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## HITTITE ‘WATER’

ALWIN KLOEKHORST

Although Jos Weitenberg mainly occupied himself with Armenology, his linguistic career started with Hittite studies. Especially his contributions on the Old Hittite traces of a three member nominal classification system<sup>1</sup> are outstanding, although unfortunately their implications for the interpretation of the PIE gender system have not yet received the attention they deserve. By dedicating this paper to him, I would like to express my gratitude to Jos Weitenberg for guiding my steps into Hittite studies.

The most important attestations of the paradigm of the Hittite word for ‘water’ can be found in Rieken 1999: 292:<sup>2</sup>

nom.-acc.sg.	<i>ṽa-a-tar</i> (OS), <i>ṽa-tar</i> (OS)
gen.sg.	<i>ú-ṽi<sub>5</sub>-te-na-as</i> (MH/NS)
dat.-loc.sg.	<i>ú-i-te-e-ni</i> (MH/MS), <i>ú-e-te-ni</i> (MH/NS)
all.sg.	<i>ú-e-te-na</i> (MH/NS)
instr.	<i>ú-i-ta-an-ta</i> (OS), <i>ú-i-da-an-da</i> (OH/NS), <i>ú-e-da-an-da</i> (MH/NS), <i>ú-e-da-an-ta</i> (undat.), <i>ú-i-te-ni-it</i> (MH/NS)
erg.	<i>ú-e-ti-na-an-za(-)</i> (MH/NS)
nom.-acc.pl.	<i>ú-i-ta-a-ar</i> (OS), <i>ú-e-da-ar</i> (OS), <i>ú-e-da-a-ar</i> (NH)
dat.-loc.pl.	<i>ú-i-te-na-as</i> (MH/NS)

The fact that the Hittite paradigm shows nom.-acc.sg. *ṽātar* alongside oblique *ṽe/iten-* has since Schindler 1975: 4-5 been explained as reflecting a PIE static paradigm. The idea is that the *ṽad-* : *ṽed-* ablaut must be old. Schindler 1975: 4 states ‘il est impossible que l’alternance *wa-* : *we-* soit un développement interne en hittite’ and assumes it reflects PIE *\*ṽod-* : *\*ṽed-*. In his view, these full grades must have had the accent, which points to zero grades in the suffix and the ending. This leads to the reconstruction of an original static paradigm nom.-acc.sg. *\*ṽód-r*, gen.sg. *\*ṽéd-n-s*. The Hitt. nom.-acc.pl. *ṽe/idār* is considered to reflect the old collective *\*ṽédōr*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Weitenberg 1987 and 1995.

<sup>2</sup> See l.c. for full attestation places. For the abbreviations, see the Bibliography

<sup>3</sup> Schindler 1975: 4.

According to this theory, the synchronic Hittite paradigm must be due to a pre-Hittite remodeling on the basis of the paradigm of ‘fire’ which has a proterodynamic inflection: in analogy to nom.sg. *pahhur*, gen.sg. *pahhuenas* (< \**péh<sub>2</sub>-ur*, \**ph<sub>2</sub>-uén-s*) the original paradigm \**uód-r*, \**uéd-n-s* was altered to attested *ua-a-tar*, *ú-úi<sub>5</sub>-te-na-as*.

There are some flaws in this theory. Firstly, the reconstruction of the static paradigm is based on the Hittite material only. Although nom.-acc. sg. \**uód-r* is reflected in other IE languages as well (e.g. Goth. *watō* < \**uod-ōr*), an *e*-grade form \**uéd-n-* is not attested outside Hittite<sup>4</sup>.

Secondly, the idea that the paradigm of ‘water’ took over the inflection of ‘fire’ in pre-Hittite is not likely. Some facts cannot be explained by this assumption. For instance, in the paradigm of ‘water’ the archaic instr. *uelidanta* (< \**-én-t*) is often found (from OS onwards) whereas the younger form *uidenit* is found in NS texts only. The paradigm of ‘fire’<sup>5</sup> however, only has instr. *pahhuenit* (oldest attestation MH/MS). It is difficult to explain how ‘water’ obtained the archaic instr.sg. *uelidanta* if it took over its inflection from the word for ‘fire’, of which no \*\**pahhuanita* is attested.

Finally, Schindler’s remark that the *ua-* : *ue-* ablaut cannot be due to an inner-Hittite development, is incorrect, as we will see later on.

Let us first look critically at the Hittite forms themselves. We notice that the vowel of the stem is written *e* as well as *i*, whereas the vowel of the suffix is written *e* throughout almost all the attestations.<sup>6</sup> Especially the spelling dat.-loc.sg. *ú-i-te-e-ni* indicates that the suffix syllable was accented: *ue/idén-*. This is generally accepted and used to explain the *e/i*-spelling of the stem vowel: unaccented (pretonic) \**e* (sometimes) yields *i* (cf. Melchert 1994: 101). In this manner, *uitenas* is considered to reflect \**uedénos*, and similarly *uidār* < \**uedōr*.

The *e/i*-spelling in Hittite, however, is not only used to denote unaccented (pretonic) \**e*, but is used to write the anaptyctic vowel /ə/ as well.<sup>7</sup> We shall return to this point later.

<sup>4</sup> Arm. *get* ‘river’ is sometimes considered to reflect \**uedō* from \**uedōr*, but must reflect an *s*-stem \**uéd-os-* (cf. e.g. Olsen 1999: 45-6).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. CHD.

<sup>6</sup> Erg. *ú-e-ti-na-an-za(-)* probably bore its accent on the ending *-anz*, which caused pretonic weakening of the \**e* of the suffix to *i*. Instr. *uelidanta* shows *a* because of the sound law \**eNT* > Hitt. *aNT* (cf. Melchert 1994: 134-5).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Kimball 1999: 193-9.

It is important to mention that within Hittite no initial alternations are allowed: all forms within a paradigm had to start with the same consonant. All pre-Hittite sound laws that would have caused initial alternation were blocked. The participle *\*lg<sup>h</sup>ént-*, for instance, should regularly have given Hitt. *\*\*alkant-* in isolation. As a part of the paradigm of *lāki* 'to fell' (*\*lóg<sup>h</sup>-ei*), however, it yielded *lagant-* [*l<sub>3</sub>gánt-*]. In 3pl.pres. *\*h<sub>1</sub>sénti* 'they are', the preconsonantal *\*h<sub>1</sub>* should regularly have dropped (cf. *\*h<sub>1</sub>lenk<sup>h</sup>-* > Hitt. *link-* 'to swear' ~ Gk. ἐλένχω 'to accuse').<sup>8</sup> In analogy to 3sg.pres. *\*h<sub>1</sub>és-ti* the laryngeal was restored, after which /ʔésti/ : /ʔsénti/ yielded Hitt. *e-es-zi* : *a-sa-an-zi*.

In my view, this tendency to avoid initial alternation explains the fact that in Hittite (consonantal) *u-* never alternates with (vocalic) *#u-*.<sup>9</sup> This indicates that forms with original ablaut *\*ue/oC-* : *\*#uC-* must have undergone analogic reshaping. For instance, 3pl.pres.act. *\*ulh<sub>2</sub>énti* 'they hit' should regularly have yielded Hitt. *\*\*ulhanzi*. As part of the paradigm of *u<sub>3</sub>alh-* (*\*u<sub>3</sub>elh<sub>2</sub>-*), however, it developed to *u<sub>3</sub>alhanzi* /u<sub>3</sub>lhánzi/. The same goes for 3pl.pres.act. *u<sub>3</sub>arpanzi* 'they wash' /u<sub>3</sub>rpánzi/ from *\*urpénti*. In isolation it should have become Hitt. *\*\*urpanzi*, but it was secondarily changed to *u<sub>3</sub>arpanzi* in analogy to 3sg. *u<sub>3</sub>arpzi* < *\*uérp-ti*.

