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COMSt

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Towards a Structural Analysis of Armenian Colophons

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After presenting in schematic format the structural elements that are typical of an Armenian colophon, this article seeks to perform a simple operation: verify their actual presence in three colophons that date to 1266, 1269, and 1432. These colophons were chosen as samples not only because they differ from one another in terms of date, place, context, and personality of the scribe, but also because they represent three different examples of the variegated literary genre of Armenian colophons (the colophon of the copyist-scholar, the colophon focussing on the type of book, and the colophon ‘with external influences’). The positive outcome of this study on the one hand confirms the uniformity that fundamentally unites the Armenian subscriptions, and on the other hand it highlights the adaptability of the scheme to the variability of the contents transmitted by these compositions.

In recent years the study of Armenian colophons has witnessed a resurgence of interest.¹ Researchers have focussed their attention especially on the essential elements of these texts, which are now viewed as a literary genre,² and on the need for a ‘holistic’ approach to them that neither overlooks any part of their texts—so as to privilege only the historical data that they transmit—nor fails to take into account the type of manuscript to which they are attached (i.e. whether one is dealing with a Gospel, a Hymnal, a Homiliary, etc.). Studies have also done much to highlight the dynamic between *imitatio* and *variatio* that every Armenian colophon attests: on the one hand, a colophon is ‘typical’ because it exhibits clear characteristics common to the genre; on the other hand, each colophon is ‘exceptional’ in that it shows signs of innovation and originality even though situated within a genre. We could say that, except for rare cases (among which there figure the short and, in terms of content, repetitive colophons belonging to the late phenomenon of a ‘serial’ production of manuscripts meant for sale³), every Armenian colophon is a unique case,

- 1 Citing only recent works, where a more complete bibliography can be found, we refer readers to: Sirinian 2014; Sirinian et al. 2016; Van Elverdinghe 2018; Harut’yunyan 2019; Van Elverdinghe 2021; Van Elverdinghe forthcoming (I am grateful to the author for allowing me to see this work that assembles the results of his doctoral thesis defended in 2017 at l’Université catholique de Louvain).
- 2 Sanjian insists on the concept of colophons as a literary genre (Sanjian 1969, 1–41); the same is done by Harutyunyan 2019, 85, 93; Van Elverdinghe 2021, 141; Van Elverdinghe forthcoming.
- 3 This is the case with, for example, the colophons of the copyist Mik’ayēl T’o-xat’ec’i, one of the most productive Armenian scribes ever, who was active at Con-

because it offers an intimate vision of the place, time, and circumstances of its production as well as obviously the personality and aims of the person who wrote it.

The more obvious specific elements of Armenian colophons include the use of a formulaic language⁴ and the arrangement of content according to pre-established themes, an aspect that we wish to consider in greater depth.

Typical scheme of an Armenian colophon

The most ancient dated Armenian colophon, which belongs to the so-called ‘Lazarean Gospel’ of 887 CE, already shows a selection of notices arranged according to a basic structure that will enjoy success in subsequent years, enriching and extending itself in a process that we might term ‘open codification’.⁵ The *incipit*, for instance, which is marked by the word *P’ark’* (‘Glorry’) that starts the Trinitarian doxology was destined to spread and become more complex in following centuries, with the result that it became the typical opening of an Armenian colophon.⁶ Even the final part containing the request for prayers from the reader—the true culmination of the colophon—will remain a stable element.⁷ It is between these two parts that we find information

stantinople in the years 1606–1658; regarding this scribe, see Harutyunyan 2016a, 14–15; Harutyunyan 2016b, 39–44 and Harutyunyan 2019, 211.

- 4 Special care for the analysis of the formulae of the colophons is shown by the work of Emmanuel Van Elverdinghe (Van Elverdinghe 2018 and Van Elverdinghe forthcoming). Other publications by this scholar on this topic are awaited.
- 5 For the famous Gospel (MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, 6200), see Stone et al. 2002, 122–125 (with bibliography). The colophon is analysed in Mat’evosyan 1988, xvii–xviii, who lists its constituent parts in the following manner: 1) opening doxology; 2) the scribe’s request for prayers; 3) type of book; 4) date; 5) mention of the religious and political authorities; 6) name of the scribe and his relatives; 7) request for the pardon of sins. This scholar adds to these seven elements another two as follows: ‘If we consider that the place is not mentioned separately but can be deduced from the geographical appellation of the scribe and his father (Vanandac’i [= ‘of Vanand’]) and that the name of the patron is absent because the scribe himself was the patron, we have a complete example of an ancient model for the Armenian colophon’. The text of the colophon—which has reached us in a mutilated state, lacking four lines after the name of the scribe and his relatives—was published *ibid.* p. 40, no. 49; previously it had been published in the collection of Yovsēp’ean 1951, 83–86 no. 32; see also Harutyunyan 2019, 85–86. As is well known, the colophon of oldest dated Armenian Gospel, the ‘Gospel of the Queen Mlk’ē’, which dates to 862 (MS Venezia, Biblioteca dei PP. Mechitaristi, 1144/86), is lacking as it was erased by a subsequent owner of the codex so as to add his own owner’s note (Gianascian 1989, 46–55).
- 6 Mat’evosyan 1984, 10.
- 7 Sirinian 2017.

that is more clearly historical in nature and anchors the copy of the manuscript in a well defined context.

As of the thirteenth century onward, an epoch that marks the beginning of the flourishing of this genre thanks as well to the increased manuscript production due to the cultural and artistic flourishing of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, the structure of a colophon can be schematized in the following manner:

- Trinitarian doxology;
- date;
- place;
- religious authority;
- political authority;
- type of book;
- name of the scribe;
- name of the patron;
- historical *excursus*;
- request that the reader pray for the patron, the patron's relatives and/or fellow religious;
- request that the reader pray for the scribe, the scribe's relatives and/or fellow religious;
- assurance that God will in turn reward the reader ('who remembers will be remembered').

The order of these elements can vary, just as one or more of them can be omitted or added (e.g. the concluding curse upon anyone who removes the manuscript from the place for which it was intended; notices regarding its price; or recommendations regarding its preservation), which is why the descriptions in the modern literature are also variable.⁸ Moreover, some of these parts may be articulated in greater detail. For instance, the place might be indicated according to a sequence *a maiori ad minus* that moves from province to city/village to monastery to church. However, the thematic nuclei transmitted by an Armenian colophon are fundamentally as listed above.⁹

Confirming this process of codification, in the Armenian world, is the intriguing evidence of a colophon model that was meant for apprentice scribes, which has been transmitted in a manuscript copied at Jerusalem in 1476. This is a miscellany codex Yerevan, Matenadaran, 2335, which on f. 181v shows an example of a colophon in which, after the initial Trinitarian doxology, in place

8 Sanjian 1969, 7–9; Sirinian 2014, 75–76; Harutyunyan 2019, 84–197.

9 Most extraordinary, from this point of view, is the geographical sequence that introduces the place of the copying in colophon no. 3 (v. infra): Europe, Italy, Rome, the Armenian hospice near St Peter's.

of all the specific information (date, toponym, name of the scribe, name of the patron, etc.) there appear the generic expressions *ays anun* ‘such a name’, *ays č‘ap* ‘such a date’, which the scribe was to replace on each occasion with the concrete information relating to the specific circumstances of the copy.¹⁰ For instance, in the part in which the name of the place was supposed to appear, the text reads ‘this book was completed [...] in the province having *such a name*, at the time of the patriarch having *such a name*, in the monastery that has *such a name*’ and, a bit further on, ‘by the hand of the sinful and inexpert scribe having *such a name*’ and so forth.¹¹

There is frequent recourse to formulaic expressions in this model, and we limit ourselves citing only a couple examples. If the scribe is defined as ‘sinful and inexpert’, according to the most common epithets expressing humility, for the patron are reserved praises on the order of ‘active and courageous in virtuous works’, ‘nourished by the monastery’, and even ‘raised and educated by (*sc.* the teacher having) *such a name*’. This last is termed ‘a lamp lit within the church’ (Mt 5,15), ‘sweet-smelling incense welcome to God’ (Ex 30,7; Ps 65,15; 140,2), ‘a spiritual swallow dwelling in the middle of the temple’.¹² These are epithets drawn from the Bible or exegetical literature, and

