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THE ROOTS OF *TEMPIETTO* AND ITS SYMBOLISM IN ARMENIAN GOSPELS

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Abstract: In some Armenian Gospels dating from the 10th-11th centuries, just after the canon tables is depicted a full page miniature of the *tempietto*. Supposedly copied from the Eusebian archetype (4th-5th centuries), the decorations of these manuscripts, and particularly the *tempietto*, stand close to the artistic traditions of the Early Christian and Late Antique periods. By help of the other artworks, representing the *tempietto*-like structures, and of the text of the 1st century author Philo of Alexandria, we attempt to analyse the *tempietto* miniature of the Armenian Gospels as the symbolic temple of God, a real “archetype” of which was the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Rejecting the idea that the Temple of God can be restored again on the earth, instead of the Holy of Holies the Christian miniaturists have depicted a symbolic Temple, to which the faithful can achieve in the Paradise, in Heavenly Jerusalem.

Keywords: *Tempietto*, *Etchmiadzin Gospel*, *Eusebian archetype*, *Holy of Holies*, *Paradise*

It is known that a gospel created in one of the scriptoria of Caesarea came down to Armenia in the 5th-6th centuries and became the archetype for the decoration of those gospels translated there¹. For this reason the old Armenian decorated gospels have preserved the initial forms of the canon tables of the so-called “Eusebian archetype”². Carl Nordenfalk argued that, among the surviving manuscripts, the Etchmiadzin Gospels³ stands closest to the Eusebian archetype⁴. The Gospel was written in 989 by Stephanos at the monastery Bgheno Noravank, in the province of Syunik, eastern part of Great Armenia. At the end of the 19th century, the illumination of this manuscript was attributed to the Syrian context⁵. Later, Kurt Weitzmann and Sirarpie Der Nersessian, separately have shown that the manuscript was illustrated by an Armenian artist⁶, probably by

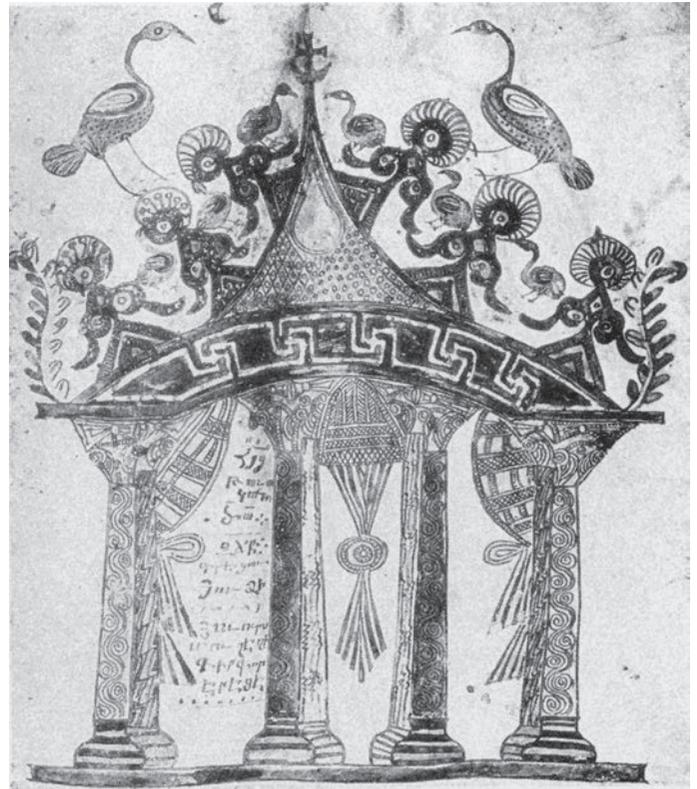
the mentioned scribe Stephanos. Studying the connections between the illumination of the Etchmiadzin Gospels and the architectural ornaments, Step’an Mnatsakanyan concluded that the decorative motifs of the manuscript correspond to the ornamental art of 5th to 7th century Armenian monuments⁷. There are only a very few Armenian artworks from that period that have come down to our days, but their skillfulness denotes that, in that period, the artistic traditions were developed enough to attract the attention of the artists of later ages, as in the case of the Etchmiadzin Gospels. Hence, the miniatures of this 10th century manuscript must be copied from an example dating at least from the 7th century. It is quite possible that that early copy was one of the archetype-manuscripts which after the officialization of Christianity were produced in Caesarea

under command of Constantine the Great and were sent to different parts of the Empire as the faithful examples of the Divine Scriptures.

Besides the Etchmiadzin Gospels, there are some other Armenian gospels of the 10th century which may have been produced on the basis of the mentioned earliest examples. In all of these manuscripts, just after the canon tables is represented the miniature of *tempietto*, such as illustrated on folio 5v of the Etchmiadzin Gospels (fig. 1), as well as in the Second Etchmiadzin Gospels⁸ (fig. 2), in MS 697 preserved at the Library of the Mekhitarist Congregation in Vienna⁹ (fig. 3), and finally in MS 9430 of Mate-nadaran in Yerevan¹⁰ (fig. 4). The mentioned gospels have come to be known as manuscripts classified within the group of the Etchmiadzin Gospels¹¹. There is also another Armenian gospel of the



1. Yerevan, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (*Mate-nadaran*), MS 2374, Etchmiadzin Gospels, fol. 5v, *Tempietto*, miniature.



2. Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, Library of St. James monastery, MS 2555, Second Etchmiadzin Gospels, fol. 7r, *Tempietto*, miniature.

10th-11th centuries displaying the *tempietto*¹² (fig. 5).

Apparently, the *tempietto* was also depicted after the set of canon tables in the archetype worked out by Eusebius of Caesarea¹³. When speaking about this rotunda-like structures, art historians address them in the such terms as “tempietto” (small, circular temple), “ciborium”, “cubiculum”, “tholos (tholoi)”, “sanctuarium”, “baldachin”, “tent”, “pavilion”, “fountain of life”, “paradise”, etc. Here, we shall mainly use the term “tempietto”, because in the history of the Armenian miniature painting it is most often labeled as such.

As it has been noticed by many specialists, the decorative part of the canon tables of the mentioned Gospels is associated with the *tempietto*-image, and the second part, i.e. the cycle of figurative illustrations, follows immediately after it¹⁴.

Thus, in the Etchmiadzin Gospels, for example, the *tempietto* is illustrated after the ten canon tables, and the next pages are depicted with the following cycle of miniatures: the enthroned Christ between two saints (fol. 6r), the four evangelists (fols 6v-7r), the Virgin with Christ (fol. 7v), the sacrifice of Isaac (fol. 8r)¹⁵. Comparing the reader of the Holy Scripture with the believer who enters into the temple of God, one can draw parallels between the gospel and the church. According to the hierotopical approach, it can be perceived as a visual location of the sacred space of a church¹⁶. In other words, when entering the church, passing through the columns, the believer reaches the most sacred place, i.e. the altar. The middle part of the church naves is perceived as a path of the “process” that leads to the Sancta sanctorum (Holy of Holies), to Christ¹⁷. In its manuscript

