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ARTICLES

Yovhannēs Sarkawag’s “Concerning the Symbol of Faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen [Fathers] at the Council of Nicaea”
Mesrop Aramian 1

The Holy Spirit in the Liturgy of the Armenian Church: The Significance of the Hymns of Pentecost
Abraham Terian 33

REVIEW ARTICLES

An Essay on the English Translation of Yeznik by Blanchard and Young
Thomas J. Samuelian 51

Virtue Ethics in Angst: a Critical Look at Vigen Guroian
Michael Merry 61

BOOK REVIEWS

Abraham Terian 67

M. Daniel Findikyan 71
Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia, 1797-1889: A Documentary Record. Annotated Translation and Commentary by George A. Bournoutian. Robert H. Hewsen

From the Holy Mountain: A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East. By William Dalrymple. M. Daniel Findikyan

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS
YOVHANNÈS SARKAWAG’S
"CONCERNING THE SYMBOL OF FAITH OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN [FATHERS] AT THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA”¹

Mesrop Aramian

Today the spiritual legacy of the Oriental Orthodox churches² has become a topic of unprecedented interest in theological circles. Dialogues are organized one after the other,³ studies are produced and texts published. In this way the possibility is created of gaining more accurate, unmediated perspectives on the Christian Orient which had an immense influence on the overall formation of a Christian civilization. Dogmatic texts are of particular interest as they reveal the similarities as well as the points of variation specific to any given confession. This is why the investigation and edition of doctrinal texts is one of the most important desiderata in contemporary theology.

The Armenian Apostolic Church’s theological heritage is especially rich in dogmatic texts, which is the result of the tense doctrinal struggle which has always typified its history. However, if it

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¹ An earlier version of this paper was read at the Armenian Church Patristics Symposium jointly sponsored by St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center on October 18, 1995. For the Armenian original of its current form see ARAMIAN, 1996.

² The term Oriental Orthodox churches embraces the Armenian, Coptic, Syrian (including the Indian Malabar church) and Ethiopian churches which are represented at international gatherings under this common rubric.

is possible to form an impression of the Armenian Church's contribution to Christian culture in the fields of music, architecture, manuscript illumination, etc., the same cannot be said about Armenian theological (and particularly dogmatic) thought and the criteria which informed its development: these are shrouded in a mist of obscurity. Even a superficial acquaintance with Armenian dogmatics is enough to demonstrate that we are dealing with a distinct doctrinal school set apart by its stages of development and characteristics. Unfortunately, protracted doctrinal debates led to the dismissal of this literature by our opponents on the one hand, while breaks in the transmission of this teaching on the other have rendered it inaccessible and incomprehensible to those within the tradition. My present study is an attempt to extract from the darkness of the unknown and bring to light one of the greatest expressions of Armenian dogmatic thought, Yovhannēs Sarkawag's celebrated compilation "Concerning the Symbol of Faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen [Fathers] at the Council of Nicaea."

This work of Yovhannēs Sarkawag is of unique significance in recreating the criteria governing Armenian dogmatic thought. Its broad scholarly, historical and culture-critical reflections render the document one of the most outstanding monuments of Oriental Christian culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. My hope is that this paper will help clarify the position of this valuable treatise in medieval Armenian literature.

A) Yovhannēs Erznkač'i's Collection

This work of Yovhannēs Sarkawag has reached us by means of Yovhannēs Erznkač'i's well known collection which, in addition to the work under consideration, includes the notable refutations of Xosrovik Ŕargmanic'i and Anania Sanahneč'i. The fact that Erznkač'i personally assembled these works in one collection furnishes clear proof of their exceptional weight within Armenian doctrinal literature, as the compiler goes out of his way to emphasize in the introduction.

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5 I present the text as found in the manuscript except for the addition of explanatory items in square brackets.
Before you enter the gates of scriptural reading,⁶ I, the humble, weak-spirited bishop Yovhannes Erznkaçi, servant of the word and athirst for the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures, should reveal [to you] how over a long time and with much labor I discovered this honorable and goodly treasury, these⁷ three books which constitute the foundation of the orthodox faith. If anyone should come upon any of them, I count it an occasion of great good fortune and incalculable enrichment for the one who finds it and tastes their sweetness. I found them in different places at different times and acquired them as three separate books, but then I had them copied and put them together to fashion one book. The first is by Anania the teacher of the Armenians, the second by Xosrovik Targmanic the vigorous scholar, and the third by the vardapet [Yovhannes] Sarkawag, the great philosopher of Hrabat. And I leave it to [those who] come after me to inherit the richness of its diverse bounties [and] the wealth of its most unalloyed treasure. It provides strong upward driving wings for those soaring into the heavens with theological genius: rudders to guide and direct those navigating the sea of this world: [...]⁹ sharpened weapons in the successful hands of brave contenders in conflicts against the bands of heretics: heavenly tables laden with sweet-tasting foodstuffs for the assemblies at the hour of peace: a pearl unobtainable by the ingenuity¹⁰ of the most skillful merchants, bought with the whole world: incomparable heavenly riches for poor souls and those indigent in material things: to those illuminated by wisdom it is an effulgence dazzling and many-rayed: to those circumscribed by the darkness of ignorance it is a torch radiating light, dispelling the gloom: to you [it opens up] springs cascading forth with all good things and to me a means of commemoration and an expression and voicing of my good wishes to you that if you take advantage of it and enjoy it, you should commemorate the wretched Yovhannes and implore mercy from Christ upon my sinful soul, my teacher and my parents.¹¹

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⁶ At this point four letters have fallen out of the manuscript. A subsequent unconvincing attempt was made to reconstruct them as $p v [s w n] d w b$. [Fr. Aramian's more plausible reconstruction is $p v [s b g] d w b$ (translator's note).]

⁷ The reading is not completely legible.

⁸ The reading is not completely legible.

⁹ Two letters are illegible here.

¹⁰ Four letters are illegible here ($[s . . .] w p n f$) [The lexeme may be reconstructed as $s w b s w p n f$ (translator's note)].

¹¹ This introduction was previously published in YOVSEFIAN, 1899, part 2, pp. 1-2.
Erzinkači’s collection has come down to us in five manuscripts, V504, M436,12 M567, M6453, M2751.13 However, the editors of Xosrovik and Anania considered only the last two, although the first ought to be regarded as Erzinkači’s autograph.14 This conclusion rests on the following arguments. Firstly, the three texts contained in V504 were patently copied by three different scribes. Erzinkači himself remarks on this in his introduction: “I found them in different places at different times and acquired them as three separate books, but then I had them copied and put them together to fashion one book.” Hence Erzinkači first collected the three books, then had them copied (presumably by his pupils) and finally put them together to form this collection. Had V504 merely been a copy of the collection it is most likely that it would have been penned by one hand, as are, for example, M567, M6453 and M2751.

The initial colophon or introduction and Sanahneči’s refutation which occupies first place were clearly written by the same scribe. To the introduction is appended the following note in smaller script: And [may God have mercy on] me the sinful scribe, the priest Yovhannēs. Its script coincides with that of the introduction and Sanahneči’s text. The scribe Yovhannēs is possibly Erzinkači or one of his pupils. Sanahneči’s text lacks a final colophon, something which suggests that perhaps Erzinkači is the scribe and was content with the introduction. Xosrovik’s text which occupies second place has the following final dedicatory colophon:

Glory to the Holy Trinity for ever. Amen. Holy vardapet Yovhannēs, reverent and elect and filled with divine grace, receive these paltry lines from the unworthy priest Yovhannēs and commemorate me with ever mindful recollection in your prayers and do not censure me for the large size of the script and the mistakes in it.

Although the scribes’ names coincide, their hands differ profoundly from one another. Since two folios have fallen out at the back of V504, Yovhannēs Sarkawag’s text is incomplete, denying us access to the scribe’s name, and the place and time of copying. At the end of Xosrovik’s text there is a later colophon.

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12 This manuscript does not contain the Sarkawag’s collection.
13 [In these manuscript citations the letter V represents the Mkhitarian collection in Venice, while M refers to the Matenadaran collection in Erevan (translator’s note)].
14 In the sense of his compilation, if not actually copied by his hand.
Now I fall on my face and implore you, sons of the holy church, who encounter this holy testament to commemorate me, the last one to possess this, Sargs the unworthy vardapat, and my spiritual and fleshy parents. I gave it to Tovma vardapat to read it continually and commemorate me in his prayer. And may Christ God who is bountiful in bestowing good things remember you for the glory of a sevenfold blessing. In the year 874 of the Armenian era.

Actually the above colophon was written in the year 1425, in all one hundred and thirty-two years after Erznkači’s death.

Thus the fact of being copied by three scribes and the formulation of the copyist’s colophon to Xosrovik’s work indicate that V504 was compiled by Erznkači himself, as is evident from some late copies.\(^\text{15}\)

Fortunately, it is possible to conduct an examination of the script, which leaves no doubt that the collection was created by Erznkači himself. In a study on that author Bałdasaryan reproduces Erznkači’s autograph colophon from f. 2r. of manuscript J1796\(^\text{16}\) which, when compared with the introduction to M504 and the script of Sanahneči’s refutation, demonstrates they are all the product of the same scribe.

It is difficult to imagine what would have happened to these doctrinal texts of the first importance, if Yovhannēs Erznkači had not included them in this well known collection. Frankly, apart from this compilation there exist only fragments in one codex or another, as well as two abbreviated versions of Sanahneči’s refutation, one of which evinces obvious influence from the Letter of Concord.\(^\text{17}\) Our text was also transmitted in fragmentary form in a few manuscripts of which the most important is M777. Comparison with the latter sheds light on a series of linguistic questions which will be addressed in the subsection relating to characteristics of language and style.

\textbf{B) The Construction of the Collection}

The text under discussion is composed of fourteen dogmatic letters which, in addition to dogmatic issues, provide rich material on Christian culture, history and various traditional practices. Still is it

\(^{15}\) See MSS M567, M2751, M6453 and in part M436 (which lacks the Sarkawag’s collection).

\(^{16}\) See BAŁDASARYAN, 1977, insert between pp. 160-161. [The manuscript is from the St. James’ collection at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem (translator’s note)].

\(^{17}\) See ANASYAN, 1959, vol. 1, col. 781. The other recension Ananyan speaks about is a portion of Anania Narekači’s Hawatarmat (Root of Faith) in my opinion. For further details see subsection 4 of this article.
uncertain whether Yovhannēs Sarkawag assembled the collection himself, or whether they were subsequently brought together. The letters were written at various times for different purposes. Questions of authorship also require careful investigation, as the title in Erznkaci’s collection is “Yovhannēs the Priest concerning the Symbol of Faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen [Fathers] of Nicaea,” from which it is not at all clear whether this Yovhannēs the priest can be identified with Yovhannēs Sarkawag or not. For example, the historian Aristakēs Lastivertcī records: “At that time there were vardapets... and Yovhannēs from the same region to whom they applied the epithet Kozerd, who wrote the Book of Faith.” ¹⁸ No book of faith has come down to us under the name of Yovhannēs Kozerd, however it may have been transmitted under the name of Yovhannēs the priest.¹⁹ I will explore the issue of authorship in more detail in the next chapter.

Below I shall list the titles of the different letters and append a brief description of their contents.

a) Yovhannēs the priest concerning the Symbol of Faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen [Fathers] of Nicaea
This is a systematic presentation of the position of the Armenian Church regarding Trinitarian theology, Christology, and pneumatology. Several heretical or schismatic teachings are examined or discussed, such as Arianism, Sabellianism, Valentinianism, Manichaeism, Apollinarism, Macedonianism, Nestorianism, etc. The Christological formulations of the Council of Chalcedon, Theodoret, and Pope Leo are subjected to sharp criticism. I shall employ the title of this letter conditionally to refer to the whole collection.

b) Eighteen Chapters of the same Yovhannēs the Priest at the Request of the Monk Gagik on the Chalcedonians
It comprises eighteen subsections. Apart from dogmatic questions it contains valuable information on feasts of the church, reverence toward saints, veneration of images, and liturgical issues. It concludes with a short theoretical portion on the allegorical interpretation of numbers. The letter’s integrity is questionable. I have introduced a tentative division into subsections.

¹⁸ ARISTAKES LASTIVERÇI, 1844 pp. 6-7.
¹⁹ A series of works known to be by the Sarkawag (e.g. his prayers) are transmitted under the names of Yovhannēs the priest, Yovhannēs Sarkawag, or the vardapet Sarkawag. The same could be true of this other Yovhannēs.
c) The Same on the Honor Bestowed on Relics, in which He also Treats Images again
This is a detailed presentation of the Armenian Church’s attitude toward images and saints’ relics. There are references to this topic in the previous and following chapters. The theological reflections are accompanied by appeals to tradition. In general the letter bears an apologetic nature directed against alien traditions which became active in Armenia during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

d) The same Yovhannës the Priest to Those who Consider Meat Unclean and do not Restrain Themselves
This is an apologetic work against censures relating to the consumption of certain types of food and drink. The refutation’s provenance is probably to be located in a monastic setting, about which there is interesting information in the letter. A number of liturgical questions are examined. It also raises the issue of the proper attitude toward the Holy Cross and religious art. On occasion the letter’s characteristically harsh refutational style is tempered with moments of amazing tolerance and brotherly love. Linguistically it contains obscure passages.

e) The Same on the Inappropriateness of Partitioning the words of the Heavenly Ones Concerning our Lord Jesus Christ As Well as His Actions and Passions
This is a systematic presentation of the Armenian Church’s Christology composed in opposition to Chalcedonians. It discusses issues of incorruptibility. The views of Diodore of Tarsus, Nestorius and Eutyches are refuted. It also approaches Apollarianism from an unusual direction, rejecting it from the perspective of the doctrine of incorruptibility. It introduces interesting parallels between the Old and New Testaments to prove Christ’s voluntary acceptance of passions. The author regards it as absolutely unacceptable to charge the Armenians with Eutychianism. He calls for a fair-minded and eirenical spirit to direct discussions and concludes with a prayer for church unity of extraordinary beauty.

f) Concerning Those who Affirm Two Natures in Christ after the Union and Of Necessity Follow the View of the Nestorians
This is the shortest chapter in which the Nestorian sources in Chalcedonian teaching are investigated. It likens the Council of Chalcedon to a second flood, underlining the exploitation of imperial authority and the element of subservience in accepting the council’s decisions.
g) On How The Word Suffered in the Flesh While remaining Impossible, and How it is that the Unorthodox Coincide
It is a concise, closely knit composition on the teaching of incorruptibility. The Chalcedonian formulation is investigated from that perspective. The author employs a series of important theological terms to describe Christ’s human passions as salvific and providential acts. In order not to ascribe mutability and passibility to the divinity one must distinguish the providential from the natural.

h) Proofs Concerning the Affirmation of Christ as One and Indivisible
Drawing examples from nature the author demonstrates the probity of applying the “One Nature” formula with regard to natural philosophy. He appeals to the creation account in Genesis, utilizing the unity of light and matter as an example of the theandric union. The concepts of immaterial light (which, however, is capable of sense perception) and material light are particularly interesting and witness to Yovhannes Sarkawag’s significant grasp of natural philosophy.

i) An Antiquarian Refutation by the Same Against Some Persons Uninformed in Scholarly Matters Who with Fallacious Talk Persuaded Some Uncouth and Simpleminded Folk to Believe their Unfounded Opinions
In a historical survey the author reflects on Nestorianism and the Council of Chalcedon, tracing their maximalist anthropology back to Artemon’s sect. Basically it relies on Eusebius’ ecclesiastical history, quoting the fifth book in its entirety. It cites the works of Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Justinian, and other early Church Fathers who “preach Christ as God and man.” The chapter ends with a brief synopsis concerning the Council of Chalcedon and the doctrinal movements that preceded it.

j) The Same on the Nature of the Word and the Union
It offers a brief review of the Armenian Church’s Christology and is written in a beautiful style. It emphasizes Christ’s perfect Godhead and perfect manhood, as well as the ineffability of the union of God and man, against the Chalcedonians.

k) The Same on How the One Nature of God the Word Incarnate May be Affirmed in Truth
This extended letter opens with a call for peace and indulgence and unfolds into a foundational composition relating to Christ’s theandric nature. A series of concepts important for ecclesiastical anthropology are presented. The formula “one nature of God the Word incarnate” is viewed from the perspective of the will and energy. The methods of pagan philosophy are widely utilized and Plato is cited. It bears the
clear imprint of David the Armenian’s acclaimed treatise *Definitions of Philosophy*.

1) *An Exposé by the Same of Various Sects of Misguided Men at Different Periods*
It is a protracted discourse on the doctrine of incorruptibility. Heretical and sectarian teachings which emerged at various times are examined with an analytic rigor of great theological importance. The dispute between Severus and Julian of Halicarnassus is described, both sides being subjected to severe criticism. It is heavily influenced by Xosrovik Targmanciç.

2) *By the Same Again*
This letter was apparently written at the request of the addressee of the first letter. The first part consists of a concise exposition of Yovhannès Sarkawag’s Christological views. The second portion incorporates valuable citations from various heretics.

3) *Citations from the Saints on the One Nature of God the Word Incarnate*
It contains citations from the following Church Fathers: Julius of Rome, Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Neoæsarea, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria and Timothy Aelurus.

