



Vestments and Vessels used in the Divine Liturgy

1. ARTAXURAKS (Infulae or Fanons) are lappets three inches wide and twelve to fourteen inches long, which are hung from the lower edge of the *vakas* about six inches away from the centre on either side. They are made of the same material and colour as the *vakas*. Usually three tassels are attached to the lower end of an *artaxurak*. *Artaxuraks* are worn with the *xoyr* (mitre).

Originally *artaxuraks* were the loose ends of a head-band, hanging at the back.

2. ASA (Staff or Ferula) is a rod of wood shorter than the other staffs, with a metal knob on top. It is carried by bishops as a walking stick and is not used during the Liturgy or the services.

3. ASHTANAK (Candlestick) is the usual one used in all churches and can be of various sizes and forms. There should be twelve candlesticks on the gradines of the Altar and two on the Altar itself. Two large and tall candlesticks should stand on either side of the Bema.

Candlesticks represent the saints, who uphold Christ's light enlightening the world.

4. BAZPAN (Maniple or Cuff or Epimanikia) is about five or six inches wide and long enough to go round the fore part of the forearm, over the sleeves of the alb (*shapik*). It is of the same material as the cope. *Bazpans* are worn by the celebrant during the Divine Liturgy.

Bazpans symbolize moral cleanliness as well as strength which enables Christians to serve the Lord.

The maniple was the original form of the cuffs as the prayer over it also suggests. It was at first a kind of large handkerchief carried across the arm by consuls and magistrates as a ceremonial dress in Roman times. Apart from being used by the bishop and the priest, it was also used as a special badge of the deacon before the sixth century, and sometime afterwards. It was eventually transformed into cuffs to hold the sleeves of the alb.

5. BAZHKI (Wine of the Cup) is unmixed, and preferably red, wine.
6. BURVAR (Censer) is a silver incense burner, in the shape of a bowl, which is suspended by chains connected to a small disc holding them. The bowl rests on a firm base, and has a perforated cone-shaped lid. Three of the chains hold the bowl, and a fourth is connected to the top of the lid in order to lift it. From the small disc on top to the base of the bowl a censer is about two feet long. The censer should not be heavy, and the lid could be decorative in the shape of the dome of an Armenian Church.

The censer symbolizes the human soul, in which the spiritual fire burns its worldly desires and sends up its prayers to God as a pleasing fragrance.

7. DASTARAK (Sudarium) is a fine linen used to hold sacred objects during the Liturgy and at other times. It is used to show the sacredness of the object held, and that holy things should be held clean of sinful contact.

8. TSATSKOTS (Veil) is a square embroidered linen or other fine material, to cover the chalice and the paten completely from top to base. The veil symbolizes the hidden mystery of the Sacrament of Communion.

9. TSNTSGHA (Cymbals) are sometimes used in the Armenian Church as musical instruments during the singing of the Angelic Hymn ("Glory to God on high"). Sometimes a single cymbal is used, beaten with a hard felt ball, to give a rhythmic background to the singing of some liturgical hymns.

10. EMIP'ORON (Omophorion or Pallium) is a long riband with a width of about nine inches and a length of about thirteen or fourteen feet, made of fine rich material, often with embroidered ornaments on it. Half of the piece has the lining on one side and the other half has the lining on the opposite side. It is wrapped round the shoulders with buttons and loops in such a way that one end of the omophorion hangs in front down to the ankles, and the other end hangs at the back again down to the ankles. There are four crosses, usually embroidered, on the omophorion: one on either shoulder, one on the front part and one on the part that hangs at the back.

Emip'oron is worn by bishops during the Preparation and Synaxis, i.e. the first two parts of the Liturgy or on other solemn occasions. It is taken off at the end of the Synaxis. In form it is an extension of the priests's stole, worn differently and representing the fullness of episcopal authority.

The bishop's *omophorion* or *pallium* is the oldest liturgical vestment, used from the fourth century onwards. Originally this was the "scarf of office" worn by the Roman emperor or other high ranking officers. The custom of embroidering it with crosses goes back to the time when bishops began to use it.

11. GAVAZAN HOVVAKAN (Pastoral Staff or Pedum) is a rod, often of metal, sometimes of wood, about five feet six inches long, crooked at the top-

end and sometimes with a knob at the base of the crooked part. It is ornamented in various ways according to the imagination of the artist.

Gavazan hovvakani is held by the bishop with the left hand. It is a symbol of episcopal authority over the flock. It is used during the Liturgy and other solemn services.

