

ARMENIANS IN ISLAMICJERUSALEM

JACOB G. GHAZARIAN
Wolfson College, University of Oxford

The study of Armenians in IslamicJerusalem is a complex subject because it involves historical considerations of widely diffuse Christian Armenian settlements which had existed from early times throughout the northern Mesopotamian peninsula and in the eastern parts of Asia Minor. This study, however, may also include the history of the Armenians in their traditional homeland, usually referred to as Greater Armenia, in the region of the Caucasus where much of the history of their ancient feudal society can be traced. Therefore we must be cognizant of the fact that Armenian religio-social experiences under Islamic rule in these more or less disjointed and disconnected geographical areas were quite different for different political reasons.

The difficulty in studying this subject is further complicated by the presence of other Christian and non-Christian minority populations, for example the Greeks, the Latins, the Syrian Christians and the Kurds, who lived and mingled with the Armenians and competed for differential treatment from their Islamic rulers. There were claims and counter-claims concerning legal rights from these various minority populations who shared a common territory. Consequently, anyone who wishes to pursue this area of study is almost forced to focus on identifying specific historical events that may represent a generalised comparative policy practised by various Islamic rulers towards a select minority population, such as the Armenians.

The conversion of the Armenians to Christianity early in the fourth century made them one of the prominent sedentary inhabitants of the Near East to assume the weight of the responsibility of preserving the Christian heritage in Jerusalem. Perhaps this is no less evident in the pivotal role the Armenians played many centuries later in assisting the first Crusaders of the eleventh century to establish their feudal principalities in Edessa, Antioch, Jerusalem and Tripoli (Ghazarian 2000: 81-110.). The elements of the Christian faith had become, and remain so to this day, inseparable and synonymous with the Armenians' sense of national and individual identities.

Historically, the Armenians have been traders and craftsmen and a series of their extended settlements had brought them into close contact with Jerusalem and Palestine (Sanjian 1965). Their many centuries of political and ecclesiastical vassalage to Byzantium had subjected the Armenians, especially in the sixth century under Emperor Justinian I (527-65), to broad demographic shifts that had served as the nucleus for the eventual founding of new Armenian kingdoms in Anatolia and Cappadocia. Therefore, as a result of their general and diffuse presence in the Near East, pilgrimage to Jerusalem by the Armenians was to play a significant role in the development and growth of their association with the Holy Land, and especially with Jerusalem (Stone 1986: 93-110).

The early pilgrims came from the Armenian settlements in Edessa (Sanli Urfa), Antioch (Antakya), Melitene (Malatya), Nisibis and Van (fig. 1). The evidence comes from many floor mosaics in scrolled Roman motifs containing Armenian writings that have been excavated in the vicinity of the walled city of Jerusalem. Six such mosaics are located on the Mount of Olives (fig. 2) and a seventh in St Polyeucte chapel in the vicinity of the Musrara neighbourhood a short distance from Damascus Gate (fig. 3). The inscription in the latter reads: *"To the memory and salvation of all the Armenians whose names only the Lord knows"*.