C) *The Problem of Authenticity*

Garegin Yovsëpiyan was the first to subject this collection to source-critical investigation in his literary historical study *Xosrovik Targmanciç*\(^20\) where he comes to the following conclusions:

1) The twelfth chapter of the work by Yovhannès the priest entitled "An Exposé by the Same of Various Sects of Misguided Men at Different Periods" is wholly an abbreviation or anthology from the corresponding first, fourth and fifth chapters of Xosrovik’s work.\(^21\)

2) A fragment of the fourth chapter "The same Yovhannès the Priest to Those who Consider Meat Unclean and do not Restrain Themselves" has been preserved in manuscript M777 which was copied from Yovhannès Sarkawag’s autograph. That means that the author of this chapter is undoubtedly Yovhannès Sarkawag.\(^22\)

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\(^{20}\) YOVSEPIAN, 1899.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 37.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., pp. 53-54.
iii) The generally accepted works of Yovhannēs Sarkawag are sometimes transmitted as those of Yovhannēs Sarkawag, sometimes under the name of Yovhannēs the priest.23

iv) In the fifth subsection of the third chapter entitled "Eighteen Chapters of the same Yovhannēs the Priest at the Request of the Monk Gagik on the Chalcedonians" the Sarkawag’s homily Yalags kahanayr tean [On the Priesthood]24 is mentioned.25

v) The third chapter entitled "The Same on the Honor Accorded to Relics, in which He also Treats Images Again" concludes with the noteworthy remark: "I implore you, commemorate the blessed vardapet Sarkawag who composed this discourse and the one who commissioned him." This indicates Yovhannēs Sarkawag authored this chapter.26

Unfortunately, Yovsēpēan contents himself with the following summation: "although our arguments are not exhausted, we nevertheless consider that those we have adduced are sufficient to convince readers that indeed the Yovhannēs the priest who utilized Xosrovik’s work is the vardapet Yovhannēs Sarkawag."27 Despite this conclusion by the distinguished expert, one issue still requires resolution: is one person responsible for authoring all the discourses? So far we know that the author of the third and fourth chapters is Yovhannēs Sarkawag. With regard to the second one should note that the discourse "On the Priesthood" is known to us only in one copy also under the name of Yovhannēs the priest (MS. V828, p. 642). Hence this fact affords an inadequate basis on which to ascribe this chapter to the Sarkawag.

Now let us attempt to pursue those arguments which Yovsēpēan did not regard as having been exhausted. First let us examine the interrelations between the individual chapters.

i) The most obvious examples of common agreement are to be found in the church teaching on the veneration of holy relics, the Holy Cross and

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23 See ibid., pp. 54-56. In addition to the data Yovsēpian brings forth in support of the accuracy of this judgement many other proofs might be adduced.
24 YOVHANNES SARKAWAG, 1853.
25 YOVSEPIAN, 1899, p. 56.
26 Ibid., p. 57.
27 Ibid.
images between the paragraph subsections [B, III, VIII, IX, XVII],\textsuperscript{28} portions [D XIV 8-9, 12-13, 22], and chapter C.

ii) In B XII 3 there is an indisputable reference to the fourth chapter which reflects in detail upon the questions of mixing water in the eucharistic wine and employing leavened bread.

For many of them do not consider water and leaven, the manifestations of corruption, as a detrimental and heretical practice in the great mystery. Consequently, one should distance oneself from them as from the Jews, since neither do they consider the body and blood of the Lord as incorrupt and salvific. Even to have fellowship with them in love is inappropriate, as we have demonstrated abundantly in another writing concerning them and their deceptive sacraments.

iii) In the two citations below the Sarkawag enjoins his readers to esteem silence more highly that an ignorant response.

1. "If you have something to say, offer a response. Otherwise, may your hand be upon your mouth" [B XV 2].

2. "If you have something wise to say, offer a response. Otherwise, may your hand be upon your mouth" [D XI 27].

iv) Discussing the Chalcedonians' "one person and two natures" formula, the Sarkawag notes that they thereby attempt to conceal their camouflaged Nestorianism and deceive "simple-minded, unskilled and uneducated" people. The same thought is expressed with variations in a range of discourses. Here is a sampling of them:

1. "Some are disingenuous in affirming one person, since by dividing it into two natures they deceive the simple-minded..." [A VI 4].

2. "For he deceitfully stated that the two persons partake from each other and that the Holy Virgin is not Godbearer, but Christbearer, to win over the simple-minded and the uneducated..." [A IX 4].

3. "At an opportune time we shall review the case of Nestorius and those who confess two natures, judging the matter together for you to know the one filthy blasphemy they all commit, although they scheme

\textsuperscript{28} These textual references relate to the edition I have prepared for publication, in which every chapter is divided into paragraphs marked by Roman numerals, which in turn are subdivided into sentences marked by Arabic numerals.
to win over the weak-minded and uneducated with their words.” [E V 8].

4. “An Antiquarian Refutation by the Same Against Some Persons Uninformed in Scholarly Matters Who with Fallacious Talk Persuaded Some Uncouth and Simpleminded Folk to Believe their Unfounded Opinions.” [I superscription].

5. “None of the sects which have emerged at various points is slow to apply the same name to the two sons in their Christology. On the contrary the introduce such terminology and by creating one person they win over the minds of the unskilled.” [I 3].

6. “Do you see that confessing two distinct natures after the union arose with Nestorius and that those who confess the same at the present time win over the minds of the uneducated by pretending to hold a different view.” [K IX 16].

7. “So as to try to seduce gullible people even many times over by means of deception through affirming one person...” [K IX 16].

8. “For though deceiving the simple-minded and uneducated...” [L II 2].

v) In the following two places the Sarkawag talks about the ineffability of the mystery of the incarnation.

1. “However, since the immutable and unchangeable One became flesh, all the passions of His flesh are affirmed of Him; for if He became flesh [it follows that] His is also the animated and rational flesh and His are also the passions of the flesh, i.e. of God the Word incarnate. This concept is hard to envision and extremely subtle. Moreover, it is incomprehensible not only to the human mind, but also to the immaterial hosts.” [A VIII 2].

2. “This point is extremely hard to envision and subtle, and more especially ineffable and beyond investigation, to state that the same is both passible and impassible and both without dubiety. Do not speak ill of us over this since the mode of this providential act is divine and imperceptible not only to humanity, but also to the pure intelligible nature of the rational creation above.” [G II 14].

vi) In the following portions from the sixth and twelfth chapters Chalcedon is compared to the flood:
1. “Thus the second flood polluted the earth and the alien fire burned up no less cities and lesser nations, but nearly the whole world. Nevertheless, those written in the book of life survived, some by means of the ark, others by fleeing to the mountain.” [F I 17].

2. “However a remnant was preserved from that deluge concerning the faith. I hope that it may be for the growth of the peoples of every nation...” [K XI 10].

vii) The rare term tramatel (to divide equally) which Xosrovik Targmanic employs only once and Sanahnic never, is utilized at two points by the Sarkawag [A XI 12] and [H II 1].

viii) The following expressions of dogmatic tolerance testify to the fourth and fifth chapters' having been written by the same author:

1. “Moreover, we love and yearn for unity in the Spirit: filled with bitterness, we lament the interruption of our conjunction and are wet with tears...” [D XVI 9].

2. “As we bitterly lament the causes of our separation from each other and the separation itself and pray fervently for reunion...” [E VII 2].

ix) There is an allusion to the first and fourteenth chapter at the beginning of the thirteenth chapter:

Previously I accomplished what you requested of me in writing to the extent of my ability in a collection concerning the word of faith and the tradition of the holy Fathers. But since you enjoined me to provide you with the testimony of Holy Scripture concerning the atrocious error of the heterodox with regard to the salvific crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ to confute their foolishness, I sent it to you in summary form, appending citations from the orthodox Fathers as far as I could most conveniently achieve in the time at hand and was germane to your request. However, first it is important to rehearse again the impiety of their opinions... [M I 1-3].

First of all the first chapter is completely concerned with theological matters, not one specific issue (e.g. incorruptibility, the union of natures, veneration of images) but a thorough analysis of the Nicene Creed according to the tradition of the holy Fathers. “Now according to the Holy Scriptures and the tradition of the Fathers” [A I 1], “...which
the church received from the Fathers" [A I 6], "again, following the holy Fathers..." [A IX 1]. It seems that the first, thirteenth and fourteenth chapters were written at the behest of the same person whom Sarkawag vardapet addressed as "most honorable among excellent men" [A VIII 1]. Consequently, on the basis of the arguments adduced above it is not hard to conclude that all the works are mutually interrelated and that therefore their common author is Yovhannēs Sarkawag.

**D. Sources of the Collection and Circumstances which Occasioned its Composition**

The historical development of the Armenian Church has been closely paralleled by the outworking of its unique dogmatic approach. The necessity to combat internal and external heresies and buttress its faithful's spiritual understanding became an object of the church's abiding concern. It would be difficult if not impossible to identify one classical or medieval Armenian composition unconnected with dogmatic questions in some way or another.

In the period spanning the fifth to the twelfth centuries a vast doctrinal corpus was compiled by the Fathers and doctors of the Armenian Church. Established on the foundation of the ecumenical Fathers St. Athanasius the Great, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. Cyril of Alexandria among others, this theological tradition acquired its own profile and criteria. Its thought attained a unique and essentially inimitable climax in the eighth century thanks to the works of Xosrovik Տարգմանիչ and Yovhannēs Օճնեց. Moreover, the ramifications of the formulae adopted at the Synod of Manazkert in 726 far outweigh the parameters of purely Armenian dogmatic thought. As already noted, this treatise by the Sarkawag bears the unmistakable mark of Xosrovik's influence, while indirect affinities with Օճնեց may also be discerned.29

The second important developmental phase in Armenian doctrine may be dated to the period from the second half of the tenth to the beginning of the twelfth century, an era marked by the activity of such illustrious figures as Anania Narekači,30 Samuēl Karmrajoreči, Anania

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29 For parallels with Xosrovik and Օճնեց see YOVSEFIAN, 1899, pp. 86-98.

30 The author of most of the refutation which has come down to us under Anania Sanahneči's name is Anania Narekači (see TAMRAZYAN, 1986, pp. 117-150). The first chapter especially which is striking for its exceptional theological depth was written by Anania
Sanahneči, Pólos Tarónači, and Yovhannēs Sarkawag. This unprecedented flourishing of doctrinal thought was conditioned by an appreciable intensification in Armeno-Byzantine and, in part, Armeno-Georgian contacts. Hence, if, for example, the polemical writings of Pólos Tarónači (a contemporary of the Sarkawag) were the result of Armeno-Byzantine inter-church relations, Armeno-Georgian interrelations appear to have been the matrix for the Sarkawag’s compilation. Incidentally it should be stated that there is no indication of mutual affinity between the works of the latter two theologians.

As stated above, the Sarkawag’s doctrinal writings are epistles written to different people at different times. Thus, while the second chapter was composed for a certain Gagik the Monk mentioned in the title, and the fifth at the behest of “brothers” [E VII 8], the first, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters were directed to an authority figure addressed as “most honorable among excellent men” [A VIII 1] who not only besought him to write [M I 1] but also commanded him to take up the task [L I 2]. In the ninth and twelfth chapters he refers to someone “dear” [I I 2, L I 4, VIII 1]. Moreover, at one point in the latter writing [L VIII 11] he alludes to the fourteenth chapter as follows: “As we demonstrated in the previous letter in which we set forth Cyril’s twelve epistles to Nestorius concerning that matter...” This clearly implies that the person referred to as “dear” in the fourteenth chapter is to be identified with the same princely figure.

Narekači. Apart from a slight lacuna at the end it survives intact in a number of manuscripts (e.g. M568, ff. 2r-54r).

31 A false opinion is widespread in Armenological circles that this author held extreme doctrinal views. The reason for this is the shorter variant of his letter Against Theopiscē which in my view is not authentic. Even a cursory study of the longer variant of that work and the same author’s Against the Sects (İndêm herjuacolo枨 ) indicates he is one of the most important figures in the development of Armenian doctrine. A critical edition of these works is currently in progress.

32 The reason for this suggestion is first and foremost the position of the monastery of Halbat where Yovhannēs Sarkawag lived and worked. He enjoyed great authority in Georgia about which even Georgian sources bear witness. Also a writing has been preserved with the following title Questions to the Georgian Bishop from the vardapet Sarkawag (see ABRAHAMIAN, 1956, p. 302), which demonstrates the Sarkawag’s exceptional standing in Georgian ecclesiastical circles.

33 I postulate that that letter has not been preserved in its full form since only some of Cyril’s twelve anathemas against Nestorius are dealt with in the fourteenth chapter.
Vardan Arevelç'i's history contains an interesting passage which may shed additional light on the Sarkawag's correspondents: "There were also (two) women of royal birth who pursued the monastic life of celibacy at Kobayr [named] Xorasu and Mariam, to whom the holy vardapet Sarkawag wrote admonitory counsels." However, it seems more likely that here the subject is advice on contemplation rather than dogmatics.

Among the sources of the collection a special place should be assigned to Timothy Aelurus' refutation and the Seal of Faith from which citations appear particularly in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters. Sometimes the Sarkawag's references to works of Fathers of the church have undergone redaction and diverge from the original text. In contrast to the influences from Xosrovik which are easily observable, no trace of dependency on Sanahneći's refutation could be detected, from which we may conclude that the Sarkawag was unfamiliar with the work.

By way of generalization one can say that the investigation of dogmatic texts emanating from these two periods is of primary importance in determining the characteristics of Armenian Christian thought. This fact is underscored by the thoroughgoing decadence Armenian dogmatics underwent during the ensuing Cilician era characterized by the overriding tendency to resolve doctrinal disputes by recourse to mutual compromise in which the achievements of Mayragomeçi, Xosrovik, Ojneçi, Anania Narekaçi and the Sarkawag were almost completely forgotten.

E. Characteristics of Language and Style

The first evaluation of the language of the Sarkawag's collection ventured by the compilers of the New Haykazean Dictionary appears extremely one-sided:

It is a hybrid work, in that alongside discourse of an exquisite nature are found elements of the later harsh sophistic style of

34 See VARDAN AREVELÇI, 1862, p. 122.
36 See TIMOTHY AELURUS, 1908. It is significant that the portions cited by the Sarkawag from Aelurus' refutation assist us in completing and reconstructing the former's text.
37 See Seal of Faith, 1914.
38 This fact is a little odd, bearing in mind that the Sarkawag was well acquainted with Sanahneçi's legacy and even edited it (see KEOSEYAN, 1993, pp. 216-217).
Xosrovik and Sanahneči intermingled with bizarre compound expressions.\(^{39}\)

One should note that in order to determine the stylistic characteristics of a given theological work one should first clarify its genre and judge it against that standard. In this way the language of moral treatises differs significantly from doctrinal works which in turn should be distinguished from commentaries and hagiographical texts. Consequently, works of different genres even when composed by the same writer will exhibit such a degree of linguistic diversity that sometimes doubt may arise as to their common authorship. This may be illustrated by a comparison between Narekaci's *Book of Lamentation* and his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Lambronaci's *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* and his *Synodical Address*, and Snorhali's *General Epistle* and his *Commentary on Matthew*. In composing in any theological genre an author had to employ certain terms and turns of phrase prescribed by the genre in order to remain faithful to the church's holy tradition of theological thought.

As a collection of dogmatic letters the Sarkawag's compilation naturally shares striking linguistic and terminological traits with other works of a doctrinal nature. However, my purpose here is not to investigate this kind of parallel (I shall reserve that for the theological analysis set out in section F), but to specify certain of its linguistic features.

As already noted, these letters were written at different times for different purposes and hence lack a unitary language and style. They are typified by linguistic complexities most noticeable in the chapters entitled "Of the Same on the honor accorded to Relics" and "Of the Same Yovhannes the Priest to Those who Consider Meat Unclean and Do not Restrain Themselves." The Sarkawag frequently cites scripture and develops comparisons with examples drawn from the physical world under the rubric of *bnaxawsuṭiwn* (natural philosophy) especially in the eighth chapter. On occasion an emotional chord is struck in the midst of the Sarkawag's compact doctrinal exposition when he turns with brotherly affection and great tolerance to address opponents of the Armenian Church, e.g. [D XVI 9-11, D XVII 3-7, E VII 2-8, L I 1-4]. At various points we encounter expressions of uncommon beauty characteristic of a high style which grace the language with a distinctive hue, e.g. "they obfuscate the discourses of light with darkness" (\(\text{zča}i\text{s lusoy stueracuclanen xawaraw}\))[B IX 1],

\(^{39}\) *New Haykazean Dictionary*, 1836, p. 18. It surely not accidental that the refutations of Chalcedon by Xosrovik and Sanahneči merited the same negative evaluation by the lexicographers.
“most adept at what is out of place and consummate in illogicality” (yantelisn ěr.artaragoyn ew hanarętk yanja.namunfwn) [C I 1], “cultivating longwindedness as a form of art” (aruestawor ěroromanamunikamb) [D III 5], “in a myriad most diverse talents” (yanemazan ew i biwraratık jirs) [D XVI 5], “They act the orator with speech lacking refinement of craft” (čartarenc baniwlıklı pakasealıgyardeančın aznarakanunți) [J I 1], “deriving pleasure from the reciting of spiritual spells and administration of wisdom-inducing drug” (axorželov zhogewor tovâťešen zjajmys ew zimastun delatâfiwun) [K I 3].

Another feature distinguishing the Sarkawg’s style is the use of compound prepositions. e.g. ōnd ar [C V I], z'i [E I 15, E VIII 12, E X 7], z’ař [E VII 2, I II 4, J I 2], z’as [E VIII 12, K X 6], z’ōnd [G II 1], y’ār [L I 24], ar ěw z- [D VII 8], z’ař i [I II 1]. In general the issue of compound prepositions in classical Armenian still requires in depth study.

Similarly, the Sarkawg utilizes a series of terms not found in the New Haykazean Dictionary, e.g. skzbnahog [D XIV 2], bacăsahmanem [D VI 7], naxahawak [I I 2], är tulĉal [L VII 21].

Finally we must consider the extent to which the extant text has undergone redaction, i.e. the degree to which the form of the work preserved in Erznkač’s collection is faithful to the Sarkawg’s autograph. A portion of the letter “Of the Same Yovhannēs the Priest to Those who Consider Meat Unclean but Do not Restrain Themselves” has reached us in ff. 1 r.-51 v. of MS M777, a twelfth century uncial (erkaiątagir ) copy, which, according to the scribal colophon, was transcribed from the Sarkawg’s autograph. The precious colophon reads as follows:

These rhetorical discourses were composed by the great artificer (pueitikos) Sarkawg from the world-renowned community of Halbat. I am the one who found it, who am least among the offspring of Mother Church. So then let no one dare take the liberty to add to or subtract from the phrases, lines and punctuation. For we took no liberties to add to or subtract from what he had written with his own hand and the document in which this was found was in this state, with the opening and conclusion corrupt. If you find a complete version anywhere, copy it and commemorate me in the Lord.

