ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԻՆՍՏԻՏՈՒՏ
ИНСТИТУТ ИСТОРИИ НАН РА
INSTITUTE OF HISTORY OF NAS RA

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿՐԹԱԿԱՆ ԱՎԱՆԴԸ ՄԵՏԱՔՍԻ ՃԱՆԱՊԱՐՀԻ ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ

ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИОННЫЙ ВКЛАД АРМЕНИИ В ИСТОРИЮ ШЕЛКОВОГО ПУТИ

CIVILIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF ARMENIA IN THE HISTORY OF THE SILK ROAD

2 0 1 2

ԳՄԴ 63.3
Հ 247

**Տպագրվում է ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտի
գիտական խորհրդի որոշմամբ**

Գիտաժողովի կազմակերպումը և հետազոտություններ իրականացվել են
ՀՀ ԿԳՆ ԳՊԿ-ի կողմից տրամադրվող ֆինանսական աջակցության շնորհիվ՝
№ 11-6a634 «Հայոց պատմության հիմնահարցերի խեղաթյուրումը թուրք-ադրբեջանական պատմագրության մեջ»
գիտական թեմայի շրջանակներում:

Հ247 Հայաստանի քաղաքակրթական ավանդը Մետաքսի ճանապարհի պատմության մեջ. Միջազգային գիտաժողովի նյութեր, 2011 թ. նոյեմբերի 21–23 / խմբ. խորհուրդ. – Եր.: Պատմության ինստիտուտ, 2012. – 423 էջ:

ՀՏԴ 93/99:06
ISBN 978-99941-73-71-6 ԳՄԴ 63.3

ՀԵՂԻՆԱԿՆԵՐԻ ՄԱՍԻՆ

Ավանեսով Հ. Ս.

Արցախի ՄՄՀ ՈՒԳԸ նախագահ (Ստեփանակերտ, ԼՂՀ)

Բալայան Կ. Լ.

«Այաս» ծովային հետազոտությունների ակումբ

Բեսոլով Վ. Բ.

Ճարտարապետության միջազգային ակադեմիայի թղթ.-անդամ (Հյուսիսային Օսեթիա-Ալանիայի Հանրապետություն, ՌԴ)

Գևորգյան Զ. Հ.

պ.գ.թ., գիտաշխատող, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ

Դանիելյան Է. Լ.

պ.գ.դ., Հայոց փիլիսոփայական ակադեմիայի իսկական անդամ, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ, հին դարերի պատմության բաժնի վարիչ,

Դումիկյան Ա. Վ.

կրտսեր գիտաշխատող, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ

Եղիազարյան Ա. Ս.

պ.գ.դ., Երևանի պետական համալսարան

Թմոյան Ռ. Ս.

ԵՊԼՀ մագիստրոս

Խառատյան Ա. Ա.

պ.գ.դ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ թղթ.-անդամ, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ, Հայ հասարակական-քաղաքական մտքի և մամուլի պատմության բաժնի վարիչ, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Լրաբեր հասարակական գիտությունների» ամսագրի գլխավոր խմբագիր

Կորնիլով Ա. Ա.

պ.գ.դ., պրոֆ., Ն. Ի. Լոբաչևսկու անվան Նիժեգորոդյան պետական համալսարանի միջազգային հարաբերությունների ֆակուլտետի արտասահմանյան երկրագիտության ամբիոնի վարիչ, «Նաիրի» հանդեսի պատասխանատու խմբագիր

Կույումջյան Տ.

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ արտասահմանյան անդամ (Կալիֆորնիա, Ֆրեզնո, ԱՄՆ)

Հայրապետյան Թ. Լ.

բ.գ.թ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտ

Հովհաննիսյան Է. Հ.

ասպիրանտ, ԵՊՀ պատմության ֆակուլտետ

Ղազարյան Ռ. Պ.

պ.գ.թ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ արևելագիտության ինստիտուտ, գիտ. քարտուղար

Մարգարյան Ե. Հ.

պ.գ.թ., ավագ գիտաշխատող, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ

Մելքոնյան Ա. Ա.

պ.գ.դ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ թղթ.-անդամ, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտի տնօրեն

Մուշեղյան Ա. Խ.

գիտաշխատող, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ

Մուշեղյան Ա. Վ.

բ.գ.դ., առաջատար գիտաշխատող, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ գրականության ինստիտուտ

Մուրադյան Ի. Ս.

«Մշակույթի և գիտության Չինական կենտրոն»-ի տնօրեն (Երևան, ՀՀ)

Նահատակյան Ռ. Ա.

պատմաբան-վերլուծաբան, ՀՀ Ազգային ժողովի հրատարակչության գլխավոր մասնագետ

Պետրոսյան Հ. Լ.

պ.գ.դ., ԵՊՀ, Մշակութաբանության ամբիոնի վարիչ, Արցախի հնագիտական արշավախմբի ղեկավար, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտ

Պետրոսյան Ս. Գ.

պ.գ.դ., Մ. Նալբանդյանի անվ. պետ. մանկավարժական ինստիտուտ (Գյումրի, ՀՀ)

Պետրոսյան Լ. Ս.

պ.գ.թ., Մ. Նալբանդյանի անվ. պետ. մանկավարժական ինստիտուտ (Գյումրի, ՀՀ)

Պլոսկիխ Վ. Մ.

պ.գ.դ., ակադեմիկոս, Ղրղզստանի Ազգային ակադեմիայի փոխնախագահ

Սալնազարյան Ա. Ժ.

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՖԿՊԻ, գիտաշխատող

Սիմոնյան Հ. Ե.

պ.գ.թ., ՀՀ ՄՆ առընթեր պատմամշակութային ժառանգության գիտահետազոտական կենտրոնի տնօրեն

Ստեփանյան Գ. Ս.

պ.գ.դ., ավագ գիտաշխատող, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ

Վարդումյան Գ. Դ.

պ.գ.թ., առաջատար գիտաշխատող, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտ

Օնիբենե Պ.

պրոֆեսոր (Բոլոնիա, Իտալիա)

ОБ АВТОРАХ

Айрапетян Т. Л.

к.ф.н., институт археологии и этнографии НАН РА

Аванесов О. С.

председатель СНО УММ Арцаха (Степанакерт, НКР)

Балаян К. Л.

президент клуба морских исследований “Айас”

Бесолов В. Б.

член-корреспондент Международной Академии архитектуры (г. Владикавказ, Республика Северная Осетия-Алания, РФ).

Вардумян Г. Д.

к.и.н., ведущий научный сотрудник, институт истории НАН РА

Геворкян З. Г.

к.и.н., научный сотрудник, институт истории НАН РА

Даниелян Э. Л.

д.и.н., действительный член Армянской философской академии, зав. отделом древних веков, институт истории НАН РА,

Думикян А. В.

мл. науч. сотрудник, институт истории НАН РА

Егиазарян А. С.

д.и.н., ЕГУ

Казарян Р. П.

к.и.н., ученый секретарь института востоковедения НАН РА

д.и.н, ЕГУ, зав. кафедрой культурологии,

Руководитель археологической экспедиции в Арцахе, институт археологии НАН РА

Петросян С. Г.

д.и.н., Гос. пед. институт им. М. Налбандяна (Гюмри, РА)

Петросян Л. С.

к.и.н, Гос. пед. институт им. М. Налбандяна (Гюмри, РА)

Плоских В. М.

д.и.н., академик, вице-президент НАН Кыргызской Республики.

Салназарян А. Ж.

ИППФ НАН РА, научный сотрудник

Симонян А. Е.

к.и.н., директор научно-исследовательского центра историко-культурного наследия при Министерстве культуры РА

Степанян Г. С.

д.и.н., старший научный сотрудник, институт истории НАН РА

Тмоян Р. С.

магистрант, ЕГЛУ

Харатян А. А.

д.и.н, член.-кор. НАН РА, институт истории НАН РА, зав. отделом истории армянской общественно-политической мысли и периодической печати, главный редактор журнала “Вестник общественных наук”

ABOUT AUTHORS

Avanesov H. S.

