Mariun: An Exiled Queen's Pilgrimage and Death in Jerusalem*

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Abstract
Upon the Mamluk takeover of Sis in 1375 CE, the former Queen Mariun of the Armenian state of Cilicia was taken into captivity and held first in Aleppo and then in Cairo. From there she traveled to Jerusalem, where she lived until her death. Her tomb at the Sts. James Monastery in Jerusalem is often mentioned in medieval and postmedieval texts, but the information in later historiography concerning Mariun and some of her contemporaries who survived the fall of the Armenian kingdom and lived through the fourteenth century has been subject to inaccuracies. This article considers some of these accretions and misrepresentations using textual and archaeological documentation, and reconstructs several key episodes in the life and afterlife of Mariun. The story of this remarkable noblewoman crosses the political realms of at least three Mediterranean communities—Armenian, Mamluk, and Latin—and reflects the scope of the ever-changing geopolitical complexities that continued to mark the eastern Mediterranean under Mamluk domination. Spending the final stages of her life in exile and on pilgrimage, the former queen of Armenia appeared in the Holy City at a time when female spirituality was flourishing within self-organized monastic institutions.

The Empress Helena’s journey to the Holy Land and her vast constructions in fourth-century Jerusalem gave rise to her archetypal image as a royal pilgrim and formed the tradition of Christian aristocratic pilgrimage, which inspired noblewomen in particular.¹ The Crusades to the Holy Land seem to have given birth to various devotional

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and ascetic exercises among women, and these resulted in a significant number of female pilgrims. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Jerusalem saw the establishment of religious organizations and special hospices designated for female pilgrims and travelers; secular women, for example, who stayed at the so-called saeculum, had now more freedom to exercise their spirituality in these self-organized institutions. The continuous wave of late medieval pilgrims included several European queens and noblewomen, who showed a particular devotion to the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. Two well-documented pilgrimages, by (Saint) Bridget of Sweden (1372/73) and Margery Kempe from England (1413), have enjoyed a great deal of attention in Western scholarship. Shortly before these

les manuscrits (Association internationale des études arméniennes): M = Yerevan, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts; J = Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate; V = Venice, Library of the Mekhitarists; W = Vienna, Library of the Mekhitarists; and LOB = London, British Library. Additionally, in order to facilitate the readers’ use of the present article, two different numbers are mentioned for Venice manuscripts. In V1318/923, for example, the first number (1318) indicates the manuscript’s inventory number, while the second one is the manuscript’s consecutive number (923) in the published catalogue.


4. Both women related their pilgrimages to the desire to see the places associated with the Birth and Passion of Jesus Christ. See Schein, “Bridget of Sweden,” esp. 54; Limor, “Jerusalem,” 231–33 (with previous bibliography). A similar phenomenon is also discernible in late medieval Armenian art and devotion, and the artistic evidence related to Queen Mariun offers a good example. Relevant to Mariun’s Holy Land pilgrimage (whose historical circumstances are detailed in this article) may be the three images of her that appear in the Gospel of Queen Mariun dating from 1346 (J1973). These images show Mariun as one of the participants in three important Christological scenes– the Nativity, Entry into Jerusalem, and Descent of Christ from the cross (Figs. 4–6)– thus allowing the Armenian queen to virtually experience and visually imitate the pilgrimage to the holy sites that she would undertake in reality twenty-nine years later. It is not impossible that Mariun made more than one pilgrimage, but there is no evidence to support this possibility. The virtual pilgrimage suggested by the festive cycle of this and other manuscripts and by some Mediterranean analogues of this kind are discussed in G. Grigoryan, “Royal Images of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1198–1375) in the Context of Mediterranean Intercultural Exchange” (PhD diss., University of Fribourg, Switzerland, 2017), 260–66. For the Gospel of Queen Mariun, see also below (§3).

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two pilgrimages, in 1372, a journey to the Holy City was undertaken by Isabelle Lusignan, the daughter of the Armenian King Guy Lusignan (r. 1342–44) and the spouse of Manuel Kantakouzenos (despot of Morea). However, the most important Armenian dignitary to appear in this vibrant milieu was Queen Mariun, the protagonist of this article.

A systematic history of Armenian female pilgrimage to medieval Jerusalem is yet to be written, but the material discussed in this article may offer some preliminary observations. The story of Mariun crosses the political realms of at least three Mediterranean communities—Armenian, Mamluk, and Latin—and reflects the scope of the ever-changing geopolitical complexities that continued to mark the eastern Mediterranean under Mamluk domination. Without undermining Mariun’s pious aspirations, it should be noted that her final pilgrimage and settlement in Jerusalem was an immediate consequence of the Mamluk takeover of the Armenian capital Sis (present-day Kozan, Turkey), which marked the end of the Cilician state. In the present article, this royal pilgrimage is examined through the lens of the specific political circumstances and ambiguous realities of the time but also through devotional manuscripts and objects that accompanied Mariun and eventually kept her memory alive in the centuries that followed.

Upon the Mamluk takeover of Sis in April 1375, Lewon V Lusignan (r. 1374–1375), the last king of the Armenian state of Cilicia, and the rest of the royal court were taken into captivity in Egypt. With the exception of Lewon’s subsequent activities, which are well documented and studied, little is known about what happened to the rest of the Armenian nobility after April 1375. We know that when the Catholicos Kostandin was freed in Cairo in the same year and was allowed to return to Cilicia, some Armenian lords accompanied him. Others continued their activities in Europe, as can be seen in various episodes narrated by Jean Dardel in his *Chronique d’Arménie*, our main source for these years.

5. She is known as Margaret or Mary Lusignan in Cypriot sources, from where her name penetrated Western scholarship in these forms. She is often misrepresented as the sister of the Armenian King Guy Lusignan (as, for example, in the important articles of Schein, “Bridget of Sweden,” 50, and Limor, “Jerusalem,” 231), but in fact she was his daughter. See W. H. Rüdt-Collenberg, *The Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans: The Structure of the Armeno-Cilician Dynasties* (Paris: A. Pigné, 1963), III (H2), no. 193. For these clarifications and certain circumstances related to Isabelle Lusignan’s visit to Jerusalem, see C. Mutafian, *L’Arménie du Levant (XIe–XIVe siècle)*, vol. 1 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 2012), 392–93.


7. Dardel’s *Chronicle* has been published twice, in the original French (1906) and in an Armenian translation prepared by Karapet Ezeanc’ (1891). Both the edition and the Armenian translation are based on the same manuscript dating from the early fifteenth century, preserved in the Bibliothèque municipale de Dole. Both publications are cited in the present article.

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the former queen Mariun settled and lived until her death. The life of this remarkable noblewoman coincided with the reigns of the last five kings of Cilician Armenia, a period full of vicissitudes that led to the fall of the Armenian state and to Mariun’s own exile from the capital Sis. The first, introductory part of this article narrates Mariun’s queenship and provides an overview of the situation at the Armenian court in 1374–75, when the court split into two dissident groups, each struggling to preserve the Armenian state in its own way. Though Mariun belonged to the group that supported King Lewon V against the group that contained, among others, the catholicos, she became a beloved personage for later Armenian historiographers, most of whom were followers of the Armenian Apostolic creed. The second and third parts of the article focus on the reasons for this interest. I hypothesize that her popularity is due not only to Mariun’s efforts for the preservation of the Cilician state (which, however, proved ineffective) but also to her relevance to the Armenian Holy Land tradition. Her tomb at the Sts. James Monastery in Jerusalem is often mentioned in medieval and postmedieval texts. However, the information found in later historiography concerning Mariun and some of her contemporaries who survived the fall of the kingdom and lived through the fourteenth century has been subject to inaccuracies, which this article seeks to correct on the basis of textual and archaeological documentation.