Collation reveals that the text transmitted in the Erznkači collection has been subject to significant linguistic (not semantic) redaction at various points which may have resulted either from the compiler’s well intentioned attempt to correct defects in the copies available to him or may actually derive from alterations effected by previous tradents. These collation results, of course, are extremely important for textual
reconstruction and I have taken them into account in preparing the critical text.  

F. Yovhannes Sarkawag’s Dogmatic Views

To gain a complete conspectus of the Sarkawag’s theological views would, of course, require consideration not only of this collection, but also his prayers and ethical paraeneses.  

Here, however, I shall limit myself to a review of his dogmatic precepts. Consequently, I intend to leave for the future the examination of a series of important questions regarding liturgical theology which the compilation raises. Moreover, Yakob Keoséyan has already dealt with some of these in part.

The Sarkawag’s treatise opens with a concise presentation of Trinitarian issues, expounding those fundamental principles of Trinitarian theology which had previously become crystallized in the teaching of the church. The Cappadocian formulation of “one nature and three hypostases” (μία ουσία, τρεῖς υποστάσεις) is explored in its inner divine dimension as well as in the economy. The mystical inner divine relations are rendered by the important term consubstantiality (harmaginyúmwn: ὀμοουσία) which entered theological usage at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 A. D.) and

40 Limitations of space necessitate postponing the presentation of the collations for a study accompanying publication of the critical text.

41 Part of the Sarkawag’s prayers appeared in the series “Sóperk haykakanlk” (see YOVHANNES SARKAWAG, 1854). Now a complete edition is being prepared by Fr. Trdat Uzunyan who recently presented the text of the Sarkawag’s paraenetical works along with a study (see UZUNYAN, 1995). One of the homilies (Yovhannes Sarkawag vardapet’s Concerning the Priesthood, Priests and Their Heads, see YOVHANNES SARKAWAG, 1853) appeared in the “Sóperk haykakanlk” series while another (A Brief Disquisition of Yovhannes the Priest on Children’s Instruction) was published in ABRAHAMYAN, 1956, pp. 306-315. The authenticity of this latter work has been questioned in AREVSATYAN, 1974. [For a recent translation and study of one of the Sarkawag’s most important poems see S. P. Cowe, “Armenological Paradigms and Yovhannes Sarkawag’s ‘Discourse on Wisdom’—Philosophical Underpinning of an Armenian Renaissance?,” Revue des études arméniennes 25 (1994-1995), pp. 125-156 (translator’s note)].

42 By liturgical theology I mean not only the theological questions relating to the various church rites and feasts, but also the symbolic role of certain rites and liturgical objects such as sacred images, the holy cross, etc.).

marked the triumph of Christianity over Jewish\textsuperscript{44} and Middle Platonic thought.\textsuperscript{45}

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinguished in hypostases and united in nature, being consubstantial with one another. To express the identity of nature shared by the hypostases of the Trinity the Sarkawag also employs other terms, such as $\textit{brutenaki}$ (sharing the same nature), $\textit{baki}$ (sharing the same essence), $\textit{paraki}$ (sharing the same glory), $\textit{erkpatak}$ (sharing the same veneration), $\textit{tiraki}$ (sharing the same dominion), $\textit{hamazor}$ (equal in power), $\textit{noynapati}$ (sharing the same honor), $\textit{hawasparati}$ (equal in honor), $\textit{hamapati}$ (together in honor), $\textit{hamabun}$ (together in nature), $\textit{noynagoy}$ (of the same substance). Consubstantiality precludes any temporal causality among the hypostases of the Trinity. The Father is the cause of the Son outside time by generation and of the Holy Spirit by spiration. Generation and spiration are acts internal to the divine nature and not temporal phenomena outside the divine nature (against Arius) or manifestations of one and the same divine hypostasis in different guise (against Sabellius).

[They are] not three gods differing from one another in nature, nor one hypostasis lacking abundance, but one God in the identity of nature and three hypostases in superabundance through an ineffable mystery. Again, [they are] not three without beginning, since only the Father is without beginning and is not begotten by anyone, while the Son is His offspring and the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him (however in the temporal sphere they too are without beginning like the Father). Moreover, the three are not the origin of each other: rather the Father is the source of the Son by generation and of the Holy Spirit by spiration. [They are] not one hypostasis, being three, and not three gods, being one in nature, and hence we confess them to be indivisible. Nor must one think them one hypostasis with three names as did Sabellius, nor three different natures, as did Arius, but one nature and three hypostases [A 1, 2-5].

Now the consubstantial Son is in no way differentiated from His Father except that He is not Father, nor is He so affirmed, and He is not separated from the Holy Spirit with whom He is equal in honor and power...His origin is not time, but His Father, with whom He is without beginning and in whom He is perfect in every respect, since He is the power and wisdom, the express image, and source of honor of the Father and the stamp and image of His essence, the Only-begotten Son, Word, and Counsel... and since He is inseparable from the Father, He says, "I am in the

\textsuperscript{44} See ARAMIAN, 1992a, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{45} See GRILLMEIER, 1996.
Father and the Father in Me,"  

Again in His holy and salvific prayer He says, "You, Father, are in Me and I in You,"...but when you hear this do not consider that one is blended with the other, since they are an incorporeal and ineffable essence and perfectly without density and materiality and hence the venerable and all-holy Trinity is distinguished in hypostases and persons. However, in the identity of their nature and their express likeness we know that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father... [A 4-19].

The hypostases of the Trinity each have their special status in the economy of creation and this has been more fully elaborated in the author's Christological and Pneumatological discourse. Indeed the concluding portion of the first chapter is devoted to the latter theme. There the Sarkawag appeals to numerous biblical citations to establish the Holy Spirit’s consubstantiality with the Father and the Son. His depiction of the Holy Spirit as an *ineffable diffusion (cawalum ançareli)*, who perfectly possesses the essence of divinity and therefore, coming with power, convinced the world because of sin, is particularly noteworthy [A XIII 12]. The Holy Spirit’s providential era in the economy begins at Pentecost. Whoever does not accept the Spirit, also rejects the Father and the Son. Hence, the acceptance of the Holy Spirit lies at the foundation of true dogma and theology, through which we become a temple of the Holy Trinity. To attain this one must therefore rely on the Holy Spirit’s living teaching and consolation and eschew every kind of sectarian or schismatic approach and stand firm on the basis of the incarnation of the Word established by holy tradition [A XIII 1-6].

Naturally, Christology is the central theme of this collection. The Sarkawag consistently expounds the Armenian Church’s Christological understanding, subjecting the Council of Chalcedon and the heretical and schismatic movements which preceded it (Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, etc.) to sharp criticism. Issues of incorruptibility occupy a special place in the compilation which I shall review under a separate heading. The Sarkawag’s Christological views pursue a soteriological goal. God the Word became man in order to save our fallen human nature. God became perfectly human, i.e. He united Himself to human nature in its entirety [A V 2, E VIII 5]. If Christ’s incarnation is not perfect or real, then neither is our salvation. That is why Apollinarianism and Eutychianism are to be rejected: each anthropological diminution or abstraction undermines the reality of our salvation (anthropological minimalism) [E VIII 1-2, E X 1-5].

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46 John 14: 11.
Equally one should avoid the anthropological extremes and unnecessary emphases which proved the stumbling-block of the whole Antiochene school from Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus right up to Nestorius. The Sarkawag continually stresses the ontological and essential (natural) union of God and man in Christ, without which our soteriological ideal would be confuted [A V 1-4].

The Sarkawag warns particularly against the hidden dangers encountered in the Chalcedonian formulation, which he states are “obscured from the simple-minded and unschooled.” In that dogma the Antiochene leaven is at once manifest, which proved the downfall of Nestorius’ teaching. The latter had attempted to overcome the insoluble Antiochene duality through the artificial term person of the union (πρόσωπου τῆς ἐνώσεως), however in effect he saw in Christ more and more only a divinized man. The followers of Chalcedon tried to surmount this insoluble duality through a hypostatic union, which might be more aptly named hypostatic assimilation, since according to that understanding the human nature is anhypostatic and is hypostasized in the hypostasis of God the Word. To be more precise, this doctrine was developed about a century after Chalcedon by Leontius of Byzantium and found general acceptance in Chalcedonian doctrine. This artificial thesis was subject to bitter criticism by the Oriental Orthodox churches. Hence when discussing anti-Chalcedonian polemic one should understand by that the rejection of Leontius of Byzantium’s argument rather than the literal contrast between the “one nature” and “two nature” formulae. Leontius’ solution actually recalls an Apollinarian-Nestorian synthesis.

The union of God and man is the focus of our faith and salvation. First and foremost it is a mystery “ineffable in word and unfathomable to the mind” [A V 4], “subtle and difficult to perceive” [A VIII 2], “beyond the capacity of the mind and inutterable in word” [A IX 2]. When the mystery of faith is reduced to a perceptible mechanism the reality of our salvation is jeopardized. Hence one should express the mystical truths of the faith apophatically rather than cataphatically. The Sarkawag describes the union of God and man in the significant terms “without confusion and without mixture” [A VI 1], “immutable, without alteration, without variation” [A V 3], i.e. in the economy of God’s incarnation no transformation whatsoever occurs. At the same time the theandric union in Christ is not a synthesis (παρακκατάλειψις) [G I 2] or conjunction (συνόρευσις) [J II 2], or relation (συνεργατισμός) [G I 9] of natures, but an essential, ontological and natural union into which it is impossible to introduce any division or dissolution.

But when He, who was true God of true God, richly poured forth upon us the infinity of [His] love for humanity in desiring to become man, the diversities of the natures united without variation and without dissolution, so that what is characteristic
of the human nature we confess to be divine according to the union and [we confess] Him to be both God and man at the same time [J II 1].

G. Teaching Concerning Incorruptibility

As I have already indicated, issues relating to incorruptibility are afforded a broad discussion in this collection. Actually it is a fundamental treatise on the doctrine of incorruptibility unique within the Armenian dogmatic corpus. It becomes clear that it is possible to grasp the inner dynamism of Christology only by means of the doctrine of incorruptibility which was developed only in the tradition of the Oriental Orthodox churches. Hence the growing interest in these problems today.

The doctrine of incorruptibility is the result of the consistent development of the church’s Christological thought. If we confess that perfect God became perfect man to redeem and divinize fallen human nature, then the mystery of the incarnation of God the Word becomes an unavoidable point of departure for Christology. Nor is it accidental that after overcoming the Arian schism the Church’s attention focused essentially on Christological problems, i.e. on how to profess the mystery of the true incarnation of God the Word. What does it mean that the Father’s Only-begotten Son, the pre-eternal Logos, became true and perfect man, like us in all respects (i.e. consubstantial with us according to the incarnation) save for sin? How does He experience what are called the innocent passions (sleep, thirst, weariness...), which were introduced into human nature as a result of sin and the fall? What level of freedom and activity can be attributed to the human nature in the salvific economy of the Theanēr? These and several other important soteriological questions are answered with reference to the doctrine of incorruptibility.

The incorruptibility issue arose from a famous dispute between Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicarnassus over the kind of flesh assumed by the Lord. How far were human passions (ἀνθρώπινα πάθη) to be predicated of Christ, if we confess He was in all respects like us, save for sin? In talking about the possibility of Christ’s flesh one should understand exclusively innocent passions (πάθη)

48 For a more detailed discussion of the doctrine of incorruptibility see ARAMIAN, 1992b, pp. 106-121. 
49 In a certain sense this is true of doctrinal literature in general. 
50 One should note that the terms corruption (apakanutινα: φθοράξ) and incorruption (anapakanutινα: αφθορισία) function here not so much in the sense of physical destruction or the lack of it, but focus on the issue of whether or not Christ’s flesh was subject to passions voluntarily or involuntarily.
St. Nersess Theological Review

αδιάβλητα), sadness, fear, hunger, thirst, etc., which are viewed as states resultant from sin and the fall.

Severus insists that Christ experiences all human passions of necessity (unwillingly, under compulsion, perforce) as do ordinary men. Otherwise it seemed to him Christ would not be fully incarnate. Hence he affirmed that Christ’s flesh was corruptible like that of all humanity. Severus’ teaching of “corruption” was totally rejected by the Armenian Church. However, the doctrine of the incorruptibility of Christ’s flesh which evolved out of the above dispute was not an innovation in the history of theological thought, but a teaching crystallized in the writings of the Church Fathers. The Armenian Fathers and teachers simply developed and expanded upon what had been transmitted by St. Athanasius the Great, St. Ephrem the Syrian, St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory the Theologian and the other great ecumenical teachers. Perhaps the best proof of this was the creation of the well known compilation the Seal of Faith, most of which is devoted to the issue of the corruptibility or incorruptibility of Christ’s flesh. From the sixth to the eighth century a powerful struggle ensued against followers of the teaching of incorruptibility culminating in the famous Synod of Manazkert in 726. That synod and the anathemas it promulgated played an exceptional role in the history of Christological thought.

As much as the Fathers of the Armenian Church eschewed Severus’ doctrine of corruption, they were equally cautious about the veiled Docetism to be found in Julian’s antithetical doctrine of incorruptibility. However, the Fathers contended not so much against Julian as his extremist followers. At all events in Julian’s writings one does not encounter the blatant Docetism his opponents often speak of in censuring him for transforming the mystery of salvation into some kind of “semblance or visionary illusion” by his teaching of incorruption.

As was already stated, the doctrine of the incorruptibility of Christ’s flesh, which became crystallized in the dogmatic tradition of the Armenian Church, developed its own perspective, free both of Severan and Julianist extremes. The Armenian Fathers approached episodes from the economy only from a soteriological perspective.

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52 See ARAMIAN, 1992b. These issues have also been handled in the introduction to YOVSEFIAN, 1899, as well as in TÊRMINASIAN, 1904. This last is a valuable study, though rather one-sided, thus completely vitiating its conclusions.
53 The basic work on this is DRAGUET, 1924.
54 For a brief description of Julian’s doctrinal views see ARAMIAN, 1992b, pp. 110-112.
Christ’s earthly life is a salvific economy devoid of contingencies. Consequently, every moment of Christ’s human life possesses the highest soteriological significance. As mentioned previously, the so-called innocent passions are characteristic of Christ, which Yovhannēs Sarkawg also styles irreproachable (anparsawelē) [A VIII 8], unblemished (anastgtianēli) [G ii 9], and irreprehensible (anangosnelē) [K III 2]. Although these passions are free from sin, they became established in human nature after sin and the fall and hence are characteristic of mortal and possible human nature, not the nature of the protoplast Adam. Thus the Sarkawg calls them at once natural (bnaworakan) [L I 6] and sorrowful (trtmakan). Christ undergoes the human passions voluntarily, not of necessity, without any constraint of nature [A VII 1-2, E I 11], and so the passions are voluntary (kamavor) [A vii 5]. God became perfectly man, i.e. He assumed human nature in its entirety for our salvation, with the result that the Savior’s human passions are salvific (jrkakan) [L I 5], as well as dominical (tnōrinakan) [A XI 10] or economic (intesakan) [K II 12].

In His salvific economy Christ bears all human weaknesses and freely undergoes the human passions, convicting the leaven of sin in them and liberating us from sin’s condemnation. Consequently, not only do the miracles appropriate to divinity form part of His economic activity, but also the weaknesses appropriate to humanity [A VII 7-25].

...as He was born without compulsion and constraint of nature, so He bore the human passions without sin. His birth was voluntary, as are all His passions. Let no one dare call the voluntary passions corruption, for He bore everything according to the economy for our salvation and hence could also not have borne them, as He was God in the flesh, but He bore them since His humanity was not a semblance, as it seemed to the Manichaeans and to the abbot Eutyches. It was His good pleasure to endure the passions; indeed that was the reason for the One who was God from the beginning to become man in order to suffer on our behalf, being one with us. The Apostle says, “God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin and condemned sin in the flesh.”

Now, as He condemned sin, while being sinless, [so] He condemned corruption, while not enduring it, and as He redeemed us from the curse of the law and bestowed a blessing on us, [so] He wished to save us from corruption [and bring us] to hope by granting us His incorruptibility as a pledge [L III 10-14].

55 Romans 8: 3.
The Sarkawag does not merely systematize the doctrinal works on incorruptibility which reached him, but essentially raises them to a new level, expounding a series of principles absent from his predecessors. The conception of the incorruptibility of the Savior’s flesh in the Sarkawag’s Christological views is transformed into a universal principle and touchstone which facilitates presenting a wholly complete picture of the Logos’ incarnation and excludes every kind of schismatic view. It is noteworthy that the Sarkawag employs the perspective of incorruptibility in examining heretical teachings which predate the actual debate on that doctrine by several centuries. Thus, for example, his rejection of Apollinarianism does not follow the classic lines of argument set forth by St. Basil in his well known work *Contra Apollinarium*. Instead he argues that if Christ’s human nature lacks a rational soul, as Apollinarius maintained, then suffering and passibility must be predicated of the divine, impassible nature, since in man the rational soul is an equal partner in the passions of the flesh. Let me cite two typical passages on this subject.

Apollinarius is wrong in postulating that the Logos united to Himself flesh lacking a soul, as such a confession would subject His impassible nature to sufferings; rather [He assumed] flesh with a rational soul, in order to share the sufferings of the flesh by means of the rational soul. The Word did not effect this according to His own [nature], but by means of His flesh endowed with a rational soul. How is it then that God the Word can suffer? Why, we affirm concisely that the impassible One truly suffered in His flesh endowed with a rational soul and that the immortal One died in the flesh, since it was the true God who bore everything in our nature to free us from service to sin and transform us into sons of His Father by grace and call us His brothers... [A VIII 5-6].

How can flesh lacking a soul experience sufferings? If the Logos had flesh devoid of a soul as it appears to Apollinarius, then the Logos, who is entirely divorced from sufferings, would have felt pain directly, something those familiar with the truth should not even speculate about. But when we state that the Logos possesses flesh endowed with a soul, as indeed is the case, we arrive at a different

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56 Here one should note primarily Xosrovik’s refutation which has left the most obvious imprint on the formulation of the Sarkawag’s doctrinal views.
understanding, since although the human soul does not participate in fleshly sufferings and is distinct unto itself, nevertheless as it is in the flesh it shares all its natural passions and external contingencies, and so [the latter] are all described as pertaining to the soul. Similarly, certain categories of pathology are classed as associated with the soul, anger, desire... Hence we learn from all this that the soul shares all the body’s natural and external states, and that is why we confess that God the Word assumed from the Virgin and Godbearer not only flesh, but a rational soul, i.e. He became man according to Scripture [E VIII 1-5].