The schwa that emerges between *u* and the following consonant is spelled *a* in these verbs because the latter consonant is a resonant. Whenever the second consonant is a stop, however, we find the *e/i*-schwa. For instance, Hittite *u<sub>3</sub>ekzi* : *u<sub>3</sub>ekanzi* 'to wish' must reflect the PIE root *\*u<sub>3</sub>ek-*.<sup>10</sup> In order to explain the *e*-grade in 3pl. *u<sub>3</sub>ekanzi*, it is generally assumed that the Hittite paradigm reflects acrostatic inflection *\*u<sub>3</sub>ēk-* : *\*u<sub>3</sub>ek-*.<sup>11</sup> This is contradicted, however, by the fact that all other IE

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Melchert 1994: 66-7.

<sup>9</sup> The seemingly alternation *u-* : *u-* in the verbs *u<sub>3</sub>as(i<sub>3</sub>a)-* 'to buy' and *us(sa)nija-* 'to put up for sale' cannot be used as an argument, as these forms do not belong to one paradigm. The verb *u<sub>3</sub>as(i<sub>3</sub>a)-* reflects *\*u<sub>3</sub>os(e<sub>3</sub>e)-*, whereas *us(sa)nija-* is derived from a noun *\*us-no-* 'sale' (Neu 1980: 87-8). This *\*usno-i<sub>3</sub>e-* is very archaic, as is shown by the fact that after Anatolian split off from PIE, the word was innovated to *\*u<sub>3</sub>osno-i<sub>3</sub>e-*, which yielded Skt. *vasnayáti* 'to higgie' and Gk. ὠνέομαι 'to buy' (through *\*u<sub>3</sub>osn-e<sub>3</sub>e-*, cf. Beekes 1995: 230).

The *u-* : *u-* alternations in *urāni* besides *u<sub>3</sub>arāni* 'burns', *ustul-* besides *u<sub>3</sub>astul-* 'sin' and *urrir* beside *u<sub>3</sub>arrir* 'they helped' are of another category (cf. Neu 1980: 87). For instance, the occasional spelling of 3sg.pres. *u<sub>3</sub>arāni* 'burns' as *urāni* is due to the fact that the verb *u<sub>3</sub>ar-* is a middle with zero grade-inflection: 3sg. *\*u<sub>3</sub>rH-ó*, 3pl. *u<sub>3</sub>rH-ént-o*. The form *u<sub>3</sub>arāni* (dissimilatory from *\*u<sub>3</sub>arāri*) is therefore to be interpreted as /u<sub>3</sub>rāni/. The alternation *u<sub>3</sub>arāni* : *urāni* does not reflect zero vs. full grade, but rather shows different ways of spelling /u<sub>3</sub>(<sub>ə</sub>)rāni/.

<sup>10</sup> In Kloekhorst 2008: 996-7 this verb is treated in more detail.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Oettinger 1979: 17.

languages point to an original root present.<sup>12</sup> It is therefore *a priori* more desirable to assume that also Hitt. *uekzi* : *uekanzi* ultimately stems from *\*uek-ti* : *\*uk-énti*. In the case of the singular form, the equation is clear: PIE *\*uek-ti* > Hitt. *uekzi*. The development of the plural form must be explained as follows. At the time that the difference between *u* and *u* became phonemic, 3pl. *\*uk-énti* was altered to *\*ukénti* in analogy to 3sg. *\*uekti* in order to avoid initial paradigmatical alternation. This *\*ukénti* automatically developed a schwa between *u* and *k*, yielding attested *uekanzi* /*uəkanzi*/.

Let us now return to the paradigm of ‘water’. We saw that Schindler’s most important argument for reconstructing *\*uód-r*, *\*ued-n-s* is the fact that in his view the *uad-* : *ued-* alternation cannot be an inner-Hittite development. This argument now has become invalid, as we have seen that in the form *\*uk-énti* an *e/i*-schwa emerged in order to avoid initial alternation, giving Hitt. *uekanzi*. In my view, this scenario is possible for the oblique forms of ‘water’ as well: Hitt. *ued-* actually denotes /*uəd-*/ < *\*ud-* in which form the *e/i*-schwa emerged in order to avoid initial paradigmatical alternation with nom.-acc.sg. *\*uódr* > Hitt. *uātar*. This interpretation fits in well with the observation that the vowel of the stem syllable of these forms is written *e* as well as *i*, a spelling alternation which is typical for the *e/i*-schwa.

To sum up: at the (Pre-Hittite) time that *u* and *u* became phonemically distinct, the original proterodynamic paradigm *\*uód-r*, *\*ud-én-s* was changed to *\*uódr*, *\*udéns* in order to avoid initial paradigmatical alternation.<sup>13</sup> These latter forms regularly yielded Hitt. *uātar*, *uītenas* : /*uāt,r*/, /*uədenas*/.<sup>14</sup>

Considering the stem vowel *e/i* to reflect /ə/, we now rather interpret the Hittite material as follows:

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Skt. 3sg. *váṣṭi* : 1pl. *uśmāsi* ‘to wish, to want’, GAv. 3sg. *vaṣtī* : 1pl. *usəmahī* ‘to wish’.

<sup>13</sup> Note that if Hitt. *utnē* ‘land’ indeed is a derivative of the stem *\*ued-* ‘water’, this form must reflect *\*ud-nēi*. The fact that here *\*ud-* did not become *\*uđ-* is explained by the very early separation of *\*uód-r* and *\*ud-nēi*. That the separation must have taken place very early can be seen semantically by the fact that the word developed the meaning ‘land’, and formally by the fact that the formation is very archaic within Hittite (*utnē* is the only *\*-ēi*-stem that survived in Hittite).

<sup>14</sup> The replacement of the proterodynamic genitive ending *\*-s* by hysterodynamic *\*-os* > Hitt. *-as* can be widely observed throughout the Hittite material.

nom.-acc.sg.	<i>u<sub>5</sub>a-a-tar</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãd <sub>5</sub> r/	< *u <sub>5</sub> ód-r
gen.sg.	<i>ú-u<sub>5</sub>i<sub>5</sub>-te-na-as</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãdénas/	< *u <sub>5</sub> đ-én-(o)s
dat.-loc.sg.	<i>ú-i<sub>5</sub>-te-e-ni</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãdéni/	< *u <sub>5</sub> đ-én-i
all.sg.	<i>ú-e-te-na</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãdéná/	
instr.	<i>ú-i-ta-an-ta</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãdánta/	< *u <sub>5</sub> đ-én-t
erg.	<i>ú-e-ti-na-an-za(-)</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãdenánt <sub>5</sub> /	< *u <sub>5</sub> đ-en-ónt-s
nom.-acc.pl.	<i>ú-i-ta-a-ar</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãdâr/	< *u <sub>5</sub> đ-ór
dat.-loc.pl.	<i>ú-i-te-na-as</i>	= /u <sub>5</sub> ãdénas/	

My interpretation has a few advantages over Schindler's analysis. First, it explains why no traces can be found of an oblique form \*u<sub>5</sub>ed-n- in any other IE language. Secondly, it makes the awkward assumption that in pre-Hittite times the paradigm of 'water' must have taken over the inflection of 'fire' unnecessary. Finally, my interpretation opens the way to compare gen.sg. *ú-u<sub>5</sub>i<sub>5</sub>-te-na-as* (< proterodynamic \*u<sub>5</sub>đ-én-(o)s) with Goth. gen.sg. *watins* < \*u<sub>5</sub>od-en-(o)s. Nom.-acc.pl. *ú-i-ta-a-ar* now can be equated with Gk. nom.sg. ὕδωρ 'water', both from \*u<sub>5</sub>đ-ór.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This article was written in 2003, with some minor additions in 2008. Relevant new literature and insights from after this period could not be included.



## ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE ARMENIAN *ALEXANDER ROMANCE* AND MOTIFS FROM CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

DICKRAN KOUYMIJIAN

Armenian is among the dozens of languages in which the *Romance of Alexander* has been translated.<sup>2</sup> Because in antiquity Armenians felt at home in both the West and the East, the Greek world of the Mediterranean and the Persian Empire of the Near East, they took a special and early interest in the life and deeds of Alexander the Great. Armenian nobility fought on both sides of the battle of Gaugamela (331 B.C.). The Orontid kings of Armenia were descended from the Achaemenid line; the Artaxiad kings also claimed Persian descent, though they were allies from time to time of the Romans, while the most famous of them, Tigranes the Great, tried to bring Armenia into the Hellenistic world. The Armenian Arsacid dynasty originated when the brother of the Parthian Great king of Iran came to rule as the king of Armenia. The translation of the *Alexander Romance* took place after nearly five centuries of Armenian Arsacid rule had ended and Armenia, already Christianized for more than a century, accepted political vassalage under the Sasanian rulers of Iran while connected to the great universal religion of the Byzantine and Latin West.

This historical dimension makes the relationship between Armenia and Alexander ambiguous, for though it is clear that the Latin and Byzantine traditions allied themselves with Alexander as a champion of their culture and the Islamic world of Arabs, Persians, and Turks adopted him as a descendent of the great Achaemenid dynasty, Armenians could claim a legitimate sympathy to both the oriental and the occidental Alexander.

<sup>1</sup> Part of the research was realized thanks to successive grants from the Bertha and John Garabedian Charitable Foundation of Fresno, California. Earlier versions of this study were presented at a conference on Armenian Christianity in Erevan, Armenia, November 1997 and lectures for the Société des Études Arméniennes, Paris, April 1998, at the University of Geneva, May 1998, and at the Byzantine Museum, Thessaloniki, April 2003. See also an earlier general study on the Armenian cycle of miniatures, Kouymjian 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Ross, 1988, provides information on the texts and illustration of virtually all language versions.



This essay will concentrate on the visual representation of the work within the context of Armenian illuminated manuscripts rather than its textual history, which is briefly summarized below.<sup>3</sup> There is a very rich Armenian illustrated tradition of the Alexander story, contrary to Wallis Budge's pronouncement of 1933 that among Near Eastern and Far Eastern peoples only the Persians have tried to illustrate their versions of the life.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the impressive Armenian material has been underexploited.

## I. THE ARMENIAN TEXT

### A. *History of the Armenian Translation*

Scholars agree that the Armenian translation of the *Alexander Romance* was made in the late fifth century and directly from a Greek version. The original was probably written in the third century by a Greek from Alexandria who compiled it from a variety of sources heavily augmented by legend, but eventually ascribed to Callisthenes, an historian and friend of the world conqueror, and thus became known as the Pseudo-Callisthenes Greek version. The Armenian was used by nineteenth century scholars to help reconstruct the lost original Greek text of the *Romance* based on a defective Byzantine manuscript of the eleventh century.<sup>5</sup> The fifth century date would put it in the initial wave of translations after the invention of the Armenian alphabet around 405 A.D. The early dating is based on two major arguments: 1) the glosses and direct borrowings from the *Alexander Romance* by early Armenian sources, especially the supposed fifth century author Movsēs Xorenac'i, and 2) the language of the translation, a Hellenizing or as some specialists maintain pre-Hellenophile Armenian, most popular in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Mekhitarist father Yakobus Tašean, in the first major Armenian study of the text, brought together the borrowings from early authors, but especially the

<sup>3</sup> Kouymjian 1999, presents the background for an iconographic study of the Armenian *Alexander*. Simonyan 1989 separated the texts into three recensions (A, B, and C) based on her study of sixty-eight manuscripts; a shorter description of the Armenian translation and its relationship to the Greek text of the Pseudo-Callisthenes can be found in Wolohojian 1969, 1-21.

<sup>4</sup> Wallis Budge 1933, 8; cf. Wolohojian 1969, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Especially for the lacunae in the A or Alpha Recension based on P grec 1711; for a discussion with pertinent literature, see Wolohojian 1969, 2-7. For a more recent review of the Armenian tradition see Traina 1996.

passages from Movsēs Xorenac‘i.<sup>6</sup> Tašean and others before him regarded the translation of the Pseudo-Callisthenes as the work of Movsēs himself, considered one of the pupils of St. Mesrop Maštoc‘, the inventor of the alphabet.<sup>7</sup> Since, however, there is still controversy over the date of Movsēs, with many authorities questioning the fifth century attribution and suggesting the seventh or even later centuries, perhaps some doubt can be cast on the fifth century translation date.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand the Hellenizing translators flourished from the last quarter of the fifth through the sixth century and later, up to Step‘anos Siwnec‘i’s translations of Dionysius, 718, which would support, though cautiously, the accepted dating. It is interesting perhaps to point out that in the vast translation program carried out by the pupils of Mesrop, the *History of Alexander the Great* is the first secular work rendered into Armenian, done by a team that concentrated initially on the Bible and the church fathers.<sup>9</sup>

### B. Manuscript tradition

A large number of Armenian manuscripts of the *Alexander Romance* have survived, upward to a hundred, though no definitive list has been established. Fr. R. T‘reanc‘, the compiler of the first, and until very recently, the only Armenian edition (1842), worked with some ten manuscripts mostly from the Mekhitarist Fathers Library in Venice; Tašean used seventeen manuscripts for his study (1892); Fr. Nersēs Akinian (1938), thirty-two; Albert Wolohojian, in 1969, thought there were about forty extant codices for a future critical edition; and finally Hasmik Simonyan, in her new edition (1989), lists sixty-eight manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> My own incomplete list includes about eighty.

<sup>6</sup> Tašean 1892a, 24-34, in part restated in Wolohojian 1969, 9-14. References are also found in the following authors, mostly historians: John Catholicos (ninth century), T‘ovma Arcruni (tenth century), Grigor Magistros (eleventh century), Mxit‘ar Goš (twelfth century).

<sup>7</sup> Wolohojian 1969, 9-13, presents late nineteenth and early twentieth century opinion.

<sup>8</sup> For some recent discussions see the Introduction to Thomson 1978 and 2006b, T‘op‘č‘yan 2001 (English version Topchyan 2006), and Garsoian 2003-2004.

<sup>9</sup> Thomson 1995, especially the first section entitled ‘Translations into Armenian’, 29-88, and Thomson 2007, 169-179.