Chairman of the Students' Scientific Society of Artsakh's UMM (Stepanakert, NKR)

Balayan K. L.

"Ayas" Nautical Research Club's President

Besolov V. B.

Corresponding-member of the International Academy of Architecture (the Republic of North Osetia-Alania, RF)

Danielyan E. L.

Doctor of History, Member of the Armenian Philosophical Academy, Head of the Department of ancient history, Institute of History of NAS RA

Dumikyan A. V.

junior sci. researcher, Institute of History of NAS RA

Gevorgyan Z. H.

Candidate of History, researcher, Institute of History of NAS RA

Ghazaryan R. P.

Candidate of History, Scient secretary of the Institute of Oriental Studies of NAS RA

Hayrapetyan T. L.

Candidate of Philology, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of NAS RA

Hovhannisian E. H.

postgraduate, Faculty of History of ESU

Kharatyan A. A.

Doctor of History, Corresponding-member of NAS RA, Institute of History of NAS RA, Head of the Department of history of Armenian media and social-political thought

Petrosyan S. G.

Doctor of History, State Pedagogical Institute named after M. Nalbandyan (Gyumri, RA)

Petrosyan L.S.

Candidate of History, State Pedagogical Institute named after M. Nalbandyan (Gyumri, RA)

Ploskikh V. M.

Doctor of History, Academician, Prof. (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)

Salnazaryan A. Zh.

sci. researcher, IAP of Physics of NAS RA

Simonyan H. E.,

Candidate of History, Director of the Cultural-Historic Heritage Centre of MC of RA

Stepanyan G. S.

Doctor of History, Senior researcher, Institute of History of NAS RA

Tmoyan R. S.

magistrant, ESLU

Vardumyan G. D.

Candidate of History, Leading researcher, Institute of History of NAS RA

Yeghiazaryan A. S.

Doctor of History, ESU

ԲՈՎԱՆԴԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

ՀՈԴՎԱԾՆԵՐ

ՀԱՂՈՐԴՈՒՄՆԵՐ

СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

СТАТЬИ

СООБЩЕНИЯ

CONTENT

ARTICLES

REPORTS

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿՐԹԱԿԱՆ ԱՎԱՆԴԸ ՄԵՏԱՔՍԻ ՃԱՆԱՊԱՐՀԻ ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ

Միջազգային գիտաժողովի նյութեր, 21–23 նոյեմբերի 2011 թ.

ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИОННЫЙ ВКЛАД АРМЕНИИ В ИСТОРИЮ ШЕЛКОВОГО ПУТИ

Материалы международной научной конференции, 21–23 ноября 2011 г.

CIVILIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF ARMENIA IN THE HISTORY OF THE SILK ROAD

International Scientific Conference, 21–23 November 2011

Համակարգչային ձևավորումը՝ Ն. Ադամյանի
Տպագրիչ՝ Լ. Մուրադյան
Սրբագրիչ՝ Ռ. Գալուստյան

Ստորագրված է տպագրության 22.12.2012 թ.:
Տպաքանակը՝ 200 օրինակ:

ՀՀ ԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԱԿԱԴԵՄԻԱ ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԻՆՍՏԻՏՈՒՏ
ИНСТИТУТ ИСТОРИИ НАН РА
INSTITUTE OF HISTORY OF NAS RA

ՀՀ, 0019, Երևան, Մարշալ Բաղրամյան պող. 24/4
РА, 0019, Ереван, просп. Маршала Баграмяна 24/4
24/4, Marshall Baghramyan Ave., 0019, Yerevan
http://www.academhistory.am

D. KOUYMJIAN

CHINESE DRAGONS AND PHOENIXES AMONG THE ARMENIANS

The *pax mongolica* instituted after the conquests of Genghis Khan is the locus for the exchange or, better, the importation into medieval Armenia art of motifs and attitudes from China. At the time Armenians were living under two quite separate regimes. In the historic homeland - Great Armenia and Armenia Minor independence had been lost as a consequence of successive invasions of Seljuks, Turkmens, and Mongols. To the southwest in Cilicia on the Mediterranean coast a new Armenian polity was established in the late eleventh century to become a fully recognized Armenian kingdom in 1198, an ally of the Crusaders. The Armenian kings of Cilicia were among the first Near Eastern or European states to establish diplomatic relations with the Great Mongols. By the mid-thirteenth century, what might be called an Armenian-Mongol treaty was concluded, though the contracting parties were hardly equal in terms of their relative power or influence.

The initial wave of Mongol invaders of the first quarter of the thirteenth century passed through northern Armenia, conquering and occupying the lands of the Armenian feudal families and Georgia. Resistance was met with harsh punishment and severe taxation imposed on the conquered peoples.

The experience of the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia was very different. Spared the conquest of the first wave of Mongol incursions, but fully cognizant of the grave difficulties of their cousins in Great Armenia and of the defeated and conquered status of their own enemies, the Seljuk sultans of Rum, the Cilician rulers were quick to turn to diplomacy as a proactive method of coming to terms with the new and unknown force from the East. The plan chosen by King Het‘um I (1226–1269) was to deal directly with the Mongol chief, the Great Khan, in his capital. For more than fifty years, coinciding with the second half of the thirteenth century, the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia had friendly relations with the Mongols,

even concluding an alliance that was several times renewed[1]. From the successive journeys by Smbat, Constable of Armenia, in 1247–1250[2] and then his brother King Het'um himself in 1253–12553 to the death of Ghazan Khan in 1304, Armenian princes and kings travelled to the Great Mongol court in Central Asia or to the various residences of the Ilkhanids, the Mongols of Iran[4], especially during the rule of Hülegü (1256–1265), his son Abakha (1265–1282), and his grandson Arghun (1284–1291).

This diplomacy produced an agreement; perhaps it is too much to call it a treaty, but an arrangement whereby the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia would be an ally of the Mongols. Armenian armies would fight along with the Mongols in the Near East and the Mongols would help the Armenians

---

[1] On Armenian-Mongol relations see, A. G. Galstyan, "The First Armeno-Mongol Negotiations", in *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* (1964), no. 1, 91–105 (in Armenian); Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia", in *A History of the Crusades,* vol. II, ed. by K. M. Setton, R. C. Wolff and H. W. Hazard,Philadelphia, 1962, 630–659, reprinted in *idem, Études Byzantine et Arméniennes, Byzantine and ArmenianStudies* (hereafter *Études), 2* vols., Louvain, 1973, 329–352; S. R. Boase, *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia,* New York, 1978, 25–29; Claude Mutafian, *La Cilicie au carrefour des empires*, 2 vols., Paris, 1988, vol. I, 423–429; Claude Mutafian, *Le Royaume arménien de Cilicie*, Paris: CNRS Editions, 1993, 54–61.

[2] On Smbat's journey, see Jean Richard, "La lettre du Connétable Smbat et les rapports entre Chrétiens et Mongols au milieu du XIIIème siècle", in Dickran Kouymjian, ed., *Armenian Studies/Études arméniennes: In Memorium Haïg Berbérian,* Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1986, 683–696.

[3] On the famous journey of Smbat's brother King Het'um, see Kirakos Gandzakec'i, *Universal History,* critical ed. K. A. Melik'-Ohanjanyan, Erevan, 1961, 364-372, and the translation of this section with commentary, J. A. Boyle, "The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke", in *Central Asia Journal,* vol. IX, no. 3 (1964), 175–189.

[4]The most convenient treatment of the Ilkhanids is still found in J. A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the 1l-Khans", in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V*, Seljuk and Mongol Period,* London, 1968, 303–420.

Tokomo Masuya, "Ilkanid Court Life", in Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds., *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353,* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2002, 96–97, is indispensable for residences of the Ilkhans. On the residences of the Ilkhans and Armenian contacts, see also, Priscilla P. Soucek, "Armenian and Islamic Manuscript Painting: A Visual Dialogue", in Thomas F. Mathews and Roger S. Wieck, eds., *Treasures in Heaven. Armenian Art,*

Religion, and Society, New York, 1998, 115–131.

in their conflicts with surrounding Islamic rulers. The heavy taxes imposed on the Armenians in Great Armenia would not be levied on an ally.