In this way Christ’s flesh is passible and mortal, but not corruptible (corruption is here viewed as a corporeal state associated with sin and its commission, which is opposed to the nature of the flesh, since it destroys that nature). God the Word did not assume the nature of the protoplasm Adam, but our corruptible nature with flesh subject to corruption, and a soul and mind liable to sin. Uniting these to Himself, He removed sin from the soul and corruption from the flesh. The growth and development of the Lord’s flesh testify not to its being corruptible but the contrary, because they perfect its sense dimension, whereas corruption destroys it. The Lord bore voluntary and irreprouachable passions, not involuntary and reproachable, which are compulsory, servile and sinful. The perfection of the Lord’s incarnation is not weakened thereby, nor His consubstantiality with us, because the rational man is man through voluntary passions and sinlessness. Whatever is involuntary and sinful operates not in accordance with nature, but in antithesis to nature, and is an alien factor intruded into nature.

H. Dogmatic Tolerance

The issue of dogmatic tolerance which Muradyan recently raised appears to be one of the characteristic aspects of Armenian polemics. In this regard the Sarkawag, who precedes Mxiynchronously and Vardan Aygekçî, does not represent an exception. Discussing doctrinal differences and the breakdown in communion between the churches the Sarkawag writes with deep sorrow:

“We love and desire the unity of the Spirit and bitterly lament the separation of those once yoked together and are moist with tears recalling that prior fellowship and even now embrace as true brothers those who have departed [from us] and encourage unanimity. Moreover, hearing so many exaggerations and

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57 See MURADYAN, 1993.
columnsies about ourselves, we do not wish to respond to them in the same fashion [saying], "Lord, do not count that as their sin" [D XVI 9].

But his opponents, according to the Sarkawag, do not possess that spirit of sacrifice and tolerance, but "feel revulsion when they meet [us] anywhere and curse [us] as they leave..." [D XVI 11]. Such behavior can elicit a similar response, something alien to the true Christian image. Hence the Sarkawag exhorts:

We, however, are content to be patient like those deserving unjust insults and enmity, but we also bless them, and feed them when we see them hungry, let them drink their fill when we encounter them thirsty, we clothe them when they are naked, we do good to those that hate us. As servants of the meek One who loves mankind let us not exhibit our Christianity merely by name or true confession, but by obeying and fulfilling the commandments, as every tree is known by its fruit [D XVII 3].

In the fifth chapter the Sarkawag again reflects on the division of the churches with great sorrow. This time he appeals to the Lord in an amazing, prayerful plea of the spirit to restore the Church's former unity [E VII 2-7]. This prayer or petition may indeed be considered one of the most beautiful examples of Armenian prayer literature.

The true Christian, according to the Sarkawag, is called to sow peace in this world because Christ is God of peace. Consequently, nothing is so alien to the Christian image as demonic agitations and divisions; and thus one should avoid soul-destroying disputes and altercations.

It is right and proper for pupils of peace not to wage war for that selfsame peace, since we were called to peace by Him who is the God of peace and not disruption; and so we desire and do not what He wishes, but what He does not wish, when we enter into useless disputes to the detriment of those who hear it and of our own souls [K I 1].

However, the Sarkawag does not recommend passive indifference; rather when you are compelled to give a response in the name of truth you should do so not with a bitter heart, but with inner quietude "teaching the truth with words of tenderness and assurance so that they give you a hearing, appreciating the spiritual charm of your tone and agree to receive its wisdom-inducing healing." For the period of this life has been given by God for spiritual fructification, and so "one must always be looking out for the fruit and [in so doing] strive to achieve what is possible and even more than what is possible" [K 1 2-4].

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The Holy Spirit in the Liturgy of the Armenian Church: The Significance of the Hymns of Pentecost

Abraham Terian

More than the brief statements on the Holy Spirit in the confessional or dogmatic writings of the Armenian Church, and altogether distinct from the occasional references to the Spirit in the polemical writings pertaining to early Christological controversies, the hymnal (Šaraknɔc') of the Armenian Church constitutes a major source for her Pneumatology. Arranged in the late 13th century by St. Grigor Tat'ewac'i,¹ the Šaraknɔc' contains seven Canons or lengthy hymns for the feast of Pentecost: the first for the feast-day and the rest for each of the week-days following.² The authorship of the Canon of the First Day remains uncertain,³ but as for the remaining six, they are attributed to St. Nersès the Graceful, the great theologian and hymnographer of the 12th century and Catholicos of the Armenian Church (in office

1166-1173). He is responsible for introducing the week-long celebration of Pentecost with its respective liturgy, following, it seems, the custom of the Latin Church, where the eight-day celebration of the feast goes back to the 7th century.

Each of the seven Canons of Pentecost consists of several parts or hymns for the eight traditional modes that characterize the hymnody of the Armenian Church. Thus, the seven lengthy hymns amount to thirty-three parts or shorter, constituent hymns. They draw their inspiration from biblical and patristic sources, especially the discourses of St. Gregory Nazianzen, and from the traditional Armenian understanding of the role of the Spirit in the worship of the Early Church and in the lives of her faithful. Whether seven or thirty-three, no traditional church has so many hymns dedicated to the Holy Spirit and for the feast of Pentecost especially.

Resorting to a hymnal as a primary source for a church’s tacit Theology, especially of such an important subject, may at first appear to be a rather questionable methodology. This may be true when treating certain lay compositions in non-traditional churches of the last few centuries, where the divine mystery is so often trivialized. There is a marked difference, however, in the theological seriousness with which the ancients traditionally approached the Deity. Their well-thought

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4 Polarean, *Hay grötner*, p. 234. In fact, the name “Nerseš” is obtained acrostically through the first six stanzas comprising the first hymn, the *Canemus* in the Canon of the Second Day of Pentecost (*Sārakan*, pp. 510-512).


7 The following words of St. Gregory Nazianzen should be instructive: “And even now He [Christ] bears to be stoned, not only by those who deal despitefully with Him, but also by ourselves who seem to reverence Him. For to use corporeal names when discoursing of the incorporeal is perhaps the part of those who deal despitefully and stone Him; but pardon, I say again to our infirmity, for I do not willingly stone Him; but having no other words to use, we use what we have. Thou art called the Word, and Thou art above Word; Thou art above Light, yet art named Light; Thou art called Fire not as perceptible to sense, but...” *Oration 37: On the Words of the Gospel*, 4 (trans. C. G. Browne and J. E. Swallow, in P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976] 7:339).
ABRAHAM TERIAN 35

hymns emanate from profound theological understanding; after all, they are the work of theologians. In the case of the Armenian hymnal, the authorship of most hymns in the Šəraknoč is well established, and that of the rest enjoys fairly reliable attributions, with St. Nerses the Graceful, the hymnographer par-excellence of the medieval Armenian Church, as its greatest contributor.

What makes the Canons of Pentecost (including those of the week following) an important subject of study is the fact that certain of their constituent hymns are also used in the various sacraments and rites of the Armenian Church where the Spirit is invoked, especially in rites involving anointing—such as chrismation and ordination. Consequently, any serious consideration of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Armenian Church should necessarily account for these hymns as prerequisites for the inquiry. Given the limitations of the paper, we shall confine ourselves to a theological outline of these hymns after considering briefly some of their subsequent liturgical utilization.

Several of the hymns in the Canons of Pentecost are sung at various intervals in the order of baptism. The first is from the end of the Canon of the First Day (Levavi), sung at the beginning of the blessing of the


9 Attributions are more certain as of the 12th century; earlier attributions are less certain (see N. Ter-Mikaëlian, Das armenische Hymnarium: Studien zu seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905], pp. 63-104. For attributions found in the manuscript tradition of the Šəraknoč, see ibid., pp. 29-62; cf. the two prefatory lists published in the 1986 New York reprint of the 1936 Jerusalem edition of the Šəraknoč: the first from Šərakan hagewor ergoc’ (Hymnal of Spiritual Songs) (Constantinople: Miwhentisean, 1853), pp. i-iv, the second from the Jerusalem edition (supra, n. 1), pp. 5-7.

10 Throughout, I have used the Latin equivalents of the seven Armenian designations for the categories of Šərakans for the Hours, as recommended by (Abp.) Tiran Nersoyan, The Book of Hours or the Order of Common Prayers of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox
baptismal braid (Arm. “narot”), the twined red and white threads or ribbons which represent the water and blood from the pierced side of Christ:

*The indivisible Trinity and heavenly Power shone forth [as] light upon the world....
He who came down from heaven this day also rested upon the apostles, the very Holy Spirit....
He who [operates] in the saving mysteries this day in descending upon the apostles made himself known [as] to the prophet....*  

The second hymn in the order of baptism is from the beginning of the Canon of the Fourth Day (first set of stanzas in the *Cantemus*), sung at the beginning of the holy baptism, as the infant is brought to the font:

*The sun of righteousness Christ rising over the world banished the darkness of ignorance and after his death and resurrection ascended to the Father from whom he was begotten. He is worshipped by the heavenly and the earthly together with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and therefore we bow down to the Father in spirit and in truth.*

*Who in place of the Word born of the bosom [of the Father], who ascended into heaven, was sent from on high with good tidings from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, to comfort them that were saddened by Adam and to arm the rank of the chosen apostles with fire; and therefore we bow down to the Father in spirit and in truth.*

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*Church* (Evanston: Ouzounian House, 1964), pp. vi-xxiii. These are:  

This day the first mother's sorrowful and nocturnal pangs of giving birth have been loosed, for those who were born with body unto death and corruption have been born again by the Spirit to be sons of light of the heavenly Father, and therefore we bow down to the Father in spirit and in truth.

The third hymn is from the beginning of the Canon of the First Day (first set of stanzas in the Cantemus), sung when blessing the baptismal water:

The Dove that was sent came down from on high with a great sound and like the flashing of light he armed the disciples with fire while they were sealed in the upper room.

The Dove immaterial, unsearchable, that searches the deep counsels of God and taking the same from the Father tells of the awesome second coming, has been declared consubstantial with the Father and the Son.

Blessing in the highest to him that proceeds from the Father, to the Holy Spirit, through whom the apostles drank the immortal cup and invited the earth to heaven.

The fourth hymn marks the beginning of holy chrismation. It is found in the middle of the Canon of the Fourth Day (Miserere):

Source of life, distributor of graces, O Spirit, who hast come down from on high, thou hast divided thine incorruptible gifts among the apostles.

Thou that being above the waters didst create the creatures, now coming down into the waters of the Font dost bear sons of God.

Thou dost adorn and restore always thy new Church so that her children shine with diverse gifts of thine.

Sometimes, the latter hymn is preceded by yet another hymn from the Canon of the Fourth Day (second set of stanzas in the Cantemus):

Thou consubstantial with the Father and the Son, the ineffable effluence from the everlasting essence, today thou hast poured the water of life in Jerusalem....

Thou who art Creator with the Father and the Son, through thee creatures are born in the waters; today thou bearest children of God from the waters....

Thou who knowest the depth of God, art glorified with the Father and the Son; today thou hast made the fools of the world utterly wise.12

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12 As in the Masño‘ kam Cisaran (Manual of Rites or Euchologion) (Antelias: Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, 1988), p. 58, omitting the third stanza. This hymn (all three stanzas) is often omitted; cf. Nersoyan, Baptism, pp. vi, 57.
As for the Theology of the order of baptism (including chrismation and Communion), it is an outgrowth of the primitive Christian experience. Initially an expression of repentance or conversion, such as from foolishness to wisdom, baptism came to be viewed as divine adoption, incorporation into the Body of Christ, or initiation into discipleship, further defined as participation in the life of Christ—by sharing in his sufferings and resurrection while maintaining a strong consciousness of the grace of the Spirit. In this sense, baptism is participation also in the life of the Spirit (i.e., the Spirit of Christ); hence the notion of Spirit baptism, a shared experience with Christ, signified through chrismation. Moreover, the repeated references to birth and body seem to suggest that the chrismation of the senses and members of the infant is at the same time symbolic of the experience of the community of faith, the Church as the Body of Christ with its various members endowed with the gifts of the Spirit.

A significant part of the rite of ordination of priests is the invocation of the Holy Spirit, to the effect that he is the one ordaining. In the words of the ancient hymn of ordination, found in the Apostolic Constitution and all eastern rites of ordination, “The divine and heavenly grace, that ever fulfills the holy necessities of the Apostolic Church, calls (the candidate by name)...” This personified grace is the Spirit, who calls, ordains, and bestows the sevenfold gift: truth, wisdom, understanding of the great Mystery, power, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord, as the episcopal “Prayer of the Litany” indicates. In the vesting of the newly ordained, the role of the Spirit is further emphasized in the words “Take the authority from the Holy Spirit, for you are able to bear the yoke of our Lord Jesus Christ,” as the stole is placed around the neck of the newly ordained. And again, when putting the girdle around him: “Take the authority from the Holy Spirit, to bind and to loose, as our Lord commanded the holy Apostles, saying...” (quoting Matt. 18:18; cf. 16:19). The three stanzas on the descent of the Dove, quoted above from the Canon of the First Day (first set in the Cantemus), are sung at this juncture to conclude the vesting and to anticipate the anointing: “The Dove that was sent

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13 For a special treatment of the form of this hymn, see Claudio Guggerotti, I riti di ordinazione e la Cilicia armena, Diss., Pontificum Institutum Studiorum Orientalium (Rome 1996), pp. 27-35; for a translation, see p. 405: “La divina e celeste grazia, che sempre adempie alle necessità del santo servizio della Chiesa apostolica, chiamai...”

14 Cf. the second set of stanzas in the Cantemus of the Canon of the Second Day for the feast of Pentecost, where the seven gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12, 14) are identified with the seven pillars of wisdom upon which the Church is built.
came down from on high...." Then follows the consecration with the holy Myron, ceremoniously brought to the bishop in a dove-like receptacle, a symbolic representation of the descending Dove. It is important to note that with every act of anointing (of the forehead and of the hands separately), the bishop stresses the consecrating role of the Spirit. It is at this juncture that a new name is given to the newly ordained priest, implying that he is now born of the Spirit (cf. John 3:5-8). It would be wrong, then, to speak of "the consecrating bishop"; but rather, of "the consecrating Spirit." Then comes the ultimate authorization to celebrate the Eucharist. When handing the chalice and the paten, the bishop says: "Take and receive authority and competence from the Holy Spirit, to consecrate and consummate the holy Sacrifice in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the living and the dead."

Much of the same Theology is reflected in the other ordination rites, whether of bishops or catholicoi.

As for the Theology obtained between baptism and ordination, we see it clearly in the Pneumatography of St. Nerses, in two consecutive stanzas in the middle of his first composition for the feast of Pentecost (Canon of the Second Day, end of Patrum):

Come, new creatures, born anew in Christ through the font by the Holy Spirit; glorify the dispenser of graces.
New priesthood honored by Christ with the anointment of the Holy Spirit; glorify the dispenser of graces.

Unfortunately, these lines are not part of either of the two rites.

The role of the Holy Spirit is equally stressed in the rite of holy matrimony. Behind it lies the notion that the Spirit is the bond of all divine relationships, whether in the heavenly realm or the earthly, or between the two. Thus, the union of man and woman within the community of faith is attributed to the work of the Spirit. All hymns and prayers emanate from such a presupposition. The first hymn is on the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, from the beginning of the Canon of the Third Day (first set of stanzas in the Cantemus):

Today the heavenly beings rejoiced over the renewal of the earthlings, because the Spirit, the restorer of beings, descended into the holy upper room; through him were the ranks of the apostles renewed.

Today this nature of earthly substance rejoices over the reconciliation with the Father; although he withdrew the Spirit from creatures born in human bodies, he gives it back again.

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15 The Canon is attributed to Catholicos Yovhan Mandakuni (in office 478-490); see Polarean, Hay großer, p. 31.
Today the children of the Church joyfully celebrate the coming of the Holy spirit, by whom they were adorned in bright and luminous garments; they sing the Trisagion with the Seraphim.

Moreover, the first priestly prayer pronounces as husband and wife those whom the Lord has united. The bride and the groom are deemed married already by virtue of the fact that the Spirit has brought them together in the first place. Consequently, separation or divorce are treated as transgressions against the Spirit, and this, in effect, constitutes the unpardonable sin—tantamount to a denial of the work of the Spirit in all Christian consciousness: the whole understanding of the divine-human relationship (cf. Matt. 12:31-32 and parallels).¹⁶ No wonder that the second hymn is the hymn of the Church: “Rejoice O Holy Church, for Christ the heavenly King has this day crowned thee with his cross, and he has adorned thy ramparts with his wonderful glory....” The experience of the newlyweds is part of the shared experience of the Spirit in the Church as the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 4:3-4).

Not to belabor our subject in the other sacraments and rites of the Church, where the mediatory role of the Holy Spirit is equally significant, we shall proceed to outline the seven Canons for the feast of Pentecost and to highlight their Theology. We have already touched on several of the works and manifestations of the Spirit in some of the constituent hymns, as we considered their place in the sacraments and rites; however, we must repeat some of the points already made as we draw the theological threads together. It is in the opening hymns where we usually find the seminal thoughts or the key words that tend to govern the rest of the composition. We shall therefore devote more attention to these openings, the two sets of three stanzas with refrain, comprising the Cantemus.

