

## HISTORICAL, APOCRYPHAL, AND THEOLOGICAL SOURCES FROM THE ARMENIAN CHURCH ABOUT APOSTLE THOMAS AND INDIA

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Nowadays, the Indian Church is undoubtedly one of the great apostolic Churches founded by an apostle, as it was the case for the Armenian Church, during the extraordinary missionary movement that took place in the second third of the first century A.D., a peaceful and free movement that reached a far greater part of the ancient world than we had imagined. Besides, that Church presents the rare trait of having seen all its manuscripts taken and destroyed by other Christians, the Portuguese, who wanted to Latinize that Church and enforce a Roman Catholicism,<sup>1</sup> which caused public burnings similar to those we saw under Hitler and also in Turkey, under Erdogan.

In the absence of sufficient and old enough direct sources, the historian has to rely on three kinds of indirect sources:

- the sources that were discovered after that period of destruction,
- the known sources that were re-interpreted after having been ignored so far, due to misinterpretation,
- and the analysis of the constitution of a new corpus in other traditions, which allowed a better understanding of the image this Church conveyed.

We shall examine the three types of approaches that bear witness to the vitality of the studies relating to Thomas' presence in India.

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Study carried out within Chaire de recherche sur l'Eurasie with the support of the Auvergne Rhône Alpes Region.

The first aspect is illustrated by a review of the *Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 413*, the text of which attests that a Christian Church did exist in South India during the first decades of the second century, probably in the Port of Muziris.

The second axis in this study consists in re-interpreting some texts we already know, *Thomas' Acts* in our case, texts that have apparently been written in the Syriac language, before being translated into Greek and Armenian. Such an analysis is based on the latest archaeological findings in China designed in fact as a report by a Community of Widows in Maïchan (South Mesopotamia), an entry port for trade with the Indian sub-continent, according to the data collected in the course of exchanging information with the Indian Christians. Once it has been read over in this light, the text could upstream with amazing accuracy some relevant information concerning Thomas' missions in Asia.

The third and last aspect is probably the least dramatic one, as it is not based on one unique document we would have completely read or re-read. The point here is to collect several texts from the whole literature of a particular Church, the Armenian Church, in order to try and re-constitute the vision the Armenian Fathers had of Thomas' action in India as well as of the foundation of a Christian Church in this country. We shall open up our analysis by adding a few texts showing the Armenians' devotion to Thomas and his sanctuary in India. In that respect, we shall examine first the traditional Armenian texts about the apostle Thomas, insisting on the texts conventionally called apocryphal, which have been preserved in Armenian. Secondly, we shall examine the Armenian sources concerning the relationships between Armenia and India until the Islamic conquest, basing our study on a brief analysis of the Silk Road.

## 1. THOMAS IN THE APOCRYPHAL ARMENIAN TRADITION

The fundamental texts of the Armenian tradition have been partly translated into Armenian, either from the Syriac or from the Aramaic languages. *Apostle Addai's Doctrine*, particularly, is a text written probably in the fifth century by an author otherwise unknown, Laboubna, Senaq's son.<sup>2</sup> The text is very famous since it relates the apocryphal correspondence exchanged between Jesus and Abgar, Manou's son, and king of Edessa.

### Special ties with Edessa

The text has been translated into Armenian at an unknown date, probably between the late fifth and seventh centuries. The latest person who translated it into French, V. Calzolari, has not proposed any particular dating, and simply stuck to a synthesis of the former dates mentioned. In fact, the

Armenian version is faithful enough, as far as the essential text is concerned, but it progressively deviates from it in the second part, as it just ignores the elements relating to the apostle's death, which makes us think that the apostle might as well have gone to Armenia after he had evangelized the Edessa Kingdom.

Laboubna, <i>Aposle Addai's Doctrine</i> <i>Syriac version, § 93</i>	Laboubna, <i>Aposle Addai's Doctrine</i> <i>Armenian version, § 93</i>
They were all appalled by his [Addai's] dying. <sup>3</sup>	And they were all appalled by his departure and by the fact that he was leaving them. <sup>4</sup>

In this text, the importance given to Thomas is considerably limited and is actually reduced to the following unique mention:

Laboubna, <i>Apostle Addai's Doctrine</i> <i>Syriac version § 7</i>	Laboubna, <i>Apostle Addai's Doctrine</i> <i>Armenian version, § 7</i>
After Christ's Ascension into heaven, Judas Thomas sent to Abgar the apostle Addai who had been one of the seventy-two disciples. <sup>5</sup>	After Christ's Ascension to heaven, Judas Thomas sent to Abgar the apostle Addai who had been one of the seventy-two disciples. <sup>6</sup>

The text endorses the benediction of the Edessa city, a city that was never forayed by any army, thanks to a divine protection. But that situation changed, in A.D. 609, when the Sassanid armies invaded it. Then we had to do with another text, which was not translated into Armenian.<sup>7</sup> Actually, for the Edessenes, the apostle of Edessa is Thaddeus, not Thomas. The Armenian Fathers had very well understood it when they translated it into their own language and when they composed original plays about Thaddeus. Therefore, in *Armenian Thaddeus' martyrdom*, where Thomas is not even mentioned.

### **Meditation of the Gospels**

There was a strong relationship between Armenia and the Syrian part of Mesopotamia in the early Christian period, because St Gregory the Illuminator, the Armenian apostle, had two groups of young men who were planned to enter the priesthood learn the Syriac language. Later, about 405–407, Mesrop Marchot's, who invented the Armenian alphabet, went to Edessa and Amida,<sup>8</sup> with the hope of finding there the help that would allow him to complete his project for that discovering

or for inventing a new alphabet for the Armenian language, and he sent his disciples to that same area so that they may translate the Bible into Armenian.<sup>9</sup> Once the work had been completed, the Armenian prelates, when they had to deal with Syriac or Armenian manuscripts, translated a synthesis of the best Greek or Syriac Patristic texts. In the theological tradition of the School of Antioch, the Armenians used passages staging Thomas. In the Synoptic Gospels and *Acts of the Apostles*, Thomas' name appears only on the lists of the apostles: Matthew 10: 2–4), Mark 6:7, Luke 10:1 and Acts 1:16. In the *Gospel by St. John*, which is given much importance in the Armenian Church, he has been mentioned three times. There, Thomas displays enthusiasm and loyalty when announcing Christ's death and saying: "Let us also go, that we may die with him!" (John 11:16). His desire to fully understand is emphasized during the last supper (John 14:4). And finally, thanks to his disbelief, so useful for the people with no faith at all, he was able, after he was convinced, to go to the end of the world (John 20:24–29). The fact of having touched and believed through his experience of Christ's resurrected body became an evidence of Jesus' full humanity and, singularly, of the reality of his body. Read *The Book of Letters*, the Armenian Church's official Compendium, and you will understand that, between the fifth and the twelfth centuries, and maybe even later, the apostle Thomas held a prominent place in the theological discussions, more particularly in the Christological ones.<sup>10</sup> It is the same for *The Seal of Faith*, a treaty composed by the Catholicos Komitas (618–628) and designed as a compendium of quotes to be used in the course of Christological discussions.<sup>11</sup> Among the texts selected, those from St. John's Gospel include many quotes where Thomas is featured.<sup>12</sup>

### Thomas in Armenian Literature

Beyond this text from the biblical tradition, which can be read and understood, Thomas is not given a significant part in the windfall the Armenian translations represent. He does not even appear in *Mesrop Marchot's Life* - the first original work composed in Armenian by his disciple Gorion, between 441 and 443 - or in the first *History of Armenia*, or in *Buzandaran*, composed about 460. In Agathangelos's *History* wrote during the decade of 470, he plays only a minor role. That text, which served as a basis for the Armenian theology and the history of that population, comprises a narrative section where the author relates the story of the conversion of king Tiridates III, known as Tiridates the Great, and of his family and his Court, by Saint Gregory the Illuminator, towards 294–295.<sup>13</sup> Somewhere in the middle of that work, *Teaching of Gregory* was inserted. It is a pre-baptism speech, theoretically pronounced before Tiridates and his Court to prepare them for their baptisms. This famous theological piece,

which was progressively completed, until the early seventh century, mentions the apostle Thomas together with the other apostles in its § 686.<sup>14</sup> The enumeration is based on Mark 6:7 and Luke 10:1 gospels, as it mentions the apostles in pairs, but the order it follows is nearer to the one Matthew 10:2–4 chose. In any case, Thomas does not hold an important place in it, nor does Saint Bartholomew either.

But he is clearly designated as the apostle of India in the *Armenian canonical collection* (Կանոնադիր Հայրոց) compiled by the Catholicos Yovhannēs Awjneč'i: "Թովմաս ի Հնդկաց—Thomas [Apostle for the] Indians."<sup>15</sup>

In fact, we'll have to wait for Philon Tirakatsi (P'ilon Tirakac'i), in 695–696, as specified in the translation colophon,<sup>16</sup> for a translation into Armenian of Socrates Scholasticus' *Ecclesiastical History*. The history has been preserved in its Armenian translation in two census records, a short literal one, and a longer one leaving great scope for rewriting.<sup>17</sup> Both versions include chapter 67: "Concerning the shrine of the apostle Thomas and events at it."<sup>18</sup> This chapter will be food for thought for the Armenians and create a taste for the apostle. Movses Khorents'i (Movsēs Xorenc'i fifth or eighth century?), will use that text and the Armenian version of the *Apostle Addai's Doctrine* in his own *History of Armenia* (II 27–34, 33 mainly), which will strengthen further more that interest for worshipping the apostle<sup>19</sup>. Some parts of Stepanos Asoghik (Asofik) de Taron's *History*—he was a late tenth and early eleventh centuries historian—closely follow Movses Khorents'i version, and certain elements from *The Apostle Addai's Doctrine* have also been incorporated into it. To give an example, Jesus asks the apostle to write the letter in response to King Abgar.<sup>20</sup> He also mentions the fact that Armenia is a part of the mission that Thomas and Bartholomew have been entrusted with.<sup>21</sup> Finally, a quote by Thomas, in *Gospel of St. John's*<sup>22</sup> was used during the tenth century Christological controversies.<sup>23</sup> The tenth century historian, Thomas Arcrouni, reproduces the history of Christianization under the same scheme,<sup>24</sup> Thomas, after de ascension of Jesus sends Thaddaeus to Edessa. For this contemporaneous the Catholicos and historian Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i (899–929), the narration is the same.<sup>25</sup>

So, there are good grounds for considering that the tradition relating to Thomas was, for the Armenian Fathers, independent of Edessa, and that the only document evoking it is the revised Armenian version of *Addai's Doctrine*, which is regularly quoted. It is at least the way the Fathers would have understood it. The centerpiece relating to the apostle Thomas' case is with no contest and for all the Christian churches, *Thomas' Acts*, which were written in Syriac before being translated into Greek, Armenian, or into any other language.

### Thomas' Acts in Armenian tradition

The Armenian translation, which included *Thomas' Acts*, is no longer available. The Armenian tradition holds five apocryphal concerning Thomas; they were edited in the vast corpus of the *Extra-canonical apostolic sources* the Mekhitarist Priest Cherubin Tcherakian (Č'raķean) published in Venice in 1896 and 1904.<sup>26</sup> The first volume contained the texts dedicated to Peter and Paul, to Andrew, and to James and John. As for the second volume, it contained the texts concerning Philip Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Jesus' brother, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and the lists of all the apostles.

G. Tcherakian collected these texts in books of homilies (*tonakan*) from the Mekhitarists Fathers of the Venice and Vienna convents. The texts were completed with some other manuscripts, mainly from Jerusalem. They are therefore consistent with a specific style, abundantly represented in the Middle-Ages Armenian literature, which we would rather expect to have produced short texts partly reproducing some events in the saint's life while summing up the other ones, in order to have these texts read in the monasteries all along the liturgical year.

