

Artistic Features of Armenian Liturgical Objects*

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Abstract: The artistic features are the important provisions by which the ritual objects types and descriptions of different Christian churches can be characterized. In essence, identifying and grouping these features are the most complex processes. In this article, an attempt is made to present the artistic features of the ritual objects of the Armenian Church in general, interpreting them according to the types of objects. The ritual objects used during various rituals in the Armenian church, with their types and artistic features, developed and completed over time, forming a solid system, that both differs from and connects to the ritual objects of other Christian churches. Armenian liturgical objects represent a set of Eastern, Western, and local traditions, forming the corresponding overall picture. The study of the objects shows that the system of design of objects was formed by including both Byzantine and later Western elements, mixing them with national artistic features, as a result of which a typical image of ritual objects was formed.

Keywords: Armenian Art, Liturgical Objects, Artistic Features, Symbols

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Introduction

The artistic features are the important provisions by which the ritual objects types and descriptions of different Christian churches can be characterized. In essence, identifying and grouping these features are the most complex processes. The ritual objects used during various rituals in the Armenian church, with their types and artistic features, developed and completed over time, forming a solid system, which both differs from and connects with the ritual objects of other Christian churches.

Current article is going to present the main characteristics of Armenian ritual objects as completely as possible.

Before moving on to the objects, one important circumstance should be mentioned: most survived examples of Armenian ritual objects which came to us, were made after the 17th century. Until then, very few samples are preserved from the medieval period, due to looting by enemies, various historical events, loss of statehood, as well as the practice, when old objects were melted down to serve as raw materials for new objects in order to save money. However, the few surviving samples, also some images in miniature painting, allow to make observations of ritual objects in Medieval period.

Armenian liturgical objects represent a set of eastern, western and local traditions, forming the corresponding overall picture. They were mainly made of silver, which was defined in church laws as early as the 5th century.¹

The study of the objects shows that they initially mainly include elements typical of Byzantine art, which were expressed both in the shape of the objects and in the artistic decoration. Western elements first appear, most likely around the 11th - 12th

¹ Hovhan Mayragomec'i, "Verlucut'iwn kat'olikē ekelec'woy ew or i nma yawrineal kargac'" [Analysis of the Church and the Laws Invented for Him], *Sion. Official Magazine of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem*, no. 1–2 (January–February 1967): 72.

centuries, in the Cilician kingdom. In 15th and 16th centuries of historical development there is observed a severe lack of samples, sometimes complete absence depending on political and economic unfavorable situation. The objects begin to appear in large numbers only in the new era. So, another significant change is noticeable already after the 17th century, when, thanks to the spread of the printed book and printing, the Baroque, Rococo, and then Neoclassical elements were widely included in Eastern art.² This process has its full impact on ritual objects, making changes to their artistic decoration, as well as giving birth to new types of objects.

The Armenian Liturgical Objects and their Artistic Features

Reliquaries - As in other Christian churches, in the Armenian Church too, holy relics and their worship occupy a special place. In the Armenian church, reliquaries can be in the form of triptyches, crosses, Dexters, arks, or have more complex or simple solutions.

Describing the western and eastern reliquaries, the researchers emphasize an important circumstance, that is, Western reliquaries display the relic, while Eastern reliquaries hide it by placing it in arks or boxes.³

The observation of the large number of reliquaries in the Armenian church shows that in Medieval period the relic was hidden, but already the samples made after the 17th century do

² Helen Evance, Silvie Merian, "The Final Centuries. Armenian Manuscripts of the Diaspora," in *Treasures of Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts*, eds. Thomas F. Matheus, Roger S. Wieck (New York: Princeton Univ Pr., 1994), 112.

³ Irina Sterligova, "Novozavetnie relikvii v drevnei Rusi" [The New Testament Relics in Old Rus'], in *Christian Relics in the Moscow Kremlin*, ed. Aleksei Lidov (Moscow: Radunica, 2000), 29; Claire Kilgore, "Viewing Heaven: Rock Crystal, Reliquaries, and Transparency in Fourteenth-Century Aachen" (Theses, School of Art, Art History and Design, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2017), 14.

not hide the relic like the western tradition, putting it under a glass or a rock cristal.

