

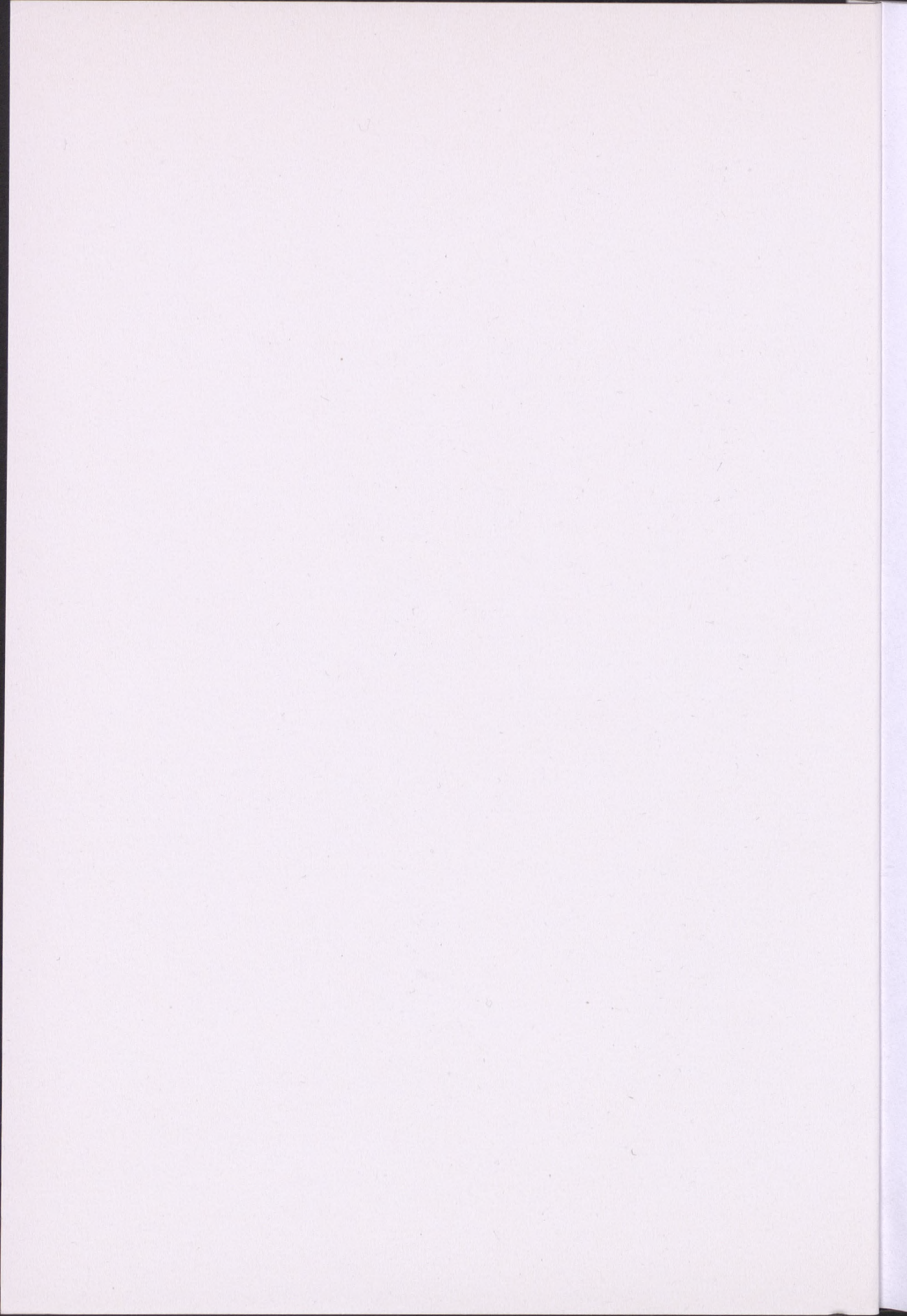
# SERIES BYZANTINA

Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art



VOLUME IX

Warsaw 2011





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Art of the Armenian Diaspora  
Proceedings of the conference,  
Zamość, April 28-30, 2010



CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI UNIVERSITY

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Virgin Mary; glassware decoration, from catacombs in Rome, 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD;  
N. P. Kondakov, *Ikongrafia Bogomateri*, St. Petersburg 1914, p. 77

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CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI UNIVERSITY

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## Introduction

This ninth volume of *Series Byzantina* contains a collection of papers presented at the international conference *Art of the Armenian Diaspora*, which was held on April 27<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> 2010, upon the initiative of the Institute of History of Art of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, in cooperation with the Polish Society of Oriental Art and the Museum of Zamość. It was accompanied by an exhibition entitled *Ars Armeniaca*.

Research on Armenian art in Poland dates back to the first studies on Armenian history and culture published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first researcher to write on Armenian history in Poland was Wincenty Sadok Barącz. He collaborated with several scientific periodicals and was the author of a monograph on miraculous images of the Virgin worshipped in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including some from Armenian churches. Tadeusz Mańkowski studied illuminated manuscripts found in Poland, as well as items in the collection of the Mechitarist Library in Vienna (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, clerics from this order scoured the province of Galicia in search of illuminated manuscripts). Mańkowski returned to the subject again in a posthumously published book on Oriental elements in Polish artistic culture. In the foreword, the eminent Polish historian Mieczysław Gębarowicz, who stayed in Lviv (Lwów, Львів, І,վով, Lemberg, Leopoldis, Λεοντοπολις) following World War II, emphasized his friend's contribution to studies of the art of the Orient in Poland.

In 1891, when the Historical Museum was established in Lviv, Aleksander Czołowski called for an Armenian section to be created. There was talk of founding an Armenian museum and *armenica* - mostly historical documents - were collected in the Municipal Archive. The Ukrainian researcher Bohdan Janusz strongly favoured the establishment of a separate museum and repeatedly initiated actions to collect objects for this future institution. He believed that this *Studium Armenum*, as he wanted to call it, should also carry out research.

The organization of an exhibition of Armenian Art in Bucharest in 1930 launched a similar initiative in Poland. The Archdiocesan Union of Armenians and the History Admirers' Society began preparations. During a meeting at the John III Sobieski National Museum on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1931, an Organizing Committee was established, headed by the Archbishop of the Armenian Church in Poland Józef Teodorowicz. The exhibition,

which eventually ran from 19<sup>th</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> October 1932, presented surviving Armenian religious cult objects, religious images, drawings, prints, photographs and historical documents, brought from Armenia and the East, as well as created in Poland. The objects from the exhibition formed the core collection of a freshly created Armenian Archdiocesan Museum.

World War II put an end to the Armenian Archdiocesan Museum. The collection was dispersed with many objects finding their way into several post-war Lviv museums. Scholarly research was broken off at the outbreak of war. Because of post-war border changes, Polish Armenians from the eastern territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth emigrated either to the western territories of the new Poland: Gdańsk, Gliwice, Oborniki Śląskie, and to the old and new capitals of the country: Kraków and Warsaw. They took with them everything of value, including manuscripts, paintings and archival documents. For years these objects of art and culture were kept in churches and private houses, finally to be deposited within the Archive of the Foundation of the Culture and National Heritage of Polish Armenians in Warsaw and the branch in Gdańsk. Recent years have brought a number of new scholarly publications, but there are still many challenges for future research.

The conference in Zamość was accompanied by an exhibition of Armenian art from Polish and Ukrainian collections. It was held at the Museum of Zamość until the end of August 2010. The exhibition catalogue published by the museum, containing research studies and a Polish bibliography of works on Armenian art, is available in electronic form.<sup>1</sup> The exhibition was accompanied by a multimedia presentation of the achievements of the Polish conservators involved in reconstruction projects in Lviv, in association with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The exhibition was organized by Polish and Ukrainian researchers together with a group of students and doctoral candidates of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, as well as their peers from the University of Warsaw and the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. We also received help from the most prominent experts from Poland and the Ukraine. This exhibition was meant to present a selection of the monuments discovered in recent years and, for the most part, not published so far. Our aim was to supplement materials gathered for the exhibitions in Lviv in 1931 and the National Museum in Cracow in 1999 (curated by Beata Biedrońska-Słota).

The study of inventories, carried out since 2007, has allowed us to gather Armenian works of art from private and public collections in Poland and the Ukraine. Thanks to help from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, we carried out a preliminary search for resources in Lviv museums, where we found some of the identified works. This exhibition catalogue is a guide to the contents of these museums and libraries, where we can find Armenian works of art created in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the old days.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ihs.uksw.edu.pl/images/publikacje-on-line/ars-armeniaca/katalog\\_ormianie.pdf](http://www.ihs.uksw.edu.pl/images/publikacje-on-line/ars-armeniaca/katalog_ormianie.pdf).



Armenians have settled in the countries of Central Europe since the 14<sup>th</sup> century - in the Republic of Poland, Hungary, Moldova and Transylvania, and later on also in Austria and the Czech Republic. Previous research projects into the Armenian Diaspora in Europe have presented the Armenian art of that region only to a slight degree. So that it would have a greater impact, the organizers of this exhibition and conference specifically set out to involve researchers from neighbouring countries, as well as scholars from the major scientific centres in Europe and the rest of the world.

The first part of the conference featured papers on Armenian art from the peripheries of the Byzantine world, from Ethiopia to the Crimea. Next, the participants proceeded to discuss the artistic productions of the former Ottoman Empire and the Persian Safavid Empire - regions from which many works of art, especially tapestries, rugs and gold-works were exported in modern times into Central Europe. Of particular note was the new information we learnt about the religious buildings of Isfahan and their relations with European art.

A large group of papers concerned works from Romania and Hungary. This part of the conference was of extreme importance for Polish researchers, in view of the very strong ties between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Principality of Moldova and Wallachia, especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Foreign participants had the opportunity not only to learn about the little-known history of Armenians in Poland through the conference papers, but also to experience this through their stay in Zamość and a day-trip to Lviv. Naturally, the Polish presentations focused on the history of Zamość and its relics. Yet, we were also given a new analysis of literary works by Armenian authors from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, such as Simeon of Zamość, by a foreign researcher. Papers on the illuminators' art, which was a notable production of Armenians tied to Zamość, were most interesting. We had the opportunity to see manuscripts which had only been discussed once by Polish art historians before World War II. A separate block of papers dealt with crafts and particularly with the manufacture of tapestries in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. We were fortunate to have been able to compare the researchers' presentations with the works shown within the *Ars Armeniaca* exhibition- situated only downstairs from the conference.

Many of the papers pertaining to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century were presentations of Armenian artists operating in Diaspora from Constantinople to Paris. That part of the conference also included papers dealing with collections of Armenian art in Poland, Ukraine and Hungary.

The participants of the conference were historians of art, historians and conservators of art from the following countries: Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Finland, France, Poland, Russia, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, Great Britain and United States. The papers were delivered in English, German or French.



The major centres carrying out research into Armenian art were represented at the event: the Institute of Art of the Armenian Academy of Science; the Matenadaran Library in Erevan; the University of California in Fresno and Los Angeles; the University of Leipzig; the Armenian Museum in Paris; the Mikolaj Kopernik University in Toruń; the University of Aix-en-Provence; the University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest; the Warsaw University; and the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University. The conference organizers received financial support from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, the Museum of Zamość and the Polish Society of Oriental Art. The conference, exhibition and publication form part of a renewed effort to research Armenian art in this region. We will carry on our research and we hope that the students who participated in our meeting will continue to follow their pursuits. Thanks to the Erasmus international exchange we have foreign students coming to us, while our students can participate in lectures delivered by professors at other universities. We hope this international exchange will continue to grow.

*Waldemar Deluga*

## *Examples of Armenian Presence and Contacts in Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia From 5<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Century*

Halina Walatek McKenney

It is acknowledged that great historical events, mostly beyond the control or influence of Armenians, dispersed this small nation far beyond their original ethnic territory. These events resulted first from its neighbours, Persia and Byzantium, and subsequently the Arab, Seljuk and Ottoman invasions. Armenian presence and contacts outside Great Armenia and then Little Armenia during this period are only partially researched. The exceptions are publications concerning the role and influence of Armenians in the history of the Byzantine Empire. Historians researching Armenian presence and contacts in Eastern Africa encounter a scarcity of sources or ultimately a lack of data for prolonged periods of the past. Interpretations of known sources can be contradictory and there are numerous misquotations and mistranslations both in older and in contemporary literature on the subject. Despite the difficulties based on existing, carefully reviewed literature I would like to propose that the presence and contacts of Armenians in Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia was more widespread than commonly recognized.

### *Egypt*

From the beginning of the Christian era it was of major significance to believers to participate in a pilgrimage or even to live permanently in the Holy Land. Numerous Armenian pilgrims were already seen in Palestine towards the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> But Egypt as well, connected so closely to the New Testament, was at this time playing an important role in attracting believers. According to one book, so called *The Armenian Infancy Gospel*, baby Jesus performed numerous miracles during the Holy Family's stay in Egypt, each miracle being associated with a particular locality. These stories served to bring numerous

<sup>1</sup> F. Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme, sa vie et son œuvre*, vol. 2, Louvain 1922, p. 43.





Fig. 1. Gospel of Mkke. Canon: Nilotic scene (Venice, Library of Armenian Patriarchate, no. 1144/86)

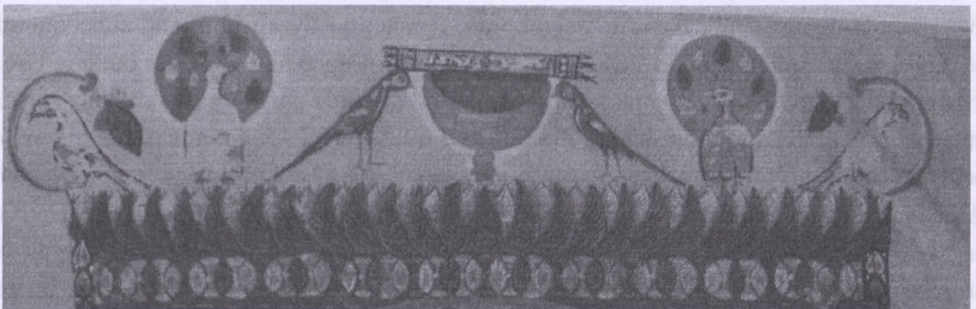


Fig. 2. Gospel of Mugni. Canon: Egyptian hieroglyphs (Yerevan, Matenadaran, no. MS 7736)

pilgrims to those sites.<sup>2</sup> In addition, a figure as important as the Apostle Mark not only established the See of Alexandria but suffered his martyrdom in that city. All this added to the splendour of Christianity in Egypt. Additionally the Catechetical School of Alexandria attracted biblical, theological and linguistic students.

Mesrop Mashtots, having completed work on the design of the Armenian alphabet in 406, sent a number of his students to Alexandria for additional education before he embarked on his next task – perfecting the translation of the Bible into the Armenian language which was completed around 434. According to Armenian historiography, one of Mesrop Mashtots' students continuing his education in Alexandria was young Moses Khorenatsi.

<sup>2</sup> O. F. A. Meinardus, *Two Thousand years of Coptic Christianity*, Cairo, New York 2004, p. 15.



He and other students left Armenia to Egypt circa 432. Some Armenian students also appeared in earlier years in Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> Mesrop Mashtots and Moses Khorenatsi were contemporaries respectively of Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine.

Before the Arab conquest and subsequent introduction of the poll tax by Muslims, an additional important aspect of Christian life in Egypt was a vibrant monasticism, bringing thousands of men and women to live an ascetic life there. There are multiple mentions of Armenians joining monastic life in Egypt. During the time of emperor Justinian, as a result of a dispute between the Melchites and Jacobites, some of around 500 Armenian monks left Jerusalem monasteries and relocated to Egypt, the stronghold of miaphysitism. One of the monasteries, whose location did not survive to us, was considered to be the Armenian one.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of Egyptian motifs is evident in one of the earliest Armenian manuscripts: *The Gospel of Mlke*, queen of Vaspurakan, wife of king Gagik, dated 862<sup>5</sup>. The canon illustrates a Nilotic boating scene including crocodiles, birds, fishes, and lotuses. Another, later example of Egyptian influence from the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century is found in *The Gospel of Mugni*.<sup>6</sup> The canon in this case also depicts a nature scene, but in addition shows an attempt to present ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. With some probability it could be interpreted as an interest in the pre-Christian period or accentuating this particular country (Fig. 1).

With the establishment of Arab rule in Al-Misr, Armenians also participated in the administrative and military life of the country. During the Abbasid dynasty Abul'l-Hasan al-Armani, who was a freed Mamluk, was twice appointed governor of Egypt (841, 849). It is assumed that thanks to his influence Ashot Bagratuni was granted the title of "Prince of Princes" as governor of Armenia in 860.<sup>7</sup> After the fall of Ani and the battle of Manzikert in 1071 a massive emigration of Armenians reached Egypt. Many contemporary sources stated that the Armenian population in this country reached then around 30,000.<sup>8</sup>

According to G. Messerlian two khachkars dated 10<sup>th</sup> century. were found in Cairo, confirming an Armenian presence there. Interestingly the earliest stelae with cross carving are known from Egypt and they are dated between the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. No picture of the khachkars mentioned is available, but khachkars of that period consisted usually of carved stones with reliefs in the shapes of simple crosses with variations of the Tree of life. They most probably resembled images we have of an early khachkar from Ani, dated 952 (Fig. 3), a khachkar from village Mec-Mazr, Vardenis region, dated 991 (Fig. 4), or a khachkar from

<sup>3</sup> M. Abegian, *Istoria drevnearmijskoj literatury*, Yerevan, 1975, pp. 135–143. See also G. Sargsyan, *Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, Yerevan 1982, pp. 40–41.

<sup>4</sup> A. K. Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities of Jerusalem*, New York, 1979; N. Ter Mikaelian, *Yegiptahay Gaghute 10–15 darerum, The Armenian Community in Egypt from 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century (in Armenian)*, Beirut 1980, pp. 43–44.

<sup>5</sup> L. A. Durnovo, *Ocherki izobrazitel'novo iskusstva drevnej Armenii*, Moscow 1979, p. 170.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 173.

<sup>7</sup> S. B. Dadoyan, *The Fatimid Armenians*, Leiden, New York, Koln 1997, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 84.





Fig. 3. Khachkar from Ani (952), Source: A. Jacobson, *Armianskie khachkary*, Yerevan 1986, pl. 4



Fig. 4. Khachkar from village Mec-Mazr (991) Vardenis region, Source: *ibid.* pl. 13

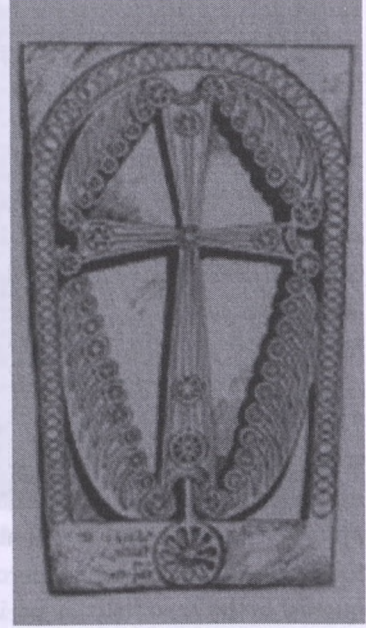


Fig. 5. Khachkar from Noraduz (996). Source: *ibid.*, pl. 14

Noraduz from 996 (Fig. 5).<sup>9</sup> These large numbers of Armenians, dispersed outside their ethnic territory, were in need of proper organization for their religious life. Showing significant involvement and initiative in this field was Vahram, son of Grigor Magistros, great grandson of Vassak the Martyr, also known, after being appointed in 1066 to the chair of Catholicosate, as “Grigor V kayaser (Martyrophil) - Catholicos of All Armenians”.

V kayaser appointed Bishop Petros Islantatsi (Icelandic) to visit Crimea, Poland and Transylvania.<sup>10</sup> In the years between 1070–1078/9, Grigor V kayaser travelled in person to Constantinople, Rome and Egypt. According to Matthew of Edessa, V kayaser spent 3 years in Egypt (1075–1078), where he was welcomed with grand honours by Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir (1035–1094). While in Egypt, V kayaser visited the monasteries of the early fathers, restored the Armenian Church and ordained his nephew (sister’s son), Father Grigor as Catholicos.<sup>11</sup> The total number of Egyptian viziers of Armenian origin during the Fatimid period reached at least seven, with one of them, Bahram al-Armani, sustaining his

<sup>9</sup> A. Jacobson, *Armianskie khachkary*, Yerevan 1986.

<sup>10</sup> H. Turshian, *From the History of Armenian Community in Egypt during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> cs.*, (Collectanea Orientalia, vol. 2), Yerevan 1964 (in Armenian).

<sup>11</sup> Matthew of Edessa, Yerevan 1973 (in Armenian).



Christian faith under Caliph al-Hafiz (1131–1149). Bahram performed his duty as vizier during the period between 1135 and 1137. Thanks to the preserved correspondence between al-Hafiz and King Roger II of Sicily there is some insight into the fall of Bahram from power in 1137 and the violence against Armenians that followed. The problem seems to have been that an additional influx of Armenians tipped the balance of power beyond the abilities of al-Hafiz to keep Bahram as vizier.

According to Abu Salih/Abu Makarim the number of Armenian churches and monasteries in Egypt during Bahram's time reached 30.<sup>12</sup> Some monasteries, such as the Monastery of St. Anthony, which were not necessarily Armenian under the Fatimids, still preserve Armenian inscriptions.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most impressive monasteries under the Armenians during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century was the White Monastery (Deir el-Abiad) near Sohag, situated about 500km south of Cairo and northwest from Aswan (Fig. 6). Originally built in 4<sup>th</sup> century by St. Shenute's uncle,<sup>14</sup> it was also a place of exile for Bahram. The fresco painted in the main apse of the church of this monastery consists of Armenian inscriptions that present an unresolved riddle. The inscriptions are situated next to the representation of enthroned Christ blessing with his right hand and holding the Bible with his left one (Fig. 7). On both sides Christ is surrounded by



Fig. 6. White Monastery near Sohag, interior. Source: [http://www.yale.edu/egyptology/assets/photos/White/12\\_documentation.jpg](http://www.yale.edu/egyptology/assets/photos/White/12_documentation.jpg)

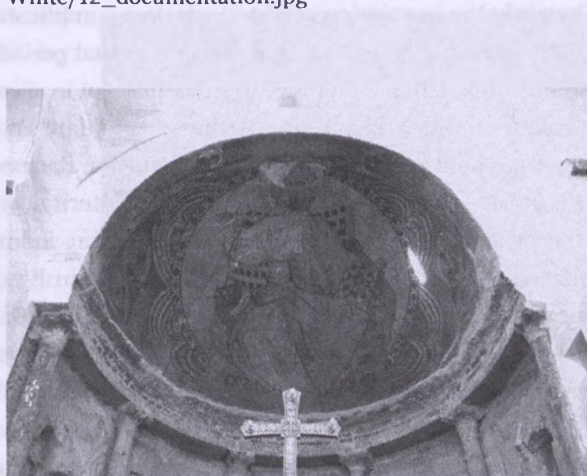


Fig. 7. White Monastery near Sohag, semi dome. Source: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/766/tr21.jpg>

<sup>12</sup> A. Salih, *Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, London 1969.

<sup>13</sup> G. Gabra, *Coptic Monasteries*, Cairo, New York, p. 79 (Chapel of Four Living Creatures. Inscription in Armenian: "Holy, holy, holy Lord").

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 95–96.



Evangelists and their symbols, the Holy Virgin and the Apostles. Also on both sides of Christ there are the initials HS (Hisus) and KS (Kristos); above the first and below the second are the Greek equivalents. Next to the image of Christ, the name Grigor is written – the same first Catholicos of Armenians (1075/6–1117) ordained by V kayaser. There are two white areas on the sides with 3 groups of inscriptions. The literal translations are as follows<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 7): “Theodoros, painter and scribe from the province of Kessun, near the bridge of Shenje from the village of Makhtelle - my father [is] a stonemason named Kristapor, God bless him and you and all the Armenians that are [held] in slavery in Egypt - [completed] during the patriarchate of Father Grigor, nephew [sister’s son] of Grigoris who is named Father Vahram. Christ, spreader of light have mercy on me the metagh. Khachatur. Christ have mercy on Sargis [...] the metagh.” The content of this quoted inscription shows unusual familiarity in using the secular name Vahram in the case of V kayaser but does not suggest any unorthodox meaning that could be attributed to the Armenian artists whose origins are traced to Mesopotamia. Certainly the inscription might illustrate a complicated relationship between the Armenian community and Fatimid authorities during that period but might also consist of a metaphorical meaning with its reference to exile in Egypt in accordance with the Old Testament.

Badr al-Jamali, another earlier Armenian Fatimid vizier (1074–1094), influenced Egyptian political life as well as religious life. Badr cooperated with Coptic patriarch Cyril II (1078–1092) in order to solve church internal problems.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the Armenian vizier was involved with Nubian politics. King Salomon of Nubia abdicated his throne to his nephew and moved to live an ascetic life in Egypt. Later Salomon was transferred to a state residence and treated in a friendly way by Badr. The vizier’s interests reached also towards Ethiopia. He sought the rebuilding of mosques for its Muslim inhabitants and wanted an assurance of safe conduct for caravans. Indeed mosques destroyed by Ethiopian Christians were restored with the help of money passed by Badr, and also thanks to the cooperation of Archbishop Sawiros, who was consecrated by Cyril II as the metropolitan bishop of Ethiopia. Unfortunately, despite dispatching two additional bishops to that country, merchants from Egypt apparently remained subject to pillage in Ethiopia.<sup>17</sup>

Except for fragmented references such as these, very little is known about the Armenian communities in Egypt during the Fatimid period. Bloody events after the fall of Bahram point towards dispersal of the Armenian population also towards the south. Taking into account the number of Armenians in Egypt being at least 30,000, it is reasonable to assume that at least some percentage of that population, including merchants and craftsmen, were interested in developing new avenues for trade and employment, and that they were looking toward the opportunities in Nubia and Ethiopia, both being Christian and ideologically friendly miaphysitic territories.

<sup>15</sup> S. Dadoyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104.

<sup>16</sup> *The History of the Patriarchs*, vol. 2, pp. 214–215.

<sup>17</sup> *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, New York 1991, p. 325.

### Nubia

Again, knowledge of Nubian kingdoms which were Christianized relatively late in the 6<sup>th</sup> century with help from empress Theodora, who, unlike her husband, was not a follower of the Council of Chalcedon, is very limited. Oriental sources concerning Nubia<sup>18</sup> and archaeological excavations on the territories of former kingdoms of Nobadia, Makuria and Alodia confirm the existence of numerous cities along the Nile up to the 7<sup>th</sup> cataract, the area south of modern Khartoum in Sudan. The high artistic value of the architectural monuments and paintings that were excavated to this day are proof of an original Christian civilisation supported by trade and agriculture.<sup>19</sup>

Thanks to the signing and renewing of *baqt* – the agreement originally signed after the year 652 as a result of the unsuccessful Arab invasion of Nubia, relationships with Egypt were mostly friendly until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. During the 500 years after the signing of *baqt* the economy of the Nubian kingdoms was prosperous. Abu Makarim/Abu Salih's description of the Nubian territory confirms the existence of numerous churches and monasteries in Nubia, including remarks on church organization, kings who were able to celebrate the liturgy only under the condition that they did not kill a human being etc.<sup>20</sup> One part of the *baqt* agreement listed permission for passage of caravans and pilgrims. That could indeed have facilitated trade and pilgrimage from Ethiopia and Nubia to Egypt and the Holy Land. The importance of trade in Nubia may be seen in the fresco from Chapel 6 in Old Dongola apparently evidencing



Fig. 8. Dongola ruins. Source: <http://www.animatedweb.it/imagestore/images/deserti/olddongolain1.jpg>

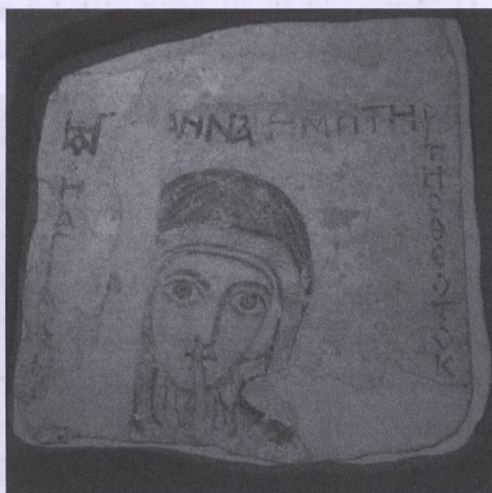


Fig 9. Faras, fresco St. Anna, Warsaw National Museum

<sup>18</sup> G. Vantini, *Oriental sources Concerning Nubia*, Heidelberg, Warsaw 1975.

<sup>19</sup> D. A. Welsby, *Settlement in Nubia in the Medieval Period*, British Museum (pdf file), S. Jakobielski, *Polish Excavation in Old Dongola*, Warsaw 2006.

<sup>20</sup> G. Vantini, *op.cit.*, pp. 323–338.



a financial transaction (Fig. 9). So far, the limited archaeological data has not revealed any Armenian inscriptions.

### *Ethiopia*

Ethiopia, Nubia's closest neighbour to the southeast, is one of the oldest Christian nations, rivalled only by Armenia (Fig. 10). After the adoption of Christianity by King Ezana around 337–340, Ethiopia suffered three waves of near-total annihilation of its Christian heritage. The first was the invasion of the probably pagan queen Judith in 10<sup>th</sup> century. The second was the destruction of manuscripts after the fall of the Zagwe dynasty and rise of the Salomonic Dynasty around 1270. The final wave was felt in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (1528) as a devastating blow from the hand of Muslim Ahmed the Left-handed.

Of great interest for research in the origins of the Armenian- Ethiopian relationship is the Ethiopian alphabet, which predates the Armenian, and shares 7 signs that are identical in design with the Armenian alphabet. There can be no doubt that Mesrop Mashtots was familiar with the Ethiopian way of writing.<sup>21</sup> This is not surprising, since during the



Fig. 10. Scene of financial transaction, 12<sup>th</sup> century. Old Dongola, Chapel 6, South-western Annex. Source: J.Jakobielski, *op.cit.*, p. 48. Photo: H. Pietras

<sup>21</sup> D. A. Olderogge, *L'Armenie et l'Ethiopie au IV siecle*, IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici, Roma 1974.



early medieval period the Axumite Empire was at the peak of its political and economical power, sharing miaphysitic convictions with Armenia and Egypt. There were opportunities for contacts between the two nationalities in Egypt, and a considerable early presence of Ethiopians is quoted in Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup>

The end of Fatimid rule in Egypt coincides with the period when the new Zagwe dynasty took power in Ethiopia. Following the fall of the Axum Empire, notwithstanding a few centuries of scarce and contradictory data on the developments in Ethiopia, it is agreed that the originally non-Christian Zagwe established themselves in the region of Lasta as the centre of their power around 1150. Ironically this non-Ethiopian (Kushitic origin) dynasty created a most spectacular complex of rock churches, in a place originally called Adefa, then Roha and still later Lalibela, after the name of the most prominent Zagwe king, who, according to tradition, ordered the creation of the site.<sup>23</sup> Chiselled into the rock, this monumental complex not only symbolized a New Jerusalem, after the conquest of the one in the Holy Land by Saladin in 1187. It was also an attempt to legitimize a new non-Ethiopian elite, to replace the old capital in Axum. It furthermore signified a strong economy able to support a project on such a scale.<sup>24</sup>

Taking into account the circumstances and uniqueness of Lalibela we can not exclude the participation of foreign craftsmen, including Armenians, looking for new opportunities due to unfavourable conditions in Egypt under the Kurds. Also, the Zagwe dynasty, being of non-Ethiopian origin, would be more likely to rely on foreigners.

The Swastika has been known since the Neolithic period as a solar and protective symbol, present in almost every culture, also used in Eastern Byzantium, though it was used there only as a modest ornament as seen in the Holy Land church of Shavei Zion. By contrast, in the territory of Armenia the swastika was used in monumental scale on Ani's ramparts (Fig. 12). In a similar manner the Swastika, in the form of a carved window, also on a monumental scale, appears more than once in Lalibela, notably in the church of Medhane Alem (Redeemer of the World) on the north wall, or on a smaller scale as a wall relief in the same church. A cross representing the Tree of Life with added Swastika can also be seen in Lalibela, such as this example from the Church Beta Mariam – Church of Mary (Fig. 13). A variation on the same motif is seen in the later carvings on an exterior window in Jesus' Cell of the Beta Golgota – Church of Golghota (Fig. 14). Multiple crosses such as those in Lalibela are not known in other Ethiopian churches and point towards imported craftsmen. The displayed crosses represent the same early Christian symbolism, common through the centuries of Armenian art.

The first recorded mentions of Armenia in Ethiopian literature are present in the national epic *Kebra Negast* ("Glory of Kings") written in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. *Kebra*

<sup>22</sup> F Cavallera, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>23</sup> G. Gerster, *Churches in Rock*, London 1970.

<sup>24</sup> E. Van Donzel, 'Ethiopia's Lalibela and the fall of Jerusalem 1187', *Ethiopia*, 1 (1998), pp. 27–49.

*Negast*, written to glorify the Salomonic dynasty after the fall of the Zagwe dynasty, refers to Gregory the Illuminator and to Armenians.<sup>25</sup> The first confirmed personal contacts between Ethiopians and Armenians are documented around 1339 by the travel of St. Ewostatewos, reformer of Ethiopian monastic life, via Nubia and Egypt to Little Armenia, where, in exile, he spent the rest of his life. It is also confirmed that some of his pupils returned to Ethiopia with an Armenian monk accompanying the group.<sup>26</sup>

Armenian historiography mentions a place called Armenian Island that is associated with the monastery of St. Istafanos on the lake Hayq, in the province of Wollo. During the medieval period, St Istafanos indeed was situated on the island.<sup>27</sup> An association of the name Hayq with Armenia is very tempting as the name of the country in Armenian is Hayastan and originated from Hayq, the ancestor of Armenians, traditionally considered to be a descendant of Biblical Noah.

An interesting coincidence is that the word “hayq”, in Ethiopian (Amhara) language means “lake”. Ethiopia has many lakes: Hayq Tana, Hayq Abaya, Hayq Zway etc., but only one Hayq Hayq.

According to local tradition, the first church on Hayq was founded by St Kalae Salama (Abuna Salama II), a monk from Jerusalem who arrived there in 862.<sup>28</sup> Much later, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Hayq Istafanos became one of the most prominent monasteries in the country under Abba Iyasus Moa, who was instrumental in bringing to power the so-called Salomonic Dynasty. Starting from that period of prominence this monastic community is well documented in Ethiopian sources. Those sources do not mention Armenian newcomers.<sup>29</sup>

Before dismissing information about the Armenian Island, it is intriguing to mention that miniatures dated to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century represent Ethiopian ecclesiastics from Dab-

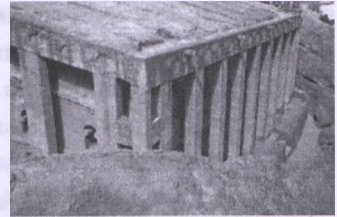


Fig. 11. Medhame Alem church Source: <http://farm4.static.flickr>.



Fig. 12. Swastika on Ani ramparts. Source: Z. Sarkysian.

<sup>25</sup> R. Pankhurst, 'The History of Ethiopian-Armenian Relations', *Revue des Etudes Armeniennes*, 12 (1977), p. 274.

<sup>26</sup> S. Chernecov, 'O putieshestviiakh sv. Evstafia monakha 14 vieka...', *Patna-Banasirakan Handes*, 158 (2002), pp. 49–52. Cf. *Encyklopaedia Ethiopica*, vol. 1, Wiesbaden, pp. 469–472.

<sup>27</sup> A. Abrahamian, *A Short History of Armenian Colonies*, Yerevan, 1964 pp. 17–24.

<sup>28</sup> P. Briggs, *Ethiopia*, London 2005, p. 314.

<sup>29</sup> T. Tamrat, 'The Abbots of Dabra Hayq, 1248–1535', *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1970, pp. 8–89.



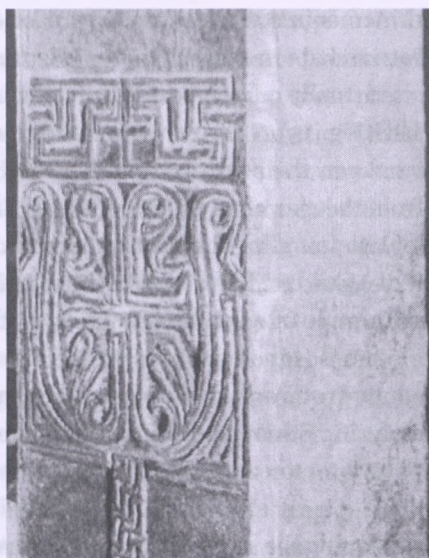


Fig. 13. Beta Mariam (House of Mary) Interior. Cross as Tree of Life relief. Source: G. Gerster, *op.cit.* pl. 66

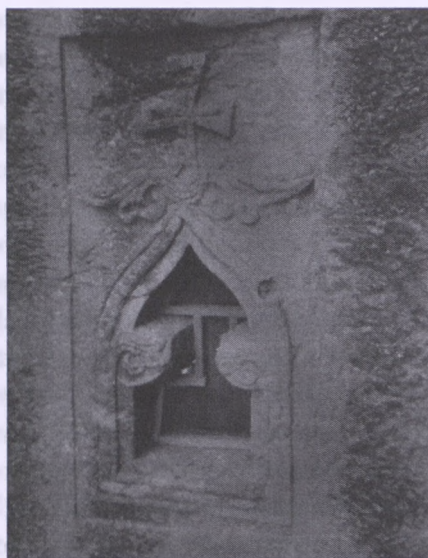


Fig 14. Window in the Cell of Christ in the Church of Golgotha. Source: photo author



Fig. 15. Armenian miniature of St. Anthony in Armenian monk habit, dated 1273, (Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, from religious miscellany m. no. 1288, folio 142 v.) Source: *Armenian Art Treasures*, New York 1979, p. 74



Fig. 16. Bishop Hovsep. Relief from the church of St. Hovannes, Sisian, Armenia, dated end of 7<sup>th</sup> century. Source: L. A. Durnovo, *op.cit.*, p. 54



ra Hayq in pointed hats usually associated with Armenian monk attire.<sup>30</sup> An Armenian miniature from the collection of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, representing St. Anthony in Armenian monk habit, dated 1273, is virtually contemporary with the image of Ethiopian Abbots and displays an identical hat (Fig. 15). There are several Armenian monuments which show images of Armenian monks in their attire, including very early examples, such as the image of Bishop Hovsep from the church of St. Hovannes in Sisian, dated end of 7<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 16). Also, a relief of two founding monks on the wall of the Church of the Mother of God from the monastery of Aghartzin in Northern Armenia shows another example of typical hoods, and is also an example of work contemporary with the miniatures from Hayq. In addition, geographical names (toponyms) tend to be very conservative, passing the original name to another ethnic group and staying the same. The author is not aware of any research on toponyms analyzing Ethiopian geographical names.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Matthew the Armenian*

This article would not be complete without mentioning the story of Matthew the Armenian and his odyssey. It is an unusual case within our topic, wherein a few sources describe such complex events in relative detail. Matthew<sup>32</sup> was an Armenian merchant employed by the Ethiopian empress Eleni. Even though the Empress was a Muslim princess by birth, she represented the Ethiopian *raison d'état* as she acted as a Regent during the childhood of the future emperor Lebna Dengel. She sent Matthew to negotiate cooperation with Portugal against Muslim forces threatening Ethiopia. He started his trip around 1512 by going not to Portugal, but to India. During the monsoons, while sailing from the southern Red Sea, it is possible to reach Western India in about two weeks. By contrast, the shorter distance between Central Ethiopia and Northern Egypt, travelling inland, took, under good conditions, over a month.

Taking into account that the Portuguese established themselves in Goa circa 1500, this was the logical way to contact them. That part of the trip was indeed successful for Matthew. After crossing the Indian Ocean on a Muslim ship, travelling under an assumed Arabic name, he got an enthusiastic welcome from the Portuguese in Goa. But later, in

<sup>30</sup> This is not the only example of images of pointed hoods in Ethiopian art. There are other examples on fresco paintings in the churches: Gannata Maryam, Emmakina Madhame Alem (both near Lalibela) dated first half of 13<sup>th</sup> century. The newly restored church of St. Anthony on the Red Sea in Egypt displays similar images. This kind of attire is considered to be typical for medieval Coptic monastic "qob". Hayq miniatures display pointed caps, not hoods, just as it is seen in an Armenian miniature from Jerusalem. Cf.: C. M. E. Heldman, 'Metropolitan Bishops as Agents of Artistic Interaction Between Egypt and Ethiopia during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries', in: *Interactions*, ed. C. Hourihane, Princeton 2007, pp. 93–96.

<sup>31</sup> Examples from Central Europe: the toponym of Bohemia originated from the Celtic tribe, while the actual territory was for centuries inhabited by a Slavic population. While Prussia is only a distant memory of an annihilated tribe whose territory was inhabited by Germans and then Poles. I am not aware of any research on toponyms analyzing Ethiopian geographical names.

<sup>32</sup> *Encyclopaedia Ethiopica*, vol. 3, Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 866–867.



1514, during his voyage to Portugal from India, on the way back through Indian Ocean and around Africa, his hosts started to suspect Matthiew of being an impostor and spy. The truth was that Matthiew, who came presumably from Cairo, was formally subject to Muslim authorities and his diplomatic activity on behalf of Ethiopia was equal to treason. No wonder he was forced to act in a very subdued way, rather than the pompous manner that an Ambassador of the Empress should use to present himself - in the eyes of Europeans. Only at the court of the Portuguese King Manoel I, after presenting a letter from Empress Eleni, the attitude towards him changed. Finally, in 1517, he sailed with the king's response - again around Africa back to Goa, and then again toward the Red Sea. Unfortunately, because of one tragic accident after another, Matthiew, with the Portuguese envoy accompanying him, reached Ethiopia only in 1520, where he promptly died, probably from poison. During Matthiew's absence the political situation in Ethiopia had changed and the reigning Emperor Lebna Dendel was not interested in cooperation with the Portuguese.

The story of Matthiew's tragic, fulfilled, but ultimately unimplemented mission is known thanks to European sources.<sup>33</sup> Without these preserved detailed sources concerning Matthiew, his extraordinary ordeal would not be possible to prove. We can only regret that right now the sources on other probable examples of Armenian contacts and presence are or lost, missing or possibly misinterpreted and can not yet supply us with additional information.

In the eighth of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologos started searching for a fiancée for his son and successor Michael IX. He was looking for a future empress, therefore he desired for his heir a suitable woman from a royal family.<sup>1</sup> However, due to the fact that after re-conquering Constantinople the Byzantines had gathered a reputation as heretics in the West, it was difficult to find a fitting candidate in this part of the world.<sup>2</sup> In spite of this fact Andronicus was not discouraged and tried to marry Michael with Catherine de Courtenay,<sup>3</sup> the titular empress of Constantinople, the granddaughter of Baldwin II, former Emperor of the Latin Empire. The newly regained capital was still in danger of being conquered; hence Andronicus II longed to keep his enemies at bay through the means of diplomacy. Unfortunately, after a few years of negotiations, all the efforts were frustrated and Andronicus II sent ambassadors to the King of Cyprus.

<sup>1</sup> About the reign of Andronicus II Palaeologos see A. E. Laius, *Constantinople and the Latins. The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II* (London: Clarendon Press, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Palaeologus, *Arbeitsaufzeichnungen*, Edition, translation and introduction by G. Falicki, Paris, 1961, vol. 3, p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> P. Wirth, *Mixed Marriages in Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century*, *Studies in Church History*, 4 (1964), Leiden, *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and the Relations with the Western World*, Leiden, 1965, vol. 22, no. 12, p. 202.

<sup>33</sup> F. Alvares, *The Prester John of Indies*, Cambridge 1961, v. 1,2, also D. de Gois, *Legatio Magni Indorum imperatoris Presbiterii Ioannis ad Emanuelem Lusitaniae regem...*, Antwerp 1532 (Facsimile edition: *Moreana* 4 (1967), pp. 37-98).





## *Little Armenia and the Byzantine World at the End of the Thirteenth Century. The Case of Maria-Rita-Xene?*

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Maria-Rita-Xene wouldn't have entered history if her brother, Hetum II, King of Little Armenia had not been important. He will be the main character of my story, along with his sister, which sheds light on relations between Little Armenia and the Byzantine Empire in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

In the eighties of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II Palaiologos<sup>1</sup> started searching for a fiancée for his son and successor Michael IX. He was looking for a future empress, therefore he desired for his heir a suitable woman from a royal family.<sup>2</sup> However, due to the fact that after re-conquering Constantinople the Byzantines had gathered a reputation as heretics in the West, it was difficult to find a fitting candidate in this part of the world.<sup>3</sup> In spite of this fact Andronicus was not discouraged and tried to marry Michael with Catherine de Courtenay,<sup>4</sup> the titular empress of Constantinople, the granddaughter of Baldwin II, former Emperor of the Latin Empire. The newly regained capital was still in danger of being conquered; hence Andronicus II longed to keep his enemies at bay through the means of diplomacy. Unfortunately, after a few years of negotiations, all the efforts were frustrated and Andronicus II sent ambassadors to the King of Cyprus,

<sup>1</sup> About the reign of Andronicus II Palaiologos see A.E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins. The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II 1282–1328*, Cambridge, Mass. 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, édition, traduction française et notes par A. Failler, Paris, 1999, vol. 3, p. 226.

<sup>3</sup> D. Nicol, 'Mixed Marriages in Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century', *Studies in Church History*, 1 (1964); Idem, *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and the Relations with the Western World*, London 1972, chap. IV, pp. 169–172.

<sup>4</sup> H. I. Brătianu, 'Notes sur le projet de mariage entre l'empereur Michel IX Paléologue et Cathérine de Courtenay (1288–95)', *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen*, 1 (1924), pp. 59–62.

Henry II Lusignan. However, when that ruler also demanded the Pope's dispensation, which could not be received, a diplomatic mission sailed to the Kingdom of Little Armenia and eventually succeeded.<sup>5</sup>

The sovereign of Little Armenia Hetum II, for whom the offer of the Byzantine emperor was favourable,<sup>6</sup> without hesitation and asking about the Pope's dispensation, decided to marry his sister to become co-emperor. He was not disturbed by being in the midst of negotiations with Rome concerning the union of the churches.<sup>7</sup> He was even so generous that he sent to Byzantium not one but two sisters:<sup>8</sup> hoping that one would become the wife of Michael IX and the second would find a husband among Byzantine aristocrats -and so not have to be sent back home. There is a story that there was a beauty competition wherein the Emperor chose from amongst the beautiful woman the prettiest and gave her a golden apple.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the motivation could have been more prosaic: Hetum had already married the other sister, Isabelle, to Amalric, the brother of the King of Cyprus and was probably tired of searching for a proper fiancé.<sup>10</sup> He also had other, more important duties such as protecting his country from a Mamluk invasion. The Little Armenia was in danger of conquest by Mamluk expansion and looked for alliances everywhere. The Byzantine Empire was also troubled by excursions of the SeljukTurks into Asia Minor.

The envoys were surprised that they were required to bring with them to the Empire two candidates for a wife, however the Byzantine chronicler George Pachymeres wrote they did not have any other choice, they could agree on both sisters or would not fulfil their mission at all.<sup>11</sup> However, with hindsight, the embassy must have been glad of the generosity of the King of Little Armenia as the long sea journey was detrimental to the health of the elder candidate, Rita. She became ill so seriously that her life was in danger and the mission was made to stop on Rodos. Whilst on the island Rita changed her faith to the Orthodox one. After the ritual associated with this ceremony, according to Pachymeres, she recovered and the voyage was continued.<sup>12</sup>

Appearing in Constantinople the sisters must have been impressed by the rich ceremony of the Byzantine court. It is likely that whilst still on the ship, both sisters thought out

<sup>5</sup> G. Pachymérés, *op.cit.*, pp. 228–230.

<sup>6</sup> Note préliminaire au Poème de He'thum', roi d'Arménie': *Recueil des historiens des croisades, Documents arméniens*, vol. 1, Paris 1869, Introduction 541–549, Poème 550–559, p. 547.

<sup>7</sup> K. Stopka, *Armenia Christiana. Unionistyczna polityka Konstantynopola i Rzymu a tożsamość chrześcijaństwa ormiańskiego (IV–XV w.)*, Kraków 2002, pp. 167–176.

<sup>8</sup> 'Note préliminaire', Introduction 541–549, Poème 550–559, p. 547.

<sup>9</sup> W. T. Treadgold, 'The Bride-shows of the Byzantine Emperors', *Byzantion*, 49 (1979), pp. 395–413; M. Dąbrowska, *Łacinniczki nad Bosforem, Malżeństwa bizantyńsko-łacińskie w cesarskiej rodzinie Paleologów (XIII–XV)*, Łódź 1996, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> 'Note préliminaire', Introduction 541–549, Poème 550–559, p. 547; J. Dardel, 'Chronique d'Arménie', *Recueil des historiens*, 1 (1869), p. 118.

<sup>11</sup> G. Pachymérés, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 232.



which of them would become lucky and be chosen as empress. Although the international position of the Byzantine Empire was weak at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, the title of *basileus* was still the highest in the world.<sup>13</sup> The title of *basilissa* was so close to both Armenian princesses that they must have been painfully aware of how much they could gain and how much they could lose.

The co-emperor chose the elder sister, Rita, although unfortunately we do not know the motivation for his decision. The sources give no word about the princess' appearance, therefore it is assumed that she was neither pretty nor ugly. Michael's selection could be explained by the age of fiancée. He preferred the elder, since she was the one who could in the shorter time give birth to a son. The younger one, Teofano, was intended to marry the *sebastokrator* Teodor Angelos, but unfortunately she died during the journey to her fiancé.<sup>14</sup>

According to custom, Rita's name was changed to Maria and, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1296,<sup>15</sup> the marriage of the heir to the Byzantine throne and the Armenian princess was celebrated. The ceremony was apparently impressive.<sup>16</sup> There is the possibility that even king Hetum II was present at his sister's wedding. We are not sure if it took place at exactly this time; however, that the unprecedented event of the Armenian ruler's trip to the Byzantine Empire took place during this period is testified to by the sources.<sup>17</sup>

King Hetum was a thoroughly intriguing character. He seems to have been unhappy to be the eldest son and the successor of Leon II and therefore the sovereign of his country because he strongly believed in God and had a sense of vocation for the ministry.<sup>18</sup> A sense of responsibility for his kingship nevertheless made him agree to rule his country instead of abdication. However, he resigned from the throne three times and repeatedly came back to power. He never got married.

Hetum succeeded the throne after his father's death in 1289. Leon II left three daughters and seven sons, which provoked dynastic turmoil as Hetum had to reign but did not want to do so, and, at the same time, his younger brothers, who were deprived of power, wanted to be the kings.<sup>19</sup> The external and interior situation during his reign was extremely

<sup>13</sup> M. Dąbrowska, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>14</sup> G. Pachymérés, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>15</sup> A. Failler A., 'La mission du moine Sophonias en Italie et le mariage de Michel IX Palaiologos,' *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 60 (2002), pp. 151–166.

<sup>16</sup> G. Pachymérés, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>17</sup> Haytanus, 'Flos historiarum Terre Orientis', in: *Recueil des historiens*, p. 328. The contacts between Armenia and the Byzantine Empire were introduced much earlier. However, there were extremely strong bonds between Byzantium and the Hetumid dynasty, which allied with the Empire against their political adversary the Rubenids – H.C. Evans., 'Imperial aspirations: Armenian Cilicia and Byzantium in the XIII century', *Eastern approaches to Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, March 1999*, ed. A. Eastmond, Warwick pp. 243–253.

<sup>18</sup> J. G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia During the Crusades. The Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins 1080–1393*, Richmond 2000, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> A. D. Stewart, *The Armenian Kingdom and the Mamluks. War and Diplomacy during the Reign of Hetum II 1289–1307*, Leiden 2001, p. 94; J. G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia*, pp. 63, 67.

difficult; Hetum was tired of the responsibility of power. Consequently, his first abdication took place in 1293. He left the reins of the state to his brother Toros and joined a monastery. However, he still was unable to find peace for himself. Probably he felt guilty for abandoning the state at such a crucial and difficult moment. As a result, in 1294 he returned to the throne.<sup>20</sup> It is significant that Toros was never crowned in 1293 and he did not issue any coins with his name.<sup>21</sup> This could imply that Hetum had doubts about his decision and preferred not to close the way to the throne entirely.<sup>22</sup>

We do not know the exact reason for his returning to power. In all likelihood it was the difficult political circumstances which made him withdraw from monastic life and decide to return to government. However he soon realized once more that the secular world was not for him and became a monk by the name of John. We can suppose that this transformation happened after his diplomatic mission to Mongols.<sup>23</sup>

An important development is that Hetum II, together with his brother Toros, appeared on Byzantine land.<sup>24</sup> The most probable date for the visit is 1296 or 1297. Since we cannot be sure of the time of his trip, we are not able to state whether he was present at Rita's marriage ceremony or not. There are many questions that are yet to be answered concerning this trip, such as: what was the aim of Hetum's voyage? Did he want to be a witness to his sister's wedding? Did he go to the Byzantine Empire to see Rita or was the reason for his voyage completely different? Perhaps his meeting with his sister could have been a nice excuse for a political mission. Did, for instance, the Armenian King want to receive support from Andronicus II against the Mamluks?

If Hetum had appeared in Constantinople with a political mission, the Byzantine chroniclers would have noted that fact. They did not. It is likely that George Pachymeres would also have written down the presence of the Armenian ruler during his account of the wedding ceremony. If we cannot find a word about it in Byzantine sources, this may imply that the purpose of the trip was not of great importance for both countries.

There are existing arguments that the motivation which brought Hetum to the Empire was connected with his religious interests. He wanted to meet with the Franciscan friars who were in the Byzantine Empire. This idea can be supported by the words of the editor of *Note préliminaire au Poème de He'thum, roi d'Arménie*. He states that after his first abdication, Hetum came back to power because Toros, during his reign, heard a calling for the ministry as well.<sup>25</sup> Considering the religious inclinations of both brothers, if in the case of

<sup>20</sup> 'Note préliminaire', Introduction 541–549, Poem 55–559, p. 547; A. D. Stewart, *op.cit.*, pp. 96–97.

<sup>21</sup> P. Z. Bedoukian, 'Coinage of Cilician Armenia', in: *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, Number 147, ed. by A. R. Berlinger, New York 1962, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> A. D. Stewart, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>23</sup> A. D. Stewart, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>24</sup> 'Table chronologique de He'thoum, comte de Gor'igos' *Recueil des historiens*, p. 490; 'Note préliminaire', Introduction 541–549, Poème 550–559, p. 547.

<sup>25</sup> 'Note préliminaire', Introduction pp. 541–549, Poème 550–559, p. 547.



Toros this is also true, we can easily imagine such an aim of travel. From this perspective it is not surprising that the Byzantine chroniclers omit the event: both Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras pay attention only to significant church matters, particularly the conflicts between the Emperor and clergy.

It is a great pity we do not know the details of the visit. It is even difficult to say how long it lasted. In one of the Armenian sources appears the information that the trip continued for half a year.<sup>26</sup> However, there are doubts over whether the author meant only the period of the voyage and stay in the Empire or if he also included a period of incarceration.<sup>27</sup> Hetum's trip to the Byzantine Empire turned out to be extremely dangerous; it was the reason for the ensuing internal situation of his country and it was also detrimental to his own safety.

Upon leaving Armenia, Hetum entrusted the dominance of the country to his brother Smpad who during his brother's absence acquired a taste for power and was not going to give it back<sup>28</sup>. After returning to the homeland, Hetum and Toros were not allowed to enter their country. Completely surprised by this action, they came back to Constantinople to ask for help. They also sought support from Ilkhan Ghazan. However it appeared that they had underestimated their brother, since the same idea sprang to Smpad's mind and he appeared at Ghazan's court with gifts and took his daughter for a wife. Coming back to Armenia with his bride, he met their two brothers and arrested them. Smpad gave an order to hang Toros and blind Hetum.<sup>29</sup> Luckily, Hetum did not lose his sight completely: it seems that one of his eyes was unhurt.<sup>30</sup>

Smpad's savage rule provoked a rebellion under the leadership of the fourth brother, Gosdantin, in 1298. The revolt was successful and as a result Hetum was released, while Smpad took his place in prison.<sup>31</sup> Gosdantin was not in power for long: Hetum decided to regain the throne and jailed his brother. In 1300 he sent both usurpers to Constantinople, wanting to protect himself from further challenges to the throne.<sup>32</sup> Probably around 1306 he handed over authority to the son of his murdered brother Toros, Leon III. His nephew was very young, he was 17 in the time of coronation, and thus Hetum was still active in government. However we know that he abdicated after accepting the title of "Grand Baron".<sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Haytanus, 'Flos historiarum Terre Orientis', in: *Recueil des historiens*, p. 328.

<sup>27</sup> A. D. Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>28</sup> 'Chronique du Royaume de la Petite Arménie par le conétable Sempd', in: *Recueil des historiens*, p. 655.

<sup>29</sup> 'Chronique du Royaume, p. 655; 'Les gestes de Chyprois', in: *Recueil des historiens*, p. 868.

<sup>30</sup> A. D. Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>31</sup> 'Chronique du Royaume...', p. 656.

<sup>32</sup> J. G. Ghazarian, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> A. D. Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-105.

A year or two years later on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1307 or 1308 Hetum, together with Leon and other important Armenians, was executed in front of the walls of the citadel of Anazarb on the order of the Mongol general Piloghan.<sup>34</sup>

As a concluding thought to these turbulent events we should ask the question: did Rita-Maria lead a happier life than her brother? Marrying the Byzantine co-emperor, she hoped that one day he would become the sole ruler and she would assume the highest position in the Byzantine Empire by his side. Unfortunately her dreams did not come true. Michael IX died before his father in 1320.<sup>35</sup> Reality did not live up to Rita's ambitions and she did not play any important role. However, she fulfilled her main task: she gave a birth to four children, two sons and daughters, the eldest of them ascended to the Byzantine throne as Andronicus III. She died in 1333. Shortly before her death Rita became a nun accepting the name Xene which means "strange". This name expresses the alienation she felt in Byzantium during all these years she spent there<sup>36</sup>. She experienced the same estranged feeling as her brother who was forced to reign instead of praying in the silence of a monastery.

<sup>34</sup> 'Table Chronologique de He'thoum, comte de Gor'igos', in: *Recueil des historiens*, p. 490.

<sup>35</sup> Nikephoros Gregoras, *Rhomäische Geschichte*, trans. J. L. von Dieten, Stuttgart 1979, vol. 2, VIII,1,3; Johannes Kantakuzen, *Geschichte*, translated by G. Fatouros, T. Krischer, Stuttgart 1982, vol. 1, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> M. Dąbrowska, *op.cit.*, pp. 107–108.



## *The Round Church at Preslav: an Armenian Transplant?*

Beatrice Tolidjian, Washington

The Round Church at Preslav (presently in partial ruins) appears as comprised of three parts. There is a rotunda on its easternmost end. A wide rectangular narthex flanked by two towers on south and north is attached to the west of the rotunda. A large atrium follows to the west of the narthex. The rotunda of the Round Church at Preslav, Bulgaria (Figs. 1a and b) is most unusual and unique to this period in Bulgarian architectural history with respect to its multi-foil plan and as such it is the focus of interest here. It conforms to the radiating multi-foil rotunda typology. In plan it is two concentric circles reflecting two building phases. There is substantial debate as to the exact chronology of the church, whether the three parts were built individually in distinct building campaigns or rather formed part of a unified plan conceived and executed at once. In the opinion of this author, there are different building phases of which the first phase (Boris, built c. 870–875) boasts eight deep exedrae radiating out of the central circle, alternating with massive piers, except in the west where the ring of conches is interrupted and replaced by three wide portals (Figs. 2a and b). The ninth exedra is the eastern and largest one - the altar apse. This deeply scalloped perimeter shell narrows at the top to form the drum on which rests the dome. The second phase (Symeon - presumably built at around the year 900) acquires an inner wreath of 10 marble columns connected at the top by arches;<sup>1</sup> it supports a second-storey gallery. A rectangular narthex is added featuring two towers one of which houses a spiral staircase to the upstairs bow-shaped gallery. Only the architecture from the first building phase of the rotunda is of relevance to the present study. It is the goal of this paper to examine the scholarship on the church at Preslav, describe the various interpretative issues regarding the rotunda, the date of its creation and potential sources of inspiration from the Caucasus.

<sup>1</sup> S. Boiadjiev, 'Arkhitekturata na Kruglata tsurkva v Preslav', in: *Izsledvaniia vurkhu arkhitekturata na Bulgarskoto srednovekovie*, Sofia 1982, pp. 59–61, figs. 43–49.

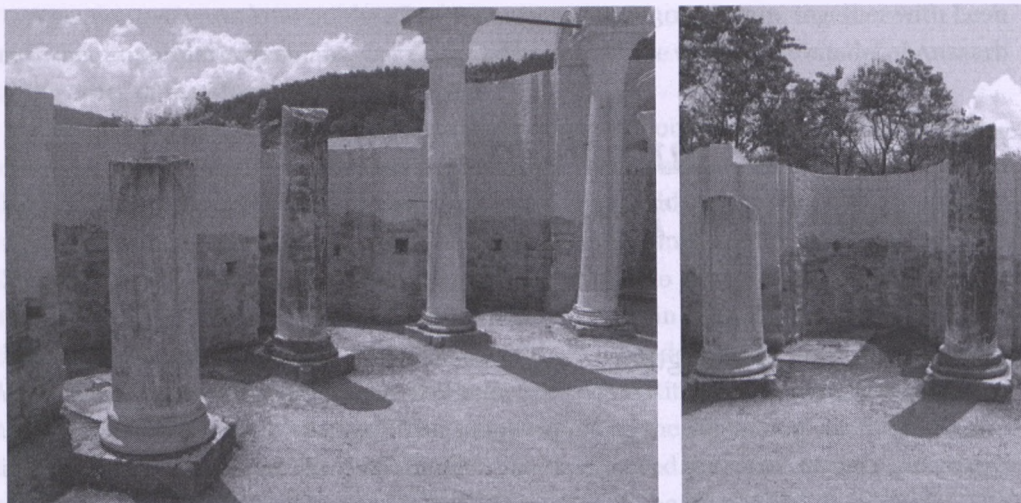


Fig. 1a. Round Church rotunda – interior (southwest); 1b - Round Church rotunda – interior

There are several theories advanced by well-known scholars (both from 'western' and 'eastern' academic spheres) concerning the original physical appearance as well as the preordination of the Round Church at Preslav. The limited scope of this paper precludes the possibility of my including all the scholarship on the church, which is consummate both in its breath and complexity. I will however, include a few opinions that are representative of the major critical perspectives on the subject. The first comprehensive excavation of the site was performed by Krustiu Miiatev.<sup>2</sup> He reached the conclusion that originally the church was comprised of a rotunda and a narthex. He argued that the weight of the cupola was born equally by the massive pillars placed at the junctions of the exedrae and the marble columns standing in front of them. It is his belief that the monument is an original work of architecture and that its precedents must be found in older Bulgarian building traditions. One of the most significant critical analyses since Miiatev was done by Gabriel Millet.<sup>3</sup> Millet states that the weight of the dome was carried by both the scalloped perimeter of the rotunda and the wreath of columns anterior to it. Millet asserts the thesis that the prototypes of the Round Church are to be found among the classical Roman examples in Italy. He feels that it is typologically closest to the baptisteries of Milet at Khierapolis, the Octagon at Antioch, etc, but that the Preslav typology itself drew its breath from Constantinople. Andre Grabar<sup>4</sup> adheres to the thesis that the whole building was erected at the same time, and that it was conceived as a whole from the

<sup>2</sup> K. Miiatev, *Kruglata tsurkva v Preslav*, Sofia 1932, p. 218, 192ff, 199, 242–257; *Idem, Arkhitektura v srednovekovna Bulgariia*, Sofia 1965, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> G. Millet, 'L'église ronde de Préslav', *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions & belles-lettres* (1933), pp. 169–193.

<sup>4</sup> A. Grabar, *L'art au Moyen Âge en Europe Orientale*, Paris 1968, pp. 33–35.



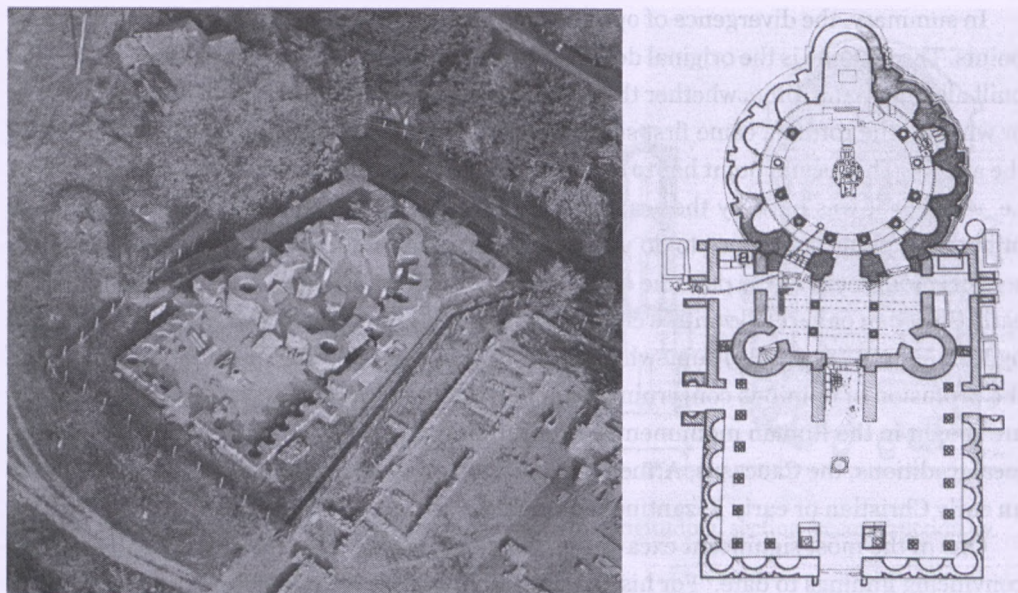


Fig. 2a. Round Church – aerial view (photo by Kamien Vlahov); 2b - plan

start. He also supports the notion that the weight of the dome fell entirely on the scalloped outer perimeter wall of the rotunda. With regards to the predecessors of the Preslav monument, he points towards the no longer extant or as yet unexcavated buildings of the Byzantine capital. He feels the Preslav church is a smaller scale tenth century reincarnation of an older and larger imperial church. Furthermore, Grabar thinks that the atrium precedes some imperial churches of even the eleventh century. While the large tri-partite narthex flanked by the northern and southern tower, far from being indigenous to Byzantium, rather draws inspiration from Carolingian architecture such as the chapel at Aachen and San Vitale in Ravenna. In his monumental survey of Byzantine architecture, Richard Krautheimer reiterates the possibility of three building phases at the Round Church of Preslav as he points to Boyadjiev's thesis.<sup>5</sup> Krautheimer focuses on the very eclectic vocabulary of this building. In terms of function, he sees a Byzantine influence. In the sculptural decoration he calls attention to classical Greek and Roman motifs as well as Sassanian ones. As for the architectural plan, Krautheimer regards it as deeply rooted in Roman mausolea, with the double tiered circular colonnade being a feature extremely similar to that of the Mausoleum of Diocletian in Split. Cyril Mango's contribution on the subject will be considered later. Several other theories have been put forth but will not to be considered here due to space limitations.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Harmondsworth 1986, pp. 319, 499 (note 43, to ch. 14).

<sup>6</sup> B. Filov, 'Starobulgarskata tsurkovna arkhitektura' *Spisanie na Bulgarskata Akademiia na Naukite*, 13 (1926), pp. 20–24; Idem, 'Kruglata Preslavska tsurkva i neinite predshestvenitsi', *Spisanie na Bulgarskata*



In summary, the divergence of opinion concerning the Round Church occurs along four points. The first one is the original design of the monument, i.e. whether its three parts were built all at the same time, whether the rotunda and the narthex were built at the same time, or whether the rotunda came first succeeded by the narthex which was itself succeeded by the atrium. The second point has to do with the source of the support for the massive dome, i.e. whether it was born by the scalloped perimeter wall, or the inner circular colonnade or both. The third point has to do with the dating of the Round Church. Most researchers see this monument as the palatine chapel of King Symeon I (893–927), some view it as an early Christian or early Byzantine church and another argues that it is a baptistery founded by King Boris I (852–889) somewhere between 870 and 875. The fourth point consists of the profusion of opinions concerning the identity and inspiration for the church – models are sought in the Roman monuments of Italy, Carolingian architecture, Byzantium, earlier local traditions, the Caucasus, Armenia in particular and lastly the building itself is seen as an early Christian or early Byzantine monument.

One of the most significant excavators of the site, Stefan Boyadjiev, puts forth the most convincing findings to date.<sup>7</sup> For his extensive analysis of the architecture, he draws inexorably from literary sources,<sup>8</sup> the archaeological data, his own expertise in the field of architectural reconstruction and engineering, building technique and craftsmanship, as well as analysis of artefacts, the iconography of the sculptural decoration, liturgical furniture and epigraphic material. He dispels any doubt that the building was constructed during three separate building campaigns, and that the earliest part is the rotunda that was conceived and built as a baptistery by Kniaz Boris I. He concludes therefore that the original rotunda of the Round Church at Preslav was a single-storey royal baptistery from the building campaign of King Boris and places it around the year 872.<sup>9</sup>

After the first phase of the acceptance of Christianity, Boris found himself in the midst of a politico-religious battle with pressure put upon him by the Popes Adrian II and John VIII to accept the church of Rome, as well as the Patriarch Photius trying to bring him back to the Byzantine church. King Boris finally accepts the Eastern faith and quickly moves to

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*Akademiia na Naukite*, 20 (1933), pp. 75–104; A. Rashenov, 'Zlatnata tsurkva na tsar Simeon v Preslav', *Serdika* I, no. 4, pp. 20–23, 217ff.; N. Okunev, K. Miiatev, 'Kruglata tsurkva v Preslav', *Bizantinoslavica*, 4 (1932), pp. 457–461; N. Mavrodinov, *Ednokorabnata i krustovidnata tsurkva po bulgarskite zemi do kraia na XIV v.*, Sofia, 1931; Idem, *Starobulgarskoto izkustvo*, Sofia 1959, pp. 150–164; B. Ignatov, 'Kum vuprosa za bulgarskata arkhitekturna shkola vuv vizantiiski stil', *Arheologiya*, 5 (1963), pp. 56–58; D. Vasileva, 'Kruglata tsurkva vuv Veliki Preslav: stroitelni znaniia i konstruktsii', *Tekhnicheska misul*, 3 (1979), pp. 81–87; D. Boskovic, K. Miiatev, 'Kruglata tsurkva v Preslav', *Starinar*, 8/9 (1933/1934), pp. 331–332; G. Stricevic, 'L'église ronde de Prěslav et le problème des traditions paléobyzantines dans l'architecture balkanique au Moyen Âge', in: *Actes du XIIe Congrès International des Études Byzantines*, Ochride 1961, Rapports VII, pp. 212–213.

<sup>7</sup> S. Boiadjiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–130.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 120–121 on correspondence between patriarch Photius and the popes Nicholas I, Adrian II and John VIII as well as the transcript of Tudor Doksov of the Old Slavonic translation of the 4 Athanasius statements against the Arians.

<sup>9</sup> S. Boiadjiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 120–122.



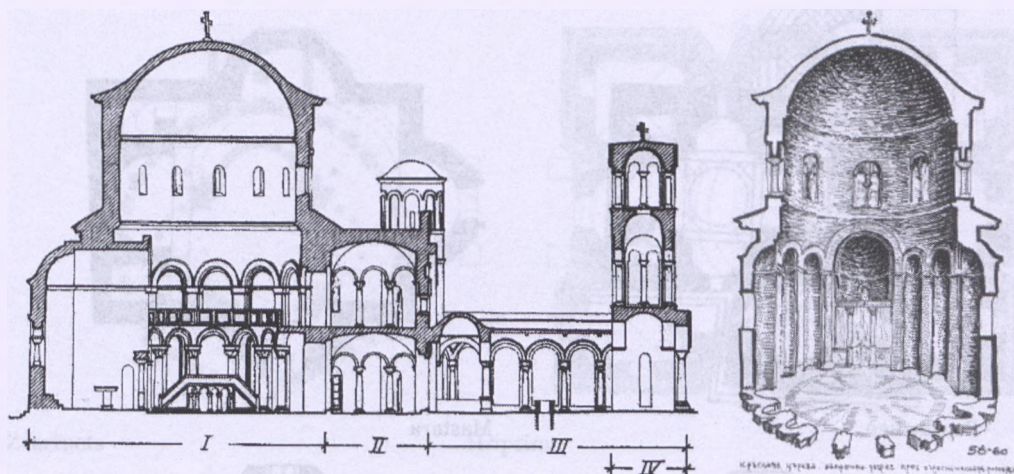


Fig. 3. Round Church: a - elevation (reconstruction); b - longitudinal section (reconstruction by Stefan Boyadjiev)

erect a splendid and richly decorated baptistery with Byzantine support, because it si incumbert uon him to baptize his subjects and, in so doing celebrate the greatness and dignity of the newly converted Bulgarian people and of its ruler.

In its original appearance the baptistery took on the form of a rotunda scalloped with nine exedrae, without the inner circle of columns. The dome was born by the elaborately furrowed wall, whereby the vertical thrust of the cupola was received by the massive piers, while the large conches whose concave walls protrude prominently to the outside dissipated the lateral force (Figs. 3a and b). The thus alternating weight-bearing elements, different in nature, united at the tops in a wreath of arches. The baptismal font was under the ciborium. The building was richly decorated, on the inside and outside and the dome had a coat of gold paint. A graffito scribbled on the coating of the narthex bears the name of St. John the Baptist as was common for such buildings.

The rotunda succumbed to destruction during the reign of Vladimir who reverted back to paganism and it was rebuilt and extended during the reign of Symeon. It was no longer a baptistery but a bishop's church, with a narthex flanked by two towers added to its west and a second story gallery (accessible via a staircase in the northern tower) as well as a bishop's throne in one of the southern conches. To supply the continuing need of bringing the catechumens into the new faith, a small baptismal font was installed above ground in the western part of the rotunda. The following period of construction witnessed the building of the atrium and the last, the building of the bell tower sometime in the fourteenth century.

To prove that the narthex came after the rotunda, Boyadjiev draws from two pieces of archaeological evidence.<sup>10</sup> He first shows that the foundation masonry of the narthex rather

<sup>10</sup> S. Boiadjiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-51, 59-61; figs. 26-35, 41-46.

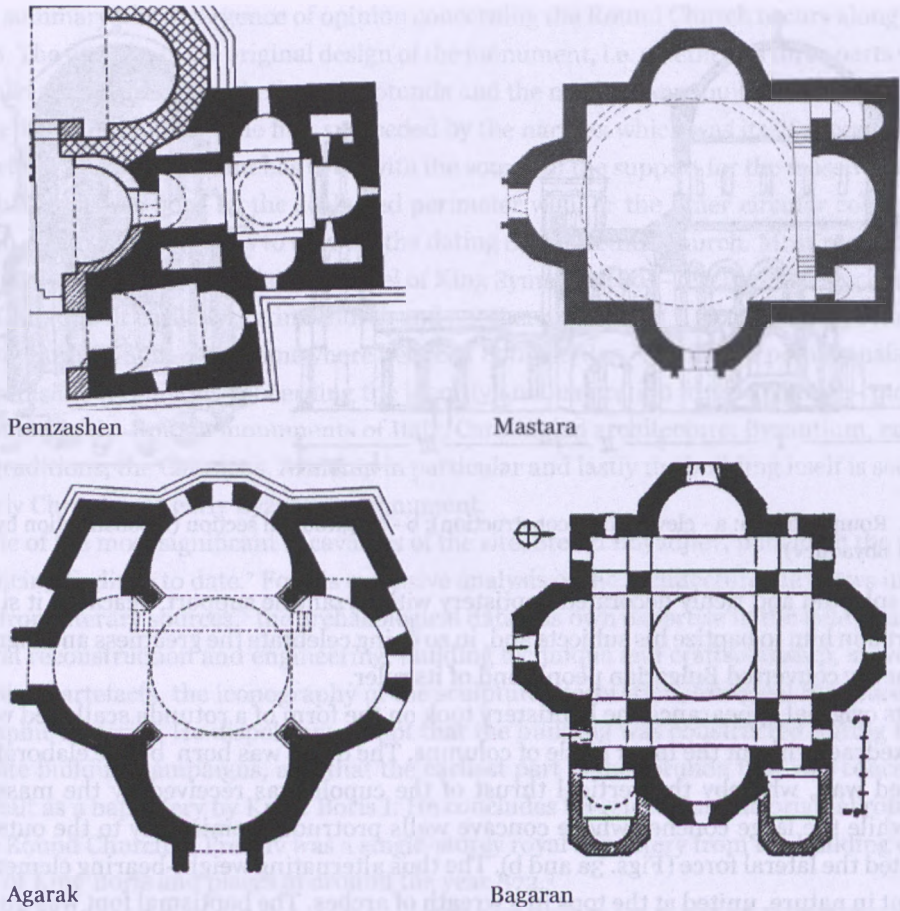


Fig. 4a. Tre-foil, quatre-foil and multi-foil churches in Armenia and Georgia

than being continuous and the same with that of the rotunda (as would be the case if the two were constructed at the same time), rather slips underneath the rotunda masonry and there is a gap that widens to 18–20 cm. Secondly, he points to the contours of the two huge western piers flanking the middle door of the rotunda. After their close examination, he points to the fact that portions of them have been shaved off so as to align them to the transverse axis of the narthex. Thus elements (the piers) belonging originally to a round body (the rotunda) are altered to fit a later adjoining rectangular body (the narthex). This theory is further advanced by the discovery that the shaving of the piers starts from the ground level up, i.e., the part of the pier that remains underground remains intact. This shows that the reworking of this part of the rotunda took place only after the initial construction was over. Lastly, to prove that the rotunda was initially not double-shelled, i.e.



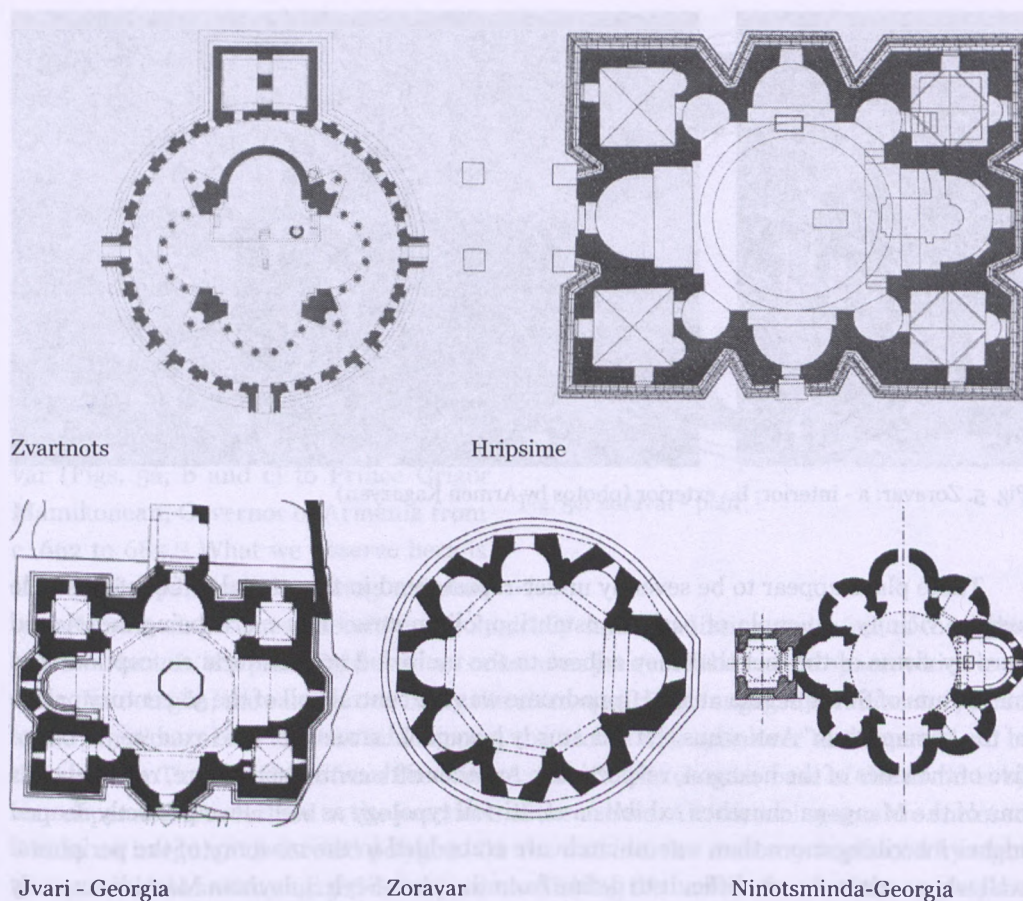


Fig. 4b. Tre-foil, quatre-foil and multi-foil churches in Armenia and Georgia

that the wreath of columns was added later, Boyadjiev again points to the archaeological evidence to show that there is a clear difference between the foundations of the peripheral scalloped wall of the rotunda and the foundations of the colonnade. He calls attention on second and kind of masonry that is used for the foundations of the colonnade.

The multi-foil plan and its myriad variants gained immense popularity in the lands of the Caucasus. It made its appearance in Armenia, for instance, around the year 500 in the church of the Holy Mother of God at Crviz.<sup>11</sup> at Avan from the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century, and there was an effervescence of building activity of these types of plans in the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4). There were approximately one of this type of monument built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, 4 from the 6<sup>th</sup>, 17 from the 7<sup>th</sup>, one from the 8<sup>th</sup>, 5 from the 9<sup>th</sup>, 8 from the 10<sup>th</sup>, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Church of the Holy Mother at Crviz (c.500). Cf. J. M. Thierry, *Armenian Art*, New York 1989, p. 55.



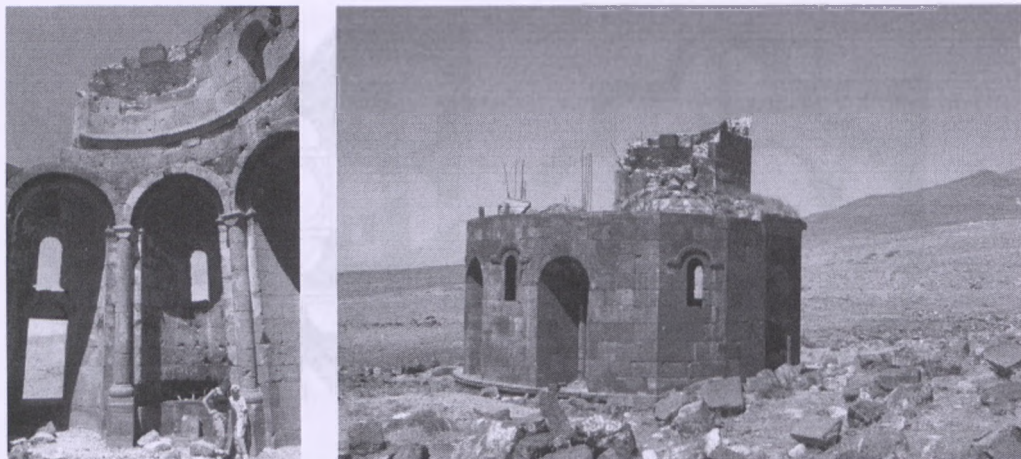


Fig. 5. Zoravar: a - interior; b - exterior (photos by Armen Kagazyan)

These plans appear to be severely under-represented in the capital of Constantinople and its vicinity. A couple of early Constantinopolitan structures merit being mentioned here by virtue of the fact that they adhere to the multi-foil architectural conception. The martyrium of St Euphemia at the Hippodrome was the central hall of the 5<sup>th</sup> century palace of the "praepositus" Antiochus.<sup>12</sup> It is a sturdy hexagonal structure. Five exedrae jut out of five of the sides of the hexagon, respectively. Another fifth century structure, referred to as one of the Mangana churches exhibits a multi-foil typology as well. Five perfectly shaped niches inscribing more than a semi-circle are embedded in the masonry of the peripheral wall whose contours are difficult to define from the plan. Seyh Suleyman Mescidi, an early Byzantine structure in the capital is an octagon inscribed in a square. Eight niches protrude from each of the sides of the octagon - four semi-circular niches alternating with four rectangular ones. It is thought to have been a baptistery.

The aim of the present study is to look at the relationship of the architecture of the Preslav rotunda to various types of multi-foils from Armenia in the period before Arab occupation. It is but the first phase of a much larger study in progress that will consider the multi-foil in all of its variant forms prior to 900 from the Caucasus, namely Armenia and Georgia, the imperial capital Constantinople, the Byzantine provinces in the Balkans and the Latin West. The intent is to attempt to link the Round Church at Preslav to this body of buildings, since it is the author's opinion that that is where it belongs.

An examination of the history of the Armenian monuments will hopefully shed some light on the circumstances surrounding the construction of the Round Church and hopefully bring us closer to answering the question of whether the Armenian newcomers to Bulgarian

<sup>12</sup> C. Mango, *Byzantine architecture*, New York 1976, p. 89, fig. 100.



lands were instrumental in importing their cultural and artistic ideas into their new social milieu. There are some 25 Armenian multi-foil buildings dating prior to 870 and these can be divided into roughly eight different groups based on their typology. Those that concern us in this study are the radiating multi-foil rotundas such as Irind, Zoravar, Aragac and Moxrenis, though only two of the four will be considered.

Historical sources attribute the erection of the eight-apsed church at Zoravar (Figs. 5a, b and c) to Prince Grigor Mamikonean, Governor of Armenia from c. 662 to 685.<sup>13</sup> What we observe here is the radial expansion of an octagonal plan entirely billowing niches; therefore, typologically it is a radiating multi-foil, of the eight-lobed variant. In the plan, eight exedrae or conches jut out of the central space, which is an irregular octagon, the eastern one being the altar-apse. Eight engaged columns are placed at the junctions of the exedrae and support the arches that span over the front of each of the exedrae. The transition from the central space to the circular base of the drum is by way of pendentives formed at the junctions of the arches. All internal spaces are enclosed within an irregular 18-faceted polygon. On the outside, the masonry is pierced by eight triangular niches with engaged columns embellishing the vertex of each of the angles; the triangular niches mark the location of the exedrae.

The eight-apsed church at Irind (Figs. 6a, b and c), a small church from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, belongs to the radiating multi-foil typology. Seven apses project radially outward from the central circular space. The western apse has been replaced by a vaulted rectangular wing. Projecting out of the north-eastern and the south-eastern apses are two square chambers. They are embedded in the eastern wall and flank the altar apse without being connected to it. The apses are circular on the inside and have a trapezoidal contour on the outside. On the inside at the junctions between the apses there are engaged semi-columns. The latter are crowned by arches that form a wreath over the central circle. The base of the drum rests on the pendentives formed by the arches. The outer perimeter wall was elegantly furrowed by an alternating pattern of straight wall and deep triangular recesses and further embellished by a blind arcade that wraps around the whole building. An engaged column

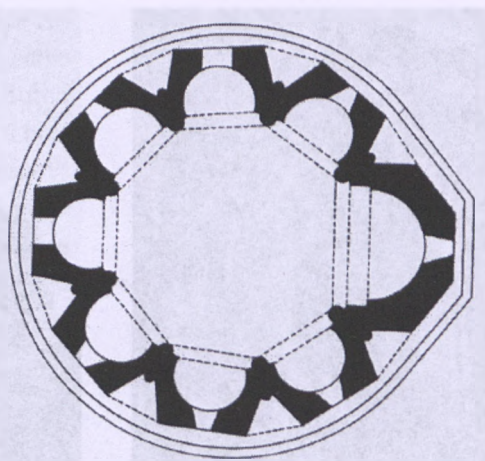


Fig. 5c. Zoravar - plan

<sup>13</sup> J. M. Thierry, *op.cit.*, p. 593.



Fig. 6a. Irind: a - exterior; b - interior (photos by Armen Kazaryan)

stands at the apex of the triangle at the triangular recesses. On the exterior the drum was eight-sided with triangular niches cut into the angles of the octagon.

Of the monuments reviewed so far, the eight-apsed church at Zoravar is seemingly the closest typologically to the rotunda of the Round Church (Figs. 2b and 5c). According to the principles of planar composition, the similarities that emerge can be summarized as follows. The main spatial arrangement constitutes a radial configuration of conches, symmetrically placed around a central space. The dome rests on this elaborately scalloped ring. The external profile of the conches is pentagonal. Except for the distortion created by the larger apse of the altar, the space underneath the dome would be a perfect circle. On the exterior, lodged at the junctions between the conches there are pilasters at Preslav and engaged columns at Zoravar. Herein the similarities between these structures end, however, because their functions in the two buildings are different. At Preslav, the prominent and rather massive pilasters appear to be part of the system of support for the massive dome together with the pillars directly across from them (in and facing inwardly) and the deeply scalloped exedrae. At the Armenian monument the rather slender and elegant engaged columns appear to participate in the overall external decorative scheme of the building more so than in anything else. The Armenian building is about three-quarters of the size of the Bulgarian one so they are not similar in size either.

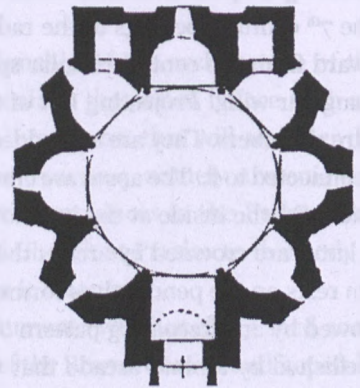


Fig. 6c. Irind - plan



Moreover and most importantly, we have not resolved the issue of the placing of the dome. To solve the problem, Boyadjiev compares the Round Church with the Holy Saviour at Ani (1036), which has a preserved superstructure up to the level of the drum<sup>14</sup> (Figs. 7a and b). He feels that the architectonic principles governing design at Ani are identical to those at Preslav (Figs. 8a, b and c). At Ani, the many-sided polygon that gives the impression of a smooth, near circular outer wall, uncompromised by niches, allows for the wall to be thinner. That, in turn, informs the design of the building by requiring a smooth-walled drum to be erected on top of it, not one furrowed by niches. The only decorative element on the exterior of both the church body wall and the drum wall is the elegant engaged colonnade. In his reconstruction, Boyadjiev applies this scheme to the case of the Round Church (Figs. 9a and b). He feels that in view of the fairly smooth external perimeter of the Round Church, and one that is not cut with deep angular niches, the solution for the design of the drum must have been almost identical to that at the Holy Saviour at Ani. He also places two cornices with triangular profiles at the Round Church – at the junctions of wall and drum as well as drum and dome, as is the case at Ani. However, since the St. Saviour at Ani comes much later, I feel this can have been accomplished only if there was a precursor to the Ani plan in an Armenian building that is no longer extant or not yet discovered, and which could possibly have served as a model for the Round Church at Preslav.

The uniqueness of the Round Church at Preslav, its radiating multi-foil rotunda and its enigmatic origins, and the possible Armenian connection has not escaped the attention of Cyril Mango. He points to the Caucasus by posing a very significant question which I feel is the crux of this issue: from where did this typology come into Bulgaria since it was not current in Constantinople but it is one that has enjoyed immense popularity and diversity in 7<sup>th</sup> century Armenian cult buildings.<sup>15</sup> He alludes to the fact that among the builders of the Round Church there were likely to have been people from Thrace where there was already a significant Armenian community. Operating on the assumption that the original rotunda

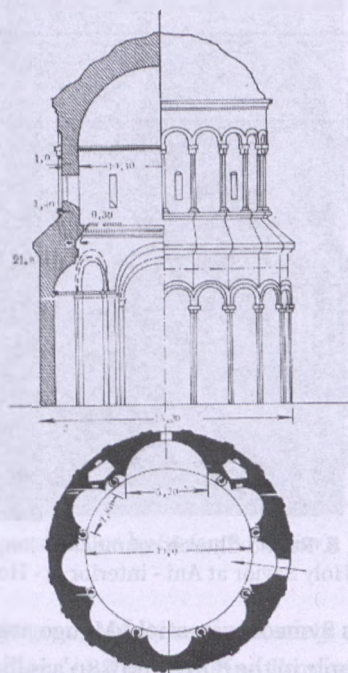


Fig. 7a. Round Church rotunda/Holy Saviour at Ani (composite image by Stefan Boyadjiev);  
7b - plan of Holy Saviour

<sup>14</sup> S. Boiadjiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–82.

<sup>15</sup> C. Mango, *op. cit.*, pp. 305–306.





Fig. 8. Round Church rotunda: a - longitudinal section (reconstruction by Stefan Boyadjiev); b - Holy Savior at Ani - interior; c - Holy Savior at Ani -interior/exterior (photos by Yarus Ozkaya)

was Symeon's creation, Mango argues further that Symeon, who was educated in Constantinople in the 870's and 880's is likely to have witnessed the erection of the Church St. Elijah in the Great Palace by Basil I, which was "circular, had seven *bemata* (chancels), and some kind of curved passages, probably an ambulatory".<sup>16</sup> Mango surmises that this would-be Constantinopolitan prototype for the Preslav building may itself have served as an intermediary between Preslav and the Armenian multi-foil rotundas current in the Caucasus at the time. Stefan Boyadjiev also maintains that the design of the Round Church at Preslav was fashioned after Armenian prototypes which the Byzantine ecclesiastics brought with them to Bulgaria after 870.<sup>17</sup> Other scholars such as Dimitur Ovcharov and Nikolai Ovcharov are also supporters of this theory of an Armenian connection.<sup>18</sup> Other developmental between Armenian and Byzantine architecture in the capital and at Mount Athos have already been suggested in the literature. The trefoil, the quatrefoil, the church with corner squinches, the "Hripsime type" of radiating octagonal multi-foil and other innovations in eleventh century Byzantium, may also owe their homage, albeit indirectly, to Armenian counterparts which flourished there from centuries before.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 306; See also, G. Millet, 'L'église ronde...', p. 188.

<sup>17</sup> S. Boiadjev, *op. cit.*, p. 125; Idem, 'Influences arménienne dans l'architecture de l'Église Ronde de Préslav', in: *Atti del Primo Simposio Internazionale de Arte Armena, Bergamo, 28-30 giugno*, Venezia 1975, pp. 35-42.

<sup>18</sup> D. Ovcharov and N. Ovcharov, 'Aspekti na genezisa na rannosrednovekovnata bulgarska tsurkovna arkhitektura i monumentalna dekoratsiia', in: *Iztochnoto Pravoslavie v Evropeiskata Kultura': mezhdunarodna konferentsiia, Varna, 2-3 iuli, 1993*, Sofia 1999, pp. 22-36.

<sup>19</sup> T. F. Mathews, 'Observations on the church of Panagia Kamariotissa on Heibelida (Chalke), Istanbul', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 27 (1973), pp. 126-127; class discussions with autor; C. Mango, 'A note



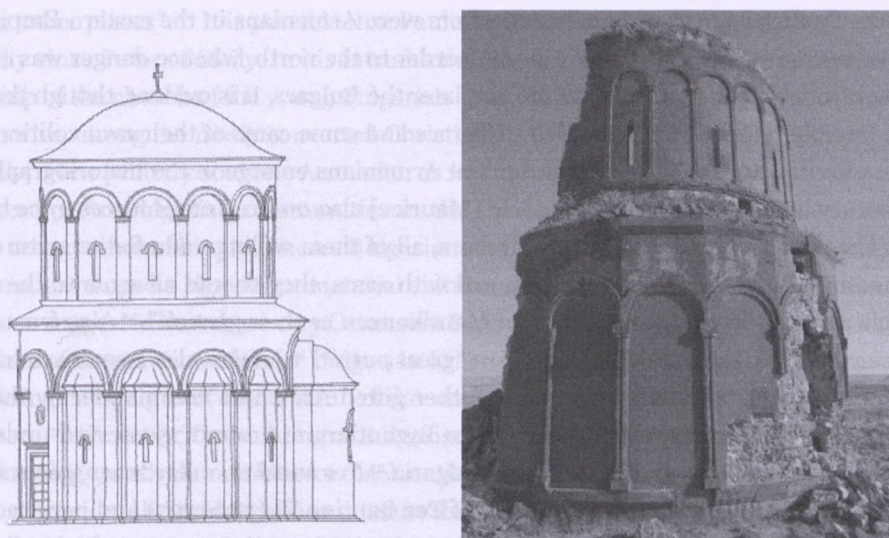


Fig. 9a. Round Church rotunda exterior, view from south (reconstruction by Stefan Boyadjiev); b Holy Savior at Ani - exterior (photo by Yaruz Ozakaya)

The Armenians made up the largest non-Greek ethnic group of Byzantine society and were very visible.<sup>20</sup> The great migratory waves of Armenians in the Byzantine Empire to Thrace, in particular, were clearly in evidence in the 7<sup>th</sup><sup>21</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup><sup>22</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup><sup>23</sup> centuries. This occurred under the auspices of the emperors Maurice, Constantine V Copronymus (741–775), Leo IV (775–780), John Tzimiskes but the latter remains out of the chronological scope of this paper. The intent was to move and reinstate in Thrace Armenians in great numbers. The reason was twofold: firstly, it was to dilute the precariously large indigenous concentrations of Armenians who were considered heretics by the empire as well as the heretical

on Panagia Kamariotissa and some imperial foundations of the tenth and eleventh centuries at Constantinople', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 27 (1973), pp. 130–132; Idem, *Byzantine architecture...*, pp. 222–231; Idem, 'Les monuments de l'architecture du XIe siècle et leur signification historique et sociale', *Travaux and mémoires*, 6 (1976), pp. 358–364; A. Ghazarian, 'A new view about the Caucasian precedents of the 'Athos type' of triconch churches', in: *XXe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Pré-Actes, III. Communications Libres*, p.337.

