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ARMENIAN SCRIBE AND PAINTER AVAG TSAGHKOGH (14TH CENTURY)

Abstract

In our paper, we tried to present the life, activity and artistic heritage of one of the individuals of the medieval Armenian art – Avag Tsaghkogh (14th century), whose life was full of wanderings. In future it is quite possible that new books will be found, which will shed a light on the topic and complete our knowledge on the artist.

Keywords: Medieval Armenian Art, Gospel, Bible, painter, scribe, miniature painting, illuminated manuscript, paleography.

List of abbreviations

AODA, HMML – Armenian Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo, Hill Museum and Manuscript Library

BSL – Berlin State Library

BL – British Library

Jerus., Jerusalem – St. James Monastery in Jerusalem

Mat., Matenadaran – Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan

Ven., Venice – Mekhitarists Library in Venice

Miniaturist Avag's artistic heritage summarizes and develops the best achievements of the Cilician and Gladzor miniature painting traditions, and develops them further to a new perfection level. He belongs to the list of talented artists, who has scribed and painted manuscripts.

Since the first half of the 20th century the art of Avag Tsaghkogh raised the interest of many Armenian and foreign researchers.¹ While in the literature predominantly Avag as miniaturist has been discussed (which of course is priority), it is also important to make a reflection on Avag as

scribe, which will give a possibility to get broader picture on this creative individual and his cultural heritage.²

The Biography of Avag Tsaghkogh

It is unknown when Avag Tsaghkogh born, but it is known where he was born. In the Bible no 6230 stored in Matenadaran one can read in the colophon left by Avag the following: "I beg you to remember my compatriot Sargis from Moshaghbyur, as well as the parents of our spiritual father and great teacher Yesayi" (fol. 101v).³ This historical village is mentioned in several sources. For example, this can be found in the record of princess Gontza devoted to construction activities of Jalalyan branch of Orbelian family in St. Karapet Church of Spitakavor Monastery. Gontza purchases Moshaghbyur with treasures from his homeland, with the aim to keep a piece of "homeland" in the monastery. From this fact historian Garegin Hovsepyan implies that Moshaghbyur was located not far from that region.⁴ This historical site is located in the territory of nowadays Ararat province of Armenia.⁵

From the above-mentioned colophon it is possible to make implications not only about the place of birth of the miniaturist Avag, but also about the education he obtained: it becomes clear that Avag was the disciple of one of the most fabulous Armenian medieval intellectuals – teacher Yesayi Nchetzi. The talented student praises his spiritual father and teacher also in other manuscripts, calling him "great teacher Yesayi" (Matenadaran no 7650, fol. 349v), "bright teacher, the great Yesayi" (BSL Ms. or oct. no 279, fol. 135v), "under the taught of the great orator Yesayi" (Matenadaran Ms. no 212, fol. 310v).

Art historian Aram Avetisyan considers the gifted and talented painter from Gladzor Toros of Taron also as the teacher of Avag, making a reference to the colophon of manuscript no 6230 stored in Matenadaran.⁶ However, reading the colophons of the above-mentioned manuscripts and all other available colophons after Toros of Taron and Avag did not provide any evidence in that regard. Thus, we tend not to agree with the above-mentioned opinion that Toros of Taron was also the teacher of Avag. Perhaps it can be implied that Avag took some painting classes from Toros of Taron, which already by that time had a reputation of well-known and skillful master in Gladzor.

Instead, we learn that Avag was the teacher of certain person named Shnophor, which helped him to create manuscripts. There are two citations in this regards: "Remember our parents and our kind disciple Shnophor deacon, who worked a lot on this" (Matenadaran Ms. no 7650, fol. 354r), "Remember with goodwill our prominent great teacher and spiritual father Grigor priest of Ani and great painter Avag scribe and other beloved brother Shnophor deacon, who helped us in this work" (Jerus. Ms. no 1941, fol. 245v). Shnophor is mentioned as deacon and someone who assisted to the work in another manuscripts also, in line with numerous other names (Matenadaran Ms. no 4429, fol. 149r).

It is interesting that none of the manuscripts of Avag Tsaghkogh, created in Gladzor, has reached to us. The subsequent stage of his life takes us to Sultania (located in the territory of historical Atrpatakan, which is currently the northwestern part of Iran).

At that time Sultania was the capital of the Hulavian Mongolian State, and was one of the rich commercial centers of Asia Major, where numerous cultural directions were cross-cut. It is known that in 1318 this city became the centre of Latin Episcopate of Maragha for a short period. With the collapse of the Hulavian State Sultania lost its importance as capital, and at the end of 14th century and beginning of the 15th century its population was evicted after destruction of the city by the troops of Tamerlane. Thus, a significant part of the Armenian population of Sultania moved to live to Tavriz.⁷

It is unknown when and for what purpose Avag went to Sultania. From the colophons we learn that between 1329 and 1340 the painter lived in that city and significant part of his creative heritage, namely six manuscripts, reached us from there.

It is known that in the first half of the 14th century Dominican and Franciscan monks start implementation of unitive campaign mission in Sultania.⁸ These important historical realities immediately find their reflection in the art of Avag Tsaghkogh, who being the confederate and follower of Yesayi Nchetzi, on its turn has struggled against this movement. Such evidence is provided by the most luxurious manuscript of 1337-1340 (Matenadaran Ms. no 212), reached to us – miniature representing the Last Judgment (fol. 79v), where the painter has dared to portray two clargymen in the Hell.

