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Articles submitted should be addressed to SNTR, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle, New York 10804. Books to be considered for review should be addressed to the same.

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Printed in the United States of America
© Copyright 1997 by the St. Nersess Armenian Seminary Press
150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle, New York 10804 USA

ISSN 1086-2080
Proceedings of the Armenian Church Patristics Symposium
October 18, 1995
Co-Sponsored by St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and the
Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center

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Dedicated in loving memory of

Archbishop Norayr Bogharian
(1904 - 1997)

Archbishop Norayr Bogharian was born in Aintab on January 17, 1904. Having received his early education in his hometown at the Vardanian School, he began his religious education at St. James Monastery in Jerusalem. He was ordained to the Order of the Holy Priesthood as a celibate priest during the Feast of the Transfiguration on July 22, 1928. After advancing his theological studies in England, he returned to Jerusalem in 1930 to continue teaching. Outside of a brief period as dean of the seminary in Lebanon in 1935-1940, Archbishop Bogharian spent most of his life at the St. James Seminary in Jerusalem.

Archbishop Bogharian held the position of the keeper of manuscripts since December of 1949, compiling and preparing a comprehensive catalogue of the monastery’s extensive manuscript collection. His Eminence was also a regular contributor to Sion, Hask, and other periodicals.

Archbishop Bogharian was elevated to the episcopate by Catholicos Georg VI of blessed memory on July 8, 1951, and to the rank of archbishop in 1973 by His Beatitude Catholicos Vazgen I of blessed memory. He was a great scholar who greatly influenced those who benefited from his learning. He was a dedicated servant of the Armenian Church whose humility and faith humbled all who knew him.
SURPASSING THE BIBLICAL WORTHIES: AN EARLY MOTIF IN ARMENIAN RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

Abraham Terian

The line of demarcation between the historical and the religious in early Armenian literature is blurred by the fact that all known authors were clerics and the extant writings abound with Scriptural allusions and quotations from the Armenian Bible, the product of the vision of St. Maštoc'i and the administrative ability of St. Sahak. Their dream to have Moses with the Prophets and Paul with the Apostles to be read in Armenian or, as Koriwn puts it, to become “Armenian-speaking”, came admirably true. Koriwn gives us the following dramatic picture of the far-reaching effect of this great undertaking:

At that time our blessed and pleasant land of Armenia became truly wonderful, where by the hands of two associates, suddenly, all at once, Moses the teacher of the Law with the prophetic order, progressive Paul with the full apostolic group, along with the world-sustaining gospel of Christ, came to be found in Armenian, became Armenian-speaking.

What heart-warming joy existed there since then, and what a worthy scene for the eyes of the beholder! For a land unfamiliar even with the fame of those regions where all the divinely-wrought, mighty acts had been performed, soon learned all the things that were wrought: not only those that had been venerated in time, but also those that were earlier, from eternity, and those that are to come—the beginning and the end and all the God-given traditions (11 [56.10-15]).

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1 Translations from Koriwn are mine. For the text, see Manuk Abelyan, ed., Vark' Maštoc'i (Erevan: Haypethrat, 1941; repr. Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan, 1985); Eng. transl., Bedros Norehad, Koriwn: The Life of Mashtots (New York: AGBU, 1965).
The translation of the Scriptures had an immediate and overwhelming influence on subsequent Armenian literature.² The historians of the fifth and following centuries adorned their works with countless quotations from the Scriptures and often incorporated its language into their prose.³ Historically, Armenians began to define themselves in Scriptural terms and to compare their religious founders and leaders with biblical worthies.⁴ A discernible motif emerges with


³ Illustrative of this is “Appendix IV: Scriptural Quotations and Allusions” as well as “Appendix V: Epic and Scriptural Formulae” in Nina G. Garsoian, The Epic Histories Attributed to P`awstos Buzand (Buzandar an P`atmut’iwınw), Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 8 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 577-596. The religious overtones of these historical yet somewhat apologetic writings by clerics are quite evident. These histories emerged from dire times extending from the periods accounted for to the very times of the respective authors; hence, an element of hope—at times profound—could be detected in all of them. On the complex geo-political and religious situation during these crucial centuries see N. G. Garsoian’s collected articles in Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians (London: Variorum, 1985) and N. Adontz, Armenia in the Period of Justinian, ed. and transl. N. G. Garsoian (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1970), pp. 7-74.

⁴ In its extreme form, this is to be seen in the Armenian dynastic rivalries, as claims to partial Jewish ancestry or even descent from the Hebrew kings were made by certain feuding clans. For the Pahlawuni-Kamsareans² (Neo-Kamsarakans) claim to Abrahamic ancestry through his wife Keturah, see the eleventh letter in Grigor Magistros T`ttera (The Epistolary of Grigor Magistros), ed. K. Kostaneane (Alexandropol: G`org Sanoyeane, 1910), pp. 36-44, and xil-xiv, quoting later affirmations from the first epic by St. Nerses Snorhalı (Vipasanut`iwın Haykazancı, [Epic History of the Descendants of Hayk], in Bank`’ Casp`aw [Words in Verse] [2nd ed.; Venice: S. Lazar, 1928], pp. 548, 588). For the Bagratids’ claim, see Yovhanne’s (V) Kał`otikos Drasaxanakert’eı, P`atmut`iwın Hayocale, 4.10; ed. Mkrtiç Emin (Moscow: Vladimir Gote, 1853; repr. Tiflis: A:focusanı,
Koriwn's *Life of Maštoc*, followed by the pseudonymous Agat'angetos, the author of the *History of the Armenians* with his focus on the life and teaching of St. Gregory the Illuminator; the anonymous author or compiler of the *Buzandaran Patmutiwnk*; Lazar and Etišè, the exponents of the wars of St. Vardan; Xorenac'i the elusive "father of [Armenian] history"; and others thereafter—especially the panegyrists on St. Gregory the Illuminator.

An attempt will be made later in this study to point out the literary-rhetorical grounds for the motif and, ultimately, to show the relation of this motif to a perceived self-definition among the Armenians ever since their conversion to Christianity.

In a variety of ways Koriwn, the first native writer since the invention of the Armenian script whose authorship is undisputed, was the standard bearer of early Armenian literature. This is demonstrated by the fact that every subsequent Armenian author of the fifth century and others thereafter were dependent upon his work. It is appropriate therefore to begin with him, and more so since I am about to demonstrate that he is the progenitor of the motif under consideration.

The motif begins with the comparative description of the profound joy of St. Maštoc' on his way back to Greater Armenia with the newly finalized alphabet. Koriwn compares the joyous Saint bearing the Armenian letters with the saddened Moses on his way down from Mt. Sinai bearing the Decalogue (*Life of Maštoc*, 9 [52.1-8]). Koriwn's comparison, in spite of his apology to do so, is to show that his teacher fared better with his anticipation for the Armenian people than did the lawgiver of Israel upon seeing the idolatry of the Golden Calf in the Hebrew camp (alluding to Ex. 31:18-32:19; 34:29-35). Koriwn writes:

Even the magnificent Moses was not as thrilled during his descent from Mount Sinai. We do not speak in superlatives here but in lesser terms. For with the God-given commandments inscribed by God Himself in his arms, the man who had seen God was descending from the mountain. However, the vindictive people who had turned their backs to divine things and had corrupted the earth, rejecting the Lord by falling prostrate to worship their molten idols, caused the bearer of His commandments to weep bitterly with a broken heart; for the despair of the bearer became visibly apparent at the smashing of the tablets. But the blessed one about whom this rhetorical work is composed did not act in that manner, as had transpired there; on the contrary, being filled with spiritual consolation, he was thinking of the eagerness of those who were to be the recipients, and in anticipation of the joy of the recipients, the bearer of glad tidings took to the network of roads.

Let no one consider us very bold for what we have said. We may be censured for our analogy; comparing a very modest man with the magnificent Moses, who had spoken with God and had done wonders. But we are quite persuaded in the belief that there is nothing to fault God for, whether in the realm of things manifest or in the realm of secret things; for it is the grace of the one omnipotent God that is distributed to all earth-born nations. (9 [52.1-19]).

This is followed by comparing the ongoing scribal and evangelistic activities with those mandated by Moses in the Law, David in the Psalms, and Christ in the Gospel (11 [54.18-56.9]). Finally, the deeper sorrow of the ever-active St. Maštoc' over the death of his associate St. Sahak is compared with the sadness, loneliness, and relative inactivity of the Apostle Paul because of the temporary absence of his associate Timothy (25 [90.2-11]). Koriwn observes:

Inasmuch as the holy Apostle upon not finding temporarily his co-worker, Timothy, says that his soul was restless, how much more intense is deemed the survivors’ grief over those who are altogether departed? Whereas the sadness caused by loneliness would not

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5 Judging from the context, there seems to be a conflation, if not confusion, between 1 Thess. 3:1-6 (cf. Acts 17:14-16a) and 2 Cor. 2:12-13 (cf. 8:23). If the allusion is more to the Corinthian passage, as it seems to be, then the reference would be to Titus and not Timothy. An early scribal error could be suspected here.
allow [someone like Paul] to be cheerful, [Maštoc'] carried out fully, with the grace of God, the course of evangelism and administration of the Holy Church and strove even more [lines 4-10].

Earlier, however, Koriwn had indicated that the concern of St. Maštoc' for his people is no less than that of the Apostle Paul for his people (2 [30.18]). Still, the two persons with whom St. Maštoc' is laudably compared are the first of the Prophets and the last of the Apostles: Moses and Paul, the two most accomplished biblical characters from the Old and New Testaments respectively. Beginning with Koriwn's introductory analogy between his praise of St. Maštoc' and the biblical treatment of its worthies, the masterful use of the Scriptures to compare, to restate, and to reaffirm is noteworthy.

The immediate influence of Koriwn's Life of Maštoc' is seen in the History of the Armenians by Agat'angeťos, the most widely held primary source on the life and teaching of St. Gregory and the conversion of Armenia to Christianity. The fifth-century Armenian author, writing in about 460, purports to be a Roman scribe and an eyewitness of the conversion of King Trdat, at whose command he writes the History (12-13). His use and adaptation of various sources, including Greek and Syriac hagiographical writings in the first part (1-258, i.e., before the insertion of The Teaching of St. Gregory, 259-715) and Koriwn's Life in the second part (716-900), have long been demonstrated by scholars. The importance of this work is attested by

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6 Alluding to Romans 9:1-3.
8 On the sources used by Agat'angeťos, see the survey of scholarship by Thomson, Agathangelos, pp. lxxv-xciii; for an Eng. transl. of the catechism attributed to St. Gregory, see idem, The Teaching of St. Gregory: An Early Armenian Catechism, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); the Armenian text (Vardapet'ıswn) is an integral part of Agat'angeťos (Aa), for which see the preceding note. On the questionable ascription of the Teaching to St. Gregory, see the introduction by Thomson, especially pp. 32-38, where he invites attention to one of its foremost sources: the Catecheses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, teachings delivered at the Holy Sepulchre in 348, long after the death of St. Gregory in 325/326; for more on the ascription, see below,
early translations to several languages: Greek, Georgian, Arabic, Syriac, Latin, and Ethiopian, with two distinct versions discernible in each of the first three languages. The obvious embellishments, attested in the variants to the story in the versions, and the mythical elements aside, the seminal tradition regarding St. Gregory in the History of Agat'angeťos is deemed trustworthy.

Agat'angeťos punctuates his work with numerous biblical allusions and comparisons that cannot be accounted for here, such as the skin condition of St. Gregory on his emergence from the pit and that of Job in his misery (Job 30:30; cf. History, 217). Far more noteworthy, however, is the description of the return of St. Gregory to Armenia as bishop. Agat'angeťos uses a substantial part of the above quoted passage from Koriwn, transferring to St. Gregory much of what Koriwn had said earlier of St. Maștoc' on his way to Greater Armenia with the new script. Note the similarities in this description:

At this time our land of Armenia was blessed, envied and truly admired. Like Moses, who suddenly became a teacher of the law to the Hebrew camp with all the ranks of the Prophets, or like the outstanding Paul with the entire group of the Apostles, with the gospel of Christ that brings life to the world, so too did he come and appear and speak Armenian to the Armenians (854).

This section is from the middle of the ample borrowings from Koriwn, especially from the latter's description of the missionary activities of St. Maștoc', appropriated for St. Gregory in Agat'angeťos (818-900).9

Moreover, when commenting on the ascetic life of St. Gregory, Agat'angeťos compares him with Elijah the Prophet and St. John the Baptist (848). Before the epilogue, he concludes the historical narrative with this statement on his hero: "So in this fashion he spent all the days of his life in acts like those of the Apostles" (891). The epilogue itself is a chain of scriptural citations that draw a parallel between the royal command to Agat'angeťos to chronicle the life of St. Gregory on the one hand and on the other hand the divine mandate in the Scriptures to write down the Law and the prophetic books (892-900). Thus in the epilogue Agat'angeťos places his writing in line with the Scriptural

n. 65.
9 See the numerous references to Koriwn in Thomson's notes to these sections, Agathangelos, pp. 492-503; cf. pp. lxxvii-lxxix of his introduction. Equally noteworthy are sections 774-776, which correspond with our first quotation from Koriwn, above.
tradition, in keeping with Koriwn who in his prologue claims continuity between his writing of the Life of Maštoc' and the apostolic writings of New Testament times (2 [30.17-34.24]). The very last words in Agat'angeťos underscore the new identity the Christian faith has brought to the Armenian people, who address God in the words of the Prophet Jeremiah: "'You are our Lord God' [Jer. 3:22]. And he will say to them: 'You are my people' [Jer. 7:23; 11:4; cf. Hos. 2:24]" (900). Here also we see a reflection of Koriwn's dictum: "for it is the grace of the one omnipotent God that is distributed to all earth-born nations" (9 [52.18-19]).

Because of these and other striking parallels between Koriwn's Life and the History of Agat'angeťos with The Teaching of St. Gregory, as well as similarities of vocabulary, style, and other factors between them, Archbishop Norayr Pořarean has long held that Koriwn is also the author of the latter two works. Noting similar features also in the Bezandaran Patmut'ıwnk', Pořarean hastens to add this work as well to Koriwn's repertoire. Although the distinct authorship of the latter work is demonstrable, as shall be pointed out following our discussion of the work, Pořarean's arguments regarding the common authorship of the Life and the History that bears the name of Agat'angeťos cannot be dismissed easily.

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11 In an insightful article James Russell suggests convincingly that the very name Maštoc' means "bearer of Good news or reward," on the basis of an Iranian form, mwjdg or mozhdag, attested in Manichaean texts in Middle Parthian of Turfan, and thus identical in meaning to Agat'angeťos, the supposed author of the History of Armenia's conversion to Christianity. Russell goes so far as to suggest, following Pořarean, that "Koriwn was in all events the author of the Agat'angeťos, and that the mythic scribe at the court of Tiridates is certainly modelled—and possibly named—after Koriwn's own teacher" ("On the Name of Mashtots," Annual of Armenian Linguistics, 15 [1994], 67-78, especially 72-78). However, the adoption of the name Agat'angeťos could also be traced to an early Armenian source called the Primary History, used by Xorenac'i (1.8-9) and found in the anonymous seventh-century history attributed (wrongly it seems) to Bishop Sebęs (Xostbanuńiwn yärafkay patmut'eanc', in Sebęs, History, 1-4, ed. Geworg
The *Buzandaran Patmut’lnk*, a collection of oral histories of Greater Armenia during the fourth century, was compiled by an anonymous author about the year 470. In a way it chronicles the history of Armenia during the long reign of Shahpuhr II of Persia (309-379) and concludes with the official partition of the already fragmented land under his successor, Shahpuhr III, in 387. The bereaved author laments the end of the period he chronicles: “And the kingdom of Armenia was diminished, divided, and scattered. And it declined from its greatness at that time and thereafter” (6.1). Through his compilation he attempts to fill the historical gap between Agat‘angetos history of the conversion of Armenia at the hand of St. Gregory, and Koriwn’s account of the invention of the alphabet at the hand of St. Maštoc’. Clearly, the author utilizes the work of Koriwn and shows

V. Abgaryan, *Patmut’ln Seğos* [Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1979]; Thomson provides a translation of the *Primary History* in an “Appendix” to his translation and commentary in *Khorenats’i*, pp. 357-367, and an analysis, pp. 53-56). This short account contains a brief reference to “Mar Abas, the philosopher of Mcurm,” who found in the ruins of that city built on the Euphrates by King Sanatrak (an Arsacid king of Armenia, possibly first century A.D.) a stele inscribed in Greek with this title: “I Agathangelos the scribe wrote on this stele with my own hand the years of the first Armenian kings, taking them from the royal archive at the command of the valiant Trdat.” The anonymous author of the *Primary History* then adds: “A little later you will see the content thereof in its [appropriate] place.” As Thomson observes, this presumably refers to the end part of the *Primary History* containing the list of Armenian kings (*Khorenats’i*, p. 358 n. 9). It is conceivable that this story in the *Primary History* inspired the adoption of the name Agat‘angetos for the anonymous author of the work which bears the title *History of the Armenians* and accounts for Armenia’s conversion to Christianity—unless one would go so far as to argue the point of adoption the other way around (see Thomson, *Agathangelos*, p. xxv, for when the name was first associated with the received history of St. Gregory and the conversion of Armenia [Aal]).

12 The treaty of Theodosius in 387 divided the Armenian territories into vassal states subject to either Byzantine or Sasanian rule, with the latter extending over the larger part of the land of Armenia. Thus ended the centuries-old conflict between Rome and Persia.

awareness of the traditions about St. Gregory—though not the entire received tradition as in the Armenian version of Agat'angevos (Aa). He is also well immersed in the Armenian version of the Scriptures. All his other sources seem to have been oral traditions, reflecting the rich oral heritage of early Christian Armenia. He appears to have been a churchman familiar also with liturgical practices and the lives of saints, with which he punctuates the otherwise gloomy history.14

Of the several lives of saints contemplated in the Buzandaran is that of St. James of Nisibis or Mcbin, a much venerated saint in the Eastern churches and especially by Armenians in whose tradition he appears as a cousin of St. Gregory the Illuminator and a sojourner in Armenia.15 While on the slopes of the mountains of Urartu, in the district of Korduk' or Qardū in the Assyrian March of southern Armenia, this "apostle of Christ" prayed that God would grant him to see Noah’s Ark.16 His prayer, however, was answered differently. In his sleep an angel alerted him of a piece of wood from the Ark lying near his head. Taking it, he descended from the mountain in a way that "not even the great Moses on his descent from the Sainaitic mountain exulted with such utter joy" (3.10).17 Earlier, in the same chapter, a spring had gushed forth for him and for his companions while on that mountain, just as a spring had gushed forth for Moses and the Israelites at Rephidim and at Meribah (Ex. 17; Num. 20). The rest of the

14 On the author’s familiarity with contemporary hagiography, see Garsoian’s “Introduction,” The Epic Histories, pp. 26-30. He is one of the primary sources of such popular stories as that of the lion with the wounded paw healed by an anchorite and the flight of snakes away from islands where Christians have been banished.


16 Clearly, the Buzandaran does not associate the place with the present-day Mt. Ararat to the north, but follows earlier tradition as in Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Religious History, q.v. Life of St. James, Eng. transl.: R. M. Price, A History of the Monks of Syria (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Western Michigan University Press, 1985); Theodoret, however, is silent about the Saint’s adventures in Armenia; cf. P. Peeters, “La légende de S. Jacques de Nisibe,” Analecta Bollandiana, 38 (1920) 285-373. See also Garsoian, The Epic Histories, pp. 252-253, 431, 474-475, 489.

17 The heavy dependence on Koriwn’s Life is evident (9 [52.1-2]).
description of St. James' descent closely follows Koriwn's description of the return of St. Maštoc' to Greater Armenia with the new alphabet (9 [52.1-19]). The Scriptural analogy in the Buğandaran differs from that in Koriwn, as we observe a shift from Moses and the Law (the very object later placed in the Ark of the Covenant) to a piece of wood from Noah's Ark—from one ark to the other.

Early in the next chapter (3.11) the author laments the deaths of Sarpapet Var'ë Mamikonean and his companions who fell in the war of about A.D. 338 between the Persians and the Armenians. Perpetual commemorative services were instituted for the fallen martyrs by the patriarch Vrt'anës who, in a sermon attributed to him, eulogized the "pious martyrs," likening them to the Maccabees and applying to the Armenian experience the vulnerability as well as the aspirations of the Jewish people under the tyrannical Seleucids. Here no doubt the author is reflecting the influence of the near-contemporary martyrdom of St. Vardan and his companions. Thus the Buğandaran anticipates the martyrrological sentiments and the Maccabean connection in Lazar and, especially, Efisë, the exponents of the A.D. 451 war.

One further passage in the Buğandaran ought to be underscored as it relates to the motif under consideration and also shows the extent of the author's dependence on Koriwn. The passage in question recounts the Bible-laced admonitions of St. Nersës the Great (4.4) which follow Koriwn closely, maintaining the very sequence of his Scriptural citations (2 [32.5-34.18]). Throughout St. Nersës is referred to as an apostle, on whose head the Holy Spirit descended bodily as a dove at the time of his consecration as Catholicos of Greater Armenia—just as the Spirit descended upon the Lord Himself at the time of His baptism.¹⁸

Again, the similarities between Koriwn's Life and the Buğandaran compelled Archbishop Potarean to speculate Koriwn's authorship of the latter work as well. We ought to grant the influence of style and other similarities between the two resulting from the dependence of the author of the Buğandaran on Koriwn; however, the question of identical authorship has to be rejected because of the far greater differences between them.¹⁹ As for the relation obtaining between the Buğandaran

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¹⁸ In the first of two panegyrics on St. Gregory attributed to St. John Chrysostom, *Nerbożtan Nsetac'el yatags Varac' ew Nohatakt'e Nrb'oyen Grigori Hayoc' Mecac' Hayrapetii* (A Panegyric Recited upon the Life and Martyrdom of St. Gregory the Patriarch of Greater Armenia) the Spirit as a dove descended on St. Gregory at the time of his consecration (Sop'erk' Haykakank' [Armenian Books] [Venice: S. Lazar, 1853], 4:68).

¹⁹ Covaakan (Potarean), *Koriwn Vardapetii Erkera*, 37-47; cf. Norayr
and the History of Agat'ange'tos, I agree with Thomson and Garsoian that while the author of the Buzandaran may show familiarity with the received text of Agat'ange'tos, The Teaching of St. Gregory especially, he opts for a divergent tradition, perhaps an earlier oral one pertaining to St. Gregory.20

We shall pursue our motif in the History of Lazar Parpec't which covers the period 387-485.21 Lazar acknowledges the works of the shadowy Agat'ange'tos and the Buzandaran, and considers his own contribution as the third historical writing (Koriwn's work is deemed hagiography). We are thus compelled to relegate the popular histories of Etiæ and Xorenac't to later times and to consider Lazar the first Armenian historian of the fifth century whose identity is known. The focus of his History is on the revolt of 451. In beautiful imagery and in keeping with the motif under consideration, Lazar describes the popular response to the battle-cry sounded by St. Vardan when Armenia was invaded by the Persians:

On hearing this, the lovers of the truth and of immortality were stirred up, vying with each other like flocks who at the sound of the flute hasten after the shepherds. It seems to me that Abraham did not run so fast to bring the calf to the angels who promised to give him his son (Gen. 17-18), as the Armenian army hastened to follow the blessed Vardan, Sparapet of Armenia, in order to go to Christ's banquet and to eat the bread of angels (p. 68).22

Biwzandac't, Koriwn Vardapet ew Norin T'argmanut'ènk' (Koriwn Vardapet and His Translations) (Tiflis: Martiroseac't, 1900), who, marshalling similar data, concludes that Koriwn was the translator of the Books of the Maccabees, Euthalius of Alexandria, Agat'ange'tos, and the Buzandaran.


21 In a letter to an old friend and nobleman, the marzpan Vahan Mamikonean, he defends himself against rival clergy because of whom he had sought exile in Amid (modern Diyarbakir). Thereupon, he was called by Vahan to head the monastery at Vatarşapad and was commissioned to write the History. Occasional allusions to these hostile clergy may be detected in the History.

In the prayer of repentance which Łazar attributes to the Armenian nobility, St. Gregory is deemed equal to the Twelve Apostles: "Grant us through the intercession of the illuminating Apostles and through the labors of the holy martyr Gregory, their equal and coworker, forgiveness for our sins" (p. 62). Conceivably, by now the equation of St. Gregory with the Apostles has become commonplace in these early writings. However, a higher esteem for St. Gregory persisted throughout this early period, a subject to which I shall return shortly.

Łazar’s martyrological sentiments vis à vis those of the Books of the Maccabees are not as pronounced as those in Ėtishē; however, there is no need to repeat them all here except to point out that for Ėtishē the Armenian martyrs fare no less than these biblical worthies—considering the canonical place of 1-2 Maccabees in the Septuagintal and early Christian tradition.23 Ėtishē reflects the predominant esteem of martyrs in the early Church, that not only they imitate the suffering of Christ, but that their death is a testimony to Christ’s achievement. To shrink from martyrdom is therefore tantamount to denial of Christ.24 Death by martyrdom was the Christian’s highest achievement, the standard against which all others were to be judged. The cardinal virtue which Ėtishē upholds throughout his work is the virtue of martyrdom. He must have been familiar with the ordeals of the early martyrs, of which there were several compilations in his time. He employs well established literary features when depicting martyrdom, especially in the speeches he attributes to St. Vardan and the priest Lewond just before the battle.

What we have in Ėtishē’s History of Vardan and the Armenian War is a reinterpreted event, an event interpreted by Łazar prior to being

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23 Ėtishē uses the word “covenant” (uxn) precisely in its Judaic sense of Intertestamental times: not as one of the Scriptural Testaments of the Christian Canon (kiakaran) but as a reference to the community of God’s people—now applied to the Armenians who like the Maccabees face an enemy that comes to forcefully alter their faith (see Thomson, Ėtishē, p.11).

24 This in addition to the fact that whether in Greek or in Armenian, the word for witnessing and/or martyrdom is the same (Gk. marturia; Arm. verkûutiwn); hence, true witnesses for Christ did not shrink from martyrdom for His sake.
reinterpreted and expanded along the same lines by Etišē. There are numerous differences between the two accounts, however, beginning with the circumstances leading to the conflict that led to the revolt and to war. Other differences notwithstanding, Etišē’s more passionate retelling has endeared his version to the point of allowing little hearing for the other.25 Questions persist, however, on Etišē’s claim to have been an eyewitness to the events recorded by him, since in its present form the History of Vardan is a sixth-century redaction drawing on existing Armenian sources, including the History of Lazar. These observations do not, in any way, diminish its significance.

Etišē is a very skilled writer. With very moving words he narrates the experiences of the imprisoned Armenian nobles who were sacrificing themselves and their families like Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:9; pp. 48-49). He details the encounters between St. Vardan and the Persians, and the last encounter in particular—as though he was on the front lines of that fateful battle. With words reminiscent of the battle by the Pool of Gibeon, between David’s men and those of Abner (2 Sam. 2:13), Etišē writes: “For neither side was victorious and neither side was defeated; but heroes attacked heroes and both sides went down to defeat” (p. 119). His descriptive skill is sustained to the very end, where he speaks of the sorrowful widows and the wives of the nobles imprisoned in Persia and goes on to extol their virtues:

The delicate women of Armenia, who had been coddled and pampered in their private stretchers and couches, daily attended the houses of prayer without shoes and on foot, tirelessly entreating with oaths that they might be able to endure their great tribulation. Those who from their childhood were nourished with marrow of steers and the best of the game, lived a herbivorous life, like wild animals, receiving their food most joyously and without any thought of the customary delicacies. The color of their skin turned black, for by day they were scorched by the sun, and the whole night they lay on the ground.

Psalms were the perpetual murmur on their lips and readings from the Prophets were their utmost consolation. They were joined in couples like willing and equally yoked pairs, plowing straight the furrow of the Kingdom so that they might arrive at the haven of peace without losing their way.... By their prayers they opened the closed gates of heaven, and by their pious supplications brought down angels for salvation. From

25 He wrote at the request of the priest Dawit’ Mamikonean, to glorify the hero of the patron’s clan.
afar they heard the good news, and they glorified God on high..... (pp. 201-202).26

Without employing any direct comparison, Etišė sustains a lengthy analogy between "the delicate women of Armenia" and the worthies of the New Testament church: like Anna the widowed prophetess (Lk. 2:36-38) and those gathered daily in prayer in the upper room at Pentecost (Acts 1:13-14; 2:1), they attended daily the houses of prayer; like those being persecuted in the Apocalypse (Rev. 7:14), they were able to endure their great tribulation; like the church symbolized as a woman who survives in the wilderness (Rev. 12:14), they lived a life of utter osterity;27 like those who follow Paul's admonition to make the most of one's time when days are evil (Eph. 5:15-20), they consoled themselves with recitations from the Psalms and readings from the Prophets; like the seventy other disciples in Luke (10:1), they were to be found in companies of two; like worthy disciples who place their hands on the plow and press forward without looking back (Lk. 9:62), they plowed straight the furrow of the Kingdom; like the Prophets Elijah and Elisha in prayer (1 Kg. 18:37-46; 2 Kg. 6:15-17), they opened the gates of heaven and summoned angels; and like the great worthies, the champions of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. 11), from afar they greeted and embraced the promised salvation. The way Etišė weaves together all these biblical examples and applies them to the sorrowful women is noteworthy.

We shall take but a brief look at Xorenac'i. In keeping with his declared interest in history rather than theology, Xorenac'i gives much more attention to the secular than to the religious.28 However, echoes of the motif under consideration are found in various chapters of the History. With reference to the unmarked, primary burial of St. Gregory, Xorenac'i remarks that the Saint's relics were hidden for many years by divine providence, "like [those of] Moses of old" (2.91; cf. Deut. 34:6). Likewise, when describing the indignant departure of St.


