The Figure of the "Manuk" (Child) in Late Medieval Armenian Tombstone Sculpture

(15th–18th centuries)

Medieval sources use the word *manuk* quite broadly, understanding by it not only the meaning of a child, as commonly known today, but also adolescent, youth, brave, warrior, unmarried person, and other meanings. Hence, in written sources, each specific case requires a special examination to clarify which particular meaning of *manuk* is being addressed. Moreover, it can be said that such analysis does not always yield a single definitive interpretation. Naturally, in tombstone sculpture as well, it is impossible to conduct research without first clarifying precisely what we are looking for. Especially considering that Armenian epigraphic materials in general, and inscriptions in particular, often stand out due to a certain flexibility in the usage of the word *manuk*, sometimes signifying simply a child, at other times a young warrior, or even a young clergyman. Therefore, our pictorial analysis of this figure must be guided by a detailed examination of related literary and especially epigraphic materials, giving special attention to late medieval sources, a period when Armenian tombstone sculpture found its most diverse expressions.

The inscription concerning Aharon Magistros, dated 1055–1056, placed on the southern section of the eastern façade of the Cathedral of Ani, has long attracted the attention of Armenologists. The honorific expressions and meanings used in it have repeatedly become the subject of studies and scholarly debates. Among numerous publications, it is possible to read that its most intriguing part is at the beginning, where Aharon states that he came to Ani “in the beauty of my youth and in the strength of my childhood” (*Kamavq [yevu] voghormuteamb barerarin Ay. Es Arauns magistros metsareal i metsapar tagavoruteancn i gegh zardu yev i tis mangutean imoy eki i yarevels i gegheckashen berds Ani*...). This "formulaic" expression becomes even more interesting when we consider that Aharon came to Ani as the military-administrative leader of the Byzantine Empire’s Eastern theme, which at the time included the Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia and part of Georgia, with Ani as its center. So, how should we understand this "strength of childhood," which is also "in the beauty of youth"—in other words, beautiful, but also developed and noble? Clearly, this does not refer to a child’s age.

It is also evident that such a serious military-administrative position would not be entrusted to someone of a young age, and thus, scholars have correctly interpreted Aharon’s use of *manuk* as referring to a symbolic, rather than literal, age.

Much earlier, during the second half of the 13th century, we read on a khachkar:
"Zgeghecik tioqn manuk ztgha Smbatn yev bari tsnaughn yur yisheq" —
("The beautiful image of the child-boy Smbat and his good wife may be remembered").

In Aharon's inscription, the separately emphasized term *gegh zardu* (beautiful youth) becomes clearer with the help of the above expression *zgeghecik tioqn* (beautiful image): in both cases, it refers to an age that is described by both *manuk* (child) and *tgha* (boy/youth), and is obviously considered beautiful.

Now, let us turn to another inscription, which, with the help of textual data, allows us to somewhat more concretely define the term *manuk*. It is inscribed on one of the tombstones at Noravank and reads: *"This high tomb is the sign of the greatness and strength of the glorious child and noble youth Pakhardavli, son of the great Tarsayich. For whom I beg mercy. Year: 745 A.E. (1296)."*

Pakhradul was the younger brother of Stepanos Orbelian, Metropolitan of Syunik and historian. His death is mentioned with sorrow, and the historian—borrowing and adapting the phrase taken from Aharon's inscription, "in the youth and beautiful age of childhood"—gives it a primary significance for our topic.

> *"...great sorrow befell us, for my beloved and dear brother Pakhradul, in the youth and beautiful age of childhood, passed away. His noble appearance was glowing, shining like a precious jewel. And his heart, in devotion, was filled with the spirit of divine counsel. And his will was adorned with nobility and virtue, in princely maturity—he had reached a life of blessedness, and his voice echoed the brave, and his breath exhaled fragrance, a gentle blossom... and he left us without a trace, without a legacy…"*

In my opinion, it is difficult to find a more typical and expressive formulation of the medieval perception of the "manuk" age. According to Orbelian, this is an age when the outlines of the future character begin to form, when the heart starts to experience the sweetness of life, and when the soul is ready for its worthy social and communal role. Significantly, Pakhradul was unmarried—though the historian does not say whether he died too young to marry or simply left no descendants.

