

# T'ovma Metsobets'i's History of Tamerlane and His Successors

## Translator's Preface

T'ovma Metsobets'i's History describes events taking place on the Armenian highlands and in Georgia during the Turco-Mongol invasions of Timur Leng (1386-87, 1394-96, and 1399-1403). These invasions were made upon a society which already had been gravely weakened by the preceding decades of warfare and persecution from Turkmen, Kurdish, and Ottoman groups now resident in the area, and from Mongols of the Golden Horde in the north Caucasus.

Information about the author of this work is found in T'ovma's own History, in the Life of T'ovma Metsobets'i, written by his student Kirakos Banaser, and in a number of 15th century colophons. According to these sources, T'ovma was born in 1378 in the district of Aghiovit, north of Lake Van. He received his early education at the monastery of Metsob (or Metsop') north of the city of Archesh, but the invasions of Timur and the attacks of Turkmen bands obliged him to move from place to place, frequently fleeing for his life. In 1395 he went to Suxara (Xarabasta) monastery in the K'ajberunik' district of southern Armenia where he studied for twelve years with the noted vardapets (doctors of the Church) Sargis and Vardan. In 1406, together with twelve classmates, he went to one of the most important seats of learning in Armenia, the monastery of Tat'ew in the Tsg huk region of the district of Siwnik'. After a residence of only two years there, T'ovma, his classmates and their teacher, the great intellectual Grigor Tat'ewats'i, were forced to flee to Metsob monastery to escape the Qara Qoyunlu Turkmens. Soon thereafter T'ovma's beloved teacher was taken to the Ayrarat district by other students, and T'ovma and his classmates who set out after him were unable to convince him to return. According to Kirakos Banaser, Grigor Tat'ewats'i conferred the vardapetal dignity on T'ovma in Erevan. T'ovma then returned to Metsob where he engaged in teaching and literary activity, and participated in the struggle against the influence of Roman Catholicism within the Armenian church. However, between 1421 and 1437, southern Armenia once again became a theater of warfare between Turkmens, Mongols and Kurds. In 1430 T'ovma fled for his life to the island of Lim in Lake Van. In 1436 he and his students fled to Xlat', Archesh and Artske. T'ovma Metsobets'i was one of the major protagonists involved in transferring the Armenian kat'oghikosate from Sis in Cilicia back to Ejmiatsin in Greater Armenia in 1441. After the realization of his dream, T'ovma returned to Metsob where he died three years later, in 1446.

The History of Tamerlane and His Successors, although a major source for Armenia in the late 14th and early 15th centuries is, nonetheless, a rather defective production. Written for the most part from memory, the work (especially when dealing with events occurring outside Armenia) contains historical inaccuracies and frequent repetitions, jumps episodically back and forth from one decade to another, and does not, generally, seem to be a well-structured history. T'ovma himself was well aware of its shortcomings. He wrote: "This event occurred in 1425 more or less. You must excuse me, for I was old and commenced fifty years later. Therefore I wrote going backward and forward."

The History begins with the devastations wreaked on the district of Siwnik' by the northern Tatars in 1386. Tamerlane's invasions of 1387, 1388, 1395, 1401 and 1402 on numerous districts of eastern and western historical Armenia and Georgia are described with the blood-curdling immediacy of a terrified eye-witness. The account is more detailed yet for the first three decades of the 15th century. It describes the impact on Armenian economic, intellectual and religious life of this dismal and nightmarish period of mass exterminations, mass deportations, and the forced and voluntary apostasy of the population. For a discussion of Armenia in this period, see R. Bedrosian, The Turco-Mongol Invasions and the Lords of Armenia in the 13-14th Centuries (New York, 1979).

Unfortunately, no critical edition of T'ovma's work exists. The classical Armenian text was published by K. Shahnazarian in Paris in 1860. Subsequently it was translated into French by Felix Neve and appeared in Journal Asiatique (1855), and as a separate book in 1861. The present translation, made from the classical Armenian text of 1860, was completed in 1977 in Erevan, Armenia. The transliteration employed is a modification of the Library of Congress system.

Robert Bedrosian  
(New York, 1987)

## [A Note on Pagination](#)

The following chronological tables may be useful as accompaniments to the translation. The tables open in separate windows, for persistence. Use ALT-F4 to close, or ALT-TAB to toggle back to this page or to other documents. Additional tables are available on another page of this site: [Chronological Tables](#).

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## The History of Tamerlane and His Successors

by vardapet T'ovma Metsobets'i

[1] Scholars and literary men must know that time is divided into three parts: past, present, and future. Vardapets (doctors) of the Church should know about these three in order to relate [what occurred] in the past, to discuss the present, and to know about and foresee the future. Similarly we too must write in a somewhat abbreviated fashion about the present, about what transpired in our own period, about the wicked, faithless kings of the East who brought ruin to the Armenian people in these latter days, and [we must] make mention of all the foreign peoples.

A man named Tamerlane (T'amur-lank), holding the faith and precepts of the obscene Mahmet, precursor of the antichrist, appeared in the East, in the city of Samarqand (Smerghand), merciless, cruel, treacherous, filled with all the evil, [g9] impurity and stratagems of the tempter satan. Some say that he was from Sart'ap' which is in the district of Kogovit hard by Mt. Masis (where Noah's ark is) and close to the district of Artaz. He went to Tabriz (T'avrez) and the khans sent him to the K'eshiks [guards] to check the enemies on the Khurasan road. He arose and went to Khurasan, crossed the Jehan river [Amu Darya] [2] and arrived at the city of Samarqand in the East. Observing that the entire land was lordless, he became the head of brigands and the chief of the murderers. There assembled about him some 515 men who were as wicked as he was. Secretly going to the city's fields, they ravished and made off with its herds. The princes of the city came out to war against them. But they turned about and fought [their pursuers] striking and killing them. Then entering the city they took possession of it, and [Timur] took the wife of its lord, Xanum, as his own wife. Gradually growing stronger, he took the city of Bukhara. Crossing to the other side of the Amu-Darya river he entered the country of Khurasan, and took many of its cities, putting everyone to the sword. Fear and dread fell upon [the people] and they gave the land over to him.

[Timur] tricked some with false bribes, some he swore [to himself], [g10] some he adopted, some he gave in marriage to his daughters, then killed the bridegrooms by means of his daughters. He also took the royal city of Herat (Hre), marrying his daughter to its prince. [The daughter] remained with the man for a few days then killed him with a sword, sending to her father for him to come and take the city. And he went and took it, making it a royal city.

[3] Now a certain prince named Shah-Mansur resisted [Timur] for more than eight years and did not yield up [the cities of] Shiraz, Kirman, and Isfahan (Aspahan). The foul Timur made peace with him, and as a ruse, turned toward the East [as though departing]. Shah-Mansur sent a great many ambassadors and supplications to him. When Timur saw the ambassadors who came, he feigned illness, had a lamb brought, slaughtered, and drank its blood. He then commanded that the ambassador be called into the multitude, and Timur gave the appearance of someone dying. He had a copper vessel brought and vomited out the lamb's blood before the entire multitude. When the ambassador saw this he was inwardly delighted and thought: "Today, soon, he will die." That night [the ambassador] jumped on a horse, reached prince Shah-Mansur, and gave the glad tidings to the entire land. And they held a great arayish, that is to say, a celebration. Then all the people of the land who were harassed, [g11] hungry, thirsty and [had been] greatly endangered, dispersed, each going to his dwelling place.

But that evil scheming Timur organized his army and traversed a journey of three or four days in but one day, arriving at the city gates. Going to battle, in a few days they destroyed them and seized their fortresses. Now the brave Shah-Mansur, remaining intrepid, armed his forces of 800 men. Suddenly he opened the gates of the city and went [4] amidst the countless, limitless brigade until they reached the very spot where Timur had assembled the Aryan [Iranian] cavalry. Then [Shah-Mansur] raised his sword over the head of satan's son, but [Timur's] soldiers surrounded him with their shields and [Shah-Mansur and his supporters] were unable to slay the dragon of the abyss. Instead, surrounded by [Timur's] troops, they were cut down, one and all. Thus did [the Timurids] capture the entire land of Khurasan, the city of Balkh (Bahl), Khurasan, Shiraz, Kirman, Isfahan, Nishapur, Kuran, Makuran, Tus, T'anjan, Damghan, Mazandaran, Ray (Re), Qazvin (Ghazuin), and they reached as far as Sultaniyeh to the borders of Tabriz in Atrpatakan. [g12] Edil, the prince of Sultaniyeh, went before [Timur] with treasures and royal supplications and made peace with him.

The khan of Tabriz, sultan Ahmad, under the leadership of the emir of the Medes (Marats'), Ezdin [Izz al-Din Shir, Kurdish ruler of the Shambo tribe in Hakkari] fled via Ostan of the Rshtunis, to the city of Babylon (now called Baghdad), to his relatives and troops, for they simultaneously ruled them as well. Now the Edil whom we mentioned, led Timur to the city of Tabriz and gave it over to him. Then secret consultations took place in his army to kill Timur the Lamé in the city bath. But someone who learned about the plot went and informed Timur privately about emir Edil's treachery. When Timur found out, he had Edil summoned. He caused a fire [5] to be kindled, had Edil placed alive in a copper kettle, and cooked in the presence of himself and the entire multitude. And thus did they destroy him.

Now this too is known: that before the coming of Timur to our land, in 835 of the Armenian Era [1386], the king of the North, named Tokhtamysh, lord of the Rus and Azax, who resided in Sarai close to the Crimea, sent an ambassador to the khan of Tabriz, Sultan Ahmad, Uwais' (Osis') son, to make friendship and peace. But [Ahmad] through wicked and foul deeds disgraced him. When the ambassador [g13] returned to [Tokhtamysh] he tore his collar before him, and filled with rage [Tokhtamysh] summoned a prince named Jani-beg (Chanibek) and entrusted many troops to him. [Jani-beg] came against [Ahmad] through the gate of the Alans and Darband. Now [Ahmad] eluded him, came to Ostan and thence to Baghdad. The troops from the north besieged Tabriz and after fighting for seven days, they took it. Killing and robbing many, they looted all of [Ahmad's] districts. Thence they went on to the city of Nakhchivan (Naxchuan) and devastated all the twelve districts of the Siwnik' country, killing and enslaving many people. It was winter when this occurred. But suddenly, at the command of God, a severe snow fell upon them on the day of the Revelation of Our Lord. Many people escaped captivity. Then, leaving [6] a large part of the booty behind, [Jani-beg and his men] returned to their land by the same road whence had come the bestial people of the Tatars, called Toghtoghan. And they made peace with the country of Shamaxi since [the inhabitants] peaceably opened the Alan Gates before them.

Now in this time lived the blessed and venerable vardapet of Armenia, Yovhannes, nicknamed kaxik ("suspended," "hanging")--suspended in the love of God. [Yovhannes] was from the district of Orotin, from the village of Vaghand, son [g14] of the great prince Iwane from the line of

the first princes of Siwnik' from which [line too] was Vasak (who spoke slander before Yazkert, king of Iran to the effect that their father's brother Vaghinak was slain). [Yovhannes] was extremely wise and learned in the Old and New Testaments, an unraveler of the subtle in the Bible and in profane [works], a student of our vardapets, the great Esay and Tiratur. [Yovhannes] assembled about himself many students from all districts and made the Armenian people gleam radiantly with vardapets and priests, with beautiful order and orthodox doctrine. He especially struggled day and night against the Christ-hating Aght'armayits' [Roman Catholics] of the Ernjak district. In these days he reposed in Christ and there was darkness in the land of Armenia. His students took his body and buried it at Ernjak monastery, close to his student the blessed hermit Maghak'ia. [Maghak'ia] was from [7] [Kafa] the seaside city of Crimea (Ghrim), son of an extremely wealthy family. He left his inheritance and came to the great vardapet Yovhannes. Receiving from him the authority of vardapet, [Maghak'ia] went to the district of Nakhchivan and constructed Armenian monasteries. He also endured much resistance [g15] from those false Christians, the Aght'armayits' [Roman Catholics]. Subsequently he was poisoned by his godmother, an Aght'arma, and left our people in great mourning. For he kept in good repair the schoolhouses of two vardapets, Yovhannes and Sargis: Aprakuneats' and Astapatin. Throughout the entire duration of his life he ate no meat and drank no wine. He wore two hair-cloths, one of which he would remove and walk through fire, while the other one he never took off. He wore around his body to his knees an iron [brace] with four wide bands [which] tormented his limbs [like] criminals [are tormented]. Our spiritual fathers, vardapet Yovhannes and the cleric Mat'eos, saw him at the hour of his death and stood by him. And they informed everyone. Amazed and astonished they glorified God and wanted to erect a cross. But the great vardapet Yovhannes did not permit it. Rather they buried him in their cemetery. People who saw Maghak'ia said that from the feast of the great martyr saint [8] Sargis to the feast of the Transfiguration (Vardavar) he drank no water and that during Lent he ate only barley flour mixed with water, from Sunday to Sunday. It was there [with Maghak'ia] that they buried the great vardapet Yovhannes; the two [had been] yoked together in faith to the honor and glory of the holy Church. [Yovhannes] was born on the thirtieth of Nawasard and died on the very same day, like the great patriarch Sahak. For this is the normal death of pure [g16] Christian folk. May their memory be blessed, and may their prayers be upon the world. By supplications may Lord God have mercy on all of our people. Yovhannes' death occurred three years after the hermit Maghak'ia's.

Yovhannes was succeeded on the [abbot's] throne by that Christ-inspired source, that sun which never sets, the second illuminator, vardapet Grigorios Tat'ewats'i, by the consent and will of the great vardapet Sargis of the holy congregation of Xarabast and by his dear brothers (hamshirak), Yakob of Saghmosavank' in the Araratean district and by Georg Erznkats'i, and by the entire group of students of vardapet Yovhannes of Metsob, Yakob and Mxi'ar Rshtuni. On this, so much for now.

Let us return to our earlier narration about the abominable king of the East. In 836 of the Armenian Era [1387], [Timur] [9] took the land of Khurasan after an eight-year war. After that he went and took the city of Tabriz of Gandzak shahastan. Then he came against the fortress of Ernjak in the Siwnik' country; then against the Chakat country; he took the city of Surbmari destroying to the foundations our fortress which the venerable Bagratid family had strongly secured; [g17] he captured the city and all the surrounding villages. Now a pious tanuter named Martiros, an extremely strong warrior from the village of Koghb, a merciful man, a lover of the poor, went up onto Mt. Bardogh (called T'akalt'u by the foreigners) with extremely manly and brave youths from the village and saved all the believers through a great battle and with the intrepid aiding power of mighty God, Jesus Christ, our Savior. And though [Timur's] men fought many times, they were unable to take that mountain. But subsequently [Martiros] was murdered by an unclean Turkmen named Sahat'--drowned in the Araz waters, far from human sight. In this time the holy cross of Getarget was lost. It had been fashioned of the Wood of Life [the Cross] and given by saint Sylvester as a gift to saint Gregory the Illuminator. Two clerics from the blessed congregation of the holy father Vardik in Kaghzvan had taken it and were secretly keeping it. Ch'aghat'a [Chaghatai, referring to Timur] fell upon them, killing both. Thereafter no one knew where the spot was; even though their bishops [10] searched many times, they could not find it. And there was great mourning for all Armenia.

Next [Timur] came to the Araratean country and Karbi and the Kotayk' country. He besieged the fortress of Bjni, [g18] took it and killed the bishop of the land, lord Vanakan, who was a wise and learned man, merciful and kind to all the poor. Furthermore, they tormented the entire multitude of believers with starvation, the sword, enslavement, and with unbearable tortures and bestial behavior they made the most populous district of Armenia uninhabited. Many people were martyred and were worthy of the crown; [they] are known only to the One Who receives them, Christ our God. May He crown them on the day that the flock of the righteous are rewarded. Amen.

