

THE ARMENIAN ANCIENT PAPER MANUSCRIPT

Taking into account the exceptional value of the writing material and scientific materials of the Armenian ancient paper manuscript (981), Matenadaran's directorate decided to publish it with complete copying, decoding and study on the occasion of the millennium in 1981. This laborious and titanic work was entrusted to Artashes Matevosyan and it took the scientist more than 15 years. The point is that the 1000-year-old paper, which was made in Armenia (as it turned out later), was poorly maintained. The writing material of several pages of the manuscript had been deteriorated and eaten away with ink and as a result only outlines had remained. One of the reasons for the publication of the manuscript in facsimile was that very circumstance (as there was no possibility to prevent the further deterioration of paper at that time). Because of publication difficulties, lack of material resources and a number of other reasons, it was not possible to publish the work on time, but it was fulfilled after the independence of Armenia with the support of Armenian diaspora benefactors in 1995 and 1997. The glorious book was published in two large and thick volumes.

Մատենան գիտութեան եւ հաւատոյ Դաւթի քահանայի (նմանահանություն), (առաջաբանը Արտաշէս Մաթևոսյանի), հատոր 1, Երևան 1995, 772 էջ:

Մատենան գիտութեան եւ հաւատոյ Դաւթի քահանայի (ուսումնասիրություն, վերծանություն, ծանոթագրություններ Արտաշէս Մաթևոսյանի), հատոր 2, Երևան, 1997, 570 էջ:

The Book of Knowledge and Faith by Priest Davit (facsimile), (prologue by Artashes Matevosyan), Volume 1, Yerevan, 1995, 772 p.

The Book of Knowledge and Faith by Priest Davit (study, decoding, notes by Artashes Matevosyan), Volume 2, Yerevan, 1997, 570 pages.

A. Matevosyan's article, presented below, was published long before the publication of books in a journal "Science and Technique" in 1982 and it represents the Armenian ancient paper manuscript in a popular way.

Artashes Matevosyan

MATENADARAN. MANUSCRIPT No. 2679

Manuscript No. 2679 of Mashtots Matenadaran stands out among the thousands of valuable monuments of Armenian people manuscript culture due to its exceptional

importance and significance. It does not shine either at its thin and processed parchment, or at “severe” Yerkatagir (iron script, երկաթագիր), golden ornaments and precious metallic bejeweled cover.

Its writing material is a paper which that time was called a “poor map”, and today it is the Armenian oldest paper manuscript and one of the oldest in the world.

The script of the manuscript is Bolorgir (round script, բոլորգիր) and that time it was called “nonsensical script”. Today it is the first Armenian manuscript written in Bolorgir, which became the main script of written and printed books.

It is the first manuscript collection with secular content, which contains a large number of scientific materials, many of which, including some authors, are only found there and remain till today.

However, the manuscript, which united two independent collections or bibliographic works, is most valuable as a collection created for certain purpose in the 10th century. The creator is Priest Davit, the bibliographer of the 10th century and who has become famous one thousand years later.

Now we will take a closer look at the manuscript.

The medieval manuscript is a complex monument of material and spiritual culture and embodies history and thinking, the writing and the art of writing not only of time it was created, but also of previous time (sometimes even later).

Many of the manuscripts are similar to those architectural monuments which have survived to our times with restoration in different styles. The historical monument can only be appreciated after comparing and revealing all changes as well as the separately restored manuscripts and collections from a textual and paleographic point of view.

In that sense, the collection № 2679 of Matenadaran is typical for Armenian ancient paper manuscripts.

Back in the Middle Ages, manuscript had served as a model for whole or fragmentary copies.

Until the 19th century the manuscript was in one of the monasteries of Baghesh, then it was taken to Karin and became part of a collection of the head of the diocese, Karapet Archbishop Bagratuni.