12. GAVAZAN VARDAPETAKAN (Doctoral Staff or Crocia) is a rod, often of metal, sometimes of wood, having the same length as the pastoral staff, and in the form of a tau cross, like the letter *T*. Very often the arms of the cross thus formed are so made as to represent two serpents facing each other. Sometimes there is a globe, with a small cross on it, on top of the rod where the two serpents branch off.

Gavazan Vardapetakan is used by priests or prelates having the doctor's rank. It may also be used by bishops. It is a symbol of teaching authority, the serpents representing wisdom, directed towards the world. It is held with the left hand, and is used during part of the Divine Liturgy or other solemn services.

13. GOTI (Zone or Cincture) is a riband of about two or three inches wide and long enough to go round the waist. Usually it is of the same material as the cope. It has a buckle in front. It is worn by the celebrant over the *shapik* and *p'orurar*, at the waist.

Goti symbolizes faith which gives strength to the soul. It represents also the priestly authority of binding and loosing.

14. GRAKAL (Lectern). Three kinds of lecterns or bookstands are used in the Church. The first kind is small and is placed on the Altar for the Liturgy-Book (*Grakal Seghani*). A similar one is used on the Bema for the Hours-Book (*Zamagirq*), which is placed on it during various services (*Grakal Bemî*). Another like it again is put on the bema, with the Gospel-Book on it for kissing and reverence (*Grakal Avetaran*). These last two are always completely covered with embroidered linen.

The second kind is a tall, portable and sometimes folding bookstand, with an almost flat top. It is used when reading the lessons, mostly in the chancel but sometimes also elsewhere in the church (*Grakal Ateni*). This bookstand should also be covered with cloth, made to fit its shape and extending down to the ground.

The third kind (*Grakal Dasi*) is one with an inclined top, fixed on a stem and base, and *not* covered with linen. Two of these are used; one in the left and one in the right wing of the Chancel, to hold the Hymn-Book (*Sharakan*) or the Hours-Book (*Zamagirq*) for the clerks of the choir.

15. HOGHAT'AP' (Sandals). These are like ordinary slippers, sometimes

elaborately embroidered on rich material, and figures of snakes and scorpions represented over the heels on the inside, referring to Ps. 91:13 (according to the Septuagint).

Church sandals must be worn by all who go up on the Bema or serve at the Altar. In some churches it is customary also for all who stand in the Chancel to wear sandals.

16. **TJATJANCH** (Ostensorium, "Radiance") is a round or oval disc of silver, surrounded by rays made of metal, and fixed on a stem and base. Sometimes a relic is placed in the centre of the disc, which is always carved or decorated with various sacred signs or figures. It is often used simply as an ornament on the Altar, symbolizing the spiritual power radiating from holy things.

17. **KANT'EGH** (Lamp). These are glass bowls, sometimes of different colours, suspended by three chains and hung from the ceiling in the Church. The bowls, in which olive oil is burnt, are often placed on large and finely wrought holders of precious metal, serving as ornaments. A lamp should always be hung over the Main Altar and it should remain perpetually lighted, if possible.

Lamps symbolize the divine light enlightening the world.

18. **KERON** (Torches or Candles) are the candles of the acolytes, fixed on wooden rods, about five feet long, and with small metal trays fixed at the foot of the candles, to prevent the wax dripping. They are carried in procession, in front of the Celebrant. They are also held on either side of the Gospel-Book during a lection and at either side of the Centre Chancel at certain times during the Liturgy.

19. **XACH DZERATS** (Hand-Cross) is a small Cross of precious metal, held with a small silk cloth for the purpose of blessing. It is used during the Liturgy and other solemn services by priests as well as bishops.

20. **XACHVAR** (Banner) is an oblong piece of fine cloth richly embroidered and decorated with tassels. A cross and other church emblems (eagle, lamb, etc.) are worked on it. The top edge of the cloth is fixed to a small rod, which in turn is attached at right angles to a long rod. It is carried in front of and behind processions on solemn occasions.

21. **XOYR** or **T'AG** (Mitre) is similar to the Roman mitre. Two stiff flexible oblong pieces, each having the shape of a pointed arch at the upper end, are sewn together at the lower half of the sides, which, when pressed, open at the base and is placed on the head. Two small crosses, alike in shape, are fixed on the pointed tops. Mitres are often richly ornamented with medals, embroidery, etc.

