

## Guide to the “Ode of Good News”

This “Ode of Good News” (Տաղ աւետեաց), dedicated to the Virgin Mary, was published in 1701 in the *Elegant and Beautiful Ode-Book* (Տաղարան վայելուն և գեղեցիկ), again in 1740 in another *dagharan* (with the title page missing in the copy I found), and undoubtedly in other *dagharank’* as well.

The 1701 version is nine verses longer, and the title page of that *dagharan* has been included in the document. The 1740 version has more consistent punctuation, and sometimes uses a hyphenation symbol Ս where a word is split between two lines of the text. Both versions use abbreviations (more so in the 1740), and a couple of minor wording differences exist between the two. The 1740 version is followed by a related *sharagan* in the դձ mode (about which you may recall from the March session of Krapar and Kini).

Each verse of the ode ends with a refrain that is repeated every four verses. Only the first instance of each of the four refrains is spelled-out in full in the text, and the subsequent repetitions are abbreviated using part or all of the first word of the applicable refrain.

Because the ode is meant to be sung, the verses have a consistent meter of seven syllables to first short stop (Jesse told me that’s a *caesura*, but I prefer my English over his Latin), then eight to the next, followed by the refrain with six syllables, then seven, then three. In some words, ը has been added between or before consonants, to make it a voiced syllable in the meter. The first verse of the 1701 version has musical *khaz* (խազ) notation over some of the words, which is not present in the 1740 version of the ode, although the notation is present in the *sharagan* that follows that version of the ode.

On the surface, the ode is a simple a song of praise, but deeper down, it’s imagery shines with subtle brilliance. On occasion, this may cause difficulty in understanding the deeper meaning of certain verses. Some verses relate, directly or indirectly, to passages in the Bible. A couple of them are composed entirely in descriptive words, without a verb.

Below are some things to be aware of, or questions to think about, when reading (or singing?) the ode.

1. Only two personal pronouns are used in the ode, “you” and “we”, but they occur in different of inflected cases:

դու	nominative	“you”
--	nominative	“you” (implied by verb person/number)
--	nominative	“we” (implied by verb person/number)
զքեզ	accusative	“you” (with definite q- prefix)
զմեզ	accusative	“us” (with definite q- prefix)
քն	genitive	“of you” –or– nominative “your” (possessive)
քեզ	dative	“to you” or “for you” (or “you” with an implied “to/for”)
մեզ	dative	“to us” or “for us” (or “us” with an implied “to/for”)
’ի քեզ	locative	“in you” or “at you”
’ի քէս	ablative	“from you”

2. In older texts, you often see ի with a mark in front of it, as ’ի. The mark is there to let the reader know that the ի is on its own as a preposition, and not the last letter of previous word or the first letter of the next. (Thank you to Jesse for explaining this to me.) For example, if you

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see ԶՐԻՍՏՈՄԻ in a text, you need to know if the Ի is a suffix of a word, as in Տեանն մերոյ Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի, or a preposition, as in Քրիստոս ի մէջ մեր յայսնեցաւ, or the first letter of the next word, as in as in Քրիստոս ինչ ձեզ ոչ աւգնէ. The mark is especially important in texts where the spacing between words is minimal, and even more so in ones using the early *Erkatagir* (երկատագիր) script. Most modern texts no longer use the mark. (When the preposition ի occurs before a word beginning with a vowel, the ի becomes the prefix յ- of the word, as in ի երթիս > յերկիս. Occasionally, you may see (hear) both the ի and the յ- prefix, as in Օրհնեցէք ըզՏէր ՚ի յերկիս. ալեւիս, where the superfluous ի is sung in the hymn.)