(II)

Because of its antiquity and influence on the subsequent Canons of Pentecost, the Canon of the First Day is crucial for our understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Armenian Church. Its broad influence is discernible through the nearly anhemic use of its opening hymn in every anointing service (first set of stanzas in the

Cantemus). It highlights the New Testament key passages on the Holy Spirit: the Synoptic descent of the Dove at the time of Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:16 and parallels), the Johannine bestowal of the Spirit by the risen Lord (albeit an upper-room setting; John 20:22), and the apostles' ultimate baptism by the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Moreover, it includes a couple of attributes of the Spirit derived from the Paraclete-sayings in the Fourth Gospel: the Spirit as the searcher of the deep counsels of God and revealer of things to come (cf. John 16:13); and a couple of dogmatic statements: the Spirit being consubstantial with the Father and the Son and proceeding from the Father. 17 This hymn with its overwhelming biblical theology illustrates clearly the basis of the Pneumatology of the Armenian Church, beginning and ending with the necessity of Spirit-baptism. Not surprisingly, these and other elements, with some variations, become recurring features in the various hymns of the Canon, and in several other hymns of subsequent Canons as well. For example, "the immortal cup" from which the apostles drank, mentioned at the conclusion of the first set of stanzas in the Cantemus (and used in the order of baptism), becomes "the cup of wisdom" in the refrain of the first set of stanzas in the Cantemus of the Canon of the Second Day; it is "the immortal cup" with which Peter was inebriated, according to the Laudate in the Canon of the Fourth day; it is "the immortalizing cup," "the life-giving cup," and "the cup with fiery taste" in the various hymns of the Canon of the Sixth Day. The imagery carries eucharistic implications as well, and reminds of the several sacramental nuances found even in those parts of the hymns that are not utilized in the established rites. Some themes, such as of the founding of the Church on the day of Pentecost (end of Laudate), are rare when compared with other, recurring themes. One such recurring theme is of the role of the Spirit in the creation story of Genesis (end of Midday), contemplated in the opening and closing hymns of the Canon of the Second Day and elsewhere. On the whole, however, the Canon of the First Day denotes the experiential realization of the Spirit in the Early Church.

17 Although in the confessional literature of the Armenian Church the Spirit, as a rule, is said to proceed from the Father (see, e.g., Knik' hawatoy [Seal of Faith], ed. K. Ter-Mkrt'ch'yan [Ejmiacin: Mother See Press, 1914], pp. 18-22, 51-55), there are instances where the Spirit is said to proceed also from the Son (e.g., The Teaching of St. Gregory, 362, 665; Eng. trans. R. W. Thomson, The Teaching of St. Gregory: An Early Armenian Catechism [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970]). See also G. Avedichian, Dissertazione sopra la processione dello Spirito Santo dal Padre e dal Figliuolo. Già pubblicata in Armeno, ed ora con annotazioni dall'autore transferita in Italiano (Venice: St. Lazar, 1824).
In the Canon of the Second Day, the first of those composed by St. Nersēs, we find recurring themes as well as some theologically loaded statements of his own. As noted above, in the refrain of the first set of stanzas in the Cantemus, the Holy Spirit offers the spiritual grace as a drink from "the cup of wisdom." Similarly, the Creator Spirit who hovered over the waters at the time of creation is petitioned to hover over the baptismal font, since he creates anew in the likeness of God and pampers humanity with love. The transforming power of the Spirit is stressed: he makes prophets out of shepherds, apostles out of fishermen, bearers of good news out of tax collectors, and proclaimers out of persecutors. The second set of stanzas in the Cantemus emphasizes both Johannine and Pauline teachings: the judgment and conviction of the world with justice (John 16:8-11), by the Spirit who is sent by the Father and the Son (14:26; 15:26; 16:7), and the bestowal of the seven spiritual gifts, identified with the seven pillars of wisdom upon which the Church is built—theologizing, it seems, on the repeated sentence "for the upbuilding of the Church" in Paul's delineation of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14). The seven gifts of the Spirit are identified in the above discussed rite of priestly ordination as truth, wisdom, understanding of the great Mystery, power, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord. The concluding hymns of the Canon highlight the biblical basis of the feast. In one (Miserere), the Johannine Paraclete is asked by the Son to comfort the apostles, and the experience in Acts is referred to as inebriation with the heavenly wine of wisdom. In the other (Laudate), the dominant roles of the Spirit in both Testaments are brought together: when God breathed his Spirit as he created man in his image and inspired the Law and the Prophets, and when the risen Christ breathed his Spirit upon the eleven disciples, saying "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). The opening and closing hymns of this Canon form some kind of a frame around the theme of the Creator Spirit, a theme brought up again in the Cantemus of the Canon of the Fourth Day.

In the Canon of the Third Day, the first set in the Cantemus connects the joy of Acts with that of the present; the second set dwells on three Old Testament events involving the Spirit: the confusion of tongues at Babel, now, as in St. Gregory Nazianzen, rectified by the pouring of tongues in the upper room;\(^{18}\) the leading of the tribes of Israel through the desert; and the inspiring of the craftsman Bezalel who made the tabernacle. By now, the Theology of the various hymns of the Canon become somewhat repetitious, and their contents assume the characteristics of topoi, with several sets of three stanzas addressed

\(^{18}\) Moreover, the tongues at Babel scatter, those in the upper room unite; as in St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration 41: On Pentecost*, 16; cf. The *Teaching of St. Gregory*, 581-586, 628-631.
respectively to the Father, Son, and Spirit, and the rest to express the present joy, like when rivers of wisdom flooded the streets of Jerusalem (Patrum). The rehearsal of the sevenfold graces or gifts of the Spirit is another commonplace. Not so prosaic, however, is the moving description of the inspired passage of Isaiah read by Jesus at the Synagogue in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." (Luke 4:18; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2; 11:2), compounding the effect of the Spirit's work (Miserere). The concluding Laudate reverberates the sheer joy in the Spirit.

The full contents of the Cantemus along with other hymns in the Canon of the Fourth Day have been given above, in our discussion of the order of baptism, and it is not necessary to repeat them here. However, the comparison and the contrast made between the physical birth by the first mother in pain and that of the spiritual, baptismal birth with joy in the Spirit ("This day the first mother's sorrowful and nocturnal pangs of giving birth have been loosed, for those who were born with body unto death and corruption have been born again by the Spirit to be sons of light of the heavenly Father"—third stanza of the first set in the Cantemus) compels us to invite attention once more to the discourses of St. Gregory Nazianzen, where the same comparison is found: "Of these the first is by night, and is servile, and involves passion; but the second is by day, and is destructive of passion, cutting off all the veil that is derived from birth, and leading on to the higher life" (Oration 40: On Baptism, 2). The brief Laudate refers to the prophecy of Joel (2:28-32), the intoxication of Peter spoken of in Acts (2:13-16), said to be with "the immortal cup," and the Spirit flowing like a river in Jerusalem—by now a topos (cf. John 7:38).

The attributes of the Holy Spirit are the subject of the Cantemus in the Canon of the Fifth Day. He is "the Spirit of Truth," "the dispenser of grace," "the fountain of wisdom," "the water of life," "the spring of Eden," etc. The Patrum again stresses the dogmatic points on the role and place of the Spirit within the Trinity. He is called "the heavenly fire, the one whom the Word brought down to the rational world." In the concluding Laudate, he is "the fountain of knowledge," "the Good News of the Father... to announce the Good News to Adam to return to Eden." Those renewed by the Spirit and who have become the children of light are summoned to worship and rejoice.

The Canon of the Sixth Day begins with similar attributes of the Spirit, the "immortalizing cup poured from heaven" and which was drank by the apostles; the "life-giving cup." He is the "living fire" which engulfs completely. It is particularly interesting to note the interchangeable roles of the Three Persons in the following triad (the second set of the Cantemus):
O God without beginning, Holy Spirit, you enlightened resplendently the predictions of the prophets, by pouring yourself abundantly on the apostles.

O timeless, Only-begotten Son, you fulfilled in the upper room the promised gifts of the good news, by pouring yourself abundantly on the apostles.

O heavenly, almighty Father, you granted to us earthlings the dawn of your indivisible light, by pouring yourself abundantly on the apostles.

These stanzas emphasize the foremost attributes of the Persons of the Trinity as consubstantial and co-eternal, their mode of existence and their equality, their co-operational relationship and yet distinctness. So much Theology is packed in these few lines. In the Patrum, the Spirit is “inexhaustible fountain of light” (so also in the Miserere), and the “cup” which the apostles drank “sprung in them the living fountain of wisdom.” The Spirit is the “miraculous divine light” who in the beginning of creation changed the darkness into light as “in a sweeping conflagration”; the same Spirit enlightens the apostles (Miserere). The Laudate concludes with the words: “You who always appear to the fiery beings like a flame with the full shine of the Sun, today you were poured from heaven like a cup with fiery taste on earthlings.” The sun imagery here has an antecedent in the Canon of the Fourth Day (used in the order of baptism), but with a possible allusion to Christ, the Sun of Righteousness.

The last Canon, that of the Seventh Day, resumes the “light” imagery throughout the Cantemus, and briefly in the middle of the short Miserere, where the “river” imagery is also brought up again. The most interesting part of this Canon, however, is the comprehensive dogmatic statement comprising the final and concluding hymn (Levavi). The dogmatic statement defining the role of the Holy Spirit is similar to the statement in the “Stichera on the Lauds” at the end of the Byzantine Canon. The statement itself, whether in Greek or Armenian, is a verbatim borrowing from St. Gregory Nazianzen (Oration 41: On Pentecost, 9). It is more than likely that St. Nerses

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20 The dependence of this constituent hymn on the corresponding Byzantine ode is well known (see M. Z. Demirjian, “The Hymns of Pentecost of the Armenian Apostolic Church: Translation with Theological Commentary,” unpublished M.Div. thesis, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY [1991], p. 9). However, for the patristic source I am indebted to A. Drost-Abgaryan and H. Goltz, “A Quotation from Gregory Nazianzen in the Sharaknoc,” paper read at the VIIe Congrès de l’Association
international des Etudes arméniennes, Louvain-la-Neuve, 4-7 Septembre, 1996. To illustrate the extent of the borrowing, in the following quotation from St. Gregory Nazianzen (Oration 41: On Pentecost, 9), I have highlighted the omissions in the Armenian and have indicated the additions in brackets; moreover, I have numbered the sequence of the stanzas as they appear in the Səraknc‘. The translation is that of C. G. Browne and J. E. Swallow, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, 7:382. “(1) The Holy Ghost, then, always existed, and exists, and always will exist. He neither had a beginning, nor will He have an end; but He was everlastingly ranged with and numbered with the Father and the Son. For it was not ever fitting that either the Son should be wanting to the Father, or the Spirit to the Son. For then Deity would be shorn of Its Glory in its greatest respect, for It would seem to have arrived at the consummation of perfection as if by an afterthought [Arm. adds the refrain: “and He is blessed forevermore]. (2) Therefore He was ever being partaken, but not partaking; perfecting, not being perfected; sanctifying, not being sanctified [Arm. transposes the last two words]; deifying, not being deified [Arm. adds the refrain: “and He is blessed forevermore]; (4) Himself ever the same with Himself, and with Those with Whom He is ranged; invisible, eternal, incomprehensible, unchangeable, [Arm. adds the refrain: “and He is blessed forevermore]; (5) without quality, without quantity [Arm. transposes the last two words], without form, impalpable, [Arm. adds the refrain: “and He is blessed forevermore]; (3) self-moving, eternally moving [Arm. transposes the last two words], with free-will, self-powerful, All-powerful—even though all that is of the Spirit is referable to the First Cause, just as is all that is of the Onlybegotten [Arm. adds, with the refrain: “for he breathes wherever He wills, as much as He likes, whenever and as much; and He is blessed forevermore]; (7) Life and Lifegiver; Light and Lightgiver; absolute Good, and Spring of Goodness; the Right, the Princely Spirit; [Arm. adds the refrain: “and He is blessed forevermore]; (6) the Lord, the Sender, the Separator; Builder of His own Temple; leading, working [better, Arm.: “strengthening”] as He wills; distributing [better, Arm.: “distributing as He wills] His own Gifts; [Arm. adds the refrain: “and He is blessed forevermore]; (8) the Spirit of adoption, of Truth, of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Knowledge, of Godliness, of Counsel, of Power [αὐτοπελεγμένοις, inadvertently omitted in Eng.], of Fear—which are ascribed to Him, by Whom the Father is known and the Son is glorified; and by Whom alone He is known; one class, one service, worship, power, perfection, sanctification [Arm. adds the refrain: “and He is blessed forevermore]. Why make a long discourse of it? All that the Father hath the Son hath also,
was familiar with the Byzantine Canon; however, he seems to have adapted the hymn from an existing Armenian translation of the Orations. Be that as it may, the purposeful borrowing should not be surprising since it was the outright intention of St. Nersès to uphold the unity of the Christian faith. His pioneering efforts to reconcile theologically the churches of the East and the West should not go unnoticed even here.

Notwithstanding their thematic repetitiousness, as well as the recurring blessing in every Patrum, the exaltation in every Magnificat, the begging for mercy in every Miserere, the rejoicing in every Laudate, and the praising in every Levavi, the Canons maintain some theological peculiarities through the different refrain(s) of each Cantemus. The refrains, themselves repetitious, help loose the

except the being Unbegotten; and all that the Son hath the Spirit hath also, except the Generation. And these two matter do not divide the Substance, as I understand it, but rather are divisions within the Substance."


In the Canon of the First Day: “...that is why we celebrate today your blessed coming” (second set in the Cantemus). In the Canon of the Second Day: “Make us drink as well, with your mercy, from the cup of wisdom... and cloth us with the light of your glory,” In the Canon of the Third Day: “Let every soul bless the Spirit of God”
redundancy found between several of these hymns, even the structurally identical patterns of some. More importantly, the hymns reflect a pneumatology based on a cumulative understanding of the scriptural readings for the entire week. After all, St. Nersés is the author not only of the Canons of the Second Day and beyond, but also of the entire liturgy for these days. His selections of scriptural readings are as much a commentary on his pneumatology as are his hymns of Pentecost. We would be hard pressed therefore to associate any of the hymns in a given Canon with a particular passage in the readings for that day as a theological backdrop or a source of inspiration for the composition. Some scattered connections between scriptural passages and certain stanzas could be made. But this does not represent the whole picture,

(second set in the Cantemus). In the Canon of the Fourth Day: "... and therefore we bow down to the Father in spirit and in truth," and "Spirit of God, have mercy." In the Canon of the Fifth Day: "Let us glorify Him with the 'Trisagion'" (second set in the Cantemus). In the Canon of the Sixth Day: "Blessed are you, Spirit of Truth... abundantly pour[ing] yourself on the apostles." In the Canon of the Seventh Day: "Blessed are you true Light," and "Blessing the Father, sender of the Word." A certain progression—conceivably experiential or participatory—is somewhat discernible in these refrains of the various days, with the seventh creating a triad for the Trinity.

24 The following structural pattern in sets of three stanzas (abc) within the Cantemus of the third / sixth / and seventh days is noteworthy: (a) the Spirit descends / is poured / flows; (b) the Spirit is given [to the apostles] / the apostles drank [of the Spirit] / the apostles are adorned by the Spirit; (c) "the children of the Church joyfully celebrate" / "the Gentile Church greatly rejoices" / "the apostles filled with joy, speak in exaltation" (adapted from Demirjian, "The Hymns of Pentecost," p. 39).

25 In the Canon of the First Day, Acts 2:1-21 (esp. vss. 1-4) is reflected in the first stanza of the Cantemus. In the Canon of the Second Day, Gen. 1:1-5 (esp. vs. 2b) is reflected in the second stanza of the Cantemus, Prov. 9:1-6 (esp. vs. 1) in the sixth stanza of the Cantemus, and Rom. 1:17 (esp. vs. 2) in the second stanza of the Laudate. In the Canon of the Third Day, Gen. 8:6-11 (esp. vs. 10) and John 1:29-34 (esp. vs. 32) are reflected in the third stanza of the Patrum. In the Canon of the Fourth Day, Gal. 4:1-7 (esp. vss. 6-7), is reflected in the second stanza of the Miserere, and Matt. 1:18-21 (esp. vss. 20-21) in the third stanza of the Cantemus. The concluding Levavi of the seventh day, with its battery of dogmatic statements, bears some semblance to the form of Wis. of Sol. 7:22-23, an apocryphal reading for that day. Thus far, our observations are adapted from Demirjian, "The Hymns of Pentecost," pp. 42-48 (he is silent regarding the readings for the sixth
since his hymns are informed by a theological understanding of more than sixty scriptural passages contemplated by him.\textsuperscript{26}

(III)

Although the Armenian Canons for the feast of Pentecost have not escaped the attention of researchers, especially of those interested in the hymnic tradition, there is but little interest in the Pneumatology of the Armenian Church in recent scholarship.\textsuperscript{27} The study of the subject in the pre-Chalcedonian writings attributed to St. Gregory the Illuminator would alone constitute a major undertaking, as would also that in the writings of St. Gregory of Narek (10th century)—not to mention the voluminous writings of St. Nersēs the Graceful or the dogmatic literature produced before his time. One could also draw a nearly complete Pneumatology of St. Nersēs, along with its attendant Christology, from his inspiring epic Jesus, the Son. Obviously, the Pneumatology of his hymns of Pentecost deserves an exhaustive study, but not apart from the decisive influence of the earlier Canon of the First Day. Ours is simply prolegomena, intended to draw attention to these hymns as prerequisites for any serious inquiry into the place and role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Armenian Church.

A point worth drawing attention to in our conclusion is the fact that the heavy dependence on St. Gregory Nazianzen notwithstanding, the Theology of these hymns is soundly rooted in the New Testament. The believers’ (or the author’s) awareness of the immediacy of the day, and the one he points out for the fifth day, Exodus 30:22-29a [esp. vs. 25] as a backdrop for the third stanza of the Laudate, is far stretched). Other direct or indirect connections cannot be ruled out. Even where established, the connections are extremely rare. However, there can be no doubt that certain readings for a particular day have some bearings on hymns for another day; e.g., 1 Sam. 16:12b-13, Samuel anointing David, a reading for the fourth day, must have inspired the first stanza of the Miserere for the third day: “You rested with seven-fold graces on the blossomed Scepter of Jesse...”; Luke 4:14-22, Jesus reading from Isaiah at the synagogue in Nazareth, a reading for the seventh day, must have inspired the second stanza of the same Miserere for the third day.

\textsuperscript{26} For the scriptural readings, see (Abp.) Khajag Barsamian, The Calendar of the Armenian Church (New York: St. Vartan Press, 1995), pp. 47-49. One minor correction: the first reading for the fourth day should be 1 Sam. 16:12b-13 (instead of 1 Kings 16:12-14).

