To Peter with Best wishes
Dickran
9/X/87

CHINESE ELEMENTS IN ARMENIAN MINIATURE PAINTING IN THE MONGOL PERIOD

DICKRAN KOUYMJIAN

For more than fifty years, coinciding with the second half of the thirteenth century, the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia had friendly relations with the Mongols, even concluding an alliance several times renewed (1). From the journey to Mongolia of Smbat (1247-1250), Constable of Armenia and brother of the ruling king Het'um (2), to the death of Ghazan Khan (1304), Armenian princes and kings (3) traveled to the Great Mongol court at Qaraqorum or to the various residences of the Mongol rulers of Iran, the so-called Il-Khanids (4),

(1) This study is a revision and expansion of a paper delivered in November 1977 for a panel on «Patronage and Symbolism in Medieval Armenian Art» sponsored by the Society for Armenian Studies during the XIth Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in New York. It had the title, «Far Eastern Influences in Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period» and was distributed in mimeogrpahed form. At the time certain points provoked a lively debate. On Armenian-Mongol relations see, A. G. Galstyan, «The First Armeno-Mongol Negotiations», *PBH* (1964), no. 1, pp. 91-105 (in Armenian).

(2) On Smbat's journey, see the article of Jean Richard, «La lettre du Connetable Smbat et les rapports entre Chrétiens et Mongols au milieu du XIII^{ème} siècle», which is published later in this volume, pp. 683-696.

(3) On the famous journey of Het'um, see Kirakos Ganjakec'i, *Universal History*, critical ed. K. A. Melik'-Ōhanjanyan, Erevan, 1961, pp. 364-372, and the translation of this section with commentary, J. A. Boyle, «The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke», *Central Asia Journal*, vol. IX, no. 3 (1964), pp. 175-189.

(4) The most convenient treatment of the Il-Khanids is found in J. A. Boyle, «Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns», *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, *Seljuk and Mongol Period*, London, 1968, pp. 303-420. For the Armenian background see Sirarpie Der Nersessian, «The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia», *A History of the Crusades*, vol. II, ed. by K. M. Setton, R.C. Wolff and H. W. Hazard (Philadelphia, 1962), pp. 630-659, reprinted in *idem, Etudes Byzantines et Arméniennes, Byzantine and Armenian Studies* (hereafter *Etudes*), 2 vols., Louvain, 1973, pp. 329-352;

especially under Hulagu (1256-1265) and his son Abaqa (1265-1282). During these visits, the sources mention the exchange of gifts and honors between the Armenian aristocracy and the Mongol rulers. Though no such gifts have either survived or been textually described, some of them were undoubtedly of Chinese manufacture or inspiration since China had already been partially conquered by the Mongols. This study will analyze the few direct consequences on Armenian art of this relationship and the channels through which Chinese motifs passed into Armenia. It will also consider the long term effects of Far Eastern influences on Armenian art and contrast these with their impact on Islamic art.

The defeat of the Seljuk Turks in Anatolia by the Mongol armies in 1243 was the prelude to the conquest of the eastern Islamic world by Hulagu Khan – the brother of the future Great Mongol Khan, Qubilai — and the destruction of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate and its capital Baghdad by him in 1258. The heartland of the Muslim world found itself under the direct occupation of an unsympathetic, non-Islamic empire whose homelands were further to the east than any permanent penetration of Islam, and whose conquest and rule of China and southeast Asia were more significant to it than hegemony over the Near East (5).

The Mediterranean world and the Near East always had commercial contacts with the Far East (6); Chinese silks and ceramics were popular trade items long before the arrival of the Mongols. However, Mongol suzerainty over the area created an arrangement whereby the overlords of Iran, Iraq, Armenia, and Anatolia were part of the same family, the same dynasty, which ruled Central Asia and China too. Genghis Khan (d. 1227) had himself conquered northern China; by 1230 Peking was part of the Mongol domain and in 1260, shortly after he succeeded his brother Möngke as Great Khan, Qubilai had established his capital there. By the time his other brother Hulagu had conquered Baghdad, Qubilai was already spending much of his time in China. At this moment the Near East was theoretically in direct contact with China and, thereby, with Chinese art, its conventions and iconography, that were borrowed and assimilated into the Islamic art of the area for the next three centuries.

also more recently, T. S. R. Boase, *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, New York, 1978, pp. 25-29.

(5) The best work on the period is Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, trans. J. Jones-Williams, London, 1968; a revised French edition has been announced.

(6) Discussed in W. Heyd, *L'Histoire du Commerce du Levant*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1885-6, 2nd ed., reprint, Leipzig, 1936, pp. 1-128.

Armenia, at least Cilician Armenia, was also to have access to Chinese art through the Mongol contact. By the 1280s, a decade before the first timid borrowings of Chinese modes began to appear in neighboring Islamic art, a repertory of chinoiserie is found in the illuminations of certain Armenian religious manuscripts. These Armenian examples are the central subject of this study.

The entire corpus of unmistakably and direct Chinese elements in Armenian art is limited to miniature paintings in two manuscripts executed for members of the royal court of Cilicia in 1286 and 1287. The latter of the two, a Gospel manuscript (Erevan, Matenadaran no. 197), was copied and illuminated at the monastery of Akner for archbishop John (Yovhannēs). It contains on folio 341^{v}, in a miniature depicting a scene of ordination (7), a single, almost haphazard motif of a Chinese dragon (Figs. 1a-b). The full-page painting is framed by a very delicate floral design. The personages to the right are rendered with very mannered features. Archbishop John, portrayed as an old man, is shown laying his left hand on the head of a youth being ordained. In the lower left corner of the miniature on the archbishop's cope is a Chinese dragon woven or painted in gold with red outlines (Fig. 1b). The head of the dragon is raised vertically in profile while the neck, body, and tail wind upward. It appears to have four feet (three are clearly visible) each with four claws. In front of its open mouth is a leaf-like object, perhaps intended to be a flaming pearl. It is difficult to tell from the miniature if this Chinese silk is a separate item of clothing or simply a piece of textile sewn onto the garment as Sirarpie Der Nersessian has suggested (8). Bishop John was the younger brother of king Het'um I and Smbat the Constable, both of whom had been received by the Mongol khans in Central Asia. This piece of Chinese silk may have been a gift which one of the brothers of John brought back to him.

The other Armenian manuscript, executed a year earlier in 1286

(7) This example of Chinoiserie was over-looked in my original paper of 1977. I would like to thank Sirarpie Der Nersessian for having brought it to my attention. For illustrations of the miniature (our Fig. 1), see Lydia Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, New York, 1961, p. 113; S. Der Nersessian, *The Armenians*, London, 1969, fig. 72; Tania Velmans, «Maniérisme et innovations stylistiques dans la miniature cilicienne à la fin du 13^{e} siècle», *REArm*, 14 (1980), fig. 10; Gérard Dédéyan, ed. *Histoire des Arméniens*, Toulouse, 1982, illustration [16].

(8) S. Der Nersessian, *L'Art Arménien*, Paris, 1977, English edition *Armenian Art*, London, 1978, p. 160, all references in this article will be to the English version.

(Erevan, Matenadaran no. 979), is a *Lectionary* containing a more organically integrated group of chinoiserie. Though neither the name of the scribe nor artist are preserved, we know the manuscript was commissioned by prince Het'um, son of the reigning king, Leo II, grandson of Het'um I, and himself to be raised to the royal dignity

FIG. 1a. Gospel of 1287. Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 197, fol. 341v. Ordination. Photo Matenadaran.

in a couple of years. Like the Gospel of 1287, it has never been fully published nor described (9). It is one of the most profusely and luxuriously decorated Armenian codices with over 700 separate illuminations, some ten of which are large miniatures of both Old and New Testament scenes.

FIG. 1b. Gospel of 1287. Detail showing dragon of bishop John's cope.

(9) However, this and the other manuscripts treated in this article have been discussed by Der Nersessian (works cited in the following note); Levon Azaryan, *Kilikyan manrankarčʿutʿyunə, XII-XII dd. (Cilician Miniature Painting, XII-XIII Centuries)*, Erevan, 1964; Dournovo, *Hin haykakan manrankarčʿutʿyun (Ancient Armenian Miniature Paintings)*, album in Russian and Armenian with color plates, Erevan, 1952; *idem, Armenian Miniatures*, a reduced album with color

Distinct Chinese elements are found in the decoration of two chapter headings. The first, on folio 294 (Figs. 2a-c), has been reproduced often (10). The upper half of the page bears a wide decorative band centered around a beardless bust of the Youthful Christ, a feature found in other Cilician Armenian manuscripts. It is placed within a roundel contained in a rhombus-like frame of rainbow colored rectangles. Above and below its extremities are triangular shaped decorations, symmetrically placed on either side. The entire band is perfectly balanced, one side a near mirror image of the other. To the left of the page extending from top to bottom is a thin Armenian letter («ini»), formed of elongated animals and birds surmounted by a naturalistically rendered rooster. Vertically to the right, an extremely dense floral band of birds and animals culminates with a three-headed human bust on which rests an eagle.

On each side of the bust of Christ are gray colored, Chinese inspired animals in an upright position, probably lions with bodies in profile (Figs. 2b-c). There is a suggestion of movement toward the center, though the heads are turned frontally. Each animal's mouth and nose is highly stylized forming a trilobed leaf motif, and from the top of the head, sharp, flame-shaped crops of hair point upward. Just below the frame under these «lions» is another pair of like animals of a bright blue color, croaching on all fours (Figs. 2c-d). They display the same tight curls of hair, bushy tails, ears, but somewhat different faces. Their tails also seem shorter. It is difficult to be sure whether they are intended to represent the same animals as above, since they are depicted in both a different posture and color. Just below the hind

plates in English and French versions; L. Dournovo and R. G. Drampyan, *Haykakan manrankarč'ut'yun/Miniatures Arméniennes*, Erevan, 1967 and 1969, text in Armenian, French and Russian, an expanded version of the other albums; Bezalel Narkiss, ed., in collaboration with Michael Stone, *Armenian Art Treasures of Jerusalem*, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1979; Velmans, «Maniérisme», *op. cit.* The *Lectionary* was first discussed by Garegin Yovsēp'ean in *Anahid* (1911).

(10) Arménag Sakissian, «Thèmes et motifs d'enluminure et de décoration arméniennes et musulmanes», *Ars Islamica*, vol. VI (1939), pp. 66-87, reprinted in *idem, Pages d'art arménien*, Paris, 1940, pp. 59-86, fig. 38, references in this article to *Pages*; Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, pp. 126-7; Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 43; Azaryan, *op. cit.*, fig. 134; S. Der Nersessian, «Miniatures ciliciennes», *L'Oeil*, no. 179 (November, 1969), pp. 2-9, 110, fig. 22, reprinted in *idem, Etudes*, pp. 509-515, fig. 261; John Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 139, pl. 259; Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, p. 155, fig. 116; *Hay Endanik* (1982), nos. 11-12, p. 35.

quarters of these blue beasts, in the lower extremity of the triangle-shapes they form part of, are violet colored monsters with mouths open nearly 180 degrees revealing long whip-like serpentine tongues projecting out of their centers (Figs. 2c, e). This detail, along with

FIG. 2a. *Lectionary* of Het'um II, 1286. Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 979, fol. 293. Decorated chapter heading. Photo Matenadaran.

FIG. 2b. *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Detail of upright lion on left side

FIG. 2c. *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Detail showing the three animals on the right.

the neat rows of white teeth visible on the jaws, adds a menacing aspect to these animals shown in profile. Their heads have pointed ears and two octopus-like tentacles at the top. Each has a truncated serpentine or fish body, marked by accordion elements ending in a strange light

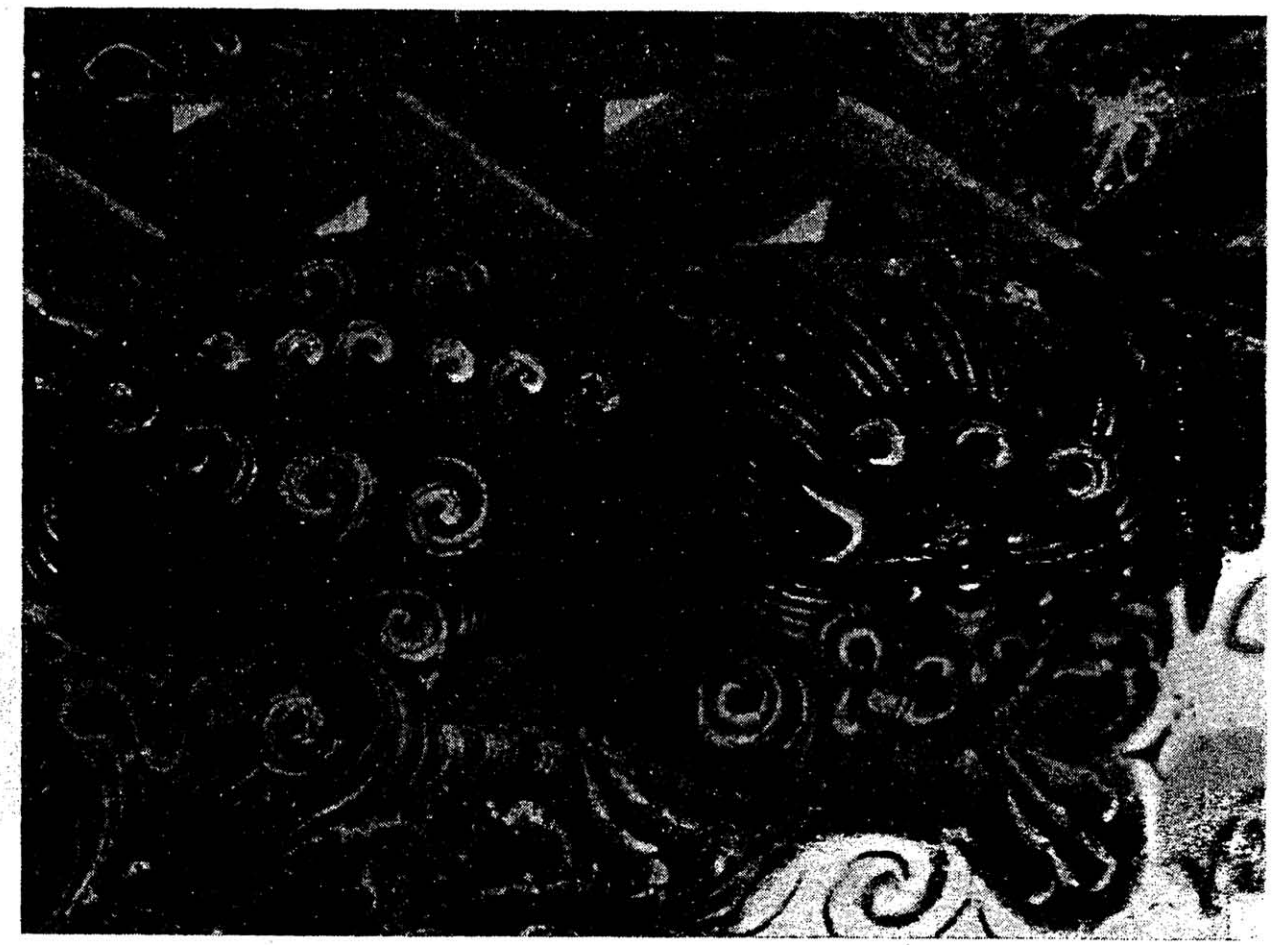

FIG. 2d. *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Detail of croaching lion on the left.

violet colored base. They must certainly represent dragons, but a legless, reptile variety. In the right hand band two similar violet dragons with prominent heads can be seen (Fig. 2a), one at the bottom, interposed with two other animal heads, but with no body, and another midway up with open mouth facing toward the feet of a monkey.

