DOCUMENTS IN PERSIAN ON THE ST. THADDEUS MONASTERY OF MAHU

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The Monastery of St. Thaddeus in Maku, which is also known as Monastery of Artaz or Gharakilisa, is one of the most ancient Armenian monasteries. Many sources concerning its history have come down to us; these have been studied both by Armenian and foreign scholars.1

Because the monastery has been under Iranian rule for many centuries, sources in Persian, and particularly the documents kept at the Matenadaran (Yerevan) and at the Museum of Armenian Prelacy in Tabriz, are of special importance.

A number of documents in Persian kept at the Museum of Armenian Prelacy in Tabriz were published in 1971-72 in the Hur monthly magazine printed in Iran. These and other documents (18 in number) have been included in A. Hahnamazaryan’s dissertation.2

Two of the edicts kept at the Matenadaran concerning the history of the monastery have been published by H. Papazyan in the first volume of the Persian Edicts of the Matenadaran.3 The first is the edict of the Kara Koyunlu Padishah Rustam addressed to the Catholicos Sargis. Dated 1483, it orders that Zacharia Vardapet, the prior of the St. Thaddeus Monastery of Maku, not be disturbed. The second is an edict dated 1562, by the Safavid Shah Tahmaz I. It concerns the boundaries of the arable land of St. Thaddeus Monastery, and its irrigation, as well as the taxes collected by the church from the villages of Kariz, Mahilazan, and Korugh.

3 Papazyan 1956, documents nos. 7, 16.

AJiNES IV/2, 2009, p. 159-175
In addition to these edicts, the Matenadaran in Yerevan also houses around 30 documents in Persian related to the St. Thaddeus Monastery. The study and publication of those sources will make corrections in the history of the monastery and enrich it with new details.

According to the 18th-century decrees (konulak) of the Catholicos, the large diocese of St. Thaddeus Monastery included Tabriz, Muzhandar, Tukharun, Maragha, Kho, Chors, and Maku with all the neighbouring villages, as well as Bayazet, Sahat, and Miandaran. The right to collect the chrahkhi1 from the villages Ghariz, Malhazan, and Ghorugh (or Korugh), too, belonged to the St. Thaddeus Monastery; although the Magharsa (Stephen the Protomartyr) Monastery of Darashamb also had claims on those villages (which were a matter of dispute between the two monasteries for centuries). Several surviving edicts corroborate the right of the St. Thaddeus Monastery to collect the chrahkhi from those villages, but there are also edicts and patriarchal decrees testifying that Gharaz, Malhazan, and Ghorugh belonged to the diocese of the St. Stephen the Protomartyr Monastery.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the history of the monastery continued as a document of the Monastery of the St. Thaddeus Monastery, written in the Persian language by the priest Frangizyan. He enumerated the following villages as formerly belonging to the St. Thaddeus Monastery: "Mazra, Ivri-dash, Gharkhila, Dipak.

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1 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicos, file no. 244, document no. 254.
2 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicos, file no. 243, document no. 8.
3 Chrahkhi - "Literally, 'for the lighting': money collected for church candles" (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 118).
4 In all probability, the villages "Ghariz, Malhazan, and Keresi" are meant: from time to time, they are referred to in decrees of the Catholicos as part of the diocese of the St. Stephen the Protomartyr Monastery (H. Voskian, op. cit., Part 2, pp. 607, 639).
8 See the decree of the Catholicos Melkisedek Ignatius (1593-1599), 1600-1624, the decree of the Catholicos Alejian and Hugjaten (dated 1712) (H. Voskian, op. cit., Part 2, pp. 607, 639) and others as well. Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicos, file no. 244, documents nos. 254, 248, 254, 260, etc.; also, the edict issued in 1696 by Shah Sultan Husain (Kontlyan 2003: 136, document no. 58).
9 We have not found in sources any reference to a settlement called Mirza. Very likely, this is a corrupted form of the word marzev, which means a grain field or a small settlement belonging to the main village. So it figures alongside other villages belonging to the St. Thaddeus Monastery: for example, the marzev of Gharizkhila, the marzev of Yoriedash, etc.
10 Yoriedash or Yoriedash is a village in the Babjik district of the Siyah Cheshme province of Maku region. It is situated 26 km northeast of Siyah Cheshme (1973, 136, document no. 58). It is also mentioned as "Voriedash" in the 19th-century document of the St. Thaddeus Monastery.

