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Homiletic Collections in Greek and Oriental Manuscripts

Edited by Jost Gippert and Caroline Macé

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Cover

The front cover shows the three church fathers Cyril of Jerusalem, Nicholas of Myra and John Chrysostom in a 16th-century fresco of the Church of the Archangels in Matskhvarishi, Latali, Svanetia (photography by Jost Gippert). All three fathers bear a board with text fragments from the *Liturgy* by John Chrysostom (CPG 4686) in Georgian; the text passage held by Cyril of Jerusalem is the beginning of the sentence რამეთუ სახიერო და კაცთ-მოყუარე ღმერთი ხარ ‘For you are a benevolent and philanthropic God’, which also appears in lines 6–7 of Fig. 1 on p. 2 below (from an 11th-century scroll of the Iviron Monastery on Mt Athos, ms. Ivir. georg. 89).

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Article

The Armenian Homiliaries: An Attempt at an Historical Overview

Bernard Outtier | Lavau, Saint-Martin de la Mer

To the best of my knowledge, the history of Armenian homiliaries has not been written yet. About half a column is devoted to Armenian homiliaries in the article ‘Homéliers’ of the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*.¹ Forty years ago, Michel Van Esbroeck and Ugo Zanetti wrote: ‘Few tools exist so far that allow us to study the collections called ճառքնորի (čarəntir, lit. ‘choice of discourses’), which consist of lections organised according to the liturgical year. [...] In order to open the way for a more comprehensive study of the homiletic-hagiographic collections of the Armenian Church, it did not seem useless to publish the description of the items contained in [such] a very big volume’ as the Yerevan ms. 993 of the Matenadaran.² I shall not pretend to fill this gap here; my aim is to suggest some regions in the field where systematic research needs to be done.

I shall first speak about the Armenian terminology of these collections and then show how the literary monument styled čarəntir was created, since we are fortunate enough to be able to date it and localise its origin. After a few words about the relationship between ‘homiliary’ and ‘lectionary’ in Armenian, we shall see how the former increased in many ways, including more and more Armenian compositions, enlarging the number of celebrations, especially by the inclusion of new saints and, as a consequence, of the texts to be read, and introducing texts taken from the rationale of the feasts.

1. Terminology

In the Armenian literature, we find different words that refer to a ‘homiliary’, mainly տառնական (tawnakan), which corresponds to πανηγυρικόν in Greek, and ճառքնորի (čarəntir). For instance, in a medieval list of historians whose texts were translated into Armenian, we read: ‘History of holy

pontiffs and martyrs, today called ճառքնորի (čarəntir). It was translated from various languages by many (translators); later, the holy father Solomon of Mak‘enoc’ collected it in one volume and called it տառնական (tawnakan),³ because up to that time there was no յայսմաւորք (yaysmawowrk) ‘martyrology-synaxary’ among us’.⁴ The first translation into Armenian of a martyrology-synaxary was made from the Greek in Constantinople in the year 991.⁵

Why were homiliaries included in a list of historians, as shown above? The homiliary of Muš (Yerevan, Matenadaran 7729), which was based on the tawnakan by Solomon of Mak‘enoc’, gives us some clues. The title found in the manuscript itself (fol. 3r; Fig. 1) begins with the following words: Սկիզբն պատմութեանց, աստուածարեալ եւ սրբազանազունդ վարդապետութեանց հոգիացելոց արանց, սրբոց հարց, եպիսկոպոսաց եւ վարդապետաց (...) ⁶ ‘Beginning of the histories of the teachings, inspired by God and full of holiness, of the spiritual men, of the holy Fathers, bishops and masters (...)’ (my emphasis). From the title of the homiliary of Muš it is clear that the texts found in it were considered պատմութիւնք (patmowt‘iwnk) ‘histories’.