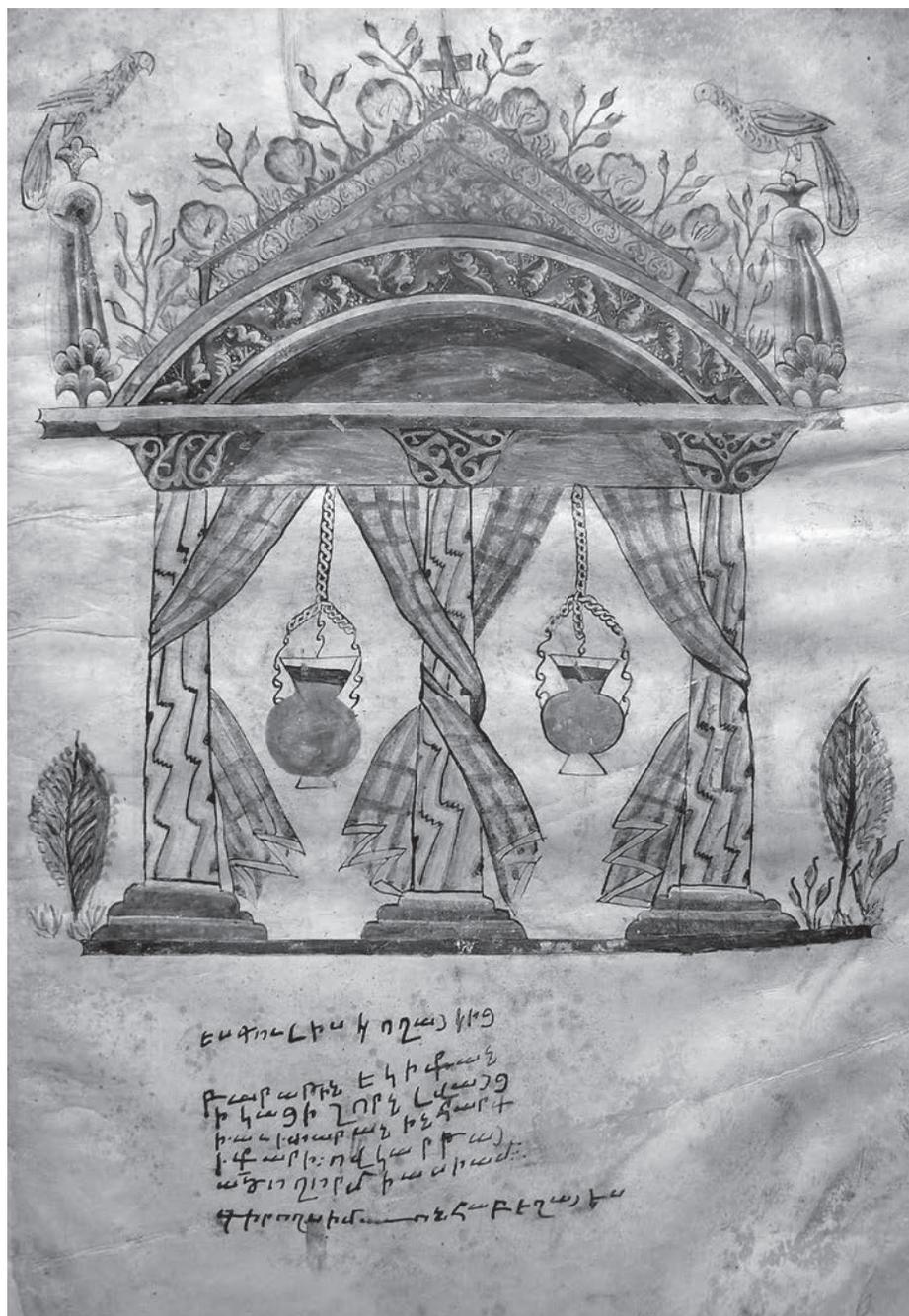
context, similar associations are meant to obtain an analogous effect – that is, the canon tables are described as a visual preparation to reading the gospel text: when entering “the Temple of God” through the columns (the first canon table), the reader progresses down through the series of arches (the next set of the canon tables) and reaches the *tempietto*, the holiest part.

In its schematic outline, as that of the canon tables, the *tempietto*-image follows an old architectural prototype that is reminiscent of Greco-Roman architecture¹⁸. The meaning of the *tempietto* has been discussed in various ways, but most often by suggesting some parallels with the tomb of Christ (or the canopy of the tomb) or the Nativity church in Bethlehem, where Christ was born. Klaus Wessel lists a great many possible interpretations on the symbolism of the *tempietto*¹⁹.

We see the image of the *tempietto* also in the Byzantine Gospels of the 10th-11th centuries, preserved in the Marciana Library in Venice²⁰. Weitzmann writes that the ornamental motives in this and the Etchmiadzin manuscripts are based on the old Syrian tradition which goes back to the Rabula-Gospels dating from 586²¹. In Armenian miniature painting, this old tradition was mostly widespread, whereas in the capital Constantinople it existed only for a certain period of time²². But also in Armenia, the “capital style” of the book illumination began to dominate already at the beginning of the 11th century²³, and as a result, a group of the manuscripts was created whose illuminations were close to Byzantine style and iconography²⁴.

Besides the above mentioned Armenian and Byzantine manuscripts, the *tempietto*-image is encountered in the Georgian *Adysh Gospels* dated to 897²⁵ (fig. 6), also in the Ethiopian *Abba Gharima II Gospels* (10th-11th centuries)²⁶. As to the Christian West, we can assume that it was common to depict similar miniatures until the 11th century. Unlike the miniature art of the Christian East, the *tempietto* type encountered in Western manuscripts seems to hint at the *Fountain of Life* symbolizing the holy nativity of Christ. In Western miniature art, the Fountain of Life is associated with baptism, and more specifically with the Lateran Baptistery of Rome²⁷. Baptism, that represents the idea of rebirth by water, overlaps with concept of the Fountain of Life. One of the earliest examples in Christian manuscript production, displaying the Fountain of Life, is the well-known Godescalc Evangelistary produced in 781-783 in the royal scriptorium of Aachen by the Frankish master Godescalc²⁸.

It is beyond doubt that in Carolingian miniatures the ciborium in Paradise designates the Fountain of Life, what is not true with Armenian miniatures and other works of the Christian East. Particularly, in the Gospels of St. Médard of Soissons (beginnings of the 9th centu-



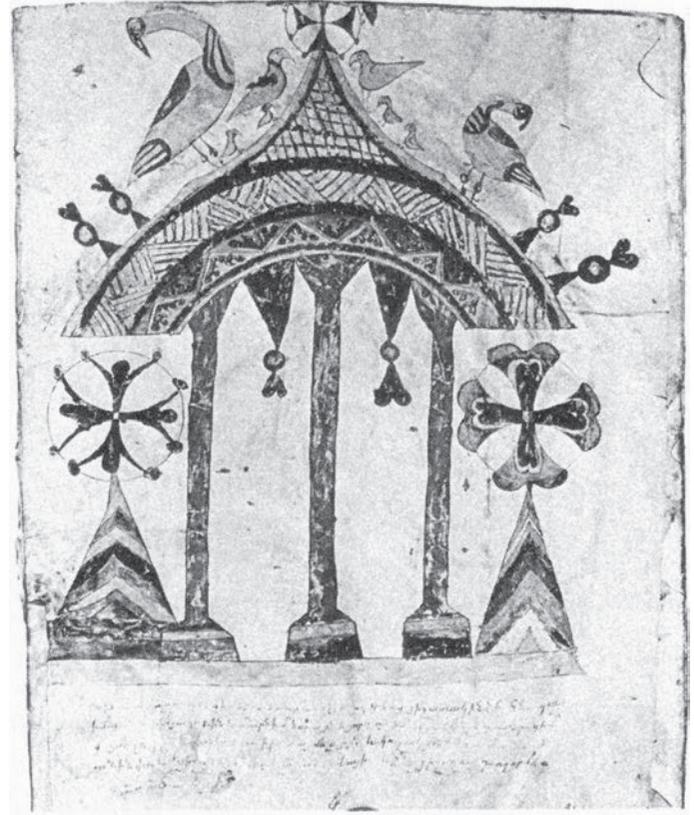
3. Vienna, Library of the Mekhitarist Congregation, MS 697, Gospels, fol. 6r, *Tempietto*, miniature.

ry)²⁹, the ciborium and the hexagonal structure full of water indicates that the artist sought to illustrate the Fountain of Life. According to the book of Genesis, a river was flowing out of Eden to water the garden (*Gn* 2, 10). The source of the ciborium is the very source mentioned in the description of paradise in the first book of the Bible.

The investigation of this production enables us to remark that the ciborium was frequently used in the Carolingian era. In the Gospels of St. Médard of Soissons – for example, in the scene of *Adoration of the Lamb of God* (fol. 1v)³⁰ – the architectural building, the curtains, the columns shape a *tempietto*-image above which the lamb of God symbolizing



4. Yerevan, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (*Mate-nadaran*), MS 9430, Gospels, fol. 1r, *Tempietto*, miniature.



5. Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, Library of St. James monastery, MS 2562, Gospels, fol. 3r, *Tempietto*, miniature.

Christ occupies the highest and most important part. In the same manuscript, a symbolic temple is represented within the frontispiece of the canon table, in which the temple is worshipped by the symbols of the four Evangelists (fol. 11r)³¹. Analogous ideas were expressed also in other artistic media of the Carolingian era. A similar shape is encountered on the coins minted by Carolingian kings³². But no less important is the medieval literary heritage that has come down to our days from this period. In the commentary on the book of Genesis, the Carolingian theologian Hrabanus Maurus (8th-9th centuries) describes Paradise as «Ecclesia and the fluvius (river) as the image of Christ flowing from His Father's fountain, bearing Christ's teachings»³³. It is clear that the idea of the Fountain of Life was more frequently adopted in the Christian West than in the Christian East.