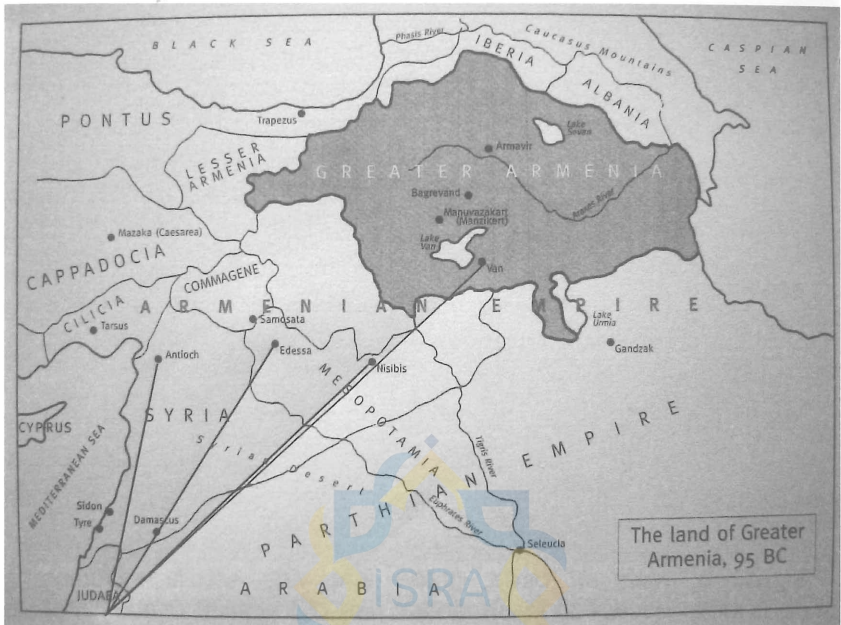


Figure 1: Routes to Jerusalem from Armenian settlements on the periphery of the land of Greater Armenia extending westward towards eastern Asia Minor.



Figure 2: Motif of grape and vine scrolls and a dedicatory inscription in Armenian; part of the fifth century mosaic pavements on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem.



Figure 3: Motif of birds, grape and vine scrolls including a dedicatory inscription in Armenian: part of the sixth century mosaic at St Polyeucte funerary chapel. The chapel is constructed over a cavernous tomb filled with human skeletons and dedicated to Armenian soldiers who had served in the Byzantine army.

These mosaics are testimony that there has been an uninterrupted Armenian community living in Jerusalem since the early centuries of Christianity. There is also the record of the cleric Anastas who had made a pilgrimage from Armenia to Palestine in the seventh century. The chronicle of his journey lists seventy Armenian monasteries then in existence in Jerusalem and in its vicinity (Sanjian 1969: 265-68, 275-90 Cf., Yaruṭ'iwn 1884: 394). The most notable is the fifth century monastery of St Euthymius at Khan al-Ahmar (خان الاحمر) (Ghazarian 2006:209) situated between Jerusalem and Jericho where Armenian and Greek monks lived and worshipped together. St Euthymius himself was an Armenian from Melitene.

A significant part of Armenians' historical contact and co-existence with Islam took place within the proper borders of the traditional Armenian homeland (Kaegi 1992). Arab rule of Greater Armenia

under the Umayyad caliph Mu'awiyah began in 661 AD and ended with the collapse of the caliphate in 750 AD. Its successor, the Abbasid caliphate, continued to rule Armenia until 885 AD when Caliph al-Mu'tamid consented to the crowning of Ashot Bagratuni as King Ashot I.

Here, it is important to note that the two centuries of generally tolerant Arab rule of Greater Armenia may be viewed as a mutually accommodating politically expedient strategic exercise between the caliphate and the feudal Armenian nobility that governed the land. The political interests of the latter were focused on restoring its independent feudal kingdoms while the former was struggling to defend itself against the ambitions of the Byzantine emperor Justinian II (685-95, 705-11). These interests present a clear contrast between Armenian experiences under Arab rule in Greater Armenia as opposed to the experiences of Armenians living under Islamic rule outside the borders of their historical homeland, as we shall see.

Caliph 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's conquest of Jerusalem in 638 AD marked the beginning of Islamic rule of Jerusalem which only ended with the successes of the First Crusade in 1099 (Phillips 1997). During this period of four and a half centuries of Islamic rule, the 'Umar's Assurance of Safety, the caliph's first Assurance of Safety to *ahl al-kitāb* (أهل الكتاب) (People of the Book) accorded the Jews and the Christians of Jerusalem the unmolested right to practise their respective religions. They were referred to as *dhimmi* (ذمي) (protected persons). In return, the dhimmi were required to pledge their loyalty to their Muslim rulers and pay a special tax, *jizya* (جزية) for all adult males. The latter were exempt from military duty because only a Muslim could draw a sword in defence of Islam. The responsibilities of the caliphate to the *dhimmi* perhaps were best described by Abu al-Abbas Ahmad Ibn Idris, known as Shihab al-Din Qarafi (d. 1285), a jurist of Berber origin who lived in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt. He wrote:

It is the responsibility of the Muslims to the people of the dhimma [covenant of protection] to care for the weak, fulfil the needs of the poor, feed the hungry, provide clothes, address them politely and tolerate their harm even if it comes from a neighbour even though the Muslim would have an upper hand. The Muslims must also advise them sincerely on their affairs and protect them against anyone who tries to hurt them or their family, steal their wealth or who violates their rights.

