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17th-century Armenian Proskynetaria of Jerusalem

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1. Introduction

Two 17th-century Armenian Proskynetaria from New Julfa, Iran, and Jerusalem will be presented. Especially during the Ottoman administration of the Holy Land, there were several reasons that justified pictorial presentations of Jerusalem and especially of the Christian holy places. For Christians it was always important to demonstrate the centrality of the Church of the Resurrection, the Anastasis and Golgotha. Moreover, it should also be shown that the holy city was a kind of replica of the heavenly Jerusalem, as described in the Apocalypse (21:9–22:5).

During the centuries of the Ottoman administration of the Holy Land, the rights and privileges of the various Christian Churches represented in Jerusalem and especially in the Church of the Resurrection were often disputed, especially between the Greeks, the Armenians and the Latins (Franciscans). Because of the heavy taxation imposed by the Turks upon the smaller miaphysite communities, namely the Syrians and the Ethiopians, they were compelled to surrender some of their rights and privileges, which were then acquired by the financially stronger Armenians and Greeks. Very early, these proskynetaria served as pictorial records of property rights and privileges, in this case of those of the Armenians. These rights, though often disputed, were affirmed by the Sublime Porte in Constantinople by the agreements of the *status quo* of 1517 and by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. Lastly, proskynetaria served as pious mementos of a pilgrimage to the holy places.

The two 17th-century Armenian proskynetaria are in the Armenian Museum north of the Cathedral of the All-Saviour in New Julfa, south of Isfahan in Iran (see below), and in the principal sanctuary of the Armenian

Cathedral of St. James in the Old City of Jerusalem (dimensions: 150 x 108 cm). Both pictures are painted with oil on canvas. They show the walled city with its seven gates from the West towards the East, in the distance being the Mount of Olives with the site of the Ascension. This is in contrast to the 16th-century Western woodcuts of Jerusalem which have always shown the holy city from the East, from the Mount of Olives.

Since the two late 17th-century proskynetaria show obvious similarities, I shall limit the presentation of this paper to a more extensive analysis of the New Julfa picture. As I have mentioned elsewhere (*Revue des Etudes Armeniennes* XVII (1983), 462), the principal differences between the two paintings are the topographical divisions of Jerusalem. Whereas the New Julfa proskynetarion divides the holy city into three regional sections, namely the Church of the Resurrection with Golgotha and the Anastasis, the Armenian section with the Patriarchal cathedral of St. James, and the Islamic buildings, the proskynetarion in the Cathedral of St. James omits the Haram ash-Šharif, the Qubbet as-Sakha and the al-Aqsa Mosque. In this picture one discovers a religious outlook that portrayed 17th-century Jerusalem not merely as an exclusively Christian, but also as a predominantly Armenian city.

Since it is impossible to determine the date of the two proskynetaria by any external criteria, we have no other alternative than to search for a possible date by internal means. One convincing method pertains to the number of sanctuary-lamps which are suspended, either above the Stone of Unction or in the *kouvouklion* (the Chapel of the Anastasis) in the Church of the Resurrection. The number of these sanctuary-lamps changed constantly in the 17th and 18th century as reported by Orthodox and Western pilgrims. The number of these lamps belonging to the Armenians provides a *terminus ante quem* for the date of these paintings.

In order to offer the necessary historical context for these proskynetaria a section on 'The Armenians in the Holy Land' presents the vicissitudes of these miaphysites of the Caucasus. Since the Armenians of the 17th century possessed the New Julfa Bible with the famous woodcuts by Christoffel van Sichem (1581–1658) – a student of Goltzius, who had produced most of his biblical works for the Armenians in Amsterdam – it would be only natural that the painters also relied upon the biblical woodcuts of the heavenly city. A brief comparison of van Sichem's 'Heavenly Jerusalem' with the proskynetaria shows the influence of the biblical message upon the 17th-century pictures.

2. The Armenians in the Holy Land

The Armenians, being the first nation to accept the Christian faith in A.D. 301, several years prior to Constantine's Edict of Milan, have always considered Jerusalem and the Holy Land as central to their spiritual life. Years before the topographical identification of the various holy places in and around Jerusalem during the first quarter of the 4th century, Armenian pilgrims from Van and Melitene, from Edessa and Nisibis visited Palestine. During the 5th century, St. Euthymius, an Armenian from Melitene (377–473) was the founder of the first *lavra* in Palestine. An historical document by the 7th-century monk Anastas Vardapet contains a list of more than seventy churches and monasteries which the Armenians possessed in Jerusalem and its environs. Following the 5th-century schisms due to the christological controversies at Chalcedon in 451, the Byzantines confiscated many churches and monasteries of the miaphysites, while the Armenian Catholicos Yovhannes II (557–574) advised his clergy to abandon their churches rather than to submit to the christological positions of the Byzantines.

