

The Holy Mother of God Armenian Church in Famagusta

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In the spring of 1974, shortly before the events that resulted in the division of the island, my wife and I were able to visit and quickly photograph the Armenian Church known as St Mary in Famagusta (Plate 3). A family we assumed was Turkish inhabited the church. The parents were at work and the children, a boy and girl who were both very young adolescents, let us enter and examine the interior (Figure 8.1). The slides and photographs were taken without extra lighting or a tripod. Upon our return to Lebanon, someone at the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias, under whose jurisdiction the diocese of Cyprus falls, informed us that the family was in fact probably Armenian. This I could not verify. I was unable to devote time to the study of the church and the medieval frescoes that covered its walls until two years later when I presented a paper on it to the XVth International Byzantine Congress in Athens.¹ A second paper followed some years later at the 25th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies at the University of Birmingham.² Neither paper was published, and the texts or drafts of them appear to have been lost. It is only lately through conferences in Montpellier and Antelias that my interest in this material has been reawakened thanks to Michael Walsh, Nicolas Coureas and Brunehilde Imhaus. More recent work on Famagusta and on the Armenian Church makes me doubt whether my documentation, once interesting because of the timing of our visit, is of much scientific importance. Nevertheless, it seems to me that presenting some of this material, augmented by a survey of the sources and literature in Armenian on the church, might in some small way contribute to the interest in preserving and restoring this monument along with others in Famagusta and elsewhere in Cyprus.

There are no specific records relating to the circumstances or the date of the church's construction in Armenian sources. Latin documents, however, are quite explicit. According to a papal bull of 1311, the church's construction

¹ Athens, 5–11 September 1976: 'The Frescoes of the Armenian Church in Famagusta, Cyprus: Preliminary Report'.

² Birmingham, 25–28 March 1991: 'Armenian Art in Cyprus in the 14th Century'.

Fig. 8.1
 Armenian
 Church with
 residents in 1974
 (photograph:
 Dickran
 Kouymjian)



had recently started,³ and a further papal letter indicates that it had been completed by 1317.⁴ The stone church lacks inscriptions of any sort. The principal western authors, Camille Enlart, George Jeffery, Jean-Bernard de Vaivre and Philippe Plagnieux,⁵ concur that the church of St Mary is datable to the fourteenth century, some like Enlart placing it late in the century.

³ *Regestum Clementis V*, ed. cura et studio monachorum Ordinis S. Benedicti, 8 vols (Rome, 1885–92), no. 7209 (10 August 1311): ‘... in civitate Famagustane ad honorem ipsius Virginis quandam ecclesiam vocatam beate Marie de Vert, de licentia venerabilis fratris nostri episcopi Famagustane, in qua presbyteri Armeni habentur inibi Domino servientes, de novo edificare inceperit’. Quoted in part in P. Plagnieux and T. Soulard, ‘Famagouste. L’Église des Arméniens (Sainte-Marie-de-Vert)’, in J.-B. de Vaivre and P. Plagnieux, *L’Art Gothique en Chypre* (Paris, 2006), 258, n. 6, cf p. 260 for the dates.

⁴ *Lettre communes de Jean XXII*, ed. G. Mollat, 16 vols (Paris, 1904–47), no. 6022 (13 December 1317): ‘Episcopo et capitulo Famagustan mandatur ut de tertia parte reddituum ecclesie Famagustane, juxta antiquam consuetudinem regni Cypri pauperibus erogari solita, 200 argenti bisantios annis singulis usque ad quinquennium clericis pauperibus Armenis commorantibus in ecclesia S. M. Viridis Famagustan assignari faciant.’ Quoted by Plagnieux and Soulard, ‘Famagouste’, p. 258, n. 7. This is confirmed in a letter of 13 April 1318. Mollat, no. 6958; Plagnieux and Soulard, p. 258, n. 8. ‘Episcopo et capitulo Famagustan mandatur ut de tertia parte reddituum ecclesie Famagustane, juxta antiquam consuetudinem regni Cypri pauperibus erogari solita, 200 argenti bisantios anniis singulis usque ad quinquennium clericis pauperibus Armenis commorantibus in ecclesia S. M. Viridis Famamagustan assignari faciant.’

⁵ C. Enlart, *L’art gothique et la Renaissance en Chypre*, 2 vols (Paris, 1899); English trans. by D. Hunt, *Gothic Art and the Renaissance in Cyprus* (London, 1987), 286–8; G. Jeffery, *A Description of the Historic Monuments of Cyprus: Studies in the Archaeology and Architecture of the Island* (Nicosia, 1918, repr. London, 1983), 143; Plagnieux and Soulard, *op. cit.*, pp. 257–60.

The major Armenian studies by Vahan Kurkjian, Arshak Alpayachian, Babgén Gulesserian, Ghevond Ch'épéyan,⁶ while providing primary source references from the first quarter of the fourteenth century, postulate an earlier foundation going back in some cases to the late twelfth century, during the time of Nersés of Lambron (1153–98).

Armenians have been in Cyprus since early Byzantine times. Several Byzantine governors of the island were of Armenian origin, but relations between Armenians and Cyprus became close during the period of the Crusades, which corresponds to the establishment of an Armenian presence, and eventually in 1198 a kingdom, in Cilicia. In the latter twelfth century there was already a prelate, a certain T'adéos, bishop of Cyprus, who signed a declaration of faith in 1179 prepared by Catholicos Grigor IV (1173–93) at the request of Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143–80).⁷ Later, in 1307, Catholicos Grigor VII convoked a church council in Sis and among those present was the Prelate of Cyprus, Bishop Nikoghayos.⁸ In the early fourteenth century the Cilician Armenian nobility was very active in Cyprus. In 1308 after the renovation by Henry II of a convent attached to the Latin church of Notre Dame de Tyr in Nicosia, Princess Euphemia (Armenian, Fimi), daughter of the Armenian king Het'um I, was appointed Mother Superior.⁹ Earlier in 1305 her cousin Het'um the historian, known as Hayton in the Latin sources, author of the famous *Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient*, and himself the son of Oshin, brother of King Het'um I, came to Cyprus. He was back in Cyprus in 1308 after a sojourn in Europe.¹⁰

It is in this context that we first hear of the Armenian Church in Famagusta of the Holy Mother of God, in Armenian, *Surb Astuvacacin*, a literal translation of Theotokos. Our information comes entirely from colophons of Armenian manuscripts copied in Cyprus. The earliest reference to such a church is the colophon of a Gospel manuscript dated 1280: 'I, Petros of Cilicia, came to ... the island of Cyprus, at [the church] of the Holy Mother of God (*i dur'n Srubhoy Astuacacin*) ... [and] completed the copying of these Gospels.'¹¹ Although no locality on the island is mentioned the reference is most probably to Famagusta.

