

In 2015 on 12 April Rome's Pope Francis  
indued to Grigor Narekatsi with  
degree doctoral of universal church

### *Introduction*

The end of the first and the beginning of the second millennia A.D. witnessed momentous changes in the Armenian homeland. They were great progressive changes, important developments towards national independence and social progress. It was a period of transition from Early Feudalism to Late Feudalism, and, as any transitional period, it was also an era of utmost aggravation of social-political, social-economic conflicts, ideological clashes, reconsideration of the foundations of dominant ideologies, reevaluation and reinterpretation of cultural values. And though the statehood was restored in Armenia, in parallel with the external threat, the problems of national independence, the establishment and sustention of a united and centralized state kept on being unsolved; continuous discords between separate feudal formations decomposed and tortured the country and prevented the achievement of a national unity. On the one hand, feudal relations strengthened, underwent automatic development and were improved (bondage of a great number of peasants in the result of the intensification of feudal exploitation, pressure apparatuses structure strengthening of secular and religious authorities, economic and military reinforcement, the great center-cities of feudal formations flourished (crafts and trades were developed), on the other hand, the resistance of the exploited stiffened too; class struggle escalated.

From this period on, during next several centuries great qualitative changes took place in the spiritual life of the Armenian people with some ups and downs; the unity of these changes comprises a prominent era which is rightfully called "the Armenian Renaissance".

Grigor Narekatsi, a great thinker and a genius poet of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, was an outstanding representative of the Armenian Early Renaissance. During the period he lived, the ripened conflicts of reality reflected in spiritual culture gave rise to an ideological acute struggle. The mainstreams of that ideological struggle were the reconsideration of Christian ideology (nationalization of Christianity, interpretative freethinking, which was an expression of discords too), pantheism and even atheism. The reconsideration of dominant ideas became urgent, but the representatives of the rivaling camps of that ideological struggle approached the problem from different points of view and with different purposes. One of the parties wanted to reconsider that ideology in order to improve it, the other one to criticize, even to deny it and promote new ideological foundations.

However, the common active interest in the ancient, especially Hellenistic culture and philosophy and the ideological sources of Christian theology united all the members of that struggle.

From the 10<sup>th</sup> century on, “the Armenian science and philosophy had been showing a growing interest in the Hellenistic culture and philosophy... Representatives of the Renaissance would naturally turn to the spiritual past of their nation, more precisely, to the Hellenistic dimension of the Armenian philosophy”. Grigor Narekatsi was one of the founders of this process.

His literary-philosophical heritage seemed to summarize the achievements of the Armenian literary and social-philosophical thought in the first millennium and outline the new tendencies of the Armenian spiritual culture in the second millennium. “Grigor Narekatsi marked the transition from the Middle Ages to new times in Armenia not only as a genius poet but also as a great thinker and philosopher. Grigor Narekatsi was the innovator of the Armenian literary and social-philosophical thought in Medieval Armenia”<sup>1</sup>.

As a great thinker, Narekatsi was the true son of his era, and his whole ideology was conditioned by national and social problems put forward by the Early Renaissance itself.

The generalization of these concrete problems was reflected in Narekatsi’s ideological-philosophical system, i.e. the great medieval thinker considered the world’s and man’s changing for the better, kinder and more perfect to be the essence of the national and social liberation. It comprised the main axis, the progressive-humanistic trend of his ideology. And it was the trend that enabled clergymen to accuse the great humanist of adhering to the Tondrakian *movement*.

It may seem that thinking that the national and social liberation consists in the perfection of the man and his mode of life, Narekatsi approached the solution of these concrete problems only from abstract-humanistic standpoints, from the standpoint of the universal depending on the individual (this dependence is real as well, but decisive is, of course, the dependence of the individual upon the universal, determination of the individual by the universal and not vice versa), so he thought that only by an individual’s education, perfection, “salvation” and “return” can the perfection of the society and even the whole universe be achieved but he simultaneously put forward the problem of reaching an individual’s perfection through the perfection of society as a whole, though the medieval thinker did not have a chance to go deep into these problems because of well-known reasons (it was just impossible to explain the whole mechanism of society development in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, though he viewed the society as “combination of opposites and for its unity, and even for its sameness and “balance” he strived), but the advancement of the idea of an individual’s dependence upon society, social relations, social existence, and the idea of reaching an individual’s perfection through the perfection of society was already a great achievement.

Narekatsi did not just adhere to but was one of the greatest ideologists of Reformation, which was a popular movement at the time, and though the main mover was the serf peasantry, it was not a mere peasant movement.

Most probably, poor masses in cities, as well as the progressive representatives of secular and religious ruling classes, were included in or sympathized with that movement.

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1. Narekatsi was appraised so by Tumanyan and other merited people.

The ideology of reformation was not uniform, it had two wings: Fighting, denying God and the clerical-feudal hierarchy.

Moderate, displeased with the violence of the ruling power and clerical-feudal hierarchy but not wholly stepped aside from or having refused them.

With his views, Narekatsi occupied a central place in this movement.

Thus Grigor Narekatsi, a genius poet and thinker, appeared in the Armenian reality during the Early Renaissance when the society had great expectations<sup>2</sup> and hoped for new, positive changes. He was the exponent of ideological multiple searches for overcoming acute controversies of his era, defining the problems (something that was a great service in itself) raised during that era and giving specific solutions to them.

Narekatsi was, surely, the most prominent ideologist and the most popular person of his times, a progressive thinker and representative of the Armenian Renaissance, the true mirror of that epoch which was full of conflicts. All the ideological trends and tendencies of his times, even the opposite standpoints such as devotion and atheism, obedience and revolt and others were not alien to him. He was indifferent to man's neither good nor bad manifestations. He attributed to himself everything human, all that referred to the man and he did that consciously, his theoretical basis being the thesis put forward by him:

*I in all, and all in me (Pr. 72, C)*

The folk epic "Sasna Tsrer" (Daredevils of Sassoun) and "Narek" (people called Grigor Narekatsi's main work "Book of Lamentations Narek") have been venerated and sanctified by the Armenian people.

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2. We should not forget that it was the end of the first millennium, and the whole Christian world expected Christ's second all-saving coming. In the Armenian reality, there were many cases when there appeared false "Christs" who were made heroes of folk legends and were the bearers of the ideas of the Tondrakian movement. By the way, the sanctification of Narekatsi's name and the fact that his name inspired folk legends were a result of those expectations too; the hero of these legends, Grigor, was sometimes a shepherd, sometimes a clergyman, etc. He was presented as a universal, almighty savior-from working ordinary miracles to establishing social justice.

As the most popular works of the Early Renaissance, raising the most important problems in Armenia, they expressed the public concern in seeking ways for national and social liberation as well as the expectations for new, great changes.

The main difference of these two works consists in the fact that "Sasna Tsrer" is a reflection of that epoch while "Narek" is a psychological-philosophical meditation. However, with the large scales of raised problems and the depth of solutions, these two masterpieces comprise "the book of life"<sup>3</sup> of all times in the Armenian history. And this fact determined the popularity of the *Narek* as a work created by a man. Legends and myths about its author witness to that popularity and the fact that the Armenian people take *Narek* equal to a folk epic and consider it their visiting-card, like Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is for the Georgians, and *Narty Epic* for the Caucasian highlanders.

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Grigor Narekatsi's literary heritage, rich in content, has been and is studied in many aspects: literary-critical (including translation theory), historical-philosophical, linguistic, textual, etc. The value of the recent studies in all these aspects enables us to state that there has been formed a unique domain in Armenian studies "Narekatsi science which still has many unsolved problems, particularly in the field of Narekatsi's philosophical views. The work done in this field is classified into two periods: in the first period (mostly interpretations) Narekatsi's ideology was mainly elucidated and evaluated from religious-dogmatic standpoints (G. Avetiqyan, H. Nalyan and others), the second is the period of historical elucidation and evaluation (A. Chopanyan, M. Abeghyan, Leo, M. Mkryan, H. Gabrielyan, G. Chaloyan, G. Khrlopyan).

Narekatsi's worldview is still not fully studied. Studies conducted by now concern this or that aspect of his views and the main point is mostly the nature of his worldview. The elucidation of this problem

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3. Narekatsi called so his book.

has undergone a considerable development. At first Narekatsi's worldview was described as a religious mysticism, and no progressive (secular) tendency, color or element was attributed to it (Abeghyan's initial opinion, Leo), then Narekatsi's progressive views were revealed and his philosophical worldview was qualified as pantheism (H. Gabrielyan, M. Mkryan). Chaloyan made a great contribution to the revelation of the nature of the *Narek*. In his well-known article devoted to Narekatsi, he considered Narekatsi's philosophy as pantheistic but "it is not only a pantheistic philosophy but also an indication to Neo-platonic philosophy as a source for pantheism". This was already a substantial progress towards the exact characterization of the nature of Narekatsi's philosophy. Thus, according to Chaloyan, the nature of Narekatsi's philosophy was pantheism and Neo-Platonism was only "indicated" as a source of pantheism. Today it is obvious that Narekatsi's worldview was Neo-platonic but the question has not been settled yet. Narekatsi was the representative of Neo-Platonism in the period of the Renaissance; he developed Neo-platonic ideas to a certain degree. It is not a mere imitation or literal revival of Hellenistic and Christian Neo-Platonism but a definite, a higher-level development with almost the same tendencies that we see in the works of Nicolas of Cusa. As to pantheism, it is not the main essence of Narekatsi's worldview and his philosophical system but only an aspect, an element of that system, and the whole system is structured not on the basis of pantheism but of Neo-Platonism and traditions of the Corpus Areopagiticum, while the idea of pantheism is indicated as one of the conclusions of Neo-platonic philosophy.

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Gr. Narekatsi's literary heritage has had a deep influence on the spiritual development of the Armenian nation. Even today, his works, valuable in all times, especially the *Book of Lamentations*, are very popular and are included in the field of youth's ideological and moral-aesthetic education. In this sense, the scientific study of the great thinker's whole worldview is very important. It will shed light on the

purposeful mastery of his literary heritage and will meanwhile fill up the corresponding gap in Narekatsi studies.

In my opinion, besides educational and scientific-historical importance, the study of Narekatsi's worldview and especially the study of his method have also scientific-practical significance. My attitude towards Narekatsi's philosophical heritage has been strictly "pragmatic". The main thing that is charming, striking and admirable in Narekatsi is his dialectical logic, the method of structuring his philosophical system. The Armenian great thinker's philosophical searches are an interesting experience in the historical development of Dialectics. Many elements of Narekatsi's philosophical heritage should be accurately studied, reinterpreted and appropriately evaluated in the contemporary science and most of them deserve to be included in the circulation of today's scientific thought as active means and principles. I have included and used Narekatsi's "logic", the dialectics of the universal and individual, the big and small in one of my works, *The Armon Structure of Metauniverse*. As a valuable achievement, Narekatsi's positive experience of philosophizing can and must be used in the contemporary development of philosophical problems, especially dialectics as a method and system of scientific cognition. This expresses not only the historically timeless value of Narekatsi's philosophy but, most importantly, also the actual value of some of his principles and theses.

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In order to assess Narekatsi's worldview completely, to establish his place in the history of the Armenian and world social-philosophical thought, to reveal the whole system of his philosophical views and to show the "concept of Man" in that system and finally to discover Narekatsi's method it is necessary to overcome the following difficulties: firstly, it is necessary to discover the objective and subjective factors of Narekatsi's formation as a great thinker (to reveal the social-economic and political conditions and the ripened problems in the Armenian reality in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the main cultural trends and peculiarities determined by them, as well as the sources

### *The Armenian Reformation and the School of Narek*

As it has already been mentioned in the introduction, the 10<sup>th</sup> century brought momentous changes to the Armenian land. It was a period when the exploited and oppressed classes, the main movers of the successful national liberation struggle against Arab invaders, pinned their great hopes on the restoration of the Armenian statehood. But their hopes for social reformations and improvements of life conditions went down the drain. Moreover, the bondage of peasants, dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, their oppressions and exploitation resulted in an internal unrest, which developed into an anti-clerical, anti-feudal powerful movement called Armenian Reformation.

Prof. V. K. Chaloyan writes, "In Armenia, under the conditions of the dominant role of the church and the utmost aggravation of conflicts between different social classes, the medieval revolutionary opposition could struggle against feudal enslavement in no other way than the obvious religious heresy. But, in fact, the struggle was against inequality and for a new type of social relations. The so-called "Tondrakian" movement, i.e. Reformation, was such an obvious religious heresy in Armenia".

On the one hand, V. Chaloyan rightfully notes that the Tondrakian movement in Armenia coincided with only one struggling wing of the European Reformation (the heretical, plebeian-peasant wing headed by Thomas Munster and others; on the other hand, he identifies Tondrakian movement with the whole Reformation. But like the European (German) Reformation, comprising not only the plebeian-peasant movement led by Thomas Munzer, the Tondrakian movement was only one of the manifestations of the Armenian Reformation. In the Armenian reality, besides the Tondrakians, the Reformation included a movement headed by the supporters of moderate reformations and innovations; with its main problems, that movement resembled Lutheranism. Though the "moderates" were

of Narekatsi's worldview, including the spiritual environment in the monastery of Narek).

These are the difficulties of the initial approach the overcoming of which will shed light on the elucidation of Narekatsi's worldview.

The main difficulty connected with this research is the form and the way of narration in Narekatsi's main work, *Book of Lamentations*; Narekatsi tried to include into it what is non-includable and he managed it to the maximum extent humanly possible.

Though the scientific, philosophical linguo-mentality of his times was developed on the basis of David Anhaght's (David the Invincible) and Anania Shirakatsi's worldviews, the system of concepts and categories was not so flexible in order to enable him to convey the non-conveyable ("untarnished") in the language of science. Therefore, Narekatsi tried to fulfill his intention by means of poetry and figurative linguo-mentality. He did that consciously firstly because the author had an intention of writing something greater than a meager philosophical treatise. He did his best to make his book reach not only the readers' minds but also hearts. In the *Narek*, he paid great attention to the unity and transmutation of thought and emotion: a bright thought must be also emotional. The most important fact for the author was probably the figurative linguo-mentality: the possibility of multiple interpretations of linguistic units and image-symbols enabled him to disguise and transmit some audacious ideas.

The overcoming of this kind of difficulties is decisive for the discovery of the system of his philosophical views. For instance, the image-symbols of the incarnate Word of God, Christ, and Mary can be correctly perceived only when comparing their comprehension in a context with their comprehension based on Narekatsi's whole worldview. Surface breaks and "disconnectedness" of some of Narekatsi's views are a kind of disguise for their deep interconnection, unity and mutual completion.

One of the difficulties is Narekatsi's manner of wording or as the author himself calls it "logic". It is, in fact, the method of Narekatsi's philosophy, the common logic of his ideas.



identified with the Tondrakians and equally perused and persecuted by the clerical-feudal conservatives who were against any, even the slightest innovation, the “moderates” were quite different from the Tondrakians. They did not support the Tondrakians’ “radical” ideas (denial of God and the church hierarchy, etc.). Though they were displeased with the injustice, the violence and severe exploitation on the part of feudal-clerical hierarchy, they did not deny them completely. On the contrary, seeing that because of “sluggard and carnal” clergymen’s oppressions and exploitation their influence on people weakened, and people got out of feudal and clerical control and obedience, also realizing how much that tendency could damage the national and spiritual-cultural unity of the Armenian people in the absence of a united statehood, the “moderates” suggested that the church should make some reformations. In order to democratize the church, they tried to simplify the clerical-feudal hierarchy (but not to eliminate it) and to enliven church rituals.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, one of the centers of that ideological current of the Armenian Reformation was the monastery-school of Narek. The first prominent representative of that school was Khosrov Andzevatsi, a genius poet, Grigor Narekatsi’s father who “did not live in the monastery but had relatives there and was in the closest creative relations with its representatives and belonged to the same literary family”<sup>4</sup>.

We learn from Armenian historians Asoghik, Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Stepanos Orbelian that Catholicos Anania Mokatsi appointed Khosrov, already renowned as an eminent scholar, the bishop of the province of Andzevatsik. Khosrov undertook to introduce some innovations into the church. At first, the Catholicos did not pay attention to those actions. But later when the bishop of Andzevatsik went too far with his innovations he was criticized, persecuted and pursued by the Catholicos.

Fortunately, Catholicos Anania Mokatsi’s epistles were preserved and by famous philologist, Galust Ter-Mkrtchyan’s efforts they were

4. “International conference of Armenian Medieval Literature, theses of reports”, Yerevan, 1986, p. 66.

published in the journal *Ararat* in 1897. One can learn about Khosrov Andzevatsi’s innovations from these letters and why the Catholicos anathematized him. One of the letters addressed to Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi is entitled: “The reason of Lord Anania Mokatsi’s anathematizing Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi”. Anania Mokatsi wrote in the letter: “In the year 954, Bishop Khosrov Andzevatsi, who was a modest and wise elderly man, suddenly driven by an evil force, began to speak deviously, distorted words without any reason. For instance, he began to pronounce kyu”ake instead of kiraki (Sunday), Erusaghem instead of Erusaghem and many other words. Then he made senseless demands, e.g. to shave children’s head until they are grown up, and so he was called “a cutter”. Another demand was to let hair and beard grow longer, and so he was called “a child”. Then he introduced into the church other nonsense, e.g. he spoke ill of cross, saying that a cross blessed by clergymen is equal to an unblessed one, i.e. he considered the blessing of crosses needless. And we forgave him **this all**”<sup>5</sup>.

It is notable that the Catholicos forgave him those innovations, but when Khosrov raised the question of the simplification of the church hierarchy, reduction of the number of the nine orders of the church he aroused the ire of the Catholicos: “Where did you get the idea that you could emphasize three church orders, excluding the others? Even Dionysius whom you trust so much enumerates seven orders and writes an accusation against subdeacon Demophilos, while you mention only three orders and not more. And you say that those (the orders) are established according to merits, i.e. the lower ones, and that you are more respected than those holding lower posts, and you are the advisor of God’s servants; deacons, priests, high priests, their disciples. If one deviates from the orders, the whole system will be ruined and there will be chaos. Thus he (Dionysius) did not cease to recognize three orders, moreover in course of time he added other useful principles and consequently it is necessary to accept that the nine-order hierarchy is very important to the church,

5. “Ararat”, 1897, pp. 276-277.

where disciples long to receive orders (commands) from the Holy Spirit nine times”<sup>6</sup>.

With the reduction of the number of church orders and hierarchy, Khosrov Andzevatsi wanted to simplify the Armenian Church, to eliminate the gap between the church and people. That way clergymen would become less occupied with their own concerns, would be closer to people and would be a greater success in strengthening faith in them. In Khosrov’s opinion, the great number of church orders stimulated clergymen’s prosperity and viciousness, thereby causing the inner collapse of the church. Anania Mokatsi wrote, “I know you want to destroy the religious power, which you cannot do; for they (the orders) do not destroy but strengthen it even more.”<sup>7</sup>

The Catholicos was angry with him mostly because he dared to reject “the holiest of holies”, the feudal bases of the church organization. Here it refers to Khosrov Andzevatsi’s refusal to give presents to the Catholicos. That “present” was like paying taxes. From the Catholicos’ letters we learn that Khosrov refused to pay such tributes saying: “Who’s made me the Catholicos’ tax-payer?” And as Kirakos Gandzaketsi told, he tried to justify it in the following way: “The bishop needn’t give presents to the Catholicos as they say he is not higher, the difference is only in titles”<sup>8</sup>.

Anania Mokatsi viewed Khosrov’s attitude as an attempt to introduce a new heresy into the Armenian Church: “Then he began to introduce a heresy into the church as he said that angles and archangels are honored and glorified equally, so must be bishops and patriarchs, emphasizing that it is written that a reader is conferred the title of deacon, the deacon may become a priest, and there are still titles to be promoted. The episcopacy follows the priesthood, there are no further titles after this one, just superiority in regard to throne. And the advance from episcopacy to the title of patriarch is not called promotion, i.e. there are no more titles: one throne and

one honor to both a bishop and a patriarch. And so, patriarch, is just a name, not a double honor”<sup>9</sup>.

Concealing the real social aspect of the issue, the Catholicos accused Khosrov of separatism and betrayal: “This cruel and evil, destructive intention leads to the destruction of the whole power of the church and to the elimination of indestructible borderlines between clergymen, i.e. each of them becomes a separate priest and house (acts independently from the others), hence an evil for the society”. The angry Catholicos continued: “He has secret intentions; that is why we have asked him many times to give up that wrong and irrational decision, we have begged even with tears in our eyes but he would not listen”.

“With tears in his eyes” the cunning and hypocritical Catholicos asked Khosrov Andzevatsi not to revolt, to be obedient and do his duty, i.e. give luxurious presents to the Catholicos, in other words to pay the demanded tribute. But as bishop Khosrov refused to do it he was anathematized by the Catholicos.

For his innovations, the contemporaries accused Khosrov Andzevatsi of being a Chalcedonian, a “tsayt”, i.e. one who deviates from the Armenian official faith. And he wrote the following in this concern: “If one of the Armenians adopts the canons of other nations, considering them true, he will be considered a tsayt, i.e. a schismatic, apostate. He will be mocked, persecuted and threatened with death”<sup>10</sup>.

Reformation caused a true revival in the field of culture in Armenia.

From the 10<sup>th</sup> century on, during the next four or five centuries (with some ups and downs) there occurred many qualitative changes in the life of the Armenian people. The unity of these changes comprises a very remarkable period in the development of Armenian culture, and this period is rightfully called “the Armenian Renaissance”<sup>11</sup>.

6. Ibid., pp. 286-288.

7. Ibid., pp. 277-280.

8. Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Patmutyun Hayots* (History of the Armenians), Yerevan, 1961, p. 85-86.

9. “Ararat”, 1897, p. 277.

10. Khosrov Andzevatsi, *Meknutyun Zhamagroc* (Commentary on Book of Hours), Constantinople, 1840, p. 199.

11. V. K. Chaloyan, *Haykakan renesans* (The Armenian Renaissance), Yerevan, 1964.

The conflicts of reality, being reflected in the spiritual culture, caused an acute ideological struggle. In the sphere of culture, in parallel with the strengthening of the oppressive influence of Christian ideology “from above”, the opposition of secular thinking and the elements of the secular culture “of below” strengthened too: from the reconsideration of the foundations of Christian ideology (interpretative freethinking, which was an expression of irreconcilability, too) to pantheism and atheism ( these were the main currents of that ideological struggle. The period required to reconsider the dominant ideas (though the conservative circles of the clergy supported the irrefutability of Christian dogmas and were against their free interpretation) but the representatives of the two (rivalry) currents of the Reformation approached them differently and with different purposes. One of the parties sought to reconsider the ideology in order to improve it, the other party strictly criticized it trying to reject it and to put forward new ideological foundations.

However, the representatives of the two currents of the Armenian Reformation had something in common: it was the active interest in the past, particularly in the Hellenistic culture and philosophy. From the 10<sup>th</sup> century on, “the Armenian science and philosophy had been showing a growing interest in the Hellenistic culture and philosophy... Representatives of the Armenian Renaissance would naturally turn to the spiritual past of their nation, more precisely to the Hellenistic orientation of the Armenian philosophy”<sup>12</sup>. The founders of that phenomenon were Khosrov Andzevatsi, an Armenian great medieval thinker, and the two prominent representatives of Narek School, Anania and Grigor Narekatsi.

Anania Narekatsi was the first to lay the foundation of the process of secularizing the ecclesiastical literature and poetry. Clearly realizing the requirements of his time, people’s humanistic moods and thinking, Anania Narekatsi tried to enliven church rituals to a certain degree and attain the intensification of their influence. Due to Anania Narekatsi’s creative innovation, such ecclesiastical genres as ser-

mon, ode and admonition underwent a new qualitative development.

First of all, Anania Narekatsi theoretically grounded the necessity to use secular elements in literature. Hrachya Tamrazyan, a literary critic, wrote that in Anania Narekatsi’s opinion a composer should take his images and examples of regret from secular life: “...like farmers who make instruments, before the work begins in the field. In the same way, we must know the purity of the earthlings about whom the disciple says: ‘The invisible is learned through the visible created by God’<sup>13</sup>.”