In another Carolingian manuscript known as the Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram of Regensburg³⁴, the *tempietto* structure is encountered twice: on folio 5v, under the ciborium, is depicted the King of the West Franks (then the Holy Roman Emperor) Charles II the Bald³⁵, who was the patron of this sumptuous manuscript. As it is seen in the Gospels of St. Médard of Soissons, here, similarly, a small temple appears again within the frontispiece of the canon table, flanked by the symbols of the four Evangelists (fol. 11r). A particular attention should be drawn to the depiction of the king within the ciborium. Since antiquity, the depiction of the kings under baldachins aimed to visualize their power and its heavenly origins. The fact that during the Carolingian age the portrait of such a powerful king as Charles II is depicted within the *tempietto*, makes us think that the cibori-

um was, in this case, not merely a decorative ornament: indeed, it played a role of an important and holy sacrament. In medieval art history, there are many known examples of monumental paintings with images of kings and queens drawn in those parts of churches that were intended for the images of saints. The artists who worked under the patronage of kings stressed their extraordinary status by depicting their images in the most important parts of the sacred space. In the same way, the brothers Liuthard and Beringer have displayed Charles II in the most sacred part of the gospel beneath ciborium. In this way, their portraits came to be associated with saints. Another similar example is the miniature of Henry II illustrated in the manuscript produced at Regensburg at the beginning of the 11th century³⁶. In Late Antiquity the domed ciborium symbolized Heaven and, usually, emperors,



6. Historical-Ethnographic Museum of Mestia, Georgia, MS 22, Adysh Gospels, fol. 5v, *Tempietto*, miniature.

high court officials or religious people who were representatives of God on earth took seat under it³⁷. Armen Khachatrian states that from the very beginnings, such pavilions served the kings of antique periods, being worshipped as “the sons of Heaven”³⁸, in other words, they received their royal power from heaven³⁹. Then, in the course of time, pavilion-like structures were used in christian architecture⁴⁰, as well as in fine arts.

The same thought, more logically, is expressed by Judith McKenzie, when she states that the roots of ciborium-like circular buildings should have been originated in Late antique Alexandria, as this

town happens to be located in the center of all those places where the *tempietto*-image emerges: Aachen from the west, Armenia and Syria (also Georgia) from the east, Ethiopia from the south⁴¹. In Christian miniature art, the *tempietto* can be associated with the tholos-structures frequently used in the Alexandrian architecture centuries ago.

The *tempietto*-image (in the West, the Fountain of Life) emerges geographically in different places, but almost always at the very time when the rediscovery of Antique pictorial and iconographic forms occur in Christian culture. Thus the Carolingian Renaissance (8th-9th cen-

turies) resulted in the production of the Godescalc Gospels, while in Byzantine, Armenian, and Georgian manuscripts, artists depicted the *tempietto*, supposedly following the traditions derived from the remains of antiquity still visible in the 9th-11th centuries. Some of the ritual books created during the Carolingian Renaissance carry the notice «ex autentico libro», which means that the manuscripts were copied from the primary source⁴². And the artists of the 10th-11th centuries of the Christian East employed the Eusebian archetype (or other manuscripts deriving from the archetype) as a primary source that was created in the Early Christian period, which in its “look” and symbolism was closer to Late Antique, Hellenic traditions. Notwithstanding their many similarities, the symbolism expressed in the *tempietto*-image was not interpreted in the same way in the East and the West. According to Günter Bandmann, the *tempietto* of the Etchmadzin Gospels may appear to be as «the Holy Sepulchre, the Fountain of Life, and Altar», since the whole meaning of the depiction is expressed through these three associations, meanwhile, none of them is presented clearly⁴³. In the opinion of Judith McKenzie, the *tempietto* in the Eastern gospels possibly denotes «the tholos over the tomb of Christ»⁴⁴.

Here, we should indicate an important point that does not allow to associate the “eastern” *tempietto*-image with the Fountain of Life, as it is seen in the Carolingian manuscripts. In Armenian manuscripts the *tempietto* with its symbolism and form is closely related to the canon tables⁴⁵, and in order to understand its meaning, we need to study it along with the canon tables yet not as a single miniature. Moreover, in order to understand the symbolic meaning of the *tempietto* we need to view it together with the figurative miniatures following it. None of the Latin manuscripts contain the *tempietto* depicted after the canon tables. A number of specialists claim that the reason of the missing miniature of

tempietto is explained by “St. Jerome’s archetype” that was used as a model for Latin manuscripts⁴⁶. The archetype was created by Jerome under the patronage of Pope Damasus I to improve the old Latin version of the Bible⁴⁷ which, in its turn, paved the way to the Vulgate – the Latin translation of the Bible⁴⁸. Like the Eusebian archetype, St. Jerome’s archetype contained the canon tables, yet it lacked the miniature displaying the *tempietto* after the canon tables on a separate page⁴⁹.

Anyway, it becomes obvious that ciborium-like images were meant to hint at the idea of eternity in different ways. In the West, eternity was perceived in *life* and the *tempietto* was presented as the Fountain of Life (or as the temple of Nativity of Christ). In the East, the idea of eternity was perceived in *death* and the *tempietto* symbolized the temple of the Resurrection of Christ. Yet, even if the perception of eternity was different, “the last destination” was always seen in *Paradise*, the idea of which is constantly expressed in all kinds of *tempietto*-images.

If we take into consideration the chronological order of historical evidences, we may see that the symbol of *tempietto* is much older than the miniatures representing the temple of Resurrection, given that the Eusebian archetype containing the earliest *tempietto*-image may have been made before 331⁵⁰, whereas the Anastasis church in Jerusalem was consecrated only in 335⁵¹. Admittedly, this does not rule out that the tomb of the Lord may have been worshipped already before 331. Paul Underwood came to think that miniatures of the Armenian *tempietto* were inspired by the ciborium on the tomb of Lord in Jerusalem⁵².

It does not actually state clearly that the *tempietto*-miniatures may represent the tomb of Christ as for example in many contemporary miniatures where the depictions of the tomb structure are quite far from the form of the *tempietto*-images. Besides, as it was said above, the temple of Resurrection did not exist in

Jerusalem when the Eusebian archetype was created. There was only a *tomb monument* similar to a ancient funerary monuments⁵³. Thus, the *tempietto* of the manuscript group of the Etchmiadzin Gospels, copied from the Eusebian archetype, cannot be interpreted as the direct depiction of the Resurrection temple. More likely, the *tempietto*-miniatures represent a symbolic temple of God. It is not excluded that the Armenian miniaturists could have depicted “the temple of God” – *tempietto*, according to the textual descriptions available during that period⁵⁴.