In 1829 with a part of inhabitants of Karin, headed by the same Archbishop, the manuscript was taken to Akhaltsikhe. After the death of the Archbishop in 1856, his collection was brought to Etchmiadzin in 1869. A new collection was created from the manuscripts, obtained through the efforts of Catholicos Gevorg IV (1866-

1882) and also from the manuscripts which were brought from Akhaltsikhe, among which the above-mentioned manuscript was number 102. The new collection was called "Gevorgyan". When, the manuscript was included in the Gevorgyan Collection of Etchmiadzin Matenadaran in 1881, it was nine hundred years old. Impressive antiquity, fact of being written on a paper, diversity and abundance of secular and religious materials attract the attention of various specialists, who publish and study some materials from the manuscript.

One of the first researchers of the manuscript Galust Ter-Mkrtchyan considers it "well-known and the most precious antiquity", H. Tashyan is of the same opinion. G. Hovsepyan finds that the manuscript deserves attention not only as the most ancient paper manuscript of the 10th century, but also as a script monument with rich content.

Nevertheless, the Armenian ancient paper manuscript, as a separate handwritten monument, in its entirety has not been studied and published yet. The gospels of Lazaryan and Etchmiadzin were in good condition in comparison with it. Their facsimile were implemented in Moscow in 1899 and in Paris in 1920, respectively. Now it is the time for the oldest paper manuscript to be facsimiled on its millennium anniversary.

The size of the manuscript is 19.5x28.5cm and 360 pages. Until now it is considered as one, consisting of two parts, and written at different times. The book has missing pages at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. The book was intertwined several times and the real cover was made in 1585.

The first part, which was previously a separate manuscript, includes pages from 1-155. It was written in one column by scribe Ghukas (Luke) in 981 at the behest of his father, Priest Davit and materials were chosen by him as well. At the beginning of a manuscript there are no fascicles A-E (Ա-Ե, 1-5). At first, it had 210 (21x10) pages. 55 pages are missing.

The scribe of the second part was also Ghukas and materials were chosen by his father, Priest Davit, who was also the receiver. It begins with page 156. In the 11th century, after the first three pages of this part, 38 pages were removed and replaced with new originals.

From the first instance, the manuscript stands out with its writing material. The paper is the youngest material, which replaced the parchment and already has history of two thousand years. Its homeland is China. According to legend, the first paper was made by Cai-Lun in 101. A paper was made in Samarkand too. It was

brought there by Chinese captives. Arabs mastered the craft of paper processing in the 8th century, improved the technique and became the main manufacturer and exporter of paper. Baghdad and Damascus became the centers of paper production. The oldest known paper is dated from 800. Several paper manuscripts, written by the end of the 10th century, were maintained: ancient Arabic (866), Cairo(878), Oxford University Library(974), and the Library of Leipzig University(990). Against this background, every single manuscript, written in the 10th century, can be considered as one of the oldest in the world.

The first part of the paper manuscript No 2679 of Mashtots Matenadaran is the fourth on this list with its antiquity, and the second part is the fifth. Incidentally, from the 10th century two more Armenian paper manuscripts has reached us. They are also in one cover and are written in Vaspurakan and Bagrevandin 999. The manuscript is in Mkhitaryan Matenadaran in Venice (No. 953). Only this number of paper manuscripts, written and maintained in Armenia, shows that there were far more manuscripts in Armenia and the paper material was made there.

The results of the physicochemical analysis of paper and ink carried out in the laboratories of the Institute of Fine Organic Chemistry and Geology of Academy of Sciences of Armenian SSR (Headed by Candidate of Chemical Sciences L. Khazhakyan) showed that the material of the manuscript and ink were made in the same geographical environment - in Armenia, which was proved by comparing the relative number of elements. Historical, philological and textual analysis of the manuscript revealed that it had been written in the capital Ani and its surroundings, therefore, ink and paper had been made there. Technical condition of paper (uneven processing, the presence of parts of a raw flax stem on some pages, mismatch between ink and paper, which was the cause of that fact that there are many pages, that had been eaten away with ink), shows that paper makers did not have much experience in its manufacture and that it was made from flax stem. Shirak was famous for flax cultivation and the city of Ani was known for extracting flax oil and manufacturing of linen fabric as well. So, in Ani, which was known for its crafts and artisans, they could make a paper. Thus, toomany crafts of Ani is added one more: paper making.