Anania Narekatsi is presented as a philosopher, musician, poet and rhetorician in Armenian literature. He is one of the highly merited persons of the Armenian medieval culture. As a writer-innovator, he paid more attention to the man’s inner rite, inner prayer, inner monologue which serve to the man’s inner purification. He developed a thesis of inner prayer, trying to penetrate into the creative process, to go deep into its peculiarities and essential features<sup>14</sup>. Grigor Narekatsi developed this creative approach in his mystic poem *Book of Lamentations*.

The mysticism and ascetics preached by Anania and Grigor Narekatsi first of all referred to “sluggard and carnal” clergymen, feudal and money-loving churchmen. This was the reason for both of them to be accused of being Tondrakians by high-ranking clergymen. In the middle of the forties of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, at the request of Catholicos Anania Mokatsi, Anania Narekatsi wrote a voluminous work, *Protest Against the Tondrakians and Other Sectarians* in which he criticized the Tondrakian (the struggling wing of Armenian Reformation) ideology and activity, viewing them as unacceptable radicalism. However, this did not help the author to avoid accusations either, as on the downhill of his life he himself was suspected in adhering to that sect and at death’s door he wrote a *Letter of Confession* by the Catholicos’ order. Prof. M. Mkryan wrote in this concern, “As a mystic Anania could have a criticizing attitude towards the

12. V. K. Chaloyan, *David Anhaghti Pilsopayutyune* (The Philosophy of David Anhaght), Yerevan, 1946, p. 195-196.

13. See H. H. Tamrazyan’s article: *Anania Narekatsi’s poem “For the earthly life”*, Historical-Philological Journal, 1980, vol. 4, p. 185.

14. International conference on Armenian Medieval Literature, p. 66.



clergy, and in order to restrain it, the Catholicos could easily qualify it as an expression of sectarianism (under the conditions of the widespread Tondrakian struggle). Later Grigor Narekatsi was treated in the same way too”<sup>15</sup>.

Grigor Narekatsi was the most prominent figure of Narek scientific-educational and cultural-enlightening center. The genius poet and thinker became a great innovator of spiritual life in medieval Armenia. His literary-artistic invaluable heritage laid the foundation of the secularization and humanization of not only literary-artistic but also social-philosophical thought. Even his contemporaries venerated him as a great philosopher and scientist, poet, rhetorician and musician. Great is his contribution to the flourishing and development of the literary language of medieval Armenia. He was a great creator of language.<sup>16</sup>

The spiritual-cultural atmosphere at the school of Narek was conditioned by Khosrov Andzevatsi’s and Anania Narekatsi’s prolific activity and creative, scientific-pedagogical innovations. Grigor Narekatsi was brought up and educated in this atmosphere. He became his father’s and his teacher’s heir and continued their work.

15. M. Mkryan, Grigor Narekatsi, Yerevan, 1955, p. 121.

16. Varag Arakelyan, Narekatsi’s language and style, Yerevan, 1975.

## The Issue of Grigor Narekatsi’s Trial

Little is known about Grigor Narekatsi’s life and work. We know that he was Khosrov Andzevatsi’s son; since childhood, he had been educated in the monastery of Narek under the tutelage of his uncle Anania Narekatsi, a prominent teacher of the time. He began to write when he was a youth. Being already popular due to his rich knowledge and unimpeachable conduct, Grigor had a serious order in 977; the king of Vaspurakan Gurgen offered him to write a commentary on *Song of Songs*. Grigor Narekatsi wrote speeches, coda-chants, lays but his masterpiece was his immortal poem *Book of Lamentations*; he died in 1003, a year after finishing it.

An interesting piece of information has come down to us. According to it, Grigor was accused of schism and was persecuted. High-ranking secular and religious figures of the time assembled in order to try him but, supposedly, he proved his innocence and sainthood by a miracle; in this way he avoided attending the trial: “The saint spared no effort for the unity of the church as the order in the holy church was shattered and neglected by sluggard and carnal clergymen. He wanted to reestablish and restore it. That is why brutal and cruel people spoke ill of him and considered him a schismatic. And assembling in a place, bishops and lords called him in order to try, to scold him publically and exile as a schismatic. And the envoys came to the saint to take him to the trial. Knowing this, the saint scolded them for senselessness and suggested that they should dine before going. He ordered to broil two pigeons and put them on their table. It was Friday. And that tempted the visitors to say: “Isn’t it Friday today, Vardapet”. And as if unaware of it, he answered: “Forgive me brothers; I did not know that it was a fasting day today”. Then he said to the pigeons: “Get up and go, join your flock as it is a fasting day today”. And on saying this, the pigeons came to life, got wings and flew up in the presence of everyone. They were dumbfounded to see that, and they fell down at the saint’s feet, worshiped him and apologized.

They went and told everyone about the miracle, they gave up their evil wish and called him the Second Illuminator<sup>17</sup> and Wonder-worker<sup>18</sup>.

Prof. M. Mkryan rightfully marks that this miracle and many others, told in folk legends and epic songs about Narekatsi prove the historical veracity of the fact that he was persecuted by the official church. And if it is so, it is important to find out why the great thinker was persecuted. Narekatsi's freethinking, dissatisfaction with the reality, his emphasized mysticism enabled some circles of the clergy to accuse him of being a Tondrakian, though the poet did not consider himself a one and like his teacher he wrote against that movement. But the influence of many ideas of that movement on Narekatsi's worldview is obvious. The poet did not deny it himself; in Prayer 75 of his *Book of Lamentations* he wrote that he used to be fascinated with the evil ideas of that heresy too. Practically Narekatsi was really against the Tondrakian "extremisms" as he was educated at Narek School and was a representative of the current of moderate reformations. He was against destroying the churches and monasteries; as *Haysmavurk* (Menology) testified, he tried to reestablish and reform the church order corrupted and neglected by sluggard and carnal church leaders, to restore the fame of the church with some reformations, to draw the church, cut off and opposed to people, nearer to them again in order to strengthen their fading faith. By the way, the tenth-century historian Ukhtanes was concerned with that issue too, he was deeply influenced by Narek School. Apparently, this influence made the historian exclaim: "And blessed is the one who thinks of the poor and homeless: as he is accepted by God"

Like his father Khosrov Andzevatsi, Grigor Narekatsi was accused of being a tsayt, i.e. Chalcedonian, Orthodox, too, only because, as the most educated person of the time, he had a profound respect for the Greek culture and wanted to introduce some positive things of the neighboring Orthodox countries into the Armenian

17. Saint Gregory the Illuminator is credited with converting Armenia from paganism to Christianity in 301.

18. *Haysmavurk*, 1706, p. 16.

Church. Let us quote Khosrov Andzevatsi's words again: "If one of the Armenians adopts the canons of other nations, considering them true, he will be considered a tsayt, a schismatic, apostate. He will be mocked, persecuted and threatened with death".

The prominent historian Michael Chamchian said the following about Grigor Narekatsi: "He was considered a schismatic because he wanted to unite the Armenians under the patronage of other churches, Greek and Georgian, which were Chalcedonian and because he borrowed some innovations from them<sup>19</sup>. One of those innovations that the "Moderates" wanted to borrow from the neighboring Orthodox churches was the usage of icons. Orbelyan wrote the following about the bishop of the province of Syunik, Vahan, who was elected Armenian Catholicos after Anania Mokatsi: "A year after being elected Catholicos, he began to bring icons from Georgia and put them on the altar. He ordered to do the same in all churches, to decorate altars with icons like the Greek and not to say the mass without icons. That's why everyone thought that he had concluded an alliance with the Greek and wanted to bring their sect into our church. People complained of him to the king. And the king ordered to convene a council in the city of Ani to clear up the matter. Knowing it, Vahan did not attend the council, instead he went to the province of Vaspurakan to king Gagik's son Hamazasp and convinced him that he was slandered by envious people<sup>20</sup>."

Nerses Lambronatsi considered that Grigor Narekatsi was Catholicos Vahan's co-thinker<sup>21</sup>. What is interesting is that in the disputable Prayer 75 of his *Book of Lamentations* Narekatsi spoke of the importance of icons and marked that portraying the Mother of

19. M. Chamchian, *Hayots Patmutyun* (Armenian History), volume 2, p. 1023. M. Chamchian perceives that "unity" differently, presenting the desired as reality; according to him Narekatsi had really adopted Chalcedon. However, the truth is that not being a Chalcedonian Narekatsi wanted to establish reconciliation among the neighboring Christian churches.

20. Stepanos Orbelyan, *Syuniqi patmutyun* (The History of Syunik), Yerevan, 1986, p. 249-250.

21. M. Chamchian, *Hayots Patmutyun* (Armenian History), volume 2, Venice, 1785, p. 1024.

God was not impious.

*If one were to consider her the image of the Mother of God, it would not be impious.*

*Like the sign of the cross of salvation with amazing powers and handiwork, it performs miracles.*

*The terrifying tribunal of the last judgment is established there visibly.*

*Through her the babbling mouths of immoral heretics are silenced.* (Pr. 75, L)<sup>22</sup>

As we see in this extract, Narekatsi gave reasons for the necessity of icons, in contrast to the Tondrakians who did not admit it at all.

Catholicos Vahan (as well as Khosrov Andzevatsi, Anania and Grigor Narekatsis) was not a Chalcedonian and considered such accusations as slander against him. This wing of the Armenian Reformation, represented by these figures, had a special attitude towards the-tenth-century Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships. The Armenian Monophysite reformers clearly saw and realized that religious disputes developed into political violence, interethnic clashes, antagonisms and weakened the neighboring Christian peoples, harmed their spiritual culture, economic and political unity, and all this was fraught with a great tragedy under the conditions of the common external threat. Only this can explain these people's aspiration and endeavor to ease the Armenian-Chalcedonian escalated relationships and end the interethnic clashes caused by that escalation. Thus, due to the work of the representatives of moderate reformations, with their special attitude to the neighboring Dyophysite churches and peoples a new mentality, a new idea was formed in the medieval reality, the idea of religious tolerance and solidarity among nations. (As we see, the principle of the peaceful co-existence has a historical past). This idea was later developed in Mkhitar Gosh's and Vardan

22. All the English extracts of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* are taken from Thomas J. Samuelian's book *St. Grigor Narekatsi, Speaking with God from the Depth of my Heart*; the other extracts from poems, with the exception of one, are translated by the translator of this book.

Aygektsi's works. "Making sure that it is impossible to come to a common conclusion over Christ's nature, Mkhitar Gosh and Vardan Aygektsi, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>-centuries' authors, who lived in different corners of the Armenian homeland (Gosh in Northern Armenia, dependent on Georgia, Vardan in Cilician Armenia), independently from each other but equally motivated by the same concern, made absolutely unique appeals having no precedent in the Christian world. These appeals were based on religious tolerance and the idea of solidarity among nations"<sup>23</sup>.

Catholicos Vahan, as well as Grigor Narekatsi, striving for reconciliation with Chalcedonian churches, never had an intention to sacrifice the independence of the Armenian Church for that reconciliation. Catholicos Vahan was not personally interested in converting the Armenian Church to a Chalcedonian one, thereby making it dependent on the Byzantine Church. They tried to ease the escalated relationships with the neighboring churches on the basis of religious tolerance. Religious tolerance was one of the manifestations of Grigor Narekatsi's, the genius poet's and thinker's humanistic worldview. And this explains the fact why he wrote his *Book of Lamentations* for all Christian nations without any exception, not taking into account whether they were Monophysites or Dyophysites: *...for the entire, mixed congregation of the Church universal* (Pr. 3, B). But naturally, Narekatsi's such position concerning the external political relationships of the Armenian Church could be and was qualified as a deviation from "the true faith" and was even regarded as a betrayal by conservatives, especially in the middle of the eighties of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, during a new stage of Byzantium's anti-Armenian policy.

That's why it was quite possible for the conservative clergy to want to try Narekatsi. Unfortunately, except *Haysmavurk*, no other book contains any concrete information about the trial. It is unknown where, when and under what circumstances the trial took place or whether it really took place or not. "We know nothing how Narekatsi

23. "International conference of Armenian Medieval Literature, theses of reports", Yerevan, 1986, p. 148.

managed to avoid attending the trial, or if he was present at the trial how he justified himself<sup>24</sup>.

The greatest part of the information concerning Narekatsi in *Haysmavurk* is true to fact. We have no reason not to believe that there was a trial and that bishops and lords had assembled to try Narekatsi. It is beyond doubt that this information is true though the fact of high-ranking clergymen's and official's assembling for trying Narekatsi was in itself undesirable for the official church (even an attempt of trying a saint did not do credit to churchmen) anyway it is explicitly told in *Haysmavurk*. Why? Because the way of overcoming that unpleasant deadlock had been found beforehand: though high-ranking clergymen and officials assembled, St. Grigor Narekatsi was not tried, he proved his sainthood with his miracles and in this way seemingly the saint was not humiliated; his trial did not take place.

M. Chamchian has accepted the fact of the trial too; he has even specified the place and the date of the council: "Seeing the Armenians' disastrous isolation from the Greek because of the Council of Chalcedon, and knowing the truth about Catholicos Vahan's withdrawal to Vaspurakan, Grigor tried to reconcile our nation and the Chalcedonians of other nations to unite them around the Greek church and eliminate agitation, saying that deviations in the Armenian church order, even those of earlier times, should be corrected cautiously and carefully.

Learning about his good will from plotters, people looked askew at him and called him tsayt, i.e. as if his faith had diminished and he had become a heterodox. Moreover, after Catholicos Vahan's death some of illiterate people began to persecute him and accused him in the city of Ani of the Shirak province, then they set up a clamor, spread rumor until it became urgent to convene a council in Ani, in which Vardapets and lords were to participate, to discuss and examine the saint's works and thoughts and exile him in case they discovered he had deviated from the true faith<sup>25</sup>. Chamchian's

sensitivity is striking and admirable; unfortunately, up to this day it is unknown on the basis of which sources he stated that the trial took place in Ani in 987 (he has marked the year 436 of Armenian chronology in the margin). Maybe this is the reason that the concrete information provided by M. Chamchian has not yet been appreciated at true value in Philology and is not being discussed even now<sup>26</sup>. But if we compare this important information given by Chamchian with the historical events in the middle of the eighties of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it becomes obvious that the merited Armenologist's information is not groundless, on the contrary, it is quite trustworthy and reliable.

Byzantium always presented its expansionist policy as a rightful struggle for "true faith". In the 10<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine emperors carried out an anti-Armenian policy, deriving benefit from doctrinal discords. Thus in 30-40ies of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, after the Emperor Romanos' persecutions, the Armenian-Chalcedonian relations became comparatively peaceful. But in 986 there started a new wave of violence against the Armenian Monophysites. The Armenian prominent historian "Asoghik told interesting facts about it: "Both abbesses and the metropolitan of Sebastia began to oppress the Armenians because of their faith. They acted violently towards priests. The chief priest of the city of Sebastia was taken to the palace in iron chains. Priest Gabriel was tortured and killed in prison because he was a wise elderly man, firm in his faith. All this happened in 986. Forced by metropolitan, non-prominent priests Sion and Hovhanness, the two bishops of Sebastia (Sivas) and Larisso respectively, accepted the Chalcedonian creed. They were left out of the Armenian congregation, and then the Armenians of Sebastia turned their backs on them, too, until King Basil's arrival in the Eastern Armenia. Then the metropolitans began to write urgent letters to the Armenian Catholicos Lord Khachik, and the above mentioned Vardapets answered them courageously<sup>27</sup>. Matteos Urhayetsi (Mathew of

25. M. Chamchyan, *Patmutyun* (History), volume 2, p. 852.

24. M. Mkryan, *Grigor Narekatsi*, Yerevan, 1955, p. 122.

26. With the exception of a 19th-century philologist Barsegh Sagsyan's work, *Study of the Manichaeon-Paulician- Tondrakian sect and Gr. Narekatsi's epistle*.

27 Stepanos Taronetsi Asoghik, *Patmutyun Tiezerakan* (The Universal History), Petersburg, 1985, p. 201.

Edessa), an eleventh-century historian, wrote in this concern: “The patriarch of the Greeks, Theodore, whose seat was the capital Melitene, who was a profound thinker, competent in Holy Scriptures, wrote a letter to him (Catholicos Khachik-S.P.). Armenian Vardapet Samvel answered him decently and politely. The whole audience liked his letter; that is why he (Samvel) began to be held in high respect both by patriarch Theodore and the Armenian Catholicos Khachik<sup>28</sup>. It should be assumed from this information that a council was called in Ani or Argina, Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni’s residence, in 987, to discuss the issues of the mentioned events and the measures to take to strengthen the Armenian Church. We can infer from Urhayetsi’s statement “the whole audience liked his letter” that Samvel Kamrjadzoretsi’s response letter to the Byzantine bishop was discussed at that council too. It might be the very council where Grigor Narekatsi, accused of being a “tsayt”, had to undergo inquisition. Narekatsi’s opponents used the moment to defame him in the presence of Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni. In that period of the inflammation of anti-Byzantine passions, even a slight doubt was enough to be cruelly tried by the church.

Accepting the fact of trial as a historical event, let us move on to the question of whether Narekatsi attended the trial or not.

In order to clear up this matter, it is necessary to take into account the nature of the ideological struggle in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and Narekatsi’s place in that struggle. Though it may seem impudent, the researcher should put himself in Grigor’s place. Not attending the trial would mean to confirm all the accusations against him. And in the result of it Narekatsi would be persecuted, imprisoned and exiled as a schismatic. And if not during his life, surely after his death, all the works that were the meaning of his life would be destroyed. Today the mankind would not have the immortal monument *Book of Lamentations*, the creative foundations of which the poet had already laid at the time. Consequently, Narekatsi would be removed from church and would have to come out of the social-po-

litical arena, in general; it was something that was not included in the great poet’s creative and practical plans at all. As it is mentioned in *Haysmavurk*, though it comes as a surprise, Narekatsi never sought to be detached from the church and join the Tondrakians. He had a task to strengthen the shaken foundations of the Armenian Church and ease the tension in Armenian-Chalcedonian relationship. He had to do a lot to achieve the goal. Anyway, he did not have another alternative. The great thinker took that step, knowing that all the other ways would prove to be in vain. It would be naive to try to persuade church leaders in the great necessity of reformations once more because even Vahan Syunetsi did not manage to do it when he was a Catholicos.

Narekatsi probably attended the council convened to try him. He was accused, reproached but managed to justify himself. However striking it may seem, the fact that *Haysmavurk* denied Narekatsi’s appearing before the court is the very proof of his attending the trial. Unfortunately, accepting the fact of the trial the prominent historian M. Chamchian repeated the legend in *Haysmavurk* that Narekatsi avoided the trial by a miracle.

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28. Matteos Urhayetsi, *Zhamankagrutiun* (Chronicle), Yerevan, 1973, pp. 25-26.



## HOW DID GRIGOR NAREKATSI JUSTIFY HIMSELF

It is clear that Narekatsi would not appear before the court empty-handed. He might have taken a work confirming his orthodoxy with him. In the Middle Ages it was accepted that an accused person could justify himself with a writing, deny the accusations against himself, prove his innocence and if he had been mechanically fascinated with some inadmissible ideas, he had to confess it with a confession letter and come to orthodoxy again as Anania Narekatsi had to write his *Confession Letter* on the brink of death”.

This hypothesis, that Narekatsi appeared before the court and justified himself by a work confirming his orthodoxy, was put forward by the philologist B. Sargsyan already at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Narekatsi wrote his well-known letter to the head of the monastery of Kchav in relation to the trial: “Even Grigor Narekatsi, the aroma of whose sainthood delights us like a sweet incense and fills the heart of every Armenian with joy even after nine centuries, did not evade their accusation until he wrote an epistle on his creed, despite the fact that Armenian historians credit him with the miraculous rebirth and flying of roasted pigeons”<sup>29</sup>.

His anti-Tondrakian, anti-Chalcedonian letter to the head of the Kchav monastery was an excellent means to defend himself against assaults and accusations. The survival of that letter is already an interesting and conspicuous fact. It is hardly probable that the clergy of the Kchav monastery would preserve that accusatory epistle; however, it has come down to us. Moreover, it was included in the official collection of *Girk Tghtos (Book of Letters)* of the Armenian Church. Doesn't the fact of the letter against the Kchav monastery being included in such an authoritative collection attest that a copy of the letter (we repeat that the original would hardly survive) somehow appeared at the Catholicate where it was included in the collection

of *Girk Tghtos*? Couldn't the author, Grigor, himself take the copy to the Catholicos?

What brings us to that idea? First of all, the very reason of writing the epistle. In this concern B. Sargsyan has interesting remarks in his work, *Study of the Manichaeon-Paulician-Tondrakian sect and Gr. Narekatsi's epistle*. Sargsyan wrote the following about the real motive of writing the letter: “It should be noted that in 987 even the purest of abbots were accused of being Tondrakians' co-thinkers because of the sect of the hypocrite Tondrakians. Saint Grigor was among those whom enemies considered as a tsayt, i.e. apostate, too. A council of prominent Vardapets and lords was convened in the city of Ani, royal residence, to examine the matter; Grigor was found innocent. But as not everyone knew about it he had to write letters to different people, in which, however, he did not write his creed”<sup>30</sup>. B. Sargsyan related the writing of the epistle to the council convened to try Narekatsi; according to him (anyhow he himself hinted at it), Narekatsi had written his epistle not because he was much concerned with the fact that the clergymen of Kchav monastery were fond of or adhered to Tondrakians. In writing that letter Narekatsi had another intention: the creation of such a document which, when needed, would be used as proof of its author's orthodoxy or innocence. (It is obvious that the real purpose of the letter was this, concluding from the fact that the clergymen of Kchav monastery were accused of being Tondrakians by someone who himself had been accused of the same thing).

It is noteworthy that, according to B. Sargsyan, Narekatsi chose a strange way to prove his innocence: instead of speaking about and grounding his orthodoxy and his faithfulness to the “true faith” in his letter, he assaulted the clergymen of Kchav monastery, accusing them of being Tondrakians. And writing even the details of the ideology of that movement, he anathematized and cursed its followers.

Apparently, Narekatsi did not choose the monastery of Kchav as a target by accident. Taking into consideration the following lines of

29. B. Sargsyan, *Study of the Manichaeon-Paulician-Tondrakian sect and Gr. Narekatsi's epistle*, Venice, 1983, p. 74.

30. Ibid., pp. 106-107.

Narekatsi's letter "...that orders to curse them in his writings and considers our Lord Anania's amazing objection-letter as a filthy talk", B. Sargsyan noted: "Judging from Grigor's words the abbot of the monastery of Kchav had evidently spoken or acted against Anania Narekatsi. On the one hand, the abbot had come to an agreement with the Tondrakians, and on the other hand, had led some of the sober-minded into temptation. It can be concluded from Kchav abbot's objection against Anania Narekatsi, if it is true, that either the monasteries of Kchav and Narek were rivals in the 10th century or the abbot of Kchav monastery really wanted to disseminate the Tondrakian sect in his congregation"<sup>31</sup>.

There is no doubt about the opposition of these two monasteries. The clergy of Kchav monastery might have accused Anania Narekatsi of being not sincere enough in his well-known writing against the Tondrakians that gave the Catholicos an opportunity to make the dying Anania Narekatsi write his *Confession Letter*. Moreover, the assaults and rumors of the clergymen of Kchav might have been redirected against Grigor Narekatsi, after Anania Narekatsi's death. Maybe, the clergy of Kchav had spoken ill of the great poet to the Catholicos.

Under the conditions of an uncompromising ideological struggle, persecutions and pressures, one has to use the opponent's weapon against him. Taking the chance that a certain Mushegh, who probably preached some of the ideas of the Tondrakian movement, had been living in Kchav monastery for some time, Narekatsi wrote his epistle addressed to the clergy of Kchav in a way as if he was much concerned with Mushegh's being accepted in Kchav and that the clergymen liked him. Maybe the clergymen of Kchav were not Tondrakians at all and Narekatsi was just taking revenge on them. Had the clergymen of Kchav justified themselves and proved their innocence, Narekatsi would state that he had just heard such kind of news and was suspicious that's why he had offered the abbot of the monastery of Kchav to anathematize the Tondrakians in writing, too.

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31. Ibid., p. 108.

Thus, the question would be clarified and the both sides satisfied.