<sup>20</sup> N. Garsoïan, *Church and culture in early medieval Armenia*, Aldershot 1999, pp. 56–57, pp. 53–124.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 56–57; P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine empire*, Lisbon 1963, pp. 14–15; Idem, 'Ethnic changes in the Byzantine empire in the seventh century', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 13 (1959), pp. 29–30, 32.

<sup>22</sup> Theophanes Confessor *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, vol. 1, Leipzig 1885, p. 427, 429; Michael I, Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. 2, Paris 1963, pp. 518, 521, 523; N. Garsoïan, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 57; P. Charanis, 'Ethnic changes', p. 30, P. Charanis, *The Armenians*, p. 15; J. V. A. Fine Jr., *The early medieval Balkans: a critical survey from the sixth to the late twelfth century* Ann Arbor 1983, pp. 6, 173; A. Dancheva-Vasileva, 'Armenskoto prisustvie v Plovdiv prez srednovekovieto (VIII–XIII v.)', *Istoricheski pregled*, 40 (1999), nos.5–6, p. 120; V. Arnaudov 'Pavlikianstvoto - armenskata eres i negovoto vlianie v bulgarskite zemi', in: *Bulgari i armentsi zaedno prez vekovete*, Sofia 2001, p. 216.

<sup>23</sup> J. Fine, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

sect the Paulicians, a great number of whom were Armenians in the eastern Empire. The second reason was to guard the imperial border to the north, whence danger was ever imminent from the Slavs and the Avars, and later the Bulgars. It is evident, though that most were forcibly removed and resettled in Thrace and some came of their own volition as deserters to the empire. Names of prominent Armenians emerge in the historiography. The 7<sup>th</sup> century historian Sebeos writes: "He [Maurice] also ordered other forces to be brought from the land of Armenia in great numbers, all of them willing and of elite stature, to be formed into battalions and that, equipped with arms, they should all cross to the land of Thrace against the enemy, and Mushel Mamikonean as their general".<sup>24</sup> Also from Sebeos we learn of a certain Atat Khorkhoruni, a "great *patrik*" who was also a commander in the Byzantine army stationed in Thrace. Another gifted Armenian commander by the name of Tadjat Andzevatzik who having come to Byzantium at around 750 served under Constantine V in his military campaigns in Bulgaria.<sup>25</sup> Yet another, a Bardanes, general of the Thracians fought under the command of Constantine VI (780–797) and perished in the Bulgarian battle of 792.<sup>26</sup> It is also clear that certain Armenians were undoubtedly in the service of the Bulgarian Khans.

It is noteworthy from the point of view of Armeno-Bulgarian relations in this period to call attention to some facts pertaining to Khan Krum and his reign (c. 803–814). The top of the administrative hierarchy was reserved for Bulgars, namely the ruler, Khan Krum, his brother Tuk and the Kavkhan Iratais. There is, however, significant epigraphic evidence that attests to the presence of Armenians in top military positions - *stratego*i in the service of these three individuals. The names Bardas, Jannis, Kordylas and Gregoras appear on an inscription from Thrace.<sup>27</sup> Armenians thus vividly made up part of the ethnic fabric of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century Thrace.

The colony was composed of emigrants from Asia Minor, and formed in and around the district of Philipopolis (modern day Plovdiv, Bulgaria) in the second half of the eighth century. There was also an influx of large numbers of Paulician heretics clustering around Philipopolis in the ninth century. Further evidence of Armenian-Bulgarian contacts in this period is that with Bulgaria's official conversion to Christianity under Boris, the Bulgarian lands turned into an arena for missionary activity of all sorts. Amongst the people who flocked there were Armenians. Testimony of this comes from correspondence exchanged between the Bulgarian monarch and Pope Nicholas I. In his answer to Boris' letter the Pope writes: "... you claim that Christians from different places have arrived in your homeland, [people] who tell many and diverse things, as they please, i.e. Greeks, Armenians and peo-

<sup>24</sup> Sebeos, *The Armenian history attributed to Sebeos*, tr. from Armenian by R.W. Thomson, vol. 1-2, Liverpool 1999, I, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup> P. Charanis, 'Ethnic changes...', p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> See note 25.

<sup>27</sup> P. Charanis, 'Ethnic changes...', pp. 103–104.



ple from other places".<sup>28</sup> It is possible that Paulicians were among the Armenian preachers especially since Peter of Sicily, in his introduction to *History of the Paulicians*, warns the leadership of the church of the young Bulgarian state of the dangers of the heretics sending missionaries among the newly converted Christians".

Lastly, a few primary sources, Armenian as well as non-Armenian, refer to the fact that there were proto-Bulgarian communities in the Caucasus<sup>29</sup>. Some claims have been put forth in recent scholarship that these Bulgarians assimilated the Syrio-Caucasian building traditions, developed a significant material culture and had urban planning. Furthermore, it has been suggested that these very Caucasian Bulgarians, returning to Danubian Bulgaria at the time of the creation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bulgarian Kingdom, may have been actively involved in the building campaigns of Pliska and Preslav and thus imparted their Caucasus-acquired skills there.<sup>30</sup> However, the building of Bulgarian cities in the Caucasus is not supported by the archaeology, such claims therefore lack authority and should be further investigated.

In summation, the evidence recounted in this paper points towards the identity of the Preslav rotunda as a foundation of King Boris, erected somewhere between 870 and 875 with the express purpose of baptizing, in a hurry, the newly converted population of Bulgaria. I feel it is very plausible that there exists a link between the original architectural conception of the Preslav rotunda and its Armenian multi-foil counterparts. The Syro-Caucasian influence could have penetrated either directly or via Constantinople. This could have occurred through the mediation of a member of Byzantine high level clergy bringing in Armenian or Armenian-inspired church plans to the sovereign of the newly Christianized state of Bulgaria, or through the influence of Armenians living on Bulgarian lands (some for centuries and some of them newcomers) who were instrumental in importing their cultural and artistic ideas into a new social milieu. While the theory of an Armenian archetype that influenced both the Round Church at Preslav, as well as the Church of the Saviour at Ani is very compelling, one has not yet been found. Thus the avenue of inspiration is still unclear at this stage of the study and requires further investigation.

<sup>28</sup> J. Fine, *The Early Medieval...*, p. 119.

<sup>29</sup> One of these early sources is Moses Khorenatsi's *History of the Armenians* – see Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, trans. R. W. Thomson, Ann Arbor 2006, pp. 132–133, 142, 197, 208, 233, 261.

<sup>30</sup> N. Tuleshkov, *Arkhitekturnoto izkustvo na starite Bulgari*, vol. 1, 2001, pp. 30–38, 42–60. I wish to acknowledge the help of Prof. Dickran Kouymjian, who alerted me to the problem with the legitimacy of this material. The material is, however, interesting and challenging enough to warrant further study.





## *Un des premiers exemples d'hybridation : l'architecture Arménienne de Crimée (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*

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Des dizaines d'édifices culturels furent bâtis par les Arméniens en Crimée, au XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, notamment dans les villes de Caffa et Solkhat/Sourkhat<sup>1</sup>. Ils s'accompagnaient certainement, en nombre encore plus grand, de bâtiments civils. De ce vaste héritage architectural, seule une vingtaine d'édifices culturels paroissiaux (églises et chapelles), trois ou quatre monastères et quelques rares vestiges d'architecture civile nous sont partiellement parvenus<sup>2</sup>.

A Caffa (aujourd'hui Féodossia) on peut encore identifier une dizaine d'églises arméniennes. Mais durant la période d'essor des XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles, ce sont plusieurs dizaines d'églises et de monastères arméniens qui ont dû exister. Des témoignages français, italien, russes et turc des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles indiquent que, à cette époque, la ville comptait encore entre 20 et 32 églises arméniennes<sup>3</sup>.

En sus des églises, il y avait à Caffa et à proximité plusieurs monastères arméniens qui ne sont pas conservés. L'église Saint-Serge, préservée en bon état, appartenait à un mo-

<sup>1</sup> Sur l'histoire de la colonie arménienne de Crimée, voir surtout V. Mikaelyan, *Ghrimahayots patnout'youn*, Erevan 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Sur l'architecture médiévale arménienne de Crimée en général, on pourra consulter notamment : M. Pechtmaldjian, *Pamyatniki armyanskikh posselenii*, Erevan 1987, p. 15–48 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *Armyanskaïa arkhitektoura v Krymou*, Erevan 1990 ; O. Khalpakhchian, 'Chiese armene in Crimea', dans : *Atti del Quinto simposio internazionale di arte armena. 1988*, Venise 1991, p. 499–515 ; P. Donabedian, 'Les Arméniens en Crimée génoise (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle). Notes d'histoire et d'architecture', dans : *Roma-Armenia*, catalogue d'exposition, red. C. Mutafian, Rome 1999, p. 188–193.

<sup>3</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma (XIV–XVII vv.)*, Erevan 1978, p. 16–17 ; V. Mikaelyan, *Ghrimahayots patnout'youn*, Erevan 1989, p. 32, 41, 191–192 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 9 ; E. Aïbabina, *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba Kaffy XIV–XVIII vekov*, Simferopol 2001, p. 23.

nastère dont presque rien ne subsiste<sup>4</sup>. Du monastère Saint-Georges, seule reste l'église, remaniée tardivement. Le monastère Saint-Antoine, qui était lui aussi situé en ville, fut célèbre au XVe siècle pour son école monastique et son *scriptorium*<sup>5</sup>. Dans celui de Saint-Grégoire, également en ville, un hymnaire fut copié en 1431<sup>6</sup>. L'existence d'un monastère Saint-Ménas ou Monastère Rouge (Kızıltaş) est aussi signalée à Caffa<sup>7</sup>. Le monastère de Gamtchak (Qimtchak), attesté depuis le début du XIVE siècle, se trouvait près de Caffa ; il possédait une église à coupole dédiée à la sainte Mère de Dieu<sup>8</sup>. Un homiliaire y fut copié en 1352–53<sup>9</sup>. Enfin, outre les fidèles de l'Eglise nationale, il y avait également à Caffa des Arméniens convertis au catholicisme, et un monastère dominicain arménien fondé en 1333 y est mentionné<sup>10</sup>. Lors de fouilles menées en 1998 et 2000, au voisinage de Caffa, au lieu-dit Vallée des Deux Ancres (*Dvoukhyakornaïa dolina*), on a découvert les restes d'un monastère arménien<sup>11</sup>.

Les Arméniens prirent une part active aux travaux d'intérêt public de Caffa. Leur évêque fit construire au début du XIVE siècle une conduite d'eau dont toute la ville bénéficia<sup>12</sup>. Deux plaques à inscriptions arméniennes de la fin du XIVE-début du XVe siècle, auxquelles des blasons génois confèrent un caractère officiel, relatent la construction de fontaines<sup>13</sup> ; s'y ajoute une pierre de margelle de puits portant une inscription arménienne et quatre blasons génois<sup>14</sup>. Les Arméniens participèrent aussi à l'édification et à l'entretien des remparts de Caffa : dans un document de 1464, les autorités génoises expriment leur reconnaissance à l'évêque arménien pour cette contribution<sup>15</sup>.

Selon une chronique arménienne du XVIIIe siècle, des notables arméniens, avec l'accord des autorités génoises, construisirent (peut-être restaurèrent) en 1432–1472 l'enceinte de leur faubourg, au sud du rempart génois<sup>16</sup>. Les Arméniens appellent aujourd'hui encore

<sup>4</sup> E. Lapouchinskaïa, « Armyanskaïa tserkov' sv. Sarkissa (Serguia) v Feodossii », *Lraber*, 5 (1984), p. 58–63.

<sup>5</sup> V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 200–201 ; H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *Armenische Buchmalerei und Baukunst der Krim. Tafeln*, Erevan 2009, p. 19, 32, 42, 51–52.

<sup>6</sup> H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 96 ; E. Aïbabina, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 9 ; V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 16 ; E. Aïbabina, *op. cit.*, p. 8 ; M. Petrossyan, 'Ghrimi Sourb Khatch vanqəev 1993–2001 t't. verakangnman achkhatanqnerə', *Houchardzan, Tarequirq*, 4-5 (2008), p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>11</sup> E. Aïbabina, *op. cit.*, p. 116–119, fig. 38, 39.

<sup>12</sup> V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 197–198 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> E. Aïbabina, *op. cit.*, p. 55–56, 105, 108 (fig. 34).

<sup>14</sup> E. Aïbabina, *op. cit.*, p. 60, fig. 10, p. 61. Inscription : *Divan Hay Vimagrou'tyan. Corpus Inscriptio-num Armenicarum. Liber VII, Ukraina, Moldova*, établi par G. Grigoryan, Erevan 1996, p. 26, n° 11.

<sup>15</sup> V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 194, 196.

<sup>16</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 11–12 ; V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 194–196.



« *Hayots Berd* » (« Fort des Arméniens ») ce faubourg, devenu au XIXe siècle le quartier de La Quarantaine.

On trouve dans le périmètre de La Quarantaine cinq ou six églises des XIVe-XVe siècles, stylistiquement homogènes. L'épigraphie, les témoignages écrits et les caractéristiques architecturales prouvent que trois d'entre elles, assez bien conservées, sont arméniennes : Saint-Jean Baptiste, datée par la tradition de 1348 et qui portait une inscription de restauration de 1661<sup>17</sup>, Saint-Jean le Théologien, vraisemblablement lui-aussi du XIVe-XVe siècle, et Saint-Etienne, datée de la première moitié du XVe siècle (avant 1456) par des sources arméniennes<sup>18</sup> et située près d'une fontaine de 1491 à inscriptions arméniennes (disparues)<sup>19</sup>. L'église Saint-Etienne conserve des fragments de fresques d'influence byzantine et à inscriptions grecques qui l'ont fait considérer à tort comme grecque<sup>20</sup>. La quatrième église de La Quarantaine, restaurée, est traditionnellement dédiée à saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur, et la cinquième, en ruines, à sainte Parascève (« *Ourbati* » = « du Vendredi »).

La typologie de l'ensemble formé par l'église et son narthex semble montrer que deux de ces monuments, Saint-Jean Baptiste et Saint-Jean le Théologien, étaient des sanctuaires monastiques. Au XIXe siècle, on pouvait aussi voir dans La Quarantaine les ruines d'une sixième église, dédiée à la sainte Résurrection (*Sourb Haroutioun*), et près d'elles, des khatchkars et des sculptures sur de hauts podiums<sup>21</sup>.

On peut donc raisonnablement étendre l'attribution nationale à l'ensemble de cette sorte de port secondaire fortifié<sup>22</sup>.

A Solkhat/Sourkhat, des colophons arméniens du XIVe siècle citent huit ou neuf églises, ce qui, selon plusieurs auteurs et en comparaison avec Caffa, ne correspond sans doute pas à la totalité des édifices culturels arméniens de cette ville, première « capitale » tatare de la presqu'île<sup>23</sup>. De ces églises il ne reste aujourd'hui que les ruines d'un modeste sanctuaire que l'on dit dédié à saint Etienne<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> *Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan. Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum ...*, p. 95, n° 183.

<sup>18</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, 'O vremeni postroïki armyanskoï tserkvi sv. Stefana v Feodossii', *Lraber*, 2 (1975), p. 92 ; E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 106 ; V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>19</sup> *Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan. Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum ...*, p. 96, n° 185, 186.

<sup>20</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 105-106 ; V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>21</sup> V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>22</sup> Sur un plan russe de Caffa exécuté en 1784, juste après l'annexion de la Crimée en 1783, quatre églises de La Quarantaine (dont St-Etienne) sont indiquées comme arméniennes, tandis que, à l'écart au sud des autres, une cinquième est identifiée comme « église grecque Saint-Pierre de 1366 ». Voir H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *op. cit.*, pl. F2, fig. 3. Sur l'appartenance aux Arméniens de ce quartier, voir aussi E. Aïbabina, 'Plity s rel'efami iz raskopok tserkvi Ioanna Predtetchi v Feodossii' *Lraber*, 6 (1981), p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 106, p. 96 ; V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 32-33, 37 ; F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Ruines de cette chapelle à nef unique et abside saillante identifiées au centre de la ville en 1968 : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 48, 50 ; O. Dombrovskii, V. Sidorenko, *Solkhat i Sourb-Khatch*, Simferopol 1978, p. 34-35, évoquent les traces d'une voûte portée par des arcs et ne se prononcent pas sur l'appartenance nationale de l'édifice. Voir le plan dans : O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 507, pl. 1 / 5.

Outre les églises paroissiales, les colophons de manuscrits attestent l'existence à Sourkhat de trois monastères arméniens (non conservés) : Saint-Grégoire (effondré en 1967<sup>25</sup>), Saint-Auxence et Saint-Georges<sup>26</sup>. Il faut ajouter, au voisinage, deux autres monastères : Sainte-Croix (*Sourb Khatch*), siège épiscopal, grand et fameux ensemble assez bien préservé<sup>27</sup>, dont l'église Saint-Signe est datée par inscription de 1358 (voir *infra*), et l'ermitage Saint-Georges ou Saint-Etienne, lié semble-t-il au bourg fortifié (non conservé) de Kazarat<sup>28</sup>, et dont il ne reste que quelques vestiges<sup>29</sup>. On y a trouvé un petit khatchkar daté de 1331<sup>30</sup>.

Une importante communauté arménienne existait également à Soudak : au moins une chapelle en subsiste et un fragment de chambranle du portail d'une église<sup>31</sup>. Dans plusieurs autres localités, des communautés arméniennes sont attestées.

Outre les ensembles conventuels déjà mentionnés, situés dans les villes de Caffa et de Sourkhat ou près d'elles, plusieurs autres monastères peuvent être cités : celui du Saint-Sauveur (Saint-Elie) de Bakhtchéli (Bogatoyé), partiellement préservé, et un couvent à Karassoubazar (Biélogorsk)<sup>32</sup>, disparu. On signale les ruines d'un monastère du XIVe-XVe siècle, avec une conduite d'eau, une citerne et une fontaine, à 12 km de Caffa, dans la Baie des Deux Ancres (*Dvouyakornaya Boukhta*)<sup>33</sup>. Un monastère Saint-Pierre nous est connu par un colophon de 1377<sup>34</sup>.

Comme en Arménie, ce sont principalement des édifices culturels qui nous sont parvenus, au moins en partie : des églises et des chapelles, ainsi que quelques monastères. Parmi ces derniers, le monastère Sainte-Croix est le seul à avoir conservé quelques constructions civiles refaites aux XVIIe-XIXe siècles. Subsistent également quelques fontaines.

<sup>25</sup> *Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan. Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum ...*, p. 120.

<sup>26</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *Armjanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 96.

<sup>27</sup> M. Petrossyan, 'Ghrimi Sourb Khatch vanq ev 1993–2001 t't'. verakangnman achkhatanqnera', *Houchardzan, Tarequirq*, 4–5 (2008), p. 19–42; F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, (histoire, fouilles des années 1990 et enluminure). Sur l'architecture du monastère : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 12–19. Description partielle et étude succincte dans O. Dombrovskii, V. Sidorenko, *op. cit.*, p. 67–108 (histoire et fouilles des années 1970).

<sup>28</sup> Le bourg fortifié de Kazarat disposait d'une garnison arménienne qui pouvait se mettre au service de la défense de Caffa en cas d'attaque tatare. Voir O. Dombrovskii, V. Sidorenko, *op. cit.*, p. 64 ; V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 33, 39, 181–182 ; F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> O. Dombrovskii, V. Sidorenko, *op. cit.*, p. 109–115 ; F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 40–41.

<sup>30</sup> F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 41. Voir aussi E. Aïbabina, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>31</sup> H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *op. cit.*, pl. F10, fig. 26.

<sup>32</sup> A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> A. Gavrilova, 'Khatchkary iz fondov Feodossiïskogo kraevedcheskogo mouzeyya', in : *The Second International Symposium on Armenian Art*, vol. 3, Erevan 1981, p. 98 ; V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 198 ; F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 23. On y trouve une chapelle à nef unique : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 10, 51. Une inscription de 1405 était gravée sur un chapiteau (*Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan. Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum. Liber VII, Ukraina, Moldova*, établi par G. Grigorian, Erevan. 1996, p. 27, n° 14).

<sup>34</sup> H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *op. cit.*, p. 94.



Si on excepte les monastères extra-urbains, en Crimée on ne trouve qu'une architecture intégrée en milieu villageois et urbain, à la différence de ce qui prévalait au Moyen Age en Arménie. En métropole en effet, après la chute des royaumes (fin Xe-début XIe), par suite de la disparition progressive des villes, la vie culturelle et spirituelle avait dû se réfugier dans les monastères, en des lieux isolés.

Cette prédominance de l'architecture urbaine s'expliquerait par la prépondérance et l'attractivité des activités concentrées en milieu urbain. En cela, le phénomène de Crimée s'apparente à certaines implantations urbaines arméniennes du bas Moyen Age, comme à Agoulis, Djoulfa (avant la déportation de 1605), Tiflis ou Ispahan (Nouvelle-Djoulfa).

Les bâtisseurs arméniens de Crimée utilisaient les espèces de pierre qu'ils trouvaient sur place (calcaire, grès) et qui se prêtent mal à une taille rectiligne. C'est pourquoi les blocs, liés au mortier de chaux (souvent visible aux joints), ne sont pas totalement dégrossis. Le résultat en est un aspect plus rustique que les appareils très réguliers d'Arménie.



Fig. 1a. Monastère Sainte-Croix (Sourb Khatch) près de Sourkhat. Eglise Saint-Signe (1358) et narthex. Vue générale S.O.

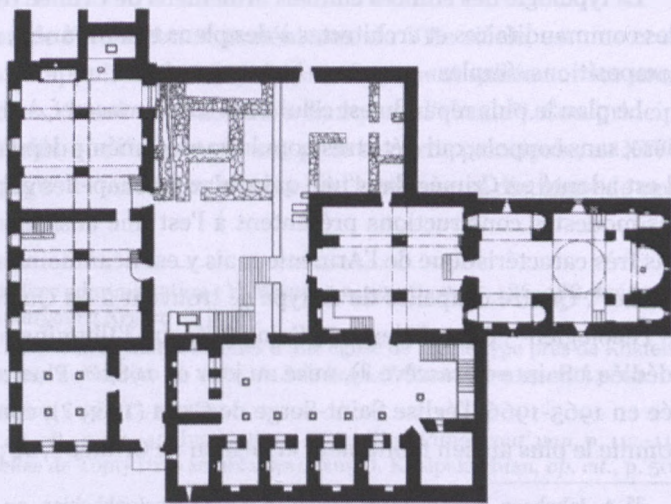


Fig. 1b. Plan d'après M. Petrossyan, 2008

Comme dans certaines provinces périphériques d'Arménie, les appareils étant grossiers, seuls quelques éléments importants font l'objet d'une taille soignée. C'est le cas, à l'extérieur, des revêtements des rares coupes existant ici et, à l'intérieur, des arcs et piliers. C'est aussi le cas des chambranles de portes, qui étaient moulurés et parfois richement ornés, souvent surmontés d'arcs saillants.

On privilégiait des structures simples, voûtées en berceau souvent brisé. Le plus souvent, la voûte est renforcée par des arcs doubleaux et, dans trois cas, par des croisées d'arcs. La coupole est rare, réservée à quelques sanctuaires particulièrement significatifs : le Saint-Signe du Monastère Sainte-Croix, Saint-Jean Baptiste de La Quarantaine, les Saints-Archanges de Caffa (ces deux dernières coupes étant très petites) et Saint-Georges de Caffa (coupole refaite tardivement sous influence russe<sup>35</sup> mais avec peut-être la réminiscence d'une coiffe en ombrelle).

À l'intérieur, les murs étaient le plus souvent couverts d'un enduit servant de support à des peintures murales, rares en Arménie médiévale. Autre différence avec l'Arménie, les éléments de décor sculpté figuré sont exécutés sur des pierres différentes de l'appareil mural.

La typologie des édifices culturels arméniens de Crimée reflète avant tout l'attachement des commanditaires et architectes à des plans traditionnels, avec une prédilection pour les compositions simples.

Le plan le plus répandu est celui de la salle à une nef, à voûte en berceau sur toit en bâtière, sans coupole, qui a été très populaire en Arménie depuis la période paléochrétienne<sup>36</sup>. Il est adopté en Crimée dans une quinzaine de chapelles et petites églises<sup>37</sup>. La plupart de ces modestes constructions présentent à l'est une abside saillante arrondie, ce qui n'est pas très caractéristique de l'Arménie mais y est néanmoins attesté à la période paléochrétienne<sup>38</sup>. Quatre chapelles de ce type se trouvent à La Quarantaine de Caffa : Saint-Jean le Théologien<sup>39</sup>, Saint-Etienne<sup>40</sup>, Saint-Grégoire l'Illuminateur<sup>41</sup> et une chapelle en ruines (dédiée à Sainte-Parascève ?), mise au jour en 1982<sup>42</sup>. Plusieurs fois remaniée puis restaurée en 1965-1966, l'église Saint-Serge de Caffa (1363 ?), considérée par plusieurs auteurs comme le plus ancien monument arménien de Crimée<sup>43</sup>, se présente aussi comme une nef

<sup>35</sup> A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 44 ; O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

<sup>36</sup> P. Cuneo, *Architettura armena*, vol. 2, Rome 1988, p. 710-715.

<sup>37</sup> Voir une planche rassemblant une partie de ces nefs uniques dans O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

<sup>38</sup> P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 710.

<sup>39</sup> Notice sur cette chapelle et son narthex, et plan dans : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 37-38.

<sup>40</sup> Brève notice et plan dans : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 38-39. Sur sa datation : E. Korkmazyan, 'O vremeni postroiki armyanskoi tserkvi ...', p. 92.

<sup>41</sup> Brève notice et plan dans : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 43-44.

<sup>42</sup> Notice, plan et relevés dans : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 40-42. Voir aussi M. Pechtaldjian, *op. cit.*, p. 20-21, fig. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Lapouchinskaya E., *op. cit.*, p. 58, admet la date de 1363 donnée (sans argumentation) par la légende de la gravure de Villeneuve dans son *Album sur la Tauride* (Paris, 1853). V. Mikaelyan estime que l'édifice, situé dans l'enceinte de la citadelle génoise, est antérieur à l'arrivée à Caffa des Génois, qui n'auraient pas



unique à abside saillante arrondie ; mais cette saillie cache à l'intérieur un chevet à trois absides, trait assez fréquent sur les églises arméniennes de Crimée. Deux chapelles à nef unique et abside saillante arrondie sont signalées au village de Topty (Topli, Topoliowka) : Saint-Serge<sup>44</sup>, où se trouve un khatchkar daté de 1381<sup>45</sup>, et Sainte-Mère de Dieu (ou « Vendredi »), restaurée en 1702<sup>46</sup>.

Deux exemples de nef unique avec abside en saillie pentagonale (contour plusieurs fois attesté en Arménie à la période paléochrétienne<sup>47</sup>) se trouvent près de Soudak : à la chapelle des Saints-Apôtres hors des remparts, près de la tour de Federico Astaguera datée de 1386<sup>48</sup>, et au village d'Ouyoutnoïe<sup>49</sup>. Une seule chapelle à nef unique possède un chevet extérieurement rectiligne, conformément à la « norme » nationale, dans le village d'Arpat (Zelenogorie)<sup>50</sup>.

La nef à coupole se distingue par sa simplicité et sa petitesse. La coupole s'appuie sur des supports attachés aux murs latéraux. C'est un élément (trait) adopté par un assez grand nombre de chapelles de l'Arménie médiévale<sup>51</sup>. Il est ensuite repris par Saint-Jean Baptiste de La Quarantaine, à Caffa, dont la datation traditionnelle remonte très vraisemblablement à 1348<sup>52</sup> et qui était probablement un sanctuaire monastique puisqu'il est précédé d'un narthex.

La salle à coupole, création de l'architecture arménienne du VIIe siècle, est une croix inscrite dans laquelle les quatre appuis de la coupole font fortement saillie sur les murs latéraux, tandis que, à l'est, deux chambres à absidiole flanquent l'abside<sup>53</sup>. Son principe est utilisé à Saint-Georges de Caffa, que l'on peut situer, pour sa partie principale, au XIVe-XVe siècle<sup>54</sup>. Initialement rectiligne à l'extérieur, le chevet, à l'intérieur, se distingue de ceux

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autorisé son érection là du temps de leur administration : V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 17, 186-188. Voir aussi E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 96.

<sup>44</sup> V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 46. Jakobson signale les ruines d'une église de même type près de Koktebel (Planerskoïe), église restaurée selon une inscription en 1401 : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Inscription : *Hay Vimagrout'yan ...*, p. 117, n° 264.

<sup>46</sup> A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 44-45. Inscription : *Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan*, p. 117-118, n° 266. Voir le plan des deux chapelles de Topty (très semblables) dans O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 507, pl. 1 / 3 et 4.

<sup>47</sup> P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 710-711.

<sup>48</sup> Voir sa situation sur le plan de Soudak publié par H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *op. cit.*, pl. F4, fig. 5, n° 14-15. Le plan de la chapelle est publié par O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 507, pl. 1 / 9. Voir aussi M. Pechtaldjian, *op. cit.*, p. 46-47.

<sup>49</sup> O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 507, pl. 1 / 8. M. Pechtaldjian, *op. cit.*, p. 47, fig. 59, signale, près du rempart nord-ouest de Soudak, une troisième chapelle à nef unique, qu'il estime arménienne.

<sup>50</sup> O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 507, pl. 1 / 1.

<sup>51</sup> P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 729.

<sup>52</sup> Sur ce monument et son narthex, et son décor, voir notamment A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 20-23.

<sup>53</sup> P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 726.

<sup>54</sup> Une brève notice sur cette église et un plan dans O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, (qui la date, on ignore sur quelle base, de 1385), p. 502 et 509, pl. 3 / 4.

d'Arménie en ceci que l'abside est flanquée de deux niches-absides largement ouvertes<sup>55</sup>. Le même type de chevet tripartite (à trois absides) s'observe aux Saints-Archanges, à Saint-Serge de Caffa et à Saint-Etienne ou Saint-Georges (de Kazarat ?)<sup>56</sup>. Dans son aspect actuel, Saint-Georges de Caffa est le résultat d'un remaniement tardif : la coupole a été refaite et une abside saillante a été ajoutée.

Dérivée probablement de la salle à coupole, la croix inscrite cloisonnée est la composition la plus caractéristique des églises monastiques de l'Arménie médiévale<sup>57</sup>. Dans cette typologie, les appuis orientaux de la coupole font corps avec le bloc absidal, tandis qu'à l'ouest, derrière les deux appuis occidentaux, apparaissent soit deux grandes niches latérales, soit deux chambres angulaires. La variante de cette composition avec quatre chapelles logées dans les



Fig. 2a. Soudak, chapelle Saints-Apôtres. Vue du S.E.

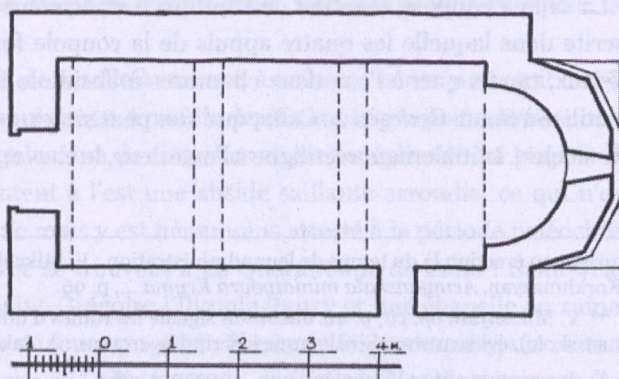


Fig. 2b. Plan d'après Yu. Tamanyan

<sup>55</sup> En Arménie le chevet à trois absides largement ouvertes sur la nef, très rare, ne se rencontre qu'à la fin du Moyen Age : P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 733, 740. Dans les églises arméniennes de Cilicie, en revanche, ce trait est un peu plus fréquent. On le trouve à Anavarza et Sis. Voir R. Edwards, 'Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Fortifications of Armenian Cilicia : Second Report', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 37 (1983), fig. 19 et 58.

<sup>56</sup> Sur ce type de chevet, voir quelques remarques et une planche chez O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 501-502 et 509, pl. 3.

<sup>57</sup> P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 726-728.



angles du périmètre rectangulaire est adoptée à l'église à coupole Saint-Signe du monastère Sainte-Croix de Sourkhat<sup>58</sup>. Cette église est datée de 1358 selon une inscription sculptée sur le tambour de sa coupole<sup>59</sup>.

C'est peut-être une croix inscrite à coupole (?) sur deux appuis libres ouest que l'on trouvait à Saint-Georges ou Saint-Etienne (de Kazarat ?), près de Sourkhat<sup>60</sup>.



Fig. 3a. Caffa (Féodossia), Hayots Berd/Quarantaine. Chapelle à nef unique Saint-Etienne (milieu XVe s.). Vue N.E.

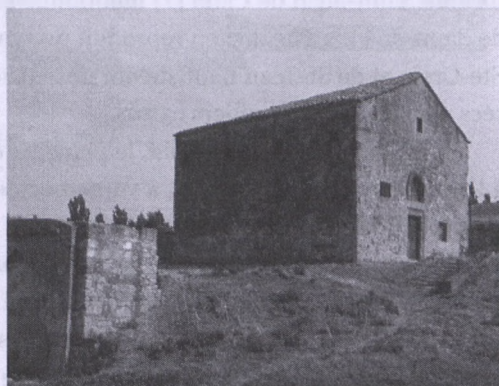


Fig. 3b. Caffa (Féodossia), Hayots Berd/Quarantaine. Chapelle à nef unique Saint-Etienne (milieu XVe s.). Vue N.O.

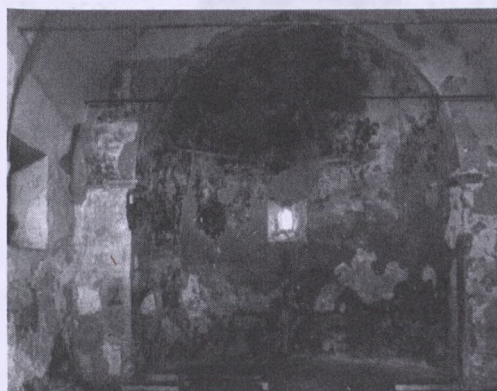


Fig. 3c. Caffa (Féodossia), Hayots Berd/Quarantaine. Chapelle à nef unique Saint-Etienne (milieu XVe s.). Intérieur

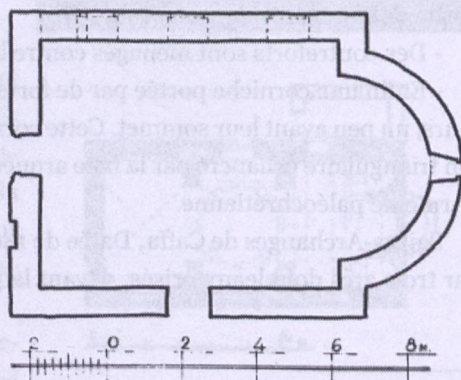


Fig. 3d. Caffa (Féodossia), Hayots Berd/Quarantaine. Chapelle à nef unique Saint-Etienne (milieu XVe s.). Plan d'après Yu. Tamanyan

<sup>58</sup> Sur ce monument, son narthex et son décor, voir notamment A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 14-19.

<sup>59</sup> *Hay Vimagrout'yan ...*, p. 103, n° 206.

<sup>60</sup> Les découvreurs laissent supposer la présence d'une coupole, car ils indiquent avoir trouvé « une pierre du toit du tambour octogonal » : O. Dombrovskii, V. Sidorenko, *op. cit.*, p. 111, 113. V. Sidorenko, 'Arkheologicheskoïe issledovanie pamyatnika armyanskoï arkhitektoury Kryma – monastyrya Sourb-Khatch', in : *IV respublikanskaïa naoutchnaïa konferentsia po problemam kul'tury i iskusstva Armenii. Tezissy dokladov*, Erevan, p. 253, mentionne carrément « une église en croix inscrite à coupole et à trois absides ».



La formule de l'église précédée à l'ouest d'un narthex, appelé *gavit* ou *jamatoun* en arménien, le plus souvent plus large et plus bas qu'elle, est propre à l'architecture monastique arménienne médiévale<sup>61</sup>. Elle est employée en Crimée dans 5 (ou 6) cas : Sainte-Croix de Sourkhat, Saint-Jean Baptiste et Saint-Jean le Théologien de La Quarantaine, Saint-Georges ou Saint-Etienne (de Kazarat ?), à *Dvoukhyakornaïa dolina* et peut-être dans un monastère Saint-Jean de Caffa [?] mentionné seulement par O. Khalpakhchian<sup>62</sup>. Le narthex de Saint-Jean le Théologien reproduit un type traditionnel à quatre piliers. Les narthex de Ste-Croix et de St-Jean Baptiste ont une structure plus originale, en salle à trois nefs séparées par une paire de piliers carrés.

Au monastère Sainte-Croix, le principe du réfectoire en forme de grande salle isolée à l'ouest du groupe principal, à voûte portée par des arcs appuyés sur des supports centraux, est, lui aussi, conforme à la tradition monastique arménienne. Cette salle a été ici tardivement divisée en deux, pour abriter au sud une cuisine<sup>63</sup>.

Saint-Sauveur (Saint-Elie) de Bakhtchéli (Bogatoïé), non daté, mais probablement attribué aux XIV<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles<sup>64</sup>, cet édifice est une longue nef à voûte sur deux arcs doubleaux et croisée d'arcs. Il présente une série de traits insolites :

- Derrière son chevet est disposé un étroit couloir reliant les deux chambres angulaires<sup>65</sup>.
- Chambres et passage sont accessibles depuis le centre de l'abside, ainsi que, semble-t-il, depuis l'extérieur, par une porte ouverte à l'origine au centre du mur oriental (cette partie du mur est endommagée).
- Des contreforts sont ménagés contre les murs nord et sud.
- Enfin une corniche portée par de fortes consoles est placée dans la partie haute de ces murs, un peu avant leur sommet. Cette corniche dessine en haut de la façade ouest un fronton triangulaire échancré par la baie arquée de la fenêtre, réminiscence antique qui évoque l'Arménie paléochrétienne.

Saints-Archanges de Caffa, Datée de 1408<sup>66</sup>, cette église est une large nef à voûte portée par trois arcs doubleaux brisés, devant laquelle se dresse à l'est un haut et étroit transept

<sup>61</sup> P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 734-741.

<sup>62</sup> O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 501 et 507, pl. 1 / 12.

<sup>63</sup> F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 26-27 (plan permettant d'imaginer un grand réfectoire) ; Petrossyan M., *op. cit.*, p. 20 (état actuel, avec au sud du réfectoire, une assez grande cuisine).

<sup>64</sup> Deux inscriptions arméniennes relatives à des restaurations de l'église étaient gravées sur ses portes ouest et sud, la seconde datée de 1810 ; elles ont disparu : *Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan ...*, p. 116, n° 259, 260.

<sup>65</sup> Sur l'architecture et le décor de ce monument, voir notamment : A. Jakobson, 'Armyanskiï monastyr' XIV veka bliz Belogorska v Krymou', *Patma-Banassirakan Handes*, 4 (1964), p. 230-235 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *Armyanskaïa arkhitektoura v Krymou*, Erevan 1990, p. 27-31 ; Y. Tamanyan, 'Ghrimi Amenap'rkitch haykakan vanqi tjartarapetout'youna', *Patma-Banassirakan Handes*, 1990, 1, p. 234-237 ; O. Khalpakhchian, *op. cit.*, p. 503, 510, pl. 5 / 1, et 511, pl. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Date donnée par l'inscription dédicatoire de l'église : V. Mikaelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 184-185 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 24. Inscription : *Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan ...*, p. 25, n° 10.





Fig. 4a. Caffa (Féodossia), Hayots Berd/Quarantaine. Eglise Saint-Jean Baptiste (c. 1348) et son narthex. Vue S.O.

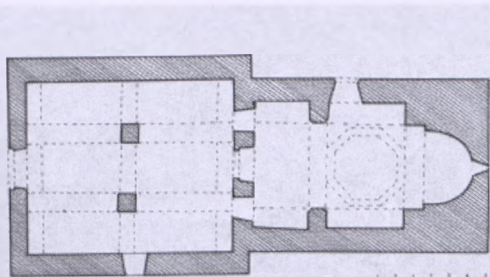


Fig. 4b. Plan d'après H. Khalpakhtchian.



Fig. 5a. Caffa (Féodossia), Saint-Georges. Vue N.O.



Fig. 5b. Caffa (Féodossia), Saint-Georges. Vue S.E.

surmonté d'une petite coupole, avec un chevet tripartite<sup>67</sup>. Ce chevet comportant trois absides est analogue à ceux de Saint-Georges et de Saint-Serge de Caffa. Elle aussi située à l'intérieur de la citadelle génoise, l'église des Archanges est, pour cette raison, attribuée à une paroisse arménienne catholique<sup>68</sup>.

En Arménie, où le baptistère comme construction séparée est inconnu, on recourt à une forme intégrée à l'intérieur des églises : une cuve destinée au baptême placée dans une niche, dans la partie orientale du mur nord. Cette solution tra-

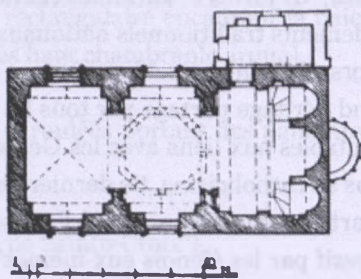


Fig. 5c. Caffa (Féodossia), Saint-Georges. Plan d'après H. Khalpakhtchian

<sup>67</sup> Sur l'architecture des Sts-Archanges, voir notamment : E. Lapouchinskaïa, 'Arkhitektoura armyanskoï tserkvi arkhangelov Gavriila i Mikhaïla v Feodossii i eïo restavratsia', *Lraber*, 9 (1982), p. 64-72. 1982 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 24-27 ; O. Khalpakhtchian, *op. cit.*, p. 502-503 et 509, pl. 3 / 3.

<sup>68</sup> V. Mikaelian, *Ghrimahayots patmout'youn*, Erevan 1989, p. 185-186, A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 24, 27. Située aussi dans l'enceinte, l'église Saint-Serge pouvait être considérée comme antérieure à la présence génoise. Au contraire, l'église Saints-Archanges est précisément datée du début du XVe s. : seule l'hypothèse catholique paraît donc plausible à V. Mikaelyan.





Fig. 6a. Monastère Sainte-Croix (Sourb Khatch). Eglise Saint-Signe (1358) et narthex. Vue du S.

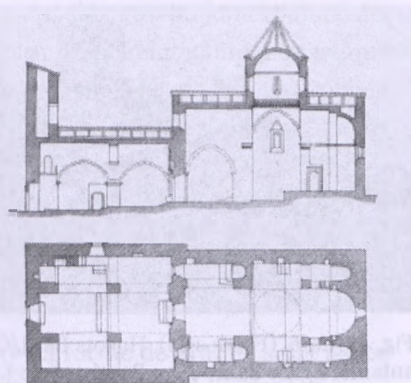


Fig. 6b. Monastère Sainte-Croix (Sourb Khatch). Plan et coupe longitudinale d'après A. Jakobson et Yu. Tamanyan. Signe (1358) et narthex. Vue du S.

ditionnelle est adoptée à l'intérieur des églises arméniennes de Crimée : Sainte-Croix, Saints-Archanges de Caffa, Saint-Sauveur de Bakhtchéli, Saint-Jean Baptiste, Saint-Jean le Théologien, Sainte-Parascève de La Quarantaine.

Les monuments arméniens de Crimée furent créés dans un environnement cosmopolite composé de présences diverses : a) musulmanes turques seldjoukides, tataro-mongoles puis turques ottomanes, b) occidentales génoises, c) orthodoxes grecques et russes, d) juives et karaïmes (karaïtes). De fait, on relève sur ces monuments, à côté des fondements traditionnels nationaux, d'une part, des procédés et motifs communs avec les décors musulmans seldjoukides et mongols, d'autre part, des éléments byzantins liés au grand héritage partagé par tous les chrétiens d'Orient, et enfin des éléments occidentaux imputables aux liens avec les Génois et probablement à la conversion de certains Arméniens au catholicisme. Ce dernier phénomène ne doit pas surprendre à Caffa, où le pouvoir appartenait aux Génois et où l'Eglise catholique menait un prosélytisme actif, jugé parfois excessif par les Génois eux-mêmes<sup>69</sup>. La miniature arménienne de Crimée apporte à cet égard un témoignage complémentaire, puisqu'on y discerne à la fois une influence occidentale et des traits liés à l'héritage byzantin commun à l'ensemble de la région, renouvelé au début de la période « paléologue ». Le courant byzantin se manifeste également sur les fragments de peinture murale conservés dans les édifices arméniens de Crimée.

<sup>69</sup> A. Jakobson accorde à la pression religieuse génoise sur les élites arméniennes de Caffa plus d'importance que V. Mikaelyan, qui en minimise les effets : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 10-12, 27, 31 (comparer avec la p. 5 de l'introduction). Voir aussi V. Sidorenko, 'Les particularités de la formation du style des monuments d'architecture de la colonie arménienne du Moyen Age en Crimée', in *The IV<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Armenian Art, Theses of Reports*, Erevan 1985, p. 324. Selon Jakobson (*op. cit.*, p. 27) et E. Aïbabina, *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba...*, p. 24, les nombreuses églises génoises qui existaient à Caffa, certaines richement décorées, ont pu exercer une influence sur les constructions arméniennes.



L'architecture arménienne de Crimée présente dans son décor architectural, et surtout dans la décoration de ses portails, une série de traits communs avec l'ornementique musulmane. Ces traits révèlent la proximité, pour les Arméniens, du milieu turco-mongol (et aussi sans doute judéo-karaïme). Il faut noter que les procédés et ornements en question

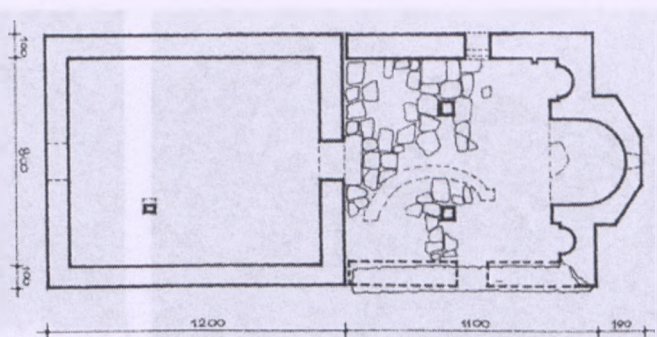


Fig.7. Saint-Etienne ou Saint-Georges (de Kazarat ?) au-dessus du monastère Sainte-Croix, près de Sourkhat. Plan d'après Fr. Babayan et E. Korkhmazyan, 2008

sont très répandus en Arménie même depuis la fin du XIIe siècle et s'inscrivent dans le cadre d'échanges étroits entre Arméniens et Seldjoukides au XIIe–XIIIe siècle. On les trouve en Crimée au XIVe–XVe siècle, outre les monuments arméniens, sur des édifices musulmans, juifs et karaïmes, et sur un vestige grec<sup>70</sup>. Côté arménien, ces éléments sont particulièrement présents sur deux des principaux monuments : Saint-Jean Baptiste de La Quarantaine (1348) et Sainte-Croix près de Sourkhat (1358). Les traits en question sont :

- l'aspect général des portails, à large chambranle rectangulaire encadrant la baie arquée de la porte (surmonté à Ste-Croix d'un second, très haut chambranle arqué),
- le motif de la « chaîne seldjoukide »<sup>71</sup>,
- les arabesques très fouillées, à tiges ondulées et enroulées portant des palmettes et demi-palmettes aux longues extrémités recourbées<sup>72</sup>,
- de gros médaillons bombés à entrelacs végétaux,
- les doubles chapiteaux à corbeille de lis du portail de Sainte-Croix<sup>73</sup>,

<sup>70</sup> E. Aïbabina, *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba ...*, p. 17–31, passe en revue les travaux qui définissent un « style seldjoukide » ou « post-seldjoukide », d'origine micrasiatique, commun à l'ensemble de la Crimée, indépendamment des différences confessionnelles, et dans la genèse duquel l'apport arménien aurait été primordial. Elle-même utilise souvent le terme « style seldjoukide », en relevant (p. 57) le rôle de « la sculpture décorative arménienne qui occupe à Caffa la place principale ».

<sup>71</sup> A. Jakobson souligne l'ubiquité de ce motif dans la Crimée des XIVe–XVe siècles : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Voir aussi Aïbabina E. *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba...*, p. 157–164, avec notamment, p. 160, la reconstitution du portail du narthex du monastère arménien mis au jour en 1998 et 2000 à *Dvoukhyakornaïa dolina*, près de Caffa.

<sup>72</sup> Ce motif est étudié par E. Aïbabina, *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba ...*, notamment p. 164–172.

<sup>73</sup> A. Jakobson souligne la présence de ce motif d'origine arméno-seldjoukide sur les monuments tatars de Crimée des XIVe–XVe ss., ainsi que sur l'un des rares monuments grecs documentés : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 16 (voir aussi F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 14).



Fig. 8a. Caffa (Féodossia), Hayots Berd/Quarantaine. Saint-Jean et narthex. Vue S.O.

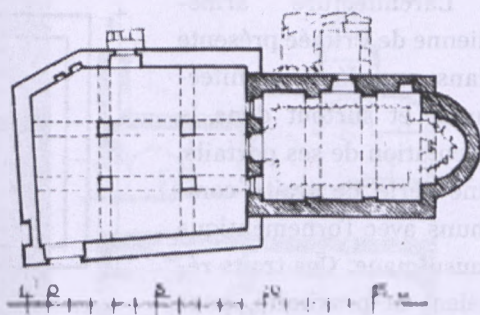


Fig. 8b. Caffa (Féodossia), Hayots Berd/Quarantaine. Plan d'après H. Khalpakhtchian

- les bandes de stalactites, à divers endroits et surtout sur les impostes,
- l'inscription à onciales fleuries du tambour de Sainte-Croix<sup>74</sup>.

Rappelons que l'ornementation des portes de bois arméniennes sculptées en Crimée au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, où domine la combinaison croix/étoiles à huit pointes, relève de la même orientation à fortes affinités musulmanes<sup>75</sup>.

Une série de traits présents sur les monuments arméniens de Crimée semblent refléter l'influence du milieu génois. Deux monuments présentent une concentration de ces caractéristiques, les Saints-Archanges de Caffa (1408) et le Saint-Sauveur (Saint-Elie) de Bakhtchéli (Bogatoïé). Pour cette raison (qui s'ajoute, dans le cas des Saints-Archanges, à sa situation) ils ont été considérés comme appartenant à des communautés arméniennes catholiques<sup>76</sup>. A. Jakobson note dans les Saints-Archanges un rejet presque total de la tradition nationale<sup>77</sup>.

- Aux Saints-Archanges, la composition mixte à étroit et haut transept, et large nef voûtée, étrangère à la tradition arménienne, semble renvoyer à des modèles occidentaux<sup>78</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> Relevé de l'inscription : *Divan Hay Vimagrout'yan* ..., p. 103, n° 206.

<sup>75</sup> Sur ces portes de bois voir notamment : O. Chalpachčjan, 'L'arte dell'intaglio su legno in Armenia nei secoli X-XIV', in *Terzo simposio internazionale di arte armena. 1981. Atti*, Milan-Venise 1984, fig. 11 (datation erronée) ; M. Ghazarian, 'Decorative Carved Doors of Medieval Armenia', in *Terzo simposio internazionale di arte armena. 1981. Atti*, Milan-Venise 1984, p. 187-197, pl. 7 ; M. Ghazarian, *P'ayti guégharvestakan p'oragrout'youne Hayastanoum*, Erevan 1989, fig. 13 ; H. und H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjan, *op. cit.*, pl. 12.

<sup>76</sup> O. Khalpakchian, *op. cit.*, p. 500, qualifie ces deux monuments de « chiese occidentalizzate ».

<sup>77</sup> A. Jakobson, 'Armyanskii monastyr' ..., p. 235 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>78</sup> A. Jakobson, 'Armyanskii monastyr'..., p. 231 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 27. A. Gavri-lova, *op. cit.*, p. 98, y voit « la forme simplifiée des églises catholiques d'Europe occidentale ». Voir aussi O. Khalpakchian, *op. cit.*, p. 502. Au contraire, E. Lapouchinskaïa, 'Arkhitektoura armyanskoï tserkvi ...', p. 64, souligne le lien avec le principe, très arménien, de la salle à coupole.





Fig. 9a. Caffa (Féodosia). Monastère Saint-Serge. Eglise (1363 [?]), partie de narthex et porche. Vue N.O.

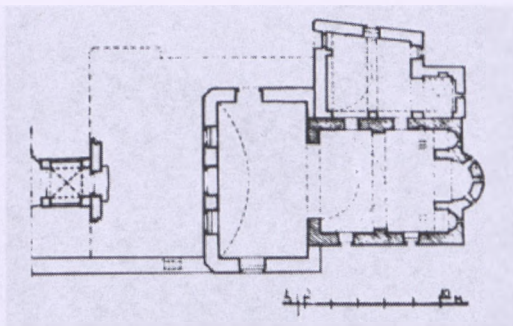


Fig. 9b. Caffa (Féodosia). Monastère Saint-Serge. Plan d'après H. Khalpakhtchian

- Au Saint-Sauveur, le couloir à l'est de la nef, reliant les chambres angulaires, constitue peut-être une reproduction malhabile de déambulatoire occidental<sup>79</sup>. On peut y ajouter les contreforts des murs latéraux<sup>80</sup>, dispositif quasi inconnu en Arménie, mais courant en Occident.

- Dans ces deux monuments, les voûtes à croisée de nervures en boudin (que l'on trouve aussi au réfectoire de Sainte-Croix) évoquent l'Occident<sup>81</sup>, davantage que l'Arménie, où les arêtes des arcs croisés sont à section quadrangulaire.

- Deux groupes de décors sculptés figurés peuvent être versés à ce dossier, tant pour l'iconographie de certains que pour le style. A Saint-Jean Baptiste de La Quarantaine sont présentés, au bas de la conque, le Christ flanqué des apôtres en buste et, sur les côtés de l'abside, deux saints en pied. Celui de droite est probablement saint Jean Baptiste ; l'identification du saint de gauche est moins aisée : on a proposé d'y voir saint Nicolas, saint Georges ou saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur. Au centre de la calotte de la coupole est figurée une Vierge en buste et en orante<sup>82</sup>. Au Saint-Sauveur de Bakhtchéli, sur les côtés de l'abside, on distingue une Annonciation, un Baptême, une Crucifixion, une Résurrection (disparue) et une Vierge couronnée à l'Enfant ; une pierre encastrée dans le mur nord, au-dessus de la cuve baptismale, présente un médaillon renfermant semble-t-il un Baptême, accosté de chérubins. Certes, la place accordée à la sculpture figurée et les caractéristiques de ces reliefs s'inscrivent en partie dans le courant qui marque le décor architectural de l'Arménie au XIIIe–XIVe siècle, où l'on trouve des reliefs souvent assez plastiques figurant des ico-

<sup>79</sup> A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 29–30. A. Jakobson rapproche ce dispositif de ceux que l'on trouve dans des églises provinciales de l'Italie médiévale.

<sup>80</sup> Ces contreforts sont signalés par Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 235, et visibles sur le plan et les élévations reconstituées de O. Khalpakhtchian, *op. cit.*, p. 510, pl. 5 / 1 et 511, pl. 6.

<sup>81</sup> A. Jakobson, 'Armyanskiï monastyr' ..., p. 234 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Voir aussi Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>82</sup> E. Aïbabina, *op. cit.*, p. 86–87.



Fig. 10a. Bakhtchéli (Bogatoïé). Eglise du monastère Saint-Sauveur (ou Saint-Elie). Vue S.O.

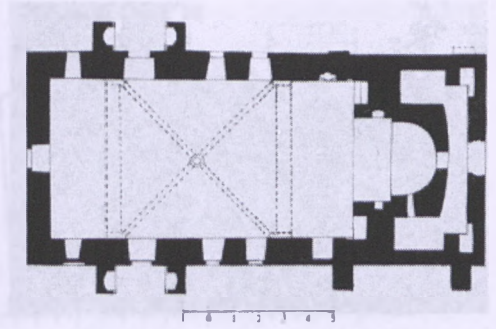


Fig. 10b. Plan d'après A. Jakobson et Yu. Tamanyan

nographies parfois empruntées à Byzance et à l'Occident<sup>83</sup>. Mais en Crimée, l'orientation occidentale semble nettement plus marquée dans l'iconographie et le style de ces hauts-reliefs fortement moulurés, en particulier les deux saints de part et d'autre de l'abside de St-Jean Baptiste et, au St-Sauveur, le Christ de la Résurrection qui, *labarum* en main, semble s'envoler au-dessus de son tombeau, la Vierge à l'Enfant couronnée et les chérubins.

- Le motif de l'agneau portant la croix sur *labarum*, symbole du Christ, fréquent en Occident, était inconnu en Arménie avant la fin du XIIe siècle : il est alors apparu en Cilicie, à une période de rapprochement avec les croisés<sup>84</sup>. Or ce motif est très répandu chez les Arméniens de Crimée. On en trouve onze

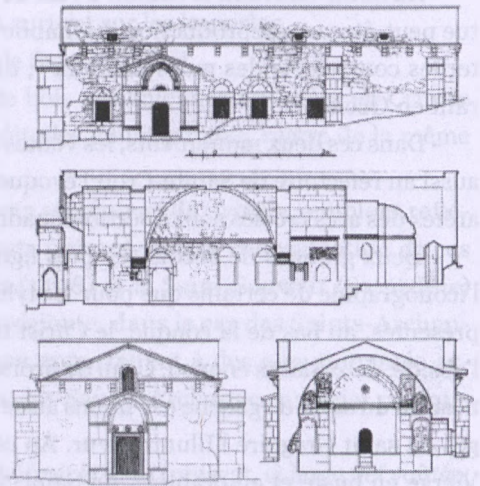


Fig. 10c. Coupes et élévations d'après H. Khalpakhtchian

<sup>83</sup> A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 21-23 ; voir aussi E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 101. A. Jakobson souligne à cette occasion la distance qui sépare les constructions arméniennes de l'architecture byzantine contemporaine.

<sup>84</sup> A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 16 (et à sa suite E. Aïbabina, *Dekoratiunaïa kamennaïa rez'ba...*, p. 56), et Babayan F., Korkhmazyan E., *op. cit.*, p. 15, croient voir l'agneau à *labarum* sur des monnaies ciliciennes, en particulier celles du roi Léon Ier (1198-1219). En réalité, c'est un lion passant, avec une croix derrière lui, que l'on y voit et non un agneau crucifère, ce lion faisant sans doute écho au prénom du roi. En fait le motif de l'agneau à *labarum* apparaît pour la première fois en milieu arménien, non sur des monnaies, mais sur des sceaux ciliciens du XIIe siècle (l'un de 1195, de Nersès de Lambron, l'autre non daté, d'un certain Thoros) et dans l'enluminure arménienne de Cilicie des années 1190, en particulier dans les Évangiles de Venise, n° 1635, de 1193, et « du Couronnement », de Lemberg/Lviv, de 1198.



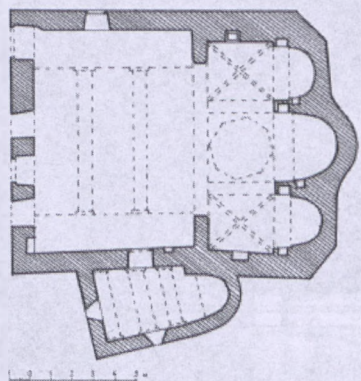


Fig. 11a. Caffa (Féodosia). Eglise Saints-Archanges (1408). Plan d'après A. Jakobson et Y. Tamanyan



Fig. 11b. Coupe longitudinale d'après A. Jakobson et Y. Tamanyan



Fig. 12.a. Caffa (Féodosia). Eglise Saints-Archanges (1408). Vue S.O.

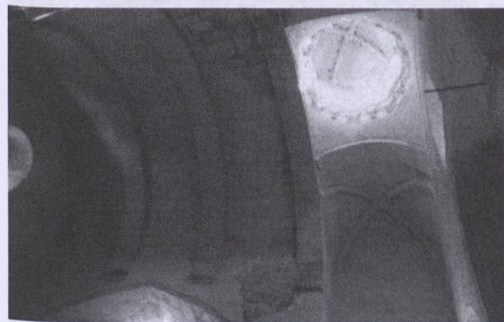


Fig. 12b. Intérieur, voûte longitudinale et coupole



Fig. 12c. Intérieur, coupole et couverture du transept





Fig. 13. Portails arméniens de Crimée : 13a. Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Caffa (c. 1348)



Fig. 13b. Sainte-Croix (1358)

exemples : 1–3) au sommet de la coupole, dans la conque<sup>85</sup> et sur le portail de Sainte-Croix de Sourkhat, 4–5) au centre de la croisée d'arcs et dans la conque du Saint-Sauveur de Bakhtchéli, 6) en haut de la façade occidentale des Saints-Archanges de Caffa<sup>86</sup>, 7–8) sur deux plaques à inscriptions arméniennes, relatives à la construction de fontaines à Caffa, et portant des blasons génois<sup>87</sup> ; 9–11) sur trois parties de Saint-Serge de Caffa<sup>88</sup>. On s'accorde à voir dans la présence de ce motif un trait d'influence occidentale (pas forcément d'adhésion au catholicisme)<sup>89</sup>. En Crimée même, outre les monuments arméniens, l'agneau à labarum-croix n'est conservé que sur un monument génois : une plaque à inscription latine de 1363 (qui provient peut-être d'une église arménienne de Caffa dédiée à la sainte Trinité)<sup>90</sup>.

- A côté du modèle de portail « orientalisant » à large chambranle rectangulaire évoqué plus haut, les architectes arméniens de Crimée élaborent un type de portail plus simple, qui évoque l'Italie médiévale. Il se réduit à un arc brisé saillant sur la façade, au-dessus de

<sup>85</sup> La présence du motif dans la conque de l'église du monastère Ste-Croix a été révélée par la chute de la partie inférieure de la peinture qui le recouvrait : O. Dombrovskii, V. Sidorenko, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>86</sup> E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 108, et E. Aïbabina, *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba ...*, p. 127, signalent aussi, par erreur, sa présence dans la coupole de Saint-Jean Baptiste de La Quarantaine.

<sup>87</sup> E. Aïbabina, *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba ...*, p. 40, 55, 127.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 123 (fig. 43), 127, 129.

<sup>89</sup> A. Jakobson, 'Armyanskii monastyr' ..., p. 234–235 ; E. Korkhmazyan, *Armyanskaïa miniatyoura Kryma ...*, p. 108 ; A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 16, 30 ; E. Aïbabina 2001, p. 40–41, 55–56 ; Babayan F., Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 14–15.

<sup>90</sup> E> Aïbabina, *Dekorativnaïa kamennaïa rez'ba ...*, p. 39–40.





Fig. 13c. Saint-Sauveur de Bakhtchéli

la porte. On le trouve, avec quelques variantes, aux Saints-Archanges de Caffa, à Saint-Etienne et Saint-Jean le Théologien de La Quarantaine<sup>91</sup>, à Topy, à Saint-Georges de Caffa (appuyé sur deux piédroits). Au Saint-Sauveur près de Bakhtchéli, ce type, orné de la « chaîne seldjoukide », est combiné avec celui du portail-porche apparu dans l'architecture arménienne dans la seconde moitié du VIIe siècle ; en même temps, ces trois portails saillants (aujourd'hui très endommagés), rappellent de loin les portails à gâble d'Occident.

La saillie arrondie des absides et la place accordée à la peinture murale peuvent être considérées comme des traits de parenté avec l'école byzantine. Les peintures sont d'ailleurs souvent influencées par l'art byzantin et celles de Saint-Etienne portent des inscriptions grecques. Rappelons que, à partir du début du XIVe siècle, la miniature arménienne de Crimée manifeste une nette perméabilité, non seulement à des modèles et à des procédés empruntés à la peinture occidentale, mais aussi à l'influence du style byzantin du temps des Paléologues<sup>92</sup>.

Par son ampleur numérique considérable (alors que les vestiges conservés des autres communautés ayant vécu en Crimée sont très peu nombreux) par rapport à sa relative modestie technique et par son originalité conceptuelle et stylistique, ce qu'il reste du patrimoine architectural arménien de Crimée constitue un témoignage précieux de la vie d'une communauté attachée à son identité et en même temps ouverte à la société environnante.

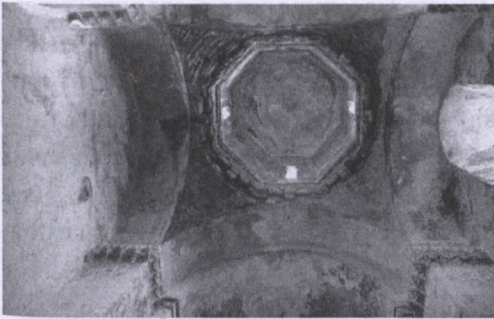


Fig. 14. Impostes à stalactites : 14a. Saint-Jean-Baptiste (c. 1348), vue intérieure zénithale



Fig. 14b. Saint-Sauveur de Bakhtchéli, porte nord

<sup>91</sup> *Eadem*, p. 87, signale un même dispositif sur la porte nord de Saint-Jean-Baptiste de La Quarantaine.

<sup>92</sup> F. Babayan, E. Korkhmazyan, *op. cit.*, p. 53-54, 56-57.





Fig. 15a. Décors sculptés figurés : 15a. Saint-Jean-Baptiste



Fig. 15b. Saint-Sauveur.



Fig. 15c. Baxc'eli (Bogatoe) Sb P'rkic' Imposte N abside

On construit en pierre des édifices à la planimétrie relativement rigoureuse, agrémentés de bandes sculptées avec soin autour des portes. Les décorateurs possèdent à la perfection le répertoire ornemental « arméno-seldjoukide » qui plaît alors à toutes les communautés. Loin des restrictions métropolitaines sur les images peintes, on enrichit les intérieurs de peintures murales et pour cela, comme dans les manuscrits, on recourt aux modèles grecs alors en vogue.

On apprécie aussi les décors sculptés figurés qui, tout en évoquant la mère patrie, peuvent s'inspirer d'exemples vus chez les voisins et maîtres génois. Que leur conversion soit sincère ou intéressée, les convertis au catholicisme veulent naturellement se distinguer de leurs anciens coreligionnaires par la forme et la décoration de leurs lieux de culte. Pour cela, ils empruntent aux modèles offerts par les Génois. Or comme ceux-ci ont pour l'essentiel disparu, les monuments arméniens présentent aussi l'intérêt de donner d'appréciables informations sur l'architecture provinciale d'une colonie génoise.

Il est révélateur que dans trois des principaux monuments, Saint-Jean Baptiste, Sainte-Croix et Saint-Sauveur, les motifs « arméno-seldjoukides » voisinent avec des éléments à affinités latines, illustrant le caractère cosmopolite du milieu où ils furent créés et, sinon l'ouverture d'esprit (comme on dirait de nos jours), du moins l'éclectisme culturel et esthétique de leurs commanditaires.

Mais par ailleurs, le traumatisme du déracinement a inévitablement entraîné une certaine perte de savoir faire. Les volumes sont modestes, les typologies sont souvent simples, les appareils sont irréguliers, voire grossiers. Seuls les éléments importants sont appareillés en pierre plus dure, soigneusement taillée. Élément fondamental de la tradition, la coupole, toujours précédée du tambour, est rare, réservée aux monuments les plus significatifs ; elle est souvent très petite.



Un certain provincialisme se manifeste dans la surcharge de quelques compositions décoratives : par exemple au portail de l'église Saint-Signe du monastère Sainte-Croix, on a le sentiment que le maître d'œuvre a voulu assembler tous les éléments populaires de son époque sans parvenir à les fondre dans un ensemble homogène<sup>93</sup>.

Malgré cela, à côté de ses spécificités, par son ouverture simultanée aux apports musulmans, occidentaux et byzantins, l'architecture arménienne de Crimée s'inscrit dans la ligne des évolutions propres à l'Arménie de la période féodale. Les mêmes synthèses s'observent, au XIIIe–XIVe siècle, en Arménie même, en particulier à Eghvard où au Vayots-Dzor, où l'on peut voir par exemple une Vierge gréco-italianisante encadrée par une « chaîne seldjoukide » ou par une bande d'étoiles à huit pointes.

Victoria Bulgakova, Berlin

Der Steinblock mit dem Relief  
gehört sich am Burgturm Nr. 6  
der genuesischen Befestigung von  
Sengiala (heute Sudeki). Es hand-  
elt sich um ein Relief, das den  
südliche Turm zeigt in der unteren  
Strecke, während der Berg im  
Hintergrund in Folge des genuesischen  
Aufbaus der Befestigungsanlagen  
zwischen ca. 1380 und 1420 er-  
baut. Der unmittelbar rechts davon  
stehende Turm ist unter dem genue-  
sischen Kommandanten Guarko im  
Jahr 1394 errichtet worden (Abb. 1).  
Die datierten Bauinschriften auf  
diesem und weiteren genuesischen  
Turmen deuten darauf hin, dass  
das untere Mauerwerk in jährlichen  
Abschnitten von Burgtor aus errichtet wurde.  
Somit sollte der Turm Nr. 6 mit großer  
Wahrscheinlichkeit kurz nach 1394  
entstanden sein.



Abb. 1. Turm Nr. 6 (Guarko) und Turm von Baldo Guarko (1394) in der unteren Verteidigungslinie der genuesischen Burg von Sengiala, Ansicht von Nordosten (Foto: Alexander Orlov)

<sup>93</sup> Das Relief wurde im Sommer 1962 während des Erbes von V. V. Kabanov im Rahmen einer Expedition der byzantinischen Archäologischen Mission (BAM) – einer Einrichtung der Sowjet-Akademie der Wissenschaften (AN SSSR) und der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz – geborgen.

<sup>94</sup> E. J. Križevski, "Inscriptions des mur de la citadelle de Sengiala (Chioshaki, Soudak, Balaklava)", *AN SSSR, Institut d'histoire et de géographie*, 1962, No. 47, p. 102.

<sup>93</sup> Faiblesse relevée par A. Jakobson : A. Jakobson, Y. Tamanyan, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

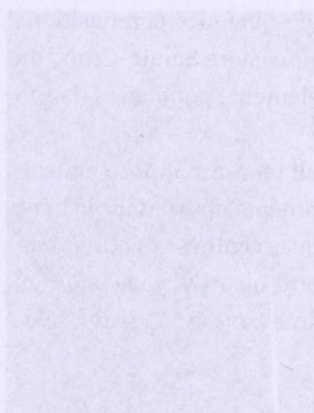


Fig. 15. Détails sculptés figurés de la façade de Saint-Jean-Baptiste

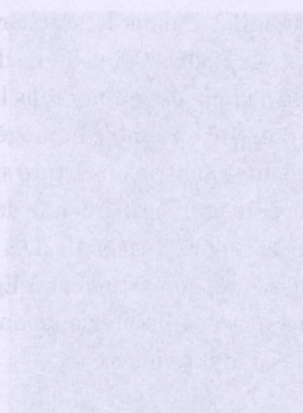


Fig. 16. Saint-Sauveur

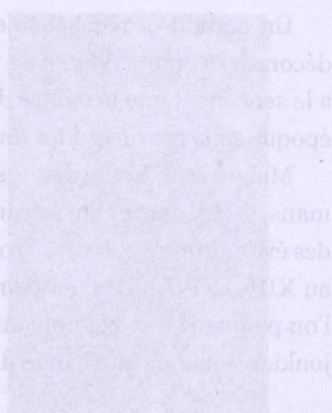


Fig. 17. Façade de la cathédrale de Bamako

On construit en pierre des édifices à la plénière, relativement rigoureux, agrémentés de bandes sculptées avec soin autour des portes. Les décorateurs possèdent à la perfection le répertoire ornemental « art déco-soudanais » qui plaît alors à toutes les communautés. Loin des restrictions métropolitaines sur les images peintes, on enrichit les intérieurs de peintures murales et pour cela, comme dans les mosquées, on recourt aux modèles grecs alors en vogue.

On apprécie aussi les détails sculptés figurés qui, tout en évoquant le trépas patrilé, peuvent s'inspirer d'exemples vus chez les voisins et voisins géométriques. Mais la conversion soit sincère ou intéressée, les convertis au catholicisme veulent faire disparaître ou dénigrer de leurs anciens corollaires par la forme et la décoration de leur « Kasa de culte ». Pour cela, ils empruntent des modèles offerts par les Génois. De ces modèles pour l'essentiel dénués, les architectes africains présentent avec l'aptitude de l'artisan d'appréciables informations sur l'architecture provinciale d'une colonie pauvre.

Il est révélateur que dans trois des principaux lieux de culte, Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Sainte-Croix et Saint-Sauveur, les motifs « art déco-soudanais » s'allient avec des éléments à affinités latines, illustrant le caractère cosmopolite de ces lieux où l'œuvre créée et, sinon l'ouverture d'esprit (comme on dirait de nos jours), du moins l'exercice culturel et esthétique de leurs commanditaires.

Mais par ailleurs, le trépasisme du décor s'accompagne à l'extérieur d'une certaine perte de savoir-faire. Les volumes sont modestes, les typologies sont souvent simples, les appareils sont irréguliers, voire grossiers. Seuls les éléments décoratifs sont soignés en pierre plus dure, soigneusement taillée. Élément fondamental de la tradition, la coupole, toujours précédée du tambour, est rare, réservée aux monuments les plus prestigieux. Elle est souvent très petite.

(1) Façades dessinées par A. Talabon, A. Talabon, Y. Jambou, et G. P. P.



## Ein Löwenrelief aus Sougdaia:<sup>\*</sup> zur Definitionsproblematik des Kunststils der spätmittelalterlichen Krim

Victoria Bulgakova, Berlin

Der Steinblock mit dem Relief befindet sich am Burgturm Nr. 6 der genuesischen Befestigung von Sougdaia (heute Sudak). Der heute zum größten Teil zerstörte dreiwandige Turm liegt in der unteren Verteidigungslinie der Burg; er wurde hier in Folge des genuesischen Ausbaus der Befestigungsanlagen zwischen ca. 1380 und 1420 erbaut. Der unmittelbar rechts davon stehende Turm ist unter dem genuesischen Konsul Baldo Guarko im Jahr 1394 errichtet worden (Abb. 1).<sup>1</sup> Die datierten Bauinschriften auf diesem und weiteren genuesischen Türmen deuten darauf hin, dass das untere Mauerwerk in jährlichen Abschnitten vom Burgtor aus errichtet wurde.<sup>2</sup> Somit sollte der Turm Nr. 6 mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit kurz nach 1394 entstanden sein.

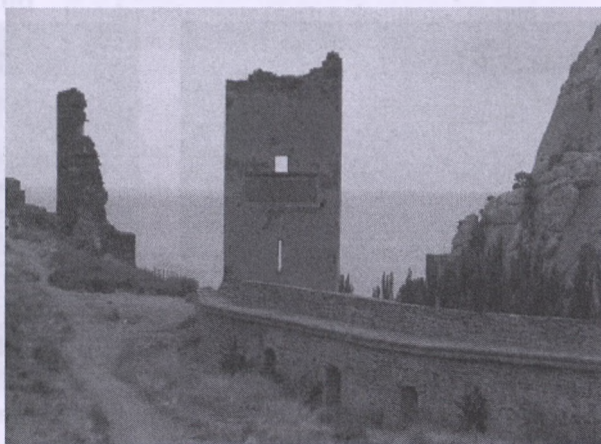


Abb. 1. Turm Nr. 6 (hinten) und Turm von Baldo Guarko (1394) in der unteren Verteidigungslinie der genuesischen Burg von Sougdaia, Ansicht vom Nordosten (Foto: Alexander Džanov)

<sup>\*</sup> Das Relief wurde im Sommer 2010 während des Krim-Survey im Rahmen eines Forschungsprojekts innerhalb der Byzantinischen Archäologie Mainz (BAM) – einer Einrichtung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz (RGZM) und der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz – gesichtet.

<sup>1</sup> E. Skržinska, 'Inscriptions latines des colonies génoises en Crimée (Théodosie, Soudak, Balaklava)', *Atti della Società Ligure di storia patria*, 56 (1928), Nr. 47, S. 115 f.

<sup>2</sup> E. Č. Skržinskaja, 'Nadpisi na plitach. Sudak', in: *Sudakskaja krepost'. Istorija – archeologija – epigrafika*, hrsg. von E. Č. Skržinskaja, Kiew, Sudak, St. Petersburg 2006, S. 201.

Der Block mit dem Relief ist auf der einzig erhaltenen nordöstlichen Turmwand, in eine Höhe von ca. 3,5 m, eingelassen. Der umgebende Fugenmörtel wurde in Folge einer Restaurierung, vermutlich bereits Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts,<sup>3</sup> erneuert. Der Block besteht aus einem hellen Kalkstein, wahrscheinlich einem Nummuliten-Kalkstein lokaler Herkunft. Die Nutzung dieser Steinart als Dekorationsmaterial war auf der mittelalterlichen Krim weit verbreitet. Die helle Farbigkeit des Materials setzt sich von dem größtenteils aus dunkleren Sandsteinblöcken bestehenden Mauerverband deutlich ab.<sup>4</sup> Der Steinblock misst in der Ansicht ca. 60 cm x 40 cm, der rechte Rand war schon beim Einbau abgebrochen. Das Steinrelief wurde von der Forschung bisher nicht berücksichtigt.<sup>5</sup> Eine flüchtige Erwähnung findet es in einem Ortsführer der 1920er Jahre, verfasst vom Simferopoler Künstler Nikolaj Lapin.<sup>6</sup> Auf dem Block lässt sich heute nur eine Tierdarstellung erkennen, die den rechten, größeren Teil einnimmt (Abb. 2). Ob den linken Teil ebenfalls eine Darstellung zierte, muss wegen starker Verwitterung gegenwärtig offen bleiben.

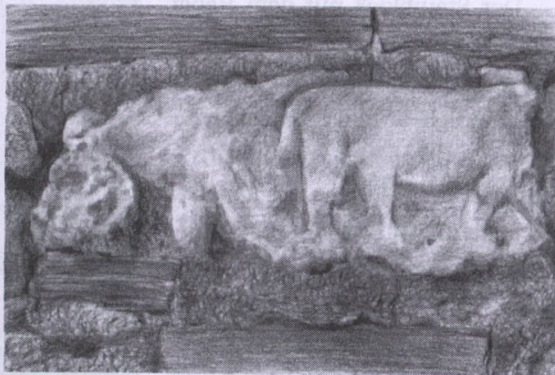
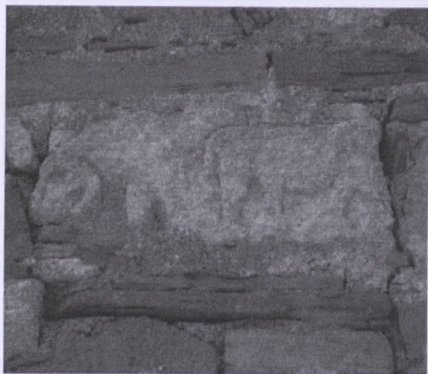


Abb. 2. Turm Nr. 6, Spolie mit einer Tierdarstellung  
(Foto: Verf., Zeichnung – E. Kazakova)

Der Gesamtumriss, die Plastizität und insbesondere die charakteristische Schwanzlinie der nur fragmentarisch erhaltenen Tierdarstellung (Kopfteil fehlt) lassen ungeachtet der fortgeschrittenen Verwitterung einen nach rechts schreitenden Löwen erkennen.

Die Darstellung des Tieres ist als Flachrelief mit einer archaisch anmutenden Frontalität ausgeführt. Die ungewöhnlich breiten Linien der Gliedmaßen und des Rumpfes lassen den Körper massiv und schwer wirken, wodurch eine Ähnlichkeit mit Stier oder sogar

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. V. Šamanaev, 'Dejatel'nost' Odesskogo obščestva istorii i drevnostej po sochraneniju Sudakskoj kreposti (vtoraja polovina XIX – nač. XX v.)', *Sugdejskij sbornik*, 3 (2008), S. 631 f.

<sup>4</sup> Im Mauerverband des Turmes kommen vereinzelt weitere darstellungsfreie Blöcke aus Kalkstein vor.

<sup>5</sup> Den Hinweis auf das Relief verdanke ich dem Krimer Archäologen Alexander Džanov (Sudak), ohne dessen Unterstützung dieser Beitrag nicht zustande gekommen wäre.

<sup>6</sup> Erwähnt hier als Spolie mit einem flachen, weiter unbestimmbaren Tierrelief, siehe N. Lapin, *Sugdaia. Soldaia. Sudak. Zapiski na dosuge Nikolaja Lapina*, Moskwa 1928, S. 14.



Elefant entsteht. Die Nähe zu letzterem wird vor allem durch die Form der hinteren Fußsohlen erweckt, die in der Frontaldarstellung gleichmäßig trapezartig nach links und rechts abfallen. Die hinteren Pfoten des Löwen, die sich nicht vom Boden abheben, vermitteln einen statischen Eindruck. Eine Bewegung hat der Steinmetz lediglich bei den vorderen Tatzen gekonnt zu vermitteln: Die linke ausgestreckte Pfote (fragmentarisch erhalten) schreitet nach vorne, die rechte, katzenartig leicht gebeugt, folgt ihr nach. Die Bewegungsplastik der Tatzen wird durch eine heute nur schwach erkennbare Muskelanspannung im Schulterbereich zusätzlich betont.



Abb 3. Kalksteinplatte mit Löwendarstellungen aus dem 9./10 Jh. aus Cherson, grafische Rekonstruktion der Fragmente (nach Kolesnikova, 'Chram v portovom rajone')

Die Darstellung entzieht sich dem im Mittelalter geläufigen, stark stilisierten dekorativen Schema, bei dem der Löwe gewöhnlich mit dem über den Rücken zurückgeschlagenen Schwanz dargestellt wurde (Abb 3).

Der ursprüngliche Bauzusammenhang des Löwenreliefs lässt sich heute nicht mehr ermitteln. Das Relief könnte ein Portal, ein Eingangstor, eine Mauer o. ä. in Sougdaia geschmückt haben bzw. in der Nähe einer Öffnung (Torbogen, Fenster u. ä.), wie es bei *guard animals* oft üblich war, angebracht gewesen sein und damit eine Schutzfunktion erfüllen. Vermutlich wurde das Relief einem zur Zeit der genuesischen Bautätigkeit in Sougdaia in den 1380er–1420er Jahren bereits ruinierten Bauwerk entnommen. Das Relief muss bereits vor der Zeit des Turmbaus einen Teil mit dem Tierkopf eingebüßt haben, was seinen Charakter als Spolie eindeutig untermauert. Allerdings kann dadurch sein Anbringen mit apotropäischer Absicht nicht eindeutig gesichert werden, eine solche Anwendung ist jedoch sehr wahrscheinlich.

Das Löwenrelief korrespondiert mit weiteren Spolien in der genuesischen Befestigung mit offensichtlich apotropäischer Zweckbestimmung. Zu denen zählen Chačkare – armenische Memorial- bzw. Votivzeichen in Form eines gewöhnlich reich dekorierten Kreuzes mit Ranken (Abb. 4a).<sup>7</sup> Auf der Krim und besonders in Kaffa (das heutige Feodosija), wo die größte armenische Gemeinde ansässig war, kommen die Chačkare meist in armenischen Kirchen vor.<sup>8</sup> Die datierten Chačkare sind auf der Krim erst ab dem 14. Jahrhun-

<sup>7</sup> Zu Chačkaren siehe A. L. Jakobson, *Armjanskije chačkary*, Erevan 1986.

<sup>8</sup> E. A. Ajbabina, *Dekorativnaja kamennaja rez'ba Kaffy XIV–XVIII vekov*, Simferopol 2001, S. 150.

dert bekannt, worauf sich die allgemeine Zuordnung dieser Fundgruppe in das 14. bzw. 15. Jahrhundert stützt.<sup>9</sup> Der Frage vom Anbringen von Chačkaren auf profanen, insbesondere nicht direkt mit Armeniern zu assoziierenden krimischen Bauten wurde in der Forschung bisher nicht nachgegangen.<sup>10</sup>

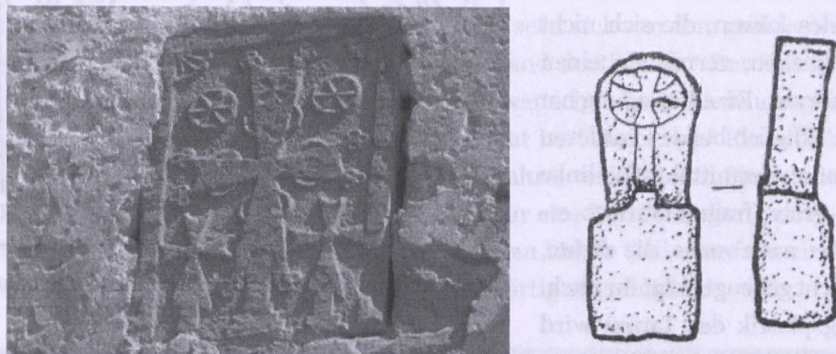


Abb. 4. Spolien mit christlicher Symbolik in der genuesischen Befestigung von Sougdaia: a) Armenisches Chačkar vom östlichen Pforteturm des Konsuls Barnabo di Franchi di Pagano aus dem Jahr 1414 (Foto: Verf.), b) Grabstein aus einer der städtischen Nekropolen aus der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit aus dem Mauerwerk der 15. Kurtine, heute im Burgmuseum (nach Majko, *Srednevekovye nekropoli*)

Neben den Chačkaren wurden im genuesischen Werk unzählige Grabsteine bzw. meist deren Fragmente, dekoriert mit einem in einen Kreis eingeschlossenen Kreuz, verwendet (Abb. 4b). Solche Grabsteine kommen *in situ* auf den städtischen Nekropolen von Sougdaia vor, wo sie in die mittelbyzantinische Zeit (8. bzw. 9. Jh.) datiert werden.<sup>11</sup>

Ausgenommen des Löwenreliefs zeichnen folglich alle bis jetzt erfassten Spolien auf der Burg von Sougdaia christliche Motive aus. Unverkennbar haben jedoch alle Spolien, sowohl mit christlicher als auch mit religiös nicht auslegbarer Symbolik, eines gemeinsam: ihre Anbringung an exponierten Bereichen der genuesischen Wehranlage, die offenkundig die abergläubische Motivation bei der Wahl dieser Schutzsymbole reflektiert.

Der Löwe war vielen antiken Kulturen sowohl aus direkten als auch indirekten Berührungen vertraut. Sein natürliches Verbreitungsareal machte ihn insbesondere in der Kunst

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, S. 147.

<sup>10</sup> In *Armenia maior* fungierten Chačkare seit dem 12. bzw. 13. Jahrhundert nicht nur als reine Memorialzeichen, sondern zunehmend als Zeichen zum Gedenken eines – nicht zwingend herausragenden – politischen oder wirtschaftlichen Ereignisses, siehe A. L. Jakobson, *Armjanskije chačkary...*, S. 27. Im Fall von Sougdaia wäre ebenfalls nicht auszuschließen, dass manche der Chačkare – die hier bislang nicht erfasst worden sind – extra für das Mauerwerk angefertigt sein konnten. Cf. auch V. V. Majko, 'Armjanskije pamjatniki srednevekovogo Sudaka', *Armenian Studies in Ukraine*, 1 (2008), S. 65.

<sup>11</sup> Ähnliche Grabsteine wurden speziell auf den Nekropolen Sudak-2 und Sudak-6 gesichert, siehe V. V. Majko, *Srednevekovye nekropoli Sudaskoj doliny*, Kiev 2007, S. 43, Abb. 159,11 (auf der Nekropole Sudak-2, datiert in das 11. bzw. 12. Jh., wurde der Grabstein als Spolie verwendet); S. 181, Abb. 109,4.



des Orients beliebt. Später wurden die antiken Muster in den Kulturen des Nahen und Mittleren Ostens und Transkaukasiens eifrig von der islamischen Kunst aufgegriffen, in der die Löwenmotive beinahe alle anderen Tierarten bereits seit frühislamischer Zeit dominierten.<sup>12</sup> Sie wurden rein dekorativ, aber auch symbolisch, als Attribute eines Herrschers oder generell als Symbole der Macht und Kühnheit verwendet.<sup>13</sup> Auch in der byzantinischen Welt kommen Löwendarstellungen wiederholt vor, ihre Ursprünge greifen dabei auf orientalische Vorbilder zurück.<sup>14</sup> Insgesamt erfreute sich dieses Motiv im Mittelalter dank seiner apotropäischen Bedeutung der abergläubischen Beliebtheit gleichermaßen bei Muslimen und Christen.<sup>15</sup>

Einer engeren Zuschreibung des Löwenreliefs aus Sougdaia sind mittels reiner Stilanalyse Grenzen gesetzt. Bei der unmittelbaren seldschukischen Präsenz in Sougdaia im Laufe des 13. Jahrhunderts<sup>16</sup> und einer starken Verbreitung der seldschukischen Stilistik in der spätmittelalterlichen Kunst der Krim (14. bzw. 15. Jh.)<sup>17</sup> wäre eine direkte seldschukische Einflussnahme gut denkbar. Wiederum schafft die Präsenz armenischer Übersiedler, die seit 1242 für Sougdaia bezeugt wird,<sup>18</sup> eine Grundlage dafür, einen lokalen armenischen Ursprung des Reliefs ebenfalls für methodisch vertretbar zu halten. Abgesehen von der komplexen ethnischen Situation in Sougdaia wird die Relie fzuschreibung durch die enge Verflechtung beider künstlerischer Traditionen – seldschukischer und armenischer – zusätzlich erschwert.

Zu den mit Seldschuken bzw. seldschukischer Architektur in Sougdaia zu assoziierenden Bauten gehört die Moschee aus dem 13. bzw. 14. Jahrhundert im östlichen Burgteil

<sup>12</sup> Cf. E. Baer, 'A group of Seljuq figural bas reliefs', *Oriens*, 20 (1967), S. 112 f.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. R. W. Hamilton, O. Grabar, *Khirbat al Majfar, an Arabian mansion in the Jordan valley*, Oxford 1959, S. 228–232, Taf. LV 1, 5.

<sup>14</sup> D. T. Rice, 'Iranian elements in Byzantine art', in: *Mémoires du III<sup>e</sup> congrès international d'art et d'archéologie iraniens (Leningrad, septembre 1935)*, Leningrad 1939, S. 205; A. L. Jakobson, *Srednevekovyj Krym*, Moskau, Leningrad 1964, S. 69.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. J. Strzygowski, 'Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte des Mittelalters von Nordmesopotamien, Hellas und dem Abendlande', in: *Amida*, hrsg. von M. v. Berchem, J. Strzygowski, Heidelberg 1910, S. 348.

<sup>16</sup> V. Bulgakova, 'Islamisch-christlicher Kulturkontakt im nördlichen Schwarzmeerraum. Sugdaia unter Herrschaft der Seldschuken', in: *Mittelalter im Labor. Die Mediävistik testet Wege zu einer transkulturellen Europawissenschaft (Europa im Mittelalter, 10)*, hrsg. von M. Borgolte et al., Berlin 2008, S. 261–274, Abb. Taf. B I–II ([http://www2.hu-berlin.de/spedia/index.php5/Mittelalter\\_im\\_Labor:Arbeitsforum\\_B/II.2.4\\_Islamisch-christlicher\\_Kulturkontakt\\_im\\_n%C3%B6rdlichen\\_Schwarzmeerraum](http://www2.hu-berlin.de/spedia/index.php5/Mittelalter_im_Labor:Arbeitsforum_B/II.2.4_Islamisch-christlicher_Kulturkontakt_im_n%C3%B6rdlichen_Schwarzmeerraum)).

<sup>17</sup> A. L. Jakobson, *Srednevekovyj Krym*, S. 117; E. A. Ajbabina, *op. cit.*, S. 174–177.

<sup>18</sup> Notitiae Sugdaeae 11 (= *Hai historikai enthymeseis tou kodikos 75 hieras mones Hagias Triados Chalkes*, in: *Ile en te Taurike Khersoneso polis Sougdaia apo tou XII mechri tou XV aionos. Sumbole eis ten historian tu mesaioniku Hellenismou tes Notiou Rosias [Huperesia Archaio teton kai Anasteloseos. Dumosieumata tou Archaio logikou Deltiou, 7]*, hrsg. M. G. Nystazopoulou, Athen 1965, S. 109–160). In dieser Notiz aus dem Jahr 1242 wird der Tod von David, den Sohn von Soumpat (armen. Smbat) festgehalten. Zur armenischen Präsenz auf der Krim siehe auch A. L. Jakobson, 'Armjanskaja srednevekovaja architektura v Krymu', *Vizantijskij vremennik*, 8 (1956), S. 167; V. Mikaeljan, *Istorija krymskich armjan*, Jerewan, Simferopol 2004, S. 10–15.

(bis 1409 außerhalb der genuesischen Befestigung).<sup>19</sup> Mit Armeniern lässt sich bisher ein ursprünglich griechischer Kirchenbau aus der 2. Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts auf dem Abschnitt der Kurtine Nr. 15 innerhalb der Burg in Verbindung bringen, der im 1. Viertel des 15. Jahrhunderts zu einer armenischen Kirche umgebaut wurde.<sup>20</sup>

Abgesehen von heraldischen Löwendarstellungen auf den genuesischen Bauplatten von Kaffa und Sougdaia,<sup>21</sup> zieren Löwenreliefs neben unserem Stück die genuesische Bauplatte am Turm von Jacopo Torsello aus dem Jahr 1385 in der Burg von Sougdaia (Abb. 5).<sup>22</sup> Hier sehen wir einen nach links schreitenden Löwen in Profildarstellung, der in einer zurückhaltenden Dimension lediglich als Teil des die Bauinschrift schmückenden Arabeskenflechtwerks in seldschukischer Bildtradition konzipiert wurde.<sup>23</sup>

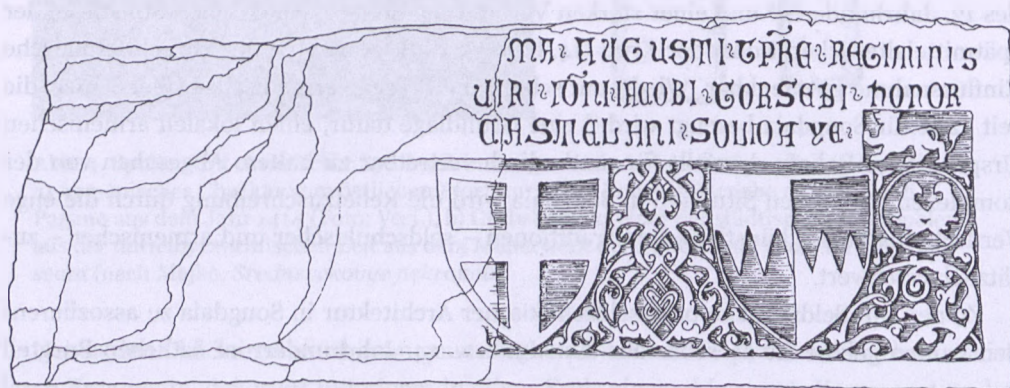


Abb. 5. Bauplatte vom Turm von Jacopo Torsello (1385) in der genuesischen Burg von Sougdaia (Zeichnung von Alexander Džanov nach Fotovorlage aus 1925, veröffentlicht in Skržinskaja, 'Nadpisi na plitach')

Die historische Besiedlungssituation in Sougdaia (seldschukische und armenische Niederlassungen) und die genuesische Bautätigkeit grenzen die Datierung des Reliefs auf das 13./14. Jahrhundert ein. In der Kunst der anatolischen Seldschuken zierten figürliche Reliefs meist die weltlichen Bauten. Tierdarstellungen und speziell Löwenreliefs bzw. -plastiken (vermutlich noch teils als phrygische bzw. römische Spolien) schmückten Stadt-

<sup>19</sup> Historiographischer Überblick zur Moschee samt der Geschichte architektonischer und funktioneller Umgestaltungen, einschließlich der Datierungs- und Deutungsfragen siehe bei A. V. Džanov, "Chram s ar-kadoj" v Sudake', *Sugdejskij sbornik*, 2 (2005), S. 652–669. Cf. auch E. A. Ajbabina, *op. cit.*, S. 30.

