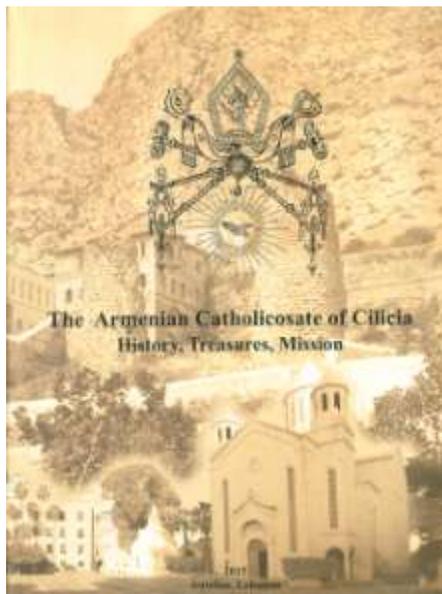


A Historic Publication

The Catholicosate of Cilicia - History, Mission, Treasures

Editor, Co-Author Seta B. Dadoyan.

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The Catholicosal Premises at Sis prior to the Genocide, in total ruins at present (background). The premises at present in Antelias, from left to right, the headquarters, the Cilicia Museum, the Genocide Martyrs' Chapel, the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

This massive, luxurious and comprehensive volume was completed at the beginning of April 2015, very shortly before the Centenary of the Genocide on the 24th. On 400 large-set pages it has over 15 articles and almost 600 high quality illustrations. A historic publication indeed. “As the title indicates,” writes in the “Preface” His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, “this volume outlines the significant aspects and major events in the history, spiritual heritage and mission of the Armenian Church, in general, and the Catholicosate of Cilicia in particular. Indeed, undertaking a multi-dimensional and broadly scoped project of this sort is not easy. It requires dedication and hard work. It also entails a long process of consultation and research.” On the occasion of the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide, His Holiness dedicates the volume to the blessed memory of the eight Catholicoi of Cilicia at Antelias (as of 1930): Sahag II Khabayan, Papken I Gulesserian, Bedros IV Sarajian, Karekin I Hovsepian, Zareh I Payaslian, Khoren I Paroyan, and Karekin II Sarkissian. “Following the Genocide, these great men played a crucial role in the reorganization of the Armenian Communities in Diaspora and in the pursuit of the Armenian Cause.”

The volume marks two centenaries, but not by coincidence: the Genocide in 1915, and within the same year and as part of it, the forced evacuation of the Armenian Catholicosate from its headquarters in Sis/Kozan, the capital of Armenian Cilicia. It had moved there in 1292/3 after the Mamluk invasions and the destruction of its premises on the peninsula of Hromkla on the River Euphrates. Previously, in 1045, following the fall of the Pakraduni Kingdom to Byzantium, this institution was forced to leave the capital Ani. It settled in the region of Cilicia. Circumstances in south eastern Asia Minor were very different from the north east, and the Armenians there developed a rich national and at the same time Near Eastern culture, which stood out by its ecumenism and spirit of renovation. The Catholicosate of Cilicia is the continuator of this legacy.

Recording the millennial history of the Armenian Catholicosate and the Armenians, according to the editor Prof. Seta B. Dadoyan, this massive volume is a historical work in the contemporary understanding of history: it considers historical knowledge embedded in the service of human interests. Armenians have an interest in knowing and communicating the history of their Church and Catholicosate, because such interest is essential for the preservation of their identity, and their persistence worldwide. The past and the future do not actually exist, but they are part of the present, and must be brought into it and be made present. As the cover of the volume (designed by the editor) depicts, Antelias and Sis are one, they are the past, the present and the future. This is the existential dimension of the volume.

“With a wide readership in mind”, writes the editor in her “Word”, “the primary objective of this ambitious initiative is to conjure up the dynamic evolution of an entire Armenian world in perpetual metamorphosis. The focus is on the Catholicosate, the spiritual culture and arts of the Armenians in Cilicia as well as the broader region west and south of the mainland. Circumstances in these parts of the historical Armenian habitat were different from those in the north and east. They inevitably generated intriguing patterns in the political, social and cultural development of the people and the institutions.”