⁶ Bakuran (Vahan M. K'iwrc'hian/Kurkjian), *Kipros kghzin (The Island of Cyprus)* (Nicosia, 1903), 51; A. Alpayachian, 'Kipros kghzin (Ir ants'ealn u hnerkan)' ('The Island of Cyprus (Its Past and Present)'), *T'eodik Yearbook* (1927), 192–239; BAK (Babgen Archbishop Kiwleserian/Gulesserian), *Hay Kiprose (Armenian Cyprus)* (Antelias, 1936), 46, 53, 71; Bishop Ghevond (Ch'épéyan), *Yishadakaran kiprahay gaghut'i (Memorial on the Cypriot-Armenian Community)* (Antelias, 1955), 2.

⁷ M. Ch'amch'ian, *Hayots' patmutiwn (Armenian History)*, vol. 3 (Venice, 1786), 132: 'T'adéos epis. Kiprosi'. See also Gulesserian, *Armenian Cyprus*, p. 53.

⁸ Bishop Ghevond, *Cypriot-Armenian Community*, p. 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ But in the same year he was forced to return to Cilician Armenia when his son-in-law, Oshin, became king. See A. Kapoïan-Kouymjian, *L'Égypte vue par des Arméniens (XIe–XVIIe siècle)* (Paris, 1988), 55–6.

¹¹ New Julfa, Armenian Prelacy, manuscript no. 33, fo. 335. See also A. Mat'evosyan, *Hayeren jer'agreri hishatakaraner. XIII dar (Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts: Thirteenth Century)* (Erevan, 1984), no. 408, p. 510.

The only other church that might have been so designated by the Armenians was that of Notre Dame de Tyr in Nicosia, but that was a Latin church despite such converts as the later Armenian head of the convent, Euphemia. The church was only given to the Armenians shortly after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1570. Slightly later, in 1287, the scribe Khach'atur, along with other scribes, copied another Gospel book in Cyprus under the protection of SS Var'var'a and Sargis the General, again without mentioning a specific locality.¹²

The first direct reference to Famagusta is from 1305 in a colophon that Jacobus Dashian found in a codex of 1773, a collation of Old Testament manuscripts. It was in the collection of the Mekhitarist fathers of Vienna and copied an older colophon from a manuscript in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.¹³ Unfortunately, a search through the Jerusalem catalogue has failed to find the precise manuscript.¹⁴ The colophon is by Yohannés the scribe: in 1305 '... at Maghuayn of Cyprus, ... remember Yohannés the writer'. Bishop Ghevond corrects the reading to Maghu[s]ayn, that is to say Maghusa/Famagusta. In 1306 and again in 1308, Levon the priest copied two psalters in Cyprus, both of which are now in the Jerusalem collection; the first at a village called Cips/Djips (today Kornokipos/Kornodjipos) under the protection of the archangels, Mikayel and Gabriel, and the second at Maghusa, but without a reference to the church of St Mary.¹⁵ Colophons of 1308 and 1309 by Yohannés with Step'anos the priest as patron in an Old Testament manuscript, mention Maghusa but again without reference to the church of the Holy Mother of God.¹⁶

The earliest reference to both Famagusta/Maghusa and the church of the Holy Mother of God is in a manuscript containing the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of St John copied by a well-known scribe who was important in Cilician royal circles, the priest Step'annos Goynerits'ants' in 1310–12. 'Written in 1310 ... with the intercession of the Holy Mother of God'; and further along, 'written by Step'annos Goynerits'ants' for Lady Alic (Alice), wife of the seneschal of Cyprus ... on 29 December 1312 on the Island of Cyprus at Maghusa under the protection of the Holy Mother of God.'¹⁷

¹² Erevan, Matenadaran (henceforth M), ms 6845, fo. 280, cf. Mat'evosyan, *Colophons. Thirteenth Century*, no. 495, pp. 609–10. Perhaps Famagusta as suggested by Gulesserian, *Armenian Cyprus*, p. 53.

¹³ J. Dashian, *Catálogo den armenischen handschriften in der Mechitaristen-bibliothek zu Wien* (in Armenian with German title and résumé) (Vienna, 1895), no. 244, p. 632. See also Bishop Ghevond, *Cypriot-Armenian Community*, p. 56.

¹⁴ N. Bogharian, *Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts*, 11 vols., in Armenian with English title, (Jerusalem, 1966–91). It was not included in L. Khach'ikyan, *XIV dari Hayeren jer'agreri hishatakaraner* (*Fourteenth-Century Armenian Manuscript Colophons*) (Erevan, 1950).

¹⁵ J1033, fo. 685 and J1926, fo. 648, Bogharian, *Jerusalem Catalogue*, 4: 45 ff. and 6: 22. The patron of the later manuscript was a certain T'oros the priest. (J = the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem manuscript collection.)

¹⁶ J1926, fos 268v and 426v, Bogharian, *Catalogue*, 6: 417.

¹⁷ The original manuscript seems not to have survived. An eighteenth-century Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles copies the earlier colophon of 1310. Bogharian, *Catalogue*, 3: no. 700, p. 145. Khach'ikyan, *Fourteenth Century Colophons*, no. 92, pp. 68–9,

By this date, according to the papal bull of 1311, the church was probably under construction. Shortly afterwards in 1314, Step'annos copied another manuscript, a collection of religious texts, again for Alic, in Maghusa, Cyprus, under the protection of the Holy Mother of God and St John the Evangelist.¹⁸

Only in a colophon of 1317 do we read for the first time in Armenian sources that the Holy Mother of God was a monastery and that it was called Kanch'uor, pronounced Kanch'vor, translated in Latin as green.¹⁹ As we saw above (notes 3–4) in the Latin documents, the church, referred to as 'Marie de Vert', was begun in 1311 and completed in this year 1317. The original is a colophon in a manuscript of the *Commentary on Chronology and the Liturgy* by Khosrov Anjevats'i and Nersés Lambronats'i by the scribe (also the patron and editor), Yovhanés Vardapet; it was recopied in two later manuscripts. The part of the colophon that relates to the Famagusta church is as follows: 'This book was written by the insignificant sinner Yohanés, servant of the word of God, in the year of the Armenian race 766 [=1317] on the Island of Cyprus, at the church (*tachar*) of the Mother of God (*Astucoy mor*), Theotokos (*Astuacacnin*), which is a monastery (*vank'*), and is called Kanch'uor (Kanch'vor) in this city Famagusta (*Maghusa*).'²⁰

This is the first and only time, according to my records, that the Holy Mother of God in Famagusta is referred to as a monastery and is said to be called Kanch'vor, rendered in the secondary literature as 'Green'. The word *kanch'vor* is otherwise lexically unattested, but it is assumed that it is derived somehow from *kanach'*, the colour green, rather than *kanch'*, a cry, scream or lament. Yet if an Armenian wanted to say green, one would expect *kanach'avor* or the grammatically incorrect *kanch'avor*. This is a very rare appellation for the Virgin, perhaps referring to fertility of fields or a painting or fresco with a green background or showing Mary dressed in green. The only medieval church with such a name is St Mary the Green in Ascalon, itself associated

extracted from a published collection from Gherla in Transylvania, presents a slightly different version.