Another noteworthy reference to a powerful individual in the "manuk" age (in the broader sense we also saw with Aharon) comes from the known historical account by Matteos Urhayetsi (later repeated by Samuel of Ani and Kirakos of Gandzak). He tells of the Greek bishop of Caesarea, who greatly hated Armenians and had named his dog "Armen." Gagik II Bagratuni, King of Armenia, after losing his crown to the Byzantines in 1045, was residing in Caesarea. He decided to punish the insulting bishop. Inviting him over and entering into friendly conversation, Gagik requested to see the dog, saying:

"I've heard you have a strong dog, and I wish to see him."

At first, the attendants hesitated to call the dog by name. But when the bishop saw that the dog didn't respond to other names, he gave in and called out:

"Armen, Armen."

What follows in the account is crucial to our topic:

"And the dog came, resembling a lion. And Gagik asked, 'Is this the dog you call Armen?' And the ashamed Markos [the bishop] replied, 'He is a manuk, that's why we call him Armen.'"
Gagik responded:
"Let us see who this manuk is, Armen, if he is Roman."

By Gagik's order, the dog and the bishop were thrown into a pen. Gagik reaffirmed his decision, adding a minor but highly relevant detail for our discussion:

"Let us see who is powerful and manuk—whether it is the Roman metropolitan, if the dog that was called such is like Armen."

Thus, it becomes evident that manuk here is used to mean brave (as H. Bartikyan also interprets the term), strong—an attribute for describing a warrior. The use of the word "lion" in the description reinforces the connotation of valor, once again showing the symbolic association of manuk with warriorhood. The pairing of warrior and lion was widespread in medieval Armenian thought, and—crucially for our study—had its visual equivalents as well.

For example, we encounter a notably interesting tombstone at Noravank with the following inscription:

"Year: 749 A.E. (1300): The glorious Elikum, son of the great Tarsaitsh, who died in battle during a lion-hunt. I plead for mercy for his soul."

Elikum, who—as previously mentioned—was the eldest brother of Pakhradul and Stepanos Orbelian, was a prince from the ruling Orbelian dynasty. He was married, and it is only the epithet *"glorious"* that allows us to assume he died not at a very early age. Let us note that this tombstone, which serves as a model of a particular type within Armenian medieval visual culture, is especially significant in relation to our subject because here the deceased is represented as a **lion**, not only in the inscription but also in the sculptural design of the tombstone. Another lion-carved tombstone is also known at Noravank (see Fig. 1), where the deceased is described with the epithet *"manly-lion-like."*

"This is the resting place of Lord Sargis, who roared like a lion in battles, son of Palka, year 780 (1331)."

Thus, based on the research, we can identify a type of figure described by the combined terms *manuk* (boy), *beautiful*, and *lion*—and if the figure of the manuk, the boy, and even the beautiful one could still retain a degree of childlike innocence, then with the addition of the *lion* attribute, a new meaning clearly emerges: that of a matured, honorable, righteous, and lion-hearted figure, fully ready for the role of a warrior.

Accordingly, we can conclude that during the late medieval period, including the later Middle Ages, when tombstone iconography was widely developed and when the cult of the "dark child" (*tukh manuk*) martyrs and boy-saints was broadly popular, *under the name manuk*, one can distinguish the image of a youthful warrior. This figure precedes and even defines the lion-like image, as the research shows. And—what is critical for our study—to *be lion-like* also implies to *be beautiful*. We see, for instance, that Elikum is called *"glorious"* (*gegheckatip*). A similar description is also found in a well-known 14th-century inscription:

"I am Chesar, son of the prince of princes Liparit and the dark Anay, grandson of Ivane, brother of the beautiful princes Birtel, Smpat, and Elikum…"

But even more convincing than this is the numerous tombstone carvings and decorative reliefs in which the hero appears not just symbolically as a lion, but as a lion slayer and victor. Another group of carvings clearly shows a full-on animal duel, in which the lion is depicted in a classic opposition—locked in one-on-one combat with a bull:
As visual analogs, we might point to battle scenes in which an eagle fights a partridge, hawk, or gazelle. If we accept that the reference is to tombstone sculpture where the hero is the central figure, then these animal duel scenes symbolically portray death as a battle to be won.