The 5 articles in Part One are dedicated mainly to the history of Cilicia and the Catholicosate, and the 9 articles of Part Two to the treasures preserved at the Cilicia Museum, such as manuscripts, old printed books, coins, metalwork, liturgical vestments, paintings, and carpets. In the “Epilogue”, the themes – history, treasures, mission – and the volume in all its

aspects are put in perspective by His Holiness Catholicos Aram I. The 5 appendices are for reference and information. The articles appear in the language in which they are written (English and French). Three articles in Armenian are translated into English (by the editor). The Hübschmann-Meillet academic system of transliteration is applied throughout. West Armenian proper names also appear in parentheses in a more common west Armenian transliteration. The objective, says the editor, is to offer the reader, in word and image, historically accurate and aesthetically refined accounts of the history, treasures and mission of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia by renowned specialists in the various disciplines. High academic standards/formats are maintained throughout and a balance kept between illustrations and texts. Obviously not all the treasures of the Catholicosate could have been showcased, and the focus is on the artifacts that are historically more significant and/or aesthetically superior. “The essential”, according to the editor, “was to bring about an opus that was a worthy testimony of this Holy See as of the rise of Armenian Cilicia in the eleventh century.”

Part One. The History of Cilicia and the Catholicosate

‘Le dernier royaume d’Armenie Cilicie - 1198-1375’, Claude Mutafian (pp. 6-21). The “last Armenian kingdom”, as the author who is a specialist of Cilician history, puts it, lasted 177



years, and had fifteen monarchs, from its founder Levon I Metzacortz to Levon V, who passed away in exile in France. He explains that the kingdom was “the culmination of a century of subtle diplomacy on the part of the Rubenids to re-create the Armenian Kingdom, destroyed by Byzantium in 1045, on January 6, 1198.” “The new-old kingdom” in the south-west of Great Armenia was distinct from its predecessors in several respects. Also, it was the first and only one that had maritime frontiers. This brief article gives the highlights of the period and outlines the regional circumstances at the time.

The Levant at the time of the death of King Levon I, Cilicia and the Christian states between the Seljuks and Ayyoubids.

‘The Move of the Catholicosate from Armenia, to Cilicia, to Antelias’, Seta B. Dadoyan



(pp. 22-67), the title of the next article “implies a focus on the dynamic evolution of the Catholicosate as part of the history of the Armenians everywhere”, according to the author. Because, “from its establishment in the early fourth century, this institution embodied and reflected the circumstances of the Armenians on their historic homeland and beyond.” In this perspective, the study evaluates the “millennial path” of the Catholicosate from its exile from Ani, following the fall of Bagratids in 1045, to the present at Antelias in Lebanon. Throughout, the emphasis is on the factors in the making of Armenian Cilicia, as a paradigm case between the Christian and Muslim worlds, the political challenges, the phenomenal success, the ecumenical role of the Church.

The Catholicosate headquarters at Sis (in the background, now in total ruins), the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator at Antelias (in the foreground): Metamorphosis

The first section is an account of the Catholicosate from Ani to the Fall of the Kingdom in Cilicia (1045-1375). In 1292/3 the headquarters of the Catholicosate on the Peninsula of Hromkla on the Euphrates fell and it moved to Sis, the capital of the kingdom. The second section is titled ‘From the Fall of the Kingdom to Antelias (1375-2015): Turmoil, Cataclysm, Persistence and Revival’. Some of the major themes are: the spiritual and intellectual legacy of the Catholicosate in Armenian Cilicia; the Council of Vagharshabad in 1441 and the aftermath; the Catholicosate in the Ottoman world during the 19th century; cataclysm, genocide and the second great migration of the final Catholicosate from Cilicia in 1920; construction and consolidation in Antelias, the first phase 1930–1956; the last decades in the modern Middle East.

‘Le monastère du catholicosat de Cilicie à Sis - Entre hier et aujourd’hui’, Lévon Nordiguian (pp. 68-91).

By orders of the Ottoman state, in September 1915, the large and imposing catholicosial compound on a hill overlooking Sis was evacuated. Today the visitor to the site is struck by the near disappearance of even the ruins. Of the imposing church only few fragments of the apses and foundations remain. The rest of the structures were removed to open space for the construction of a water reservoir for the city of Sis. Covered by a grove of cypress trees, the site however presents many archaeological interests. The article is an attempt to “reconstitute” these monuments, as the author puts it, including and especially the mother church St. Sophia, based on various studies, testimonials, and photographs taken prior to the present condition.



Sis. The central altar with the *khachgal* beneath the *bem*, and the catholicosial marble throne on the left (photo pre-1915).

