

# Armenian Monastic Elites Harnessing the 'Turkmen' State? I: Layout, Text, and Textual Commentary of the Armenian Inscription at Arcowaber (1420 CE or earlier)

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## Abstract

This article presents the all-but-lost Armenian inscription ostensibly recording an order from the last years of the Qaraqyunlu 'Turkmen' ruler *qara* Yūsuf (d. 1420 CE) at the church of the monastery of Arcowaber, now located in the center of the village of Salmanağa / Erciş / Van in Turkey. A subsequent article discusses the date of the inscription together with its historical context and function. The present contribution establishes the layout and form of the text, including an extensive commentary of its terminology and content.

## Keywords

Arcowaber, Armenian epigraphy, historical geography of the region of Arckē / Erciş during the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE, types and units of landed properties, Arabic technical terms in 15<sup>th</sup> century CE Armenian.

## Layout and Preservation of Inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber

Inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber<sup>1</sup> was inscribed on two courses of cream-colored stone below an earlier inscription dated to 734 AE / January 9<sup>th</sup> 1285 until January 8<sup>th</sup> 1286 CE confirming possessions of the monastery in the name of the Īlkhānid ruler Arghūn.<sup>2</sup> This earlier inscription was inscribed inside a carefully framed area on the Southern façade of the church that began two courses above the middle window on this façade.<sup>3</sup> The edition of P'irālēmean's reading by Ter-Step'anyan does not include indications of line breaks or the original arrangement of either inscription.<sup>4</sup> Thierry treats both texts as one single inscription,<sup>5</sup> which is surprising due to the differing letter sizes and spatial arrangements clearly visible on the extant parts of both inscriptions. Nonetheless, his inawareness of the earlier inscription may be

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<sup>1</sup> As will be argued in the forthcoming second article, the Armenian inscription at Arcowaber reconstructed in the present article must be dated to the *terminus ante quem* of the death of the Qaraqyunlu ruler *qara* Yūsuf in 1420 CE. Because the author's work on this Armenian inscription pertains to a larger project dedicated to the critical edition of the entire corpus of Qaraqyunlu and Aqqyunlu courtly epigraphy, the designation of this inscription in the present article follows the conventions of this overarching project. Therefore, the inscription will in this contribution always be referred to by its date according to the Islamic lunar calendar, which is used in all extant dated inscriptions affiliated to the Qaraqyunlu and Aqqyunlu 'Turkmen' courts, in addition to its location. For the same reason, dates according to the Armenian Era (AE) or Common Era (CE) are consistently indicated as such in the present article, while all dates cited without further indication pertain to the Islamic lunar calendar.

This article is dedicated to the memory of our esteemed colleague Armen Ter-Step'anyan, who passed away in 2021 CE before he could conclude his important project of systematically publishing the epigraphic notes by Lewond P'irālēmean held in the Matenadaran. The first part of these notes appeared in 2013 CE and has made the present study of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber possible. I sincerely hope his invaluable work will be concluded by the other able researchers working at the Matenadaran.

Many thanks to Pascal Maguesyan of OTC France for the generous permission to work with and publish his photographs taken on site in 2011. The author is greatly indebted to the invaluable assistance of Ani Manukyan and her colleagues at the Department of International Relations at the Matenadaran, as well as the generous introduction to the research tradition engaging with Lewond P'irālēmean and perspicacious advice by my esteemed colleague Armine Melkonyan at the same institution.

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<sup>2</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Parts of the final three lines of this earlier inscription have been preserved on six blocks of stone arranged in two separate courses. The lower course of stones inscribed with this earlier inscription has the same height as the two courses of stones that displayed inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber. The extant letters in this course show that the earlier inscription featured two lines of letters per course. By contrast, the extant stones displaying remains of the third-to-last line of this earlier inscription are so deteriorated as to make a confident assessment of their original size impossible. Nonetheless, it appears that the stones in this line were smaller than the following courses and the letters in this line are noticeably shorter than those of the two following lines.

<sup>4</sup> See Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 19-20. The one explicit reference of P'irālēmean to a deteriorated area will be discussed below.

<sup>5</sup> "*Il ne reste plus actuellement qu'une seule inscription*", Thierry 1976, 48, "*Nous n'avons trouvé qu'une seule ins.*", Thierry 1989, 203.

because P'irlālēmean's edition of 1888 CE only included the text of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber.<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 1: The Southern Facade of the Monastic Church at Arcowaber. Photography © Pascal Maguesyan - Mai 2011, <https://www.collectif2015.org/fr/100Monuments/Le-Monastere-de-la-Sainte-Mere-de-Dieu-Ardzwaper/>.**

[Insert Illustration 1 here.]

Although the main part of this earlier inscription has disappeared and none of the extant inscribed stones reaches to the frame, it is possible to reconstruct the original layout of both inscriptions by extrapolating the letter sizes displayed on the extant parts in comparison with the reading of P'irlālēmean in 1866 CE and the reconstructed width of the framed area. According to this extrapolation of letter sizes across the width of the reconstructed framed area that formerly displayed both inscriptions, the earlier inscription extended from one side of the framed area to the other and was arranged over 7 lines.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See P'irlālēmean 1888, 31-32, where no indication of the earlier inscription above inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber is given.

<sup>7</sup> Within the edition of Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 19-20, the line breaks should be reconstructed as follows: Line 1 included the text from the date (*č'ld*) to the partially effaced name of the incumbent leader of the ecclesiastical leader (*y-araj'nordowt'iw*) (*tēr x...*, according to Ter-Step'anyan's edition, P'irlālēmean noted that the following letters had become effaced (*girs elceal ēr*). Arguably, his name could be reconstructed as *tēr Xač'atowr*, as this name appears below in line 7). Line 2 ran from (*norogec'i*) to (*p'ok'own...*), line 3 from (*hatowc'man*) to (*k'a...*), line 4 from (*mec*) to (*...yz...*), line 5 from (*z-aygin*) to (*...a...*), line 6 from (*ew kroak'n*) to (*y[-?]jays...*), and line 7 from (*minč'*) to (*noratown*). As in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber, this final line appears to have



**Figure 2: The Remains of Inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber below the remains of the earlier Īlkhānid inscription. Photography © Pascal Maguesyan - Mai 2011, <https://www.collectif2015.org/fr/100Monuments/Le-Monastere-de-la-Sainte-Mere-de-Dieu-Ardzwapar/>.**

[Insert Illustration 2 here.]

In marked contrast to the spatial arrangement of the earlier inscription across the entire width of the framed area on the southern façade and (at least in its last two lines) in high letters of two lines per course, inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber was arranged flush to the left and across about two thirds (lines 1 to 4) or three quarters (lines 5-7, note that line 8 ended earlier) of the framed area in shorter letters of four lines per course.<sup>8</sup> While P'irālēmean noted the entire

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ended earlier than those above it, as the letters *NORATOW* and the upper left dash of the letter *N* (Ն) are clearly visible on an extant stone, which does not extend to the frame delimiting the field of the other lines of this inscription.

Notable *lacunae* indicated by Ter-Step'anyan's edition of P'irālēmean's notes, which are likely due to natural deterioration, existed on the upper right-hand third of the framed area and in the middle of the text from the second to the fifth line. Nonetheless, it is possible that further *lacunae* existed which P'irālēmean was able to confidently fill in due to the formulaic structure of the inscription and his personal erudition.

<sup>8</sup> Note that notwithstanding the disappearance of most of the inscribed stones, un-inscribed extant stones in the lower right part of the field formerly displaying both inscriptions enable a confident assessment of the final three courses of the inscribed frame as having been of equal height.

It should be noted that the sketches and comments of Thierry are unreliable for the reconstruction of the spatial layout of both inscriptions, as his indications of the format of the stones seen by him, likely in the 1970s CE, do not agree with the dimensions of those stones that continue to be visible on contemporary photographs. This is particularly visible in the sketch plan given in Thierry 1976, 48, and Thierry 1989, 204, where the last inscribed stone of the final course of the framed area is almost twice as wide as high, while the extant stone is in fact roughly as wide as high. The same applies for the two final extant inscribed stones of the third-to-last course. Due to Thierry's particular interest in documenting the extant letters of these inscriptions, this horizontal

inscription in 1866 CE and Thierry still was able to document four stones of this inscription in the 1970s CE, photographs taken in May 2011 CE show that only one stone of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber remained *in situ* by this time.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the coincidental preservation of the lower right-hand corner of the inscribed area within the frame on the tympanum of the southern façade of the church including the ends of lines 1-8) in the documentation of Thierry and the ends of lines 5-7) in the photograph of 2011 CE enables the confident reconstruction of the line breaks in the original inscription as indicated in the edition given here.