- 10 The text of the model was published in Mat‘evosyan 1988, xviii, note 64, but the credit for having brought it to researchers’ attention goes to Harutyunyan 2016c, 49–50, 68 (pl. 1) and 2019, 201–204 (pl. 27). An English translation is to be found in Sanjian 1969, 8–9, which, however, limits itself to citing the manuscript in a note and omits to specify the nature of the document.
- 11 This colophon model presents the following structural elements in this sequence: 1) opening doxology; 2) type of manuscript (*manrusumn*, or anthology of chants), which is mentioned only here and without further reference in the text; 3) date; 4) name of the region; 5) name of the religious authority; 6) name of the monastery; 7) name of the church at which the codex was written; 8) name of the head of the monastery; 9) name of the scribe; 10) name of the patron; 11) name of his teacher; 12) closing request for prayers for the patron and the scribe.
- 12 The expression *cicarn banawor* (‘spiritual swallow’), which is not to be found in the Bible, is instead present in the work of the exegete and homilist Sargis Šnorhali Vardapet, who lived in the twelfth century. In fact, we find it used in his commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles (in particular, in the first exhortation, or *yordorak*, on 1 Jn) addressed to the apostles, of whom it is said that *banawor cicrunk‘ en‘ or zhogeworn mez awetaranec‘in zgarun* ‘they are spiritual swallows who have announced to us the immaterial springtime’, see Narinean 1828, 498. For this author, see Thomson 1995, 192–193. The image may derive from the Greek patristic tradition: see αἱ λογικαὶ χελιδόνες, αἱ τῶν ψυχῶν εὐαγγελιζόμεναι λογικὸν ἔαρ in the Ps.-Chrysostom *In decem virgines* (CPG 4580; PG 59, 527–532: 529), which is translated as *banawor cicrunk‘n ork‘ zhogwoc‘n awetaranen zgarun* in the ancient Armenian version published by the Mekhitarist Fathers in 1862 (*Yovhannu Oskeberani Meknut‘iwn T‘it‘oc‘n Pawlosi*, II, 744–750: 747). For the correspondence

they underscore the honour attributed to the *vardapet* (learned monks) who played a key role in the long chain of transmission of knowledge from teacher to students that was typical of medieval Armenian monasteries¹³. Of especial interest is the part that refers to the anonymous abbot of the monastery: after the customary praises proposed by the model ('holy in the conduct of his life, mild of character, sweet in speaking, generous of heart, wise as his namesake¹⁴, as hospitable as Abraham [Gn 18,1–15]'), the apprentice scribe read the invitation to add yet others according to desire (*orĉ'ap' or kamis' asay*, 'say as many as you wish')!

The colophon template transmitted by MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, 2335 is the only one of its kind to have reached us. Nonetheless, its mere existence has been sufficient to spur scholars in recent years to look for those colophons that display in long stretches of text affinities that are striking enough to lead one to posit a common source (represented either by a model that has not survived or by a colophon used as a point of reference by subsequent scribes). Conducted by comparing texts, this research is giving results that are extremely interesting, for it identifies not only the specific models of a precise *scriptorium* that were repeated by different copyists over the years,¹⁵ but also models that went beyond the borders of place where they were created and found favour also elsewhere.¹⁶ Thus a window is opened onto the dense network of relations created by the travels of scribes, manuscripts, and ideas between the numerous *scriptoria* that dotted the Armenian highlands in the Middle Ages, thereby adding new information to that already known from historical and philological study. Moreover, the investigation of models reinforces our understanding of the dynamics of the evolution of this literary genre in terms of that concept of 'open codification' that we mentioned above.

Adaptability of the scheme

We now wish to proceed to a simple check: using the texts of three colophons that have been chosen as a sample, we wish to verify the presence of those structural elements listed in the foregoing scheme. The sample texts were cho-

of the Armenian *banawor* with the Greek λογικός see NBHL, I, 435; for λογικός as 'spiritual', see Lampe, 1961, 805. I wish to thank Paolo Lucca for having discussed with me the possible origin of this image and for offering important advice on the matter.

13 For other praises of teachers to be found in colophons, see Sirinian-Uluhogian 2003, 4–9.

14 The model offered here, evidently, a parallel with the biblical figure whose name the *vardapet* had.

15 Harutyunyan 2019, 204–207.

16 Van Elverdinghe forthcoming.

sen because they differ from one another not only in terms of place, date, type of manuscript, and personality of scribe, but also because each of them represents a particular type within the vast Armenian production of colophons (as we shall soon try to illustrate). The samples consist of the following three subscriptions:

- 1) MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, 823, dated to 1266 CE, ff. 171v–172v: colophon of the copyist-scholar;
- 2) MS Rome, Pontificio Collegio Armeno, 62, dated to 1432 CE, ff. 174v–175v: colophon focussed on the type of book;
- 3) MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, 142, dated to 1269 CE, ff. 325r–327v: colophon ‘with external influences’.

For each of these, we offer the bibliography, a brief introduction, and a translation that is as literal as possible. The overall results of the comparison will follow. Since we shall focus our analysis on the formal level, we shall not go into the wealth of information of a historical and literary character that these colophons can offer, including the analysis of the many anthroponyms in which (as is well known) Armenian colophons abound.¹⁷ We shall limit ourselves to short, essential footnotes referring, for further investigation, to the bibliography cited.

17 For the variety of Armenian anthroponyms documented by the colophons and their lexical elements, which often derive from other languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, see the recent contribution of Harutyunyan 2016c.

1) Colophon of the copyist-scholar: MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, 823: Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus. Year: 1266; place: Eznkay; scribe: Yovhannēs Erznkac‘i Pluz. Colophon: ff. 171v–172v

BIBLIOGRAPHY: the text of this colophon was published in the collection Mat‘evosyan 1984, 339–340, no. 279; the Armenian text, with slight orthographic corrections and accompanied by an Italian translation, is also in Sirinian 1999, xi–xv (with further bibliography); with short initial cuts it has also been published in Egeanean 2007, cols 863–866.

The colophon belongs to a manuscript that was copied at Eznkay (modern Erzincan, a city to the north-east of present-day Turkey) in 1266 and contains the Armenian translation of the *Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus*.¹⁸ We have termed it the ‘colophon of a copyist-scholar’ because the scribe is Yovhannēs Erznkac‘i Pluz (c.1230–1293), who was a poet, theologian, and *vardapet* of considerable fame during the Armenian Middle Ages and for that reason invited to lecture in the most important cultural centres of his day, from Greater Armenia to Cilician Armenia (Sis, Drazark, Anavarza, and elsewhere).¹⁹ At the moment of the creation of the colophon, Yovhannēs was still a young deacon (l. 6) and he noted that this was his first work of copying (l. 21). From his teacher, who was also the patron of the book, Yovhannēs asks forgiveness for his mistakes and lack of skill in calligraphy as well as prayers for his former teachers, for the members of his family, for a fellow religious and this individual’s mother, and last of all for himself. It is to be observed that the name of the teacher-patron was erased, according to the practice (not infrequent in Armenian manuscripts) of cancelling the former owner’s name when the manuscript passed to a subsequent owner.

Glory to the most holy Trinity forever and in the centuries to come. Amen. Blessed is the Father, who has no beginning, the only begotten Son, and the truthful Holy Spirit, the indivisible and equal Trinity, which has enabled me—a scribe who is a sinner and unworthy—to complete (this copy) of the Theologian (= Gregory of Nazianzus). And (this book) was written by my hand, which belongs to the despicable and unworthy and guilty individual with the false name of Yovanēs, a bad deacon; and it was written in this city which is in the region of Ekeleac‘ and is named Eznkay, under the protection of the holy Saviour, in the year of the Armenians 715

18 To be precise, this manuscript contains the *Ar nawarkut‘iwn* (‘Ad navigationem’), which is one of the four collections into which the orations of Gregory of Nazianzus were divided in the Armenian manuscript tradition; see Lafontaine and Coulie 1983. The manuscript is especially important for establishing the critical edition of the Armenian text of *Orations* IV and V, which were aimed at Julian the Apostate; see Sirinian, 1999, vii–xxviii.

19 Thomson 1995, 221–222; Thomson 2007, 204–205; Mutafian 2012, 648–650.

(= 1266 CE), during the Catholicate of *tēr* (= lord) Kostandin²⁰ and in the archbishopric of *tēr* Sargis Marhasia the Great²¹, and under our *išxan* (= prince) crowned by Christ, the lord Yohanēs, the servant of the Lord; may he live for a long time to come. Amen.

Therefore, I, a most sinful and unworthy scribe, beg of you, o venerable priest and father <eras.>, remember in your pure and immaculate prayers my spiritual father, the teacher and *vardapet* (= doctor) *tēr* Yovannēs, who was killed by infidels armed with the sword. What bitter grief and inconsolable mourning! Remember, too, my first teacher father Yakob and my honoured father Širin and my deceased mother Sap‘ira, and my brothers Awētšah and Šahnšah, my spiritual brother and fellow disciple Sargis and his deceased mother, and ask the Lord for the remission of (their) sins. I also beg of you, father, to be indulgent with me if there is some mistake in this (book). Rather, forgive the coarse calligraphy of this which is my first book to date, for it is written ‘forgive and you will be forgiven’ (Lk 6,37; Mt 6,14-15; Mk 11,25). And yet again I beg of you, ask for pardon for me a sinner, since it is appropriate to God the benefactor, through the prayers of others, to grant the remission of the sins of others, and he who remembers us, may Christ remember him in his mercy and may he receive recompense from Him who is the Giver of good, which he gives to all in abundance and without contempt for anyone. To Christ God, benefactor and lover of humanity, who looks after (everyone) and holds no grudge, there belong glory, power, and honour now and forever and for eternity in the centuries to come. Amen. May the Lord God grant to the spiritual father, *vardapet*, and my teacher <eras.> to enjoy this (book) for many days. Amen²².