From the Medieval period reached us reliquaries in a shape of triptychs. The most famous of them is the Skevra reliquary of 1293 currently preserved in Sate Hermitage (Russia).⁴

The study of different collections shows, that Greek cross-shaped reliquaries are strongly predominant in the Armenian Church. But it should be noted again that all preserved examples were made after the 17th century. We cannot make any judgments about the prevalence of cross-shaped reliquaries in the Middle Ages, as there are almost no preserved examples (ill. 1).

As a rule, the relic was placed in the center of the cross: the place where Christ's body was at the time of the crucifixion: This approach is also emphasized during the rite of consecration of the cross: first the center is anointed, then the crown, the cross arms, and finally the handle.⁵

Reliquaries are formed with images, colored stones, rarely enameled, the surface is often simply polished, or covered with a rich floral motif, inscriptions – which also make an artistic role, and is also made with the full filigreed technique.

Special group consists of examples made of filigree, mostly with palm-shaped wings. Filigree was very popular as in Van-Vaspurakan region⁶, as well as in other Armenian silver-making

⁴ Sirarpi Der-Nersessian, “Le reliquaire de Skevra et l'orfèvrerie cilicienne aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles,” *Revue des études Armeniennes*, Nouvelle série, Tome I (1964): 121-47; Aleksandr Kakovkin, “Skvrski skladden of 1293” [Skevra Reliquary of 1293], *Bulletin/Review of Social Sciences*, no. 1 (1978): 92-7; Alvida S. Mirzoyan, *Le Reliquaire de Skevra* (New York, 1993).

⁵ “Kanon Xač‘ orhneloy ew oceloy” [The rule of blessing and anointing the cross], in *Girk‘ Mec Maštoc‘ koč‘ec‘eal* [Book of rituals of the Armenian church] (Costantinople: Yohannisean Połos print., 1807), 208.

⁶ On Van-Vaspurakan area silversmithing see: Hayk Ter-Ghevondyan, “ŽZ- ŽƏ dareri Vaspurakani arca t‘agorcu t‘yan masin“ [About Vaspurakan Silversmithing of 16th-18th centuries], *Bulletin/Review of*

centers (ill. 2). In general, this silversmithing technique was also in demand in other cultures under the Ottoman Empire's rule, for example in traditional cultures of the Balkans. In many cases, the samples have stylistic and making commonalities, despite being made in different cultural and religious environments. However, typologically, a similar group of cross-shaped reliquaries is mostly represented in Armenian churches, presenting the artistic preferences existing in the Armenian church in the 18th-19th centuries.

Body-part reliquaries - Among the types of reliquaries used in the Armenian church, the Arm reliquary or the Dexter occupies an important place (ill. 3). A large number of examples of latter have reached us. They are presented both with rich artistic decoration, with the use of complex silversmithing and goldsmithing techniques, precious stones, and with simpler solutions. Reliquaries in the shape of body-parts are not widely used in the Armenian Church. Only the Dexter is used during various rituals: for example, on the blessing of the Holy Chrism, on the occasion of the ordination of Catholicos etc.

As it is known, the use of reliquaries in the form of parts of the human body was developed in the West approximately from the end of the 9th century, but gained more importance only from the 12th-13th centuries.⁷

The Orthodox Christian Church does not use reliquaries in the form of body-parts.⁸ Similar reliquaries were avoided

Social Sciences, no. 8 (1963): 101-108; Osep Tokat, *Armenian Master Silversmiths* (Los Angeles, 2005).

⁷ Caroline W. Bynum, Paula Gerson, "Body-Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle ages," *GESTA* 36, no. 1 (1997): 4.