[Timur] took booty, plunder, and countless captives. No one can relate the disasters and bitterness of our people. Going with numerous troops to the city of Tiflis (Tp'ghis) P'aytakaran, he took it and captured countless people; and it is believed that those killed outnumbered those left alive. Now it happened that the vardapet Step'annos nicknamed P'ir, was there [in Tiflis] and escaped death by a hairsbreadth. [At that time] the king of Georgia was Bagarat [V, the Great [11] 1360-95] descended from those Jews who were captured in the days of the kings of Babylonia, brought to our people, converted to the faith of Christ by the Illuminator and then numbered among our princes. And they became the kings of Ani and of all Armenia after the Arshakuni clan. [Subsequently] harassed by the impious, they fled to Georgia, apostasized the truth, and became Chalcedonians doctrinally.[g19]

[Bagarat] came with numerous presents to submit to the detestable king, but [Timur], filled with satan's evil, made him apostasize and then took him and went to Qarabagh to the winter residence of our first kings. Now the king of Georgia, filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, tricked [Timur], saying: "Give me numerous troops so that I may go to Georgia, take the entire land and turn it to your faith--for the people speak eight languages--I shall subdue them all and bring them to your religion." The peoples [he referred to] are as follows: Dral, Osed, Imerel, Mekrel, Ap'xaz, Sonk', Vrats'i, and Mesx. [Timur] rejoicing, dressed him in a robe of honor, gave him numerous gifts and sent him off with many troops. With countless soldiers [Bagarat] came to Georgia.

Now this Bagarat secretly sent to his sons Gorgi [George VII], Kostantin [Constantine I] and David to come surreptitiously and help their father flee from Timur. [Bagarat] took Chaghatai [Timur's] troops to the most narrow and tight places, while the king's sons held the expanse of the road. Putting their swords to work they killed many of them more, than 12,000 they say. Taking their father, they went to their dwelling.[g20]

Now in springtime the abominable tyrant Timur took his troops and secretly came against the Turkmen Ghara Mahmat [Qara Muhammad Turmush, of the Qara-Qoyunlu Turkmens]. The latter, informed, fled from him. But [Timur] through a fast-paced campaign, like a mountain-goat, reduced a journey taking many days to a short one, and came against [Qara Muhammad] in the district of Chapaghjur. The latter turned back, joined battle, and worked an amazing feat, for he drove out the filthy tyrant and killed the chief of his forces, Loghmaghan, and many other soldiers with him.

He turned back and came to [that part of] the country of Taron called Mush. Now the country of the K'ajberunis, Archesh, and Aghiovit, the most ancient seat (tunn) of the Xorxoronis and the city of Manazkert in Hark' had been avoided [or bypassed] by Chaghatai [Timur]. [The

Turkmen] arrived in the country of Paluni in the district [13] of Taron, [where] the tomb of Yovhannes and At'anagines [are], at saint Karapet, at the glorious capital city, the monastery of the Syrian vardapet, Zenob Glak. Making an attack, a group of pilgrims were captured, pilgrims who had come to revere the holy places of Karapet, Yovhannes, patriarch At'anagines, the blessed hermits Anton, Kronides and the seven vegetarians. A certain vardapet Step'annos, [g21] a bishop named Nerses from the blessed congregation of Metsob in the Archesh district, the hermit vardapet Yakob and bishop Abgar of the holy congregation rousingly urged all for the love of God and the honor of saint Karapet to confess their sins and to commune in the redeeming body and blood of the Lord, to hold a great celebration, and to comfort the multitude of clerics at the holy congregation with mercy and sacrificial gifts.

Now lord Abgar the bishop and vardapet Yakob received our pilgrims with greater love and prayed many days with the intercession of saint Yovhannes and all the saints, to aid them and free them from enslavement to the wicked tyrant. Now the Turkmen army robbed all of our Christians at the order of the tyrant Yusup' [Qara Yusuf, son of Qara Muhammad Turmush]. What remained of the goods and the whole multitude they gave in security to the emir of Xut' named shex Sharaf [shaykh Malik Sharaf]. [14] He forcibly took them to the Euphrates River, close to the village of Hasdegh. The Christians, rebelling, did not want to ascend the mountain of Xut' and Sasun; rather, avoiding it, they wanted to go to their own land. Now [shaykh Sharaf] violently and with blows--by the care of God's mercy--forced us up the mountain of Xut'. [g22] And on the same day the forces of Chaghatai [Timur] fell upon us. But merciful God, Who works the will of those who fear Him and hears their prayers, through the intercession of saint Karapet and all the saints aided us. For the Turkmen named P'ir Hasan who separated from Qara Muhammad (and later killed him and his son, Bayram) came down the mountain, and we ascended.

At the same time bitter and fatal news reached us that the Turkmen army had taken the village of Hizank'uran (Hizan). There one could see disasters of anguish, for father disclaimed son, son, father; mother, daughter; daughter, mother; brother, brother; and lover disclaimed lover. And the clamor of their cries reached to heaven. I, too, was present. In tears they began to beseech God through the intercession of saint John the Baptist, the blessed Apostles of the congregation of angel-inhabited Ghazar, and the blessed cross of Jacob, Christ's [15] brother which was in the monastery. Their request reached God. For the Turkmen P'ir Hasan wanted to depart and go to Marat'u mountain. All of a sudden he encountered the troops [g23] of Chaghatai. And the people took refuge in God and brought to the blessed altar of sacrifice an ox which they sacrificed in the name of the blessed Apostles in the relics of the blessed evangelist Luke and the Apostle Andrew; and there are [to be found there] two right hands of the Apostles Peter and Paul which the patriarch Sylvester and King Constantine gave to [Gregory] the Illuminator. It is enclosed there. Tradition has come down to us that it was placed in Ghazar monastery.

Here one could see the bravery of men in single combat; for the brave-hearted roared and the faint-hearted fled, the weak grew weaker. Helmets shone, swords flashed, spears broke, brave battled with brave and the noise of the clamor frightened observers of this war. Here one could see the mercy of God, the fruit of prayers and the hope of the believers. For God sent a force of angels to aid them: three glitteringly white men mounted on a white horse came from above, descended and joined with the Turkmen army, as relates our spiritual brother, the cleric Karapet (who saw the event). Then the strength of Chaghatai shattered and broke, for one of the Turkmens named Maraf [g24] killed one hundred men. The eastern army turned in [16] flight, horrified by the multitude of their own dead and by the confusion of alarm at the great war. Fear-ridden, they fell off a precipice to their destruction, more than 2,000 people it is said. Meanwhile we, with our sons and daughters, free from them, began with joy and mirth in a great noise to bless God the King of kings, Jesus Christ, Who Has compassion, on the Christians, Who freed [us] from the beasts of the East. And we offered a mass of thanksgiving and blessing to God in heaven.

An amazing event took place in this time, for [there lived] a pious and faithful woman from the district of Mush who had an extremely respectable, desirable son, with a face like an angel, being about seven or eight years of age. Now when the eastern army ascended the mountain of Xut' many of the Christians fled hither and thither and were secretly staying in thickets of the forest. When the infidels saw them, they wanted to attack and capture them. Now the saint-loving, pious mother turned around and saw that they were coming after her were gaining on her and were close to seizing the lad. Taking a sword in her hand [g25] she sacrificed her desirable son like an innocent lamb out of love for the lamb Jesus Christ, as the heavenly Father who offered up his spotless lamb, the son of [17] God, slaughtered and pierced on the Cross erected above holy Golgotha. Then the child's mother, going on a short while, ascended a high rock and threw herself off, dying, thankfully praising the name of Jesus Christ. She did this to prevent both of them from being deprived of Christ, and turning into satan's portion. Rather they would be God's portion and a pleasing sacrifice, more so than the father of faith, the great Abraham and more than the mother Shamon who offered [sons] as sacrifice to God, inspiring them to die willingly for God, our Messiah. These [sons] were Andranik, Akar, Makar, Xoren, Xorsen, Aminadab and Gaghie. And God permitted His beloved son to be killed and Himself worshipped not just that the God of Abraham or the house of ancient Israel be glorified. Let not the old Israel boast more than the new Israel of the faith of the sons of the great Abraham [g26] and of Gregory the Illuminator, who was of the corporal grandsons of the father of faith.

Let no one doubt or suspect this [story] for we vardapets and students went to saint Karapet [monastery] and again came to Mush and brought someone who saw and heard it, the hermit father, the cleric Dawit', spiritual brother of the blessed hermit Bartholomew of the [congregation of] Holy Apostles, from Ghazar monastery. From them we ascertained the truth and have left you a testimony of the blessing of God.

[18] But men from the district of Sasun and Xut', believers and unbelievers from the Mar people [Marats, sometimes translated "Medes," refers to the Kurds] encouraging one another, all turned to plundering Chaghatai's booty, and they filled up with their loot and treasures.

Now on the second day Timur came to the city of Mush and called its emir to him. The emir went with the greatest presents and gifts. And [Timur] said: "Come, take us to the Turkmen." [The emir] took them to the scene of that very battle and showed him the multitude of slain. Awestruck, [Timur] gazed at the sight, wondering at what had happened and at how many had been pierced by the sword. Then he saw those men he had died, but not by the sword [i.e., those who fell off the cliff]. [Timur] said in the hearing of everyone: "This is not the deed of man, but of God the Creator." [g27] He turned back to his troops and said: "Lead me against him so that I may take my revenge." [The emir] said: "It is not humanly possible to get at him for he has gone up Marat' mountain; and if you do go, he will wreak great, unbelievable damage on you." Accepting this, the infidel turned to the city of Baghesh [Bitlis]. Emir Sharaf went to him and received him affectionately and [Timur] gave him a letter of peace; and there was peace in all the land.

[19] Thence [Timur] came to Artske. When he reached the gates of the city, they seized a monk named Karapet, from the village of Jugha, who was coming from Jerusalem. They bound him and took him in fetters. The captured Christians remained firm in the faith in the city of Samarqand. Subsequently there was a bishop [dispatched], but he did not reach that land; instead, he died in Sultaniyeh. But Christianity was lost there when Timur's son Sha-Ruf [Shahrukh Mirza (1407-47)] ruled as king in the city of Herat, he set up his son Ulux-Beg as king in Samarqand. Then an impure Syrian Nestorian [qhasha] came and entered the home of one prince, staying some days with him for [religious]

service, but slept with his wife. Leaving the attendance, he went to a distant place whence he wrote to them, saying: "Your precepts and your leader are false. I came among you, recognized the falseness of your precepts, and disgraced your women." [g28]

The prince took the letter to that emir Ullux-Beg. The latter inquired: "Of what people and creed is that man?" They replied: "The man is a Christian (Yisei er)." [Ullux-Beg], filled with anger, ordered all Christians to apostasize or be killed. Some few chose death, while many lost the faith. Our bishop Yovhannes (nicknamed Ch'anki because of his captivity), went and wrote these bitter tidings and brought them to us. Vay!

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## T'ovma Metsobets'i's History of Tamerlane and His Successors

[20] Let us again return to our former narration. That wicked beast [Timur] came to the gates of the city of Artske. The prince of the city, Sahand, went to him through the mediation of Ordu Bugha of Her and Zarewand district. [Timur] received him very affectionately and the entire country was freed of him and remained in peace. And he gave Archesh to him. Suddenly, in a few days, the entire land of Archesh came to the city of Xlat' and reached Tsg'hakk'. From evening to morning [the] Kurd(s) plundered the tormented country. Going to the troops of Sahand, they brought them to Artske city. [g29] Then they again commenced building, for the entire land had been ruined by the troops of the abominable and impious Chaghatai [Timur]. Then [Timur] went to the district of Tosp against the fortress of Vana Hayots'. But emir Ezdin [Izz al-Din Shir] of the line of Senek'erim did not come out to him forthwith. Rather, rebelling from him, he stayed in the fortress with all the troops and a multitude of Christians. Subsequently, [Izz al-Din], descending from the fortress, went to [Timur] who seized and bound him. Then going against the fortress, he subjected it to trouble for forty days, killing many of the defenders. Suffering from lack of bread and water they were unable to withstand the siege and surrendered the fortress. Alas the disaster and bitter affliction. Here could be witnessed the fear and dread of the Day of Judgement, the weeping and lamenting of the entire fortress, for the evil [21] tyrant had ordered that the women and children be taken into slavery and that [men] believers and unbelievers be hurled down from the fortress. So much did [the valley below] fill up with the slain, that those hurled last did not die. We heard about this from the holy father, the blessed [g30] archbishop lord Zak'aria and from father vardapet lord Poghos, [people] who saw these things with their own eyes. They had been in the fortress but set free, since a Chaghatai [Timurid] prince had set free his share of captives, and thus was the cause of the few survivors. All the land around the keep became saturated with the innocent blood of Christians and foreigners. Now a certain Mughri [mukri, Qur'an reciter] with an extremely loud voice ascended the minaret in the city of Berkri and cried out: "Ghiamat' i salayn [The Day of Judgement has arrived]."

The loathsome, pitiless [Timur] listened and asked: "What is that noise?" People about him replied: "The Day of Judgement which Jesus will bring about, has come; and you caused it, today." The mukri cried out like a wailing horn. [Timur] said: "May that mouth be broken; had it cried out a little earlier, I would never have killed a single man." At once he ordered that those remaining alive not be hurled down, and he freed all of them. But who can relate the number of captives or the killing of the innocent; only God, Who [22] created all, counted them all. For the entire world filled up with Armenian slaves. Priests, laymen, believers and unbelievers alike died.

All of this befell us because of our sins, especially from the laxity of the clergy (kargaworats') and the apostate cheats. [Timur] returned whence he came, with captives and booty. Then the dear ones of those slain came and saw the incurable wounds of Armenia, and they lamented for the land. One cried: "Vay, my son"; another, "Vay, my father"; the country and land filled up with weeping and moaning, every single part of the district of Vaspurakan For there was not a soul who did not have a dear one or friend vanished and unlocatable. Woe and alas for all Armenia, for the entire country was ruined. From Archesh to Georgia and to the Kur river in Aghbania was smeared with the blood of the innocent, with torture, killing and captivity. After the departure [of Timur] from our land, a severe famine befell us, spreading everywhere. [The people] ate dogs and cats, then roasted their sons and daughters; man and woman killed one another, ate, but were not satiated, and subsequently themselves died. I cannot relate our bitterness which I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears. For human life was exterminated especially in the Haykazean district. The vision and command [23] of the great [kat'oghikos] Nerses was realized, that, "the Nation of Archers will wipe out the house of Aram." So much on this for now.

It should be known that it was not merely corporal famine that was given to us, but spiritual famine, [for] not heeding the word of the Lord. Now there were two schools (dasatunk') in the land of Siwnik', one at the blessed congregation of Aprakunik' [headed by] the great professor Grigor a student of great Yovhannes Orotnets'i for twenty-eight years. It was two years that he had occupied the doctoral chair, teaching. His closest (hamshirak) brothers had left him: the great Yakob, who had studied with Yovhannes Orotnets'i for twenty years went to the Araratean country and settled in the holy congregation of Saghmosavank; and vardapet Grigor with his students went to Erzinka in Ekeghets'eats' district; while others dispersed hither and thither. Now the great Grigor, with a few students, went to Aprakunik' in winter reaping time. In springtime he went to the blessed congregation and the grace-filled seat of the apostle Stat'e and to the house of the Orbeleans, to prince Smbat, son of Iwane, grandson of Burt'el. After a while he assembled many students, and by the mercy of God, illuminated our people with true and orthodox doctrine and faith. Creating hymns (harts'munk'), he [also] wrote answers [24] against all critics, as well as two volumes of sermons, one for summer, one for winter; selections from the Old and New Testaments, [g33] and explanations of secular writings. He did not leave there until 867 of the Armenian Era [1418]. But for some reason [he] came to the K'ajberuni country. We [clerics], twelve brothers, who were students of the great Sargis, went and stayed with him for two years. There was neither tranquility nor the calm of peace, because of the wickedness of the infidels. [Grigor] promised all of us that he was going to go to Jerusalem and detach himself from worldly pursuits and teaching. Once again, regarding the excommunication of the disobedient seat of Aght'amar, he preached a return to obedience.