¹⁸ J265, fo. 300v, Bogharian, *Catalogue*, 2: 61. On Step'annos Goynerits'ants' and his relationship to the royalty of Cilician Armenia and Cyprus see H. Achar'ian, *Hayots'anjanunneri par'aran* (*Armenian First Name Dictionary*), vol. 4 (Erevan, 1948), 635–6.

¹⁹ Gulesserian suggests that the term was already in use in 1307, even perhaps in 1179: 'It seems to us that the residence of Bishop T'adeós of Cyprus who participated in the Council of Hromkla in 1179 was Kanch'avor as was that of Bishop Nikoghayos who participated in the Council of Sis in 1307', *Hay Kipros*, p. 53. But as far as I can tell, this is projecting back from the colophon of 1317; in the acts of the Council of 1179 no specific place in Cyprus is mentioned.

²⁰ J1142, fo. 664, Bogharian, *Catalogue*, vol. 4, p. 226 (re-copied at St. James in Jerusalem in a manuscript of the *Commentary on the Liturgy* by Anjevats'i in 1840. J2254, fo. 100; Bogharian, *Catalogue*, 7: 349). Khach'ikyan, *Fourteenth Century Colophons*, no. 175, p. 135, takes his information from M6273, vol. 1 of *Nshkhark'patmut'ean Hayots'* (*Fragments of the History of the Armenians*) by Ghevond P'irghalémian. The emendations by Khach'ikyan must be ignored and P'irghalémian incorrectly copied the word Kanch'uor as Kanch'ut.

with the early crusaders.²¹ Perhaps another interpretation would be the monastery of the weeping or lamenting Virgin, from Armenian *kanch'*, cry, scream, shriek.

I know of no further textual references to the Famagusta church until modern times, though I have collected some 16 colophonic citations from Armenian manuscripts copied in Cyprus between 1318 and 1679. Seven of these refer to Levk'osia (variant spellings: Levk'usieay, Lôk'oshia, Lôk'ôshay, Lôk'och'a, Lôk'ashé) and one to Nicosia (1679); those of the seventeenth century (six) consistently refer to the church of the Holy Mother of God in Levk'oia/Nicosia.

I think it reasonable to suggest that after the first quarter of the fourteenth century the church was in decline and perhaps soon neglected. It was built sometime from the late thirteenth century to the first quarter of the fourteenth century; its frescoes must date from that latter period. It is curious that there are no references in Armenian sources to the church in the mid-fourteenth century or immediately after, when we are told by James of Verona that in 1335 there was an influx of some 1500 Armenian refugees from Cilicia.²² In any case, when these refugees arrived in Famagusta there was an Armenian monastery, clearly attested 18 years earlier.

The modern history of St Mary suggests it was not used in the nineteenth century. In 1907 the holes in the church's walls were repaired and the main doorway was fitted with a strong gate;²³ this work was intended to protect the wall paintings inside as much as possible.²⁴ Babgen Gulesserian reports in 1936 that 30 years earlier, in 1906, Bishop Petros (later catholicos) of the Cilician Catholicosate upon visiting the church made a formal request to the government for the restoration of the church and its return to the Armenians. He pursued this request upon his return to Sis (today Kozan), the Holy See. The church was restored and eventually, in a letter dated 20 January 1936, given over to the Armenians for 90 years with an annual charge of five pounds sterling.²⁵ From the 1940s onwards an itinerant priest administered to the Armenian faithful in Limassol and Famagusta.²⁶ There was a school in Famagusta in the house where the teacher lived, with 17 students in 1955.²⁷ Church services were sometimes held there, the church being too far during

²¹ 'The small church, which is built against the eastern wall of Ascalon near the Gate of Jerusalem, is thought to be St Mary the Green (Maria Viridis). It remounts to the Byzantine era, but was rebuilt anew by the Crusaders.' M. Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099*, trans. E. Broido (Cambridge, 1997). For an alternative interpretation see D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: a Corpus* (Cambridge, 1993–2009), 1: 63–4.

²² C.B. Cobham, ed. and trans., *Excerpta Cyprica* (Cambridge, 1908; repr. 1969), 17.

²³ Jeffery, *Description*, p. 144.

²⁴ R. Gunnis, *Historic Cyprus* (London, 1936), 40.

²⁵ Gulesserian, *Armenian Cyprus*, pp. 73–4. He had visited the church in 1934.

²⁶ Alexander-Michael Hadjilyra suggests it would probably have been Fr Khoren Kouligian.

²⁷ Bishop Ghevond, *Cypriot-Armenian Community*, pp. 86–7.

inclement weather. The Armenian community in Cyprus in 1955 numbered over 4,000.²⁸ His Holiness Karekin I Hovsepian, catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, made pastoral visits to Cyprus, including Famagusta, in 1946, 1947 and 1948.²⁹

The Frescoes of the Church of the Holy Mother of God³⁰

Architecturally Camille Enlart adequately and carefully described the church of St Mary. More recently Plagneux and Soulard, as well as Langdale and Walsh, have repeated and augmented this information.³¹ The stone church is rectangular, resembling the simple hall church or mono-nave popular in Armenia from the fifth-century conversion to Christianity until late medieval times, although the great majority of Armenian churches including such single nave affairs were domed.

All the walls of the church were frescoed, an unusual rather than usual practice. Many Armenian churches dateable to the fifth or sixth centuries were decorated with frescoes, but these, though often spectacular, represent a small minority compared to the thousands without wall paintings. Among those with cycles of paintings from the life of Christ are the tenth century churches of the Holy Cross on the island of Aght'amar³² and SS Peter and Paul at Tat'ev. The Church of St Gregory built at Ani under the patronage of the rich merchant Tigran Honents' in 1215 has a large fresco cycle of the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity, but also liturgical scenes in the now exposed narthex. Finally, there is an important and large series of frescoes in a Byzantine-Georgian style in the northern church of Ahlata in Lori. However, iconographic parallels to the church in Famagusta must be sought primarily in miniature cycles of the abundant Armenian Gospel manuscripts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and earlier.