27 Thomson invites attention to parallels in 2 Macc. 5:27 (ibid., p. 246 n. 12).

28 Note his exaltation of the exploits of Artašēs I of Armenia (190-159 B.C.), whom he proclaims "superior to Alexander the Macedonian" for ruling distant lands without leaving his country (on the authority of some unheard-of Greek writers; 2.13).
James from the court of Manaḳihr, the prince of the Rštunis, following the Saint’s failed pleading with the prince to release certain innocent captives, Xorenac’i remarks: “[St. James] returned to his own see full of anger, like Moses leaving the presence of Pharaoh” (3.7; cf. Ex. 11:9). More of this motif is discernible in the concluding chapter of the History, where Xorenac’i laments the fortunes of the Armenian people following the loss of their fifth-century leaders, especially that of St. Sahak the Great and that of the blessed St. Maštoc’, both of whom are referred to as the author’s “fathers” responsible for his spiritual birth and education abroad. Their death is like that of Moses who has been removed, but without a Joshua to succeed them (3.68).29 Here Xorenac’i seems to rely on the threnody upon St. Nerses in the Buẓandaran (5.30).

The motif is discernible in subsequent writers;30 however, it is not necessary to prolong its investigation beyond the panegyrical compositions in medieval Armenian literature dedicated to St. Gregory the Illuminator.31 The laudatory tradition about the Saint and the

29 As Thomson and others observe (Khorenats’i, pp. 350-351 and notes), there is much reliance here on St. Gregory Nazianzenus’ panegyric on St. Athanasius who is similarly likened to Moses: In laudem magni Athanasi, apud Funebris oratio in Patrem (ed. Migne, PG 39.985ff); cf. St. Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio funebris in magnum Meletium (ed. Migne, PG 46.852ff).

30 See, e.g., the last anonymous continuator (eleventh-twelfth centuries) of T’ovma Ascroni, the “Supplement” to Book IV concerning “the pious prince Abdalmeh and his sons,” whose virtues are said to exceed many of those of the biblical worthies (in V. Vardanyan, ed., T’ovma Ascroni e v Aranun, Patmut’yn Arcrwnyac’ Tan (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1978); Eng. transl., Robert W. Thomson, Thomas Artsruni, History of the House of the Artsruni (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), pp. 368-387. See also (Ps.) Yovhannès Mamikonean, Patmut’yn Tarōnoy, where St. Gregory is said to be superior to Moses (p. 40) and is called “Sun of righteousness” (p. 123), an epithet used earlier in the Patmut’yn for Christ, in keeping with the Jewish apocalyptic writings of the Intertestamental period (p. 41; Avdoyan, Pseudo-Yovhannès, pp. 58-59, 94). For a similar use of the epithet “Sun of righteousness” for St. Gregory, see the first panegyric on the Saint attributed to St. John Chrysostom (Sop’erk’ Haykakan’t; 4:31), cited in the next note.

31 These works have been collected in the small yet celebrated Sop’erk’ Haykakan’t (Armenian Books) series; vol. IV: Yovhannu Oskeberani ew Grigori Sarkawagapeti Nerboṭeank’ i S. Grigor Lasaworč” (Panegyrics on St. Gregory the Illuminator by John Chrysostom and Gregory Sarkawagapet); and vol. V: Yovhannu Sarkawagay, Vardanay
higher esteem in which he is held in comparisons with biblical worthies in these writings could be traced to the hitherto established tendency in the surveyed sources and others, including the other versions comprising the Agat’angełos cycle and certain near-contemporary, non-Armenian hagiographies. This is particularly true of the two panegyrics traditionally attributed to St. John Chrysostom (c.350-407, or to his circle) and translated from Greek into Armenian in the eleventh century upon the request of Catholicos Grigor II Vkasäh (in office 1065-1105). The translation of the first of these two panegyrics, Nerbo’ean Asac’eal yaf’aks Varuc’ ew Nahatsak’t’ean Srbayn Grigori Hayoc’ Mecac’ Hayrapet’i (A Panegyric Recited upon the Life and Martyrdom of St. Gregory the Patriarch of Greater Armenia) was revised by Catholicos (St.) Nersës Snorhali (in office 1166-1173), according to a colophon by him at the end of the text. Thus it is impossible to determine what the original reading must have been, though there can be no doubt about a Greek original of dubious

Bar’hrderc’woy, Yovhanna Er’nak’woy Nerbo’aye’k i S. Grigor’ Yosaworë’ (Panegyrics on St. Gregory the Illuminator by...) (Venice: S. Lazar, 1853).

32 See, e.g., the panegyrics by St. Gregory Nazianzenus (Funeris oratio in Patrem, collected in Migne, PG 39), especially In laudem magni Athanasi (985ff), and those of St. Gregory of Nyssa (collected in Migne, PG 46), especially De vita Ephraemi Syri (820ff).

33 Vkasäh commissioned Armenian-speaking Greek “rhetors” to translate a few of St. John Chrysostom’s works into Armenian, beginning with the above mentioned panegyrics and then his homilies On the Acts of the Apostles and On the Gospel of John.

34 Text in Sop’erki’ Haykakank’, 4:5-86 (colophon, 86-87); that of the other, 4:89-125. Although the full title of the first (... i Kokison Hayoc’ minë’ yak’sorans & i xndroy Hayazin orum episkopos’ ew vardapeti hamazgwoy norin Deoskoros anun koec’ec’eloy...) (... at Cucusa in [Cilician] Armenia, while he was in exile, upon the request of a certain bishop and vardapet, his Armenian-born compatriot named Dioscoros...) suggests that it was written between 404 and 407, the year of his deportation to Pityus or Colchis on the Black Sea (he died en route at Comona in Pontus), there is reason, and that more than the geographical anachronism in the word “Armenia” in the title, to suspect both works as spuria (the popularity of Chrysostom as preacher and writer gave rise to many such works in Greek). Vkasäh himself is the translator of the Life of St. John Chrysostom from Greek, Patmut’iwn Varuts’,... Surb Yovhannës Oskeberam Hayrapet’im Kostandnupolsoy: Targm. i Yunakanë i Hays, i Grigorë Kat’utikosë Vkasäh Koec’ec’eloy (History of the life... of St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, translated from Greek into Armenian by Kat’otikos Grigor, called Vkasäh) (Venice: S. Lazar, 1751).
authorship. These two panegyrics in turn inspired the composition of several such works in Armenian.\textsuperscript{35}

In the first of these two panegyrics attributed to St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory is ranked with the angelic hosts, the Prophets, and the Apostles in heaven; he is most accomplished in heavenly virtues (pp. 7, 9; cf. p. 74: he combines in himself all the virtues of all the eternal saints). Like Abraham he was called from paganism to God’s light; like David he is an exemplary shepherd, unmoved by the flood of grief; like Moses he ascended the mountain to receive the spiritual law; like Joshua he brought the people not to the Promised Land but to heaven itself; like the Prophets he made predictions, and like the Apostles he presented many souls to God (pp. 12-13). Like St. Paul he received a direct call from heaven and endured humanly unbearable pains; even more: Isaiah the Prophet was sawed asunder, St. John the Baptist beheaded, St. Stephen stoned, St. Peter crucified, and St. Paul also beheaded, yet the martyr St. Gregory appropriated the sufferings of them all in his endurance (pp. 14-15). While in the pit, St. Gregory was like the Prophet Jonah in the belly of the fish and like St. Paul when saved from the depths of the sea (alluding to the shipwreck at Malta, Acts 27); his coming out of the pit is like being called from the grave to resurrection (alluding, no doubt, to the resurrection of Lazarus, Jn. 11; pp. 28-29). The divine promise once made to Abraham is here repeated to St. Gregory: “I shall make you a father of many nations, for I shall multiply your progeny as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea” (Gen. 22:17; ibid.). In his chariot of virtue St. Gregory participated with the Prophet Elijah in the heavenly ascent; with the Prophet Jonah in the harshest solitude; with St. Paul in the bonds of imprisonment; and with St. Peter in authority—even sharing “the keys of the Kingdom” with him (referring to Mat. 16:19; p. 30). Whereas the Apostles divided the world among themselves for mission,\textsuperscript{36} St. Gregory was given more than the

\textsuperscript{35} The major works comprise the contents of Sop’erk' Haykakank', 5 (cited above). The panegyric by Grigor Sarkawagapet Erusalemac'i, Xosk' i Surb Grigor Lusavoriç' (A Discourse on St. Gregory the Illuminator) (4:129-157) is the most subdued of these compositions and appears to be free from the influence of the twin translations from Greek, thus antedating these translations.

\textsuperscript{36} For the division of the world by lot among the Apostles, see The Teaching of St. Gregory, 685; cf. Thomson, Teaching, p. 172 n. 3, who invites attention to the apocryphal Acts (see The Acts of Thomas 1; cf. Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, 3.1).
Apostles' share, for he alone was privileged to preach universally, for which reason he is called "the universal sun of righteousness" (p. 31).37

Through the conversion of King Trdat, whose dramatic experience is here compared with that of the Apostle Paul (p. 38), "a peculiar people" is presented to God; this happens even as the Saint concludes his prayer for the healing of the king (p. 34).38 To St. Gregory are applied the words spoken of St. John the Baptist: "You, child, shall be called a prophet of the One on high" (Lk. 1:76; p. 44). In the afflictions that the Saint endured patiently, he is like David and Job (63-64);39 in his solitary confinement he is like Elijah the Prophet and St. John the Baptist (p. 69; even more, at his consecration the Spirit descended upon him as a dove, p. 68);40 in his purity he is like Elijah, united with God (p. 74). Although Abel is much praised for his perfect sacrifice (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4), St. Gregory surpassed him in that he offered himself daily as a rational offering; although Enosh hoped for God (Gen. 4:26), the Saint continues to demonstrate that hope; although Enoch was taken from earth to heaven (Gen. 5:24), the Saint had his soul contemplatively and completely translated to heaven; although Noah saved the animals from the flood by bringing them into the ark (Gen. 6-8), the Saint built a better ark: the church, and saved people from the perils of paganism by bringing them to God; although Abraham excelled in his love for God, hospitality, and even willingness to offer his son Isaac (Gen. 17-18, 22), the Saint surpassed him in that

37 The author is not slow to attribute to St. Gregory some of the attributes and epithets of Christ, as "Sun of Righteousness" here; or earlier, when describing the Saint's deliverance from the pit, he is said to have trampled Beliar (the name given to Satan in Jewish apocryphic writings of the Intertestamental period) under foot (p. 29); and later he is called, in the words of "Paul" in Hebrews (passim), a high-priest who has ascended to heaven (p. 46). And later, as on Christ, so also on St. Gregory at the time of his consecration, the Spirit descended as a dove (p. 68).

38 Ew anciayel ke'ez te'arin Astucouy zotouvard sepaker: "And to present to you, Lord God, a peculiar people." Cf. p. 68, where this is realized upon the baptism of the people. Earlier, p. 40, the Saint acts upon the king's request to prepare the people for baptism: Patrasee znasa zotouvard te'arin: "Prepare them [to be] the Lord's people". This seems to echo the new identity declared at the end of Agat'antegos (History, 900).

39 David is cited as one who exemplifies patience in St. John Chrysostom, De David et Saul, 2.1 (ed. Migne, PG 54.675); cf. idem, Specimen expositionis in Job (ed. Migne, PG 64.504).

40 Cf. the similar narrative in the Bugandaran, with reference to the consecration of St. Nersēs the Great (4.4),
he welcomed Christ not once but daily while in the pit and sacrificed not a ram in place of Isaac but himself as a rational offering; 41 although Isaac is glorified for his righteousness and exemplary life (Gen. 24-26), the Saint set a standard of righteousness and exemplary purity; although Jacob is wonderful in his simplicity of spirit, in begetting many children, and in seeing the ladder that reached from earth to heaven (Gen. 27-30), the Saint begot many shepherds and flocks for the Chief Shepherd, set his mind to be elevated from earth to heaven over an intelligible ladder, and begot many children of light; 42 although Job is most renowned for bearing afflictions patiently (Job 1:3; 7:5), the Saint’s suffering is no less, for instead of sitting on a heap of ashes outside the city he went farther away, into hellish solitude, and coped with snakes instead of worms (pp. 74-77). And the comparison continues in like manner, comparing the Saint with Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, and Sts. John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul—with St. Gregory surpassing them all (pp. 77-81).

There are fewer comparisons in the second panegyric attributed to St. John Chrysostom, I Mecn Grigorias Lasawort’ Pn Hayastaneac’ ([Panegyric] on Gregory the Great, the Illuminator of Armenia), the origin of which remains just as dubious as that of the first. The focus, throughout, is on the imprisonment of St. Gregory in the deep pit or dungeon, the survival of this man of God who at the beginning of the document is declared an equal to Sts. Peter and Paul since he evangelized the East as they evangelized the West (p. 92) and who at the end of the document is referred to as “second Paul,” “second Moses,” and “new Daniel” (p. 122). 43 The Saint’s condition in the pit is compared with that of Lazarus in the grave (Jn. 11), yet unlike Lazarus the Saint’s pit had no stench but smelled like the Garden of Eden (p.

41 Cf. the short, anonymous panegyric on the Illuminator’s descent into the dungeon, in Liakatar Vark’ ew VKayabanut’iwn Srboc’ (The Complete Lives and Martyrology of the Saints), ed. Mkrtiç Vardapet Awgerean (Venice: St. Lazar, 1810), pp. 213-216, where the Saint is said to have “altogether surpassed both Abraham and Isaac, for he was sacrificing and offering his body through diverse tortures” (p. 213).

42 The Biblical phraseology is evident: Chief Shepherd (Heb. 13:20); children of light (Jn. 12:36).

98; cf. p. 108, for further Edenic description of the place). Unlike Adam, St. Gregory did not succumb to the serpents there (Gen. 3; p. 101; cf. p. 109, where these serpents are said to be descended from the one that deceived Eve). He is like the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace: Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael (Dan. 3:19-27; cf. 1:7 for the names; p. 103). St. Gregory’s fourteen-year survival in the deep pit is said to be a greater miracle than that of the Prophet Daniel in the lions’ den (Dan. 6), since snakes are considered deadlier than lions (p. 104). There he was fed like the Prophet Elijah in the wilderness (1 Kg. 17:1-7; p. 116). In most of these examples, as in those preceding them, the Illuminator fares better than the biblical worthies. As noted earlier, these two panegyrics said to have been translated from Greek had profound influence on all subsequent Armenian panegyrics on St. Gregory, especially those ascribed to Yovhannēs Sarkawag, Vardan Arewēc’i, and Yovhannēs Erznkac’i.46

Sarkawag begins his Nerboṭečan i Surbn Grigor (Panegyric on St. Gregory) by remarking that Armenian martyrs, such as the Illuminator, manifest far greater zeal for God than that manifested by Phinehas (Num. 25:6-8; cf. Ps. 106:30); their testimony is much more effective than the word of Elijah when he spoke against iniquity and thereupon brought drought upon the land (1 Kg. 17:1; 18:1; cf. Lk. 4:25; Ja. 5:17); their inspired messages that have been transmitted to the faithful are comparable to the sayings of the biblical worthies, those well

44 In a similar vein of thought, the beginning of an anonymous panegyric on the Illuminator’s release from the dungeon compares his fourteen years there with the four days of Lazarus lying dead in the grave, with the thought that fourteen-year endurance in the pit is a much more dreadful existence than being dead for four days; moreover, the Saint brings up with his release those who are spiritually dead (in Liakatar Vark’ew Vkayabanut’iwn Srboç’, pp. 237-239). For a partial, modern Armenian translation, see Surberu Kian’k’ (Beirut: Fraternité ecclésiastique arménienne, 1970), pp. 299-301.

45 For other comparisons between the Illuminator and Daniel, see Sop’erk’ Haykakank’, 4:95, 99, 108-111, 116 (where the period in the dungeon is fifteen years). To be sure, the connection between Daniel’s experience and that of the Illuminator is made explicit in the Karshuni version of Agat’angeťos ([Vk] 53-71; ed. M. van Esbroeck, “Un nouveau témoin du livre d’Agathange,” “Revue des études arménienes, n.s. 8 [1971] 22-95); cf. the Armenian version (Aa) 122; see Thomson, Agathangelos, pp. xliii-xliv.

46 All three published in Sop’erk’ Haykakank’, 5 (pp. 5-36, 39-82, 85-164, respectively; the second wrongly attributed to Vardan Barjrberd’i).
known to God and familiar to us in the Old and New Testaments (pp. 6-7). Near the end of the panegyric Sarkawg systematically compares St. Gregory with Moses. He draws analogies between Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush, where the prophet was unable to see God when told to deliver the Israelites from Egypt (Ex. 3:1-12), and St. Gregory's encounter with the "Bridegroom" in Roman territory and his return to the native land to deliver his people (pp. 28-30). He then turns to the miracles wrought by the rod of Moses, the rod by which he turned the Nile water to blood, the rod which turned into a serpent, and by which he led the Israelites to the Promised Land (Ex. 4:1-9; 7:8-25), comparing them with what the Illuminator accomplished by the Word of the Lord and the sign of the Cross: taming the serpents in the pit, transforming the very person of the king, and bringing the Northern tribes from darkness into God's light (pp. 30-31). Whereas Moses inflicted ten plagues upon the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus (7:14-11:10), St. Gregory delivered and lifted up his people through the suffering inflicted upon himself. Whereas Moses used his rod when crossing the Red Sea, causing Pharaoh to drown (Ex. 13:20-14:31), the Saint turned the tide at his crossing of the Euphrates by baptizing the masses, and in so doing he crushed the head of "the invisible Pharaoh" once crushed at the Jordan (p. 32). Whereas Moses fed the people with manna (Ex. 16:13-35), St. Gregory fed them with the true Bread from Heaven (alluding to Jn. 6:25-59). Whereas Moses hit the rock, causing a spring to gush forth for the people to drink (Ex. 17:5-7), St. Gregory activated the spring of the Water of Life to quench their spiritual thirst (alluding to Jn. 7:37-39). Whereas Moses with his outstretched arms helped Joshua carry a victory over Amalek (Ex. 17:8-16), St. Gregory carried victories with the sign

47 Cf. the short, anonymous panegyric on the Illuminator's descent into the dungeon, in Liqatvar Vark' ew Vkyabanwr'Twvn Srbo', p. 214, where The Teaching of St. Gregory is compared with the burning bush, "ablaze with the love of God."

48 Alluding to the tradition that at His baptism Jesus crushed the head of Satan, who was lurking as a serpent in the Jordan, and thus fulfilled the prediction in Gen. 3:15 literally. For this recurring theme in early Christian writings on Adam and Eve, including patristic homilies on Gen. 3, see the sources in Michael E. Stone, A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve, SBL Early Judaism and Its Literature, 3 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 84-116. This traditional belief is at times depicted in medieval iconography of the baptism of Christ. Pharaoh as the personification of evil is common in the allegorical writings of Philo of Alexandria, which had an overwhelming influence on patristic exegesis.
of the Cross and destroyed the sanctuaries of demons, chasing them out to the Caucasus. And whereas Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land, the Saint brought his people into “the world to come”: even to see God (pp. 33-34). Sarkawag has come a full circle in his systematic comparison between Moses and the Illuminator by repeating the notion that Moses was unable to see God: whether at the burning bush or, presumably, when he asked to see God’s face (Ex. 33:21-23; cf. Jn. 1:18). Moreover, he has pursued the motif under consideration near the beginning and near the end of his composition, thus creating a larger literary frame or an inclusio.

In his *Nerbofian y Erc’s Eranexl Partewn Grigoriy Lusaworiq* (Panegyric on the Thrice Beatified Parthian, Gregorios the Illuminator of Armenia) Arewelci carries the motif a step further. In the dedicatory preface to his patron, Tēr Hamazasp, Bishop of Haṭbat (1243-1261), he refers to St. Gregory as “your Abraham” and our spiritual ancestor (p. 40). He then equates St. Gregory and King Trdat with the two anointed leaders, the “two branches” in the book of Zechariah: Joshua the high-priest and Zerbabbel the would-be-king (Zech. 4:3, 11-14; pp. 51-52). Elsewhere, St. Gregory is the “new Joshua,” the high-priest who introduces Trdat, the “new Zerbabbel” (pp. 55-56). Moreover, the Saint holds the two sticks mentioned in Ezekiel 37:16-23: with one he leads the flock and with the other he wards off the wolves (p. 52). These two sticks become the one rod of a walnut tree mentioned in Jeremiah 1:11 identified here with the Saint himself (p. 53). The plains of Ararat are graced with the glory of Mount Horeb and of Mount Sinai, since what St. Gregory saw in the vision of Soṭ kat’ is the pillar of light and of cloud that led the Israelites through their wanderings in the Sinai (Ex. 13:21; p. 54). St. Gregory is the “new Jacob” who likewise had a vision of a heavenly ladder whence descended the Only-begotten (etymologically referring to Ejmiacin) and who also, like Jacob, begot a flock of bright-striped sheep (Gen. 28:12; 31:8; p. 55). These are the great Armenian people whom he begot for God through his suffering (pp. 56-57, 61). St.

49 Cf. the opening words of the anonymous panegyric on the Illuminator’s descent into the dungeon, in *Liakatar Vark’ ew Vkeyabanurt’wan Srboc’,* p. 213, where the Saint is addressed as “New Abraham, the progenitor of faith”; and again: “I speak of our glorious father, the God-approaching patriarch of the house of Israel” (p. 214).

50 Following the Armenian Bible, as also in the Septuagint; the Hebrew has “a rod of an almond tree.”

51 On the vision, see Agat’angeftos, *History,* 731-756.
Gregory’s descent into the pit is like Christ’s descent into the world at His incarnation and into hell following His resurrection (Jn. 1:14 and 1 Pet. 3:19; cf. 4:6), and like Daniel’s into the lions’ den (Dan. 6); and his fifteen years there are more severe than Jonah’s three days in the belly of the fish (Jon. 1:17; p. 62; cf. p. 71). God went down with him into the pit, just as when He told Jacob He will go down with him into Egypt and will bring him out of there (Gen. 46:4-5; p. 64). St. Gregory rejoiced in the presence of the Lord as David did before the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam. 6:14-15; p. 72); and on Mount Sepuh the Saint was like Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kg. 18:16-46; p. 74). The only two analogies between St. Gregory and Moses are found at the beginning and at the end, respectively: in one, St. Gregory with his two sons, Sts. Aristakēs and Vrt’anēs, are the counterparts of Moses, Aaron and Joshua (p. 44); in the other, St. Gregory’s death on Mount Sepuh is compared with that of Moses on Mount Nebo; however, upon the Saint’s death his kin did not lament over him as the Israelites did for thirty days upon the death of both Moses and Aaron (Num. 20:29; Deut. 34:8; pp. 73, 75-76). As in the panegyric by Sarkawag, the references to Moses in this panegyric serve as a literary frame.

The panegyric by Erznakac’i, Asac’uvac Nerbotakan Govesti i Surb Lusaworić’en Hayoc’ Grigorios (Panegyric of Praise Recited on St. Gregorios the Illuminator of the Armenians) has been acclaimed as the

52 Cf. the anonymous panegyric on the Illuminator’s descent into the dungeon, in Liakatar Vark’ew VKayahanat’iwn Sirhoc’, pp. 213-214, where God is said to have gone down with the Saint as He did with Joseph when the latter was thrown in a pit (Gen. 37:12-36); however, the Saint is said to have surpassed Joseph when the latter was released, since the Saint came to save people not from the famine of the land but from the famine of hearing the Word of God (cf. Am. 8:11).

53 Cf. Koriwn, Life of Maštoc’, 25 (90.2-11), on the sorrow of the ever-active St. Maštoc’ over the death of his associate St. Sahak, compared with the sadness, loneliness, and relative inactivity of the Apostle Paul because of the temporary absence of his associate Timothy (see above, n. 5).

54 Similar comparisons abound in the other panegyrics by Arewele’i: on St. Gregory VKayasēr and his successors to the Catholicosate; on Sts. Sahak and Mesrop (Maštoc’) and their pupils, the holy translators; on Sts. Aristakēs and Vrt’anēs and their descendant successors to the Catholicosate; and on St. Yovhan Ojñec’i (works listed chronologically); see (Archbishop) Norayr Po’faran, Hay Grotner (Armenian Writers) (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1971), pp. 295-297. See also Payak Ant’ab’yan, “Vordan Arewele’u Nerbota Nvirvac Hayoc’ Grem Gyutin” (The Panegyric by Vordan Arewele’i on the Discovery of the Armenian Letters) Bamber Matenadarani, 7 (1964) 365-397, especially p. 366.
best of these medieval compositions because of its artistic creativity
seen in rich imageries and associations.\textsuperscript{55} It is in the work of this
thirteenth-century prolific author where the ultimate development of the
motif is to be seen. For him, Mount Sepuh, the place of the Saint’s
asceticism and primary burial, is superior to all the biblical
mountains—including Ararat, Sinai, Zion, and even Golgotha (pp, 123-
139 [§§ 29-40]). Repeatedly in this panegyric, St. Gregory, the most
radiant among the saints in heaven, is compared with Moses (pp. 99,
113, 145 [§§ 13, 22, 44]) and several other worthies whose names are
associated with the biblical mountains; they are: Noah, Abraham,
David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah. Moreover, St. Gregory is
the new Aaron, the new Bezalel, and the new Jacob of the Armenians
(pp. 145, 149 [§§ 44-45, 49]). On the whole, this work brings to a
climax the blend of nationalism and piety that seems to characterize
early Armenian Christianity.

It must be said that comparing a eulogized hero with renowned
persons in antiquity is an encomiastic or panegyrical requirement in the
rhetorical literature from Classical times through the \textit{Progymnasmata} of
Late Antiquity. Such comparison is an often recommended step when
to tolling great men and their meritorious achievements. Aristotle, for
example, has this rule in his \textit{Rhetoric} (1368a11-25): “Point out... that
he has done it better than anyone else”; “the comparison should be with
famous men; that will strengthen your case; it is a noble thing to
surpass men who are themselves great” (lines 12, 21).\textsuperscript{56} Aphthonius in
his \textit{Progymnasmata} has this admonition: “add comparison, in order to
infer a greater position for the one being praised.”\textsuperscript{57} It is in such
instances of encomiastic comparisons in Koriwn’s \textit{Life of Maštoc’}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{55} In addition to the text in \textit{Sop’erk’ Haykakank}, 5:85-164, see the
more recent edition by Armenuhi E. Srappyan, \textit{Hovhannes Erznakac’i, Hay
K’narergut’yun Matenašar} (Erevan: Sovetakan Grot, 1986), pp. 136-199;
and Aršaluys ḿ Lazinyan, “Nerpot’a hay hin grakanat’yan mej” (The Panegyric
in Ancient Armenian Literature), in V. S. Nersisyan and H. G. Bax’inyan,
eds., \textit{Hay Mjnakdaryan Grakanat’yan Zaner} (Genres of Medieval Armenian
Literature) (Erevan: Academy of Sciences, 1984), pp. 127-178, especially
pp. 150-152.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{56} Cf. Cicero \textit{De Oratore} 2.85.348: “A splendid line to take in a
panegyric is to compare the subject with all other men of high distinction.”

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{57} From R. Nadeau, transl., “The Progymnasmata of Aphthonius in
Translation,” \textit{Speech Monographs}, 19 (1952) 273; for the entire transl.,
see pp. 264-285.
where the pattern is set for the development of this motif in early Armenian literature.\textsuperscript{58}

Biblical precedents, especially from the New Testament, could also be cited as contributing factors to this development in early Christianity. The remarks of Jesus to His disciples regarding St. John the Baptist in Matthew 11:11 are noteworthy: “Among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” There are also the Pauline injunctions in 1 Corinthians 11:1, to become imitators of him as he is of Christ; even to follow the example of others praised by him.\textsuperscript{59} The formal praise of a long line of biblical worthies in Hebrews 11 further justifies the praising of the saints early in the history of Christianity, following similar “praises of famous men” in one of the most loved Apocryphal books: Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (44-50).\textsuperscript{60} Early Christian hymns, the emerging liturgical literature, and early hagiography dealing with the lives and legends of the saints are other major blocks in this development. Moreover, there can be no doubt about an excessive Christian exegetical understanding of the Old and New Testaments of which early Armenian writers were aware, as seen in their reliance on a vast array of patristic translations.\textsuperscript{61} These patristic writings tend to heighten the distinction between the dominance of the Law in the Prophets and the superior role of the Spirit in the Apostles.\textsuperscript{62}

Precedents aside, there seems to be a particular self-definition emerging in the earliest writings by these clerics surveyed above, beginning with Koriwn’s \textit{Life of Maštoc’}. This self-definition is somewhat akin to that of early Christianity in its relation to Judaism


\textsuperscript{59} Cf. 1 Cor. 4:16; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess. 1:6-7; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7; see also 1 Clement 31:2, Ignatius Eph. 2:1; Justin Martyr \textit{Dial.} 125:5.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. the exhortations for endurance based on faith in God in 1 Macc. 2:49-64; 4 Macc. 16:16-23; 18:11-13.