The lord of Tabriz, the tyrant Yusup'[Qara Yusuf], again took Orotn from prince Smbat. In order to intercede with them [Grigor] arrived. But [Qara Yusuf] did not heed the vardapet's pleas. For an entire year [Grigor] resided at the blessed congregation of Metsob. He gathered about him ten vardapets and eighty monks, and consoled them with correct instruction and doctrine. The next year he departed and that same year death called him to the Holy City. He was an eloquent and rich speaker, without an equal among all [25] peoples in the past or present, a second John Chrysostom the theologian. While teaching and when closing his eyes we saw [g34] an old man seated by him. And sometimes he shared out bread, and sometimes apples. Lucky was the one who saw and heard him for he had an awe-inspiring appearance, and we frequently heard people say that Christ had come to earth in just such a form. [Grigor] was the one who freed the Archesh country from the fetters (kapanatsn) of Aght'amar through a night vision. So much about this. [We] departed from the narration for the edification of the vardapets of the Church.

We now return to our historical progression. The great vardapet Sargis who headed the blessed congregation of Astapat, departed thence and came to the city of Her with a few students in the same bitter year. It was there that he passed those days of bitter, oppressive famine. [Sargis] sent one of his students, named Yovhannes (nicknamed Sadagh), a holy man with a pure soul to go to the K'ajberuni country to find a dwelling place for themselves. Yovhannes came to that wonder-working, divine dwelling place, the congregation of the Mother of God (Tiramor Astuatsatsnin) in the capital(city) monastery of Surxar now called Xarabast monastery, to the blessed and meek man, the venerable lord Zak'eos, bishop of the district, so that [Zak'eos] give them a place of habitation. [26] Now that very night the soulful vardapet-monk Yovhannes saw an astounding vision.[g35] (It is perhaps due to humility only that Yovhannes did not take the scepter of vardapet, but he was an advisor and teacher of all by words, deeds and virtues.) [He saw] the church of the blessed Mother of God filled with lamps, with each lamp glowing

like the sun, and the belfry gleaming with the light of candle lamps. Awakening from sleep he blessed God and thanked Him, saying inwardly: "God is pleased that [we] came here to dwell with the great vardapet Sargis, a man with the soul of prophecy who recognizes everyone by the look of eye and face, a man without equal among the sons of Adam with regard to humility." Throughout his entire life until the day of his death, he ate no meat and drank no wine. His visage inspired awe and amazement in everyone, especially the foreigners, including Chaghatai's [Timur's] people who came to revere Yovhannes. He was an evangelist and teacher, preaching the Gospel.

Vardapet Sargis came and dwelt in the heavenly congregation of the blessed Mother of God and sat in the chair of doctoral teaching. He assembled about himself many students of writing, of the clerics and researchers, more [g36] than sixty clerics and scholars. He schooled the entire seacoast of the Vaspurakan district with learning and knowledge, services and masses. And people regarded the holy congregation as heavenly [27] Jerusalem from the year 838 of the Armenian Era [1389] to the year 851 A.E. [1402]. He died a gentle death and passed to Christ. Sargis was buried in a tomb close to the holy bishops Xach'atur and Zak'eos, to the glory of our God.

But it is known that vardapet Sargis bore much grief and bitterness from his students. For when he was in the Siwnik' country, a vardapet named Karapet (nicknamed Chagaraker) had set as a lesson their [Roman Catholic] Book of Virtues. An Aght'arma [Roman Catholic] monk came to him and said: "I was once a monk from among you, but satan ruined me and made me Chalcedonian and my heart is ever wounded by your disrespect and cursing [of Chalcedon]. But you should know that Karapet set as a lesson the Book of Virtues and they want to come to you to ask questions about it. Now here is the Book of Virtues so that you may reply to them."

Sargis, delighted, glorified God with great thanksgiving.[g37] Two days later, two Aght'arma [Roman Catholic] monks came to the vardapet and inquired: "What is virtue and what is its definition?" He responded correctly, and they went to their vardapet. Once again they came and asked: "What is the definition of faith?" And he replied with what he had learned from the vardapets. In shame [the questioners] returned to the monastery of K'rna. Now the students of great Sargis [28] pleadingly forced him to lecture about their Book of Virtues. [Sargis] meekly and simply, taking refuge in the spirit of God, began to instruct them in doctrine. But his students, since they were ignorant, did not get the flavor of the doctrine of the blessed church of great Gregory the Illuminator, Gregory the Theologian, Athanasius, Cyril and our [Armenian] theologians Step'annos of Siwnik', Anania Shirakats'i, Poghos Taronats'i, Yovhannes, Sargis Haghpартats'i, Dawit' the philosopher, Movses k'ert'oghahayr, Asoghik the translator and other blessed vardapets.

Now those who do not get the taste of correct doctrine, easily erring, die spiritually, just as a lamb soon dies if it does not take its mother's milk. Just in this fashion did [g38] Sargis' students quickly weaken in the faith and wanted to become Aght'arma [Roman Catholic], not knowing the vardapet. One of the priests at the holy congregation (the attendant and warden of the blessed congregation of Aprakunik') through the influence of the Holy Spirit saw a dream-vision in which the Erasx [Arax] River swelled up and approached, carrying off the students and destroying them one and all; while the vardapet Sargis and the warden Step'annos swam and escaped drowning in the river by a hairsbreadth. [The dreamer] awakening from sleep, went to the vardapet and to the hermit [29] Maghak'ia and related to him the dream and the plan of his false and incredulous students.

Now they struck their faces and tore their beards, beating their heads and lamenting with inconsolable mourning as if for the dead, weeping for their spiritual death and destruction. The great vardapet then decided to send the hermit Maghak'ia to the renowned and celebrated vardapet Yovhannes (nicknamed kaxik [suspended]) to come to the aid of this meek man of God before the scandal of the wicked ignorance of his students reached the Aght'arma [Roman Catholics], apostasizers of the truth, and [the students] not flee. [g39]

The blessed and venerable vardapet Yovhannes came with students and numerous priests from the Orotan country to the gracious seat of the apostle Stat'e, to the Ernjak country, to the blessed congregation of Aprakunik'. He summoned all clerics and laymen and ascertained from them all the evil of the ignorant students. He ordered that the students be brought and set opposite him in the square; and they were found guilty. They were placed in prison. Some were placed in fetters and some were beaten.

[30] Vardapet Sargis grumbled about them, and subsequently all were punished by God: some drowned, some, disgraced, circulated around naked, half of them fled to the land of the Franks where they said wicked things and were placed into a copper [kettle] and cooked. Half of them sought repentance, such as Atom Mokats'i who repented and went to Jerusalem, returned to his district yet bore physical punishment, for his heart was punctured. And in a year, the air quit his heart and he gave up the ghost in repentance.

After the death [of Sargis] the chair of the vardapet ut'iwn was occupied by the blessed man, cherished by angels and mortals alike, the venerable, learned vardapet Vardan. [Vardan] [g40] was from the blessed congregation of Hogwots' monastery and was superior in wisdom, knowledge and virtue to all the vardapets of Armenia, so much so that people said that the dead should resurrect and seek forgiveness for their sins from him, [and] from his own students. For four years he illuminated the blessed congregation and the entire K'ajberuni country with correct doctrine and classes. By the prayers of [Vardan] and of his brother the hermit Eghis--who was a deacon who throughout his entire life stood praying before God--the capital city monastery of the Mother of God and the whole Archesh country gushed like a spring with temporal goods and mercy. However, persecuted by the infidels he took his students and went to [31] the Tosp country. There he reposed in Christ in the blessed congregation of Salnapat in the year 855 of the Armenian Era [1406]. Blessed be his memory.

His chair was then occupied by the great vardapet and martyr, compassionate to all, Grigor, son of an old man loyal to God. Grigor was from the city of Xlat' one of the students of the great Sargis, one of his close (hamshirak), spiritual brothers. But [he did not occupy the seat] in the same Suxaru congregation of the Mother of God, rather in the city of [g41] Artske, Bznunik' country, at the blessed congregation of Step'annos the martyr, called Ts'ipna. He did not occupy himself with doctrinal teaching because of the chilly behavior of the investigators among our people. Instead, day and night he wrote, fed all the poor, loved mercy and encouraged all the vardapets and clerics toward the same. He had no equal for compassion and humanity and as an attendant to the poor and destitute. God had given him wisdom superior to all the vardapets, for on three occasions he published histories in question and answer form, and books about the holy martyrs and witnesses called Yaysmawurk', concise and precise, composed [32] by holy vardapets ancient and modern, thereby illuminating the doors of our darkened Church. No one could know the wisdom he concealed inside, only God. For fifty years he wrote books, day and night, with unquiet fervor, as someone who knew a secret. He himself left many canticles (gandz) and verses (tagh). He was a man so loving of [religious] holidays and so reverencing of the saints that his equal has not and will not be met.



He reached deep old age, more than seventy-five years. Now in 874 A. E. [1425], the wicked Mar people came to Artske city in Armenia and went to the Ts'ipna retreat. The [g42] infidels seized [Grigor] and tortured him greatly. He confessed the correct doctrine of Christ God and the Lord. Just then they sacrificed him like an innocent, spotless lamb, the blessed and venerable Grigor in place of the lamb of Christ. He who was such a great lover of martyrs received a martyr's crown. They buried him in the holy congregation called Ts'ipna [dedicated to] the proto-martyr Step'annos. His spiritual brother vardapet Yakob the hermit, a desirable man, came and buried him with his own sons, with bishop Step'annos and student, and attended his grave for one year.

He grew weak, the law of nature and on Ascension day, as the priests repeat "Our Lord ascended to the sky," he gave [33] up his soul to the glory of Christ our God. Subsequently, two years later the same K'urd, from the Mar people of Baghish went to the Rshtuni country and the blessed, prayerful, solemnity-loving vardapet Yakob Ovsannats'i from the congregation of Antsghnapat was martyred. They placed him close to the grave of Grigor of Narek'a monastery. And in the same year vardapet Ghazar of Baghish [Bittis], a renowned, learned prayerful hermit, fled from the infidels and went to the Sasun mountains. But infidels from the Mar people found him. They said: "You say that Christ is God." He replied: "I say it and teach it, while he does not say and teach it goes to eternal destruction." Striking him with a sword, [the infidels] killed him, but he received a martyr's crown. Some three or four months prior to this, they shot and killed with an arrow a vardapet named T'ovma, a student of Simeon vardapet of Rshtunik', a man learned in the subtleties of doctrine, a lover of holiness and prayer, from the blessed congregation of Putlik monastery. And they became worthy of Christian halos. Blessed be the memory of these four vardapets who, in our day, were slain by the infidels. Through their prayers may Christ have mercy upon us. This occurred in 874 A.E. [1425], more or less. You must forgive me, for I was old and commenced [writing] fifty years later. Therefore I wrote going backward and forward [vet ew yaraj grets'i].

[34] In 844 A.E. [1395], [Timur], the loathsome tyrant of Khurasan, moved yet again and came [west] by the Baghdad road. He destroyed Baghdad, all Asorestan, all of Mesopotamian Diyarbakir (Tiarbak), came to the city of Amida, took it, [g44] and killed the grandees with fire and sword, and unspeakable, unrecordable tortures. They took male and female children as captives to their own land. He came to Merdin, destroyed the city [K.Shahnazarean, the editor, observed in note 24, p. 45 that Mardin was not captured by Timur, but came to terms.] and captured fifteen villages of orthodox and true Christians--3,000 homes--and others, all told, 7,500 [Shahnazarean, note 25 p. 45: four copies at St. Lazar read 700 and 500.]. He totally destroyed four villages of the fire-worshipping Arewordi(k'): Shol, Shmrx, Safari and Marashi. But subsequently, through the strategems of satan, [the Arewordik'] again multiplied in Mardin and Amida.

[Timur] came east once again, going against the city of Erznan which he took by the sword, destroying to the foundation the great cathedral of saint Sargis and ruining all the churches through the defamation of Paron Taharten (T'axrat'an) [Taharten, the Muslim Armenian governor of Erznan, is also mentioned in Embassy to Tamerlane, written by the 15th century Spanish ambassador, Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo. G. Le Strange, trans. (London, 1928) p.125.] and all the other Tachiks in the city. Our vardapet Georg, a student of Yovhannes Orotnets'i went to [Timur], and from fear and dread of that abomination, his lips cracked and blood flowed [35] down. [Georg], the man of God, returned with tears and wailing for the order had been given to pull down all the churches: and there was great mourning. Coming to the upper part of the land [Timur] besieged the fortress of Basen called Awnik, took it, bound its prince named Msir, and the infidel [g45] hurled one hundred souls down from the fortress to their death. He went to the Araratean district, destroying the entire land and stealing the goods; he besieged and took the fort of the Bagratuni. [Here] he divided 30 Tachiks and 300 Christians from one another, saying: "We shall kill the Christians and free the Tachiks." Now two brothers of the city's bishop Mkrich' went and mixed in with the Tachik group. Putting their swords to work they killed the Tachiks and freed the believers. Two Christians, however, raised a clamor, saying: "We are Christ's servants, and believers, they have spoken falsely." [The Timurids replied: "Then we shall not free you"; and they killed the two of them. This caused the bishop great mourning, even though they did die as true believers.

[The Timurids] came against the Chakututs' country of Surmari and Koghb, against Barnakut and the Archesh district. They tore apart these three districts, universally robbing everyone, but by the mercy of God the captives were freed [36] from their clutches. There was a great famine throughout the entire country. But in the same day the town (giwghak'aghak') of Koghb was robbed. Twenty-five buffaloes from upper Koghb were sent down the rock in the Archesh district. Putting their swords to work, [g46] the Christians sacrificed them, divided up the provisions, and reached the K'ajberuni country, with vardapets, bishops, priests, and the people. We arrived at Dara village, in Kogovit district. It was here that the blessed vardapet Step'annos died, a student of the great Yovhannes Orotnets'i and friend of the holy vardapet Yovhannes Metsob. Arriving, we saw our lands ruined, vacant, and devoid of all goods and lacking in spiritual virtues [having] neither divine service nor mass. Once again they commenced [re]building. Our country had been given to the paron of Archesh named Sahand. The next year [Qara] Yusuf the Turkmen came and again ravaged our lands. He took the city of Archesh and he killed the paron named Himat', together with thirty-four men, since he had killed the priest Step'annos, dzernawor of the city. Through the defamation and treachery of loveless Christians, they martyred a tanuter named Musefir, [scion] of a great family (metsazgi). And the entire city was burned with fire. Meanwhile, the lord of Ostan, emir 'Izz al-Din (Ezdin) with the Chaghatai [soldiers] came against Yusuf. [37] They battled for a few days and then were reconciled. [g47] The next day a Chaghatai paron from the fortress of Basen came with 400 men to the village of Aghi to help the emir. He requested peace from them and they replied that they had come in peace. He enslaved the village of Aghi until sunset, then returned to his dwelling place. Now the Christians pursued, stirring up sand and dust and [the enemy] left behind the captives and loot and fled. One pious man, our dear brother Yovhannes, [travelling] like a mountain goat, reached the plain of Archesh and informed Yusuf and his brother Arali who came in the middle of the night, seized Chaghatai, robbed all of his troops, killing some, arresting their prince At'alмыш, and sending him to Egypt.