Narekatsi's epistle has been viewed differently in Armenian studies. Some of the investigators even considered it as a proof of Narekatsi's being extremely reactionary (Leo, A. Hovhannisyan). The proponents of this view have not taken into account the historical conditions and circumstances and the real motives of writing that *Epistle*. Narekatsi was not a Tondrakian. He was against the "radical" manifestations of that movement but at the same time he was deeply affected by some of the ideas of that movement. His *Book of Lamentations* is perhaps the mirror of those ideas. Narekatsi was a "moderate" reformer. This was the reason of his special attitude towards the Tondrakians (members of the most revolutionary movement) on the one hand, and towards conservatives, on the other hand. Anyway, we should not forget that Narekatsi was the great figure and ideologist of the Armenian Reformation. Thus, though he did adhere to the Tondrakians but was much closer to them than to the conservatives.

If we go far in comparisons, we should say that Narekatsi was Martin Luther of the Armenian reality. Luther's great creative deed was the translation of Holy Writ into German during the nationalization process of Christianity. And, in the Armenian reality the creation of *Book of Lamentations* by Narekatsi was such a great creative deed.

Grigor Narekatsi's letter against the clergy of Kchav monastery was a kind of "practical" evidence of its author's innocence. It could attest that its author had acted against sectarians, but in the letter, he attacked the clergy of Kchav rather than defended himself. B. Sargsyan rightly marked that the author had not written about his faith, as it was accepted in Middle Ages, for his contemporaries to know whether he had deviated from the foundations of faith or not. That is to say Narekatsi might have taken some other writing, besides that letter a "theoretical" evidence of his orthodoxy, in which he must have written his creed. In my opinion, the unity of the disputable prayers of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* could be such a work. Taking into consideration the very words of the author, I con-

ventionally name it *Havatoy Sahmank* (Profession of Faith). Written in a rhetorical style and being religious in content, Prayers 34, 75, 92, 93 of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* were initially the entire work in which Narekatsi presented the foundations of the doctrine of the Armenian Church, showing his negative attitude towards almost all the deviations of the time from those foundations.

Apparently, those prayers were directed not only against the Ton-drakians but also against Dyophysites as is obvious from the fact that one of the citations of famous Vardapets in Vardan Aygektsi's collection of *Armat Havatoy* (Roots of Faith) has been taken from the very disputable Prayer 75 of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations*:

*reverently loving the Father,  
whose likeness he bears...  
humbled itself and descended to earth,  
without diminishing its inherent glory,  
to enter the maternal womb of the immaculate Virgin,  
Mother of God, in whom he grew the seeds of blessings  
in that radiant field of purity.* (Pr. 75, E)

These Prayers have caused scientific hot discussions. Disputable points include the question of their authorship, whether they were initially in the *Book of Lamentations* or not, the question of their premeditation and **so on**<sup>32</sup>.

Thoroughly considering these issues in his monograph, M. Mkryan came to the conclusion that "either Narekatsi was not the author of the non-poetic Prayers 92, 93, as well as 75 and the last parts of some other Prayers at all, or if he had ever written them, he had composed them independently from his poem for other purposes, and later scribes mixed those Prayers and parts with the text of the poem for certain reasons". The valuable study of manuscripts, recently conducted by P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan, enables us to leave out doubts and say with certainty that Grigor and no one else is the author of these Prayers, and they have initially been in

32. M. Mkryan, "Grigor Narekatsi", Yerevan, 1955, pp. 174-177.

the *Book of Lamentations*<sup>33</sup>. In this concern, the bibliographers have written, "Is Narekatsi or somebody else the author of these prayers? Could they be written by his brother Hovhannes?" There are no reasons to attribute the manuscripts to somebody else. We think that the author's mention of his brother's collaboration does not refer to Hovhannes' creative help but copying and editorial assistance. Narekatsi does not give a hint of not being the author of these **Prayers**<sup>34</sup>.

Accepting that these disputable Prayers initially constituted a part of the *Book of Lamentations*, there arises some controversial situation; if Narekatsi is their author why are they different from the other Prayers not only stylistically but also in content? (We will consider this difference separately below).

M. Kheranyan and V. Gevorgyan solved that discrepancy by regarding Narekatsi as not the author of those prayers. M. Kheranyan wrote: "Prayers 75, 92, 93 wholly, as well as separate parts in Prayers 33, 34 and 36 are of only doctrinal and religious-philosophical character, and in my opinion, these Prayers, being stylistically and spiritually different from the whole poem, can hardly belong to the genius poet's **pen**"<sup>35</sup>.

However, the studies of the manuscripts give no reason to doubt that Narekatsi was the author of those prayers.

P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan tried to solve that controversy mainly in the following way: "The fact that Prayers 33 and 34 as well as some parts in Prayers 75, 92, 93 have a religious-doctrinal content, special titles and subtitles, and violate the general lyrical-emotional mood of the poem cannot be a sound argument to take these Prayers out of the *Book of Lamentations*, moreover, to consider them as not Narekatsi's work. These Prayers make Narekatsi's worldview complete, expressing his religious mentality, the narrow-mindedness

33. Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, notes, pp. 973-1122.

34. Ibid., p.1112.

35. Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, translated from Grabar by Mkrtych Kheranyan, Yerevan, 1960, p. 34.

of that epoch and the profound influence of the church ideology and theological scholasticism<sup>36</sup>.

As we see, they have solved the controversy by considering the disputable Prayers as supplementing and concretizing the content of the other Prayers (in these Prayers Narekatsi has enlarged and gone into the details of the Creed of the Nicene Council in 325), i.e. these Prayers are viewed as an expression of Narekatsi's ideological beliefs. The following citation confirms that: "Narekatsi's position taken in behalf of the church and against the people who defame it, is distinct here (in Prayer 75). According to Narekatsi, to neglect the order, mystery of the church is the same as to raise hand against God: ...*raises a hand in malice against the heavenly kingdom*"<sup>37</sup>.

Khachatryan and Ghazinyan saw the solution of the issue this way: "Proving that the author of these Prayers is Narekatsi, we should accept that their content is not alien to him. On the contrary, they constitute a part of his ideological beliefs, hence the composition of these Prayers was initially a part of Narekatsi's ideological-creative plans of writing the poem, and these Prayers were not composed "independently from his poem and for other purposes".

Such an approach does not take into account the fact that the disputable Prayers differ from the other Prayers of the poem not only stylistically but also in content and even with regard to religious-doctrinal questions, moreover, they have been written from different perspectives of the tenth-century ideological struggle but by the same person.

M. Mkryan was right considering that Narekatsi "had created the disputable Prayers independently from his poem and for other purposes..." The celebrated philologist saw the reasons of their creation very well. "...Even if we consider that these prayers (they mostly refer to the Nicene Creed) were written by Narekatsi, who was accused of being a Tondrakian and was persecuted for it, all the same

it is impossible to imagine that such a genius poet like him would disturb the purposeful structure of his poem with religious prosaic "insertions" two or three times<sup>38</sup>. But why not? Isn't it possible that the great poet, whatever his purpose of writing these prayers was (securing himself from accusations), had to include them in his poem because of the above-mentioned reasons, in order to ensure the future existence of his poem...?

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Prayer 75 is pivotal among Narekatsi's religious-doctrinal Prayers (34, 75, 92, 93): it unites the other prayers around itself. That pivotal Prayer, with its D-F parts, referring to the creed of the Holy Trinity, is related to Prayer 34 and with its parts referring to the special interpretation of the mystery of the physical church, it is connected with Prayers 92, 93. Thus, these disputable Prayers comprise an entity. The thing that before being included in the *Book of Lamentations* they had been a separate work, and that Narekatsi had written them independently from his *Book of Lamentations* is apparent from the fact that they have been written with a common aim the whole work referring to the doctrine of the Armenian Church. What is the ideological aim that unites the disputable Prayers in an entity? Narekatsi was undoubtedly aware of what, in particular, he had been charged with: the first point concerned the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the question of Christ's nature, closely connected with it. Narekatsi was accused of being Dyophysites' co-thinker; the Armenian Monophysites called Dyophysites man-worshipers (Nestorians) which meant considering the Son subject to the Father, not accepting that the Holy Trinity is of one nature and consubstantial. Secondly, he was accused of derogating the role of the church, neglecting it (that came from Narekatsi's mysticism and was one of the significant merits of his *Book of Lamentations*). Thirdly, he was accused of attempting to neglect, to look down upon the symbolism of the church. In the disputable Prayers Narekatsi tried to reject the accusations

36. Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, p. 186.

37. Ibid., p. 153.

38. M. Mkryan, *Grigor Narekatsi*, p. 175.



against him point to point, justify himself and prove his faithfulness to the doctrine of the Armenian official church. In fact, this was the general idea, the aim of writing these Prayers.

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A. The comparative analysis of the disputable and other lyrical Prayers indicates that they are different not only in regard to their linguistic-stylistic peculiarities but also in respect to their nature, content or as Mkryan has more precisely noted, “in regard to the nature of the content”. Apparently, the disputable Prayers are religious-dogmatical; although such kinds of problems are touched upon in almost all the Prayers of the *Book of Lamentations*, their difference becomes obvious at first glance: due to the possibility of the multiple interpretation of the poetic discourse doctrinal issues are presented in diversity of their solutions, sometimes in logically opposite interpretations in the lyrical Prayers which is the result of the author’s creative ease, free-thinking, as well as the result of disobedience to the blind faith and dogmatism of the church that makes the reader think over the raised problems freely. In contrast to them, the disputable Prayers are one-sided and boring. From this standpoint, q (c), η (d), τ (e), q (f), τ (g) parts of Prayer 34 are closer to the lyrical Prayers. Presumably, Narekatsi composed them while inserting the *Havatoy Sahmank* (Profession of Faith) in the *Book of Lamentations*. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that these parts of Prayer 34 and the parts η (d), τ (e), q (f) of Prayer 75, though touch upon the same topic are essentially different from each other; the parts of Prayer 34 are richer in content and can have multiple interpretations, in contrast to the above-mentioned parts of Prayer 75. Besides, it is hardly possible for two narrations on the same issue (the nature of the Holy Trinity) to be in same work, *Profession of Faith*. That is why it is considered that the mentioned parts of Prayer 75 (which are closer to the doctrine of the church and comprise less judgments of the author) were taken from the *Profession of Faith* and they were immediately followed by ρ (h) ρ (i) parts of Prayer 34.

B. Glorifying God in the lyrical Prayers, relating man’s salvation

directly to God, Narekatsi really neglected the church and its attributes. Moreover, there was a discrimination on his part as to the persons of the Holy Trinity, he emphasized the Son more, and what is most striking, even Godhead was derogated sometimes, while in the disputable Prayers, on the contrary, Narekatsi strictly followed the requirements of the religious dogmatism, displaying his competence of the Holy Book, and most importantly the great role of the church in man’s salvation was emphasized there.

C. As we have already mentioned, bibliographers P. Khachatryan and A. Ghazinyan thought that the disputable Prayers had been in the *Book of Lamentations* from the beginning, and in order to prove it, they cited some parts from these Prayers to show that these were the inseparable parts of the *Book of Lamentations* and “had been written for it”. Agreeing with the opinion that these Prayers had been in the book since the moment of its creation, however, I think that they had been written much earlier than the *Book of Lamentations* and “independently from his poem and for other purposes”. They were not “mixed up with the text of the poem” by scribes after his death, the author himself inserted those Prayers into the poem during the process of the creation of the *Book of Lamentations*, for some reasons. For this purpose, the author made substantial editorial attempts to “tie” the disputable Prayers to the lyrical ones.

Thus, the author composed and inserted the following part at the beginning of Prayer 34:

*Here is my profession of faith, here,  
the yearnings of my wretched breath to you  
who constitute all things with your Word, God.  
What I have discoursed upon before, I set forth again,  
these written instructions and interpretations  
for the masses of different nations.  
I offer these Prayers of intercession  
in the thanksgiving Prayer below.*

In this way, Prayer 34 was tied to Prayer 33. Having worded the doctrine of the Holy Trinity of the Nicene Creed the poet wrote:



*Now, I offer to your all-hearing ears, almighty God,  
 the secret thoughts in this book,  
 and thus equipped, I venture forth in conversation,  
 not with the idea that my voice could  
 somehow exalt you,  
 for before you created everything,  
 before the creation of the heavens  
 with the immortal choir of praise and  
 the earthly thinking beings,  
 you yourself in your perfection were already glorified,  
 but still you permit me, a reject, to taste  
 your indescribable sweetness, through  
 the communion of words.  
 And what good is it to mouth your  
 royal command about  
 "Adonai, Lord," and not carry it out.  
 I destroyed with my own hand  
 the golden tables of speech,  
 dedicated to your message, written by  
 the finger of God.  
 That was true destruction.  
 And I, with ashen-faced sorrow,  
 now provide a second copy, made in its likeness.  
 But now, since I have prayed much,  
 in a voice of passionate and sincere praise,  
 hear me, compassionate God, with this  
 profession of faith.  
 May the voice of this Prayer be joined with those offered  
 by clean worshipers obedient to your will  
 so that this meager offering, a dry loaf of  
 unleavened bread,  
 might be served with oil upon your altar of glory.*

This part is a very important link too. In this respect, Khachatryan and Ghazinyan noted: "In Prayers 33 and 34 Narekatsi mainly writes about his credo, his profession. It requires a different style, different

order and a different technique. In other words, these lines have not been written with tears of tremulous complaints and regrets, and the poet turns to God to accept together with the profession of his faith those many Prayers which are said with passionate praises: *in a voice of passionate and sincere praise* (Pr. 34, J)<sup>39</sup>. It is obvious that the author tries to connect the non-poetic Prayer 34 to the poetic ones. Moreover, in the above-mentioned part the poet tries to secure his lyrical poems delicately, "under the patronage" of that doctrinal Prayer, thereby ensuring the future existence of his compositions. The proof of this is the fact that instead of asking the Almighty to accept and perceive "this" writing (Prayer 34) together with the previous ones the great poet asks quite the contrary, to accept the others with this one...

For Prayer 75, parts u (a) and p (b) are the "ties". Part u (a) is of special importance. Khachatryan and Ghazinyan thought that Prayer 75 had been written for the poem, too, and not independently from it. In this concern, they wrote: "G. Avetiqyan believes that this Prayer should have been placed after Prayer 34 as the latter is devoted to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity according to Nicene Creed, and this Prayer to the mystery of the church doctrine according to Apostolic and Constantinopolitan Creeds... It is a mere logical conclusion, not a grounded argument. Narekatsi regards the church as Christ's pure body, which should be worshiped equally with its head, i.e. the incarnate Word of God "Christ, and he has written this Prayer also mentioning his speech (Prayer 34) devoted to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. According to Narekatsi, the church is the true and glorious mother (i.e. the basis) of the believer's spiritual birth. It is impossible to cleanse oneself of sins, communicate with saints and be worthy of the heavenly salvation without it, that is he considers it necessary to word his profession of both the Holy Trinity and especially of church in an explanatory way in his *Book of Lamentations*"<sup>40</sup>.

39. Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, notes, pp. 1042-1043.

40. Ibid., p. 1089.

Certainly, there is no need to put Prayer 75 immediately after Prayer 34 in the poem, but the sound fact that Prayer 75 is the logical continuation of Prayer 34 cannot be denied which indicates that these Prayers were really created independently from the poem and before being inserted in the poem, they had been a single whole, a separate piece of poetry. As the author himself inserted the disputable Prayers in his poem (in my opinion), moreover in the process of the creation of the poem, there is no need to raise the question of taking these Prayers out of the poem or changing their place. However, philology has to discover the history and purpose of their creation in order to be objective during their assessment and evaluation.

As to Prayers 92 and 93, they are almost irrelevant to the contexture of the poem. All this indicates that the disputable Prayers were really created independently from the poem and before the creation of the poem had been a separate piece of poetry with a solid structure of the content.

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The disputable Prayers of the *Book of Lamentations* are anti-sectarian in content.

As it has already been said, these Prayers convey the essence of the doctrine of the Armenian Church: 1) the concept of God, 2) the sacrament of the church, 3) symbols of the Armenian Church... That is to say, Narekatsi wrote the foundations and the roots of the faith of the Armenian Church in these Prayers, assuring that they were his personal convictions too.

They used to accuse Narekatsi of being a schismatic, sectarian, tsayt, Tondrakian, Paulican, Manichaeon. The movement of the Armenian Reformation was a unity of different ideological currents. Currents of any type, opposed to the Armenian official church, were equally considered enemies of the official church and formed the opposition front. Here we have the same picture as during the German Reformation: the fighting wing of the Armenian Reformation (headed by Smbat Zahrevantsi, i.e. T. Munzer of the Armenian reality) set the problem of radical reforms, and the proponents of moderate reforms

tried to simplify the church hierarchy, reform and enliven church rituals and order. Narekatsi was charged with three pivotal points of the ideology of the Reformation movement “ the mighty, anti-feudal, anti-church movement in medieval Armenia. These were the points: a) deliberate distortion of the concept of God, tangling the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, overestimation of Christ’s saving role, generally preferring the Son to the other members of the Holy Trinity “ the Father and the Holy Spirit. Narekatsi made a special emphasis on Christ’s philanthropy, closeness to the human, earthliness, which was viewed as a deviation towards Chalcedon. And this was not all; emphasizing the human nature of the Son, Narekatsi also glorified the human much, even divinizing and worshipping the human (not only God is human but also the human is God). In short, Narekatsi could easily be accused of anthropolatry and even of atheism and fighting against God. b) and c) Narekatsi was accused of neglecting the church, its order and symbols. He was accused of being the Tondrakians’ co-thinker, “the sects, being diverse and many, were known by different names, Manicheans, Paulicians or Pavlikians, etc. They despised the church, and mocked everything that was done in the church”<sup>41</sup>.

And thus in the *Profession of Faith* or in the disputable Prayers Narekatsi tried to reject all these accusations, writing the viewpoint of the official church, concerning these key points and particularly emphasizing his “negative” attitude and “intolerance” against any kind of deviation. And this was done by Grigor Narekatsi, the author of the *Book of Lamentations*, a man who preferred logical thinking to blind faith, a thinker who respected all the possible more or less reasonable viewpoints, and suddenly he was displaying such a one-sided and abrupt approach.

Committing the Nicene Creed to paper, Narekatsi forbade deviations from it and he threatened the deviators:

*But if one presumes in a refutation  
to snatch the Father from his Word,*

41. G. Avetiqyan, *Narekaluts* (Analysis of the Narek), p. 382.

*on the ground that there was a time when the Word was not,  
believing that such speculations exalt the sublime greatness of  
the divine,*

*or if one subordinates the Spirit which proceeds forth  
on the ground that it is not spiritual by nature  
thereby introducing an alien being or unstable mixture  
into the pure and sublime unity of the Holy Trinity,  
we must reject such persons from our midst.*

*We must drive them away in disgrace  
with the confession of faith*

*like a stoning of fierce demons or vicious beasts,  
cast a curse on their devilish lot,  
and shut the gates to the church of life in their face.*

*While we glorify the Holy Trinity in the same lordship of united  
equality,*

*In parallel praise and uniform level,  
blessed on earth and in heaven,  
in the congregation of the nation of earthly thinking beings,  
now and forever. (Pr. 34, J).*

“Grounding” the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the inadmissibility of deviations from this doctrine, Narekatsi passed on to the interpretation of the mystery and order of the church. Khachatryan and Ghazinyan wrote: “Narekatsi meant the believers by saying the spiritual church, and by physical church he meant the temple which was to be worshiped not as a material building, as it would be sectarianism, but as God’s home; a sanctuary, a door which led to the Kingdom of Heaven. According to Narekatsi, the sacrament of the church was different from the sacrament of the temple. Cults were worshiped in temples, God the almighty was worshiped in church. The worship of Christian God destroyed the worship of idols, opposing the faith of the Holy Trinity to polytheism. Narekatsi rejected the Paulician and Tondrakian views, according to which churches were nothing more than a transformation of pagan temples<sup>42</sup>.”

<sup>42</sup>. Grigor Narekatsi, Matyan Oghbergutean, ed. by P. M. Khachatryan and A. A. Ghazinyan, Yerevan, 1985, notes, pp. 1091, 1093.

Not only the Tondrakians but also Dyophysites were criticized in Narekatsi’s interpretation of the sacrament of church. Probably some ideological features, common for Tondrakians and Dyophysites, were indicated in it. In medieval Armenia, the official church reproached both the Tondrakians and Chalcedonians as man worshipers and materialists. Narekatsi’s criticism of the Tondrakians was directed against Dyophysites at the same time. In both cases, the great thinker tried to assure that he was not a man worshiper, he worshiped God. That way Narekatsi ensured himself from accusations of being a tsayt and Tondrakian.

Narekatsi interpreted church symbols, the sacrament of the bell-ringer’s stick, Chrism, icons, etc. the same way, too. This is a common feature, which was developed in the disputable Prayers of the *Narek*. Thus, according to Narekatsi’s logic if someone considered icons, Chrism, the bell-ringer’s stick, church buildings only material, such a person considered Christ a human only and not God, which meant the rejection of the Holy Trinity at the same time:

*And woe to him who raises a hand in malice  
against the kingdom of heaven as if  
the doctrine of the church were made by a man  
were some physical invention  
of human artifact or earthly handiwork,  
and not the gift of life and reflection of the divine,  
a foreshadow of the renewing light revealed by the Holy Spirit,  
and the abundant gifts of God on high,  
the altar honoring the sacrament of the will of the creator,  
and the institution founded with wisdom by the righteous hand of  
apostles,  
in a word, the gate of heaven,  
the city of living God,  
the mother of all living things, free of all sin,  
and the true model of our visible, thinking being.  
Her intellectual part is the mystery of our souls.  
Her palpable part is the image of our bodies.  
And a new holiness surpassing the holiness of the old*

*and crowned with the brilliantly glorious sign of Christ,  
those who do not confess this  
are expelled from the Almighty's presence  
by the hand of his consubstantial Word,  
depriving them from the inheritance of grace  
from the co-glorified Holy Spirit,  
and closing before them the doors to the bridal chamber of life.  
And we who have written this bear witness to it  
and believe in what we have composed here,  
in the name of and for the glory of the almighty Holy trinity  
and of one Godhead,  
forever and ever. (Pr. 75, M)*

It is obvious that while composing the disputable Prayers Narekatsi displayed a special attitude. In order to reject the accusations of neglecting the significance and the role of the church, assigned to him, the author glorified the church. He had a reason for it; as we know, Narekatsi had been educated in church since childhood, and in order not to be called an “ungrateful son”, the poet praised and exalted the church, considering it the true and glorious mother of every believer’s spiritual birth, mother without whom it was impossible to cleanse oneself of sins and be worthy of the kingdom of heaven (see Prayer 75, parts Է (g), ը (h), թ (i), ժ (J) and other parts).

The unity of the disputable Prayers of Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations*, with its ideological content, style, spirit, even the author’s tone and “attitude” and, most importantly, with its anti-Chalcedonian orientation, is the paraphrase of Narekatsi’s “Epistle” against the Tondrakians. And the issues and topics discussed in both of them have something in common with the response letters written to the bishops of Sebastia and Melitene. Thus, there is a considerable basis for assuming that before being included in the *Book of Lamentations*, the disputable Prayers were a single work which was taken to Ani or Argina, and due to which Narekatsi was able to justify himself during the trial. The great poet, like the great Galilee, outwardly, partially retreated from his ideological positions but only

in the purpose of avoiding anathema and exile, in order to be able to continue his innovative activity. The following words by Narekatsi can be considered as a direct hint of Narekatsi’s temporary retreat and, in general, of the story concerning the trial:

*For although at times  
I was ensnared and lured away  
and expelled from Paradise  
by heretical doctrines, devices of the Deceiver,  
now by this true doctrine in upright purity,  
as a token of true grace  
again on wings of light  
I ascend in pursuit of heaven. (Pr. 75, A)*

These words should be regarded as strictly autobiographical because they are not a lyrical generalization to arouse doubt. This confession is already a proof that the disputable Prayers were written because of the trial.

It becomes clear from all this why the work *Profession of Faith* did not survive in the Catholicos’s Archives and even was not mentioned by later scribes, while Grigor Narekatsi’s Epistle to the clergy of the monastery of Kchav survived in its original form, being included in the *Book of Letters* (Girk Tghtos). The *Profession of Faith* could not survive as an individual work, probably because later the author himself took that work from the Catholicos’s Archives and inserted it into the *Book of Lamentations*. Maybe, Samuel Anetsi hinted this very fact in a piece of information, which seems insignificant at first glance: “At that time, bishop Andzevatsi’s son, the great and universal Vardapet Grigor Narekatsi, composed his book **there**”<sup>43</sup>. Apparently, several years later after the trial, undertaking the composition of the Book, Narekatsi went to Ani where the Catholicos’s residence was at that time, (it had been moved from Argina to Ani during Catholicos Sargis Anetsi’s term of office) and taking the *Profession of Faith* from the Archives dissolved it into his *Book of Lamentations*...