1. Queen Mariun and the Takeover of Sis (1375)

Mariun was born of the marriage of the pali (bailiff) Awšin, the powerful lord of Kořikos (also Corycus, present-day Kızkalesi, Turkey), and Joan of Anjou, the widow of King Awšin (r. 1308–1320) and former queen of Armenia. Mariun’s queenship started when her husband Kostandin of Nłir acceded to the royal throne to reign as King Kostandin I (r. 1344–62/63). However, her queenship turned to be not just a symbolic one, for she actually governed the kingdom for a few years. Thus, a fourteenth-century chronicle records that after the death of Kostandin I, Mariun occupied the Armenian throne for one year (1363–64). We learn from the same source that Mariun succeeded also the next King

8. Also spelled Mariwn, Marun, Mariawn/Marion, Marian, Mariam, Mary, and Maria.
9. I avoid labeling the two rival groups “Latinophile” and “non-Latinophile,” because although they are generally known as such, I do not think that the disagreements among the members of the royal court were primarily based on their religious-cultural orientations. This question requires a deeper analysis, but the episodes discussed under §1 (especially in relation to Mathieu Cappe) demonstrate the advisability of adopting a more cautious approach to the straightforward characterization of “Latinophile” versus “non-Latinophile.” In addition, Queen Mariun, who supported King Lewon V on various occasions and might therefore be taken as a “Latinophile” (also because of her Angevin mother and her close relationship with the West and the papacy), was a follower of the Armenian Church (not to mention her final installment in the Sts. James Monastery, which functioned then as it does now as the seat of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem).
10. For Mariun’s origins, see the principal colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun (J1973), the relevant parts of which are transcribed and translated below (§3). For other sources, see Chronique d’Arménie, 19; Yovhannu Dardeli Žamanakagrut’ïwn, 28; Samuēl Anec’i ew šarunakolner: Žamanakagrut’ïwn Adamic’ minč’ew 1776 t’. [Samuēl Anec’i and continuators, Chronicle from Adam to 1776], critical text, study, and commentary by K. Matevosyan (Yerevan: Nairi, 2014), 274.
Kostandin II (r. 1365–73) and governed the state for a second time in 1373–74, until the reign of Lewon V, the last king-to-be. This information is confirmed by Jean Dardel, Lewon’s future confessor-companion, who calls Mariun “the old queen of Armenia.” This second period of Mariun’s rule is especially interesting from the point of view of her legitimacy, since as seen below, the widow of Kostandin II, likewise called Mary, was alive and could have laid a more rightful claim to the throne of her late husband than could Mariun, who was the widow of the previous king. During the reign of Kostandin II and especially in the early 1370s, we see Mariun actively engaged in negotiations with the papacy and the West with the aim of gaining support for and preserving the Armenian state. In view of these initiatives undertaken by the former queen, questions have been raised about the surprising silence in these negotiations of King Kostandin II, who was the acting king and alive until 1373. Mariun’s efforts were important also in 1374, when, after some diplomatic arrangements, Lewon was finally able to arrive in Sis and take up his royal responsibilities.

12. Mat’evosyan, Ananun žamanakagrakan graṙumner, XIV d. [Anonymous chronicles, fourteenth century], appendix 3 in L. Ter-Petrosyan, Xa’čakırnerew ew hayera [The Crusaders and the Armenians], vol. 2: Historico-Political Study (Yerevan: Print-Info, 2007), 555. This and several other excerpts from anonymous chronicles, as well as three larger chronicles attributed to Smbat Sparapet, Het’um Nlirc’i, and Marajjox Vasil, are preserved in a manuscript dating from 1382–1404: MS London, British Museum, Or. 5458, now in the British Library. For the manuscript’s description, see Frederick C. Conybeare, A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Museum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), 290–92. This seems to be the very manuscript on the basis of which the first publication of Smbat’s History was prepared by Oskan Gēorgean Yovhanniseanc’ (Moscow 1856), although, for the sake of accuracy, a comparative textual analysis is desirable. The two less-known chronicles, preserved in the same manuscript and attributed by Artašes Mat’evosyan to Het’um Nlirc’i and to Marajjox Vasil, were published in 1963. In the same publication, Mat’evosyan also included four important excerpts from anonymous chronicles that occupy various folios of LOB Or. 5458. The reason these texts have been preserved in a fragmentary and mixed state is that the manuscript has missing folios, and the current binding of the folios was done in an incorrect order. Unaware of this edition, in 2007, Levon Ter-Petrosyan prepared a new publication of some chronicles found in LOB Or. 5458, reproducing the text of the Chronicle of Het’um Nlirc’i and five excerpts from anonymous chronicles. The two publications organize and number the excerpts differently, because Mat’evosyan arranged them with an eye to paleographical and scribal peculiarities, whereas Ter-Petrosyan placed the excerpts in the chronological order of the narrated events. Thus, the fourteenth-century chronicle in which Mariun’s double rulership is mentioned appears in Mat’evosyan’s edition as excerpt 6 (Mat’evosyan, “Het’um Axtuc’ tiroǰ,” 198) and, in Ter-Petrosyan’s edition as excerpt 2 (Ter-Petrosyan, Ananun žamanakagrakan graṙumner, 555).

13. Chronique d’Arménie, 41–42: “. . . les Armins s’apperçeürent et pour ce le [King Kostandin II] tuerent ou moyys d’avril l’an mil CCCLXXIII, et donnerent par commun assentement le gouvernement du royaume à la vielle royne d’Armenye [Queen Mariun], qui femme avoit esté du premier roy tirant [King Kostandin I], jusques à la venue du dit messire Lyon [future King Lewon V Lusignan], leur droit seigneur naturel.” See also Yovhannu Dardeli Žamanakagrut’iwn, 68.


When the Armenian capital was taken by the Mamluks in April 1375, the current queen of Armenia was Margaret of Soissons, who had been coronated in the cathedral of Saint Sophia of Sis a year earlier, on September 14, 1374, together with her spouse Lewon V. At the time of the kingdom’s fall, two other former queens in addition to Margaret were also present in the royal fortress of Sis: Mariun, the widow of Kostandin I, and Mary, the widow of Kostandin II. These two homonymous noblewomen were widows of two consecutive kings, both called Kostandin. Furthermore, the former queens were daughters of two namesake lords, both named Awšin: Mariun’s father, as already noted, was Awšin of Korikos, whereas Mary was the daughter of Awšin Olruy (and the granddaughter of Awšin of Korikos through the maternal line, which means that Mariun was her aunt). In the genealogical tables of Rüdt-Collenbert and Toumanoff, Mariun is referred to as “the old queen,” apparently following Dardel’s above-quoted designation, while Mary of Olruy is called “the young queen.” Between 1374 and 1375, the latter also seems to have been active at the court of the declining state, as shown in the passage summarized below.

On the day of his coronation, Lewon V had given the title of knight to two noblemen, Sohier Doulcart (also known as Soher de Sart) and Mathieu Cappe, who were at the same time also proclaimed maraǰaxt (marshal) of the state and the king’s chancellor, respectively. On the same day, the newly minted knights further married two widowed noblewomen. Sohier Doulcart, the new marshal, married the widow of Prince Bohemond of Korikos, Lady Ephemie (also spelled Femye, Femi, and Fimi), whose name appears in Dardel’s Chronicle as Remye. Mathieu Cappe, the new chancellor, married the “young queen” Mary, the widow of King Kostandin II. In the case of Cappe, however, Lewon’s generosity was not rewarded with faithfulness. According to Dardel, it was Cappe who, supported by his new spouse Mary, Catholicos Kostandin, and Paron Vasil, initiated an assassination attempt against King Lewon on March 24, 1375. Lewon managed to evade the assassination, and Cappe

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17. Rüdt-Collenberg, Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans, III (H2), no. 165/175 (for Mariun) and no. 169/192 (for Mary of Olruy); C. Toumanoff, Les dynasties de la Caucase chrétienne de l’Antiquité jusqu’au XIXe siècle: Tables généalogiques et chronologiques (Rome, 1990), 291 (table 61).
18. Bohemond of Korikos was Lewon V’s uncle, who was assassinated together with King Guy Lusignan.
19. Chronique d’Arménie, 66; see also ibid., n. 5 for the identification of Lady Remye with Ephemie; Yovhannu Dardel Žamanakagrut’iwn, 114–15.
20. Chronique d’Arménie, 75; Yovhannu Dardel Žamanakagrut’iwn, 130.
22. Chronique d’Arménie, 75–76; Yovhannu Dardel Žamanakagrut’iwn, 130–32. The failed assassination attempt was followed by another one, organized by Vasil. See Chronique d’Arménie, 77–78; Yovhannu Dardel Žamanakagrut’iwn, 135–36.
himself was killed by falling down from the castle tower.23 We are not told what happened to the twice-widowed Mary. Unlike Mariun and Margaret of Soissons, she is not listed among the prisoners who accompanied Lewon during his exile from Sis (though she may have been among the twenty exiled aristocrats whom Dardel mentions but does not name24).