While there was this anguish in our land, suddenly bad tidings of death and tidings worthy of tears reached [us] to the effect that the troops of Chaghatai [Timur] had filled up our country. Here one could witness calamities of grief, fear and dread of the infidels. Then 15,000 men arrived at Erishat village. We fled into the mountains and valleys, but the infidels knew about this and surrounded the mountain for twelve days and, as though hunting deer, they caught everyone. Some they killed, some they enslaved, and our lands were given over to fire. Vardapet Yovhannes with his students escaped [38] by a hairsbreadth and went to the district of Rshtunik'. He remained there for two years and received honor from Christ's believers. [g48]

The impious Yusuf fled from Chaghatai during the years 844 to 855 of the Armenian Era [1395-1406] and was unable to come to our lands. Now in 846 A.E. [1397], Timur sent the Chaghatai shaykh (shex) Ahmad to our lands. He came searching out our great vardapets Sargis Sorbets'i and Yovhannes vardapet, director of Metsob monastery. He built up our lands, collecting [the dispersed] here and there, and was extremely kind and philo-Christian. All the dispersed came forth and commenced reconstruction. And for eleven years, in peace, through the mercy of God, the land blossomed forth with scholars.

Now in 850 A.E. [1401], the greyed and aged great vardapet Sargis reposed in Christ. He was succeeded on his throne by his student, that marvellous man of God, the great ascetic and vardapet of Armenia, Vardan, [who held the position] for four years. He illuminated and made

the district of Archesh blaze more than before. There assembled about [Vardan] numerous students, more than sixty clerics, in the imposing congregation and chief monastery of Tiramor Astuatsatsin [Mother of God]. And for four years he illuminated and [g49] [39] made resplendent the souls of all, with divine service and mass, with the study of the Bible and psalmody. [Vardan] fled from the infidels and went to blessed Salnapat where he died and was buried. His soul rose in a chariot of cherubim and seraphim to the ranks of our theologian vardapets and illuminators. May his memory be blessed and his prayers upon the whole world. Amen.

His orphaned students departed, and we went to the district of Siwnik' to the great Grigor, vardapet of all the Armenians, [our] second Illuminator and theologian without equal among all the ancient and modern scholars and vardapets. [Grigor] was delighted and received us affectionately, like his beloved, desired spiritual sons, for his father was from the city of Archesh, in the K'ajberuni district. Assembling many of his students: Mxit'ar from Tat'ew, Yovhannes from Ekegheats' Hermon monastery, Galust from st. Karapet [monastery] in Vaghandni Siwnik', Simon from Siwnik', Yakob Bostats'i, [g50] Grigor Araratean, Grigor and Matt'eos Jughayets'i, Awetis from Astapat, Eghia from Otsop', Yovhannes from Vaghandni monastery, Unan from Shamasa, Yovhannes karmir (red) from Kapan. There were also three students from other places: Matt'eos Uxtets'i, from the blessed congregation [40] of Gandzasar, Mkrtich' from P'aytakaran, and Step'annos from T'awriz, and more than sixty priests. [Grigor] began teaching the writings of secular philosophers (zqirs artakin imastasirats'n).

Grigor astonished all of them, more so than the wise men of the Hellenes. [They studied also] the fourteen letters of the Apostle Paul, and the work of Gregory the Theologian Arh Ors. The director of the blessed congregation was the holy bishop lord Arak'el, a man chosen from the womb, the scholarly sister's son of the great doctor (varzhapet) who had a fiery mentality and was a lover of all virtue. We were the twelve brothers, students of great Sargis who became [Griqor's] students after Sargis' death: Yakob, Margare, Yovhannes, Mkrtich', Karapet, Melk'iset', Sargis, Matt'eos, Karapet, and I, the worthless T'ovma. [Grigor] comforted [g51] us for two years with the Bible. Persecuted by the infidels, he moved from the district of Siwnik', taking us along, to the district of Archesh, and he established his residence in the God-pleasing congregation of Metsob, by vardapet Yovhannes the meek theologian and blessed man of God. And he was delighted, for in that very year, 858 A.E. [1409] the new church of the blessed Mother of God was completed.

[41] There assembled about [Grigor] numerous vardapets: the martyr Grigor, the holy man from Xlat', Yakob Ovsannats'i from Rshtunik', Margare from Varag, Yakob from Aspisk, Yovhannes from P'ap'lin, Step'annos from Berkri, Mkrtich' from Hizan, Yovhannes from Baghesh (Bitlis), Sargis vardapet Yarut', Melk'iset' from Erzka (Erznjan) and among the priests and students, more than eighty monks. For a full year he comforted all the brothers with indescribable joy. In class he commented on three books: the Gospel of John the evangelist, the Book of Job the martyr, and the writings of the two vardapets, Georg Lambronats'i and Aristakes.

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## T'ovma Metsobets'i's History of Tamerlane and His Successors

In the same period, the matter of the excommunications of Aght'amar became a question. Holding a very solemn meeting, [Grigor] freed all [from the excommunications] of our ancient kat'oghikoi. The overseer and provider was the blessed, [g52] venerable, ascetic vardapet Yovhannes of Metsob monastery, who supervised the multitude of brothers, clothed all, and fed them with bread. Our vardapet Yovhannes, the wonderful man of God, lived in great glory. This occurred in the year 868 A.E. [1419]. Now after one year, his students came to him, [42] remained a short while, then secretly took him to the Araratean district, to the great vardapet Yakob of Saghmosavank', his spiritual brother. We, all the vardapets and students, went to him. Again [Grigor's] students came from Siwnik's [monastery of the] blessed Apostle Stat'eos. The learned bishop and vardapet, lord Arak'el, took him. Eight days after his departure, he grew ill and passed from this life to the next. Blessed be his memory and may Christ have mercy on all of us through his prayers. Now our wonderful vardapet and man of God, Yovhannes, reposed in Christ on the same day. We took him and buried him in the glorious monastery of Hayots' T'ar, between the neo-martyr Yovsep' and Eghia their vardapet. An inconsolable grief descended over our country, over us and all the inhabitants of the retreat and district, for we were [g53] not worthy of [receiving] his blessed remains, although his prayers and intercession penetrate every crevice of the country. Amen.

Yovhannes, this blessed, God-pleasing vardapet, a model of all virtue and [a model] to the vardapets of the Church, was from the district of K'ajberunik', the town of Zarishat. The son of pious, God-loving parents, [his] father's name was Nerses, a priest who loved the saints. He beseeched God, promising that should he have a son, he would devote him [43] to God in his stead. Benevolent and humane God, Who works the will of those who fear Him, gave [Nerses] a good son, and [Nerses] gave him over to study of the Bible at the blessed, heavenly retreat, the beautiful congregation of the Mother of God, the renowned monastery of Metsob, with the ascetic man of God, Nahapet, a cleric of angelic worship. He studied and grew learned in the Psalm of David, and the minor studies (manr usumn) of the Church. The meek and blessed archbishop lord Nerses saw [Yovhannes] and called him [to assume] the station of priest. He gave himself as a gift to God. He taught the habits of asceticism especially from the books and works of Scripture [in a manner] superior to all of his comrades. Moved by the Holy Spirit, he wished to aspire to the vardapetal learning, but there was no vardapet to be found in coastal Vaspurakan. [g54]

So he joined with a saint-loving and kind priest named Step'annos, who had studied with the vardapet Movses from the same retreat. They went to the great professor Yovhannes, nicknamed kaxik in Orotn district, Siwnik' country, who shined like the sun amidst all the Armenian people, illuminating everyone with divine knowledge. He also resisted the diophysite Aght'arma [Roman Catholic] heretics. They were greatly loved by him like an angel of God. His [44] companion Step'annos, studying for three years, gave him the scepter of authority to go and comfort the multitude of Christians and monks who had been without counsel, for that district was lordless. Now Yovan, that venerable man of God, stayed with him for twelve years, having for fellow-students the great vardapet Grigor and many vardapets and students. He vowed with his life that should God grant him the authority of the rank of vardapet, the Only Begotten Son would be a witness that he would construct a marvellous church to His Mother, the Virgin Mother of God.

Now in the year 835 of the Armenian Era [1386], the great vardapet Yovhannes gave him the divine writings of the doctrinal order to learn by heart, so that he receive the diploma of [g55] authority. But that same year he suddenly grew weak and ill, and it was the Creator's will that he go to Him. He summoned the great vardapet and his comrades, blessed them with a completely spiritual and divine blessing, and designated Grigor as the chief and teacher of them all. He entrusted [to Grigor] vardapet Yovhannes, so that he be given the vardapetal authority and be sent to his own land.

Now [Grigor], after the great Yovhannes' death, convened a very solemn meeting and gave [to Yovhannes] the vardapetal [45] scepter and sent him to his country with vardapetal wealth and students, after the destruction of the upper region [of Armenia] by the wicked tyrant Timur Chaghatai. [Yovhannes] came to his own district with joy and gladness. Then the great vardapet Sargis from the grand congregation of Xarhabast came before him, with his students and the entire multitude of believers. Next [Yovhannes] came to his paternal home, the blessed congregation of Metsob monastery on New Sunday.

Here one could observe the joy of the blessed retreat and of all [Yovhannes'] comrades who looked upon him [g56] as Gregory the Illuminator or Christ's beloved Lazarus, risen from the dead. At the start of the second year, [Yovhannes] commenced construction of the blessed church [to fulfill] the pledge and oath he had made. However, there was no skilled architect in his district. He patiently waited a while for the Lord to aid the work, meanwhile he embellished the blessed congregation with services, prayers, and masses, with reading Scripture and studying, and with the beautiful arrangement of trees and plants, [making Metsob] like unto the Garden of Eden. Believers came and were moved to goodness, saying: "Lo, we have seen Jerusalem." Preaching the doctrine of the Gospel, he illuminated the Vaspurakan district and its environs. He spent his life in asceticism and in sleepless vigils, and he [46] never laid his head on a pillow. Rather, book in hand, he passed through the exile of this bitter world. Thereafter lord Jesus bestowed upon [Yovhannes] the gift of healing, for he drove away pains and sicknesses from the ill by reading the Gospel and by the laying of his hands on the weak; and not only on believers, but on unbelievers, too. Christ granted his requests because of the firm faith which he had in Christ [g57] and the hope in believers. For this reason he became dear to unbelievers and believers alike, as an honest man of God. But his soul was greatly concerned about constructing the blessed church.

Now [God] works the will of those who fear Him and He hears their prayers. A man named Faradj (Farach), of Roman nationality (azgaw Horom) who [was free] from the captivity of Timur came to the city of Mardin. He was an extremely skilled and competent builder. [Yovhannes] sent for him and began constructing the blessed church in the days of Chaghatai who had razed to their foundations all the churches of Armenia. Despite the fact that many unbelievers bore ill will and once wanted [to demolish] the initial foundation in the city of Archesh, nonetheless Chaghatai came and personally bore rocks, bringing them and placing them on the foundation of [47] the blessed church. And God vanquished and confounded the enemies. In seven years God completed it, with the prayers of the vardapet and the unwavering hope which he had in Christ with the unity of the blessed congregation [whose members] gave their lives to God and the holy church of the Virgin Mother of God. [The church] was begun in the year 851 of the Armenian Era [1402] and completed in 858 A.E. [1409], in [g58] seven years, to the glory of Christ our God. Amen.

In the same year professor Grigor came with vardapets and students. [Yovhannes] went before his spiritual father, brought him to his retreat and recruited him into his numerous projects. Many vardapets and students gathered about him, eleven vardapets and eighty clerics, as was written above. He radiantly illuminated all with divine doctrine, like our Savior Jesus Who sat on the Mount and taught the Beatitudes. Now the holy vardapet Yovhannes rejoiced with indescribable joy and attended to providing what was needed. And he said to Christ: "Lord Jesus, I honored Your Mother, and You honored me with vardapets and my spiritual fathers with the writing of students, with scribes, ascetics, and true scholarship and You sent them on the occasion of the consecration ceremony of the church of Your Mother. What shall I give You in return and recompense? For I am a poor man and have nothing; but [48] we shall only bless and praise the most holy Trinity and the Mother of the Only Begotten since You made me worthy of achieving the completion of the church. But it is not enough just to bless You, for You are exalted by angels and archangels. [g59] I have given my life to You and furthermore I have gone and preached to the unbelievers that 'Your leader is false and you, having become fanatics with him [are travelling] the road to unequaled destruction. Turn to my Christ and you will see with what gifts He will reward you'".

It was not solely in old age that he preached to the unbelievers about their falseness and deception, but throughout his entire life he insulted them and their destructive leader, boldly and intrepidly. But no one dared touch him, neither prince nor subject. Rather they were terrified by his venerable face for he had martyred his body alive with fasting and prayer and all holiness. The great vardapet Grigor blessed our lands then took his students and went to the Araratean district. Vardapet Yovhannes and we, all of the students, went along. Departing thence we went to his gracious seat [the church] of the Apostle Stat'eos. He remained healthy for eight days. Then he was summoned by the supreme Caller so that he be given wages for his labor. This was on the day of the feast of the great [49] Apostle, the proto-martyr Step'annos. As for that marvellous man of God, vardapet Yovhannes, he remained in the Araratean district. [g60] And during the feast of Resurrection, Easter, when [the prayer] "Uncreated God" is recited, on the day of the Resurrection itself, he passed to Christ. For this reason his death took place there, for he had gone to worship before the picture of the Savior of All which, at the request of the Mother of God, had been imprinted above holy Golgotha by the prayers of the blessed evangelist John. Subsequently this had been given as a gift to King Ashot by the king of Rome [Byzantium] and was brought by the curopalate prince. [Yovhannes] being there to worship, passed to the life eternal, to Christ whom he sought. We, his students who were also his spiritual sons, Mkrlich' and T'ovma and the great martyr vardapet of Rshtunik', Yakob, and vardapet Mkrlich' from Berkri and numerous brothers, assembled and placed him in the tomb (hangstaran) of the neo-martyrs Yovsep' and vardapet Eghia, in the grand congregation of Hayots' T'ar. Numerous healings took place because of [Yovhannes'] bones, to the glory of Christ, our God. May his memory be blessed and may Lord Jesus grant mercy through his prayers, amen.[g61]

Let us return to the story we commenced with. In the year 850 of the Armenian Era [1401], Timur, that dragon with the breath of death, moved from Samarqand, came against our [50] land, went against Syria, and destroyed Aleppo and all its environs. Thence he went to Damascus, to the city of Dmshx (Damascus), and destroyed the entire territory south of it until they nearly reached the [holy] places of the city of Jerusalem. [Timur] remained a full winter in Damascus. Now the wives of the leaders [of the city], the teachers, [namely] the qadi (ghadi), mufti (Miwft'i), mudarris (miwtariis) [mudarris, head of a madrasa or religious college] imam and danishman came [to Timur] and said: "You are the padishah of the entire world who came at the command of God to interrogate those who had trampled the command of God. There was no inquirer like yourself; and you made those who were evil descend alive into hell. In this city all are criminals and sodomites, especially the false and deceptive mullahs (mollek'n)." [Timur] said to them: "If you are lying, I shall kill you." They replied: "May women not lie; summon our leaders and we shall testify in their presence."

He issued a severe and dreadful order for all the leaders of the evil teaching throughout the entire city to be summoned to him. Forthwith all the qadis and mudarris assembled. [Timur] asked: "Whose city is this?" They responded: "The Prophet's [P'eghamber's], padishah." He asked: "Do you have the Book of P'eghamber [the Quran] with you?" They said: "Our life and death are written by him, but we do not read it." [51] [Timur] said to them: "Did the Prophet command you to commit crimes?" They said: "Have mercy." He asked: "Were there such and such a [wicked] man, what would be a just verdict for him?" They answered: "He should be tortured with the most wicked torments and destroyed together with his entire family." [Timur] said: "That man is you." They said to him: "Xondk'ear [Khunkiar(khudawendigiar) a title given to the Ottoman sultans], this is the city of Mustafa. Such a thing has not and will not happen." Then [Timur] called the leaders' wives who came and in the presence of the men testified to the impious deeds they had wrought.