It is likely that even in Christian-intellectual circles of medieval Armenia, such scenes of animal combat carried a symbolic meaning: conquering death through struggle. In this regard, a highly interesting example is the account of Tovma Artsruni, the 10th-century historian, and his continuator Anania, describing the animal combat scenes on the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Aghtamar and the artistic interpretation of the master who carved them:

"He created lively scenes (says the historian of the master—H.P.) and arranged them harmoniously on the church: youths and elders, monks and nobles, together with various beasts—lions and panthers, leopards and boars, attacking one another in pairs—showing with these animals a certain deep meaning, which is most pleasing to the wise."

In other words, the animal combat scenes, as mentioned in the section I cited above, "remind the wise of life's essence, which is dear to them":

Let us recall how medieval Armenian historians consistently compare Armenian warriors to roaring lions or soaring eagles, while referring to enemies as wolves, foxes, or sometimes cowardly deer.

This theme is clearly repeated, multiplied, and spread not only through tombstones but also across secular architecture, churches, flags, and various artistic objects, all reflecting the same imagery, where death's defeat is not merely an occasional outcome, but an eternal, ongoing process. Just as the iron nails endlessly pierce the heel of Artavazd to keep him from returning, just as Aram is slain and mourned, just as even Christ is *"endlessly"* crucified—or in certain repetitive liturgical moments, *"endlessly"* offered as the "divine blood."

In tombstone sculpture, the deceased is most often depicted seated at a banquet. Yet even in these banquet scenes, weapons are hung behind him, and a sword is placed at his side. In other words, the ideal man, regardless of specific context, cannot be portrayed in any way other than as armed and warrior-like. And since both the cup and the weapon appear as two complementary representations of the same identity, in many reliefs the deceased is also shown armed and equipped with a weapon.

As a classic example, we can consider a tombstone from Gndevank (see Fig. 2), whose inscription states:

> *"This is the resting place of Lord Avaq, who became a horseman, and was a sharp arrow in battle... Year 1016 (1567)."*

Here, Avag is depicted in the relief grasping a goblet with one hand and holding a sword with the other. At his side stands a horse, and the hilt of the sword is firmly in his grip. The presence of the goblet and sword together carries symbolic meaning, showing the deceased's primary role in the "battle" of overcoming death through feasting.

In the medieval reality, horsemanship held significant importance and, based on the visual evidence, was also considered a practical skill with high scholarly value—often involving specialized training, which was not always safe.

From Noravank, we have another important inscription that recounts the death of a young man during a competition:

> *"The noble Pughtayin, who at a young age was thrown down by a blow in a brave competition and thus departed from this life. Year 767 (1318)."*

The sword and the cup are far more complex subjects—while they are present together, they are not strictly bound by a fixed adolescent or young-adult age. The next significant aspect, which is closely tied to the visual narrative, is the appearance of the manuk (child/youth), which can also indicate either age or social status.

After careful consideration, we can already assume that the manuk may not necessarily be unmarried. Asatur Mnatsakanyan, who attempted to interpret the image of the non-canonical, publicly venerated figure referred to in the 19th century as “tukh manuk” (dark child), described it as a heretic and bone-protecting spirit. He paid special attention to a passage from a 10th-century note by Catholicos Anania Mokatsi, where the patriarch refers to Bishop Khosrov of Andzevatsik in the context of various canonical violations:

> *“…but the conclusion of the conflict was unshakable: because from ordination until death he refused to wear a cowl. This heretic is to be called Ktrich, and his death should be long remembered and mourned, for this heretic is a manuk.”*

Khosrov’s “falling short” in other issues as well—as becomes evident from other excerpts of Anania's note—was mostly textual or linguistic in nature. For example, he believed that one should say kivrake instead of kirake (Sunday), and Yerusaghem instead of Erusaghemi, which shows a general concern with liturgical accuracy (but also suggests a threat of doctrinal deviation). Yet it is also likely that this reflects a broader discomfort with certain appearances or social statuses that deviated from the norm—compare, for example, the described hairstyles of members of the Gisaneh cult in Hovhannes Mamikonean’s writings.

I say appearance, because in the visual memory of the same time—particularly in the region of Aghtamar near Aghdznik—there are no tombstones from that period depicting long hair. It seems that only beginning in the late 12th and early 13th centuries do we begin to see representations of young men with noticeably long hair, in the form of curls or braids, and even then, only in Northern and Eastern Armenia.