The passage from the list of historians quoted above is important because it shows that the term ճառքնորի (čarəntir) was used later than the term տառնական (tawnakan) to refer to a homiliary. Actually, we find no example of the term ճառքնորի (čarəntir) in the 357 colophons of Armenian manuscripts (from the fifth to the twelfth century) published by A. Mat‘evosyan.⁷ Here I give the words that can be found

¹ Barré 1969, 607.

² Van Esbroeck and Zanetti 1977, 123 (my translation).

³ About the term տառն (tawn) (‘feast’), see Belardi and Cardona 1968.

⁴ Anasyan 1959, LVI (my translation).

⁵ Mat‘evosyan 1988, no. 86.

⁶ Mat‘evosyan 1988, 31.

⁷ Mat‘evosyan 1988.



Fig. 1: The homiliary of Muš, Yerevan, Matenadaran 7729, fol. 3'.

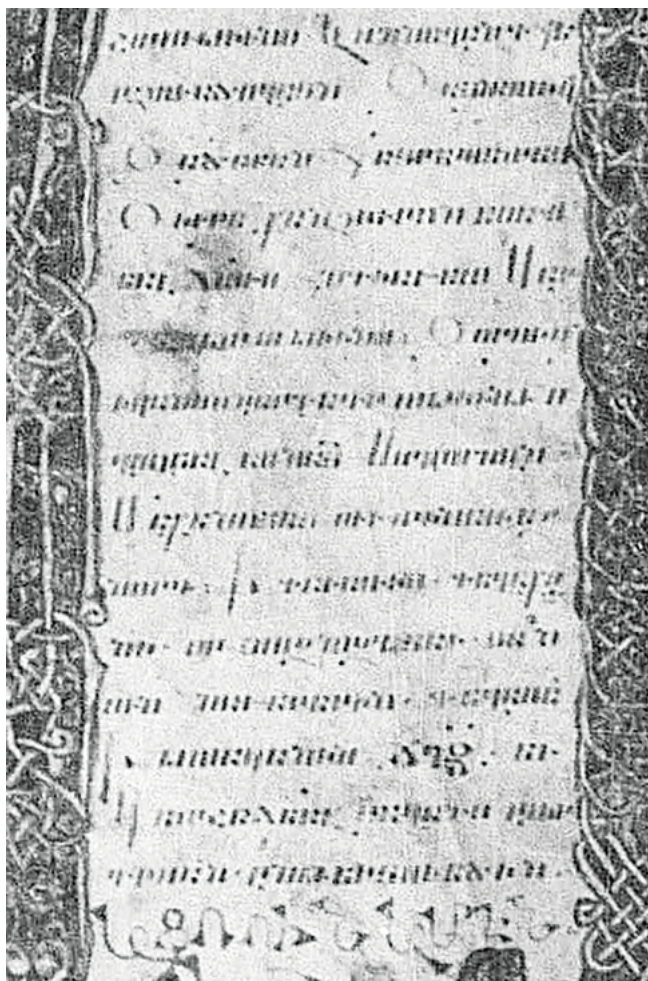


Fig. 2: The homiliary of Muš, Yerevan, Matenadaran 7729, fol. 3^a, detail.

