XIV, 7(8), 597-8.

Dan, R. (2017). "The Gate and Temple of Ḫaldi in Ašotakert/Yeşılalıç and the Evolution of Urartian Cultic Complexes". *Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies/Aramazd*, 11, 161-85.

Dan, R. (2020). *A study on the Toponyms of the Kingdom of Bia/Urartu*. Roma: Scienze e Lettere. Serie Orientale Roma 19.

Dan, R. (2021). "Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Land of Bia/Urartu". *Res Antiquae*, 18, 25-48.

Dan, R. (2023). *Studies on the Architecture and Archaeology of the Achaemenid Empire. Dynamics of Interaction and Transmission between Centre and Periphery*. Roma: Scienze e Lettere. Serie Orientale Roma 35.

Dan, R.; La Farina, R. (2012). "Ricerche su alcuni siti dell'Armenia pre-classica". *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, 54, 249-62.

Dan, R.; Vitolo, P. (2016a). "La fortezza di Körzüt. Un sito Urarteo sulla costa orientale del lago Van, Turchia". *Bollettino Unione Storia ed Arte*, 11, 127-40.

Dan, R.; Vitolo, P. (2016b). "Girik Tepe. An Urartian Mud Brick Palace Near Patnos, Turkey". *Res Antiquae*, 13, 89-108.

Danışmaz, H. (2020). *Urartu Krallığı: Yönetim ve Organizasyon*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu. Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınları 13.5.

Dinçol, A.M. (1976). "Die neuen urartäischen Inschriften aus Körzüt". *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*, 26, 19-30.

Dinçol, A.M.; Kavaklı, E. (1978). *Van bölgesinde bulunmuş yeni Urartu yazıtları/Die neuen Urartaeischen Inschriften aus der Umgebung von Van*. Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası. Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschungen Beiheft 1.

Dittmann, R.; Hauptmann, H. (eds) (1995). *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Vorderasiens, Festschrift für Rainer Michael Boehmer*. Berlin: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.

Gökçe, B.; Kuvanç, R.; Genç, B. (2021). "Lake Van Basin Urartian Period Road Routes Survey. First Preliminary Report (2017-2018): Muradiye and Tuşba Districts". *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 36(1), 137-62.

Harutjunjan, N.V. (2001). *Korpus urartskich klinoobraznych nadpisej* (Corpus of Urartian Cuneiform Inscriptions). Erevan: Gitutjun.

Hejebri-Nobari, A. (1997). *L'Architecture Militaire Urartéenne* [PhD dissertation]. Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

Işık, F. (1995). *Die Offenen Felsheiligtümer Urartus und ihre Beziehungen Zudenen Hethiter und Phrygen*. Roma: ICEVO-CNR. Documenta Asiana 2.

Işık, K.; Genç, B. (2021). "On a Place Name in Urartian Studies and a New Inscription with an Urartian Expression: Qudulani Šuḫinaşi". *Anatolia Antiqua*, 29, 1-11.

Karabaşoğlu, A.; Karaoğlu, Ö.; Kuvanç, R. (2021). "Van Çevresindeki (Doğu Türkiye) Urartu Yerleşim Merkezlerinde (Van Kalesi, Aşağı ve Yukarı Anzaf, Çavuştepe, Ayanis, Toprakkale, Zivistan, Keçikıran, Aliler, Körzüt ve Menua Kanalı Tarihi Yerleri) Kullanılan Kayaçlara İlişkin Petrografik Gözlemler" (Petrographic Observations on the Rocks Used in the Urartian Settlement Centers Surrounding Van (Eastern Turkey) (Van Castle, Aşağı and Yukarı Anzaf, Çavuştepe, Ayanis, Toprakkale, Zivistan, Keçikıran, Aliler, Körzüt, and the Menua Canal Historical Sites)). *Türkiye Jeoloji Bülteni*, 64, 199-222.

Kleiss, W.; Hauptmann, H. (1976). *Topographische Karte von Urarṭu*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag. Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran Ergänzungsband 3.

König, F.W. (1955-7). *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften*. Graz: Selbstverlag Ernst Weidners. Archiv für Orientforschung 8.

Kuvanç, R.; Işık, K.; Genç, B. (2020). "A New Urartian Temple in Körzüt Fortress, Turkey: A Report on the Rescue Excavation of 2016 and New Approaches on the Origin of Urartian Square Temple Architecture". *Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies/Aramazd*, 141(1-2), 112-38.

Lehmann-Haupt, C.F. (1928-35). *Corpus Inscriptionum Chaldicarum*. Berlin; Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter.

Matthews, R. (ed.) (1998). *Ancient Anatolia*, *Fifty Years' Work by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara*. London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara.

Melikišvili, G.A. (1960). *Urartskie klinoobraznye nadpisi* (Urartian Cuneiform Inscriptions). Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR.

Müller-Simonis, P.; Hyvernat, H. (1892). *Du Caucase au Golfe Persique à travers l'Arménie, le Kurdistan et la Mésopotamie: suivie de notices sur la géographie et l'histoire ancienne de l'Arménie et les inscriptions cunéiformes du bassin de Van*. Washington, D.C: Université catholique d'Amérique.

Naumann, R. (1968). "Bemekungen zu urartäischen Tempeln". *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*, 18, 45-57.

Özfirat, A. (2010). "Van, Ağrı ve Iğdır İlleri Yüzey Araştırması, 2008" (Surface Survey of Van, Ağrı, and Iğdır Provinces, 2008). *Araştirma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 27(2), 223-38.

Roaf, M. (1998). "Multiple Rabbets on Doors in Iron Age Assyria and Western Iran". *Iranica Antiqua*, 33, 57-80.

Russell, H.F. (1980). *Pre-Classical Pottery of Eastern Anatolia*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports. International Series 85.

Salvini, M. (1979). "Una 'bilingue' Assiro-Urartea". Carruba, O. (ed.), *Studia Mediterranea Piero Meriggi Dicata*. Pavia: Aurora Edizioni, 575-93.

Salvini, M. (1980). "Un testo celebrativo di Menua". *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, 22, 137-67.

Salvini, M. (1995). *Geschichte und Kultur der Urartäer*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Salvini, M. (2001). "Notiziario. Ricerche a Van e dintorni (estate 2001)". *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, 43(2), 283-306.

Salvini, M. (2002). "Nel regno di Urartu". *Archeo*, 18(2), 57-89.

Salvini, M. (2008). *Corpus dei Testi Urartei, vol. I-III. Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia*. Roma: ICEVO-CNR. Documenta Asiana 8.

Salvini, M. (2012). *Corpus dei Testi Urartei, vol. IV. Iscrizioni su bronzi, argilla e altri supporti. Nuove iscrizioni su pietra. Paleografia generale*. Roma: ICEVO-CNR. Documenta Asiana 8.

Salvini, M. (2018). *Corpus dei Testi Urartei, vol. V. Revisione delle epigrafi e nuovi testi su pietra e roccia (CTU A). Dizionario urarteo. Schizzo grammaticale della lingua Urartea*. Paris: De Boccard.

Sinclair, T.A. (1987). *Eastern Turkey: An Archaeological and Architectural Survey*, vol. I. London: Pindar Press.

Tarhan, M.T. (1985). "Van Kalesi'nin ve Eski Van Şehrinin Tarihi-Milli Park Projesi Üzerinde Ön Çalışmalar" (Preliminary Studies on the Historical-National Park Project of Van Castle and the Old City of Van). *Araştirma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 2, 179-203.

Tarhan, M.T. (2007). "A Third Temple at Cavustepe-Sardurihinili? Uç Kale". Çilingiroğlu, A.; Sagona, A. (eds), *Anatolian Iron Ages* 6. *The Proceedings of the Sixth Anatolian Iron Ages Colloquium Held at Eskişehir, 16-20 August 2004*. Leuven; Paris; Dudley (MA): Peeters, 265-82. Ancient Near Eastern Studies 20.

Tarhan, M.T.; Sevin, V. (1976-77). "Van Bölgesinde Urartu Araştırmaları (I). Askerî ve Sivil Mimariye Ait Yeni Gözemler" (Urartian Research in the Van Region (I). New Observations on Military and Civil Architecture). *Anadolu Araştırmaları*, 4-5, 273-304.

Trémouille, M.C.; Dan, R. (2022). "Some Remarks on Changes in the Water Level of Lake Van, Turkey: An Evaluation of the Cartographical and Archaeological Evidence". *East and West*, 3(62), 71-95.

Trémouille, M.C.; Bonfanti, A.S.; Dan, R. (forthcoming). "Recently Discovered Urartian Inscriptions in Eastern Turkey".

Uslu, E. (2021). "Körzüt Kalesi Tapınak Alanı 2016 Yılı Kurtarma Kazısı" (2016 Rescue Excavation of the Temple Area at Körzüt Castle). *Türk Arkeoloji ve Etnografya Dergisi*, 82, 125-35.

Linguistics and Philology

The *Vita Silvestri* and Its Armenian Versions in the Context of the Apostolic Foundation of the Patriarchates and Papacy

Manya Erna Shirinian
Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan

Abstract   The article is focused on issues connected with the spread of the Greek and Armenian versions of the *Vita beati Silvestri*, which so far seems to be underestimated. These versions are worthy to research, since they are also closely intermingled with many interesting topics, one of which is a question on apostolic foundation of the papacy and the patriarchates. The *Vita* also served as a source for the later forgeries made on a lore of its content (e.g. the *Donatio Constantini*, the *Letter of Love and Concord*). The research of the tradition and texts connected with Sylvester is *quaestio vexata* and it can be solved by involving all existing versions.

Keywords   Vita beati Silvestri. Apostolic foundation. Patriarchates. Papacy. Forgeries. Armenian tradition. Letter of Love and Concord.

Summary   1 Research Topic. – 2 The Apostolic Foundation of the Papacy and Other Patriarchates. – 3 The Journey of the Armenian King Trdat and St. Gregory the Illuminator to Rome. – 4 Some Conclusions.

1 Research Topic

This article sets to analyse the development of traditions associated with the Greek and Armenian versions of the so-called *Vita beati Silvestri*, without, however, going into the details concerning the editions and the history of research of the texts. Rather, I argue that the *Vita*, conventionally known as a forgery, and its different versions, had a strong bearing on questions related to the Apostolic foundation of the papacy and its relationship to other patriarchates. In this light, it is important to reveal the possible motivations for translating the *Vita Silvestri* from the Greek to Armenian. The information about the context of the emergence of the Greek *Vita* is sparse and one can only hypothesize that it was composed in the sixth century. Yet, questions of why, by whom and where – remain unanswered.

The Roman Pope Sylvester I (*sedit* 314-35) was known in Armenian sources (e.g. Agat'angełos, Ełišē, Movsēs Xorenac'i, *Book of Canons*, cf. Hakobyan 1964; Sebeos 1999) since the very beginning of the development of Christian literature in that language. Moreover, the Greek version of the legend of Sylvester was translated into Armenian quite early. Thanks to the preserved colophons,[1] the name of the translator and the exact date of the translation are known: in 678 by Grigor Jorap'orec'i. Later on this text was abridged and transmitted in manuscripts in combination with the adaptation of Socrates Scholasticus' *Ecclesiastical History*. The latter came to be commonly known as *Shorter Socrates* (cf. Shirinian 2003-4).

The fact that such a pro-Roman work as the Greek *Vita Silvestri* was selected for translation into Armenian is surprising. The Armenian translators usually chose works that were in concord with the Armenian confessional point of view or at least did not contradict it. Chalcedonian Armenians too produced their own writings, which never became popular (at least in Armenia) and, unfortunately, mostly disappeared except for two or three units (e.g. the *Narratio de rebus Armeniae* or *On the Difference of Nature and Hypostasis* by Eutychius of Constantinople, an interesting but little-studied work, which is extant only in an Armenian translation).[2] It is therefore

---

1 Concerning these colophons cf. Tēr-Movsēsean 1897, XVII-XIX, LXXXIII-XCIV; in more detail cf. Shirinian 1994, 156-63; Thomson 2005, 59-62.

2 There is an interesting passage in this writing which witnesses that in Armenia at that time there were tolerant clergymen, open-minded towards the disputes about one or two natures of Christ, like bishop Vrt'anes who said that he had learned from his predecessors that God is Ἅγιος and that he does not want to omit or add anything to it: λέγων ὅτι 'Οἱ μακαριώτατοι ἐπίσκοποι οἱ πρὸ ἐμοῦ ὅ τε Πέτρος καὶ Γρηγόριος οὕτως ἔλεγον τὸ "Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός', ἐγὼ δὲ οὔτε προσθήσω οὔτε ὑφέλω' ("saying that: 'The blessed bishops, which were before me – Peter and Gregorios – said 'Holy God', and I won't add or subtract anything'"; Garitte 1952, 38).

important to uncover the reasons why the translator(s) and the person who commissioned the translation were interested in the Greek *Life of Sylvester*, which, in fact, reflected the Chalcedonian doctrine. This, in turn leads to the conclusion that the *Vita* was thought to express shared interests of non-Chalcedonian, as well as Chalcedonian Armenians.

First among these reasons was the Armenians' interest expressed from time to time to reveal the historical relationship between Armenia and Rome, something discussed also below. Secondly, this work includes two episodes of great importance for the entire Christianity: the *Visio* of the Cross by Constantine and the *Inventio* of the Holy Cross by Helena.[3] Indeed, the passages relaying Constantine's miraculous apparition and the finding of the Holy Cross were later expanded in the Revision of the Armenian translation of the *Vita Silvestri*. In addition, for the Armenians Sylvester was connected with the Council of Nicaea (325), which had a special significance for them, since they were intent on establishing the preeminence of this Council over the other ecumenical ones. This was also one of the reasons why Emperors Constantine and Theodosius the Great were praised in the Armenian sources (Nève 1857).[4] Besides, during the period of their rule Armenia did not have any major dogmatic differences with the rest of Christendom.

Last but not least, the text was of importance not only for Armenians but for all Christians due to pope Sylvester's relevance for the development of the liturgy, including his renaming or official acceptance of the days of the week by numerical instead of pagan names, and especially the designation of fasting and feast days.

It should be noted that the contribution of Armenian sources to the study of the above-mentioned topics (e.g. problems related to the legend of Sylvester, as well as the bearing of these legends on understanding the hierarchical structure of the ecclesiastical seats within the ancient Church), has been entirely neglected. In recent studies on Sylvester, even scholars pointing out the "lack of sources" (Canella 2018) do not even refer to the Armenian translation and its redaction.[5] Yet, the Armenian versions of the *Vita Silvestri*, as well as oth-

---

[3] About the Armenian versions, cf. data given by Sanspeur 1974, 307-9.

[4] There are numerous passages dedicated to the praise of these emperors, and even special writings, e.g. the Armenian sacred chants, especially the so-called *ganjer* – highly embellished feast chants (cf., for example, the *ganjer* by Mxitʻar Ayrivanecʻi [1230/1235-1297/1300]; Mxitʻar Ayrivanecʻi 2005, 94-5). Constantine the Great was praised also for ending the Great Persecution of martyrs during his reign.

[5] Cf., for example, Tessa Canella's quite a large number of publications (2006; 2013; 2018), which have raised the study of issues related to the Sylvester legend to an unprecedentedly high level but are surprisingly silent on the Armenian tradition. The same could be said concerning research by Starostin. Among laudable exceptions is a PhD dissertation by Di Rienzo (2018-19).

er sources that provide data on this Roman pope, appear to be rather crucial for elucidating many questions.

2   The Apostolic Foundation of the Papacy and Other Patriarchates

The *Vita Silvestri* is one of the rare sources where, instead of Pentarchy, the concept of Tetrarchy (τετραρχία – if it is possible to refer to it in this way)[6] of the church is developed. This makes the *Vita Silvestri* and all of its versions important witnesses to the development of the tradition on the Apostolic foundation of the papacy and other patriarchates.

This subject of the Apostolic foundation of the papacy and the patriarchates seems to be a preeminent question of concern in all the versions of the *Vita*. Yet, the topic did not attract much attention in the Middle Ages (especially after the fall of the Byzantine Empire) and was not discussed. The situation was different for the Eastern churches, who refused to accept Byzantine claims to ecclesiastical supremacy based on the premise that the see of Constantinople was founded by St Andrew, the First Called of the apostles (as expressed in the treatise *Ad eos qui dicunt Romam esse Primam sedem* attributed to Photius).[7]

The issues and data associated with the apostolic sees in the early Church and its hierarchy, particularly the special attitude towards the Eastern churches, require a more thorough investigation than has been accorded thus far. One may well suppose that it was the first cornerstone for the development of schisms between churches. The argument of the apostolicity was one of the key issues that shaped the relationship between Rome and Constantinople (especially at the time of patriarch Photius), and persisted in the period of the Iconoclasm, affected Armeno-Georgian relations, etc. Further research of these problems is imperative given that some Armenian, Ethiopian and other sources preserve unexplored information on this question, viz. on the adaptation of the ecclesiastical organization to the administrative divisions of the empire. One can suppose that this data was eventually eliminated or even purposely destroyed in Greek or Latin, although, significantly, its traces are still visible in some sources, among them the *Vita Silvestri*.

---

[6] Even though the technical term 'Tetrarchy' usually refers to a political system of governance based on four rulers, here it is used to designate the administration of the church by four patriarchal sees. For further research on this topic, cf. Shirinian 2009, 84-97; 2010, 90-9.

[7] For a circumstantial survey on the history of the research in question, cf. Dvornik 1958; Starostin 2017.

Firstly, according to these sources, in the initial stages of the establishment of Christian churches they were administered by four sees, i.e. there was a time when universal Christendom was governed by the four patriarchal sees – a Tetrarchy, rather than a Pentarchy. Interestingly, the order of apostolic sees provided by the concepts of Tetrarchy and Pentarchy has not been the same throughout the centuries. The idea of a 'classical' Tetrarchy is visible in the *Adversus haereses* by Irenaeus, and the theory of the Tetrarchy presented in Armenian sources perhaps goes back to this older tradition. According to it, the four sees of the Tetrarchy were founded: by Matthew (because he preached in Hebrew) in Jerusalem, by Peter and Paul in Rome, by Mark in Alexandria, by Luke perhaps in Antioch, and by John in Ephesus.[8] It is commonly accepted that the theory of Pentarchy was formulated in the legislation of the Emperor Justinian I (527-65), especially in his novella 131. This novella received a formal ecclesiastical sanction at the Council in Trullo (692), which ranked the five sees as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem (cf. Canon XXVI).

Armenian sources present the most plentiful and earliest data on this topic. Astonishingly, these testimonies that give us unique information concerning the history of the early Church are rarely examined.[9] In numerous Armenian sources, which will be discussed in more detail below, not only the information concerning the Tetrarchy

---

8 Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* in Harvey 1857, III, 1, 1-13 and I, 1, 6, 26; I, 1, 13, 53; I, 1, 17-18; I, 13, 2, 1 etc., especially III, 1, 1: Ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίους τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν, καὶ γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου, τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων, καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων ἔξοδον, Μάρκος ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου, καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Πέτρου κηρυσσόμενα ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν παραδέδωκε. Καὶ Λουκᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου, τὸ ὑπ᾽ ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βίβλῳ κατέθετο. Ἔπειτα Ἰωάννης ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσών, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατρίβων (Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia. http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book3.html).

9 From rare research dedicated to this subject, one may mention Dvornik 1958, who relied on the evidence of Armenian sources among others. Yet, his access to them was limited due to the language barrier and he used the Armenian sources thanks to the help of Der-Nersessian, who was a fine expert in Armenian miniature, but not necessarily of the Armenian tradition on apostolic sees. However, it appears that Dvornik, or scholars who wrote reviews on this book (e.g. Runciman 1959), did not consider that 'apostolicity' played any role in the organization of the church. The most recent study on this topic is an impressive essay by van Esbroeck, which deals with all these questions and examines different traditions (e.g. Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian) and for the first time draws on the data of the Armenian sources (1991). It is important to stress that van Esbroeck was convinced of the existence of the theory of governing the universal

and Pentarchy is presented, but also some points connected with them are elucidated. For example, the rank of the patriarchates at different times is explicated: it is explained why in the beginning it was decided that there should be four apostolic sees. The main question, concerning the transferring of the patriarchal see from Ephesus to Constantinople (including the time when it was done and the persons who did it), is clarified too. The issues connected with what led to this action among the Eastern churches and those of China and India are discussed as well.

Obviously, the Tetrarchy presented in Armenian sources goes back to older Christian traditions, for example, to Irenaeus quoted above, who associates the four apostolic thrones with the main symbols of the Tetrarchy – the four evangelists (and with the four rivers of Eden). According to some Armenian sources, we have Matthew (because he preached in Hebrew) in Jerusalem; Mark in Alexandria; Luke in Antioch; and John in Ephesus. This listing is somewhat rare in the Armenian sources, and a more 'classical' ranking seems to be a vision of the Tetrarchy according to which Peter and Paul were linked to Rome; Mark to Alexandria; Luke to Antioch; and John to Ephesus. Jerusalem was mentioned as an honorary see.[10]

Information present in the Greek text of the *Vita Silvestri* and its Armenian versions, i.e. the literal translation and its reworking in *Shorter Socrates* (Shirinian 2003-4), which starts with the *Vita* (1997), is an important source regarding the question of the Tetrarchy. The same could be said concerning Socrates Scholasticus' *Ecclesiastical History* – the Greek original and its Armenian versions.

Scholarly opinion on the question of when the patriarchates were established is divided. There is a general agreement that the metropolitan sees were instituted at the Council of Nicaea and that the patriarchates were established at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381).[11] Such a consensus seems justified for several reasons. Firstly, the word πατριαρχία (as well as the concept of the 'patriarchate') had possibly not been mentioned before the Council of Constantinople. Two canons of this council are worthy of discussion here: Canon II deals with the administration of Church affairs in the dioceses, stressing "let no bishops go beyond their dioceses" and Canon III says that "The bishop of Constantinople is to be honored

Christendom by the four patriarchal sees and he considered that this goes back to the fourth-fifth century (cf. especially 505, 509-10, 518).

10 This is too large a problem to treat here at length; the issue and the Armenian data (with almost all sources) on this topic are discussed in Shirinian 2009; 2010; 2016. More details on the question will appear in the *Introduction* to the forthcoming edition of the *Vita Silvestri*.

11 Erickson 1991, 94; Anastos 2001; Pheidas 2005, 65-75; Kauffman 2016, 10-12; cf. also Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 278 ff; Castellano 2006.

next after the bishop of Rome; because Constantinople is the New Rome".[12] In fact, the word πατριαρχία is not attested in the canons of this synod either. The most interesting fact is that πατριαρχία is attested in Socrates Scholasticus' *Ecclesiastical History*: the first testimony could be doubtful for a very critical reader, since it is reconstructed in accordance with the Armenian translation and with the context of the Greek original; but in the case of the second one everything is clear. The first evidence is found where Socrates speaks of the affairs of the Second Universal Council. In particular, concerning the administration of the Church, he says the following:

> ἐβεβαίωσάν τε αὖθις τὴν ἐν Νικαίᾳ πίστιν, καὶ πατριάρχας κατέστησαν διανειμάμενοι τὰς ἐπαρχίας, ὥστε τοὺς ὑπέρ διοίκησιν ἐπισκόπους ταῖς ὑπερόριος ἐκκλησίαις μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν. (Hansen 1995, 280, lines 20-22)

> They also again confirmed the Nicene Creed, and constituted the **patriarchs** and the provinces, so that bishops do not transgress any jurisdiction over other churches out of his own diocese. (Author's transl.; bold added)

In this place, the Armenian translation of Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History* has հայրապետութիւն (patriarchate).[13] This means that in the

---

[12] Labbe 1671, II: 945. Interestingly, in the Armenian *Book of Canons*, the canons of the Council of Constantinople contained only three chapters (Hakobyan 1964, 273-6); in the second chapter, Canons II and III of the Council of Constantinople are combined (i.e. in the Armenian translation only the first four canons are reflected). It is known that the number of canons accepted by this council is doubtful. Scholars enumerate seven (in accordance with the preserved Greek manuscripts and the twelfth century commentaries by Balsamon and Zonaras) or, following the old Latin translations, they accept only the first four canons of the Greek text (cf. more details in Héféle 1869, II: 351). The fact, however, that the old Latin translations were made from much older Greek codices (than the ones that reached us) seems to prove that the other canons were not in the old version of the Greek text. As a result, one might think that these last three canons did not really belong to the Second Ecumenical Council, but were later interpolations. To this, one must add the Armenian translation of these canons (fifth century), which was also made from much older Greek manuscripts than the extant ones, and which does not contain the fifth, sixth, and seventh Canons either. Moreover, as another proof that there were only four canons, one can bring forward the testimonies or the description of matters at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople provided by Socrates Scholasticus (Hansen 1995, 280, lines 20-22), which includes the content of these four canons. It is worthy of note that the work of Socrates Scholasticus, which was of great interest to Armenians, had a connection to the Armenian *Book of Canons* too, since the latter includes passages from this work, viz. *Ecclesiastical History* (cf. Hakobyan 1964, 131-2; 1971, 290-2).

[13] Tēr-Movsēsean 1897, 419. Let us stress that this text as well the *Vita Silvestri* are translated in the Hellenizing style, i.e. they are very literal translations (Shirinian 1996; 1997). It should be noted here that the words հայրապետ or հայրապետութիւն are exact calques of the corresponding Greek terms; հայրապետ and պատրիարք (which is just a

Greek text (that the Armenian translator had in his hands) instead of πατριάρχας there was πατριαρχίας (so, the translation should be "the **patriarchates** and the provinces"; bold added). This reading was accepted by the editor of the new critical edition of the *Ecclesiastical History*, Günther Christian Hansen,[14] who brought forward grammatical, prosorythmical, and other proofs that the context here seems to back to the reading πατριαρχίας. Indeed, the context itself speaks in favour of this reading because the passage following it says:

Καὶ κληροῦται Νεκτάριος μὲν τὴν μεγαλόπολιν καὶ τὴν Θρᾴκην· τῆς δὲ Ποντικῆς διοικήσεως Ἑλλάδιος ὁ μετὰ Βασίλειον Καισαρείας τῆς Καππαδοκῶν ἐπίσκοπος, Γρηγόριος ὁ Νύσσης ὁ Βασιλείου ἀδελφὸς, (Καππαδοκίας δὲ καὶ ἥδε πόλις,) καὶ Ὀτρήϊος ὁ τῆς ἐν Ἀρμενίᾳ Μελιτηνῆς τὴν πατριαρχίαν ἐκληρώσαντο. (Hansen 1995, 281, lines 1-6)[15]

To Nectarius therefore was allotted the great city and Thrace. Helladius, the successor of Basil in the bishopric of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, obtained the patriarchate of the diocese of Pontus in conjunction with Gregory, Basil's brother, bishop of Nyssa in Cappadocia, and Otreïus bishop of Melitina in Armenia. To Amphilochius of Iconium and Optimus of Antioch in Pisidia, was the Asiatic diocese assigned.[16]

---

transliteration from the Greek) are used in Armenian sources to designate the 'patriarch'. As is obvious from the previous footnote, this rendering was used in the Hellenizing translation of Socrates *History* (Tēr-Movsēsean 1897, 419, 420, 651). Somehow van Esbroeck considers that the word 'patriarch' was transliterated from the Greek into the Armenian but did not recognize it as an equivalent of հայրապետ (1991, 515). Even if հայրապետ has a much broader semantic spectrum than պատրիարք, such an opinion seems unambiguous, since it needs further research and it is closely connected with the topic in question. In any case, there are attestations that these words have the same meaning; cf. the phrase by Maštocʻ Ełivardecʻi from the *Letter to Catholicos Georg*: նոյնպէս եւ ի ներքին խորանիս զահաւորեցան պատրիարքք, որ են հայրապետք (likewise, patriarchs, which are *hayrapet*s, were enthroned in the inner *x*oran [altar]) (Xačʻatryan, Kʻyoseyan 2003, 295). Cf. also almost the same usage by Anania Sanahnecʻi: պատրիարգ որ է հայրապետոն (a patriarch, which is a *hayrapet*); and Mxitʻar Goš: պատրարքք, որք թարգմանին է հայրապետք, որք ունին զաթոռ չորից աւետարանչացն (patriarchs, which are translated as *hayrapet*s, which hold the Sees of the four Evangelists) (Awetikʻean, Siwrmēlean, Awgerean 1836, 624).

14 Perhaps, such a statement on my part is somewhat inappropriate, since Hansen is no longer with us to support my words. But I was told that he discussed this question with his colleagues. As far as I know, the discussion happened online after the new critical edition appeared among scholars who joined in an Internet group called 'Eusebia' or 'Eusebeia' (cf. Shirinian 2003, 89-90 fn. 73).

15 Cf. this excerpt with the one in *Shorter Socrates*, where it is quite expanded (Tēr-Movsēsean 1897, 420-1); for English translation cf. Thomson 2001b, 146-7.

16 Transl. on https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26015.htm.

As we see from this passage, the word πατριαρχία is used for the second time in the same context, explaining the same matter of things. Hence, it could mean that already in the beginning of the fifth century the term πατριαρχία was in use to designate patriarchal sees. Consequently, one can suppose that patriarchates were established at the end of the fourth century. At least in the beginning of the fifth century the words 'patriarch' and 'patriarchates' seem to have specific ecclesiastical meanings because Theodosius II used in his letter the word 'patriarch' as a Christian title of honour for Pope Leo I (Mansi 1960-1, 6: 68) and the word 'patriarchate' is testified by Socrates Scholasticus in his *Ecclesiastical History*. The citation above is noteworthy because it reflects Canon II of the Second Council of Constantinople, which proves, together with Canons IV and VI of the Council of Nicaea that formerly all the Metropolitans of the dioceses (e. g. Pontus, Asia, and Thrace) were autocephalous in their provinces and were ordained by their own synods. The situation was changed by Canon XXVIII of the Council of Chalcedon (451) and the dioceses of Pontica, Asiana and Thrace lost their autonomy forever:

> As a consequence of this canon the patriarchal prerogatives of the see of Ephesus and Caesarea were lost and they lost their importance forever. The negative attitude of Armenians toward the Council of Chalcedon derives from this fact. The schism came about on a basis of hierarchy and not over the dogma, as implied by later sources. (Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 280)

These words by Adontz express the real picture of the events, which were later on explained via disagreements on confessional grounds. Interestingly, the honour of being autocephalous was transmitted to the other churches: the Church of Cyprus received it at the Third Ecumenical Council (Canon VIII), and the Church of Iberia (Georgia) at the Sixth (Canon XXXIX).

As to the information concerning the apostolic sees, the *Vita Silvestri* testifies in the very beginning of the text that[17]

> τούτων δὲ τῶν πόλεων καὶ ἀποστολικῶν θρόνων τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην ἐπεσπάσατο, τουτέστιν τῆς μεγάλης τῶν πόλεων Ῥώμης, Ἀλεξανδρείας τε καὶ Ἀντιοχείας, τῆς κοινῆς ἕνεκεν ὠφελείας. (Combefis 1660, 258-9)

> and of these cities and apostolic thrones, that is, of the great cities of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, the high priesthood was seized of the common benefit. (Author's transl.)

---

17 The fact that this question is discussed in the very beginning of the writing speaks of its importance for the matter at hand.

This is the reading of the manuscripts used by Combefis in *Illustrium Christi martyrum* for his edition, but the text here is corrupt because it speaks only about three apostolic sees. Indeed, there are *variae lectiones* as in the Greek text, as well in the Armenian versions. For this place, some Greek manuscripts belonging to the B recension[18] have an addition – Ἐφέσου καὶ Ἱεροσολύμη (or vice versa). The Armenian translation here differs from the original. It is in accordance with the mentioned Greek manuscripts and renders the same information literally, where Ephesus and Jerusalem are indicated as well:

Այսոցիկ յայտ է քաղաքաց որչափ ըստ առաքելականն աթոռոց զքաւչապետութիւնն առ ընդունողաց՝ այս է մեծին քաղաքի բոլոր քաղաքաց Հռովմայ, Աղէքսանդրացւոց, [Անտիոքայ],[19] Եփեսոսի եւ Երուսաղէմի: (Tēr-Movsēsean 1897, 692)

And it is obvious from these cities, that is, of the greatest city (*sic*) of all cities – Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, and Jerusalem, how the high priesthood was accepted according to the apostolic throne.

Thus, the Greek text of the *Vita Silvestri* and its literal Armenian translation delineate the following order of dignities in a Tetrarchical arrangement: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus and Jerusalem.[20] Note that there is no mention of Constantinople since this pro-Roman composition claims to reflect the situation and the time when Constantinople was not yet founded by Constantine on the site of Byzantium. Interestingly, in the adaptation of the Armenian Hellenizing translation this passage has some divergences and Constantinople is already present. Rome stands in the beginning of the first sentence as superior in honour compared to all others, separated from them as the "see of the patriarchate of Peter and Paul" (Tēr-Movsēsean 1897,

---

18   Cf., for example, the following manuscripts from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: C (= Grec 1449, eleventh c.), 37*v*; D (= Grec 501, twelfth-thirteenth c.), 164*r*; K (= Grec 808, sixteenth c.), 279*r*; G (= Grec 1508, twelfth-thirteenth c.), 17*v*. Concerning these Greek manuscripts it should be noted that Starostin, who has published three articles on the topic, brings forward a testimony about the Greek manuscript Messanensis 87 discovered at the end of nineteenth-beginning of twentieth century by Krashennikov, which contains this redaction (Starostin 2008, 128; 2012, 126; 2017, 123). My comparison of the Armenian Hellenizing translation with some Greek manuscripts held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France has shown that this version in general is part of the tradition of the manuscript group CDK, and is especially close to D (= Grec 501, twelfth-thirteenth c.), 164*r*-188*r*, with which the Armenian translation coincides word for word (except in rare cases). If Starostin had used the Armenian versions, they would have been helpful for his conclusions.

19   This word is added from the Jerusalem manuscript; cf. Xapaean 1898, 89.

20   Let us not forget that Jerusalem was considered as an honorary see: it was mentioned but not accounted for in the case of the Tetrarchy, nor of the Pentarchy.

692). Then, the other important centres are listed and Constantinople is added in the end:

որ կոչեցաւ յատռո հայրապետութեան Պետրոսի եւ Պաւղոսի մեծ քաղաքին Հռովմայ, որ յոյովս ունի պատմութիւնս, որ եւ զառաքելոցն վերագրեաց զկկայութեանց նահատակութիւնս եւ զհայրապետաց, եւ զկկայից, եւ զխստովանողաց, զարանց եւ զկանանց, որք արիական ընդդէմ հալածչացն յաղագս ի Քրիստոս հաւատոցն, որ եւ յայլ քաղաքս եւ յականաւորս յայտնի է՝ յԱղէքսանդր, եւ յԱնտիոք, եւ յԵփեսոս, եւ յերուսաղէմ, եւ ի Կոստանդնուպօլիս: (Tēr-Movsēsean 1897, 692-3)[21]

The order of precedence of the Apostolic sees in these quotations is quite similar, except for Constantinople, which, according to the Canon III of the Council of Constantinople, was placed in the second place according to dignity as the New Rome (after the Old Rome).

Intriguingly, the see of Constantinople does not appear in the second place also in a very interesting and important document written by the Georgian Catholicos Kiurion, where there is a reference to the Pentarchy. In his second letter to the Catholicos of Armenia Abraham (late sixth century) the Catholicos Kiurion, speaking about the concordance between Armenians and Georgians at the time of Gregory the Illuminator when they "were unanimous with each other sharing the faith of Jerusalem", concludes:

Իսկ այժմ ո՞ստի եղեն. Հռովմայ հայրապետն ի սրբոյն Պետրոսի ատոռն նստի, եւ Աղէքսանդրացին՝ ի սրբոյն Մարկոսի աւետարանչի, եւ յԱնտիոքցին՝ ի սրբոյն Ղուկասու աւետարանչի, եւ Կոստանդնուպաւլսեցին՝ ի սրբոյն Յովհաննու աւետարանչի, եւ Երուսաղեմացին՝ ի սրբոյ Յակովբայ՝ եղբաւրն Տեառն: (*Girkʻ tʻłtʻocʻ* 1994, 337)

And now where are they? The patriarch of Rome sits on the throne of Peter, and of Alexandria on [the seat of] St. Mark the Evangelist, and of Antioch – on [the seat of] St. Luke the Evangelist, and of Constantinople – [on that] of St. John the Evangelist, and of Jerusalem [on that] of St. Jacob, the brother of the Lord. (Author's transl.)

This is quite an interesting excerpt because of the unusual order of the five apostolic sees – Rome (the seat of apostle Peter), Alexandria (St. Mark the Evangelist), Antioch (St. Luke the Evangelist), Constantinople (St. John the Evangelist), and Jerusalem (St. Jacob = St. James, the brother of the Lord). It is noteworthy that the see of Constantinople is presented by the Evangelist St. John and not by St. Andrew.

---

21 For an English translation cf. Thomson 2005, 68.

It should be stressed that these testimonies (except the reworking of the Armenian translation of the *Vita Silvestri*) coincide with the traditions outside of Armenia: one is pro-Roman, and the other is Georgian. In the meantime, in the Armenian tradition of the sixth-seventh centuries there are texts, mainly translations, where the theory of the Pentarchy is transmitted according to the Canon XXXVI of the Council in Trullo. For example, in the Armenian translation of a text attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis entitled Ἐπιφανίου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κύπρου Ἔκθεσις πρωτοκλησιῶν πατριαρχῶν τε καὶ μητροπολιτῶν,[22] the canonical order of the Pentarchy appears as: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that in this work there are passages, that have reached us only in the Armenian translation (Fink 1902, 16, 52).

As to the question of why the theory of the Tetrarchy in the hierarchical organization of the Church has survived in the Armenian *milieu*, one can add the following considerations. Firstly, we can hardly suppose that the Armenian sources were the only ones to transmit this idea. Numerous Armenian authors testified that this concept derived from the Greek tradition. In fact, this theory is implied in the Canons VI and VII of the Council of Nicaea. The Canon VI deals with the exclusive authority exercised by three of the most important cities at the time – Alexandria, Rome and Antioch.[23] According to the Canon VII special honour was granted to Jerusalem. The Council of Nicaea dealt with only four sees that were significant at the time. Perhaps that is why according to Eastern ecclesiology, the established order of the apostolic sees was Rome, followed by Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Interestingly, the canons of the Council of Nicaea do not mention the patriarchal see of Ephesus at all, while, as it was noted above, it is referred to in the *Adversus haereses* of Irenaeus and is present always in the versions recorded by Armenian sources.[24] It seems that the existence and then the transfer of this patriarchal see to Constantinople, as well the replacement of the Evangelist St. John by St. Andrew, was a rather controversial topic for Armenian Church officials too.

Secondly, Armenians were interested in the version of the Tetrarchy where the Roman see was included since there existed an historical tradition related to an alliance between Armenia and Rome. According to this tradition the Armenian king Trdat (Tiridates) visited Rome with St.

---

22   The editor of this work displayed on the cover of this small book the Greek title: Ἔκθεσις πρωτοκλησιῶν [...]. The Armenian title reads as follows: Եպիփանու եպիսկոպոսի Կիպրացոց վասն նախասպատիւ եկեղեցեաց իւրաքանչիւր ապռոց մայրաքաղաց (Fink 1902, 4).

23   Note that Alexandria comes first.

24   These sources are too many to be listed here. Some of them, including the *Book of Canons,* Sołomon Makʻenacʻi, Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʻi, Vardan Aygekcʻi, and Kirakos Gandzakecʻi, will be dealt with in another study.

Gregory the Illuminator to meet the Emperor Constantine after his conversion. In Rome, the Bishop of the city Sylvester I took an active part during this visit. Scholars who reject the authenticity of this tradition suggest that it was an adaptation of the visit of Trdat I to the court of Nero in Rome in the first century AD (e.g. Hovhannisyan 1957; Thomson 1997). Taking into account all the historical circumstances,[25] this tradition does not seem to be entirely spurious. At any rate, it is well attested in numerous Armenian sources since the fifth century.[26]

Moreover, judging from some Armenian sources, it is even possible to think that there was an agreement that should also be a patriarchate in Armenia and that Nersēs the Great was the one who was elected to be a patriarch (Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʻi 1987, 84; 1996, 48). But then, he was sent with the delegation to Byzantium to confirm the treaty of peace and unity between Armenia and the emperor. The negotiations with Valens were not successful because he was an Arian (and many Armenian writers do not even consider him as a Christian), so Nersēs was exiled.

In reality, after the failure of expectations concerning the patriarchal see, Armenia was in political excommunication, because, as it is rightly noted by Adontz, "the schism came about on a basis of hierarchy and not over the dogma, as implied by later sources" (Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 280). Perhaps, by supporting the Pope's claims of their supremacy, the Armenians hoped that they could also restore the historical tradition dating to back to the early fourth century, when Armenia was more powerful and, due to its alliance with Rome, had experienced a more peaceful and flourishing period:

In Armenia, the reign of Trdat, a contemporary of Constantine, was a time of glorious national revival. The Roman government then, and for some time after, supported the Armenian kingdom against the Persians, and the country had a breathing spell before its final political dismemberment (Coleman 1914, 157).

---

25   Firstly, Armenia, as a country that officially accepted Christianity in the beginning of the fourth century, should have had quite close relations with Rome until confessional disagreements, which were in fact political ones. Indeed, both Gregory the Illuminator, a 'living martyr' of Armenia, and king Trdat were installed on their thrones with the help of Rome. Furthermore, after a successful battle in 297, when the Roman and Armenian armies together defeated the Persians, they signed an alliance of peace in Nisibis in 298/299, which lasted for 40 years (cf. Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 349). For the Romans, from a political perspective, it was vital to turn Armenia to an ally during the heated wars with Sassanian Iran. On the other hand, Armenia too needed Rome not only as an ally in the wars against Iran, but also against incursions of 'Barbarian' tribes from east and northeast.

26   Armenian sources on this pact are cited in the translation of Agatʻangełos by Thomson (Agatʻangełos 1976) and in Thomson 1997 (cf. also Ełishē 1982, 123 fn. 6). Let us recall that Movsēs Xorenacʻi mentions in mere two phrases that "Trdat went to Rome to Saint Constantine" (Moses Khorenatsʻi 1978, 235), and that there was a "sworn covenant" between Trdat and Constantine (257).

3 The Journey of the Armenian King Trdat and St. Gregory the Illuminator to Rome

If we accept the authenticity of the visit of king Trdat and Gregory the Illuminator to Constantine, a few words should be said about when it could have happened. Judging from Greek and Armenian sources as well as taking into account the historical context, the most probable date would be 313 or 314. This date is based on the testimony of Eusebius of Caesarea, who tells that "the Armenians […] had been from ancient times friends and allies of the Romans" (*Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.2, in Schwartz 1903). This quote could serve as a *terminus ante quem* for dating the friendship and alliance between Armenians and Romans to before 324, when this work was composed. A dating between 313-14 and 324 is then justified by another piece of evidence. According to Eusebius, Maximinus "the tyrant […] was compelled to go to war with the Armenians, who had been from ancient times friends and allies of the Romans" (*Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.2-4, in Schwartz 1903) and this caused problems for Armenians to travel safely to the West. It should be also noted that Maximus was defeated by Licinius after 313-14.

In any case, this alleged or real journey was reworked to compose a 'document' of a completely legendary character titled *Dašancʻ tʻułtʻ* (Letter of Love and Concord), whose authenticity has rightly been criticized.[27] Based on historical and legendary elements, this forged document declares a number of times that Sylvester recognized Gregory's see to be "equal in dignity to his own and those of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria" (Šahnazareancʻ 1862, 24-5, 28, 30). These lines prove that the question of apostolic succession was of crucial importance. It was imperative to emphasize this within a pact of 'love and concord' between Armenia and Rome and that is why this tradition was sealed in shape of such a forgery.

The *Letter* was based not only on the historical tradition but also on the Armenian translation of the Greek *Vita Silvestri*, as we already noted. For example, forged additions such as the *Donatio Constantini* were also taken into account.[28] Perhaps, one can even say that the *Letter of Love and Concord* is sort of an Armenian version of the *Donatio Constantini*.[29] The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia at the time of the Crusaders hoped to find support in this forgery by demonstrating the

---

27   Or 'peace': Latin *concordia* also means 'peace'. For more information about the *Letter* cf. Thomson 1997; 2001a; Uluhogian 2003; Shirinian 2003; 2005, 84-100; 2006a; Bartʻikyan 2004; Pogossian 2010.

28   A large literature exists on the subject; among the most recent studies, the following articles can be referred to: Levine 1973; Raspanti 2004; Leppin 2006; Fried 2007; Gandino 2009; Goodson, Nelson 2010; Cadili 2013.

29   It would be interesting if someone would carry a comparative analysis on these two forgeries.

ancient connection between the Catholic and the Armenian Churches and the close ties between them and their secular leaders at the time of the formation of their churches.

As to the date of the *Letter*, scholars have expressed different opinions, but all agree that this was a forgery composed in Cilician Armenia, between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.[30] Moreover, a close re-reading of an excerpt by Kirakos Ganjakec'i concerning the *Letter*, suggests quite convincingly that this author provides a clear date of the journey of Trdat and Gregory, as well as the name of its initiator:

Իսկ սքանչելի հայրապետն Գրիգորիս որ ըստ օրէ յաւելոյր ի բարեգործութիւն ի պայծառութիւն եկեղեցւոյ: Եւ էր սիրեցեալ նա յամենայն ազգաց: Եղեւ նմա գնալ ի սուրբ քաղաքն Երուսաղէմ, զի երկրպագեսցէ նա սուրբ տեղեացն տնօրինականաց: Իբրեւ եհաս նա ի քաղաքն Անտիոք, եւ ամենայն քաղաքն ընդ առաջ նորա ջահիւք եւ լապտերօք եւ մեծաւ պատուով տարեալ նստուցին զնա յաթոռն Պետրոսի առաքելոյն: Եւ իբրեւ եհաս նա յԵրուսաղէմ, ազգն ֆռանկաց, որ իշխողք էին քաղաքին, եւ պատրիարք նոցա առաւել սէր հաստատեցին ընդ ազգիս մերում վասն նորա, զի էր նա բարի տեսլեամբ եւ զիտութեամբ սուրբ գրոց զարդարեալ. **զիին դաշինսն Տրդատայ եւ սրբոյն Գրիգորի եւ Կոստանդիանոսի կայսեր եւ Սեղբեստրոսի հայրապետին վերստին նորոգեցին առ սովաւ:** (Melik'-Ōhanǰanean 1961, 157-8; bold added)

The marvellous patriarch Grigoris daily increased his good works for the glorification of the Church. He was loved by all people. It happened that he went to the holy city of Jerusalem to revere the sites of the Incarnation of [108] the Lord. As soon as he reached the city of Antioch, the entire population came out before him bearing torches and lamps. With great honour they took him and seated him on the throne of the Apostle Peter. As soon as he reached Jerusalem, the Frank people (who were ruling the city) and their patriarch more deeply established love between our peoples [g117], on account of Grigoris. For he was pleasing in appearance and adorned with knowledge of the holy Scriptures. According to tradition, **the old agreement of Trdat and Saint Gregory, of Emperor Constantine and the patriarch Sylvester, was restored**. (Kirakos Ganjakets'i 1986, 117-18; bold added)

It seems that this passage explicitly stresses that Grigor III Pahlavuni (1093-1166) renewed the old alliance that existed between Trdat and Saint Gregory from one side, and Emperor Constantine and the

---

[30] E.g. cf. Shirinian 2003; 2006a, 68-9; Pogossian 2010, 119-25.

patriarch Sylvester from the other, but this time instead of Sylvester it was Pope Innocent II, and Grigor III Pahlavuni instead of Gregory the Illuminator. Since Grigor III died in 1166, this date could be taken as a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the *Letter* in question (Shirinian 2021, 186; 2006b, 449; cf. Pogossian 2010, 119-20). Moreover, another more certain *terminus ante quem* could be brought forward. It is known that Catholicos Grigor Pahlavuni enjoyed great respect among the Latins: he was twice invited to the Councils convened by them – in 1141 to Antioch and in 1145 to Jerusalem. Besides, there is evidence that he corresponded with Pope Innocent II. Taking into account that Innocent II died in 1143, the *terminus ante quem* should be this date. It is curious that in both in the first union and in this one were involved Catholicoi with the same name Gregory (Gregory the Illuminator and Gregory III), and both were Pahlavuni (since Gregory III was also considered to be of the Pahlavuni family). The eponymity of the Catholicoi may also have had a symbolic meaning. Interestingly, a century earlier, another Catholicos with the same name, Grigor II Vkayaser Pahlavuni, also had correspondence with Pope Gregory VII. As for the initiative for composing such a forged document, some investigators agree that it could be even understood as mutual attempts from both sides on several different occasions, especially during the Crusades (cf. Hovhannisyan 1957, 76; Shirinian 2003, 89, 97-8; 2006a, 71).

It is noteworthy that the *Letter of Love and Concord* provides a partial explanation for the appearance of the Greek *Vita Silvestri*. In fact, we are dealing with the same story adapted to the Armenian *milieu* of different periods. All these sources, then, can be seen as a part of the same interconnected web of texts. They all originated in a non-Armenian but a pro-Roman tradition, based on the Latin *Vita beati Silvestri*, which in the beginning of the sixth century served as a basis for various improvisations and forgeries, the first and foremost of which was the Greek *Vita Silvestri*.

4 Some Conclusions

Let us summarize the information given above. The first issue to address is why *Vita Silvestri* and Sylvester himself were so popular in the Armenian *milieu*, and what motives caused the Armenians to translate this particular text from a large corpus of pro-Roman sources. I argued above that the significance of this writing for the Armenians lay with its reference to patriarchal sees. Greek and Armenian sources indicate that various controversies among the Armenian and Byzantine churches were due to the disagreements on the meaning and ranking of patriarchal sees.

When translating the Greek *Vita Silvestri*, the Armenians may have

found it significant also because the story of Constantine's conversion was very similar to that of the conversion of the Armenian King Trdat, as van Esbroeck has persuasively shown (1982, 94-5).[31]

Given that all conclusions regarding such a complex text as the *Vita Silvestri* must be tentative, we should also ask why the Armenian sources are important for its comprehension. The answer to this question must also be held in abeyance. There are too many obscure and contentious issues relating not only to Armenian, but also to early Byzantine historiography. For example, some scholars have expressed doubts about the authenticity of such a well-studied work as the *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius.[32] Testable hypotheses are often met with a sceptical or hypercritical attitude. Such suggestions may sometimes make the paradigm more complex, but at the same time they contribute to the development and advancement of scholarship, even though they are hypothetical.[33]

Two main points about the Armenian translation of the *Vita Silvestri* should be emphasised. Firstly, the Armenian translation confirms that the legend of Sylvester was widespread in the seventh century. Furthermore, there are numerous references to Sylvester in the Armenian historiography before and after the appearance of the Armenian translation of the *Vita Silvestri*. So, his memory was quite vivid in Armenia, while in the West "Sylvester's relics did not gain much attention until the middle of the eighth century" (Manarini 2021, 76). The second important point is the relevance of this text for our understanding of the development of theories on apostolic sees. The concept of Tetrarchy, which must have been the dominant paradigm in the early church, was almost completely consigned to oblivion after the sixth century and Justinian. In fact, by developing the theory of the Pentarchy, Emperor Justinian caused a significant change both in the state and ecclesiastical policies. Even if the memory of the administration of the universal Church by four patriarchal sees lingered on in different traditions (cf. Van Esbroeck 1991), it is best preserved in the Armenian sources. Thanks to these we can today form an idea about this ancient tradition, something preserved also in the *Vita Silvestri*.

To conclude, one can say that the information brought forward in these documents can be valuable not only when researching the ties between Roman and Armenian Churches but also for elucidating many political problems that existed in Christendom starting from

---

[31] But this is not to imply that the Armenians developed this topic in the Armenian translation (although this is partly true for the shorter version), because what they did was an exact translation of the Greek spurious – if not forged – writing.

[32] From the beginning of the 1930s, a number of such articles were written by Grégoire (cf. 1938).

[33] E.g. in the case of *Vita Constantini* an interesting dispute arose between Grégoire and Baynes (Baynes 1972, IV-VI).

the early centuries until the time of the Crusades.

Bibliography

Sources

Agatʻangełos

Agatʻangeghos (1976). *History of the Armenians*. Translation and Commentary by R.W. Thomson. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Book of Canons I-II

Hakobyan, V. (ed.) (1964). *Kanonagirkʻ Hayocʻ A* (The Armenian Book of Canons 1). Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Hakobyan, V. (ed.) (1971). *Kanonagirkʻ Hayocʻ B* (The Armenian Book of Canons 2). Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Book of Letters

Girkʻ tʻłtʻocʻ (Book of Letters) (1994). 2nd ed. Erusałēm: tparan Srbocʻ Yakobeancʻ.

Ełišē

Eḷishē (1982). *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*. Translation and Commentary by R.W. Thomson. Cambridge; Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press. Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 5.

Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*

Schwartz, E. (Hrsg.) (1903). *Eusebius, die Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. I. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs. GCS 9.1.
https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783112490082/html

Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*

Harvey, W.W. (ed.) (1857). *Sancti Irenæi Episcopi Lugdunensis libros quinque adversus Haereses*. Cantabrigiae: Typis Academicis.

Rousseau, A.; Doutreleau, L. (éds) (1974). *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies*. Livre 3, vol. 2. Paris: éditions du Cerf. Sources chrétiennes 211.

Kirakos Ganjakecʻi, *History of the Armenians*

Kirakos Ganjaketsʻi (1986). *History of the Armenians*. Translation from Classical Armenian by R. Bedrosian. http://www.attalus.org/armenian/kgtoc.html.

Melikʻ-Ōhanǰanean, K. (ed.) (1961). *Patmutʻiwn Hayocʻ* (History of the Armenians). Erevan: "Nairi" Publishing house.

Movsēs Xorenacʻi, *History of the Armenians*

Moses Khorenatsʻi (1978). *History of the Armenians*. Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources by R.W. Thomson. Cambridge (MA); London: Harvard University Press. Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 4.

Mxitʻar Ayrivanecʻi

Mxitʻar Ayrivanecʻi (2005). *Ganjer ew tałer* (Treasures and Songs). Ed. by Ê. Harowtʻyownyan. Erevan: "Nairi" Publishing house.

Narratio de rebus Armeniae

Garitte, G. (1952). *La "Narratio de rebus Armeniae". Édition critique et commentaire*. Louvain: Peeters. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 132; Subsidia 4.

Sokrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*

Hansen G.Ch. (hrsg.) (1995). *Sokrates Kirchengeschichtei*. Mit Beiträgen von M. Širinjan. Berlin: De Gruyter. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte n.F. 1.

Tēr-Movsēsean (ed.) (1897). *Sokratay Skʿolastikosi "Ekełecʿakan patmutʿiwn" ew "Patmutʿiwn varucʿ srboyn Siłbestrosi episkoposi Hṙovmay"* (The *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates Scholasticus and the *Story of the Life of St. Sylvester, Bishop of Rome*). Vałaršapat: tparan Mayr Atoṙoy S. Ējmiacni, 1-690.

Vita Silvestri (Arm. and Engl.)

Tēr-Movsēsean, M. (ed.) (1897). *Sokratay Skʿolastikosi "Ekełecʿakan Patmutʿiwn" ew «Patmutʿiwn varucʿ srboyn Siłbestrosi episkoposi Hṙovmay»* (The *Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates Scholasticus and the *Story of the Life of St. Sylvester, Bishop of Rome*). Vałaršapat: tparan Mayr Atoṙoy S. Ējmiacni, 691-799.

Thomson, R.W. (2005). "The Armenian Versions of the Life of Silvester". *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 14, 55-139.

Xačʿatryan, P.M. (2003). *Əntrani hay ekełecʿakan matenagrutʿyan* (Selected Works of Armenian Religious Literature). Ējmiacin: Mayr Atʿoṙ Surb Ējmiacni, 294-7.

Xapaean, S. (1898). *Bałdatutʿiwn tpagir Sokrati ew Erusałemi jeṙagrin* (The Comparison of the Published *Socrates* with the Jerusalem Manuscript). Yerusałēm: tp. Aṙakʿelakan atʿoṙoy S. Yakovbeancʿ.

Vita Silvestri (Gr.)

Combefis, F. (ed.) (1660). *Illustrium Christi martyrum lecti triumphi*, *vetustis Graecorum monumentis confignati*. Parisiis: sumptibus Antonii Bertier.

Vita Silvestri (Lat.)

Mombritius, B. (1910). *Sanctuarium sive Vitae Sanctorum*, vol. 2. Edited by H. Quentin and A. Brunet. Parisiis: apud Fontemoing et socios, 508-31.

Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʿi

Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʿi (1987). *History of Armenia*. Translation and commentary by Rev. K.H. Maksoudian. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʿi (1996). *Patmutʿiwn hayocʿ* (History of the Armenians). Modern Armenian translation and commentary by G.B. Tʿosunyan. Erevan: EPH hraratarkčʿutʿyun.

Secondary Literature

Adontz, N.G.; Garsoïan, N.G. (1970). *Armenia in the Period of Justinian. The Political Conditions Based on the Naxarar System*. Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Anastos, M.V. (2001). "The Theory of the Pentarchy and Byzantine Arguments Against the Roman Primacy". Vryonis, S.; Goodhue, N. (eds), *Aspects of the Mind of Byzantium. Political Theory, Theology, and Ecclesiastical Relations with the See of Rome*, vol. 4. Aldershot: Ashgate, 55-9.

Awetikʿean, G.; Siwrmēlean, X.; Awgerean, M. (1836). *Nor baṙgirkʿ haykazean lezui* (New Dictionary of Armenian Language). 2 vols. I Venetik: i tparani srboyn Łazaru.

Bartʻikyan, Hr. (2004). "*Dašancʻ tʻułtʻ*. Kazmə, stełcman žamanakə, hełinakn u npatak" (The *Letter of Alliance*. Composition, Date, Author, and Aim). *Patma-banasirakan handes*, 2, 65-116.

Baynes, N.H. (1972). *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*. Pref. by H. Chadwick. London: Oxford University Press.

Cadili, A. (2013). "Il veleno di Costantino. La donazione di Costantino tra spunti riformatori ed ecclesiologia ereticale". *Costantino I: Enciclopedia costantiniana sulla figura e l'immagine dell'imperatore del cosiddetto editto di Milano, 303-2013*, vol. 2. Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 621-43.

Canella, T. (2006). *Gli Actus Silvestri. Genesi di una leggenda su Costantino imperatore*. Spoleto: CISAM.

Canella, T. (2013). "Gli Actus Silvestri tra oriente e occidente. Storia e diffusione di una leggenda costantiniana". Melloni, A. et al. (a cura di), *Costantino I: Enciclopedia costantiniana sulla figura e l'immagine dell'imperatore del cosiddetto Editto di Milano, 313-2013*, vol. 2. Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 241-58.

Canella, T. (2018). s.v. "Sylvester I". Hunter, D.G. et al. (eds), *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*.
https://referenceworks.brill.com/search?q=Sylvester+I&source=%2Fdb%2Feeco

Castellano, D.J. (2006). "Commentary on the First Council of Nicaea".
https://www.arcaneknowledge.org/catholic/councils/comment01.htm

Coleman, Ch.B. (1914). *Constantine the Great and Christianity. Three Phases: The Historical, the Legendary, and the Spurious*. New York: Columbia University Press. Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law 146.

Di Rienzo, A. (2018-19). *Holiness and Power in Syriac Hagiographic Collections* [PhD dissertation]. Roma; Ghent: Sapienza Università di Roma; Ghent University.

Dvornik, F. (1958). *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press. Dumbarton Oaks Studies 4.

Erickson, J.H. (1991). *The Challenge of Our Past. Studies in Orthodox Canon Law and Church History*. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Fink, F.N. (1902). *Epipʻan Kipracʻu Ἔκθεσις πρωτοκλησιῶν πατριαρχῶν τε καὶ μητροπολιτῶν* (The Ἔκθεσις πρωτοκλησιῶν πατριαρχῶν τε καὶ μητροπολιτῶν by Epiphanius of Cyprus). Tʻiflis: aragatip Mn. Martiroseancʻi.

Fried, J. (2007). Donation of Constantine *and* Constitutum Constantini. *The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and Its Original Meaning*. Berlin; New York: De Gruyter.

Gandino, G. (2009). "Falsari romani o franchi? Ipotesi sul *Constitutum Constantini*". *Reti Medievali*, 10, 1-11.

Goodson, C.J.; Nelson, J.L. (2010). "Review Article: The Roman Contexts of the *Donation of Constantine*". *Early Medieval Europe*, 18(4), 446-7.

Grégoire, H. (1938). "Eusébe n'est pas l'auteur de la *Vita Constantini* dans sa forme actuelle et Constantin ne s'est pas 'converti' en 312". *Byzantion*, 13, 561-83.

Héféle, Ch.-J. (1869). *Histoire des Conciles d'après les document originaux*. Tomes I-XI. Paris: Letouzey et Ané.

Hovhannisyan, A. (1957). *Drvagner hay azatagrakan mtkʻi patmutʻyan* (Episodes from the History of the Armenian Liberation Ideology), vol. 1. Erevan: HSSṘ GA hratarakčʻutʻiwn.

Kauffman, T.F. (2016). "Nicaea and the Roman Precedent". *The Trinity Review*, 334-5, 1-12.

Labbe, P. (1671). *Sacrosancta concilia ad regiam editionem exacta quae nunc quarta parte prodit auctior*, t. II. Lutetiae Parisiorum: Impensis Societatis typographicae librorum ecclesiasticorum jussu regis constitutae.

Leppin, V. (2006). "Die Konstantinische Schenkung als Mittel der Papstkritik in Spät-mittelalter, Renaissance und Reformation". Fiedrowicz, M.; Krieger, G. (Hrsgg), *Konstantin der Grosse: der Kaiser und die Christen – Die Christen und der Kaiser*. Trier: Paulinus, 237-65.

Levine, J.M. (1973). "Reginald Pecock and Lorenzo Valla on the *Donation of Constantine*". *Studies in the Renaissance*, 20, 118-43.

Levison, W. (1924). "Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvester-Legende". *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle. Scritti di storia e paleografia*. Vol. 2, *Per la storia di Roma*. Roma: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 159-247. Studi e Testi 38.

Manarini, E. (2021). "The Translation of St Sylvester's Relics from Rome to Nonanto-la. Itineraries of Corpora Sacra at the Crossroads Between Devotion and Identity in Eighth-Tenth-Century Italy". *Medieval Worlds*, 13, 76-103.

Mansi, J.D. (1960-61). *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vols. 1-2. Graz: Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt.

Nève, F. (1857). *Constantin et Théodose devant les églises orientales*. Louvain-Bruxelles: C.-J. Fonteyn.

Pheidas, B.I. (2005). "Papal Primacy and Patriarchal Pentarchy in the Orthodox Tradition". Kasper, W. (ed.), *The Petrine Ministry. Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue*. New York: The Newman Press, 65-82.

Pogossian, Z. (2010). *The* Letter of Love and Concord. *A Revised Diplomatic Edition with Historical and Textual Comments and English Translation*. Leiden; Boston: Brill. The Medieval Mediterranean 88.

Raspanti, F. (2004). "Ipotesi per una cronologia della Donazione di Costantino (757-772)". *Pensiero politico medievale*, 2, 177-87.

Runciman, S. (1959). "Review of *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*. By Francis Dvornik". *Speculum*, 34(3), 463-5.

Šahnazareancʻ, K. (1862). *"Dašancʻ tʻłtʻoy" kʻnnutʻiwnn u herkʻumə* (Critique and Refutation of the *Letter of Love and Concord*). Paris: i gorcarani K.V. Šahnazareancʻ.

Sanspeur, C. (1974). "La version arménienne de la *Visio Constantini* BHG 396". *Handēs amsōreay*, 88, 307-20.

Sebeos (1999). *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*. Transl., with notes, by R.W. Thomson. Historical commentary by J. Howard-Johnston. Assistance from T. Greenwood, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Shirinian, M.E. [Širinyan] (1994). "Ricerche sulla *Storia Ecclesiastica* di Socrate Scolastico e sulle sue versioni armene". *Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie Orientale*, 33(3), 151-67.

Shirinian, M.E. (1996). "The Ancient Armenian Versions of Socrates Scholasticus's *Ecclesiastica Historia*. Their Destiny in the Armenian Milieu". Ševčenko, I.; Litavrin, G.G.; Hanak, W.K. (eds), *Acts, XVIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Selected Papers, Main and Communications (Moscow, 1991)*. Vol. 4, *Literature, Sources, Numismatics and History of Science*. Shepherdstown: Byzantine Studies Press, 217-22.

Shirinian, M.E. (1997). "The Armenian Versions of the *Vita Silvestri*". Awde, N. (ed.), *Armenian Perspectives. 10th Anniversary Conference of the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes*. Richmond: Curzon, 69-75.

