

From Ararat to Mount Zion: Armenian Pilgrimage and Presence in the Holy Land, Fourth to Seventh Century

Since the Christianisation of the Arsacid Kingdom of Armenia in ca. 314¹, Jerusalem and the Holy Land became central points of reference in the »mental maps« of Armenian Christians². The remarkable mobility of Armenians, not only of pilgrims, but also of noblemen, mercenaries, merchants or scholars, across the Mediterranean and the Near East soon also included the sites of veneration in and around Jerusalem. Even the turbulent history of the Armenian homelands, which saw the rise and fall of indigenous kingdoms, partitions between the neighbouring great powers and foreign domination, did not impede frequent travel between »Ararat and Mount Zion«³. These contacts became manifest in the foundation of monasteries and the emergence of a permanent Armenian community in Jerusalem, which formed the basis for the establishment of an Armenian Patriarchate in 1311; this institution in turn is a telling example for the processes of interactions and negotiation between the Armenians and other religious communities in the city. For the period between the fifth century and the crusades, Yana Tchekhanovets most recently provided a magisterial survey on the written and material evidence of the presence of individuals and groups coming from Armenia as well as from the neighbouring countries of Caucasian Albania and of Georgia in the Holy Land⁴.

Mobility of Individuals and Groups between Armenia and the Holy Land, fourth to seventh Century

We will focus in this paper on relations between Armenia and the Holy Land in the period before the Arab conquest, when both regions were (at least partially) integrated into the Roman Empire. An early example for the mobilising effects of this imperial framework is the installation of Aristobulos (fig. 1), descendant of the Herodian royal family of Judaea

and husband to the »infamous« Salome, as King of Armenia minor by Emperor Nero in 54⁵. From even before that time dates the establishment of the first Jewish communities in Greater Armenia during the reign of King Tigran the Great (95-55 BCE), whose short-living empire also claimed suzerainty over the Hasmonean Kingdom of Judaea. These Jewish communities then also played an important role as points of contact for early Christian mission to the Caucasian lands⁶.

Also from the beginning of the establishment of an Armenian ecclesiastical hierarchy in the fourth century, its representatives were closely connected with neighbouring churches and church provinces. Until the end of the fourth century, the Senior Bishop (later »Katholikos«) of Armenia was ordained by the metropolitan of Caesarea in Cappadocia; Armenian hierarchs took part in the Ecclesiastical Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries in Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon. The Armenian clergy communicated also with ecclesiastics in Syria and Mesopotamia, in Georgia and Caucasian Albania and in Persia. These exchanges on doctrine and praxis of faith intensified in the period of Christological disputes between the fifth and the seventh century, when the Armenian church ultimately repudiated both the teaching of Nestorius (whose followers became most prominent in Persia) and of the Council of Chalcedon (the dogma of the Byzantine and later also of the Georgian Church) and sided with the miaphysite Churches of Egypt and Syria, with the latter of the two contacts strengthened. Many of these communications have been collected in the so-called »Book of letters« (Girk' T'it'oc')⁷. From these letters and other sources we also learn that despite the rift between the churches in the sixth and seventh century and the Arab conquest of Armenia, contacts with the Byzantine church did not break down in the eighth and ninth centuries. In general, the picture of a united anti-Chalcedonian Christianity produced in the Armenian historiography does not withstand closer inspection; the number

1 The first section on »Mobility of individuals and groups between Armenia and the Holy Land« and part of the introduction of this paper have been written by Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, the rest by Emilio Bonfiglio. This study was undertaken within the framework of the project »Moving Byzantium: Mobility, Microstructures and Personal Agency« (Principal Investigator: Claudia Rapp), funded by the Austrian Science Funds FWF at the University of Vienna and the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Emilio Bonfiglio completed the revision of his sections while holding the »Gulbenkian Fellowship in Armenian History« at the Department of History of Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. – On this date see Seibt, Hintergrund.

2 On this concept, cf. Downs/Stein, Maps in Minds; Gould/White, Mental Maps.
3 Garsoïan, Aršakuni Dynasty; Garsoïan, Marzpanate; Preiser-Kapeller, Vom Bosphorus zum Ararat.
4 Tchekhanovets, Caucasian Archaeology. See also the edited volume of Stone/Ervine/Stone, Armenians in Jerusalem.
5 Wilcken, Aristobulos.
6 Topchyan, Jews.
7 Cf. for an overview on these issues and all sources Garsoïan, Grand schism.



Fig. 1 Coin of Aristobulus, descendant of the Herodian royal family of Judaea, as King of Armenia minor from the year 61/62. – (From Künker, Auction 273, 2016, no. 669 [www.kuenker.de/de/archiv/stueck/124275]).

of Armenian clergymen and laymen, who (and not only under Byzantine pressure) also in the seventh and eighth century and later on had sympathies for the Chalcedonian creed was not insignificant. The Holy Land may have been one of the regions where this phenomenon was visible⁸.