²⁸ According to the registration census of October 1956 there were 4,549 Armenians in Cyprus; I would like to thank Alexander Hadjilyra for this information.

²⁹ Bishop Ghevond, *Cypriot-Armenian Community, passim*. Today (2007–2008) there are approximately 2,500 Armenians living in Cyprus, in addition to some 1,000 non-Cypriot Armenians working on the island.

³⁰ Since this chapter was written the very interesting iconographic study and contextualization of the Armenian frescoes within the artistic tradition of Cyprus was published by Michele Bacci, 'The Armenian Church in Famagusta and Its Mural Decoration: Some Iconographic Remarks', *Hask hayagitakan taregirk'*, vol. XI (2007–2008, published 2009), pp. 489–508.

³¹ Enlart, *L'art gothique*, pp. 366–8; Plagneux and Soulard, 'Famagouste', pp. 257–60; A. Langdale and M.J.K. Walsh, 'The Architecture, Conservation History, and Future of the Armenian Church of Famagusta, Cyprus', *Chronos* (2009), pp. 7–40.

³² N. Thierry, 'Les peintures de l'Eglise de la Sainte-Croix d'Aghtamar (915–921)', *The Second International Symposium on Armenian Art, Erevan, 1978*, vol. 3 (Erevan, 1981), 182–90.

Since 1974 much of the lower register of the frescoes in St Mary Church have been covered with whitewash.³³ Below is a listing of the scenes represented in the frescoes and details about them from traditional sources. Camille Enlart was the first to describe them at the end of the nineteenth century, but at times the positioning of the scenes is confused. G. Jeffery made a summary description of the frescoes commenting on what was still visible in his time (1918).³⁴ Bishop Babgen Gulesserian lamented the deterioration of the frescoes, covered with graffiti in many languages, including Armenian (Plate 5); and noted that the Armenian inscriptions were essentially unreadable, but saw the words 'St. Barbara (?), this is Abka(r) (*Surb [Var'var'é?], Abka(r)in é'*).³⁵ Monica Bardswell's unpublished description of 1937 is more systematic and at times furnishes better details.

East Wall and Apse

The dome of the apse once had a *Christ in Majesty*, according to Bardswell 'probably a Majesty', although since the church is dedicated to the Mother of God, it may well have been the Virgin. Nothing was discernable in 1974. On the south side of the vault of the apse there was, so Enlart recorded, a kneeling figure with a white robe, probably a donor, with a large coat of arms above to the left. Although both Enlart and Jeffery referred to this figure, in Bardswell's time the head was missing; in 1974 nothing discernable appears on my photos, and Langdale and Walsh report nothing but bare stones at the spot. Below Enlart saw the Apostles seated with Armenian inscriptions and Bardswell referred to them as nimbed on a dark blue background; under them Enlart identified full length standing figures as the patriarchs of the Eastern church under arches, which Bardswell called canopies and Jeffery, niches. In 1934 Gulesserian was able to make the identifying Armenian inscriptions for the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew.³⁶ Enlart saw a similar, but larger, figure on the vertical pilaster of the apse to the north. According to the latter only two of these were visible: a patriarch or ecclesiastic on the left/north side and a figure with a red cloak blessing, with a small kneeling donor to the right. On the 1974 photo of the apse, there is only the slightest glimmer of what appears as a row of seated figures just above the string course that divides the vault from the lower cylindrical back of the altar area.

³³ Reported by Langdale and Walsh, 'Armenian Church of Famagusta', pp. 7–40.

³⁴ Jeffery, *Description*, pp. 143–4.

³⁵ Gulesserian, *Armenian Cyprus*, p. 73.

³⁶ 'T'adéos and Bart'oghemeós', *ibid.* These two are always included among the 12 in Armenian artistic and literary traditions, see Dickran Kouymjian, 'Identifying the Apostles in Armenian Narrative Miniatures', *From Byzantium to Iran: Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, Jean-Pierre Mahé and Robert W. Thomson (eds) (Atlanta: 1997), 453–74.

South Wall

There are two subjects, one on each side of the central doorway. Enlart spoke of a large figure of St John the Baptist with 16 associated scenes framing it and the Death of the Virgin. Mrs Bardswell (see Appendix) is more precise, though she was unable to determine the number of scenes from the St John's life: 'Very large figure of St John the Baptist surrounded by square compartments arranged perpendicularly on either side, containing ? [sic] scenes from his life (all perished) within yellow frame. To left and to right, a strip of ornament containing shields of arms, one of them bearing a mitre and crosier on white shield.' Additionally, she describes in some detail a large Dormition of the Virgin on the east end of the south wall: 'Death of Virgin, she lies on a couch, above is the figure of Our Lord who receives her soul, as a swaddled infant. Our Lord in a white mandorla, and around Him a red glory filled with angels who bear candlesticks, censers, etc. All painted in red and white. Below, left and right Apostles weeping. Above to the right, there are angels in adoration on a green background.' Langdale and Walsh report that St John is covered by whitewash, which is probably the case with the Dormition as well.

A photo of 1974 shows 12 rectangles placed vertically, six on each side of the portrait of the standing St John, who has a golden halo and long curled hair falling to the right. His bare right arm, bent at the elbow, holds an object at his breast. At first glance it looks like a hand cross, but closer examination shows it as a knife like object. His left shoulder is covered with his red-brown garment and in his hand he holds an object that looks very much like a serpent winding down to ankle level (Plate 5). None of the 12 panels reveals any clear sense of what scene was originally depicted. The left hand band of heraldic emblems is totally effaced; the right band includes two shields, one with perhaps a spear and the lower one with what might be an eagle. Below it is graffiti: 'L. Bon 1898.' Another example of graffiti on the saint's lower garment has the date 1828. To the upper right, above the figure's head the reading of Armenian SB, S[ur]b, saint, is possible. No trace of the Dormition was seen or photographed.