However, the *dhimmi* remained restricted. They were not allowed to forget their social status; could not testify before Muslim courts; and like slaves and women, were compensated less for death or injury. The *dhimmi* were not free to marry Muslim women under the penalty of death though Muslim men could marry Christian or Jewish women. They were subject to dress restrictions requiring them to wear distinguishing garments and signs, and also were not allowed to own or ride horses but only donkeys or mules (though these may have been later fabrications not part of the original 'Umar's Assurance of Safety). According to the law, the *dhimmi* were allowed to repair their old places of worship but could not build new ones. These restrictions were not always officially imposed but could always be invoked, if so desired. Persecution of non-Muslims was uncommon, usually a product of personal disputes or vendettas, but discrimination was practised and considered necessary. It was sanctioned by Holy Law (*Shari'a*). Nevertheless, these social disabilities and restrictions were rather symbolic and without practical significance, as we shall see below. Their symbolic purpose was to identify who was a member of the dominant group and who was not. This distinction was maintained as the portal to myriad social and cultural engagements between the Muslims and non-Muslims. It might be argued that one particular social disability of significance was the higher rates of taxation imposed upon the non-Muslims. It is unlikely that the imposed taxation represented a serious burden upon the affluent sector of the non-Muslims. However, the eleventh century Geniza chronicles of the Jewish community in Cairo suggest that, for the poorer classes at least, the tax burden was heavy. This type of fiscal policy naturally was exercised as a tangible economic burden

upon the non-Muslims. But this is not necessarily a policy peculiar to Islamic rule.

The burden of paying higher taxes and of servitude by a subjugated population is an inherited reality that applies equally to all who suffered under conquerors from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the Macedonian Alexander the Great, the Romans, the Persians and, most notably the least benevolent of all the conquerors of recent history, the Byzantines, who pillaged and taxed mercilessly even those they called their brothers in faith. The letter of the Armenian patriarch Nerses IV Shinorhali (the Gracious, 1166-1173) to the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180) exemplifies how unmitigated domination of the vanquished can be deployed by a culture that was obsessed by its vision of "*the Byzantine commonwealth of faith in communion with the centre of political power in Constantinople*". They believed themselves to be "*the bearers of Christian light to the East*" and ruled with such great insensitivity and unmeasured cruelty that the effects of their domination continue to reverberate in Christendom to the present day. In his letter to the emperor, the patriarch wrote:

Let there be an end to the reasons for which, until now, our people have fled from you, our churches and the altars of God are ruined, our sacred objects are destroyed, our ministers are subjected to ill treatments and calumnies, the like of which we do not even suffer at the hands of the enemies of Christ who are our neighbours. For such deeds not only fail to unite those who are separated, but bring dissension even among those who are united.

The Jews, in particular, found Islamic Jerusalem much more tolerant of the Jewish faith than they had experienced under the Byzantines. A large number of deposed Jewish families were allowed to return and reside in the Walled City. Unlike the Jews in much of Europe, Jews and Christians alike under Islamic rule were rarely called upon to suffer exile or martyrdom for their faiths. They were neither confined to geographical nor to occupational ghettos and, with the exception of a few holy cities in the Hijāz, there were no restricted places for their movements.

Figure 4 summarises the several periods in which the experiences of the Armenians living in IslamicJerusalem may be grouped. These are: 1) the first century following Caliph ‘Umar’s conquest of Jerusalem; 2) the reign of the Abbasids of Baghdad from 750 AD; 3) the Fatimids’ rule in 969 AD; 4) the Ayyubid period beginning in 1187 AD; 5) the Mamluk period from 1250 to 1517 and finally 6) the Ottoman period from 1517 to 1917.

1. First century following Caliph ‘Umar’s conquest of Jerusalem
2. Reign of Abbasids of Baghdad from 750 AD
3. Fatimid’s rule in 969 AD
4. Ayyubid period beginning in 1187 AD
5. Mamluk period 1250 – 1517 AD
6. Ottoman period 1517 – 1917 AD

Figure 4: Timetable of the historical periods in which the experiences of the Armenians living in IslamicJerusalem may be grouped. The dates correspond to the years of Muslim occupation and administration of Jerusalem.