<sup>20</sup> V. V. Majko, 'Armjanskije pamjatniki ...', S. 60–65.

<sup>21</sup> E. Skržinska, 'Inscriptions latines ...', Nr. 8, 11, 38 (Kaffa); E. Skržinskaja, 'Nadpisi na plitach ...', S. 207 ff., 214 f., 221 f. (Sougdaia).

<sup>22</sup> E. Skržinskaja, 'Nadpisi na plitach ...', S. 201–204.

<sup>23</sup> Steinreliefs aus dem 10. Jahrhundert mit Darstellung der Tiere aus der Gattung Panther sind aus dem byzantinischen Cherson bekannt, siehe A. L. Jakobson, *Srednevekovij Krym*, Taf. XVI, 2.



tore und -mauern der Festungen (Konya, Diyarbakır), Grabmäler (Kayseri, Nigde, Kirşehir, Tokat), Paläste (Konya), Hane (Ak, Alay, Alara, Xardak, İncir, Karatay, Kesiköprü), Hospitäler (Kayseri, Sivas), Brücken (Diyarbakır) sowie Portale von Medresen (Sivas) und sogar Moscheen (Diyarbakır). Der Löwe zählte zu einem der beliebtesten Symbole in der geistigen und materiellen Kultur der Rumseldschuken. Das Wort "aslan" (Löwe) wurde häufig als Personennamen seldschukischer Sultane (Alparslan, Kılıçarslan) und Staatsmänner gewählt.<sup>24</sup> Er trat häufig als unheilabwehrender Talisman oder Zeichen fürstlicher Macht auf.

Das Relief von Sougdaia ist stilistisch – verglichen mit anatolischen Löwendarstellungen, welche die in der seldschukischen Kunst stark verankerte Steppentradition bekunden – deutlich anders. Die meisten der seldschukischen Löwenreliefs, gewöhnlich als Hochreliefs gearbeitet, weisen eine äußerst stilisierte Ausführung auf, während das flache Relief aus Sougdaia eher eine unbeholfene Naturnachahmung darstellt. Besonders verbreitet unter seldschukischen Werken scheint dabei der Typ mit einem schreitenden Löwen mit frontal ausgerichtetem Kopf (Abb. 6) zu sein. Der Typ des schreitenden Löwen in Profildarstellung, zu dem vermutlich das Relief aus Sougdaia zählte, ist dagegen in Anatolien eher rar. Unter den bekannten seldschukischen Löwenreliefs von vier verschiedenen Typen (schreitender Löwe mit Kopf in frontaler Ausrichtung, schreitender Löwe in Profildarstellung, kauernder Löwe, schreitender Löwe mit nach hinten gerichtetem Kopf)<sup>25</sup> lassen sich keine stilistischen Parallelen zur Darstellung aus Sougdaia finden. Lediglich kann das Elefantenrelief aus dem zwischen 1235 und 1241 erbauten Karatay-Han (Region von Kayseri) als einziger annähernder stilistischer Vergleich genannt werden (Abb. 7).



Abb. 6. Tierkampfdarstellung am äußeren Torbogen in der Großen Moschee (1163) in Diyarbakır (Foto: Yasser Tabbaa/Aga Khan Visual Archive)



Abb. 7. Elefantendarstellung über dem Eingang im Karatay-Han in Zentralanatolien (nach K. Branning, *The Seljuk Han of Anatolia*, <http://www.turkishhan.org/karatay.htm>)

<sup>24</sup> M. Önge, 'Caravanserais as symbols of power in Seljuk Anatolia', in: *Power and Culture: Identity, Ideology, Representation*, hrsg. von J. Osmond, A. Cimdiņa, Pisa 2007, S. 59.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. G. Öney, 'Lion figures in Anatolian Seljuk architecture', *Anadolu*, 13 (1969), S. 48–53.



Auf der Krim selbst waren bisher keine Tierdarstellungen auf den direkt mit Seldschuken zu assoziierenden Denkmälern bekannt. Tiere aus der Gattung Panther<sup>26</sup> begegnen uns jedoch auf Münzen lokaler Prägung aus der Zeit der Goldenen Horde. Sie sind unter anderem auf zwei anonymen kupfernen Pulen mit dem Tamga des Batu-Hauses aus der Wende des 13./14. Jahrhunderts abgebildet.<sup>27</sup> Ein weiteres Beispiel hierzu liefert das kupferne Pul aus der Mitte des 14. bzw. Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts, das einen Löwen in zodiakaler Komposition zeigt (Abb. 8).<sup>28</sup>

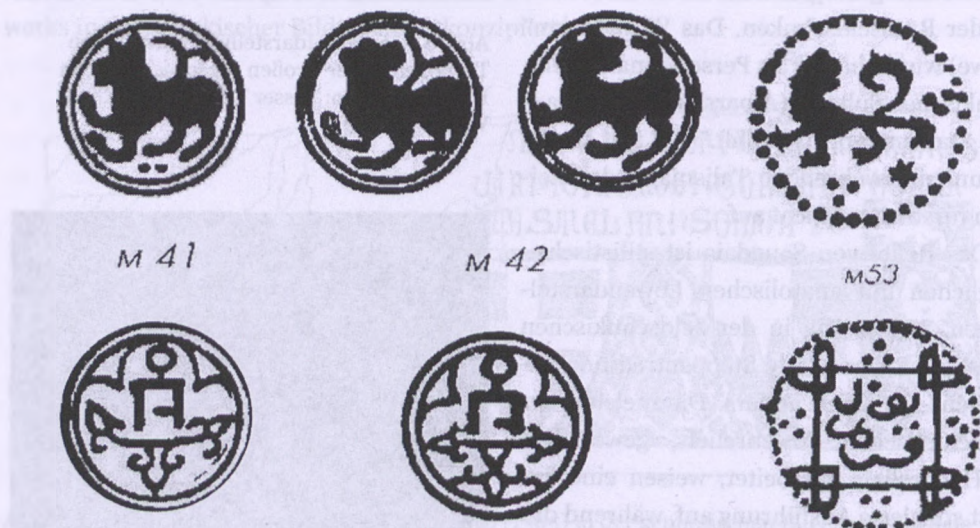


Abb. 8. Pulen der Krimmer Prägung vom Ende des 13. bis zum Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts mit Tierdarstellungen (nach Lebedev, 'Korpus monet ...')

In der armenischen Kunst gehen Löwen- wie Tierdarstellungen insgesamt auf mesopotamische und iranische Vorbilder zurück. Nach dem Erscheinen der Türken in der Region wurden figürliche Darstellungen zusätzlich von der islamischen Kunst und insbesondere von der seldschukischen dekorativen Stilistik stark beeinflusst.<sup>29</sup> Löwendarstellungen tre-

<sup>26</sup> Bei einer meist starken Stilisierung, die antiker Kunst eigen war, ist heute nicht immer zu unterscheiden, welche der vier Arten der Panther Gattung – *Panthera leo*, *Panthera pardus* und *Panthera onca* mit Ausnahme der *Panthera tigris* – dargestellt worden ist.

<sup>27</sup> V. Lebedev, 'Korpus monet Kryma v sostave Zolotoj Ordy (seredina XIII – konec XV vv.)', *Numizmatyka i faleristyka*, 14–15 (2000), M 41, M 42 (Abb. 3).

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, M 53 (Abb. 6).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. K. Otto-Dorn, 'Türkisch-islamische Bildgut in den Figuren von Achtamar', *Anatolia*, 6 (1961), S. 1–69; K. Otto-Dorn, *Kunst des Islam (Kunst der Welt: Ihre geschichtlichen, soziologischen und religiösen Grundlagen*, 1, 8), Baden-Baden 1964, S. 155.



ten in der armenischen Kunst verglichen mit der seldschukischen Kunst dabei fast häufiger in einem sakralen als in einem profanen baulichen Kontext auf.

Die meisten Löwenreliefs und -plastiken sind uns aus den armenischen Klöstern übermittelt (Cob, Aght'amar, Ptghni, Tatev, Sanahin, Makaravank', Geghàrd, Sisavan, Tadeivank, Ganjasar, Tanadivank, Gavar, Egvard, Calackar Est). Vereinzelt wurden sie auch auf den Befestigungsmauern platziert (Ani) (Abb. 9).<sup>30</sup>



Abb. 9. Löwenreliefs in der armenischen Kunst des 7.-13. Jhs. (1 – Ani, Festung, 2 – Ptghni, 3 – Sisavan, 4-5 – Aght'amar, 6 – Ganjasar, 7 – Geghàrd, 8 – Egvard, 9 – Tadeivank (nach Cuneo, *Architettura Armena*)

<sup>30</sup> Zu Löwendarstellungen aus armenischen sakralen und profanen Bauten siehe P. Cuneo, *Architettura Armena dal quarto al diciannovesimo secolo*. Bd. 2: *Tavole sinottiche e apparati di consultazione*, Roma 1988, S. 805, 823, 825, 827. Zum Sanahin-, Khoranashat- und Geghàrd-Kloster siehe zusätzlich O. Kh. Khalpakhchian, *Architectural ensembles of Armenia (8 c. B. C. – 19 c. A. D.)*, Moskau 1980, S. 11 (Sanahin), 22 (Khoranashat), 11 (Geghàrd). Zur Kirche in Cob/Ghugark und in Calackar Est siehe M. A. L. Comneno, 'Architectural sculpture in Medieval Armenia – decorations with animal motifs', in: *Armenien. Tagebuch einer Reise in das Land des Ararat* (Bericht Nr. 19 des Instituts für Hochbautechnik, Abteilung für Architektur, ETH Zürich), hrsg. von M. Piccolotto, S. Shahinian, Zürich 1996, S. 192 f., 196 f., Abb. 11.



Ein bedeutender Anteil der Reliefs stammt dabei aus der Zeit vor der seldschukischen Eroberung, d. h. aus dem 5. (Cob) bzw. 7. (Ptghni,<sup>31</sup> Sisavan) oder 10. bzw. Anfang des 11. Jahrhunderts (Tatev, Aght'amar, Sanahin, Calackar Est), wobei speziell Aght'amar (915–921) einen abbasidischen Einfluss reflektiert.<sup>32</sup>

Ein weiterer neben Aght'amar besonders an zoomorphem Baudekor reicher Kirchenkomplex befindet sich in Makaravank' (1198–1224). Er weist Parallelen zur Kunst der Großseldschuken im persischen Keshan auf. Die Tierkampfszenen in der Hauptkirche (1215) des Komplexes von Geghàrd schließen sich eng an ähnliche Kompositionen auf dem Torbogen (1163) der Ulu Camii in Diyarbakır (allerdings war das südöstliche Anatolien nie rumseldschukisch, sondern wurde von Ortokiden beherrscht).<sup>33</sup>

Bei funktional ähnlichen seldschukischen und armenischen Bauten wie Karawansereien beobachten wir nicht nur eine Ähnlichkeit in der Wahl der Sujets sondern auch in deren Platzierung am Bauwerk.<sup>34</sup> Ähnlicher Dekor zeugt neben den verwandten Architekturformen und Kompositionslösungen in seldschukischer und armenischer Kunst von intensiven und umfassenden Kontakten zwischen diesen beiden benachbarten Kulturen. Sie bezeugen ebenfalls ähnliche ästhetische und abergläubische Vorstellungen, die sich in islamischer und christlicher Welt einander glichen.

Neben der monumentalen Kunst wurden Löwenmotive häufig in der Ornamentik der armenischen Buchminiatur des 12.–15. Jahrhunderts verwendet. Zierinitialen in Löwengestalt, teils als geflügelte Tiere, waren insbesondere bei armenischen Künstlern, die in Kaffa und Surchat (Solchat) wirkten, sehr beliebt (Abb. 10).<sup>35</sup>

In der armenischen Steinmetzkunst der Krim ist bisher nur eine einzige Löwendarstellung – Plastik eines geflügelten Löwen – aus der Surb-Stephanos-Kirche in Feodosija (Kaffa)<sup>36</sup> bekannt (Abb. 11). Die figürliche Plastik, datiert in das 14. bzw. 15. Jahrhundert, diente hier vermutlich als Vorsprung einer Konsole.

Neben diesen, mehr oder minder deutlich zwischen seldschukischer und armenischer Kunst trennbaren Beispielen können als eine eigenständige Gruppe Löwenmotive aus Ostanatolien bzw. dem armenischen Mesopotamien gelten, die ursprungsmäßig meist schwer abzugrenzen sind. Stellvertretend dafür stehen die Reliefs aus der Festung im armenischen Ani, die während der seldschukischen Besatzung bzw. der Herrschaft der Schaddadiden 1072–1110 ausgebaut wurde. Die Steinplatte mit der expressiven Löwendarstellung von einer Festungsmauer in Ani (Abb. 9, 1) wird bezeichnenderweise von der türkischen Forschung

<sup>31</sup> Bei dem Löwenrelief in Ptghni handelt es sich wahrscheinlich um eine Spolie, die vermutlich älter als der Kirchenbau ist, M. A. L. Comneno, 'Architectural sculpture ...', S. 193.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. K. Otto-Dorn, *op. cit.*, S. 79 ff.

<sup>33</sup> M. A. L. Comneno, 'Architectural sculpture ...', S. 197.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, S. 198.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. È. Korchmazjan, *Krymskaja armjanskaja miniatjura*, Simferopol 2008, Taf. 11, 58, 31, 46.

<sup>36</sup> E. A. Ajbabina, *op. cit.*, S. 119, 121, 123, Abb. 41. Die Skulptur befindet sich heute im Heimatmuseum, Feodosija.



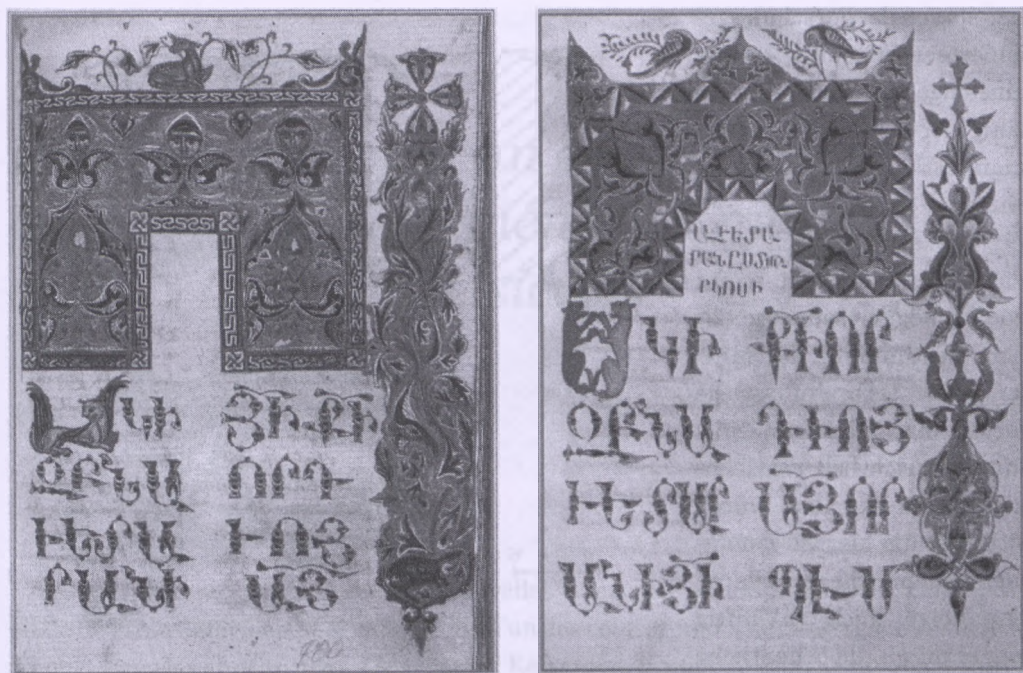


Abb. 10. Titelblätter aus Markus-Evangelien von der Krim (Kaffa?): a) Mat. 7699, 14. bzw. 15. Jh., b) Mat. 318, 14. Jh. (nach Korchmazjan, *Krymskaja armjanskaja miniatjura*)

zu den seldschukischen künstlerischen Erzeugnissen gezählt,<sup>37</sup> während die Armenien-Forschung das Relief unter die Steinmetzarbeiten armenischen Ursprungs einordnet.<sup>38</sup>

Die für Ani bekannte Deutungsproblematik, die sich mit einer Mischkunst befasst, steht im Anklang mit der Situation auf der Krim und insbesondere in Sougdaia. Die Migration auf die südöstliche Krim im 13.–15. Jahrhundert armenischer und türkischer Bevölkerung Kleinasiens mit gemeinsamen stilistischen Vorbildern und einem regen gegenseitigen Kulturtransfer macht eine enge kulturelle Zuordnung des Löwenreliefs aus Sougdaia gleichfalls undurchführbar.

Der vorangehende Vergleich zwischen seldschukischer und armenischer Kunst erhebt keinesfalls den Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit. Er sollte vornehmlich die künstlerischen Wurzeln, stilistischen Vorlieben, üblichen Zweckbestimmungen, gesellschaftliche Stellung angewandter Symbole, aber auch den Gegeneinfluss zwischen armenischer und seldschukischer Kunst in zeitlicher und räumlicher Perspektive aufzeigen. Daraus resultiert die

<sup>37</sup> G. Öney, *op. cit.*, S. 50, Taf. XXV.

<sup>38</sup> P. Cuneo, *op. cit.*, S. 823.



bereits von der Forschung geäußerte Feststellung,<sup>39</sup> dass eine enge kulturelle Abgrenzung der sich auf der Krim manifestierten Formensprache und deren Bildlichkeit, für die exemplarisch auch das Löwenrelief steht, so gut wie unmöglich ist. Eine nähere Bestimmung der Motive und Verbreitungswege dieses eigenständigen Stils mit offensichtlich seldschukischen Merkmalen würde sich, wie die hier vorgenommene ausführliche Stilanalyse zeigt, auch zukünftig weder durch die schriftliche Überlieferung noch den archäologischen bzw. kunsthistorischen Befund fundiert verifizieren lassen.

In diesem Zusammenhang erscheint die Definition des Kunststils der spätmittelalterlichen Krim, der sich vor allem im Südosten der Halbinsel etablierte, als "seldschukisch" freilich unglücklich.<sup>40</sup> Eine Stilbezeichnung, die sowohl den Widerspruch als auch die Ähnlichkeit beider Bildtraditionen zuließe, würde die krimische Stilkomplexität wesentlich dezidiierter widerspiegeln und vor der Versuchung bewahren, eine schlichte Abgrenzung zwischen armenischer und seldschukischer Kunst anzustreben.

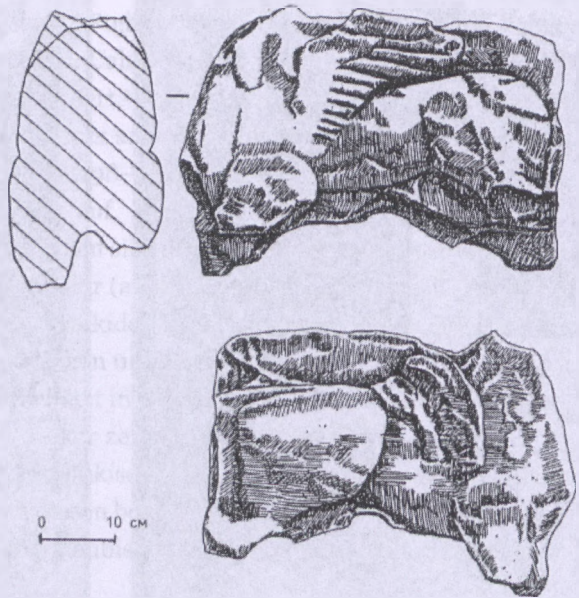


Abb. 11. Plastik des beflügelten Löwen aus der Surb-Stephanos-Kirche in Feodosija (Kaffa) (nach Ajbabina, *Dekorativnaja kamennaja rez'ba*)

<sup>39</sup> B. N. Zasytkin, 'Pamjatniki architektury krymskich tatar', *Krym*, 2 (4) (1927), S. 115.

<sup>40</sup> Umfassender historiographischer Überblick zur Problematik siehe bei E. A. Ajbabina, *op. cit.*, S. 12–31.



## *Les églises d'Ispahan et affinités architecturales arméno-iraniennes aux XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles*

Mourad Hasratian, Arménie

La communauté arménienne de la Nouvelle-Julfa, créée en 1604/5 près d'Ispahan, capitale de l'Iran Séfévide, fut et reste encore l'un des centres importants de la culture arménienne. Dans les années 1630, Khatchatour Kessaratsi, primat du diocèse du lieu, y fonde une école (que les contemporains appellent « université ») où l'on enseigne la musique, la poésie, la grammaire, la philosophie et les sciences et naturelles. En 1658, il fonde une imprimerie qui est la première non seulement en Iran, mais dans tout le Proche-Orient. Un dépôt de manuscrits, un musée et une bibliothèque sont fondés au monastère Saint-Sauveur de la Nouvelle-Julfa. L'Évangile écrit et illustré à la Nouvelle-Julfa en 1610 est l'un des chefs-d'œuvre de l'enluminure arménienne, tandis que la collection de manuscrits de la Nouvelle-Julfa est l'une des cinq les plus riches au monde après Erevan, Jérusalem, Venise et Vienne. L'école artistique de la Nouvelle-Julfa occupe une place importante dans l'histoire de l'art arménien. Fondée au XVIIe siècle, elle a contribué au développement de la peinture et des fresques arméniennes. Les peintres les plus connus de la Nouvelle-Julfa, Minas, Hovhannes Mrkouz et bien d'autres combinent harmonieusement les traditions classiques de l'art occidental avec les principes de l'enluminure arménienne et des arts décoratifs iraniens. L'école artistique de la Nouvelle-Julfa marque le passage de l'art médiéval arménien à celui des temps nouveaux. Le rôle de l'architecture de la Nouvelle-Julfa n'est pas moins important dans le processus historique du développement de l'architecture arménienne.

Le plan de la Nouvelle-Julfa a été et reste très régulier. Le réseau des rues était composé de l'avenue de Khodja Nazar, orientée d'est en ouest (longueur : environ 2 km, largeur environ 10 m) et de neuf rues qui la croisaient perpendiculairement de nord en sud, séparant la ville en neuf quartiers (par la suite, la ville grandissant, de nouveaux quartiers sont

venus s'y ajouter)<sup>1</sup>. Les quartiers entre les rues ont eu chacun leur nom ; parmi ces quartiers les Grand et Petit Meydans et Tcharsu (la Place du marché) étaient les centres publics de la ville. Les résidences des notables, des « *khodjas* » arméniens, ont été construites au quartier central. C'étaient de vastes demeures à deux niveaux, cour intérieure et bassin, aux murs décorés de splendides peintures murales<sup>2</sup>.

Environ deux dizaines d'églises, construites au XVIIe siècle, avaient une place importante dans l'image architecturale de la ville ; aujourd'hui treize en sont conservées, parmi lesquelles le célèbre monastère Saint-Sauveur arrive en premier lieu. Les églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa ont été érigées avec le mécénat des riches *khodjas* arméniens et parfois sur les frais collectés par la population. Les treize églises conservées s'élèvent dans les quartiers des Grand et Petit Maydans, de Tcharsu, d'Erevan, de Tabriz, de Kotcher, Charagal et Hapcodjanents.

Les églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa présentent un certain nombre de particularités essentielles (emplacement, matériaux de construction, solution volumétrique, décoration intérieure, etc.) qui les distingue de l'architecture ecclésiastique arménienne. Les églises sont entièrement construites en briques et sont influencées par l'art du bâtiment iranien du XVIIe siècle, ce qui se manifeste dans certaines structures, l'aspect général de l'édifice et son décor. Les églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa sont situées à l'intérieur des quartiers, au milieu des bâtiments, dans une cour entourée de murailles et l'une des façades leur est souvent accolée. Grâce à ces hautes murailles, le principal du volume des églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa est isolé des bâtiments de la ville et seule les coupoles sont visibles dans le panorama de la localité. Les clochers élevés à côté des églises sont plus tardifs et datent du XVIIIe siècle.

A l'intérieur des murailles, divers bâtiments sont construits dans la cour : salle de réunion, presbytère, pièces ancillaires, cuisine, four, ainsi que chapelles et, parfois, caveau (tel que dans la cour de l'église Saint Bethlehem). En règle générale, il y a aussi un puits. Ainsi, avec les bâtiments qui les entourent et leurs hautes murailles, les églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa présentent elles une architecture caractéristique des monastères et, de même que les monastères fortifiés du XVIIe siècle d'Arménie, en cas de danger elles servaient de refuge aux habitants du quartier. Ces complexes avaient également un autre objectif : la satisfaction des besoins sociaux et spirituels de la population arménienne privée de sa patrie. D'après leur composition, les églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa se divisent en trois principaux groupes typologiques. Le premier est le type à quatre piliers et coupole, le deuxième la salle à coupole avec ses deux sous-types (à deux paires et une paire de piliers engagés), le troisième est le type des églises à abside ouverte « estivale ».

<sup>1</sup> A. Hakhnazarian, V. Mehrabian, *Nor Djulfa* (Documents of Armenian Architecture, 21), Venezia 1992, p. 8, 12.

<sup>2</sup> J. Carsvell, *New Julfa. The Armenian Churches and other Buildings*, Oxford 1968, pp. 65-68.



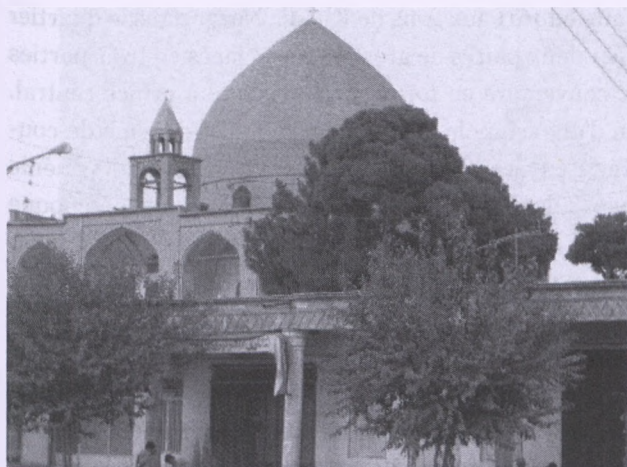


Fig. 1. Eglise Saint Bethleheme, vue ouest

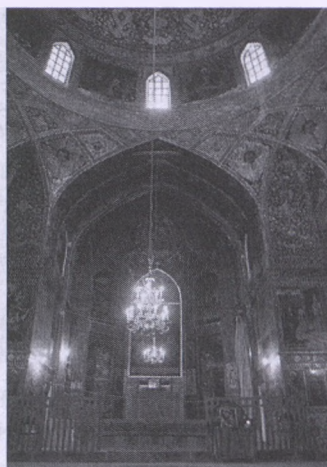


Fig. 2. Eglise Saint Bethleheme, intérieur

Toutes les églises possèdent une abside pentagonale à l'intérieur, dotée de deux pièces auxiliaires sur les côtés. Les absides pentagonales à l'intérieur font leur première apparition dans l'architecture arménienne au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle et, outre la Nouvelle-Julfa, dans l'architecture du Nakhidjévan, qui lui était étroitement liée.

Les églises St. Stépanos (1614), St. Jean Baptiste (1621), St. Sarkis (deuxième moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle) et St. Minas de la Nouvelle-Julfa sont des basiliques à coupole et quatre piliers.

L'église St. Minas construite en 1659 au quartier Tabriz présente une composition unique en son genre. Basilique à coupole et quatre piliers en plan, l'église St. Minas est d'une solution volumétrique essentiellement différente des monuments analogues. Ainsi, la coupole est posée non au centre de la salle sur les quatre piliers, mais repose sur la paire des piliers orientaux et sur les arcs soutenus par les angles de l'abside. Il est à noter que si une solution pareille ne s'observe pas dans les églises d'Arménie, elle est néanmoins présente dans la composition des églises d'une autre communauté arménienne, celle de Tbilissi. C'est ainsi que sont construites les églises du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle St. Stépanos du monastère Koussanats, Ste Mère de Dieu de Djegrachen et Ste Mère de Dieu de Norachen.

La composition « salle à coupole » de l'architecture chrétienne tire son origine des églises du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle d'Arménie (église Sts Pierre et Paul de Zovouni) ; elle a été perfectionnée au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans les monuments classiques arméniens : Ptghavank et église St. Grigor d'Aroudj (666). Les églises St. Guévorg, Ste Mère de Dieu et Saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur de la Nouvelle-Julfa appartiennent au sous-type des salles à coupole à quatre piliers engagés.

L'église St. Guévork a été construite en 1611 aux frais de Khodja Nazar dans le quartier de Petit Meydan. La salle se divise par deux paires de gros piliers engagés en trois parties presque égales dont chacune a une couverture en forme d'hémisphère à orifice central. L'hémisphère oriental est surmonté d'une coupole à petit tambour. Cette forme de couverture distingue essentiellement l'église des salles à coupole du XVIIe siècle d'Arménie (cette forme de couverture s'observe seulement à l'église St. Grigor de la même époque du Nakhidjévan, région immédiatement limitrophe de l'Iran). L'entrée ouest de l'église St. Guévorg est décorée de deux *šuvres* d'une grande valeur artistique, exécutées en carreaux de faïence : *L'Annonciation* (1717) et *L'Adoration des Mages* (1719).

La composition de la salle à coupole de l'église de la Ste Mère de Dieu, construite en 1613 au quartier de Petit Meydan par Khodja Avétik, présente un certain nombre de particularités architecturales. La partie centrale de la salle est sensiblement agrandie (presque de deux fois par comparaison aux parties est et ouest) et elle est couverte d'une assez grande coupole ovale, sans tambour. Un second niveau est construit au-dessus de la partie ouest de la salle et, du même côté, une tour à clocher est accolée à la façade ouest au-dessus de la salle à deux niveaux et trois arcs. La coupole, d'une forme ovale accentuée, construite au-dessus de l'abside, est également unique en son genre. L'église de la Ste Mère de Dieu est entourée d'un complexe de bâtiments, au nombre desquels on compte l'église St. Hacob (1607), la plus vieille église actuellement debout (conservée) de la Nouvelle-Julfa. C'est une salle mononef à abside rectangulaire surmontée de trois petites coupoles dont celle du milieu se dresse sur un tambour octogonal.

Les murs de l'église de la Ste Mère de Dieu sont couverts à l'intérieur de reliefs en faïence sur une hauteur de 1,35 m, caractéristiques du style « *haft rangui* » des arts décoratifs iraniens du XVIIe siècle ; au-dessus, les murs, les piliers engagés et les arcs de l'église sont entièrement couverts de peintures murales et d'ornements. Les peintures murales se ressentent d'une influence certaine de l'art occidental, en premier lieu italien.

Les églises Ste Cathariné du couvent féminin (1623), St. Nerses (1671), St. Nicoghaïos (1630) et St. Bethlehem, ainsi que le chef-d'œuvre architectural de la communauté, la cathédrale dédiée à St. Joseph d'Arimathée du monastère Saint-Sauveur appartiennent au type de salles à coupole à une paire de piliers engagés.

L'église St. Bethlehem du quartier de Grand Meydan a été construite en 1628 aux frais de Khodja Pétros Vélidjanian. L'église présente la composition classique de la salle à coupole à une paire de piliers engagés. Elle est surmontée de la plus grande coupole parmi les églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa (diamètre intérieur : 12,5 m). Le petit tambour cylindrique a une couverture double : l'une presque hémisphérique de l'intérieur (comme c'est la coutume générale dans les églises arméniennes) et la deuxième, extérieure, est une grande et haute coupole de contour ovale. Elle est identique aux coupoles des mosquées. Grâce à cette double couverture, la coupole de l'église St. Bethlehem est aussi la plus haute des coupoles de la Nouvelle-Julfa et c'est l'une des verticales du panorama de la localité.



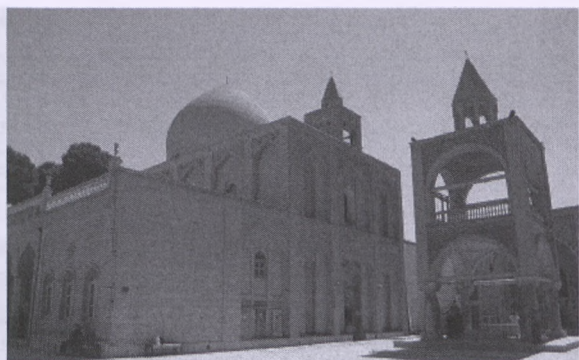


Fig. 3. Monastère Saint-Sauveur, Cathédrale  
vue générale



Fig. 4. Monastère Saint-Sauveur, Cathédrale, intérieur

La partie ouest de la salle de l'église St. Bethlehem est à deux niveaux dont le supérieur est un balcon destiné aux femmes. Au-dessus de la salle à deux niveaux et trois arcs, une tour à clocher est élevée sur le toit et accolée à la façade ouest (1897). A l'intérieur de l'église, la partie inférieure des murs est revêtue à une certaine hauteur d'ornements exécutés en carreaux de faïence, alors que la partie supérieure des murs, les piliers engagés, l'abside et le tambour sont entièrement couverts de peintures murales. Il est à noter que les peintures murales de l'abside sont marquées par l'influence de l'Ecole du Vaspourakan de l'enluminure arménienne. La splendeur du décor intérieur de l'église St. Bethlehem ne le cède en rien à celle du décor de l'église du monastère Saint-Sauveur. Les sujets des peintures murales sont variés : *Le Christ en gloire sur la conque*, *La Nativité*, *La Sainte Mère de Dieu*, *La Passion de Grégoire l'Illuminateur*, *L'Ascension*, *Le Martyre de Saint Etienne*, *Saint Sarkis*, *Saint Théodore* et d'autres.

Le groupe le plus important des monuments de la Nouvelle-Julfa est le complexe monastique Saint-Sauveur situé dans le quartier de Grand Meydan. Ce monastère, fondé en 1606, a été nommé d'après le monastère Saint-Sauveur de la Vieille Julfa. D'après une inscription, la cathédrale du monastère dédiée à St. Joseph d'Arimatee a été construite entre 1655 et 1664 grâce à l'argent collecté de la population, sur l'initiative et sous la direction de l'évêque David. La cathédrale présente un volume cubique sans frontons avec, au centre, une grosse coupole ovale soutenue par une paire de puissants piliers engagés et les arcs réunissant les angles de l'abside pentagonale. Les murs en briques ne sont pas plâtrés à l'extérieur (de même que ceux de plusieurs églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa) et sont creusés de deux rangées de niches décoratives à arcs en ogive. L'entrée principale, ménagée à l'ouest, est décorée de stalactites et revêtue de carreaux émaillés. A l'intérieur, la partie inférieure des murs est revêtue des ornements en carreaux de faïence à une hauteur de 1,65 m, alors que toute la surface restante est couverte de peintures murales. Ce sont des scènes à sujets empruntés à l'Ancien et au Nouveau Testaments, des anges, la *Passion de Grégoire l'Illuminateur*,



représentés sur un fond d'ornements végétaux. Des œuvres picturales et des dessins graphiques importés d'Europe ont été repris dans la composition des peintures murales. Ils ont été exécutés par des peintres arméniens dont les noms se sont conservés sur les murs de l'abside (Avétik, Simon, Stépanos et d'autres)<sup>3</sup>. La grosse coupole domine la composition spatio-volumétrique de la cathédrale (le diamètre du tambour cylindrique est d'environ 10 m), doublé par les volumes supplémentaires, hémisphérique à l'intérieur et ovale à l'extérieur.



Fig. 5. Eglise "estivale" au sud de l'église Saint Minas, vue sud-ouest

A l'ouest de la cathédrale, un clocher à trois niveaux a été construit en 1702 ; son deuxième niveau est une chapelle dédiée aux archanges.

Il y a un type d'église à la Nouvelle-Julfa qui est le résultat de l'évolution architecturale de cette communauté. C'est l'église « estivale » à abside ouverte, dont le schéma est dicté par le climat très chaud d'Ispahan. Ces absides ouvertes « estivales » ont été accolées au XVIIe siècle à un certain nombre d'églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa ou construites à côté. En 1704, une abside ouverte, dédiée à St. Stépanos, a été élevée au sud de l'église St. Sarkis, sur le prolongement de sa façade orientale. Elle est rectangulaire à l'intérieur avec des pièces auxiliaires sur les deux côtés et une coupole posée sur un tambour cylindrique. L'église estivale voûtée à abside ouverte (1713), construite au sud de l'église St. Minas, est également rectangulaire à l'intérieur ; elle est dédiée à la Ste Mère de Dieu. L'abside de l'église estivale accolée du sud à l'église de Saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur (1714) est pentagonale à l'intérieur ; les pièces auxiliaires des deux côtés sont à deux niveaux et l'abside est surmontée d'une coupole à tambour octogonal. L'église estivale (1774), accolée au nord-est de l'église St. Nicoghayos et dédiée à St. Stépanos, offre la même architecture. C'est également

<sup>3</sup> A. Hakhnazarian, V. Mehrabian, *op. cit.*, p. 113.



en 1774 que se situe la construction de l'abside-église pentagonale accolée du nord à l'église St. Jean Baptiste, privée de pièces auxiliaires à cause du manque de place.

Les absides-églises ouvertes se sont présentées comme une innovation dans l'architecture ecclésiastique arménienne et ne s'observent nulle part ailleurs, ni en Arménie, ni dans les autres communautés arméniennes de l'étranger.

Les églises de la Nouvelle-Julfa présentent un certain nombre de particularités qui sont nouvelles dans l'architecture non seulement arménienne, mais chrétienne en général. L'innovation typologique est le type des absides-églises estivales ouvertes, créées à cause des conditions climatiques locales. Les schémas spatio-volumétriques des autres églises sont également des novations. Si les plans et les solutions des espaces intérieurs répètent les formules traditionnelles des églises médiévales d'Arménie (salle à coupole, basilique à coupole et quatre piliers), leur image extérieure, leur disposition et leur ornementation décorative sont absolument originales et exceptionnelles dans l'architecture ecclésiastique.

Ce sont des volumes rectangulaires sans frontons, construits en briques, couronnés de coupes ovales caractéristiques de l'architecture islamique, parfois à double volume. L'emploi de coupes caractéristiques pour les mosquées dans l'architecture des églises pourrait être expliquée par le besoin de ne pas exciter le fanatisme religieux ni l'inimitié de la population d'Ispahan. La technique de construction iranienne est également utilisée dans les parties est et ouest des salles de prière où la voûte est remplacée par des couvertures hémisphériques, les arcs décoratifs et ceux qui soutiennent la coupole sont pointus et dans certains cas les façades et les coupes sont enduites de « *kahquel* » (mortier mélangé de paille).

Quant à la décoration de l'espace intérieur des églises avec des carreaux de faïence, les décorations à fleurs où dominent les couleurs jaunes et bleues, les ornements en technique de majolique, l'usage de briques émaillées dans le décor des façades extérieures, des coupes et des portails, tous ceux-ci sont typiques et caractéristiques de l'art de l'Iran Séfévide. Quant aux peintures murales, leur iconographie et leur style s'apparentent à la peinture occidentale, surtout italienne du XVIIe siècle.

Il est enfin à noter que les œuvres de peintres arméniens de la Nouvelle Julfa ont influencé la peinture iranienne de l'époque et il est probable que ce sont eux qui ont introduit en Iran l'art de la peinture sur toile.

Nous avons présenté une véritable synthèse de l'architecture iranienne et arménienne, engendrée lorsque le schéma traditionnelle arménienne du plan de l'église est combinée aux formes volumétriques caractéristiques des mosquées, le décor assemble l'art décoratif iranien du bas Moyen Age et certains ornements et peintures murales sont exécutés sous l'influence de l'enluminure arménienne et de la peinture occidentale : tout ceci confère aux églises du XVIIe siècle de la Nouvelle-Julfa un caractère exceptionnel dans l'histoire générale de l'architecture.

Les églises byzantines ont une structure caractéristique, basée sur un plan centralisé. Elles sont généralement constituées d'une nef unique, terminée par une abside semi-circulaire. Les murs sont épais et les ouvertures sont petites et hautes. Les églises byzantines ont une décoration intérieure riche, avec des fresques et des mosaïques. Les églises byzantines ont une architecture simple et fonctionnelle, qui reflète les valeurs spirituelles de la civilisation byzantine.

Quant à la décoration de l'espace intérieur des églises, celle-ci est caractérisée par une grande simplicité et une grande harmonie. Les murs sont généralement blancs, ce qui met en valeur les fresques et les mosaïques. Les fresques représentent des scènes bibliques et des figures saintes, tandis que les mosaïques sont souvent dorées et représentent des figures divines. Les églises byzantines ont une décoration intérieure qui est à la fois simple et riche, reflétant les valeurs spirituelles de la civilisation byzantine.

Les églises byzantines ont une structure caractéristique, basée sur un plan centralisé. Elles sont généralement constituées d'une nef unique, terminée par une abside semi-circulaire. Les murs sont épais et les ouvertures sont petites et hautes. Les églises byzantines ont une décoration intérieure riche, avec des fresques et des mosaïques. Les églises byzantines ont une architecture simple et fonctionnelle, qui reflète les valeurs spirituelles de la civilisation byzantine.

<sup>1</sup> A. Haldeman, V. Mohrman, op. cit., p. 123.



# *Arts de la diaspora arménienne. L'évolution des arts visuels au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle à la Nouvelle-Djoulfa\**

Sarah Laporte-Eftekharian, Bruxelles-Paris

Tout au long du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, les rapports entre les Ottomans et la Perse ont été marqués par des luttes incessantes ponctuées de paix et cessez-le-feu éphémères<sup>1</sup>. Lorsque `Abbâs I<sup>er</sup>, cinquième shâh de la dynastie safavide, accéda au trône en 1587, la guerre faisait à nouveau rage depuis neuf ans entre les deux empires. Les Turcs avaient conquis de nombreux territoires en Transcaucasie, détenant des parties de l'Azerbaïdjan et occupant Tabriz depuis 1585, ainsi que plusieurs parties de la Géorgie et du Karabakh, Erevan, Shirvan et le Khuzistan. En 1590, un traité de paix mit un terme à douze ans d'hostilités, mais les conditions imposées aux Safavides étaient particulièrement dures et humiliantes, amputant leur territoire de vastes régions.

Au début du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Shâh `Abbâs risqua une nouvelle confrontation avec les Ottomans. Ceux-ci connaissaient des problèmes dans leurs marches orientales, dévastées par des rébellions. Les lourdes taxations, les persécutions religieuses et l'insécurité avaient forcé de nombreux habitants, notamment des Géorgiens, des Arméniens et des Kurdes, à trouver refuge dans l'empire safavide. Des appels étaient lancés au shâh pour obtenir sa protection contre les exactions des Ottomans et des Jalalis, rebelles anti-ottomans. En particulier le catholicos arménien Melkiset se déplaça à Ispahan pour supplier le shâh de reconquérir les territoires perdus.

En 1603, Shâh `Abbâs reprit Tabriz, puis occupa Nakhitchevan et se dirigea vers Erevan. En route vers la cité arménienne, il traversa la ville de Djoulfa, sur la rive gauche de

\* J'exprime ici ma reconnaissance au Prof. Waldemar Deluga pour son invitation à publier le présent article à la suite de ma communication intitulée « Les peintures murales des églises de la Nouvelle-Djoulfa – Un trait d'union entre l'Orient et l'Occident » dans le cadre du colloque *Art of the Armenian Diaspora* qui s'est tenu du 28 au 30 avril 2010 au Musée de Zamość (Pologne).

<sup>1</sup> Voir R. Kévorkian, 'L'Arménie (1441-1802)', dans : *Armenia Sacra*, Paris 2007, p. 359-363.

l'Araxe, où il fut reçu en libérateur. Il fut grandement impressionné par la richesse et le dynamisme de cette cité marchande, dont l'essor, qui datait des dernières décennies du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, était le résultat de l'implication des marchands de la ville dans l'exportation de soie brute vers le Levant<sup>2</sup>.

Fin 1603, les armées perses arrivèrent à Erevan, qui tomba en juin 1604 après six mois de siège. Au cours de l'été, les Ottomans lancèrent une contre-offensive. `Abbâs battit en retraite en pratiquant la tactique habituelle de la terre brûlée. Il ordonna également à ses troupes de déplacer tous les habitants de la province. En quelques jours, les armées safavides déportèrent des centaines de milliers d'Arméniens, poussant dans la hâte ces populations vers la Perse avant l'arrivée des troupes ottomanes. Cependant, cette décision de déplacer un si grand nombre de personnes ne résultait pas uniquement d'une stratégie militaire, mais se fondait également sur des considérations économiques : les marchands, artisans et paysans arméniens devaient contribuer à développer l'économie safavide. En outre, ils paieraient la *jizya*, taxe versée par les sujets non-musulmans pour le maintien de leur statut.

D'après l'historien et chroniqueur arménien Arak'el Dawrižec'i (Arakel de Tabriz)<sup>3</sup>, la déportation eut lieu durant l'automne 1604. La traversée de l'Araxe fut particulièrement pénible et nombreux furent ceux qui y périrent. Affaiblis par la faim, le froid, les brutalités et les maladies, un grand nombre ne parvint jamais à destination. Au printemps 1605, les déportés furent répartis dans diverses régions de l'empire. Les marchands de Djoulfa, qui formaient une communauté de quelque deux mille familles, furent les seuls à être bien traités. Arrivés à Ispahan, ils se virent attribuer un large périmètre sur la rive droite du Zâyande-rud, où ils édifièrent la cité de la Nouvelle-Djoulfa<sup>4</sup>.

Jusqu'à la fin des années 1660, les habitants de la Nouvelle-Djoulfa bénéficièrent d'un traitement privilégié de la part de Shâh `Abbâs I<sup>er</sup> et de ses deux successeurs immédiats, Safi I<sup>er</sup> et `Abbâs II, prêts à de nombreuses concessions pour s'attacher leur service en vue du développement de l'État safavide. Ils reçurent le droit de bâtir des églises et d'organiser leurs institutions religieuses. D'après le voyageur italien Pietro Della Valle, qui visita Ispahan entre 1617 et 1619, les Arméniens avaient déjà édifié dix églises à la Nouvelle-Djoulfa. V. Ghougassian établit une liste de vingt-quatre églises construites au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans la cité.

<sup>2</sup> E. M. Herzog, 'The Rise of the Julfa Merchants in the Late Sixteenth Century', dans : *Safavid Persia, The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, London 1996, p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> Né à Tabriz à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, il fit ses études à Etchmiadzine, puis entreprit de nombreux voyages. Il rédigea une histoire contemporaine du peuple arménien couvrant les six premières décennies du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Son *Livre d'Histoire* a été publié en 1669 à Amsterdam. L'ouvrage a été traduit en français par M. F. Brosset dans : *Collection d'Historiens arméniens*, vol. 1, Saint-Petersbourg 1874.

<sup>4</sup> V. Ghougassian, *The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa in the Seventeenth Century*, Atlanta 1998, p. 29.





Fig. 1a. Adoration des Mages,  
Église de Bethléem, Nouvelle-Djoulfra  
(Photo : S. Laporte)



Fig. 1b. Adoration des Mages,  
J. I. Sadeler d'après M. De Vos  
(Photo : S. Laporte)

L'architecture de ces monuments religieux<sup>5</sup> témoigne d'un certain éclectisme, portant la marque du milieu dans lequel ils furent édifiés. Les constructeurs durent s'adapter aux matériaux locaux, la brique au lieu de la pierre, matière première de l'architecture traditionnelle arménienne. Par ailleurs, les conditions climatiques et l'environnement urbain non chrétien impliquaient la nécessité de concevoir des édifices religieux différents du type classique, intégrés dans le tissu urbain et d'apparence modeste. L'intérieur de ces églises est en revanche richement décoré de peintures murales, dont les mieux conservées se trouvent dans l'église de Bethléem, édifiée en 1628, et dans la cathédrale Saint-Sauveur, bâtie entre 1655 et 1664.

Au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'art pictural de la Nouvelle-Djoulfra se caractérise par un renouveau de l'iconographie et des techniques, qu'il s'agisse de l'enluminure ou de la peinture murale. Plusieurs facteurs expliquent cette évolution. On observe d'abord un phénomène d'imitation délibérée des œuvres plus anciennes, qui débouche parfois sur un style fusionnant les traditions de différents *scriptoria*<sup>6</sup>. Forcés de quitter leur terre natale en ne prenant avec eux que ce qu'ils pouvaient transporter, les Arméniens déportés par Shah `Abbâs I<sup>er</sup> avaient conservé ce qu'ils avaient de plus précieux, les manuscrits enluminés. Une fois installés, les riches marchands continuèrent à en acquérir en provenance d'autres colonies. Les miniaturistes s'inspirèrent notamment des manuscrits ciliciens. Or, l'influence occidentale

<sup>5</sup> On en trouvera une description architecturale précise dans J.-M. Thierry & P. Donabédian, *Les arts arméniens*, Paris 1987, p. 561, ainsi que dans A. Hakhnazarian & V. Mehrabian, *Nor Djulfa: A brief Historical Outline and Description*, Venise 1992.

<sup>6</sup> S. Der Nersessian, *The Chester Beatty Library – A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts*, Dublin 1958, p. XL.





Fig. 2a. Adoration des Mages, Ménologue de l'an 1630, f. 270 v (Photo : A. Mekhitarian)



Fig. 2b. Adoration des Mages, Cathédrale Saint-Sauveur, Nouvelle-Djoulfâ (Photo : S. Laporte)



Fig. 2c. Adoration des Mages Evangelicae Historiae Imagines (Photo : S. Laporte)

sur l'enluminure arménienne s'était exercée une première fois à l'époque du royaume de Cilicie. Comme le note S. Der Nersessian, l'imitation de ces miniatures des XIIe, XIIIe et XIVE siècles rendit certainement les artistes de la Nouvelle-Djoulfâ plus réceptifs à la manière européenne<sup>7</sup>.

Le renouveau est stimulé par un nouvel apport occidental, induit par l'essor économique exceptionnel de la communauté et par son rôle dans le négoce international<sup>8</sup>. L'opulence des marchands de la Nouvelle-Djoulfâ, leurs voyages en Occident, le maintien de contacts permanents avec leurs compatriotes installés en Italie, en Europe centrale et dans l'Europe du Nord, ont contribué à développer chez ces notables un goût pour les décorations somptueuses telles qu'ils pouvaient les admirer, par exemple, dans les églises de Venise ou de Rome, mais aussi dans les édifices non religieux. Les voyageurs occidentaux à Ispahan ont décrit la richesse des demeures arméniennes d'Ispahan, *la plupart fort belles, et magnifiquement basties, avec les toits et les murailles peintes et dorées par dedans*<sup>9</sup>. Le commanditaire des peintures de l'église Sainte-Bethléem est l'un de ces riches négociants, Khodje Petros.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. XL. Voir également S. Laporte-Eftekharian, 'Le rayonnement international des gravures flamandes aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles : les peintures murales des églises Sainte-Bethléem et Saint-Sauveur à la Nouvelle-Djoulfâ (Ispahan)', thèse de doctorat (<http://www.dart-europe.eu/full.php?id=135973>) 2006, p. 312-319.

<sup>8</sup> Voir S. Chaudhury, K. Kévonian (collectif), *Les Arméniens dans le commerce asiatique au début de l'ère moderne*, Paris 2008. Voir également S. Khatchikian, 'Les livres de comptes des négociants arméniens des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', dans : R. Kévorkian, *Arménie entre Orient et Occident – Trois mille ans de civilisation*, Paris 1996, p. 152-156.

<sup>9</sup> G. Figueroa, *L'ambassade de D. G. de Silva y Figueroa en Perse... traduit de l'Espagnol par Monsieur de Vicqfort*, Paris 1667 ; cité par J. Carswell, *New Julfa, The Armenian Churches and Other Buildings*, Oxford 1968, p. 86. Cf. K. Karapetian, *Isfahân, New Julfa: The Houses of the Armenians – A Collection of Architectural Surveys*, vol. 1, Rome, 1974.



Un troisième facteur intervient dans le renouveau de l'art pictural arménien, c'est le rôle de la gravure de reproduction. Favorisée par des échanges commerciaux dans lesquels les marchands de la cité nouvelle jouaient un rôle essentiel, la circulation des estampes stimula une seconde fois l'intérêt pour les modes de représentation de l'Europe occidentale. L'attrait était sans doute d'autant plus grand que les Arméniens déportés dans les faubourgs d'Ispahan constituaient désormais une minorité dans un environnement non-chrétien<sup>10</sup>.

Dans le domaine de la gravure, la ville flamande d'Anvers occupait la première place en Europe : l'imprimerie et l'édition y prospéraient et la renommée de ses graveurs était telle que, jusqu'à la fin du XVIIe, c'est à eux qu'on envoyait les dessins préparatoires destinés à illustrer les livres de qualité. Les gravures flamandes du troisième quart du XVIe siècle connurent une diffusion dans une grande partie du monde chrétien, protestant, mais aussi catholique et même orthodoxe<sup>11</sup>. Or, ce sont les illustrations de deux ouvrages religieux imprimés à Anvers et dont la première édition date de cette période qui ont servi de modèle à bon nombre des peintures murales des églises de la Nouvelle-Djoufka : le *Thesaurus veteris et novi Testamenti*, publié en 1579 par l'éditeur calviniste Gerard de Jode, et le recueil jésuite *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines ex ordine Evangeliorum, quae toto anno in Missae Sacrificio recitantur, in ordinem temporis vitae Christi digestae*, plus connu sous sa dénomination courante de *Bible de Natalis*, publié en 1593 sans nom d'imprimeur. Il convient cependant de préciser que de nombreuses gravures isolées ont également été utilisées.

On trouve dans le chœur de l'église de Bethléem une *Adoration des Mages* (fig. 1a) dans la manière de l'école du Vaspurakan, comme en témoignent les plis des vêtements rehaussés de larges traits – dont la stylisation rappelle par exemple une autre *Adoration des Mages* (fig. 1b), celle de l'*Évangile de l'an 1472* du miniaturiste Karapet de Berkri<sup>12</sup> –, le grand œil au sourcil épais du premier Roi Mage et le sol parsemé de fleurs multicolores. On relève également une influence perso-mongole, en particulier dans le traitement de l'arbre et des rochers à l'arrière-plan. Pourtant, la source iconographique en est en grande partie occidentale : la scène principale, à l'avant-plan, dérive en effet d'un burin de Johann I. Sadeler d'après un dessin de Maarten de Vos, daté de 1585, qui fait partie d'une série de huit estampes allégoriques ayant pour thème les vertus du Christ.

Alors que cette *Adoration des Mages* de l'église de Bethléem se caractérise par la souplesse des poses et la sinuosité du trait, celle qui figure dans le manuscrit dit *Ménologue*

<sup>10</sup> « The Armenians looked west for models, identifying with the Christians of Europe, while the Jews stressed the identity as Persian Jews », A. Taylor, *Books Arts of Isfahan – Diversity and Identity in Seventeenth-Century Persia*, Malibu 1995, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> Sur le rôle de la gravure européenne dans le développement de l'art post-byzantin, voir W. Deluga, *Panagiotafitka. Greckie ikony i grafiki cerkiewne*, Kraków 2008.

<sup>12</sup> *Évangile de l'an 1472*, Ms 476 (62) f. 4r, dans : S. Der Nersessian & A. Mekhitarian, *Miniatures arméniennes d'Ispahan*, Bruxelles 1986, fig. 93, p. 159.

d'*Ispahan*<sup>13</sup> (fig. 2a) frappe au contraire par l'attitude hiératique des personnages, renforcée par la verticalité des lignes qui structurent la composition. Il y a pourtant tout lieu de rapprocher les deux œuvres, car nous sommes en présence dans les deux cas d'un exemple de transposition d'un modèle occidental où seule la composition est reprise, alors que le style se démarque résolument de celui de la source d'inspiration. Ici, le modèle est une estampe de la *Bible de Natalis* (fig. 2b), gravée par l'artiste Jérôme Wierix d'après un dessin de Maarten de Vos.

La cathédrale Saint-Sauveur possède également une *Adoration des Mages* (fig. 2c) dont le modèle est la même vignette de la *Bible de Natalis*. Cependant, dans ce cas-ci, il ne s'agit plus d'une transposition : l'artiste ne reprend pas seulement la composition, il s'approprie aussi le style du modèle, tout en laissant libre cours à son inspiration dans le traitement décoratif des riches vêtements des Mages. On remarque également la finesse du modelé des visages et des mains. Cet artiste qui s'inscrit dans la tradition arménienne tout en ayant une connaissance approfondie des procédés de la peinture occidentale, c'est selon toute vraisemblance le peintre Minas, mentionné sur une inscription découverte lors de la restauration de l'église en 1970 comme l'un des artistes arméniens chargés de la décoration de l'édifice et dont on sait par Arakel de Tabriz qu'il avait appris son métier d'un peintre européen à Alep<sup>14</sup>.

C'est dans la représentation du visage du Christ (fig. 3a) que le maître donne toute la mesure de son talent. Illuminé par son nimbe, ce visage d'une translucidité laiteuse est tourné de trois quarts vers les spectateurs, comme attirant l'attention sur les signes qu'il inscrit sur le sol. Le délicat rendu de la barbe et de la carnation ainsi que le traitement de l'ombre et de la lumière témoignent d'une maîtrise accomplie des techniques



Fig. 3a. Le Christ et la femme adultère, Église de Bethléem, Nouvelle-Djoulfa détail (Photo : S. Laporte)



Fig 3b. Portrait d'un jeune élégant, détail, Aga Khan Museum (Photo : S. Laporte)

<sup>13</sup> *Ménologue de l'an 1630 Ms 466 (241), f. 270 v, dans : S. Der Nersessian & A. Mekhitarian, op. cit., fig. 114, p. 182.*

<sup>14</sup> Voir S. Laporte-Eftekharian, *op. cit.*, p. 54.





Fig. 4a. L'Annonciation  
Evangelicae Historiae Imagines  
(Photo : S. Laporte)



Fig. 4b. L'Annonciation  
Église Sainte-Mère-de-Dieu,  
Nouvelle-Djoulfâ  
(Photo : S. Laporte)

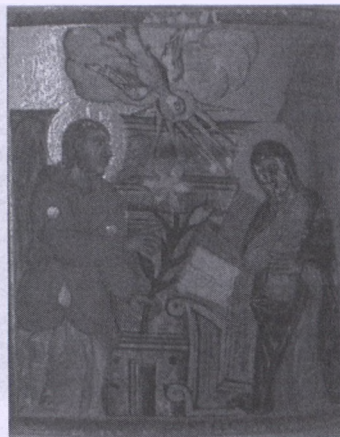


Fig. 4c. L'Annonciation  
Ms Matenadaran 262 fol. 151 v°  
(Photo : S. Laporte)

picturales occidentales<sup>15</sup> (fig.3b). Le regard fixe et comme perdu dans le lointain, les paupières lourdes, la bouche charnue renvoient quant à eux à des modes de représentation caractéristiques de la peinture slave et post-byzantine. D'autres artistes ont participé à la décoration des églises de la Nouvelle-Djoulfâ, comme le vardapet Merkuç ou encore Astuacatur. Ce dernier émigrera à la Cour de Russie où il poursuivra sa carrière sous le nom d'Ivan Bogdan Saltanov<sup>16</sup>. L'examen stylistique du *Portrait funéraire du tsar Feodor III Romanov* nous laisse penser qu'il a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec Minas<sup>17</sup>.

Les illustrations de la *Bible de Natalis* furent utilisées par de nombreux artistes arméniens. Ainsi la vignette de l'Annonciation (fig. 4a) a-t-elle servi de modèle à la fois à un panneau de l'église Sainte-Mère-de-Dieu (fig. 4b) et à une miniature du manuscrit M. 262 (fig. 4c) daté de 1661<sup>18</sup>. Il ressort de la comparaison des divers avatars de ces estampes que certaines caractéristiques du modèle sont tantôt estompées, voire disparaissent totalement, tantôt soulignées, voire forcées. C'est le cas ici des rais de lumière céleste qui accompagnent l'archange Gabriel : très intrusifs et tous dirigés vers la Vierge dans le modèle,

<sup>15</sup> Minas a également peint pour les souverains safavides. Sa renommée de portraitiste dépassera la cité de la Nouvelle-Djoulfâ. Voir par exemple *Portrait d'un jeune élégant*, dans : S. Makariou, *Chefs-d'œuvre islamiques de l'Aga Khan Museum*, Paris 2008, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> Voir 'Julfa IV. Architecture and Painting', dans: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/julfa-iv-architecture-and-painting>.

<sup>17</sup> *Sainte Russie – L'art russe des origines à Pierre Le Grand*, ed. J. Durand (collectif), Paris 2010, p. 656.

<sup>18</sup> *Ms Matenadaran 262 fol. 151 v°*, 1661, dont l'origine supposée est la Nouvelle-Djoulfâ. Le fait que le modèle en est la *Bible de Natalis*, ouvrage largement utilisé comme source d'inspiration tant par les peintres que par les miniaturistes de la Nouvelle-Djoulfâ, tendrait évidemment à renforcer cette hypothèse.





Fig. 5a. Le Baptême du Christ  
Église de Bethléem, Nouvelle-Djoulfra  
(Photo : S. Laporte)



Fig. 5b. Evangelicae  
Historiae Imagines,  
détail  
(Photo : S. Laporte)



Fig. 5c. Evangelicae  
Historiae Imagines,  
détail  
(Photo : S. Laporte)

ils sont à peine suggérés sur la peinture murale, tandis qu'ils sont repris avec vigueur sur la miniature, mais rayonnant cette fois-ci tel un luminaire au-dessus de la scène.

Il est intéressant de constater que les artistes de la Nouvelle Djoulfra ne se contentent pas d'emprunter à l'art occidental des éléments relevant du mode de représentation des motifs iconographiques, qu'il s'agisse de la composition ou du style, comme nous en avons fourni quelques exemples ci-dessus. Ils introduisent également certains contenus jusqu'alors absents de l'iconographie arménienne. C'est le cas, nous semble-t-il, de la représentation de Dieu le Père. On trouve parfois la première hypostase représentée sous une forme humaine dans la peinture monumentale ou la miniature arménienne. On citera comme exemple les fresques médiévales de l'Église Sainte-Croix d'Alt'amar, où Dieu, dans la scène de la *Création d'Adam*, est représenté comme homme d'âge mûr, de même qu'Adam qu'il tire du néant et crée à son effigie<sup>19</sup>. Un second exemple est une miniature de l'Évangile du peintre Nahapet de Surb Gamaliel datée de 1391 représentant une vision dans laquelle la première personne de la Trinité apparaît sous la forme d'un vieillard à la barbe blanche<sup>20</sup>. Cependant, ces occurrences sont l'exception : dans la plupart de ses représentations, la première hypostase apparaît sous la forme conventionnelle d'une main surgissant d'une nuée.

Or, dans de nombreuses peintures et miniatures de la Nouvelle-Djoulfra, on retrouve Dieu le Père sous la forme d'un vieillard avec une barbe blanche et une longue chevelure. Ce motif est emprunté à l'iconographie de l'Europe occidentale, où il apparaît au Moyen âge. Il correspond à la vision décrite dans le livre de Daniel : *un vieillard s'assit ; son vêtement était blanc comme la neige, et les cheveux de sa tête blancs comme une laine pure* (VII, 9-13). De nombreuses peintures murales des églises de la cité représentent Dieu le

<sup>19</sup> Voir N. Kotandjian, 'Les décors peints des églises d'Arménie', dans : *Armenia Sacra* ..., p. 137-144.

<sup>20</sup> Voir J.-M. Thierry & P. Donabédian, *op. cit.*, fig. 270, p. 384 pour le premier exemple, et fig. 144, p. 294 pour le second.



Père sous cette forme, soit en pied (ainsi dans la *Création d'Adam* et la *Création d'Ève* de la cathédrale Saint-Sauveur, ou dans la *Création d'Ève* de l'église de Bethléem), soit en buste, dans une nuée, parfois doté d'un globe et d'un nimbe triangulaire (dans l'*Expulsion du Paradis* ou dans le *Meurtre d'Abel* de la cathédrale). De nombreux modèles de ce prototype du Dieu à la barbe blanche se trouvent dans les recueils d'estampes parvenus à la Nouvelle-Djoulfra (fig. 5b et 5c). On retrouve également des représentations du Dieu vieillard dans les manuscrits peints, tels que ceux inspirés par la Bible dite de Bry, publiée à Mayence en 1609 et illustrée par l'artiste liégeois Théodore de Bry, par l'intermédiaire de la bible illustrée de Łazar Baberdac'i de 1619 du scriptorium de Lwow<sup>21</sup>. La filiation est parfois directe : la figure du Dieu vieillard sur la miniature du manuscrit M. 204, f. 390 représentant Jonas recevant l'ordre d'embarquer pour aller prêcher dans la ville de Ninive provient d'une gravure du *Thesaurus*<sup>22</sup>.

On notera que tous les exemples donnés jusqu'à présent de la première hypostase représentée sous la forme d'un patriarche sont tirés de scènes de l'Ancien Testament. Or, on trouve dans l'église de Bethléem un cas tout à fait original : c'est celui du *Baptême du Christ* (fig. 5a). La peinture fait pendant à l'*Adoration des Mages* (fig. 1) et réalise comme elle la synthèse d'une tradition arménienne – le style imite délibérément des œuvres plus anciennes du Vaspurakan<sup>23</sup> –, d'éléments orientalisants (l'arbre, les montagnes), et d'une influence occidentale : Dieu le Père sous la forme d'un vieillard dans une nuée. En effet, cette dernière figure est un emprunt à l'iconographie occidentale. C'est à notre connaissance, la première fois que, dans les arts visuels arméniens, Dieu le Père est représenté sous la forme d'un vieillard dans une scène du Nouveau Testament.

Cette peinture illustre le mode sur lequel s'opère la réception de l'art occidental chez les artistes de la Nouvelle-Djoulfra : les motifs véhiculés par les gravures entraînent non seulement un renouvellement des formes mais encouragent également une appropriation de contenus nouveaux, qui viennent enrichir le répertoire iconographique des artistes de la diaspora. La grande quantité des objets liturgiques arméniens en fournit maint exemple. Ainsi, l'*Adoration des Mages* représentée dans le médaillon qui orne l'épigonation (fig. 6) somptueusement brodé de Karapet II de Zeytoun (1713)<sup>24</sup> s'inspire-t-elle de celle de la *Bible de Natalis* illustrée ci-dessus (fig. 2). De même, la décoration des reliures en cuir ou en métal précieux puise son inspiration aux mêmes sources que les artistes de la

<sup>21</sup> Cf. B. Narkis & M. E. Stone, *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem*, Jérusalem, 1990. Voir également liste non exhaustive de manuscrits dans S. Laporte-Eftekharian, *op. cit.*, note 347, p. 241.

<sup>22</sup> S. Laporte-Eftekharian, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

<sup>23</sup> Ajoutons que l'attachement à la tradition ne se manifeste pas seulement sur le plan stylistique : le serpent écrasé par le Christ, qui rachète ainsi la seconde faute d'Adam (celle d'avoir vendu à Satan son âme et celle de ses descendants), est un motif ancien de la tradition apocryphe arménienne.

<sup>24</sup> Musée du catholicossat, Etchmiadzine, inv. n° 222. Reproduite dans M.-A. Privat-Savigny & B. Berthold, *Ors et Trésors d'Arménie*, Lyon, 2007, n° 96 (notice de D. Kouymjian), p. 131.

Nouvelle-Djoulf<sup>25</sup> : au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle encore, le plat supérieur de la reliure dite de Machtotz conservée au Musée arménien de France<sup>26</sup> représente un *Baptême du Christ* d'inspiration occidentale qui est reproduit également sur le baptistère de l'église Surb Asdvadzadzin de Botosani (Moldavie) ainsi que sur une peinture murale de la cathédrale de la Nouvelle-Djoulf<sup>a</sup>.

La recherche des sources iconographiques des peintures murales des principales églises décorées de la Nouvelle-Djoulf<sup>a</sup> nous permet de constater que les estampes des XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles à sujet religieux, principalement flamandes, sont à l'origine du style occidentalisant développé par les artistes de la communauté arménienne installée dans la capitale safavide. Sensible aussi dans l'art de la miniature, mais également dans les arts décoratifs, cette influence se manifeste non seulement par les formes, mais également par les contenus, enrichissant le répertoire iconographique arménien et faisant évoluer le rapport entretenu avec l'image. Ainsi, à travers la pratique multiséculaire de la copie appliquée à la gravure, les artistes arméniens – mais aussi l'ensemble de la communauté – se sont approprié à partir du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle une perspective différente, qui a renouvelé leur mode d'appréhension des aspects les plus fondamentaux de leur propre culture, ceux qu'en fin de compte ils partagent avec l'Occident depuis sa christianisation.



Fig. 6. Épigonation ou Konker, 1713, Musée du Catholicossat, Etchmiadzine (Photo : Musée de Fourvière)

<sup>25</sup> Sur l'apparition des motifs iconographiques occidentaux dans la reliure arménienne à partir du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, voir D. Kouymjian, 'Post-byzantine Armenian Bookbinding and Its Relationship to the Greek Tradition', *Vivlioamphiastis*, 3 (2008), p. 163–176.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.le-maf.com/>.



## *Reflections on Objects with Armenian Inscriptions from the Pre-Twentieth Century Diaspora*

Dickran Kouymjian, Paris

Objects, artistic, liturgical, or personal, have been inscribed from the earliest times, whether in hieroglyphs, cuneiform, Greek and Latin, Hebrew, Chinese or other languages. Within this nearly universal practice, the place of objects fashioned and inscribed in a language that is not indigenous to the region where they were crafted, that is in a diaspora, is rarely considered. The interpretation of inscriptions in the languages of empires or universal religions, like Greek, Latin, or Arabic, require particular criteria, because of their formal use even by populations that seldom mastered such languages.

Among literate, historic diaspora communities, one thinks of the Jews and the Armenians, principally because they were ancient, wide spread, and used a language with a unique script. Armenians had a strongly developed habit of using their alphabet to record, often precisely, the circumstances relating to the creation of an artistic or literary work. Armenian scribes, for instance, were perhaps the most consistent of any medieval manuscript tradition in leaving a memorial or colophon with name, date of copying, as well as the place and patron. A survey of surviving manuscripts established that 60% were exactly dated.<sup>1</sup>

Armenian diasporan communities are relatively well documented from early medieval times.<sup>2</sup> Manuscripts were actively copied in Italy, the Crimea, Iran, Cilicia, as well

<sup>1</sup> It is extremely rare to find a complete manuscript which lacks a dated scribal colophon; when such is missing, usually it means folios at the end have been dropped or disturbed in successive rebindings. See D. Kouymjian, 'Dated Armenian Manuscripts as a Statistical Tool for Armenian History', in: *Medieval Armenian Culture*, eds. T. Samuelian and M. Stone, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, vol. 6, Chico, CA 1983, pp. 425-439.

<sup>2</sup> A concise overview with a very pertinent bibliography can be found in L. B. Zekiyan, 'Les colonies arméniennes, des origines à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Histoire du peuple arménien*, ed. G. Dédéyan, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Toulouse 2008, pp. 425-446.

as major cities of the Byzantium and Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> Impressive floor mosaics (Fig. 1) with Armenian inscriptions from the fifth to the seventh centuries survive in the Holy Land.<sup>4</sup> The first two centuries of printing with Armenian type, the sixteenth and seventeenth, were essentially a diasporan endeavour, for instance the press set up in Lwow in 1616 by Yovhannès K'armatanents.<sup>5</sup> Ceramics, bindings, liturgical objects, altar curtains, carpets- as well as the expected tombstones- were left by Armenian communities from Europe to the Far East bearing Armenian inscriptions as a kind of proof of manufacture or ownership, or a sort of trademark or hallmark.

Only a longer study could hope to elucidate the nuances involved in the how and why of these inscribed objects. It would be interesting too to compare the Armenian experience with that of other diaspora communities, which produced inscribed objects or which failed to do so. In this paper a restrained group of art works from Armenian diasporas will be examined.



Fig. 1. Floor mosaic from a funerary chapel of St. Polyeuctos with a long Armenian inscription. Jerusalem, Damascus Gate, Musara Quarter

<sup>3</sup> Place name indexes found in catalogues of the major Armenian manuscript collections – Erevan, Jerusalem, Venice, Vienna – and in collections of manuscript colophons, are a good source to identify codices copied in different regions. Cf. D. Kouymjian, 'Dated Armenian Manuscripts as a Statistical Tool for Armenian History', *Medieval Armenian Culture*, 6 (1983), p. 425–439. Through further statistical analysis I have lowered that number to about 57%. For the Crimea, see H. and H. Buschhausen, E. Korchmasjian, *Armenische Buchmalerei und Baukunst der Krim*, Erevan 2009; for Cilicia, S. Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, 2 vols., Washington, D.C. 1993; for Italy, *Roma – Armenia*, ed. Cl. Mutafian, Rome 1999, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> A good selection of illustrated examples can be found in B. Narkisss, M. E. Stone, A. K. Sanjian, *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem*, New Rochelle 1979, pp. 21–28, figs. 32–40. An example is the Musara mosaic, late-fifth or sixth century in a funerary chapel near the Damascus gate, D. Kouymjian, *The Arts of Armenia*, (Accompanied by a Collection of 300 Slides in Color), Lisbon 1992, no. 165, available on the internet: [http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/arts\\_of\\_armenia/index.htm](http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/arts_of_armenia/index.htm).

<sup>5</sup> R. H. Kévorkian, *Catalogue des « incunables » arméniens (1511/1695) ou chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne*, Geneva 1986, pp. 30–31.



## Ceramics

The oldest dated Armenian ceramics are a liturgical pitcher of 1510 (Fig. 2a–b) and a bottle of 1529 (Fig. 3a–b) both manufactured in the western Anatolian town of Kütahya.<sup>6</sup> The blue and white pitcher and bottle are incidentally the oldest dated ceramics to be produced within the Ottoman Empire. Kütahya was most famous for the massive series of more than 10,000 tiles and objects produced there in 1719–1721, which now decorates the Armenian Cathedral and Patriarchate of St. James in Jerusalem. At least from the fourteenth century until the Armenian Genocide of 1915, the illustrious ceramic industry of Kütahya was dominated entirely by Armenians.<sup>7</sup> Among the patrons of the ceramics created for Jerusalem was Abraham Vardapet, whose monogram (Fig. 4b) was fashioned on a number of Kütahya pieces, like the dish of 1719 showing the beheading of St. John the Baptist (Fig. 4a) now in

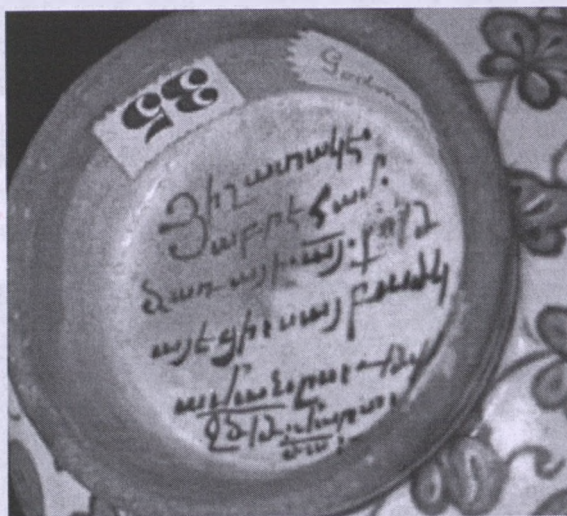


Fig. 2a–b. Liturgical pitcher, inscribed in Armenian and dated 1510 on its base crafted in the Armenian-Ottoman ceramic centre of Kütahya. British Museum, formerly in the Godman Collection

<sup>6</sup> The fundamental study on Kütahya ceramics remains, J. Carswell, *Kütahya Tiles and Pottery from the Armenian Cathedral of St. James, Jerusalem*, I, *The Pictorial Tiles and Other Vessels*, with an edition of the Armenian texts by C. J. F. Dowsett, II, J. Carswell, *A Historical Survey of the Kütahya Industry and A Catalogue of the Decorative Tiles*, Oxford 1972; reissued in one volume, Antelias, 2005; all pieces discussed in the following lines are illustrated and described. See also specifically on this question, D. Kouymjian, 'Le rôle des potiers arméniens de Kütahya dans l'histoire de la céramique ottomane', in : *Des serviteurs fidèles. Les enfants de l'Arménie au service de l'État turc*, ed. M. Yevadian, Montélimar 2010, pp. 64–85, figs. 35–36.

<sup>7</sup> According to two Ottoman Turkish judicial agreements of 1764 and 1766 concerning the potters of Kütahya, all of the more than 150 names were Armenian. These archival documents are reproduced in: G. Kürkman, *A History of Kütahya Pottery and Potters*, Istanbul 2006, pp. 51–52; D. Kouymjian, 'Le rôle des potiers arméniens de Kütahya ...', p. 72, fig. 38.





Fig. 3a–b. Liturgical bottle, inscribed in Armenian and dated 1529 on both the base and the upper ring, crafted in the Armenian-Ottoman ceramic centre of Kütahya. British Museum, formerly in the Godman Collection



Fig. 4a–b. Decorative dish of the beheading of St. John the Baptist inscribed and dated 1719 in Armenian with the monogram of Abraham Vardapet of Jerusalem on the back, made in the Armenian-Ottoman ceramic centre of Kütahya. Venice, Congregation of the Mekhitarist Fathers, San Lazzaro





Fig. 5a–c. Three ceramics from Isfahan-New Julfa of the early eighteenth century:  
 a) large dish with monogram “Nazareth”, Venice, Congregation of the Mekhitarist Fathers, San Lazzaro;  
 b) bowl with monogram “Nikoghos”, Erevan, State History Museum;  
 c) small dish, with monogram “T’êr Aghek’sandr” and date 1(7)06, Watertown, MA,  
 Armenian Library and Museum of America

the collection of the Mekhitarist Fathers of Venice.<sup>8</sup> The hundreds of inscribed Kütahya pieces that have survived suggest that, at least in the first half of the sixteenth century and again from the early eighteenth the display of Armenian/Christian writing in some spheres of a Muslim empire had become acceptable and even normalised.

Abraham’s monogram leads us to a series of Armenian ceramics, mostly undated, but probably all from the beginning of the eighteenth century from an eastern centre of the diaspora: Iran. They were most certainly potted in New Julfa, the Armenian suburb of Isfahan, the capital of the Safavid dynasty. The Armenian town was founded by refugees from ancient Julfa on the Arax, displaced and deported in 1604–1605 by Shah Abbas.<sup>9</sup> These monogrammed pieces (Fig. 5a–c), loosely classified as part of Safavid ceramics, are more enigmatic because Armenian was already an esoteric script in Iran, but their monogram form makes them still more mysterious. Perhaps the most famous are the large blue and white dishes with a symmetrical design of aster flowers (Fig. 5a) in the centre of which there is the elegant monogram “Nazaret”.<sup>10</sup> There are specimens in Venice, London, Phoenix, Boston, Russia, and elsewhere suggesting that Nazaret’ of New Julfa commissioned an entire personal dinner set. Other bowls and cups have the names of Nikoghos (Fig. 5b),<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> D. Kouymjian, ‘Le rôle des potiers arméniens de Kütahya...’, fig. 37. J. Carswell, *op. cit.*, pls. 17,19 reproduces all three known monograms of Abraham on ceramics dated 1718–1719.

<sup>9</sup> A concise history of the founding of New Julfa can be found in V. S. Ghougassian, *The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa in the Seventeenth Century*, Atlanta 1998, pp. 33–54.

<sup>10</sup> P. and V. Bedoukian, T. Hazarian, *Armenian Ceramic Art*, catalogue of an exhibition, New York 1982, p. 1; D. Kouymjian, *The Arts of Armenia ...*, no. 176.

<sup>11</sup> Nikoghos, bowl, Erevan, Historic Museum inv. 8654; *Arménie: La magie de l’écrit*, ed. Cl. Mutañian, catalogue of exhibition, La Vieille Charité, Marseille, Paris 2007, p. 256, fig. 4.84 “pas encore déchiffré”; the illustration is upside down.

Safraz,<sup>12</sup> and a monogram which still remains undeciphered.<sup>13</sup> Fine porcelain dishes were also commissioned by Armenians in Europe, for instance a white porcelain Dutch pitcher with the owner's initials and the date of 1787 in gold (perhaps a marriage gift), and a cup with a two letter ligatured monogram.<sup>14</sup>

Among the Safavid-type pieces is a small dish, in brown and yellow colouring (Fig. 5c), typical of some ceramics from New Julfa-Isfahan; it is the only dated specimen.<sup>15</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, evidence suggests that it was made for Têr Aghek'sander in 1(7)06, the last year that Vardapet (by then Bishop) Aghek'sander was Armenian Primate of Iran. It was probably a gift to him by the New Julfa community on his election as the Catholicos of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin in that same year.<sup>16</sup>

### Bindings

Aghek'sander Vardapet was an erudite clergyman and a collector of books and manuscripts. At least six volumes survive from his library with his name carefully inscribed on the leather bindings.<sup>17</sup> These include a Missal of 1679 probably copied in New Julfa, but bound in an uncharacteristic style (Fig. 6), I suspect by a European binder, with the inscription "Remember Aghek'sandr Vardapet and his

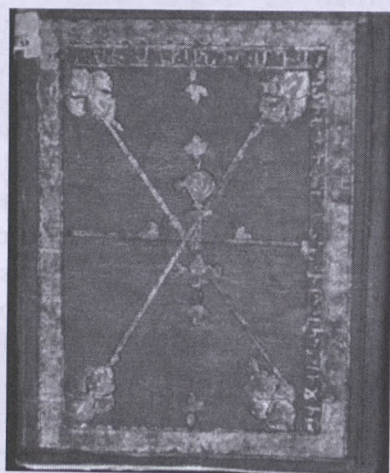


Fig. 6. Stamped leather binding inscribed "Remember Aghek'sandr Vardapet and his family, 1680", on an Armenian manuscript of 1679 probably copied at New Julfa, Iran. Erevan, Matenadaran Repository of Manuscripts, M2673

<sup>12</sup> Paron Safraz (d. 1728) from New Julfa, white Safavid dish with monogram in centre, inv. 2714-1876; sand pot (?) blue and white with the same monogram, painted upside down, inv. 1248-1876; blue and white pitcher, monogram at top, inv. C. 1851977, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, for which see, Y. Crowe, *Persia and China, Safavid Blue and White Ceramics in the Victoria & Albert Museum 1501-1738*, La Borie 2002, pp. 205-206, respectively nos. 354-356.

<sup>13</sup> Flared blue and white bowl, with clear but undeciphered monogram in the centre, Watertown, MA, Armenian Library and Museum of America, inv. 86.7.132; P. and V. Bedoukian, T. Hazarian, *op. cit.*, p. 255, no. 4.82.

<sup>14</sup> P. and V. Bedoukian, T. Hazarian, *op. cit.*, p. [3].

<sup>15</sup> Monogram in the centre, Watertown, MA, Armenian Library and Museum of America, inv. 91.197; P. and V. Bedoukian, T. Hazarian, *op. cit.*, p. 1, "so far have defied all deciphering attempts"; *Arménie : La magie de l'écrit ...*, p. 255, no. 4.83.

<sup>16</sup> The word Têr, originally 'lord', is often found associated with clergy, as earlier scholars have surmised. The number 106 has contributed to the confusion in reading the monogram, but it helps identifying the owner. By reading it as the date 1706, Têr Aghek'sander becomes an easy choice and fits perfectly.

<sup>17</sup> For more details on Têr Aghek'sander and his library, see D. Kouymjian, 'From Manuscript to Printed Book: Armenian Bookbinding from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century', in: *Printing and Publishing from the Middle East*, Papers from the Second International Symposium on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2-4 November 2005 [*Journal of Semitic Studies*, Supplement 24], ed. Ph. Sadgrove, Oxford 2008, pp. 19-21, pls. 13-14.



family, 1680".<sup>18</sup> There is also an interesting hybrid volume containing both a printed Calendar of 1669 from the Armenian press in Amsterdam and a manuscript of miscellaneous church texts, including calendars, commissioned by Aghek'sander himself in 1697–1698, bound together with the inscription: "Aghek'sandr Vardapet, 1698."<sup>19</sup> I have argued that in the mind of someone like Aghek'sander there was not a dramatic difference between the old technology of hand copied manuscripts, and the new one of printing; thus, binding them together was not a problem.<sup>20</sup> The inscribing of leather bindings with the use of stamping tools is a phenomenon, almost unique, to the Armenian workshops of New Julfa of the second half of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> The beginning of this practice corresponds to the launching of an Armenian printing press at the monastery-cathedral of New Julfa in the mid-seventeenth century; the stamping tools used for the inscriptions were recycled printing fonts. The inscriptions on manuscript covers served, at least in Aghek'sander's case.

#### *Zamość and Lwow House Monograms*

Arriving at the Rynek, the central square of Zamość, via ul. Ormianska (Armenian Street), one meets a series of five magnificent multicoloured three-storey renaissance styled houses constructed by rich Armenians in the early seventeenth century.<sup>22</sup> They are by far the most distinctive houses in the city. The fifth of these, starting from City Hall, or the first beginning at the very corner of the square (Fig. 7), is that of the Armenian merchant Saldan/Saltan or Soltan Sachwelowicz, who came to Zamość from Lwow. The residence built between 1642 and 1657, is popularly called the "Under the Madonna House" because of the sculpted relief on its



Fig. 7. The house named "Under the Madonna" (to the right) of the Armenian Saldan/Saltan or Soltan Sachwelowicz with his monogram in Armenian above the windows on the second level with his initials SS in Polish above and below

<sup>18</sup> Erevan, Matenadaran, ms. M2673; D. Kouymjian, 'From Manuscript to Printed Book ...', p. 296, pl. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Antelias, Lebanon, Cilician Catholicosate, ms. Ant. 151; D. Kouymjian, 'From Manuscript to Printed Book ...', pp. 20–21, 296, pl. 14.

<sup>20</sup> D. Kouymjian, 'From Manuscript to Printed Book ...', p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> D. Kouymjian, 'The New Julfa Style of Armenian Manuscript Binding,' *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 8 (1995, pub. 1997), pp. 13–36.

<sup>22</sup> A surprise discovery on the eve of the conference is the source of this addition to my paper.





Fig. 8a-c. Three Armenian monograms of the seventeenth century in stucco and stone from houses in Zamość and Lwow:

- a) stucco Armenian monogram on the house of “Saldan” or Sołtan Sachwelowicz with his initials S and S in Polish above and below, Ormianska St., Rynek, Zamość;
- b) stone monogram “Avag” on the corner house at Ormianska St. and the Rynek, Zamość;
- c) detached stone with Armenian monogram perhaps reading “Vardan/Vartan”, Lwow, in a restaurant on a street perpendicular to Dovbusha St., near the Museum of the History of Religion

façade of the crowned Virgin with sceptre standing on a menacing dragon. In the cornice above the three windows on this same second level are decorative ovals each with the identical Armenian monogram of the name Saldan/Saltan and, above and below, in Latin letters is an S, the initial of the owner (Fig. 8a).<sup>23</sup> This is not an isolated case because the building across Ormianska St., at the corner of the Rynek, also has a monogram – but its reading as Awag is not without problems (Fig. 8b).<sup>24</sup> A stone fragment with an Armenian monogram was also photographed in Lwow, now inside a restaurant, the reading of which is uncertain, perhaps Vardan/Vartan (Fig. 8c).<sup>25</sup> Saldan’s monogram, repeated three times

<sup>23</sup> The reading of the monogram is very difficult. The final N is nowhere to be found, suggesting Salda. The A which is clear, must be iterated twice; the classical D was also pronounced T in western Armenian, thus Saltan. One could even imagine Soldan, a more common name, but the O is also hard to justify. The Zamość Museum, housed in one of the Armenian mansions, has on display a reproduction of the monogram.

<sup>24</sup> A similar monogram for Avag (I suspect it is this very example) can be found in A. G. Abrahamyan, Հայոց գիր և գրչութիւն (Armenian Letters and Writing), Erevan 1973, p. 193. The reading is problematic because Awag is spelled in classical orthography ԱԻԱԳ and not ԱՎԱԳ, that is AWAG and not AVAG. A look through seventeenth century Armenian manuscript colophons confirms that in rare cases there is confusion between the two letters in names.

<sup>25</sup> The stone fragment is now in a restaurant on a street perpendicular to Dovbusha St. where the Museum of the History of Religion is located. I was directed there by Jurij Smirnow author of *Katedra Ormiańska we Lwowie*, Lwów 2002, and I would like to thank him for taking me to it. Curiously, this monogram is not found among the 110, including some Armenian examples, listed at the back of W. Łozinski, *Złotnictwo Lwowskie*, Lwow 1912, pp. 164–166; I would like to thank Irina Gayuk, Conservator, Museum of the History of Religion, Lwow, for sending pages from this important work. Among this large, illustrated list of monograms, nos. 57–71 are marked as unknown, of which 61 and 71 are clearly Armenian. Two others are noted as Armenian, no. 32, Kalnik – but the clear Armenian monogram provides no reasonable possibility for such a name – and no. 85 Steczko has no discernable Armenian letters in its combination. No. 100 is identified as Wartanowicz, which can be justified by the drawing of the monogram, but with a lot of imagination. Eleven monograms from among the group of Łozinski’s ‘unknowns’ were reproduced in the recent study, J. Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian Polskich*, Warszawa 2002; six others from Łozinski’s list are also reproduced, nos. 22, 32, 75, 85–87. Curiously no. 100, Wartanowicz, seems missing. I would like to thank Monika Agopsowicz for bringing this book to my attention and introducing me to Mr. Smirnow.



on the façade, is revealing because the owner wanted to make sure that Armenians and non-Armenians, who could not comprehend the Armenian symbol, understood to whom this magnificent house belonged through his initials in Polish/Latin script. This seems to be a unique case among monograms, though on tombstones, now very worn, in the Lwów Armenian Cathedral courtyard, one encounters Armenian monogram-like signs that seem to accompany the long inscriptions in Latin or Polish.<sup>26</sup>

### Carpets

Was the use of monograms, instead of clearly spelled out words, as we find on the ceramics or that of Sołtan Sachwelowicz on Ormianska Street in Zamość a question of discretion on the part of the Armenian merchant-magnates of New Julfa or simply a design feature? It is hard to know. The value of discretion is clearly demonstrated by an extraordinary carpet (Fig. 9a–d) woven in Isfahan or its Armenian suburb in a style that became known as “polonaise.”<sup>27</sup> These were apparently special large rugs with atypical designs that

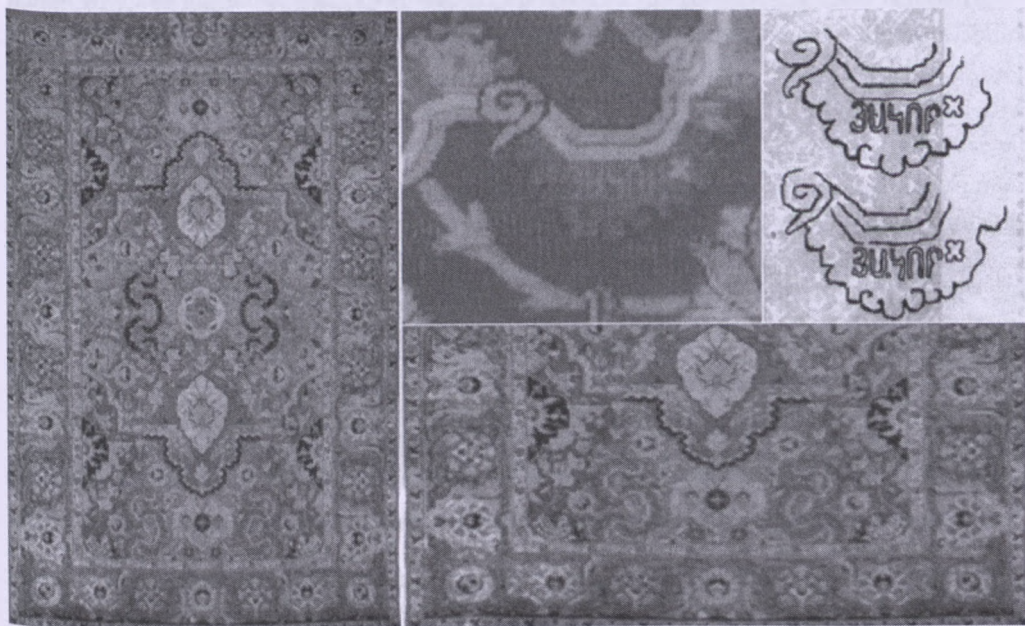


Fig. 9a–d. a) Safavid carpet dated by style to 1620–1625; b) detail of lower left; c) detail of the name Yakob/Hakob woven in Armenian majuscules; d) drawings of the two Yakob/Hakob inscriptions. Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia, formerly in the William Bowman Collection

<sup>26</sup> J. Chrzęszczewski, *op. cit.*, p. 96, reproduces a tombstone in the Lwów Cathedral with a monogram (unknown) and the date 1480, perhaps one of the oldest known Armenian monograms from the region. I could not locate the actual stone.

<sup>27</sup> A discussion of these carpets with reference to earlier literature can be found in M. Wenzel, ‘Carpet and Wall-Painting Design in Persia. An Armenian-inscribed ‘Polonaise’ Carpet’, *Apollo* (1988 July), pp. 4–11.



are believed to have been commissioned by Shah Abbas himself as gifts for western officials or aristocracy. The term "polonaise" came into use as a result of the 1878 Paris International Exhibition during which the Polish Prince Czartoryski displayed a number of such rugs from his family collection.<sup>28</sup> For a while it was believed they might have been woven in Poland. Our rug, now in the Art Gallery of South Australia in Adelaide, but thirty years ago in France, is dated by style to 1620-1625.<sup>29</sup> Within red-pink cloud bands in the upper right and lower left, the name Yakob/Hakob (Fig. 9c-d) is very finely woven in Armenian majuscule (*erkat'agir*), almost invisible to the naked eye, and in the extreme corners there appear to be two Armenian letters – Y and G – probably the initials of the weaver.<sup>30</sup> Yakob was certainly the weaver of the rug, because if he were the patron, his name would have appeared more prominently. On the other hand, it is perfectly reasonable to imagine that the rug and other "polonaise" carpets were in fact either made for Armenian merchant families in Zamość or Lwow or brought to Poland as part of their commercial dealings. In either case, some of these rugs were clearly woven by Armenians.

There are hundreds of carpets with Armenian inscriptions,<sup>31</sup> including some in Polish collections,<sup>32</sup> but most of these were woven in geographic Armenia, especially Karabagh, Siunik, Goris, and the surrounding areas. The most famous is the Guhar or Gohar carpet with a long two-line inscription in which Guhar tells us she wove the rug in 1699.<sup>33</sup> Very few oriental carpets bear inscriptions of any kind: these include a special group of Ottoman prayer rugs in the Topkapı collection, certain Safavid carpets from Isfahan, and some Moghul carpets. Turkish or Persian village rugs or those of the Muslims of the Caucasus do not in general bear inscriptions.<sup>34</sup> The Armenian inscribed rugs, including that of Guhar, the Yakob carpet, and several other earlier seventeenth-century examples, provide very concrete evidence of Armenian rug weaving, which historical sources speak of from the

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> The rug was given to the Art Gallery of South Australia in 2000 by its owner, William Bowmore. The Museum's website has a reproduction of the carpet with a short history: <http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Collection/detail.jsp?ecatKey=4525>.

<sup>30</sup> The name Yakob and the initials appeared when Bowmore gave the rug for professional cleaning in London in the 1980s.

<sup>31</sup> L. Der Manuelian, M. L. Eiland, *Weavers, Merchants and Kings. The Inscribed Rugs of Armenia*, exhibition catalogue, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth 1984; D. Kouymjian, 'Les tapis à inscriptions arméniennes', *Tapis et textiles arméniens*, ed. H. Kévorkian, B. Achdjian, Marseilles 1991, pp. 247-253.

<sup>32</sup> B. Biedrońska-Słota, ed., *Ormianie polscy Odrębność i asymilacja*, Kraków 1999, pp. 60-64, nos. 44 (1900), 46 (1902), 49 (1881), 50 (1903), 51 (1894); the latter rug was in the special exhibit organized to coincide with the conference in the Zamość Museum.