In general, clerics and monks found their way to Palestine before and after the Arab conquest, where we encounter a vivid Armenian community in and around Jerusalem. We also possess several Armenian mosaic inscriptions from the fifth to seventh century, which are among the oldest epigraphic testimonies in Armenian language at all⁹. A text attributed to a Vardapet Anastas and dated between in the sixth to seventh century lists – for sure exaggerating – 70 churches and monasteries, which had been build or bought by Armenians in Jerusalem between the fourth and seventh century¹⁰. At least several churches are mentioned in the exchange of letters between Modestos, the head of the Armenian community in at this time Persian-ruled Jerusalem, and Katholikos Komitas in Armenia from the year 617, included in the history attributed to Sebēos¹¹. In his answer to Modestos, the Katholikos also explains the motivation and spiritual value of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and beyond: »But know this, O beloved brother, no little consolation was conveyed to our people by the coming and going of those journeys. First, because they forgot all the troubles and sadness of this country. Secondly, because they cleansed their sins through repentance, fasts and mercy, through sleepless and unresting travelling by day and night. Thirdly, because they baptized their bodies in the water of holiness, in the fiery currents of the Jordan, whence

the divine grace flowed to the entire universe. For in the desire of their heart [the pilgrims] travelled around Mount Sinai, which in the times of Moses was close to God, [repeating] friend to friend the prophetic saying: »Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob«¹². The presence of Armenian pilgrims and monks at the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai is equally documented by Armenian inscriptions and manuscripts¹³ as well as in hagiographic sources: in the *Narrationes de patribus Sinaitis* we find for the seventh century an Armenian *monachos* named Elissaios who saw a vision of fire above the altar almost every night¹⁴. In addition, later, the *Narrationes* mention a group of not less than 800 Armenians, who, together with a large number of Arabs, became witnesses of a fire vision on Mt. Sinai¹⁵.

Yet, mobility from Armenian lands towards the Holy Land was not only motivated by religious zeal, but, as mentioned above, also initiated within the framework of imperial politics when both regions were, in the case of Armenia at least partly, under Roman rule¹⁶. A telling example is the career of Aratios, an Armenian nobleman from the Persian part of the country, who in ca. 530 together with his brothers Narses and Isaak defected to the Roman side across the frontier near Theodosiupolis (modern-day Erzurum in Eastern Turkey) during wartime¹⁷. The three brothers may have come from the well-known aristocratic family of Kamsarakan; but Roman authorities considered it wise to separate the three of them and to send them to various commands and administrative posts all over the empire during the next two decades, as we

8 See most recently Garsoian, *Interregnum* 55-104 (with references), and Garsoian, *Problem* 104-109. Cf. also Redgate, *Myth and Reality*.
 9 Greenwood, *Inscriptions* 89-91, and esp. now Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology*.
 10 Sanjian, *Anastas Vardapet*; Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims* 16-17. 166-168; Terian, *Anastas Vardapet*; Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology* 20-21. Cf. also McCormick, *Charlemagne's Survey* 57-59.
 11 Sebēos c. 35-36: 116-121 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson/Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos I* 70-76). Cf. also Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology* 13-14.
 12 Sebēos c. 36: 119 (Abgaryan; tr. Thomson/Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos I* 74)

13 Stone, *Armenian Inscriptions*; Stone, *Greek Background* 194-202; Vaux, *Linguistic manifestations*. See also Redgate, *Myth and Reality* 285.
 14 PmbZ 1508; *Narrationes de patribus Sinaitis* cap. XXXVII, 81.
 15 Anonymi (PmbZ 10204); *Narrationes de patribus Sinaitis* cap. XXXVIII, 81-82.
 16 Adontz, *Armenia*; Ayvazyan, *Armenian Military*; Preiser-Kapeller, *Vom Bosphorus zum Ararat*.
 17 Prokop, *Bella I*, 15, 31 (Dewing I 139). Cf. Preiser-Kapeller, *Aristocrats, mercenaries, clergymen and refugees*. The presence of Aratios in the Holy Land is surprisingly absent from the above-mentioned recent survey of Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology*.



Fig. 2 Insignia of the *Dux Palaestinae*, an office held by the Armenian Aratios in ca. 535/536, from the *Notitia Dignitatum* (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Canon. Misc. 378, fol. 117r). – (From https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Notitia_Dignitatum_-_Dux_Palaestinae.jpg [public domain]).