The 1340s are the most unknown periods of the life in the biography of Avag, since the colophons almost do not provide any information about that period. In the Mechitarists Library in Venice a Bible is kept

(Ms. no 935), illuminated by Avag. It is difficult to say when exactly he has illuminated the Bible. Most likely it was until 1341, since in the colophon written after that one can read the following: "Grigor, the wise priest of God, received this in memory of his parents and himself, and for the heritage of his son Eprem Priest in 1341 in Sultania city" and then continues "in the year 1354 of the Savior's birth, Eprem Priest, who is the son of Grigor Priest, with his own will has presented this Bible to Varaga Saint Nshan Church for the good memory of his parents and himself" (fol. 449r). One year after that, in 1355, Monk Movses of Metsopa Monastery writes the Book of Parables in Varaga Saint Nshan Church (fol. 538v).⁹

The next information on biography of Avag is communicated from the colophon of the manuscript no 6230 stored in Matenadaran. In 1350 the king of Cilicia Constandin IV and Mkhitar Catholicos present to Avag a Bible, which he later on, perhaps in 1356-58, illuminates, binds and "brought and presented it to prominent and Christian loving paron Sorghatmish and his believer and hard-working wife Beki Khatun... these people hosted us with pleasure and kindness" (fol. 505v). Garegin Hovsepyan thinks that before going to Cilicia, i.e. before 1350, Avag was in Tpghis (nowadays Tbilisi), where he was informed about the wish of paron Sorghatmish to receive a Bible.¹⁰

One can read in the colophon of the manuscript no 7631 stored in Matenadaran the following: "Unworthy Sargis priest, who worked in very hard times (1352), did it with his own hands by the request of the great orator Avag" (fol. 260v). Perhaps Avag wrote this manuscript in Cilicia between 1350-52. Due to the fact that the parchment was over, Sargis priest completed the work in 1352 (fol. 260v).

Until today the information about the biography of the painter was limited with the fact of presenting Mr. Sorghatmish and his wife a manuscript in 1358. His future fate was remaining unknown.

However, the study of the paleography of manuscripts written by Avag allowed us to assign one more manuscript to Avag Tsaghkogh. This is the Gospel no 6402 of Matenadaran, the paleography of which will be analyzed later on. Now let's present a section from the colophon, which provides biographic information about the painter Avag:

In 1377 spiritual priest John again repaired and composed it /the Gospel/, since the *varpet* Avag, who started to scribe passed away and could not complete it. Me, Zacharia, unworthy and poor scribe full of numerous

sins, did a lot of work in Aghtamar Island under the sponsorship of Saint Cross and Saint Nshan and under the leadership of *ter* Zacharia (fol. 347v).

Unfortunately, due to scarce information of the colophon we cannot state where did Avag live in his last years and where he passed away. The fact that the manuscript appeared in Aghtamar and Avag did not arrive there to complete, shows that he was in different location. Regarding the date we can only state the assumption of Levon Khachikyan that the colophon of Avag should have been written several years before the 1377.¹¹

Thus, the first known to us book of Avag Tsaghkogh dates back to 1329, and his last manuscript was completed by another scribe in 1377. From this we can imply that his creative activities lasted about forty years, and the last book he should have written at the elderly age of over 70 years.

So far this is the information known about the biography of Avag Tsaghkogh.

Study of Paleography

First of all let's mention that in order to recognize and compare the script of Avag two manuscripts are taken as basis, where he signs both as painter and scribe. These are the Gospel of 1337-1340 (Matenadaran Ms. no 212) and a New Testament (BL Ms. no 5304), which does not have a date since its colophon is not maintained. Right from the beginning it should be mentioned that in his manuscripts the text is in two columns, and the cursive is *bolorgir*.

As already mentioned, the first book that reached to us is the Gospel of 1329 (Matenadaran Ms. no 7650). The owner of the manuscript was Aslan, who presented it to St. Sargis Church in Ordubazar, which was in one of the suburbs of Sultania (fol. 353v).¹² The fact that Avag worked in Ordubazar created confusion within some experts, who categorized him as belonging to the Crimea school of painters (this is due to the wrong understanding about the location of the settlement).¹³ The scribe of the manuscript is Grigor priest,¹⁴ and Avag was the developer of the Canon Tables, illuminator and binder, about which there are references in different folios (25r, 180v, 349v, 354r).

Without denying the fact, that Grigor priest was the copyist of the manuscript, it should be mentioned that Avag was also partially

participating in that work. Thus, he illuminated not only the Canon Tables, but also wrote the texts within the colons – the Letter of Eusebius to Karpianos (fols. 3v and 4r) and the tables (fols. 5v and 12r, **see table I B 1-4**). In general the script of Avag has certain distinctive features. The Armenian letters “U”-“M”, “Q”-“Z”, “U”-“S”, and “F”-“V” are distinguished with their style. The writing is harmonious and has a little curvature. Due to thin edge used it is extremely delicate. The scribe preferred using black ink.

In this manuscript Avag has also written the first two folios of each Gospel. In the Gospel of Matthew the writing is of golden color, and in other three Gospels – golden and blue (**see image 1**). Such combination of colors gives a particular charm to the book. A tendency of emphasizing and enriching the writing of the manuscript in such a way is also observed in the manuscripts Matenadaran Ms. no 212 and Matenadaran Ms. no 6402 (**see images 2 and 3**). Also, the initials decorated by the image of bird make the Gospel extremely attractive: red-legged and red-beaked birds are portrayed flying or making complex turns (**see table III A 1-3**). We can also state that the colophon also belongs to the pen of Avag (**see table IV A 1-2**). While referring to the names of the scribe and the receiver he asks the following: “Also considered me, Avag Monk *dpir*, to be worth for composing this holy Gospel” (fol. 354r).

The next manuscript is the Gospel of 1334 written in Sultania (Jerus. Ms. no 1941), the scribe, illuminator and binder of which was one of the famous representatives of the Armenian manuscript art Mkhitar of Ani. In this manuscript Mkhitar of Ani make a reference to Avag as “brave secretary and invaluable painter Avag the *vd*” (fol. 15r), “multitalented painter Avag the *vd*” (fol. 156r), and “brave secretary monk Avag *vd*” (fol. 245v).

The above-mentioned inscriptions “Avag *vd*” often make the experts to consider him to be so called *vardapet* – an Armenian religious teacher of the highest qualifications. However, both in this and subsequent books (even in the latest manuscript no 6402) next to the name of Avag one can also read the words monk *dpir* or deacon. He could be both monk *dpir* and deacon at the same time, but it is out of logic that he would be *dpir* and *vardapet* at the same time. Thus, we tend to agree with the opinion of Garegin Hovsepyan that the inscription “*vd*” is used with the meaning of “*vardapet*” or “*varpet*” – which in the medieval armenian art history meant to be both scribe, painter, architect and sculptor.¹⁵

In this manuscript Avag has illuminated not only images of the Great Feasts, as thought by Norayr Pogharyan and Garegin Hovsepyan,¹⁶ but also the portraits of the four Evangelists. And Mkhitar of Ani is the author of Canon Tables, title pages and marginal ornaments. The latter called himself painter, perhaps meaning decorating ornaments.