<sup>33</sup> L. Der Manuelian, M. K. Eiland, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73; D. Kouymjian, 'Le tapis « Gouhar » [« Gohar »]', *Arménie : la magie de l'écrit ...*, p. 278.

<sup>34</sup> J. M. Rogers, translator, editor and reviser of original Turkish text by H. Tezcan, *The Topkapı Saray Museum. Carpets*, Boston 1987, chapter 2 'The Inscription Carpets,' pp. 17-30, pls. 2-35. All these carpets with Koranic inscriptions in the imperial collection are undated. They are a unique group, assigned by some to the earlier centuries and by others to the mid-nineteenth century. They use a Persian rather than a Turkish knot, and seem to have been made in Anatolia, but there is no agreement on the locality.



earliest times. The Yakob and Guhar rugs through their designs also help to demonstrate the probable Armenian origin of both the famous dragon and “polonaise” type carpets.

#### *Altar Curtains*

There are of course hundreds if not thousands of textiles with Armenian inscriptions created in diasporan communities: embroidered and woven textiles, liturgical garments, lace of various types, chalice clothes, and even large altar curtains.<sup>35</sup> The most impressive group of the latter is a series of stamped and painted cotton curtains with traditional scenes from the history of the Armenian Church manufactured in southern India around Madras.<sup>36</sup> These date from the late seventeenth through the eighteenth century. They were commissioned by rich Armenian merchants, most of them native of New Julfa trading in



Fig. 10a–b. a) Armenian altar curtain, stamped and painted in 1798 in Madras, India, with the principal motif made up of exotic trees and bushes from southern India with legends in both Armenian and the local India language, with a mounted St. George to the left (not visible), b) detail showing the coconut palm with the Armenian inscription “narglitzar”, coconut palm, from the Arabic *nargil* and Armenian *tzar*, tree. Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, Church of St. Toros

<sup>35</sup> On Armenian textiles in general, see D. Kouymjian, ‘Textiles arméniens : une riche palette’, in: *Trames d’Arménie : tapis et broderies sur les chemins de l’exil (1900–1940)*, Muséon Arlaten, catalogue, ed. D. Serena, Arles 2007, pp. 29–35. Eight altar curtains from Etchmiadzin were published earlier without description or commentary in the large album, *Treasures of Etchmiadzin*, in Armenian, Russian, and English, Etchmiadzin 1984. The large collection in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem has never been published, but three seventeenth century embroidered figural altar frontals were included in B. Narkiss and M. Stone, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–137, figs. 179 (1619), 180 (1620), 181 (1655).

<sup>36</sup> M.-H. Guelton, ‘De l’Inde à l’Arménie, la fabrication des rideaux de choeur peints et imprimés’, in: *Ors et trésors d’Arménie*, ed. M.-A. Privat-Savigny and B. Berthod, Lyon 2007, pp. 48–61.





Fig. 11a–c. a) and b) Ottoman postage stamps depicting Fenerbahçe, lighthouse of Istanbul, issues of 1914 and revised post-Genocide issue of 1920; c) (above) the line in cryptic Armenian in the 1914 version reading “mankind will worship God”. Istanbul, Orlando Carlo Calumeno Collection, courtesy of Osman Köker.

the Far East, as presentation items for churches such as Holy Etchmiadzin and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and that of Constantinople. Armenian altar curtains have not yet been thoroughly studied as a group,<sup>37</sup> but their often lavish decorations and very elaborate inscriptions make them immediately recognizable. The largest collections are at Holy Etchmiadzin and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, including the “botanical garden” curtain with lavish paintings of the trees and bushes of south India labelled in Armenian and a local Indian language (Fig. 10a–b).<sup>38</sup> Though they were manufactured by Indian craftsmen on the Coromandel Coast, their iconography and the “cartons” used for their execution were almost certainly the work of Armenians.

There is nothing esoteric about the inscriptions on the curtains. Nor is there anything enigmatic such as we find in the monograms or the Yakob carpet. Our final example, one in the category of hidden inscriptions, a sort of secret message for those who know, in this case those who can identify Armenian letters and perhaps decipher them, is a Turkish postage stamp (Fig. 11a–c) printed in London in 1914 for the Ottoman government. The engraver was an Armenian who concealed a message under the clear

<sup>37</sup> D. Kouymjian, ‘L’art des tentures de chœur arméniennes,’ Privat-Savigny and Berthod, in: *Ors et trésors d’Arménie* ..., pp. 35; M. Martiniani-Reber, ‘Les rideaux de chœur. Introduction : leur origine et à leur usage dans les églises orientales,’ and ‘Fonctions et symboles dans la liturgie arménienne,’ *Ors et trésors d’Arménie* ..., pp. 37–46.

<sup>38</sup> For a group of 17 curtains from Etchmiadzin, see the catalogue of altar curtains in *Ibidem*, pp. 63–75.



words "Postes ottomanes." At first glance a series of vertical strokes appear under these words, but at high magnification Armenian letters are evident (Fig. 11c), which read, "martik bidi bashden zasdvatz" (mankind will worship God). The authorities in post-Genocide Turkey discovered the ruse and in the reprinting of 1920, the surreptitious line was removed.<sup>39</sup>

### Conclusion

All the inscriptions have a common function: they served to identify an object of Armenian provenance, either collectively as in liturgical objects or privately as in the bindings or ceramic monograms. Often the words or letters have a decorative function as on the ceramics or the altar curtains. At times they are either esoteric or secretive as in the monograms, the Yakob rug, or the postage stamp. All were intended for a specific audience: those initiated in the mysteries of the Armenian language and its culture.

Discussion on Armenian art has often been restricted to the description of shapes and colours and their historical developments on the diachronical level. In the following, I hope to offer some theological and philosophical depth to the topic by analysing the depiction of mountains in Medieval Armenian miniature art and providing some outlines for their interpretation. Leaving the question of historical influences aside, my focus is on defining the meanings and functions of mountains in relation to the "iconic narrative" of Eastern Christian art on the synchronic level. I will concentrate on four images of the central event of Christianity, the resurrection of Christ.

As far as the technical and stylistic side of a specific Armenian painting is concerned, there has been plenty of variation regarding the way the mountain has been approached. There is the simple, even naive, yet especially powerful representation of Vaspurakan, "softer naturalism of Cilicia, even geometric abstraction" (Fig. 11c) of Mankrik, an early fourteenth century artist from Norzarak. The latter approach includes cases of extreme abstraction with arbitrary fields of patterned decoration, in which the motifs resemble bricks, tiles or tesserae, and ornaments.

An abstract mountain may be constituted by the repetition of a single characteristic detail. Mankrik of Norzarak in his depictions of the Anagnisis and Pentecost transformed the mountain into a pattern of repeated arches, the result being an almost surreal symbolism.<sup>40</sup> (Of course, the setting is not that surreal when compared with the peculiar beauty of

<sup>39</sup> The term refers to the way the line appears in images: horizontal, oblique, the square content, rectangular measure with its own associations and didactic ideas.

<sup>39</sup> The stamp was published on one of the postcards in O. Köker, *100 Yıl Önce Türkiye'de Ermeniler*. Orlando Carlo Calumeno: *Koleksiyonu'ndan Kartpostallarla*, Istanbul 2005, p. 36, postcard no. 57. The recent English version is entitled *Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago*, Istanbul 2008.





## *The Interpretation of Mountains in Armenian Miniatures*

Serafim Seppälä, Joensuu

Discussion on Armenian art has often been restricted to the description of shapes and colours and their historical developments on the diachronical level. In the following, I hope to offer some theological and philosophical depth to the topic by analysing the depiction of mountains in Medieval Armenian miniature art and providing some outlines for their interpretation. Leaving the question of historical influences aside, my focus is on defining the meanings and functions of mountains in relation to the "iconic narrative"<sup>1</sup> of Eastern Christian art on the synchronic level. I will concentrate on four images of the central event of Christianity, the resurrection of Christ.

As far as the technical and stylistic side of the Armenian miniature painting is concerned, there has been plenty of variation regarding the way the mountains have been approached. There is the simple, even naive, yet spiritually profound abstractism of Vaspurakan,<sup>2</sup> softer naturalism of Cilicia, even geometric abstraction such as in the works of Momik, an early fourteenth century artist from Noravank. The latter approach includes cases of extreme abstraction with arbitrary fields of patterned decoration, in which the motifs resemble bricks, tiles or textiles, and ornaments.

An abstract mountain may be constituted by the repetition of a single characteristic detail. Momik of Noravank in his depictions of the Ascension and Pentecost transformed the mountains into a pattern of repeated arches, the result being an almost surreal symbolism.<sup>3</sup> (Of course, the setting is not that surreal when compared with the peculiar beauty of

<sup>1</sup> The term refers to the way the icon conveys its message: perspectives, colours, the semiotic content, theological message with its own associations and didactic aims.

<sup>2</sup> An excellent collection is in *Armenian Miniature. Vaspourakan*, Yerevan 1978.

<sup>3</sup> Matenadaran 6792, fol. 5v. See the figure 106c in T. F. Mathews, *Armenian Gospel Iconography. The Tradition of Glajor Gospel*, Washington 1991.

certain mountains in Cappadocia, or even around Noravank.) A very similar mountain was depicted by Kirakos in New Julfa (1330) in a transfiguration scene.<sup>4</sup>

Even though the techniques and styles vary, something remains. It seems that the artists are not so much interested in spatial clarity, solidity or stability. Instead, they illustrate illusionistic landscapes swirling with motion not always in full accordance with the natural scenes, not even laws of gravity.

### 1. Methodological considerations

A crucial question that this paper will address is: how should we interpret a mountain? Additionally, who can define meanings for medieval religious images, and how? To begin with, Armenian miniature paintings are not only works of individual creativity but indicators of a whole religious tradition. Therefore, even the painter himself has no monopoly over the meaning: the images are to be read in a wider context. Moreover, there is no fixed "right" answer available in the canons of the Church or elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> In the literature of the Armenian Church, there indeed are explicit teachings on images and religious painting, but they deal mainly with the justification and proper forms of images and their devotion, not so much in the meaning of given details.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the interpreter must take into account various fields of ideas. In the case of Armenian religious painting, there are at least five different fields of ideas that provide a relevant basis for approaching the topic.

#### *Natural reference*

Firstly, somewhere in the background, there is the natural experience of mountainous surroundings. This is not irrelevant, even though miniature painting is a sacred art that does not portray natural order. One may assume there is a certain relationship between the physical and psychological world-view. In a plain landscape, the horizon is a clear line of demarcation between heaven and earth; the heavenly and earthly are clearly separated stable entities, which acts in favour of a dualistic attitude in matters of world view. In mountain areas, however, the horizontal reality appears to human experience as multidimensional, more complex. The earth and sky intertwine and overlap: the relation of earth and sky is more nuanced, emerging dissimilar after each step. In mountains one may also have something that the dwellers on plain land can only dream about: sky perspective to

<sup>4</sup> New Julfa, All-Savior MS 47, fol. 5v. For the figure, see 106e in Mathews, *Armenian Gospel Iconography*, or S. Der Nersessian, A. Mekhitarian, *Armenian Miniatures from Isfahan*, Brussels 1986, p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> This leaves certain interpretative freedom which in turn is restricted by the conventionality of the iconic painting tradition. In Byzantium, the beholder was considered to have assumed responsibility for the proper interpretation of sacred images. L. Brubaker, *The Sacred Image East and West*, Illinois 1995, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> For further reading on early Armenian approach to images and iconoclasm, see G. Kochakian, *Art in the Armenian Church: Origins and Teaching*, New York 1995.



earthly reality. Mountainous landscapes seem to reflect the intention and yearning of the earthly towards heaven. In plain lands, where the landscape does not offer this variation, mankind has even resorted to artificial mountains such as pyramids for elevation.

This all is reflected in the psyche of mountainous people in one way or another. The fact that Armenians lived for millennia in mountainous areas has left deep marks on their collective psyche and aesthetic sense.

It has sometimes been wondered why the gorgeous Armenian natural world did not leave its imprint on miniatures. Actually, this is not completely true: if we look at the expressionist strength of the mountains in the images 1 and 4, for example, we may recognise some echoes of picturesque Armenian mountainous landscapes. It is to be admitted, however, that the mountains found in miniatures primarily represent something more than reproductions of natural surroundings.

#### *Biblical reference*

It goes without saying that the basic reference for miniature art is constituted of the Biblical subtexts: the Jewish variations on the idea of Holy Mountain and their Christian derivatives. In the sacred script, Eliah, Moses and Jesus all have mountains of their own in the narrative – and all three even appear together on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Mountains have a special function in the mythological thought of almost all religious traditions. In biblical Judaism, the concept of the Holy Mountain was the kernel of religious thought and practice. Judaism as a religion was based on two mountains: Sinai functioning as the formative Holy Mountain where the Law was given (Ex. 24:16–17), and Zion (Temple Mount) as the ultimate centre of the religion. All the various aspects of Jewish religion, such as worship, pilgrimage, interpretation of law, and the themes of the myths were concentrated on the Temple Mount, the centre of the cosmos and the focal point of creation. Moreover, there are several hints in the biblical texts that even Paradise itself was considered as the Holy Mountain. In Ez. 28:13–14, Eden is explicitly referred to as “the Holy Mountain of God”. The idea is widely attested in Early Christian Syriac literature, and one may assume that from the Syrian tradition it found its way to early Armenian Christianity as well.

Likewise in Christianity, crucial events take place in relation to mountains – even in spite of the fact that the initial natural mountain could be tiny. Nevertheless, in terms of significance, a modest hillock could become a mountain of cosmic proportions. The birth of Christ took place in a cave, and the rock around it became a holy mountain, in iconography at least. The divine character of Christ was revealed on a mountain (traditionally identified as Tabor) through the transfiguration in the uncreated divine light. Even the agony of Gethsemane that took place in a tiny flat rock is depicted in the Gladzor Gospels as a mountain upon which Christ prays and from which He descends to the sleeping apostles<sup>7</sup> – an out-

<sup>7</sup> The plate 23 in T. F. Mathews & A. Taylor, *The Armenian Gospels of Gladzor*, Los Angeles 2001 (2<sup>nd</sup> printing 2002).





Fig. 1. Descent, Targmantchants-Gospel, 1232



Fig. 2. Galilean-Mountain, Toros Roslin



Fig. 3. Descent, 1400s; Unknown Artist-Khizan Q



Fig. 4. Women-Targmantchants Gospel, 1232



standing example of the fact that mountains symbolise the ascent above the earthly. And finally, Golgotha is self-evidently a holy mountain for Christianity. There is in fact some archaeological evidence that Golgotha was the actual direction of prayer for the early Jewish Christians, replacing the Temple Mount as the cosmic centre and as the focus of spiritual orientation. Nevertheless, the ultimate Holy Mountain in Christianity is the tomb of Christ that in the cosmic process of the fall and restoration forms a pair for the Paradise Mountain of Eden. In this way, the mountain is a place for the revelation of God also in Christianity.

#### *Armenian patristic reference*

Since the biblical subtext is so rich in terms of mountains, it is no surprise that the Armenian patristic tradition offers some ideas applicable for the interpretation of iconic mountains. For example, the nature of Golgotha as a holy mountain is demonstrated by Agathangelos in his *History of Armenians*, in which he writes on the Crucifixion, describing Christ as "climbing" onto the cross. This as such is a common metaphor in Eastern Christianity. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the earliest visual presentation of Christ climbing onto the Cross by himself with a ladder is in an Armenian Verhap'ar MS, dated to eleventh century.<sup>8</sup> What is even more important for our topic, however, is the fact that Agathangelos refers to the cross of Golgotha as a "summit":

The son of God too became in the flesh an image of man, in the likeness of human images, mounting the elevated cross as if climbing a *high summit*; and he showed (his) speechless lifelessness to creation. So the world saw him *on a high place*.<sup>9</sup>

In the Armenian Crucifixion scenes, Golgotha is a rocky summit hollowed out underneath. Under the rocky peak there is almost always the skull of Adam, a symbol of humanity in its fallen state subjugated to death – a typical eastern feature.

Another type of notion important for our topic consists of the texts in which the mountains occur in spiritual teaching in a symbolic function. For example, in Grigor of Narek's hymn for the Resurrection of Christ, the narration starts from the top of Mount Ararat. The hymn depicts heavenly chariots with a golden throne surrounded by angelic beings. The verses culminate into New Jerusalem, the heavenly Zion. In this way, the resurrection of Christ unites the heavenly and the earthly, but at the same time Ararat functions in the hymn as a unifying principle that seems to appear at times as heaven, at times as earth.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Matenadaran 10780, fol. 125 v. The climbing is essentially a Christological issue, emphasising the free-willing-ness of his death, but it may also be seen to reflect the idea of Golgotha as a high place, a holy mountain. For discussion, see A. Derbes, 'Images East and West: The Ascent of the Cross', in: *The Sacred image East and West...*, pp. 111–116.

<sup>9</sup> Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, §83, trans. R.W. Thomson, Albany, 1976, pp. 92–93. It is remarkable that the description predates the oldest survived Golgotha icons, so most probably the teaching is not inspired by paintings.

<sup>10</sup> "Let us glorify and praise the wonder of the Resurrection of Christ. The chariot is sent from the mountain Masis, and in there are benches, and in it also a golden throne..." D. Der Hovanessian & M. Margossian, *Anthology of Armenian Poetry*, New York 1998, pp. 50–51.

In short, Ararat functions as the Mount Zion of Armenians, and the loss of Ararat is a catastrophe of cosmic proportions that may well be compared with the impact of the fall of Jerusalem for Jews.

#### *Armenian mythological reference*

The fact that Armenian culture has grown-up on mountainous landscapes has resulted in a rich folklore and mythology of mountains, which is in many ways unique in the whole of Christendom. In times of trouble, Armenians have oftentimes escaped to mountains. Therefore, it is no wonder that mountains have a saving function in the mythology of Christian Armenia, as the epic of Davit Sasuntsi shows. The epic tells about the heroes of four generations, the last one of which stays inside a mountain, waiting for the day when the world will begin anew. Thus the Armenian salvation is not resting on earth or waiting in heaven, but remains in the mountains.<sup>11</sup>

The epic produced a legend in which the hero, Mher the Younger, steps out from the mountain twice a year – around the feasts of Ascension and Transfiguration, i.e. the feasts of the *Mount of Olives* and *Mount Tabor* – and looks around to see whether the world has been transformed or not. The actual mountain of this myth is located in Van, currently in Turkey, which contributes additional tragedy to the myth. Mher the Younger is like an image of the glory of Armenia, lost for real yet ever resting somewhere in the mountains. The actual glory may be dead but in human minds it is still alive and functioning. What is interesting is the fact that the myth of Christian Armenia is by its structure and function a loose parallel to the image of the Resurrection Mount. The glory fills up the mountain but does not touch its outer surface. The mountain is the same in outer terms, but the content has become a golden one. This is an Armenian resurrection – a national variation of the resurrection image.

Especially rich in mythic functions is Mount Ararat, the eternal Holy Mountain of the Armenians. It is reflected in the symbolism of the Church from *veghars* to architecture and *sharakans*, as well as in national symbolism. Each Armenian church is like a small holy mountain that one may enter. The symbolism and significance of Ararat, however, deserves a study of its own, and it must be passed over here.

#### *Byzantine icon theology*

The last but not least field of reference is Byzantine icon theology – a rich and lively field of its own from the patristic era up to our own times. This is a relevant factor for two reasons. Firstly, Armenian miniature art often provides parallels with the scenes of Byzantine icons; many Armenian images are in fact derivations of Byzantine iconic paintings. In addition to the thematic and historical relevance, there is the actual synchronic level of

<sup>11</sup> Z. Nalbandian, *David of Sassoon*, Yerevan 2002, p. 282.



interpretation which offers concrete models and ideas in approaching the sense of iconic images in general, and Byzantino-Armenian settings in particular.

In the visual language of Byzantine icons, the mountain tops symbolize events of profound spiritual significance. Church fathers attributed the biblical mountains with a special spiritual meaning: "divine Scripture figuratively calls the virtues 'mountains'", as John of Damascus stated.<sup>12</sup> In the same way, the famous 11<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine author Michael Psellos took Sinai not as a meaningless mountain heap but as a "symbol of the ascent of the soul away from the material".<sup>13</sup> This, Psellos reasons, cannot be seen from the mountain itself, but only from an intellectual, noetic, perspective. These notions have been further developed in modern Orthodox icon theology. We are clearly dealing with the same Eastern Christian mystical tradition that is portrayed in Armenian sacred art.

## 2. Synchronic analysis of the iconic mountains

After briefly outlining the most relevant points of reference, I will now move on to present some suggestions for the general principles concerning the meanings and functions of mountains in iconography. The following division is based on the analysis of four different resurrection images (numbers 1–4 are used in the following discussion):

1. *The Descent into Sheol*. Targmantschants Gospel, location unknown, dated 1232.
2. *Encounter of Christ and Apostles in Galilee* by Toros Roslin. Malatian Gospels.
3. *The Harrowing of Hell*. 15<sup>th</sup> century. Unknown artist, Khizan?
4. *Myrrh-bearing women and the Angel*. Targmantschants Gospel, location unknown, 1232.

### 2.1. Independent identity

Firstly we may note that mountains as an element are not only instances of escalated soil but distinct entities, a sphere of their own. In Armenian miniatures, mountains are often separated and denoted in clear visual terms with a clearly distinguishable profile (see image no. 2).

The idea is not only an artistic convention but has long theological roots. In Jewish thought, mountains were not understood as mere heaps of earth but as distinct items with

<sup>12</sup> John of Damascus, *Sermon on Transfiguration*, PG 96, col. 550. For discussion, see A. Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis*, New York 2005, pp. 194–204. The idea appears also in St. Augustine: "If it is asked what the 'mountain' means, it may well be understood as meaning the greater precepts of righteousness" (On the Sermon on the Mount 1:2).

<sup>13</sup> Michele Psello, *Epistola a Giovanni Xifilino*, ed. U. Criscuolo, Naples, 1990, 54:165–171. Cf. C. Barber, *Contesting the Logic of Painting: Art and Understanding in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, Leiden 2007, p. 68.

a specific identity and nature, distinguishable from the earth. It is revealing that in a Jewish *midraš* it is said that “mountains, heaven, earth and sea” were created on the first day.<sup>14</sup> In other words, mountains were understood to be a distinct category, different from the earth. In the Bible, mountains are called “foundations of the earth”<sup>15</sup>, and in more poetical terms “pillars” the function of which is to keep the earth together.<sup>16</sup> In the book of Job, “the pillars of the earth” refer to mountains, and apparently the same logic applies to their heavenly counterpart, pillars of heaven.<sup>17</sup> In the creation of earth, mountains were set as supporting structures. Moreover, the mountains also function as a unifying element between the depths (Hebr. *tehom*) and heaven.

## 2.2. Symbolic character

When we turn to the actual function of mountains in the iconic narrative, the first thing to strike our eye is the obvious *symbolic* character of mountains. The symbolism is expressed in colours as well as in forms.

In the image no. 1, there is a red mountain for the saved ones. Red is a traditional symbol of divinity in iconography, and in that sense the choice of colour constitutes a divine mountain. The mountain of Sheol is grey, the colour of lifelessness. Also in no. 3, the mountains of *Sheol* are depicted as blackness, indicating lifelessness, emptiness, lack of hope – all attributes of death.

In the image no. 2, the mountain appears as a cover of reality, a wrapping for the golden heavenly content, gold being the traditional symbol of heaven. (In fact, “cover of reality” would be an apt definition of “symbol” in the eastern Christian thought.<sup>18</sup>) This covering function is especially clear in the Cilician adoration of the Magi by Toros Roslin<sup>19</sup> in which the mountain is above the Virgin Enthroned. In this setting it is remarkable that the very fact of enthroning refers to Mary’s heavenly position only *after* the Dormition and Assumption, which in turn is based on her function as *Theotokos* (*Astvatsatsin*), the Birth-giver of the Divine Person. In this way, the setting shows that the heavenly position of Mary is inseparable from her earthly role. The symbolic character of the mountain is here so excessive that it would perhaps not be recognised as a mountain at all without the two trees on

<sup>14</sup> Stated by Rabbi Tanhum ben Jeremiah in *Berešit rabba* 6.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 2:8.

<sup>16</sup> “When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm” (Ps. 75:3, NIV).

<sup>17</sup> “He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble” (Job 9:6, NIV), “The pillars of the heavens quake” (Job 26:11, NIV).

<sup>18</sup> The central figure here is Pseudo-Dionysios. For further discussion, see M. Barasch, *Icon*, New York 1992, pp. 165–179.

<sup>19</sup> Matenadaran Ms. 10675, f. 19. Malatian Gospels, Ilromkla monastery. The image has been published in *Armenian Miniatures from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Leningrad 1984, fig. 94.



it. The discrete trees, in turn, are obviously not present for stylistic reasons but serve a symbolic function. They remind us of the two cosmic trees of the Paradise Mountain, those of knowledge and life: the Holy Mount in the picture is an image of the Paradise opened by the incarnation of God.<sup>20</sup>

The symbolic character of mountains is made evident by their composition and form. Just as in the Byzantine icons, the proportions of the mountains appear distorted in order to underline the symbolic function.<sup>21</sup> In no. 4, the symbolism is expressed in the almost abstract character of the mountains' shapes. But if the mountains are symbolic entities, what exactly do they symbolize? In order to answer this more thoroughly, let us proceed with the other characteristics.

### 2.3. Organic continuity with the characters

In most cases of mountains in Armenian miniatures, one may grasp a clear *continuity* between the mountains and the characters. This continuity may be expressed in a variety of ways, depending on the style of the artist.<sup>22</sup> In no. 4, the myrrh-bearing women and their clothing bear a striking resemblance to the mountainous background. The angel's wings appear like an extension of the mountain. It is as if the characters and the mountains represent the same reality.

In no. 2, the golden halos of the apostles merge into the golden interior of the mountain, expressing the harmony and unity of holiness. In no. 3, the continuity has turned to unanimity: the characters are imbedded not only inside the mountain but are literally *in* the mountain. The similarity of souls and their place is a clear and profound way to express the non-physical character of the lower world, as well as the mental non-physical nature of torment experienced therein. (The most extreme torment is lack of love, as Isaac of Nineveh says.)

All these manifestations of continuity between the mountains and human characters seem to imply that mountains are not only lifeless *background* but organic entities, and as such a meaningful part of the narrative. In many cases, the mountain is almost a personalized subject in the iconic narrative. Perhaps the best examples of the organic character of mountains are produced in Toros Taronatsi's Gospel in 1323. In *John and Prochoros*, the mountains are almost breathing, in spite of the abstracted nature of mountains.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Nativity*. Targmantsants Gospel, location unknown, date 1232. Cf. *Miniatures Arméniennes*, Yerevan, 1969, fig. 25. For a minimalist symbolism in the tomb of Christ, see the image of the Lectionary from 1286 in *Ibidem*, fig. 37. The same image has been published also in *Matenadaran*, vol. 1, Moscow 1991, p.151.

<sup>21</sup> J. Baggley, *Doors of Perception*, New York 1988, p. 83.

<sup>22</sup> For a Cilician style representation (1287) of how the apostles and the mountain merge, see *Miniatures Arméniennes ...*, fig. 45. Another example in *Matenadaran ...*, p. 138.

<sup>23</sup> *Miniatures Arméniennes ...*, fig. 59. For more cases of almost personalised mountains, see a Cilician example from King Hietum's lectionary, 1286 AD (Ms. 979, f. 137v). Cf. *Miniatures Arméniennes ...*,

It is noteworthy that the topic of palm Sunday, *Entry into Jerusalem*, is almost always depicted with a mountain, the function of which is to underline and dramatise the significance of the event, not to hint at the existence of such a mountain in Jerusalem (nevertheless, its location roughly corresponds to the Mount of Olives, the direction from which Christ entered the Holy City). The tendency of organic symbolism in a way reached its ultimate form in the 14<sup>th</sup> century *Entry into Jerusalem* from Nakhichevan. If in no. 2 the apostolic group is like a mountain *within* the mountain, here one encounters a “naked” holy mountain *without* the mountain of stone. In this image the “entry mountain” is formed solely by the apostles.<sup>24</sup>

#### 2.4. Functional continuity with the characters

The parallelism of the characters is not only shown in their way of *being* but also in their *functions*. In other words, the human characters and the mountains do not only represent a similar mode of being, but they also carry a *functional correspondence*. This dynamic parallelism intends towards the ultimate inner meaning of the image – the meaning that the mountains alone seem to tell

In no. 4, the amazement and perplexity experienced by the characters is reflected in the character of the mountains, their shakiness and restlessness. The mountains are as if expressing the human perplexity in front of the greatest mystery of human history. In no. 3, people appear as if they were flowing, and so are the mountains. The human characters are like flickering micro-flames within black macro-flames. In no. 2, the parallelism is obvious in another way. The apostles form a human mountain inside the Resurrection Mount. Whatever the function ultimately is, it seems obvious that the apostles and the mountain serve the same semantic function. If we take the outer mountain as the Holy Mountain of Paradise, then the apostolic community forms a small paradise in themselves. In other words, the apostolic Church is Paradise as a microcosm. In the same way, in no. 1 the position of groups of people resembles the corresponding mountain.

In short, people and mountains are in a functional relationship to each other, paralleling and reflecting each other. This may be seen to express a harmonious relation between the physical and mental dimensions of creation. The human being is a microcosm of the natural world. The spirituality expressed by the iconic images applies to the whole created order.

fig. 36; *Armenian Miniatures from the Matenadaran Collection*, Yerevan 2009, p. 158. See also Zakaria Gnunetsi's 16<sup>th</sup> century *Nativity* (Ms. 4831, 2a) from Van. Cf. *Armenian Miniature. Vaspourakan*, Yerevan, 1978, fig. 79.

<sup>24</sup> *Armenian Miniatures from the Matenadaran Collection*, Yerevan 2009, p. 248, fig. 182.



### 2.5. Indicative relation with the central figure

In icons, according to the definition of Boris Uspensky, a concrete object is perceived through its place in the world,<sup>25</sup> i.e. its ontological function. Quite obviously, the mountains of Armenian miniatures always stand in a signifying relation with the central figure and the principal message of the painting. In terms of iconic narration, this is perhaps the most relevant function. The semantic function of the mountains is determined in relation to Christ, and this subordination exemplifies a world-view that is Christocentric in terms of its dynamics. "In him salvation has its centre", as von Balthasar has stated.<sup>26</sup>

In the image no. 1, the inter-crossing diagonal planes cause the mountains to point at Christ, lead to Christ, emanate from Christ. In no. 3, the situation is essentially the same yet the implementation is more organic. This visual fact activates further theological associations. The lines from heaven to Christ on earth represent the symbolism of incarnation and *kenosis*; the line from the earthly Christ towards heaven represents the divinization of man (*theosis*). In this way, the mountains gently and silently declare the main message of Christianity: the transcendent God has become man so that man could become divine. Or perhaps more appropriately, the heavenly became earthly so that the earthly could become heavenly.

In this way, iconic images consist of a two-way movement that connects heaven and earth by lifting up the earthly and enabling the heavenly to descend. Here we may quote the leading medieval Byzantine theologian, Gregory Palamas, who flourished at the same time as Armenian miniature art. "God manifests Himself upon the mountain both as one who comes down from his own lofty regions, and as one who lifts up from our earthly baseness", Palamas declared. The Transcendent one has taken on mortal nature so that He may be comprehended by human nature.<sup>27</sup>

The exact expression of the relation between mountains and the central figure may vary and have diverging manifestations, according to various styles and different topics, but the existence and relevance of it remains from picture to picture. In short, mountains appear in a special relationship to Christ. This principle may be manifested in various ways. In no. 2, the mountain is as if a divine tent or a tabernacle above Christ. The principle applies even to image no. 4 that may appear to be an extraordinary case: the central message is told exactly by the very lack of the central character. This means that in terms of iconic narration, Christ is present through his absence – a unique way to represent divine transcendence and immanence simultaneously. The main message (resurrection) is indicated by what cannot be seen: the mysterious disappearance of Christ from the earth. Consequently, the mountains are in disarray, in a confusing, non-centred way of being. Nevertheless, one may note that the leading figure among the three women, who obviously is the Virgin Mary, the

<sup>25</sup> B. Uspensky, *The Semiotics of the Russian Icon*, Lisse 1976, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> H.U. von Balthasar, *Mysterium paschale*, Edinburgh 1990, p.55.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory Palamas, *Homily* 34, PG 151, col. 426. For discussion, see A. Andreopoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

Mother of God, has been marked by the mountains in the same way as Christ in the images 1 and 3, albeit in a more modest fashion. The heaven, as if pointing at her, approaches her with lines resembling the lines of Christ in 1 and 3, but not in such a central way since her role is not the core of the message.

Yet the mountains have their reason to point at the Virgin. According to a widely accepted principle of Byzantine theology, the Virgin Mary was present in the tomb of his Son before all the others. The notion is profoundly connected with the idea of paradise as a Holy Mountain. The empty tomb of Christ in the Garden next to Golgotha is the new Eden, the new Paradise – the new Holy Mountain. Indeed, in the artistic representations, the surroundings are not depicted as a garden, as the Bible indicates, but as a mountain (no. 4), as the iconic semantics indicate. The setting forms a cosmic parallel. In Eden, Eve was quick to grasp at death from amongst the life of paradise in her desire to appear on the hierarchical slopes of the Paradise Mountain;<sup>28</sup> here Mary hurried to the tomb to catch the Life from the death. Mary arrives to the tomb as the New Eve who no longer takes hold of death but rushes for redemption and life. Due to this cosmic parallelism, it was essential that it was a woman who entered the area of the new Holy Mountain first. Therefore, women bear witness to humankind's return to life.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, in Eden there was no-one to see the creation of the first Man, and the first one to see him was Woman: Eve. The same setting was repeated in the renewal of human nature in Christ: there was no-one to see the resurrection of Christ, and the first one to see Him was a woman, the New Eve.<sup>30</sup> The setting implies that the mountainous stone represents the New Eden. In Eden, death springs up from amidst blossoming nature; in Golgotha, Life blossoms up from amongst the dead stone. The case of the Virgin Mary at the tomb is a good example of the fact that the miniature paintings are not picturisations of biblical verses but representations of theological ideas – that in turn are based on the Bible and tradition – with their mystical dimensions.

According to Byzantine tradition, the angel on the grave was Gabriel – the same whom Mary had already encountered in the Annunciation. This is one of the many parallels between the Nativity and Resurrection, Christmas and Easter, Christ's birth and His victory

<sup>28</sup> Ephrem the Syrian, a much loved author among the Armenians, depicted the Paradise mountain as hierarchy in which the Presence of God is at the summit (*risha*), then, heights (*rawma*), slopes (*gabbe*) and lower slopes (*shfule*). The tree of life is between the summit and the heights, and the tree of knowledge between the heights and slopes. The levels of paradise mountain correspond to the hierarchy in Moses: God at the summit, Moses at the heights, Aaron at the slopes and the people at the lower slopes. Cf. S. Brock, *Hymns on Paradise*, New York 1990, pp. 49–57.

<sup>29</sup> Mary was understood as the New Eve from the second century, a famous topic in patristic soteriology. Peter Chrysologos, *Sermo* 99:5 in PL 52, col. 478–479. For discussion, see L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, San Francisco 1999, p. 299.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory Palamas has a beautiful homily (*Hom.* 18) on this parallelism in which he explains why the Virgin Mary was the first one to the tomb and why the apostles did not state this openly (Mark even states explicitly that the first one was Mary Magdalene). The Greek text in: Γρηγορίου του Παλαμα, *Εργα* 9, Θεσσαλονίκη 1985. See especially *Hom.* 18:1–3, 8–12.



over death.<sup>31</sup> This means that in terms of iconic narration, the image of Christ's sepulchre is a pair with the Annunciation image. Mary and the tomb are the two gates through which the divine Logos are transformed into the new mode of existence: through Mary, to earthly life; through the tomb, to the heavenly one.<sup>32</sup>

<b>Thematic parallels</b>	
<i>Annunciation</i> The divine Logos enters the created order, leaving His transcendence	<i>Burial</i> Christ leaves the created order, entering Hades
<i>Birth</i> Christ enters earthly life through birth	<i>Crucifixion</i> Christ leaves earthly life through Death

### 2.6. Further theological functions

So far the notions discussed have been based strictly on the constituents of the painting itself. Nevertheless, there are also other, less obvious theological functions that one may distinguish, at least when looking through appropriate interpretative glasses. Some representatives of Byzantine icon theology might see in the pair of mountains the figure of a Eucharistic chalice constituted by the shape of hills. Such a liturgical interpretation is fitting from an analogical point of view: both the Eucharistic chalice and the setting of the painting represent a heavenly content defined by earthly covers. Moreover, the halo of Christ, especially in no. 3, is like the Eucharistic bread in the cup.

In perhaps a more convincing fashion, one can see in no. 2 an ecclesiological aspect. The mountain represents the Church, as well as a church (building), by its function as the cover of the apostolic community and protector of men's communion with Christ. Therefore, the mountain is a mystical Church in which the function of the altar belongs to Christ himself. In this perspective, St. Thomas touching the life-giving body of Christ symbolises a Eucharistic encounter with the same Christ-reality. In this sense, the picture is an image of the holy liturgy, the heart of the life of the Church. In addition, the shape of the Apostle Thomas is again a further microcosm of the apostolic group. In this way, a believer is the Church in microcosm, in this case a one-man mountain. In Byzantine tradition, the idea

<sup>31</sup> Gregory Palamas: *Hom.* 18:9.

<sup>32</sup> For a brilliant 10<sup>th</sup> century representation of this idea in Armenian miniatures, see image in *Armenian Miniatures from the Matenadaran Collection ...*, fig. 30.

was discussed by Maximus the Confessor.<sup>33</sup> In the Christian Orient, Ephrem the Syrian drew a parallel between the paradisiacal Holy Mountain and the human being, both consisting of four levels.<sup>34</sup>

A peculiarity of the image no. 2 is the depiction of a locked door embedded in the mountain.<sup>35</sup> Obviously, the door functions as an ideographic sign that is semantically relevant. The immediate context of the image itself does not reveal the function, but the script indicates that it represents the door through which Jesus came in when the apostles were inside a building.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the door closes the entrance to the community from everyone else but Christ. The setting underlines the Eucharistic aspect – the outsiders were outside the Church during the Eucharist in early Christendom. The mystic door also bears a resemblance to the tomb of Christ, the door of which was closed for humankind but open for Christ. From this perspective, the fact that the door is locked is demonstrating the timelessness of the setting. In contrast to the standard depiction of rocky iconic mountains, this one is blossoming with trees – a mark of the paradise opened by the resurrection.

A further theological notion can be deduced from the fact that the images include no sign of sun or of natural light, even though the images 2 and 4 are illustrations of a natural environment. In theological terms, the iconic light consists of the divine light of Christ. Due to the choice of a dark blue colour, one could even argue that heaven is shown as divine darkness where the darkness is caused by being blinded by the uncreated Light (cf. Moses in Sinai, apostles in Tabor). All the mountains are variations of one eternal spiritual ascent that leads to Christ, the ultimate living Mountain.

## 2.7. Metaphysical functions

In the iconic narrative, mountains constitute a dividing element between the spheres of the heavenly and the earthly. The simple fact that mountains separate two modes of being may be interpreted also in a certain metaphysical sense by taking the levels as indicators of separate spheres of existence. From this perspective, the mountains symbolise an ontological sphere, higher than earth yet lower than the heavenly or divine one. In Neoplatonic terms, the mountains represent a divine emanation that is closer to the One than the earth-

<sup>33</sup> Cf. "The Church's Mystagogy", Ch. 5, in Maximus Confessor, *Selected Writings*, New York 1985, pp. 190–195.

<sup>34</sup> S. Brock, *op.cit.*, pp. 52–53.

<sup>35</sup> For an outstanding example of a door in the mystical function, and in continuity with a mountain, see the 15<sup>th</sup> century Image of Transfiguration in MS 5511 (3b). Cf. *Armenian Miniature Vaspourakan ...*, fig. 58.

<sup>36</sup> The upper inscription in no.2 reads "Mount Galilee, where had told to meet" – a reference to John 20:26 ("Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, where he had told them to meet him"). Above the door it reads: "Jesus came in while the doors were still locked" (John 20:26).



ly spheres.<sup>37</sup> In the system of Neoplatonic ontology this would correspond to the “Psychic” sphere of reality (“Psychic” here is to be taken in the sense of *élan vital*). This would explain why in the iconic narrative the trees blossom in the mountains and not in the plain ground: they do not represent earthly growth but heavenly life. One can easily draw parallels with Neoplatonic ontology and the iconic landscape:

Neoplatonic ontology	The cosmic landscape
The One (τό ὄν), the Transcendence	God, not depicted (except at times as a hand in the upper corner)
Nous (νοῦς), the Noetic sphere	Heaven
Psyche (ψυχή), the animate sphere	Mountains
Matter, the physical sphere, the lowest form of existence	Earth

In icon theology, these lines of reasoning have been followed by Richard Temple in his imaginative books on Byzantine icons, especially *Icons and the Mystical Origins of Christianity*. For him, iconic images portray man’s ascetic ascent to a more spiritual way of being.

When the images are read in this sense, it is remarkable that in the iconic narration it is the mountains that define the space for the heaven, in that sense constituting the heavenly. In no. 1, the mountains of stone portray the heaven as a mountain of sky upside down, reaching the earth. This heavenly mountain is inhabited by a victorious martyr bearing the victorious cross. This figure is traditionally understood as the Wise Robber, the first one to enter paradise after its gates were closed in Eden.

What have been presented above are perhaps no more than some outlines for a deeper understanding of the meaning of iconic images amongst the traditional Armenian miniatures of classical schools. Such paintings, in my view, are very fruitful for theological analysis because of their unique mixture of traditionalism and creativity. The Armenian artists followed, adapted, modified and developed the same imagery that was used in Byzantine and other eastern iconography, yet often with unique and distinctive choices for the settings of the sacral scenery. It seems to me that even though the forms varied remarkably from one school to another, in most cases the deep-structure of the message remained in many respects.

<sup>37</sup> For an image that illustrates the idea that the Ontological spheres are expressed through symbolic mountains, see the image of Sts. John and Prochorus (Ms. 6305, 220v). Cf. *Grigor Tatevatsi and Anonymous Painter of Syuniq*, Yerevan 1987, fig. 26.





## *The art of the Armenians of Romania: Its reality and its perception in time*

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In the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century Armenian culture was more frequently referenced in books on the History of Art in Romania than is the case now. My paper intends to underline the need for keeping Armenian culture within the attention of researchers in Romania and other countries, and perhaps within the attention of the Armenians themselves – wherever they live. It also attempts to justify this necessity and to express the hope that a resurgence of research concerning the Armenian contribution to the culture of the countries in which they live, including Romanian lands, will happen.

Even though one can speak about an Armenian diaspora in the Balkans on a larger scale starting with the fifth century, when the Byzantine rulers resettled Armenians in Macedonia, the representatives of this people were attested for the first time in the Romanian territories in the tenth century, in Cetatea Albă (Fig. 1) on the Nister River.

Sergiu Selian quotes Grigore Goilav (Goilavian)'s mention of a tombstone inscription in that town, which says: "This cross is carved in 416". According to the Armenian calendar introduced on 11 July 551, the year 416 in the Christian calendar is the year 967 AD. Selian also refers to a religious inscription from 1174 and to coins minted on the orders of the Armenian kings in Cilicia that were used for trade in the area.<sup>1</sup> Armenian merchants going from Crimea to Galitia passed through Cetatea Albă, and commerce flourished there. An Armenian Church was in existence in this town in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup>

The fall of the Bagratuni kingdom in 1045, the conquest of Ani by Seljuk Turks led by Arp Arslan in 1064, the repeated Tartar invasions (1239, 1299, etc.), the earthquake and famine of 1319, and the Mongol invasion in 1342, were all events which precipitated many Armenians to take refuge in the territories that are today Romania. From the fourteenth

<sup>1</sup> S. Selian, *Schiță istorică a comunității armene din România*, București, 1999, pp. 16–17, 19. Cf. N. Iorga, 'Choses d'art arméniennes en Roumanie. Conférence donnée au Collège Morat en mars 1934', *Revue historique du sud-est européen*, 1–3 (1935).

<sup>2</sup> S. Selian, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

century onwards they were encouraged to settle by having had special conditions created for them, as will be shown further. They became a familiar presence in towns such as, for example, Suceava, Bucharest and Botoşani, and were good entrepreneurs in the communities in which they lived. They were awarded political representation and degrees of self rule.

Alexandru cel Bun [the Kind] invited Armenian merchants from Poland, especially from Lvov and Cracow, to come to Moldova, and to this respect he issued a document (Hrisov) on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1401 regarding the enthronement of an Armenian Bishop in Suceava, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1407 another one to exempt the Armenians from taxes and customs.<sup>3</sup>

Some noble families in the Romanian Principalities were of Armenian origin, and they even managed to attain the throne. Ioan [John], Stephen the Great's grandson by his son, Bogdan the Third, and a lady from the Armenian family Serpega, was the ruling Prince of Moldavia between 1572 and 1574. He was surnamed Armeanul (the Armenian) or, more often, Vodă cel Cumplit (the Terrible Voivode), or cel Viteaz (the Brave) for the fierce resistance with which he opposed the Turks.

In 1577 and 1578 successively the two brothers of Ioan Vodă ruled in Moldova. They were Garabed Ioan Potcoavă and Alexandru Serpega. Also the son of the latter, Petru Cazacul, briefly became the ruler in Moldova in 1592.<sup>4</sup>

Subsequent events, such as the Turkish-Persian wars at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the massacres in 1895 and the genocide in 1915 brought new waves of Armenian refugees to various countries in Europe, including Romania. They received citizenship through the decision taken by the international protectorate over the Romanian Principalities (instituted after the Crimean War and the ensuing Treaty of Paris) to extend civil rights to all religious minorities. With the exception of the Ştefanitsada event that took place in the sixteenth century (in 1551 Ştefan Rares killed Armenians<sup>5</sup>), in a Moldavian principality troubled by a struggle for power, the representatives of this nation were always welcome in the Romanian principalities.

Helped by many economic facilities offered to them by the local authorities, Armenians kept their culture alive, and their artistic and architectural creations celebrate their identity. Many of their monuments still stand in various Romanian towns and cities. Among



Fig. 1. Cetatea Albă

<sup>3</sup> T. Grigorian, *Istoria si cultura poporului armean*, Bucureşti 1993, p. 384.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 399.

<sup>5</sup> D. Marshall Lang, *The Armenians: A people in exile*, London 1989, p. 103.





Fig. 2. Zamca Monastery



Fig. 3. Zamca Monastery

them the churches in Botoșani (1350), Iași (1395), Suceava (the first one built in 1388; only four from the seven erected there later still exist), Bucharest (the cathedral – the first building 1638, the latest 1911–1915), and Bărăția Church (1629) – the latter two still standing – are the most significant.

The cathedral in Bucharest has as its patronal feast the Holy Archangels. The work done on it in 1911 was by the architect Dimitri Maimarolu who went to Armenia to study the architecture and sculptures of the Etchmiadzin Cathedral. On the advice of Toros Toromanyan<sup>6</sup>, the Romanian architect built the church in Bucharest as a replica of Etchmiadzin, only smaller.

Armenian art was influenced by and has influenced the local culture. Even though in some cases the influence of Armenian art is very visible, it has not always been recognized as such; sometimes, especially in the more recent literature, the most one can find is a mention made in passing that one monument or another has some 'Oriental' influence – not named as being Armenian. For example, not even Răzvan Theodorescu, who, in general, as we shall see further, recognises foreign contribution by concretely naming them in his other books, in *Piatra Trei Ierhahilor* he does not name the Armenian contribution to this particular church in concrete terms. Theodorescu says: "[The Romanian civilization] is one, I would dare to write, with persistent tendencies towards universality, in which the founders' taste cannot produce any wonder, but at the same time with discernment towards the country's traditions, the Late Renaissance, the Western Baroque, and towards the Turkish-Persian or Caucasian East – for which [...] some princely buildings of Iași, such as the Three Hierarchs with Oriental 'embroidered' stone facades, exemplarily bring testimony".<sup>7</sup> As noted here, these remarks do not go into the details of the meanings of the words 'Caucasian East' or 'Oriental'.

<sup>6</sup> Toros Toromanyan, an important architect and historian in the first half of twentieth century. In 1921 he held a series of lectures on the history of architecture of Ancient Armenia at the University of Yerevan.

<sup>7</sup> R. Theodorescu, I. Oprea, *Piatra Trei Ierhahilor*, București 1979, p. 19.



Among other comments in this paper, some will be made in regard to artistic works achieved by the Armenian diaspora in order to identify their specific characteristics and the ways in which these were incorporated into the local art in the territories between the Danube and the Nister.

Selian explicitly presents the interaction of Armenian local art as follows: "It is interesting to notice that the Armenian churches in Transylvania are usually built in the style specific of Catholic religious buildings, without specific Armenian characteristics being present in their architecture and carved decoration (with the exception

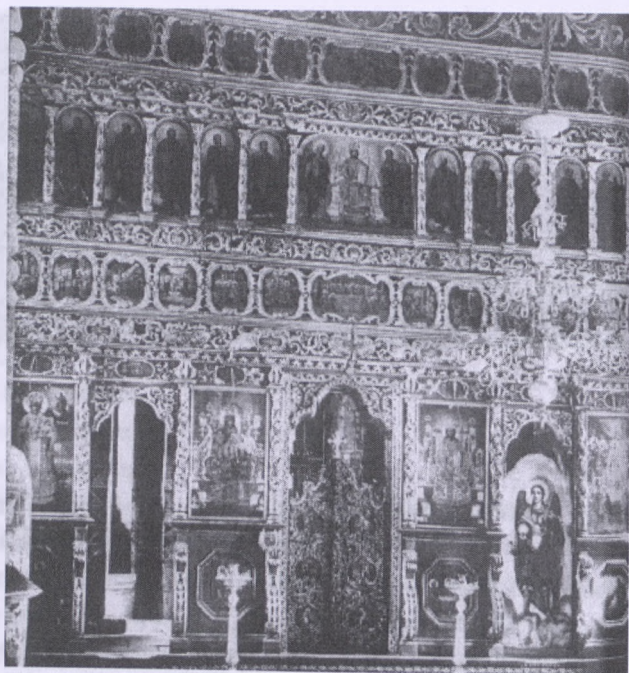


Fig. 4. Dragomirna iconostasis

of frescoes and icons with visual representation and Armenian inscriptions), and that the situation is similar in Moldova and Wallachia. That is true in the sense that the churches erected there by Armenians faithful to their specific Christianity, do not display the typical Armenian style, but they follow the local one. The exceptions are the above-mentioned Orthodox Cathedral and the Catholic chapel in Bucharest.

The iconostasis from Dragomirna Monastery (Fig. 4) is an interesting case because of the fact that, even though the church it belongs to Orthodox, the decorative motifs lend to it a very 'Armenian' appearance. We notice the resemblance of the motifs, especially on the Royal doors and on the walls, with the motifs from the introductory Gospel page from the Evangel manuscript written in Cilicia.

The founder of Dragomirna Monastery (1609), Anastasie Crimca or, with his lay name, Crimcovici, as the Slavonic inscription above the entrance door reveals<sup>8</sup> (c. 1550–1629), was the Orthodox Metropolitan of Moldavia (1608–1617; 1619–1629), as well as a copyist and illuminator; he initiated a scriptorium remarkable for the stylistic unity of the work produced there over two decades. He was born in Suceava as the son of a rich merchant, Ioan, and of an aristocratic mother, Cristina (or Cîrstina *cn agina*, as it is written on her

<sup>8</sup> T. Voinescu, R. Theodorescu, *Dragomirna Monastery*, București 1965, p. 10. See also Ș. S. Gorovei, I. Miclea, *Dragomirna. Historical and Art Monument*, București 1978, p. 5.



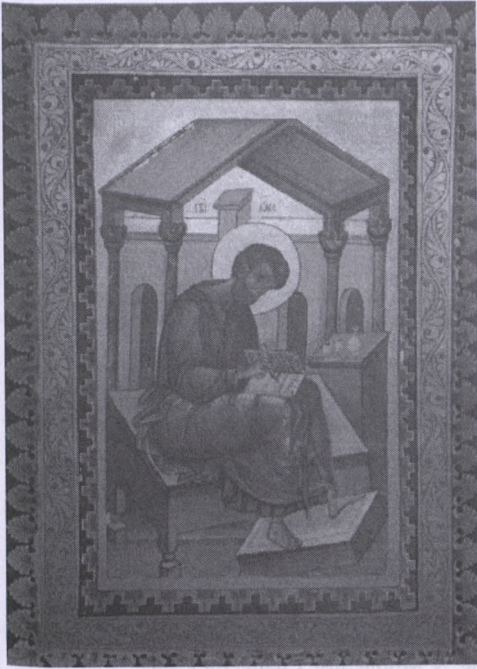


Fig. 5. Tetraevangel, 1429

tombstone in Pătrăuți<sup>9</sup>). She was related to Stroici brothers, who played an important role in the life of the country. There is a possibility that Ioan Crimca was of an Armenian origin or had connections with the Armenians merchants in Suceava, and the young Ilie (the name of his son before becoming the monk, and then the Metropolitan Anastasie), who had an avid interest in culture, became familiar with these motifs that he used in adorning the church of Dragomirna. Whether this is the case, or he just learnt about the Armenian decorative elements by discovering them by himself, the certain fact is that they are present in the respective church. Such motifs are conventionalized rosettes, geometrical figures, stars, squares combined with poly-lobed ornaments, circles, etc. Also, the architecture displays signs that might be credited to Armenian and Georgian cultures.

Teodora Voinescu and Răzvan Theodorescu, referring to Dragomirna, show that "The walls, supported by a massive, protruding pedestal rising high above the ground are divided into two, about mid-height, by a stone cable-moulding, in the shape of a rope made of three twisted strands, an ornamental element to be seen in the interior of the church as well, whose origins must be sought in Georgia and Armenia, for as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century the influences of Georgian and Armenian art penetrated into the Romanian Principalities and could be seen at the well-known monastery founded by prince Neagoes Basarab at Curtea de Arges (Fig. 6). And further: "Four steps lead to the ante-nave which is thus higher above the ground than the porch and arrests the attention of the visitor especially through its roofing: the eight arches intersecting each other form a real decoration for the two calottes of the vaulting. This system, already met with in earlier times, first at St. George's church at Hîrlău (1492) then at other monuments of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, seems to have originated in Persian and then Armenian architectures and it was probably brought here by masters whom the Turkish scourge had driven away to Poland and Moldova."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> T. Voinescu and R. Theodorescu, *op. cit.*, p. 7. For Anastasie's parents and his becoming a monk see S. Gorovei. Miclea, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.



Just as an Armenian altar differs from an altar in an Orthodox Church in Moldavia, there is also a difference in the style of manuscript illumination between Armenian and other manuscripts written in Romania. In order to support this idea, I will compare two pages from the above mentioned Evangel from Cilicia which was written in the first half of the fourteenth century by the scribe Hovhannes and illuminated by the manuscript painter Sarghis Pițak<sup>11</sup> with two pages from the Tetraevangel written and illuminated in 1429 by Gavril Uric (Figs. 4, 5) in Neamț Monastery<sup>12</sup>. In order to do this, I have chosen the figure of St. Mark from the two Evangelg below. As a further example, the opening pages of the respective Gospels in the two codices are reproduced here for comparison. According to Agémian, the motif of the circle with a large band on the margin was very characteristic in Great Armenia. But floral and round or three-lobed, as well as ornithornic forms, are also characteristic and they are frequent in this Gospel.<sup>13</sup>

There are many catalogues in Romania which record the Armenian manuscripts in addition to that mentioned above by Agémian. For example, two by H. Dj. Siruni<sup>14</sup> and three by S. Kolandjian<sup>15</sup>; some were written explicitly as catalogues and some as articles containing lists of manuscripts and books. Ștefan S. Gorovei and Ion Miclea refer to the manu-

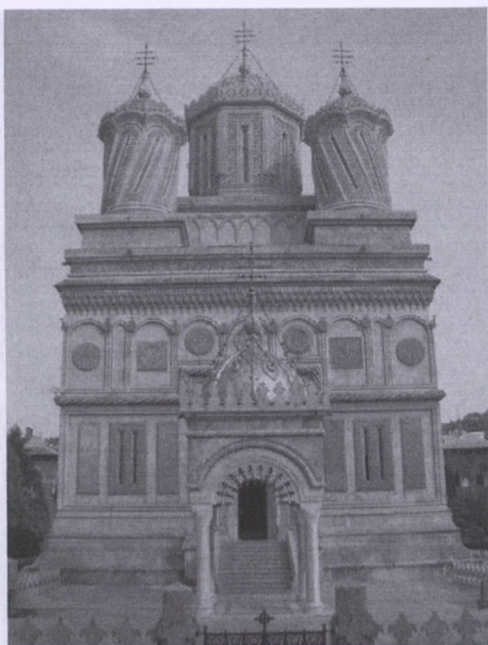


Fig. 6. Monastery, Curtea de Argeș

<sup>11</sup> The place and the date on the creation of this Gospel have disappeared, but the illuminated/miniatured elements make it easy to identify the work as being that of Sarghis Pițak. The physical types depicted support also Pițak's paternity; the portrait of St. Apostle Mark (fig. 10 above) looks like that of the same apostle in the 1331 Gospel, today in the Monastery of Mechitarians in Venice (Nr. 16) and in the 1349 Gospel, today in Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (No. 561). Regarding the copyist, Hovhannes, he was the son of Hovhannes and Mamahatun, and worked many times with Pițak. His main residence was in Skeva Monastery in Cilicia, where Pițak finds him again in 1325, but it is not certain that this codex was realised in that place. What is certain is that the work was done on the order of Bishop Ter Vardan (fol. 117v-118). Pițak was from Militina, Cilicia, but established himself in St. Auxin /Zamca, Suceava. Cf. S. Agémian, *Manuscrite miniaturate armene în colecții din România*, trans. from French by C. Grecescu, București 1982, pp. 20-22.

<sup>12</sup> *Documente de Artă Românească din Manuscripte vechi*, ed. I. Bianu, Fasc. I, București 1922, p. 2-10.

<sup>13</sup> S. Agémian, *Manuscrite miniaturate...*, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> H. Dj. Siruni, Siruni, Hagop Djololian, *Casa culturală armeană*, București 1944; 'Manuscritele armenesti de la Academia Română', *Ani*, I (1935), pp. 79-84.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. S. Agémian, *Manuscrite miniaturate...*, pp. 26-27.



scripts in Dragomirna Monastery; among them there are two by Dimitrie [Dumitrascu] Vasilievici Bielinsky, who signed 'foreign deacon (copyist)': a Tetraevangel, Sept 18, 1609 and a Missal, 1609/1610.<sup>16</sup>

An explanation as to why the Armenians followed in general the local style in Church architecture – when this was the case – is given by Selian in theological terms. He considers that, at a time when their denomination was perceived as being a heresy, Armenians preferred to avoid building churches that looked too specific to them. They exerted discretion in the outside appearance of their religious edifices since that was the 'visible' face of their cult. Not many people of other ethnic origin would have gone inside these buildings to discover the differences. Later, especially because mixed marriages took place, this danger passed.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps this was also why the Armenians in Romania often gave up their Armenian patronim in order to adopt a Romanian nickname as Ciuntul, Pruncul, etc. as Neagu Djuvara shows.<sup>18</sup>

Selian speaks also about the Armenian influence which was at work in Romanian lands. He pushes the case further by affirming that from Arges (a toponim in itself considered by Hasdeu of Armenian origin<sup>19</sup>) and Dealu, in Wallachia, this influence spread to Văcărești and Mihai Vodă monasteries in Bucharest, and also to the Patriarchate Cathedral. I am not certain that this influence is so extensive, but some of the Armenian elements which he considers present in all these building will be discussed here in order to assess what the Armenian influence consists of. Selian lists as Armenian elements that have passed into Romanian architecture: the transition from the square plan of the basis of the dome to the circular form through pairs of overlapping arches; the torsioned system of arches; decorative arches in relief with small twin semi-columns on the tower's dome; decorative rosettes on each arch; pure ornamental panels; broad frames around rectangular windows; ornamental motifs (lilies, stalactites, and geometrical figures); the rope band (or 'course') around the building, etc.

Alexandru Odobescu (1834–1895), revisiting older theories, considers that, in erecting the beautiful church of Curtea de Arges on the very place of the first Metropolitanate of Wallachia, Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521) would have brought not only marble and mosaic, but also masters from Constantinople (he visited the Byzantine capital), and that their leader, Manole (whose name Selian questions as being Manuc), was an Armenian. The church was consecrated on the Assumption of the Virgin feast – its dedication day – with

<sup>16</sup> S. Gorovei, I. Miclea, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–33 refer to the manuscripts in Dragomirna Monastery; among them there are two by Dimitrie [Dumitrascu] Vasilievici Bielinsky, who signed 'foreign diac (copyist)': a Tetraevangel ['Four-Gospel'], Sept 18, 1609 and a *Missal*, dated 7118, i.e. 1609/1610 (p. 30).

<sup>17</sup> S. Selian, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>18</sup> N. Djuvara, *Între Orient și Occident. Țările Române la începutul epocii moderne*, București 1995, p. 178.

<sup>19</sup> B. P. Hasdeu, *Etimologicum Magnum Romaniae: dicționarul limbei istorice și poporane a românilor*, ed. G. Brâncus, București 1972, p. 322.

great pomp due to the presence of outstanding Orthodox religious personalities, led by the Ecumenical Patriarch Theolipt of Constantinople himself.<sup>20</sup>

Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940) appreciates the contribution of Armenian culture to that of Romania. He mentions the Armenian manuscripts in Romanian lands<sup>21</sup>, and speaks at length about the role played by the Armenians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at Court and in diplomacy.<sup>22</sup>

One of the most straightforward cases of recognition of the Armenian influence in the religious culture of Romania is that made by Alexandru Xenopol (1847–1920). He states that many Christian monuments in Romanian Principalities – some of them listed in the quotation above – “bear the seal” of an Oriental style. Their outlook is rather solid than beautiful. Golia Monastery in Iași, Zamca in Suceava, Tismana and Cotmeana in Wallachia are all proof of this. Two monuments are distinctive through their graceful and harmonious forms and through their special beauty. One is in Wallachia – Curtea de Argeș monastery and church, and the other one in Moldavia – the Church of Three Hierarchs. In spite of the fact that the church in Iași is considered as being more than a hundred years older than Argeș Cathedral, the Three Hierarchs Church has in general the same character and is the product of the same school which, given the fact that many of the motifs found in these churches have been found in monuments in Armenia, seems to have been of the Byzantino-Armenian School.<sup>23</sup>

Nicolae Djuvara, in a tone somehow diminished in comparison to that of the historians from the beginning of the twentieth century, mentions the fact that through their history Armenians had their own churches in many cities and towns and considers that “Armenian art had, sometimes, an evident influence on the religious architecture, especially in Moldova”.<sup>24</sup>

As one can notice, these notes of appreciation of Armenian contribution to the national Romanian heritage were all written before the First World War. Selian as an Armenian, with his book of 1999, is an exception. Djuvara wrote his book *Între Orient și Occident. Țările Române la începutul epocii moderne* in 1989, but within it he has only a page dedicated to Armenians.

The book written by Gorovei and Miclea about Dragomirna Monastery, while recognizing the role played by it in the seventeenth century, when it “offered to the art creators in Moldova models of architecture and sculptural decoration”,<sup>25</sup> does not mention anything

<sup>20</sup> A. Odobescu, ‘Doamna Chiajna’, in: *Trecute vieți de doamne și domnițe*, vol. 1, ed. C. Gane, Bucharest, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> N. Iorga, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 8.

<sup>22</sup> N. Iorga, *Istoria comerțului românesc: epoca veche*, București 1925, pp. 224–225.

<sup>23</sup> A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiană*, București 1985, quoted in Selian, *Schiță istorică* ... pp. 68–69.

<sup>24</sup> N. Djuvara, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>25</sup> S. Gorovei, I. Miclea, *op. cit.*, p. 32.



about Armenian traces within it. No such mentions are made in regard to the monasteries around it either, in spite of the fact that "Solca Monastery in the close vicinity seems to be a replica of Dragomirna; 'Three Hierarchs' in Iasi (Fig. 7) represents the perfection along the road opened up by Dragomirna style. Even the distant Cetățuia Church descends from the same architectural family set up by Dragomirna".<sup>26</sup> Also regarding the other edifice having obvious Armenian influence, as demonstrated above, Theodorescu and Oprea, in their book *Piatra Trei Ierarhilor*, do not mention this even once by name, but only by a very indirect allusion. This is in contrast to what the prince and scholar Dimitrie Cantemir did in the beginning of the eighteenth century, when

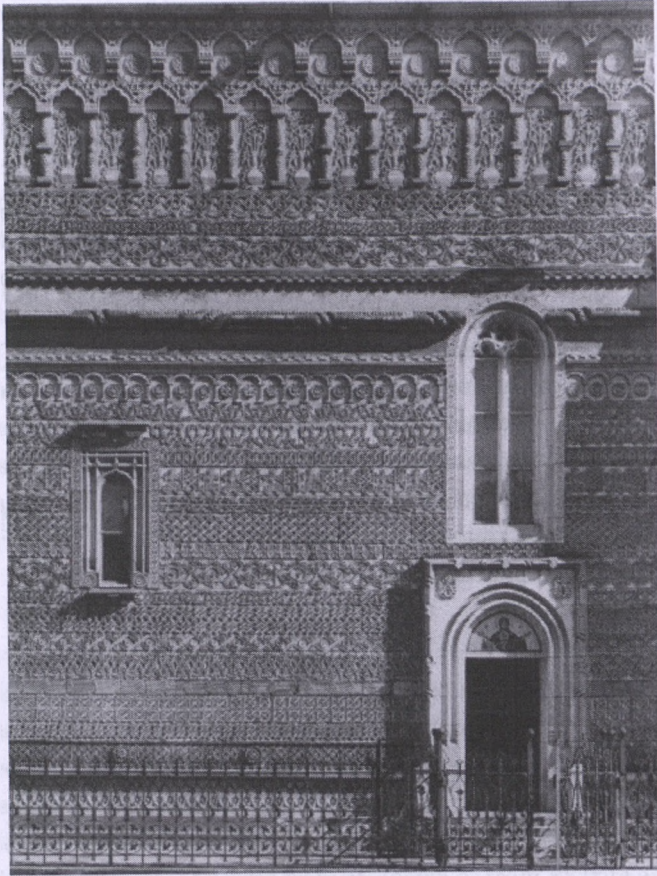


Fig. 7. "Three Hierarchs" monastery, Iasi

he mentions Armenians first in his list of non-Romanian inhabitants of the principality in the *Descriptio Moldaviae*. Armenian churches, he says, are just as large and decorated as those of Romanians, and the representatives of this nation enjoy full religious freedom.<sup>27</sup> There is a huge distance from the situation he describes to that which barely mentions the representatives of this nation at the moment.

Of course, the history has changed the demography in general – because of persecution and, more recently, through emigration. From more than 50,000 at the beginning of the twentieth century, now there are about 5,000 or less Armenians in Romania.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, their presence in the life of this country is still to be taken into consideration since

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> D. Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae*, București 1909.

<sup>28</sup> M. Lang, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

they have representatives in the arts, politics and medicine. Many Armenian museums are also still in use today, for example, Zambaccian and Avakian in Bucharest. The community presently publishes the periodicals *Nor Ghiank* - 'New Life' (in Armenian; it is printed in an edition of 3,000 copies and send to 34 countries<sup>29</sup>), *Ararat*, and the government-sponsored *Lăcașuri de cult* [Shrines].

David Marshall Lang comments that, "The Armenians in Romania somehow managed to resist assimilation and to preserve the tradition and ritual of their own Apostolic Church",<sup>30</sup> but actually they managed more than that – to spread their culture in a subtle and discreet way to make it become an organic part of that of the host country. The explanation which Selian gives for the 'natural' and 'inerrant' transfer of Armenian elements to the local culture is its antiquity. It means that when new nations emerged – Romania included – the Armenians already had something to offer to the world, and they did so. This author states that the elements of Armenian art and architecture "in their capacity as components of an ancient culture, penetrated the Romanian civilization and not only that, they were [...] integrated in the universal heritage".<sup>31</sup> After all, they are the offspring of the Ugarits, an impressive civilization.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 103–104.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 102.

<sup>31</sup> S. Selian, *Schiță istorică ...*, pp. 70–71.



## *An Armenian Man of Culture and Artist from Transylvania. Zacharias Gábrus (Zacharija Gabrušjan) and his Heraldic Manuscript*

Ioan Chindriș, Cluj-Napoca

Anca Elisabeta Tatay, Cluj-Napoca

Zacharija Gabrušjan, known under his Magyarized name Zacharias Gábrus, lived in the town of Gherla (Armenopolis, in Armenian Hayakaghak) in Transylvania between 1794 and 1870, and became one of the most outstanding cultural personalities of the Armenian community of this town, founded in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Armenians.

A significant moment for the history of Armenians in the region came when at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, more specifically in 1680, the prince Mihai Appaffy permitted the Armenians to settle in Transylvania. The immigrants came from Moldavia or from Bistrița as they had been driven away due to some disagreements of a religious or commercial nature. Most of them settled in Dumbrăveni or Gherla, towns that were particularly marked by their presence. The two Armenian settlements were declared free royal towns in 1711 (Gherla) and in 1733 (Dumbrăveni), gaining the right of self administration, of having their own law courts and proper laws, of maintaining commercial relationships with foreign countries without restrictions concerning the organizing of markets, and they were under the rule of the Prince of Transylvania from a military or fiscal viewpoint only. These privileges were exclusively granted to the Armenian Catholics.<sup>1</sup> It should also be mentioned here - as it is of significance to their status in Transylvania - that in 301 Armenia became the first Christian country in the world.

The first catholic bishop of the Armenian rite from Gherla, Oxendius Vărzărescu, fundamentally shaped the construction of this Baroque town through his activities in seeking

<sup>1</sup> V. Pop, *Armenopolis. Oraș baroc*, Cluj-Napoca 2002, pp. 24-29; Gazdovits N., *Istoria armenilor din Transilvania (De la începuturi până la 1900)*, București 1996, pp. 206, 257-259.

to employ a foreign architect and to devise the plans.<sup>2</sup> Gherla is the only town in Romania which was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century after a pre-established plan and whose architecture has been preserved up to the present time.<sup>3</sup> This fact conferred an impressive image upon the town that was in competition with the old centres of Transylvania such as Sibiu, Cluj, Brasov and Bistrița.

Zacharija Gabrușjan was a remarkable person amongst Gherla's personalities. Although he trained to become a priest, later on he devoted himself to a didactic career, during a period of forty-two years being the teacher of more than 2500 graduates. The town and its community, which were engaged in many initiatives towards progress, offered him a wide range of activities to take part in, thus he became known as a writer, historian, painter, and sculptor, but particularly as a man dedicated with all his heart to the progress of the Armenian community of Transylvania. He himself made the altar of The Church of Solomon, the first Armenian church of the community (built in 1727), and also donated some other objects and money to his Armenian townsmen.

The first private library in Gherla - Armenopolis- was founded by Zacharija Gabrușjan. The library also contained his own manuscript works, the most important being the treatise in the Armenian language *The Book of Divine Providence* (*Kirkh asvaćaji Nachachaluthiuni*). A special work of his is the heraldic album in manuscript form, *Scuta heraldica totius mundi...* (*The Escutcheons of the Entire World*), which defines him as one of the first modern heralds on Romanian territory (the country where the town of Gherla or Armenopolis is situated now). Zacharija Gabrușjan collected Armenian books and books referring to the Armenians from all over Europe, thus offering these examples to the Armenian intellectuals of the future such as Vartan Esztegar, Szongott Kristóff, Kristóf Lukács and others. During the Communist period, Gabrusjan's library was dispersed into more libraries and archives, particularly in Cluj-Napoca.

In this paper we intend to draw attention to the manuscript of his heraldic album, which has not been investigated so far. This original album, kept at the National Archives in Cluj-Napoca, *Fondul Gherla, Documente armenesti*, contains about 300 pages.

The book has a cardboard cover and on its leather back is written in golden letters: *Heraldice Zachariae Gabrus*. The title page only is printed and it contains the following information: *SCUTA HERALDICA / TOTIUS MUNDI / IMPERIORUM, REGNORUM, PRINCIPATUUM, / PROVINCIARUM, DUCATUUM, AC COMITATUUM / INSIGNIA / IN SE CONTINENTIA; / PER / ZACHARIAM GÁBRUS / E DIVERSIS MAPPIS GEOGRAPHICIS, / LIBRISQUE HERALDICIS COLLECTA, / AC PROPRIA DILIGENTIA DELINEATA*. The place and the year of publication are written at the bottom of the page: *SZAMOSUJVÁRINI, / TYPIS TYPOGRAPHIAE GR. CATH. DIOCESANAE. / 1867*. Therefore the book

<sup>2</sup> V. Pop, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>3</sup> <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gherla> (15 September 2010).



was edited in Gherla (the name of the town is given in Hungarian) in the typography of the Greek Catholic Diocese. It is worth mentioning that at the top of the page is written in Roman figures the year 1898: *XDCCCXCVIII*, which could be the year when the page was printed. It is mentioned both on the title page and on the back: *Tomi secundi fasciculus 2*. Szongott Kristoff asserts that the work initially consisted of four parts (two volumes, each having two fascicles), which is a theory to which we subscribe as well. The fascicle that is still preserved starts at page 549 and it has at the end an alphabetical index of 111 pages of the pictures. This index comprises the images of the four parts of the work, and indicates that Gabrus's entire heraldic work contained approximately 2500 drawings.

Fascicle 2 of volume II includes 299 coats of arms, followed by 147 flags. This is despite the fact that the author of the album mentions at the beginning of the manuscript a number of 298 coats of arms and 144 flags<sup>4</sup>.

The existent or non-existent (I mean invented by himself) escutcheons, some never finished, belong to empires, kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, provinces, counties, and towns, all of them being accompanied by inscriptions in Latin, which designate their identity. They are drawn accurately, precisely and carefully, in black or brown ink, often using parallel or crossed lines, or dots, thus alluding to puncheon prints. The light and shade are rendered with painstaking subtlety. Particularly in the unfinished escutcheons one can notice lines drawn by means of a pencil and ruler, which divide the work's surface, thus attesting to the rigor of the herald who worked using strict composition rules.

A page contains one or, sometimes, three or four escutcheons which are executed with obvious precision and elegance, drawing attention to Zacharija Gabrušjan's qualities as an excellent drawer who, as it is known, hadn't studied the fine arts, being just a gifted self-made man.

The compositional elements of the escutcheons he drew prove him to be a good specialist in that field of activity. Therefore we are able to identify differently shaped escutcheons: oval, quadrilateral—either pointed or rounded at the bottom—etc, which are classified according to their specific character: modern French, Swiss, German, Russian.<sup>5</sup> The field of the shield can also be divided or not into more compartments called quarters,<sup>6</sup> which are usually differently decorated. In this case, we can use the term "the colour" of the shield to refer to the types of hachure used – since the drawings are not in colour. In the specialist language of heraldry the "colour" refers to the "enamel" and the hachure is used by the artist to designate the "codes" of the colour. Therefore, according to this code

<sup>4</sup> Direcția Județeană a Arhivelor Naționale Cluj, Fondul Gherla, Documente armenesti, Lăsământul lui Gabrus Zaharias, no. 2379/105 (catalogul fondului), p. 2V.

<sup>5</sup> For the shape of the shields of the coats of arms see: O. Neubecker, *Le grand livre de l'héraldique. L'histoire, l'art et la science du blason*, Bruxelles 1977, pp. 76–77; D. Cernovodeanu, *Știința și arta heraldică în România*, București 1977, p. 13; M. Sturdza-Săucești, *Heraldica. Tratat tehnic*, București 1974, pp. 27–31.

<sup>6</sup> About the quarters of the shield see: M. Sturdza-Săucești, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–39; D. Cernovodeanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–14; G. Oswald, *Lexicon der Heraldik*, Leipzig pp. 458–459.

used by the artist, the vertical parallel lines stand for red; the horizontal parallel lines—for blue; the crossing lines that form squares—for black; the crossing lines forming rhombus—for brown; the oblique parallel lines, inclined from left to right—for green; the oblique parallel lines, inclined from right to left—for mauve. The dots represent gold (or yellow), and the blank space is equivalent to silver. The device used by the Armenian scholar “to render” the colours of the blazons is normal for the craft of heraldry, to be carried out later by the artist. The descriptions of coats of arms in Latin, that appear only here and there, clarify the connection between drawing and colours and, at the same time, show Zacharija Gabrušjan’s advanced knowledge in this domain which he was certainly fond of. In this respect I shall offer only an example: *Insigne Constantinopoleos / Est scutum rubrum ovalis figurae cruce au / rea in quatuor partes divisuum, in quavis / parte librum clausum servans, qui libri / secundum veteres Scriptores pro quator / Evangeliis assumuntur*, that can be translated as the following: *The coat of arms of Constantinople is a red oval shield with a golden cross which divides it into four parts, each part having inside it a book that represents the four Gospels.*

Against the coloured background of the quarters there can be seen various representations such as: animals, reproduced completely or partly, more or less stylized (lion, eagle, snake, fish, horse, elephant, billy goat, ox, panther, owl, frog, camel, wild boar, bee) or fantastic animals (gryphon, dragon, pegasus, unicorn); humans rendered entirely, in mounted position, as a bust, or diverse parts of the body can be depicted, even Christ Crucified can be seen; plants (flowers, leaves, palm-tree); celestial bodies (moon, sun, star, comet); architectonic elements (citadels, different buildings); weapons (club, sword, spear, arrow); letters or some other objects (beehive, bell, cross, wheel with spokes, crown, scissors, boat, anchor, ladder, scales, trumpet, urn, axe). The nature of the exterior decorations that surround or are included within some shields is also of a wide variety. The most frequently depicted are the different crowns<sup>7</sup> that adorn the top of the shield, as well as the stylized (or not) vegetal elements, the open-winged eagle, a helmet, flags, a turban, feathers, harp, animals etc.

Examining the contents of the coats of arms in Zacharija Gabrušjan’s manuscript we found out that some elements are perpetuated till nowadays. In this respect we give here just two examples: the escutcheons of Hamburg (Germany) and of Ostende (Belgium). Referring to the former we find (both in the 1867 manuscript and at the present time) the representation of a citadel with three towers against a red background, however in the latter case, the colours in the devised shield correspond to those of the flag of the city from the present.

Taking into account the context of this paper we consider it important to draw to the reader’s attention the appearance of the coats of arms of Poland and Armenia existing in

<sup>7</sup> For crowns see: O. Neubecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 178–179.



this manuscript. The blazons entitled: *Armeniae Maioris*, *Armeniae Minoris*, *Armeniae Novum* and *Armeniae*, are each illustrated on distinct pages, representing different stages in Armenia's history. The symbols of the shields are different, but all of them have a crown at the top. Poland's coats of arms are also rendered in three hypostases, each escutcheon on a full page: *Totius Poloniae*, *Regis quondam Poloniae*, *Regni Poloniae*, the last one being almost similar to the present day version, on whose escutcheon there is a white crowned eagle with open wings profiled against a red field.

The 147 flags presented by Zacharija Gabrušjan prove again the thorough knowledge of this learned Armenian from Gherla. They are correctly rendered, having an apparent regard both for the realities of the time and for the conventions for the use of colours. For example Transylvania's flag is blue, red and yellow, and the colours are displayed horizontally. Switzerland's flag contains a white cross against a red field.

The concise presentation of the heraldic manuscript, competently and meticulously achieved by Zacharija Gabrušjan places him among the first modern heralds from the Romanian region. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the professor Francisc Páriz Pápai from Aiud<sup>8</sup> became preoccupied with this field of activity, then in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Iasi and Bucharest, the following scholars engaged themselves in the art of heraldry: Gheorghe Asachi, who is also supposed to have been of Armenian origin, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Cezar Bolliac, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, V. A. Urechia, D. A. Sturdza, P. V. Năsturel and others.<sup>9</sup>

It is natural to wonder why this Armenian scholar from Gherla made his album, from which we have only a part today. Zacharija Gabrušjan may have made his album most probably after seeing examples of foreign heraldic albums existing at that time.<sup>10</sup> His manuscript of blazons and flags was likely to have been compiled for private reasons and due to his passion for the science and art of heraldry, proving again the Armenians' thirst for art and culture. The author might well have intended to publish this work, but it has remained in manuscript form until today.

<sup>8</sup> F. Páriz Pápai, *Ars heraldica seu Consuetudinum Heraldicarum...*, Claudiopolis, 1695.

<sup>9</sup> D. Cernovodeanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–26.

<sup>10</sup> Among the works printed in the field of heraldry before 1867 I quote only the following: F. C. Palma, *Heraldicae Regni Hungariae specimen, Regia, Provinciarum, Nobiliumque scuta complectens...*, Vindobonae, 1766; P. J. F. Jules, *Nouveau manuel complet du blason ou cofe héraldique*, Paris, 1843; V. Bouton, *Nouveau traité du blason ou science des armoiries*, Paris, 1863.





## *A Fresh Look at the Causes of the Decline of the Armenian Communities in Poland*

George Bournoutian, New York

Armenian and non-Armenian sources describe several vibrant Armenian communities in a number of Polish cities. Some of these communities lasted for approximately 500 years, that is, from the thirteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. The purpose of this paper is to take a fresh look at the reasons for the rapid decline of Polish Armenian communities in the seventeenth century.

First of all, it is important to debunk an old myth regarding the number of Armenians in Poland. For the past fifty years numbers ranging from 200,000 to 400,000 have been bandied about without any concrete evidence. Some historians combined the Armenians of Poland, Ukraine, Crimea, and Bessarabia to come up with inflated numbers. In all probability, however, the total number of Armenians in the territory of Poland and western Ukraine combined, at its height, was slightly over 100,000.

It is now certain that unlike the large Armenian communities in the Crimean Peninsula<sup>1</sup> and Bessarabia,<sup>2</sup> the Armenians of Poland were scattered in small numbers over a very large territory of Galicia, Podolia, and Volhynia, which at the end of the medieval period belonged, for the most part, to the Polish Kingdom. Some fifteen main Armenian communities rose between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries in Lvov, Kamenets-Podolsk, Zamość, Lutsk, Dubno, Vladimir-Volhynskii, Bar, Iazlovitz and others—most of which first fell into the Russian or Austrian zones by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and were recovered by Poland after World War I. After World War II, they became part of the USSR, and are now part of the Ukraine.<sup>3</sup>

We know that two of the largest Armenian communities were in the cities of Lvov and Kamenets-Podolsk. Armenians began to settle in Lvov in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, a century

<sup>1</sup> Cf. V. A. Mikaelyan, *Ghrimi Haykakan gaghuti patmut`iun*, 2 vols, Erevan 1964, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. V. B. Barkhudaryan, *Nor Nakhijevani Haykakan gaghuti patmut`iuné*, Erevan 1967.

<sup>3</sup> K. Maksoudian, 'Armenian Communities in Eastern Europe,' in: R. Hovannisian, *The Armenian People*, vol. 2, New York 1997, pp. 52-69.

later, Lvov had an Armenian monastery and two churches. In 1363 two Armenian merchants, Hakob of Kaffa and Panos of Vaysur, financed the building of the great cathedral of Lvov and, a year later, Lvov had an Armenian prelacy. We also know that the Polish kings, Casimir III and Sigismund I, granted the Polish Armenians various privileges, including the right to practice their laws and maintain their traditions. The Armenians of Kamenets-Podolsk, Lvov, and Zamość established their own courts, elected their own judges and elders, and lived in their own prosperous quarters.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately there are no exact figures on the total number of Armenians in Poland in its heyday. There are some numbers, however, for the Armenian population living in the centre of Lvov, but not its suburbs. According to the studies by Alboyadjian, Abrahamyan, and others there were not more than 300 Armenians living in Lvov in 1407; in 1417 the number had increased to some 350 and remained generally constant until 1600, when the number was increased to over 500. In 1620 there were some 350 original members and some 300 newcomers, for a total of 650. The peak was reached in 1633, when records indicate that the Armenian community of Lvov and its suburbs consisted of some 2,000 individuals — with over 1,000 living in the city of Lvov and the rest in the various suburbs. In 1640, many had moved, and there were only 500 Armenians left in Lvov. Although between 1655 and 1675 some 250 Armenian arrived in Lvov from Van, Constantinople, and Isfahan, they did not all stay, however, and by 1782 there were only some 211 Armenians left there.<sup>5</sup>

The Armenians of Kamenets-Podolsk seem to have fared better, for, according to the same sources, in 1672, when the Ottomans conquered the city, there were some 6,000 Armenians left. Meanwhile, Lutsk had 4,000 Armenians in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The other cities had far less. It is safe to assume, therefore, that by the end of the seventeenth century there were less than 20,000 Armenians left in Poland.<sup>6</sup>

Who or what was responsible for this dramatic decline? The main blame has generally been focused on the Armenian bishop of Lvov, Nikol Torosovich, and on the Jesuit priests, who, in 1622, under the direction of the Sacra Congregazione di "Propaganda Fide," were ordered by the Vatican to establish special missions. Its sole purpose was to oversee the re-conversion of Post-Reformation Europe. It is true that, the Counter-Reformation triggered a change in the previously tolerant policy of the Polish government toward the Armenians. It is also equally true that a special seminary was established by Rome in Lvov in 1662 to prepare Armenian-speaking Catholic priests, to replace the old priests from Armenia. However, the traditional view that thousands of Armenians living in Poland were assimilated as a result of the forced conversions to Catholicism is false. No single event or individual

<sup>4</sup> For more details, see L. Ter-Oganian, 'Armenians in Poland', *Ararat*, 31 (1990), pp. 4-36.

<sup>5</sup> A. Alboyadjian, *Patmut' iwn hay gaghtakanutian*, vol. 3, Cairo 1961; A. G. Abrahamyan, *Hamarot urvagids hay gaghtavaireri patmut' yan*, Erevan 1964, pp. 187-233.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.



can be blamed for the decline and gradual disappearance of the Armenian communities in Poland, as well as Lvov.

First of all, as I have indicated, the Armenian communities were not very populous and scattered over a large area.

Second, the feudal lords and the feudal social and economic structure in Poland limited the growth of cities. Almost all of the Armenians in Poland were merchants or artisans and not farmers. The constant wars with the Cossacks, Ottoman Turks, and Crimean Tatars during the seventeenth century, as well as the bickering amongst Polish nobles, vividly described in the great novels of Henryk Sienkiewicz,<sup>7</sup> limited trade activities. Armenian merchants were no longer interested in Poland or Ukraine. My two studies, *Armenians and Russia, 1626–1796* and *The Journal of the merchant Zak`aria of Agulis* clearly indicate that Armenian merchants preferred taking their goods to central and northern Europe through Russia, via the Volga or through Bursa and Constantinople to Venice, the Palatinate, and Amsterdam.<sup>8</sup>

Third: The first partition of Poland placed Podolia in the Russian zone. In 1793 the Armenian tribunals were shut down in that region and by 1823 the Russians deprived the Armenian Catholics of Podolia of maintaining their Armenian rite.

All of the above reasons were of course external. What has been generally ignored, however, are the internal reasons, which affected the Armenian community in Poland as a result of the spiritual deterioration of the Armenian Church leadership and the terrible disorder, which had affected the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, starting in the fifteenth and continuing until the seventeenth century. Armenian primary sources criticize their Church and its leadership for the lack of spiritual and Christian values.

First, the fall of the Armenian kingdom in historic Armenia in the eleventh century and its move to Cilicia created a vacuum. Local Armenian bishops soon created their own religious centres and gave themselves the title of Catholicos. The Catholicosate of Aght`amar in Van and also Aghuank` in Gandzasar began to act independently from Etchmiadzin. Even, after the return of the Holy See to Etchmiadzin in 1441, the Sis hierarchy continued its catholicosate. Hence, until the nineteenth century there were four Armenian catholicoi. In addition, the Armenian patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem would, at times, act independently from Etchmiadzin.<sup>9</sup>

Second, the devastating wars between the Timurids, Aq Qoyunlu, Qara Qoyunlu, Safavids and Ottomans on the territory of historic Armenia created great economic hardships, loss of population and the further decline of the newly relocated Holy See of Etchmiadzin. In my translation of the *History Book of Arak`el of Tabriz*, this great seventeenth-century

<sup>7</sup> See his trilogy: *With Fire and Sword*; *Deluge*; and *Colonel Wolodyjowski*.

<sup>8</sup> *The Journal of Zak`aria of Agulis*, trans. G. Bournoutian, Costa Mesa, Ca. 2003, pp. 188–196; G. Bournoutian, *Armenians and Russia, 1626–1796: A Documentary Record*, Costa Mesa, Ca. 2001, pp. 5–40.

<sup>9</sup> For details see: Simeon of Erevan, *Jambr*, trans. G. Bournoutian, Costa Mesa, Ca. 2009, pp. 148–194.

Armenian historian describes the terrible invasions, which not only destroyed churches and monasteries, but also contributed to the decline of learning among the clergy. In addition, he blames the Church leaders for the absence of discipline among the higher clergy and the deterioration of religious practices. Political and economic instability resulted in the terrible custom of appointing coadjutor catholicoi at Etchmiadzin from the latter part of the fifteenth century to 1629. Some of these co-catholicoi received recognition through bribery and other illegal means. At times there were as many as four catholicoi at Etchmiadzin.<sup>10</sup>

The worst among them was the co-catholicos, Melkiset of Garni, who assumed the post by paying bribes to the Persian shah and who sold the relics of St. Hrip'simé to Catholic missionaries.<sup>11</sup> After running away from Armenia, he came to Poland, caused havoc in the Armenian community in Lvov by further dividing the Armenians, and died in Kamenets-Podolsk on March 18, 1627. Arak`el of Tabriz has a long chapter in which he describes Melkiset's intrigues among the Armenians in Poland.<sup>12</sup>

In my translation of the *Travels of Simeon of Poland*, an Armenian from Zamość and Lvov, Simeon a scribe and aspiring cleric, refers to Melkiset as "weak of mind and body, a drunkard and a money grabber. He was accompanied by many bishops, who were just like him and drunkards as well. They were very far from having any [theological] knowledge."<sup>13</sup>

Catholicos Simeon of Erevan in his monumental work *Jambr* portrays the corruption in the Armenian Church hierarchy in the seventeenth century, by referring to the priests having relations with prostitutes and dishonourable men. They had no boundaries and did anything they wanted, without shame or fear from anyone.<sup>14</sup> He also criticizes them "for consecrating, for a few pounds of coffee or a donkey, bishops who were not even worthy of the rank of deacon. He adds that they also ordained *vardapets* who were not even twenty years of age."<sup>15</sup>

The aforementioned Simeon of Poland, during his travels from 1608–1618, that is, long before the conversion of the Armenians of Lvov to Catholicism, is already disillusioned with his Church. He writes, "Shame and disgrace on us pseudo-Christians... they [the Muslims] perform their five prayers, not only at home, but never miss them on the road, and perform them steadfastly day and night, in fierce winters, on water and snow; they perform their ablution in cold water and pray... Woe to us [Armenians] the ill-fated, that as Christians we barely go sluggishly once a day to church, and even that as a penance."<sup>16</sup> His account of

<sup>10</sup> *The History of Arak`el of Tabriz*, trans. G. Bournoutian, vol. 2, Costa Mesa, Ca. 2006, pp. 325–332.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 1, pp. 136–148.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 1, pp. 265–283.

<sup>13</sup> *The Travel Accounts of Simeon of Poland*, trans. G. Bournoutian, Costa Mesa, Ca. 2007, p. 313.

<sup>14</sup> Simeon of Erevan, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 193.

<sup>16</sup> *The Travel Accounts of Simeon of Poland ...*, p. 52.



Rome praises Catholic charitable institutions and religious sincerity and adds, "There are people [Armenians] in my city who do not cross the threshold of a church once in every two or three years. They already have gray hair, but they do not know [the prayer] "Our Father [Who Art in heaven]." He concludes that the Catholics are better Christians than the Armenians."<sup>17</sup> Simeon's disappointment with the Armenian Church reached its limit as a result of the shameful behaviour of *vardapet* Zak`aria, who was dispatched by the infamous Catholicos Melkiset to Rome with gifts for Pope Paul V. Simeon was present in the city, when on March 27, 1612, the Pope returned the gifts and asked Zak`aria to leave Rome, after it was revealed that he had a woman living with him in his residence.<sup>18</sup>

The poor education of the Armenian clergy is mentioned by Arakel of Tabriz, who states that when Catholicos Movses of Tat`ew sent Armenian *vardapets* to Lvov, they could not hold their own in debates with the Catholic *paters*.<sup>19</sup>

The reforms carried out by Catholicos Movses of Tat`ew and P`ilippos of Aghbak from 1629 to 1655, as detailed by Arak`el of Tabriz<sup>20</sup> and Simeon of Erevan,<sup>21</sup> came too late. In addition, they were limited and did not affect the Armenian communities of the Ottoman Empire or Eastern Europe. It is not surprising therefore, that at the start of the eighteenth century, the Armenian priest Mkhitar of Sebastia, angered by the careless attitude of the Armenian clerics, broke away from the Armenian Church and established the Mkhitarist Armenian Catholic order, which was later responsible for the first published books on Armenian history, theology, geography, language and grammar in Venice and Vienna. Bishop Nikol or the Catholic missionaries were not, therefore, the sole cause of the conversion of the Lvov Armenians. According to Maksoudian, Nikol tried a dual policy to satisfy both Rome and Etchmiadzin and failed.<sup>22</sup> Armenian primary sources cited above make it absolutely clear that the spiritual decline of the Armenian Church must have played a decisive role in the conversion of the Polish Armenians to Catholicism. The final break was accomplished not by Nikol, but his successor, Bishop Vardan Hunanian, who severed relations with Etchmiadzin and accepted the supremacy of the Pope in 1689.<sup>23</sup>

Ironically, the Armenian community of Lvov revived after the Austrian takeover of the city, now called Lemberg. Catholic Armenian priests from the Mkhitarist order in Vienna were free to serve the community. By 1885 the Catholic Armenian bishopric had about 3,000 Armenian Catholics, and in 1902, an American-Armenian visitor records 500 Armenians in Lvov. He adds that there were twenty Armenian Catholic priests and a convent

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>19</sup> Arakel of Tabriz, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 296.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, I, pp. 210-251.

<sup>21</sup> Simeon of Erevan, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-92.

<sup>22</sup> K. Maksoudian, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

near the cathedral, where some of the nuns were of Armenian origin.<sup>24</sup> Following WWI, when Galicia was returned to Poland, the Armenians continued to maintain their identity. Lvov had an Armenian cultural organization and published journals and pamphlets. Following WWII, Lvov became part of the USSR and although the Mkhitarists left, there were, according to the *Armenian Soviet Encyclopaedia*, still some 1,500 Armenians in Lvov in the late Soviet period.<sup>25</sup>

In conclusion, despite a number of monographs,<sup>26</sup> articles<sup>27</sup> and brief subchapters in general histories of the Armenian people,<sup>28</sup> as well as an excellent book by Professor Grigoryan on the Armenian court records of Kamenets-Podolsk,<sup>29</sup> a detailed account of the history of the Armenian community in Poland is yet to be written.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> *Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran*, vol. 4, Erevan 1978, p. 671.

<sup>26</sup> M. L. Hovhannisyan, *Urvagdser Lehastani ev Arevmétyan Ukrainayi gagtavaireri patmut`yan*, Erevan 1977.

<sup>27</sup> I. P. Kripiakevich, 'K voprosu o nachale Armianskoi kolonii vi Lvove', *Patmabanasirakan hands*, 1 (1963); Ia. R. Dashkevich, 'Armianskoe samoupravlenie vo Lvove v 68-80-kh gg. XVII v' *Banber Mate-nadarani*, 9 (1969).

<sup>28</sup> For example, Cf. G. Bournoutian, *A Concise History of the Armenian People*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Costa Mesa, Ca. 2006, pp. 249–251.

<sup>29</sup> V. Grigoryan, *Kamenets-Podolsk kaghaki haikakan datarani ardzanagrutiunnere*, Erevan 1963.



## Siméon de Pologne : le diacre de Zamość (1584/5 – après 1639)

Angèle Kapoïan, Paris

J'aborderai la vie et l'œuvre de Siméon de Pologne sous un angle quelque peu différent de celui que j'avais entrepris dans le passé<sup>1</sup>. Ici, je suivrai en filigrane l'une des nombreuses études de Yaroslav Dachkévytch sur l'histoire des Arméniens de Pologne et d'Ukraine. Il s'agit de « Siméon Dpir Lehac'i. Qui est-il? »<sup>2</sup>, (*dpir Lehac'i* signifiant diacre de Pologne). Article qui garde encore toute sa pertinence quoique paru il y a plus de trois décennies.