## Edition and Translation of Inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber

As most of the inscription has since vanished, the following edition follows the text recorded in 1866 CE by Lewond P'irġalēmean with minor emendations, while building on the reconstruction of the spatial layout proposed in the preceding section, as well as comparison with the documentation of the extant parts of the text by Thierry's sketch in the 1970s CE and the remainders visible on photographs of the 2010s CE.<sup>10</sup> Ligatures visible on the photographs are not indicated, *crucēs* are indicated by asterisks \*...\*, and suggested emendations are framed by square brackets [...].

1) Ի ղանուրթեան Ղարայ Ուսուճին եւ ի պարոնութեան Իսպանիս

2) եւ յառաջնորդութեան սուրբ ուխտիս Կարապետ վարդապետի տուաւ

3) հրամանաւ Ուսուճ պարոն տուաւ \*Նալաթլամով\* [բարաթնամով?] մուլք

Սուրբ Աստուածաճնիս

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lengthening of the stones is perfectly understandable as an aid to legibility, however it must be accounted for in reconstructing the original spatial layout of both texts.

<sup>9</sup> See in addition to the photographs included in the present article the photographs accessible online: <https://www.collectif2015.org/fr/100Monuments/Le-Monastere-de-la-Sainte-Mere-de-Dieu-Ardzwaper/> (last accessed December 13<sup>th</sup> 2022). I thank Pascal Maguesyan and *Organisation Terre et Culture* (Paris) for their generous permission to use their work in the present article.

<sup>10</sup> The most reliable version of the full text is contained in the edition of P'irġalēmean's notes in Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 20, while the original edition by P'irġalēmean 1888, 31-32, differs from the edition of his notes by Ter-Step'anyan and the extant passages confirmed by Thierry 1976 and Thierry 1989, 199-205. The main differences concern a repetition of parts of the line reconstructed as line 4) in line 3) and the representation of extant numerals in spelled out numbers. Some of the numbers also differ, while some prepositions are added to toponyms where no prepositions are given in the edition of P'irġalēmean's notes given by Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 20. In addition, the edition of 1888 CE offers a different spelling of some of the toponyms and differs from the interpretation proposed below in its punctuation marks. The edition of P'irġalēmean 1888 accordingly appears to have been garbled somewhere during the development of the notes taken *in situ* into a printed monograph. Oskean 1942, 403-404, depends exclusively on the edition of P'irġalēmean 1888 and will accordingly be left out of the following discussion.

I do not indicate the differing readings of P'irġalēmean 1888, 31-32, in my edition, while including his readings, comments, and glosses in the discussion.

- 4) ի գիւղն Անիշատ ի Շինամէջ Լ մուր տեղ ջրով Ի մուր ոստին ի Կտրածքար
- 5) Ժ մուր ջրով Ի ոստ Պապաճ ԺԴ մուր տեղ ի Յայրիկէ ԺԵ մուր ի Յառինջիկն Բ խաղարտն Բ ակն ջաղ[ե]աց
- 6) ի Բոլորմարգն Ա արտ ի Բլուրն Ա արտ յԱկանց Դ արտ յԻրիշատ Ա արտ ի Մկնաւերն Բ արտ Խառաբաստ Չ արտ Բ
- 7) ջաղ[ե]աց Սոսկոն Բ արտ ի Գանձակ այգի մի Ով որ հակառակ լինի զանէծքն Ուղային առնու
- 8) Եւ որ կամակից լինի աւրինին յաստուծոյ եւ յամենայն սրբոց ամէն<sup>11</sup>

- 1) During the rule (*khān-ship*) of *qara* Yūsuf (*laray owsoufin*) and the governorship (*paron-ship*) of Ispan,
- 2) and when archimandrite Karapet (*karapet vardapet*) held the ecclesiastical leadership (*arajñord-ship*) of the holy community [of Arcowaber], was given
- 3) by command (*hramanaw*) of lord *qara* Yūsuf (*owsowf paron*), was given \*as confirmed tax-free (*barā'atnām[a]-ov*)\* possession of [the church of] the mother of God:
- 4) In the village of Aniṣat (?) in Šinamēj 30 bushels (*mowt'*) of irrigated (*ǰrov*) land (*teł*), 20 bushels of arid (*ostin*) [land]; in Ktrack'ar
- 5) 10 bushels of irrigated [land], 20 [bushels of] hillside (*ost*); Papač 14 bushels of land; in Hayrikē 15 bushels; in Yařinjik 2 marshlands (*xalartn*) with 2 lined wells (*akn ĵaleac'*);
- 6) in Bolormard 1 acre (*art*); in Blur 1 acre; in Akanc' 4 acres; in Iriṣat 1 acre; in Mknaver 2 acres; in Xarabast 6 acres,

<sup>11</sup> For the sake of readers unfamiliar with the Armenian alphabet, I include a transliteration:

- 1) I ħanowt'ean Łaray Owsowfin ew i paronowt'ean Ispanin
- 2) ew y-arajñordowt'ean sowrb owxtis Karapet vardapeti towaw
- 3) hramanaw Owsowf paron towaw \*nalat'lamov\* [barat'namov?] mowlk' Sowrb Astowacacnis
- 4) i giwłn Aniṣat i Šinamēj L mowt' teł ǰrov I mowt' ostin i Ktrack'ar
- 5) j mowt' ǰrov I ost Papač jD mowt' teł i Hayrikē jE mowt' i Yařinjikn B xalartn B akn ĵal[e]ac'
- 6) i Bolormarn A art i Blowrn A art y-Akanc' D art y-Iriṣat A art i Mknawern B art Xarabast Z art B
- 7) [akn] ĵal[e]ac' Soskon B art i Ganjak aygi mi ov or hakařak lini z-anēck'n Owdayin arnow
- 8) ew or kamakic' lini awrhnin yastowcoy ew yamenayn srboc' amēn

7) 2 lined wells (*jaleac*); Soskon 2 acres; in Ganjak one vineyard. Whoever opposes receives the curse of Judas

8) and whoever consents is blessed by God and all saints, amen.

## Textual Commentary

### Lines 1) to 3): Introduction

Although the reference to *qara* Yūsuf as a *khān* (*lan*) and to both him and his son Ispan as lords (*paron*) in lines 1) and 3) is peculiar, I do not believe the occurrence of the title *khān* in particular instead of *qara* Yūsuf's usual title of *nūyān* in documents written in Arabic script can be taken as any kind of evidence for the assumption of this title during the last years of *qara* Yūsuf.<sup>12</sup> Instead, I believe these titles are rooted in the current if somewhat idiosyncratic practice of attributing titles to non-Armenian and / or non-Christian rulers in Armenian written sources, which also underlies the introduction of the Īlkhānid ruler Arghūn as an imperator (*kayser*) in the earlier inscription above inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber.<sup>13</sup> The reference to Karapet *vardapet*'s function at Arcowaber as an ecclesiastical leadership (*y-araǰnordowt'ean*) of the monastic community in line 2) constitutes a direct link to the earlier inscription formerly inscribed above, where the function of *tēr X...*, who commissioned this earlier inscription, is described with the exact same term.<sup>14</sup>

The description of agency in lines 2) and 3) is crucial in determining the function of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber. Textually, the matter is unambiguous, as the form *towaw* occurs in both lines as a third person singular indicative medio-passive of the Aorist of the verb *tam*, to

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<sup>12</sup> See the discussion of the numismatic legends in the name of *qara* Yūsuf that were minted after the death of *pīr* Būdāq (*al-nūyān al-a'zam jamāl al-dīn yūsuf*) by Album 1976, 131, and inscription 816 Argavand (*yūsuf nūyān*, see P'ap'azyan 1962), as well as the decree in the name of *qara* Yūsuf on behalf of the shrine of Šafī al-Dīn and Šadr al-Dīn in Ardabīl dated to 817 / 1414 CE (*yūsuf bahādur nūyān*, Herrmann 1976, 226). *Qara* Yūsuf's decree on behalf of the Rūzakī rulers of Bitlis as reported by Sharafkhān b. Shams al-Dīn Bidlīsī dated to 820 / 1417 CE (Bidlīsī *Sharafnāma*, 1, 376-378) does not contain any titles of this ruler. In his edition (Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1352 / 1973, 20), Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī supplemented an *intitulatio* ("*tuǰhrā*") that features neither the title of *nūyān* nor that of *khān* based on Rūmlū *Aḥsan*, 46 (*abū l-naṣr yūsuf bahādur sūzūmīz*). According to Samarqandī *Maḥla*, 126, *qara* Yūsuf referred to himself as *nūyān* during the nominal overlordship of his son (*sulṭān pīr būdāq yarliǰhīndan* [text: *yarliǰhīdīn*] *abū l-naṣr yūsuf bahādur nūyān sūzūmīz*), while reserving the title of *khān* (*ism-i khāniyyat*) for his descendants.