20 Katholikos Kostandin I Barjrberde‘i (1221–1267).

21 Father of the *išxan* Yovhannēs who is mentioned immediately afterwards, the archbishop Sargis and his son were prominent figures in Erzrnka in the second half of the thirteenth century, which was a period when (in spite of the Mongolian domination) the city enjoyed a distinct flourishing of the arts and the economy. Both men were murdered in 1276, in the wake of a revolt by the Turkish population; see Mutafian 2012, 647–648 (where this colophon is mentioned); K‘iwrtean 1953, 127–134. The archbishop is also mentioned in the Milione of Marco Polo (ch. XVI), who visited the city in 1272, at the beginning of his travels through Greater Armenia: ‘la più nobile città è Arzinga, e hae arcivescovo’ (‘the most noteworthy city is Arzinga, and has an archbishop’); see Ponchirolì 1974, 16.

22 At the colophon’s conclusion, on the lower margin of fol. 172v, there is a representation of Julian the Apostate who (now a cadavre) is dressed in a purple cloak, has a bearded face, and, with a sword by his side, lies prostrate on the ground. A colour reproduction of this miniature has been published in Mutafian 2012, II, pl. 173.

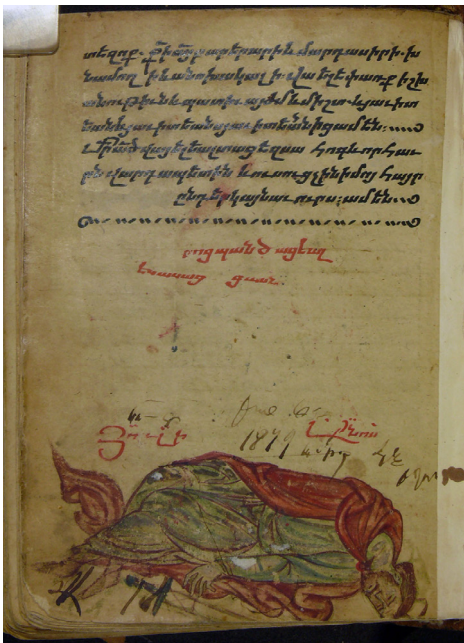
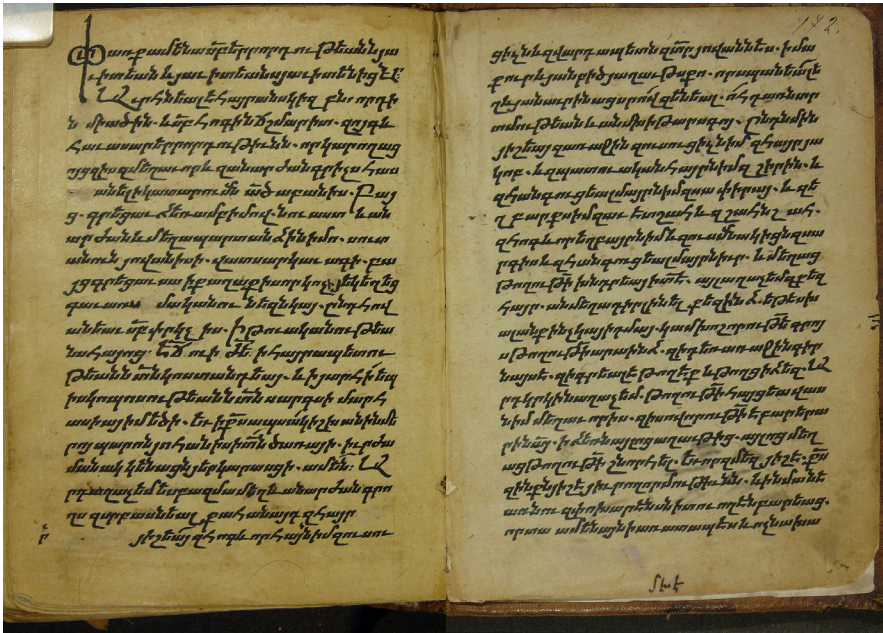


Fig. 1 (a-c). Ms Yerevan, Matenadaran, 823: colophon, ff. 171v-172v. © Matenadaran.

2) Colophon focussed on the type of book: MS Rome, Pontificio Collegio Armeno, 62: *Maštoc'* (Ritual). Year: 1432; place: Arčēš; scribe: Karapet; second scribe: Yovhannēs; binder: Hayrapet; painter: Minas. Colophon: ff. 174v–175v

BIBLIOGRAPHY: the manuscript containing this colophon is part of a large group of codices rediscovered at the Pontificio Collegio Armeno in Rome in 2000 and not yet catalogued; see Sirinian 2003, 81–83. The colophon, however, was already known thanks to an eighteenth-century transcription by the monk and *vardapet* Lewond P'irlalēmean (P'irlalēmean 1888, 100–101, no. 102), who had seen the manuscript in the monastery of Gomk', near Bałēš/Bitlis in 1881, before it disappeared;²³ subsequently the transcription of the colophon passed into the collection Xaç'ikyan 1955, 424–425, no. 455, which was the source of an extract translated into English in Sanjian 1969, 180–181, no. 4. Since neither edition offers an integral version of the colophon,²⁴ we have considered it worth presenting the complete text in an appendix to the present contribution.²⁵

This second colophon was written at Arčēš (modern Erciș, in present-day Turkey, in the vicinity of the northern shore of Lake Van) in 1432 CE by the scribe Karapet. Since it contains much information pertinent both to the manuscript—a *Maštoc'* or Ritual—and to the artists and artisans who worked to-

- 23 The religious left a note in his own hand in purple ink on the lower margin of the first page of the colophon (f. 174v). In this note he indicates the place and the year in which he saw this codex: in the monastery of Gomk', in the vicinity of Bałēš/Bitlis, in 1881.
- 24 In the introduction to the first volume of his collection of colophons of the fifteenth-century Xaç'ikyan notes—even citing the example of our colophon—that Pirlalēmean had to eliminate from his edition the references to Islamic oppression that were present in the texts; for this reason, in publishing them anew, Xaç'ikyan made use of the collation of the manuscript transcriptions of the *vardapet* preserved in MSS 6273 and 4515 of the Matenadaran (Xaç'ikyan 1955, LVIII–LIX). Notwithstanding the restoration of those passages dealing with the Islamic domination that come from MS 4515 (Xaç'ikyan 1955, 424–425, no. 455), the colophon published by Xaç'ikyan appears all the same to be lacunose in other parts, which is a clear sign that even the transcription of Pirlalēmean had omitted them. These concern the description of the *Maštoc'* that follows the mention of the book (v. infra, Appendix, ll. 8–11), of other individuals named by the patron and his request for prayers (v. infra, Appendix, ll. 14–29), and even the *explicit* (v. infra, Appendix, ll. 45–49). Xaç'ikyan himself, for his part, focussing on information of a historical nature, eliminated the beginning with its doxology and the initial formulae of humility, which are instead to be found in Pirlalēmean, 1888, 100–101, no. 102 (v. infra, Appendix, ll. 1–7).
- 25 I am very grateful to the Rector of the Pontificio Collegio Armeno of Rome, the Reverend Father Nareg Naamo, for having allowed me to consult the manuscript, to transcribe its colophon, and to publish its images.

gether in creating it, it may be reckoned an example of a ‘colophon focussed on the type of book’. The *Maštoc* ‘is defined as a book which ‘regulates the seven sacraments of the Church and contains set forth in itself the seven grades of the Church and also every spiritual and physical sanctification of our members, which, if you wish, you will find immediately described at the beginning of this book, in the list’ (ll. 8–11). The codex in effect is provided at its beginning with a list of chapters, which are in turn easily identified within the manuscript thanks to the presence of beautiful, vivid miniatures on the margins that serve to indicate textual divisions. In addition to these *marginalia*, there are three full-page miniatures executed by the same hand. Aside from the principal scribe (Karapet, ll. 12–13 and 44–45), reference is also made to the second scribe Yovhannēs, the binder Hayrapet, and the miniaturist Minas. As regards the last-named, a famous painter of the so-called ‘Vaspurakan school’, our manuscript represents his first work, which, before its rediscovery at the Pontificio Collegio Armeno at Rome, was thought to have been lost.²⁶

From a structural point of view, the colophon shows one oddity: even though it was physically written by the second scribe of the codex, Yovhannēs, as is noted by the colophon itself, it was composed in the name of the patron (‘I ... Mkrtič’ ... desired this book’, ll. 5–7). As a result, contrary to the normal practice according to which it is the scribe who showers himself with epithets of humility and praises the patron, we find here an inversion of roles: it is the patron who deprecates himself and praises the scribe.