In this period, Far Eastern influences, both Chinese and Central Asian, penetrated Armenian culture particularly in the visual arts but also certain aspects of literature, administration, and politics[5]. The channels of these influences are not always clear; some came directly from the Mongol court in Kharakhorum, others by way of the Ilkhanids after they took firm possession of the Near East in the 1250s, some through commerce in Chinese goods, and some, perhaps second hand, through borrowings from Ilkhanid, or Ilkhanid-influenced, art in Iran.

Artistic Borrowings

In a series of papers and articles, I have presented and analyzed elements perceived as emanating from Chinese art, which made their appearance in Armenian manuscript illuminations in the second half of the thirteenth century[6]. The context was royal Armenian patronage in the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia during years when the small Mediterranean state was in direct alliance with the Mongols. Three full-page illuminations from two manuscripts (Figs. 1-3) serve as a nucleus to show the entry and artistic assimilation of Chinese motifs into Armenian painting in the 1280s:A profusely illustrated Lectionary commission in 1286[7] by Prince

---

[5] These areas will not be covered in this essay, though a literary-iconographic exchange around the revival of the Alexander Romance in the Mongol period was engaged in Dickran Kouymjian, "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth Century Armenia: Political and Cultural Exchange along the Silk Road", in *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road,* Philippe Forét and Andreas Kaplony, eds., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008, 129–131.

[6] Dickran Kouymjian, "Far Eastern Influences in Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period", Middle East Studies Association, XIth Annual Meeting, New York, 1977, published in *Armenian Post*, New York, 3 parts (December 6, 13, 20, 1977); Dickran Kouymjian, "Chinese Influences on Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period", in Kouymjian, *Armenian Studies/Études arméniennes: In Memoriam Haïg Berbérian*, 415–468; Dickran Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs in Thirteenth-Century Armenian Art: The Mongol Connection", in Linda Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, 303–324, 524–526 (pls. 23–25), 590–599 (figs. 58–67); Kouymjian, "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery", 119–133, pls. 12–19.

[7] Erevan, Matenadaran, Repository of Ancient Manuscripts (henceforth M), M979, fols. 293 and 334, as isvisible on the folios, though they are listed as fols. 295 and 335 in

Het‘um, son of the reigning King Levon II (1269–1289) and his successor, with two elaborate headpieces bearing Far Eastern elements and a Gospel of 1289, commission by Archbishop John (Yovhannēs), brother of King Het‘um I, showing him in full liturgical garb in a scene of consecration[8]. Among the exotic animals shown on these three pages there are three dragons, three phoenixes, and four lions, all resembling their Chinese counterparts. A gradually more aggressive, or, perhaps better, a more minute, inspection of these and other manuscripts reveals an even larger repertory of motifs[9] and even a broader stylistic adoption of Chinese painting techniques passing to Armenia through the Mongol connection, as it was to do at the same time, but independently, to Islamic Iran[10].

The Lectionary of Prince Het‘um

The manuscript of 1286 contains an organically integrated group of ancient Chinese mythical creatures[11]. Though neither the name of the

---

Sirarpie Der Nersessian (with Sylvia Agemian), *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century,* 2 vols., Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993, figs. 516–517 (in colour).

[8] Erevan, M179, fol. 141 v.

[9] Partially enumerated and discussed in Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 318–319.

[10] The stylistic traits were carefully discussed in Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements", 461–468.

[11] Erevan, M 979; it has now been fully published and described, see *infra* Drampian, 2004. Der Nersessian provided a list of some 130 marginal miniatures in Appendix II of her *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, 165–167 and reproduced many of the full-page illuminations in the same book. The Lectionary was first discussed by Garegin Yovsep'ean in *Anahid* (1911). Earlier studies of the manuscript include: Levon Azaryan, *Kilikyan manrankch‘utyune, XII–XIII dd.* (Cilician Miniature Painting, XIIth–XIIIth Centuries), Erevan, 1964; Lydia Dournovo, *Hin haykakan manrankarch‘ut'yun* (Ancient Armenian Miniature Paintings), album in Russian and Armenian with colour plates, Erevan, 1952; idem, Armenian Miniatures, a reduced album with colour plates in English and French versions, Paris and New York, 1961; L. Dournovo and R. G. Drampyan, *Haykakan manrankach'ut‘yun* (Miniatures Arméniennes), Erevan, 1967 and 1969, text in Armenian, French and Russian, an expanded version of the other albums; Bezalel Narkiss, ed., in collaboration with Michael Stone, *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem*, New Rochelle, N. Y., 1979, *passim*; Tania Velmans, "Maniérisme et innovations stylistiques dans la miniature cilicienne à la fin du 13e siècle", in *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s. 14 (1980), 415–433; Irina Drampian, *Lectionary of King Hetum II* (Armenian illustrated codex of 1286 A. D.), Erevan, 2004,

scribe nor artist of the Lectionary is preserved, we know Prince Het'um (later king 1289–1301) commissioned the manuscript.

The first relevant chapter heading, announcing the lection for April 7, the Annunciation[12] (Fig. 1), displays a wide, richly decorated band tapering toward a central round frame decorated with a symmetrical scroll of *fleur-de-lys* in which is a beardless bust of the youthful Christ Emmanuel against a plain gold background, a common feature of twelfth and thirteenth century Cilician Armenian manuscripts[13].

On each side of Christ are grey-brown, Chinese inspired lions in an upright position prancing toward the central circle but with their heads turned forward and with eyes slightly askance toward Christ. Each animal's mouth and nose is highly stylized forming a trilobed leaf motif. From the top of their heads, sharp, flame-like, tufts of hair point upward. Their tails are knotted in the Chinese manner[14]. Lions were introduced into Chinese

---

trilingual text, Armenian, Russian, English, lists all illuminations and offers thumbnail reproductions of them all as well as colour plates of the most important; and Ionna Rapti, "Image et liturgie à la cour de Cilicie: Le Lectionnaire du Prince Het'um (Matenadaran ms 979)", in *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, 87 (2008), 105–142.

[12] Erevan, M979, fol. 293, lection for 7 April, the Annunciation to the Virgin; Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements", 421–425, figs. 2a–2e (details); colour reproduction in Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian*
Kingdom of Cilicia, fig. 516. Earlier literature and reproductions: Arménag Sakissian, "Thèmes et motifs d'enluminure et de décoration arméniennes et musulmanes", in *Ars Islamica*, vol. V1 (1939), 66–87, reprinted in *idem*, *Pages d'art arménien,* Paris, 1940, 59–86, fig. 38, references in this article is to *Pages*; Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, 126–127; Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 43; Azaryan, *Cilician Miniature Painting*, fig. 134;
S. Der Nersessian, "Miniatures ciliciennes", in *L'Oeil*, no. 179 (November, 1969), 2–9, 110, fig. 22, reprinted in *idem*, *Études*, 509–515, fig. 261; John Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, Harmondsworth, 1970,
139, pl. 259; Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, 155, fig. 116.

[13] The earliest Cilician manuscript with Christ Emmanuel (in the headpiece of the incipit of St. Matthew) is from a Cilician Gospel book of 1166 copied by the scribe Kozma at Hromkla, Erevan, M7347, fol. 13; Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, 3–4, fig. 9, others are discussed by her, see the index, 197.

[14] Discussion of the knotted tail in Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life", Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 97 and Yolanda Crowe, "Late Thirteenth Century Persian Tileworks and Chinese Textiles", in
Bulletin of the Asia Institute, n.s., vol. 5 (1991), 157.

art along with Buddhism. Buddha was considered a lion among men. These felines are seen as symbols of power and protectors of temples or the images around which they are placed. Just below the frame is another pair of similar animals, bright blue in colour, crouching on all fours. They display the same tightly curled hair, bushy tails and ears, but somewhat different faces. A late Tang or Liao Dynasty (907–1125) upright gilt bronze lion has a face and pug nose like these animals[15], and a Sung Dynasty (960–1279) ceramic with a seated lion scratching its left ear has similar curls and a trilobed nose[16]. The Chinese lions protect Christ from menacing dragons of a non-Far Eastern type found at the extremities of the headpiece.