The masterpiece of Avagh Tsaghkogh is the Gospel of 1337-1340 (Matenadaran Ms. no 212), which was created in Sultania and Tavriz for *paron* Peshgen, who was the son of Burtel Orbelian prince. In the colophon of the manuscript one can read the following:

The beginning and completion of this book was in Atrpatakan region, in the king's residence cities of Sultania and Tavriz, under the light of the Holy Mother and under the sponsorship of Saint Sargis, by the insignificant and unworthy scribe and illuminator Avag.... (fols. 310r-v).

According to the colophons the scribe, illuminator and binder of the manuscript was Avag (fols. 152r, 310r, 311r, **see table IV B 1-2**). This small Gospel was intended for personal use, and the author has intensively illuminated it through numerous miniature paintings about the life of Christ. And though he modestly describes himself as senseless, unskillful and immodest scribe and illuminator, in this manuscript he has harmoniously combined the holy text of the Gospel and the image of its interpretation.

However, since our main objective is not studying the painting, let's make a transition into the scribe of Avag Tsaghkogh.

As a matter of fact the Gospel is the first completely handwritten book created by Avag, which reached to us. Like in the Gospel of 1329, in this manuscript we see even better, improved version of his script.

Almost all paragraphs of the Gospel start with decorated initials. Golden-color writing follows the initials until the end of the row, and the next row is written with red ink. He keeps such pattern everywhere. The same principle can be seen also in the Gospel of 1329 (**see table III A 2, B 1**).

The first four folios of the Gospel of Matthew are golden-letter with the illustrations of the Genealogy of Christ (**see image 4**). This principle is also observed in the famous Gladzor Gospel of 1300-1307, which is stored in the library of the University of California, Los Angeles.¹⁷ The first two folios of the following three Gospels are written with cursive *bolorgits*

erkatagir in golden and blue colors (**see image 2**).¹⁸ The paleography of different letters is shown in tables I A 1-4 and III B 1-3.

By the request of the metropolitan Sargis of Syuni in Sultania Avag writes and presents him a Book of Songs (Manrusmunk, BSL Ms. or oct. no 279). In the colophon we can read the following:

I completed this book of songs in 1337.... during the khanate of Sultan Mahmud and during the realm of the Armenian King Levon IV, also during the patriarchy of Hakob and during the time of the great Armenian and Georgian commander paron Burtel of Sisakan authoritative house, as well as his sons – paron Peshgen and Ivane from the Orbelian's. Thus, great Metropolitan of this province asked to write and compose this book of songs ... and I – the sinful Avag, unworthy and unskillful scribe, wrote and painted this book with my slow hand and strayed mind, and served it to my lord as a present (fols. 135r-v).

This book provides that Avag was a talented artist. As a matter of fact he was not only scribe and painter, but was also gifted with musical skills. The manuscript mainly presents the medieval *khaz-notation*, and only in colophons we recognize his script (**see table IV C 1-2**).

The Bible no 4429 stored in Matenadaran is the second manuscript created in 1338 within the collaboration of Avag Tsaghkogh and Mkhitar of Ani. Mkhitar of Ani is the scribe, and Avag is the painter.¹⁹ The scribe wrote the colophon in the form of a poem, where he asks to remember himself “the unworthy, immodest scribe – miserable Mkhitar” (fol. 148v), and described Avag the following way:

To the great assistant to this work,
Brave and knowledgeable secretary,
Very good illuminator,
Gifted Avag Deacon,
Who took a great care of me,
Like to his own son (fol. 148v).

The next Bible created by Avag Tsaghkogh that reached us is the manuscript created in 1341-1355 and stored in Venice, which we have already talked about. The Bible was written by several scribes,²⁰ and Avag was the painter of it: “Please remember also the illuminator of this manuscript Avag deacon together with his parents” (fol. 2r).

The illuminations of the manuscript start with Old Testament theme about Adam and Eve (fol. 2v) and with luxurious Incipit page (fol. 3r). In the opposing pages of these two folios Avag wrote the beginning of the text (**see table I C 1-2,4**), which was continued by Karapet Scribe.²¹

The result of the joint work of Sargis priest and Avag Tsaghkogh was the 1352 Gospel (Matenadaran Ms. no 7631). We have already made a brief reference to the manuscript. As scribe and illuminator Avag has left several colophons (fols. 6r, 17r, 260v, 261r, 262v, **see table IV D 1-2**). However, it should be noted that all miniature paintings, including Canon Tables, portraits of four Evangelists, Incipit pages, ornaments and illuminations belong to the paintbrush of Sargis priest.²² And Avag has calligraphically scribed each letter, in separate cases combining the blue and golden (**see table I D 2-4; image 5**). The same principle was used in the Gospel of 1337-40 (image 7). According to the colophon left by Sargis, the great orator Avag has scribed the book before the Gospel of Luke (fol. 260v).

The Bible scribed by Martiros in 1314 and illuminated by Avag Tsaghkogh in 1356-58 is one of the treasures of Matenadaran (Ms. no 6230). We have already talked about the circumstances of creation and patrons of the manuscript.

The Bible was completely scribed by Martiros (fol. 443v), and Avag has illuminated the New Testament with various marginal images.

The participation of Avag in this manuscript is limited to colophons, where he requests to be remembered as painter (**see table IV E 1-2**), and then at the end summarizes the book with extensive colophon.

Another manuscript – New Testament (BL Ms. no 5304), has reached us from Avag the painter, which is not completely maintained, and unfortunately the main colophon is also lost.²³ Thus we don't know when and where was it created. However, Avag has left two small, but important references: *"I beg to remember Avag painter and scribe"* (fol. 2r) and *"remember to scribe"* (fol. 70r, **see table IV F - 2**).

Being both the scribe and the painter, he had a possibility to illuminate the text with luxurious miniature paintings fully using his talent (as we have already seen, the same principle was applied in the Gospel of 1337-1340).

The paleography is fluent and harmonious, and we see already familiar ornaments (**see table I E 1-4, III C 1-3**).