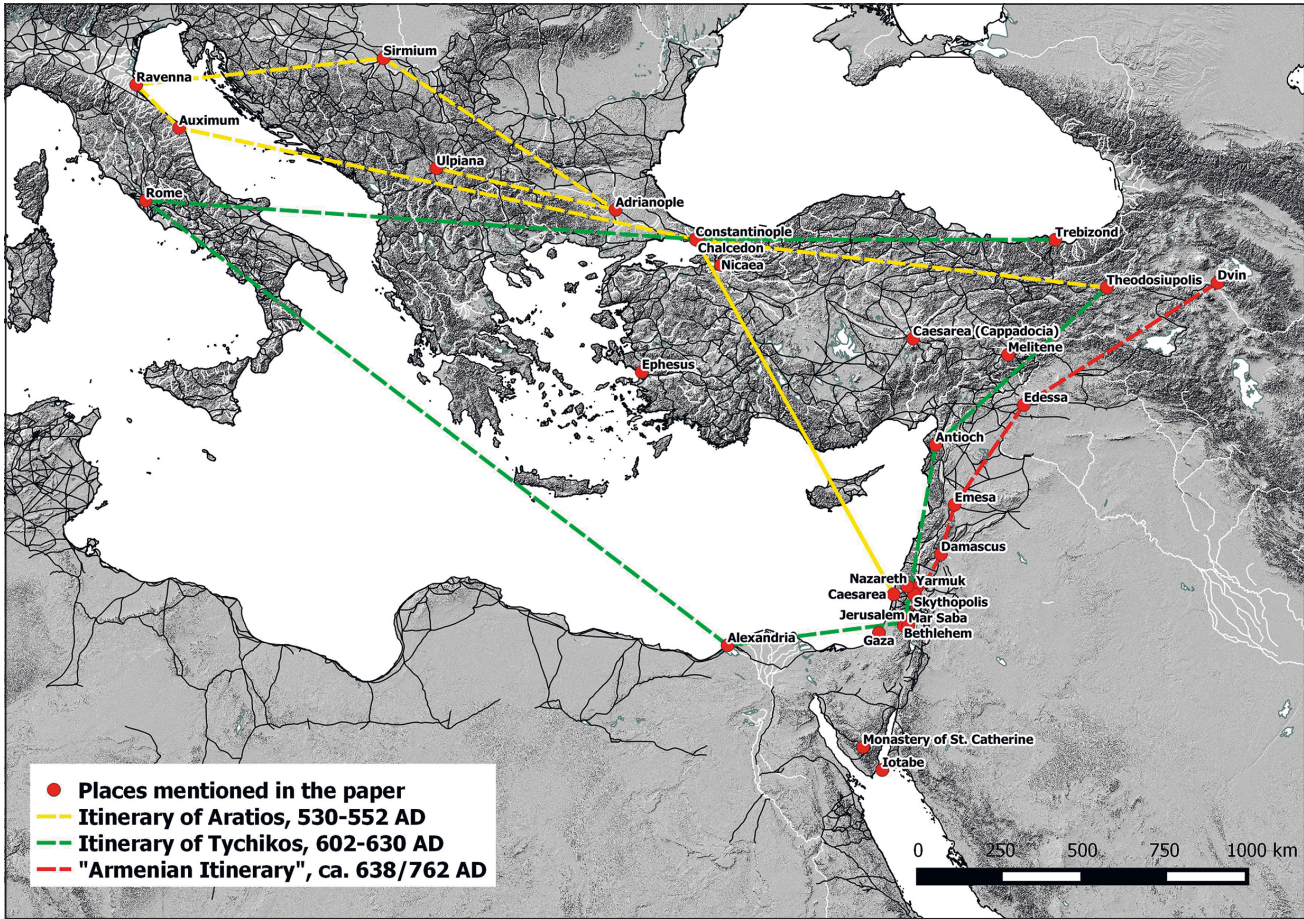


Fig. 3 Map of localities and itineraries in the Eastern Mediterranean mentioned in the paper. – (J. Preiser Kapeller, 2018).

learn from occasional references in the history of Procopius and other sources¹⁸. For Aratios this also included a period of service as *Dux Palaestinae* in ca. 535/536 (fig. 2), when he was addressed in a panegyric text by the famous orator Chorikios of Gaza together with a certain Stephanus, the civil governor of the province. The deeds of Aratios praised by Chorikios include his nonviolent oppression of an uprising of »heretics« near Caesarea and some daring military operations against Arab tribes, during which he re-conquered the island of Iotabe (modern-day Tiran) in the Red Sea. We may assume that Aratios brought with him also some Armenian retainers as we know for other Armenian aristocrats in Roman services. His tenure of office in Palestine ended before 538, when he was transferred to Italy to fight the Ostrogoths together with Belisarios. Finally, Aratios died in 552 in a battle against the enemies of the empire in the Balkans as last of the three brothers, who all had found a violent death in the military service of Rome (fig. 3 and fig. 4)¹⁹.