<sup>13</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 19.

This *araǰnordowt' ywn* of Karapet is also attested in a colophon written in the nearby monastery of Mecop' in 867 AE / December 7<sup>th</sup> 1417 until December 6<sup>th</sup> 1418 CE (Xač'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 178). Karapet's specific function within the Armenian Christian networks of the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE will be discussed in greater detail in the forthcoming second article on the historical context and function of the inscription.

give.<sup>15</sup> In both instances, this verb is qualified by a noun in the instrumental case singular. The first of these, *hramanaw*, is the instrumental singular of *hraman*, command, which is specified by the following name of *qara Yūsuf (owsouf paron)*, which somewhat unexpectedly is given in the nominative instead of the genitive case. Accordingly, the landed properties listed below are claimed to have been given "by command" of *qara Yūsuf*.

The resumption of the verbal form *towaw*, it was given, in line 3) is followed by an unclear noun in the instrumental singular case, before the landed properties listed below are described as possession (*mowlk*<sup>ʿ</sup>) of the [church of] the mother of God. The term *mowlk*<sup>ʿ</sup> is glossed, most likely *ad sensum*, as "landed property" (*kalowac*) in the original edition of P'irġalġmean.<sup>16</sup> In this context, the Arabic origin of Armenian *mowlk*<sup>ʿ</sup> (cf. Arabic *mulk*) is significant, as it references the terminology of Islamic law notwithstanding its (limited) currency in Armenian scriptural practice during the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>17</sup> In the index of foreign words (*ōtar baġer*) to his edition of Armenian colophons from the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE, Xaġ'ikyan glosses *moulk*<sup>ʿ</sup> as stable possession of properties and lands (*anšarž gowyk*<sup>ʿ</sup>, *kalvack*<sup>ʿ</sup>, *sep*<sup>ʿ</sup>*akanowt*<sup>ʿ</sup>*yown*).<sup>18</sup> As shown by extant slightly later 'Turkmen' decrees in Persian that were issued for specific Armenian monasteries, the possessions of these monasteries, were exempt from several imposts as guaranteed immediately by the 'Turkmen' ruler who issued this decree.<sup>19</sup> The occurrence of *mulk* in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber likely implies a similar tax-exempt status for the possessions held by the monastery.

The noun immediately following *towaw*, it was given, in line 3) represents a puzzle beyond its grammatical form, which can clearly be reconstructed as the instrumental singular case. This word is given by P'irġalġmean in the form of *nalat*<sup>ʿ</sup>*lamov*, which is doubtful beyond the confident interpretation of the concluding *-ov* as indicating the instrumental singular case.<sup>20</sup> In the English version of the edition of P'irġalġmean's notes, this term is not translated,<sup>21</sup> while P'irġalġmean's edition of 1888 CE glosses the term as "with irrevocable decision" (*andarj*

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<sup>15</sup> As the occurrence in line 2) stands at the end of this line, this form is corroborated by Thierry's reading of the parts of the inscription extant in the 1970s CE in addition to P'irġalġmean's reading of 1866 CE.

<sup>16</sup> P'irġalġmean 1888, 31.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Xaġ'ikyan 1955-1967, 2, cxx-cxxi, as well as the exemplary occurrences of this term listed in the index to the first volume, Xaġ'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 814.

<sup>18</sup> Xaġ'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 814 cf. P'ap'azyan 1979.

<sup>19</sup> P'ap'azyan 1956, 244-255.

<sup>20</sup> See Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 20, which agrees with P'irġalġmean 1888, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2014, 19.

*včraw*).<sup>22</sup> This glosse is followed by Thierry in his translation,<sup>23</sup> although there appears to be no way of rooting this interpretation in the letters noted by P'irġalēmean. As neither P'irġalēmean nor Thierry indicate that this interpretative rendering is supported by a reconstruction of the Armenian text that would differ from the text noted by P'irġalēmean, I believe this glosse constitutes an emendation *ad sensum* and is not rooted in additional information or a sustained re-interpretation of the Armenian text.

Beyond the formal classification of *-ov* as indicating the instrumental singular case, I believe the word in question likely was a not too current loanword derived from Islamic fiscal practice, complementing the following *mowlk'*. This Arabic or Persian loanword likely consisted of two separate parts, as the letters *Ayb* and *T'o* in *\*nalat lam-ov\** likely reflect the *Tā' marbūṭa* of an Arabic deverbal abstract noun, which would be written with a regular *Tā'* in Persian. As in most Arabic loanwords in Turkic, the Armenian transliteration of these Arabic loanwords is based on the Persian pronunciation of the word in question, rather than the forms stipulated by Arabic *fushā*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

<sup>23</sup> Thierry 1976, 49, and Thierry 1989, 203.

<sup>24</sup> See for the representation of the final *Tā' marbūṭa* of Arabic abstracta with the Armenian letters *Ayb* and *T'o* the following examples contained in Xaç'ikyan's *indices* of foreign words: *Dawlat'* (Arabic *dawla*, Persian *dawlat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 353. *Zahmat'* (Arabic *zaḥma*, Persian *zaḥmat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 386, 407, 548, and 607. *Sowrat'* (Arabic *šūra*, Persian *šūrat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 284. In the glosse given in his index of foreign words (Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 815), Xaç'ikyan appears to interpret this form as a plural (*demk'*, *kerparank'*). However, the original context in the rhymed colophon by Grigor Cerenc' dated to 1422 CE (see above) is *kerp ow sourat'*, which should probably be understood as a *hendiadyoin* of two nouns of similar meaning and translated as 'any shape' or something similar. From an Arabic point of view, the regular plural of *šūra* would also be *šūwar* instead of *\*šūrāt*. Accordingly, I include *sowrat' / šūra* among the Arabic *abstracta* taken over into Armenian in the singular form and transcribed with a final combination of *Ayb* and *T'o*.

*Niat'* (Arabic *niyya*, Persian *niyyat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 2, 358. *Šalawat'* (Arabic *shaqāwa*, Persian *shaqāwat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 2, 216 and 282. *Amanat'* (Arabic *amāna*, Persian *amānat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 3, 132. *Əraḥmat'* (Arabic *raḥma*, Persian *raḥmat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 3, 492. *Hasrat'* (Arabic *ḥasra*, Persian *ḥasrat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 3, 255. *Sahat'* (Arabic *sā'a*, Persian *sā'at*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 3, 251. I fail to see the Arabic counterpart of *salvat'* (Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 345), whose Arabic origin is suggested in the index (Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 814). An additional example is *barat'* (Arabic *barā'a*, Persian *barāt*, see below), which is attested epigraphically in an inscription dated to 766 AE, see Avagyan 1978, 42-45.

In contrast, the Arabic root consonant *Tā'* is transcribed with *Tiwn* even when it follows a *fatha* (Armenian *Ayb*) in the words *řabat* (from Arabic *raḥaṭ*, suburb) and *řalat* (Arabic, Persian *ghalaṭ*). See for *řabat* Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 443, and the interpretation as 'suburb', see the glosse by the editor, Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 814 (*k'atalk'i arvarjan*). For *řalat*, see Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 3, 486 and 531. But cf. the transcription of Turkic 't' with *T'o* in *awt'ax* (Turkic *ortak*, *urtak*, shareholder), see Avagyan 1978, 340-342.