The last work of Avag Tsaghkogh is the manuscript no 6402 stored in Matenadaran, which is written before 1377 (in the above a section from the colophon is presented).

Experts considered it to be the style of Vaspurakan School.²⁴ This is perhaps true but only from the perspective of miniature painting, since the scribe of the manuscript, Avag deacon and varpet, was not a representative of Vaspurakan school. The same identity of Avag deacon or varpet and Avag Tsaghkogh is evident, since in this book Avag remained loyal to the style of scribe already familiar to us.

Thus, in each Gospel the first two folios he starts to decorate with blue, golden and red ink (see **images 3, 6**). Then he continues to state the text with already familiar letters and colophons (see **tables I F 1-4, IV G 1-2**).

Unfortunately, due to his death Avag was unable to illuminate and ornament it. The painters Hovhannes and Zacharia of Aghtamar continued this work.

In the literature there are certain inaccuracies regarding the number of manuscripts reached from Avag Tsaghkogh to us, which is worth talking about.

Byzantine art historian Victor Lazarev assigns to Avag a Gospel (Matenadaran no 2653) created in Vardnashen village of Tayotz province (Tayq) in 1341.²⁵ The first scribe of the manuscript was Stepannos Kanutzi: "I beg for my guilty parent Stepanos to be remembered" (fol. 107r), and the second scribe was Nater:

Was written by senseless and unworthy scribe, sinful Nater, and remember the Lord through praying hands, and ask for a pardon from the Christ for the Priest Stepanos, who has scribed and illuminated this book as a plea to Jesus... remember Grigor deacon, who is his offspring, and then repaired... and remember his mother, who wanted and helped in this work, and his mother's brother Avag... (fol. 226v).

As we see, Avag who is referred to in the colophon, does not have any role in creation of the manuscript. Maybe the illumination of the book made Lazarev to assign it to Avag. However, our studies showed that Avag Tsaghkogh does not have any relation to this Gospel. The ornaments of the manuscripts consist of portraits of three evangelists - Matthew (fol. 64v), Luke (fol. 108v) and John (fol. 176v), four Incipit pages (fols. 1r, 65r, 109r, 177r), and marginal ornaments and initials illustrated in different pages. Those illuminations do not belong to the paintbrush of Avag.

Presumably Levon Khachikyan assigns to Avag a Homiliarium written in 1337 (Matenadaran Ms. no 3787),²⁶ but we do not know the exist location where it was scribed, though the scribes are known – Grigor priest, Sostenes

and master Avag. In reality, the latter one does not have any relation with Avag we are interested in, since the script is completely different. This thick Homiliarium is decorated with illuminations, marginal ornaments, portraits of Saints illustrated in different folios, which unfortunately are fragmented (the outlines of the images are slightly copied in the opposite folios). However, even this vague images show that they belong to the paintbrush of another painter.

According to historian Hmayak Martirosyan, in 1358 Avag Tsaghkogh has also been to Jerusalem, where he reproduced and illuminated a manuscripts by the order of clergymen Grigor and Simeon.²⁷ This manuscript, which represents Gospel and Lectionary, was being stored in the collection of the Forty Martyrs Cathedral of Aleppo (Ms. no 54).²⁸ Unfortunately, the church was destroyed in 2015. Now the manuscript collection of the church library is available through the digitized copies of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (Collegeville, Minnesota). Let us bring a section from the colophon according to the catalogue of Surmeyan:

The holy Gospel was copied in the city of Jerusalem, in the glorious temple of Saint Archangels, by unworthy, sinful and unskillful priest Avvag... by the request of clergymen Grigor and Simeon (fol. 443r).

This colophon allowed Hmayak Martirosyan to attribute the manuscript to Avag Tsaghkogh. However, the study of the digitized copy of manuscript²⁹ proved that it is a work of another artist. First of all we need the careful reading of the colophon: Artavazd Surmeyan read the name of the scribe as ter Awag (տէր Աւագ) instead of Terawag.³⁰ Even if the scribes names were the same, the paleography of the manuscript proves that the author is not the same. The script of the manuscript differs. Avag's script is characterized by a slight slope, which is not similar with Terawag's script. The linear and colored initials (**see table III.A**), the prefaces of each Gospel are also designed by another way (**see image 8**). The style and the iconography of the miniatures are different from the Avag's artworks. Perhaps the author of the miniatures is the scribe either Terawag or another painter.³¹

Thus, to the extent possible, the above-mentioned detailed study of paleography shows us complete picture of the heritage of manuscripts reached to us from Avag (**see table II**) and helps as to recognize not only Avag the painter, but also Avag the scribe.

Table I

	1 S-U	2 V- Ի	3 M-U	4 Z- Ջ
A Mat. 212				
B Mat. 7650				
C Ven. 935				
D Mat. 7631				
E BL 5304				
F Mat. 6402				

Table II

	Number	Content	Date	Place	Scribe	Painter
1	Mat. 7650	Gospel	1329	Ordubazar	Grigor and Avag dpir	Avag
2	Jerus. 1941	Gospel	1334	Sultania	Mekhitar of Ani	Avag monk and <i>vardpet</i> , Mekhitar of Ani
3	BSL or oct. 279	Book of Songs	1337	Sultania	Avag	Avag
4	Mat. 212	Gospel	1337-40	Sultania, Tabris	Avag	Avag
5	Mat. 4429	Bible	1338	Sultania	Mekhitar of Ani	Avag deacon
6	Ven. 935	Bible	about 1341-55	Sultania, Vaspurakan	Karapet, Movses, Sargis, Avag dpir	Avag dpir
7	Mat. 7631	Gospel	about 1350-52	Cilicia	Avag <i>vardpet</i> , Sargis priest	Sargis priest
8	Mat. 6230	Bilble	1314, 1356-58	Cilicia, Tpghis	Martiros	Avag <i>vardpet</i>
9	BL 5304	Tew Testament	?	?	Avag	Avag
10	Mat. 6402	Gospel	?-1377	? then Vaspurakan	Avag dpir and <i>vardpet</i>	John and Zacharia