Another example of partly empire-directed mobility between Armenia and Jerusalem is Tychikos, the teacher of mathematics the famous seventh century scholar Anania of Širak mentions in his so-called »autobiography«. As Ananias learnt from Tychikos, he had served in the Roman army in Armenia under the Emperors Tiberios (578-582) and Maurikios (582-602) at the end of the sixth century, where he had also learned the Armenian language. After a battlefield injury, Tychikos left the army and started studies of philosophy and science, which led him to Antioch and to Jerusalem, from where (presumably due to the advance of the Sasanian armies in 614) he moved on to Alexandria, Rome and Constantinople. Eventually, he settled down in Trebizond at the Black Sea, where Anania became his student (fig. 3 and fig. 4)²⁰.

Equally, the last Byzantine military commander in the Holy Land, the *magister militum* Baanes or Vahan, was of Armenian origin; he replaced Theodoros, the brother of Emperor Herakleios, after a first defeat against the Arabs in ca. 634.

18 PLRE III 103-104s. v. Aratius; PLRE III s. v. Isaaces 1; PLRE III 928-929 s. v. Narses 2, with sources and further references.

19 Litsas, Choricus of Gaza; Penella, Choricus. Preiser-Kapeller, Aristocrats, mercenaries, clergymen and refugees.

20 Greenwood, Anania Širakac'i 131-186. See also Hewsen, Ananias 32-45.

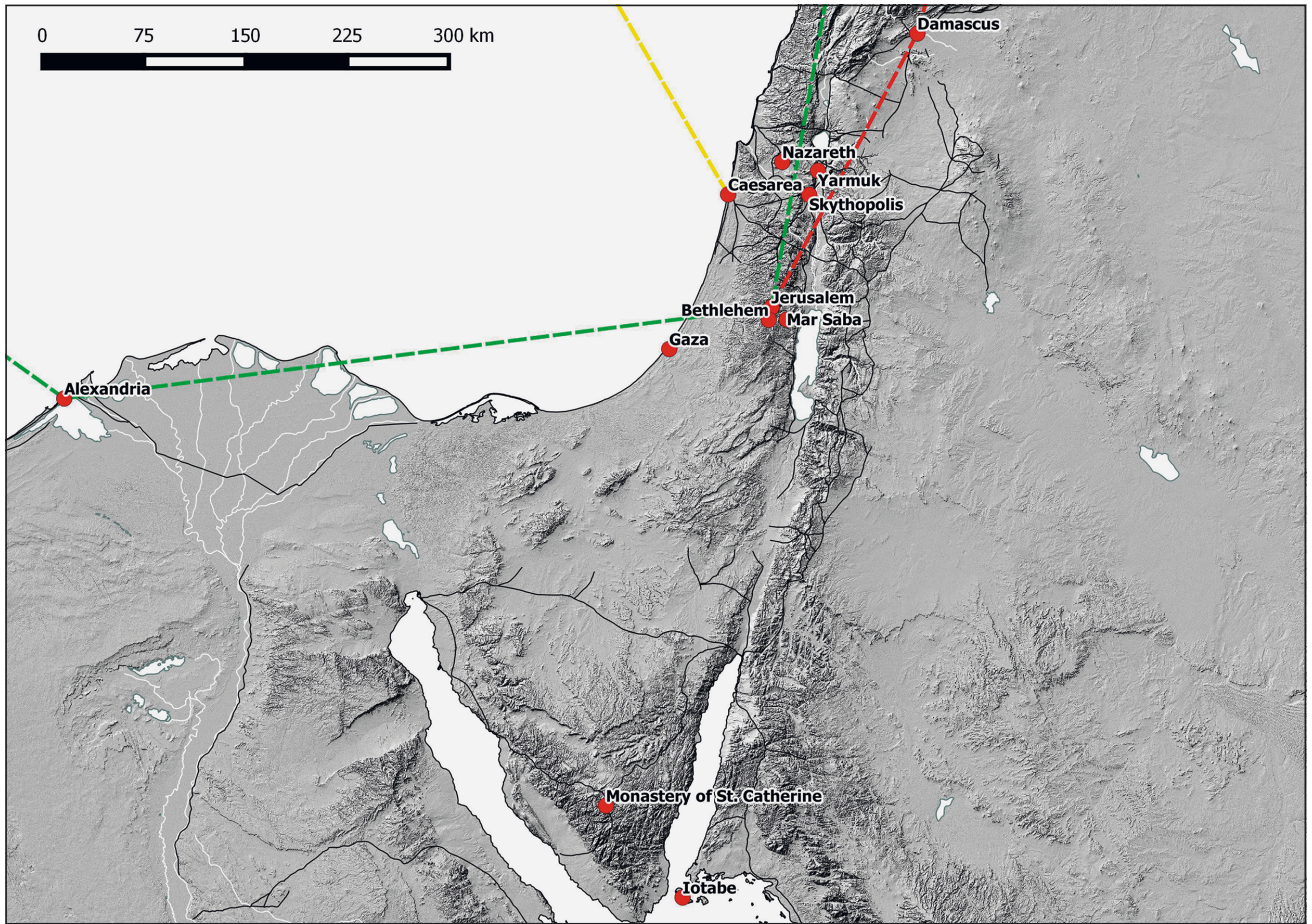


Fig. 4 Map of localities and itineraries in the Holy Land and in Egypt mentioned in the paper. – (J. Preiser-Kapeller, 2018).

After some partly successful operations between Damascus and Emesa, Vahan was one of the generals of the Byzantine forces, which also included considerable Armenian troops, in the decisive Battle at the river Yarmuk in August 636. This defeat led to the eventual loss of the province to the Arabs²¹.

From shortly afterwards that period, we possess another text sometimes attributed to Anania of Širak, the «Armenian Itinerary» (*Mtonac'ap'k*), which can be dated in the years between 638 and 762. It contains descriptions and distances for six routes from the Armenian capital of Dvin leading into different parts of the world, from the Persian Gulf to the Caucasus, from Eastern Iran to Rome and the Atlantic Ocean. Some central axes of long distance Armenian mobility in Late Antiquity, which we can also trace in other sources, become visible – and one of these led from Dvin via Edessa, Emesa and Damascus to Jerusalem, and from there onwards to Egypt and even the «far West» of the Mediterranean (where we also find Armenian commanders and soldiers in the sixth and seventh century in

North Africa) (fig. 3 and fig. 4)²². By this period, Jerusalem had become a fixed point in the «mental map» of the Armenians²³.

The Earliest Literary Evidence