Shirinian, M.E. (2003). "The *Letter of Love and Concord* Between Rome and Armenia. A Case of Forgery from the Period of Crusaders". Ciggaar, K.; Teule, H. (eds), *East and West in the Crusader States: Context, Contacts, Confrontations*. Vol. 3, *Acta of the Congress Held at Hernen Castle in September 2000*. Leuven; Dudley: Peeters, 79-99. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 125.

Shirinian, M.E. (2003-04). "The Shorter Socrates. A Review Article". *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 13, 83-97.

Shirinian, M.E. (2005). *Kʿristoneakan vardapetutʿyan antik ev hellenistakan tarrerə. Haykakan ev hunakan, dasakan ev byuzandakan, ałbyurneri bałdatutʿyamb* (Antique and Hellenistic Elements in the Christian Teaching, with a Comparison of Armenian and Classical and Byzantine Greek Sources). Erevan: Maštocʿi anvan hin jeřagreri institut "Matenadaran".

Shirinian, M.E. (2006a). "Sełbestrosi Varkʿə ev Dašancʿ Tʿułtʿə" (The *Vita Silvestri* and the *Letter of Love and Concord*). *Banber Matenadarani*, 17, 53-77.

Shirinian, M.E. (2006b). s.v. "Grigor III Pahlavuni". *Pravoslavnaja Enciklopedija* (The Orthodox Encyclopaedia), vol. 12, 449.

Shirinian, M.E. (2009). "'Tetrarxiaʾ-i (kʿařišxanutʿyan) tesutʿyunn əst mi šarkʿ haykakan ałbyurneri" (The Teaching of 'Tetrarchy' according to Some Armenian Sources). *Ējmiacin*, 6, 84-97.

Shirinian, M.E. (2010). "Əndhanrakan Ekełecʿu Aṙakʿelakan atʿoṙneri vardapetutʿyan jevavorumə ev zargacʿumə" (Formation and Development of the Teaching of Apostolic Sees of the Universal Church). Ter-Vardanyan, G. (ed.), *Nyutʿer Matenadarani himnadir tnōreni cnndyan innsunamyakin nvirvac miǰazgayin gitažołovi* (9-11 hoktemberi, 2008 tʿ.) (Materials of the International Conference Dedicated to the Ninetieth Anniversary of the Founder-Director of the Matenadaran Levon Khachikian, 9-11 October, 2008). Erevan: "Nairi" Publishing House, 90-9.

Shirinian, M.E. (2016). *Byzantine Policy Concerning the Government of Christendom by Patriarchal Sees: 'Tetrarchy' and Pentarchy. The 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies = Conference Proceedings* (Belgrade, 22-27 August), 8. Moscow: Pravoslavnaia Entsiklopediia.

Shirinian, M.E. (2021). s.v. "Salomeja Aršakuni". *Pravoslavnaja Enciklopedija* (The Orthodox Encyclopaedia), vol. 61, 186.

Starostin, D. (2008). "*Žitie papy Silʾvestra* i novye dannye po rukopisnoj tradicii teksta" (The *Life of Pope Sylvester* and New Data on the Manuscript Tradition of its Text). *Rusʾ i Vizantija. Mesto stran vizantijskogo kruga vo vzaimootnošenijax Vostoka i Zapada = Tezisy dokladov XVIII Vserossijskoj naučnoj sessii vizantinistov (Moskva, 20-21 oktjabrja, 2008 g)*. (Rusʾ and Byzantium. The Place of the Countries of the Byzantine Circle in the Relations Between East and West = Abstracts of the papers presented at the session of Byzantine Studies of the Eighteenth Panrussian Scientific Workshop (Moscow, 20-21 October 2008). Moskva: Akademija Nauk – SSSR Institut vseobščej istorii RAN, 126-9.

Starostin, D. (2012). "Maloizvestnyj sjužet iz istorii otečestvennogo vizantinovedenija. Neudavšiesja popytki izdanija *Žitija Konstantina i Eleny* i *Žitija papy Silʾvestra* v konce XIX-načale XX v. i novye dannye o rukopisnoj tradicii jetix tekstov" (A Little-Known Story from the History of Russian Byzantine Studies. Failed Attempts to Publish *The Lives of Constantine and Helen* and *The Life of Pope Sylvester* at the End of the Nineteenth-Beginning of the Twentieth Centuries – and New Data on the Manuscript Tradition of These Texts). *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 71, 124-43.

Starostin, D.N. (2017). "*Žitie papy Silʾvestra* i poiski idei xristianskoj imperii. Problemy rukopisnoj tradicii v kontekste stanovlenija cerkvi v IV-VI vv." (The *Life of Pope Sylvester* and the Search for the Ideas of a Christian Empire. Questions on the Manuscript Tradition in the Context of the Formation of the Church in the Fourth-Sixth Centuries). *Vestnik Tomskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta*, 415, 119-25.

Straw, C. (2006). "Much Ado About Nothing. Gregory the Great's Apology to the Istrians". Chazelle, C.; Cubitt, C. (eds), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*. Turnhout: Brepols, 121-60. Studies in the Early Middle Ages 14.

Thomson, R.W. (1997). "Constantine and Trdat in Armenian Tradition". *Acta Orientalia*, 50(1-3), 277-89.

Thomson, R.W. (2001a). "The Crusaders through Armenian Eyes". Laiou, A.E.; Motta-
hedeh, R.P. (eds), *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim
World*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 71-82.

Thomson, R.W. (2001b). *The Armenian Adaptation of the Ecclesiastical History of So-
crates Scholasticus. Commonly Known as "The Shorter Socrates"*. Leuven; Paris;
Sterling (VA): Peeters. Hebrew University Armenian Texts 3.

Uluhogian, G. (2003). "Un tardo apocrifo armeno relativo a Costantino il Grande: la
Lettera dell'unione". *Bizantinistica*, 5, 369-85.

Van Esbroeck, M. (1982). "Legends about Constantine in Armenian". Samuelian, Th.J.
(ed.), *Classical Armenian Culture. Influences and Creativity = Proceedings of the
First Dr. H. Markarian Conference on Armenian Culture*. Chico (CA): Scholars Press,
79-101. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. University of Pennsylvania Ar-
menian Texts and Studies 4.

Van Esbroeck, M. (1991). "Primauté, patriarcats, catholicossats, autocephalies en
orient". Maccarone, M. (a cura di), *Il primato del Vescovo di Roma nel primo millen-
nio. Ricerche e testimonianze = Atti del Symposium storico-teologico* (Roma, 9-13 ot-
tobre 1989). Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 493-521.

Xačʻatryan, P.; Kʻyoseyan, H. (2003). "Ǝntrani hay ekełecʻakan matenagrutʻyan" (Se-
lected Works of Armenian Religious Literature). *Surb Ējmiacin*, 294-7.

Anania Širakac'i's *k'nnikon* Reconsidered

Stephanie Pambakian
University Saint Andrews, UK; Université de Genève, Suisse

Abstract Armenian medieval sources record that the seventh-century mathematician Anania Širakac'i was commissioned with the creation of a perpetual calendar for the Armenians. These include Step'anos Tarōnec'i (eleventh century), who uses the term *k'nnikon* in reference to Širakac'i's work, the exact meaning of which has been matter of debate. Scholars have suggested that it was a synonym of 'chronicle', and that it may have been used to indicate Širakac'i's perpetual calendar. The present article explores this idea further, comparing evidence in Armenian, Syriac and Georgian that had not been taken into account before in this context, showing that *k'nnikon* was used to refer to an era based on an Easter cycle, a *computus*, and its use in Tarōnec'i's History may indicate Easter tables attributed to Anania Širakac'i.

Keywords Anania Širakac'i. K'nnikon. Classical Armenian. Seventh century. Calendar-making. Time-reckoning. Armenian Era. Roman Era. Paschal cycle. Easter cycle. Computus.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Anania's Calendar in Medieval Sources. – 2.1 Presentation of the Sources: A Lost Calendar? – 2.2 A New *Computus*? – 2.3 *K'nnikon* in *Letter 21* and *Letter 25* of Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros. – 2.4 *K'nnikon* and *K'ronikon* in Armenian Sources. – 2.5 The *Chronicon* and Paschal Cycles. – 2.6 Where Does *K'nnikon* Come From? – 2.7 A New Era. – 3 Concluding Remarks.

1   Introduction

Anania Širakac'i is amongst the most-highly celebrated figures in the history of Armenian scientific tradition; however, the achievements and contribution of this seventh-century mathematician remain hard to grasp; this article proposes a re-assessment of Anania Širakac'i's activity and production. In particular, it presents a fresh analysis of medieval sources and shows that the word *k'nnikon*, associated with a commission he was responsible for at the time of the Armenian Catholicos Anastas, refers to a calendar, or, most likely, to an Easter cycle, a *computus*.

A key passage that needs re-examination in this discussion is the testimony of the eleventh-century historiographer Step'anos Tarōnec'i, where, to our knowledge, the earliest attestation of the term *k'nnikon* is found. As this article demonstrates, strong elements point at the identification of this term with an Easter cycle. Supporting evidence shall be provided by means of a comparison with time-reckoning terminology employed in Armenian, Syriac and Georgian sources, to show that the piece of work that may most probably be ascribed to Anania Širakac'i from testimonies is a festivity calendar. This might be seen in relation to the emergence of a new dating practice in the seventh century, that is the reckoning of years in an 'Armenian Era', whose starting point is the year 552-553 AD.

Our argument inherently challenges a view that identifies Anania's *k'nnikon* with a textbook for the teaching of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, as described in Grigor Magistros' *Letter 21*, implying that what the mathematician had presented to the Catholicos and the bishops in the seventh century was a collection of books for the teaching of the seven *artes*. This interpretation is methodologically problematic and, in the light of our analysis of the meaning of *k'nnikon*, evidence in Grigor Magistros' letters invite for reconsideration, and may reveal new information in regard to both Anania Širakac'i's and Grigor Magistros' textual tradition and legacy.

2 Anania's Calendar in Medieval Sources

2.1 Presentation of the Sources: A Lost Calendar?

The primary source of information about Anania Širakac'i is the so-called *Autobiography*,[1] which, whilst certainly providing some information on the author's life, contains very little on his origins and none about his scholarly production. No other contemporary sources with such information survive other than internal references found in texts attributed to the same Širakac'i. Although no reference to a calendar is found here, we hence acquire information about Širakac'i's teacher Tychicos, who visited the major centres of learning of the time, including Alexandria, offering an explicit connection between Širakac'i and the computational tradition of the Roman-Byzantines.[2]

Medieval historians record information in regard to his career and production: the first mention of Anania 'Anec'i' (lit. 'from near Ani', referring to Širakac'i) is preserved by the Catholicos and historiographer Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i (ninth-tenth century)[3] in a brief account of when the Armenian Catholicos Anastas (661-7) requested Anania to produce an "immovable calendar" (*anšarž tōmar*).

From this passage, it appears that what is meant by this expression is most likely a calendar in which the months would always fall in the same season, and so would the non-mobile feasts such as Christmas.[4] Such calendar, Drasxanakertc'i records, has never been ap-

---

[1] *Ink'nakensagrut'iwn* (Autobiography) is preserved in two recensions, which are generally referred to as short and long (Abrahamyan 1944, 32; Berbérian 1964, 189-91). For the editions, cf. Patkanean 1877a, 1-4 (short); Abrahamyan 1944, 206-9 (long), both reprinted in Matenagirk' Hayoc' (henceforth MH) 2003 ff., 4: 591-7, apparently without further editing. The text was translated into Russian (Patkanean 1877b, preface); English (Conybeare 1897; Greenwood 2011); German (Bauer, Markwart 1929); French (Berbérian 1964); and Modern Eastern Armenian (Abrahamyan, Petrosyan 1979, 25-9).

[2] Anania's desire to study mathematics, the *Autobiography* reads, took him on a journey out of Armenia to find an instructor, first in Theodosiopolis and then in Trebizond. Here he was accepted as a student by Tychicos, and the text further tells of Tychicos' own journey and scholarly formation. The account ends with Anania's return to the motherland and his dissatisfaction as a teacher there. Cf. Greenwood 2011, 138-42; Berbérian 1964, 191-4.

[3] Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i was a Catholicos of Armenia between the end of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth. He wrote a *History of the Armenians* from the Deluge to his days, including the Arab invasions and the rise of the Bagratuni family (Hairapetian 1995, 224; Thomson 1997, 228).

[4] The Julian and the Gregorian calendars, for example, obtain this result to different degrees of precision by means of leap years (a solar year lasts 365.24219 days, and the Julian calendar approximates it to 365.25 days). Such calendars may be seen as the repetition of cycles, and for this reason they are also called 'perpetual'. The approximation of the year of the Julian calendar eventually causes a disparity, too, as it runs ahead of the actual solar year. The Gregorian reform was an attempt to bring the approximation

proved of by the Church council during Anastas' lifetime nor adopted by later Catholicoi. He writes:

> Իսկ Անաստասայ հայրապետին հոգացեալ վասն Հայկականս տոմարի, զի թերեւս անշարժ զնա ըստ այլոց ազգաց մարթասցէ յօրինել․ զի միշտ անշարժք լինիցին տօնք տարեկանաց կամ յեղափոխ յեղանակք ժամանակաց․ Վասն որոյ եւ առ ինքն զԱնանիա Անեցի կոչեալ որ բանիբուն այնմ արուեստի էր հմուտ, հրամայէ նմա ստեղծագործել զխնդրելին իւր․ Իսկ նորա ջան ի վերայ եղեալ եւ ըստ բոլոր ազգաց պայմանի անշուշտ յօրինեալ զկարգ Հայկականս տոմարի․ զի բարեձեւագունից ումանց եւ զմերս կշտադատեալ մի կարօտասցուք զալ ի զուգաւորութիւն Հոռմայեցւոց․ Եւ մինչդեռ խորհէր մեծն Անաստաս ժողովոք եաիսկոսպոսաց զեղեալսն հաստատել վախճան կենաց նմա ժամանէր, կացեալ յաթոռ հայրապետութեան ամս վեց․ Անփոյթ զկնի եկեղեցւոյն այսմիկ արարեալ եւ զառաջին մշտախաղաց շրջագայեալ կարգ կալեալ․ (Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʻi 1912, 92)

Patriarch Anastas took measures, moreover, concerning the Armenian calendar, intending to make it immovable on the example of other nations, so that the feast days and the times of the seasons' changes may always be fixed.[5] For this reason he summoned to himself Anania of Ani, who was well versed and an expert in that art, and ordered him to create what he wished for. And he [i.e. Anania] worked hard on this and adjusted the order of the Armenian calendar according to the manner of all other nations, so that, making our [calendar] concord with other, better designed [ones], we would not need to run in union with the Romans.[6] And

---

to a higher degree of precision, so that by means of skipping some leap years it obtains a solar year of 365.2425 days.

[5] It appears that the Armenian Calendar in use at that time was based on a year of 12 months of 30 days each with the addition of 5 epagomenal, or intercalary days, which amount to a total 365 days (12×30+5), and the start of its adoption in Armenia may have dated to the Achaemenid rule (Stern 2012, 179-81). Because the duration of a solar year is of 365 days and approximately 6 hours (365.24219 days), without a leap year the calendar would eventually cause months to shift from a season to another.

[6] 'Romans' here most probably refers to the Byzantines. The opening of this passage suggests that the purpose of Anania's calculations was that of allowing Armenians to harmonise their movable calendar to those of other nations, therefore it seems to us that this remark on the Romans is out of place. In the *Discourse on Easter* attributed to Anania Širakacʻi, the author speaks highly of the computation techniques of Alexandria, that is Roman too. It is possible that Drasxanakertcʻi misinterprets the work carried out by Anania, or that, in his time of political instability, he manifests a bias in favour of a national (uniquely Armenian) calendar against the necessity to rely on a Roman one. According to the information presented by the same Drasxanakertcʻi immediately above, however, Anania Širakacʻi was asked to make the Armenian calendar perpetual (immovable), which would have resulted in allowing the Armenians to use the Roman *computus* for the dating of festivities, and arrange their calendar into perpetual

while Anastas was thinking of establishing those great changes through a council of bishops, the end of his life came about, after he had been on the patriarchal see for six years. Those who came after [him] neglected this [matter] and kept the former, ever-wandering system. (Author's transl.)[7]

It appears to describe a failed calendar reform: no traces are left of it. The old Armenian calendar based on the Persian model, that is 12 months of 30 days with 5 additional days, persisted into the modern times. Another attempt to reform the calendar was later made in the twelfth century, and it was likewise unsuccessful.[8] It is possible that a reform was attempted and the details of its design were lost, and Drasxanakertcʻi's *History* seems to have served as a source for later historiographers who record these events as well, without introducing significant variations, for example the thirteenth-century historian Kirakos Ganjakecʻi.[9]

There is, however, one source which may reveal different information on this matter, suggesting that this new calendar might have been a calculation for the dating of Easter.

2.2   A New *Computus*?

Of particular significance is the witnessing preserved in the *Universal History* by Stepʻanos Tarōnecʻi Asołik,[10] dating to the start of the

---

cycles. We also note that such a negative reference to the Romans' *computus* is absent from other accounts of these events, for example Ganjakecʻi's and Tarōnecʻi's histories.

7 Cf. French translation by Mahé 1987, 199-200.

8 Stepʻanos had designed a new Armenian calendar with a leap year, but it was not adopted; cf. Orengo 2008, 209-10 fn. 19.

9 His *History of the Armenians* narrates events from the Armenians' conversion to Christianity to the middle of the thirteenth century; cf. Hairapetian 1995, 234. In regard to the immovable calendar he writes: Եւ յետ Ներսէսի առ զկաթողիկոսութիւնն տէր Անաստաս ամս վեց: Սա կոչեաց առ ինքն զմեծ վարդապետն Անանիա՝ ի Շիրակ զաւառէ, այր բանիբուն ի հանճարեղ, զիւռող լոյժ ամենայն տոմարական արուեստին, զի կարգիցեն անշարժ տոմար հայոց, որպէս այլոց ազգաց: Զոր արարեալ մեծաւ ջանիւ, եւ մինչ կամէին ժողովով հաստատել, վախճանի սուրբն Անաստաս: Անմիջոյթ եղեալ իրն զկնի եկեղցն, այլ առաջին կարգաւն վարէին: Kirakos Ganjakecʻi 1961, 62, 8-16. (After Nerses, lord Anastas occupied the Catholicosate for six years [661-7]. Anastas summoned to himself the great *vardapet* Anania from the district of Shirak [a learned and brilliant man, and very knowledgeable in all the calendrical systems] to establish an immovable Armenian calendar, as other peoples had. Anania worked on this with great effort, until they were ready to adopt it through an assembly. But just then, the holy Anastas died. Those succeeding him as *katʻoghikos* neglected the matter and so they continued according to the former systems; translated by Bedrosian [1986]. Cf. also Orengo 2008, 209).

10 Historian active in the early eleventh century, his *Universal History* presents an account of human history from Creation to AD 1004-05. Cf. Greenwood 2017, 32.

eleventh century, who devotes part of book II to the sequence of patriarchs who succeeded one another on the Holy See. It offers notes as brief as their provenance and length of catholicosate, or as extensive as to record their activities and any contemporary people or events of relevance. From Tarōnec'i's *History*:

> Իսկ Անաստաս խորհեալ Հայաստանայցս կարգել տոմար անշարժ ըստ այլոց ազգաց՝ եւ հրամայէ Անանիայի Շիրակացւոյ[11] կարգել զքննիկոնն[12] հրաշագան, յորում զտոմարս մեր կարգեաց անշարժ: Եւ Անաստասայ խորհեալ ժողովով եւ եպիսկոպոսաւք հաստատել զքննիկոնն[13] եւ վախճանի կացեալ յաթոռն ամս Զ (6): (MH 15: 702, 159-60)

> Anastas intended moreover to establish an immovable calendar for us Armenians, on the example of those of other nations: and he commanded Anania Širakac'i to establish the wonderful *k'nnikon*, through which he made our calendar immovable. And Anastas intended to ratify the *k'nnikon* through a council and the bishops, and he died after holding the throne for six years. (Author's transl.)

In contrast with Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i's account quoted above, Step'anos Tarōnec'i introduces the term *k'nnikon* to describe what was being commissioned by the Catholicos. This has been interpreted in different ways in modern scholarship. One understanding of this term is that it refers to a chronicle or a calendar, which would be in line with Yovhannēs' testimony.

Our suggestion is that *k'nnikon* means something more specific, and that Step'anos Tarōnec'i's account ascribes to Anania some tool for the calculation of festivities that would determine the date of Easter.

Tables of a feast calendar attributed to Anania Širakac'i have been preserved by manuscript tradition; in particular we refer to the *532-Year Cycle*,[14] which reflects a technique elaborated in Alex-

---

[11]   *Širakec'woc'* in two witnesses.

[12]   *Zk'nnikonn*. The editors change it to *zk'rawnikonn* զքրաւնիկոնն (*zk'rōnikonn*), we restore reading from all manuscripts reported in the apparatus of the printed edition (A = M2865, thirteenth century; B = M3502; C= M4584; D= M3070; E= M1482; O= V869 from the second half of the seventeenth century). The editors justify their correction by referring to the *Nor Baṙgirk' Haykazean Lezui* (henceforth NHBL) 2: 1009.

[13]   See note above.

[14]   *532 bolorak*; cf. Anasyan 1959, 744. Hewsen (1968, 41; 1992, 279) associated the title *Cycle 532 and the Calendar* to the Armenian *Tiezeragitut'iwn ew T'omar*. This might generate confusion because *Tiezeragitut'iwn ew T'omar* is the title of Abrahamyan's 1940 edition of the long recension of the *Cosmology* (10 chapters) and of 72 chapters on various calendrical matters (*Voprosy i resheniya* 'Problems and Solutions' in Orbeli's Russian translation from 1918), where no tables are included. Hewsen himself

andria to calculate the date of Easter.[15] This cycle is a computation of Easter that would cover the years 552-553 to 1084-85 AD, starting from where the charts made by Andreas, brother of Magnus (fourth century) ended.[16] Parts of them have been preserved in manuscripts and they are attributed to Anania Širakac'i. Four folios of this *computus* are preserved in manuscript M2679,[17] and another copy of it was transcribed by Ēynatyan from M1999.[18] Ēynatyan (2002b, 14) reports that most scholars do not believe Anania Širakac'i's tables have survived, and, in presenting the tables attributed to him from M1999 (twelfth century), the scholar comments that they must be the product of later interventions by Yovhannēs Imastasēr in the eleventh century (19-21). While proving the authenticity of these tables is, at least for the moment, beyond us, it is worth pointing out that such eventual re-elaboration, re-editing or even a falsification of such tables would have occurred around the same time as Step'anos Tarōnec'i's *Universal History*, opening the question of the reception, understanding and representation of Anania Širakac'i's figure in this period.

In any case, a noticeable piece of innovation does take place at the time of Širakac'i, and it may be the result of his response to the Catholicos' request: Armenian sources show a new dating system, called 'the Armenian Era', appearing from the seventh century. Its starting point corresponds to the beginning of a new Easter cycle's in AD 552-553, and its duration, 532 years, would be the same as the cycle. We explore the possibility that this may be related to the Anania Širakac'i's activity, and to an Easter *computus* that was also referred to as *k'nnikon* at least from the eleventh century.

---

translates the title *Tiezeragitut'iwn ew T'omar* as *Cosmography and Chronology* elsewhere in the same article (1968, 33 fn. 9).

15 This is a computing technique based on a 19-year long cycle. Cf. Warntjes 2007, 55 fn. 75. A 532-year table contains 28×19-year cycles, and its implementation is associated with Annianus (Mosshammer 2008, 199).

16 Andreas, brother of Magnus, wrote Easter tables covering a 200-year period from 353 to 552 AD; cf. Mosshammer 2008, 93.

17 *Non vidi*; after Abrahamyan 1944, 262. The abbreviation M indicates mss from the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia. We refer to the same abbreviation system throughout the article; cf. Coulie 2020. M2679 is dated to AD 981; cf. Tēr-Vardanean 2013. From the surviving fragments, Abrahamyan (1944, 262-82) published a reconstruction of the rest of the chart, reprinted in MH 4: 635-68. This was translated into Modern Armenian by Abrahamyan and Petrosyan (1979, 174-249).

18 M1999 is composed of three manuscripts, the first two dating to the twelfth century, and the third to the thirteenth. The texts discussed and edited by Ēynatyan (2002a; 2002b, the latter presenting an English translation by Muradyan and Topchyan) are found in the first manuscript. According to Ēynatyan, the tables found in M1999 had been discarded by Abrahamyan as too jumbled to be of any use, but the data contained in the tables was sufficient to set the page-order right (21).

2.3 *K'nnikon* in *Letter 21* and *Letter 25* of Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros

Because of its occurrence in relation to *Letter 21* of Grigor Magistros's epistles, the word *k'nnikon* has also been attributed a meaning that would be similar to the Latin *summa*; an organic collection of works conceived with a didactic purpose. This is currently the most widely accepted interpretation of this term within scholarship, but, in our view, not the best one.

The epistolary collection of the erudite and statesman Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros (eleventh century) does in fact record information about Anania Širakac'i's production. Relevant passages are found in two letters sent to the contemporary Catholicos of the Armenians, Petros Getadarj: the first (*Letter 21*, cf. especially Muradyan 2012; MH 16: 270-1 sentences 33-7) describing a book for the teaching of several subjects, explicitly attributed to Anania Širakac'i, which Grigor Pahlawuni claims to be kept at the Catholicosate. The second relevant document is *Letter 25* (cf. especially Muradyan 2012; MH 16: 284 sentences 3-4) which Muradyan suggests to have been written in thanksgiving for the book, which Magistros confirms to have received (Muradyan 2012, 105-6), although it contains no further information on the book's content and no mention of Anania Širakac'i's name.

These letters call for a careful examination, as they may allow us to trace new connections in the history of ideas and of education in this period, which, for matters of space, shall await for a different occasion. What suffices to point out in this context is that very little is known about the history of Magistros' epistolary collection, and scholarship is silent in regards to who was responsible for its compilation and for assigning titles to the letters. The problem of editing is in fact a fundamental one when it comes to the question of Anania's *Great K'nnikon*, because this term was not used by Grigor Pahlawuni himself, but it is only found in the title of *Letter 21*. It is possible that it is found here due to an existing association between *k'nnikon*, i.e. Anania's computational endeavour as we argue, and Anania's name mentioned overtly in the body of *Letter 21*. Its presence here may therefore be of secondary importance, if not an accident altogether.

We further observe that the said title, mentioning the *Great K'nnikon*, brings additional support to our hypothesis that associates *k'nnikon* to a computational era. We suggest this inasmuch as the period covered by the following 532 years starting from AD 1085 designed by Yovhannēs Imastasēr in the eleventh century, that would be a second paschal cycle following the one starting in AD 552, is addressed as the 'New' or the 'Small' Armenian Era in the sources (cf. for example Kirakos of Ganjak and Mxitar Goš, quoted in Dulaurier 1859, 114), which distinguishes the second cycle from the preceding one, the 'Great'

Era, a distinction that could only occur after the eleventh century.[19]

Whoever gave titles to Grigor Magistros' letters must have therefore made an association between Anania Širakacʻi, named in the letter, and what he was known to have created, namely the *Great Kʻnnikon*. The description of this collection of books ascribed to Širakacʻi as found in Magistros' *Letter 21* and its possible follow-up, number 25, leave several open questions, and the extent to which they may add to our understanding of Anania Širakacʻi's production, Grigor Pahlawuni's agenda and a wider context of the history of ideas, is yet to be investigated further.

2.4 *Kʻnnikon* and *Kʻronikon* in Armenian Sources

Let us now come back to Tarōnecʻi's testimony and to our suggestion that the term *kʻnnikon* belonged to the semantic sphere of time-reckoning. We shall presently discuss attested uses of *kʻnnikon* as a synonym or an alternative spelling or indicating something similar to *kʻronikon* (chronicle), and show how this, taking into consideration the complexity of both terms, may have referred to a calendar.

The term *kʻnnikon* has been identified as an alternative spelling for *kʻronikon* (chronicle),[20] and this is evident in the discussed passage from Stepʻanos Tarōnecʻi's *History* as pointed out in the notes to the Armenian text. Tarōnecʻi's passage shows the reading *kʻnnikon*, and the editors changed it to *kʻrōnikon*,[21] which usually translates as 'chronicle'. This choice is explained with reference to the NHBL, where *kʻnnikon* is given as an alternative spelling for *kʻronikon*, and one may presume that the editors took these terms as synonyms and may have thus decided to present the readers with a simpler, straightforward term, although we do not dare to speculate on their reasons for this intervention.

What we shall note, however, is that previous manuscript tradition also attests a number of cases where the opposite happens, and compilers use *kʻnnikon* where *kʻronikon* could be expected: Abgaryan has collected instances where copyists or list compilers used one term in place of the other, and further argues that alternative spellings that appear to be 'in between' these two words (see point 6 below) would demonstrate that *kʻnnikon* and *kʻronikon* were used as synonyms (Abgaryan 1986, 26-33; cf. also Mahé 1987, 168-70).

---

[19]   The twelfth-century manuscript M1999 reports definitions of the two Armenian Eras, the Great and Small (Ēynatyan 2002b, 18).

[20]   Cf. especially Abgaryan 1986; Matʻevosyan 1974. The NHBL dictionary indicates that *kʻnnikon* is an alternative form for *kʻronikon* (chronicle), *žamanakagrutʻiwn* (chronography, chronicle) but also *tomar* (calendar), and *tomaragirkʻ* (calendar-book) (NHBL 2: 1009 col. 1).

[21]   An alternative spelling for *kʻronikon* (NHBL 2: 1019 col. 2).

We shall give a brief account of Abgaryan's list of supporting evidence that identify *k'nnikon* with *k'ronikon*:

1. In two manuscript copies of the eighteenth-century list *Patmagirk' Hayoc'*, a scribe refers to Samuēl Anec'i's *Chronicle*[22] as *k'nnikon gawazanagirk'*: "Samuēl the Priest [i.e. Anec'i], who made the *k'nnikon gawazanagirk'*".[23] *Gawazanagirk'* is a compound word from *gawazan* (rule), and *girk'* (book), which may translate as 'chronicle' or 'book of chronicles'. Anec'i's work is indeed a chronicle, modelled on the example of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon*, leaving no doubt that this instance of *k'nnikon gawazanagirk'* indicates a chronicle.

2. In copies of Vanakan Vardapet's *Book of Questions*, originally composed in the thirteenth century, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon* is referred to as *k'nnikon*: "And he [i.e. Eusebius] made the *Ecclesiastical History* and the *K'nnikon*".[24] Abgaryan only cites two witnesses here, the earliest of these dating to the fifteenth century, but states that there are more (which we presume later than the copies he cites).

3. In at least two manuscript copies of Vardan Arewelc'i's *Universal History*, which dates to the thirteenth century, Samuēl Anec'i's *Chronicle* is referred to with the term *gawazan* in the accusative plural, i.e. 'the lines', 'the rules', 'the canons', and it is thought that Anec'i had followed the model of the *k'ronikon*, most likely referring to Eusebius' *Chronicle* or some later work of a similar kind: "Samuēl the Priest Anec'i, who modelled the *gawazans* on the example of the *k'ronikon*".[25]

   Whilst in point 1 the *gawazanagirk'* is associated with *k'nnikon*, here the *gawazans* are said to be modelled on a *k'ronikon*, allowing us to infer that, if not synonyms, *k'nnikon* and *k'ronikon* do at least have a feature in common; something related to ruling or canons. The observation is further reinforced by Abgaryan's note concerning the 1861 edition of Arewelc'i's *Universal History*, indicating that both witnesses read "Samuēl the Priest of the land, who modelled the

---

22 Samuēl Anec'i was an Armenian historian active in the twelfth century. His *Universal Chronicle* begins with the story of Adam and reaches the events of the year 1178-80 (Boyadjian 2016). Cowe describes Anec'i's *Chronicle* as an example of a "chronographic approach" (1997, 305).

23 Սամուէլ երեց, որ արար զքննիկոնն գաւազանագիրքն (M2220, f. 292; M2271, f. 214; after Abgaryan 1986, 32). M2220 dates to AD 1789-90 and M2271 to AD 1724.

24 Չեկեղեցական պատմութիւնն եւ զՔննիկոն նա արար (M3074, f. 98*r*; M1254, f. 40*v*, "and other mss"; after Abgaryan 1986, 32). M3074 dates to the fifteenth century and M1254 to the seventeenth century.

25 Սամուէլ երեց Անեցին, որ զգաւազանն յօրինեաց Քրոնիկոնին (Vardan Arewelc'i's Universal History, ed. Emin 1861, 159).

gawazans on the example of Anec'i's *K'nnikon*",[26] showing that the two words appear to have been used interchangeably in this instance.

4. Another occurrence comes from a manuscript copy of a commentary by Esayi Nč'ec'i.[27] In M5254 (AD 1280) Nč'ec'i cites a passage where Cyril of Alexandria refers to the *Chronicon* of Eusebius using the term *k'nnikon*: "But I searched in the first [book of] the *K'nnikon* and found…". (Author's transl.)[28] The same work is referred to as *k'ronikon* in another passage where Nč'ec'i cites Cyril of Alexandria, preserved in M5566 (fourteenth century). The citation, in reference to the Eusebian *Chronicon*, reads: "Many times I searched in the *K'ronikon*".[29]

5. Abgaryan then cites two occurrences found in a manuscript list kept at the library of the Monastery of St John's, known as Amrdolu, compiled by Vardan of Bałēš (Bałišec'i) in the seventeenth century. An edition of this list, based on a manuscript referred to as 639 of the Holy See collection (Ējmiacin), was published in 1903,[30] and it reports: "105*r*. Book, a dictionary[31]

---

26 Սամուէլ երէց աշխարհի, որ զգաւազանն յօրինեաց Քննիկոնին անեցին (Emin 1861, 159 fn. 2). The copies used in this edition are one printed, unnumbered copy from Moscow and a manuscript from Tiflis dating to 1814, made from a fifteenth century manuscript and presented to the Rumyantsev Museum of St Petersburg (Emin 1861, VII). We point out that this citation appears to present a logical impossibility in stating that Samuēl the Priest, who is otherwise known as Samuēl Anec'i, modelled his work on Anec'i's. This is either the result of confusion or some transmission errors, or perhaps an indication that there was another chronicle by someone called Anec'i. Anania Širakac'i, as seen above, is referred to as 'Anec'i' in Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i's *History* (1912, 92), and this work could either be identified with a calendar or with a chronicle. For the contention that Širakac'i wrote a chronicle, cf. Abrahamyan 1944; Abgaryan 1986. Abrahamyan suggested that this might coincide with an existing anonymous chronicle, which he published in his anthology of works by Anania Širakac'i (1944, 357-99). This text was previously edited by Sargisean in 1904 as Anonymous, and it had also been suggested that the author responsible for it, or at least for part of it, is an otherwise unknown Pilon Tirakac'i/Širakac'i (Greenwood 2008, 249).

27 Active in the thirteenth century, associated with the Glajor Monastery and teaching institution.

28 Իսկ ես յառաջին քննիկոնէն խնդրել զոր… (f. 59*r*; after Abgaryan 1986, 33 fn. 64).

29 Պազում անգամ յուսեցի ի Քրոնիկոնն (f. 8*r*; after Abgaryan 1986, 33). He invites comparison with M1241 (AD 1612), f. 7*v* (Abgaryan 1986, 33 fn. 63). It is unclear why Abgaryan did not compare the same sentence from the two sources.

30 Ter-Hakobian 1903. These examples are discussed in Mat'evosyan 1974, 73-4.

31 This reference to a *baṙagirk'* (dictionary) seems unusual for a collection of scientific or philosophical texts. It was probably used to indicate that it contained information on several topics, similar to the modern encyclopaedia. On this, we invite a comparison with Pseudo-Zeno's *On Nature*, a treatise translated into Armenian (probably in the seventh century) which includes discussion on cosmology, anatomy, medicine, morals, logic and grammar, but it is primarily a list of philosophical definitions (Stone, Shirinian 2000); cf. witnesses M529 (AD 1614) and M4669 (AD 1675) of Yovhannēs Erznkac'i's *On the Movements of the Celestial Bodies*, both recorded as 'dictionary' (Stepanyan, Topchyan 2001, 12).

in gold from Surb Hovhannēs,[32] which is Anania Širakac'i's, which is a[33] *k'nnikon*".[34] Below, on the same list: "182*r*. Book, Anania's *k'nnikon* and many sayings of doctors and unknown commentaries".[35] Abgaryan, however, does not cite copies of the same list where *k'ronikon* is found in place of *k'nnikon*. He produces instead a reference from a second list, reported in a catalogue of unedited manuscripts[36] where he found this note: "Now, he wrote this *k'ronikon*, which Anania Širakac'i made".[37] The relevance of this comparison is that this note refers to a book kept at the Monastery of Bałēš (Mat'evosyan 1974, 73-4; cf. also Mahé 1987, 177); one may therefore consider the possibility that this final citation describes one or parts of the two items on Vardan Bałišec'i's list, and that this is another example where *k'ronikon* and *k'nnikon* may be used as synonyms or as alternative spellings.

We remain however uncertain over what type of works these titles referred to, and what either of these words would actually describe: given that point 5 refers to texts or tables attributed to Anania Širakac'i, their inclusion in our argument becomes somewhat tautological. A scribe's note dating to the seventeenth century in absence of the item being described does not necessarily reveal to us the exact nature of that *k'nnikon* mentioned by Step'anos Tarōnec'i, but merely demonstrates that *k'nnikon* and *k'ronikon* came to be used as synonyms at least by then.

6. The last items on Abgaryan's list are examples of different spellings, seemingly the result of miscopying, which, the scholar argues, might demonstrate that the scribes confused the words *k'nnikon* and *k'ronikon* because they were synonyms. For example, in the title of *Letter 21* of Grigor

---

32 *Hovhannēsin* (Abgaryan 1986, 33). Ter-Hakobian (1903, 183) reads *Yovsin*, which might be an abbreviated form for *Hovhannēsin*.

33 Որ է քննիկոն does not present any articles, and translates as "which is a *k'nnikon*", possibly indicating that this term described a specific type of work (like a 'commentary' or a 'hymnal'). However, one may also suppose that a determinative article is implicitly understood, "which is the *k'nnikon*", and interpret it as the name of one particular, and potentially well-known, text or collection of texts.

34 105a Գիրք ոսկով բաջղիրքն է սուրբ Յովսին, որ է Անանիա Շիրակացլոյն, որ է քննիկոն (Ter-Hakobian 1903, 183; cf. also Abgaryan 1986, 33).

35 182r Գիրք Անանիայի քննիկոն եւ բազում ասացուածք վարդապետացզ եւ մեկնութիւնք անծանաւթք (Ter-Hakobian 1903, 188).

36 Մատենադարանք անտիպ ձեռագրոցուցակներ (Catalogue of Unedited Manuscripts after Mat'evosyan 1974b, 74; cf. also Abgaryan 1986, 33.

37 Արդ գրեցաւ Կրոնիկոնս, զոր արարեալ Անանիայի Շիրակունոյ (Catalogue of Unedited Manuscripts, 133, *non vidi*; after Mat'evosyan 1974, 74).

Magistros' epistles, *k'nnikon* is spelled *k'nnokon*[38] in a manuscript and *k'nokon* in another witness held in Vienna.[39]

It is most prudent to focus first on instances referring to works which can be identified with certainty. Conclusions which may be drawn from the examples above, points 1 to 4, are that the words *k'nnikon* and *k'ronikon* have been occasionally used interchangeably in reference to the *Chronicon* of Eusebius or to works of a similar kind and which emulate it, as, for example, the *Chronicle* of Samuēl Anec'i. We also conclude that the earliest attested instances of such use of the two terms in reference to chronicles based on the Eusebian model date from after the thirteenth century. Abgaryan might therefore be correct in concluding that *k'nnikon*, being the same as *k'ronikon*, refers to a chronicle (1986). However, it seems to us that the meaning of both terms may hide a much wider complexity, and that the prominence of computations in relation to them has thus far not been given enough consideration in the study of Armenian literature.

2.5 The *Chronicon* and Paschal Cycles

Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon* was no chronicle in the sense of a narration of historical events, but rather the combination of a Χρονογραφία (Chronography), an unrefined annalistic compilation (book I), and Χρονικοὶ Κανόνες (Chronological Canons) presenting historical events in tables that compared different year counts (book II). This is a clear warning that the line between chronicles and tables is hard to draw. Moreover, in relation to Eusebius of Caesarea's works, the term *krōnīqōn* in Syriac was also used to refer explanations of the computation of Easter (Debié 2015, 221-2), and not to the sole *Chronicon*.[40]

In Armenian, although as we have seen both *k'ronikon* and *k'nnikon* found in relation to chronicles, including cases where they are used as synonyms (the NHBL lexicon, too, records this), *k'ronikon* does not appear to indicate paschal tables, whereas there are several instances where this meaning is conveyed by the term *k'nnikon*.

This use of *k'nnikon* is attested in medieval *miscellanea*, as we shall analyse shortly below, reinforcing a suggestion put forth by Mat'evosyan in his extensive studies on Anania's tradition: "*K'nnikon* is a calendar, a new era, regularity and a canon, law, order and confines" (Author's transl. 1974, 78).

---

[38] Langlois 1869, 37; after Abgaryan 1986, 33.

[39] Abgaryan 1986, 33.

[40] Cf. Mosshammer (2008, 145-8) on a traditional attribution of a 19-year cycle to Eusebius, which does not appear to be grounded on his works.

The occurrences we present come from two medieval *miscellanea* (M1999, twelfth-thirteenth century, and M5975, AD 1467), transcribed and published by Ēynatyan,[41] and they clearly refer to the *computus* and to paschal tables.

The first extract (henceforth Misc1) is from M1999:

Թուական Հոռոմոց այսպէս արա՛.
կա՛լ զՀայ Մեծ թուականն, ՅԴ (304) ի վերայ բե՛ր[42] Մեծ թուական է Հոռմայցւոց: ՇԼԲ (532). ի բաց զնա[43] Փոքր թուական է Հոռոմի, որ կոչի Քննիկոն:[44]

For the Roman Era do this way:
take the year of the Great Armenian Era [AD 552-3] and add [subtract] 304; this is the year of the Great Roman Era [AD 248-9]. Subtract [add] 532; this is the Small Roman Era [AD 780-1], which is called *k'nnikon*. (Author's transl.)

This excerpt suggests that *k'nnikon* is a name for the Small Roman Era, that is a second 532-year cycle after the completion of the Great Roman Era, starting in the year AD 248-249, and is attested in Armenian, Byzantine and Georgian sources. Based on such information we suggest that the operations in the extract are inverted, as noted in the text and its English translation.[45] The same Misc1 continues: Վերադիր այսպէս արա՛. Կա՛լ զՔննիկոնն եւ ե՛րթ ԺԹ (19)[46] (For

---

41 For a partial diplomatic edition of manuscript M1999, cf. Ēynatyan 2002a, 140-247; 2002b, 27-319 for the edition with facing English translation. For manuscript M5975, cf. a partial diplomatic edition by Ēynatyan 2002a, 251-88; for the edition with facing English translation cf. Ēynatyan 2002b, 320-451.

42 Ի վերայ բեր (add). It should say 'subtract', for example ի բաց զնա.

43 Ի բաց զնա (subtract). The text should say ի վերայ բեր (add).

44 Ēynatyan 2002a, 183; 2002b, 146 drawing from M1999, f. 205v. Part of this quoted in Mat'evosyan 1974, 77.

45 Cf. Mosshammer 2008, 266-70 on the calculations of the Roman Era's starting date. On the existence of two Roman Eras, one starting in 248-249 and the second starting 532 years later (a whole paschal cycle) in 780-781, cf. Mosshammer's discussion on the Georgian dating system (269). Cf. The English translation of the same extract in Ēynatyan 2002b, 151: "Calculate the Year of the Roman Era in the following way: take the year of the Great Armenian Era and add 304; this is the year of the Great Roman Era. Subtract 532; this is the Small Roman Era, which is called *k'nnikon*". The Roman Era is also mentioned in the *Chronicon Paschale*, a Byzantine calendrical text also known as *Chronicon Alexandrinum*, which included a chronicle from Adam to Emperor Heraclius, Easter tables and explanations on the *computus* (Mosshammer 2008, 266-8). On the *Chronicon Paschale* cf. 286-311. Georgian sources, however, do not seem to distinguish between a 'Great' and a 'Small' Era, and our corrections presume that the Great Roman Era precedes the Small in consistency with the use of 'great' and 'small' to indicate respectively the first and second cycles of the Armenian Era (one starting in AD 553, the second in AD 1085, both lasting 532-year; cf. Dulaurier 1859).

46 M1999, f. 205v; after Ēynatyan 2002a, 183; 2002b, 146.

the epact, do it this way: take the *k'nnikon* and divide by 19; author's transl.). 19 is the minimal unit of a paschal cycle, and this citation confirms that *k'nnikon* refers to something that may be divided by 19: in this case we suppose that it is a 532-year-long cycle (that is 19 × 28), based on the quotation above.

We find information similar to Misc1 in Misc2, MS M5975:

Թուական այսպէս արա՛.
Կա՛լ զՀայոց թուականն, ՅԴ (304) ի վերայ բե՛ր[47] եւ այն է: Եւ զչորեանսն ՇԼԲ (532), ի բաց[48] երթ, որ մնայ Փոքր թուական է, որ կոչի Քննիկոն: Դարձեալ՝ կա՛լ զՀայոց Փոքր թուականն, ՄԻԸ (228) ի բաց երթ Քննիկոն է:[49]

Calculate the year in the following way:
take the year of the Armenian Era and add 304, this is it. And subtract the 532[-year] cycle; the result is the year of the Small Era,[50] which is called *k'nnikon*. Again, take the year of the Small Armenian Era and subtract 228; it is the year of the *k'nnikon*. (Author's transl.)[51]

These occurrences in medieval *miscellanea* allow us to theorise that, at least by the twelfth century, *k'nnikon* had become a way to indicate an era or a cycle, more specifically to the Small Roman Era. This is evidently anachronistic if applied to what Tarōnec'i records about Anania Širakac'i's work, as the starting point of this Roman Era is at the end of the eighth century, long after the departure of Catholicos Anastas and Širakac'i's activity, but one may nonetheless assume that its meaning might have also been used to indicate a term for an era or table more in general, and even one with a fixed duration of 532 years. In the case of Tarōnec'i it undoubtedly referred to something 'immovable', perpetual, which is a characteristic of such cycles. Širakac'i's *computus* would have also covered 532 years, like the Roman Era mentioned in the miscellanies.[52]

---

[47] Ի վերայ բեր (add). It should say 'subtract', for example ի բաց գնա.

[48] Ի բաց (subtract). This does not make sense, and the text should say ի վերայ բեր (add).

[49] F. 15*v*; after Ēynatyan 2002a, 264; 2002b, 360.

[50] AD 780-781, that is the Roman Era in Georgian sources; cf. Mosshammer 2008, 268-70.

[51] As in the previous excerpt, adding 304 would not be the correct operation here, one would need to subtract: the Great Armenian Era starts in 552-3, and one needs to subtract 304 in order to obtain 248-9, the start of the Roman Era. Similarly to the previous passage, the next operation should be adding 532 rather than subtracting. Finally, to obtain "the year of the *k'nnikon*" the number of years to be subtracted should be 304 years, and not 228. Cf. Ēynatyan's 2002b, 371.

[52] This use of the word *k'nnikon* in Misc1 (M1999) had already been cited by Mat'evosyan in an article on the *k'nnikon* question (1974), where he suggests that the

The picture may become clearer thanks to parallels found in studies on Syriac and Georgian sources, where there are attestations of the terms *krōnīqōn* (Syriac) and *kronikʻoni* ქრონიკონი (Georgian) found in relation to the *computus*. Debié has shown that, rather than strictly referring to chronicles alone, *krōnīqōn* was used in Syriac sources to describe the *computus*, treatises on the calendar, and explanations on the computation of Easter (Debié 2015, 229). This shift, or rather, this expansion of the possible meanings of the term might derive from the *Chronicon* par excellence, the above-mentioned fundamental work of Eusebius of Caesarea. Debié points out that, in Syriac, *krōnīqōn* was also used to refer to Eusebius' *computus* (221) and not just to his chronicle in the sense of 'history', or, rather, 'chronography'.[53] The breadth of the Eusebian production and the fortune of its legacy might be at the heart of the variety of meanings attributed to *krōnīqōn* through the Middle Ages. Debié further shows that the term continued to be used in Syriac for both the *computus* and for treatises around the *computus* (229), potentially generating confusion.

As mentioned in relation to Misc1 and Misc2, the Roman Era is not only attested in Armenian sources, but was used by Georgians, too. In Georgian the term *koronikʻoni* ქორონიკონი or *kronikʻoni* ქრონიკონი identifies a 532-year long cycle.[54] In Armenian sources, still in clear association to a 532-year-long computational era, we find the word *kʻnnikon*.

2.6 Where Does *Kʻnnikon* Come From?

The emergence of the term *kʻnnikon* remains an unresolved linguistic issue; we discuss here possible explanations for its formation.

As we have seen, Abgaryan proposed that *kʻnnikon* was derived from *kʻronikon*, on the basis that scribal mistakes might have occurred through tradition and generated a variation. To show this, he includes evidence of 'hybrid' readings (*infra* point 6; cf. Abgaryan 1986, 27-33).

---

word might have indicated a calendar, and, in particular, something in the form of a table; cf. especially 77-8. However, Matʻevosyan does not state that this *kʻnnikon* corresponded to the *532-Year Cycle* attributed to Anania, nor to other specific texts.

53   On the erroneous attribution of paschal tables based on the 19-year cycle to Eusebius cf. *infra* fn. 41.

54   Cf. Abuladze 2008, s.v. "ქორონიკონი, ქრონიკონი". Mosshammer (2008, 269) calculates a starting date of AD 780-781 for a Georgian *kʻronicon* based on archaeological evidence, which allows us to calculate that the previous cycle would have begun in 248-9 (that is AD 780-781 – 532 years = AD 248-249). That is the same starting date as the Roman Era in Armenian sources, including Misc1 and Misc2 seen above. Cf. also Debiè 2015, 212 fn. 38. According to the Dictionary of Classical Georgian (Abuladze 2008), the year 780-781 AD corresponds to the thirteenth reiteration of the cycle.

Markwart's suggestion was that it derived from the same root of the Armenian verb *k'nnel* քննել (to examine) with the addition of the adjectival ending *-ikon* as found in Greek, forming some sort of an Armenian-Greek hybrid term to parallel the Greek *kritikon* κριτικόν[55] (capable of discernment, capable of judgement),[56] meant as the final result of a thought process: 'examination'. This hypothesis aligns with an interpretation of the *k'nnikon* on the basis of Magistros' *Letter 21*, i.e. as a collection of books on the different sciences, and with no special association with time-reckoning or chronology. Mahé objects that there appears to be no reason to form such a term with the Greek ending *-ikon* rather than the Armenian *-akan* (*k'nnakan*) (Mahé 1987, 168). In agreement with Mahé, we suggest that the Greek ending in *-ikon* would most likely point at the whole word being derived from Greek.

Mat'evosyan's hypothesis is that the etymology of *k'nnikon* is to be found in the Greek *kanonikon* κανονικόν, pointing at ruled tables related to the calendar. This connections to the 'ruling' is indeed very relevant: as an alternative to *k'ronikon*, one of Abgaryan's cited sources showed *k'nnikon gawazanagirk'* (point 1 above) and *gawazank'* (point 3 above) which point at the technical feature of tables, i.e. the ruling. Ruling is also a prominent feature of the Eusebian legacy, whose *Chronological Canons* were, in fact, partly tabular.

Classical Armenian presents orthographical variations for its loan from the Greek κανών: կանոն, կանուն, քանոն, քանուն.[57] Alongside offering the Greek equivalent κανών, the Latin translation in the NBHL show 'canon', 'regula', 'forma'. The adjectives քանոնիկոն and քանոնական are then translated as κανονικός, -κη, -κόν in Greek and 'regularis' in Latin.[58]

Starting from Mat'evosyan's proposal, we suggest that *k'nnikon* could be the result of an abbreviation, typical of copyists, where some vowels are omitted:

քանոնիկոն> ք͞ան͞ոնիկոն> քննիկոն

One may in fact suppose that the ի *i* and ո *o* of the last syllables would not be easily left out as they are reminders of a Greek suffix, atypical for Armenian (which would present -ական for the most common formation of adjectives from a noun), so that their omission might have caused confusion. This might be how this term originated.

One further suggestion we would like to advance is that *k'nnikon* might be the result of a crasis of *k'ronikon* and *k'anonikon*. A similar

---

55 Bauer, Markwart 1929, 429, after Mahé 1987, 168.

56 Cf. Liddell, Scott 1940.

57 NBHL 1: 1051 coll. 1-2; 2: 980 col. 2.

58 NBHL 1: 1051 coll. 1-2; 2: 980 col. 2.

compound is attested in Syriac: *krwnnqnwn* (chrono-canon),[59] which is explicitly associated to a 532-year cycle[60] and to a "comput des années, des mois, de jeûnes et des fêtes".[61] As we have already pointed out, the Eusebian legacy is especially meaningful, not last because of the graphic arrangement of the canons, characterised by ruling, which provided a model to arrange chronologies and computational tables, such as the 532-year cycle. The second part of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, called Χρονικοὶ Κανόνες (Chronological Canons), could be at the origin of both the Syriac *krwnnqnwn* and of the Armenian քննիկոն *k'nnikon*.

Another element in favour of this reconstruction is the starting letter of *k'nnikon*. Although, as we show above, Greek *kanōn* finds an Armenian translation both beginning with կ and with ք, the first would be more likely to transliterate a κ, while the latter, being aspirated, a Greek χ. The ք at the start of *k'nnikon* in Armenian might reflect a Greek χ, as in *chronos* (time). It is however to be noted that Armenian *k'nnikon* does not present a ր as we find in Greek *chronos* and the Syriac compound *krwnnqnwn*.

2.7 A New Era

Armenian medieval sources mention two Armenian Eras, a Great and a Small one, both 532-year long. The latter, dating to the eleventh century and attributed to Yovhannēs Imastasēr, starts in AD 1084-85 (Dulaurier 1859), coinciding with the completion of a previous 532-year cycle starting in AD 552-553.

This Armenian Era appears in Armenian sources from as early as the seventh century, corroborating the notion that computational tables may have served as a chronological reference in the reckoning of years, and allowing us to conjecture about an innovation occuring at this time, perhaps in relation to Širakac'i's activity.

The earliest attestation of this dating practice is in the seventh-century *Anonymous Chronicle*[62] where the year "134 of the Armenian Era" is given as the date of a military defeat.[63] This era is further

---

[59] The starting letter in the Syriac transcription, *k*, is used for Greek χ, while *q* corresponds to Greek κ.

[60] From a manuscript copied by Moise of Mardin (Debié 2015, 211). He was active in the sixteenth century.

[61] From the undated MS Paris, BNF, syriaque 13 (Debié 2015, 213).

[62] Tentatively ascribed to Anania himself by Abrahamyan 1944, 357-99. On its attribution to P'ilon Tirakac'i/Širakac'i, cf. Greenwood 2008, 249. We maintain this text as anonymous.

[63] Cf. Abrahamyan 1944, 399; MH 5: 969; after Orengo 2008, 207.

referred to in an eight-century *Treatise on Councils*, where a sinod is dated to the year 175 of the Armenian Era, preserved in the *Girk' T'łt'oc'* (Book of Letters),[64] and in an inscription dated to the second half of the eighth century, which dates the erection of a fountain to the year 232 of the Armenian Era (Greenwood 2004, 87).

The emergence of this dating system may help our understanding of Step'anos Tarōnec'i's passage: this attestation of newly designed *k'nnikon* could be a witness to a new *computus*, and its starting date came to be used as a year-reckoning tool from the seventh century onwards. In the light of all the elements converging to read Tarōnec'i's account as the witness of a new Easter cycle, it is inevitable to ask whether Drasxanaketc'i's passage may be narrating the same event, too, although using the term *tōmar* (calendar), still referring to a paschal cycle, rather than a substantial reform of the Armenian calendar, as one may interpret it. All accounts of the matter, however, refer that the mathematician's work was rejected, opening questions on the actual extent of its rejection and, on the other hand, on the possible means of its dissemination.

3   Concluding Remarks

This article presents a re-examination of medieval sources on Anania Širakac'i's activity; it shows that the term *k'nnikon*, associated with the mathematician's production, was used to refer to time-reckoning, and more precisely to a computational era or paschal cycle. The eleventh-century historiographer Step'anos Tarōnec'i records the request advanced by Catholicos Anastas to Širakac'i to reform the Armenian calendar to make it "immovable", and in this instance he refers to Anania's work as *k'nnikon*. Expanding on a suggestion advanced by Mat'evosyan, namely that *k'nnikon* was a way to refer to the calendar, we argue that the most probable meaning of this term is that of a *computus*, i.e. tables for the calculation of the Easter dates year after year until cycle's completion.

In support of this hypothesis, we propose a comparison with analogous terminology in Georgian and Syriac as well as making use of previously underexplored Armenian sources. In particular, we highlight the emergence of a new dating system, the Armenian Era, attested from the seventh century, which has the same duration as a 532-year paschal cycle and which begins right where previous Easter tables ended, in AD 552-553.

Our contention challenges a widely-accepted hypothesis that sees the *k'nnikon* as a structured collection of writings that was intended

---

[64]   Cf. Połarean 1994, 479; after Orengo 2008, 207.

as companions to the *curricula* of *trivium* and *quadrivium*. This interpretation is based on *Letter 21* of Grigor Pahlawuni, also called Magistros (eleventh century), which is the only existing description of such a *summa* explicitly associated with Anania Širakac'i, referred to by the name *k'nnikon* in the letter title. Given that the origin of the letter titles in this collection is unknown, it seems to us that taking this association between *k'nnikon* and the textbook as core evidence of Širakac'i's activity and to read all other records in this light raises serious problems of methodology. While Magistros' letters deserve to be examined afresh, as they open a number of questions related to Anania's legacy and works allegedly compiled by him and lost, we here demonstrate that medieval records present *k'nnikon* consistently in association with computational eras. Whether this was the case in the seventh century, is not possible to establish from known evidence, but it appears that later records, such as Taronec'i's *History*, used it to refer to Easter tables attributed to Anania Širakac'i.

Abbreviations:

BNF   Bibliothèque nationale de France
NHBL   Nor Baṙgirk' Haykazean Lezui
M   Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts
MH   Matenagirk' Hayoc'

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Anania Širakac'i

Abrahamyan, A.G. (ed.) (1940). *Tiezeragitut'iwn ev Tomar* (Cosmology and Calendar). Erevan: HSSṘ Matenadarani hratarakč'utyun.

Abrahamyan, A.G. (ed.) (1944). *Anania Širakac'u Matenagrut'yunǝ* (The Works of Anania Širakac'i). Erevan: HSSṘ Matenadarani hratarakč'utyun.

Abrahamyan, A.G.; Petrosyan, G.B. (eds) (1979). *Anania Širakac'i Matenagrut'yun*. Erevan: Sovetakan groł hratarakč'utyun.

Bauer and Markwart, see Hyppolitus.

Berbérian, H. (1964). "Autobiographie d'Anania Širakac'i". *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 1, 189-94.

Conybeare, F.C. (1897). "Anania of Širak. His Autobiography; His tract of Easter". *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 6, 572-84.

Greenwood, T.W. (2011). "A Reassessment of the Life and Mathematical Problems of Anania Širakac'i". *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 33, 131-86.

Hewsen, R.H. (ed.) (1992). *The Geography of Ananias of Širak: Ašxarhac'oyc'. The Long and the Short Recensions*. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag.

Orbeli, I.A. (1918). *Voprosy i rešenija Vardapeta Ananija Širakca, armjanskogo matematika VII veka* (Problems and Solutions by Ananias of Širak, Armenian Mathematician from the Seventh Century). St Petersburg: Russian Academy of Science.

Patkanean, K'. (ed.) (1877a). *Ananiayi Širakunwoy mnac'ordk' banic'* (The Extant Works of Anania Širakuni). St. Petersburg: Tparan kayserakan čemarani gitut'eanc'.

Patkanean, K'. (ed.) (1877b). *Armjanskaja geografija VII veka* (An Armenian Geography of the Seventh Century). St. Petersburg: Tipografiya Imperatorskoĭ Akademii Nayk'.

Sargisean, see Anonymous.

Anonymous

Ēynatyan, J. (ed.) (2002a). *The Ancient Armenian Calendar (7th-15th cc.)*. Erevan: Qnnaser; Armenian Theological Society.

Ēynatyan, J. (ed.) (2002b). *Hin haykakan Tomarǝ (7-15 dd.). The Ancient Armenian Calendar (7th-15th cc.)*. Bilingual edition. Transl. by Muradyan and Ter-Vardanyan. Erevan: Maghagat Publishing House.

Ēynatyan, J. (ed.) (2015). *Tiezeragitut'yan ev tomari meknut'yunner (7-15 darer). Usumnasirut'yun ev bnagrer* (Commentaries on Cosmography and Calendar Theory (7th-15th Centuries) Study and Texts). Erevan: Nairi Publishing House.

Sargisean, B. (1904). *Ananun žamanakagrut'iwn* (Anonymous Chronicle). Venice: St Lazarus.

Book of Letters, see Girk' T'łt'oc'
Drasxanakertc'i, see Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i

Eusebius of Caesarea
Aucher, J.B. (ed.) (1818). *Eusebii Pamphili Caesariensis episcopi Chronicon bipartitum nunc primum ex Armeniaco textu in latinum conversum adnotationibus auctum Graecis fragmentis exornatum*, vol. 1. Venezia: San Lazzaro.
Cohen-Skalli, A.; Ouzounian, A. (eds) (2020). *Chronique I*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
Girk' T'łt'oc' (1994). G*irk' T'łt'oc'* (Book of Letters). Ed. by N. Połarean. Jerusalem: St James Press.

Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros
Kostaneanc', K. (ed.) (1910). *Grigori Magistrosi t'łt'erĕ* (The Letters of Grigor Magistros). Alexandropol: Tparan Gēorg Sanoyeanc'i.
Muradyan, G. (ed.) (2012). *Grigori Magistrosi t'ułt'erə ew čap'aberakank'* (The Letters and Verse of Grigor Magistros). MH 16: 139-385.

Hippolytus
Bauer A.; Helm R.; Markwart (Marquart), J. (Hrsgg) (1929). *Die Chronik*. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

Kirakos Ganjakec'i
Ohanǰanean, K.M. (1961). *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*. Erevan: HSSṘ GA Hratarakč'ut'yun.
Bedrosian, R. (ed.) (1986). *History of the Armenians*.
    http://www.attalus.org/armenian/kg3.htm
MH = *Matenagirk' Hayoc'* (2003 ff.). Vol. 1, *Ant'ilias: Tparan Kat'ołikosut'ean Hayoc' meci tann Kilikioy*. Erevan: Nairi.

Pseudo-Zeno
Stone, M.E.; Shirinian, M.E. (eds) (2000). *Pseudo-Zeno: Anonymous Philosophical Treatise*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Step'anos Tarōnec'i Asołik
Greenwood, T.W (ed.) (2017). *The Universal History of Step'anos Tarōnec'i: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vardan Arewelc'i
Emin (Ēmin), M. (ed.) (1861). *Mecin Vardanay Parjrberdec'woy patmut'iwn tiezerakan* (The Universal History of the Great Vardan of Parjrberd). Moskow: Tparan Lazarean Čēmaran arewelean lezuac'.

Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i
Emin (Ēmin), M. (ed.) (1912). *Yovhannu Kat'ołikosi Drasxanakertc'woy Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (A History of the Armenians of John Drasxanakerteci the Catholicos). Tbilisi: Tblisi: Ēlēk'tratp. or. N. Ałanyanc'i. A reprint of Emin (Ēmin), M. (ed.) (1853). Moskow: Vladimir Gotie Press.

Yovhannēs Erznkac'i
Stepanyan, L.; Topchyan, A. (2001). *Yałags erknayin šarǰmann*. Erevan: Magaghat.

Secondary Sources

Abgaryan, G. (1986). "Anania Širakacʻu 'Žamanakakan kʻanonə' kam 'Kʻnnikonə'". *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 15, 21-43.

Alpi, F. (2015a). "Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros: un esempio riuscito di reazione culturale alla crisi politica nell'Armenia dell'undicesimo secolo". Angiolillo, R.; Elia, E.; Nuti, E. (a cura di), *Crisi: immagini interpretazioni e reazioni nel mondo greco, latino e bizantino*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 293-303.