<sup>10</sup> T‘reanc‘ 1842; Tašean 1892a, cf. Wolohojian 1969, 14, note 50; Akinian 1938; Wolohojian 1969, 21; Simonyan 1989, 34-65, for a complete list with descriptions; Simonyan does not claim completeness. This very large book does not offer a critical edition, but a diplomatic one, her A recension of the medieval translation with the addition

There are only two pre-sixteenth century manuscripts (V424 and M10151); neither can be precisely dated but both are attributed to the thirteenth or early fourteenth century, though of different versions and with varying histories. The most famous Armenian *Alexander* is also the most beautifully illustrated, a treasure of the Mekhitarist Monastery on the island of San Lazzaro, Venice (Fig. 1). T'reanc's original edition of 1842 was primarily based on this manuscript, which is unfortunately defective. It has recently been published as a luxurious facsimile.<sup>11</sup> Its primary colophon is missing so we know neither its date or place of copying, but we do know the name of the scribe, a certain deacon (*sarkavag*) Nersēs. We also lack information about the artist or artists who lavishly illuminated the manuscript. Sirarpie Der Nersessian has attributed it to the late thirteenth or fourteenth century on the basis of the style of the miniatures<sup>12</sup> and because in a colophon (perhaps recopied?) of the manuscript, the poet Xaç'atur Keč'ařec'i (1260-1330), says he reedited the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>13</sup> In this revised version he added more than 150 short poems,<sup>14</sup> called in Armenian *kafas* after the Arabic *qafiya*, rhymed verse, as a running commentary on the text and its episodes.<sup>15</sup> *Kafas* by other poets and copyists were also composed in the sixteenth century and after, but Xaç'atur's are those most often found though sometimes together with verses of later authors.<sup>16</sup> Xaç'atur also composed an introduction championing Alexander as precursor to Christ, this together with his moralizing *kafas* helped to make the *Romance* acceptable to a Christian reading public.

of rhymed poems (*kafas*), 67-364, for which see below, as well as the text of the earliest manuscript dated to the thirteenth century (M10151), her B recension.

<sup>11</sup> Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003; all folio references will follow this edition.

<sup>12</sup> Der Nersessian 1978, 233, fourteenth century; Macler 1928, 23-24, late thirteenth, early fourteenth century.

<sup>13</sup> Simonyan 1989, 51, considers the manuscript to be of the fourteenth century. It is the oldest example of the new or revised recension (Simonyan's A recension); no autograph copy by Xaç'atur has survived.

<sup>14</sup> Simonyan 1989, 52; she earlier reported 127 *kafas*: Simonyan 1979, esp. 123.

<sup>15</sup> Avdalbegyan 1958; for older literature see Thomson 1995, 214. For a discussion of his 'reediting', see Wolohojian 1969, 14-16. For a recent study of the relationship between *kafas* and illuminations see Maranci 2003-2004. The translation of the text, *kafas*, and legends of V424 can be found in Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003, the text volume.

<sup>16</sup> Most famous of these are catholicos Grigoris of Alt'amar and his student, the scribe and Bishop Zak'aria Gnuni; brief discussion in Wolohojian 1969, 14-16. On Grigoris, see Thomson 1995, 137-8 and Thomson 2007, 190.

The other thirteenth century manuscript now in the Matenadaran in Erevan (M10151) is considered to be the oldest surviving example of the Armenian version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes as it was copied before Xaç'atur edited the text and added *kafas* to it.<sup>17</sup> As mentioned above Simonyan published it for the first time, but separately rather than as an integral part of her edition of the text with the *kafas*.<sup>18</sup> This manuscript also lacks the original colophon so we know neither its date, place, nor scribe. A quire at the beginning and two at the end of the text had been lost much before these sections were restored to the manuscript (with *kafas*) in 1606 by the priest Anton.<sup>19</sup> According to Simonyan, all subsequent manuscripts, including that of the Xaç'atur Keč'ařec'i group, are based on this prototype.<sup>20</sup> There are also a large number of brief summaries or epitomes of the *Romance* and a very popular oral tradition, first recorded in writing in the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup>

## II. ILLUSTRATED ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPTS

There is a rich tradition of Armenian manuscripts of the *History of Alexander the Great* with illuminated cycles. Of the eighty manuscripts in my provisional list, fourteen are illuminated.<sup>22</sup> They are or were all heavily illustrated with an average cycle of a hundred and twenty-five scenes. Among the fourteen illustrated manuscripts there are two

<sup>17</sup> Simonyan 1979, 117. Beside what she considers the oldest manuscript, M10151, she lists six other examples of this early recension (designated the B recension by her) in the Erevan collection and one in St. Petersburg; all dated from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. On the *kafas* in the *Alexander History*, see Simonyan 1975, 41-134.

<sup>18</sup> Akinian 1938, 206, spoke of the existence of an even earlier text, which he planned to edit. Though Simonyan (1989, 364-446) was the first to publish the text – her B recension – it had been discussed earlier in an unpublished doctoral dissertation, Skinner 1940.

<sup>19</sup> A description of the manuscript M10151 can be found in Simonyan 1989, 26, 49-50.

<sup>20</sup> A nuanced suggestion that the B recension may not be what Simonyan believed it to be is offered by Cowe 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Simonyan 1989, 446-492, an edition of these as her C recension, based on a late seventeenth and a nineteenth century manuscript, both in Erevan. See her earlier comments on the folk versions in Simonyan 1979, 126-7. Oral legends about Alexander, independent in many details from the Pseudo-Callisthenes, survived into the nineteenth century, see Tcheraz 1901.

<sup>22</sup> The fourteenth example of the nineteenth century (M8003) has no miniatures but was laid out with spaces for 101 illustrations. Simonyan's list of sixty-eight manuscripts contains ten that are illustrated; Kouymjian 1999, 97-8, for a short discussion, and Ross 1988, 6-7, for important observations on the Armenian cycle. Ross 1963, *passim*, also discusses the Armenian versions in relation to the earliest cycle.

epitomes or shorter versions of the Alexander story; these are also fully illustrated.<sup>23</sup>

The miniatures of the Armenian *Alexander* have only been seriously considered at any length in connection with the remarkable manuscript of the Mekhitarist Fathers in Venice. Fr. Awgerean at the beginning of the twentieth century devoted a two part article to them concluding that they were executed at the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century by an artist in Cilician Armenia along with, but perhaps somewhat later than, the text of the manuscript itself.<sup>24</sup> A decade later, Frédéric Macler provided uniform reproductions of eighty-three of the surviving miniatures (originally there were at least 116), but referred the reader to Awgerian's article for a commentary.<sup>25</sup> Sirarpie Der Nersessian, unfortunately, never devoted a special study to either this manuscript or the illustrations of the Armenian *Alexander*, though she mentioned in passing several of the artists who illustrated manuscripts containing the cycle. She thought the miniatures of Venice 424 to be stylistically close to Byzantine painting.<sup>26</sup> Heide and Helmut Buschhausen regard the art as Paleologan with an oriental influence and opt for localization in Trebizond, comparing the miniatures to those of the Chrysobolus of Alexis III of 1374 (Fig. 2).<sup>27</sup>

Most recently the manuscript was the subject of a thesis for the University of Venice by Cecilia Veronese Arslan.<sup>28</sup> After reviewing the earlier literature, she develops her own views on the illustrations. Rejecting Cilicia as the artistic region, she prefers greater Armenia, finding resemblances between the illustration of the Erzinka (Erzincan) Bible of 1269 now in Jerusalem, J1925 (Fig. 3) and the Venice Hellenic Institute *Alexander* (Fig. 4). She also sees the style as archaizing, inspired by mid-eleventh century Armenian art, itself much inspired by the Byzantine tradition of the period. As for Trebizond as a place of execution, she accepts some stylistic similarities with Paleologan art, but finds no evidence for an Armenian scriptorium in Trebizond. For Veronese Arslan,

<sup>23</sup> According to Simonyan, Ber805 of 1535 and M3387 of 1635.

<sup>24</sup> Aucher 1914. The article was illustrated with a sampling of a dozen miniatures.

<sup>25</sup> Macler 1928, 21 ff.; the facsimile edition has all miniatures, including torn pages and stubs of folios, Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003. Macler also reproduced all the miniatures from W319 of 1694 and P291 of 1712 (colophon), but an earlier date of ca. 1646 has been proposed because of several sheets of watermarked paper.