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4 In all probability, the settlement of Dipak (ديپک) is meant. In the 20th century, it is mentioned as part of the Chaldoran district of the Siyah Cheshme province of the Maku area, 20 km northeast of Siyah Cheshme (1973, 136, document no. 58).
6 In the 20th century, this village is referred to among those of the Babjik district of the Siyah Cheshme province of Maku, 20 km east of Siyah Cheshme (1973, 136, document no. 58).
8 In all probability, the villages of "Ghariz, Malhazan, and Keresi" are meant: from time to time, they are referred to in decrees of the Catholicos as part of the diocese of the St. Stephen the Protomartyr Monastery (H. Voskian, op. cit., Part 2, pp. 607, 639).
9 The village of Agbulagh (آغبولاغ) is mentioned in the administrative area of the Babjik district of the Siyah Cheshme province in Maku, 22.5 km southeast of Siyah Cheshme (1973, 136, document no. 58).
10 Agdash - village in the khanate of Maku. It is situated 33 km southeast of Maku, on the bank of a small river in the Zangim Basin, in a narrow valley (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and the Neighbouring Regions, vol. 1, p. 170).
11 Malhazan - village in the Khoy province of Artpakatan in Iran, near the border of the Maku region. Formerly it was a town. Malhazan is mentioned in the 18th-century document: (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and the Neighbouring Regions, vol. 1, p. 170).
12 In all probability, the villages of "Ghariz, Malhazan, and Keresi" are meant: from time to time, they are referred to in decrees of the Catholicos as part of the diocese of the St. Stephen the Protomartyr Monastery (H. Voskian, op. cit., Part 2, pp. 607, 639).
15 In all probability, the villages of "Ghariz, Malhazan, and Keresi" are meant: from time to time, they are referred to in decrees of the Catholicos as part of the diocese of the St. Stephen the Protomartyr Monastery (H. Voskian, op. cit., Part 2, pp. 607, 639).
16 Chors - town, fortified settlement in the Khoy province of the Artpakatan region of Iran. Situated 37 km north of Khoy, it is the center of the small Chors district. In the early 19th century, it had 200 Persian and Armenian families (Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and the Neighbouring Regions, vol. 4, Yerevan, 1998, p. 271).
17 In the 20th century, a settlement called Reihanli is mentioned in the Chaldoran district of the Siyah Cheshme province of Maku, 9 km northeast of Siyah Cheshme (1973, 136, document no. 58).
18 Frangizyan, op. cit., p. 62.
From ancient times, the St. Thaddeus Monastery owned a portion (hakkabeh) of the kyaret (underground canal) in the Gharakilisa village (3 out of the 6 parts of the canal). From 1656 onwards, Armenian sources refer to the fact that the St. Thaddeus Monastery had large lands in Varagnakert. According to a number of title deeds kept at the Matenadaran, in 1663 the 6-dang1 property of the Yomridash village was bought and secured (vakf) for the St. Thaddeus Monastery of Maku. In 1685/86, the same was done with the whole village of Gharakilisa. A resolution of the shar2 dated 1680 confirmed the monastery’s vakf ownership of the previously-bought Nushik (Keshishlik) village. The fact that the monastery had estates in the Nushik village is also corroborated by several Armenian documents. Another resolution of the shar of the same period mentions Sargis, the prior of the St. Thaddeus Monastery, and confirms his ownership of the Shuruk mezraye.3

In the second half of the 17th century, Isahak of Maku and Sargis of Kafa, priors of St. Thaddeus, took special care of the monastery’s property. They undertook the acquisition of some of the abovementioned lands and obtained proper documentation confirming the monastery’s ownership of its estates. In a title deed in Armenian dated 1679, the monastery’s lands in Nushik, Varagnakert, and Maku are enumerated with ratification of ownership.4 Another title deed, written in Persian, states on behalf of a number of influential persons and officials that the Muhammadkend mezraye of Yomridash, the Kondkekend mezraye of Gharakilisa, the Shuruk mezraye of the Reyhanalus, and the Shamiskend mezraye of Dibak in the mahal of Maku, which were acquired by Sargis and Sahak, priors of Gharakilisa, were owned by them pursuant to legal title deeds.5