Dom Louis Leloir, from the Abbaye of Clerveaux, translated these two precious volumes into French with analysis. They appear in the volumes 3 and 4 of the *Apocryphorum Series* of the *Christianorum Corpus* edited by Brepols.<sup>27</sup> The texts we are interested in, referred as VII a (BHO 1211); VII b (BHO 1215); VII c (BHO 1212); VII d (BHO 1214) and VII e (BHO 1219), are collected in Volume 4.<sup>28</sup> The five texts comprise two sets, on the one hand, the VII a, VII b, VII c and VII e, which are revised excerpts or *Thomas' Acts* that have been abbreviated and condensed, the other set (VII d) being an Armenian composition.

This set of four volumes arises some comments. On the one hand, they all deal with a part of *Thomas' Acts*, the other Acts being at times abruptly summarized. Dom Louis Leloir has been able to prove that the whole set of texts, contrarily to what G. Garitte thought, are all dating back to a translation of *Thomas' Acts* that has not been kept in its complete form.<sup>29</sup>

For example, the same process occurred for Ireneus de Lyon's *Adversus Haereses*, his books I to III having partly survived only in some quotations, whereas his books IV and V have been entirely retained. On the other hand, the same researcher has shown that the Armenian version had probably been written from the original Syriac or Aramaic document, and not from the Greek version.<sup>30</sup> At last, confirming what we have already said, at no moment in this set of texts is there *any mention of the Edessa city*.

Here follows a table of the Acts and of them having been transmitted in the four Armenian works preserved:

Actes	§	Éd. Bonnet, P.	VII.a	VII.b	VII.c	VII.e
Acte I	1-16	99-124	x		x	x
Acte II	17-29	124-146	x		x	x
Acte III	30-38	147-156	x			
Acte IV	39-41	156-159	x			
Acte V	42-50	159-167				
Acte VI	51-61	167-178				
Acte VII	62-67	178-185	x		x	
Acte VIII	68-81	185-197	x		x	
Acte IX	82-118	197-229	(x)*			
Acte X	119-133	229-240				
Acte XI	134-138	240-245	x			
Acte XII	139-149	245-258	(x)**			
Acte XIII	150-154	259-263	(x)**			
Acte XIII	155-158	264-269		x		
Martyre	159-171	269-288		x		

\* The § 82-101 contents are condensed in four lines.

\*\* The § 139-149 contents are condensed in a few lines.

Reading the table requires some comments.

On one side, the reworking of the texts has been so important that now the entire Acts written in Armenian have been lost (V, VI and X). Similarly, in response to the use that was made of them, the texts essentially allow for a narrative leeway and the compilers have omitted the prayers and speeches, which are an important component of the original text. Such was the case for the famous hymn called "Hymn of the Pearl," whereas the Act 'VII, a' ends where the text begins. In the same way, the *Teshbuhta* featured in the Syriac text, right after the hymn called "Hymn of the Pearl," has not been retained either. On the other hand, the parts that have been best preserved are the Acts I and II and the account of the martyrdom (preserved in the Acts VII a, c, and e). The Acts VII and VIII have also been attested in Armenian. Our only regret is that the integral text is no longer available, but the passages preserved in several dozens of manuscripts prove that worshipping Thomas was a widespread tradition in the whole area of the Armenian plateau. Another sort of available text, called the *Synaxarions*, shows there was an Armenian devotion to Thomas, but before studying them, a last piece remains to be examined, the Act VII d.

Entitled *Discovery and Transfer to Armenia of Thomas' mortal remains* (BHO 1224), the text is an Armenian composition aiming at explaining how Thomas' remains were taken from India to Mesopotamia before the reign of Constantine (§ 3), and how, in Julian the Apostate times, the chest containing the relics was stolen by a General of the Sassanid army who thought he would find a treasure there. Since what he found were only bones, he just threw them at the feet of his horses, which at once became very agitated (§ 7–8). A man from his suite, called Joseph, had a vision. He collected the relics and went to Armenia to keep them safe from harm (§ 6,9–11). When he arrived there, he asked for being baptized (§ 12) and the relics were allotted to two monasteries, the Palivank monastery and the Saint-Thomas monastery, in Rešouni, south of the lake of Van, (§ 12–13). The story is also mentioned in the summary of the text VII e, from the Armenian collection. In that version, we learn that the Sassanid lord is Joseph (Usuf), who left Iran to carry away Thomas' relics and have them safe (§ V–VI).

This story is also mentioned in a third version, contained in the *hays-mavouk* (Armenian *synaxarion*). The *Armenian synaxarion* was originally a version translated from the Greek at the very beginning of the eleventh century, and it was progressively enriched with texts that were either composed or reworked. The text of that *synaxarion* was officially published in Constantinople in 1834. This edition was used by G. Bayan used for his French translation published in the *Oriental Patrology*.<sup>31</sup> It is a survey of the text VII, d. In some ways, it is more complete and more precise. That excerpt from the *haymavouk* (synaxarion) gives us the route Thomas followed:

“Իսկ ինքն երանելին թովմաս քարոզեաց Պարթեւաց եւ Մարաց՝ Պարսից եւ Կրմանաց, Բակտրիացոց եւ Մոգոց՝ մինչեւ ի Սինէացիս, ընդ ամենայն տեղիս առնելով նշանս եւ սքանչելիս անուամբն Քրիստոսի եւ դարձուցանելով զբազումս ի հաւատս ճշմարտութեան, հաստատելով եկեղեցիս եւ կարգելով պաշտօնեայս ի տեղիս տեղիս: Blessed Thomas preached Parthians and Medes, Persians and Kirmans, Backtraits, and Mages, and went all the way to China, performing miracles and marvels in the name of Christ, converting a lot of people to the true Faith, founding churches with their appointed religious officials in several countries.”<sup>32</sup>

The same text ends with a recall of the Armenian pilgrimage to Saint-Thomas' sanctuary in Chennai. We shall return to this later:

“Եւ գերեզման սուրբ առաքելոյն է հոշակաւար ուքտատեղի մինչեւ ցայտոր ժամանակի, յորմէ բազում բժշութիւնք կատարին ի վարս Քրիստոսի: The holy apostle's tomb is a pilgrimage place famous to this day, where many healings occur in the name of Christ.”<sup>33</sup>

Recently, the Holy See of Etchmiadzin has published, under the direction of the Archbishop Eghia Petrosyan a new version of the *Synaxarion*, in twelve volumes, including notes to be read during one month of the Liturgy.<sup>34</sup> To each text is presented in a synoptic presentation of six versions with all the manuscripts that contain it, but they unfortunately lack a critical apparatus. It is however a stunning working tool. The story of Apostle Thomas appears in the Volume of October.<sup>35</sup>

This first series of texts bears evidence of the progressive rise in the worship of the apostle Thomas and it is largely similar to the worship of the Armenian Apostle Saint Bartholomew. The series also confirms that the Armenian Church possessed a version of *Thomas' Acts*, large excerpts of which have come to us. At last, for the Armenian Fathers, Thomas is, above all, India's apostle and his links with Edessa are insubstantial.

## **2. THE ARMENIAN-INDIAN RELATIONSHIPS UNTIL THE CONQUEST BY ISLAM**

### **The Silk Roads**

The historical relationships between Armenia and the Indian sub-continent go back a long way, dating back to the Achaemenid period at the latest. In fact, the King of kings, Darius I (521–486 B.C.) reorganized and developed what was called the Royal Road. This road was built and maintained in order to serve as a link between the main cities of the empire and facilitate a free circulation of people and goods. It went from Susa to Sardis and covered 1677 miles.<sup>36</sup> It crossed the Euphrates River at the level of Southern Armenia, and three stations had been established in that country: Ad Aros Tomisa, Kharpet, and Amida (Cf. Figure 1). In the first century A.D., the Greek geographer Strabo indicated that the road went on from Sardis and up to India,<sup>37</sup> thus being an important communication channel between both countries, which was part of a larger network called the Silk Roads.

May be I should remind you of what is usually called the Silk Road, which in fact was a triple network of distinct trade routes (Cf. Figure 2). The main roads started from Chang'an (Xi'an), built in the Han's period (206 B.C.) to the end of the Tang period (A.D. 904, probably with some interruption periods).<sup>38</sup> On the Han Chinese territory (206 B.C. to A.D. 220), there was a relay station every nine or twelve miles on all the land routes. On that Silk Road, we can mention the Chinese cities of Dun-Huang, Zhang-Xie or Wu-wei.

The *central road* is best known. It is a transcontinental land road that went across the Pamir high mountains via high altitude passes, two of

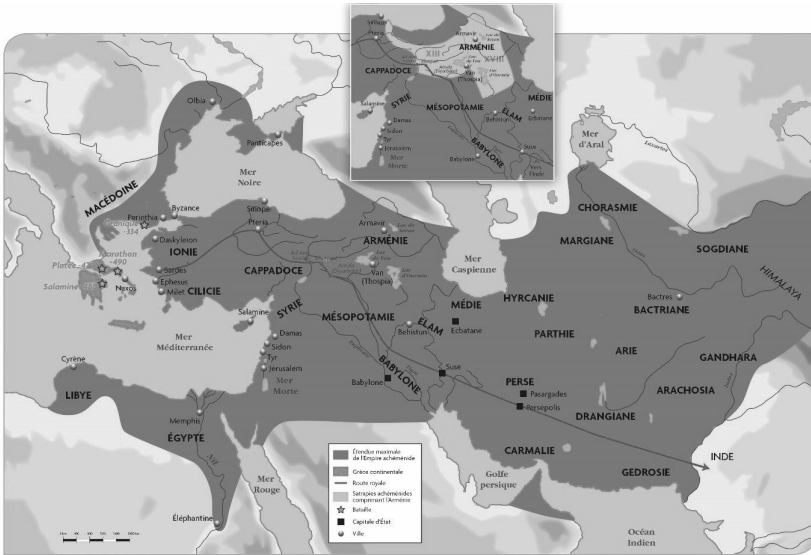
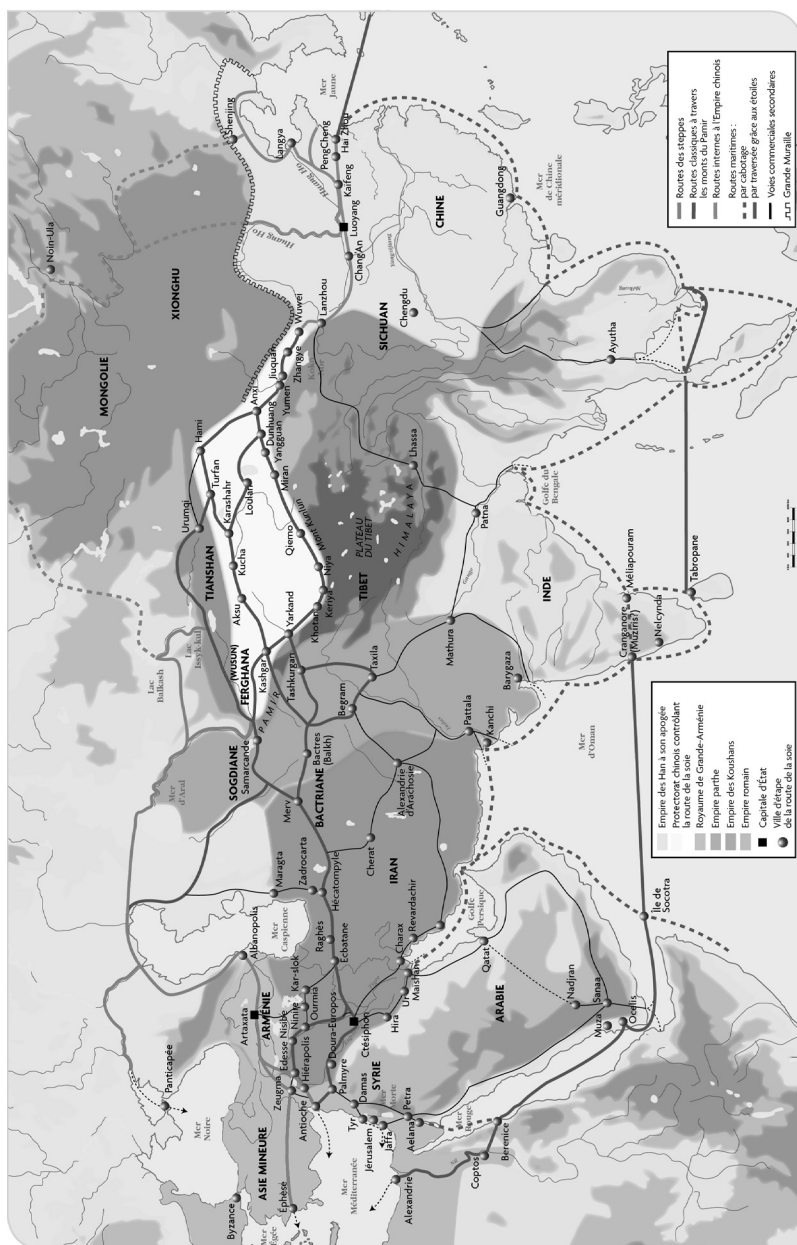