Glory to the Father who is without beginning, and to the only begotten Son perpetually born of Him, and to the truthful Spirit that (from him) proceeds in eternity, who are united in nature and distinct in their persons, to whom let there be glory from the fiery beings and adoration from the earthly ones,²⁷ now and forever. Amen.

5 I, a sinner amongst the children of the Church, unworthy amongst the ranks of the *vardapet* (= doctors), lowest of the preachers, last amongst the generations of the Church, Mkrtič’, *vardapet* only in name, I desired this book inspired by God, which is called *Maštoc*’ (= Ritual). It regulates the seven sacraments of the Church and contains set forth in itself the seven grades of the Church and also every spiritual and
10 physical sanctification of our members, which, if you wish, you will find immediately described at the beginning of this book, in the list.²⁸

26 Vardanyan 1998–2000, 360–361.

27 For the definition of angels as ‘beings made of fire’ and men as ‘beings made of earth’, see Ps 103:4; Heb 1:7; and 1 Cor 15:47–49. The same adjectives *hrelēn* and *holelēn* in reference, respectively, to angels and men recur in para. 24 of the ancient Armenian catechism known as *Vardapetut’iwn Srboyn Grigori* (*The Teaching of Saint Gregory*), see MH II, 1426–1427 and Thomson 2001, 64–65 (§ 262).

28 As mentioned above, the codex does in fact present at the beginning the numbered list (*c’ank / c’ang* in the manuscript) of the rites that it contains (ff. 1r–2r).

Therefore, with care and zeal I have assigned to our dear spiritual and sanctity-loving brother, the priest Karapet, the task of writing this (book) in memory of myself and my spiritual parents, the religious Karapet and Yakob, as well as my physical parents, Örpēli and Dovlat', and my grandmother Baldat, and my maternal aunt Saġdat', and my sister Xat'un Melik', and my brother-in-law Yakobšin, and their children Simēovn and Nersēs, and the deceased Step'anos, Galust and Yovhannēs, and the son of my maternal aunt Karapet, and also of her who gave me paper, the faithful Sabah and our pious spiritual sister.

For this reason prostrate on the ground and with wretched pleas, I, who am earth in the grave and have arrived at the gate of the Judgement of God, beg and implore you, children of the Holy Church who enjoy the divine table, that when you turn to this (book) for studying or copying or a rapid glance, recite a *miserere* with all your heart and goodwill, with perfect faith, with resolute hope and absolute love and ask our merciful Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of the sins of all those who have been named above in this (colophon), and in the measure in which you will measure us, with that same measure will you be measured. And may He who is generous in bestowing good grant his indescribable mercy and eternal peace to all of us who hope and to you who remember. Amen. I also beg you to remember in the good Christ the blessed and upright rector and light of the universe *rabbuni* (= master) T'ovma, who has given the model (for copying) and shown us many good works.²⁹ And also our spiritual brethren, people instructed in letters: the religious Yovhannēs, who has written seven laws and the colophon (*yišatakaran*) of this book, and the religious Hayrapet who has bound this book, and also my spiritual children Minas *dpir* (= subdeacon), who has illustrated this book,³⁰ and Grigor *dpir*, who untiringly looks after us, and his brother Mkrtič' Mont'; may Christ God inscribe them in the book of life and in writing that cannot be erased. Amen.³¹

And therefore this (book) was written in the year of the Armenians 881 (= 1432), in this wicked and bitter time in which Christian nations are afflicted by various chastisements by hand of the infidels, and with the permission of God on account of the multitude of our sins; during the reign of Sk'andar ruin of the world and insane,³² and in the patriarchate of *tēr* Kostəndin,³³ and in the episcopate of *tēr* Yohanēs, in the region of K'ajberuni, in the city that is called Arčēš, under the protection of the Holy Mother of God and Saint Yakob, by hand of the priest Karapet, upright and wise secretary, whose memory be blessed. And with the prayers and the intercession of all the saints, may Christ God grant the remission (of sins) to all sinners who repented, especially to those named above in this (colophon). And to Him glory for ever and in the ages to come. Amen. So be it.

29 This individual is to be identified with the famous *vardapet* T'ovma Mecop'ec'i (c. 1376–1447); see P'irialēmean 1888, 101, n. 2. For this historian and hagiographer, who was the author of the *History of Tamerlane and his Successors*, see Thomson 1995, 205–206 and Thomson 2007, 202.

30 For the painter Minas, see above.

31 For these themes, see Sirinian 2017, 283–285.

32 This is the Iskandar who was the head of the Turkish dynasty of the *Ḳarā-Ḳoyunlu* for eighteen years until 1438, when he was murdered by his son; see Sümer 1978, 609–611.

33 *Katholikos* Kostandin VI Vahkac'i (1430–1439).

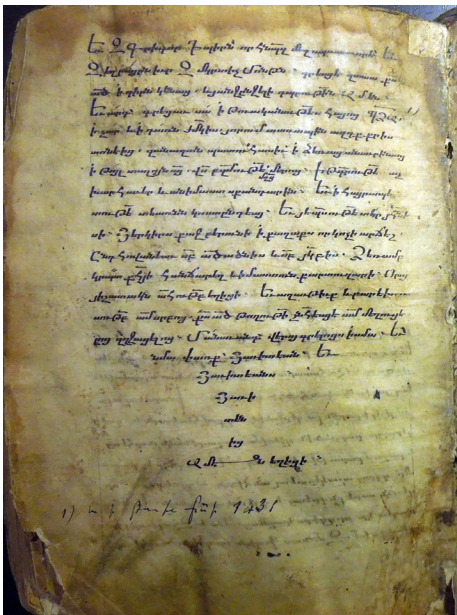
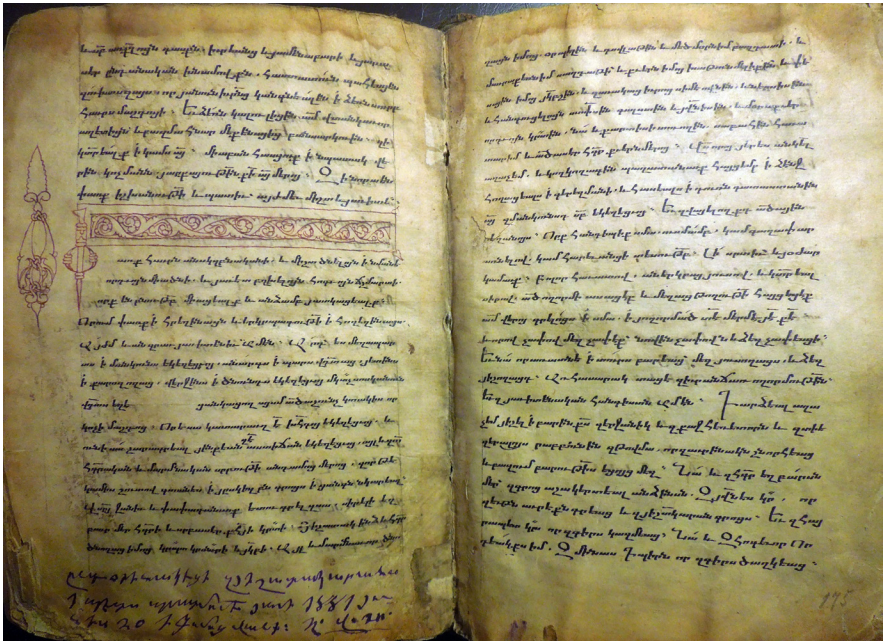


Fig. 2 (a–b). Ms Rome, Pontificio Collegio Armeno, 62: colophon, ff. 174v–175v. Courtesy of the Pontificio Collegio Armeno di Roma.

3) Colophon with ‘external influences’: MS Yerevan, Matendaran, 142: miscellany. Year: 1269; place: Rome; scribe: Margarē. Colophon: ff. 325r–327v

BIBLIOGRAPHY: the colophon has been published (with various cuts) in Eganyan et al. 1984, cols 587–590, as well as complete in Mat’evosyan 1984, 368–372, no. 300; an Italian translation is in Sirinian 2016, 327–334; see also Sirinian 2019, 65–80.

The third colophon is the most unusual of the three because it exhibits ‘external influences’, which are Roman in this instance: codex and colophon, in fact, were written in 1269 at Rome, where an Armenian community had been established in the vicinity of St Peter’s.³⁴ The place where the copy was made was none other than this community’s hospice (*hangstaran*), which hosted pilgrims coming from different parts of Armenia, and amongst these was our copyist named Margarē. The colophon is especially long and quite interesting from a variety of points of view. In its first part are described the inhabitants of the Armenian hospice, for which is furnished here the most complete list of names that we possess, sometimes indicating the ecclesiastical grade, provenance, and even the ‘trade’ (e.g. a baker and a shoemaker). In the second part, the subscription contains instead a long confession of sins by the scribe, rich in concepts and images and rather extraordinary in the Armenian world, which is something to which we shall return.³⁵

Glory to the most holy Trinity, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and in the age to come and throughout time without end. Amen, amen, amen.