The decree of the Catholicos dated 1758 and addressed to “the same” (Minas) vardapet, prior of St. Thaddeus, testifies to the losses suffered by the monastery, its poor condition, and debts.6

The title deeds also corroborate the existence of gardens and lands owned by the monastery in the towns of Maku7 and Khoy,8 in the Diza village of the Khoy province, in “Kohrovan,”9 and other places whose names are not mentioned.10

In 1824, Bishop Barsegh, the prior of St. Thaddeus, compiled a list of the monastery’s lands in Dekhverdian, Khoy, and Bayazet. In that list, 8 estates belonging to the monastery in Dekhverdian, the town of Khoy, and the neighbouring places called “Keney, Yonjali” are clearly mentioned.9 The list also includes the names of estates formerly owned by the monastery in the villages “Peray and Keney” near Khoy as well as in the village “Tize” of the Chors province. The list provides evidence that the monastery had more than 10 houses for rent in Khoy and Bayazet.

In 1814, the crown prince Abbas Mirza issued a decree granting permission to the monastery to collect taxes from the village Gharatuki.11 This right was subsequently ratified by several other edicts in the 19th century.12

In the first half of the 19th century, during the priorate of Archbishop Simeon, the St. Thaddeus Monastery was completely restored. It became the Armenian Prelacy of Atropatkan. In all probability, the crown prince Abbas Mirza intended to create a new religious center for the Armenians in Atropatkan in opposition to Etchmiadzin, which was under the strong influence of Russia. During the restoration actively supported by Abbas Mirza, the governor of Atropatkan, the black stones of the central and western walls of the monastery were replaced with white ones. An inscription in the Persian nastaqdigh script above the main entrance tells about this important undertaking of the

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1 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 242, documents nos. 138, 139, 145; Chronicle, Matenadaran, manuscript no. 8233, p. 259.
2 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 242, documents nos. 120, 121.
3 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
4 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
5 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
6 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
7 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
8 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
9 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
10 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
11 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
12 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
13 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
14 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
15 Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 120, 121.
crown prince. Abbas Mirza’s edicts concerning the St. Thaddeus Monastery have come down to us. They testify to the crown prince’s financial support of the monastery, as well as to his special care and other undertakings for the benefit of the monastery.

In this article, we shall present translations of three unpublished edicts related to the history of the St. Thaddeus Monastery.

Document no. 118 of file no. 4 in the Archive of the Catholicosate at the Matenadaran is an edict of the Safavid Shah Ismail. It was issued in 1516 to protect the rights of the monastery over the mazaar and hakkahe in Gharakilisa. The abovementioned edict of Shah Tahmasz I was issued to confirm this one, included in H. Papazyan’s collection as document no. 16. Probably, Shah Ismail’s edict was obtained by the Matenadaran after the publication of the first volume of this collection, or else Papazyan would certainly have also included the second document in it.

Document no. 119 of file no. 4 in the Archive of the Catholicosate at the Matenadaran is an edict of the Safavid Shah Safi I. It was issued in 1633 to ratify the rights given to the Monastery of Artaz by the abovementioned edict of Safi I’s predecessors: Ismail I, Tahmasp I, and Abbas I. It refers to the intercession of the rich Armenian merchants Khoja Nazar and Khoja Safraz with the shah for the issuance of the edict, which was evidence of the important role of influential Armenians of Isfahan in protecting the rights of Armenian monasteries.

We should note that Khoja Nazar’s name also figures in Shah Safi’s edicts of 1629 and 1621, the first of which was issued to release Etchmiadzin from the payment of 100 tuman annual pisheksh, while the second concerns the edict imposed on the St. Stephen the Protomartyr Monastery of Darashamb and the appointment of Petros Vardapet as the prior of the monastery.