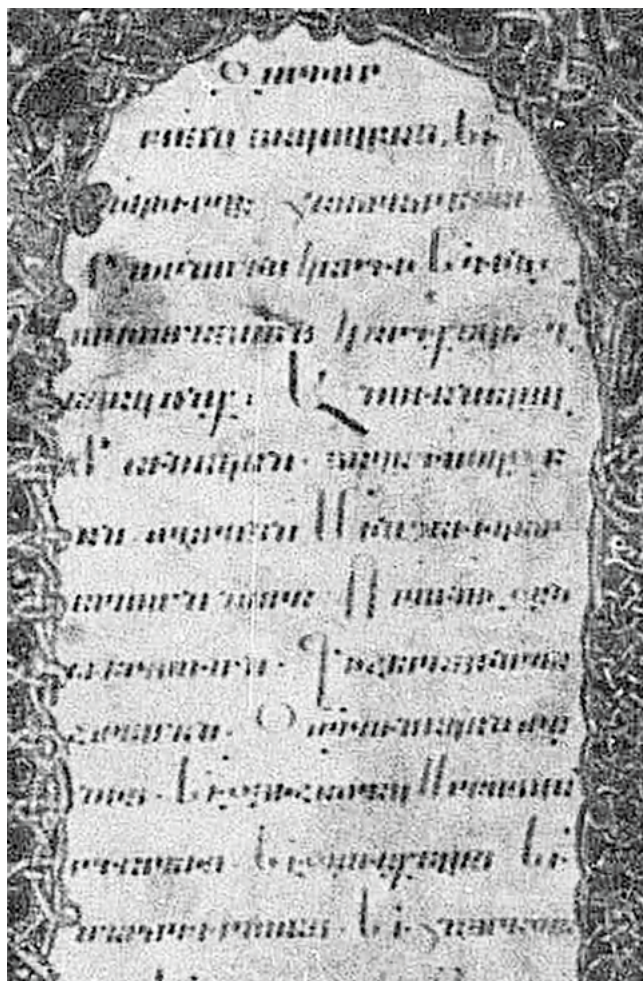


Fig. 3: The homiliary of Muš, Yerevan, Matenadaran 7729, fol. 3^b, detail.

in colophons beside *tawnakan*, all of them in the twelfth century. The most frequently used is also the one with the largest scope, viz. *գիրք* (*girk*) ‘book’.⁸ We also find *կտակ* (*ktak*) ‘testament’, denoting a manuscript as being left as a heritage.⁹ We further find a group of words that indicate that many feasts of martyrs were added to the celebrations of the moveable feasts, viz. *ճառք վկայական հանդիսից* (*čark’ vkayakan handisic*) ‘discourses for the celebrations of martyrs’¹⁰

Since the eleventh century, we find collections of passions that have no more direct links with the liturgical year. So the codex Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arm.

178 (twelfth century) is a *վկայական մատեան* (*vkayakan matean*), i.e. a book of martyrs that, however, is not a ‘martyrologion’ in the liturgical sense of the term, since the texts are not given according to the order of the liturgical year, but alphabetically.¹¹

Beside the *տառնական* (*tawnakan*), we should also mention the existence of another related collection, the *տառնապատճառ* (*tawnapatčar*) ‘rationale of the feasts’¹² or, more explicitly as in the codex Matenadaran 3795,¹³ *տառնից պատճառ եւ ընթերցուածոց մեկնութիւն* (*tawnic’ patčar ew ənt’erc’owacoc’ meknowt’iwn*), ‘cause of the feasts and explanation of the lections’. In a very generic way, the codex Matenadaran 1007 calls this a *գիրք* (*girk*) ‘book’, as

⁸ Yerevan, Matenadaran 3777 (1195 AD); Matenadaran 9296 (twelfth century); Venice, San Lazzaro 205.

⁹ Yerevan, Matenadaran 1522 and 3782, both from the twelfth century. The last one has also the old word *տառնական* (*tawnakan*), while the former uses the less common *տառնացուցակ* (*tawnac’owc’ak*) ‘inventory of feasts’.

¹⁰ Venice, San Lazzaro 201, from the twelfth century.

¹¹ Outtier 1998. Curiously, one short text was copied twice in this manuscript, based on two different models.

¹² On this type of collection, see Ant’abayan 1971.

¹³ 1190 CE (Mat’evosyan 1988, no. 271).

we have already seen above.¹⁴ The first shaping of this type of collection has been attributed to Samuel of Kamrhadzor (tenth–eleventh century); Yovhannes of Gandzak and Vardan Arewelc'i (both thirteenth century) can also be named as compilers of that kind of collections. Unlike the *tawnakan*, it seems that the texts of a *tawnapatčar* were not read during the liturgical celebrations.