Fig. 1: the Achaemenid empire, under the reign Darius I (521–486 B.C.)<sup>39</sup>

which being at an altitude of about 16,000 feet. Travelling that road meant you had to transfer the goods twice, in order to use animals capable of climbing that high while carrying a heavy burden. This route, which made the Kingdom of Parthia a mandatory intermediary between China and the Mediterranean coastline of Antioch, in Syria, was not very convenient, finally, due to the high passes it went through. So, it was cut off during the invasion of a Yuezhi tribe from Pamir around A.D. 20 and again, later, during the invasion of their successors the Kushans.

Then, there was a *sea road*. It went around India, crossed the Red Sea, and went up the Nile River as far as Alexandria in Egypt (cf. Figure 3). The Greeks on one side, and the Indians and the Chinese on the other side, controlled that route from the second century B.C. onwards. Sailing it depended on the monsoon and on its required winds, but it also represented a constant sinking risk for the other boats, and a rotting risk for the goods transported.<sup>40</sup>

The *northern road*, or the Steppe's Road, as René Grousset calls it, went through the Northern part of the Caspian. Opened during the winter months, it led to Greater Armenia. It served as a direct way to the fairs organized in the capital city of Great-Armenia, Artaxata.<sup>41</sup> It was in fact the only all-weather road in place, since no pass there would be higher than a mile. Therefore, this route must have absorbed a significant part in the global trade of Chinese goods. During the winter, the frozen ground offered a trafficable trail and the streams were still safer ways, whereas in



*Fig. 2: The Silk Roads in the middle of the first century*<sup>42</sup>

summer, thawing made this transit route impracticable. So, the caravans had to reach Armenia before the thawing period. This is the probable context in which the Greek geographer Strabo, a contemporary of the emperor Augustus, could have written the following passage, which had been unsatisfactorily explained so far:



Fig. 3: The Silk Road (sea road) from Alexandria to Berenike<sup>43</sup>

In the farther provinces of the North of Armenia, an enormous quantity of snow will fall down, apparently due to the proximity of the Caucasus and the Iberia or the Colchis Mountains. It is not unusual, as some people assure, that entire caravans were caught in avalanches when the snow fell over the passes or the narrow routes of the mountains, and they would stay buried there. But in order to be prepared for that risk, all travellers, they say, would not forget to carry with them long sticks that, in case they had that sort of accident, they would push forward to attain the higher levels and be able to breathe and warn those who would come after them, and who would inevitably help them and save their lives by pulling them out.”<sup>44</sup>

The Northern part of the Armenian Plateau was particularly subject to avalanches when the first snows came or at the end of winter, when the snow melted. The passage evoked probably concerned the late arrival on the Armenian Plateau of caravans from China, at the beginning of Spring.

### **The Apostles Bartholomew's and Thomas' preaching**

The existence of the three silk roads helps better understand the obvious apostolic dispersal to the Eastern world. The second chapter of the *Andrew's Acts* offers, according to our analysis,<sup>45</sup> the most complete version of the world having been split among the apostles:

They stood up and drew lots to know who was going to “spread the word” and where they would go and preach to which population. Peter's lot was the coastal area, James' and John's were the eastern area, Philip's lot fell on the cities of Samaria and Asia, Bartholomew's was Albanopolis, Matthew got Parthia and the Murmenide city, Thomas's lot was the Greater Armenia and India, Lebbeus and Thaddeus were assigned Beronicide, Simon the Canaanite was assigned the Barbarian countries and, after each of them had got his lot drawn, Andrew got Bythinia, Lacedomonian and Achaia.”<sup>46</sup>

The apostle Thomas was assigned Parthia—which also included Armenia in A.D. 66—and Asia. He was sent to the East together with Bartholomew. The two apostles had to part when they realized that the Kushans had blocked the central road. Thomas went southwards and headed for the sea road, in order to go to India and then to China. As for Bartholomew, he tried to avoid the Kushans by going northwards. He probably went across Armenia, since his evangelical activity there was reported in sources from the entire Christian world. He was probably put to death in *Albanopolis*, a city of the Southern Caucasian Mountains.<sup>47</sup> The place was one of the last stages before he was to go around Southern Caucasus, in the coastal plain of the Caspian region. That is where he must have suffered martyrdom while he was considering going further on the Steppe Road.



Fig. 4: The probable itinerary of the apostles Thomas and Bartholomew<sup>48</sup>

### The Armenian missionaries in Europe and Asia (fourth–seventh centuries)

One of the consequences of converting Armenia to Christianity was that it gave momentum to the preaching of the Christian religion in the East about A.D. 402, as attested by the Greek historian Sozomenus's *Church history*:

Then, among the neighbouring populations, religion and belief gathered pace and people came in greater numbers, and I think that the beginning of the conversion of the Persians was owing to their intercourse with the Osroenians and the Armenians, for it is likely that they would converse with such Divine men and make experience of their virtue.<sup>49</sup>

The Armenian policy, as Tiridates' letter we mentioned earlier confirms it, was a groundswell movement in the history of that Church. Missionaries were sent to the four cardinal points, to Georgia and the Caucasus, as well as to Persia, right from Gregory the Illuminator's lifetime, and then to Europe (Italy, Gaul, and Germany).<sup>50</sup> The vast Asia also experimented the itinerant preaching of the Armenian missionaries. About the years 550, the White Huns (the Hephthalites) were a mission land for an Armenian bishop named Macarius. On two occasions, and together with his group of priests, the bishop devoted himself to evangelizing the Huns, as reported in the contemporary text that follows:

After twice seven years came another bishop named Macarius, who was Armenian too. He behaved rightly and came voluntarily, and some priests came along with him. He (Macarius) built a church of bricks, planted trees, sowed various sorts of vegetables, performed miracles,

and christened a lot of people. Seeing there was something new, the chiefs there wondered, they were very pleased with these men and revered them, each one of the chiefs inviting them in his own region to see his people, and pleading for him to teach them. And see! They are still there.”<sup>51</sup>

We can't exclude the possibility that an echo of the preaching survived in Central Asia; it could partly explain the conversion of the Keraït tribe in 1009, a major event that played its part at the time of the Mongolian epic of the thirteenth century. The Keraïts' Khan asked Ebedjesu, Merv's metropolitan, to find a priest or a bishop that would baptize him. The letter he wrote to the patriarch of Bagdad, John VI, has been kept and is dated 1009.<sup>52</sup> We would all the more expect that the bond between the Armenian Church and the Keraït region had remained vivid, because in 1324, in what is now called the Kyrghyztan, in the Pishpek oasis, John the Armenian served as a bishop.<sup>53</sup> The epitaph on his tomb, written in Armenian and summarized in Syriac, was actually discovered in the nineteenth century.

### Knowing the Indian geography

The movements of men and goods between India and Armenia helped the Armenians gain a rather precise knowledge of India and its *Geography*. So, the geographer Ananias of Shirak, who died in 690, composed a vast geography after the text of the learned Greek Claudius Ptolemy. The text survived in the form of two reviews, a short one and a longer one to which were added some prints, which have now been lost. India is mentioned nine times in the whole text and here is the most complete description Ananias de Shirak gives of it:

The thirty-fifth country of Asia is India, east of Ariana and Scythia by the Imaeus Mountains. [It extends] from there as far as the Aemodae Mountains and the border of China, and divided into two parts east and west of the River Ganges. Ptolemy shows seven rivers here, each with its own name, [...] The Gymnosophists feed only on fruit, rice, and sugar; they are called the Shaman and Brahmin nation by the Persians. They abstain from women and meat and in the morning, they worship the sun saying: “We believe you [to be God], but if there is any other superior to you, to him do we render our workshop.” Here are found animals with the Persians call *šarpašank*. There are seventy-two nations east to Granges River [extending] as far as the land of Sinae. Here are other districts called the “Golden” and the “Silver.” In their capital are found crows, white parrots, and bearded roosters. Two other districts are also called the “Golden” and the “Silver” and another, the “Copper” district. Here are found elephants and tigers which they say are subdued by magic and are as fast as the wind. Here are found peper, and aromatics [such

as] *boačarš*, *axiri-boyek*, *goziboyek*, *agisboyeak*, *cassia*, *dwalak*, *šahaworar*, *k'akołak*, witch eats camphor, sandal, *nayiboyeak*, several medicines and *bažark*, the rat called *bēšmašk*, which eats dealdy roots called *biš* from which antidotes are made ; and large ants in the places where gold-dust is found. Here is an animal [called the] *sawarsan* which can kill an elephant with its tongue and then carry it on a kind of hook which it has on its back, and when it hears any animal cry out, it ejects blood. The unicorn is also found and griffons, which come from the Sinae, are raised here in iron cages. They say that the *p'grē* attacks the griffon and, carried away by fury, both throw themselves into the sea and drown. They say that there are savage peoples here with hard, arrow-proof skins and *Gndandiarik'* who are half, or at least one-third, non-Indian; and seven [other people].

The thirty-sixth country, Taprobane, is a large island of India and the largest island in the entire world. From north to south is 1,100 miles long and from east to west 150 miles wide. It lies beyond India and is surrounded by the Indian Sea. Rice is found there which is [a kind of] millet; ginger; beryl, hyacinth and other precious stones, and also much gold and silver and elephants and tigers. It has two mountains in the center, one called Galiba, which is the source of two rivers, and the other called Malaea, which is the source of three rivers. Here are found imperishable woods, ginger, fine pearls, and the most precious stones. There are two cities, they say, 150 miles apart. One is called Manakor and one called Royan. Between them is a mountain named Gaylase from which flows a river in which the most precious stones are found. There are twelve nations in the north who always dress their hair like that of women. Two of these nations are called the *Hac'acank'* and the *Hac'aink'*.