Two other edicts related to the St. Thaddeus Monastery and kept in the Archive of the Catholicosate at the Matenadaran bear the names of Nadir Shah (1735-1747) and Ibrahim Shah (1748-1749). These edicts ratify the release of the St. Thaddeus Monastery from taxes and order the local authorities to provide help to the clerics of the monastery during the disturbances on the Iranian-Turkish border. Issued in 1743 and 1748 respectively, the two edicts have almost the same contents, that is to say, Ibrahim Shah’s edict was issued to confirm that of Nadir Shah, but the first is a copy while the second is the original, which has come down to us in a better condition than the first. Therefore, we are citing below only Shah Ibrahim’s edict.

Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, document no. 118

For the sake of repentance, beg the mercy of the Almighty

By Ibrahim Shah, the Great

The next edict is an unpublished edict of Shah Abas I. Its mention in the Azeri manuscript of Zoroastrian religious text suggests that it is a confirmation of the Gharakilisa mazaar, which is the property of the monastery. The edict also includes the word “cheragh,” identifying the village of Cheragh as part of St. Thaddeus and prohibiting the Maghara Monastery of Darashamb from laying a claim to it (Das Arsenische Thabbeis-Kloster in Der Provinz West Aserbaidschan in Iran. Doc. 11; the reference is from the Hur monthly magazine, fascicle 3-4, 1971).


Ibid., document no. 20.

Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, documents nos. 41, 131.
ابلاک، ارائه‌ها معبری مورد انتقاد می‌باشند. دسترسی ناپذیر و بازگشت، جمع‌آوری و عبور در هر گونه یک‌جانبه کشتار و زندان و واقع می‌شود. در زمان محدودیت شهری و روزانه محدودیت و حرف‌های ترجمه‌ای می‌باشد. ترجمه در شهر رجب سال ۱۳۹۴.

Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, document no. 131.

[متن] بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

دومین روز

فرمان همايون شد، انگرا وانشیت شاهنامه سروده به‌خوبی خودروهای در باره زیرین عروسی و ازدواج‌های ایرانی م saja فارسی نهاده می‌باشد و طبیعی و کلیسای نهاده می‌باشد و طبیعی و کلیسای مزبور و مبلغ فردی به شهرداری مازندران را تاکنون داده‌ایم از قبل به سیاست‌های صادرا و اصلاحات و جویای‌گری به معاون مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور باید به صالح مسلم مزبور B

Translation

Doc. No. 1

Matenadaran, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, document no. 118, original: size: 19 x 42 cm; script: divani

In the name of the beneficent and merciful Allah!
O Muhammad, o Ali!
Victorious Ismail Bahador,
Our word: [the seal of Shah Ismail I]

Prior Karapet has recently informed us that the rayats3 of Arkavin4 are engaged in farming in the mazraye of Gharkiliassa, which is the monastery’s legitimate property (mulk),5 but they do not pay babarche.4 Therefore, it has been ordered that, in obedience to the shar, the legal babarche ... should be paid to the supplicant. He has also informed us that three parts out of the six of the river of Arkav in had been given to the Gharkilassa mazraye as a hakake, but now the cultivators of Arkavin,

1 Rayats - دریایی - in literary sources, it means a subjected, taxpaying people engaged in agricultural work and living a sedentary life; the tribes of nomadic shepherds, called یل (یل), were regarded as more privileged (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 118).
2 A village called Arkavin or Arkavin was currently known in the Siyah Cheshme district (بیشتر) of the Maka region (نامه) (یکمین), 19 km southeast of Siyah Cheshme (بیشتر) (یکمین), 19 km southeast of Siyah Cheshme (بیشتر) (یکمین) (یکمین).
3 Mulk - مالک - property, land, real estate inherited or bought (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 115).
4 Babarche - دریایی - the land tax paid by husbandmen to the landlord or the state; the part paid to the state was called babarche-e drivam (بیشتر) (یکمین) (یکمین) and the part paid to the landlord was called babarche-e multane (بیشتر) (یکمین) (یکمین).
opposing the shar and the accepted order, are hindering the use of the hakkabe in the long established manner.

Therefore, it has been instructed that the hakkabe of the mazraye should be given to the owner in accordance with the old order of the shar and that there should be no uprising and opposition. On this occasion, the ghazi of Maku and the ghazi of Childran are obliged to act in accordance to the shar and give no opportunity for disobedience to anyone. Let them accept this as a strict command and be led by the instruction of the shar.