43. Samuel Anetsi, *Havaqmuk i grots Patmagrats* (Chronicle), Vagharshapat, 1893, p. 104.



## UKHTANES AND GRIGOR NAREKATSI

The historian Ukhtanes's connection with the monastery of Narek, the mystery of the meeting of Ukhtanes and the Vardapet who ordered him to write his *History* and some notable coincidences and parallels make us put forward the following hypothesis:

**Ukhtanes wrote his *History* at the request of Grigor Narekatsi.**

The tenth-century historian "Ukhtanes told in the first part of Chapter One of his *History of Armenians* (this part being the preface of his work) that he had written his work, particularly the second part, subtitled *History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians*, the most valuable part as he himself called it, at the request of a Vardapet of the monastery of Narek. Narekatsi's name was not specifically mentioned anywhere in the text. It was mentioned only in the titles: "History in three parts, written by Lord Ukhtanes, bishop of Sebastia, at the request of Father Anania, the abbot of the monastery of Narek and the preeminent Vardapet"; "A reply to Anania's letter and my promise to fulfill his request"<sup>44</sup>.

But it is known that these titles had not been written by the author; they were added by scribes of later periods which was done either by mistake or deliberately. Thus, traditionally there dominated a belief in Armenian studies that Ukhtanes had written his *History* at the request of Anania Narekatsi. Among scholars of Armenian studies, only P. Peters was skeptical about this viewpoint, doubting its truthfulness, however he ran to another extreme. Denying that point of view, he stated that the Vardapet who had ordered Ukhtanes to write his *History* was not a representative of the School of Narek at all.

In the very Preface of his *History* Ukhtanes mentioned that the Vardapet of the monastery of Narek, at whose request he wrote his *History*, was in the Catholicos' residence, in Argina. The Vardapet and the author met and spoke to each other: "...when you came to

the venerated and saintly patriarch Khachik and brought your religious book *Havatarmat* against Dyophysites as a present for him, in which you yourself spoke with faith due to the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, and we spoke about that History face to face. If you wish, I will mention both the place and the time and season when we walked and sat near the river, called Akhurian, read the missal attributed to Athanasius; it was a warm, sunny day, the eleventh of the month Tre<sup>45</sup>, Sunday; nine o'clock"<sup>46</sup>.

The historian also mentioned that the meeting took place during the reign of Smbat the Third Bagratuni.

Zaza Aleksidze, a scholar of Armenian studies, thought that the people and dates in Ukhtanes' work referred to his (Anania Narekatsi's – S. P.) activity. He wrote, "It is true that the title of Ukhtanes' work should be considered to belong to a later period, anyway we can assume from the Preface that Anania Narekatsi was the historian's pen-friend. It is said in the Preface that the undertaker of the creation of the History was from the monastery of Narek and was an abbot"<sup>47</sup>.

It is worthy of immediate note that after Anania Narekatsi Grigor became the dean of Narek monastery. One of the folk legends says: "And Saint Grigor was put on the throne of the monastery to rule people forever". Thus let us move on to the discussion of more serious issues, "people and dates mentioned in the work".

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**The date of the meeting of Ukhtanes and the Vardapet of the monastery of Narek.**

According to M. Brose's counts, that meeting could take place in 973, 980 or 987 when the 11<sup>th</sup> of the month Tre was Sunday. Scholars of Armenian studies discuss mainly two dates.

45. Tre lasted from the 9th of November till the 8th of December.

46. Ibid., pp. 1-15.

47. *Ukhtanes, History of the Severance of the Georgians from the Armenians*, ed. Zaza Aleksidze, Tbilisi, 1975, p. 227.

44. Ukhtanes, *History of Armenia*, Vagharshapat, 1871.



M. Ormanyan and Hr. Acharyan admitted the year 973, N. Akinyan found the year 987 probable<sup>48</sup>. Philologist Hrachya Tamrazyan, whose PhD dissertation was devoted to Anania Narekasi's life and works, even thought that the meeting in Argina should have taken place in 980s as Smbat the Second sat on the throne in 977, consequently that meeting could not take place in 973. So, either 980 or 987. The most probable of these two dates is the year 987 and this is why: the Vardapet who went to Argina from the monastery of Narek took a work, entitled *Havatarmat* (Roots of faith) with him, written against Dyophysites, as a gift for the Catholicos. At the same time, Ukhtanes undertook to write the history of the severance of the Georgians from the Armenians, which was directed against Chalcedon. It can be assumed that all this has a direct connection to the extreme aggravation of Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships dating back to the year of 986.

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Until recently there dominated the idea in Armenian studies that Anania Narekatsi had written his *Letter of Confession* by the Catholicos Anania Mokarsi's order (G. Ter-Mkrchyan, B. Sargsyan, G. Hovsepian, M. Abeghyan, M. Mkryan); "We learn from his (Anania Narekatsi's) *Khostovanagir* (*Letter of Confession*) that he lived in the same place with Anania Mokatsi and on the brink of his death cursed the Tondrakians, not willingly but fulfilling the Catholicos's demand"<sup>49</sup>.

However, analyzing the biographical data in the *Letter of Confession*, Hr. Tamrazyan came to the conclusion that Anania Narekatsi's letter had been addressed not to Anania Mokatsi but to Khachik Arsharuni. In Tamrazyan's opinion Anania Narekatsi and Khachik the First were related in kinship. Both of them were from the same province, most probably from Arsharunik, and had spent their

childhood and student years together.

Hr. Tamrazyan's viewpoint seems quite possible though the following circumstances should not be neglected, either: a) Anania Mokatsi was Khachik Arsharuni's uncle; consequently, Anania Narekatsi could be related in kinship with both Khachik Arsharuni and Anania Mokatsi. b) Anania Narekatsi was of the same age as Anania Mokatsi rather than Khachik the First. Anania Mokatsi and Khachik Arsharuni died almost at the same age. Asoghik said about both of them: "He died at a venerable age". Taking into consideration the facts that Mokatsi died in 968 and Khachik Arsharuni in 992, we can conclude that Khachik was 20-25 years younger than his uncle and must have been born in 920s. In this case Anania Narekatsi could not be of the same age as Khachik (thus they could not have spent their childhood together) because if Anania Narekatsi was born in 960s during the foundation of the monastery of Narek (943) he would be about 20 and could hardly be trusted to be the abbot of the monastery at that age.

The monastery of Narek had been founded before 943, before the death of Gagik Artsruni, because there is a miniature of Gagik Artsruni giving the keys of the monastery to Anania Narekatsi in one of the survived manuscripts (Matenadaran, manuscript " 7359) of *Haysmavurk*. Anania Narekatsi was probably about 40 at that time because before the foundation of the monastery of Narek he and the clergyman Petros had served in the monasteries of Antak and Khavaradzor of the provinces of Havnunk and Arsharunik respectively. And already then he was a prominent Vardapet. It means that Anania Narekatsi must have been born in 900s, while Khachik Arsharuni in 920s.

Hrachya Tamrazyan's belief that Anania Narekatsi's *Letter of Confession* had been addressed to Khachik Arsharuni was based on the following judgment: Catholicos Anania Mokatsi could not order the same author to write a work against the Tondrakians, then accuse him of adhering to the Tondrakian movement and force him to write the *Letter of Confession*. Thus, Hr. Tamrazyan drew a logically true conclusion: it was not Anania Mokatsi but Catholicos Khachik

48. M. Ormanyan, *Azgapatoom* (History of the Armenian Nation), p. 971. H. Acharyan, *Hayots andznanunneri bararan* (Dictionary of the Armenian First Names), vol. 1, p. 191.

49. *Ararat*, Ejmiatsin, 1987, p. 94.

Arsharuni that made Anania Narekatsi curse the Tondrakians. However, if we proceed from this true logic, we will reach a deadlock: it is hardly possible that receiving the *Havatarmat* (Roots of faith), an anti-Chalcedonian, anti-sectarian work as a proof of its author's true faith, Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni would accuse the author of sectarianism and schism. There may arise an objection that the *Havatarmat* was against the Chalcedon while Catholicos Khachik I accused Anania of being Tondrakian. Here is the answer to it; firstly, the Tondrakian sect was a mixture of all the sects of the time; secondly, Anania Narekatsi was also accused of being Chalcedonian that was why he also cursed the Chalcedonians in the *Letter of Confession*.

There is only one way out of this deadlock: accepting that Anania Narekatsi's *Letter of Confession* was really addressed to the Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni but in this case, the existence of the *Havatarmat* becomes impossible. Actually, had Anania Narekatsi made a present of such a work to Khachik the First why would the Catholicos accuse him shortly thereafter? One more very important fact; A. Narekatsi stated in the *Letter of Confession*: "And the one who curses them (sectarians) falsely or with a disguised artifice or only outwardly by word of mouth and not with all his heart, he himself will be cursed by the above mentioned saints"<sup>50</sup>.

Let us compare it with a part of Narekatsi's epistle addressed to the clergy of Kchav: "...who orders to curse them, and considers our glorified Lord Anania's amazing objection-letter as inappropriate, a filthy talk or not written with faith"<sup>51</sup>.

It is obvious that the clergymen of Kchav spoke ill of Anania Narekatsi to the Catholicos, considering his *Argument against the Tondrakians and other Sectarians* (*Hakacharank*) not a sincere composition. This made the Catholicos doubt Anania Narekatsi's true faith. Anania Narekatsi's *Argument against the Tondrakians and other Sectarians* is mentioned at the end of the *Letter of Confession*, "Now a little about those few ideas of which I informed you not in a

perfunctory manner or thoughtlessly or in order to please you, but so that you learn about me from myself, and by deciphering my previous writings, you realize my godliness. Without a moment's hesitation, I perceive the truthfulness of all canons and accept it before God and holy angles, avoiding doctrines adopted by all ungodly people as I have previously written about them. May the same verdict be attained if someone approves or believes what you have written about me! Thanks God. And I say: cursed is the one who relies on the man and not on God, the lord of heaven and earth, cursed is the one who relies on his own power"<sup>52</sup>. Here a question arises: if Anania Narekatsi mentioned his *Hakacharank* in his *Letter of Confession* as a proof of his true faith, why didn't he mention *Havatarmat* written and presented to Khachik Arsharuni many years later than that? It follows that he did not write any work entitled *Havatarmat* during the period between the *Argument against the Tondrakians and other Sectarians* and the *Letter of Confession* or else he would mention it in the *Letter of Confession*, written on the brink of his death.

If Anania Narekatsi had a work, entitled *Havatarmat* at least some information would survive. It would be mentioned in the Armenian literature at least. Neither Gr. Narekatsi, nor Asoghik, nor Gr. Magistros, nor Lambronnatsi, nor Shnorhali knew of any *Havatarmat* written by Anania Narekatsi while *Hakacharank* was well known and wildly spread among the Armenian intelligentsia. *Hakachrank* has not come down to us either but some parts of it have survived.

In Armenian studies, attempts were made to find extracts from Anania Narekatsi's *Havatarmat*: In his article *Anania Sanahentsi's Hakacharutyun*<sup>53</sup>, H. Qyoseyan rightfully noted that the extracts attributed to Vardapet Anania in the religious-theological collection, *Armat Havatoy* (*Roots of Faith*), compiled by Vardan Aygektsi, were the works of Anania Narekatsi. Proceeding from the fact that the survived extracts mainly concerned the problems connected with Christ's nature, the author thought that these were extracts from the

50. "Ararat", Ejmiatsin, 1982.

51. *Girk Tghtots* (Book of Letters), Tbilisi, 1901, p. 496.

52. "Ararat", 1982, p. 18.

53. *Historical-Philological Journal*, 1982, vol. 2.

very *Havatarmat* written by Anania Narekatsi. This opinion is unconvincing; firstly, as Vardan Aygektsi himself noted he had taken those extracts “from Armenian Vardapet Anania Narekatsi’s praise-worthy book on faith”. Anania Narekatsi’s “praise-worthy book on faith” could only be *Hakacharank* as that very work had made the author famous. Besides, Anania Narekatsi’s work was directed not only against the Tondrakians but also against the other sectarians. In his work, the author denounced not only the Tondrakians but also the Chalcedonians, in particular, defending and grounding the Monophysite principle of the Armenian Church doctrine proceeding from the fact that Catholicos Anania Mokatsi had ordered him to write *Hakacharank* not only in relation to the activation of the Tondrakian movement but also in respect to the utmost escalation of Armenian-Chalcedonian relationships during the reign of Emperor Romanos.

Let us quote one of the parts attributed to Anania Narekatsi that have come down to us thanks to Vardan Aygektsi: “And as the fire does not change the nature of gold and iron, only adjusts them to its light, or like the light mixed with air or the body and soul are united harmoniously providing the man’s entity, God’s Word, too, is an un-mixed entity beyond our understanding”<sup>54</sup>. H. Qyoseyan found out that never before the comparisons between *gold or iron and fire, light and air* had been used in any other work. After Anania Narekatsi these simile-phrases were used in the letter (986) addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia, the letter being preserved in Asoghik’s History, and in Anania Sanahentsi’s *Hakacharank*. It is worthy of note, that these phrases were found in Grigor Narekatsi’s *Book of Lamentations* too, moreover in the disputable Prayer 34:

... formed from an incorruptible mixture  
like us in body,  
in the manner of the soul with body;  
as gold with fire,  
or to put it more plainly,  
light in air, neither transformed nor separated.

54. Ibid.

The author of the letter addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia and Grigor Narekatsi had logically taken those similes from the same source: “from Armenian Vardapet Anania Narekatsi’s glorious book on faith”. Anania Narekatsi’s famous book on faith could not be the *Havatarmat* mentioned by Ukhtanes because, as we found out, *Havatarmat* was taken to Argina to Catholicos Khachik in 987 while the letter addressed to the Metropolitan of Sebastia was written in 986. This testifies that the famous book on faith is Anania Narekatsi’s *Hakacharank* written against the Tondrakians and other sectarians.

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It is hard to agree with Hr. Tamrazyan’s belief that Anania Narekatsi was born at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, lived till the end of the century and wrote his *Khostovanagir* on the brink of his death, during the period between 980 (987) and 992. There is no reason to prolong A. Narekatsi’s life until the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, we have found out that Anania Narekatsi never had a work, entitled *Havatarmat*; consequently, somebody else went from the monastery of Narek to Argina, to Catholicos Khachik. Thus, it is senseless to consider that *Khostovanagir* was composed after the meeting in Argina, before Khachik Arsharuni’s death (992). Secondly, being born at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A. Narekatsi would hardly be able to go to Argina at the age of eighty. Thirdly, Anania Narekatsi was probably already dead in 977 or was on the brink of death because King Gourgen Artsruni assigned a most honorable and difficult task of commenting *Erg Ergots (Song of Songs)* to young Grigor Narekatsi. Gr. Narekatsi wrote in his *History of the Cross of Aparan* (983) that from the monastery of Narek, only his brother Hovannes and he took part in the great religious festival in the province of Mokq (Moxene). In this concern, M. Chamchyan noted that at the time Hovannes was the dean of the monastery of Narek and Grigor was the principal of the school of Narek<sup>55</sup>. Gr. Narekatsi talked about

55. M. Chamchyan, *History*, vol. 2, p. 857.

Anania Narekatsi in the past tense in his *Aparanits Khachin Patmutyune (History of the Cross of Aparan)*. \_

It follows from all this that Anania Narekatsi wrote his *Khostovanagir* during the first years of Catholicos Khachik's term of office and died immediately after that.

Referring to Asoghik, M. Ormanyan wrote the following about Khachik Arsharuni's activity during the first years of his office: "Khachik's activity firstly resulted in putting an end to the dissensions over the throne of the Catholicos, and he made all the parties come to an agreement and "ruling alone he brought peace to Armenia"<sup>56</sup>. Probably at that time the clergymen of Kchav spoke ill of Anania Narekatsi to the new elected Catholicos which became a reason to doubt A. Narekatsi's true faith and loyalty in general. Considering the fact of Catholicos Vahan's authority in the province of Vaspurakan and particularly in the monastery of Narek, it becomes clear why Anania Narekatsi cursed not only the Tondrakians but also the Chalcedonians in his *Khostovanagir*. The thing that A. Narekatsi died during the first years of Kachik the First's reign is obvious from the fact that Asoghik attributed A. Narekatsi's works to the time when Anania Mokatsi was a Catholicos: "At that time most glorious Lord Anania was the Catholicos, who was kind and gracious to his clergymen.

At that time the clergy was flourishing in Armenia. Many monasteries were built for the clergymen.

There also existed Vardapets, true teachers who were good at the Lord's teachings. Among them were an elderly man, Basilos who knew the Lord's laws pretty well; non-monastic priest Grigor a rhetorician of Lord's Commandments; Barsegh's disciple Stephanos who became a clergyman with his word and work befitting disciples; wise and pious, eminent Moses who fasted forty days; poor David; a stingy scholar named Mashkot, the commentator of the Holy Book Petros, and Anania, the great philosopher of the monastery of Narek

whose book was directed against the Tondrakians and other sectarians"<sup>57</sup>.

Anania Narekatsi's name was not mentioned in the list of prominent Vardapets acting during Khachik the First's term of office.

Thus, it is hard to agree with Armenologist Zaza Aleksidze's viewpoint (a traditional viewpoint in the Armenian studies) that the people and dates corresponding to them, mentioned in Ukhtanes's work, refer to Anania Narekatsi's activities. During Khachik the First's term of office and Smbat the Second's reign Grigor Narekatsi was a famous and respected figure in Armenia: "These days the saintly man" Grigor Narekatsi shone like a sun with his wisdom and virtue"<sup>58</sup>.

All the mentioned facts enable us to claim that Ukhtanes wrote his *History* at Grigor Narekatsi's request.

The biographical information and lofty praises presented in the Preface of the *History*, refer to Grigor Narekatsi rather than to Anania Narekatsi.

"These writings are due to your perfect and divine brightness, and wisdom granted by the Holy Spirit. Writing religious songs and being competent in God's Commandments more than anyone else, as a tree with various fruits in a heaven called the monastery of Narek, you, the most glorious lord, universal Vardapet, sprouted, came into leaf and then bloomed with your virtue in the Lord's home, bringing fruits of justice". The historian's words obviously referred to Grigor Narekatsi's life, education, upbringing and maturing in the monastery of Narek where he *bloomed* and *gave fruits*, i.e. started his creative activity, then became the pillar and headmaster of the school. This could not be attributed to Anania Narekatsi because historian Asoghik stated that Vardapet Anania founded the school of the monastery of Narek during Anania Mokatsi's term of office. Anania Narekatsi was already a famous scholar when he came to the monastery. In this concern Hr. Tamrazyan wrote, "Valuable informa-

57. Asoghik, *History*, pp. 184-186.

58. Samuel Anetsi, *Havaqmunq i grots Patmagrats* (Chronicle), Vagharshapat, 1893, p. 103.

56. M. Ormanyan, *Azgapatoom* (History of the Armenian Nation), Constantinople, 1912, p. 1125.



tion has survived about Anania Narekatsi's life before coming to the monastery of Narek. That period of his activities was connected with the monasteries of Khavaradzor and Antak in the provinces Arsharunik and Havnunik respectively. Still in that period, Anania Narekatsi was considered one of the outstanding scholars of his time and took part in religious-doctrinal debates.

"And you the exalted with much asceticism and virtue leading to the spiritual fields, you wait for the Lord's coming with alert and watchful farmers". With the words "alert and watchful farmers" (արթնեալ և զգուշացեալ ըշակ), Ukhtanes might have hinted at the name *Grigor* which, as the genius poet interpreted in his *Book of Lamentations*, meant *awake* and *guardian*?

In the Preface of his *History* Ukhtanes called the Vardapet, at whose request he was writing his book, "religious author and outstanding rhetorician" and "poet", etc. As we know not only Anania Narekatsi but also Grigor Narekatsi even more displayed fascinating poetic as well as musical ability.

The similarity of the style of Ukhtanes' *History* to the style of Grigor's works speaks of Ukhtanes's close relationship with Grigor and the latter's profound influence on him. As Z. Aleksidze noted, Ukhtanes tried to write some of the Prayers of his *History* in the form of a rhythmical prose, displaying great ability of alliteration. The historian did all this to satisfy his requester's taste. In order to show the linguo-stylistic closeness and similarity of Ukhtanes's work to Grigor's style, Z. Aleksidze brought the following parts as examples: "With his wise and meaningful thoughts, he thwarted bishops' evil plans. His letters and words completely revealed wicked people's evil intentions".

"I pray to the grantor of lives to prolong your life as it is pleasing to the Creator and desirable for us like the renewal of God's Church is: so said "let it be" it will be". The historian (Ukhtanes) deeply appreciated his requester as a great ecclesiastical and social figure who the hopes of the restoration and strengthening of the church were pinned on. This slightly resembles the part in *Haysmavurk* where Grigor Narekatsi's activities are estimated, "The saint spared

no effort for the unity of the church as the order in the holy church was shattered and neglected by sluggard and carnal clergymen. He wanted to reestablish and restore it".

And after all, Grigor Narekatsi showed some interest in Georgian reality (see M. Chamchian), so most probably, Grigor Narekatsi was the undertaker of writing the history of the Armenian-Georgian separation.

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Accepting that Grigor Narekatsi was Ukhtanes's pen-friend and that they were co-thinkers who met in Argina in 987 and had a talk about the book we might content ourselves with this much but for the following questions arising spontaneously:

Why did not Ukhtanes mention the name of the Vardapet at whose request he had written his *History*, why did he avoid saying his name openly whereas he venerated him so much and gave enough information about his personality, mental abilities, poetic talent, etc.?

It is also important to find out why the historian did not mention the year, the season, the month, the date, the day of the week or the time the meeting took place.

And above all, why did not Ukhtanes give the real reason of Narekatsi's long journey to Argina, to Catholicos Khachik in the Preface? Obviously, Narekatsi would hardly go to Argina only to meet Ukhtanes and propose him to write the *History*.

In order to clarify these questions, we need to consider the information of Narekatsi's journey to Argina where he took the *Havatar-mat* written against Dyophysites, against the background of social-political and ideological struggle in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. We need to correlate the little information we have about the great thinker's and genius poet's life and activity with the ecclesiastical events taking place in the middle of eighties of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

In this period the neighbour Chalcedonian churches greatly oppressed the Armenian Church. The ecclesiastical-doctrinal struggle



escalated into violence during Khachik the First's term of office: "During his (Catholicos Khachik's) reign Vardapet Hovhannes, who was a true Christian, preached and commented on the Holy Scripture not with a powerful discourse but wisely. He was killed by fanatic Georgians and was buried in a monastery of Aksigoms in the province of Basen, and from that day on the monastery lying at the foot of the mountain of apricots was called St. Hovhan Monastery"<sup>59</sup>.

The same historian spoke about the persecutions of the clergymen of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Sebastia and many other cities of Byzantium populated with Armenians.

Putting these facts together with Ukhtanes' information that only by king Smbat the Second's order, bishops', princes' and other high-ranking people's mediation and blessing he was able to overcome all the threats directed against him and start writing his *History*, we can conclude that the historian might have been officially permitted to write his *History* (or its second and third parts) during the meeting in 987 which king Smbat and Armenian princes participated in, too.

Thus, in my opinion, Gr. Narekatsi and Ukhtanes met in Argina on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Tre month in 987 on the occasion of the ecclesiastical council headed by Catholicos Khachik Arsharuni. Grigor Narekatsi was to undergo inquisition in this very council. Presumably, this was the reason that Ukhtanes did not speak of the unpleasant event, did not even mention his requester's name, and never spoke of the real cause of their meeting in Argina.

However, which is the work " *Havatarmat* that Narekatsi took to Argina with him? There is no such work in the Armenian Literature attributed to Grigor Narekatsi. While the unity of the disputable Prayers of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations*, which we conventionally named *Havato Sahmank* (Profession of Faith) with its content and anti-sectarian orientation could have been taken to Argina under the title *Havatarmat*.