Mais pourquoi cette question au sujet de ce grand voyageur du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui nous laisse pourtant une autobiographie dans sa *Relation de voyage*<sup>3</sup> (fig. 1) où il décrit sa traversée des Balkans pour arriver à Constantinople où il manque le bateau des pèlerins qui devait l'emmener, selon son vœu, à Jérusalem. Il reste donc en Turquie (1609–1611) en espérant exaucer un autre vœu, celui de visiter à Mouch le monastère de Sourb Karapet (Saint Jean-Baptiste), haut lieu de pèlerinage arménien, dont il ne reste rien aujourd'hui. Apprenant, cependant, que c'est une région où Ottomans et Safavides sont en guerre, il décide, en attendant que la situation s'apaise, de passer en Italie, à Venise puis à Rome (1611–1612) afin de se recueillir sur les tombes des apôtres Pierre et Paul. Par la suite, il réussit à se rendre en pèlerinage à Mouch en Arménie historique (1613), puis de Constantinople (1614) il s'embarque pour l'Égypte (1615) et se trouve enfin à Jérusalem (1617), pour s'en retourner en Pologne en 1618, après être passé par la Syrie et de nouveau par Constantinople.

<sup>1</sup> A. Kapoïan-Kouymjian, *L'Égypte vue par des Arméniens (XI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Paris 1988, p. 25–54 ; A. Kapoïan, 'Egypt in 1615-1616 as Seen through the Eyes of the Armenian Simeon of Poland', dans : *Unfolding the Orient – Travellers in Egypt and the Near East*, ed. P. and J. Starkey, Reading, UK 2001, p. 111–117.

<sup>2</sup> Ya. Dachkévytch, 'Siméon Dpir Lehac'i. Qui est-il?', *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 12 (1997), p. 347–364.

<sup>3</sup> N. Akinian, Միմևն դպրի լեկացոյ Ոսկերութիւն, Տարեգրութիւն եւ Յիշատակարան (Relation de voyage, annales et colophons de Siméon, le diacre de Pologne), Wien 1936, p. 1–4 et 348–353.

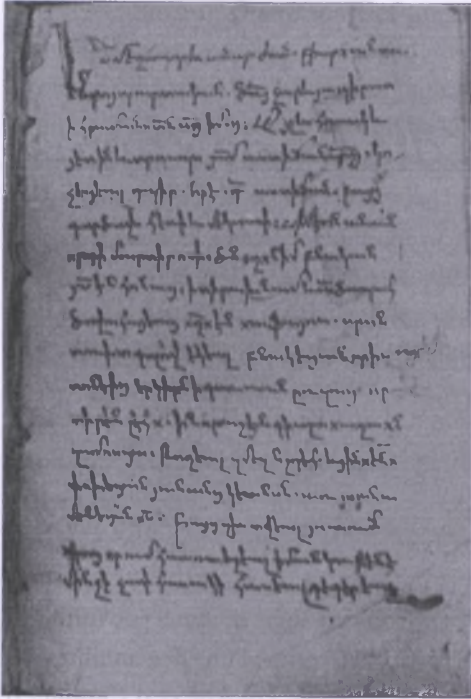


Fig. 1. Première page du manuscrit de Siméon de Pologne. Warszawa, Biblioteka Narodowa, Akc. 10761

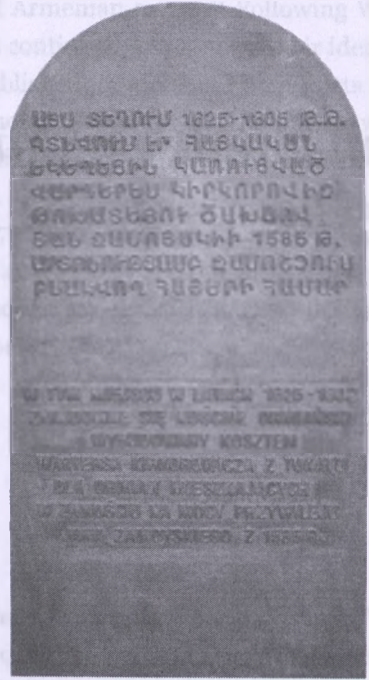


Fig. 2. Plaque sur la façade de l'hôtel Renesans à Zamość. Voir note 9

En posant cette question « Siméon Dpir Leahac'i. Qui est-il? » ce que Dachkévytch regrette, en fait, c'est que notre connaissance de Siméon se borne à ce qu'il veut bien nous dire car nous n'avons à notre disposition, du moins pour le moment, que très peu de sources extérieures le concernant<sup>4</sup>.

Mais, avant tout, que nous apprend au juste son autobiographie<sup>5</sup>? Qu'il est *dpir*, titre ecclésiastique de quatrième degré, soit le plus bas, que ses parents Martiros et Dovlat', originaires de Kaffa en Crimée<sup>6</sup>, émigrèrent dans un pays chrétien, la Pologne, s'établirent dans le bourg nouvellement construit de «Zamostsa», soit Zamość, et l'envoyèrent, malgré

<sup>4</sup> Ya. Dachkévytch, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

<sup>5</sup> N. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 1-3.

<sup>6</sup> Les Arméniens de Crimée émigrèrent en Pologne après la conquête ottomane en 1475. Les plus anciennes traces d'émigration remontent toutefois au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle après la conquête d'Ani, capitale de l'Arménie, par les Turcs seldjoukides en 1064. Au cours des siècles suivants, il y eut d'autres vagues importantes d'émigration dont celles dues à l'invasion de l'Arménie par les Mongols dans les années 30 et 40 du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, et à la chute du royaume arménien de Cilicie causée par les Mamelouks d'Égypte en 1375. Voir par exemple : L. B. Zekiyian, 'Les colonies arméniennes des origines à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', dans : *Histoire du peuple arménien*, ed. G. Dédéyan, Toulouse 2008, p. 430-431 ; K. Maksoudian, 'Armenian Communities in Eastern Europe', dans : *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. R. G. Hovannisian, vol. 2, New York 1997, p. 51-79.



leurs modestes revenus, dans une école religieuse où il apprit l'art de copier des manuscrits et où naquit sa passion pour les livres<sup>7</sup>, ainsi que pour les voyages.

Un peu plus loin<sup>8</sup>, il écrit avec une extrême précision que le lundi 15 février 1608, il quitta la métropole de Lvov (aujourd'hui Lviv en Ukraine) pour entreprendre son périple à l'âge de 24 ans. Ici, Siméon nous laisse donc entendre qu'il est né en 1584, sans relater cette fois la date exacte et le lieu de sa naissance.

Ces premiers renseignements nous troublent déjà. En effet, Zamość est alors une ville totalement nouvelle fondée en 1580, sur ses propres terres, par Jan Zamoyski, chancelier du royaume et grand humaniste. De style Renaissance, construite à l'image de Padoue sur les plans d'un architecte italien, elle ne fut entièrement achevée qu'en 1591. Toutefois, c'est en 1585 que Zamoyski octroie un privilège aux Arméniens afin qu'ils puissent s'y établir s'ils le veulent<sup>9</sup> (fig. 2). Il est donc peu probable que les parents de Siméon s'y soient installés avant cette date et que leur fils y soit né en 1584. Ou bien il se pourrait qu'il soit né en 1584 mais pas à Zamość, peut-être à Lvov où vivait une importante et dynamique communauté arménienne depuis le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle notamment, et que, un ou deux ans après, sa famille se soit déplacée à Zamość, mais pas plus tard puisque sa mère mourut en 1586. Notons, cependant, que parmi les nombreux colophons qu'il ajoutait aux manuscrits qu'il copiait pour gagner sa vie, il se présentait généralement comme étant « Siméon *dpir* Lehatsi » ou « Siméon Lehatsi ». Seuls deux d'entre eux, transcrits à son retour en Pologne, le premier, très précisément le 18 août 1618 et le second en 1619, pour Hovhannès K'armatanents, fondateur de l'imprimerie arménienne à Lvov en 1616<sup>10</sup>, sont signés sous le nom de « Siméon *dpir* Zamostatsi », soit Siméon, le diacre de Zamość<sup>11</sup>. A remarquer également que, à la fin de son récit de voyage, il décrit Lvov mais paradoxalement pas Zamość.

<sup>7</sup> En 1628, étant complètement démuné, il dut vendre à un marchand arménien venu de France à Lvov, un Psautier arménien conservé aujourd'hui à la Bibliothèque municipale de Tours. Voir : B. Outtier, 'Les feuilles de garde onciales du Psautier arménien de Tours', *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 9 (1972), p. 107-112, ainsi que F. Macler, 'Le Psautier arménien de la Bibliothèque municipale de Tours', dans : *Mélanges offerts à N. Iorga*, Paris 1933, p. 641-662.

<sup>8</sup> N. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Dernière édition de cette lettre : K. Lepszy, *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego kanclerza i hetmana wielkiego koronnego* (1585-1588), vol. 4, Kraków 1948, p. 405-406, n°7; voir aussi : Dachkévytch, *op. cit.*, p. 352 et note 24. À signaler qu'une plaque apposée sur la façade de l'hôtel Renesans à Zamość rappelle qu'en 1585 Jan Zamoyski octroya un privilège aux Arméniens pour s'installer dans sa ville. En outre, c'est à l'emplacement de cet hôtel que fut bâtie une église arménienne (1625-1802). Au sujet des Arméniens de Zamość, voir : M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie Zamojscy i ich rola w wymianie handlowej i kulturalnej między Polską a Wschodem*, Lublin 1965. Cf. G. Petrowicz, 'L'organisation juridique des Arméniens sous les monarques polonais', *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 4 (1967), p. 348, note 2. Voir enfin : J. Chrząszczewski, *Kościół Ormian Polskich*, Warszawa 2001, p. 138-144.

<sup>10</sup> Voir entre autres : R. H. Kévorkian, *Les « Incunables » arméniens (1511/1695) ou Chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne*, Genève 1986, p. 30 ; Ya. Dachkévytch, 'L'imprimerie arménienne à Lvov au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 6 (1969), p. 355-371.

<sup>11</sup> N. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 393-394.

Une autre erreur de datation à signaler est celle de la durée de son voyage. Siméon écrit : « Les douze années de mon pèlerinage sont révolues »<sup>12</sup>, ce qui signifierait qu'il revint à Lvov en 1620 puisqu'il en était parti en février 1608. Or, les deux colophons que je viens de citer prouvent bien qu'il était de retour avant août 1618. Son voyage dura donc dix ans et quelques mois. Ces confusions, parmi d'autres, sont probablement dues au fait que sa *Relation de voyage* ne fut achevée que tardivement, vers 1635, car il y ajouta des annales<sup>13</sup> exposant des événements survenus en Pologne de 1623 à 1635 comme, par exemple, la mort du roi Zygmunt III et le couronnement de son fils Władislaw IV en 1632, la guerre polono-moscovite de 1632-1634 ou encore l'épidémie de peste à Lvov de 1625 et non de 1627 comme il l'écrit. Par ailleurs, durant son voyage, il ne prenait que des notes. « J'écrivais tantôt à bord du navire, tantôt à dos de mulet, tantôt dans des auberges ou des caravansérails, [tandis que] les autres pèlerins mangeaient, buvaient et se divertissaient ... »<sup>14</sup>, se plaint-il.

Ce ne sont certes pas ces quelques erreurs et imprécisions qui pourraient dévaloriser l'importance du texte que nous lègue Siméon. Écrit dans une langue hautement pittoresque faite d'un mélange d'arménien classique et populaire où abondent des mots polonais, turcs<sup>15</sup>, persans et arabes sans qu'il s'agisse cependant de l'arméno-kiptchak<sup>16</sup> en usage chez les Arméniens venus de Crimée, nous avons là un long document exceptionnel non seulement par la singularité de la forme mais également par la richesse du fond. De condition modeste, notre diacre se préoccupe particulièrement des aspects sociaux, économiques et religieux des pays où il séjourne. Il s'intéresse aux classes défavorisées telles que celles des fellahs en Égypte ou des réfugiés arméniens ayant fui les Djalâlîs, bandes de soldats irréguliers, hors-la-loi qui semaient la terreur en Asie Mineure<sup>17</sup>. Où qu'il aille, il ne manque jamais de donner le nombre des familles, des églises, des ecclésiastiques et des marchands arméniens qui sillonnaient le monde, tenant probablement ces précieux renseignements

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 335.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 354-384. Pour les erreurs de datation, voir : Ya. Dachkévytch, 'Siméon Dpir ...', p. 358-359 et Dachkévytch, 'Le second voyage de Siméon de Pologne en Orient et les questions relatives à l'étude ultérieure de son héritage littéraire', *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 13 (1978-1979), p. 252.

<sup>14</sup> H. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>15</sup> E. Schütz, 'The Turkish Loanwords in Simeon Lehaci's Travel Accounts', *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 20 (1967), fasc. 3, p. 307-324.

<sup>16</sup> À propos de ce langage, voir, entre autres : J. Deny, *L'arméno-coman et les « Ephémérides » de Kamieniec (1604-1613)*, Wiesbaden 1957; E. Schütz, 'Notes on the Armeno-Kipchak Script and its Historical Background', *Aspects of Altaic Civilization, Uralic and Altaic Series*, 23 (1963), p. 145-154 et Idem, *An Armeno-Kipchak Chronicle on the Turkish Wars in 1620-1621*, Budapest 1968.

<sup>17</sup> Du nom de Djalâl qui, en 1518-1519, organisa une révolte aux environs de Tokat et fut combattu par les armées du sultan Sélim I<sup>er</sup>. Plus tard, on utilisa le terme de « Djalâlîs » pour toutes sortes d'insurrections en Turquie ottomane. À ce propos, voir : le chroniqueur arménien du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Arak'el de Tabriz (†1670), Պատմութիւն, édition Vagharchapat 1884, p. 58-65, *The History of Vardapet Arak'el of Tabriz*, trad. angl. G. Bournoutian vol. 1, Costa Mesa, California 2005, p. 65-72, ainsi que M. K. Zulalyan, Ջալալիների շարժումը և հայ ժողովրդի վիճակը օսմանյան կայսրության մեջ (XVI-XVII դդ.), (Le mouvement des Djalâlîs et le sort des Arméniens sous l'Empire ottoman [XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles]), Erevan 1966, et D. Kouymjian, 'Armenia from the Fall of the Cilician Kingdom (1375) to the Forced Emigration Under Shah Abbas (1604)', dans : *The Armenian People ...*, vol. 2, p. 19.



des religieux arméniens chez lesquels il était toujours hébergé. Renseignements d'une précision étonnante que personne d'autre n'a donnés. Il s'agit d'un véritable recensement concernant particulièrement les Arméniens dispersés hors de leur patrie par les invasions, les pillages, les massacres. « Où que vous alliez, vous rencontrerez des Arméniens éparpillés comme de la poussière dans le monde entier<sup>18</sup> », dit-il. Siméon, né en Europe mais ethniquement un oriental, nous fournit dans son récit très détaillé « la première source importante pour l'étude de la formation des différentes communautés arméniennes »<sup>19</sup>.

Il faut souligner qu'il se distingue indéniablement des autres voyageurs du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, qu'ils soient arméniens ou occidentaux, par le fait que la plupart d'entre eux font partie des classes plus favorisées et sont généralement envoyés en mission diplomatique, militaire, scientifique, religieuse ou commerciale, et bénéficient du soutien d'un commanditaire pour écrire le récit de leur voyage.

C'est peut-être ce qui explique que notre Siméon, si apprécié aujourd'hui, n'ait pas éveillé l'intérêt de ses contemporains et qu'il soit même tombé dans l'oubli durant trois siècles.

Il nous informe effectivement qu'à son retour en Pologne, s'il fut d'abord accueilli plutôt chaleureusement, très vite, ses proches et ses connaissances le pressèrent de se marier avec une Arménienne du nom de Nasdukhnna Kevoroviczovna - mariage qui fut malheureux - et après son installation à Zamość, ils commencèrent à l'insulter en lui reprochant brutalement sa longue absence et le fait qu'il soit resté diacre et pauvre au lieu de se hisser dans l'échelle sociale<sup>20</sup>. A leurs yeux, il n'était qu'un raté. Blessé profondément et se sentant bien seul, Siméon ne pensa alors qu'à reprendre ses chers voyages, désir qu'il réalisa puisqu'un colophon ajouté de sa main à un manuel de médecine et d'anatomie nous indique qu'il le recopia en 1635 à Bursa, en Turquie<sup>21</sup>.

En outre, son virulent pamphlet, « Histoire nikolienne »<sup>22</sup>, contre l'archevêque arménien Nikoghos T'orosian (Nikolaj Torosovicz), qui imposa aux Arméniens de Pologne l'union de l'Église arménienne avec Rome, lui attira bien sûr l'hostilité de ce dernier et de ses partisans. D'où probablement le mépris manifesté à son égard et par là même à son œuvre.

<sup>18</sup> N. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> P. Tchobanian, 'Les lettres arméniennes et la découverte du monde (VII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)', dans : *Arménie, la magie de l'écrit*, sous la direction de Cl. Mutafian, Paris 2007, p. 323-324.

<sup>20</sup> N. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 348-353.

<sup>21</sup> Ya. Dachkévytch, 'Le second voyage de Siméon de Pologne...', p. 251-257 ; O. Eganyan, A. Zeytunyan, P. Antablyan, Յուգակ ձեռագրաց Մատենի անվան Մատենադարանի (Catalogue des manuscrits du Matenadaran), vol. 2, Erevan 1970, ms n<sup>o</sup> 7100, col. 460-461.

<sup>22</sup> N. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 399-405 ; *The History of Vardaped Arak'el*, p. 279-300, trad. angl. Bournoutian, vol. 1, p. 265-283 ; F. Macler, 'Rapport sur une mission scientifique en Galicie et en Bukovine (juillet-août 1925) *Revue des études arméniennes*, 7 (1927) fasc. 1, p. 21-33, et G. Petrowicz, *L'Unione degli Armeni di Polonia con la Santa Sede (1626-1686)*, Roma 1950.

Ce fut un fragment de cette « Histoire nikolienne » - le début et la fin ayant disparu - qui suscita d'abord un certain intérêt en 1896 lorsque le Père mekhitariste de Venise, Ghewond Alichan, en fit la publication<sup>23</sup>.

Quant à sa *Relation de voyage*, elle ne fut localisée qu'en 1869 par le Père dominicain arménien, Sadok Barącz<sup>24</sup>, connu aussi sous le nom de Barącz, qui mentionna brièvement qu'une « Description de diverses choses rencontrées en Europe et en Asie par Siméon le clerc » se trouvait, parmi d'autres manuscrits arméniens, à la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Lvov.

Plus tard, en 1925, Frédéric Macler<sup>25</sup>, lors d'une mission scientifique en Europe centrale, en traduisit la première page, celle où Siméon se présente, ainsi que la dernière qui se termine abruptement avec l'arrivée à Lvov en 1626, et non 1628, du catholicos Melk'isedek<sup>26</sup>, indiquant donc que le récit est inachevé. Il nota, d'ailleurs, qu'il y avait neuf pages blanches.

Ce fut finalement le Père mekhitariste de Vienne, Nersès Akinian, qui eut l'immense mérite de publier intégralement l'œuvre de Siméon, d'abord à phases successives, de 1932 à 1935, dans *Handès Amsorya*, la revue arménologique de la congrégation des Mekhitaristes de Vienne, et enfin en un seul volume qu'il intitula lui-même, puisque Siméon n'y avait pas mis de titre<sup>27</sup>. En outre, le manuscrit se présentant d'un seul bloc, il dut l'aérer en le divisant en chapitres portant chacun un titre. Il y ajouta une longue introduction, des annotations détaillées, un glossaire, un index et un résumé en allemand.

L'unique manuscrit de Siméon était conservé à la Bibliothèque Universitaire de Lvov, comme cela a déjà été mentionné. Toutefois, en 1945, après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, il disparut à l'instar d'autres manuscrits précieux tel l'Évangile arménien de 1198, dit de Lemberg ou Lvov, aux superbes enluminures. Fort heureusement, ils ont été retrouvés et sont conservés aujourd'hui à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Varsovie. Grâce à l'exposition *Arménie, la magie de l'écrit*, organisée par Claude Mutafian en 2007 au Centre de la Vieille Charité à Marseille à l'occasion de l'« Année de l'Arménie en France », nous avons pu découvrir, entre autres, le manuscrit de Siméon ainsi que l'Évangile de Lemberg, figurant également dans le beau catalogue de cette exposition<sup>28</sup>.

Après trois siècles de silence, le récit du voyage de Siméon attire de plus en plus l'attention des chercheurs. Des traductions plus ou moins complètes en ont été faites en

<sup>23</sup> Gh. Alichan, Կամենից. Տարեգրքի կայաց Լեհաստանի և Ռումինիայ (Kamenits. Annales des Arméniens de Pologne et de Roumanie), Venetik 1896, p. 202-214 ; F. Macler, 'Rapport sur une mission...', p. 33-35 ; Dachkévytch, 'Siméon Dpir', p. 349.

<sup>24</sup> S. Barącz, *Rys dziejów ormiańskich*, Tarnopol 1869, p. 205.

<sup>25</sup> F. Macler, 'Rapport sur une mission...', p. 126-127.

<sup>26</sup> N. Akinian, *op. cit.*, p. 384, notes 1 et 2.

<sup>27</sup> Voir *supra* note 3.

<sup>28</sup> Cl. C. Mutafian, 'La présence arménienne en Pologne', et A. Schmidt, 'L'Évangile de Lemberg : un itinéraire rocambolesque', dans : *L'Arménie, la magie de l'écrit...*, p. 349-353 et 260-263.



français<sup>29</sup>, italien<sup>30</sup>, turc<sup>31</sup>, russe<sup>32</sup>, polonais<sup>33</sup>, bulgare<sup>34</sup>, arménien oriental moderne<sup>35</sup>, et enfin en anglais<sup>36</sup> en traduction intégrale.

Par ailleurs, nous ne connaissons pas la date de la mort de Siméon mais savons qu'il était encore vivant en janvier 1639, à la mort de sa femme, puisque, à cette date, sa belle-mère lui réclama devant le tribunal arméno-polonais de Lvov de lui rendre tous les biens de sa fille<sup>37</sup>.

Les recherches devraient être poursuivies en consultant les archives historiques de Lvov pour le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ainsi que celles du tribunal ecclésiastique arménien de cette même ville en y incluant le contrat de mariage de Siméon et Nasdukhna. En ce qui concerne les registres administratifs et judiciaires de la communauté arménienne de Zamość, ils n'existeraient plus, d'après Dachkévytch<sup>38</sup>, pour les années 1584/85 à 1608 et 1618/19 à 1624, années que Siméon passa à Zamość. Les registres conservés à la Bibliothèque des Pères mekhitaristes de Vienne et les éventuels colophons inédits de Siméon peuvent être également intéressants car notre diacre voyageur n'a peut-être pas encore dit son dernier mot.

<sup>29</sup> G. Guerguérian, traduction française inédite du chapitre relatif à l'Égypte, manuscrit dactylographié, Bibliothèque du Deutsches Archäologisches Institut du Caire, Inv. 3213 (information communiquée par T. Walz), Cf. A. Kapoïan-Kouymjian, *op. cit.*, p. 25-54.

<sup>30</sup> M. Roncaglia, 'Itinerario in Egitto di Simeone, viaggiatore polacco (1615-1616)', *Oriens*, 15 (1962), p. 130-159.

<sup>31</sup> H. D. Andreasyan, *Polonyali Simeon'un seyahatnâmesi, 1608-1619*, Istanbul 1964. Voir aussi son article : 'Ermeni seyyahi Polonyali Simeon'un seyahatnâmesi (1608-1619)', *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, 10 (1951-1953), p. 269-276.

<sup>32</sup> M. O. Darbinyan, *Симеон Лехаца путевые заметки*, Moskva 1965.

<sup>33</sup> Z. Kościów, *Zapiski podrózne Simeona Lehacego*, Warszawa 1991.

<sup>34</sup> A. Ormandzhian, *Arménski ts'êpisi za Balkanite, XVII-XIX v.*, Sofia 1984, p. 13-42.

<sup>35</sup> A. Madoyan, Սիմեոնի Լեհացի, Ուղևորություն (Siméon de Pologne, *Relation de voyage*), Erevan 1997.

<sup>36</sup> G. Bournoutian, *The Travel Accounts of Siméon of Poland*, Costa Mesa, California 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Ya. Dachkévytch, 'Siméon Dpir...', p. 363. Sur les tribunaux arméno-polonais, voir G. Petrowicz, 'L'organisation juridique...', p. 321-354.

<sup>38</sup> Ya. Dachkévytch, 'Siméon Dpir...', p. 354 et 363-364.





## Armenian Art in Zamość

Piotr Kondraciuk, Museum of Zamość

In 1585 Armenians obtained the legal right to settle in Zamość along with a number of privileges. They settled mainly in the north-eastern part of the Great Market in Zamość. In the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century they built tenement houses along the street from town hall in the eastern manner.<sup>1</sup> Armenians inhabited Zamość for two centuries; they brought to the town and left to posterity their wonderful heritage, their culture and knowledge of the sciences. Armenians were a substantial number of the inhabitants of Zamość. In 1678 they were 15% of its residents.<sup>2</sup>

The new rights and privileges given to the Armenians by the owner to the town, Jan Zamoyski, were geared towards ensuring the Armenian community's development. One of the citizens of Zamość, Murat Jakubowicz, received a monopoly for the production and trade of saffians and Ottoman-Turkish carpets in Poland, from the king, Stefan Batory. This monopoly lasted 20 years. It also seems that efforts were being made to establish in Zamość the first factory in Poland, for the production of these oriental products both for export and the local market.<sup>3</sup> These plans were being made because the Zamość saffians were equal in quality to the Ottoman-Turkish versions, but were much less expensive.<sup>4</sup>

The other fields of Armenian activity in Zamość included the production of carpets, which was also organized by Murat Jakubowicz. The carpets produced in Zamość were of the best quality; they differed from the Turkish versions due to the thickness of the wool used, which had been produced in more raw climatic conditions.<sup>5</sup>

In the vicinity of Zamość sheep farming was being developed commercially. The sheep farming was able to deliver wool for the carpet making, but also skins, which were used to

<sup>1</sup> T. Zarebska, *Zamość – miasto idealne i jego realizacja*, in: *Zamość miasto idealne. Studia z dziejów rozwoju przestrzennego i architektury*, ed. J. Kowalczyk, Lublin 1980, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie zamojscy i ich rola w wymianie handlowej i kulturalnej między Polską a Wschodem*, Lublin 1965, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> K. Kowalczyk, *Rzemiosło Zamościa 1580–1821*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 104–105.

<sup>4</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce*, Lublin 1982, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> T. Mańkowski, *Polskie tkaniny i hafty XVI–XVIII wieku*, Wrocław 1954, pp. 69–70.

produce cordovans. These cordovans were also being produced under the leadership of Murat Jakubowicz<sup>6</sup> We don't know the scale of this production of cordovans in Zamość, although it seems that their producers were few in number. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Zamość the manufacturers did not have their own organization; they belonged to shoemakers' guild.<sup>7</sup> Towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was only one Armenian, Arand Axentowicz, who was still producing items from skins.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the production of carpets, saffians and cordovans, Armenians were also heavily involved in the craft of artistic embroidery. We don't know whether this trade existed in Zamość. The nearest-known centres of the production of embroidery were Lublin and Lvov.<sup>9</sup> In Zamość however there are some objects tied to the production of Armenian workshops. For instance, a liturgical chasuble from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4), which is found in the collection of the Cathedral Museum in Zamość<sup>10</sup> and which is thought to have come from the Armenian church.

A field that is better substantiated as existing in Zamość is that of the Armenian artistic trade of goldsmiths work. Already in 1591 we have written sources referring to two goldsmiths as owners of homes in the town. They were the Armenians Jakub and Stanisław.<sup>11</sup> Stanisław Abrahamowicz was the son-in-law of the architect named Morando, and he worked for Jan Zamoyski. There was also a third individual working amongst the Zamość goldsmiths, Krzysztof, who was probably also an Armenian.<sup>12</sup> Following this, by the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, only Armenians were responsible for goldsmiths work in Zamość. It is even likely that we can link the Renaissance reliquary of the piece of the Holy Virgin's garment to these Armenian workshops (Fig. 5). The reliquary is made from mountain crystal framed with gold, decorated with the Moresque ornament and niello technique. We know that Armenian goldsmiths were using this technology perfectly at that time but we do not have any clear attributions.<sup>13</sup> For instance, in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century we know about a goldsmith with the surname Jatulowicz,<sup>14</sup> but his works have not yet been identified.

Armenian artists were also wonderful miniaturists and we see this activity in Polish territories too. Illuminated manuscripts were produced in Zamość scriptorium in rising

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. Bender, *Złoczone kurdybany w Polsce*, Lublin 1992, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> K. Kowalczyk, *Rzemiosło...*, pp. 110–112.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> T. Mańkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja*, Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, Kraków 1999, cat. 180.

<sup>11</sup> K. Kowalczyk, *Rzemiosło...*, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, table II.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. J. Kowalczyk, *W kręgu kultury dworu Jana Zamoyskiego*, Lublin 1980, p. 213.

<sup>14</sup> The surname of Jatulowicz, the goldsmith, was found in the document from 1685, in the testament of Zachariasz Arakielowicz in favour of his wife Anna Jatulowicz. Cf. M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce...*, p. 228.



numbers.<sup>15</sup> One of the copyists operating in Lvov and in Zamość was Akop from Tochat (or Agop/Hagop from Tokat), who has been well studied in the past.<sup>16</sup> Our recent research is focussed instead on searching for the influence of such Armenian miniatures in the interior decoration of the houses of Zamość. In the Armenian merchant's home, built in 1632–1634, we have uncovered fragments of the former polychrome decoration, which we have identified to have been inspired by Armenian miniatures. Above the window, in the frieze, we have a fragment depicting the Christ Pantokrator, surrounded by the motif of the wind plant. In another place, amongst fragments depicting a bunch of grapes, we can see that the artist has painted the distinctive motif of a bird with a long tail. The motif of the vine and other clusters are repeated in a frieze on the other wall. The delicate figure of the vegetable flagellum and other characteristic motifs, all testify to the influence of Armenian miniatures over the decoration of this house. We can suggest that this was probably caused by an Armenian painter working on them.

However we don't have any information about Armenian painters from this time and so we cannot yet draw any firm conclusions. There is one painter Wojciech, who had the Armenian surname Mantukowicz<sup>17</sup> but unfortunately we don't know his work.

Instead we can, in the meantime, focus on drawing attention to the formal features of the houses and their relationship to Armenian miniatures and other art forms, both Armenian and of foreign derivation.

In particular, deserving of a special mention, are the bas-relieves and stuccoes in the interiors and on the elevations of buildings. The variety of animal, vegetable and geometric motifs depicted point towards various sources of inspiration. The motifs are composed from the repertoire of forms of the Italian Renaissance, of Mannerism of the Netherlands and Baroque, and are combined with oriental ornamentation, thus creating a characteristic style of decoration seen in the houses of Zamość. The houses of Zamość have been the subject of many historical and architectural studies. Each phase of construction has been subjected to analysis; however the ornamentation has not yet been the focus of any study.<sup>18</sup> This article will therefore begin to look at the ornamental forms of the decoration of Zamość houses- and in particular the aspect of their origin.

The Armenian merchant Gabriel Bartoszewicz's tenement house possesses both the earliest decoration and the most extensive example. This use of decoration even includes

<sup>15</sup> Cf. P. Nerses Akinian, *Katalog der Armenischen Handschriften in Bibliotheken zu Lewow und Stanislawów*, Wien 1961, cited after: B. Biedrońska-Slotowa, *Sztuka i kultura w Armenii i ormiańskiej diasporze*, in: *Ormianie polscy...*, p. 20, gloss 20.

<sup>16</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce...*, pp. 242–243.

<sup>17</sup> Mantukowicz was employed by Jan Zamoyski in 1652, with the annual salary of 800 ducats. Cf. J. Kowalczyk, *Dwór artystyczny Jana Zamoyskiego „Sobiepana”*, in: *Sarmatia artistica. Księga pamiątkowa ku czci prof. Władysława Tomkiewicza*, Warszawa 1968, p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. for example: Z. Baranowska, H. Sygietyńska, *Kamienice rynku zamojskiego w XVII wieku*, Zamość 1969; M. Pawlicki, *Kamienice ormiańskie w Zamościu*, in: *Zamość miasto idealne...*, p. 79–102; M. Pawlicki, *Kamienice mieszczkańskie Zamościa. Problemy ochrony*, Kraków 1999, pp. 120–122.

the fact that windows are used on the exterior to assign a vertical rhythm to the elevation of the tenement house.

These stylized pilasters, situated in a frieze under the windows of the first floor, are also repeated in the attic. This was executed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when, after building the next floor, the window openings were added. They serve to confine the windows of this storey.

The panels of this type, which were printed from a wooden model, belong to a group of the most characteristic ornamental motifs of the style that has been determined as "Renaissance of the Lublin region". These motifs were specific to the works of Jan Wolff, the builder from Zamość.<sup>19</sup> The motif of the winged angel-heads are not however foreign to Armenian art. We see them in the decoration of the portal of the oldest Armenian church, the cathedral church in Eczmiadzyn. The structure of this building was shaped in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> Other ornamental motives seen in this building also resemble the architectural adornment used in Zamość: particularly, the symmetrical and delicate motif of the vegetable flagellum, in the form of bell-shaped flowers and rosettes. The same ornament, joined by the motifs of the vine and other clusters, fills panels of the frieze under the windows on the elevation, and the columns between the windows in the interior. These more antique ornaments in the remaining fragments of the decoration of the façade are combined with more fantastic motifs. For instance, the stylized vegetable motifs, filling the wall in attic, which are winding in shape and pass from a vegetable form or a crawling dragon. The corners of the tenement house are graced with two lions resting on their back paws. These ancient and fantastic motifs are not connected to the rest of the decoration scheme, but they exist separately, similarly to the architectural decoration of Armenian churches.

The influence of the adornment from the Armenian cathedral in Eczmiadzyn on the architectural adornment of Zamość, may not be coincidental. We know that the Polish Arme-



Fig. 1. Gabriel Bartoszewicz house, Zamość

<sup>19</sup> See: M. Kurzej, *Jan Wolf. Monografia architekta w świetle analizy prefabrykowanych elementów dekoracji sztukatorskich*, Kraków 2009, p. 93. The same decorations are located in the former Church of Grey Friars in Szczepieszyn and in the Church in Turobin.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. D. Próchniak, *Eczmiadzyn w IV i V wieku. Z problematyki genezy chrześcijańskiej architektury Armenii*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne”, 26 (1978), no 4, pp. 21–22.



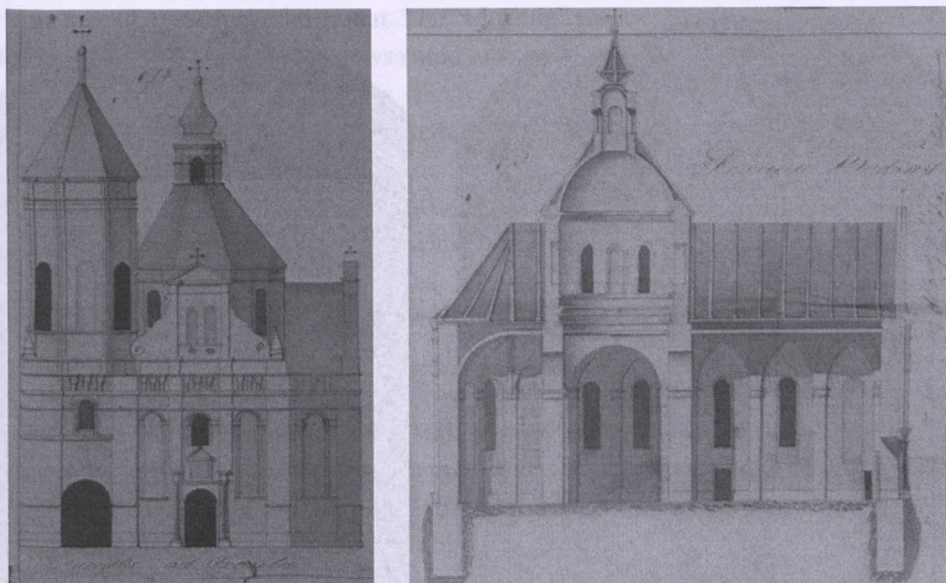


Fig. 2. Magnus Bicschlager, Plan of Armenian church in Zamość, State Archive in Lublin

nians had many contacts with the culture of the religious centre of Armenia. In 1625, the Armenian patriarch's delegate from Eczmiadzyn, katholikos Melchizedech, along with the bishops accompanying him, Marcin and Elias, laid a cornerstone for the construction of the Armenian Church in Zamość (Fig. 2).<sup>21</sup> There is evidence that the travelling of Lvov and Zamość Armenians to Eczmiadzyn was also frequent.<sup>22</sup> These kinds of contacts may imply that there was knowledge of the forms of Armenian architecture and architectural detail, and may have provided chances for these motifs to penetrate into the local architecture.

The variety of the adornment of the facade of the Bartoszewicz's tenement house and of other houses belonging to Armenians exerted an influence on the decoration of Polish tenement houses. The corner tenement house in the northern part belonging to Jan Wilczek is a good example of such relations. Jan Wilczek, apart from Mannerist and Baroque ornamental forms, also used specific elements of the decoration from the Armenian houses.

In the Bartoszewicz's house we have identified the richest set of Armenian motifs. In the adjacent house, which was constructed in 1632–1657, the ornamentation is more modest. In the decoration of the façade, they discarded the use of vertical divisions, introducing two continuous ornamental friezes. The frieze under the windows consists of geometric strap work motifs. A frieze arranged from various sequences of vegetable forms composed symmetrically with geometric elements and star-shaped rosettes, decorates the attic wall.

<sup>21</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce...*, p. 278.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 287.





Fig. 3. Holy Virgin Graceful, Szczepieszyn, franciscans church



Fig. 4. The chasuble from Armenian church in Zamość, Cathedral Museum in Zamość

The most striking motif is the centrally positioned stylized image of a married couple. The man's and woman's forms, with their heads ending in Ionic volutes, are underpinning the crowning parapet. The panel between these fantastic props is filled with vegetable ornament.

The Soltan Sachwelowicz tenement house from 1642–1657 is decorated with early-Baroque ornamentation. Elements such as the vegetable flagellum setting off from the central vase resemble the frieze of ornament of the Zamość cathedral. The endings of the leaves form esemble the Netherlands motive of the concha. This frieze cannot be compared to the Armenian vegetable strap work, as Miroslawa Dubasowa suggests,<sup>23</sup> because it belongs to the repertoire of ornamental forms of modern art. These include: snail shells, garlands of leaves and flowers and cartouches. Armenian letters are used to decorate only the field of the cartouche. Armenian motifs are used rarely here. Only the motif on the parapet of the vegetable flagellum, developing from birdlike heads returned to oneself, points towards

<sup>23</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce...*, p. 194.



the influence of Armenian adornment. The “whirling” rosettes in the frieze above the windows could also be seen as an Armenian influence.<sup>24</sup>

Geometric rosettes belong to the constant repertoire of forms decorating the ceiling beams of Armenian tenement houses. In their most decorative and various forms they can be seen in the Bartoszewicz's house. The first floor combines the original naked flooring with traces of the polychrome decoration. The central bar is decorated with three rosettes, the central one of which includes a net of geometric motifs, the side has some elements arranged in a radial manner and gives the impression of “whirling”. There are boards on the walls between bars, which are filled with panels decorated with the motif of arches. The bars of the ground floor and the floors of the back rooms of this tenement house are decorated with rosettes in the form of six flower petals. These rosettes are most often cut in a concave shape (for example, Bartoszewicz's house), but in the subsequent period they are cut in a convex way. This method of decorating the ceiling beams in the form of the six petals of the rosette is the most frequently seen. It is thought to date from the late antique. Identical versions of the six petals of the rosette are seen on the ending of the belt from the 4<sup>th</sup> century of the “treasure from Zamość”. Tadeusz Sulimirski has linked this belt to the Black Sea region.<sup>25</sup> The motif of a rosette filled in a radial fashion with lunar elements is also often repeated. These motifs are cut sharply, in the convex way. Sometimes we also see a simple form of the radial rosette, and a rosette filled with diamond-shaped motifs.

It is necessary now, as a conclusion to this article on the Armenian arts in Zamość, to turn to the Armenian Church itself, which once stood in the town and formed



Fig. 5. Reliquary, Cathedral Museum in Zamość

<sup>24</sup> Similar silver rosettes are located on the decoration of Tartar shield from the collection of the historic museum in Lvov, see: *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja...*, p. 126, cat. 167.

<sup>25</sup> T. Sulimirski, *Znalezisko z Zamościa i jego tło*, „Archeologia Polski”, 11 (1966), pp. 121; 133. Describing these rosettes Sulimirski is naming them „zakopiańskie”, because of popularity of this motif in the architectural adornment of the Podhale region (“Zakopane style”).

a focus of the community. The architectural structure of the church has been analyzed repeatedly.<sup>26</sup> However, we know very little about the original contents and equipment of the church, because it was subject to dispersion. It is possible that many of these objects were accepted by the Catholic churches, like the richly decorated chasuble found in the Cathedral Museum. We owe the preservation of such objects to the priests of Armenian origin, who "polonized" themselves and reached high status within the Catholic Church.

Jakub Arakielowicz, Zachariasz Arakielowicz's son from Jazłowiec, was one of these men. Zachariasz Arakielowicz was the chief officer and the town councillor of the Armenian community in Zamość.<sup>27</sup> Jakub Arakielowicz became the professor of the Zamość University and a catholic priest.<sup>28</sup> He founded two silver reliquaries for the Collegiate Church in Zamość: a reliquary for the piece of the tree of the Holy Cross, and of the Thorn from Christ's Crown.<sup>29</sup> Priest Kajetan Derbedraszewicz rebuilt the wooden Church of Saint Catharina. In 1795 he built the new church in brick, to which he endowed the equipment from the Armenian Church.<sup>30</sup>

The "polonization" of the Armenian bourgeoisie was one of reasons for the liquidation of the Armenian parish, which resulted in the destroying of the walls of the church in 1811. This situation was intensified systematically since the second half of 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Armenians' decreasing population meant that the separate municipal corporation was suppressed in 1738.<sup>31</sup> Klemens Zamoyski (duce of the Zamość majority) made an attempt to attract Armenians to the town in 1760. He confirmed all of the privileges given to them earlier and widened them to include the cost of the Jewish population's business. This plan did not bring success however.<sup>32</sup> The Armenians, after staying for two centuries in Zamość, left after themselves only these richly decorated tenement houses and few works of art.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. Kowalczyk, *Kościół ormiański w Zamościu z XVII w.*, „Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki”, 1980, nr 3/4, pp. 215-232; M. Pawlicki, *Odkrycie fundamentów kościoła ormiańskiego w Zamościu w 1968 roku*, „Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki”, 1980, nr 2, pp. 179-180; D. Próchniak, 'Cechy armeńskie i niearmeńskie w architekturze kościoła Ormian zamojskich', *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny*, 6 (1992), pp. 255-268.

<sup>27</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce ...*, p. 228.

<sup>28</sup> J. A. Wadowski, *Wiadomości o profesorach Akademii Zamojskiej*, Warszawa 1899-1900, p. 172.

<sup>29</sup> P. Kondraciuk, *Mecenat artystyczny duchowieństwa diecezjalnego w ordynacji zamojskiej w XVII i XVIII wieku*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne”, 50 (2002), p. 75.

<sup>30</sup> B. Sroczyńska, *Zamość w XIX stuleciu...*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>31</sup> K. Kowalczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33.



## *Some new information about the life and activity of the priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz*

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Despite the difficult political situation in Fee tail Zamoyski (Ordynacja in Polish- an estate in real property which cannot be sold) in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was a great deal of building activity in this area. These new buildings were built according to the law and to populate the regions of the government, and with special consideration given to the capital, Zamość.<sup>1</sup> The most important institutions for religious and educational life in Fee tail Zamoyski were the Collegiate and the Academy; the clerical body were appointed to these and assembled here to perform their functions. Educated clerics in different fields of science were appointed as lectures in the Academy. Some of them would also attend meetings of church elders and took part in the social life of Zamość.<sup>2</sup>

Amongst the honoured priests of the 18<sup>th</sup> century of Zamość was the twelfth chairman of the twelfth scholastics, Jan Maciej Pawłowicz. He was a lecturer at the Academy of Zamość, a doctor of philosophy, and was, around the year 1738, involved in the construction of a Mary Magdalene church in Bilgoraj; he also for a period of 40 years organized the affairs of the Church of Saint Nicolas in Szczebrzeszyn.<sup>3</sup> An equally enterprising priest was Jan Aleksander Trembiski, from 1749 to 1796 the successor of priest Pawłowicz, who

<sup>1</sup> B. Sroczyńska, *Rozwój przestrzenny przedmieść Zamościa w latach 1580–1939*, „Konserwatorska Teka Zamojska”, Warszawa-Zamość 1986, pp. 58–64;

<sup>2</sup> B. Kumor, *Wydział Teologiczny Akademii Zamojskiej (1648–1784)*, in: *Akademia Zamojska w dziejach i życiu miasta*, ed. R. Szczygiel, A. Urbański, Zamość 1996, pp. 65–75; J. Kowalczyk, *Kolegiata w Zamościu*, Warszawa 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Ks. F. Stopniak, *Dzieje kapituły zamojskiej*, Lublin 1962, p. 193. Ks. M. Zahajkiewicz, *Diecezja lubelska, Informator historyczny i administracyjny*, Lublin 1985, pp. 120–121 i 300; *Album studentów Akademii Zamojskiej, 1595–1781*, ed. H. Gmiterek, Warszawa 1994, p. 27; M. Stworzyński, *Opisanie statystyczno-histeryczne dóbr Ordynacji Zamojskiej 1834 roku*. National Library in Warsaw, manuscript: Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej, no 1815, p. 254.

became the rector of Academy, a doctor of theology and professor of law., He took on the function of the protonotary apostolic (infulat in Polish) and whilst in this position, he removed in 1754 the figure of the Mother of God from before Church of Saint Nicolas in Szczebrzeszyn.<sup>4</sup>

From 1774 Trembinski was priest and Baltazar Dulewski, a graduate from Krakow Academy, who was a scholastic, rector of the Zamość Academy, doctor of philosophy and law, and professor of logic, supervised works going on in the parish of Zamość. He fulfilled the Canon's functions in Chelm and after that in Brzysko and Chmielec; he was the author of several publications and presided over many trials. Dulewski patronised many events in Zamość. In the 40s of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, he was prebendary of the Church of Saint Catherine in Przedmieście Lubelskie in Zamość.<sup>5</sup> He was the patron of two side altars under name of Jana Kantego and Jesus Christ walking to Emmaus, and he was engaged in refurbishing this church. In the 70s of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whilst he was a parish-priest he patronised works in churches in Tarnograd and Goraj.<sup>6</sup>

From amongst the ministers who contributed to the religion, the culture and social life in 18<sup>th</sup> century Zamość, we should draw special attention to the priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz, the multiple canon, originator and founder of the building the Church of Saint Catherine on Przedmieście Lubelskie in Zamość.

The figure of the priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz is well-known thanks to the investigations of the priest Franciszek's Stopniak conducted in the last century. In his book *Dzieje Kapituły Zamojskiej* he outlined the life of the priest Deberdasiewicz, determined the functions that he performed and drew attention to his accomplishments, especially with regards to his foundations. The importance of the activities of Deberdasiewicz as a patron of architecture and urban development was made even more were explicit in the publication of the town-planning and history of the development of the city of Zamość, and this information was repeated other works such as individual biographies and in an Encyclopaedia about Zamość.<sup>7</sup>

However there is important and so-far-unknown information about the priest's life, family and cultural interests that this paper will draw attention to. This more detailed vision of the priest that this paper will give has been made possible by the discovery of a document that details his fortune and a list that was made in the several months after he died in 1827 year by the notary Jana's Ulencki in Szczebrzeszyn.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> State Archiw in Lublin: Parafie Rzym.-kat. w woj. lubelskim, sygn. 106, Parafia szczebrzeska, sign. 3.

<sup>5</sup> F. Stopniak, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 185.

<sup>6</sup> M. T. Zahajkiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 320 i 124.

<sup>7</sup> F. Stopniak, *op. cit.*, p. 184–185; A. Kędziora, *Encyklopedia ludzi Zamościa*, Zamość 2008, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup> State Archive in Zamość: Akta Notariusza Jana Ulenckiego w Szczebrzeszynie, sygn. 4, 1827 r., no. 62.



Priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz came from an Armenian family. He was born in the year 1749 in Zamość, as the son of Lukasz and Elzbieta Deberdasiewicz.<sup>9</sup> We don't have any information about his education.<sup>10</sup> The first reference concerning the priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz comes from the year 1772 and tells that he was a priest in a parish in Górecko Kościelne, and then, later, in 1795 he was known as a curate in a collegiate church. From a different source it is known that he was involved in the construction of a church under the name of Saint Catherine in Zamość.

The building of the church was the project of Ferdynand Merksen, along with the initiative of Konstancja from Czartoryski Zamoyski, the Zamość townsmen and the priest Deberdasiewicz, who supervised works and gave away about 1652 Polish zlotys on the site.

The Armenian church was closed down at an early date. At the auction of the contents, he bought the side altars, chasubles and a tin cross and before the year 1795 he had commissioned the main altar from the sculptor Ignacy Buczynski.<sup>11</sup> Historical records show that from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz was the promoter of the brotherhood of the Holy Trinity near the Zamość Collegiate church, in 1801 he was the honourable canon, in 1804 he was the canon of canonry Brzysko and in 1810 of Wozanowski.<sup>12</sup> Priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz died on 6th August 1827 in Zamość.

New information on the priest's biography, interests and preferences is delivered by the inventory of his estate; this information can be found in records of the Entail Zamoyski as well as in the records of the Zamość Collegiate church, namely the certificate of death.<sup>13</sup>

In the 20s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz lived in Zamość in the curates' building, given the police number 47.<sup>14</sup> The priest's abode was modest; his possessions consisted of pieces of furniture: tables, chairs and chests of drawers, in one room there was a *table with drawers and coat of arms*. On the walls were placed *Crucifixes* as well as paintings. The official responsible for compiling the list noted that there were about eleven small paintings and sixteen big ones. Additionally in the rooms there were violins as well as two big reliquary's and seven small reliquary's.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> State Archive in Zamość: Księga Urodzeń, 1735–1776, p. 146.

<sup>10</sup> F. Stopniak, *op. cit.*, s. 184.

<sup>11</sup> State Archive in Lublin: Akta Ordynacji Zamojskiej, sygn. 1510, p. 41 v, 47, 661. Cf. Z. Prószyńska, 'Meroksen Ferdynand', in: *Słownik Artystów Polskich Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających (zmarłych przed 1966 r.): malarze, rzeźbiarze, graficy*, vol. 5, Warszawa 1993, p. 488; B. Sawa, *Jakub Bobrowski, zapomniany malarz zamojski przelomu XVIII i XIX wieku*, „Archiwariusz Zamojski”, 2004, pp. 21–22.

<sup>12</sup> F. Stopniak, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>13</sup> State Archive in Lublin: Akta parafii rzymskokatolickich w województwie lubelskim, sygn. 106, USC Kolegiata w Zamościu, Akta zmarłych, 1827, p. 135; AOZ, sygn. 1550.

<sup>14</sup> State Archive in Lublin: Akta Notariusza Jana Ulenckiego w Szczepreszynie, sygn. 4, 1828, no. 62.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

The priest's inventory contains a list of his wardrobe; for instance, in one closet were a black *dress and coat*. This information tells us that his wardrobe was modest.<sup>16</sup>

The analysis of the contents of these new documents has confirmed that Deberdasiewicz was the founder of the church under name of Saint Catherine. This fact is recorded in the part of the document where Deberdasiewicz conveys his wishes for institutions, namely the benefactors of church under name of Saint Catherine and Collegiate church

In the inventory it is noted down that Deberdasiewicz also left funds for the poor from Zamość, for his relatives including his niece Catherine Rudzka, who remained a state minister and lived in a sister's mercy assembly in Warsaw.

We can learn much about Deberdasiewicz's interests from the list of books, which remained in his library. In amongst the first editions prevails theological literature, collections of sermons, works on the sciences and on constitution, for example: *Christian education for the salvations of souls*, *The Christian armed the patience*. Worthy of particular attention is a book entitled: *Everyday meditations of Saint Peter from Alcantara*. Saint Peter was the patron of the parish, made so by his father and the reformers. The presence of this publication in Deberdasiewicz's library shows that the life of the founder was well-known to him also.<sup>17</sup> In the list of literature there were three books concerning *written theology by priest Deberdasiewicz*.<sup>18</sup>

From the contents of the document we can also gather information about his relationships with his contemporaries. In the section concerning his wealth, the priest presented surnames to which he was connected. One of the witnesses listed, and probably a close friend, was the priest Józef Biesch the curate of collegiate church. The document also notes one Agnieszka Bobrowska, whom we know was the wife of the painter Jakub Bobrowski, who had died twelve years earlier. This woman inherited the priest Deberdasiewicz's flat (of the number 38) in Zamość.<sup>19</sup>

The information contained in this inventory enables us to supplement the knowledge we already have about the priest Kajetan Deberdasiewicz and they bring new, unknown facts to light concerning his biography, his culture and social life.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> A. J. Błachut, *Słownik artystów reformackich w Polsce*, Warszawa 2006, p. 164.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 164.

<sup>19</sup> State Archive in Lublin: Akta notariusza Bazylego de Vahnawa Wysoczańskiego w Zamościu, sygn. 6, 1815, nos. 524–525; B. Sawa, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–23.



## *The Art of Armenian Miniaturists from Tokat Functioning in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century*

Joanna Rydzkowska, Toruń

The time period spanning six centuries, from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was not a particularly favourable one to Armenia. The country had lost its sovereignty, and spells of Turkish and Persian occupation forced many Armenians to emigrate and look for a safe place to live in the Crimea, Constantinople, New Julfa, Venice and Lviv. Successive Turkic empires, which occupied the entire western part of Armenia, conducted a policy of resettlement towards conquered countries. In doing so, they suppressed insurgent movements and rebels, as well as settled strategic areas.<sup>1</sup> The resettlements were often carried out selectively, aiming particularly at persons who had considerable influence on society, such as the clergy, aristocracy and educated people. Squeezed by the Ottoman-Turkish repression of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, many Armenians came to the lands of south-eastern Polish-lithuanian Commonwealth. Amongst them was a group of Armenians from Tokat (historical name: Eudokia<sup>2</sup>). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Tokat was, next to the north-eastern Anatolian city of Erzurum, the most important reloading point for Persian silk production and trade.<sup>3</sup> This wealthy city provided good conditions for the development of the art and culture of the Armenian community there, now known as an important part of the Armenian Diaspora. This centre produced the first Armenian printer, Abgar of Tokat.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dzieje gospodarcze i społeczne imperium osmańskiego 1300–1914*, ed. H. Inalcik, D. Quataert. Kraków 2008, pp. 26–27.

<sup>2</sup> Old name Եւդոկիա, Eudokja, Eudocja, Eudoxia, currently Northern Turkey, Sebastia province of Western Armenia.

<sup>3</sup> *Dzieje gospodarcze ...*, p. 433.

<sup>4</sup> M. Ormianian, *The Church of Armenia: her History, Doctrine, Rule, Discipline, Liturgy, Literature and existing collecton*, Oxford 1912, p. 75.

The connection between Polish and Armenian peoples turned out to be long-lasting and fruitful, particularly coming to a head in the time of Baroque. Poland, as a country that enjoyed economic prosperity, was located near to important trade routes, and was relatively open and tolerant, perfectly met the expectations of Armenian refugees. They, in turn, easily adjusted to Polish society, thanks to their Christian faith, knowledge of eastern languages, high levels of education, loyalty towards their new homeland and their practicing of crafts in an oriental style that matched local aristocratic tastes. As a result of these attractive qualities, Armenians were invited to newly-established cities, such as Stanislaviv<sup>5</sup> or Zamość, to work in trade. Furthermore, they were granted numerous privileges from Polish rulers, which gave them a wide jurisdiction over their own activities, a degree of autonomy and freedom of religion. There is some evidence that relations between Poland and Tokat were quite animated: in the 17<sup>th</sup> century bishop Torosowicz wrote a letter in which he gave support to the Armenians in Eudokia, and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the region was visited by Jakob Paschalis, a manufacturer of kontush belts.

The emigrants from Tokat brought with them to the Polish lands various valuable manuscripts and established several scriptoriums in order to produce books for the use of new churches and monasteries, and also for the Armenians, who missed their country, its culture and language. The main centres of manuscript production were Lviv, Stanislaviv, Jazloviec, Zamość and Kamenets - Podilskyi.<sup>6</sup> There is even a hypothesis that manuscripts were produced in Polish territories for export to other centres of the Armenian Diaspora.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, very few monuments survive to the present times. The majority were destroyed as a result of war, fires and Armenian migrations. Nevertheless, there are about 300 manuscripts made by Armenians in Poland, out of which over one hundred contain ornamentation. At present, they are kept in libraries and museums in Yerevan, Vienna, Jerusalem, Warsaw, Cracow, Wrocław, Berlin, Paris and Lviv.

Armenian artists worked in Poland from the 14<sup>th</sup> century although neither their works nor names are known. The first famous illuminator was Mkrditch, or John the Baptist, who in 1522 was a member of a holy orders. At the same time, another famous artist of Lviv was Grigor of Lviv. The second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by an intensified influx of miniaturists from Tokat to Poland. Five of them we know by name: Minas, John, Lazarus, Jacob and Sargis. Since only several works of the two latter artists survive, the present article is devoted to the creative output of Minas, John and Lazarus.<sup>8</sup> The majority of their works are currently kept in Vienna, in the library of Mekhitarists.

<sup>5</sup> Currently Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine.

<sup>6</sup> Currently in Ukraine.

<sup>7</sup> W. Grigorian, 'Kultura piśmiennicza w ormiańskich koloniach na Podolu', in: *Studia z dziejów kontaktów polsko-ormiańskich*, ed. M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, Lublin 1983, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> G. Petrowicz, 'I copisti e scrittori Armeni di Polonia nei secoli XV-XVIII', in: *Mélanges E. Tisserant*, vol. 3, Città del Vaticano 1964, p. 153.



Chronologically, the first miniaturist from the group was Minas, who named himself Diwrigci. He was active from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Lviv and Kamenets – Podolskyi. He was also a writer, poet and notary of the Armenian court in Lviv. He mastered the following languages: Kipchak, Tatar, Armenian and Polish. Many of the documents and literary works<sup>9</sup> that he wrote survive into the present times. His earlier miniatures, for instance, his ornamentation in a Calendar from 1565 and a Psalter from 1567 or a Book of Rites from 1567, are, first and foremost, small designs of poor quality in the marginal areas.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, his later works represent a far better standard of craftsmanship and the development of the individual style of the artist, an example of which is a song-book from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (at present, in the Mekhitarist Library in Vienna, no. 344). Minas never incorporated geometric and zoomorphic ornaments, as well as he probably never painted a single figural scene. In his works he used colours: especially red and blue, the colour of the background and back lines. In these works we see a dexterous hand, subtle line and original compositions. They must have made an impression on other miniaturists, since at that time many similar works were created, e.g. by Presbyter Jacob of Zamość (Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, Cod. Armen. 16 and 17).

In 1602, Poland was visited by Lazarus, a bishop of Tokat, son of Mankusz Sargis and the Lady of Lutel.<sup>11</sup> He was an artist who worked in Zamość, Lviv, Kamenets – Podolskyi and Jazlowiec. Apart from copying and decorating manuscripts, Lazarus wrote poetry, for instance the Song of Praise for Tokat and other elegy songs. In the colophon of the first gospel book he created in Poland in 1603 he mentions how he was expelled from his homeland and found shelter in Zamość, where he wrote and decorated that manuscript (National Library in Warsaw, no. 10758). The second manuscript that has been attributed to Lazarus was a Gospel Book from 1606 (Figs. 1, 2). Yet, in his article from 1932, Mańkowski hesitated if the miniatures should be ascribed to the same Lazarus, especially due to the presence of a number of accomplished artists who had the same name and worked in Poland.<sup>12</sup> Two important examples are Lazarus of Babert/Bayburt and Lazarus, the bishop of the Armenians of Wallachia. However, taking all details into account, as well as the manner of the depiction of the faces, drapery arrangement and colours, we can argue that miniatures are very similar. Lazarus of Tokat died in 1634.

Another notable miniaturist was John of Tokat who lived in Jazlowiec and Kamianets – Podilskyi in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was the author of a Gospel Book written on parchment from 1618 (Mat, no. 9655), which is a copy of the Gospel Book from the

<sup>9</sup> A song/lament about 1551 in Italy; acts, inventories, marriage contracts for Armenian courts, Mekhitarist Library in Vienna, nos. 446, 441, 447, 452, 344.

<sup>10</sup> Both manuscripts are kept in the National Library in Vienna, nos. 25 and 15.

<sup>11</sup> T. Mańkowski, 'Sztuka Ormian lwowskich', *Prace Komisji Historii Sztuki PAU*, 6 (1934), p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 148.



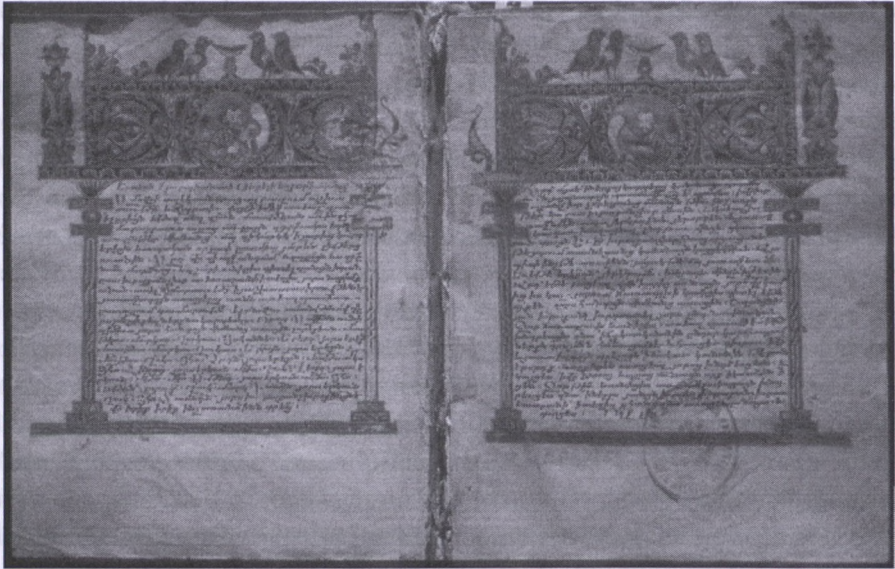


Fig. 1. Lazarus Gospel Book from 1606, Mekhitarist Library in Vienna, no. 97



Fig. 2. Lazarus Gospel Book from 1606, Mekhitarist Library in Vienna, no. 97



Mekhitarist Library (Figs. 1, 2), made by Lazarus of Tokat. Unfortunately, the miniatures of John are of far lower quality, they lack a finessed line, sense of composition and proportions of the human body. In 1629 another work was commissioned from John. This Gospel Book is currently kept in the Mekhitarist Library in Vienna (Fig. 3). The manuscript comes from the 14<sup>th</sup> century from Cilicia but the figural miniatures were completed in Poland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Although they are similar to the ones from the Gospel Book from 1628, they represent a far higher standard. It is not yet clear whether the artist developed such skills over 11 years or if this attribution is wrong and John only made a part of The Gospel Book, which was decorated mostly by another artist e.g. Lazarus of Tokat. Taking all details into consideration we notice that the nose shape of the figures, the colours and drapery structure is very much like the miniatures of Lazarus of Tokat, and which is why the second hypothesis seems to be closer to the truth.

The artists from Tokat residing in Poland were apparently inspired by old, medieval models, particularly those from Cilician Armenia, which at that time represented the highest level of development of Armenian miniaturists. They aspired to beauty and harmony but did not look for new artistic solutions. All elements of pictorial composition, as well as figures and architecture, were depicted for purely decorative purposes, with care for neither the correctness of body proportions nor perspective. Furthermore, they never submitted to the influence of Ottoman-Turkish art, which can be seen in the works of other artists at the same time, i.e. the unknown author of the Gospel Book that is kept in National Museum in Cracow (Fig. 4).<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, there is a noticeable similarity between the creativity of the artists from Tokat and the miniaturists from the city of Kars, a settlement much further to the north-east of present-day Turkey, on the border with Armenia. This can be seen, for instance, in the Breviary from the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, now in The Czartoryscy Library in Cracow (Fig. 5).<sup>14</sup> This relationship suggests that during the Baroque era, cultural exchange between these two centres was strong; this is in addition to the connection of the settlements by an important trade route.

The occurrence of manuscript illumination in the 17<sup>th</sup> was an anachronistic phenomenon. Its flourishing can be explained by taking into consideration several factors. Firstly, at that time print production was becoming more and more popular, many prints were published but their quality could not be compared to the high standards represented by the manuscripts of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Many Armenians were probably of the opinion that printed books were simply ugly and not suitable to perform liturgical functions. Also indicative of this state of affairs is that despite the fact that the world's fourth Armenian

<sup>13</sup> B. Biedrońska-Słota, *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja* [catalogue from exhibition in the National Museum in Cracow], Kraków 1999, p. 87.

<sup>14</sup> J. Rydzkowska, 'Zbiór hymnów brewiarzowych, nr inw. 2406. Ormiański rękopis ze zbiorów Fundacji XX Czartoryskich w Krakowie', *Biuletyn Ormiańskiego Towarzystwa Kulturalnego*, 56/57 (2009), pp. 16–62.



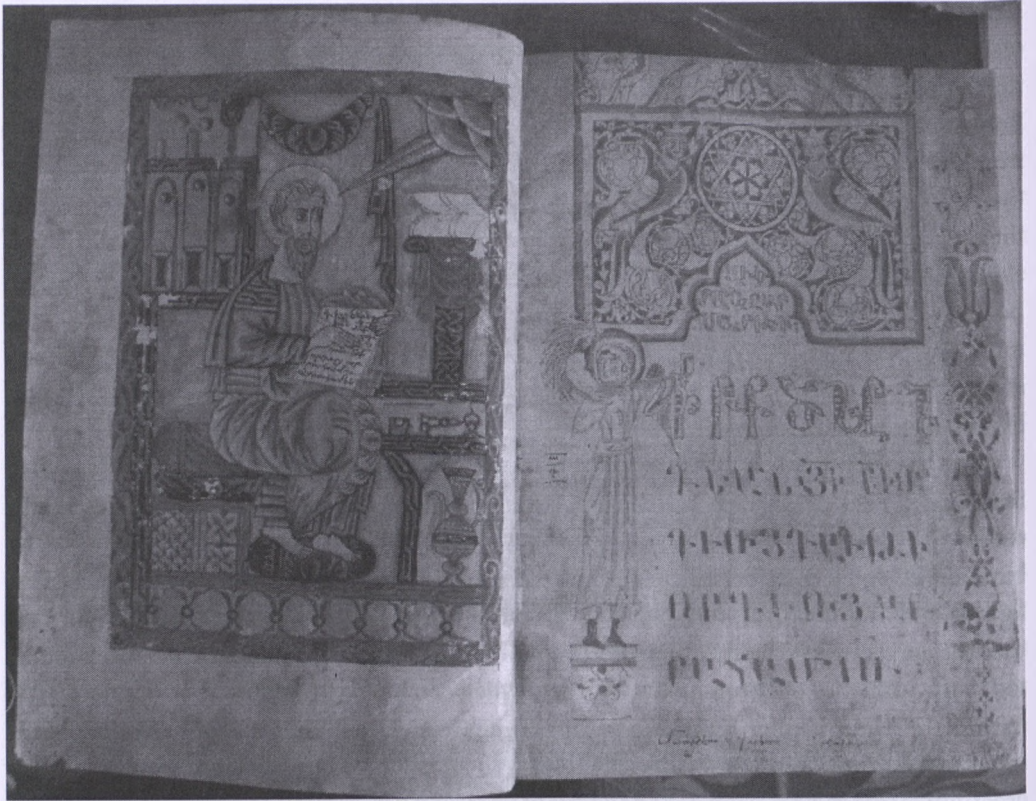


Fig. 3. Gospel Book, 1629, Mekhitarist Library in Vienna, no. 272

printing house was established in Lviv in 1616, throughout the next two hundred years the Armenians remained loyal to manuscript-making and the printing house collapsed after only two years of running. The second, and related, reason is the fact that the Armenians were strongly bound to their traditions, especially those Armenians who were forced to live outside their country.

Mańkowski was of the opinion that an Armenian school of illumination did not manage to develop in Poland since many artists of different roots who constantly travelled were not able to create common features in such short period of time.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the comparison of the works of Armenian miniaturists who came to Poland from different Diaspora centres and those works of another generation of emigrants propagating a western style shows that they have hardly any elements in common. The only characteristic they shared was a passion for manuscripts, rich decorations and continuing echoes of Armenian tradition. Nevertheless, this stage of development of Armenian painting in Poland was the most prolific,

<sup>15</sup> T. Mańkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 151.





Fig. 4. Gospel Book,  
National Museum in Cracow, no. 1106

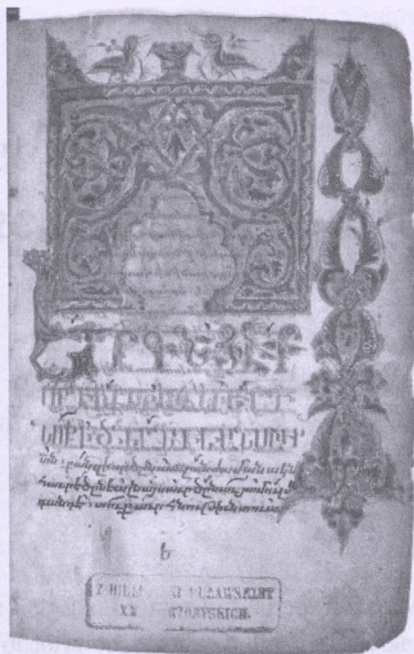


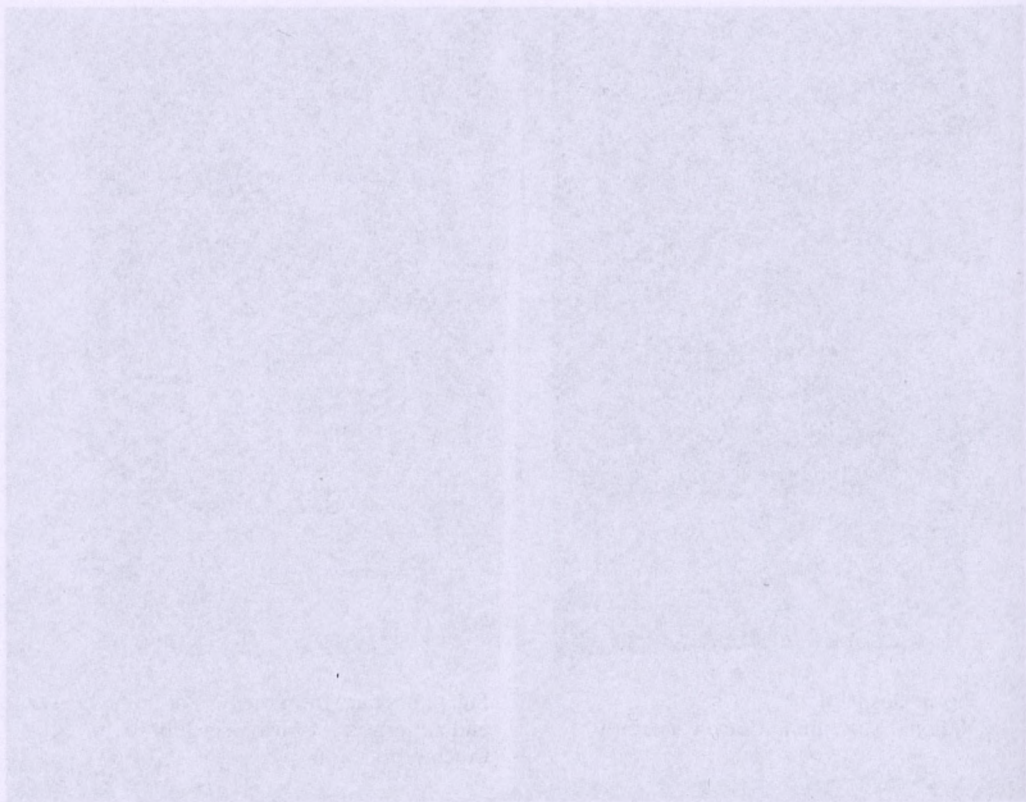
Fig. 5. Breviary from the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup>  
and 17<sup>th</sup> century, Czartoryscy Library in  
Cracow, no. 2406

represented the highest standard and these miniatures made in Lviv had much influence over other Armenian art centres, in Etchmiatsin and New Julfa.<sup>16</sup> At that time, the Armenian miniatures created in Poland came closest to forming a separate school.

The Armenian miniatures of Poland flourished unexpectedly, provoked by the deportations and persecution of the Armenians in old Armenia, and disappeared, equally fast, with the development of printing and the assimilation of Armenians into Polish society. In addition, the artists often changed their places of residence, which was not conducive to the education of the next generations. As a result, the artists from Tokat did not live to have many students who would continue their traditions. The works of later artists, such as Krzysztof Faruchowicz, Stefan Faruchowicz and Stefan Bielecki, who lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, were instead under considerable influence from European art. In their manuscripts elements descending from Armenian art are to be found only in ornaments and initials.

<sup>16</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce*, Lublin 1982, p. 256.





represented the highest standard and these standards were in fact the highest over other Armenian art centres, in Constantinople and New Orleans. At that time, the Armenian community in Constantinople, in order to provide a separate school of young artists, organized the Armenian Art School, which was directed by the famous Armenian painter, the founder of the Armenian school, and distinguished himself with the development of existing and the re-orientation of Armenian art. In addition, the artists often changed their place of residence, which was not conducive to the development of their art. In fact, the artists found it difficult to find a place where they could work and live. The work of these artists, such as the great Armenian painter, the founder of the Armenian school, and the Armenian painter, the founder of the Armenian school, was not only in their own hands, but also in the hands of other artists. The only characteristic of the Armenian art of that time was a lack of a clear direction and a lack of a clear direction. The only characteristic of the Armenian art of that time was a lack of a clear direction and a lack of a clear direction.

M. Zakrzewski-Dobrowa, Opinions in drawing school, Lublin 1984, p. 100.



## Armenian Illuminated Codices in the Collection of the National Library in Warsaw\*

Karolina Wiśniewska, Warsaw University

The little-known Armenian collection of the National Library in Warsaw not only shows the magnificence and variety of Armenian book decoration, but also indicates the role of Lviv as an eminent centre of Armenian scriptoria: of more than ten illuminated codices held in the National Library, four were undoubtedly created in Lviv and belonged to Armenians from the local community (I 12672, II 12679, III 12677, III 12681). Moreover, a major part of the contemporary collection consists of codices from the Library of Lviv University (established in 1783), previously the Jesuit Academy (established in 1661).<sup>1</sup> A number of its books, stolen by the Nazis, were found in Adelin in 1945.<sup>2</sup> These included liturgical books and Gospels from the Armenian Diaspora, which were recovered by the National Library in Warsaw in that same year, and have been in its collection ever since. Noteworthy among them are: two Hymn and Songbooks (dated 1344, Surchat, Akc. 4097; 1424, Amasia, I 12671), a Book of Sermons (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> c., III 12678), St. Paul's Letters and Book of Revelation (1563, Lviv, I 12672), an Armenian Canon Book (1600–1602, Lviv, II 12679) and an Easter Week Canon (18<sup>th</sup> century, I 12675), two books of the Four Gospels (1603, Zamość, I 12670; 1639, Lviv, III 12677), two Lectionaries (1658, III 12682; 1698, Lviv, III 12681) and a Psalter (17<sup>th</sup> c., I 12676), together forming a var-

\* The article is based on the results of my three-month internship in the Manuscript Department of the National Library in Warsaw in the fall and winter of 2009. I would like to take the opportunity of giving thanks to Andrzej Kaszlej, who supported my work with his advice.

<sup>1</sup> The Library of Lviv University had many manuscripts, which were owned by Armenian community in Zamość. Some of them arrived to Zamość with the Armenians who at the request of Jan Zamojski transferred from Lviv to the newly established city. T. Mańkowski, 'Archiwum lwowskiej katedry ormiańskiej', *Archeion*, 10 (1932) pp. 1–2. The author also traced the complicated history of manuscripts held in the Armenian cathedral archive in Lviv, *Ibidem*, pp. 2–8.

<sup>2</sup> *Zbiory rękopisów w bibliotekach i muzeach w Polsce*, ed. D. Kamolowa, T. Sieniacka, vol. 1, Warszawa 2003, p. 357.

ied group of codices dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of these works, as well as to present the most interesting examples of miniatures and their characteristics. If the date and place of execution is known from a colophon I will give exact information. When it is unknown, either because their colophons or inscriptions are missing, or because not all pages of a codex have survived, I will use data from Akinian's *Katalog der armenischen Handschriften in den Bibliotheken zu Lvov und Stanislavov* published in 1961 or Macler's article from 1927 summarizing his field studies, which he conducted in Galicia and Bukovina in 1925.<sup>3</sup> It should also be stated that the Cilician Gospel Book from Skevra will not be taken into consideration in this paper, as the owner of the codex is the Armenian Catholic Church in Poland and the manuscript is kept in the National Library as a deposit.

Starting from the oldest codices dated to the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century, two Hymn and Songbooks should be discussed.

The first one (Ak. 4097) was originally owned by the Lviv historian Aleksander Czołowski (1865–1944), and in 1947 was bought by the National Library.<sup>4</sup> The codex was

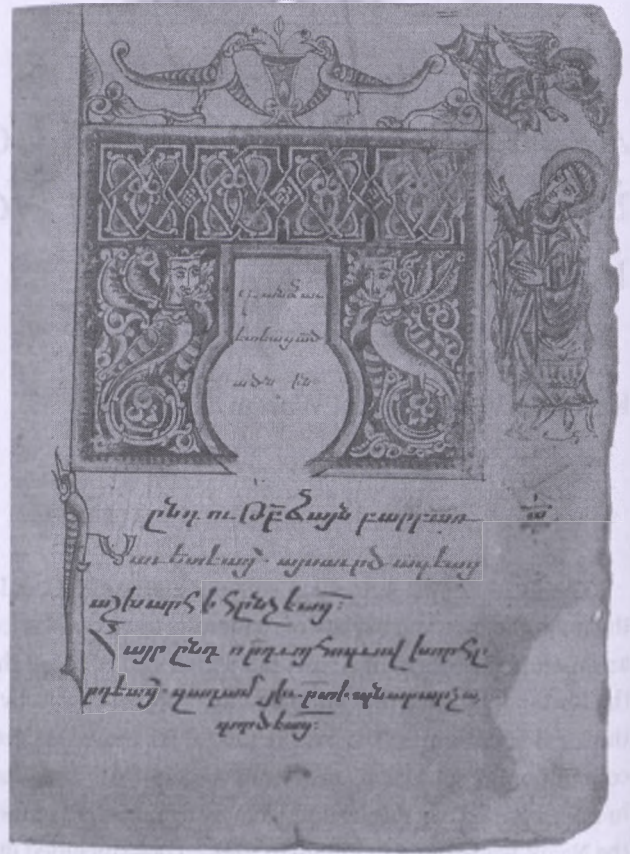


Fig. 1. Hymn- and Songbook (1424, Amasia, I 12671), p. 7, The National Library in Warsaw

<sup>3</sup> N. Akinian, *Katalog der armenischen Handschriften in den Bibliotheken zu Lvov und Stanislavov*, Wien 1961; F. Macler, 'Rapport sur une mission scientifique en Galicie et en Bukovine, juillet-août 1925', *Revue des Études arméniennes*, 7 (1927), pp. 94–155.

<sup>4</sup> *Biblioteka Narodowa. Katalog Rękopisów*, vol. 7, ed. K. Muszyńska, Warszawa 1969, p. XIX. Ownership of the codex is indicated by an *ex libris* placed on the internal side of the book cover. Aleksander Czołowski had an extensive manuscript collection, its history and contents with bibliographical references are discussed in: P. Kennedy Grimsted, 'The Stefanyk Library of the Ukrainian Academy of



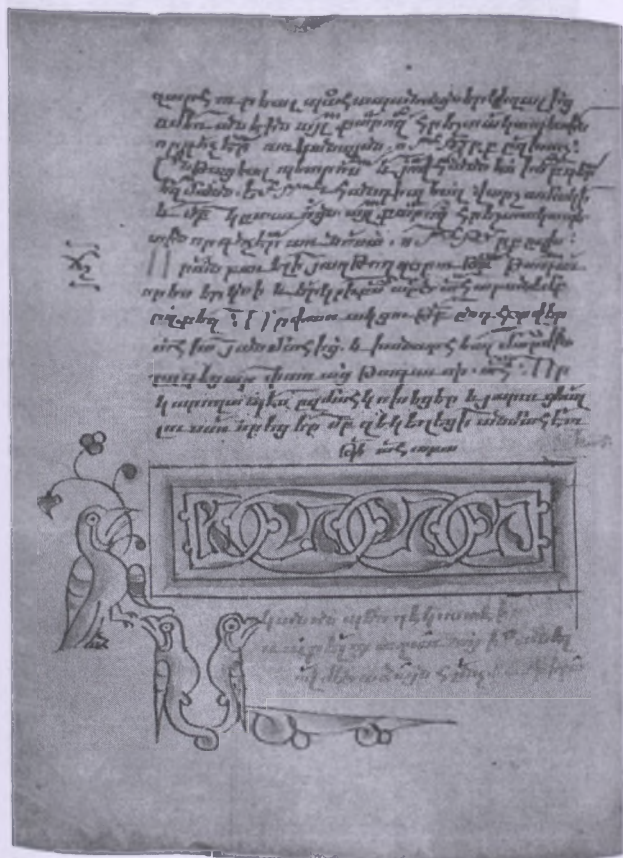


Fig. 2. Hymn- and Songbook (15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> c., Akc. 4097), f. 168v, The National Library in Warsaw

written in 1344 in Surchat.<sup>5</sup> The small stature of the Hymnal, as well as the presence of worn-out spots and the loss of painting layers indicate the manuscript's functional use. The decoration consists of black outlines filled in with watercolours in purple and green hues. Mainly floral and zoomorphic marginals and six vignettes (f.8v, 54r, 104r, 127r, 168v, 215r) structure the text, marking off its particular passages.

Let us consider the second one, known as Ganjonen jew Talaran (I 12671) was, according to Akinian, written by Yokanes [John] in Amasia in 1424.<sup>6</sup> The manuscript is a hand-sized book with one miniature which has the width of a text column and consists of a decorative vignette with two birds and scene of the Annunciation in the outer margin (p. 7). Numerous ornamental initials in zoo- and anthropomorphic forms; with decorative mar-

ginals are composed of abstract interlocking elements such as leaves and buds, sometimes adorned with additional depictions of birds, human faces, occasionally with architectural structures (temple – pp. 117, 393, 399) or crosses (pp. 271, 426), and once with a hybrid beast – a harpy wearing a crown (p. 547).

Sciences: a Treasury of Manuscript Collections in Lviv', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 5 (1981), no. 2, pp. 217–218.

<sup>5</sup> Akinian proposed the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century: *Katalog der armenischen...*, p. 37; B. Biedrońska-Słota (*Ormanie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja*. Katalog wystawy, ed. B. Biedrońska-Słota, Kraków 1999, p. 97) dated the codex to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but indicated her uncertainty with a question mark.

<sup>6</sup> N. Akinian, *Katalog der armenischen...*, p. 9; F. Macler did not give an exact date and place, but dated the codex to the 15<sup>th</sup> century: *Rapport sur une mission...*, p. 145.

Following chronological order, a Book of Sermons (III 12678) should be presented. This manuscript was, according to Akinian, dated to the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century and written by a priest named T'adeos (Thaddeus).<sup>7</sup> Macler, on the other hand, dated the codex to the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> The decoration of the Book of Sermons is rather simple and mostly ornamental. Decorative initials are accompanied by floral marginals. The only figural decoration consists of two birds depicted on both sides of a spring, on the headpiece of an incipit page (p. 1) and two other birds in the outer margins, accompanying ornamental initials (p. 11, 189).

The next relevant codex contains St. Paul's Letters and the Book of Revelation (I 12672). The manuscript was written in Lviv in 1563 by the monk Thouman (Thomas).<sup>9</sup> The codex opens with an ornamental incipit page (covered with a layer of dirt), the headpiece of which contains a vignette with floral decoration, an ornamental initial and marginal floral motifs creating a kind of candelabrum. This miniature, along with the homogeneous scheme of marginal decorations that follows it, is painted with black outlines filled with a red tint. A representative example of marginal floral decoration can be seen on p. 406. Ornamental initials sometimes have original stylised floral motifs; much rarer are zoomorphic-shaped initials, a few have an ornithomorphic form.

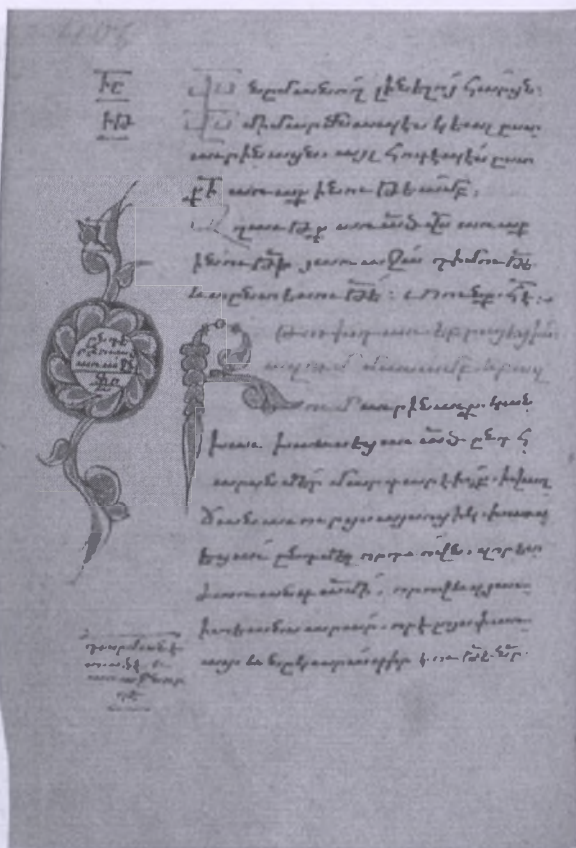


Fig. 3. Hymn- and Songbook (1344, Surchat, Akc. 4097), The National Library in Warsaw

<sup>7</sup> From the information on p. 116 of the codex we know that the manuscript was owned in 1696 by the counsel of Zamość Stephan Alhinowicz.

<sup>8</sup> F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission...*, p. 134.

<sup>9</sup> N. Akinian, *Katalog der armenischen...*, pp. 5–6. Macler gives the full text of the colophon with translation into French: F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission...*, pp. 128–129.



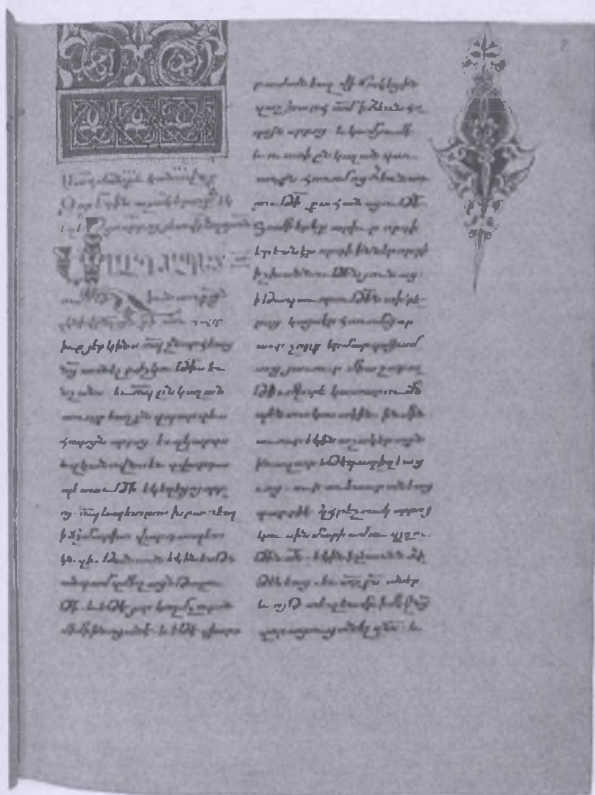


Fig. 4. Armenian Canon Book (1600, Lviv, II 12679), f. 2r, The National Library in Warsaw

Moving to the next codices executed in Lviv, the Armenian Canon Book (II 12679) should be mentioned. As we know from its colophon, the manuscript was written by Zekhno in 1602.<sup>10</sup> Not many miniatures are inserted into the text. A small vignette, the width of one text column, with ornamental initial and floral motifs in the outer margin, is depicted on f. 2r. The beginnings of the most important text sections are emphasized by ornamental initials, some further passages are denoted with a decorated circle in which the number of the chapter is inscribed, and finally, less important parts of the text are distinguished in the outer margin with Armenian letters. This marking system is of consequence and corresponds to the list of content contained in the codex.

At this point a few remarks must be added about an Easter Week Canon (I 12675), dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> This is a relatively small codex, containing hymns for the Octave of Easter, has a quite simple but stylistically consistent marginal decoration. The manuscript opens with an ornamental incipit page (p. 1) with an interesting ornithomorphic initial that extends into the form of a candelabrum with floral marginal decoration. There are also two ornamental (pp. 6, 7) and ten ornithomorphic initials (pp. 8, 7, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32), but only four of them have floral marginals (pp. 6, 7,

<sup>10</sup> F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission...*, pp. 115–124. Macler gives the full text of the colophon with translation into French, which shows that the codex was finished in 1051 of the Armenian era, that means in 1602. Akinian dated the codex to 1600: N. Akinian, *Katalog der armenischen...*, pp. 23–26.

<sup>11</sup> Akinian dated this codex to the 18<sup>th</sup> century: N. Akinian, *Katalog der armenischen...*, p. 15, Macler proposed the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century as the time of writing this manuscript, which he identified as a collection of hymns: F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission...*, p. 124.



17, 20). There is only one example of a figurative miniature in the outer margin (p. 8), which shows a bird with five candles.

Turning now to the Four Gospels, I shall first draw attention to a codex from Zamość (I 12670). At this point it is worth noting that this Gospel was written down by the Armenian priest Lazar, who, as we know from the colophon, came from Eudokia (Tokat). In the inscription it is added that when he worked in Zamość in 1603 on the Four Gospels Lazar was in sad spirits after being expelled from his country.<sup>12</sup> His miniatures serve to tie the manuscript to an original Armenian visual tradition and evoke some forms developed in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. The remarkable miniatures were illuminated using a great amount of gold and vivid colours (blue, red, green and yellow). He also followed the Armenian tradition of

illuminated Gospels, pairing the pages of Eusebius' letter and the eight Canon Tables, as well as juxtaposing the images of the Evangelists with the incipit pages opening each Gospel. The composition of each Evangelist page centres on a seated, haloed scribe, who is surrounded by writing implements and books. Thus the miniaturist is continuing the best pictorial traditions of Armenia. It is also worth noting that these images of the Evangelists are painted with the highest degree of attention given to facial parts and details such as draperies and writing

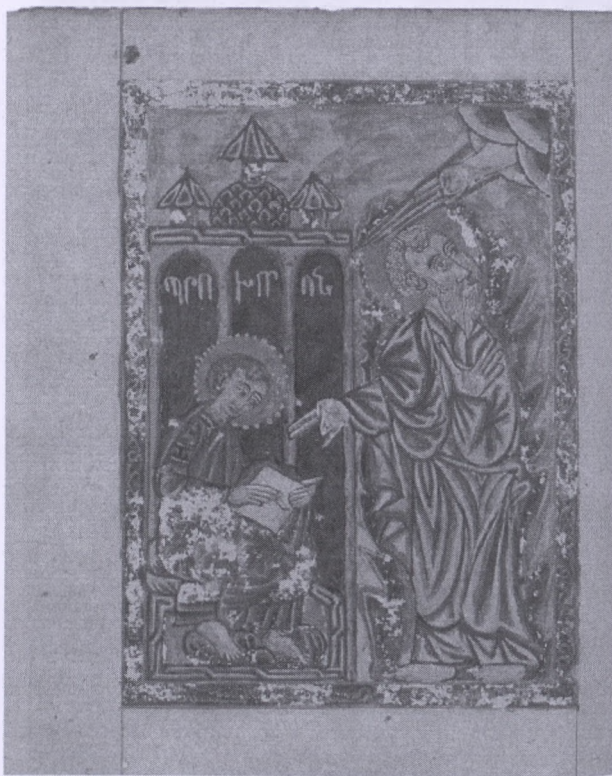


Fig. 5. Four Gospels (1603, Zamość, I 12670), p. 522, The National Library in Warsaw

<sup>12</sup> This codex (as well as III 12677 and other manuscripts from the Armenian cathedral treasury and the collection of Aleksander Czołowski) was exhibited in Lviv in 1932. The catalogue of this exhibition mentions the colophon and gives some information about the Four Gospels: *Wystawa zabytków ormiańskich we Lwowie*, 19. VI–30. IX 1932, Lwów 1932, pp. 25–26. The whole text of the colophon with translation to French is given in: F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission...*, pp. 150–152. Tadeusz Mańkowski in *Sztuka ormian lwowskich*, Kraków 1934, p. 91–92 also mentioned the text of the colophon and gave some more information about Lazar, who called himself bishop of Eudokia. Mańkowski wrote that he was in Poland from 1602 and apart from Zamość he stayed in Lviv and Jazłowiec. He was also known as a poet, author of two elegies, a laudatory poem of his family town and a laudatory song dedicated to bishop Karapet.



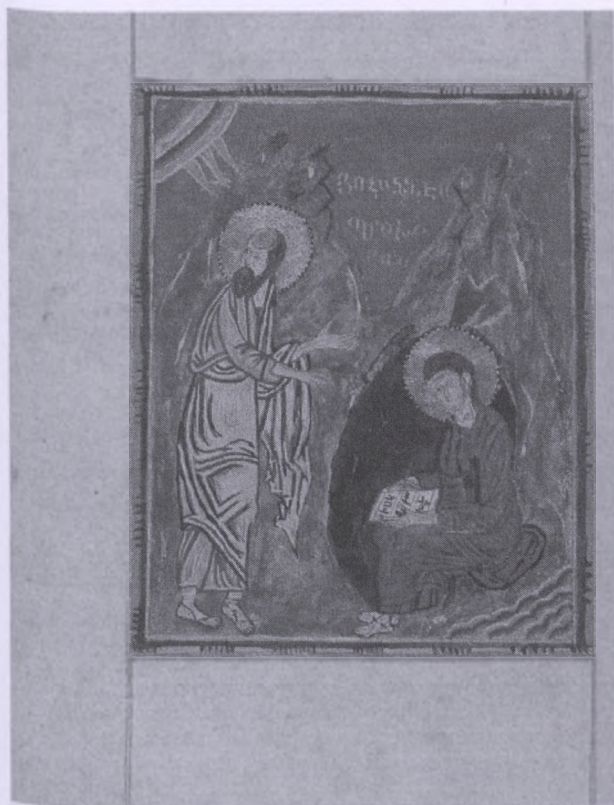


Fig. 6. Four Gospels (1639, Lviv, III 12677), p. 510, The National Library in Warsaw

utensils. These portraits are facing elaborate incipit pages which attract the eye with carefully illuminated ornamental letters and ornate floral marginals. Moreover, the construction of the non-figural marginal decorations which characterises not only incipit pages but also other text passages, and is mostly based on highly stylized forms, is consistent throughout the book.

By contrast, miniatures in the Four Gospels executed in Lviv in 1639 (III 12677), are not so elaborate. The scribe and miniaturist Mkrtime' (John Baptist)<sup>13</sup>, according to what is known from the colophon, was not such a gifted artist as the priest Lazar. On one hand, some damage to the codex, such as missing parts to a few pages, make it more difficult to appreciate the artistry of the decoration. On the other, the images that are in their original sequence: Euse-

bius' Letter (pp. 10–11), eight Canon Tables (pp. 12–19), images of the Evangelists (p. 40, 210, 322, 510), four incipit pages (p. 41, 211, 323, 511), and the many marginals, all refer to the best Armenian pictorial traditions. Only the full-page miniatures are simplified, less refined and more decorative. From the Evangelist representations only the miniature of St. John and Prochorus (p. 510) is more elaborate, indicating the mountainous scenery of the island of Patmos. Furthermore, gold is rarely used; one can see it only in vignette decorations. Particularly interesting is the way of using colour - palettes made up of intensive hues can be seen in the full-page miniatures, whereas the marginals were painted with a less vivid choice of colours. Noteworthy is also the diversity of motifs used in the incipit pages.<sup>14</sup> On each

<sup>13</sup> N. Akinian, *Katalog der armenischen...*, pp. 4–5; Macler gave the whole text of colophon with translation: F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission...*, pp. 111–112.