\textsuperscript{62} See, e.g., St. John Chrysostom, \textit{In Mat. Hom.}, 15.6, who observes that the prophetic witness was less than that of the apostolic, since the Prophets were geographically limited, but not so with the Apostles whose witness is universal (quoting Mat. 5:13); cf. \textit{The Teaching of St. Gregory}, 609.
ever since the emergence of Christian distinctiveness in the first century, when there was a strong consciousness among early Christians of their being the people of God. By the fifth century Christians had already established, to their own satisfaction, that they were the true heirs of ancient Israel. The way early Armenian writers expressed this consciousness of their Christianity calls for a more exhaustive study, employing for its methodology principles of the sociology of knowledge. Suffice it to say, however, that the initial inroads made by Christianity must have been socially and politically far more painful and destabilizing than the picture presented by the early church historians. Circumstances in Armenia during the period of the Christian Arsacids were probably similar to those elsewhere in the fourth and early fifth centuries. It was a time of uneasy change in the self-consciousness of the people. From that time onward, as far as these ecclesiastic spokesmen were concerned, they had acquired a new identity and, consequently, ceased to define themselves by their pre-Christian past. They have become closely associated with the commonwealth of the New Israel or the people of God; they have become a distinct entity whose religion is neither Iranian nor Hellenic but "biblical" and with ties to that heritage through varying degrees of closeness to either Edessa or Cappadocian Caesarea. It seems that a substantial part of the above cited authors' intent, like that attributed by them to their respective heroes, was to heighten this self-consciousness among the people and to forge a new identity—perhaps even unity. Their efforts may be deemed significant in view of the prevailing conditions in the much fragmented land with its constantly shifting boundaries, not only between the threatening Byzantines and Sasanians but also among the feuding Armenian naxarars, the rulers of the autonomous Satrapies south of the struggling Arsacid kingdom.

The very high esteem for the native heroes of faith in early Armenian literature, as being no less honorable than the biblical worthies, may thus suggest dire socio-political realities and times when


64 For a general assessment, see Robin Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), pp. 293-335.
the newly acquired faith and the new identity that came with it had to be reaffirmed. Notwithstanding the unique historical circumstances that seem to have influenced the shape of the Armenian ethos, the motif herein surveyed is indicative of a self-understanding similar to the two most prevalent self-definitions in primitive Christianity: (1) its continuity with ancient Israel, and (2) its willingness of martyrdom. As part of the first definition, there was a strong sense of apostolic tradition, seen in the assumption of continuity with the Prophets and the Apostles: the true doctrine is what is taught in the apostolic churches and those in communion with them. As for the second, early Armenian writers had a strong penchant for martyrdom, not simply for

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65 What is conspicuous about Armenian Christianity in the fourth and early fifth centuries is that (1) it did not dwell on defining itself in terms of "orthodoxy" and "heresy," even though the Church adhered to Athanasian orthodoxy at the height of the Arian controversy; (2) nor did it assert a separate identity among fringe-groups or sects within the early Church, even though the ruling Arsacids from the accession of Tiran in 338 to that of Arsak III in 374 aggressively pursued an Arianizing policy. On the first, cf. the earliest Armenian catechisms: Vardapetet'iwn (Armenian text in Agat'ange'ay Patmut'iwn Hayoc', 259-715; Eng. transl., Thomson, Teaching) and Yačaxapatum (Armenian text, Srboy Hörn Meroy Eranelwoyn Grigori Lusaworč'ı Yačaxapatum Čairc' Lusawork'ı [Elaborate (and) Enlightened Homilies of Our Blessed Father Gregory the Illuminator], ed. Aršak Tër Mik'elean [E]miacin: Mother See Press, 1894]), both works attributed either to St. Gregory or, more likely, in their present forms, to St. Mat'oc and his School; on their pre-Chalcedonian date, see the summary of scholarship in Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Daser Hay Ekte'oč'akan Matenagrut'yunic' (E Dar) (Lessons from Armenian Ecclesiastical Bibliography [(5th Century)] (Soč'i: Armenian Diocese of Kar Naxijevan and Russia, 1993), pp. 22-23, 35-38. In Ezunik Kot'bač'i, in whose untitled work our motif is absent (Armenian text with French transl. in Eznik de Kotb: De Deo, ed. L. Mariës and C. Mercier, Patrologia Orientalis, 28, fascs. 3-4 [Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1959]; Eng. transl., Thomas Samuelian, Refutation of the Sects: A Retelling of Yeznik Kghbots'i Apology [New York: St. Vartan Press, 1986]), the Church appears to define itself doctrinally: by denouncing heresy and by leaning toward an established orthodoxy. On the subsequent anti-Chalcedonian posture of the Armenian Church, see (Catholicos) Katerkin Sarkissian, The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church (London: SPCK, 1965). As for church-state relations under the Arsacids, see Nina G. Garsoian, "Politique ou Orthodoxie? L'Arménie au quatrième siècle, " Revue des études arméniennes, n.s. 4 (1967) 297-320; repr. in eadem, Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians, ch. IV.
being the spiritual successors of the Maccabees but because the reward of those who thus bear witness for Christ is all the greater.
THE ARMENIAN LITERARY CORPUS ATtributed to Ephrem THE SYRIAN: PROLOGEMENA TO A PROJECT

Edward G. Mathews, Jr.

It would be quite remiss in a conference on Armenian Church Patristics not to mention the name of Ephrem the Syrian, the fourth-century deacon of Edessa. Ephrem is one of the most renowned of the early Church Fathers and was known throughout the early Christian world as a prolific ecclesiastical hymnographer and biblical commentator.¹ He was called the 'Harp of the Holy Spirit' by Theodoret of Cyr² and known by that title in his native Syriac tradition. Ephrem was also lauded by such patristic writers of the fifth century as Palladius, Sozomen, and Jerome.³ The writings of Ephrem have exerted an enormous influence on almost every early Christian culture of Europe, Asia and Africa, and were quickly translated into numerous languages: Greek, Armenian, Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopian, Slavic, and Georgian.⁴ The Greek works attributed to Ephrem, almost all devoted to ascetical subjects, are so numerous that none of the works of the great Greek fathers themselves, with the sole exception of those of John Chrysostom, exceeds them.⁵

¹ For a general overview of the life and works of St. Ephrem, see BROCK, 1992, and our introduction in MATHEWS/AMAR, 1994.
⁴ KIRCHMEYER, 1960, pp. 819-822. The Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopian, Slavic, and Georgian versions all seem to be dependent on the Greek corpus.
Although a Syrian and not an Armenian, the corpus of Armenian works that survive under the name of Ephrem is substantial. The importance of these works for the history of Armenian literature is universally recognized. Ter-Petrosian, in his recent work on ancient Armenian translations, refers to these works as "the greatest contributions to the field of patristics." While perhaps showing a greater tendency to refrain from such hyperbole, contemporary scholars would agree with this assessment. Yet, only the Syriac works attributed to Ephrem have been subject to the interest and study that his works merit. The extensive corpus of Greek works attributed to Ephrem have received almost no attention at all and, more regrettably, research into the large corpus of Armenian works that has come down to us under the name of Ep'rem Sori has not been commensurate with the importance generally accorded him.

In 1836, the Mkhitarist Fathers in Venice published four volumes of the works of St. Ephrem, including commentaries, homilies and hymns. This edition was a major event in Armenian Ephrem studies, but the texts therein were edited on the basis of single manuscripts found in the Venice library and are thus deficient in terms of contemporary critical editions. In the subsequent 160 years after the publication of this Venice edition, new critical editions of only two works from this collection have appeared. Of additional works not included in the Venice edition, here too only two critical editions have appeared. This fact alone reveals much about the state of research into the Armenian corpus of the works of Ephrem the Syrian. In addition, the large part of the meager subsequent secondary scholarship on Armenian Ephrem has occupied itself more with questions of biblical text, relations with other commentators, even with possible influence on the famous frescoes at Art'amar than with Ephrem himself. In short, too little has been done on the Armenian corpus

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7 For a general listing of these Syriac works, see MELKI, 1983, and more recently BROCK, 1990.
8 The skimpy notices in the standard histories of Armenian literature are woefully inadequate. ZARBHANALEAN, 1889, while still far out of date, nevertheless gives a generally reliable catalogue of the works in this corpus. TOROSSIAN, 1925, is also inadequate and out-of-date.
9 EPHREM, 1836. For a brief resumé of this edition and its contents, see DJANACHIAN, 1969.
10 EPHREM, 1953-1954 and IDEM, 1968. The original edition of these two works constituted most of vol. II of EPHREM, 1836. See further, below.
11 See notes 37 and 39, below.
12 See OUTTIER, 1984, pp. 589-592.
itself and nothing at all on the influence this corpus has produced on the
tHistory of Armenian literature.

This Armenian corpus shares a striking characteristic with the even
larger Greek corpus attributed to Ephrem; with only a few exceptions,
there are no Syriac counterparts that have come down to us. Only two
works from the Armenian corpus have underlying Syriac counterparts:
the Commentary on the Diatessaron, which survives in complete form
in Armenian (whereas we have only about eighty-five percent of a
single sixth-century Syriac manuscript of this work),\textsuperscript{13} and a Life of
Ephrem, which has come down to us in ten manuscripts, along with its
derivatives in various synaxaria versions.\textsuperscript{14} In the case of the huge
corpus of Greek works that have been handed down under the name of
Ephrem, there are only a few homilies and the so-called Testament of
Ephrem that have extant underlying Syriac versions.\textsuperscript{15} The general
consensus of contemporary scholarship is that this Greek corpus, with
the possible exception of a single Ascetical Homily, is entirely
inauthentic.\textsuperscript{16} It is perhaps not out of place to suggest that one of the
first tasks of the Armenian Ephrem scholar is to take inventory of the
Armenian corpus and determine correspondences, if any, with either the
Syriac or the Greek corpus. While it is far too premature and beyond
the scope of this paper to accomplish such a task, nonetheless it might
serve a useful purpose to provide a resume, however sketchily, of the
present state of affairs with regard to this very large corpus of works.

The Armenian works attributed to Ephrem that have come down to
us are many, varied and are scattered in all the collections of Armenian
manuscripts throughout the world. While the present state of the
catalogues of these collections does not allow any definitive listing,
these works can, nevertheless, be categorized under five general
headings: prayers, biographical material, homilies, hymns and
commentaries.\textsuperscript{17} The first two of these categories are quickly treated.

\textsuperscript{13} See note 37, below. For a general discussion of the history and
problems with this text, see the introduction to the recent translation of

\textsuperscript{14} See discussion of these texts, below.

\textsuperscript{15} See GEERARD, 1974; HEMMERDINGER-ILIADOU, 1960; IDEM,
1961 and 1975-76.

\textsuperscript{16} GEERARD, 1974, pp. 370-373. This work seems to be a
compilation of various texts rather than a translation of any single text.
The best evaluation of this Greek corpus is DE HALLEUX, 1983.

\textsuperscript{17} I have also found a number of works attributed to Ephrem in the
catalogues, labeled bank. I do not propose to treat these nor the fragments
found in such collections as the Knik Hawatoy.
PRAYERS

O Lord of heaven and earth, sovereign over life and death, judge of the living and the dead, O Christ God, hope and assurance of my soul, to You do I incline my worship and offer my prayers in praise. Hear, O Giver of gifts, my humble entreaties, You who alone are without sin, You who alone are holy and are glorified among the saints, You who alone are merciful and compassionate. Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy, and according to Your great compassion pardon my iniquities. O my creator, have mercy on me and bless me; reveal Your face to me and be benevolent toward me. O my lifegiver, turn toward me, reveal Your face and remember me in Your kingdom. Turn toward me, O God my savior, and turn away from me Your anger; never be angry with me and do not turn Your face from me. Do not punish me in anger nor in Your wrath revile me. Never be angry with me and do not remember my evil deeds; do not condemn me for my iniquities. Never bear malice toward me and do not be wholly angry with me. Do not treat me according to my sins nor recompense me according to my iniquities. Do not cast me away from Your face nor condemn me for I myself know that I have been crooked and a transgressor from my youth and I am completely without defense.

[ From a prayer of St. Ephrem ]

Several editions of the prayers attributed to Ephrem exist in Armenian, but none of these can be considered complete.\textsuperscript{18} As the above excerpt demonstrates, these prayers are very biblically based and imbued with a deep spirituality. While prayers attributed to Ephrem also exist in other oriental traditions, including the famous Prayer of St. Ephrem used in the Byzantine Paschal Liturgy, there is not, so far as I know, a single study of the prayers attributed to Ephrem in any of these traditions nor of the interrelation of these prayers. Ortiz de Urbina notes that the prayers attributed to Ephrem in Syriac are found only in late manuscripts.\textsuperscript{19} These Syriac prayers, none of which have been edited, seem, however, to stem from Greek originals which, on the surface at least, would militate against their authenticity.\textsuperscript{20} None of these Syriac

\textsuperscript{18} EPHREM, 1836, vol. IV, pp. 227-276, and IDEM, 1933. These two editions are identical. For other editions of this popular collection, see DJANACHCHIAN, 1969, p. 404, n. 62.

\textsuperscript{19} DE URBINA, 1965, p. 75. Some of these prayers can be found in EPHREM, 1882-1902, vol. III, pp. 211-230. Other unedited prayers are listed in BAUMSTARK, 1922, p. 51, n. 6.

\textsuperscript{20} GEERARD, 1974, pp. 438-444.
prayers seems to correspond to any of those in the Armenian tradition, so there is at present no basis on which to make a judgment as to their authenticity.

**BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS**

Ephrem is that one who is carried about on the tongue of every Christian. I speak of Ephrem the Syrian, for I am not ashamed of the race in whose customs I take pride. Ephrem, the splendor of whose life and contemplation has radiated throughout the whole world, is known in almost every place under the sun and is unknown only among those places where Basil, that great luminary of the Church, is unknown. Ephrem, the truly spiritual one of the Church of Mesopotamia, from whose fullness the faithful were watered, pays back the seed of his faith a hundred fold. Ephrem is that fruitful vine of God, who blooms with the fruit of teaching in the manner of sweet grape clusters and delights the nurslings of the Church with the fullness of his love of God. Ephrem is that good and faithful steward of grace who measures out words of virtue equally to his fellow servants and who manages the Lord’s house in most noble fashion.

[From a panegyric on St. Ephrem attributed to Gregory of Nyssa]

The Armenian versions of the biographical works have been recently edited in good critical editions and translated into French. 21 There are basically three works that constitute this collection: the *Life of Ephrem*, the *Testament of Ephrem* and an *Encomium on Ephrem* attributed to Gregory of Nyssa. Colophons inform us that the *Life of Ephrem* was translated from Syriac at the bequest of Kat’olikos Grigor Vkayaser in the year 1101. The *Testament*, although a Syriac version exists, and the *Encomium* were both translated from Greek versions at approximately the same time. 22 The editors of these texts make no mention of it, but the originals of all three of these works have already been shown to be late in composition, based on a pastiche of biographical notices and traditional monastic *topoi*, and to have little to do with the genuine Ephrem. 23

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22 TER-PETROSIAN/OUTTIER, 1985, p. xvii. ZARBHANALIAN, 1889, p. 444, notes that translation of the works of Ephrem was also carried out under Vardapet Gevorg K’esune’i (c.1100-170).

HOMILIES

Jesus led them up to the mountain to show them that He was indeed the Son of God, begotten from the Father before all time, as He Himself knew. He was born from a virgin, and He kept inviolate the virginity of His mother. For wherever God wills, He overcomes the nature of power. God, the Word, dwelt in the womb of the Virgin, and the fire of His Divinity did not burn the membrane of her virginal flesh, but was rather kept for nine months in her nature. He dwelt in the womb of the Virgin and did not make the earthly substance of her nature a matter for shame for from her God proceeded to become man in order to bring us back to life. He manifested His fire which does not destroy that flesh with which He was united, so that He might bear witness to the Virgin, who was not destroyed, that she would be made holy by His power.
[ from St. Ephrem, Homily on the Transfiguration ]

The homilies (σαρκ’) of Ephrem have received scant attention. Over twenty-five years ago, G. Garitte published a Latin translation with brief introduction of Ephrem’s homily on Jonah.24 This homily was translated from a unique Syriac version, extant in a 6th century manuscript.25 A Georgian version of this same homily, also published by Garitte, is based on a rather periphrastic Greek version. An early extant Syriac version argues in favor of the authenticity of this work. The style and imagery lend credence to this position. To my knowledge, not a single one of the other homilies found in vol. 4 of the Mkhitarist edition has received any attention.

On the other hand, B. Outtier published, a few years after the article of Garitte, a text of a homily attributed to Ephrem titled “On the wiles of Satan”.26 It survives in a single fifteenth century manuscript, with no extant underlying Syriac or Greek version. Outtier posits that this piece might have been translated from an Arabic exemplar, probably in the region of Palestine.27 As the article went to press, he found in the Mingana collection of Christian Arabic manuscripts, found in the Selby Oaks Library in Birmingham, a slightly more developed version than

24 See GARRITE, 1969. While noting that there are more than twenty manuscripts containing this work, Garitte translates the text as found in EPHREH, 1836, vol IV, pp. 107-124.
26 OUTTIER, 1978-79.
27 Ibid., p. 166.
that which is found in the Armenian text. For reasons of style and language, this piece is almost certainly inauthentic. The work entitled "On the Seven Vahangs of Joseph" probably belongs in this category and is likely an apocryphal work, though I have not yet been able to look at this piece.

Although this is not the forum to provide a list, I have been able to locate more than twenty homilies that are not found in the Venice Mkhitarist edition. As I have so far had only the chance to look through some volumes of the Jerusalem catalogue and through part of the first volume of the Matenadaran catalogue, there are no doubt more homilies yet to be discovered. I hope to be able to provide a complete list of these homilies in the not too distant future.

HYMNS

Jesus, who was our teacher, washed the feet of the disciples. For He became a servant to his servants. Let us not subjugate our fellow servants. Peter, the rock, who was the head of the Apostles, fled from honors. Do not go after that from which the disciples fled. Let us truly do to each other, as we have received the commandment. Let us not seek honors; Jesus did not become an example to us for this. Let your companion be forced to honor you but you be terrified of honors. It would be great folly, if we were to abandon ourselves to honors, and let us not be zealous to imitate those who honor us. In that we desire honors, let us hasten to honor others. Flee, O brothers, from honors; let not the command be abolished. According to the command draw near and honor your lesser. As our Lord did to His disciples, do all the more to your lesser and from that one will you receive the measure of glory.

[ From St. Ephrem, Armenian Hymn 44 ]

The hymns that are attributed to Ephrem are probably the most beautiful of the works that survive in Armenian under the name of Ephrem. As with his genuine Syriac hymns, justice can not be done

28 IBID., p. 174.
30 A short selection of these hymns can be found in BROCK, 1983. EPHREM's Hymns on Paradise, perhaps his most beautiful hymns, have now been translated in EPHREM, 1990. English translations of the hymns On the Nativity, the Hymns on Virginity and the Hymns Against Julian, have now appeared, with introductions and notes, in EPHREM, 1989. A new translation of the Nisibene collection is in preparation; see EPHREM, Hymns on Nisibis. For some thematic treatment of Ephrem's hymns, see
to them in such a brief sketch as this. We now have available critical editions of two collections of hymns, already mentioned.\textsuperscript{31} Fragments of the original Syriac of the \textit{Hymns on Nicomedia} have survived and were published along with the Armenian text. The style and language of these hymns are clearly that of Ephrem the Syrian, and show similar traits to the early hymns in his collection of \textit{Hymns on Nisibis}. These hymns present us with a contemporary account of, and theological reflection on, the great earthquake that struck the city of Nicomedia on the 24th of August in the year 358. Ephrem reflects long on the destruction wrought within the city and how the Christian community was the cause of the earthquake by their behavior. Ephrem also marvels at how quickly a normal morning turned into sudden and total disaster for the inhabitants of the city. Thus, we have now a substantial counterpart to the \textit{Oration} of the pagan orator Libanius on that same catastrophe.\textsuperscript{32}

The collection of 51 ٨٥٤٥٥٢٤٥٤ is a collection of pieces in different styles and on different subjects.\textsuperscript{33} There are seven hymns on virginity, including three in dialogue format, four on the importance of vigilance and many with Old Testament themes. The collection concludes with five hymns on the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{34}

These two collections are interesting in that the first collection, the \textit{Hymns on Nicomedia}, is a translation of a single, unified, collection of Syriac \textit{mēmrê}, a poetic style based on lines of 7x7 syllable count. The other collection, the ٨٥٤٥٥٢٤٥٤, is clearly a translation of a varied collection of \textit{madranšê}, a Syriac poetic style based on stanzas of many different syllable counts. Both these poetic styles were well-known Syriac genres and all the surviving Syriac poetry of Ephrem himself falls into these two styles, with the \textit{madranšê} by far the predominant. The translator of the \textit{Hymns on Nicomedia} makes a concerted effort to

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\textsuperscript{31} EPHREM, 1975. See also RENOUX, 1973; IDEM, 1976; and the earlier work of ESSABALIAN, 1933.

\textsuperscript{32} LIBANUS, 1908. “Monody on Nicomedia,” in vol. 4, pp. 322-341.

\textsuperscript{33} The complete collection of hymns was first published in EPHREM, 1953-1956. These were later issued separately as EPHREM, 1957. His text was reproduced with Latin translation and notes in IDEM, 1961. See TER-PETROSIAN, 1978.

\textsuperscript{34} To my knowledge, only two of the hymns from this collection have been translated into English: Hymn XLIX in Brock, 1983, pp. 80-82; and Hymn XLVI in MURRAY, 1989. There are French translations of Hymn XLVIII in MARIE'S, 1954, and of Hymns XIV and XV in IDEM, 1957. The present writer has prepared the three dialogue hymns on the subject of virginity for publication. See “Armenian Hymn #9” and IDEM, “Armenian Hymns #4-5”.

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render the underlying Syriac verse into Armenian with rhyming lines, whereas the translator of the \textit{\textit{hymn\textit{on Nicomedia}} makes no such effort. The style, language and unanimous attribution in antiquity attest to the authenticity of the \textit{Hymns on Nicomedia}.\textsuperscript{35} As for the \textit{Kaeowrd} also, the style, the language, and the topics and treatments of the subjects lead us to the same conclusion.

\textbf{COMMENTARIES}

While the commentaries are by far the largest and most important component of the Armenian Ephrem corpus, little work has been done on them. There exist in Armenian commentaries attributed to Ephrem on nearly all the books of the Bible. Yet, not only have these commentaries not been studied in and of themselves, but neither does a study exist on their influence. In fact, there exist only few and scattered editions of the vast Armenian tradition of biblical commentaries. While new critical editions have been done of two of Ephrem’s many biblical commentaries, little else has been done.

1. New Testament

Who is capable of understanding the sum of all that is to be found in one single phrase of yours, [O Lord]? For that which we leave behind is much greater than that which we take, just like thirsty persons who [drink] from a fountain. The senses [lit. faces] of your [every] word are as numerous as the perspectives [lit. faces] of those who study it. [The Lord] has painted his word with many splendid colors so that each of us who look at it can examine that one which he prefers. He has hidden in his word all [his] treasures so that each of us can become rich from that word on which we [choose] to meditate. His word is a tree of life whose every branch offers blessed fruit to you; it is like that rock that was struck in the desert which became for everyone everywhere a spiritual drink. [They have eaten] a spiritual food and they have drunk a spiritual drink.

Let not then that one who happens upon one of these riches think that that which he has found is the only thing there. But, [let him rather realize] that he was only capable of discovering there that one single thing among so many others. Nor [let him think] that after he has been enriched by the word that that word has then become impoverished. Rather, because he is incapable of exhausting its riches let him acknowledge its greatness. Rejoice that you have been satisfied but do

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{EPHREM,} 1975, pp. xiii-xv.
not be sad that [the word] is greater than you. The one who drank is joyful and is not sad that he is unable to exhaust the spring. The spring will overcome your thirst but your thirst will not overcome the spring. For, if the spring is not exhausted, you may drink again each time that you are thirsty. But if, when you satisfy yourself you dry up the spring, your victory would become your downfall. Give thanks that you have taken [something] away and make no complaint about that which still remains. That which you have taken and brought away is your portion and that which is left behind is the blessing of your inheritance. That which you were not able to take at one time due to your weakness take at a later time through your perseverance. Do not resolve in your wickedness either to take at one time that which cannot be taken at one time or to turn away from that which you are able to take little by little.

[From St. Ephrem, Commentary on the Diatessaron]

Of the New Testament commentaries the Commentary on the Diatessaron has received the most attention. L. Leloir has given us new critical editions of both the complete Armenian version of this work as well as of the nearly complete Syriac original that has survived in a single manuscript. There has been considerable recent argument over its authenticity, but it seems to be on the whole genuine Ephrem, although later accretions have no doubt crept in.

G. Egan edited the work titled An Exposition of the Gospel, which circulated in the same two manuscripts as the Commentary on the Diatessaron. While Egan has argued vigorously for its authenticity, scholars now generally consider this anti-Marcionite piece to be the work of some other unknown Syrian author.

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36 EPHREM, 1953-1954.
38 Leloir has considered it genuine in his many works. See, for example, LELOIR, 1957, 1959, 1961a, 1961b, 1962, 1988 and 1989.
39 EPHREM, 1968.
40 MS. V452, and MS. V312, both of the twelfth century.
Of the commentaries on the fourteen letters of Paul we still have only the Mkhitarist edition. This edition of commentaries does not include one on the letter to Philemon, but does include a commentary on III Corinthians, which reflects the canon in the early Syrian and Armenian Churches. As mentioned above, the little research on these commentaries has focused on the biblical text type, particularly in regard to the last named book. The manuscripts, which are not a few, often contain commentaries of Ephrem combined with those of John Chrysostom and pieces from these commentaries also turn up in collections of homilies (בום פון בון פון גון), so there remains much work to do in sorting these out and in producing new critical editions of these works. There is not, to my knowledge, a trace of the survival of any underlying Syriac text of these works.

In addition to the commentaries on the letters of Paul, there exists a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, edited by N. Akinian. The catalogues also attribute to Ephrem, in both complete versions and fragments, a Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew and a Commentary on the Gospel of John. In a few other manuscripts, however, these latter are attributed to an Ep'rem Sasneč'i, to whom they are probably rightly to be attributed.

2. Old Testament

Then why was the tree of life planted? Because, ultimately, it would have been useful to make them live. Now, it is likely that it would have been given to [Adam] to eat from that tree, if he had endured the billows of one moment and had rejected the counsel of the serpent. Not

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42 EPHREM, 1836, vol. III.
43 See, for example, VETTER, 1894, pp. 80-97; SCHÄFLERS, 1917; MERK, 1924; and MOLITOR, 1938. For possible influence on the Aghtamar frescoes, see OUTTIER, 1984.
44 E.g., cf. MS. M4119—Ephrem and John Chrysostom, On the Acts of the Apostles; MS. PB36, PB38, Catena ex the Letters of Paul by Ephrem and John Chrysostom. There are no doubt many others.
45 See, for example, “On Those who have Fallen Asleep." This work, which is found in MS. J1 A, ff. 265-266v, and MS. J154. A, ff. 552-553, claims to be a fragment from Ephrem’s Commentary on the Letter to the Thessalonians. I have not seen this text to verify whether it is, in fact, or not such a fragment.
46 EPHREM, 1921.
47 Fragments of a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew are found in MSS. M1138 (with commentaries of Ephrem on Samuel, Kings and the letters of Paul), M3791, M4676, and M4802. Fragments of a commentary on the Gospel of John are found in MSS. M1204, M4139, and M9372.
because [Satan] lied to [Eve]—although this is indeed very evil—nor because these things did not come to pass, did anyone force them, but it was right, even if the serpent had spoken truthfully, that Adam remain firm in the command of his Lord. (?) For this reason, with all speed and haste, [God] removed [Adam] from the presence of the blessed tree, which crowns the just with its fruit, so that he might go to the cursed earth which would shame the transgressors with its thorns; that is, in return for [breaking] the commandment, the decree of punishment. And if [Adam] had kept [the commandment], he would have become perfect in the knowledge of good and evil, then from that moment he would have known that ‘good’ is to keep the commandment, and that ‘evil’ is to transgress the commandment.

[ From St. Ephrem, Commentary on Genesis ]

In the Venice edition of the Mkhitarists one finds there are commentaries attributed to Ephrem on the following Old Testament books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, and 1-2 Chronicles. In other words, with the exception of Ruth, on the present first fourteen books of the Armenian Bible. 48 This edition of these works claims to be done on the basis of the unique manuscript found in the library of the Mkhitarists at San Lazzaro, no. 873, dated 1299. Ms. Bzommar 437, a very clear notogrig text dated 1602/3, also contains the Armenian commentaries of Genesis through Chronicles attributed to Ephrem the Syrian, 49 as does the late manuscript, Vienna 1985, found in the Mkhitarist library of Vienna. 50 A very incomplete perusal of manuscript catalogues reveals that there exist at least fragments from commentaries attributed to Ephrem on Job 51, the Psalms 52, Isaiah 53.