Now let us summarize all that we have stated above. According

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59. Asoghik, *History*, p. 184.

to the suggested hypothesis, Ukhtanes wrote his *History* not at the request of Anania but of Grigor Narekatsi, whom Ukhtanes met in Argina in 987. Their meeting was not accidental: Grigor had gone to Argina to attend the council convened to try him. As an evidence of his true faith, he took a work entitled *Havatarmat* with him; the work he had written against sectarians. The unity of disputable Prayers of Narekatsi's *Book of Lamentations* could have been that work.

In his work " *the Armenian writers, 5<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries*, famous bibliographer N. Pogharian mentioned a manuscript by Anania Narekatsi " *Against Dyophysites* kept in the library of Armenian manuscripts in Jerusalem,<sup>60</sup>. The complete and unique manuscript of Samvel Kamrjadzoretsi's *Tonapatchar* (Reason of holiday) is kept in the library of Mkhitarian Congregation in Vienna; M. Chamchian and Gh. Alishan drew interesting information about Anania Narekatsi from that manuscript.

The further investigation of these two and other sources may finally shed a light on whether Anania Narekatsi did or did not have a separate work entitled *Havatarmat* and whether the hypothesis of mine is right or wrong.

However, apart from this hypothesis, the truthfulness of the fact that Narekatsi's trial took place in 987, either in Ani or Argina where Narekatsi justified himself with two apologetic works should be admitted.

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60. N. Pogharian, *Hay Groghner* (Armenian writers), Jerusalem, 1971.

## THE “HAVATARMAT” (BASE OF BELIEF) COMPOSITION OF GRIGOR NAREKACI

### Prayer 33

#### *Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart*

##### A

Let this offering of words, compassionate God,  
from the fruits of my soul rise to you with incense,  
mixed by you with the sweet oil  
used by the pious Mary,<sup>1</sup>  
which you accepted with respect  
just as you also accept offerings astonishingly  
from prostitutes, fortunate to be making offerings.  
May my humble words also praise you and may you  
accept their reaching toward  
your unreachable head, God on high,  
in spite of the reproach of the Psalmist,  
“Do not let the leafy boughs of my head  
be anointed with the oil of the sinner.”<sup>2</sup>

##### B

Let the perfume, the bouquet of this book of confessions  
be redoubled and affect multitudes.  
Let its memory be told everywhere and fill the world  
like the fragrant oil in the house of Lazarus.<sup>3</sup>  
For you are the same Lord who brought  
the sinful plotting women to their senses.<sup>4</sup>  
And their character you transformed in your true image,  
as in the allegory of the prophet.<sup>5</sup>  
By changing them you made me know  
the perfection of your grace.  
Instead of barley for livestock you provided  
the abundant wheat of the bread of life.

Instead of tarnishing silver you presented  
your majestic image.  
Instead of the oil taken from the wanton women of old,<sup>6</sup>  
you anointed me with your grace.  
Instead of shredding burial bindings around the head,  
there is an incorruptible cloak.  
Instead of elaborate handcuffs, a free soaring toward  
perfect virtue according to the law and the Gospels.  
Instead of a splendid earring, the unfading memory  
of your lordly voice.  
Instead of a sparkling necklace, the bountiful inheritance  
of the sweet yoke of your righteous faith.

##### C

But am I proud of these writings,  
rather than feeling shame again?  
Why change my style in this prayer book,  
in woeful song, to suit my fancy  
and earn punishment as sin’s wages?  
Citing briefly the words of the prophet,  
I enter this chamber solemnly like a stern prosecutor,  
my charges prepared,  
and rather than reveling in them,  
I enter with weeping, a sighing voice in angry protest,  
with bruising insults and grave wailing.  
But your lovingkindness, O great God,  
that reaches everyone,  
awakened in me hope as well,  
whence comes my regret, confession,  
good news, gifts, visions of light,  
divine encouragement, splendid visions,  
the source of hope for some,  
the source of despair for others,  
and for me, who willingly destroyed myself,  
my portion of perdition.

## D

If Ezekiel said that under God's disguising cloak  
many people patch together idols<sup>7</sup>  
and act like harlots –  
how much more severe will my punishment be  
for cloaking my unclean self in God inside and out?  
I am amazed that I am not consumed in flames.  
I am astonished that I am not burning up.  
I am confounded that I am not taken hostage,  
tortured, abandoned, tormented, beaten,  
pulverized, cracked, crushed, torn to shreds  
in the jaws of the Satan our destroyer  
according to Scripture.<sup>8</sup>  
All that is left for me  
is the glimmer of a memory of  
hope of salvation. For the Gospel of Christ  
is truly life revealed where there is  
for our sins, forgiveness,  
for debts, grace,  
for decay, renewal,  
for iniquity, atonement,  
for wounds, bandages,  
for distress, calm,  
for punishment, pardon,  
for war, peace,  
for fire, rain,  
for condemnation, rewards,  
for the dread of dying, lenience,  
for the destruction of death, the salvation of life.

## E

How can I enumerate so many things here yet neglect  
to include what is beyond words? When speaking  
of the exalted Father, we must remember our tie  
to the Son, the only begotten son of the Father.

And remembering these two we must commune with  
the Holy Spirit, remembering also  
that with the cross comes salvation,  
with the word, comfort,  
with God's all-knowing judgment,  
the reward of good will,  
with the life-giving font of baptism,  
the mediation of reconciliation,  
as well as all other countless blessings, bestowed by God:  
freedom from compulsion, freedom from the yoke,  
freedom to rule oneself and not be ruled.  
These are the comforting heralds of the life to come  
in the midst the bitterness of death.  
For if I did not have these things,  
surely I would have perished long ago,  
as the Psalmist says.<sup>9</sup>  
I do not glorify the Father by disparaging the Son.  
Nor is the Holy Spirit subordinated by  
naming the Son first.  
I hold the Trinity equal in glory and in creation  
co-created, for there are prayers to the Holy Spirit  
to be offered before the Divine Liturgy,  
when the heavenly lamb is sacrificed I pray this way:

## F

Almighty, beneficent God of all, who  
loves mankind, maker of the visible and invisible,  
savior and creator,  
defender and peacemaker, spirit of the Father Almighty,  
we beseech you with outstretched arms,  
tears and prayers,  
as we appear before you,  
you, who strike terror in our hearts,  
judge us as we approach with trembling and fear,  
presenting first this sacrificial offering of

words to your power that is beyond understanding.  
You share the throne, glory and creatorship of  
the undiminishing honor of the Father.  
You examine our deepest secrets and mysteries.<sup>10</sup>  
O Emmanuel, who fulfill the will of your Father  
who sent you as the Savior, life-giver and creator.  
Through you he is made known to us,  
three persons in one Godhead,  
of which only you, incomprehensibly, can be known.  
By you and through you did our forefathers,  
the first generation of the patriarchal tribe,  
called prophets,  
tell of the past and the future,  
what has been and what is yet to come,  
in plain words and images.  
Spirit of God, Moses proclaimed you as the one  
who brooded on the water, an unbounded force,<sup>11</sup>  
taking the new-born under your protective  
wing with care,  
and with lovingkindness revealing the mystery of  
the baptismal font.  
Likewise, in the pattern of the archetype,  
before fashioning the pliable substance with  
its final covering,<sup>12</sup>  
you shaped, in lordly manner, all nature,  
the full range of existence, all beings from nothing.  
Through you all that has been created shall receive  
the renewal of the resurrection  
on the last day of this life  
and the first day in the land of the living.  
Christ obeyed you with unity of will as he did his Father,  
being of the same family, of the same essence  
as the Father.  
Being the first born son in our image,  
he announced you, true God,

equal and consubstantial with his mighty Father,  
He preached against those who blasphemed you,  
and, as opponents of God, spoke impiously against you.  
He silenced the blasphemous mouths and graced  
his own people,<sup>13</sup>  
he, the just and spotless, who finds all,  
who was betrayed for our sins,  
and rose from the dead to justify us.<sup>14</sup>  
Through you glory to him and praise to you,  
with the Father almighty, forever and ever.  
Amen.

## G

Again, I shall continue in this manner  
until the assurance of the miraculous light  
heralds the good news of peace.  
With all our souls  
we pray and beseech you with tearful cries,  
glorious creator, incorruptible and uncreated,  
timeless Holy Spirit of compassion.  
You are the intercessor of our silent sighs to  
your merciful Father.<sup>15</sup>  
You, who keep the saints, purify the sinners and  
build the temple of the living and life-giving  
will of the Father,  
free me now from all unclean deeds,  
which are not pleasing for your dwelling place.  
Do not extinguish the light of grace  
in us and in our minds' eye,  
for we have learned that you will join us  
through prayer and sumptuous incensing.<sup>16</sup>  
One of the Trinity is sacrificed and the other accepts it,  
favoring us with the reconciling blood of his first born  
so that you might accept our supplications.  
Prepare for us honorable lodgings



for the partaking of your heavenly lamb,  
that we might eat life-giving manna of the new salvation  
and escape the punishments of condemnation.  
Our blasphemy shall be purified in the refiner's fire,  
as the prophet told of the live coal in the tongs of  
offering at the altar.<sup>17</sup>

In all things you spread your mercy through  
the Son of God.

Also spread the sweetness of the Father,  
as you embraced the prodigal son with  
fatherly inheritance,  
and led the prostitute to the bliss of  
the heavenly kingdom.

## H

Yes, yes, and I too am one of them.  
Receive me with them,  
as one who is needy of your great love for mankind,  
one who lives only by your grace, redeemed by  
the blood of Christ,  
so that your divinity might be revealed and in  
all ways glorified.

You are honored equally with the Father,  
with one will and one rule, worthy of praise.  
For yours is compassion, ability and lovingkindness,  
might and glory forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Prayer 34

### *Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart*

#### A

Here is my profession of faith, here,<sup>1</sup>  
the yearnings of my wretched breath to you  
who constitute all things with your Word, God.  
What I have discoursed upon before, I set forth again,  
these written instructions and interpretations  
for the masses of different nations.  
I offer these prayers of intercession  
in the thanksgiving prayer below.

#### B

I pray to your unchanging, almighty Spirit:  
Send the dew of your sweetness upon my soul  
to rule over the impulses of my senses.  
Send the all-filling gifts of your merciful grace  
and cultivate the reasoning fields hardened by my heart,  
that they might bear the fruit of your spiritual seeds.  
All gifts that flourish and grow with us, Teacher,  
come from your all-encompassing wisdom.<sup>2</sup>  
You who laid hands on the apostles,  
filled the prophets,  
taught the teachers,  
made the speechless speak,  
and opened the ears of the deaf.  
You, of the same family as the first and  
only begotten Son of your consubstantial Father,  
carry all this out through your mutual effort.  
You proclaimed as the co-equal of your Father,  
grant me, a sinner, to speak boldly of the life-giving,  
mystery of the good news of your Gospel,  
that I might follow with soaring mind,

the infinite course of the inspired breath of  
your testament.  
And when I embark upon the solemn interpretation  
of the Word, send me first your compassion,  
and let it speak through me  
in a manner worthy, useful and pleasing to you,  
in glory and praise for your Godhead,  
and in the silence of the universal church.  
Extend over me your right hand,  
and fortify me with your grace.  
Clear my mind of the fog of forgetfulness,  
dispelling the darkness of sin,  
that I might rise above this earthly life through wisdom.  
May the dawn of that unobscured miracle,  
the knowledge of your Godliness,  
shine within me again, Almighty.  
To be worthy to do and teach  
and be an example of goodness for god-loving listeners.  
To you all glory in all things,  
with your Father almighty and  
your only begotten and benevolent Son,  
now and forever, without end.  
Amen.

**C**  
The creed of the co-existing Holy Trinity,  
the rule of life and grace of salvation,  
I taught in the following way:  
We confess and profess, honor and worship  
the shared glory and unity of the Holy Trinity,  
Godhead beyond description, always good,  
of the same substance, equal in honor,  
beyond the flight of the wings of our thought,  
higher than all examples, beyond all analogies,  
surpassing the limits on high.

Before the creation of eternal undifferentiated matter  
and the categories of creatures  
with blessing that cannot be translated,  
crowned forever with the richest greatness,  
setting time in motion and all that has taken shape as time  
unfolds,  
himself the cause and shaper of everything visible  
and invisible,  
who cannot be defined by name or denoted by label,  
nor likened in quality, nor weighed in quantity,  
nor formed by rules, nor known by kind,  
nor spread to exhaustion,  
nor occupying space,  
nor appearing in a place.

**D**  
Father of compassion, God of the universe,  
creator of everything in heaven and on earth  
except the only begotten Word, through whom  
all things exist, creator and giver of breath to all things  
except for the consubstantial Holy Spirit,  
through whom you formed all else.

**E**  
One of three glorified persons equal in power and awe,  
who descended from on high to here below,  
who was indeed by nature indistinguishable  
from those below,  
without relinquishing the throne of glory,  
without leaving the watchful gaze of the parent of love,  
merely entering the vessel of the virgin womb purely  
and coming out joined with a body  
inseparable in essence,  
without any flaw in his humanity and lacking  
nothing in divinity,

one and only Son of the only Father and  
the first born of the Mother of God, Virgin Bearer  
of the Lord,  
creator becoming a true man as originally created,  
not in the fallen state of mortals,  
but new and splendid with the sublime glory of kings,  
not seen in the ages or existing in time.  
The first born, as the Psalmist said,  
higher than all the kings of earth,<sup>3</sup>  
formed from an incorruptible combination  
like us in body,  
in the manner of the soul with body,  
and as gold with fire,  
or to put it more plainly,  
light in air, neither transformed nor separated.

## F

He submitted himself willingly to the cross of death,  
like an innocent lamb led to slaughter,<sup>4</sup>  
and girded himself with mighty self-discipline  
for the salvation of those he created.  
He truly suffered like a mortal.  
He was placed in a tomb with no special treatment for his divinity.  
On the third day, in the hell of Tartarus,  
he preached to the  
downcast captives and showed renewal and light.  
And having carried out his providential  
mission of redemption,  
he came back to life as God,  
and ruled on the wings of the winds,  
rising upon the Cherubim,  
covered in an inscrutable cloud.<sup>5</sup>  
He ascended into heaven on high,  
sat in splendor upon the throne bequeathed to him  
from the beginning, equal with his Father,

from whom he had never been separated,  
neither losing what had been acquired,  
nor diluting that which was his own.  
Therefore, he shall come to the judgment of retribution,  
examining the unseen with the scales of justice,  
for which we wait and pray  
with faith in his almighty Lordship over and through all,  
who truly is the only one of the only one  
in equal glory forever worshiped as one.

## G

We always praise along with the Son and Father, the Holy Spirit,  
which is of the same essence,  
mighty, true, perfect and holy,  
who from nothing brought into existence  
everything that exists,  
who acts through itself and shares rule with  
the other two,  
in the same indestructible, boundless kingdom,  
who is the first cause, the awesome Word of his selfhood.  
And the same exalted Holy Spirit,  
good ruler, who dispenses the gifts of the Father,  
in praise of the name and the glory of  
the only begotten Son,  
who acted through the Laws and inspired the Prophets,  
with the encouragement of your co-equal Son  
commissioned your apostles.<sup>6</sup>  
In the form of a dove you appeared at the River Jordan,  
for the greater glory of the one who had come,  
shone forth in the writings of the evangelists,  
created genius, strengthened the wise,  
filled the teachers, blessed the kingdom,  
assisted the kings, appointed the guardians,  
issued the decree of salvation, granted talents,  
prepared atonement,<sup>7</sup>

cleansed those baptized into Christ's death that  
you might dwell in them  
a sacrament performed jointly by the Father and  
Son with the Holy Spirit,  
who is God, honored as Lord, in all ways in all things.

## H

Being named first among the Trinity does not make one greater  
than the other,  
or being named after the other, less than the rest,  
or by saying that they are one, that there is a  
confusion of persons,  
or by dividing into three, a separation of wills.  
For the Father would be diminished  
if he did not have the power of the Word  
so too if he did not have the Holy Spirit and  
was speechless,  
lifeless and deprived of any power to command.  
And the Word, if it were not known by  
the name of the Father,  
would be abandoned like some orphan or just  
another mortal being.  
Similarly the Holy Spirit, if not commissioned  
by its cause,  
would be vagabond, an unruly wind.<sup>8</sup>

## I

But if one presumes in a refutation  
to snatch the Father from his Word,  
on the ground that there was a time when  
the Word was not,  
believing that such speculations exalt  
the sublime greatness of the divine,  
or if one subordinates the Spirit which proceeds forth  
on the ground that it is not by nature spiritual,

thereby introducing an alien being or some  
unstable mixture  
into the pure and sublime unity of the Holy Trinity,  
we must reject such persons from our midst.  
We must drive them away in disgrace  
with our confession of faith  
like a stoning of fierce demons or vicious beasts,  
and cast a curse upon their devilish lot,  
shutting the gates to the church of life in their face.  
While we glorify the Holy Trinity in the same lordship of unified  
equality,  
in parallel praise, uniform level,  
blessed on earth and in heaven,  
in the congregation of the nation of  
earthly thinking beings,  
now and forever.  
Amen.

## J

Now, I offer to your all-hearing ears, almighty God,  
the secret thoughts in this book,  
and thus equipped, I venture forth in conversation,  
not with the idea that my voice could  
somehow exalt you,  
for before you created everything,  
before the creation of the heavens  
with the immortal choir of praise and  
the earthly thinking beings,  
you yourself in your perfection were already glorified,  
but still you permit me, a reject, to taste  
your indescribable sweetness, through  
the communion of words.  
And what good is it to mouth your  
royal command about  
"Adonai, Lord," and not carry it out.<sup>9</sup>



I destroyed with my own hand  
the golden tables of speech,  
dedicated to your message, written by  
the finger of God.<sup>10</sup>

That was true destruction.

And I, with ashen-faced sorrow,  
now provide a second copy, made in its likeness.

But now, since I have prayed much,  
in a voice of passionate and sincere praise,  
hear me, compassionate God, with this  
profession of faith.

May the voice of this prayer be joined with those offered  
by clean worshipers obedient to your will  
so that this meager offering, a dry loaf of  
unleavened bread,<sup>11</sup>  
might be served with oil upon your altar of glory.

## K

But you, beneficent and charitable in all things,  
O Christ, of one God, mighty and powerful,  
who surpasses all with your sweet and  
caring compassion  
not only humanity in general and those like me  
who are susceptible to all manner of contrariness,  
but also the uncontaminated angels,  
and even the pure and saintly, who give praise.

There was Elijah, for example,<sup>12</sup>

whose austere signs on Mt. Horeb were shown  
in three ways:

a great earthquake, strong winds and burning fire.

But you act in the mildness of patience and  
the calm peacefulness of the sweet air,  
for you alone, as the Scripture says,  
are the will of mercy.<sup>13</sup>

And although our kind found joy in virtue

and otherwise adopted heavenly ways,  
still they were earthlings, though chosen  
among mankind.

You, on the contrary, are not even capable of evil:

You are good in your very essence  
and blessed in all things,

salvation for all, tranquility in all,

calm for all, cure for all disease,

the fount of life-giving water in the words of Jeremiah.<sup>14</sup>

## L

Turn toward me and have mercy upon me,  
O God, who so thirsts, hungers and longs for  
my salvation.

You have gone so far as to designate  
a heavenly host of blessed immortals,  
to act as priests and intercessors for man's salvation,  
so that on behalf of us earthly beings,  
for the reconciliation of the wretched and  
abandoned like me,  
they might perpetually pray for your great  
blessed mercy,

with this light-giving phrase,

"Have mercy upon Jerusalem,"

so that based upon your great revelation

places left empty by the fallen angels,

might be filled by human beings,

who have joined you, in the manner of

the earthly Jerusalem,

about which you sent us good news.<sup>15</sup>

## M

Truly, you hear, kind God,

You listen, king.

You lent an ear, life and light.

You paid attention, heavenly one.  
You respected us, almighty.  
You noted, knower of secrets.  
You saw, keeper.  
You empathized, Lord beyond telling.  
You humbled yourself, exalted one.  
You became meek, awesome one.  
You were revealed, Lord beyond words.  
You were defined, boundless one.  
You were measured, unexaminable one.  
You focused light, radiant one.  
You became human, incorporeal one.  
You became tangible, immeasurable one.  
You took shape, you who are beyond quality.  
You truly fulfilled the yearnings of those  
who pray to you.  
With the voice of the blissful,<sup>16</sup>  
you were even for me, miserable soul that I am,  
a kind intercessor, a living mediator,<sup>17</sup>  
an immortal offering, an endless sacrifice,  
a gift of purity, a priceless burnt offering,  
an inexhaustible cup.  
Merciful Lord, who loves mankind,  
may you always show  
the favor of your life-giving will and your  
long-suffering patience toward me, a sinner.  
To you glory forever.  
Amen.

## Prayer 36

### *Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart*

#### **A**

No matter how great the mounting debt of my sins,  
the saving grace of your trials  
is greater by far.

You were nailed to the cross, the instrument of death,  
on your all-embracing creative hands, which  
hold all souls,<sup>1</sup>

so my disobedient hand might be stilled.

Out of compassion for my wantonness,  
you bound the motion of your two life-giving feet,  
so they might be pawned for my miserable feet,  
always racing toward brutishness.

#### **B**

You did not order the hands of those who beat  
your head to shrivel.<sup>2</sup>

You, who could uproot the fig tree without effort.

This example gives me hope of reprieve.

You did not threaten me with the evil whipping  
that was your own lot,

though you are proclaimed God.<sup>3</sup>

You who darkened the sun<sup>4</sup>

and grant rest with goodness to me a mortal.

You did not dry the evil mouth of those who cursed you,  
you who tinted the image of the moon with  
the color of blood,

so you might strengthen my meek tongue to praise you.

You did not rebuke the wanton insultors,

you who shook the very firmament,

so you might anoint my miserable head with  
the oil of compassion.

You did not rip the jaws of the God-killer who called you a fanatic,  
charlatan,<sup>5</sup>  
you who rent the hardness of the rocky tomb,<sup>6</sup>  
so you might mercifully grant my soul,  
though it is incapable of goodness,  
a respite from the burden of emptiness.  
You did not run the swords of the guards through  
their bowels,<sup>7</sup>  
you who condemned the snake to slither on the ground,<sup>8</sup>  
so you might preserve the bones of my tormented body,  
to be worthy of resurrection.  
You flatten and thrust into the abyss,  
those who sealed the tomb upon the bearer of life,  
in order that you might rest the token of your light  
in the tomb of my soul.  
You did not absolutely and for all generations  
strike down  
those who rumored your hand perished and  
your body stolen like that of a mortal,  
so you might permit me, insignificant as I am,  
to partake of that goodness which neither perishes nor can be  
harmed,  
together with those chosen for salvation.  
You did not turn into stone, as with Moab in  
days of old,<sup>9</sup>  
your frenzied persecutors who twice stole silver bribes  
from the offerings in your Father's sanctuary  
to betray and degrade you,<sup>10</sup>  
so that you might set me upon the steadfastness  
of your rock.<sup>11</sup>  
Although I waver and am sold to the powers of death,  
I am redeemed by your blood.  
You are blessed twice over and blessed again,  
praised in all things, forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Prayer 75

### *Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart*

#### A

And now, engulfed, entranced and overwhelmed  
by the magnitude, multitude and frequency  
of your gifts that overflow infinitely with abundant,  
undiminishing plenty, on the left and right,  
to the front and back,<sup>1</sup>  
I approach to offer again, great God, a testament in praise of the  
true faith,  
for although at times  
I was ensnared and lured away  
and expelled from Paradise<sup>2</sup>  
by heretical doctrines, devices of the Deceiver,  
now by this true doctrine in upright purity,  
as a token of true grace<sup>3</sup>  
again on wings of light  
I ascend in pursuit of heaven.  
And as I was conceived and born in the  
womb of the Church,  
with pangs of spiritual labor,  
remembering the profession of faith  
and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity,  
I now should address the great  
and favored immaculate queen,  
true maiden of all virgins, my glorious mother,  
worthy of praise, so she may be known  
and proclaimed and the extent of her venerable glory might be told  
to the nations in the future,  
worthy of honor  
and reverence as a pure body  
headed by the incarnate Word of God.