⁸ Ioli Kalavrezou, "Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the byzantine Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 68-9; Anna Ballian, "The Treasury of the Monastery of Saint Sophia at Sis," in *Armenian Relics of Cilicia. From the Museum of the Catholicosate in Antelias, Lebanon*, ed. Anna Ballian (Athens: Olkos, 2012), 88.

probably because, being as a shrine for the holy relic, they were either too similar to a real body part, or were close to three-dimensional sculpture.⁹

The use of three-dimensional sculptures of saints is also not welcome in the Armenian church.¹⁰ So, we can assume that this phenomenon entered our church as a result of western influence. Accordingly, it is possible to put forward the point of view that the arm reliquary began to be used around the time when certain movements, tendencies towards the Catholic Church began to be noticed in the Armenian Church. In this sense, the spread of similar reliquaries in the West coincides with the period when pro-Catholic moves began to be observed in Armenian Cilicia already in the late 12th and early 13th centuries.¹¹ It is also important that in the context of the aforementioned tendencies, changes took place in the Liturgical vestments of the Armenian Church, borrowing many elements from the Latin Church.¹²

⁹ Ioli Kalavrezou, “Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the byzantine Court,” in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 68-9.

¹⁰ Giwt Alaneanc', *Karg astuacapaštut'ean Hayastaneayc' S. yekelec'wo [Order of Piety of Armenian Holy Church]* (Tbilisi: St. Martirosyanc' Publ., 1902), 48.

¹¹ Claude Mutafian, *La Cilicie au Carrefour des empires*, Tome I (Paris: Société d'édition “Les belles lettres”, 1988), 408-11;

Aram Hovhannisyan, *Hayoc' ekelec' in kilikyan šrjanum [The Armenian Church in Cilician period]* (Yerevan: Copyright edition, 2018), 28-9.

¹² See: *Tn. Nersesi Lambronac'woy Tarsoni episkoposi Atenabanutiwn ew t'ult'k' ew čark'* [*The Epistle and Papers and Speeches of Ter Nerses of Lambron, Bishop of Tarsus*] (Venice, San Lazzaro, 1838), 203-42;

See: Nelli Smbatyan, “Haykakan ekelec'akan sašavartneri ew vakasneri gelarvestakan nkaragirə (Buxaresti haykakan ekelec' u t'angarani nmušneri orinakov)” [The Artistic Characteristics of Armenian Liturgical Mitras and Amicts (On the Example of the Specimens from the Museum of Armenian Church in Bucharest)], in *Genesis Forest, Collected Articles in Memory of Felix Ter-Martirosov* (Yerevan: YSU publ., 2015), 499-513.

Therefore, the introduction of arm reliquary was also possible in that period.

Among the arguments supporting our hypothesis in favor of the Cilician period are also the earliest examples of arm reliquaries with a clear dating, which were made in Cilicia.¹³

It is noticeable in the Cilician examples that they presenting the gesture typical for Latin ritual (ill. 4). Later, first of all changed the gesture, corresponding to the gesture of blessing accepted in the Armenian ritual.¹⁴ Besides the Cilician Dexters, the vast majority of arm reliquaries that have come down to us already displaying the relic in a visible place of the object, mostly on the forearm, under a piece of rock crystal, completely in accordance with the Western tradition. Despite this, the arm reliquary has completely become an inseparable part of the ritual items of the Armenian Church, fully bearing the features and characteristics of Armenian art in its artistic decoration.

Altar crosses – The Altar Cross is mandatory in the decoration of Holy Table in Armenian Church. It has a foot and a pedestal on which the cross rests (ill. 5a, b). Crosses can be meet also of other materials, not only silver, for example bronze, and of a rock-crystal example from medieval period. Discovered

¹³ Astghik Babajanyan, “Hovhannes Mkrtč'i ajov xač'-masunk'aran [The Cross-Reliquary with John the Baptist's Dexter],” *Vem* Panarmenian Journal, no. 4 (44) (October-November 2013): 94-106; Dickran Kouyoumjian, *The Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia. History, Treasures, Mission*, ed. Seta Dadoyan, (Lebanon-Anthelias, 2015), 179-81; On stylistic and artistic analysis of the arm-reliquary of Saint Nicholas see: Anna Ballian, “The Treasury of the Monastery of Saint Sophia at Sis,” in *Armenian Relics of Cilicia. From the Museum of the Catholicosate in Antelias, Lebanon*, ed. Anna Ballian (Athens: Olkos, 2012), 87-93.