Above the bust of Christ are three pairs of birds. The largest pair with wings spread out as though about to fly shares a vague Chinese quality with another pair gracefully hovering at the top. (A third one is located in the decoration to the right below the three headed

figure). Flying birds are common to Chinese art of the period, whether ducks, cranes, or the fabulous phoenix. Though several birds with wings spread about to fly or land are depicted in late twelfth and thirteenth century Armenian canon table decorations (11), they lack the naturalistic quality of those of the *Lectionary*. Generally in

FIG. 2e. *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Detail of open mouth dragon on the left.

the art of the Middle East up to the Mongol period, birds are never shown in flight (12), but rather static, like the lower pair in this same

(11) Baltimore, Walters Gallery of Art, MS no. 538, Gospel executed in 1193 at Połoskan, Cilicia, fols. 5, 7, 11, S. Der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Walters Gallery of Art*, Baltimore, 1974, figs. 28, 30, 32; Venice, Mekhitarist Congregation, MS no. 1635, Gospel of 1193, Cilicia, fols. 4, 7^{v}, S. Der Nersessian, *Manuscrits arméniens illustrés des XII^{e}, XIII^{e} et XIV^{e} siècles de la Bibliothèque de Pères Mekhitaristes de Venise*, 2 vols., Paris, 1936, II, figs. 42-3; Baltimore, MS, no. 539, Gospel of 1262 executed by T'oros Ṙoslin at Hṙomkla, fols. 4, 9^{v}, 383^{v}, Der Nersessian, *ibid.*, figs. 46, 51, 132.

(12) «Before the spread of Mongol taste about 1300 birds in Near Eastern

headpiece. Finally, in the top center of the composition is an eight petalled or eight pointed lotus-like rosette, reminiscent of the Buddhist wheel of the law.

The second decorated chapter heading from the *Lectionary* of Het'um, folio 334 (Figs. 3a-d), is less well known (13). Its formal arrangement is similar to the other, with a complex vertical decoration to the right, surmounted by a cross and finished at the bottom by an artistically twisted feline creature, perhaps a panther. The center of the headpiece is an empty trilobed arch, the flanking spandrels of which contain identical scenes: a Chinese dragon and phoenix in combat (Fig. 3b). From the viewer's position the dragon is given preference. It is seen clearly with tail and body moving up along the outer frame toward the top with the head curved back around facing toward the outside lower corner of the page. The under body of each dragon is rendered in a somewhat deeper violet than the dragon heads in the previous headpiece. The scales of the body are painted in alternating white and blue sections or stripes; their blue heads with white highlights are shown with open mouth, nose turned up, both eyes visible and directed toward the viewer; a short red tongue jets out and the long tufts of hair above the eyes end in red tips. The animal has four legs (only three are visible) ending with paws of four claws spread out like pinwheels.

Confronting the dragons are phoenixes with brown bodies and heads, and blue wings, the tips of which end in soft, pink, flared feathers. The brown feathered body highlighted in white is rendered in two parallel rows; the forward part has sharply pointed blue feathers. Both birds are rendered vertically by the requirements of the space and composition with the head of each, beak open, pointed directly into the open mouth of the dragon. Only one open eye is evident, since the head is in profile. The body, however, is spread out in aerial view. From the head long streamers of hair can be seen, two flowing in the air and another along the neck ending in a double curl. From the chin or lower beak of the phoenix on the right

art never convincingly fly, at most they stand in profile with wings raised, or in the heraldic frontal stance with wings displayed», Arthur Lane, *Later Islamic Pottery*, London, 1959, p. 12. This is certainly the case with most of the Armenian examples. See also Richard Ettinghausen, «On Some Mongol Miniatures», *Kunst des Orient*, vol. III (1959), pp. 44-65.

(13) Dournovo, *Hin haykakan manrankarč'ut'yun*, pl. 35; Azaryan, fig. 134.

is a floral like motif. The characteristic tails with long flowing flyers are lacking probably due to the exigencies of space.

FIG. 3a. *Lectionary* of Het'um II, 1286. Erevan, Matenadaran MS 979, fol. 334. Decorated chapter heading. Photo Matenadaran.

In the center of the decorated band above the arch is a single, almost heraldically placed Chinese phoenix (Fig. 3c). Its coloring of brown and blue is the same as that of the other phoenixes. However,

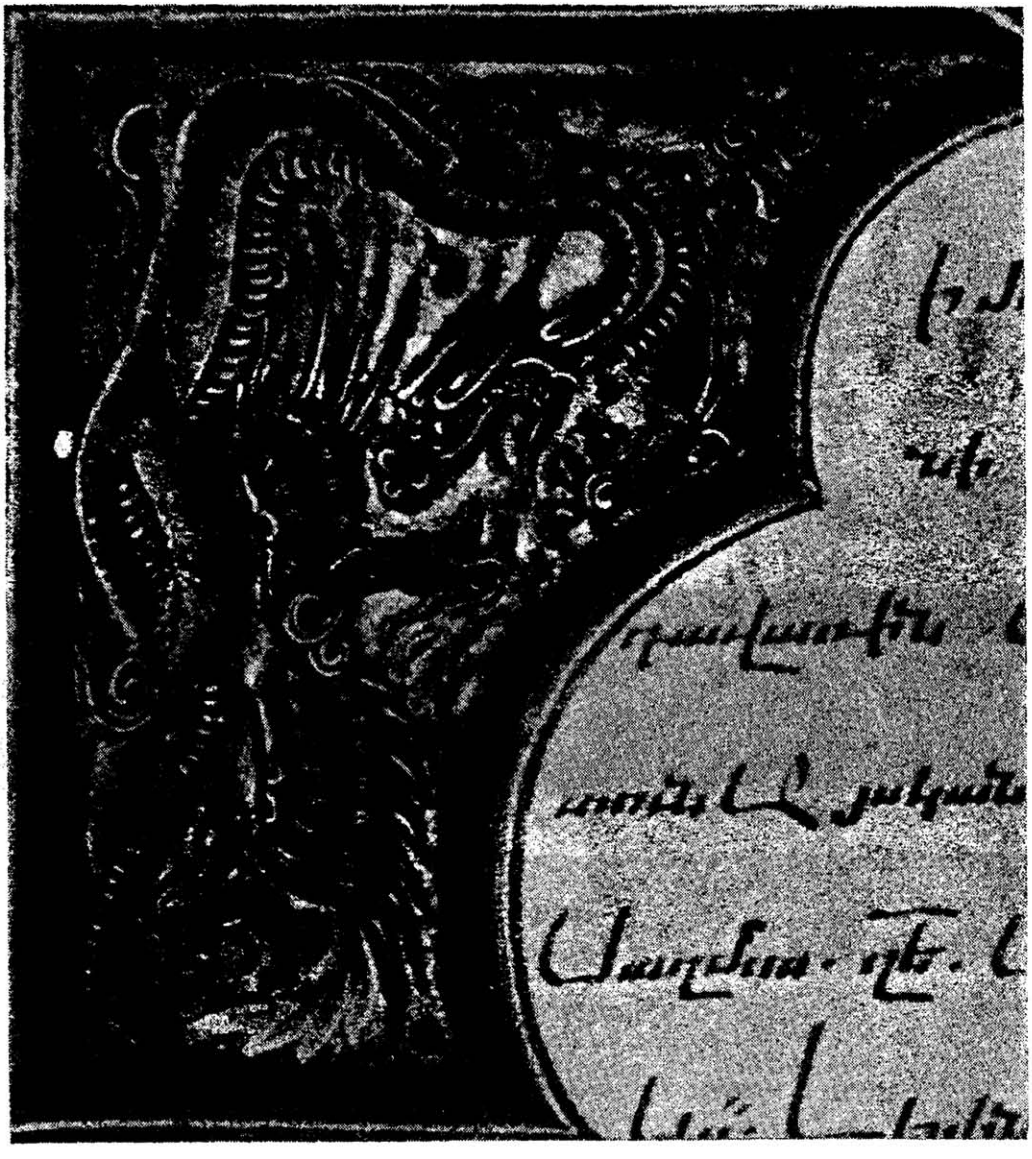

FIG. 3b. *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Detail of dragon and phoenix in left spandrel.

its much longer neck seems to be twisted from left to right in a loop with the head and beak intended to be shown upside down. From this view point the larger part of the head is clearly inverted, though its eye is faint or lacking. However, a row of teeth on the lower inverted part of the beak is clearly seen. The whole bird is visable, reveal-

ing fine, soft, fury tufts of feathers in blue below the brown wings and the expected long streamer tails, four in number and brown in color. The entire form is rendered extremely gracefully and with well understood proportions.

Floating above and to each side of this phoenix are a pair of eight pointed lotus like rosettes (Fig. 3a) similar in form and color to the central one in the earlier headpiece, perhaps again a Buddhist element. Just next to the lower part of the horizontal headpiece in the vertical band to the left can be seen another, open mouth dragon (Fig. 3d) similar to the four in the other miniature (Fig. 2c) and with the same violet colored head. The body is rendered more clearly in this example; it ends in a long tail. In the middle of this vertical decoration is a human head with two faces which, like the pair of deer in the upper corners of the central decoration, is found in other Cilician manuscripts. They, as well as scores of other animals and motifs in the ornamentation of these and other pages of the *Lectionary*, are not inspired by Far Eastern art and are not of direct concern to this study.

Thus, the complete catalogue of Chinese items in these three miniatures is four lions or dog-like animals, one pair prone and the other upright; three phoenixes; three Chinese dragons, two of which have four claws and the other on the textile, with three; five other birds rendered in a vaguely Chinese style, of which two are in flight; and three stylized lotus leaf rosettes. Little doubt can be cast on their Chinese borrowing or inspiration. In addition to these «bits» from Chinese art, there may have also been more general aesthetic influences. Near the end of this paper there will be a discussion, more a hypothesis, concerning the possible influence of Chinese landscape painting on the miniatures of these and a related group of Armenian manuscripts. But some practical questions must be considered first.

* * *

Through what channels and in what media did Chinese art come into Armenia? What was the effect of this art on Armenian painting? How was it similar or dissimilar to the effect of Chinese art on Islamic painting in the same, Mongol, period? What relationship is there between the Armenian and Muslim reaction to this Far Eastern artistic incursion?

One group of motifs in these miniatures seems to be copied with almost no modification from Chinese models. It includes the heraldic phoenix (Fig. 3c) and the dragon-phoenix motif (Figs. 3a, b) of the

second *Lectionary* headpiece, and the single dragon (Fig. 1b) on bishop John's garment. In the latter case, it is assumed we are confronted by a genuine piece of Chinese gold embroidered or painted silk cloth, faith-

FIG. 3c. *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Detail with phoenix at center top.

fully copied by the Armenian miniaturist as it appeared on the garment. It is less likely a fabric produced in Armenia with a Chinese motif, though Armenia was known for its fine textile industry, and contemporary miniatures display the rich apparel worn by Armenian aristocracy (14). The single phoenix in the headpiece is rendered in such

(14) A manuscript of 1268-9 attributed to Ṙoslin in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., MS no. 32.18, p. 535, shows Christ wearing such a garment

a way that it too must have been copied from some piece of Chinese decorative art. The dragon-phoenix motif is well known from Chinese ceramics, bronze mirrors, later lacquers, and could have been portrayed on textiles, including honorary robes presented as gifts. The dragon design is particularly appropriate for members of the Armenian royal court — like bishop John and prince Het'um — since the animal, as a four legged creature of the sky, was associated with the ruler and his family. The Chinese emperor himself sat on a dragon throne and wore robes with dragons, while emblems with dragons were common for his courtiers. The four clawed dragon was used by princes, while the five clawed imperial dragon was iconographically reserved for the emperor himself (15). As a compliment, the phoenix represented the empress; her crown had on it the fabled bird, the Fêng Huang, not really a phoenix, but assimilated to the animal of Greek mythology from early times (16). The single phoenix in the center of the second headpiece seems to have the same function in this miniature, though more symbolic to be sure, as does the bust of Christ in the first. In China the Fêng Huang-phoenix (the dragon too) was one of the four animals representing the cardinal directions. It ruled over the southern parts of heaven and, therefore, represented warmth, summer, the sun, and was said to appear and glorify a successful ruler and a peaceful reign. Its dominant postion on folio 334 of the royal *Lectionary* is clearly parallel to that of Christ, the King of peace and justice, on the other headpiece, folio 293.