He ordered the 700,000 men with him to bring him 700,000 heads that day and the next, to build seven fortresses and to decapitate anyone not bringing a head. Those who were Christians were not to be approached. Many soldiers put their swords to work and destroyed the entire city. [Eventually], they were unable to find any more men; so they decapitated women, and the whole army fulfilled the command. An example [g63] of the universal Judgement could be witnessed here: the cries, clamor, weeping and sighing. Those unable to get a head paid 100 t'anks to the counter, while many who were unable to do even this had their own heads chopped off and they made a mountain of wicked meat. Our spiritual son Mxit'ar, from the city of Van related the events of the clamity and about their deaths.[52] He himself escaped from their hands by a hairsbreadth. This occurred in Damascus. [Timur] again ordered his troops to go to the city of Baghdad where they similarly created a mountain of the flesh of 700,000 men. The melik of Ostan and our spiritual son Mxit'ar were with them. As a result of that terror and dread, the cenobite Mxit'ar came and dwelled with us for three years and then departed to Christ. Taking his troops the next year, [Timur] came against the city of Sebastia, which belonged to Yildirim (Iltrum) xonghear [Ottoman sultan Bayezid I, 1389-1403], the tyrant of the Rum area. [The people] did not surrender the city immediately to the implacable tyrant [Timur]. Tricking them, [Timur] said: "Fear not, for whoever slays you by the sword will have your swords in their hearts." Opening up the city, [the people] came before him with joy [g64] and gladness, as if freed from prison. He immediately sent a foul command to his troops to take captive the poor, to torture the rich and to seize their hidden treasures, to tie the women to the tails of horses and let the horses run, and to assemble the countless, numberless sons and daughters in the middle of the plain and to mercilessly trample them like sheaves of grain.

One could see here the calamitous anguish of believing and unbelieving youths caused by the wicked tyrant. Those [53] troops which emerged from the city (whom he had promised not to kill) he had dig up the earth. Then he had them bound hand and foot--4,000 souls--and buried them alive, covering them with water and ash. Their cries reached to heaven. Who can write down the bitter tortures which this precursor of the antichrist, this merciless tyrant occasioned? However, we have briefly recorded for those who will come after us, [things] which we heard and things we saw, [information] from Christians, captives, and lords (ters) of captives who came to us.

Then [Timur] with numerous troops went against Xondk'ear Yildirim, son of Murad Beg (Murat Pek). The latter assembled four times more soldiers than the many troops which Timur had, and came before him. But [Timur] tricked him, [g65] eluding him at night, capturing his land, and turning back. In battle [Timur] seized (and killed) [Yildirim] and many troops [Editor Shahnazarean (p.66 n.29) observes that Yildirim (sultan Bayazid I) was killed in 1403 by Aq-Shahir.]. He took booty, and more captives than there are stars in the sky or sand in the sea, as many as 60,000 households (tuns); Qara-tatar (Gharat'at'ar) with his House and sons went as captives to Khurasan. But there was much more, unrelatable and unspeakable. When [Timur] was coming against those parts of Rum belonging to Yildirim, he first went against [54]

Georgia to enslave and destroy the people. Now the king of Georgia, Gorgi [George VII, 1395-1405] and his two brothers Kostantin [Constantine I, king of Georgia 1405-1412] and Dawit', learning about [Timur's] wicked intentions, quickly held a mustering of troops and sent all the people of Georgia and Armenia to fortresses where they were kept. They themselves possessed a narrow close spot. But Satan, the slanderer, entered three wicked, godless, infidel azat sons who secretly separated from the king, went to the evil tyrant and pointed out the road leading to their forest. [Timur] sent many troops in from above them, and captured the entire Christian multitude. The grandees they killed, and the lowly ones they took captive--more than 60,000 souls.

Now King Gorgi, taking one hundred people with him, charged through [Timur's] forces, recalling the name of [g66] Jesus Christ; and he killed many of them and went to a secure spot, escaping by a hairsbreadth. With fire and sword [the Timurids] destroyed the entire land of Georgia and demolished the churches, bringing the captives to our land naked, barefoot, hungry and thirsty, every five Chaghatai [troops] having twenty captives. Many died en route, while [the Timurids] smashed the heads [of the fallen] with rocks so that they would not live; and [the enemy] themselves went on their way. We saw this with our own eyes and heard it [with our own ears]. Lamentation and woe befell the Christian [55] peoples. We saw the captives, but were unable to help. Choking with weeping and lamentation, we eluded and fled from them.

Taking the captives, they went to Khurasan. The loathsome tyrant [Timur] set up his son named Miran-Shah over parts of Atrpatakan, [with his residence] in the shahastan of Tabriz, while he set up his son named Omar, a hater of Christians. During the first year of his reign, he forcibly made to apostasize three princes of our people who had remained like a tiny cluster of grapes among us: the son of Ivane and grandson of Burt'el, Burt'el lord of Orotan, of the Orbelean family; his brother Smbat, [g67] whom they took with his family to Samarqand (but subsequently, through divine mercy and their prayers they returned to their patrimony); the lord of Eghegis named Tarsayich, son of Gorgon they caused to apostasize; the lord of Maku they removed from the false and diophysitic [beliefs] of Aght'armayut'iwn [Roman Catholicism], and the son of an azat (azator) named Azitan from Aghts'uats' village in the Ayraratean district. Later, however, [the apostates] repented and [again] became true believers in Christ and heirs of the Kingdom.

Again that wicked dragon, that precursor of the antichrist, the abominable Timur, took his troops, entered the land of the Huns, conquered their king Tokhtamysh, and subjugated the entire land. He made Idika their king, seated him in Sarai, and [56] conquered land eastward for a six months' journey. Then he went east again to India and captured the city of Delhi (Dili)[Editor Shahnazarean notes (p.68 n.30) that Metsobets's chronology is awry. Timur took India only once, six years before battling Yildirim (Bayazid).]. They say that he besieged it for forty days with his troops and did not know the limit of the city. Further, he subjugated the entire land of the Amazons, which is the country of women, and he took K'eshubahra and Balashxan, the country of the Indians as well as that ocean whence pearls are removed by diving down to the sea bottom. [g68]

Timur's son, Miran-Shah, was an extremely merciful and benevolent ruler. He received with love the great vardapet Grigor, as though he were an angel of God. They spoke ill to him about the emir of the city of Baghesh (Bitlis), Ibrahim, who ruled as emir after his brother Amir-Sharaf, saying, "He does not want to submit to you." This Ibrahim was a very great hater of Christ and Christians, unlike his brother who loved all Christians. Instead, [Ibrahim] wanted to destroy our faith and had it cried out in the city that God is One, without Son or Spirit--such a God with neither wisdom nor spirit. [Ibrahim] did not want peace, but plundered the city, and the Christians grew extremely bitter. Then merciful God [57] moved [Miran-Shah] to anger. In 845 of the Armenian Era [1396], [Miran-Shah] came to the city of Archesh with his troops and worshipped at the holy church. He did not enter the Tachiks' mosque, but rather treated them with contempt and disrespect. He suddenly came against Baghesh (Bitlis) and emir Ibrahim came to him. [Miran-Shah] seized and killed him, looting the entire city and district. Then the lord of Ostan, emir 'Izz al-Din (Ezdin), came among them and effected a reconciliation. [Miran-Shah] made emir the son of emir Sharaf, a little boy named Shamshatin, and then [g69] he went to Tabriz. This [episode] was inserted according to the order of the composition. So much on this matter for now.

The filthy Timur went to his land and died like a dog, howling like one in the foul xatiray Mashat' (?) Removing him thence, they placed him in fire and passed him through water, and his obscene noise did not stop for a long while. Now after the death of Timur in 857 of the Armenian Era [1408], the Turkmen [Qara] Yusuf took a few of his broken down and unarmed soldiers, escaped the prison in Damascus, and once again came to our land, first to the city of Bitlis. The son of emir Sharaf, Shams al-Din (Shamshatin), went before him and greatly honored him with bread, donkeys, horses, weapons, and all military and battle preparations. Taking this, [58] [Yusuf] went against the land of Rshtunik' and the monastery[-complex, vanakert'] of Varag. Preparing their forces, [the people of Rshtunik'] came before him with more than 12,000 troops. The treacherous Mar (Marats') people cheated the goodly Melik' who was fond of and merciful toward Christians--they fled. Then [Qara Yusuf] destroyed the land with fire, robbing, killing, and polluting. Then emir 'Izz al-Din (Ezdin) and son Melik' submitted.

In this same year two of our vardapets died: the great [g70] Vardan, the blessed vardapet and teacher (rabuni) of the holy Mother of God of Xarabast, a student of the great Sargis; and Yovhannes, the ascetic vardapet of Rshtunik' who, like an incorporeal angel, stood on his feet for more than fifty years praying and supplicating. We saw him with our own eyes and enjoyed his prayers. [Yovhannes] was from K'ajberunik' from the holy congregation of the Resurrection which was renamed Aspiska, from the village of Vaxan. May his memory be blessed. And may [Vardan's and Yovhannes'] prayers be upon the whole world. Amen.

This emir 'Izz al-Din (Ezdin) who opposed Yusuf [was] the lord of Ostan. In the year 842 A.E. [1393] he killed the kat'oghikos of Aght'amar named Zak'aria. His story may be read in the book, Yaysmawurk', by the blessed vardapet Grigor. [59] The previous year, the abominable melik Omar of Sis killed lord Teodoros, the kat'oghikos of Sis and sixteen tanuters in a persecution of Christians. Then the sultan of Egypt killed melik Omar wickedly and with bitter tortures. Glory be to God.

Thereafter Yusuf grew powerful, came to Tabriz and battled with Timur's son, Amir Miran-Shah Chaghatai. He captured Tabriz and killed [Miran-Shah], plundering him and all his [g71] troops. He effected peace in the upper parts of the land of Armenia. The next year Miran-Shah's son, Abu Bakr (Apu-Bak'ir), an extremely powerful military commander massed together countless, numberless troops and came against Yusuf. They dug in opposite one another for some days. Then one night Abu Bakr secretly took his troops and fled. He left behind booty and plunder, tent and sarup'artay all the treasures of the royal house and of his Turkmen troops. Greatly strengthened, [Yusuf] came the next year and took the city of Erzinka peacefully, as the prince of the city, named Darxrat, had died. He took the fortress of Mardin and all their districts. He went against Amida and Arghni, besieged them and destroyed that land. The lord of Erzinka, Pir 'Umar (P'ir Omar) came up and reconciled the lord of Amida, named 'Uthman Aghghoyinlu, a great lover of the Armenian people, a valiant warrior. They saw that he had slain 72 parons and conquered Diyarbakir himself.

[60] In the same period sultan Ahmat [Ahmad Djala'ir] came from Baghdad, entered Tabriz and took it. Smbat (Ivane's son and Burt'el's grandson), fooled by [Ahmad's] advice, went to him. [Ahmad] magnified him and gave him the village of Angeghak'ut' [g72] as a gift. When Yusuf learned about this, he quickly came against the khan of Tabriz. Warring with the sultan-khan, they seized and choked him to death, for they were lords of the place and called khan and son of a khan. By the solicitude of God there was at this time peace and construction throughout all the lands(s) of Georgia and Aghbania, while from Archesh to the Araratean district people dwelled not in desolation, but in a condition of building. Despite the fact that there were many taxes demanded, nonetheless the peace was without disturbance. The churches blossomed with priests and deacons, and those people who had apostasized during the time of Chaghatai [Timur], returned to the faith, [namely] Burt'el of Orotan, Tarsayich of Eghegeats', Surghat'mish of Maku, and Azitan of Aghts'. And at Archesh, the monastery which the Tachiks had taken, they gave [to] the church; and the believers rejoiced exceedingly.

Now loathsome satan (Beliar) could not bear the Church's spiritual joy, so he stirred up a war against the Persians. There was a boy in the city of Tabriz named Yusuf, a great curser and hater of Christ's name. Taking the foul bones of a dog, [Yusuf] pursued [some] Christian boys and threw the [g73] [61] filthy bones into the Christians' vats, from which the vardapet Step'annos (a student of the great Grigor) as well as all the Christians drank water. That same night the firmament opened, Christ descended from heaven and sat on the fiery throne, the twelve Apostles with him. He descended on the spot where Yusuf slept. The Lord said: "Seize that boy, take him and show him the place of torture of their filthy leader and all his followers. Then kill him so that he will go to that very place of their torments." The angels took [Yusuf] to hell and to the blazing flames of Gehenna where their leader and all of his followers were burning. [Muhammad] had the form of a dog and a yelping noise was issuing from the inferno's flames; and there was a chain about his neck. The angel said: "Behold, your leader and your people." Removing [Yusuf] thence, they showed him the kingdom of Heaven, its comely beauty, the rank of all the foremost souls, the delights, and all the leaders of the Christian people. The angel spoke: "Oh strayer (moloreal), do you see the believers in Christ our God, the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, [g74] and do you see the Illuminator of Armenia glorified with divine splendor? Why do you insult the Armenian people with curses? Believe in crucified Christ, go, be baptized in the name of the Most Blessed Trinity so that you go not to that place of torture which you saw but rather to this place [62] where you are now. For Christ Himself with His Apostles descended from Heaven and came to you."

Thence they again brought [Yusuf] to the terrible fiery throne of Christ. Seeing Christ [Yusuf] bellowed forth like Thomas: "My Lord and God, I have sinned before You, I confess and believe in You, fashioner and creator, and in Your omnipotent Father and Your true Holy Spirit of God, equal in glory--only free me from my sins so that I will not go to the place of torture of our wicked leader."

Suddenly the vision of the dream ceased and his family, mother and brothers, heard a frightful shouting, the word of doctrine, coming from his mouth. Awestruck, they stayed there in amazement. For three days and three nights they were unable to awaken him. Suddenly [Christ's] throne ascended to Heaven and [Yusuf], awakening from the sleep of that night vision, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, commenced professing Christ God and the Lord of all, in Persian. After [g75] a few days he went to vardapet Step'annos, called the weeper (laluk), and related the frightful vision to him. Baptized by Step'annos, [Yusuf] became a Christian. The infidels learned that [Yusuf], drum in hand, was going about the city confessing Christ God. Multitudes of infidels assembled, and devised various stratagems, persuasion and threats [to check Yusuf]. [63] Then they placed him on a camel and led him around the entire city. [Yusuf] said: "Lord Jesus Christ take me soon from this world, for I ride upon a camel, and they are on foot. [The infidels] dismounted him and tortured him with such bitter torments such that for forty days they wrapped him in skin (? i mort' tsarrets'in). When he recovered, his family expelled him. [Yusuf] then went to Sultaniyeh where he was tortured further. Then he went to Samarqand, thence a fifteen days' journey to the fire-worshippers' land, he came to Baghdad. Tormented by the Nestorian people, he professed Christ God. He entered Mashad Ali and secretly remained inside during the night, and he observed their deceit, for they said to light a fire in it. He came to us at the blessed congregation of Metsob in the district of K'ajberunik', for six months. Then he went to the city of Archesh and professed the most blessed Trinity. When the infidels saw this they [g76] dug a hole, buried him to the waist, and stoned him like the proto-martyr Stephen. Afterwards the mullahs freed him, for they had broken his arm. But six days later the one who had broken his arm, named Aramish, died wickedly.