¹⁴ On the entry of the Arm reliquary into the ritual of the Armenian Church through the Cilician kingdom see: Mariam Vardanyan, “Arm Reliquary from the Collection of the Armenian Diocese of Romania: on the problem of local influences,” *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 1 (31) (2023): 156-67.

bronze crosses of Medieval Armenia are similar to Byzantine bronze examples of current period.¹⁵

What about the illustrated decoration system of the crosses, then we can judge mainly by examples of later periods. From early Christian and medieval times, very few samples preserved, which were made with Byzantine influence, as it is seen in bronze samples.¹⁶

The observation of the samples reveals the interruption of the previous tradition of illustrating in the new era. Thenceforth, they appear by imitating the Western system of cross decoration: as a rule in the center is presented the crucified Christ or the brief scene of Crucifixion on one side and on the other side - the image of Mother of God with child or praying. The arms of crosses are often decorated with the images of Evangelists or their symbols, the angels, instruments of Passion of Christ.¹⁷ There are also examples with Greek influence can be found, where the prophets are also depicted in the artistic system of the cross.¹⁸

¹⁵ Nyura Hakobyan, “Mijnadaryan Hayastani gēlarvestakan metał IX–XIII darerum” [„Artistic metal of medieval Armenia in 9th–13th centuries”], in *Hayastani hnagitakan hušarjannerə* 10 [Archaeological monuments of Armenia 10], no. III (Yerevan, 1981), 32; “Trasures of Armenian Church. Exhibition in the State Museum of the Moscow Kremlin,” ed. Nathan Hovhannisian, text: Iveta Mkrtchyan, Seyranush Manukyan (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, 1997), 51; “The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843-1261,” ed. Helen C. Evance and William D. Wixom (New York: The Metropolitan museum of Art, 1997), 56.

¹⁶ “Trasures of Armenian Church. Exhibition in the State Museum of the Moscow Kremlin,” ed. Nathan Hovhannisian, text: Iveta Mkrtchyan, Seyranush Manukyan (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, 1997), 50.

¹⁷ Mariam Vardanyan, “Armenian Altar Crosses in Romanian-Armenian Church Tradition,” *Revue Des Études Sud-Est Européennes* LVIII, no. 1–4 (2020): 193.

¹⁸ Mariam Vardanyan, “Armenian Altar Crosses in Romanian-Armenian Church Tradition,” *Revue Des Études Sud-Est Européennes* LVIII, no. 1–4 (2020): 196-97.

However, it should be noted that only the images forming the cross are western. The shape of the cross remains typical Armenian. It is the blooming cross, the wings of which end with buds or palm-shaped. Apart, after the 17th century, rays or beams almost always come out from the crossing point of the cross-arms. Sometimes rays can be replaced with angel heads or lush leaves. This whole composition symbolizes the Tree of life.

In addition, the Armenian cross can be known thanks to “INRI” written in Armenian «ԻՆՐԻ».

Altar Radiances – One of the unique objects in Armenian Church is the altar Radiance, which decorates the Holy Table (ill. 6).

The name of the object comes from its form: it usually represents round or oval metal sheets made mostly in the technique of chasing or having transparent compositions, framed by rays. Radiances could be decorated from one side or from both sides. The center usually depicts either the Crucifixion of Christ or Madonna with the Child, which are the most common scenes. There are other scenes as well, mostly in the churches of the Armenian colonies, for example the All-see eye of God, the Dormition of the Mother of God (Romania). Examples with a three-dimensional sculpture of a dove in the center differ to some extent from the basic described invention of Radiances. As the study shows, they are the importation of Armenian silversmiths from Iran (ill. 7).

The comparison of the ritual objects used in different Christian churches, brought us to the conclusion, that the altar radiances were formed and used in the Armenian Church under the influence of the Western Church tradition, perhaps after the 17th century. The model for the creation of the object and its artistic decoration was a western Monstrance or Ostensorium, which in its shape and rays was in harmony with the requirements of the period. From the 16th century onwards, the appearance of the Monstrance began to change, and after the

emergence of the Baroque style, they received their finished composition framed by rays.