Table III













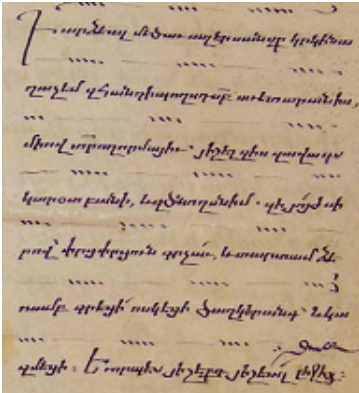
	1	2	3
A Mat. 7650			
B Mat. 212			
C BL 5304			

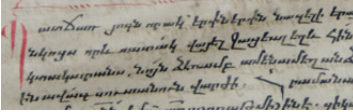
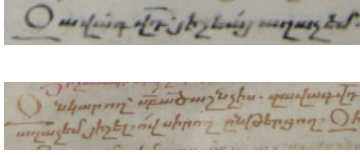
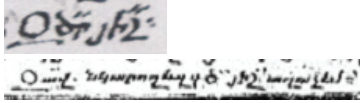
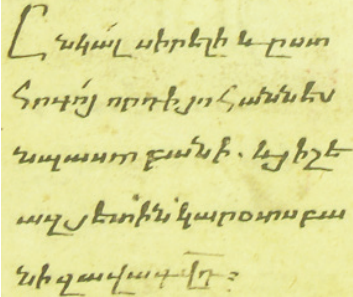
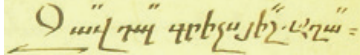
Table III.A

	1	2	2
A MS AODA 54, HMML			

Fragments from the pages 88, 393 and 265. All rights reserved to AODA. Images supplied by HMML.

Table IV

	1	2
A Mat. 7650		
B Mat. 212		
C BSL or oct. 279		
D Mat. 7631		

E Mat. 6230		
F BL 5304		
G Mat. 6402		

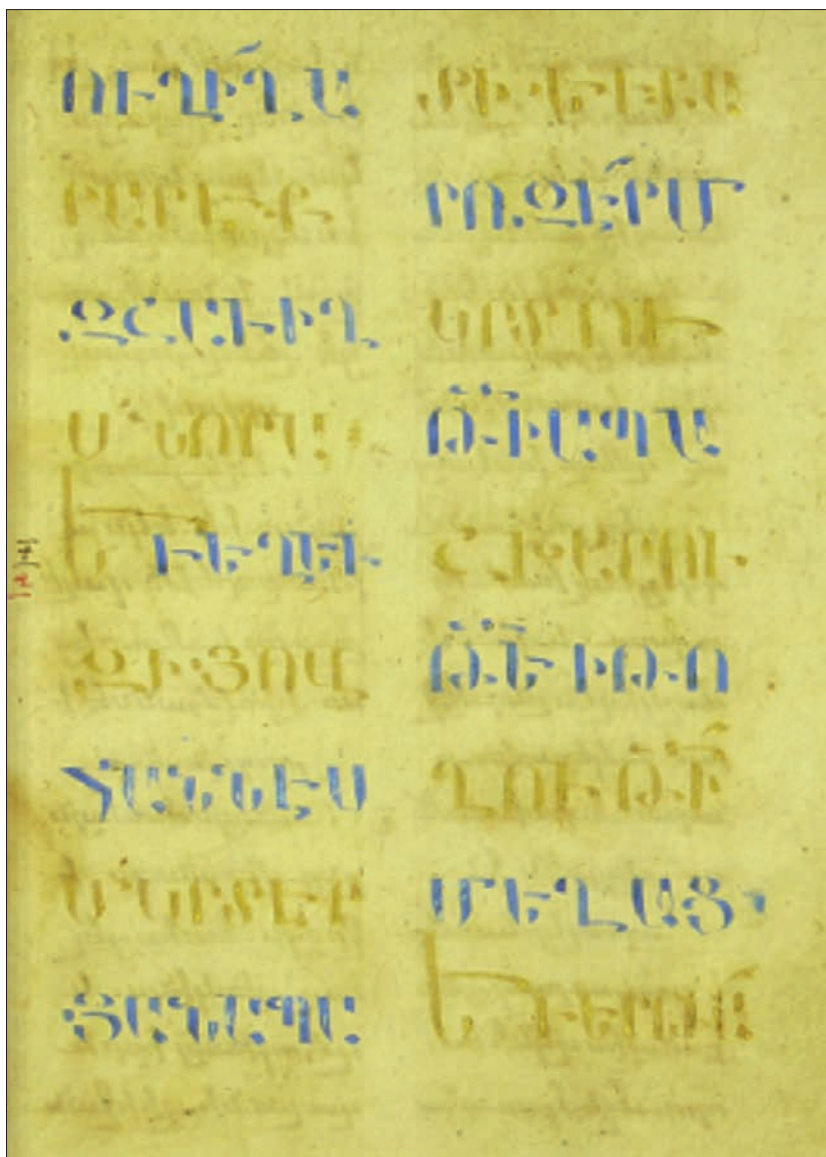


Illustration 1. Folio of the Gospel of Evangelist Mark, Ms. no 7650, fol. 122r, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan.

