

ARMENIA & BYZANTIUM WITHOUT BORDERS

MOBILITY – INTERACTIONS – RESPONSES

20–22 April 2018, University of Vienna

ABSTRACTS

SESSION I

VAN ELVERDINGHE Emmanuel | Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

‘The hand that wrote...’: The Journey of a Colophon Formula from Greek to Armenian

“The hand that wrote rots in a grave, but what is written remains until the end of time”: this famous epigram or one of its variations adorns many a Greek colophon. Verses revolving around the same idea also occur in colophons from the Coptic, Arabic, Persian, Syriac, Armenian, and Georgian traditions. Whilst the Greek material has already been studied rather intensively, the Armenian version of this pattern has never been investigated previously. Yet, tracing the various guises under which it appears yields about 200 occurrences across the whole timespan of Armenian manuscript copying – a slightly larger number than has been recorded in Greek. This paper aims to provide a first appraisal of the Armenian material and to give some clues as to how and under what circumstances the formula was adopted and adapted by Armenian copyists.

Eventually, it will be seen how this phenomenon is relevant for the study of Byzantine-Armenian intellectual and material contacts.

ZAKARIAN David | University of Oxford

King Vasil's Holy Sign of War

Several Armenian colophons from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries contain references to “the Holy Sign of King Vasil” or “the Holy Sign of war of King Vasil”, which was kept in the monastery of Arckē, north of Lake Van in the Turuberan province of Greater Armenia. The scribes provide no other information about the nature of the revered relic and no clarification is given regarding the identity of King Vasil. Considering the fact that there were no kings in the Armenian tradition called Vasil, it seems reasonable to assume that the holy object was associated with one of the Byzantine emperors, either Basil I or II. This paper explores the relevant colophons and historiographical material, and attempts to establish what the holy relic was, which Byzantine emperor's name was so keenly linked to it many years after their rule, and the turn of events that brought it to Arckē monastery.

Respondent: **PREISER-KAPPELLER Johannes** | Austrian Academy of Sciences

SESSION II

ASRYAN Arpine | Matenadaran, Erevan

Byzantine-Armenian Encounters in Context: 10th–11th-c. Ornamental Sculpture of Armenian Monuments

Cultural interrelations between Armenia and Byzantium have been studied from different aspects. Tied connections are especially evident during the long Middle Byzantine period (843–1204) while Armenia was ruled by the Bagratid royal family. One can trace Armenian/Byzantine cultural relations by studying the architectural monuments of 10th–11th centuries. As an example, the sculptural decoration of churches built by the endowments of the two branches of the Bagratid royal family in Ani (Shirak) and Tayk/Tao will be discussed.

The second half of the 10th century and the first half of the 11th century are marked by flourishing in the art of both Ani, the capital of the Bagratid kings of Armenia and Tayk/Tao, which was of great importance thanks to its topography, political, and religious situation. Architectural monuments decorated with original style were created in both Tayk and Ani (Oshk Monastery, Ishkhan Church, Ani Cathedral, Gagkashen church, etc.). The hybridity of Byzantine and local ornaments created completely different unique styles that are typical for these regions. They were used in a peculiar interpretation in each of these schools to highlight their artistic peculiarities that were completely different. The outside ornamentation of the churches of Tayk and Ani was executed with the application of ornamental patterns typical for Byzantine art (chancel screens, textiles, traveling objects, etc.). Ornamental sculpture of Armenian monuments has always been considered as an auxiliary part of the architectural composition, but its artistic solutions and references to Byzantine

monuments should be examined in the context of political and cultural interrelations.

ERCAN Ayse | Columbia University, New York City

A Prelude to the Future: St George of Mangana and its Architectural Legacy

Architecture engraved personal desires, political manifestoes and religious doctrines on the landscape of the Byzantine Empire. Every single monument functioned as an image that materialized and eternalized ideologies woven by intricate sociopolitical dynamics and cross-cultural exchanges that are left as enigmas to solve for architectural historians.