<sup>26</sup> Der Nersessian 1978, 233.

<sup>27</sup> Buschhausen 1976, 103 and personal communication, letter of 16 November 1997. See the Chrysobull of 1374 which the Buschhausens use as an example (our Fig. 2).

<sup>28</sup> Veronese 1992.

the Venice manuscript's art remains rather unique in Armenian painting, displaying a very artistic quality and combining an earlier Armeno-Byzantine tradition with Islamic influences.<sup>29</sup>

The importance of the Venice manuscript to the study of the iconographical development of the Armenian *Alexander* cannot be overstressed. Not only is it the oldest illustrated Armenian version, but it is also separated by more than 200 years from the next series of five illuminated *Alexander* manuscripts all from the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Of these, the one dated 1544, copied and painted by Bishop Zak'aria Gnuni in Constantinople, now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester,<sup>30</sup> has the closest iconographic resemblance to the Venice manuscript according to Der Nersessian.<sup>31</sup> For instance compare the crucifixion of Besos and Zarivardan, the assassins of Darius, in the two manuscripts, V424 and MCR3 (Figs. 5-6).

Yet, another manuscript copied and illustrated in Rome by Bishop Zak'aria and his student Yakob Jułayec'i between 1538 and 1544, now in Erevan (M5472), shows little resemblance to either the Manchester or the Venice manuscript.<sup>32</sup> One more contemporary example illustrated by the catholicos Grigoris of Alt'amar in 1536, now in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, J473, according to Der Nersessian follows a completely separate iconographic tradition.<sup>33</sup> Compare for example the birth of Alexander from the Jerusalem manuscript (Fig. 8) with that of Venice (Fig. 9). Even a second manuscript illustrated ten years earlier by Grigoris in 1526, now in the Mekhitarists Library in Venice except for a few leaves in the Princeton University Library, shows little similarity with Grigoris's later work in Jerusalem or with the Venice 424 manuscript.<sup>34</sup>

These real or seeming disparities raise a number of iconographic and textual questions, which until now have remained unstudied or only

<sup>29</sup> Conclusions in Veronese 1992, 147-161.

<sup>30</sup> MCR3, description (but without a list of miniatures of which there are 121) in Kurdian 1975; three illustrations in Yovsēp'ean 1969, 128-132; one illustration in Tchobanian 1923, opposite p. 124; one in Kouymjian 2007, 172.

<sup>31</sup> Der Nersessian 1978, 233.

<sup>32</sup> A few poor illustrations can be found in Simonyan 1989, 71, 80, 289, 481; two double page illustrations in color can be found in *Alessandro Magno* 1995, 333; double page in color in Kouymjian 2007, 170. I discussed the manuscript at a conference in Erevan in September 2011: „The Miniature Cycle of the *History of Alexander the Great* and Matenadaran Manuscript No. 5472“.

<sup>33</sup> J473 copied at Varag Vank and Alt'amar in 1536 by Margarē of Arješ; Der Nersessian 1978, 233; discussed in Kouymjian, forthcoming.

<sup>34</sup> V.Kurd 280; PRU, Garr23. For details, see Sanjian 1976, 406-8, no. 94; Macler 1928, figs. 84-88. See Lollini 2005 and Kouymjian forthcoming.

partially so. Recent interest in the Armenian *History of Alexander the Great* has been predominantly textual and even in this domain, focused more on the poetry of the later *kafas* than on the text of the translation from the Greek.<sup>35</sup> The poetic commentary begun by Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i, in the late thirteenth century and continued by Catholicos Grigoris, Bishop Zak'aria Gnuni, and others even into the nineteenth century has provided one of the largest groups in the corpus of medieval Armenian poetry. The same energy needs to be devoted to the artistic cycle or cycles used to illustrate the text.

In both textual and iconographic research we seem unable to go back earlier than the time of Xaç'atur and the Venice manuscript, that is around 1300. The earliest version of the *History* (M10151, called the prototype by Simonyan), which predates, and that only slightly, the reedited text of Xaç'atur, was not illustrated. As mentioned above seven other manuscripts (all later) from among the sixty-eight she studied belong to what she calls the pre-Xaç'atur recension.<sup>36</sup> None of these have miniatures either. This would suggest that illustrative material was added to the Armenian version at the same time as the *kafas*, that is at the end of the thirteenth or the early fourteenth century, and possibly by Xaç'atur himself. Xaç'atur was known as scribe, poet, and painter. When deacon Nersēs copied the Venice manuscript as well as a preface and an allegoric post-scriptum, the colophons of Xaç'atur saying he had reedited and corrected the text were already in his exemplar. The hypothesis that Nersēs's model was an earlier manuscript copied and illustrated by Xaç'atur has been proposed by a number of scholars, most recently Veronese.<sup>37</sup> This earlier exemplar we suppose was illustrated because Nersēs when copying it for manuscript V424 left spaces for miniatures, which were painted in later; the *kafas* in red ink and the legends in black were also added within these frames by a different scribe. Was this in fact Xaç'atur who was alive until 1330? Yet, since the principal colophon and that of the artist are lacking, we do not know where, when, or by whom they were executed. Some have conjectured that Xaç'atur was the artist, suggesting that he was better at painting than poetry, because

<sup>35</sup> Maranci 2003-2004. Cowe 1996, which studies the translation into Armenian is an exception.

<sup>36</sup> See note 19 *supra*. These are M1783 (eighteenth century), M3182 (seventeenth century), M5627 (eighteenth century), M5632 (nineteenth century), M6485 (seventeenth century), M9631 (eighteenth century), and SABO A-9 (eighteenth century); Simonyan 1979, 117.

<sup>37</sup> Veronese 1992, 10.



some consider his *kafas* rather undistinguished. But if it is true that Xaç'atur illustrated the Venice copy, it might itself be the first Armenian version, since it is perfectly possible that the original autograph manuscript of Xaç'atur, now lost, which Nersēs copied was not illustrated and only during Xaç'atur's collaboration with Nersēs did he make clear to the scribe where to leave space for miniatures.

A good case can be made for the suggestion that illustrations of the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance* began with Xaç'atur's revision since, as we have said, none of the eight surviving manuscripts of the text as it existed before Xaç'atur's modification, is illustrated.<sup>38</sup> However, only one-fifth of the surviving manuscripts with the Xaç'atur additions are illustrated; there might have been some illustrated Armenian copies made from the fifth to the twelfth century, which simply did not survive beyond the sixteenth century. Perhaps it is the moment to point out that prior to the thirteenth century we have no secular Armenian manuscripts decorated with a miniature cycle. The *History of Alexander* seems to be the first, at least the oldest surviving, example.<sup>39</sup> By the time it is illustrated in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century it already has attached to it moralizing poems, which begin to make Alexander a paradigm of Christian virtues, thus an acceptable text for illustration in a monastic scriptorium.<sup>40</sup>

Some scholars, David Ross the most representative, believe that the *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes was illustrated from the earliest times, already in the fourth century.<sup>41</sup> It is, therefore, not inconceivable that the Greek manuscripts available to the Armenian translators of the fifth century contained miniatures. Kurt Weitzmann pointed out long ago the persistence of that cycle by the insertion of miniatures from it,

<sup>38</sup> Only one dates to before Xaç'atur's time (M10151) for which see note 19 above; this may not be a definitive argument since the later manuscripts might have all been dependent on the M10151.

<sup>39</sup> See Kouymjian 2007.