In the south the plains are used for pasturing elephants. They say that one nation which dwells in this country is made up of women and that at a certain time of the year dogs come among the elephants and have intercourse with the women who give birth to twins, one [male] puppy and the other a [human] girl. The sons cross the river to their fathers while the girls remain with their mothers. But I believe that this is just an allegory for they say the same about the Amazons in the Book of Alexander [the Great]. The allegory means that they are a quick-turning (?) people. Ptolemy says that there are temples of the moon in the southern extremity of the island. There are 1,378 other islands around Taprobane, some inhabited and others uninhabited but of which [only] nineteen names [are known to us]. The Equator crosses the south of this large island.<sup>254</sup>

The description is far richer than the initial text by Claudius Ptolemy, to such an extent that it is impossible to translate a great number of Indian productions because they have not been attested anywhere else. Such movements don't seem to have been totally disrupted by the Islam conquest because a precious Armenian document was copied in the twelfth century and is now kept in the Matenadaran of Yerevan. It contains a review of the distances the routes between Armenia and India

represented, and it mentions the names of hundreds of towns. The text is a part of the itineraries compiled between the ancient Christianity times and the modern times; itineraries designed to help prepare journeys to the sub-continent. Besides, and as an example, in the lists of the Eastern cities the Armenians would go to, we can read:

Nakhebtin is a big city with many Christian inhabitants and several churches. All these cities border the sea. From Nakhebtin we can reach Schabatin, and there, people can go to the holy apostle Thomas' tomb. The name of the city is Malab; it is at the seaside, and some Christians are still living there. From Malab, travellers go to Zouzer, a big rich city with many shops. In Malab, there is the holy apostle Thomas' tomb; in all the fountains there are leeches; only the water from the fountain located next to the saint's tomb is pure, fresh, and free from leeches."<sup>55</sup>

These itineraries have not been compiled, suggested, written, and copied without a purpose. Pilgrimages took place there, between the Armenian Plateau and Saint Thomas' sanctuary in Chennai. We have already mentioned them at the end of the note dedicated to Saint Thomas in the *haysmavouk* (synaxarion).

#### **Thomas Cana, around 345**

An important event in the ancient history of Christianity in India provided the first written evidence of such a pilgrimage. Being in Europe did not make it really possible to establish a precise enough analysis of this issue, but the one possible thing is that the Christians from the South of India apparently affirm that they do have some evidence of the visit of a certain Thomas of Jerusalem, an Armenian merchant who would have been there around A.D. 345 and settled down near the apostle's tomb, together with four hundred Christians from seventy-two families.<sup>56</sup> The fact that Armenians came there at a time when Shapour II was reigning and ordered many Christians to be put to death seems to be quite likely. The fact is notably attested in Portuguese sources, the two most ancient sources of which are the following ones:

Padre Alvaro Penteado, between 1515–1518, wrote to the king in Portugal:

The establishment of these Christians, both from Cranganore and Coulao when they all came following St. Thomas, was brought about in this way: leaving Coulao, about which your Highness must have certain information, there went forth from Cranganore an Armenian merchant of advanced years who had no hope of ever returning to his homeland; he bought a piece of deserted land with its revenues from the ruler of those parts, both of the water and of the land, according to his landmarks which are still in existence; it is said that he married, and having had two

sons, the first became a priest and the heir to those revenues, which upon his death he left to the church, which today bears the name St. Thomas, and likewise he bought native men and women, whom he converted and married and protected and helped. His second son became a Justice of the Peace.”<sup>57</sup>

Gaspar Correa, who lived in Goa between from 1512 to his death (between 1561 and 1583), mention named Thomas Chanaan.<sup>58</sup> About the same person Padre Francisco de Sousa, SJ, was written:

This Armenian had numerous descendants, some from his legitimate wife, one Nayra Christian, others from a concubine: the legitimate descendants peopled Cranganor, Caturte, Cottete, Diamper, and other places: the bastards dispersed over other areas: and all greatly spread the Christianity of the Mountains. And inasmuch as all the other Christians with the exception of those in Travancor and Todamala were allied to these two families through marriage, there resulted two distinct groups which were at such variance in matters of honour that they would not intermarry. [...]

Further adding that numerous Armenians who went to Malabar intermarried.<sup>59</sup>

The name of a man close to Thomas Cana, “Siphir,” is an adulteration of the name “Sapor,” which takes us back to the Sassanid period, more likely than to the Muslim domination.<sup>60</sup> Anyway, this Armenian merchant, Thomas, who became a pilgrim, would have received from the local king some privilege carved on the copper blades that were kept there until 1603 but were lost when being sent to Portugal. The privilege granted them a right to settle down on a land where they would build the city of Kuramaklur. The migration is supposed to have favored the Christian presence in the area and it created a solid foundation for future relationships with Armenia. I would like to get more information about it.<sup>61</sup>

### **Gregory of Tallard, around A.D. 380**

The second fact I want to evoke is the arrival in the French Alps, in Tallard, near Gap, around 405, of an Armenian bishop who died there. He had been expelled from his country and his bishopric by a Sassanid invasion in 370. The Latin historian Ammianus Marcellinus, a contemporary of the fact, reported the event:

Šapuh gathered his considerable forces and he largely destroyed Armenia, looting openly whatever was there.”<sup>62</sup>

An Armenian source written around 460, the *Buzandaran*, completed this too short evocation. He added that the Sassanid armies first besieged the fortress where the queen, Pharandzê, was confined:



Fig. 5: Gregory of Tallard setting off on a pilgrimage to India<sup>63</sup>

Then Šapuh the king of Persia sent two of his princes one of whom was called Zik and the other Karēn, with [a lot of] men against the realm of Armenia [...] They ravaged and devastated the entire land.”<sup>64</sup>

Then began the systematic invasion of the whole country.<sup>65</sup> Part of the population was massacred and the other part made captive; “As for the prisoners, they were sent either to Assyria or to Khuzestan.” Bishop Gregory was apparently taken to Khuzestan (Susian), but he soon left it to continue his exile, which became a real pilgrimage:

Having to flee away, Gregory consulted with the five persons who had shared danger with him about the place where they should go and seek refuge. History has transmitted only the names of four bishops, John, Paul, Mark, and Polycarp. They agreed they would go through India, Gregory’s intention being to go and weep on Saint Thomas’ tomb, to cry over his Church’s woes and to draw on the supernatural force he needed to sustain the terrible assault the infernal spirit has engaged against him.”<sup>66</sup>

The rest of his journey through Asia comprises six episodes, the four first ones concerning his journey to Chennai, but making an analysis of that journey is no easy task.

#### *I - A wreck in Bactria?*

The ship, which was carrying the bishops who had run away, ran aground along a not very hospitable shore, due to a tempest.<sup>67</sup> Having

no information about the moment of the year when the voyage began, we cannot suppose what pitfalls they had to face. Navigation on the Persian Gulf being rather easy, it is very unlikely that the tempest may have happened while they were sailing along the Iranian coast. Besides, we are led to suppose that the first stage in their voyage was planned beyond the Sassanid kingdom or at least in its margins that were dominated by vassal sovereigns. So, the action of the run-away bishops must be placed beyond these regions. In Iran, indeed, they were considered as deportees fleeing their exile site. The wreck may rather have occurred along the Mekran coastline (the current Pakistan). In that region, there were actually peoples that Christianity saw as pagans, as they worshipped idols in temples. But the local sources made available to me don't mention any preaching mission in the years 380.

## II - *Tolobia, or Northern India*

The second country where the Christian Armenians stopped was called Tobbia.<sup>68</sup> It is not easy to find the name hidden under this heading. In any case, with its poisonous snakes, the area described evokes the abundant vegetation of Northern India. Hinduism being established in the region, it left little room for a Christian preaching, about that not a single word is said anyway.

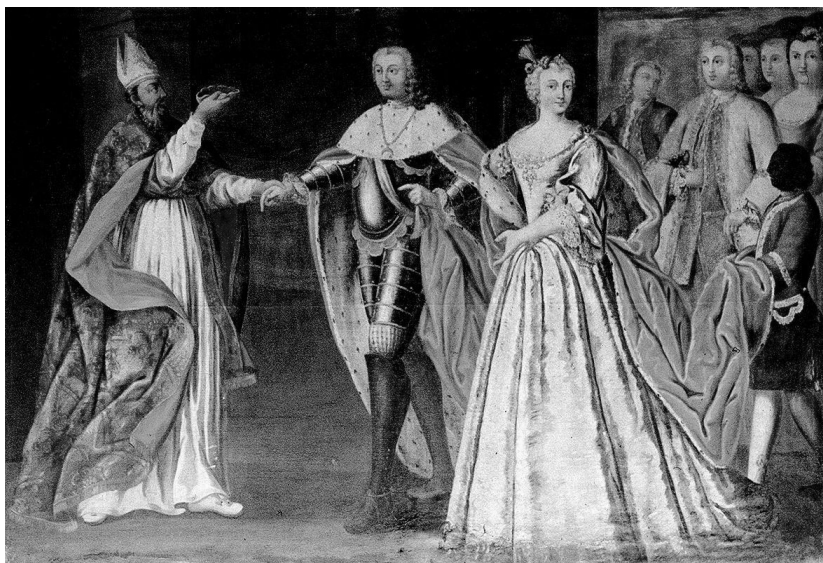
## III - *Nobia, or Southern India*

As they continued their journey, they reached the South of India where, in the current Kerala area, the population had long been Christianized.<sup>69</sup> There, the hospitable attitude of the population was probably due to their Christian character, but also to the religious and business relationships they maintained with the country the bishops came from.

## IV - *Arrival in Chennai (Madras)*

The description of their arrival in Madras, now called Chennai, was clearly influenced by what was written in the Portuguese reports.<sup>70</sup> However, the chapel that had been built at the top of Saint-Thomas' Mount is a fact. Similarly, in the current church, which incorporates an older building, an ancient cross with an inscription written in Syriac is still above the altar. It may be there as a memorial, or as a representation of the cross that is mentioned in paragraph 39. The tears the bishop shed over the apostle's tomb are only the *cliché* they usually used in such occasions. The recall of the apostle's death is made in terms so general that they can't allow any historical or

literary analysis. Yet, they assuredly correspond to the traditional account that was made of the apostle's death.<sup>71</sup>



*Fig. 6: Gregory of Tallard baptizing and then marrying an Indian prince<sup>72</sup>*

We have to suppose that this pilgrimage was sufficiently frequent to enable a regular transmission of information:

The new danger Gregory and his companions had just avoided increased their trust in a divine providence watching over them, and it was so obvious to them that they handed their fates and safeguard to it and fearlessly continued their journey. The rumour that Gregory had affected many conversions among the idolaters and of the miracles that proved the holy character of his mission had been spread ahead of him in Annice, boosting the impatience people had to see him again.<sup>73</sup>

After they had achieved their pilgrimage, the Armenian pilgrims regained the Mediterranean region via a road that is not precisely reported. Their intention was to go on a pilgrimage in the Holy Land [§ 54-74]. Afterwards, Gregory headed for the Latin world and walked as far as Tallard, where his life ended after he had preached the Word in the region.

We have carefully studied that *vita* and edited it in French, and we have come to the conclusion that even if it had been progressively magnified, its historical background could not have been invented and that it really corresponded to a journey through the Indian sub-continent. In the documents attached to this communication, there is a visual graph of the whole journey Gregory undertook through Asia.

Beyond these journeys, there were attested relationships at an ecclesial and theological level.