Unlike the dragon-phoenix headpiece, which has never been adequately discussed and only rarely reproduced, the beardless Christ

when he appears to the Disciples after the Resurrection, Der Nersessian, *Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Washington, 1963, fig. 165, color reproduction in *idem, Armenian Art*, p. 135, fig. 98. There are many other such examples, as in the costumes of prince Leo and princess Keran, a manuscript executed in 1262 at Hṙomkla by T'oros Ṙoslin, Erevan, Matenadaran, MS no. 10675, fol. 288, formerly Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarachate, no. 3627, for color illustration see, [C. F. J. Dowsett], *Catalogue of Twenty-three Important Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts*, Sotheby auction catalogue, London, 1967, lot no. 1.

(15) Any standard handbook of Chinese mythology offers this information; for a recent one, see Hugo Munsterberg, *Dictionary of Chinese and Japonese Art*, New York, 1981, p. 186, «Lung-Dragon». This is considered the most powerful of Chinese dragons and inhabits the sky.

(16) *Ibid.*, «Phoenix». The dragon and phoenix motifs were already used in the Han dynasty and reached their highest point of popularity in Chinese art under the Sung (960-1279).

minature (Figs. 2a-e) has been published by A. Sakissian, L. Dournovo (twice), L. Azaryan, and S. Der Nersessian (twice) (17). The animals in

FIG. 3d. *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Detail of open mouth dragon in right margin.

it have been variously identified. They have given rise to questions simply because it is harder to find the direct correspondences in surviving Chi-

(17) See the references as given in *supra*, note 10.

nese or other Far Eastern art as was the case with the dragon and phoenix motif. All Armenian scholars have interpreted the pair of animals flanking the bust of Christ (Fig. 2b) as Chinese or Chinese inspired (18). Yet specialists of Chinese art who have examined the miniature fail to see any Far Eastern, especially Chinese, inspiration, but rather view them as heraldic animals of an Iranian or, in any case, from the Chinese point of view, a western tradition (19). However, there is nothing similar to them in either Armenian, Byzantine, or Islamic art, although the stylized flame like projections from the tops of quadrapeds' heads have been used in Armenian art, not just in the wings of angels, but in association with a lion rampant in a Cilician miniature of T'oros Ṙoslin of 1262 (20). Lions in Chinese art up to the Yuän or Mongol dynasty

(18) Sakissian, *Pages,* p. 65: «...sur le fronton même, deux lions chinois fantastiques, à tête et crinières stylisées, qui flanquent le medaillon central. Ils se rattachent aux influences extrême-orientales transmises par les Mongols»; Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures,* p. 126: «On either side of the portrait bust gray and blue dogs stand guard in Heaven and repel dragons with open jaws....the dragons are indeed Iranian in origin, the celestial dogs, Chinese»; Dournovo/Drampyan, p. 230: «des cheins céleste gris et bleu protegent les iconês contre des dragons iraniens aux gueules overtes, mençants, ramassés en noeud. Les chiens bleus fixant les dragons ont un regard expressif. On peut voir là le preuve que T'oros Roslin (sic) connaissant parfaitment l'art chinoise»; Der Nersessian, *L'Oeil,* p. 110: «Dans la tête de chapître, des lions à la crinière dressée rappellent des bronzes chinois»; *idem, Armenian Art,* p. 157: «However, the appearance of the lions and the dragons' heads or even that of the birds flying above the headpiece evoke Chinese art»; Nicole Thierry, «L'éclosion artistique des XII^e^ et XIV^e^ siècles», in Dédéyan, *Histoire des Armeniéns,* p. 337: «...on note de nombreuses créations venues de Chine ou d'Asie centrale comme les chiens bleus volants, les dragons aux lèvres retroussées, les grands échassiers aux ailes recourbées, les nuages flottants». Though Dournovo accepted the *Lectionary* and other manuscripts of the group as works of T'oros Ṙoslin, few scholars hold to this view any longer. As will be shown below, the wide mouth dragons are Iranian as Dournovo suggested. On the other hand, there is almost no discussion or even reference to the dragon-phoenix motif in these same sources.

(19) Jacques Giés of the Musée Guimet and the C.N.R.S. in Paris pointed out that Chinese lions as guardians of Buddha were never shown in motion or standing on all fours, but rather static. He observed that there was little that appeared Chinese in these animals. Jean-Paul Desroches, Conservator of Chinese Art at the Musée Guimet, was even more emphatic, saying that at first view there was nothing Chinese in the dog-lion animals, either upright or crouching, and certainly not in the open mouth dragon of the headpiece with the bust of Christ. However, quite to the contrary, he viewed the other headpiece with the dragon-phoenix motif as being completely Chinese in feeling. I would like to formally thank both scholars for the time and suggestions they gave me on these illuminations.

(20) Baltimore, Walters Gallery of Art, Gospel of 1262 illustrated by T'oros

are common, but they are usually seated with front legs erect and hind quarters on the ground. Those in the Armenian manuscript seem to be in movement toward Christ. Certainly they are totally erect and on all fours.

The lion is not indigenous to China; it made its way into Chinese art through Buddhism imported from India. The animal was sacred to Buddha, who was considered a lion among men, and it was generally regarded as a symbol of power. Just as lions are often represented guarding Buddha's throne, so too they kept watch over temples and, more importantly for our purposes, they protected images or icon-like objects on which they are portrayed. Dournovo already suggested this function as the reason for their presence on each side of the image of Christ (21). In later Chinese art of the Ming and expecially the Ching period, these guardian lions are often confounded with dogs, so-called Fu or celestial dogs, also associated with Buddha (22), and several times those in this miniature have been anachronistically so identified (23).

It is reasonable to conclude that our animals, though in an upright position, represent the Chinese guardian lions. The tight curls and even the nose and mouth stylization are more characteristic of Chinese artistic language — despite the protest of experts in that domain — than anything in the Middle East or the West. A Chinese example in bronze of such an upright lion (Fig. 4) is known from a previous dynasty. Similar lions were moulded or incised on ceramics and depicted on textiles. Another sculpted ceramic lion also from the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 5), seated but with head turned up, even has a nose with a trilobed leaf configuration similar to that shared by our lions (24). A somewhat earlier painted flaxen textile from Central Asia in the Musée Guimet in Paris (Fig. 6) shows a symmetrically placed pair of winged lions (perhaps qilin/ch'i-lin) in association (but

Roslin, MS no. 539, fol. 131, first page of Gospel of St. Mark, with a lion as part of the large ornamented initial letter of the text, Der Nersessian, *Walters*, pl. 62, fig. 89.

(21) Dournovo/Drampyan, p. 230, see *supra* note 18.

(22) Jacques Giés first pointed this out to me. It is confirmed in the standard works, for example Munsterberg, *op. cit.*, under «Fu Dog», p. 80.

(23) Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, p. 126, see *supra* note 18 for full text.

(24) For the bronze lion, late T'ang or perhaps Liao, see *The Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1970, p. 40, fig. 42; or the porcelain lion see, Mario Pradan, *La poterié T'ang*, Paris, 1960, pl. 15, from the Sung dynasty.

not in combat) with a pair of phoenixes surrounding a luxurious incense burner (25).

The other pair of blue creatures (Fig. 2d) also raises questions of identity and origin. It has been suggested that their crouched position facing toward the threatening open mouth creatures in the corners shows them as protectors against evil. For this period, these must also be regarded as lions, the change of color reflecting decorative considera-

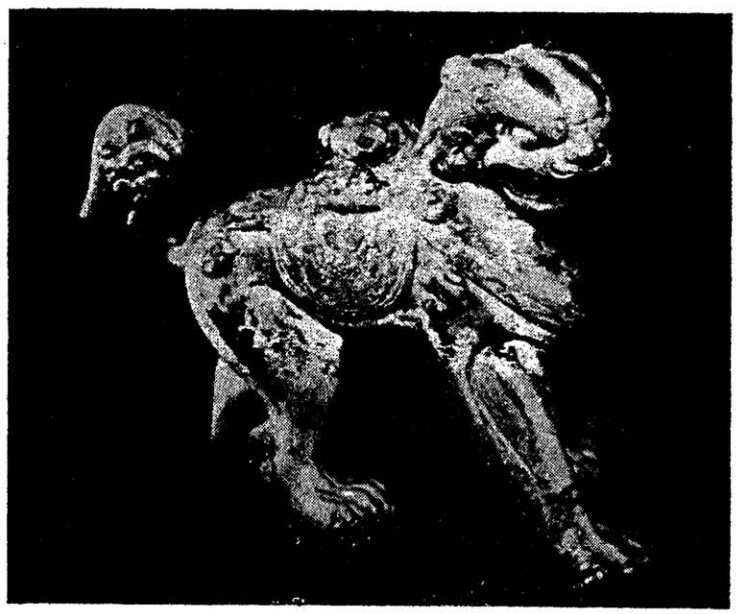

FIG. 4. Lion, gilt bronze. Late T'ang or Liao dynasty. London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Photo after *Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art,* London, 1970, no. 42.

tions or their actual coloring on the object from which they were copied. Chinese art historians again find them to be far removed from anything they know. But once more they are clearly not western. And a contemporary (thirteenth century) Chinese stone carving from excavations near Peking conducted in 1966 shows two phoenixes in combat and below them two crouching qilin/ch'i-lin or lion-like animals with curly or at least shaggy manes (26). The models for these croaching

(25) A middle or late T'ang painted textile on which the animals flank an incense burner; from the mission of Paul Pelliot, *La route de la soie,* exhibition catalogue, Musée Guimet, Paris, 1976, p. 60, no. 302.

(26) The ch'i-lin is a fabulous leonine creature, often with wings, considered a good omen and signifying longevity. The crouching ch'i-lins with shaggy manes were found in 1966 in excavations near the walls of the city of Peking. The stone slab is dated to the Yuän dynasty and has been published in *Vestige archélogique*

lions must have come through textiles, for ceramics and bronzes of the period seldom show these animals.

Unlike the imperial Chinese dragons of the headpieces, open mouth dragons, like the serpentine creatures of these miniatures (Figs. 2e, 3d), are unknown in Chinese art. There is at least one parallel in early Armenian art of animals with such truncated bodies. Several pairs of them are found in the decoration of a headpiece (Fig. 7a) of the

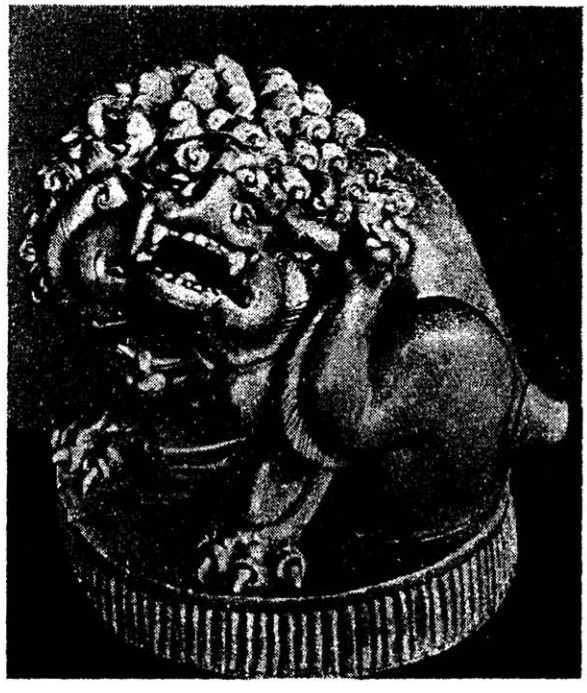

FIG. 5. Lion, ceramic. Sung dynasty. Photo after Pradan, *La poterié T'ang*, Paris, 1960, pl. 15.

Gospel of St. Luke in a manuscript also executed in Cilicia in 1274 now in the Pierpoint Morgan Library in New York (27). These heads

ou des nouvelles fouilles durant le revolution, Peking, 1972 (in Chinese), no. 82. Jean-Paul Desroches brought this example to my attention, though, once again, he saw little similarity between the Chinese and Armenian examples.

(27) New York, Morgan Library, MS no. 740, executed in Sis in 1274, fol. 148; Frédéric Macler, «Quelques feuillets épars d'un Tétraévangile arménien», *REArm*, VI/2 (1926), pp. 169-176, fig. 4; Sakissian, «Thèmes», in *Pages*, pl. IV, fig. 7; Avedis Sanjian, *A Catalogue of Medieval Armenian Manuscripts in the United States*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1976, no. [130], pp. 582-596. It was executed for marshall Ōšin; presumably the manuscript could have been known to the artist of the *Lectionary*. Such intertwinning arabesques were common at the time, but are normally not composed of dragons' heads. A somewhat different

sprout out of stems of vines (Fig. 7b) which make up the arabesque-like decoration of the chapter heading. They lack bodies (28). But open mouth dragons with very long serpentine bodies are known in Armenian art from both manuscripts, the Gospels of 1197-1199 in the Lvov/-Lemberg Armenian archbishopric, and as decorative motifs on churches such as Alt'amar, Sanahin, and Ani (29). In Islamic art such dragons were common, especially in the thirteenth century, on metal work

FIG. 6. Buddhist altar cloth showing winged lions and phoenixes around an incense burner. Middle or late T'ang. Paris, Musée Guimet. Photo after *La route de la soie,* Paris 1976, no. 302.

and earlier twelfth century example (Erevan, Matenadaran MS no. 379) was published by Jurgis Baltrušaitis, *Le Moyen Age Fantastique,* 2nd edition, Paris, 1981, p. 107, fig. 75. Baltrušaitis offers an elaborate discussion of zoomorphic arabesques and rinceaux of heads, pp. 100-114; cf. also Sakissian, «Thèmes», *passim.*

(28) On the general question of monsters with head and feet but no body, Baltrušaitis, *ibid.*, pp. 9-17, especially fig. 5.