After this episode, Lewon, along with a small group of guardians, moved to the residence of Mariun, situated in the so-called Second Castle, where he was “accepted very honorably.” Soon, Sohier Doulcart and some groups of people and soldiers joined Lewon in Mariun’s castle. The tower castle, which was the king’s official residence, was occupied by the initiators of the coup, who—according to Dardel—did not want to hand it back to Lewon despite the latter’s initially peaceful (and later military) efforts to regain control of it.25 On the feast of the Annunciation, Lewon could finally enter the royal castle, and his banner was raised atop the tower, as our chronicler proudly describes. But his opponents were there, too, and Dardel accuses the catholicos and Paron Vasil of handing Lewon over to the Mamluks.26 According to a contemporary manuscript colophon, the royal castle surrendered on Friday, April 16, after several months of blockade.27

2. Queen Mariun after the Fall of Sis

According to Jean Dardel, the victorious Mamluk commander ordered one of his officials to replace him in Sis, while he accompanied Lewon’s retinue to Aleppo. The commander was ’Ashiq Tamur (’Ashaqtamur), the emir of Aleppo. On the day of Easter (April 22, 1375), the group of royal prisoners, comprising “the king and the queen [Lewon V and Margaret of Soissons], their children, the former queen of Armenia [Mariun], who was the spouse of the tyrant king Kostandin I, and Sir Sohier Doulcart and his countess [Lady Remye], as well as Armenian barons and great men from the city of Sis, altogether twenty persons,” left Sis.28 At the end of April, the travelers approached Aleppo but did not enter the city immediately, because the emir wanted it to be splendidly decorated before his solemn entry, which Dardel explains by the emir’s desire to highlight the significance of his recent victory and to exhibit his glory and magnificence to Lewon.29 After spending the entire month of May in Aleppo, on the first day of June the prisoners were sent to Cairo at the command of Sultan


24. See below, §2 (n. 28).

25. After his messengers were rejected, Lewon initiated a military attack in order to take back the tower castle. Four attacks were launched in one night, but none of them was successful, because, as described by Dardel, the tower castle was “very strong, and its entrance was so thin that the soldiers could enter only one by one.” Because of this, many of the attackers were wounded. See Chronique d’Arménie, 76–77; Yovhannu Dardeli Žamanakagrut’iwn, 132–34.


27. However, in another Armenian source dating from the fourteenth century, the date of the final surrender of the royal castle is given as April 12. Both texts are reproduced and translated in Grigoryan, “Armenian Colophons.”

28. Chronique d’Arménie, 84; Yovhannu Dardeli Žamanakagrut’iwn, 148.

29. Chronique d’Arménie, 84–85; Yovhannu Dardeli Žamanakagrut’iwn, 149.
al-Ashraf Shaʿbān. They arrived there on Wednesday, July 9, and were given appropriate accommodation, though the sultan did not receive them immediately but only several days later.30 Dardel writes that it was decided that Lewon would stay in Cairo with a daily subsidy of sixty silver drams, whereas the former queen Mariun, together with Sohier Doulcart and Lady Remye, would head for Jerusalem upon their own request. According to a permission letter issued by al-Ashraf Shaʿbān in April 1375, the sultan guaranteed the safety of Lewon, his queen, and his children.31 The security of the other members of Lewon’s retinue was guaranteed as well, but they were given a modest subsidy to cover the costs of their trip to Jerusalem.32 Mamluk Jerusalem seems to have been the best destination for these stateless aristocrats, for it boasted an active Armenian community and patriarchate and had become the focus of renewed interest of Western aristocratic pilgrimage. As for the rest of the captured Armenian aristocracy, they soon managed to repatriate to Sis, led by Catholicos Kostandin.33

In autumn 1377, a knight called Manuēl, who had in the early 1370s engaged in diplomatic affairs initiated by Queen Mariun, appears to have conducted negotiations with Peter III of Catalonia (known also as Peter IV of Aragon or Peter the Ceremonious) for Mariun’s liberation. For this purpose, on November 25 the king signed several letters addressed to recipients whose names are not known but who were to write to the Mamluk sultan to advocate for Mariun’s freedom.34 Madalena Sáez Pomés has observed that Manuēl’s negotiations may have been a pretext for him to stay on at the Catalan court for a while.35 After the fall of Sis, Manuēl himself was held as a prisoner in Aleppo, where, according to Dardel, he became a “sarrasin.”36 Through the intercession of Lewon V, Manuēl managed to gain his liberty and move to Europe. His efforts to liberate Mariun in 1377 are indeed a little surprising. Although Jerusalem was under Mamluk control, the aged queen seems to have lived there not as a prisoner in urgent need of liberation. According to certain manuscript colophons, reproduced and discussed below, Mariun lived a “merciful and charitable” life in the Holy City, which suggests a monastic lifestyle. Indeed, when she died she was buried at the Sts. James Monastery. The events preceding Manuēl’s initiative in October-November of 1377 further highlight its apparent lack of purpose. First, in 1375, before the imminent end of his reign, Sultan al-Ashraf Shaʿbān had already granted Mariun a sort of freedom by allowing her to leave Cairo and to move to Jerusalem upon her own wishes. Second,


31. The text of the sultan’s guarantee letter is reproduced in chapter 104 of Dardel’s chronicle. See *Chronique d’Arménie*, 80–81; Yovhannu Dardeli Žamanakagrut’iwn, 141–42.


33. For sources, see above, n. 6.


35. Ibid., 400.


*) Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭā 29 (2021)
a fourteenth-century manuscript colophon and several later Armenian texts mention that Mariun died in July 1377 (see below, §2.1), which does not fit chronologically with Manuël’s undertaking of efforts to liberate her in autumn 1377. He was either unaware of Mariun’s death months earlier or had other intentions, such as to stay at the Catalan court, as suggested by Saez Pommés, or to obtain financial support for himself, as Dardel suggests on one occasion.37

2.1. Evidence from Manuscript Colophons and Minor Texts

The final account on Queen Mariun in Dardel’s chronicle says that she and her two companions, Sohier Doulcart and his wife, were paid poorly for their trip to Jerusalem.38 In the Holy City, a certain Vahram acquired from Mariun a now-lost gospel book, which had originally belonged to King Kostandin I, Mariun’s late husband.39 This parchment manuscript had been created in 1290 for the priest Kostandin in the Monastery of Armēn (situated on the eponymous mountain, east of the fortress of Lambron), and according to the colophon’s text, it had been richly illustrated in 1345 at the command of King Kostandin I. When Mariun was expelled from Sis, she apparently took her husband’s gospel along and carried it with her all the way to Jerusalem. Curiously enough, sometime before the seventeenth century (or perhaps in the seventeenth century) the manuscript was moved back to Sis, the seat of the catholicosate of Cilicia, as two Cilician catholicoi—Yovhannēs Ant’ēpc’i (1601–21) and Kirakos Ajapahean (1797–1822)—are mentioned as having repaired it.40 By 1851, the gospel of King Kostandin was still in Sis, for in that year Lewond Pirłalemean documented the manuscript and reproduced its colophon from 1345.41 Soon thereafter, in 1852, the manuscript—described as having a silver binding—was also mentioned by Victor Langlois, who saw it in the treasury of the Chapel of Surb Grigor (St. Gregory) in Sis.


39. A detailed description of this gospel manuscript is to be found in a handwritten notebook compiled in Adana between the years 1919 and 1921 by the later Catholicos Sahak Xapayean. His notebook is preserved as J3602/24. The whereabouts of the gospel belonging to King Kostandin I (and then to Queen Mariun) remain unknown to me. Xapayean’s description of the manuscript is reproduced in N. Polarean, Mayr c’uc’ak jeragrac’ Srboc’ Yakobeanc’ [Grand catalog of Sts. James manuscripts], vol. 11 (Jerusalem: Press of Sts. James, 1991), 15–18.

40. Colophons about the later restorations are reproduced in Polarean, Mayr c’uc’ak, 11:17–8.

Langlois documented it in his travelogue study, providing a French translation of the same colophon. But before the manuscript was repatriated to Cilicia in the postmedieval period, sometime in the last decades of the fourteenth century, the aforesaid Vahram composed a colophon that includes a brief eyewitness account of the queen’s sojourn in Jerusalem. Of the known sources, this is one of the closest to Queen Mariun, from whom Vahram acquired the manuscript, apparently shortly before her death:

42. V. Langlois, Voyage dans la Cilicie et dans les montagnes du Taurus exécuté pendant les années 1852–1853 (Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1861), 403.

43. Sahak Xapayean’s handwritten transcription of this colophon appeared in Połarean, Mayr c’uc’ak, 11:17, and it served as the basis of my reproduction and English translation, expanding only the abbreviations. It is also reproduced in Covakan, Hay grič’ner, T’–ŽĒ dar [Armenian scribes, tenth–seventeenth centuries] (Jerusalem: Press of Sts. James, 1992), 144–46, and Covakan, Vanatur: Banasirakan yōduacneru žolovacoy [Vanatur: Collection of philological essays] (Jerusalem: Press of Sts. James, 1993), 275 (in part). Previously, an abbreviated version of the colophon was published by Bishop Mkrtič’ Aławnuni in his Miabank’ ew ayc’eluk’ hay Erusałēmi [Cenobites and visitors to Armenian Jerusalem] (Jerusalem: Press of Sts. James, 1929), 170–71; Aławnuni had likewise used Xapayean’s transcription, available at that time in Xapayean’s handwritten catalog of Sts. James manuscripts. This catalog was never published and in fact is now obsolete due to the eleven-volume series of catalogs published successively by Połarean until 1991.