Spirit is drawn from the Johannine Paraclete-sayings; their exuberant joy is drawn from the Lucan narrative in Acts; and their sense of participation in the life of Christ or the life of the Spirit owes much to Pauline Theology. The hymns capture well the gathering of the disciples in the upper room, the descent of the Spirit on the day that marks the birthday of Christianity, and the enjoining of the proclamation of the Gospel.

A clear consciousness of community characterizes all these hymns, reflecting a sense of identity, a distinctiveness of belonging to the new Israel. A most recurring imagery is that of the baptismal rebirth, renewal, and restoration. About the role of the Spirit in baptism we need add nothing to what we have said above. But two brief comments may be appropriate on the life and worship of the believing community (perhaps just of the authors). One is their exuberance and joy; they delighted in their worship and gatherings, as the repeated use of the words “joy” and “rejoicing” indicates. The second is their experiential awareness of the power of the Spirit in their midst, as indicated by the frequent use of the word “today.” The Spirit is “the heavenly Power... who operates in the saving mysteries this day.” These words from the end of the Canon of the First Day (Levavi) are a fitting summary of more than just the predominant thought of the earliest Canon, which by virtue of its antiquity must have influenced—if not inspired—the composition of the later six Canons by St. Nersēs, who seems to have been dependent also on inspiration by the very Spirit of whom he speaks.28 We see both spontaneity and structure in his compositions here as elsewhere in his writings.29

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AN ESSAY ON THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF YEZNIK BY BLANCHARD AND YOUNG

Thomas J. Samuelian

In Armenian tradition, translation is holy work. This is particularly apt to remember when considering this new English translation of one of the Holy Translators, Yeznik Koghbats’i.\(^1\) Yeznik was one of the circle of fifth-century Armenian clerics who under the tutelage of Sts. Sahak and Mesrop learned the new Armenian alphabet and used it to translate the Holy Book, and in Yeznik’s case, to create a work of theology. His *Yeghts Aghandots’, The Refutation of the Sects*, (which Monica J. Blanchard and Robin Darling Young, have called, “On God,” following L. Mariës’s functional classification of the book as a “De Deo”), is the earliest extant, sustained effort of the Armenian mind to attempt to understand the essence of God. Yeznik’s book survives today only in the single manuscript, Matenadaran No. 1097, dated 1280 A.D. copied by the scribe Lusser at the University of Gladzor, and rediscovered in 1902.\(^2\) However, the first publication of 1763 in Smyrna, was based on what appears to be a second, now lost manuscript, by the scribe Gevorg, that was used by the medieval professor, Tovma Metsopets’i (1378-11446), who also left notes in the margins of Matenadaran No. 1097.\(^3\) Since its rediscovery, Yeznik’s

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\(^2\) G. T. Mkrtch’ian and H. Y. Acharian, *Հեասահարի ՀՀ Հայաստանի ուսումնասիրություններ* (Vienna: Mkhit’arian Tparan, 1904), which is uncited by Blanchard and Young.

book has been published in several critical editions and translated into German, French, Modern Eastern Armenian, Modern Western Armenian, Russian, Italian, and twice into English, first in an abridgement for the Armenian Church's Christian Education Program in the United States, and now in the translation that is the subject of this review.

Blanchard and Young's book is divided into two parts: an historical/critical introduction and a translation. Without explanation, Blanchard and Young choose to use the French edition as the basis of their translation, rather than the more recent critical edition by Minassian which takes into fuller account the two recensions of this work. One would expect, at a minimum, that after the scholarly effort of nearly a century, when the full text was finally presented in English for an academic audience, the result would shed new light on the significance of the work, its text, its historical context and theological content, and that it would advance the translation of the text itself. Unfortunately, this edition, by design it appears, falls somewhat short of those expectations in both parts -- in the authors' words: "We have not attempted to address every question about Eznik's treatise, especially issues requiring a good understanding of the Armenian language. We have however, tried to give English readers a taste of the prose style of Eznik by following wherever possible the Armenian word order." [p.32]. (Unless otherwise noted, page numbers bracketed in the text refer to the book under review). Despite this disclaimer, Blanchard and Young make a number of assessments about Yeznik and his book and their place in Armenian political, theological and literary history as well as in the broader theological context of the time. The assessment of the significance of a book and its author depends in large part upon the way that the context is presented and the methods of assessment applied to the book and that context. For this reason, it is important to take a closer look both at the authors' presentation of the context and at their assessment of the book and its author.

The Introduction

On nearly every page of the Introduction there is a proposition about Armenian history or literature that is at best unsupported and at worst silent as to any scholarly debate surrounding the proposition. While a


proposition-by-proposition analysis is beyond the scope of a review, it is my duty as a reviewer to provide enough examples to support the proceeding observation and to put the reader on notice of the kinds of problems there may be with the book.

The introduction begins with an uncritical rehash of Armenian history and the development of Christianity in Armenia based on oblique references drawn from secondary sources. The first line states that the "[t]he conversation of Armenia is usually dated to 314." With the adverb "usually" and no citation, the introduction sidesteps the Armenian Church’s own records and tradition dating the adoption of Christianity as Armenia’s state religion to 301 and conflates the conversion of Armenia with the adoption of Christianity as Armenia’s state religion. It furthermore relegates the earlier Christian missionary work by the apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew to the status of a "fifth-century tradition," [p.6] making no mention of King Abgar and the early Armenian presence in the Holy Land at all. In a study that is trying to establish the significance of the first extant Christian apologetic work, the existence (or if Blanchard and Young want to refute it with facts and arguments, the non-existence) of this Christian tradition in Armenia and among Armenians would seem necessary for any reasonable assessment of Yeznik.

The introduction further asserts that the Armenians were “[l]iving in that region since ca. 600 BC and mingling with the native peoples of western Anatolia” without so much as a mention of the large body of scholarship, Armenian and non-Armenian, that concludes that the Armenians did not start living in the region in 600 BC, but are native to Armenia. Why this is relevant to the introduction to the translation of Yeznik’s book is unclear, but as long as it has been included, scholarly standards demand that it be properly supported and reflect the latest scholarship. Similarly, while acknowledging the existence of an Armenian monarchy and feudal system, the introduction anachronistically makes it seem that this monarchy emerged upon “the defeat of the Seleucids by the Romans in 190 BC [which] gave the Armenians an opportunity to establish national rule” [p.3] ignoring the

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formation of a state political structure that can be traced at least to 1200 BC, and that, between periods of independence and autonomy, was a vassal state of various conquerors. The Introduction correctly states that the Armenian Church has an "ancient and perduring involvement of lay Christians in the decisions of the church." [p.4] Then it asserts that this practice differs from that of the Roman church, attributing this difference, without any citation or factual argumentation, to the practice of appointing bishops to serve various nakharar families rather than geographic administrative structures, as if the nakharar families were not the administrative structures of Armenian self-governance during this period and as if lay Christians and secular powers have not been involved in the appointments of bishops, including the bishops of Rome and other large cities in the Roman Empire.

The Introduction states that "Armenia survived as a nation, where other small kingdoms of the Near East had not...because Christianity was ultimately a unifying force." [p.5] No one would deny that Christianity is an important, perhaps, the defining trait of Armenian identity and that the Armenian Church has been the institution that played the most significant role in the survival of the nation at many points in its history. But in a work focused on early Christian apologetics in Armenia, one would have expected some supporting evidence for this proposition and some effort to explain why other factors – such as language, social structure, political structure, cultural mores, legal codifications, an institutionalized military, a continuous tradition of local self-governance, geography and economic factors – were not as significant. This tendency to blur the facts about Armenian statehood is also manifested in the repeated use of the term "region of Armenia" [p.1,2,3] and phrases such as "autonomous region," [p.3,4] and "limited autonomy" [p.4], as if there were no country called Armenia that had its own sovereigns and was an independent political and geopolitical entity. It is patently unfounded to state that from the Persian overlordship of Armenia Major in the 5th century "independent political rule vanished until the twentieth century," ignoring the Bagratuni kingdom in Ani, the Cilician kingdom, the Zakarians in the Caucasus, and the Melikdoms of Arts‘akh.7

The Introduction states that "they [Koriwn, Eghishe, P‘arbets‘i] used Greek literary models, even though Syrian words and concepts survived in Armenian religious vocabulary, and Iranian culture and religion left a permanent legacy in all types of literature." [p.9] This is a sweeping statement and an interesting thesis, if it can be proved, but

it is unsupported by so much as footnote. Similarly, the discussion of the Armenian position vis-a-vis the Council of Chalcedon takes no note of numerous works of the late Abp. Tiran Nersoyan on Armenian Christology and does not appear to use, although cited in the bibliography, Karekin Catholicos’s book on the Council of Chalcedon. Finally, it fails to mention the recent joint statements by the Catholicos and Pope on this doctrinal issue.

Blanchard and Young state that "his work was left outside the mainstream of Armenian Christian literature." [p.12]. This is an interesting statement, repeated again in fn. 30, and again, in slightly different form, on page 17:

Eznik of Ko[b the Translator and Eznik Bishop of Bagrewand might have remained relatively minor and separate figures in the fifth-century history of the Armenian church, but for the eighteenth-century discovery of an Armenian manuscript, containing the treatise we call Eznik’s.

Each time, this disparagement of Yeznik is presented without citation, evidence or argumentation, except that “Eznik’s concerns for the church were rendered less relevant by historical events in the second part of the fifth century.” [p. 11] One could just as well say that Thomas Paine’s concerns were rendered less relevant by later historical events, but this would not support the proposition that Common Sense is outside the mainstream of American political literature. Moreover, this statement ignores the facts: Yeznik’s book was used as a text at the University of Gladzor, where it was copied in 1280 by the scribe Luser at the request of the founder of the University of Gladzor, Nerses Mshets’i, and bears the margin notes of the renowned medieval professor, Tovma Metsopets’i, who used Yeznik as a theology text. As duly noted in the Introduction [p.15], direct textual comparison shows that the two widely copied and important histories by Eghishe and Ghazar P’arbets’i quote an extensive passage from Yeznik. In addition, Yeznik appears to have been the author of the Armenian response to the Council of Chalcedon, a work no doubt well studied in the Armenian literary and ecclesiastical history. Yeznik is also cited by Vardan Aygeks’t’i (12th century) in a work dated before the earliest extant manuscript by Luser.

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8 See note 3 above.

9 Vardan Aygeks’t’i, Հայերեն գրային կրոնի էվոկացիա (dated 1205), Shahe Hayrapetian, ed. (Yerevan: Yerevan State University Theology Faculty, 1998), p. 58.
Finally, the phrase "containing the treatise we call Eznik's" seems to be a gratuitous casting of suspicion on his authorship, which has become de rigueur in western Armenology. The Introduction correctly points out that both Koriwn and Khorenats'i mention Yeznik and his theological work. What basis is there to conclude that this treatise, which bears his name, is not the treatise that Koriwn and Khorenats'i describe him writing? Interestingly, the Introduction notes that Yeznik took an unauthorized excursion to Constantinople, which is corroborated by his letter of apology to Mesrop Mashtots'. This episode is missing from Koriwn, whom the authors accept as a fifth-century contemporary of Yeznik, but is inexplicably mentioned by Khorenats'i, whom they describe in the Introduction as an eighth-century (rather than fifth-century) author, despite the fact that he relates information about Yeznik that Koriwn did not.

In short, it is not that it is not possible to present and test such hypotheses, but at a minimum one would expect in a study such as this that the authors would take some pains to establish the facts showing, if it can be shown, that the subject of their study remained outside the mainstream of Armenian Christian literature and then, explain, if possible, why they believe this is so. Or if it can be shown that the book was not written by Yeznik Koghbangts'i, then this should be demonstrated after the facts have been clearly set forth, verified, and weighed.

In addition, there are numerous works, particularly in Armenian, that one would have expected to have been dealt with and mentioned in what aims to be the basic scholarly edition of Yeznik in English.10 One leaves this book hungry for a balanced and circumspect assessment of the influence of Yeznik, his ideas, and his book, of its value in relation to earlier, contemporary, or later Christian apologetics, or of the body of scholarship in and outside of Armenia relating to the text, Yeznik's life and his historical/literary context.

The Translation

For the monolingual English speaker, any English translation is better than no translation at all. And on the whole, this translation conveys

10 E.g., Levon Khachikian, "Հերեր Յեզիկի եվրոպական եկեղեցին" (Yerevan: Yerevan State University, 1984), 498; G. Khlopian, on Yeznik Koghbangts'i, in B. Aghayan et al., eds., Հերեր Յեզիկի եվրոպական եկեղեցին V-XVIII դարեր (Yerevan: Yerevan State University, 1976), pp. 42-58.
the key topics and ideas presented by Yeznik in his book, which is admittedly at times very difficult to translate. However, for the rare monolingual English-speaking scholar that decides to cite or discuss Yeznik, this translation could be problematic. Take the first line, for example:

When concerning the Invisible One and His eternal power someone intends to discourse, because he has become corporeal he has to cleanse his mind and to purify his thoughts, to clear up the confusion of impulses in order to be able to attain what he has proposed. [Yeznik 1,1, p.33]

As promised, the authors have preserved the word order of the first clause (why word order, rather than lexical precision, or felicitous conveyance of ideas into English is particularly important is not explained). Even without looking at the original, a major mistranslation is evident. "Someone" refers to an ordinary human being and the corporeal human condition that limits and hampers human understanding of the divine. The translation, "because he has become corporeal," however, sounds like a reference to the Incarnation. Human beings do not become corporeal, they are corporeal. Nor is Yeznik suggesting that all human beings have been incarnated.

The Classical Armenian text uses the past participle of the verb to be, իցիչ (izch), which is often translated as created or born, e.g., "He said that unto him in Bethlehem the prophet will be born. հոգևոր իցիչ (hogevor izch) (q.v. իցիչ, Nor paigirk‘ haykazean lezui). Indeed, Yeznik uses իցիչ “made, created” in parallel: իցիչ (izch) but two lines later իցիչ (izch) իցիչ (izch) իցիչ (izch) "created by the good creator" (Yeznik 1:15, Blanchard and Young, para. 66,67). Here, the past participle could be translated being or creature (that which has been created or born), as Blanchard and Young translate it in para. 66, “created.”¹¹ In addition

¹¹ The use of իցիչ to mean “created” is found in other fifth-century works as well: P’austos Biwzand, ընտանի այսօտտա (syntan iastottta), իցիչ իցիչ (izch izch), “for that was the place created for our nation” (IV, 54);
to this mistranslation, there are imprecisions in the syntax, tenses, pronoun references, and lexicon, each of which subtly affects the English reader’s understanding of Yeznik’s purpose, his understanding of the relationship between God and humans, and his understanding of the obstacles to achieving that purpose: comprehension of the Divine. The various obstacles that human beings face are not so much in attaining what they propose, as rendered by Blanchard and Young and Mariès’s French translation, but the human mind’s inability to apprehend God. In Classical Armenian, both in liturgy and prayers, God is ունկույր or ունկույրելներ, incomprehensible, unreachable, and in Armenian, even to this day, when one does not understand something, one’s mind didn’t reach it. Finally, the use of the present subjunctive in the first clause is conditioned upon the subordinate conjunction when, which is often followed by a subjunctive, and does not warrant translation as "intends to discourse."12 The passage might be more precisely translated as follows:

When one discourses about the Invisible and His eternal power, inasmuch as one is a corporeal being, one must clear one’s mind, purify one’s thoughts and calm the agitation of one’s emotions, so that one might apprehend that which one has placed before oneself.

Throughout the translation, in innumerable, small and imperceptible ways, some of Yeznik’s meaning may be lost to the English reader of this translation. Of course, this may be unavoidable. There are very good arguments that any serious attempt to understand a philosophical or theological work requires reference to the original.

The inclusion of the earliest Armenian Christian apologist in the series entitled Eastern Christian Texts in Translation, of which one of the authors is a Managing Editor and the other an editor, is to be

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12 Blanchard and Young appear to have been following Mariès’s French translation, at least in part, since several of the departures from the Classical Armenian text are paralleled in the French as highlighted: “Lorsque, de l’Invisible et de sa puisance éternelle, quelqu’un veut faire une harangue, parce qu’il est né corporel, il lui faut esprit clarifier et pensées épurer, transport de mouvements (intérieurs) acçois, pour qu’au but qu’il s’est proposé, il puisse effectivement atteindre.” However, they did not adopt his translation of տեղ, which he translates as né, “born.”
welcomed. In light of the at times disconcerting shortcomings of this book, one wonders whether the Board and independent reviewers paid sufficient attention to their duty not only to approve the book but also to improve it before publication. This is especially important in that the book's main new audience is an English-speaking readership that, presumably, needs this translation since it is unable to read the original or translations in other languages. One hopes that before this team attempts another foray into Armenian Christian literature, they attend more carefully to the historical background and linguistic precision necessary to perform the scholarly service they undoubtedly intended to perform. Would that this translation were worthy of this Holy Translator.
VIRTUE ETHICS IN ANGST: A CRITICAL LOOK
AT VIGEN GUROIAN

Michael Merry

Here we will consider, and to some extent, critique the paper of Vigen Guroian\(^1\) as found in a recent annual of *The Society of Christian Ethics*. Guroian is something of a Burkean conservative in his political outlook. To this is added no small amount of what he calls, "Cappadocian" flare, or, if one prefers, Armenian Orthodox forthrightness. Guroian is in earnest to attack what he perceives to be a rampant "ethical relativism" that has been given sanction by our postliberal and postmodern age. The tone of Guroian's paper is that of strident alarm as he endeavors to troubleshoot and set aright the alleged collapse of ethical fortitude and "epistemological realism." In order to do this, Guroian unambiguously sets out to reinstate a "universalistic anthropology" that he is certain will overthrow whatever expeditious embrace of controvertible assumptions beset our theologians nowadays. Indeed, he seems inordinately worried that we very well may be approaching an "invitation to a new Christian nihilism."