Written on the 9th of the month zī ghaude of the year 922.5

Doc. No. 2
Matenadarān, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, document no. 119, original; size: 18 x 40 cm, script: nastāalgīh-shikaste

The power belongs to Allah!
O Mohammad, o Ali!
Shah Ismail: may he deserve the benevolence of God
My great grandfather Shah Tahmasp: may the ground be light on him
My Father Shah: may Allah bless his soul
[the seal of Shah Safi I]

A royal command concerning the following has been issued:
As we have been informed by Kohja Nazar and Kohja Safraz from [New] Julfa, who are the best among the Christian wealthy men, the Gharakilisza mazraye, whose boundaries are the pass of Angurak, Ghirkbulagh,6 and the cemetery of Hunak, belong to their [monastery] as

property. [They] presented the parvanché of His Majesty, the paradise-dweller and lord of the world, the observance of which is compulsory. It was issued to confirm the edicts of His predecessors, the former kings. According to him, the hakkabe of the mentioned mazraye is approved as three of the six parts of the river in the Arkavin village. And [they] asked for the signature of His Royal Majesty. Therefore, we have instructed that nothing should be changed in the old order which has been valid until now. None of the rayats of Arkavin and other villages shall illegally enter the property of the mentioned mazraye, have any claim on the hakkabe given to them, and violate what was arranged long ago. Since it is stated in the decree of the sovereign, lord of the world, that from olden times the čagahblagh of the villages Ghariz, Mahlazan, and Ghorough has belonged to Gharakilisza, the rayats and koddhudas of Darasharns shall not encroach on their right and breach the old rule and order. Thus, they must act in obedience to the same law and not go against the contents of the command – issued on this occasion, valid until now, and possessed by them – of His Majesty the Shah deserving the paradise-dweller Jamshid’s glory, the fortunate ruler himself dwelling in the heavenly paradise. The hakim of and tiuldars of the oktas of Khoy and Maku shall regard this as an order according to what is written and shall not disregard the contents of the previous edicts and the old order. They shall accept this as a strict command, shall not oppose it, and shall not demand a new edict every year.

Written in the month rajab of the year 1042.6

Doc. No. 3
Matenadarān, Archive of the Catholicosate, file no. 4, document no. 131, 1

2 Kyväkhuda – “elder” but the word does not simply mean “head of a village.” There could be several elders in one village; they were members of the local council of oghšakhol (Persian rishef) and received that title thanks to having formerly held the position of tawawer (“head of the village”). After abandoning that position, they continued to take part in the meetings of the local council and were still called kyväkhuda (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 122).
4 Tiuldar – تولدار – military officers, statesmen, and amirs who had the right (as tiuldar) to collect, in return for a salary, the whole tax or a part of it payable to the state by a district, several villages or one village. The tiuldars of high rank had also administrative and legal rights over the taxpayers within their jurisdiction in the given period (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 109).
5 Okta – اکتا – land given as a feud to a chiefain of a nomadic tribe or a military officer of high rank (an amir). The amirs who received an okta were obliged to provide a certain number of soldiers to the central authorities when necessary. Possessing an okta, they were given the right to have a flag and beat drums during ceremonial marches and movements of the troops (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 123).
6 January 12 – February 11 of the year 1633.
A royal command concerning the following has been issued:

We have shown our royal benevolence to Minas 1 khalif 2 of Gharkhilia, the best among the Christian priests and monks, and with infinite mercy we have [taken into consideration] his devotion and services as well as the fact that, according to our late great uncle (may the ground be light on him) and the raghans 3 of the sovereigns of Iran and Rum (Ottoman Turkey), paradise-dwellers, the Gharkhilia village has been the vakf 4 of the mentioned monastery and the inhabitants of the village, being its servants, have been granted muaif from the mutavajjeihat 5 to the divan. 6 Therefore, Our Royal Majesty, too, orders that they be released from obligations to the divan, such as jizya, 7 mutavajjeihat and saderat, 8 avaraziat, 9 chobanbeki 10 etc., to acknowledge them as muaif and musallam 10, so that they can spend the leviable

1 Minas Vardapet was ordained Bishop of the Artax Monastery in April of 1741, in Etchmiadzin (Chronicle, Matenadaran, manuscript no. 8233, p. 780). In all probability, the following inscription on a tombstone in the graveyard of the St. Thaddeus Monastery concerns Minas Vardapet: “This is the grave of the humble Vardapet named Minas, who succeeded [to the priorate] in this great house at a time of anxiety; he was a servant of the great Ter Zacharias Vardapet. 1751” (Das Armeische Thaddeuskloster in Der Provins West Azerbaijan in Iran, p. 198).