West Wall

Enlart identified the two standing figures to the north or right of the door as the Virgin and St Helena. Bardswell offers more details: 'To the north of door, two figures of saints, under arched ornamental canopies, green backgrounds. On the left a female saint in cloak, who holds a head of our Lord within a medallion. Inscription on the background in Armenian. On right, a royal personage, nimbed, crowned, wearing much jewellery. Armenian inscription.' In 1974 the figures were still visible. Individual Armenian letters can be made out here and there on each of the two panels, but there are not enough letters to offer the names of the two female figures. Though Bardswell

did not offer names for the saints, Enlart was able to read or have read the Armenian inscriptions and one must assume the identifications are correct. The figure represented as St Helena has a white kerchief attached to the right side of her waist and her crown is very pointed. The other figure has all the characteristics of the Virgin, but the head or figure in a halo itself within a large circle seemingly held at her chest is difficult to visually decipher. Is it intended to be the Virgin of Wisdom, with the Christ Child in a round mandorla of light, a theme popular in early Christian but also Armenian art?³⁷

To the left of the door is a large framed, nearly square portrait of St George killing the dragon (see Figure 12.9). The horse is galloping to the left with St George, whose cape flows right and is turned frontally while he is looking back and stabbing the serpent's head under the hind feet of his mount with his long spear. He has a shield attached to his left upper arm. The frame is yellow, the background grey, the horse red and the dragon green. In the 1974 photographs the colours are faded but the image is still visible even though much diminished. Bardswell has left a photograph of the fresco as it was in 1937, as well as a copy that she executed.³⁸ It has completely disappeared today.

North Wall

The Life of Christ cycle, including the Passion, is painted on the north wall. The scenes are in two parallel bands, the subjects more or less in chronological order, but with the lower band starting with a large and full Nativity including the washing of the infant below the main scene, followed rather than preceded by the Annunciation in the centre in a smaller panel sandwiched between the door and a window, and followed by the Baptism. To the right of this on the same level is an ogival niche, in the spandrels of which is crowded the naked torso of Christ with His arms crossed on His chest. The upper band continues the cycle with the Flagellation to the left followed by Christ before Pilate. An arched window with the parallel vertical rows of circular openings interrupts the series. The paintings continue with the Crucifixion, the Deposition or Descent from the Cross, and the Entombment, which abuts the east wall.

Camille Enlart simply lists the scenes, discussing only the Nativity in detail; Mrs Bardswell is more detailed on this important north wall (see Figure 12.8). Following the chronological order of Christological cycle, the Annunciation in 1974 was virtually unidentifiable with most of the paint in the middle of the scene dropped off. But in 2007 the outlines in cobalt blue of the Virgin's head

³⁷ The enthroned Virgin and Child in the Presentation of the Magi, Etchmiadzin Gospels, final miniatures, c. 600, fo. 229, N. Kotanjian, *The Etchmiadzin Gospels* (Erevan, 2000: text in Armenian, Russian, English), 64; Bible Syriac, BnF, ms. Syr. 341, see S. Der Nersessian, 'Le peinture arménienne au VIIe siècle et les miniatures de l'Évangile d'Etchmiadzin', reprinted in S. Der Nersessian, *Byzantine and Armenian Studies* (Lisbon, 1973), 1: 529, 2, fig. 277.

³⁸ These were communicated to me from the Courtauld Institute at the same time as her typed notes.

are still apparent in a detailed close-up.³⁹ Both Enlart and Bardswell found strong affinities with Italian style paintings, the latter adding that the plaster was tinted buff with green backgrounds. Unfortunately, her photographs of the north wall lack this section, but she describes the Annunciation as 'very fragmentary. To left St Gabriel. To right the Blessed Virgin Mary. Centre, pot of lilies. (Vase with two handles).' The Nativity, the first scene on the lowest register at the west, is the largest and iconographically the most complete scene among the frescoes. The Virgin is reclining to the left, next to and parallel to the manger in the form of a sarcophagus-like rectangle (Figure 8.2). Above to each side are five angels, the first one on the right extending a hand toward the Child, who lies in swaddling clothes and has a halo. To the left, at the height of Mary's head, are the three magi drawn in miniature size. Enlart pointed out that the Virgin's name was inscribed in Armenian on her purple robe, that the head of the ox and the ass are visible next to the manger, and that there are 13 angels. In Bardswell's photograph only nine angel heads and ten halos can be counted; the animals have disappeared though perhaps their hooves or their ears or horns are apparent. In 1974 the angels on the right have almost faded away, with the first angel being the clearest; the Virgin and Jesus are still easy to identify though diminished. The magi are quite clear, in file with hands extended and bearing gifts towards the Mother and Child. Their costumes and their peculiar hats, like little folded cards pinned at the top of their hair, are reminiscent of those in Cilician Armenian Nativity miniatures from the second half of the thirteenth century.⁴⁰ Below as an extension of the episode is pictured the washing of the child by midwives, a popular iconographic element in the same Cilician manuscript illustrations. Enlart observed two women, as did Bardswell, but her photograph lacks them. In 1974 the one on the left was quite clear seemingly holding the child, while in the centre is a large rectangular basin with a tablet on which is a spouted urn for water and a basin. The woman on the right is faded away and partly fallen off. By 2007 virtually all of the Nativity had disappeared or was whitewashed over.⁴¹

The Baptism is to the right of the door and on the same level as the Nativity. Bardswell's photographs lack this scene, but her description traces most of the elements and offers some idea of the colour.⁴² Our 1974 photograph in black and white shows the elements rather clearly: John the Baptist to the left, Christ

³⁹ Photograph by Wilbert 'Skip' Norman. See Langdale and Walsh, 'Armenian Church of Famagusta', fig. 17.

⁴⁰ T'oros Roslin painted the scene many times, but usually with the Magi entering from the right, while others had them as in the fresco on the left. See S. Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, 2 vols (Washington, 1993), 2: figs 183-4, 212-13, 378-80.

⁴¹ Photograph by Wilbert 'Skip' Norman. Langdale and Walsh, 'Armenian Church of Famagusta', fig. 10.

⁴² Bardswell's description: 'Green background. To left St. John ... stands on the bank ... and pours water on head of Christ, who stands ... naked, water up to middle (not heaped up water). To right two angels stand on the bank. Of most of this subject only the under-painting remains; the outline sketched in red.'