(29) Nersēs Akinean, *Das Skevra-Evangeliar von Jahre 1197, Materialien zur Geschiche der armenischen Kunst, Paläographie und Miniaturmalerei,* vol. II, Vienna, 1930, in Armenian with German résumé, p. 7, fig. 1. The dragons are in the decorated headpiece of the Eusebian letter and show the characteristic knotted tail of this variety often used almost heraldically; for examples from sculptural decorations, Sakissian, «Thèmes», *Pages,* figs. 32-34, illustates a few in stone from Alt'amar

and in other media. Most famous are the pair of dragons dated 618/1221 once on the Talisman Gate of Baghdad which were photographed early in this century before their destruction (30). A knot in the body is characteristic of many of the dragons of this type in both Armenian and the Islamic tradition. Another example, slightly after our period, but in the same tradition, is the dragon with fully open mouth in the miniature of the *Shāhnāma* of ca. 1330 now in Istanbul (31). But

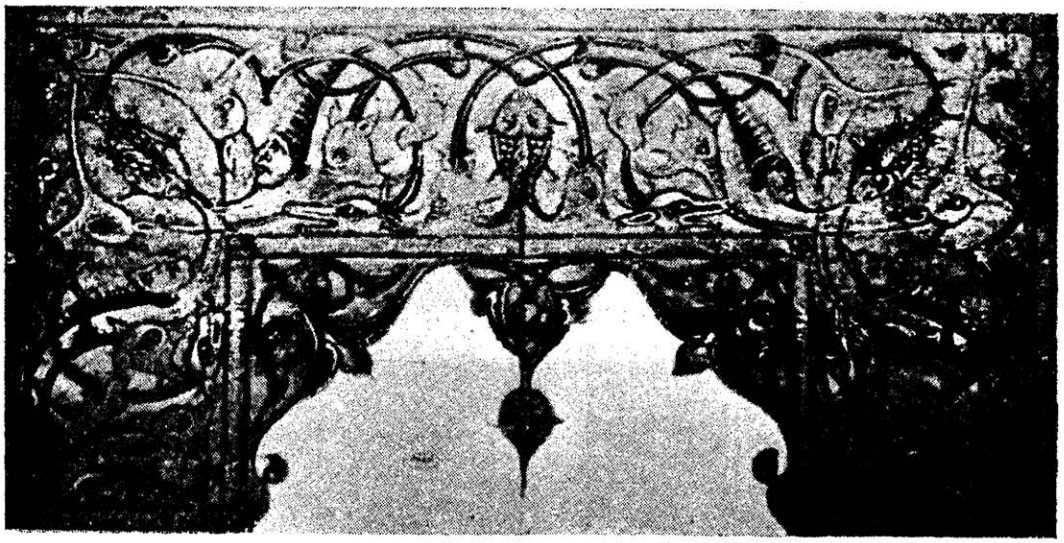

FIG. 7a. Gospel of 1274. New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS 740, fol. 148. Headpiece of the Gospel of St. Luke. Photo after Macler, *REArm*, VI/2 (1926), fig. 4.

(915-921), Sanahin (1061), and Ani (thirteenth century context). Another is used as an animal letter in a late thirteenth century Cilician manuscript, Erevan, Matenadaran, MS no. 7651, Heide and Helmut Buschhausen, *Armenische Handschriften der Mechitaristen-congregation in Wien, Katalog zur Sonderausstellung in der Österreichischen National-bibliothek*, Vienna, 1981, pl. 33, fig. d; another in a late thirteenth century Cilician canon table is in the Vienna Mekhitarist collection, H. and H. Buschhausen, *The Illuminated Armenian Manuscripts in the Mekhitarist Congregation in Vienna*, Vienna, 1977, German, English, and Armenian editions, MS no. 278, fol. 10^{v}, pl. 35, fig. 79.

(30) The winged dragons are often illustrated, most recently in Michael Rogers, *The World of Islam*, London, 1976, p. 46. The terracotta decorations and the gate itself were destroyed in 1917. For an earlier photographic reproduction see Gaston Migeon, *Manuel d'art musulman*, 2 vols., Paris, 1927, vol. I, p. 266, fig. 93; other thirteenth century examples of this motif are on an Artukid marble in the Arab-Islamic Museum in Cairo, Migeon, p. 265, fig. 92, and the Ayyūbid citadel of Aleppo, Rogers, *ibid.*

(31) Istanbul, Topkapi Saray, Hazine MS no. 1479, fol. 144, reproduced in M. Ş. Ipşiroğlu, *Painting and Culture of the Mongols*, translation of the 1965 German edition, London, 1967, fig. 3. The creature has legs.

these examples, at least the Armenian ones, are different in feeling and less menacing than our dragons. It is not fortuitous that the closest parallel to our non-Chinese open mouth dragons is from the earlier Morgan Cilician Gospel frontispiece which is not only decorated in a fashion similar to the beardless Christ miniature with a large capital letter «ini» to the left and an elaborate arabesque rinceau to the right,

FIG. 7b. Gospel of 1274. Detail of headpiece showing dragon-headed arabesque.

but the crowning eagle at the top of this band is iconographically almost identical to and in the same position as the eagle in the *Lectionary* headpiece.

The notion that these non-Chinese dragons were intended to look threatening — representations of evil that were to be kept at a distance from Christ and the Christian community of His church by the blue lions — may have confirmation from western sources. Jurgis Baltrušaitis in his *Le Moyen Age fantastique* has already discussed the use of the wide open mouth of a beast to represent evil and perdition. One of his examples (Fig. 9) is a western miniature of the Descent into Hell dated after 1235 showing such a head with legs, but no body. Tania Velmans, in a recent study on the style of the *Lectionary* of Het'um and a related group of Armenian manuscripts, published

another European example in which an open mouth dragon serves as Hell (32). She used it to point out the iconographic parallel between the dragon and the whale depicted in the scene of Jonah being spat out of the whale in another illumination of the same *Lectionary* of Het'um (33); the employment of this monster in our miniature is closer to its original significance in western examples.

It is no coincidence that in Armenian art these fantastic animals are depicted in decorative headpieces of manuscripts. Frontispieces,

FIG. 8a. *Shāhnāma* of 1330. Istanbul, Topkapi Saray, Hazine MS 1479, fol. 141a. Isfandiyār and the dragon. Photo after Ipşiroğlu, *Painting and Culture of the Mongols*, London, 1967, fig. 3.

and the illumination of canon tables and the Eusebian letter at the beginning of the Gospels, all served as vehicles for the representation of secular life, including fabulous or imaginative creatures (34). As is

(32) For the Gothic manuscript of post-1235, Baltrušaitis, *op. cit.*, fig. 5, cf. *supra* note 28. Velmans, «Maniérisme», *op. cit.*; her article was originally presented as a communication at the Second International Symposium on Armenian Art, Erevan, September 1978, and published in the *Acts*, 4 vols., Erevan, 1981, vol. I, pp. 67-81, pls. 12-18. Madame Velmans' reference to my article (note 32) is cited from the mimeographed version of 1977.

(33) The whale in Het'um's *Lectionary*, at least in the second of two scenes, the one vomiting out Jonah (Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, p. 153, fig. 114), has, along with the treatment of the water, affinities to the Chinese carp, which probably served as a model for the whale of the Jonah story in the Edinburgh manuscript of the *Jāmi' al-tawārikh*, fol. 25b, T. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, London, 1928, reprint New York, 1965, pl. XXXVI.

(34) Decorative headpieces, first pages, chapter headings, canon arcades (in Armenian *xoran*, 'altar') were often the vehicle by which secular motifs entered

well known, Armenian painting through the medieval period is preserved almost entirely through illustrated Gospels and a few liturgical texts. The subject matter of Gospel miniatures is limited perforce to symbolic or narrative interpretations of the life of Christ. Very little opportunity was available artistically to depict components of everyday life. Nevertheless, very early in the history of Armenian manuscript illumination, already in the oldest complete and decorated Gospels, the so called Mlkʿē Gospels of 851-862, now in the Mekhi-

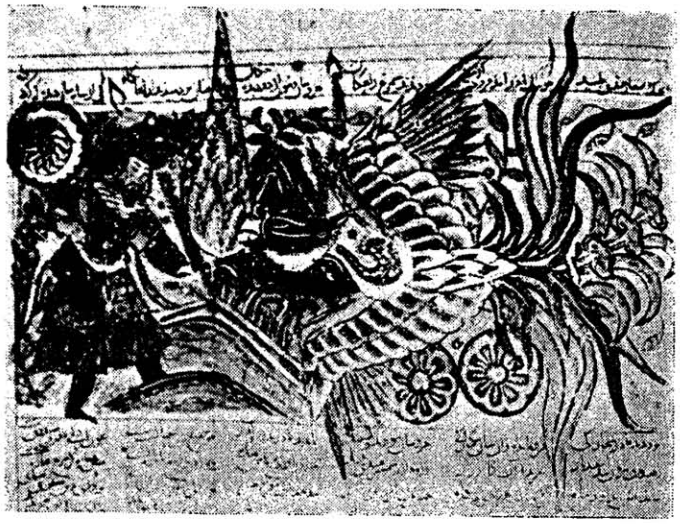

FIG. 8b. *Shāhnāma* of 1330. Fol. 155a. Isfandiyār and the simurgh. Photo after Ipşiroğlu, *Painting and Culture of the Mongols*, fig. 4.

tarist collection of San Lazzaro, the pages reserved for the Eusebian letter and the canon tables are decorated with non-religious images — personages, animals, birds — some of which are symbolic to be sure, but others with little relationship to Christianity (35). Even

a religious context. Everyday life, objects and genre scenes, as well as fabulous creatures were allowed in the illuminated headpiece because of the latter's non-specific nature and the apparent lack of injunctions as to what was deemed inappropriate. Actual Gospel scenes were proscribed by a rigid iconography and the sanctity of the representation itself and, therefore, could not themselves serve as convenient or flexible idioms for the introduction of foreign or fantastic items. I have already discussed these notions in a public lecture entitled «The Secular in the Sacred: the Decoration of Armenian Canon Tables», presented in December 1977 to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

(35) Mesrob Janashian, *Armenian Miniature Painting of the Monastic Library of San Lazzaro*, vol. I, San Lazzaro, Venice, 1966, pls. II-III; for full bibliography on

phoenixes and dragons, of a non-Chinese variety, appear in canon tables and Eusebian letter ornaments in Cilician manuscripts of the the late twelfth century (36). The earlier use of such motifs helps us to understand better how the dragon-phoenix and the creatures surrounding the breadless Christ were so harmoniously incorporated into the Armenian artistic tradition.

We have already mentioned that Islamic art was greatly influenced by Chinese art during the Il-Khanid period and after (37). Dragons, phoenixes, and other birds in flight became common elements in miniature painting and ceramics. The effect of Far Eastern influences on Islamic art especially under Mongol Il-Khanid patronage will be discussed later in this article. As for the relationship to Armenia of the art of neighboring Islamic countries and the question of borrowing of the chinoiserie under discussion from an intermediary Muslim source, for the moment, it is enough to point out that there is a chronological problem. Surviving Islamic miniatures reflecting Chinese traces are later in date than the Armenian ones (38). Animals such as the Chi-

the Mlkʿē Gospels and other early illustrated Armenian manuscripts, D. Kouymjian, *The Index of Armenian Art*, Part I, *Manuscript Illumination*, Fascicule I, *Illuminated Armenian Manuscripts to the Year 1000 A.D.*, Fresno-Paris, 1977, pp. 3-4, figs. 6-10.

(36) In addition to the Lemberg Gospels of 1197-1199 already cited in *supra* note 27, phoenixes are found in Venice, Mekhitarist Library, MS no. 1635 of 1193, fols. 5ᵛ-6 as part of canon table decorations, Der Nersessian, *Manuscrits arméniens illustrées, op. cit.*, pp. 58-9, pls. XXII-XXIII.

(37) The original mimeographed text of this paper contained a fuller discussion of the development of Chinese influences in Islamic art. Though there has been no monographic treatment of the subject, the articles listed below are those most pertinent to the present study: Max Loehr, «The Chinese Element in Istanbul Miniatures», *Ars Orientalis*, I (1954), pp. 85-90; Richard Ettinghausen, «An Illuminated Maniscript of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū in Istanbul», *Kunst des Orient*, II (1955), pp. 33-44; Basil Gray, «Chinese Influence in Persian Painting: 14th-15th Centuries», *The Westward Influences of Chinese Arts, A Colloquy Held 26-29 June 1972, David Percival Foundation*, London, 1972, pp. 11-19; Margret Medley, «Chinese Ceramics and Muslim Design», *Westward Influences*, pp. 1-10; *idem*, «Islam, Chinese Porcelain and Ardabīl», *Iran*, 13 (1975), pp. 31-37; Daphne Lange Rosenzweig, «Stalking the Persian Dragon: Chinese Prototypes for Miniature Representations», *Kunst des Orient*, XII/1 (1978-9, published 1980), pp. 150-176, which is unfortunately not as promising as the title suggests.

(38) The first version of this paper referred only to the *Manāfi' al-hayawān* executed in Maragha later in the 1290s now in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, for which see note 79 *infra*. Earlier traces are found in a manuscript dated 1290 of the *History of the World Conqueror* of ʿAṭā Malik al-Juvainī now in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, on which see note 78 *infra*.

nese dragon and phoenix only appear in the first half of the fourteenth century save for a single example from the 1290s (39). Thus, Islamic miniatures may be ruled out as the immediate source for the *Lectionary* of Het'um II. Islamic ceramics might have also been dismissed without discussion except for the bird in flight motif (40) and a special group

FIG. 9. Manuscript of Wolfenbüttel, post-1235. Descent into Hell. Photo after Baltrušaitis, *La Moyen Age Fantastique,* Paris, 1981, fig. 5.