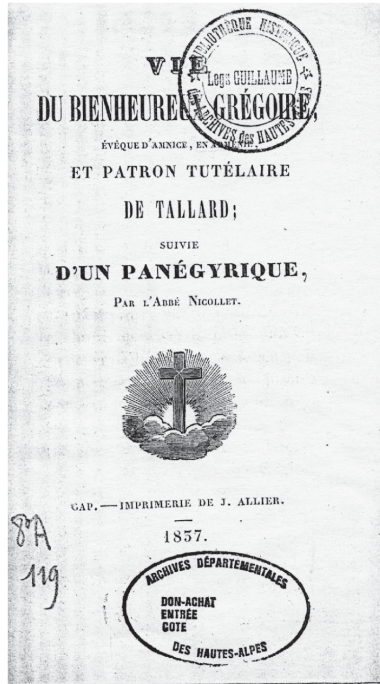


Fig. 7: Edition of the life of Gregory of Tallard by Father Nicollet<sup>74</sup>

### 3. THE ARMENIAN CATHOLICOS SAHAK III DSOROPORETSI RECOGNIZES THE INDIANS' ORTHODOXY

Now we must come to a top-class document. Earlier, we have too briefly evoked the foundation of a Christian Church in Armenia, under the leadership of a Catholicos, Saint Gregory the Illuminator, at the end of the third century. The Catholicos of Vagharshapat—a city later called Etchmiadzin—was, and still is, despite the vagaries of history, the supreme guide of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Catholicos was the leader of the bishops he consecrated, and he also was the supreme legal recourse and the guardian of the Doctrine. The symbol of the unity of all the members of that Church was the consecration of the Holy Chrism, the *Myron*, by the Catholicos, who would do it at regular intervals in the presence of the bishops. Being the guardian of the Doctrine, he would send bishops to the ecumenical councils—cf. the Council of Nicea, in A.D. 325—and bring together national Councils. It is on this basis that the Armenian Catholicos became a reference in the East.

The Catholicos we are interested in is Sahak Dzoraporesti (*Սահակ Զորափորեցի*). He was the Bishop of Rotakk before he was elected Catholicos in 667.<sup>75</sup> His Pontificate took place at an essential moment of the Middle-East history, when the Armenian lords had to repel the Khazars' invasion during the seventh year of his pontificate (685) and had also to fight the Muslim invaders.

During the year 691, Caliph Abd al-Malik's armies conquered militarily Armenia. As he was a sharp political leader, the Caliph designated Sembat VI Bagratuni—a man who was not favorable to the Byzantine Greeks—as the crown prince (691–711) responsible for the management of that difficult transitory period and for the integration of the Armenian plateau into the Muslim world.<sup>76</sup> In 695, Sembat VI Bagratuni tried to rebel but the Muslim general Mohamed Ibn Merwan made him a prisoner, together with the Catholicos Sahak III, and sent them both to Damascus as prisoners. After a while, Sembat VI Bagratuni went back to Armenia, but Sahak III was confined in Syria.<sup>77</sup> He probably stayed there until he died (703), but continued to play a spiritual and a political role in the negotiation of the Armenian integration into the Islamic empire.

His theological thought was known through those of his works that came to us. He is the author of liturgical hymns (*charagans*), which are still being used in the Armenian Church, and also of a homily that has been saved.<sup>78</sup> Council acts were written under his pontificate and probably drafted under his direction.<sup>79</sup>

His main theological work—one we are most concerned with, as it directly serves our purpose—is a speech by Sahak III, or an *Explanation of the unanimous theology of the holy spiritual fathers, in accordance with the tradition the apostles of Christ's Church have established, with the Armenian's theology of the true orthodox tradition, pronounced against the diophysite Nestorians, given by the saint doctor and great interpreter Sahak, the Catholicos of Armenia*.<sup>80</sup>

The Speech, which is in fact a genuine theological treaty, has been kept in the *Book of Letters*, *Գիրք թղթոց*, a collection of ninety-eight official letters the Armenian Church sent to prelates of the Christian world. We shall note that the first part of the collection was compiled, probably in the seventh century, whereas the letters edited in the second part were written later, during the Cilician period (eleventh and twelfth centuries). The only complete manuscript, copied in the Armenian Cilicia in 1298–1299, is now being kept in the Bzommar convent, in document 431. It has been re-edited three times since it was discovered.<sup>81</sup> We have also examined the text on the basis of defending its authenticity as well as its having been attributed to the Catholicos Sahak III, even though such an important text was used later as a model for several texts of the same kind.<sup>82</sup>

## Text Analysis

Here is now a more precise presentation of the *Speech* he wrote about 691.<sup>83</sup> The text has been studied and translated into French by Michel van Esbroeck, who sees in it a review of the religious thought of the Armenian Church of the period. The Belgian Armenologist rightly detected the “Manifesto of the Armenian Faith”<sup>84</sup> the text stood for. It is long and dense, and begins with a historical introduction stating that there was a special link between Armenia and the Greek culture, which permitted a transmission of faith without risking a suspicion of heresy (1–5). The Trinitarian faith is founded on the teachings of Gregory the Illuminator as they appear in the central part of Agathangelos’ history (6–10). Then, Sahak III tackled the Incarnation issue in its various aspects, referring to an important patristic file (11–15) and its characteristics: Natures (16–21), Divine Names (22–24), energy (25–27) and will (28–29), Jesus who is sitting on God’s right and will be until the Judgment Day (30–38). After that positive approach, the same themes are taken again to show the groundlessness of the adverse theses, the unique Nature of Christ (39–44), the unique will (45–46), the unique activity (47–48), the incorruptible flesh (49–51), the life-giving Cross (53–58) and the passible and the impassible (59–65). Then, concerning a possible addition of the Trisagion, he develops the historical issue of the Armenian Church as a communion (66–70). The next part is again dedicated to reducing the adverse theses (71–83). The end of the text is dedicated to the Eucharistic question of unleavened bread and of pure grape wine (84–89). The way the text is constructed is quite complex, with an alternation of an affirmation of the Armenian Church’s faith and a criticism of the positions of the opposing side, the conclusion affirming the Eucharistic position of that Church.<sup>85</sup>

The document, therefore, has a real intrinsic value and a great significance.

## The Orthodoxy of Indian Church

The most important point for us is the § 67 from the *Speech*. In that passage, which appears in the last third of the text, after he had shared his thoughts about theology, Sahak III uses an argument that is neither scriptural, nor theological, nor patristic, but is rather linked to the communion of his See with the rest of the Christian world:

Իսկ եթէ Յոյնք ոչ ընդունին զպատմութիւնն Սոկրատեսայ եւ զաւանդութիւն երանելոյն Յովհաննու, յայտնապէս վարդապետացն իւրեանց լինին անարգիչք, որպէս եւ հրեայք՝ մարգարէիցն: Բայց թէ զայս ոչ ընդունին ցուցցեն յաստուածեղէն գրոց, թէ ո՛ր ի սրբոց հարցն ասաց, Սուրբ Աստուած առանց՝ խաչեցարի, եւ յորո՞ւմ զիրս գրեալ է: Ապա թէ ոչ կարեն ցուցանել, ուրեմն ճշմարիտ է պատմութիւնն

Սոկրատեսայ: Վասն որոյ եւ մեր ընդ սուրբ, եւ ընդ Իգնատիոսի եւ ընդ Ոսկեբերանին Յովհաննու խոստովանեալ ենք եւ ասեմք ի սկզբանէ մինչեւ ցայսաւր, “Սուրբ Աստուած հգաւր եւ անմահ, որ խաչեցար վասն մեր, ողորմեա՛ մեզ:” եւ ոչ միայն մեր, այլ եւ Եգիպտացիք, եւ Ափրիկեցիք, եւ արեւմտեան Հնդիկք, եւ Եվթովպացիք, եւ Հռովմէայեցիք, եւ Սպանիացիք, եւ մեծ ազգն Փռանգաց, եւ արեւելեան Հնդիկք, եւ Ճենաստանեայք, եւ Ասորիք, եւ ազգ մի ի Հոնաց աշխարհին, եւ Աղուանք, եւ մեր հայաստանեայքս: Այս ազգք երկոտասան միաբան ամենեքեան ասեմք. “Սուրբ Աստուած հգաւր եւ անմահ, որ խաչեցար վասն մեր, ողորմեա՛ մեզ”:- Now, if the Greeks don’t accept Socrates’ speech and the tradition coming from John Chrysostom, it means that they clearly deny their own doctors, just as the Jews deny their prophets. But the fact they don’t accept it is shown in their theological books: Which one of the Holy Fathers said: ‘Saint God, without the *‘Ye who wert crucified for us’*, and in which one of the books has this been written? If they are unable to show it, then Socrates’ history at least is quite true. That is the reason why, together with the saints, with Ignatius and John Chrysostom, we have confessed and said, from the origin to this very day: Saint God, Thou that art strong and immortal, Thou that wast crucified, have mercy on us!

*And not only us, but also the Egyptians, the Africans, the West Indians, the Ethiopians, the Romans, the Spanish, the vast nation of the Franks, of the East Indians, the Chinese, the Assyrians, and those from a nation of the Huns country, the peoples of the Caucasus and we, the Armenians.*

We who are from twelve different nations say all in unison: Saint strong and immortal God, Thou that wast crucified for us, have mercy on us!<sup>86</sup>

The model for that list was obviously the peoples table on Pentecost Day, in the *Apostles’ Acts* (II, 8–11), but this updating of it deserves some comments. The Caucasian Albania (the Ałuank), constituted a Church very similar to the Armenian Church throughout the Middle-Ages and until the Touranian tribes’ invasion and the decimation of the population. Similarly, the Assyrians maintained close ties with the Armenian Church because the Catholicos Nerses II consecrated a bishop designated for their church, in 555, and then again, in 723, another Catholicos, Yovhannes Ōjnec’i (John of Odzoun), invited some Syrian bishops to one of the main Armenian councils of the eighth century, the Manazkert Council.<sup>87</sup> Their presence at the Council shows that their communion was still consistent a generation after Sahak III’s *Speech*. The mention of the Huns’ country probably refers to the consequences of the bishop Macarius’ predication evoked earlier. The Copts and the Ethiopians (Egyptians, West Indians, African Ethiopians), well before that period, already maintained close ties with the Armenians, precisely in Jerusalem, where the Armenian patriarch was in charge of the Oriental Orthodox (non-Chalcedonian)

Christians. In 1459, at the time when the Ottomans organized the Holy Land, the Syrians, and the Copts and those who depended on them were linked to the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople. Therefore, the Indians and the Ethiopians were also subjected to that patriarch, which explains why Jacome Abuna was sent to India (as we shall explain later).<sup>88</sup>

As for the relationships with the Latin world peoples (the Spanish, the Franks, and the Romans), the fact is not really surprising. Let's remember that, in 649, an Armenian monastery was attested in Rome.<sup>89</sup> It must have been very active, because its prior attended a council of the Roman Church. And in 642 also, an Armenian Prince, Artabasdos, was exiled in Spain by a Byzantine emperor who may have been Heraclius. He was probably not the only one to be thus sent to the Visigoths kingdom, and he married a royal princess there. They had a son who became king of the Visigoths (680–687).<sup>90</sup> A part of his Court may have returned to the East when the Emperor died. Finally, the fact that a few years before, in 591, the bishop Symeon, who fled Persia and servitude, ended his life at the Court of the Merovingian kings, shows clearly that the ties between both nations really existed.<sup>91</sup>

Now, what of the Eastern nations? We have underlined the great importance of the Christian Chinese being mentioned, for it allows us to affirm that after it was established by the apostle Thomas,<sup>92</sup> that Church developed and maintained some ties with the other Christian Churches. Moreover, its being explicitly mentioned in a Christological text bears witness to our point of view concerning the orthodoxy of that Church. After a stele carved in 781 was discovered in Si-n'gan-fou, near Xi'an, the historians were inclined to think that the Chinese Christians, if they ever existed, were all "Nestorians." Yet, the Catholicos Sahak III's testimony makes us temper that position.