Bishop Abraham I (638-669) was the first reigning Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem when Caliph ‘Umar entered the city. Although the Armenians of Jerusalem had generally maintained a precarious control over the Christian holy places, maintaining this control however was mainly determined by the extent of the co-operation given to the ruling authorities. Armenian sources allege that, predicting the fall of Jerusalem, the Armenian Bishop Abraham travelled to Makkah and received from the hand of the prophet Muhammad an edict that safeguarded the secular and religious rights of the Armenians in Jerusalem (fig. 5). Although the document does not specifically mention the Armenians, it does however set out the rights and duties of the Christians living under Islamic rule. Moreover, it implies the edict to have been dictated by the prophet and written by Mu‘awiyah Ibn Abī-Sufyān, one of the scribes of the prophet.

Furthermore, in their perpetual efforts to retain and safeguard their purported secular and religious rights, the Armenians, under ‘Umar’s Assurance of Safety, claimed custody of the Christian

sanctuaries based on an allegedly original charter granted to them



Figure 5: The edict attributed to the prophet Muhammad. Parchment on silk backing, 529 x 29 cm each.

by Caliph Ali Ibn Abī Ṭalib preserved to the present day in the treasury of the Armenian Patriarchate (fig. 6). Regardless of their authenticity, however, such documents have been used by successive Muslim rulers over the centuries as justification for conferring analogous rights to the Armenians. Examples include the *firman* granted to the Armenians by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf Ibn Ayyub in 1187 AD (fig. 7) exempting the Armenians from paying the ransom money and the taxes demanded from the Christians who had come with the Crusaders (Goddard 2000). And unlike other Christians, the Armenian population of the city was neither



Figure 6: The charter of Caliph Ali Ibn Abī Ṭalīb (656-661). Parchment, 825 x 32.8 cm.



Figure 7: The *firman* of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yusuf Ibn Ayyub exempting the Armenians from taxation. Paper on silk backing, 327 x 21.5 cm.

expelled nor taken into slavery. It has been suggested that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's benevolence towards the Armenians might have stemmed from his dislike of the Latins and mistrust of the Greeks and thus he may have found it politically advantageous to favour the Armenians as his potential allies.

The favourable conditions the Armenians enjoyed under the Ayyubids changed little with the coming of the Mamluks. The Armenians continued to enjoy relatively greater freedom in the exercise of their religious rites. The special privileges granted to them enabled not only the preservation but also the extension of their sanctuaries and monasteries. Official contacts with Cairo

maintained by Armenian patriarchs, for example by Sarkis I (1281-1313), ultimately secured for the Armenians permission to build a wall around their quarter in Jerusalem. This significant yet extraordinary gesture indicated that the Mamluks were confident of their relationship with the Armenians and did not see them as a threat to their rule. It had been the policy of the Mamluks to dismantle defensive city walls in Palestine in an effort to deny the Christians strategic advantages. Although high stone walls surrounding cities and towns were normally built for defensive and military purposes, the walls surrounding the Armenian quarter in Jerusalem were intended for the safety and security of the monks and the lay people who resided within the monastery compound. The resident lay people were engaged in the physical service of the monastery as cleaners, cooks and caretakers whilst also managing the influx of pilgrims who were accommodated in special facilities within the monastery.

The congenial relationship that existed between the Armenians and the Mamluks was further reinforced by the late fifteenth century edict of Sultan Jaqmaq displayed at the entrance of the Armenian monastery of St James in Jerusalem (fig. 8). In essence, the edict rescinded the annual taxes imposed on the Armenians as it reads:

The decree of our Lord Sultan al-Zahir Abu Said Muhammad Jaqmaq is displayed to rescind the annual tribute imposed by Abu al-Khair Ibn al-Nahhas on the Armenian convent Mar Ya'qub in Jerusalem. The rescinding was verified and endorsed by al-muquirr (the registrar) Saif al-Din al-Sharafi al-Ansari, and recorded in the official registers in the year 854 of the Hijra Sharifa. May God's curses fall upon and follow, till the end of time, whosoever imposes a tribute or inflicts an injustice.