Following the widespread destruction of churches and monasteries by the Persians in 614, the Armenians took an active part in the reconstruction of the holy places. At the time of the Arab Conquest in 638, the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem received from Caliph ʿUmar the famous charter listing the rights and privileges of the Armenians in Jerusalem and environs, which the successive Islamic ʿUmayyad and Abbasid caliphs recognized.

At the time of the Crusades, though often discriminated against by the Frankish rulers, the Armenians established their quarter in the south-western part of the Old City. Their condition was considerably better than that of the other Oriental Christians, owing largely to the fact that the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1080–1375) had established intimate associations with the Crusaders. Almost all the Latin queens and a substantial number of princesses were either Armenians, or of Armenian descent. In 1161, the Armenian king Thoros and members of the royal family visited Jerusalem. Due to this close relationship to the Crusaders the Armenians secured important privileges guaranteeing prosperity for their churches and monasteries. The most enduring accomplishment of this period was the construction of the large Armenian cathedral of St. James, consisting of several sanctuaries. These included the relics of the Apostles James the Great and James the Younger, as well as the tombs of Sts. Makar and Menas.

The occupation of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187 led to a reaffirmation of Armenian rights in the holy city. Unlike other Christians, the Armenians of Jerusalem, consisting of some 500 monks and 1000 families, were neither expelled nor subjected to slavery by the troops of the Sultan. Also during the early period of Mameluk rule, the Armenians continued to enjoy relatively good relations with their Islamic masters. Privileges that were granted to them enabled them to extend their rights in the sanctuaries of the city. As one passes the massive gate of the monastery-compound of St. James, one sees a mural edict in Arabic by the Mameluk Sultan az-Zaher Jaqmaq (1438) abolishing all the taxes of his predecessors and commanding his successors not to oppress the Armenians in any way by exacting taxes.

The situation of the Armenians during Ottoman rule depended again and again upon the maintenance of the *status quo*, which was guaranteed by the Sublime Porte in Constantinople. The strongest and almost continuous challenge to the Armenian holdings in the Holy Land came from the Greek Orthodox patriarchate in spite of the various firmans issued by the sultans. Following the conquest of Jerusalem by the Turks, Sultan Selim I (1464–1521) issued the famous Firman of Safar 25, A.H. 923 (1517), in which he guaranteed the integrity of the age-old Armenian possessions.

The firman mentions the major sanctuaries owned exclusively by the Armenians, such as the monasteries of St. James, the Holy Apostles and the Holy Saviour. It also mentions the rights in such principal shrines as the Holy Sepulchre, St. Mary at Gethsemane, and the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which were given to the Armenians. However, since the sultans granted the same privileges for these major sanctuaries to the Greeks as well, disputes, controversies and conflicts were the natural result. Although firmans were confirmed by such important sultans as Sulaiman the Magnificent (1522–1566) and Ahmad (1603–1617), the situation of the Armenians in Jerusalem was constantly challenged by the Greeks. At the same time, being the only major miaphysite or non-Chalcedonian Orthodox community in the Holy Land, the Armenians acquired several holy sites (chapels, altars, etc.), which the Ethiopians, Syrians and Copts had to surrender on account of their small numbers. Thus, by the 18th century, the Armenians represented the 'lesser miaphysite Orthodox churches' at the Sublime Porte as stated by the firmans of Mahmud I (1730) and Mahmud II (1805). The latter clearly stated that the Armenians possess the right to control the properties of the Ethiopian, Coptic and Syrian communities in accordance with their traditions, 'since they have been

for a long time under the supervision of the Armenians'. This claim was repeatedly challenged by the 'lesser' miaphysite Orthodox Communities!

During the 17th–19th centuries the problems regarding the rights and privileges in the holy places remained in the forefront of international politics. While the Latins (Franciscans) were supported by the European Catholic powers, the Greek cause was championed by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, and since 1714 by the Russian tsars, the Armenians, lacking such political protection, had to rely on their own resources, their influential persons of rank and the Armenian patriarchate in the Ottoman capital.