And what about the Indians? We must insist that the fact is well established in two manuscripts still preserved.<sup>93</sup> It is a precisely dated attestation of the orthodoxy of the Indian Christianity, after it was founded by the apostle Thomas and had developed in connection with the Middle-East and with Egypt, as attested by the papyrus 413 found in Oxyrhynque. Actually, the fact the Catholicos Sahak III took the Chinese Church into account takes much importance in his speech and it will be a landmark and serve as a model in the future relationships of his Church with the Byzantine Church. The mention proves that the relationships between India and Armenia were reasonably usual for the Catholicos to know that a Christian Church existed there and what its theological orientation was. *The Speech* required, for the Catholicos Sahak III, to be fully aware of being in communion with the Church of the Indian community, which apparently dated back to Thomas's preaching. His approach would then

be the one of a Primate of the Church Bartholomew founded, a Primate who would fraternally address the members of the Church his mission companion, Thomas, had founded. This indeed is not a meaningless symbol of communion.

This position was solid enough and fairly well accepted to be restated and confirmed by another Catholicos, Khatchik I Arsharouni (973-992). In his answer to a letter the Chalcedonian Metropolitan from Melitene sent to him, he justified at length the doctrinal position of his Church and ended his letter by emphasizing the fact that the Armenians, as many other Eastern nations, don't recognize the Council of Chalcedon, thus including once more the Indians within his Communion:

“ամենայն Հայք, Աղուանք, Լիինք, Կաղիք, Ճիղք, Ասորեստանեայք՝ որք են Յակոբիկ, ամենայն եգիմպոսոս, եթիոպա մեծ, Արաբինար, եւ ամենայն աշխարհն Հնդկաց:– Armenian, Aḡuans, Lepnik, Gaḡpk, Giḡpk, Assyrians who are the Jacobites, the whole of Egypt, Great Ethiopia, Arabia, Arabinar and the whole world of India.”<sup>94</sup>

We find again the same affirmation, three times, under the pen of Ananias of Narek (tenth century) who was the founder of the theological school of Narek, especially known through the name of Gregory of Narek (†1001), the thirty-sixth Doctor of the Catholic Church.<sup>95</sup>

The last point we would like to emphasize is that we have found no other affirmation being so clearly expressed of the full orthodoxy of the Indian Church (in Kerala and Chennai) corresponding to the patristic or to the medieval period.

These elements mostly represent what we can learn from a review of the Armenian sources dating back to the fifth to the eleventh centuries, or from the volumes 1 to 20 from the *Madenakirk hayotz* collection (Armenian Classical Authors), i.e., about 20,000 pages that bring together all the essential Armenian texts about Thomas for that period. Now we shall examine the historical elements in the Armenian-Indian relationships.

We lack the time to develop how extensive the links the Armenian and the Indian Christians shared, but we shall highlight two events relating to the medieval period, events that will open new research avenues for the future.

On the one hand, the researcher Raphael Liogier, in his book *Jesus, a Western Buddhah*, remarked that the *Lalatavistara*, “one of the oldest texts of the Buddhist canon of the Big Vehicle, comprises some strange similarities with the Armenian version of the Christian apocryphal of the *History of Jesus' Childhood*.”<sup>96</sup>

On the other hand, the Latin missionaries' testimonies are first-value sources as far as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are concerned. Through their letters, we learnt there was an Armenian colony on the Chinese coastline, in Zaiton, in the region of Fujian, Zaiton being a port used for trading exchanges with the Southern seas and with the West. When the Franciscan missionaries arrived, in 1309, a rich Armenian lady funded the first Western Church (a catholic one) in China:

In the city of Cayton (Zaytun) we have a good church witch an Armenian lady left us, with a house, and she provided the necessities of life for ourselves and for others if they come.<sup>97</sup>

André de Pérouse, the catholic bishop of Zaiton himself, related this fact in a letter he addressed to the Pope.<sup>98</sup> And again, in 1321 or 1322, Odoric de Perdenone, is a witness to the use of the Armenian language in the Indian Ocean, and Armenian was still being used at the beginning of the fourteenth century in the same area.<sup>99</sup> So, it was a language people used when they travelled in Asia.

As a conclusion, Thomas, Bartholomew's companion, and the apostle of India, holds a major place in the Armenian tradition. Furthermore, for ages the Armenian Catholicos have been considering that the Christians who lived in India were of their Communion, and their history was curiously governed by two Armenians of conviction and of high values: Thomas Cana and Jacome Abuna.

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## APPENDIX 1

### LIFE OF GREGORY OF TALLARD

In Yevadian, 2011, 65–70.

#### *Chapitre troisième:*

#### *Voyage de Grégoire aux Indes*

24. La paix dont jouissait l'église d'Amnice sous le gouvernement de Grégoire fut troublée par une violente irruption de barbares qui, voulant rétablir le culte des idoles, mirent tout à feu et à sang, à cause de la résistance qu'ils trouvèrent dans les chrétiens d'Amnice. 25. Le saint patron ne craignit point d'affronter le péril pour confirmer son peuple dans la foi, et l'encourager à verser son sang pour la gloire de Dieu, qui le premier versa le sien pour notre salut. 26. Le ciel bénit ses [22] efforts, car aucun de ceux qu'il avait évangélisés ne renia sa foi. 27. Contraint de fuir, Grégoire se concerta avec les cinq personnes qui avaient partagé avec lui le danger, sur le lieu où ils iraient chercher un asile. 28. L'histoire ne nous a transmis que le nom de quatre évêques, Jean, Paul, Marc et Polycarpe. 29. Ils convinrent de passer aux Indes, car l'intention de Grégoire était d'aller pleurer, sur le tombeau de l'apôtre saint Thomas, les maux de son Église, et d'y puiser la force de soutenir le terrible assaut que lui livrait l'esprit infernal. 30. Le ciel voulant faire subir une nouvelle épreuve à la vertu de ses serviteurs, permet que la tempête leur ferme le passage de la mer, et les oblige à jeter l'ancre dans un lieu opposé à leur dessein.

I–31. [23] Voyant leur vie en danger, nos pèlerins, tout en bénissant la providence, cèdent à l'orage et s'acheminent à travers un sentier raboteux dont ils ignorent l'issue. Contre leur attente, ils arrivent bientôt dans une province idolâtre, non éloignée du lieu où ils avaient débarqué. 32. Grégoire se rappelant ces paroles du Sauveur: que son évangile doit être prêché dans tout l'univers, "cette bonne nouvelle du royaume sera prêchée dans le monde entier," se hâte de l'annoncer, convaincu que le Seigneur l'a détourné de sa course pour procurer à ces infortunés, le bonheur de connaître leur créateur. 33. Pratiquant [Grégoire] le premier les vertus qu'il annonce, ces idolâtres abjurent bientôt leurs erreurs. La douceur, le calme peint sur tous ses traits au milieu des [24] revers dont il est la proie depuis longtemps, lui gagnent les coeurs et les portent à l'imiter. 34. Se voyant entouré de nombreux prosélytes, Grégoire dédie au Seigneur les temples que le démon occupait il n'y a qu'un instant, et il a la joie de pouvoir offrir à Dieu la seule victime qui lui soit agréable dans un lieu où le culte qui lui est dû, était rendu à des dieux étrangers. [25]

II-35. Après un séjour de trois mois dans ce pays idolâtre, ayant confirmé dans la foi les nouveaux convertis, Grégoire suivi de ses compagnons d'infortune, continua son pèlerinage. Ils s'engagèrent alors dans un chemin beaucoup plus difficile encore que celui qui les avait conduits dans ce lieu. Ils traversèrent des endroits tout-à-fait stériles; les sentiers étaient frayés au milieu de sablières, d'où l'on ne pouvait se tirer qu'avec beaucoup de peine. 36. Après [26] des efforts presque incroyables, ils arrivèrent à Tholobie, pays plus mauvais encore, occupé par des serpents et autres animaux venimeux qui les eussent infailliblement dévorés, si le Seigneur, pour l'amour duquel ils souffraient tant de maux, ne les eût délivrés en ralentissant la faim de ces monstres, et en amortissant leur venin.

III-37. Nos voyageurs éprouvèrent à Nobie, d'une manière bien sensible, l'effet de cette promesse du Sauveur, qui dit que son joug est léger pour celui qui le porte avec courage: là ils rencontrèrent un peuple chrétien qui les reçut avec une charité vraiment hospitalière et qui compatit, autant qu'il le put, au triste récit de leur malheur.

IV-38. Remis des peines de leur long et pénible voyage, ils continuent [27] leur route avec une nouvelle ardeur, espérant que le Seigneur, qui vient de leur accorder tant de consolations, leur donnera encore celle de vénérer l'objet de leurs vœux. 39. Leur confiance n'est point trompée, car sous peu ils arrivent à *Meliapour* ou *Coeloemines*<sup>15</sup>, elle [la route qu'il empruntait] joint le golfe de Bengale ou Coromandel. C'est dans cette ville, que l'apôtre saint Thomas dédia une église au Seigneur, en mémoire des prodiges qu'il y avait opérés pour sa gloire et par sa puissance; il est même dit dans la légende du bienheureux Grégoire, qu'il trouva dans cette église une croix en pierre érigée par l'apôtre saint Thomas, portant cette inscription:

*Quand par permission divine les vagues de la mer viendront mouiller cette pierre, de nouveaux apôtres [28] d'une terre étrangère confirmeront la doctrine que je vous prêche.*

40. Cette prophétie eut son accomplissement à l'époque où les Portugais firent la conquête de ce pays. 41. Fidèle gardien du temple qu'il avait voué au Seigneur, saint Thomas mourut d'un coup de lance, que lui porta un des sacrificateurs des idoles qui voulait profaner le lieu saint. 42. Les chrétiens de Meliapour, en proie à la douleur la plus cuisante à la vue du massacre du saint apôtre, lui prouvèrent leur attachement en exposant leur vie pour ravir son corps à ses meurtriers; le ciel ayant secondé leurs efforts, ils l'ensevelirent dans le caveau de l'enceinte sacrée où il avait remporté la palme du martyre. 43. L'aspect du tombeau du saint apôtre pénétra Grégoire [29] et ses compagnons de la plus vive émotion. Ils l'arrosèrent de leurs larmes et, après avoir imploré

son secours avec une ferveur vraiment digne du crédit dont il jouit auprès du Dieu tout-puissant, enflammés d'un courage tout nouveau, ils pensèrent à regagner leur chère patrie dont ils espéraient adoucir les maux, en annonçant à leurs concitoyens qu'ils venaient de leur conquérir un puissant secours dans la protection de l'apôtre saint Thomas.