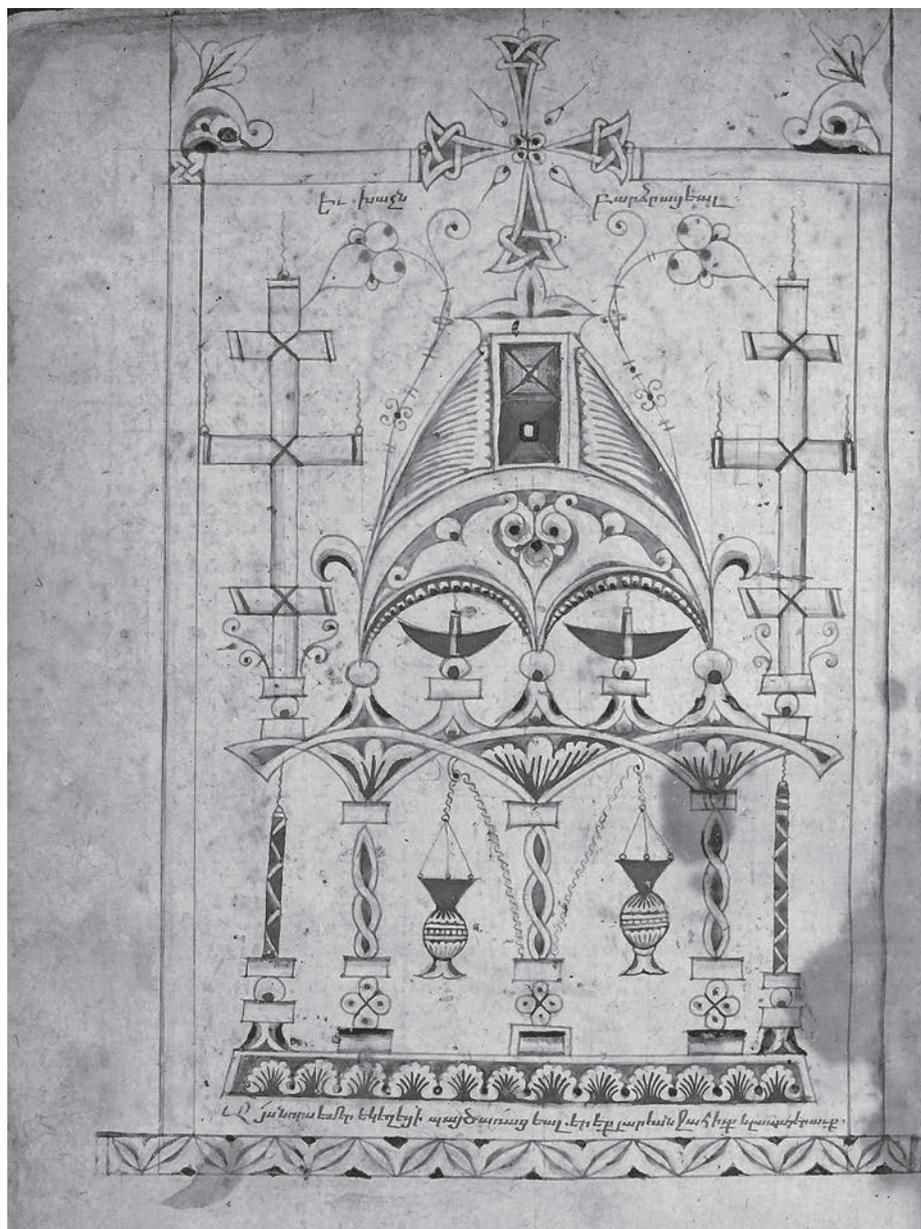
There is also another viewpoint on the Armenian *tempietto* expressed by Rouzanna Amirkhanyan. She states that the ideas of Crucifixion and Resurrection are synthesized by the symbol of the *tempietto*⁵⁵. She illustrates her idea by commenting upon the miniature of MS 697 in Vienna, in which the vault and the roof of *tempietto* show two different buildings: the rotunda, like temple of Resurrection, and the schematic outline of the «architectural sanctuary of Holy Cross» are drafted within each other⁵⁶ (fig. 3). Accordingly, it should be noticed that the artist of Georgian Adysh Gospel deliberately distinguished the whole building of *tempietto* from the roof as well (fig. 6).

Within all the viewpoints suggested on the symbolism of the Armenian *tempietto* we mostly support the idea discussed above, i.e. that the *tempietto* aims at evoking the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The places, where these two events were happened – Golgotha, the place of Christ’s Crucifixion, and the Holy Sepulchre, the place of Resurrection – allegorically related to the idea of Paradise⁵⁷. These scenes are depicted most often together on the pilgrims’ ampullae of Monza and Bobbio which were produced in 6th-7th centuries in Palestine⁵⁸. At the same time, Golgotha is the place where four ends of the world meet – that is, it is considered to be as the center of cosmos⁵⁹. By this, the *tempietto* re-

minds us about the last moments of Christ’s life, thus, symbolizing hope and salvation⁶⁰. The eschatological meaning is clearly revealed by the representation of cypresses on both sides of the miniature. As they are growing in the garden of God (*Ez* 31, 8), they manifest death and eternal life. Apparently, it is not by accident that, in the Etchmiadzin Gospels, a cypress in the scene of the *Sacrifice of Isaac*⁶¹ is introduced to indicate death and sacrifice, as well as the cypresses depicted around the *tempietto* are associated with Christ, who undergoes sacrifice for the salvation of humanity. Here, we must mention again the symbolic relationship between the *tempietto* and the miniatures depicted after it. In the Etchmiadzin Gospels, the symbolic representations of four scenes illustrated after the *tempietto* (enthroned Christ, the portraits of the evangelists, the Virgin with Christ, the Sacrifice of Isaac) are explained by Sirarpie Der Nersessian in the following way: «The portrait of the hero of the book, that is Christ, the portraits of the authors, that is the evangelists (...) The orant Virgin with the infant Jesus is the symbol of incarnation, the Sacrifice of Abraham is the symbol of the crucifixion, of the redemption»⁶². Therefore, she comes to think that the *tempietto* stands for sacrifice/crucifixion as well: «The *tempietto* is probably also connected with the same idea, it may represent the sanctuary, the place where the sacrifice takes place»⁶³. Until the 10th century, there is no scene of *Sacrifice of Isaac* seen in Armenian miniature art⁶⁴. The depiction of this Old Testament theme occurs only in those manuscripts of the 10th century that contain the *tempietto* such as the Etchmadzin Gospels (fol. 8r)⁶⁵, the Second Etchmadzin Gospels (fol. 8v)⁶⁶ and the Gospel of MS 697 of Vienna (fol. 6v)⁶⁷. Unluckily, the Gospel MS 9430 of the Matenadaran has not preserved the pages following the *tempietto*-image but we can assume that the scene of sacrifice was certainly depicted there, since these gospels belong to the same so-

called “archaic” group of manuscripts. In the mentioned manuscripts, the presence of the *Sacrifice of Isaac* allows us to believe that there is, undoubtedly, a close relationship between the symbol of *tempietto* and sacrifice (death), which we will discuss later.

The *tempietto*-miniatures of the Armenian gospels denote a certain orientation in visual conventions that comes closer to the spirit of Late Antique period. Later, the depiction of the *tempietto* following the canon tables fades away. It is true that we can see many *tempietto*-miniatures over the history of Armenian miniature art, but they excellently appear to be marginal illustrations, and basically (particularly in the Late Middle Ages) carry decorative-ornamental character. The only manuscript within those gospels produced after the 10th-11th centuries that has the miniature of the *tempietto* (or similar to it) is the Gospels dating from 1443, created in Aghjots monastery⁶⁸ (fig. 7). Here the *tempietto* is illustrated after the canon tables. If previous Armenian manuscripts could be related to the Hellenic traditions reused in Christian East in 9th-11th centuries, then it becomes more ambiguous to understand how the miniature of *tempietto* could appear in this manuscript made in the midst of the 15th century. We can merely suppose, that as an archetype to decorate the gospels, the artist Stepannos used a gospel of earlier period, that contained the miniature of the temple, which, nevertheless, seems less possible, since this miniature acquired a completely new interpretation. Beneath the miniature, there is the following inscription in Old Armenian: «This is our new church enlightened with a three-branch candelabrum and lanterns» and above, where the cross is depicted, we read «And the raised cross». In the 15th century, the Christian world, of course, was far away from the early Christian, Late Antique roots but it gave a new meaning to the *tempietto* by introducing a novice into the idea as well. Now, the temple was already perceived as a “new church” which



7. Yerevan, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran), MS 6342, Gospels, fol. 8v, *Tempietto*, miniature.

presented a designed image that, for its elements, reminded us of the *tempietto*. However, we are sure to think that this *tempietto* is not the same symbolic image as those depicted five centuries earlier. Here we do not see the obvious image of rotunda-like temple. Had the artist followed the traditions of the so-called “classical” *tempietto* iconography, he should have also included the curtains. It becomes clear, that as in the case of the 10th century gospels, here we mainly deal

with an image that completes the set of canon tables and has a sacred meaning. Therefore, it points out the direction the believer has to follow during his life. Thus, if we consider the canon tables as the path that the believer passes through, then the *tempietto* depicted after them, can be the Heavenly Jerusalem.

It might be added that the miniature of *tempietto* appeared again in the 15th century in Ethiopian manuscripts⁶⁹. Although, it should be indicated, that nei-

ther from the stylistic approaches, nor from iconographic perspective, there is no relationship between the miniature of MS 6342 of the Matenadaran and Ethiopian gospels. Unlike the Armenian manuscript, the Ethiopian manuscripts of the 15th century have the “classical” *tempietto* that, in its symbolic meaning, is closely related to the archaic examples of the 10th century.