Following the Crimean War (1853–1856) – which resulted from the Greeks' removal of the silver-star affixed by the Latins to the altar in the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem – the Paris Peace convention of March 30, 1856, left the *status quo* in the holy places as it had been prior to the conflict. The *status quo* was reconfirmed in subsequent years by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, the British Mandate Power, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Israelis, namely 'that no alterations can be made to the *status quo* of the holy places'.

3. The Armenian Jerusalem Proskynetaria and the Heavenly City

At first sight there appear to be certain similarities between the 17th-century composition of Jerusalem based upon the Apocalypse 21 and 22 as found in Christoffel van Sichem's woodcuts in the New Julfa Bible of 1645 and the Armenian proskynetaria. There is no doubt that the 17th-century Armenian Jerusalem topographers were quite familiar with the biblical description of the heavenly city as found in the prophecy of Ezekiel and in the Apocalypse.

Following the biblical description of the heavenly city (Apocalypse 21:16), the proskynetaria also show Jerusalem as being foursquare, the length of the city being approximately the same as its breadth. The description of the twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes (Apocalypse 21:12–13) is derived from Ezekiel 48:31–34, while the twelve angels at the gates are a feature added by John. The picture of the twelve gates has been retained in the Armenian proskynetaria. Twelve towers, three on each side, symbolize the biblical gates. The actual seven gates represent the fullness of the city (Augustinus, *civ. dei* XI, 31) and could be seen as a reminder of the eternal city.

For the Apocalypse, the very centre of the heavenly city is 'the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb' (21:22). On the other hand, the proskynetaria show as the centre of Jerusalem the Church of the Resurrection with Golgotha and the Anastasis. The absence of the temple is wholly in keeping with the Christian view expressed in Hebrews 9:23–28, that the sacrifice of Christ has done away with all other sacrifices, Christ being the Passover Lamb by whose sacrificial blood men are redeemed (Apocalypse 1:5; 5:9). For the artists of the proskynetaria the buildings around the centre represent the Armenian churches and shrines, the Cathedral of St. James, the Convent of the Olive Tree (Dair az-Zeitun) as well as Islamic buildings, the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of al-Aqsa.

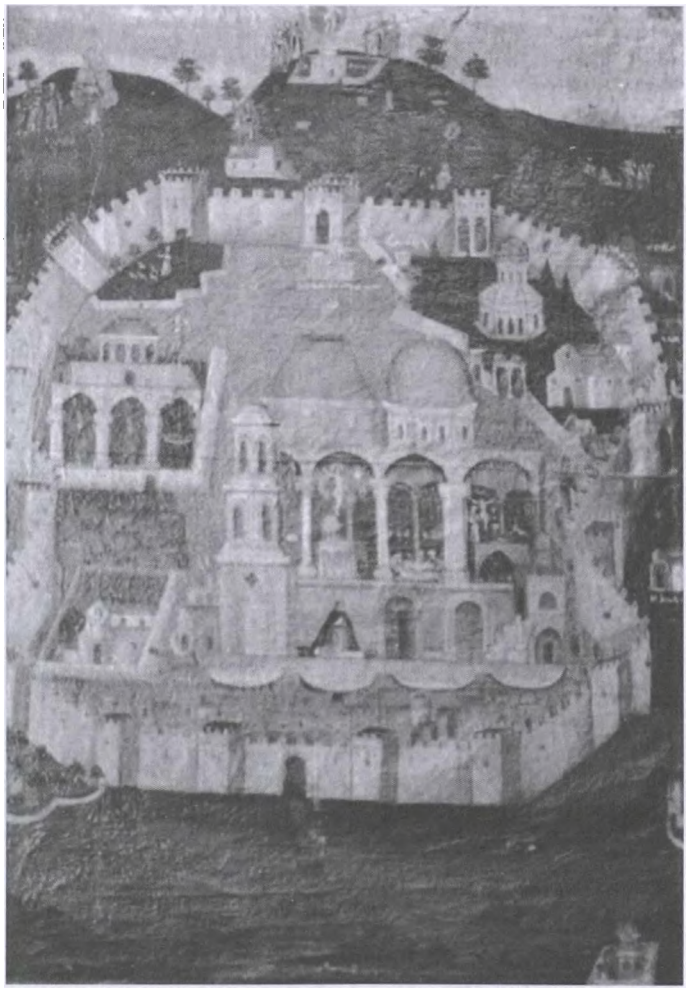
While the proskynetaria show in the distance the Mount of Olives with the site of the Ascension of Christ, the woodcut portrays a bearded heavenly Father wearing the papal tiara, holding in his left hand the globe (?) while bestowing a blessing with his right. He appears in the clouds as architect of the city. In the upper right hand corner there is John, the Seer of Patmos, who receives from the angel of God a vision of the heavenly city.