Fig. 8.2 Detail from *Nativity* in 1974 (photograph: Dickran Kouymjian)



naked with halo standing in the Jordan, with a ray of light perpendicularly descending from the orb of heaven and with the dove evident. To the right two angels are holding their garments. The lower parts are already deteriorated. There is only a vague sense of the garments flowing down on each side. The photos taken by Wilbert Norman in 2007 seem to show clearly and in good colour the head of the furthest angel and the feet of John with graffiti in various languages carved over it.⁴³

The series then moves to another band devoted to the Passion except for the Annunciation, in the middle directly above the north entry and under the window. Enlart saw above the doorway, in or above the tympanum, Christ with extended arms.⁴⁴ There was no trace of such a fresco in 1974; Bardswell does not speak of it but moves directly to the Annunciation. Perhaps Enlart confused it with the *Pieta* above the piscine arch at the eastern extremity of the north wall next to the Baptism. In my 1974 photograph of the top of the doorway and in the photograph of 2007 there simply seems to be no room for a painting.⁴⁵

The five scenes in the top band (excluding the Annunciation) according to Enlart are the Flagellation, Christ Bearing the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Descent from the Cross, and the Entombment, but he offers no details.⁴⁶ Bardswell's account is more substantial. She hesitatingly thought the second scene was Christ before Pilate. Here is the section from her notes:

⁴³ Langdale and Walsh, 'Armenian Church of Famagusta', figs. 18–19.

⁴⁴ Enlart, p. 367: '*Dessus du portail nord*. Tympan, buste du Christ, les bras étendus'.

⁴⁵ Langdale and Walsh, 'Armenian Church of Famagusta', fig. 10.

⁴⁶ Jeffery, *Description*, p. 144, sees the same 'Carrying of the Cross' after the Flagellation rather than Christ before Pilate.

(A) Series more Italian in style than the rest of the paintings. Plaster tinted buff, green backgrounds.

(1) The Scourging. Christ in centre, bound to pillar. An executioner to the right and to left with whip of knotted thongs. A building top left.

(2) ? Christ before Pilate. Mostly, perished. Christ centre left faces right, hands bound before Him. Right part of picture missing.

(3) Crucifixion. Skull of Adam under the cross. Left, Virgin fainting in the arms of the two Marias, to right, St John. All the upper part gone.

(4) ? Deposition (very faint). Several figures to right.

(5) Entombment, or Pieta. Several figures carry the body of Christ wrapped in winding sheet and laid across the lap of the Virgin. A female figure stands behind.

In 1974 as well as in 2007 (Langdale and Walsh, fig. 11) many of the frescoes were still visible, probably protected through being high up on the wall. The Flagellation is quite clear with Christ facing right in three quarter profile, hands tied to the pillar and feet apart as though walking to the right (Plate 16). In the upper left a building with a pitched roof is evident, but those scourging Christ are not easily visible (even on the left, very clear in Bardswell's photo), in part because a large part of the upper right of the panel shows either the naked wall or the plaster repair near a square recess or window. A single very faint figure of the following episode did not allow any help in determining the scene.

The cross of the Crucifixion was still apparent in the 1974 photographs as was the silhouette of St John and very vaguely a mass, which could represent the fainted Virgin. Of the Descent from the Cross, again a faint trace of the cross is visible with a figure on the right perhaps removing a nail. The last of the cycle, the Entombment, is the best preserved today as it was in 1974. Christ in his burial shroud is being moved toward the right by two figures (perhaps Joseph of Arimathea in the foreground) with another figure close by on the rear part of the body, which seems to be lying or passing over the Virgin, since her bended knees are very clear. To the extreme right is a third male figure, with bare legs seemingly guiding the corpse into the tomb. Such a representation of the burial is known in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Armenian manuscripts.⁴⁷ In the case of the Lectionary of Het'um, it is combined with the removal from the cross as in the fresco.

There remains one more scene found at the east end of the lower band above the arch of the piscine (the basin used to dispose of water from various liturgical rites). Bardswell's photograph is very clear, showing Christ naked from the waist up, perhaps in the tomb, with his hands crossed on his waist. The

⁴⁷ Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, fig. 473, Mat. 979, Lectionary of Het'um II, 1286, fo. 194; fig. 472, Mat. 7651, Gospels of the seven painters, late thirteenth century to 1320, fo. 81.

figure was still clear in 1974, but it was hard to make out the two instruments of the passion Bardswell had seen. The image of the 'Pity' as Bardswell calls it or in the case of Enlart, 'Christ ressuscitant' is a symbol of the Resurrection appearing in the fourteenth century in western art, sometimes with the Holy Women near the body or as a *Pieta*. It is essentially foreign to the Armenian tradition. This essentially completes the cycle but it was probably added after the original cycle; the painting looks fresher in the earlier photos. Technically, the cycle continues on the south wall with the Dormition of the Virgin, but that too is a late subject in Armenian iconography essentially borrowed from the Byzantine or Western tradition.

The history of the Life of Christ cycle in Armenian painting is complex.⁴⁸ In the early Christian period the first such cycles contained the Annunciation, the Nativity and ended with the Baptism. By the eleventh century a larger cycle of from seven to 15 scenes was used in Gospels manuscripts. Armenian churches were not systematically graced with wall paintings as in the Byzantine tradition. The earliest surviving fresco cycle at the Church of the Holy Cross on the island of Aght'amar (915–21) with 25 scenes is unique in its extent.⁴⁹ Yet, it too lacked the Flagellation, the Descent from the Cross, the Entombment, the Dormition, and the *Piéta*, while incorporating the other scenes we find at Famagusta including the Judgement of Pilate.

The frescoes themselves were, at least initially, probably painted by an Armenian artist from Cilicia in the first half of the fourteenth century. The Armenian inscriptions and the refined style of many of the figures and their garments underline an eclectic court art prevalent in Cilician Armenian manuscripts. Perhaps with the planned or at least projected restoration of the church and its paintings, a clearer notion of the style and the iconographic details of the scenes will allow future art historians to more conclusively evaluate the history, style, and influences at work in what is a unique witness to Armenian wall painting of the late medieval period associated with Cilicia and its Latin tendencies.

⁴⁸ D. Kouymjian, 'The Evolution of Armenian Gospel Illumination: The Formative Period (9th–11th Centuries)', *Armenian and the Bible*, ed. C. Burchard (Atlanta, 1993), 125–42; idem, 'Armenian Miniature Painting in Asia Minor in the Eleventh Century: The Melitene Group', *The Armenian Communities of the Region of Kesaria (Gesarial Caesarea)*, proceedings of the conference, UCLA, May 17, 2003, ed. R. Hovannisian, in preparation.

⁴⁹ N. Thierry, 'Les peintures de l'Eglise de la Sainte-Croix d'Aghtamar', pp. 182–90.