44. The date of the takeover of Sis is given erroneously as ՊԻԳ (823 = 1374 CE) instead of ՊԻԴ (824 = 1375 CE). The error may have been caused by the false reading of the letter/number Դ, whose form resembles that of the letter Գ. Because the original manuscript is missing, it is impossible to verify the colophon’s text, which was transcribed by Xapayean and recopied by several scholars (see the previous note).
And again, in the Armenian year 823 [= 1374], Sis was taken from the Christians; and this happened when T'er Kostandin of Lambron, a wise and ingenious man, was catholicos of the Armenians, and when Paron Lewon, son of the prince, was king of the Armenians. He reigned over the Armenians for seven months. He was taken captive into Egypt together with his queen and children. But the great queen of Armenia, Mariwn, dwelt in Jerusalem for three years with truly great virtue and fell asleep in Christ on July 18 in the [Armenian] year eight hundred... [illegible], for she was very merciful and charitable [lit. lover of the poor]. She was buried in front of the door of Saint James. She offered us the holy sign which [had belonged to] Catholicos Yakob.

From her I also acquired for my own enjoyment this holy and God-spoken gospel, which is adorned with pure [lit. holy] gold and silver. And when I pass away, [may this be] a memory of my soul, of my parents, of my relatives, and of all those who are beneficiaries of this holy gospel. ...And I, Vahram, sinful and useless servant of God and of all you who confess Christ [as] God, accepted this honor undeservedly, for I have the name only, but with my deeds I have turned away and isolated myself from God's commandments. But my hope is in this holy gospel, which is God's mouth and word, as He Himself, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, commanded with His divine mouth in the holy gospel: “Everyone who asks [receives]...” [Mt 7:8 or Lk 11:10]. Yet again, falling on my face, I beseech all believers of the Holy Trinity who will come upon this holy and God-spoken gospel... ask Christ to have mercy on us....

The fact that Vahram acquired the now-lost gospel of King Kostandin I in Jerusalem and directly from Queen Mariwn shows that she took it with her when leaving Sis, along with a certain “holy sign” (i.e., a cross) that had belonged to Catholicos Yakob. Apart from these two objects, another gospel manuscript, known as the Gospel of Queen Mariun and now preserved as J1973, may well have been among the sacred objects that the queen brought with her to the Holy City. These were, moreover, neither the sole manuscripts associated with the former queen nor the only royal codices to have appeared in Jerusalem after the final takeover of Sis. The ritual manuscript J2027, copied in 1266 by the scribe Awetik’ and illustrated by T’oros Ṛoslin, contains a later colophon that was added in the last decades of the fourteenth century, most likely in Jerusalem (where, incidentally, the best collection of Cilician royal manuscripts is currently preserved). This colophon, written on folio 275v in

45. About the erroneous date of the takeover of Sis, see above, n. 44.
46. For the Gospel of Queen Mariun and its relevance to the queen’s Jerusalem pilgrimage elsewhere, see Grigoryan, “Royal Images,” 260–66.
47. In his monumental manuscript catalog, Polarean did not include this colophon in the description of manuscript J2027; see N. Polarean, Mayr c’uc’ak jeṙagrac’ Srboc’ Yakobeanc’ [Grand catalog of Sts. James manuscripts], vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Press of Sts. James, 1974), 59–66. It is, however, reproduced in one of his later essays; see Covakan, Vanatur, 276.
a somewhat careless way, is clearly dependent on the above-quoted colophon of Vahram, likely being its revised abbreviation:

And again, in the Armenian year 82(4),\(^{51}\) Sis was taken from the Christians; and this happened when tēr Kostandin of Lambron, a wise and ingenious man, was catholicos of the Armenians, and when Paron Lewon, son of the prince, was king of the Armenians. He reigned over the Armenians for seven months.\(^{52}\) He was taken captive into Egypt together with his queens and children. But Queen Marun dwelt in Jerusalem for three years, after which she fell asleep in Christ and was buried in front of the door of Saint James.

Lewun and Het’um, son[s] of Kostandin.

The information on Mariun’s death and on her burial in front of the door of St. James that is found in these two manuscripts can also be found in the Chronological History of Armenian Cilicia, authored by Yakob erēc’ Ssec’i and preserved in the seventeenth-century manuscript V1318/923.\(^{53}\) The events between the years 1375 and 1377

\(^{48}\) Here, too, the date of the takeover of Sis is copied erroneously: instead of "Պհարիւր ԻՑ" (824 = 1375 CE) we read "Պհարիւր ԻԴ", which does not make sense and confirms the questionable writing of the letter/number ' in the original manuscript (see above, n. 44). Polarean transcribed the date as "Պհարիւր ԻԶ" (823 = 1374 CE), following the unpublished catalog of Sahak Xapayean. However, he added a question mark to indicate the questionable writing of the date. See Covakan, \textit{Vanatur}, 276. See also Aławnuni, \textit{Miabank’ ew ayc’eluk’}, 170–71 (who similarly used Xapayean’s handwritten catalog of manuscripts).

\(^{49}\) Probably because of the pronunciation, the scribe has written "օ" instead of "աւ". However, "աւ" is pronounced "օ" when it is followed by a consonant letter. In this case, the correct writing would therefore be "թագաւորեաց".

\(^{50}\) "Սայ թագօորեաց Հայոց ամիս Է ․" ("He reigned over the Armenians for seven months") is missing from Polarean’s transcription (Covakan, \textit{Vanatur}, 276).

\(^{51}\) For the writing of the date, see above, n. 48.

\(^{52}\) See above, n. 50.

\(^{53}\) The identification of the chronicler was made by Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean, who has also prepared the text of the \textit{Chronological History} to be published soon (private communication with Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean, who also informed me about a relevant soon-to-be-published article entitled “Յակոբ Սսեց’ի ժամանակագրութիւնը և նրա պատմագիտական արժէքը” ["The chronicle of Yakob Ssec’i and its significance for historiography"]). For the description of V1318/923, see S. Čemčemean, \textit{Mayr չուկ հայերէն ջերագրե’ մատենադարանի Միսէրանց’}.  

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are narrated twice on folios 249 and 250, apparently having been copied from two different sources. To my knowledge, the excerpts from V1318/923 transcribed below have never before been published. Correspondences to other sources and some clarifications about the abovementioned events and persons are given in the notes that accompany the English translation.

Translation:

And in the fourth year of his reign, the Circassian mēlik' Pērxux\(^5\) came against King Lewon in Sis, took the city, and burned it down. And he took King Lewon captive to Egypt, together with the queen and their children. And the arrow became drunk with blood, and the sword ate the flesh of the heads of the wounded, captured princes, as had happened long ago to Israel. And when their king was taken into captivity in Egypt, Queen Marun, by the order of mēlik', went to dwell in Jerusalem for three years, leading an ascetic life, full of virtuous deeds. And in Sis they murdered vardapet Keč'ałak, who was a student of the Scriptures.\(^5\)

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5. This is al-Ẓāhir Barqūq, the first sultan of the so-called Circassian dynasty, who seized power and reigned 1382–89 and 1390–99. The chronicler is clearly confusing the events related to the takeover of Sis, which happened during the reign and by the order of a previous Mamluk sultan, al-Ashraf Shaʿbān (1363–77).
And in the following year there was such a severe famine in Urhay [i.e., Edessa], Assyria, that [people] ate impure animals, and many were compelled to sell their own children for the sake of food. And emir Hačn, son of Di(d)in, lord of Bałēš, who was a kind and righteous man toward the Christians, was killed. And Marun, Queen of Lewon, after three years of ascetic life, passed away in Jerusalem and was buried in front of the door of Saint James in the year 1377, on July 18. She was very merciful and charitable [lit. lover of the poor]. She bequeathed the holy sign of the abovementioned Catholicos Yakob, which is now kept in the sacristy of [Grigor] the Enlightener. And Parxux, mēlik’ [of] Tahir, who had taken six cities, including Sis, and nine other cities one by one, disappeared from the mēlik’s’ throne after six years and seven months of reign.