Xoyr is worn by bishops during the Liturgy. It can sometimes be used also

by prelates of lower rank having the administrative jurisdiction of a bishop. It symbolizes the "helmet of salvation" like the crown.

Before the end of the tenth century no liturgical headgear was used anywhere in the Christian Church. The use of the bishop's mitre was spread from Rome. Its origin is the headdress called *camelaucum*, having the shape of a kind of helmet. It has undergone many transformations from the tenth century to the present times. The Armenian Church adopted the use of the mitre from Rome in the fifteenth century.

22. **KONQER** (Epigonation) is a stiff piece about ten to twelve inches square, richly embroidered with a cross or image in the middle and with four tassels at the four corners. Only the Catholicos or the Patriarch can wear a *Konqer*. It is hung on the *goti* at the height of the knee on the right side, with a cord attached to one of its corners.

Konqer symbolizes the sword of justice.

23. **KORBURA** (Corporal) is a square linen or other material, usually white, on which the chalice is placed during the Liturgy.

The corporal represents the shroud in which our Lord's body was wrapped at his burial.

24. **KUŽ** and **KONQ** (Ewer and Basin or Bowl) are vessels larger than the ones in use in Western churches, and are used for washing the Priest's hands during and at the end of the Liturgy.

Washing is symbolical of spiritual cleansing.

25. **QSHOTS** (Fan or Flabellum) is a disc of silver, about eight or nine inches in diameter, with the figure of a six-winged cherub made on each side of it in relief, and with little ball-shaped bells, often twelve in number, attached all around the rim of the disc. The disc is fixed on a wooden rod about five feet long.

Fans were originally used to drive flies or other insects away from the cup. They also symbolized cherubs driving evil spirits away from the sacred place. It is now used decoratively and as a musical instrument, with the like symbolism.

26. **LANJAXACH** (Pectoral Cross) is a small metal cross studded with precious stones suspended from the neck on the chest. It is worn by priests as well as bishops. The right to wear the pectoral cross is granted by the Catholicos or the Patriarch, in recognition of long or distinguished service to the Church.

MAGHZMA (Patén) is a small round tray, from one to two inches wider in diameter than the mouth of the chalice, and made so as not to slide away from the top of the chalice, upon which it is placed. It is similar to the western paten.

28. **MAS** (Antidoron) is very thin unleavened bread of wheat, of any reasonable size making it possible to be baked on a metal tray. It can be made by any

member of the congregation. It is often used after being softened by spraying water on it. It is distributed after the Liturgy to those of the congregation who have not received communion. It is customary to take *mas* to the members of one's family and to friends, who have been unable to attend the Liturgy. *Mas* symbolizes the bond of love among the members of the church.

Mas, meaning "a portion", represents the remaining part of the loaf which the faithful used to bring to Church in ancient times to be used as bread for the Eucharist. A fraction (= *nshxar*) of this loaf was taken for consecration, while the remainder was distributed among the congregation at the end of the Liturgy.

29. **MATANI** (Ring) is a ring with a rather large precious stone, often amethyst, sometimes surrounded by small diamonds, worn by bishops as insignia of their episcopal administrative authority and granted to them at their consecration. Bishops used to seal documents with their rings.

30. **NSHXAR** (Wafer) is the bread prepared for the oblation. It should be prepared by a priest or a deacon on the Sunday before the Liturgy. (After sunset on previous Saturday, Sunday is considered to have begun). It is a small thin loaf, approximately from two to three inches in diameter, made of unleavened dough of pure wheat and without salt. It should be stamped so as to have the figures of the crucifix and of ears of wheat and a cluster of grapes in relief, and baked just short of getting brown.

Nshxar is a single loaf in token of the unity of the church and of the One Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 10:17.) It is unleavened, symbolizing the purity of the Faith.

Nshxar means "a fraction", which shows that the bread assigned for communion was part of a large loaf, brought by the faithful to the Church for the Liturgy, a fact mentioned in the acts of the Armenian Church Council of Dvin (555 A.D.). The Council of Partav (768) bids the priests themselves to prepare the bread for communion. In the 11th century the Host was already a small single loaf, prepared by deacons or by priests.

31. **URAR** (Orarion or Stole) is a band or riband of about nine feet long and four inches wide. It must be of rich material of any of the main colours. It should have a cross sewn on where it rests on the shoulder and two other crosses, one in front and one at the back.