‘The Caravan of the Monastery – 1915’, Eye-Witness Account of Khat Vartabed [then]

Achabahian (pp. 92-95) – Written probably in 1935, this brief yet extremely valuable text is best summarized by few following excerpts: “On the 3rd of September 1915, after a meeting with the Turkish governor of Sis, the locum tenens of Catholicos Sahag, His Beatitude Archbishop



Eghishe Garoyan brought the horrific news of expulsion orders. The brotherhood of the monastery was given a ten-day notice to depart Sis for Aleppo. Issued from Istanbul, the order was final and during this short period we had the soul-wrenching task of packing the eight hundred year-old precious treasures of the historical Catholicosial See of Sis. We worked day and night to place the precious vessels, the priceless liturgical vestments, ancient manuscripts and an important part of the artifacts of the monastery in specially prepared wooden cases and waited for the last instructions. The 13th of September, the Sunday of the Exaltation of the Cross, became a historic day of lamentation and mourning for the brotherhood and the few Armenians of Sis. On that day, all the keys of the monastery were handed over to the government.... We parted with no return.”

The vessel for the blessing of the Holy Chrism (Surp Muroi Gatsay), July 1, 1817, Constantinople, presented to Catholicos Guiragos I Metz. A rescued treasure from Sis by the ‘Caravan of the Monastery’.

‘Symbols of Martyrdom and Resurrection’, SBD (pp. 96-102)



**The Genocide Martyrs' Memorial Chapel (1939) during a commemoration of April 24 (left)
Renovated and extended (2014), (right).**

By direct consultation with and materials from the artists/people involved, also based on the archives, this article is a brief and illustrated presentation of the Genocide memorials initiated and realized by the Catholicosate of Cilicia: Genocide Martyrs' Memorial Chapel at Antelias (built in 1939 by architect Mardiros Altunian, remodeled in 1993, renovated/expanded in 2014); the 50th Anniversary of the Genocide statue at Bikfaya (1965, 2014); the Genocide Memorial at Deir al-Zor (1991); the Memorial Chapel at Marqadeh, both in central Syria. Recently, on September of 2014, the latter two were victims of terrorism and are partially demolished.

Part II. The Treasures of Armenian Cilicia



‘The Cilicia Museum’, Editorial (pp. 104-111) – Completed and inaugurated at the beginning of 1998, the Cilicia Museum stands as a living testimony to the historic journey of the Armenian Catholicosate. This stone building on four floors, the last one constructed on the premises, also houses the library of the Catholicosate. Most of the precious relics and samples of religious arts are rescued treasures of from Sis. In the late summer of 1915 they made an Odyssean journey from Sis to Aleppo (as eye witness Bishop Khat relates twenty years later), and in 1930 they

were brought to Antelias. Exhibited on three floors, there are the collections of liturgical metalwork, manuscripts, coins, ecclesiastical vestments and embroidery, archeological artifacts, paintings, sculptures, carpets, tapestry and other artifacts.

‘Miniatures et manuscrits’, Sylvia Agemian (pp. 112-137) – About 40 very rare manuscripts constitute the collection of the Museum. The hall is dedicated to Catholicos Garegin I Hovsepian (1943-1952) a specialist of illuminated manuscripts. Mostly rescued from Sis in 1915, some of these manuscripts were made at the Cilician monasteries of Metzayr, Skevra and Sis. Two in particular stand out: The *Bible of Partsrpert* made at Hromkla in 1248, and *Mayr Mashdots* made at Sis at the beginning of the 14th century. The article highlights eighteen of the most representative bibles, synaxaria, ritual books, and hymnals dating from the 13th to the 17th centuries.



The Bible of Partsrpert (Hromkla, 1248)

‘Le fonds de livres arméniens anciens de la Bibliothèque’, Raymond Kévorkian (pp. 138-143)–Published between 1511 and 1850, 1720 books make the collection old prints (*hnadib*) of at the library of the Catholicosate, most of them are originals. The article briefly discusses the editions of Venice, Amsterdam, Marseille and Constantinople.



Book of History Written by Arakel Tavrijetsi [Girk Badmutyants Sharatreal Wartabed Arakylo Tavrijytsvoy], (Amsterdam, 1669).