48 EPHREM, 1836, vol. I.
49 AKINIAN/OSKIAN, 1971, pp. 34-35.
50 Szekula, 1983, p. 639. This manuscript is dated 1867.
51 VARDANEAN, 1912a; RENOUX, 1975-76 [he lists more than fifty manuscripts]. See now TER-PETROSIAN, 1994. He has argued that Eznik knew of this work and therefore the Commentary on Job must have been translated in the first decades of the fifth century.
52 Br. Lib. Add. 19279, is a catena on the Psalms from the works of Ephrem, Athanasius, Basil, Daniel, Dionysius, Epiphanius and John Chrysostom. CONYBEARE, 1913, pp. 188-189.
53 MS. M4825, is a commentary by George Skevracl on Isaiah which contains many fragments from a commentary on Isaiah attributed to Ephrem. See BUNDY, 1984, pp. 401-402.
Ezekiel\textsuperscript{54}, the Twelve Prophets\textsuperscript{55}, and Daniel\textsuperscript{56}. The only work of which I am aware on any of these Old Testament commentaries is a single article which treats the commentaries on Joshua through Chronicles.\textsuperscript{57} Comments in other works amount to little beyond reiterating the "fact" that these Armenian versions are translations or epitomes of the Syriac.\textsuperscript{58}

Of the Syriac originals we have only the commentaries on Genesis (complete) and Exodus (incomplete), which have survived together in a single sixth-century manuscript (MS. Vat. Syr. 110).\textsuperscript{59} A few scholars have recently pointed to fragments of Syriac commentaries on nearly every book of the Old Testament that survive in a ninth-century catena compiled by Severus of Edessa (d.c. 863). This catena is printed only in the old Assemani edition of the works of Ephrem.\textsuperscript{60} This edition utilizes only Vat. Syr. 103, which seems to be the oldest of the three known recensions of this catena, but the text here seems rather to reflect a "corrected" version of Assemani rather than the readings of the manuscript itself.\textsuperscript{61} But so far, there has been no work done on this catena, either, and therefore one must be extremely cautious in using it. G. Zarp'ianalean has claimed that these Armenian commentaries differ from "the more expansive Syriac Commentaries" and are based on Syriac epitomes, which he claims Ephrem himself was wont to do with his works.\textsuperscript{62} This latter comment no doubt arises from a mistranslation of the opening statement found in the Syriac Commentary on Genesis.\textsuperscript{63} Even a casual reading of the Armenian

\textsuperscript{54} MS. M5906, is a commentary on Ezekiel culled from the commentaries of Ephrem, Esayi Nē'ěce'î, and Cyril of Alexandria.

\textsuperscript{55} MS. M4042, is a commentary on the Twelve Prophets attributed to Ephrem.

\textsuperscript{56} MS. RV14, contains a catena on Daniel taken from the works of Ephrem and Hippolytus. See TISSERANT, 1927, p. 245. MS. M3606, is a commentary by Vardan Arewele'î on Daniel which contains many fragments from works attributed to Ephrem, Hippolytus and Step'ānos.

\textsuperscript{57} VARDANEAN, 1912h.

\textsuperscript{58} See, for example, ZARBHANALIAN, 1989, p. 444; OUTTIER, 1984, pp. 589-590; and BUNDY, 1990b, pp. 235-236.

\textsuperscript{59} EPHREM, 1955; English translations of both these commentaries are found in IDEM, 1994, pp. 67-265.

\textsuperscript{60} EPHREM, 1732-43, vol. I., pp. 1-315.

\textsuperscript{61} Personal communication from Dirk Kruiksbeek, who is preparing critical editions of the exegetical work of Jacob of Edessa on the Pentateuch.

\textsuperscript{62} ZARBHANALIAN, 1889, p. 444.

\textsuperscript{63} The Syriac Commentary begins with the following words: "I had not wanted to write a commentary on the first book of Creation, lest we should
Commentaries on Genesis and Exodus against the corresponding Syriac
Commentaries makes it quite clear that we are dealing not with
epitomes nor with apocopated texts; in fact, we are dealing neither with
the same commentaries nor even with the same author. The Armenian
Commentaries show little of the style of Ephrem nor much at all of his
usual concerns.

I have demonstrated elsewhere that the Armenian Commentary on
Genesis is based on the unpublished Scholia of Jacob of Edessa (d.
708). The style and language is much more that of this great
Monophysite biblical scholar and grammarian than of the fourth-century
poet. The Armenian Commentary on Genesis, in general, follows the
same outline, uses the same images and arguments and, most
conclusively, includes many phrases and complete sentences taken
verbatim from these Scholia. While the textual dependency is harder to
demonstrate with regard to the other Armenian commentaries attributed
to Ephrem, these all nevertheless manifest another striking—non-
Ephremic—feature. They all constantly appeal to other biblical
versions, particularly the Hebrew version. The Armenian Commentary
on Genesis alone refers to a Hebrew text explicitly 53 times, as well as
another six probable times. It also refers twice to a Greek version,
most probably that called the Septuagint, twice to the version of
Theodotion, twice to that of Symmachus, and once to the version of
Aquila. In the Syriac Commentary on Genesis (only if one accepts an
emendation by T. Jansma), is there even a single such reference. While
this feature cannot be easily used for dating the text as such, as interest
in other versions is already a feature in the Commentary on the
Octateuch of Eusebius of Emesa, it is nonetheless of great interest as
not a few of these citations found in the Armenian Commentary on
Genesis match no known text. Even in those few places where
Eusebius of Emesa and the Armenian Commentary on Genesis claim to
be citing the same verse of the same text, the texts do not match. This
particular phenomenon is most easily explained by the fact that
the author of this Commentary was utilizing the revised Peshitta
biblical text that Jacob of Edessa was known to have made. Fragments
of this revision exist, and would obviously not have been available to

now repeat what we had set down in the metrical homilies and hymns.” See
EPHREM, 1955, p. 3. English translation by the present writer in
EPHREM, 1994, p. 67.

64 MATHEWS, Commentary on Genesis.

65 E.g., Eusebius of Emesa and this Ps-Ephrem Commentary on Genesis
both cite different versions of Genesis 24:63. For further evidence, see
MATHEWS, IBID.

66 Fragments of Jacob’s revision of the Old Testament are found in
three manuscripts: on the Pentateuch are found in Ms. Par. Syr. 26, on
Eusebius of Emesa. In any event, I have yet to see these fragments and thus this explanation must remain for the moment as speculation.

There are also matters of obvious exegetical contradictions. The Syriac Commentary on Genesis at Genesis 1:2, strongly argues that the ṭ̄̄hā d’alāhā, literally “the wind/spirit of God”, can only refer to the natural wind. This interpretation, which was also held by Theodore of Mopsuestia, was known explicitly as that held by Ephrem in nearly all subsequent Syriac commentators. Those who explicitly name Ephrem as the holder of this opinion include the anonymous Nestorian Commentary, Mošè Bar Kēphā, Dionysius Bar Salibi, İβ̄̄'dad of Merw, İβ̄̄'bar Nun and Bar Hebraeus. Not only are these the greatest of the Syriac commentators, they span both parties of the Syriac church—Nestorian and Monophysite. In fact, the last two named even chided Severus of Antioch for having claimed that Ephrem identified the “wind of God” with the Holy Spirit.

The Armenian Commentary interprets this verse in exactly the opposite manner—that it refers to the Holy Spirit. When we look into this tradition, the surviving Armenian commentaries are, unfortunately, much later and mostly unedited. The surviving fragments from the commentaries of Etišē, Step'anos Siwnec'ı (680-735), and of Timot'ėos Vardapet (fl. early XI), are of no help on this question. The earliest native Armenian commentary on Genesis that survives complete is that attributed to Vardan Arewec'ı (1200-1271). Vardan, unlike any of the Syrian commentators, cites Ephrem here as maintaining the identity of the wind of God with the Holy Spirit, saying that [Moses/Scripture] is indicating by those things “the mystery of the font of baptism,” quoting the Armenian Commentary on Genesis attributed to Ephrem nearly word-for-word. I have been unable as yet to look at the later unedited Genesis commentaries of Yovhannes Orotnc'ı (1315-1387), Grigor Tat'ewac'ı (1344-1409), or that of Grigor Xlat'ec'ı (c. 1350-1425).

In conclusion, it is evident that there remains a tremendous amount of work to do on this large corpus of Armenian works. There are a large number of works, heretofore presumed to be translations of genuine works of Ephrem the Syrian, that seem to be later works based on the writings of different writers. The times and circumstances of these translations are completely unknown, but the traditional presumption that the great majority of them were accomplished in the first great wave of translations effected by Mesrop Maš'toc' and his disciples can no longer be maintained. 67 Finally, the question of the influence that this corpus, or more precisely the various components of

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67 As was maintained, for example, by OUTTIER, 1984, pp. 589-590.
this corpus, has had on the history of Armenian literature has yet to be broached. Nevertheless, the quantity of this corpus and its traditional attribution to the great Syrian hymn writer, “The Harp of the Holy Spirit,” ought to compel some serious research into this corpus.

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NOTES ON EZNIK OF KOLB’S DISCUSSION OF THE INCARNATION

Robin Darling Young

The career of Eznik of Kolb occurred during a time of great importance for the development of the doctrine of the Incarnation within Armenian Christianity. During his lifetime (374/380-ca.450) the dispute unfolded between Cyril and Nestorius, with its consequences in the ecumenical councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon and in the development of differing Christological traditions within the churches of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Persian Empire. In the early fifth century, Armenian Christian theological literature began to develop, and with it the early attempts to arrive at an adequate statement of Christology in the Armenian language.¹

Eznik’s extant writings include fragmentary letters on Christ and the lengthy treatise customarily known as the Against the Sects or On God.² Since his work is one of the earliest witnesses to the Armenian theological tradition, and since he knew and used the literature of the Greek and Syriac-speaking Christian communities bordering Armenia, Eznik’s opinions on the Incarnation, are of intrinsic interest. This is all the more true since Eznik’s Christology, sparse as it is, seems to concentrate more on the economy of the one God than upon the questions of nature and person in Christ which occupied contemporaneous writers. Perhaps because of the strong monotheism he presented in disputing various dualistic doctrines, Eznik preferred an older Christology far from the specificities of Cyril’s treatises or of the

¹ For brief overviews of this development, see INGLISIAN, 1963; SARKISSIAN, 1960; and THORROSSIAN, 1951. Consult also the magisterial work of ABELYAN, 1955, particularly pp. 133-157, on the life and works of Eznik.

Tomus ad Armenios of Proclus of Constantinople. It is noticeable, for instance, that two Armenian documents coming from the same period as Eznik, the Teaching of St. Gregory and the Confession of Faith of the Council of Artasat, contain more specific and more extensive Christological terminology than the On God.3

Furthermore, the letter to Mastoč presents a compendium of the teaching of the Council of Ephesus; this short summary stands in stark contrast to the Christological passages in the On God. Eznik states that the Council fathers

...are agreed to confess Christ as true God, Son of God, Only-Begotten, born of the Father before all creatures, and Creator-Lord of all things, and to confess that the same God the Word, in the last days, being clothed in flesh, became man for us without undergoing, in his divine identity, change, decay or destruction, and that God, in his birth from the Virgin, is perfect man according to fleshly birth; that the Virgin is named and really is Mother of the Lord and Mother of God; that he who is perfect God is called perfect man because he is perfect in his members and as perfect God he has endowed his holy flesh with a soul ...4

Where the above passage reflects the discussions of the early fifth-century authors, the On God evinces no awareness of the same. Thus, this essay explores the Christology that Eznik does advance in his long apology, and by noting the relevant passages on the incarnation, advances a possible reason for the differences noted.

THE EXTANT LITERARY WORK OF EZNIK

Eznik came from the village of Kolb, in the province of Tayk. According to Koriwn’s Life of Mastoč he was sent to Edessa with another priest-scholar, Hovsep’, in order to translate “the traditions of

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3 Etiše records the confession of the Synod of Artașat as having asserted that “God who made this world, the same came and was born from the Holy Virgin Mary, as the prophets previously indicated, without any bodily intervention. [H]e took flesh from the unsullied Virgin—truly and not in a shadowy appearance. He was truly God and became truly man. In becoming man he did not lose his divinity, nor in remaining God did he spoil his humanity, but [he remained] the same and one.” English in Etiše, 1982, pp. 90-91.

[the Syrians'] holy fathers" from Syriac into Armenian. Before 431, the two arrived in Constantinople to translate Greek Christian literature. There Eznik is said to have learned of the formulae of Nicaea and later councils and to have brought back with him the acts of the council of Ephesus. A fragmentary letter to Mastoc listing the decisions of Ephesus is attributed to Eznik by the compilation Knik Havadoy (Seal of Faith) and a fragment is included in that document.

After their stay in Constantinople the two "brother disciples" then returned to Armenia with copies of the Scriptures and their conciliar documents. Before their departure, Eznik is alleged to have influenced Proclus, bishop of Constantinople 434-446/447, to send his famous Epistle Two, the Tome to the Armenians. That letter anonymously attacked Theodore of Mopsuestia and defended a moderate Cyrillian Christology of one person in two natures. If he really did influence Proclus, Eznik also contributed in this way to the development of Armenian Christology.

Eznik is said to have become bishop of Bagrevand once he returned to Armenia. There, as bishop-vardapet, he prepared his magnum opus, a polemical-apologetic work which aimed to provide Christians with the means to refute their religious opponents. Other Armenian sources—notably the historians Etise and Lazar P'arpec'i—name Eznik as the bishop of Bagrevand in the district of Ayrrarat. As such, he is named as a participant in the 449/450 council of Artasat, which formally rejected by composing a defense of the faith and spurning the letter of the Persian emissary Mihr Nersah. During the decade of the 440s, the Persian rulers of Armenia had increasingly pressed Armenian Christians to abandon their religion and return to Zoroastrianism. This pressure culminated in the Battle of Avarayr in 451, which historians later read as a crucial episode in the history of the nation and its religion. The synod of Artasat shared part of the objective of the Against the Sects—to refute the basic tenets of religions which were present and exercised an obvious appeal to Armenians.

In the first case, the partition of Armenia in 386-387, under the emperor Theodosius, had placed the majority of Armenians under Persian administration. The church in Armenia had been growing since its adoption in the early fourth century. After the partition, not only did the catholicosate develop an independent, Armenian patriarchate of sorts, but Armenian Christianity became subject to Yazdegerd II's aggressive program of Iranization with its accompanying stress on the adoption of Zoroastrianism as the official religion. These conditions

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5 For the critical text see KORIWN, 1941, and IDEM, 1964, for the English translation by B. Norehad.
made it imperative to compose an apologetic defense of Christian teaching.

In the second case, there were other disputed beliefs within emergent Christianity in Armenia. Marcionism, as we know from the Syrian authors Ephrem and Theodoret, continued to flourish in parts of Syria well into the fifth century. It offered a version of Christianity convincing to some by emphasizing the overthrow of the Old Testament and its God. And further, there was the appeal of the old religion, which Christian authors had come to call Hellenism—Greek pagan literature, often philosophical in nature, which encouraged determinism.

If it was Eznik the bishop of Bagrevand, attendant at this council, who was also the author of the document under consideration, then his aims were consistent in each case—to participate in the ecclesiastical resistance to the resurgence of Zoroastrianism and to compose a work which could form a more sophisticated answer to the opponents of Christianity. The work itself was probably written between 441 and 448, most likely after 445.⁷

THE PARTS OF THE AGAINST THE SECTS

The Against the Sects, although not divided in the original manuscript, readily partitions itself into four sections. The first contains a polemic against the pagans; the second, against the Persians, the third, against the Greeks, and the fourth, against Marcion. Yet the editor of the book, Louis Maries, cautions against regarding the work as a collection of separate polemical pieces.

We do not have in Eznik’s treatise four polemical treatises, taking each one by itself and separately, but one treatise on God, a De Deo, as one says in a course of theology, where, on the occasion of positive theses, such-and-such categories of adversaries are refuted. It is quite correct to say that the adversaries combated by Eznik are the Greeks, the Persians, the Marcionites. This is right, from a doctrinal point of view, and likewise from a geographical (Greece and Asia Minor, Persia, Syria)—there were three dangerous currents which converged toward Armenia, situated at the crossroads of these three directions. But Eznik does not take his

⁷ The history of Armenian church leaders, and of Armenian Christology, in the early fifth century is extremely complicated. For a recent discussion see WINKLER, 1986, and VAN ROMPAY, 1985. Of earlier studies, an important review is ABRAMOWSKI, 1955-1956. See also RICHARD, 1948.
adversaries one by one to refute separately. If he gathers
them, it is from a philosophical and theological angle.¹⁸

Although Maries’ comparison between a fifth-century book and
twentieth-century, neoscholastic, theological instruction is perhaps not
apt, Eznik’s introduction itself makes clear that the entire book
concerns itself with the Christian’s knowledge of the one true God,
both transcendent and creative.

Because “He Who Is” (Ex. 3.14) has to be eternal and
unoriginate, since he did not receive his beginning-of-
being from anyone; and He does not have anyone above
Him whom one is obliged to believe a cause for Him ...
Because there is no one prior to Him, and no one after
like Him, and no companion equal to Him, and no
essence in opposition to Him, and no existence contrary
to Him ... Rather, He Himself is the cause of all who have
come into existence from nonexistence... (1)²⁹

In addition to its treatment of the one God, Eznik’s treatise is also a
discussion of the contingent nature of evil and on the free will necessary
to fulfill the ethical requirements of the Christian life. In the first
section against the “Greeks,” in actuality the Valentinian Gnostics,
Eznik discusses the origin of evil and of Satan, denying that there is an
independent principle of evil, and concluding with a section on the
nature of spirits—angelic, demonic, and human. In the second section,
against the Persians, Eznik denies that any creature is evil by nature,
and rebuts astral determinism. He attacks the Zurvanite cosmogony and
discusses theories of dreams and of demonic possession. In the third
section, against “Hellenic” pantheism and polytheism, Eznik places a
literal interpretation of Genesis and the construction of the cosmos to
rebut the belief that the heavenly bodies are gods. Finally, the fourth
section, against Marcion, demonstrates the concordance between the old
and the new covenants, and shows the pagan origins of Marcion’s
thought.

Eznik’s descriptions and rebuttals of false doctrines were not, of
course, without precedent in Christian literature. It was one of the great
contributions of Maries and Mercier to track down Eznik’s sources and
to show that in incorporating previous patristic literature of the Greek
and Syriac traditions he had sometimes quoted them word for word.

¹⁸ EZNİK KOŁBACI, 1959, vol. 2, p. 5. Maries here reconsiders the
division of the text into four parts by its original editor, A. Bagratuni, who
published the originally untitled text under the title of Against the Sects
(EZNİK KOŁBACI, 1826).
²⁹ All translated sections of the Against the Sects/On God are taken from
the forthcoming volume by Blanchard and Young.
Most prominent among his sources is Methodius of Olympus' *On Free Will*. Other sources include the *Apology of Aristides*, Basil's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron*, Syriac texts against Zoroastrianism, Epiphanius' *Panarion*, and the works of Origen, Achilleus Statos, Adamantius, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodore, Irenaeus, Ephrem, and possibly the now-lost works of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus against the Magians.

Thus, Eznik had encapsulated and summarized a kind of library of early Christian literature which had already raised arguments against doctrines which disagreed with fundamental principles of Christian teaching. Yet one of the remarkable features of Eznik's work, especially when compared with the confession of the synod of Artasat, is the omission of any sustained discussion of the Incarnation or of Christology. Indeed, the entire preoccupation of fourth-century theology, the relation between Father and Son in the Godhead, and the relation between the divinity and the humanity of Jesus Christ, receives scant attention from Eznik. It is even more remarkable to consider that Eznik was in Constantinople at precisely the time when the controversy between Cyril and Nestorius began in earnest, and that he is alleged to have helped Proclus' Christology enter Armenia, and that finally as a signer of the *Havadutiwm (Testament of Faith)* of the Synod of Artasat, he was aware of the need for some account of Christology in the face of opposed teaching.

**THE INCARNATION IN THE AGAINST THE SECTS**

In the book under consideration Eznik's purpose was twofold. As has been seen, it was apologetic in the manner of Athanasius' *Contra Gentes*. But it was also catechetical. Eznik meant to instruct believers, perhaps primarily other bishops and vardapets, in the elements of Christian doctrine and the proper understanding of the Scriptures.

As Eznik himself remarks, "the work of the church of God is the following: to convince the ones outside of the truth of things apart from the Scriptures, and to convince the ones on the inside not having true opinions, *by means* of the Holy Scriptures" (144; emphasis added). Perhaps Eznik reflects his early training in Edessa and Constantinople when he characterizes this work as that of an exegete, an interpreter:

But conformably with the dignity of God, no one will be worthy to become an interpreter (*patmic*) unless they are friends of God, who because of love for him also despise the life of the world, and [despise] the limit of death because of that living hope unto God—accomplishing [such] work they will be delivered from the fleshly perishing, whence salvation of spirit is found. (155)
Scriptural interpretation and catechesis in the mid-fifth century was a matter of interpreting disputed Christological passages. It is curious then that in the Against the Sects there are very few passages which directly discuss the incarnation.

There seem to be two layers of Eznik’s Christology. The first is archaic and reminiscent of second-century assertions of the way in which the Son has his source in the Father. This passage, for instance, asserts the atemporality and spiritual nature of the Son:

For it is not fitting for God to have a son in marriage, but in eternity, as the word to the mind, the river to the spring, and heat to fire, and light to the sun. (262)

There is also a second layer, which asserts the divinity of Jesus Christ, and may reflect less archaic doctrine. In the midst of a passage asserting the need of humanity for divine aid, Eznik speaks of such divinity:

He who was himself God said, “by the spirit I cast out demons” (Mt. 12.28) in order that mankind might learn that they will be unable to cast out demons without the cooperation of the grace of the Holy Spirit. (100)

Eznik also puts forth, against the philosophers, a reason for why Christ came into the world at a late date. Here (341-349) Eznik attempts an answer to the direct question, “why did [God] defer the advent of Christ, and thus the nations were humiliated without divine worship?” Christ, he says, did not come in the youth of the world because his teaching was too complicated for an unprepared human race. Rather, “first [God] instructed by means of preachers and prophets... And then he came to give the perfected teaching.” As an illustration Eznik adduces 1 Cor. 13, 11-12 to contrast the thoughts appropriate to a child and to an adult respectively.

Here Eznik avoids the question of the Incarnation’s necessity by demonstrating that God is all powerful, creating what he created only at the suitable time, particularly the creation of humanity. The force of these passages seems to be that God’s eternal will rules, even over the generation of His Son. He continues by stating that “the coming of his Son at that time was fitting, in which God knew that it would become a help [to man].” If a doctor applies the remedies for illness in the appropriate stages, seriatim, “how much more the crafter-of-all, from which every kind of invention is distributed, makes what he made at the proper time...”

Such a schema has more to do with Eznik’s view of the divine economy. He regards the Incarnation as the summit of the economy, occurring at just the right moment when humans were ready to recognize and accept the Gospel. A discussion in passages 117-119
seems to reflect Origen’s doctrine of the *epinoiai*, or Biblical terms for God, when Ezik considers the appropriateness of the terms “spirit,” “fire,” “light” and “life” for God. These are terms appropriate to God’s “remedies.” But in section 118, Ezik considers the human form as an especially appropriate way for God to appear:

And when He wants to appear to his holy ones, He does not appear by means of any other forms but only by means of the forms of man whom He made according to His own image. And it is not that that would come about to no purpose, but rather so as to demonstrate His excessive love which He has for man. And again, so that he might improve man in advance in order to lead him into knowledge, so that when He would send His own son as man to the world, they would not reckon anything strange at all. Above all they would know that in fact, that one was revealing Himself by means of the forms. Just as when He descended into the garden to Adam, He made a footfall like a man. And when the son stood beside Abraham with two angels, he was worthy to eat lunch in his tent.

And having conversed with Abraham on the mountain, He dispatched His two young men, angels taking the form of man, to Sodom to the attractive hospitality of Lot. And having been ignited without altering, He led the angel in the bramble to human voice, giving with the man of God, in exchange for the previously-offered one, to converse with Moses. (118)

This passage, like the previous, describes a divine economy of graduated revelation.

It was important for Ezik to stress that God always has willed what he continues to will, and therefore the Incarnation was no novelty in the will of God. “The willing was not born afterwards in him, but He knows all as prescient, until it comes into existence. And he did not make something mixed-up, which he would some day regret and cancel. And he lacked nothing ... But perfect and complete in himself, he contains all power by making and establishing all, and preserving it.” It is in this context that Ezik puts forward a rare reference to the doctrine of the Trinity:

And he does not have anyone beside him as an accomplice, as brother, or as friend or as some stranger [or fellow-worker, but only his own power and wisdom, which is a birth of his being and co-eternal, and the spirit is of his nature, which is from the same and eternal with him, indestructible and without change. (350)
A second context for discussion of the Incarnation appeals not so much to God's providence and foreknowledge in reserving it to the appropriate time and manner. Rather, it seeks to answer the Marcionite position that Christ was incarnate only in appearance, and that he overturned the edicts of an opposing God.

Eznik states that "if by appearance only he became man and if by means of an image the cross and sufferings and death came about, then also salvation cannot have been accomplished." Eznik concentrates on the reality of Christ's miracles of healing and redemption, and of his submission to the Law, to prove his humanity against Marcionite opposition:

Who was that one who was able to accomplish very great things in such a way if not the Lord of all, who said, "Everything has been given to me from my Father." Whence it is clear that not like some alien did he take forcibly, but received into his own hands from a father, and as Lord of the Law he has made the Law to stop. And before the crucifixion he manifested his kingdom. Oh foolish ones! For have you not understood, that the Father of Jesus is the Lord of all, inasmuch as he gave all into his hands? (392)

The greater part of this section Eznik devotes to showing that Christ comes at the behest of the earth's creator, to rescue creatures made not by an alien god, but by the good creator himself. Finally, he will completely subdue evil at the behest of this same Creator:

Will you not realize from the Apostle that Christ will destroy these principalities, and he will put every enemy beneath his feet? ... But Our Lord and His Father, who are able to make everything and subjugate all enmity underfoot. (397)

As a result of his mercy, the God who delays the Incarnation also keeps back "the coming of his Son until the [final] end of the earth."

CONCLUSION

The foregoing notes on Eznik's view of the Incarnation in the On God/Against the Sects have gathered the sections of the treatise which explicitly discuss the topic. It has been seen that Eznik does not use the contemporary terminology which he demonstrably knew and used in his letter to Mastoc', and which he is said to have endorsed in a generally similar form at the Synod of Artasat. A lengthier consideration of Eznik's Christology in relation to that of those documents, or of the Teaching of St. Gregory and other, non-Armenian
sources, is an obvious next step for placing his teaching in the spectrum of early fifth-century Armenian descriptions of the nature and person of Christ.

On the basis of the On God itself, however, it is possible to venture two explanations. First, if the book served as a kind of preliminary teaching in Christianity, a catechesis joined to an apology, then more dogmatic statements about Christ might well have been omitted from the book. But second, and perhaps more likely, is that in stressing the will, power and acts of the one God—against the doctrines of philosophers or dualists—Eznik found it more consistent to emphasize the role of Christ within the divine economy of salvation arranged by God. Such an emphasis may have led Eznik to concentrate upon the revelatory and exemplary acts of Christ and to steer away from meditation on his divinity and humanity in order to allow his emphatic monotheism to dominate his book.

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Seal of Faith

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GREGORY OF TAT'EW AND THE NEW VERSION OF HIS COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS

Armine Keuchgerian

A voluminous commentary on the Psalms written in 1405 A.D. by the famous medieval author Grigor Tat'ewac'i is well known by scholars as part of his literary heritage. In recent years I came upon a new version belonging to the same author in the manuscript collection of the Maštoc' Matenadaran of Erevan, but much smaller in volume than that of the year 1405. Our investigation revealed peculiarities deserving special attention. The results of the research were presented in an article¹ and later, the whole text was published as a book.² I wish to discuss in this forum the latter version of Grigor Tat'ewac'i's commentary, speak about the motives which gave birth to it, explore its significance and expose the role it could have played then.

Grigor Tat'ewac'i, christened Xutluşah, was born in A.D. 1346 in Vayoc' Jor of Siwnik', a region in the southeastern part of Armenia. He died in A.D. 1409 and was buried in Tat'ew. Grigor's tutor was Yovhan Orotnee'i, the founder of the monastic academy at Tat'ew. He had met the boy on his way to Jerusalem and, having perceived his mental capabilities, adopted him with the intention of bringing him up for the priesthood. Yovhan Orotnee'i was not mistaken. Grigor deserved the faith and trust his teacher had put in him; he proved himself to be a most devoted clergyman and a brilliant scholar who created numerous literary works and carried out successful social activities. In 1386, when Yovhan Orotnee'i passed away, Grigor replaced him as director of the academy.

Tat'ewac'i's very rich literary heritage embraces fields such as: philosophy, commentaries, theology, pedagogical works and art criticism. Some of his works, such as "The Book of Questions," "The Book of Sermons," "Introduction to the Book of Porphyry," and "Oskep'orik" (=miscellany) have also been published. The "Commentary on the Psalms" that is the subject of this study is much

² GRIGOR TAT'EWAČ'I, 1993.
smaller than the one of A.D. 1405 and contains obvious diversities.

Commentaries were in practice long before Christianity. To explain the meaning, the essence of a writing allegorically, became more and more widespread after the adoption of the new faith. The same is true with Armenians; at the dawn of Armenian Christian literature the authors inherited the custom of commenting on writings, with preferences going, of course, to the books of the Bible. The Book of Psalms was one of the first to be interpreted, it being the text most often read of the Old Testament. Complete or partial commentaries on Psalms are known from as early as the fourth century. We can mention the names of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, Ephrem Syrus, Basil the Great (of Caesaria), and many others. In Armenia, Nersès Lambronac’i (1153-1198) was the first to take all 150 psalms into serious consideration. Next to him is Vardan Arewele’i (c. 1198-1271) followed by Grigor Tat’ewac’i. Much later, Mik’ayél Camèean (1738-1823) presented a thorough and meticulous study of the Psalms, in ten substantial volumes.³

The new version of Grigor Tat’ewac’i’s “Commentary on the Psalms” is preserved in the following six manuscripts of the Maštoc’ Matenadaran: nos. 1126, 1130, 1131, 2642, 4370 and 6995.⁴ There is a seventh copy in the manuscript collection of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, but the date and place are unknown.⁵ The text of the Commentary begins as follows:

“Epiphanius [writes] about the psalm—[Therefore], the wicked will not stand [in the Judgment].” (5:5)

All the copies are alike with the exception that some of the subdivisions do not correspond. None of them is likely to be considered an undistorted version of the original. M1131 is the only text to have partly preserved its purity and integrity. The manuscript is a fifteenth century Miscellany; it consists of 213 folios. The colophon of Şahik, the scribe, mentions neither the place nor the date. The commentary occupies folios 64r-94r. It is written in very dense, minuscule script (bolorgir). The title is rather long:

“This Interpretation of the Collection of Dialogues of the Prophet David, Forefather of God, is composed by Grigor, the pupil of the renowned Yovhan Orotac’i, against the errors of those who confess Purgatory.”⁶

³ CAMÈEAN, 1815-23.
⁶ The same is repeated in the other sources with some trifling differences. The text in M4370 has no title as the beginning of the text is missing.
As we may note, this title testifies, first of all, to Grigor Tat’ewac’i’s authorship. It also affirms that the writing is aimed against those who believe in Purgatory. Undoubtedly, this is an allusion to the followers of Catholic doctrine, as the Armenian Orthodox Church does not admit the existence of the Purgatorium.