There are also other items clearly inspired by Chinese art – various birds and a Buddhist Wheel of the Law for instance; these have been described and discussed in earlier articles[17]. The second chapter heading (Fig. 2), the lection for the feast of the Transfiguration, (Vardavar in Armenian), is less well known[18]. Its formal arrangement is similar to the other, again with a complex, vertical decoration along the entire right margin. The centre of the headpiece is an empty trilobed arch, whose flanking spandrels are each filled with a confronted dragon and phoenix motif. From the viewer's position the dragons are given preference: their blue heads with white highlights are shown with open mouths, noses turned up, both eyes visible and directed frontally. They have paws of four claws spread out like pinwheels. Confronting the dragons are phoenixes with brown bodies and heads and blue wings, the tips of which end in soft,

---

[15] London, Victoria and Albert Museum, *Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art,* London, 1970, 40, no. 42; Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements", 434–5, fig. 4.

[16] Mario Pradan, *La poterie T'ang*, Paris, 1960, pl. 15; Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements", 434, fig. 5.

[17] Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements", 432–443; Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 311–314.

[18] Erevan, M979, fol. 334; Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements", 437–433, figs. 3a–3d (with details); colour illustrations in Dournovo, *Ancient Armenian Miniature Paintings*, Erevan, 1952, pl. 35; Emma Korkhmazian,
Irina Drampian, Hravard Hakopian, *Armenian Miniatures of the 13th and 14th Centuries, Leningrad, 1984, fig. 119; Der Nersessian, Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, fig. 517; see also Azaryan, *Cilician Miniature Painting*, fig. 134.

pink, flared feathers. The birds are rendered vertically by the requirements of the composition with their heads in profile, beaks open, pointed directly into the dragons' mouths. Their bodies, however, are spread out in aerial view. The characteristic tails with long flowing flyers are reduced to short deep pink tufts (seen at the bottom of the spandrels) probably due to the exigencies of space, though there is a form of Chinese phoenix with a short tail but no long streamers[19]. Traditionally, historians of Chinese art maintain that the dragon and phoenix in combat or opposition does not occur in art until the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). There is even the suggestion that they do not appear together on the same object until then. Thus, this late thirteenth century Armenian example, in which the animals are clearly confronted, is enigmatic. The meaning and interpretation of the dragon-phoenix pair within an aristocratic Christian manuscript will be considered in detail below. In the centre of the headpiece above the arch is a single Chinese phoenix placed in almost an heraldic manner (Fig. 2). Its colouring is the same as the others. It is positioned almost identically to phoenixes (Fig. 4) described as "soaring" on two thirteenth-century Jin Dynasty (1115–1234) silks in the Cleveland Museum[20]. The head of the Armenian example is turned like those on the silks and the streaming tails are also turned, though one is hidden under its body. They are arranged symmetrically and are very long, winding down and then looping upward above the phoenix's spread wings. The whole bird is visible, revealing fine, soft, fury tufts of feathers and, on both sides at the back of the wings,

[19] Best illustrated in the large (143 x 135 cm) Yüan canopy with two phoenixes in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1988.82), James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles,* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997, no. 60, 196–199; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, no. 184, 179, fig. 210, the phoenix on top, see also fig. 82, 196, in Watt and Wardwell, showing a Yüan relief carving with two phoenixes; the one lacking streamers is above. Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon,* New York, 1984, 100, suggests that the difference in tail feathers has to do with the gender of the bird.

[20] Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund (1994.292), tabby, brocade, gold thread on a blue green ground with rows of phoenixes facing right and left, Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, no. 31, 118–119; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, no. 180, 177, fig. 207. Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Art Textile Alliance (1994.27), tabby, brocade, Watt and Wardwell, no. 32, 120–121.

additional pointed feathers reminiscent of the pointed flames on the lion manes of the earlier headpiece. The entire form is rendered extremely gracefully with well-understood proportions. The rest of the decoration is similar to the other headpiece with East Asian elements such as rosettes that represent the Buddhist Wheel of Law and a pair of deer. However, the vast majority of decorative elements in the decorative vertical band to the right and elsewhere in the Lectionary (over 300 illuminations of various size) are *not* inspired by Chinese art and are not of concern to this study.

Gospel of Archbishop John

The third miniature bearing a Chinese motif, in a Gospel manuscript executed for Archbishop John in 1289, has as its last miniature a donor portrait depicting the aged cleric performing an ordination[21] (Fig. 3). On the archbishop's tunic or alb, a liturgical garment worn under the chasuble, there is an isolated motif of a Chinese dragon woven in gold with red outlines. The head of the dragon is raised vertically in profile while the neck, body, and tail wind upward. The visible feet have each three claws[22]. In front of its open mouth is a leaf-like object, perhaps intended to be a flaming pearl. Perforce the silk was acquired before 1289, also the date of Bishop John's death[23]. The textile in the miniature is a piece of Chinese silk

---

[21] Erevan, M197, fol. 141v, not executed at the monastery of Akner as believed by some authorities; see Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, 96–97; Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements",418–419, figs. 1a–1b (detail of dragon); colour reproductions in Mutafian, *Le Royaume arménien de Cilicie*, 55; Der *Nersessian, ibid., fig. 645.*

[22] When I first studied this miniature, I thought I saw four claws, but today what I thought was a fourth claw, especially on the right front leg may be a leaf. The hind legs or feet show three claws. As brother of King Het'um, the number three would place him in the proper subordinate rank of a prince, on which question see below.

[23] John wears a chasuble decorated with four-pointed stars in gold (intended as stylized crosses with arms of equal length?) on a red ground. The shape is similar to "cross" tiles, as they are called, from Takht-I Sulaymān, Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 175, fig. 204, 237, fig. 278; Kouymjian "Chinese Elements", 448, fig. 14, after a reconstruction of eight pointed dragon and phoenix tiles with cross tiles proposed by Elizabeth and Rudolf Naumann, "Ein Kösk in Summerpalast des Abaqa Khan auf dem Tacht-i Sulaiman und seine Dekoration", in *Forschungen für Kunst asians. In Memorium Kurt Erdmann*, Istanbul, 1969, fig. 11; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 176, fig. 205. Might this suggest that the chasuble was woven in Ilkhanid Iran?

used as an under garment[24], but it is hard to say if the entire tunic was made of Chinese silk or if the dragon was just a piece sewn on its front. The dragon's resemblance to authentic Chinese silks is striking as is evident from two pieces: a splendid red silk of the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art with rows of coiled golden dragons with five claws facing in different directions[25], and a smaller fragment in the Cleveland Museum of Art dated to the contemporary Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368) depicting rows of golden dragons in a nearly identical coiled position with three claws within roundels[26].

John, as the brother of King Het'um I and Smbat the Constable, both of whom had been received by the Mongol Khans at Kharakhorum, may have acquired this Chinese silk as a gift from one of them. Yet, in three

---

[24] S. Der Nersessian, *L'Art arménien*, Paris, 1977; English edition *Armenian Art*, London, 1978, 160, "An example of […] imported silk clothes exists in the portrait of Archbishop John […] adorned with a Chinese dragon […] sewn onto the bottom of his cope"; colour illustrations in Mutafian, *Le Royaume Arménien de Cilicie*, 55; Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia,* fig. 645. Der Nersessian has spoken of this fabric more than once, "Deux exemples arméniens de la Vierge de Miséricorde", in *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., vol. 7 (1970), 187–202, reprinted in *idem*, *Études Byzantines et Arméniennes*, 595, "Jean, i.e. Bishop John] semble avoir eu une predilection pour les beaux tissue car dans son portrait de l'an 1287 [sic] il porte, sous la chasuble, une tunique de soi chinoise ornée de motif caractéristique du dragon"; *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, 158, "The material of Archbishop John's alb […] came from an entirely different region. A gold dragon, standing upright with gaping jaws, is woven on white ground; the gold has flaked from the greater part of the foliate ornament around the dragon. […] I believe that we do not have an imitation of Chinese ornament, but an actual textile like the Italian material of the chasuble [in the miniature of 1274] […] Chinese silk might have been brought by one of John's brothers […] both of whom had visited the Mongol court, or it may have been an imported silk that Bishop John could have used as his alb."