3. In the title page (1701 version):

- a. For what purpose, and for whom, were the odes composed?
- b. Who was the Catholicos at the time of publication? Bonus question: Where was he approx. five years prior to this (for a period of about ten months), and why? (You’ll have to look this one up, but I thought it was interesting.)
- c. There’s a (coincidental) linguistic connection between the name of the Catholicos and the office which he held. (Sometimes words mean the same thing, but actually don’t.)
- d. Where was the *dagharan* published?
- e. What date is shown in addition to 1701, and how is it different?
- f. At the bottom of the page, there’s a symbol over the լ in the word թուիս, and it’s often there in the 1740 version. What does the symbol mean?

4. The first verse of the ode has a name in it, in addition to Mary. Who is it, and what did he or she do by way of սկզբնաւորեաց? (Note that personal names in the ode are not capitalized, which is not uncommon in manuscripts and older printed texts.)

5. The second verse begins with Բանաւոր, which word is often rendered “rational”, “reasonable”, or even “vocal”, “oral”. In the context of the verse, what would be a more appropriate rendering?

6. Note the “beautiful” alliteration in the third verse, which begins with Գեղեցիկ and is followed by the word գեղ, then by a word beginning in a q-, and then by word that begins with գեղ-.

7. In the 1740 version, the last word of the third verse (before the refrain) is մաքուր, but in the 1701 version, it’s ամուր. In the context of Mary, does one of the adjectives more appropriately describe տաճար, or are they equally appropriate?

8. The fourth verse, which begins with Դուռն, has a name in it. Who is it, and how does he or she contextually relate to Mary?

9. Beginning with the refrain of the fourth verse, there are a number of words that brightly light up the ode: լուսոյ, լուսով, ծագեալ, ըզծագելն, լուսափայլ, ծագէր, ծիրանափայլ, շող, and ծագեաց.

10. What is the արեգակն արդարութեան which shines-forth from the Լուսափայլ that begins the 12th verse? (The word արդարութեան is “built” from the word արդար, which is turned into an abstract noun by adding the suffix -ութիւն [for example, սուրբ = “holy”,

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սրբութիւն = “holiness”), and then changed to the genitive case by replacing the nominative -իւն with the genitive suffix -եան.)

11. In the 13th verse, from whom or what is the Խորհուրդ concealed, and why?

12. In my opinion, the 14th verse, Ծաղկեցար դու ծառ կենաց՝ մեզ բերելով զանմահ պտուղն, is the most beautiful analogy of Mary in the entire ode. How does this analogy relate to the person in the fourth verse (item 8 above)?

13. The 15th verse begins with Կոյս կուսից, “Virgin of virgins”, which was a common way of expressing a superlative in that part of the world, with its origin in the *shahanshah* of the Parthian empire. Other superlatives you may have seen before are թագաւոր թագաւորաց, “king of kings”; իշխան իշխանաց, “prince of princes”; յաւիտեանս յաւիտենից, “unto ages of ages”; and even Աստուած աստուծոց, “God of gods”, in the Badarak. (Note the various genitive plural suffixes in these expressions: -ից, -աց, -ոց.)

14. The 16th verse, which begins with Հոսաբեր, was one of the more difficult ones to render clearly, especially since most of the words are descriptive. (Thank you to Jesse for the help.) The plant-imagery of the verse is also difficult to understand, but the color ծիրանափայլ may offer a hint as to what the nun represents.

15. The 17th verse, which begins with Ձայնեցեր, refers to Mary doing something near a plant. What does this allegory mean? (This is a tough one, Jesse’s edification was very interesting.)

16. Ղևտացոյն, the first word of the 18th verse (the last verse in the 1740 version), is the genitive or dative singular form (-ոյ suffix, with a definite -ն) of Ղևտացի, the collective name of a family, tribe or people. What is this family, tribe or people, and why is an unnamed member of it included in an ode dedicated to the Virgin Mary? (When an -ոյ or -ոց suffix is added to a word ending in ի, the ի changes to լ, as here with Ղևտացոյն. Occasionally the ի is simply dropped without the replacement լ, as in the 1701 version, where it’s spelled Ղևտացոյն, similar to the spelling of հոգւոյն and հոգոյն in the eighth verse).