The account referring to Queen Mariun’s death and to the cross of Catholicos Yakob that she gave away is apparently taken from the now-lost gospel of King Kostandin I, discussed above. Yakob Ssec’i, when preparing his Chronological History, made a precious addition, writing that “the holy sign” of Catholicos Yakob “is now kept in the sacristy of [Grigor] the Enlightener.” He seems to have used the very manuscript of King Kostandin, which, according to Langlois’s nineteenth-century description, was kept in the church of Surb Grigor (St. Gregory the Enlightener) of Sis. As for Mariun’s stay in Jerusalem, Ssec’i confirms the previously cited accounts of her dwelling in the Holy City for three years, during which she led an ascetic, merciful, and charitable life, performing “virtuous deeds.”

In these sources, Mariun’s passing away is dated to 1377, and the initial location of her tomb is mentioned as being in front of the St. James cathedral. This information can also be found in an anonymous continuation of a chronicle attributed to King Het’um II.
...և ի վերջին Լեւոն ԺԱ ամիս թագաւորեալ եւ եկեալ սուլտան Մսրայ եւ գերեաց զթագաւորին։ Մարիուն թագուհիւն տարեալ յԵգիպտոս եւ խնդրեալ թագուհին ի սուլտանէն, գնաց յԵրուսաղէմ եւ մեռաւ անդ, ԷՃԾԴ, դուռն Սուրբ Յակոբայ թաղեցաւ եւ բարձաւ թագաւորութիւն ի տանէն Կիլիկեցոց ԸՃԻԳ։

Translation:
And the last [King] Lewon reigned for eleven months, until the sultan of Msr [i.e., Egypt] came and captured the king. Queen Mariun was taken to Egypt, [where] she requested of the sultan [to go to Jerusalem]; and she went to Jerusalem and died there in 754 [1305?] and was buried at the door of Saint Yakob [i.e., James]. And in 823 [1374?] the kingdom of the house of the Cilicians fell.

Another later narrative referring to the events in question is given by Martiros Łrimec‘i (1620–83) in his rhythmic narrative Կարգ և թիւ թագաւորաց հայոց (Karg ew t’iw t’agaworac’ hayoc’, “Order and list of Armenian kings”). Łrimec‘i, who was the patriarch of Jerusalem, provides the following retelling of the events of interest to this study:

Finally, after Konstandin, the miserable King Lewon [came and] reigned for eleven months, [but] lost the crown and the throne, because the sultan of Egypt came and captured everyone, including the baron together with his [family], also the queen, their stepmother. The tyrant pitied the queen and [with these words] let her free: “Go wherever you wish!” And she headed for Palestine. Her life ended in the Holy City of Jerusalem, and she was buried under a pillar in the holy cathedral of the Holy See of the Armenian nation in the Armenian year 823 [1374?].

Although both the continuator of Het’um’s chronicle and Łrimec‘i commit several errors—notably, in the dates of Lewon V’s reign, the alleged participation of the sultan in


62. King Konstandin II.

63. Here meaning Sts. James Cathedral in Jerusalem.

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the capture of Sis, and the year of the queen’s death—these texts are apparently accretions of earlier accounts, for their vision of the events essentially corresponds to that of the manuscript colophons reproduced above. Another Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem, Minas Hamt’ec’i (1697–1704), also included information on the takeover of Sis and the capture of the last king, “together with Queen Mariun,” in his *Genealogy of Armenian kings*.64 Remarkably, in these late narratives Mariun continues to be called queen, whereas no specific reference can be found to Margaret of Soissons, who was the actual queen at the time of the kingdom’s fall. From the time of Martiros Lrimec’i (probably even before), there has been persistent confusion about the identities of the noblewomen who accompanied Lewon V during his exile from Sis. Later traditions and stories woven around the last queens of Cilicia resulted in mistaken identifications regarding various episodes of their lives. A point that further deepened this confusion is the mention of a royal heir, traditionally represented in scholarship as Mariun’s daughter. As will be seen below, this claim does not in fact accord with contemporary or near-contemporary sources, some of which are explicit in representing the complex genealogy of the royal family and of the court members. These questions are discussed below, taking into consideration—among other evidence—records of several nonsystematic excavations that have taken place at the Sts. James Cathedral since the nineteenth century.

2.2. Archaeological Information

In November 1897, during excavations prompted by renovation works, two skeletons were found in front of the chapel of the Martyrdom of St. James the Great, also known as the chapel of Gixadir, the most popular pilgrimage destination in the Cathedral of Sts. James. Malak’ia Ormanean suggested that these were the remains of Queen Mariun and Lady Remye,65 apparently on the basis of Dardel’s account, according to which Remye and her husband accompanied Mariun on her trip to Jerusalem (see above). Tigran Sawalaneanc’, followed by Kevork Hintlian and Parsegh Kalemderian, attributed the remains to Mariun and “her daughter.”66 Another attribution for the two skeletons found in 1897 was made by Mkrtič’ Alawnuni, who ascribed them to Mariun and her young relative P’enna.67 P’enna has also been

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represented as Mariun’s daughter—(or as her granddaughter)—a widespread opinion that is not, however, attested in fourteenth-century sources. A further opinion about the two deceased noblewomen, who were said to have spent the last years of their lives in Jerusalem before being buried in the Monastery of Sts. James, was expressed by Yarut’iwn Tēr Lazarean, who identified them as Queen Mariun and Countess Fimi.

In November 1957, the newly elected Bishop Šnorhk’ Galustean undertook renovation work inside the Sts. James Cathedral with the aim of replacing its old pavement, which has since been covered with marble. Coming across a skeleton, Bishop Šnorhk’ initiated spontaneous excavations, which turned up about a dozen more skeletons and many human bones in the main nave of the cathedral, in the chapel of St. Minas (Menas) and in the Church of Holy Ēǰmiacin. Modern visitors to the Sts. James Cathedral are told that the massive column standing near the Glxadir shrine marks the burial place of Queen Mariun (Fig. 1), a claim that echoes Martiros Lrimec’i’s seventeenth-century narrative.

Within the monastic complex there are, however, two other locations that have been associated with Mariun’s tombstone. In his voluminous Chronological History of Jerusalem (1890), Bishop Tēr-Yovhannēseanc’ writes that although the tombs of Queen Mariun and of “her daughter P’enna” have since been covered, they were buried in the gavit’ of the Sts. James Cathedral, near a column.

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73. Tēr-Yovhannēseanc’, Žamanakagrakan patmut’iwn, 213. It is not clear which part of the Sts. James Cathedral he means with gavit’. There are two possibilities: the modern gavit’ is where the principal entrance is currently situated (i.e., in the western part of the cathedral), whereas the gavit’ of the original medieval structure was situated where the chapel-church of Holy Ēǰmiacin is now (i.e., in the southern part of the cathedral). The chapel was constructed in the seventeenth century by walling up the gavit’ and thus closing the main entrance of the original structure. For the cathedral’s plan and architectural history, see D. Pringle, The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus, vol. 3: The City of Jerusalem (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
He also reports that sometime in the nineteenth century the galiacik’ (i.e., the Franks/French) made an inquiry about the grave of P’enna. 74 Tēr-Yovhannēseanc’’s identification of “Mariun and her daughter P’enna” and his locating their graves within the cathedral’s gavit’ coincide with the mid-nineteenth-century records of Xorēn Mxit’arean, who describes the western gavit’ as containing the graves of these two women, as well as of three Armenian patriarchs of Jerusalem—Abraham, Yovhannēs, and Dawit’ (see below). 75

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74. Tēr-Yovhannēseanc’, Žamanakagrakan patmut’iwn, 213.
75. Mxit’arean, Hamařot patmut’iwn Erusalēmi, 185.
Another location for Mariun’s gravestone has been indicated by Abraham Terian, who specifies that “an ancient tombstone inscription marks her [Mariun’s] grave in the southwestern corner of the courtyard of the Saint James monastery.” Currently, that corner of the courtyard is occupied by the tombstone of Patriarch Abraham of Jerusalem, with an inscription mentioning the Armenian year 641, or 1192 CE (see Fig. 2). During my several visits to the Sts. James Monastery, I was unable to discern the supposed gravestone of Queen Mariun in that courtyard.

Interestingly, however, in 1867, when the abovementioned restorations of the Sts. James Cathedral had not yet taken place, the gavit’, where the tombstone of Patriarch Abraham was initially located, is described as follows (translation from Armenian):
First, if you enter the gavit’ of the holy church of this glorious monastery, you will see the image of the Awesome Judgment, which is situated above the main door of the church. And on each side of this door there is a liturgical table in the form of a built-in closet; one of them is named after Saint Gēorg and the other one after Nikolayos Skanč’elagorc [Nicholas the Wonderworker], and on each of these mass is served on the corresponding feast days. And in this gavit’ are buried Mariam, the queen of King Lewon, and her daughter Benna, also the patriarchs Abraham, Yovhannēs, and David. And the walls of the gavit’ are decorated with many wonderful images.