4. The proskynetarion in New Julfa[1]

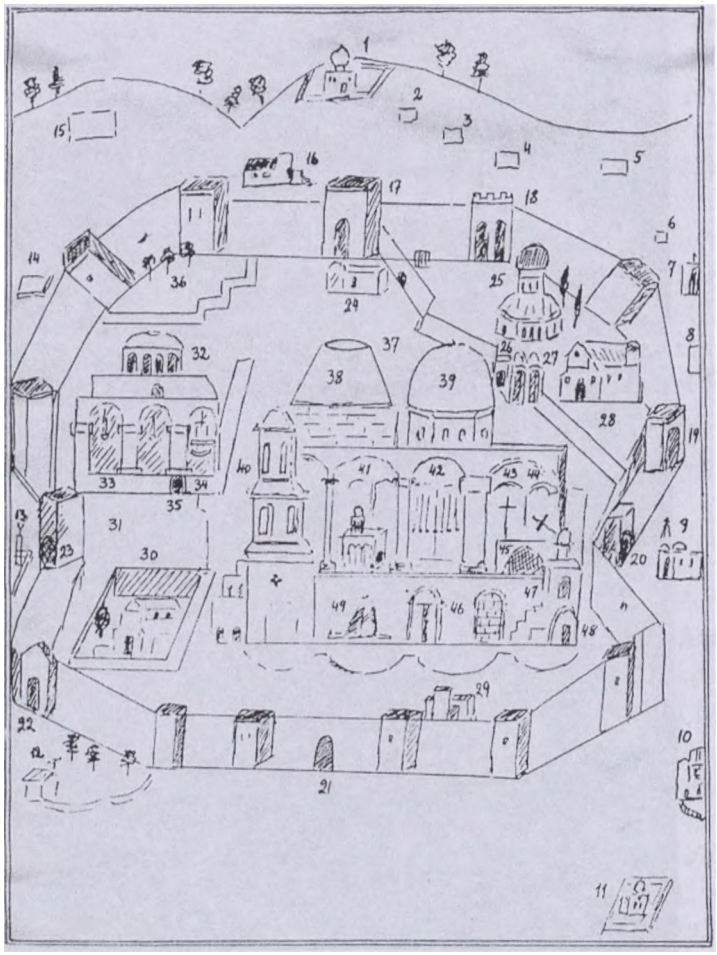
The purpose of this study is to throw some light upon the 17th-century Armenian Jerusalem proskynetarion which is exhibited in the Armenian Museum north of the Cathedral of the All-Saviour (Surb Amenaperkitch) in New Julfa, south of Isfahan (Figs. 1, 2, 3).[2] A proskynetarion falls into the category of popular religious art, it is a souvenir or *memento*, in this case of a pilgrimage made by an Armenian Catholic friar to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. This proskynetarion is an oil-painting on canvas and measures 122 x 173 cm. It is exhibited in Room A of the museum. Following an investigation of some special characteristics of this painting, we shall proceed to offer a description of this proskynetarion, followed by an inquiry about the donor and painter as well as the date of the object in question.

[1] *Studium Biblici Franciscani Liber Annuus*, XXI (1971), pp. 180–193.