For nearly a millennium, Jews and Armenians alike had lived under Islam. The Ottoman conquest merely exchanged one Muslim master for another. Under Ottoman rule the Armenians, like other non-Muslims such as the Jews and the Greeks, were organised for administrative purposes into autonomous communities called *millet*s. The *millet* invested the religious leadership with civil



Figure 8: The testimonial inscription of Sultan al-Zahir Abu Said Muhammad Jaqmaq's edict at the entrance of St James Armenian monastery in the walled city of Jerusalem.

authority over its sector of the population thus *de facto* making it representative of the Ottoman government. As head of the secular community, the religious leadership was responsible for keeping law and order within its own community, and for collecting taxes. It governed with its own religious laws in matters that concerned civil matters such as baptism, marriage, divorce and inheritance. It maintained its own parochial schools, a judicial court, police and even the authority to imprison. It is rather astonishing that a ruling power which under most normal circumstances would attempt to assimilate its subjugated minority populations, as has been the case throughout the medieval history of the Near East be it under the Romans, Persians or the Byzantines, would actually devise a *millet* system of government that vested a communal autonomy in the very minority it wished to be assimilated. By virtue of the *millet* system, the Armenians, the Jews and the Greeks were able to maintain their separate national and cultural identities which have continued to thrive long after the demise of the Ottoman Empire.

Throughout the medieval history of the Near East, the sources attest the neutrality of Islamic rulers towards their subjects. The recruitment of their civil servants, for example, was conducted on the basis of merit rather than race or creed. The *dhimmi* therefore were accepted as civil servants when they brought their skills and expertise to the benefit of the state. The Armenians, for example, took advantage of their new economic opportunities and played an important role in Ottoman trade and finance, specialising in money-changing, banking, the jewellery industry and in the import and export of durable goods. Armenian bankers underpinned the Ottoman economic wealth in Istanbul and thus controlled significant power and influence in the highest government circles. They enjoyed a separate and privileged status and were called the *amiras*, derived from the Arabic *emir* (أمير), meaning prince or commander. As servants and advisors to Ottoman officials in both the capital and the provinces, the *amiras* were in a better position to represent the social, political and economic interests of the Armenians.

Likewise, the Jews after being expelled from Spain in the fifteenth century were resettled primarily in Islamic countries where they contributed much to the welfare of their host communities (Braude & Lewis 1982 (1) 101-105). Jewish physicians trained at the University of Salamanca were greatly respected and were being employed in the service of many Muslim rulers. No less relevant were the large number of Muslim communities where glass making and metalworking industries became essentially Jewish monopolies operated under Jewish ownership and control. With their knowledge of foreign languages the Jews were the greatest competitors of the Venetian traders. The Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (1448-1512) is purported to have said in reference to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 by King Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452-1516): "*How can you call this Ferdinand, Wise – he who has impoverished his dominion in order to enrich mine?*" Other groups of refugees and Christians persecuted by a dominant church in their districts all found refuge in the Ottoman lands. Ironically, when Ottoman rule in Europe came to an end, the Christian nations which the Turks had ruled for centuries were left intact with their

languages, their cultures, their religions and many of their civil institutions ready to serve their separate national functions. An acute observer had described the Ottoman society as follows:

Probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples... It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix, but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community, living side by side, but separately within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines. (Furnivall 1956: 304-05)

The impact of Islamic rule on the Armenians was far more reaching than the mundane exercise of political power. The flavour of Islamic artistic motifs began to make their appearance in Armenian art and architecture (Der Nersessian 1978). The interior of the Cathedral of St James in Jerusalem has unequivocal Islamic features which demonstrate the meticulous art of woodcarving characteristically employed in Islamic architecture. Seljuk woodcarving was used as a medium in a variety of techniques as in interlocking designs of tongue-and-groove joints on doors and *minbars* (pulpits), relief carving on doors and window shutters, and openwork carving commonly employed in the construction of book-rests. That the Armenian artisans used these techniques is most prominently displayed in the construction of the patriarchal throne of the cathedral placed immediately below the high altar (figure 9) and in the distinctively

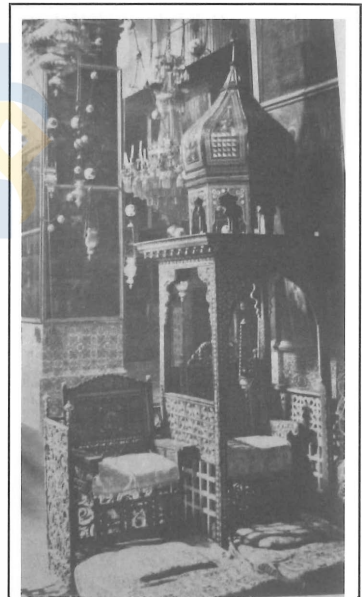


Figure 9: The patriarchal throne in the Armenian Cathedral of St James showing the patriarch's throne and the elaborate network of hanging lamps, incense burners and decorative ornaments.