<sup>14</sup> On each of these preparatory pencil drawings are to be seen, that enable the study of the technique of constructing and composing most of the ornamental motifs.

of them different ornaments fill the opening vignette and each floral candelabrum in the outer margin is built of different ornamental motifs.

A good example of both figural and non-figural miniatures is provided also by a small sized Psalter (I 12676) from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> Decoration of the codex consists of seven illuminated incipit pages (p. 48, 103, 164, 216, 276, 327, 382), ornamental initials with several floral, five ornithological and eight figural marginal miniatures. Within this last group, a representation of Christ with a book (p. 13), a temple (p. 25, 183), prophet Moses (p. 39), a man with a nimbus - king David (?) (p. 54), a man in a turban (p. 154), Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (p. 442), katholikos Nerses sitting on a throne (p. 453) and a harpy or siren (p. 272) can be seen. A few remarks

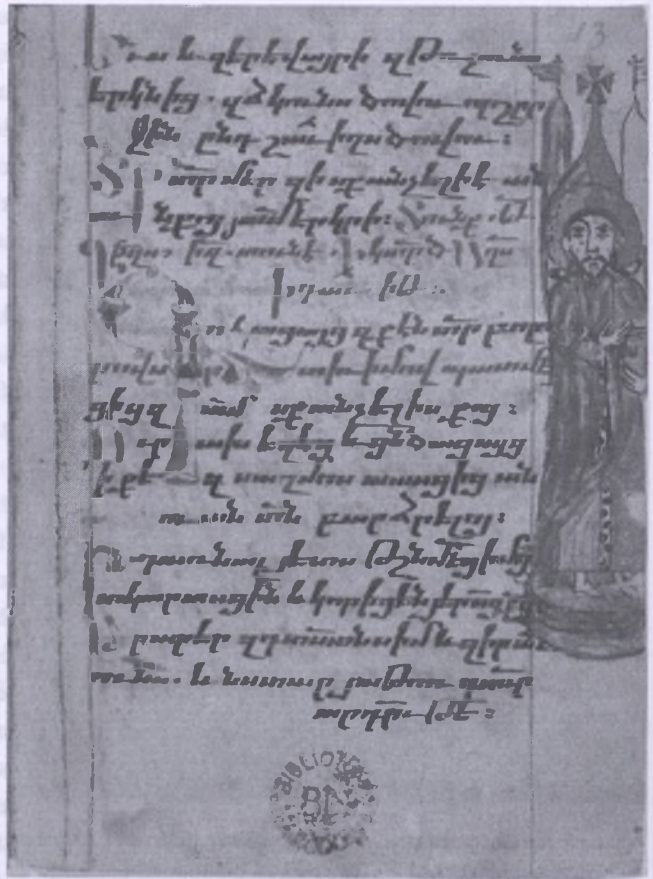


Fig. 7. Psalter (17<sup>th</sup> c., I 12676), p. 13,  
The National Library in Warsaw

must be added about the character of the decoration. The outline is not as prominent as it is in all of the above-mentioned illuminations. Sadly, in many cases the painting layer is blurred and as a consequence the miniature is ill-defined. Yet, it can still be discerned that the painter shows fantasy and inventiveness in the choice of the decorative repertoire and in the reinterpretation of traditional motifs.

<sup>15</sup> According to Akinian (*Katalog der armenischen...*, p. 3) the codex was written in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Macler dated this manuscript to the 16<sup>th</sup> century but with a question mark indicating that this date is uncertain. He mentioned also that the codex is incomplete – both its beginning and end are missing: F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission...*, pp. 130–131.



I shall turn finally to a Lectionary (III 12681) written in Lviv at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> Two parts of the codex (pp. 1–28 and pp. 91–205) are decorated with ornamental initials and marginal miniatures. Each part of the text is begun with an incipit page, with a title written in a trifoliate niche in the vignette. There are two full-page incipit page decorations (p. 1 with floral motifs and p. 91 with a depiction of two birds near a spring) and four smaller ones, which are the width of one text column. As could be expected, every incipit page has floral decoration in the outer margin and ornamental initials. Numerous marginals are drawn with black outlines which are filled with two contrasting colours: red and blue. Traditional motifs are creatively transformed. All of them are painted with a flourish and a fair amount of fantasy. Apart from the floral repertoire, figural decorations should be mentioned: six depictions of birds (pp. 7, 10, 12, 92, 109, 141), two keys combined with a cross (p. 111) and Archangel Michael defeating a devil (p. 142).

To draw conclusions, the quality of the illumination of the Armenian codices in the National Library is uneven. Several manuscripts (for example I 12670) are of exquisite quality, others were carried out by less proficient craftsmen, and there are many whose miniatures consist of text divisions of varying intricacy. Most of the discussed codices were decorated only with marginal illuminations, a few contain elaborate full-page miniatures, which include Eusebius' Letter, eight Canon Tables, representations of the Evangelists and ornate incipit pages in the Four Gospels and extensive vignettes in other codices. However, the marginal miniatures, varied as they are in quality and style, play an important role: that of organizing, structuring and building a significant frame that imposes a certain understanding of the text. The specific iconographic details seem to have been chosen to draw attention to the meaning of the relevant text passage. Despite the relatively small number of Armenian codices, the Warsaw collection enables one to examine the repertoire of marginal motifs from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century and their relations both to their accompanying text and to the use of decoration in manuscripts from Proper and Lesser Armenia. Moreover, forming a representative group of miniatures created in Lviv and Zamość, the collection of the National Library in Warsaw forms a convenient starting point for studying Armenian art produced in the kingdom of Poland.

<sup>16</sup> The codex is divided into several parts, Akinian, (*Katalog der armenischen...* p. 6) mentioned 1698 as the date of the manuscript's execution, and Isaak as one of the scribes, while Macler (*Rapport sur une mission...*, p. 126) on the basis of the colophon, stated that part of codex was written in September of 1698 by Nikol (?), and the other in June of 1703.





## *Maps of Kamenets Podilskyj From Various Epochs and the Armenian Heritage*

Ruben Atoyan, Minsk

Kamieniec Podolski (Kamenets-Podilskyi), one the oldest and most beautiful towns of Ukraine, is located on the Smotrich river, it has a deep canyon forming a huge curve, similar in shape to a heart. Situated on an unassailable peninsula is medieval Kamenets, the historical centre of today's Kamenets-Podilskyi. Kamenets is one of a few towns in the Ukraine, which have preserved their historical shape. Tourists can admire numerous monuments of the town, the sights of the Old Fortress, the beautiful Town Hall, and the religious monuments.

The subject of this paper is a trip to Kamenets-Podilskyi, during which the focus was on the study of the Kamenets Castle, one of the winners of the Ukraine's Seven Wonders competition. Still, the overriding purpose of our travel was, undoubtedly, the Armenian monuments of this region. We wanted to find out what has survived to this day from the large Armenian community in Galicia and Podolia of the 14<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Guided by the text of Churches of the Polish Armenians, we planned our itinerary.<sup>1</sup> More than two thousand kilometers had to be covered during three days.

Our research on the area was carried out in the summer of 2008, during which time we set out to define the condition of the monuments. In order to achieve this purpose we used not only modern, but also antique maps. Namely the works of European artists who drew historical maps of Kamenets in late middle ages (maps from 1672, 1684, 1691, 1773 are known)<sup>2</sup> (Fig.1). Cartography was developed in Europe at that time and many maps "from bird's eye view" were created. These antique maps allow us to view the original shape of the

<sup>1</sup> J. Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół ormian polskich*, Kraków 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja*, ed. B. Biedrońska-Słota, Kraków 1999, nos. 69, 70.



Fig.1. The antique map of Kamenets from 1691  
the map wiew, 1691, engraving, National Museum, Warsaw

medieval town and to find monuments that are now missing, including those of the Armenian community. Therefore although a great number of monuments have been irreversibly lost, we can at least identify and describe them by comparing antique and up-to-date maps. However, we are fortunate that the Town Hall, the Cathedral, a lot of churches, the Citadel and urban walls remain extant.

The Armenians had a long history in Kamenets; their quarter occupied the southern part of the town. By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Armenian community in Kamenets had grown to become one of the largest in the town and the major in the East European region in the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries. One hypothesis of how the Armenian community appeared in Kamenets arose from the work of the French orientalist, missionary and diplomat Louis Marie Pidou de Saint-Olon (1637–1717) and the Armenian cultural figure of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century – Minas Bzhishkiants. Referring to a document inserted in 1641 in the Crown Metrics, they asserted that in 1062 Armenians from the city of Ani were invited by Prince Feodor to Kiev, Lviv and Kamenets.

Being a part of the town home guard, Armenians were employed to protect Kamenets from overseas aggressors - the Turks and Tartars, and in peace time they were mainly en-



gaged in the practical arts and in trade with Oriental countries. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Armenian Quarter began to really develop (Fig.2). Armenians lived compactly in the southern part of the town where they built a cathedral, several churches, and a lot of public and residential buildings. When, with the help of the Lithuanian Grand Dukes, Kamenets received the Magdeburg Right, Armenians started to elect their own Vogt (Reeve) and created their own court. In Kamenets, there were the Armenian magistracy and the Armenian school; there lived and worked historians and writers.



Fig. 2. The Armenian Quarter on the map of Kamenets from 1672

The preserved written documentation of the Armenian communities in Podolia and Galicia totals tens of thousands of pages and cover the period of 1524–1669. These include 28 registers of the Armenian Reeve's Court of Kamenets (1572–1663); registers, as well as cash and metric books relating to the Lviv Armenian Ecclesiastical Court of the same years; the Kamenets Chronicle that describes the events of the Hotin War; the Venetian Chronicle; the Chronicle of Poland; samples of Mkhitar Gosh's Code of Laws with a plenty of additional articles and comments, authorized by the Polish King Sigismundus in 1519; the tractate by Andrei Torosovich, called the Secrets of the Elixir Stone (1626); dictionaries, prayer books, Psalters, hagiographies, calendars, and private correspondence. Generally, the sources are written in Armenian letters in the so-called Armenian-Kypchak language used by Podolian Armenians.

If you ask local residents about the main sightseeing attractions of their town, they will direct you towards the Medieval fortress, the old Town Hall, and the Armenian Market Square. Just like all of the tourists, we entered the historical part of the town through the Fortress, by the bridge. Right behind it, there is a defensive fortification which was created to absorb the first blow of the penetrating enemy - the Armenian Bastion.

Then, there is a road from the Bastion which led us to the biggest square of the old town- it is called the Armenian Market. This space once incorporated the Armenian town hall, houses of rich townspeople, and the Burse (Exchange). Nowadays, there is only one preserved old building marked in maps as the Armenian Trading House. Actually, it is a former house of the Armenian bishop, where there is the Archaeological Museum now.

The Armenian Street arches down from the Square deep into the Quarter to the ruins of Surb Nikogayos Cathedral. It was built in 1398. After the seizure of Kamenets, the Turks

destroyed *Surb Nikogayos*; it was restored only in 1756–1767. For a long time, the Cathedral had dominated the panorama of the southern part of the town, but unfortunately it was demolished in the 1930s. There remains only the substructure of the Cathedral, the arches of the entrance, the warehouse, and the high four-step bell tower (built in 1580, reconstructed in 1633).

Passing by the high walls of the Armenian warehouses, it is possible to approach the small *St. Nicholas' Church*. It is the former *St. Virgin's Church*, which is often thought to have been built when the first Armenian incomers appeared in the town. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it is mentioned in the sources as the *Armenian Church of Annunciation*. Later, like other Armenian churches, it became *Armenian-Catholic*. In 1811, *Greco-Catholic*, who did not have a separate church, asked the authorities to turn it into a *Uniat church of Prelate Nicholas*. In 1839, under the same name, the church became *Orthodox*.

On the outer wall of the Church, it is easy to notice the stone of approximately 20 x 20 cm with an Armenian cross on it. Inside, to the right of the altar, one of the icons with an image of the Holy Mother is referred to as “*Armenian*”. In the centre of the Old town, on *Town Hall Square*, there is another monument esteemed by the townspeople, which is the *Armenian town well*, built in 1638.

Using the material gathered during our research, a three-dimensional illustrated map of the *Armenian Quarter* of *Kamenets* was created, on which all extant and missing Armenian monuments were marked (Fig. 3).

Not all Armenian sites were indicated on the historic maps that were the subject of our research. Walking around the *Town Hall Square* for fifteen minutes, we found two more monuments, an *Armenian house* of the 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the modern *Hetman Hotel*. The memorial sign on the facade specifies the names of all owners of the building. Here, it is possible to read that “... in 1735, this stone house was built by *Sefer Ovanesovich*.” Therefore, our fieldwork around the town enabled us to identify Armenian owned buildings from various eras which were not identified on previous maps.

Another source of the findings that are represented on our three-dimensional map was the use of historical maps. In particular, there are many Armenian sites, which have not survived up to now and are marked on a historical map of the town of 1773. These sites are: the *Armenian Town Hall*, *Tower*, *Hospital*, small church *Surb Grigor Lusavorich*. Comparing several historical maps with today's map of *Kamenets-Podolski*, we found that the place of the *Armenian Tower* was once signed as the *Guard-House Tower*. A small distance to the south, there was an *Armenian hospital*. Presently on this site there is a two-storied

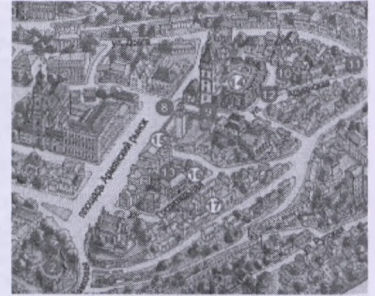


Fig. 3. The Armenian Quarter on the map of *Kamenets* from 2008 (by R. Atoyán)



ancient building, while the street itself is called Hospital St. However the Armenian Town Hall at the end of the present Commandant's Lane has not been preserved. Neither has the Armenian Mill - on the map of 1691, there are mills of all the three communities, including an Armenian one.

As a further part of our research we visited The Sanctuary- a scientific institution where its employees showed us a plethora of interesting materials- albums with old postcards, reports on research and excavations of Surb Nikogayos Cathedral, and even students' projects dedicated to its restoration. These combined research techniques of firsthand fieldwork surveillance, the use of historical sources, maps and the incorporation of the findings of others have enabled us to create maps of the town that allow us to view its heritage in fuller and more vivid detail than has been gained before and to draw attention to the Armenian community that had once flourished there.

*Agnieszka Bender, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw*

Armenians, who had been settling in Poland since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, were granted in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, by the King Casimir the Great and his successors, a number of privileges allowing them to live peacefully in one hundred and twenty thousand in various provinces. They settled mostly in Lwów, which boasted the largest Armenian community, but also in Kamieniec Podolski, Koryć, Łuck, Raszów, Jarosław, Ławosz, Stanisławów and other towns.<sup>1</sup> They occupied themselves mostly with trading and importing decorative objects from Turkey and Persia. As their complexion was dark, their hair black and their distinct language was impossible to understand, they were called 'Portians' for a long time.

Due to their mobility and their trading and craft skills, the Armenians in Poland achieved a high social status. Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dobrowa is of the opinion that the Armenians nearly monopolised the Eastern trade of the First Polish Republic.<sup>2</sup> Already in the Middle Ages in Lwów they owned stores along the Armenian Street all the way up to the Dominican church, as well as on the Market Square, to the South of the city hall on the so-called 'rich store street'. In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Armenians started to buy often purchase houses in the city centre, especially after King Stephen Batory made their status equal to other burghers.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Armenian Lwów

<sup>1</sup> K. Szepka, *Polscy armeni* (Lwów, Kraków 1926), 10-11.  
<sup>2</sup> C. Chyrowicz, *Genealogie et Nomenclatures de XVII et XVIII siècles*, 2006, 200-201.  
<sup>3</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dobrowa, *Genealogie et Nomenclatures de XVIII et XIX siècles*, 2006, 200-201.  
<sup>4</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dobrowa, *Genealogie et Nomenclatures de XVIII et XIX siècles*, 2006, 200-201.  
<sup>5</sup> K. Szepka, *op. cit.*, 10-11.

unfortunately it was demolished in the 1930s. There remains only a fragment of the wall, which was used as a fence for the Armenian cemetery. The church was destroyed in 1935. The church was built in 1735 by the Armenian community that had once flourished there.<sup>10</sup> In 1871, Greco-Catholic, who did not have a separate church, asked the authorities to turn it into a Greek church of Prelate Nicholas. In 1879, under the same name, the church became Orthodox.

On the outer wall of the Church, it is easy to notice the stone of approximately 20 x 30 cm with an Armenian cross on it. Inside, to the right of the altar, one of the icons with an image of the Holy Mother is referred to as "Armenian". In the centre of the Old town, on Town Hall Square, there is another monument erected by the townspeople, which is the Armenians' open well, built in 1638.

Using the material gathered during our research, a three-dimensional illustrated map of the Armenian Quarter of Kamensk was created, on which all extant and missing Armenian monuments were marked (Fig. 3).

Not all Armenian sites were indicated on the historic maps that were the subject of our research. Walking around the Town Hall Square for fifteen minutes, we found two more monuments, an Armenian house of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the modern Hetman Hotel. The memorial sign on the facade specifies the name and all owners of the building. Here, it is possible to read that "... in 1735, this stone house was built by Sefer Gvanesovich." Therefore, our fieldwork around the town enabled us to identify Armenian-owned buildings from various eras which were not identified on previous maps.

Another source of the findings that are represented on our three-dimensional map was the use of historical maps. In particular, there are many Armenian sites, which have not survived up to now and are marked on a historical map of the town of 1773. These sites are: the Armenian Town Hall, Tower, Hospital, small church Surb Grigor Lazavovich. Comparing several historical maps with today's map of Kamensk-Pudolki, we found that the place of the Armenian Tower was once signed as the Guard-House Tower. A small distance to the south, there was an Armenian hospital. Presently on this site there is a two-storey



## *Armenian Artisans and Traders of Decorative Arts in the First Polish Republic. Status of Research and Proposed Directions for Further Study*

Agnieszka Bender, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw

Armenians, who had been settling in Poland since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, were granted in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, by the king Casimir the Great and his successors, a number of privileges allowing them to live peacefully in communities and devote themselves to various professions. They settled mostly in Lwów, which boasted the largest Armenian community,<sup>1</sup> but also in Kamieniec Podolski, Kutry, Łuck, Raszaków, Jazłowiec, Zamość, Stanisławów<sup>2</sup> and other towns.<sup>3</sup> They occupied themselves mostly with trading and importing decorative objects from Turkey and Persia. As their complexion was dark, their hair black and their distinct language was impossible to understand, they were called “Persians” for a long time.

Due to their mobility and their trading and artistic skills, the Armenians in Poland achieved a high social status. Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa is of the opinion that the Armenians nearly monopolised the Eastern trade of the First Polish Republic.<sup>4</sup> Already in the Middle Ages in Lwów they owned stores along the Armenian Street all the way up to the Dominican church, as well as on the Market Square, to the North of the city hall on the, so called, “rich store street”. In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Armenians started to more often purchase houses in the city centre, especially after king Stephen Batory made their status equal to other burghers.<sup>5</sup> Towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Symeon Lehacy

<sup>1</sup> K. Stopka, *Pomniki minionej chwały. Ormiański Lwów*, Kraków 2002, passim.

<sup>2</sup> C. Chowaniec, *Ormianie w Stanisławowie w XVII i XVIII wieku*, Stanisławów 1928, passim.

<sup>3</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce*, Lublin 1982, pp. 18–19; *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja*, [catalogue of exhibition], Kraków 1999, pp. 12, 177–178.

<sup>4</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> K. Stopka, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–25.

(born ca. 1584 in Zamość, died after 1639), the writer, church cantor and traveller wrote that Armenians were at that time in Zamość “great and wealthy merchants who have their representatives in Istanbul, Anguria, Isfahan, Moscow, Gdansk, Portugal and other places”.<sup>6</sup> Apart from consumer goods such as wine, oil, exotic fruit and spices, described in customs tariffs as “Armenian merchandise”, it was luxury goods which brought greater profits. Armenians therefore imported patterned Turkish and Angurian silks, camlets - fabrics made of goat, camel or sheep wool, rugs, kilims, chamois, jewels, especially pearls, golden thread, as well as articles of clothing and belts from Turkey, Persia and even China, as well as shawls and footwear.<sup>7</sup> Richly decorated weapons and saddlery, so valued in ancient Poland, were also an important part of their trade. It is worth to mention here Sefer Muratowicz, a merchant from Lwow, who in 1601, at the orders of king Sigismund III Vasa, travelled to Kashan in Persia in order to buy silk and gold rugs, sabres and a tent.<sup>8</sup> Zakrzewska-Dubasowa reports that state coats of arms were to be included on two rugs.<sup>9</sup> In 1650 an Armenian named Bernatowicz delivered 12 golden threaded carpets to King John Casimir.<sup>10</sup> Later on, this design of rugs was often purchased by the aristocracy, emulating the king. They became known as so-called “*tapis polonais*” and are rare and valued items in museums around the world today.<sup>11</sup>



Fig. 1. Carpet, so-called „tapis polonais”, Kashan, Persia, 16–17<sup>th</sup> century. (Czartoryski Museum)

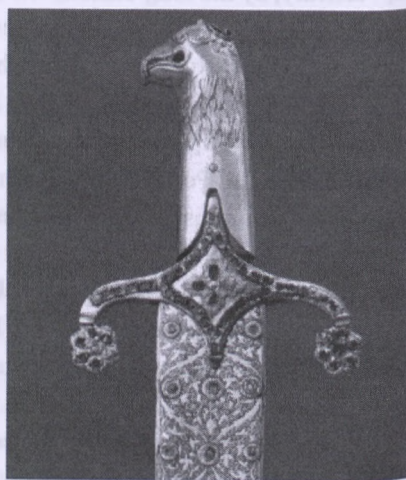


Fig. 2. Sabre, Armenian workmanship, belonged to King Jan III Sobieski, ok. 1680 (The Royal Castle of Wawel)

<sup>6</sup> S. Lehaci, *Putiewyże zamiętki*, transl. M. O. Darbinian, Moskawa 1965, pp. 243–244.

<sup>7</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, p. 129–147; A. Dziubiński, ‘Handel polsko-turecki w XVI–XVIII w.’, in: *Wojna i pokój. Skarby sztuki tureckiej ze zbiorów polskich od XV do XIX wieku, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie*, [catalogue of exhibition], Warszawa 2000, p. 37–38; K. Stopka, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja ...*, p. 135, il. 183.

<sup>9</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, pp. 132, 160.

<sup>10</sup> R. Szymdki, ‘Wydatki artystyczne dworu Jana Kazimierza w latach 1650–1653’, *Roczniki Humanistyczne KUL*, 47 (1999), pp. 202–203.

<sup>11</sup> B. Biedrońska-Słota, *Leksykon sztuki kabierniczej*, Kraków 1999, pp. 166–169.



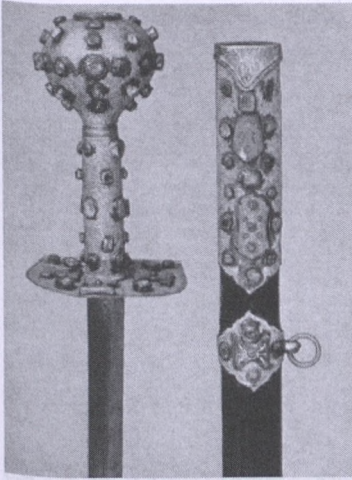


Fig. 3. Estoc with scabbard, Armenian workmanship, 17<sup>th</sup> century (The Royal Castle of Wawel)



Fig. 4. Hetman's mace belonging to Michał Wiśniowiecki, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 17<sup>th</sup> century (Czartoryski Museum)

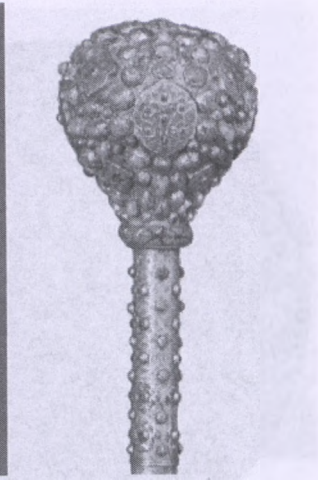


Fig. 5. Hetman's mace, latter half 17<sup>th</sup> century (The Royal Castle of Wawel)

Trade and the travels associated with it posed a tremendous risk but if completed successfully brought enormous profits to the Armenians. Symeon Lehacy describes how Zachariasz Iwaszkiewicz in 1600 and Mikołaj Bernatowicz two years later brought to Lwow merchandise of great value.<sup>12</sup>

Armenians also specialised in the decorative arts. We should remember that in Lwow from 1600 onwards there could only be two non-Catholics in each guild. However according to some historians, from 30 to 40 percent of Armenians in Lwow were craftsmen.<sup>13</sup> They belonged to the guilds of goldsmiths<sup>14</sup>, sabre makers, leather workers, saddle makers, bow makers, embroiders, Cordovan leather makers, tent makers, tailors and haberdashers. In

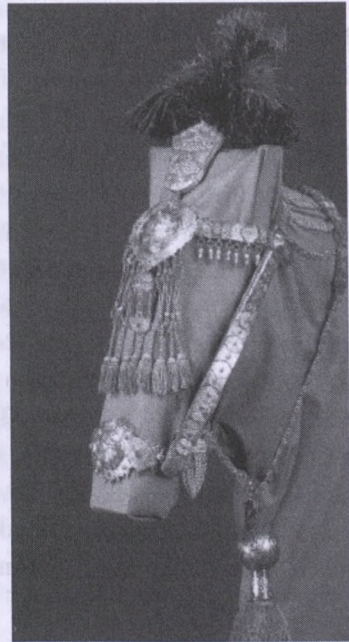


Fig. 6. Bridle from harness supposed to have belonged to Jan Łącki, Armenian workmanship, 17<sup>th</sup> century (The Royal Castle of Wawel)

<sup>12</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145, 147.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 148.

<sup>14</sup> W. Łoziński, 'Ormiański epilog sztuki złotniczej', *Sprawozdania Komisji do Badania Historii Sztuki w Polsce*, 7 (1902), pp. 242–271; J. K. Ostrowski, *Lwów. Dzieje i sztuka*, Kraków 1997, p. 18, 34.



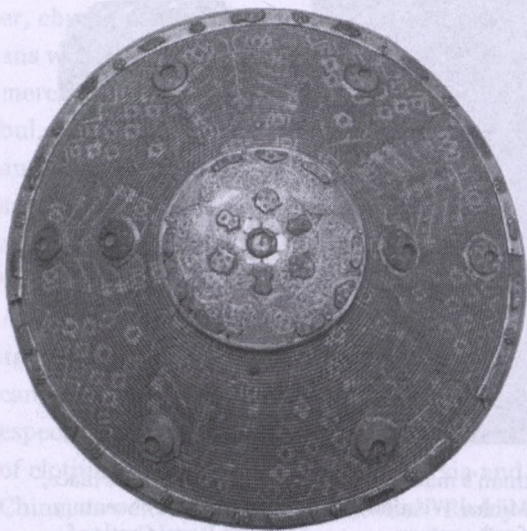


Fig. 7. Kalkan shield, Armenian workmanship, later half 17<sup>th</sup> century (The Royal Castle of Wawel)

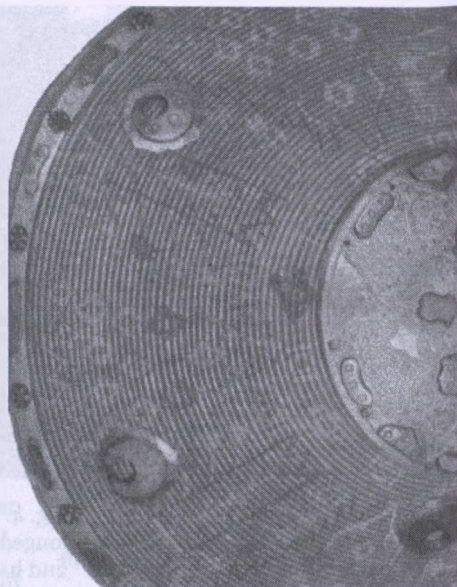


Fig. 8. Detail of Kalkan

Lwow they were especially known as the makers or decorators of various weaponry parts. They made “embroidery on yuft leather, chamois, quiver and bow cases, saddle bags, saddles, [...] saddle blankets and other things needed by soldiers”.<sup>15</sup> Armenian goldsmiths prided themselves for making “costly sabre settings, rich decoration of horse tack, detailed smithing of shields, kalkan shields, chain mail hoods, quivers and cartridge boxes in gold and silver.” Armenians made excellent, flexible and strong sabres which they often decorated with oriental hilts scabbards.<sup>16</sup> Parts and pre-fabricated elements were imported from the East, which was the speciality of, among others the trading house of the Nikorowicz family.<sup>17</sup> The elements were then put together and fitted. It is therefore not easy to distinguish Armenian production from Oriental imports. Such is the case of several dozen kalkans preserved in Poland. The majority of these round shields are typical of Turkish art. A number of such objects in the Wawel collection seem to be the work of Armenian craftsmen, according to Zdzisław Żygulski Jun.<sup>18</sup>

Armenian artisans worked not just in Lwow. In Zamość, in 1585, Murat Jakubowicz received from hetman Jan Zamoyski an exclusive 20 year right to produce and sell rugs

<sup>15</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 147-174.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 149; *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja ...*, p. 135, il. 185.

<sup>18</sup> Z. Żygulski jun., *Dzieje polskiego rzemiosła artystycznego*, Warszawa 1987, p. 36.



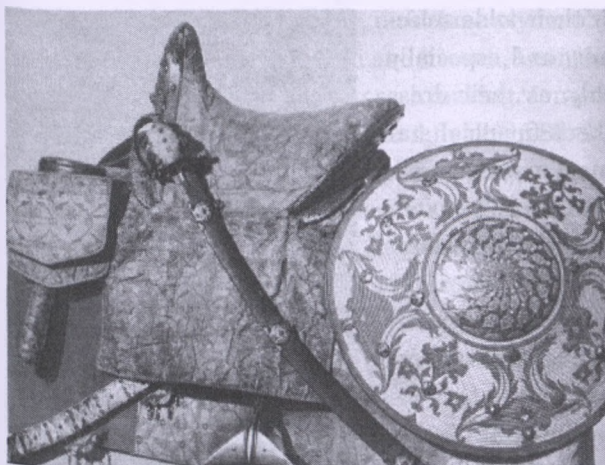


Fig. 9. Saddle and housing supposed to have belonged to Jan Łącki, Armenian workmanship, 17<sup>th</sup> century (The Royal Castle of Wawel)



Fig. 10. Saddle and housing, with kalkan shield, supposed to have belonged to Jerzy Lubomirski, Armenian workmanship, first half 18<sup>th</sup> century (The Royal Castle of Wawel)

and chamois leather.<sup>19</sup> An Armenian goldsmith, Stanisław Abramowicz worked for Jan Zamoyski's son, Tomasz.<sup>20</sup> A tent-making workshop, employing, among others, Krzysztof Muratowicz and Meger Dycenicz, was operating at the court of King John Casimir in Warsaw.<sup>21</sup>

King John III Sobieski, a great friend of Armenians and a connoisseur of Oriental Armenian craftsmanship<sup>22</sup> commissioned objects of art from, among others, the famous goldsmith Bedros Zachariaszowicz. The king's palace in Lwow, located in the Market Square, had its own goldsmith's workshop, employing exclusively Armenians, led by Bedros Marderysowicz. In 1685, at the initiative of John III Sobieski, the Armenian goldsmiths of Lwow were granted full rights, which enabled them to become members of the goldsmiths' guild. Due to their talents and entrepreneurship they grew to be a very large and influential group, which even at that time dominated the Polish goldsmiths. Among their works we should mention silver liturgical vessels, jewellery, decorations of weapons - sabres and ceremonial maces, as well as horse tack. Armenian masters used various techniques such as enamelling, filigree, engraving, inlaying of gems and incrustation. Joint usage of turquoise and pearls was especially preferred.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, p. 132; J. Kowalczyk, *Kultura i ideologia Jana Zamoyskiego*, Warszawa 2005, p. 88.

<sup>20</sup> J. Kowalczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>21</sup> R. Szmydki, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>22</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>23</sup> W. Łoziński, *op. cit.*, passim; J. Szablowski, *Collection of the Royal Castle of Wawel*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 35-40.



Armenian shops were famous for their wide selection of luxurious clothing. Armenians, and especially Armenian women, dressed very richly, as their dress was a sign of their husband's or father's financial status. Their clothes were made of the most expensive silk fabrics, brocade, damask and taffeta. They were often embroidered and decorated with fur and gold. Pre-nuptial agreements known as "*krorong*" often inform of the appearance of such articles of clothing, as do various descriptions of festive Armenian wedding celebrations, especially from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup>

Turkish, Tatar and Swedish invasions beginning in the 1620s, and eventually the 1704 capitulation of Lwow to king Carl XII of Sweden, contributed to a gradual decline of arts and crafts. A list of items from Lwow Armenian workshops sold to Warsaw by Szymon Nikorowicz in 1764 shows however that their work was still appreciated in other Polish cities. The list included, among other things, cavalry saddles, horse tack, cartridge boxes, scabbard straps and fittings.<sup>25</sup>

From the 1740s Armenians, supported by the Polish aristocrats, especially the Radziwiłł and Potocki families became important makers of kontusz sashes, which constituted the most decorative part of the national Polish dress. A sash maker, Dominik Misirowicz came in 1744 from Turkey and settled first in



Fig. 11. Detail of shield, a Turk's head made of coral

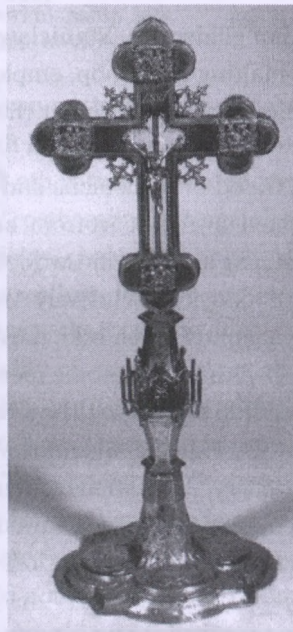


Fig. 12. Reliquary, 17<sup>th</sup> century (Armenian Treasury, Lvov)



Fig. 13. Reliquary, 18<sup>th</sup> century, from Armenian Treasury, Lvov (Museum of History, Lvov)

<sup>24</sup> I. Turnau, 'Źródła z lat 1572–1728 do ubioru polskich Ormian', *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 1987, 4, pp. 601–610.

<sup>25</sup> K. Stopka, *op. cit.*, p. 61; M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *op. cit.*, p. 149.



Stanisławów and then in Brody, unfortunately no objects signed by him survived. Jan Madżarski and his son, Leon distinguished themselves in the field of kontusz sash making. Jan worked at first in Stanisławów, then in Nieśwież and finally in Słuck. Leon, who continued his father's work, was given a noble title in 1790. Another famous kontusz sash maker, Jakub Paschalis, who worked in Warsaw and then in Lipków, was also awarded a noble title in 1791 for "increasing useful handicraft", assumed the surname Jakubowicz and a coat of arms depicting a Paschal Lamb.<sup>26</sup>

Kontusz sashes, made predominantly by Armenians became for the Poles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a symbol of the strength of the old Republic. Despite strict laws against them, in particular in the Russian occupied part of Poland, they were worn, especially during family events.<sup>27</sup> They were also used as elements of liturgical vestments, an interesting example of which is a mention of a chasuble made of Polish sashes from the Armenian church in Stanisławów, presented in 1928 at the Historical Exhibition of the City of Stanisławów.

In conclusion it is important to stress that Armenians, trading with the East and specialising in different branches of decorative arts contributed greatly to a process of what we may call the 'Orientalisation' of Polish art, particularly in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Western European motifs began to return gradually to Lwów decorative art only during the regency and rococo periods.

The subject of Armenian trade and the production of decorative art in pre-Partition Poland were taken up by Polish literature by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Władysław Łoziński's *Patriarchs and Bourgeoisie of Lwów in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries* can serve as an example of such interest.<sup>28</sup> The same author described the demise of gold-working in Lwów in his *Armenian Epilogue*



Fig. 14. Kontusz Sash. Woven by the manufacturer Leo Madżarski, Słuck, Karol Radziwiłł factory, 1780–1807 (National Museum Warsaw)

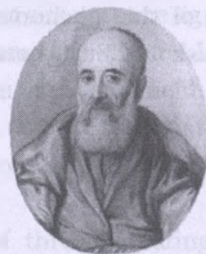


Fig. 15. Portrait of Paschalis Jakubowicz (National Museum Warsaw)

<sup>26</sup> J. Chruszczyńska, *Pasy kontuszowe z polskich manufaktur i pracowni w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie*, [catalogue of exhibition], Warszawa 1995, passim.

<sup>27</sup> M. Wróblewska-Markiewicz, *Pas kontuszowy – recepcja formy, recepcja mitu. Centralne Muzeum Włókiennictwa* [catalogue of exhibition], [Łódź 2009], p. 8–12; A. Bender, 'Szaty liturgiczne z polskich pasów kontuszowych i z tkanin naśladowujących pasy kontuszowe. Stan i perspektywy badań in: *Architektura znaczeń. Studia ofiarowane Prof. Zbigniewowi Bani w 65 rocznicę urodzin i 40-lecie pracy dydaktycznej*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 454–463.

<sup>28</sup> W. Łoziński, *Patrycjat i mieszczaństwo Lwowskie w XVI i XVII wieku*,

of *Lwow Gold-Working Art*<sup>29</sup> from 1902. Later on, Tadeusz Mańkowski described Armenian art in several books, for example *The Art of Lwow Armenians*, published in Kraków in 1934<sup>30</sup>. Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa has also dealt with these subjects. In 1987 an important article by Irena Turnau was published entitled *Sources from 1572 to 1728 on the Dress of Polish Armenians*.<sup>31</sup> Recently, Zdzisław Żygulski jun.<sup>32</sup> and Beata Biedrońska-Słotowa<sup>33</sup> have been interested in the subject of the Armenian involvement in the decorative arts.

It should be stated that some aspects of the history of Armenian trade and the production of decorative art have been well documented and studied. Often however the literature on the subject is dated. Without a doubt there is a need for the fuller, deeper and more ordered scientific study of the subject, which could, using hitherto unpublished sources, give us a better understanding of this phenomenon of great importance to Polish and European art and culture.<sup>34</sup>



Fig. 16. Kontusz Sash. Woven by the manufacturer Paschalis, factory in Warszawa-Lipków, 1788–1790 (National Museum Warsaw)

<sup>29</sup> W. Łoziński, *Ormiański epilog...*, passim.

<sup>30</sup> T. Mańkowski, *Sztuka Ormian lwowskich*, Kraków 1934.

<sup>31</sup> I. Turnau, *op. cit.*, pp. 601–610.

<sup>32</sup> Z. Żygulski jun., *op. cit.*, passim; Z. Żygulski jun., 'O polskim orientalizmie', in: *Orient w sztuce polskiej. Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie* [catalogue of exhibition], Kraków 1992, pp. 7–19.

<sup>33</sup> B. Biedrońska-Słota, 'Orient w sztuce polskiej', in: *Orient w sztuce polskiej. Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie* [catalogue of exhibition], Kraków 1992, p. 20–30; B. Biedrońska-Słota, 'Sztuka i kultura w Armenii i ormiańskiej diasporze', in: *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja ...*, pp. 14–24; B. Biedrońska-Słota, *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja. Charakterystyka wystawy*, in: *Odrębność i asymilacja ...*, pp. 33–35.

<sup>34</sup> A. Bender, 'Sztuka polskich Ormian', *Zeszyty Społeczne*, 18 (2010), pp. 121–128.



## *Armenian Fabric from the Collections of the National Museum in Warsaw – Analysis, Reconstruction and Identification*

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Ewa Orlinska-Mianowska, National Museum in Warsaw

In the textile collection of the National Museum in Warsaw there are numerous textile fragments which are especially difficult to identify due to their small size (sometimes they don't represent the whole woven pattern). One of them is a fragment of silk with the figure of Jesus Christ enthroned. This fragment was a donation of 1929 from the collector Jadwiga Bobinska. The donor did not give any data concerning the origin of the fragment. Its small size (23x18 cm) and the destruction that has been caused to it make determination of the original object even more difficult. However, the ornament allows us to state that it was probably a kind of liturgical vestment.

The poor condition of the fragment, especially the destruction of threads relating to the pattern, meant that we have not been able to fully recognize the scheme of the decoration. Only research undertaken in 2008 and computer assisted reconstruction of the fabric pattern has enabled us to identify the image of Christ and to read the inscriptions in the ornament.<sup>1</sup>

The fragment depicts Jesus Christ enthroned, with the Gospel in his left hand, he is blessing with the right one<sup>2</sup>. Christ's head is surrounded by a nimbus with the cross within this. The figure of Christ is repeated twice on the surviving fragment. There are

<sup>1</sup> Presentation at the conference 'Christian Art on the Borderlands of Asia, Africa and Europe', Zakroczym 2008, cf. Polish version of article: 'Jedwabna tkanina liturgiczna z kolekcji Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie', in: *Ars Armeniaca. Sztuka ormiańska ze zbiorów polskich i ukraińskich*, ed. W. Deluga, Zamość 2010, pp. 89-100.

<sup>2</sup> This blessing gesture in early Christian art was also read as one of preaching (teaching) and thus this image can be interpreted as Christ the Teacher. T. Dobrzeński, 'Maiestas Domini w zabytkach Polskich i obcych z Polską związanych', *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, 17 (1973), p. 23.



Fig. 1. Fragment of silk with Christ enthroned from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, cat. SZT 52

numerous inscriptions around the crosses flanking Christ's head, and on the side of the footrest. They are difficult to read, however it can be seen that the letters are Armenian. On the right side we can see from the fabric edge that it is 0,4 cm wide. At the bottom the fragment is permanently folded.

The fragment was woven from the silk threads and metal threads applied to the silk core. As a warp the S-twist plied yarn was used both for the main red warp and binding white warp. As a weft a very low S-twist thread was used in red, blue, green and ivory. It was only partially desized and this is what has given the thread some stiffness. The single patterning weft consists of 4 threads with very low Z-twist, soft, and desized. Brocading metal thread was supplemented by an accompanying weft of yellow silk, a popular technique giving the gold thread a better effect.

The Metal thread was tested in a laboratory of the National Museum in Warsaw in 1986. It was of a low twist yellow silk core wrapped with silver lamella gilded on both sides (copper was both in silver and gold alloy). Later analysis at Warsaw University allowed us to





Fig. 2. Silk from the cope from the Historical Museum in Yerevan, 1601, in: *Armenians Gold and Treasures*, Musée des Tissus et des Arts décoratifs de Lyon

fully determine the composition of metal alloy (Ag 61%, Au 15%, Cu 6%) as well as to determine the dyes used.<sup>3</sup>

The structure represents a lampas-technique. The background in red colour is woven in satin weave 4/1, pattering wefts, three or four in one course, in white, blue, light red and green, and brocading weft - metal thread on a yellow silk core accompanied by yellow silk, interlace in 1/3 twill (Z) with binding white warp.

Precise analysis of the structure can provide us with a basis for the reconstruction of the original appearance of the fragment. Where the ornament was undecipherable due to the destruction of threads, the back side of the fabric was analysed. Because in lampas technique

some number of pattering wefts is inserted in one shed opening, on the left side one can see these which do not create the pattern on the fabric surface. Thus the absence of weft in a particular colour on the back side means that it created the ornament on the surface. Proceeding in this way we managed to recover the whole figure of Christ as well as the form of a tetramorphic throne with images of the angel, the eagle, the lion and the ox, all holding the book. They represent the beasts of Apocalypse: "And the first living creature was like a lion: and the second living creature like a calf: and the third living creature, having the face, as it were, of a man: and the fourth living creature was like an eagle flying" (Ap.4, 7).

The most difficult problem was to decipher the inscriptions woven in a few rows. Reconstruction of the original appearance of the ornament enabled us to find analogous silk

<sup>3</sup> K. Lech, M. Puchalska, E. Rosloniec, M. Jarosz, *Mass spectrometric and liquid chromatographic investigation of historical fabrics from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw*, DHA26, Vienna 2007.

examples, such as that which the copy from the collection of History Museum in Yerevan was made from<sup>4</sup>. On the Yerevan cope the following inscriptions are woven:

1. ՄԲ ՄԲ ՄԲ ՏԴ
2. ԶԱԻՐ ՈՒԹՅ
3. ՏԴ ԱԾ
4. ՅԻ ՔՍ
5. ԹՎ
6. ՌԾ ՌԾ
7. ՅՇՏԿԷ
8. ՄԲ ԵԿՂՅՍ

The inscriptions are abbreviations of the Armenian text:<sup>5</sup>

- 1 ՍՈՒՐԲ ՍՈՒՐԲ ՍՈՒՐԲ ՏԷՐ - Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
2. ԶԱԻՐ ՈՒԹԵԱՆՅ - of the hosts
3. ՏԷՐ ԱՍՏՈՒԱԾ - Lord God
4. ՅԻՍՈՒԻ ՔՐԻՍՏՈՍ - Jesus Christ
5. ԹՎԻՆ - In the year
6. ՌԾ - 1050 (1601 according to Armenian calendar)
7. ՅԻՇԱՏԱԿԷ - remember
8. ՍՈՒՐԲ ԵԿԵՂԵՅԻՍ - this church.

On the fragment from the National Museum in Warsaw there are no rows 5 and 6. The holes caused by damaged wefts may suggest that there were inscriptions woven there, however this is not proven. The last row of text also doesn't exist and row 7 is underlined.

Finally, the text on the Warsaw fabric can be read as: "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of the Hosts, Lord God, Jesus Christ, Remember "

Both the inscriptions and the form of the throne clearly refer to the Apocalypse of St. John which includes a Trisagion taken from the Old Testament: "And the four living creatures had each of them six wings; and round about and within they are full of eyes. And they rested not day and night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come" (Ap 4,8).<sup>6</sup>

Both the fragment from NM and the analogous example in Yerevan belong to the group of silks designated for use as liturgical vestments of the Orthodox Church. Examples of such silks can be found in many worldwide textile collections. They often represent the

<sup>4</sup> Anelka Grigorian's note in the catalogue *Ors et Trésors d' Arménie*, Musée des tissus des Arts décoratifs de Lyon, 22.03.-15.07.2007, Lyon 2007, no 56, pp. 116-117,

<sup>5</sup> The authors thank Dickran Kouymjian and Benedek Zsigmond for their help in reading out the inscriptions.

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 6,1-3;... they were calling to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory".



products of Eastern workshops from the Ottoman Empire from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The dating of some of them was carried out on the basis of historic data, for instance concerning the case of the sakkos given by Czar Ivan the Terrible to the Metropolitan Dyonisios in 1583. This determined the dating of similar textiles.<sup>7</sup>

The use of icons of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ as a pattern for European silks appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in the workshops of Venice and Florence.<sup>8</sup> Most often they present scenes from the life of Jesus and Mary. Beside the Annunciation, the Birth of Jesus or Resurrection of Christ, one can find the orphreys presenting the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.<sup>9</sup> Narrow bands (23–30 cm wide), from silk and gold threads were often attached to the copes and chasubles. The patterns were very complex, often based on paintings, and often used also as models for works of embroidery.<sup>10</sup>

Textiles were a very important element of the liturgy of the Eastern Church.<sup>11</sup> They were decorated with patterns relating to the liturgy and from a certain time also to the iconography of the Eastern Church. Among the preserved examples of images from the sakkos one can find Christ on the throne surrounded by four apocalyptic beasts.<sup>12</sup> This motif of Christ NIKA as a highest priest can be also found in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw (also a phelonion from the Stauroprigiansky Museum in Lvov and the back of chasuble from the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź, inv.2028, were made from similar silk). Textile fragments with the motif of Christ the Priest are quite common in the collections of worldwide museums. Some differences in form and size of the motifs prove that they were made in different workshops.<sup>13</sup> This type of image appeared in the iconography of Eastern art around the 15<sup>th</sup> century mainly in Russia and the Balkans, however some theologians criticised it as a departure from Orthodox theology.<sup>14</sup> Still, the appearance of this image on textiles or on the cover of the Gospel from Wologoda dated to 1572 indicates that despite theological criticism the image of Christ as

<sup>7</sup> N. Atasoy, W. B. Denny, *IPEK. The Crescent & the Rose: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets*, London, 2001; *Byzantium Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, cat. exh., Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, New York 2004, pp. 445, 469.

<sup>8</sup> B. Markowsky, *Europäische Seidengewebe Des 13.–18. Jahrhunderts* (Kataloge des Kunstgewerben-museums vol. 8), Köln 1976, nos. 72–74.

<sup>9</sup> Orpheys (?) with the inscription ASSUNTA EST adorning the tomb placed under the feet of the Virgin Mary raised up into heaven can be found in the collection of the V & A in London and the museums of Berlin and Brussels. Cf. M. King, D. King, *European Textiles in the Keir Collection 400 BC to 1800 AD*, London 1990, pp. 123, 124, cat. 84.

<sup>10</sup> Among the many designers one can mention Jacopo Bellini and Rafaelino del Garbo. D. King, M. King, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. P. Johnstone, *The Byzantine Tradition in Church Embroidery*, London 1967.

<sup>12</sup> T. Dobrzeniecki, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Similar fragments can be found in the Dionysiou Monastery on Mount Athos, in the collection of Abegg Stiftung and in the collection of the Textile Museum in Łódź.

<sup>14</sup> One of the opposing theologians was Zinowij arguing that it was a devilish idea because a liturgical vestment doesn't meet the idea of God, who has no human attributes. Cf. A. Sulikowska-Gąska, *Spory o ikony na Rusi w XVI XVII w.*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 260, 237.





Fig. 3. Silk with Christ NIKA from the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, inv. SZT 53. Phelonion from the Stauroprigiensky Museum in Lvov and the back of a chasuble from the Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź, inv.2028, are made from similar silk.

evan cope attributed to Constantinople in the catalogue of the Lyon exhibition, shows some substantial differences. Among them one can mention the more hierarchic presentation of the figure of Christ, the cross in the form of a khachkar and the inscriptions. The silk of

<sup>15</sup> T. Dobrzeniecki, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–7.

<sup>16</sup> This image refers to theophany and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. T. Dobrzeniecki, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>17</sup> Apocalyptic beasts were also interpreted as a symbol of Jesus Christ; according to St. Irenaeus of Lyons (d. 202 AD) a lion was a symbol of Christ as a King, an ox - His Priesthood, a man (an angel)- Incarnation of Christ and the eagle - the symbol of giving the Holy Spirit. According to the first chapters of the four gospels St. Irenaeus likened the beasts to the Evangelists. Royal dignity as expressed in Saint John's Gospel was related to a lion, the priest's offering was symbolised by an ox as related by Saint Luke, the genealogy of Jesus presented in the Gospel According to St. Matthew was related to a man and the eagle symbolised the prophecy of Isaiah in the St. Mark Gospel. T. Dobrzeniecki, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38. In later images the beasts hold the books. This link between beasts and the Gospels allows us to interpret the image of Maiestas Domini as a presentation of Christ the Teacher.

<sup>18</sup> There is a fragment of similar silk dated before 1538 from the collection of the Benaki Museum that was presented at the exhibition in New York: *Byzantium Faith and Power ...*, p. 445, no. 270. A similar pattern can be found on the silk dated to the first half of 16th c, from the sakkos from the Dionysius Monastery on Mount Athos Cf. *Treasures of Mount Athos*, exh. cat. Thessaloniki, 1997, pp. 448–449, no. 11.1. Both silks are attributed to the workshops of Bursa or Constantinople.





Fig. 4. On the right: Sakkos of Patriarch Joseph from Moscow Kremlin, around 1640, in: *The Moscow Kremlin State Historical and Cultural Museum-Monument*, Moscow, 2001. On the left: Silk with Christ (3862), before 1583, Benaki Museum in Athens, in: *Byzantium Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2004 (Bursa or Constantinople)

as the inscriptions flanking the cross indicate. The image of Christ is rather schematic with linearly treated cloth. In both one can notice an error in the image of Christ blessing with the left hand. Christ on the MNW fragment is closer to Armenian miniature paintings in the way the face is drawn – the symmetry, underlined eyes, and lines of the cloth are very subtle when compared with the linearly treated vestment of the Bursa textiles.

Unlike the silk from the Benaki Museum related to the scene often met in Orthodox Church art of the image of Christ NIKAI, the pattern on the NMW silk fragment can be associated with a text from the Book of Revelations, and part of the inscriptions seems to have a particularly important meaning. Repeated three times the word *HOLY* can be related also to the Divine Liturgy hymn of the Orthodox Church: *Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal one, have mercy on us*. Inscriptions below with the date and dedicated to the memory of church allow us to draw up the hypothesis that the fabric was connected with some important event, anniversary or donation.<sup>19</sup> Inscriptions as a part of the ornament

<sup>19</sup> A. S. Atiya, *Historia Kościołów wschodnich*, Warszawa 1978, p. 294 (History of Eastern Christianity, Periodicals Service Co, 1980).



can often be found on silks for liturgical vestments; however they are usually a prominent part of the image. Dates that allow us to connect the object with some act of donation or manufacturing are extremely rare.<sup>20</sup>

Used as a pattern for the Apocalyptic Christ of the silk of the Yerevan cope is an illustration for text from the Apocalypse of St. John [4, 1–14] related to *Maiestas Domini* presenting Christ in a Mandrola on the throne surrounded by four apocalyptic beasts. Creatures holding books allow us to read this image as Christ the Teacher. In Armenian art this image is rather rare. One of the oldest is an illustration from a Gospel manuscript from the Armenian scriptorium of Julfa dated to 1362. Paintings from Armenian manuscripts of the Gospels are often literal illustrations or supplements to the text.<sup>21</sup> In this case Christ is worshiped by nations, as it can be read in the next chapter of the Apocalypse [Ap. 5, 1–3]. Christ as a Teacher is also shown in an Armenian document dated to 27.VII.1644 addressed to King Ladislas IV Vasa by the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church.<sup>22</sup>

It is possible that the pattern of a silk is associated both with the liturgy and, as the contents of their inscriptions suggests, with the context of some particular Armenian church.

As it was mentioned before, silks with similar patterns from the Moscow Kremlin and the Benaki Museum are attributed to workshops in Bursa and Constantinople. This kind of pattern can be often be found on silks for liturgical vestments, however this pattern distinguishes itself from the ones mentioned above by its inscriptions and the strict relation of the image and text to the Armenian liturgy. If we additionally take into account the different style of ornament, the erroneously presented figure of Christ in the Bursa silks and a difference in weaving techniques, some further questions arise. Could Armenian silks including coherent (as well as significant) inscriptions be made in a workshop outside the Armenian Diaspora? Weaving a pattern including an important element of Armenian text was most likely to have been possible only in a workshop with Armenian weavers. Misunderstanding the text or not knowing the Armenian alphabet could lead to mistakes, just as had taken place in the case of the silk with Christ blessing with the left hand. The analysed fragment as well as the silk from the Yerevan cope were undoubtedly woven by Armenian weavers for the needs of the Armenian Church. The pattern closely resembles the style of images known from Armenian manuscripts. Its unique qualities and the date woven allow us to assume it was made in a similar period and for some particular community of the Armenian Diaspora. The date allows us to connect the silk with the community of Armenians deported by Shah Abbas (1586–1628) from Julfa to Isfahan. Established at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century New Julfa soon became a major trade and manufacturing centre, famous

<sup>20</sup> With the exception of silks from Islamic *Tiraz* workshops with the patronage of Caliphs whose names together with a blessing appeared in inscriptions.

<sup>21</sup> B. Słotowa, 'Sztuka ormiańska. Charakterystyka przemian do XVIII w.', *Biuletyn Ormiańskiego Towarzystwa Kulturalnego*, 21/22 (2000), p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> *Ormianie polscy. Odrębność i asymilacja*, Catalogue of the exhibition In National Museum in Cracow, Cracow 1999, no 58, p 70.



also for its silk workshops.<sup>23</sup> Almost three thousand Armenians who were relocated to the new settlement were given the opportunity to trade and manufacture silk as well as the freedom of their own religion. Numerous churches were built and they preserved Armenian traditions manifested by forms and rituals. The Armenian silk workshops of Julfa may also have manufactured textiles assigned for the Armenian Church. It is possible that our silk fragment is an example of such objects made in the Armenian workshops of Julfa. Unfortunately, we do not have any data concerning the textile production there. The tradition of silk manufacturing is testified to only by records concerning some arcane silk crafts written by monks on the margins of some Gospel manuscripts. We can suggest that this small fragment may be one of the very few preserved silks from an as yet unknown Armenian workshop of Old Julfa.

As far as historic sources suggest, already in antiquity, people migrating from the Levant brought into their new homelands in Europe a superior material culture that gave life to entirely new industries, technologies and goods, fascinating the indigenous population and influencing its taste. Complex production relations enabled these industries to thrive, thereby facilitating the local economies to survive periods of crisis and dislocation. They were also instrumental in fostering a process of product innovation and import substitution. And despite attempts by Europeans to break into the technical knowledge of the East seen as potentially helpful for the industrial development of the Old Continent, the results were uneven and modest. However by the late eighteenth century Europeans began to acquire competitive advantages as well and developed technological innovations that enabled them to produce goods "similar" to the Levantine (Asian) originals.<sup>24</sup>

To this might be added generous contributions of Muslims who introduced their own silk and, as one might expect, their expertise, very gradually. For an overview of the local industry, see also Western historiography and most popularly, Mitchell L. Kinch, *Persia, A History*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977, pp. 120-121. For a detailed bibliography, see the text in the next section. The following sources are also relevant: G. R. Kinch, 'The Rise of European Cotton Spinning and the Influence of Asia in the 17th and 18th Centuries', presented at the ICHS Conference on Cotton Textiles in the Islamic World, Cairo, December 1992; G. Kinch, 'East and West: Textiles and Fashion in Europe in the Early Modern Period', *Journal of World History*, 41 (2010), pp. 227-246; S. Kinch, 'The World of South Asian Textiles, 1600-1800', in *How India clothed the World*, London, Boston 2009, pp. 1-20. For the further sector the production of wool, see G. Kinch, *Wool, A History*, London, Boston 2009, pp. 190-200. An extensive historical bibliography concerning the leather branch is available at <http://www.leather-history.com/>.

<sup>23</sup> B. Skladanek, *Historia Persji*, vol. 3, Warszawa 2007, p. 59.

of the silk. The pattern of a silk is associated both with the liturgy and, as the contents of their inscriptions suggest, with the context of the Armenian church.<sup>20</sup> As it was mentioned before, silks with similar patterns (such as the Moscow Kronin and the Denakl Museum) are attributed to workshops in Bursa and Constantinople. This kind of pattern can be often be found on silks for liturgical vestments, however this pattern distinguishes itself from the ones mentioned above by its inscriptions and the strict relation of the image and text to the Armenian liturgy. If we additionally take into account the different style of ornament, the erroneously presented figure of Christ in the Bursa silks and a difference in weaving techniques, some further questions arise. Could Armenian silks including coherent (as well as significant) inscriptions be made in a workshop outside the Armenia Diaspora? Weaving a pattern including an important element of Armenian text was most likely to have been possible only in a workshop with Armenian weavers. Misunderstanding the text or not knowing the Armenian alphabet could lead to mistakes, just as had taken place in the case of the silk with Christ blessing with the left hand. The analysed fragment as well as the silk from the Yerevan cape were undoubtedly woven by Armenian weavers for the needs of the Armenian Church. The pattern closely resembles the style of images known from Armenian manuscripts. Its unique qualities and the date woven allow us to assume it was made in a similar period and for some particular community of the Armenian Diaspora. The date allows us to connect the silk with the community of Armenians deported by Shah Abbas (1628–62) from Julfa to Isfahan. Established at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century New Julfa was because a major trade and manufacturing centre, famous<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> With the exception of all other Asiatic Turkey workshops with the patronage of Caliphs whose name together with a blessing appears in inscriptions.

<sup>21</sup> B. Słotwińska, 'Siergiej iwanowicz Czajkowskij i jego przemysł w XVIII w.', *Biuletyn Dniwarski* 20 (1907), 100–101.

<sup>22</sup> *Ornamenty polskie. Dedykacje i inspiracje*, Catalogue of the exhibition in National Museum in Warsaw, Warsaw 1990, no 58, p. 72.



## Armenian Gilt Leather and Silk in Europe, 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Problems of Attribution and Conservation

Magdalena Stoyanova, Venezia

As far as historic sources suggest, already in antiquity, people migrating from the Levant brought into their new homelands in Europe a superior material culture that gave life to entirely new industries, technologies and goods, fascinating the indigenous population and influencing its taste. Complex production relations enabled these industries to thrive, thereby facilitating the local economies to survive periods of crisis and dislocation. They were also instrumental in fostering a process of product innovation and import substitution.<sup>1</sup> And despite attempts by Europeans to break into the technical knowledge of the East seen as potentially helpful for the industrial development on the Old Continent, the results were uneven and modest. However by the late eighteenth century Europeans began to acquire competitive advantages as well and developed technological innovations that enabled them to produce goods “similar” to the Levantine (Asian) originals.<sup>2</sup> Yet,

<sup>1</sup> To this complex subject generations of historians have addressed their research and, as one might expect, their explanations vary greatly. For an overview of the latest tendencies, limited within Western historiography and most popular industries: L. Hilaire-Pérez, C. Verna, ‘Dissemination of technical Knowledge in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era: New Approaches and methodological Issues’, *Technology and Culture*, 47 (2006), no. 3, pp. 536–565. An updated bibliographical data-base for the textile sector principally can be found at <http://chnm.gmu.edu/jsh/index.html>. The different theories on the relation between technology, knowledge of colouring agents, business entrepreneurship and fashion in the textile sector (cotton, silk and woollen) recently have been critically reviewed from a *super partes* point of view by G. Riello, ‘The Rise of European Calico Printing and the Influence of Asia in the 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-centuries’ paper presented at the GEHN Conference on *Cotton Textiles in the Indian Ocean*, Pune, December 2005; B. Lemire, G. Riello, ‘East and West: Textiles and Fashion in Eurasia in the Early Modern Period’, *Journal of Social History*, 41 (2008/4), pp. 887–916; G. Riello, T. Roy, ‘The world of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850’, in: *How India clothed the World*, Leiden, Boston 2009, pp. 1–30. For the leather sector the fundamental work remains G. Gall, *Leder im europäischen Kunsthandwerk*, Braunschweig 1965, pp. 295–297. An extensive up-dated bibliography concerning the leather branch is available at <http://skinheritage.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Although many authors are speaking of ‘dissemination of oriental knowledge in Europe’, as far as I have been able to ascertain until now, little reliance can be placed on such statements. Besides the

written and material sources unequivocally attest that in Europe the new industries could never have been developed without the direct participation of skilled oriental artisans. This was in first place due to the lack of a thousand –year- long craft experience. Another key factor was the supply of resources, more precisely, the problems that Europe's manufactures faced in relation to the supply of indispensable exotic raw materials that were applied by the original eastern technologies.<sup>3</sup>

Today, the extant works carried out through specific, yet little known proceedings by Arab, Syrian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Jewish, Armenian, Slavic or native Greek immigrants are scattered throughout the world - even where least expected - and not rarely, unwillingly or not, "hidden" behind incorrect labels. Due to a strange inertial "automatism", the artistic production going back to the definitive fall of the Oriental Empire still continues to be called in an ambiguous and generic manner "post Byzantine", although the ensemble of religions and ethnic groups once subdued under the Byzantine emperor indeed had preserved cultural ferments besides the dominant Greek-orthodox one. While the importance of these for the extraordinary richness and pluralism of Byzantine culture has been subject of many-sided thematic or interdisciplinary studies, their role in the formation of the Western civilisation, within and outside the Catholic sphere, conversely, remains scantily researched. Following other inertial automatisms, in the opposite direction, here the patrimony created by Levantine refugees is passed off as European art of "Oriental style".

The present paper, part of a more detailed and exhaustive study on the transfer of technologies, materials and art techniques from the Levant into Europe, is designed to promote the individualization of artefacts manufactured by Armenians from the diasporas - in the broadest sense of the word, well beyond the current boundaries of the country - with particular attention paid to technical and technological aspects. The last two centuries preceding the industrial revolution, when goods imported into Europe from the

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arguments listed in this paper, see also my "I cuoi "bulgari" a Venezia" in: *L'Europa Centro-Orientale e la Penisola italiana: quattro secoli di rapporti e influssi intercorsi tra Stati e civiltà (1300-1700)* ed. C. Luca, G. Masi, Bräila, Venezia 2007, pp. 309-322; 'Denominazioni amariche in una ricetta copta per tingere la lana', in: *Bibliotheca nubica et aethiopica* [= *Orbis Aethiopicus*, vol. 10], Lublin 2007, pp. 264-280, and my *Tecnologia ed arte dal Levante in Europa nei secoli XV-XVII*, München 2010. About the link between European copies of oriental textiles and originals, on the technical level: Riello, "The Rise"; Lemire&Riello, "East and West"; there also surveys of good founded critics, in later historiography, on the tendencies 'to foreground a supposedly European artistic exceptionalism'.

<sup>3</sup> F. Brunello, *L'arte della tintura nella storia dell'umanità*, Vicenza 1968, passim; Idem, *Concisa e tintura delle pelli nel Veneto dal XIII al XVI sec.*, Vicenza 1977, E. Ashtor, *Studies on the Levantine Trade in the Middle Ages*, London 1978; For the most updated and systematic scientific discussion of the colouration technology evolution: H. Schwappe, *Handbuch der Naturwerkstoffe. Vorkommen-Verwendung-Nachweis*. Landsberg 1993; "I cuoi" - for bibliography on leather chemistry and technology. Generally speaking, the "industrial rise" of Europe that helped withstand Eastern competition during colonial rule based on quite different productive methods and sources that could be roughly determined as synthetic (Europe) in confrontation with the prevailing natural raw materials employed in the East. Therefore any attempt to measure both economies is of highly relative results. Europe's industrial preponderance became particularly evident in the post colonial period, due to the background of the energy and raw materials' shortage.



East were still unmatched in terms of cost and quality, have been focused on in the scholarship for the fact that afterwards their import, due to the technological breakthroughs in Europe, dramatically diminished. Besides this the body of work has fixed on strongly individual works, but also those with the likely involvement of a more or less remote Armenian cultural background.<sup>4</sup>

For reasons of space, just few examples from the better-studied silk and leather branches will be addressed here,<sup>5</sup> however the range of industries that the Armenian refugees in Europe challenged seems to have been much broader, and embracing printing and painting techniques with the respective instruments and materials; paper, silk, leather and metal working (embroidering, tanning, dyeing, pigment extraction and fabrication of varnishes included). Not less irreplaceable was the cultural mediation of these “iso-citizens” - thanks to their broad acquaintanceship with eastern and occidental peoples, languages and mores - in customising oriental products and original technologies to suit European tastes and expectations that I will only try to summarize briefly.

Often the theme of heated debates and often concerning exasperated nationalistic assimilation is the issue in the literature that the ‘500 and ‘600 silk, velvet or gilt leather are signed as Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian or Flemish. Referring to “indisputable” archival sources, many authors are speaking even of copies of oriental textiles made by Europeans (without any clarification as to why these were adopted and what exactly is intended by their use of the term “copy”: design-imitation or technical quality) and destined for the markets of the Ottoman Empire, whose quality should have been superior to that of the original ones.<sup>6</sup> In some cases also the thesis is argued that the Ottoman Empire

<sup>4</sup> Some notices upon gives L. Bréhier, ‘Les Colonies d’Orientaux en Occident au commencement du moyen âge’, *Revue historique*, 128/1, s.d.; Good historical research to this subject has been made by: E. Nadel-Golobić, ‘Arméniens et Juifs à Lvov au Moyen Age. Leur rôle dans le commerce avec l’Orient, 1400-1600’, *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 20 (1979), no 3, pp. 345-388. I. B. McCabe, *The Shah’s Silk for Europe’s Silver: The Eurasian Trade of the Julfa Armenians in Safavid Iran and India (1530-1750)* [= *Armenian Texts and Studies*, vol. 15], Atlanta 1999; F. Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, New Haven and London 2008, cap. VI; S. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: Circulation and the Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa, 1605-1748*, Columbia University 2007 (unpublished PhD. thesis).

<sup>5</sup> Gilt leather and textiles have been chosen because of the numerous indications showing how the streaming towards a more rational and competitive production was often brought to their aggregation: the double use of the employed raw or processed materials, the common ornamental patterns (printing blocks included) as well as the similar sequence of working phases in the decoration of determined gilt leather types and of textile printing.

<sup>6</sup> I could continue for many pages not only citing such works, but more importantly, having to point out mistakes of historical facts. One of the most typical for occidental art history cases is embodied by L. W. Mackie’s, ‘Italian Silks for the Ottoman Sultans’, *Electronic Journal for Oriental Studies*, 4 (2001), pp. 1-21. From her statement, for example, that in Russia, up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, there wasn’t any silk working and that Italian silks were imported there, it’s impossible to understand if she means the Kiev Rus’ or the actual Russian state, of which Ukraine makes no more part, but is particularly rich on historic silk dated between the 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, of world-wide renown and since decennials the object of multilateral studies, chemical analysis inclusive, see n.10, also: H. Соболев, *Очерки по*

(and the Islamic civilisation on which it is based) are just passive recipients of Occidental civilization,<sup>7</sup> neglecting thoroughly the existence and role, within this empire, of other ethnic backgrounds: in the Balkans, in the Caucasus, in the Middle East or in North Africa. Even in the cases when the presence of elements foreign to the European tradition can be seen, the Euro centric stereotypes prevail.<sup>8</sup>

The Armenian Diasporas, some of the earliest in Europe together with the Jewish ones, are closely concerned to such a lack of common sense and confusion amongst art historians and experts as to which nation should be used to classify the origin of the artefacts made outside the geographic or temporal limits of the homeland. The problem is a crucial one and touches upon historical, juridical, political, technological and scientific questions, open to discussion for a long time and far beyond the limits of this paper. Here I'll concentrate rather on the inconsistent arguments of some traditional attributions that distort the real origin of obviously Armenian (entirely or in part) artefacts- as documented in the sources and by their very material nature. It is impossible, on this occasion, to pass over in silence the striking lack of sufficient scientific knowledge seen in the approach and technical evaluations typically applied to Western Europe art objects, that, when applied to these Armenian objects often results in superficial, even erroneous interpretations and inappropriate strategies of protection from damage. The situation is really critical and compels us to a revised view of much what is now called "post Byzantine", "Ottoman" or European art of "Oriental style". In view of the European legislation of archival and cultural patrimony, and of its spirit of mutual respect between members as well as to external states, these "foreign"

*истории украшения тканей*, Москва 1934; А. Н. Свирип, *Древнерусское шитье*, Москва 1963; Е. В. Карасонова, *Золотое шитье премонгольской Руси X–XIII вв.*, Москва 1969. The greatest collections are displayed at the Moscow Historic Museum, at the Hermitage and the historic museums of Kiev, Černigov, L'vov, Khersones, Novgorod; of particular value are, besides the cloths, the draperies and *peleny* of ecclesiastical use. No traces of Italian or any other European silk, only wool and linen stuffs can be found. Silk penetrated there from Byzantium and from the Orient (China or today Uzbekistan).

<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed critique of this thesis: S. Kirillina, 'Russian Historiographical Tradition in Oriental Studies: the Arab Periphery of the Ottoman Empire', *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies*, 2 (1999), p. 11. On the whole, the European origin of the items has been questioned only by few authors. See, for example, the catalog of the exhibition organised in 2008 at the Musée des Tissus de Lyon: "The Age of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Italian Renaissance Fabrics at the Musée des Tissus de Lyon". Cf. S. Sardjoni, 'Vellurs ottomans ou italiens', in: *Venise et l'Orient*, Paris 2006, 193–203.

<sup>8</sup> For example: N.A. Reath, 'Velvets of the Renaissance, from Europe and Asia Minor', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 50 (1927), no 281, pp. 298–304; F. Little, 'A Group of Spanish Textiles', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 29 (1934), no. 9, pp. 155–156; G. F. Wingfield Digby, 'Sixteenth-Century Silk Damasks: A Spanish Group', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 74 (1939), no. 434, pp. 222–228; J. Irwin, 'Origins of the 'Oriental Style' in English Decorative Art', *The Burlington Magazine*, 97 (1955), no 625, pp. 106–114; M. S. Dimand, 'Two Fifteenth Century Hispano-Moresque Rugs', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 22 (1964), no. 10, pp. 341–352; A. Contadini, 'Due pannelli di cuoio dorato nel Museo Civico Medievale di Bologna', *Annali di Cà Foscari, Rivista della Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere dell'Università di Venezia. Serie Orientale*, 27 (1988), no 3, pp. 127–142; Idem, 'Cuoridororo. Tecnica e decorazione di cuoi dorati veneziani ed italiani con influssi islamici', in: *Atti del primo Simposio internazionale sull'arte veneziana e l'arte islamica*, ed. E. J. Grube, Venezia 1989, pp. 231–239; D. Davanzo Poli, 'La produzione serica a Venezia, in: *Tessuti nel Veneto, Venezia e la Terraferma*, Verona 1993, pp. 21–34.



artefacts should be contemplated within an adequate juridical frame securing their correct presentation and protection against inopportune interventions (incompetent restorations included). Practically this means the elaboration of more precise and detailed, standardized cataloguing and classification, taking into account not just iconography and style but also the material and structural aspects of these items and their position in the process of technological evolution.

Without a doubt, the first question to address to this end should be the exact meaning of attributions like "Venetian", "Italian", "Greek", "Armenian", "French" or "Flemish". Do these labels refer to artefacts planned and carried out (entirely or only in part?) by native people or by naturalized immigrants (but on the basis of what evidence?) or are the works called this only because they were conserved there or because of past legislative interventions?

The very definition of the term "nation", if one wishes to still call it so, did not exist in the timeframe that is being referred to and does not express that reality. Furthermore, it is important to point out that nations are constituted of ethnic groups and persons, hence the attributions should pay great attention to the primary evidence of the national or ethnic origin of the artefact and should not just approximate in terms of current national groups of boundaries. At present attributions either avoid it, or, in sync with national legislation upon cultural heritage, rather tend to sign works off as "national" although carried out by foreign authors. Indeed, a great number of these laws and their stipulations are quite anachronistic, in terms of date and spirit, to the actual social systems and perspectives of the European countries over which they govern.<sup>9</sup> Given the background of the migration processes that have transformed nations into Diasporas, the definition of ethnic and national identity used in such attributions must recognise and analyse their profound linkages with other factors than those which have been used to determine such identities in the past such as geographical territory, language or currency. For example, crafts and trade have been around from times earlier than nations and were not limited to one territory, state power or group of people.

Regrettably, whilst pretending to have paternity over a group of "Oriental style" artefacts, in Western Europe up to the present neither exhaustive inventories of the dyeing, weaving, tanning and gilding centres, nor systematic analysis of the constituent and structural particularities of the historic textiles and gilt leathers has been carried out. There is not even an awareness of the data bases published in specialized East European editions regarding analogous artefacts conserved there. Generally, traditional attributions and the

<sup>9</sup> The inherent criteria and terminology discrepancy as the main cause for the inefficiency of the international legislation on the protection of cultural heritage, as well as the necessity to redefine them after more adequate guide-lines are argued by D. Löhr, 'Kulturgutschutz auf nationaler, europäischer und internationaler Ebene. Die Regelung nach dem Recht Deutschlands und der Europäischen Union sowie den internationalen Abkommen UNESCO und UNIDROIT', *Weltkunst* 2003 no.14, pp. 2049–2053.

same questions that have been asked in the past are repeated. Attention is given to the identity of the donors (or provenance of the object) and to some of its characteristics such as the use of iconography, the style, the object's liturgical or parade use, while the origin of the employed materials, the structure and composition of the products as well as the typology of the manufacturing style are almost always downplayed.

In contrast, in Russia the publication even of a single piece of archaeological fabric has, for decades, been rigorously supplied with a complex laboratory analysis.<sup>10</sup> However the thousands of fabrics and leather panels from the most valuable Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek or French collections still continue to be classified without recourse to scientific investigations.

Studies on ornament are limited to the objects of the usual central museum collections, and from these paragons are made, neglecting the fact that these collections assemble products of a multi-ethnic and multi religious economy, and are marked by the coexistence of hybridism and syncretism of religions, both in their urban and rural varieties. More than one author ascribes decorative elements such as the tulip, the carnation flower, the pomegranate, almond, flag or lotus to Islamic art, although they occur also in Persian art and on cult-objects venerated by subjects of the Ottoman Empire who, although forcibly converted to Islam, continued to confess their previous religion: Orthodox, Monophysite, Melchite, Hebrew, Sabean or Zoroastrian, for instance. Logically, for the expression of such ambiguous faith, symbols and figural idioms of polyvalent significance were preferred; therefore they were all but intrinsic to the Islamic creed. The "giauri" (*gavur*/ non-Muslim Ottoman subjects), who succeeded in maintaining their faith, had limited civil and religious rights, referred to as "dhimmi" status. The artisans among them that worked for the Ottoman markets, as well as are known, absorbed and catered to the style and tastes of the surrounding populations.<sup>11</sup> For this reason, there is a strong possibility that many attributions of Ottoman silk (textiles) could actually refer to works by non-Muslims, such as the Armenian workers who established centres near Tokat, Antalya, Sinop for example. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Armenians were the

<sup>10</sup> П. Геерман, *Текстильно-химическкк исследования*, Москва, Ленинград 1933; А. Закощиков, *Текстильная микроскопия*, Ташкент 1931; the relations of V. N. Kononov, textile restorer at the State Hermitage, from 1940 to 1951, and of his successors; А. Нахлик, "Ткани Новгорода", in: *Труды Новгородской Археологической Экспедиции. (Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР)*, ed. А. Б. Арциховски; Б. А. Колхин, No. 123, Москва 1963; З. В. Доде, "Уникальный шелк с "драконами" из могильника Джухта (Северный Кавказ)", *Российская археология*, 2 (2005) pp. 138–150; recently a series of studies by V. P. Golikov et al. For an updated bibliographical overview on regard of the three principal silk producing centres, Moscow, Tashkent and Leningrad: Т. Н. Глушкова, *Археологический текстиль как источник по реконструкции древнего ткачества Западной Сибири*, Ph. D. these, State University of Omsk, 2004, ch. 1.

<sup>11</sup> In realty, the (Ottoman) governors of the Near East maintained – from the fall of the Byzantine Empire up to the 1840s – a policy of relative non interference in the internal ecclesiastic matters of the subject populations, allowing their ethnic and cultural consolidation, see: М. И. Якушев, *Христианские субъекты Османской империи- Антиохийский и Йерусалимские патриархаты - в политике Российской империи (30-е гг. XIX - начало XX в)*, Москва 2009 (PhD thesis).



second largest ethnic group after the Greek one and were involved in a great variety of trades, including textile manufacturing.<sup>12</sup> The silk reproduced in is just one example that needs a re-examination from this point of view.

The major challenge for Western Europe's art historians remains however their technical expertise. In spite of the huge number of university institutes, faculties, chairs or private centres concerned with post-Byzantine art, with oriental civilisations and with the restoration of Levantine (Oriental) artefacts, and despite the lavish multitude of conventions and publications they produce, it is very rare to find anyone who is really acquainted with and reliably competent in technological issues.<sup>13</sup> These matters are thoroughly neglected by the educational programs of the universities in Western Europe, they are sometimes just hinted at in a superficial, out-dated manner, without going into the issues of regional and temporal artistic and craft production or engaging with scientific investigations. As result, not only in the theoretical sphere, but also in the areas of conservation and restoration of "Oriental style" works, Occidental practitioners operate according to instinct rather than on a scientifically grounded methodology.

Another problematic issue to confront is the individualization of this cultural heritage created by Armenians (or other Levantines). This tendency has been encouraged in Western Europe by poor communication between the different states and public or private institutions.<sup>14</sup> Although generations of historians have demonstrated that silk and leather working were imported to Europe already in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries by Levantine artisans, archival research focussing on their ethnic background and craft traditions has not yet been carried out, therefore the current data is not sufficient to draw objective conclusions. It has been ascertained, however, that in Marseille in the 1650s and 1660s and in Amsterdam in the 1670s, Armenians were employed to 'draw and colour or dye all kinds of East Indian cottons, which has never before in this country been practiced'.<sup>15</sup> It is also beyond doubt that in France the so called "Turkish red" or "Adrianopoli red", a very resistant cotton dye, at least up to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century remained an exclusive characteristic of

<sup>12</sup> I. B. MacCabe, *The Shah's Silk for Europe's Silver...*, ch. 6; W. M. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus and Armenia*, London 1842, 351 ff.; A. D. Mordtmann, *Anatolien, Skizzen und Reisebriefe aus Kleinasien, 1850–1859*, Hanover 1925, p. 160 ff.; S. Yandim, *Ikono-graphische, stilistische und kunstsoziologische Studien zu den post-byzantinischen Ikonen in den Städten Antalya und Tokat*, Marburg 2004 (PhD thesis), p. 21 ff.

<sup>13</sup> About the qualifications indispensable in an expert and the minimal requirements for technical expertise: Ю. Гренберг, 'Технологическая экспертиза живописи', *Арххроника*, 2004/1 (on-line journal).

<sup>14</sup> I had to experience these obstacles during my investigations on the gilt leather collection of the Decorative Arts Museum, Paris, whose staff, with futile excuses, did not allow me to examine it personally: in obvious spite of the official French policy that not only supports but promotes the opening of national boundaries within the frame of several UNESCO and ONU conventions.

<sup>15</sup> Cit. in E. Homburg, 'From Colour Maker to Chemist: Episodes from the Rise of the Colourist, 1670–1800', in: *Natural Dyestuffs and Industrial Culture in Europe, 1750–1880*, ed. R. Fox and A. Nieto-Galan, Canton, Mass. 1999, p. 221.

works produced by Armenians and Greeks.<sup>16</sup> Calico printing, for instance, 'was introduced in Genoa in 1690 by an Armenian workman who was not only allowed to exercise his trade outside the guild system, but also given the monopoly of the activity for ten years'.<sup>17</sup> Armenian immigrants from Italy to the Tyrol and Flanders are mentioned by Brunello to have established block and screen printing manufactures in these regions.<sup>18</sup>

The opening of the EC-boundaries fifteen-odd years ago considerably accelerated the documentation of public cultural patrimony (yet not of the private goods however) in most of the member states. Thanks to the inventories that have been compiled, although not definitive and often not performed by adequately trained persons,<sup>19</sup> it has been identified that the diffusion of some typical handicraft and artistic techniques can be linked to the presence of immigrant's communities (Armenian, Jewish, Islamic, Orthodox etc.) in the area. These items are characterized by common method and style as well as by the use of raw materials imported from the Near and Middle East or from Asia. Yet, in the light of the latest technological investigations on techniques in Eastern Europe, and primarily in Russia, a series of incongruities with the established attributions can be noticed, which are of importance to the study of Armenian art and craft traditions.

The most significant concern a conspicuous group of gilt leathers known under various names: "Spanish", "Catalan" or "Venetian". The extant exemplars go back to the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and have been carried out in Portugal, Croatia, Spain, France or Italy (Venice). Although these can be ordered into different subspecies, throughout the group common traits prevail and these regard the employed materials, the technique and the ornamentation as well.

These works all differ from the vernacular oil painted wall hangings in their use of lipid varnishes, more brilliant than the oil glazing and they are coloured with natural red pigments (madder and kermes lake from Armenia and Poland).

The lipid varnishes are the hardened solution of natural pigments in natural resins, colourless or lightly coloured, selected on base of their adherence to metals, available in

<sup>16</sup> H. Schweppe, *op. cit.*, 90–91. Cf. O. Raveux, 'Espaces et Technologies dans la France Méridionale d'Ancien Régime: l'Exemple de l'Indiennage Marseillais (1648–1793)', *Annales du Midi*, 116 (2004), no. 246, p. 157.

<sup>17</sup> M. Cataldi Gallo, 'Indiane e mezzari a Genova', in: *I Mezzari: tra Oriente e Occidente*, Genoa 1988, pp. 25. About the earliest archaeological and written sources on block printing: Schweppe, *cit.*, 72–77, regrettably this author too ignores totally the Eastern European resources, to which belongs, for instance, a Chinese manuscript from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The archaeological finds testify however to the use of this technique since immemorial times.

<sup>18</sup> F. Brunello, *op. cit.*, pp. 171–178.

<sup>19</sup> E. Manzato, in his position of Treviso City Museum director, writes with regards to the extant gilt leather decoration in the former Monte di Pietà Bank of Treviso: "Il tocco finale all'eleganza dell'ambiente venne dato, nei primi decenni del Seicento, dall'applicazione lungo le pareti di pannelli in cuoio impresso a fuoco con motivi complessi di foglie stilizzate, passate in oro e argento su un fondo rosso vivo." Any 'impressione a fuoco' has been made here, and there is not the minimal trace of gold in these wall hangings: all the silver alloy foils are gilded with mecca-varnish. More details on this technique by: G. Gall, *op. cit.*, pp. 295–297.



considerable quantities and cost. They occur already in old Egyptian art, although their chemical composition there yet has not been clarified.<sup>20</sup> Some varieties are visible on icons from Mount Sinai dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in Turkey (in Aya Sofia - Istanbul and in the museums of Antalya, Tokat or Sinop), in Albania, on a series of 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century icons that are part of the adornment of churches in Thessaloniki, in the Byzantine museums of Korfu, Joaninna, Zante, and elsewhere in the south of the Balkans.<sup>21</sup> These were employed also in 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia (Novgorod and Solvychevodsk) for cold enamelling.<sup>22</sup> Russian technical treatises, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek and some Romanian *hermenias* from the 19<sup>th</sup> century contain instructions (going back to earlier periods) on their preparation including solvents and mordents for the different kinds of resins or gums, how to extract pigments as well as advices regarding their correct application.<sup>23</sup>

The most recent classification and methodology for the de-



Fig. 1. Gilt leather with coloured (purple red) transparent varnish from the Casinò of Venice. (Photo: Magdalena Stoyanova)

<sup>20</sup> А. Шаренков, *Старинни трактати по технология и техника на живописца*, vol. 1, София 1988–94, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> N. Stojanović, 'Oltarska pala sa Lopuda – sastav i struktura originalnih slojeva boja', *Зборник заштите споменика културе*, 19 (1968), pp. 71–83.

<sup>22</sup> Л. Писарская, 'Дреннерусская эмаль XI–XVII веков' in: *Русские эмали XI–XIX веков*, Москва 1974, pp. 138–139.

<sup>23</sup> The most important publications of these sources are cited at n.30; more detailed discussion in my forthcoming *Tecnologia ed arte*.



tection and conservation of these varnishes has been elaborated by the Russian Institute for the cultural and naturalistic patrimony and by the Central Russian Laboratory for Restoration.<sup>24</sup> Again, the Soviet and Russian scientists have developed very interesting strategies for the identification of natural resins based not just on molecular structure and on the chemical composition but considering their thermodynamic and kinetic properties as well.<sup>25</sup>

We can rule out the possibility that vernacular artisans in Spain, Venice or France could have prepared them alone because of the unavailability of the required components.<sup>26</sup> The ingredients were familiar and accessible instead to Levantines who imported them from their native lands or other countries. In contrast to original eastern treatises,<sup>27</sup> recipe books published from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards in Italy, France, Germany or Holland show great taxonomic confusion and their "secrets" include results that are unfeasible and incomplete.<sup>28</sup> Up to present day, the collection of the famous Armenian kermes for instance, and the extraction of the dye from it is a matter of some difficulty even for specialists.<sup>29</sup> In Armenia instead, the extraction of kermes (and of others splendid mineral and vegetal pigments) was a thriving industry already in antiquity and its centre, the town of Artashat, was called Kirmis.<sup>30</sup>

M. B. von Bernitz reports in 1672 that Polish kermes harvested in the Ukraine were optioned to Jews, who then sold it on to Armenians and Turks. The dye was used for wool and silk as well as for horse manes and tails. Dutch artisans used to mix it with Ameri-

<sup>24</sup> В. П. Голиков, З. Ф. Жарикова, (РНИИ культурного и природного наследия), М. В. Капустина, (ВХИРЦ им. И.Э.Грбаря). "Классификация баканов", relation hold at the symposium "Экспертиза и атрибуция произведений изобразительного и декоративно-прикладного искусства", Санкт Петербург, Гос.Эрмитаж, 27.06.2000 and later papers by Golikov on "bakany".

<sup>25</sup> For more on this complex subject see my *Tecnologia and arte* paper. Here I'll only mention the puzzling fact that up to the moment none of the Western scientific publications on the matter has ever considered the pioneering Russian achievements in this field as documented already in the 1960s, in easily accessible editions like the *Soviet encyclopedia*, for example. This enormous information gap is surely all but a sign of objectivity and scientific methods! About the unsatisfactory state of these studies in West Europe: A. K. Tsakalof et al., 'Binding media identification in art objects: the state of the art in Europe. Results of the international survey.' study presented at the Int. Symposium: 'Archaeometry Studies in the Aegean: Reviews and recent developments'. Athens Greece, May 28–31 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Among others: turpentine, essential oils, different drying oils, balsams, resins, pigments and other natural exotic substances referred to in my *Tecnologia ed arte*. The vernacular Venetian gilt leathers from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries do not have any transparent coloured varnishes any more, only protective and mecca-gilding, very thick and uneven, obtained by the termic application of linseed oil and darkened, visually not particularly aesthetically pleasing.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. M. Stoyanova, 'Written Sources on Coptic Dyeing Methods', *Journal of Coptic Studies*, 10 (2008), pp. 109–110.

<sup>28</sup> E. Flaiani, 'Il manoscritto 297 del Fondo Bolognelli dell'Archivio segreto Vaticano. Un ricettario del XVII secolo (part 1)', *Kermes*, 53 (2004), pp. 54–55.

<sup>29</sup> H. Böhmer. *Koekboya. Natural Dyes and Textiles. A Colour Journey from Turkey to India and beyond*. Gandarkesee 2002, pp. 207–208.

<sup>30</sup> И. А. Атаджанян, *Из истории русско-армянских взаимоотношений с X по XVIII века*. Yerevan University, Lingva, 2006 available at [www.archi.ru](http://www.archi.ru) («Российский архитектурный портал»).



can kermes (Cochenillkarmin) and produced also coloured lakes from it.<sup>31</sup> The Polish kermes was exported by Armenian traders to Italy, perhaps together with the Serbian *zrvaz*<sup>32</sup> and the Albanian *qöqel*.<sup>33</sup> Schweppe makes strong case that many Italian silks from Lucca, Florence and Venice, personally examined by him, had been dyed with kermes.<sup>34</sup> I noticed this pigment on the unpublished gilt leather pieces of the Venice



Fig. 2. Silver printed velvet attributed as Venetian and put up for sale few years ago in the USA. (Source: www.TextileAsArt.com)

State Archive, in Palazzo Labia (Venice), on altar hangings from Val di Zoldo, on some of the pieces displayed in the Correr Museum in Venice as well as on several items in French and German gilt leather collections. To them belong also the gilt leather wall hangings actually in the Wawel Castle in Krakow, brought there from Venice.<sup>35</sup> In the area of Savoya (France) has been documented a conspicuous group of leather altar hangings, sometimes back signed as Venetian. All of these are characterized by decorations with transparent varnishes coloured with kermes. In the same region, more precisely in the archives of Rodez, documents about a gilt leather merchant, Andre Enjalran, with an Armenian family name, have recently come to light.<sup>36</sup>

Rarely dwelled on by art historians<sup>37</sup> and ignored by Occidental restorers that confuse them with mecca-varnishes obtained from chromo-resins, these transparent purple red films are frequently damaged by cleaning with thin alcohol. The consequence of such "protection" that does not take into account the delicate bonds between pigment and resin can be noticed on the giants' (*golems*) leathers in the Renaissance Museum near Paris, where

<sup>31</sup> H. Schweppe, *op. cit.*, pp. 268–270.

<sup>32</sup> Љ. Стојановић, *Старе српске повеље и писма, књ. 1. Дубровник и суседи његови, други део*. Београд, Сремски Карловци 1934, pp. 350–351. С. Радојчић, 'Црвац', *Зограф 1* (1966), pp. 31–32.

<sup>33</sup> About the puzzling Albanian dye *qöqer* or *qöqel*: F. Stamati, 'Plant and Animal dyes Formerly used in Albania', *Dyes in History and Archaeology*, 11 (1992), p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> H. Schweppe, *op. cit.*, 269.

<sup>35</sup> R. Kozłowski, J. Adamowicz, 'Flattening in situ the gilt leather wall', in: *ICOM-CC Working Group Leather interim meeting*, Brussels 1998, post-prints.

<sup>36</sup> J. P. Fournet, *op. cit.*, 160.

<sup>37</sup> Several indications by J. P. Fournet, *op. cit.*, passim; Goldrausch. *Die Pracht der Goldledertapeten*, ed. Thümmeler, C. Eva Gerner, Kassel 2006. Doubt remains concerning the dating of the wall hangings with such varnishes displayed at the Ars Nobilis exhibition, Berlin 2003, (published in *Weltkunst*, 2003, no. 12, p. 1708: "Tapetenwand, Italien um 1700, 126 x 195, versilbert, gepunzt, konturiert, rote Lasurfarbe"). About the kermes lake: J. Sanyova, *Contribution à l'étude de la structure et des propriétés de laques de garance*, Bruxelles 2000/2001, Ph. D. Thesis.



not only the varnish, but also the underlying metal foil have been exported. On the whole, the treatments of these leathers, from the cleaning to the consolidation, neglects their material nature<sup>38</sup> and hinder possibilities for further technical investigations that could bring to light great surprises. For instance the discovery of bromine by the determination of the silver alloy composition by a proton induced X-ray emission on the Gardner Museum's (Boston) Venetian type gilt leathers, recently published and discussed by Valentine Talland.<sup>39</sup> It is yet not clear if this is due to pollution or any unknown silver deterioration mechanism. Substances could also have been introduced with the purpose of obtaining a matt effect, diminishing the metal lustre. However, the photochemical properties of AgBr

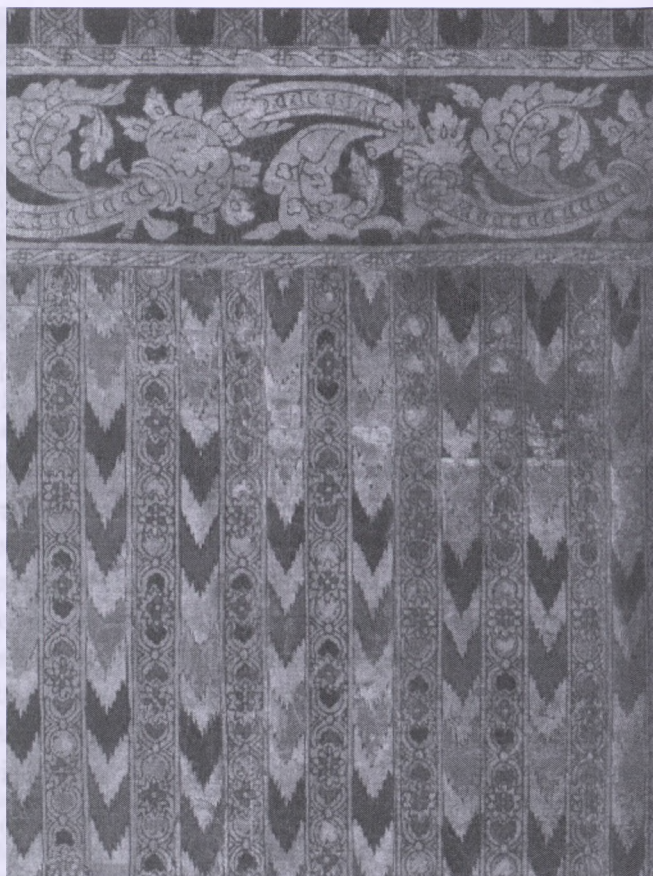


Fig. 3. Gilt leather datable in the 16th century and conserved in the Bologna Medieval Museum.