[25] New York, MMA, 1989–205, 74.5x33.2 cm; first published in Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, no. 30, 116–7; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, cat. 181, 174, fig. 202.

[26] Cleveland Museum of Art (Edward I. Whittemore Fund, 1995–73), 20 cm square, with alternating rows of roundels with phoenixes (only partially visible on the fragment) and dragons; Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk*
Was Gold, no. 42, 153; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, cat. 183, fig. 206, 176.

earlier portraits in manuscripts also commissioned by him, he is wearing different robes without any clear traces of Far Eastern design[27].

Thus, we see on these three folios from two Armenian manuscripts copied for the royal family three years apart, a group of figures which seem to be copied with almost no modification from Chinese models. In addition to the guardian lions they include the dragon-phoenix motif, the heraldic phoenix, and the single dragon on Archbishop John's garment. In the latter case, we are confronted by a faithfully copied piece of Chinese gold woven silk[28], while the single phoenix in the second headpiece is rendered in such a way that it too must have been copied from Jin or Yuan silks. The dragon-phoenix motif is well known from Chinese textiles[29], including honorary robes, ceramics, bronze mirrors, and later Ming lacquers.

The Armenian Miniatures and the Tiles of Takht-i Sulaymān

---

[27] Each of these are discussed in detail in Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 310–311.

[28] It is less likely a fabric produced in Armenia with a Chinese motif, though Armenia was known for its fine textile industry and contemporary miniatures display the rich apparel worn by Armenian aristocracy, no doubt some imported from east and west. A manuscript of 1268–9, attributed to T'oros Roslin, in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., FGA 32.18, 535, shows Christ wearing such a garment when he appears to the Disciples after the Resurrection, Der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Washington, 1963, fig. 165, colour reproduction in *idem*, *Armenian Art*, 135, fig. 98. There are many other such examples, as in the costumes of Prince Levon and Princess Keran, a manuscript executed in 1262 at Hromkla by T'oros Roslin, Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, J2660, fol. 228, for colour illustration see, [C. F. J. Dowsett], *Catalogue of Twenty-three Important Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts,* London: Sotheby's,
1967, lot no. 1, Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia,* fig. 640; or in another portrait of the same Leo and Keran, now king and queen, and their children being blessed by Christ flanked by the Virgin and John the Baptist in a Gospel of 1272 copied by the scribe Avetis probably in the Cilician capital Sis, Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, J2563, fol. 380; Der Nersessian, *ibid.*, fig. 641.

[29] A silk lampas fragment from the Yüan Dynasty (1279–1368) acquired in 1995 by the Cleveland Museum of Art (Edward I. Whittemore Fund, 1995–73), 20 cm square, shows the dragons and phoenixes individually woven in roundels in gold on a dark green-black ground, Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, no. 42, 153; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, no. 183, 176–177, fig. 206.

Despite the difference in medium, the painted Armenian dragons and phoenixes resemble those on the tiles (Fig. 5) from the Ilkhanid summer palace at Takht-i Sulaymān[30].

Their source was surely the same: China, either directly or through the Mongol courts in Central Asia. The possibility that East Asian craftsmen actually were in part responsible for the Ilkhanid ceramics has no echo in the Armenian experience[31]. Whether we speak of the 1270s or 1280s or even the 1290s, the only authentic Chinese looking dragons and phoenixes in the art of the Near East before 1300 are the Armenian ones and those on the Takht-i Sulaymān tiles, along with the monumental dragon carved at the neighbouring site of Viar, dated, like the tiles, to the reign of Abakha (1265–1282)[32]. Though individual dragons and phoenixes from Takht-i Sulaymān resemble those in the Armenian miniatures, the phoenix and the dragon are never shown together on a single tile as they are in the

---

[30] The closest in feeling are on the large lustre titles, both dragons and phoenixes, but never together on the same tile, and for the phoenix the eight-pointed star tiles in lajvardina; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, no. 99, fig. 97 dragon from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 100, fig. 100, phoenix from the Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 84, fig. 101, star tiles from Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, or the phoenix on a hexagonal tile from Berlin, no. 103, fig. 95. During the exhibition "*The Legacy of Genghis Khan*" (2003) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Linda Komaroff and her staff set up an entire wall of these tiles or their reproductions mixing dragon and phoenix tiles somewhat like the reconstruction on paper by the Naumanns, Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, fig. 205, and the original archeology photo, fig. 92. Cf. for these same or similar phoenix and dragon tiles from Takht-i Sulaymān, Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements", figs. 10–14.

[31] On the possible use of Chinese craftsmen by the Ilkhans see Morris Rossabi's remarks, "The Mongols and their Legacy", in Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 35.

[32] Marco Brambilla was kind enough to inform me in the early 1980s of this monumental Chinese dragon carved in stone in a single unit with a mihrab near the village of Viar, thirty kilometers south of Sultaniya. He also sent me a fine photograph of the monument. See Giovanni Curatola, "The Viar Dragon", in *Quaderni del Seminario di Iranistica, Ural-Altaistica e Caucasologia dell'Università degli Studi di Venezia,* no. 9 (1982),

71–88; Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 110, fig. 127. Viar was perhaps the site of a Buddhist Monastery (vihara in Sanskrit), see Sheila Blair, "The Religious Art of the Ilkhanids", in Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 110. Illustrated in Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", fig. 53.

Lectionary, but rather are juxtaposed in various geometric arrangements, much like on Chinese silks. These latter goods probably provided the models[33], but in the Lectionary the artist seems to have more freely interpreted the design in a way that might anticipate its use a century later in Chinese art of the Ming Dynasty.

The large dragon and phoenix lustre titles are without inscriptions but are associated with a series of inscribed decorative and pictorial tiles in the same monument representing scenes from the *Shāhnāma* with dates from 1271 to 1275/6[34]. Though the Takht-i Sulaymān ceramics are a decade earlier that the Lectionary miniatures, which would allow the possibility that Armenian envoys and members of the royalty could have seen the palace of Abakha during one of the well-documented official visits to the Ilkhanids, it is improbable that Armenians would have been received in the summer palace at Takht-i Sulaymān, a private rather than an official residence. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine how even the most talented artist or patron could have united the separate dragon and phoenix tiles, even if juxtaposed on the same wall, in just the same way as Chinese artists were to do later during the Ming Dynasty without recourse to a model or at a strong understanding of the symbolic meaning of these creatures in Chinese imperial art. Thus, we must conclude that the use of similar artistic features in Cilician Armenia and the Ilkhanid court at virtually the same moment was done quite independently.

These quite remarkable lustre tiles were, we must remember, commissioned by a Mongol ruler for one of his private residences. Abakha was not a Muslim, but maintained his loose Mongolian shamanism. As patron of the arts, in the summer palace he insisted on the dragon and phoenix motif cognizant of its association with the Chinese and afterward

---

[33] Linda Komaroff also favours textiles as the major vehicle of transmission: Komaroff, "The Transmission and Dissemination of a New Visual Language", in Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 169–195.

[34] Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life", 96, figs. 111–112, illustrates two of these tiles. The inscriptions were studied by Assadullah Suren Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Shāh-Nāme, la gnosse soufie et le pouvoir mongol", in *Journal asiatique,* 292 (1984), 249–337, and *idem*, "Le Livre des Rois: Miroir du destin. II: Il-Takht-e Soleymān et la symbolique du *Shāh Nāme*", in *Studia Iranica,* 20 (1991), 33–148.

with Mongol emperors and empresses. He and his consort might thus be represented respectively by the two animals. The resemblance between the tiles of the palace and East Asian examples suggests that the Iranian tile makers obtained their designs from Chinese models. The Ilkhans, like the Great Khans of China, used these motifs in their palaces as symbols of sovereignty; but the presence of only four claws on the dragons at Takht-I Sulaymān may have expressed the Ilkhanid respect for the sovereignty of the Great Khans who claimed for themselves the exclusive use of the five-clawed dragon"[35]. By depicting the dragons with four claws instead of the imperial five, Abakha was showing clearly that he was the Il-Khan and not the Great Khan, who at the time was his uncle Qubilai. Both animals were symbols of sovereignty in China; often forming a pair, they were used as decorative motifs on imperial belongings. It should be assumed that already by the 1270s and 1280s these Chinese creatures were reserved exclusively for the imperial entourage even though it was only during the YƋan period that the imperial monopoly over these two motifs was formally established through the code of 1314[36].