(39) In the Morgan *Manāfi'* there is a Chinese phoenix in the pose of a rooster, note 80 *infra* for details. The first convincing examples of Chinese animals in Islamic miniature painting are found in the *Shāhnāma* of 1330, a dragon (our Fig. 8a) and a phoenix (our Fig. 8b), as cited in note 86 *infra.* Perhaps the most famous of the fourteenth century Muslim manuscripts to contain Chinese elements is the Demotte *Shāhnāma* on which there is much literature, but especially Ivan Stchoukine, «Les peintures du Shah-Nameh Demotte», *Arts Asiatiques,* V (1958), and D. Brian, «A Reconstruction of the Miniature Cycle in the Demotte *Shah Namah*», *Ars Islamica,* 6 (1959), pp. 97-112.

(40) Ducks on the neck of a jar in the Havermeyer Collection dated 681/1282, Arthur Udham Pope and Phyllis Ackermann, eds., *Survey of Persian Art,* 6 vols., London and New York, 1938, fig. 759; birds on a blue glazed jar, Freer Gallery of Art, dated 683/1284, Pope, *Survey,* fig. 760; and others of somewhat later date in the British and the Victoria and Albert Museums, Pope, *Survey,* nos. 780A and B. In the early fourteenth century such birds, including phoenixes, are found on ceramic bowls, such as the often reproduced Louvre piece, Section islamique no. 8177, three flying phoenixes with heads much like that of the heraldic phoenix

of Il-Khanid tiles recently come to light which requires a detailed discussion.

These are a series of polychrone tiles in square, hexagonal, octagonal, and star shapes. Though undated, they have been uncovered in excavations suggesting a context a few years before the Armenian miniatures under study. They were found at Takht-i Sulaymān in northwestern Iran at the summer palace supposedly built by the second Il-Khanid, Abaqa (1265-1282), on the site of a former Sasanian palace. Abaqa was the son of Hulagu and of course had as uncles the Great Khans Mönkge and Qubilai. Archaeological campaigns conducted in the 1960s and published by E. and R. Naumann (41) unearthed the tiles that were employed most especially as part of the decoration in the north octagon of the building. The main chamber, where they served as wall decorations, was used for ceremonial purposes. The tiles were executed in both the rich lajverdina technique and in lustre. One of the large (35 by 35 cm.) lajverdina variety in the collection of the Iran-e Bastam Museum of Tehran (Fig. 10) was on display at the 1976 World of Islam Exhibition in London (42). Yolanda Crowe, who reproduced it in a discussion of Chinese influences on Islamic art in a companion article to the exhibit, dates this example to pre-1282, that is, sometime before Abaqa's death (43). This tile, and others like it found in broken condition,

of the *Lectionary*, see *L'Orient des Croisades, Cahier Musée d'art et d'essai*, Palais de Tokyo, no. 8, Paris, 1981, figure on p. 16. They also become common in the same period on Mamluk glassware, such as the one in the Gulbenkian collection purchased in China itself, no. 2378, *Oriental Islamic Art, Collection of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation*, Lisbon, 1963, no. 1. The flying bird in the frontispiece of the al-Juvainī manuscript of 1290 should of course be added to this list, see *infra* note 78.

(41) E. and R. Naumann, «Ein Kösk in Summerpalast des Abaqa Khan auf dem Tacht-ē Sulaiman und seine Dekoration», *Forschungen für Kunst asians. In memoriam Kurt Erdmann*, Istanbul, 1969, pp. 35-65. See also E. and R. Naumann, *Takht-i Suleiman*, exhibition catalogue, Munich, 1976, and, Rudolph Naumann, *Die Ruinen von Tacht-e Suleiman und Zendan-e Suleiman*, 1977; neither of the latter works were available for this study.

(42) Dalu Jones and George Michel, editors, *The Arts of Islam, Hayward Gallery, 8 April-4 July 1976*, London, 1976, p. 259, fig. 388, now in the Iran-e Bastam Museum, Tehran, no. 21723. See also the illustrations in Naumann, *passim*.

(43) Yolanda Crowe, «The Islamic Potter and China», *Apollo* (April, 1976), pp. 296-301, fig. 6; a dragon tile (our Fig. 11) of the same dimensions (35 cm. square) in lustre rather than lajvardina, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Arthur Lane, *Guide to the Collection of Tiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London, 1960, pl. 2e. Souren Melikian, who has been studying the inscriptions on the Takht-i Sulaymān tiles, dates them to the period 1280-1290.

depicts a Chinese dragon with four claws. Another set of tiles — in all formats mentioned above — shows the fabulous Chinese phoenix

FIG. 10. Lajverdina tile with Chinese dragon from Takht-i Sulaymān, pre-1282 (?). Tehran, Iran Bastam Museum. Photo after Crowe, *Apollo* (April 1976), fig. 6.

FIG. 11. Lustre tile with Chinese dragon, early fourteenth century. London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Photo after Pope, *Survey of Persian Art*, fig. 727A.

(Figs. 12, 14) (44). Both the Chinese dragons and phoenixes are very much like those in the Armenian *Lectionary,* though at Takht-i Sulaymān the animals are never shown quarreling nor ever together on the same tile. The fundmental difference between the three phoenixes decorating the incipits and the three dragons (including the one on bishop John's garment) of the Armenian examples and the Takht-i Sulaymān tiles is their position and attitude.

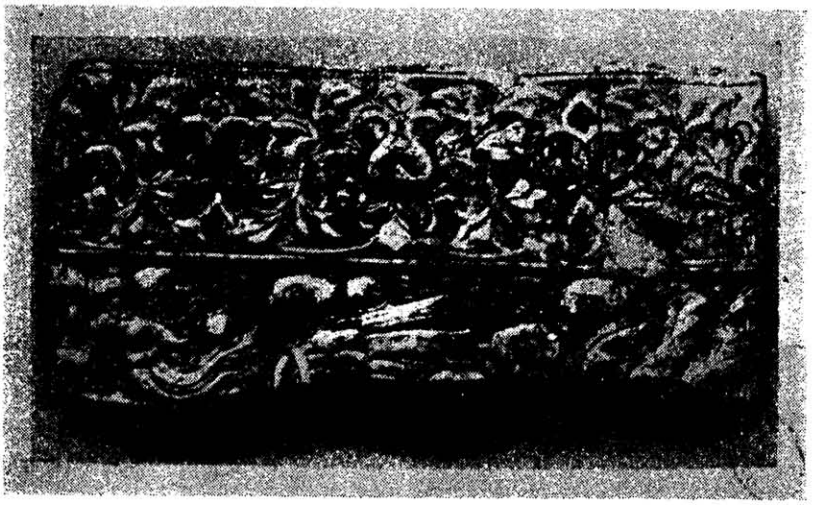

FIG. 12. Lajverdina tile fragment with phoenix from Takht-i Sulaymān, pre-1282 (?). Photo after Naumann, *In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann,* Istanbul, 1969, pp. 64-5.

There seems to be no guarantee, however, that the tiles in question were in place before 1282. Was Abaqa's palace destroyed in 1282 and never reused? The available information seems unclear on this point (45). On the other hand, we have square tiles executed in the more common lustre technique of the same 35 cm. dimensions with identical dragons (Figs. 11, 15) and phoenixes (Figs. 13, 15) preserved in various collections (46). There are also octagonal tiles with dragon

(44) Naumann, *op. cit.,* is fully illustrated with the various types of tiles found in the summer palace, both photographs of actual pieces and idealized reconstructions from fragments (our Fig. 14).

(45) The Naumanns are not clear on this detail. We are told that Arghun Khan burned down a palace, but was this the one at Takht-i Sulaymān of Abaqa? See J. A. Boyle, in *Cambridge History of Iran, op. cit.,* vol. V., p. 367.

(46) In the Victoria and Albert Museum with a dragon (our Fig. 11), Pope, *Survey of Persian Art,* fig. 727A, and Lane, *op. cit.,* note 43 *supra;* another in the Metropolitan Museum, New York with a phoenix (our Fig. 13) in lustre, Maurice S. Dimand, *A Handbook of Mohammadan Art,* New York, 1944, p. 201, fig. 132.

and phoenix (never together on the same tile) in a context of 1293 and 1329 (47). Yet, even supposing a date before 1282 for the Takht-i Sulaymān tiles, there is little likelihood that they served as the actual models for the Armenian miniatures despite the visits made to Abaqa's court by Armenian rulers, for not only do they lack the other animals of one of our miniatures, they do not reveal the dragon-phoenix combat relationship as found in the *Lectionary*. The closest Islamic-

FIG. 13. Lustre tile with phoenix, early fourteenth century. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo after Dimand, *Handbook of Muhammadan Art*, New York, 1944, fig. 132.

Armenian parallel is found between the single phoenix at the top of the second chapter head (Fig. 3c) and eight pointed lustre tiles of a phoenix in a near identical orientation (Fig. 16); these latter bear an inscriptional band with the date 1329 (48). It is reasonably

(47) The tiles (our Fig. 15) of 1305 containing both phoenixes and dragons, originally from Imāmzāde ʿAlī b. Djaʿfar mosque, are in the museum of Qum, Yedda A. Goddard, «Pièces datées de céramiques de Kāshān à décor lustré», *Athār-é Iran*, 2 (1937), pp. 309-337, fig. 145, cf. Naumann, *op. cit.*, p. 55. The 1329 tile contains a phoenix (our Fig. 16) and is in the British Museum, *Survey of Persian Art*, 2nd ed., vol. X, fig. 723 D. Just published is the carliest example of them all, an eight pointed lustre tile with a single phoenix dated 1293 in the Avery Brundage Collection, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Maxime Morris, *Near Eastern Masterpieces from the Avery Brundage Collection*, San Francisco, 1984, fig. 34.

(48) The carliest of 1293 is discussed in the previous note. The one of 1329

sure that imported Chinese objects or perhaps even Chinese craftsmen (in the case of the summer palace) were the independent inspirations for both the Armenian and the Persian examples just discussed (49).

With the practical elimination of borrowing of Chinese motifs from the neighboring Islamic artistic tradition let us examine the other avenues available for the penetration into the Cilician kingdom of

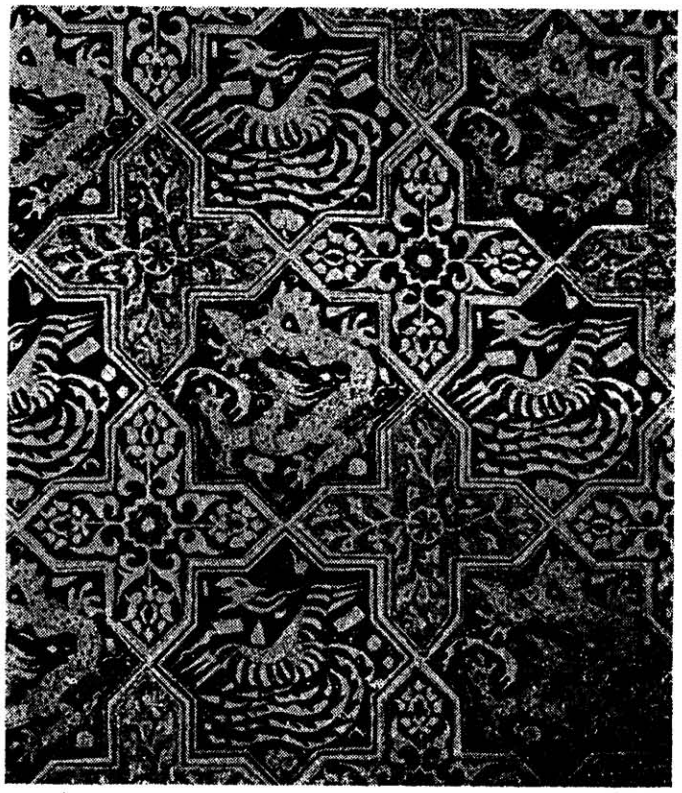

FIG. 14. Reconstruction of arrangement of eight pointed Star tiles with dragons and phoenixes from Takht-i Sulaymān, pre-1282 (?). Photo after Naumann, *In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann*, fig. 11.

is in the British Museum and is identified as «Sulṭānābād», Pope, *Survey*, as in the previous note.

(49) A. Lorentz says that Hulagu (the grandson of Genghis Khan) took artists and workmen to Baghdad, and that eventually under Qubilai Khan there was an exchange of weavers between Persia and China, *A View of Chinese Rugs from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*, London, 1973, as quoted by D. Rosenzweig, *op. cit.*, p. 175, n. 55.

Marco Brambilla has informed me of a monumental Chinese dragon carved in stone in a single unit with a mihrab near the village of Viar, thirty kilometers south of Sulṭāniya. It is thought to be from the reign of Abaqa: see Giovanni Curatola, «The Viar Dragon», *Quadera del Seminario di Iranistica, Ural-Altaistica e Caucasologia dell'Univ. degli Studi di Venezia*, no. 9 (1982), p. 70.

Chinese objects bearing such motifs. Two possibilities present themselves: one by way of trade, that is commercial transactions with the Far East, the other through the exchange of gifts or honors between the Armenian aristocracy and the Mongol rulers. Either alternative poses the question of what kinds of decorated objects were accessible to the miniaturists working at the Cilician court.