Urar is worn on the left shoulder and hangs down loosely in front and at the back. It is the distinctive vestment of ordained deacons, but permission to wear it is often given by the bishop to persons in minor orders, together with the permission to perform some of the duties of a deacon.

32. **PNAKĒ** (Panagia or Enkolpion) is an oval medalion with the figure of the Holy Virgin and the Child Jesus represented on it and surrounded by a frame studded with precious stones and suspended with a chain from the neck on the chest. It is an episcopal decoration granted by the Patriarch-Catholicos to all bishops after their consecration.

33. **PATKER** (Image or Picture). No statues in any form are allowed in the Armenian Church, and in the Armenian Church unlike other oriental churches, icons are always oil paintings on canvas. They should be few in the church and should represent divine figures or saints or sacred events. On the Main Altar there should always be the Theotokos, seated on a throne with the Child Jesus on her knees or in her arms on her left, holding a sceptre in her right hand. There is often a globe on the knee of the Child Jesus with a cross on it, and the right hand of Jesus is in a blessing position. Pictures are venerated in the Church as vehicles of spiritual discernment.

34. **P'ILON** (Phelonion) is a vestment of the same shape as the cope, made of plain black material. It is worn by priests while attending any service. Some priests (married or unmarried) and all bishops wear the same in silk, black on fast days and purple on other days. *P'ilon* may be *Dsaghkia* (= flowery) i.e. with flower designs on it, which in the case of priests can only be worn with the especial permission of the bishop. *P'ilon* symbolizes the spiritual defense of the soul against the attacks of the evil One.

Phelonion (Arm. *p'ilon*) was the only overall vestment used during offices in the Eastern churches until the thirteenth century. It was a large circular cloth which had an opening in the centre, large enough for the head to pass through. This bell shaped dress was later split in the front and held with a buckle. It is used by the clergy in the Armenian Church while attending offices. It is not a sacramental vestment.

35. **P'ORURAR** (Stole) is about nine inches wide and four feet six inches long. It is of the same material as the cope. At one end it has an opening for the neck, and it hangs down in front over the *shapik*. It is in fact the deacon's stole worn round the neck with the two stripes, often attached, hanging down in front.

P'orurar is one of the liturgical vestments of the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy. It symbolizes righteousness, with which the christian must brace himself in resisting sin, or the yoke which the servant of God must carry around his neck.

36. **SAGHAVART** (Crown or Helmet) is a tall bulbous headdress of any hard material, covered with fine rich silk or velvet cloth. It has twelve pieces shaped like pointed arches sewn together at the sides and to the edge of the crown at the base. There is a small metal cross on top of the crown. Round or oval medallions of metal or enamel or embroidery are often attached to the front of the upper part of the crown, representing pictures of holy figures or symbols.

The crown is worn by the Celebrant at certain times during the Liturgy. It symbolizes the salvation of the soul from the bondage of the spiritual enemy and the royal attribute of Christ the King, whom the priest represents, enabling the Christian to fight against the Evil One.

The crown is used only by the bishop in the Byzantine Church. It began to be used as a liturgical headdress only after the thirteenth century. Its origin is oriental, and is most probably derived from a kind of Persian helmet.

37. **SKIH** (Chalice) is a semispherical gold plated silver cup on a stem and base, often having a knob in the middle. It is similar to the chalice of other churches. The cup must be of such a shape that could allow the wafer to be easily immersed in the wine. It should not be tulip shaped. The height of a chalice should be about from nine to twelve inches.

38. **SHAPIK** (Dalmatic or Tunic or Sakkos) is like the western dalmatic or rather like the eastern *sakkos*. It is long, extending down to the ankle. The sleeves are wide, with a band, two or three inches wide, sewn on around the cuffs. The body has no waistline and widens considerably as it comes down, two V pieces being sewn into either side. It sometimes has a band around the hem, two or three inches wide and of a colour different from the material. The breast is single fold and has an opening slit in front as far down as the waist. This opening is for the purpose of passing the head through when putting the *shapik* on. Material of different colour is sewn upon it so wide as to cover the shoulders, and coming down a few inches lower than the lower end of the slit opening in front, the same piece extends also at the back to the same length as in front. A narrow riband of a suitable colour can be sewn on to the edges of the cape-like piece, of the hem band and of the cuff bands. The neck has also a collar band.

Shapik is worn by clerks and deacons in the church during all services except in Lent and on other penitential days. A *shapik* must be of fine, rich material. It is usually white, but it can be of any other colour as well, such as red, blue, green or yellow. The front and back are sometimes embroidered.