After the cultural and iconographic changes of the 17th century, one of new elements which entered Armenian art, were rays of sun. Until this period, such an abundance of rays has never been observed in the Armenian art. So, it becomes obvious that the artistic decoration of the radiances bears the characteristic features of the artistic principles prevailing in the new era.

The fact that the radiances entered the Armenian Church much later, testifies to its non-ritual function.

Our research on the Altar Radiances, has shown, that the radiances are typical exclusively for the Armenian Apostolic Church. This is another phenomenon which distinguishes the Armenian Church from the other Christian churches. It is also one of the manifestations of cultural interaction, when even with other influences it is possible to create a new and unique type of an object.

In this regard, the current conclusion can serve as a basis for the accurate attribution of radiances preserved in different collections, without Armenian inscriptions not attributed yet, as well as for the unknown documental photographic materials depicting church altars and church vessels.¹⁹

Chalices - the chalice must be silver, if not the base, at least the cup itself, and inside gilded²⁰ (ill. 8).

The origin of the Armenian chalice goes back to early Eastern Christian examples. In early examples, judging from the miniature painting examples had conically shaped cup rested on an almost little foot and circular pedestal. Later, the pedestal get

¹⁹ On the Altar Radiances see: Mariam Vardanyan, “Altar Radiances among Ritual Objects of Armenian Church (On the Example of the Collections of Armenian Diocese of Romania),” *Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art: Collection of articles* 13 (2023): 244-52.

²⁰ Malakia Ormanian, *Cisakan bararan [Ritual Dictionary]* (Yerevan: Hayastan Publ., 1992), 182.

wider, the cup get smaller, the foot get longer and the object become decorated in different ways.

The decoration of Armenian chalices was canonical. They were decorated with images of angels, cherubs, evangelists and their symbols, apostles, biblical scenes, included rich floral motifs and clouds.

Pedestals come in different shapes: round, wavy, square with wide or narrow spread. Especially in the 18th century, a step-shaped floral cut is often found.

Various stylized floral designs are more common, geometric ornaments are less. Although this decoration is the result of the influence of the Baroque and Rococo styles, it also became popular as a symbol of the heavenly paradise. They could be installed both in sections, and decorate the entire surface of the chalice, or completely fill the open spaces between the images of thematic medallions, angels or other figures. Grape vine and wheat, which symbolize the Eucharist, also often appear.

Here also, as in the case of reliquaries, separate group consist filigreed chalices.²¹

Paten: Patens, which present in pair with chalice are generally simple in design, mostly only polished, shallow bottomed plates. There are differences in size between them, depending on which chalice they were made and used for, so the bottom of the paten had to match the circumference of the chalice lip. Judging by the donative inscriptions, as a rule, each chalice had its own paten.

Pyx: In the Armenian Church, the pyx is generally represented as a small silver box, in which are kept fragments of

²¹ About the characteristics of Armenian Chalice see: Mariam Vardanyan, "Haykakan yekelec'akan skihneri ev Buxaresti hayoc' Srhoc' Hreshtakapetac' yekelec'u tangarani arcate skihneri masin" (About Armenian Church Chalices and the Chalices of the Museum of Armenian St. Archangels' Church in Bucharest), in *Genesis Forest, Collected Articles in Memory of Felix Ter-Martirosou* (Yerevan, 2015), 485-88.

the Eucharistic bread, which are given to the believers outside the liturgy or taken by the priests to the sick.²² Pyxes can be oval, round, rectangular, octagonal etc. In fact, we can associate the Pyxes with their shape, with the earliest Byzantine stone reliquaries. Essentially, they repeat the same form, but in smaller sizes and in a different material.

Images mainly cover the caps. The scenes mainly concern to sacrifice of Christ and the Eucharist. The image of Agnus Dei is the most common, can be met also images of St. George,²³ glorification of St. Chalice, etc.