2. The first Armenian homiliary

The list of translated historians quoted above names Solomon of Mak'enoc' as the compiler of the first Armenian homiliary in the eighth century.¹⁵ But of course, the Armenians did not wait until the eighth century before they started reading lections during the night services.¹⁶ But until then, there must have been a certain liberty of choice for each church or monastery. We know that it was such for the hymnals before the practice became more unified.¹⁷

The homiliary of Solomon of Mak'enoc' is not preserved as such, but the homiliary of Muš (Matenadaran 7729, cf. above), which was written down between 1200 and 1202, claims to be a copy from the exemplar of Solomon.¹⁸ However, Charles Renoux assumed that between the exemplar of Solomon and the copying of the Muš homiliary, some lections were moved so that we do not have the original state anymore.¹⁹ It is obvious that the contents underwent some

changes from the original of the year 747, as it is the rule for liturgical books.²⁰ This is proven by the presence of lections by the Catholicos Zak'aria (†877) and even three lections taken from the Commentary of St Luke's Gospel by Ignatios Vardapet (thirteenth century).

Matenadaran 7729 is not a pocketbook: its size is 705 × 553 mm, and 603 parchment folios are preserved, so when it was still complete, it must have weighed some 30 kg. It is therefore clear that it must have lain permanently on a lectern. It still contains 342 lections, but must have had about 350 originally. This is not the only giant in this kind of collection. In the year 1307, a manuscript measuring 695 × 465 mm was copied in Crimea. 979 paper folios are preserved, but the last twenty lections are lost and some folios are missing at the beginning as well, so we may assume that there were more than 1,000 folios when it was still complete. Too heavy to be transported, weighing probably around 30 kg, the manuscript was unbound and divided into three volumes, today kept as Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arm. 116, 117 and 118. The manuscript Jerusalem, St James, 1, from the year 1419, contains 521 titles (some of them cover more than one lection). It was copied in Jerusalem, has 940 folios measuring 570 × 445 mm, and has been divided into four volumes. The manuscript Matenadaran 993, copied in 1456, contains 445 lections.²¹

Having studied the decoration of the homiliary of Muš, Mat'evosyan linked it to the scriptorium of Awag Vank' in Upper Armenia.²²

3. Relationship between homiliary and lectionary and sources of the homiliary

The title of the homiliary of Muš clearly shows a relationship between the homiliary and the lectionary: 'These lections from the theologian pontiffs, each of them (are) teachings spoken by the (Holy) Ghost, which the man of God Solomon, head of the community of Mak'enoc', collected in well-ordered disposition (...) in the year 196 (= 747 AD). And he made them fit with the disposition of the lectionary set out by SS James and Cyril, according to the same order, calling these ecclesiastical ordinations *tawnakank'*, (extending) from the beginning of the year to its end, which contain what

¹⁴ Dated to the eleventh–twelfth centuries by Ant'abyan (1971) or to the twelfth century by Mat'evosyan 1988.

¹⁵ See Van Esbroeck 1969.

¹⁶ See Renoux 1993 as to the Palestinian origin of the Armenian hymnary.

¹⁷ A text by Kirakos Ganjakec'i (thirteenth century) is very telling in this matter: '[About 650] it happened to him [the Catholic Nerses Šinot] to be in Bagowan for the Feast of the Transfiguration with a multitude coming from all over the country. The singing of the hymns had multiplied in the churches of the Armenians, to the point that the cantor of one region did not know those of another. And they pronounced the *Harc'* [hymn of the morning office] of the Transfiguration, and the other group could not answer. And they multiplied many hymns, and they did not know them any more. Then the patriarch Nerses, with the agreement of all, chose what was useful and profitable, so that there was in all churches every day a unique liturgy according to the mystery of the day. They chose wise men to ramble throughout the country of the Armenians. They established the same disposition which is still that of today' (Kirakos Ganjakec'i, *Patmowt' iwn Hayoc'* [History of the Armenians], ed. Melik'-Ohanjanyan 1961, 61–62; my translation). The tradition attributes the act of unification to Barseł Čon (seventh century?).