In order to understand Grigor Tat’ewac’i’s intended aim we must consider the ideologically stormy epoch the author was living in. Taking advantage of the political instability and confusion of Armenia, the pope sought to impose Catholicism upon the Church of Armenia. Highly intellectual scholars and erudite preachers skilled in rhetoric were commissioned to southern Caucasus. Being very well versed in the Armenian language so as to be able to translate the literature necessary to their mission, they attracted not only vast masses of the population but also clergymen serving in the Church of Armenia. Soon a movement to unite with the Latin Church emerged, headed by Yovhannès K’imec’i, which became known as Uniatism. It found expansion mainly in the regions of Artaz, Naxijewan, ErnJak and mostly in Cilicia, where it became a real threat. The movement was apparently directed against the Church, but in reality the very existence of the people as an independent nation was greatly endangered. No wonder that in Artaz, Naxijewan, ErnJak, those who accepted Catholicism later became Muslims and lost their national identity forever. Fortunately, however, there were individuals both among the clergy and the lay people wise enough to realize the seriousness of the danger, a danger demanding prompt and effective response. Siwnik’ was the principal site of Uniatism, and here the most zealous defenders of the traditional Armenian faith came to counteract the threat with perseverance and ardor. The initiative was taken by Esayi NE’ec’i (1260/65 - 1338), an eminent medieval scholar and clergyman, who was the founder (and for many years the rector) of the monastic academy at Glajor. His celebrated successors were Yovhan Orotnecc’i and his pupil, Grigor Tat’ewac’i.

The School of Tat’ew, it must be noted, was characterized by its anti-Chalcedonian, anti-Catholic activities. Here, side by side with the works of Orthodox writers, works of their opponents were being copied and translated as well. Grigor Tat’ewac’i who began his career as a scribe, copied books written not only by Cyril of Alexandria, the outstanding figure of Orthodox faith, but also the works of the Latin

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7 Uniates, as is well-known, while belonging to the Eastern Church, was in union with Rome. Acknowledging the Pope’s authority as supreme in matters of faith, they have maintained their own rite and discipline to varying degrees.

clergymen Fra Bartholomew and Peter of Aragon. In his colophon to Cyril of Alexandria’s “Girk’ Parapmanc’” (Book of Scholia) copied in 1379, Grigor Tat’ewae’i tells about the open struggle fought against the enemy by Yovhan Orotnee’i and his pupils:

[B]y that time the harsh and atrocious diophysitic sect of Chalcedon had again germinated in the village of K’rmn and the neighboring regions. Therefore, everyone of us undertook the task of copying books for the usage and instruction of the right-minded; and I, being one of them, copied this work with my deformed fingers to the best of my abilities, under the guidance of my teacher Yovhan Orotnee’i. Then we went to the said region, carrying with us the books, and with the help of them we beat the blasphemous ranks. The phalanx of Catholics was then dispersed, many monasteries were freed and there was joy after that for the Orthodox for many years to come.9

The prevailing spirit of the epoch is obvious in almost all the works of Grigor Tat’ewae’i. As for the new version of his Commentary on the Psalms, the title itself affords evidence of the author’s attitude. His colophon, preserved in three of the manuscript sources,10 gives not only the date of composition, but also valuable information about the hardships and misfortunes that befell the country and the people at that time. The more important parts of that colophon, are cited below, extracted from M1131 (f. 94r-v):

[L]et this be in good memory of my blessed tutor Yovhan Orotnee’i who passed away three years ago, leaving me an orphan staying in uncertainty within the winding waves of multifarious calamities. An inexperienced and unskilled sailor as I was, no less consolation had I in bringing forth this work, but was as much grieved because of the idleness, the laziness of our pupils and the bitterness of the difficult times we had when the hostile Xorazm troops again invaded, devastating the lands of the Armenians, the Georgians, the Persians and of many others. Some of the people were put to the sword or burned, others were taken captive and the rest starved to death. Many buildings were pulled down too. That happened in the year of the Armenian era 836 [A.D. 836+551=1387]. Narrowly escaping, I wandered like a vagabond, finding

9 XAC’IKYAN, 1950, pp. 529-530.
10 See MSS M1131 (f.94), M4370 (ff. 118v-119r), M6995 (ff.143r-144r).
no place of peace and kindness. At last I had a rest of brief duration in safety of the monastery of Ewstat'e, where this writing was at last accomplished.

The invasion of the year A.D. 1387 the author alludes to, and which was a real disaster, is Tamerlane's incursion to Armenia. The insecurity reigning in the country urged Grigor Tat'ewac'i, as many others, to seek contemporary refuge in various places. In 1387 he was in the fortress of Șahabonk' and, in 1391, in the monastery of Ap'raḵ'unis, in the region of ErnJak. From 1388 to 1391 he was again in Tat'ew,\(^1\) where he finished his Commentary. The following sentence of the colophon, "...Yovhan Orotnec'i passed away three years ago," helps to determine the exact date of the writing. According to Grigor Xlat'ec'i, Yovhan Orotnec'i died on the sixth of January 1386, at the time of the solar eclipse.\(^2\) There can be no objection to this testimony, as a solar eclipse did really happen that year. Therefore, the Commentary on the Psalms was written in 1389 (1386+3), in the monastery of Tat'ew.

Now a few words about the structural and textual characteristics of this new version of the Commentary. As we have mentioned above, it is small in volume, having 99 subdivisions with a list of the titles at the beginning. Unlike other commentaries on the Psalms here, only part of the book, with selected items, has become the object of analysis maintaining, as a rule, the numerical succession. The title of each item is usually a sentence extracted from that same psalm; sometimes, especially in the list at the beginning, it is expressed by words reflecting the meaning of the content. Some of the psalms are examined most thoroughly, interpreted in several long paragraphs, while others receive a rather concise description. As for textual specifics, we must admit that the comparison of the extant copies did not reveal substantial diversities. There are, however, some discrepancies due to later interference and revision of the text. Special attention must be paid, for instance, to section XIII which is entitled: "We went through fire and water; yet you brought us out into a place of abundance". (Ps. [65] 66:12)

An analysis in ten points follows, ending in a rather long supplement called Prologue where all the ten points are interpreted most diligently. This Prologue is preserved only in four of the copies.\(^3\) It is also present in the extended version of the author's Commentary (A.D. 1405), but there it is referred to as a sermon, and has the following explanatory note:

\(^{11}\) XAC'IKYAN, 1950, pp. 567-569, 592, 613.
\(^{12}\) XAC'IKYAN, 1955, p. 272.
\(^{13}\) MSS M1126, M2642, M4370, and M6995.
Some understand this as Purgatory. Our response to that explanation is 'No'; first of all because, according to their point of view, Purgatory is fire, while here it says fire and water. Secondly, because fire is mentioned first and water succeeds it.

(MS. M1020, f.117r)

Most probably, the original version did not contain the Prologue. It would have been inserted later, when the author realized that the comprehension of the topic discussed in the chapter was defective and needed a more detailed and exact explanation.

No less interesting is an instructive writing that precedes Section VII of the Commentary and bears the same number. It is preserved in only a single manuscript M1131—and has the following title: "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your comrades" (Heb. 1:9).

This writing, which seems to be complete, consists, in reality, of two separate parts. In the first part the problem of Christ's two natures, i.e. divine and human, is discussed, refuting the Chalcedonian approach and confirming the viewpoint of the Armenian Church. The second part, which is smaller, presents the hierarchical ranks of the Armenian as well as of the Greek and Latin Churches. The same material, only very concise, exists in Grigor Tat'evaci's Commentary of A.D.1405, with a short explanatory note by the author stating that "This has already been discussed elsewhere, in another commentary". Some parts of the writing are compatible with similar sections of the author's other works, such as his "Book of Questions" (A.D. 1397) and "Oskep'orik" (A.D. 1409). It is difficult, however, to say whether it formed part of the original or was added afterwards.

The comparison of the extant copies of the new version of the "Commentary on the Psalms" has brought us to the conclusion that it was composed for teaching purposes, as a course of lectures for students. This becomes more obvious when we consider some details of importance.

The absence of the author's original text, undoubtedly, suggests we be more circumspect and cautious in making hasty conclusions. The manuscripts that we employed for our research are copies of later date, belonging to the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, all of them being miscellanies with a collection of different subjects. This leads us to the reasonable supposition that the various topics were deliberately brought together in one manuscript which was perhaps to be used as a manual, a textbook for teaching. The fact is, we have a lot of manuscript miscellanies which are far from being casual collections of writings, and are defined by precisely planned programming. The oldest

14 MS M1020, f. 134v.
Armenian manuscript written on paper (in A.D. 981) is a miscellany of various scientific treatises, evidently compiled on that same principle, for tutorial purposes. It is also noteworthy that the new version, though complete in its integrity, instead of presenting the whole Book of Psalms, examines only a selected group of items. Surely, it was not an arbitrary selection and the author chose psalms that were to serve a definite idea and purpose he had in mind.

Another characteristic of the new version of the commentary is the textual interference. The comparison of the copies reveals such differences, additions or omissions, that could not be mere errors and mistakes made by the scribe. The section entitled “We passed through fire...”, which we referred to as not being part of the original text, but added afterwards for some special purpose, may serve as evidence of intentional interference.

Attention must be paid to the fact that the copies have not identical titles for the psalms. In the manuscripts M1131 and M2642, for instance, the second subdivision of the text is entitled: “You will hear my voice in the morning”, while in manuscripts M1126, M1130 and M6995, that is replaced by an explanatory phrase: “Morning means Christ”. This change was certainly made on purpose and by some intelligent, learned person. Some of the manuscript sources provide us with the names of individuals who might have thus interfered, as we shall see further.

In the colophon of MS M4370, after the phrase “...in the monastery of Ewstae where this writing was finally completed”, we meet with the words: “by Grigor Jufayec'i”, while the manuscript M6995 has another phrase: “by the scribe and pupil Mat'eso.” We must also pay attention to the fact that Grigor Jufayec'i and Mat'eso (who can be identified with Mat'eso Jufayec'i) were both the pupils of Grigor Tat'ewac'i, while the author's colophon speaks of himself as being the pupil of Yovhan Orotnci: “…under the guidance of my teacher Yovhan Orotnci.” It is also important to note that the colophon of MS M1131, which we look upon as the most reliable, does not have any of the above mentioned names. The said Grigor and Mat'eso, being among the pupils of Grigor Tat'ewac'i, while copying their teacher’s Commentary were, most probably, in a way revising it, making corrections and other changes. It was perhaps that interference which gave them the right to insert their names into the colophon.

I conclude my observations with the proposition that the newly discovered version of Grigor Tat'ewac'i’s “Commentary on the Psalms” may serve as a very useful source reflecting the ideology that reigned in Armenia and the events which were taking place during the tumultuous epoch of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. With his work the author pursued the aim of preserving the integrity of Armenian Christianity and trying to abolish the intrusion of foreign doctrine,
exposing the evil consequences any alienation from the Orthodox faith of the Mother Church might cause. As I indicated, the Commentary was evidently composed with a special purpose, answering the demands of educational projects. Sixteen years later, in A.D. 1405, under new circumstances after a long and prolific creative career, the author once again was impelled to fulfill a similar undertaking. This time, his methodical and in depth study of the Book of Psalms, including all the items, resulted in a most detailed Commentary intended for a wider circle of readers.

Now, 600 years later, the writings of Grigor Tat'ewac'i are valuable not only as literary creations. Their objective point and ideological background seem to be equally actual, corresponding to our problems, serving as a powerful spur to expel unhealthy ideas and attitudes from our nation's spiritual life. That must be realized through the same perseverance, securing the invulnerability of our Church as did Grigor Tat'ewac'i and his colleagues in one of the most critical periods of Armenian history.

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LITURGICAL USAGES AND CONTROVERSY IN HISTORY:
HOW MUCH DIVERSITY CAN UNITY TOLERATE?

Michael Daniel Findikyan

Maintaining a certain uniformity in liturgical practice is probably one of the oldest and most arduous tasks of ecclesiastical authorities. Be it a distinct usage in a particular parish, differences in the ritual of the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom among Greeks, Russians and Rumanians, or the more pronounced divergence among liturgical families, problems arise when people in one place do liturgy differently than people in another place.

A good part of Armenian Christian literature consists of apologies for her various distinct liturgical practices: the use of unleavened bread and pure wine unmixed with water in the Eucharist; the celebration of Nativity and Epiphany together on January 6; the ancient rite of animal sacrifice; the preference for carved crosses in our churches over painted images. Of course other churches have their own unique liturgical usages: The zeon, hot water mixed into the chalice just before communion, is unique to churches of the Byzantine tradition. The Syrians, for their part, prepare the eucharistic bread with oil and salt. The Copts and the Ethiopians have their own distinctive usages.

With today’s growing momentum toward the reconciliation of the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches, what are we to make of the bitter historical controversies that arose because of differences in liturgical customs? In the realm of liturgical ritual how do we judge what is primary and non-negotiable, versus secondary features that may vary from church to church without impeding authentic Orthodox unity? There are two extremes to avoid. One temptation is to exaggerate the dictum, “unity in things essential, liberty in things doubtful, charity in all things,”\(^1\) and to regard all distinctions in liturgy as secondary relative to doctrinal differences. The other tendency is to accept at face value every ritual divergence among our churches, assuming that each is equally pertinent to the preservation of

orthodoxy—that every variation in liturgy obstructs the path to Orthodox-Oriental Orthodox reconciliation.

History shows that both approaches are specious. In the face of the gigantic amount of literature born of historical intolerance for liturgical diversity, little of it edited, still less translated into western languages, I cannot pretend to analyze every case where one of our churches bickered with another over some problematic ritual. Therefore, I will propose some criteria for gauging the relevance and significance of some liturgical usages that have caused controversy in the history of the Armenian Church’s relations with her sister churches, primarily the Syrian and Byzantine. I believe that this will provide a way to evaluate liturgical usages and determine to what extent they do or do not pose obstacles for the restoration of communion among our churches.

WHAT CAUSED LITURGICAL DISPUTES IN HISTORY?

A number of disputes between the churches resulted from pure and simple ignorance. In looking back on these conflicts one must never lose sight that in those days few people had the luxury of being able to travel to distant lands to see for themselves the liturgical rites of other churches. And of those who did have such experience, fewer still could understand the language of the ceremonies to be able to appreciate the meaning and context of the liturgy. In such a climate it was easy for rumors to spread and become magnified, especially when an underlying spirit of malice and xenophobia influenced the evaluation of divergent usages in faraway churches. One must always be alert to spot such underlying currents in historical disputes over liturgical matters.

A good example is a treatise from the pen of one of the luminaries of the Syrian Orthodox Church, the twelfth-century Syrian bishop Dionysius Bar Salibi (†1171). However, he was no friend of the Armenians, as his protracted diatribe against them demonstrates. In this work Dionysius passionately refutes 35 alleged canonical, doctrinal and theological abuses of the Armenians. These include the well-known distinctive usages of the Armenians to which we shall return, the unmixed chalice, unleavened bread, the single feast of the Lord’s nativity and epiphany, et al. Other usages for which Dionysius castigates the Armenians can have no justification except ill will. He attacks, for example, the Armenian practice of purifying sacred vessels that have become defiled in some way, among others, by coming into contact with a rodent: “Furthermore,” Dionysius lashes,

[T]ell us whose creature is the mouse? If you say that it is the creature of the Devil you will be Manicheans who believe in two Supreme Beings, one who created good and the other evil. If you confess the truth and say that it
is the creature of God, all that God created is very good as Moses said, [then] how can you decide that it is defiled? God abhorred the impurity of the flesh and of the spirit, that is to say of the body and of the soul, such as fornication, murder and theft, but not the impurity of the mouse! And how is it that you can purify the great uncleanness of the soul, and your priests are unable to purify the uncleanness of a mouse! Again tell us whether the uncleanness of the mouse emanates from its nature or its free-will...²

Dionysius then provides a catalogue of scriptural and patristic citations to prove that the mouse is God’s beloved creature, and that the Armenians are wretched and perverse for condemning God’s creation.³

Elsewhere, Bar Salibi’s criticism that the Armenians marry close relatives is based on misinformation.⁴ He attacks the Armenians for burning pure frankincense instead of a mixture of incenses,⁵ for consecrating church bells and crosses,⁶ for variations in fasting discipline,⁷ and for preparing the chism from sesame oil instead of the oil from olives, which do not grow in Armenia.⁸ These rebukes obviously are fueled not by a genuine fear of heterodoxy. They are contrived out of simple mistrust and malice.

I cite Dionysius not to denigrate in any way a saint and illustrious church father. Neither am I trying to defend my own church. My point is to illustrate that much of the polemic which arose over liturgical usages in the history of contact among our churches was based on misinformation and fueled by fears and jealousies which have no basis today. Dionysius’ rancor makes more sense when we realize that in 1156 the Armenians captured Marash, the territory of Dionysius’ episcopal diocese, and took him captive.⁹ Furthermore, Dionysius’ treatise is probably a response to earlier accusations made by the Armenians criticizing certain Syrian usages such as making the sign of the cross with one digit, and confecting the eucharistic bread with leaven, wine, honey and oil. One treatise of uncertain authorship attacked the Syrians because they consecrated and consumed the

² DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI, 1931, p. 35.
³ IBID., p. 36.
⁴ IBID., pp. 51-52.
⁵ IBID., pp. 46-77.
⁶ IBID., pp. 41-43.
⁷ IBID., pp. 48-49.
⁸ IBID., pp. 37-38.
eucharistic species after a mouse had fallen into them.\textsuperscript{10}

In an age when intercontinental travel and communication are routine, and in our country where every ancient eastern liturgical tradition is represented, ignorance of the liturgical usages of our sister churches is intolerable. One would hope that the malice and xenophobia that stained relations among our churches in the past is now obsolete.

**LITURGY AND POLITICS**

One of the bitter lessons of history is that regardless of the doctrinal polarization that has existed among our churches, disputes can rarely be reduced to pure theological differences. Political vicissitudes are rarely far beneath the surface of allegedly theological and liturgical disputes, and for that matter, of historical initiatives toward mutual understanding and reconciliation. Like the christological controversies of the fifth century, theological and political threads are usually intertwined. To this day, scholars debate the priority of political and theological issues in the cataclysm that followed the Council of Chalcedon. In evaluating confrontations between our churches over liturgical issues, the political element too must be weighed.

In the case of the Armenian Church, geopolitical forces were destined to play a role in her doctrinal orientation and in all relations with the imperial church. During the formative years of the Armenian Church, and for centuries after that, Armenia was caught in the bloody buffer zone between Byzantium on the west and successive Persian, Arab, Mongolian and Turkish domination to the south and east. For centuries the fate of the Armenians was decided by continual, ferocious battles between Byzantium and the infidels, that wrenched the border between them back and forth over the Armenian highland, leaving behind destruction and chaos. Every shift of that border, sometimes several times in a decade, effectively re-polarized the political, ecclesiastical and social orientation of Armenia as domination oscillated between Constantinople and the Persian or Arab capital.

This scenario sheds much light on the conflicts that arose between the Armenian Church and her Syrian, Byzantine and Georgian neighbors. At the end of the seventh century, the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II was able to forge a union between the Armenian Church and the imperial church.\textsuperscript{11} The deliberations that led the Armenian Catholicos Sahak III to accept the Council of Chalcedon could not have

\textsuperscript{10} The allegation comes from Bar Hebraeus, but his attribution of the letter to a certain Armenian catholicos Gregory is false, and the contorted account of the letter's history is highly doubtful. TER-MINASSIANTZ, 1904, pp. 112-114.

\textsuperscript{11} MAHÉ, 1993, pp. 476-478.
lasted more than a few months, and we have no indication that existing liturgical differences were considered an obstacle to the union.\textsuperscript{12} But within a year the Armenian Catholicos had denounced the union in a long letter defending the traditional Christology and liturgical usages of the Armenians,\textsuperscript{13} and the Greeks devoted canons at the Council in Trullo to censuring the Armenians for the same old practices.\textsuperscript{14}

Why the sudden change of heart? There is evidence, especially in Armenian sources, that Justinian’s union was not without coercion, and the union was never accepted by the majority of Armenian bishops. But there is more to the story. Justinian pushed for reunion with the Armenian Church at the very moment that he had re-conquered the lion’s share of Armenia from the Arabs in 690. Restoring ecclesiastical unity could only complement and solidify the military coup he had just made. Why did the union not hold? Because it only took the Arabs a year to dominate Armenia again. By 693, an Arab governor had been named in Armenia,\textsuperscript{15} who would never tolerate any hint of collaboration between the Armenians and the despised empire to the

\textsuperscript{12} A set of canons allegedly from a council convoked by a certain Byzantine Emperor Justinian at Theodosiopolis is preserved in Hakobyan’s collection of Armenian canons. While sponsored by the emperor, the canons strongly defend several of the traditionally divisive liturgical usages of the Armenians, unleavened bread, the unmixed chalice and especially the celebration on one day of Christ’s nativity and epiphany. Hakobyan judges these canons to be a fabrication of the tenth or eleventh centuries. Van Esbroeck argues, however, that this council was convoked by Justinian II, and is evidence of his hastily concluded and ephemeral union with the Armenian Church in 690. I find it difficult to believe that the emperor, whatever his eagerness to effect a union with the Armenians, would have put his name to a set of canons that explicitly denounces the Tome of Leo and disparages the Chalcedonians. If, on the other hand, van Esbroeck is correct, then these canons would further illustrate tolerance in liturgical diversity when this happens to serve a higher political end. Kanonagirk', II, pp. XCVIII, 244-257; MAHE, 1993, p. 470 n.103; ESBOECK, 1995, p. 326. The canons are translated into French in ESBOECK, 1995, pp. 440-445.

\textsuperscript{13} Girk' T't'roce', 1901, pp. 413-480; French translation in ESBOECK, 1995, pp. 367-436, and his argument for this sequence of events and the attribution of this letter to Sahak III Jorojorec'i († c. 703), pp. 325-331.

\textsuperscript{14} ESBOECK, 1995, pp. 348-354.

\textsuperscript{15} IBID., p. 328.
west.  

Similar examples of politics influencing inter-church relations are many. Sometime in the mid-seventh century the Syrian bishop James of Edessa (†708) authored a treatise against the Armenians, attacking them for the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, among other usages.  

But a few years later at the Council of Manakert in 726 A.D. the Armenian Catholicos Yovhannēs Ojneči (717-728) and the Syrian Patriarch Athanasius (724-740) gathered around the table and while clearing up certain christological ambiguities, they agreed to tolerate the respective distinctive liturgical usages of each church.  

Communion between the two churches was affirmed by two liturgies. The Armenians celebrated their liturgy and offered communion to the Syrians, and vice-versa. By the early eleventh century, the tide changes again and the Armenian Catholicos Gēorg and the Syrian Patriarch John X Bar Sušan (1064-1073) find cause to debate those same liturgical practices again.  

Arab hegemony and waxing intolerance of Christianity cannot but have helped steer the Armenians and Syrians to find common ground in the early eighth century.

I am not suggesting that politics exclusively determined the theological orientation of the Armenian, Syrian, or any other church. But its role must always be weighed among other factors in supposed theological disputes.

DISTINCTIVE RITUALS, DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES

Despite the passion with which our churches at times attacked one another over variations in ritual, most would agree that a great number

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16 For a recent appraisal by the current Catholicos of All Armenians of Armenian-Byzantine ecclesiastical relations during the Cilician period see SARKISSIAN, 1993.

17 HANSSENS, 1930, p. 162.

18 TER-MINASSIANTZ, 1904, pp. 192-194; MAHÉ, 1993, p. 481-484; COWE, 1993. I am grateful to Professor Cowe for allowing me to consult his article in electronic format, prior to its publication.

19 HANSSENS, 1930, pp. 162-163; MAHÉ, 1993, p. 484. Ter-Minassiantz’s assertion, “Diese Bestimmungen werden wohl nur für die Armenier gemacht, denn die Syrer haben später gegen einige dieser Bestimmungen ganz entschieden gekämpft...” seems unlikely. I think that the hostile political ambience encouraged the Armenians and Syrians each to broaden their range of tolerance in matters of liturgical usage. TER-MINASSIANTZ, 1904, p. 76.

20 TER-MINASSIANTZ, 1904, pp. 94-113. Catholicos Gēorg’s response is preserved in Girk’ T’ft’oe’, 1901, pp. 335-357.
of these distinctive rituals are patently of lesser importance than the doctrinal disputes that separated our churches for centuries. This is borne out in most of the polemical literature: doctrinal differences were the first item on the agenda, with liturgical differences subordinate to them.

We will now examine a different phenomenon, where distinctive liturgical usages became linked to distinctive doctrines. The best example of this is the singular Armenian usage of a eucharistic chalice of pure wine, unmixed with water, and the use of unleavened bread.\(^{21}\) The origins of these usages are unknown, but there is no evidence that the Armenians ever used a mixed chalice or leavened bread. The first probable reference we have is the virulently anti-Chalcedonian Armenian Catholicos Movses II Etivardeci (†c. 606), who in 591 refused Emperor Maurice’s invitation to Constantinople to accept Chalcedon and restore communion. Referring to the boundary between Persian Armenia and the Byzantine empire he replied, “I will not cross the River Azat nor will I eat the baked bread of the Greeks nor drink their hot water.”\(^{22}\) From this point on, apologies for the unmixed chalice and unleavened bread will occupy Armenian theologians, exegetes and historians for centuries as Greeks, Syrians, and Latins criticize these eucharistic practices (the latter limiting their objections of course to the unmixed chalice).

We do not have time to delve into the fascinating arguments constructed by the Armenians over the centuries to defend these customs, or for that matter, the objections presented by the Greeks, Syrians and Latins. Suffice it to point out that the argumentation is far from rigorous on either side. Both parties manage to conjure up biblical evidence to prove that the bread Christ took in his hands at the last supper was either leavened\(^ {23}\) or unleavened.\(^ {24}\) And that Christ either did or did not\(^ {25}\) add water to the chalice. Linguistic arguments are made to interpret Christ’s words at the last supper as favoring one or the other position.\(^ {26}\) Every possible reference in the Bible and in the

\(^{21}\) For a catalogue of references see HANSSENS, 1930, pp. 156-161, 162-167, 250-271.

\(^{22}\) Narratio, 1952, pp. 242-244. Robert Taft proposes that originally the “hot water” referred to by Catholicos Movses was the only water added during the preparation of the gifts in the Byzantine liturgy. In other words, the chalice was mixed with hot water even before the development of the so-called rite of the zeon. TAFT, 1987, pp. 340-341.

\(^{23}\) DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI, 1931, p. 25.

\(^{24}\) Mxit’ar Sasneći [II], 1993, pp. 95-96; ESBROECK, 1995, p. 432.

\(^{25}\) Mxit’ar Sasneći [II], 1993, p. 98.

\(^{26}\) DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI, 1931, pp. 24, 26, 31.
fathers that seems to favor one or the other position is duly cited, frequently plucked out of context,²⁷ sometimes by both parties toward different ends.²⁸ Typology is used variously and often dubiously to prove that Old Testament references to unleavened bread either validate²⁹ or refute³⁰ its use in the church’s Eucharist. The same holds for references to leavened bread.³¹ Moral conclusions are drawn from scripture that associate leaven and water with either life and virtue³² or sin and death.³³ In cases where such associations in scripture are manifestly contrary to the position being argued, allegory becomes the key to controvert the sense of the text. So, for example, Christ’s reference to “the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” [Mt 16:26] is made to harmonize with Christ’s juxtaposition of leaven and the kingdom.³⁴ One Armenian author brings the debate to a chemical level, arguing that water mixed with wine forms a new compound that is neither water nor wine,³⁵ and is thus contrary to holy scripture and sacrilegious.

Much more significant for us than these perhaps petty polemics is the interpretation by the Armenians of the unmixed cup and the unleavened bread as symbols of Christ’s body, untainted by sin and corruption. Once the Armenians establish such a symbolic connection, the discourse immediately changes from polemics over ritual variants of strictly secondary significance to doctrines of primary importance.