‘The Coin Collection’, Levon A. Saryan (pp. 144-157)



(Left) Silver two-lion dram of King Levon I (1198-1219). (Right) 100 Ruble banknote of the Republic of Armenia, 1919.

The numismatic collection of the Cilicia Museum of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia dates back several decades, says the author, and has been growing steadily. It includes over a1000 examples of coins and banknotes, as well as many coins of neighboring lands. The article focuses on a representative selection of 15 items. Some of these are: bronze coin of Tigranes II (95-56 BC), silver double *dram* of King Lewon I (1198-1219), silver Armenian-Arabic bilingual *dram* dated (1239 A.D), silver regular *dram* of Het‘um I (1226-1269) with Queen Zapēl, silver regular *dram* of Smbat (1296-1298), copper *kartez* (or *pogh*) of Gosdantin I (1298-1299), silver coronation *dram* of Oshin (1308-1320), also a 100 ruble paper banknote of the Republic of Armenia, dated 1919.

‘Catalogue of the Liturgical Metalwork’, Dickran Kouymjian (pp. 158-297) – This very extensive article serves to “contextualize”, says the author, “the liturgical metalwork in the Cilician Museum of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia.” The catalogue of some 100 objects are discussed in detail – though a small sample of the collections – this group presents the most important items. The liturgical artifacts – silver metalwork, vestments, altar curtains, and manuscripts including Gospelbooks, lectionaries, prayer books – formerly part of the treasury of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Sis and now the core of the Cilician Museum in



(Left) Silver binding of *Mayr Mashdots* (1765), Manuscript made in 1302-1321 at Sis, the main ritual book at the Cathedral of St. Sophia at Sis. A rescued treasure.

(Right) Pre-1765; 1928, Aleppo, restored and reworked at the order of Sahag Catholicos by H. Calemkeryan. Length 48cm; weight about 1 kilogram. Silver with gilding on the hand, ring with a ruby stone. Kept with the Catholicos.

important and authentic pre-Genocide collections of Armenian religious art to have reached us.” The 102 items discussed in the article are illustrated with their inscriptions both in the original Armenian texts and in translation. Part One is dedicated to 16 reliquaries (entirely from the early modern period): altar reliquaries, cross shaped reliquaries and dexters, the most significant of which is the Right Hand reliquary of St. Gregory the Illuminator. Part Two is on the chalices, and focuses on 28 items. Part Three, on 23 silver bindings, is introduced by discussions on the silversmiths, binders, dates, places and the iconography of the bindings. The most significant of the bindings is the *Mayr Mashdots* (main Ritual Book) of the Cathedral of St. Sophia at Sis, the binding is made in 1765 binding, the manuscript is copied in 1302-1321, at Sis. Part Four is on 30 miscellaneous liturgical objects such as candleholders, censers, incense boxes, chandeliers, flabellae, crosses, staffs and liturgical headdresses, the Vessel for the Blessing of the Holy Chrism (*Surp Miwroni Gatsay*, 1817, July 1, Constantinople) still in use, and few cross stones or *khachkars*.

‘Paramentiques et autres textiles’ the Armenian Church, and they have always been part of the ceremonies and rites. Despite the well known tragic events and consecutive losses in modern Armenian history, says the author, “the Armenian Catholicosate has a significant collection of vestments, their richness and diversity allows us to trace and study connections with the

liturgical vestments of the West and Oriental churches. In fact, she observes, it was in Cilicia that the Armenian Church was in close contact with both Constantinople and Rome during the Crusader period and the establishment of Latin kingdoms.” The basic trends and forms in ecclesiastical vestments came about in these circumstances. Over 30 items – all illustrated and dating from the 17th century – are large altar curtains, chasubles, embroidered chalice napkins, collars, aprons, cuffs, miters, slippers, and others with their inscriptions (with translations).



Liturgical costume made on silk and pure gold threads, kept at the treasury of the catholicosate. The Inscription is: “Նուիրեցաւ յԱրաաշէս Պէրպէրպաշեանէն որ ի Սան Ֆրանսիսքոյի յիշատակ կնոջն իւրոյ Կալիփսէի 1970” [Gift to the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia from Ardashes Berberbashian, San Francisco, in the memory of his spouse Galipse in 1970. On the parovrar, beneath the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the emblem of the Catholicosate of Cilicia is emdroidered. The signatur is J. Marashlian.