**B**

And now, in the manner of this word picture drawn by the Spirit,  
this icon upon the altar of light,  
accept me, O compassionate and blessed God,  
and let me be pardoned and cleansed through it.  
Remove the sinful stains upon my soul.  
Seat me with the innocent and the pure under  
its shadow.  
Gather me up, the weakest of the house of David,<sup>4</sup>  
and move me from there to the house of God,  
as the Prophet said, referring to you, Jesus.<sup>5</sup>  
Do not render my comings and goings from the chapel vain and  
useless.  
Do not find the fervor of my faith cold.  
Do not consider the embrace of my greeting out of place.  
Do not deem my service without grace.  
Do not leave my worship without inspiration.  
May the vision of your image not be fruitless.  
May this model of paradise not be lusterless.  
May the fireless burnt offering not be overlooked.  
May the sacrifice of this vow in words not be cast away.  
May the taste of your light not be my death.  
May the cup of the blood from your wounded side  
not be my condemnation.<sup>6</sup>

**C**

To you, Lord Jesus, one of the divine essence,  
whom we tasted, thereby coming to know the Father  
and Holy Spirit,  
to you, teacher who taught us  
the all-rewarding ways of the church,  
to you who dwell in this light-filled house of prayer  
dedicated to the salvation of good souls  
to you, ruler of all, Holy Trinity  
with hearts spread forth and hands outstretched,

we offer this incense of words  
forever, with grace and thanksgiving.<sup>7</sup>

**D**

We glorify you chanting hymns of praise,  
believing in the efficacy of the ministry of the Word,<sup>8</sup>  
O good commanding cause of all being,  
Holy Trinity without beginning, peerless highness,  
unfathomable mystery, incomprehensible for our minds,  
unexaminable by our senses, beyond the capacity  
of all creation, whose greatness encompasses  
the heavens on high and the limitless depths below,  
end of all ends and beginning of all beginnings,  
one from three distinct persons,  
three from one indivisible Godhead,  
beyond the understanding of the unfettered mind  
traversing all dimensions, unchanging good,  
unshakable uprightness, unadulterated image of love,  
greatness beyond which there is nothing,  
height which cannot be lowered,  
vision that cannot be marred,  
undiminishing beneficence, steadfast will,  
living commandment, sign of salvation, true blessing,  
expectation of faith, unfeignable promise,  
generous inheritance, trustworthy good news,  
sublime beyond reach.  
One Father of the only Son, honored by the singular Holy Spirit,  
with the richest goodness, completely devoid of evil,  
with thanksgiving offered in a voice of blessing,  
exalted with hymns of praise beyond our understanding.

**E**

One of the exalted, the awesome name  
partaker of the same honor,  
the same ineffable nature,



the same substance of three conjoined lights,  
perfection to which nothing can be added,  
of his own free will reverently loving the Father,  
whose likeness he bears,  
with the aid of the Spirit of Holiness,<sup>9</sup>  
who humbled itself and descended to earth,  
without diminishing its inherent glory,  
to enter the maternal womb of the immaculate Virgin,  
Mother of God, in whom he grew the seeds of blessings  
in that radiant field of purity,<sup>10</sup>  
combining with the most perfect divine essence  
in an unfathomable unity,  
in a permeating union,  
he miraculously combined into his divinity  
the breath of our existence.  
In this way, with the irresistible reins  
of his guiding bridle, he calmed my unruliness  
and willingly submitting to the cross.  
He rose like the flower of the  
fruit-bearing tree of life  
upon the stem of immortality.<sup>11</sup>  
He was wounded, died  
without separating his divinity from  
the flesh that is the same as ours  
and suffering forever with his physical body,  
inseparable from the essence of the creatorship  
within him he brought life out of the  
instrument of defeat.  
Descending into the dark regions of hell,  
he delivered the kidnapped beings of his creation  
from the bonds of the alienating serpent,<sup>12</sup>  
and as if shaking off the stupor of sleep,  
he forced death's assault on him to retreat,  
and arose and came to life divinely  
ascending from earth as the bread of life,

shepherding the flock of thinking souls.<sup>13</sup>  
The world had faith in him and<sup>14</sup>  
he appeared again to his disciples as he was  
in no way diminished, for he  
had come back whole and ascended  
in his entirety to sit upon  
the exalted throne with the glory  
of his creatorship as simply  
as it had been formerly.  
We confess him as God, doer of good  
and Lord of all who judges  
all the earth with justice on the great day,  
who himself is the beginning and himself  
is the end, the first and the last,  
who rules with his undiminished wholeness  
in light too bright to approach.

## F

We praise with the Father and the Son  
the Lord Holy Spirit, which springs inseparably  
forth from them sharing their glory,  
the Spirit that created everything and gave life to all,  
that Spirit which from the very beginning,  
when the universe was completely enveloped  
in misty darkness, brooded, designed and shaped<sup>15</sup>  
the sea which covered the earth with  
its infinite, all-powerful waters,  
an act symbolic of the true mystery  
of the holy baptismal font of light.  
First he created and now he acts.  
He brought into existence and constantly  
performs his handiwork, splendid miracles,  
foretold through the visions of saintly,  
divine signs, amazing miracles,  
prophets, apostles, scholars,

learned in the teaching of wisdom.  
He prepared the sanctuary for the offering  
of Christ's blood. With mercy he ordered  
the pardoning of souls and the healing of  
bodies in the manner of Christ.  
He baptized with that which is greater than water  
and he renewed and enlightened through himself.<sup>16</sup>  
He daily grows stronger by his good works.  
He bore witness to the only begotten of God  
at the flowing waters of the Jordan.<sup>17</sup>  
With the voice of the Father in the shape of a cloud  
he appeared on Mount Tabor.<sup>18</sup>  
In the same form he protected the house of Jacob  
in its exodus from Egypt.<sup>19</sup>  
On the march led by Moses,  
he engulfed Pharaoh with terrible winds.<sup>20</sup>  
He creates priests.  
He shapes sages.  
He strengthens kings.  
He accords pardon.  
He grants life to the dead in the renewal of  
the resurrection.  
He himself is the anointing of God made man,  
forever equally worshiped with the Father  
for the honor of greatness of the Son,  
with boundless glory praised forever,  
Amen.

**G**<sup>21</sup>

We profess the true faith, unerring and pure,  
with the kiss of our lips we greet the altar  
built of lifeless stone, the body of the church  
as the dwelling place of God  
more exalted than the most splendid heights of heaven  
and founded upon the congregation of the apostles,

and revered by the disciples of the one on high,  
as the place where the servants of the Word worshiped.  
This treasure of life had its beginning in  
the upper room, the place where the miracle<sup>22</sup>  
happened on the great day of Pentecost.  
The spirit of God radiant with power,<sup>23</sup>  
filled that beautiful house,  
breathing upon it as a sign of the pre-eminence  
of the church,  
then sanctifying it through this act of grace,  
then endowing it and those within with glorious  
renewing light. Thus the blood of the almighty God  
distributed and offered forever  
is greater than Abel's.<sup>24</sup>  
For Abel's cries only the message of death  
but this blood shouts with a blissful voice  
proclaiming life immortal.<sup>25</sup>  
No one has the power under heaven  
or before the sun to celebrate this awesome mystery  
except under the protective wing of the church,  
for heaven is not pleased with a gift of the Lord's body,  
except when offered under the auspices  
of this blessed roof, and for this reason,  
according to the Law, there is a curse of death  
upon one who makes the divine offering,  
except at the altar of communal sacrifice.  
Moreover, one who makes this offering,  
the image of the soul, at a place other than the altar,  
shall be branded with blood guilt.  
In the church, there is but one baptism into the  
death of Christ,<sup>26</sup>  
so that his divinity might not unwittingly suffer  
sacrificed a second time to purify someone already cleansed by  
his light.<sup>27</sup>  
There is but one laying on of hands

to be anointed with light so that deceit  
might not be mixed with truth.  
There is but one pardon,  
more through grace than penance,<sup>28</sup>  
so that the reality might not  
be confused with appearances.  
There is but one doctrine about the trial to come,<sup>29</sup>  
so that the threat of punishment might not  
seem like mere talk about some stranger.<sup>30</sup>  
There is but one just warning for both of the elements  
of our nature, so that in the immortal power  
of the adoption into the kingdom of heaven<sup>31</sup>  
the recompense for good and evil  
does not appear solely for the inner soul, but  
for the outer man too, so the true magnificence  
of the kingdom might be manifest  
through our earthly nature as well.  
There is but one hope of life with the incorruptible saints,  
so that the certitude of things promised,  
as revealed to the minds of those who listen,  
might be believed.

## H

The inanimate church, venerable queen,  
gives life and rules over death,  
like the fruit that Adam was said to have eaten.<sup>32</sup>  
But this church surpasses all animate beings,  
for though inanimate, it performs miracles,  
even undertaking to perfect and renew us,  
by etching the image of the glorious light upon us.  
It is written that the church shares the vault  
of heaven's grandeur, before the hosts  
of spiritual beings that live there.  
She uplifts bodies to soar again with  
the lightness of the soul, endowing

the baser element with dignity.  
She is not debased by her own faults,  
but by being trampled by evil or faithless people.<sup>33</sup>  
She is an amazing sign, overwhelming our  
mind's understanding,  
this unthinking thing, created by thinking creatures,  
that helps them as a superior helps its subordinate.  
She is greater than man,  
as the invincible rod was greater than  
God's chosen Moses.<sup>34</sup>  
She surpasses the speaking beings  
as the miraculously blooming rod was  
greater than Aaron.<sup>35</sup>  
She exceeds the thinking beings just as  
the splendid cloak  
that parted the rivers is greater than  
Elijah and Elisha.<sup>36</sup>  
She delivers assistance again and again with hands  
more saintly than militant, for her body<sup>37</sup>  
of stone and mortar shares the same substance  
as the feeling beings and the saints.  
Like an immortal rock, she lives in the falling  
and rising of many.<sup>38</sup>  
Like the judge of all souls, she comes forth  
with miraculous signs  
through curses and blessings.<sup>39</sup>  
Like one who sees the unseen she exposes some,  
shelters others.  
Like the commander-in-chief she summons  
all by name.<sup>40</sup>  
Like an eternal mountain she resists attack.<sup>41</sup>  
Like a net cast by God she catches souls.<sup>42</sup>  
Sinless, unerring, she proceeds in the  
footsteps of Christ.<sup>43</sup>  
Like the praiseworthy, she lifts up her head in  
sublime magnificence, boldly and without shame.

## I

The church has such great sanctity that her canons  
make distinctions among the creatures made  
in God's image.

If, despite care, an improper person  
ventures through her portal,  
she is not desecrated,  
but rather distressed by this carelessness.  
She is not cursed, but pardons those who do not understand her  
sanctity.

She is not abandoned as if she caused the shortcomings,  
but is tarnished by our deeds.

She does not permit a second approach to receive  
the mystery of the Lord at the feet of the  
life-giving God.<sup>44</sup>

She does not permit that sacrament to be offered twice  
in one day so that this gift is not debased by  
indiscriminate use.

She has compassion for our frailties,<sup>45</sup>  
the same as one immune from passion's corruption.  
Without a word she judges with lordly authority.

## J

For she is an ark of purity,<sup>46</sup>  
a second cause of rejoicing  
who saves us from drowning  
in the tumult of our worldly lives.

She does not gather all sorts of beasts and just a few humans, but  
rather gathers the heavenly host together with us mortals.

She is not tossed about on waves of agitation,<sup>47</sup>  
but rises above it to the heavenly heights.

As a disciple under the command of the  
Holy Spirit of God  
she avoids iniquity.<sup>48</sup>

She does not demand a death blow to the flesh

but rather guides those in her care to the  
good news of life.

She is not built by the hand of Noah,  
but is built by the command of the creator.<sup>49</sup>

She is not adorned by Moses with the craftsman Bezaleel,<sup>50</sup> but by  
the only begotten Son of God  
with the Holy Spirit.

She is not in perpetual motion, constantly changing  
but is established permanently upon an  
unshakable foundation.

Like the ark made of wooden planks,<sup>51</sup>  
lacking the ability to speak and the sense of sight,  
still she guides us anew.

In the image of the creator's infinite plenitude  
she goes ahead to prepare for us a place in  
the light of life.<sup>52</sup>

She strikes one dead on the spot, like Uzzah,<sup>53</sup>  
if she is not shouldered like the cross in the soul.

She kills without pause or trace  
if she is carried off like some man-made vessel  
on a cart harnessed to beasts in earthly desires.<sup>54</sup>

She speaks not with the tongues of men,  
but with the language of angels.<sup>55</sup>

She does not listen with physical ears  
but comprehends directly with her mind.<sup>56</sup>

She does not proclaim with articulated sounds  
but tells the message of Jesus' works to all nations.<sup>57</sup>

She does not have vocal cords but expresses  
herself with the breath of the living God.

She does not have joints of bones and nerves  
but just as the armed throngs of Israelites  
though the chosen army of God on high,  
were made to stand two thousand cubits from the ark of the  
covenant<sup>58</sup> because of their impiety, she still keeps her distance  
from those infected with sin  
even though they were delivered from the toil

of brick-making in Egypt.<sup>59</sup>  
Even the essence of God incarnate was  
called the “rock,”<sup>60</sup>  
for the thirst of the many was quenched by  
the piercing of his side.<sup>61</sup>  
It is not the flow of blood through veins  
but the rays of light from on high  
penetrating and becoming one with it  
that give the Church life and renewal.  
It is not masterful art of Solomon or Zurababel,<sup>62</sup>  
but the wisdom of God who holds all in his hands  
that designs the Church.  
It is not with the unconsecrated and common oil of Jacob  
that is applied to it, but with the awesome  
blood and glory of the great God that it is anointed.<sup>63</sup>  
It is not a house made with the things of earth,<sup>64</sup>  
but rather the body of the heavenly light of God  
where he baptizes and ordains its children.  
The Church nurtures not those born to the  
ways of the world,<sup>65</sup>  
but rather those who are heirs to the  
heavenly kingdom,<sup>66</sup>  
so that she might offer to the bosom of Abraham  
those raised in her care.<sup>67</sup>  
The bridegroom of her wedding day is the  
Son of the living God.  
And the rejoicing entourage of bride’s maids are the  
assembly of patriarchs.<sup>68</sup>  
She makes us forget the high places of pagan  
worship where demons dwell, so that only God in heaven might be  
worshipped.  
She is the complete refutation of the images  
of pagan gods for in her every stone Christ is exalted.<sup>69</sup>  
She is the open destruction of the self-indulgent  
nymph cults of the forest, so that above all other trees

of this world, the Lord might be offered,  
like the tree of life, in the Church.<sup>70</sup>  
She undermines all the false, magical, fertility idols  
because in her and with her the adored rock  
is established, set in light-giving rubies and living stones.<sup>71</sup>

## K

This graceful, God-pleasing house is free of all servility.<sup>72</sup>  
It is not the image of Zion on high, but rather  
the true Zion as experienced in reality.  
It is not a pagan fire altar or  
a place of penance under the yoke of the Law,<sup>73</sup>  
but rather the Lord’s table which we kiss offering thanks  
for his loving-kindness. It is unshakable,  
never taking on a different image but rather  
grows ever greater in the same radiant glory,  
proclaiming the heavens and representing  
heaven on earth in brilliant light.  
Just as without the Father, there is no Christ,  
so without the womb of the mother Church,  
the soul cannot be fulfilled.<sup>74</sup>  
The infinite God would wander were it not for  
the shelter of the tabernacle of this house of prayer.<sup>75</sup>  
The Lord of all would have no place to rest his head,<sup>76</sup>  
if he did not lodge at this inn of life.  
He is more honored in this material dwelling place  
than in the vault of heaven on high.  
The infinity of the divine light  
that covered the face of the prophet and those  
with him<sup>77</sup> caused people to flee because the glorious  
radiance was overwhelming, whereas here in the Church,  
while celebrating those very prophets,  
they approach the light and sing praise with  
the host of angels. Here in the Church, God’s good will  
and repeated blessings exceed the splendor of paradise.



## L

This spiritual, heavenly mother of light  
cared for me as a son more than a earthly, breathing, physical  
mother could.

The milk of her bosom was the blood of Christ.

If one were to consider her the image of the Mother  
of God, it would not be impious.

Like the sign of the cross of salvation with amazing  
powers and handiwork, it performs miracles.

The terrifying tribunal of the last judgment  
is established there visibly.

Through her the babbling mouths of immoral heretics  
are silenced.

She also has intelligent, speaking stones,  
by which she chases away the beastly and unclean.<sup>78</sup>

She gives birth to godly mortals,<sup>79</sup>

saints in the image of the sole God, Christ.<sup>80</sup>

She faces east, our first place of habitation.<sup>81</sup>

She points the way to the second coming of God,  
and making us face east guides us toward  
the Lord's brilliant light.<sup>82</sup>

The dawn and rising of the sun foreshadow  
for the creatures of earth the vision of Christ  
on the day of the last judgment.

She drives away pain, heals the infirm, overcomes  
the tyranny of demons.

Like a jubilant bridal party the twelve apostles  
encircle her the life-giving fountain, the womb of life.

So much have her blessings and bliss increased  
and flourished that she has been called by the name of  
the Savior himself<sup>83</sup>

and by those close to the only begotten Son,  
she was consecrated in the name the radiant  
Mother of God.

For sinners tossing about on the sea, she is a safe harbor;  
for the heavenly choirs, a place of jubilation.

For the perplexed mortal, a place of sure healing.  
The Holy Trinity, beyond telling, is glorified in her,  
the blessed in all.

## M

And woe to him who raises a hand in malice  
against the heavenly kingdom as if  
the doctrine of the church made by hands,  
were some physical invention  
or human artifact or earthly handiwork,  
and not the gift of life and reflection of the divine,<sup>84</sup>  
a foreshadow of the renewing light revealed by  
the Holy Spirit, and the abundant gifts of God on high,  
the altar honoring the mystery of the will of the creator.  
and the institution founded with wisdom by the right  
hand of the apostles, in a word, the gate of heaven,<sup>85</sup>  
the city of the living God,<sup>86</sup>

the mother of all living things, free of all sin,<sup>87</sup>  
and the true model of our visible, thinking being.

Her intellectual part is the mystery of our souls.

Her palpable part is the image of our bodies.

And a new holiness surpassing the holiness of old<sup>88</sup>  
and crowned with the brilliantly glorious sign of Christ.

Those who do not confess this  
are expelled from the Almighty's presence  
by the hand of his consubstantial Word,  
depriving them of the inheritance of grace  
from the co-glorified Holy Spirit,  
and closing before them the doors to the  
bridal chamber of life.

And we who have written this bear witness to it  
and believe in what we have composed here,<sup>89</sup>  
in the name of and for the glory of the almighty Trinity  
and of the one Godhead,  
forever and ever.

Amen.

## Prayer 92

*A Prayer of Instruction on the wooden bell  
that calls us to worship, symbol of the trumpet on the  
Day of Judgment.*

### A

I give you thanks, compassionate Lord,  
friend of mankind,  
creator of heaven and earth,  
Son of the living God.  
As soon as I awake I am seized by yearning  
for your love, thanks to the sounding of your wooden bell.  
Hearing the bell's clipped resonance  
we awake and arise from our deathlike slumber.  
And as if called by a consoling voice,  
we are drawn to the service of blessing and come  
with joy before your throne to be judged.<sup>1</sup>

### B

Glory to you,  
name beyond definition, uncontainable power,  
who went to such amazing lengths to provide  
for my salvation.  
Immortal essence, praised with thanksgiving,  
your miracles in this world  
foreshadow the world to come.  
By this instrument, this wooden vessel,  
you firmly shake me from the stupor of sleep,  
as if you rouse me from my slothfulness  
with an admonishing reproach,  
adding percussive accompaniment  
to the gentleness of your fatherly love.  
By the clapping of two mallets,

you sweetly rain your loving-kindness upon us.  
You do not plunge me back into the depths of sleep  
with hushed syllables,  
nor frighten my anxious soul  
with needless harshness.

I worship you, upon my knees, Creator of all,  
who has given us in this world a sample  
of the sound of that terrifying alarm that will echo  
on the great day of resurrection.

You brought me back to life  
from the tomblike numbness of oblivion.

You sought a fool like me to invite  
to taste the wine of joy.<sup>2</sup>

You made this instrument to prepare  
the immaculate bride for your love, O groom.<sup>3</sup>

With this humble spur, you struck fear in the  
monstrous demons.

You tamed the Rebel by placing a massive yoke  
upon his shoulders.

You muzzled the jaw of the Troublemaker with a restraining bridle.

May your infinite highness be forever exalted great God,  
who turned the tree symbolizing our transgression  
into the liberating grace of salvation<sup>4</sup>

and who brought a muddled fool like me  
to my senses through the wisdom of your spirit.

Through the strokes of the mallet on this wooden board  
you remind us that alone we cannot cure  
the serpent's bite.

By the three blows at the end of the call to worship,  
which symbolize the Trinity,  
you reinforce the three chains that restrain  
my destroyer.<sup>5</sup>

## C

I send up odes of praise, with fragrant incense, to you  
God who cares for all,  
for your ways are more potent than the multitude of pagan gods,  
from whom you captured my sinful soul  
guiding me to your worship.  
With the voice of this sacred wood, hardy and robust,  
you preached the truth.  
With this worthy instrument  
you increased the honor of your New Covenant.  
Its clamor calls your heavenly host to arms,  
Lord Christ, who rules over all earthly states  
and emperors.  
It is the sign of joy, Lord Jesus, upon your victory on the  
field of battle, in which the Pharaoh who oppresses souls is seized  
and bound.<sup>6</sup>  
This well-shaped piece of wood delivers a daily beating  
upon the head of the haughty evil doer.  
By the sound of this wood, the sons of Zion are  
summoned to battle against the despot who casts a  
darkness over the world.<sup>7</sup>  
And like a house of divine worship, built long ago,<sup>8</sup>  
this wood consecrated with oil, which neither grows old  
nor retires from service,  
alerts us well in advance of the Day of Reckoning that  
lies ahead.  
It is like the tree of life in paradise, O God, inviting  
us to gather and hasten to the house of blessings.  
It resembles the tree of knowledge  
created to distinguish good from evil.<sup>9</sup>  
It is a solemn reminder of the sign of the cross  
sealed upon my forehead by your Holy Spirit.  
It announces the good news of your glorious  
second coming to the bride, kept pure for you, O King.<sup>10</sup>  
It encourages the ranks of the saintly to rejoice.

It inspires an innocent yearning for spiritual union  
with the virgin queen, the mother of all, veiled  
in splendor.  
It prepares the secret treasures that adorn the soul.  
It is reminiscent of the thunderous message on Mt. Sinai  
and the aura of dwelling places of the Lord.  
It crowns with glory the immaculate mother of  
pure children, the splendid eternal virgin – the church.

## D

With the sounding of this wood,  
stronger than the trumpeting rams' horns at Jericho,<sup>11</sup>  
you brought down and leveled the tyranny of Satan.  
With this wooden slingshot you slew Goliath.<sup>12</sup>  
You fashioned this new javelin that foretells the  
destruction of Satan,<sup>13</sup>  
for with this tool you pulled up the deep roots of sin  
and through its beneficial work  
you recommitted me to duties I had forgotten.  
If I call this alarm a voice,  
that predicts the coming of your Word, O God,  
I would not be wrong, but would be telling the truth.<sup>14</sup>  
By this humble instrument,  
though material, yet bearing the spirit,  
the majesty of your works are proclaimed, O Jesus.  
Through this unassuming sign,  
signaling the place of refuge,  
you draw our attention on earth  
to your bounteous help from on high.

## E

Your name is proclaimed,  
God, who loves mankind,  
who provides and cares for us beyond reason.  
You are adored in the mystery of your Holy Trinity,

O light whose image cannot be drawn.  
By this twice dedicated wood,<sup>15</sup>  
you shot arrows of sound,  
through the air, reaching their targets  
across long distances, bearing a living spirit,  
foiling the secret designs of the archer of darkness,  
forcing him into retreat.  
As if waging battle from a high fortress,  
mighty and indestructible,  
you hurl down the strokes of this wooden bell,  
like an angel you send to confound the enemy.  
With the words of your covenant, Your Majesty,  
consecrated with grace by being mixed with your blood,  
you have sharpened this horn  
like a cross of redemption honed on the whetstone,  
to strike down the blustering bully.  
By the clamor of this wooden bell,  
more tumultuous than a celestial chorus,  
the doors of the human will  
with its half-hearted and unseemly impulses,  
are knocked down  
taking with it the legalistic mentality of the  
Old Testament heart and its house which is but a shadow  
of your new covenant.

