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MANUSCRIPT CAIRO SYRIAC 11 AS A GATEWAY TO UNDERSTANDING THE 17TH -CENTURY SOCIO- CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN DIARBAKIR

Keywords: Armenian Garshuni, Syrian Christians, Armenian-speaking communities, monastery of Mor Abhay, Eliya of Nisibis, Gerger, Diyarbakır.

From the 15th century onwards, a number of Armenian texts were recorded in the Syriac script in Upper Mesopotamia and Greater Armenia, areas inhabited by Armenians and Syrian Christians. All the examples found until now are written in *Serto*, the Western Syriac script (used by the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Maronites). At the same time, the opposite phenomenon, Syriac in the Armenian script, was quite rare.¹ The use of Armenian Garshuni is closely connected with the emergence of the Armenian-speaking Syrian Orthodox communities.² In this short article I am going to discuss why Syrian Christian communities, living in a multinational and multilingual environment and using Classical Syriac as their liturgical and literary language, felt it was important to create the trilingual dictionary (MS Cairo Syriac 11, see fig. 1) and many other Armenian Garshuni manuscripts.

The monastery of Mor Abhay was one of the most important centers for the production of Armenian Garshuni texts.³ From the 15th century on, the monastery became a spiritual center for the Syrian Orthodox community of Malatya. The monastery existed until early 18th century. It was in this center that Armenian Garshuni manuscripts were produced for the Armenian-speaking members of the Syrian Orthodox Church. There are unique cases of Armenian Garshuni texts even from the 20th century.

¹ Johannes Den Heijer, Andrea Schmidt, Tamar Pataridze, “Scripts Beyond Borders: Allographic Traditions and Their Social, Cultural and Philological Aspects: An Analytical Introduction”, in *Scripts beyond Borders: A Survey of Allographic Traditions in the Euro-Mediterranean World*, ed. Johannes den Heijer et al., Leuven: Peeters, 2014, 1-65, p. 20.

² Արման Հակոբյան, *Արամեագիտության և ասորագիտության ներածություն* [Arman Hakobyan, *Introduction to Aramaic and Syriac Studies*], Yerevan, VMV-print, 2015, p. 540:

³ Արման Հակոբյան, ««Հայկական Գարշունի»-ի՝ ասորատառ հայերենի մասին» [Arman Hakobyan, “On Armenian Garshuni (Armenian Written in Syriac Characters)”], in *Arabic Studies Journal* 7, ed. Sona Tonikyan et al., Yerevan, YSU press, 2014, p. 27:

Until recent years, little attention was paid to garshunography in general and to Armenian Garshuni in particular. Being a part of the world history, it deserves to be studied before we can make assumptions or conclusions.

Among other Armenian Garshuni manuscripts, there are three Syriac-Armenian and Syriac-Arabic-Armenian Garshuni manuscript dictionaries known to us, which are kept in library collections in different parts of the world.⁴ All of them are from the 17th century: MS Harvard Syriac 54, MS Yale Syriac 9, presently in the United States, and MS Syriac 11, which is the focus of this paper.

Ms. Syriac 11, kept in the library of the Franciscan Center for Christian Oriental Studies in Cairo, is a 17th-century Garshuni manuscript dictionary written in the Syriac *Serto* script.⁵ The dictionary is trilingual, containing columns of Syriac, Arabic and Armenian words. There are two types of Garshuni in this manuscript: Arabic Garshuni (Arabic written in the Syriac script) and Armenian Garshuni (Armenian written in the Syriac script). It was written by a scribe from the Mesopotamian city of Gargar (Gerger). The dictionary consists of the topically classified Syriac-Arabic Garshuni glossary of *The Book of the Interpreter* by Eliya of Nisibis (975–1046), to which columns of Armenian words in Garshuni were added. Eliya was an Eastern Syrian scholar and monk, early grammarian and an important figure in Syriac and Christian Arabic literature.

The Armenian words of the manuscript are difficult to understand mostly because they comprise a relatively high number of loanwords from Arabic, Persian and Turkish. The Armenian words in the dictionary

⁴ For more information about other manuscripts containing Armenian Garshuni texts see **Hidemi Takahashi, and Jos J. S. Weitenberg**, “The Shorter Syriac-Armenian Glossary in Ms. Yale Syriac 9, part 1,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 14, no. 1, 2011, pp. 87-144; **Hidemi Takahashi**, “Armenian Garshuni: An Overview of the Known Material,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 17, no. 1, pp. 81-117; “Armenisch-Garschuni (Armenisch in syrischer Schrift),” in *Scripts beyond Borders: A Survey of Allographic Traditions in the Euro-Mediterranean World*, ed. **J. den Heijer et. al.**, L’Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 62, Louvain: Peeters, 2014; “Armenian Garshuni (Armenian in Syriac Script) and Its Users,” in *Syriac in Its Multi-Cultural Context*, ed. **H. Teuleet. al.**, Louvain: Peeters, forthcoming.