The Dragon-Phoenix Motif

In the art of the Ming dynasty the dragon-phoenix motif is very common on all sorts of objects. The mythical creatures are usually presented together, often around a pearl. The scene represents confrontation, if not combat, at least to Western eyes, and the animals look menacing. Since the dragon and phoenix are depicted together in one of the decorated headings of the Lectionary of 1286, and since a round object appears in the spandrel to the right, and, furthermore, since their heads are almost butted together with the dragon's wide open and menacing with the open peak of the phoenix thrust toward and almost into the dragon's mouth, I assumed this was the portrayal of a fight. But colleagues, specialists in

[35] Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life", 97.

[36] Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life", 96, quoting Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A cultural History of Islamic Textiles*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 107–108.

Chinese and Central Asia art[37], were troubled by my conjecture or hypothesis on two accounts. In the first place, they pointed out that neither the dragon nor the phoenix was seen as a hostile or menacing creature in China, but just the contrary, they were regarded as good omens[38]. Secondly, they pointed out that though the representation of the dragon and phoenix is extremely ancient in China their appearance together is unknown until the Ming Dynasty. However, they could provide no explanation for their coupling in an Armenian context a full century before the Ming tradition.

Thanks to the curiosity of one of these gentle critics, Lukas Nickel, a first step toward a solution of this riddle was possible. A year after a conference in Zurich during which I spoke of these Chinese motifs and their passage by way of the Silk Route to Armenia, Nickel reported the discovery of a round bronze mirror in a Chinese tomb burial of 1093, which presented a dragon and a phoenix at opposite extremities of the mirror with a round object (a pearl?) in the exact centre of the mirror[39] (Fig. 6). Consequently, at least one example of such a dragon-phoenix combination is known dating two centuries before the Armenian specimens and three before the Ming[40]. Nickel cautioned that this was in the Liao dynasty and the Liao were not Chinese, thus, Central Asia might be the place where the animals were removed from their isolation and joined on an ordinary rather than an imperial object.

---

[37] They include Jean-Paul Desroches, then (1986) conservator of Chinese Art at the Musée Guimet, Paris, Yolande Crowe, specialist in Islamic and Far Eastern art, Linda Komaroff, curator of Islamic Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Lukas Nickel, professor of East Asian art at the London School of Oriental and African Studies. Their remarks can be found on the pages cited in the next footnote.

[38] See the detailed discussion along with the attributes of each of these animals in the Chinese tradition in Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 320–324 and *idem*, "East Asian Imagery", 126–129.

[39] *Excavation Report of the Liao Dynasty Frescoed Tombs at Xuanhua: Report of Archaeological Excavation from 1974–1993*, vol. 1 (in Chinese with English title), Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House (Wenwu chubanshe), 2001, 49. I again thank Lukas Nickel for this precious information.

[40] In the early 1980s when I discussed the dragon-phoenix motif with Jean-Paul Desroches in Paris, he suggested mirrors.

The synthesis of forms at least in the late Ilkhanid and Timurid period, occurred when East Asian motifs similar to those we are discussing were incorporated into Near Eastern art, particularly at the summer palace of Takht-i Sulaymān. Chinese symbols of rulership – the dragon and phoenix tiles (Figs. 5) – were used together with smaller narrative tiles of Iranian kingship from the *Shāhnāma* (The Book of Kings). In Iran, though the two traditions were separated, they eventually merged very organically after the Ilkhanids converted to Islam in the beginning of the fourteenth century[41].

All of this leads to other questions with respect to the Armenian examples. Why did Armenian artists employed by the royal court make the synthesis of the dragon-phoenix motif a century before its visual demonstration in imperial Chinese art and seemingly even before the neighbouring Mongols of Iran at Takht-i Sulaymān? Before suggesting a possible answer it is important to summarize the symbolic use of dragons and phoenixes in the two Armenian manuscripts of the 1280s. I proposed some years ago during a reexamination of the headpieces that they are symbolic representations of King Levon II and Queen Keran, the parents of Prince Het'um, the patron of the Lectionary manuscript[42]. If my conjecture has merit, Levon and Keran are represented by the dragon-phoenix motif, the anonymous artist fully aware of their use for the emperor and empress in the Sino-Mongol court, and perhaps for the Ilkhanids, if the tiles of the royal foundation at Takht-i Sulaymān are any indication[43]. This suggests that in the summer palace the consorts (*khatuns*) lived together with the Khans[44]. Furthermore, the dominant, heraldic phoenix at the top of the headpiece is a direct tribute to Queen Keran, the great lady of the arts. The

[41] Discussed by Masuya, "Ilkhanid Court Life", 102–103.

[42] Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 321–322.

[43] "The inclusion in the design scheme [at Takht-i Sulaymān] of dragons and phoenixes, Chinese symbols of rulership, was […] a deliberate importation of foreign imagery that had special significance for the Ilkhans", Masuya "Ilkhanid Court Life", 102. The relation of these animals to Levon himself is implicit: Levon-Leo- Lion.

[44] The tiles with the dragons representing the Ilkhans and the phoenixes their consorts should reinforce the idea that at Takht-i Sulaymān they lived together under the same roof.

other headpiece with Christ Emmanuel probably stood for King Levon and his realm, one of peace and justice as symbolized by the Wheel of the Law, a kingdom blessed by Christ and guarded by protecting lions[45]. Whether the idea of a separate headpiece for each member of the royal couple is ultimately justified or not, it is clear that the phoenix dominating one headpiece symbolizes a kingdom of harmony and tranquility.

I have remarked from the beginning that these elements were seamlessly integrated into the decorative scheme of both manuscripts with a remarkable mastery of their forms and shapes and, even more, of their symbolic meaning. I do not for a moment believe that the Chinese dragon on the silk garment of Bishop John was painted by the Armenian miniaturist with just three claws by accident or by coincidence any more than that those in the headpiece of the Lectionary had exactly four claws. This was precisely the symbolic distinction between the king and a prince or the Great Khan/Emperor and the Il-Khan, an iconographic mode clearly understood by the Armenian court. The Armenian royalty must have learned all of this from their long residence at the court of the Great Khans in Kharakhorum three decades prior to the paintings of the manuscripts. There was a close relationship between the Armenian kings and the Mongol khans that lasted for half a century, especially with the very active military cooperation in the various wars of the Near East before the Ilkhanid conversion to Islam. This alliance, not always easy to maintain by Cilician Armenia with an all powerful and often tyrannical Mongol khans, frequently had the appearance of monarchs dealing with fellow monarchs. This relationship probably explains how it was possible to represent, symbolically, the Armenian king with a fourclawed dragon when Cilician Armenia's powerful ally, the Il-khan Abakha, only allowed himself a dragon with the same number of claws in deference to Qubilai, the Mongol Emperor of China. King Levon II (or his son Het‘um) considered himself

[45] The guardian lions under Christ Emmanuel represent symbolically the king (Levon, Leo, Leon, Lion), already the royal emblem used on the coins of the dynasty for generations; numerous examples in Paul Z. Bedoukian, *Coinage of Cilician Armenia*, Numismatic Notes and Monographs, no. 147, New York: American Numismatic Society, 1962, passim.

tributary to the Great Khans (now the Yuan Emperors) through treaties negotiated directly with Guyuk and Mongke Khans in Kharakhorum by his uncle Smbat and his father King Levon I, the great uncle and grandfather of the patron of the Lectionary, Het'um II.