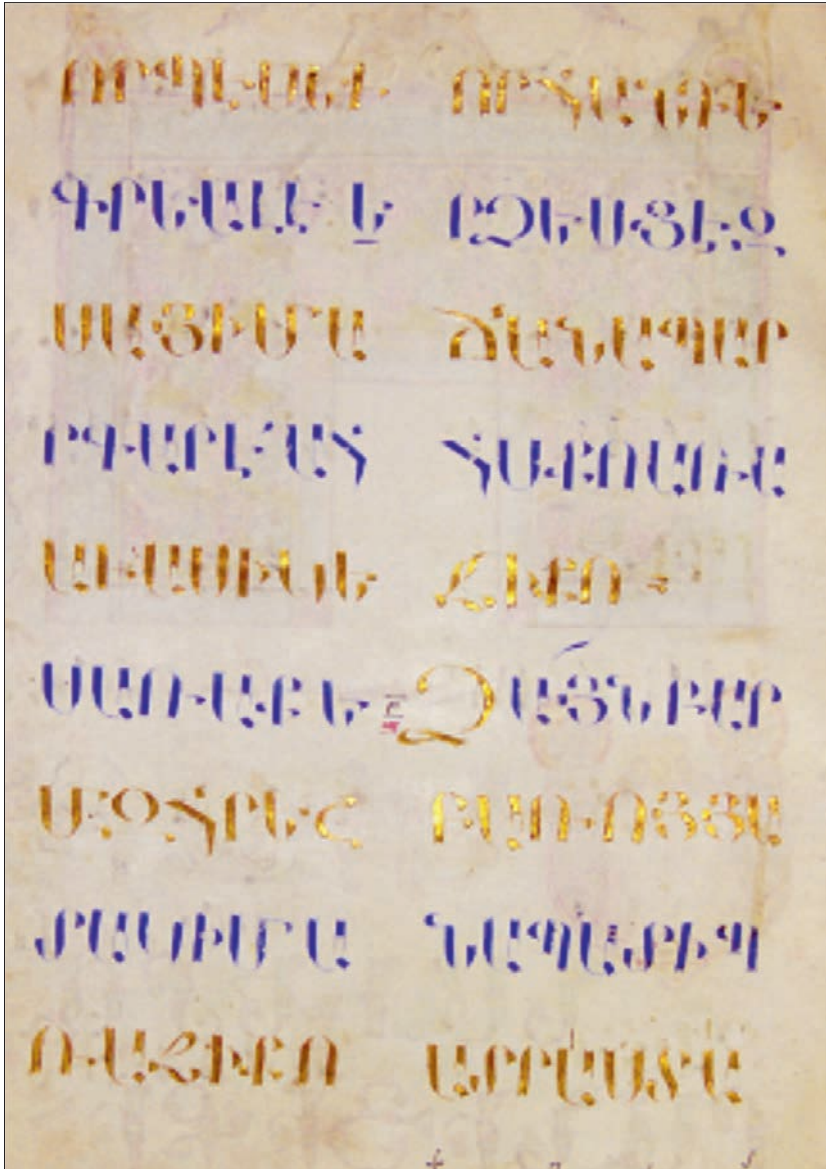


Illustration 2. Folio of the Gospel of Evangelist Mark, Ms. no 212, fol. 99v, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan.

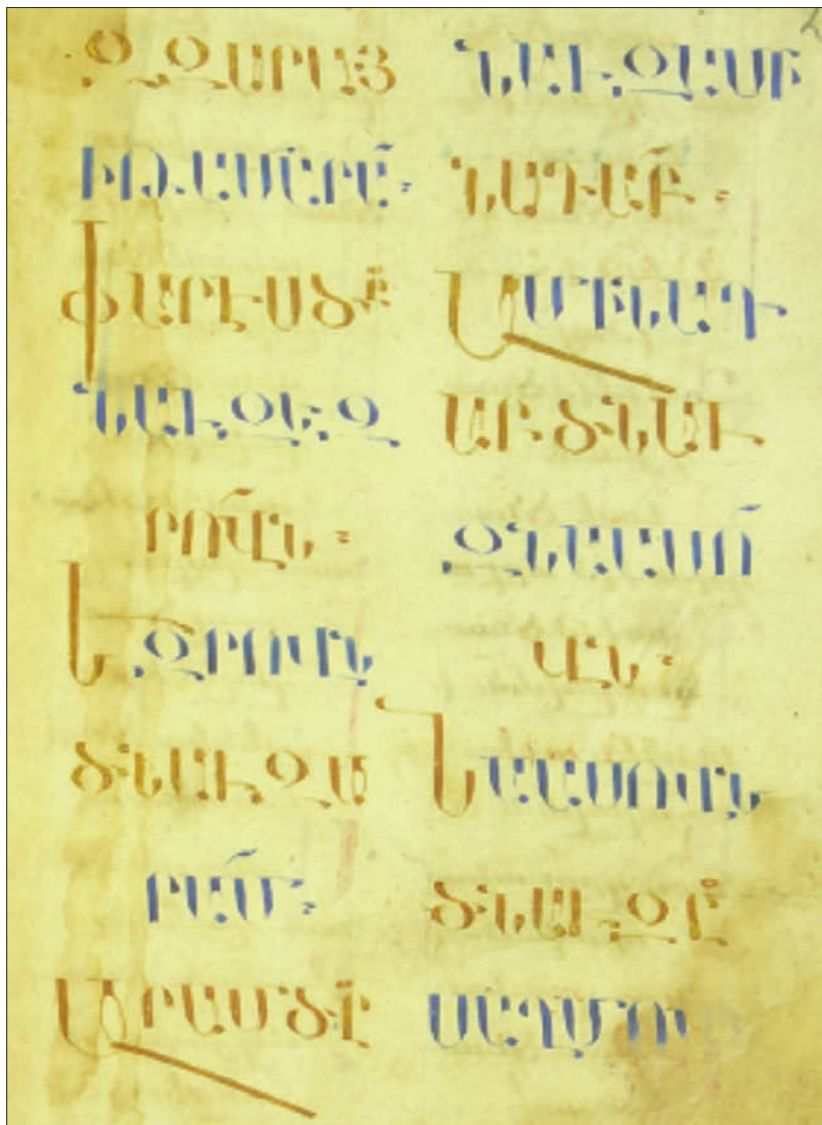


Illustration 3. Folio of the Gospel of Evangelist Matthew, Ms. no 6402, fol. 2r, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan.



Illustration 4. The Genealogy of Christ, Ms. no 212, fol. 17r, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan.