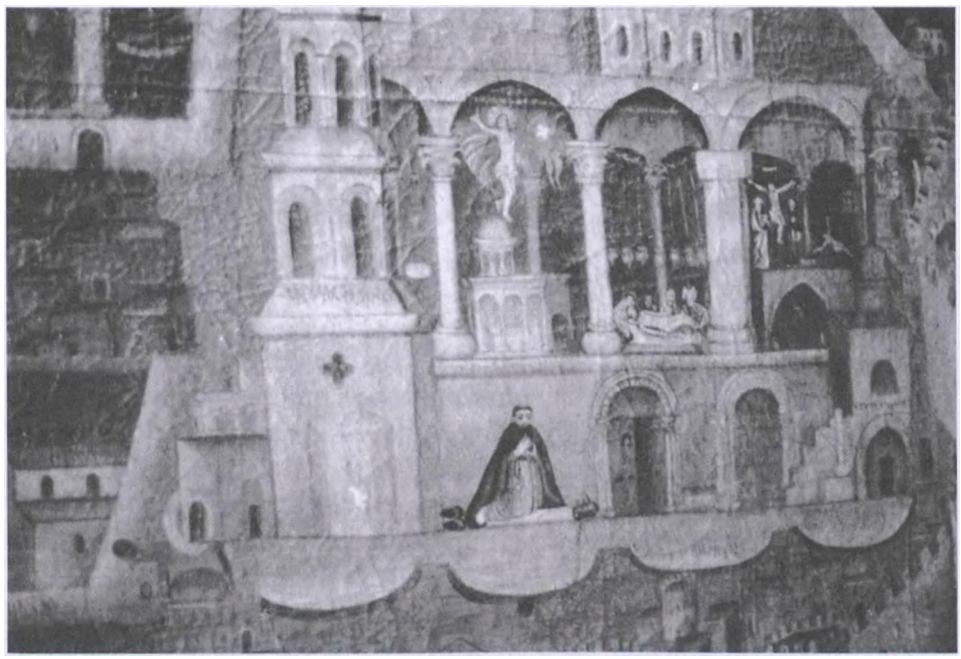
[2] Cf. J. Carswell, *New Julfa. The Armenian Churches and Other Buildings*, Oxford 1968, p. 70.



1. Proskynetarion; 17th c.; Cathedral of All Saviour in New Julfa.



2. Proskynetarion; 17th c. (drawing); Cathedral of All Saviour in New Julfa.



3. The Donor, Proskynetarion (fragment); 17th c., Cathedral of All Saviour in New Julfa.

4.1. Some special characteristics

In more than one way, this proskynetarion shows certain characteristics which are found neither on the 16th-century Latin drawings of the Holy City[3] nor on the 18th- and 19th- century Greek hagio-topographical proskynetaria.[4] It is quite evident that the artist intended to convey three outstanding facts through this painting, namely, the centrality of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the undisputed and prominent presence of the Armenians in Jerusalem, and lastly, a reminder that, after all, this City was in the hands of the Muslims.

This three-fold message is clearly discernible if we divide the complex of buildings inside the walls vertically into three sections. Beginning on the left, i.e. the western part of the Holy City, there is the Hârat al-Armen, the Armenian Quarter, which in our painting occupies approximately one third of the whole territory within the walls. In the centre of the map, there is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, while the section on the right, i.e. the eastern and especially the north-eastern part, which is separated from the rest of the city by a wall, includes the al-Haram aš-Šarif and the Muslim Quarter.

It is interesting to note the national-religious predisposition which the painter projected on canvas. Of course, for the Christian, Jerusalem is the Holy City because of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and it is understandable that this church, which enshrines Golgotha and the Holy Tomb, should occupy the central position. While ignoring the churches and monasteries of the Greeks, the Latins and the other Christian communities in the Holy City,[5] our artist assigned an unusually large section of the City to the Armenians. In fact, next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the largest and most impressive building is the Cathedral of St. James, the See of the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. Other Armenian properties, like the Dair az-Zeitun and the Garden of St. James occupy the remaining space of the western part of the Holy City. The al-Haram aš-Šarif with the Qubbat as-Sakhra and the al-Aqsa Mosque appear relatively

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[3] E.g. the drawings of the Holy City by Sebastian Munster of 1550 and Sebastian Werro of 1581.

[4] O. Meinardus, 'Greek Proskynitaria of Jerusalem in Coptic Churches of Egypt', *Studia Orientalia Christiana: Collectanea*, XII (1967), pp. 309–334 and 8 plates.

[5] By the latter part of the 16th century, the Greeks, Latins and Armenians were well represented, while the Copts, the Ethiopians, the Jacobites, the Georgians, and the Nestorians were slowly surrendering either some or all of their properties to the larger communities.

insignificant when compared to either the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the Armenian Cathedral of St. James.

4.2. Description

For the purpose of a detailed description of this painting we shall follow the numbers given to the objects on the rough sketch (Fig. 2). The material has been divided into five sections according to the geographical locations:

A. The events and buildings outside the walls, nos. 1–16.
B. The gates of Jerusalem, nos. 17–23.
C. The buildings inside the wall: the eastern and north-eastern part, nos. 24–29.
D. The buildings inside the wall: the western part, nos. 30–36.
E. The buildings inside the wall: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, nos. 37–49.