Alpi, F. (2015b). *Messaggi attraverso il confine. L'Armenia e il confine orientale di Bisanzio nelle "Lettere" di Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros (ca. 990-1058)* [PhD dissertation]. Pisa: Università di Pisa.
https://etd.adm.unipi.it/t/etd-08102015-094929

Alpi, F. (2018). "Le lezioni della crisi: elementi di continuità nell'istruzione in Armenia fra XI e XIV secolo". Ferrari, A.; Frappi, C. (a cura di), *Armenia, Caucaso e Asia Centrale. Ricerche 2018*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 45-64. Eurasiatica 11.
http://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-279-6/003

Anasyan, H.S. (1959). *Haykakan Matenagrutʻyun 5-18 dd.,* vol. 1. Erevan: HSSŘ GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Bartʻikyan, H.M. (1967). "Anania Širakacʻun veragrvoł 'Žamanakagrutʻyan' ew nra banakʻałi harcʻi šurjě". *Banber Matenadarani*, 8, 57-77.

Boyadjian, T. (2016). "Samuel Anecʻi". Dunphy, G.; Bratu, C. (eds), *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*.

Broutian, G. (2020). "Anania Širakuni's *Kʻnnikon* and its Destiny", in *Sciences and Learning in Armenia between Anania Širakacʻi and Grigor Magistros*, monogr. no., *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 86(1-2), 123-35.

Calzolari, V. (2007). "Aux origines de la formation du corpus philosophique en Arménie: quelques remarques sur les versions arméniennes des commentaires grecs de David". D'Ancona Costa, C. (ed.), *The Libraries of Neoplatonists*. Leiden; Boston: Brill. 259-79. Philosophia Antiqua 107.

Calzolari, V. (2014). "Philosophical Literature in Ancient and Medieval Armenia". Calzolari, V.; Stone, M.E. (eds), *Armenian Philology in the Modern Era: From Manuscript to Digital Text*. Leiden: Brill, 349-76. Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8 Uralic & Central Asian Studies 23(1).

Calzolari, V. (2016). "The Transmission and Reception of the Greek Cultural Heritage in Late Antique Armenia: The Armenian Translations of the Greek Neoplatonic Works". Gazzano, F.; Pagani, L.; Traina, G. (eds), *Greek Texts and Armenian Traditions: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 47-70.

Cowe, S.P. (1997). "Medieval Armenian Literary and Cultural Trends". Hovannissian, R. (ed.), *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 1. New York: St Martin's Press, 293-325.

Debié, M. (2015). *L'écriture de l'histoire en Syriaque: transmissions interculturelles et constructions identitaires entre hellénisme et Islam. Avec des répertoires des textes historiographiques en annexe*. Leuven; Paris; Bristol (CT): Peeters. Late Antique History and Religion 12.

Dulaurier, E. (1859). *Recherches sur la chronologie arménienne, technique et historique*. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale.

Gippert, J. (1987). "Old Armenian and Caucasian Calendar Systems". *Annual of Armenian linguistics*, 8, 63-72.

Greenwood, T.W. (2004). "A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions". *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58, 27-91.

Greenwood, T.W. (2008). "New Light from the East: Chronography and Ecclesiastical History through a Late Seventh-Century Armenian Source". *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 16(2), 197-254.

Greenwood, T.W. (2011) see Anania Širakac'i.

Greenwood, T.W. (2017) see Step'anos Tarōnec'i Asołik.

Hacikyan, A.J. et al. (2000). *The Heritage of Armenian Literature*, vol. 2. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Hairapetian, S. (1995). *A History of Armenian Literature*. Delmar; New York: Caravan Books.

Hewsen, R.H. (1967). "On the Date and Authorship of the Ašxarhac'oyc'". *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 4, 409-32.

Hewsen, R.H. (1968). "Science in the Seventh century". *Isis*, 59(1), 32-45.

Hewsen, R.H. (1992) see Anania Širakac'i.

Langlois, V. (1869). "Mémoire sur la vie et les écrits du prince Grégoire Magistros". *Journal Asiatique*, 6(13), 5-64.

Lemerle, P. (1964). "Note sur les données historiques de l'autobiographie d'Anania de Shirak". *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 1, 195-202.

Mahé, J.-P. (1987). "Quadrivium et cursus d'études au VIIe siècle en Arménie et dans le monde byzantin d'après le *K'nnikon* d'Anania Širakac'i". *Travaux et Mémoires*, 10, 159-206. Centre de recerce d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1974a). "Norahayt patařikner Anania Širakac'u t'vabanut'yan dasagrk'ic'" (Newly Found Fragments on the Arithmetics Textbook of Anania Širakac'i). *Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutyunneri*, 6, 65-76.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1974b). "Anania Širakac'u 'K'nnikonə'" (Anania Širakac'i's 'K'nnikon'). *Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutyunneri*, 7, 66-78.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1974c). "Anania Širakac'u 'K'nnikonə'" (Anania Širakac'i's 'K'nnikon'). *Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutyunneri*, 8, 71-81.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1979). "Anania Širakac'u 'K'nnikoni' erkrač'ap'ut'yan bažinə" (Step'anos Taronac'i Asołik and Anania Širakac'i's 'K'nnikon'). *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 2, 163-78.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1981). "Noric' Širakac'u 'K'nnikoni' masin". *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 2, 223-39.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1986). "Step'anos Taronac'i Asołikə ew Anania Širakac'u 'K'nnikonə'". *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 3, 125-33.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1994). "Grigor Magistrosə ew Anania Širakac'u 'K'nnikonə'" (Grigor Magistros and Anania Širakac'i's 'K'nnikon'). *Banber Matenadarani*, 16, 16-30.

Mosshammer, A.A. (2008). *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Muradyan G. (2012) see Grigor Pahlawuni.

Muradyan, K.M. (1975a). "Əndhanur hatvacner u srbagrut'yunner Kesarac'u ew Širakac'u gorcnerum" (Common Passages and Corrections in [Basil] of Caesarea and Širakac'i). *Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutyunneri,* 1, 55-72.

Muradyan, K.M. (1975b), "Kesarac'u 'Vec'ōrean' Širakac'u tiezeragitakan ašxatut'yunneri ałbyur" ([Basil] of Caesarea's Hexameron As a Source for Širakac'i's Cosmological Works). *Lraber Hasarakakan Gitutyunneri*, 3, 95-114.

Muradyan, K.M. (1976). *Barseł Kesarac'in ew nra "Vec'ōrean" hay matenagrut'yan meǰ* (Basil of Caesarea's *Hexameron* in Armenian Literature). Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakč'ut'yun.

Orengo, A. (2008). "Calendari armeni". *Studi Linguistici e Filologici Online*, 6, 203-18.

Orengo, A. (2016). "Un selfie alla cultura armena del settimo secolo: l''Autobiografia' di Anania Širakac'i". *Lingue e letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente*, 5, 81-102.

Orengo, A. (2020). "L'*Autobiographie* d'Anania Sirakacʻi", in *Sciences and Learning in Armenia between Anania Širakacʻi and Grigor Magistros*, monogr. no., *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 86(1-2), 9-18.

Petrosyan, G.B. (1980). "Anania Širakacʻu 'Kʻnnikon'" (Anania Širakacʻi's "Kʻnnikon"). *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 2, 212-20.

Petrosyan, G.B. (1983). "Noricʻ Anania Širakacʻu 'Kʻnnikon' masin" (More On Anania Širakacʻi's "Kʻnnikon"). *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 4, 131-7.

Shirinian, E.M. (2020). "The Study of Sciences at the Time of Anania", in *Sciences and Learning in Armenia between Anania Širakacʻi and Grigor Magistros*, monogr. no., *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 86(1-2), 91-105.

Stern, S. (2012). *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, States, and Societies*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Stone, M.E. (1975). "Armenian Canon Lists II – The Stichometry of Anania of Shirak (c. 615-c. 690 CE.)". *Harvard Theological Review*, 68(3-4), 253-60.

Stone, M.E.; Shirinian, M.E. (2000), see Pseudo-Zeno.

Terian, A. (1982). "The Hellenizing School. Its Time, Place and Scope of Activities Reconsidered". Garsoïan, N.G.; Mathews T.F.; Thomson R.W. (eds), *East of Byzantium. Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 175-86.

Thomson, R.W. (1995). *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD*. Turnhout: Brepols.

Thomson, R.W. (1997). "Armenian Literary Culture through the Eleventh Century". Hovannisian, R.G. (ed.), *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 1. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 199-239.

Thomson, R.W. (2007). "Supplement to 'A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD'. Publications 1993-2005". *Le Muséon*, 120(1-2), 163-84.

Vardanyan, Ṙ.H. (1987). "Anania Širakacʻu hišatakaranneri meknutʻyan šurǰə ew mi kʻani tomarakan-žamanakagrakan harcʻer" (On Anania Širakacʻi's Colophons and Questions on the Calendar and Chronology). *Patma-banasirakan Handes*, 1, 195-210.

Warntjes, I. (2007). "The Munich Computus and the 84(14)-Year Easter Reckoning". *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, 107c, 31-85.

Warntjes, I. (2010). *The Munich Computus, Text and Translation: Irish Computistics between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede and Its Recepton in Carolingian Times*. Stuttgart: Steiner.

Warntjes, I. (2016). "Computus as Scientific Thought in Ireland and the Early Medieval West". Flechner, R.; Meeder, S. (eds), *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture and Religion*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 158-78.

Zuckerman, C. (1995). *A Repertory of Published Armenian Translations of Classical Texts*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Institute of African and Asian Studies.

Lexica and catalogues

Abuladze, I.V. (2008). *Żveli kʻartʻuli enis lekʻsikoni: masalebi* (Dictionary of Classical Georgian). Tbilisi: Metsniereba.
http://www.nplg.gov.ge/saskolo/index.php?a=term&d=44&t=14872

Bedrossian, M. (1985). *New Dictionary: Armenian-English*. Beirut: Librairie Du Liban.

Calfa, A. (1861). *Dictionnaire arménien-français*. Paris: L. Hachette et Compagnie.

Ciakciak, M. (1837). *Dizionario Armeno-italiano*. Venezia: S. Lazzaro.

Coulie, B. (2020). *Armenian Manuscripts: Catalogues, Collections, Libraries*. Turnhout: Brepols.

Liddell, H.G.; Scott, R. (1940). *A Greek-English Lexicon. Revised and Augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the Assistance of Roderick McKenzie*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057

NHBL = Awetikean, G.; Siwrmēlean, X.; Awgerean. M. (eds) (1836-37). *Nor Baṙgirkʻ Haykazean Lezui* (New Armenian Lexicon). 2 vols. Venice: St Lazarus.

Ter-Hakobian, S. (1903). "Vardanay vardapeti Bałišecʻoy. Cʻucʻakʻ grocʻ Amrdoli vanucʻ" (New Lexicon of the Armenian Language). *Ararat*, 36(2-3), 176-89.

Tēr-Vardanean, G. (2013). *Mayr cʻucʻak hayerēn jeṙagracʻ Maštocʻi anuan Matenadarani* (General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran), vol. 8, cod. 2401-2700. Erevan: Nairi Publishing House.

The King's Mellifluous Tongue
Study, Social Bonding, and the Making of Middle Armenian as a Language of the Elite in Medieval Cilicia

Michael Pifer
University of Michigan, USA

Abstract   This article on social history examines the study of Middle Armenian manuscripts at the Cilician court, placing the language's development within a Mediterranean context that includes Outremer French and Byzantine Greek. In particular, it argues that King Het'um I (d. 1270) bolstered his status as educated king through the commission of two works from theologian Vardan Arewelc'i (d. 1271): an encyclopedic compendium and commentary on grammar, which aided vernacular study in different ways. By balancing the microhistory of these manuscripts against the macro-history of Cilician Middle Armenian's configuration in writing, this article shows how vernacular Armenian became an object of elite study, seemingly capable of representing all the knowledge in the world.

Keywords   Middle Armenian. Medieval Cilicia. Social history. Vernacular. Old French. Byzantine Greek. Het'um. Vardan Arewelc'i. Žłlank'. Educated king. Compendium. Grammar.

Summary   1 Introduction: A Rupture. – 2 The Written Cultivation of Cilician Middle Armenian Among Court and Church. – 3 A Pleasant Conversation Between Grammarian and King. – 4 Grammaticality and Armenian Kingship. – 5 Conclusion: Docile Speech, Pleasing Labour, and Ties that Bind.

1 Introduction: A Rupture

This story about language – which is also a story about power – begins with a murder. In 1225, the Cilician Armenian nobility arrested Philip of Antioch, poisoned him, and killed him in prison. This may not have been of great historical significance had Philip, though a Frank, not also been the king of the Kingdom of Armenia in medieval Cilicia, a territory perched on the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. In fact, Philip had become king only three years prior by marrying Zabel (d. 1252), who was heir of the Ṙubēnid dynasty that had ruled since Cilicia had become a kingdom in 1198.[1] However, a powerful Armenian noble named Kostandin (d. 1263), who was also Zabel's regent, had other plans. After disposing of Philip, he promptly marched his army to Silifke Castle, captured Queen Zabel, and then married her off to his son Hetʻum I (d. 1270). Thus, in the year 1226, the Hetʻumid dynasty began their reign over Armenian Cilicia with an unsettling marriage that was also the primary legal source of their legitimacy (Kirakos Ganjakeʻci 1961, 188-9; cf. Vardan Arewelcʻi 1991, 141). Zabel was perhaps only eleven years old when she was wed for the second time; Hetʻum would have been around thirteen. The couple would not produce a child for another ten years (Tēr-Petrosyan 2005-07, 2: 257).

Smbat Sparapet (d. 1276), military commander and older brother to King Hetʻum, barely mentions this episode in the chronicle attributed to him (1956, 225).[2] He chooses instead to portray the event as the somewhat natural restoration of Cilician power to Armenian

1 Zabel is another form of the name Elizabeth, as is the name Isabella, and was spelled many ways in the premodern period, including as Zapel, Zapēl, Zabēl, and, in Vardan Arewelcʻi's historical compilation, even as Zapil, reflecting the pronunciation of the "Franks" (1991, 141). In this article, I follow its traditional spelling, which also reflects its probable Cilician pronunciation in transliteration. Cf. also Ačaṙyan 1944, 2: 159-62.

2 On the attribution of the *Chronicle*'s variants to Smbat, cf. especially La Porta 2020.

stewardship, additionally blaming the flight of Zabel, a child and a widow, to Silifke Castle on a "diabolic fury" within her (226).[3] Still, it could hardly have escaped Het'um that his claim to legitimacy in Cilicia was on a different footing than it had been for the Ṙubēnids, whose rule was legitimized in part by a crown they received directly from the Holy Roman Empire. Het'um, on the other hand, drew legitimacy from his marriage to Queen Zabel.[4] It therefore should not come as a surprise that Het'um sought to bolster his own rule, both implicitly and explicitly, even in ways that previous kings in Cilicia had not. Most famously, he disguised himself as a commoner, snuck out of his kingdom, and made the long journey eastward to Qaraqorum to forge a new alliance with the Mongols, subtly rebalancing political power in Anatolia in the process.[5]

In counterpoint, this article sheds needed light on a less dramatic cultivation of authority and royal identity pursued by Het'um and his successors; one which arguably long outlasted his alliance with the Ilkhanate, yet also one that has received relatively little scholarly attention aside from its treatment by a handful of linguists and historians in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As opposed to the sweeping historical drama of Het'um's clandestine journey to Qaraqorum, this strategy was far more understated: for the most part, it revolved around the study, commission, composition, translation, and discussion of 'vernacular' or Middle Armenian texts at court. These activities were generally not seen by the people whom the nobility ruled, but rather were undertaken for the court's own benefit and to showcase royal erudition to other Armenian nobles and visitors. Still, taken in sum, these acts played a role in marrying the medieval Armenian vernacular to elite audiences in Sis, and especially to Het'um's cultivation of his image as 'educated king'. This *topos* was commonplace at medieval courts around the Mediterranean world, found in sovereigns such as the learned Byzantine ruler Theodore II Laskaris (d. 1258); the polyglot king of Sicily and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (d. 1250); and Alfonso X of Castile (d. 1284), who promoted use of vernacular Castilian in knowledge production at court.

In the Armenian iteration of this *topos*, reports of Het'um's erudition likewise circulated far beyond the court. In the words of

---

3 Դիւական բարկութիւն. Despite the lack of discomfort over this union in the Armenian chronicles, its profound ambivalence was well represented by the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century painter Vardges Surenyanc' (d. 1921), whose 1909 painting Զաբել թագուհու վերադարձը (The Return of Queen Zabel) depicts the despondent queen, surrounded by the trappings of court, searingly resigned to her fate.

4 Bohemond VI of Antioch, in a letter from 1237 to the pope, thus challenged the legality and legitimacy of Het'um's rule on the grounds of a "third degree of kinship" between the king and Zabel. Cf. the quoted passage and discussion in Neagu 2021, 217.

5 For an English translation of this account, cf. Boyle 1964.

the thirteenth-century clergyman and historian Kirakos Ganjakecʻi, who hailed from the eastern region of Greater Armenia, Hetʻum was known as an "amiable man and wise and erudite in scripture [and/or books]".[6] Similar depictions also grace less prestigious historiographic genres. Thus, in the colophon to a hippiatry, the scribe reports that Hetʻum commissioned three translations while abroad in 1258, when he joined the Mongol conquest of Baghdad. During this campaign, the scribe tells us, Hetʻum encountered a deacon at the caliph's court named Stepʻanos, a man educated in many scripts and languages who "became beloved to the King of Armenians on account of [his] robust knowledge".[7] The king took advantage of this meeting, and asked the scholar to translate a treatise on the care of horses, another on the art of fashioning sabres, and yet another on the study of the sun and moon, all from Persian originals.[8]

Hetʻum's family also commissioned, composed, and read works in 'vulgar' Armenian at home in Sis, the capital of the Kingdom of Armenia in Cilicia. Not only did such acts buttress Hetʻum's authority as cultivated and educated king, but, as I will argue, they helped to further the correlation of 'vernacular' Armenian with statecraft, science, and learning more broadly. Just as importantly, the production of texts in this language helped to bring different elite actors together at court and in the church, whose Holy See was located some two hundred kilometres east of Sis (near Kozan in modern day Turkey) across a mountainous terrain, into a shared project of knowledge production that benefited these figures in different ways. Its usage moreover helped to provide opportunities for different forms of social and kinship bonding at court, including between the king and his wife, mediated by the teachings or actual presence of clergy from the Armenian Apostolic church.

---

6 Այր քաղցր էր և իմաստուն և գիտնաւոր գրովք (Kirakos Ganjakecʻi 1961, 370).

7 Սիրեցեալ եղև ի Հայոց թագաւորէն վասն հզօր գիտութեանն (Matʻevosyan 1984, 299).

8 More generally, foreigners also remarked positively on the kings of Cilicia; Hetʻum was king when Niccolò and Maffeo (Matteo) Polo travelled through the major Cilician port of Ayas on their return journey from China; in 1271, just shortly after Hetʻum's death and the beginning of the reign of his son, Marco Polo likewise travelled with his father and uncle through the port of Ayas, asserting that the king of Lesser Armenia (Cilicia) ruled his territory well and "with justice" (*en justice*) (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, fr. 1116). The rest of the Armenian nobles did not much impress a young Marco Polo, he says, as they were good for nothing but heavy drinking. Somewhat analogously, the chronicler Michael the Syrian, whose work was translated from Syriac into Armenian by the theologian Vardan Arewelcʻi (d. 1271) with the help of a Syrian named Išōx (fl. thirteenth century), praises Hetʻum as զեղեցիկ հասակաւ և բարի խորհրդով, մեծահոգի և երկայնամիտ, հեզ և հանդարտ ('comely in stature and right in thought, magnanimous and patient, tranquil and calm'; Michael the Syrian 1871, 506), the very image of a wise ruler fit for the throne. Similarly, in his own history, Vardan lauds the young Hetʻum as 'wise' and 'right-minded' (հանճարեղ) (1991, 141).

Of course, as we shall see, the development of Middle Armenian had begun before Het'um's rise to power; it also continued in an intensified form after his death. Hence, while one should not claim a special causality between Het'um and the accelerated development of Cilician Middle Armenian as a written language, it is possible to observe a turning point in the history of the Armenian vernacular that overlaps roughly with his rule. In the history of a language, call this period the hastening of the tempo of life. It was a time when Middle Armenian writing began to flourish in a widespread manner in Cilicia, and moreover it was a time when Middle Armenian, for complex reasons, provisionally became an object of study in more than one manner. The Het'umids played a role in this process as it unfolded specifically in Cilicia, at their court in Sis, though far from the only role. Still, the ways in which the king and his circle used the Armenian vernacular at this pivotal moment provide us with a useful window into this broader linguistic realignment of power, culture, and knowledge production among Armenians in the Mediterranean.

This article consequently seeks to balance a macro-history of the medieval Armenian vernacular during this period against the micro-history of textual production for Het'um's court. It is divided into three parts, each of which advances an interlocking argument about the complex life of Cilician Middle Armenian in relation to courtly study. My overall contention is that what made Cilician Middle Armenian a language of the elite was not only that the nobility spoke a form of dialectal Armenian by situation of birth, or necessarily because they employed this language in the administration of their kingdom for pragmatic reasons. Rather, it was because these Cilician nobles and clergy often made an effort to use the language as a written vehicle for knowledge production in ways that sometimes supplemented, and sometimes supplanted, the other available languages at the court and in the church. Plainly said, they used Middle Armenian often as a conscious choice in their writing (and reading) during this period because of what it could do for them. Within this context, the early Cilician Middle Armenian textual corpus demonstrates that vernacular had become a medium through which the nobility, in partnership with the church, could fashion expressions of their own authority and royal erudition in an abundance of ways.

In the first part of this article, I offer an expansive look at Middle Armenian before and after Het'um was crowned, charting the development of the Cilician vernacular against the backdrop of other classical and vernacular languages that circulated in the medieval Mediterranean world, with a selective comparative focus on Vulgar Latin, Outremer French, and Byzantine Greek. Although many specialists have fruitfully explored the grammatical and lexical formation of the medieval Armenian vernacular more broadly, this section seeks to break different ground by focusing on the relatively neglected social

and epistemic functions of the vernacular Armenian language, especially as they are presented in the linguistic behaviours of elite figures at the Cilician court in Sis and at the seat of the Armenian church in Hṙomklay. Hence, although Middle Armenian is generally termed the 'official language'[9] or the 'state language'[10] of Cilicia in secondary literature, the first section of this article seeks to distinguish the vernacular's social and epistemic history at court beyond the chancellery, shedding light on what it meant for the nobility to employ the vulgar tongue in writing among themselves. By tracing the gradually changing attitudes and social practices that coalesced around Cilician Middle Armenian at court, I show that the Armenian vernacular made certain forms of knowledge and power available to a wide array of actors, even while it was appreciated for its perceived familiar and 'mellifluous' qualities.

Upon this stage, I center two unpublished and relatively neglected manuscripts composed in Middle Armenian, in part to demonstrate what these broader linguistic transformations looked like on the ground. Each manuscript is connected to King Hetʻum in different ways. The first is the *Žłlankʻ* (Middle Armenian for 'Pleasant Labour', with additional connotations of conversation and dialogue; Ališan 1885, III; Antʻabyan 1987, 1: 156-7; Łazaryan, Avetisyan 2009, 258), an encyclopedic compendium that focuses on the interpretation of scripture, with entries that touch adjacently on theology, grammar, animals, astronomy, music, the natural world, and many other subjects; among other things, it also includes a primer for the study of other Armenian manuscripts.[11] King Hetʻum commissioned this monumental work from the renowned theologian Vardan Arewelcʻi (Vardan 'the Easterner', meaning Vardan from Greater Armenia) for his own personal study; Vardan completed it in 'vulgar' Armenian by 1246.[12] As I argue, the *Žłlankʻ* did many things for King Hetʻum, helping him to cultivate his image as 'educated king' at court, in addition

---

9 Պաշտոնական լեզու (Ačaṙyan 1951, 235).

10 Պետական լեզու (Łazaryan 1954, 331-6).

11 The Middle Armenian word *žłlankʻ* would seem to be derived from the Middle Armenian word *žułl* (today *žłul* in colloquial Eastern Armenian), meaning 'speech', 'dialogue', or 'conversation' according to the compilers of the *Middle Armenian Dictionary* (Łazaryan, Avetisyan 2009, 259); in modern colloquial Armenian *žłul* denotes an amusing pastime, diversion, or pleasant occupation, and in this sense has a secondary meaning of 'conversation' (Malxaseancʻ 1944, 2: 144). Both *žułl* and *žłul* are derived from the Arabic word *shughl*, meaning "occupancy, filling, taking up; detention, prevention, distraction"; in the plural (*ashghāl*) meaning "occupation, activity, work, job; business, concern" (Wehr 1979, 556). Usages of *shughl* can connote both physical labour as well as the occupation or preoccupation of the mind.

12 For the most detailed assessment of the *Žłlankʻ*, its contents, and its many recensions, cf. Antʻabyan 1967; 1987, 2: 110-26. E. Prudʻhomme has also translated various excerpts from the *Žłlankʻ* in French (Vardan Arewelcʻi 1871).

to providing a medium to bring him and his wife together, at times under the supervision of a priest, in the intimate study of many subjects. Similarly, it established a model, based on the pedagogy of a monastic education, that was intended to serve the king's children in developing their own *bona fides* as educated rulers, in the mold of their father, in the future. Finally and most subtly, it served as implicit proof-of-concept that Middle Armenian could house within itself the knowledge of the world, and therefore become a suitable medium to impart a royal education. Works like the *Žłlankʻ* helped to prompt an era of 'vulgar' learning among the nobility more broadly at this time, rooted in a vernacular pedagogy that drew on the teachings of the church, and further correlated Middle Armenian usage with elite study in medieval Cilicia.

The second manuscript I briefly examine here is among the oldest grammars to be composed in Middle Armenian, straddling a world both in and out of court. It is a loose translation of a Classical Armenian grammar that King Hetʻum also commissioned, again from Vardan Arewelcʻi, who came west to reside in Cilicia around 1242. Vardan's grammar continues a long tradition in Classical Armenian of commenting on the *Tékhnē grammatikē* (Art of Grammar) by the foundational Greek grammarian Dionysius Thrax (d. 90 BCE). In this sense, Vardan's *Meknutʻiwn kʻerakani* (Commentary on Grammar) is not a language textbook as one might expect of modern grammars, but rather contains something like a theory of language, or a different kind of proof-of-concept: a demonstration that the Classical Armenian language was capable of auto-theorization, and that the student of Armenian was capable of taking on any subject that language can express.[13] Quite clearly, this grammar was a part of Hetʻum's correlation of his own power with erudition and study.

It is therefore significant that the *Commentary on Grammar* was adapted into Middle Armenian, though for unknown purposes. The oldest extant copy of this work preserves a colophon dated 29 June 1335, but it may also have been translated prior to this year. As this third section shows, the unpublished Middle Armenian grammar likewise demonstrates Middle Armenian was capable of theorizing language, and therefore was capable of serving as the gateway to "wisdom" and "knowledge" (M2283, 4*r*) as it states, through a diglossic relationship with the Classical language. Crucially, such works indicate that the clergy experimented with the Armenian vernacular as an intermediary link that might aid in the study of Classical Armenian, suggesting that the vernacular might provide a cornerstone in the study of grammar, the first of the arts in the medieval *trivium*

---

13 The title of this work is also sometimes translated as *Commentary on the Grammarian*.

and hence the basis of a Christian education. This relatively neglected Middle Armenian adaptation of Vardan Arewelc'i's *Commentary* matters, then, precisely because it marks a moment when the Armenian vernacular gradually became an object of study in its own right, and moreover, an object to be contemplated by elite figures who were perhaps beyond the court.

In sum, these dual metamorphoses – Middle Armenian's capability of totalizing seemingly all knowledge, on the one hand, and its partial transformation into an object of study, on the other – occurred against the backdrop of the broader Mediterranean world, and more locally against a shared multilingualism with the Crusader states. Hence, the production of such works during this period reflects another step in the evolution of Middle Armenian into a primary language by which knowledge was produced for the multilingual court, rivaling even other vernaculars in their presence in medieval Cilicia. However, at least in these examples, Middle Armenian does not seem to have especially rivaled its Classical sibling during this early stage at court. As Łazaryan has observed, the vernacular emerged out of a delicate partnership with the Classical Armenian language, drawing heavily on Classical grammar and syntax, even as it began to weave new grammatical forms, a new lexicon, and a new pronunciation of Classical words into its warp and weft, setting off a process of gradually increasing differentiation (1954, 331-2). In some sense, one might thus consider Cilician Middle Armenian to have developed out of an ongoing dialogue between the spoken Armenian dialects from Greater Armenia that had migrated to the Mediterranean coast, on the one hand, and the other languages of the Mediterranean world, including now also Classical Armenian, that grounded these dialects in preestablished styles and genres of writing, on the other.

At the same time, Cilician Middle Armenian also developed as a written language out of a series of conversations between the court in Sis, the Armenian church, and other actors with varying degrees of closeness between the two, including from Greater Armenia. These relationships were both of an intimate nature and incredibly generative for Middle Armenian as a language of science and statecraft. The cultivation of Middle Armenian as a courtly language of study may thus be seen as part of a broader project, explored in recent years by scholars such as Abkarian, Grigoryan Savary, Rapti, and Vardanyan, in which the Het'umid court sought to bolster Armenian authority over their corner of the northeastern Mediterranean in many ways.[14] Of course, in retrospect, this larger project would be

---

[14] There has been a renewed interest of late regarding the Armenian nobility's articulation of their authority in Sis, particularly in art history (Grigoryan Savary 2022; Rapti 2022; Vardanyan 2022), and also in the study of how these figures constructed

short-lived; the Cilician state fell to the Mamluks in 1375, ending the last Armenian kingdom. Yet this outcome was hardly inevitable in the early thirteenth century. After all, this was a world in which one could murder the king of Armenia, who was the son of the ruler of Antioch, an ally and a Christian neighbuor, and in many respects get away with it. It is all the more remarkable, then, that one aspect of the Het'umid project of consolidating authority among the other elites in Sis in fact succeeded wildly, long outlasting Het'um's alliance with the Ilkhanate and even Armenian statehood in Cilicia altogether. This was the selective transformation of dialects from Greater Armenia, rarely preserved in extant writing before their migration to the Mediterranean coast, into a chosen courtly language of the last Armenian kings and an enduring medium of knowledge production.

2 The Written Cultivation of Cilician Middle Armenian Among Court and Church

Before turning to the intellectual partnership between King Het'um and Vardan Arewelc'i, it is illustrative to sketch a broader arc for the development of Middle Armenian during the Cilician period here. Middle Armenian is often termed a 'vernacular' language, and the language that medieval Armenians actually spoke (when they spoke Armenian), but these descriptions generally conceal as much as they reveal. Notably, Middle Armenian does not entirely conform to Pollock's classic formulation of a vernacular language as one that looks to a separate and classical antecedent (such the relationship of Kannada to Sanskrit), from which it derives its literary and rhetorical models. Thus, for Pollock, the choice to write in the vernacular is a choice to write in a language that does not travel in the same way as the cosmopolitan or classical language (1998a, 8; 1998b; 2006). In contrast, Middle Armenian does not fit this mold quite so well (Pifer 2023, 317-18). For one, the relationship between Middle and Classical Armenian is closer to the relationship between Byzantine and Classical Greek than it is to the relationship between Old French and Latin. Though Middle Armenian and Classical Armenian have their own

---

their genealogies across disparate historical and literary sources, as in the work of Abkarian (unpublished), whose treatment of the Cilician representations of authority in the Mediterranean world is the subject of a forthcoming dissertation. My interest here is not on authority per se, but rather in how the nobility, in partnership with the church, specifically used the vernacular to further specific aims at court even beyond the chancellery, both socially among themselves and also in concert with the leaders and major intellectuals of the Armenian Church. For historical background on Armenian Cilicia more generally, cf. also the rich studies by Der Nersessian 1962 and Mutafian 1988; 1993; 2012.

distinctive grammatical and lexical forms, they exist along a linguistic continuum rather than as entirely independent and separate languages, and different points on this spectrum interface with neighbouring literary and linguistic forms in divergent ways.[15] Of course, the same is true to a degree of the modern Eastern and Western Armenian 'vernaculars', which likewise take a sizable amount of their lexicons and grammatical forms from Classical, Middle, Early Modern (Civil), and dialectical Armenian(s). It is perhaps more accurate to envision the Armenian language as a large and unruly family with many siblings, cousins, and parents who each vied for prominence in different ways, and as the result of different language ideologies, than as incommensurate tongues. Put differently, the Armenian language is one that houses vernaculars in the *plural*, even as it sometimes unsettles contemporary models for what those 'vernaculars' might do in relation to each other or to their classical language.

That said, even at the early period under consideration in this article, Cilician Armenian authors were often sharply aware that they were not writing in a classicizing mode. In the words of Mxitʻar Heracʻi (d. c. 1200), the celebrated Armenian physician who composed an early Middle Armenian book called *J̌ermancʻ mxitʻarutʻiwn* (The Consolation of Fevers) in late twelfth-century Cilicia, he made his book in a "rustic [*gełǰuk*] and unrestricted tongue" that would be easy for his readership to understand (1832, viii).[16] Implicit in his words is the assumption that Classical Armenian (known as *grabar*, or the written language) was apparently not accessible for Mxitʻar's desired audiences. Tellingly, glimpses of this same rhetoric also reflect moments of vernacularization elsewhere in the medieval Mediterranean. For instance, Roman Catholic officials at the third Council of Tours in 813 instructed clergy to no longer deliver sermons only in Latin, which was apparently difficult for some audiences to comprehend, but rather to preach in the *rusticam Romanam linguam*, or the 'rustic' romance language, meaning Vulgar Latin,

---

15 I have borrowed the notion of a 'linguistic continuum' from Mavroudi (2022, 265), who uses it to distinguish the cases of different medieval registers of Greek and Arabic from their classical languages, as opposed to the European model of the classical and vernacular languages, which are separate from each other.

16 Գեղջուկ և արձակ բարբառով. Here I employ Cowe's insightful translation of արձակ as 'unrestricted' instead of 'prose' as it is sometimes understood, which he reads as the language being freed from the "various rules set out in textbooks and taught in schools" on Classical Armenian (2020b, 109). It is also worth observing that Mxitʻar's other epithet, *gełǰuk* or 'rustic', predates him by several centuries. For instance, the historian Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʻi, who was Catholicos of the Armenian Church from 897-925, reports that Šapuh Bagratuni wrote a history in the ninth century in a *gełǰuk* register, though this work is now lost to us. So too did the ninth-century grammarian Hamam Arewelcʻi term a form of Armenian as *gṙehik* or 'vulgar'. Cf. the discussion by Ačaṙyan 1951, 229-31.

which encompassed what might be termed the 'proto-Romance dialects' or the 'Latin of the illiterate' (Werminghoff 1906, 288, l. 28; Gravel 2021, 561-2). But what did using the 'rustic' language really mean for these diverse figures, straddling opposite shores of the Mediterranean world?

In some ways, it may have meant something relatively similar. Akin to Latin, which predated the development of the 'proto-Romance dialects' for many centuries, Classical Armenian (*grabar*) gained admission to writing in the fifth century CE, following the invention of the Armenian script. By the thirteenth century, Classical Armenian was an archaic language, and moreover one that required diligent study to read and to write in any capacity – it was therefore not spoken by the nobility or the Armenian populace at large. Instead, when these figures spoke Armenian, they spoke dialectal forms of the language that had developed over many centuries and were used across broad swaths of Armenian society in Cilicia, as is suggested by the manuscript record and which I will discuss shortly.[17] This language is known today under the rubric of 'Cilician' Middle Armenian, even while other varieties of the premodern Armenian vernacular developed in writing in a decentralized manner both simultaneously and over the following centuries.

At least in its written forms, early Cilician Middle Armenian drew a great deal of its lexicon and grammar from Classical Armenian, while it also introduced new vocabulary and simplified or subtly altered many of those grammatical forms. Perhaps most famously, Cilician Middle Armenian interfaced with the major cosmopolitan and vernacular languages of the Mediterranean world in its adoption of new loanwords, which sprung from the floodgates of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Outremer French, Greek, and Latin.[18] The textual corpus of

---

[17]   In fact, many premodern dialectal strands of Armenian developed centuries before the configuration of Cilician Middle Armenian as a written language, sometimes seemingly as early as the fifth and sixth centuries; not all of these were necessarily antecedents to the Cilician vernacular, however (Winter 1966; Weitenberg 1983).

[18]   On the development and forms of 'Middle' Armenian, cf. the foundational studies by Hovnanean (1897) and by Karst (1901), as well as the discussion in the overview of grammar in the modern vernacular by Aytənean (1866). Aytənean does not always take an appreciative view of the premodern vernacular variants and forerunners of modern Armenian, calling their use of foreign loanwords and lack of uniformity a kind of "ugliness" (տգեղութիւն) (142), even while scaffolding aspects of Middle Armenian history into his construction of a modern vernacular ideology. On Middle Armenian's grammatical and historical development, cf. also *Aknarkner miǰin grakan hayereni patmut'yan* (Ałayan, J̌ahukyan 1972-75), and the studies by J̌ahukyan (1969), Łazaryan (1960), and Avetisyan (2016). Avetisyan does not consider 'Middle' Armenian, in his usage, to be a literary language on account of its internal heterogeneity and non-standardized character; instead, he chooses to bifurcate 'literary' Armenian into two more general and overarching periods, that of Classical and that of the 'vernacular', which underwent standardization in the modern era; Middle Armenian, in this light, served as a kind of

Middle Armenian reflects the cross-cultural and multilingual environments in which it emerged, remaining internally diverse throughout its long life. Even in Armenian-ruled Cilicia, which represents the most centralized phase in the configuration of the medieval Armenian vernacular, a wide and heterogeneous array of Middle Armenian forms appear. Mxit'ar Herac'i, for example, had migrated to Cilicia from Khoy, today in northwestern Iran, and he likely brought a different dialectal strand of the Armenian vernacular with him. Hence, he pluralizes some nouns in a different manner than do the vernacular writers in Cilicia who immediately follow him (Ačaṙyan 1951, 253).

This does not necessarily mean, of course, that the variety of medieval dialects and literary registers housed under the rubric of 'Middle' Armenian were restricted to the speech of non-elite Armenian actors. No one would argue that Mxit'ar's decision to write in his 'rustic' tongue was for the benefit of 'peasants' or 'villagers', which is another meaning of *gełǰuk* (Bedrossian 1875, 115).[19] His was a medical treatise which served in the training of other physicians, both in and beyond Cilicia itself. The foundational nineteenth- and early twentieth-century studies on Middle Armenian were well aware of its relationship to royal power and knowledge production during the Cilician period; it is no coincidence that Cilician Armenian is by far the most studied form of the Middle Armenian vernacular, in part for this reason. Still, it is somewhat common to encounter the assertion that the Armenian vernacular was spoken by the 'people', while Classical Armenian remained a language of the church and the elite,[20] with-

---

holding place for the 'literary' Armenian vernaculars that exist today. However, it is worth observing, at least in passing, that many premodern vernacular languages likewise displayed a wide degree of variation and non-standardization even in literary texts. In my opinion, it is more productive to consider how and to what degree a premodern language interfaces with particular styles, aesthetics, and genres, and moreover how and to what degree it does so in particular times and places, than it is to try and categorize what is explicitly 'literary' or not 'literary' about its products according to modern benchmarks. For broad investigations into the development of the Armenian language, including its 'Middle' period, cf. also Ačaṙyan (1951, 226-54) and Nichanian (1989). Finally, for an introduction to the evolution and development of the premodern Armenian dialects, which began long before Middle Armenian was introduced to writing in Cilicia and also continued long after, cf. the detailed linguistic studies by Pisowicz (1995), Weitenberg (1983; 1984; 1996; 1999-2000; 2002), and Winter 1966. On Middle Armenian textual study and readership in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, cf. Budak, Pifer 2024 and Pifer 2023.

19 Likewise, as Ačaṙyan observes, although Mxit'ar Goš (d. c. 1200) wrote his law code in a simple Classical Armenian register, he did so for the benefit of other specialists and officials in the Cilician legal system, and not for the public at large (1951, 232).

20 For example, as the editors of the three volume *Heritage of Armenian Literature* observe in passing, "Part of the movement toward secularization, especially from the twelfth century on, was the emergence of a new literary idiom: Middle Armenian, a diction that could be comprehended by the masses. *Grabar* (Classical Armenian) continued to exist alongside the various spoken dialects, however, and gradually became

out always a great deal of effort to place these two very broad poles along a more graded spectrum.[21]

Here, too, comparison within a broader Mediterranean framework is instructive. Take, again for example, the famous (and often misunderstood) injunction at the third Council of Tours: the command to preach in the *rusticam Romanam linguam* was not directed toward the general Christian populace, but rather seems to have been intended as an instruction for use in the training of *clergy*, as Gravel (2021) has argued. This 'rustic' tongue was, in this context, also a language of priests, albeit those who seem to have had difficulty receiving a complete education in Latin grammar, and yet those who still possessed some education in relation to a generally illiterate and unlettered populace.[22] In the case of Middle Armenian, it is certainly true that many poems were composed in part for relatively uneducated (by monastic standards) audiences in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, both in Cilicia and in Greater Armenia; these poems were often composed by Armenian clergy, in part to inculcate knowledge of Christianity among their scattered flocks. However, beyond the form of poetry, there is another strand of Middle Armenian's history that deserves to be teased out here: namely, its connections to knowledge

---

the language of the church, just as in western Europe Latin was gradually confined to the church and related areas of scholarship" (Hacikyan et al. 2002, 201). It is important to acknowledge the validity of this observation, even while one might speculate where we should place the interpretive communities of groups such as the nobility, physicians, scribes in the chancellery or at the customs-house in Ayas, and certain vernacular poets from the period, such as Kostandin Erznkac'i and Frik, each with different commands of the language and each with slightly differing audiences, in-between these very broad poles of the clerics and the 'people'. The same can be said of different uses and registers of language within the Armenian Church itself.

21 Of course, this over-identification of the 'vernacular' with 'the people' also has an old genealogy. As Mavroudi has aptly observed, "The romantic conceptualization of the 'vernacular' as the 'language of the people' owes much to Herder's eighteenth-century identification of language as the fundamental characteristic of a nation and its deployment in nineteenth-century German cultural and political life – in part, a reaction to French cultural dominance in the German lands and elsewhere in Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries"; therefore, she notes, the identification of a 'vernacular' simply with the 'people' is also anachronistic in the premodern world (2022, 264). In this case study, the corpus of Middle Armenian – even in its early period in the thirteenth century – is simply too diverse, and to an extent too decentralized, to ascribe a single kind of audience or function to, and one should be skeptical of any attempt to do just that. For instance, during this century, Middle Armenian was used at times by theologian-poets in Greater Armenia such as Yovhannēs Erznkac'i who explicitly state that their (sometimes) lay audiences could not read scripture and therefore they composed poetry (1958, 208); it was also used at the court in Sis by nobility who actively studied Classical Armenian, although did not seem as comfortable in the Classical language as they did in the Middle register, as this article will show.

22 Similarly, as Agapitos observes of Byzantine Greek, "there can be no question of class distinction in the use of the learned and the vernacular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, given that both idioms belonged to the educated elite" (2022, 264).

production and to royal power, even before the establishment of the Kingdom of Armenia in Cilicia, and even apart from the chancellery at court.[23] Middle Armenian was likewise a language developed in its written forms first and foremost by elite Armenian figures, including by the heads of church and court. In this context, the various branches of Middle Armenian were 'rustic' primarily in relation to the archaic, learned language of Classical Armenian; this epithet is thus not necessarily reflection upon those who used the vernacular, as this was a capacious group that included kings and queens.

In fact, elite usage of the Armenian vernacular dates to its earliest appearances in the manuscript record. For example, one of the oldest extant Armenian language manuscripts, an Armenian-Latin glossary produced in late ninth- or early tenth-century France, features many dialectal forms and may have been dictated by an Armenian physician to a Frankish monk (Weitenberg 1983; Redgate 2007). This work is known as the Autun Glossary; it is contained within a Carolingian manuscript that includes a copy of the letters of Jerome (d. 420). Slightly later in time, but further to the east in Greater Armenia, a physician near Diyarbakır named Busayid wrote the oldest known Middle Armenian prose text that is still extant today: a prescription for the treatment of the liver, which he recorded in 1037.[24] Tellingly, Busayid's patient Grigor was the son of Vahram Pahlawuni (d. 1045), who bore the hereditary title of the *sparapet* (military commander-in-chief) of the Bagratuni kingdom. As these early examples suggest, Middle Armenian has long been a language of knowledge production, and in particular of medical knowledge, even as it was also correlated with elite figures, including physicians (who may or may not have been Armenian) and the Armenian nobility.[25]

Remarkably, this relationship only deepened after the collapse of Bagratuni rule in the mid-eleventh century. It was during this period when migrating waves of Armenian nobles began to settle in Cilicia, bringing with them many dialectal forms of medieval Armenian, which took on new lives in exile from their native lands and in partnership with Classical Armenian (Łazaryan 1954, 332). While the admission of Middle Armenian to writing seems to have happened first in Greater Armenia, it is in Cilicia where its literarization, or the

---

23   The connection of Middle Armenian to Cilician statecraft has been observed at least since the foundational study on the documents of the chancellery by Langlois 1863.

24   For the text, cf. Ačaṙyan 1951, 233-4. Cf. also the discussion in Hovnanean 1897, 414-20.

25   Łazaryan considers the development of Middle Armenian to have taken place during Bagratuni rule (and hence to have developed already before its period of flourishing in Cilicia), beginning in the tenth century, and contextualizes its early development against other social and economic shifts during this period (1960, 67-114).

cultivation of language within a literary context, appears to have begun.[26] One of the earliest known authors of this new literature is another elite figure of Pahlawuni descent: Nersēs Šnorhali (d. 1173), the Armenian Catholicos, who rewrote the Bible as a series of versified Middle Armenian riddles in Hṙomklay, the new see of the Church.[27] He did so, according to one thirteenth-century Armenian historian, so that Armenians might recite these scriptural enigmas at wine-bibbings and weddings in the place of more worldly forms of entertainment (Kirakos Ganjakecʻi 1961, 147). Somewhat like the command to preach in the *rusticam Romanam linguam*, these riddles remained popular in monastic settings, where they were largely copied numerous times throughout the medieval period, even while they reportedly had currency in other social contexts. Right from the start, the church's use of the vernacular was invested in a particular pedagogical program, in other words, and that pedagogy seemingly had currency beyond the walls of the monastery.

Nersēs seems to be at the vanguard of a trend. As noted earlier, one decade after Nersēs's death, the erudite Cilician physician Mxitʻar Heracʻi composed his famous medical treatise in Middle Armenian so that his work might be "easily understood" (դիւրահաս լիցի) by readers (1832, viii). Mxitʻar's choice of linguistic register was likely not coincidental: he worked in both Sis, the capital of Armenian Cilicia, and also at the see in Hṙomklay; moreover, he received patronage from Nersēs and Grigor Tłay, the next head of the Armenian Church, and was associated especially with Nersēs. Though the exact audiences of both figures remain somewhat shrouded by time, Nersēs and Mxitʻar were part of overlapping circles – ordained clergymen and lay Cilician physicians – who incrementally tilted modes of knowledge production toward this new 'rustic' idiom, which now assumed a role in shaping the interpretation of holy scripture (in the poetic riddles of Nersēs) and in collating medical science culled from Greek, Arabic, Syriac, and Persian (in the prose work of Mxitʻar). These were no small tasks.

By the turn of the thirteenth century, there was a quantitative and qualitative shift in Middle Armenian textual production that was driven by another elite coterie, tipping the language's gravitational center toward the royal court in Sis. This new phase of the language's history coincided roughly with the takeover of Cilician Armenia by the Hetʻumid dynasty in 1226, when the regent of Queen

---

26 For the terms and definitions of literization (the admission of a language to writing) and literarization (the admission of language to a literary standard), cf. Pollock 1998b; 2006.

27 For the text of the riddles attributed to Nersēs, and for information on their reproduction in manuscripts, cf. Mnacʻakanyan 1980, 40-191.

Zabel conspired to wed her to his son Het'um I. Somewhat akin to the vernacular riddles of Nersēs, which contain within themselves the sweeping range of biblical texts, this phase in the Armenian vernacular's development had its own encyclopedic bent, serving as performative proof-of-concept that the vernacular was capable of housing within it all the knowledge of the world (and, simultaneously, that the king enjoyed command over this diverse material). For instance, it was around this period when an anonymous translator rendered into Middle Armenian the Arabic version of the *Geoponica*, a treasure trove of information on weather, agriculture, and animal husbandry, originally compiled in Greek for Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos in the tenth century (Ališan 1877; Greppin 1987). As I will examine shortly, it was likewise during this period when King Het'um commissioned Vardan Arewelc'i to compose the encyclopedic *Žłlank'* for his own study, a work that shares affinities with other 'encyclopedic' projects in Outremer French.

Such activity may not have been limited to Armenians alone. Syrian physicians in Cilicia, such as Išōx and Faraǰ, likewise composed books that appeared in Middle Armenian during the mid to late thirteenth century; their works collectively touch on anatomy, the natural world, cosmology, and horses (Vardanyan 2008, 276; cf. Cowe 2010).[28] The court in Sis sometimes played a role in the production of such works. King Smbat (r. 1296-98) commissioned the hippiatry by Faraǰ, for instance (Cowe 2010, 101). The production of these works in Cilician Middle Armenian suggests a broader shift in the vernacular's efficacy, which was gradually becoming a regional language of knowledge production, buttressed by royal patronage and the activities of a variety of physicians and translators who benefited from that patronage. Moreover, the appearance of 'rustic' scientific and medical works in Cilicia is also suggestive of courtly activity in other ways. To give one prominent example, Queen Zabel established a hospital in 1241-2 (Ališan 1885, 554); it is not difficult to envision how these same 'rustic' texts would have been used at this institution, which depended on the patronage of the court. The nobility not only commissioned works in Middle Armenian directly, in other words, but just as crucially developed institutional spaces within which the vernacular could find purchase. They provided much of the language's needed infrastructure, albeit sometimes language cultivation would not seem to be their primary objective.

Parallel to this story, as Middle Armenian's status as a language of learning among the rulers of Armenian Cilicia continued to grow, so too did the court practice certain forms of institutionalized study.

---

28   On Syrian-Armenian intellectual and cultural exchange from this period, cf. also Tēr-Petrosian 1989.

Near the end of the thirteenth century, the Dominican traveller Burchard of Mount Sion spent ten weeks with King Lewon II (d. 1289), the son of Het'um.[29] He was particularly impressed by the piety of the king and his family, noting a specific form of study that the king and nobility exercised daily:

> *Reges et principes et omnes nobiles audiunt libentissime uerbum Dei. Vnde cotidie ad horam tertiam uerthapate siue monachi curiam regis uel principis adeunt alicuius ad quos statim accedunt principes ipsi uel domini cum filiis suis et potentibus de curia sua, et apponitur liber aliquis de sacra scriptura, et legitur coram eis in uulgari, quia linguam aliam nesciunt sed linguis et literis propriis utuntur, et exponitur eis textus a monachis illis, et ubicumque dubitant seculares et questiones mouent, a monachis instruuntur et questiones soluuntur secundum dicta sanctorum. Ego quesiui ab ipso catholicos, quos doctores maxime sequerentur in scripture sacre expositione et dixit, quod inter precipuos sunt isti: Iohannes Chrisostomus, Gregorius Nazancenus, Cyrillus Alexandrinus quem Kyrillum uocant quia C litteram non habent, et Effrem.*

> The kings, the princes, and all the nobles hear the word of God most willingly. For this reason daily at the third hour the verthabite [vardapet] or monks visit the court of king or a prince; the princes themselves or the lords with their children and officials of their court come to them at once. Some book of sacred scripture is brought and read before them in the common tongue, because they know no other, but use their own languages and script. The text is expounded to them by the monks, and whenever the lay people have doubts and raise questions, they are taught by the monks and questions answered in accordance with the sayings of the saints. I enquired from the catholicus [Catholicos] himself which doctors of the church they followed in particular in expounding sacred scripture. He said that among the important ones were these: John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzus, and Cyril of Alexandria, whom they call Kyril, because they have no letter C, and Ephraem. (Burchard of Mount Sion, O.P. 2019, 206-9)

Three details are especially worth unpacking here. First, clergy would come and read books about scripture to the nobility and their families "in the common tongue [*in uulgari*]", or form of vulgar

---

Armenian, because their audience apparently did not know other languages. Perhaps the scriptural books at court were read aloud in Classical Armenian, following a discussion in a more colloquial and contemporary register of Armenian, as happens even today in Armenian churches around the world. It may also be that the clergy actually read aloud from a vernacular Armenian text, as Antʻabyan has suggested (1967, 157-8).[30] At the least, Burchard's observation marks a clear partnership between the nobility and the church, which facilitated learning and piety among the highest echelons of Cilician society. Second, and just as important, study at court was reportedly a social affair, bringing the nobility, their wives, their children, and even servitors and officials together. As it would seem, this study inculcated a kind of familial intimacy based on a shared commitment to learning at court – an intimacy which, of course, was also shaped by the priest or monk who was present. And finally, study in the 'common' tongue was a dialogic affair, as it apparently included not only a form of instruction, delivered by the priest, but also made room for different responses and questions from the nobles and their children. These aspects of Burchard's report are significant, as we will see in the following section, in part because many of these threads reappear in Vardan Arewelcʻi's vernacular pedagogy for the instruction of Hetʻum and his immediate family, which predated this account by a generation.[31]

Nonetheless, Burchard's latter claim about the monolingualism of the Armenian nobility, as if they were merely forced to use the vernacular out of lack of other options, was probably overstated. At least some of the nobility were well-versed in Outremer French, a

---

[30]   There is also reason to suggest that Dominicans in the region, who had been dispatched partly to proselytize to the Mongols but turned their attention to Armenian Christians, whom they converted instead, employed Middle Armenian in part because they could not acquire monastic training in the Classical language. Cf. the discussion by Cowe 2020b, 109-10. Cowe posits that Dominicans in Cilicia and Greater Armenia "did not have access to Armenian Apostolic monastic academies and therefore, when they wrote their own works, would do so in a form of Middle Armenian, so much so that in his letter to them from the 1320s Esayi Nčʻecʻi goes out of his way to write in that idiom, though the remainder of his correspondence is penned in Classical Armenian, and it is against this backdrop that we should interpret Grigor Tatʻewacʻi's remarks in his renowned *Girkʻ Harcʻmancʻ* (Book of Questions) to the effect that it is written in the Classical form for *banibun* (i.e. highly educated) vardapets, perhaps disparaging the Dominicans' lack of control of that idiom". On Armeno-Latin intellectual exchange, cf. also Cowe 2013 and La Porta 2015.

[31]   Antʻabyan (1967, 157-8) quotes part of this passage in Armenian translation in his indispensable study of the *Žłlankʻ*, largely to argue that the nobility may have also studied non-scriptural texts read by clergy, as some entries of the *Žłlankʻ* would seem to suggest. Elsewhere, he also posits that Vardan's *Žłlankʻ* may have been responsible for establishing this tradition (Antʻapyan 1987, 1: 157). My interest in this report lies more in the social component in the courtly act of study, and in particular the rather direct mediation of a priest in this process.

vernacular tied to statecraft on the eastern fringes of the Mediterranean world. The Armenian nobility seems to have considered these two vernaculars as somewhat related; so extensive was the exchange of vocabulary from Outremer French to Middle Armenian, that even today the word in the modern Eastern and Western Armenian dialects for 'mister' or 'sir' is the French *baron* (Aslanov 2021, 181). So too did the Cilician nobility translate texts from Outremer French into their native vernacular. Smbat Sparapet, the older brother of King Het'um, thus translated the *Assises d'Antioche* ('Statutes of Antioch', or *Ansiz Antiok'ay* in Armenian), a legal treatise from the Crusader state of Antioch, from Outremer French into Middle Armenian in 1253; this work survives today only in Middle Armenian, though many other legal codes in Old French have come down from this period.[32] Remarkably, upon completion of this Middle Armenian translation, Smbat states that he sent his version back to the court in Antioch to be compared against the originals in Outremer French and verified as accurate (Smbat Sparapet 1876, 3). In other words, as he implies, it was not enough simply to render the text as comprehensible or accessible in Armenian. Rather, his Middle Armenian translation had to be technically exact in accordance with the Outremer French originals, and even acknowledged as such by his relatives and allies in Antioch, who likewise apparently knew both Middle Armenian and Outremer French. Smbat's claim thus does some nimble argumentative work, buttressing both his skill as translator and Middle Armenian's capacity to convey the same juridical discourses as Outremer French. The salient idea here is that justice demands exactitude, and Middle Armenian could now plausibly deliver both within the context of the Cilician courts, in a manner legible to other vernacular legal systems found in nearby states.

Crucially, as I contend, these vernacular texts activated and made available certain forms of power at court. Such works were clearly products of the court's significant and deliberate investment in producing Middle Armenian codices in particular. Sargis Picak, one of the most renowned Armenian artists of his time, helps to bring these points into relief: in 1331, he skillfully illuminated the frontispiece of a copy of Smbat's *Assises d'Antioche*. Sargis Picak depicts King Lewon IV (d. 1341) in a seated position, dispensing "correct judgment" to other men at court, who are positioned hierarchically below him.[33] A divine hand lingers above the king, in the left-hand corner of the image, from which King Lewon receives his authority, and, more important, which transforms

---

[32] For a linguistic analysis of the Middle Armenian *Assises d'Antioche*, cf. Ouzounian 2014.

[33] Middle Armenian: ՈՒՂԵՂ ԴԱՏԱՍՏԱՆ. For a detailed and comparative study of the depiction of Lewon IV, cf. Grigoryan 2023.

King Lewon into the conduit through which divine judgment is meted out on earth **[fig. 1]**. The implication, in this case, is that such judgment is also mediated through the 'vulgar' text of Smbat's translation, which is also constitutive of the court's adjudicating power. The image, like the translation from one 'vulgar' tongue to another, underscores a form of divinely-appointed Armenian authority claimed and exercised by the royalty through the production of vernacular texts.

Figure 1 The frontispiece of Smbat Sparapet's Middle Armenian translation of Assises d'Antioche. V107, 1*v-2r*. Mekhitarist Order, San Lazzaro, Venice. Courtesy of the Librarian Rev. Father Vahan Ohanian

In short, it is clear that texts in Middle Armenian held a significant relationship to their readers and commissioners at court, who were willing to patronize the illumination of even non-Biblical texts. This investment also helps to distinguish Middle Armenian texts from certain other vernaculars that likewise existed along a linguistic continuum with their classical languages, such as Byzantine Greek. For instance, Agapitos has observed that unlike "some Western medieval vernacular works, no single Byzantine vernacular text survives in a luxury book with illustrations, though we have a few remnants of rather crude ink drawings in some manuscripts" (2022, 226). The Armenian court in Sis seems to have felt differently about their own vernacular, perhaps in part because their exposure to rival vernaculars came not only from

the Byzantine Empire, but more immediately from the Crusader states and Outremer French, as well as from other cultural contexts. Moreover, this exposure to 'vernacularity' included both proper vernaculars that were separate from their classical languages and languages that existed along a continuum with their classical counterparts.[34]

The Armenian nobility's use of Outremer French even extended to at least one notable composition. In 1307, Het'um the Historian (d. c. 1310-20), the nephew of Het'um I and Smbat, composed his widely popular history *La Flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient*, concerning the Mongol invasions, in Outremer French at the request of Pope Clement V. This work was richly illuminated and even translated into Latin, then back again into French, with additional translations in Spanish later in the century and in English in 1521 (Jackson 2016).[35] Its frontispiece was illuminated with an image of Het'um, who had joined the Premonstratensian Order in Cyprus, delivering his vernacular codex to the Pope. Unlike Sargis Picak's miniature of King Lewon, here the hierarchy of power is quite different, with the Armenian submitting to Rome in humility. So, too, is a crimson crowned lion, the coat of arms of the ruling family of Cilicia, nestled within a large illuminated letter, which likewise assumes a lower hierarchical position on the folio in relation to the figure of the Pope [fig. 2]. In each of these cases, however, such power differentials were negotiated and affirmed by a vernacular codex. Quite clearly, Outremer French gave the Cilician nobility access to different forms of power (whether in the northern Mediterranean or more locally, in relation to the Crusader States in the eastern Mediterranean), as well as ideas about how to articulate certain forms of authority and law in their own territory. It is therefore worth noting, even at this early stage, how cross-culturally entangled Cilician Middle Armenian was, drawing its models especially from Greek, Arabic, Syriac, and Persian (in the transference of medical and scientific knowledge)

---

34   Similarly, though in less lavish detail, a notable Cilician manuscript from 1292, which contains the majority of the *Žłlank'* alongside several other texts, features a simple illuminated frontispiece that depicts Moses as the author of the Pentateuch (Church of the Forty Martyrs, Armenian Church, Diocese of Aleppo, ALQ155). In some cases, the illumination of 'vulgar' Armenian texts that were originally composed during the Cilician period even continued after the kingdom's downfall. The most notable, and indeed one of the most beautifully illuminated Armenian manuscripts extant today, is from a copy of the Alexander Romance that was made on vellum, in Constantinople, for the patriarch of the Armenian church in 1544. The renowned manuscript features both the original prose translation of the Alexander Romance in Classical Armenian, alongside the medieval Middle Armenian poetry that adapts and occasionally updates the same story for later audiences. The scribe reports that he copied this manuscript at the request of his 'learned' (*banibun*) patron, who apparently had an appreciation of both the Classical and vernacular tongue, which were jointly mediated by abundant miniatures throughout the manuscript (Manchester, The University of Manchester Library, Armenian MCR3, 182*r*).

35   For a recent linguistic analysis of the Cilician Armenian absorption of Outremer French, cf. Aslanov 2021.

and from Outremer French (in the transference of juridical knowledge), reaching both eastward and westward in the entwined labour of producing knowledge, cultivating language, and pursuing the aims of the kingdom. These early authors of Cilician Middle Armenian straddled multiple cultural and linguistic worlds, and these experiences shaped the early corpus of vernacular Armenian texts in a profound way.

Figure 2 Het'um the Historian's presentation of *La Flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient* to the Pope. BnF NAF 1255, 1*r*

Equally important during this period is a discourse of familiarity, and even of agreeability, that ran alongside courtly endeavours in the vernacular. For example, in 1265, Smbat composed another law code in Middle Armenian based in part on the simple Classical Armenian work by Mxit'ar Gosh. Smbat Sparapet carefully explains, in the introduction to his Cilician Middle Armenian *Datastanagirk'* (Lawcode), that he chose to adapt this work both because the original Classical Armenian was difficult, and also because he seems to have had a fondness for Middle Armenian itself:

Եւ այլ շատ ի վերայ իրաւանցս կու պնդէ մարգարէն: Առ որս ես Սմբատս անարժան եւ մեղաւոր ծառայս Աստուծոյ, որդի Կոստանդեայ Թագաւորահօրն եւ եղբայր բարեպաշտ թագաւորին Հայոց Հեթմոյ բազումն աշխատեցայ ի սա ծերացեալ մտօք ի հին եւ յանհասկանալի բառից: Եւ ես բազում աշխատութեամբ փոխեցի զսա ի մեր հեշտալուր բառս, ի թուականութեանս Հայոց ՉԺԴ, ի հայրապետութեան Տեառն Կոստանդեայ, եւ ի թագաւորութեանն Հեթմոյ եւ որդւոյ սորա Լեւոնի: (Mat'evosyan 1984, 328; Hovnanean 1897, 201; cf. Karst 1905, 1: XV-XVI; cf. Nichanian 1989, 220-2)

And the prophet asserts many other [clarifications] upon these laws. Concerning these, I, Smbat, an unworthy and sinful servant of God, son of the King's father Kostandin and brother to Het'um, the pious king of Armenians, laboured greatly over this, with an intellect grown old in years, [due to the language's] ancient and incomprehensible words/expressions. And with great labour I modified this [book] in our mellifluous words/expressions, in 714 [= 1265] of the Armenian Era, during the patriarchy of Kostandin and the reign of Het'um and his son Lewon.

This illuminating passage has long drawn the attention of scholars, not least because it has come down in two quite different manuscript recensions; the variant quoted here is housed in Venice (V107),[36] and an alternate passage was discovered in Ējmiacin. In the Ējmiacin recension, a second commenter inserts himself in the passage, and claims that Smbat had given him the book to 'alter' (փոխսել), apparently after it was completed, begging the reader to remember Smbat, his 'baron', in their prayers (Karst 1905, 1: XV-XVI). As Hovnanean observed over a century ago, this second manuscript recension reclassicized Smbat's vernacular register throughout the book, minimizing its Middle Armenian forms (1897, 201-32). Nichanian has further remarked that these changes raise questions about what degree of vernacularization was considered acceptable at this time in the

---

36 V107 contains both the Lawcode and Assises d'Antioche.

written language, though we know little about the classicizing scribe in this case, who was possibly a member of the clergy (1989, 220-2).