Armenians were very much engaged in east-west trade in the middle ages (50). A vast commercial network was established from Cilicia northeast through Greater Armenia, Iran, and Central Asia, even to China, and northwest with Armenian agents in Crimea, Byzantium and Europe. By the late thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century the most important trade centers of the Near East were the coastal cities of the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean under the control of Cilician Armenia. The principal port was Ayas or Lajazzo. Nearly all of the great Italian mercantile cities had agents and warehouses there. W. Heyd referred to Cilician Armenia as the vestibule of Central Asia (51). Through the close Armenian-Mongol relationship inaugurated and reinforced by the continued inititive of king Het'um I, Ayas became the emporium for goods originating from the entire Mongol empire, including China. After the conquest of Iran by the Mongols and the destruction of Baghdad in 1258, Hulagu's new capital, Tabriz, became the most important city of the area. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Pegolotti reports that the major trade route of the region began in Ayas, passed through the Cilician Armenian fortress of Gaban, and then Kayseri (Caesarea), Erzinjan, Erzerum, finally terminating at Tabriz (52). There was an important Armenian colony at Tabriz in this period attested to in 1271 by Marco Polo (53). The Italian traveler also confirms that all goods from Central Asia were brought to Ayas, presumably via Tabriz (54), where he himself had begun his journey into the interior. In 1271 besides spices, Marco Polo found in Ayas «silken cloth, gold embroid-

(50) The general works on Armenian commerce are H. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade,* English translation, N. Garsoïan, Lisbon, 1965, and for Cilician Armenia, W. Heyd, *L'Histoire du commerce du Levant, op. cit.*

(51) Heyd, vol. II, pp. 73 ff.

(52) Manandian, *Trade and Cities,* p. 189 with references to earlier works.

(53) Der Nersessian, *Etudes,* p. 628. See also the article in this volume by Claude Cahen, «Marco Polo en Asie Anterieure», pp. 81-87.

(54) Manandian, *Trade and Cities.* p. 190.

ered brocade, and other goods which are brought there from Central Asia». He says that at «Tabriz very expensive silken and gold cloths are made» (55), presumably from imported raw silk. Heyd emphasizes that silk was the most precious trade item sought by western merchants from China (56). We know very little about the design on Chinese silks of the late Sung and Yuän period imported into the Near East.

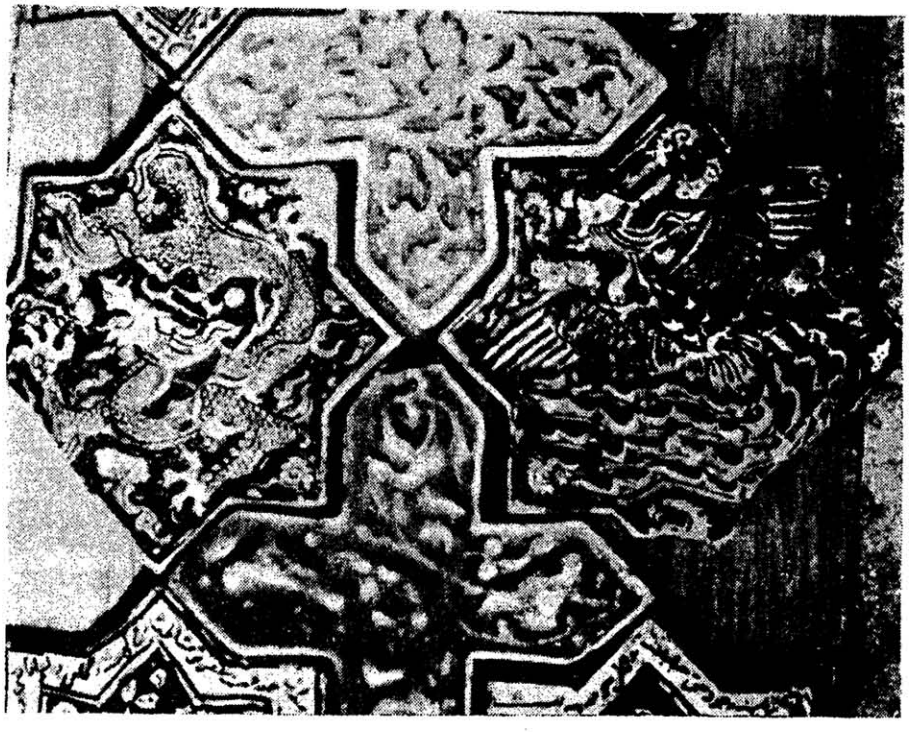

FIG. 15. Arrangement of eight pointed star tiles with dragons and phoenixes dated 1305. Qum, the Qum Museum, originally from the Imāmzāde 'Alī b. Dja'far mosque. Photo after Yedda Goddard, *Athar-é Iran* (1937), fig. 145.

Arthur Pope had purchased a Chinese textile fragment in Iran (57) showing parts of birds, perhaps phoenixes. A few other examples are known from western treasuries of such silks and their contemporary Muslim imitations with dragons, phoenixes, and other birds (58).

(55) Manandian, *ibid.*, p. 197.

(56) «Soie est la plus prècieux et celui que les marchands d'Occident recherchaient avant tout», Heyd, *L'Histoire du commerce,* vol. II, p. 252.

(57) Phyllis Ackerman, «Islamic Textiles. A History», *Survey of Persian Art,* 2nd edition, New York-London-Paris-Tokyo, 1964-5, vol. V, pp. 2042-2061, N. J. Sachs collection, phoenix, white satin with gold design, found in Iran by Arthur Pope, p. 2049, fig. 664; also reproduced by Crowe, *op. cit.*, fig. 7.

(58) Discussion in Ackerman, *Survey,* pp. 2045-2049; examples: pl. 999 A,

And of course in the miniature depicting bishop John, we have another example of Chinese silk, if we accept it as an original piece sewn into his garment and later faithfully rendered by the miniaturists.

Though silk is mentioned in published inventories from Ayas and other Armenian ports, other Chinese craft items such as ceramics are not (59). From Islamic sources we know that the so-called Kārimī merchants were bringing in goods from «Cathay» and one, a certain al-Kūlamī, is know to have brought a great quantity of silk to Aleppo: in 1303-4, «on his way from Cathay and China...(he) brought silk, moschus, porcelaine, slaves» with him to Aden (60). Also abundant quantities of Chinese ceramics have been found in Middle Eastern excavations such as those of Fūsṭāṭ in Egypt.

It is, however, doubtful that the source for bishop John's silk dragon (Fig. 1b) was the market place. Though the piece is woven or painted in gold on silken fabric like that mentioned by Marco Polo above, it is hard to image silks decorated with dragons so similar to the imperial ones as items of normal commerce. Crowe has remarked that, «diplomatic gifts, although of best quality, were not readily available on the open market» (61).

Thus, the dragon on the garment in the miniature of 1287 was probably a gift to bishop John from one of his brothers, Smbat or Het'um, after their respective return to Armenia from inner Asia. This would seem the most logical way for the entry of objects with Chinese motifs into court circles. According to Armenian sources, such gifts could have come directly from the Mongol court at Qaraqorum or from the Mongol rulers based in Iran. Smbat *sparapet*, we are told by his cousin, the historian Het'um of Korikos, had taken with him rich presents for the Mongol khans on his journey

phoenix with head turned upside down, a Persian origin is claimed for this textile; pl. 1000, Chinese dragons; pl. 998 B, fêng-huangs (phoenixes) in descending flight with pheasants; all examples cited are from the Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

(59) The privileges granted to the Genoese by king Leo II on December 23, 1288, clearly mention silk as do other inventories which have survived, Paul Z. Bedoukian, *The Coinage of Cilician Armenia*, New York, 1962, revised edition 1979, pp. 25-42, especially pp. 30-31 for the privileges.

(60) J. Ashtor, «The Karimi Merchants», *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1956), p. 56.

(61) Crowe, «The Islamic Potter and China», p. 298. However, in contradiction to this notion, Heyd thought that only expensive goods were brought from the east, especially those not affected in price by the length of the journey, like precious silk; quoted by Manandian, *Trade and Cities*, p. 197.

of 1247-1250 (62). Though there is no mention of his bringing back any gifts in the sources, it must be assumed that the customary exchange took place. It is a well known fact that the emperors of China — and presumably by extention their Mongol usurpers — always gave more lavish presents than they received as a way of overwhelming foreigners with the might and wealth of their empire. Concerning his brother's voyage three years later, not only are we told by Smbat himself in the

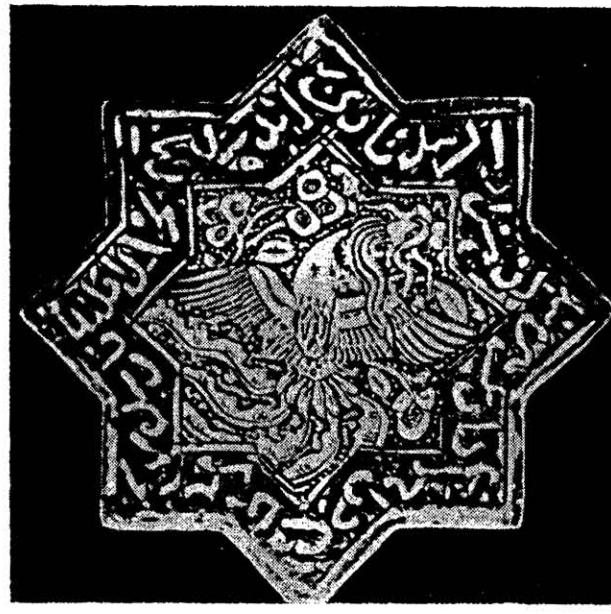

FIG. 16. Eight pointed star tile with a phoenix dated 1329. London, British Museum. Photo after Pope, *Survey of Persia Art*, fig. 723D.

Chronicle attributed to him that Het'um took presents that were so marvelous they excited the envy of those who saw them (63), but Het'um the historian also tells us that Möngke Khan sent the Armenian monarch home with great gifts *(grans don)* and honors (64). At the

(62) Hayton, *Fleur des Histoires de la Terre d'Oriente, Recueil des historiens des Croisades, Documents arméniens*, vol. II, Paris, 1906, p. 164; Louis de Backer, *L'Extrême orient au Moyen-age d'après les manuscrits d'un flamand de Belgique et d'un prince d'Arménie*, Paris, 1877, p. 177; G. Dédéyan, *La Chronique attribuée au connétable Smbat*, Paris, 1980, pp. 98-9. For further details on Smbat see the article by J. Richard in this volume cited in note 2 *supra*.

(63) Smbat, *Chronicle*, trans. Dédéyan, p. 98, «La roi prit tous ces presents qui excitaient la convoitise de ceux qui les regardaient, se rendit auprès du khan Mangu, auquel il les offrit».

(64) Hayton, *RHC, DA*, II, p. 164; de Backer, *op. cit.*, p. 178: «et il (Mangu)

beginning of his *History*, written in 1307, he also comments about the artistic and artisanal skills of the Chinese (65). Another contemporary historian, Grigor of Akner, also states that Het'um went with much treasure and was honored by the khan (66), while Vahram of Edessa says the king returned to Armenia with great honors (67). The journeys of Smbat and Het'um provided the direct channel from Qaraqorum for the entry of gifts into the royal court of Armenia under whose patronage, some thirty years later, the manuscripts bearing Chinese motifs were executed.

But an intermediate route from the Mongol court in northwestern Iran could have served just as well for the exchange of such diplomatic gifts. King Het'um I and his son Levon II paid many visits to the Il-Khans Hulagu, Abaqa, and Arghun from the 1250s to the 1280s, and several of these sojourns are well recorded by Armenian historians. In July 1264 Het'um visited Hulagu, probably in Tabriz, bearing many gifts. He in turn was dispatched to Armenia with honor and great wealth by the khan (68). Before July 1269, Levon II, perhaps with his father, journeyed to the Il-Khanid court to receive approval from Abaqa Khan for succession to the Armenian throne; Smbat the Constable relates that Levon was received with consideration and sent back to Cilicia with numberous presents (69). Levon returned to Abaqa again in 1272 and obtained military assistance from him (70).

fist de grans don et de grans graces». See also Der Nersessian, «The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia», *op. cit.*, p. 263, *Etudes*, p. 347.

(65) «Et vraiement l'en voit venir de cellui pays toutes choses estranges, et merveilleuses et de soubtil labour, que bien semblent estre les plus soubtilz gens du monde d'art et et *(sic)* de labour des mains», Becker, p. 126; cf. Der Nersessian, «The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia», *Etudes*, p. 348: «Hetoum returned...laden with gifts».

(66) Grigor of Akner, *History*, edition and translation, R. P. Blake and R. N. Frye, *History of the Nation of Archers*, Cambridge, Mass., 1949, p. 325.

(67) Vahram, *Chronicle*, in rhyme, *RHC, DA*, vol. I, Paris, 1869, p. 519: «Il s'en revint comblé d'honneurs».

(68) Vardan, *Universal History*, ed. Venice, 1862, p. 156. Grigor of Akner says, «with such honor and great wealth he dispatched the king of the Armenians to his country», Blake and Frye, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

(69) This had to be before Het'um's death on July 15, 1269. Smbat in his *Chronicle* relates the event as follows: «Levon, baron des Arméniens, se rendit en Orient, auprès du Khan Abaga qui le reçut avec considération et le renvoya en Cilicie avec nombreux présents», trad. Dédéyan, p. 123; cf. Der Nersessian, *Etudes*, p. 375.

(70) Abaqa sent 10,000 men and came to Armenia in person several months later according to Smbat, *Chronicle*, trad. Dédéyan, p. 124.

A decade after, he visited Arghun Khan to pay his respects (71). The later trip would have had to have been after Arghun's succession in 1284 but before Levon's own death in 1289. Any, probably all, of these visits would have involved the exchange of diplomatic gifts.

Whether from trade or as gifts, theoretically there were available portable objects manufactured in China either in the late Sung period, when much of northern and central China was already under Mongol domination, or after the early 1270s when Qubilai definitively completed the conquest of China and officially established in 1279 the Yuän or Mongol dynasty. Surely gifts of Chinese production must have been used by the court in Qaraqorum when king Het'um paid his visit to Möngke. Is it not also reasonable to assume that after he became the Mongol Great Khan in 1261, Qubilai, the conqueror of China, and his courtiers would have been attired with garments displaying the imperial iconography with its dragons and phoenixes? Would not his brother Hulagu, and after him his nephew Abaqa also, have taken this royal perogative by adopting some Chinese paraphanalia (with the princely) iconography of the new rulers of China in their court ceremony? And if this seems too conjectural, then surely the supposition that respective Il-Khan rulers received gifts from their brother and uncle Qubilai would be in order. For it cannot be a gratuitous coincidence that the ceremonial reception hall of the summer palace of Abaqa so clearly and so sumptuously displayed golden lajverdina tiles with imperial motifs of dragons and phoenixes. It is all too perfect — just the right number of dragon claws reserved for princes like Abaqa, a scion of the family ruling China — to be mere chance. Such a view would also explain the anomolous appearance of Chinese elements in a Persian context decades before chinoiserie begins to be experimented with by Islamic miniaturists evolving the Perso-Mongol style.