That the idea of *tempietto* was originated in the Late-antique world and was developed in the Early Christian period, is confirmed also by another fact. It is *The Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus*⁷⁰ of Philo of Alexandria⁷¹, which is one of his less-known works, since it has reached down to us only in Armenian translation⁷².

The author’s perception of the image and his ability to express it through language enable us to better understand the illustrations of Old Testament stories along with their details. Philo of Alexandria subordinates language to image, since, at first, the image is perceived before its verbal description, that is the image is considered to be reality, whereas language works as knowledge about reality⁷³. In this part of the article, we will make efforts to analyze the Armenian *tempietto* iconography by relying on Philo’s interpretation of the theme.

Thus, in Philo’s *Commentary on the Book of Exodus* we read: «Question - Why does He order to hang a curtain on four columns behind the *khoran*^[74] [altar]?»⁷⁵. This description is itself in keeping with the external outline of the *tempietto*, namely: four columns, curtain behind the altar (apparently, he mentions the end of the canon tables, where is the *tempietto*). «Answer - Four columns are firmly strengthened, and in the altar everything has terrestrial significance, while the celestial is beyond the columns [of altar] (...) After knowing the true path, you will achieve the sensual vision»⁷⁶.

How do these words pertain to the *tempietto*-image? We can suppose that the

true path concerns the path of the believer. Passing through it “with dignity”, he is the one who achieves “the sensual vision” (heavenly vision). Eusebius of Caesarea who depicted the *tempietto* after the canon tables in the archetype manuscript sought to tell the gospel readers that «now you are going to holiness»⁷⁷. As it was already mentioned above, when opening the gospel, the believer moves through the canon tables and at the end he reaches the most sacred place, the temple of God (*tempietto*). This last destination is described by Philo of Alexandria as “the sensual vision”. Joseph of Balai, a Syrian author of the 5th century, writes that the temple of God is not an ordinary temple, but it is heaven on the earth, because God lives in it⁷⁸. Within almost all the artworks discussed by us, there is an image of a curtain (figs 1-6) that plays a significant part in Philo’s *Commentary*. «Question - What is the curtain for?», «Answer - The curtain separates the interior from the external space because the interior is holy and divine, whereas the external space, which is sacred on its turn, has not the same origins which denotes the changing relics of the world, that is all the things that are under the moon [meaning the terrestrial] which accepts floods [i.e. it is subjected to tremors]. While the celestial is unchanging and permanent»⁷⁹. «Question - Where is the place for the curtain in the holy of holies?», «Answer - (...) the place is explained as the border for the curtain to separate the immaterial [spiritual] world from the material [physical]»⁸⁰.

Thus, according to Philo, the curtains depicted between columns appear to be as a border separating the inner world from the external one, i.e. visible from invisible, in other words, the saints are inside, behind the curtains, while the earthly bodies are outside of it. The *tempietto* was the medium for the artists «to turn the invisible into the visible», that is to make it comprehensible to people⁸¹. Paradise is often described as the place, whose entrance is closed with curtains

reaching up to clouds⁸². In this context, it is worth considering the *tempietto* of the Adysh Gospels dating from 897, where cloud-like decorative ornaments are depicted behind the curtains, so marking the border of the heavenly dimension, which is inside (fig. 6). The Book of Exodus states: «Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle» (*Ex* 40, 35). In all *tempietto*-miniatures, the curtains are depicted either tied with knots or hung around the columns. In such way, the miniature painters sought to show a hidden object behind the veil. In a similar way, the painter of the 3rd century Synagogue in Dura-Europos drew the curtains in the depiction of the Tabernacle⁸³. Ephrem the Syrian associates the Tabernacle with the Paradise, at the same time, drawing parallels between Paradise and the House of God, hinting also at the veil which separates the Tabernacle and Holy of Holies⁸⁴. Also in the text of Pseudo-Philo⁸⁵, the Tabernacle and the Garden of Eden are mentioned together⁸⁶.

An analogous use of curtains is encountered in the mosaic of the Basilica of Sant’Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna displaying King Theodoric the Great’s palace (the 6th century)⁸⁷. In the mosaic, the curtains are closed with knots and they are open only in the vaulted structure located in the middle. The central part of the building is gilded. It is possible to reach heaven «when one has knowledge of the true path»⁸⁸ (that is, to be worthy of God). Only then the curtains will open for the believers and they will access the Heavenly Jerusalem. In the mosaic, the depiction of the opened curtains indicates that the temple of God is open for the king Theodoric. And the architectural buildings drawn above the palace must be an allegoric reflection of Jerusalem.

As it was noted, Philo of Alexandria calls the discussed space “Holy of Holies”. “Holy of Holies” is the expression used

to hint at the most interior part of Jewish Temple in Jerusalem where the Holy Ark, housing the Tables of the Law, was preserved. The Holy of Holies is covered with curtains and only the High Priest could enter there once a year, at the Day of Atonement, to serve the blood of sacrifice. It is significant to note that according to the liturgy of St. James – the oldest ritual of Jerusalem – right before the beginning the priest expresses his thankfulness to God for giving him authority to enter the tent of Holiness (of God), to stay behind the curtains and to watch Holy of Holies⁸⁹. It is also interesting to note that the liturgy of St. James that was used at the end of the 4th century and at the beginning of the 5th century was widespread in the Armenian and Ethiopian churches, as well⁹⁰. In the clouds, the Lord appeared to the priest while the incense was burning during the Mass in the Holy of Holies. The perfume of the incense symbolized His presence⁹¹. In miniature painting, the Christian artists used to limit the means of representation of the Holy of Holies. Only the details of the *tempietto*-images can explore the hidden and invisible idea of the Holy of Holies, which, in its turn, is identified with the House of God in Paradise.

Let us see what Jewish artworks witness about it. In the synagogue of Dura Europos, a number of scenes from the Old Testament are represented against a blue background in the upper part of the western wall encircling the Torah-niche: they are the *Seven-branched menorah*, the *Sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham*, and the building with columns that is of interest to us⁹² (fig. 8). As in Armenian gospels, it is no coincidence that the Sacrifice of Isaac is depicted next to the heavenly temple. As the Bible states, Abraham accepted to sacrifice his only son Isaac to show his endless faith in God (*Gn 22, 1-18*). Many scenes of the Sacrifice of Isaac can be seen in Early Christian art⁹³. Abraham stood for the perfect faithful, who witnessed his faith to God and, thus, was saved⁹⁴. The Dura Europos



8. Damascus, National Museum, Decoration of the Torah Shrine from the Dura Europos Synagogue, mid-3rd century, fresco.

murals suggest that mankind can reach the kingdom of Heaven by having faith in God. There is another interpretation of the association between Isaac's sacrifice and the Temple on the mural of Dura Europos: Abraham should have sacrificed Isaac on one of the mountains in the region of Moriah (*Gn* 22, 2) upon which the Temple was later built⁹⁵. The symbolic temple drawn in the center is the illustrative reflection of "Holy of Holies" of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, which is evidenced by Philo. Most probably this mural was unknown to Armenian artists of the 10th century, but they were probably well-aware of Philo's text, which may have been used as a source of inspiration for the *tempietto*-images. On the other hand, it should be also taken into account that in the *tempietto*-images of Christian manuscripts, the symbols of Holy of Holies are given indirectly, since the Christians believed in Heavenly Jerusalem and «rejected the idea that the Temple of Jerusalem was to be restored on earth»⁹⁶.