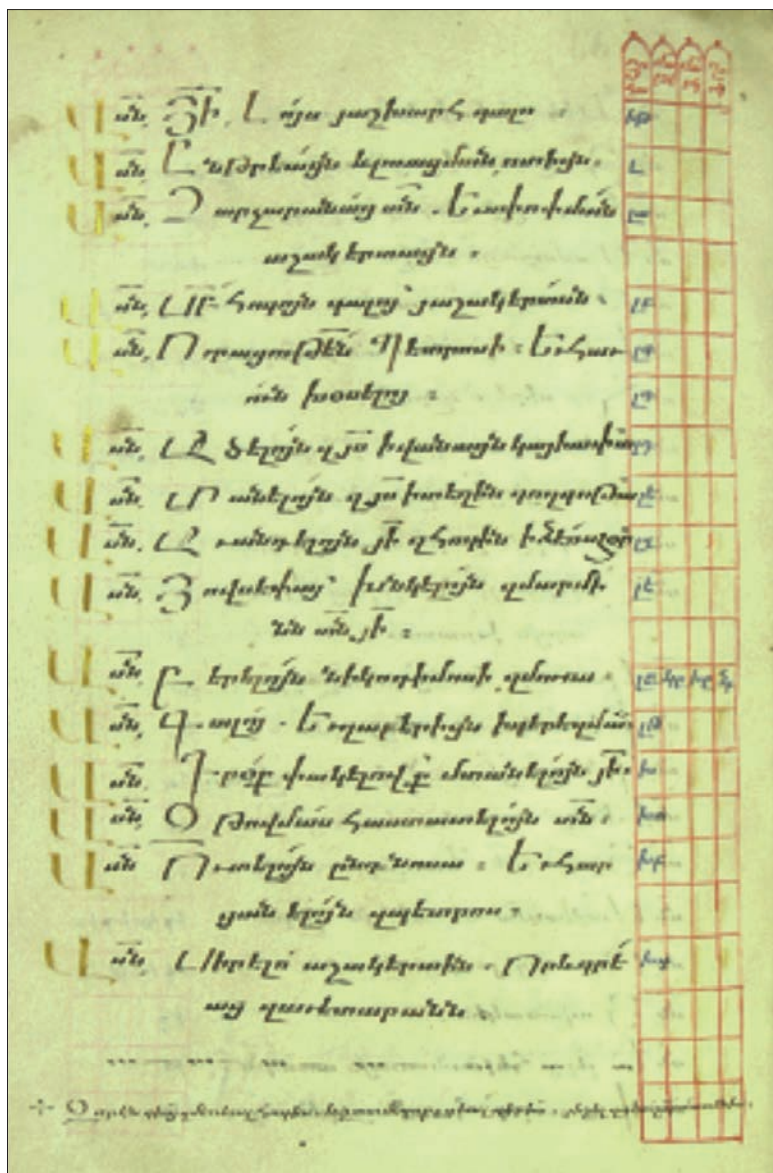


Illustration 5. Folio of the Gospel of Evangelist John, Ms. no 7631, fol. 262v, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan.

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Լ ասն Լ՝ ոչնի զի	ԿԵ		Կ	
զառան մն ան				
Լ ասն Զառան անիմ:	ԿԸ	ԻԵ	ԽԵ	ԼԲ
Լ ասն Զարգանից	ԿԹ		ԽԸ	ԼԵ
բաշանայանից զի զարգ				
Լ ասն Լ Դաւիթ այգ	Կ		Ծ	ԼԶ
ոչն:				
Լ ասն Դաւիթի անիմ:	ԿԱ		ԾԲ	ԼԵ
Լ ասն Լաւորիկից ոչն:	ԿԲ		ԾԳ	ԼԶ
Լ ասն ԸԵ զի արդարան	ԿԳ		ԾԴ	Խ
որդի դաւթի Ե:				ԽԱ
Լ ասն Երզնր Լորնայ	ԿԴ			
ից այր ոչն:				
Լ ասն Զարգ Դանիա	ԿԵ		ԾԵ	ԽԲ
տարածիմ:				
Լ ասն Օտոկի Իմ:	ԿԶ		ԿԳ	ԽԵ
Լ ասն Լիճի ոչն ԸԵ	ԿԷ		ԼԵ	ԻԵ
ոչն մԵԾ:				
Լ ասն Ինորի ոչն	ԿԸ			
հաստանայի:				
Լ ասն Լաւրի անու	ԿԹ			
անցիկի ոչն ԸԵ զարգ:				
Լ ասն Լորնի ոչն ԿԱ	Ը			
անուցն:				
Լ ասն Լ Կարտի ան	ԸԱ			

Illustration 8. Folio of the Gospel of Evangelist Luke, AODA Ms. no. 54, fol. 186, HMML. All rights reserved to AODA. Image supplied by HMML.

NOTES

- ¹ For the first time R. Drampyan and A. Svirin put the art of Avag Tsaghkogh into scientific circulation. See Drampyan R., "Armenian Miniature Painting and Literary Art", "Note on the History of Armenian Art", collection of articles, Art, Moscow-Leningrad, 1939 (in Russian); Svirin A., *Miniature Painting of Ancient Armenia*, Art, Moscow-Leningrad, 1939 (in Russian). For more details on the history of studying the art of Avag see Sargsyan L., "The History of Studying the 1329 Gospel of Avag Tsaghkogh", *History and Culture Armenological Journal*, volume B, Yerevan State University, Yerevan, 2011, pp. 332-337 (in Armenian).
- ² There is contradicting information in literature on the manuscripts of Avag reached to us. Some assign to Avag manuscripts, which he has not take part in creation, and vice versa. Such confusion is due to the fact that there are manuscripts, where Avag did not do illumination, but did only reproduction. Thus, studying the scribe will help us to differentiate the manuscripts of Avag Tsaghkogh of the 14th century from the manuscripts of the authors with the same name.
- ³ For the first time the Russian art historian A. Svirin records that Avag was born in Moshaghbyur. See Svirin A., *Miniature Painting of Ancient Armenia*, Art, Moscow-Leningrad, 1939, p. 96 (in Russian).
- ⁴ Hovsepyan G., *Khaghbekyans and Proshians in the History of Armenia*, Second Publication, Armenian Patriarchate of Cilicia, Antelias-Lebanon, 1969, pp. 443-444 (in Armenian).
- ⁵ *National Atlas of Armenia*, Editor Babken Harutyunyan, volume B, "Tigran the Great", Yerevan, 2008, p. 151 (in Armenian); In the Dictionary of locations of settlements of Armenia and neighboring regions Moshaghbyur is wrongly identified as Moshahav spring, and located in the Martuni Region of nowadays Artzakh (see *Dictionary of locations of settlements of Armenia and neighboring regions*, Hakobyan T., Melik-Bakhshyan St., Barseghyan H., Yerevan State University, Yerevan, 1991, volume 3, p. 865) (in Armenian).
- ⁶ Avetisyan A., "Miniature Painter Avag (from the History of the Ancient Armenian Miniature Painting)", "Etchmiadzin" Journal, Holy See of Etchmiadzin, Etchmiadzin, 1961, p. 51 (in Armenian); Same author, *Gladzor School of the Armenian Miniature Painting*, Academy of Sciences, Yerevan, 1971, p. 25; Later on this idea is repeated by Zakarian L., see *Sacred Armenia: History and Culture, From the Biblical Armenian till the end of 18th century*, exhibition catalog, Editor Claude Mutafian, Paris, 2007, p. 365 (in Armenian).
- ⁷ Martirosyan H., *History of Armenian Community in Iran, Tinkler-97*, Yerevan, 2007, p. 189 (in Armenian).
- ⁸ *After Marco Polo. Travel of Western Foreigners into the Three Indian Countries*, translation from Latin and Old Italian languages, introduction and notes by Sveta. Ya. M., Science, Moscow, 1968, p. 58 (in Russian);

- Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe - XVe siècles)*, École Française de Rome; Palais Farnèse, 1977, p. 180-181.
- 9 See the colophons of the manuscripts: F. Sargisean B., "Main Catalog of the Armenian Manuscripts in Venice Mekhitarists Library", volume A, Venice – Saint Lazar, 1914, pp. 93-96 (in Armenian); Khachikyan L., "Colophons of the Armenian Manuscripts of the 14th Century", Academy of Sciences, Yerevan, 1950, pp. 328, 406, 415 (in Armenian); The comparison of the list of Father Barsegh Sargisean shows inconsistency in the number of pages, since we were guided with the current pagination of the manuscript.
- 10 Hovsepyan G., "Mkhitar of Ani – Scribe and Painter", "Hask" Armenological Yearbook, Year A, Armenian Patriarchate of Cilicia, Antelia- Lebanon, 1948, p. 201 (in Armenian).
- 11 Khachikyan L., "Colophons of the 14th Century Armenian Manuscripts", Academy of Sciences, Yerevan, 1950, p. 522 (in Armenian).
- 12 The identity of these historical persons is described in more detail in the following publication – Zakarian L., *Un Artista Anti-Unitore del XIV secolo*, Roma-Armenia, a cura di Claude Mutafian, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1999, pp. 176-178.
- 13 Svirin A., "Miniature Painting of the Ancient Armenia", Moscow-Leningrad, 1939, p. 97 (in Russian); Lazarev V., "History of Byzantine painting", Art, Moscow, 1986, p. 185 (in Russian).
- 14 In the widely written colophon at the end of the Gospel we can read the following: "*Please remember myself – unworthy and unskillful scribe Grigor priest, and my parents*", fol. 353r.
- 15 Hovsepyan G., "Mkhitar of Ani – Scribe and Painter", "Hask" Armenological Yearbook, Armenian Patriarchate of Cilicia, Antelia- Lebanon, 1948, p. 203 (in Armenian); see also Barkhudaryan S., "Armenian Medieval Architects and Stone Masters", Academy of Sciences, Yerevan, 1963, pp. 16-18 (in Armenian).
- 16 Hovsepyan G., "Mkhitar of Ani – Scribe and Painter", "Hask" Armenological Yearbook, Armenian Patriarchate of Cilicia, Antelia- Lebanon, 1948, p. 203 (in Armenian); Pogharyan N., "Main Catalog of Manuscripts at Saint James", volume 6, Armenian Patriarchate of St. James, Jerusalem, 1972, p. 21 (in Armenian).
- 17 Mathews Th. and Taylor A., *The Armenian Gospels of Gladzor: The life of Christ Illuminated*, Los Angeles, California, Getty Publications, 2001, plates 9-10.
- 18 We see such principle of calligraphy also in the Cilician manuscripts, for example in the Gospel scribed and illuminated by the famous Cilician artist of the 14th century Sargis Pitsak, which after being brought to Romania in 1664 was completed by Avetik deacon (State Archive of Cluj-Napoca, no. 11, fol. 120r). Also the same refers to another manuscript stored in the same collection (no 15), which was written in Cilicia and then in Cyprus

- Famagusta. The manuscript was ordered in 1310-12 by the aunt Alits of the Cilician kings, and scribed by famous artist Stepannos Guynrereritzantz and illuminated by Sargis Pitsak (fol. 285r).
- 19 The miniature paintings of the Bible are incomplete, which is evidenced by the red ink and drawings painted by feather.
- 20 F. Sargisian B., “Main Catalog of the Armenian Manuscripts in Venice Mekhtarists Library”, volume A, Venice – Saint Lazar, 1914, pp. 87-88 (in Armenian).
- 21 The exact continuity of the original is checked.
- 22 In the two ornamental borders of the Gospel John the Baptist and God’s Mother are portrayed (fol. 23r, 110r), in the back of which one could notice the traces of drawings with red ink. It is not excluded that Avag did the drawings to paint them after completion of the scribe, but Sargis Pitsak continued it.
- 23 For the first time the manuscript was assigned to Avag by great scholar, Byzantine art historian, Sirarpi Der Nersessian, see the digital archive of Der Nersessian S., folder 5, document 5304, stored in Matenadaran.
- 24 Matevosyan K., Tumanyan L., Asryan A., “Historical-Cultural Heritage of Aghtamar”, Holy See of Etchmiadzin, Etchmiadzin, 2013, p. 124 (in Armenian).
- 25 Lazarev V., “History of the Byzantine Painting”, Art, Moscow, 1986, p. 185 (in Russian).
- 26 Khachikyan L., “Colophons of the 14th Century Armenian Manuscripts”, Academy of Sciences, Yerevan, 1950, p. 293 (in Armenian).
- 27 Martirosyan H., “History of the Armenian Community of Iran”, Tinkler-97, Yerevan, 2007, p. 193 (in Armenian).
- 28 Archbishop Surmeyan A., “Catalog of the Armenian Manuscripts at Aleppo Cathedral of Forty Martyrs”, Armenian Patriarchate of St. James, Jerusalem, 1935, p. 111-119.
- 29 The current location of manuscript is unknown.
- 30 For more details about the name Teravag (*Տէրաւագ*) see Acharian Hr., *Dictionary of Armenian names*, Yerevan, 1942, p. 144.
- 31 The study of the illumination of manuscript and the identification of the artist of manuscript will be discussed by me on another occasion.

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