V-44. Les souffrances et les tribulations étant la voie ordinaire par laquelle Dieu conduit ses saints à la gloire, il permit qu'au sortir de Meliapour, nos pèlerins tombassent au pouvoir des émissaires d'un roi barbare. 45. Ceux-ci les chargèrent de fers comme s'ils [30] eussent été de grands criminels, les conduisirent à leur maître, qui les fit jeter dans un obscur cachot, [où il leur] fit souffrir toutes sortes de tortures et finit par les condamner à mort. 46. Tous ces tourmens, ni la vue d'une mort prochaine, n'ébranlent point le courage des glorieux captifs, ils savent que le royaume du ciel souffre violence et qu'à ce prix seul, on peut le conquérir, témoin le divin Sauveur qui nous dit à tous dans la personne de ses disciples: il me fallait endurer tous ces maux pour entrer en possession de ma gloire<sup>17</sup>. 47. Cette pieuse pensée les rend tout rayonnans de joie dans les fers, et leur fait espérer que, comme saint Thomas, ils verseront leur sang pour le Seigneur; ils le prient continuellement et ne lui demandent d'autre faveur. [31] 48. Dieu les exauce et, content du sacrifice de leurs coeurs, il ne veut voir en eux que des martyrs de la charité. Aussi les délivre-t-il de la mort, et les glorifie-t-il en présence de celui qui, aux yeux du monde, les avait couverts d'opprobre. 49. Le fils du roi barbare tombe subitement malade, sa mort paraît inévitable, 50. son épouse voit que le ciel punit dans la personne de son fils la cruauté du père. Elle le conjure de rétracter ses ordres sanguinaires elle court elle-même dans le cachot pour annoncer aux innocents captifs leur délivrance, et prie Grégoire de demander à Dieu la guérison de son fils, son unique consolation. 51. Grégoire, plus jaloux de leur procurer la vie de la grâce que celle du corps demande à Dieu le prodige [32] l'ayant obtenu, il fait connaître à la mère et au fils celui qui tient entre ses mains la vie et la mort des hommes les ayant instruits de sa doctrine, il les régénéra tous deux dans les eaux du baptême, et ils furent fidèles à en observer les obligations. [33]

## APPENDIX 2

### ANANIAS OF SHIRAK, GEOGRAPHY (Ašxarhač'oyc')

Ed. Hewsens, 1992, 74A–75A.

35. The thirty-fifth country of Asia is India, east of Ariana and Scythia by the Imaeus Mountains. [It extends] from there as far as the Aemodae Mountains and the border of China, and divided into two parts east and west of the River Ganges. Ptolemy shows seven rivers here, each with its own name, which, uniting near the Gymnosophists, are called the Phison. There are three rivers rising among the Gymnosophists: first, the Diamunas River, then Ganges and then the Sarabus, which, uniting is called the Imoyn. To the right of the River Indus are fifty-seven nations. Here are found *heašir*, *dahanak* and excellent tin. The Gymnosophists feed only on fruit, rice, and sugar; they are called the Shaman and Brahmin nation by the Persians. They abstain from women and meat and in the morning, they worship the sun saying: "We believe you [to be God], but if there is any other superior to you, to him do we render our worship." Here are found animals which the Persians call *šarpašank*. There are seventy-two nations east to Granges River [extending] as far as the land of Sinae. Here are other districts called the "Golden" and the "Silver." In their capital are found crows, white parrots, and bearded roosters. Two other districts are also called the "Golden" and the "Silver" and another, the "Copper" district. Here are found elephants and tigers which they say are subdued by magic and are as fast as the wind. Here are found pepper, and aromatics [such as] *boačarš*, *axiri-boyek*, *goziboyek*, *agisboyeak*, *cassia*, *dwalak*, *šahaworar*, *k'akolak*, which eats camphor, sandal, *nayiboyeak*, several medicines and *bažark*, the rat called *bēšmašk*, which eats deadly roots called *biš* from which antidotes are made; and large ants in the places where gold-dust is found. Here is an animal [called the] *sawarsan* which can kill an elephant with its tongue and then carry it on a kind of hook which it has on its back, and when it hears any animal cry out, it ejects blood. The unicorn is also found and griffons, which come from the Sinae, are raised here in iron cages. They say that the *p'grē* attacks the griffon and, carried away by fury, both throw themselves into the sea and drown. They say that there are savage peoples here with hard, arrow-proof skins and *Gndandiark'* who are half, or at least one-third, non-Indian; and seven [other people]. The *Dēpuxk'* [are found here] and the *Spahlabalora*, i.e., red water hyacinths; then *Č'nglibalos* where *grtapoz* is found and the musk ox resembling, in form and size, a four-month old goat except for the teeth which they say, are like those of a fox, [and which] eats mice. Some say, wrongly, that [the musk sack] is the testicles, while others say that the musk [sack] is in front of the testicles. There is another province called *Kalah* where the horned ass is found. Another province is *Hak'er* where there is teakwood, which is an imperishable wood, and ginger. There are several islands here: [those of] the warrior peoples and the cannibals near the island of [*Ia*] *batiu* whose capital

city abounds in gold and silver [and which is located in] the Green Sea, where, according to the Greeks, three kinds of aloes are found: one is called *ningre* which is black in color and [sometimes] yellow and resembles a sharp and porous comb. It costs five, six and even seven *dahekan* per liter. The second, called [aloes] of Camt' is black, and [which smells?] like resinous pine, 96 and [which being] heavy, costs four *dahekan*. The third is called [aloes] of Kalah. Yellowish and lightweight, a liter costs three *dahekan*.

[36] The thirty-sixth country, Taprobane, is a large island of India and the largest island in the entire world. From north to south is 1,100 miles long and from east to west 150 miles wide. It lies beyond India and is surrounded by the Indian Sea. Rice is found there which is [a kind of] millet; ginger; beryl, hyacinth and other precious stones, and also much gold and silver and elephants and tigers. It has two mountains in the center, one called Galiba, 106 which is the source of two rivers, and the other called Malaea, which is the source of three rivers. Here are found imperishable woods, ginger, fine pearls, and the most precious stones. There are two cities, they say, 150 miles apart. One is called Manakor and one called Royan. 108 Between them is a mountain named Gaylase from which flows a river in which the most precious stones are found. There are twelve nations in the north who always dress their hair like that of women. Two of these nations are called the *Hac'acank'* and the *Hac'aink'*.

In the south the plains are used for pasturing elephants. They say that one nation which dwells in this country is made up of women and that at a certain time of the year dogs come among the elephants and have intercourse with the women who give birth to twins, one [male] puppy and the other a [human] girl. The sons cross the river to their fathers while the girls remain with their mothers. But I believe that this is just an allegory for they say the same about the Amazons in the Book of Alexander [the Great]. The allegory means that they are a quick-turning (?) people. Ptolemy says that there are temples of the moon in the southern extremity of the island. There are 1,378 other islands around Taprobane, some inhabited and others uninhabited but of which [only] nineteen names [are known to us]. The Equator crosses the south of this large island.<sup>100</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Alexis de Menezes, *La Messe des anciens chrestiens dicts de S. Thomas... repurgée des erreurs et blasphèmes du nestorianisme*, y premise une Remonstrance catholique aux peuples du Pays-bas, Anvers, de H. Verdussen, 1609, 139 pages ; *Synodo Diocesano da Igreja e Bispado de Angamale. dos antigos christaos de Sam Thome das Serras do Malauar das partes da India Oriental celebrado pello Reuerendissimo Senhor Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes Arcebispo Metropolitano de Goa, Primaz da India et partes Orientaes*, Coimbra, Officina de Diogo Gomez Loureyro, impressor da Universidade, 1606, 124 pages; *Historia ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana synodo apud Indos Nestorianos, S. Thomae Christianos nuncupatos*, Roma, Ex Typographya Hieronymi Mainardi, 1745.
- <sup>2</sup> Laboubna, tr. Destrumeaux, 1997, in *Christian Apocryphal Writings*, I, 1485–1525 for a French translation.
- <sup>3</sup> Laboubna, ed. Alishan, 1868, 45, l. 3-5.
- <sup>4</sup> Laboubna, ed. Phillips, 1876, 96, l. 8-9 = tr. Destrumeaux, 1997, 1521.
- <sup>5</sup> Laboubna, ed. Alishan, 1868, 45, l. 3-5 = tr. Emine, 1867, 318.
- <sup>6</sup> Laboubna, ed Phillips, 1876, 56 = tr. Destrumeaux, 1997, 1489.
- <sup>7</sup> *Thaddeus'Acts*, ed. Lipsius, 1891, 273-278 = tr. Palmer, 2005, 651–660.
- <sup>8</sup> *Life of Mesrop Machtot's*, VII, 1.
- <sup>9</sup> *Life of Mesrop Machtot's*, VII, 2.
- <sup>10</sup> *Book of Letters*, ed. Bogharian (Polarean), 1994, 51: *Letter of Acacius of Melitena to the Catholicos Sahak I*; 142: *Treaty of the Catholicos Yovhannes Mandakouni*; 360: *Letter of the Catholicos Abraham I Albat'anec'i*; 383: *Answer by Vrtanēs Kertot to (lords) Albanians*; 447 and 509: *Letters of Step'anos Siwnec'i*; 328: *Letter of the vardapet Sahak Merut to Armeniens lords*; 589 (= ACA, X, 2009, § 61, 670): *Answer of the Metropolit of Sebastia to the Catholicos Khatchik I (Xač'ik I<sup>er</sup> Aršaruni)*; 646: *Answer of the vartapet Georg to John the Patriarch of the Syrians*.
- <sup>11</sup> Komitas, ed. ACA, IV, 2005, § 56-57, 91; § 170, 115 (cf. Գիրք Հարցողաց / Rule ≠ ed. Uluhogian, 1993); § 180, 323; § 226, 326 (Thomas and Barthelemy).
- <sup>12</sup> Gregory Magistros, *Poetry*, ԴԿ, ACA XVI, 2012, 177 and *Letters* no 9, ACA XVI, 2012, 235, § 264 (after Jn X, 26-27). With mention of the mission to the Indians, § 100, 38 (same volume) and Grigor of Narek, commentary of “*ով է դա*,” ACA, XII, 2008, § 115, 894. See too Hovsēp Anapadakan, (memorial) § 21, 585, ACA, IV, 2005 ; Step'anos Siwnec'i, § 214, 6-10 (on Jn 20, 24-25), ACA, VII, 2007; Zakaria Jagec'i, § 174 (17), ACA IX, 2008, 294 ; T 'ovma Arc'rouni, *Histories*, chap. 6, § 49, ACA, XI, 2010, 90.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Yevadian, 2008, 357-370.
- <sup>14</sup> Agathange, ed. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean – Kanayanc', 1909–1980, 355; tr. Thomson, 2001, 221.
- <sup>15</sup> ACA, VII, 2007, § 82, 227.
- <sup>16</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, tr. Thomson, 9–11.
- <sup>17</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, tr. Thomson, 12–26.
- <sup>18</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, tr. Thomson, 111.
- <sup>19</sup> Movses Khorenac'i, tr. Thomson, 2006, II, 27-34, 162-173.