In terms of paleography ancient paper manuscript is very important. It is the first survived manuscript, written in Bolorgir. Mistakenly it was called "Yerkatagir" or average Mesropyan Yerkatagir".Bolorgirand other types of scripts were created at

the same time, thus, it is as ancient as others. At first it has served as a script of common use but later also as a script of writing. Using cheap paper they wrote manuscripts in simple and popular types of writing scripts like Bolorgir and Shkhagir (written with a reed or a piece of thin wood or metal with a point at one end), and It is no coincidence that survived ancient paper manuscripts (in Mashtots Matenadaran and Mkhitaryan Matenadaran in Venice) were written in Bolorgir and Shkhagir and according to scribes "on a poor map in a large, nonsensical script". In the ancient paper manuscript the Bolorgir is used in two sizes: medium and small. They used not only Bolorgir but also Yerkatagir as an initial.

In the manuscript there are both hieroglyphs and ligatures. In some calendar sections the words sun and moon are written only in hieroglyphs, but the word «ամ» (am, year) is often written in ligature. The Manuscript is rich in punctuation marks, which are used in various ways and are of great importance for studying punctuation.

The dates are written under the title and sometimes between two colons.

Sacred names are also used under the title (Jesus, Christ, Lord, God) but here we meet another way of contraction.

The Armenian ancient paper manuscript is especially noticeable in its rich content. Davit's manuscripts are the first collections, created by the author (the first collection principally contains scientific and historical materials, and the second one - historical and dogmatic).

There have been maintained the colophons of manuscripts. About the first manuscript (981) Priest Davit wrote that he had gathered the collection of some objections of Athanasius of Alexandria, some materials from Andreas's work and like the latter, calendar complete work or parts of it, which he had created as a textbook for teaching his son and others.

From the colophon of the second manuscript, we learn that Priest Davit has created the collection to support the dogmatic struggle of the Armenian Church and reject Chalcedonian Christianity, for which he used many Armenian and foreign works, including some of the parts of historiographical, metrological and numismatic works. As such, they contain a great deal of historical, philosophical, calendrical, cosmic, metrological, and dogmatic materials, including rare bibliographical works, which are unique and remarkable with their thousand year old writing.

To give an idea of the richness of the material contained in the manuscript, we list only the names of the authors whose works have been used for extracting

materials on a number of occasions (the names of authors is in alphabetical order): Patriarchs of Rome: Athanasius of Alexandria, chronicler Andreas, Apollinarius, Arius, philosopher Aristides of Athens, philosopher Aristotle, Basil of Cesarea, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Gregory of Nyssa, Eñios, Epiphanius of Cyprus, Ephrem the Syrian, Eunomius, chronicler Eusebius of Cesarea, Bishop Zenobius, Priest Theodorus, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Eunomius, Origenes, Peter of Alexandria, philosopher Severus Secundus, Timothy Aelurus, Philo the Hebrew, Patriarchs of Rome P'eleka and Utała etc.

Most of their works are translated from Greek, and some of the originals do not reach us in other languages.

The list of Armenian authors is also impressive. Some of them appear in this manuscript for the first time: Grigor Partev (4th century), Yeghishe, Movses Khorenatsi, Hovhannes Mandakuni (5th century), Atanas Taronatsi, Petros Syunetsi, Davit Harkatsi (6th century), Vrtanes Kertogh, Anania Shirakatsi (7th century), Hovhan Odznetsi, Stepanos Syunetsi (8th century), Priest Tachat, Archimandrite Tovma, Archimandrite Timoteos, Prince Artavazd Mazazunyats, Prince Atom Andzevatsyats (9-10th centuries), Priest Davit, Ghukas, the creator of manuscript and son of Priest Davit (10-11th centuries), from whom there are also separate works in the manuscript.