What I wish to draw attention to in the case of Smbat, however, are two related and overlooked points. The first is that Smbat essentially admits to having difficulty reading Classical Armenian texts; yet, despite this, he still made the effort. He wrestled with the literary language of Classical Armenian, which required much study to read and to write in any capacity. Even more, it would seem that Smbat prevailed to a degree. Second, and most crucially, he does not seem to have taken a great degree of satisfaction from this struggle; to paraphrase Roland Barthes, there was little pleasure in the text for him. On the contrary, Smbat implies that it is the 'rustic' tongue which brings him relief. Hence he terms his register *heštalur*, a compound which means many things: 'tractable, docile', 'mild' (Bedrossian 1875, 401), easy to understand, and pleasing and 'mellifluous' or easy to hear (Awetik'ean et al. 1836-37, 2: 86). The term *heštalur* would thus seem to include a vernacular orality with its connotation of audition, encompassing more than a simple declaration of Middle Armenian's intelligibility. At the least, Smbat's ear is very close to this language, which is amenable to his thoughts: it is a language grown docile by his hand. He therefore labels Middle Armenian speech or words 'ours', as opposed quite strikingly to Classical Armenian, whose ownership is left dangling and unclaimed.

In this sense, Smbat offers a counterpoint to the learned physician Mxit'ar Herac'i, who labelled his own vernacular Armenian 'rustic' and 'unrestricted'. Mxit'ar, in his direct proximity to two Catholicoi of the Armenian church and therefore also to the study of Classical Armenian, seems to have considered Middle Armenian as freeing but perhaps also uncultivated – or, at least, as having less to do with the circles of higher learning that he moved within than did the Classical register. By Smbat's time, and in the courtly setting of Sis, that picture has evolved: now the Middle language is 'docile' and even 'delightful', still a sigh of relief from the anachronisms of the Classical register, yet also an established medium for knowledge production. The court and its affiliated institutions have rubbed off on it, and vice-versa.[37]

It therefore seems that Het'um's family found the written vernacular not only useful but also familiar, even agreeable. This matters, as we shall see, because not all clergy in the church would react to the 'mellifluous' Armenian tongue in the same manner as did

---

[37]   In this sense, Smbat's characterization of Middle Armenian loosely corresponds to how contemporary authors had begun to speak of Old French. To give one notable example, in the thirteenth-century *Les Estoires de Venise*, Martin de Canal describes Old French as the 'most delightful' (*la plus delitable*) language to read and to write (Zinelli 2018, 238).

Smbat's classicizing scribe; other priests were perfectly ready to employ aspects of the vernacular to strengthen the personal and ideological bonds between the court and church. Smbat's remarks also matter because they index an ongoing and diglossic relationship between Classical and Middle Armenian at court, one in which each written branch of the Armenian language held a different proximity to the hearts (and ears) of the noble families. The court made various uses of each language; though some readers like Smbat sometimes found the Classical tongue vexing, they did not entirely relinquish their study of texts in an archaic register, either. Case in point, Smbat also commissioned a poetic inscription in mono-rhymed Classical Armenian, which names him as its author, to adorn the castle walls in Babaron (Çandır Castle), today in the province of Mersin (Ališan 1885, 73). More privately, so too did he commission a magnificently illuminated copy of the Gospels for his personal study.[38] This manuscript bears Smbat's name in his own hand in its margins, alongside the pristine Classical Armenian translation of the Bible, informing the reader in red ink that Smbat sought "to amend this [text] with grammar", likely referring to the addition of stresses and unstressed pauses, also in red ink, over the black text **[fig. 3]**.[39] It is clear that Smbat laboured over the Classical Armenian Bible even as he composed marginalia, in this same manuscript, in a decidedly more 'vulgar' register. In ways both intimate and publicly facing, Classical Armenian still held many uses for the elite in Sis, however contingent on genre, medium, and function those uses sometimes were. Middle and Classical Armenian registers of the language thus often coexisted alongside one another at court, as both made available different forms of knowledge production for the nobility.

---

38 Yerevan, Matenadaran (Mesrop Maštocʻ Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), M7644.

39 Քերականաւ ուղել ըզսա. Smbat also alludes to these stresses, and their aid in reading or chanting the Bible, in his colophon on 124*r* in this manuscript, lamenting that his people have grown estranged from such knowledge.
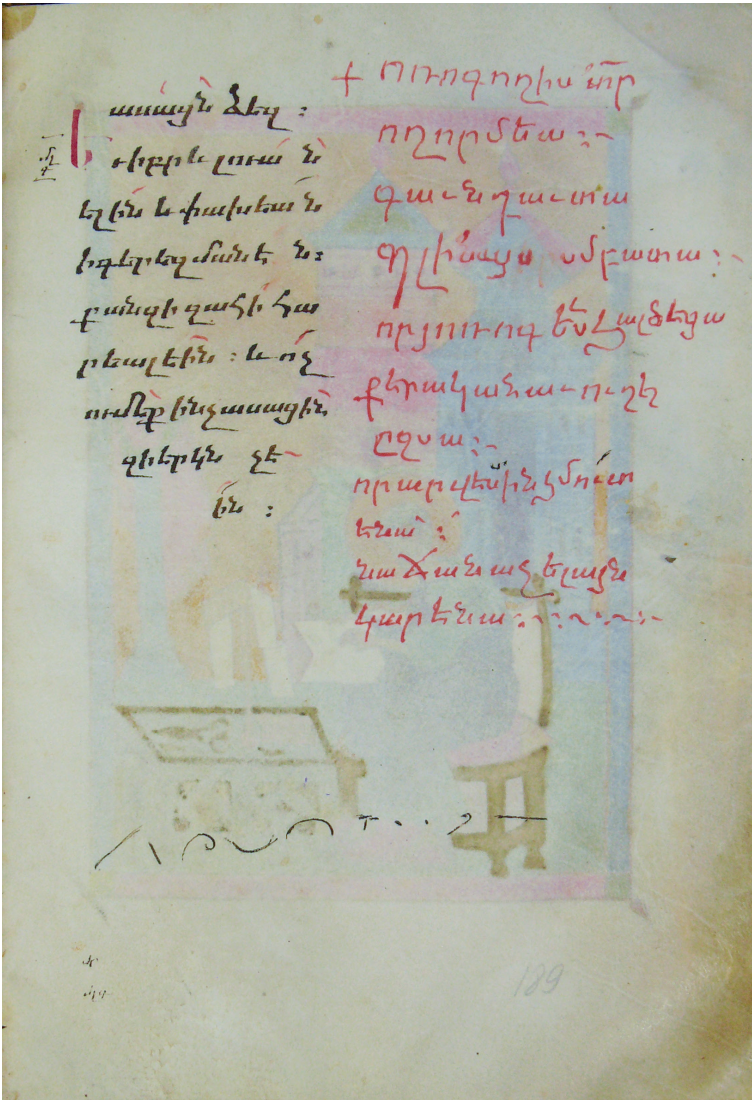
Finally, it is important to note that the nobility's use of the 'mellifluous' language was never limited to the court itself, as we have seen in the context of the Cilician medical school and beginnings of its legal system(s). In a complementary vein, the court made the correlation between Middle Armenian and royal power explicit for actors even

beyond Cilicia, issuing several proclamations from the chancellery in the vernacular.[40] Some of these documents, such as the privilege issued by the Latinophile king Lewon I to the Genoese in 1201, were originally issued in Middle Armenian and Latin simultaneously, though today only the Latin translation survives (Bais 2014, 235-6). Still, other Cilician Middle Armenian privileges have reached us today, as when Lewon II (d. 1289) proffered his *sigeł* (Latin: *sigillum*) to the Genoese, renewing trading rights in 1288 (Langlois 1863, 154-8). Other proclamations, such as the privilege of King Ōšin (d. 1320) to merchants in Montpellier in 1314, followed by a later privilege to the same merchants by Lewon V (d. 1393) in 1321, soon appeared in Middle Armenian, as did another privilege to the Silicians in 1331 (178-9; 185-90). The marginal notation on these documents moreover addresses a wide array of different officials in the kingdom, including those who held offices at the customs house and the harbour master in Ayas, even directly by proper name in the former case. As I have noted elsewhere with Budak, these forms of address point to the widespread efficacy of the Armenian vernacular in the administration of the kingdom (Budak, Pifer 2024). Not surprisingly, then, such efficacy took many forms. More generally, throughout this period, even when notable clergymen wrote to the Cilician nobility, they began to do so in Middle Armenian, despite being in full command of Classical Armenian, implicitly acknowledging the Middle tongue of their audiences was in fact the language correlated with royal power (Ačaṙyan 1951, 235).[41]

Taken in sum, it thus appears that Middle Armenian's ascendancy at court arrived through a cooperative (though unequal) relationship between the Cilician nobility, the Armenian church, a wide array of Cilician institutions, such as the customs house and chancellery, and the activity of lay scholars and physicians such as Mxit'ar Herac'i, in addition to the circulation of more peripheral figures, such as Dominican priests who spoke with Armenians in this region, or the vernacular poets who composed in Middle Armenian both in and beyond the domain of Cilicia proper. Moreover, its earliest written documents at court were generally diglossic, as its authors sought to blend, rather synthetically, Classical and 'vulgar' grammatical forms and lexicons in the construction of their authority, let alone the authority of the court itself, for the benefit of other elite audiences, including one another.

---

40 The chancellery also made use of Latin and Old French, as Langlois notes (1863, 12-13). The chancellery of the neighbouring Lusignan court of Cyprus exercised a similar notarial practice, issuing documents in Latin, Old French, and Greek (Beihammer 2011).

41 For instance, in the early fourteenth century, the Catholicos Grigor Anawarzec'i (d. 1307) composed an epistle counselling King Het'um II (d. 1307), his 'baron', on spiritual matters using a mixture of Middle and Classical Armenian forms (Hovnanean 1897, 249-52).

3 A Pleasant Conversation Between Grammarian and King

In many ways, the Cilician program of language cultivation for Middle Armenian follows a broader pattern that extends even beyond the Mediterranean. During the years 1000-1500 CE, part of what Pollock calls the "vernacular millennium", courts played a pivotal role in creating new cosmopolises, or territorial spaces in which language and power were ultimately conjoined (1998b). In these broader Mediterranean and Eurasian contexts, it is unsurprising that the court of the last Armenian kingdom, which took its cues from the various states in which it had contact, likewise cultivated something akin to a 'vernacular' during this era. To whatever degree this undertaking was by design or more a byproduct of Cilician pragmatism (in concert with many other historical factors), their choice to write in the 'rustic' language helped to differentiate their rule from nearly all extant Armenian writing that came before them, much as Cilicia itself was distinguished geographically from previous Kingdoms of Armenia.

Within this context, there is perhaps no figure as important to the establishment of vernacular study at Het'um's court than Vardan Arewelc'i. Vardan Arewelc'i (Vardan 'the Easterner', or from Greater Armenia) entered monastic study and eventually attained the station of *vardapet* (teacher) in the Armenian church. He first came to Cilicia in 1239/40, just over a decade after Het'um's coronation, on a return journey from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Catholicos invited him to reside in Cilicia for a time; so, too, did the young king make a warm welcome for the theologian. We know that Vardan remained in Cilicia until 1246 before returning to Greater Armenia, and then travelled again to Cilicia at least by 1248, this time staying roughly three years. Like King Het'um himself, Vardan also made the journey on a diplomatic mission to the seat of the Ilkhanate's power in 1246, meeting with Hulagu Khan alongside his king (Vardan Arewelc'i 1991, 155-9). As I will discuss here and in the following section, Vardan also composed at least two major works at King Het'um's request: the *Žłlank'* and the *Commentary on Grammar*, both of which contributed to the bolstering of Het'um's image as 'educated king' and to supporting Middle Armenian as a language of knowledge production, in complementary though different ways. Both works, moreover, contributed to a vernacular pedagogy at court and potentially beyond it, establishing a model for Het'um's descendants to become educated rulers in their own right.

In fact, Vardan subtly supported Het'um's rule through multiple avenues, even beyond the production of these two important works. We should recall that Het'um partially displaced the Ṙubēnid dynasty as the king of Cilicia when he married Zabel; his right to the crown was somewhat more ambiguous in terms of succession than it was for his

predecessors on the throne. Like the Ṙubēnids, however, he continued to style himself as the King of Armenians, and pursued many ways of supporting his claim to the crown. Vardan was indirectly useful in this regard, even when working independent of Sis, as he composed the only known medieval Armenian geography during this period. In this work, Vardan asserted a truly expansive Armenia (Hayastan) stretching from Cilicia to the Caucasus, even though the 'King of Armenians' did not directly control much of this territory (1960, 9-50). Likewise, Vardan also composed a new universal history around 1267, after he had departed Cilicia for the second time, which attempted to place Armenia into a more global frame of reference that included the births of Christ and the Prophet Muhammad, as well as the activities of the Byzantine Empire and the Mongol expansions. Perhaps not coincidentally, this work praises Het'um for providing aid to the surviving forces of Kitbuqa Noyan, a Christian general who served the Ilkhanate. These soldiers "came to the king of Armenia, from whom they found great compassion; [he provided] clothing, horses, and money, so they returned gratefully to their lord, Tatars and Christians", Vardan writes. "Thereby the name of Christ was greatly glorified for King Het'um at home and abroad".[42] Both implicitly and explicitly, Vardan provides us with something like an aspirational sketch of what Armenian rule over Cilicia might become, rooted in the broadly recognizable authority among both "Tatars and Christians" of its wise king.

Vardan's writings thus may be understood as pursuing overlapping aims in a differential manner: they do this by bolstering Het'um's standing at court, rooted in the *topos* of the educated king (in matters scientific and grammatical, which in this case are the same); by envisioning a geographically massive Armenia, implicitly under Het'um's rule as 'king of the Armenians', whether or not that territory was actually under the control of the court at Sis; by centering Armenia within the scope of recorded human history, stretching back to the Tower of Babel in the Hebrew Bible; and finally by correlating knowledge production and kingly authority with Middle Armenian directly. This is not to say, of course, that Vardan necessarily had all of these aims at the forefront of his mind, or even as the primary reason, for undertaking labour both within and beyond Cilicia in each of these disparate genres. Still, it does suggest that Vardan sought to support the king through a spectrum of writings in both Classical and Middle Armenian, which collectively construct a portrait of Het'um as a wise and educated king, devoted to both his church and his queen.

---

[42] Եկին առ թագաւորն Հայոց. և 'ի նմանէ յոյով գտեալ մարդասիրութիւն, հանդերձ և երիվարս և ոսկիս, եկին զհունրեամբ առ տէրն իւրեանց, Տաթարք և քրիստոնեայ: Եւ յայնմանէ յոյով փառաւորեցաւ անունն Քրիստոսի յարքայն Հեթում, յստարաց և յլոստանեաց (Vardan Arewelc'i 1991, 152; Vardan Arewelc'i 1989, 218). Perhaps tellingly, other Armenian sources do not seem to recount this episode; cf. Vardan Arewelc'i 1989, 218.

These threads converge most clearly in his encyclopedic compendium known popularly by its Middle Armenian name, the *Žłlank'*, a term Vardan uses in the colophon to his work. However, he titled this compendium somewhat differently in Classical Armenian as Լուծմունք ի սուրբ գրոց Վարդանայ Վարդապետի ի խնդրոյ բարեպաշտ Թագաւորին հայոց Հեթմոյ (Explanations from the Holy Bible, [by] Vardan Vardapet, at the request of Het'um, the devout King of Armenians) **[figs 4-5]**. As mentioned, the work is a compendium of knowledge, with many entries on the Bible that also make diversions into other fields. Many of its entries are provocative: the *Žłlank'* contains, for instance, a slightly alternate telling of the discovery of the Armenian alphabet in the fifth century CE.[43] Another entry, composed by the Catholicos, directly counsels Het'um on how to defend the confession of the Armenian church against the Roman church, maintaining a boundary between the Armenian faithful and the Pope.[44] Woven alongside and even into its biblical and creedal entries, the *Žłlank'* also contains scientific information on many subjects, such as the celestial bodies, botany, and animals, interspersed with other sections on the fine arts, considering music and its role in the church. In stark contrast, Vardan speaks rather disdainfully of poetry, a literary form which had begun to flourish during his day especially in Middle Armenian and borrowed heavily from Persianate styles and Islamicate themes.[45] Given his status as a staunch defender of Armenian Christianity, it is probably not for nothing that Vardan declares "for the wise person it is nothing to craft versified words […] but the Muslims honour [such things]".[46]

---

43   Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, MS Arménien 42, 125*r*-128*v*; cf. Ant'abyan 1967, 174-7.

44   MS Arménien 42, 139*v*-149*r*.

45   The Middle Armenian retellings of the Alexander Romance are a prime example of this. These short poems, known as *kafa*s after the Arabic word for 'rhyme', accompanied the original Classical Armenian translation of the Greek romance. However, they wove the romance itself partly into a Persianate sensibility, using the Middle Armenian vernacular as their language. Xač'atur Keč'aṙec'i (d. 1331), writing in Greater Armenia, was the first author to do this poetic rewriting of the romance, choosing to render the speech and descriptions of Alexander – the paradigmatic philosopher king – into dialectal and 'rustic' forms of Armenian not so different from those spoken by the elites in Sis. On the selective use of Middle Armenian in the formal aspects of this poetry, cf. MacFarlane (2022); on the adaptability of this genre in the Armenian vernacular more generally, cf. also the important work of MacFarlane (2023a; 2023b). On the illumination of the Armenian Alexander Romance, cf. Maranci 2003-04.

46   Իմաստունյ չէ փոյթ տաղական բան առնել: […] բայց իսմայելացիքն պատուեն. Diocese of Aleppo, Church of the Forty Martyrs, Armenian Church, ALQ155, 340; cf. Ant'abyan 1967, 179.

Figures 4-5 The opening folio of Vardan Arewelcʻi's compendium, with marginal note on the left hand side.
BnF MS Arménien 42, 1*r*

Significantly, Vardan seems to have intended the *Žłlankʻ* to aid the king in the study of other manuscripts at the royal library.[47] The *Žłlankʻ* includes, for instance, an extensive set of pictographs that stand for common terms one encounters in Armenian manuscripts, ranging from patriarchs in the Hebrew Bible such as Abraham to a variety of Armenian names, as well frequently used words like 'musician', 'heaven', 'Egypt', 'world' and 'money'.[48] Many of these abundant pictographs function in the Armenian manuscript record essentially as commonplace

---

47 There is no doubt that the Cilician court collected many books in Sis, though we presently possess relatively little information about the royal library itself. Still, some revealing clues remain, particularly from the colophon record. For example, a bishop named Stepʻannos from Sebastia reported, in the colophon of a copy of the Gospels from 1320, that he had traveled to Cilicia where he was warmly received by King Ōšin, who gave him permission to enter into the *yarkels* (coffers) of the palace and examine its books. Stepʻannos reports encountering many diverse copies of the Gospels (which is what he was primarily seeking), and finding one in particular that was beautifully yet incompletely illuminated. He then reports commissioning the renowned illuminator Sargis Picak, who also illuminated a copy of Smbat's *Assises d'Antioche*, and paying him a sum of 1,300 dram to complete the work (Xačʻikyan 1950, 162-3).

48 MS Arménien 42, 136*r*-139*r*.

abbreviations; others in the compendium seem to have been invented by Vardan and are not well attested elsewhere (Abrahamyan 1973, 210). In any case, their inclusion suggests that Vardan intended the *Žłlankʿ* to serve as a basis for the king's education, opening the way for his continued study of other manuscripts in either Classical or Middle Armenian **[figs 6-7]**. Hence, we should probably not consider the use of the vernacular or Classical language to be mutually exclusive, either for Vardan or for his audience, in the case of the *Žłlankʿ*. Just as important, Vardan also provides ample opportunities for one to practice deciphering these pictographs throughout the *Žłlankʿ* itself, offering the reader a kind of training ground for future study in other contexts.
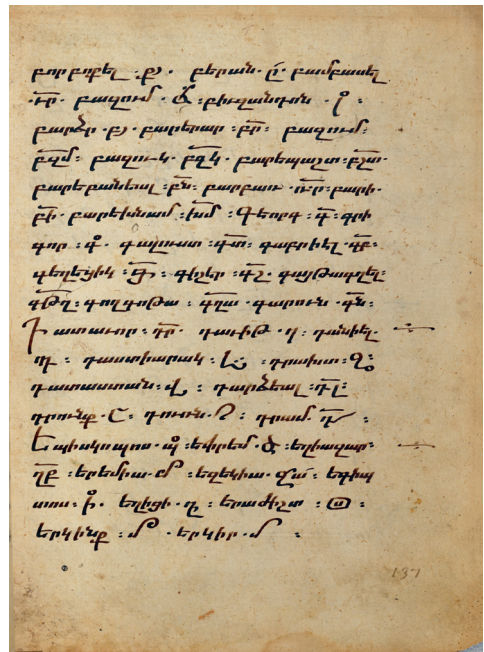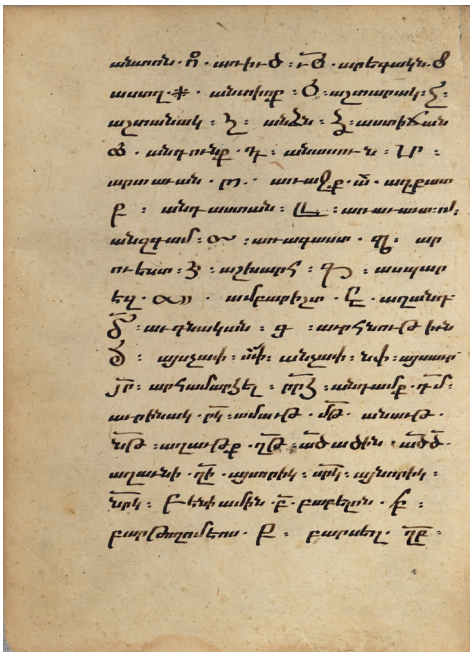

Figure 6-7 Pictographs to aid in the study of reading and writing Armenian texts. BnF MS Arménien 42, 136*v*-137*r*

There are additional indications that the *Žłlankʿ* served as a foundation for Hetʿum's education at court. In another entry, Vardan provides an explanation for basic grammatical parts of speech, offering definitions of nouns, verbs, participles, articles, pronouns, prepositions, adverbs, and conjunctions (Xačʿikyan 2012). After each definition, which are coded numerically in the margins for easy reference, Vardan supplies a simple sentence in Armenian to illustrate his point. Grammar was widely considered to form another cornerstone

of a medieval education in Armenian monasteries; elsewhere, Vardan calls the study of grammar the entry point into acquiring wisdom, since one needs grammar to properly decipher any kind of text or discourse. For this reason, Het'um had also commissioned a Classical Armenian grammar from Vardan, known as the *Commentary on Grammar*, which I will return to in the following section. However, whereas the *Commentary* seeks to dazzle the reader with its explications of the Greek grammarian Dionysius Thrax, the *Žłlank'*'s entry on grammar is downright workmanlike, covering essentials in a succinct and efficient manner. The composition of a simplified explanation of basic grammatical forms, stripped of lofty attempts to theorize language, speaks to the continuing importance of grammatical learning in Vardan's pedagogical program. Though one can only speculate, perhaps it also suggests that the king also had use of a less theoretical grammar, delivered in a different linguistic register, than the *Commentary* that Vardan additionally delivered.[49]

This brings us to the question of language itself. Vardan composed the *Žłlank'* in grammatically mixed and diglossic registers of Armenian. At times, his language is nearly indistinguishable from a literary register of Classical Armenian, such as briefly near the end of a colophon in dedication to King Het'um, which is also mixed lightly with Middle Armenian grammatical forms. At other times, his register is decidedly more serviceable, such as his entry on grammar, which, not coincidentally, requires very little knowledge of Armenian grammar to understand. In 1862, the Mekhitarist historian Ališan simply noted that Vardan wrote the *Žłlank'* in a simple and 'vulgar' (ռամկական) style (Vardan Arewelc'i 1862, III); the nineteenth-century French Armenologist Prud'homme likewise termed it "la langue vulgaire" (1871, 7). Other scholars have observed that Vardan made explicit use of Middle Armenian forms throughout the compendium and throughout his many other works, which sometimes come to the fore and sometimes recede into the background of a simplified Classical register (Ant'abyan 1967, 179-80; 1987, 294-9; Łazaryan 1960, 86, 105, 121-4; Xač'ikyan 2012, 258).[50] Generally speaking, its language does not seem intended to be demanding, but rather to be accessible and perhaps familiar, ushering the reader into a broad pedagogical program that begins, but does not end, with the *Žłlank'* itself.[51]

---

[49] Vardan originally wrote this entry on grammar in the *Žłlank'* for the brother of the Catholicos, who apparently also had use of a simplified Armenian register (Xač'ikyan 2012). Still, he clearly thought it would impart useful information to other vernacular learners such as Het'um and his family.

[50] Hovnanean (1897, 254) has noted that Vardan incorporated dialectal features seemingly from Greater Armenia within his Cilician Middle Armenian writings.

[51] As Łazaryan has observed, Vardan additionally appears to have defended the use of 'vulgar' Armenian in his *Commentary on Grammar*, also composed for King Het'um,

Why, then, might the 'devout King of the Armenians' have desired such a work? We have but a few clues. As we have seen, around this time, an anonymous translator rendered the *Geoponica*, another compendium, into Middle Armenian from Arabic; the original was composed in Greek for the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. Compendia were both popular in many languages adjacent to Cilicia, and moreover were also correlated with the erudition of the sovereign. Similarly, other compendiums were beginning to flourish in Old French at roughly the same time Vardan composed the *Žłlank'*; such works include Brunetto Latini's *Li livres dou trésor* (Book of Treasure) dating from the mid to late thirteenth-century, and the *Livre de la fontaine de toutes sciences* (better known in English as the 'Book of Sydrac the Philosopher') from the late thirteenth century.[52] We also have at least one encyclopedic example from Outremer in the *Image du monde*, copied at the scriptorium of Acre in the thirteenth century (Minervini 1999, 92-3). The original of this work was composed by the Catholic priest Gautier de Metz, and gifted to the brother of the French king Louis IX in 1246; this was likely the same year that the Armenian Apostolic priest Vardan made an analogous encyclopedic gift to his king in Sis.

Vardan's own compendium would appear to be riding an early wave of this broader vernacular trend, coinciding with or even predating many of these other works. He therefore helps us to observe a moment in time in which elites around the Mediterranean coast found use in vernacular collections of knowledge on seemingly every subject. The scriptorium in Acre, where the court of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was located, along with other courts where vernaculars flourished, such as the Byzantine court in Constantinople and Nicaea, the court of King Louis IX, and the Armenian court in Sis, were all part of an epistemically entangled Mediterranean world, although scaffolded within it in different ways. The implication of composing an Armenian vernacular compendium against this backdrop would perhaps be twofold in this case: first, that Middle Armenian could do what these other languages could do; and second, that the Cilician nobility were capable of undertaking the same forms of study as did other elite audiences at neighbouring vernacular courts.

Although this is somewhat speculative, we can at least say that Vardan requires the reader to reflect on Het'um's erudition repeatedly throughout the *Žłlank'*. In no subtle terms does he correlate an

---

such as when he states: Եւ չէ՛ պակասութիւն, զի որ չգիտէ ասել երկոտասան՝ ի՞նչ պակաս է յասելն տասնևերկու (And [this] is not a deficiency, since [for] he who does not know [how] to say twelve [in Classical Armenian], what loss is it in saying ten and two?"; Vardan Arewelc'i 1972, 133; Łazaryan 1960, 86).

**52** For general background, cf. Prince 1993 and Steiner 2021, 177-209.

image of the 'educated king' and the study of his vulgar compendium. In fact, Vardan addresses Het'um directly in multiple entries (Ant'abyan 1967, 166), many of which take the dialogic form of questions and answers; Vardan makes so many asides that one gets the impression of reading over the king's shoulder at times. At one point, he explicitly states that his aim is to instruct the king in an accessible and pleasing manner: "It is our desire to give you the substance of [each] thing, and not to compose a systematic exegesis", he writes, "thus to gain for you whatever seems novel to us, for the delight of [your] heart".[53] Simply put, Het'um is as much a character in this work as Vardan. This dialogic nature of the compendium is also suggested by its title, *Žłlank'*, whose root has an additional connotation of 'conversation'. In this sense, as Ant'abyan has observed, the entire work takes the structural and rhetorical form of a dialogue between Vardan and his king (1987, 1: 157); a pleasing labour that instructs the mind by delighting it.

Nowhere is this more explicit, and nowhere is Het'um's kingship configured so precisely in relation to his vernacular erudition, as when Vardan describes why he wrote the *Žłlank'* in a lengthy colophon, which appears in slight variation across the manuscript record. For instance, in a severely damaged recension of the colophon in Matenadaran M750,[54] Vardan addresses Het'um in Middle Armenian as իմ պարոնն (my baron), as Ant'abyan has observed (1967, 158). In another variant, found in Matenadaran M341, Vardan at times addresses Het'um intimately as 'you', in the familiar second person singular;[55] at other times, he addresses the king more formally as his proper superior. This fluctuation between formal and informal may thus suggest a twining of Vardan's dual aims: first, to forge bonds of closeness with the king that befit the relationship between a teacher and student; and second, to offset this intimacy by establishing reverence for the higher station of his student. In a measured way, Vardan thus seemingly uses this balancing act to remind the king of his shared humanity and of his exalted responsibility to rule. Moreover, throughout these oscillations, he largely writes in a simple Classical Armenian register with slight vernacularisms and irregularities sprinkled in. His linguistic register therefore actualizes this interpersonal dance between formality and familiarity, subtly basing the king's piety in no small part on the study of this very manuscript:

---

53 Կա՛մ է մեր քեզ նիւթ բանի տալ, և ոչ կարգաւ մեկնութիւն գրել, ապա և զոր ինչ նոր թուի մեզ, զտամնել քեզ, ի բացումն սրտի (MS Arménien 42, 63*r*); cf. Prud'homme's French translation of this line (Verdan 1867, 26).

54 Yerevan, Matenadaran (Mesrop Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), M750.

55 Yerevan, Matenadaran (Mesrop Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), M341.

Ա՛յսպէս արա՛ և դու. սակաւ մի աշխատեա՛. քո սակաւ աշխատիլն զայլոց շատոն արժէ: Զի որպէս լուաք ի քրիստոսէ ամէն մարդո 𝒻 [pictograph for հրեշտակ] կա պահապան, և ձեզ որ ազգի գլուխն և թագաւոր էք, ինքն գլուխն քրիստոս է պահապան և անմեկնելի: Մի՛ պաշտեր զնա որպէս հեռաւո՛ր. այլ որպէս առ քեզ, ի սրտի՛ն, և յոգւոջ: ուր կամիս զգլուխդ և զերեսդ դնել ի պատիւ նմա, ի ծիրքն դնես, և յաստուած միանաս: և զոգի իմ տառապեալ և տկար յիշեացէ՛ն և որ զքեզ սիրէ, առաւել քան զասել: Վասն որոյ զայս աշխատութիւն տկար մարմնով. կատարեցի սիրով ձեր զաւրացեալ. և աւժանդակեալ. և յիշեա՛ զոր ի ձեռն Թորոսի հրամանեցիք. վասն եղաբերից կանանցն գրել ձեզ և ի խորհուրդ պատարագին, և ապա երեսաւք յանդուին հրամանեցիք որ գրեաք ձեզ ժղյանք. ի մեկնութենէն քերականին: և ես այլ յաւելի սիրով գրել ձեզ ձեռամբ լուծմունս. յաւետարանէ՛ն: և յարարածոգն. ուստի տեսէք թէ շա՛տ էիք հարցանել. և սիրէք սրտիւ: Է՛ որ հանգուցանէ՛ զձեր միտքդ. և իմանաս որ պատճառ լինի ձեզ բանաւորութեան. զայս հարցանելոյ. և զստոյգն զտանել: [...] Եւ ես զիտե՛մ որ այս չէ թագ[աւոր]ական իրք. այլ ոսկէգի՛ր պիտեր. և ճառտա՛ր գրչի: և ես շա՛տ պատճառ ունեի, որ խափանէր զիս յայս ձեռնարկութենէս. տկարութիւն և մուքն խրճի՛թս: և հողմ պարիսարո՛ւ, փոշխիսասն փչելով ընդ պատուհասն, և պատ աւդոյս, բայց սիրովն հրաշագործիւ յաղթահարեալ եղեն պատճառքն. և որպէս տեսանէք եղեւ. (M341, 103r-104r; cf. Antʻabyan 1967, 157; Hovnanean 1897, 234-6)[56]

Conduct yourself thusly: labour moderately; your moderate labouring is worth the abundant [labour] of others. For as we heard from Christ, every man has an angel as protector; as for you, who are the head of the nation and are King, it is He, Christ, who is the head protector and inseparable. Do not worship him as though distantly, but as near to you, within your heart and your soul. When you wish to cast [down] your head and face in honour of him, you cast them upon [His] bosom and are united with God. Remember my miserable and feeble soul, which loves you more than is possible to say. For this reason, I, weak in the flesh, completed this labour strengthened and sustained by your love. Recall that you commanded, through the aid of Tʻoros, to compose [works] concerning the Oil-bearing Virgins and the mystery of Holy Mass; afterwards you

---

56 In this passage and the one cited below, I have not attempted to 'correct' any irregularities in punctuation or spelling that the scribe did not correct himself (at least, these textual features may be irregular from the perspective of a more formal Classical Armenian register), as does Antʻabyan at times. Instead I simply present this text as it appears in the manuscript, with the exception of common abbreviations, which are spelled out in full here. For readability in English, however, my translation does not always preserve the punctuation, but instead occasionally follows Antʻabyan's interpretation in his edited transcription.

personally ordered me to compose for you, in Andul [monastery], a pleasant occupation for the mind [*žtlank'*] out of the *Commentary on Grammar*. And then, with greater love, [I undertook] to write for you by [my] hand Explanations [*lucmuns*] of the Gospels and Genesis. Hence, recall that you had posed many questions [to me]; you [now] delight in heart. It is [this book] which sets your thoughts at ease; you apprehend that this [book] shall help you to gain understanding and interrogate these [matters] to discover what is true. […] And I know that [this book] is not a regal object, for it should have been [written in] gilded letters and a dexterous hand. I had many reasons that impeded me from this undertaking: weakness, the dark in this cell, and the wind of Barkhar blowing, mixed with dust, through this window and this frigid air. Yet with miraculous love these reasons were overcome. And, as you see, it was so.

Vardan performs a rhetorical sleight of hand here. He freely admits that his scriptural entries, which lacked a finer hand and gilded letters, are not 'regal' or 'kingly'. Certainly, this may be true to an extent; aside from the presumed material condition of his original manuscript, now lost to us,[57] Vardan is moreover not concerned with statecraft or diplomatic relations exactly here. Yet he does make the case that the king is the beloved of Christ, and commands Het'um to embrace Christ within his own heart and soul.[58] Christ, the head of the Church, and Het'um, the head of the kingdom, are to become one under Vardan's tutelage. This process coincided with Het'um's request for another text: an explication of the commentary on the grammar of Dionysius Thrax, which I will return to in the following section. For now, it suffices to say that grammatical learning is a cornerstone of the king's education, as it would also be for monastic students. The very next stone in the king's education, likewise, is

---

57 As Vardan continues in his colophon, he notes that Het'um may ask the scribe Grigorēs to improve the hand and presentation of the manuscript, should this be the king's desire.

58 Vardan's colophon is also reminiscent of the words he reports speaking to the Ilkhan ruler Hulagu (Hulawu), whose wife was a Nestorian Christian. As Vardan reports, Hulagu told him personally that his mother was likewise a Christian; the Armenian priest was moved to give his own reply in turn: Եւ բռնեալ էր զիմ ձեռքս, և մեք ասացաք զինչ Աստուած երետ ասել բան. թէ Որչափի 'ի վեր ես դու քան զայլ մարդիկ, մօտ ես յԱստուած (Vardan Arewelc'i 1991, 157). "He had seized my hands, and we said what words God gave us to speak: 'The more superior you are to other men, the closer you are to God'" (Vardan Arewelc'i 1989, 220). Interestingly, as Thomson notes in the footnotes to his translation, Vardan introduces colloquial forms when recounting the meeting between himself, King Het'um, Hulagu and others in this scene; in this passage, when Vardan says that God "gave" him the words to say, he uses the Middle Armenian third person singular form *eret* (1989, 220, fnn. 4, 2). Compare also with Vardan's earlier colophon on the Mongols, which depicts their claim to rule in a far less favourable light (Pogossian 2014).

a commentary on the Bible, interspersed with a performative sampling of seemingly all the knowledge in the world.

There are other layers to peel back as well. Vardan's colophon, seemingly for the king's eyes only, was also read by many audiences over the centuries. In fact, this manuscript was quite popular; it was copied in near completion at least seven times by the early fifteenth century (Antʻabyan 1967, 163). We do not know, of course, to what degree Hetʻum whiled away the hours in study over the *Žłlankʻ*. Still, under the guise of providing an explanation for his compendium, Vardan crafts something far more wily: a discursive model of an Armenian educated king, to be read by other Armenian nobles and elites. Moreover, by recasting his monastic pedagogy to serve another social context, Vardan fashions an intellectual genealogy for his erudite king, beginning with the study of grammar and continuing with the interpretation of the Bible, which clears the way for the study of the celestial bodies and the natural world, in addition to subjects such as the fine arts of music and poetry, which are present in the compendium. Finally, as Vardan makes apparent, the *Žłlankʻ* did not represent learning for learning's sake, but rather, again following a monastic pedagogical model, served as an attempt to bring the king closer to Christ. The salient difference, of course, is that unlike a student embarking on a monastic education, the king is head of the Armenian people; his closeness to Christ, as with his closeness to Vardan, is to help him better rule. In other words, the composition and study of this work enacts the labour of making a social and theological hierarchy: the king is over his people, mirroring Christ's rule over the dominion of the earth. Correspondingly, the *Žłlankʻ* speaks to Hetʻum intimately, at times both in the second person singular and in the king's 'mellifluous' tongue, which was gradually also becoming a language of royal power.

As if this could not be any more clear, Vardan steps in again and instructs the king on *how* to study the *Žłlankʻ*. First and foremost, he is not to study alone. As Vardan counsels, the queen is also to take on a role in this labour, supplementing the king's learning through her own study:

Թող թագուհի՛ն պահէ, և ի պիտոյ ժամն առնույք ի նմանէ: Եւ նմա հրամաէ պալդոս հարցանել զձեզ: Եւ զպատշաճն ծանուցանել: Եւ պարտական են ասէ: ապրեցուցանելոյ զիրեարս, առն և կնոջ: Եւ զերկոսինդ ապրեցուսցէ տէր լիսուս կենդանութիւն ձեր: ի խնամս հաւր, և ի զուգ հոգւոյն սրբոյ: յոռոգումն սնդեան դալար արձա՛կ, տնկաբողբր՛ջ շառաւեղեալ ոստոց, ծիրանածին տղայոցդ ի զիրկս սին սրբոյ: ի կատարումն պասակման հայակոյտ ազնւական ազգաց, և ազանց, տոհմից ազատաց, ազատեցուցի՛ք արեանառու զարմից: լծադի՛րք, և բեռնաբարձաւլք կորացուցի՛ք աւտարաց ազգաց, ի փառս փառաւո՛ր և պաշտեցեալ աստուածութեան որ է աւրհնեալ

յալիստեանս ամէն. (M341, 104*v*; cf. Antʻabyan 1967, 158; Hovna-
nean 1897, 234-6)

Let the queen keep [this book], and at a suitable hour you [may]
take it from her. St. Paul commands her to question you and to re-
veal what is suitable, and, he says, man and wife are obligated to
save one another. And may Lord Jesus, [who is] your life, deliver
the two of you, in the care of the Father and the mercy of the Holy
Spirit, for the sprinkling of instruction [over] your verdant, thrust-
ing, sprouting, budding branches, your sons, born in the purple,
in the embrace of holy Zion, for the perfection of the crowning of
the people and nation of the noble Armenian flock, of highborn
lineage, liberators of kindred houses; [those] who subjugate, who
burden with heavy loads, who destroy foreign peoples, for the glo-
ry of the glorious and adored God, who is blessed forever, amen.

The colophon and the entire *Žłlankʻ* rest on this ending, which is di-
rected not to a broad public but rather to the king and queen directly,
who are at the center of a dense social and kinship network that en-
compasses all Armenians. Hetʻum is to draw near to Christ through
the vernacular compendium; Zabel is to draw near to Hetʻum through
the same compendium. In other words, here, too, is Hetʻum's legiti-
macy as both educated king and leader of his people is bound to Za-
bel, from whom he originally derived his power, though he is also po-
sitioned as *her* teacher in all things. Implicit in this is that 'docile'
or 'mellifluous' Armenian, intertwined with Classical, is a language
that brings king and queen together, that sets the kingdom in order
with Christ as protector of its head. It is not merely a language that is
bound up with Hetʻum's legitimacy as king; to some degree, it is also a
language that is supportive of that legitimacy, insofar as it shapes him
into the very 'educated king', both discursively and performatively, as
he sought to present himself. Moreover, it is also a language whose
offshoots continue in the lives of Hetʻum's sons, who are described as
ծիրանածին (the Armenian calque of the Greek *porphyrogénnētos*), lit-
erally 'born in the purple', as they bring together the Ṙubēnid blood-
line of Zabel with the bloodline of the Hetʻumid dynasty, cementing
Hetʻum's claim to the throne.[59] The *Žłlankʻ* serves Hetʻum because
it is for his sons; the compendium itself is therefore future oriented,
presenting a pedagogy meant to bind the royal family, going forward,
within the teachings of the church and to one another.

It is equally revealing that these unsettling hierarchical relation-
ships (Christ over Hetʻum; Hetʻum over Zabel; Hetʻum and Zabel over

---

[59] On Cilician genealogies as technologies of authority in other contexts, cf. Abka-
rian unpublished.

their offspring; Armenians over 'foreign peoples') are preserved genealogically, through the same compendium that activates them, for other readers. Arguably, these relationships are also somewhat different from other attempts by Hetʻum to correlate his legitimacy with Zabel. Famously, for example, Hetʻum also minted a silver coin that declared him ՀԵԹՈՒՄ ԹԱԳԱՒՈՐ ՀԱ/Յ (HETʻUM KING OF ARMENIANS) on one side, and the inscription ԿԱՐՈՂՈՒ – ԹՆ ԱՅ Է (IT IS THE AUTHORITY OF GOD) on the other (Bedoukian 1958; Pavlou 2017, 390-1). This latter inscription encircles an image of Hetʻum and Zabel, who stand together, holding aloft a large cross. Quite obviously, these coins served as visual reminders, for anyone engaged in Cilician commerce, that the authority of king and queen were bound together in their shared proximity to Christ. The *Žłlankʻ* stakes a similar claim for a more selective audience: namely, for the other Armenian nobility who descended from Hetʻum or who studied the compendium for themselves. In fact, we know that subsequent nobles followed Hetʻum's model for vernacular study between husband and wife. One of the oldest extant copies of the *Žłlankʻ*, dating to 1274, thus includes multiple marginal notes throughout its many entries which ask the reader to remember Queen Keṙan (d. 1285), the commissioner of the manuscript.[60] Keṙan was married to Hetʻum's son Lewon II, who had become king only four years prior. Like Zabel, she seems to have assumed the role of caretaker for the *Žłlankʻ*, presumably studying it with her husband, Hetʻum's son, another 'educated king' whom Vardan also prays for in his colophon (Antʻabyan 1967, 164).

What the *Žłlankʻ* helps to bring into relief, then, are many gradual transformations at court: the ascendancy of 'vulgar' Armenian as a language of courtly erudition; the implicit correlation of the educated king, and indeed even the royal marriage, with the vernacular compendium and the teachings of Vardan; the tacit acknowledgement of Vardan that the nobility desired to be instructed in this 'mellifluous' register, even while he potentially left the door open for the future study of manuscripts in Classical Armenian; and finally the capability of the vulgar tongue to successfully impart knowledge of scripture and of the natural world.

More broadly, the *Žłlankʻ* gestures toward a moment of vernacular flourishing on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, which witnessed the spread of analogous genres in Outremer French, as well as the competition of other emergent vernaculars, such as the Mamluk translations of Persian literary works into Turkish. As Vardan sat to compose the *Žłlankʻ*, these processes were still ongoing, as was perhaps his own embrace of 'vulgar' Armenian, which he mixed with an abundance of Classical forms. The future of written Middle

---

60 MS Arménien 42, 29v, 38v, 132r.

Armenian, like the future of the Kingdom of Armenia in Cilicia, was far from settled, but one thing had grown clear: Cilician Middle Armenian was gradually becoming an instrument through which the nobility articulated their authority and performed their erudition *to one another.* At the same time, it served additional purposes for a different set of elite figures – the clergy of the Armenian church – who, after all, had a vested interest of their own in cultivating Het'um as a pious defender of church teachings, and moreover were implicitly willing to employ this 'rustic' Armenian in part to realize those aims.

4 Grammaticality and Armenian Kingship

The *Žłlank'* helps us to see how the broader ascendancy of Middle Armenian in Cilicia looked on the ground, configured in tandem with the image of Het'um as educated king. Still, this granular look at Middle Armenian as a language of royal erudition during this period would be too provisional without briefly addressing the preeminent form of medieval language cultivation – the patronage and production of grammars – which was also a significant feature of the commission and study of manuscripts in Sis. Moreover, the court's interest in grammar also helps to shed light on study in 'mellifluous' Armenian in contexts removed from the court, yet still related to its program of knowledge production.

The art of grammar and forms of royal and clerical power have long been close companions, even in widely disparate times and places. In the case of the Sanskrit cosmopolis in South Asia, Pollock has posited that kingship and grammaticality were to an extent mutually constitutive. He argues that this was demonstrated by

> the celebration of grammatical learning especially in kings, the royal patronage of such learning, and the competitive zeal among rulers everywhere to encourage grammatical creativity and adorn their courts with scholars who could exemplify it. (2006, 165)

For Pollock, this "assertion of grammaticality, and with it literary skill" was therefore an absolute necessity "for the fully realized form of kingliness" in part because grammar was a precondition for knowledge of literature, and therefore was a precondition for the formation of the cosmopolis in the first place (166). We might expand this frame somewhat further. Elsewhere in medieval Europe, grammatica, or the institution of grammar and the first of the arts in the trivium, also held an intimate relationship with power. Irvine argues that for

> the dominant social and political institutions of medieval Europe, grammatica functioned to perpetuate and reproduce the most

fundamental conditions for textual culture, providing the discursive rules and interpretive strategies that constructed certain texts as repositories of authority and value. (1994, 2)

Grammatica, for Irvine, thus consisted of "technologies of authority" which produced both literacy and normative Latinity (306).

Though Pollock and Irvine attend to widely different contexts, they help to index a general relationship between the premodern study of grammar and power, if not the authority of the king (or church) in particular. In this light, it is not surprising that the first Classical Armenian grammars likewise bore a complex relationship with power. Until the seventh century CE, these works were largely produced by a professional and lay elite who were in active dialogue with the Hellenic world, whose massive geographic footprint was established with the conquests of Alexander the Great. As this world began to gradually wane in Armenia, Armenian grammarians slowly replaced Hellenic literary references, such as the work of Homer, with citations and figures from the Bible (Cowe 2020a). So, too, did Armenian clergymen displace their lay grammarian counterparts, even as they continued to produce and collate commentaries on the *Tékhnē grammatikē* (Art of Grammar) by the foundational Greek grammarian Dionysius Thrax (d. 90 BCE). Such commentaries proliferated in Classical Armenian throughout the medieval period and continued to be read and produced by the educated classes of the Armenian church. Yet given the close relationship between grammar, literary culture, and power, the question necessarily arises: aside from a brief entry in the *Žłlank'*, where then are the Cilician Middle Armenian grammars?

The answer is complicated. In fact, King Het'um did commission a grammar in his lifetime. He made this request again of Vardan Arewelc'i, who completed his *Meknut'iwn k'erakani* (Commentary on Grammar) "at the request of Het'um King of the Armenians", as the heading to his commentary tells us, sometime between 1244-46.[61] Unlike the terse grammatical entry in the *Žłlank'*, this work is a commentary on the seminal grammatical work of Dionysius Thrax. Hence, the aim of Vardan's *Commentary* is not to teach readers the Armenian language as would a modern language textbook, though it does contain ample linguistic information on the conjugation of verbs and declensions of nouns. Rather, like the tradition it belongs to, this work proposes a much broader philosophy and theory of language

---

61 Ի խնդրոյ թագաւորին Հայոց Հեթմոյ (Vardan Arewelc'i 1972, 73). Here, too, Vardan would seem to speak with Het'um, albeit in a more oblique manner than in the *Žłlank'*. For example, in an entry that explains the meaning of being *erkanun* (binomial), or having two names, he gives the name and title of the king's brother, 'Smbat' and 'Sparapet', respectively, as examples (1972, 117).

(Xačʻikyan 2012, 257). Vardan therefore defends his work as more than mere տեղեկութիւն (information). Grammar is հմտութիւն ('wisdom' or 'understanding'); it is գիտութիւն ('science' and 'reason'), and it is concerned with the proper interpretation of the essence of written texts, whether they be in verse or prose (1972, 73-4).[62] The wisdom of grammar allows one to distinguish whether a text is orthodox or not, or even to discern whether a text is medical or astrological in nature (75). Thus, for Vardan, the study of grammar is the most necessary and foundational art for those who wish to be wise. In this context and for the many other Armenian commenters in this tradition, grammar is part of the branch of literature (գրականութիւն); in fact, it is the cornerstone of literature, poetry and prose, unlike the modern relegation of grammar to the branch of linguistics.[63] This, too, is a repository of authority and value, to paraphrase Irvine.

Where power and wisdom are correlated, the production of Vardan's *Commentary* is clear. Still, things become more complex where language enters the picture. The critical edition of the *Commentary*, compiled by the erudite scholar Xačʻeryan, presents a relatively seamless Classical Armenian text, though slight vernacularisms appear throughout.[64] In fact, the vast majority of premodern recensions of this text are in Classical Armenian. The scribes who copied Vardan's *Commentary*, following the collapse of Cilicia in 1375, clearly considered the Classical Armenian original to be the authoritative version. However, the ever-resourceful Middle Armenian still found its way into this work, as is made clear by Matenadaran M2283.[65] Unlike other recensions, this unpublished variant of Vardan's *Commentary* presents an explicit adaptation in Middle Armenian. Moreover, although M2283 was copied in a later century, it preserves a colophon composed by a scribe named Yakobak, who reports finishing the labour of copying the contents of

---

[62]   Cf. also Xačʻeryan's discussion in the introduction to the critical edition of Vardan's *Commentary* (Vardan Arewelcʻi 1972, 8-9).

[63]   Cf. Xačʻeryan's detailed introduction to the *Commentary* (Vardan Arewelcʻi 1972, 10); cf. also Antʻabyan's shorter overview of Vardan's grammatical work (1987, 1:123-33; 2: 147-51). On Vardan's grammatical works, including a discussion on popular or 'vulgar' elements, cf. also the grammatical study by Ĵahukyan (1954, esp. 243-59).

[64]   For instance, Vardan is the first grammarian to describe the differences in the thirteenth-century pronunciation shift between the letters *aw* and *o*, as the former had a palatal pronunciation and the latter a nasal one (1972, 86). The *ku* particle, which marks the present and imperfect indicative in Middle Armenian verbal conjugations, also appears in the Classical Armenian text, as if out of nowhere, perhaps giving some of Vardan's erudite explanations a more 'mellifluous' feel (86). Most prominently, Vardan (or a scribe after him) offers an explanation of the Middle Armenian form *grenkʻ* – i.e. 'let us write' or 'we shall write' – as belonging to the future tense (123; Xačʻeryan 1992, 157). In contrast, the text reports that the Classical Armenian form *gremkʻ* (we write) is used for the present tense. In general, however, whereas the *Žłlankʻ* leans into a 'vulgar' register of Armenian, the *Commentary* skews more toward a formal register of the classical language.

[65]   Yerevan, Matenadaran (Mesrop Maštocʻ Institute of Ancient Manuscripts), M2283.

this miscellany on 29 June 1335 (126*r*-126*v*). It is uncertain whether Yakobak's Middle Armenian recension was copied from a manuscript that was produced before 1335.

The two linguistic variants of the *Commentary* do not diverge by an order of magnitude, just as Middle and Classical do not diverge from one another by an order of magnitude during this period. However, unlike the Classical Armenian recension, the vernacular *Commentary* regularly conjugates verbs in Middle Armenian forms, as well as opting at times for a slightly different vocabulary in its use of nouns. It also replaces aspects of the Classical text, such as declensions that may have required a different kind of grammatical knowledge, with a simpler register of Middle Armenian, at times using a light form of circumlocution to make its point. Its use of Middle Armenian forms were both deliberate and pervasive, in other words, unlike its Classical counterpart.

Still, 'vulgar' Armenian also had defined limits in this work. Xačʻeryan demonstrates that the manuscript simplifies (and in some cases slightly confuses) the Classical Armenian version of the text, which he believes is the only version that sprung from Vardan's pen (Vardan Arewelcʻi 1972, 50-61).[66] Even more, it is worth observing that the Middle Armenian adaptation generally preserves the Classical Armenian text in discussions on specific grammatical forms, such as conjugations and declensions, perhaps so as not to confuse the reader with two competing registers or grammatical systems.[67] In contrast, it employs a Middle Armenian lexicon and grammar especially in more theoretical passages on language itself. In other words, its aim is not to teach the reader Middle Armenian grammar using a model culled from a Classical text, but rather, akin to the *Žłlankʻ*'s entry on pictographs and abbreviations, to aid the reader in future study, leaving the door open to acquire a nuanced understanding of the Classical language. This adaptation might therefore be thought of as an intermediary text, and an intermediary link, between the 'vulgar' and Classical language, as it uses the former in part to facilitate study of the latter.[68]

---

[66] It is worth observing that the Middle Armenian recension also omits mention of Vardan's authorship or Hetʻum's patronage in the title.

[67] Compare, for instance, Vardan's discussion on the Middle Armenian form *grenkʻ*, which is basically identical in both the Middle Armenian variant and in the Classical Armenian text. So, too, are the conjugations of verbs left according to their Classical forms here (Vardan Arewelcʻi 1972, 123; Matenadaran M2283, 29*r*).

[68] Currently, we know of no such intermediary grammatical text in the case of Byzantine and Ancient Greek, another vernacular and classical language set within the same linguistic continuum. A somewhat closer analogue, again, might be found in the case of Old French and Latin. For example, the Parisian scholar Alexander Neckam compiled his *De nominibus utensilium* (On the Names of Useful Things) in the late twelfth century, a widely popular word-list of Latin and vernacular English, which also included

And yet, its functional purpose is the same: to theorize the various parts of language itself, using Dionysius Thrax as its departure point. Although the aim of the vernacular rendition of the *Commentary* is not to teach the reader Middle Armenian, it does often allow the reader to learn to theorize language *through* Middle Armenian, which is also what the Classical Armenian original does. Hence, in every entry, Vardan opens by quoting Dionysius Thrax, in Armenian translation, and then glosses his words in different ways. For example, in one heading, Dionysius Thrax likens writing to the elements. Vardan explains this statement in a slow and methodical manner, gradually fleshing out the implications of a correspondence between the physical, elemental world and the Armenian alphabet in particular:

Որպէս տարերք որ ունին հակառակութիւն և հաշտելութիւն այ՛սինքն միաւորութիւն. և այնի՛ն կու զոյացնեն զամէնայն, նոյնպէս և զիրն ի ձայնաւորաց և յանձայն իրաց իւրեանց. զոյացնէ զբանն. ի լերկից և ի թաւից ի բթիցն և յայլոցն որպէս յառաջ ունիս ուսանել. և որպէս վերոյ՛ ասացաք. Մարդո է նըման բերականութիւնս. տառն ի հոգի և զիրն ի մարմին և այս եւթն ձայնաւոր գրերս. յեւթն զգայարականըս ի մարդոյն որով կու յարդարի մարդութիւն և որպէս ի զաւղուածքն՝ մինն պատուականագոյն՝ է՛, քան զմին այլն. Նոյնպէս և ի գրերոյ՛ս է որ պատուականագոյն է մինն քան զմին այլնս:[69]

As with the elements [*tarerkʻ*], which possess contrariety and conciliation, that is to say, conjunction, and through which they bring everything into being, so it is with letter[s] [*gir*], which, from their substance out of vowels and consonants, create the word [*ban*], and [moreover] out of soft consonants, and heavy consonants, and blunt consonants,[70] and out of other [such things], which you have [in hand] to study prior [to this], as we said above. Grammar is akin to mankind; the letter [*tar̄*] [which is pronounced] is like the soul, and the letter [*gir*] [which is written] is like the body; and these seven letters, which are vowels, are like the seven senses in man, by which human nature is fashioned. And as with members [of the body], one is all the more venerated over another, so it is among these letters, that one [set] is more venerated over others (Matenadaran M2283, 8*v*-9*r*).

It is common to find such discourse in Armenian grammars, and here the translator makes a fine metaphysical meal of it [fig. 8]. The material of the world is formed out of a tension that brings synthesis: air, fire, water, and earth do not go together, and yet through their combination, everything is formed. In the grammarian's eyes, the same is true of the dissimilar sounds that the Armenian consonants produce. He also gives the seven letters of the vowels prominence, as they correspond to 'seven' human senses, which, in Aristotelian terms, serve as the gateways that connect the material world to the rational mind, and therefore are more honoured than other parts of the body (like vowels, which render articulate speech possible). In fact, Vardan continues to elaborate on this theme, and in the following entries declares the vowels *ē* and *ō* to be the 'divine' letters, as they have a long pronunciation, he says, indicating the boundless existence of God within verbalized speech (Matenadaran M2283, 8*v*-9*r*).[71] In short, Vardan weaves his commentaries on the Armenian alphabet into a Christian sphere of meaning-making, even while retaining his original ancient Greek source material, including references at times to Homer and the *Illiad*.

---

[70] *Butʻ* denotes both an unstressed pause, and, in the case of pronunciation, "blunt" consonants that follow a vowel. Cf. Petrosyan et al. 1975, 69.

[71] The Classical Armenian text conversely gives the 'long' vowel in its original written form, as *aw* (Vardan Arewelcʻi 1972, 86); Middle Armenian adopted the letter *ō* during this period, and the translation uses this new letter in the Armenian script. It is additionally worth observing that the letter *ē* numerically means seven, corresponding again to the 'seven' senses, as well as serves as the auxiliary third person singular verb for 'he/she/it is'. In the Armenian church, the letter *ē* is also explicitly connected with God, the one who 'is', and hence also holy.
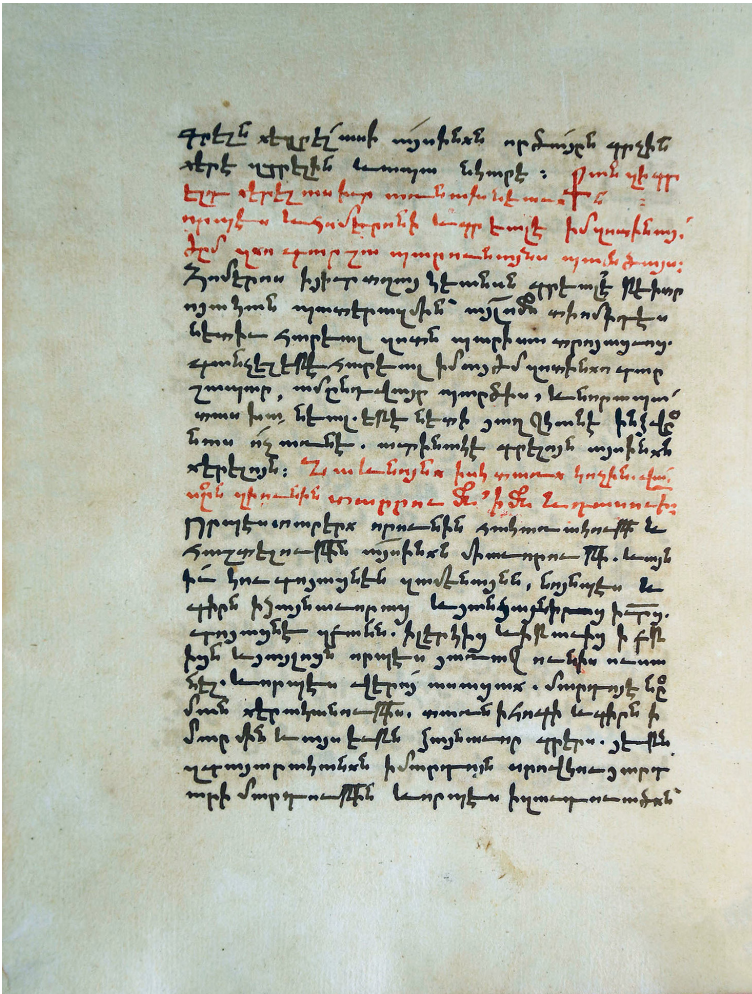
Figure 8 Discourse on letters in the Middle Armenian adaptation of Vardan Arewelc'i's Commentary on Grammar. M2283, 8*v*. Courtesy of the Matenadaran (Mesrop Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts)

Quite obviously, his grammar teaches much more, and much less, than only the paradigms of grammar as might a modern language textbook. Rather, it serves to guide the reader to reflect on language within a broader symbolic order, which is to say, to contemplate the ways that language metaphysically interfaces with its analogues in the physical world and with the Christian theology of the Armenian church. When one reads this text in its Middle Armenian adaptation, one also is invited to consider these same correspondences through Middle Armenian as a medium of thought. Arguably, in this

light, the Middle Armenian *Commentary* is not only a simplified, and sometimes corrupted, version of Vardan's (largely) Classical Armenian original, as Xač'eryan would imply. Instead, it is an invitation to do this labour in the 'mellifluous' tongue, just as one might do it in Classical – which, after all, still shares the same basic constitutive elements of language, including aspirated and unaspirated consonants and seven vowels. By implication, this vulgar adaptation is also a subtle indication that Middle Armenian might be capable of providing part of the cornerstone in any medieval Armenian education – the study of 'grammar' – and hence serve as a basis for all future learning, presumably in both Middle and Classical Armenian.

What the Classical and Middle Armenian recensions of Vardan's *Commentary* collectively demonstrate, at the least, are three important points. First, in his self-presentation as an 'educated king' at court, King Het'um took an active role in commissioning a new Armenian grammar; grammaticality was therefore also tied to his kingship in Cilicia, much as it was at other courts during the 'vernacular millennium'. Second, the movement to use Middle Armenian as a language of knowledge production, which was also correlated at this time with the education and even authority of the nobility, was robust enough to support both the translation of works from other languages *and* the adaptation of Classical Armenian texts into the vernacular, even in cases where the originals were still available. In this case, the Middle Armenian adaptation of Vardan's *Commentary* arguably served to aid readers who had difficulty studying the same work in Classical Armenian, or who preferred the 'mellifluous' register over the Classical standard. Third, and perhaps most important, the Middle Armenian *Commentary* served as a similar linguistic proof-of-concept as did the Classical Armenian recension. That is, it implicitly demonstrated that Middle Armenian was a language capable of auto-theorization, just as it was a language capable of producing legal, encyclopedic, medical, and theological works, even as Vardan's Middle Armenian *Commentary* still gave primacy to the classical language.

The relationship between grammaticality and kingship has received relatively little attention in the history of the Armenian language. Indeed, the Middle Armenian *Commentary* has never been published, even as an appendix to Xač'eryan's critical edition, in part because of practical limitations due to space, and in part because he did not place as much value in a Middle Armenian recension that seemed less sure of its subject than did its Classical Armenian counterpart. Yet this relationship between grammar and power seemed quite clear to our premodern subjects, even in the expression of Middle Armenian 'grammaticality'.

It is telling, then, that the Middle Armenian adaptation of Vardan's *Commentary* did not emerge in a vacuum. Rather, its composition (or at least its copying) roughly coincides with the activities of

Yovhannēs Kʻṙnecʻi (d. 1347), an Armenian priest who was a member of the Fratres Unitores, which advocated for the reunification of the Armenian and Roman churches – a position which Vardan Arewelcʻi staunchly opposed – and eventually became a branch of the Dominican Order. Unlike nearly all the Armenian grammarians who preceded him, Yovhannēs actually provides and explains many of Middle Armenian's grammatical paradigms in a clear manner, and with abundant examples (Yovhannēs Kʻṙnecʻi 1977; cf. Cowe 2020b, 109-12), though he wrote generally in a simple Classical register.[72] He also broke with the long tradition of commenting on Dionysius Thrax, aiming to impart less a theory of language than its finer points of syntax, which he accomplished by melding Armenian with Latinate syntax in particular.

Yovhannēs perhaps did not undertake this task to elevate Middle Armenian to the level of other more standardized 'vernaculars', but rather to assist his fellow Dominicans and students who could not study Classical Armenian at the Apostolic monasteries of the Armenian church, as Cowe has proposed (2020b, 110). It is also worth noting that, in some respects, the Middle Armenian adaptation of Vardan's *Commentary* presents an inversion of Yovhannēs's grammar: the former uses Middle Armenian especially in prose sections that theorize language, but instructs its audience using the grammatical paradigms of Classical Armenian; the latter generally uses a simple Classical Armenian in its prose, yet instructs readers in many 'vulgar' grammatical forms. In other words, both make use of the 'mellifluous' tongue, yet for different reasons, and presumably to serve the needs of different audiences. It is unknown whether Yovhannēs grasped, to whatever degree, that Middle Armenian had become both a language of erudition and a hallmark of knowledge production at the court at Sis, in addition to serving as a written language for an increasing number of clergy in the Armenian church. Still, at the least, he exhibits the importance of folding both Middle and Classical Armenian into his Latinophile sphere, aligning the language of the court with the language of the church he desired to unite with his own, whether this was his explicit intention or not.