Appendix IV: Armenian Manuscript Colophons from Famagusta and Cyprus

Compiled by Dickran Kouymjian

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DATE	PLACE	SCRIBE	PATRON	TEXT	MANUSCRIPT
1280	<i>Kipros, i durn Srбуhoy Astuacacnin</i>	Petros of Cilicia		Gospel	NJ33; Mat'evosyan, #408
1287	<i>Kipros: S. Var'var'a, S. Zoravarin Sargis</i>	Khach'atur grich' (scribe), Alidz, 3 others	Abraham	Gospel	M6845, <i>Mat. Cat.</i> II, col. 405
1305	<i>Kipros; Maghuayn Kiprosu, corrected by Ghevond to Maghu[s]layn, p. 56</i>	Yōhannēs grogh (scribe), also mentions Georg vardapet		Collation of Bible, 1773, citing various earlier colophons	This from a Jer. ms. Dashian, p. 632 [not J1926 of 1308-1309]; quoted in Ghevond, p. 56; not in Xač'ikyan, <i>14th Colophons</i>
1305, 1308	Het'um/Hayton in Cyprus				Kapoĭan, p. 56
1306	Famous island of <i>Kipros</i> , in the village called <i>Čips (Djips)</i> under the protection of the archangels Mikayel & Gabriel	Levon the priest		Psalm Book, f. 685	J1033, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> IV (1969), pp. 45 ff.
1308	[<i>Kipros?</i>]	Levon	Patron T'oros the priest	Psalm book, f. 648	J1714, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> VI (1972), p. 22
1308, 1309	<i>Kipros, i Maghusa k'aghak'</i> . (No mention of St. Mary)	Yovanes, Yohannēs	K'ahanay (priest) Step'anos	Old Testament, ff. 268v, 426v	J1926, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> VI (1972), p. 417
1310	<i>Kipros kghzi</i> (island)	Step'annos Goynerec'anc'anc', earlier scribe		Acts of the Apostles	J700, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> III (1968), f. 651, p. 145
pre-1311	Kipros and Akner	?		Gospel	M9450, <i>Mat.</i> II, 931
1310, 1312	<i>Kipros, i Maghusay, hovaneaw S. Astuacacin</i>	Step'anos Goynereric'anc'	Lady Alic, daughter of Baron Het'um	New Testament and Lectionary	Gherla 2(13), Xač'ikyan, <i>14th Cent.</i> , #92; K'olanjyan, pp. 436-7

1314	<i>Kipros, k' Maghusa, i vanks hayoc', end hov. S. Astuacacin</i>	Step'anos Goynerere[r]ic'anc'		Cisakan	J265, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> II (1967), pp.59-61, f.300v
1316	<i>Lek'osia (Nicosia)</i>	Smbat	Step'anos k'ahanay	Psalter	M3412, <i>Mat.</i> I, col. 1006
1317	<i>Kipros, Maghust, dur'n astucoymor tačarin Aštuacacin [or e vank' ev koč'i kanč'ut], mistaken reconstruction</i>	Yohannēs, servant of God	Yohannēs	Commentary on Liturgy, Nersēs Lambronac'i	Xač'ikyan, <i>14th Cent.</i> , #175, p. 135
1317	<i>Kipros kghzi, i dur'n Astucoymór tačarin Astuacacin, or ē vank', ev koč'i kanč'vor i k'aghak'is Maghusa.</i>	Yovhanēs vardapet, patron, scribe, editor	Same as previous	Commentary on Liturgy, Kh. Anjevac'i & N. Lambronac'i, f. 664	J1141, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> IV (1969), p. 226
1317	<i>Kipros, Kanč'vor i k'aghak'is Maghusa[y] ...</i>	Yovhan[n]ēs	Same as previous	Commentary on Liturgy, f.100, 1840, St. James,	J2254, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> VII (1974), p. 349
1317-1318	<i>Kipros, S. Sargis</i>	T'oros	T'oros; binder Sahag	New Testament	M242, <i>Mat. Cat.</i> I, cols. 280–81
1310 1311 1317 1318	<i>Kipros, S. Astuacacin, S. Varvar'a, S. Sargis, S. Makar Churches</i>	Step'annōs Goynereric'anc, Yovhannēs, T'oros			<i>Encyclopedia</i> , II, p. 694
1341	<i>Kipros, Levk'osia = Nicosia</i>	Poghos		Miscellany, f. 36,	J1337, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> IV (1969), p. 604
1379	<i>Kipros</i>		Sargis kahanay (priest)	Bible	M9116, <i>Mat. Cat.</i> II, col 873
1426	<i>Kipros</i>	Gaspar Hamt'ec'i		Commentary on Catholic letters, Sargis Shnorhali	M6262, <i>Xač'ikyan, 15th Cent.</i> , vol. 1, #373, p. 354

DATE	PLACE	SCRIBE	PATRON	TEXT	MANUSCRIPT
1467	<i>Lamōshay</i> =?Limassol, <i>i kipros kghzodj, i mayrak'aghak' Lewk'usieay</i> (Nicosia)		Bp. Sargis prelate	Yaysmavork'	Xač'ikyan, <i>15th Cent.</i> , vol. 2, #340, p. 266; Ghevond, pp. 99–100, text
1468	<i>Kipros: S. Astuacacin, S. Barseghay ekegh. yishatak or ē i Kipros</i>	Martiros		Gospels, f. 267	Xač'ikyan, <i>15th Cent.</i> , vol. 2, #359, p. 279; Munich #1, <i>HA</i> (1891), p. 238
1581	<i>i Kipros kghzi</i>	Hayrapet abeghay		Hymnal	Ghevond, p.102
1636	<i>Kipros, Lawk'oshia</i> (Nicosia), <i>i dur'n S. Astuacacnay</i>			Ancient Arm mss	J3848, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> XI (1991), ms of 1912, p. 284
1641, 1648	<i>Kipr'un, end hovaneav S. Astuacacnis, i kghzis i Kiprun, i k'aghak'n Lōk'ōshay</i> (Nicosia)	Step'annos erēc' (priest)		Ritual	<i>Encyclopedia</i> , II, 1641, p. 694
1650	<i>i yanpatē Kirposi, or S. Makar anun koč'i</i>	Tonapet dpir (clerk)		Psalm Book	Ghevond, p. 102
1668	<i>Lawk'oč'a</i> (Nicosia); <i>S. Astuacacin</i>			Lectionary'	Ghevond, p. 103
1670 1674	<i>i covoc' kghzi i Kēpros or mak anun Gheprez..k'. Lawk'ōshay, katoghikē ekegh. or Astuacacnin</i>	Yohanēs episkopos.	Later colophon of Tēr Karapet K'ésabc'I, 1793,1795	Hymns of Yovhanēs	Ghevond, pp. 105–6; <i>Encyclopedia</i> , II, p. 694 for 1674
1671	<i>Kipros</i>	Sargis gronavor (cleric)	Cypriot vardapet	Miscellany	M2022, <i>Mat. Cat.</i> I, col.702, <i>Encyclopedia</i> . II, p. 694
1675	<i>Kipros, Lawk'ashé, I dur'n S. Astuacacnin</i>			Gospels	J1967, <i>Jer. Cat.</i> VI (1972)
1679	<i>Nikosioy S. Astuacacnin ekegh</i>	Vardan vardapet		Lectionary	Ghevond, p.103