Censer: The censer is one of the important ritual objects used in church rites and, especially, during the liturgy. From medieval round forms, they were transformed again with western influence into small, elongated architectural forms (ill. 9), symbolizing the Heavenly Jerusalem. The symbolic meaning of the Heavenly Jerusalem is also carried by the *arks* (ill. 10), again appearing in the form of Churches.

Dove-shaped vessel for Holy Chrism – This vessel stands out as a symbol of the descending Saint Spirit. The latter circumstance is fundamental for creating the form for the vessel in which Holy Chrism is stored in the Armenian Church (ill. 11). The Dove-shaped vessels often with outstretched or movable wings, are an obligatory attribute of the Baptism rite.

Flabellum's typical traditional appearance is the decoration with images of cherubs, are fixed all around with little bells. Basically, flabellum decoration has not undergone changes over time.

Hand or benediction crosses – The hand cross is always present in the Armenian church ritual life. No ritual is performed without a cross. It is one of the most practical

²² Ormanian, *Cisakan bařaran*, 100.

²³ The art historian Manya Ghazaryan considers that the origin of pixes with the image of St. George is Romania. See: Manya Ghazaryan, “Ējmiaçni harstut‘yunnerə” [The Riches of Echmiadzin], *Echmiadzin, Official journal of the Patriarchal See*, no. 5-6 (1987): 99.

elements of church vessels, an important component of a priest's dress, a sacred symbol and a special object.²⁴ Hand crosses are basically small, Greek cross-shaped, with a handle attached to the lower arm. These are available with or without images, designed with floral ornament, precious or semi-precious stones. Even in the small sizes, it bears all the characteristics of the Armenian cross, which we described above (ill. 12).

Book bindings - The Gospel book is mandatory in the decorating system of the Holy Table in the Armenian Church. It symbolizes Christ in the altar, being his image and witnessing his presence.²⁵ As we can see, the Gospels placed on the Holy table are enclosed usually in richly decorated silver bindings. Besides the Gospels other books used in the church were decorating too.

Bindings can be classified into two main types:

1. Bindings made of full plates,
2. Bindings consisting of separate metal parts.

Regardless of whether the bindings are made of a complete plate or with separate parts, their principle of composition is the same: that is, to emphasize the five main points, in the center and at the four corners.

3. As a rule, the central detail for the decoration of the upper cover depicts the Crucifixion of Christ, with brief or large iconography. The central plate of the lower flap represented either the Resurrection of Christ or Madonna with the Child. These were the main scenes of the central plate. Of course, depending on the taste of the master or the customer, their location could be

²⁴ Hakob K'yoseyan, A. Łazaryan, "Xač' [Cross]," in *K'ristonea Hayastan hanragitaran [Christian Armenian" Ennciclopedia]* (Yerevan, 2002), 423.

²⁵ *Srboyn Nersesi Lambronac'woy Tarsoni Episkoposi Xorhrdaciwnk' i kargs ekelec'woy ew meknutiwn xorhrdu pataragin [Reflections of Saint Nerses of Lambron, Bishop of Tarsus, on the order of the church and the interpretation of the Liturgical Council]* (Venice, San Lazzaro, 1847), 129.

changed, as well as replaced with other scenes. Images of the Evangelists or angels were placed in the corners.²⁶

The surviving medieval examples of compositions still follow Greek principles. The first Western influences appear again in the Cilician period, appearing as symbols of the evangelists placed in the corners.²⁷

Most of all the western influences, were expressed on the bindings of Cesaria²⁸ (ill. 13), then in Constantinople silver centers²⁹ (ill. 14a, b), sometimes practically copying the western

²⁶ About the artistic decorations of Armenian silver bindings see: Babken Araqelyan, “Kazmeri zardarman arvestə mijnadaryan Hayastanum” [The Art of Decorating of Book Bindings in Medieval Armenia], *Bulletin of Matenadaran*, no. 4 (1958): 183; Armen Malkhasyan, *Surb Ējmiacni metale krknakazmerə* [The Metal Bindings of Holy Etchmiadzin] (Etchmiadzin, 2011); Mariam Vardanyan, “The Collection of Silver Book Binding of the Armenian Museum in Bucharest and Their Relationship to Eastern and Western Arts,” *Series Byzantina* XV (2017): 81-97; Flora Ghazaryan, “Western Iconographic Influences on Armenian Silver Book bindings from Ottoman Constantinople (Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)” (MA Thesis, Central European University, 2017); Levon Chookaszian, “Metal Covers of the Certain Armenian Manuscripts and books from the Eastern European Collections,” in *On the Borderline Between the East and the West. Materials of the international conference dedicated to the 90th anniversary of Yaroslav Dashkevich* (Lviv, 2018), 319-23.