In spite of the fact that the «received» account of the evangelization of Armenia as provided in Agat'angelos' *History of the Armenians* claims an official adoption of Christianity in Armenia at the time of Gregory the Illuminator's conversion of King Trdat IV (314, see also above)²⁴, other late antique literary sources suggest an ever earlier date for the introduction of Christianity in Armenia, offering alternative evidence for long-existing connections between Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and Armenia. Indeed, these texts would give the impression of an uninterrupted movement of people and ideas in both directions as early as the apostolic age and lasting through the entire late antique period²⁵.

21 PLRE III 161-162 s. v. Baanes; Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* 130-135; Howard-Johnston, *World Crisis* 295-297.

22 Edited and translated in *Armenian Geography* (Hewsen) 320-321. On Armenian presence in the «far west» of the Mediterranean cf. Kaegi, *Muslim Expansion* 101-103; Preiser-Kapeller, *Aristocrats, mercenaries, clergymen and refugees*.

23 See also Preiser-Kapeller, *Between New Jerusalem*.

24 For the date of the conversion: Ananian, *La data*. Also Chaumont, *Recherches. Agat'angelos, History of the Armenians* (Thomson).

25 On the processes of Christianization in Armenia, see Thomson, *Mission*.

While the *New Testament* books are altogether silent about an Armenian presence in Jerusalem both at the time of Jesus' ministry and in the long list of people and languages heard on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11), a passage in Tertullian's *Against the Jews*, VII 4 (written in 196) explicitly mentions Armenia among the countries of provenance of the people that were present at that event²⁶. This particular alternative version of the story of Pentecost is also witnessed by a reading of Acts 2:9 in the *Codex Bezae*²⁷.

Next to these references, there exist two Armenian texts (respectively of the fifth and eighth century) belonging to the large file of *New Testament Apocrypha* that describe the missionary travels to Armenia of the apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew²⁸. The first of these texts, the *Martyrdom of Thaddeus*, narrates the mission of its eponymous hero who, having received the task of evangelizing Armenia at Pentecost, reaches the country under king Sanatruk, after completing various other missionary duties in Edessa, at the court of king Abgar V. Essentially building on the activity already begun by Thaddeus in Armenia, the second text, the *Martyrdom of Bartholomew*, recounts the travels and missions of the apostle Bartholomew, who reached Armenia after a long journey begun in India (i. e. Arabia Felix) and continued through the regions of Commagene, Coele-Syria, and Persia²⁹.

Despite the literary and legendary character of these two narratives, these texts emphasise two facts: they confirm the affiliation of part of the Armenian Church to the Christianity of Edessa, but also witness an established early itinerary that connected Jerusalem and Armenia, a route passing through Mesopotamia and Edessa that was well-known to, and easily recognizable by both Armenian late antique readers and travellers to Jerusalem. Most likely, this southern route was the same followed by the Syriac missionaries and clergymen whose accomplishments are narrated in a later historiographical work known under the title of *Epic Histories* (c. 470)³⁰.