## F

I offer you glory and praise,  
immortal king,  
I pray that you might renew  
with your mighty right hand  
all that you have created.  
By the reverberating wooden bell  
you drove away the wicked peril of the  
cunning Troublemaker,  
the feverish torment of sin,

the sour breath of the deceiver,  
the impulsive and deadly misadventures and delusions,  
the harmful and depressing acts caused by  
weakness of the flesh,  
the diabolical whining that causes us to faint.  
Helped by the wings of the sign of your cross,  
dispel again with this wooden armament  
clouds that rain fire,  
thunder that brings hail,  
burning flames of smoky deception  
of the many-footed fire-breathing dragon,  
the butcher's knife, the confrontation of battle,  
the wild thoughts that overtake me  
like prancing demons.  
They are set to flight by this little bell,  
overcome with trembling,  
and they know the Lord  
comes to judgment  
with a sound like this.  
And the pious warriors,  
well armed with the sword of the Holy Spirit,  
are spurred on with courage,  
when they hear the alarm of the wooden bell,  
which with an inarticulate cry calls all nations  
to sacrifice themselves for justice.

## G

Listen to the great trumpet sound  
by which God is exalted in worship<sup>16</sup>  
throughout the world.  
It resounds in the ears of the heathens, causing  
them to scatter.  
It reinforces the voice of the watchmen of great God,  
and, in the words of Isaiah, has us singing  
together for joy.<sup>17</sup>

Thanks to this wooden bell, the enemies of the cross,  
are separated like the waters.<sup>18</sup>  
The fruit of the first tree loses its  
far-reaching significance,<sup>19</sup>  
when wood becomes celebrated as the symbol of life.<sup>20</sup>  
Compared to this wooden bell emitting the sound of life,  
the iron sword of war loses its luster.<sup>21</sup>  
And like something sacred,  
this wooden bell that rings out life  
was deemed worthy to be inscribed  
with the sign of the cross,  
like bells on horses, holy to the Lord.<sup>22</sup>  
The sword of human authority is sheathed<sup>23</sup>  
in deference to this anointed staff of the  
heavenly shepherd.  
No hammer of any artisan has nicked a  
stone of the temple,<sup>24</sup>  
but on the altar built by God this sacred wood  
soaring with the wings of the cross wields power.  
Not only at the beginning of the month,<sup>25</sup>  
nor upon the seven times seven years of the jubilee,<sup>26</sup>  
is the wooden bell removed from its corner and sounded,  
but from the dawn of the universe to its far reaches,<sup>27</sup>  
upon the waves of the sea and its islands,  
it echoes, divinely,  
announcing the good news.  
The swords of the butcher were broken  
by the sight of this wood,  
and the useless were transformed into ploughshares and pruning  
hooks.<sup>28</sup>

## H

The sound of the wooden bell, is not like the harsh echo  
of stones in the depths of a pit,  
nor does it do violence to the air, in the words of

a foreign sage.<sup>29</sup>  
It does not pierce the ear with a sharp and  
annoying sound,  
nor does it make the skull vibrate unpleasantly.  
It does not cause bones to crack,  
nor does it stun the mind.  
It does not clang like a bell of copper,  
nor does it clunk without any sweetness  
like a stone on the pavement.  
It is the invincible keeper of the New Zion.  
It is one of the main, sacred vessels, given by God,  
that Christian clerics, along with the Levites,  
treat with care and reverence.  
It is like the voice of an angel,<sup>30</sup>  
which in the words of the parable-teller,  
resemble the song of a bird.<sup>31</sup>  
It is a new musical instrument to announce the grace of the good  
news.  
It awakens in us the Spirit of God  
more readily than the odes of Elise's harp.<sup>32</sup>  
It is the prelude to the lamentations,  
played upon the strings of a sweet and  
harmonious violin.  
It is cymbals with their allegorical expression.  
It is a new flute of a different sort  
that we have adopted instead of the old.  
It does not make hollow noises like reeds of the pagans.  
It does not make earthly noises like instruments of  
the Jews, about which the Lord said through the prophet,  
"Take these away from me."<sup>33</sup>  
Rather, it is a God-pleasing sound, doubly honored,  
for it wards off attacking demons and other  
strokes of evil.



**I**

And now, I have accepted with blessing,  
veneration and praise, this sacred gift,  
as protection for me and glory for you,  
thanksgiving from me and worship to you,  
a wonder of your creative glory, wanting in nothing.  
May this Godly sound pierce through the joints  
of my body<sup>34</sup> to drive from my soul the deceitful ways of the demons  
and block corruption.  
Make this wooden bell a symbol,  
a harp of light, an invitation that cannot be  
retracted, an endless praise of your  
lordly providence.  
Hear us, O compassionate Lord, through  
this wooden bell.  
Grant us, I pray, almighty Lord,  
twofold protection against visible and  
invisible enemies.  
Give us, O generous hand,  
open and ready to offer and share good things,  
the sweetness of air and beneficial rains.  
May your order, voiced in this medium,  
curb the hellish blasts, the painful breathing,  
the attacks of the deceitful and evil brigands.  
By this instrument may we be delivered from  
the aggressive warriors who lead us to evil.  
By the cheerful voice of this anointed wood,  
may the worm, canker, and their kind,  
that draw strength from our sins and fight  
against us be driven away, cut down and killed.  
By this plant of bliss  
may our trust in you as our protector,  
Creator of all, lord of creation,  
take root, like the thicket where Abraham  
found the ram,<sup>35</sup> at the end of whose branches  
the sacred inheritance of my present salvation  
hangs before us, caused by you, Christ, to blossom

and bear the fruit of eternal life.  
Before the ringing out of the good news heralded by  
his glorious wood,  
may the demon-possessed enemies  
and the lying and tricky many-handed hellions  
be set to flight and banished to the dark abyss.  
May this bell drive away from the fertile fields  
of our toil, the devastating blights and trampling  
bands of animals.  
Let this bell remove unbecoming excesses  
caused by the devices of evil,  
that render us yet more ugly.  
May this bell truly eliminate  
the faults generated by traitors  
in our two natures:  
from the spiritual, strange, false thoughts;  
from the physical, corruption caused by  
impure stirrings.  
Deliver me, Lord Jesus, I pray you!  
Deliver me, my benefactor.  
Reach out to me with your almighty right hand,  
and having helped me,  
free me of these enemies.

**J**

Mix and unite your commandments with the  
sound of the bell,  
so that my callous heart, hard as a diamond,  
might again bear the fruits of your word.<sup>36</sup>  
May the sound of the bell strike and pierce  
my worn heart and forsaken soul  
and like a sharp stake of wonder,  
reinforce and shore them up,  
upright and steadfast,<sup>37</sup>  
while softening the hardness of my soul,

so that I might awaken, sobered with humility,  
like Paul and Matthew.<sup>38</sup>  
O God who loves mankind,  
through this venerable wooden bell  
remind me of the gifts of your cross  
by which you did things beyond words.  
Lift away from me, Giver of life,  
the weight of my sins  
by the glorious yoke of your new tabernacle.<sup>39</sup>  
By your will, Almighty,  
may the ears of my stubborn heart be opened  
to the sound of life.  
By this tidings of your magnificent good works,  
may the ears of the deaf hear.<sup>40</sup>  
Through this bell may the tongues of the dumb speak.<sup>41</sup>  
May the sight of the eyes be restored,  
that they might look upon you purely in  
unwavering adoration.<sup>42</sup>  
May the weary wills of men be refreshed,  
that they might repent and return to you.<sup>43</sup>  
In my turmoil, O Lord,  
grant me the rain of tears.  
Let this be from you to us  
a message of joy,  
a jubilant shout,  
a tranquil song,  
a thing of bliss,  
a means of salvation,  
an occasion for pardon,  
a banishment of grief,  
an extrication from entanglements,  
an easing of anxiety,  
a ceasing of cares,  
a dispelling of sighs  
an alleviation of groaning,

an assurance of necessities,  
a discipline of passions,  
a consolation for disappointments,  
a cure for pains,  
an immunization against backsliding,  
a contemplation of things invisible.

## K

Lead me across this bridge of yearning,  
which neither hinders nor causes us to stray,  
on our upward journey,  
upon this heaven-bound ladder marked<sup>44</sup>  
by the footsteps of the saints.  
Offer me to your blessed Father,  
whose name inspires awe,  
O doer of good,  
may I be guided by your Holy Spirit,  
to inseparable unity with you.  
And to your one and only, holy and united Lordship and  
incorruptible creatorship, for which your creatures,  
both living and inanimate, give thanks,  
glory and dominion, forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Prayer 93

### *A Prayer of Instruction on the Holy Chrism, the light-giving oil of consecration*

#### **A**

Holy, awe-inspiring name, too sublime to utter,  
ever desired object of our yearning,  
praised without end by the glorious seraphim,<sup>1</sup>  
who sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy,"  
to you who dwell in the Holy of Holies,  
who are filled with bountiful goodness,  
you pour forth generously and without end,  
awesome and incomprehensible.  
You are all and are in all.<sup>2</sup>  
With these words, as my contract of hope,  
may I enter into a covenant with you, Almighty?  
Yes, amen, alleluia!<sup>3</sup>  
venerated king of the universe,  
God of all, creator of beings and sovereign Lord,  
sole cause of all consequences,<sup>4</sup>  
forever adored, Savior and Christ, the anointed Messiah.

#### **B**

The meaning of this priceless treasure and  
irreplaceable wealth  
is given to us by your very name,  
Jesus Christ heavenly king,  
whom the immortal and sublime beings,  
with mouths of light and breath of fire,  
serve with trembling,  
bowing to you on bended knee in thanksgiving,  
gladly without mental reservations,<sup>5</sup>  
Creator of all beings visible and invisible.<sup>6</sup>

You who are and were totally perfect and  
lacking nothing, took our nature truly and in its entirety,<sup>7</sup>  
in order to complete it with your perfection.  
O blessed and praised Lord,  
forever proclaimed for the incomprehensible  
sacrifice you made for our salvation,  
to you, glory and praise for your goodness,  
you, who are exalted beyond words,  
sublime and awe-inspiring.  
You are the source of grace given through anointing,  
a great mystery that miraculously adorns us,<sup>8</sup>  
for through it your light was revealed to us,<sup>9</sup>  
O incomprehensible ray,  
boundless dawn,<sup>10</sup>  
sun shining fairly on all,<sup>11</sup>  
star that divides the day in two,<sup>12</sup>  
lamp unto our feet and light upon the path,<sup>13</sup>  
thanks to you we see the meaning of this sacrament  
and compose this prayer,  
celebrating with angelic singing and jubilation,  
with a pure spirit,  
venerating with incense fit for our Savior  
your generous allotment of gifts, most wise Lord,  
through the oil of gladness and spotless belief.<sup>14</sup>  
For the first created man, my forefather, who,  
scarcely created, tragically lost the greatest gift,  
the breath of eternal life,<sup>15</sup>  
and forever withering in the hands of sin,  
became a captive of death.<sup>16</sup>  
He was tied into an undoable knot,  
into deadly decadence,  
and fell because of the tree of knowledge,  
unable to stand, stumbling toward destruction,  
expelled from the light,  
he was condemned to the darkness of this world.<sup>17</sup>

But you, compassionate Lord,  
always knew your creature  
better than he knew himself.  
In pursuit of the divine knowledge he could not have,  
he lost the innocence he had,  
thereby becoming unable to look upon  
your sublimity which dwells in unapproachable light,<sup>18</sup>  
O infinite God.  
For this reason you did not reveal yourself  
in an ever radiant light that does not wane,  
but only as an aid against the terrors of the night,  
when the feet stumble.  
You gave the oil, and in this oil you placed a wick,  
which exemplifies your union, without imperfection, with our condi-  
tion,  
formed and woven with your love of mankind,  
so that we, who find ourselves banished, in the  
shadow of death,  
because of the first transgressions against the tree,<sup>19</sup>  
through the fruit of the tree akin to it,<sup>20</sup>  
might be enlightened with the flame of faith  
and restored to that former blessed state.  
And also by being spread upon the tree of death  
you spread us upon it as well,  
and thanks to this great mystery<sup>21</sup>  
united us with the tree of life.

## C

Now, just as the day is incomplete without night,  
so the household is incomplete without the staple oil.  
For as ordinary, unconsecrated oil illumines the sight of the physi-  
cal eyes,  
so the oil sanctified and chosen by the mystery of your breath of  
grace  
gives luster to our invisible souls in a glorious,

miraculous way  
uniting us with you, Lord who cannot be seen.  
For as we believe, that by the washing of the body  
in the glow of holy baptismal font  
our souls are cleansed,  
so when anointed with chrism, that oil of hope,  
we believe, without the least doubt,  
that we receive through it the Holy Spirit.  
And since by your blessed commandment, Lord,  
you arranged in advance the pardoning of  
those afflicted with sin,  
and for those who do not believe in this pardon,<sup>22</sup>  
you performed before their eyes the miracle  
of healing as evidence for doubters.  
Similarly, this oil of salvation, sanctified with light,  
is poured on us to anoint our outer temple,  
and enters us in secret and unseen,  
whereby the inner man is born again.

## D

This physical thing is a superb analogy for you,  
for the wise maidens who bore the oil  
received the benefit of your mercy,<sup>23</sup>  
and in praise you defined yourself as merciful, saying:  
“I am merciful, said the Lord.”<sup>24</sup>  
As your name is synonymous with love, O God,<sup>25</sup>  
so in part your mercy and love are manifested  
by coming down to be reimprinted upon our nature  
according to the divine plan of salvation.  
The sacrificial fat is a fitting analogy for a great  
and sublime mystery,<sup>26</sup>  
for as the fat is to the animal,  
so the oil is to the plant – its heavy, earthen part.  
And as you commanded in the Old Law  
that this part of the animal should not be eaten,

but should be offered as a sacrifice to you, O Creator,<sup>27</sup>  
so under the New Testament,  
this oil is a potent offering ceremonially given  
for your favor, fitting only for you Lord,  
the God who is,  
as the true travel-mate of my soul,  
to be kept and pledged to you, Creator.  
For neither the lifeblood nor the savor of the burning  
fat,<sup>28</sup> which are the symbols of the soul and strength,  
are burnt to ashes with the meat of sacrifice,  
but are the portion offered before your throne  
in the heavenly kingdom, O Lord,  
so this light-giving substance  
may always burn bright and inextinguishable.

## E

The first-born male could not preside as a judge  
unless he was anointed,  
nor could the clergy set foot in the Holy of Holies,  
unless he were ordained and consecrated with oil<sup>29</sup>  
Jacob poured oil upon the stone on which he slept,<sup>30</sup>  
thus consecrating the distant archetype of  
the altar of God.

This pouring out moreover symbolized your descent  
on that splendid ladder, O God exalted beyond words,  
to take me up on my heavenly journey.  
And for this reason, he erected and anointed a monument  
to remind later generations.

The splendor of Aaron's priesthood  
was fulfilled by anointing him  
according to your commandment, great God<sup>31</sup>  
In the words of the Psalmist,<sup>32</sup>  
when oil poured down over his head and beard,  
he was miraculously transformed,  
regaining the original glory of Adam,

and receiving your life-giving Holy Grace through union with our  
nature.

The kings of this world would have no legitimacy,  
as the image of your creatorship on earth,  
were it not for their consecration with a horn  
filled with oil,<sup>33</sup> and the placing of the crowns upon their  
heads in your name, Christ.

And how could I forget the first among these sublime  
figures, Melchisedek, the servant of your greatness and  
your image beyond understanding?

Is it possible that Melchisedek  
the symbol of your awesome truth,  
on the Mount of Olives,<sup>34</sup>

where later your feet, God incarnate, walked,  
can it be possible he was not anointed by the fruits of this  
place by the angels on high?<sup>35</sup>

Thus he was invested by you  
to guard the tomb of our forefather Adam<sup>36</sup>  
in princely episcopal honor,  
until you appeared, Lord,  
the true priest fully revealed,  
the regeneration and regenerator of Adam.

## F

Since yours is grace,  
and to you is befitting thanksgiving,  
O blessed Son of God,  
may you yourself place the seal of your blessed image  
upon these prayers, imbued with the oil of humble love,  
the incense of adoration  
and the myrrh of repentance  
that they may bring glory for you  
and healing for me, a wretched sinner.  
Apply, Lord Jesus, this oil of light to my invisible sores,<sup>37</sup>  
and on the cauterized parts of these deadly wounds,



put a drop of the blessed oil of your salvation  
 with the ever sweet wine of your love,  
 bound by you with the protective bandages of your care,  
 so that this testament, my explanatory discourse in prayer,  
 might be endowed with fitting dignity,  
 under the wings of your Holy Spirit.  
 Your Spirit, O exalted God, came upon David,  
 only after the day he was consecrated and anointed.<sup>38</sup>  
 Saul became a different man and joined the  
 band of prophets, when the anointing oil  
 descended upon his head.<sup>39</sup>  
 The Assyrian Empire was conquered and taken captive  
 by the anointed and joined to the house of Israel.<sup>40</sup>  
 Certain illustrious rulers, great and prominent  
 among the uncouth and barbarous nations,  
 upon whom was sprinkled the dew of this  
 life-giving oil, were caught as if in a trap,  
 joining your family in service to you, great God.<sup>41</sup>  
 The heavenly word, spoken through the prophets,  
 calling Cyrus, chosen of God,  
 also honored him by referring to him as  
 “the Anointed One.”<sup>42</sup>  
 The Psalmist esteemed the title, “anointed”  
 greater than that of “prophet,” first stating the  
 prohibition, “Do not approach the anointed.”  
 and then adding, “and do not harm the prophets.”<sup>43</sup>  
 The divine mission entrusted to Elijah on Mount Horeb,  
 which marked the end of the pagan cult of Baal,  
 was the anointing Jehu and Hazael.<sup>44</sup>  
 Your name, O bridegroom, the Christ,  
 “the oil poured out,”<sup>45</sup>  
 is witnessed long ago by the inspired  
 words of the sage.  
 In this way, the Spirit, the eternal image and sign of God,  
 might imprint your great image on this small drop of oil  
 that we may be united with you, receiving your grace.

## G

Why do I belabor this point  
 with images and farfetched analogies  
 in long, complicated, poetic prayers to you,  
 O exalted and awesome Lord  
 O Lord and giver of life,  
 O creator of heaven and earth?  
 You began to preach the good news of your kingdom,<sup>46</sup>  
 only after you were anointed and proclaimed by  
 John the Baptist as the Anointed One and “Lamb of God,  
 who takes away the sins of the world.”<sup>47</sup>  
 Although the Holy Spirit was always in you with its  
 complete essence, and your perfect union of divinity  
 with humanity was an anointing in itself,  
 the word, anointed, when applied to the saints  
 describes the miraculous grace acting upon them,  
 and through this word you prepare the servile  
 flesh of Adam to be eternally ennobled.  
 Opening the book of the prophet Isaiah,  
 you read about yourself, O incarnate divinity,  
 and in fulfillment of the words of your servants, O Lord,  
 revealed yourself as the anointed,  
 through the prophetic words:  
 “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
 because he has anointed me.”<sup>48</sup>  
 Then you closed the book,  
 thereby showing the great difference in degree  
 between these two anointings, ours and yours,  
 and defined the great distance between them:  
 ours is a bit of luster from a drop of grace,  
 and yours is the revelation of your divine essence  
 shared equally with your Father and your Holy Spirit.  
 When you first made your incarnation known  
 at your birth, the angels in high praise proclaimed you  
 the Anointed One by which name you became known to all the

creatures of earth.<sup>49</sup>

The Prophet foretold the descent  
of your Father's voice from the heavens  
at the River Jordan and on the chosen Mount Tabor,<sup>50</sup>  
saying "He proclaims among the people his  
Anointed One."<sup>51</sup>

And the Psalmist also foretold your glory, Almighty,  
and of the honor bestowed by consecrating the human  
nature you have assumed, "God, your God has anointed  
you with the oil of gladness."<sup>52</sup>

**H**

"The breath of our face," Lord Christ,<sup>53</sup>  
your name is truly, "the Anointed One,"  
for in your goodness, you gave our souls  
the breath of life<sup>54</sup> and light of your countenance.<sup>55</sup>

The wise words of one favored by God<sup>56</sup>  
proclaimed your love for mankind,  
while telling of a certain prophet:<sup>57</sup>

"He shall testify before the Lord and his anointed,"<sup>58</sup>  
and confirmed the good news, saying:<sup>59</sup>

"I have not taken so much as a pair of sandals  
from any man."<sup>60</sup>

In praise of Christ's bride, the holy church,  
the Song of Songs, from beginning to end,  
explains the divine mystery,  
comparing incarnation to spiced wine<sup>61</sup>  
and virtue to myrrh mixed with choice oil<sup>62</sup>  
and perfect morals to a sweet perfume of  
myrrh and incense mixed with delicious powders.<sup>63</sup>

When Daniel described in words that seemed  
beyond human expression your life-giving death,  
Christ King of heaven, he predicted "the anointed one  
will be killed in sixty-nine weeks,"  
calling you the anointed leader.<sup>64</sup>

The lamp stand of Zechariah, son of Berechiah

and grandson of Iddo,<sup>65</sup>

through its ingenious system of oil supply  
to the seven lamps, keeping them constantly lit,  
symbolizes the anointing and salvation  
poured from your bounty upon us.

And according to the Old Law of prophecy,  
cereal offerings of round loafs of unleaven bread  
of fine flour mixed with the oil<sup>66</sup>

and peace offering of the anointed calf,<sup>67</sup>  
the portion called the Lord's, and

purification sacrifice performed with two birds,  
the living one dipped in the blood of the other,<sup>68</sup>  
as if with anointing oil,

all were performed at your altar in the temple.

All these are manifestations of the mystery,

all are signs relating to you,

only begotten Son, blessed of great God.

You alone are anointed in a new and marvelous way,  
in and through yourself, with your whole essence,  
perfectly and lacking absolutely nothing.

**I**

But does it make sense to multiply examples of  
this great, inexplicable mystery?

To understand, we must taste you, sweet Lord,<sup>69</sup>

and learn through you

the true meaning of the oil

for what is it, if not

the gladness praised by the Psalmist<sup>70</sup>

that you grant by curing the grief

of the tree of our transgression?

What is it, if not the rich, fullness of heart,

by which you make us forget the food of death?