This pre-restoration description of the main entrance by Xorēn Mxit’arean, a scholar of the Sts. James congregation, appears to correspond entirely with the modern appearance of the cathedral’s main entrance, with its depiction of the Last Judgment in the upper part and with the two closet-like altars dedicated to St. George and St. Nicholas, respectively (Fig. 3). These closet-altars are still in use for occasional ceremonies. As for the tombstones mentioned by Mxit’arean, apparently they were later moved out of the gavit’ or around it, as was the case with Patriarch Abraham’s tombstone (Fig. 2). Although several written and oral traditions—some of which date back centuries—regarding Queen Mariun’s final resting place seem to corroborate each other, only serious archaeological research will help us achieve any level of certainty on this and many other issues related to the multilayered history of the Sts. James Cathedral.

Figure 3: The modern principal entrance of Sts. James Cathedral, flanked on both sides by closet-like altars dedicated to St. George and to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. (Photo: Gohar Grigoryan Savary, December 2017)
3. Did Queen Mariun Have a Daughter?

As seen above, various narratives and studies mention Mariun’s having a daughter who presumably accompanied her to Jerusalem and was even buried in the Sts. James Cathedral together with her mother. The name of this daughter differs from one study to another: she appears as P’enna (Benna), as Fimi (or Euphemie), or simply as “Mariun’s daughter.” However, neither in the minor texts cited above nor in the extensive chronicle of Jean Dardel can we find anything about a daughter of Mariun. When describing the exile of Lewon’s retinue from Sis, Dardel lists the following aristocrats: “the king and the queen [Lewon V and Margaret of Soissons], their children, the former queen of Armenia [Mariun], who was the spouse of the tyrant King Kostandin I, and Sir Sohier Doulcart and his countess [Lady Remye], as well as Armenian barons and great men from the city of Sis.” In this account, the former queen Mariun is not said to be accompanied by any child, male or female. If she had been, the child or children would have been mentioned right after her name, like the children of the king and the queen (that is, of Lewon and Margaret) were. Queen Margaret died in Mamluk captivity sometime in the early 1380s: in 1384, two Franciscan pilgrims are said to have visited the graves of Margaret and her daughter Maria in Cairo.80 The absence of Margaret of Soissons in Armenian historiography and the misrepresentation of Mariun as the spouse of Lewon V may have reinforced later associations connecting the last king’s children to Mariun. Let us now consider Mariun’s heirs and whether she ever had a daughter, as is often presumed.

A significant primary source for clarifying the genealogy of the royal family is the principal colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun. This richly illustrated manuscript was produced in 1346 at the Surb Nšan (Holy Sign/Cross) Monastery of Sis and is currently kept at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem (J1973). I have dealt with this royal manuscript elsewhere, providing also transcriptions and translations of its colophons. Here I will make use of the principal colophon insofar as it pertains to the question of Mariun’s “daughter.” Another peculiarity of the Gospel of Queen Mariun is its remarkable miniature painting, whose interpretations have further confused the issue of Mariun’s supposed daughter. Thus, among the illustrations created by the famous Sargis Picak there is an inscribed image of Queen Mariun (fol. 258v; Fig. 6) and two further images of a stemma-bearing female figure (fols. 8v, 114r; Figs. 4–5).

Several art-historical studies have identified these images as representing Mariun’s daughter “Princess Fimi.” It turns out, however, that this identification is based on a false reading of the colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun, which requires closer consideration. Before we turn to the relevant passages of that colophon, some remarks must be made to clarify the reason for the abovementioned confusion.

Figure 5: *Gospel of Queen Mariun* (1346 CE), Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, manuscript J1973, fol. 114r. (Photo: Hrair Hawk Katcherian, July 2014)
Figure 6: Gospel of Queen Mariun (1346 CE), Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, manuscript J1973, fol. 258v. (Photo: Hrair Hawk Khatcherian, July 2014)
The scribe Nersēs composed the principal colophon of J1973 using, first, the genealogy of Queen Mariun (the manuscript’s intended owner) and, second, the genealogy of her spouse, King Kostandin I. Reading the colophon in this light, it becomes easier to identify the aristocrats mentioned therein—altogether seventeen persons, whose relationships are visualized in the genealogical chart included in this article (Fig. 7).

Figure 7: Royal family members mentioned in the colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun (J1973), 1346 CE.

Unsurprisingly, some of these ruling aristocrats have the same first names, popular at that time within the royal court. Thus, the same pedigree colophon mentions not only Queen Mariun (as Mariawn) but also another noblewoman of the same name, Lady Mariawn, and her daughter Femi. The identities of the two homonymous women mentioned in the same colophon were conflated, and the expression “her daughter Femi” was mistakenly connected to Queen Mariun. Lady Mariun was the spouse of Marshal Paltin (Baldwin) and the mother of King Kostandin I—that is, Queen Mariun’s mother-in-law. Consequently, Femi (elsewhere Ephemie) is the daughter of Lady Mariun (not of Queen Mariun) and of Marshal Paltin and a sister of King Kostandin I; she later appears as Countess Femi (Ephemie/Fimi/Remye) in collaboration with Lewon V and Queen Mariun. Although the colophon translated below has thus been the cause of the misidentification of Queen Mariun with Lady Mariun, it is in fact a precise and invaluable source for reconstructing the relationship between these two noblewomen. The bold part of the text refers to Lady Mariun and her daughter Femi.

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82. See Rüdt-Collenberg, Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans, III (H2), no. 167 (mentioned as Euphemie).

83. Chronique d’Arménie, 47, also 61; Yovhannu Dardeli Żamanakagrut’ıwn, 78–79, also 105. See also Kühl, Leon V. von Kleinarmenien, 123.

Եւ արդ ես՝ յուգամեղ և անպիտան ծառայս Ա(ստուծո)յ Ներսէս, ցանկացող եղէ այսմ սրբոյ աւետարանիս գրել զսա յիշատակ բարի և գրեցի ըստ իմում կարի ի ստոյգ աւրինակէ Թարգմանչացն և պարգևեցի զսա հեզահոգի և ողորմած թագաւոհոյն Հայոց Մարիաւնոյն, որ բազում բարեգործութեամբ զարդարեալ է, ևս առավել հեզութ(եամ)բ և խոնարհութ(եամ)բ և ողորմածութ(եամ)բ և որ զայսպիսի առաքինութիւն ստացեալ է, զտ(է)րունական պատմուճանն զգեցեալ է, առավել ևս սա է զգեցեալ զայս լուսաւոր հանդերձ իբրեվ զպարիսպ ամուր։ Այլև զմեր անարժանութիւնս եղբայր կոչեաց իւր, և ինձ այսպէս թուի եթէ ի կամացն Տ(եառ)ն և ի շնորհաց Ս(ուր)բ Հոգւոյն յայտնեցաւ մեզ հոգևոր քոյր և կատարեալ բարեկամ։ Ես շնորհեցի նմա զայս ս(ուր)բ աւետարանս ի վայելումն անձին իւրոյ և յիշատակ բարի, որ և յուսամք ի Ք(րիստո)ս զի ընդ երկայն աւուրս պահեսցէ զնա ամբողջ կենդանութ(եամ)բ հոգւով և մարմնով, և ամենայն սրբոց աղաւթք՝ պահապան լիցի նմա ի տուէ և ի գիշերի, և զամենայն յանցանս իւր զոր գործեալ է՝ թողցէ Տ(է)ր Ա(ստուա)ծ։

Ողորմեսցի Ք(րիստո)ս Ա(ստուա)ծ և իւր բարի ծնաւղացն պ(ա)ր(ոն) Ավշնի, որ տէր էր Կավռիկոսոյ և պայլ Հայոց։ Ս(ուր)բ Ա(ստուա)ծածնին բարեխաւսութ(եամ)բ ողորմեսցի Տ(է)ր Յ(իսու)ս Ք(րիստո)ս և բարէգործութ(եամ)բ զարդարեալ մաւր իւրոյ Ճուանին, որ յառաջն թագուհի էր Աւշին թագաւորին։ Հանգուսցէ Տ(է)ր Յ(իսու)ս զհոգիս նորա յարքայութե(ան)ն երկնից։ Ողորմեսցի Ք(րիստո)ս և պարկեշտ քաւրն իւրոյ Ալիծին, որ յառաջն թագուհի Լևոն թագաւորին։ Յիշման արժանի արարէք և զհաւրեղբայր իւր զպ(ա)ր(ոն) Կոստա(նդին)՝ սպարապետն Հայոց, և զհայր նորին զպ(ա)ր(ոն) Հեթում՝ զտէրն Կոռիկոսոյ, և հանգուսցէ զհոգիս նոցա։