If for the first three centuries of the Christian era, the evidence of Christian connections and travels between Armenia and Jerusalem can be reconstructed only tentatively, from the fourth century the presence of Armenians traveling to the Holy Land is firmly attested. Indeed, just two decades after the official conversion to Christianity of the kingdom of Armenia, a document known as *Letter to the Armenians* witnesses Armenians visiting and worshipping in Jerusalem in both private and official capacity. Previously dated to the sixth century, in 2008 Abraham Terian reassessed the *Letter to the Armenians*, establishing bishop Macarius as its rightful author and 335 as the year of its composition³¹. Originally composed in Greek and now existing only in an Armenian translation executed before 451, the *Letter to the Armenians* represents

the earliest full-length document concerning instructions on the theology and the liturgical practises of the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist as performed in Jerusalem in the first half of the fourth century. The letter was written by Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem between 314 and 335/336, and addressed to Vrt'anēs, the elder son and second successor of Gregory the Illuminator as bishop of Armenia. The circumstance that prompted the letter was an official delegation of Armenian priests to Jerusalem, probably sent by Vrt'anēs himself on the occasion of the dedication of the church of the Holy Sepulchre for the Encaenia of September 335.

Half a century later, an explicit mention of the Armenian presence in the Holy Land is found among the Latin sources in a letter that Jerome addressed to Marcella in the year 386. Written in Bethlehem, Jerome's *Letter 46* mentions the Armenians within the multi-ethnic group of pilgrims who flocked to Palestine from all over the world: Gallia, Britannia, Persia, India, Arabia, Egypt, Pontus, Cappadocia, Coele-Syria, and Mesopotamia³².

Further literary evidence comes from Cyril of Skythopolis (c. 525-559) who informs us that towards the end of the fifth century Armenian monks were living in the Holy Land both in isolated and mixed communities. In the *Life of Sabas*, for instance, Cyril, attests the presence of Armenian monks in the monastery of Mar Saba, where they were allowed to pray in their own language while living in a mixed community³³. A similar scenario is depicted in the *Life of Euthymius*, where Cyril narrates that in one occasion a considerable number of Armenian pilgrims (some 400 men) came from Jerusalem to visit and settle in the monastery founded by Euthymius (himself a native Armenian from Melitene, in Armenia Minor). Due to its convenient position in the Judean desert, not far from the Holy City and in the vicinity of the Jordan River³⁴, Armenians monks could easily access the monastery, living and worshipping together with their Greek brothers within the same walls.

The Material Evidence

The material evidence for the Armenian presence in Jerusalem and the Holy Land is varied and well documented. The ensemble of the available data has recently been magisterially examined by Yana Tchekhanovets in a ground-breaking book that appeared in 2018³⁵. There, the author has methodically gathered and examined the literary, archaeological, and manuscript evidence of the three Caucasian communities present in late antique Palestine: Armenians, Georgians, and Caucasian Albanians.

26 Tertullian, *Against the Jews* (251 Menzies/Clark).

27 *Codex Bezae* (Scrivener). Also, with further references, Parker, *Codex*.

28 *Martyrdom of Thaddaeus* (27-49 Calzolari).

29 *Martyrdom of Thaddaeus* (*passim* Calzolari).

30 P'awstos Buzand: *Epic Histories* (Garsioian).

31 Macarius, *Letter* (Terian).

32 Jerome, *Letters* XLVI 10 (187-196 Fremantle/Lewis/Martley).

33 Armenian monks came from both Armenia Minor and Greater Armenia. See Patrich, *Sabas* 46-47. Cyril of Skythopolis, *Life of Sabas* (*infra*, Schwartz).

34 Cyril of Skythopolis, *Life of Euthymius* XVII (27-28 Schwartz).

35 Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology*.

As far as the Armenians are concerned, their presence is revealed by the architectural remains of, and the mosaics, inscriptions, and graffiti discovered in a great number of monastic complexes and sites scattered in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, from Nazareth in the north, to the Judean desert in the east, down to the Sinai in the south. Among the most remarkable sites are the Armenian monastic complexes on the Mount of Olives, in East Jerusalem, and in the Musrara Quarter of the city, just outside of Damascus Gate. These findings were first uncovered during archaeological excavations carried out in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and have been exploited to confirm that at least a dozen of Armenian monasteries was in operation in late antique Jerusalem. A significant number of high-quality mosaic floors dated to as early as the fifth century offers clear witness to a wealthy Armenian presence in Jerusalem and validate medieval historical sources concerning the active role played by members of the royal and aristocratic Armenian families in sponsoring monastic activity in the Holy Land³⁶. A number of these mosaics include inscriptions that represent some of the earliest evidence for the Armenian script, which was invented by Mesrop Maštoc' only a few decades earlier (c. 404)³⁷. In one case (Tomb of Abbess Charate), the uncovered inscription has been of great value to attest the presence of a monastery of Armenian women³⁸.