²⁷ Anna Ballian, “The Treasury of the Monastery of Saint Sophia at Sis,” in *Armenian Relics of Cilicia. From the Museum of the Catholicosate in Antelias, Lebanon*, ed. Anna Ballian (Athens: Olkos, 2012), 82.

²⁸ Harutyun Qyurtian, “Kesarioy voskerč‘akan dproc‘in arcat‘ kazmerə. ŽĒ dar” [Silver Bindings of the Jewelry School of Cesaria], “Hask” *Armenological Yearbook* (Anthelias, 1948): 51-61; Armen Malkhasyan, “Kesarahay kazmarvesti patmutiunic” [From the History of Caesarian Armenian Book Binding Art], *Echmiatsin*, no. 5-6 (1996): 174-90; Sylvie L. Merian, “The Armenian Silversmiths of Kesaria/Kayseri in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Armenian Kesaria/Kayseri and Cappadocia*, ed. Richard G. Hovhannisian (Costa Mesa: Mazda publishers, 2013), 117-85.

²⁹ On the Armenian jewelry and silversmithing in Constantinople see: Armenak Sagzyan, “K.Polsi hay voskerč‘utiwnə. ŽĒ - ŽT‘ dar,”

engravings, for example from the first Armenian Bible printed in Amsterdam in 1666.

Western influences brought innovation even in book bindings, giving birth to a new group of design - Mirrophores Gospels (ill. 15a, b). According to our studies, they were formed in the Constantinople silver-making center, and then spread to other centers from the very beginning of the 19th century. The Mirrophores Gospels contain only the texts relating to the burial and resurrection of Christ and are read on the Feast of the Resurrection. So, appropriate themes were chosen for decoration: scenes of Christ's burial and Resurrection.

Conclusion

Based on the above mentioned, we can conclude that despite various influences, Armenian ritual objects have shaped their unique features over the centuries.

The study of different collections of the Armenian liturgical objects shows that the system of design of objects was formed by including both Byzantine and later Western elements, mixing them with national artistic features, as a result of which a typical image of ritual objects was formed. Also very important is the fact that among the ritual objects over time, such objects

[Armenian jewelry in Constantinople: XVIII-XIX centuries], *"Anahit" journal of thinking and art*, no. 5 (January-February 1930): 9-14; Hasmik Stepanyan, *Hayeri nerdrumn Osmanyanyan kaysrutyunum [Contribution of Armenians to the Ottoman Empire]* (Yerevan: Gasprint, 2011), 584-600; Garo Kürkman, *Ottoman Silver Marks* (Istanbul: Mathusalem Publications, 1996); Ronald Marchese, Marlene Breu, *Treasures of Faith. Sacred Relics and Artifacts from the Armenian Orthodox Churches of Istanbul* (Istanbul, 2015); Garo Kürkman, *Sultan's Jewelers in the Ottoman Palace 1853-1871* (Istanbul: Korpus Yayinlari, 2019); Arsen Yarman, *Osmanli Döneminde Mücevher ve Ermeni Kuyumcular* (Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, 2022).

were formed that are characteristic only for the Armenian Church.

The stylistic and artistic traditions of Armenian liturgical objects collected and systematized over the centuries, are preserved during the 20th century and even now. Masters preserve the characteristic features, developing, but not departing from the basic forms.

However, during the search or study of Armenian ritual objects, apart from the artistic forms and features, first of all suggest the Armenian origin Armenian writings included in the artistic system, which are present in the vast majority of ritual objects.

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