Երկնաւոր թագաւորն Ք(րիստո)ս, աւրհնեսցէ զմեր Հայոց թագաւորս Կոստանդիանոս և ընդ երկայն աւուրս արասցէ, և պահեսցէ յերևելի և յաներևոյթ թշնամեաց, և զա(ստուա)ծատուր որդիսն իւր՝ զպ(ա)ր(ոն) Աւշին, և զպ(ա)ր(ոն) Լևոն, և զպ(ա)ր(ոն) Հեթում, անվնաս պահեսցէ յամենայն ազգ փորձութենէ, և թողցէ զյանցանս իւր։ Ողորմեսցի Ք(րիստո)ս և հանգուցեալ հաւր իւրոյ՝ պ(ա)ր(ոն) Պաղտին մարաջախտուն Հայոց, և հանգուցեալ քաւյուր տիկին Ալիսին, և քեռոյն իւրեանց պ(ա)ր(ոն) Սմբատայ և պ(α)ր(ον) Լևոնի։
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Translation:

...And I, Nersēs, sinful and useless servant of God, desired to copy this holy gospel as a good remembrance, and I copied it according to my abilities from an authentic example by the Translators and offered it as a gift to the meek [lit. meek of soul] and merciful queen of the Armenians, Mariawn, who is adorned with numerous good deeds and with utmost mildness, humbleness, and charity, and who has acquired so much virtue and is clothed with the Lordly garment; and yet further, she is clothed with this luminous cloak as a strong rampart. Despite our unworthiness, she called us her brother, and it seems to me that it was by the Lord’s will and by the grace of the Holy Spirit that she appeared to us as spiritual sister and perfect friend. I offered her this holy gospel for her own enjoyment and as a good remembrance, hoping that Christ will keep her safe with full vitality of spirit and body for long days. And may the prayers of all the saints be a guardian for her by day and by night; and may the Lord God pardon all the transgressions that she has committed.

May Christ God also have mercy on her [Queen Mariun’s] good parents, Paron Awśin, who was the lord of Kawrökos and payl [i.e., bailiff] of Armenia. Through the intercession of the Holy Astuacacin [i.e., Theotokos] may the Lord Jesus Christ have mercy also on her mother, Čuan, who is adorned with good works and who formerly was the queen of King Awśin. May the Lord Jesus grant her soul rest in the Kingdom of Heaven. May Christ also have mercy on her [Queen Mariun’s] modest sister Alic, who formerly was the queen of King Lewon. Make also her uncle, Paron Kostandin, the sparapet [i.e., constable] of Armenia, and his father, Paron Het’um, the lord of Koṙikos, worthy of remembrance. May their souls rest in peace.

May Christ, the heavenly king, bless Kostandianos, our king of Armenia, and grant him length of days, and protect him from enemies visible and invisible. May also his God-given sons, Paron Awśin, Paron Lewon, and Paron Het’um, be kept unharmed from all the temptations of this life. May the Lord God bless also Paron Smbat, the

85. Awśin, lord of Koṙikos, father of Queen Mariun. See Rüdt-Collenberg, Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans, III (H2), no. 143.
86. This is Joan of Anjou, mother of Queen Mariun. After the death of King Awśin, Joan married payl Awśin, Mariun’s father. See ibid., III (H2), no. 143/2. See also above, n. 10.
87. Alic of Koṙikos, sister of Queen Mariun and the first spouse of King Lewon IV (r. 1321-1341). See ibid., III (H2), no. 173.
88. Constable Kostandin, lord of Lambron and uncle of Queen Mariun. See ibid., III (H2), no. 142.
89. Het’um (Hayton) the Historian, lord of Koṙikos and father of Constable Kostandin. See ibid., III (H2), no. 117.
90. King Kostandin I, spouse of Queen Mariun. See ibid., III (H2), no. 165 (mentioned as Constantine III).
91. Three sons of King Kostandin I – Awśin, Lewon, and Het’um. The latter’s name is unknown to Rüdt-Collenberg (ibid., III (H2), nos. 188–190). See also Covakan, “Yišatakaran Nersēs episkoposi,” 127, nn. 10–12; Covakan, Vanatur, 273, 276.

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beloved brother of the king and the constable of Armenia, and grant him length of days. May the Lord God bless also the mother of the king, Mariawn, who is our spiritual mother. May the Mother of God intercede for her day and night and may She preserve her with full vitality of spirit and body, and may she be cleansed of all her sins. May the Lord God bless also her [Lady Mariawn’s] modest daughter Femi, who is our spiritual sister and friend. May the Lord God preserve her with full vitality of spirit and body from every kind of temptation, and may He forgive her transgressions.

Although the Femi mentioned in this colophon was clearly not Queen Mariun’s daughter, the question remains whether Queen Mariun ever had a daughter. The names of her and Kostandin’s sons—Awšin, Lewon, and Het’um, all bearing the title “baron” (paron)—are attested in the colophon. Lewon and Het’um are also mentioned in a later colophon preserved in the manuscript J2027 and reproduced above. Apparently, none of these sons survived the fall of the state: Dardel reports that Kostandin I had many children but they all died at an early age “by the will of God, who did not want these children to reign after King Kostandin, for he had no royal blood.” In addition, Yakob Ssec’i, the author of


93. Lady Mariawn, the spouse of Marshal Paltin and the mother of King Kostandin I—i.e., the mother-in-law of Queen Mariun. For both Queen Mariun and Lady Mariun, their relationship, and their family members, see also Rüdt-Collenberg, *Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans*, genealogical table III (H2), nos. 174 (Queen Mariun), 147/136 (Lady Mariawn), 167 (Femi/Euphemie, daughter of Lady Mariawn and Marshal Paltin). On Marshal Paltin and Lady Mariawn, see also the extensive colophon of the lectionary preserved as MS Vatican, Borg.arm. 61, fol. 437v, reproduced in E. Tisserant, *Codices armeni Bybliothecae Vaticanae Borgiani, Vaticani, Barberiniani, Chisiani* (Rome: Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1927), 99; *Hayeren jeṙagreri hišatakaranner, ŽD dar [Colophons of Armenian manuscripts, fourteenth century], part 1: 1301–1325*, comp. L. Khachikyan, A. Matevosyan, and A. Ghazarosyan (Yerevan: Nairi, 2018), 389.

94. Femi, the daughter of Lady Mariawn and Marshal Paltin; see the previous note.


97. Smbat, brother of Lady Mariawn and uncle of King Kostandin I. See ibid., III (H2), no. 146.


99. *Chronique d’Arménie*, 35–36; Yovhannu Dardelį Žamanakagrut’iwn, 58–59. Though Kostandin may have had distant blood relations with the royal family or may have been connected to them through earlier intermarriages (on which see Ter-Petrosyan, *Xač’akirnerǝ ew hayerǝ*, 428–34), his ascension to the Armenian throne through election was indeed unprecedented in the history of the Cilician state. Two nephews of the
the seventeenth-century Chronological History of Armenian Cilicia, mentions that King Kostandin and his sons died of the plague in 1356 in Sis.\footnote{100. See V1318/923, fols. 240–41. Although the chronicler mistakenly dates the death of King Kostandin as 1356, we know that he died in the early 1360s. Whatever the exact date of the king’s death, his sons had already passed away by the time of their own succession to the throne and certainly by the fall of Sis in 1375—an event that finds a modified echo in this later Chronological History preserved in V1318/923. For clarifications of some relevant errors in the Chronological History, see Ter-Petrosyan, Xač’akirnerǝ ew hayerǝ, 441, n. 18.}

Given that the colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun names six different female members of the royal court (both living and deceased), the simplest explanation for the absence of a royal princess among them is her nonexistence. In the part referring to the family members of Queen Mariun, the colophon mentions the queen, her mother Joan, and her sister Alic, whereas in the second part, referring to the family of King Kostandin, only his mother Mariun, and his sisters Alis (deceased) and Femi are named. None of the sources known to me or to previous writers on this subject mention Queen Mariun’s having a daughter. Had she had a daughter, that information would have been reflected in some sources or at least in those manuscript colophons that refer to royal children. As the material treated in this article demonstrates, the erroneous identification of a daughter of Mariun entered modern scholarship from later narratives and from the misreading of the colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun and was then reinforced by its circulation from one study to another. Further, the nineteenth-century theory that the two skeletons found in the Sts. James Cathedral belonged to Queen Mariun and “her daughter” can now be dismissed, especially in light of the subsequent discovery of numerous additional skeletons in the cathedral.