The probability that Chinese artists were sent to the Il-Khanid court to supervise the design of these tiles in the traditional Iranian ceramic center of Kāshān or to set up shop somewhere further west in lands under Mongol domination is both a logical and appealing hypothesis (72). However, silks and ceramics could have also served as

(71) Der Nersessian, «Kingdom of Cilician Armenian», *Etudes*, p. 349.

(72) It should be recalled that Hulagu supposedly took Chinese artists and workmen to Baghdad with him and that there was an exchange of weavers between the courts of the Mongols in China and Persian, see *supra*, note 49.

A totally different interpretation has been suggested recently by Souren Melikian, namely that the symbols associated with the phoenix (Fêng huang, the bird

models for these tiles, as could have drawings from the east which were popular in the period (73). One might also suggest bronzes, craved jade, lacquers, or scrolls as models for the tiles, but as mentioned above little in these media from the Sung or Yuän period has been preserved, or at least published, bearing the motifs we are concerned with. Such luxury items would not have been trade commodities either. However, Il-Khanid court artists would have had access to precious *objets d'art* for copying. This emphasis on direct contact with Chinese art is made because, just as with the Armenian examples already discussed, so also on the Takht-i Sulaymān tiles, the dragons and phoenixes are reproduced as they are seen and understood in Chinese art with little modificiation or stylization.

The Armenian kings too, as royal vassal-allies of the Mongols, could have received as gifts silks or other objects from them with symbols of royal dignity like the dragons and phoenixes at the same historical moment that the Il-Khans were decorating, with like motifs, the summer residence at Takht-i Sulaymān. The very existence of the Armenian examples in royal manuscripts seems to confirm this notion. The *Lectionary* headpieces and the Abaqa tiles have dragons and phoenixes that are remarkably similar, and the use of the princely four clawed dragons in each suggests a common source from the imperial court of China. Certainly in the Armenian case, the struggle between these animals so clearly depicted in the Chinese manner would militate for the direct copying from a product of imperial manufacture: a silk or ceramic. For silk the evidence has already been discussed and bishop John's garment reinforces the argument. As for ceramics in the late thir-

of fire) and dragon used by the Mongols in Iran combine older Iranian interpretations for these animals, especially as associated in the *Shāh-nāmeh* (in the epic as simurgh and dragon) with Chinese meanings. There is, however, no discussion of the dating of the titles at Takht-i Sulaymān, Assadullah Souren Melikian-Shirvani, «Le *Shāh-nāme*, la gnose soufie et le pouvoir mongol», *Journal asiatique*, vol. CCLXXII, nos. 3-4 (1984), pp. 249-337.

(73) A. Lane, *Later Islamic Pottery*, p. 5, has emphasized that «though textiles were doubtless the chief medium through which Chinese designs reached the Near East, we should not discount the influence of Chinese painting on silk or paper»; and again, referring to the lustre tiles with dragons and phoenixes and cranes mentioned earlier, he says, «Chinese motifs painted on Persian lustre and other pottery about 1300 — dragons, phoenixes, lotuses, cloud scrolls — could not in the nature of things have been taken from Chinese celadon or white procelain; they must have have been borrowed from another medium, almost certainly textiles», p. 9. But on the question of celadon, see below in the text and note 75.

teenth century, likely models would have been moulded or incised celadon ware. The famous painted blue and white still seems to have been a later, fourteenth century, phenomenon, despite recent ascertions by eastern scholars to the contrary (74). Celadon pieces have survived in relative abundance and the finest among them bear the dragon and phoenix motifs (75). However, the guardian lions (Figs. 2b-2d) of the Armenian chapter heading present a different problem. They are not found on ceramic plates, but rather as three dimensional sculpture in stone, clay, or ceramic (Fig. 5) in China itself (76). They do not occur among the chinoiserie of Islamic art of the Il-Khanid period. The most likely models for them would have been painted silks, like the one from Central Asia already cited (Fig. 6), or small figurines, none of which have seemingly been found in a Near Eastern context.

Despite the unlikelihood that the Takht-i Sulaymān tiles served as inspiration for the decorated chapter headings of the *Lectionary*, assuming of course that they were fabricated earlier than 1282 or at least 1286, the date of the miniatures, and despite the chronological impossibility of Islamic painting as an influence, a glance at the way in which Chinese art affected its Islamic counterpart will be useful as a contrast to the Armenian experience.

Muslim painting remained under the spell of Chinese art for centuries (77). In the Mongol period, from the last decade of the

(74) A Tokyo antiquities dealer claims there is evidence from recent excavations which suggests that blue and white was already being manufactured in the Sung period; Lee Yu-Kuan (Sammy Lee), *Preliminary Study of Chinese Ceramics in Blue and White (Ching Hua)*, Tokyo, 1971. Most western scholars, however, are still skeptical.

(75) Such carved celadon dishes are found in various collections: enamelled celadon dish with a three clawed dragon chasing a pearl surrounded by cloud chains, Yuän, early fourteenth century, Percival David Foundation, London, *The Ceramic Art of China*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1971, no. 117, pl. 27; Sung vase with dragon, *Catalogue of Chinese Ceramics*, Tokyo, 1960; celadon with a phoenix, National Museum, Tokyo; other pieces from the late Sung or Yuän period are illustrated in Sherman Lee and Wai-Kam Ho, *Chinese Art under the Mongols: The Yuän Dynasty 1279-1368*, Cleveland, 1968, figs. 40, 45, 47-49, 60, 82.

(76) From a somewhat earlier period, perhaps Liao (907-1125), a bronze guilt lion (our Fig. 4), with face, nose and highly curled hair like the *Lectionary* examples, *The Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art, op. cit.*, no. 42, p. 40, fig. 42, a seated lion (our Fig. 5) in porcelain has already been cited, *supra*, note 24.

(77) The important studies on Chinese influence in Islamic art have been cited in *supra*, note 37. Already prior to the Mongol period a number of Persian poets like Niẓāmī regarded Chinese painting as the ultimate standard of excellence;

thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century, the fascination with Far Eastern aesthetics resulted in the gradual elaboration of a new, dynamic style in manuscript illumination. The earliest manifestation of the new manner, characterized by the use of Chinese formulae for rendering trees, grass, and clouds — yet relegated to the existing conventions of twelfth and thirteenth century art of the Mesopotamian and Syrian schools — is witnessed in the frontispiece of a manuscript of al-Juvainī's *Tārīkh-i Jahān Gushā* finished in 689/1290 (78) and in some of the miniatures of the famous Pierpoint Morgan manuscript of the *Manāfiʿ al-hayawān* of 1295 or 1297 or 1299 (79). The latter was executed in Il-Khanid courtly circles in northwestern Iran, perhaps Marāgha. It displays a variety of new conventions: Chinese cloud chains, gnarled trees often with trunks and branches cut off by the miniature's enclosing frame, discontinuous ground lines, the use of short vertical strokes to indicate grass and vegetation, and the rendering of the water of pools and ponds with scalloped edges. With the single exception of the rooster like phoenix, identified as such in the Morgan manuscript (80), none of the traditional animals of Chinese art occur in these works.

see Priscilla Soucek, «Niẓāmī on Painters and Painting», *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Richard Ettinghausen, New York, 1972, pp. 9-20.

(78) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Supplement Persan, no. 205, fols. 1ᵛ-2. This two page frontispiece is seemingly the earliest example of Islamic painting with Chinese influences. The manuscript was executed in Il-Khanid court circles in 689/1290; 'Aṭā Malik al-Juvainī was an important court official. The Gibb Memorial Series edition of his *Tārīkh-i Jahān-gushā/History of the World Conqueror*, Leiden, 1912-1916, Part I, already reproduces the frontispiece between pages xx-xxi; cf. R. Ettinghausen, «On Some Mongol Miniatures», *op. cit.*, figs. 1-2. I would like to thank Ms. Marianna S. Simpson, Associate Dean, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., for having drawn this example to my attention.

Though there is a flying bird among clouds in this manuscript, the actual Chinese elements are much less striking than those found in the Morgan *Manāfi'* of a few years later, for which see *infra*.

(79) Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York, MS no. 500, see *supra*, note 38. Miniatures from the manuscript have been widely reproduced, see for example Basil Gray, *Persian Painting*, Geneva, 1961, pp. 22 and 24; A. U. Pope, *Masterpieces of Persian Art*, New York, 1945, esp. pl. 114.

(80) The Morgan *Manāfi'*, a book on the usefulness of animals, illustrates a phoenix with prominent Chinese characteristics in the rendering of the head and tail; however, the bird is not shown flying, but perched upright like a common rooster, see Ernst Grube, *The World of Islam*, London, 1966, fig. 36.

Clearer Chinese elements are found in the illustrations of a manuscript of Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī's *Chronology of Ancient Nations* dated 1307 in the Edinburgh University Library (81) and two versions of the *Universal History* of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlullāh, the vizier of Uljaitu Khan (1304-1316), executed in the special scriptorium and library

FIG. 17. *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* of 1314. London, British Museum. The Indian Mountains. Photo after Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, pl. XXIII A.

established by the Mongol statesman in al-Rashīdiyya, the famous suburb of Tabriz. One of these manuscripts dates to 1314 (Fig. 17) and is now in the British Museum, and the other of 1306 (Fig. 18) is

(81) Edinburgh University, MS no. 161; all twenty-four miniatures have been published recently by P. Soucek, «An Illustrated Manuscript of al-Bīrūnī's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*», *The Scholar and Saint*, edited by Peter J. Chelkowski, New York, 1975, pp. 103-168, see especially fols. 48b, fig. 4, 140b, fig. 21, 161a, fig. 24, 162a, fig. 25. Unfortunately, for our purposes, Soucek does not discuss stylistic questions.

in the Edinburgh University Library (82). Chinese clouds, concentric circles for water, wedge-shaped rows for mountains and grass, distant trees indicated by short sprouts, invoke a Far Eastern aspect, as does the feeling of depth created by a landscape that appears to recede (83).

Within a generation these effects are dealt with more gracefully by Muslim artists, producing the remarkable miniatures associated with the Demotte *Shāhnāma* (84). Also by at least the middle of the fourteenth century, pottery from Kāshān and the so-called Sulṭānābād ware begin

FIG. 18. *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* of 1306-1314. Edinburgh, University Library, Arabic MS 20. Muḥammad and Abū Bakr on the way to Mecca. Photo after Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, fig. XXb.

to incorporate such motifs; as we have seen contemporary tiles (Figs. 11, 13, 15-16) also display these animals (85). In two other manuscripts of the period, *Shāhnāmas* of 1330 now in Istanbul, Chinese styled

(82) The manuscript of 1314 is the property of the Royal Asiatic Society though kept in the British Museum, see Basil Gray, *The World History of Rashid al-Din*, London, 1976. The Edinburgh University manuscript, no. 20, was probably executed over the period 1306-1314 in Tabriz. For illustrations see L. Binyon, J.V.S. Wilkenson, and B. Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, London, 1933, reprint New York, 1971, pls. XLVIII-LVIII.

(83) B. Gray, «Some Chinoiserie Drawings and Their Origin», *Forschungen... In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann, op. cit.*, pls. 3a-b, fols. 30^{v} and 21 of the Royal Asiatic Society manuscript, and, Thomas Arnold, *Painting in Islam, op. cit.*, pls. XXa-b, LIII, which illustrate examples of these tendencies in the Edinburgh manuscript, respectively, fols. 47b, 65 (our Fig. 18), 72a.

(84) The miniatures are widely scattered, but see Brian and Stchoukine, as cited *supra*, note 39.

(85) Examples cited *supra*, notes 40, 46, and 47.

dragons and phoenixes have been conflated with the Persian dragon (Fig. 8a) and the simurgh (Fig. 8b) (86). This tendency was accentuated until the end of the following century when Chinese motifs — dragons, phoenixes, lions, celestial dogs, flying geese — became the artistic rage in Timurid courtly circles by way of imported blue and white porcelain, patterned textiles, and small luxury objects.

Islamic painting under successive Il-Khanid, Timurid, and Safavid dynasties reflected a constant borrowing and a gradually more sophisticated and harmonious absorption of motifs and artistic conventions of China. The culminative result of this process was the production of some of the finest works of Islamic art. Such a masterpiece as the sixteenth century Houghton *Shāhnāma* (87) displays a series of miniatures clearly inspired by both the principles and the motifs of Chinese art. These are well understood and organically integrated into the Persian aesthetic. A model example is the miniature entitled the Court of Gayumarth which shows the latter — the legendary first shah of Iran — in a Buddha-like pose in the distant center of a Chinese landscape with its jagged mountains, gnarled trees, and Chinese clouds, surrounded by an entourage with heavily eastern facial features (88). Two other miniatures from the same manuscript reveal just how the dragon and phoenix, rendered in a pure Chinese style, became the conventionally accepted substitutes for the Iranian animals of the epic (89). Such magnificent paintings bear witness to the profundity and persistence of the Chinese influence on Islamic art.

The Armenian experience is nearly the opposite. No lasting mark from China was left on Armenian art. At the very moment that Islamic art was beginning to experiment with the new concepts

(86) Istanbul, Topkapi Saray, Hazine MS 1479, fol. 144, Isfandiyār and Dragon (our Fig. 8a), fol. 145, Isfandiyar and Simurgh (our Fig. 8b), Ipşiroğlu, *Painting and Culture of the Mongols, op. cit.*, figs. 3-4.