A. The events and buildings outside the walls

1. The Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. The shape of the large dome of the church is similar to those of some of the Armenian churches in New Julfa.[6] On the Feast of the Ascension, the Armenians are entitled to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the courtyard of the building, which was converted into a mosque in 1187. Above the dome we see Christ ascending, flanked by the Holy Apostles standing on the summit of the Mount of Olives.
2. The Grotto of the 5th-century nun Pelagia, a penitent of Antioch. She has been venerated in Jerusalem since at least A.D. 530.
3. The site of the Pater Noster. The various churches which were built on this site during the Constantinian, post-Justinianian and Crusader periods were all destroyed. By the 17th century, this site was marked only by the fragment of a column. The column is clearly discernible on this proskynetarion.
4. The site of the Agony: The Garden of Gethsemane with Christ praying. In the second half of the 17th century, the Latins acquired the garden and the ruins of the Theodosian church.

[6] E.g. the Cathedral of All Saviour and the Churches of the Holy Virgin and of Bethlehem.

5. The site of the Resurrection of Lazarus in Bethany. After the fall of the Latin Kingdom, the Byzantine and Crusader churches were abandoned and fell into ruin. Only in the beginning of the 17th century did the Latins acquire this site with the tombs. This explains why no building is portrayed on our map.
6. The Tomb of Solomon (*sic*). Of course, this should read Tomb of Absalom in the Valley of Josaphat, probably a reference to II Samuel 18:18.
7. The Pool of Siloe.
8. The Armenian *kouvouklion* «Apa Horn», now destroyed, probably near the Bir Ayoub.
9. The Church of the Nativity of Our Lord, Bethlehem. At least since the 13th century the Armenians enjoyed certain rights and privileges in this church.
10. The Greek Monastery of Mar Elias between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.
11. The Church of St. John the Baptist with the Grotto of the Nativity of the Forerunner in Ain Karem. This church, belonging to the Latins, was restored in 1674.
12. The site of the repentance of St. Peter in Gallicantu. On the roof of the building (church?) there is portrayed a cock.
13. The Cenacle with a minaret surmounted by a crescent. In 1552 the Christians lost the Church of the Upper Room to the Muslims.
14. The site of the Annunciation in Nazareth. A church was built only in the 18th century on the ruins of a Byzantine and a Crusader church.
15. Christ preaching to His disciples in Galilee.
16. The Sepulchre of the Holy Virgin in the Valley of the Cedron. In the 17th century this church still belonged to the Latins. Above the roof we see the Assumption of the Holy Virgin.

B. The gates of Jerusalem

For our understanding of the location of the gates of the Holy City we must keep in mind that this proskynetarion is oriented, i.e. that the northern wall with its gates is shown on the left side of the painting. This arrangement has the result that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Armenian Quarter with its buildings are not situated in their correct topographical positions.

17. Stephen's Gate (Bab Sitt Mariam) leading to Gethsemane and the Church of the Sepulchre of the Holy Virgin.
18. The Golden Gate, through which, according to tradition, Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In A.D. 629, the Emperor Heraclius entered the City through this gate returning the Holy Cross. It was closed by the Turks in 1530.
19. The Dung Gate (Bab al-Maghariba) leads to the Valley of Siloe and to the road to Bethlehem.
20. Sion's Gate opens into one of the towers of the city-wall built by Sulaiman the Magnificent.
21. Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil) or the Gate of the Friend, i.e. Abraham, because the road leads to Hebron.
22. Damascus Gate (Bab al-Amud) or the Gate of the Column, a 16th-century gate, once known as the Gate of Ephraim or the Gate of St. Stephen.
23. Herod's Gate (Bab az-Zahira) or the Flowery Gate. The gate was named after Herod, because it leads to the place which was believed to be the House of Herod Antipas.

C. The buildings inside the wall: the eastern and north-eastern part

24. The House of SS. Joachim and Anne is situated near St. Stephen's Gate and commemorates the site of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin. To the right of this site we notice on this map the Bab Hutta (Low Gate), which leads to the al-Haram aš-Šarif.
25. The Temple Area with the Dome of the Rock or the Mosque of ᶜAbd al-Malik ibn Marwân.
26. Probably the Bab al-Hadîd.
27. The Bab al-Qattanin; it is unlikely that this construction could represent the north-west steps of the Temple area.
28. The Mosque of al-Aqsa, built on the site of the 6th-century New Church of St. Mary.
29. The Citadel with the Tower of David near Jaffa Gate.