We see this earlier in the khachkars of Artsakh, in church sculpture, and in the 1211 illustrated Gospel of Haghpat. It is especially interesting that Kirakos of Gandzak later presents the same figures in a slightly altered form:

> *“There was a bishop of the Syriac side, named Yakob, who began to introduce new interpretations and discussions. Another bishop, named Khosrov, said: ‘It is not proper to say kivrake as the Lord said, but kivrake, for it is of the Romans.’ And the general public agreed. Then he said: ‘Let no one shave or cut his beard until it reaches his waist and grows fully, for such a one is called a patani (lad).’ And so he named him Ktrich. Then he added: ‘It is not proper for a bishop to be subordinate to another bishop, that is, to the Catholicos, for the Catholicos has no greater blessing, only administrative authority.’ And with such irrationalities he confused everyone, causing unrest throughout the land with his innovations.”*

As we can see, according to Gandzaketsi, Khosrov’s long hair is interpreted as the age of the one he calls manuk. If we attempt to align these two sources, we get at least three different time and visual identifiers: patani, who has either a beard or long hair.

What other traits might correspond to these ages is unclear from the available descriptions. In all cases—both in Anania's note and in Kirakos's account three centuries later—these traits are marked as undesirable innovations.

However, observable cultural realities urge us to be more attentive to such so-called unacceptable transformations. Even if in Mokatsi's case no specific visual evidence is known to me, in Gandzaketsi's account, we can confidently say that he had direct visual access to long-haired and curly-headed heroes in the sculpture of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist (Hovhannes Mkrtich) in Gandzasar. The construction and dome of that church are described by him with great reverence.

By the time of Gandzaketsi—two centuries later—the Armenian tombstone iconography had already spread widely, incorporating numerous popular motifs and figures. We are presented with a series of striking youthful representations, where the stylized hair, curls, and fringes were no longer unusual visual elements. Even the smallest "heroes" depicted in tombstone reliefs can be distinguished—especially when they are shown alongside adults. (Generally, tombstone reliefs maintain a proportional scale between figures, so the larger and smaller figures can often be identified based on that principle.)

This proportionality is sometimes supported by inscriptions, especially in the case of very small-scale tombstones (the tradition of erecting tombstones over children continued well into later centuries in Artsakh and Syunik).

In a 12th–13th century khachkar from Artsakh, a *manuk* (child/youth) is depicted alongside the mother, as a swaddled infant. In another khachkar relief, the *manuk* appears together with both parents—father and mother. In both cases, the figure is shown wearing a sharply pointed headpiece, beneath which paired curls extend down to the shoulders.

What is especially interesting is that in Artsakh reliefs, similar hairstyles are worn not only by children but also by warriors—regardless of age. This suggests that the hairstyle alone is not a strict indicator of age but may instead represent a symbolic or status-related element.

In tombstone reliefs from the 15th to 18th centuries, the depicted figures become significantly more detailed. Of particular interest to our study is a tombstone from Brnakot, dated 1551, whose central theme revolves around the opposition between life and death (see Fig. 3). Although the full inscription is not entirely legible, a fragment of its most significant portion reads:

"Sp[as] Khach[s] protected Melik Mirjan. Year :R: (1551)"

The central figure of this rich composition is Melik Mirjan, who is depicted as the head of his household. Death, in this composition, is personified by a figure emerging from the grave,

grasping Melik Mirjan's feet with both hands. Life, in contrast, is represented by Melik Mirjan's family—his wife and son—positioned in front of him. The family is shown engaging in a symbolic ritual: the wife holds a cross in one hand; Melik Mirjan, with his other hand, accepts a cup of wine from a *matrvak* (cupbearer). At the side, arranged on shelves, are skewers and other foods. This scene is a striking blend of Christian and folk iconography, where the cross and the feast are given the same redemptive significance. The wife is fully adorned: under her headpiece descends a tightly plaited braid, ending in a triangular ornament, and above it sits a more noticeable three-lobed central jewel. Her hairstyle is made up of plaits similar to forked braids wrapped in narrow strips of cloth. She wears large, triangular earrings. The child is dressed in a long *chukha* (coat), reaching to the knees, closed with a belt. His head is shaved in a circular pattern, with a tuft left in the center and swept toward the left side in a prominent lock. The child holds a small cup, with a distinct rim. It is possible that the tuft of hair was loosely associated with a specific lineage or ancestry, which ensured the cup's slightly elevated symbolic placement in the composition. The child, barely tall enough to reach his mother's waist, clutches at the edge of her cloak with both hands. These details clearly indicate the child's very young age. In the background, the seated couple is accompanied by a finely carved household chest, still participating in the narrative unfolding around the child they are waiting for.