What, if not the anointing, that transforms our ashen  
wretchedness into the brightness of perpetual good

cheer,<sup>71</sup> that through the salvation of your name,  
O Spirit of Might, we might become the  
children of God? <sup>72</sup>  
What, if not the cure that is the fervent desire of the  
prophet's heart, that is, to be anointed in his old age  
with rich oil<sup>73</sup> that he might be anointed upon  
his head with oil<sup>74</sup>  
by which with the help of your protecting hand,  
we are saved from the tragedy of the fall,<sup>75</sup>  
which brings death.  
What, if not the thanks  
expressed for the lamp<sup>76</sup>  
that shed light on the fog of sin and the darkness  
of idolatry, your union in my nature to  
become in me, Emmanuel?<sup>77</sup>  
What, if not the consolation prophesied by the prophet  
of gladdening blessings as a sign saying:  
"They will be anointed with oil free of impurities."<sup>78</sup>  
Or when the wiseman in the name of bride, says to the  
maids of honor, "Sustain me with oil,  
shower me in apples," <sup>79</sup>  
and "Keep me in the embrace of the  
sweet balsam orchard," <sup>80</sup>  
referring to that fine substance, filled with your Spirit,  
whose light enables us to see  
your finer, higher, ungraspable element, praised Lord.  
And now, our only provider and  
cause of all good things,  
listen with compassion, Lord,  
to the supplications I call to you,  
with my arms lifted up in prayer,  
bolstered from within,  
with the sighs of my heart,  
with the cries of my tongue and lips.  
Expressing thanks through these offerings,

I offer up my gratitude to you,  
almighty, awesome, exalted, incomprehensible,  
forever embraced in unending love,  
constantly praised with the chant,  
Holy, Holy, only and always Holy,<sup>81</sup>  
blessed forever.  
Out of your great goodness,  
grant me yet more help,  
for I am completely lost.  
Give me hope of sweetness,  
though I am not worthy of the least drop of your light,  
so that I might understand through you, good Lord,  
the subtle secret of this mystery.  
and mix thanks with my prayer,  
saying with David,  
"We have received your mercy, Lord," <sup>82</sup>  
and "your hidden and invisible secrets,  
you have revealed through your wisdom."<sup>83</sup>

## J

And now, majesty to you, God almighty,  
whose generosity never ceases,  
whose compassion streams in all directions,  
who is always ready in healing,  
because you merged and mixed  
your splendid miracles, awe-inspiring beyond telling,  
into such a common and familiar material.  
For that force which the heavens in their height,  
and the earth in its breadth,  
and the abyss in its depth,  
and the seas in their multitude  
could not hold, you fit in this small drop of oil,  
a mere speck, compared with your immensity,  
truly and not just in appearance,  
so that when it performs a new miracle,

unrelated to its nature,  
it does not appear to be some kind of  
illusion to onlookers.  
Instead it heals the doubting souls  
rather than wounding them.  
Just as out of the flour of wheat,  
blessed Son of God, you made your body,  
in reality and not in semblance,  
and out of the wine of the grape  
the blood of your side,  
and out of the bountiful water,  
the womb of spiritual birth,  
so you also bestowed on us, as you did upon  
your disciples, the immortal breath of your Holy Spirit<sup>84</sup>  
through and in this oil.  
For the people who walked in darkness<sup>85</sup>  
you brought the dawn through your incarnation,  
and through your labors you gave birth to new life.  
You placed a seal upon them  
that cannot be effaced even by idolatry,  
just as no one can follow your example  
to further consecrate the wood of the cross, Lord.  
For by this mark of grace  
you brought light to the world,  
manifesting yourself in your perfect fullness,  
beyond understanding,  
in such a way, that the poor shall not want  
and the rich shall not take on airs,  
for like the air is distributed  
and the sunlight is spread  
and the stream waters flow  
equally to all, just as the manna was equally  
distributed to all people on earth alike,<sup>86</sup>  
with more for the poor than the rich and powerful.

## K

The deep mystery of this substance is  
marvelously explained by its very nature,  
for it does not shift around constantly  
as if it cannot make up its mind,<sup>87</sup>  
nor does it steal away from its place of rest,<sup>88</sup>  
nor can it be removed by the strongest soap,  
nor is it washed away by any other kind of liquid.  
And just as color is a necessary and permanent attribute  
of physical existence,  
because when there is color, the body exists,  
and when there is no color, the body seems not to exist,  
in the same way, by virtue of its natural powers,  
this oil takes hold and does not let go,  
and through it you were united and joined with us,  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
joining the inner substance with its outward form.  
You rendered visible  
that which was invisible for the eyes  
and incomprehensible for the desires of our hearts,  
by providing us this oil,  
made by pressing and squeezing fruits of the earth.  
Moreover, you did not command that this anointing oil  
be prepared by mixing together all manner of flowers  
into a strange concoction,  
in accordance with the old and benighted law.<sup>89</sup>  
Instead, turning your name into reality,  
you mixed yourself into this pure oil,  
making it radiant with heavenly light.  
And although the savors of your sweetness are  
beyond expression and cannot be compared to anything,  
although you have variously been referred to as  
the flowers of the field or the lilies-of-the-valley,<sup>90</sup>  
exquisite nard or sandalwood mixed with aloe,<sup>91</sup>  
the scent of saffron, the blossoms of the vine or

a fine wine, you, Lord beyond understanding,  
deemed it fitting  
that your name be glorified simply as “oil poured out,”<sup>92</sup>  
for you are the consummation of all things  
and lacking in nothing.

Thus, not by the mixing of opposing elements,  
which at once symbolize a divided will,  
but rather in confirmation of our love,  
you revel in divine joy,  
for our sake, you manifest yourself in all your splendor,  
according to our needs,  
as the light of goodness  
or as a warming fire,  
or as the fervor of love,  
devoid of any hard-hearted coldness,  
in ways to make understandable to our minds  
that this drop of oil can really unite us with God.  
With Solomon the anointed and adopted of God,  
I sing with the mouth of a bride, to you heavenly  
bridegroom, a song of praise and thanksgiving,  
yearning with the fervent desire of my heart  
for your sweet scent, more than for any incense.  
In the inspired words of the wiseman<sup>93</sup> and the  
theological evangelist,<sup>94</sup> let us hasten in your footsteps  
and the trace of your scent.<sup>95</sup>

Like one who has the words of eternal life,<sup>96</sup>  
having washed my face with the water of life,<sup>97</sup>  
which is more exalted than the waters above the  
heavenly firmament,<sup>98</sup> and having anointed my head  
with the heavenly oil of incorruptibility,<sup>99</sup>  
I come before you with joy, cheerfully and  
without sadness.

**L**

This venerated and blessed oil,

would not be an ointment for the chamber of my brain,  
or do the hair on my head any good,  
were it not sealed with the sign of your  
life-giving cross, Lord.

This miraculous oil brings the blessing of the Light to  
the Jew and the Gentile,  
the Indian and the barbarian,  
the Scythian and the Greek,  
the cruel savage and the fearsome dog-headed giants,  
the freeborn master and the slave by birth,<sup>100</sup>  
making them Christians,  
baptizing them in your name,  
dedicating them to your Holy Spirit, and  
adopting them as the true sons of your Heavenly Father.

See how varied its powers,  
first in the physical and then in inner strength.  
For as a wooden vessel easily cracks unless it is  
rubbed with oil  
and becomes useless and worthless,  
so a person, if not anointed, is easily led astray,  
and separated from you, and  
remains unenlightened.<sup>101</sup>

This oil is your finger, O Jesus,<sup>102</sup>  
with which you perform miracles,  
which like unscratchable, impenetrable armor,  
covers us with an ever protective cloak,  
from dark and foreign marauders.  
For one pure as wool, dipped in this oil,<sup>103</sup>  
can neither be stained with blood,  
nor fade into somber colors.  
Spiritually, this oil enters  
and penetrates the very substance of our being.  
And if the curse of the Psalmist  
could soak the bones of the evildoer like oil,<sup>104</sup>  
how much more will your Spirit



through this oil of light,  
heal and make whole  
our invisible inner beings,  
from our windpipes  
to our toes,  
completely submerging  
any disturbing thought of death.  
For your awesome, life-giving power, Lord Christ,  
is mixed in this oil and truly dwells in it.

## M

Oil, this magnificent substance applied by wrestlers  
to their naked bodies, as an enhancement  
during tournaments, making it difficult for their  
opponents to take hold of them,  
sets demons and diseases to flight.  
For, in the words Ezekiel addressed to the  
spiritual Pharaoh,<sup>105</sup> in the form of a satirical allegory:  
“On the day you were created,  
I placed you with an anointed guardian cherub  
amidst the fiery stones of the holy mountain of God.”  
O blessed and awesome universal help,  
who is always beyond words and beyond understanding,  
who is constantly venerated through the gospel of life  
as the new-born, anointed one from the city of David,<sup>106</sup>  
and constantly sought as in the question of the  
chief priest,  
“Are you the Christ, son of the blessed?”<sup>107</sup>  
and in the blessed proclamation by Peter,  
“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,”<sup>108</sup>  
and by your suspicious interrogators,  
“If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”<sup>109</sup>  
And because of your teachings,  
we believe you to be the Christ,  
teacher and Lord of all.

And even before this,  
Herod directly asked for you by name, O Christ,<sup>110</sup>  
and you yourself answered, “How is it written  
that the anointed of God, the Son without beginning,  
the one David calls Lord, could be his son in time?”<sup>111</sup>  
And we understand from this as a fitting interpretation,  
that the consummation of this mystic calling is  
realized in us, who have the honor of being called Christians.<sup>112</sup>

## N

The awesome word “anointing,”  
evokes at once trepidation, veneration and  
rich adoration, that no earth-dweller dares be called God,  
but only godly.  
Likewise, no human being has been called the Christ,  
but only Christian.  
Not even the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist,<sup>113</sup>  
who by baptizing with water  
prepared the way for the baptism with the spirit,  
could claim this name,<sup>114</sup>  
for he said, “I am not the Christ, but was sent  
before him.”<sup>115</sup>  
In the words of the evangelist Mark,  
the disciples set out in pairs,<sup>116</sup>  
and as if acting with the genuine hand of God  
they would anoint with oil  
and without invoking any other human devices,  
they would heal people.  
For as darkness yields to the light,  
and ailments to health  
and night to day  
and death to life,  
so by virtue of this substance, given by the Lord,  
all evil works are rejected, checked, and  
completely suppressed.

And just as for flies, spiders and insects that  
crawl into the ears,  
the oil is a deadly poison that kills them,  
so this oil strengthened with the abundant  
blessings of grace,  
wards off demons, dissolves the mortgage of evil and  
tears up the death sentence.  
The baptismal font is not complete  
unless accompanied by anointing.  
To the first man left mortally wounded by brigands,  
this salve of salvation was applied,<sup>117</sup>  
and it also served honorably  
as ointment for the incurable wounds of  
Jacob and Israel.<sup>118</sup>  
David wanted this oil  
as a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord,  
dwelling there always in trust,<sup>119</sup>  
predicting abandonment of circumcision  
and adoption of the grace of baptism.  
But how can I discourse  
convinced that I understand this completely,  
especially regarding holiness,  
when even the angels cannot explain it in words?  
How indeed could I hope to describe its true essence?

O  
Glory to you always and in all things,  
immortal king, in the praise I now sing,  
which you created and perfected through me,  
good, caring, merciful and patient,  
wealthy and abundant, Lord, triumphant over all.  
The idea of anointing sketched by our forefathers,  
you made a reality in the fullness of time.  
You are light in your very nature<sup>120</sup>  
and the ever-shining sun,

and you called your disciples the light of the world,<sup>121</sup>  
for through them you filled the creatures of all the earth  
with rays of blissful grace.  
You accepted the anointing of your feet with the  
oil of sweetness<sup>122</sup>  
as a symbol that our prayers are acceptable to you.  
And by the anointing of your head by a  
woman of ill-repute,<sup>123</sup>  
you showed your compassionate love for us.  
And with such great pleasure, O infinite Lord,  
did you inhale the aroma of the oil,  
that you ordered as an inviolable commandment  
that wherever the gospel is preached  
throughout the world  
that seemingly insignificant act of anointing  
should be remembered,<sup>124</sup>  
to the amazement of your listeners  
and raising the hopes of future generations.  
“You have been anointed by the Holy One,”  
said that most blessed of your disciples,  
explaining the mystery poured out upon us  
from your overflowing bounty, O source of life.  
This drop of blessing from you who are praised on high,  
which endlessly inoculates us,  
bears a close, fitting and lasting resemblance  
to you who are light and to your Holy Spirit.  
It is called light,  
because it is like the first element of creation,<sup>125</sup>  
and the very symbol of you, our Creator,  
by which you drive away the gloomy  
darkness of evil.  
It is called fire,  
because in every element of creation  
there is distributed in some measure, your essence,  
hidden and manifest, silent and known,

that unless provoked by the devilish adversary,  
it will not flare up by itself.  
It is also called anointing,  
because through it we are adopted  
into your majesty  
and are offered to your Father as his inheritance<sup>126</sup>  
and marked indelibly with your mercy by this oil, like you, so we  
might shine brightly in the next life.  
It is also called spirit,  
because we are cleansed of the calamities of deceit,  
cunningly instigated by that troublemaker Satan,  
so we might worship our heavenly Father  
renewed in soul and with truth,<sup>127</sup>  
nailed to you with faith and hope,  
all-giving God.

## P

In truth, eternally and in reality,  
this oil filled with light is  
a venerable proof of your love, God on high.  
This is why Paul himself deemed it fitting  
to say directly in his teaching on grace and thanksgiving,  
“He who establishes us with you in Christ and has  
anointed us is God, who has also sealed us and given  
us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee,”<sup>128</sup>  
and also, “Do not,” he said, “grieve the  
Holy Spirit of God,  
by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”<sup>129</sup>  
“Anointed” is a title honorable and invincible  
in the Old Testament, yet more so in the New.  
In the words of the Psalm of David,  
that predict faithfully the mystery of your providential  
suffering, Lord, “The rulers of the people band together against the  
Lord and his anointed.”<sup>130</sup>  
A great prophecy that imprinted upon the

Jewish throngs the unredeemable sin of  
spilling your blood, caused by audacity toward you,  
Lord, “Who can put forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed, and  
be guiltless?”<sup>131</sup>  
For although Saul was killed by one of his own,<sup>132</sup>  
still they were not rejected in shame  
or subject to the insults of foreign nations,  
until they were implicated in the spilling of  
your blood, Lord.  
And these pleas in the Psalms are a great pledge,  
reminding us of the inheritance of future generations:  
“For the sake of your beloved servant David,  
you do not turn away the face of your anointed one,”<sup>133</sup>  
and again, “Look upon the face of your anointed”<sup>134</sup>  
and “show steadfast love for your anointed.”<sup>135</sup>

## Q

This light-filled fluid, O Christ,  
is the venerated gift of your hand,  
for out of all riches in your kingdom,  
the Prophet deemed nothing higher, Lord,  
than that you would say,  
“I have found David, my servant,  
and with my holy oil I have anointed him.”<sup>136</sup>  
Thus, by this instructive example,  
embracing your anointing with the light, our  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
you are known to us, unchanging and eternal.<sup>137</sup>  
You are all and in all, the only king of kings,  
and the true anointed one among the anointed,  
glorified and worshiped yesterday and today.<sup>138</sup>  
For as the wick, soaked in oil, does not give light  
until lit with a flame,  
so we, who are anointed with the light,  
do not glow until we are lit like torches in heaven.

This is a clear explanation of its nature,  
transmitted from the ancients till today,  
painted in marvelously brilliant colors  
through these felicitous analogies.

## R

Now, the cause of these sublime, life-giving,  
divine effects,  
characteristic of you, Creator,  
without which one cannot be considered a Christian,  
or named a Nazarite,<sup>139</sup>  
or be remembered as a son of Judah,  
or raise a battle cry in the name of the Lord of Jacob,<sup>140</sup>  
is this substance, the oil of blessings,  
in which your Holy Trinity is mixed and joined:  
the ray of grace, the splendor of our forehead,  
the image of our face, the comeliness of our traits,  
the light of our eyes, the sign of the cross on our pupils,  
the tenderness of our cheeks, the decoration of  
our countenance,  
the guardian of our lips, the attendant of our faith,  
the guide of our behavior, the tie that binds,  
the strength of souls, the fortitude of resistance,  
the barrier to spells, the destroyer of talismans,  
the repeller of wizards, the confounder of sorcerers,  
the expositor of heretics, the vanquisher of demons,  
the dispeller of pain, the fulfiller of the baptized,  
the fervent desire of converts, the incomprehensible  
mystery of outsiders,  
the bewilderment of pagans,<sup>141</sup>  
the envy of non-believers,<sup>142</sup>  
the unmasker of secrets, the honor of the humble,  
the glory of slaves, the adornment of women,  
the growth of children, the joy of the aged,  
the consecrator of the ordained, the counsel of the pure,

the crown of kings, the grandeur of monarchs,  
the excellence of emperors.  
For as a sealed container indicates the value of  
the contents,  
so the sublimity of your grace sealed in us  
by being anointed in your name, God and  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
is beautifully symbolized by anointing.  
And the name of this substance, muron,  
according to the inspired wisemen,  
originated with the Egyptians and  
expresses its very essence  
as an image of an awe-inspiring mystery.

## S

For this blessed muron,  
which the prophet foreshadowed,  
referring in his prayer to the light of his eyes,<sup>143</sup>  
according to its etymology is derived from homeron,<sup>144</sup>  
which means mother for me,  
that is to say, that which strongly attracts our  
nature to itself,  
and solidifies through a wonderful transformation,  
the fluid water of the font of light,  
and like the ingredient that curdles milk into yogurt,  
so it stabilizes my untame ravings and  
the perpetually flowing stream of my consciousness.  
According to another etymology,  
the word muron means 'somber,'  
that is, 'obscure,'  
since it refers to something dark, hidden or unseen.<sup>145</sup>  
And this name is not some baseless metaphor,  
since this word truly refers to something  
that symbolizes a secret deeper than the holy of holies.  
For muron does not wash away dirt like water,

or bolster the heart like bread.  
 Instead in a fittingly new way, with divine providence,  
 it imprints the Lord on our senses,  
 nevertheless remaining exalted beyond our  
 comprehension, thus its name is beyond our understanding.  
 For as God truly dwells in light that  
 cannot be approached,<sup>146</sup>  
 with your boundless glory in its infinity,  
 you covered yourself in impenetrable cloud<sup>147</sup>  
 externally sealed from our faculties.  
 In the same way, the flow of light  
 from the eloquent tongues of some,  
 in appropriate poetic composition is called obscure,  
 because worldly natures cannot understand  
 essential truths.  
 The holy chrism richly and properly  
 commands both these divine names,  
 for the very name chrism resembles the name of our  
 exalted Lord, Christ, doubly glorifying this oil,  
 consecrated with fine and fragrant incense.  
 For “Our God is a consuming fire,”  
 according to Moses,<sup>148</sup> and also,  
 “the light,” according to John,<sup>149</sup>  
 thus Isaiah’s allusion is justified:  
 “The light of Israel shall become a fire.”<sup>150</sup>

**T**  
 Once again I shall express the same idea  
 in different words and comparisons,  
 with renewed praise and blessings,  
 for I cannot forget my bitterness,  
 which you sweetened in your great compassion.  
 For mera, which means ‘bitterness [in Hebrew],’<sup>151</sup>  
 appropriately signifies ‘wearisome torment and pain,’  
 so in Armenian, muron is explained etymologically

as a derivative of merelutyun, that is, ‘mortification.’<sup>152</sup>  
 For by being anointed with this spirit-bearing oil,  
 we are cut off from the vanities of this world,  
 those vile and deadly excesses of the Adversary,  
 whose dankness makes my lyre go out of tune,  
 whose dampness muffles the sound of my drums<sup>153</sup>  
 that used to resound strong and bold when struck  
 but whose soggy wetness drags us down  
 into the deaf numbness of death.  
 Yet again through this anointing we are bound with hope  
 to the miracle of your cross, beyond telling, O Christ,<sup>154</sup>  
 for by baptism into your death, O living God,<sup>155</sup>  
 we partake in your divine immortality through you  
 yourself, God, placing complete trust in you,  
 forever, fully and inseparably.

**U**  
 This oil seals us in your name, Jesus,  
 with a four-pointed mark in the form of your sign,<sup>156</sup>  
 conferring grace in glory and dignity to your blood,  
 O Savior and giver of life,  
 and crowned with the same invincible glory  
 this oil is exalted.  
 It is called the wood-blessing oil,  
 in the words of the Prophets,<sup>157</sup>  
 for when this oil is miraculously applied  
 to common wood of the forest,  
 raw material, wild with evil and strange ideas,  
 becomes the mature equivalent of your cross,  
 to be offered up to you, O Creator.  
 Similarly, the windows of our soul, which are  
 always open, were sealed by you, in the name of your  
 awesome majesty, with the sign of the cross  
 in providential modesty,  
 that we might inhabit a dwelling favored by your



Holy Spirit,<sup>158</sup> and might be impervious to the evil delusions of the trickster and his dark fog.

Restrained by this light, we gather for the hymns of thanksgiving at the evening service with the stars, your heavenly lamps, symbolic of the light of your grace, the muron, that burns in us.

And in this light, the oil reminds us of the salvation of the good, planting this thought in our souls, making it blossom and bear fruit.<sup>159</sup>

To make ready for the banquet on the last night of your Second Coming,<sup>160</sup> we use this light like a torch.<sup>161</sup>

## V

Now, if using the numerical value of the Armenian alphabet, we take the 24th letter with the value of 400 [n], and apply it to the profound mystery of the oil, we come up with an easily digestible explanation to nourish those hungry for understanding.

For when we multiply twenty times four, we get 80 [dz], which is the first letter of the word oil [dzet/dzyut] in Armenian.

And when we substitute the letter 400 [n] for 80 [dz], we change the word for oil [dzyut] in to the word for matter [nyut], which symbolizes the new leaven that miraculously raises up the lump of dough.<sup>162</sup>

And as the Gospel parable teaches, though the smaller [80] does not contain the larger [400], nevertheless it can transform the whole mass and make it grow, so the anointing oil mixed into our nature transforms and makes us grow.

## W

This gentle oil is a constant reminder of elevation and humility.

For when eaten in food it goes down soft, like a balanced and kind word, but when put on liquids, slippery and unstable, it rises above them, showing its glorious excellence and superiority, symbolizing its miraculous mystery. And when applied to a leather container, it is not absorbed like water or wine, but rather stays on the surface within its proper bounds.

Thus understanding the incomparable excellence of your goodness,

O Son of the living God,

by virtue of your blood,

we write on our foreheads

with this oil of sacred gifts,

and we imprint the breath of our nature with your Holy Spirit,

believing with the conviction of our heart

that this oil will forever show forth and shine anew with

brilliant radiance upon the varied and marvelous expanse like a beacon toward the glory of everlasting life.

And may this spiritual oil,

full of bliss and heavenly glow,

make the sign of your cross

shine upon my face, in your image.<sup>163</sup>

## X

And being incomprehensible, a power too great for understanding, even soaring with the swift wings of the mind, before the pursuit of my thought flying without trace into infinity,

completely disappeared, hid from me,  
and it left no likeness,  
resembled no parallel,  
was defined by no formula,  
and could be measured by no companion,  
but rather was spiritually superior to them,  
like the sign of your divine cross,  
the equal to your blood, O Savior.  
And now, Lord, bless us through it and in it.  
And by it may your name become our salvation,  
O awesome, light, heavenly and marvelous,  
venerated with incense by the pure in spirit in praise of  
your ineffable glory,  
holy, holy, beyond understanding, beyond telling,  
exalted, merciful, lauded, true, doer of good and holiness,  
Pardon us.<sup>164</sup>  
Grant us healing.  
Cloth us in grace.  
Endow us with bliss.  
By being anointed with this oil, this heavenly  
shower of light, may I be found sinless.  
Do not let the sorrow of sinful infirmity,  
invade and take over this anointed rational  
fabric of mine, and commingle with the image of my soul.  
For those who present themselves to be anointed  
with this oil, let them be like a bride,  
as for a glorious wedding,  
beautifully arrayed in holy splendor,<sup>165</sup>  
their souls adorned with happiness.  
And for those who approach it for purification,  
may this light, this glorious fire, given by God,  
be a double tempering and second immersion,  
with fervent striving for the good,  
through which they emerge as if newly created.  
And in all ways fully armed with ever-ready

steadfastness, may I dwell upon your unshakeable rock,<sup>166</sup>  
standing firm, my faith grounded in you without any doubt.  
For those who are on fire with this gift,  
by this sign of victory, may they  
not be doused with water,  
not be burned by the fire,  
not be frozen by the cold,  
not be extinguished by the harmful wind,  
not be stained by unclean dreams,  
not betray Jesus' own to the Evil One,<sup>167</sup>  
not throw away the accumulated treasures of life  
at their moment of exit from this world,  
not be outside the protection of your wings,<sup>168</sup>  
not be stripped of our being anointed by unclean living.  
But by your grace, may we be set on fire by it,  
be filled with it,  
be enlightened through it,  
be justified by it,  
be liberated, crowned and reign by it.<sup>169</sup>  
And to you alone, the only Anointed,  
together with your Father and your Holy Spirit,  
may all give  
hymns of blessing, alleluias in all tongues,  
resounding voices, triumphant praise,  
lips lauding your goodness,  
holy words of the Psalms,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.

**Translation of Tom Samuelyan**

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Սամվել Պողոսյան  
Samvel Poghosyan

Գրիգոր Նարեկացու «Հավատարմատը»  
Grigor Narekatsi's Base of Belief

Խմբագիր Գ. Կիրակոսյան  
Սրբագրիչ Կ. Կիրակոսյան

**Editor G. Kirakosyan**  
**Proofreader K. Kirakosyan**

Թուղթը՝ օֆսեթ, տպագրությունը՝ օֆսեթ, չափսը՝ 60x84 1/16,  
ծավալը՝ 16.5 տպ. մամ. տպաքանակը՝ 200













































































































