Aspects of Armenian Cultural Activity in Jerusalem

The presence of an established and well-organized Armenian community in late antique Jerusalem is reflected also in the diverse cultural output and activities that were pursued there by the Armenians. One of the most significant achievements is the Armenian translation of the so-called *Jerusalem Lectionary*. Translated into Armenian from the original Greek shortly after 417, the »Armenian« *Jerusalem Lectionary* is an invaluable document for the reconstruction of the sequence of the stational liturgy that was performed in and around Jerusalem in the first half of the fifth century (in particular, between 417 and 439), as well as for the recovery of the list of scriptural passages read at the divine services³⁹. Of all the extant Armenian manuscripts (c. 31.000), almost 350 are lectionaries⁴⁰. While these can be grouped into various recensions, they are virtually all adaptations of the same early Jerusalemite type.

Because of the loss of the Greek original, the Armenian translation represents, together with its Georgian counterpart⁴¹, an exceptional witness to this specific liturgical tradition⁴².

Another notable example of the Jerusalemite Armenians' cultural activity is represented by the so-called Armenian »Jerusalem School« or »Scriptorium«. By this terminology, scholars refer to certain stylistic features that are common to a group of Armenian texts of liturgical and hagiographical type⁴³. Evidence for this scriptorium has been gathered thanks to, among others, a colophon appended to a 1403 manuscript transmitting the Armenian translation of Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, which reads »this book was translated in the holy city of Jerusalem in the year 450«, as well as through a ninth century colophon, in which the scribe claims that the *Autobiography* of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite copied in that manuscript was translated in Jerusalem⁴⁴. Although the bulk of the Armenian translations of the Areopagite were actually executed on Greek exemplars in Constantinople, it is remarkable that the *Autobiography* was rendered into Armenian from Georgian in the city of Jerusalem⁴⁵. Taking into consideration the rarity of medieval Armenian translations from Georgian, this case is a clear witness of the liveliness of the cross-cultural dialogue between Armenians and other confessions of the Holy Land, and also of the fact that over the time Jerusalem came to be seen by the Armenians as a centre of authoritative teaching, especially from the second half of the sixth century, when conflicts between Armenians, Greeks, and Georgians over questions of theology and liturgy significantly increased⁴⁶.

South Palestine: Sinai and Beyond

Further material evidence of the Armenian presence in the Holy Land has been uncovered by Michael Stone in a great number of Armenian inscriptions discovered on Mount Sinai⁴⁷. These inscriptions count to some more than one hundred and bear witness of the Armenian pilgrimage activity in the Sinai region throughout the Middle Ages. The oldest inscriptions have been dated, on palaeographical ground, to the fifth century, showing the Armenians as one of the earliest groups of Christian pilgrims to the Sinai⁴⁸.

The material evidence offered by the Sinai Armenian graffiti together with the inscriptions on the mosaic pavements in Jerusalem provides some of the very first attestations of the

36 Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology passim*.

37 For the invention of the Armenian script: Koriwn, *Life of Maštoc' (17-155 Mahé)*.

38 Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology* 107-108.

39 *Armenian Jerusalem Lectionary* (Renoux); Renoux, *Liturgie*; Renoux, *Un manuscrit. For the medieval Armenian liturgical calendar Adontz, Les fêtes*.

40 For a concise introduction to Armenian manuscripts, with further references Kouymjian, *Manuscripts*; Kouymjian, *Codicology*; Kouymjian, *Palaeography*.

41 *Georgian Jerusalem Lectionary* (Tarchnishvili).

42 For later developments of the Jerusalemite liturgy with further references Galadza, *Liturgy*.

43 The bibliography on the Armenian translations from Greek and Syriac is vast and there is no comprehensive survey. For a synthetic, yet clear overview Nicholson, *Âges* 91-97. Further references Thomson, *Bibliography* 29-88; Thomson, *Supplement* 169-179.