Notwithstanding the fact that Guroian's paper carries a powerfully disturbing apocalyptic tone, we must address some of his polemic and, come what may, steer around his dire assortment of culture-denigrating agony. Guroian asks:

Could this new religious communitarianism and the postmodernist paean for pragmatic pluralism be a dress rehearsal for increased inter-communal conflict [...]? (303)

But it is not clear to me just what postmodernism *an sich* has to do with inter-communal conflict, or any other conflict for that matter. Inter-communal conflict occurs at every level in every society, modern or primitive; our age is arguably no better or worse than any other prior to our own. (It was not without good reason that Flaubert said, "our

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ignorance of history causes us to slander our own time.”) Still, how does one get around the unbelievably pessimistic commentary of Guroian, who actually believes that we “may be visited by a demonic fury [that] willfully wreaks its awful destruction upon a culture from which belief in a common humanity and a universal law has been evacuated [?]” (303).

Next Guroian marshals a discussion on human rights. He is quite convinced that

The liberal theory of human rights [does not have] much staying power outside of certain historic political societies where in fact a deeply embedded tradition of democratic constitutionalism already exists (304).

Now I will not contest that human rights is a discourse that is first and foremost rooted in “historic political societies [with] a deeply embedded tradition of democratic constitutionalism,” in particular Western ones. But then to suggest that our international human rights movement is the “migrated” fruit of liberal Protestantism’s “spirit of benevolence and faith in reason and democratic progress” (304) smells too much of a non-sequitur. And while Guroian insists that “the modern human rights project has yet to prove that it makes a believable difference,” (305) this may appear to be picking at straws. After all, is not any attempt to improve the quality of life worth pursuing? Mother Theresa of Calcutta was surely outnumbered by the hundreds of millions of India, but does this diminish her charitable effort—which stretched for decades—in any way?

To be sure, ‘human rights’ will never, as Guroian correctly points out, really “shield [anyone] against intractable ethnic animosities, old religious hatreds, and collective scapegoating” (305). But is that any reason to castigate its noble intentions, or better, its worthwhile accomplishments? Again, it is true to say that ‘human rights’ are “subject to misuse” in the same way as the world’s religions are, but now to repeat myself, should they be stopped on account of a potential abuse? To reason in this direction only lands one in the rather unfortunate position of impugning the very existence of religion on the same grounds. Institutionalized and non-institutionalized religions (e.g., cults), after all, are culpable for an ample amount of violence, both toward the psychological and physical of course, but also the spiritual well being of persons.

But finally Guroian oversteps his circumscribed bounds and begins (in a fury?) to multiply his dubious assertions with embarrassing consistency. For his “third and most radical point” is that we should believe the ‘human rights’ project to be not only a “secularistic” scheme, but more forcefully, “atheistic” (305). From this point,
Guroian is at pains to convince his reader that the Christian faith has provided the basis for human rights. There can be little doubt that Guroian interprets the human rights enterprise as a bastardized Christianity, or perhaps more insidiously, its nemesis. This would appear to be because to join the human rights project, so the argument goes, one would have to concede that

Powerful forces would have one eschew these religious convictions, or at least subordinate them in deference to so-called objective norms of reason and positive law (306).

Guroian’s chief contention with this, apart from the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not contain the Decalogue [1], is that it “ultimately refuses to honor God, certainly in any public way” (306). But I am extremely perplexed by this denouncement of human rights as a “practical atheism” and find Guroian to be championing fundamentalist views, the likes of which one witnesses from America’s Religious Right.

Guroian’s stance makes me wonder whether he actually believes in the goodness of Creation, or whether, in consonant strain with John Calvin, we are all damned save for the fortunate ‘elect’. There is no mention—how very odd—of humankind being made in the image and likeness of God, 2 nor is there any mention of virtue being attainable outside of religious, and specifically Christian, convictions. Instead, we are trampled underfoot with invectives like the following: “if human beings do not worship and pray and repent, then human rights are already deeply in trouble” (306).

One gets the feeling in listening to Guroian’s jeremiad that we are sitting in a Presbyterian Sunday School, being told that we are sinful, depraved and have unlawfully contravened the bounds of our freedom. In order to buttress his harangue with quotations, he avails himself of two prominent spokespersons of Eastern Europe (Havel and Solzhenitsyn) who, like the title of a book suggests, make bold to speak ‘from under the rubble’. And while it is not my intention to marginalize the importance of Havel and Solzhenitsyn—both of whom are rightly hailed as literary and political heroes—it must be said that their testimony in no way speaks pertinently to the issue of human virtue. 3 Both men, after all, witnessed untold suffering at the hands of an explicitly and even militantly atheistic, anti-religious socialist enterprise run amok. Millions of lives were thoughtlessly sacrificed on the altar of ‘human progress’ and given approval by the leaders of the state. To my knowledge, the ‘human rights movement’ as such is not

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2 Gen. 5:1.
anti-religious, but does not, simply put, consider religion to be its primary inspiration.

Guroian then states his primary fear in no uncertain terms, viz., that "autonomous reason is what the modern human rights project is really about [...]" (307) and continues with a digression into one of the monastic leitmotifs of the Orthodox East, namely that of our 'gnomic will' that is "subject to corruption, capable of lending infinite justifications to the libido dominandi" (307). But gladly, not everything in Guroian's article is so gloomy.

The strength of Guroian's article—alas, by now relegated nearly to a footnote—is the perfectly plausible claim that human rights as we have come to know them "reflect the laws and customs of nations, by which the human race has more [or] less successfully articulated the normativity of what it means to be human" (308). Of course to this religious persons aptly contribute to—or revise if necessary—the language used of the human rights Declaration. Christians would naturally want to add their beliefs in a personhood that is ultimately informed by knowledge (and, one might hope, experience) of Jesus Christ and His incarnational role in salvation. Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Buddhists will each, in turn, substitute the respective components that make each one what they are.

Guroian—by now taking us completely by surprise—is also correct to underscore the fact that

The justice that would be measured by so-called universal human rights is historically embodied justice and never more than a rough approximation of the righteousness and love of the kingdom of God (308).

No theist true to his principles would disagree. And fortunately even Guroian is (reluctantly?) willing to admit that "this justice is real" (309) all the same, because justice and freedom belong to human

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3 Havel spoke truthfully enough when he said, "we are going through a great departure from God which has no parallel in history." V. Havel, Disturbing the Peace, trans. P. Wilson (New York, 1990), p. 11. But given his context, we can fairly mitigate the import of this sweeping indictment. The resurgence of religious practice throughout Eastern Europe only points to the relative nature of his comments. To be sure, there is much "godlessness," but very little of it, I'm convinced, is an explicit atheism, which seems to be Guroian's point.

4 Guroian wrote, "more and less [...] ."

5 Guroian comments at the end of his text—as if to proffer us his belated caveat—that he is no "enemy of human rights" (309).
nature, and though he doesn’t say it, we have these owing to our being made in God’s image.

Finally, Guroian offers us a challenge. He refers to it as the “social gospel” of Orthodox Christianity. Here I will quote the task he sets before us:

If the gospel is proclaimed by the prophet, preached by the church, and developed in every sector of life within the Orthodox lands that have been liberated from Soviet tyranny, it will do far more to preserve human dignity than all the lists of human rights enshrined in our modern documents (308).

If this Christian utopianism were actually realizable, we would indeed have the magnanimous preservation of human dignity Guroian speaks about so eloquently in this statement. The painfully obvious problem with his clarion call to uphold human dignity, however, is the gnawing socio-political reality of Eastern Europe—’Orthodox lands’ if you will—where freedom of religion and personal liberties generally are violated in the most egregious way. This is not strictly speaking an Orthodox problem in the so-called East either. The manner in which the Orthodox Church of Greece, for instance, pushes its government to disadvantage minority groups is not merely intolerant; it is deeply offensive as well. The legislation ratified in Russia (c. 1993) to discriminate against the freedoms of religious minorities appears incorrigibly medieval to the outsider. Our Eastern Catholic brethren are, it is to be lamented, continuously denounced as “fence-riders.” The examples overseas could be multiplied at will. And in this country, too, our Orthodox churches appear to the watching world to be paranoid traditionalists who feel—as palpably as one’s very breath—that any kind of change must be bad change. We appear to live for the status quo and have forgotten our telos.

And this, at long last, brings me to the point of this entire discussion. For the ethics of virtue is concerned, it seems to me, with moral development. One does not speak of acquiring virtue by happenstance or ecclesial affiliation. We Orthodox, each and every one of us, employ high-minded principles of “tolerance” and affirm the freedom of others to follow the exigencies of his or her conscience. But in actual practice, we appear to fail miserably on these points with scandalous regularity. And while there are serious criticisms to be brought against pluralist theologians such as Knitter and Hick, are they

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not right to call attention to the *ethical* impetus the world over? Are they not right, at the very least, to challenge us to take our rhetoric seriously? (And was this not the admonition of Pelagius?) For when we say, as we are certainly wont to, that "the kingdom of God is more real than any theory of justice formulated by human beings at any given moment in history, including the modern concept of human rights" (308), ought we not to live up to that which we claim to be self-evident?

In closing, then, one thing remains, and that is this: we must begin to live as though the 'mind of Christ'\(^8\) were not some mere platitude, but rather concrete, existential reality. For it seems to me that the Orthodox have spoken for centuries about an eschatological reality (usually couched as a *telos* in the mystical present) with precious little concern for actually living it in the here and now, with all of the social and political implications in tow—our insistence to the contrary notwithstanding. We are correct to speak of transformation, of striving, of practice—and, *à la* MacIntyre, each within the context of community with appropriate narratives, liturgies and mentors—but unless we see these things as a means to godlikeness and not an end in themselves, can we really expect our neighbor to see the 'fruits of the Spirit'\(^9\) we blithely believe ourselves to manifest? Here I strongly suspect that Guroian and I are in complete agreement.

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\(^8\) I Cor. 2:16.

\(^9\) Gal. 5:22.
BOOK REVIEWS


Reviewed by Abraham Terian

Reading the first volume of a newly inaugurated series devoted to Christian oriental texts in translation is as thrilling as entering through the gate of a medieval city for the first time. One becomes immediately anxious to look for more things around the corner. Bernard Coulie, the "General Secretary" of the series observes in the "Foreword": "A growing interest among a broader public in the sources and traditions of eastern Christianity has made it opportune to provide readers with easily available and scientifically sound translations." The new series complements the older and well known series *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* by making the classics of eastern Christianity more accessible to the general public through new translations. The new series is, in effect, a step-child of *CSCO*. The choice of Abu Qurrah's (c.755-830) treatise on the veneration of icons, an Arabic document treating a subject of no less interest to Western Christianity and translated by a distinguished scholar, is certainly an excellent start for the series.

At the time when Abu Qurrah wrote his treatise the Second Council of Nicaea (A.D. 787) was history. At this the Seventh General Council (in the estimate of the Greek Church, the last), assembled in the famed city of the First Council, it was decreed that "... the honor which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents, and he who shows reverence to the image shows reverence to the subject represented in it." Abu Qurrah amplifies the conciliar decree by expanding on the theme that veneration of icons does not constitute idolatry.

Abu Qurrah should be of interest to scholars in Armenian studies not only because of the existence of an early Iconoclast movement condemning the veneration of images in Armenia, attested by Vrt'annës K'ert'ol (c.550-c.620) whose apology for images is possibly the earliest such work in its genre, but also because Abu Qurrah
traveled to Armenia in 813/4 to argue for Chalcedonian Christology with an intent to dissuade the Armenians from their anti-Chalcedonian stance; this according to Michael the Syrian, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch (1126-1199) of whose history there is an ancient Armenian translation. As a missionary to the Armenians, Abu Qurrah was manifesting with zealous fervor the passionate Christology of the Lavra of St. Sabas in the desert of Judea, where he was a monk and where sentiments against anti-Chalcedonian Armenians ran high for a period—while Chalcedonian Armenians were being embraced and accommodated.

The treatise in twenty-four chapters is aimed at convincing Christians (much as John of Damascus, c.675-753/4, had done earlier, cf. The Fountain of Knowledge, a refutation of heretical teaching, including Islam and Iconoclasm), that the veneration of icons does not constitute idolatry as Jews and Moslems constantly charge—especially in Edessa, where the legendary icon of Christ was enshrined. Griffith delineates Abu Qurrah’s five main arguments as follows: (1) images do not necessarily imply corporeality or bodiliness to God; (2) to denounce the veneration of icons on the basis of not having specific injunction in the New Testament for such adoration is tantamount to denouncing several apostolic traditions and practices on which the Scriptures are silent, such as the eucharistic formuale; (3) the fathers attest to the use of icons even since the first century; (4) icons are not idols and therefore the Mosaic prohibition of idolatry does not apply to the veneration of icons, which is adoration to God and honor to the saints; and (5) Scriptural examples abound to meet each of the specific charges brought by the opponents.

Even for the Western Church, there is little to learn from the logic of this eastern scholar living in the Age of Charlemagne. Among the few contributions to the developing theology of icons one may cite a point made at the conclusion of ch. XIII, where Abu Qurrah refers to the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel drawing “icons” of Babylon and Jerusalem in their writings: “As for writing, it is equivalent to the icon in this respect. What one does with it is what makes the contact with that which it indicates, just as what one does with the icon makes the contact with that of which it is the icon.” Griffith explains: “The insistence on the idea that what one does with an icon is what makes the contact between the icon and the person whom the icon represents is one of Abu Qurrah’s contributions... His thinking on the subject may be said to be ‘functionalist’, even liturgical, rather than ‘essentialist’” (pp. 66-67 and n. 97). As for the notion that the icon is equivalent to text, it is found also in the above mentioned apology for icons by Vrt’annēs K’ert’ōl, who also makes special mention of the icon of Christ in Edessa and provides an illustration that closely parallels the thought just quoted (on the authority of Severian, Bishop
of Gabala, of an absentee king whose presence is acknowledged through his portrait: "when the king is absent... his portrait occupies the place of the king" and people prostrate before it, "not focusing on the wood but on the image of the king; they do not venerate the substance but that which has been imprinted on it").

Griffith's translation follows the 1986 edition of the critical text by Ignace Dick, based on the two surviving manuscripts (British Library Oriental MS 4950, dated 877, and St. Catherine Arabic MS 330, dated tenth century). The early dates of the manuscripts notwithstanding, the abstracts at the heads of the chapters "suggest that what we have before us is an edited recension of the original work" (p. 28). The translation is fluid and enhanced by few pertinent notes which not only dwell on features of the text but also provide analytical explanations of the author's thought.

The only negative—albeit insignificant—criticism pertains to editorial oversights resulting perhaps from a hurried production, such as the duplus "By" on the title-page, and "Chapter I" of the text beginning at the bottom two lines of p. 28, immediately following the "Introduction." Moreover, a word by the series editor on projected titles would have been helpful to would-be-subscribers to the newly introduced series. Among the positive features one may cite the ever increasing popularity of placing the bibliography at the beginning of the volume instead of at the end.

All said, and judging from the first volume, the series promises to be meritorious. One cannot help but wait for the forthcoming translations.

Reviewed by Michael Daniel Findikyan

Easily the least known and studied of the eastern rites, the Ethiopian liturgical tradition reveals a number of highly original and remarkably ancient features. The cradle of the ancient Ethiopian Church was the city of Aksum in northern Ethiopia. Just a few years after St. Gregory was baptizing the Armenian King Trdat and his court in the opening years of the fourth century, tradition has it that Christianity was brought to the Kingdom of Aksum by St. Frumentius, a Roman citizen from Tyre. In Ge’ez, the ancient Christian language of Ethiopia, St. Frumentius is called kásáth-berhan, “Illuminator,” like St.Gregory’s title, Lusauri, a reference to baptism; in the early church baptism was referred to as “illumination.” Like the Armenian Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church rejected Chalcedonian Christology, and, situated far from the hubs of Byzantine civilization, cultivated a liturgical expression that is in many aspects strikingly different than those we encounter in the textbooks. When considering the Ethiopian Rite (not to mention the Armenian, Coptic and Syriac Rites), it behooves us to recall that Constantinople already represents “the West”; that, after all, “the Christian East” is a rather relative term.

This is the first systematic and synthetic study of the Ethiopian Daily Office in a western language. The study is divided into three parts. Part One describes, in two chapters, the liturgical books of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The author assesses the traditional dating and attribution of these books, especially the principal book of the Ethiopian Office, the Māshāfā Deggwā, which contains the hymns or troparia sung during the daily services.

Part Two describes six structural constituents of the Ethiopian Office: Invitatory prayers; various prayer genres including litanic and intercessory prayers recited during the offices by the presiding cleric; Psalmody; hynmology, Biblical and extra-Biblical lections, and sacred music, including instrumental music and sacred dance. Some structures such as the Trisagion, the Old Testament canticles, and antiphonal psalmody are common to the Daily Office in nearly all rites. In such cases a comparative view provides the author with a framework within which to clarify the distinctive use of these structures in the Ethiopian Rite. Where there is no obvious analog with other rites the author’s approach is perforce largely descriptive. For each liturgical unit, the
author begins by analyzing the etymology of the liturgical nomenclature, seeking clues regarding the origin of the various liturgical units. The author deftly enumerates and evaluates existing theories and not infrequently advances new hypotheses based on his own assessment of the evidence. This is followed by a description of the use of the structures in present practice, and observations on their historical evolution where possible. In this way, Habtemichael-Kidane subjects some aspects and components of the Ethiopian Office to primary analysis from the perspective of comparative liturgy for the very first time.

Particularly rich and complex in the Ethiopian Rite is the use of hymnology. The author devotes an entire chapter to describing its various genres. More than a dozen distinct hymnographic genres are enumerated, some associated with specific biblical texts, others simply reflecting the central theme of the particular hour being celebrated. One of the more salient features of Ethiopian hymnology is the genre of improvised hymns known as Qene. The Qene is a relatively short, rhymed hymn of praise and thanksgiving, which is performed spontaneously by the Dábára, or professional cantors, during various festal offices and the Eucharist. Some believe that the improvised worship form developed as an almost charismatic demonstration of the worshipper’s subjection and obedience to God. Others interpret the practice of spontaneous hymnody as the result of spiritual discipline allowing the composer to fully control and focus his senses and intellect toward the worship of God. Either way, the resulting hymns are often esoteric, the obscure words and subtle biblical allusions rendering the sense of the hymn practically incomprehensible to the people. The author concludes his discussion of hymnography with the critical observation that the Ethiopian Office has been largely “suffocated” by hymnography, much of it late in origin and unintelligible to the people: “One would wish for the courage to eliminate the Qene, which, for the Ethiopian Christian people, are nearly useless” (223).