Through its close relationship with the Classical standard, then, Middle Armenian gradually became an object of study, both for the

---

[72] To give but one illustration of this, in the following sentence, Yovhannēs (1977, 177) sets up his explanation in a simple Classical register, but conjugates verbs in the present tense using the Middle Armenian particle *ku*: "Արդ ցուցականքն են, որ ցուցանեն զժամանակ, զդէմս, և զթիւ՝ եզական և բազմաւորական: Եւ են այսպէս. ներկա ցուցական, եզական կու սիրեմ, կու սիրես, կո[ւ] սիրէ..." (Now the indicatives, which indicate the tense, person, and number, [i.e.,] singular and plural, are as such: in present indicative, singular, 'I love', 'you love', 'he/she/it loves'...). His use of Middle Armenian in present and imperfect indicative is generally pervasive throughout his *Grammar*, though he also often uses Classical forms for the other tenses.

(unnamed) audiences of Vardan's 'vulgar' *Commentary* and also for Dominican and/or Armenian readers of Yovhannēs's *Grammar*, although in different ways. Again, this was not only learning for learning's sake, but rather, in the case of Yovhannēs's *Grammar*, represented a subtle effort to exert a kind of cultural, theological, and political leverage, assisting his fellow Dominicans in nudging other Armenians toward the Catholic church and the Latinate world, but through a 'mellifluous' tongue. Of course, the writings of partisans of the Armenian church, such as Vardan Arewelc'i, continued to be copied, to circulate, and most of all to be studied at the court in Sis. Middle Armenian had become a language of the elite in Cilicia not only by default, as a language that kings spoke simply because it was also their mother tongue, but also for its epistemic, and pedagogical, and authoritative currency in multiple social contexts: it was a language fit to instruct the Armenian nobility; it was a language the nobility and the church used to articulate their conjoined legitimacy; and finally it was a language that erudite Apostolic and Dominican figures undertook to study and to reproduce in different degrees, as through the production of diglossic Classical and Middle Armenian grammars, even beyond the court. Middle Armenian's moment as a companion of elite power, and thus as a new front line in the battle over the cultural and religious orientations of Cilicia, would therefore seem to have fully arrived.

5 Conclusion: Docile Speech, Pleasing Labour, and Ties that Bind

A language is a dialect with an army and a navy – or, at least, so goes the maxim widely attributed to Max Weinreich. It is not hard to see the implications of the Weinreich witticism, as it is sometimes called: what rises to the upper branches of the linguistic taxonomic tree, and hence what becomes the subject of academic study and even cultivation, is often underpinned by a form of state power. In the case of Middle Armenian's gradual ascendancy as a court language in Sis, the Weinreich witticism is doubly true: to some degree, the court and church's proximity to Middle Armenian also helped nudge it to become an object of study in premodern Cilicia. Likewise, this proximity is what initially drew the attention of linguists in the late nineteenth century, who reinvigorated the study of Middle Armenian in the modern age, even as Armenians lacked their own form of modern statehood.

Given the fact that elite proximity or 'closeness' is what made it possible to study Middle Armenian today, it would therefore behoove us to consider its relation to power not merely in the abstract, as though somehow coequal with Cilician statehood writ large, or

in the administrative context of specific branches of the court, such as the chancellery or legal system's use of the language. Rather, as I have outlined briefly here, the use of 'rustic' and 'mellifluous' Armenian in Cilicia often took place in discrete social contexts, both in and out of court, for the benefit of elite audiences who in this case study were largely other Armenian nobility. Of course, this is but a small moment in the early life of Cilician Middle Armenian, as seen here from the perspective of the king, a member of the clergy, and their extended networks in the church and at court. Even during the height of Het'um's rule, the medieval vernacular was used in more decentralized ways than the ones I have briefly sketched, just as it had a broader life at court beyond the texts composed by or adapted from Vardan Arewelc'i.

There were also clear limits to the reach of Middle Armenian in Cilicia. As the *Žłlank'* and the *Commentary on Grammar* show, the 'vulgar' Armenian tongue did not exactly angle to displace its Classical sibling in its slow rise to power: after all, Het'um commissioned works in both Middle and Classical Armenian; even more, his Middle Armenian compendium drew heavily from Classical Armenian grammatical forms, albeit in a relatively simple manner. Both Classical and Middle Armenian were also employed to articulate different sorts of royal self-fashioning and authority by the court, depending on the context, from this period onward in the history of Armenian Cilicia. For instance, Het'um's son Lewon II commissioned a versified history about his family, known as Vahram's *Chronicle*, in a mono-rhymed Classical Armenian; this history was explicitly modelled upon the former Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali's own versified history, which narrates the genealogy of his family. Vahram's *Chronicle* thus had to be composed in Classical Armenian, in part because Nersēs also composed his poetic history in Classical Armenian, as Abkarian has observed (unpublished). However, akin to Nersēs, who additionally penned biblical riddles in versified Middle Armenian, Lewon II also employed the vernacular for other ends, notably issuing a Middle Armenian privilege to the merchants of Genoa in 1288. Of course, the audiences and functions of these works were also different: one explicitly aimed to adapt a poem by the head of the church, while the other addressed tax collectors at the customs house in the port of Ayas (and, at least in theory, also the Genoese directly). The salient point is that the Het'umid line had many ways of exercising their power, and those articulations fell across a spectrum of literary and dialectal registers, depending on their particular need.

In these senses, although part of a 'linguistic continuum' with its classical language, Cilician Middle Armenian enjoyed a very different life at the Armenian court in Sis than did vernacular Greek, which likewise existed along a spectrum of language, at the Byzantine court. Chiefly, as this article has shown, the Armenian court and

church tasked Cilician Middle Armenian with producing knowledge across multiple genres (compendia, exegesis, pharmacopoeia, jurisprudence, grammars, etc.), unlike Byzantine Greek, which was never used for these purposes during this period. Cilician Middle Armenian's life at court thus more closely paralleled the uses of Old French in Outremer, even though the latter's classical antecedent was Latin and hence a different language, which, again, is quite different from the case of the Armenian vernacular and Classical Armenian. It would seem in part that Cilician Middle Armenian's many deviations from its adjacent vernacular neighbours were due to its development out of multiple intersecting and multilingual environments, even as it engaged in a diglossic dance with its classical counterpart. In the case of the court at Sis, the nobility demonstrated different degrees of fluency in Classical Armenian, Middle Armenian, and Old French in Het'um's time. Other servitors, visitors, and clergy at court added languages into this mix (such as Latin, Arabic, Syriac, and Greek in particular; Burchard of Mount Sion also observed a few Mongols at court during his visit). Additional languages, such as Georgian, New Persian, and Anatolian Turkish, further interfaced with the Armenian dialects in Greater Armenia and Anatolia. Arguably, Cilician Middle Armenian developed at court as a written language out of its uneven interface with many of these tongues.

It is difficult to consider this language as especially 'rustic' within the courtly setting of Sis, as Nichanian has aptly observed, stressing instead the vernacular's configuration in writing at the crossroads of many languages and genres (1989, 234). Here, we can add that courtly Middle Armenian was 'rustic' to the extent that Vulgar Latin, which became a language for the training of Catholic clergy in the ninth century, could also be accurately described as a 'rustic' tongue at the Council of Tours: both vernacular registers extended a bridge to forms of knowledge production in the classical language, even while both were implicitly and explicitly contrasted against the rigorous forms of learning that use of the classical language necessitated.

Most crucially, as I have posited here, Cilician Middle Armenian likewise developed in writing out of its interface between different elite figures and institutions across and beyond this space. In particular, the 'mellifluous' tongue served an important role in bringing together a grammarian from Greater Armenia and his king in Cilicia, who grew closer in a mutually beneficial relationship forged in part through their interest in and use of language. As we have seen, Vardan often addressed Het'um directly, at times even in the second person singular 'you' instead of by a formal title more appropriate to the king's station. He also employed a vernacularized Armenian, mixed with Classical forms, to converse with his sovereign in an accessible and perhaps familiar manner. In other words, by braiding a rhetoric of intimacy into a blend of classical and vernacular forms of the

Armenian tongue, Vardan sought to produce a specific form of authority: one founded upon this very dialogue, which produces closeness between the Armenian church and the royal court, just as it produces closeness between the Hetʻumid and Ṙubēnid dynastic lines and closeness between 'vulgar' and Classical Armenian.[73] In this light, his pedagogy aimed not only to establish a program for the king and his immediate family members, but rather for the future of courtly study in Sis under the auspices of the Armenian church more broadly.

It would seem that Vardan, along with his colleagues in the church, were rather successful in this endeavour at least in the short term. When Burchard of Mount Sion visited the court in the late thirteenth century, he was impressed not only by the austerity of the Catholicos, who chose to don a shirt of hair despite his personal wealth, but also by the closeness between the clergy and the king's family in the social act of study:

Regem Armenie et Cilicie uidi cum omnibus optimatibus suis sedentem ualde humiliter et cum magna reuerentia ante pedes eius pluries cum filio suo primogenito, et cum magna deuotione audientem ab eo uerbum Dei. Iste cum omnibus suis prelatis archiepiscopis et episcopis et ceteris per totam quadrigesimam in pane et aqua abstinebant, et rex idem similiter et omnes optimates sui, nisi in festo annunciationis, et tunc me presente idem Catholicus cum ipso dispensauit, ut pisces comederet et biberet uinum. Illo die interfui misse coram eodem Catholico et rege et regina. Et habent officium deuotum ualde.

I saw the king of Armenia and Cilicia with all his nobles sitting very humbly and with great reverence before the feet of the Catholicus, frequently with his first-born son, listening with great devotion to the word of God from him. The Catholicus with all his prelates, archbishops, bishops, and others, fasted the whole forty days of Lent with bread and water, and the same king and all his nobles similarly, apart from the Feast of Annunciation, and then in my presence the same Catholicus gave himself a dispensation that he might eat fish and drink wine. That day I attended mass before the same Catholicus and the king and queen. They take their liturgical duty very seriously (Burchard of Mount Sion, O.P. 2019, 204-5).

Here, as in Vardan's *Žłlankʻ*, an intellectual genealogy (and with it, a social hierarchy) is on display: the king and his first-born son,

---

73 The familiarity of this tongue was also outwardly facing, toward audiences not at court. For example, in the Middle Armenian privilege to the merchants of Montpellier from 1314, King Ōšin addresses the tax collectors at the port of Ayas in the same familiar, singular 'you' that Vardan uses to speak with the king, just as he employs a lexicon that contains loanwords of Greek and Arabic origin.

surrounded by the nobility, sit at the feet of the Catholicos, from whom they receive their instruction directly in the spoken Armenian vernacular. Burchard furnishes a tableau in which the uses of Cilician Middle Armenian obviously intersected with many other pedagogical, theological, and political, and social developments at court. The activity of manuscript study at court, both in Middle and Classical Armenian linguistic contexts, thus provided a kind of infrastructure that produced social propinquity between disparate and sometimes distant actors. At times the configuration of Middle Armenian as a written language of elite study may have been a byproduct of the complex and shifting interpersonal and inter-institutional relationships among elite actors in Cilicia. At other times, this configuration in turn seems to have subtly informed those other interpersonal and inter-institutional relationships, as when it opened a channel for dialogue between the king and his grammarian, or when it served as an implicit medium for Het'um's legitimacy to be buttressed by the "budding branches" of his sons, who were joined to his program of vernacular study.

As I have argued previously, we might therefore ask more from the modern epithet of 'Middle' Armenian, which need not only describe a mere chronology of language (Pifer 2023; Budak, Pifer 2024). Rather, the 'mediality' of this language might be used to characterize a quality of both the language and the people who used it. In this case, Middle Armenian was successfully configured into a language fit for the king – in that it served as a medium for the king to conduct study on seemingly any topic in the world – in part because it served as an acceptable go-between for the church, which entered into the lives of Het'um, Zabel, and their sons 'born in the purple', in an intimate manner through the production of works like the *Žłlank'* and the *Commentary*. Moreover, it was a language through which the king aimed to bridge the gap between himself and his wife, between his erudition and her inherited right to the throne, even as it folded them into a patriarchal hierarchy with Christ over all. So too did it serve as a synthetic bridge between truly 'rustic' and dialectal speech, exhibited across Cilicia and Greater Armenia, and the Classical literary standard, even while simultaneously interfacing with other languages of the court in Sis. Finally, it was a language whose life in the Mediterranean, the sea in the middle, distantly mirrored the development of other 'vernacular' tongues, such as the Vulgar Latin in France, the use of Outremer French in the neighbouring Crusader states, the Mamluk patronage of translations into Old Turkish at court, and the development of Byzantine Greek within a linguistic continuum alongside its own Classical language. This was the broader milieu in which it became beneficial to employ 'classical' languages, such as literary Arabic and Latin, in addition to developing seemingly more localized 'rustic' tongues, often at the same courts. Of

course, as we have seen here, this grand drama of Mediterranean multilingualism could also play out on a small and intimate stage: in this case, through the courtly study of a handful of manuscripts between one's kin and an erudite priest.

Tellingly, in this era of linguistic hyperpluralism at court, Middle Armenian even drew the attention of elite actors beyond Cilicia or Greater Armenia. In fact, slightly before the Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia fell to the Mamluks, another court was attempting to study Armenian in a different and more limited fashion. We know this from the Rasulid Hexaglot, a multilingual dictionary composed for the sixth Rasulid king of Yemen (r. 1363-77), which contains entries in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Mongol, Byzantine Greek, and Armenian (Golden 2000). Notably, the Rasulid Hexaglot also features a list of Middle Armenian imperative forms, supplied by either Armenian slaves or servitors in Yemen. It is unclear whether these Armenians at the Rasulid court only knew the Armenian vernacular or whether they provided this language because it would have been useful in dealing with actors or merchants from the Cilician state. What we can say is that the Cilician court in Sis helped to fashion Middle Armenian into a language that had different sorts of currency at court; in the case of the Rasulids, it just so happens that the elites who took a brief interest in 'Middle' were not always Armenian, but other figures who employed the Armenian tongue, to whatever degree, in part to perform and articulate their own status as educated rulers even beyond the Mediterranean world. At both of these courts, and to different degrees, written Middle Armenian was a language of interest primarily to the educated elite. The same is true, slightly later in time, of attempts to study Middle Armenian at the Ottoman court of Meḥmed II (d. 1481), which likewise produced a detailed grammar of the language in the Arabo-Persian script, and moreover seems to have done so to bolster the universalist, imperial ideology of their own 'educated king' (Budak, Pifer 2024).

This broader social history of Middle Armenian emerges from the mouths and the pens of many actors, in relation to one another, across distances great and small. The Armenian vernacular thus helped to bridge chasms of many kinds, just as it also helped to bring various and perhaps even unwilling historical actors together. Most of all, Middle Armenian was a language of opportunity: a medium to assert overlapping, and occasionally competing, claims to power on behalf of the church and the nobility, even as it sometimes disguised those tensions with a rhetoric of intimacy, if not a pedagogy that produced certain forms of social and dynastic bonding at court. And yet, the development of Middle Armenian as a language of writing, which also was beginning to live a decentralized life beyond Sis, obviously cannot be reduced to a single set of innovations by a particular king or even a specific generation or two among the clergy or nobility, either.

This is partly because Middle Armenian is also an actor in this story, one whose presence at court implicitly proffered new possibilities for the social articulation of power to many others in its midst, as though angling, through its own increasing proximity to both church and king, to secure an elite position even for itself.

Bibliography

Abkarian, A. (unpublished). "The Crown of Togarmah: Mediating Discourses of Sovereignty in Cilician Armenia". *Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association = Conference Proceedings* (Denver, 4 December 2022).

Abrahamyan, A.G. (1978). *Hayocʻ gir ev grčʻutʻyun*. Erevan: Erevani Hamalsarani hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Ačaṙyan, H. (1944). *Hayocʻ anjnanunneri baṙaran*, vol. 2. Erevan: Petakan Hamalsarani hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Ačaṙyan, H. (1951). *Hayocʻ lezvi patmutʻyun*, vol. 2. Erevan: Petakan Hamalsarani hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Agapitos, P.A. (2022). "Greek". Chinca, M; Young, C. (eds), *Literary Beginnings in the European Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 255-75.

Ałayan, Ē.; J̌ahukyan, G. (eds) (1972-75) *Aknarkner miǰin grakan hayereni patmutʻyan*. 2 vols. Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Ališan, Ł. (ed.) (1877). *Girkʻ vastakocʻ*. Venezia: Mekhitarist Press.

Ališan, Ł. (1885). *Sisuan*. Venezia: Mekhitarist Press.

Antʻabyan, Pʻ.P̣ʻ. (1967). "Vardan Arevelcʻu 'Žłlankʻ'". *Banber Matenadarani*, 8, 157-81.

Antʻapyan, Pʻ.P̣ʻ. (1987). *Vardan Arewelcʻi: kyankʻn u gorcuneutʻyunə*. Edited by L.H. Ter-Petrossian. 2 vols. Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Aslanov, C. (2021). "Old French and Armenian in Contact in Cilicia: A Short-Lived Episode?". Aurell, M.; Galvez, M.; Ingrand-Varenne, E. (eds), *Transferts culturels entre France et Orient latin (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 173-91.

Avetisyan, Y. (2016). *Grakan hayereni zargacʻman erku šṙǰapʻulerə: Grabar ev ašxarhabar*. Erevan: EPH hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Aytənean, A. (1866). *Kʻnnakan kʻerakanutʻiwn ašxarhabar kam ardi hayerēn lezui*. Wien: Mekhitarist Press.

Awetikʻean, G. et al. (1836-37). *Nor baṙgirkʻ haykazean lezui*. Venice: Mekhitarist Press.

Bais, M. (2014). "Documents de la chancellerie du royaume d'Arménie en Cilicie: traductions et traducteurs". Mutafian, C. (éd.), *La Méditerranée des Arméniens: XIIe-XVe siècle*. Paris: Guethner, 231-48.

Bedoukian, P. (1958). "Two Hoards of Hetoum-Zabel Trams". *Museum Notes*, 8, 145-80.

Bedrossian, M. (1875). *New Dictionary Armenian-English*. Venice: S. Lazarus Armenian Academy.

Beihammer, A. (2011). "Multilingual Literacy at the Lusignan Court: The Cypriot Royal Chancery and Its Byzantine Heritage". *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 35(2), 149-69.

Boyle, J.A. (1964). "The Journey of Hetʻum I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke". *Central Asiatic Journal*, 9(3), 175-89.

Budak, S.; Pifer, M. (2024). "Learning Middle Armenian at the Court of Meḥmed II: Language, Knowledge, and Power Before the Imperial Rise of Ottoman Turkish". *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wusṭā: The Journal of Middle East Medievalists*, 32, 250-339.

Burchard of Mount Sion, O.P. (2019). *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*. Edited and translated by J.R. Bartlett, with original Latin text. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Copeland, R. (2010). "Naming, Knowing, and the Object of Language in Alexander Neckam's Grammar Curriculum". *The Journal of Medieval Latin*, 20, 38-57.

Cowe, S.P. (2010). "'On Nature' by Išox/Išoʿ: Study of a 13th Century Cosmological Treatise in its Linguistic and Cultural Milieu". Vanséveren S. (éd.), *Calliope: Mélanges de Linguistique Indo-Européene Offerts à Francine Mawet*. Leuven: Peeters, 99-136.

Cowe, S.P. (2013). "The Franciscan and Dominican Mission to the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and Greater Armenia, Its Reception, and the Resulting Interchange". *Aram*, 25(1-3), 127-49.

Cowe, S.P. (2020a). "The Inception of Armenian Grammatical Thought out of the Matrix of Hellenic Paideia". *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 70, 465-86.

Cowe, S.P. (2020b). "The Role of Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae* in Informing Yovhannēs Kʿṙnecʿi's Innovative Account of Armenian Grammar with Regard to Terminology, Classification, and Organization with Special Focus on His Investigation of Syntax". *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 39, 91-121.

Der Nersessian, S. (1962). "The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia". Setton, K.M. (ed.), *A History of the Crusades*. Vol. 2, *The Later Crusades 1189-1311*. Ed. by R.L. Wolff and H.W. Hazard. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 630-59.

Golden, P.B. (ed.) (2000). *The King's Dictionary - The Rasûlid Hexaglot: Fourteenth Century Vocabularies in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Greek, Armenian, and Mongol*. Transl. by T. Halasi-Kun; P.B. Golden; L. Legeti; E. Schütz. Leiden: Brill.

Gravel, M. (2021). "Reconsidering the Shift from Latin to Romance, from the Perspective of the Council of Tours (813)". *Journal of Medieval History*, 47(4-5), 559-73.

Greppin, J.A.C. (1987). "The Armenians and the Greek *Geoponica*". *Byzantion*, 57(1), 46-55.

Grigoryan Savary, G. (2022). "Royal Images and Coronation Celebrations in the Sermons of Yovhannēs Plus Erznkacʿi". Bacci, M.; Studer-Karlen, M. (eds), *Meanings and Functions of the Ruler's Image in the Mediterranean World (11th-15th Centuries)*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 33-57.

Grigoryan, G. (2023). "The 'Just Judgement' of King Lewon IV: Representational Strategies of Righteous Rulership in Cilician Armenia". Bacci, M.; Grigoryan, G.; Studer-Karlen, M. (eds), *Staging the Ruler's Body in Medieval Cultures: A Comparative Perspective*. Turnhout: Brepols, 79-116.

Hacikyan, A.J. et al. (eds) (2002). *The Heritage of Armenian Literature*. Vol. 2, *From the Sixth to the Eighteenth Century*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Hovnanean, Ł. (1897). *Hetazōtutʿiwnkʿ naxneacʿ ṙamkōrēni vray: Usumnasirutʿiwnkʿ ew kʿałuackʿner.* 2 vols. Wien: Mekhitarist Press.

Hunt, T. (1991). *Teaching and Learning Latin in Thirteenth-Century England*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Irvine, M. (1994). *The Making of Textual Culture: "Grammatica" and Literary Theory, 350-1100*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jackson, P. (2016). "Hayton". *Encyclopædia Iranica*.
http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hayton-of-gorighos

J̌ahukyan, G. (1954). *Kʿerakanakan ev ułłagrakan ašxatutʿyunnerə hin ev miǰnadaryan Hayastanum*. Erevan: Erevani Hamalsarani hratarakčʿutʿyun.

J̌ahukyan, G. (1969). *Hayocʿ lezvi zargacʿumə ev kaṙucʿvatskʿə.* Yerevan: "Mitkʿ" Hratarakčʿutʿyun.

Karst, J. (1901). *Historische Grammatik des Kilikisch-Armenischen*. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner.

Karst. J. (1905). *Sempadscher Kodex aus dem XIII Jahrhundert oder Mittelarmenisches Rechtsbuch*. 2 vols. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner.

Kirakos Ganjakec'i (1961). *Patmut'iwn hayoc'*. Edited by K.A. Melik'-Ōhanǰanyan. Erevan: HSSṘ Gitut'yunneri Akademiayi hratarakč'ut'yun.

La Porta, S. (2015). "Armeno-Latin Intellectual Exchange in the Fourteenth Century: Scholarly Traditions in Conversation and Competition". *Medieval Encounters*, 21, 269-94.

La Porta, S. (2020). "The Chronicle Attributed to Smbat the Constable". Mallett, A. (ed.), *Franks and Crusades in Medieval Eastern Christian Historiography*. Turnhout: Brepols, 179-210.

Langlois, V. (ed.) (1863). *Le trésor des chartes d'Armenie ou Cartulaire de la chancellerie royale des Roupeniens*. Venise: Mekhitarist Press.

Łazaryan, S.Ł. (1954). *Hayoc' lezvi hamaṙot patmut'yun*. Erevan: Erevani Hamalsarani hratarakč'ut'yun.

Łazaryan, S.Ł. (1960). *Miǰin hayeren*, vol. 1. Erevan: SSṘ GA hratarakč'ut'yun.

Łazaryan, Ṙ.S.; Avetisyan, H.M. (2009). *Miǰin hayereni baṙaran*. Erevan: EPH hratarakč'ut'yun.

MacFarlane, A. (2022). "The Poetic Middle Armenian of *Kafa*s in the *Alexander Romance*". *Armeniaca*, 1, 49-62.
http://doi.org/10.30687/arm/9372-8175/2022/01/003

MacFarlane, A. (2023a). "The City of Brass and Alexander's Narrow Grave: Translation and Commentary of *Kafas* Added to Manuscript M7709 (Part 3)". *Iran and the Caucasus*, 27(3), 249-64.

MacFarlane, A. (2023b). "'This World Is Like a Water-Wheel': Alexander and Darius in the Mirror". *Postmedieval*, 13(3-4), 385-402.

Malxaseanc', S. (1944). *Hayerēn bac'atrakan baṙaran*, vol. 2. Erevan: HSSṘ Petakan hratarakč'ut'yun.

Maranci, C. (2003-04). "Word and Image in the Armenian Alexander Romance". *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 13, 19-28.

Mat'evosyan, A.S. (1984). *Hayeren jeṙagreri hišatakaranner žg dar*. Erevan: HSSH Gitut'yunneri Akademiayi hratarakč'ut'yun.

Mavroudi, M. (2022). "The Modern Study of Selfhood in Byzantium Compared with Medieval Europe and the Islamic World: Parallel and Diverging Trends in the Construction of 'East' and 'West'". *Palaeoslavica*, 30(1-2), 234-304.

Michael the Syrian (1871). *Žamanakagrut'iwn*. Erusałēm: i tparani Srboc' Yakovbeanc'.

Minervini, L. (1999). "Produzione e circolazione di manoscritti negli Stati Crociati: biblioteche e *scriptoria* latini". Pioletti, A.; Rizzo-Nervo, F. (a cura di), *Il viaggio dei testi = Terzo colloquio internazionale Medioevo romanzo e orientale* (Venezia, 10-13 ottobre 1996). Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 79-96.

Mnac'akanyan, A. (ed.) (1980). *Hay miǰnadaryan hanelukner: V-XVIII dd.* Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakč'ut'yun.

Mutafian, C. (1988). *La Cilicie au carrefour des empires*. 2 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Mutafian, C. (1993). *Le Royaume arménien de Cilicie. XII-XIV siècle*. Paris: CNRS.

Mutafian, C. (2012). *L'Arménie du Levant, XIᵉ-XIVᵉ siècle*. 2 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Mxit'ar Herac'i (1832). *Mxit'aray Bžškapeti Herac'woy ǰermanc' mxit'arut'iwn*. Venice: Mekhitarist Press.

Neagu, D. (2021). "Het'um I between the Mongol Empire and the Holy See". *Banber Matenadarani*, 31, 210-30.

Nichanian, M. (1989). *Âges et usages de la langue arménienne*. Paris: Entente.

Ouzounian, A. (2014). "Les Assises d'Antioche ou la langue en usage: remarques à propos du texte arménien des Assises d'Antioche". Mutafian, C. (éd.), *La Méditerranée des Arméniens, XIIIᵉ-XVᵉ siècle*. Paris: Geuthner, 133-62.

Pavlou, P.S. (2017). "A Large Parcel of Silver Trams of Cilician Armenia 1198-1307". *The Numismatic Chronicle*, 177, 343-98.

Petrosyan, H.Z.; Galsdyan, S.A.; Łaragyulyan. T'.A. (1975). *Lezvabanakan baṙaran.* Erevan: SSH Gitut'yunneri Akademia.

Pifer, M. (2023). "Reading Hakob Meghapart's Songbook (Venice, 1513/14): On Middle Armenian and the First Printed Volume of Armenian Poetry". *Turcica*, 54, 287-324.

Pisowicz, A. (1995). "How Did New Persian and Arabic Words Penetrate the Middle Armenian Vocabulary? Remarks on the Material of Kostandin Erznkac'i's Poetry". Sicco Weitenberg, J.J. (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Armenian Language and Literature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 96-109.

Pogossian, Z. (2014). "An 'Un-known and Unbridled People': Vardan Arewelc'i's Colophon on the Mongols". *Journal for the Society of Armenian Studies*, 23, 7-48.

Pollock, S. (1998a). "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular". *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57(1), 6-37.

Pollock, S. (1998b). "India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500". *Daedalus*, 127(3), 41-74.

Pollock, S. (2006). *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Prince, D.E. (1993). "Textual History of *Li livres dou tresor*: Fitting the Pieces Together". *Manuscripta*, 7, 276-89.

Rapti, I. (2022). "Beyond the Page: Royal Imagery in the Queen Keṙan Gospels and the Rhetoric of the Court in Armenian Cilicia". Bacci, M.; Studer-Karlen, M. (eds), *Meanings and Functions of the Ruler's Image in the Mediterranean World (11th-15th Centuries)*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 58-94.

Redgate, A.E. (2007). "An Armenian Physician at the Early Tenth-Century Court of Louis III of Provence? The Case of the Autun Glossary". *Al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*, 19(2), 83-98.

Smbat Sparapet (1876). *Assises d'Antioche*. Venise: Mekhitarist Press.

Smbat Sparapet (1956). *Taregirk'*. Ed. by S. Agəlean. Venice: Mekhitarist Press.

Steiner, E. (2021). *John Trevisa's Information Age: Knowledge and the Pursuit of Literature, c. 1400.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Tēr-Petrosyan, L. (1989). *Asorineri derə haykakan Kilikioy mšakut'ayin keank'um žb-žg darerum*. Venice: Mekhitarist Press.

Tēr-Petrosyan, L. (2005-07). *Xač'akirnerə ew hayerə*. 2 vols. Erevan: Naxagah Tēr-Petrosyani Arxiv ew Gradarani Himnadram.

Vardan Arewelc'i (1862). *Hawak'umn patmut'ean*. Edited by Ł. Ališan. Venice: Mekhitarist Press.

Vardan Arewelc'i (1867). *Extraits du livre intitulé Solutions de passages de l'Écriture sainte, écrites à la demande de Héthoum I, roi d'Arménie, par le vardapet Vardan, traduits de l'arménien vulgaire sur le texte original par M. Évariste Prud'homme*. Translated with introduction by E. Prud'homme. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale.

Vardan Arewelc'i (1960). *Ašxarhac'oyc' Vardanay Vardapeti*. Ed. by H. Berberian. Paris: Arak's.

Vardan Arewelc'i (1972). *Meknut'iwn k'erakani*. Ed. by L.G. Xač'eryan. Erevan: HSSH Gitut'yunneri Akademiayi hratarakč'ut'yun.

Vardan Arewelc'i (1989). *The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i*. Translated with introduction by R.W. Thomson. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Publications.

Vardan Arewelc'i (1991). *Chronicle: A Facsimile Reproduction with an Introduction by Robert W. Thomson*. Delmar (NY): Caravan Books.

Vardanyan, E. (2022). "The Royal Portrait in the Het'um Lectionary (1286) and the Genealogy of Christ in the Art and Ideology of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia". Bacci, M.; Studer-Karlen, M. (eds), *Meanings and Functions of the Ruler's Image in the Mediterranean World (11th-15th Centuries)*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 95-133.

Vardanyan, S. (2008). "The Medical Heritage of Cilician Armenia". Hovannisian, R.G.; Payaslian, S. (eds), *Armenian Cilicia*. Costa Mesa (CA): Mazda Publishers, 275-96.

Wehr, H. (1979). *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Arabic-English)*. Edited by J. Milton-Cowan. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Weitenberg, J.J.S. (1983). "Armenian Dialects and the Latin-Armenian Glossary of Autun". Samuelian, T.J.; Stone, M.E. (eds), *Medieval Armenian Culture*. Chico (CA): Scholars Press, 13-28.

Weitenberg, J.J.S. (1984). "Evliya Chelebi on the Armenian Language of Sivas in 1650. Some Remarks". *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 5, 99-108.

Weitenberg, J.J.S. (1996). "On the Early Development of Armenian Dialects". Sakayan, D. (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics* (Montreal, 1-5 May 1995). Delmar (NY): Caravan Books, 93-118.

Weitenberg, J.J.S. (1999-2000). "On the Early Development of Armenian Dialects II. The Monophthongization of Ay-". *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 20, 1-26.

Weitenberg, J.J.S. (2002). "Aspects of Armenian Dialectology". Berns, J.; van Marle, J. (eds), *Present-day Dialectology: Problems and Findings*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 141-57.

Werminghoff, A. (ed.) (1906). *Concilia aevi Karolini*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Legum Sectio III, Concilia, 2, part 1. Hanover: Hahn.

Winter, W. (1966). "Traces of Early Dialectal Diversity in Old Armenian". Birnbaum, H.; Puhvel, J. (eds), *Ancient Indo-European Dialects: Proceedings of the Conference on Indo-European Linguistics*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 201-11.

Xačʻeryan, L.G. (1992). *Hay lezuabanutʻean aṙaǰacʻman patmutʻiwnə ew kʻerakanagitakan mitkʻə V-XVI darerum*. Lisboa: Armenian Library of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Xačʻikyan, L.S. (1950). *ŽD dari hayeren jeṙagreri hišatakaranner*. Erevan: HSSṘ Gitutʻyunneri Akademiayi hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Xačʻikyan, L.S. (2012). "Vardan Arevelcʻu 'Vasn banin masancʻ' ašxatutʻyunə". Muradyan, P.M. (ed.), *Levon Xačʻikyan: Ašxatutʻyunner*, vol. 1. Erevan: "Nairi" hratarakčʻutʻyun, 254-63.

Yovhannēs Erznkacʻi (1958). *Hovhannes Erznkacʻi: Usumnasirutʻyun ev bnagrer*. Edited by A. Srapyan. Erevan: HSSṘ GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Yovhannēs Kʻṙnecʻi (1977). *Yałags kʻerakanin*. Edited by L.S. Xačʻikyan. Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Zinelli, F. (2018). "The French of Outremer Beyond the Holy Land". Morreale, L.K.; Paul, N.L. (eds), *The French of Outremer: Communities and Communications in the Crusading Mediterranean*. New York: Fordham University Press, 221-46.
https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823278183-010

Literature

"Da natural vaghezza mosso": Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri's Travels Through Armenia (1694)

Alessia Boschis
Università degli Studi di Udine, Italia

Abstract   Travel Literature is a goldmine of information for the study of Armenian art and culture. Nevertheless, it is a largely unexplored field of investigation, especially accounts written in Italian. Among the understudied works, *Giro del mondo* (1699-1700) by Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1651-1724) stands out. Travelling to Ispahan across Historical Armenia in 1694, Gemelli described populations, settlements, and monuments. The analysis retraces the traveller's path examining the information on the presence and conditions of the Armenian artistic heritage in the Eastern Ottoman districts and the Safavid provinces of Erevan and Naxiǰevan.

Keywords   Armenian art. Travel literature. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri. Ottoman Empire. Safavid Empire. Erzurum. Kars. Tʻalin. Ēǰmiacin. Erevan. Gełard. Naxiǰevan. J̌uła.

Summary   1 European Travel Literature: A Source for Armenian Art History. – 2 An Unexplored Case: Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri and His Chronicle *Around the* (Armenian) *World*. – 3 Conclusions.

1 European Travel Literature: A Source for Armenian Art History

Since the dawn of civilisation, travels have been part of the human experience in response to dangers, necessity, or even the pure desire for knowledge. They constitute a fertile soil for humanistic studies thanks to the accounts of those who entrusted their memory to posterity through writing. Despite the long-standing fascination with travel literature and the extensive studies devoted to it, the field is still far from being fully explored. This is due to the vast quantity of material to be examined and the inevitable language barriers associated with it.[1]

A promising line of research combines art history and odeporic, i.e. the use of travel literature as a source for the study of artistic heritage. This approach is highly significant for Armenian art, whose numerous samples only represent the remnants of a much more glorious past.[2] Considering natural disasters, neglect and deliberate destructions, the voices of wayfarers from the past can help to understand (and sometimes to reconstruct) what was once the ancient consistency of a cultural heritage sadly heavily threatened to this day (Ferrari 2019, 11-32; Dorfmann-Lazarev, Khatchadourian 2023).

However, this is still a relatively unexplored area of research, apart from the monographs dedicated to the most famous sites (e.g. Grigoryan 2015; Kéfélian 2021), works conceived with an avowedly Armenian focus (Lynch 1901) or dedicated to Near Eastern antiquities, in which the description of Armenian monuments is relegated to the background compared to other contexts.[3] To this day, there is no comprehensive and critically updated documentation on

---

1 From the purely historical perspective, the period most extensively studied to date continues to be the Middle Ages; in contrast, studies of the Modern and Contemporary Ages tend to adopt either a monographic or anthological approach, cf. Guglielminetti 1967; Searight 1979; Berchet 1985; Reichert 1992; Menestò 1993; Invernizzi 2001; Surdich 2017. However, recent progress in the field of mobilities turn research can provide new insights and methodological tools to the disciplines of humanistic sciences, cf. Urry 2007; Adey et al. 2014; Merriman, Pearce 2017; Biasiori, Mazzini, Rabbiosi 2023; Nelles, Salzberg 2023; Holmberg 2024.

2 If only a tiny percentage of the art of medieval Byzantium remains today, the situation of Armenian art is far worse, cf. Demus 2008, 5.

3 E.g. Chardin 1711; Ker Porter 1821; Layard 1853; cf. Invernizzi 2005, VII-XIII.

Armenia and its artistic production, even less so related to European travel literature.[4]

This paper aims to fill the gaps of a mosaic that is as complex as it is essential to the understanding of Armenian culture and its perception, possibly expanding the still ill-defined boundaries of its frame. To this purpose a travel report scarcely known in Armenian studies will be analysed, of which exists no critical edition (not even in Italian, the language it was written in). The author of the account is Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1651-1724), one of the first Italians to undertake an around-the-world voyage for sheer pleasure.[5]

2 An Unexplored Case: Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri and His Chronicle *Around the* (Armenian) *World*

When the first volume of his *Giro del Mondo* went to press in 1699, Gemelli was 48 years old, which means he was born in 1651 (Gemelli 1: 2) **[fig. 1]**.[6] Born in Radicena (Calabria), he was educated in Naples at the Jesuit Fathers College. Having obtained a degree in *utroque iure*, he was allowed to hold positions in the administration of the viceroyalty of Naples between 1671 and 1685. Being allegedly prevented from exercising his duties by serious disagreements with shady personalities,[7] he left his post to undertake a journey through

---

4   Previous studies have predominantly referenced renowned travel accounts, from Marco Polo to Henry Lynch, in a more descriptive than analytical perspective, e.g. Karagezjan 2019. It is beyond doubt that the French jeweller and traveller Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-89) is among the most frequently cited authors in Armenia studies. Like the younger Jean Chardin (1643-1713), Tavernier undertook business voyages through its regions, and his account provides useful insights into the commercial mobility of the period; however, it lacks references to artistic and historical matters, and is full of inaccuracies and far-fetched anecdotes, which have been disproved or ridiculed by subsequent writers, e.g. Gemelli 2: 17. Among the Italian travel-writers of the seventeenth century, Ambrogio Bembo (1652-1705) and Nicolò Manucci (1638-1717) are worthy of note. For further information, cf. Pedrini 2011, Invernizzi 2012 and the related bibliography.

5   Gemelli 1699, vols 1 and 2. There are only a few studies on this author and his works, and the most specific ones concerning mostly travels to the Far East and the Americas, which are beyond the scope of the present discussion. This is a selected and updated list of such studies: Du Halde 1722, XIV-XVIII; Prevost 1753, 465; Grossi 1820; Ciampi 1859; De Gubernatis 1875, 57-8; Amat di S. Filippo, 467-70; Ghirlanda 1899; Magnaghi 1900; Nunnari 1901; Zeri 1904; Vece 1906; Croce 1929, 106; Magnaghi 1932; Barthold 1947, 139; de Vargas 1955; Guglielminetti 1967, 683-4; Zoli 1972, 409-16; Perocco 1985, 144-65; Fatica 1998; Galeota 1994; Buccini 1996; Ballo Alagna 1997; Maccarone-Amuso 2000; Doria 2000; Negro Spina 2001; Invernizzi 2005, 387-91; Hester 2008, 155 ff.; Sarzi Amade 2012.

6   In fact, some claim that Gemini was born in 1648, cf. Fatica 1998, 66.

7   In explaining his motivations for travelling, the author speaks about "unfair persecutions and undue outrages", Gemelli 1: 2-3. Translations from Italian are by the author of this article.

Europe (from 1685 to 1687), during which he participated in the Hungarian campaigns against the Ottoman Empire, both being wounded (Battle of Buda, 2 September 1686) and receiving commendations for military prowess (Battle of Mohács, 12 August 1687). These awards guaranteed him reinstatement in the viceroyalty administration, but only for four years. Between 1689 and 1693, he worked as *auditor* at the magistracies of Lecce and L'Aquila. In those years, he published two travel reports, *Relazione delle campagne d'Ungheria* (1689) and *Viaggi per l'Europa* (1693) (Doria 2000, 43).

Figure 1
Portrait of Giovanni Francesco
Gemelli Careri, 1699,
Giro del mondo, 1, frontispiece

Once again victim of alleged harassment by his detractors, he decided to leave Naples and, notebook in hand, set off on a new, longer journey. The original plan to visit the Chinese Empire underwent a gradual expansion that in five and a half years (13 June 1693-4 December 1698) took him from Egypt to the Indies, then from China to the Philippines, where he sailed for Mexico and from there came back to Europe. After his return, he gained international fame by publishing the six-volume detailed account of his wanderings, entitled *Giro del Mondo* (Around the World, 1699-1700). The work was

reprinted at least seven times between 1699 and 1728, and was translated into French (1719), and English (1732), while excerpts from it were included in foreign compilations, including German and Russians works (Doria 2000, 44; Invernizzi 2005, 387). After his return to his homeland, perhaps due in part to his literary success, Gemelli was appointed vicar judge and auditor of the navy. He died in Naples on 25 July 1724.

Apart from the editorial history and the critical success of the *Giro*, what is important to us is its relevance as a source for the study of Armenian art and culture in a period characterised by constant clashes between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. Thus, an annotated reconstruction of the traveller's path through historical Armenia is proposed here. At the same time, the Mediterranean area is excluded, not for lack of evidence of Armenian presence – significant in the districts of Edirne,[8] Smirne[9] and Jerusalem[10] –, but because it would deserve a separate discussion. The itinerary analysed and reconstructed is that from Trebizond to Ǧułay [fig. 2], described in the first two volumes of his monumental report, dedicated respectively to *Giro del Mondo del Dottor D. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri contenente le cose più ragguardevoli vedute nella Turchia/Persia* (The Most Remarkable Things Seen in Turkey and Persia) (Gemelli 1: 395-450, 2: 1-22).

---

8   Between 22 December 1693 and 4 January 1694, Gemelli stayed in Adrianople, "inhabited by Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Turks, Wallachians, and other nations" (Gemelli 1: 242-89, in particular 244). The author also mentions the existence of an Armenian community in *Malgarà* (i.e. Malkara), cf. Gemelli 1: 240.

9   Gemelli stayed twice in Izmir: from 27 November to 12 December 1693 and from 17 February to 9 March 1694 (cf. Gemelli 1: 213-24, 342-50). He also reports that, on the latter occasion, he lodged at the Armenian caravanserai because, in his opinion, the Armenians "though schismatics, have no such aversion; on the contrary, they lovingly procure to render every possible service to Catholics on occasion, as I have experienced many times" (Gemelli 1: 343). The Greeks, on the other hand, are thought by Gemelli to be fraudulent and unfriendly to Catholics.

10   During his stay in Jerusalem (29 August-8 September 1693), Gemelli described the St. James complex, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the tomb of the Virgin, a small Armenian church on Mount Zion and other places of worship attended (also) by Armenians (cf. Gemelli 1: 111-78).

Figure 2   Reconstruction of Gemelli Careri's travel through Armenia (1694). Author's elaboration

Having left Naples on 13 June 1693, Gemelli stopped in *Redicina* to bid farewell to his brother, Abbot Giovanni Battista. He left for Messina on 7 July[11] and, within six months, he visited Malta,[12] Egypt,[13] the Holy Land, then, via the Aegean islands,[14] Izmir, Gallipoli,[15] and Edirne, where he also saw Sultan Ahmed II (Gemelli 1: 6-402). He then reached Constantinople on 10 January 1694, where he remained until 11 April.[16] During these three months, a series of worrisome accidents occurred, including Gemelli's arrest by the Ottoman authorities, just before his planned departure for Trebizond, on suspicion of being a spy (Gemelli 1: 292-336, 369-402).[17] The traveller had previous misadventures with Ottoman guards and janissaries, which contributed to eliciting antipathy towards the Turks that, with rare

---

[11]   He arrived in Radicena on 27 June and left from Palmi on 7 July 1963.

[12]   The Italian traveller stopped in Malta from 15 to 21 July.

[13]   Gemelli was in Egypt from 1 to 23 August 1693, then from 2 to 10 October, mainly in Alexandria and Cairo.

[14]   Specifically, he called at Rhodes (24 October-11 November 1693), *Stanchio* (Coo, 13-14 November 1693), *Scio* (Chios, 17 November 1693) and, after passing Smyrna (cf. fn. 9), *Mitylene* (Lesvos port, 13-15 December 1693) and *Tenedos* (today's Bozcaada, 15-17 December 1693).

[15]   He stayed in Gallipoli for just two days (17-19 December 1693).

[16]   Gemelli also stayed twice in the Ottoman capital: from 10 to 28 January, then from 29 March to 11 April 1694.

[17]   Gemelli was detained from 2 to 6 April 1694.

exceptions,[18] made his stay within their domains rather unpleasant.[19]

In the former Byzantine imperial capital on the Black Sea, Gemelli enjoyed the hospitality of the local Jesuit mission, consolidating a practice already experimented during his Mediterranean pilgrimages (Gemelli 1: 117, 408).[20] For his safety, he decided to undertake the journey to Ispahan together with a small group of missionaries: Fr. Villotte, Superior of the mission of Erzurum by decree of the Sultan; Fr. Dalmatius of Auvergne, destined for the province of Şamaxı; Fr. Martin of Guyenne, directed to Ispahan; and Dominic of Bologna, a Dominican Friar directed to Aparaner (Gemelli 1: 413-14).[21] Gemelli later reported that Fr. Villotte "had well learned the Armenian language" for obvious missionary purposes, using games he invented to bring the faithful closer to Catholic doctrine (Gemelli 1: 419). This is important because it helps to explain the acquisition of so much knowledge about Armenian customs and traditions by the curious writer, who assiduously reported the names of places and settlements, rendering a pronunciation that was as close as possible to the language he heard. By doing so, he attested a fair number of Armenian toponymies along the way.

Gemelli's Trabzon was "a province between Asia Minor and Greater Armenia", and a city in decay, of which

> due to the many vicissitudes it had undergone, it must be believed that nothing has remained of its ancient splendour, as it now looks more like a village than an imperial city; indeed it looks like an inhabited forest, as there is no house that does not have its own large garden, with olive trees and other fruits, as well as the fields that are interspersed with it. (Gemelli 1: 408-9)[22]

The day after his landing, Gemelli was able to observe the two citadels, emphasising how both were "poorly provided with garrison

---

18   The Turks with whom he travelled from Constantinople to Trebizond, for example, turned out to be "costumed people" (Gemelli 1: 405-6).

19   The traveller describes the Ottomans as: "utterly barbarous, uncivil, proud above all other nations, liars, much given to idleness, greedy for money, ignorant, and enemies of the Christian name. Nor is the government any better than the customs, because the trials are very short, and exposed to the falsehood of the witnesses; the cases being determined for the benefit of those who give more, not those who are more right" (Gemelli 1: 386-7).

20   When he arrived in Jaffa, a few months earlier, he had to take lodging with a Jew, "neither Friars nor French being in such a small country" (Gemelli 1: 117). In Trebizond he stayed with the missionaries from 21 to 27 April 1694. The traveller was received by Fathers "dressed in Armenian fashion" (Gemelli 1: 407).

21   A fifth missionary, Fr Lau from the province of Lyons, remained in Trebizond.

22   Gemelli also mentions a violent sacking of the city by the Russians in 1617, asserting that the same fate befell Sinope and Caffa.

and artillery" (Gemelli 1: 409-10). In a later visit to the lower citadel, "situated on a rock, with two orders of walls and a deep moat", he judged it to be the oldest one (Gemelli 1: 412). On 23 April, he visited the urban suburbs where, he says, "for the most part live Armenians, and Greeks, with their bishops for the exercise of their Religion" (Gemelli 1: 410). Unfortunately, the traveller does not describe Armenian churches and places of worship, showing more interest in practical aspects such as the lax customs controls. Above all, he notices that both Armenians and Greeks live in uncomfortable socioeconomic conditions caused by the many taxes combined with the burden of supporting the visiting *paša*'s family during Ramadan (Gemelli 1: 412).

Gemelli's small company joined a caravan to Erzurum on 27 April, finding refuge in the ruined caravanserai of *Oreglan*, after four hours of "mountainous and muddy" travel (Gemelli 1: 414). The journey was no less difficult in the following days, as the caravan had to cross the Zigana pass relying on small and unprotected shelters (Gemelli 1: 414-16).[23] On 30 April, the caravan reached the village of *Giumis-Xane*, near the silver mines which gave it its name, probability corresponding to present-day Gümüşhane, about 120 km south of Trebizond (Gemelli 1: 416-17; cf. Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1986, 1: 913). On 1 May the caravan passed through the village of *Cuvans* (Gemelli 1: 417),[24] reaching after 20 miles the village of *Balaxor*, where it stopped at the dwelling of one of the *Catergì* (coachman) of the group. The *Catergì* was perhaps an Armenian, as Gemelli notes the hamlet was "almost all inhabited by Armenians", and the place's toponym seemed to be Armenian (Gemelli 1: 417-20; cf. Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1986, 1: 551).[25] The author was struck by the architecture of the dwellings in Balaxor, described as

> caves or stables [...] hollowed out in the ground, that serves as a wall, with large beams placed across the top to support the roof, which is also made of earth, over which (being at the same level of the road) one can walk. In the middle they leave a very large opening to receive the light, not caring that one can then observe what is done in the house, and do more harm if one wishes [...]. Beasts and men are housed in it at the same time. (Gemelli 1: 417-18)

---

23 Gemelli mentions the *Cuscan* caravanserai (24 miles past *Oreglan*, possibly located in the area between the present centres of Kozağaç and Coşandere) and a second one at the foot of Mount Zigana, from which it took its name, where the caravan stopped after another 24 miles.

24 Based on the distances reported by the author, it was around the present-day village of Tekke.

25 Gemelli's *Balaxor* probably corresponds to the present Akşar or its vicinity.

This is one of the rare descriptions of the traditional architecture of the *glxatun* type, of ancient memory, which the traveller found in other villages along the route to the Persian border, such as *Avirac* and *Carvor* (Gemelli 1: 422-3; cf. Donabédian 2008, 50 fn. 121, fig. 92) [fig. 3]. Although Gemelli considered the accommodation inelegant and referred to it henceforth as a "stable", he also stated its functionality.
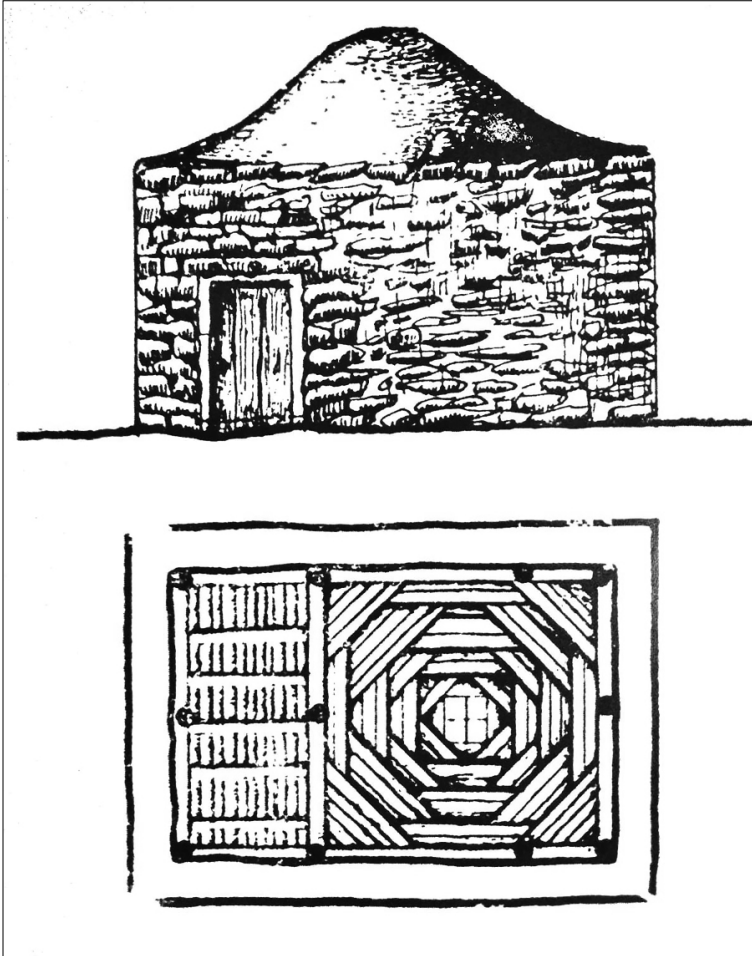

Figure 3   Relief and plan of a *glxatun* type dwelling, from © Donabédian 2008, 50, fig. 92

The caravan drove 12 miles later to the city of *Beiburt* (Bayburt), which Gemelli reports as a centre of manufacturing and trade of

"good woollen carpets" (Gemelli 1: 414), perched on a rock, surrounded by walls, but with weaponry lacking. After another six miles along the Č'orox river, the caravans were camped at a place called *Maaciur* (perhaps the Armenian village of Mahaǰur) (Gemelli 1: 421; cf. Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1986, 1: 652).[26] After stopping "in the house, or, to put it better, the stable of an Armenian" (Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1986, 1: 364), near Avirak, and then in another "stable" in *Carvor*,[27] the caravan ended up, on 6 May, in the village of *Teurischiuch* (Tebrizcik, arm. T'aruǰuk), arriving the next morning in the city of Erzurum (Gemelli 1: 422-4; cf. Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1988, 2: 422).

Gemelli describes its plateau as fertile, well cultivated and populated by various hamlets, almost scenically "crowned with snow-covered mountains". He reports that Erzurum resembled Constantinople for its walls "defended by a middle ditch and by several towers placed at a suitable distance and equipped with small pieces of artillery called falconets". Next to the Janissaries' Castle, Gemelli remarked the presence of "the Archiepiscopal Church of the Armenians, much of it ruined, except for two towers that are made of brick" and low houses made of wood and mud "mostly inhabited by Armenians", flanking narrow streets without cobblestones which lead to ordinary bazaars, as well as 22 caravanserais. According to Gemelli, as well as many authors, one of the most remarkable features of Erzurum was its cold climate, as well as its proximity to the Euphrates. The stay in Erzurum ended abruptly after ten days because of the Armenian Apostolic Church's aversion to Catholic missionaries. The local authorities, who pandered to the Church, acted so hostile that Gemelli and his companions fled the city at night, in secret (Gemelli 1: 424-38).[28]

The group stayed overnight in the village of Axa, four miles from the fortified centre of *Hassan-kale* (near the present day Pasinler, Gemelli 1: 439).[29] On 19 May they passed the *Taliscì* customs post, the bridge of *Scio.ban.nuprì* (*sic*) (probably Yeniçobandede), reaching after 28 miles *Korason*, a village on the left bank of the Arax, with houses "like those of Balaxor", and where women "cover their faces, almost Egyptian-style, with certain small silver plates, [as large] as a Neapolitan carlin, which with the movement of their heads also make

---

26 An approximate calculation of distances suggests a location near the modern Medan.

27 It is conceivable that *Carvor* was located near the present Kügükegeçit, 5 km east of Ashkale, and a village called Avirak is reported in the same province.

28 Two years earlier, the Jesuits were forced to leave the city, and the same happened in Trebizond. The phenomenon can be interpreted in terms of harmony between the local Ottoman government and the Armenian ecclesiastical hierarchy.

29 Cf. Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1991, 3: 368-9; Chiesa 2011, 506-7.

a graceful sound; and on each side of the robe there are two orders of large buttons, with other small silver plates". This was probably the Armenian village of Korasan (modern Akkiran) and the women's clothes described were Armenian as well (Gemelli 1: 428, 440-1).[30]

From this point on, Gemelli's narrative becomes more confused, probably reflecting the roughness of a mountainous route and the threat of bandits. The caravan reached a place named *Misinghirt*; contrary to his custom, Gemelli does not specify the distance from the previous halting place, which, however, must have been at least 15 km.[31] From this fortified centre populated by "many Christians" and some Kurdish settlements, the group reached a rural hamlet inhabited by Armenians called *Cotanlò*, 12 miles from Kars (Gemelli 1: 442-3).[32]

The company arrived in the border city of Kars, the last before entering Safavid territory, on Sunday 23 May and left after two days. Despite the short time, Gemelli managed to sketch out a minimal description of civil and military structures rather than the religious ones [fig. 4].[33] Kars was a large but sparsely populated city, which, being on the frontier between enemy empires, was too often victim of ravages from both Turkish and Persian armies. The destruction wrecked on the region by wars was visible for "eight, nine, days of march" (Gemelli 1: 445-8). The only exception to this desolation seemed to him to be the Bagratid capital, *Anì-kagaë* (Ani), with its still-standing walls and monastic ruins (Gemelli 1: 448-9) [fig. 5].[34] After passing through the Ottoman fort of Arpaçay and crossing the Axuryan river, the caravan entered the Safavid territory, to the relief of Gemelli, who, as soon as he reached the opposite bank, dismounted from his horse and kissed the long-awaited land, now out of the reach of any "Turkish slyness" (Gemelli 1: 449-50).

---

30 Cf. Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1988, 2: 794; *Nisanyan Envanteri*. Gemelli was careful in reporting women's clothing, which was also the case in Erzurum, where women dressed in "boots, and a black cloth in front of the forehead, to hide their faces" (Gemelli 1: 428), and a knee-length cloth on their heads.

31 This place could be identified with the Armenian Mžnkert already mentioned in the thirteenth century by William of Rubruk and probably located in the vicinity of today's Bulgurlu. Cf. Guglielmo di Rubruk 2011, 310; Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1991, 3: 814-15; Harut'yunyan 2007, 87; Boschis 2023, 148 fn. 32.

32 This could be the Armenian village of Kotanlu, cf. Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1991, 3: 225.

33 Gemelli mentions neither the church of St. Aṙak'loc' (tenth century), nor the nearby Beşik kilise, both of which are clearly visible, centrally located in the lower township, on the opposite bank of the river from the upper citadel. Cf. Cuneo 1988, 686-7, 689; Ferrari 2019, 124-43.

34 Cf. Ferrari 2019, 90-123. The caravan reached Ani after stopping in the unidentified village of *Chialà*, 30 miles away from Kars.

Figure 4 Kars, church of St. Aṙakʻelocʻ, tenth-thirteenth centuries. Photograph by Łukasyan, 1941. Courtesy of the © History Museum of Armenia, inv. no. 468

Figure 5 Ani, northern wall, tenth century. Courtesy of © History Museum of Armenia, inv. no. 270

By the evening of the same day, 26 May 1694, the company stopped in *Talen*, "the first village of Persians". Gemelli wrote:

> There was already an excellent church here, for the use of the Armenian Christians, who make up the majority of the inhabitants; the figures of the Holy Apostles can be seen painted on the high altar; however, it has now fallen into disrepair, like another adjacent one. (Gemelli 2: 2-3)

This is the first known description of the monumental complex of T'alin, its cathedral and its St. Astvacacin church (seventh century) **[figs 6-8]**.[35] Gemelli was attracted by the fading apsidal paintings, among which he recognised the figures of the Apostles in the second register, today barely visible **[fig. 9]**.

The next day the company reached Ējmiacin, where Fr. Villotte acted as Gemelli's guide, instructing him on the history of the Armenian Church and on legendary and etymological anecdotes.[36] An important description of the cathedral is provided by Gemelli: domed, cruciform, accessible through three entrances and floors covered with carpets, three altars and a patriarchal seat, as well as a series of service buildings including a convent, the patriarchal residence, gardens with fountains and the guesthouse where Gemelli himself with his companions passed the night (Gemelli 2: 4-5).[37]

The next morning, after the office celebrated in the cathedral by 70 monks (Gemelli 2: 6-8), the group reached *Erivan*, where Gemelli lodged at the only caravanserai in the city, rather than in the city's Jesuit residence. The description he supplies of the administrative centre of Safavid Armenia is critical of defence devices and building techniques, but he is fascinated by the organisation of activities, from the bazaars to the palace of the Sardar (governor), from the method of making coins at the Mint to the origin of the main source of water, the Hrazdan river and its beautiful bridge. Walking through hamlets and gardens Gemelli did not record any information about the religious architecture, then represented at least by the churches of St. Astvacacin, St. Połos-Petros and the chapel of Gethsemane.[38]

---

35 Donabédian 2008, 118-22, 146-7.

36 This good-natured missionary is the same Jacobus Villotte (1656-1743), the author of a Latin-Armenian dictionary printed under the patronage of Propaganda Fide in 1714, as well as of a mission report to the East published in Paris in 1730, cf. Villotte 1714; Villotte, Frizon 1730; Tadevosyan 2001-02.

37 Gemelli also briefly described the *martyria* of St. Gayanē and St. Hṙip'simē, but did not mention St. Šołakat', the construction of which began in 1694, cf. Cuneo 1988, 88-101; Donabédian 2008, 83-7, 105-7.

38 St. Astvacacin is the only medieval church in Erevan, while the other two mentioned were destroyed in the 1930s in the implementation of the new urban plan

What he dwells on instead is the damage caused to the city by the Ottoman wars, neglecting to mention the disastrous earthquake of June 1679, whose effects were probably still evident at the time (Gemelli 2: 8-10).[39]

On 1 June, Gemelli made an excursion to the monastery of Gełard, "cut into the rock, of which are also made the pillars that support the church", an aspect as impressive in his eyes as the presence of the Holy Lance relic in the treasury. The author also mentions the presence of five other monastic centres in the surroundings.[40] On his return to Erevan, Gemelli dined at the Jesuit residence, but provides no information about its location.

On Saturday 5 June he left for Naxiǰevan with Fr. Dominic, joining a Georgian caravan (Gemelli 2: 11-17). Heavy rain forced the group to make frequent stops, first in *Gavuri-ciny*, then in *Satarach* (Sədərək, AZ; Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1998, 4: 459). Passed the guard post on the Arp'a River, the caravan reached the caravanserai of *Karaba* (nowadays Qarabaqlar, AZ; Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1988, 2: 937), whose square factory was, according to Gemelli, one "of the most spacious and beautiful I have ever seen" (Gemelli 2: 17). Nearby there was a spring by Armenian legends said to have been created by Sem, Noah's son.

On 8 June 1694, the group arrived in Naxiǰevan (Gemelli 2: 17-20), where Fr. Dominic directly left for the monastery of Aparaner, leaving Gemelli as the sole target of robbery by the city guards. The situation became so dire to remind him the misadventures suffered in Erzurum, and he considered *Nak Civan* to be its Persian equivalent. Gemelli dedicates to it a succinct description, recalling the legend of its foundation by Noah,[41] and remarking how its buildings, "reduced to nothing by constant wars" (Gemelli 2: 18), were relics of the glorious past. The modern village was small, with only one narrow street, a good bazaar and four large caravanserais. Its houses were made like caves. What impressed Gemelli the most was the exotic building visible just outside the city, made of bricks "more than 70 palms high, octagonal in shape, ending spire-like", with "two tall towers on either side, without any communication with the spire" (Gemelli 2:

---

approved by the Soviet authorities in 1924. The church, also called *kat'ołike*, was among the few city structures to withstand the 1679 earthquake, following which St. Ananias Zoravar (1694) had to be rebuilt. The old churches of Avan, St. Astvacacin and St. Hovhannēs were at the time quite isolated from the city centre. Cf. Cuneo 1988, 110-13; Shahaziz 2003.

39 Regrettably, unlike Chardin (in 1672), Gemini published few engravings of his trip to the Near East, none of which concern Armenia; it would have been extremely useful to compare engravings from just before and just after the 1679 earthquake.

40 Cf. Cuneo 1988, 136-9; Sahinian, Monoukian, Aslanian 1972.

41 Abaraner (or Aparaner) corresponds to today's Bənəniyar in Azerbaijani territory.

19), which he assumes to be of Timurid age, but truly the mausoleum of Momine Xat'un (1186). Gemelli does not mention Armenian churches. Most of them were razed to the ground in the thirteenth century, so that of the original eighty churches only two remained, probably St. Errordut'yun (seventh-eighth century, destroyed in 1975) and St. Gevorg (rebuilt on older structures in 1869, now disappeared).[42] Because of the guards' abuses, Gemelli decided to leave the same night, taking advantage of the company of a Persian envoy on his way to Ispahan (Gemelli 2: 20-1).