<sup>40</sup> There are no book artists that we know of who were not clerics in this period. In fact, it is not yet clear when lay artists started to execute paintings in manuscripts; I would suspect the seventeenth century. Secular subjects, donor portraits for examples, appear early in Gospel manuscripts as they do in sculptural reliefs on churches. On my remark 'paradigm of Christian virtue', Peter Cowe, in an email of March 23, 1998, comments: 'My impression is that the primary focus of the *kafas* is not so much to extol Alexander as to tone him down by underscoring his foibles and ... the pursuit of worldly glory and power and contrasting him negatively as a world conqueror with the achievements of Christ'.

<sup>41</sup> Ross 1963 and 1988.



centered on Alexander's legendary horse Bucephalus, in classical texts.<sup>42</sup> That a large Alexander cycle existed is evidenced by the later Byzantine and medieval French manuscripts. In the Islamic east, illustrated epics of the kings such as Firdusi's *Shahnameh*, completed in the early eleventh century, or Nizami's *Khamsa* of the late twelfth century, contained sections on Alexander, which were illuminated. The *Histoire universelle*, written in the first half of the thirteenth century, has a concluding section on Alexander the Great and was already a popularly illustrated text among the Crusaders in the later thirteenth century.<sup>43</sup> But these examples do not have sufficiently large cycles of the Alexander story to have been the inspiration behind the 125 or so miniatures in the Armenian cycle.

On the other hand, the illustrated manuscript of the Pseudo-Callisthenes in the Hellenic Institute for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice has a cycle of some 250 richly painted miniatures, often in two parts, spread throughout the text.<sup>44</sup> The art shows Paleologan influences. Similarities to the Armenian manuscript V424 include the treatment of the armor and the horses. But it has been dated to the fourteenth century by Xyngopoulos who ascribed it to either Crete or Cyprus;<sup>45</sup> the recension is from the *gamma* recension different from the original Greek *alpha* used for the Armenian translation. A thirteenth century French version of the *Romance* has 150 miniatures, but the text and illustrations are from very different and late recensions.

### III. SIMILARITIES WITH CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Since the earliest illustrated Armenian manuscript of the *History of Alexander the Great* with its *kafas* is also the first to give the work a moralizing tone, it would be natural to expect that the dozen or so

<sup>42</sup> Weitzmann 1970, 2nd edition of 1947, 145-6, figs. 133-4. Ross 1963, 1-2, summarizes and evaluates Weitzmann's conjectures.

<sup>43</sup> For details on the composition and especially the illustrations of the Crusader manuscripts, see Buchthal 1957, 68-87.

<sup>44</sup> For a brief description, several illustrations, and the most recent bibliography, see *Alessandro Magno* 1995, no. 126, 330-333. See also Traina's discussion of the Venice manuscript, part of the exhibit, with recent bibliography, *Alessandro Magno* 1995, no. 125, 327-330.

<sup>45</sup> Xyngopoulos 1966, 141-143; cf. Veronese 1992, 37, 46, and *Alessandro Magno* 1995, 330. Xyngopoulos reproduces all the miniatures and provides translations of all captions in the text. More recently a facsimile edition has been published by Trahoulia 1997, in Greek with a translation of the captions into English and modern Greek.

illuminated manuscripts of the Armenian version dated from around 1300 to 1800 would reveal similarities with the preponderant Christian art of that same tradition.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the vast cycle of scenes, which covers the episodes of the life of the world conqueror, shows many parallels to individual miniatures of Old and New Testament stories.

Among the most evident are scenes of nativity, crucifixion, banquets, burial, the embrace, presentation of gifts, destruction by water, group cavalry, royal portraiture, and a number of miscellaneous episodes.<sup>47</sup> Rarely, however, is there an identical iconographic similarity, but rather a sharing of common elements between the secular and the religious illuminations. A few examples will demonstrate the point.

1. The crucifixion of Besos and Zarivardan, the assassins of king Darius, ordered by Alexander at the site of the latter's tomb resembles the Crucifixion. In the *Alexander Romance* it has a consistent iconography among all manuscripts (Figs. 5-7). Among the most characteristic examples are V424 of c. 1300, fol. 76v (Fig. 5), PRU, Garr23 of 1526, and MCR3 of 1544, fol. 96v (Fig. 6). The resemblance to the Crucifixion is clear even if there are two crosses instead of one and more rarely three. In Armenian Gospel examples from the eleventh century, the two thieves are portrayed crucified along with Christ, who is normally shown alone in Armenian art. A visual parallel with two crosses, as in the Alexander miniatures, does occur in the eleventh century, but only in miniatures where the artists have placed two scenes side by side within a single frame, giving the false illusion that two different people are on crosses (J3624, Gospels of 1041, fol. 9v, Crucifixion and Descent from the Cross).<sup>48</sup> M5472, p. 161 (Fig. 7), however, deviates radically in iconography.

2. There are several episodes in the *History of Alexander* illustrated by banquet scenes; the most notable are (a) the ambassadors of Darius at first ordered to be crucified, V424, fol. 30 (Fig. 10), but later feted by Alexander, V424, fol. 31 and (b) the banquet with his men at which

<sup>46</sup> Maranci 2003-2004, 24, suggests that the miniatures of V424 do not represent the earliest Armenian cycle of the *Alexander Romance* because Xaç'atur's *kafa*, the one accompanying the miniature of a unicorn of a distinctly feline character (fol. 95), placed next to the creature, describes it as 'like a stag'; therefore, she argues that there must have been an earlier illustrated manuscript in which the unicorn looked like a deer rather than a tiger or a leopard.

<sup>47</sup> Lollini 2005, also treats the general question of similarities to Christian iconography through the two illustrated *Alexanders*, V424, and V.Kurd280.

<sup>48</sup> J3624, fol. 9v, Gospels of 1041, and M3784, fol. 9v, Gospels of 1057; Izmailova 1967, figs. 26-7, respectively.

Alexander is poisoned, V424, fol. 117 (Fig. 11).<sup>49</sup> The Gospel parallels are the Marriage Feast at Cana and the Last Supper; the Old Testament Hospitality of Abraham also lends itself to pictorial exchange. In a Gospel of c. 1268 attributed to T'oros Roslin, there are a number of banquet scenes – Herod's banquet, Last supper, Jesus at the house of Levi, Marriage Feast at Cana – which like those in the *Alexander* are small in size with fewer guests around the table (except for the Last Supper).<sup>50</sup>

3. Burial scenes of the dead Nectanebos and especially of Darius recall the Entombment of Christ. There are many examples in each of the manuscripts: V424, fol. 73v, Alexander carrying the bier of Darius; W319, fol. 232v, Alexander on his deathbed, fol. 235, Alexander in his tomb at Alexandria (represented in the same way as Eternal Jerusalem in seventeenth and eighteenth century Armenian Gospels) (Fig. 12); P291, fol. 179, Alexander on his deathbed.<sup>51</sup> The artists Zak'aria and Yakob Julayec'i in M5472 of ca. 1544, fol. 80, (Fig. 13) also have in mind miniatures of the Raising of Lazarus, for they show the soldiers covering their noses with their sleeves because of the stench of the corpse, a trait common to Armenian Gospel iconography of the thirteenth century in Cilicia, for example T'oros Roslin's rendering of the scene in Malatia Gospels of 1268 in Erevan.<sup>52</sup>

4. The reconciliation of Philip and Olympias, Alexander's parents, J473, fol. 21; W319, fol. 32v, or the embrace of Philip and Alexander before the latter goes off to compete in the games at Pisa, W319, fol. 29v, recall the Visitation of Martha and the Virgin.<sup>53</sup>

5. The presenting of gifts (V424, fol. 20) or a crown to Alexander or Philip recalls gifts given to the Christ child in the Adoration of the Magi.