The Sacrifice of Isaac in the manuscripts of the Etchmiadzin Gospels-group is closely associated with the symbolism of the *tempietto*, exactly in the same way as the images of the sacrifice and the Holy Temple in the frescoes of the Dura Europos, or as in the same scenes of Exodus Chapel of El-Begawat⁹⁷. The latter has been interpreted by Matthew Martin in the following way: «That the gabled *tempietto* represents the Jerusalem Temple is indicated by the Sacrifice of Isaac immediately above it. The Temple, here, must represent the Promised Land to which Moses led the Israelites. At the heart of this identification lies the understanding that, whereas Mt Sinai was the place where the Law was given, the Temple of Jerusalem in the Promised Land was where the Law was enacted, and central to that enactment was the Temple's sacrificial worship prefigured by Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac»⁹⁸. In the depiction of Dura's Torah Shrine, the three parts of composition – the Temple, Menorah and

the sacrificial scene – are associated with the events happened in Jerusalem and represent «man's reconciliation with God»⁹⁹. Here, in Armenian manuscript gospels as well, with the depiction of Isaac's sacrifice next to the Heavenly Temple it seems to suggest the solution for receiving God's forgiveness. In the liturgy of St. James, the High Priest prays for God to have mercy on people who, in fear and shivering, have come closer to the holy altar of God to use the bloodless sacrifice as an atonement for their sins¹⁰⁰. In the Book of Exodus, God says to Moses: «Set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting (...) Place the Ark of the Covenant law in it and shield the ark with the curtain. Bring in the table and set out what belongs on it. Then bring in the lamp stand and set up its lamps. Place the gold altar of incense in front of the Ark of the Covenant law and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting (...) Then anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar, and it will be most holy» (*Ex* 40, 1-14; 16-33). In Philo's *Commentary on the Book of Exodus* we read: «Question - Why does He order to take the table and the candelabrum away from the curtains?»¹⁰¹. This question is in keeping with the Dura Europos mural, where the candelabrum and the table¹⁰² (on which Abraham shall have sacrificed Isaac) are depicted on the both sides of the Holy Temple (fig. 8). Let us see how the candelabrum and table are analyzed by Philo: «Answer - As it was said from the beginning, the terrestrial nature is expressed through the table, and the terrestrial heaven is expressed through the candle. They are put outside the curtain, since all the things inside the curtain are invisible and spiritual^[103], and all the things outside the curtain are visible and physical»¹⁰⁴.

The Armenian *tempietto*-miniatures lack candelabra, but the presence of jugs filled with oil may be interpreted as lighting

implements visually hinting at the Biblical menorahs. The seven branched lamp, i.e. the menorah in the Temple, represented the perfumed oil which was produced from the tree of life¹⁰⁵. The oil and the lamp were symbols of the Holy Wisdom¹⁰⁶. Anything anointed with oil became itself holy and divine. The perfumed oil «transformed mortals back into angels»¹⁰⁷ and «changed the human mind and gave Wisdom»¹⁰⁸. In one of the commentaries of the canon tables, the 8th century author Stepanos Syunetsi writes that the oil symbolizes the eternal clearness of the just (saints)¹⁰⁹. Philo of Alexandria records: «And the oil was especially created for light [lamp?] which is the most clear and the most sacred in its nature»¹¹⁰. According to the Jewish text *Zohar*, spatial oil is associated also with the Fountain of Life: «The Fountain of life is the supernal oil which flows continually and is stored in the midst of the most high Wisdom, from which it never separates. It is the source which dispenses life to the supernal tree, and kindles the lights. And that tree is called the tree of life because it is planted on account of that source of life» (*Zohar, Leviticus* 34b)¹¹¹. In the *tempietto*-image of MS 697 dating from the 10th century, preserved in the Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna, the artist has depicted the blue oil in two jugs with red fire jets on the upper layer of it, by which, apparently, he has sought to create an illusion of the perfumed oil and the lamp preserved in the temple (fig. 3).

In the central part of fresco of the Dura Europos, the Holy Temple comprises the synthesis of two architectural buildings: the rectangular part colored in light pink and the "cupola" gilded in gold symbolizing holiness (fig. 8). As discussed above, the *tempietto* structure can convey the principle of «Temple of revival and Golgotha of Crucifix»¹¹². The difference between the fresco and miniatures is that in the Dura Europos mural we see the synthesis of cupola-shaped and rectangular buildings, and in the miniatures we

see the synthesis of cupola-shaped and triangular models. It seems that either the rectangular or triangular images hint at the same architectural building by selecting one of its parts and viewing it from different viewpoints: if the building is represented on one side, it is attributed a rectangular shape, whereas a triangular form, including the pediment, appears if the opposite or back sides are represented. It is interesting that Philo of Alexandria discusses even this viewpoint: «As it is known in general, there are fifty columns. Let us maintain all those columns that cover two corners, since their strength are the triangular parts»¹¹³. According to Philo, the rectangular building has fifty columns, that compose right-angled gables on both ends, and the power of the building is right there. One can see a correspondence between the mural of the Exodus Chapel of the Jerusalem Temple and the building described by Philo: it is a rectangular building with many columns, and the “right-angled triangular” – pediments rest on both of the Temple corners. In the center, another building is depicted with vaulted pediments leaning a little bit forward. Actually, this mural shows a double view of two sides of the Temple, whereas in the Armenian gospels, they are synthesized by combined the vaulted part (rotunda-like building) and the side marked by triangular pediments (figs 1-6).

As to the columns of the *tempietto*, we can notice that the columns are depicted in different quantity in miniatures. The representation of domed buildings with columns is often dependent on the precise drafting of the circular building on the flat surface, which is actually a difficult task, for this reason the artists had to employ the method of «projection and volume decrease»¹¹⁴.

In the *tempietto*-images and in the *Fountain of Life*, as well as in the fresco of the Jerusalem Temple of El-Begawat, there are the images of birds and vegetal ornaments that symbolize the heavenly Paradise. Philo explains why birds live in paradise in these terms: «The internals – the

birds and the rest, are much closer to God in their essence, since the physical never flies alike celestials (birds, angels)»¹¹⁵. As a rule, a couple of peacocks is illustrated on the both sides of the cross. According to the interpretation put forward in Late Antiquity, the body of peacocks does not decay, and in the Christian period it continues to symbolize immortality, resurrection and rebirth¹¹⁶. Therefore, the peacock is most notably depicted in the allegories of Paradise. Stepanos Syunetsi (8th century) and Vanakan Vardapet (12th-13th centuries) state that the two peacocks on the vault are symbols of the prophets and the wisdom of the Old Law¹¹⁷.

It is beyond doubt that for medieval artists the *tempietto* conveyed this very symbolism explained by Philo of Alexandria in the 1st century. Certainly, Philo meant the Holy of Holies of Jewish Temple, which, in miniature painting of Christian East, is allegorically represented as Heavenly Temple, since the Christians believed that the salvation would have come in heavenly life.

The rotunda-like images of pilgrims' ampullae and on the Early Christian murals of Dura Europos and El-Bagawat, the *tempietto*-images in Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopian, Byzantine manuscripts can be considered to be visual interpretations of the same theme. This symbolic image that we call *tempietto* designates the path that the Christian has to pass through in order to reach the temple of God (Heavenly Jerusalem, the kingdom of Heaven, Paradise) and, thus, to attain eternal life. In the art of the Christian West, the Fountain of Life represents the destination of the believer's path, i.e. the eternal life in Paradise, while in the Armenian miniatures discussed previously, by help of the canon tables and *tempietto*, the artists expressed both their path and their destination.

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Notes

1) C. Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln. Kunstgeschichtliche Studien über die eusebianische Evangelien-Konkordanz in den vier ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Geschichte*, Textband, Göteborg 1938, pp. 109-10, 273; Th. Klauser, *Das Ciborium in der älteren christlichen Buchmalerei*, in «Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. I. Philologisch-historische Klasse» 7 (1961), p. 193; G. Bandmann, *Beobachtungen zum Etschmiadzin-Evangelium*, in *Tortulae. Studien zu altchristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten*, Rom-Freiburg-Wien 1966, p. 12; H. Buschhausen - H. Buschhausen, *Codex Etschmiadzin. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe von Codex 2374 des Matenadaran Mesrop Mashtots in Erevan. Kommentar*, Graz 2001, pp. 88 ff.

2) *Eusebian*, since the mentioned archetype was created by Eusebius of Caesarea (260/265-339/340). It represents the concordance system of four evangelists in which the texts of the gospels are attributed to the numbered parts that, in other words, are known as *Eusebian (and/or Ammonian) sections*. Most apparently, it was Eusebius of Caesarea who decorated the canon tables with the series of arches on the basis of the decorations of calendars of Antique period and basilique churches of Early Christian period, especially, their vault-like decorations. See: Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln*, pp. 119-20; Klauser, *Das Ciborium*, pp. 192-3; K. Wessel, *Kanontafeln*, in K. Wessel - M. Reste (ed.), *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, vol. III, Stuttgart 1978, cols 927-32; V. Ghazaryan, *Meknutiunq khonanats. Arvesti tesutyanyan mijnadaryan bnagrer* [Commentaries of Canon Tables. The Medieval Armenian Texts on Theory of Art], Holy Etchmiadzin 2004, pp. 31-2.

3) Yerevan, M. Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (hereafter, Matenadaran), MS 2374.

4) Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln*, p. 109.