Abbreviations

- Dashian Jacobus Dashian, *Catalog den armenischen handschriften in der Mechitaristen-bibliothek zu Wien* (in Armenian with German title and résumé), Vienna, 1895
- ekegh.* *ekeghec'i*, church
- Encyclopedia* *Abridged Armenian Encyclopedia*, vol. II, Erevan, 1995 (in Armenian)
- Ghevond Bishop Ghevond (C'épéyan), *Yishadakaran kiprahay gaghut'i* (Memorial on the Cypriot-Armenian Community), Antelias, 1955
- HA *Handēs Amsorya*
- J Jerusalem manuscript from the Armenian Patriarchate of St. James
- Jer. Cat.* Norayr Bogharian, *Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts*, 11 vols, in Armenian with English title, Jerusalem, 1966–91
- k'* *k'aghak'*, city
- Kapoïan Angèle Kapoïan-Kouymjian, *L'Égypte vue par des Arméniens*, Paris, 1988
- K'olanjyan Suren K'olanjyan, "Summary Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the City of Gherla, *Banber Matenadarani*, vol. 9 (1969), pp. 433–85 (in Armenian)
- M Erevan, Mashtoc' Matenadaran Repository of Manuscripts
- Mat. Cat.* *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Mashtoc' Matenadaran*, Erevan, vol. I, 1965, vol. II, 1970 (in Armenian)
- Mat'evosyan Artashes Mat'evosyan, *Hayeren jer'agreri hishatakaranner. XIII dar* (Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. Thirteenth Century), Erevan, 1984
- NJ New Julfa, Isfahan, manuscript in the Armenian Prelacy
- S. *Sourb*, Saint
- Xač'ikyan Levon Xač'ikyan, *XIV dari Hayeren jer'agreri hishatakaranner* (14th-Century Armenian Manuscript Colophons), Erevan, 1950; *15th Century*, vol. I, 1955, vol. II, 1958

**Appendix V: Typed Notes by M[onica] Bardswell,
February 1937 from Conway Library, Courtauld Institute**

Reproduced by Dickran Kouymjian

Famagusta Armenian Church

14th-century church. Sacked by the Turks in the 16th century.

North Wall

UPPER TIER, FROM THE WEST

(A) Series more Italian in style than the rest of the paintings. Plaster tinted buff, green backgrounds.

(1). The Scourging. Christ in centre, bound to pillar. An executioner to the right and to left with whip of knotted thongs. A building top left.

(2) ? Christ before Pilate. Mostly, perished. Christ centre left faces right, hands bound before Him. Right part of picture missing.

(3) Crucifixion. Skull of Adam under the cross. Left, Virgin fainting in the arms of the two Maries, to right, St John. All the upper part gone.

(4) ? Deposition. (very faint) Several figures to right.

(5) Entombment, or Pieta. Several Figures carry the body of Christ wrapped in winding sheet and laid across the lap of the Virgin. A female figure stands behind.

LOWER TIER BELOW (A).

(B) Another series, more Byzantine in style and more coarsely painted. Enclosed in red frames edged white. From the west:

(1) Very large, Nativity; the Virgin reclines centre, Child in an oblong box on her left. Left at top, four nimbed figures in adoration. Right at top, a group of angels in adoration. Left centre, Magi, not nimbed, bearing gifts. Left at bottom, two midwives prepare the bath.

- (2). Over arched recess, Annunciation, very fragmentary. To left St. Gabriel. To right the Blessed Virgin Mary. Centre, pot of lilies. (Vase with two handles).
- (3) Baptism of Christ. Green background. To left St. John the Baptist. Stands on the bank of a stream and pours water on head of Christ, who stands in the stream naked, water up to middle. (Not heaped up water). To right two angels stand on the bank. Of most of this subject only the under-painting remains; the outline sketched in red.
- (4) Image of Pity over a recess, ? Easter sepulcher. Half figure of Christ stands in tomb, hands crossed before Him, showing wounds. Cross behind and two of the Instruments of the Passion, sponge and spear. Background dark blue.

East Wall

- (C) The apse and its surroundings.
- (1) Respond of arch, a saint, very fragmentary.
- (2) Vault of the apse, lower south side: Kneeling figure, head missing, probably the donor, large shield of arms above to left. Kneeling in adoration of ? (Probably once a Majesty on the vault of the apse) Below a string-course, remains of the figures of the Twelve Apostles surrounding the apse. Bearded, nimbed, on dark blue background.
- (3) Below were figures of saints within arched canopies. Full length figures, two very fragmentary, remain. On the north side, an Ecclesiastic, Patriarch? On the south side, a figure in red cloak, blessing. Small kneeling donor to the right.

South Wall

- (D) To the east. Death of Virgin, she lies on a couch, above is the figure of Our Lord who receives her soul, as a swaddled infant. Our Lord in a white mandorla, and around Him a red glory filled with angels who bear candlesticks, censers, etc. All painted in red and white. Below, left and right Apostles weeping. Above to the right, angels in adoration on a green background.
- (E) To the west. Very large figure of St. John the Baptist surrounded by square compartments arranged perpendicularly on either side, containing ? [sic] scenes from his life (all perished) within yellow frame. To left and to right, a strip of ornament containing shields of arms, one of them bearing a mitre and crozier on white shield.

West Wall

- (F) South of the door, within a yellow frame and a grey background: St. George on a red horse, slaying a red and green dragon. (Copy by M. Bardswell)

(G) To the north of door, two figures of saints, under arched ornamental canopies, green backgrounds.

(1) On the left a female saint in cloak, who holds a head of our Lord within a medallion. Inscription on the background in Armenian.

(2) On right, a royal personage, nimbed, crowned, wearing much jewellery. Armenian inscription.

Note: the backgrounds, whether blue or green, are put on over an undercoat of black. The under colour of the faces and hands is yellow-green, like raw sienna. Some paintings are drawn in first in red outline, others, (C2 and F) in green.

M.B. Feb. 1937.

All the paintings in the church preserved by M. Bardswell.