D. The buildings inside the wall: the western part

30. The Dair az-Zeitun or the Convent of the Olive Tree, named after the tree walled up outside the church and to which according to tradition Christ was tied on the night when He was brought to Annas to be judged. The tree is shown on this map. The church is dedicated to the Archangel; it is also known as the 'House of Annas'.
31. The Hârat al-Armen or the Armenian Quarter.
32. The Armenian Patriarchal Cathedral of St. James. The person standing on the roof of the Cathedral is St. James the Great, who suffered martyrdom by order of Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 44.
33. Sanctuary-lamps suspended in the outer narthex of the cathedral.
34. Wooden and iron *nawakis* in the outer narthex of the cathedral.
35. Entrance to the Armenian monastery through a low vault.
36. The Garden of St. James with sheep and shepherd.

E. The buildings inside the walls: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

37. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in which the Armenians share principal rights and privileges with the Greeks and the Latins.
38. The Dome of the Rotunda.
39. The Dome of the Catholicon.
40. The Campanile.
41. The *kouvouklion* with the Tomb of Christ and the Chapel of the Angel.
42. The Stone of Unction with seven sanctuary lamps suspended above it.
43. Golgotha: the Altar of the Cross.
44. Golgotha: the Altar of the Crucifixion.
45. The Chapel of Adam with the Altar of Melchisedek.
46. The twin-doors leading to the Church. The right door was closed by Saladin, the other door has been confined to the custody of two Muslim families.
47. Second Golgotha: the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows.
48. The Chapel of St. Mary of Egypt.
49. Father Marcar (see below).

4.3. The Donor and the Painter

We assume that the person who is portrayed kneeling to the left of the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the donor of this painting, for to assign any other function to this person would add to rather than ease our problem (Fig. 3).[7] His name, Father Marcar, was written in Armenian letters above his head. At a later time, perhaps even immediately after the completion of this painting, his name was erased by being painted over, probably in response to his request for reasons of humility. It is only with much difficulty, therefore, that one can detect and read the letters. Father Marcar is portrayed kneeling on a cushion. He wears a white habit, a wide brown leather belt with a rosary attached to it, a black cappa and white socks. He has received the tonsure and has a black beard and a moustache. His blue turban is placed in front of him. His hands are folded in the traditional posture of prayer. Moreover, he has removed his sandals, which are shown being placed behind him.

According to his habit, Father Marcar was with all probability a lay-member of the Third Order of the United Brethren,[8] who were officially incorporated in the Order of the Preachers (Dominicans) either in 1582 or 1583 as the Province of Naxivan. The members of the Order of the United Brethren, therefore, enjoyed the privilege of wearing the habit of the Dominicans without any difference. The same injunction pertained to the members of the Third Order, except that they did not have the right to wear the scapular. We notice that Father Marcar is shown without the scapular. At the same time, we must be careful in ascribing too much importance to the appearance of the habit, for up to the 17th century especially there existed in Armenia – as the Reverend Fr. R.J. Loenertz has pointed out – the worst kind of anarchy with regards to the soutane, a true carnival![9]

In this context it is important to keep in mind that in the 17th and 18th centuries the Dominicans maintained a church in New Julfa, as seen in the

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[7] The common mediaeval practice of including the donor of a painting in religious art was also practised among the Armenians. In the famous 17th-century painting of the Last Judgment in the Cathedral of All Saviour in New Julfa we can identify Khodja Awetik Stephanian, who paid for the building of the cathedral.

[8] In the 13th century, the Dominicans had already established themselves in Armenia and Georgia. In 1330 the Order of the United Brethren of St. Gregory the Illuminator was founded for Armenians. In the latter part of the 14th century, the United Brethren had fifty monasteries with seven hundred religious in Armenia alone.