The next morning, on a poorly crafted and very badly steered boat, he crossed the Araxes in the vicinity of the ancient J̌ułay, according to him an uninhabited "heap of mud and caves built underground" with "two caravanserais, built at great expense by the Armenian *Coggia* [arm. *xoǰa*] Nazar on either side of the river, […] also ruined". The description depicts the desolation into which the city, once a small but flourishing centre on the so-called Silk Road before the Persian deportation, had fallen at the time. Gemelli's annotations on his contemporary J̌ułay, disdainful of its buildings, are the result of an increasingly confident European mentality of superiority, from which even the jurist could not escape. The passage reveals a certain hastiness in writing: Gemelli does not mention the presence of churches, chapels and cemeteries reported by other travellers, probably because he did not even have the time to notice them while fleeing early in the morning.[43] Quite a pity, because it would have been interesting to know whether the underground caverns he mentioned were of the same type as those he had already encountered in the provinces of Ottoman Armenia, and whether they were only inside or also outside the walls, made of raw brick rather than mud. What is certain is that with the crossing of Arax, the Italian traveller's experience in the lands of Historical Armenia came to an end.

---

[42] Cf. Guglielmo di Rubruk 2011, 302-6; Ayvazyan 1986; Cuneo 1988, 466; Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1991, 951-5; Karapetyan 2012, 25.

[43] Gemelli does not mention any of the at least five ancient churches that should have been in the city at the time: St. Amenap'rkič' Pomblozi (Hovvi), St. Astvacacin, St. Hovhannes e St. Gevorg, cf. Cuneo 1988, 476; Barsełyan, Hakobyan, Melik'-Baxšyan 1998, 426-8; Karapetyan 2012, 25.

Figure 6   T'alin, cathedral (seen from the west), late seventh century. Photo by the Author, June 2022 (before restoration currently underway)

Figure 7
T'alin, church of St. Astvacacin, late seventh century. Photo by T'. T'oramanyan, beginning of the twentieth century. Courtesy of © History Museum of Armenia, inv. no. 640

Figure 8 T'alin, church of St. Astvacacin, after the latest restoration. Photo by the Author, June 2022

Figure 9 T'alin, cathedral, wall paintings in the apse, late seventh century. Photo by the Author, June 2022

3   Conclusions

Despite his having received little attention in historical studies, Gemelli's *Giro del mondo* constitutes a valuable source of knowledge of Armenian history and culture in many respects. The author, well disposed towards the Armenians, who according to him were schismatics but still devoted and good-hearted Christians, often sought refuge and support in case of need or simply out of preference among the Armenians, both in the Ottoman and Persian Empires, from Smyrna to Ispahan (Gemelli 1: 21, 2: 35). Considered to be the first tourist in history and, by his own admission, a traveller "moved by natural wanderlust" (Gemelli 1: 2), he was an attentive observer, rigorous in distinguishing data from unverifiable hearsay, sometimes quick to judge cultural attitudes different from his own, yet demonstrating great intelligence in going beyond the preconceptions consolidated in his mind by education and experience (Gemelli 1: 413, 429-3, 2: 3).[44]

This reconstruction of Gemelli's journey through the provinces of Historical Armenia highlights the relevance of his account for investigating the spread of Armenian communities in lands that today belong to Turkey and Azerbaijan, as well as studying Armenian toponymy. From an art historical perspective, Gemelli's contribution cannot be considered more precise or detailed than other works, but it remains important. Neither the references to the popular architecture of the hypogeal Armenian houses, nor the description of the jewellery and traditional clothing are trivial. Through the pages of the *Giro*, one seems to be able to relive the ancient atmosphere breathed in villages now lost, such as Balaxor, Avirak, *Carvor* and *Korason*.

The same can be said for urban realities such as Trebizond, Erzurum, Kars and Erevan, although the descriptions of places and monuments are not as exhaustive as a modern scholar might wish, focusing mainly on aspects of the military, economic and administrative organisation rather than on the appearance of churches and monasteries, usually briefly mentioned in relation to the presence of religious communities. An important and physiological exception is the Patriarchal See of Ējmiacin, which greatly fascinated Gemelli: much remains to be said about the evolution of its churches, particularly the cathedral, which was much altered over the centuries.

Reports on caravanserais and ancient bridges (especially in the Naxiǰevan area, sadly notorious for the physical and cultural

---

[44]   This is true in both positive and negative terms, for despite Gemelli's esteem for the Armenian people, he is also sharply critical of the Armenian clergy. In some cases, Gemelli's negative attitude was influenced by the Armenian clergy's blatant rivalry with Catholic missionaries, as in Erzurum, in other occurrences it was linked with simpler, everyday contexts, such as his encounter with the superstitious *Vardabietto* (Vardapet) of T'alin.

obliteration of Armenia's artistic heritage) would also need to be discussed separately. In this sense, Gemelli's thin descriptions, which are the results of short stints more than thoughtful sojourns, are very useful and interesting, as seen in the case of Ǧułay and its muddy houses. Certainly, it would have been useful to know more about the Armenian churches in ruins in the Ottoman domains, as well as about the appearance, name, and location of the "many hermitages inhabited by Christian Religious" (Gemelli 2: 14) scattered at the foot of Ararat. Gemelli, on the other hand, without omitting linguistic information such as the mountain's Armenian and Persian names (*Masesusar* and *Agrì* respectively), takes care to point out how its summit was always visible in the morning and always obstructed from view by a crown of dense clouds "from vespers onwards" (Gemelli 2: 14). To appreciate fully the importance of the testimony of this eclectic wayfarer-writer, it must be contextualised within the cultural framework of which it was a brilliant product.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Amat di S. Filippo, P. (1882). *Biografia dei viaggiatori italiani colla bibliografia delle loro opere*. Roma: Società geografica italiana.

Chardin, J. (1711). *Voyages de Monsieur le Chevalier Chardin, en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient*. 3 vols. Amsterdam: Jean Louis de Lorme.

Chiesa, P. (a cura di) (2011). *Guglielmo di Rubruk: Viaggio in Mongolia (Itinerarium)*. Milano: Fondazione Valla.

Du Halde, J.-B. (1722). "Aux Jésuites de France". Le Gobien, C.; Du Halde, J.-B.; Patouillet, L. (éds), *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères*, vol. 15. Paris: Le Clerc.

Gemelli Careri, G.F. (1699-1700). *Giro del Mondo*. 6 vols. Napoli: Rosselli.

Guglielmo di Rubruk (2011). *Viaggio in Mongolia (Itinerarium)*. A cura di P. Chiesa. Milano: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla; Arnoldo Mondadori Editore.

Invernizzi, A. (a cura di) (2001). *Pietro della Valle: In viaggio per l'Oriente. Le mummie, Babilonia, Persepoli*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Ker Porter, R. (1821). *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia &c. &c., During the Years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820*. 2 vols. London: Longman-Hurst-Rees-Orme-Brown.

Layard, H.A. (1853). *Discoveries Among the Ruins of Niniveh and Babylon; with Travels in Armenia, Kurdistan, and the Desert*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.

Lynch, H.F.B. (1901). *Armenia: Travels and Studies*. 2 vols. London: Longmans Green & Co.

Villotte, J. (1714). *Dictionarium novum latino-armenium*. Roma: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide.

Villotte, J.; Frizon, N. (1730). *Voyages d'un missionaire de la Compagnie de Jesus, en Turquie, en Perse, en Arménie, en Arabie, & en Barbarie*. Paris: Jacques Vincent.

Secondary sources

Adey, P. et al. (eds) (2014). *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*. London: Routledge.

Ayvazyan, A. (1986). *Naxiǰevani ISSH haykakan hušarjannerə* (Armenian Monuments in the Autonomous Republic of Naxiǰevan). Erevan: Hayastan.

Ballo Alagna, S. (1997). "Italiani intorno al mondo. Suggestioni, esperienze, immagini dai diari di viaggio di Antonio Pigafetta, Francesco Carletti, Gian Francesco Gemelli Careri". *AGEI-Geotema*, 8, 107-25.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan; S.T. (eds) (1986). s.v. "Avirak". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 1. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 364.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1986). s.v. "Balaxor". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 1. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 551.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1986). s.v. "Gyumišxane". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 1. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 913.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1986). s.v. "Mahaǰur". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 1. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 652.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1988). s.v. "Karaba". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 2. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 973.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1988). s.v. "T'aruǰuk". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 2. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 422.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1991). s.v. "Hassankala". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 3. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 368-9.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1991). s.v. "Kotanlu". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 3. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 225.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1991). s.v. "Mžnkert". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 3. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 814-15.

Barsełyan, H.X.; Hakobyan, T'.X.; Melik'-Baxšyan, S.T. (eds) (1998). s.v. "Sadarak". *Hayastani ev harakic' šrǰanneri tełanunneri baṙaran* (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Bordering Regions), vol. 4. Erevan: Hamalsarani hr., 459.

Barthold, V.V. (1947). *La découverte de l'Asie. Histoire de l'Orientalisme en Europe et en Russie*. Paris: Payot.

Berchet, J.-C. (1985). *Le voyage en Orient. Anthologie des voyageurs français dans le Levant au XIXᵉ siècle*. Paris: Laffont.

Biasiori, L.; Mazzini, F.; Rabbiosi, C. (2023). *Reimagining Mobilities Across the Humanities*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Boschis, A. (2023). "'Omnia depinxissem vobis si scivissem pingere!'. L'Armenia nell'*Itinerarium* di fra Guglielmo di Rubruk". *Eurasiatica*, 20, 133-66.

Buccini, S. (1996). "Coerenza metodologica nel *Giro del mondo* di Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri". *Annali d'Italianistica*, 14, 246-56.

Ciampi, I. (1859). *Il Gemelli. Discorso*. Vol. 5, *Saggi e riviste*. Roma: Aureli.

Croce, B. (1929). *Storia dell'età Barocca in Italia*. Bari: Laterza.

Cuneo, P. (1988). *Architettura armena: dal quarto al diciannovesimo secolo*, vol. 1. Roma: De Luca.

De Gubernatis, A. (1875). *Storia dei viaggiatori italiani nelle Indie orientali*. Livorno: Vigo.

de Vargas, P. (1955). "Le *Giro del mondo* de Gemelli Careri, en particulier de récit du séjour en Chine. Roman ou vérité?". *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 5, 417-51.

Demus, O. (2008). *L'arte bizantina e l'Occidente*. Torino: Einaudi. Trad. it. di: *Byzantine Art and the West*, New York: New York University Press, 1970. The Wrightsman Lectures 3.

Donabédian, P. (2008). *L'âge d'or de l'architecture arménienne. VIIe siècle*. Marseille: Parenthèses.

Dorfmann-Lazarev, I.; Khatchadourian, H. (2023). *Monuments and Identities in the Caucasus: Karabagh, Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan in Contemporary Geopolitical Conflict*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Doria, P. (2000). s.v. "Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri". *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 53, Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 42-5.

Fatica, M. (1998). "L'itinerario sinico di Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri. Saggio di decrittazione degli antroponimi europei e dei toponimi cinesi nel *Giro del mondo*". Faizah, S.; Rivai, S.; Santa Maria, L. (a cura di), *Persembahan. Studi in onore di Luigi Santa Maria*. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 45-67.

Ferrari, A. (2019). *L'Armenia perduta. Viaggio nella memoria di un popolo*. Roma: Salerno.

Galeota, V. (1994). "Il Viceregno della Nuova Spagna nel *Giro del mondo* di Gemelli Careri". Crovetto, P.L. (a cura di), *Andando más, más se sabe. Atti del Convegno internazionale "La scoperta dell'America e la cultura italiana" = Conference Proceedings* (Genova, 6-8 Aprile 1992). Roma: Bulzoni, 287-95.

Ghirlanda, G. (1899). *Gianfrancesco Gemelli Careri e il suo viaggio intorno al mondo (1693-1698)*. Verona: Paderno.

Grigoryan, A. (ed.) (2015). *Ani. The Millennial Capital of Armenia*. Erevan: Tigran Mec.

Grossi, G.B.G. (1820). s.v. "Francesco Gemelli Careri". *Biografia degli Uomini Illustri del Regno di Napoli*, vol. 7. Napoli: Stamperia di Nicola Gervasi.

Guglielminetti, M. (1967). *Viaggiatori del Seicento*. Torino: UTET.

Harut'yunyan, B.H. (2007). *Hayastani patmut'yan atlas*, vol. 1. Erevan: Macmillan Armenia.

Hester, N. (2008). *Literature and Identity in Italian Baroque Travel Writing*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Holmberg, J.E. (2024). *Writing Mobile Lives, 1500-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Invernizzi, A. (a cura di) (2001). *Pietro della Valle. In viaggio per l'Oriente. Le mummie, Babilonia, Persepoli*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Invernizzi, A. (2005). *Il genio vagante. Viaggiatori alla scoperta dell'antico Oriente (secc. XII-XVIII)*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Invernizzi, A. (2012). *Il viaggio in Asia (1671-1675) nei manoscritti di Minneapolis e di Bergamo*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

Karagezjan, G. (2019). *Naxičevan v zapiskax evropejskix putešestvennikov (XIII-XVII vv.)* (Naxiǰevan in the Notes of European Travellers, thirteenth-seventeenth Centuries). Erevan: Izd.-vo "Gitutjun" NAN.

Karapetian, S. (ed.) (2012). *Nakhijevan Atlas*. Yerevan: Research on Armenian Architecture, Tigran Metz Publishing House.

Kéfélian, A. (2021). "Regards croisés de voyageurs occidentaux sur le site de Garni". Ferrari, A.; Haroutyunian, S.; Lucca, P. (a cura di), *Il viaggio in Armenia. Dall'antichità ai nostri giorni*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 62-89. Eurasiatica 17.
http://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-497-4/004

Maccarone-Amuso, A. (2000). *Gianfrancesco Gemelli-Careri: L'Ulisse del XVII secolo*. Roma: Gangemi.

Magnaghi, A. (1900). *Il viaggiatore Gemelli Careri (secolo XVII) e il suo "Giro del mondo"*. Bergamo: Cattaneo.

Magnaghi, A. (1932). s.v. "Gemelli Careri, Giovanni Francesco". *Enciclopedia Italiana*, vol. 16. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 493-4.

Menestò, E. (1993). "Relazioni di viaggi e di ambasciatori". Cavallo, G.; Leonardi, C.; Menestò, E. (a cura di), *Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo*. Vol. 1, *Il Medioevo latino. La produzione del testo*. Roma: Salerno, 535-600.

Merriman, P.; Pearce, L. (2017). "Mobility and the Humanities". *Mobilities*, 12(4), 493-508.

Negro Spina, A. (2001). *Un viaggiatore del Seicento in giro per il mondo: Giovan Francesco Gemelli Careri*. Napoli: Bowinkel.

Nelles, P.; Salzberg, R. (2023). *Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World. The Practice and Experience of Movement*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Nisanyan Envanteri (Inventario Nisanyan) = *Nisanyan Yeradları Türkiye ve Çevre Ülkerer Yerleşim Birimleri Envanteri* (Nisanyan Inventory of Toponyms of Settlements in Turkey and Neighbouring Countries).
https://nisanyanmap.com/

Nunnari, F. (1901). *Un viaggiatore Calabrese della fine del secolo XVII*. Messina: Mazzini.

Pedrini, G. (2011). *Sguardi veneziani a Oriente. Ambrosio Bembo e il suo viaggio per parte dell'Asia* [PhD dissertation]. Venezia: Università Ca' Foscari Venezia.

Perocco, D. (1985). "Fenomenologia dell'esotismo: viaggiatori italiani in Oriente". Braudel, F. (a cura di). *Storie di viaggiatori italiani*. Vol. 1, *L'Oriente*. Milano: Electa, 144-65.

Prevost, A.-F (1753). *Histoire générale des voyages*, vol. 2. Paris: Didot.

Reichert, F.E. (1992). *Incontri con la Cina. La scoperta dell'Asia Orientale nel Medioevo*. Milano: Biblioteca francescana. Trad. it. di: *Begegnungen mit Cina. Die Entdeckung Ostasiens im Mittelalter*. Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1992.

Sahinian, A.; Monoukian, T.A.; Aslanian, A. (eds) (1972). *G(h)eghard*. Vol. 6, *Documents of Armenian Architecture* = DAA. Milano: Ares.

Sarzi Amade, J. (2012). "Gianfrancesco Gemelli-Careri: 'Vagabundu, spiuni, jettaturi'". *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 33(1), 121-43.

Searight, S. (1979). *The British in the Middle East*. London: The Hague.

Shahaziz, Y. (2003). *Old Yerevan*. Erevan: Mułni hr.

Surdich, F. (2017). *Viaggiatori, pellegrini, mercanti sulla Via della seta*. Milano: Luni.

Tadevosyan, Y. (2001-02). "The Armenian Terminology: Jacob Villot's Latin-Armenian Dictionary". *Slovo*, 64-72, 111-16.

Urry, J. (2007). *Mobilities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Vece, V. (1906). *Il viaggiatore Calabrese Gemelli-Careri e il suo giro intorno al mondo*. Napoli: Maddaloni.

Zeri, A. (1904). "Il primo giro del mondo compiuto da un viaggiatore italiano: Gianfrancesco Gemelli Careri". *Rivista marittima*, 37(4), 253-79.

Zoli, S. (1972). "Le polemiche sulla Cina nella cultura storica, filosofica, letteraria italiana della prima metà del Settecento". *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 130, 3/4(475), 409-67.

History

Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean's Pastoral and Scholarly Activities in Manchester (1873-78) and the Armenian Community

Armine Melkonyan
Matenadaran-Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia

Abstract   This article presents an episode from the history of the Armenian community in Manchester during the pastorate of Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean (1873-8) – a prominent philologist, poet, traveller, and church figure from Vaspurakan. Some intra-community issues, cultural and social activities of the Manchester Armenians, and their attitudes towards Łevond Vardapet, as reflected in the periodicals of the time, are discussed. Based on P'irłalēmean's notes and colophons, this essay also presents his works composed or arranged in Manchester (Dictionary of Provincial Words, Collection of Seals, Chronology, and the volumes of Armenian Colophons).

Keywords   Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean. Manchester. Armenian community. Colophon. Manuscript.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 A Biographical Account of Łevond Vardapet. – 3 Łevond Vardapet in Manchester: Intra-Community Concerns. – 4 Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean's Scholarly Activities in Manchester. – 5 Concluding Remarks.

In memory of Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean, with grati-
tude for his encouragement and valuable advice in
studying Łevond Vardapet's life and work.

1 Introduction

The Armenian community in Great Britain was formed in the 1830s
when Armenian merchants from Constantinople, Smyrna and other
places settled in London, Manchester, and Liverpool.[1] In 1862, Karapet
Vardapet Šahnazarean (1862-66), a well-known clergyman and scholar
of the time,[2] was invited from Paris to organise the spiritual and reli-
gious life of a small community of about thirty people. With the dona-
tions from Armenian emigrants, he rented a chapel for church servic-
es. Karapet Vardapet Šahnazarean was followed at intervals by Xorēn
Vardapet Kiwroyean (1866-70; 1872-3), Sargis Vardapet T'ēodorean
(1870) and priest Nersēs Palapanean (1870-72).[3] In 1870, the Armeni-
an Church of the Holy Trinity was built on Upper Brook Street, where
the Armenians used to live, with funds provided by the community
members (Gouligian 2020, 19-22, 24). In 1873, after the resignation of
Xorēn Vardapet Kiwroyean, on 15 August, the meeting of communi-
ty representatives sent a letter to the Patriarchate of Constantinople
(the Patriarch at the time was Archbishop Mkrtič' Xrimean) on the is-
sue of electing a new leader. Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean, a famous
clergyman, philologist, poet, and traveller, was chosen from the list of
candidates and submitted by the Patriarchate.[4]

In his study on the Armenian community of Manchester, Bishop
Mušeł Serobean provides some valuable details about the years of
Łevond Vardapet's pastorate (1911, 54-65). These are mainly drawn
from the records of community meetings and other historical sourc-
es. Recently, in the National Archives of Armenia, I found the Pro-
vincial Dictionary, the Chronology, and the eighteenth volume of
the Collection of Armenian Colophons[5] compiled by P'irłalēmean in
Manchester.[6] Subsequently, it came to my attention that the Collec-
tion of Colophons (M6273) and the Collection of Seals (M10013) of
P'irłalēmean, housed in the Matenadaran-Maštoc' Institute of Ancient

---

1 For more on the formation of the Armenian community in Great Britain, cf.
Ełiazarean 1996, 43-59; 2013, 111-39; Mrmrean 1908, 47-50; George 2002.

2 In 1863-64, he published the *Series of Armenian Historians* in his Paris-based print-
ing house, and the *Erkragund* (The Globe) newspaper in Manchester. For more about
Šahnazarean, see Kostanean 1910.

3 For the periods of their activities, cf. Serobean 1911, 26-54.

4 According to the Charter, the community had the right to choose the parish priest.

5 This volume contains colophons from the 1510-30s.

6 National Archives of Armenia, collection 332, catalogue 1, documents 653, 780, 781.

Manuscripts,[7] were also compiled in Manchester. These works, which are also briefly outlined in the paper, are of great importance for the study of Armenian history and culture. The focus of this essay, however, is on P'irłalēmean's inscriptions and colophons, which shed light on his scholarly activities in Manchester. In order to gain an insight into the inner life of the Manchester Armenians and their relationship with their pastor during this period, I will discuss the series of articles dedicated to the Manchester Armenian community in the official journal *Ararat* of the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin in 1875, as well as the 1877 publication by Vahan Vardapet Bastameanc', who travelled to Europe for educational purposes.

Thus, based on the works produced by Łevond P'irłalēmean in Manchester and the information provided in their colophons, as well as the archival documents and articles published in ninenteenth-century periodicals, this study aims to present the activities of one of the most prominent Armenian spiritual and cultural figures of the time in Manchester, exploring both his role as a pastor and his contributions as a scholar.

2   A Biographical Account of Łevond Vardapet

Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean[8] (baptismal name: Martiros) was born in the city of Van, in 1830 **[figs 1-2]**. In 1852, three years after settling in the Monastery of the Lim Desert, he was ordained a deacon in the Surb Nšan Church in Van, and in 1860 he received the rank of Vardapet.[9] In 1859 P'irłalēmean moved to Varagavank', where he carried out spiritual, educational and cultural activities; he was the agent of the magazine *Arcui Vaspurakan*, reporting and participating in its publishing work. However, he spent most of his life travelling in Western and Eastern Armenia, as well as in the Armenian-populated areas of the Ottoman Empire, copying thousands of manuscript colophons, epigraphic inscriptions and epitaphs, collecting provincial words and chronological sources, and recording ethnographic material. Łevond Vardapet is best known for compiling the first collection of the Armenian manuscript colophons (cf. Awetean 2018, 239-45). Thanks to this collection, we have information about many manuscripts that are now thought to be lost (Tēr-Vardanean 2015, 48-50). P'irłalēmean left his

---

[7]   Matenadaran-Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, is marked in this paper with the sigla M.

[8]   In George 2002, 25, Łevond Vardapet is mentioned as "Vartabed Perghalenian".

[9]   While describing and studying the Homiliary 4677 from the Maštoc' Matenadaran collection, I came across Łevond Vardapet's autobiographical colophon, on the basis of which I conducted a separate research; cf. Melk'onyan 2020, 408-20. Therefore, the details of his biography and literary legacy will not be discussed in this article. Cf. also *Murč* 1903, 73-87; Tēr-Mkrtič'ean 1996, 249-61.

own inscriptions in the manuscripts he used, which are relevant to the study of the history of individual manuscripts (cf. Sirinian 2003, 83-6; 2005, 235-6, 238; 2022, 234-44). During his third visit to the Mother See in the summer of 1889, Łevond Vardapet compiled the collection of epitaphs of the St. Ējmiacin Congregational Cemetery (cf. Harut'yunyan, Melk'onyan 2021, 141-61). Of particular interest are his travelogues, in which he describes Armenian churches and monasteries, the everyday life of the people, their customs, dishes, etc. (P'irłalēmeanc' 1871; 1882). In December 1890, accompanying Archbishop Mkrtič' Xrimean, P'irłalēmean left for Jerusalem, where he died in 1891 (at the age of 61), and was buried in the local Armenian cemetery.[10] The colophons in M9027 indicate that he continued to classify and collect sources in Jerusalem. The manuscript ends with the inscription "14 April 1891, in Holy Jerusalem",[11] which was probably the last note written by Łevond Vardapet.

Figure 1 Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean. Matenadaran-Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, "Personal archival fond", file 187, doc. 39/9
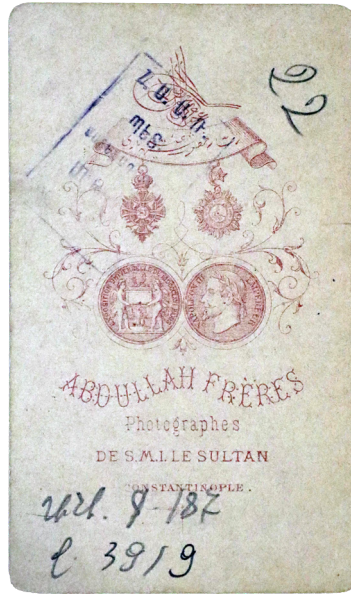
Figure 2 The *verso* of the picture with the seal of the photographers. Matenadaran-Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, "Personal archival fond", file 187, doc. 39/9

---

10   The versified epitaph of 15 lines was composed by Mkrtič' Xrimean, cf. Aławnuni 1929, 235; Sawalaneanc' 1931, 1285-6; Melk'onean 2022, 352-3.

11   M9027, 101*v*: 1891 ապրիլ 14 ի Սուրբ Երուսաղէմ. All translations from Armenian are made by the Author.

3   Łevond Vardapet in Manchester: Intra-Community Concerns

Thus, in 1873, after being elected the parish priest of the Armenian community in Manchester, Łevond Vardapet left for Great Britain. At that time, there were about 80-90 Armenians living in Manchester, mostly merchants and students from the Ottoman Empire and Russia (*Ararat* 1875, 9: 358).

This is how P'irłalēmean describes his arrival:

> The undersigned, a humble parish priest of the Armenian community of Manchester, was appointed, at their request, inspector and pastor of the little spiritual flock of Christ, in September 1873, under the Patriarchate of Archbishop Mkrtič' Xrimean, and with his *kondak* [pastoral letter] of blessing and a letter of recommendation, relying on God, I left Constantinople, set out on a journey and came by sea on a steamer named Hagia Sophia to Liverpool, one of the principal and commercial cities of England, and from there I came by a railway carriage to Manchester to our dearly loved people.[12]

From the extensive autobiography included in his Collection of Seals [fig. 3], we learn that before coming to Manchester, P'irłalēmean had settled in Constantinople; in 1872, he was elected a National Deputy (ազգային երեսփոխան), and on 29 April 1873 he received from Archbishop Nikołayos Ałasean the high degree of special authority and Supreme Vardapet (cf. M10013, 36*v*-37*r*). In the same source, he mentions the exact date of his departure for Manchester:

> On the fifteenth of September, leaving Constantinople, he[13] went to Smyrna, Malta and Liverpool, and from there to Manchester, where he remained until Saturday 7 June 1875, when he wrote briefly about his past. (37*r*)

---

12   Serobean 1911, 54-5: Ստորագրեալս խոնարհ դէտ Մանչէստրի հայ հասարակութեան, ըստ խնդրանաց նոցին կարգեցայ տեսուչ և հովիւ հոգևոր փոքրիկ հօտին Ք[րիստո]սի, ի 1873 ամի, յամենանն Սեպտեմբերի, յաւուրս պատրիարքութեան Խրիմեան Մկրտիչ Արքեպիսկոպոսի, և Նորին օրհնութեան կոնդակաւ և յանձնարարական նամակաւ, յվասրւած սպաստանեալ թռղի գՊղղս, անկալ ի չու, և եկի ծովային ճանապարհորդութեամբ Այա Սօֆիա անուն շոգենաւաւ միՆչ ի Լիվրրուլ, որ է մինն ի գլխաւոր և ի վաճառաշահ քաղաքացն Անգղիոյ, և անտի լս շոգեկառօք եկի ի Մանչէստր առ սիրելի ժողովուրդս մեր. Serobean (55) informs that this inscription is found in the Register of Baptisms and Burials of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Manchester, on pages 52-5 of which P'irłalēmean wrote a Chronology.

13   The autobiography is written in the third person next to his private seal.
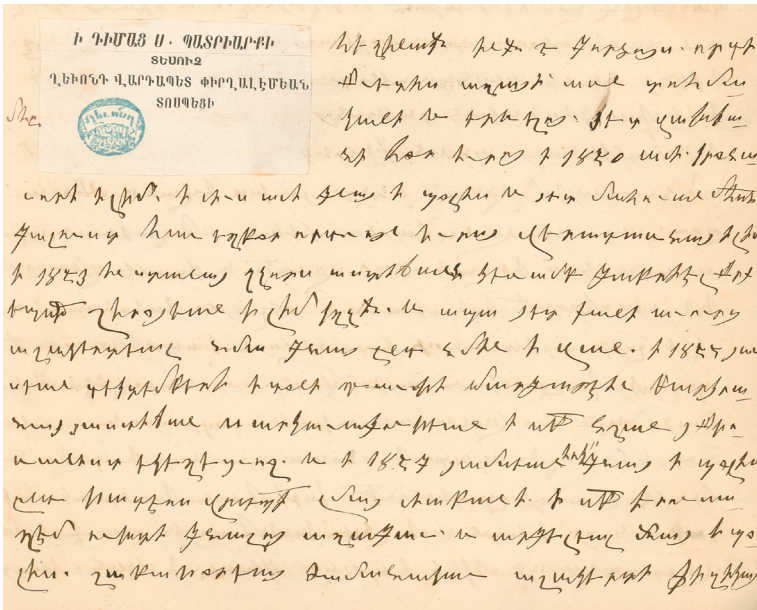
Figure 3 A fragment of P'irłalēmean's autobiography and his seal from Matenadaran-Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, M10013, fol. 32*r*

This autobiography was written two years after P'irłalēmean had settled in Manchester and assumed his duties as parish priest.

In the same year, 1875, an extensive series of articles, criticising the Armenian community of Manchester and its leader, appeared in the Constantinople-based newspaper *Ōragir*. The same material was republished in issues 9-12, 1875, of *Ararat* (1875, 9: 357-8, 10: 397-9, 11: 438-40, 12: 466-70). The anonymous author is referred to as "a friend of ours who has long been in those parts", "an honourable letter-writer",[14] suggesting that the author was a member of the community in Manchester, or at least one of the cities with an Armenian population in Britain. In the series of articles, under the general title "A few words on the Armenian colony in Manchester" (Մանչէսթրի հայ գաղթականութեան վրայ քանի մը խoսք) and the subheadings "Mixed Marriages" (Խառն ամուսնութիւն), "Fashion" (Նորաձեւութիւն), "Piety" (Բարեպաշտութիւն *Barepaštut'iwn*), "Merchantry" (Վաճառականութիւն), "Love of Reading" (Ընթերցասիրութիւն), "Language" (Լեզու), the so-called 'vicious' practices of the community are discussed and criticised. The first of

---

14 *Ararat* 1875, 9: 357-8: "այն կողմերը երկար ատենէ ի վեր զմնուոզ մեր մէկ բարեկամ", "պատուարժան նամակագիր".

these was the problem of mixed marriages. Armenians were said to be marrying English women, thus alienating both themselves and their children from Armenian traditions and the Church. The author of the article urged them to follow the example of the Greeks living in Manchester, among whom mixed marriages were rare. According to him, the Greeks were more zealous, almost fanatical about their religion, and did not allow the children born of mixed marriages to "get lost in the Protestant mixture" (10: 397). Unlike the Armenians, they made every effort to raise these children as Greeks. The author criticises the Manchester Armenians for being fashionable and innovative, and the question was about church rites, the vestments of the clergy, the ceremony of the Holy Mass, church utensils and decorations. For instance, it is said that some members of the community suggested that there should be no candlesticks on the Holy Table, or that the officiating priest should not wear slippers, and should dress in a more European style, in general. It was even suggested that the "Greeting" part[15] of the Holy Mass should be omitted, because "the English laughed at this kind of ceremonies" (399). The anonymous author has high praise for Armenian merchants, describing them as "talented, loyal, decent, thrifty and hardworking" (440). He sees the Armenians' "evil envy" of each other as the main obstacle to progress in this field. It is also said that when Armenians go to England, as soon as they learn a little English, they start mixing English words while speaking Armenian. In particular, the author criticizes the Armenians living in London, who were mostly wealthy merchants from India, for not knowing their mother tongue. And he asks a question: could they not hire an Armenian teacher to educate their children? He notes that, since the Armenians of London had no church and no priest, they celebrated Christmas and Holy Easter with the English; therefore, the priest of Manchester had to take care of the spiritual needs of the Armenian community in London as well. The author of the article does not mention P'irłalēmean by name, but he criticises him indirectly as well:

> The pastor of Manchester should be patriotic and active, a learned man and not a careless clergyman; he should be able to travel to London and frequently visit his misled flock as a sacred duty, to supervise, and exhort them.[16]

---

[15] This refers to the 'Kiss of Peace', when believers greet each other during Holy Mass with a kiss on the cheek, saying: "Christ is revealed among us".

[16] Ararat 1875, 12: 470: Մանչէսթրի հոգևոր հովիւր պետք է որ ազգասէր, գործունեայ և լեզուագէտ անձ մը ըլլայ և ոչ անփոյթ հոգևորական մը, և կարող ըլլայ Լոնտոն երթևեկել և իրեն իբրև սուրբ պարտաւորութիւն զարտուղեալ հօտին ստեպ-ստեպ այցելութեան երթալ, հսկել, յորդորել զանոնք.

The anonymous author even suggests that the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin should pay for the transport so as not to place an additional burden on the community. In this regard, the editorial of *Ararat* has the following comment as a footnote:

> We draw this paragraph to the attention of the Armenians of Manchester, our dear brothers and Rev[erend] Shepherd, and hope that they will hasten to report to His Patriarchal Holiness whatever is worthy and necessary in this matter.[17]

Łevond Vardapet, published a reply article in the December issue of *Ararat*, signed "Pastor of the Armenians in Britain, S[upreme] Vardapet Łevond of Tosp",[18] which also proves that his pastoral activity was not limited to Manchester, but included other cities where Armenians lived. P'irłalēmean expressed his regret that the editorial board of *Ararat* had reprinted the material published in Constantinople, perhaps believing it to be true. As he put it, the anonymous author had generalised a private flaw by criticising everyone.

The parish priest affirms the devotion of the Armenians of Manchester to the national values and the Armenian people, referring to their generous donation for the "Famine in Asia" (cf. *Ararat* 1875, 12: 466; see also, Ełiazaryan 2013, 133), thanks to which hundreds of people were saved from death. Without going into details, it is worth mentioning that in 1874-75, at the request of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Famine Committee, the Armenian community of Manchester donated 1,000 gold coins to help their compatriots in Western Armenia, particularly Van and Muš, who were in dire straits. In addition, the Armenians of Manchester discussed the importance of developing educational and cultural programs for the self-development of the Armenian people, raising the standard of living and providing sustainable support. The members of the community planned to form a Union of Armenians in Manchester whose aim would be

> to help poor schools in Armenia, to protect Armenian rights, to contribute morally and materially as much as possible to useful national affairs, and to obtain valuable publications. (Serobean 1911, 57)

At a meeting on 11 February 1876, one of the active members of the community, G. Kiwmiwškērta, spoke about the oppressed condition of

---

[17]   Ararat 1875, 12: 470: Այս պարբերութիւնը Մանչէսթէրի Հայոց, մեր սիրելի եղբարց և Արժ. Հովուին ուշադրութեան յանձնելով, կյուսամք որ կփութան տեղեկագրել առ Վեհ. Հայրապետս ինչ որ յայսմ մասին արժան և անհրաժեշտ է.

[18]   Ararat 1875, 12: 466: Հովիւ Բրիտանիոյ Հայոց, Ղեւոնդ Ծ[այրագոյն] Վարդապետ Տոսպեցի.

the people in Armenia, the need for education and enlightenment. For this purpose, it was proposed to collect 8-10 gold coins per year from each member of the Armenian community in Manchester. Łevond Vardapet, was enthusiastic about the idea and confirmed that with 10-15 gold coins it would be possible to open schools in the villages of Armenia. He was ready to donate his fortune to the schools of Armenia if a foundation was set up in Manchester for this purpose, and he was given control of the schools to be opened (60). Unfortunately, this promising plan never came to fruition.

Returning to Łevond Vardapet's reply published in *Ararat*, he sees the reason for mixed marriages in the scarcity of Armenian families, which forced Armenians to marry English women. However, he considered it important that they were married according to the rites of the Armenian Church. Finally, he sees the construction of the Holy Trinity Church as a proof of devotion to the Armenian Church and national values. According to P'irłalēmean: "They need encouragement and incentives, not gossip, and they expect exhortation and inspiration from the editorial of *Ararat*".[19] P'irłalēmean's reply was immediately followed by a statement from the editorial board, saying that they did not want to upset their compatriots, but that by publishing the article they wanted to draw attention to the problems in the community and at the same time encourage them to stick to Armenian rituals and traditions (cf. *Ararat* 1875, 12: 466-7).

Vahan Vardapet Bastameanc', a monk of Holy Ējmiacin and a famous lawyer, who travelled to various European cities from October 1876 to August 1878 in order to master French and German, and also to study ecclesiastical law, provides relevant information about the Armenian community of Manchester and Łevond Vardapet.

In his article "The Armenians living in Manchester", published in the December 1877 issue of the *Ararat* journal, he praised the Armenians of Manchester, whom he described as mainly engaged in trade, having offices, speaking fluent English and enjoying great sympathy from the locals (Bastameanc' 1877, 464-8; reprinted in Tēr-Vardanean 2018, 399-402). Speaking of their national feelings, Bastameanc' writes: "Blessed would be the Armenian nation, if the Armenians abroad were as fervent and patriotic as they are" (1877, 465). He gives a detailed description of the Armenian church in Manchester, and the three-storey building next to it. According to the author, the community had only one Vardapet,[20] assisted by the believers, who wore a surplice during the divine services, especially those from the Armenian-populated areas of the Ottoman Empire, who

---

19 Ararat 1875, 12: 466: Սոքա քաջալերութեան և խրախուսանաց պետք ունին քան թէ բամբասանաց և յՎրարատայ խմբագրութենէն յորդոր և քաջալերութիւն սպասեն.

20 Naturally, the information for this period refers to Łevond Vardapet.

were skilled in church singing. As Bastameancʻ reports: "The Vardapet gets a free apartment, fuel and light (gas) and a servant, ten gold coins (70 rubles) a month and clothes if necessary" (466). He was required to administer all the sacraments free of charge. Although there was no treasury in the church, many people still rewarded their priest. According to his assessment, "The honourable Łevond Vardapet Pʻirłalēmean is, indeed, a beloved and respectable person for his sweet character, gentle and decent morals. A native of the Ottoman Empire (Van, I think), he is a man of considerable worldly experience, well versed in the written language and has many handwritten works on national history and chronology" (467).[21] Bastameancʻ emphasises that the local Armenians preserve their mother tongue and speak Armenian beautifully. In addition to these virtues, he also addresses the problems of life within the community. The first of these was the disagreement over Łevond Vardapet, which divided this small community into two parts: the majority loved and respected their pastor, and the smaller part was made up of the younger people,

> who wanted to have a European-like scholar and an enlightened clergyman, either to shine more brightly among the foreigners, or to establish various scholarly enterprises, such as a printing house, a magazine, etc. (467)

In fact, this disagreement over Pʻirłalēmean's personality arose a year before Bastameancʻʻs visit to Manchester. At the general meeting of 28 January 1876, Yovhannēs Andrēasean, one of the active members of the community, while expressing his satisfaction with Pʻirłalēmean's work, suggested that he be replaced by someone more competent as a pastor, who spoke fluent English and would, if necessary, correct "the wrong ideas about our religion and nation" (Serobean 1911, 59). Finally, the question of replacing the parish priest was raised, and the community was divided with 20 votes in favour and 12 against Pʻirłalēmean.

After some time, however, Łevond Vardapet resigned, and asked to be allowed to go to Constantinople in order to publish his works. His resignation was accepted at the community meeting on 2 August 1876, but for some reason Pʻirłalēmean reconsidered his decision and stayed on for another two years, until 1878 (61-2). At this point, it is difficult to say what caused him to change his mind. On the other hand, since the Armenian community of Manchester and England took an active part in the political and national issues and

---

[21]   It should be added that in June 1877 Pʻirłalēmean and Bastameancʻ officiated the funeral of Tʻēodor vardapet Kiwroyean in Paris, see Serobean 1911, 44.

especially in the events on the eve of the Berlin Congress of 1878,[22] and probably due to external problems, the intra-community issues were temporarily suspended.[23] However, after the Congress of Berlin, P'irłałēmean, seeing the unfavourable attitude towards him and considering his tenure no longer useful, sent his resignation to the Patriarchate. At the meeting on 18 September 1878, the Manchester Armenians accepted P'irłałēmean's resignation. Patriarch Nersēs II Varžapetean also accepted his resignation and appointed Priest Yovhannēs Mkrean as parish priest (118). But the Armenians of Manchester rejected Mkrean's appointment. In the end, Esayi Vardapet Astuacaturean, of the Congregation of the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin, was chosen and appointed in October:

> As the Pastor of the Armenians living in the city of Manchester in England, Reverend Łevond Vardapet P'irłałēmean resigned from his position, Reverend Esayi Vardapet was appointed as the Pastor according to the choice and request of the Armenian people of the place. [24]

Esayi Vardapet arrived in Manchester at the end of November[25] after which P'irłałēmean left Manchester (he was still there on 26 November, as we learn from a colophon in M6273, f. 302*v*). He described the new parish priest, as "good-natured" and "eager to learn" clergyman (cf. Serobean 1911, 141-2).

---

22   Discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this article. On the involvement of the Armenian community of Great Britain in the preparations for the Congress, cf. Serobean 1911, 66-108. For more about the Armenian question at the Congress of Berlin, cf. Kostandyan; Hovhannisyan 2010, 436-47.

23   According to Serobean (1911, 115), the lack of records means that there were no community meetings between December 1876 and September 1878.

24   Ararat 1878, 10: 399: Անգղիոյ Մանչեսթէր քաղաքում ընակեալ Հայոց հոգեւոր հովիւ արժ[անապատիւ] Ղեւոնդ Վարդապետ Փիրղալէմեանց հրաժարուելով իւր պաշտոնէն, ըստ ընտրութեան եւ խնդրանաց Հայկազն ժողովրդեան տեղւոյն՝ արժ[անապատիւ] Եսայի Վարդապետ Աստուածատրեանց հոգեւոր հովիւ կարգեցաւ։

25   For this information Serobean refers to P'irłałēmean's Chronology mentioned above, see note 12.

4 Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean's Scholarly Activities in Manchester

In 1875, a Reading Room was established next to the Armenian Church of Manchester, and P'irłalēmean was elected Chairman of the Council. The Reading Room was designed for the acquisition and reading of newspapers and magazines, published mainly in the Ottoman Empire, Russia and elsewhere. The Council, under the leadership of P'irłalēmean, was to organise the purchase of new volumes and publications (selection of content and fundraising) (57-8). As we learn from Łevond Vardapet's letter of 1875 to priest Giwt Ałaneanc', a prominent historian, translator, editor and publisher of the time, P'irłalēmean had proposed that Giwt join him in Manchester with the aim of organising book publishing and establishing an Armenian school.[26] Despite the internal problems and external political challenges, the years of P'irłalēmean's activity in Manchester were a relatively quiet period, after constant travelling and holding various spiritual and organisational positions. In Manchester, therefore, the prolific clergyman managed to organise, process and chronologically arrange the various materials and sources he had collected over the years. In this respect, his dictionary entitled *Collection Dictionary of Provincial Words* (Ժողովածու բառատետր գաւառական բառից) is of great interest.[27] In the preface to one of his travelogues (Journey to the Mother See and thence to Constantinople), among thousands of colophons, epigraphic inscriptions and epitaphs, P'irłalēmean also mentions over 2,500 provincial words, which he collected, "with their original sound and meaning".[28] He collected these words during his travels, often noting in the margins of the Dictionary the place where a particular word was used. In the margins of some pages of the Dictionary, usually after the group of words of each alphabetical letter, P'irłalēmean left a short note indicating the place, year, month and day of the completion of his work, such as: "1874 Jan[uary] 14 Monday in Manchester".[29] It is clear from the colophons that the Provincial Dictionary was compiled and almost entirely classified in

---

26 The letter is kept in the fonds of Giwt Ałaneanc' from the collection of the RA Museum of Literature and Art. For the publication, cf. Melk'onean 2022, 354.

27 I found the Dictionary, which was thought lost until now, in the fonds of the priest Giwt Ałaneanc' at the RA National Archives. Most probably, P'irłalēmean left his unpublished works in Constantinople before leaving for Jerusalem. Giwt Ałaneanc' reports that in 1898 he brought P'irłalēmean's works, collected in three sealed bundles, from Constantinople to Ējmiacin and handed them over to the Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtič' Xrimean Vanec'i; cf. Ałaneanc' 1912, 54 (ՃԴ).

28 P'irłalēmeanc' 1871, 4 (Դ): Իրենց բուն ինչմամբ և նշանակութեամբ.

29 National Archives of Armenia, fonds 332, catalogue 1, doc. 780, f. 2*r*: 1874 յունվ[ար] 14 երկուշաբթի ի Մանչեսստէր.

Manchester between January 1874 and May 1877. He left his main colophon on folio 22*v*:

> I have copied here with the laborious work of arranging in alphabetical order the disordered notebook of this provincial dictionary, written on 25 June 1872, for the richness of the Armenian language. The sixth of February 1874, Carnival Wednesday, in the English city of Manchester. Compiler of this work Łevond Supreme Vardapet P'irłalēmean of Tosp.[30]

According to another note on the same page, he added 311 words to various sections of the Dictionary in May 1877. The final colophon on f. 33*r* indicates that P'irłalēmean completed his Dictionary much later, on 13 December 1888, when he was in Constantinople, serving at the Surb Nikołayos Sk'anč'elagorc (St. Nicholas Thaumaturgus) Armenian Church in Topkapi.[31]

In Manchester, he compiled another important work, the *Seal Collection* (Կնքագիր, lit. 'Book of Seals'), which contains a total of 468 seals (including those in Arabic letters) of nineteenth-century Armenian personalities, Catholicoi, ecclesiastical figures, educational institutions and national associations, literary and educational centres, and churches. Next to each seal, P'irłalēmean presented biographical information, significant events related to the owners of the seal, and also mentions the purpose of the seal's use. He wrote an extensive autobiography for his own seal (M10013, 32*r*-37*r*). The scribe-compiler left his colophon in the lower margin of the last page of the manuscript:

> This Book of Seals was completed by Łevond Vardapet of Tosp in the city of Manchester in England on 14 June 1875, the day of Saturday, the feast of (Gregory the Illuminator's) deliverence from Xor Virap.[32]

During the months from August to November 1874 in Manchester, as noted in the short colophons (61*v*, 73*v*, 85*v*, 97*v*, 109*v*, 114*v*), he compiled an extensive chronology covering the events of the years

---

[30] National Archives of Armenia, fonds 332, catalogue 1, doc. 780, f. 22*v*: 1872 յունիս 25-ին գրեալ խառն տետրակն զաւառական բառարանիս մեծատաժան աշխատութեամբ ըստ այբբենական կարգադրութեան վերածելով աստ օրինակեցի ի պէտս ճոխութեան լեզուիս Հայոց: 1874, փետ. 6 Բարեկենդանին չորեքշաբթին ի Մանչէստր քաղաք Անգղիացւոց: Հալաքող գործոյս Ղեւոնդ Ծ[այրագոյն] Վարդապետ Փիրղալէմեան Տոսպեցի.

[31] National Archives of Armenia, fonds 332, catalogue 1, doc. 780, f. 33*r*.

[32] M10013, 57*r*: Աւարտեցաւ կնքագիրս ի 1875 ամի յամենան յունիսի 14 յաւուր շաբաթու ի տօնի Ելն վիրապէն, ձեռամբ Ղեւոնդ վարդապետի Տոսպեցւոյ ի Մանչէստր քաղաքն Անգղիոյ. I am preparing the Provincial Dictionary and the Seal Collection for publication.

35-1871, based on a variety of sources: historical sources, colophons, inscriptions, epitaphs, seals, letters, and eyewitness accounts.

P'irłalēmean arranged the 23 precious volumes of Armenian colophons he had collected, under the title "Colophons or Relics of Armenian History"[33] in 1878 – the fifth and last year of his pastorate in Manchester. On the title page of the collection, he mentions the names not only of the Catholicos of all Armenians (Gevorg the Fourth), the Patriarchs of Jerusalem (Archbishop Esayi) and Constantinople (Archbishop Nersēs), but also of the Queen of England, Victoria:

> Taking refuge in God, I have begun to write this in the commercial city of Manchester in Great Britain, under the auspices of our Holy Trinity Church, in the fifth year of our pastorate here, and in the forty-eighth year of my life, during the days of Her Majesty Queen Victoria of England, who has been on the throne of Great Britain for 42 years.[34]

The title pages of each volume of the colophon[35] indicate that he began his work on 10 February and completed it on 26 November 1878, just before his return from Manchester.

During his stay in Great Britain, Łevond Vardapet also travelled to London and studied the Armenian manuscripts in the British Museum, as we learn from the notes next to some of the colophons included in the *Nōtark' Hayoc'* collection, such as the note after the colophon of a Hymnarium from 1435:[36]

> On 25 November 1877, in England, in the capital city of London, in the great museum of the place, which is called the British Museum.[37]

It is noteworthy that P'irłalēmean, in his aforementioned letter to the priest Giwt Ałaneanc', expresses his fascination with the museums, factories, and antiquities of England, which he says are "sadly

---

[33] M6273, 2*r*-302*v*: Յիշատակարանք կամ նշխարք պատմութեան Հայոց.

[34] M6273, 2*r*: Յաստուծոյ ապաստանեալ սկիզբն արարի գրութեան սորին ի Մանչէստէր վաճառաշահ քաղաքն Բրիտանիոյ, ընդ հովանեաւ Սրբոյ Երրորդութեան եկեղեցւոյն մերոյ ի հինգերորդ ամի հովուութեանս որ աստ և ի քառասուն եւ ութ ամի կենաց իմոյ: Յաւուրս Վիքտորիայ վեհափառ թագուհւոյն Անգղիոյ որ քառասուն և երկու ամաց հետէ նստեալ կայ ի զահն մեծին Բրիտանիոյ.

[35] M6273, 2*r*, 13*r*, 27*r*, 41*r*, 55*r* and elsewhere.

[36] For a detailed description of this manuscript, *cf.* Conybeare 1913, 96-104.

[37] P'irłalēmean 1888, 113: Ի 1877 ի նոյ. 25. յԱնգղիա ի մայրաքաղաք նորին ի Լոնտրոյ. ի մեծ թանգարան տեղւոյն որ կոչի Բրիթիշ Միւզում. Cf. pp. 52, 161, 165 for similar notes.

lacking today in Tačkastan[38] and our sweet motherland" (Melk'onean 2022, 354).

5 Concluding Remarks

Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean, a monk from Vaspurakan, from the Varag Monastery, a famous philologist, poet and traveller, was the parish priest of the Armenian community of Manchester from September 1873 to November 1878. According to the testimony of Vahan Vardapet Bastameanc', a monk of St. Ējmiacin who travelled to Europe at that time, the community paid all the expenses of the priest's stay, including free accommodation, fuel, light, and a servant, ten gold coins a month, and clothing. The priest, on the other hand, was obliged to administer all the sacraments free of charge. P'irłalēmean was a much loved and respected priest because of his sweet character and gentleness, and certain disagreements about his personality were mainly due to his lack of knowledge of English and, perhaps, the circumstance that he neglected his duties of more vigorous social and political activities, expected outside the community. However, it is certain that P'irłalēmean was devoted to his small flock; it was he who responded to the accusations against the community published in 1875 in the official journal *Ararat* of the Mother See of St. Ējmiacin, in which the anonymous author accused the Manchester Armenians of marrying the English, not following the national and church traditions, and not properly protecting the mother tongue. In his reply, the parish priest reaffirmed the devotion of the Manchester Armenians to the national values and the Armenian people, citing their generous donation to the "Famine in Asia", thanks to which hundreds of people were saved from death. He also noted that although Armenian men married English women because of the scarcity of Armenian families, they followed the rites of the Armenian Church. Finally, the spiritual leader considered the construction of the Holy Trinity Church (in 1870) as a proof of their devotion to the Armenian Church. It is noteworthy that Łevond Vardapet dedicated his *Nōtark' Hayoc'*, published in Constantinople in 1888, "In memory of the noble Armenians of Manchester".[39]

During his stay in Manchester Łevond Vardapet systematised the various sources he had accumulated over the years, as evidenced by the colophons he left on the pages of the manuscripts housed in the Matenadaran and the National Archives of Armenia. Thus, the *Dictionary of Provincial Words*, consisting of more than 2,500 words,

---

38 The Ottoman Empire.

39 P'irłalēmeanc' 1888, 3 [Գ]: Ի յիշատակ ազնիւ ազգայնոց Մանչէսդրի.

was almost entirely classified in Manchester between January 1874 and May 1877. During the months of August and November 1874, he compiled an extensive Chronology of the events of the years 35-1871, based on a wide variety of sources. On 14 June 1875, he completed another important work, the Seal Collection (M10013), which contains a total of 468 seals (including those in Arabic letters) of nineteenth-century Armenian personalities, Catholicoi, ecclesiastical figures, educational institutions and national associations, literary and educational centres, and churches. P'irłalēmean compiled his Collection of Armenian Colophons (M6273) during the fifth and last year of his pastorate in Manchester from 10 February to 26 November 1878. Taking advantage of his stay in Great Britain, the industrious monk travelled to London and studied the Armenian manuscripts in the British Museum, copying some of the manuscript colophons and adding them to his collection. P'irłalēmean was the head of the council of the Reading Room established next to the Armenian Holy Trinity Church in 1875 and even intended to found an Armenian school and publishing house.

Bibliography

Aławnuni, M. (1929). *Miabank' ew ayc'eluk' hay Erusałēmi* (Monks and Visitors in Armenian Jerusalem). Erusałēm: Tparan Srboc' Yakobeanc'.

Ałaneanc', G. (ed.) (1912). *Diwan Hayoc' Patmut'ean* (The Archives of Armenian History), vol. 10. T'iflis: Elek'tražarž Tparan Or. N. Ałaneanc'i Pōlic'. 7.

Ararat (Anonymous) (1875). "Manč'ēst'ri hay gałt'akanut'ean vray k'ani mə xōsk'" (A Few Words about the Armenian Colony in Manchester). *Ararat*, 9, 357-8; 10, 397-9; 11, 438-40; 12, 466-70.

Awetean, K. (2018). "Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmeanə ew ir yišatakaranneri hawak'acon" (Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean and His Collection of Colophons). Safrastyan et al. (eds), *The Countries and Peoples of the Near and Middle East*, vol. 31. Erevan: HH GAA Gitut'yun hratarakč'ut'yun, 239-45.

Bastameanc', V. (1877). "Manč'est'rabnak Hayk'" (The Armenians Living in Manchester). *Ararat*, 12, 464-8.

Conybeare, F. (1913). *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London: Oxford University Press.

Ełiazarean, Ṙ. (1996). "Uruagcer hay-angliakan kaperi patmut'ean (7-18-rd dd.)" (Outlines of the History of Armenian-English Relations). Barxudarean, V.; Ekawean, Z. (eds), *Ējer hay gałt'avayreri patmut'ean*. Erevan: Hayastani gitut'yunneri azgayin academia, 43-59.

Ełiazaryan, Ṙ. (2013). "Anglia" (England). Barxudaryan, V. et al. (eds), *Hay gałt'ašxarhi patmut'yun (mijnadaric' minč'ev 1920-akan t't')*. (History of the Armenian Diaspora (from the Middle Ages to the 1920s). Vol. 3, *Evropayi ev Amerikayi haykakan gałut'nerə* (Armenian Colonies in Europe and America). Erevan: HH GAA Patmut'yan institut, 111-39.

George, J. (2002). *Merchants in Exile. The Armenians in Manchester, England, 1835-1935*. London: Taderon Press (Gomidas Institute).

Gouligian, V. (2020). *From Armenia to Manchester, The Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Manchester and its Community*. London: Heritage Fund.

Harut'yunyan, A.; Melk'onyan, A. (2021). "S. Ējˇmiacni tapanagreri Łevond Vardapet P'irłalemyani norahayt žołovacun" (Newly Discovered Collection of Epitaphs of Holy Ējˇmiacin by Łevond Vardapet P'irłalemyan). *Ējˇmiacin*, 78(6), 141-61.

Kostandyan, Ē.; Hovhannisyan, Ṙ. (2010). "Beṙlini vehažołovə ev haykakan harc'ə" (The Congress of Berlin and the Armenian Question). Melk'onyan, A. et al. (eds), *Hayoc' Patmut'yun* (History of Armenia), vol. 3, book 1. Erevan: HH GAA Patmut'yan institut, 436-47.

Kostanean, K. (1910). *Karapet Vardapet Šahnazareanc' (kensagrakan aknark)*. Tiflis: tparan N. Ałaneani. Matenadaran-Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, MSS 6273, 9027, 10013.

Melk'onean, A. (2022). "Manč'ēstri hay hamaynk'ə Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmeani hogewor aṙaȷˇnordut'ean tarinerin" (The Armenian Community of Manchester during the Years of Pastoral Leadership of Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean). *Sion*, 94(8-12), 345-54.

Melk'onyan, A. (2020). "Łevond Vardapet P'irłalemyani gorcuneut'yunə ev grakan žaṙangut'yan xndirə (norahayt ink'nakensagrakani aṙt'iv)" (Łevond Vardapet P'irłalemyan's Activity and the Issue of his Literary Heritage (on the Occasion of a Newly Discovered Autobiography)). *Banber Matenadarani*, 30, 408-20.

Mrmrean, Y. (1908). *T'urk'ahayoc' hin vačaṙakanut'iwnn ew vačaṙakank': 1740-1890* (The Ancient Trade of the Turkish Armenians and Merchants.). K. Polis: Tpagrut'iwn Sagayean.

Murč (editorial, signed with the Initial Ư-M) (1903). "Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean (kensagrakan aknark)" (Łevond Vardapet P'irłalēmean. A Biographical Remark). *Murč*, 11, 73-87. National Archives of Armenia, collection 332, catalogue 1, documents 653, 780, 781.

P'irłalēmeanc', Ł. (1871). *Čanaparhordut'iwn i Mayr At'oṙn Araratean ew anti i K.Pōlis* (Journey to the Mother See and thence to Constantinople). K.Pōlis: Gorcaran Zardarean.

P'irłalēmeanc', Ł. (1882). *Č'ors ənkerk' or ē čanaparhordut'iwn Vanay minč'ev Kostandnupōlis* (Four Friends. A Journey from Van to Constantinople). T'iflis: Yovhannēs Martiroseanc'.

P'irłalēmean, Ł. (1888). *Nōtark' Hayoc'* (Armenian Notaries). K.Pōlis: Tpagr. Nšan K. Pērpērean.

Sawalaneanc', T. (1931). *Patmut'iwn Erusałēmi* (History of Jerusalem), vol. 2. Erusałēm: Tparan Srboc' Yakobeanc'.

Serobean, M. (1911). *Manč'esdri hay gałut'ə* (The Armenian Colony in Manchester). Boston: Tpagrut'iwn "Azg"-i.

Sirinian, A. (2003). "Le nuove accessioni manoscritte armene del Pontificio Collegio Armeno di Roma. Un primo report". *Le Muséon, Revue d'étude Orientales*, 116(1-2), 71-90.

Sirinian, A. (2005). "Hṙomi Levonyan varžarani norahayt haykakan jeṙagrerə" (The Newly Discovered Armenian Manuscripts of the Levonyan College of Rome). *Lraber hasarakakan gitut'yunneri*, 614(3), 234-8.

Sirinian, A. (2022). "Per la storia di un manoscritto armeno in Inghilterra (London, Wellcome Library, ms. 16586)". Alpi, F. et al. (eds), *Armenia through the Lens of Time. Multidisciplinary Studies in Honour of Theo Maarten van Lint*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 234-44. Armenian Texts and Studies 6.

Taǰaryan, Y. (ed.) (2023a). *Lusankarneri əntrani Maštoc'i anvan Matenadarani havak'acuneric'* (A Compilation of Photographs from the Maštoc' Matenadaran Collections). Erevan: Matenadaran.

Taǰaryan, Y. (2023b). "Abdullah ełbayrneri bac'aṙik derə Osmanyan kaysrut'yan lusankarč'akan arvestum" (The Unique Role of Abdullah Frères in the Art of Photography in the Ottoman Empire). *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Armenians in Cultural, Economic and Political Processes = International Conference* (Yerevan, 15-18 October 2018). Moscow: ID "Ark Media", 390-9.

Tēr-Mkrtič'ean, E. (1996). "Łevond P'irłalēmean". *Ganjer Vaspurakani* (Treasures of Vaspurakan), vol. 1. Boston, 249-61.

Tēr-Vardanean, G. (ed.) (2015). *Ełeṙnə ew mer jeṙagreri korustnern u p'rkut'yunnerə* (The Genocide and the Losses and Rescues of Our Manuscripts). Ēǰmiacin: Mayr at'oṙ Surb Ēǰmiacni hratarakč'ut'yun.

Tēr-Vardanean, G. (ed.) (2018). *Vahan Cayragoyn vardapet Bastameanc', Taregrut'iwn, S. Ēǰmiacin (1872-1880 t't'.)* (Vahan Supreme Vardapet Bastameanc', Annals, St. Ēǰmiacin in the years 1872-80). Ēǰmiacin: Mayr At'oṙ Surb Ēǰmiacin.

Reports

The Armenian-Italian Joint Expedition to Dvin
Report of 2023 Activities

Hamlet Petrosyan, Michele Nucciotti, Elisa Pruno, Tatyana Vardanesova, Francesca Cheli, Leonardo Squilloni, Hamazasp Abrahamyan, Lyuba Kirakosyan, Miriam Leonetti, Lisa dall'Olio

Abstract   This report aims to show the results of the third excavation campaign at Dvin/Dabīl (Armenia), conducted by the Italian-Armenian research group in Autumn 2023. The excavations involved three areas in distinct sectors of the city: the southern portion of the Lower Fortress, where the 2021 square was deepened and enlarged; the so-called 'Market' area, where the 2021 excavations were expanded and a micro-stratigraphic trench was opened; and the excavations of the Area of the Future Building of the Dvin Museum. Additionally, there is a starting research about the analysis of pottery carried out between 2022 and the last year excavation. We presented also the first results concerning faunal remains research.

Keywords   Dvin/Dabil. Stratigraphic methodology. Eurasia. Excavation. Light archaeology. Medieval archaeology.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Excavation at the Dvin Market. – 2.1 Archaeological Description. – 2.2 Findings. – 2.3 Conclusions. – 3 Area 2000. – 3.1 Introduction. – 3.2 Stratigraphic Description. – 3.3 Conclusions. – 4 Light Archaeology Survey of the Dvin Market. – 5 Area 1000 and the Stratification of the Lower Fortress: A Peek through the Peephole. – 5.1 Introduction. – 5.1.1 Cons and Pros of a Micro-Stratigraphic Approach. – 5.1.2 Harris Matrix Segmentation and New Macro-Periodization for Areas 1000 and 2000. – 5.2 Area 1000: Stratigraphic Description. – 5.3 The Wall SU 1090: Technical and Chronological Discussion. – 5.4 A Stratigraphy of Transformations in the Lower Fortress of Dvin: Area 1000 at the End of the 2023 Season. – 6 Material and Artefacts from Area 1000 and Area 2000. – 6.1 Artefacts. – 6.2 Area 1000: Materials and Artefacts. – 6.3 Area 1000: Faunal Remains. – 6.4 Area 2000: Materials and Artefacts. – 6.5 History Museum of Yerevan Survey and Documentation. – 7 Excavations of the Area of the Future Building of the Dvin Museum. – 7.1 Archaeological Description. – 7.2 Finds. – 8 Conclusions.

1 Introduction

The joint Armenian-Italian archaeological expedition to Dvin was carried out in 2023 by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (IAE NAS RA) and the University of Florence, with the financial support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ERC Project ArmEn (Armenia Entangled), conducted archaeological research at the site of Dvin. During the spring, excavation activities were performed in the area of the future building of the Dvin Museum, where a trench was opened in 2022. In the same period, pottery recording and classification were carried out. During the fall season (29 September-4 November), excavations were concentrated in three sites: the Dvin Market (§§ 2-4), the southern area of the 'Lower Fortress' (§ 5), and the site of the future building of the Dvin Museum (§ 6), 120 m southeast of the central quarter [fig. 1].