6. The royal pose of kings Philip, Alexander (Fig. 10), and Darius recalls that of Christ enthroned so prevalent in thirteenth century Cilician

<sup>49</sup> For the banquet with ambassadors: V424, fol. 31, Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003; W442, fol. 12, Macler 1928, fig. 82; W319, fols. 56 and 209; P291, fol. 51v, respectively, Macler 1928, figs. 110, 172, 220. For Alexander's betrayal at his banquet: V424, fol. 117, Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003, W319, fol. 223v, Macler 1928, fig. 182.

<sup>50</sup> WAF32.18, Gospels copied in Hromkla, 85, 169, 373, 548, Der Nersessian 1963, figs. 77, 98, 141, 168 respectively.

<sup>51</sup> For the Venice manuscript, Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003, fol. 7v; for the Vienna and Paris manuscripts, Macler 1928, successively figs. 188, 190, 308. I have discussed the representation of burial in the *Alexander Romance* in association with images of burial in Byzantine and Muslim representations of the fourteenth century: Kouymjian 2008, 129-131, figs. 6.8-6.10

<sup>52</sup> M10675, formerly in Jerusalem, fol. 300v, Der Nersessian 1978, 134, fig. 97.

<sup>53</sup> Macler 1928, pl. XXII, figs. 100 and 99 respectively.

manuscripts.<sup>54</sup> There is also a resemblance to the Evangelists' portraits of the same period among the many scenes of Alexander or Darius receiving envoys or writing letters (V424, fol. 32v [Fig. 14], fol. 78); while their thrones resemble those of Christ or the Virgin.

7. Individual miniatures echo comparable Biblical episodes: the sea monster of Alexander with the whale of the Jonah story; the destruction of Darius's army crossing the Stranga in V424 (fols. 67, 69) but especially W319 (fol. 113v) with those of the Pharaoh's troops crossing the Red Sea in the famous miniature of T'oros Roslin; the soldiers and Roxanna around Alexander's death bed (W319, fol. 232v) is like the crowd in the Dormition of the Virgin.<sup>55</sup>

Yet these parallel examples do not definitively demonstrate that the iconography of the *Alexander Romance* was inspired by Christian motifs. That is, the Gospel or Bible scenes seem not to be the source of the artists' models, except perhaps in Mat. 5472. I do not wish to suggest, however, that the opposite might have been true: that the art of the Alexander cycle affected the Christian cycle. Though no work has been engaged in this direction, the late fourth century mosaic with the birth of Alexander, to be discussed below, and its resemblance to the Nativity begs the question of the influence of a pagan iconography on early Christian art. On the other hand it can be reasonably argued that the Alexander cycle influenced at least one secular set of manuscript paintings, namely the battle scenes with elephants in the few illustrations of the battle of Vardananc' in later manuscripts, such as the Hymnal (*Šaraknoc'*) of 1482 (M1620, fols. 295v-296), or various

<sup>54</sup> Examples are particularly striking from the most luxurious of the Armenian Alexander manuscripts, V424, but also from the fourteenth century Byzantine Alexander in the Hellenic Institute, Venice, for which see Xyngopoulos 1966. In addition to our Fig. 4 from V424, fol. 26, there are many others from that manuscript: fols. 14v, 26, 30, 32v, 42, 67v, 74, suggesting an aristocratic patron for the manuscript. Among the miniatures of Christ enthroned one can cite the following Cilician examples reproduced in Der Nersessian 1978: Gregory of Narek before Christ, M1568, fol. 177v, of 1173, fig. 89; Christ and Donor, J1796, fol. 288v, of the twelfth century, fig. 90; Last Judgment, M10675, fol. 89v of 1268, fig. 93; Christ and the royal family, Queen Keran Gospels, J2563, fol. 380, of 1272, fig. 107; Christ enthroned and Virgin with Prince Vasak and family, Prince Vasak Gospels, J2568, fol. 320, of the thirteenth century, fig. 109; Christ and donor, Gospels of 1316, J1950, fol. 16v, fig. 117.

<sup>55</sup> For V424, Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003, and Macler 1928, figs. 34, 36; for W319, fol. 113v, Macler 1928, fig. 142. The Crossing of the Red Sea in J2027, fol. 4v, Ritual of 1266, Der Nersessian 1978, 132, fig. 95; for W319, fol. 232v, Macler 1928, fig. 188.

scenes in the illustrated *History* of Agat'angelos of 1569-1570 (M1920, fols. 250v, 183v).<sup>56</sup>

A final example will, I hope, underline the danger of facile comparison between the representations of similar subjects in the *Romance* and the Gospels. There is at the beginning of the Pseudo-Callisthenes a nativity: the birth of Alexander (Figs. 8-9, 15-16). The scene as painted by Grigoris of Alt'amar in 1536 (J473, fol. 17) (Fig. 8) looks like a standard Nativity with Olympias replacing the Virgin, Alexander, Christ, and Nectanebos, in place of Joseph. Bishop Zak'aria a few years later, in 1538-44 (M5472) also rendered the scene by using Gospel iconography of the birth of Jesus. But these are exceptions to the standard Armenian representations of Alexander's birth. V424 (fol. 8) (Fig. 9), BER805 (fol. 8v) (Fig. 15), MCR3 (fol. 11v), W319 (fol. 19v),<sup>57</sup> and M7677 (fol. 13) copied in Constantinople in 1695, all preserve a more primitive version of Alexander's birth, inspired, according to David Ross, by the Egyptian custom of using a birth chair on which the mother sits to conceive. Ross believes this detail to have been artistically established in Alexandria according to local tradition and dates the iconography back to the first illustrated version of the fourth century. The text of the Greek *alpha* recension and the Armenian version are explicit on this detail: 'And when the fixed birth span of nine months for the completion of the pregnancy had come to an end, Olympias went and sat on the child-bearing throne to give birth'.<sup>58</sup> This scene (Fig. 16), slightly modified, appears along with three others from the Alexander cycle already in the fourth-fifth century villa mosaics from Baalbek, studied in detail by Ross, demonstrating that the Armenian cycle guards elements of the original iconography.<sup>59</sup>

Theoretically, many traditions could have influenced the Armenian artist of V424. In the conclusion of her study of the manuscript, Veronese suggests that Armenian art of the period, including this manuscript, was highly eclectic and took from both East and West. The western tradition

<sup>56</sup> For M1620, Mutafian 1999, 89, fig. III.40; Durand, Rapti, Giovannoni 2007, 74-75, no. 15. For M1920, Kouymjian 2007b, 165, fig. Battle of Avarayr, 171, fig. King Trdat and Emperor Constantine. The latter scene can be conveniently compared to V424, fols. 89v-90, Battle between Alexander and King Poros, illustrated in *ibid.*, 177 fig.

<sup>57</sup> Illustrated in Kouymjian 1999, figs. 1-4, and in Macler 1928, under the respective folios for V424 and W319.

<sup>58</sup> Wolohojian 1969, 32, paragraph 25.