¹⁸ For a full description of the manuscript, see Van Esbroeck 1984a; on the structure of the homiliary, see Van Esbroeck 1984b.

¹⁹ Renoux 1986–1987, 132, n. 57.

²⁰ See Zanetti and Voicu 2015.

²¹ See the description in Van Esbroeck and Zanetti 1977.

²² Mat'evosyan 1969; on this monastery, see Thierry 1988–1989, 409–417.

is read during the night service, for the feasts of the Lord and for the commemoration of the holy prophets and apostles, and martyrs and pontiffs and emperors'.²³

Indeed, in his 1987 study, Dom Renoux showed very well that the titles of the liturgical sections of the homiliary were borrowed from the lectionary and that the choice of lections in the homiliary was largely influenced by the Gospels read in the lectionary.²⁴

Dom Renoux also proved that the old Armenian lectionary was translated from the Greek lectionary of Jerusalem, probably between the years 418 and 422.²⁵ However, whereas it is clear today that the lectionary, the ritual, the book of hymns and the breviary all drew from Hierosolymitan Greek sources, this is not the case for the homiliary. For his compilation, Solomon used texts already extant in Armenian. This is why the texts are less typically Palestinian in it than in the Georgian *mravaltavi*.²⁶

4. The enrichment of the homiliary

In the course of time, new texts were added to the original homiliary of Solomon. According to the description by Michel Van Esbroeck (1984a), John Chrysostom takes the lion's share of the homiliary of Muš, with 81 lections (including some *pseudo-chrysostomica*) out of 342 (82 if we count the anonymous lection no. 184, the beginning of which is by Chrysostom while the ending part is by Severian of Gabala). We have already seen that homilies by Catholicos Zak'aria and Ignatios Vardapet were inserted later. The procedure is obvious: a new text, by a younger author, is normally added at the end of a section. Van Esbroeck remarked that this enrichment is compensated by an abridgement of lections, which are otherwise often longer in the homiliary of Muš than in later homiliaries. As in Matenadaran 3782 (fifteenth century), nos 20–25, long lections are generally cut

into pieces: two for the Gospel of Nicodemus, five for the homily on the Nativity of Christ attributed to Ephrem the Syrian (in fact by Jacob of Sarug).

At least since the twelfth century (Matenadaran 948, of the year 1196), we observe an 'Armenisation' of the lections, with the introduction of the homilies known under the name of Johannes Mandakuni (also transmitted under the names of Ephrem and John Chrysostom), an Armenian author from the seventh century. We find them, for instance, in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, arm. 116–118 and Matenadaran 993. In Paris, arm. 116–118, we also find seven homilies attributed to Theophile, a disciple of John Chrysostom; these homilies, unknown in Greek, could have been composed by an Armenian.

Another way of enrichment consists of introducing new celebrations, especially for saints. So we find 26 celebrations in the homiliary of Muš, but 141 in the manuscript Paris, arm. 116–118, including many Armenian saints.

A third way has not been noticed up to now. It consists of introducing into the homiliary explanations taken from the rationale, ten of which are to be found in Matenadaran 993.