The Staff of the Expedition
- Armenian side. Director: Hamlet Petrosyan. Archaeologists: Tatyana Vardanesova, Hamazasp Abrahamyan. Architect: Lyuba Kirakosyan.
- Italian side. Director: Michele Nucciotti. ArmEn P.I.: Zaroui Pogossian. Archaeologists: Elisa Pruno (Codirector), Lapo Somigli, Francesca Cheli, Leonardo Squilloni, Miriam Leonetti, Hasmik Hovhannisyan. Students: Lisa dall'Olio, Tommaso Montecchi, Leonardo Quercioli.

2 Excavation at the Dvin Market

Hamlet Petrosyan, Tatyana Vardanesova,
Hamazasp Abrahamyan, Lyuba Kirakosyan

In the fall of 2023, excavation and cleaning works were conducted at the Dvin ancient site, located southeast of Hnaberd village in the Artashat community of the Ararat region, with basic funding from NAS RA. The excavations covered an area of approximately 170 m^2 and focused on the Lower Fortress and the 'Market' (Shuka) area.

In the market area, the cleaning and excavation efforts continued in the southeastern part of the site.

2.1 Archaeological Description

A horseshoe-shaped mound extending from the western, southern, and eastern sides of the 'Market' area was one of the study's primary issues. The slab floor is located near the centre of the excavation site. On its western and eastern flanks, there are foundation remnants and column fragments that show signs of secondary stone processing.

During the 2021-2 excavations in different parts of the mound bordering the Market (A1, B1, C1, D1, D5, D6 sq.), various situations mentioned in the survey summarizing the previous excavations, and previously left out, were observed (Ghafadaryan 1982, 106). In the southern part of the mound, along the continuation of the semi-circular tower, the remains of the brick walls of two rooms and the second semicircular tower were discovered. This second tower was located at a distance of 15.5 m from the first one and was marked in the 1959 measurement (History Museum of Armenia, Archive, N 1214: Petrosyan et al. 2023, 203, fig. 15).

In the fall season of 2023, continuing the previously studied southern height of the mound, the excavations were moved to the eastern part. Judging by the 1959 layout of the Market, this part of the excavation site had not been excavated at all. As it turned out in 2023, the soil waste from all the previous excavations had accumulated in this area. Moreover, the wasteland was piled up, and the space between them was later filled with the household waste of the village.

The 2023 fall excavations in the Market area were dedicated to cleaning the excavation waste from 1955-61 and separating archaeological artefacts from it. As a result of the cleaning works, the level of excavation depth in squares A10, B10, and C10 was brought up to the level of the second semicircular tower. Hopefully, the actual archaeological layers will begin to be dug further down this year.

Figure 2 Market's measurements and 2023 area of work

2.2 Findings

During the excavations, the most archaeological material was found in the A10 and B10 squares [fig. 2]. It is mainly represented by pottery and remarkable fragments of architectural decoration. All the material can be categorized into the following groups:
- Glazed pottery.
- Faience.
- Simple pottery.
- Fragments of architectural decoration.

The main part of the glazed pottery consists of green and greenish-yellow glazed pottery typical of Dvin from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries [fig. 3]. Out of the entire mass of fragments, only three fragments belong to the ninth century. Fragments of green glazed plates match hemispherical vessels. The manufacturing technology is also characteristic: reddish-yellow shell, white slipware, engraving (graffito), and transparent glaze.

As a result, thin, scratch-like, and restrained geometric patterns are visible as black lines on a green background. Pottery with a combination of green and yellow glazes is also quite common [fig. 4]. In this case, the floral and geometric patterns were obtained by a

combination of removing the slipware in large layers and thin drilling. This type of pottery dates from the end of the twelfth to the early thirteenth century, representing the early mass production of Dvin. Examples of similar pottery are also found in Vayots Dzor, Etchmiadzin, and other medieval contexts (Kalantarian 2009, pl. XXIX).
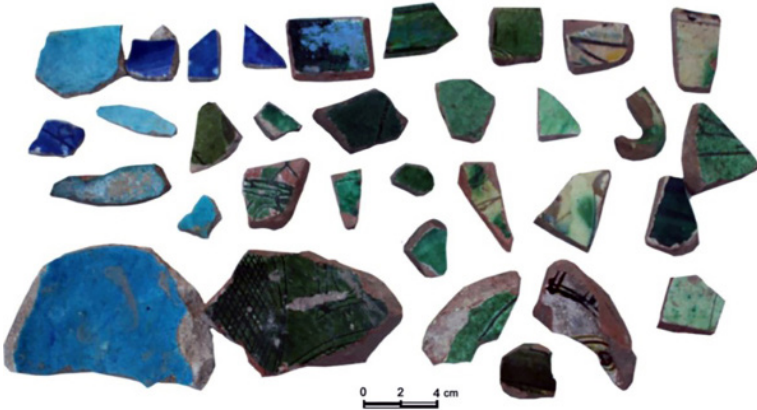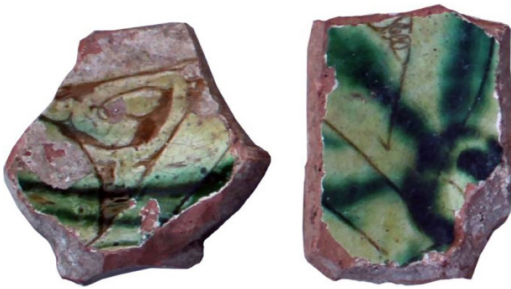
The next group consists of terracotta vessels. The archaeological material includes several fragments of turquoise and dark blue transparent glazed faience vessels **[fig. 5a]** and one fragment of glazed faience imported from Iran with dark blue and black ornaments. Describing the 1956 excavations, K. Ghafadaryan notes that a small faience bowl with a dark blue transparent glaze, embedded in mortar, was found in site 4, indicating luxury items reused in some market structures (1982, 40). The researcher dated the vessel from the end of the twelfth century to the beginning of the thirteenth century. It should be noted that the previous excavations at the Lower Fortress, (unfortunately never completed), provided magnificent examples of such a design **[fig. 5b]**.

Figure 5   On the left, turquoise terracotta from the excavation site; on the right, blue bowl, Dvin
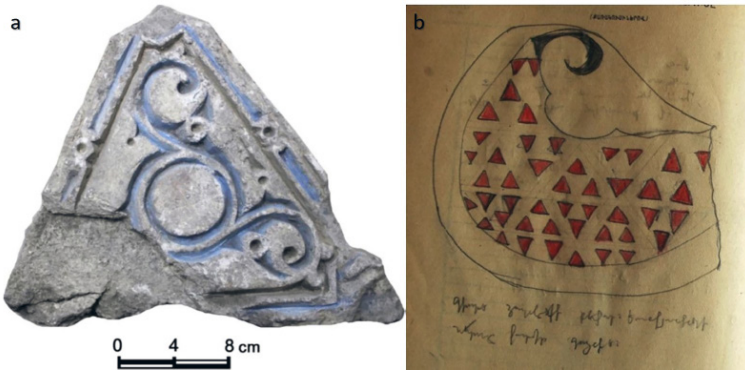Archaeological Site, Lower Fortress

Plain (unglazed) pottery is also highly fragmentary, consisting of bottoms, handles, and various vessel bodies. Two fragments of large flat lids attract attention. One fragment of a lid is painted with slipware circles, in the middle of which there are large dots, while the second one is decorated with stamped rosettes. This pottery dates back to the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century **[fig. 6]**. Among the archaeological material are several clay cylinders that were used in the pottery production process.
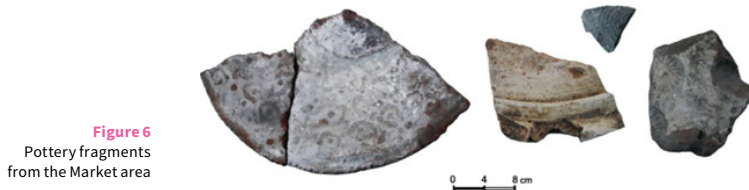
Figure 6
Pottery fragments
from the Market area

Although the shreds of architectural decoration are highly fragmented, they are remarkable for their amazing variety. In one case, they are shaped fragments of bricks embedded in mortar **[fig. 7a]**. In the second case, they are specially prepared shaped bricks intended for wall decoration. A fragment of wall cladding in the form of a triangular ornament made of three bricks was also found **[fig. 7b]**. Blue paint can be seen on the fragment of one of the cut and plastered bricks found during the excavations. In addition to the brick, a raised rosette of concrete mortar was also found, made from a concrete mixture with the addition of gypsum **[fig. 7b]**. K. Ghafadaryan describes architectural decorative details made with a similar technique, which were coloured blue, red, and yellow (Ghafadaryan 1982, fig. 78) **[fig. 8a]**. One of the wall panels found in Site 4 was cast from plaster. The vegetable ivy-type carved composition by a master is painted in blue colour (143). It is noteworthy that in the diary of E. Musheghyan, a member of the expedition, there is also an image of

a similar fragment, but with red decoration **[fig. 8b]**. It is well known that in Middle Eastern architecture, tinted plaster, shaped brick, marble, and plaster were used as decorative materials for exterior and interior wall decoration.

Figure 7 Architectural decorative fragments from the Market area: above, fragments of cut bricks; on the bottom, wall fragments and gypsum ornament

Figure 8 On the left, stylized ornament; on the right, stylized ornament drawing from E. Musheghyan's diary

Its first stage (starting from about the eighth century) is plaster carving in the interior of the buildings, followed by pictorial cladding with burnt bricks (ninth century, mainly on the outer walls of the buildings). Since the twelfth century, decorative carvings on terracotta have been used, and from the thirteenth century these carved panels began to be covered with blue glaze, etc. We believe that Dvin's magnificent collection of wall decorations has great research potential in this regard. And more importantly, the findings of the 'market' may shed new light on the function and artistic decoration of this extensive architectural structure.

2.3   Conclusions

The 2023 fall excavations in the area of the Market at Dvin mainly focused on a cleaning aspect. The soil excavated, dating back to the 1950-60s, once filled the unexcavated part of the monument, and the expedition had to re-excavate these wastes and separate the archaeological findings from them. Micro-stratigraphic assessment carried out in the western part (Area 2000) of the market revealed the complex structure of that area, ranging from the stone bases of the columns to traces of reconstructions from different periods. These results indicate the necessity of placing similar sondages in other parts of the structure to obtain an even more detailed picture of the changes over time.

3   Area 2000

Francesca Cheli

3.1   Introduction

During the 2023 excavation in order to better understand the extent of the cobblestone wall SU (Stratigraphic Unit) 2018 and the structure of cobblestone SU 2038, uncovered in 2022, it was decided to enlarge the excavation sondage 1 m towards north and 1 m towards east (current dimensions 4 × 4 m) **[fig. 17]**.[1]

The archaeological excavation strategy was to remove the surface layers already identified until reaching the wall SU 2018, the cobblestones layer SU 2038 (where present) or layers not intercepted last year.

3.2   Stratigraphic Description

On the northern side, between SU 2018 and SU 2038 under the topsoil and the surface layers identified in 2022 (SUs 2016, 2025 and 2030), the layer made with crushed dark tuff stones placed quite horizontally (SU 2031) on the cobblestones of SU 2038, already found last excavation year, was reached **[fig. 9]**. In agreement with Prof.

---

1   Initially, the excavation was only widened at the north-east corner by approximately 1 m and involved the area where layer SU 2038 and the wall SU 2018 were located (1.50 m on the northern side and 2 m on the E side from the stake to the north-east). At a later stage, based on the findings, it was decided to extend the entire north and east sides by 1 m. The extension is therefore L-shaped.

Petrosyan, it was decided to leave them *in situ*, together with the cobblestones of SU 2038, as evidence of the construction technique. Below this layer, SU 2038 continues beyond the northern section, while they seem to stop towards east.

Towards the west, SU 2031 is confirmed leaning on the wall SU 2018 which, in its extension towards the north, reduces its width from 85 to 30 cm ca. In addition, near the new limit of the northern section, some cobbles of SU 2018 seem to be covered by what appears to be an alignment of mud brick, in a very poor state of preservation (SU 2052). The layer, rather than corresponding to a mud brick elevation of the structure SU 2018 as hypothesized in 2022 (Petrosyan et al. 2023, 213), seems to be a reconstruction or extension of it on the northern side. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that, after approximately 2 m, the cobbles of SU 2018, at least on the eastern side, seem to be interrupted and mud bricks are visible in the same alignment. Currently, this interpretation remains a hypothesis as the two structures (SU 2018 and SU 2052) are partially covered by the stones of SU 2031.

On the western side of SU 2018 during the 2023 extension a new stratigraphic deposit came to light. At the north-western corner, approximately 5 cm below the floor level, a mud brick wall with a NE-SW orientation was uncovered: SU 2051, made of mud bricks measuring 30 × 30 × 6 cm; this structure extends beneath both the western

and northern limits of the sondage.[2] It was partially covered by small compact clay layers with pieces of mud bricks (SUs 2050, 2053 and 2064).[3] Below these, the small portion of 2023 extension between the wall SU 20218 and the mud brick wall SU 2051 showed distinct characteristics: on the western side there were flat and 'smoothed', rather compact and fine-grained layers, while the eastern one showed evidence of collapsed mud bricks. The two portions alternated with each other, overlapping in small portions. This stratigraphic sequence was identified in 2022 with the SU 2034 mud bricks collapse. In 2023, the discovery of the SU 2051 mud brick wall and the lack of direct physical relationships between it and the SU 2018 cobblestone wall, has led to greater attention being paid to the sequence of collapses which could therefore be referred to different structures, trying to understand their origin although, due to the small size of the portion, it was not possible to certainly identify the directions.[4] The first of this collapse was SU 2065=2034, a silty, brown, fine-grained layer characterized by the high quantity of pieces of mud bricks. They are quite pure, light brown in colour and very compact with small holes due to the air; they are 5-6 cm high. Near the wall SU 2018, the collapse SU 2065=2034 contains some mortar lumps of medium dimensions, grey and with some black pieces of charcoal like the mortar of SU 2018, but stronger. These mortar lumps are mixed with the pieces of mud bricks.

On the western side, SU 2065=2034 leaned on a silty, greyish-brown, fine-grained layer (SU 2068). It had a quite horizontal and compact interface with small dimension stone chippings inside. This one, partially covered another collapse of mud bricks with both N-S and E-W direction (SU 2066). SU 2066 is a silty, quite soft, light brown layer with occasional small pieces of charcoal, fragments of tuff e and stone chippings. The layer has a descending trend towards the E where it has the greatest depth (ca 50 cm). Mud bricks are very compact, light brown, with negative traces of the vegetable inclusions used in the mixture. The presence of small holes, perhaps due to the decomposition of vegetable fibres or air bubbles during manufacture, can be seen; inside there are very small stone chippings, mortar lumps and fragments of orange tuff. The height of the bricks is between 5.5 and 6.5 cm [fig. 10].

---

2 In particular, SU 2051 appears to be at the same level as the ground floor on the western side where the latter is lower, while toward the northern side it is covered by about 5 cm of topsoil.

3 SU 2050 is a compact, light brown-whitish layer with mud bricks; SU 2053 is a crumbly, light brown-greyish layer and SU 2064 is a compact, grey, horizontal layer. All the layers are located in the N-W corner of the excavation.

4 In 2023, in order to reconstruct the stratigraphic sequence, it was decided to identify SU 2034, dug last year, with the first of these collapses, SU 2065.

On the western side, SU 2066 leaned on another with horizontal interface (SU 2069). SU 2069 is a sandy-clay, fine-grained, yellowish layer descending towards east. Inside there are rare stone chippings and tuff of small dimension and rare charcoal.

SU 2069 is still partially *in situ* and covers a clayish, compact brown layer with pieces of mud bricks (SU 2082) which is partially covered by another collapse of brown mud bricks (SU 2070) which leans on the wall SU 2018. At the end of the excavation the mud brick wall SU 2051 is visible for 7 courses (overall height of about 42 cm) and shows an alternation of courses consisting of lighter-coloured bricks to darker-coloured ones [fig. 11]. It seems to cover SU 2082, a clayey, fine-grain, compact layer with mud bricks, still *in situ*.

Figure 10   North-western corner: example of flat and 'smoothed' layer on the western side (SU 2068) and the collapse of mud bricks on the eastern side (SU 2066)

Figure 11   The mud bricks wall SU 2051 at the end of the excavation

The Eastern side of the trench extension (1 × 4 m) had, from the beginning, a small higher portion (triangular in shape with sides of approximately 1 × 1 m) near the south-east corner and a depression, around 15 cm, immediately north of this. The rest of the eastern side (3 m) was rather horizontal.

Due to the stratigraphic sequence excavated in 2022, the archaeological excavation strategy was to remove the surface layers already identified until reaching the cobblestones layer SU 2038. The topsoil removed was a grey medium-size grain layer with stone chippings, rare stones and frequent pieces of orange and yellow fired bricks, mostly on the bottom part. Inside it was found also modern metal.

On the eastern side, under the topsoil, a small stockpile of yellow and orange fired bricks (variable height between 4 and 4.7 cm) with a clayey-sandy matrix, quite compact, coarse-grained and dark brown/grey in colour (SU 2054) was unearthed. The layer appears to be the result of accumulated material following a depression (SU 2084) visible in the ground even before the excavation and possibly due to recent activities [fig. 12].

Figura 12   The stockpile SU 2054

On the higher south-eastern corner, under this topsoil, a small portion of the layer with fragments of orange tuff (SU 2002, dug last year in the excavation area) was brought to light. SU 2002 covered a friable layer, with a sandy silt matrix, light brown in colour with occasional lumps of white mortar (SU 2049). Under this, SU 2015 (dug last year in the excavation area) covered a very friable sandy silt layer, greyish brown in colour, with small lumps of mortar, charcoal, fragments of yellowish clay and rare fragments of tuff (SU 2055). This latter covered a light brown-whitish layer with fragments of orange tuff, rare lumps of mortar and pieces of mud bricks (SU 2056). It has a compact interface where mud bricks are more concentrated and friable towards south. For the compositional features and the discovery elevation, it has been identified as SU 2032 excavated last year (2056=2032).

Under SU 2056=2032 an articulate situation was brought to light in the S/E corner. It covered a compact grey layer with small stones

(SU 2059) and a coarse-grained layer with pieces of mud bricks (SU 2060, for compositional features identified as SU 2042 dug last year); near the river stones SU 2038, SU 2056=2032 was leaned on a layer of breaking up of mortar (SU 2058, destruction of 2062) made up of mortar, debris and stones **[fig. 13]**.

Figure 13   Situation under SU 2056=2032

The archaeological deposit brought to light in the eastern extension, although still under study, proved to be quite interesting. Two rather tenacious mortar conglomerates (SU 2062 and SU 2063) were found close to the SU 2038 cobblestones, not in contact with each other. SU 2063, located further north than the other, has a rather rectangular shape, with, perhaps, remains of plaster on the south side **[fig. 14]**.

SU 2062, although it maintains a rather regular shape, is slightly rotated with respect to the alignment of the cobblestones. The two conglomerates are covered by the highest cobblestones level of SU 2038 but appear to rest on/cover the underlying levels of the same. At this stage of the research therefore, cobblestones layer SU 2038 and mortar layers SU 2062 and SU 2063 have been considered linked, although their function has yet to be understood.[5]

The removal of SU 2059 and SU 2060 exposed a small, crumbly, light-brown layer rich in basalt and tuff stones and stone chippings on the southern side of SU 2062 (SU 2067) and a very strong,

---

5   Between SU 2062 and 2063 a brown, crumbly, fine-grained layer with lumps of mortar and stone chippings (SU 2073) was unearthed under topsoil.

light brown-yellowish clayey layer, near the S/E corner of the area (SU 2061). Inside SU 2061 there were frequent stone chippings and fragments of pressed mud bricks.

Figure 14 On the left, mortar layer SU 2062 and 2063 on the eastern side of the cobblestones of 2038 during the excavation; on the right, detail of plaster on SU 2063

After the removal of SU 2061, the final level of 2022 was reached. SU 2044, a light brown, coarse-grained, sandy-clay layer with stone chippings in the central south portion, and, under this, SU 2043 and SU 2045 compact, clayey, light-brown layers were removed.[6]

SU 2043 leaned on a very compact, grey layer characterized by the frequent presence of stones and stone chippings (also tuff) and small lumps of white mortar (SU 2057). SU 2057 was quite thick and extended throughout the eastern extension below the topsoil.[7] Inside the layer SU 2057 a broken cobblestone and a sherd of pottery with incised linear decoration were found [fig. 15].

Figure 15 SU 2057 during the excavation. On the left side, the broken cobblestone; on the right side, a sherd of pottery with incised decoration

6 It must be noted that SU 2043, which extended from the central area to the eastern extension, showed, in this easternmost portion, some areas of friable grey mortar. This year, compared to last year's final plan, it was decided to consider as SU 2045, due to the features described and verified, only the southernmost portion characterized by the greater presence of pieces of mud bricks. Inside SU 2045 a fragment of an interlocking tile was found.

7 Near the N/E corner it was partially covered by a brown, crumbly, coarse-grained layer with stones and stone chippings (SU 2071). This layer seems to be covered by the 'first' level of the cobblestones SU 2038 and covers the 'second' one.

SU 2043 covered, on the southern side of the area, a collapse of mud bricks, SU 2072. It is a brown, quite crumbly layer with occasional tuff stone chippings and medium size pieces of mortar inside. It is more compact and lighter in colour near the mud bricks. Mud bricks height is around 6-8 cm (only one preserved the thickness) and they have variable colour and compactness: some of them are dark brown, crumbly and with frequent traces of vegetable fibres and stones chippings inside; others are light brown, homogeneous mixture and compact. It is probably the collapse of the mud bricks' structure still *in situ* SU 2080. Inside one of the mud bricks of SU 2072 a small coin (around 20 × 20 mm ca and very thin, around 1 mm) was found [fig. 16]. The find was handed over to the History Museum of Armenia. After cleaning it was possible to identify the coin. It is an Abbasid Caliphate *fals*, possibly minted in Barda'a at the time of Yazid ibn Usayd (or Asid), governor (*ostikan*) of Arminiya (ca 750-80).[8]

Placed inside a mud brick in collapse, this coin cannot be used to obtain a precise dating of the layer, but it provides us an important *terminus post quem*.[9]

---

[8]   We extend our thanks to Hasmik Hovhannisyan and Armine Zohrabyan for identifying the coin. Yazid ibn Usayd (or Asid) ibn Zafir al-Sulami was a governor of Arminiya serving the early Abbasid Caliphate. The settlement of Arab contingents in Armenia had a military as well as a political purpose for the pursuit of the war against Byzantium and the Khazars. As a member of Sulaym tribe, which participated decisively in Arab-Byzantine wars, Yazid was settled in the western Armenian borderlands with the Byzantine Empire (Ter-Ghevondyan 1976, 29-30). According to al-Baladhuri and Al-Tabari, his mother was the daughter of the Christian patrician of Siwnik' (Kennedy 1990, 70; Al-Balādhurī 2022, 214) so "Yazid inherited a prominent position in the Qaysi army of the last Umayyad caliph and among the semi-autonomous princes of Armenia", and his father had been a companion in arms of Marwan ibn Muhammad ibn Marwan in the Caucasus area, before he became caliph (Kennedy 2016, 57-8). Yazid took back the city of Karin which had been captured by Constantine V. He was appointed three times to the governorship of Arminiya (752-4, 759-70, and 775-80) and played a central role during the conflict with the Khazar Khaganate (Ter-Ghevondyan 1976, 30). Moreover, Yazid joined the ranks of the counsellors of the Abbasid caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur becoming a trusted advisor (Kennedy 2016, 57-8). Around 758-60, Al-Mansur ordered Yazid, the Arab governor of Armenia, to attempt to marry one of the Khazar kagan's daughters. The goal was to establish long-lasting peace with the khagan and the Khazar soldiers, thus helping Armenia to survive against the Khazaria's strength. Baghatur, the Khazar kagan, accepted Yazid's offer, and the bride was escorted south to the Muslim town of Bardha'a (Partaw) by ten thousand elite Khazars. After only two years and four months of marriage, the khatun died. The Khazars interpreted her death as a result of a deliberate plot hatched by the Muslim and took revenge. The Khazars launched devastating raids in South of Caucasus in 762-4: in 762 passed Derbent and headed south killing Muslims in Armenia; in 764 occupied Albanian territories, principalities in eastern Georgia, Tiflis and destroyed parts of Armenia (Brook 2006, 114-15; Czeglédy 1960, 75-81).

[9]   We can hypothesize that the coin was in the clay used to make the mud brick or that the brick came from reused material. The practice of reusing previous construction materials is already attested in Dvin, for example in the central district (Kalantaryan 1996, 42, 49, 83).

Coin description (by Armine Zohrabyan and Hasmik Hovannisyan)

Abbasid CaliphateYazid ibn Usayd (or Asid) (ca 750-80), governor (ոստիկան) of ArminiyaFals, Æ, 1.30 g, 20.0 mm, h 4Mint of Barda'a (?), AH ??6/AD 77?)

After restoration:

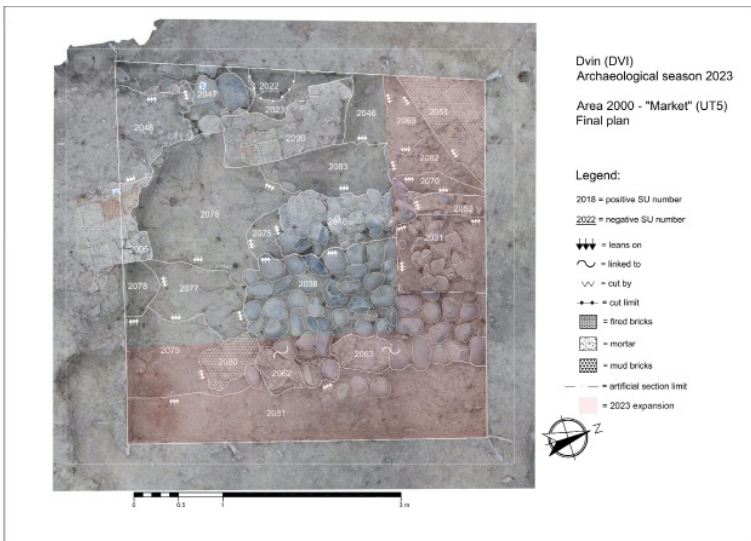At the end of the excavation the stratigraphic situation is the following **[figs 17-18]**:

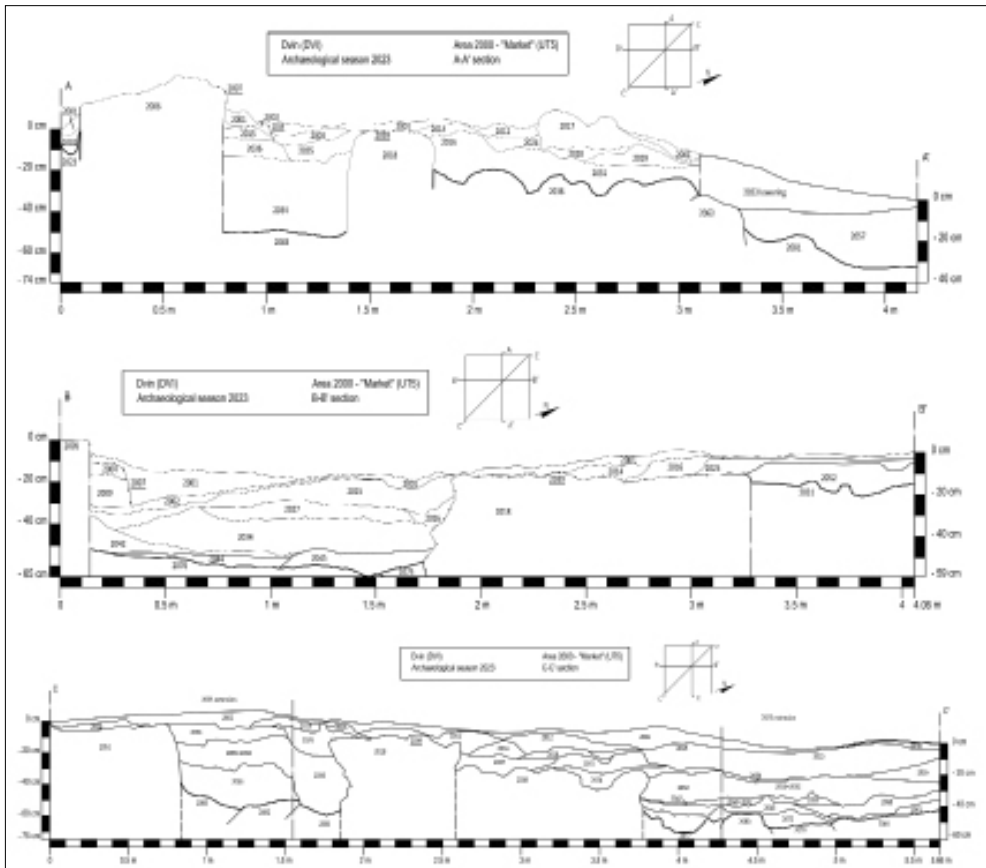**Figure 17**   Area 2000. Final plan at the end of the 2023 expedition

3.3   Conclusions

At this stage of the micro-stratigraphic assessment excavation of area 2000 **[fig. 19]**, 7 activities[10] could be hypothesized:

- A2093: it is the oldest one to which belongs the wall SU 2018, the cobblestones layer SU 2038 and the conglomerate SUs 2062-2063.
- A2094: to this activity belong the mud bricks constructions: SU 2051, the reconstruction of the wall SU 2018 (SU 2052)

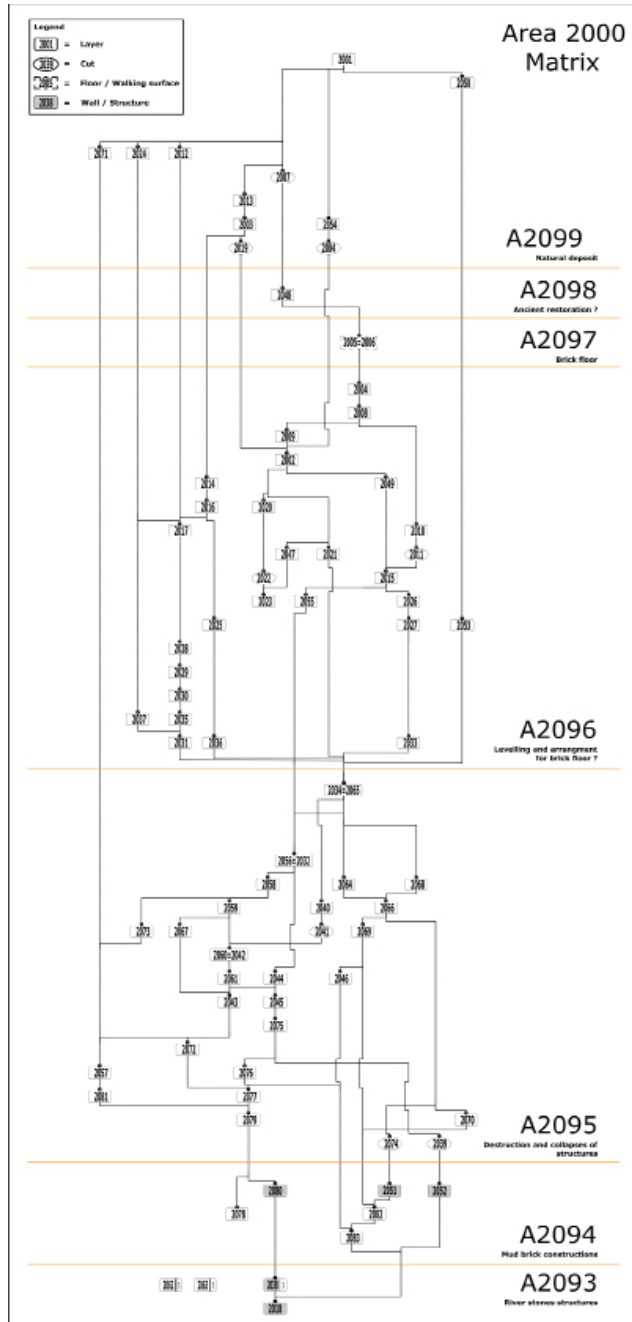10   See § 5.1.2 for the definition of "Activity".

Figure 19 Area 2000. Matrix after 2023 archaeological activities

and the remains of the mud bricks wall on the southern side (SU 2080).

- A2095: this activity refers to the destruction of the structure SU 2018 (SU 2039) and all the collapse found during the excavation (e.g. SUs 2072, 2066, 2065, 2034, etc.). It is not possible at this moment to identify sub-phases.
- A2096: to this activity belongs the layers after the collapses that were used to create an horizontal level for the creation of the fired bricks floor (e.g. SUs 2004, 2009, 2008, 2015, etc.).
- A2097: this activity refers to the construction of the fired bricks floor (SU 2005 and 2006).
- A2098: this activity refers to a probable ancient restoration of the fired bricks floor (SU 2048).
- A2099: this activity refers to recent layers and topsoil.

4 Light Archaeology Survey of the Dvin Market

Francesca Cheli

In 2023 a light archaeology survey on the structures preserved in the 'Market' area was started **[fig. 20]**. The aim was to describe these structures and, where possible, the used tools. Particular attention, in this sense, was given to the large slab tuff flooring present in the south-eastern portion of the area. The work is ongoing.

A – Refers to the large slab flooring on the south-eastern side in the 'Market' area. It is made up of, squared and smoothed dark tuff ashlars. Rare presence of orange tuff ashlars. The central portion is missing, and, at a lower level of the floor, there is a layer of white mortar mixed with stones and brick fragments.
On the ashlars of the south side, the floor has a continuous groove about 14 cm wide, while on the north side only two ashlars are grooved, and the adjacent one is only roughly outlined. The groove has a rectangular section. Around it there are ashlars not in place with traces of grooves (at least 5), one of which has a T-shaped groove. On the north side, traces of two bases (possibly columns) are noticeable, but they are slightly misaligned.

A.1 – dark tuff ashlar on the north side of the slab flooring (67.5 × 100 cm) **[fig. 21]**. It has a groove approximately 15 cm wide and approximately 2-3 cm deep. It continues on the ashlar A.2, but is interrupted to the west due to the presence of a quadrangular base.
The groove is made with a flat blade (chisel): ↔ 1.3-2 cm; √ 1-4 mm. The cut on the northern side shows two dimensions (↔ 1.3-2.16 cm) and it is not clear if it is another tool or two overlapping traces.

Figure 20 Photo of the Market area taken by drone.
Letters indicate the structure analysed, numbers the ashlars of the large floor studied
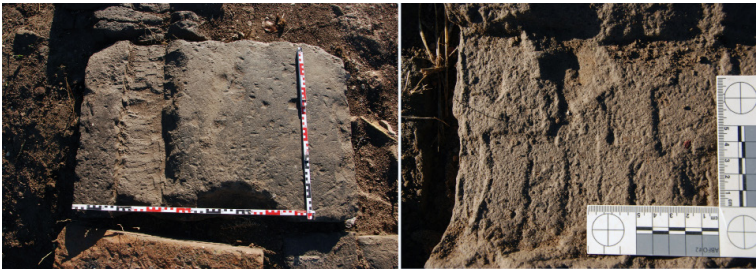
Figure 21 On the left side, the tuff ashlar A.1;
on the right side, a detailed of the flat chisel marks

A.2 – dark tuff ashlar on the north side of the slab flooring, on the eastern side of A.1 (111 × 70 cm). It has a groove approximately 14-15 cm wide and approximately 2-3 cm deep. It is shallower on the E side (< 1 cm). The groove is made with a flat blade (chisel) and tool marks are more clearly readable on the north side: ↔ 1.2-1.3 cm; √ about 5 mm.

A.3 – dark tuff ashlar on the north side of the slab flooring, on the eastern side of A.2. The groove is roughly outlined (length 10 cm, width 15 cm). The groove is made with a flat blade (chisel) and tool mark is not clearly visible: ↔ 1-1.1 cm.

A.4 – dark tuff ashlar on the north side of the slab flooring, on the eastern side of A.3 **[fig. 22]**. It does not show traces of grooves but has a non-through, polygonal hole (22 × 17 cm). Hole depth: 5-5.5 cm. The walls of the cut show marks of a point tool: ↔ 5mm.

A.5 – dark tuff ashlar (63 × 72 cm) on the western side, not in place, with two perpendicular grooves (width 14-15 cm, depth 3-4 cm) **[fig. 23]**. At the intersection point, there is a square (14 × 15 cm) through hole. Tool mark is not clearly readable,

but on one side of the groove linear marks given at 45° are visible. It could be a point tool: ↔ 2 mm.

The distance between the traces is about 1 cm.

Figure 22 On the left side, the tuff ashlar A.4; on the right side, a detailed photo of the point tool marks

Figure 23 On the left side, the tuff ashlar A.5; on the right side, a detailed photo of the tool marks

A.6 – orange tuff ashlar on the southern side (64 × 74 cm) **[fig. 24]**. It has a groove approximately 14-14.5 cm wide and approximately 3.5-4 cm deep.

The groove seems to be made with a flat blade (chisel): ↔ 8-10 mm; only a tool mark on the bottom is ↔ 1.74 cm. Tool marks are parallel to the long side.

A.7 – dark tuff ashlar on the southern side (68 × 122 cm). It has a groove approximately 13.5-14 cm wide and approximately 4-5 cm deep.

The groove is made with a flat blade (chisel): ↔ 0.9-1 cm.

Traces of a pointed tool can also be seen: ↔ 2 mm; √ 5 mm.

B – Refers to the fired orange bricks floor on the western side of the 'Market' area (Petrosyan et al. 2023, 211, fig. 26).

Bricks dimensions: 23 × 23 × 4-4.5 cm.

Remains of the same floor are found within excavation area 2000 (SUs 2005-2006).

C – Refers to the mud bricks wall on the western side of the 'Market' area, within excavation area 2000 (SU 2051) **[fig. 11]**.

The wall is visible for at least 2 courses in width and 7 in height. Its orientation is East-West. Mud bricks dimensions: 30 × 30 × 6 cm.

5 Area 1000 and the Stratification of the Lower Fortress: A Peek through the Peephole

Michele Nucciotti, Leonardo Squilloni, Miriam Leonetti

5.1 Introduction

The micro-stratigraphic study conducted by the University of Florence team within the framework of the Armenian-Italian expedition to Dvin is enabling a detailed assessment of the formation processes of archaeological stratification in two sectors of the site, the Market area (cf. area 2000) and the Lower Fortress (area 1000). It is certainly worth questioning how two excavations of such limited extent can contribute to the historical-archaeological reconstruction of the events of an urban site the size of Dvin, or what their level of representativeness and 'capacity for innovation' might be in the broader context of studies on medieval Armenia. For obvious reasons, a comprehensive response must be deferred until the end of the investigation, at least for this first phase of the project expected in 2026. However, in light of the findings thus far, I would like to attempt a preliminary assessment at the conclusion of the third campaign of investigation (2023), as some results and many perspectives now appear, at least to the author, sufficiently delineated.

5.1.1   Cons and Pros of a Micro-Stratigraphic Approach

First, the limitations. Both quantitatively and topographically, the limits of area 1000 are evident. It represents about 0.001% of the entire archaeological site (based on current knowledge) and within it, no building is observable in its entirety in plan. Hence, it is necessary to exercise particular caution in generalizing any results of the excavation because, ultimately, the perspective offered by area 1000 resembles that of a peephole: quantitatively limited and optically distorted, highlighting and almost absolutizing what is in the foreground, thereby altering the proportions relative to the general context. However, what can be observed is extremely detailed. High resolution. And this is perhaps the greatest asset of the adopted sampling strategy. This point should not be underestimated and, indeed, should be highlighted. In what sense and how? First and foremost, by assigning value to the stratigraphic method itself, based on the principles of the "site formation process" outlined by Edward Harris in 1973 (1979)[11] and practically implemented primarily by Philip Barker (1977). Generally, it has not been adopted at Dvin in previous decades of archaeological research on the site, and when it has been, it was never at this level of detail. A stratigraphic approach which, despite the difficulties posed by the characteristics of the architectures present on the site (largely made of perishable materials and observable in highly degraded situations within the 'historicized' excavation areas), has been moreover extended to the non-destructive archaeological study of structural-architectural evidence, with an approach of architectural archaeology and light archaeology (Brogiolo, Cagnana 2012; Nucciotti, Vannini 2019), previously used for Armenian-Italian research in Vayots Dzor (Nucciotti et al. 2015), and which has allowed, from this year, the creation of an atlas of building techniques used between the fifth and thirteenth centuries in the entire archaeological area of Dvin (Leonetti 2024). From a methodological point of view, then, the intersection between the stratigraphic analysis of the deposit in areas 1000 and 2000, integrated with the atlas of building techniques, allows for greater contextualization of the structures uncovered in the excavation and helps providing a reference absolute chronological framework (see § 5.3), initiating a strategy to correct the 'peephole effect'. In a similar perspective, the contextual study of all artefacts associated with the micro-stratigraphy (without selection) will allow for a deeper understanding and seriation of the

---

11   This method has had a significant impact on the Italian archaeological scientific community, as evidenced by the first non-English edition of Harris's work in 1983, and was particularly welcomed by Historical Archaeologists working on the Medieval Period.

lesser-known ceramic productions, primarily those unglazed items related to kitchen and storage functions. A result that, although obtained from a limited 'peephole', will provide knowledge that can be reflected on the scale of the entire site and beyond it, with the final elaboration expected in 2026.

5.1.2 Harris Matrix Segmentation and New Macro-Periodization for Areas 1000 and 2000

Based on the findings from the 2022 excavation season proposed in the previous report (Petrosyan et al. 2023), primarily concerning the relative chronological framework, it was decided, starting from this report, to modify the notation system of the macro-periodization of the Harris Matrix. Until last year, the Harris Matrix had been segmented into "phases" (Petrosyan et al. 2023, figs 41-2), progressing from the most recent (Phase 1) to the oldest (Phase 6, for area 1000). Reflecting on the implications of this nomenclature, three critical points emerged, which prompted the adoption of a new nomenclature based on "Activities", starting from 2023 and replacing the previous 'phases' **[fig. 33]**.

   The first critical point observed relates to the ambiguity of the term 'phase', which generally refers to an overall phasing of the site, not yet available, and which could create confusion between the macro-periodization of the different excavation areas, simply because 'Phase 2' or 'Phase 3' of areas 1000 and 2000 would not necessarily refer to the same absolute chronology. The second critical point, partly related to the first, is that since the micro-stratigraphic excavation samples are of limited extent, using the term 'phase' risked implying too broad a generalization of the research results. Finally, as a corollary to both critical points, the inverse numbering of a 'Phase 1' more recent than a 'Phase 2' (or 3 or 4) was counterintuitive, as it is usually expected that 'Phase 1' is the oldest in a series of site transformations. For all these reasons, a more low-key segmentation of the Harris Matrix into "Activities" has been adopted, grouping coeval and/or coexisting SUs, numbered in reverse order starting, for area 1000 from A1099 (the most recent), and from A2099 for area 2000. This way, an intuitive sequence is maintained in the chronological progression of stratified horizons (e.g. A1080 predates A1090) while avoiding nomenclature that might imply an overall phasing of the archaeological site.

M.N.

5.2   Area 1000: Stratigraphic Description

The 2023 excavation season started with the removal of the geo-textile, and deep cleaning of the section and the layers already uncovered in 2022. Because of the presence of three walls (SUs 1074,[12] 1090, 1115), the area has been investigated in three different sub-areas [fig. 31]:

- The southern portion: south of walls SUs 1090 and 1115.
- The northwestern portion: between walls SUs 1115 and 1074 and the W and N sections.
- The northeastern portion: between walls SUs 1090 and 1074 and the E and N sections.

While the walls SUs 1074 and 1090 were already identified in 2022, SU 1115 and its destruction cut SU 1114 were recognized after the removal of SU 1080 (collapse layer in the northern corner of the area, later than SU 1074) and SU 1109 (small accumulation of clay soil on SU 1115). SU 1014 is made of rammed earth, and it has roughly the same SW-NE orientation as SU 1090, slightly more W-E.

In the southern portion, the first layer to be removed was SU 1095, the filling of the SW-NE oriented cut SU 1099. The cut had a concave profile, more vertical on the northern side. No clear clues on its function have been uncovered. It divided a compact and slightly N-S inclined surface clay layer (SUs 1071-1100). This could be a walking surface arranged on the below destruction layers.

Under SU 1071=1100, the remains of a mud-bricks floor (SU 1104 and SU 1129) have been uncovered. Its state of conservation was bad both due to ancient destruction (SU 1120 and SU 1108) and due to the degradation of the bricks (SU 1105 and SU 1121). Some of them, placed horizontally, were still partially visible, but none of them preserved the entire limits. The bricks' mixture contained straw. The floor was laid on a level compact clay preparation (SU 1106) with a slight N-S inclination.

Below this situation, the destruction (SUs 1133 and 1135) of a mud-bricks structure and the structure itself have been uncovered in the southwestern portion of the area. The preserved structure was formed by a sub-rectangular-shaped arrangement of mudbricks (SU 1136) with a semicircular end (SU 1137) on the eastern side [fig. 25]. The latter framed a small, shallow oval-shaped cut (SU 1148), in which nothing was found except a pebble, taking on a form that suggests its possible use as a tool for smoothing. The mudbricks of

---

12   The mud bricks wall SU 1074 has been maintained in situ even if it is later than other excavated layers (SU 1128 and SU 1110) to preserve it and to facilitate its continuation in the northern section once we open that area.

the ring around this pit were horizontally placed, while SU 1136 was made of half-bricks arranged vertically in parallel rows. The upper S-N profile of the structure showed a depression in the central part, possibly the remains of a channel to allow the flow of fluids or liquids toward the pit. The bricks, with a hard and refined mixture, were bound together with hardened clay. So far, the interpretation of the structure remains uncertain. The main idea is that it could be a structure consisting of a rectangular portion with an attached small pit surrounded by bricks, used for some type of production, although no traces (raw materials or production waste) of it have been recovered. In this case, it might seem unusual that, despite the structure being of modest size, the bricks were placed directly on the underlying layers of ashes (SUs 1107 and 1124) without any preparation. Conversely, it has to be noted that structures formed by vertically placed mudbricks have been noted and reported on top of the fired-bricks floor of what Ghafadaryan identified as a mosque, in the central quarter.[13] The other hypothesis, which anyway shows a number of criticalities and is less probable, suggests that it could be a collapsed brick wall in a single block (SU 1136), partially broken apart (SUs 1133 and 1135).[14]

---

[13] Maybe, Ghafadaryan refers to these walls when he says that small rooms with mud-brick walls were built on the floor of the mosque in the twelfth or thirteenth century (1952, 46). Archive pictures of the walls are published online (cf. the repository at https://treasury.am/hy, picture no. 1499 and 1599). Also fired bricks were usually vertically displayed, as in the not-identifiable structure of picture no. 2284 in the same repository.

[14] According to the orientation of the bricks, the eventual wall should be located to the south of the collapse, perhaps beyond the excavated section where no traces have been found within the excavation area. In this case, it remains difficult to explain why the potential wall would be composed of bricks arranged with their headers facing towards the external side (a construction type not present in the works published on Dvin), and the presence of the pit with bricks arranged in a ring around it (is it a coincidence or the result of an excavation beneath the overlying cut 1095?).

Figure 25 Mud bricks structure (SUs 1136 and 1137) in the southern part of the area

As already mentioned, this evidence lay on ash layers, most likely to be interpreted as destruction layers of a phase related to a period subsequent to the primary use of the walls SUs 1090 and 1114 (?), partially excavated at the end of the 2022 season.[15] The upper ones showed a formation from south to north with a slightly horizontal upper surface (SUs 1124, 1150, 1159, and 1169), and an extension limited to a narrow strip along the southern section of the excavation. This is due to the conformation of the underlying layers, which instead show a noticeable inclination from north (walls 1094 and 1115) to south. The situation is particularly interesting starting from SU 1091=1149, a layer composed of grey to white ash mixed with a soft and incoherent light brown soil. This layer abutted against the southern face of the walls SUs 1090 and 1115. Many materials – fragments of pottery, including small glazed or luster fragments and cooking pots, metal, and animal bones – have been recovered. The high fragmentation of the pieces, which persists even in the underlying layers, is indicative of the fact that these layers refer to post-use and destruction deposition. Indeed, no clear traces of fire, but only ash, have been detected. The only exception is SU 1176, a quadrangular-shaped accumulation of fire traces (withe/grey ash framed by a dark brown/black ash

---

15 Petrosyan et al. 2023, 226; during the 2023 excavation, it was decided to investigate the destruction layers south of the walls in more detail. Thus SU 1091, excavated in a small section close to wall SU 1090 last year, was divided into many more layers during the 2023 excavation.

line). Conversely to other ash accumulation (SUs 1174 and 1177-1178), in SU 1176 – and SU 1179 – there were no materials. The high concentration of ash in the soil seems to suggest that a fire was lit. All the ash concentrations laid on a soft, light brown, and very incoherent soil (SU 1175), that seems to be a layer over which they have been deposited. It was characterized by the presence of small mortar lumps and fragments of charcoal, and the pottery found inside was abundant. Two other ash layers were noteworthy: SUs 1174 (later than SU 1175) and SU 1181 (earlier than 1175). They were composed of grey and compact ash and had a maximum thickness of about 10 cm, while all the other ash layers were very shallow.

Coming to the end of the southern portion, it is possible to say that all the excavated layers of 2023 are later than the destructions of the walls SUs 1090 and 1115. These are represented by the N-S inclined layers (SUs 1180, 1175, 1091=1149) below or above which there are concentrations of ash, often the result of intentional deposition.

In the northern portion of the area, as already mentioned, the excavation was carried out in two different sub-areas, due to the presence of the wall SU 1074, uncovered in 2022. The excavation of the deposit in the northeastern portion of the square allowed to clarify the technology of the wall SU 1090 and its relation with the wall SU 1074. Indeed, while in 2022 such relation was still unclear, because of the pit SU 1072 cut on their intersection, the stratigraphic analysis of the archaeological deposit allowed in 2023 to understand that the wall SU 1074 is later than SU 1090. Moreover, since the excavation activities in this portion of the square reached the foundation of SU 1090, this latter can now be better described (see further § 5.3).[16]

Four stratigraphic units, referred to the construction process, can be distinguished in the wall SU 1090: MSU 1090, the wall elevation made by rammed earth, which lay on MSU 1146 (accumulation of fragments of mud bricks on the eastern portion of the wall), MSU 1184 (very compact grey clay masonry portion) and MSU 1185, the basement (still not completely visible) composed of 7 broken stones. These have a rectangular shape and are arranged horizontally. All the layers excavated are later than the basement of the wall MSU 1185 (see § 5.3).

The first layers to be removed in this portion, covered by the walking surface SUs 1085-1086, were SUs 1097 and 1087, both

---

[16]   During the excavation, the upper part of the wall SU 1090 was excavated as part of the layers abutting it. In fact, as visible from the eastern section and the excavation photos, the top of the preserved wall was higher and already visible at the level of layer SU 1066. Having noticed this, it was possible to revise the interpretation and relative chronology of some layers: SU 1066 is a collapse layer, similar and coeval to SU 1080 on the other side of the wall SU 1074; SUs 1085-1086 were reinterpreted as walking surfaces from the room bordered by walls SUs 1074 and 1090.

accumulation deposits rich in fragments of fired and mud bricks, lumps of mortar, fragments of gypsum, and charcoal. A small post hole was identified in SU 1087, close to the wall SU 1074.

In turn, these layers covered a horizontal walking surface (SU 1119 and his levelling SU 1117), where a small structure was installed. The latter (formed by SU 1010=1116) was a kind of platform that rose from the ground of about 15 cm [fig. 36]. It was made of hard and compact clay and displayed a horizontal upper surface. In the middle of it, there was a concave N-S oriented cut (SU 1113). Straw remains arranged in a linear pattern from north to south have been found both in the filling (SU 1111) of this cut and over the remains of the platform/structure. Furthermore, in SU 1116 a mother-of-pearl waste was recovered. The presence of the straws and the mother-of-pearl fragment, even if only one, may suggest a productive function of the structure, a hypothesis that needs to be verified with additional data.

The wall SU 1074 was founded on the above mentioned structure, without any foundation cut. It preserves only one line of mud bricks and a soil preparation under them. On the western side of the wall, at the same height of SU 1110=1116, the layer SU 1128 was also covered by SU 1074. The construction of SU 1074 is therefore later than SUs 1110=1116 and 1128. A detailed analysis of the materials will provide data for a clearer absolute chronology of this sequence. In any case the available data, indirectly, also allow to state that wall 1074 is later than walls SUs 1090 and 1115. Furthermore, it means also that the inner division of the space to the north of SUs 1090 and 1115 was not in place before the making of SU 1074.

Going deeper, SU 1119 (clayish layer with small stones) covered a previous walking surface (SU 1141) on which three structures made of raw mud bricks were placed [fig. 26]:

- SU 1142: two perpendicular lines of gray mud bricks forming a rectangular structure with SU 1090. The structure is empty in the middle and the western portion is covered by SU 1074, so is not visible. At the first sight, it seemed to be a structure with a containing function.[17]
- SU 1143: alignment of mud bricks with a slightly north-south orientation, perpendicular to SU 1090. The bricks are aligned but do not form a straight line. The structure is about 1 m long, between the wall SU 1090 and the northern section.
- SU 1145: remains of a mud brick structure abutting on the northern face of SU 1090. It preserves only two rows of two mudbricks each, one over the other.

---

[17] Similar structures can be identified in the rooms of the twelfth-thirteenth century of the southern part of the lower fortress (cf. Kalantaryan 1996, pl. 19.1 and pl. 47) and on the western slope of the citadel (cf. the 1950 plan edited in Ghafadaryan 1982, 73).

The scarce visibility due to the limited size of the area between SU 1090 and the north section does not allow to have a clear idea of the situation. At least, it is possible to state that at a certain point, the space was reorganized, with the creation of a horizontal floor and the construction of modest structures, whose function has to be clarified.

Figure 26   Mud bricks structures (SUs 1142, 1143, and 1145), north of SU 1090

Before this reorganization, there was one other walking surface (SU 1152), covered by SU 1141. SU 1152 was a clayish layer, very compact on the upper surface and softer in its thickness, where crushed stones and tuff dust were present. On its surface, in the corner between the northern section and SU 1074, a fireplace/hearth (SU 1151) was preserved [fig. 27]. It had a defined semicircular shape where grey and black ashes were mixed. SU 1152 covered two collapsed mud bricks' layers (SUs 1157-1158) and, over them, four mud bricks horizontally well-arranged as a sort of floor remains (SU 1156). The collapses displayed two different orientations: from west to east SU 1157 (the later one), and from east to west SU 1158. Beyond orientation, the distinguishing feature between the two layers is the greater presence of plaster in SU 1157.

In this portion of the excavation, SU 1158 was the last one removed. The collapses covered a probable floor (SU 1171) and a deposit layer over it (SU 1166) featured by the presence of orange and white soil patches. The remains of a mud bricks wall (SU 1186) were uncovered under layer SU 1158. SU 1186 is perpendicular to SU 1090 and is made of two rows, which preserve respectively four (the eastern one) and one (the western one) bricks. These layers will be investigated in 2024, to clarify if SU 1171 can be a floor related to the first phase of use of the wall SU 1090.

L.S.

In the northwestern portion of the area, the excavation started with the removal of the collapse layer SU 1080, which covered SU 1074 and its disruption SU 1083. This layer covered SU 1122, which is probably a rise in the terrain, made by mud and fired bricks fragments, mortar, crushed stone, and particularly straw with an orientation from north to south (very similar to the straw found east of SU 1122, in SU 1110=1116).

SU 1122 covered a large pit (SU 1126) filled with fired and mud bricks in fragments mixed to a light-colour friable matrix with faunal remains, which extends westwards continuing beyond the excavation limit (SU 1127=1130). This pit cuts through SU 1123, a horizontal, very compact clay surface, partially visible along the western

section, composed of gray and brown soil with lumps of mortar, pebbles, and decaying mud bricks [fig. 28].

Figure 28   Floor SU 1123, cut 1126, and its filling SU 1127=1130

All these SUs mark up a precise stratigraphic horizon, that is related to the last phase of use of the 1074 wall, after the construction of the wall itself. Indeed, below this situation, another phase was uncovered.

This latter consists of the walking surface SU 1128, over which the wall SU 1074 and the structure SU 1131, which abuts on SU 1074, are founded [fig. 29]. SU 1131 was formed by compact clay soil and fragments of mud bricks and showed a broken pattern with an E-W oriented section and a NE-SW oriented one. The structure was found not intact, but in disrepair, and in the eastern portion it has been partially cut by the pit SU 1072. No hypotheses about its function have been elaborated for now.

Figure 29 Structure SU 1131 on the walking surface SU 1128 and the wall SU 1074

SU 1128 covered another walking surface (SU 1132), a 5-6 cm thick layer made up of clay soil, with a horizontal orientation (it resulted visible only in some portions of the area because it was partially removed by the cut SU 1147). SU 1032 laid on two layers, SUs 1140 and 1153.

SU 1140 is a sandy-claysh layer very thin, featured by white soil patches, most likely melted plaster, and charcoal. It covered SU 1153, a layer composed of medium-large building material (fired and raw bricks), arranged in a fairly regular manner, which can be interpreted as a crawl space for the SU 1132 floor.

Evaluating the heights and what has been observed in the field, limited to the position and the remains of the deposits in the NW corner of the area, partially destroyed by the cut SU 1126, it is conceivable that the use of the floor SU 1132 was related to a second phase of use of the *tonir* (SU 1189) discovered there.

Indeed, in the western section, close to the northwestern corner of the area, a *tonir* has be found **[fig. 30]**. The *tonir* was positioned by cutting (SU 1164) the layer SU 1155, which was therefore the first plane of use of the *tonir*. The space between the *tonir* and its cut (10 cm ca) was filled by a fine ash layer featured by the presence of very small pebbles (SU 1188). Three quadrangular broken fired bricks (SU 1163) framed the cut. Over these bricks, there was an accumulation of fine ash (SU 1162), resulting from the use of the *tonir*. The ash was also spread on the layer SU 1155. In the end, one other layer composed of black charcoal and quadrangular fired bricks (SU 1160), most likely to be connected with the intentional defunctionalization of the *tonir*,

has been uncovered. To summarize, the *tonir* was used at least in two different phases: the first one in connection to the walking surface SU 1155, and the second one to be confirmed with a larger excavation around the *tonir*, in connection to the floor SU 1132.

Tonir SU 1189 and stratigraphic column

The last layer excavated was SU 1155, which covered SU 1161, to be excavated in 2024. SU 1161 covers a structure (SU 1154) located in the southern area, north of the wall SU 1115, which precedes the entire stratigraphic column described so far and is covered by some layers of disruption (SUs 1167-1168, 1165).

M.L.

5.3 The Wall SU 1090: Technical and Chronological Discussion

The architecture of Dvin is characterized by a variety of construction materials and significant aesthetic heterogeneity. Consequently, an in-depth investigation of the site's masonry walls was necessary, encompassing findings from the excavations conducted by Ghafadaryan (1952; 1982) and Ghafadaryan (1996; 2008), as well as from the new excavations initiated in 2021. This analysis focuses on the identification of the Building Technique (BT) of each wall and the discernible Masonry Types (MT), as defined in Mannoni 2005.

The term 'Building Technique' refers to the composition of the masonry wall in terms of the materials used, including the presence or absence of a foundation and binding agent.

MT, on the other hand, has been identified for each building technique based on the material, the method of construction, the treatment of stones or the composition of bricks, and their dimensions.

The MSU 1090 wall, featured in the Dvin wall atlas, constitutes a wall segment running in a northeast-southwest direction and is situated in the northern section of Area 1000.

Among the seven building techniques identified at Dvin (Leonetti 2024), wall MSU 1090 falls under building technique BT 4, characterized by a stone foundation and a superstructure made of rammed earth (*pisé*).[18]

The foundation of the structure (SU 1185), uncovered during the 2023 excavation campaign, is composed of stone bonded with clay mortar, while the elevation is made of rammed earth pressed within formworks, although no traces of their dimensions are currently visible.

While it was not possible to assign a wall type to the elevation as it lacks traces and therefore measurements of the formwork, the stone foundation has been classified as MT B, based on the materials used, with subtype 4 designation (MT B4).

It comprises split sandstone and limestone blocks, typically rectangular in shape, arranged in horizontal courses (of which only one is visible), ranging in length from 24 cm to 35 cm.

The joints of the foundation exhibit considerable width and irregularity, measuring between 1.8 cm and 4.8 cm, filled with a clay-sandy binder recessed within the joints.

Through stratigraphic revision (see § 5.2), it has been determined that the elevation is visible to a height of 60 cm in the portion of Area 1000 currently under excavation, whereas in the eastern section of the excavation, it is visible at a greater height.

The wall SU 1090 represents the only observable example of this construction technique at Dvin.

Other examples of this construction technique are no longer visible, but they have been reported by Kalantarian in his excavation reports and in the published accounts of the structures in the southwest portion of the Central District of Dvin (2008).

Currently, only scant remains of the foundations of these structures are visible, while there is no trace of the elevated portion.

The identification of a building technique and a MT has allowed for a better chronological framework, which, combined with the stratigraphic analysis, has facilitated the dating of the wall MSU 1090.

---

18 For a definition of *pisé*, cf. Hermann 1999, 48-9.

From the archaeological evidence, the Building Technique type is present in Dvin between the eighth (structures in the southwest part of the central district) and the twelfth (structures of the Lower Fortress) centuries, while the MT of the foundation dates between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

According to data from micro-stratigraphy, the construction of MSU 1090 may have taken place in the eleventh century (± 50 years; see § 5.4) with a continuity of use of the wall evidenced by various floor levels, identified during excavation, leaning against the wall, until the twelfth-thirteenth centuries.

Table 1   Building technique 4: Stone (Base) and Rammed Earth (Elevation)
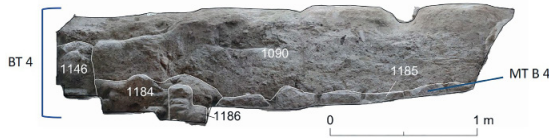
DESCRIPTION:

The foundation (SU 1185) is made of stone with clay binder, and the upper structure is constructed using rammed earth pressed into formwork (*pisé*). Apart from wall SU 1090 in Area 1000, only the stone foundations of this masonry technique are currently visible, while the earth structures can only be inferred from excavation photographs or descriptions in excavation reports.

FOUNDATION: Present	
Core technique: Not visible	**Composition of foundation:** Lithic and clay
Masonry types: MT B3, B3.1, B4, B5, B6, B8	
ELEVATION: Present	
Core technique: In layers between formwork	**Composition of elevation:** Clay-sandy matrix
Masonry type: Not attributable because the dimensions of the layers are not discernible.	
Sample Origin: Area 1000 SU 1090	
Presence of building technique:	Area 1000, SU 1090; AC 1, B 1, FU 5; B 2; AC 2, B 3, FU 2, E South and FU 5, E North; AC 5 (southwest portion); B 6, B 9, B 10.
Dating of masonry technique:	Between the eighth and twelfth centuries AD.
Bibliographical references:	Dvin Report 2023; Kalantarian 1996, 80-1; 2008, 96; Ghafadaryan 1982, 57-8 and 103-5.

M.L.

**5.4   A Stratigraphy of Transformations in the Lower Fortress
of Dvin: Area 1000 at the End of the 2023 Season**

The 2023 excavation season in Area 1000 revealed a complex sequence of use, reuse, abandonment, transformation, and repurposing of the spaces within the site's area. A comparison between the Harris Matrix **[fig. 33]**, the end-of-excavation plan **[fig. 31]**, and the cumulative section of the deposits investigated so far **[fig. 32]** further illustrates how the formation times of the deposits do not coincide with horizontal planes. Consequently, at the same level, stratifications related to chronologies that are significantly distant from each other, at least from the perspective of relative chronology, can coexist (as indeed they do). This demonstrates how adopting a micro-stratigraphic strategy can assist the Armenian-Italian team in advancing their understanding of the site, highlighting aspects of its material history (as well as its productive, social, and political history) that have not been analysed at this level of detail until now.