17. Both the 20th and 25th verses (1701 version), which begin with Մայր and Չէ respectively, have a name which may be easier to recognize if you’re aware that its initial vowel was dropped in order to maintain the syllabic meter of the ode.

18. In the 21st verse (1701 version), the word արեւելս is usually rendered “east”, but its original meaning, based on արեւ “sun” + ելք “rising up”, may be more appropriate. What might this verse mean, allegorically? (There may be some relevance to Mihr [Միհր], the Armenian counterpart of the Zoroastrian Mithra. Again, thank you to Jesse for this.)

19. The second-to-last verse of the ode (1701 version), which begins with Պատմեցաւ, refers to an Old Testament prophet. Who is he, what did he proclaim, and how does it relate to Mary? (This should be apparent if you’re aware of the particular Bible verse.)

20. The last verse of the ode (1701 version), which begins with Չահ, refers to another Old Testament prophet. Who is he, what did he see, and how does it relate to Mary? (This one is more difficult than the previous, and you may have to think a little bit outside the box.)

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21. The *sharagan* after the ode (1740 version) has the word Աստուածածին (abbreviated and hyphenated between two lines in the text as  $\bar{u}\delta\omega\text{ } \delta\bar{h}\bar{u}$ ), which is almost always translated as “Mother of God”. However, this is not technically correct. Considering the second part of the word,  $\delta\bar{h}\bar{u}$ , what would be a more accurate translation of Աստուածածին? Likewise, what would be a more accurate Armenian word for “Mother of God”?

22. To make things a little easier for everyone, here are most of the abbreviations in the ode:

$\bar{u}\delta\omega\delta\bar{h}\bar{u}$	Աստուածածին	( $-\bar{u}\delta$ is standard for Աստուած, plus the remaining $-ա\text{-}\delta\bar{h}\bar{u}$ )
անարտ	անարատ	
արգկան	արեգական	
երրորդուն	երրորդութեան	( $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{e}$ or $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{e}$ is standard for $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{e}\bar{a}\bar{n}$ )
գած	գԱստուած	( $-\bar{u}\delta$ is standard for Աստուած, plus the $գ\text{-}$ prefix)
գանմի	գանմաի	( $\bar{i}$ is sometimes seen in printed texts for $-ա\text{-}$ )
գորուիքս	գորութիւնքս	( $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{h}$ or $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{h}$ is standard for $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{h}\bar{i}\bar{l}\bar{e}\bar{n}$ , plus the $-\bar{u}$ suffix)
ըգթագուցլսն	ըգթագուցեալսն	
թգրին	թագաւորին	( $-\bar{\rho}\bar{q}\bar{r}$ is standard for $\bar{\rho}\bar{a}\bar{q}\bar{a}\bar{l}\bar{o}\bar{r}$ , plus the $-\bar{h}\bar{i}\bar{n}$ suffix)
ծագել	ծագեալ	
ծածկել	ծածկեալ	
յաւանց	յաւիտեանց	
$\bar{u}\bar{\rho}$	սուրբ	(this is standard)
սրբունք	սրբութեամք	( $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}$ or $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{\rho}$ is standard for $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{e}\bar{a}\bar{m}\bar{\rho}$ )
տր	տէր	(this is standard)
օրհնութք	օրհնութեամք	( $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}$ or $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{\rho}$ is standard for $-\bar{n}\bar{l}\bar{\rho}\bar{e}\bar{a}\bar{m}\bar{\rho}$ )

Other standard abbreviations you often see are:

$\bar{u}\bar{m}$	ամենայն
$\bar{u}\bar{j}$	Աստուծոյ
$\bar{j}\bar{u}$	Յիսուս
$\bar{j}\bar{h}$	Յիսուսի
$\bar{n}\bar{u}\bar{y}$	որպէս
$\bar{\rho}\bar{u}$	Քրիստոս
$\bar{\rho}\bar{h}$	Քրիստոսի