(87) M. B. Dickson and S. C. Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, Cambridge, Mass., 1981; however, for this paper, illustrations will be cited from the more accessible earlier publication, Stuart C. Welch, *Persian Painting*, New York, 1976.

(88) Houghton, *Shāhnāma*, fol. 20^{v}, Welch, *Persian Painting*, pl. 2.

(89) Zal sighted by a caravan, Houghton *Shāhnāma*, fol. 62^{v}, Welch, *Persian Painting*, pl. 8; contrast the Chinese phoenix in this manuscript with the one of four decades earlier from the Morgan *Manāfi'*, see *supra* note 80 for reference. Gushtāsp slaying the dragon of Mt. Saqala, fol. 402, Welch, pl. 9, where the dragon has the expected five claws reserved for the ruler.

available through Chinese imports, circa 1300, Armenia was abandoned by her Mongol protectors. The final break came with the death of the last friendly Il-Khan, Ghazan, in 1304. In the fourteenth century Cilician Armenia came under ever increasing pressure from her Mamluk neighbors in Egypt. By 1375 the capital Sis had definitively fallen and with it, the practical end of the last Armenian dynasty was announced (90). The loss of royal patronage was to have a palpable effect on the type and quality of Armenian art in subsequent centuries (91).

Was then the only permanent artistic result of the contacts between Armenia and the Mongol court a few Chinese animals found on three miniature from two Cilician manuscripts of the 1280s? Perhaps. Yet, from details in these very same and a closely related group of manuscripts there seems to be cause for an inquiry into traces of another, a stylistic, influence from the Far East. These Cilician manuscripts, in addition to the *Lectionary* of Het'um II and the Gospel of bishop John, include two undated, but contemporary Gospels, and the earlier queen Keran and Pierpoint Morgan Gospels respectively of 1272 and 1274 (92). Though working in the Cilician kingdom, the artist

(90) The most recent treatment of the fall of the Cilician kingdom, with bibliography of the earlier literature, will be found in Dédéyan, *Histoire des Arméniens*, chapter 8, esp. pp. 310-311.

(91) On the general decline in the arts and culture from the fall of the Cilician kingdom in 1375 to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, see D. Kouymjian, «Sous le joug des Turcomans et des Turcs ottoman (XV^{e}-XVI^{e} siècles)», in Dédéyan, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 369-372, and *idem*, «Dated Armenian Manuscripts as a Statistical Tool for Armenian History», T. Samuelian and M. Stone, eds., *Medieval Armenian Culture*, Scholars Press, Chico, Calif., 1983, pp. 425-438.

(92) The final composition of this group of manuscripts as well as a detailed analysis will have to wait Sirarpie Der Nersessian's major study on Cilician miniature painting now in the final stages of completion. In an earlier essay, she listed six principal codices: Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, no. 2563, Gospel of queen Keran, executed at the capital Sis in 1272; New York, Pierpoint Morgan, no. 740, Gospel of Marshall Ošin, Sis, 1274; Jerusalem no. 2568, Gospel of Prince Vasak, 1268-1285; Erevan, Matenadaran no. 979, Lectionary of king Het'um II of 1286; Matenadaran no. 179, Gospel of bishop John, Akner, 1287; Matenadaran no. 9422, Gospel of the 1280s; and in part Istanbul, Topkapi no. 122, Gospel, Skevra, 1273; S. Der Nersessian, «Un Evangil cilician du XIII^{e} siècle», *REArm*, 4 (1967), pp. 103-119, reprinted *Etudes*, pp. 562-575, note 33. The Buschhausens have given an expanded list of nine manuscripts, not including either the Topkapi or the Morgan Gospels, but adding Matenadaran no. 7651, executed in part in the 1280s; Matenadaran no. 5784, Gospel of Skevra, 1293; and Vienna Mekhitarists nos. 278 and 1303,

or artists responsible for their creation painted in a new, highly manneristic style (93). The surcharged atmosphere of this group is in sharp contrast to the illuminations of a decade or so earlier, executed in the same workshops, epitomized by the controlled and delicate style of T'oros Ṙoslin (flourished 1256 to 1268), his school, and contemporaries. This new mode of the 1270s and 1280s is abandoned, however, before the end of the century almost as suddenly as it appeared. Apart from the mannered figural and facial rendering in the Gospel scenes, there are two features which remain unsatisfactorily explained: the source of the very delicate, dense floral and tendril decorations which frame miniatures in this series, and the way background landscapes are treated.

The very fine plant stems and flowers that begin to sprout from the corners of the borders of these manuscripts (Fig. 1) as well as in the decorations of the headpieces (Figs. 2-3) have no real precedents in Armenian miniatures of the prior period. Their delicacy recalls floral designs often found in Chinese art, though such water plants are also painted on Islamic ceramics of the early thirteenth century (94). Along with the mannered style, they too disappear from Armenian art after 1300 (95).

The artists' attitudes toward landscape perspective, if we can use that term, was also modified in a large series of miniatures: the Entry into Jerusalem (Fig. 19) and the whale spitting out Jonah in the *Lectionary* of Het'um II (96), the Baptism and Entry into Jerusalem (Fig. 20)

both of the 1280s, see H. and H. Buschhausen, *Armenische Handschriften, Katalog, op. cit., supra* note 29, p. 89.

(93) See Velmans as already cited *supra* notes 7 and 32.

(94) Of course they are quite different when compared to actual Chinese or Islamic models. Incised Sung bowls have lotuses or peonys in a scroll-like arrangement, e.g. *The Mount Trust Collection of Chinese Art, op. cit.*, fig. 56. For Islamic examples, *The Arts of Islam, op. cit.*, thirteenth century Kāshān, p. 249, nos. 359 and 360; A. Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*, London, 1947, figs., 86, 92b, both early thirteenth century Kāshān bowls.

(95) In the fourteenth century Mamluk Qur'ans show restrained stylized sprouts at the four corners of framed frontispieces, but even though at times very elaborate, they are more angular and geometric; for examples, Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination*, London, 1976, pls. 52-59, especially a Qur'an of 1304, pl. 62.

(96) The Entry into Jerusalem (our Fig. 19), Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, p. 129; Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 36; Der Nersessian, *Etudes*, fig. 257; Jonah, fol. 200^{v}, Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, p. 134; Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 39;

of the Gospel of bishop John (97), the Raising of Lazarus and the Descent into Hell (Fig. 21) of a related Erevan Gospel (98). This new interest on the part of Armenian miniaturists in rendering depth through receding space is already hesitatingly demonstrated a decade earlier in the Raising of Lazarus (Fig. 22) in the Keran Gospel of 1272 (99) and the Annunciation, Nativity, and Baptism of the second prince Vasak Gospel (100). Sharp-edged mountains (Figs. 19, 21) become reduced in size as they are extended toward the upper frame of the miniature (101). Trees become more gnarled and bent as they hang over precipitous ledges (Figs. 21, 22). More dramatically, the movement and position of Christ on his donkey in the Entry into Jersualem of the Gospel of 1287 as he descends downhill on a treacherous winding path (Fig. 20) gives the viewer the sense that the animal and rider are about to walk out of the page (102). Clumps of grass or low lying vegetation scattered up the sides of the hills fix different planes of space.

The combination of these effects works toward creating a sense

Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, p. 153, fig. 114. Cf. Der Nersessian's discussion of depth in these miniature, *Armenia Art*, p. 153.

(97) Baptism, Azaryan, *op. cit.*, fig. 118; Entry into Jerusalem (our Fig. 20), Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 44; Azaryan, fig. 119; Descent into Hell (our Fig. 21), Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, p. 119; Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 45.

(98) Erevan, Matenadaran no. 9422, the Raising of Lazarus, Dournovo, *Armenian Miniatures*, p. 121; Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 49; Azaryan, fig. 126; Descent into Hell, Der Nersessian, *Etudes*, fig. 258; Azaryan, fig. 128.

(99) Jerusalem, no. 2563, Raising of Lazarus (our Fig. 22), fol. 333, is the most striking example, Der Nersessian, *Etudes*. fig. 254; Azaryan, fig. 111; Velmans, *REArm*, 14 (1980), fig. 3, but the mountains in the Baptism, fol. 25, and the Transfiguration, fol. 69, are of the same type, Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art.*, p. 143, figs. 105-6.

(100) Jerusalem no. 2568, Gospel, probably of the 1270s, Annunciation, fol. 152, Azaryan, fig. 99; Nativity, fol. 8, Azaryan, fig. 100; Narkiss, *op. cit.*, fig. 81; Baptism, fol. 12^{v}, Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, p. 146, fig. 108; Narkiss, fig. 82.

(101) *Lectionary*, Resurrection with Holy Women at the Empty Tomb, Dournovo/Drampyan, pl. 41; Gospel of bishop John, Death of St. John the Evangelist, fol. 311^{v}, Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, p. 150, fig. 111.

(102) This tendency is already evident in the late works of T'oros Ṙoslin, Erevan, Matenadaran no. 10675, formerly Jerusalen no. 3627, Gospel of 1268, Raising of Lazarus, fol. 300^{v}, Azaryan, fig. 94; Der Nersessian, *Armenian Art*, p. 134, fig. 97; in the Raising of Lazarus of the Keran Gospel of 1272, the mountains are turned back at the top to fit in the upper border, references in *supra* note 99, Jerusalem no. 2563.

of space and depth (103). It is precisely these elements that are characteristic of distant mountainous landscapes with lonely riders

FIG. 19. *Lectionary* of Het'um II, 1287. Erevan, Matenadaran MS 979. Entry into Jerusalem. Photo after Dournovo/Drampyan, *Miniatures arméniennes*, pl. 36.

(103) As is well known, such jagged, distant mountains, with a tree here or there, were already a feature of Byzantine miniature painting of the Basilian (Macedonian) renaissance of the tenth and eleventh centuries as seen in such manuscripts

so popular in Chinese painting. To be sure, if one were to compare directly on a one to one basis any of these miniatures with a Chinese painting, the treatment in the Armenian example would prove to be

FIG. 20. Gospel of 1286. Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 197. Entry into Jerusalem. Photo after Dournovo/Drampyan, *Miniatures arméniennes*, pl. 44.

as the Menologion of Basil II of 985, Vatican Library, MS Graec. 1613 and the Dumbarton Oaks Psalter of 1084, MS no. 3. On the whole the treatment of the landscape, especially the mountains, is different than the late thirteenth century Armenian examples by the sharpness of the mountain edges, the restrained treatment of the trees, and the insistence on carefully containing the landscape well within the frame of the miniature. My intent here is not to discuss the Byzantine influence on Armenian miniature painting, especially in Cilicia, for it was as important as it was persistent, but only to suggest that the landscape features alluded to in the foregoing analysis go beyond the Byzantine in both feeling and source of inspiration.

very far removed in appearance and feeling from the misty atmosphere of Chinese naturalism. Are we then to discount this phenomenon as an exaggerated viewing of these effects or as only a coincidental juncture of some common elements found in Chinese art used to create

FIG. 21. Gospel of 1286. Erevan, Matenadaran MS 197. Descent into Hell. Photo after Dournovo/Drampyan, *Miniatures arméniennes*, pl. 45.

the exuberant style in the same manuscripts in which were painted — at times by direct copying — the Chinese animals? If the answer is yes, if we reject any stylistic influence on Armenian art, then in the case of the Islamic counterpart, we can just as easily dismiss the landscapes of the *Universal History* manuscripts by the same close compar-

ison. When these Islamic examples (Figs. 17-18) from the early fourteenth century are placed next to actual Chinese landscapes, they appear to have little inspiration from or resemblance to art of the

FIG. 22. Keran Gospel of 1272. Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, MS 2563, fol. 333. Raising of Lazarus. Photo after Der Nersessian, «Miniatures ciliciennes», *l'Oeil* (November 1969), fig. 17.

extreme orient. And yet these are the Muslim manuscripts which are considered most indicative of the advance toward the Chinese style and precisely because of the same traits found in the Armenian miniatures just discussed.

In the Islamic case the insistence on Chinese stylistic influences in these early works is more confidently put forward because of the hindsight granted by an elaborate further evolution. In the Armenian case no time for such a development was afforded. The experiment with space stops just as abruptly as the mannered figural style, leaving the researcher uncertain as to the inspiration for the new elements found in Cilician painting of the last quarter of the thirteenth century.

* * *

The intent of this paper has been to describe the Chinese motifs which were integrated into several Armenian miniature paintings in the Mongol period, to trace their origins, and to evaluate their impact on Armenian art. The parallel influence of Chinese art on Islamic painting was developed to emphasize that Armenian art incorporated the same elements before, or at least contemporary to, their use in the Iranian world and quite independent of it. This point, that Armenian art did not have to look toward its all powerful Muslim neighbors to absorb new artistic or cultural currents, has already been stressed in an earlier study dealing with thirteenth century Armenian fraternal organizations of Anatolia that preceded and were independent of their Islamic *akhī* counterparts (104).

Medieval Armenian culture was so vigorous, sophisticated, and independent that, in the interaction with Islamic civilization, when a certain phenomenon is observed in both traditions, contrary to what may appear to be the more appealing premise, it is not necessarily true that the much smaller group had to borrow perforce from the larger and dominant power.

At those moments in history when a strong Armenian state flourished with an aristocracy and religious hierarchy having adequate material means to patronize the arts, as was the case in the Cilician kingdom in the second half of the thirteenth century, Armenians were sufficiently developed artistically and culturally to independently import and incorporate forms and ideas from near and distant nations with which Armenia seemed always to maintain direct contact.

(104) D. Kouymjian, «The *Canons* Dated 1280 of the Armenian *Akhī*-type Brotherhood of Erzinjan», *Actes du XXIX*e *Congrès international des Orientalistes*, Paris, 1972, *Etudes Arabes et Islamique*, I, *Histoire et Civilisation*, Cl. Cahen, ed., vol. 2, Paris, 1975, pp. 107-115.