Shapik symbolizes purity of mind and of heart with which all who serve the Lord must be clothed.

The *sakkos* (Deacon's *shapik*) or the dalmatic was originally the dress of high civil officials in the Roman Government. Its use by bishops was introduced in Rome in the fourth century. By the ninth century the dalmatic was used universally by bishops and deacons alike in the West. In the Byzantine Church it was the vestment of the archbishop, as it continues to be to the present time in the Greek Church. *Shapik* is a lengthened modification of the dalmatic or *sakkos* and is used as the vestment of clerks and deacons in all Eastern Churches.

39. **SHAPIK** (Alb) is of the same shape as the *shapik* (dalmatic) described above, with the difference that it does not have the sewn-on shoulder piece, the cuff and hem bands, and is always of plain white linen.

"The Celebrant's *shapik*" is worn by the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy as the first vestment to be put on beneath the others. It shows the gladness of spirit with which the priest must approach the Lord's Table.

The *shapik* of the Celebrant or the alb was originally the unofficial dress of men of middle class, worn at home. Referring to this vestment, Origen (+ 254) mentions that ministers were required to wear pure white vestments at the Liturgy. It symbolizes purity.

40. **SHURĀR** (Cope) is a piece semi-circular in shape and made of fine rich

material of any colour or combination of colours, provided one colour is dominating. To be exact, the shape of a *shurĵar* is that of a segment of which the chord is four inches away from the centre of the circle, having a radius equal to the height of a man to the shoulder, plus four inches.

Shurĵar is worn by a priest or bishop during the Divine Liturgy. It is also worn during other services for reading the Gospel or for special solemnities. Symbolically it represents the glory of the new spiritual life and of the faith, as shield and defense against the attacks of the Evil One.

41. SRBATUP' or MASNATUP' (Pyx) is a small silver box, round, oval or square-shaped, in which the reserved sacrament is put, to be taken to the sick for communion in emergency. When not in use, it is kept on the middle step of the gradine of the Altar, sometimes inside a more elaborate and larger casket called "the ark or tabernacle of communion," having various shapes. *Srbatup'* may also be kept on the table of Prothesis in the church. The 'ark' symbolizes the tomb of Christ, out of which he rose and gave life to the world.

42. T'ASHKINAK (Towel) is an oblong piece of linen, sometimes hung on the *goti* of the priest at the right side, and sometimes carried with the ewer, for the purpose of drying the hands of the Celebrant after ablutions during the Liturgy. It indicates spiritual cleanliness.

43. VAKAS (Superhumeral or Amice) is a hard flexible piece four inches wide and eighteen inches long, covered with the same material as that of the cope, or of a colour to match with the cope or the crown. It has a linen piece, eighteen inches long and thirty inches wide, of which one end is attached to the top edge of the *vakas* from inside. There are two strings or ribbons, each three feet long, attached at one end to either of the lower corners of the *vakas*. *Vakas* is placed on the shoulders behind the neck and held in place by passing the two strings in front across the breast and tying them together at the back, while the linen hangs down the back. The cope is put on this hanging piece of linen, so that the *vakas* is kept well in place.

Vakas can be ornamented with embroidery or medallions of different materials to match the other vestments. It symbolizes righteousness in obedience to Christ as against the "stiffness of the neck."

Although the *vakas* is worn as part of the *shurĵar* it is in actual fact part of the *saghavart* (Crown). For this reason the prayer of vesting for the *vakas* and *saghavart* are the same.

44. VEGHAR (Cowl or Hood) is a black silken headgear worn by the celibate clergy in the church. Married clergy stand bare-headed in the church during services. *Veghar* is an oblong material, folded lengthwise into two and sewn at one end. It is fastened on to a stiff cone-shaped cap, so that when worn, the sewn

end of the black silk forms a cone-shaped head-dress and the other end hangs loosely at the back. From the top down it is about 40 inches long and 22 inches wide. *Veghar* symbolizes humility and the denial of the world.

45. VERARKU (Schema or Cassock) is a long vestment of plain black material with wide sleeves and ample body, without a waistline, coming down to the ankles. It is slit and double breasted all along the front and has a collar band around the neck. *Verarku* is the clerical garb worn by all ranks of the clergy and at all times.

46. ZANGAK, a bowl shaped bell, rung with a small iron rod, sometimes used as a rhythmic accompaniment for certain hymns. In some places it is used together with cymbals. The use of the bell as a musical instrument is now discontinued.