(Source: Fortini Brown P. *Private life in Renaissance Venice*. London 2004)

had been officially made known and first applied for photographic fixing in Europe only by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further research should establish if Br is present also on other exemplars of this kind elsewhere. In order to select the most opportune conservation

<sup>38</sup> In the last twenty years, at the ICOM-CC meetings and in the restoration documents, the cleaning with thin alcohol of the lipid varnishes - without preliminary analytical investigations and nearer to a sort of handicraft mending as to scientific conservation - has been reported principally by Maria Regni (Italy) and by C. Bonnot-Diconne (France). In the book dedicated to the restoration of the Doge's Palace in Venice, sponsored by the Banco Popolare di Verona (*Palazzo Ducale, Storia e restauri*, ed. G. Romanelli), there is any description indeed about the interventions the gilt leather wall hangings there underwent, despite the prescriptions of the famous International Venice Restoration Chart signed 1964.

<sup>39</sup> V. Talland, B. Mangum, C.M. Tsu, D. Fullick, 'The conservation of leather wallhangings at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum', in: *ICOM-Committee for Conservation, Conservation of Leathercraft and Related Objects*, Interim Meeting Brussels 1998, post-prints.



strategy, it should be as important to understand if it might have been introduced during beating – Armenian (Caucasian) artisans are renowned for their thousand year-long skills as silver and goldsmiths, however most of the registered gold-beaters were Jews – or by the final varnishing of the gilt leathers. Additionally, to the innovations Armenians brought to Western Europe seems to belong also a range of particular drying oils used for painting, varnishing, for water fastness of dyed and printed textiles and for gilding/silvering, but these assumptions, although confirmed by historic sources and chemo-physical analysis in Eastern Europe, have not been explored in Italy, France, Belgium or Holland.

The lavish amount of silver foils necessary for the “gilding” of leather and silk fabrics since the early Middle Ages up to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century at least was imported to Venice from former Armenian lands, and from the mines near Trebisond.<sup>40</sup> Ottoman non-Muslim subjects (Armenians and Jews) were responsible for the import, from the Balkans, of conspicuous quantities of skin (proceeded or raw) necessary for the leather wall hangings.<sup>41</sup> A great deal of the trade of silk, pigments, dyes, resins, jewels and other *exotica* both into and through Russia was already, by the time of the Russian Tsar Ivan Grozni, since 1556 onwards, in Armenian hands thanks to the tax free privilege they were awarded. Subsequently this was confirmed by Tsar Aleksej Mihailovich and by Emperor Peter the Great as well.<sup>42</sup>

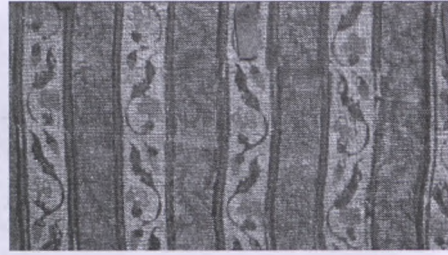


Fig. 4. Lining (doublure) of a manuscript binding, stamped cotton with floral stripes, inscribed binding of 1700, Venice, San Lazzaro, Library of the Mekhitarist Fathers, MS 1527. (Photo: Dickran Kouymjian, see the on-line Index of Armenian Art)



Fig. 5. Chassuble attributed as Italian (Venitien), recently put up for sale in the USA. now in unknown private collection. (Source: www.TextileAsArt.com)

<sup>40</sup> A. Lipinsky, *Oro, argento, gemme e smalti. Tecnologia delle arti dalle origini alla fine del medioevo (3000 a.C. – 1500 d.C.)*, Bologna 1975, p. 92

<sup>41</sup> В. Вук, 'Дубровник и турска у XVIII веку', in: *Српска академија наука, посебна издања, Историјски институт*, 331/11, Београд 1960, 418, 426–427.

<sup>42</sup> И. А. Атаджаян, *op. cit.*; p. 28 ff.; I. B. McCabe, 'Silk and Silver: The Trade and Organization of New Julfa at the End of the Seventeenth Century', *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes*. n. s., 25 (1994–1995), pp. 245–272.; Idem, *The Merchants of New Julfa: Some Aspects of their International Trade in the late Seventeenth Century*. Ph.D Diss., Columbia University, 1993.



The decorative elements typical of the Spanish-Venetian leather wall hangings and for some silk fabrics made in Spain and Italy are quite alien to European ornamental systems, to their repertoire and arranging principles. Characteristic for all these items are the intransigence to Christian symbols and the preference for the ornamental motives and concepts dating back to pre-Christian times and exclusive to the Levantine area: stylised pomegranates, almonds, Cedar of Lebanon pinecones or tulips in elongated forms (Fig. 2) called also *ljale*, Tur., or *lampas* because they often occur on the lampas fabrics. In the earlier examples they are arranged after the arabesque principle of mutual repetition (normally in two tonalities: gilt silver on red or indigo background) or in vertical columns

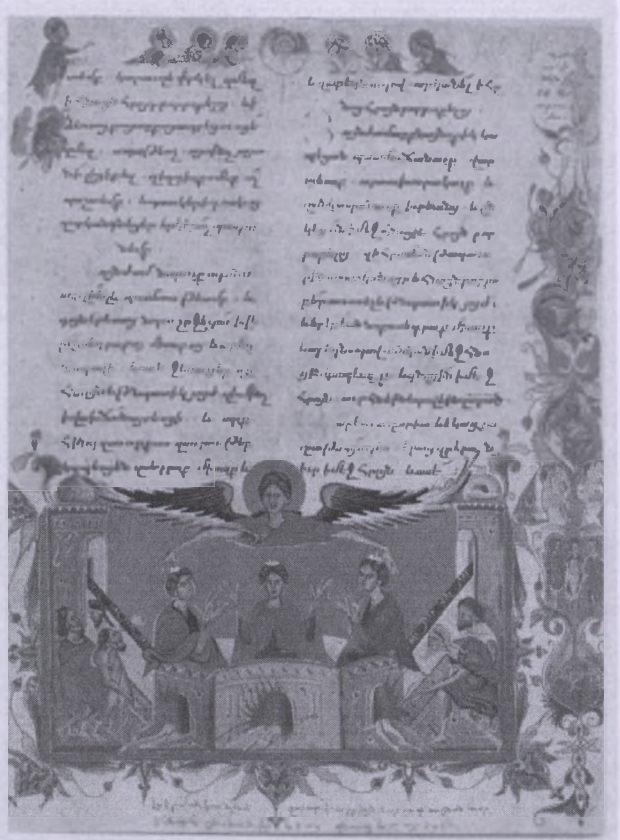


Fig. 6. Miscellanea from 1288 (Sorice: L. Durnovo, *Armenische Miniaturen*, Köln 1960, 135)

like trees. Later striped patterns with spirals of flowers alternated by sets of coloured geometric forms appear (Fig. 3), these are typical of the decoration of a very popular kind Persian (Isfahan) carpets, known in Russia under the name *dorogojniki* (Fig. 4).

The pomegranate, one of the symbols of Armenia, has its well established semantics in its mythology, but it was venerated also by Persians, Jews and Greeks. Pomegranates probably adorned Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem (after I Kings, 7:13–22) and were embroidered on the liturgical cloths of Hebrew priests (cf. Exodus, 28:33–34) depicted in Christian churches; they are also the mascot of many cities in modern-day Turkey.

The Almond tree, from an earlier origin in the pre-Christian Middle East, was considered a vegetable deity.<sup>43</sup> Besides being adopted in Christian symbolism (the so called 'mandorla of light'), it penetrated European imagery through the striking designs of

<sup>43</sup> M. Stoyanova, 'The Gnostic Meaning of the Mandorla', in: *18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies pre-prints*, Moscow 1992, pp. 54–55.



imported Asian textiles that attracted generations of European consumers. The chasuble at Fig. 5., for example, put on the antiquity market as Italian, is instead of undeniable Oriental manufacture. It is embroidered with vividly depicted plants of exotic allure (Indo-Iranian), in a variety of exquisitely brilliant and fast coloured silk threads: a technique in which Europe had never excelled. The adaptation of oriental designs for a Catholic liturgical vestment can not be explained but through the mediation of Armenian designers and embroiders, converted to the Catholic faith. An analogous case is the Persian sashes preserved in Polish collections – to which our attention has been drawn by Beata Biedronska-Slota at the present conference.



Fig. 7. The Gospel from Nea Julfa, 1610. (Source: Durnovo L. *Armenische Miniaturen*. Köln 1960, 174–175)

The pomegranate and the so called “tree of life”, profoundly rooted in the pagan myths and legends of the Levant, but also of many other ancient civilisations spanning from Scandinavia to Iran, are an almost obligatory device in the figurative repertoire of the illuminated Armenian manuscripts, maintaining poetic unity with the pre-Christian system of aesthetic and ethical values (Fig. 6).

The ornamental patterns still preserved on the gilt leather wall hangings in the Doge’s Palace and in the Casino of Venice, are surprisingly near to the fantastic and, at the same time, naturalistic spirit of some Armenian 17<sup>th</sup> century miniatures originating from New Julfa, (Fig. 7) famous for having enriched the preceding tradition with Iranian and European elements.<sup>44</sup> As a whole, Armenian miniatures are unanimously recognized amidst the highest achievements of Byzantine book art, due as to their fascinating manner of stylising

<sup>44</sup> L. Durnovo, *Armenische Miniaturen*, Köln 1960, p. 82, 96, 128, 139 particularly 174 (The Gospel from Nea Julfa, 1610); see also Э. Корхмазиан, *Армянская миниатюра Крыма*, Эреван 1978, *Treasures in Heaven, Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts*. ed. T. F. Mathews and R. S. Wieck, New York 1994.



as well as to their employment of rare, precious mineral and vegetal pigments. These enabled the experimental discovery of optical relations and principles centuries before Impressionists and Post-Impressionists outlined their theories on basic and complementary colours. The plastic construction of volume by the warm and cold shades of one and the same colour, for example, like in the silks woven for the sultans, in madder and crimson red, led icon painters into temptation almost immediately and, later, some of the Russian vanguards, as David Sterenberg, during his Paris period, or Aristarh Lentulov. The Armenian miniatures together with embroidering in silver treads and silver works are acknowledged amidst the principal sources of inspiration for the enamelled silvers during the Russian "Silver Age", but their importance for Western European art is, as of yet, far from being adequately appreciated. Many relations could potentially be found regarding wall papers and textile printing and painting, woodcut, designs for leather wall hangings, textile draperies and for cloth.

When faced with the suggestive gilt leather panels that survive in the Venetian Doge's Palace and Casino,<sup>45</sup> or in the former Treviso "Monte dei Pascoli" Bank, without paragons in contemporary Italian art for their originality, the fantastic ornaments and unknown technique, it is impossible not to question who could have carried them out. Due to their "painting without colours", the optical joke of lights damasking the surfaces, as well as the light asymmetry and inspiration from exotic floral models, they announce their separate derivation from European examples. It is impossible not to recall figures like the most famous master of Armenian wall painting and miniatures Minas Zakharar, author of the murals in the Etchmiadzin cathedral.<sup>46</sup> It seems likely that, in Venice, only Armenian painters from Persia could have been able to assemble all the necessary ingredients for the realization of these tapestries. Documents published by Sarah Eftekharian in her Ph.D. thesis show the level of familiarity the Armenian painters of the churches in Isfahan had with contemporary European art.<sup>47</sup> The role that figures like the Scerimans and other Armenian

<sup>45</sup> Datable, on the basis of Andrea Vendramin's testament, ante 1513: F. Pedrocco, *Ca' Vendramin Calergi*, Venezia 2004, pp. 13–14 (this author makes no hint on the gilt leather wall hangings).

<sup>46</sup> Корхмазян, cit, reports that in Isfahan he painted some palaces and the church of the Sciahrimanian. Another renowned and gifted master was Bogdan Saltanov, one of whose works – the copper plate engraved with the "Last Supper" after Da Vinci – was presented 1660 to Tsar Aleksey Mihajlovich and had such success that Saltanov and his brother were appointed to the Royal Art School. For a complete overview of the Russian bibliography on this figure: Атаджанян, *op. cit.* p. 51 ff.; Н. И. Комашко, 'Живописец Богдан Салтанов в контексте художественной жизни Москвы второй половины XVII века' *Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики*, 2 (2003), pp. 44–54. On the talented Isfahani painter Minas, Sarah Eftekharian reports (S. S. Eftekharian, *Le rayonnement international des gravures flamandes aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles : les peintures murales des églises Sainte-Bethléem et Saint-Sauveur à la Nouvelle-Djoulfra (Ispahan) Bruxelles 2006*, Ph.D. these, 318) the witness of Arakel of Tabris who wrote: « Il peignait les plantes, les animaux, les fauves, les oiseaux et les visages des individus de toutes les nations avec une ressemblance parfaite, tant ceux des Perses que des Arméniens, des Hébreux, des Hindous, des Francs, des Russes, des Géorgiens ; de même que les sentiments et les passions de l'homme [...]. Il peignait à l'huile ou à l'eau, sur parchemin, toile, cuivre, bois, mur, et où besoin en était. Il était aussi un enlumineur de manuscrits, et il pouvait décorer n'importe quel livre avec de l'or et de l'indigo, car il connaissait à la perfection tous les métiers spéciaux qui ont trait à l'art de la peinture » (cit. by O. Avedissian, *Peintres et sculpteurs Arméniens du 19ème siècle à nos jours*, Le Caire, 1959, p. 114.).

<sup>47</sup> S.S. Eftekharian, *op. cit.*, 54 ff.



traders could have played in the development of the arts in Europe (Venice, Amsterdam etc.) are yet to be more closely examined.<sup>48</sup>

The strong stylistic analogies between the gilt leather and the silk textile ornamentation with the so called “bizarre style” of 1680–1725,<sup>49</sup> suggests that the appearance of this phenomenon perhaps could be shifted back to the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and ascribed to Armenian designers and artisans. A strong argument for such a conclusion is the biggest European collection of “bizarre” cloths now at the Hermitage of S. Petersburg: 5 000 pieces in the wardrobe of Peter the Great,<sup>50</sup> all surely brought to the Russian court by Armenian traders as historic sources suggest.

Until now, textiles in Western European collections have been classed into the above-said “bizarre” typology drawing on stylistic qualities only. The results of a technological investigation help us to establish an exact date and origin of the “bizarre” silks, which were frequently found in places inhabited by Jews and Armenians, like the Terraferma Veneto and provinces of Verona.

During laboratory analysis of 17<sup>th</sup> century *parsunes* (the Russian portraits), painted on silk in the so called *taft'iannaja* technique and conserved today in Russia, interesting information came to light concerning the workmanship and encyclopaedic knowledge<sup>51</sup> acquired by Russians from China, Charkas or Uzbek people thanks to Armenian mediation. The Russian court relied very much on Armenians for introducing to Russia the latest artistic news (copper printing etc.) from West. The case of the Tsar's painter Bogdan (or Ivan) Saltanov, Moscow Armery, is the better studied<sup>52</sup>, but there are many earlier examples of such Armenian artisans. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as Uspenskij writes, few other foreigners were employed in the Royal Art School: Apostol Jur'ev from Athens, Daniel Vuchters (an Austrian), Ivan Decters (from Sweden) and Stanislav Lopuzkij (Poland). Saltanov, an Armenian from Isfahan, worked in the Armoury for thirty years as interior designer, gilder, oil and icon painter and art-teacher. He is considered equal to Simon Ushakov in his role in painting and reforming the Russian icon, and he is known as the author of the *taftjannaja* technique in Russia. Some authors emphasize the dominant German influences in his style, however little is known about where he formed his artistic skills.

<sup>48</sup> K. Kevonian, *Marchands Arméniens au XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle, Cahiers du Monde Russe e Soviétique*, 16 (1975); see also M. Stoyanova, *Arte russa in Italia. Nuove scoperte dalle collezioni Abamelek-Lazarev e Demidoff*, München 2011.

<sup>49</sup> P. Thornton, 'The 'Bizarre' Silks', *The Burlington Magazine*, 110 (1958), no. 665, pp. 265–270; *Bizarre Seiden – ein Exotismus um 1700*, (Exhibition catalog), Riggisberg 2000, p. 34.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>51</sup> О. Б. Лантратова, О. Н. Сотскова, В. П. Голиков, 'Парсуна патриарха Никона из собрания Государственного Исторического музея – 'энциклопедия' материалов и технологических приемов в русском искусстве конца XVII века', relation hold at the symposium Экспертиза и атрибуция, *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> И.Л. Бусева-Давыдова, 'О концепциях стиля русского искусства XVII века в отечественном искусствовании' («Российский архитектурный портал» 2006), [www.archi.ru](http://www.archi.ru).

Indeed, the future analysis of the gilt and silver block printing technique of velvets, the economic substitution of brocades, should pay much more attention to the scientific investigations of silk painting and gilding methods in Russia. In Italy very few examples of this type of production have survived, there are more in the Abegg and Lehmann collections and yet more evidence from the Italian and Dutch paintings going back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> Organic varnishes on mineral mordent kneaded with metal powder were used for the purpose. Mixtures were further elasticised with drying oils that do not turn yellowish like linseed oil and do not granulate as does nut oil in presence of enzymes.

The wooden prints for textiles still bearing traces of indigo dye from the monastery of San Lazzaro in Venice are particularly precious because they testify to the existence of indigo printing there. In Venice, the "indiane" (a kind of printed cotton fabrics) were imported up to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century at least. Worthy of further research is the very probable link with the appearance of textile block printing in the Tyrol and Flanders, along the way of the cotton trade, where this technique later experienced significant modernisation thanks to Armenians migrated from Italy to the North of Europe. Waterproofing of block-printed cloths in Tyrol was guaranteed by the application of casein. Gilt leather and wall paper in Flanders from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century perhaps belong to the activity of the same workshops, to judge from the similar Oriental designs and techniques (typical for the calico printing technique). Moreover, the mould's patterns repeat those used contemporary for textile, leather and wall paper printing.<sup>54</sup> Particularly informative on the professional activities of Armenians in Europe are also the wood cuts with solar symbols conserved in the monastery of San Lazzaro and similar to a great number of items from the Italian, Austrian, French and German Alp-regions.

The listed cases, impressive as they are, cover only a tiny fraction of the scholarly work necessary to draw an objective picture from the extant material, before such witnesses disappear altogether. Sources that contain notices about patents and other kind of innovations in the leather and silk branches, such as household accounts, household inventories and inventories of firms, do not usually provide enough of the right kind of information to make it possible to link the concrete cases to specific types of items and do not seem to be particularly reliable. The correct identification of the discussed artefacts depends much on the training of the scholars and on their capacity to value the available information in the context of the complex interrelations between historical, philological, technical and scientific questions as well as on the quality of the laboratory analysis at their disposal. In Western Europe, regrettably, an institution of such a profile does not yet exist, but all transfers, restitutions, auctions etc. of artefacts – Levantine or European – must be accompanied by commonly recognized technological expertise.

<sup>53</sup> R. Duits, 'Figured Riches: The Value of Gold Brocades in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Painting', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 62 (1999), pp. 60–92.

<sup>54</sup> One of the greatest collections is that of the Renaissance Museum near Paris. On the techniques see: H. Clouzot, C. Follot, *Histoire du Papier Peint en France*, Paris 1935.



## Armenian Silk Sashes

Beata Biedrońska-Słota, National Museum, Krakow

Eastern silk sashes were not only once very popular in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth but became an important element of Polish national costume. These sashes were brought to Poland from Persia and the territories of the Ottoman Empire by merchants, many of whom were of Armenian origin. It is well known that Armenians also established workshops in Poland and started to produce sashes after Persian and Indian designs. Additionally, it has been established that many of the sashes brought from Constantinople were woven by Armenian craftsmen settled there and were intended expressly for the Polish market. These sashes are the most interesting because they contain Armenian inscriptions, which serve as a clear sign that the sashes were the result of some Armenian involvement in their production.

The strong influence of Armenians on shaping the artistic development of the crafts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is well known. There are several sources that confirm this influence. It has been established through the use of these sources that privileges for Armenian embroiderers were announced by Zygmunt August in 1552<sup>1</sup> and then more than one hundred years later in 1658 for Armenian embroiderers in Lwów. It is important to also mention that on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1583 the chancellor Jan Zamoyski announced privileges for Armenians. This favoured position of Armenians was confirmed in the privilege on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1585 by the king for Murat Jakubowicz from Kaffa, and rights for the exclusive production of saffian leathers and carpets knotted following Ottoman designs were granted.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, Andrzej Potocki in 1677 announced the privilege of granting autonomy to the Armenians of Stanisławów. In 1678 workshops were established by Potocki and in Brody and Buczacz.<sup>3</sup> A contract dating from 1758 between Michał Kazimierz

<sup>1</sup> M. Taszycka, 'Hafciarstwo', in: *Zarys historii włókiennictwa na ziemiach polskich do końca XVIII wieku*, Wrocław-Kraków 1966, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie zamojscy i ich rola w wymianie handlowej i kulturalnej między Polską a Wschodem*, Lublin 1965, pp. 41–45; Eadem, 'Rzemiosło ormiańskie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej', in: *Studia do dziejów kontaktów polsko-ormiańskich*, Lublin 1983, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> K. Stopka, *Ormianie w Polsce dawnej i dzisiejszej*, Kraków 2000, p. 133.

Radziwiłł and Jan Madzarski, documents the fact that in Sluck were produced "hangings, carpets decorated with numbers of gold, silver and silk according to the given image".<sup>4</sup> In 1788 Paschalis Jakubowicz, a Warsawian merchant of Armenian origin, purchased the town called Lipków near Warsaw from Michal Mniszech, who was the great crown marshal. Earlier, before 1788, Paschalis had established a centre for manufacturing sashes in the town. Showing his devotion to the production of such sashes it is stated that "Because of his delivery of benefaction to handicrafts" he was given the Paschal lamb coat of arms during a Parliament meeting in 1790.<sup>5</sup>

The sashes made by Armenian manufacturers can be regarded as an extremely important and representative element of Polish national costume. They are known because of their high quality, artistic value, technical perfection and richness of colours.

There is a big difference between these sashes and the very simple, monochrome versions or versions in two colours made by Armenians in Constantinople. It could be that these sashes are the most original examples of that particular Armenian handicraft. The inscriptions that can be seen on the sashes that contain the names of their creators as well as the distinct artistic expressions that can be identified on these works show their different quality.

There is little information that has been found concerning the sashes, and there are no known Ottoman-Turkish or Armenian sources concerning their production. They were likely to have been listed in the registers of the trade houses as they were brought by merchants to Poland. These sashes are especially interesting because of their simple technique of production, involving a contour drawing of the design (with no inside drawing) – similar to a cut-out. The dimensions are about 30cm width and 300cm in length. The inscriptions on them suggest that the people who made them wanted to show the splendour of their works, but in comparison with the sashes made in Poland, the ones from Constantinople were not able to be such an expression of the pride of their authors. The sashes are generally dated to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However some sources suggest a date of the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For example in 1669 a Krakow inventory contained a reference to a "white silken Armenian sash", and a similar sash was mentioned in 1789 or a "crimson Armenian sash".<sup>6</sup> In the accounting book of Nikorowicz written between 1753 and 1774 sashes that came from Constantinople were listed.<sup>7</sup> Despite the lack of specific sources to prove this, it seems certain that sashes were made in Constantinople in a quick manner to fulfil the demands of the market, whereas they were without such a consciousness of the realities of the market and demand for sashes in Poland.

<sup>4</sup> Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, 'Rzemiosło ...', p. 101

<sup>5</sup> J. Chruszczyńska, *Pasy kontuszowe z polskich manufaktur i pracowni w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 300–304.

<sup>6</sup> M. Taszycka, *Pasy wschodnie*, Katalogi zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie, Kraków 1990, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> T. Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu w Polsce w XVII i XVIII wieku*, Kraków 1935, pp. 62–63.



We will now look to the evidence of the sashes themselves to be able to situate them with more specificity. In the National Museum in Krakow there are preserved sashes (inv. no. MNK. XIX-2502) with an inscription referring to Ewon Mikonowicz a Constantinopolitan<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 1), that are very similar to sashes with the same inscription in the Diocesan Museum in Poznan published by Tadeusz Mańkowski<sup>9</sup>, and in the National Museum in Warsaw (inv.no. SZT 185).<sup>10</sup> The colour of the sashes is gold, with pink and delicate blue. On the ends of the sashes there are three motifs depicting symmetrical bushes of flowers, forming a regular oval shape, growing from a mound in the ground; in the background of the sash there is depicted continuous ornament.

The next group that can be identified are those sashes with the signature of Jakub Piotrowicz a Constantinopolitan (Fig.1). These are preserved in the collections of the National Museum in Krakow (inv.no. MNK.XIX-2500)<sup>11</sup> and in the National Museum in Warsaw (inv. nos. 156334, 156597, SZT 47).<sup>12</sup> This group of sashes are identical in their employment of the colours of red-beige, navy blue and white. On the ends there are three motifs of symmetrical bushes of flowers, these are simple drawings consisting of two kinds of flowers growing from a vertical stalk supported by motifs in the shape of a heart. In the fields of the sash is, like the other example, continuous ornament.

The differences between the sashes can be seen in their way of applying the inscriptions that are situated on both sides of the vertical parts of the sash, like in the case of the sash from Krakow or are applied onto one side like in the case of the sash from Warsaw. There are also differences in the shapes of the letters, mostly these are geometrical and- as in example from Warsaw – resembling handwriting.

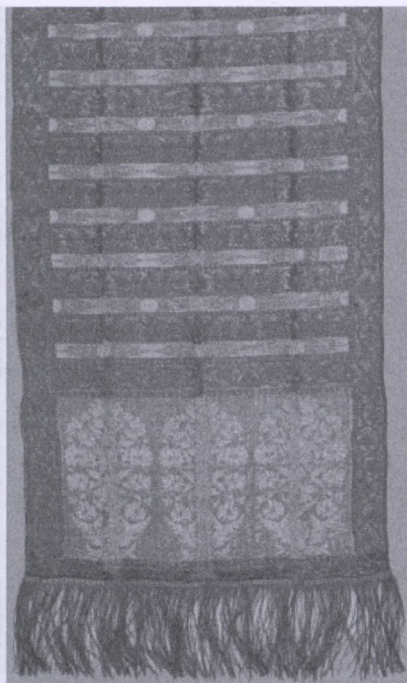


Fig. 1. Ewon Mikonowicz a Constantinopolitan, Silk Sashes, 18<sup>th</sup> Century, National Museum in Krakow

<sup>8</sup> M. Taszycka, *Pasy wschodnie...*, pp. 106–108.

<sup>9</sup> T. Mańkowski, *op. cit.*, tabl. 25.

<sup>10</sup> *Tkanina turecka XVI–XIX ze zbiorów polskich*, Warszawa 1983, no. 116.

<sup>11</sup> M. Taszycka *Pasy wschodnie ...*, pp. 108–110.

<sup>12</sup> *Tkanina turecka...*, pp. 37–38.





Fig. 2. Silk Sashes, 18<sup>th</sup> Century, National Museum, Krakow

The following examples of sashes are: one from the National Museum in Warsaw (inv. no. 156565) with illegible signatures, including just two motifs of flower bushes.<sup>13</sup> Two sashes are from the National Museum in Warsaw,<sup>14</sup> two are from the Museum of the Archdiocesan of Warsaw<sup>15</sup> and one from the National Museum in Krakow,<sup>16</sup> are all without signatures and form a group of similar works- they are in a similar style and technique (Fig.2), (inv. no. MNK XIX-4951). Another one from the National Museum in Krakow has a signature situated in the right hand corner and includes a border filled with the Armenian language<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 3, MNK.XIX-2528). This sash was made in taffeta technique with broaches and lances made with silken and golden thread. On their ends these sashes repeat three times the motif of the bush of flowers formed with two shoots of mallow tendrils.

There is only one known sash that includes a signature in the Armenian language. Armenians signed their products in Latin and French this may suggest that they wanted de-

<sup>13</sup> *Tkanina turecka...*, p.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p.

<sup>16</sup> M. Taszycka *Pasy wschodnie ...*, pp. 12-122.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 128-130.





Fig. 3. Silk Sashes, 18<sup>th</sup> Century, National Museum, Krakow

scribe the addressee that received the sashes. Additionally the use of the Latin language and the name Constantinople most likely indicates a connection with the Christian world and a Christian destination for those products. The sashes created in Constantinople by Armenians for the Polish market nevertheless form an important part of Armenian heritage.

That these sashes were Armenian productions and form part of Armenian heritage is shown by the unique features of their craft. However, as with the great works of architecture, paintings and other works created by Armenians in the 'Diaspora' which were influenced in some way by the local art forms, it is difficult to identify their specifically Armenian elements and identity. These sashes are therefore a good example of a pragmatic and flexible identity. They testify to an artistic activity that was marked by the demands of the market, and, furthermore, this exact Polish market. The craftsman worked quickly to satisfy this demand. This is the reason of some mistakes and -inconsistent details that can be seen in the decorative features, but moreover in the simplified technique, and lack of metal thread in most of the examples.







## *Fascinante Constantinople. Le regard des artistes arméniens de Bolis au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle<sup>1</sup>*

Varvara Basmadjian, Paris

Ville aux facettes multiples, Constantinople trouve son caractère unique dans ses contradictions. Au centre des enjeux stratégiques de l'histoire, forgée par les différentes nations qui l'ont bâtie ou investie, la ville à son tour, forge les hommes qui l'habitent. Comme en un enchantement sans cesse renouvelé « elle » fascine tous ceux qui la rencontrent à un moment de leur vie. Byzance, puis Constantinople jusqu'au XV<sup>ème</sup> siècle pour tous les peuples parlant de la ville du Bosphore, puis Istanbul pour les Turcs ottomans, Constantinople reste toujours la ville archétype jusqu'au changement de capitale en 1923. Reconnaisable entre mille, Constantinople porte également un nom dérivé du premier et cher au cœur des Arméniens : Bolis, appellation que les Arméniens d'Istanbul utilisent jusqu'aujourd'hui de façon familière et unique, en changeant le p de Polis en b de Bolis, comme il est d'usage en arménien occidental.

Ville cosmopolite par excellence, Bolis est aussi au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle en grande partie la ville des Arméniens, leur capitale intellectuelle, économique et culturelle. L'appeler par son diminutif arménisé la rend plus accessible au cœur de la population arménienne. Ceux-ci évoquent leur vie et leur ville dans des poèmes, des romans, des chants, des pièces de théâtre, mais la racontent aussi dans des tableaux.

<sup>1</sup> Cette étude est basée essentiellement sur les travaux effectués par Garo Kurkman qui a réuni dans deux grands volumes une très riche documentation sur les peintres arméniens de l'empire ottoman, paru en 2004 à Istanbul (Kürkman G., *Armenian Painters in the Ottoman Empire 1600–1923*, Istanbul 2004). C'est une source documentaire remarquable, à partir de laquelle j'ai pu travailler à plusieurs reprises. Qu'il en soit remercié. Le livre de Mayda Saris sur Givanian, me fut également d'une grande aide (photos courtesy Garo Kurkman). Cf.: A. Bohçaliyan, *Agnarg me hay ngarcutean vra*, Vienne 1989 ; Saris M., *Armenian Painting from the Beginning to the Present*, Istanbul 2005 ; Saris M., *Migirditch Jivanian, a painter of Istanbul*, 2006 ; Hitzel F., *De Marseille à Istanbul, l'Orient turc de Ziem et de ses contemporains*, Marseille 2009.

Plus ouverts que leurs autres compatriotes sur les idées et mœurs venues d'Europe, les artistes arméniens se tiennent au courant des principales directions picturales suivies par les artistes occidentaux. Ils restent néanmoins des artistes locaux, encouragés par des Sultans ouverts aux arts tels *Abdulmecid*<sup>2</sup> (1823–1861) et *Abdulaziz* (1830–1876). C'est avec beaucoup de finesse et de curiosité qu'ils peignent la vie grouillante de leur ville. Ils magnifient aussi ses paysages uniques au monde, avec de superbes vues cavalières sur le Bosphore



Fig. 1. Megerditch Givanian L'arrivée du « vapor » sur les rives du Bosphore, collection privée

à partir de Rumeli Hisar, de Kadiköy, de la pointe du Sérail ou de Fenerbahçe.<sup>3</sup> (Fenerbahtché). Le Bosphore, bras de mer séparant les deux continents se transforme dans la vie sociale en un lien indéfectible entre plusieurs mondes (fig. 1).

Dans cette ville singulière, les Arméniens sont chez eux. Ils aiment leur ville et lui rendent hommage dans un langage accessible au plus grand nombre, la peinture. La vision d'ensemble de la Bolis des Arméniens peut se décliner en trois parties, dont la plus impressionnante est celle des vues panoramiques et pittoresques de la ville, avec comme principal acteur Megerditch Givanian.

Ensuite ce sont des plans rapprochés, avec des perspectives de certains quartiers ou de bâtiments, réalisés au crayon ou à l'huile. Enfin nous pénétrons dans la vie quotidienne de Bolis avec ses personnages nonchalants et des scènes de rue que nous relatent Vicken Arslanian, Calousd Cilingiryan (Tchilingiryan), ou Sarkis Diranian. Des artistes français et italiens ont été attirés par le mystère de Constantinople. Ils venaient chercher aux bords du Bosphore l'exotisme qui leur manquait dans leur pays ou tout simplement de nouveaux horizons. Peut-on parler d'influence des uns sur les autres ? Il serait préférable d'évoquer une inspiration mutuelle, où chacun trouve à s'enrichir d'une nouvelle expérience. Nous verrons un peu plus loin quelques exemples peints par ces artistes. Contrairement aux orientalistes dont la touche reste précieuse ou artificielle par l'exagération du caractère exotique, les artistes arméniens de Bolis sont sensibles à la réalité de la vie et des paysages de leur ville. Ils ne se forcent pas à la rendre plus belle qu'elle n'est. Ils la peignent telle qu'elle leur apparaît, sans détours.

<sup>2</sup> Abdulmecid règne de 1839 à 1861. Il inaugure l'ère des Tanzimat avec le Hatt I Chérif de 1839 et le Hatt I Humayun de 1856. Abdul Aziz règne de 1861 à 1876.

<sup>3</sup> Les noms de lieux sont donnés ici avec l'orthographe turque d'aujourd'hui. La plupart des artistes signant également en caractères latins, c'est leur signature qui a été choisie. Si cela est nécessaire la lecture phonétique est proposée entre parenthèses.





Fig. 2. Megerditch Givanian, vue sur le Bosphore, collection privée

Megerditch Givanian (1848–1906) est sans conteste le témoin le plus emblématique de Constantinople. Personnalité riche et attachante, il se sera adonné à tous les genres de peinture, allant des panoramas grandioses aux nature-mortes et aux portraits, des décors de théâtre aux vues plongeantes sur le Bosphore et la mer de Marmara, sans oublier des marines inspirées par Aivazovsky. Il peint sur de la toile, du contreplaqué, des plaques de métal, du bois. Ses œuvres de petites dimensions, sont signées,

mais pratiquement aucune n'est datée, ce qui est un frein pour fixer son parcours artistique, même si sa biographie nous permet de sentir l'évolution de son style après son voyage en Italie, et son exil en Russie à la fin de sa vie.

Megerditch Givanian est né en 1848 à Besiktas (Bechiktache) dans une famille de 7 enfants. Son père était violoniste et musicien du palais durant le règne d'Abdulmecid. Megerditch est brillant et ne supporte pas l'école et les injustices qu'il rencontre autour de lui. Il se rebelle, quitte l'école, doit travailler en tant qu'apprenti chez différents maîtres. A 14 ans, il quitte définitivement l'école et n'arrête plus de dessiner. Sa vie est désormais étroitement liée à la force créatrice de son pinceau.

En ce milieu du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, la vie culturelle et artistique de Bolis est très riche. La compagnie de théâtre de Hagop Vartovian remporte de grands succès. Megerditch Givanian se faufile dans les coulisses du théâtre, rencontre H. Hekimian, qui en peignait les décors. Ils se mettent à travailler ensemble. Durant cette période faste à tous points de vue, entre 1860 et 1870, un nouveau style architectural dont on remarque l'esprit moderne et occidental, fleurit le long du Bosphore. Les architectes en sont les Balian père et fils, qui après avoir étudié en France sont revenus à Constantinople et mis leur talent au service du Sultan. Ils demandent à Givanian de participer à la décoration intérieure des Palais de Beylerbeyi et Ciragan. (Tchiraghan).<sup>4</sup> Ses élans artistiques plongent également Givanian dans le monde de la musique et notamment de l'opéra, qu'il affectionne particulièrement avant même son voyage en Italie en 1876, où il séjourne trois ans.

Givanian est certainement un touche à tout de grand talent dont la générosité se manifeste en de nombreuses occasions. Bohème et esprit libre, il aime peindre les paysages d'Istanbul et peut travailler sur plusieurs tableaux simultanément. C'est avec virtuosité qu'il

<sup>4</sup> Mayda Saris, Givanian a painter of Istanbul, Raffi Portakal Antikacilik Muzayede Organizasyon ve Danismanlik A.S. 2006.





Fig. 3. M. Givanian, Panorama des hauteurs de Pera, collection privée

nous mène sur les hauteurs de Pera pour admirer la vue sur le Bosphore avec la pointe du sérail dans le fond et le ballet des bateaux, sans lesquels il manquerait un peu de vie à ce urbain langoureux. Pour mieux nous donner la dimension de la perspective, au premier plan un pin parasol, situé à la gauche ou à la droite du cadre nous guide vers l'horizon (fig. 3).

Son style pourrait s'apparenter à celui des romantiques. Il travaille par touches, ses personnages perdus dans le paysage sont à peine esquissés, mais leur présence est nécessaire pour animer notre regard. Il utilise des tons froids, qui correspondent à la brume qui envahit la ville, même son coucher de soleil doré se déroule au-delà d'un premier plan aux tons verts et bleus.

Les deux peintres suivants se situent dans un registre totalement différent. Dans le tableau, « Le Bosphore », David Ciracyan (1839–1907) (Tchiradjian) nous propose le même panorama, peint d'une colline plus éloignée, à mi-chemin sur le Bosphore. Il utilise des tons dorés et ocres. Le paysage est brûlé par le soleil. Au premier plan sur la gauche Rumeli Hisar, la forteresse d'Europe que Mehmet le Conquérant, fit construire avant de conquérir



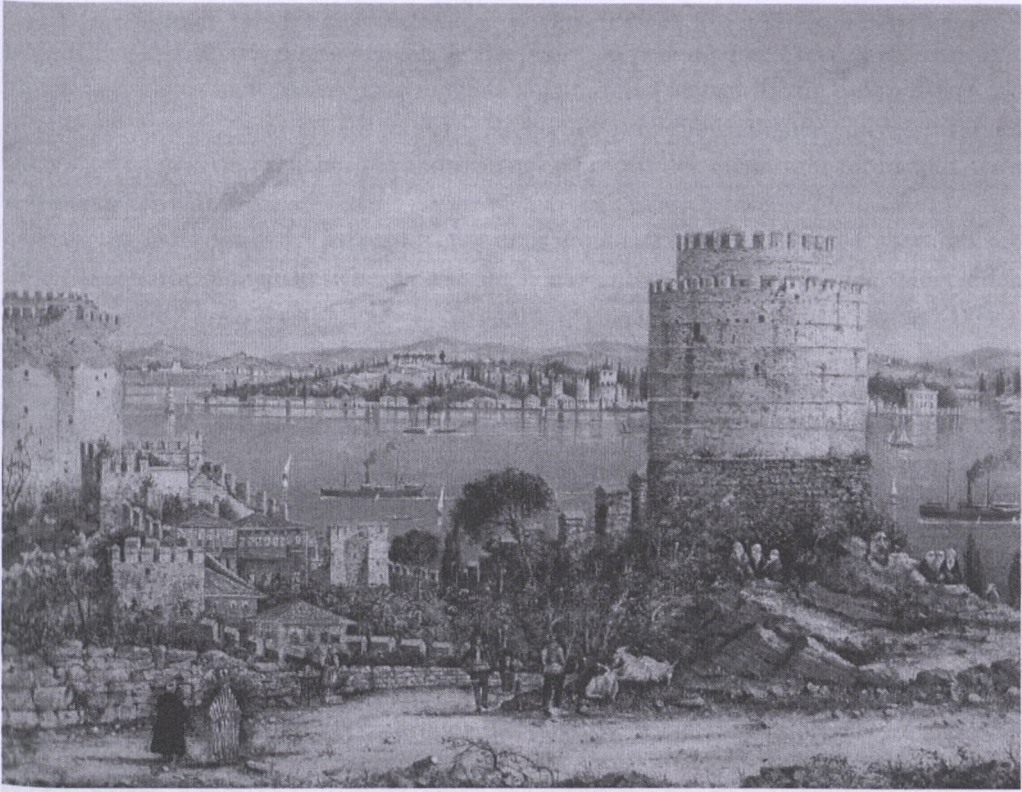


Fig. 4. D. Ciraciyan, Vue de Rumeli Hisar, 1897, collection privée

Constantinople. A droite pour encadrer le tableau, un arbre vient équilibrer l'ensemble. Une sensation particulière se dégage de ce tableau. L'artiste a voulu attirer notre attention sur la forteresse et les maisons qui l'entourent en les dessinant et en les peignant avec soin, soulignant les contours pour les rendre bien accessibles au spectateur. Le premier plan est aussi important que la boucle du Bosphore qui s'en va se jeter dans la mer de Marmara.

David Ciraciyan, qui signe D.C ou D. Ciray en rouge nous ramène en 1897, à nouveau vers les forteresses de Rumeli Hisar. Il campe sa tour sur la droite du tableau. La force massive de cette tour nous raconte l'histoire de Bolis. Quelques personnages sur le devant et une multitude de bateaux dans le lointain, avec apparition des bateaux à vapeur et le contraste des couleurs, l'ocre et le bleu, nous plongent dans un monde de poésie.

Le même paysage a été peint en 1907. Nous sommes exactement au même endroit, avec un léger décalage. Notre vision s'est rétrécie. A peine quelques changements de détail. L'ocre s'est assombri, le bleu de la mer est moins présent (fig. 4).



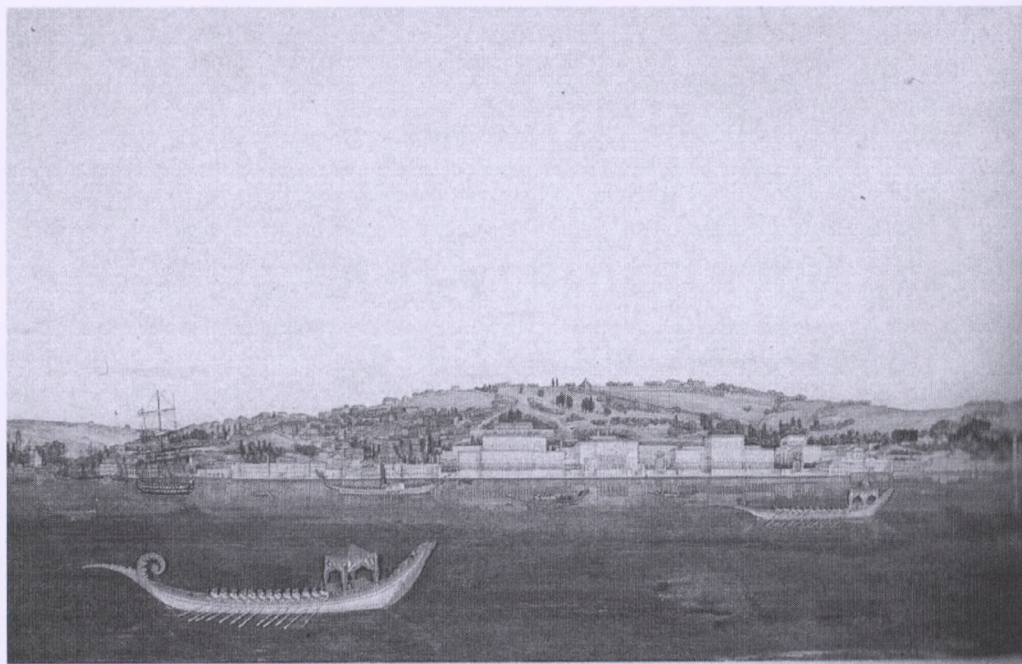


Fig. 5. Megerditch Melkonyan, Panorama, 1844, Musée naval, Istanbul



Fig. 6. Megerditch Melkonyan, Panorama, 1844, Musée naval, Istanbul



Cette technique est encore plus sensible dans le tableau de Norman Frenkian (1884–1930/33 ?),<sup>5</sup> à nouveau une vue sur le Bosphore où chaque détail se détache avec des à-plat de couleurs contrastées. La simplicité, à la limite d'un esprit naïf, qui se dégage de ce tableau le rend très attachant, malgré une certaine rigidité soulignée par des contours épais. Les œuvres de Frenkian se rapprochent de l'esprit des miniatures ottomanes, avec leur perspective à étages.

Il est temps de descendre les pentes et de nous promener au bord de l'eau. Un style encore différent et particulièrement riche et poétique, nous ramène à une autre époque. Megerditch Melkonyan né à la fin du XVIIIème siècle a du vivre jusque dans les années 80 du XIXème siècle. Il est fameux par ses grands panoramas longitudinaux sur le Bosphore et la mer de Marmara. Mis bout à bout ses tableaux, pourraient servir à monter le film du détroit.

Un article paru dans *Araradian Archalouys* à Izmir en février 1846 rapporte que Melkonyan dont les œuvres ont été également exposées à Paris, réalisait des panoramas miniatures en marqueterie. De passage dans la capitale française, la reine d'Angleterre voit ses compositions et les admire. Ses œuvres deviennent fameuses dans de nombreux pays européens. L'une d'entre elles est conservée à Topkapi et deux autres au musée naval d'Istanbul. Il signe en ottoman (fig. 5 et 6).

Il est tentant d'imaginer que ses magnifiques compositions, où aucun détail n'est négligé, où le travail de marqueterie sur la soie et la peinture à l'huile donne un volume inattendu à l'œuvre, annoncent la technique des dessins animés. Sous un ciel très haut, et lumineux, et le dessin du littoral urbain en plan fixe, on a l'impression que les bateaux vont s'animer, que l'on pourrait les déplacer sur le tableau, dans un enchevêtrement calculé, comme dans une bataille navale. L'œuvre de Melkonyan est très originale et se démarque de celle des autres artistes de Bolis. La fausse simplicité de ses œuvres, leur donne un caractère ludique et gai, aux limites d'une construction artificielle. L'une de ses œuvres a été récemment vue à Paris dans l'exposition de « Byzance à Istanbul », au Grand Palais.

Un artiste arménien d'exception a fait lui aussi de Constantinople, dont il n'était pas originaire, un sujet d'étude empreint d'émotion. Hovhannes Aivazovsky (1817–1900) a séjourné et travaillé à Constantinople à 4 reprises et fut certainement troublé par son magnétisme. Il nous a laissé des tableaux d'une rare transparence, qu'ils soient peints de jour, au coucher du soleil ou au clair de lune.

Sur ce tableau, Constantinople est dans l'embrasement doré d'un soleil couchant, une mosquée au premier plan, à peine un voilier au loin et la pointe du Sérail dans le fond. L'atmosphère qui se dégage de ce tableau d'Aivazovsky nous invite à une réflexion pleine de mystère. Contrairement à Melkonyan qui nous offre un spectacle, Aivazovsky par l'usage chromatique de l'or et le jeu d'ombres et lumières nous fait pénétrer dans le cœur de la ville (fig. 7).

<sup>5</sup> G. Kürkman, *Armenian Painters in the Ottoman Empire, 1600–1923*, Istanbul 2004.

Grand maître de la peinture de marines du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, il semble conquis par la ville où la mer est toujours présente. Après avoir été nommé membre de l'Académie de Saint-Petersbourg en 1844 et avoir déjà voyagé à plusieurs reprises à l'étranger, il visite pour la première fois l'empire ottoman en 1845. Il y accompagne le Grand Duc Constantin, fils du Tsar. Il est reçu au palais de Beylerbeyi, sur la rive asiatique du Bosphore, où le Sultan



Fig. 7. H. Aivazovsky, La mosquée d'Ortaköy au coucher du soleil, Musée russe, Sankt Pétersbourg

Abdulmecid le décore de l'ordre du Mecidiye. Il y revient une seconde fois en 1857 avec son frère Kapriel, prêtre à Venise. En 1874, il est invité par le sultan Abdulaziz. Il réside un mois chez l'architecte Sarkis Balian à Kurucesme (Kurutchechmé). Il y réalise les tableaux commandés par Abdulaziz pour le Palais de Dolmabahce (Dolmabahtché). Il est décoré à cette occasion de l'ordre ottoman/osmaniyé. La vie culturelle et artistique est à son sommet à cette époque. Les artistes arméniens de Bolis se retrouvent tous à un moment ou un autre chez Sarkis Balian. Givanian et Aivazovsky se voient à cette occasion. Mayda Saris rapporte qu'Aivazovsky avait déjà vu les œuvres de Givanian exposées devant l'ambassade de Russie. Il profite de leur rencontre pour lui dire qu'il apprécie ses œuvres. Il aurait poussé la plaisanterie jusqu'à lui suggérer de signer ses marines du nom d'Aivazovsky, ajoutant qu'il pourrait ainsi vendre ses œuvres beaucoup plus cher, ce que Givanian ne mit jamais en pratique.

Givanian nous charme avec deux nouvelles perspectives sur Istanbul peintes dans les tons froids. Sa palette utilise toujours le bleu, l'horizon est bas, sa composition toujours décalée avec un élément vertical sur le côté du tableau, que ce soit la Pointe du Sérail peinte dans un tondo, format assez souvent utilisé au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, une vue de Fenerbahce (Fenerbahtché), avec son phare, ou bien un arbre sur un promontoire (fig. 8 et 9).

Cette construction méthodique crée la profondeur de ses tableaux. Il suffit d'admirer ces paysages sereins où la nature est reine. A peine aperçoit-on un personnage dans un caïque. Nous sommes toujours au bord de l'eau, en contact étroit avec l'élément marin.

Revenons vers Aivazovsky. Quelle que soit la hauteur de l'horizon, les couleurs employées ou le moment de la journée, on ressent le « juste équilibre » qui habite ses tableaux. On nous rapporte qu'il ne peignait pas d'après nature. Après avoir fait quelques esquisses, il réalisait son œuvre en intérieur, ce qui lui permettait probablement de construire minutieusement son tableau. Il n'y a rien de trop dans ses compositions. Dans le coucher de soleil sur Istanbul, que nous avons vu plus haut, un petit bateau au premier plan et un voilier



sur la droite viennent ponctuer la perspective. La vie ne s'est pas éteinte, il y a encore quelques tout petits personnages sur le quai. Tout est calme, du moins en apparence.

Nous nous déplaçons sur la mer de Marmara. Les murailles maritimes de Constantinople (fig. 10) qui ont fait l'admiration des occidentaux au moment des croisades et su toujours protéger Constantinople, sont aussi impressionnantes que dans notre imaginaire. Aivazovsky passe avec une grande aisance de la sérénité d'un paysage à la force indestructible de rochers, de falaises ou de constructions plongeant dans la mer. Son art réside dans le talent qu'il a de nous faire participer à sa création et de nous mettre dans une situation d'attente du moment qui va suivre celui que nous sommes en train de vivre. Il nous emporte avec lui et son monde devient le nôtre.

Dans un tableau peint probablement des hauteurs d'Eyüp, dans une perspective plongeante sur la Corne d'or, Aivazovsky souligne le rôle esthétique des arbres qui placés sur l'un des côtés du tableau, viennent créer l'équilibre entre les verticales du premier plan et les horizontales de la ville dans le lointain.

Aivazovsky peint en 1884 la toute neuve mosquée d'Ortaköy ou de Tophané, construite en 1854-1855 par Garabed Amira et son fils Nigoghos Balian (fig. 11). Il se dégage de ce tableau à demi plongé dans la brume, une transparence rare. Les barques vont d'une rive à l'autre. Des vaguelettes animent le bras de mer. Nous avons la même impression que dans les tableaux précédents d'Aivazovsky. L'instant est suspendu, nous sommes « juste avant ». Cette très belle œuvre est conservée au Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest.

Istanbul, universelle, attire comme un aimant par sa beauté et son pittoresque les artistes occidentaux. En France, en Angleterre et en Italie, les événements qui bouleversent l'est de l'Europe ne passent pas inaperçus. Les écrivains, les archéologues et les artistes sont curieux de découvrir « l'orient », ses paysages et ses modes de vie. Certains passent quelque temps à Istanbul, d'autres s'y installent.



Fig. 8. M. Givanian La pointe du Sérail, collection privée



Fig. 9. M. Givanian, Une vue de Fenerbahçe, collection privée



Quatre artistes français de talent, parmi d'autres, ont séjourné à Istanbul. Parmi les plus remarquables, citons François Barry (1813–1905), peintre de marine marseillais, Jules Laurens (1825–1901), Fabius Brest (1823–1900), Félix Ziem (1821–1911).

Jules Laurens (1825–1901), arrive à Istanbul en 1846. Il y peint des vues intimistes. Accompagnant une mission archéologique, il réalise des croquis et des aquarelles. Ici une vue des murailles terrestres, qui pourrait être le pendant des murailles maritimes d'Aivazovsky.

Fabius Brest (1823–1900) a fait d'Istanbul sa terre d'élection, il y va en 1855 et y séjourne pendant 3 ans. Ses tableaux remportent de grands succès à son retour en France. Comme Aivazovsky, il peint d'après dessins. Parmi ses œuvres les plus célèbres, le *At Meydan*, la Place de l'Hippodrome, peint en 1861. Il a mis dans ce tableau tout ce que l'on était censé attendre d'une œuvre exotique nous présentant un pays ou une ville avec ses extrêmes. C'est un beau tableau, mais c'est surtout une accumulation de détails. On a du mal à respirer et à prendre du recul. C'est vraiment la vision que les occidentaux pouvaient avoir de l'Orient : un enchevêtrement chaotique de personnages et de lieux.

Félix Ziem (1821–1911), né à Beaune, près de Dijon est un peintre aux origines mêlées, assez difficiles à dé-



Fig. 10. H. Aivazovsky, *Les murailles maritimes*, Galerie nationale d'Arménie



Fig. 11. H. Aivazovsky, *La mosquée d'Ortaköy*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest



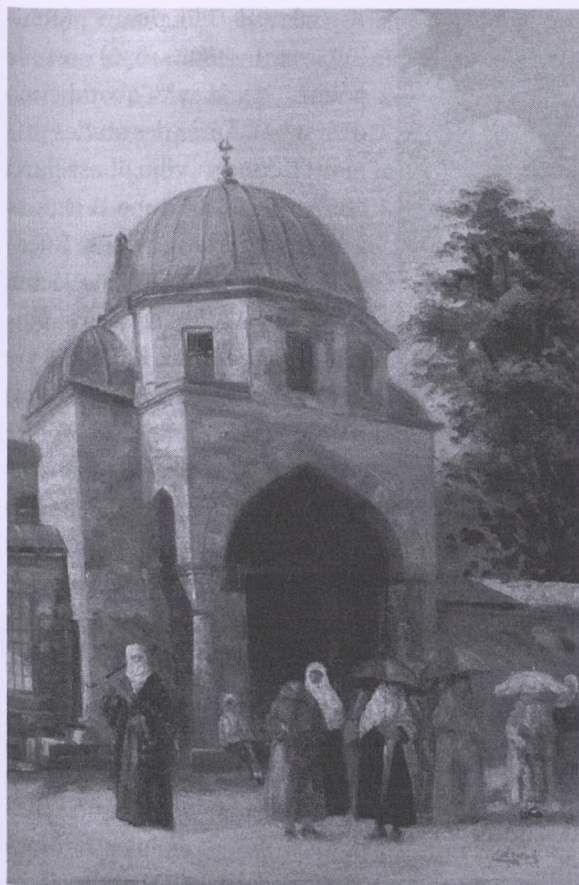


Fig. 12. Calousd Cilingiryan, femmes quittant la Mosquée, collection privée

Dans les plus tableaux, l'angle de vision est pratiquement le même, il réussit à nous dévoiler une sensibilité différente. Le plan rapproché, les couleurs dorées, les voiliers et le ciel habité de nuages blancs du premier peint en 1904, s'opposent à l'atmosphère plus dynamique du second, caractérisé par une mer très bleue et la fumée d'un « vapeur » au loin. Les vues des îles des Princes sont rares bien que des gravures en existent. Givanian nous a laissé quelques vues d'approche, perdues dans la brume.

David Efendi Ciraciyan (1839–1907) peint plusieurs fois la Tour de Léandre. Dans deux tableaux où l'angle de vision est pratiquement le même, il réussit à nous dévoiler une sensibilité différente. Le plan rapproché, les couleurs dorées, les voiliers et le ciel habité de nuages blancs du premier peint en 1904, s'opposent à l'atmosphère plus dynamique du second, caractérisé par une mer très bleue et la fumée d'un « vapeur » au loin. Les vues des îles des Princes sont rares bien que des gravures en existent. Givanian nous a laissé quelques vues d'approche, perdues dans la brume.

finir dont les arrières grands parents partis de Crimée, seraient passés en Pologne puis en France. On cite parfois un grand-père arménien. En tous cas c'est un peintre bien français, qui se rend à Constantinople en 1856. Conquis par la lumière de la ville, il y reste un mois et demi. Il recherche surtout des impressions, des instantanés qu'il fait baigner dans des couleurs chaudes. Par son pinceau, il s'apparente aux impressionnistes, bien plus qu'aux orientalistes.

J'aimerais souligner comme éléments récurrents et caractéristiques de ces paysages d'Istanbul, la présence d'un bras de mer, d'arbres (un ou plusieurs), quelques bateaux dans le lointain et toujours des personnages en nombre réduit, mais bien là, savamment esquissés. Ce sont pour les artistes arméniens de Bolis les ingrédients nécessaires dont le mélange harmonieux nous donne l'image de la ville.

Nous quittons la ville pour aller nous perdre en mer, autour de Kiz



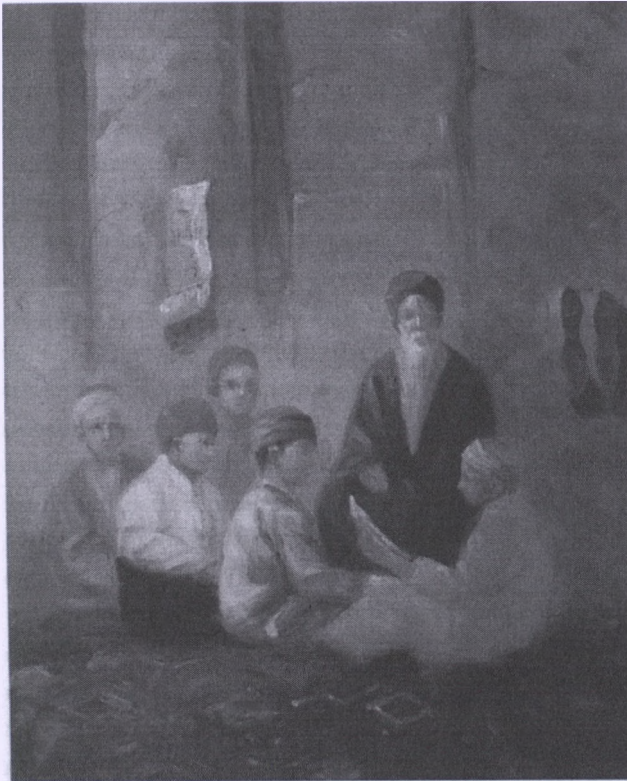


Fig. 13. Calousd Cilingiryan, La leçon, collection privée

la construction du tableau. Devant la présence massive de la mosquée, les femmes s'en vont dans un mouvement lent et mesuré (fig. 12).

Calousd Cilingiryan, qui signe en ottoman ou le plus souvent Calusd ou Calousd, a peint dans un très grand tableau de 140x100 cm le tombeau de Selim II<sup>6</sup>. (ph.15) Aucun personnage ne vient animer ce tableau. Par sa belle facture et un plan rapproché, l'artiste porte toute son attention sur le bâtiment du tombeau. Nous nous situons face à l'entrée du tombeau, il s'est décalé légèrement sur la gauche, Le choix de cet angl permet de donner une perspective et de la profondeur au bâtiment. Peint de face, le tombeau aurait pu paraître plat et sans âme. Les dimensions du tableau de Cilingiryan sont rares chez les artistes arméniens et méritent d'être signalées.

<sup>6</sup> Selim II (1524–1574), onzième sultan turc est le fils et successeur de Soliman le Magnifique. Son règne est entre autres marqué par la conquête de Chypre sur les Vénitiens en 1570, suivie par la défaite de la bataille navale de Lépante face aux occidentaux, la même année.

Calousd Cilingiryan (Tchilingiryan) (1872–1936) est le peintre de la vie quotidienne d'Istanbul. Après des études primaires dans sa ville, il est parti étudier l'art en Europe. A exposé à Vienne, Sofia, Athènes, Bucarest. En 1916, il s'est installé aux Etats-Unis. A la croisée de plusieurs civilisations, il peint la vie de sa ville, où les mosquées sont nombreuses.

Dans ce tableau « Femmes quittant la mosquée », les femmes portent le tcharchaf sur la tête, le bas du visage est caché, comme on peut le voir également sur des gravures ou des dessins mettant en scène des femmes arméniennes de l'empire ottoman. Petit clin d'œil au modernisme de l'époque, elles portent des parapluies pour se protéger du soleil. Une sensibilité occidentale se remarque dans



Son contemporain Vicken Arslanian (1886–1942), a représenté le même tombeau, vu sous un angle différent, avec le même souci de la profondeur. Né à Istanbul, le jeune Arslanian entre à l'Académie des Beaux-arts en 1883, reçoit un prix en 1884 puis est diplômé en 1887. Il est comme Givanian et Diranian, un des élèves du peintre français Pierre Désirée Guillemet (1827–1878). Il participe à de nombreuses expositions, fait partie de la génération des jeunes qui ont étudié à l'Académie.

Le reportage stambouliote se poursuit dans ce tableau de Calousd Cilingiryan. Nous sommes dans la ville musulmane : réunis dans un recoin de mosquée, un vieux maître enseigne à de jeunes élèves.

Deux scènes typiques des rues d'Istanbul font suite aux précédents. Karnik Ekserciyen, dont la vie ne nous est pas connue a peint « la bonne aventure », une belle huile sur toile, en 1883. Face à un homme qui leur raconte des « boniments », et lit l'avenir dans les osselets, trois femmes, dont le bas du visage est recouvert d'un voile sont attentives à ce qui se joue devant elles, notamment la femme en rouge assise au premier rang et directement concernée. Ses deux amies sont là en observatrices. Il est probable que ces jeunes femmes soient chrétiennes. Leurs coiffes ne sont pas celles des femmes musulmanes. Une petite fille aux cheveux et au teint clair s'accroche à sa mère et aimerait s'en aller. Le peintre a su traduire ici un moment d'intense tension. L'homme pointe son doigt sur les osselets comme une menace, la femme en rouge est déjà inquiète et ses amies de plus en plus éloignées d'elle ne lui sont pas d'un grand secours. Garabed Nichanian, (1861–1950), dans « la lettre » peint en 1898 nous montre une autre scène des rues d'Istanbul. Sur le pas de porte d'une modeste maison, un homme lit « la lettre » dont l'arrivée était probablement attendue depuis un certain temps. Nichanian fait ses études primaires en Italie. Après être passé par Bakou Tbilissi et Vladikavkaz, va à Paris en 1906.

Remarquons la construction similaire des deux tableaux en miroir, bien que les touches de pinceau et la lumière soient différentes. Construction pyramidale et focus triangulaire dans les deux tableaux. Dans le premier, un homme et trois femmes, dans le second une femme et trois hommes. Le regard se lève du niveau du sol jusqu'au personnage debout, placé un peu en retrait chez les deux artistes. Un fond architectural donne la perspective de la scène (fig. 14).

Megerditch Givanian, a également peint le fleuve Kagithané dans le parc de Yildiz. Belle perspective, présence de l'eau, fidélité aux tons bleutés. On imagine les bosquets où se tramaient peut-être des complots impériaux.<sup>7</sup>

Dans ce tableau (fig. 15), le Cheikh fumant son narguilé, Givanian élargit sa vision sur Istanbul. Dans son palais de la rive asiatique du Bosphore, face à la tour de Léandre, que nous voyons ici dans une nouvelle perspective, le cheikh est assis sous une véranda aux colonnades en marbre. Il nous fait face et fume son narguilé. Ici, peut-être parce que ce

<sup>7</sup> Les différents kiosques du Palais de Yildiz, qui était une ville dans la ville ont été construits pour le sultan Abdul Hamid II, par les Balian et l'architecte italien Raimondo d'Aronco.

tableau était une commande, le personnage bien peint nous fait face. Il est l'élément central du tableau. Mais ce subterfuge n'arrive pas à nous détacher de la beauté du paysage qui s'offre à nous. La tour de Léandre,<sup>8</sup> la mer et au loin le vieil Istanbul.

Cette étude très brève nous a permis de constater combien les Arméniens de Bolis aimaient leur ville. Ils l'ont peinte sous de multiples facettes, avec ses paysages, ses scènes de rue et la mer omni-

présente. On a pu voir que les Arméniens avaient peint des mosquées, mais nous n'avons pas rencontré une seule vue d'église. Pourtant les artistes arméniens travaillent également pour les églises, où ils peignaient des tableaux pour les autels. Ils ne voulaient peut-être pas mettre en avant une vue extérieure des bâtiments.

Je me suis efforcée ici de constituer un florilège des œuvres d'un petit nombre de peintres parmi les plus intéressants. Loin de proposer une vue exhaustive d'Istanbul au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle et à l'orée du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, j'ai souhaité mettre en scène les différents genres de peinture en usage à cette époque et pouvant nous transporter dans la Bolis des Arméniens. De nombreux autres peintres n'ont pas été évoqués. Une étude ultérieure permettra de combler ce manque.



Fig. 14. K. Ekserciyan, *La bonne aventure*, collection privée ; G. Nichanian, *La lettre*, collection privée



Fig. 15. Megerditch Givanian, *Le cheikh fumant la narguilé*, collection privée

<sup>8</sup> La tour de Léandre, située près des côtes d'Usküdar est un îlot rocheux, auquel sont attachées des légendes grecque et byzantine. Emblème d'Istanbul, elle sert de phare et de lieu de quarantaine.



## The Balyan Family and Paris

Alyson Wharton, London

*Les Ballian ont, depuis plus d'un siècle et demi, rendu héréditaire dans leur famille l'emploi d'architecte des sultans. Cette charge obtenue sous Ahmed III et conservée sous Mahmud Ier, par Balli, fut par lui transmise à son fils Magar Ballian, qui l'exerça pendant les règnes d'Osman III, Mustapha III et Abdul-Hamed. Kirkor Ballian, fils de Magar, occupa le meme poste sous Sélim, Moustapha IV et Mahmoud II. Il avait un petit magasin que sa famille possède encore près de yeni Djami à Galata, ou bien souvent il servit d'intermédiaire secret entre Mahmoud et les envoyés européens qui venaient l'y trouver. C'est lui qui construisit l'ancien palais de Beyler-beyi, celui de la pointe du sérail, la mosquée de Top-Hané et la caserne Selimiyé. A la suite d'intrigues politiques suscitées contre lui, le Sultan Mahmoud, voulant lui sauver la vie, l'exila pendant six mois à Césarée, puis le réintégra dans ses bonnes grâces et le décora du Nichan Iftihar. Garabed Calfa, fils de Kirkor, lui succéda pendant les règnes de Mahmoud II, Abdul-Medjid et Abdul-Azziz. Il fut décoré du Nichan Iftihar et du Medjidié. Entre autres constructions, il bâtit le palais de Tchéragan que l'on réédifie actuellement et celui de Dolma-Baghtché avec l'aide de son fils aîné Nigoos Calfa. Ce dernier, qui fut comme tous ses ancêtres, du reste, honoré de l'estime et de l'amitié particulière de son maître Abdul-Medjid, lui servit souvent de secrétaire dans des occasions délicates et construisit la mosquée d'Ortakeui, le kiosque de Gueuksou et diverses autres résidences impériales. A Nigoos Calfa et à Garabed ont succédé Serkis-Bey et Hagop-Bey Ballian, fils de Garabed, qui occupent actuellement ce poste et ont fait construire les kiosques de Kiaat-hané, Top Capou, Izmid, etc. et les palais de Beylerbeyi et de Tchéragan.<sup>1</sup>*

The Balyan family, as this quotation from Alfred de Caston tells, were an Armenian family who managed to secure the post of chief architect to the Ottoman Sultan for over a century and a half. This post included constructing imperial palaces, mosques and pavilions as well as other 'new building types'. They were even responsible for founding the Ottoman Company for Public Works with the intention of building Ottoman railway lines and extracting raw materials from Ottoman domains so as to stave off foreign importations.

<sup>1</sup> A. De Caston, *Constantinople en 1869, histoire des hommes et des choses*, Paris 1868, pp. 267-270.

This paper will investigate the levels of engagement that this Ottoman-Armenian family had with Paris- the geographical location, its institutions and its local person-ages as well as its ideas and material things- over the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It will begin to assert the importance of this connection to the identities of the individual members of the Balyan family, to their works of architecture and to their careers as imperial archi-tects. This has not been achieved by the studies of the past which have tended to view the family not as individuals worth studying in their own right but rather as symbols of the decay of the traditional values of Ottoman architecture, and its increasing and undiscerning westernisation. This is seen to have been at the hands of non-Muslims and foreigners (with the former often conflated with the latter), such as the Balyans as the prime example, who are seen to have had no regard for the systems of decorum that had formerly governed the stately edifice of Ottoman Architecture.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will therefore hope to throw new light on the complexity of this purported period of the westernisation of Ottoman architecture by focussing on the case of the Balyan family and by investigating their connections with Paris. In contrast to former interpretations, I will emphasize to what degree the family identified themselves as first and foremost Ottoman subjects and saw their role as importing European ideas and techniques into the Ottoman Empire to revive traditional identity and enable it to sur-vive into the future, not simply as the following of European fashions to the expense of Ottoman indigenous identity as has been claimed by sceptics since the time of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century itself. The paper will proceed by looking at the different levels of engage-ment: educational, architectural (professional), intellectual and also the social networks that were gained from their contact with Paris. It will show the extent to which, despite this multi-layered engagement with Paris, the members of the Balyan family continued to show their rootedness to their Ottoman locality and identity.

<sup>2</sup> On the rules of decorum that governed Ottoman Architecture of the Classical Period see: G. Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton and Oxford 2005. On the backlash against the works of the Balyans from the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, see the *Usul-u Mimar-i Osmaniye* a treatise produced for the 1873 Vienna Exposition. De Launay, Montani et al *Usul-u Mimar-i Osmaniye/ L'Architecture Ottoman*, Constantinople 1873 (reprint, 1998 Tarih Araştırmalar Vakfı, T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı), p. 16. For a study on this source see: A. Ersoy, *On the Sources of the "Ottoman Renaissance": Architectural Revival and its Discourse During the Abdülaziz Era (1861–1876)*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Harvard, 2000, p. 261. Also the chronicle of Mustafa Nuri Pasha includes the basics of the criticism that would continue until today. M. Nuri Paşa *Netayic ül-Vukuat*, Constantinople 1877 (reprint Ankara: TTK, 1992), vol 2, p. 147. Works by Turkish architectural historians have only very recently begun to change these opinions. See the collection of essays in: *Armenian Architects Of Istanbul in the Era of Westernization*, ed. H. Kuruyazıcı, Istanbul 2010.



## Education

The earlier generations of the Balyan family, Krikor and Karapet Amira, are not thought to have been educated in Paris, although it is clear even they established good contacts there. It was the following generation of Nigoğos, Serkis and Agop, the sons of Karapet, who were sent to Paris from the 1840s for their education.<sup>3</sup> This is mentioned by the Armenian periodicals of the day, as read by Pars Tuğlacı and other scholars who have worked on the family using mainly Armenian material in the past.<sup>4</sup>

Tuğlacı, for instance, states that the sons of Karapet, Nigoğos, Serkis and Agop were all educated at home, then sent to the Collège-Sainte-Barbe (Fig. 1). Following this, the first son, Nigoğos, returned home and continued his training under his father, but the other sons, Agop and Serkis continued their education in Europe. For Agop the exact location is not mentioned but Paris, Vienna and Italy are listed. For Serkis, it is claimed that he continued his education in Paris, graduating in engineering from the Ecole des Beaux Arts. However, the older two are also noted to have returned home to receive practical training under their father.<sup>5</sup>

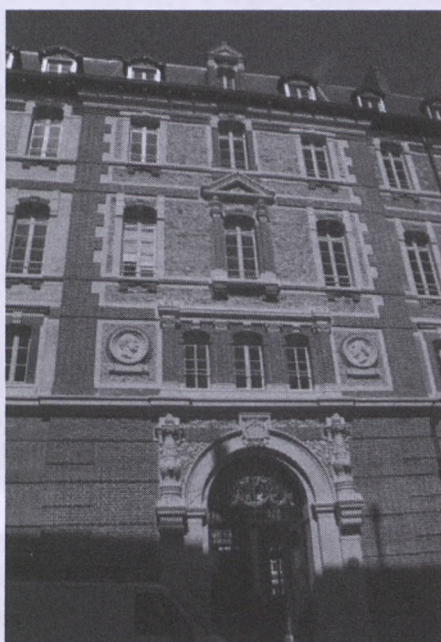


Fig. 1. The Education of the Balyan Family in Paris. The Collège Sainte-Barbe and the Labroustes

<sup>3</sup> Amiras such as Krikor and Karapet tended towards the employment of professors to educate their families, this is documented for the case of their peers the Dadyans although no evidence concerning the cases of Krikor and Karapet has yet been found. A. Alboyadjian, *Les Dadian*, French transl. A. Naguib Boutros-Ghali, Cairo 1965, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> P. Tuğlacı, *The Role of the Balian Family in Ottoman Architecture*, Istanbul 1990; P. Tuğlacı, *Osmanlı Mimarlığında Batılılaşma Dönemi ve Balyan Ailesi*, Istanbul 1981. Tuğlacı does not always reference his sources accurately. However the sources given when referring to the time of Nigoğos Balyan in Paris include: *Arşaluys Araradyan*, Izmir 1842 issue 107; *Meğü*, Istanbul (no date given but this is most likely the issue of 1858), p. 4; *Hayasdan*, Istanbul, (Tuğlacı gives the date of 1946 perhaps meaning 1846, which he later refers to), issue 3; *MASIS*, Istanbul, 1857, issue 307; *Zartaryan, Vahan, Hişadagaran*, Cairo 1935, p61-64 as well as other Armenian periodicals and histories. The same can be said for the other Balyans. Therefore it seems safe to assume that these Armenian periodicals were not fictitious (although some Turkish art historians, who do not know Armenian, or indeed anything of the Armenian milieu, have suggested as much).

<sup>5</sup> P. Tuğlacı, *op. cit.*, p. 303, on A. Balyan, *op. cit.*, p. 395 and on S. Balyan, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

### *Effect on Architectural Training*

The Balyans do not seem to have been given formal architectural instruction at the Sainte-Barbe but they were given some preparatory lessons. As letters written by the friend of the family banker/merchant Bilezikçiyân and Madame Balyan to the director of the Collège Sainte-Barbe dated 1873, found by Aygül Ağır states, Leon Balyan, son of Nigoğos, requested to be exempt from Latin and German classes because for the vocation of practicing architecture 'in the East' there was no need to learn these languages. Instead, it asks if he could study mathematics, drawing and design in order to prepare him for his future career.<sup>6</sup> This shows a clear sense of vocation as an architect 'in the East' that suggests that the Balyans, even of the later generations of Nigoğos, Serkis, Agop and Leon, did not want or need to learn the architectural practices of the West. They seem to have kept their personal vocation and identity of the *kalfa* or master builder throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although they were very much open to the usage of new ideas and technology in their architectural projects.

### *Effect on Intellectual Horizons*

We can suggest that the intellectual affects of the education of the Balyans had wider ramifications than the contents of their architectural instruction. Within Armenian Studies, the education of the sons of the Amiras such as Nigoğos Balyan in Paris is viewed as playing a crucial role in the developments towards the Constitution of the Armenian Community of the Ottoman Empire of 1863.<sup>7</sup> Within Art History, it is known as the time when the Balyans were exposed to European architectural fashions. However they were not necessarily aware of the ideas behind them but used them as, rather, a decorative overlay on Ottoman buildings. Although some more progressive art historical secondaries furthermore mention in passing that Nigoğos had been the protégé of the architect Labrouste whilst at the Sainte Barbe, this assertion is never elaborated upon, or even referenced.<sup>8</sup>

Nigoğos could indeed have fallen under the influence of Henri Labrouste whilst at the Sainte-Barbe, since the director of the college at that time was his brother, Alexandre. Henri Labrouste, we should remember, is notable for having been profoundly influenced by his

<sup>6</sup> A. Ağır, 'Balyanlar'ın Eğitimi Üzerine Notlar', in: *Afife Batur'a Armağan*, ed. A. Ağır, D. Mazlum and G. Cephaneçigil, İstanbul 2005, pp. 66–67.

<sup>7</sup> V. Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1863: a Study of its Historical Development* (1980) originally a thesis from Brandeis University in 1970; L. Arpee, *The Armenian Awakening*, Chicago 1909.

<sup>8</sup> G. Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture*, London 1971/1987, p. 419 refers to the influence of Labrouste on the Balyans whilst in Paris but does not give his source; Turkish art historians are generally more negative on the effect of Europe on Ottoman Architecture, for instance, Metin Sözen states: "... Ottoman architecture became overwhelmed by a confusing complexity of architecture and decorative styles taken wholesale from Western sources...it became accentuated in Turkish architecture by virtue of being isolated from the cultural movements that were its cause..." *The Evolution of Turkish Art and Architecture*, İstanbul 1987, p. 160.



archaeological work in Rome early in his career and thenceforth asserting the importance of the study and use of ornament as a means of creating an architectural renaissance.<sup>9</sup>

The influence of his brother, Alexandre, could also have formed a primary example to the young Nigoğos: he is known for having carried out many activities that reformed life at the Sainte-Barbe—reconstructing buildings, encouraging its traditional appeal and the cult of its founder Victor de Lanneau; founding new associations to aid the government of the College and making some radical reviews concerning its direction and ethos.<sup>10</sup> He was also well-regarded by the Ottoman Sultan, who gave him several decorations, including one on the request of the Dadyan family, who also attended the Sainte-Barbe, in 1846.<sup>11</sup>

Both of these contacts and the preliminary education (and influence) they could have provided would have sent Nigoğos Balyan back to Constantinople inspired to create the novel



Fig. 2. Early Attempt at an 'Ottoman Renaissance' à la Labrouste? The Dolmabahçe Palace, its Relief Carved Ornament and Triumphal Arches

<sup>9</sup> P. Saddy, *Henri Labrouste architecte 1801–1875*, Paris 1977, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> J. Quicherat, *Histoire De Sainte Barbe. Collège, Communauté, Institution*, Paris 1864, vol. 3, pp. 240–248.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 298; The document is: BOA (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi/Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives*), I.DH (*İrade Dahiliye/Order of the Interior Ministry*), *Dosya* (Folder): 1168, *Gömlek* (Case): 91311, *Tarih/Date* 1307. C. 12 (1)/1890. Concerning the awarding of a *nişan*/decoration to the *müdür*/director of the Sainte Barbe College in Paris.



statement within the history of Ottoman architecture of the heavily layered, naturalistically sculpted ornament of the Dolmabahçe Palace (Fig. 2). This indeed could be viewed as an attempt to revive the craft and create an 'Ottoman Renaissance' through the manipulation of ornament and architectural types, as well as showing an increased emphasis on signs of imperial power such as the *tuğra* (Sultan's monogram) displayed on the triumphal arches through which one enters the palace.<sup>12</sup>

The context of the Sainte Barbe also could have inspired Nigoğos to write his draft of the Constitution shortly before his death in 1858. Indeed, it is written by Armenian scholars such as Barsoumian, Artinian, and Etmekjian that he, along with other Paris-located Ottoman Armenians Nahapet Rusinean and Krikor Odian were so influenced by the contexts of their education in Paris in the 1840s that they established the Young Armenians Movement.<sup>13</sup> This movement carried out various initiatives to benefit the condition of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire including intellectual works such as carrying out translations of French literature, publishing a journal, as well as establishing a council for schooling, writing a draft of the constitution, and proposing language reform. However, it is not discussed whether their actual education, that is, the teachers and curriculum they were exposed to, had an influence over this. It seems, as with the case of the architectural training of the Balyans, that milieu and exposure to new ideas was of primary importance in the transformation of the approach of these individuals, not necessarily formal education.

#### *Effect on Social Networks*

Moreover, there was a vital practical effect of these contacts that they built up over their time inhabiting the Parisian educational and cultural milieu that characterized the Balyans' careers as imperial architects and enabled them to dominate the building industry in Constantinople for so long. These foreign contacts became a crucial element to the success of their system of building that they perfected over the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The memoir of Charles Séchan describes how he created in his atelier in Paris between 1853 and 59, several items: the bedchamber of Sultan Abdülmecid, the interior decoration of the palace of the Sweet Waters of Asia, and Küçük Çiftlik and the apartments of the Sultan and his brother at the Dolmabahçe Palace (Fig. 3). Séchan carried these out before executing his 'masterwork', the Paris Opera, in 1860.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Both the use of ornament to communicate national identity as well as the new manipulation of symbols of sovereign power were preoccupations of architects in Paris in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Cf.: D. Van Zanth, *Building Paris. Architectural Institutions and the Transformation of the French Capital 1830–1870*, Cambridge 1994, p. 105.

<sup>13</sup> H. Barsoumian, 'The Dual Role of the Armenian *Amira* Class Within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750–1850)', in: *Christians and Jews In the Ottoman Empire. The Central Lands* ed. Braude and Lewis, New York 1982, vol. 1, p. 176; J. Etmekjian *The French Influence On The Western Armenian Renaissance*, New York 1964, p. 101.

<sup>14</sup> Ch. Séchan, *Souvenirs d'un homme de théâtre 1831–55*, Paris 1883, p. XIV. Preface by Adolphe Badin concerning his career.



Furthermore, we know from the letters found by Aygül Ağır that Aubry Donon Gautier, relative of Theophile, who had worked on the Dolmabahçe Palace alongside Nigoğos, became Leon's guardian in Paris whilst at the Sainte-Barbe.<sup>15</sup>

There are many more foreign names, first of all French, which are mentioned in the construction accounts, particularly of



Fig. 3. European Contractors Working for the Balyans. Room by Charles Séchan in the Dolmabahçe Palace (Red Room Number 62)

the palaces such as Dolmabahçe and Beylerbeyi that required particularly lavish interior decoration and furniture. This taste was procured so as to satisfy the requirements of the Sultan. As Theophile Gautier mentions in his account of his meeting with Karapet Balyan on the building site of the Dolmabahçe Palace. Theophile Gautier states: “the Sultan, in the same spirit which makes us build Alhambras at Paris, chose to have a palace in modern taste. At first, one is surprised at his caprice; but, on reflection, nothing can be more natural, if simply as an escape from monotonous harmony all around him, and all previous models. M. Balyan, however, had need of a rare fertility of imagination, to decorate, in different styles, more than three hundred halls or apartments, with the restriction, above named, imposed upon his materials.”<sup>16</sup> Although Gautier attributes this variety to the imagination of Balyan, it was also, in no small part, due to the wealth of his address book.

However, despite these foreign decorators and furniture makers who were employed to create the sumptuous palace projects, the majority of the teams that lay behind the construction were in fact Armenian. The Ottoman construction accounts that form the basis of my dissertation show a large majority of low-status local Armenian labourers, craftsmen, suppliers of materials and manufactured goods involved in the construction of the imperial mosques of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> The Balyans, furthermore, employed a team of

<sup>15</sup> A. Ağır, 'Balyanlar'ın Eğitimleri Üzerine Notlar', in: *Afife Batur'a Armağan*, İstanbul 2005.

<sup>16</sup> T. Gautier, *Constantinople of To-day (1854)*, London 1856, pp. 301–303.

<sup>17</sup> A. Wharton, *Building the Tanzimat. The Power of the Balyan Family in the Age of 'Re-Organisation'*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, SOAS, University of London, forthcoming 2012.





Fig. 4. Umed Behzad, Armenian Painter Educated at the Cemaran Mektebi (in Üsküdar), Photograph by Gökhan Tan. Painting by Umed Behzad in the Surp Asdvadzadzin Church, Beşiktaş.



assistant architects, also referred to as *kalfa*, and also of Armenian families, often closely linked to their own, such as Ohannes and Artin Serveryan, who would supervise the projects.<sup>18</sup>

They employed a team of Armenian painters, who were at the very top of their profession, often serving also as court painters to the Sultan and painting portraits of the 'Men of the *Tanzimat*' (the highest ranking Ottoman officials of the time), some of whom were trained within the school established by the Balyans, the *Cemaran Mektebi* in Üsküdar, such as the case of Umed Behzad (Fig. 4). These artists, as well as working on the decoration of imperial palaces and pavilions, made a large number of paintings for the churches the Amiras rebuilt in the 1830s onwards, although in a new, more Italianate style than had been seen before, thus re-defining Armenian cultural production in Constantinople at this time, via the patronage of Karapet Balyan and his friends.<sup>19</sup>

The regular construction teams also included elite craftsman who acquired a virtual monopoly over their field, such as Vortik Kemhaciyian who dominated the supply of imperial carpentry goods in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 5). On Kemhaciyian and the effect

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the Ottoman archival documentation that refers to these *kalfas* referenced in my thesis, Kevork Pamukciyan mentions some Armenian sources dealing with the Serveryan family. Cf.: K. Pamukciyan, *Zamanlar, Mekanlar, İnsanlar*, Istanbul 2003, p. 138 in particular the source of Ağayekyan *Gensaveb*, pp. 215–218.

<sup>19</sup> On the Armenian painters with whom the Balyans collaborated (and gave their patronage to) see: G. Kürkman, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Ermeni Ressamlar 1600–1923*, Istanbul 2004.



of the patronage he received from frequent employment on imperial works (carried out by the Balyans) the *Levant Herald* in 1873 explains: "A project is on foot for converting the furniture factory of Vortik Effendi into a joint-stock enterprise. Vortik Efendi has, it will be remembered, made the greater part of the furniture for the palaces of Dolmabahçe and Çırağan. It is a question whether the large profits made by Vortik Effendi are not mainly due to the exclusive character of his 'clientèle'; and since it is not believed that His Majesty the Sultan has the intention of furnishing another palace for the present, it might turn out that the oyster- if we may be allowed the comparison- has been already swallowed, and that the shareholders would find that they had paid a high price for the shells."<sup>20</sup>

Many of these Armenians with whom the Balyans regularly collaborated were educated in Paris however, such as Artin Serveryan, showing that this was not an entirely locally rooted and self-made phenomenon. Indeed, it is significant that the only two Armenians listed amongst the architectural students graduated from the Ecole des Beaux Arts (Fig. 6), although they do not include the Balyans themselves, can be connected to the works and general milieu of the Balyans. These were: Artin Pascal Bilezickdji, a student of Duban and Jacob Mélick, a student of Labrouste. They both graduated around 1840.<sup>21</sup>

Artin Bilezikciyan returned to the Ottoman Empire after graduating and carried out a range of official works: designing a monument to celebrate the alliance of Great Britain, France and Turkey for the Universal Exposition of 1855, restorations to the Süleymaniye Mosque in 1861<sup>22</sup>, and he was an official of the Istanbul Municipal Administration (*Belediye*) in 1865. He also worked as a private building contractor within Constantinople. Bilezikciyan was a family acquaintance and seems to have been employed by the Balyans on their projects although, thanks to a lack of surnames in Ottoman



Fig. 5. Elite Armenian Craftsmen Working for the Balyans. Vortik Kemhaciyan and his Carpentry Work for the Beylerbeyi Palace

<sup>20</sup> *Levant Herald*, Jan 25, Istanbul 1873.

<sup>21</sup> T. Louis, and P. David de, *Les Architectes Elèves de L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, 1895, p. 106.

<sup>22</sup> B. St-Laurent, *Ottomanization and modernization. The architectural and urban development of Bursa and the genesis of tradition, 1839-1914*. (Harvard, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1989), p. 61.



documents, there is no sure proof of this yet.<sup>23</sup>

The other graduate, Jacob Mélik, also worked within Constantinople on official projects: he was in 1855–1856 given the job of constructing the Ottoman neighbourhood for the international exposition.<sup>24</sup> However he also worked on private commissions, such as the coastal residence of the Armenian banker Migirdiç Cezayirliyan in Yeniköy (figure seven).<sup>25</sup>



Fig. 6. Education of Serkis Balyan at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris? At Least the Contacts of Artin Bilezikciyan and Jacob Mélick

This project has been attributed to Serkis Balyan and his assistant architect Migirdiç Charikian, and so we can assume that Mélik was under their orders.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Bilezikciyan was a founding member of the S.F.P. (*La Société Française de Photographie*) in 1854, leaving in 1885; in the Ottoman Bank Archive there is a work labelled: « Catalogue historique des médailles et pièces de monnaie depuis la fondation de la dynastie Ottomane: (l'an 699 de l'Hégire) par Sultan Osman-Khan jusqu'à Sultan Abdulaziz Khan, empereur régnant; formant la collection de P. A. Bilezikdji. » (3rd edition, Constantinople : Imprimerie Henri Cayol, 1864); a document: BOA (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), HR.TO (*Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası/Translation Bureau of the Foreign Ministry*), Dosya (Folder): 507, Gömlek (Case): 75, Date: 06/1/1865 is a letter of Artin Bilezikciyan, official of the Municipality, concerning the management of the 6<sup>th</sup> District; another document: BOA (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives), I.ŞD (*İrade Şura-yı Devlet/ Order of the Council of State*), Dosya/Folder:3, Gömlek/Case: 166, Tarih/Date: 1285.M.19 (1868), concerns the dues of Artin Kalfa from building jobs. K. Kreiser, 'Public Monuments in Turkey and Egypt 1840-1916', *Muğarnas*, 14 (1997) pp. 103-117, mentions the monument planned by Bilezikciyan.

<sup>24</sup> BOA (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives), HR.TO (*Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası*), Sira (line): 166, Dosya (folder):419, Gömlek (case):28, Tarih (date): 1855. 04. 14 (3). Memo sent by Mösyo Pier Duran concerning the project by Mimar Mösyo Mélik concerning the production of the Exposition neighbourhood (*mahalle*). BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), HR.TO (*Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası*), sira/line: 1465, Dosya (folder): 423, Gömlek (case): 36, date: 1856. 02. 07. Letter regarding the spending for the pavilion to promote the exports of the Well-Protected Domains at the Exposition from the architect Mélik to the Paris Embassy.

<sup>25</sup> Migirdiç was a money lender (*sarrafi*) and chief customs officer (*gümrük emini*). In 1267/1851 he is listed in a register recording most of the names of the powerful *sarrafs* at that time and took huge sums for the importation of goods. BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), MAD.d (*Maliye Defteri/Financial Notebook*), No: 13768, Tarih/Date: 1. M. 1267 (1850). He did business with Mustafa Reşid Paşa. See: 'Cezayirliyan Ailesi', in: K. Pamukciyan, *Zamanlar, Mekanlar, İnsanlar*, Istanbul 2003, p. 130. Ottoman archival documents refer to the involvement of Mimar Mélik in the *sahilhane* (coastal home) of Migirdiç. For instance: BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), A.MKT.NZD (*Mektubi Kalemî Nezaret ve Devair Evrakı/Correspondance of Ministry of Chief Viziers*) Dosya (folder): 75, Vesika (Document): 37, Tarih/Date: 1259. C. 15. (1843) on the totals for the workers on the coastal home in Yeniköy of Migirdiç built by Mélik Kalfa.

<sup>26</sup> The information issued by the present occupant of the site, the Austrian Summer Consulate. The coastal palace was seized from Migirdiç when he fell from power. It was given to the Kaiser by Sultan Abdülhamid II.



The team behind this residence included a range of influential Parisians such as architect and ceramicist Leon Parvillée, who worked on Ottoman delegations to the international expositions and also was contributor to the journal *L'Illustration*, as well as the beaux arts trained painter Pierre Victor Galland. Although this, to an extent, shows the mobility and inter-connectedness between milieus, that the Armenian element remained managing the work and retaining control over its physical form - as well as the bulk of the team were Armenians - prevents us from labelling this simply as 'Tan-zimat cosmopolitanism'.



Fig. 7. Coastal Home of Mıgırđıç Cezayirliyan in Yeniköy by Jacob Melik (and Serkis Balyan?)

Indeed, that there was an eventual separation between the Balyans, their local Armenian colleagues and their foreign contractors, at least with regards to their business transactions, is indicated by petitions submitted to the Porte regarding the operations of the Balyans.

#### *Dispute Concerning Karapet Balyan in 1861*

The first, concerns an Armenian Russian subject, Keresteci Agop Kurdođlu, who wrote to the Porte in 1861, asking for payment for damages from Karapet Balyan following not being paid for work on building projects.<sup>27</sup>

Karapet was defended by two Italians, one of whom, Abraham Camondo, was the prime banker to the Ottoman Empire, a Sephardic Jew of Venetian citizenship, who moved to Paris later in life. The Greek banker Yorgo Zariffi, also hugely influential over Ottoman finance, presided over the case and ruled in Karapet's favour.

That Karapet Balyan served an intermediary role between the departments of the Ottoman State, European and other foreign craftsmen is shown clearly by this case. It states: "Karapet Kalfa was not an employee of the Government but he was under the Imperial authority which was responsible for making decisions which he does not have the power to change." And so: "Karapet Kalfa is not personally obliged to pay the due sum"

<sup>27</sup> BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), HR.TO (*Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası/Translation Office of Foreign Ministry*), Dosya (folder): 438, Gömlek (case): 78, date: 1861. 11. 30.

instead: "throughout the whole affair he was a simple intermediary and never a debiter whether direct or indirect to M. Kurdoğlu."<sup>28</sup>

This role of Karapet can be seen also in a petition against Serkis Balyan from 1878, however, by that time, the situation regarding the state of the finances of the Ottoman Empire was changing.

#### *Petition Against Serkis Balyan in 1878*

This petition was submitted by Savriyo Kalfa and Eugène Maillard on behalf of a list of craftsmen, suppliers, and entrepreneurs who had worked on the Aziziye Mosque and Akaretler apartment projects (Fig. 8), of primarily French, but also English, Russian, Persian, Armenian, Austrian and other nationalities.<sup>29</sup>

It requested payment for goods and work carried out which had been due for the past three years. However, it stated that since the Imperial Treasury may not be capable of paying this, the creators would concentrate on obtaining payment from Serkis Balyan for goods that they furnished.

In this case, Serkis was not defended, instead, shortly after, amid other memos complaining about the spending of the former Sultan due to the building projects of the imperial architect Serkis Balyan,<sup>30</sup> he was, investigated<sup>31</sup> accused of embezzlement and some of his property confiscated.<sup>32</sup>



Fig. 8. The Akaretler (Row Houses) in Beşiktaş, Mid 1870s, Subject of the Petition Against Serkis Balyan by Maillard and Savriyo Kalfa

<sup>28</sup> BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), IIR.TO (*Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası/Translation Office of Foreign Ministry*), *Dosya* (folder): 438, *Gömlek* (case): 78, date: 1861. 11. 30.

<sup>29</sup> BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), IIR.TO (*Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası/Translation Office of Foreign Ministry*), *Dosya* (folder): 464, *Gömlek* (case): 57, date: 1878. 9. 8

<sup>30</sup> BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), Y.PRK.A (*Yıldız Tasnifi Perakende Evrakı Sadaret Maruzatı/ Yıldız Collection*), *Dosya* (Folder): 1, *Gömlek* (Case): 98, *Tarih/Date*: 1295. R. 3. (1878).

<sup>31</sup> BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), Y.PRK.ZB, (*Yıldız Tasnifi Perakende Evrakı Zabtiye Nezareti Maruzatı/ Yıldız Collection*) *Dosya* (folder):2, *Gömlek* (case): 73, *Tarih/Date*: 1301. L. 29. (1884).

<sup>32</sup> BOA, (Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive), Y.PRK.AZN, (*Yıldız Tasnifi Perakende Evrakı Adliye ve Mezahib Nezareti Maruzatı/ Yıldız Collection*) *Dosya* (folder): 2, *Gömlek* (case): 49, *Tarih/date*: 1303. L. 17 (1886).