Islamic cupola atop the throne. The door shown in figure 10 is a further example of Armenian woodcarving – dated 1212 – which embodies and unifies both Seljuk and traditional Armenian Christian motifs. Furthermore, the inclusion of inscriptions along the upper edges of the door panels is analogous to the practice of the thirteenth century Seljuk artistic motif seen in the adjacent door panels from Cizre in southeastern Turkey.



Figure 10: (left) Walnut wood double doors, 185 x 115 cm; carved for the entrance to the church of St Kārāpet in Muş, eastern Turkey, dated 1212. Part of the inscription reads – This door for Holy Kārāpet was built by Baron Step'ānos in the Armenian era 961; (right) Walnut and poplar wood double doors with handles of bronze and brass, 300 x 224 cm carved for Sultan Melik dated the thirteenth century, Cizre, Turkey.

One of the most striking features of the interior of the Cathedral of St James is the elaborate network of silver hanging lamps, incense burners and ornaments – seen in figures 9 and 11. Although most of the hanging lamps are made of metal and silver, there are a few made of pottery. The hanging ornaments, on the other hand, are made of glazed pottery and appear to serve only a decorative purpose. Inscriptions state that they were brought to

Jerusalem from Turkey by Armenian pilgrims. They are coloured, either white, yellow, cobalt blue or turquoise. As well as in Armenian and Greek churches, hanging lamps, incense burners and ornaments are also found in mosques. The mosque of Hakim Oğlu Ali Pasha in Istanbul is elaborately decorated with a variety of suspended lamps and incense burners made of brass and inlaid with silver. Most of these objects share a common egg-shape feature symbolic of fertility and renewal.



Figure 11: The high altar of the Armenian Cathedral of St James in Jerusalem showing the patriarch's throne and the elaborate network of hanging lamps, incense burners and decorative ornaments.

With the arrival of the Seljuks in Anatolia in 1071 (Der Nersessian 1969: 37-40; Cf., Redgate 1998) the art of tiling, the prime artistic form of the Seljuks derived from the art of their Central Asian heritage, entered a new phase. During the following two centuries tiling occupied a major position in Seljuk architectural decorations. It adorned the walls of mosques, palaces, khans, caravanserais and venerated sites, which most often were the tombs of holy men. Normally, tiles in turquoise, purple and cobalt blue were arranged

in interlocking patterns of scrolling flowers or of abstract geometric crosses and stars to cover walls up to a height of two metres. This architectural practice was equally applied to concave and convex surfaces such as the interior of domes, arches and niches which normally were decorated along their perimeters with Qur'ānic verses in exquisite Kufic script. Often rectangular panels of decorative tiles with finely mitred corners were inserted within a tiled wall to highlight a holy verse, or as a dedicatory tribute, as shown in figure 12.



Figure 12: Tiled panel, AD 1750/1, in the mosque of Hisar Bey, Kütahya, Turkey.

The multiplicity of cultural engagements between the Seljuks and the Armenians inevitably facilitated the Seljuk artistic practices to permeate contemporary Armenian architecture especially in the decoration of their sanctuaries and devotional sites as seen in figures 13 and 14 (Ghazarian 2000: 44-45).

The outcomes from these cultural minglings continued well into the eighteenth century. But earlier in the seventeenth century it became fashionable for Armenian pilgrims from throughout Asia Minor to bring gifts to the Cathedral of St James. Glazed pottery was a valued and favourite choice. The modern town of Kütahya (Turkey) is situated along the western rim of the Anatolian highlands about 320 Kilometres (200 miles) inland from the Aegean coast. The town was in existence in classical times when it