5) J. Strzygowski, *Das Etschmiadzin-Evangelium. Beiträge zur Geschichte der armenischen, ravenatischen und syro-ägyptischen Kunst*, Wien 1981.

6) K. Weitzmann, *Die armenische Buchmalerei des 10. und beginnenden 11. Jahrhunderts*, Bamberg 1933; S. Der Nersessian, *The Date of the Initial Miniatures of the Etchmiadzin Gospel*, in «The Art Bulletin» XVI/4 (1933), pp. 327-60.

- 7) S. Mnatsakanyan, *989 t. Ejmiatsni avetarani manrankarneri usumnasirutyun shurj* [Around Study of Miniatures of the Etchmiadzin Gospel of 989], in «Lraber hasarakakan gitutyunneri [Herald of the Social Sciences]» 1 (1958), pp. 55-66.
- 8) Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, Library of St. James monastery, MS 2555, fol. 7r.
- 9) Vienna, Library of the Mekhitarist Congregation, MS 697, fol. 6r.
- 10) Matenadaran, MS 9430, fol. 1r.
- 11) Der Nersessian, *The Date*, pp. 335-7.
- 12) Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, Library of St. James monastery, MS 2562, 3r. In the manuscript catalogue of Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the *tempietto* is described as «the canon table decoration with three columns and two curtains», N. Bogharian, *Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts*, vol. XI, Jerusalem 1991, p. 375 (in Armenian with English title).
- 13) Wessel, *Kanontafeln*, col. 932.
- 14) Bandmann, *Beobachtungen*, p. 14; N. Kotanjian, *Etchmiadzni avetaran* [The Etchmiadzin Gospel], Yerevan 2000, pp. 7 ff.
- 15) F. Macler, *L'évangile arménien. Édition phototypique du manuscrit n° 229 de la bibliothèque d'Etchmiadzin*, Paris 1920, fols 6r, 6v, 7r, 7v, 8r (now preserved in Matenadaran, Ms 2374).
- 16) A. Lidov, *Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Spaces as a Form Creativity and Subject of Cultural History*, in A. Lidov (ed.), *Hierotopy. The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, Moscow 2006, p. 45.
- 17) K. Gamber, *Sancta sanctorum. Studien zur liturgischen Ausstattung der Kirche, vor allem des Altarraums*, Regensburg 1981, pp. 7-8.
- 18) Bandmann, *Beobachtungen*, pp. 16-7; Buschhausen - Buschhausen, *Codex Etchmiadzin*, pp. 90-2; H. Buschhausen - H. Buschhausen, *Das Evangeliar Codex 697 der Mechitaristen-Congregation zu Wien. Eine armenische Prachthandschrift der Jahrtausendwende und ihre spätantiken Vorbilder*, Berlin 1981, pp. 13-7; J. McKenzie, *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt c. 300 BC to AD 700*, New Haven 2007, pp. 367-70 ff.
- 19) K. Wessel, in *Ciborium*, K. Wessel - M. Reste (ed.), *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst*, vol. I, Stuttgart 1966, cols 1055-65; idem, *Kanontafeln*, cols 951-67.
- 20) Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS gr. I, 8, fol. 3r. See: K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*, Wien 1996, vol. I, fig. 92.
- 21) *Ibidem*, p. 16.
- 22) *Ibidem*, p. 63.
- 23) *Ibidem*.
- 24) V. Lazarev, *Istorija vizantijskoj živopisi*, Moskva 1986, t. I, p. 84; T. Izmajlova, *Armjanskaja miniatjura XI veka*, Moskva 1979, pp. 182-214; Z. Akopyan, *Gruppa armjanskix illjustrirovannyx rukopisej XI veka i problema vizantijskogo xudožestvennogo vlijanija*, in «Vizantijskij vremennik [Byzantina xponika]» 67/92 (2008), pp. 194-206.
- 25) Mestia, Georgia, Historical-Ethnographic Museum of Mestia, MS 22, fol. 5v. See: Sh. Amiranashvili, *Gruzinskaja miniatjura*, Moskva 1966, fig. 6.
- 26) J. Leroy, *Un nouvel évangélaire éthiopien illustré du monastère d'Abba Garima*, in *Synthronon. Art et Archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1968, fig. 11.
- 27) P. Underwood, *The Fountain of Life in Manuscripts of the Gospels*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers» 5 (1950), pp. 43-138; B. Reudenbach, *Karolingische und Ottonische Kunst*, in *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst in Deutschland*, vol. I, München-Berlin-London 2009, p. 437.
- 28) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. lat. 1203, fol. 3v. See: Reudenbach, *Karolingische und Ottonische Kunst*, p. 436.
- 29) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 8850, fol. 6v. See: M. P. Laffitte - Ch. Denoël, *Trésors Carolingiens. Livres manuscrits de Charlemagne à Charles le Chauve*, Paris 2007, p. 97, pl. 10.
- 30) B. Brenk, *Schriftlichkeit und Bildlichkeit in der Hofschule Karls d. Gr.*, in *Testo e immagine nell'Alto Medioevo*, Spoleto 1994, vol. II, fig. 44.
- 31) *Ibidem*, fig. 45.
- 32) B. Kluge, *Numismatik des Mittelalters*, Berlin 2007, pp. 307-13, figs 10-3.
- 33) Underwood, *The Fountain of Life*, pp. 47-8.
- 34) Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm. 14000, cim. 55.
- 35) F. Mütterich - J. Gaehde, *Karolingische Buchmalerei*, München 1976, fig. 37.
- 36) Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, *Sacramentary of Henry II*, (1002-1014), MS Clm. 4456, fol. 11v. See: E. Klemm, *Die ottonischen und frühromanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, Wiesbaden 2004, vol. II, pl. 12.
- 37) Klauser, *Das Ciborium*, p. 203.
- 38) A. Khachatrian, *L'architecture arménienne du IV^e au VI^e siècle*, Paris 1971, pp. 76-7.
- 39) Apparently, the kings of such titles sought to show more power in their positions indicating that they received their authority from heaven and not by people, for this reason, it was sacred and constant. The best example of it is the name of the chinese title given by chinese emperors, which is literally translated as «The Sons of Heaven» who appeared to be as intermediaries between heaven (God) and mankind.
- 40) Khachatrian, *L'architecture arménienne*, p. 77.
- 41) McKenzie, *The Architecture*, p. 370.
- 42) Reudenbach, *Karolingische und Ottonische Kunst*, p. 437.
- 43) Bandmann, *Beobachtungen*, pp. 20, 22, 28.
- 44) McKenzie, *The Architecture*, p. 367.
- 45) In the gospels, the columns of *tempietto* are often depicted with such ornaments as the columns of the canon tables of the same manuscript. For example, the column-decoration of *tempietto* in the Etchmiadzin Gospels corresponds to those of the canon tables on the folios of 1v and 2r. Similarly, the decoration of the columns of *tempietto* and the canon tables of the Second Etchmiadzin Gospels, MS 9430 of the Matenadaran and MS 697 preserved in Vienna, correspond in their style.
- 46) Klauser, *Das Ciborium*, p. 200.
- 47) Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln*, p. 167.