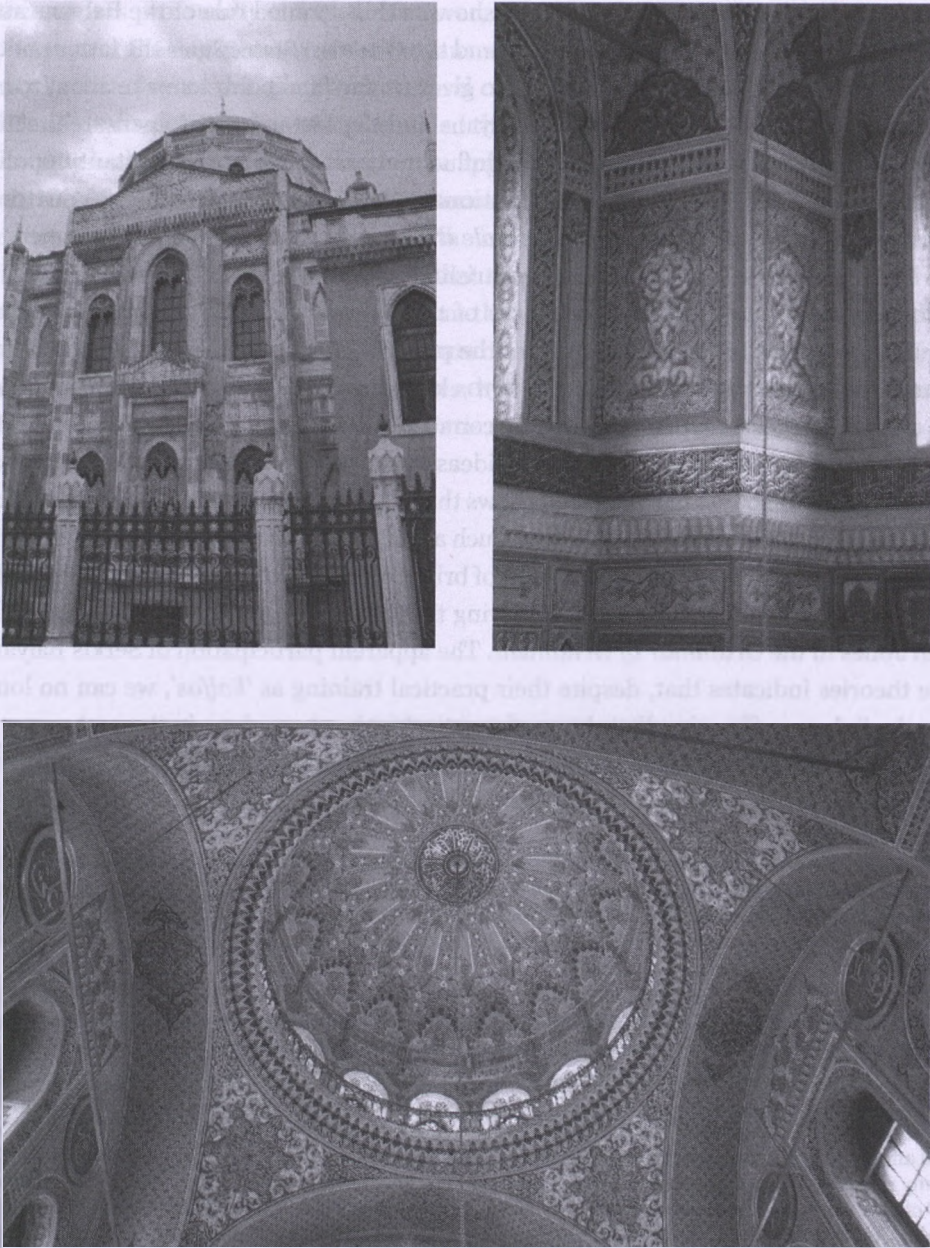


Fig. 9. An 'Ottoman Renaissance' à la Owen Jones? The Pertevniyal Valide Mosque of 1872 by Serkis and Agop Balyan



Nevertheless, the petitions do not only show us this doomed role of the Balyans as intermediaries between Parisian contractors and the Ottoman State. Since the latter petition was submitted by Eugene Maillard, this also gives us one final point to make about a more positive connection between Paris, the Balyans and the history of Ottoman architecture. Maillard was a Frenchman who became an influential personage in the Constantinopolitan elite cultural milieu. He worked on international exhibitions including the 1863 Ottoman Exposition, was also the director of the *Etoile d'Orient* or Istanbul Masonic Loge between 1859 and 1870, as well as contributing to Parisian journals such as *L'Illustration*.<sup>33</sup>

That we can connect him to the works of the Balyans via this petition is significant because he was one of the crucial 'men of the pen' responsible for a text heralding a renaissance in Ottoman architecture in the 1870s known as the *Usul-u Mimar-i Osmaniye*.<sup>34</sup> This alliance suggests that we can directly connect the Pertevniyal Valide Mosque of 1872 (Fig. 9) by Serkis and Agop Balyan to such ideas.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the architectural ornament and interior decoration of the mosque itself shows the incorporation of 'traditional' motifs from the Bursa period of Ottoman architecture, such as the distinctive blind arches on the corner towers, which are 'revived' through the use of bright colours and new techniques, according to the directives of the text and also following the ideas of European contemporaries like Owen Jones in the *Grammar of Ornament*. The apparent participation of Serkis Balyan in these theories indicates that, despite their practical training as '*kalfas*', we can no longer write the Balyans off as simplistic 'men of practice', as has been done in the past.

This article has shown how, through their extended stays in Paris, wherein they took their preliminary education, the Balyans' outlook both on Armenian identity and on ar-

<sup>33</sup> A. Ersoy, On the Sources of the "Ottoman Renaissance": Architectural Revival and its Discourse During the Abdülaziz Era (1861–76), Unpublished PhD Thesis, Harvard 2000, p. 152–153, for this information on Maillard, he cites: C. G. Hornig, *Séjours et promenades à Constantinople, 1860–1861*, Paris 1876, p. 106. On the role in the masonic loge, see: P. Dumont, *Osmanlıcılık Uluşçu Akımlar ve Masonluk*, Istanbul 2000.

<sup>34</sup> For a thorough discussion of the *Usul* see: A. Ersoy, *op. cit.* For a recent reprint of the text and translation to English, see: De Launay, Marie, Montani, Pietro et al, *Usul-u Mimar-i Osmaniye/ L'Architecture Ottoman, 1873* (reprint, Ankara: *Tarih Araştırmalar Vakfı, T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı* 1998).

<sup>35</sup> The decoration of this mosque has been interpreted in the past as related to the influence of Pietro Montani an Italian who was thought to have been employed on the project as well as being one of the authors of the *Usul*. Instead, the role of the Balyans in implementing this thought into their works has been minimised and the decoration has been described more recently as 'Orientalist' rather than as Historicism. However my thesis argues that it was a distinct style created by the Balyan family for Abdülaziz. For interpretations of this work and the issue of style in the period, see: Batur, Afife, 'Balyan Ailesi', in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, İstanbul 1994, p. 35–41; and 'Valide Camii', in: *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1994, p. 360–362; *Islamic Art in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Tradition, Innovation and Eclecticism*, ed. D. Behrens Abouseif, S. Vernoit, Leiden 2006; Bozdoğan, Sibel, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, University of Washington Press 2001; Çelik, Zeynep, *The Remaking of Istanbul. Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1986; Saner, Turgut, *19. Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarlığında Oryantalizm*, İstanbul 1998.



chitecture was profoundly changed. However, primarily, it has aimed to express that the importance of the engagement of the Balyans with Paris lies in the social and professional networks that they used in their architectural careers. These contacts both within Parisian and Paris-trained Armenian groups enabled them to carry out their works with an unprecedentedly luxurious and up-to-the-minute appearance (although at economical cost) and to win the continued patronage of the Ottoman Sultan.

More research is needed to determine the nature of the education that the Balyans experienced in Paris, to flesh out the milieu that they inhabited there and the degree of their acceptance within it. It seems for now, from the evidence of the Ottoman documentation used within my dissertation, that the Balyans remained chiefly rooted to their locality and its methods of training, and communal ties, but this picture might change when further archival research has been carried out in Paris and using Armenian sources.

Les Arcades viciennes arrivèrent sur les balcons polonais vers 1830 et les polonais pour il était les plus grandes communautés des Arméniens à Lodowicz, à Karłowice, Poleski, à Lwow, à Brady, enfin à Stanislawow. En 1836, d'après Sadok Barakat, les architectes de Tander Asentowicz virent s'installer dans les alentours de Kamienna Polska, pendant que Hout Asengy Asentowicz, né en 1809, obtint le titre de noble, fut inscrit dans le « Livre de la Noblesse polonaise » et attribué aux arméniens (Gryf [Gryf]) obtenant le pseudonyme Josa. Le fils de Piotr – Grzegorz Josa Asentowicz, eut une lecture assez splendide à Czerniewo près de Brady, qui, par la suite des mariages familiaux, hérita, ce qui, par conséquent, amènera le père de Tander. De dat à vendre la propriété pour s'en aller à Bucara, puis à Lwow où il occupa le poste de fonctionnaire juridique. Enfin, grâce à la connaissance des langues, il sera délégué en Hongrie où il se maria avec une Hongroise, Agnieszka Piotrowski.

Peu après, mais avant tout un éminent représentant de l'Art Nouveau en Pologne – Tander Asentowicz (1859–1920) fut non seulement un Polonais d'origine arménienne, mais aussi un grand Européen. Né à Brasso en Transylvanie (actuellement Brasso en Roumanie), élevé en Hongrie et séjourné à Lwow, il étudia la peinture à l'Académie de Munich dans l'atelier des Gabriel Hinkel, Alexandre Wagner et Gyula Benczer ; il poursuivit ses études à Paris dans l'atelier d'Émile Auguste Carlier-Dumas, et commença la carrière dans deux capitales : à Londres et à Paris, où il fréquentait les salons les plus raffinés de Cyrill Gulebski, d'Émile Lambert, de Sara Bernhardt, d'Henri Pourcelier, l'atelier de Józef Chełmoński. En 1885, il revint à Cracovie où il devint professeur et, à deux reprises, recteur de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts et aussi membre de la Société des Virtuoses.

<sup>1</sup> K. Barakat, *Życie artystyczne Ormiań w Polsce*, Łódź 1926, p. 26; le Karwin, *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce*, Kraków 1924, p. 96–97.

<sup>2</sup> J. Barakat, *Życie artystyczne Ormiań w Polsce*, Łódź 1926, p. 26; le Karwin, *Chrześcijaństwo w Polsce*, Kraków 1924, p. 96–97.

... This article has shown how, through their extended stays in Paris, wherein they took their preliminary education, the Beylams' outlook both on Armenian identity and on architecture was shaped. ... Indeed, the architectural ornament and interior decoration of the mosque itself shows the incorporation of traditional motifs from the Bursa period of Ottoman architecture, such as the distinctive blind arches on the corner towers, which are revived through the use of bright colours and new techniques, according to the directives of the text and also following the ideas of European contemporaries like Owen Jones in the *Grammar of Ornament*. The apparent participation of Serkis Balvan in these theories indicates that, despite their practical training as *kafias*, we can no longer write the Beylams off as simplistic 'men of practice', as has been done in the past.

... This article has shown how, through their extended stays in Paris, wherein they took their preliminary education, the Beylams' outlook both on Armenian identity and on architecture was shaped.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Inanç, 'On the Sources of the "Ottoman Renaissance": Architectural Revival and its Discourse During the Abdülhamid Era (1876–1909)', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Harvard 2000, p. 152–153, for this information on Maillart; he cites C. G. Brang, *Diary of a Prominent Architect in Constantinople, 1860–1866*, Paris 1870, p. 105. On the role of French architects, see P. Dumont, *Osmantürk: L'Ère de l'Art et de l'Architecture*, Istanbul 2009.

<sup>24</sup> 1902a through discussion of the *Üçüncü Mecmua*, Inanç, *op. cit.* For a recent reprint of the text and translation to English, see De Lencay, Maria, Montari, Pietro et al. *Early Modern Ottoman Architecture*, 1973 (reprint, Ankara: Türk Arşivleri Kurumu Yayınları, T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı 1995).

<sup>25</sup> The decoration of this mosque has been interpreted by the text as related to the influence of Pietro Montari an Italian who was thought to have been employed on the project as well as being one of the authors of the *Üçüncü Mecmua*. Instead, the role of the Beylams in implementing the *Üçüncü Mecmua* into their works has been minimized and the decoration has been described more correctly as 'Ottoman' rather than as 'Italian'. However my thesis argues that it was a distinct style created by the Beylams family for Abdülhamid. For interpretations of this work and on issues of style in the period, see Kibar, Adile, 'Beylams' İdeali', in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Anıdefterleri*, vol. 1, İstanbul 1994, p. 25–32; and Yelide Çanakkal, in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Anıdefterleri*, İstanbul 1994, p. 340–352; also see A. I. in *The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Tradition: Innovation and Eclecticism*, ed. D. Behrens-Abensour, B. Verhulst, Leiden 2006, Brill; *Modernism and National Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, University of Washington Press 2001; Celik, Zeynep, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1986; Sencer, Turhan, *19. Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimari Hazinesi Organizasyonu*, İstanbul 1998.



## Teodor Axentowicz – – *Un Arménien polonais et un Européen*

Stefania Krzysztofowicz-Kozakowska, Musée National de Cracovie

Les Axentowicz arrivèrent sur le sol polonais vers 1630 et leur nom apparaît dans les plus grandes communautés des Arméniens à Jazłowiec, à Kamieniec Podolski, à Lvov, à Brody, enfin à Stanisławów. En 1688, d'après Sadok Barącz<sup>1</sup>, les ancêtres de Teodor Axentowicz vinrent s'installer dans les alentours de Kamieniec Podolski, pendant que Piotr Axenty-Axentowicz, né en 1650, obtint le titre de noblesse, fut inscrit dans le « Livre de la Noblesse polonaise » et attribué aux armoiries *Gryf* [*Griffon*] obtenant le pseudonyme Jaxa. Le fils de Piotr – Grzegorz Jaxa Axentowicz, gagna une fortune assez splendide à Cieniowo près de Brody, qui, par la suite des partages familiaux, fonda, ce qui, par conséquent, amènera le père de Teodor, Deodat à vendre la propriété pour déménager à Suceava, puis à Lvov où il occupa le poste de fonctionnaire juridique. Enfin, grâce à la connaissance des langues, il sera délégué en Hongrie où il se maria avec une Hongroise, Agnieszka Plutarch<sup>2</sup>

Peintre, mais avant tout un éminent représentant de l'Art Nouveau en Pologne - Teodor Axentowicz (1859–1938) fut non seulement un Polonais d'origine arménienne, mais aussi un grand Européen. Né à Brasso en Transylvanie (actuellement Brasov en Roumanie), élevé en Hongrie et éduqué à Lvov, il étudia la peinture à l'Académie de Munich dans l'atelier des Gabriel Haekel, Alexandre Wagner et Gyulia Benczúr ; il poursuivit ses études à Paris dans l'atelier d'Emil Auguste Carolus-Duran et commença la carrière dans deux capitales : à Londres et à Paris, où il fréquentait les salons les plus raffinés de Cyprian Godebski, d'Hôtel Lambert, de Sara Bernhardt, d'Henri Fouquier, l'atelier de Józef Chelmoński. En 1895, il revint à Cracovie où il devint professeur et, à deux reprises, recteur de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts et aussi membre de la Secession viennoise,

<sup>1</sup> S. Barącz, *Żywoty sławnych Ormian w Polsce*, Lwów 1856, p. 56; L. Korwin, *Ormiańskie rody szlacheckie*, Kraków 1934, p. 66–67.

<sup>2</sup> I. Kłak, "Teodor Axentowicz. Życie i twórczość", *Prace Humanistyczne*, 1 (1970), serie 1, no 1, p. 249–305; *Teodor Axentowicz 1859–1938, katalog wystawy, Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie*, ed. S. Krzysztofowicz-Kozakowska, Kraków 1998.

cofondateur de la Société des Artistes Polonais « Sztuka ». Il s'adonna avec la même passion à deux types de peinture fort dissemblables, illustrant d'un côté le pittoresque folklore houtsoule, et peignant d'autre part, le plus souvent au pastel, des portraits de jolies femmes.

Teodor Axentowicz n'oublia jamais ses racines arméniennes. Déjà, de son séjour à Londres, en 1892, il peignit sur commande de la commune arménienne londonienne le portrait de

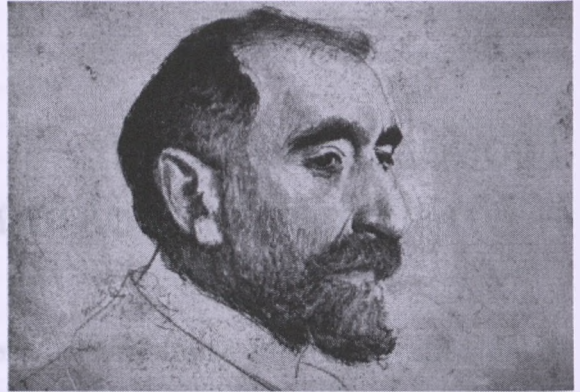


Fig. 1. Teodor Axentowicz, Autoportrait, vernis moux, 1907. Musée National de Cracovie

Katolokos Migrides et de Khriman en habit pontifical<sup>3</sup>. Il s'engagea plus fortement dans les affaires des Arméniens polonais après son retour au pays en 1895, quand il occupa le poste du professeur de dessin dans l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, future Académie des Beaux Arts.

Les premières prémices des contacts avec le milieu arménien, sont confirmées par la correspondance durant depuis 1897, entre Teodor Axentowicz et le prêtre Karol Bogdanowicz, prévôt arménien à Suceava en Bucovine<sup>4</sup>. Celui-ci le 1er mars 1897, vu la suggestion de l'archevêque Izaak Isakowicz, s'adressa à l'artiste, en tant qu'*ancien paroissien de Suceava*, en demandant de peindre pour l'église paroissiale, un nouveau tableau d'autel, représentant Saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur, qui remplacerait l'ancien, *non-esthétique*. La proposition du prêtre Bogdanowicz fut certainement la conséquence du fait que l'évêque arménien Izaak Isakowicz – *nota bene*, l'oncle de l'artiste, reçut en 1863 son premier presbytère indépendant, justement à Suceava. Le prêtre Bogdanowicz dicta aussi le sujet de la peinture qui devrait présenter le baptême des Arméniens, la reine et le roi Tiridate, conféré par Saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur. En même temps, il informa l'artiste d'avoir collecté pour cette réalisation des fonds assez sobres<sup>5</sup>. Dans la lettre du 16 mars de la même année, le prêtre Bogdanowicz remercia Axentowicz de l'acceptation de sa proposition, tout en posant une question bien voilée sur les coûts de cette création, ainsi qu'en lui demandant de lui envoyer la photo de la vieille toile délabrée. Il supposa aussi que, *probable-*

<sup>3</sup> Teodor Axentowicz ..., p. 35 – disparaître.

<sup>4</sup> Karol Bogdanowicz (1865–1927) prévôt arménien à Suceava, et après à Horodenka, doyen à Kutu.

<sup>5</sup> „(...) Katolicy Ormianie w Suczawie na Bukowinie nie mając niestety własnego kościoła, muszą się tulić w kościele łacińskim, gdzie mają tylko swój własny ołtarz św. Grzegorza (...) ołtarz ten stary, spruchniał całkowicie. Przy tem obraz – św. Grzegorz Oświeciciel chrzci ormiańskiego króla Tyrydata i Królową, klęczących u stóp jego – tak nieestetyczny, wstyd brzydki, że i wstrętno spoglądać na niego (...) Otóż przez pięć lat zbieraliśmy datki z rozmaitych stron świata – z Galicji, Bukowiny, Besarabii, i uzbierali około tysiąc zł. na budowę nowego ołtarza (...) I któż nam świętego Grzegorza, patrona Ormian wymaluje, jeśli nie Ormianin, a do tego dawny Suczawski parafianin, jak to świadczy fotografia Wielmożnego Pana Profesora z lat młodzieńczych, pokazywana dziś z dumą po domach ormiańskich i nie ormiańskich...”, de lettre de 1 mars 1864, collection privée.



ment, Son Eminence, l'Archévêque Isakowicz, se réjouirait fortement lorsqu'il aurait appris que Monsieur le Professeur était si gracieux envers la pauvre Suceava...<sup>6</sup>

Les travaux sur la peinture pour l'église à Suceava furent récalcitrants car, encore au mois de novembre de l'an 1900, le prêtre Bogdanowicz écrivit : *Nous attendons à Suceava, l'année prochaine, la visite canonique du prêtre Archévêque Isakowicz [...], nous serions fort déçus si notre archévêque retrouvait le nouvel autel rapiécé de l'anncienne toile [...] et si le vide était couvert de rideaux de satin rouge. Cet état provisoire dure déjà quelques années et les paroissiens m'interpellent tout le temps sur le sort du nouveau tableau nous promis si gracieusement par Monsieur le Professeur*<sup>7</sup>. Teodor Axentowicz réalisa enfin son obligation ce que confirme la lettre, familière dans le ton, de l'archévêque Isakowicz, datant du janvier 1901, dans laquelle il nota : *Mon cher Teodor, Je t'écris pour te remercier profondément pour la Toile que tu as peinte pour la chapelle à Suceava. Cette oeuvre pour la gloire de Dieu va rendre illustre le lieu de prière des Arméniens...*<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 2. Teodor Axentowicz, Saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur, paroisse 1900. St. Pierre et Paul à Gdańsk

<sup>6</sup> Z prawdziwą przyjemnością odczytałem list W. Pana Profesora, który z radością został przyjętym przez moich parafian. W swym i ich imieniu składam więc niniejszym najserdeczniejsze dzięki W. Panu Prof. za Jego łaskawość i gotowość, z jaką raczył wysłuchać prośby naszej. (...) Proszę darować mojej śmiałości oraz otwartości, że się chce dowiedzieć jeszcze, czy obraz ofiaruje nam P. Pan Prof. jako dar w łaskawości swojej całkowicie, czy też będziemy przy tem mieli jakie wydatki i w jakiej wysokości, abyśmy podług tego wiedzieli, jak stosować się z pieniędzmi uzbieranymi. Także i to jeszcze – czy nie posłać Panu choćby fotografię starego obrazu, aby kompozycja pozostała ta sama i aby to był nasz ormiański św. Grzegorz Luminator czy Oświeciciel, gdyż świętych Grzegorzów jest wielu? Już to zapewne J. E. Ksiądz Arcybiskup Isakowicz ucieszy się najbardziej, gdy się dowie, że Wielmożny Pan Profesor taki był łaskaw na biedną Suczawę..., de lettre de 16 mars 1897, collection privée.

<sup>7</sup> Na drugi rok w lecie spodziewamy się w Suczawie wizytacji Kanonicznej księdza Arcybiskupa Issakowicza (...) Bardzo by nam było niemiło, gdyby arcybiskup nasz zastał nowy nasz ołtarz załatany starym obrazem, który nie wypełnia nawet miejsca na nowy – a próżnię pokrywają firaneczki z czerwonego atlasu. Stan ten prowizoryczny trwa już kilka lat, a parafianie wciąż mnie interpelują, co się dzieje z nowym obrazem, obiecany nam łaskawie przez Pana Profesora... ; de lettre 21 novembre 1900 roku, collection privée.

<sup>8</sup> Mój Kochany Teodorku, Pisze by Ci wielce podziękować za Obraz jaki namalowałeś do kaplicy w Suczawie. To dzieło na Chwałę Bożą uświetni miejsce modlitw Ormian..., de lettre de janvier 1901, collection privée.





Fig. 3. Teodor Axentowicz, Les Arméniens en Pologne, 1912. Collection privée

La peinture connue sous le nom *Le Baptême de l'Arménie* (ou *Le Baptême des Arméniens*) fut créée par Teodor Axentowicz définitivement en 1900, ce que atteste l'inscription au dos du tableau, pour être installée sur l'autel à l'église de Suceava. Après la seconde guerre mondiale, elle fut transportée dans la paroisse romaine au nom des Saints Pierre et Paul à Gdańsk, dans la Chapelle de l'Image Miraculeuse de la Vierge Marie Gracieuse. La scène peinte sur la toile représente le baptême du roi d'Arménie, Tiridate III par Saint Grégoire l'Illuminateur, un événement ayant lieu dans les premières années du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Teodor Axentowicz s'engagea aussi dans les travaux de décoration des intérieurs de la cathédrale arménienne à Lvov. En 1895 soit en 1896, il prépara un projet, très traditionnel, de vitrail - non réalisé, présentant Notre Dame<sup>9</sup>, pendant que, en 1906 il fut invité avec Józef Mehoffer par l'archevêque Józef Teodorowicz afin de décorer l'intérieur de la cathédrale. Axentowicz, intéressé de la proposition tel *Als eines Hausarmenier* par Jan

<sup>9</sup> Esquisse en crayon, collection privée.



Boloz Antoniewicz, n'avait aucune expérience en tant que peintre monumental et pourtant, d'après Mehoffer: *il s'illusionna qu'il allait faire ensemble avec moi la polychromie*<sup>10</sup>. Comme le maintient Joanna Wolańska, auteure de la monographie sur la cathédrale arménienne, le devis préparé par deux artistes indique le fait que c'est à Axentowicz qu'on confia le projet d'autel, de décoration des murs ainsi que d'hémicycle de l'abside, restant en pleine harmonie avec celui-ci. En définitive, l'archevêque Józef Teodorowicz rejetta les projets d'Axentowicz en chargeant Józef Mehoffer du rôle difficile de transmettre cette décision à l'artiste. Cependant, Mehoffer, en commentant la justice des conclusions négatives concernant Axentowicz, posa la question si le jugement du jury *n'était pas trop sévère*<sup>11</sup>. *Nota bene*, les projets de Józef Mehoffer furent aussi rejetés par l'archevêque Teodorowicz quelques années après.

Axentowicz était auteur d'un seul projet d'une décoration murale: «L'Ange d'or» jouant de violon - dessin au pastel, datée entre 1900–1912<sup>12</sup>. On peut supposer, que c'était le projet pour la cathédrale arménienne à Lvov, inspirer par la polychromie «angelique» de l'église Notre-Dame à Cracovie, de Jan Matejko qui a collaboré avec Stanisław Wyspiański.

Teodor Axentowicz ne fut pas indifférent à la tragédie nationale des Arméniens comme envers le massacre turque et c'est en 1909 qu'il décida de peindre le panorama consacré justement à ces dramatiques événements historiques. Il proposa l'idée de cette grandiose réalisation au Comité Arménien siégeant à Londres, tout en comptant sur l'aide de son beau-père, Adam Giełgud, fort influent dans la capitale. Axentowicz eut dans cette époque une grande expérience dans la création des panoramas si populaires le long du XIXe siècle dans toute l'Europe. Il co-créa en 1894 avec Wojciech Kossak et Jan Styka le *Panorama de Raclawice*<sup>13</sup>, et un an plus tard, accompagné de Stanisław Janowski, Ludwik Boller, Kon-

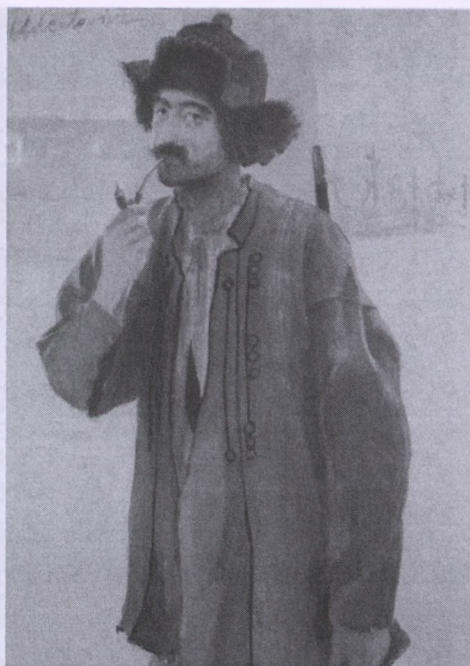


Fig. 4. Teodor Axentowicz, *Le Houtsoul* (Autoportrait), 1888. Collection privée

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Wolańska, *Katedra ormiańska we Lwowie w latach 1902-1938. Przemiany architektoniczne i dekoracja wnętrza*, Warszawa 2010.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> Collection privée; *Teodor Axentowicz, katalog ...*, p. 135 – datée ca. 1900; *Ibidem*, p. 296 – datée ca. 1912.

<sup>13</sup> S. Krzysztofowicz-Kozakowska, '„Mała Panorama Raclawicka” Wojciecha Kossaka i Jana Styki', in: *Mała Panorama Raclawicka Wojciecha Kossaka i Jana Styki, wystawa w Muzeum Okręgowym w Tarnowie oraz w Muzeum Narodowym Ziemi Przemyskiej w Przemyślu 2001-2002*, Kraków 2001.





Fig. 5. Teodor Axentowicz, Portrait d'une fille d'artiste Kazia, 1907.  
Musée National de Cracovie



Fig. 6. Teodor Axentowicz, Portrait d'une fille d'artiste Jadzia, 1908. Collection privée

stanty Mańkowski, Władysław Wankie et Stanisław Radziejowski, *Le Panorama des Tatars*<sup>14</sup>. Malheureusement, le plan ambitieux de peindre le panorama démontrant le massacre des Arméniens ne fut pas accepté par le Comité des Arméniens vu les raisons politiques, ce qui lui fut annoncé en janvier 1910 par Adam Gielgud : *Je viens justement de recevoir la réponse décisive de Atkin. Le Comité Arménien trouve que c'est déjà trop tard pour un panorama car l'ardeur face au massacre de Constantinople s'éteignit et ils exigent seules les redevances financières pour les pauvres Arméniens en Bulgarie comme dans d'autres lieux. La question politique est aux mains du gouvernement et son action est pleinement approuvée par le Comité, alors ils ne veulent plus agiter contre la Turquie. Atkin pensait qu'il pourrait attirer un capitaliste arménien pour avancer de l'argent pour le panorama, mais ceci fut aussi tombé à l'eau*<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> Teraz dopiero otrzymałem stanowczą odpowiedź od Atkina. Komitet Ormiański sądzi, że już za późno na panoramę, ponieważ zapal co do rzezi w Konstantynopolu przygasił i tylko żądają o zasiłki pieniężne dla biednych Ormian w Bułgarii i w innych miejscach. Kwestia polityczna jest w rękach rządu i jego akcja jest zupełnie aprobowana przez Komitet, i nie chcą więcej agitować przeciwko Turcji. Atkin myślał, że by mógł dostać od jakiegoś ormiańskiego kapitalisty do awansowania pieniędzy na panoramę, lecz to także przepało... ; le lettre de 22 janvier 1910, collection privée.



En 1910, comme réponse à l'échec lié avec le panorama, Teodor Axentowicz devint membre de l'Association Arménienne « Haiasdan » intéressée par la propagation du savoir au sujet de la culture, histoire, littérature, art arméniens, jusqu'alors supportée financièrement par lui.

En 1912, Teodor Axentowicz commença de traiter dans son oeuvre les sujets historiques et revint à la thématique arménienne. Successivement, en 1912 et en 1919, il prépara deux esquisses,



Fig. 7. Teodor Axentowicz, Portrait de la famille Axentowicz, 1907. Musée de Silesia à Katowice

peintes avec élan, pour la toile *Les Arméniens chez le roi Jean Casimir* (connue aussi sous le nom *Les Arméniens en Pologne*)<sup>16</sup>, non réalisée, représentant le roi entouré des Arméniens habillés de façon exotique. Cette composition fait rapport du décret du 1659, prononcé par le roi Jean Casimir sur demande de la communauté Lvovienne et reconnaissant les Arméniens égaux dans les privilèges aux bourgeois de Cracovie comme de Lvov portant les titres de noblesse. Les décrets avantageux pour les Arméniens étaient déjà pris dans le passé par les ascendants royaux. La participation à la cérémonie des Voeux de Jean Casimir, prononcés dans la cathédrale de Lvov, fut de même une élévation pour les Arméniens, habitants de cette ville.

Une analyse de l'oeuvre de Teodor Axentowicz, maître du portrait au pastel, ainsi que de son attachement aux racines arméniennes ne serait pas ignorer toute une série de faits familiaux, où la généalogie familiale arménienne est bien visible. Par commencer par les autoportraits du peintre même, avec une palette<sup>17</sup>, soit en vêtements des houtsoul<sup>18</sup>, soit par les portraits dans la manière de vernis moux<sup>19</sup> jusqu'aux portraits des enfants – du

<sup>16</sup> Collection privée.

<sup>17</sup> 1898, Musée National de Varsovie.

<sup>18</sup> Collection privée.

<sup>19</sup> Musée National de Cracovie.



filz Tommy<sup>20</sup> et des images éblouissantes des filles - Gladys, Jadwiga, Renata (*Gladys en robe rose* et *Jadzia en robe bleue* - du 1903, Kazia - 1907 ou *Jadzia au ruban bleu* - 1908, les portraits de Jadwiga avec une rose-thé, Renata, Gladys au plateau aux fruits - 1910, Renata dans le jardin de la villa *Gladys* à Zakopane - 1920. Tous ces portraits exposent visiblement la beauté arménienne des modèles. Une oeuvre exceptionnelle familiale qui dénote le caractère arménien de la famille des Axentowicz est le portrait monumental de toute la famille, signé l'an 1907 – de la femme entourée d'enfants, peint pendant quelques années et successivement complété au moment de la naissance de nouveaux membres de la famille<sup>21</sup>.

Teodor Axentowicz peignit aussi quelquefois l'archevêque Izaak Isakowicz<sup>22</sup>. Parmi les trois tableaux réalisés, se conservent deux, l'un - peint sans contrainte en 1884<sup>23</sup>, l'autre, plus raide peint d'après la photographie, à Paris, en 1886<sup>24</sup>. Nommé *prêcher aux lèvres dorées, patriote fervent, entouré d'amour*, Isakowicz fut l'oncle de Teodor (la soeur du grand-père du peintre, Rypsyna, fut l'épouse de Jakub Isakowicz). L'archevêque Isakowicz finançait l'éducation de Teodor au niveau secondaire, il refusa par contre de le supporter pendant ses études artistiques car il prévit pour lui une carrière différente. Ce n'est qu'après la recommandation de Deodat, le père du peintre, qu'il solda en trois échéances une somme annuelle au jeune adepte d'art sous condition qu'il développe son talent. Après des années, l'archevêque avouerait son erreur. Le portrait peint en 1886, reconcilia enfin l'artiste avec son protecteur.

La correspondance de Teodor Axentowicz confirme une obligeance si typique pour les Arméniens. Il intervint, entre autre, chez l'archi-comte Karol Stefan Habsbourg à Żywiec. Il facilita, en 1900, son ami arménien et cousin lointain, Auguste Teodorowicz, de récupérer



Fig. 8. Teodor Axentowicz, Portrait d'archevêque Izaak Mikolaj Isakowicz, 1886. La Galerie de la Peinture à Lvov

<sup>20</sup> 1896, collection privée.

<sup>21</sup> Musée de Silesie à Katowice.

<sup>22</sup> Izaak Mikolaj Isakowicz (1824–1901) l'archevêque arménien à Lvov entre 1882–1901, théologien, écrivain, philanthrope, homme qui s'occupe d'affaires sociales, enterrer au cimetière de Łyczaków à Lvov. Cf. T. Zaleski, *Biskup ormiański Izaak Isakowicz „Złotousty”*, Kraków 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Musée Historique de ville Lvov.

<sup>24</sup> La Galerie de la Peinture à Lvov.





Fig. 9. Teodor Axentowicz, Ange, avant 1900. Collection privée

le poste du secrétaire et professeur de langue polonaise chez l'archi-comte qui *eut un peu de scrupules en ce qui concerne ce poste à Żywiec*<sup>25</sup>. Un an plus tard, le même Teodorowicz dans la lettre du mois de novembre 1901, rappella à Axentowicz la nécessité de terminer le portrait des Habsbourg et d'en proposer le prix<sup>26</sup>. Il tenta aussi chez le Habsbourg en 1903 le déplacement de service de l'Arménien - Erazm Barącz<sup>27</sup>, de Kaczyk (Bucovine) dans la mine de sel à Wieliczka. Celui-ci crut que si l'archi-comte avait décidé d'exprimer son souhait dans cette affaire face au ministère de la trésorerie via la chancellerie de la cour soit un adjutant, ceci aurait permis de se réenregistrer momentanément. Après un an, Axentowicz réussit à régler le déplacement de Barącz. Pour ce dernier, cela était important, d'après l'information présente dans la lettre du mois de juin 1903, du point de vue assez banal puisqu'il avait connu une jeune demoiselle dont les parents n'étaient pas d'accord qu'elle se marie dans un endroit si lointain<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Wielmożny Panie Profesorze, Najmocniej przepraszam, że ośmielam się bardzo Pana trudzić i molestować Go mojemu natręctwami, ale sprawa to dla mnie tak wielkiej wagi, że przy wielkiej życzliwości Pana dla mnie mam jednak nadzieję, że mi to Pan profesor wybaczyć raczy. Wysłałem dziś telegram, ale widzę, że nie potrzebnie, bo cała sprawa wyjaśni się dopiero w poniedziałek, gdy się Pan z Arcyksięciem zobaczy (...). Mam trochę co do posady w Żywcu skrupulów, bo chciałbym odpowiedzieć bardzo wymaganiom, a nie chciałbym postąpić nieuczciwie. Będę też u profesorów specjalistów zasięgał rady jak najlepiej uczyć Niemca po polsku (...). Byłbym niezmiernie szczęśliwy, gdybym mógł tego zadania (?...) i ta myśl, że Rodzina Arcyksięcia nauczyła się słodkiej naszej mowy przeze mnie, napawa mnie już dziś szczęściem i dumą. Co do form towarzyskich, to jestem na tyle dobrze wychowany, że nie popełnię nic zdroźnego..., collection privée.

<sup>26</sup> ...Jego Ces. Wysokość raczył najlaskawiej polecić, abym się zapytał Pana Profesora o cenę portretu, jaki ma Pan Profesor dla Jego pułku robić. Jego Ces. Wysokość raczy mianowicie wiedzieć stanowczą cenę obrazu naprzód, aby wedle tego albo dać portret teraz malować, albo odłożyć to na później ze względów finansowych, bo wedle Jego słów, nie ma teraz pieniędzy (...). Dlatego zaraz podać od razu ostateczną cenę obrazu, bo Arcyksięciu chodzi o to bardzo, by mógł wedle tego się ustawić..., le 4 novembre 1901, collection privée.

<sup>27</sup> Erazm Barącz (1859–1929) ingénieur d'exploitation, collectionneur; en 1921 il a donné sa collection au Musée National de Cracovie.

<sup>28</sup> ... W maju b.r. Byłem u Łaskawego Pana z prośbą o łaskawą interwencję u J.Ces.Wys. Arcyksięcia Stefana w sprawie przeniesienia mnie z tego (...) napowrót do Wieliczki. Wówczas był pan łaskaw przyżec (sic!) mi że w swoim czasie gdy Arcyksiążę będzie w kraju, wspomni mu w stosownej chwili o tej sprawie. Jakkolwiek dobrze wiem że Kochanego Mistrza zapewne tysiącami próśb rozmaitych nagabują, to jednak licząc na łaskawą zawsze mi okazywaną życzliwość, ośmielam się prosić usilnie by łaskawy Pan raczył użyć w tym wypadku Swej interwencji a może właśnie trafi się na chwilę szczęśliwą i Arcyksiążę zechce się rzeczywiście ta sprawą zająć.(...) Dla przypomnienia przytaczam sprawę o którą chodzi. W kwietniu b.r. awansowałem do rangi VI i przeznaczono mi jako miejsce służbowe Kaczyk na Bukowinie. Rozchodzi się o to, by mnie przeniesiono do Wieliczki (...). Jako motyw starania mego może Wielmożny Pan podać co uważają stosowne – może tę fabułę że w czasie gdy mnie przerejestrowano starałem się o jakąś pannę w Krakowie i że wskutek tego 2 ludzi byłoby





Fig. 10. Portrait d'artiste dans son atelier, photographie. Collection privée

C'est ainsi que dans ce riche calendrier artistique de Teodor Axentowicz, tellement apprécié, étant dominé par le sujet folklorique *houtsoule*, comme par les portraits au pastel, se trouva aussi la thématique arménienne, inspirée avant tout de l'histoire des Arméniens comme d'un fort attachement de l'artiste à ses propres racines et à sa généalogie. Axentowicz, formé par les meilleures universités artistiques et les salons d'Europe les plus raffinés, le pilier de l'art de la Jeune Pologne, se sentit toujours un Arménien polonais pour qui les paroles d'un poème datant du XVIe siècle - chant lyrique nomade anonyme, intitulé *La Grue (Krunek)* ne sont aujourd'hui qu'un fragment d'histoire:

La forêt nous y poussa et les seuils ici tellement lisses  
 Et là, parmi les étrangers, tu n'as aucune âme proche  
 On languit seulement après le feu éteint  
 De notre patrie, personne ne nous appelle ?<sup>29</sup>

traduit par Daria-Anna Polszewska

uszcześliwionych – gdyż rodzice panny ani slyszeć nie chcą o tym by panna szła za mąż do tak odległej dziury..., le 21 juin 1903, collection privée.

<sup>29</sup> *Stara poezja ormiańska*, Warszawa 1970, p. 178.



## *Le Musée arménien de Lviv*

Irina Horban, Musée d'éthnographie et d'artisanat, Lviv

Au fil des siècles, Lviv a joué un rôle important dans la vie de la communauté arménienne créée sur le territoire de la Galytchyna (Galicie) Orientale. Possédant des positions clés dans le commerce avec l'Est, les négociants arméniens avaient la possibilité d'accumuler une fortune considérable et produire beaucoup de richesses, parmi lesquelles de nombreux monuments de leur culture nationale. Pourtant, de nombreux événements historiques d'importance variée, les temps pénibles causés par de nombreuses guerres et les cataclysmes naturels, avec des milliers de victimes - c.à.d des particuliers et des familles entières; enfin l'appauvrissement de la population, tout cela amena à la perte de nombreux monuments de culture et d'art arméniens.

Première personne qui y prêta attention fut le célèbre historiographe de Lviv, Władysław Łoziński qui déclara, entre autre : «C'est une chose étonnante et digne de compassion, car de leur passé il ne reste que très peu de monuments historiques dans le pays, aussi bien que dans leur vie. Les antiquités arméno-polonaises se rencontrent de plus en plus rarement»<sup>1</sup>.

Cet état de choses a excité un vif intérêt pour les monuments ainsi que pour les mesures prises de leur conservation. Parmi les antiquités du Consistoire métropolitain arménien qui se trouvent aujourd'hui à l'Archive Centrale d'Etat de l'Histoire de l'Ukraine à Lviv, on peut voir pas mal de différents ordres et ordonnances gouvernementaux et administratifs locaux voués à la protection et la conservation des monuments de culture<sup>2</sup>. Une partie de ces monuments date du début du XIXe siècle.

<sup>1</sup> *Wystawa zabytków ormiańskich we Lwowie 19.VI-30.IX.1932. Przewodnik*, Lwów 1932, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ordre de la Direction départementale concernant les principes de la conservation des biens des églises et des couvents, ainsi que ceux concernant la régularisation des inscriptions des donations. - Archive Centrale d'Etat de l'Histoire de l'Ukraine à Lviv (suite - ACEH), fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 359, page 4; Ordre de la Direction du Département concernant la conservation des anciens monuments et anciennes pièces de monnaie trouvées. - ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 617, page 1; Correspondance avec les administrations publiques et d'églises concernant les monuments historiques et de culture. - ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 618, page 15; Correspondance avec le Gouvernement Général de Galicie et les sociétés de conservation des monuments historiques de culture. - ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 620, page

Dans les matériaux des archives on trouve des appels invitant à prendre part à diverses expositions, ce qui témoigne de la nécessité absolue d'exposer les monuments arméniens afin de mieux les connaître.<sup>3</sup>

Un grand intérêt pour les monuments arméniens fut manifesté par de nombreux musées de Lviv. Aleksander Czołowski, directeur de l'Archive et des Musées Municipaux de Lviv, a exprimé entre autre l'idée qu'avant tout il est indispensable de fonder à Lviv, auprès du Musée d'Histoire, un secteur arménien et d'acquérir pour l'archive de la ville une collection de documents arméniens liées à l'histoire de la ville de Kamianets-Podilsky<sup>4</sup>.

La direction du Musée d'Artisanat de la ville manifesta aussi un grand souci et prit soin du sort des monuments d'art conservés dans les églises arméniennes<sup>5</sup>. Dès 1881, la direction s'est adressée au Consistoire métropolitain arménien avec la prière d'accorder au Musée le droit primordial d'acheter aux églises des objets hors d'usage, mais qui ont de la valeur en tant qu'objets d'art et anciens monuments d'artisanat locaux<sup>6</sup>.

Pourtant, les efforts constants réunis pour la création d'un musée afin d'y placer les monuments d'art arméniens paraissent dans les années 1920-1930 pour des raisons bien précises. Premièrement, c'est le développement rapide de l'industrie des musées pendant cette époque. Plus de 20 musées fonctionnaient déjà dans la ville durant la période d'entre guerre «se distinguant les uns des autres selon leur identité: religieuse ou nationale, leur forme de propriété privée ou de leur statut juridique. A Lviv il y avait des musées d'Etat, publics, de l'art religieux, privés, de bienfaits, de corporations (c.à.d. de diverses sociétés et organisations)»<sup>7</sup>.

Le deuxième facteur fut la croissance de la conscience nationale des arméniens, stimulée par leur vie nationale et culturelle. A ce moment-là, «l'Institut de recherches. I. Torosiewicz» a déployé son activité et lance depuis 1927 la publication du périodique «Posłaniec Świętego Grzegorza» (Le Messager de St Gheorghe)<sup>8</sup>, édition illustrée de l'Archidiocèse arménienne.

57; Ordre du Gouvernement Général de Galicie et de la Direction du Département de Lviv concernant la conservation et la protection des monuments d'églises, artistiques et historiques, ainsi que les principes de les étudier. – ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 621, page 17; Acte administratif de la Commission Centrale concernant la conservation et la protection des monuments d'architecture à Vienne, la conservation des anciennes églises et synagogues en Galicie et en Bucovine, ainsi que les ordres concernant la Direction de la Bucovine dans cette affaire. – ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 622, page 5.

<sup>3</sup> Correspondance du Gouvernement de Galicie avec la Direction du Gouvernement de Bucovine etc. concernant la conservation des monuments historiques et de culture. – ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 620, page 2-5; Lettre de la "Commission spéciale à Lviv d'organiser une exposition générale à Vienne", concernant la participation du clergé à y prendre part. – ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 752, page 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> J. Petrus, 'Archidiecezjalne Muzeum Ormiańskie we Lwowie', dans: *Ormianie polscy: Odrębność i asymilacja*, Kraków 1999, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Plus tard le musée changea son nom pour "Musée municipal de l'art artisanal".

<sup>6</sup> Correspondance du Gouvernement de Galicie et les sociétés responsables de la conservation des monuments historiques et de culture. – ACEH, fonds 475, inventaire 1, unité 610, page 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> А. Крутоус, 'До питання формування окремих музейних збірок України та м. Львова у XIX-першій третині XX ст.', *Наукові записки Львівського історичного музею*, 7 (1998), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Des 1931 cette édition devint l'organe de l'Archidiocèse de l'Union des Arméniens.



En 1930 fut créée l'Archidiocèse de l'Association des arméniens, dont les buts étaient de réunir les arméniens, créer des possibilités de communication, faire renaître, les traditions populaires et les rites des cérémonies religieuses des arméniens.

Le troisième facteur, non pas moins important, était l'idée de fonder le Musée arménien, celle-ci a trouvé un ardent partisan, le meilleur connaisseur et expert du passé de Lviv, Bohdan Yanush. Il fut le premier à exprimer cette idée au Deuxième Congrès des restaurateurs d'art et museologues polonais qui avait eu lieu à Varsovie en novembre 1927<sup>9</sup>.

Pour argumenter son idée, Yanush y a consacré un article : «La valeur scientifique de nos collections publiques», publié en 1928, dans la monographie collective intitulée «Lviv ancien et contemporain»<sup>10</sup>. Ayant critiqué la proposition de fonder un secteur arménien dans un des musées de Lviv, il a souligné, particulièrement : «L'élément arménien dans la culture de Lviv est très important, mais aujourd'hui si peu apprécié, que fondant un musée arménien en guise de supplément à quelque chose, il ne peut pas en être question»<sup>11</sup>. Dans cet article B. Yanouche a défini les principes théoriques du futur musée qui selon son idée pourraient servir de base, de sujet à un grand ouvrage scientifique : «Auprès le Musée arménien il y aurait une bibliothèque arméno-polonaise d'une valeur inestimable qui en principe servirait de base à l'Institut des Etudes arméniennes pour la propagation des recherches scientifiques menées dans tous les domaines de la culture et de l'art arménien (civilisation arménienne)»<sup>12</sup>.

Yanush a développé cette thèse au V<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Union des musées en Pologne, qui s'est déroulé à Tarnów en juin 1930. Dans son discours consacré à la nécessité de fonder Le Musée de la Diocèse arménienne à Lviv, il a exprimé sa conception et a exposé un programme bien fondé, ainsi que les principales tendances des activités du futur musée<sup>13</sup>. Le Congrès (de l'Union des musées en Pologne) «a reconnu la nécessité de créer un centre où l'on pourrait rassembler, restaurer et mener des recherches scientifiques concernant les monuments arméniens en Pologne» il s'est adressé à l'archevêque, le docteur Iossipe Théodorovitch, en le priant de fonder «bien que dans des dimensions les plus modestes – «le Musée de la diocèse arménienne», où l'on pourrait conserver les monuments étant hors d'usage de la Cathédrale Arménienne à Lviv, des églises arméniennes des provinces polonaises et quelques temps après tout ce qui est lié à la vie ancienne et actuelle des arméniens polonais en général et, de ceux de Lviv en particulier»<sup>14</sup>.

La «Société des partisans du passé de la ville de Lviv» a réagi positivement à cette décision et, dans le cadre de la célébration de son 25<sup>e</sup> Anniversaire, ensemble avec le Musée

<sup>9</sup> *Wystawa zabytków ormiańskich we Lwowie ...*, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> B. Janusz, 'Wartość naukowa naszych zbiorów publicznych', dans : *Lwów dawny i dzisiejszy*, Lwów 1928, p. 59–61.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> J. Petrus, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.

National Jan III Sobieski (Roi de Pologne) et le Musée d'Histoire de Lviv, s'est posée pour but d'organiser une exposition des monuments arméniens et a pris l'initiative de faire les premiers pas pour fonder le Musée arménien.

Les préparations à cette fête avaient eu lieu en étroite liaison d'un travail collectif de la Direction de l'Archidiocèse et de l'Union des arméniens. A la séance commune, qui s'est déroulée le 21 décembre 1931 dans le bâtiment du Musée National Jan III, fut élu le Comité de l'exposition avec, à sa tête, Jan Antoniewicz, président de l'Union de l'Archidiocèse arménienne.

Le Comité a déployé un travail intensif, et, en résultat, le 19 juin 1932 a eu lieu l'inauguration solennelle de l'Exposition des monuments arméniens dans le bâtiment de l'Union de l'Archidiocèse arménienne 13, rue *Virmenska*. A l'exposition qui a eu lieu sous le patronat du métropolite arménien, l'archivêque *Józef Teodorowicz*, furent exposés des monuments provenant des trésoreries de la cathédrale arménienne à Lviv, ainsi que ceux des églises d'autres villes de la *Galytchyna* et de nombreux établissements de conservation, de monuments en particulier: de l'Archive de la ville, de la Bibliothèque *Baworowski*, de l'Établissement National des *Ossolinski*, de la Bibliothèque universitaire, du Musée Historique de Lviv, du Musée National Jan III Sobieski et des collections de *Boleslav Ojehovitch*, du Musée National Ukrainien; de même que des collections privées. Aux monuments de grandes valeurs se rapportent l'Évangile de *Skévra* datant de 1197, ainsi que d'autres manuscrits illuminés (miniature), des tissus, des objets d'orfèvrerie (de culte en or), toute une galerie de portraits des métropolitains arméniens, ainsi que ceux des supérieures des couvents arméniens, les *bénédictines* etc.

L'exposition fut installée dans quatre salles et se composait de cinq sections: 1. les monuments de culte religieux; 2. les icônes et les portraits historiques; 3. les documents et les manuscrits; 4. les arméniens dans les belles lettres et la musique polonaise; 5. les dessins, les gravures, les photos<sup>15</sup>.

L'exposition a joui d'une grande popularité elle a duré jusqu'au 31 octobre 1932. Durant cette période elle a été visitée non seulement par les habitants de Lviv, mais aussi par de nombreux hôtes de la ville et, en particulier, par les participants aux adjudications de l'Est qui se sont déroulées la même année. On a publié spécialement un prospectus où toutes les pièces exposées étaient énumérées avec soin<sup>16</sup>. Donc, le premier essai des études scientifiques consacrées aux recherches fut publié dans une édition spéciale du «*Messenger de St Gheorghe*»<sup>17</sup>.

Après la clôture de l'exposition, une partie des pièces qui y avaient été exposées, comme il avait été décidé d'avance, y est restée et servie de base au «Musée de la Diocèse armé-

<sup>15</sup> A. Czolowski, 'Wystawa Ormiańska we Lwowie', dans : *Wystawa zabytków ormiańskich we Lwowie ...*, p. 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> *Wystawa zabytków ormiańskich we Lwowie ...*, passim

<sup>17</sup> *Posłaniec św. Grzegorza*, 64-66 (1933).



nienne". Pourtant la date exacte de la fondation de l'inauguration du Musée reste inconnue jusqu'à nos jours. L'authenticité des suppositions exprimées par les chercheurs contemporains ne sont pas confirmées par les matériaux des archives<sup>18</sup>. Il est certain que le Musée n'a pas été ouvert au grand public, bien que des informations de ce genre parurent dans les publications et les prospectus de cette période<sup>19</sup>. Et, en septembre 1939, sa création fut interrompue par la Seconde Guerre Mondiale.

Le 17 septembre 1939 l'armée soviétique pénétra sur le territoire de l'Ukraine Occidentale, et, dès le 22 septembre Lviv se trouva sous le contrôle du régime soviétique. Suite aux unités militaires, Lviv fut envahie par les autorités administratives qui se mirent à établir le nouvel ordre. Les changements ne tardèrent pas dans le domaine des musées.

Des inspecteurs de tous rangs dans un délai très court prirent connaissance des expositions et des réservations des musées de Lviv. «En général, — comme il fut noté dans un rapport, — pour la plupart des musées (excepté 2 musées ukrainiens) toutes les pièces furent cachées, l'exposition anéantie, cela s'explique éventuellement par le danger qu'auraient pu causer les bombardements»<sup>20</sup>. Face à cette situation — fut prise une décision urgente — réorganiser les musées.

Les archives actuelles, bien étudiées à fond, néanmoins ne nous permettent pas de reproduire clairement les événements de cette époque. Cela concerne aussi le Musée arménien.

Selon nos connaissances actuelles, en automne 1939 une Commission spéciale à Lviv s'occupa de la confiscation des objets de grands prix, trophées. Le Musée d'art artisanal fut désigné comme base de conservation des objets d'art de grands prix. A la suite de la liquidation d'un certain nombre de musées, à la nationalisation et la répartition de nombreuses collections privées qui sont restées sans leurs propriétaires, à cause des derniers événements politiques ainsi que de la nouvelle répartition des collections existantes à cette époque dans les musées de Lviv, de nombreux monuments ont trouvé abrit au Musée d'art artisanal.

En février 1940, selon la résolution prise à la conférence qui s'est tenue au Comité Régional, le Musée Juif fut liquidé, la collection fut transmise au Musée de l'art artisanal<sup>21</sup>. Le 2 avril 1940, la Direction du Musée de l'art artisanal a adressé une demande de sollicitation

<sup>18</sup> Le célèbre muséologue polonais Jerzy Pétrus, désigne 1933, motivant que justement cette année-là une information concernant le Musée arménien, en tant que structure à part, est apparu pour la première fois dans le «Schematyzm» de l'Archidiocèse arménienne. Tandis que dans sa monographie B. Mansfeld fixe la date à 1936. Cf. J. Petrus, *op. cit.*, p. 29 ; B. Mansfeld, *Muzea na drodze do samoorganizacji: Związek muzeów w Polsce 1914–1951*, Warszawa 2000, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup> A. Czołowski, *Lwowskie zbiory muzealne*, Kraków 1938, p. 7, 9 ; A. Medyński, *Przewodnik turystyczny po Lwowie*, Lwów 1936.

<sup>20</sup> ACEH, fonds 859, inventaire 1, unité 10, page 10–13.

<sup>21</sup> Archive de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, Académie de Science Nationale de l'Ukraine. Chemise: Correspondance, contrats, renseignements. Documents no 188.

à la Commission chargée de la protection des monuments de culture<sup>22</sup> pour accorder à faire 'la répartition des objets de l'art artisanal qui se trouvent jusqu'à présent au Musée arménien', ce dernier avait aussi été liquidé<sup>23</sup>.

Il n'est pas évident que le transfert eu lieu avant l'intrusion des allemands, en juin 1941. Les registres des inventaires du Musée d'Art artisanal, au cours des années 1940–1941, ne mentionnent aucune inscription concernant les monuments du Musée arménien. Il est possible qu'ils soient restés dans le bâtiment de l'Union de l'Archidiocèse arménienne qui se trouve rue Virmenska. Jerzy Pétrus, en particulier, est d'avis que le Musée arménien a cessé son activité au moment même de la liquidation de l'Archidiocèse arménienne, c'est-à-dire après la guerre, en 1945. Mais cette hypothèse n'est confirmée par aucun document<sup>24</sup>.

On peut constater le fait, qu'à l'heure actuelle, à la suite de nombreux transferts et répartitions des fonds de musées à Lviv, quatre collections de musées des monuments arméniens sont créées à Lviv : le Musée d'éthnographie et de l'art artisanal (qui est de droit le Musée de l'art artisanal), le Musée d'Histoire, le Musée de l'Histoire de la religion, la Galerie des beaux-arts.

*Traduction par Zinoviya Danyliu*

<sup>22</sup> La Commission chargée de la protection des monuments de culture fut fondée par la Municipalité provisoire de la ville en novembre (?) 1939. La Commission se trouvait 42, rue Copernic, dirigé par P. Pantch.

<sup>23</sup> Archive de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, Académie de Science Nationale de l'Ukraine. Chemise: 1941. Actes déclaratoires adressées aux institutions de la ville concernant le travail du musée. Documents No 210.

<sup>24</sup> J. Petrus, *op. cit.*, p. 31.



## *Some Features of the Armenian Culture of the Diaspora (on the Basis of the Analysis of Ukrainian Museum Collections) and the Problems of Studying its Development*

Iryna Hayuk, Lviv

Despite the history of the Armenian people having developed so that the majority of Armenians settled outside of the Motherland, Armenians throughout centuries have managed to keep their ethno-national identity. This was thanks to; first of all, the careful treatment of their cultural heritage, which consists of two basic components, the Armenian culture of their historical native land and culture of the Armenian Diaspora.

The Ukraine and Armenia have been connected throughout centuries by diverse relations in which the strong Armenian community of the Ukraine played a considerable role. From the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, primarily due to the works of Prof. Y. Dashkevych, there was the beginnings of a revival of the armenological school in Ukraine, during which Lviv of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century achieved notoriety. From the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there was more activity directed towards not only the reconstruction of scientific armenological schools, but also the studying of the cultural heritage of the Armenians within a museum format. This article is one preliminary result of this studying and cataloguing of the Armenian cultural artefacts and monuments which are in the 44 state museums of the Ukraine. The forthcoming volume: "Encyclopaedia of the Armenian culture in Ukraine with the catalogued list of the Armenian culture monuments in Ukrainian museums" will be the final result of this research; now in the process of being published.

At first this work was conceived as an expanded catalogue of monuments of Armenian culture, however, during the time of study, it became apparent that issues relating

to theme, character and complexity had to be addressed- and also simply the very large amount of material that had to be included- and so this forced the work out of the frame of the traditional catalogue. In addition, the knowledge of the experiences of various other cultural and scientific institutions who had engaged in the same activity, suggested to us that the presentation of the material within the catalogue format would be incomprehensible to most people, not sufficiently informed about the history of Armenians in our country (especially for museum professionals and scholars). And so, for these reasons, the selection of items for the catalogue took place according to our specific criteria and to show certain aspects. Therefore, using the collected material, the author made a short history of Armenian life in the different regions of the Ukraine, described the overall development of Armenian culture and major fields of activity of Armenians there.

The analysis of exhibits found in the state museums of the Ukraine, scientific and archival sources allows us to present Armenian culture in terms of the following directions or groups (the term "culture" is used in its broad sense, i.e. meaning all things (utilitarian and art) and spiritual, embodied in material carriers, which are the achievements of Armenians):

1. The exhibits, which have characteristics that certainly testify to their relation to Armenian culture. These are the various products of Armenian masters, items with Armenian inscriptions, exhibits that depict either Armenians, or subjects related to Armenian history and culture, various documentary sources, such as Armenian manuscripts and books, letters, memos deeds and privileges given to the Armenian community and individuals, and also parish and city books containing records concerning their Armenian citizens, the correspondence of the Commonwealth of Poland and the Ukraine with Armenian scholars, politicians, writers, public figures, etc.;

2. The exhibits, which can be attributed to Armenian culture on the basis of "legend" (the museum term, meaning the information about a location or source where the exhibit originates from). First of all this group includes items that came to the museums from closed or destroyed Armenian churches in the Ukraine, from private Armenian collectors, from other Armenian institutions (museums, schools, banks, hospitals, etc.);

3. The exhibits that have no direct testimonies relating to their belonging to Armenian culture, though their being present in our lands is connected to the Armenians. Such exhibits are partially included in the catalogue. First of all, this group includes Safavid-Persian and Ottoman-Turkish carpets, oriental weaponry and jewellery- the appearance of which in the Ukraine is mainly connected with the trading activity of Armenians. And not only this: as a rule, these Oriental luxury items were usually made by Armenian artisans in Persia or Turkey, where they were bought and brought to us by Armenian merchants (particularly in the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Levantine trade was focused



in their hands). These kinds of exhibits in museum collections are often not accurately attributed and need serious research work in the future so that we can move past general labels such as an "origin" of "Iran", "Turkey", "East", or "Caucasus".

The experience of working on the encyclopaedia has shown that, despite the existence of Armenian colonies along the whole territory of the Ukraine, it is difficult to talk about a common holistic socio-cultural field of the Armenian Diaspora. Instead the culture is connected more closely with the political history of the regions of our country than the term 'Armenian Diaspora' implies. Indeed, the life of the Armenian people of the Ukraine and their cultural history carry a perceptible imprint of the political history of the Ukraine, which is clearly seen in museum collections. For this reason, at least four relatively autonomous (in terms of cultural and historical matters and their development) regions of the Armenian Diaspora can be distinguished:

1. Western Ukraine and Podillya.
2. Central, Southern and Eastern Ukraine.
3. Bukovyna, Transcarpathia, and Pokuttya.
4. Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

The Ukrainian political history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the region's situation within the active zone of two World and Civil wars, the USSR state cultural policy and even the state cultural policies in times of Independence - all these factors have caused huge losses to Ukrainian museum collections and has been detrimental to their ability to function as a service and/or business. This has encompassed the dispersal and re-giving of museum collections and exhibits, the evacuation and export abroad of historical items of value, the loss of a considerable part of the registration documentation (old inventory books), and the extermination of experienced museum experts. This has led to not only the physical loss of many items, but also to an information vacuum: a great number of museum exhibits in Ukraine do not have any data concerning their author or producer and are missing information on the individuals and the events depicted; often is missing information on where and from whom the exhibit came to the museum, when and where it was used in the past. In the Kiev museums all of the pre-war inventory books are lost; many exhibits from the pre-war collections (before the 2<sup>nd</sup> World war) have disappeared. In Lviv all of the old collections, both public and private, including those of the Armenian Archdiocese Museum, were partially moved abroad. Those that remained were carted to three museums, from where some of the exhibits (primarily from the Historical Museum) were ordered to be transferred to other museums. Many items also disappeared, being destroyed or stolen.

Another very important, pressing and relevant question that continually arose whilst working on the encyclopaedia, is regarding the problem of the national self-identification of the Armenian in the Diaspora. How is it appropriate (and also legally correct) to refer to

Armenian culture and its representatives amongst the people who were citizens of Poland, Russia, Moldavia, and the Ukraine, felt themselves and recognized themselves as such, spoke the languages of these countries, and played an important role in the political, cultural and religious life of these countries? Or, as it is often heard: can people who have lived outside their ancestors' Motherland for more than a generation, speak the language of another country, live by its laws, and take its traditions and customs etc. be called Armenian, as they are too different from the Armenians who live in Armenia?

Therefore, is it scientifically correct, that we take as a starting point (in terms of their cultural development) Armenians living in their native land? However, for example, people emigrated from Armenia in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and for centuries significant changes were happening not only to the Armenian-immigrants, but to autochthons. Besides, significant waves of Armenian immigrants to our land came from the Crimea (and to the Crimea from the banks of the Volga river, where the capital of Golden Horde Ak-Saray was located), later from Persia, Crimea, Wallachia, Moldavia, Turkey. Accordingly, our criteria for comparison should include features that were inherent to Armenians of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when there started the formation of new branches of the Armenian ethnos.

It is logical that the Armenian immigrants, especially during a mass migration after passing the first stage of adaptation to new conditions, begin to change, to seek a synthesis with the new environment, that was dictated by the new political-economical realities, and also coincides with the aspiration of the state to include these emigrants in a system of socially homogeneous (in an ideal) connections. But for Armenians it was already another – not native – country that defined their identity, and also other social connections. Entry into the new system on a “general basis” with the autochthons may have caused the total assimilation and disappearance of Armenians as a separate ethnic group in their new country. Therefore at various points we see their desire to keep their originality and to fix their separate identity in the new state-legal system. Thus, in 1356 in the Ukraine they were allowed self-government and their own judiciary, and in 1367 were granted religious autonomy etc. But changes were inevitable too: on the one hand, there was the assimilation on the part of the Armenian immigrants with the local population, and on the other hand – there appeared a new interesting social organism - the Armenian Diaspora of Ukraine with features inherent only to this group and its culture.

The emigration of people (especially, mass emigration) always destroys the balance of an ethnic system - and so the society of these emigrants creates a diaspora. It means, that the Armenians who immigrated to Ukrainian lands changed; the Armenians who remained in native lands changed after each wave of emigration; the society which accepted the Armenian emigrants also changed. Armenians, remaining and realising themselves as Armenians, at the same time, become Ukrainian, Polish, Russian Armenians.



This is one of the reasons why comparing Armenians of the Diaspora to Armenians from historical Armenia is not quite correct from a scientific point of view. The second reason is that Armenian culture is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can not be narrowed down just to the indigenous culture of native Armenia. Any phenomenon can be studied using different criteria. In the light of the above problem, it is appropriate to divide Armenian culture into two major types: autochthonous national culture (basic, effluent, variable in time), characteristic of the indigenous ethnic group living in their native land, and the Diaspora culture - the subculture of the part of the people (as a component of a larger cultural entity), that emigrated for permanent residence to another country.

The Diaspora culture is derived from national culture. It is the original phenomenon arising from the interaction of the organic synthesis of the emigrant culture and the dominant culture of the country that gave them refuge, and develops as an independent and a unique occurrence. This process is the ethnic-cultural divergence that occurs when a certain part is separated from the ethnicity and then forms an independent ethnic-cultural integrity. The result of this ethnic divergence is the emergence of new ethno-cultural systems of the same type, which retain the overall sense of community of the system. The basic cultural characteristics of the development of the Armenian Diaspora testify the originality of this phenomenon in the Ukraine. Armenians created here their own specific environment with different degrees of religious and administrative autonomy; they developed traditional crafts and made products under the influence of local conditions, which gained features that are not inherent to them in their native land. They created new laws, customs, traditions; lifestyle, language, and also names changed. Additionally, in the Ukraine this happened along with a successful union of the Armenian Church with Rome, which also had consequences for the changes that have occurred to the Armenian Diaspora during the centuries that it existed in our country.

Numerous well-known facts prove that the culture of the Armenian Diaspora was (and is) an extremely interesting, original and valuable part of common Armenian culture. For instance, the first Armenian printing house in which the first Armenian book was published in 1512, was founded in Venice; the first world map was created by Armenian cartographers and engravers in Amsterdam and printed in the Armenian language in 1694; the first Armenian magazine was issued in 1794 in Madras in India; one of the best higher Armenian schools - Lazarev Academy, was founded in Moscow in 1815.

Naturally, along with this separate identity and connection to the promotion of Armenian language and culture, there was also an assimilation of the part of the Diaspora with their new environment. Often, because of the remoteness of these times and the lack of information we have about them, it is difficult to determine with confidence the level or rather, the degree, of belonging and of participation of individuals in the life of the Armenian Diaspora. In most cases, especially, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>

Century, we can judge the connection to Armenian culture of individuals in the Ukraine depending on what is known from historical sources of a person's lifestyle. The main criteria may be general laws (for example, Armenians usually got married to representatives of their ethnic community; they preferred to co-operate, first of all, with their countrymen etc.) and other characteristics that betray the degree of participation of this person in a life of Armenian community. In other way, how this person or another contributed to the community of Armenian people, felt himself as a part of Armenian destiny, history and culture.

So, it is hardly justified to raise the issue, as it has repeatedly been heard, if it is possible to include, for example, I.K. Aivazovsky (Hayvazian), O. Spendiarov (Spendiarian), J. Boloż-Antoniewicz, F. Zakharyasiewych, the von Mikuli family and other well-known people amongst representatives of Armenian culture. We can say yes with confidence. It is not even relevant whether they were, genetically-speaking, Armenians in origin. These figures, in spite of their "involvement" in the public and cultural life of the Ukraine, Russia, Poland, actively studied, preserved and significantly developed the culture of Armenians in Ukraine. They also pursued close relationships with Armenian communities, which, for them, was an integral part of their lives. The same applies to many of the well-known families of Lviv Armenians: Augustynowich, Bernatowich, Stefanowich, Piramowich, Nikorowich. They never separated themselves from the social and cultural life of these lands, however, thanks to them in the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century the Lviv school of Scientific Armenianistics was formed (thanks to work of Sadok Barącz, Frans Zakhariyasewich, Jan Boloż-Antoniewicz etc.).

Although there were others, whose Armenian descent has not been doubted, they in no way associated themselves with the traditions, history and life of the Armenian people. So it is not possible to relate such Ukrainians, Polish (in the Western Ukraine) people or Russians to the representatives of the Armenian culture, despite their Armenian roots.

One more of the main issues that arises in the study of the art and culture of Armenians is the difficulty, and sometimes the inability, to ethnically identify the manufacturer or artist. This problem is keenly felt in the attribution of all items of manufacturing, and craft work of the Armenians: jewellers' work, gun-smithing, leather processing, weaving and so on. The matter is that the manufacturers usually are determined according to the territory in which they were produced or to the state under whose power they were produced. But these attributions ignore the fact that mono-ethnic lands and states do not exist: in one place there may be living many different people who live compactly, but, at the same time, try to keep their ethnic and cultural features. For Armenians this issue is particularly acute. The essence of it was very accurately determined by the German scientist G. Volkmar: "The problem



here is that historically the destiny of Armenians is the destiny of a national minority... However, the negation of the existing criteria of ethnic cultural area would be equivalent to propagation of ethnocide.”<sup>1</sup>

Although the aforementioned researcher is concerned with Armenian carpet production, his pronouncements also correspond to other spheres of craft (industrial) activity of Armenians. For example, there is a basis to assume that the majority of the carpets in the collection of the Lviv ethnographic museum are the work of Armenian handicraftsmen, living and working in Safavid Persia or Ottoman-Turkey, though they are marked in the museum as Anatolian, Persian and Turkish carpets.

There is also the unresolved problem of the identification of Armenian arms products and their manufacturers. From surviving documents we know the names of Lviv Armenian armourers, but the arms made by them are not known. We need therefore to define the characteristic stylistic features of the work of some master, to establish the name of the master and/or manufacturer and then to fix these to the documentation, which is a very difficult task. A similar situation can be seen in the case of the medieval Armenian-jewellers: there are many historical testimonies of the high level of skill of Lviv Armenian-jewellers-, whereas real samples of their skill are practically absent. The same problem is encountered with Armenian painting of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries when there are a number of portraits of the Armenian men and women of Lviv, Kamyanets-Podilskyi, Tysmenytsya, Horodenka, but the names of the artists that painted these portraits, are unknown. Besides in all museums –primarily in the Western Ukraine and Podilia - many items have no ‘legend’, i.e. it is known only that the object has some relation to Armenian culture because, for example, it was in the Lviv Armenian museum, but there is no more concrete historical information about it.

Thus it is possible to notice that the culture of the Armenian Diaspora in the Ukraine is an interesting and original interlacing of the ancient Christian and pre-Christian traditions of the historical Motherland with the traditions and customs of the Ukrainian-Polish environment. These factors generated the unique phenomenon of the culture of the Armenian Diaspora in the Ukraine. This phenomenon demands serious and scrupulous study- not only from the historical, but also the applied point of view. Studying of local Armenian traditions, their comparative analysis with similar traditions of the historical Native land, but also with local autochthons traditions, and, furthermore , the comparative analysis of the development of cultural traditions of the Armenian Diaspora in other countries, will bring to light and allow us to define in more detail, the prominent features and the unique elements of the culture of the Armenian Diaspora in Ukraine.

<sup>1</sup> Г. Фолькмар, ‘Христианско-восточный ковер - один из аспектов армянского искусства’, in: *Четвертый международный симпозиум по армянскому искусству. Тезисы докладов*, Ереван 1985, pp. 73-75.





## *Sacred and Civil Architectural Monuments of Armenians in the Ukraine. Legal Aspects*

Samvel Azizyan, Kiev

During the 14<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Armenian émigrés to the Ukraine built significant sacred complexes, churches and small chapels in many towns in Galicia, Podolia, Volyn, Crimea and the city of Kyiv.

In the inter-war period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Soviet leadership, as a result of its anti-religious policy, gradually nationalized all Armenian religious churches throughout the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Crimea. Along with nationalized Armenian church structures, the church property of religious communities was also expropriated. In 1945–1946, Armenian churches all over historic Galicia faced that miserable fate.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, religious Armenians could not hope for the re-establishment of Christian churches closed under Soviet power and for the return of their church heritage which had been nationalized. It was only after the the independence of the Ukraine, apart from democratic changes, that there appeared this question of how to return the church property that had been nationalized by the Soviet power to its former owners – the Armenian religious communities of the Ukraine.

At present, there are over 80 churches and other sacral structures in the Ukraine that had historically belonged to the national religious organizations of Armenians in Ukraine; forty-three out of them have been entered into the State Register of the National and Cultural Heritage of Ukraine. Some Armenian historical sites are included into the UNESCO World Heritage List and are part of prominent Ukrainian national historic and architectural conservation efforts. At the same time, a great quantity of Armenian monuments fail to be included onto any state protection register.

The issue of returning nationalized church property to believers is closely connected with the history and contemporary life of Armenian religious national communities and is subject to the law of the Ukraine.

Central state historic repositories in Kiev and Lviv, including the regional ones of the Ukraine, keep numerous documents that speak for the proprietary rights of Armenian national religious communities both for specific and for all churches that, for example, were part of the Archdiocese of Lviv.<sup>1</sup> Some documents also confirm the proprietary rights of Armenian religious communities over other buildings – public, educational, industrial and commercial structures,<sup>2</sup> for example, an architectural complex on Virmenska Street in the city of Lviv and Zamość.

However, a number of Armenian landmarks are not included in any state protection register. In ancient times, Armenian temples were most frequently erected as an integrated architectural ensemble that, apart from the church itself, included a priest's residence, cells and bell-tower, and also comprised of a school or any educational facility, hospital, home for elderly, orphanage, service buildings, art and icon painting workshops, residential buildings, guesthouse, and sometimes a bank, wells, fountains, defence towers and other buildings. Small necropoles were always built near churches; and town Christian cemeteries included Armenian grave sites with canonical gravestones, family tombs or *khachkar* stone crosses with names carved with Armenian, Cyrillic or Latin letters and decorated with national plant-like ornaments.<sup>3</sup> Armenian cemetery gravestones in some Ukrainian towns and villages remain the only reminder of the historic presence of Armenians in one place or another. This is, for example, typical for Mohyliv-Podilsky, wherein there used to be a majestic cathedral church and residence of an Armenian Catholic administrator during the time of the Russian Empire.

Armenian believers set a high value on the appearance and indoor arrangement of churches. They denied themselves many things, but spared no expense to build and decorate their churches. So today, even several decades after the desolation and oblivion that has been seen in the region, West Ukrainian and Crimean Armenian churches look magnificent. Besides, one and the same church belonged, as a rule, to various Armenian Christian confessions in the course of several centuries. It often happened that members of the same Armenian family worshipped in churches of various religious confessions. That was, for example, in Feodosiya, Kamianets-Podilsky, Yevpatoriya, Bilohirsk and Izmail.

Armenian temple structures were traditionally located in central or historical parts of Ukrainian towns, which speaks for a long-standing establishment of Armenians in the Ukraine. Such a favourable location of Armenian sacred structures arouses, it may be said, an unhealthy interest in Armenian church real estate by a number of commercial and public organizations

<sup>1</sup> State Archives of Lviv region/Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛЮ), Ф.3, Оп. 1, Спр. 940, Арк. 2.

<sup>2</sup> State Archives of Lviv region/Державний архів Львівської області (ДАЛЮ), Ф.3, Оп. 1, Спр. 39, Арк. 5–6.

<sup>3</sup> Р. М. Липка, *Ансамбль вулиці Вірменської, Львів 1983*, р. 5.



that seek to privatize them for further use or re-selling. Unfortunately, this situation tends to aggravate. Until now, the Ukrainian state has transferred to Armenian religious communities only 5 of all of the former Armenian churches: in Lviv – the Armenian Cathedral church *with a bell-tower*, in Yevpatoriya – St. Nickoghajos church, in Yalta – St. Ripsime church, in Feodosiya – St. Sargis church, in Old Crimea – St. Cross Monastery. As we can see, nearly all sacred structures, except for the Lviv cathedral, are located in the Crimea and have been transferred to religious communities of the Armenian Orthodox Church. The Lviv Cathedral Church is the only religious structure of inland Ukraine that Armenian believers endeavoured to acquire from the Ukrainian state throughout the eighteen years of independence. This was made possible due to efforts made by deputies of the Lviv City Council and the Ukrainian Union of Armenians. The former issued a resolution approving the return of the national relic to the Armenian community of the Ukraine – the Lviv Cathedral Church of the Assumption of the Mother-of-God; and the latter built a relevant building and moved their Ukrainian national relics, that is, the ancient Galician icons that had been preserved there since 1946.

In addition to this, on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2007, deputies of the Lviv City Council during a regular session unanimously resolved to transfer the Armenian Cathedral Church bell-tower to the Armenian community, which had been public property before that.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that compromise and close co-operation between the bodies in power and the public organization of the national minority is essential for consolidating trust and friendship, which, in turn, give rise to restitution. This decision concerning the Lviv Cathedral can be considered to be an excellent example of the preservation of the cultural heritage of the two peoples and a successful solution of the restitution in Ukraine as a result of such efforts towards warm relations.

However, the process of returning Ukrainian church property is still unsettled on a state, i.e. legislative, level. The legal status of nationalized movable assets and real estate of religious communities is not defined yet. This failure of determination generates conflicts and discrepancies when claiming for a title. The return process is often hindered as the church property is in use by several organizations or has changed its ownership several times. Given this situation, it's not surprising that many religious communities of the Armenian Church commenced to build churches and chapels at new locations, without waiting up for the historical record to be put straight.

This situation has occurred in Odessa and Kharkiv. Apart from the state, the church property that used to belong to Armenians is now used by individuals and legal entities, including the churches of other religious confessions. E.g., Armenian churches in Kutu, Ivano-Frankivsk,<sup>5</sup> Feodosiya and Kamianets-Podilsky have been transferred to the Orthodox church; churches in Lysets, Zhvanets and Razkiv – to the Roman Catholic

<sup>4</sup> О. Читайло, 'У Вірменському соборі встановили температурні датчики', *Високий Замок*, (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Т. Гринчишин, *Інтерв'ю з Блаженнішим Нерсесом-Бедросом XIX, Патріархом Вірменської Католицької Церкви*, 2001, [www.risu.org.ua](http://www.risu.org.ua).

Church.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, some ancient Armenian churches are now used for educational purposes, as a lecture hall (e.g., the St. Cross Cathedral in Lviv) or as a philharmonic hall (in Chernivtsi;<sup>7</sup> some of them are used as storehouses (in Horodenets and Berezhany), a residential building (in Lutsk), a gymnasium (in Sniatyn), etc.

This state of affairs is extremely frustrating for the traditional Ukrainian churches and national religious Ukrainian communities which fail to re-acquire their nationalized property. These groups expect the state to settle the problem as soon as possible, especially as the Ukraine undertook to "return the property of religious organizations as soon as practicable" prior to joining the European Council; this was irrespective of who owns the property at present. Unfortunately, the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukraine of the 5<sup>th</sup> convocation failed to approve the draft law on making alterations in the moratorium on the privatization of religious property owned by the state and the public.

Instead, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine approved the Law of Ukraine "On the List of Cultural Landmarks Not Subject to Privatization". Following this establishment of a new state register of cultural heritage landmarks, the quantity of Armenian landmarks protected by the state has been considerably reduced and consists of 16 items at present. The buildings that can be privatized now include even the House Museum of Aivazovskiy, the great Armenian painter who, according to his well-known last will, bequeathed the building, including all his paintings and other property, to the city of Feodosiya.

Many Armenian churches not included on the state and local property protection registers and, thus, can actually be privatized, are now temporarily used by various organizations that, together with religious Armenian communities may claim for ownership or privatization thereof. This circumstance leaves open the possibility of conflicts and court proceedings concerning specific religious structures.

So, as for the future of the policy of returning church property nationalized under the USSR to Ukrainian Armenian religious communities, the dialogue with those in power should focus on the prospects for the return and restoration of sacred structures or immovable church property and the seized movable church property that remains in the Ukraine under state ownership. The activities of national religious and scientific cultural organizations such as the Committee for Armenian Studies in Ukraine and the Ukrainian Union of Armenians (President Hayk Pambukchyan) active since 2008, should be first of all targeted towards the identification and systematization (entering into a special register) of lost (seized) church property, and the register should be consolidated with state research and that undertaken by the institutions for the protection of buildings. These activities will certainly require close cooperation with the state governmental organizations that are involved (or will be involved) in the restitution of lost church property.

<sup>6</sup> J. Chrzyszczewski, *Kościoly Ormian polskich*, Warszawa 2001, pp. 5–143.

<sup>7</sup> І. Чеховський, 'У вірменській церкві через 60 літ знову зазвучало слово Боже вірменською', *Час*, (2000–2001), 23 листопада.



## *Who do Polish Armenians Feel Today? Selected Aspects of Polish-Armenian Self Identity*

Zofia Dukielska, Warsaw

Who do Polish Armenians feel today? With whom do they identify in contemporary Polish society? This paper discusses the issue of the self identity of Polish Armenians living in contemporary Poland. I would like to briefly present the results of the research conducted for my MA thesis at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences of Warsaw University.

Armenians have been present in Poland for centuries and have been, step-by-step, assimilating into the Polish society. Until the end of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they lived on the country's south-eastern borders, in cities like Lviv, Stanisławów, or Kutry. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War they were forced to abandon lands which their families had inhabited for generations.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of my research was to find out how the descendants of this so-called "old Armenian emigration" define themselves at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: what aspects of Armenian identity have remained in their global self awareness, what their attitude to their origins is, and how this affects their lives.

I interviewed representatives of two polar generations: the generation born before the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, and the generation of their grandchildren, today in their twenties. They were brought up in two totally different socio-cultural realities. The Grandparents still remember the times when Polish Armenians lived in geographical as well as social vicinity to each other. The young generation knows this "private homeland" only from family stories.

The research was conducted in the first half of 2008, in Warsaw, Cracow and the Lower Silesian Region through biographical methods.

What are my findings? Since there is not the possibility to present all of them here, I will focus on the main ones. The first one – provides an answer to the question comprised in

<sup>1</sup> M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce*, Lublin 1982.

the title – with whom do Poles of Armenian origin identify today. Above all they consider themselves as Poles. This was the first, immediate response I was receiving in my interviews: “This is my place” said one of my interlocutors. Their families have lived here for centuries, playing a significant role in the country’s development, defending its borders. Step by step they have been entering the Polish cultural circle – internalising Polish culture. This was an inevitable process, if they wanted to mean something – that is, to become part of the country’s elite. Now they think and feel in Polish but not to the full extent.

Despite the fact that they were one of the smallest minority groups, despite the tumultuous and eventful former century, never have they forgotten about their exotic roots. Now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century both generations still remember where they came from. In all of the families amongst my respondents, the awareness of their Armenian provenance is somehow cultivated. Family stories, half legendary - like the one about the ancestors coming from the gentry of the Kingdom of Cilicia/Little Armenia, or about ancestors from the 18<sup>th</sup> century who were responsible for driving oxen from Moldova to Vienna (which was one of the common occupations of Armenians of that time), or various other family anecdotes, still known and passed down from generation to generation. The children are taught their genealogical trees. The level of knowledge of family roots is much higher than in a “typical” Polish family. Another issue is the cultivation of everyday traditions and festive customs. In some of the families, a traditional parsley soup called “gandzabur” is still cooked. For Christmas some of my respondents still bake traditional fruit nut cakes. These are only some aspects of the Armenian identity of my respondents. There are many more.

The Republic of Armenia isn’t for them an unknown, far away country, as it is considered by most Polish citizens, nor is the Armenian Genocide a forgotten historical fact. But still they feel much stronger bonds to the former South-East part of Poland, than to the mythical land of the Ararat Mountain. The knowledge of the history of these lands is nevertheless widespread among my respondents, regardless of their age.

Another issue are characteristic surnames, like Agopsowicz (coming from Armenian name Hagop – Jacob<sup>2</sup>), or Kajetanowicz (that derives from saint Kajetan, the founder of the Theatyn Convent which played a significant role in the development of the Armenian Catholic Church in Poland<sup>3</sup>). Armenians who have these names are not able to forget their historic identity. They uphold their awareness of their unique bloodlines. The surnames also make Polish Armenians recognizable by others – one of my respondents mentioned that during his studies he was asked by one of the professors if he was Armenian due to his peculiar surname.

The Armenian Catholic Rite, into which the majority of my interlocutors were baptised (the older as well as the younger generation), is another aspect of their lives, which reminds

<sup>2</sup> Mieczysław Buczyński, ‘Zapożyczenia ormiańskie w języku polskim’, in: *Studia z dziejów kontaktów polsko-ormiańskich*, ed. M. Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, Lublin 1983.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.



them of their roots. Although most of them participate in Armenian-Catholic religious life occasionally, they recall a certain feeling of being different due to not having participated in the confirmation ceremony during secondary school together with all of their friends, because they had already undertaken it while being baptised in their early childhood.

Last but not least - some of my respondents, especially among the young generation, are sure that a few of their personal characteristics, for example - impulsiveness or impetuosity - were inherited from their exotic ancestors, not to mention the most visible -physical aspects listed by many respondents - regarding dark complexion or dark hair or even the distinctiveness of Armenian noses.

Polish Armenians I interviewed during my research see themselves as unique Poles. Their Polish identity is enriched by an exotic Armenian component. I am using the word "enriched" on purpose. The Armenian element is not by any means a stigma, or a negative label (using the words of Erving Goffman, the Canadian sociologist<sup>4</sup>). It is quite the opposite - it is perceived as something very positive, something to be proud of.

They are proud of being somewhat connected with the illustrious past of Armenian civilisation, the first Christian country in the world. They are proud of their ancestors, who came to Poland and played such a significant role, firstly, in the economical and then social and political development of south-eastern lands, and the whole country. My interlocutors both from the older and the younger generation had good knowledge of and often recalled prominent members of their families, who served their foster homeland in the course of 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as politicians, lawyers, representatives of the clergy, landlords - founders of agricultural associations, and eventually - as soldiers fighting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century's uprisings. The English word "homeland" is a very appropriate word in this context. Polish Armenians still feel very strong bonds with the former south-eastern parts of Poland. The older generation perceive these lands as their homeland- indeed, their private homeland (using the term created by the Polish sociologist Stanisław Ossowski<sup>5</sup>). They were born there, spent all or most of their childhood there, the earliest memories that they have which constitute everyone's sense of identity, are bound to these properties, towns, and cities. Armenia, on the other hand, is considered as a fatherland - a country of mythical fathers, and mythical origins almost lost in the past, but not forgotten.

Returning to the issue of pride - the individual that Poles with Armenian roots are extremely proud of, who they recognize regardless of their age, is the last archbishop of the Armenian Catholic Church in Poland, the politician -and Polish patriot altogether - Józef Teodorowicz.<sup>6</sup> His name naturally came up in conversations with all of my interlocutors from the older generation and was known by all young respondents. In my

<sup>4</sup> E. Goffman, *Piętno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości*, Gdańsk 2005.

<sup>5</sup> S. Ossowski, *Z zagadnień psychologii społecznej*, Warszawa 1967.

<sup>6</sup> K. Stopka, *Ormianie w Polsce dawnej i dzisiejszej*, Kraków 2000.

opinion he has turned out to be an important component of Armenian self identity here in Poland, a kind of a symbol.

Moreover, the young generation indicated something that didn't appear in the interviews with their grandparents – the idea of their Armenian roots distinguishing them from others in a positive sense. In a world where the uniformity of every aspect of our life is an unwritten rule – having something atypical, in comparison to the Polish average, hair or skin colour or unusual interests or being able to tell something about one's family, roots, which isn't standard, is attractive to peers and attracts attention. This is especially important when you are in your twenties.

What significance do Armenian roots have in the everyday lives of my interlocutors? How does it affect their lives? What does it imply? Talking to my respondents, I usually heard from them at the beginning that "no, they do not have anything interesting to say, they don't remember, they don't know etc." When I kept digging deeper and deeper in their biographies it turned out that their Armenian origins had and still have an impact on the lives of both of the investigated generations – on their interests, hobbies, and the choices they make in various fields of activity.

The older generation is interested in historical issues regarding the Armenian presence in Poland. They read books, attend lectures organised by Armenian Associations, and try to stay in touch with other members of the community. Within the younger generation the signs may not be visible at a first glance – they read less, and rarely participate in community events. When it seems there is no interest on their part in their origins, it suddenly turns out that they started to attend Armenian language classes, they have just visited Armenia or that as a final architectural project for their studies at university they chose a project of a Centre for Armenian Culture. It turns out that deep inside they remember – it's a part of their identity, which comes out unexpectedly.

Another characteristic issue are trips to the Western Ukraine – the former Polish south-eastern borderlands. Almost all of the persons interviewed by me regardless of their age have already been there and those who haven't have declared a desire to go. They visit symbolic places like Lviv with its Armenian Catholic Cathedral – as well as private places - former properties where they themselves or where their grandparents were born and brought up. These sentimental journeys into the past are one of the most tangible manifestations of the Armenian part of their self awareness.

They also take metaphoric journeys – while studying family genealogical trees, listening to stories told by grandparents, participating occasionally in Armenian Catholic ceremonies. It's their duty – some of them say. A duty towards their ancestors - to remember the world that has almost disappeared.



Memory, remembering – are words, which I often heard during interviews. Pierre Nora, a French historian created a term called “points of memory”.<sup>7</sup> It refers to physical and metaphorical places (such as museums, monuments, ceremonies, books) created to memorize the past in order to preserve the group’s identity. My respondents, Poles with Armenian origins, also have their points of memory. These, listed by my interlocutors, were for example -regularly visited family graves on Łyczakowski cemetery in Lviv, some of them secretly renovated without the relevant authority’s permission, or the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of archbishop Teodorowicz, celebrated by the Armenian community in 2008<sup>8</sup>, or the first written history of the Armenian presence in Poland by Sadok Barącz<sup>9</sup> which was mentioned during all interviews. Additionally, there are also Armenian cultural associations – which my respondents from the older generation are all members of and were more or less actively participating in its activities, even if these activities only involve lending family keepsakes for an exhibition. The representatives of the young generation act more as observers in community life, but all of them have at least once been somehow involved.

Why do my respondents nurture the Armenian element of their identity? Why is it important to them even though it’s not particularly influential in their everyday lives? It provides them with the foundation of human identity - roots. These two terms – identity and roots are inseparably inter-laced with each other, mutually affecting each other. There is no self identity without being able to answer questions like: who I am, where do I come from. Simone Weil wrote that “having roots is probably the most important need of the human soul, and at the same time something very difficult to define. Human beings create roots by participating in the life of a community, which keeps their past treasures alive”. All of my respondents from the older generation pass down memory of their Armenian roots to their children, all the young declare to do it. As one of them said “I have such a feeling, that there is something, some past standing behind me and that I can take something from it for myself. I mean some kind of a heritage. This seems quite important to me because it is something I can relate to. I am able to say – who I am, what my roots are. This is important to me, because nowadays it is not easy to find something that lasts more than one day”.

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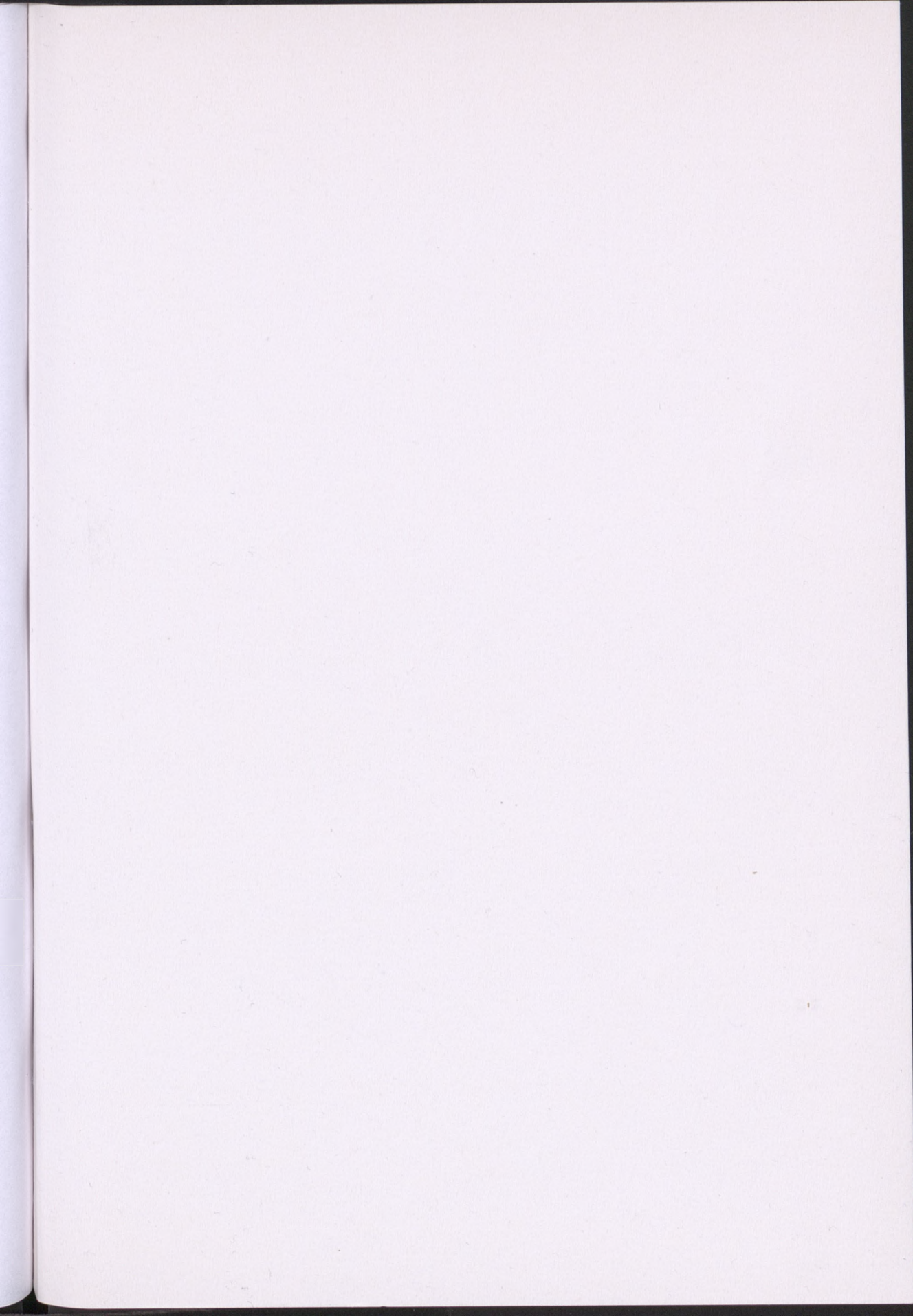
<sup>7</sup> K. Kaźmierska, ‘Ramy społeczne pamięci’, in: *Kultura i społeczeństwo*, 2 (2007).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. [http://www.dziedzictwo.ormianie.pl/Arcybiskup\\_Jozef\\_Teodorowicz/](http://www.dziedzictwo.ormianie.pl/Arcybiskup_Jozef_Teodorowicz/).

<sup>9</sup> S. Barącz, *Rys dziejów ormiańskich*, Lwów 1889.







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