After analyzing the tombstone composition from Brnakot, we can more confidently interpret another example from Aghitu, dating to the 16th–17th centuries, as representing childhood. In this case, the small size of the tombstone and its inscription are supplemented by the proportions and fine details of the figures. The northern side of the tombstone is occupied by a carved cross, while the southern side features the main composition, which is divided into three equally sized sections. These sections contain figures of three similarly aged children—a musician, a cupbearer with wine, and a figure holding a goblet. The inscription, carved in the upper-right section, states:

"I am Nariman, cross of the woman, son of Martiros, son of Avanes, remember me."

Thus, there are two deceased individuals represented, allowing us to assume that all foundational elements face the central figure who extends a hand toward the goblet, and who is watching the cupbearer—his peer in age and likely one of the main protagonists. The depictions of the goblet and cupbearer are not reliable indicators of age on their own, since, as we've noted elsewhere, these elements often serve symbolically—referring to the spiritual "overcoming" of death via the banquet motif—and may not have direct thematic connections to individual identity. The central figure's feet are spread apart, standing upright. His hair styling is similar to that of the Brnakot child, with the exception that the central hair tuft appears on the right side. The corner figures' hairstyles are particularly noteworthy—they have double hair tufts. The asymmetry between the two side figures, whose faces are detailed and expressive, and the central figure, whose face is left unfinished by the sculptor, is intriguing. Such asymmetry, while not common, is observed in other tombstones and remains unclear—whether it stems from technical

limitations or carries some deeper symbolic meaning. In both of these tombstones, the children are not tied to any specific professional or social role, which further supports the interpretation of their young age.

Of particular note is a tombstone composition from Avetaranots (Artsakh), dated 1736. Here, all participants in the banquet scene—including the musician and the cupbearer—have either double braids or single side tufts. Notably, this tombstone belongs to Melik Husein's son, Melik Shahnazar, who—as the inscription reveals—died at the age of 27.

To this group, we can add yet another tombstone relief, carved on a relatively small stone surface. It comes from Areni and is currently preserved in the Geological Museum of Yeghegnadzor. The composition presents three figures, the first of whom (from left to right in modern display) is holding a goblet in the right hand, upon which a lid and what seems to be a bunch of grapes or a decorated fruit are placed. In the left hand, the figure holds a *gradzoghik* (a stylus or writing tool), with its tip pressed against an open notebook or tablet. The figure is slender and clothed in a tightly fitted *arkhalugh*, the most common garment worn by young men of the time. The hairstyle, parted in the middle, strongly resembles that of the child from Brnakot. Near the feet, a bird is depicted.

The second figure holds either a book or a tablet in the right hand, while the left extends toward a goblet being presented by the third figure—a crowned individual, presumably a servant, given the goblet in the left hand. In terms of posture and hairstyle, the second figure is identical to the first, suggesting that this is the same protagonist shown in three "episodes": with sword (warrior), with a writing tool (student), and in a banquet (celebrant). Only the figure of the deceased is labeled, as is made clear by the inscription:

"This is the resting place of Tankum, son of Lord Gharam. Year :RID: (1575)."

The motif of "study" appears also in the depiction on a tombstone from Vardadzor, where the central figure is seated on a horse, and to the side a banquet table is prepared—attended by musicians and a cupbearer (see Fig. 5). The inscription reads:

"The holy cross protected Aghasi, son of Astsaytir. Year :RtShTsD: (1704)."