The embeddedness of these Arabic loanwords in Armenian linguistic *matrixes* is shown by composita such as *buniat' dnel*, to lay a foundation, where the first form reflects Arabic *bunya*, Persian *bunyat*, which is coupled with Armenian *dnel*, to put down (Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 566). Nominal *copula* featuring a transcribed Arabic *abstractum* as their first element are particularly well represented in Armenian personal names such as *dowlat' xat'own*, literally lady of the state, queen: See the references in the index of personal names, e.g. Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 694. Names of this type are also well attested in 15<sup>th</sup> century CE Armenian epigraphy.

Nonetheless, it remains unclear whether these onomastic *composita* that do not feature an element rooted in Armenian were formed in an Armenian linguistic matrix, or whether they were taken over from a spoken or written register of Arabic, Persian, and / or Turkic.

Even if the interpretation of *\*nalat lamov\** as Arabic *abstractum* ending in a *Tā' marbūṭa* + second nominal element + instrumental singular ending *-ov* should be accepted, however, it is difficult to suggest a convincing interpretation of the nominal elements in question. Within the context of P'irṭalēmean's epigraphic notes, I believe *\*nalat lamov\** likely represents an attempt to reproduce visible letters which were not understood. Accordingly, the number of letters and possibly the distribution of vowels, which are frequently represented by ligatures in extant portions of this inscription, may be more reliable than the interpretation of the individual consonants.

Due to my reconstruction of the pragmatic context of the inscription, which will be discussed in a separate forthcoming article, I believe the meaning of this term likely complemented the verbal form *towaw*, it was given, in a way that impacted the following *mowlk*՝, possession. Building on a comparison with slightly later 'Turkmen' decrees issued for specific monastic communities, I suggest that this semantic impact may have concerned the tax-exempt status of the possessions subsequently listed. Although arguably the most current term designating a courtly decree that bestowed tax-exempt status on specific landed properties in 'Turkmen' contexts of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE is the Turko-Mongolic *suyūrghāl*, this term certainly does not constitute an Arabic *abstractum* ending in *Tā' marbūṭa* as postulated above. Accordingly, I suggest Arabic *barā'a*, Persian *barāt*, 'tax-exempt status; decree conferring tax-exempt status' as a possible emendation.<sup>25</sup> Incidentally, this very term is attested in an Armenian inscription dated to 766 AE in the same linguistic form of *barat*՝ (albeit with a different semantic meaning) postulated for inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber.<sup>26</sup> Alternatively, this first element may conceivably also be retained in the form *nalat*՝ as given by P'irṭalēmean, as this term is attested as a by-form to Arabic *la'na*, Persian *la'nat*, *curse*, in some Armenian sources.<sup>27</sup> In comparison

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Xaç'ikyan also lists hybrid Armenian-Arabicizing composita. These include *anmərwat*՝ (Armenian negative prefix *an-* and Arabic *muruwwa*, Persian *muruwwat*) and *anšalawat*՝ (Armenian negative prefix *an-* and Arabic *shaqāwa*, Persian *shaqāwat*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 1, 282. As both occur exclusively in a rhymed colophon by Grigor Cerenc՝, they may, however, represent stylistical idiosyncrasies of this author. Somewhat greater currency is attested for the hybrid Armenian-Arabicizing compositum of *hasrat amah*, *xasrat amah*, or *hasrat amer* (Arabic *ḥasra*, Persian *ḥasrat* and Armenian *mah*): Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 2, 6 (*xasrat amah*) and 235 (*hasrat amah*); 3, 142 (*hasrat amer*) and 255 (*hasrat amah* thrice).

A detailed study of the regional dispersion and intertextual linkage of these Arabicizing loanwords in Armenian scribal practice would be fascinating but transcends the scope of the present commentary on inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber.

<sup>25</sup> For the transcription of trilled Arabic and Turkic *Rā'* in an open syllable with Armenian intervocalic *Rē*, see for instance the epithet of *qara* Yūsuf, regularly rendered as *lara(y)*, or the representation of Arabic-Turkic *naqqārachī* (Arabic *naqqāra* and Turkic professional suffix *-ji*, *-chi*) as *nalarači* (Xaç'ikyan 1955-1967, 3, 104).

<sup>26</sup> Avagyan 1978, 42-45.

<sup>27</sup> See Hübschmann 1897, 271; Ačařyan 1971-1979, 3, 418, and Pogossian 2023, 239. Cf. for Ottoman and modern Turkish Redhouse 2006, 1634, and Steuerwald 1998, 685.

to *\*barat*’, however, this interpretation would be less rooted in the Islamicate terminology regulating the normativities of specific endowments.

In either case, I suggest an interpretation of the second nominal element as Persian *nāma*, letter, writ. While not impossible, this emendation of *\*nalat lamov\** (ՆԱԼԱԹԼԱՄՈՎ) as *barat namov* (ԲԱՐԱԹՆԱՄՈՎ) does, however entail a reinterpretation of quite a bit of the Armenian letters read by P’irġalēmean even if we assume that the letter *Ayb* denoting the vowel *a* was consistently represented by ligatures with the preceding consonant.

#### Lines 4) to 7): Structure, Toponyms, and Spatial Distribution of Properties

The following list of landed properties whose (tax-exempt?) possession by Arcowaber is (claimed to be) confirmed by *qara* Yūsuf in lines 4) to 7) of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber will be commented successively on three separate levels. I start with a reconstruction of the structure of the list, before identifying the toponyms. Subsequently, I will discuss the terminology used to describe the properties.

In my view, the list is structured by the recurrent sequence of the Armenian preposition *i* or *y-*, 'in', / a toponym / a numeral / the unit and type of property held.<sup>28</sup> Notable exceptions from this recurring sequence concern the introduction of the toponym of Šinamēj (see below) as *i giwln anišat* in line 4). While the first two words can confidently be translated as 'in the village of', the interpretation of *anišat* as a toponym that could alternate with Šinamēj is not supported by any attestation of *anišat* as a toponym in the Armenian colophons written during the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE. *Anišat* is also not included as an alternative designation of Aşağrı Göze / Erciş / Van in the *Index Anatolicus*,<sup>29</sup> where Šinamēj (Şinameç) is given as an earlier name of the village. A second if less grave exception to the recurring sequence structuring this list concerns the toponyms of Papač in line 5), Xarabast in line 6), and Soskon in line 7), which are not preceded by the preposition *i* or *y-*, 'in'.<sup>30</sup> In a final exception, the number 'one' is spelled out in line 7) as (*aygi*) *mi*, instead of being indicated by the numeral *Ayb*.<sup>31</sup> Notwithstanding these three

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. the commata given in the edition of Ter-Step’anyan 2013, 20, followed by the translation of Ter-Step’anyan 2014, 19, for a differing interpretation of the structure of this list.

<sup>29</sup> See for the very useful (if certainly not comprehensive) online tool of the *Index Anatolicus* maintained by Sevan Nişanyan the website [www.nisanyanmap.com](http://www.nisanyanmap.com). Within toponyms located inside the modern Republic of Turkey, I render the name and location of toponyms through the sequence of toponym / İlçe / İl.

<sup>30</sup> This preposition is restored in the edition of P’irġalēmean 1888, 31-32, even though the sketch plan published by Thierry 1976, 48, and Thierry 1989, 204, clearly writes Xarabast without the preposition.

<sup>31</sup> As indicated above, several numerals are spelled out in the edition of P’irġalēmean 1888, 31-32, which is contradicted by their representation by numerals in the sketch plan of Thierry 1976, 48, and Thierry 1989, 204.

irregularities, I believe the general structure of the list is clear and can be used to reconstruct the properties held by the monastery of Arcowaber.