In the third part of the work, the author discusses the daily cursus and its liturgical structure, emphasizing the Morning and Evening Hours. The latter are clearly of the Cathedral tradition, Pss 140 and 62 standing out as the heart of Vespers (Wazema) and Matins (Sebhatá Nágéd), respectively. The popular character of the two principal hours has gradually been weighed down, however, by later developments which mask the original liturgical foci of the Office. In his Epilogue (pp. 359-370), the author evaluates the need, and makes a number of specific recommendations for a reform of the Degg-wa. These include highlighting texts from sacred Scripture where these have been smothered by hymnography, hagiography, and other extra-biblical texts. The author favors suppressing or at least diminishing some of the more
esoteric hymnographic genres, particularly those which are largely unintelligible to the people, and in so doing, producing an Office better suited to modern exigencies.

One of the most welcome features of this work, especially for those who, like myself, may never have the temerity to explore this rich and intricate area in depth, is the Glossary which constitutes Appendix 3. In nine pages the author presents an exhaustive list of the liturgical terms encountered in the work; in transliteration and in Ge'ez, with succinct yet thorough definitions. As I ventured through the pages of Habtemichael-Kidane's work, I referred constantly to the Glossary to recall the meanings of technical terms repeated in the text. The Glossary is preceded by a list of manuscripts consulted, and a table of months in the traditional Ethiopian calendar. Three indices round out the volume: An Index of Canticles and Psalms Cited, an Index of Persons and Places, and a Topical Index.

A glance at the extensive bibliography prefacing this volume (20-34) shows the extent of Habtemichael-Kidane's achievement. He has distilled the fruits of a vast literature, much of it by Ethiopian authors, producing an indispensable work for specialists in Ethiopic studies, as well as for orientalists and comparative liturgiologists who do not possess the linguistic tools and research experience needed for independent study in the field of Ethiopian Liturgy. Habtemichael-Kidane's exacting work will no doubt be the cornerstone of much future study of this ancient and venerable Christian tradition.

Reviewed by Robert H. Hewsen

Once again, George Bournoutian, Professor of history at Iona College in New Rochelle, New York, has made a major contribution to the elucidation of the history of Armenia in what remains its last "dark age," the much-neglected period between the time of Nadir Shah and the tsarist occupation and administration of Eastern Armenia. In this volume, he has assembled an anthology of 450 documents covering almost a century of Armenian history, which he has painstakingly translated from Russian, Armenian, Persian and Turkish into excellent and readable English. The documents include letters, surveys, military reports, decrees and excerpts from diaries, all of them of the highest interest. The documents have been arranged into eleven chapters according to the administration of the various Russian governors and viceroys of Transcaucasia.

The authors of these documents include tsars, generals, lesser officers, katholikoi, archbishops, bishops, vardapets, diplomats, statesmen, consuls, Georgian princes, Persian shahs, Russian viceroys, Muslim khans and Armenian meliks, many of them formerly mere names mentioned only in passing in previous historical works but who here spring to life as real people as we read of their concerns and activities in their own words. Many of these documents have been previously published in various archival collections (the famed but difficult to access 12-volume Akty sobranne Kavkazskoi Arkheographitcheskoii Kommissieii), but have never been made available in a Western language; others have been drawn from the Central State Archives in Erevan, the Central State Historical Archives of Georgia, The Matenadaran Archives in Erevan, the Central State Archives of Ancient Documents, the Archives of Foreign Policy, the Central State Archives of Military History and the Central State Historical Archives (the last last four housed in Russia), and have never been published at all.

Of general interest will be the documents that represent surveys taken by the tsarist administration to determine exactly what they had acquired from the Persians in the wars that occupied the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Document 101 comprises a short survey of Ganja (Elizavetpol/Kirovabad, now Ganja, once again) dated 4 March 1804; 253 is as succinct survey of the Armenians in every district in Transcaucasia in 1822. 256 is a survey of Karabagh - the first ever
made - conducted in 1823; 291 consists of General Paskievich's notes on the Armenian battalions under his command in 1827; 323 is a report on the Armenians of Turkey and Iran dated 26 Oct. 1828; 348 is a survey of the Russian Armenian Province dated May, 1832 and giving a detailed census of the towns of Erevan, Nakhichevan and Ordubat in which we find that there were just over 250 churches in the province; 354 is as report on Eastern Transcaucasia from 1833; 363 contains the full text of the Polozhenie or statute of 11 March 1836 establishing the regulations under which the Armenian Church was to be administered in the Russian Empire; 373 is a report on the Armenian Catholics and their settlement in the Akhaltsikhe district dated 13 October 1841; and document 383 is a survey of the whole of Transcaucasia dated 1843. The documents in section XI will be of special interest to students of the Armenian Question dealing as they do with Armenian political activities in Transcaucasia and Eastern Anatolia.

Of particular interest to this reviewer were the many documents by and about the Armenian meliks of Karabagh and other places in South Caucasus. I was especially gratified to find a clear statement by the Khan of Karabagh that the renowned Russia Armenian general, Prince Valerian Grigorievich Madatov, whom he had known since childhood, was of the house of Melik-Shahbazarian. Although his melik's origin seemed indisputable, and I strongly suspected that he was a Shahbazarid scion, I was never fully certain until I read document 226.

Among the many fascinating details of Armenian history that we encounter in these documents is the fact that there were no less than nine Armenian villages in the vicinity of the remote town of Derbent in Daghestan (Doc.1); that the Armenians of the five melikdoms of Karabagh numbered 11,000 families (Doc. 5) or about 60,000 people (compared with c.150,000 today); that Swiss missionaries were active in Karabagh when the Russians arrived (349) and had opened a school in Shushi as early as 1827; that there were Muslim meliks in Karabagh who had once been Armenian Christians (354); that as recently as 1822 the soon-to-be boom town of Baku still had but forty-seven Armenian households and a single church; that in 1843 the Armenians of Transcaucasia numbered some 282,339 out of a total population of 1,483,392; that the monks of Etchmiadzin once donated 50 bottles of vodka, 150 bottles of wine, 15 puds of fine wheat, 150 puds of flour, 10 pigs and 3 bulls (397) so that the local Russian garrison might celebrate Christmas in a suitable manner! One document (252), a decree of General Ermolov to the people of Karabagh, tersely announces a major event in the history of the region, its annexation by the Russian Empire: "It is with great surprise that I announce the betrayal and fleeing of Mahdi-qoli Khan of Karabagh to Persia! I hereby announce that the khanate of Karabagh from this moment on is subject to the Russian Empire. The rule of the khan is forever terminated and I shall
send special officials to administer the area.”

Ethnographic and economic data abound in the 450 documents gathered by Bournoutian and only await the graduate student’s attention. Indeed, more than one dissertation might be mined from their contents. For example, one might fruitfully use this book as the starting point for a study of Russian policy towards the population of Transcaucasia, and the techniques used to manage the multi-ethnic natives, whose various religious confessions included both Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, Christians of different sects and also various Jewish elements.

Apart from an excellent Introduction that prepares the reader for what is to follow, Bournoutian has supplied his anthology with a detailed annotation that greatly clarifies much that would otherwise be obscure in the history of this little known period, and he follows the documents, themselves, with a commentary that brings the total collection into focus. Appendices include a list of Russian, Persian, Georgian and Ottoman rulers in the period under consideration, a list of Russian administrative chiefs in Transcaucasia, the Table of Ranks established by Peter the Great and in force until the Revolution, a glossary of place-names, a glossary of terms, and a thirty-six page biographical directory that is extremely useful. Altogether, Professor Bournoutian has supplied us with a major work of scholarship that will be of inestimable value to all those of us who are concerned with the tsarist period in Armenian history.

There are, of course, a few errors which is only to be expected in a work of this size and complexity. In particular, it should be noted that the famous Armenian Archbishop, Joseph Prince Argutinsky-Dolgoruky was not a scion of the Russian noble family of Dolgoruky, his surname being a translation of the Armenian erkayanabzuk ‘long arm,’ which only coincidentally translates as dolgoruky in Russian. Also, Melik Vakhtam is more correctly Melik Bakhtam though Vakhtam, of course, was the spelling that Bournoutian probably found in the original document he is quoting. Such trivial details, however, in no way detract from the over all excellence of this work, which is almost always of the highest quality in every way.

Reviewed by Michael Daniel Findikyan

As the title suggests, this book is a travel memoir, the author’s account of a journey he undertook in 1994 from Istanbul through Anatolia to Syria, the Holy Land, and Egypt. More correctly, this is a double travel memoir, since Dalrymple’s itinerary was inspired by that of another sojourner who preceded him by 1400 years. In 578 AD, the aged Greek monk John Moschos set out with his disciple Sophronius, future Patriarch of Jerusalem, from the Monastery of St. Theodosius in the deserts outside Jerusalem to explore the eastern half of the Byzantine Empire. The great tourist attractions of that time in that part of the world were without a doubt the many monasteries dotting the landscape throughout eastern Anatolia and the Levant. In these communities of prayer and learning, men and women devoted their lives to God, renouncing the distractions of the world, and becoming figures to be emulated by those seeking the spiritual life. Moschos recorded his journey in a memoir known as *Leimonarion*, or *The Spiritual Meadow*, an anthology of anecdotes and sayings of the monks and other figures that Moschos encountered in his travels. Translated within a generation or two into Latin, Georgian, Armenian, Arabic, and a variety of Slavonic languages, this eclectic work was well-known and esteemed throughout the Christian world. Today scholars prize *The Spiritual Meadow* as a precious eyewitness account of the decline of the fragile world of the desert fathers on the eve of the fall of Jerusalem to the Sassanian Persians, before the Arab conquest and subsequent domination of the Levant by Islam.

The persecution of Christians in the Middle East, the cradle of Christianity, is not a story from the past, but a devastating reality today:

That first onslaught on the Christian East observed by the two monks [is] now being completed by Christianity’s devastating decline in the land of its birth. The ever-accelerating exodus of the last Christians from the Middle East today [means] that *The Spiritual Meadow* [can] be read less as a dead history book than as the prologue to an unfolding tragedy whose final chapter is still being written. [19]
In 1922, 52 per cent of the population of the Old City of Jerusalem had been Christians; now they make up less than 3 percent. Constantinople, for over 1000 years the capital of Christendom, is today 99 percent Turkish. In the last century, the Syrian Orthodox ("Jacobite") Church, the ancient Church of Antioch, boasted a community of 200,000 in Mardin and its periphery in southeastern Turkey. Today there are about 900. As a result of Turkish oppression, little noticed in the West, Syrian Orthodox monasteries and Christian villages are emptying. Some, like St. Gabriel in the Tur Abdin, have been occupied continuously since the fifth century. The ancient Christians of Egypt, the Copts, while having suffered petty discrimination for centuries, have in recent years encountered sporadic violence, even massacres following the revival of extreme Islamic insurgency in Upper Egypt. They, too, are emigrating in growing numbers.

And so, his sixth-century prototype in hand, Dalrymple sets out from the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos (known as "The Holy Mountain"), home of the oldest surviving manuscript of The Spiritual Meadow. From there he traces the footsteps of John and Sophronius to see for himself as much as possible of what remains today of "the last ebbing twilight of Byzantium." What he discovers is chilling indeed:

Without the local Christian population, the most important shrines in the Christian world will be left as museum pieces, preserved only for the curiosity of tourists. Christianity will no longer exist in the Holy Land as a living faith; a vast vacuum will exist in the very heart of Christendom. As the Archbishop of Canterbury recently warned, the area, 'once center of a strong Christian presence', risks becoming 'a theme park' devoid of Christians 'within fifteen years'. [317]

Oscillating as he does between John Moschos’ sixth-century testimony and his own encounters, Dalrymple presents a vivid, informed, and highly-readable, if disturbing narrative that juxtaposes the vibrant witness of several strains of ancient Christianity in the East — Greek, Armenian, Syrian "Jacobite", Persian "Nestorian", Maronite, Melkite, Ethiopian and Coptic — with their sadly dwindling remnants there today.

To the Armenian reader, Dalrymple’s work is reminiscent of another recent travel book in what is virtually a genre of itself among British authors, Philip Marsden’s superb, A Crossing Place: A Journey Among the Armenians. While Dalrymple embraces Christians of numerous eastern traditions, he dedicates substantial space to the Armenians, including detailed and frank accounts of the Armenian
genocide and other atrocities committed by the Turks against their Armenian, Syrian, and Greek Christian minorities.

Wandering around eastern Anatolia, northern Syria and the Holy Land, the author cannot but encounter Armenians and their vestiges at every turn. In Antakya, the ancient Christian center of Antioch, Dalrymple meets an Italian Catholic priest whose own flock has all but vanished save for numerous Armenians “in the mountains,” who, though he is Catholic, come to him for baptism. “[They] have pretended to be Muslims ever since the massacres of 1915...On their papers they say they are Muslim, but they know — and I know — the real situation” [63].

In Diyarbakir, one of the largest Armenian communities in Anatolia in the mid-nineteenth century, the author visits the last remaining Armenian Church, a magnificent edifice now vacant and crumbling. There he met “Lucine, the last Armenian in Diyarbakir,” struck dumb since the Turks slaughtered her husband before her very eyes.

In Sivas, Dalrymple notes the odd disappearance of fifteen Armenian khatchkars (stone-carved crosses) from “an ecumenical graveyard” formerly containing Turkish, Greek and Armenian tombs:

The removal of perhaps fifteen heavy slabs and memorials would have been a considerable operation, and it had clearly taken place very recently, for the grass was still depressed and discolored where they had rested; but when I asked the custodian where they had gone, he resolutely denied that any such stones had ever existed. I could probably have persuaded myself that I was mistaken and that the stones were my own invention, had I not actually written quite full descriptions of them in my notebooks the previous year. It was all very strange. [83]

In Edessa (Urfa), the first city outside Palestine to accept Christianity in the first century, the author stumbles upon two Turkish workers busy converting the old Armenian cathedral into a mosque. He asks if the building is an old mosque:

“No,” one of the workmen shouted down. “It’s a church.”
“Greek?”
“No,” he said. “Armenian.”
“Are there any Armenians left in Urfa?”
“No,” he said, smiling broadly and laughing. His friend made a throat-cutting gesture with his trowel.
“They’ve all gone,” said the first man, smiling.
The two men went back to work, cackling with laughter as they did so. [78]
Dalrymple’s memoir also includes a lengthy segment devoted to the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem, where he visited for several days, interviewing some of the resident population and clergy. By the time John Moschos visited Jerusalem, a permanent Armenian presence in the Holy Land was already more than two centuries old, and seventy active Armenian churches and monasteries dotted Jerusalem and its vicinity. One Armenian bishop with whom Dalrymple spoke expressed serious concern for the future of the Armenian community in Jerusalem:

We have been here for 1600 years, yet we cannot be sure what will happen tomorrow. The Israelis claim that they are champions of religious freedom, but behind that smoke screen they make it impossible for our community to flourish. They have not granted one building permit to us since 1967, and they destroy any building we construct illegally. [314]

The Armenian reader will also read with interest accounts of the desecration of ancient sacred Christian sites [327-330] and “suppression of truth”, perpetrated not only by Turks in the Armenian ancestral homeland, but by Israelis in Jerusalem [358-359]. Moreover, harrowing tales of persecution and denial so well known to the Armenians are today being told by Syrian Orthodox in the Tur Abdin, Palestinian Melkite Christians in Israel, and Copts in Upper Egypt. The reality of Christian oppression in Turkey, Israel and Egypt, and the constant fear experienced by Christians in those countries is demonstrated by a stark note in Dalrymple’s acknowledgments: “The identity of a great many people has been disguised, particularly in those sections dealing with Turkey, the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Egypt. I sincerely hope that no one comes to any harm through what I have written” [ix].

Though Christian persecution and oppression run through this book like a leitmotif, such staid themes are at least balanced by many amusing anecdotes, adventures, and conversations with the colorful characters Dalrymple encounters. All of these are woven together with enlightening historical and cultural observations into a literary fabric which, at moments, is simply inspiring. In the Monastery of St. Anthony, the author asks Fr. Dioscuros, a modern-day hermit, about his vocation to prayer in the remote Egyptian desert:

“...The spiritual life is like a ladder. Every day if you are disciplined and make the effort you find you will rise up, understand a little better, find it a little easier to concentrate, find that your mind is wandering less and less. When you pray alone in your cell without distraction you feel as if you are in front of God, as if nothing is coming to you except from God. When you succeed — if you do manage to banish distractions and communicate directly with God — then the compensation outweighs any sufferings or hardships. You feel as if
something which was dim is suddenly lighted for you. You feel full of light and pleasure: it is like a blinding charge of electricity."

“But you don’t have to come to the middle of the desert to find an empty room free of distractions. You can find that anywhere: in Cairo, or Alex[andria], or London...”

“What you say is true,” said Fr. Dioscurus with a smile, “You can pray anywhere. After all, God is everywhere, so you can find him everywhere.” He gestured to the darkening sand dunes outside: “But in the desert, in the pure clean atmosphere, in the silence — there you can find yourself. And unless you begin to know yourself, how can you even begin to search for God?” [410]

Here flowed the ancient wisdom of the holy desert fathers articulated in the words of a sage, old monk with startlingly modern insight and immediacy.

Numerous black and white, as well as full-color plates adorn this volume. An exhaustive index and glossary of terms assist the reader who may not be very well acquainted with the distant world of eastern Christianity.

I sincerely hope that many people with no particular knowledge of Christianity in the Middle East will read this book. While visiting the ancient Syrian Orthodox Monastery of Deir el-Zaferan, (Saffron Monastery) in the Tur Abdin, Dalrymple was forced to flee the monastery because the monks feared repercussions from the Turkish police, who had been trailing him throughout southern Turkey. One of the monks, accepting the author’s apologies for any difficulties he had caused, responded: “Just make sure you tell the outside world what is happening here.” [98] It is my hope that many in the “outside world” will read this fine and moving work, and learn precisely what is happening.
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NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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HÜBSCHMANN-MEILLET-BENVENISTE SYSTEM

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