It is important to note that the theme of education—in this case, of writing and reading—is widely spread in tombstone reliefs from the 15th to 18th centuries. There is ample reason to believe that the idealized image of the *manuk* (youth) could, at times, be understood primarily as a "scholar figure," depicted with writing tablets, books, or, in some cases, styluses (see Fig. 6). This figure can be reconstructed in considerable detail—especially with the help of tombstones from Gegharkunik and, in particular, from Noratus—where small-sized tombstones often feature one, two, or even three "heroic" figures. Several signs suggest the idea that these "scholar-youths" may in fact be crowned *manuks*—a hypothesis reinforced by the presence of crowns,

which might carry symbolic or ecclesiastical meaning. For instance, on a tombstone in Dzoragyugh, the long braids of the deceased hang below the shoulders. The crown starts just above the temples, ending in a small pointed headpiece. His hands are crossed at the chest, and the inscription reads:

> *"This is the resting place of Voskan the scribe, who replaced ZhE (the deceased) in the year :JDzD: (1535)."*

This provides us with crucial information—both age-related and social-status-related—for understanding the multifaceted image of the *manuk* in Armenian medieval tombstone sculpture.

From the perspective of age, the upper limit of the *manuk* figure is quite fluid—sometimes very high. In medieval love lyric poetry, *manuk* is often used as the most emotionally charged name for a beloved adolescent, yet there are also straightforward indicators of age. Notably, we find this in the following lines from a well-known poem by Frik:

> *"The child, undeserving, remains in my soul like a wound."*
> (*"Yeresnamea manukn ankni, i hoghi mejyn tavali."*)

Ultimately, the highest possible age marker might be seen in khachkars from Sevan Monastery, Noratus, and villages in Gegharkunik, particularly in Crucifixion scenes where Christ is depicted with long braids (see Fig. 7). For any medieval depiction of the Crucifixion, the earthly age of Christ needed to be visually marked. Let us note that in medieval tombstone sculpture, as a general rule, *adult* men are portrayed without braids or long stylized hair. Their headdresses range from simple spherical ornaments at the top of the head to elaborate royal crowns resembling those of Cilician kings.

In this regard, especially noteworthy is a small tombstone from the village of Gladzor (see Fig. 8), where the youthful hero, adorned with a luminous crown and triangular earrings (or possibly ear-wrapped braids), also has a thick braid resting along his right shoulder. At his side are wine and grilled meat; in his hand, he holds a filled goblet, and nearby, a beloved horse awaits. A similar composition appears on another tombstone from Geghhovit, where a tall, conical headdress crowns the hero, whose long braid descends along his back. Here, the banquet and wine are accompanied by a new element: a "written" scroll. We should note that in this case, aside from the braids, there are no other clear indicators of the figure's age.

Finally, we may recall several tombstone compositions in which the hero is depicted with a fully shaved head. For example, the cupbearers on the already-discussed Brnakot tombstone, or the writing-tool-holding figures on a 1540 tombstone from Angeghakot. It cannot be ruled out that in certain cases, we are dealing with technical inconsistencies in execution, or with stylized

head types in which the hair is omitted altogether—either deliberately or due to technical limitations.

The materials examined—both textual/epigraphic and visual—present at least three distinct representations of the *manuk-patani* or *manuk-yeritasard* (child-adolescent or youth), corresponding to at least three roles (also indicative of social groups): the *warrior-worldly* type, the *scholar-spiritual* type, and the *servant-cupbearer* type. These align with at least three age categories, which, to avoid linguistic complexity, we may simply call *young*, *middle*, and *older*. It is also fairly reasonable to assume that the younger age group is typically associated with one to three braids or hair tufts, while the middle and older groups are associated with multiple braids or long plaits.

Do these figures represent specific age or social categories? Not definitively—but visually, it becomes increasingly evident that the iconographic material aligns closely with textual patterns: the three age groups and three hairstyles offer a framework through which we may glimpse more concrete socio-cultural distinctions and hierarchies.

Still, the current availability of data does not yet allow definitive answers to several critical questions—especially those concerning the origins of tombstone sculpture, the stages of its evolution, and its visual synthesis of folk cosmology. These issues require serious investigation and foundational research, particularly into the roots of the tradition of *elongation* in Armenian historical, cultural, and social contexts.

It is well known that many elements of the *tukh manuk* (dark child) cult, regardless of the lack of consistent scholarly interpretation, are usually associated with much later periods. Yet medieval tombstone sculpture—developed during perhaps the most precarious centuries for the Armenian national gene pool and cultural survival—offers a coherent visual world of idealized figures dedicated to the future and to immortality, in which *children* occupy a place of unmatched prominence.

And while the mythological roots of the *tukh manuk* cult may truly stretch into deep antiquity, the medieval period compels us to examine the iconographic medium through which these figures were recreated, reproduced, revived, and transformed as they emerged from the depths of time.