44 Thomson, *Jerusalem* 80.

45 Thomson, *Armenian Version of Ps.-Dionysius*; *Armenian Ps.-Dionysius* (Thomson).

46 Garsoïan, *Grand schism*; Garsoïan, *Interregnum*; Aleksidze, *Narrative*.

47 Stone, *Armenian Inscriptions*; Stone, *Footprints*.

48 Tchekhanovets, *Caucasian Archaeology* 132-136.

Armenian script. Indeed, if Armenian literacy begun in Armenia, it is however in late antique Palestine that the earliest specimens of the Armenian script are preserved. This evidence is further confirmed through the manuscript collection of St Catherine Monastery. Here, in 1975, several new manuscript palimpsest fragments were discovered. One of these (Syriac NF frg. 12) presents, under a Syriac upper layer, an Armenian *scriptio inferior* that has been dated to the sixth (or also to the seventh/eighth) century and identified as the Armenian translation of John Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Psalms*, de facto suggesting that these fragments are among the oldest attestations of the Armenian script on parchment outside Armenia⁴⁹.

The impact of the Armenians' activity in the Holy Land went far beyond the boundaries of late antique Palestine and cannot be overestimated. As an example, one could take the influence that the Armenian Christians of Jerusalem exerted on the Ethiopians and their literature, which remembers the figure of Gregory the Illuminator, as well as on the country itself, where an island of Lake Tana is named after St Hrip'simē⁵⁰. While the first Armenian colonies in Ethiopia date to the seventh century, being the result of the Arab in-

vasions of Palestine, the most spectacular material evidence of the strong ties that were built in Jerusalem between the Armenians and the Ethiopians is highlighted by the striking parallels of the *Canon Tables* frames found in the *Garima Gospels* (sixth/seventh century) and the *Ējmiacin Gospels* (ninth/tenth century)⁵¹.

The evidence discussed in this paper shows a documented continuity in both the presence of Armenians in the Jerusalem and the Holy Land and the mobility of pilgrims, scholars, mercenaries, and merchants in a period roughly comprised between the fourth century and the mid seventh century. Material and written evidence attests the growing establishment of an Armenian community in Jerusalem that resulted in the construction of monasteries, production of texts and translations, and interaction with other local Christian communities. In time, the foundation of this Jerusalemite community made possible further exchange between the Armenians from the Caucasus and those in Palestine, with Jerusalem becoming at the same time both the terminus of travels to the Holy Land and a crossroad for scholarly, military, and religious business that furthered travels to locations far beyond Palestine.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Vom Ararat zum Sionsberg. Armenische Pilgerfahrt und Gegenwart im Heiligen Land, 4. bis 7. Jahrhundert
Seit der Christianisierung Armeniens im frühen 4. Jahrhundert wurden Jerusalem und das Heilige Land zu zentralen Anziehungspunkten für die Mobilität armenischer Christen. Dies galt nicht nur für Pilger, sondern auch für Adlige, Söldner, Kaufleute oder Gelehrte. Selbst die turbulente Geschichte der armenischen Heimatländer hat die häufigen Reisen zwischen Armenien und dem »Heiligen Land« nicht behindert. Diese Kontakte manifestierten sich in der Gründung von Klöstern und der Entstehung einer ständigen armenischen Gemeinschaft in Jerusalem. Der vorliegende Aufsatz untersucht verschiedene Aspekte und Schichten dieser Bewegungen und Migrationen auf der Grundlage schriftlicher und materieller Belege für den Zeitraum zwischen dem 4. Jahrhundert und der arabischen Eroberung des 7. Jahrhunderts.

From Ararat to Mount Zion. Armenian Pilgrimage and Presence in the Holy Land, Fourth to Seventh Century

Since the Christianisation of Armenia in the early fourth century, Jerusalem and the Holy Land became central points of attraction for the mobility of Armenian Christians. This was not only true for pilgrims, but also for noblemen, mercenaries, merchants, and scholars. Even the turbulent history of the Armenian homelands did not impede frequent travel between Armenia and the »Holy Land«. These contacts became manifest in the foundation of monasteries and the emergence of a permanent Armenian community in Jerusalem. The present paper surveys various aspects and layers of these movements and migrations on the basis of written and material evidence for the period between the fourth century and the Arab conquest of the seventh century.

De l'Ararat au mont Sion. Les pèlerinages et la présence des Arméniens en Terre sainte du 4^e au 7^e siècle
Jérusalem et la Terre sainte ont attiré les chrétiens d'Arménie dès le début du 4^e siècle, quand le pays fut christianisé. Ce mouvement touchait non seulement les pèlerins, mais également les nobles, les mercenaires, les commerçants ou les érudits. Même l'histoire turbulente des régions arméniennes n'a pas empêché les déplacements fréquents entre l'Arménie et la « Terre sainte ». Ces contacts se manifestèrent à travers la création de monastères et l'établissement d'une communauté arménienne permanente à Jérusalem. Cet article examine divers aspects et niveaux de ces mouvements et migrations à partir d'écrits et d'autres témoins matériels datant du 4^e siècle à la conquête arabe au 7^e siècle.

Traduction: Y. Gautier