<sup>59</sup> Ross, 1963, reprinted in Ross 1985; citing Weitzman he also points out that this iconography was common in classical times for the birth of a god. The mosaic is now more commonly dated to the late fifth, early sixth century than Ross's fourth century.

entered Armenia through the close contacts and intermarriage of the Armenian nobility of Cilicia with its Crusader counterpart from France and later Jerusalem and Cyprus, while Byzantine art was a constant source of inspiration for Armenian painting from the sixth century on. The oriental elements in various miniatures of the Venice manuscript, for instance Near Eastern clothing, especially the turbans reserved for Persians, are present in the Byzantine *Alexander* of the Hellenic Institute and in Crusader miniatures as well as contemporary Islamic works. But such apparel was already part of Armenian art and life in the tenth century as witnessed by relief sculpture from the tenth century churches of Alt'amar, Halbat, and Ani.<sup>60</sup>

Stylistically relating the miniatures of V424 to Byzantine art, particularly to the Paleologan period, with perhaps a substratum going back to Armenian borrowings from the tenth and eleventh centuries, though possibly correct, does not advance the search for more direct antecedents. Unlike most Armenian manuscripts, I repeat we do not know the date, the place of execution, or the artist of this earliest illustrated *Alexander*. To propose, for instance, Trebizond requires more than a stylistic similarity, for as Veronese has well observed, we must explain how an Armenian scribe copied the manuscript there. It would be easier to posit the existence of a Byzantine manuscript in the Armenian scriptorium responsible for the production of Venice 424.

In this respect the ancillary disciplines of paleography and codicology may help. The defective Venice manuscript was restored in Padua in 1972-1974 and valuable codicological data may have been lost.<sup>61</sup> I have undertaken a paleographic examination of the principal text in black ink and tried to compare it with other late thirteenth and early fourteenth century manuscripts studied during research for the *Album of Armenian Paleography* authored by Michael Stone, Henning Lehmann, and myself.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> For convenient examples, Der Nersessian 1978, figs. 54, 58 for early tenth century usage at the church of the Holy Cross, Alt'amar; fig. 73 for the monastery of Halbat, tenth century.

<sup>61</sup> To the best of my knowledge the manuscript had never been thoroughly described before its restoration and had not (and I believe still has not) been included in the published volumes of the Mekhitarists Library manuscript catalogue. Veronese 1992, 10-15, offers the most complete physical description, but see also Simonyan 1989, 51-2, and of course now the new facsimile edition with a massive critical apparatus and a complete list of the 112 surviving miniatures or fragments, to which one should add the four miniatures or fragments of the two folios from the Venice manuscript now with the Vienna Mekhitarists, W442: Traina, Franco, Kouymjian, Veronese Arslan 2003.

<sup>62</sup> Stone, Kouymjian, Lehmann 2002, and 2006 for the Armenian translation.

Nersēs the scribe's minuscule (*bolorgir*) resembles very much that used at the very beginning of the fourteenth century in the Armenian monastery of Glajor.<sup>63</sup> It was a famous center of learning in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It had an excellent scriptorium and produced well-illustrated manuscripts, including the recently published Glajor Gospels of 1300-1307 by a team of artists the most famous of whom was T'oros of Tarōn.<sup>64</sup> Certain representations, especially portraits of the kings in the genealogy of Jesus in the Gospel of St. Matthew, pages 28-33 (Fig. 17),<sup>65</sup> offer an echo of the way king Alexander was sometimes treated in the Venice manuscript. Should this attribution to Glajor prove to be correct it would place the production of the manuscript in Greater Armenia, outside the immediate sphere of the Cilician kingdom, the major center of painting in the late thirteenth century, and still rather distant from Trebizond. Furthermore, it would underline the affinities with Armenian monasteries in the northwest, such as Erznka where miniature painting in the second half of the thirteenth century, at least in the famous Bible of 1269 as discussed above, has a general feeling vaguely akin to the Venice manuscript (Fig. 3).<sup>66</sup> V424 also shows some kinship with Armenian illumination from the Crimea in the early fourteenth century when a previously established community was being reinforced by further immigration from Greater Armenia.<sup>67</sup>

A localization of the copying and painting of the Mekhitarist *History of Alexander* in one of the northern monasteries of Armenia seems a very reasonable supposition, and a date in the early fourteenth century also most likely. This does not, however, help us much with the prototype of the manuscript or the origin of its painted cycle.

Many illustrations used in manuscripts of the Armenian *Alexander* must go back to the origin of the picture cycle itself. What were the

<sup>63</sup> In particular the *bolorgir* script of the scribe Yunan in a manuscript copied at Glajor in 1334 reproduced by Garegin Yovsēp'ean 1969, 107, figs. 90-91.

<sup>64</sup> Mathews and Sanjian 1991. For a detailed review of the study see Kouymjian 1992-1993.

<sup>65</sup> LSU1, 28-33, Mathews and Sanjian 1991, figs. 28-33.

<sup>66</sup> J1925, Erznka Bible of 1269, for instance, fol. 241 (our Fig. 3), Job and his friends who wear crowns and garments similar to those in the V424 and seated on thrones or benches resembling those in the *Romance*, Narkiss and Stone 1979, 72, fig. 86.

<sup>67</sup> Heide and Helmut Buschhausen have been attracted by this notion believing strongly and with some evidence that Byzantine Trebizond would have been a gateway city to the Crimea. Personal communication as in note 27 above. On Armenian immigration into the Crimea see, e.g. Mik'aelyan 1964, Schütz 1980, Xačikjan 2009 (Russian translation of Xač'ikyan 1980, repr. in Xač'ikyan 1999); on artistic achievements also Korxmazjan 1978, Stone 1997, Buschhausen & Korchmasjan 2009.



artistic or textual chains that linked the oldest illustrated Armenian version (V424) to fourth century iconography during the 800 years that separate them? Except for the Baalbek mosaic and the few miniatures in the eleventh century manuscript of the Pseudo-Oppian discussed above, and the textual information for the birth chair used by Olympias, we lack totally evidence that might help.<sup>68</sup> The Armenian text follows the Greek *alpha* or original recension from which it was translated. There are only two surviving Greek *alpha* manuscripts and neither of them is illustrated.<sup>69</sup> Therefore we are left with the study of the late cycles illustrating other versions of the text in the hope of localizing scenes iconographically similar to those in the Armenian group.<sup>70</sup> Recent comparison to Serbian manuscripts of the *Alexander Romance* might provide some new insights.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, later Armenian manuscripts with an extensive cycle, such as W319 of 1694 with its 100 miniatures, or P291 of 1708-1712 with its 118 miniatures, seem either to follow a cycle different from the Venice manuscript or else their images have been dramatically infiltrated by later non-Armenian iconography.

All the miniatures of only three Armenian manuscripts have been published (V424, W319, P291). For the moment it appears that there is not a singular tradition in the miniature cycle. But until all illustrated codices are properly described and studied, I am not sure we will be able to reach any firm conclusions on the history of the cycle or cycles of the Armenian *Alexander* or the origins of the iconography. The subject is wide open to basic research. Hopefully, younger art historians will take up the challenge.

<sup>68</sup> See Weitzmann in note 48 above.

<sup>69</sup> Principally P grec 1771, see a full discussion in Ross 1988, 6 ff.

<sup>70</sup> See fuller discussion in Kouymjian 1999, 102-04.

<sup>71</sup> Kampouri-Vamvoukou 2000.





Fig. 1 Venice, Mekhitarist Brotherhood, V424, *History of Alexander the Great*, c. 1300, fol. 27, Alexander with the statue of “his father” Nectanebus in Egypt. Photo courtesy of the Mekhitarist Brotherhood.



Fig. 2 Mount Athos, Monastery of Dionysion, Chrysobull of Alexis III Komnenus, 1374. Photo courtesy of Helmut Buschhausen.



Fig. 3 Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, J1925, Erzincan Bible, 1269, fol. 241. Job discussing his fate with three friends. Photo after Narkiss and Stone, 1979





Fig. 4 Venice, Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post Byzantine Studies, Gk. No. 5, *Romance of Alexander the Great*, mid-fourteenth century, fol. 142. A message from Candice is read to Alexander. Photo Wikimedia Commons.