Testimony of Catholicos Sahak III Jorop’orec’i (†703) demonstrates that by the end of the seventh century, the Armenian use of unleavened bread was no longer merely an innocuous ritual anomaly, but had fully evolved into a symbol of Christ’s incorruptibility:

Now we confess the body of Christ [to be] incorrupt and all-powerful always and constantly from [the moment of] the union of the Logos. This is why we take azymes for the bread of holiness with which we offer the salvific sacrifice, which signifies incorruptibility. For leaven is

²⁷ MXIT’AR SASN ECI [II], 1993, p. 95.
²⁸ Both proponents and opponents of mixing water in the chalice use Jn 19:34 to support their claims: ES BROECK, 1995, pp. 434-435; MXIT’AR SASN ECI [II], 1993, pp. 98-99; NERSÈS SNORHALI, 1871, pp. 100, 133-135.
²⁹ MXIT’AR SASN ECI [II], 1993, p. 95.
³⁰ DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI, 1931, pp. 23, 26.
³² DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI, 1931, pp. 27-29.
³³ MXIT’AR SASN ECI [II], 1993, pp. 96-98.
³⁵ MXIT’AR SASN ECI [II], 1993, p. 100.
the sign of wickedness and corruption, as Cyril says in the commentary on Leviticus.36

Later in the same treatise, Sahak provides an allegory of Christ’s metaphor of the kingdom as the leaven that the woman dissolved in three measures of flour [Mt 13:33]:

[T]he first woman Eve took the leaven of Satan’s wickedness and guilefully mixed it with our nature according to three things: according to thoughts, according to words and according to deeds. And she leavened with wickedness our entire nature, spirit, breath and body, and of these three [aspects] of blessed life she created three woes, and she plundered us of the mystery of the Trinity, and she brought us from goodness to wickedness, from innocence to sinfulness, from life to mortality and corruptibility by means of the leaven of wickedness. And instead of being clothed in the divine form, we have been clothed in a serpentine and dark form.

Then came Christ, however, and in place of the wickedness of the satanic leaven, he joined37 himself to our nature by the holy virgin, and he exiled from our nature the old leaven of wickedness that the first woman took as counsel from the serpent and hid in her heart, and through herself [she hid it] in all of us. Taking from the holy virgin our most pure human nature without the leaven of sin, he joined himself to it and completely divinized it, the body, the soul and the mind. Then in his body he joined himself to all the sons of Adam, and he transformed them all from sinfulness to innocence, and from wickedness to goodness, and from death and corruption to life, and he clothes us once again in the divine form […] For this [reason] we, who confess the body of Christ taken from the virgin [to be] innocent, [we also] place on the divine altar the bread of holiness without the mixture of leaven. For as he took from the virgin our pure human nature free of, and unmixed with the old leaven of wickedness, and he divinized it in its entirety, likewise having taken the pure nature of the heavenly bread free of, and unmixed with, any acidic38 and corruptible fermentation of leaven, so that he might truly make it his body […] We shall place before the Lord

37 Or “mixed.”
38 Lit., “like vinegar.”
the holy unleavened bread, so that he will make it his body and grant us life.\textsuperscript{39}

An analogous argument associates the unmixed chalice with the incorruptible blood of Christ.\textsuperscript{40}

Where did these symbols come from? Obviously there is no inherent ontological link between unleavened bread, or a chalice of wine, and the theology of the body assumed by the Logos from the Mother of God. We have not the slightest evidence that before the Julian-Severan controversy the Armenians did anything but consecrate an unmixed chalice and unleavened bread. So we have no reason to assume that they modified the preparation of the gifts specifically in order to defend a certain christological position, as it might appear from Sahak’s presentation. Conversely, the age-old Christian usage of consecrating a mixed chalice at the Eucharist originally had no theological pretensions; from time immemorial it was customary in many areas to cut table wine with water.\textsuperscript{41}

So, in the case of the unmixed chalice and unleavened bread it appears that the Armenians did not create a distinctive ritual, but rather created a distinctive interpretation. One can theorize the following evolution: It was the custom of the Armenians, perhaps consistent with domestic usage, to consecrate a chalice of pure wine. By the end of the sixth century the Armenian chalice of wine becomes known as an “unmixed” chalice, with respect to the usage of the rest of Christendom. Soon after, the Julian-Severan controversy in full swing, some Armenian theologian makes the connection that the unmixed chalice is pure and uncorrupted by water, paving the way for this usage to become a symbol of the incorruptibility of Christ’s blood.\textsuperscript{42} The analogy of eucharistic bread untainted by leaven becomes the concomitant symbol of the incorruptibility of Christ’s body. Here then is the essential symbolism of the wine and the bread that the Armenians will argue, with minor nuances, for centuries to come.

I prefer to leave the theological examination of the Christology implicit in these symbols, and the whole question of a Julian, apthartodocetic theology in some Armenian circles to those who are more competent than I to analyze these issues. I will say only that this whole issue must be reexamined in light of certain clarifications that

\textsuperscript{40} Girk’ $T’\text{tt}’\text{oc’}$, 1901, pp. 478-480; ESBROECK, 1995, pp. 434-436.
\textsuperscript{41} TAFT, 1987, pp. 323-324, 340-342.
\textsuperscript{42} COWE, 1993. Cowe proposes that Catholicos Movses’ terse rejection of the Greeks’ “cooked bread” and “hot water” may be “the first intimation of a singularly Armenian integration of liturgical and Christological symbolism.”
Peter Cowe has made in a new study.\textsuperscript{43} In short, while there was undoubtedly a certain Julianist trend in some Armenian circles,\textsuperscript{44} one may not read apollinarism into every usage of the word "incorruptible" in Armenian sources.\textsuperscript{45} As everywhere in the Julian-Severan controversy, the key is in the interpretation of this term, and the anthropology underpinning it. Cowe has shown that the larger trend in Armenian theology, crystallized in the early eighth-century writings of Catholicos Yovhannēs Ojnec'i (717-728) and canonized at the Council of Manazkert in 726, "[shares] much more with Severus\textsuperscript{46} than either Julian or Philoxenus of Mabbug, although [it continues] to affirm the incorruptibility of Christ's flesh."\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore, I would add that all such theological expositions must be read in light of the high, Alexandrian incarnational stamp characteristic of Armenian

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{44} Particularly the seventh-century Yovhannēs Mayragomec'i and his followers.

\textsuperscript{45} It seems that the Armenian predilection for the "incorruptible" stems from their insistence on defending Peter's confession of Christ, who "was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." [Acts 2:31, cf. Ps 16:8-11 LXX]. See \textit{Girk' T'tvoc'o}, 1901, p. 67; and FRIVOLD, 1981, pp. 198-199, whose reading of the sources, however, is not attentive to their nuanced anthropology. Cf. COWE, 1993.

\textsuperscript{46} Severus is explicitly condemned in several documents of the Book of Letters. But as Frivold notes, "the name of Severus is mentioned only three times in later documents of [the Book of Letters], pp. 83, 138 and 146. Then his name disappears from the documents, and no anathema is later placed on him or on his disciples. Probably the reason is that in the second half of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries the Armenians had changed their view of Severus and his doctrines and had turned from condemnation to acceptance." FRIVOLD, 1981, pp. 148, 198-199.

\textsuperscript{47} COWE, 1993. A comparison of the Christologies of T'ēodoros Krēnawor (c. 600-c.675) and his student Yovhannēs Ojnec'i with that of the latter's contemporary, John of Damascus would be edifying. They seem to share a similar anthropological framework. John Meyendorff writes: "...in speaking of Christ, John specifies that he assumed 'the incorruptible and natural passions.' It is evident that the passions against which man has to struggle to acquire impassibility are the passions that imply sin, of which Christ was completely exempt. In this sense John asserts that the human nature of Jesus was that of Adam before the transgression. But the ambiguity of the word 'passion' in its patristic use leads John to assert also with strength that the Word really assumed the 'incorruptible' passions, that is, the consequences of the sin of Adam, attached to fallen mankind, which he came to save by restoring its original impassibility." MEYENDORFF, 1975, pp. 164-165.
theology.

More important for our purposes is that we distinguish between usages such as the unmixed chalice, which really stands for a doctrinal position, and other customs and traditions, which have no such doctrinal import. So it is no longer a matter of judging a divergent ritual, but of evaluating the orthodoxy of a certain doctrine which some rituals symbolize, a much thornier undertaking.

WEIGHING THE EVIDENCE

Now that we have seen some historical examples of disputes over the liturgical usages of our churches and the motivation behind those disputes, I would like to propose a few criteria for evaluating distinctive rituals in our traditions, to determine whether or not they present an obstacle to our communion.

History

Historical study of liturgy helps us to determine what we are doing in the liturgy and why. It gives us a standard for weighing the various rituals, gestures and other elements that have evolved in our liturgies. Historically speaking, in liturgy things are seldom what they seem. In the Armenian liturgy, the ritual of processing around the altar with the gospel, sometimes called “the little entrance” was never an entrance at all in Armenia. 48 The great entrance, one of the most impressive and somber ceremonies in the Byzantine and Armenian liturgies, was so innocuous around the turn of the fifth century that in his references to the liturgy in Constantinople, St. John Chrysostom passed over it without a word. 49 Liturgy is a living organism. Over the centuries new rituals are introduced and others drop out of use with or without a trace. Previously insignificant actions take on great importance. Important actions become marginalized and omitted. The evolution is unsystematic and seldom premeditated. 50 To complicate matters further, liturgical rituals are seldom what they are explained to be by ecclesiastical authors who have, in every tradition, interpreted them throughout the centuries. There is a big difference between a ritual’s original function, and the theology that may later develop around it;

48 FINDIKYAN, 1995, pp. 185-190.
between function and meaning; i.e., what a ritual does, and what some church father says it means. Careful historical study reveals the paths that liturgical elements have taken in developing the shape and meaning they have today, and allows us to better gauge their role in the overall liturgical expression of the church. This is especially important in evaluating liturgical usages that have caused controversies among our churches.

To give just one example, the unified celebration of Christ's nativity and the epiphany on January 6 has been ardently defended by the Armenians since the fifth century. From the earliest centuries Armenian apologists have insisted that this practice was the traditional usage handed down from Cyril of Jerusalem. This was considered absurd until the beginning of this century, when the early fifth-century Jerusalem lectionary, preserved in full in Armenian and partially in Georgian, proved beyond any doubt that January 6 was, in fact, the original date of the celebration of the Nativity, a tradition preserved now exclusively by the Armenians.

Every time the Greeks came head to head with the Armenians, at least until the twelfth century, they insisted that the Armenians transfer their commemoration of the Nativity to December 25. In this charged atmosphere, the Armenians began to defend their practice not only by its antiquity and erstwhile universality, but as a demonstration of the unity of humanity and divinity in the incarnate Logos. To the Armenians, dismembering the one celebration was tantamount to Nestorianism. Thus, we have here another example of

51 IBID., pp. 152-153.
53 For centuries thereafter the same argumentation arose in discussions with the Latins.
55 "It is not for self-satisfaction that we did separate ourselves from the other peoples by celebrating [Christ's nativity on January 6]. Rather, the others formerly had our [custom] but willingly changed to their present practice. But our church preserved the former custom unchanged..." NERSE SNORHALI, 1871, p. 137.
56 For a full discussion of the controversy throughout history, with ample references, see RENOUX, 1965.
57 The Armenian christological implications of one celebration of Nativity and Epiphany were in response to the censure of other churches, and their insistence that the Armenians divide the celebration into two feasts. It was only then, it seems to me, that the christological association was born. The "birth from the Virgin" is juxtaposed to the "birth from the Jordan" not in any kind of adoptionist sense, but strictly according to the traditional Armenian theology of baptism, viewed strongly as rebirth unto
a distinctive liturgical usage which acquired a doctrinal symbolism. This symbol presumably was created soon after the Armenians crystallized their anti-Chalcedonian stance in the mid-sixth century.

**Context**

After we have excavated the historical levels in the evolution of rituals, we must read divergent usages not in a sterile laboratory, or from our own point of view, but in the context within which these rituals were born and are used. As we have seen, the lack of an objective approach and a desire to understand the other's traditions, has more often been the cause of polemics among our churches, than questions about the rituals in themselves.

The Armenians have an ancient practice of animal sacrifice called *Matat*. Without any further information one can well imagine a sensational headline that screams, “Armenian priests slaughter animals on the steps of their churches perpetuating Jewish rituals and denying the new covenant and Christ’s eternal sacrifice!” This is precisely the gist of the argument made for centuries by scandalized Syrians, Greeks and Latins.\(^{58}\) Dionysius Bar Salibi wrote, for example, “The sacrifice of lambs has no utility after the coming of Christ, who abolished it.”\(^{59}\) No doubt Dionysius’ outrage over what seemed to him a patently non-Christian ritual colored his condemnation of the Armenians and their other distinctive practices.

Such hasty condemnation has no place today. When judging an anomalous ritual in another tradition we must seek not the interpretation that first comes to mind, or the potential heresy that a given ritual *could* imply. We must seek to understand the interpretation given by the patrons of that ritual. How have their best theologians and church fathers understood the ritual? This approach requires charity (lacking in past and in present) and objective, rigorous study. It demands looking into their tradition, their writings; not just one or two, but many, over a period of time, to determine the authenticity of the practice and its explanation. This is not an easy path to take. It

divine sonship. Catholicos Nersês Šnorhali (†1173) writes, for example, “As he was born of the body from the holy Virgin, he was also born in baptism from the Jordan as an example to us. And since both are births, though distinguished in meaning and time, for this [reason] it was prescribed in the beginning to celebrate the second birth together with his first birth.” NERSÊS ŠNORHALI, 1871, p. 137. See the main prayers of the Armenian liturgy of Christian initiation in Order of Baptism, 1964, pp. 15-19, 47-49, 65-67; WINKLER, 1982, pp. 455-462.

\(^{58}\) For the ordo of the rite along with historical documents that illustrate the disputes, see CONYBEARE, 1905, pp. 77ff.

\(^{59}\) DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI, 1931, p. 33.
means reading theological literature in Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, Ge‘ez. I wonder how many critics of Armenian Christology have read our theologians in Armenian?

*Lex Orandi*

A third criterion for judging distinctive rituals in other traditions is intimately related to this, and is deftly illustrated by St. Ambrose of Milan in his *De sacramentis*:

We must now examine what it is we mean by baptism. You came to the font, you went down into it, you turned towards the high priest, you saw, there at the font, the Levites and the priest. What is baptism? 60

St. Ambrose is basically saying if you want to know what baptism is all about, go to church and see a baptism. The same principle holds for any ritual, of course, most especially those that are disputed. If you want to know what the Armenian ritual of animal sacrifice is all about, go to an Armenian Church and see it for yourself. Go read the scripture readings that are appointed for the ceremony. Go read the prayers that the priest recites over the animal. Only in this way can one justly evaluate the orthodoxy of a disputed ritual of another tradition.

If one turns to the liturgical texts of the *Mata‘* ceremony, one will find that the ritual has nothing to do with pagan or Judaic sacrifices, as the main prayer explicitly and forcefully attests. The prayer repeatedly invokes the one, eternal and unsurpassable sacrifice of Christ on the cross, while confessing the power of sacrificing that which is dear to us, as an unmistakable affirmation of fidelity and worship. Equally emphasized in the appointed lections and prayers is the charitable character of the ceremony; the meat from the sacrificed animal is given to the poor. 61 My purpose here is not to prove to you the orthodoxy of the Armenian ceremony of *Mata‘*, or any of our distinctive usages, but to demonstrate that a careful reading of the liturgical texts will often clear up ambiguity regarding the legitimacy of disputed liturgical customs.

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60 *De sacramentis* II.16. English translation from YARNOLD, 1981, p. 115. Professor Cesare Giraudo, S.J. of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome regularly cites this passage as a demonstration that *Lex orandi* principle was alive and well in the western patristic tradition until it was controverted by scholastic approaches of the second millennium. See GIRAUDO, 1989, pp. 7ff., TAFT, 1984, p. 152.

61 For an interpretation of the ceremony, its appointed lections and prayers, see FINDIKYAN, 1991.
CONCLUSION

Rituals and liturgical uses are rarely absolute. Their meaning and function in the liturgy are conditioned by history, by theological trends and controversies, by the varying approaches of the church fathers who have interpreted them. Neither do the disputes that arose among our churches over the centuries concerning liturgical usages have absolute value in themselves. Many conflicts were the result of ignorance and antagonism caused by circumstances having nothing to do with Christian worship, the orthodox faith or the circumstances we live in today. Sadly, politics often fueled conflicts that would have been quickly extinguished in another era. Therefore, the first step in evaluating the significance of debates in history over divergent liturgical usages is to strip away all of these external factors so that one can look objectively at those usages that reflect real divergence in confession.

In this area there are two extremes to be avoided: We must not be tempted to a blind inclusivism that welcomes all liturgical variants in the name of the “diversity,” our society has come to idolize. No meaningful Orthodox unity will ever result from such an approach. Absolute uniformity in liturgical practice, however, is equally undesirable and impossible. It betrays the nature of liturgy itself, which is and must be conditioned by the community’s particular witness to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those usages that pose more serious problems must be addressed head-on. A grave danger is that these rituals become symbols of disunity itself. We must not allow the theological intricacies beneath the surface of a ritual symbol to become eclipsed so that the ritual itself becomes a symbol of disunity and heresy.

Has there been any benefit from the polemics that have occurred because of divergent rituals? In the remarkable twelfth-century dialogue between the Greek theologian Theorianos and the Armenian Catholicos Nerses Šnorhali, there seems to be a real willingness at mutual understanding, a theological give-and-take, where Nerses defends practices that he considers non-negotiable, while promoting tolerance in less significant matters. In addition, there is evidence that some Greek objections caused Nerses to investigate, to reexamine controversial usages and to reformulate his theological and historical justification for them. In this way sober dialogue on controversial points gives rise to theological development and mutual understanding.

This is all good, and it is the way sister churches should interact with one another; not by vain polemics, but in a spirit of charity, never satisfied with pat condemnations inherited from previous generations.

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62 PG 138, coll. 119-298; NERSES ŠNORHALI, 1871, pp. 94-107, 130-143; ZEKIYAN, 1980.
Our evaluation of other traditions must not be blinded by naive chauvinism and ethno- or ecclesiocentrism, a temptation for all. We must each look for the best and not the worst interpretation of another’s tradition.

Catholicos Nersès the Graceful reflects just this kind of attitude in his ecumenical dealings. For example, he concludes his discussion on the controversy over the Trisagion with the following judicious, irenic observation:63

[Regarding the] thrice-holy doxology, which your churches offer to the three persons, and we to the Son alone. Both are mystical and beautiful when one sees them without contention. But with contention, they become a cause for blasphemy instead of praise. For censuring us you say, “You say the Trinity was crucified.” And we, countering, that you do not say that the one crucified for us is God and mighty and immortal in death, but that [he is] merely man. And both [sides] strive to triumph at the expense of the other. But although we say this to the Son alone, according to the tradition of the first fathers, nevertheless in many church services we sing the three holies of the Seraphim to the Holy Trinity.64

Elsewhere Nersès continues:

Therefore whether one says [the Trisagion] to the Holy Trinity like you, or to the Son alone, as we, both are pleasing to God when they are said without contention.65

Today our churches enjoy unparalleled freedom of operation and a desire for unity amongst ourselves that is more acute than in past generations. We also benefit from great strides in understanding the evolution of our respective liturgies. Moreover, in most of the world our churches are practically side-by-side, and there is no more excuse for ignorance and isolation. It is incumbent upon this generation courageously to sweep aside the banal debris of centuries of vain dissension, chauvinism and fear, and intelligently to address the very few legitimate difficulties that

63 Though the controversies surrounding of the interpolated Trisagion could be discussed within the framework proposed here, I have largely omitted it because it is equally a confessional statement bearing directly on doctrine. Essential in this area, however, is BROCK, 1985.
64 NERSÈS ŠNORHALI, 1871, p. 138.
65 IBID., 99.
stand in the way of the full reconciliation of the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches.

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ORIGINS OF THE EASTERN LITURGIES

Paul Meyendorff

As representatives of the various eastern churches gather together in search of greater unity, the question of liturgy inevitably arises. Common to all our traditions is the centrality of the liturgical act. We all have rich liturgical traditions, many of which trace their origins to the earliest centuries of the Church’s life. All of us are strongly attached to our own traditions, and we sometimes view others with suspicion, though we know little about them. This diversity in liturgical practice thus often presents an obstacle to real dialogue, particularly on the more popular level, where mutual ignorance and even hostility reign. It is for this reason that the organizers of the 1996 Symposium have decided to focus on the question of liturgy.

My task today is to sketch out, in very general terms, the origin of the eastern liturgical families. Others will discuss how theological developments influenced the various liturgies, and then various speakers will describe the particular ethos of each of the liturgical traditions represented here. In this way, we can come to know each other by seeing how each community actually lives out its faith in its worship life.

The first problem one faces when dealing with the eastern liturgical families is how to distinguish or name them. Often, political designations are used: thus one speaks of the “Armenian,” or “East Syrian” rites. At times, theological criteria prevail—thus the “Nestorian” rite. Or else a linguistic label is used, such as “Coptic.” None of these is adequate, particularly in the modern era, as communities have migrated and faith boundaries have shifted. Today, for example, the vast majority of formerly Nestorian Christians in India, who use the “East Syrian” or “Nestorian” rite, belong to the “Malabarese” church, in communion with Rome. In many cases, rites are shared across confessional lines, chiefly as result of Latin missionary efforts. In addition, all the different liturgical families have, to some extent, been influenced by others, so there is no such thing as a “pure” liturgical rite. For the sake of convenience, then, we might simply define a rite as the tradition used by a particular group.
LITURGICAL ORIGINS

Where, then, did the present liturgical rites originate? An earlier generation of scholars believed that all modern liturgical families originated from one single, pristine liturgy. In the case of the Eucharist, for example, they believed that the so-called “Clementine” liturgy found in the late fourth-century church order known as the *Apostolic Constitutions*.¹ More recent scholarship has shown that in fact early Christian worship was far from uniform, and that the basic pattern was exactly the reverse—multiple traditions evolved into just a few rites. All modern traditions, he shows, are mongrel traditions resulting from the coming together of various disparate traditions.² Subsequent scholarship, supported also by the work of biblical scholars, has demonstrated the truth of Baumstark’s position. Despite this, many on the popular level continue to hold onto the belief that there was a single, pristine Christian liturgy. In fact, there has been from the very beginning a tremendous variety in liturgical practice, even at a time when the Church was united.

Modern scholars identify four basic phases in liturgical development. First, an initial period of formation during the first three centuries of the church’s life. In this period there is tremendous local variety. Every town has its own traditions and practices, as we can even see reflected in the New Testament communities, which have preserved four different accounts of the Lord’s Supper. But in a second stage of formation one finds also an emerging synthesis in various regions, which leads also to differences with other regions. There is thus a move to unification within regions, paralleling the increasing organization of church life around the major centers. This is what results in distinct liturgical families or rites. By the 5-6th centuries, therefore, we find a number of families, each with a life of its own, reflecting the various political and religious subdivisions within the Christian world.

Second, a period of extension and development, or the death, of these autonomous traditions follows. The tradition of Jerusalem, for example, eventually dies out, although customs from Jerusalem eventually enter into many other traditions—this is true particularly for the liturgical calendar and the celebration of Easter. Other traditions, such as the Constantinopolitan, greatly extended their influence. No new families appear any longer, except as variants of the old ones.

Third, the Reformation, which marked the breakup of unity in the West, had no significant influence in the East. Fourth, the modern period has witnessed the development of liturgical scholarship, which has led

¹ This theory was first proposed in PROBST, 1870. The best modern study on early Christian worship is BRADSHAW, 1992.
² This second theory was articulated in BAUMSTARK, 1940.
to a great deal of restoration. The classical example here is the liturgical reform of Vatican II, which has in some respects brought the Roman rite back to the 4th century. But the eastern traditions are also undergoing some changes, such as the spreading eucharistic revival resulting from the (re)discovery by historians and theologians of the centrality of the Eucharist for the church’s self-understanding.

A number of factors contributed to the development and subsequent evolution of the various liturgical families.\(^3\)

- The evolution of church structures often played an important role. This often led to a process of unification within geographical areas. In one case, the Synod of Selecucia-Ctesiphon in 410 attempted to standardize the liturgical practices of the church in Persia. But in most cases, the process of unification was much more subtle, and only in 16-17th century Muscovite councils do we find similar attempts to regulate liturgical practice.

- Geography played a major role. There are, for example, stronger influences between Egypt and Rome, because they were accessible to each other, than between Syria and Egypt. Meanwhile, travel from Jerusalem through Asia Minor to Constantinople was relatively easy and, therefore, we find many common elements. In this second axis, Antioch also played a major role.

- Political factors entered as well. Thus, the East Syrians had little contact with the West because they were part of the Persian Empire, which was frequently at war with the Roman Empire. In contrast, the Byzantines were always in contact with the Armenians—hence the many common elements in these two traditions.

- The many theological disputes and divisions were reflected in the evolution of liturgical practice. The anti-Arian Council of Constantinople (380) led to increased emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit. This resulted in the addition of strong epicleses into eucharistic prayers, as well as a leveling of the doxology.\(^4\) Similarly, the Council of Ephesus (431)

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\(^3\) For a general discussion of many of these developments, see the somewhat dated but still classic work of JUNGMANN, 1959.

\(^4\) The earlier form of the doxology was “Glory to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit,” which now became “Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.”
led to the isolation of the Nestorian churches and an increased focus on Mary in those churches which accepted this council.

- Great individuals strongly influenced liturgical practice as well. Many churches had strong leaders, such as Basil the Great or Severus of Antioch and poets such as Ephrem the Syrian or Romanos.

- Developments in the 4th century played a pivotal role. The Peace of Constantine in 313 allowed the Church to expand rapidly, and gradually to evolve from being a persecuted minority to being the official religion of the Roman Empire. The Emperor Constantine and his successors launched a massive building campaign, erecting cathedrals in all the major cities. This led to the creation of the so-called "cathedral rite," a highly popular form of liturgy which involved the new masses of the faithful in numerous processions, in the singing of responses to psalmody, in colorful rites which incorporated numerous elements from pagan, and particularly imperial, rites. It led also to a rise in pilgrimage, particularly to Jerusalem, whose liturgy immediately began to influence the traditions of many other churches, particularly during Holy Week and Easter. The flood of converts into the church after the persecutions ceased led also to developments in the rites of initiation and penance. With the mass of new converts, many of whom were only nominal, came a revolution in piety, particularly with respect to the Eucharist. A new attitude of "fear and awe" develops, as preachers such as Cyril of Jerusalem and John Chrysostom try to impress into the new converts a sense of seriousness about the step they have just taken. Connected with these developments in piety was the development of a system of liturgical theology. As bishops and preachers explained the meaning of the mysteries (Baptism and Eucharist) to the newly-baptized, they applied to the liturgy a method of typological and allegorical interpretation borrowed from the schools of biblical exegesis. They saw in the liturgy not just a literal meaning, but also a symbolic, spiritual sense. All these factors greatly

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5 On the cathedral rite, see BALDOVIN, 1987.
6 Cf. BISHOP, 1909.
7 See MEYENDORFF, 1985.
influenced further developments in all liturgical families.

- The 4th century also saw the development of monasticism, at first in Egypt, but soon also in Palestine, Antioch, and Caesarea. Later, Constantinople, Asia Minor, and Mount Athos, as well as Gaul and Italy, all became major monastic centers. Monasteries developed their own particular style of worship, generally referred to as the "monastic rite," which was far more sober and consisted essentially in the recitation of the Psalter. From the very beginning, cathedral and monastic practices influenced one another, resulting in a hybrid liturgy in many traditions.

- Finally, it must be noted that, virtually from the very beginning, traditions exerted mutual influence. The Trisagion and the Monogenes appear in several eastern liturgies. The songbook of Severus of Antioch, composed in Greek, was translated into Syriac, and songs appear in both the West Syrian and Armenian traditions. Some anaphoras are common to all eastern traditions. After the 4th century, Jerusalem and Constantinople in particular exercised strong influence. Jerusalem contributed the church year calendar and the lectionary system; Constantinople was instrumental in the spread of feasts of Mary and the Elevation of the Cross, as well as the custom of reciting the creed at the Eucharist.

All these trends were, of course, not rigid. Many local traditions continued to flourish. Development never ceased, as the various liturgies continued to be adapted to local needs. It was the invention of the printing press, and the subsequent printing of liturgical books in the 16th century, which was the greatest single factor in slowing the growth and development of liturgy, as well as curtailing variety. The manuscripts selected for publication by book publishers (who were generally lay entrepreneurs) ended as the official texts to the exclusion of others. And it was precisely the printing of books which first gave rise to the idea (stronger in some traditions than in others) that there can only be one standard, unchangeable text.

**THE ORIGINS OF THE PRESENT TRADITIONS**

A major difficulty faced by scholars attempting to trace the origin of ancient liturgical rites is the paucity of early sources. As a result, we
know very little. We have no idea, for example, what liturgy was served in Athens before the Byzantine era, though Christians have been there from the first century. Not until the 4th century do we find more evidence—texts of prayers, eyewitness accounts, church orders, and various canons. Following, then, is a summary of the extant eastern liturgical traditions. For further information, readers are referred to the convenient survey of the eastern churches by Ronald Roberson. The chart appended to this article also provides a bird’s eye view of the extant eastern liturgical traditions.

**THE SYRIAN RITES**

These can be grouped into three distinct families, the East and West Syrian, and the Maronite. The East Syrian rites originated in the Christian communities of the Persian Empire, centered at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, which lies on the Tigris River, about 30 miles south of present-day Baghdad. The rite traces its origin to the practice of Edessa, from which Christianity spread to Mesopotamia. This rite thus represents the ancient usage of the Mesopotamian church. Today, these Christians call themselves the “Church of the East,” but they are often referred to as “Nestorian” because of their rejection of the Council of Ephesus (431). Today, the rite is also used by Chaldean and Malabar Catholics (see appendix).

The West Syrian rite today is used mostly by the “Jacobite” Church, a Syriac-speaking remnant of non-Chalcedonian Christians from Palestine and Syria. They were organized into an independent church by Jacob Baradai (+578). This rite originates in the traditions of Antioch and Jerusalem: the euchologia derive from Greek sources in Antioch and Jerusalem, while most of the Syriac poetic materials trace their origin to Edessa. Originally centered in Antioch, this tradition becomes separated from imperial orthodoxy in 516, after the deposition of Severus of Antioch, at which time the center of gravity shifts from the Orthodox coast to the non-Chalcedonian, more Syriac, mountain monasteries. This rite is used today by the Malabar Christians in India.