How did these motifs make their way into Armenia? I have discussed this matter more than once, suggesting the most natural channel was through the exchange of royal gifts between Armenian and Mongol royalty or through commerce. The most transportable of presents would have been Chinese or Central Asia silks[46], standard presents of honour. The silk textile with the dragon would reinforce this idea. Bishop John could have received it from his brother the king or his other brother, Smbat the Constable. The latter actually married a Mongol princess, Bxataxvor, a descendent of Genghis Khan[47]. It is perfectly reasonable to imagine that in her dowry, the princess had silks, which may have served as models for some of the motifs. There are a considerable number of silks from China and Central Asia with dragons, phoenixes, and sometimes dragons and phoenixes juxtaposed in alternating bands[48]. One might also cite a tent hanging of the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, probably from Central Asia, with large and small roundels, the latter with dragons in exactly the same configuration as that on Bishop John's garment[49].

Though this article has concentrated on the dragon-phoenix motif, other East Asian elements found in these and other manuscripts have been mentioned in passing and still others from the Chinese artistic repertory – *kilin* (mythical, composite quadrupeds) and *jeiran* (deer usually shown recumbent) both with positive connotations of princely authority – have been discussed previously[50]. The much earlier stylistic innovations in landscape rendering found in various manuscripts of the second half of the thirteenth century from Cilician Armenian scriptoria that show a close

[46] See note 33 above.

[47] Richard, "La lettre de Connétable Smbat", 696, note 59.

[48] See Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", for examples and a discussion.

[49] Copenhagen, David Collection (40/1997), Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 45, fig. 42.

[50] Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 318–319.

affinity to landscape treatment and perspective in Chinese art have also been discussed[51]. The depiction of Mongols with

Central Asian facial features and Mongol costumes and headdresses in thirteenth and early fourteenth century manuscripts has also been very summarily reviewed, but a thorough inventory of these elements still needs to be established[52].

Conclusion

Contemporary Armenian historians have been considered among the most valuable sources on the Mongols. Of the half dozen most important, both Vardan Arevelc'i and Kirakos Gandzaketsi (of Gandzak) (1200–1271)[53] were close to the Armenian court and lived through the early years of the Armenian (of Cilicia)-Mongol alliance. The authenticity of their accounts is further supported by the elegant and intelligent incorporation of Chinese artistic practices, particularly, but not limited to, the dragon-phoenix motif transmitted to Armenian aristocracy by the Mongols. This contact and transmission was direct from Central Asian and Far Eastern sources and not by way of Islamic art as might be imagined. In part this must have been due to dealings of Mongol emperors with Armenian kings. Though there has been much new research on the historical relations between the Mongols and the Armenians, a great deal more has to be done in the domain of purely cultural exchanges.

---

[51] Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 461–468.

[52] Kouymjian, "Chinese Motifs", 319. Already in a Gospel manuscript illuminated by T'oros Roslin in 1260 the Mongols are depicted in the scene of the Nativity and identified as such, Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, Ms no. 251, Dickran Kouymjian, *The Arts of Armenia,* Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1992, slide 85, also accessible on the Internet: http://armenianstudies.csufresno.edu/arts_of_armenia/index.htm. The famous Red Gospels of 1237 executed in north Armenia also seems to be replete with figures in eastern costumes, Chicago, Regenstein Library, Ms no. 949, fols. 1v, 16v, 84v, 179, see Garegin Hovsep'ian, "A Gospel Manuscript", *Garegin Hovsep'ian, Collected Essays* (in Armenian), vol. II, Erevan, 1987, 108–115, illustrated.

[53] Vardan Arevelc'i, *Universal History*, English translation, Robert W. Thomson, "The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 43 (1989), 125–226; Kirakos Gandzakec'i. *Universal History*,
critical edition, K. A. Melik'-Ōhanjanyan, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1961. An English translation by Robert Bedrosian is available on the Internet.

Bibliography

Allsen, Thomas T., *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A cultural History of Islamic Textiles*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Azaryan, Levon, *Kilikyan manrankch'utyune, XII–XIII dd*. (Cilician Miniature Painting, XIIth–XIIIth Centuries), Erevan, 1964.

Beckwith, John, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, Harmondsworth, 1970.

Bedoukian, Paul Z., *Coinage of Cilician Armenia*, Numismatic Notes and Monographs, no. 147, New York: American Numismatic Society, 1962.

Blair, Sheila, "The Religious Art of the Ilkhanids", in Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 104–133.

Boase, S. R., *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, New York, 1978.

Boyle, J. A., "The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke", in *Central Asia Journal*, vol. IX, no. 3 (1964), 175–189.

—, "Dynastic and Political History of the 1l-Khans", in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, *Seljuk and Mongol Period*, London, 1968, 303–420.

Crowe, Yolanda, "Late Thirteenth Century Persian Tileworks and Chinese Textiles", in *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, n.s., vol. 5 (1991).

Curatola, Giovanni, "The Viar Dragon", in *Quaderni del Seminario di Iranistica, Ural-Altaistica e Caucasologia dell'Università degli Studi di Venezia*, no. 9 (1982), 71–88.

Der Nersessian, Sirarpie, "The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia", in *A History of the Crusades*, vol. II, ed. by K. M. Setton, R. C. Wolff and H. W. Hazard, Philadelphia, 1962, 630–659, reprinted in *idem*, *Études Byzantine et Arméniennes, Byzantine and Armenian Studies* (hereafter *Études), 2* vols., Louvain, 1973, 329–352.

—, "Miniatures ciliciennes", in *L'Oeil*, no. 179 (November, 1969), 2–9, 110, fig. 22, reprinted in *idem*, *Études Byzantines et Arméniennes*, 509–515, fig. 261.

—, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Washington, 1963.

—, "Deux exemples arméniens de la Vierge de Miséricorde", in *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., vol. 7 (1970), 187–202, reprinted in *idem*, *Études Byzantines et Arméniennes,* 585–596.

—, *Études Byzantine et Arméniennes, Byzantine and Armenian Studies,* in: *Revue des etudes arméniennes, 2* vols., Louvain, 1973.

—, *L'Art arménien,* in: *Revue des études arméniennes*, Paris, 1977.

—, (with Sylvia Agemian), *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century*, 2 vols., Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993.

[Dowsett, C. F. J.], *Catalogue of Twenty-three Important Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts*, London: Sotheby's, 1967.

Dournovo, *Hin haykakan manrankarch'ut'yun* (Ancient Armenian Miniature Paintings*)*, album in Russian and Armenian with colour plates, Erevan, 1952.

Dournovo, Lydia, *Armenian Miniatures*, Paris and New York, 1961.

Dournovo, L. and Drampyan, R. G., *Haykakan manrankach'ut'yun* (Miniatures Arméniennes), Erevan, 1967 and 1969.

Drampian, Irina, *Lectionary of King Hetum II (Armenian illustrated codex of 1286 A.D.)*, Erevan, 2004, trilingual text, Armenian, Russian, English.

Excavation Report of the Liao Dynasty Frescoed Tombs at Xuanhua: Report of Archaeological Excavation from 1974–1993, vol. 1 (in Chinese with English title), Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House (Wenwu chubanshe), 2001.

Galstyan, A. G., "The First Armeno-Mongol Negotiations" (in Armenian), in *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* (1964).

Hovsep'ian, Garegin,"A Gospel Manuscript", in *Garegin Hovsep'ian, Collected Essays* (in Armenian), vol. II, Erevan, 1987, 108–115.

Kirakos Ganjakec'i, *Universal History*, critical ed. K. A. Melik'-Ohanjanyan, Erevan, 1961.

Komaroff, Linda and Carboni, Stefano, eds., *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2002.

Komaroff, Linda, "The Transmission and Dissemination of a New Visual Language," in Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 169–195.

—, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Korkhmazian, Emma, Drampian, Irina, Hakopian, Hravard, *Armenian Miniatures of the 13th and 14th centuries*, Leningrad, 1984.

Kouymjian, Dickran, "Far Eastern Influences in Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period", in *Armenian Post*, New York, 3 parts (December 6, 13, 20, 1977).