Within this overarching structure, the list appears to be sorted according to the types of properties held or possibly the levies to be collected by the monastery. Interestingly, these two main categories do not overlap in any of the named toponyms. While the first part of the list (lines 4-5) is structured according to the unit *mowt*‘ which could indicate either a surface measure or a capacity (see below), the second part (lines 6-7) is structured according to the units *art* and *aygi*, which refer to a piece of arable land or a vineyard respectively. Between both parts stands the possession of 2 pieces of marshland with lined wells (? see below) at the end of line 5) and the possession of two lined wells in addition to the 6 acres of land held at Xarabast itself at the beginning of line 7). As will be discussed at greater length below, this internal structure does not reflect the topographical arrangement of the properties. Accordingly, it could hypothetically reproduce the sequence with which the properties came into the possession of the monastery, or arguably reflect the internal organization and / or bookkeeping of the monastic community.

As stated above, *anišat* in line 4) is not attested as a toponym and arguably should be reinterpreted.<sup>32</sup> Notwithstanding its literal intelligibility within an Armenian linguistic *matrix* ('the centre of a village or town', cf. the translation as *köyüci* in the *Index Anatolicus*), Šinamēj (written Şinameç) in line 4) is listed in the *Index Anatolicus* as the modern village of Aşağı Göze / Erciş / Van near Arcowaber and included in the map of Thierry.<sup>33</sup> Properties at this village are also listed as belonging to the monastery of Arcowaber in the earlier inscription above inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber, which is dated to 734 AE / January 9<sup>th</sup> 1285 until January 8<sup>th</sup> 1286 CE.<sup>34</sup> The final toponym in line 4), Ktarack‘ar appears under the form of Gıdradz Kar in the *Index Anatolicus* as the modern village of Kadirasker / Erciş / Van.<sup>35</sup>

The toponym of Papač in line 5) is more difficult to trace. Although this part of the inscription was not documented by him, Thierry originally followed the edited text of P‘irġalēmean 1888 in reading P‘akač. Although P‘irġalēmean had acknowledged that he could not identify this

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<sup>32</sup> But cf. the note of P‘irġalēmean 1888, 31, according to which this place was "currently deserted" (*ayžm awer*). It is not clear whether this is intended as a reference to the factual existence of a ruined village of this name, or whether P‘irġalēmean assumed that this should represent a deserted village due to his inability to identify *anišat* as a toponym.

<sup>33</sup> Thierry 1976, 40, and Thierry 1989, 198.

<sup>34</sup> Ter-Step‘anyan 2013, 20.

The modern name appears to represent a phonological reinterpretation of Ktarack‘ar that resonates with modern Turkish nationalism. The village is also included in the map of Thierry 1976, 40, and Thierry 1989, 198.

toponym with the former location of any deserted village,<sup>36</sup> Thierry in his first article on Arcowaber suggested an identification with the village of Bay, some 10 km north-east of Arcowaber.<sup>37</sup> In his subsequent monograph, he renders the toponym as P'irakac' and suggests a derivation from a regional Armenian form *pakah* meaning 'farm'.<sup>38</sup> In my view, the earlier identification with Bay, currently Bayköy / Erciş / Van is more convincing. Nişanyan gives the earlier form of Payküğ in the *Index Anatolicus*, from which Bayköy likely is derived through a phonological reinterpretation that is rooted in a Turkish linguistic matrix.

The subsequent toponym of Hayrikē in line 5) is glossed by P'irġalēmean 1888 as "an extant village of 24 houses".<sup>39</sup> Thierry suggested an identification with Xarkēn or Hargin,<sup>40</sup> which appears in the *Index Anatolicus* under the form Xargin as the old name of Alkanat / Erciş / Van on the outskirts of Erciş.<sup>41</sup> The final toponym in line 5) of Yarinjik is printed as Varñjik [sic] in P'irġalēmean 1888, which a note explains as not attested as a toponym in the region (*sahman*) of Arġeš / Erciş. Accordingly, P'irġalēmean suggested a village of some 25 houses named Arñjkows between Erciş and Adilcevaz as a possible identification.<sup>42</sup> This toponym appears in the *Index Anatolicus* under the forms of Arincikos and Arinçguys as the old name of the village of Kavuştuk / Adilcevaz / Bitlis.<sup>43</sup> The location of Kavuştuk / Adilcevaz / Bitlis in the marshy land near Lake Van fits well with our proposed interpretation of the properties endowed at this locality as marshland (*xalart*), possibly featuring lined wells (*akn ĵaleac* ', see below).

In line 6), the toponym of Bolormarg is glossed by P'irġalēmean 1888 as "a village of 25 houses with Armenian families, not far from the small town of Akanc' [modern Erciş]."<sup>44</sup> Thierry

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<sup>36</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

<sup>37</sup> Thierry 1976, 49.

<sup>38</sup> Thierry 1989, 203.

<sup>39</sup> *24 tamb kay šēns kangown*: P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

<sup>40</sup> Thierry 1976, 49. The toponyms are rendered as Xarken and Hargin respectively in Thierry 1989, 203.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the map given in Thierry 1976, 40, and Thierry 1989, 198.

<sup>42</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31. Thierry 1976, 49, and Thierry 1989, 203, render the toponym as Arinjik, which Thierry 1976, 49, glosses as "*Localité de situation inconnue*."

<sup>43</sup> The *Index Anatolicus* suggests an interpretation of this toponym as "near arinç (?)" (*arinç (?) yant*), and lists Arin, Armenian *arin*, identified with Urartian *Arnia*, as the old name of the adjacent village of Göldüzü / Adilcevaz / Bitlis. Nonetheless, the location of both toponyms in the middle of the distance between Erciş and Adilcevaz arguably suggests a Turkic origin of both terms as derived from Turkic *\*yarin* or *yarım*, half, and *\*yarincik*, a small half, respectively. The utilization of some village populated by (Armenian?) Christians (*qaryat našārā*) as a way-station during the two-day journey between both towns is incidentally attested for the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE by the travelogue of the Mamlük envoy Ibn Ajā in 876 AH / 1471 CE (Ibn Ajā *Ta'riḫ*, MS Topkapı III. Ahmet 3057, 153r, equivalent to Dār al-Kutub MS 3663 *ta'riḫ*, 86; ed. Ṭalaymāt, 120, and Dahmān, *Al- Irāk*, 126). If this etymology is correct, the form *yarinjik* in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber would preserve the initial glide of the toponym.

<sup>44</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

identifies this with the village of Plurmark, some 5 km south of Erciṣ.<sup>45</sup> The toponym appears in the *Index Anatolicus* under the forms of Pulturmanik and Plur Manig as the old name of the village of Gölağzı / Erciṣ / Van. The following toponym of Blowr is glossed by P'irġalēmean 1888 as "near Blowrmark, now inhabited by Turks (*tačkabnak*)."<sup>46</sup> Thierry identifies this with the current village of Çelebibahçe<sup>47</sup> which, however, lies West of the Zilan or Ilıca River on the outskirts of the former location of Erciṣ. Instead, the *Index Anatolicus* notes Pultur as the old name of the village of Çınarlı /Erciṣ / Van between Gölağzı / Bolormarg and modern Erciṣ / Akanc', to the East of the Zilan or Ilıca River.

As noted by the original edition of P'irġalēmean 1888, the toponym of Akanc' in line 6) is the old name for the location in which the rebuilt modern town of Erciṣ / Van stands.<sup>48</sup> Iriṣat is glossed by P'irġalēmean 1888 as the almost deserted remainder of a formerly larger town, now divided into two small villages.<sup>49</sup> Thierry identifies it with a village 4 km to the North-West of Erciṣ,<sup>50</sup> which is included in the *Index Anatolicus* under the form Iriṣad as the old name of the two villages of Yukarıışıklı and Aşağıışıklı / Erciṣ / Van. Possessions held by the monastery at this site are also mentioned in the older inscription above inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber.<sup>51</sup> According to the original edition of P'irġalēmean 1888<sup>52</sup> and Thierry,<sup>53</sup> Mknawer cannot be identified.<sup>54</sup> The toponym of Xarabast in line 6) is an alternative designation for the location of the monastery of Arcowaber in the current village of Salmanağa / Erciṣ / Van.<sup>55</sup> The earlier inscription above inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber also records possessions at this location.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Thierry 1976, 49. The toponym is written Blumark in Thierry 1989, 203.

<sup>46</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

<sup>47</sup> Thierry 1976, 49.

<sup>48</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

<sup>49</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31. The reference appears to be to the extensive Urartian remains at Zernaki Tepe.

<sup>50</sup> Thierry 1976, 49.

<sup>51</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 20.