The Maronites form a third, distinct group, whose rite derives both from West and East Syrian sources, from both Antioch and Edessa. The rite is named after St. Maron, an 8th century Lebanese monk. This group is today 100% Catholic. This community consisted of hierarchically independent peasants surrounding the monasteries and following their own liturgical traditions. They were Syriac-speaking Chalcedonians, who maintained their distinction from the Greek-speaking Antiochians and preserved their own traditions. But they were

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8 ROBERSON, 1993.
also influenced by the Syrian non-Chalcedonians who lived around them. Because of their relative isolation from the Greek-speaking Chalcedonians, their tradition never underwent the Byzantine influence that most Syrian Chalcedonians were subjected to. During the Middle Ages, they encountered the Latin Crusaders and underwent strong Latin influence, a trend which accelerated under Patriarch Joseph Rizzi in the 16th century.

THE ALEXANDRIAN TRADITION

This liturgical tradition developed within a strongly centralized area around Alexandria, but, as can be expected, there was also a strong monastic influence. After the Council of Chalcedon (451), the church split. The Greek-speaking population in the cities accepted the council, and they were eventually byzantinized. The Coptic-speakers in the countryside rejected Chalcedon and gathered around the monasteries, mostly east of the Nile. Today, only a few Greek speakers remain in Alexandria, and Pope Shenouda heads the Coptic community. The Church of Ethiopia was also under the influence of Alexandria, although Ethiopia was first evangelized from Syria. Its liturgical tradition is a sub-branch of the Coptic tradition.

THE BYZANTINE AND ARMENIAN TRADITIONS

We know nothing about either before the fourth century. Because vespers and the structure of the eucharistic prayers in the Byzantine rite follow an Antiochene pattern, it is generally presumed that the first stratum is probably from Antioch. The Armenian tradition was originally influenced by the practices of Syria and Caesarea in Cappadocia, but it then underwent very strong influence from Constantinople. Both the Byzantine and Armenian traditions were also strongly influenced by Jerusalem. The Byzantine office today is almost entirely from Jerusalem, as are the calendar and lectionary in the Armenian rite. The Byzantine rite, in particular, is very much a hybrid, and, much like the Roman rite in the west, has become virtually universal within the Chalcedonian churches in the east.

If there is one lesson to be learned from such a brief, historical overview, it is that liturgical uniformity has never been the rule within the Church. There has always been variety in practice, even before the various schisms that divided the eastern churches in the fifth and sixth centuries. Efforts at reuniting the separated churches, and we have come a long way in recent years, cannot have as their goal the absorption of any liturgical tradition into another. All the rites we have looked at have their roots in the ancient, undivided Church. Unity can be achieved only if this legitimate diversity is respected.
APPENDIX

EXTANT RITES WITH APPROXIMATE STATISTICS (1993)

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“PARISH ETHICS” AND 
THE TEACHING OF JESUS

John Breck

I.

In these brief remarks I would like to focus on what can be called “parish ethics” and the scriptural background that underlies decision making in the parish setting. Moral choices have to be made in many spheres of our life: in the family, on the job, at school; in fact, in every realm of personal and social interaction. The local parish, as much as the family, is a community of persons. Like parents and children, parish members relate to one another in a specific context and for specific mutual ends. Therefore, they too, both clergy and laity, are constantly faced with the need to make moral decisions.

If needless tensions and disagreements arise within the local parish, often it is due to the fact that we take our church life for granted. The Church is the realm of the holy: we experience the joy and peace of God’s loving presence with us through the Liturgy and Sacraments. We are nurtured by the reading of Scripture and the celebration of its saving message. We are edified by the singing of hymns that instruct us in our faith and give expression to that faith. Icons remind us that we commune with the saints, asking their constant intercession on our behalf. Although we know that we are called to struggle against temptation and sin—what the holy Fathers refer to as the “passions”—we seldom take that struggle very seriously. Everything is given in the Church: the content of our faith, the presence of God, eternal life itself. So our tendency—our great temptation—is to perform the Church’s rituals, create a vigorous social life within the parish, and assume that we are fulfilling God’s will and our Christian vocation. Nevertheless, when ritual performance and social function occur above all in order to preserve our ethnic identity and cultural heritage, then we can only admit that we have betrayed both God and our vocation…

Among all of us who share an Orthodox heritage, this is indeed the great temptation. The local parish, rather than being the Church, becomes our “possession,” a structure by which and in which we preserve our own heritage and promote our own agendas. Little wonder that we no longer perceive it to be a living and life-giving member of the universal Body of Christ, uniting the living and the dead in an
eternal communion that reflects the boundless love of an infinitely merciful God.

It is no exaggeration to say that the vast majority of "problems" that arise within our parishes are due to this misperception concerning the nature of the local church. Problems between clergy and laity, between bishop and priest, and between various members of the community, can usually be traced to our sinful tendency to transform the parish from the Body of Christ into a kind of social organization whose purpose is to provide us with "spiritual" nurture and a communal identity, while imposing little or nothing upon us in the way of repentance, self-sacrifice and love. This situation represents a profound spiritual crisis within our church communities. But because it concerns basically our patterns of behavior, it signals as well an ethical or moral crisis.

II.

In the midst of the pluralistic and relativistic culture in which we live, we are constantly called to rediscover and recommit ourselves to the true Church, the Church of Jesus Christ, our risen and glorified Lord. The foundation for such a rediscovery and recommitment is provided for us in Jesus' own teachings. It is there that we find the "pathway" into the Kingdom of Heaven: a pathway that necessarily begins in our present life, and most specifically within the parish setting.

A useful place to begin is with Jesus' teaching given in the framework of his "Sermon on the Mount," recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, chapters 5-7. But this should be read with its parallel passage, given by St. Luke (ch. 6). These two sermons, using similar language and imagery, provide us with clear indications of what constitutes genuinely "Christian" moral behavior. They speak to Christian life in general, but perhaps with special eloquence to life within our parish communities.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes, familiar to us in the Byzantine tradition as the Third Antiphon of the Divine Liturgy: "Blessed are the poor in spirit... blessed are the meek... blessed are the pure in heart." They are addressed in the third person ("blessed are they") and represent what can be considered as virtues to be acquired in the Christian life. St. John Chrysostom and other Eastern Fathers will speak of "poverty of spirit" as a spiritual value to be sought and cultivated. "Mournfulness" concerns repentance, compunction, the sense of profound sorrow over our sinfulness. "Meekness," "righteousness," "mercy," and "purity of heart" are, in similar fashion, attributes of those who attain the ultimate beatitude of life within the Kingdom of God.
When we turn to the Gospel of St. Luke, however, the situation is much different. Here (6:17ff), Jesus does not speak from a mountain side. He comes down to “a level place,” a plain, filled with crowds of people who are sick and poor. He addresses them directly, in the second person (“you”), and thereby he speaks to their own greatest needs and personal suffering. “Blessed are you poor, you that hunger, you that weep and are persecuted...” This doesn’t describe attributes to be acquired; it speaks rather to the harsh, painful reality of the people’s daily lives. Yet the promise is the same as in the Gospel of St. Matthew: insofar as we remain ultimately and completely faithful to Christ, his saving love will open before us the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven. That particular Way is then charted, in both Matthew and Luke, by further teaching that focuses above all on the theme of love: God’s love for us expressed through the ineffable gift of his own Son; but also our love for one another, that imitates and conveys God’s love within every aspect of our daily life.

The heart of the Sermon on the Mount is a triptych of almsgiving, prayer and fasting (Mt. 6:1-18). All of Christian existence takes shape about these three virtues. Fasting subdues the passions, strengthens the body, and opens the spirit to perceive the presence of heaven on earth, particularly in the framework of liturgical worship. This personal sacrifice is complemented by works of “social action,” primarily the sharing of our wealth with those who are less fortunate. This is a necessary function of the spiritual life, because each of us is nothing more than a steward of God’s gifts. If we possess wealth or talents, it is because God has bestowed them upon us for a single purpose: to use them for others, in order to demonstrate his love and to manifest his glory.

Yet these two, fasting and almsgiving, are never complete unless they issue from and lead toward prayer. Significantly, the focus of the central panel of this triptych is the “Lord’s Prayer,” the prayer Jesus taught his own disciples. In the life of faith, that prayer becomes our own. Because of God’s boundless love for us, we are granted the gift of addressing him by the tender and affectionate name Jesus himself used: the name “Abba” or “Dear Father.”

As the comparison between the Gospels of Sts. Matthew and Luke demonstrates, however, we can never attain to life in the Kingdom without reaching out as Jesus himself did, to meet the needs of those about us, and to embrace them with understanding, compassion and self-giving love. This is the work of every Christian, but it is also the work of our ecclesial communities, our parishes. The Way into the Kingdom of Heaven, for ourselves as individuals and as members of the Body of Christ, is through an authentic stewardship of love. Without it, once again, our parish life degenerates into the life of a social club, which serves neither us nor God’s world.
A second major element of Jesus' teaching that underlies what we can call "parish ethics" is found in his parables. Several of those, known as "parables of mercy," appear only in the Gospel of St. Luke. There we find a number of passages that help prepare us for the Lenten season: the encounter between Zacchaeus and Jesus, but especially the parable of the Publican and Pharisee, and the parable of the Two Sons (often called "the Prodigal Son").

In the first of these, Jesus makes a striking contrast between the noble and pious Pharisee, and the humble but sinful Publican or tax collector. We need to remember that in Jesus' time tax collectors among his people were Jews who were in the employ of the Roman government. They earned their living by exacting more tax than the government demanded, then keeping the excess. The system was rife with exploitation, and as a result tax collectors were despised as traitors to their own people. In Rembrandt's marvelous rendering of the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, the Pharisee stands boldly upright in the center of the temple, illumined by a bright shaft of light. Head raised, he is thanking God for his piety, grateful that he is not like other people. The depths of his hypocrisy would hardly be noticeable, if it were not for the figure of the tax collector, shrouded in the darkness of a temple corner. This man dares not raise his eyes heavenward, so conscious he is of his sinfulness. But despite the Pharisee's very truthful claims to proper piety and ritual observance, it is the Publican who "goes down to his house justified."

Jesus' point is made by contrasting the repentance of a sinner with the self-proclaimed righteousness of one who feels he needs no repentance. The Physician of our souls and bodies has come to heal the sick. The tragedy of the Pharisee, and of so many members of the Church today, is that he does not realize that he is as "sick" as the Publican. He, too, despite his fidelity to ceremonial law and the "traditions of the elders," is caught up in sin, death and corruption. He, too, has no claim on God's grace without receiving the healing that God himself longs to bestow upon him. But that healing, grounded in repentance, comes only in response to genuine humility. God alone works the miracle of salvation and life. To receive that gift, however, we need to cry from the depths of our heart the prayer of the humble Publican: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Coupled with the name of Jesus, this has become the "Prayer of the Heart," so dear to Orthodox piety. It is a prayer that eschews all exclusivism and triumphalism. It is an appeal grounded in utter realism about ourselves: that we too are sinful people, caught up in pride, selfishness, and an insatiable quest for comfort and amusement, however great the depths of spiritual and material poverty may be in the lives of people around us.

A similar emphasis appears in the parable of the Two Sons. When the Prodigal repents of his arrogant profligacy and turns back home, he
finds the father waiting for him with open arms. Willing to be taken in as a hired servant, he is instead embraced and showered with gifts, to celebrate his "repentance," his return to the father's house. The older brother, however, is filled with jealousy. He has remained "faithful" to the duties expected of a son. He has, we can say, played the role of the faithful Pharisee, respecting the rituals of daily life, including required chores and prayer. Yet he condemns himself by comparing his deeds and attitudes to those of his younger brother. Rather than rejoice at his brother's return, he becomes sullen and resentful. "The household is mine," he thinks to himself; "I have remained faithful to it, and this fellow who left it of his own accord has no right to be received back." How many of us harbor similar thoughts and feelings regarding those of other Christian confessions, or of no confession at all? "They abandoned the faith," we think to ourselves, "therefore they have no business coming into our church, our parish!" And in the midst of this hypocrisy, we wonder why the Church is not growing, why some are predicting that our parishes will simply wither away.

Hypocrisy, though, whether of the Pharisee or of the Older Son in Jesus' parables, is rooted in a refusal to love. This is the most basic ailment affecting church-life today. We have fashioned the parish community into our own image and likeness, creating a style of "Christianity" that is comfortable and undemanding. Would anyone, looking in from outside, ever see in our midst evidence of authentic repentance and a concern for active mission? Would they perceive that we are in fact "Christian," given that true faith in Christ necessarily entails bearing his Cross for the sake of others? Would they be convinced that we have heard Jesus' one commandment that sums up every other: "Love the Lord your God...and your neighbor as yourself"? Unless our parish life reflects at its deepest level that most fundamental concern for love, then we cannot claim that our parish is truly "of the Church" at all.

That love, however, needs to be directed to the inner life of the church community as much as to those who live beyond its walls. Within the parish dwell both the Publican and the Pharisee, both the Prodigal and the Older Son. Yet only God can judge the category into which any of us falls. It is never our place to attempt to do so. Parish life—communal life within the Body of Christ—is appropriately marked by an ongoing struggle on the part of each of its members to move from hypocrisy and sinfulness, to repentance and humility. Because we live in communion with one another, that movement or spiritual growth involves not only ourselves as isolated individuals. It involves us together as a living "community," united in faith and love in the Name and in the Person of Jesus Christ. This most simple and basic truth has momentous implications for specific relationships, and the resolution of specific problems, within any parish setting.
III.

The most difficult moral problems we have to deal with in parish life concern relationships: on the level of church authority, between bishop, priest and parish council, and on the level of personal interactions among parishioners. To each of these, the solution is as simple and straightforward as it is difficult to realize; namely, to ground every thought and gesture, every word and decision, in the love of Jesus Christ.

We in the Orthodox tradition have developed our own form of clericalism that has wreaked considerable damage throughout the Church. The threefold hierarchical structure represented by bishop, priest and deacon, is a venerable and essential one that goes back to the late first century. It reflects the hierarchical relationships that exist within the Trinity itself, among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. A popular image, drawn from the writings of St. Ignatius of Antioch (died ca. 117), likens the bishop to God and the priest to Christ. This image, however, has often been misinterpreted so that the authority implied by each ministerial function is invested in the human cleric rather than in the divine Person that cleric is called to reflect and to manifest. On the parish level, this takes an all too familiar form. We venerate the bishop and invite him to serve at the altar; we prepare a small banquet to welcome him and give him a chance to speak; and we breathe a sigh of relief when he leaves, thankful that nothing "went wrong," that no controversies or delicate pastoral topics were broached, and that he came and went without obliging us to change anything of significance. We venerate the bishop, yet we hold him at a distance, afraid of saying the wrong thing, afraid of enduring his judgment upon us and our parish life.

Yet the bishop is elevated to his position within the ecclesial body to be a "father" in the image of God the Father. He is there as the pastor of pastors, the spiritual guide, the preserver of Holy Tradition, the celebrant of life-giving "mysteries," and the living symbol of unity within the Church. Does he experience our support, our respect for the God-given authority he represents, and our concern to live and work in the closest filial relationship with him? Does he, in a word, experience our love for him? If not, we can hardly be surprised if our superficial welcome of him, and relieved parting from him, tend to push him into ever greater isolation and distance from ourselves and the concerns of our community. The loneliest ministry in the Church is often that of the bishop—precisely because we so often place him on a pedestal and avoid him at the same time.
This is an ethical issue, once again, because it concerns our ways of behaving. Similar tensions arise within parish life because we behave in similar ways with regard to the priest, his wife, and the parish council. We tend to mistrust authority, as much as we may respect it. When the priest appears to usurp power that was once in the hands of parish council members, or a particularly influential lay person in the parish, we resent it. Often we talk behind his back, form alliances, and in general attempt to undermine the authority that is rightly his by virtue of his election and ordination. Yet the converse needs to be acknowledged as well. Often the priest, for various personal reasons, misinterprets the boundaries of his authority, ignoring the advice of the bishop or dismissing the counsel of his people. And the same, of course, happens with lay leaders in the parish.

Authority, in other words, can only effectively and faithfully be exercised in humility and in love. This means that concerted effort is needed—among bishop, priest and laity—to recognize problem areas in parish life and to seek resolution to those problems in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation. This involves us together in prayer for mutual discernment and cooperation for effective and lasting solutions. The ultimate source of unity and of spiritual growth within the ecclesial community is Jesus Christ himself. The grace that works miracles, brings healing, and offers practical solutions to seemingly insoluble problems, is a grace that he alone bestows. But that grace comes in response to love: for him and for one another. By uniting ourselves as pastors and flock, in prayer and in genuine mutual concern, we can face any crisis, resolve any problem, and fulfill any mission, all to the glory of God and the salvation of his world.

With regard to ethical issues that confront us in the day to day activities of the parish, we can say the same. No program, no agenda, no “special parish event,” can have anything but a destructive purpose if it is not grounded in the love of Christ and his own work for the conversion and salvation of the world around us. We are on the threshold of a new millennium, one that will present to us as Christian people challenges and difficulties as great as we have ever known, including the periods of persecution that have so tragically marked our common Orthodox history. Yet the opportunities, especially here in the West, are as great as the potential problems. We need, for example, to look for new forms of ministry that will draw upon the talents and capacities of our women and our young people. We need to develop new models for Christian education in a society where our children are exposed every day to the corruption and denial of our most basic values. We need to find ways to bring the Gospel to areas of neglect, such as our inner-cities and their lost teenagers, in order to extend the Church’s witness and mission to those who have never received it, or who
rejected it because it was imposed without understanding and without love. We need also to open new avenues of witness and service to those who are the most vulnerable and the most readily rejected by our parishes: pregnant teenage girls, victims of AIDS, inmates in our prisons. Finally, we need as well to develop new and caring ministries to the sick, the aged and the dying.

The challenges that face us, and the ethical decisions needed to respond to them, are daunting and seemingly overwhelming. If we rely, as we tend to do, only on our own resources, with the concern to preserve our own interests and foster our own agendas, then the Church will quickly lose its moral voice, as it loses its moral bearings, in what is increasingly a godless and demonic society. On the other hand, if we unite ourselves in the love of Jesus Christ, determined to work together in order to further His mission within the world, then the grace of God will, without any doubt, lead us to fulfill that mission faithfully and successfully.

Such success is never measurable in human terms. It is not the product of structured programs, although those can be useful. It is not the product, either, of mere good intentions and hard work, although those, too, are instrumental to it. “Success” in Christian terms is measured as the fruit of an inner transformation, grounded in humble repentance and shown forth to the world and to one another as love: love that “is patient and kind, not jealous or boastful...does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.” Such love, reflecting the boundless forgiveness and inexhaustible mercy of God, “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13). This love, originating within the Holy Trinity itself, is ceaselessly poured out upon us by the God of love. It is a gift, one that can underlie and reshape all of our relationships and all of our moral decisions within the Body of Christ.

Let me close with an appeal. We have just come through the blessed period of Great Lent and Holy Pascha; we have celebrated once again the life-giving event of our Lord’s resurrection from the dead. That victory can only become ours insofar as we respond to it in faith and love. Within our various parishes there are occasions every day for us to accept and rejoice in that victory as we interact with one another. Those occasions, however, require discernment. Yet discernment itself is a gift of the Spirit, granted in response to ardent and faithful prayer.

The key to resolving strife within our communities, to advancing the mission of the Church, and to following the pathway that leads into God’s Kingdom, is precisely that constant prayer for discernment in every aspect of our daily, communal life. May each of us, then, accept
the challenge of the Apostle Paul, to "pray without ceasing" for the
discernment that issues in acts and attitudes of healing love. May we
learn to discern within the face of each other the very face of Christ
himself, and so respond in all of our interactions and relationships with
the self-sacrificing love of the Cross, that "bears, believes, hopes and
endures all things" for the sake of the other's salvation.
CURRICULUM FOR EDUCATING INFANTS WHO ARE CALLED TO THE RANK OF PRIESTHOOD: NECESSARY AND USEFUL ADVICE WRITTEN BY LORD ĀRAK'EL, BISHOP OF SIWNIK', AND GRIGOR [OF TAT'EW], THE GREAT RHETOR

Arakel Aljalian, Simeon Odabashian, and Hratch Tchilingirian

Lord Arak’el (c.1356-c.1422), the Bishop of Siwnik’, and his maternal uncle, Grigor Tat’ewac’i (1346-1409), the Great Rhetor, underscore the important role of parents to nurture faith in their children—especially parents of those children with a calling to serve as ordained ministers of the Lord. The two Church Fathers composed guidelines in the form of a curriculum and offered guidance for parents educating such children dedicated to the priesthood. For these children, spiritual enrichment and religious education must not simply be a part of their lives, but the very center of it.

The title of the document, as it appears above, must be derivative, since it incorporates the names of the co-authors and employs two words in conjunction not found in the text: Noracaneal mankanc’, literally, “of newborn children.” The translation of the latter as “infants” is but a convention that is true to the contents of the text. As for the translated text, it is part of the Mec Maštoc’.1

Raising children has, throughout human history, been a social and cultural priority in order to ensure the continuation, success, and future of societies. Nowhere is this phenomenon more true or better exemplified than within the Christian community, where raising children in the light and example of our Savior Jesus Christ is integral

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to the preservation, continuity, and growth of the faith. Generation after generation, Christian parents, clergy, and others instill in children faith, morals, and values: love, honesty, humility, dedication, perseverance, commitment, mercy, and forgiveness. This is in keeping with Christ’s great commission in which He challenges and commands His disciples to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”  

Naturally, Christian are called to be themselves the foremost missionaries to discipline their own children.

There is a considerable history of educating children in the Armenian tradition. There, as in this document, admonitions from the Wisdom tradition to teach children “the fear of the Lord” are often contemplated alongside similar teachings on Christian virtues in the Gospels and the Epistles. Among the ancients, most education was religious education. Consequently, young boys dedicated to the priesthood by their parents, for reasons of which the high rate of infant mortality was not the least, were given additional care and attention. Planting the Christian virtues in them was an imperative ever since their birth, a process that began in infancy—long before they were tutored by related vardapets at the monastic schools. The home was, naturally, the first of these protected environments for their special upbringing.

The two authors also seem to draw upon certain views found in the General Epistle of Nersês Snorhali (1101-1173), who upholds the clergy as the first among those who belong to a higher kingdom in manners and behavior. Accordingly, those destined for ordination must possess certain virtues and values, integrity, innocence, purity and intelligence—these qualities manifested in children. It is through the course of growth and development in a fallen society that these good

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2 Matthew 28:19-20.
3 For a survey, see (Fr.) Vardan Hac'uni, Dastiaraket 'iuna hin hayoc' k'ov (Education among Old-time Armenians) (Venice: S. Lazar, 1923), especially pp. 38-78.
4 At the time of Lord A'ak'el and Grigor Tat'ewac'i, much of Armenia’s spiritual culture was focused in its monasteries. It was in these monasteries that the religious lived and nurtured a spiritual environment for the religious nourishment of those who dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord. Therefore, often, it was to these monasteries that parents, having raised their children in a truly Christian setting and having instilled in them faith, discipline, and love, presented them to begin their journey to the ultimate service of the Lord.
attributes are corrupted and turned into vices. Christ illustrates the immaculate qualities of childhood, when He says, "...unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."6 It is a remarkable task to preserve the faith, innocence, and other qualities of childhood and exemplify them through adulthood! If faith and purity are essentials for the faithful members of the Christian Church, then how much more crucial are they for the clergy, the ordained servants of our Lord?

Although conditions have changed significantly in the intervening six centuries, a reading of the curriculum indicates the continuing relevancy of these traditional tenets.

CURRICULUM FOR EDUCATING INFANTS' WHO ARE TO BE CALLED TO THE RANK OF PRIESTHOOD

Now, in due time, it is necessary by the nourishment of holiness and wisdom to raise in the fear of God children who, like newborn crying babes seeking pure milk, might grow in salvation thereby; children who shall taste the sweetness of God according to the prophet; children who still approach the "living rock" and will be made a spiritual temple for spotless priesthood to offer God-pleasing spiritual sacrifice through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For as Paul says, "Those whom he first knew, he also called and those whom he called he also invited and those whom he invited he made righteous and those whom he made righteous, he glorified."7

Hence, after the sacrament of baptism, the rebirth and enlightenment of the holy font and the adoption by our Heavenly Father, the parents, as servant and teacher of the Heavenly Father's adopted child, receive the child in their home and educate him in the fear of God.

When the child begins to speak, first they shall put the blessing of God in his mouth as the prophet David says, "O Lord, if You open my lips, my mouth shall sing Your praise."8 And again, "blessing shall come forth from the mouth of children." Hence at the coming of our Lord into Jerusalem, the mouths of forty-day-old sucklings were opened, and they sang aloud, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel

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6 Matthew 18:3-4.
* Lit., "Newborn Children" (Noracaneal Mankanc). These words in the title do not appear in the rest of the text.
7 Romans 8:30
8 Psalm 51:15
who comes in the name of the Lord. Praise to the Son of David.”. 9 And our Lord rebuked the Jews who did not understand this mystery, saying to them, “Have you not read that ‘out of the mouths of babes and sucklings praise shall be established’?” 10 Thus, if the scholars and the illustrious were to keep silent, the stones would cry out. So babes who are still being nursed by their mothers shall offer praise to me, the Creator, instead of taking milk and nourishment. For it is necessary that the tongue of the child shall first utter blessing to God and then voice other words and meanings.

Thus, every morning when we wake up, we should first say, “O Lord, if You open my lips, my mouth shall sing Your praise.” 11, for it is obvious that our mouths are opened and closed at the command of the Creator. For from the evening hour until bedtime, we shall beseech God saying, “Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, and a strong door for my lips.” 12. And in the morning when we wake from sleep, we shall ask God’s command, saying, “O Lord, if You open my lips...” Likewise, for all the senses we shall beseech the Lord, “Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.” 13. And again, “Cause me to hear joy and gladness. Let my suffering bones rejoice.” And others like these. For it is necessary that the tongue of the child should first utter blessing to God.

Second, when he is grown in stature and understands everything, they should show him all the movements of the sky and the course of the heavenly luminaries and their beauty and the changing of the seasons, and through these he should learn of their Creator and the greatness of His beauty. As the prophet says, “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.” 14. And also they should show him the blossoming of plants and seeds and the fragrance of sweet-smelling lilies of various bright colors. Through these he should be given to recognize the beauty of the Creator, as he [the prophet] says, “the beauty of the field is with me” and through them he should recognize the Creator of beings. As Paul says, “For the invisible things of God are visibly seen by rational beings.” 15. And in this way little by little they should bring the child to the knowledge of his Creator.

Third, they shall teach him about the three persons of the One Godhead: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit consubstantial divinity. One

9 Luke 19:38, Mark 11: 9-10
10 Matthew 21:16, Psalm 8:2
11 Psalm 51:15
12 Psalm 141:3
13 Psalm 13:3, Psalm 51:8
14 Psalm 19:1
15 Romans 1:20
nature, one will, one energy, one ruler of everything visible and invisible.

Fourth, they shall teach him the ordering of the nine classes of Angels, which are Thrones, Seraphim, Cherubim, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. And they shall teach him about the demons who fell from the angelic ranks because of their arrogance and disobedience.

Fifth, they shall reveal to him the creation of our ancestor who was in paradise and his fall by the deceit of Satan, for eating the fruit, by which man became mortal and fell from glorious paradise to this painful and mortal earth.

Sixth, they shall teach him about the incarnation of the Son of God for our salvation. Beginning from the Annunciation by Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, birth-giver of God, and the birth in the manger, they shall teach him about the descent of the multitude of heavenly hosts, about the arrival of the Magi and the coming to the temple on the fortieth day, the baptism of the revelation of God, the opening of heaven and the voice of the Father, and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove upon Him, and His coming willingly to suffer on the cross, the miracle-working of Christ, and the wonders which took place during the crucifixion. They shall teach him that the earth shook and the rocks were split and that the heavenly luminaries were darkened, and that the tombs were opened and many of the dead were raised and that they entered Jerusalem and that the curtain of the temple was torn. They shall teach him about the three days' burial, through which hell was destroyed and the souls saved and about the resurrection of God from the sealed tomb. The descent of angels, the appearance to the myrrh-bearers and disciples, the ascension to heaven and the sitting at the right hand of the Father, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the ranks of the apostles.

All of these it is necessary to impress on the mind of the child, according to the order of the dominical feasts.

Seventh, it is necessary to reveal to him the second coming of Christ from heaven and the resurrection of all mankind and the awesome judgment, the glory for the righteous and torment for sinners. For the child should be aware of all this, of both the beginning of creatures as well as the consummation of the world.

Eighth, they should teach him to go to church that he might view the liturgical rites and listen to the voice of the priest, the reading of the scriptures, the prayers, lamentations and weeping of the people, so that he might learn the order of Christianity and grow accustomed to the

16 Genesis 2:15, Genesis 3:76
same always. For this reason the prophet says, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go unto the house of the Lord."\textsuperscript{17}

Ninth, they shall reveal to him that every evil word and hateful, repugnant and condemnable deed is repugnant to God and they shall strictly silence him from cursing and lying, from stealing and other such things. For from such strictness he shall realize the iniquity of sin and shall hasten to do what is right. For this reason, the prophet says, "When a child learns good and evil, he shall reject the evil and choose the good" and shall boldly say, "I hate and reject sin and love Your laws."\textsuperscript{18}

Tenth, they shall remind him of the day of death, the hour of agony, and the battle of demons who encounter a man in the soul’s journey and the confusion of sinners in the stations of souls and their remorse until the day of judgment. The parents shall always arouse all these things in the child’s mind, so that his mind might be imbued with the fear of God. For this reason Solomon says, "I was a thoughtful child and I came upon a good spirit."\textsuperscript{19} And the prophet Isaiah says, "My child take heed." And you might say, "How is one able to teach the child all this?" Thus the prophet Jeremiah said to God, "I am a child and I do not know how to speak."\textsuperscript{20} And God said to him, "Don’t say, ‘I am a child’, for I shall place all My words in your mouth, and you shall go before everyone I send you to."\textsuperscript{21} It is necessary to teach every child everything in this way.