‘The Painting and Sculpture Collection’, SBD (pp. 332-339) – The Cilicia Museum has around 350 paintings, 20 sculptural pieces and few cross-stones. Part of the collection is on exhibit at the Museum, and some works decorate the catholicosol premises at Antelias and Bikfaya. The collection is unique in several respects. First, unlike the rest of the museum’s artifacts, such as metalwork, manuscripts, liturgical vestments, textiles, and carpets, the paintings and sculptures are mostly post-Genocide works by artists, who were born outside the native lands, in the various countries of the Middle East and Europe. Therefore, primarily as a post-Genocide phenomenon, the collection stands as a witness to the special circumstances and experiences of Armenians in exile. The collection is unique in another respect too: while literature and all the arts and crafts were indigenous aspects of the culture, in western Armenian history in particular, painting and sculpture did not have a history prior to the Genocide. These are post-Genocide arts and developed in strictly diasporic conditions and in reaction to them.

Anonymos, ‘Mshoy Surp Garabed Vank’ (Monastery of St. Garabed of Mush). No date.

‘The Carpet Collection and Notes on the Art of Weaving’, Movses Herkelian (pp. 340-347)



–The Cilicia Museum has around 50 antique carpets, 9 of which are of thematic nature. There are 5 prayer carpets, 6 Karabagh carpets, the rest are classified as Iranian and Turkish. The thematic carpets may indirectly be classified under the major categories of Armenian carpets, as they have motifs of horses, saints, emblems, cross-shapes, chandeliers, liturgical objects and chapels/churches. Most have Armenian inscriptions and are clearly dated. The prayer carpets of the museum are all Armenian in style, even though they are classified either as Turkish or Iranian. All the items are of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries.

‘Virgin and Child’, late 19th century.

“The Library”, SBD (pp. 348-349) – Within months after the arrival of Catholicos Sahag in Antelias in 1930, Co-adjutor Catholicos Papken I Gulesserian and few assistants built wooden bookshelves in a modest room and established the library of the Catholicosate. This was a most valuable gift to the first 37 seminarians. At present, one of the most significant and richest Armenological libraries worldwide, the library – or the Madenataran – houses over 100.000 volumes mostly in Armenian, and other languages as well. The collection of old printed books (*hnadib*) – the richest in the Middle East – has three thousand volumes, over one third of which are in foreign languages. In addition to a large study hall and offices on the top floor, the stacks are on the three floors of the east wing of the Museum building.



The first library at Antelias in 1930 (left). The reading room of the Library on the top floor of the Museum Bldg.

***Appendices* (pp. 354-400)**

The first two Appendices, are ‘history in images’ to show the evolution and growth of this institution during the past eighty five years, from 1930 to 2015. The first is “The premises in 1930s”, it presents the early years at Antelias by 26 photographs; the second “The premises and other institutions in 2015” by 18 photographs. Appendix III is a “Complete List of the 177 catholicoi of the Armenian Church” prepared by S. B. Dadoyan. The fourth Appendice is again for information and is “A concise chronology of Armenian History”, prepared by the same. Finally Appendice V is “Brief Autobiographies of the Contributors to the Volume”.



Panoramic view of the premises at Bikfaya at present.

“Epilogue”, His Holiness Catholicos Aram I (pp. 350-352) – At the end of the volume His Holiness Catholicos Aram I explains the project with respect to the three concepts of the title: history, treasures and mission. He writes: “The title for this volume, *The Catholicosate of Cilicia: History, Treasures, Mission* has a profound meaning and a clear message. ... History is the context through which faith, the human drive for transcendence, is concretely articulated, bearing the impact of its time and place. For the Armenians, history is not a simple chain of events or casual occurrences; it is the context in which they have engaged in a dialogue of life with God, responding faithfully to its imperatives and implications. ... The Treasures, that are succinctly depicted and displayed in the preceding pages, present the rich spirituality that the Armenian people created, preserved and protected, sometimes at the cost of their blood, in Armenian Cilicia, the extension of Armenia and, in the Diaspora, the continuation of Armenian Cilicia. ... Mission constitutes the very being of the church. For the Armenian Church, the missionary inreach became a high priority because of the geopolitical position of Armenia, the daily interaction with non-Christian values and traditions in Cilicia, and its situation as a minority in pluralistic societies in the Diaspora. ... The mission continues with renewed pace and deep dedication. This Epilogue is, in a sense, the Prologue of a new journey of faith, hope and vision....”