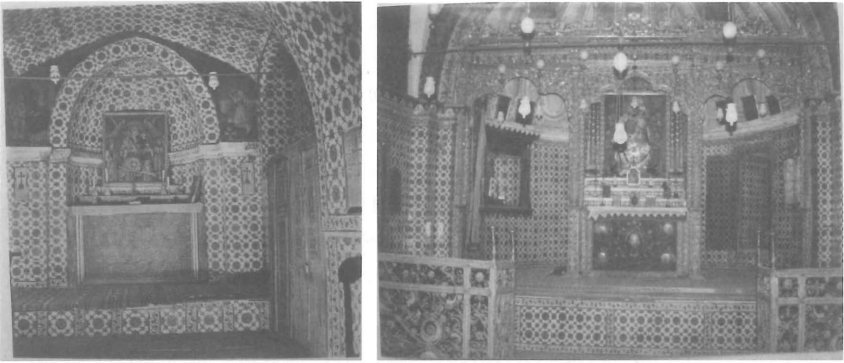


Figure 13: (left) The tiled apse and the walls surrounding the altar of the chapel of St Kārāpet in the church of St Toros within the Armenian monastery of St James in Jerusalem, looking northeast; (right) Wall tiling in the sacristy of the chapel of St John the Baptist in the church of St Toros, looking north.

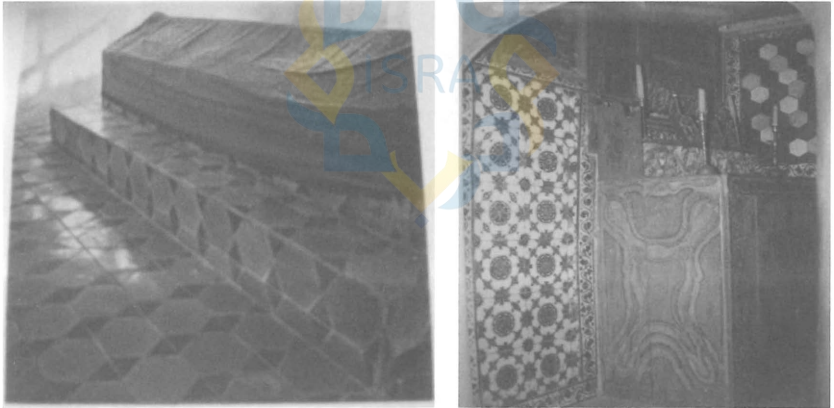


Figure 14: (left) Tiling patterns at the tomb of Yakub II (d. AD 1428/9), Kütahya, Turkey; (right) Tiling at a devotional altar (14th or 15th century) at the tomb of St Toros in the church of St Toros within the Armenian monastery of St James in Jerusalem.

was known as *Cotyaenum*. In the Byzantine period it was an important town but in the eleventh century it was captured by the Seljuks. Kütahya was given to the Ottomans as a dowry in the marriage of Murad I. It became a centre of a pottery industry in the fifteenth century (Kelekian 1909: 29-30) started by the arrival of a group of displaced artisans under Sultan Mehmed II al-Fatih (The Conqueror, 1432-1481).

Figure 15 shows two Kütahya glazed pottery flasks brought to Jerusalem by Armenian pilgrims as gifts to the cathedral. Each flask bears an inscription of the pilgrim's Turkish name transliterated in Armenian with dates indicated both in Arabic letters and Arabic numerals (سنة ١١٧٧ , ١٢٠٤). Other motifs on glazed flasks included the inscription of Turkish verses in Arabic script as shown in figure 16. The black inverted inscription on the neck of this flask contains four verses, each one separated from the others by a single vertical stroke. It is dated ١١٥٤. The following is a considered translation of the four separated verses (Carswell & Dowsett 1972 (1): 88):

'The gift is necessary for the land of exile'
 'I, moonlike, am the cause of the water of delight'
 'His beloved is not ashamed; he will know for honour'
 'I was determined ever on the separation of death'

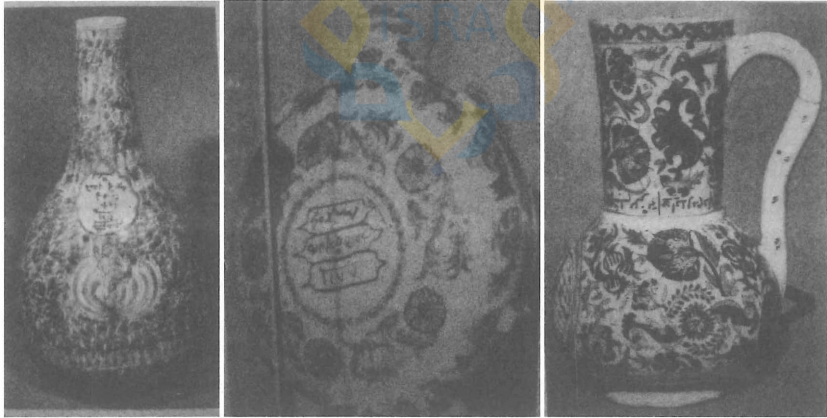


Figure 15: (left) Kütahya glazed pottery flasks, AD 1789 (34.6 cm high, 19 cm diameter) and (right) AD 1763/4 (22.9 cm high, 18 cm diameter) brought to Jerusalem by pilgrims. Each bears an inscription of the pilgrim's Turkish name transliterated in Armenian with dates indicated in Arabic letters and numerals.