The manuscript No. 2679 of Matenadaran contains an impressive part of historical chronological, calendar chronological, historical ecclesiastical and historical cultural works. There are also many scientific works, devoted to cosmological, astronomical, geographical matters, the most valuable of which are the works of the great Armenian scientist Anania Shirakatsi, whose works we meet here for the first time.

Alongside with calendrical and cosmological materials there are many other translated works, some of which Shirakatsi has used in his "Knnikon" (Քննիկոն). The latter was near the city of Ani, in Argena, in the Armenian Catholicosate.

The paper manuscripts are an important historical cultural phenomenon in the Armenian reality. In the 9 -10th centuries being freed from heavy Arabic domination, lasting two centuries, Armenia had a short period of economic growth. Cities were being established and developed, urban life, crafts and trade were being activated as well. All this, in turn, contributed to the secularization of

Armenian culture, which was reflected in different spheres of spiritual life. In literature it began with works by Grigor Narekatsi.

GrigorMagistros's pedagogical activity (11th century) plays a significant role in the field of pedagogy and upbringing, which is based on Anania

Shirakatsi's "Knnikon" (Քննիկոն) with teaching quadrivium: arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy.

The demand to have manuscript and reading increases, a manuscript gradually becomes part of common life. The process of secularization also spreads on the art of writing. Manuscripts of secular nature are being written, they are written on a paper and in Bolorgir. The commonly used script, which was for ordinary literature became an official script and a parchment was replaced with a cheap, affordable and more common material, a paper.

Schools are expanding in Armenia, monasteries and adjacent schools are founded, the main business of which is teaching and copying of manuscripts. More known among those schools is the school of Kamrjadzor in Arsharunyats province, on the banks of the river Araks. It was a restored school, which had been established by two students of Mashtots, Tatul and Varos still in the 5th century, as well as Horomos monastery, near Ani, on the banks of Akhuryan, Narekavank (Monastery of Narek), in the south of Lake Van, where a genius poet Grigor Narekatsi lived and created, the schools of Khladzor and Hndzuts in Bardzr Hayk (Upper Armenia), Dprevank in Shirak, TsakhatsKar in VayotsDzor, Haghbat and Sanahin in Gugark etc. At these schools history, philosophy, arithmetic, song-music, art of script, miniature painting, and calendar were studied together with theology.

At the monasteries and schools were founded Matenadarans (repository of manuscripts). Among them was particularly popular Matenadaran of Argina (Shirak), which was founded by Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni and enriched with numerous and varied manuscripts. At one of these schools Priest Davit with his son Ghukas lived and created, in all probability, in Argina, because several hundreds of materials from different manuscripts and works, and also materials from "Knnikon" (Քննիկոն) of Anania Shirakatsi can be found only in Argina, where the patriarchal rich Matenadaran was located.

Manuk Abeghyan noticed a change of life and worldview in the Armenian reality at the end of the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century, connected with the development of cities and urban life and, as a result, "the secular element gradually goes into church literature, new literary themes and forms in new

language emerge until our literature is secularized...".As he wrote, in the first half of the 11th century there was a great change in our life and thought. The religious and monastic spirit was gradually retreating giving place to secular spirit in culture and literature. The popular writing material and script, secular and scientific materials of collections also testify to the process of secularization.

The first collection of Priest Davit contains more secular and scientific materials than dogmatic. 2/3 of the collection are cosmic, astronomical, calendrical, historical chronological works and only 1/3 are dogmatic. The second collection is created to fight against Chalcedonian Christianity and defend Orthodoxy. The author called it «Ծաղիկփաւստոյ» ("Flowers of Faith"). Part of this are also historical, chronological, geometric, arithmetic, biographical materials and extracts from scholar archimandrites, Church Fathers and also from other works. Priest Davit was fighting not only with the works of Church Fathers and other religious works but also by showing activities of historic personalities, their speeches and encouraging stories, to make an impact on the opponent.

"Science and Technique", 1982, No. 4, p. 1-6.

English translation by Anna Yepremyan