In the year 718 according to the calendar of the Armenians (= AD 1269), when the true vicar of our Illuminator *tēr* Yakobos³⁶ was guiding the orthodoxy of the Christian faith with the authority of superintendent, having been brought to an end, this book inspired by God was completed in this part of the vast region of Europe,³⁷ in the country of Italy, in the very famous and imposing metropolis of Rome, under the protection of the holy apostle and most honorable and sublime [custodian of the keys]³⁸ of the heavenly Jerusalem Peter, cornerstone of the faith, and (under the protection) of the light of the world and benevolent universal father, vase of election,

34 Sirinian 2013–2014 (with previous bibliography).

35 The manuscript exhibits other examples of ‘lesser’ colophons added by Margarē, which have been published in Mat’evosyan 1984, 372 (in part) and in Eganyan et al. 1984, 587, 590; their Italian translation is in Sirinian 2016, 333–334.

36 Yakobos (or Yakob) I Klayec’i, *katholikos* in the years 1268–1286, is here defined as the legitimate successor of St Gregory the Illuminator, who converted the Armenians (third–fourth century CE).

37 To our knowledge, this is the first appearance of the term ‘Europe’ in an Armenian colophon.

38 We read *p’akakali* at this point where the manuscript is damaged and only transmits [±4]*kali* (f. 325 col. b, ll. 20–21).

the holy apostle Paul, in this hospice of the Armenians that was built with the labour of many, poor and wealthy, and all those who have come to venerate these holy apostles have contributed of their own spontaneous volition with (their) earnings to the construction of this residence, some with much and some with little, according to their abilities: to all of these may the Lord, who is all-powerful and most generous in good gifts, offer them a hundred, a thousand, and a million times reciprocation in his kingdom. As for those who were the first to work for this residence—since some of them that worked here before now rest in Christ and yet others have returned to their country—may Christ have mercy on all of them. Those who currently live in this residence (are) the glorious priests, pure and immaculate, the venerable elders Grigor and Arak'eal; and also those young men who are fortifying themselves against the multiple snares of Beliar, Step'annos and Karapet, Xaç'atur and Yovhannēs, T'oros and Eliazar and Vardan Arewelc'i; and also the courageous ascetics who lift up the cross of Christ and follow the illuminated paths of the Lord, Aļekanun and Kostandin, Sargis Surbmarec'i and Step'anos Xlat'ec'i, Kiwrakos and Nersēs, Tiratur and Xaç'er, Yovhannēs Arewmtc'i and P'ok'r Xaç'er, Arewik and Vasil, Kostandin Prčik, Vardan P'rnavař (= baker), and also Grigor Ujnac'i and Grigor Kiwlikec'i, Pōlos and Petros Erkayn, Step'annos and Awetik', Yovhan and Yovhannēs, Sirun Kōškar (= shoemaker) and Grigor Arewmtc'i, Grigor and Karapet. These are at the present moment the inhabitants of this residence, who, having left their country and their people, their home and their possessions, have arrived here as pilgrims at the threshold of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and await eternal hope and indescribable rest.

And together with them living in this residence are also honorable women and pious old women, poor and impoverished for the sake of Christ, who sleep on the ground and fast; some of them have taken a vow of virginity while others, virtuously married in this life, have subsequently followed the hope of heaven and await the rest of the just. And the Lord all powerful, Father of good, God of mercy, and Lord of compassion, who is generous in giving and bestowing charisms, pours forth generously his piety upon all of those who have worked for this residence: the first, those in between, and the last, on those who have worked much and those who have worked little, on those who have been liberal with their property and those who have been less so. May God in his compassion have mercy on everyone, on the living and the dead, on those who have gone away and on those who live there, on the priests and deacons, the monks and religious, the laity and the elderly women. May the drops of God's compassion descend upon the bones of the dead who rest here in purgatory. May the Spirit God³⁹ descend into their souls, may this be the will of God all powerful, may the Spirit God give solace to these souls, may the only begotten Son, taking them by the right hand, say: 'Come, my Father's blessed ones, receive the inheritance that has been prepared from the beginning' (Mt 25:34). May the Lord God grant the same solace not only to those who now rest here in purgatory, but also to all of the deceased of Armenian confession.

And with your prayers and with the intercession of the Holy Mother of God and the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and all the saints on earth and in heaven and Saint John the Forerunner, give peace to our country and set it free from slavery to foreigners, comfort it, make it strong, and make it firm. And may God in his mercy bless the inhabitants of this residence in Rome, may he range its priests with the apostles, refresh the monks together with the ascetics, and crown the elderly women together

39 *Hogin Astuac* in the text, repeated a bit further on.

with the holy *myrophores*. And may the Lord Jesus grant even greater gifts to Vardan
 60 and his parents, father and mother, because he has worked hard to prepare our meals
 and given us much vinegar⁴⁰: to him may the Lord Jesus gave sweet-tasting food and
 joyous quiet, and may he be blessed for the ages.

And I, Margarē, with my many worries, who with hard work have copied this book
 65 of our persons and for the memory of our souls; and I, hapless Margarē, useless and
 clumsy, slothful and wretched, cowardly and petty, shameful and wicked, the most
 evil of the evil and the most hateful of the hateful, someone who has never done good
 and never abstained from evil, which of my sinful deeds unworthy of memory shall I
 70 recall and which shall I write? In fact, my evil deeds are beyond repair and innumera-
 ble, and never have they been listed and numbered. And now I am assailed by doubt
 because, should I write out the multitude of my sins, a vast quantity of parchment
 would be needed to remove them from my wicked self.⁴¹ Now I shall recall them for
 you, holy and religious fathers and brothers, (and) even though I am not worthy to be
 your son and brother, nonetheless I share with you the birth from the holy fount and
 75 the confession and the correct faith in the Holy Trinity, in the Father and in the Son
 and in the Holy Spirit, and I hope in the Lord, so that I too may be able to receive pity
 from the merciful Lord, because He is compassionate. If indeed I remember the evil
 of my thoughts, that of my deeds comes before that of the mind; and if I remember
 the errors of my vision, the sins of my hearing hinder (me) from doing so; and if I
 80 were to remember the sins of the gullet, the numerous evils tied to touch accumu-
 late. Lo and behold, indeed, the two terrible beasts of anger and luxury—calling out
 to one another and having caught me in (their) midst—have reduced to tatters my
 half-dead soul, they have beaten it, they have wounded it, they have taken turns in
 striking it so as to make me altogether despair of the salvation of my soul.

Indeed, standing aside and roaring like a lion and a bear struck by an arrow, anger
 85 without piety and with much fierceness is tearing my soul to pieces. Having found
 only this (to do) among its good deeds, it has struck (me) with ferocity, it has torn
 (me) to pieces, it has beaten (me), and not content with that, having dragged me out
 of the sheepfold and pulled me towards the plain of perversion with its evil, now it
 90 bites me, now it terrifies me, now having seized me with its paws it drags me along
 on the ground and causes me to roll in the filth, hapless me! And it does this not
 merely with its force, but also with my own participation, since the anger that the
 Lord and creator God has placed in the essence of my soul, with which I ought to
 have repelled the attacks of the Evil One, has through my own action become the
 95 support for my destruction, not only because I was [[not]]⁴² wroth with my brother,
 but because of my own volition I killed him and pierced my brother through with my
 treacherous tongue: one I have offended in my thoughts, another I have injured open-
 ly, another I have scorned with mockery, another I have wounded with evil, calling
 him foolish. I have held in contempt those whom I ought to have honoured, I have

40 To be understood as ‘thin wine’, a refreshing drink that consists of water and vine-
 gar.

41 This is an allusion, just as in what follows, to the ‘manuscript’ or ‘receipt’
 (χειρόγραφον) of one’s sins (Col 2:14), an extremely common theme in Armenian
 colophons; see Sirinian 2017, 284–285.

42 This second negation, which is present in the text, is to be considered pleonastic.

100 made life difficult for those to whom I ought to have offered rest, I have saddened those whom I ought to have caused to rejoice, I have persecuted those whom I ought to have cared for, I have scattered those whom I ought to have united, I have been angry at the good. What I ought to have done against the evil I have instead done with my brothers: some I have killed with my thoughts, others with my will; those
105 against whom my forces were insufficient I have intentionally misled.

The beast of luxury, instead, being ready for a direct onslaught, took as allies the cavalrymen of envy and hatred. Together with them they made an imposing formation, and, with this formation and with their sharp weapons, they attacked my naked soul, and they arrogantly boasted of their victory and laughed, and they exulted over and
110 rejoiced in my ruin. Indeed, one of them, having gripped his axe, promptly buried it in my side and another, having grasped a double-edged sword, triumphantly sank it into my undefended heart, and another, seizing his bow, took up a position outside (of the melee) and from afar shot arrows at the whole of my body and soul, and, seizing the effective and heavy club (*peletkinin*) that they call *laxt* in our region and
115 *sarlex* in other places and yet others call *mahak*, yet others approached and struck me mercilessly and wounded the whole of my head.