And after seven years his parents will take him with gifts to the church door and present him to God, committing him to the graces of the Holy Spirit. And they will take him to a chosen and God-pleasing priest to be instructed in divine knowledge. And taking the child as a spiritual father, he offers him to God and says, "For of such is the kingdom of God." And he exhorts the child’s heart in the love of a God-pleasing way of life to the measure of the child’s capacity and ability. And when he sees that he is well-versed in the primary curriculum, he commences the higher learning.

First, he instructs the pupil’s mind to strive for the intelligible, as the abundance of luminous rays extends among the ranks of angels, and from there upon the nine orders of priesthood in the church. For as man is a composite of two parts, spirit and body, so also is he illumined by two kinds of light, that is, the sensible body by the sensible light and the intelligible spirit through the rays of God’s wisdom. This is the food of the Spirit, as the prophet says, "You shall

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Psalm 122:1
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Isaiah 7:16
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Wisdom of Solomon 7:19
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Jeremiah 1:6
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Jeremiah 1:7
\end{itemize}
give the river of delights for them to drink.”22 And this is what makes up the faith, as is said, “Faith is the illumination of the mind, poured from the first light into our rational minds by which we know God.” According to the verse, “by the light of your countenance we see light.”23

Second, he teaches him to lift up his mind above the intelligible, to the stations of the ineffable, to the unattainable for contingent beings, to the interior of the veil, where the uncreated Godhead is: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For this reason, Paul says, “Seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”24 It is always necessary for us to dwell in the same passion of longing and to desire with eyes of faith. Accordingly, “just as a hart desires fountains of water, so my soul desires to be with you, O God. My soul thirsts for you, mighty and living God. When shall I come to be revealed to the face of God?”25 For it is not possible for created beings to enter the divine abode, that is, while striving with our minds for God, He humbles Himself to us as to the prodigal, as it says, “the father went to meet him.”26 And the Lord says, “My father and I shall go to him and we will make our dwelling in him.”27 For the prophet says, “Make a highway for him who rides upon the heaven of heavens toward the East.”28 Behold, in lifting up our minds to Him, He Himself is humbled to us as we demonstrated. Thus, there exist three types of vision in a man: 1) eyes of sense to see the visible creatures, 2) intelligible minds to behold the intelligible abodes of the angels, 3) and eyes of faith to know the uncreated Godhead. And thus it is necessary to instruct our minds in the communing with the ineffable One. For this reason, he says, “Ponder on things above.”29

Third, he teaches him by word the fourteen stages of faith as follows:30

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22 Psalm 35:8
23 Psalm 36:9
24 Colossians 3:1
25 Psalms 42:1-2
26 Luke 15:27
27 John 14:23
28 Psalm 68:34
29 Colossians 3:2
30 What follows is an excerpt from the “Creed of the Ordination to the Holy Priesthood” by Tat’ėwac’i. For a detailed analysis of the biblical and patristic sources, see Abp. Nnoryr Potaton, Hay Ekeławw Hayawac Hay Hanganganker (The Credal Confessions of the Armenian Church) (New York: St. Vartan Press, 1991), pp. 11-20. The numbering of the fourteen points of faith has been supplied by us. For an English translation of the Armenian rite of Ordination in the Mes Mathon, see Hratch Chilingirian,
[1] We confess and believe wholeheartedly (in) God the Father, uncreated, unbegotten, and without beginning, and also begetter of the Son and emanator of the Holy Spirit.

[2] We believe (in) God the Word, uncreated, begotten of the Father before all eternity, not next (in order) nor less, but in as much as the Father is father, so with Him also the Son is Son.

[3] We believe (in) the Holy Spirit, uncreated, eternal, unbegotten, but proceeding from the Father, coexistent with the Father and of the same glory with the Son.

[4] We believe in the Holy Trinity, one Nature, one Divinity, not three gods, but one God, one Will, one Kingdom, one Sovereignty, Creator of the visible and the invisible.


[8] We believe that one of the three Persons, God the Word, who was begotten of the Father before all eternity, in fullness of time descended into the Virgin Mary Mother of God, from whose blood He took and united it with His own Divinity. Nine months He patiently waited in the womb of the immaculate Virgin, and the perfect God became perfect man in soul, and in mind, and in body: one Person, one visage, and united in one nature. [9] (That) God became man without change and without alteration. [10] (That) His conception was without insemination and His generation without corruption. As there is no beginning to His Divinity, so also there is no end to His humanity, "for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." 31

[11] We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ walked on earth. After thirty years He came to be baptized; the Father from on high bore witness: "This is my Beloved Son"; and the Holy Spirit came down like a dove. He was tempted by Satan and conqueror him. He preached salvation to men; He labored in the body; He suffered fatigue, hunger, and thirst. Afterwards He voluntarily submitted to (His) passion; was crucified and died in the flesh but lived in His Divinity. His body placed in a tomb was united with His Divinity; and with His spirit He descended into hell, undivided from his Divinity. He

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31 Hebrews 13:8
preached to the spirits, destroyed hell and delivered the spirits. After three days He rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples.

[12] We believe (that) our Lord Jesus Christ ascended with the same body into heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father. [13] Also (that) He will come with the same body and in the glory of the Father, to judge the living and the dead—Who is also the resurrection of all men.

[14] We believe also (in) the compensation for works: to the just everlasting life, and to the sinners everlasting torments.32

Fourth, he teaches the child about the lives of the holy hermits and virgins, the unbearable torment of the holy martyrs before which the bodies of all men tremble and by whose patience they are awestruck. And this is the order, either to examine intelligible things above or to contemplate the sufferings of the saints below. In these two things alone are to be the activity of the mind and the contemplation of the heart. As the apostle Paul says, "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life and imitate their faith."33 It is to this end that the church every day reads of their sufferings.

Fifth, he teaches him how to confess the seven deadly sins and their venial aspects. For God spoke thus by the prophet Isaiah, "Set forth your wrongdoings, that you may be proved justified."34 For he who stays firm in confession, remains untempted by any sin.

Sixth, he teaches him how to fast, genuflect, and be diligent. For this is how every sin is chased from mankind. As the Lord says, "This kind of evil never comes out of a man except by prayer and fasting."35 And again he says, "Pray that you be not led into temptation."36

Seventh, he shall teach temperance in food and drink and clothing, for he should not be gluttonous or drunken or foppish. For he says, "an abundance of wine and grain were the cause of the destruction of

32 The credal text concludes with the following admonition: "This is the Orthodox confession of our faith, which every Christian ought always keep in his heart and have it on his tongue. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation, says the Apostle. This is the foundation upon which good works ought to be build; for these are the steps of faith through which we go up to heaven unto God, pace by pace, through mind and faith. And after death, through spirit and good works. But after resurrection, through body and soul."

33 Hebrews 13:7
34 Isaiah 43:26
35 Matthew 17:21
36 Mark 14:41
your sister Sodom.”37 And Moses says, “He became fat, he became thick and became wide, and he left the Lord God his Creator. And after that, he forsook God his savior.”38 Therefore, the holy Fathers say that the religious man’s food should be bread and water, and of those little. And about wine and meat what shall I say, but that they are not all worthy.

Eighth, he teaches him silence of tongue and solitude, for he should not be talkative and a gadabout. For the prophet Jeremiah says, “He sits alone silently in his home, for by himself he has taken on the yoke of the Lord.”39 And the apostle James says, “If a religious man among you does not bridle his tongue, his religion is vain.”40 And for those who gadabout, the saints say that a plant continually moved does not take root but dries up and is good only for firewood.

Ninth, he shall teach him to be temperate and patient in all virtues: in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, in toil, in distress, in sorrow, in vigilance, and in the struggle against demons. For if anyone lacks temperance, Satan plucks him from every good work and thrusts him into evil. For Paul says, “Therefore, if you stand upright, take heed lest you fall.”41 And Sirach says, “If you come forward to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for all sorts of temptation.”42 And if through temperance he is ready, he will not be disrupted according to the words of the prophet.

Tenth, he shall teach him the four virtues, according to the parts of the soul, that is, prudence, courage, wisdom, and justice. And he shall extract from his soul the six opposites of the same which by their sixfold action destroy the souls of man; namely: cunning, ignorance, temerity, cowardice, extravagance, licentiousness, and relentless greed. For these six are the cause of all evil, and if a person is able to rid himself of these, no evil thing will happen to him. Hence, the instructor ought to teach all these to the pupil by the time of ordination.

And when he becomes an adult, reaching the age of Christ’s maturity, the age of thirty, the time for his ordination approaches, according to the election of God.

Then his father confessor through various means and counsel examines the preparedness of his soul. First, whether or not what he has learned since his childhood has been confirmed according to the willingness of his heart. For if it is not in conformity with the

37 Ezekiel 16:49
38 Deuteronomy 32:15
39 Lamentations 3:28
40 James 1:26
41 1 Corinthians 10:12
42 Sirach 2:1
intention of what he learned from his instructor, he shall not be invited to the vocation, according to the saying, "he who does not want a blessing, shall remain far from it." 43

Second, he sees whether he practices the same, or whether it is only by words he has learned and not by deeds; for the apostle says, "One is justified not by listening to the laws, but by practicing them." And the Lord says, "Whoever says, and does not do, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven, and whoever does it and teaches it shall be called great." 44 For whoever is void of good deeds is deprived of God's grace and is unrewarded on the day of crowning.

Third, he sees (even though he might be perfect in deeds) whether he did what is good under pressure from his instructor or with willingness of heart. For if he did it under pressure, when the pressure is increased, he will leave the work and take up another job and will put the [priestly] rank in disrepute. And he who does what is good upon compulsion and not willingly, shall not receive a reward of God.

Fourth, he shall ask whether or not his character is capable of enduring this holy life. For if he is not capable, even though he is willing, his disposition would stumble and err. Therefore, let him not approach this rank. Hence, he shall ask if he has the desire for holiness according to his natural will, so that he can approach this rank. And if he loves holiness by the force of his will, let him not approach this rank, in case the force of his natural inclination overcome him and he fall and be numbered among the ranks of the fallen. As our Lord says, "He is able to stand with ten thousand against him who attacks with twenty thousand; otherwise he would send the messengers to him so that he might remain in peace." As our Lord speaks of the love of holiness, "Not everybody is capable of it, but [only] those to whom it is given." 45

Fifth, he asks, though he be a lover of holiness in will and nature, whether he desires with willing heart to take upon himself the yoke of priesthood, as is necessary for those who are called to come to this rank. And if he should choose not to enter under this heavy yoke he should not be constrained, for as Paul says, "Let each one decide according to his own mind." 46

Sixth, he shall ask whether he has any mortal or venial sins, or any habits which he cannot give up. Perhaps he has become inured over a long period of time to the same errors and cannot quit them, according to the verse, "a long-standing practice will become second nature." Let that sort of person not approach the rank of priesthood.

43 Psalm 109:14
44 Matthew 5:19
45 Matthew 19:11
46 Romans 14:15
Seventh, he shall ask whether he has remained free of all corruption from birth to that day, whether he might have erred and now suffers remorse and has taken refuge in confession that by this he might be worthy of priesthood. Such a person should know that although confession remits sins, still he cannot become a priest, as is well known from the prodigal son, who said, "Father, I have sinned before you and heaven." And although the father took pity on him and forgave his sins, nevertheless he did not give him authority to offer the divine sacrifice. But he said to others, you slay the fatted ox for him, i.e., the sacrifice of Christ. Since if he has erred, he is not worthy of priesthood. Let him not be ordained, for he is not worthy of assuming the authority of the priesthood. In the same way if he errs after ordination, he shall no longer have the authority to celebrate the seven sacraments of the church, but if he should repent, let him pray with the people. But if he should carry out the priestly functions insolently, although unworthy, he will bring the wrath of God upon the people, and he will be condemned with the God-killers who were burned by such fire, as St. Nersês says, "For if Nabath and Abiud were burned by such fire, now in the time of the true priesthood how much worse should the eternal inextinguishable fire be which the unworthy priests will bear in the next life."\(^{47}\)

Eighth, the father confessor shall instruct him to confess all his wrong-doing on the same day and not to leave it until the next. For the Lord says, "Let tomorrow take care of itself, the evils of this day are more than enough."\(^{48}\) Further, he shall instruct him not to enter the church or pray without confessing, for the priest is an intercessor for the people to God, and when he himself is in need of an intercessor, he cannot be an intercessor for others. Therefore, it is necessary that he himself first become worthy to pray to God without intercession before interceding with God for the people. For as long as he has sins, his prayers are unacceptable. As the prophet David says, "If I see sin in my heart, can the Lord hear me?"\(^{49}\) Therefore, the priest must approach all the sacraments of the holy church with confession, that he might say, "I stood in prayer before you, Lord, at the acceptable time."

Ninth, the father confessor should counsel him to be humble, obedient, calm, patient, long-suffering, God-fearing, and conscientious to receive God's grace. As God says, "Where shall I rest, if not among the meek and humble and among those who tremble at my words?"\(^{50}\) But any who are proud and quick to anger, contentious and contrary,
dissolute, arrogant, and unscrupulous, are devils, not priests. For it says, "The Lord scorns scorners and gives grace to the humble."  

Tenth, the father confessor should advise him against wantonly cursing people without warrant, so that the curse should not turn back on him. As it is written, "If a son of peace be there, your greeting of peace shall rest there; if not, it shall turn back to you."  

So too with curses. Rather, he is bound to bless those who curse him, to love his enemy, to do good to those who are hateful, to pray for those who persecute him, for this is the perfection of goodness. Thus, says the Lord, "Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."  

All this must the father confessor teach someone who wants to become a priest. To Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory unto the ages. Amen.

51 Proverbs 3:34  
52 Luke 6:10  
53 Matthew 5:48
BOOK REVIEWS


Reviewed by Arten Ashjian

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, since 1990 the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, has devoted many years during the 1980's to studying at St. John's University, Minnesota, the Oriental Institute, Oxford, England, and the Gregorian University, Rome, Italy. He aimed at specializing in Armenian liturgical studies. Prior to returning to New York in 1988 to serve as the Vicar General of the Diocese, Father Barsamian completed the course requirements for the doctoral degree in Rome under the tutelage of Professor Robert Taft, Jr., noted specialist in the Eastern Liturgies.

Abp. Barsamian's booklet on the origins and the present form of the calendar of the Armenian Church is a valuable reference tool for scholars, seminarians, and specialists whose area of interest is the liturgical calendar of the Armenian Church. With his knowledge of modern and classical Armenian, as well as English, French, German, and Greek, the author has utilized works by approximately forty writers to prepare this presentation.

The bulk of the volume (pages 15-87) is devoted to the listing of Holy Scripture readings for a series of liturgical days given in parallel columns for the:

1. Textus receptus, the version of the present-day Typicon of the Armenian Church, revised and published by order of Catholicos Simeon of Erevan (1763-1780).
2. The Armenian Codex of Jerusalem, a manuscript lectionary dating from the Middle Ages which reflects the liturgical practice of the Church in Jerusalem in the fifth century.

This listing is given under the following divisions:

1. Fixed-date feasts
2. The great period of Pascha in two sections:
   a. 10 weeks before Easter
   b. 14 weeks after Easter
3. The Period of Transfiguration
4. The Great Period of extra-Pascha in three sections:
   a. The Period of Assumption
   b. The Period of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
   c. The Period of Advent
5. The Feasts of the Major Saints, celebration in the final days of December on weekdays other than Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday.

The column under Textus receptus has no gaps. At certain points it contains rubrics related to the variability of certain liturgical periods. For example:

When the Period of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross consists of nine weeks, All Saints Day is celebrated on Saturday of the Seventh week of this period. The Feast of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated on Thursday of this same week, and the saints of Thursday are transferred to Tuesday. (p. 79)

The parallel column giving the list of readings contained in the Jerusalem Manuscript No. 121 has many gaps. But it has an interesting feature, it indicates the places in the Holy City of Jerusalem where the specific feasts must be celebrated. Thus, the faithful are directed to assemble at the Anastasis, on Eleona, at Golgotha, on the Holy Sion, in Lazarium, where the story of the raising of Lazarus is read, in the Martyrium of Stephen. Outside of Jerusalem, the commemoration of the Prophet Jeremiah should be held at Anatoth, that of the Apostle Thomas at Bethpage, the Commemoration of the Ark of the Covenant should be at Kiriat-Jearim, and on January 5 on the Eve of Epiphany, the Assembly should be at the Place of Shepherds. Armenian Pilgrims in the Fifth Century knew all these places venerated also by other Christians. In addition, they abided—beginning on the sixth day before after Easter—by the instructions about certain assemblies, and visitations designated for specific hours. For example, following the vigil preceding Good Friday, certain episodes of the Passion of Jesus leading to his crucifixion are read at spots such as the Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, and the "Court of the High Priest" at the place of Peter’s Repentance.

Two errors in the booklet should be corrected when a revised edition is published. The first, in the last paragraph on page 5, pertains to the latest possible date of Easter instead of the earliest. In this context, March 22 should be changed to April 25. The second is a confusion between “Yisnak” (p. 6 and 7) and “Yinownk” (p. 35). Both words mean in Armenian fifty days. However, the fifty-day period beginning on Easter is referred to as “Yinownk”, whereas “Yisnak” is limited to designating the Advent period which begins on the Sunday nearest to November 18.

Better proofreading would have detected a few typographical errors. Still, this booklet is an informative and useful sourcebook for anyone who has an interest in the origin and formation of the liturgical calendar of the Armenian Church.

Reviewed by Abraham Terian

Unlike many other collected essays, this book maintains a thematic content which, unfortunately, is not indicated in the cumbersome title—or even in a subtitle. The following would have been a more suitable designation for its contents: *Studies in the Theology of St. Grigor Tat'ewac'i and Other Essays*, since more than half of the book deals with the thought of St. Grigor Tat'ewac'i, a prolific theologian of the fourteenth century—his understanding of the image of God in man, his sacramental doctrine, and his angelology (pp. 19-146). Three other essays complete Part I of the book, entitled “Church Doctrine and Teaching.” They deal with the ecclesiology of St. Irenaeus, the ecumenical councils in the history of the Armenian Church, and, farther afield, a historical and theological assessment of cremation (pp. 147-193). Part II of the book, entitled “Historical Studies,” has three essays that pertain to Hellenistic subjects: the first two deal with the aftermath of the conquests of Alexander the Great, first that of the Near East in general and then that of Armenia in particular; and the third with the Taurobolium, the sacramental sacrifice of a bull in certain mystery cults of the Greco-Roman world (pp. 197-226). This part concludes with another, farther-afield essay on the Millet system, the Ottoman jurisprudential empowerment of minorities within the Empire (pp. 227-251). In addition to generous notes with ample references to primary sources, each essay has its separate bibliography.

Reviewers of this book may become handicapped by the fact that it begins with a laudatory “Foreword” by Vigen Guroian that functions as both a preview and a review of the collected essays (pp. 9-11). Of course, this is for the benefit of the readers. Guroian’s praise of the author’s “intellectual integrity” and his ecclesiastical and theological commitment is well deserved. Modest about his own contribution, the author has the following disclaimer in the “Preface”: “I don’t think I am vain enough to believe that I am presenting something new to the academic world, or a definitive word on the subjects treated; God forbid such an ambition!” (p. 14). However, with this publication Archbishop Ashjian makes some important contributions to scholarship, not only in his bringing to scholarly attention the hitherto little-studied works of Tat’ewac’i but also in his comprehensive treatment of an earlier, entangled period in the history of the Armenian Church. So also is his treatment of the mostly obscured Hellenization of Armenia. Moreover, his two essays at the end of the respective parts (“Cremation: A Historical and Theological Perspective” and “The Millet System”)
emanate from pastoral concerns and may be viewed as excellent examples of applied theology, having to do with the life of the church in the Armenian diaspora. Even though the reader is reminded of the fact that these essays collectively belong to the time of the author’s graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, there is a degree of scholarly quality in them that is rarely seen even in post-doctoral research.

The three initial studies on Tat’ewac’i are particularly fascinating for someone interested in medieval theology. In the first we find a continuity of the Hellenistic Jewish (Philonic) understanding of the image of God in man as the imprint of His Logos in the human nous and its equation with the Divine Spirit breathed upon the earth-born man (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7). The early Christological adaptation of this interpretation by the Fathers is here given a further Trinitarian interpretation (though not necessarily original with Tat’ewac’i). The second study with its focus on Baptism, Confirmation and Communion, provides a window into the understanding of the catechumenate in the fourteenth-century Armenian Church. And so also with the third study, which provides an understanding of the extent of the influence of the “Celestial Hierarchy” of (Pseudo) Dionysius the Areopagite, which was translated into Armenian early in the eighth century by Step’anos Siwnec’i and Dawit Hiwpatos, in Constantinople. Tat’ewac’i manifests recognizable milestones in the history of the interpretation of the above mentioned Genesis passages, the catechumenate, and the angelic hierarchy, all of which are discussed rather completely by the author—especially their place within the thought of Tat’ewac’i.

The preceding highlights do not reduce the significance of the other essays, which are worth reading for their insightful observations. Throughout, the author’s theological concerns guide the treatment of his topics in an even and quite cautious fashion, as he moves from the medieval to the classical and also to the near-contemporary. The book reflects not only admirable scholarship permeated by incisive theological insights but also pastoral concerns laden with keen historical awareness.

It is hoped that the tidings of this book will bring in a stronger wave of interest in the theology of the Armenian Church, both past and present.

Reviewed by Robert H. Hewsen

This handsome book appears at a most opportune moment, its publication coinciding, as it does, with the election of the first Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians of the Armenian Church in forty years.

The purpose of this book, as stated by the author, is not to iterate a reign by reign account of each election, but to "provide the reader with an understanding of historical developments that may serve as a background to the present-day tradition and process" whereby the new Catholicos would be elected in 1995. Considering that Vazken I, elected in 1955, was the 130th primate of the Armenian Church, it is obvious that it would be impossible for the author to detail the election of each Catholicos in less than 200 pages even if the information on these elections were available. As it happens, in most cases the details of the various catholicosal elections are at best murky and as a rule quite unknown. Thus, the author is at pains not so much to trace the history of these elections but rather to identify the procedures used in each of them and to focus on those that either demonstrated the following of these procedures or those that introduced new procedures departing from the previous norm.

The book begins with an overview of our evidence for the episcopate in Armenia through the fourth century and then proceeds to a survey of the system of elections in later years (the fifth, sixth, seventh centuries, the Arab period, the Bagratid era, the period of Byzantine domination, the Cilician period and those held after the fall of the Cilician kingdom in 1375. After a survey of the events surrounding the transfer of the Catholicosal seat to Etchmiadzin in 1441, the book continues with chapters on the periods 1443-1629, 1629-1843, 1843-1911, and on that since 1932. The book is equipped with seven appendices:

1. The Classical Armenian text of the *Položenie*, i.e., the regulations defining the relationship between the Russian government and the Armenian Church issued in 1836,
2. the same in modern Armenian,
3. the original text of the *Oath of Office* administered to lay delegates,
4. the original Armenian text of the *Special Bylaws* confirmed in 1925,
5. the original Armenian text of the Special Bylaws as revised, adopted, and confirmed in 1945,
6. a list of the Supreme Catholicoi according to Patriarch Ormanian (which could do with some re-examination), and finally,
7. a list of the thirty-five dioceses under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See, in which we may note the addition of the new diocese of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay (replacing Latin America), Paris, Marseilles and Lyon (replacing France), Australia/New Zealand, Germany, Switzerland, Ethiopia, and Sudan, together with a Spiritual Ministry for Sweden and an Office of the Pontifical Legate of Central Europe with its seat in Vienna, i.e., a total increase of eighteen sees from the list of seventeen in the revised update of Ormanian’s book (1954), and seven more than the twenty-eight cited by Ormanian in his original version (1910).

Serious reflection and meticulous scholarship characterize this work as they do everything written by Fr. Maksoudian. The history of the Armenian Church, particularly in regard to the rivalries for the catholicosal throne, is not always a particularly edifying one; the Church at times abdicating its responsibilities to the Armenian people in some of their darkest days, and occasionally being a part of the darkness rather than a lamp within it. To Fr. Maksoudian’s credit as a scholar, he does not flinch from reporting the rather unsavory examples of bickering, intrigue, machination, bribery, simony, and general corruption that characterized the elections at various times in its history after the fall of the Cilician kingdom in 1375 (e.g., p. 74). Several catholicoi or candidates for the throne were actually murdered by their rivals. On the other hand, the many edifying examples adduced of leadership under extremely difficult circumstances adds considerable weight to the claim of the Armenian Church to have been the major guarantor of national survival since the fourteenth century. Although this is not a history of the catholicoi but only of their elections, among the more wise and dedicated primates whose personalities and virtues emerge from Fr. Maksoudian’s account, both before and after 1735, we may note Barsel of Ani (1105-1113), St. Moses III (1629-1633), and Abraham of Crete (1734-1737).

Of particular interest is the author’s account of the election of 591, when the Byzantines forced the Armenian bishops in their part of Armenia to elect a Chalcedonian Catholicos (i.e., a de facto Roman Catholic, there was as yet no break between the Greek and Latin Churches), and that of 1441, at which time the seat of the supreme catholicosate was transferred from Sis in Cilicia to Vartanapat in Armenia proper, where it has remained ever since. The latter was a
particularly important election and we are fortunate in having a detailed eye-witness description of the circumstances surrounding it in the overly-neglected history by Thomas of Mecop', arguably the last important Armenian historian before the modern era. Rather too much emphasis, I think, has been placed on the idea of the catholicosate having been returned to its "traditional" seat at this time; the catholicos having, in fact, wandered from place to place so often and for so long than one can make a better case that he had no traditional seat at all. The catholicosal seat, in practice, had always been wherever the catholicos chose to sit. Wisely, though Fr. Maksoudian refers to Ejmiacin as the "original home," he does not belabor this. As already noted, the circumstances surrounding several of these elections are very unclear and we are not always certain whether or not a particular prelate actually assumed the catholicosal throne or, if he did, whether or not he was able to exercise his authority. Fr. Maksoudian explores these cases and offers his own resolution to some of the problems involved. On page 25, there is a most interesting discussion of the original meaning of the term wank', which we learn did not always mean "monastery" as it does today. On page 76 ff., there is a valuable examination of the institution of the coadjutor, whereby the reigning catholicos took on a sort of assistant or deputy catholicos who was to automatically succeed him. David IV had no less than three coadjutors at one time! Naturally, Fr. Maksoudian dwells at great length on the terms of the polozheniya, which governed the elections of the catholicoi under czarist rule and these chapters (12 and 13) are among the most interesting parts of the book. Very interesting, too, are the several lists of bishops participating in various councils of the Armenian Church, which while they do not always represent a complete list of the existing sees of the day, at least enable us to perceive the administrative structure of the Armenian Church over the centuries and to observe how it changed.

In a more critical vein, I would question the author's use of the term "catholicos" for the head of the Armenian Church prior to the fifth century (pp. 4 and 7) rather than "chief bishop" (as found correctly on pp. 2-3 and elsewhere on 7) and I believe a more detailed discussion of the origin of the title (p. 23) would have been useful. I would not have quoted Çamècan on conditions surrounding the continuation of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in 1441, but would have tried to track down the original source. Berberian, and Bardakjian following him, have demonstrated that Çamècan is not as reliable as one might think (as indeed noted by Fr. Maksoudian, p. 67). Also, it is to be regretted that the list of dioceses in Appendix 7 does not include those under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, and those under the Catholicos of Cilicia, an expansion of the data that would have provided us with a complete picture of the administrative structure of the Armenian Church at the time of publication. Nor does
it give the data on the number of churches, priests, faithful, etc., in each diocese such as is found in Ormanian’s work and its 1954 revision. Such a thorough survey and complete update of Ormanian’s data would have been most useful after a period of forty years. While the descriptions of the elections under czarist rule are particularly interesting, the accounts of those in the Soviet period, though factual, are perhaps less detailed than one might wish. Charges of irregularities in the election of 1955 are not dealt with and Soviet influence in the elections tends to be played down. Finally, although the book was specifically written to provide a background to the election of 1995, there is a sense of letdown in not being offered some analysis of this, the most significant catholicosal election in a century and the first in 200 years that did not involve pressure of some kind from a major power, Turkish, Persian, or Russian. Having advanced these reservations, however, there is no question that, given his intention in writing this book and the limited space within which he has had to work, Fr. Maksoudian has given us a most useful and valuable study of a subject of perennial importance to the Armenian people, both cleric and lay. The outline of the story has been drawn, the main issues defined, and the most important questions raised. What is needed now is a detailed history of the Armenian Church written according to the canons of modern Western scholarship, a work to replace the tendentious, overly brief, and long out-of-date study by Ormanian. There is no question that Fr. Krikor Maksoudian, holder of a doctoral degree in history from Columbia University, and one of the foremost examples of the recent and happy revival of the Armenian tradition of the scholar-cleric, is the historian to whom this task would best be entrusted.
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HÜBSCHMANN-MEILLET-BENVENISTE SYSTEM

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