At liberty, he came to us again, then went to the city of Axalts'xe and assembled Georgian and Armenian clerics. After eating pork, they placed the pigs' bones in their mosque. The infidels who were there saw this. The stupid prince [64] Ivane, son of Aghbugha, had elevated [the infidels] more than any of the Christian people about him. Treacherously, [the infidels] took many treasures and went to the tyrant Yusuf at Vagharshakert in Bagrewand district. They made their evil [intentions] known to him, they took him to Georgia and gave the city over to him. Like mad, pitiless beasts, they fell on [the Christians] with swords and slaughtered them like innocent lambs--killing more people than the human mind can comprehend. Taking the entire land captive, women and children, they filled up the entire world with Armenian slaves; they made pitiful all the Christian people, clerical and lay and [the Christians] gave spiritual and temporal goods for the price of a slave. Some Christians were freed by theft, some by flight, and some were eaten by wild beasts. Who can relate or put into writing the calamitous anguish and the racking sobbing and lamentation of fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. Furthermore, mere beholders were unable to restrain themselves. Women pawned [their] jewelry; men, their animals; priests and clerics demonstrated their indigence. Whoever had sheep or cattle gave and bought [the captives].

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## T'ovma Metsobets'i's History of Tamerlane and His Successors

When the infidels saw their willingness, they sold all the captives for between 10,000 and 20,000 [dahekans]; and [the Christians] bought one priest at Archesh and Artske for [65] 230,000 dahekans. But this deed became the ruin of the wicked, impious tyrant Yusuf, for God took his power from him and no longer succored him. This transpired in the year 865 of the Armenian Era [1416]. [Yusuf] subsequently went to Diyarbakir and descended into Syria like a fox, but returned like a weakened bat. For his son, whom he had set up as a khan over the entire land, had been killed.

The next year 'Uthman, lord of Amida, took Erzinjan and wickedly killed Pir 'Umar. The next year, Shah-Ruh [Shahrukh Mirza, 1404-1447], Timur's son, the lord of Khurasan, [g78] took a countless host of his troops and came to Sultaniyeh and Tabriz, against Yusuf. The latter came to oppose him. When they were close to each other--for they were to fight on that day or the next--God exacted from the Turkmen vengeance for the merciless enslavement, because that tyrant grew sick and died. His troops left him unburied and departed, arriving in the K'ajberunik' land, weeping and pitifully trodden. They encamped at the Christian monasteries and villages until springtime; and when they departed, they pillaged everything. [Yusuf's] son, named Aspahan, greatly aided and pitied the believers, freeing all to go to the district of Rshtunik'. And by a hairsbreadth we escaped Chaghatai's [the Timurid] army, for like a swiftly flying eagle they fell upon the [66] the Turkmen troops in the Taron country. Leaving behind their booty and loot, they secretly reached the country of Syria, the plain of the city of Amida.

Now Yusuf's son Iskandar (Sk'andar) had not been with his father, rather he had remained in his own place. Now he came from Baghdad, gathered up his father's troops and the braves of Hizan, and came to the Bagrewand district, close by the holy congregation built by Trdat and Gregory the Illuminator, [g79] planning to go against Shahrukh. The latter reached Her and Zarewand district and finally Berkri. The news of Iskandar's arrival reached him. With an infinite multitude he came to Archesh, and ordered two trenches to be dug, one at Archesh, and one at Jrapsak [other copies, hrapsak, iwsapsak] close to Aghu mountain. The next day he arose and went to the plain of Apahunik', to Kanagah and had a trench dug from fear of the troops of the brave and powerful warrior Iskandar. Reaching Vagharshakert, [the armies] encamped face to face on the plain of Bagrewand. Joining battle, they struck at each other. The manly and valiant warrior [Iskandar] went into the midst of Shahrukh's army killing many of the troops of Chaghatai [the Timurids], cutting off the trunk of an elephant, and ravishing one of the serving women from Shahrukh's house. He cast dread and [67] terror over the eastern army. Yet Shahrukh had no fear of him. His servants came to him and said: "Why are you at peace, behold we have lost ourselves from fear of the valiant, single-combattant son of Yusuf." [Shahrukh], emerging from the tent ordered that camels and animals be taken before the troops. They cried out in unison, [g80] the witches tossed paper into the air, they unsheathed their swords and attacked. At once, without delay, they put the troops of the disobedient Turkmen to the sword and destroyed them.

Here one could witness their calamitous anguish, for their clamor made both sides quake as though chilled, just as the braves Vardan and Mushegh made the Persians tremble. Father disowned son, and son, father; mother disowned daughter, and daughter, mother.

The two brothers Iskandar and Aspahan, escaping by a hairsbreadth with a few troops, fled to the inner reaches of the land, to Merdin and Mowsil And all the troops and families [Editor Shahnazarean notes (p.81 n.33) that xizan may mean "family, clan" if it is not the name of a district.] fell into the hands of Chaghatai. In the very place where they had divided up the Armenian and Georgian captives, they themselves were enslaved, and in the same spot countless hosts of them were killed. Who can put into writing the [68] screaming and clamor of the infidel youths who remained in that very place, and all who died of hunger and were eaten by beasts. This occurred in the year 870 of the Armenian Era [1421]. And Chaghatai, taking the booty and plunder went to Khurasan whence he had come; while the sons of Yusuf fled to the inner reaches of the land. Learning about [the Timurids'] departure, Aspahan quickly went to Tabriz by the [g81] Bitlis (Baghesh) road and for some days besieged it with a few troops. Now the other brother, Iskandar, came by the Baghdad road, entered Tabriz, put his brother to flight, took the entire land and sat as king over all parts of our land. His brother came to Basen and took the stronghold of Awnik. The next year he went to his other brother named Shah Mahmut in Baghdad, and waited for two years. Then he reunited his army against his brother and took the whole land of Babylonia. [Shah Mahmut], fleeing from his brother, fell into the hands of Chaghatai who killed him, for he was a peace-loving and philo-Christian man. And many said that he was Christ's servant.

Aspahan filled Babylonia with blood, for he had taken the land's treasures, secretly hid them, and killed the treasurer. He spared neither Tachik nor Asori. He destroyed and enslaved Mowsil, Sanjar, T'klad and the entire land and then came against Jazira, shedding much blood. He went against Merdin and killed thirty Christians. The lord of Merdin, son of 'Uthman, [69] Sultan Hamze, came up before [Aspahan], [Spandiar (Ispend, Espan), son of Qara Yusuf] seized all his troops and loot, and he himself escaped by a hairsbreadth from his hands. The blood of the innocent cried out to God [g82], destroying him and his troops. Now in 871 A.E. [1422], Iskandar, who sat as king in Tabriz shahastan, came with his troops against Xlat' and taking the entire country, besieged Aghvanits' fortress. A Kurd named Sharaf together with some foolish Christians cursed him from the fortress in rebellion. Angered, [Iskandar] ordered his troops to shoot arrows at them and they took it immediately. Putting swords to work, they killed one hundred fifty Christians of the people located there and sixty souls they gave as a hideous sacrifice of Christians in Tshhak and Aghvanits'; they took a multitude of women and children as slaves, and they killed many.

There were some few who were returned, purchased with silver. But from that day forth, there was weeping and lamentation for the entire Armenian people until the day of [Iskandar's] death. The second year he came against Bitlis and Xlat', summoned his brother-in-law (p'esa) Shams al-Din (Shamshatin) and said: "Give me the fortress of Xlat." [Shams al-Din] went near the fortress, untied the belt around his waist, then tied it again tightly. And the emir let his head kerchief fall, [g83] thereby signalling that "if they behead me, do not surrender the fortress. Rather, tighten your belts." [Iskandar] became angry and commanded his soldiers [70] to behead [Shams al-Din]. He seized the lord of Rshtunik', sultan Ahmad, son of emir 'Izz al-Din (Ezdin), and suddenly came against the fortress of Van and ravaged the entire land. He besieged Van for four months and during the seige of the fortress countless hosts of Christians died of hunger and thirst, and many died of stomach pains.

But he was unable to take Van that year. Instead, he went to Tabriz and was quiet during that year. He killed emir 'Izz al-Din's son, sultan Ahmad, in the fortress of Ernjak. The next year, 874 A.E. [1425], he once more came against Van and besieged it. Placed into straits, K'urd's

son Melik' Asd gave the fortress to him, and, at liberty, he took his goods and belongings and went to Julamerk. That very year they killed his father's brother, named Pahat', taking the Rshtunik' country and the island of Aght'amar. Many Christians, wandering about the mountains and hills, died of hunger and weakness. And I cannot put a figure on the number killed, or [describe] the lamentation, weeping, clamor and destruction of our people occasioned by the wicked tyrant, the filthy, impious precursor of the antichrist. [g84]

The same year the stinking (nengazhot) and pitiless Kurd of Bitlis came against the God-kept city of Artske and put many of our people to the sword, including the goodly, God-inspired, merciful and blessed vardapet Grigor, son [71] of Tser of Xlat', of the blessed congregation of Dastak, named Ts'ipnavak'. And the entire Armenian people mourned. For [Grigor] had embellished the churches of Armenia with menologies (yasmawurk'), lost homilies, canticles (ganjk') and hymns, and for fifty-five years he wrote books [or copied them] and gave everything to the poor. Being meek, extremely studious, and a reverer of martyrs, he received the martyr's crown. He was a student of the great Sargis, vardapet of Armenia, and studied for eight years with Yovhannes Orotnets'i, a classmate of the great Tat'ewats'i.

In the same year [Iskandar], that merciless dragon and bloodthirsty beast, went to the Armenian city of Ormi, wrecked the entire land, killed 700 Tachiks and pitilessly, wickedly beheaded them, took many slaves and exterminated the Armenian people, in accordance with the prophecy of the great Nerses that "the Nation of Aram will be wiped out by the Nation of the Archers." Again in the year 878 A.E. [1429], [Iskandar] [g85], mustered troops, formed a band, came against the city of Sultaniyeh, and took it after a four months' seige. He put to the sword and sacrificed all the troops found there, more than 300 souls. Pitifully sobbing, they cried out through their tears, "Lord, avenge our blood." Seizing the lord of [72] the place, Elias, Xaji's son, [Iskandar] put him in his own fortress. Now this lord [Elias] was the son of the sister-in-law (wife's sister's son) of Shahrukh, king of Media and the Persian parts of the East and Khurasan. Moved to anger, [Shahrukh] came with troops as countless as the stars in the sky, in solemn military preparedness against the foolish, unfeeling, disobedient, proud and arrogant tyrant, Iskandar. The latter fled from him, but he came and camped opposite [Shahrukh] at Salmast, front to front, division to division. He did not permit his troops to flee from the wrath of Chaghatai's army, since through sorcery he had bound him such that he was unable to remove one arrow from his quiver. But during the time of battle, he slipped away and fled saying: "I shall pit a thousand of my men against ten thousand of them." The deplorable creature neither knew nor understood, [g86] nor (due to his arrogant nature) did anyone want to inform him that a king's heart is in the hand of God Who gives victory to believers and unbelievers. [Iskandar], trusting in the strength of his arm, wanted to display a triumphant deed, but God did not give him the strength of victory. Rather, He betrayed his entire army into Chaghatai's hands. All the Turkmens and many Christians were captured, taken to the wintering place of Gharabagh where [Shahrukh] passed the blustering wintertime.

[73] Now those of Iskandar's soldiers who had survived the warfare, secretly fleeing hither and thither, came to the K'ajberuni country, took city, village, monastery and awan, and robbed and destroyed, leaving neither bread nor grass, bestially tearing everything apart. Above and below the wrath of God enveloped this seashore. From above, there came snow and showers of hail and here below was the bitterness of the infidels. Escaping by a hairsbreadth, we wanted to go to the island of Lim, but once we had arrived we found neither place to sit or stand nor sustaining food to prepare because of the frightful rage of God, and there was severe rain and snow. Our spiritual brother, vardapet [g87] Yovhannes received us affectionately. And while we were experiencing this tribulation, suddenly the troops of Amka fortress' wicked, loathsome infidel prince named Hajipek came to the island by boat, seized all of our Christians and demanded gold and silver. From evening until dawn [Hajipek] took 40,000 dahekans, though actually more than 100,000. Out of fear of them we willed the sea to drown us, [after] seeing and hearing the clamor and screaming of women and their children. For they struck them and beat them with sticks.

And while we were thus thinking that we would arise from the midst of the sea, disastrous news reached us, that [74] the Turkmen 'Uthman had come to Archesh city and robbed all the believers remaining there, since he was an enemy of Iskandar and his forces. It was on his counsel that Shahrukh vanquished the abominable Turkmen. And the saint's proverb was fulfilled regarding us "fleeing from the unicorn we fell victim to the snake." But at this point the mercy of benevolent God aided our overturned people. For the fugitive Iskandar, who had slipped away from Chaghatai and had come to the city of Van angered at his forces, came and removed those monsters who were ruling our district and ripping everyone apart like [g88] wicked beasts. And they removed the loathsome animals from the city, village and monastery. Freed from them, we had a brief respite for three winter months. This bitterness occurred at the time of the feast of the Cross of Varag. Now in springtime, Iskandar (who had fled from Chaghatai and was stealthily roaming about hither and thither, sometimes in the fortress of Ernjak and other places) came and besieged the city of Artske which the native lords of the city named Sawalan had taken. He besieged it for a few days and fought a great battle over it. The Christians and foreigners strove greatly, all of them praying that the wicked dragon would be slain and all [his forces] killed. The entire district was holed up in the fortress. Then suddenly the wicked forces of Chaghatai, 20,000 people led by Shahrukh's son Jonka reached the city like a swiftly-moving eagle. When the troops of Iskandar saw this they expired from terror, because they were [75] unprepared. And they cried out: "What will you do Amirza, the enemy has arrived." As though unafraid, Iskandar [g89] willingly and without haste, donned his armor and all military weapons, and went before them with a small force of about 1,000 men by the Kur valley road behind the mountain of the blessed congregation of the Miracle-Worker. [Jonka's] troops, 20,000 strong, pursued [Iskandar] but were unable to break through his ranks and capture him. However a strong warrior and brave single-combatant came from Chaghatai, charging on his horse crying: "At'alba Iskandar, turn back that we may see each other, for I have followed you from Khurasan to fight." Turning back, sword in hand, [Iskandar] reached him and said: "From Khurasan? Let me end your quest," and he struck him with the sword, cleaving him into two parts from neck to waist. Seeing him all the eastern troops were awestruck and dumbfounded, saying: "Who could pursue him after he worked such frightful unrelatable valor?" And thereafter they did no battle, but followed him in dread. Fearlessly [Iskandar] went to the Basen district. Now the multitude of the city of Artske emerged from the city and gathered up all the Turkmen booty and loot remaining from Chaghatai. The wicked descendant and son of destruction did not pursue them, but turned back and went to the Archesh country. [g90]

There were many Christian clerics and laymen wandering around as fugitives, in the mountains and hills and in caves. [76] But [the enemy] surrounded the mountain like an eagle hunting a bird from the sky, roaring and shrieking. They attacked with horses; and the hearts of the men and women wilted when they arrived like the terrible and frightful Day of Judgement. They killed the grandees; some they circumcised and dragged from the faith and led into captivity away from their fathers, women and children. Mother cried out to son, and son to mother: "My mother, who will let me see you again?" And mother to son: "Why my son? Alas and woe is me, and woe the day of your birth. Woe to me and to your father that glad tiding. Alas may my arm which held you aloft break. Will you go to the sea of bitterness? Will Christ give you a means of getting free?" It is impossible to put into writing this disastrous, racking calamity. But I am providing a few details about it for those coming after us, that you mourn the destruction of the Armenian people, for we personally were there. They took booty and plunder and countless hosts of our pitiful children from city and village and went to Tosp district, to the Van country, to the foot of the blessed congregation of Varag. Under the leadership of a loathsome unbelieving Kurd named Sewdi (from the house and line of the goodly, constructive Amir Ezid and Melik who held the Berkri country) [they] arrived suddenly and enslaving countless multitudes of women and [77] the children of all the believers, they led them away to Khurasan.



Screaming and lamentation ruled us. We frequently inquired that we might perhaps find out the number of slaves taken from Archesh and Van. No one was able to say for certain, but only this much: that three deacons [were taken] from the blessed congregation of Metsob and twenty-seven [Shahnazarean notes on p. 91 note 34 that one ms. has sixty-seven.] captives, close to our family and known to our dear ones, from the village of Agho were taken and ten captives from one house in Majaruats' village. Alas and woe to us, from that day until the present, and beyond.