<sup>52</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

<sup>53</sup> Thierry 1976, 49.

<sup>54</sup> The toponym should possibly be interpreted as 'mouse-infested' within an Armenian linguistic *matrix*; however, I cannot identify any equivalent toponym according to Turkish or Kurdish linguistic *matrices* in the vicinity of the other toponyms mentioned in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber. The toponym may also just have referred to a field (*Flurname*), however this would constitute a deviation from the list of inhabited toponyms that continues through the list of properties held by Arcowaber.

<sup>55</sup> According to Thierry, 1976, 40, this village had disappeared over one century before 1976 CE.

<sup>56</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 20.

In line 7), the word *jalac'* is capitalized in the first edition of P'irġalēmean 1888 and explained as the name of the hometown of Kirakos Virapec'i, the first *kat'olikos* at the reestablished see of Ējmiacin after 1441 CE (P'irġalēmean 1888, 31). At the time of P'irġalēmean's writing in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE, however, this former town had entirely vanished (P'irġalēmean 1888, 31). Although I have not been able to corroborate this, it is certainly possible that Kirakos Virapec'i hailed from a place called *jalac'* or the like. As, however, *jalac'*

The toponym of Soskon in line 7) is explained in the original edition by P'irġalġmean 1888 as a village of 5 houses with Armenian families that was on the verge of abandonment at the time of writing.<sup>57</sup> Thierry writes Sōskun<sup>58</sup> or Sōskun<sup>59</sup> and notes the location of the village on his map.<sup>60</sup> The *Index Anatolicus* notes Soskun and Sosgun as old names of the village of Keklikova / Erciř / Van near Arcowaber. The toponym of Ganġak is glossed by P'irġalġmean as a village of 18 houses that continues to exist.<sup>61</sup> Thierry identified this with the village of Ganġak or Kenzek, some 15 km West of Erciř,<sup>62</sup> which is included in the *Index Anatolicus* under the forms of Kenzek, Kanzak, or Kantsak as the former name of the village of Kırkdeġirmen / Erciř / Van. In their spatial layout, the properties whose possession by the monastic community of Arcowaber was confirmed in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber can tentatively be assigned to two distinct types. The first type is represented by a cluster of properties that lay in the immediate vicinity of Arcowaber. This cluster comprised the holdings at the village of Aniřat (?) in řinamġ and Ktrack'ar in line 4), the holdings at Papaġ and Hayrikġ in line 5), those at Bolormard, Blur, Akanc', Iriřat, and Xařabast in line 6), and the possessions at Soskon in line 7). As these possessions may have been situated within a good hour of walking distance from Arcowaber, it is likely that they could have been effectively supervised by the monastic community. Although the toponym of Mknaver cannot, as stated above, be identified, it likely also lay within this cluster of landed possessions. Due to their location in the immediate vicinity of Arcowaber, it may be possible that these properties were successively acquired by the monastic community over multiple separate acts of donation<sup>63</sup> or purchase.

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refers to mills in Armenian toponyms (cf. Hűbschmann 1904, 464), there were doubtlessly several mills and toponyms named after mills from which Kirakos Virapec'i may have come. Indeed, the same word *ġalac'* also appears in P'irġalġmean's notes and edition in line 5) as part of the composite of *akn ġalac'*, where it is not capitalized as a toponym in the first edition of P'irġalġmean 1888 (P'irġalġmean 1888, 31). As will be argued in greater detail below, I additionally doubt that the reading as *ġalac'* is correct in the context of the list of landed properties held (as tax-exempt holdings?) by the monastery of Arcowaber. Accordingly, I believe the word *ġalac'* should be read as [*akn*]*ġaleac'* and interpreted as a reference to some sort of permanent infrastructure supplying water to the landed properties listed in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber. *Pace* P'irġalġmean 1888, I therefore do not interpret the occurrence of *ġal[e?]ac'* in line 7) as a toponym.

<sup>57</sup> P'irġalġmean 1888, 31.

<sup>58</sup> Thierry 1976, 49.

<sup>59</sup> Thierry 1989, 203.

<sup>60</sup> Thierry 1976, 40, and Thierry 1989, 198.

<sup>61</sup> P'irġalġmean 1888, 32.

<sup>62</sup> Thierry 1976, 49.

<sup>63</sup> For the most prominent sequence of acts of donation of substantial properties to an Armenian monastery during the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE see the donations to the monastery of Ganġasar recorded by inscriptions in the Gavit' and Taġar of the cathedral at Ganġasar, edited in *Divan Hay Vimagrowt'yan V*, 42-45 and 54-58.

By contrast, the second and much smaller type of landed possessions whose ownership is confirmed in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber was located significantly further to the West, between the towns of Arčēš / Erciş and Arckē / Adilcevaz. Possessions of this type comprised the holdings at Yařinĵik in line 5) and at Ganjak in line 7), both of which lay several hours away from Arcowaber. Accordingly, it is unlikely that these possessions could have been supervised or even cultivated as effectively by the monastic community as the cluster of possessions located in the immediate vicinity of the monastery. As about a day's march separates Yařinĵik and Ganjak, designation of these possessions as a cluster is much less feasible than with the possessions clustered around the monastic community at Arcowaber itself. It may also be quite possible that the possessions at Yařinĵik and Ganjak were established through two separate acts of donation or purchase and had no immediate relation with each other.

Comprehensively, the spatial distribution of the landed properties listed in lines 4) to 7) consists of a cluster of possessions near Arcowaber that is located in the fertile area East of the Zilan or Ilıca River and two additional holdings at Yařinĵik and Ganjak located far to the West. This marked separation of the cluster around Arcowaber from the western holdings at Yařinĵik and Ganjak was likely caused by the presence of further urban and monastic centers that structured the areas in between. The fertile areas to the West of the Zilan or Ilıca River constituted a suburban area of gardens and under intensive cultivation that was focused on the former location of the urban center of Arčēš / Erciş at the village of Çelebibaĵe / Erciş / Van. The adjacent fertile areas to the North along the Zilan or Ilıca River were likely focused on the Armenian monastery at Mecop', modern Ziyaret / Erciş / Van, while the areas under agricultural cultivation further to the East in the plain of the Bendimahi Çayı were likely centered on the town of Berkri, modern Muradiye / Van. Accordingly, inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber confirms possession by the monastic community of a cluster of possessions around Arcowaber, as well as possession of two stray possessions that were located outside the suburban areas of the towns of Arčēš / Erciş and Arckē / Adilcevaz.

#### Lines 4) to 7): Units and Types of Properties

The properties whose (tax-exempt?) possession by the monastic community of Arcowaber is confirmed in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber are in my view described as parcels of land that partially reference their specific provision with water. Some arguments within the normativities of Islamic taxation stipulate a different rate of imposts depending on how the land in question is supplied with water. These arguments are mainly concerned with the distinction between lands watered by rain (*mařar*) or the opening of irrigation channels (*fath*) and lands

whose water needs to be supplied by the 'bucket' (*dalw*) or other mechanical means.<sup>64</sup> If the interpretation of the properties suggested below is correct, however, this dichotomy within Islamic normativities of taxation does not map onto the different categories of presumably useful lands possessed by the monastery of Arcowaber (see below). Although it cannot be ruled out that the characterizations given in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber were intended to resonate in some fashion with the Islamic stipulations regarding the taxation of agriculturally useful land, it accordingly appears that the categories included in this inscription were rather intended to identify the approximate value of the properties in question.

The unit by which the possessions of the monastery are measured in lines 4) to 5) is *mowt*´, translated above as 'bushel', which is derived from the Latin dry measure *modius* via Greek *módios*.<sup>65</sup> An older Armenian reflection of this measure is *mod*.<sup>66</sup> This term is glossed as "the name of a measure" (*anown č'ap'î*) in the original edition of P'irġalġmean.<sup>67</sup> In the form of *mudd*, the term was also used as a dry measure in Arabicizing languages. While the capacity designated by other measures could vary drastically, Hinz suggests a remarkable stability of this Islamicate *mudd* at 1.053 litres in his overview over the measures used in the pre-industrial Islamicate world.<sup>68</sup> According to his suggestion of assuming a specific weight of (unground) wheat at 77 kg for 100 litres,<sup>69</sup> this translates to a weight of 0,81 kg of wheat.