4. Conclusion

The available evidence about Queen Mariun’s last years allows the following conclusions to be drawn. According to the fourteenth-century sources treated in this article—namely, Jean Dardel’s Histoire d’Arménie and several manuscript colophons—after the fall of the Armenian kingdom the queen journeyed to Aleppo, Cairo, and then Jerusalem, where she passed away and was buried in the Cathedral of Sts. James. The source closest to her in time is the account of Vahram, the next owner of the now-lost gospel book, since he acquired the manuscript directly from the queen before her death. It is Vahram\footnote{101. It is noteworthy that shortly after the fall of the kingdom, a certain Fimi, who identified herself as the “spouse of Vahram,” acquired a gospel manuscript in Ayas (present-day Yumurtalık, Turkey). This manuscript (now V1635/125) is a remarkable specimen of the Skewṙay school of miniature painting. It was commissioned in 1193 by Nersēs Lambronac’i and his brother Het’um. According to the later colophon written by Fimi, the}
who tells us about Mariun’s pious way of life in Jerusalem, such as helping the poor (he calls her al’k’atasēr, “charitable,” lit. lover of the poor). This portrayal became increasingly popular over time, giving rise to the now widespread view that Mariun became a nun in the Sts. James Monastery. Although Vahram does not specifically mention her becoming a nun, the monastic lifestyle adopted by Mariun in the last years of her life appears to support this possibility and reflects similar practices of female spirituality in late medieval Jerusalem. When heading for Jerusalem to lead “an ascetic life, full of virtuous deeds,” Mariun carried along from Cilicia several objects, such as two gospel manuscripts and a holy cross, which must have also accompanied her during her final settlement in the Holy City. Crosses and sacred manuscripts are the two most often used objects in the liturgical and devotional practices of the Armenians, but they are also two symbols through which the iconography of monasticism was expressed: thus, in one of the miniatures depicting “Saint Grigor the Hermit” (Սուրբն Գրիգոր Ճգնաւոր, as the accompanying inscription reads), the renowned saint of Narekvank’ is shown holding a golden cross and a richly adorned book in his hands (Fig. 8). Although the current state of this miniature portrait suggests a later provenance than the twelfth-century manuscript in which it is found, it nevertheless bears traces of the Armenian reception of medieval monasticism.

manuscript came to Ayas from the captured Lambron castle. One might speculate that Fimi’s spouse Vahram is the same person who had acquired from Queen Mariun the now-lost gospel of King Kostandin I. What is certain, however, is that both Fimi and Vahram were of a high social standing and could afford to buy royal manuscripts that had once belonged to the rich library of Sis or that of the powerful Lambron castle. From a contemporary manuscript colophon we learn that after the fall of Sis many churches and scriptures “had fallen into captivity” (“Թափաստանից եկեղեցին, սուրբ ավետարանիս Ֆիմիս Այասցի՝ կին Վահրամի, ի դառնութեան ժամանակի աւերումն”); see Է. Ալիշան, Sisuan: Hamagrut’iwn hayyakan Kilikey ew Lewon Mecagorc [Sisuan: A documentary study of Armenian Cilicia and Lewon the Great] (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1885), 228, and Grigoryan, “Armenian Colophons.” Another interesting, though not uncommon, feature of the colophon is that Fimi describes the act of buying the gospel manuscript as rescuing it from captivity, hoping, in exchange, that she (“her soul”) and her parents will be remembered (V1635/125, fol. 322v): “Այս սուրբ ավետարանիս Ֆիմի Այասցի՝ կին Վահրամի, ի համար իշատակ հոգ իմոյ և ծնողաց իմոց” (Translation: “The last acquirer of this holy Gospel, I, Fimi Ayasc'i [i.e., from Ayas], spouse of Vahram. In this bitter time, when the castle of Lambron was plundered, this holy gospel was brought to the city of Ayas as a captive, and for the sake of Christ’s love, I, Fimi, bought this holy gospel in memory of my soul and of my parents.”) The original text in Armenian is reproduced in B. Sargisean, Mayr c’uc’ak hayerēn jēragrac’ matenadararan Mxit’areanc’ i Venetik [general catalog of Armenian manuscripts of the Mekhitarist library in Venice], vol. 1 (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1914), 559–60; Xač’ikyan, ŽD. dari hayeren jērageri hišatakaranner, 521. Both scholars consider the possibility that Fimi’s colophon might have been written during or shortly after the fall of Sis in 1375.


103. The image of Grigor of Narek representing him as a hermit is found in M1568, which is the oldest surviving copy of the Book of Lamentations, created in 1173 for Nersēs of Lambron. The same manuscript contains three other images of Grigor, representing him (according to the accompanying inscriptions) as “Grigor the Philosopher” (fol. 7v) and “Grigor the Watchful/Vigilant” (fol. 55v) and as kneeling before Christ (fol. 178v). Unlike these three representations, which are contemporary to the manuscript, the one showing Grigor as a hermit seems to be a result of a later repainting. For the miniature paintings of M1568, see S. Der Nersessian, Miniature Painting, 12–13.
Figure 8: “Saint Grigor the Hermit” in Grigor Narekac’i’s *Book of Lamentations*, manuscript M1568, fol. 120v. (Source: Yerevan, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts.)
Although the current state of this miniature portrait suggests a later provenance than the twelfth-century manuscript in which it is found, it nevertheless
While a magnifying glass is needed to find any information in the textual sources about Armenian female monasticism in the Holy Land, the archaeological data provide some episodic but valuable details for reconstructing the history of the subject. An example is a tomb inscription in Greek found in 1870 just above the Garden of Gethsemane that mentions a certain “Charate, hegumeness of the chaste monastery of the Armenian women.”

The existence of the Armenian patriarchate in Jerusalem and of numerous hospices belonging to the Armenian Church—many of which are still available for modern pilgrims—made Jerusalem the preferred abode for the aged queen Mariun, who undertook her Holy Land pilgrimage in the unique circumstances of exile after her former kingdom had ceased to exist. In Jerusalem, as in her native Cilicia, the “merciful” queen was still able to perform one of the most emblematic royal duties, almsgiving, continuing in this way the well-established tradition of her institutional predecessors. In Mariun’s new dwelling at the Sts. James Monastery, the Armenian clergy were managing “a large hospital for bringing the poor of their nation,” as evidenced by the twelfth-century eyewitness description of John of Würzburg.

A further issue that the present article clarifies is the widespread misidentification of Queen Mariun with other contemporary noblewomen, as well as the misrepresentation of several young ladies as Mariun’s daughters. Although it is not impossible that Mariun had a daughter, the current state of research offers little support for such a claim. On the basis of the colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun, we can affirm with some certainty that by 1346 Mariun had no daughter, only three sons (see the genealogical chart, Fig. 7). This also means that the two portraits of a stemma-bearing female person depicted on folios 8v and 114r (Figs. 4–5) of that manuscript cannot be associated with Mariun’s daughter, as has been proposed, but instead most likely represent Queen Mariun herself, the manuscript’s intended owner, whose inscribed portrait appears on folio 258v (Fig. 6). Other fourteenth-

104. See Tchekhanovets, Caucasian Archaeology, 107–8, fig. 72.


106. “. . . and beyond another street is a large church built in honor of St. James the Great, where Armenian monks live and also have there a large hospital for bringing together the poor of their nation.” See Pringle, Churches of the Crusader Kingdom, 169.
century sources, notably those created after the fall of Sis, are also silent about the existence of a daughter of the queen. It is only in the postmedieval narratives and especially in modern scholarship that we read about women described as Mariun’s daughters, but these narratives cite no corroborating primary or near-contemporary sources. The most reliable source on the queen’s genealogy is the principal colophon of the Gospel of Queen Mariun, and much of the confusion regarding Mariun’s supposed daughter can be traced to a misreading of this text. The available archaeological material, though poorly studied, provides no support to the widespread narrative of “Mariun’s daughter”: the traditional attribution of the two skeletons found at the end of the nineteenth century in the Sts. James Cathedral to Mariun and her daughter can now be rejected, especially since the accidental excavations of 1957 brought to light even more skeletons and human bones. On the basis of the textual sources, we can be certain only about Mariun’s being buried at the Sts. James Cathedral. Inside the cathedral, near the massive column facing the Chapel of the Martyrdom of St. James the Great (Fig. 1), Armenian pilgrims continue to pay tribute to Queen Mariun, believing that her grave is somewhere under the pavement, even though the actual location of her tomb is currently unknown. It is to be hoped that it will not remain so forever.
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