The aim of this concluding paragraph of the 2023 excavation report for Area 1000 is to illustrate how the stratigraphic data collected so far can be used to describe the sequence of transformations that occurred in the Lower Fortress sector of Dvin. It also aims to anticipate the logical-chronological reference system into which the results of ceramic, production-archaeology, and zooarchaeological studies will be integrated. Collectively, these studies will form the interpretive backbone concerning material sources.
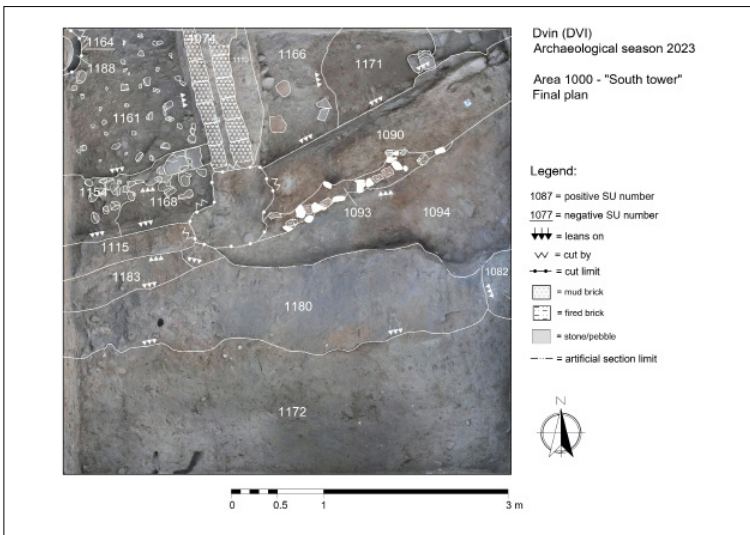

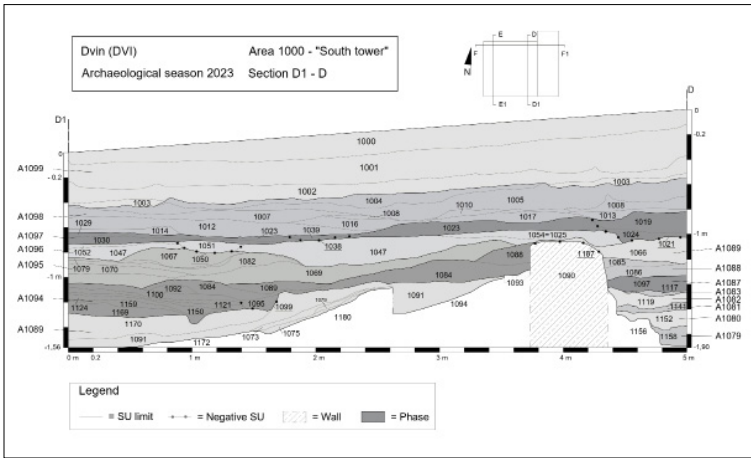**Figure 31**   Area 1000 2023 end-of-excavation plan

Contrary to the illustration of the excavation, in this paragraph, I will invert the order of presentation of the evidence, proceeding from stratigraphic horizon A1080 to the most recently investigated activity this year, A1092.

A1080 **[fig. 34]** shows one of the oldest configurations identified in Area 1000. It is characterized by a use floor abutting walls SUs 1090-1115, which were already present for some time. It is not yet possible to establish exactly when they were constructed, although, based on the technological analyses of 1090 (see § 5.3), I would currently hypothesize a construction date around the eleventh century (± 50 years). Following events that will be further clarified by the excavation of the SU of A1079 and A1078 in 2024, A1080 presents a *facies* associated with a domestic setting, with an earthen use floor (SU 1155 and SU 1152) featuring a hearth (SU 1151) and a *tonir* (SU 1189, inserted with cut SU 1164). This suggests a likely residential function.
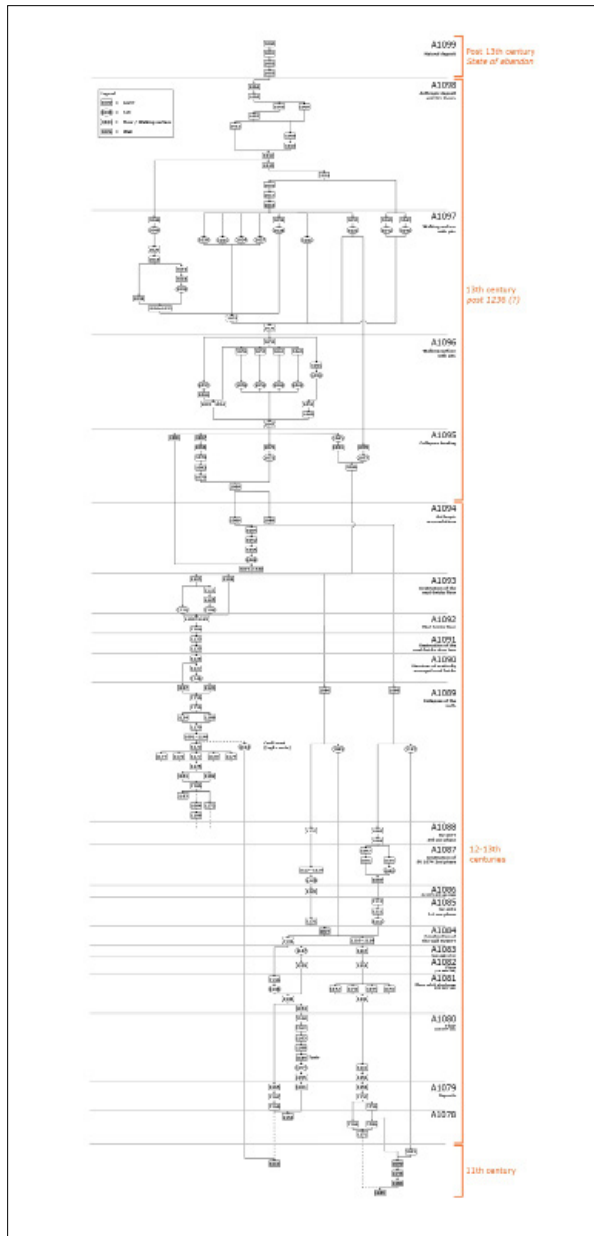
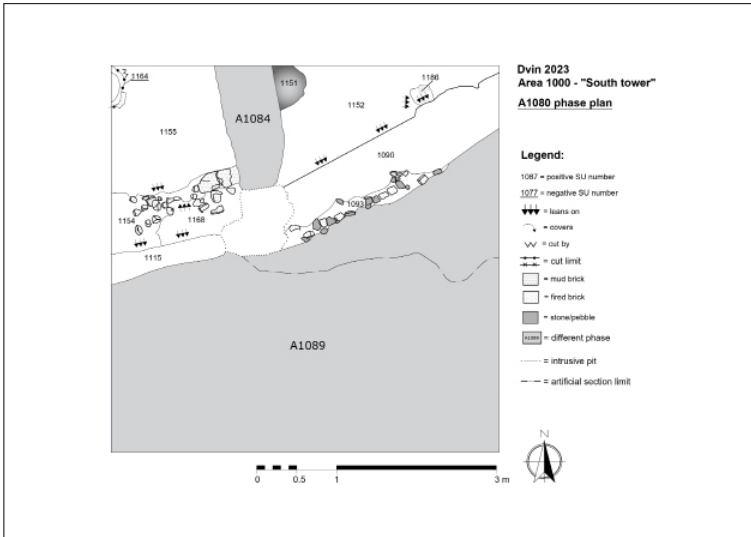**Figure 33** Area 1000 matrix after 2023 archaeological activities

The use of *tonir* SU 1189 continues for some time and appears still in use during A1082, before its deactivation and destruction in A1083. A1081 [fig. 35] shows a reorganization of the area north of walls SUs 1090-1115. As mentioned, the *tonir* is still present; however, modifications to the previous configuration are also evident. A new carefully constructed earthen use floor (SU 1140) is created over a preparation layer (SU 1153) composed of residual fragments of construction elements arranged to form a horizontal level. The presence of construction waste materials likely indicates the use of debris from ruined buildings for supply purposes. To the east, small rectangular basins or silos with walls made of fragmented mud bricks are built against the northern side of wall SU 1090. The previously open 'domestic' space becomes congested with other structures and probably additional functions. Whether this space served as a storage area, a stable, or, partially transformed, a section of the domestic area of A1080 for productive purposes cannot be determined at this time. However, the transformation of the space and its use, with the elimination of the hearth, is evident.
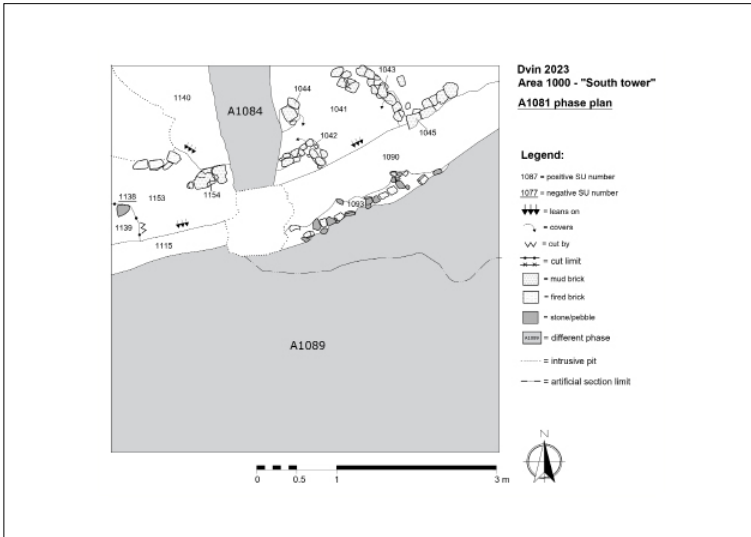
Following this horizon, the main transformation occurs during A1084 [fig. 36], when the area north of walls SUs 1115-1090 (at this point surely considered ancient by those using them) is divided into two portions by the perpendicular wall SU 1074. This wall is constructed over the walking surface constituted by SUs 1128-1110 and SU 1117, which previously (A1083) levelled the structures exposed in A1081 and ended the use of *tonir* SU 1189. Moreover, the construction of wall SU 1074, made of new and unbroken bricks, could be linked to the transformation of the area for productive purposes. Throughout activities A1083 and A1084, an oblong basin cut into the floor (SU 1113) is created, from which strong concentrations of straw or vegetal fibres, also found on the surface of SU 1110, were recovered. This might be the remains of some type of mats made of plant fibres, suggesting, in association with mother-of-pearl fragments found in SU 1116, the possible installation of a manufacturing workshop. Without overemphasizing the specialization of this activity, which is also compatible with a domestic setting, it is evidence of productive activity indicating a further transformation of use in this part of Area 1000 during A1084 (possibly related, to the west of wall SU 1074, to the remains of a small structure evidenced by SU 1131).
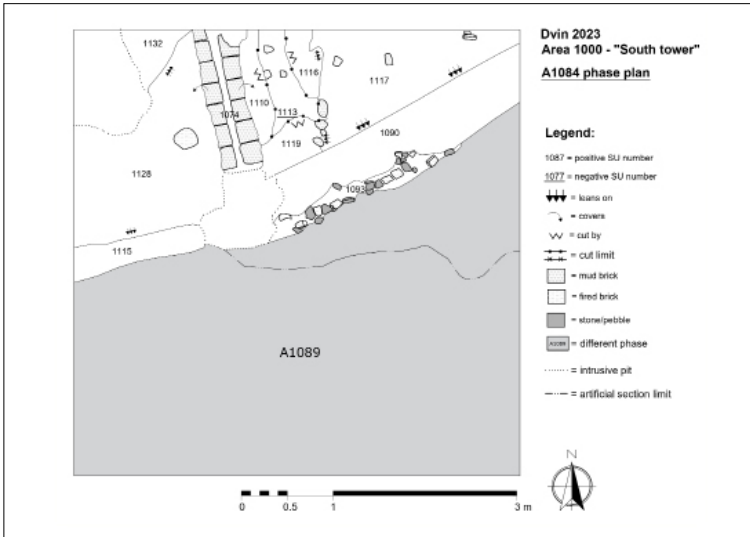
The wall SU 1074 continued to exist until Activity A1089, as evidenced by the accumulations and walking surfaces abutting the structure until that period. However, it is unclear if the wall had suffered deterioration starting from Activity A1086. During that period, a new floor (SU 1123) was laid west of the wall, characterized by the presence of reused materials from a ruin (mortar lumps and fragmentary mud bricks), covering the structures of SU 1131, which were evidently no longer in use. Notably, a cobalt blue glass rod, indicative of glass production, was found in SU 1123, although it is not possible to directly relate this to SU 1131, despite the topography suggesting a potential connection. East of the wall SU 1074, the deposit SU 1111 appears to form, marking the end of the use of the small manufacturing facility chronologically linked to Activity A1084 (see § 5.2). The change in usage patterns is clear from the subsequent Activity A1087 **[fig. 37]**, when a pit (SU 1126) was opened in the walking surface SU 1123, whose fill (SU 1127=1130) contained faunal remains but no ceramic materials. This possibly indicates a further moment of restoration or re-purposing, likely a restoration building-yard, resulting in a raised walking surface. On the east side of wall SU 1074, accumulations SU 1087 and SU 1097, a dumping of residual materials including gypsum and charcoal, are noted, preluding the new reorganization evident in Activity A1088, where new walking surfaces are established both west and east of SU 1074 **[fig. 38]**.
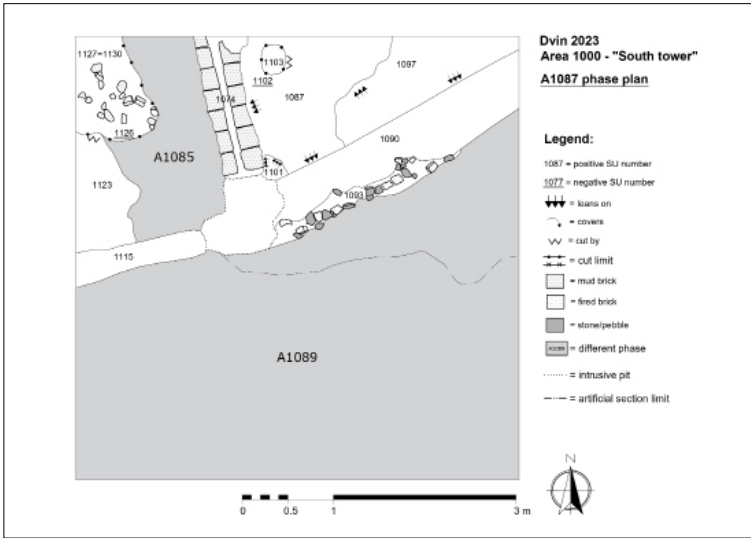
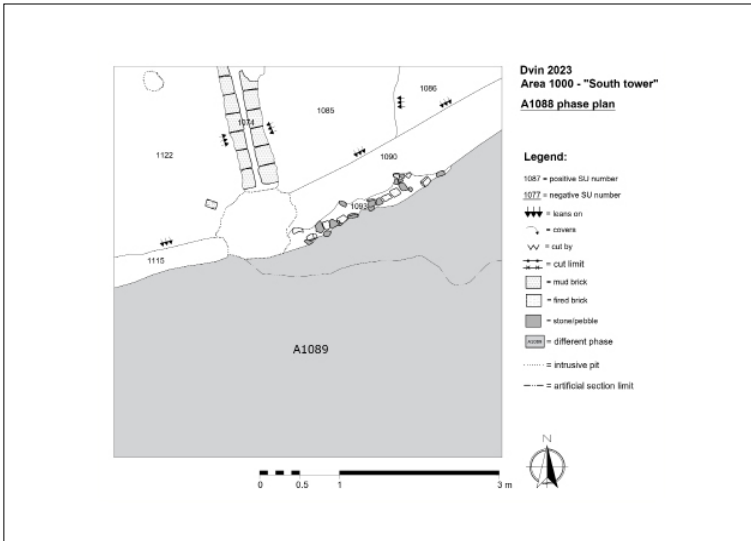All activities described so far are visible only in the northern portion of Area 1000, that is, north of the ancient structure delimited by walls SUs 1115-1090. The moment, crystallized in the subsequent Activity

A1089, completely changes the scenario of this (small) part of the Lower Fortress **[fig. 39]**. A series of collapses affecting all structures (SUs 1083, 1114, 1187) indicate a dramatic event, either natural (earthquake?) or anthropogenic (destruction by or with fire), which literally disintegrated the urban environment that was never re-established in this area.

However, over the ruins of the ancient structures, the oldest of which might have been constructed as early as the eleventh century, stable forms of settlement reappear, as evidenced by the establishment during Activity A1090 **[fig. 40]** of a production facility, featuring a flooring and channelling made of vertically set mud bricks, connected to an oval basin (SUs 1136-1137, 1148).

It is certain that from these two moments onwards (A1089 and A1090), Area 1000 retains the material memory of an 'open-air' portion of the city. It is important to remember that this re-configuration took place considerably earlier (in relative chronology) than the re-purposing of this area as a seasonal encampment site in the Mongol period (cf. Petrosyan et al. 2023, 232, phase 3/A1096). This indicates that the transformation and de-structuring of the urban environment of the Lower Fortress of Dvin, at least in Area 1000, was mainly caused by the collapses during the A1089 period which, despite in need of being precisely placed in absolute chronology, predates by several decades the Mongol destructions of post-1236.
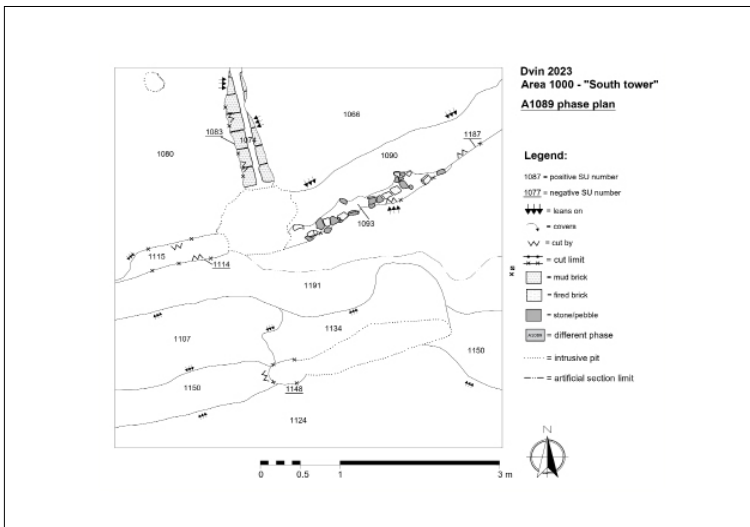
M.N.

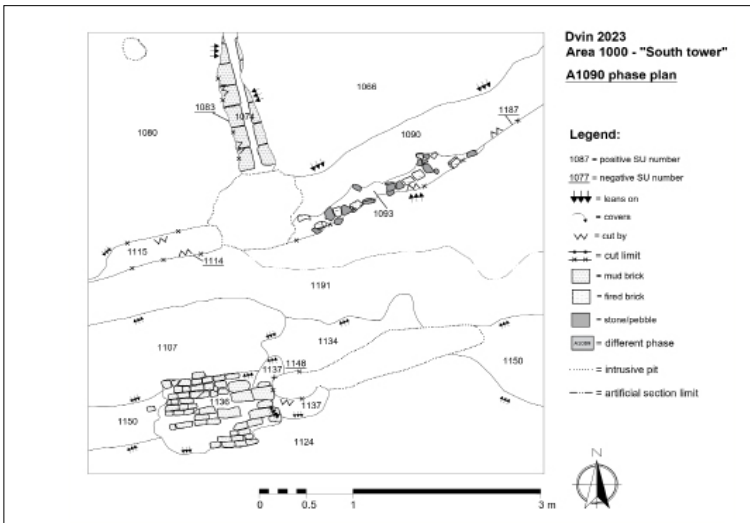**Figure 39**   Area 1000, Activity A1089

6 Material and Artefacts from Area 1000 and Area 2000

Elisa Pruno, Lisa dall'Olio

Regarding the 2023 campaign, the work presented here involves the first qualitative analysis of the main stratigraphic units, analyzed by phases of activity, for both Area 1000 and Area 2000. Additionally, it includes the initial presentation of an ongoing study on animal bones, specifically aiming to identify the main species present in the excavated contexts and attempting to provide insights into livestock farming and diet.

6.1 Artefacts

As for the study on materials, the following operations were carried out during the 2023 campaign:
- Processing of the 2023 data, referring to the materials from the 2022 excavation campaign.
- Preliminary inventory of September-October 2023 excavation campaign materials.
- First photographic documentation campaign of imported artefacts found in Dvin excavation campaigns, now stored at the History Museum of Armenia in Yerevan.

The processing of data concerning artefacts from the stratigraphic units excavated in both Area 1000 and Area 2000 during the 2022 season aims to tackle several issues, the primary one being the chronological contextualization of the activities identified through stratigraphic excavation. The primary challenge in addressing the requirement for chronological contextualization stems from the absence of prior studies conducted under similar micro-stratigraphical parameters. Typically, in the available literature for Dvin, chronological references are encountered primarily for painted, glazed, or enamelled ceramics, often spanning broad periods. Comprehensive studies on unglazed ceramics, which constitute the majority of findings and fulfilled a variety of functions, have not been recently updated.[19] The ongoing work entails systematic seriation of all stratigraphic units, preserving chronologies established with glazed ceramics while also integrating all unglazed ones. This process involves analysing the initial appearances, presences, and subsequent disappearances of different types on a seriation or semi-seriation basis. At the conclusion of these operations, we might be able to propose contextual chronological elements and even suggest chronologies for at least some of the unglazed pottery. The workflow for the study of each context begins with the quantification of pottery using and combining three methods: sherd count, Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) and sherd weight.[20] If the meaning of the counting of fragments and the weight of the different ceramic classes is clear, it is necessary to explain how the MNI count is obtained. MNI of each pottery typology is worked out from the number of different rims and bases. The higher of the two totals is added to the number of complete profiles with the addition of 1, to count all the body sherds of the same type (compensation by 1; Verdan 2011). The main objective of the MNI counting is to identify how many individual

---

19 The main objective of our work on materials is to carry out a comprehensive study on all the analysed contexts, encompassing all classes of ceramics and taking into account all the collected fragments. The most recent interventions on the excavations conducted in Dvin before 2021 are those of A. Zhamkochyan (2015; 2018). For a comprehensive view of the materials excavated at Dvin, it must be mentioned the French volume of Kalantaryan (1996). For imported ceramics in Armenia in the ninth century, cf. Pormohammadi 2015. Essential for studying medieval ceramics in Armenia are the many works of A. Babajanyan (among which 2015a; 2015b; 2018).

20 From a general point of view the quantification allows an overall comparison between different types of archaeological contexts, in the same site and in different sites, even if excavated at different times or by different research groups (but in this case, the criteria used for quantification must be made explicit): "Statistical exploitation of the counts is successful when the sampling is representative from both a qualitative (considering all categories and forms homogeneously) and a quantitative point of view. For instance, an assemblage that is too small might not necessarily lead to a general overview of each defined pottery production. Primarily, quantification of material is applied to facilitate comparison which supports the larger historical picture; hence the use of the same counting method for each assemblage is crucial" (David, Saskia Buechner 2022, 65).

forms are at least represented by all the fragments in each single stratigraphic unit. By then converting the obtained data into percentages, it allows for the verification, both diachronically and synchronically, of the presence of the different types and classes of ceramics across all the investigated areas.

This process will enable the identification, among other things, of the primary functions associated to the stratigraphic units. For instance, a substantial percentage of kitchen ceramics may indicate areas of domestic activity, while a significant presence of storage ceramics might suggest locations associated with the storage of food commodities, and so forth [fig. 41].

This is the only way to meaningfully compare the various technological-functional classes present in the studied contexts. After obtaining the quantification of the MNI for each class and type within each stratigraphic unit, it becomes possible to start defining the percentages present. This process will facilitate identifying, among other things, the primary functions carried out in the discovery areas of the stratigraphic units. For instance, a significant proportion of kitchen ceramics may indicate domestic activity areas, while a substantial presence of storage ceramics might suggest locations associated with the storage of food commodities, and so forth. Based on the results of these analyses, the preparation of an article is underway, which will also benefit from the ongoing processing of data concerning artefacts from the 2023 campaign.
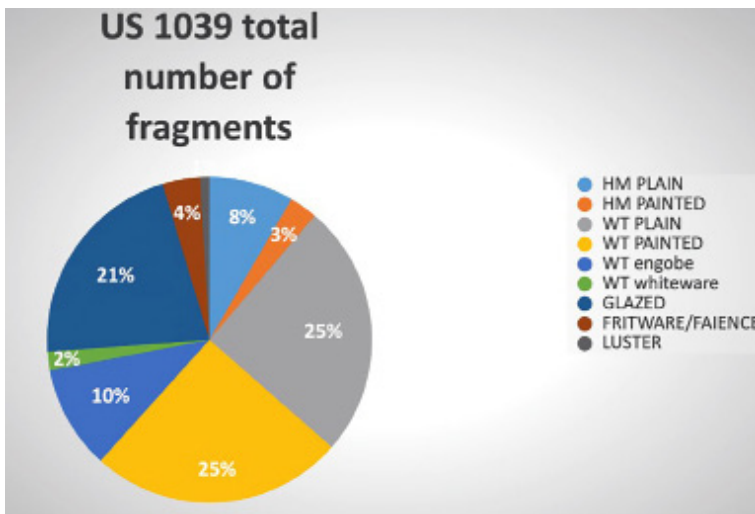
E.P.

Figure 41 The example of SU 1039

6.2   Area 1000: Materials and Artefacts

Extensive amount of pottery and animal bones were excavated during the 2023 fieldwork, along with smaller quantities of glass and metal artefacts. Qualitative analysis of the pottery was conducted during this campaign to establish technological classes and typologies, while quantitative analyses are currently ongoing. Initially, as was done for previous campaigns, a categorization was established based on technological classes, including handmade, moulded, and wheel-thrown pottery, distinguished further by glazed or unglazed, as well as by the composition of the body, whether siliceous or clay (the latter categorized as rough, semi-coarse, or coarse), for each pertinent stratigraphic unit. This classification excluded units associated with cleaning phases or those of non-anthropogenic origin, which will be examined in a subsequent phase of the research, such as for verifying residuality indices.

Nineteen stratigraphic units were examined in Area 1000, but here eight are presented. They are related to some different Activities identified (see § 5.4): the construction of the wall SU 1074 (SU 1128, 1116, A1084), its first and second use phases (SUs 1111-1112, 1123, A1085-A1086), its destruction (SU 1097, A1087) and the collapses of the wall (SUs 1080, 1091, A1089). Since the quantitative analysis is still underway, which is essential for addressing chronological and functional inquiries systematically, it is crucial to highlight that the overall horizon facilitates contextual framing in chronologically compatible phases (as far as presently understood) extending to the twelfth-thirteenth century.

Starting from Activity A1089, concerning the S Area, it's interesting to analyse, even if only at a preliminary qualitative level, which doesn't yet include the final phase of quantification, the SU 1091, which represents a layer interpretable as a context of post-use and destruction deposition of the walls SUs 1090 and 1115. It is a very rich SU, with a high quantity of pottery sherds, and a relevant index of fragmentation (that will be precisely measured during the inventory drafting process in the upcoming season).[21] Generally speaking, SU 1091 comprises both glazed and unglazed artefacts. Among the unglazed ones, there are both types for cooking use and for storage, with many diagnostic fragments **[fig. 42]**.

---

[21]   The fragmentation index is closely related to how contexts are formed and to their post-depositional events, as well as to the specific characteristics of different ceramic productions: for example, fragile vessels with thin walls can break into a greater number of fragments than vessels with thick walls. A fairly simple way to calculate it is to divide the weight of the ceramic fragments found by the total number of fragments (Ceci, Santangeli Valenzani 2016, 21).

Figure 42 Cooking pottery sherds from SU 1091

Among the glazed artefacts, there are also 4 Mina'i fragments and one stonepaste sherd **[fig. 43a]**. The discovery of Mina'i ware fragments in SU 1091 is significant. Mina'i ware is an Iranian pottery, notably developed in Kashan prior to the Mongol invasion of Persia in 1219, after which its production is generally believed to have ceased. Mina'i ware likely represented one of the most luxurious ceramic wares produced in Islamic lands during the medieval period.

In SU 1149, equivalent to 1091, qualitatively, a notable quantity of stonepaste pieces is observed, still regarded as significant materials pending further verification through archaeometric analyses.

In the Northwest Area, to define A1089, SU 1080 has been taken into account. It also presents a good number of fragments, and regarding ceramic classes, both glazed and unglazed are present. Among the glazed ones, there are no stonepaste ceramics, while among the unglazed we have cooking and storage vessels (possibly also transport artefacts) **[fig. 43b]**.

A1087 is here presented through the SU 1097 materials. Both classes are present, glazed and unglazed ones. There are fragments of green sgraffito, yellow and green sgraffito, two small fragments of stonepaste ware and, maybe, just one small piece of luster. As for the unglazed ceramics, it is mainly represented by storage materials, while there don't seem to be many fragments of kitchenware ceramics. The A1086 is represented only by SU 1097, a very small context with only five pottery fragments (one is stonepaste ware) and glass rod **[fig. 43c]**.

The A1185 is presented through the materials from the SU 1112 and 1111. Both are small, containing not a lot of fragments. There are both glazed and unglazed sherds and it should be emphasized the presence of mother-of-pearl in SU 1111 **[fig. 43d]**.

The presence of glass rod and mother-of-pearl fragments in A1086 and A1085 leads us to reflect on the possibility that in the vicinity of Area 1000 or nearby it, there could have been production facilities, especially related to glass or ceramic production. Moreover, excavations conducted in past years have suggested the presence of artisan workshops precisely on the western slope of the citadel and near the southern tower (Kalantarian 1996, 50-2; Ghafadaryan, Kalantaryan 2002, 51-2; Zhamkochian 2015; 2018).

Both SU 1116 and SU 1128 are connected to the construction of SU 1074 (A1084). SU 1128 is quite interesting, with glazed and unglazed pottery, two fragments of stonepaste ware, some glazed pottery sherds and a group of very dark (and burnt?) fragments of unglazed pottery. Instead, SU 1116 is quite poor in ceramic fragments, and all of them, except one, are unglazed.

E.P.

Figure 43
a) Mina'i sherds from SU 1091; b) Unglazed pottery from SU 1080; c) Glass rod from SU 1123; d) mother-of-pearl fragment from SU 1111

6.3 Area 1000: Faunal Remains

During the 2023 archaeological mission, animal bones found in Area 1000 in 2022 were catalogued. The materials date back to the late thirteenth (possibly also early fourteenth) century (A1097, A1096, and A 1095) and were uncovered in rubbish pits (SUs 1032, 1039, 1041, 1043, 1048, 1051), walking surfaces (SUs 1029-1030, 1044, 1047, 1052, 1054, 1069) and accumulations layers (SUs 1053, 1064-1065, 1068, 1081, 1082).

For species identification, several comparative anatomy manuals (Pales, Lambert 1971; Schmidt 1972; Barone 1976) and specific articles were used to distinguish between sheep and goat (Payne 1985; Halstead et al. 2002; Zeder, Lapham 2010). The data from the mandibular wear stage, useful for the determination of the age of death, were recorded according to the criteria of Payne (1973) for domestic caprines and Hambleton (2001) for cattle.

Generic age class information derived from the analysis of long bone epiphyseal fusion were collected according to the work of Bullock and Rackham (1982) for domestic caprines and Silver (1969) for cattle. For osteometric data, the method proposed by von den Driesch (1976) was used as a reference, integrating it with the indications of Salvagno and Albarella (2017) for domestic caprines. In addition, taphonomic processes (slaughter, processing, burning, gnawing marks) and pathological evidence were recorded.

There were a total of 570 catalogued remains, of which 179 (31.4%) were determined at a taxonomic and anatomical level, 254 (44.6%) at an anatomical level and 137 (24%) for which the determination at any level was not possible due to fragmentation which does not allow for certain identification in the absence of a comparative collection.

Taxa	A1095	A1096	A1097
Ovis aries L. (sheep)	7	5	8
Capra hircus L. (goat)	6	2	3
Ovis vel *Capra* (sheep/goat)	33	28	28
Bos taurus L. (cattle)	25	13	15
Equus sp. (horse/donkey/hybrids)	-	1	-
Sus sp. (pig/wild boar)	-	1	-
Canis sp. (dog/wolf)	-	1	-
Felis sp. (domestic cat/wild cat)	-	1	-
Coturnix coturnix L. (common quail)	-	2	-
Total identified bones	71	54	54
Aves	-	1	-
Small vertebra	13	13	17
Small rib	23	34	29

Taxa	A1095	A1096	A1097
Large vertebra	7	8	6
Large rib	11	16	13
Not identified	68	61	71
Total unidentified bones	122	133	136

The faunal assemblage is represented almost exclusively by goats, sheep and oxen; only in A1096 there are other species present with few remains.

The frequency of species in the investigated phases shows a decrease in the presence of the ox in favour of domestic goats, and in particular sheep, between A1095 and A1096 with a distribution that remains substantially stable in A1097.

The anatomical elements of domestic caprines are all attested in the three phases, whereas for cattle this occurs only in A1095; in A1096 and A1097 the species is represented almost exclusively by terminal parts of limbs.

For A1096, the carpal bone of an equid, the scapula of a young pig, the phalanx of a canid belonging to a large dog or a wolf, the humerus of a young cat and two tarsometatsarsi of common quail are also present.

The data on the age of death obtained from the mandibular wear stage for A1095 and A1097 and from the analysis of long bone epiphyseal fusion, indicate that goats and sheep were culled not before they reached six months in sub-adult and adult/senile age, while for the cattle, a veal aged less than eight months in A1097 and sub-adult/adult specimens are attested.

The traces associated with the slaughter of animals refer not only to the skinning and removal of meat, but also to the partitioning of bones to obtain smaller pieces suitable for cooking, and the division of carcasses into half-carcasses. Traces of which remain in the vertebrae, generally divided in half at all the phases investigated.

Evidence of gnawing marks by medium and large carnivores is more frequent in A1095, while evidence of burning is more frequent in later phases.

Traces of working activity have been identified on a sheep/goat astragalus from A1095 that has smoothed surface on the medial and lateral sides [fig. 44].

Pathologies were found on the bones of domestic caprines and cattle. For domestic caprines, evidence is limited to a A1095 sheep mandible showing abnormal bone growth on the mandibular branch (buccal face) possibly caused by trauma in the process of healing and to an abscess related to the loss of the second premolar on a A1097 goat mandible.

For the cattle pathologies were found on a metatarsus in A1095 and on two proximal phalanges in A1097. The metatarsus shows

degeneration of the inner tissue in the proximal-medial part of the bone [fig. 44a]. One phalanx is affected by an extensive abnormal bone growth on the palmar, axial and abaxial sides that partially reaches the proximal articular surface [fig. 44b]. The other phalanx presents a roundish bone outgrowth approximately 0.5 cm in diameter on the dorsal face [fig. 44c].

The prevalence of domestic caprines in the sample suggests an economy based mainly on goats and sheep breeding. The absence of slaughtered animals under the age of six months indicates a breeding strategy focused on the production of meat, wool and hides. However, the absence of very young animals could be linked to the consumption of these specimens in other not-investigated areas of the city.
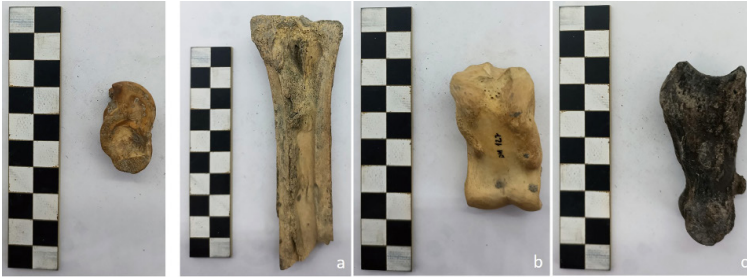
Figure 44   On the left, the worked sheep/goat astragalus from A1095 (lateral view); on the right, cattle's pathological bones: a) metatarsus from SU 1068; b) proximal phalanx from SU 1047; c) burnt proximal phalanx from SU 1047

Cattle seem to play a more prominent role during A1095. The quantitative decrease of remains and, above all, the clear prevalence of anatomical elements with low food interest from A1096 onwards seem to indicate a change in the dietary habits of the occupants of the area that continued into the next phase. The pathological evidence identified does not show features that can be definitely associated with work activities and could also depend on the advanced age of the specimens, but the data on the age of death indicate that cattle were generally kept alive until adulthood or senility, so it is likely that they were used as labour force. The presence of a mandibular fragment associated with a veal less than eight months old indicates that the species was probably bred at the site or in its immediate vicinity at least in A1097.

A change between A1095 and A1096 seems confirmed by the appearance of species other than domestic caprines and cattle. The small number of fragments attesting to the presence of these species is not compatible with a change in eating habits that remained centred on the consumption of domestic caprines and cattle but could

indicate a temporary abandonment of the area. Of these species, perhaps only common quail could be traced back to hunting activities because they have already been determined in earlier studies in rubbish pits dated between the seventh and twelfth century AD in other areas of Dvin (Dal' 1952). However, the remains of Area 1000 pertain to accumulation layers (SUs 1047, 1053) and not to rubbish pits that can be associated with meal remains. Their presence may not be due to human activity also because the Armenian territory falls within the reproductive area of the species, which is abandoned in winter (Svensson, Mullarney, Zetterstöm 2017, 56).

Possible indicators of activity in the area include an astragalus that has its medial and lateral sides abraded and smoothed. The presence of talus in archaeological sites is usually linked to ritual or playful practices that lead to the discovery of discrete quantities of these bone remains (Gilmour 1997; Minniti, Peyronel 2005; De Grossi Mazzorin, Minniti 2012). In prehistoric times, and particularly in Eastern Europe, astragali were sometimes interpreted as functional artefacts for the finishing of handmade pottery (Mărgărit 2017).

L.d.O.

6.4 Area 2000: Materials and Artefacts

Unlike the findings observed last year, the 2023 campaign in Area 2000 has yielded a bigger quantity of artefacts, although it is evident that the presence of finds in this sector of the site is much smaller in absolute terms and also when compared to the quantities of materials in Area 1000. As mentioned above (see § 3.2), the discovery of a coin (SU 2072), currently undergoing restoration, is notable. Among the 13 SUs analysed, there is a clear absence of glazed pottery, while there is a significant presence, at least in this initial phase of analysis, of storage and/or transport ceramics. Additionally, several interesting glass fragments have been uncovered **[fig. 45a]**.

Dividing the stratigraphic column by Activities, the most recent (A2096) is represented by SU 2055, with only two fragments of cooking pottery **[fig. 45b]**, one fragment of animal bone, and one fragment of material that, although very damaged, could be plaster.

The SUs 2043-2045, 2057, 2072 and 2073 are part of A2095 (area SE) and SU 2060 was in the same Activity in the East corner. The totality of the sherds are unglazed. Concerning their functionality, most of the sherds are for storage, only few pieces are cooking ware. Of particular interest is the discovery in SU 2057 of one fragment of mat-impressed kitchen pottery (a 'stuoia') **[fig. 45c]**, a type that has been identified in locations far from Armenia, including in Sicily, Italy (cf. Arcifa 2010).

At this point of the research, regarding Area 2000, it is possible to indicate a certain presence of storage materials and, perhaps, transport materials (difficult to distinguish given the lack of a significant number of fragments and, especially, the lack of diagnostic pieces). The glass fragments, although not large in size, are very interesting (also because some were found among last year's materials as well) and their function will need to be studied carefully.

E.P.

6.5 History Museum of Yerevan Survey and Documentation

Throughout the 2023 campaign, a significant effort was made to photographically document and study artefacts housed in the Museum of Armenian History in Yerevan. Our primary focus was on imported artefacts from major sites, notably Dvin, as well as Ani and others [fig. 46]. This ongoing activity, intended to be completed in future missions, primarily aims to elucidate the primary and most significant channels of commercial contact between major Armenian cities and renowned ceramic production sites, particularly those within the Islamic world. This data will assist us in assessing, by the conclusion of our excavation campaigns, whether our understanding of imported

materials has broadened or if the channels and types remain consistent. Moreover, the substantial presence of intact pieces at the museum enables a considerable enhancement of our understanding of morphologies, which are often challenging to comprehend solely through the analysis of excavation fragments.

E.P.

Figure 46
Luster pottery from
Dvin at the HMA
in Yerevan

7 Excavations of the Area of the Future Building of the Dvin Museum

Hamlet Petrosyan, Tatyana Vardanesova, Hamazasp Abrahamyan, Lyuba Kirakosyan

In the spring of 2023, excavation and cleaning activities were carried out on the site of Dvin future museum and archaeological camp with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Armenia.

7.1 Archaeological Description

In 2022, in this area, which is located to southwest of the citadel, on the right side of the Hnaberd-Verin Artashat intercommunal road [fig. 1], preliminary excavations were conducted (Petrosyan et al. 2022). The expedition chose this area believing that during the Middle Ages the two main moats protecting the city converged here,

making the presence of cultural layers less likely. In the fall of 2022, a 10 m long and 2 m wide exploration trench was dug in the central part of the future construction area. These works reached a depth of 220 cm, revealing three main layers [fig. 47]. These works continued into 2023, expanding to cover an area of 275 m² (Area A).
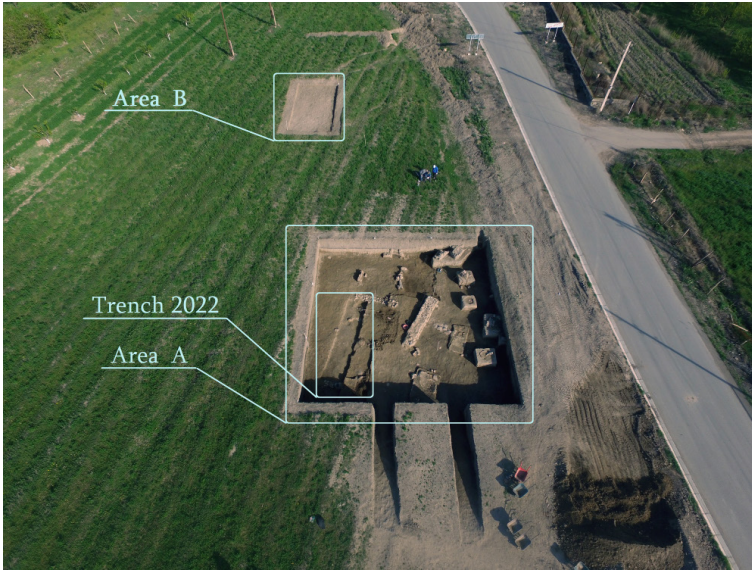
The uppermost layer, with a thickness of 90-130 cm, consisted of a mixed layer devoid of significant archaeological contexts.

Below this, starting at a depth of 90 cm and extending 7 m across the excavation site, was a layer up to 35 cm thick, identified as a deposit of a water-bearing ditch.

The third layer, containing the main archaeological features, began at a depth of 90-130 cm and was dated to the eighth-ninth centuries. This layer was characterized by simple pottery, as well as fragments of glazed pottery from the ninth century, glass, bricks, metal objects, slag, mortar, and more. Unlike the upper layers, the third layer revealed distinct features such as brick walls, floors, sections of raw brick, poured mortar, trampled floors with ash deposits, and intact objects.

In the spring of 2023, archaeological work continued in the same site, now conducted in Area A and Area B [fig. 2]. The main section selected for further excavation in Area A, measuring 15 × 15 m, including the ditch from November 2022 (west section) [fig. 2]. This section was conventionally named Area A and was subdivided into nine

squares [fig. 48]. The second excavation site – Area B, located 11.5 m west of Area A – was divided into two squares.

In excavation Area A, the situation observed in 2022, particularly in the exploratory trench, was generally repeated, but the expanded dimensions of the excavation site now allow for a better understanding of the situation. The excavation has reached a depth of up to 250 cm. As a result of archaeological works, both in the exploratory trench and in excavation Area A, we have identified three main layers that correspond to each other in their main features [figs 49-50].

The first layer is in a mixed state and lacks significant archaeological contexts. It contains pottery from different periods as well as modern materials. This layer is characterized by its dark grey, sandy composition with gravel, shell fragments, and stones. The thickness of the first layer varies across different parts of the excavation site, generally ranging from 50 to 130 cm. Specifically, it is 50 to 70 cm thick on the north side, 70 to 90 cm on the south side, 50 cm on the east side, and 120 to 130 cm on the west side. This layer shares similar characteristics with the first layer observed in the exploratory trench.

The second layer is situated on the southern side of excavation site A (A 3, A 4, A 5, A 8, A 9). It extends 4.4 m in width on the eastern side and 10 m on the western side. This layer appears black with abundant gravel and sand. It contains a large quantity of pottery from various

periods, predominantly glazed and plain pottery dating to the ninth century. Additionally, there are glass fragments and animal bones, most of which show signs of burning. This layer shares characteristics with those observed in the previous year's exploration.

Figure 49 The third main layer of the excavation site

Figure 50
Measurement of the main layer
of the excavation site

Another layer is identified in the trench. The cuts of the platforms entering the trench provide insight into the total width of this layer, which averages 12.5 m. This stratum is notably a water deposit and, based on initial observations, likely represents the bed of the water ditch surrounding the citadel. The thickness of this sediment gradually decreases toward the edges, while in the central area, the layer reaches up to 60 cm in thickness **[fig. 51]**.

Figure 51 A section of water sediment black layer at a site of excavation

The third main layer is evident at various depths across different parts of the excavation site, a result partly influenced by the damage to the layer in the southern part of excavation site A, possibly due to the water supply ditch (the second layer). In the northern part of excavation site A (A 1, A 2, A 4, A 5 squares), the layer becomes visible starting from a depth of 60 cm, revealing preserved remnants of buildings. These sections feature remnants of one or two-row, single-layer dry-laid river stone walls. The first wall measures 195 cm in length, and the second measures 120 cm. There are also single-layer brick walls and, in two instances, a double course of river stone is placed atop a single course of brickwork. These walls measure 120 and 195 cm in length, and the bricks, like in other cases, are sized at 23 × 23 × 5 and 24 × 24 × 5 cm. Throughout the layer, at various depths, parts of river stone and brick walls, a *tonir*, pots, hearth, etc., were discovered with lime mortar and dry layering. A considerable amount of almost complete and fragmentary glazed and plain pottery was found in this layer. Glazed pottery dates back to the ninth

century and gradually decreases in quantity with depth. Plain pottery is similar to those found in the exploration trench from 2022. Additionally, numerous new types of pottery, all dating back to the eighth-ninth centuries, were discovered. The layer also contains a substantial amount of glass, iron fragments, coins, bones, and the upper arm of an early medieval winged cross, among other items **[fig. 52]**.

Figure 52   On the left, vessels from Area A; on the right, cross arm of an early medieval winged cross from excavation Area A

Several archaeological situations and remains of structures have been documented. In the central part of square A 5, at a depth of 130 cm, a mixed situation with a length of 360 cm and a width of 180 cm was preserved **[fig. 53]**. This area contains pottery fragments mixed with river stones and brick waste, forming a solid layer without ash. At the same depth, but in the edge area of squares A 6 and A 7, an ash layer up to 5 cm thick can be observed. In square A 4, at a depth of 180 cm, a lime mortar platform was uncovered, measuring 150 × 140 cm **[fig. 54]**. The mortar sits on a brick base, and two semi-preserved urns were found to the south of the platform. Moving north of the lime mortar platform, in the central part of the excavation site, a stone platform for the raw brick wall was uncovered at a depth of 170 cm in square A 5, measuring 500 cm long and 90 cm wide. From this stony platform to the east, towards the edge of the excavation site (squares A 2, A 3, A 4, and A 5), an area covered with large river stones and lime mortar was opened **[fig. 49]**. Next to the central high part of this area, two wells with river stones were found, each with pursed lips. Another similar well was discovered on the southern edge of the adjacent river stone platform. Two additional underground wells were found to the north of the section covered with river rocks. From one of these pits (A 1), fragments of pottery and bones were recovered, while the

other (A 2) contained only various fragments of the same glass vessel. In square A 7, a 140 cm deep section of a 55 cm long brick wall with one row and 7 layers was preserved **[fig. 55]**. In the same square, on the western edge of the brick wall, a two-row river stone wall measuring 230 cm in length and 50 cm in width was found at a depth of 195 cm.

Figure 53   The archaeological situation in the center of Area A

Figure 54   The lime mortar platform

Excavations also revealed the continuation of the brick floor uncovered during the previous year's work (in square A 8). The floor is damaged, with only a section measuring 60 × 60 cm preserved. To the north of the floor, there is a two-row river stone wall, measuring 360 cm in length and 50-60 cm in width. Considering the direction of the wall, it would intersect with the wall in square A 7 if it continued. Adjacent to this wall in square A 6, from the north, is a hearth **[fig. 56]**. The hearth, located at a depth of 200 cm, consists of 7 bricks. It has an average width of 50 cm and is filled with ash. Fragments of pottery were found on the hearth. Additionally, there are numerous earthen sections in the layer.

Sections constructed with raw brick or clay mortar filling-plastering technology are found across the entire surface of excavation site A and at various depths. One such section is located in the area of squares A 2 and A 3, adjacent to the river stone-lined section and 150 cm deep. This fragment has a preserved height of up to 80 cm, a length of 290 cm, and a thickness of 85 cm. In square A 3, at a depth of 210 cm, another part of the earthen wall is found, measuring 310 cm in length and 50 cm in thickness. 170 cm west of the aforementioned walls, on the opposite side of the river stone section (in square A 5), another wall section is preserved. This section is 85 cm thick, 60 cm high, and 70 cm long, with its continuation extending under the stone platform. A small portion of the earthwork is preserved in the central part of the long wall in square A 9, at a depth of 160 cm. This section is about 50 cm wide and 80 cm long.

Another small fragment is found in square A 7 at a depth of 215 cm. It is attached to a fired brick arrangement in square A 7 and measures up to 30 cm wide and 20 cm high. The walls opened in the lower part of squares A 6 and A 7 are relatively well preserved. The first wall (in A 6) is located under the presented hearth, with a depth of 200 cm. It is 330 cm long, 60 cm wide, and up to 50 cm high. The second wall (in A 6 and A 7) is situated at a depth of 240 cm and opened at a height of 20 cm. It measures 200 cm in length and 60 cm in width.

Various remnants of rammed clay floors were also documented in the excavation site area, the primary one being the continuation of the floor uncovered in last year's exploration trench, measuring about 300 × 300 cm. It is located at a depth of 220 cm. Remnants of brickwork and tiled floors are also present. A similar floor was discovered in square A 7 at a depth of 210 cm, beneath the wall. This section measures about 150 cm long and 90 cm wide, consisting of 24 × 24 × 5 cm bricks and debris. Another part of the floor was preserved in square A 6 at a depth of 230 cm. This floor measures 130 × 120 cm and consists of 6 polished slabs.

Figure 56 The hearth

Excavation site B measures 10 m long and 5 m wide **[fig. 48]**, with a depth of 150 cm. In excavation site B, the situation is similar to that of excavation site A, except for the second layer, as the sediment from the trench was not documented here. The upper layer corresponds to the first layer of excavation site A and shares the same characteristics. The thickness of this layer is 90-100 cm. Notably, a bronze

medal related to the Patriotic War was found at a depth of 90 cm. The lower layer corresponds to the main third layer of excavation site A and has an excavated thickness of 50-60 cm [fig. 57]. The main situations are located in square B 2 of the excavation site (southern part). Here, we have debris from a river stone wall, a river stone wall section measuring 140 cm in length and 45 cm in thickness at a depth of 110 cm, and a raw brick wall platform section measuring 80 × 70 cm at a depth of 140 cm.

Figure 57 The general view of excavation Area B

The other preserved part of the wall is constructed using tuff pieces and fired bricks (23 × 23 × 5 cm, 24 × 24 × 5 cm). This double-layered wall is 120 cm deep, 235 cm long, and 40 cm wide. Parallel to this wall is another wall constructed with the same dimensions of fired bricks and reused red and black full chevron tufas (two full tufas, one black, and each measuring 60 × 45 cm). This second wall is 180 cm long and 45 cm thick. Additionally, another reused tufa slab, sized 50 × 50 cm, and is located in square B 1. An interesting find is a red tuff fragment of a window sill, discovered at a depth of 120 cm [fig. 58]. It measures 60 cm in length, 30 cm in width, and 20 cm in thickness (B 2).

The layer contains fragments of both plain and glazed pottery, bones, metal objects, glass fragments, and other artefacts, all dating to the ninth century.

Figure 58   B 2 square

7.2   Finds

During the archaeological works, a large number of mainly eighth-ninth century dated plain and glazed pottery sherds were found. Complete objects form a smaller group. In addition, fragments dating from the early and twelfth-thirteenth centuries were also discovered in the upper mixed layer of the excavations and in the sediment of the water-carrying ditch.

The glazed pottery present in the main layer dates back to the ninth century **[fig. 59]** and gradually decreases in quantity with depth. Plain pottery is identical to complete examples found in the exploration trench from 2022. Additionally, there are a large number of new types, all dating from the eighth-ninth centuries **[fig. 52]**. Furthermore, there is a substantial amount of glass, iron fragments, coins, bones, etc. in the layer. Research on the objects found in the excavation is currently ongoing.

In both A and B excavations dating to the eighth-ninth centuries, reused early medieval architectural details were discovered in the dated layers. These include the stylized tuff parapet of a window in square B 2 **[fig. 16]** and two hewn stones reused from black tuff, which belong to this series. Single-hewn tuff masonry stones were also recorded in various parts of the excavations. Additionally, in the

eastern part of excavation site A, the upper wing of an early medieval winged cross was found **[fig. 52]**.

8   Conclusions

Thus, the main approach of the expedition regarding the selection of the area, which suggested that the waters flooding the citadel and the central district mixed and passed through this place, was confirmed by archaeological excavations. However, beneath the sediment layer of the canal, a rich archaeological layer dating back to the eighth-ninth century was found. Based on this discovery, the expedition proposed to introduce a new component into the project, which involves a complete excavation of the area of the future building and its incorporation (or partial presentation of parts) into the future museum as an underground glass-enclosed exhibition. The setting and material are rich, and the expectations are high. We believe that the implementation of such a project will be unique in the practice of restoring archaeological monuments in Armenia and will significantly contribute to increasing the tourist attraction of Dvin.

Bibliography

Al-Balādhurī, A. (2022). *History of the Arab Invasions: The Conquest of the Lands. A New Translation of al-Balādhurī's Futūḥ al-Buldān*. Transl. H.N. Kennedy. London; New York; Dublin: I.B. Tauris.

Arcifa, L. (2010). "Indicatori archeologici e dinamiche insediative nella Sicilia tardo bizantina". Congiu, M. et al. (a cura di), *La Sicilia bizantina. Storia, città e territorio*. Sciascia, 67-89.

Babaǰanyan, A. (2015a). "Hayastani Tʻ-ŽĒ dd. anǰnarak xecʻełeni hardarman ełanaknerə" (Decoration Techniques of Unglazed Pottery of Armenia, Ninth-Seventeenth Centuries). *Ēǰmiacin*, 9, 111-25.

Babaǰanyan, A. (2015b). *Hayastani ŽD-ŽĒ dd. xecʻełenə* (Armenian Ceramics, Fourteenth-Seventeenth Centuries) [PhD dissertation]. Erevan: HHGA Akademia – Hnagitutʻyan ew azgagrutʻyan Institut.

Babaǰanyan, A. (2018). "The Glazed Pottery of Armenia in the Twelfth-Fourteenth Centuries in the Cultural Context of East and West". *AIECM3 Proceedings of XI Congress on Medieval and Modern Period Mediterranean = Conference Proceedings* (Antalya, 19-24 October 2015). Antalya: Verkam, 271-8.

Barker, P. (1977). *Techniques of Archaeological Excavation*. London: Batsford.

Barone, R. (1976). *Anatomia comparata dei mammiferi domestici. Osteologia*. Bologna: Edagricole.

Brogiolo, G.P.; Cagnana, A. (2012). *Archeologia dell'architettura. Metodi e interpretazioni*. Firenze: All'Insegna del Giglio.

Brook, K.A. (2006). *The Jews of Khazaria*. 2nd ed. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bullock, D.; Rackham, J. (1982). "Epiphyseal Fusion and Tooth Eruption of Feral Goats from Moffatdale, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland". Wilson, B. et al. (eds.), *Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites*. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 73-80.

Ceci, M.; Santangeli Valenzani, R. (2016). *La ceramica nello scavo archeologico. Analisi, quantificazione e interpretazione*. Roma: Carocci.

Czeglédy, K. (1960). "Khazar Raids in Transcaucasia in 762-764 A.D.". *Acta Orientalia. Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 11(1-3), 75-88.

Dalʻ, S.K. (1952). "Pticy iz raskopok Dvina (VII-XII vv. n.ė.)" (Birds from the Dvin Excavations [Seventh-Twelfth Centuries C.E.]). *Ašxatutʻyunner Hayastani Petakan Patmakan tʻangarani = Trudy gosudarstvennogo istoričeskogo muzea Armenii*, 4, 113-15.

David, R.; Saskia Buechner, M. (2022). "Quantification". David, R. (ed.), *Concise Manual for Ceramic Studies*. Nairobi: Africae, 54-7.

De Grossi Mazzorin, J.; Minniti, C. (2012). "L'uso degli astragali nell'antichità tra ludo e divinazione". De Grossi Mazzorin et al. (eds), *Atti del 6° Convegno nazionale di archeozoologia = Conference Proceedings* (San Romano in Garfagnana, 21-4 maggio 2009). Lecce: Associazione Italiana di ArcheoZoologia, 213-20.

Ghafadaryan, K.G. (1952). *Dvin kʻałakʻə ev nra pełumnerə* (The City of Dvin and Its Excavations). Vol. 1, *Haykakan SSH GA Hnagitakan aršavaxmbi 1937-1950 tʻtʻ. ašxatankʻneri ardyunkʻnerə* (Results of the 1937-50 Archeological Expedition of the NAS RA). Erevan: HSSṘ GA hratarakčutʻyun.

Ghafadaryan, K.G. (1982). *Dvin kʻałakʻə ev nra pełumnerə* (The City of Dvin and Its Excavations). Vol. 2, *Haykakan SSH GA Hnagitakan aršavaxmbi 1951-1972 tʻtʻ. ašxatankʻneri ardyunkʻnerə* (Results of the 1951-72 Archeological Expedition of the NAS RA). Erevan: HSSH GA hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Ghafadaryan, K.G.; Ghafadaryan, A.A. (2002). *Dvin II. Dvin kʻaɫakʻə ev nra pełumnerə* (*1973-1980 tʻtʻ*) (Dvin II. The City of Dvin and Its Excavations [1973-80]). Erevan: HH GAA ʻGitutʻyunʼ hratarakčutʻyun.

Gilmour, G.H. (1997). "The Nature and Function of Astragalus Bones from Archaeological Contexts in the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean". *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 16(2), 167-76.

Halstead, P. et al. (2002). "Sorting the Sheep from the Goats. Morphological Distinctions between the Mandibles and Mandibular Teeth of Adult *Ovis* and *Capra*". *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 29(5), 545-53.

Hambleton, E. (2001). "A Method for Converting Grant Mandible Wear Stage to Payne Style Wear Stages in Sheep, Cow and Pig". *Archaeological Sciences '97 = Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Durham* (2-4 September 1997). Oxford: Archaeopress, 103-8. BAR International Series 939.

Harris, E. (1979). *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy*. London; San Diego: Academic Press.

Harris, E. (1983). *Principi di stratigrafia archeologica*. Bari: Laterza.

Hermann, G. (1999). *Monuments of Merv. Traditional Buildings of the Karakum*. London: Society of Antiquaries of London.

Kalantarian, A.A. (1996). *Dvin, histoire et archéologie de la ville médiévale*. Neuchâtel: Recherches et Publications.

Kalantarian, A.A. (ed.) (2008). *Dvin kʻaɫakʻə ev nra pełumnerə (1981-1985)* (The City of Dvin and Its Excavations [1981-5]), vol. 4. Erevan: NAS RA ʻGitutyunʼ hratarakčʻutʻyun.

Kennedy, H.N. (ed.) (1990). *The History of al-Ṭabarī*. Vol. 29, *Al-Mansūr and al-Mahdī, A.D. 763-786/A.H. 146-169*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kennedy, H.N. [1981] (2016). *The Early Abbasid Caliphate. A Political History*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge.

Leonetti, M. (2024). *Edilizia civile a Dvin (Armenia) tra IX e XIII sec. d.C.* [M.A. Dissertation]. Firenze: Università di Firenze, Scuola di specializzazione in Beni archeologici.

Mannoni, T. (2005). "Archeologia della produzione architettonica. Le tecniche costruttive". *Arqueología de la arquitectura*, 4, 11-19.

Mărgărit, M. (2017). "Spatulas and Abraded Astragalus. Two Types of Tools Used to Process Ceramics? Examples from the Romanian Prehistory". *Quaternary International*, 438, 201-11.

Minniti, C.; Peyronel, L. (2005). "Symbolic or Functional Astragali from Tell Mardikh-Ebla (Syria)". *Archaeofauna*, 14, 7-26.

Nucciotti, M.; Vannini, G. (2019). "Light Archaeology and Territorial Analysis. Perspectives and Experiences of the Florentine Medievalist School." *Archaeologia Polona*, 50, 149-69.

Nucciotti, M. et al. (2015). "The Making of the Silk Road in Armenia (7th-14th Centuries). Vaiots Dzor and Arates Monastery". Arthur, P.; Imperiale M.L. (eds), *VII Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Medievale* (Lecce, 9-12 September 2015). Firenze: All'Insegna del Giglio, 493-8.

Pales, L.; Lambert, C. (1971). *Atlas ostéologique pour servir à l'identification des mammifères du Quaternaire. Les membres Carnivores*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

Payne, S. (1973). "Kill-off Patterns in Sheep and Goats. The Mandibles from Aşvan Kale". *Anatolian Studies*, 23, 281-303.

Payne, S. (1985). "Morphological Distinctions between the Mandibular Teeth of Young Sheep, *Ovis*, and Goats, *Capra*". *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 12(2), 139-47.

Petrosyan, H. et al. (2022). "The Armenian-Italian Joint Expedition at Dvin. Report of 2021 Activities". *Armeniaca*, 1, 199-229.
http://doi.org/10.30687/arm/9372–8175/2022/01/011

Petrosyan, H. et al. (2023). "The Armenian-Italian Joint Expedition at Dvin. Report of 2022 Activities". *Armeniaca*, 2, 193-246.
http://doi.org/10.30687/arm/2974-6051/2023/01/009

P'ormohammadi, P'.H. (2015). "XI darum Hayastan nermucvac xec'ełeni" (The Pottery Imported to Armenia in Ninth Century). *Banber Erevani hamalsarani – Hayagitut'yun*, 16(1), 39-53.

Salvagno, L.; Albarella, U. (2017). "A Morphometric System to Distinguish Sheep and Goat Postcranial Bone". *PloS one*, 12(6), e0178543.
https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0178543

Schmidt, E. (1972). *Atlas of Animal Bones*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Silver, I.A. (1969). "The Ageing of Domestic Animals". Brothwell, D. et al. (eds), *Science in Archaeology*. London, Thames and Hudson, 283-302.

Svensson, L.; Mullarney, K.; Zetterstöm, D. (2017). *Guida degli uccelli d'Europa, Nord Africa e Vicino Oriente*. Roma: Ricca editore.

Ter-Ghevondyan, A. [1965] (1976). *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*. Transl. by N.G. Garsoian. Lisbon: Livraria Bertrand.

Verdan, S. (2011). "Pottery Quantification. Some Guidelines". Verdan, S. et al. (eds), *Early Iron Age Pottery. A Quantitative Approach = Proceedings of the International Round Table Organized by the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece* (Athens, 28-30 November 2008). Oxford: Archaeopress, 165-71.

Von den Driesch, A. (1976). *A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites*, vol. 1. Cambridge (MA): Peabody Museum Press.

Zeder, M.A.; Lapham, H.A. (2010). "Assessing the Reliability of Criteria Used to Identify Postcranial Bones in Sheep, *Ovis*, and Goats, *Capra*". *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 37(11), 2887-905.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2010.06.032

Zhamkochian, A.S. (1990). "Čartarapetakan hardarank'i nmušner Tiknuni amroc'ic'" (Samples of Architectural Decoration from Tiknuni Castle). *Lraber hasarakakan gitut'yunneri*, 12, 66-75.

Zhamkochian, A.S. (2015). "Dvini miǰnaberdi haravayin burgi šertagrut'yan patmut'yunic'" (The Excavations and the Stratigraphy at the South Part of Dvin's Citadel). *Mecamor. Kesdarya pełumneri taregrut'yun* (Mecamor: The Chronicle of Fifty Years of Excavations). Erevan: HH Mšakuyt'i naxararut'yun, 206-17.

Zhamkochian, A.S. (2018). "IX-X dd. ǰnarakac xec'ełeni usumnasirut'yunə patmašxarhagrakan hamatek'stum" (The Study of Ninth-Tenth Century Glazed Pottery in the Historical-Geographic Context). *Lraber hasarakakan gitut'yunneri*, 2, 310-24.

Annual journal
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia,
Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna,
Università degli Studi di Firenze,
Università di Pisa