Nonetheless, this measure does not constitute a suitable point of reference for inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber, where the unit *mowt*´ is used to reference a doubtlessly larger amount of wheat that would be sown on a contiguous piece of arable land (see below). Indeed, the Arabicizing equivalent of Armenian *mowt*´ should be identified not as the classical Islamicate *mudd*, but as the *mūt* suggested specifically as an Anatolian dry measure (*kayl*) for wheat (*ghalla*) in the report of a certain *shaykh* Haydar al-ʿUryān (?) al-Sibirġiġarġ al-Rūmġ, literally from the Anatolian town of Sivrihisar / Eskiġehir,<sup>70</sup> contained in the description of Anatolia by the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE author al-ʿUmarġ.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. the classical review of different opinions on this topic given by Yaġyā b. Ādam K. *al-Kharāġ*, 112-120.

<sup>65</sup> Cahen 1988, 127.

<sup>66</sup> Hübschmann 1897, 366.

<sup>67</sup> P'irġalġmean 1888, 31.

<sup>68</sup> Hinz 1970, 46.

<sup>69</sup> Hinz 1970, 45.

<sup>70</sup> For him see the brief characterization by Taeschner 1929, 7, as well as al-ʿUmarġ *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 19; facsimile, 3, 154.

<sup>71</sup> "Wheat, however, is sold according to a dry measure they use, which is known as *al-mūt*, which is equivalent to about one and a half Egyptian *irdabb*." See al-ʿUmarġ *Masālik* ed. Taeschner, 19; facsimile, 3, 154.

This dry measure is mentioned again in the same work on the authority of al-‘Umarī’s other main authority on Anatolia, the Genoese-born Balabān al-Janawī,<sup>72</sup> who gives a range of different sizes. As calculated by Cahen, this range of something between 0.75 and 1.5 *irdabb* is equivalent to between 72.5 to 132 litres<sup>73</sup> and does not correspond to the Islamicate *mudd*, but rather lies in the same range as the Syro-Egyptian *módios* and roughly reflects some sort of Byzantine usage.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the *módios* was used as a surface measure originally derived from the area that could be sown with a *módios* of wheat in Byzantine administrative practice.<sup>75</sup>

Accordingly, I believe the *mowt*‘ of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber should be interpreted neither as the classical Islamicate *mudd* as calculated by Hinz, nor immediately as the Byzantine *módios* or its classical Armenian adaptation as *mod* by Anania Širakac‘i and others. Instead, I believe it is the same dry measure as the specifically Anatolian *mūt* or *mudd* mentioned for the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE by al-‘Umarī. The 15<sup>th</sup> century CE use of this Armenian *mowt*‘ as a dry measure in the immediate vicinity of Arcowaber is coincidentally attested independently for the year 880 AE / December 4<sup>th</sup> 1430 until December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1431 CE by T‘ovma of Mecop‘, where he illustrates the direness of a famine by suggesting that one *mowt*‘ of wheat (*c‘orean*) cost 60 silver coins (*t‘ankay*) in the market (*bazar*) of Arčēš / Erciş.<sup>76</sup>

The qualification of the *mowt*‘ as land (*tel*) either supplied with water (*ĵrov*), dry (*ostin*),<sup>77</sup> or located on a hillside (*ost*) in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber indicates that the measure was

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<sup>72</sup> According to al-‘Umarī, he was formerly known as Domenichino Doria, the son of Taddeo Doria, cf. the brief characterization of Taeschner 1929, 7, as well as al-‘Umarī *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 30; facsimile, 3, 164. Balabān uses the classicizing form of *al-mudd* for this dry measure and gives the following range of equivalents: In his description of the kingdom (*mamlaka*) of Germiyan, this measure is written in the classicizing form of *mudd* and described as follows: "Their dry measure is called *al-mudd*, which is about one and a fourth Egyptian *irdabb*." (al-‘Umarī *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 36; facsimile, 3, 169) The amount of about three quarters of an Egyptian *irdabb* is given for *al-mudd* in the kingdom of Denizli (al-‘Umarī *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 38; facsimile, 3, 171), *al-mudd* is given as about one Egyptian *irdabb* in the kingdoms of Kastamonu (al-‘Umarī *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 40; facsimile, 3, 173), Menteşe (? *Marmarā*: al-‘Umarī *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 44; facsimile, 3, 176), and Antalya (al-‘Umarī *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 48; facsimile, 3, 179), and as about one and a half Egyptian *irdabb* in the kingdom of Karesi (? *Akīrā*: al-‘Umarī *Masālik*, ed. Taeschner, 43; facsimile, 3, 175).

<sup>73</sup> Cahen 1988, 127.

<sup>74</sup> Cahen 1988, 127-128.

<sup>75</sup> See the exhaustive survey of the *módios* as a surface measure by Schilbach 1970, 56-93, as well as his survey of different *módioi* used as dry measures, Schilbach 1970, 94-159.

The different volumes of this Byzantine *módios* likely influence the different volumes that are reconstructed for the Armenian *mod* primarily on the basis of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE works of Anania Širakac‘i by Manandyan (Manandyan 1930, 69-75 and 94, cf. the succinct survey in the index *sub voce mod*, Manandyan 1930, 132-133) and Vardanyan (Vardanyan 1989, 176), however their estimates differ substantially from that suggested by Cahen for the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE Anatolian *mūt* or *mudd*.

<sup>76</sup> T‘ovma *Patmagrowt yown*, 161. The date of 880 AE stands T‘ovma *Patmagrowt yown*, 159.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. the glosse of *ostin* as *anjrdi getin* or waterless land by P‘irālēmēan 1888, 31, where the opening bracket indicating the glosse was left out due to a printing error.

here not intended to designate a dry measure. Instead, it was used as a surface measure, likely indicating the surface area that could be sown with one *mowt* ' of wheat. Accordingly, this would for instance imply that the monastery of Arcowaber owned properties used to cultivate wheat at Šinamēj that were located near a water course (likely the creek running through the current village of Aşağıgöze / Erciş / Van) and other properties also farmed with wheat near the same village that lay somewhere on the arid hills above the floor of the valley. If the unit of *mowt* ' was not used in an extremely loose manner, the denomination of both types of property with the same unit would indicate that wheat was grown both with intensive irrigation in the valley and on tracts of land on the hillsides exclusively watered by rain.

In contrast to the unit *mowt* ' that measured tracts of land used to cultivate wheat, the surface measure *art*, translated above as acre, in lines 6) and 7) does not immediately imply a particular use for the land it measured. With the exception of the holdings at Xarabast in lines 6) and 7) (see below), there is also no indication that a specific type of irrigation characterized the lands measured in acres. Nonetheless, it is noticeable that both systems of measuring land do not overlap in any given locality. This is ideally illustrated by the adjacent villages of Šinamēj and Xarabast, where the properties at Šinamēj are measured in *mowt* ' and located both in the irrigated floor of the valley and on the surrounding hillside, while the properties at Xarabast are measured in acres without any further indication regarding their spatial distribution. As the location where the properties were measured in acres are today located in the plains, it may be possible that the presence of some sort of irrigation infrastructure was implied by this term.

No indication of the extent of these "acres" is given in the inscription itself. Nonetheless, the early Ottoman codification of tax-regimes supposedly going back to the slightly later Aqqyunlu ruler *uzun* Hasan uses the amount of land that could be farmed with a pair of oxen (Turkic *çift*) as the basic unit of taxable agriculturally cultivated land.<sup>78</sup> Very tentatively, this unit may be suggested as a point of reference in determining the size of the *art* in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber. Accordingly, the monastic community would have held domains that would have needed some 17 households to cultivate in the immediate vicinity of the monastery of Arcowaber. It is unclear whether all of this land was let to local peasants, or whether the monastic community also engaged in agricultural work.

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<sup>78</sup> See Barkan 1941, *passim*, as well as the discussion by Hinz 1950, 180. Cf. Cahen 1988, 128, as well as for the possibly similar Byzantine *zeugarion* Schilbach 1970, 67-70.