One particular monument in Constantinople, the eleventh-century *katholikon* of the Mangana Monastery of Constantine IX Monomachos constituted a foremost case that triggered debates about the so-called Byzantine reception of Armenian architectural tradition in the heart of the capital. Regarded as ‘the New Jerusalem’, this massive monastic complex consisted of numerous structures that were seamlessly integrated into a marvelous garden noted for the sizable collection of exotic plants amassed from all over the empire. Nevertheless, above all, architectural historians were puzzled by its unparalleled *katholikon*, which introduced a revolutionary type to the Byzantine architectural vocabulary. Epitomized by the Mangana monastery, the type is considered as a direct heir of Armenian architecture based on the structural support system of its central dome, previously implemented in the Aght’amar Church (915-21) as the closest counterpart.

By focusing on the eleventh-century architecture of the Mangana monastery’s *katholikon*, this paper examines the discourse of cross-cultural interactions, imitation or appropriation between Byzantine and Armenian

architecture. Based on the premise that architecture traveled in the minds of their creators, let it be masons, masterbuilders or patrons, the paper presents an overview of this architectural debate by seeking to critically interpret historical conditions and social dynamics between the Byzantine and Armenian realms that contributed to the creation of the Mangana *katholikon*.

Respondent: **THEIS Lioba** | University of Vienna

SESSION III

NAKADA Kosuke | University of St Andrews

The Power of Relics: A Case Study on the Religious Contacts between Byzantium and Armenia in the Tenth Century

It is often maintained that in the sphere of religion there was an insurmountable wall between Byzantium and Armenia. It is further argued that such religious contacts as there were tended to end up in failure due to the intransigent attitude of the Imperial church in relation to the Council of Chalcedon. Nevertheless, the relationship between the two did not evolve entirely without efforts to utilise religion as a common factor. This was especially the case in respect of relics and cults of saints, which could be exploited without complicated doctrinal debates. When Byzantium expanded to the East in the tenth century, relics were used as a form of ‘soft power’ to attract and integrate the local Christian populations, including Armenians.

Until recently, such communications have mostly been studied in the context of Byzantine religious policy, although some scholars have suggested that there was also a demand from the Armenian side. On this point, a little-studied text called the *History of the Finger of the Holy Apostle Peter and Its Journey from Rome to Armenia* (Matenadaran 1315, 2a-5b) offers fresh insight into the Armenian perspective on such religious contacts. The text was written by an Armenian who travelled to Constantinople in the reign of Nikephoros II, to obtain relics of the Apostle Peter. Although the text remains largely unstudied, it provides intriguing new evidence that can be used to investigate the approach of Armenians to Byzantium concerning relics and to understand the resulting cultural interactions between the two sides.

ARLEN Jesse Siragan | UCLA, Los Angeles

Gregory of Narek, Symeon the New Theologian, and the Inward Turn in Ascetic Experience

Despite being contemporaries, sharing similar literary and ascetic-mystical concerns, and being among the most important figures in their respective traditions, Symeon the New Theologian (ca. 949-1022) and Gregory of Narek (ca. 945-1003) have rarely been studied together. This paper considers them together in the broader context of the history of asceticism, showing how the writings and concerns of both of them represent a wider trend towards interiorization of ascetic-mystical experience, characteristic of the Christian Near East in this era. After a brief discussion of the terms ‘asceticism’ and ‘mysticism,’ this paper surveys the evolution of the spiritual experiences and practices associated with these two terms in the Christian East in the first millennium C.E., locating Gregory and Symeon within this broad overview. Then the works, lives, and four of the major preoccupations of these two figures are briefly discussed (repentance through spiritual mourning with tears; mysticism of light; spiritual fatherhood; conflict with the established hierarchy) along with some concluding remarks on their influence and afterlife.

HAMADA Karen | University of Tsukuba

Gregory of Narek, Symeon the New Theologian, and the Inward Turn in Ascetic Experience

A series of theological controversies, which occurred after the council of Chalcedon, remained a live issue for centuries in Byzantium and the Christian East. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, along with the reassertion of Byzantine military power and political influence in the Eastern Anatolia, controversies on religious matters between Chalcedonian Byzantines and Non-Chalcedonian Armenians resurfaced.

This research will focus on the two polemical texts, both written in the middle of the eleventh century, not long after the seizure of Ani by the Byzantines in 1045. One is the anti-Armenian treatise, written by the Byzantine theologian Niketas Stethatos (c.1005 - c.1090) around 1050; the other is Anania Sanahneç'i's *Refutation Against Dyophysites*, the polemical work undertaken by the order of Armenian Catholicos Petros I (- c.1058) and completed after death of the Catholicos around 1060.