- 48) S. Rebenich, *Jerome*, London-New York 2002, p. 101.
- 49) Klauser, *Das Ciborium*, p. 200.
- 50) As previously discussed, in 331, Constantine the Great ordered Eusebius of Caesarea to produce fifty examples of the Bible for new Christian churches that supposedly were the examples of “the Eusebian archetype”, Wessel, *Kanontafeln*, col. 928.
- 51) Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln*, p. 108 note 2; Klauser, *Das Ciborium*, p. 204; Bandmann, *Beobachtungen*, p. 17.
- 52) Underwood, *The Fountain of Life*, p. 95.
- 53) E. Klemm, *Die Kanontafeln der armenischen Handschrift Cod. 697 im Wiener Mechitaristenkloster*, in «Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte» 35/1-2 (1972), p. 90.
- 54) In the literature, besides “the Eusebian archetype” there is also the concept of “the Armenian archetype”, which, although, with its miniature-decoration have close relations with the Eusebian archetype but it was typical to the Armenian gospels (Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln*, p. 70 note 2; Wessel, *Kanontafeln*, col. 952). We assume, if there was indeed the Armenian archetype, then one of the main reasons of its existence could have been the Late Antique texts (most likely, their translations) widespread in Armenia, particularly, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus* by Philo of Alexandria, to which we have dedicated the second part of our article.
- 55) R. Amirkhanian, *Tempietto - Harutyantachar yev khachelutyant Goghgotha* [Tempietto - A Temple of Revival and Golgotha of Crucifix], in «Lraber hasarakakan gitutyunneri [Herald of the Social Sciences]» 2 (2004), pp. 3-20.
- 56) *Ibidem*, p. 11.
- 57) Bandmann, *Beobachtungen*, p. 21.
- 58) A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza - Bobbio)*, Paris 1958, pls XXII, XXIV, XXXIV ff.
- 59) G. Bandmann, *Zur Deutung des Mainzer Kopfes mit der Binde*, in «Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft» X (1956), pp. 163-4.
- 60) R. Shmerling, *Xudožestvennoe oformlenie gruzinskoj rukopisnoj knigi IX-XI vv.*, T'bilisi 1979, p. 31.
- 61) Bandmann, *Beobachtungen*, p. 21.
- 62) Der Nersessian, *The Date*, p. 352.
- 63) *Ibidem*, note 92.
- 64) After the 10th century, almost three centuries later the *Sacrifice of Isaac* appears again in the Armenian miniature, particularly in the Vaspurakan schools of painting: G. Grigoryan, *Isahaki zobaberutyant patkeragrutyuny yev khorhrdabanutyuny hay manrankarchutyant mej* [The Iconography of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* in Medieval Armenian Miniature], in «Etchmiadzin amsagir [Etchmiadzin Monthly]» 8 (2012), pp. 94-5.
- 65) *Ibidem*, fig. 1.
- 66) B. Narkiss - M. Stone - A. Sanjian, *Armenische Kunst. Die faszinierende Sammlung des armenischen Patriarchats in Jerusalem*, Stuttgart-Zürich 1980, fig. 43.
- 67) Buschhausen - Buschhausen, *Das Evangeliar Codex*, p. 58 (6v).
- 68) Yerevan, Matenadaran, MS 6342, fol. 8v. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Karen Matevosyan, the head of the department of Art History in Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, for his support of providing me with information about this miniature.
- 69) J. Leroy (introd.) - S. Wright - O. A. Jager (texts), *Ethiopia. Illuminated manuscripts*, Paris 1961, pls VII, XXVIII.
- 70) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena: Libri videlicet quatuor in Genesim, Libri duo in Exodum, Sermo unus de Sampsonem, Alter de Jona, Tertius de tribus angelis Abraamo apparentibus. Opera hactenus inedita ex Armenia versione antiquissima ab ipso originali textu Graeco ad verbum stricte exequuta saeculo V*, in Old Armenian with the Latin translation and edition by M. Augereants (Aucher), Venetiis 1826.
- 71) Philo of Alexandria (Philo Judaeus) was a Jew author of the 1st century in Alexandria whose philosophy introduce the combination of the ideologies of Judaism and Hellenism. His exegetical method and the concept of the *Logos* have greatly impacted on the Early Christianity.
- 72) D. T. Runia, *Philo - Alexandrian and Jew, in Exegesis and Philosophy. Studies on Philo of Alexandria*, Aldershot 1990, p. 6.
- 73) G. Kweta, *Sprache, Erkennen und Schweigen in der Gedankenwelt des Philo von Alexandria*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, p. 100.
- 74) In Old Armenian, the word “*khoran*” is polisemantic that has the following meanings: 1) altar, 2) tent, 3) pavilion, 4) canon table, 5) court having a cupola, 6) table or bema, 7) church (temple of God), etc.: G. Avedikian - K. H. Surmelian - M. Avgerian, *Nor bargirk haykazian lezvi* [New Dictionary of the Armenian Language], vol. I, Venice 1836, p. 972.
- 75) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena*, p. 529.
- 76) *Ibidem*, pp. 529-30.
- 77) Klauser, *Das Ciborium*, p. 203.
- 78) Gamber, *Sancta sanctorum*, p. 8.
- 79) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena*, p. 529.
- 80) *Ibidem*, p. 530.
- 81) Bandmann, *Beobachtungen*, p. 22 note 63.
- 82) L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, t. II, *Iconographie de la Bible. Ancien Testament*, Paris 1956, p. 79.
- 83) K. Weitzmann - H. Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art*, Washington 1990, p. 57, figs 4, 80.
- 84) Sh. Laderman, *Images of Cosmology in Jewish and Byzantine Art. God's Blueprint of Creation*, Leiden-Boston 2013, p. 192.
- 85) The text of Pseudo-Philo, also known as *Biblical Antiquities* or *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, is an imaginative retelling of the Old Testament stories dating from the 1st century which was later translated into Greek and Latin.
- 86) Laderman, *Images*, p. 189.
- 87) C. Bertelli (ed.), *Die Mosaiken. Ein Handbuch der musivischen Kunst von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1989, p. 82.
- 88) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena*, p. 529.
- 89) Gamber, *Sancta sanctorum*, p. 7.
- 90) P. Tovey (ed.), *The Liturgy of St James as presently used*, Cambridge 1998, p. 3.

- 91) M. Barker, *Fragrance in the Making of Sacred Space. Jewish Temple Paradigms of Christian Worship*, in A. Lidov (ed.), *Hierotopy. Comparative Studies of Sacred Spaces*, Moscow 2009, p. 74.
- 92) C. Kraeling, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos. Final report, VIII, part I: The Synagogue*, New Haven 1956, p. 11.
- 93) Particularly, those scenes of the Old Testament are spread in the painting of catacombs that demonstrate the biblical personages saved by faith (Noah, Abraham-Isaac, Daniel, etc.). Supposedly, in this way, they sought to indicate the faith of the deceased and, by this, to expect salvation by God as He, previously saved the personages drawn in the frescoes: A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: a Study of Its Origins*, Princeton 1968, pp. 10-1, 14-5.
- 94) «Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham» (*Gal 3, 7*).
- 95) Kraeling, *The Excavations*, p. 58; E. Kessler, *Art Leading the Story: the "Aqedah" in Early Synagogue Art*, in L. I. Levine - Z. Weiss (ed.), *From Dura to Sepphoris. Studies in Jewish Art and Society in Late Antiquity*, Portsmouth 2000, p. 81.
- 96) Weitzmann - Kessler, *The Frescoes*, p. 155 note 8.
- 97) M. Martin, *Observations on the Paintings of the Exodus Chapel, Bagawat Necropolis, Kharga Oasis, Egypt*, in *Byzantine Narrative. Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*, Melbourne 2006, pp. 236-7, fig. 22.
- 98) *Ibidem*, p. 236.
- 99) Kraeling, *The Excavations*, p. 61.
- 100) Gamber, *Sancta sanctorum*, p. 7.
- 101) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena*, p. 530.
- 102) In Old Armenian, the word "seghan" (table) is translated as an altar, sacrificial altar: R. Ghazarian, *Grabari bararan* [Dictionary of Grabar (Old Armenian)], vol. II, Yerevan 2000, p. 450.
- 103) In the Armenian text the word "imanali" has been used which is translated as «mental, spiritual that can be perceived only by help of mind»: R. Ghazarian, *Grabari bararan* [Dictionary of Grabar (Old Armenian)], vol. I, Yerevan 2000, p. 510.
- 104) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena*, p. 530.
- 105) Barker, *Fragrance*, p. 75.
- 106) *Ibidem*.
- 107) *Ibidem*, pp. 74-5.
- 108) *Ibidem*, p. 75.
- 109) Ghazaryan, *Meknutiunq*, p. 264.
- 110) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena*, pp. 534-5.
- 111) Barker, *Fragrance*, p. 77.
- 112) Amirkhanian, *Tempietto*, pp. 3-20.
- 113) *Ibidem*, pp. 529-30.
- 114) Khachatrian, *L'architecture*, p. 79, fig. 123; Amirkhanian, *Tempietto*, p. 10.
- 115) Philonis Judaei *Paralipomena Armena*, pp. 530-1.
- 116) J. Hall, *Dictionnaire des mythes et des symboles*, Paris 1994, p. 295; S. Dittrich - L. Dittrich, *Lexikon der Tiersymbole*, Petersberg 2005, pp. 348-9.
- 117) Ghazaryan, *Meknutiunq*, p. 45; Stepanos Syunetsi, *Meknutiunq khoranats* [Commentary on Canon Table], in *Matenagirq Hayots* [Armenian Classical Authors], vol. VI (8th century), Antelias 2007, pp. 556-7.