2 Khalif – khalif – in the 16th-19th centuries, the Armenian Catholics were called khalif in Iran, because they were regarded as the successors of the Christians’ prophet Jesus Christ. Diocesan prelates and even priors of monasteries, too, were honoured with that title (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 220).


4 Mutavajjeihat – متنویه‌بندی – the compulsory work of vraps in various unforeseen circumstances. This obligation was often replaced by payment of a tribute (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 105).

5 Chobanbeki – چوپان‌بکی – the term is used in local Turkish spelling; the Persian spelling is chupanbeki.

6 Jizya – جیزی – per-capita tax collected from non-Muslims (Christians and Jews) in cash, i.e., from every adult man capable of working. The total capital tax imposed on each village was counted and set down in tax registers under the name of the given rural community (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 118).

7 Muaif and Musallam – معايض و مساللم – synonyms which mean “free of taxes,” “enjoying immunity from taxes”; the words were used both for individuals and communities (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 116).

8 Amil – امیل – the official who took stock of the taxable property, measured arable lands and gardens, listed all adult men capable of working, and accordingly determined the amount of taxes (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 104).

9 Abvak-e jam – ابواق جم – or simply jam (جعما) – a method of counting taxes: all the taxes leviable on a taxpayer or a rural community were calculated and set down one by one in tax registers; then these were totaled and the whole payable amount in money terms was determined (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 103).

10 Divan – دیوان – governmental office; the word also meant the state or its supreme body (H. Papazyan, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 108).

Written in the holy month muharam of the year 1161.

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January 2 – February 1, 1748.
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SPOILED CREATION: EUROPEAN FOLK BELIEFS AND ASIAN MYTHOLOGIES*

Yuri Berezkin

Twenty years ago, work began on the creation of a world folklore and mythology database. My aim was to reveal trends in the distribution of motifs that reflected early migrations to the New World. Because processing dozens of thousands of texts was practically impossible in the pre-computer era, most of these trends were not noticed before. Now the database contains information on oral traditions of the entire world. Its continual upgrading helps to obtain ever new information on prehistory.

To extract such information from the pool of data on Eurasian folklore is more difficult than to study the American or Oceanic materials. Demographic and cultural processes in Eurasia were more complicated, and the space and time dimensions much bigger. Gaps in the database are also more serious. For example, we have no information at all on the folklore and mythology of southern Iran and Oman, while the data on the northeastern and west-central provinces of China are minimal. Nevertheless, the materials that we possess are vast enough to deserve their processing.

Creating the database of western Eurasian folklore, I had to include materials on the so-called “folk faith,” “folk Bible” and the like, i.e. a set of traditional tales and beliefs that people regard as Christian but which are not necessary recognized as such by the church. I am not sure that “folk Islam” is a correct term, but certain motifs in the Christian and Muslim folklore of the Near East, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Balkans and Eastern Europe are often similar.

Two peculiarities of these texts attract attention. Firstly, the sets of motifs typical for the “folk faith” is largely different from the set of motifs found in the texts of the

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1 More than 45,000 Russian abstracts of texts are at http://www.ruthenia.ru/fo/kolz/offiks.php?index=berezkin. Motif is defined as any narrative or structural element found in two or more (in practice, much more) texts. From the approximately 1600 motifs whose areal distribution has been systematically studied, about half are tale-producing motifs, in which the wording is as complex as the wording of tale-types (Uiber 2004). Motifs, however, have no areal distribution, i.e. all the details of the wording must be present in every related text. Only regionally-specific motifs are included in the catalogue, while those that are recorded universally, chaotically or strictly locally are ignored.


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