The two properties outside the cluster of landed holdings around Arcowaber at Yařinjik and Ganjak are designated by terms that do not occur elsewhere. Although it is unclear who cultivated it, the vineyard (*aygi*) at Ganjak in line 7) clearly supplied either wine and (dried) grapes or the proceeds from the sale of both products to the monastic community of Arcowaber. By contrast, the property at Yařinjik is described as a "cross-acre" (*xač'artn*) in the original edition of P'irġalēmean 1888.<sup>79</sup> As indicated by the doubtful rendering of Thierry as "champs (?)",<sup>80</sup> this term is highly unusual and arguably does not make much sense as a unit used to describe two pieces of landed property. Accordingly, the present edition follows the reading of marshlands (*xalartn*) suggested by Ter-Step'anyan's edition of the notes of P'irġalēmean held in the Matenadaran.<sup>81</sup> Although Ter-Step'anyan capitalized this term as a toponym,<sup>82</sup> the identification of the village of Yařinjik with the contemporary village of Kavuştuk / Adilcevaz / Bitlis proposed above explains the unusual description of landed properties as marshland, as the possessions likely were situated in the marshy area between Lake Van and the small lake of Sodalı Gölü. Although the late Flemish travelogue of Joos van Ghistele written by Ambrosius Zeebout mentions the cultivation of rice on the Eastern shores of Lake Van around 1484 CE (*daer ontrent wast ooc ... wonderlicke vele rijs*),<sup>83</sup> no evidence for the cultivation of rice during the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE appears to exist for the Western and Northern shores. Accordingly, I preliminarily believe the marshlands near Yařinjik were most likely used as pasture.

The two elements that were also held by the monastery near Yařinjik in line 5) are spelled *akn ĵalac'* both in P'irġalēmean's original edition and in his notes edited by Ter-Step'anyan.<sup>84</sup> While the first term *akn* commonly designates a well or spring and *ĵalac'* designates a mill, the interpretation as "water-mills" (*moulins à eau*) proposed by Thierry is doubtful due to the general absence of water-driven mills in pre-Industrial Eastern Anatolia, where mills were commonly turned by animal power.<sup>85</sup> The interpretation as "millstones" suggested in the English translation of Ter-Step'anyan's edition of P'irġalēmean's notes is equally doubtful,<sup>86</sup> as

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<sup>79</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31.

<sup>80</sup> Thierry 1976, 49. In Thierry 1989, 203, this question mark is transformed into the numeral seven between parentheses "(7)". This should be interpreted as a typographical mistake.

<sup>81</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 20.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. the retainment of the form as a toponym in the English translation of Ter-Step'anyan 2014, 19.

<sup>83</sup> Zeebout *Tvoyage*, 333.

<sup>84</sup> P'irġalēmean 1888, 31, and Ter-Step'anyan 2013, 20.

<sup>85</sup> Thierry 1976, 49. But cf. the reference to "wonderfully many watermills" (*wonderlicke vele watermuelenen*) in van Ghistele's description of Tabriz, Zeebout *Tvoyage*, 338.

<sup>86</sup> Ter-Step'anyan 2014, 19.

it appears highly unlikely the stone of a mill would have been designated as *akn jālac* ' without any further declension.

Although the term *jālac* ' also occurs in line 7) to designate two elements owned by the monastery near Xarābast, mills do not commonly feature among the properties held by pious foundations in the Islamicate world.<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, I believe interpretation of the structures designated by (*akn*) *jālac* ' in lines 5) and 7) should not proceed from interpretation of the term *jālac* ' as a mill, but from *akn* or a well. Due to the high salinity of Lake Van, use of the marshlands near Yařinjik as pasture would have been predicated upon the availability of a suitable source of water for the animals. Accordingly, the second term should be emended *pace* P'irlālēmean to *jāleac* ' or fortified, strengthened, resulting in the translation of *akn jāleac* ' as 'lined wells' proposed in the above translation, as sources of water feature frequently in lists of pre-industrial Islamicate endowments. Building on this emendation, I suggest that the term *akn* was implied in the second occurrence of [*akn*] *jāl[e]ac* ' in line 7) to designate two additional lined wells owned by the monastic community, which were located at Xarābast. In this case, the monastery would only have owned the lined wells, while the animals likely were grazed upon fallow fields and on the higher slopes of the hills and mountains depending on the season. In any case, the landed properties whose possession by the monastery was confirmed in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber evidently were of considerable value and represent an important source for the reconstruction of agricultural geography in the area during the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE.

#### Lines 7) to 8): Curse and Benediction

The conclusion of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber with "the curse of Judas" on those who oppose its arrangements, as well as with blessings on those who follow it, resonates with practices attested at the 'Turkmen' chancelleries. The conclusion of edicts issued in Arabic and Persian in the name of 'Turkmen' rulers with curses for those who interfere with their ordinances is attested for the tax-edicts epigraphically inscribed at the main mosque of towns,<sup>88</sup> as well as

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<sup>87</sup> This is likely due to the high proportion of capital invested in the animal employed to turn the mill as opposed to the open structure of the millstones and the wooden beam used to turn the millstones, all of which could be erected at almost any flat location large enough to enable the animal to walk in a circle around the millstones. As wheat and other corn is generally easier to transport before it has been ground, pre-industrial Islamicate mills turned by animals were generally located in or near villages, rather than somewhere in the fields around them.

<sup>88</sup> See inscription 857 or earlier Mardin (von Oppenheim 1909, 68), inscription 862 Gurgān / Astarābād (Ma' tūfī 1387 / 2008, 264-266), inscription 863 Yazd (Afshār 1348 – 1354 / 1969 – 1975, 2, 144), inscription 869 Kāshān (Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā' ī 1352 / 1973, 34-35), inscription 875 Yazd (Afshār 1348 – 1354 / 1969 – 1975, 2, 139-140), inscription 878 Ardabīl (Turābī Ṭabāṭabā' ī 2535 / 1977, 281 and 283), and inscription 897 or earlier Erzincan (see the photograph published by Ali Kemali, Kemali 1932, 236).

in the edict of the Qaraqyunlu ruler Jahānshāh appointing a hereditary leader of the caravan of the *hajj*.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, the reference to Judas in line 7) and the inclusion of blessings on those who comply with the directives of inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber arguably ground this concluding formula in specifically Armenian Christian epigraphic practices.<sup>90</sup> Accordingly, this formula should be interpreted as a standard element of Armenian epigraphic habits that likely resonated with the broader practices of the production of edicts by the 'Turkmen' chancellery.

## Conclusion

Building on this establishment and commentary of the text, a forthcoming article will analyze its historical context, including function and date.

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<sup>89</sup> Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1352 / 1973, 47-52.

Arguably the closest parallel to the conclusion of the list of possessions contained in inscription 823 or earlier Arcowaber that is affiliated to the 'Turkmen' courts stands in the fragmentary Persian endowment inscription to the left of the entrance *īwān* of the foundation of Bāyandur *bīk* at Ahlat (inscription 882 Ahlat b, edited on the basis of photographs taken on site by the author in 2018 CE). This inscription concludes in line 4) with the phrase "anybody who changes this shall be damned by God and the prophet with the curse of Fir'awn and Hāmān" (*taghayyur kunanda dar sakhat-i khudā wa-rasūl bāshad wa-lā 'nat-i fir'awn wa-hāmān*). I am tempted to read the mostly deteriorated and shorter line 5) below an ornamental roundel as "and whoever follows the order of God will receive the grace of Hārūn. Kamāl of Yazd wrote this" (*wa-mann-i hārūn ba-kardan rasmihī ta 'ālā katabahū kamāl-i yazd*). However, this conjecture is mainly based on the identification of the Qur'ānic prophet Hārūn and the possibility that the Armenianizing architectural elements in this unusual monument may have been echoed in the equally exceptional conclusion of a Persian inscription composed at the behest of a 'Turkmen' courtly figure with a blessing following the established practice of Armenian epigraphy.

<sup>90</sup> See e.g. the concluding epigraphically inscribed curse formula mentioning Judas in pre-15<sup>th</sup> century CE Ani listed in the index of *Divan Hay Vimagrowt'yan I*, 134, *sub voce Youda, matnič'ə*. Unfortunately, the Persian inscription at the mosque of Manuchihr in Ani lacks its ending, which may have included a curse formula, see Barthold, Hinz 1951, and Ališan 1881, 56.

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