This transpired on the day of Pentecost, in the year 879 of the Armenian Era [1430]. Once again on the day of the Feast of the Cross, Iskandar came and besieged the city of Artske and devised a strategem for taking it. Now the Christians, secretly taking counsel about the infidel, especially the sagacious and wise princely philo-Christian tanuter named Murat, together with the tanuters of Archesh: the dzernawor Yovhannes P'ok'o and Gorgi Melik' tanuter of Agho, resolved to go to the tyrant Iskandar and to quench his bitter anger. For he had come to kill the poor Christians by sword. [78] They went down to him with supplications and entreaties and gave him an oath so that he would not remember the former rebellion and disobedience which they had shown him, and in no way harm them. By the mercy of Christ they quenched his bitterness, and he vowed to do no damage to them. In the middle of the night they came down from the walls and went to [Iskandar]. Filled with unspeakable joy, he treated all citizens with affection and in the morning entered the city in peace, without pillaging.

However, they killed the lord of the city, named Salt'in and a Danishman advisor of his. Through the mercy of God he did not harm a hair in the city, for he was philo-Christian and compassionate toward our people. But because of his arrogant nature neither he nor the believers were successful. He ruined himself and destroyed our people. Now at the coming of the next year, 880 A.E. [1431], a severe famine descended over the believers and unbelievers in our land. [g93] They ate dog, cat, corpse, horse, mule, ass, and camel, and the number of animals decreased therefrom. [The people] then turned to their sons and daughters, to the point that in the city of Tabriz, 1,000 souls were eaten, secretly and openly, and the upper and lower parts [of the land] were ruined. Others from Tabriz city, [from] Her and Zarewand, Oshni and Aghbak went to the K'ajberuni area. And many who [79] were there died. But those who came to Arest awan multiplied through fish and vegetables.

Now beasts, grown accustomed to eating corpses, attacked those left alive in our country. Wolves entered Archesh and all our districts, took, tore to pieces, and devoured children from their mothers' embrace. They instantly ripped apart those folk, large and small, they encountered in the [open] plain. Wolves ate more than one hundred souls in the district of Archesh, to say nothing of the poor by the Arest and Marmet rivers. In wintertime so many believers perished from the cold weather, going from the Araratean district toward Georgia that it is impossible to calculate it, as our spiritual brother the monk Zak'aria Tegherts'i told us. Furthermore, a mot' of wheat fetched more than 60 t'anks in the bazaar of Archesh. [g94] Everyone was dying, natives and foreigners alike. Some took their horses and went to distant lands: to Erzinjan, Xarberd, Amida, Arzn and Ch'mshkatsak; and those who remained lordless died from the severity of the famine. Some went to the Kurds at Bitlis, Mush and Sasun and from poverty and the bitterness of hunger apostasized and became unbelievers, more than 500 people, to the sorrow of God, the angels, and mankind. And all of this transpired because of our sins and wicked deeds; especially from the laziness of presbyters and the fraudulence of clerics, and from the evil deeds of unbelieving and falsely-named [80] believers; from unjust tanuters who confiscated; from the loathsome, foul leaders--we are unable to set down our own and their impurities, for what is secretly alluded to is known by everyone. It is seven years that we have been living under this bitter scourge. For in the absence of the sword, it was famine that killed; in the absence of slave-taking, wild beasts ate people; birds ate the crops, frogs and mice sullied the fields; it was chastisement more bitter than the Babylonians' in the days of Abraham, and more bitter than the punishment of the Hebrews and Egyptians, for whereas the sons of the [g95] Egyptians drowned in the sea, the sons of Armenia drowned in the city of Herat (Hre) in a sea of unbelief. They drowned in the sea and did not multiply with children. Our sons and brothers who died and were lost through unbelief, raise up their sons in unbelief and fill the entire world. Until the final day of justice so many peoples [shall] be born from the Armenian people, like the 72 nations presently existing: for if the entire world was populated by eight times more just and righteous a man of God, Noah, then how many more must grow and multiply from thousands and tens of thousands of men?

Such a chastisement occurred: neither cleric, layman, rich or poor restrained his tongue from cursing the rulers, nor did they say "Forgive us God," nor [cease] the putrid, foul-mouthed, impure curses and anathemas the clerics of the church of Armenia constantly cleave apart the newly-ruined [81] vow, always filling the mouths of scholars with impurity. Alas and woe to us and to them, for I blame myself since I am of the same will though stricken by pangs of reason; for I was familiar with Biblical knowledge, want to withdraw and do not want to heed. And I am always bitter, for the habit has grown old. I am unable to support the church clerics for they are the dragon of rebellion; and, having evaded the advice of spiritual men and vardapets of the Church, they follow their own wills...[ We omit the translation of a group of lengthy Biblical quotations and references to priests who curse the bishops and vardapets (pp. 97-98).] For it was as a consequence of such imprecations, I believe, that the Holy Spirit of God quit the people and Church of Armenia.

Once again let us return to the previous exposition of the wretched last times and the overturned people. The tyrant Iskandar placed one of his sons named Arali as prince in the city of Van the fortress of Tosp district, at the foot of Varag. And [Arali] made unjust tax demands upon our people and the Tachiks. They went to his father Iskandar and complained, saying: "We cannot bear the grief and bitterness which he causes, for he has greatly impoverished our land. [Iskandar], very much displeased, summoned [Arali] to correct his ignorance. Afraid to go to his father, [g99] he slipped away to the lord of Shamaxi, Xalil-Ullahanu, son of shaykh Ibrahim. But the latter seized him and had him taken to the lord of Khurasan, Timur's son Shahrukh, as Xalil [82] secretly nursed a grudge against Iskandar. Learning of this hatred, [Iskandar] assembled troops in a division and went against the Shamaxi region, destroying the entire land, city and village, putting to the sword the country for a fifteen days' march and bitterly harassing the lord of Shamaxi and the city of Shamaxi. He cut down tree and vineyard, sparing nothing, and wreaked unrelatable destruction. Furthermore one of their princes, also named Iskandar (and his equal in wickedness), took him to the other side of the Darband gate. He destroyed many lands, mercilessly putting to the sword the mountaineers and the plains-dwellers, remaining there for a full year shedding so much innocent blood that no one can commit it to writing. Turning back they brought to the Siwnik' country 360 severed Danishman heads in blood-caked, foul-smelling loads. The Christians were extremely lucky for [the Qara-Qoyunlu] had brought 30 [Christian] captives secretly. A priest named Yakob followed them and informed him. Extremely displeased, [Iskandar] set them free in peace. [g100]

Now the lord of Shamaxi, that Xalil, took the qadi and mudarris and went to Shahrukh, lord of the city of Herat, casting dirt on his head and tearing his collar. They related the bitter and lamentable calamities which Iskandar visited upon them. [Shahrukh] and his entire family became enraged. Bitter bile, filling the appetite for reason, he [83] summoned all the leaders of the wicked city of Herat, great and small, and said to them: "Judge properly and correctly what must be done to Yusuf's son." In unison they all clamored: "He is worthy of death. Let that man be killed; and should you not kill such a merciless thirster for blood, the creator God will demand justice from you." He ordered that armaments be brought, and he fastened them on himself, something he had long since prohibited, being a sufi (sofi) and a peace-lover. In complete rage he traversed a twenty days' journey in but three days. Then gathering up his forces from here and there, he arrived at the city of

Sultaniyeh with an inestimable, countless multitude. He waited forty days that perchance that foolish braggart, supported and tricked by satan, might obediently come before him. [g101]

But [Iskandar] paid no attention to him. Shahrukh, a peace-loving man, came to Siwnik' with his heavy forces, to the fortress of Ernjak; he surrounded and besieged it for many days. Meanwhile [Iskandar's] son and mother, acting wisely, made a vow with [Shahrukh] not to leave his father [Iskandar] alive if there were any means of killing him; and they gave [Shahrukh] numerous gold and silver treasures. Receiving the supplications of the emissaries, [Shahrukh] thanked them. And he praised his wisdom, saying: "The wisdom of his son [and] Xanum exceeds that of op'a Iskandar." [84] Again ambassadors came to the fortress (klayn) with great gifts. Iskandar was outside the fortress. He fled with 150 men and came like a thief to the village of Artsap' in the Gogovit country, remaining there a brief three or four days. Then he and his troops went to the city of Karin now called Arzrum (Erzerum), fleeing from terror and dread of Chaghatai [the Timurids].

The lord of Erzinja (Erznka), named 'Utman, took his forces--more than 20,000 men--and came before [Iskandar] to fight him. Having 3,000 armed men with him, [Iskandar] and these troops suddenly entered the ranks of their forces [g102] where they killed 'Uthman, the head of the army and his son named Bayezid (Payazit) plus more than 700 people. Seizing 100 brave, powerful warriors, that merciless and foul animal, the son of satan, slaughtered them like sheep and piled the slain on the road, like a fortress. The next day, the Chaghatai army of Shahrukh's son, Jonga, who had 30,000 men with him, arrived. Seeing the slain on the road they were seized with dread and did not want to pursue them. His son (who regarded not pursuing them as ignominious) filled with anger and said before his grandees: "Let none of our troops dare remain in the city or mountains; rather in unison, arm and go after themn." Coursing after them, they caught up and took all their plunder as booty and [85] loot. However, they were unable to enter [Iskandar's] lines. Instead [the two armies] moved in close range of one another as far as Aghch'ar city. But they were unable to seize him. [Iskandar] went and dwelled in T'oxat' and his own country, receiving great honors from the city princes and the surrounding areas.

Now in springtime he wasted their land, and then went and encamped on the bank of a river. He assembled numerous troops--more than 40,000--came [g103] and encamped near them, but was unable to do anything to them. When they saw his unmanly arrival, they came and demolished and ruined his land. He went to Sebastia and besieged a cave where people had fled for refuge out of dread of him. He tricked those people with a false oath, brought a multitude of believers out of the cave, and enslaved wife and son of the innocent, miserable Armenian people; and the wicked ones tortured [them] with fire, sword, and unspeakable torments. Now the Christians of Divrigi (Tiwrrike) saw the tortured and captured folk, and weeping and mourning they went before the wicked tyrant and precursor of the antichrist. Giving inestimable sums they purchased [the captives], and many of them were brought and settled in the upper regions. Then [Iskandar] went against Xarberd, burning the entire country with fire and sword, all the multitude of the merciful [86] and compassionate [folk] of the district he seated in the mourning of captivity.

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## T'ovma Metsobets'i's History of Tamerlane and His Successors

He came against the Derjan district where he uprooted everything, goods and belongings, sons and daughters and wanted to take this to the Araratean country and Siwnik'. Those were blustery wretched days of wintertime. Suddenly after two days, severe snow fell upon them, and in that night [g104] the country grew cold, and many Christians died of the cold. Son cried to father and father to son, and dear children died in their mothers' arms. Taking their children in their arms, they raised their voices crying to God above: "Lord Jesus, avenge the blood of Your servants, for You are our hope and refuge, and free us and our children from the hands of the beast." That same day, as a result of the bitter weather, more than 700 innocent Christians perished. There was no time to bury them; they became food for wild animals. Nor was there was a village nearby. Their overseers cut off their ears and took them and showed them to the precursor of the antichrist. [Iskandar] laughingly said: "God did it. What do I care? He should not have given them into my hand, and He should not have made it snow."

The impious beast worked this evil. Some ignorant people out of dislike for the believers, wished him a long life. [Other] people are of the opinion that because of [Iskandar's] [87] insubordination and proud behavior which did not submit to the king of the East, more people died than there are stars. For [Shahrukh] was a peace-loving man, nor did he want to be an agitator, for he had seen his father dying, [g105] howling like a dog. Nor did he want to destroy our people. However, he did the will of those and heeded their prayers; [Iskandar] turned [divine] assistance from his sword through the prayers and murder of the innocent and weakened his beloved brothers and relations in the eyes of his troops. He came to his brother named Jihanshah (Jhanshah) whom Shahrukh had placed over his people and over our land, to war against his own brother, knowing that his forces would sacrifice their lives. They had already done so once before when they killed his brother, Sultan Abu Sa'id (Busayid) whom the same Shahrukh had placed over our land. But [this time] all his men abandoned him and fled to his brother Jihanshah. Left with only a few men, he escaped from his brother by a hairsbreadth, secretly going to Ernjak fortress where he passed the entire winter in drunkenness.

Now his brother with his troops besieged him until springtime, creating a fortress and habitation around the fortress. He secretly sent an ambassador to the sultan of Egypt for him to send him many auxiliary troops. [The sultan] sent him numerous forces, many more than 60,000 men. When [this army] came to Ekegheats' district [g106] it heard that they [88] had killed [Iskandar] in Ernjak fortress. Now this Iskandar had a son named Shah-Qubad (Shahubat'). He and his mother, united with ten powerful warriors and valiant single-combattants, went at night and found [Iskandar] in a wine-induced drunken sleep. Unsheathing their swords, they stabbed him to death, without him recognizing his relations. In the morning [people] came to see Shah-Qubad and asked: "Where is your father?" He replied: "My father's fate to your enemies". The people gave [Shah-Qubad] an oath that they would not harm him. He had a relative named Hulegu (Holawlu) whom they fetched and killed, decapitated, and sent the head to his brother Shahanshah who was besieging them. When the latter saw [the head] he greatly rejoiced and held a great celebration, glorifying God that their enemy had born a son who liked him, had killed him, and that they themselves had not killed him. Thus was this wicked one eliminated and, as the prophet says, he did not see the glory of God. And [thank God] that I saw the evil one eliminated and destroyed and behold! he was no more, for he was a bloodshedder and did not live out half the days of his life. The country became pacified in a few days [after Iskandar's death]. The entire duration of his life on earth there was unrest and agitation from Khurasan to Egypt. This transpired in [g107] the year 886 of the Armenian Era [1437]. From the year 870 A.E. [1421] onward until his death, the [89] whole world was in agitation and disturbance, both unbeliever and believer. For this was the third time that Shahrukh Chaghatai placed all the Turkmens and the midland provinces (Mijerkreays) in captivity because of [Iskandar's] disobedience. First at Vagharshakert; second, at Salmast and the third time was this one, when he died and many others died as well, because of him. I saw this vividly in our district. For in 885 A.E. [1436] during Chaghatai's second coming we fled from him and reached the cities of Xlat', Her, Berkri, Archesh and Artske. Suddenly there descended upon us all the Kurds and all Kurdistan from the mountains and hills. Unsheathing their swords they terrified all our miserable people, cutting them down, and wanting to kill everyone. So terrible was that day from the fear, dread, and clamor of the loathsome and bloody Mar (Marats') people that it would have been the Day of Judgement had not aid been sent by our Savior, Christ God, the hope of all. For at night we wanted to go to the city of Bitlis (Baghesh) to the God-loving and God-kept and Christ-loving believers, vardapets, bishops, priests, and clerics there. [g108] But unexpectedly [the Kurds] fell upon us, sword in hand, wanting to kill everyone. Now we took refuge in God, left all material goods behind, fled into the mountains, and with the aid and grace of God escaped from their clutches.

News of our difficulty reached the city of Bitlis. Their [90] bishop, lord Step'annos, a merciful and God-loving man, took a multitude of believers and our spiritual brother the vardapet Step'annos, and lamenting, wept over us, took, restored and received us and our poor for three years like the angels of God. May Lord God, our Jesus Christ, keep that district undisturbed and secure, its sons, daughters, and all of its property, until His second coming. This was in the year 884 of the Armenian Era [1435].