[9] Communication by the Rev. Fr. R. J. Loenertz, o.p. (Paris) to the Rev. Fr. J. M. Fiey, o.p. (Baghdad) of August 17, 1970.

early 18th-century engraving published by Cornelis de Bruyn[10] and reported by the 17th-century traveller John Fryer.[11] Unfortunately, we have been unable to identify Father Marcar in terms of the period of his service in the Order. Neither the special names section of the famous Armenian-Italian dictionary published by Ciakciak nor Fr. M.A. van den Oudenrijn's work *Linguae Haicanae scriptores Ordinis Predicatorum Congregationis Fratrum Unitorum* (Bern: A. Francke, 1960) mentions his name.[12]

There is little doubt that some time during the latter part of the 17th century Father Marcar made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where this map was painted by an Armenian resident of the Holy City. The importance given to the Armenian Quarter with the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. James suggests that this proskynetarion was the work of an Orthodox Armenian rather than that of a convert to the Armenian Catholic Church. If Father Marcar were himself the painter rather than the donor, we should have expected that at least some of the more significant Catholic devotional sites, e.g. the Via Dolorosa or the Dair al-Franj, etc., would have been included. The fact, however, that apart from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Muslim Quarter only Armenian sites are portrayed seems sufficient reason to assign this proskynetarion to an Armenian Orthodox painter of Jerusalem.

The author recognizes that especially with Armenians national allegiance is often considered more important than any particular denominational attachment. Furthermore, the Armenian Catholics would not have had their own 'sites' in the Holy City. A pilgrim like Father Marcar, therefore, must have felt a great emotional attachment to his fellow Armenians at the Cathedral of St. James. Yet, for his sacramental devotions he would have joined the Latins in their celebrations.

4.4. The Date

Since it has been impossible for us to determine the date of this proskynetarion by any external criteria, i.e. by identifying the dates of either

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[10] Cornelis De Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy, Persia and part of the East Indies,* London 1737, vol. I, pp. 232–233.

[11] John Fryer, *A new Account of East-India and Persia... being nine Years Travels begun 1672 and finished 1698*, London 1698, pp. 262–263.

[12] For this information I am indebted to the Rev. Fr. Ambrosius K. Eszer, o.p. of the Istituto storico Domenicano, Rome.

the donor or the painter, we have no other alternative but to attempt to date this paining by internal means, i.e. by some of the objects which are portrayed. The most obvious item for this purpose is the *kouvouklion* which enshrines the Holy Tomb and the Chàpel of the Angel. Now, if we compare the construction depicted on this map with the drawing published by Jean Doubdan, who visited the Holy City in 1652, we discover striking similarities.[13] Furthermore, the artist of this Jerusalem proskynetarion portrayed seven sanctuary-lamps suspended above the Stone of Unction, between the *kouvouklion* and Golgotha. This observation is important in so far as in earlier and again in later centuries there were eight sanctuary-lamps suspended above the Stone of Unction.[14] This fact is substantiated by the accounts of pilgrims of the 17th century. Thus, for example, the Russian pilgrim John the Little, who visited the Holy Land in 1651, noticed only seven sanctuary-lamps hanging above the Stone of Unction, of which two belonged to the Greeks, and one each to the Latins, the Armenians, the Abyssinians, the Copts and the Syrians.[15] Jean de Thévenot, visiting Jerusalem six years later, confirmed the number of sanctuary-lamps suspended above the Stone of Unction, although he assigned only one lamp to the Greeks and included the Nestorians among the owners of a lamp.[16] Moreover, in the lower right corner of the proskynetarion there is portrayed the Church of St. John the Baptist with the Grotto of the Nativity of the Forerunner in Ain Karem. Although there used to be a 5th-century and later a Crusader church on this site, these buildings were subsequently destroyed. The Church of St. John the Baptist was only restored in 1674. The *terminus ante quem,* therefore, is determined by the fact that this sanctuary is included on our map.

In view of the obvious similarities of the construction of the *kouvouklion* as pointed out above, and the portrayal of the seven sanctuary-lamps above the Stone of Unction, as well as the inclusion of the Church of St. John the Baptist at Ain Karem on our painting, it seems justifiable to assign this Jerusalem proskynetarion to the second half of the 17th century. This date would also be in keeping with the existence of the United Brethren in Armenia, whose province was active until the 18th century.

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[13] J. Doubdan, *Le Voyage de la Terre-Sainte,* Paris 1666.

[14] A. Baumstark, 'Eine arabische Palästinabeschreibung', *Oriens Christianus,* VI (1906), pp. 252–264; O. Meinardus, *The Copts in Jerusalem,* Cairo 1961, p. 71.

[15] S. O. Dolgov (ed.), 'Itinerary of John the little', *Pravoslavnyj Palestinskyj Sbornik,* XIV, p. 37.

[16] J. de Thévenot, *Relation d'un Voyage fait au Levant,* Paris 1687, p. 383.