Figure 16: Kütahya glazed pottery flask, AD 1741/2 (18 cm high, 11 cm diameter) with Turkish poetic verses in Arabic script around the neck of the flask.

Such offerings of gifts that bore the legacy of the pilgrims in the three languages demonstrate clearly the non-stigmatised cohesion of the extant communities. No doubt cultural and religious

differences did exist and were commonplace but the gifts are indicative of a lack of apparent taboos or necessary distinctions placed in the use of the mix of languages within and amongst the various ethnic groups, and as such, they may be viewed as a measure of the multicultural harmony that must have existed in Asia Minor and Islamic Jerusalem in the seventeenth century.

In conclusion, there is ample evidence to suggest that multiculturalism in Islamic Jerusalem functioned and thrived during the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era. Muslims ruled Jerusalem during most of this period of its history and generally practised a policy of tolerance towards the Armenians allowing them, in the main, to pursue their own religious beliefs and to control the affairs of their own religious institutions. Although this policy in the main encompassed the principles of legal, political and social inequality, it is important nevertheless to note that its significance goes far beyond allowing the Armenians the freedom to exercise their Christian faith. The Armenians were not only the first nation to adopt Christianity but they did so collectively as their state religion. Therefore from the beginning the Armenian Church maintained a proxy civil authority over the secular and political centres of the nation. As a result, the Armenian patriarchal seat in Jerusalem acquired administrative jurisdiction over monastic as well as secular communities in Palestine, in Damascus and in the bishopric of Egypt and Cyprus. In effect, the nature of the relationship between the Armenians and their Islamic rulers might be viewed as having had the properties of a co-operative diplomatic liaison that impacted upon regions and sedentary Christian populations existing far beyond the immediate confines of Islamic Jerusalem. Their mode of government in Jerusalem was the finest example of preserving a quorum of good will and confidence in a hierarchy which had a delegated authority over the Armenian, Jacobite Syrian, Coptic and Abyssinian (Ethiopian) monophysite communities inhabiting vast Islamic lands in the Near East.

References

- Braude, B. & Lewis, B. (eds)
1982 *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*. New York, Vol I.
- Carswell, J. & Dowsett, C.J.F.
1972 *Kütahya Tiles and Pottery from the Armenian Cathedral of St James, Jerusalem: The Pictorial Tiles and other Vessels*. Oxford, Vol I.
- Der Nersessian, S.
1978 *Armenian Art*, London. 1969 *The Armenians*. London.
- Furnivall, J.S.
1956 *Colonial Policy and Practice*, New York.
- Ghazarian, J.G.
2000 *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia During the Crusades. The integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins 1080-1393*. London, Curzon Press.
- Ghazarian, J.G.
2006 *The Mediterranean Legacy in Early Celtic Christianity*. London, Bennett and Bloom.
- Goddard, H.
2000 *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*. Chicago, New Amsterdam Books.
- Kaegi, Jr., W.E.
1992 *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*. London, Cambridge University Press.
- Kelekian, D.K.
1909 *The Potteries of Persia*. Paris.
- Phillips, Jr., (ed.)
1997 *The First Crusade: origins and impact*. Manchester.
- Redgate, A.E.
1998 *The Armenians*, Oxford.

Sanjian, A.K.

1965 *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion*.
Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Sanjian, A.K.

1969 "Anastas Vardapet's List of Armenian Monasteries in Seventh-Century Jerusalem: A Critical Examination" *Le Muséon-Revue d'Etudes Orientales*, 82 (3-4).

Stone, M.E.

1986 "Holy Land pilgrimages of Armenians before the Arab conquest" *Revue Biblique*, 43.

Yarut'iwn (Anastasius) of Armenia.

1884 *Les LXX couvents arméniens de Jérusalem'*, *Archives de l'Orient Latin*, ii.