Again I shall relate the disaster and racking bitterness of our people. In the city of Artske there dwelled a pious and charitable man, a lover of God and of holiness, extremely humble, a lover of clerics and a hater of all evil. Day and night did he pray, with his brothers, sons, and entire family. [g109] He was named Muratshah and had a mild and compassionate appearance. He trampled upon all of the city's infidels to the point that he permitted believers to bless water on the [day of the] Revelation of the Lord, with cross and Gospel. He was like the king of the Christians in the midst of a sea. However the wicked people of satan and his orderlies envied [Muratshah], and betrayed him to the mayor. The infidel citizens, having a grudge against him, betrayed him with the permission of an abominable, criminal [member] of our people, named Zenon. He was put into prison, shot with arrows, thrown from the keep and achieved martyrdom and the [91] eternal halo. Prior to this they seized a tanuter named Zak'aria, and strangled him with a rope. May his memory be blessed and through his prayers may Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on all Christians. Amen.

But the following too is known, that during these same days, three times in the same year, the loathsome prince named Pir 'Ali (P'irali) who dwelled in a cave at Amuk enslaved and pillaged the Archesh and Artske country, and burned in fire the dzerkawor named Mkrtych' with eight members of his household, in the village of Zarishat. [g110] And a pious dzerkawor Yovhannes was killed at Aspisnak village and they roasted in fire a brother of the servitor named Aristakes, like an innocent lamb. Thus martyred for Christ, they received from Christ an uncorruptable halo. May Lord God Jesus Christ forgive whatever sins they may have committed. Amen. [The Qara-Qoyunlu] so robbed all the districts and so denuded the area of goods, that all Christians, grand and lowly, at present despise themselves and, unashamed, regard it as nothing to cover their bodies with grass and to go about like animals, naked and barefoot.

[Pir 'Ali] sold the believing women who had [sought refuge] on the island of Lim for more than 200 and 300 t'anks over and above our poor, none of whom had a single dram. [92] That prince who destroyed our lands is now set up as lord and prince over our land as chastisement for our sins and because of God's wrath. He now is placing all believers under taxation such that they collect from each man 40 t'anks, to say nothing of the bahra and ch'arek' [Shahnazarean p. 112 n. 40 describes bahra as 1/10 and ch'arek' as 1/4 of the country's harvest.] which went to the aged, children, orphans and widows, the blind, poor and bankrupt. Everyone is starving, and though alive, they are dead (kendani merealk', "living dead"). [g111]

Having seen this all, we want to speak briefly about the lamentation and sighing of the denuded and poor, [and to make] complaint against the falsely named tanuters by whose permission and negligence our miserable people were destroyed not only through bitter poverty but through unbearable and unrelatable deeds and in the dissolute drunkenness of elders and youths as may plainly be seen in the city of Archesh.

Now there was a priest named Step'annos from the Amuk country who had come and dwelled on the island of Lim for a few days. Thence he went to the city of Archesh and found it without overseer or leader, neither spiritual nor temporal, neither bishop, vardapet, dzerdawor nor tanuter. Seizing a woman citizen through bribing the infidels and at their command he became, for a long while, director (arainord) [93] of the city. Then treacherous infidels and lying Christians betrayed him to the mayor of the city of Artske named Sahand, and [they also betrayed] a pious tanuter named Musefir. They shed their blood and hanged their heads from the wall. And while perhaps it was a punishment from the Lord so that each cleric hold to his rank, nonetheless by their innocent blood they washed away the stain of their sins; for whoever is so punished in this life is freed from the torturous punishments of Hell. [g112] And if Christians so perish by the hand of infidels, as Abel was killed by Cain, so [the infidels] will be punished by the Lord. For the head of the faith said: "Let none of you be tormented like a thief, a criminal, or a seer (otaratesuch), that is, a witch; but should they torment you for being a Christian, be not ashamed." Similarly they shall not be ashamed before Christ; rather they shall receive the uncorruptible halo, like the class of martyrs. Lord God Jesus Christ forgive their sins. Amen. This occurred in the year 844 of the Armenian Era [1395].

This priest [Step'annos] had a young son named Yovhannes who was loved by all believers and unbelievers alike. They set him up as dzerdawor of the city and commander (hramanatu) of the country. But from wicked seed grows a wicked harvest and the teaching of evil instructors is evil. For [Yovhannes] [94] father had given his daughter [in marriage] to a man named Murat. And [Yovhannes] took in marriage the sister of his brother-in-law. This was the first sin. The second was that the one born of that woman named Baghshashish, was engaged in improper activities. Advised [g113] by one of those who liked him, named Vegen, [Yovhannes] unsheathed his sword and killed her. With bitter mourning the brothers lay her in the grave. We offered prayers and masses that perhaps he find forgiveness for his sins. But he did not regret his deeds. Then the mother [of the slain child] died, and the father went and married the daughter of his uncle's wife's sister. Living with her briefly, this wife also died. And he did not repent his sins. Once again he took another woman but did not repent, rather he lived in wantonness for a long time.

His brother's son was named Yovhannes. He gave [his] daughter to a youth named Ghrimpek and his sister's son took his [?] Ghrimpek's] sister [The translation of this passage is uncertain.]. The child became racked with very bitter pains. He went to the blessed congregation of Gaghton and did not return. His mother turned to constant prayer and asceticism, and her brother did not pity her. Once more the dragon of satan moved his/her house, that is [95] he wanted to marry her child. Going, he took the daughter of the sister of the p'esa of his father's brother's son from whom his sister's son had taken the other sister. We preached and advised against this, but he did not obey. We wrote three and four letters of blessing and he ignored it. Rather, like the crafty creature which approached mother Eve [g114] and tricked her, he approached the spiritual leaders and vardapets of the church. And at their command he took as a bride for his son the daughter of a tanuter named Aslan. Because of his disease of greed they took the reconciler Christ as an intercessor, with crosses and masses, desiring with their sins to make good service to the Father, abandoning the orders of [the Patriarchs] and the Illuminator, going against their canons disobediently, and wanting to do evil in the face of Christ's will. The forgiveness of God pardoned them for one year.

But come the second year, that woman bore a son and the chastising wrath of God fell upon her. This innocent one cried and clamored: "The wrongs of my parents have surrendered me to the hands of the dews. Bless me, Creator God, and do not let me go." A multitude of priests and the people came [96] with cross and Gospel and prayed over her. With no cure or rest from the agitation of bitter pains, they took refuge in sorcerers (diwt') and witches. The latter dug [a hole] at the head of the street, relieved themselves into it, buried [the woman] there up to the neck, then taking swords in hand they cried out and struck the earth, saying: "Arise from this woman, wicked dew." [g115] The foreigners, having opened the mouth of the pitiful and weeping woman, terrified [her] with the sword. The entire multitude of the city's believers and unbelievers came and saw the woman with the woeful face and disheveled hair in the midst of the square. And just as they were happy in transient joy, so now they were saddened at the misery of the poor wretch. Who can relate the heart-rending sobs of the poor woman amidst the solemn trial (aten). Viewers and hearers related it to us, weeping and lamenting. After living a few days, she gave up the ghost. With all our heart we beseech benevolent Lord Jesus Christ to forgive her sins, with the intercession of all the saints, for she was unwillingly, not willingly, a sinner.

As for her more guilty parents and the dzerdawor, the consenting director and deceitful monks, may Lord God Jesus [97] Christ pardon them in this world and in the next at the court of Christ, with supplications to the holy Mother of God. I beseech the future brothers who come after [us], bishops and vardapets, putting [my] face to the ground, with [my] body turned to earth, do not betray brotherly love for the sake of this false and transitory life. For whoever hates his brother is a murderer, [g116] while divine love is born of brotherly love. No one lacking divine love can unite into the realm of God. With a sighing heart and correct faith I beseech Christ to forgive whatever blameworthy faults be found among our brothers, and to forgive me for my shortcomings worked throughout my entire life toward God and the brothers. Vay!

Now after three years had passed, the aforementioned dzerdawor gathered up the hungry, miserable, naked dregs of our people of K'ajberunik' and brought them to Archesh, handing them over to the infidel. They demanded 540 per head from the lame, blind, old, and children--from such who had not a single dram in the first place.

In the year 887 of the Armenian Era [1438], the king of Georgia, Alexander [I, 1412-42, Alek'san] gave poison to prince Beshk'en (Peghgin), son of Smbat Orbelean, grandson [98] of Burt'el, his own father-in-law. For he had taken all parts of Siwnik', and all districts surrounding Siwnik', more than 60,000 Christian homes, and freed Georgia from Shahrukh. Outwardly the king honored him, giving him the fortress of Lori. [Beshk'en] was pious and compassionate, [g117] a lover of the clergy, merciful toward all, and toward the poor, telling them to gather around him. All of the Armenians who applied to him he honored and elevated with bread, food, and dress. But that bloody cruel beast [Alexander] feared him, holding the vain and false view that the Armenians must not gather together, so that Georgia would not be destroyed. Especially

motivated by the treachery of wicked princes who, as in the beginning, through jealousy and hatred, ruined the entire Armenian people, they gave the poison [to be administered] to an Armenian man named Amnadin, promising him great gifts.

The impious, blood-thirsty Cain loved treachery and the Chalcedonian people more than the pious, benevolent, orthodox and true believers. He administered the poison unexpectedly at dinner. [Beshk'en] realized what had happened and sought an antidote, but it did no good. His soul passed to the angels. He was taken and buried with his father Smbat and his brother Step'annos, bishop of the blessed congregation of Tat'ew, [men] who had died in Georgia, fleeing from foreigners. [99] [His death caused] great mourning for the entire Armenian people and [g118] disappointment, for [he had resembled] a small cluster of grapes among the grapes, and a star in the black night and an asylum for all Christian peoples. He was survived by a brother named Shah, nourished and educated among the gastromaniacal (orovaynamol) Georgian people. He was weak and not solicitous about his patrimonial district. In addition [Beshk'en] left a little son of about ten years. May his memory be blessed and may Christ God forgive his sins, for like Abel, he died and was martyred by treacherous, false brothers.

[Beshk'en's] princes avenged themselves on the impious Amnad[in], cutting off his feet and fingers. But they were unable to make the Poisoner who snatched our prince from life confess. Merciful God spared him for a year. But in the second year, 888 A.E. [1439], His righteous judgement was effected, for the loathsome, blood-thirsty king was struck with the bitter blows of leprosy/venerical disease such that each day he died but was revived, groaning "Alas!" and "Woe!" He assembled hakim and doctor but the severe pain grew stronger. Again in 889 A.E. [1440] the Creator God was angered at our people, the wicked king and their land. For [100] the king of Tabriz, the tyrant-prince named Jihanshah, assembled troops, formed divisions, gathered [g119] the wicked director of Ardabil, all the qadis and mudarris and came against Georgia. He sent ambassadors many times for [the king] to come to him in obedience and to pay the customary tax. But [Alexander] did not want to; rather, he replied in harsh words.

Enraged, [Jihanshah] came with a countless host of troops suddenly and unexpectedly on great Easter day. Those who fell into their hands were enslaved and the grandees were killed. He besieged the city of Shamshulde. By Pentecost, the day of the Coming of the Holy Spirit, they had captured Shamshulde through deceit and the fear [of the besieged citizens]. And they built a minaret of 1,664 human heads at the gate of the city, and they took captive 9,400 [folk] to say nothing of those ravished in forests and thickets. Sixty blessed men, senior priests, monks and princes were sacrificed like sheep at the city gate; some had their heads quartered; some crushed, some were killed [even] after apostasizing. May God have mercy on them for their sin of [filling] [holy] basins with pure blood.

Here one could see the calamitous tribulation of the [101] Christian band. For taking heart, the valiant and brave professed Christ the true God with great clamor [g120] in the midst of the satanic multitude. Their faces shone, resembling the faces of angels, like unto Saint Stephen the Proto-martyr. Who can relate the sorrowful tribulations and racking anguish of the miserable Haykazean [Armenian] people. Only their creator, God the Fashioner and Creator, can know that. For father cried to son: "Vay, my son!" while son cried to father in sobbing supplication: "Woe is me, father!" Mother looked at daughter and her tears coursed down like a river. And the country and entire land filled up with captives, weeping, mourning, sobbing, especially the center of our patrimonial district, for everyone had fled there, and encountered such trials and ambushes.

The whole world to Egypt, Khurasan, Baghdad and Tachkistan split apart with the lamentations of sending for and purchasing slaves at a heavy price. [The infidels] boasted of our destruction and exclaimed in a loud voice: "Where is Christ their God? Let Him come and save His believers." Oh woe and alas, a thousand times over, for today we observed the day of cruel sin, the Day of Judgement in our city. All the [g121] captives were sold for 1000 t'anks. And we had fallen into such penury, all people, city and village, monastery and [102] farm (agarak) that one city and one village was unable to buy a single captive because of the bitter tribulations of poverty. Rather, mourning and lamenting with heart-rending bitterness and lachrymose sobs do we weep and lament our loss. For innocent clerics bought with the blood of Christ [and] the people, blessed lambs and pure brides, betrayed to the infidels, were lost completely. And there was no one to help, or come to [their] aid.

From here they went on to Tiflis p'aytakaran city, and demolished to the foundations all the old and new churches built by the first kings. They hurled down the symbol of the Lord, swarming over churches with unsheathed swords, with frightful shouting and thundering, to the point that all the mountaineers and plainsmen chilled and trembled, out of terror and dread of them. Sword in hand, brave, coward, and commander took to forests, thickets and caves. Having removed their women and children for many days they took captives. And that cowardly, gastromaniacal, drunken, lapathum-eating [lapastakaker "eater of lapathum," a purgative plant.] Georgian nation, which continually sat intoxicated, boasting [g121] that they would vanquish all peoples, were unable to pierce by arrow even one man. Instead, spying some of them in a grove they would stealthily [103] say to one another in terror and trembling: "Behold, the Turkmens! Behold, the Turkmens!" And behold, having themselves escaped by a hairsbreadth, they betrayed their sons into the infidels' hands. Furthermore we [Armenians], always placing hopes on the Georgians and boasting of them among the infidels, were thereafter disappointed and confounded in the infidels' presence. The words of the prophet were fulfilled: "Cursed is the man who places his hopes on man," and "Trust not the prince, for that is not salvation." Nor was there anyone to help us besides Lord Jesus Christ Who by crucifixion and torture gave His life for the holy Church.

All this descended upon us because of our sins, especially because of the swearing of the foul-mouthed, because of lazy, lack of prayer, and the hatred and lack of love manifested toward all, and the incorrigible priesthood.

The filthy tyrant again summoned the wicked leaders of his faith and asked: "Were there any besides our first kings who worked such good deeds and bravery?" They responded: "You are more worthy of honor and glory than the Prophet [g123] (p'eghamber)." And the loathsome shaykh of Ardabil said: "God pardons whatever crimes you have committed for the next seven years; whatever crimes you commit He will forgive. [104] But let me give you some advice. Because they curse our leader, calling him bald and k'ashch'al(?), place tax and kharadj over all Christians so that they will apostasize Jesus Christ and adopt our faith." They levied kharadj and enormous taxes on all peoples so that through numerous harassments they turn from our faith. May Lord Jesus quickly do away with them and judge directly between us and them who totally destroyed His people. For in 800 of the Armenian Era [Shahnazarean notes (p. 124 n.47) that 800 A.E. [1351] is in error.] there will come aid and they will be destroyed like Gog, Magog, Hrap'sak, Sennecherim and all the evil kings of the world. For whoever strikes against the rock of Christ will be crushed in this world and in the next, with his family and entire people. And he shall lift up the horn of the kings of Christ with the intercession of the blessed Mother of God and of all the heavenly and earthly saints, especially of the new and select martyrs, the brave, valliant pitiful citizens of Shamshulde who were drowned in martyrs' blood. [g124] Through their intercession and good wishes may Lord Jesus forgive us, our parents, relatives and the entire Armenian people, clerics, laymen, and all Christians. [g125]

Amen

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