- <sup>20</sup> Stepanos Asolik, ed. *Malxaseanc'*, 1885, 45; tr. Dulaurier, 1883, 38.
- <sup>21</sup> Stepanos Asolik, ed. *Malxaseanc'*, 1885, 46; ACA, XV, 2012, § 116, 667; tr. Dulaurier, 1883, 39.
- <sup>22</sup> Stepanos Asolik, ed. *Malxaseanc'*, 1885, 20; tr. Dulaurier, 1883, 28.
- <sup>23</sup> Stepanos Asolik, ed. *Malxaseanc'*, 1885, 213; tr. Dulaurier, 1883, 90.
- <sup>24</sup> Book I, chap. 5 (6), ed. Tarminian–Melikian, 2006, 55; ACA, XI, 2010, chap. 6, 90; tr. Brosset, 1874, 40.
- <sup>25</sup> ACA, XI, 2010, chap. 6, § 12, 376, tr. Boisson-Chenorhokian, 2004, chap. VI, 88.
- <sup>26</sup> *Armenians apocryphals*, ed. Tcherakian (Č'rak'ean), 1896 and 1904.
- <sup>27</sup> *Armenians apocryphals*, tr. Leloir, 1986-1992.
- <sup>28</sup> *Armenians apocryphals*, tr. Leloir, II, 1992, 531-646.
- <sup>29</sup> Garitte, 1971, 151-195.
- <sup>30</sup> *Armenians apocryphals*, tr. Leloir II, 1992, 539-541.
- <sup>31</sup> The text we are interested in was printed on 91b to 94a of the Constantinople edition and in the booklet *PO* 5, 3 (1910), 420-426
- <sup>32</sup> *Armenian synaxarion of Ter Israel*, ed.-tr. Bayan, 1910, V, 3, (29) 421, cf. Yevadian, 2011, 101-106.
- <sup>33</sup> *Armenian synaxarion of Ter Israel*, ed.-trad. Bayan, 1910, V, 3, (29) 421 [77].
- <sup>34</sup> *Synaxarion*, ed. Petrosyan, 2008-2010.
- <sup>35</sup> *Synaxarion*, ed. Petrosyan, 2010; 17 Hori, 62-71.
- <sup>36</sup> Cf. Herodotus, *Histories*, v. 52-54, viii, 98 and *The Persian Royal Road System*, 1994.
- <sup>37</sup> Strabon, *Geography*, XIV, 2, 29, ed. Meineke, III, 1913, 930.
- <sup>38</sup> Boulnois, 2001, 48-49.
- <sup>39</sup> Credit: Yevadian, 2018, 13.
- <sup>40</sup> Boulnois, 2001, 129-136.
- <sup>41</sup> Boulnois, 2001, 251.
- <sup>42</sup> Credit: Yevadian, 2018, 19.
- <sup>43</sup> Credit: Sources d'Arménie, 2018.
- <sup>44</sup> Strabon, *Geography*, XI, XIV, 4, ed.-tr. Lassère, 1981, 122.
- <sup>45</sup> Yevadian, 2007, 142-147.
- <sup>46</sup> *Acta Andrae*, cap. 2, ed.-tr. Prieur, 1989, 685.
- <sup>47</sup> The question of Bartholomew's itinerary should be considered if the current reassessment of Thomas's Acts was confirmed. This point remains open.
- <sup>48</sup> Credit: Yevadian, 2018, 19.
- <sup>49</sup> Sozomenus, II, 8, 2, tr. Festugière, 1983, 264-265.
- <sup>50</sup> For the western world, see Tchouhadjian, 2011.
- <sup>51</sup> *Zachary the Rhetor*, ed. Brooks, 1919, 217 of the Syriac text.
- <sup>52</sup> Bar Hebraeus, *Chroniques ecclésiastiques*, III, 280-282, cf. Grousset, 1965, 244-246.
- <sup>53</sup> Dauvillier, 1975, 5.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ašxarhac'oyc'*, tr. Hewsén, 1992, § 35-36, 74A-75A.
- <sup>55</sup> *Armenian Geographical Notices*, § 20, ed. Venise, 1882, 312.
- <sup>56</sup> Seth, (1937) 2005, 612: "Fully seven centuries prior to the landing of Vasco de Gama on the Malabar Coast on that memorable day, the 20th of May 1498

- A.D. an enterprising Armenian merchant, Mar Thomas by name, had landed on the same coast in the year A.D. 780 when one Sheo Ram was the native ruler of Cranganore, and in whose eyes he found great favor, which resulted in his amassing considerable riches by trading in muslins and spices, his main object in seeking the Indian shores.” The date given by Mesrop Seth, is false but the factual elements are interesting.
- <sup>57</sup> In Silva Rego, III, 1950, doc. 112, 547.
- <sup>58</sup> João de Barros and Diogo do Couto, 1777, chap. 5, 282–283.
- <sup>59</sup> De Sousa, II, 1710, 113 and 115, several others mentions to Armenians.
- <sup>60</sup> The Muslims rarely moved populations that did not belong to their religion. They’d rather found military colonies, so as to control the territories. Similarly, they had itinerant Muslim tribes settle down in Christian countries in order to increase their control over these territories.
- <sup>61</sup> I think Jacob Kollaparambil’s, Kollaparambil, 1992, recent analysis is questionable for several reasons. On one side, the Southern Babylonia place-names he identifies in the names of Thomas Cana and in those of his relatives do not give any precision concerning the ethnic origin of these Christians. On the contrary, mixing peoples was for the Sassanid governments an efficient way to control the population, as was the case during the war against Armenia in 370. Finally, Babylonia was one of the primary centers for rabbinic Judaism, so that the establishment of a Christian community in the early period of Christianity would have been a cause for problems.
- <sup>62</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, ed. and tr. Galletier, 1984, V, XXVII, XII, 11, 142.
- <sup>63</sup> Credit: Yevadian, 2011, 67.
- <sup>64</sup> *Buzandaran*, IV, 55, trad. Ėmine, 1869, 273 et trad. Garsoïan, 1989, 173–174.
- <sup>65</sup> *Buzandaran*, IV, 55, tr. Ėmine, 1869, 275 and tr. Garsoïan, 1989, 176.
- <sup>66</sup> Yevadian, 2011, *Life of Gregory of Tallard*, § 27–29, 102.
- <sup>67</sup> Yevadian, 2011, *Life of Gregory of Tallard*, § 31–34.
- <sup>68</sup> Yevadian, 2011, *Life of Gregory of Tallard*, § 35–36.
- <sup>69</sup> Yevadian, 2011, *Life of Gregory of Tallard*, § 37.
- <sup>70</sup> Yevadian, 2011, *Life of Gregory of Tallard*, § 38 and 34.
- <sup>71</sup> Yevadian, 2011, 104–105.
- <sup>72</sup> Credit: Yevadian, 2011, 71.
- <sup>73</sup> Yevadian, 2011, *Life of Gregory of Tallard*, § 52, 70 and 102, for analysis.
- <sup>74</sup> Credit: Yevadian, 2011, 60.
- <sup>75</sup> Yovhannes Drasxanakertci, trad. Boisson-Chenorhokian, 2003, chap. XX, 153.
- <sup>76</sup> Yovhannes Drasxanakertci, trad. Boisson-Chenorhokian, 2003, chap. XX, 154–155.
- <sup>77</sup> *Idem*, 155–156.
- <sup>78</sup> ACA V, 2005, 1287–1292.
- <sup>79</sup> The so-called posthumous canons are published in ACA, V, 2005, 1293–1300 and about Théodosiopolis’ canons, see Sahak III, tr. van Esbroeck, 1995, 439–444.
- <sup>80</sup> “Բացայայտութիւն համաձայն աստուածաբանութեան հոգելից Հարցն սրբոց ըստ առաքելասահման աւանդիցն եկեղեցւոյ Քրիստոսի,

հանդերձ հաւատարմութեամբն ճշմարիտ ուղղափառ դասանութեան Հայաստանեայց, ասացեալ սրբոյ վարդապետին Սահակայ հայոց կաթողիկոսի և մեծի թարգմանչի ընդդէմ երկարնակաց նետտրականացն,” *ACA*, IX, 2008, 373.

- <sup>81</sup> *Letter's book*, ed. Izmireantz, 1901 ; ed. Polarean (Bogharian), 1994 and Léon Melikset-Bek, "Un essai de correction des erreurs de copie dans quelques parties du Livre des Lettres», *Sion*, 1961, 35, pp. 46–49, In Armenien; Michel Van Esbroeck, "Le discours de Catholikos Sahak III en 6914 et quelques documents arméniens annexes au Quinisexte, *Kanonika, Pontificio Istituto Orientale*, VI, 1995, 323–463.

About the discussion on the attribution of this text M<sup>gr</sup> Norayr Polarean (Bogharian), *La démonstration du Vartapet Sahak*, Presses du patriarcat arménien de Jérusalem, 1993, 110 pages, cf. *ACA*, IX, 2008, pp. 373–423; Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev, *Arméniens et Byzantins à l'époque de Phostius: deux débats théologiques après le triomphe de l'orthodoxie*, Louvain, Peeters, CSCO, 609, Subsidia, 117, 2004, 90, n. 209; Jean-Pierre Mahé, *REArm*, NS, 1994–1995, 25, 472–475 [Review of Sahak III, trad. van Esbroeck, 1995]; van Esbroeck, 2003, *Armenology today and Prospects for its développement, (15-20 septembre 2003), Abstracts of papers*, Erevan 2003, 226; Garsoïan Nina, *Interregnum, introduction to a Study on the Formation of Armenia Identity*, Louvain, Peeters, CSCO, 640, Subsidia, 127, XVIII–195 pages, pp. 86–87 and 135.

About the patristics quotations: Yervantz Ter-Minassiants, *Die armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zu den Syrischen Kirchen bis zum Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1904, 12–212 pages, pp. 136–141; Jordan Hermann, "Armenische Irenäus-Fragmente," *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 1913, XXXVI, fasc. 3, 222 pages; Nerses Akinian, "Denys d'Alexandrie, Lettre sur la pénitence à Merouzan évêque des Arméniens.," *Handes Amsoya*, 1949, 36, 59–78; Bernard Outtier, "La version arménienne du commentaire des Psaumes de Théodoret," *Revue des études arméniennes*, N.S., XII, 1977, 169–180 ; Michel Van Esbroeck, "Citations apollinaristes conservées en arménien dans la Lettre de Sahak III, Dzoroporetsi (691)," *OCP*, 1994, 60, 41–67.

- <sup>82</sup> Yevadian, 2013, pp. 157–159.

- <sup>83</sup> *Letter's book*, ed. Izmireantz J., Tiflis, 1901, 234–240; Sahak III, tr. van Esbroeck, 1995, 367–354 and *ACA*, IX, 2008, 373–423.

- <sup>84</sup> Sahak III, tr. van Esbroeck, 1995, 347.

- <sup>85</sup> Sahak III, tr. van Esbroeck, 1995, 347–348.

- <sup>86</sup> Sahak III, *Speech*, § 67, *ACA*, IX, 2008, 411–412 and tr. van Esbroeck, 1995, § 67, 411–412.

- <sup>87</sup> Asolik, ed. Malxassianc', 1885, 102–103; tr. Dulaurier, 1883, 131–132 cf. Yevadian, 2008, 226–227 for an overview.

- <sup>88</sup> Fortescue, 1913, 418 and Gulbenkian, 1995, 105.

- <sup>89</sup> "Thalassus priest and abbot of the venerable monastery of the Armenians," Mansi, X, 904, cf. Sansterre, 1983, 10.

- <sup>90</sup> Settipani, 2006, 224–231.

- <sup>91</sup> Gregory of Tours, *History of Francs*, X, 24, = *Libri historiarum X*, MGH, *SS rer. Merov.* I, 1, ed. Krusch Bruno, 515-516; Grégoire de Tours, *Histoire des Francs*, tr. Latouche, 1975, 302-303.
- <sup>92</sup> Perrier, 2011.
- <sup>93</sup> ACA, IX, 2008, 412.
- <sup>94</sup> *Book of Letters*, ed. Połarean, 1994, 321-322.
- <sup>95</sup> “Եթովպիա մեծ եւ փոքր մինչեւ ցծովն Հնդկաց ի նոյն հաստատեալ հաւատ”, ACA, X, 2009, § 1075–1077, 558; § 1093, 559 (with the mention of Thomas); 1099, 560; to complete with Timotēos vardapet (10<sup>th</sup> century), ACA, X, 2009, § 262, 919.
- <sup>96</sup> Liogier Raphael, *Jésus Bouddha d'Occident*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1999, 273.
- <sup>97</sup> Letter of Andrew of Perugia: “*Est quaedam magna ciuitas iuxta mare Oceanum, que uocatur lingua persica Zayton, in qua ciuitate una diues domina Armena ecclesia erexit pulcrum satis et grandem.*” ed. A. Van den Wyngaert, *Sinica franciscana*, 1929, I, 374 and Dauvillier, 1975, 9.
- <sup>98</sup> *Relatio*, ed. A. Van den Wyngaert, *Sinica franciscana*, 1929, I, 437.
- <sup>99</sup> Bernard, 1935, 29.
- <sup>100</sup> *Aṣṣarḥaṣ'oyc'*, trad. Hewsens, 1992, 74A–75A.