The possibility of the influence of Niketas' anti-Armenian treatise on Anania's polemical work has been mentioned in previous studies. There is however no detailed survey that compares and examines these two texts, mainly because of the lack of information about Anania's text. This research will shed new light on the work of Anania Sanahneç'i and depict how Byzantines and Armenians tried to reconstruct and demonstrate each concept of orthodoxy in a new ethno-religious dynamism, brought about by the change of the balance of power after the fall of the Bagratid Kingdom.

Respondent: **DROST-ABGARJAN Armenuhi** | Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg

SESSION IV

EVANZIN Heinrich | University of Salzburg

The Enigma of the ‘Macedonian’-Herb – *δωηωηωδου* / Μαϊντανός

Since biblical times plants and trees represent mankind’s most natural environment. Soon they were used as food, drugs and raw materials for the ongoing evolvement of human civilisation. Thus, plant names show incredible traces of human knowledge, beliefs and historical inter- and transcultural inter- actions. The “Macedonian” herb (*Μαϊντανός/Μακεδονήσι*) is such an example. It shows how a short form of a Greek plant name found its way into various neighbour languages and was later readopted in an alternated form into modern Greek. Further investigation on Armenian and Greek plant names of the “Macedonian” *Petroselinum crispum* (Apiaceae) shows similar terminological ideas on identical and similar botanical taxa. In this talk we will focus on this phenomenon and will discuss the impact of Greek botanical termini on Armenian termini and even further traces.

ROOSIEN Mark | University of Notre Dame

Feasting the Lord’s Transfiguration in Armenian, Syriac, and Byzantine Traditions: The Travels of a Liturgical Feast from the Holy Land

In late antiquity and the Middle Ages, Jerusalem was a hub of religious and intellectual exchange. One of the primary fascinations of the Holy Land was its liturgy, which on special occasions was performed at the places associated with the life and ministry of Jesus. From the Holy Land, liturgical rites and practices often “travelled” to other churches in the Byzantine world. This paper analyzes how the specific cultural, historical, and intellectual circumstances of various Christian traditions

affected how they appropriated Jerusalem's liturgical practices, using the Feast of Transfiguration as a case study. This annual liturgical commemoration originated in the Holy Land in the sixth century, and was soon adopted in Armenian, Syriac, and Byzantine Christian traditions. Through an analysis of liturgical manuscripts, homilies, and hymnography, I show how the feast was appropriated in each tradition in stunningly unique ways. In Armenia, the feast took on characteristics of the pre-Christian summer festival of *Vardavar*; in Syria, the feast was shaped by themes related to the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles; and in Byzantium, the feast was heavily influenced by the Iconoclast controversy. I argue that the history of this feast demonstrates how even strongly-codified phenomena like liturgical feasts were remarkably flexible as they moved across borders in late antiquity and the Middle Ages and encountered new cultural and intellectual realities.

HENNY Sundar | University of Bern

Armenian, Greek, and Latin Pilgrims at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (1400–1600)

I am interested in cross-cultural encounters at Christianity's most prominent and most contested place, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. During the 15th and 16th centuries Armenian, Greek, and Latin Christians—among others—clashed their regularly (as, in fact, they still do today). The aim of my new project (funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation) is to look at those encounters from different cultural angles. The project's aim is to transcend the mono-confessional outlook that has been dominant in pilgrimage studies so far by considering also Armenian and Greek sources, in addition to sources from Latin Christianity.

While research on Jerusalem pilgrimage and respective accounts is well-established as a field of research for the medieval West the situation

is different for Eastern Christianity. The Greek *proskynetaria*, for example, are not directly comparable to western pilgrimage accounts, the latter being a quite widespread phenomenon while there seem to be only a few Greek travelogues. In the Armenian case the most substantial sources on Jerusalem pilgrimage seem to be colophons, that is paratexts that contain biographical information on the respective scribe. At the conference ‘Armenia & Byzantium without Borders’ I would like to present preliminary results of my research and some problems that come with a project that tries to combine fairly different strands of sources.

Respondent: **VAN LINT Theo Maarten** | University of Oxford