And these are not the works of Satan, but rather of my personal inclination and will, since that desiderative part that the Creator placed in my living soul, I, having taken hold of it, perverted it, and I have deeply loved indecency since, I admit it, I have felt
120 desire for individuals of another religion and nation. Indeed, I have ardently desired not only natural things, but also unnatural things, for I have fornicated with water, stone, wood, and earth, with fire and water.⁴³ Not only have I dirtied myself and the elements, but even their origins,⁴⁴ for I have turned to the sight of sin these eyes that the Creator had assigned for seeing holiness. Indeed, seeing the pleasures of this life,
125 I have desired them all. I have seen the attractive beauty of gold and silver and that of variegated clothing and I have desired them. I have seen the beauty given by God to women, and I have loved looking at the comely forms of boys, and I have burned with desire. I have been besotted and dirtied myself. I have soiled myself in my soul, and I have been corrupted. With my mind, I have soiled myself. With my sense of
130 touch, I have ruined myself. With my sense of taste, I have prostituted myself. With my hearing, I have become vile. Because of these material things, I have rushed in every way to the doorway of sin. I have become a foreigner and abandoned the laws of God.

Thus and in this way pierced by arrows, struck by the axe, run through by the lance, wounded by the sword, beaten and with broken limbs, with my spirit wounded and infected, gasping and with tears in my eyes, I throw myself on the ground before the all powerful Lord Father, who has care and mercy for all, and the only begotten Son and the most Holy Spirit; I beg, I seek, and I ask that He wish to have mercy and having mercy that He save (me). May He not look⁴⁵ severely upon my person that
140 has wallowed in sin. Rather, may He with sweetness have mercy, and with mercy

43 This expression is to be understood as an allusion to idolatry; see Ciakciak 1837, s.v. *šnam*.

44 Here we are to understand the five senses, which are mentioned shortly afterwards. These were considered the origin of man's knowledge of the world.

45 In the manuscript one reads *ha<y>esc 'i* at this point rather than *hanesc 'i*, which is in the edition of Mat'evosyan.

forgive (me), erase the manuscript of my sins, cleanse my soul of filth (and) colour me a pure white, I who have been obscured (and) dirtied with blackness. May He shed His most pure and holy blood, may He give as food His life-giving and salvific body, so that, having eaten and drunk these, I may be able to vomit forth all the wickedness of my thoughts and will, of my actions carried out or left undone, voluntary or involuntary, thought or spoken; and so that, having taken flight, I may be able to ascend the wagon of clouds, to rise up to the heights before the Bridegroom and Spouse and enjoy the joyous wedding, and with thanksgiving glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever in the ages to come. Amen, amen.

150 May those charitable Christians who give us food be remembered by the will of Jesus Christ our Lord. May the Lord God grant to them the bread of life and the taste of immortality thanks to the intercession of all the saints, and may they be able to share in the condition of all the saints. Amen.

And now and forever, blessed be the all powerful Father, the only begotten Son, and

155 the truthful Spirit forever and in the ages to come.

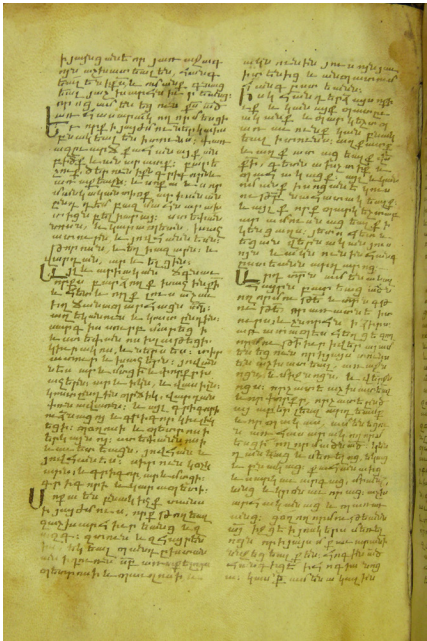
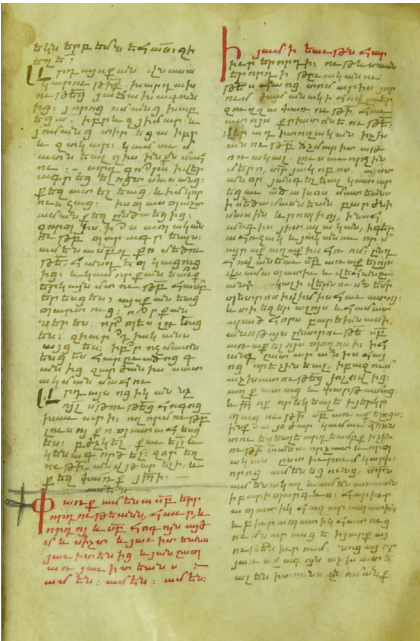


Fig. 3 (a–b). Ms Yerevan, Matenadaran, 142: colophon, ff. 325r–327v, here ff. 325r (a), 325v (b). © Matenadaran.

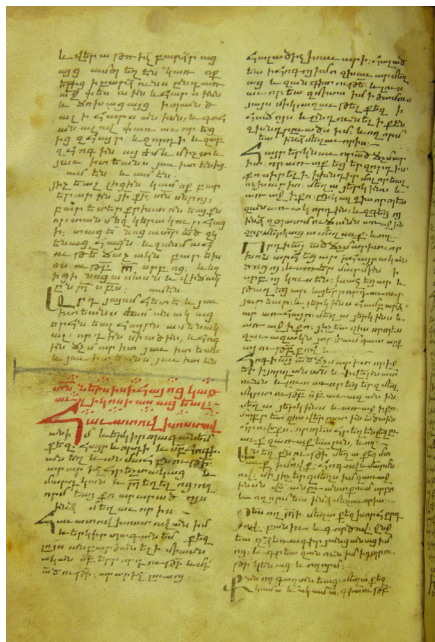
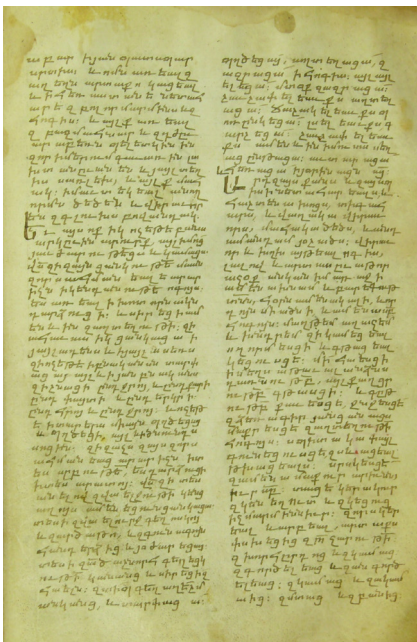
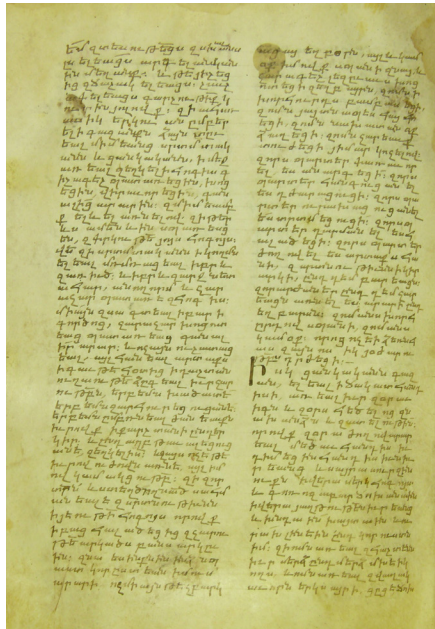
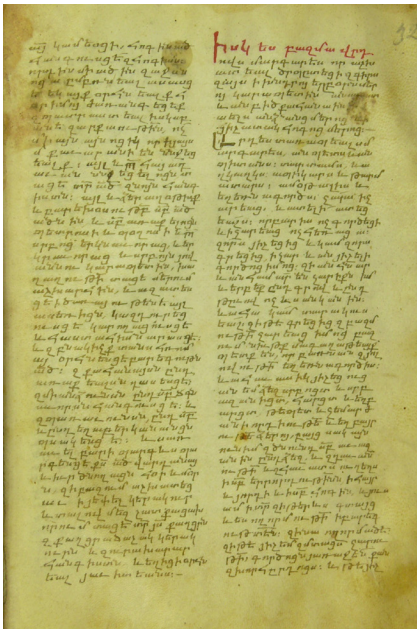


Fig. 3 (c–f). Ms Yerevan, Matenadaran, 142: colophon, ff. 325r–327v, here ff. 326r (c), 326v (d), 327r (e), 327v (f). © Matenadaran.