⁵ The colophon of the manuscript reads: “This book was completed in the year 1977 of the Greek calendar (1665/6), in the protected city of Amid, by deacon Malkeh, son of the priest Nīqūdīmūs, from town Gargar the rural village of Vank, namely Dayr (Monastery) of Abū Ghālib, and the deacon who wrote this book is a student of the lowly among the high-priests patriarch Shuqr Allah from the city of Mardin from the village of Dayr Heliya, son of Rabbān Nī’ma nicknamed Ibn al-Dabbāgh, who is resting in the abundance of light, glory and honor to the Lord forever, Amen.”

are close to the dialects spoken in the territories of Malatya, Diyarbakir and Urfa.

The Ottoman population register suggests that in the 16th century the area of Malatya and Gargar, from where the scribe of Cairo Syriac 11 comes, had altogether 19450 family households, out of which 17810 were Muslim and 1640 were non-Muslim. It does not specify which groups were part of the non-Muslims, but they were mostly Armenians and presumably also Syrian Christians. Furthermore, there were another 2715 unmarried Muslims and 44 unmarried non-Muslims. Finally, there were 208 Kurdish and Yuruk (Turkmen) nomad households.⁶

Cairo Syriac 11 was copied in Diyarbakır (Amid). Accounts of travellers from the 17th century give the modern scholars the demographic picture of Diyarbakır in 1660, when Cairo Syriac 11 was copied.

Situated on the west bank of the Tigris River, Diyarbakır is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. Because of its strategic position (both commercial and military), Amid had a mixed population, representing nearly every ethnic and religious group in the area. More about the 17th century Diyarbakır is known from Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* ("Book of Travel").⁷ In the past, Diyarbakır had been part of Greater Armenia, and in the 17th century, most of the peasants and craftsmen in the province were Armenians. Although they did not form a majority, there was a substantial Armenian population in the region.⁸ It was a multinational and heterogeneous province, with the Armenians, Kurds, Syrian Christians, Arabs, Turks, Persians, Jewish minorities, both nomads and sedentary, living side by side. Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Kurdish, Armenian, and even the Iranian archaic language *Zaza* that in *Seyahatname* Evliya describes as one of the Kurdish dialects, were spoken there. In the city of Diyarbakır and in other surrounding towns there was a significant number of native Turkish speakers.⁹

In the 1520s, the population of the Diyarbakır province was 415.420.

⁶ "Defter-i Hâkânî dizisi: 387 numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Karaman ve Rûm defteri (937 /1530)", Ankara, *Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü*, 1997, p. 70.

⁷ Evliya Çelebi was an Ottoman Turk who travelled through the territory of the Ottoman Empire and its neighboring lands over a period of forty years and wrote about the places he visited in a travelogue called the *Seyahatname*.

⁸ **Türkmen, İlhan**, "Tahrir Kayıtlarına Göre 16. Yüzyılda Malatya'da Ermeni Nüfusu" ["Armenian Population in Malatia in the 16th Century According To Cadastral Registers"], *Gazi Akademik Bakış* 8, no. 16, 2015.

⁹ **Martin van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten**, *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbakir*, Leiden, Brill, 1988, p. 29.

85% of them were Muslims, 14.5% Christians and 0.2% Jews. In around 1560, the population of the city of Diyarbakır was around 50.000.¹⁰

The creeds were as diverse as the population itself. Most of the Muslims were Kurdish. Hanafi Muslims, Shafi'is, Alevies, Shi'ites were popular denominations in the province. Çelebi did not write much about the Christians and the various Christian groups. He talks about the Armenians, whom he describes as peasants and blacksmiths, the West Syrians and smaller Nestorian communities. Diyarbakır was even the seat of the West Syrian patriarch. There could have been other groups as well, such as Greek Orthodox and Jewish minorities.

According to the account of another 17th century traveler, Simeon Lehac'i (of Poland), all the bakers, butchers, soap and kebab-sellers in Diyarbakır were Armenian, while the silver and goldsmiths were West Syrian.¹¹ He also mentions two Armenian churches, Surb Kirakos and Surb Sargis, both large and glorious, with gates, an episcopate and a school. The Armenians had their separate cemetery. He also talks about one thousand rich and gorgeous Armenian households. There was also a major Syrian Christian church called Maryam, the seat of the patriarch.¹²

To the above mentioned list of languages van Bruinessen and Boeschoten add different Aramaic dialects spoken by the West Syrians and Nestorian Christians, who were considered Arabic speakers or Armenians by Ottoman authors.¹³ Çelebi mentions that most of the Arabic speakers were Syrian merchants; in fact, the West Syrian Christians may have spoken Arabic rather than Aramaic. There is no doubt that there were Syrian Christians in the province, but it is questionable to what extent the Aramaic dialects were spoken by them.