—, ed., *Armenian Studies/Études arméniennes*: *In Memorium Haïg Berbérian*, Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1986.

—, "Chinese Influences on Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period". in Kouymjian, *Armenian Studies/Études arméniennes: In Memoriam Haïg Berbérian*, 415–468.

—, *The Arts of Armenia*, Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1992.

—, "Chinese Motifs in Thirteenth-Century Armenian Art: The Mongol Connection", in Linda Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 303–324, 524–526 (pls. 23–25), 590–599 (figs. 58–67).

—, "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth Century Armenia: Political and Cultural Exchange along the Silk Road", in *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road*, Philippe Forêt and Andreas Kaplony, eds., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008, 129–131.

Masuya, Tokomo, "Ilkanid Court Life", in Komaroff and Carboni, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan:* 96–97.

Melikian-Chirvani, Assadullah Suren, "Le Shāh-Nāme, la gnosse soufie et le pouvoir mongol", in *Journal asiatique*, 292 (1984), 249–337.

—, "Le Livre des Rois : Miroir du destin. II : Il-Takht-e Soleymān et la symbolique du *Shāh Nāme*", in *Studia Iranica*, 20 (1991), 33–148.

Mutafian, Claude, *La Cilicie au carrefour des empires*, 2 vols., Paris, 1988.

—, *Le Royaume arménien de Cilicie*, Paris: CNRS Editions, 1993.

Narkiss, Bezalel ed., in collaboration with Michael Stone, *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem*, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1979.

Naumann, Elizabeth and Rudolf, "Ein Kösk in Summerpalast des Abaqa Khan auf dem Tacht-I Sulaiman und seine Dekoration", in *Forschungen für Kunst asians. In Memorium Kurt Erdmann*, Istanbul, 1969.

Pradan, Mario, *La poterie T'ang*, Paris, 1960.

Rapti, Ionna, "Image et liturgie à la cour de Cilicie : Le Lectionnaire du Prince Het'um (Matenadaran ms 979)", in *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, 87 (2008), 105–142.

Rawson, Jessica, *Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon*, New York, 1984.

Richard, Jean, "La lettre du Connétable Smbat et les rapports entre Chrétiens et Mongols au milieu du XIIIème siècle", in Dickran Kouymjian, ed., *Armenian Studies/Études arméniennes*: *In Memorium Haïg Berbérian*, Lisbon, 1986, 683–696.

Sakissian, Arménag, "Thèmes et motifs d'enluminure et de décoration arméniennes et musulmanes", in *Ars Islamica*, vol. V1 (1939), 66–87, reprinted in *idem, Pages d'art arménien*, Paris, 1940, 59–86.

Soucek, Priscilla P., "Armenian and Islamic Manuscript Painting: A Visual Dialogue", in Thomas F. Mathews and Roger S. Wieck, *Treasures in Heaven. Armenian Art, Religion, and Society*, eds., New York, 1998, 115–131.

Vardan Arevelc'i, *Universal History*, English translation, Robert W. Thomson, "The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 43 (1989), 125–226.

Velmans, Tania, "Maniérisme et innovations stylistiques dans la miniature cilicienne à la fin du 13e siècle", in *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s. 14 (1980), 415–433.

Victoria and Albert Museum, *Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art*, London, 1970.

Watt, James C. Y. and Wardwell, Anne E., *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.

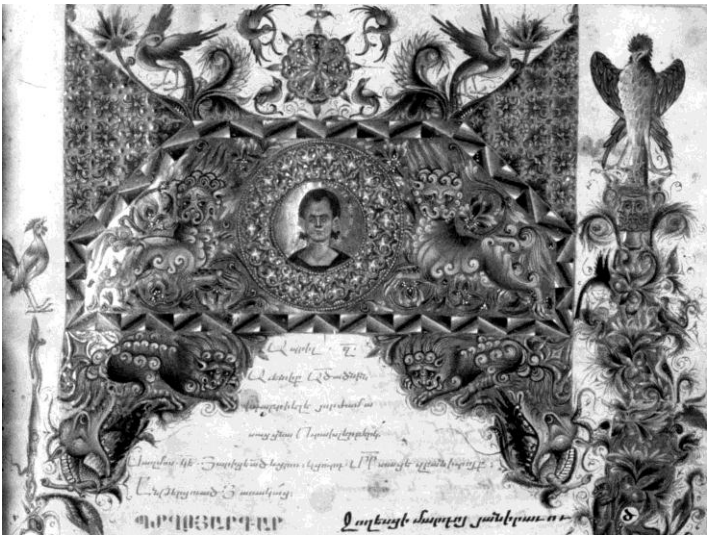
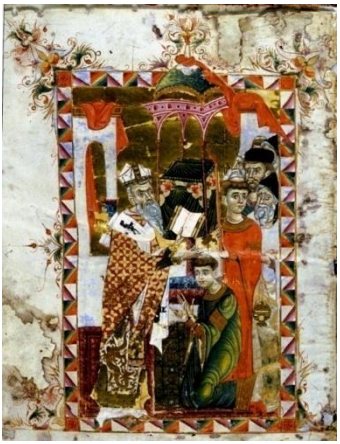


Fig.1 Headpiece with Christ Emmanuel and Chinese animals, detail. Erevan, Matenadaran, M979, Lectionary of Het'um II, 1286, fol. 284. Photo Matenadaran.

Fig. 2. Headpiece with dragon and phoenix motif, detail. Erevan, Matenadaran, M979, Lectionary of Het‘um II, 1286, fol. 334. Photo Matenadaran.



ig. 3. Archbishop John, brother of King Het‘um, in ordination scene. Erevan, Matenadaran, M197, Gospels, 1289, fol. 341v. Photo Matenadaran.

Fig.4 Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund (1994.292), tabby, brocade, gold thread on a blue green ground with rows of phoenixes facing right and left. Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold*, no. 31, 118–119;

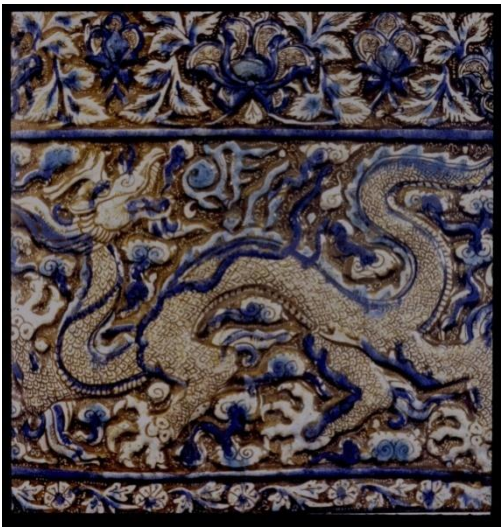


Fig.5 Frieze tile with dragon, Takht-i Sulaymān, 1270s. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, (541–1900). Photo after Komaroff and Carboni, *Legacy of Genghis Khan*, fig. 100.

Fig.6 Bronze mirror with dragon and phoenix. Xuanhua, Hebei, China, tomb M10, pre–1093. *Excavation Report Xuanhua*, 2003, vol. I, 49.

Տ. ԿՈՒՅՈՒՄՋՅԱՆ

ՉԻՆԱԿԱՆ ՎԻՇԱՊՆԵՐԸ ԵՎ ՓՅՈՒՆԻԿՆԵՐԸ ՀԱՅԵՐԻ ՄՈՏ

Բնապատկերում կիրառված ոճական նորույթները, որոնք արտահայտվել են Կիլիկյան Հայաստանի ձեռագրերում XIII դ. երկրորդ կեսին քննարկման առարկա են՝ չինական արվեստում եղած բնապատկերի և հեռանկարի հետ եղած համադրման մասին:

Т. КУЮМДЖЯН

КИТАЙСКИЕ ДРАКОНЫ И ФЕНИКСЫ У АРМЯН

Стилистические инновации в изображении ландшафта, нашедшие выражение в рукописях Киликийской Армении второй половины XIII века, являются предметом дискусси о сопоставлении с изображением ландшафта и перспективой бытовавшими в китайском искусстве.