Summary observations

Now, the search in our three colophons for the twelve structural elements listed in the preceding paragraph confirms their presence, with the following oscillations: six elements appears in all three colophons; four elements in two; and two elements appears attested in only one colophon. In these last cases, when a structural element is absent in one of the three colophons, we shall see, however, that it is possible to identify the cause, or else that it is in reality present in a reduced form that has been adapted to the context, as we shall attempt to show shortly.

Let us summarize in the following table the results of the comparison (the abbreviation ‘ad’ stands for ‘adaptation’):

<i>Element</i>	<i>Colophon 1 Matenadaran 823 (lines in translation)</i>	<i>Colophon 2 PCA 62 (lines in translation)</i>	<i>Colophon 3 Matenadaran 142 (lines in translation)</i>
Trinitarian doxology	1–3	1–4	1–3
Date	8–9	38	4
Place	7–8	42–44	7–12
Religious authority	9–10	42	4–6
Political authority	10–11	41	
Type of book	4–5	7–11	
Name of the scribe	6	13, 32, 44	63
Name of the patron	14, 30 ⁴⁶	7	64
Historical <i>excursus</i>	15–16 ad	39–41	12–20 ad
Request that the reader pray for the patron, his relatives, and/or religious brethren		13–19, 20–26	63–65 ad
Request that the reader pray for the scribe, his relatives, and/or religious brethren	13–20, 23	44–45	63–65 ad
Reassurance of remuneration by God (‘the person who remembers will be remembered’)	25–26	27–29	150–153 ad

46 In colophon no. 1, even though it has been erased (for the reasons discussed above), the name of the patron had been present all the same.

Let us take a closer look at the instances where elements are omitted:

- political authority is not mentioned in colophon 3, but it could hardly be otherwise, as the place of copying was the ‘city of the popes’, i.e. Rome;⁴⁷
- the type of book is not mentioned in colophon 3, but in this case we are dealing with a miscellany, which is less definable by its content than the other two manuscripts;
- the *excursus* or historical description as a self-contained unit, introduced by the typical formulaic expression ‘in this wicked and bitter time ...’ (*i č’ar ew i dařn žamanakis*), is present only in colophon 2 (ll. 39–41); the other two colophons, however, do contain references to historical events: in colophon 1, Yovhannēs Erznkac‘i remembers with grief his teacher ‘who was killed by infidels armed with the sword’ (ll. 15–16), alluding to the Turkish-Mongolian invasions, while colophon 3 directly ‘attaches’ the *excursus* to the mention of the place of copying (the hospice at St Peter’s) by means of a reference to its construction by Armenian pilgrims who had come to Rome: ‘in this hospice of the Armenians that was built with the labour of many, poor and wealthy...’ (ll. 12–20);
- as far as the last three elements of the scheme are concerned, we can note, in the first instance, that the explicit request for prayers on behalf of the patron, his relatives, and/or religious brethren is absent in colophon 1 because here it is the young scribe Yovhannēs Erznkac‘i to ask the patron—who, it is to be remembered, was his teacher—for prayers for himself and his relatives as well as forgiveness for the faults of his calligraphy. Again, as regards these final points, it is especially interesting to observe the ‘behaviour’ of colophon 3 (the ‘Roman’ one), which effectively shows itself to be the more eccentric of them. In this colophon the question of the reader’s remembering the scribe and patron (i.e. prayers for the salvation of their souls) is dealt with summarily: ‘I, Margarē [...] have copied this book at the request of our brother Karapet [...] for the benefit of our per-

47 As regards the religious authority, it is to be recalled that the manuscript mentions the *katholikos* Yakob I Klayec‘i, see note 35 above. It is worth remarking that the pope is not mentioned in a single one of the colophons of the group of Armenian manuscripts copied at Rome between 1221 and 1310 (Sirinian 2016); on the other hand, in the course of the thirteenth century, he was often absent from Rome, see Paravicini Bagliani 2003, 3–78 (‘il fenomeno della mobilità della corte papale duecentesca è quantitativamente impressionante [...]: tra il 1198 e il 1304, la corte papale è assente da Roma per quasi il 60% (59,10%) del periodo corrispondente al totale dei singoli pontificati’, *ibid.* p. 5). The first references to the pope in Armenian colophons are instead to be found in the following century, in connection with the proselytising activity of the Dominicans in Armenia (Xaç‘ikyan 1950, 216, no. 273; 245, no. 307) or in manuscripts copied in Italy (*ibid.*, 407–408, no. 488).

sons and for the memory of our souls’ (ll. 63–65).⁴⁸ From this moment onwards, the scribe effectively ‘opens’ the compositional scheme of his colophon so as to insert the unusual confession of his own sins as we have noted, the development of which even exceeds in length that of the first part of the composition.⁴⁹ At the conclusion, divine recompense is called upon not for the person who will pray on behalf of the scribe’s soul, but for those who have offered hospitality to him as a pilgrim (‘May those charitable Christians who give us food be remembered by the will of Jesus Christ our Lord. May the Lord God grant to them the bread of life and the taste of immortality’, ll. 150–153). Why this substitution?

The passionate and detailed confession of his sins that Margarē makes to his fellow Armenians, ardently asking God’s forgiveness and begging to become worthy of receiving communion does not have, to our knowledge, any precedent within the rich tradition of Armenian colophons. That the Armenian scribes ask for forgiveness of their sins in the colophons is indeed not surprising—we have seen just how important the request for prayers was—, but normally they do so using a standardized language and without entering into detail. Margarē, instead, certainly does do that. After generic self-accusations of grave faults in thought and action, which are connected to the senses, he focusses on the specific vices of anger and luxury. Without reticence, he vividly describes their manifestations and effects, not omitting to mention shocking details as regards the sin of luxury.

Anomalous within an Armenian setting, this confession instead makes sense, in our opinion, in the Latin world of the thirteenth century. It was a milieu suffused with a new zeal for pastoral care aiming to secure the individual salvation of every member of the universal Church, religious and lay—this latter being the condition that, in view of the absence of any ecclesiastical title whatsoever accompanying his name, we think was the condition of the scribe Margarē—, by means of preaching, the confession of sins, and the sacrament of confession.⁵⁰ The thirteenth century is the age of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which had placed emphasis on the importance of confession, imposing (in its twenty-first constitution) the obligation for every believer (*omnis fidelis*)—under the threat of being prohibited from access to the church

48 For the request of ‘memory’ as synonymous with a request for prayer, see Sirinian 2017, 280–282.

49 The beginning of the confession (‘And I, Margarē, with my many worries [...]’, l. 63) is marked in the codex by the rubrication of the first lines of the second column of f. 326r.

50 Within the vast bibliography dedicated to this topic, see Rusconi 2002 for the period being considered here.

and, upon death, from a Christian burial—to confess all their sins (*omnia sua peccata*) to their own priest and to receive communion at least once a year.⁵¹

The thirteenth century is also the age in which the theme of the septenary (i.e. the doctrine of the seven capital sins, which entered the Latin world through the teaching of St Gregory the Great) was most influential.⁵² Many of the passages in the colophon of Margarē indeed seem to be linked to medieval Latin literature and its focus on fighting vices, especially the seven capital sins. This holds true, for example, for the images of anger and luxury, which are likened by the scribe to beasts that tear his soul asunder (almost an anticipation of the three beasts of Dante!). The same can be said of the scene of the armed attack of the vices upon his defenceless soul as well as for other particulars.⁵³ Even the detailed list that Margarē offers for the manifestations of these two sins seem to recall the detailed examination of the *species* of individual vices as they are described in the handbooks written to aid confessors.⁵⁴

On the other hand, it is to be observed that Margarē repeatedly betrays the influence of Latin in his manuscript. At the beginning of the codex, for example, he transcribes in Armenian characters, but in the Latin language, three New Testament passages (Acts 1:1; Mt 18:1–10; 1 Cor 6:15–20). Here and there, moreover, small glosses in his hand transliterate some words from Latin and translate them into Armenian.⁵⁵ We therefore think it possible that even in

- 51 For this Council, see the recent work of Ciola, Sabetta, Sguazzardo 2016. Some representatives of the Oriental Churches also participated in this Council, and amongst these there may have been the Armenian *katholikos*: his name appears among those listed as present in the Acts, but it does not subsequently reappear amongst those who gave their signature to the canons; see Loda 2016, 492 and n. 5.
- 52 Casagrande and Vecchio 2000.
- 53 Casagrande and Vecchio 2000, 184–189 (§ 2: *Le metafore dei vizi*).
- 54 For example, on the subject of anger, we find the following passage in a manual for confessors composed by Robert of Flamborough at the beginning of the thirteenth century: *Ad iram pertinent ista: impatientia, indignatio, injuria, rixa, contumelia [...] discordia [...] furor [...]*, see Firth 1971, 181; some of our scribe's admissions regarding the sin of luxury, on the other hand, recall the question posed by the confessor *Ad infidelem, scilicet judaeam, gentilem, haeticam (accessisti)?* cited *ibid.*, 197. Even the passage dealing with sins caused by the sense of sight has echoes in that on *concupiscentia oculorum* present in *Speculum penitentis* of William de Montibus, see Goering 1992, 200. – I am very grateful to Joseph Goering, James Long, Roberto Rusconi, and my colleague Iolanda Ventura for the generous advice (which was not limited to questions of bibliography) that they have given me on these topics.
- 55 For these passages and glosses in *hayatar latinērēn* (Latin transcribed in Armenian characters), see Sirinian 2018, 103–106.

his colophon he displays an affinity for the religiosity of the Latin church at that epoch.

