

FACSIMILE OF CODEX 543 OF THE MEKHITARIST CONGREGATION IN VIENNA

The Mekhitarist congregation (an Armenian-Benedictine Order) will be celebrating the bicentenary of its foundation in Vienna in 2011. To mark the occasion, the Vienna monastery – one of the largest centres of Armenian culture outside of Armenia – will present the facsimile of an invaluable manuscript: Codex 543 from the monastery's own library.

THE MANUSCRIPT

The small-format manuscript – one of the finest and most beautiful of Armenian manuscripts dating back to the 15th century – measures 135x85 mm, has 240 pages and was set down in 1432 at the Armenian Monastery of Saint Anthony near Caffa on the Crimean peninsula in the Black Sea. The manuscript contains several writings by Catholicos Nerses IV Shnorhali (1102-1173), including his opus magnum "Jesus, Son Only-Begotten of the Father", a sublime elegiac poem.

CATHOLICOS NERSES IV. SCHNORHALI

Nerses Shnorhali (the Gracious) descended, on his mother's side, from the noted princely Armenian family of Pahlavuni which had given the country several statesmen but also 7 catholicos (head bishops of the Armenian Church) who succeeded each other from 1065 to 1202.

Catholicos Nerses Shnorhali -theologian, poet and musician- became an industrious writer in the field of theology, poetry, hymn, homily, prayers, sacred music, letters, educational writings, parables, riddles, etc.

He was a pioneer of church union. After many years of preparation (correspondence and meeting with Byzantine Emperor Manuel I, Patriarch Michael and Prince Alex), he hoped to accomplish the union with the Greek Church, but did not have the time to carry it through.

MINIATURES

(The following description is taken from the book by H. and H. Buschhausen, *Die Illustrierten Armenischen Handschriften der Mechitaristen-Congregation*, Wien, 1976)

Codex 543 comprises "11 full-page miniatures, 11 text-inserted miniatures, 24 border miniatures, 3 decorated pages, 3 title bars, zoomorphous and vegetal border decoration as well as swash letters..."

"Taken as a whole, the small codex presents itself as an illuminated manuscript of delicate, meticulous beauty."

THE COMMENTARY

The facsimile manuscript is accompanied by a commentary in German and English.

THE FACSIMILE EDITION

Two versions of the Codex 543 facsimile will be published as limited edition:

Complete facsimile – limited to a numbered edition of only 50 copies, printed on parchment with manually retraced ornaments, gilding. Hand bound in sheepskin on wooden boards, with blind embossing and two metal fasteners, packed in a casket made of cherry wood and accompanied by a digital edition on CD and the commentary.

Price including shipment EUR 3,600.

All pictures and texts are copyrighted. Publications may only be made upon written consent by the Mekhitarist Monastery in Vienna.

If you are interested in acquiring a copy of the above-referenced facsimile, please click on the order form and send. Then please transfer the amount to the following account.

Bank Austria, Bank code: 12000
Account. number: 219 103 060 00
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Mekhitarist Monastery in Vienna
Fax: +43/1/523 64 17 111
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