The analysis of the marginal notes of MS Cairo Syriac 11 confirms many of the above discussed realities about the different peoples living in the region and the diverse languages spoken by them. At the same time, it raises the question to what extent Syriac was spoken in the Syrian Christian communities. Analyzing the margins would help the attempt of reconstructing the distribution and the state of the languages in the region.

At first glance, one might suppose that the dictionary created by

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹ Simeon of Poland visited Diyarbakır 42 years earlier than Evliya.

¹² Սիմեոն Լեհացի, Ուղեգրություն, Տարեգրություն եւ Յիշատակարանք [Simeon Lehac'i, *Travel Notes, Chronicle / Annals and Memoirs*], ed. N. Akinean, Vienna, 1936, p. 204-209:

¹³ **Martin van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten**, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

եռալեզու գարշունի բառարան է: Այն պարունակում է եղիա Մծբնացու (975-1046) ասորերեն-արաբերեն հայտնի բառարանը, որին ավելացված է հայերեն բառաշարք, ինչն էլ ձեռագիրը դարձնում է եզակի: Ամբողջ ձեռագիրը գրված է ասորերենի «սերտո» գրատեսակով: Ասորատառ են նաև հայերեն և արաբերեն բառաշարքերը, ձեռագրի հիշատակարանը և եղիա Մծբնացու բառարանի հայտնի ներածությունը: Վերջին երկուսը ասորատառ արաբերեն են:

Ձեռագրի հայերեն հատվածը ամենադժվարն է վերծանելու տեսանկյունից: Նախ այն ներառում է մեծ թվով արաբերենից, պարսկերենից և թուրքերենից փոխառյալ բառեր, և ապա դժվարություններ է ստեղծում ասորատառ գրված լինելու հանգամանքը: Հայերենը հնչյունական առումով ավելի հարուստ լեզու է, քան ասորերենը, ուստի և ասորերենում չկան հայերենի մի շարք հնչյուններին համարժեք տառեր: Այս թնշուկը լուծելու համար գրիչները օգտագործել են միևնույն ասորերեն տառը հայերենի մի քանի՝ երբեմն 3 և ավելի հնչյունի համար՝ տառերի վրա ավելացնելով համապատասխան նշաններ և կետեր:

Ձեռագրի լուսանցագրությունները թույլ են տալիս վերականգնել XVII դարի բազմազգ և բազմալեզու Դիարբեքիրի պատմությունը՝ պատասխան տալով այն հարցին, թե ով և ինչու է սեփական գիր ունեցող հայերենը գրի առվել ասորատառ: Փաստերը ցույց են տալիս, որ ձեռագիրը գրվել է հայախոս ասորական համայնքի կողմից՝ հայերենի միջոցով դասական ասորերեն սովորելու և լեզվին վարժվելու համար, քանի որ այս շրջանում ասորերենը միայն ծիսական լեզու էր:

ЭСТЕР ПЕТРОСЯН

КАИРСКАЯ РУКОПИСЬ 11 (ИЗ СИРИЙСКОЙ КОЛЛЕКЦИИ) КАК КЛЮЧ К ПОНИМАНИЮ СОЦИАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНОЙ СРЕДЫ ДИАРБЕКИРА СЕМНАДЦАТОГО ВЕКА

Ключевые слова: армянский гаршуни, сирийские христиане, армяноязычные общины, монастырь Мор Абхай, Илия Нисивийский, Гергер, Диарбекир.

Каирская рукопись (№ 11 из коллекции сирийских рукописей Францисканского Центра Христианского Востоковедения) – трехязычный словарь, написанный в XVII веке сирийским письмом “серто”. Словарь содержит столбцы сирийских, арабских и армянских слов и был сформирован на основе известного сиро-арабского словаря Илии Нисибинского (род. в 975 г.), к которому добавлены столбцы с армянскими словами. В рукописи находим два типа гаршуни: арабский гаршуни (арабский текст, писанный сирийским пись-

мом) и армянский гаршуни (армянский текст, писанный сирийским письмом).

Армянская часть рукописи наиболее трудна для расшифровки, поскольку включает в себя большое количество слов, заимствованных из арабского, персидского и турецкого. Маргиналии помогают воссоздать контекст, в котором армянский язык был представлен сирийском письмом, а не армянским алфавитом. Факты свидетельствуют, что рукопись была написана для армяноязычной сирийской общины с целью обучения сирийскому языку с помощью армянского, так как в этот период сирийский был лишь языком литургии.

Моё исследование – лишь первый шаг на пути к пониманию и выявлению реальной картины той пестрой среды, в которой создавалась рукопись. Существует еще много неисследованных рукописей, писанных армянским гаршуни. Для воссоздания реальной картины необходимо собрать и исследовать все имеющиеся материалы.