Whether or not there is a Latin influence (as we suggest), there can be no doubt that Margarē uses the second part of his colophon to make a list of his sins and ask for their forgiveness not, as seems, in a future *post mortem* but rather so as to be able to purify himself and take communion *in vita* (ll. 63–149). That might explain why, having arrived at the end of his colophon and therefore in the ‘area’ reserved for the request for divine remuneration, the scribe invokes it not for future readers who will pray for his soul, but rather for his fellow Armenians who are hosting him.⁵⁶

Returning to the structural aspect of the Armenian colophons, it is possible to assert, at the end of our analysis, that each scribe gives evidence of knowing thoroughly the rules for composing a colophon and that at the same time he is able to adapt them to its contents. Those elements of the list that are not present in one of the three colophons analysed have been omitted because they are effectively at odds with the message of that particular composition, or else they have been consciously adapted.

Therefore, we are dealing with a compositional structure that is elastic and adaptable to the different contexts in which a particular scribe was writing and the goals that he had in mind. Thus it would appear that we are able to detect in this specific setting one of the constants of Armenian history and civilization: the elaboration of codes or models of cultural reference that, on the one hand, are clearly recognizable and reproducible and, on the other hand, are able to change and adapt themselves to new situations and new contents.

56 It is interesting to note that, immediately after his colophon, Margarē copies, as the final work in his manuscript, the prayer *Hawatov Xostovanim* (‘I faithfully confess to You’) of the *katholikos*, theologian and hymnographer Nersēs Šnorhali (1166–1173), which, with its repeated request addressed to God at the close of every strophe, *ew otormea inj melaworis* (‘and have pity on me a sinner!’) seems almost to serve as a seal for his confession. Among the many editions of this prayer, which is extremely famous in the Armenian world, we cite that which was published by the Mekhitarist Fathers in 1871 in thirty-six languages, *Preces Sancti Nersetis Clajensis Armeniorum Patriarchae triginta sex linguis editae*, Venetiis, in insula S. Lazari 1871 (repr. Yerevan: EPH Hratarakčut‘yun, 2013). The text of our manuscript presents some variants with regard to this edition, such as the above-cited supplication at the end of every strophe, which in the text published by the Mekhitarist Fathers in 1871 instead reads *ew otormea k’o araracoc’s ew inj bazmamelis* (‘and have pity on these your creatures and on me, a great sinner!’).

Appendix

Complete edition of Colophon 2: MS Rome, Pontificio Collegio Armeno, 62: Ritual (Maštoc'), ff. 174v–175v

NOTE: the abbreviations present in the Armenian manuscript have been quietly expanded; moreover, according to the standard practice in editing Armenian colophons, the exchange of voiced and voiceless consonants has been indicated in cursive.

(174v) Փառք Հարն անկզբնականի, և միշտ ծնելոյն ի նմանէ Որդւոյն միաձնի, և յաւէտ բոյխելոյն Հոգւոյն ճշմարտի, որք են բնութեամբ միացեալք և անձամբ յատկացեալք, ուրում փառք ի հրեղինացն և երկրպագութիւն հողեղինացս, այժմ և անգրաւ յախտենիւ, ամէն:

5 Արդ՝ ես մեղապարտս ի մանկունս եկեղեցւոյ, անարգս ի պարս վարդապետաց, յետինս ի քարոզողաց, վերջինս ի ծնունդս եկեղեցւոյ Մկրտիչ սոսկ անունս վարդապետս, եղէ ցանկացող այսմ աստուածաշունչ կտակիս որ կոչի Մաշտոց: Որ է սա կատարաւդ Է խորհրդոյ եկեղեցւոյ, և ունի սա շարագրեալ յինքեանս զէ աստիճան եկեղեցւոյ, այլ և զամենայն հոգեւորական և մարմնական սրբութիւն անդամոց մերոց, գոր թէ կամիս շուտով գտանես ի յըսկիզբն գրոցս ի ցանցն նկարեալ: Վասն որոյ ջանիւ և փափագանաւք ետու գրել զսա սիրելի եղբար մեր հոգեւորի և սրբասէր քահանայի Կարապետի, յիշատակ ինձ և հոգևոր ծնողաց իմոց Կարապետ կրօնաւորի և Յակոբի: Այլ և մարմնաւոր ծնո(ւ. 175r)ղացն իմոց Օրպելին և Դովլաթին և մեծմօրն 15 իմ Բաղդաստի, և մարաքեռն իմ Սաղդաթի՝ և քւերն իմոյ Խաթուն Մելիքին, և փեսային իմոյ Յակոբչին, և զաւակաց իւրոց Սիմէովնին և Ներսիսին, և հանգուցելոցն Ստեփանոսին, Գալստին և Յովաննիսին, և մօրաքւեր որդւոյն Կարապետին, նաև քարտիսի տուողին Սաբասին՝ հաւատարիմ և աստուածասէր հոգեւոր քւերն մերոյ:

20 Վասն որոյ յերես անկեալ աղաչեմ, և կողկողագին պաղատանաւք հայցեմք ի ձէնջ՝ հողացեալս ի գերեզմանի և հասեալս ի դուռն դատաստանին Աստուծոյ՝ զմանկունսղ սուրբ եկեղեցւոյ և զվայելողքդ աստուածային սեղաւոյս, որք հանդիպիք սմա ուսմամբ կամ զաղափար առնելով կամ հարեւանցի տեսութեամբ, յի սրտիւ և յօժար կամաւք, բոլոր հաւատով, աներկբայ յուսով և կատարեալ սիրով՝ Աստուած ողորմի ասացէք և մեղաց թողութիւն հայցեցէք ամենայն վերոյ գրելոցս ի սմա ի յողորմած Տեառնէ մերմէ Յիսուսէ Քրիստոսէ. և որով չափով մեզ չափէք՝ նովին չափովն և ձեզ չափեսցի: Եւ նա որ առատն է ի տուրս բարեաց՝ մեզ յուսողացս և ձեզ յիշողացդ առհասարակ տացէ զիւր անճառ ողորմութիւնն և զյախտենական հանգիստն, ամէն: Դարձեալ աղաչեմ 30 յիշել ի բարին Քրիստոս գերջանիկ և զքաց հեռետորն (*sic*) և զտիեզերալոյս ըարբբունին գծովմա, որ զաւրինական շնորհեաց և բազում բարութիւնս եցոյց մեզ. նաև զհոգեւոր եղբարսն մեր՝ զգրոց աշակերտեալ անձինսն, զՅովաննէս կրօնաւոր որ գեւթն աւրէ<ն>քն գրեաց և զյիշատակարան գրոցս և զՀայրապետ կրօնաւորս որ գգիրս կազմեաց, նաև զհոգեւոր որդեակքս իմ՝ զՄինաս Դպիրն, 35 որ գգիրս ծաղկեաց (f. 175v) և զԳրիգոր Դպիրն, որ հանապազ մեզ սպասաւորէ, և զեղբայրն իւր, զՄկրտիչ Մոնթն. գրեսցէ զսոսա Քրիստոս Աստուած ի զիրն կենաց և յանջընջելի դպրութիւն, ամէն:

Եւ արդ՝ գրեցաւ սա ի թուականութեանս հայոց ՊԶԱ, ի չար և ի դառն ժամանակիս, յորում տառապին ազգք քրիստոնէից զանազան պատուհասիւ
 40 ի ձեռաց անաւրինաց, ի թոյլ տալոյն Աստուծոյ վասն բազմութեան մեղաց մերոց, ի թագաւորութեան աշխարհաւեր և անիմաստ Սքանդարին, և ի հայրապետութեան տեառնն Կոստընդեայ, և յեպիսկոպոսութեան տէր Յոհաննիսի. յերկիրս Քաջբերունի, ի քաղաքս որ կոչի Արճէշ, ընդ հովանեաւ սուրբ Աստուածածնիս և սուրբ Յակոբիս, ձեռամբ Կարապետ քահանայի՝
 45 հանճարեղ և իմաստուն քարտուղարի, որոյ յիշատակն արհնութեամբ եղիցի: Եւ աղաթիւք և բարեխաւսութեամբ ամենայն սրբոց՝ Քրիստոս Աստուած թողութիւն շնորհեսցէ ամենայն մեղուցելոց զոջացելոց, մանաւանդ՝ վերոյ գրելոցս ի սմա: Եւ նմա փառք՝ յաւիտեան և յաւիտեանս յաւիտենից, ամէն եղիցի:

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