Sometimes a scribe changes the presentation and provides a new structure. So, in the manuscript Paris, arm. 120 (fourteenth century), we read first the homilies for the whole liturgical year, including homilies by Zak'aria Catholicos and Ignatios Vardapet (fols 1–151), then the lives of the saints in alphabetical order (fols 152–519).²⁷

5. By way of conclusion

Liturgy is always alive, as the study of liturgical books shows very clearly: there are no two identical homiliaries. The body grows but keeps its original frame: it is still possible to follow the order of the lectionary of Jerusalem, and it is still possible to find fixed units, for example the lections for the deceased (this time without correspondence in the lectionary).²⁸

The origin of the Armenian homiliary is Armenian, even though it is in a way similar to the Greek *panegyrika* (especially to 'type C' of Albert Ehrhard²⁹). This is also the case with the Georgian *mravaltavi*, and we could say about the Armenian what Michel van Esbroeck wrote about

²³ Զայնոսիկ զաստուածաբան հայրապետա, գիրքանշիրսն ասացեալ ճառս հոգիախաւս վարդապետութիւնս, զորս ի կանոն կարգադրութիւն ժողովեալ առն Աստուծոյ՝ Մաքնոցաց ուխտին առաջնորդ (...) ի թուական ճՂԶ: Եւ պատշաճեալ յաղագս ըստ դրման ընթերցուածին, զոր ի սրբոյն Յակովբայ եւ ի Կիլղէ հաստատեցաւ ընդ նմին կարգի եղին, զոր ի սմայս են կարգք եկեղեցականք անուանելով Տաւնականք, յաղագս սկզբան տարոյն մինչեւ ի կատարումն նորա, որ ունի զընթերցումն գիշերային պաշտաման, զտէրունական տաւնից, եւ զյիշատակ սրբոց մարգարէից եւ զառաքելոց, եւ մարտիրոսաց, եւ հայրապետաց եւ թագաւորաց.

²⁴ Renoux 1987.

²⁵ Renoux wrote extensively about the models of the Armenian liturgical books, see for instance Renoux 2003.

²⁶ See Jost Gippert, this volume.

²⁷ See Muyldermans 1961.

²⁸ Lections nos 100–127 in the homiliary of Muš and nos 85–107 in ms. Paris arm. 110 were divided into four parts in ms. Matenadaran 993, as nos 118–123, 125–126, 137–145 and 147–150.

²⁹ Ehrhard 1937–1952, II/1 (*Fünfter Abschnitt*), 65–91.

the Georgian: ‘Without any doubt, these correspondences [between the Greek and the Georgian] show evidence of the high age of the separation of the two traditions and the long isolated evolution of the old Georgian homiliary.’ The prehistory of the Armenian *tōnakan* before the eighth century still needs to be studied.

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Homiletic Collections in Greek and Oriental Manuscripts – Histories of Books and Text Transmission from a Comparative Perspective

by Jost Gippert and Caroline Macé

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The Earliest Greek Homilies

by Sever J. Voicu

Fig. 1: © St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai, Egypt.

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Gregory of Nyssa's Hagiographic Homilies: Authorial Tradition and Hagiographical-Homiletic Collections. A Comparison

by Matthieu Cassin

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Unedited Sermons Transmitted under the Name of John Chrysostom in Syriac Panegyric Homilies

by Sergey Kim

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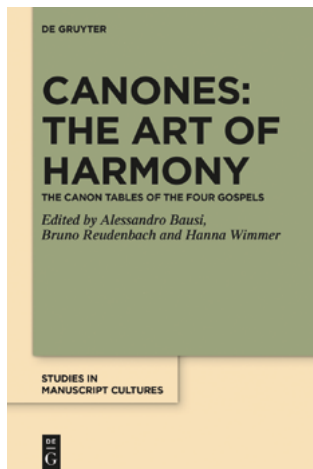
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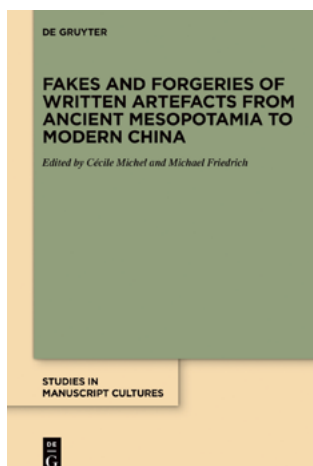


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