

Marcin Bider

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE DEACONESSSES OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH. A HISTORICAL AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE 17TH TO THE 21ST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

According to historic records, the custom of “ordaining” deaconesses in the Armenian Apostolic Church, at least in the currently known form, probably began to emerge no earlier than in the 9th century and became more common in the 12th and 13th centuries. At that time, “ordination” of deaconesses began to grow less visible in other Churches. Historical data shows that deaconesses were rather common in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1199-1375). Its close ties with the Latin Church led to the borrowing of many elements of the Latin liturgy. The false belief that deaconesses were the result of Latin influences, quite widespread in Armenia, prompted opponents of Latinizing tendencies to oppose the women’s diaconate [Dum-Tragut 2013, 73].

The history of Armenian deaconesses can be roughly divided into the following periods: a) the rise of Greater Armenia (4th-7th c.); b) the development of Armenian kingdoms (9th-11th c.); c) the development of the

Kingdom of Cilicia (Little Armenia) and the province of Syunik' (12th c.); d) the revival of the deaconess state during the modern-era renaissance of Armenian culture (from the 17th c.) [ibid., 74].

This article discusses the duties and rights of Armenian deaconesses from the 17th to the 21st century based on the preserved literature data and graphic records and following the historical and legal method [Arat 1990a; Oghlukian 1994; Ervine 2013, 124-34; Dum-Tragut 2007, 71-85; Kazaryan 2022, 5-23]. Prospectively, the beginnings and the duties and rights of Armenian deaconesses from the 4th to the 17th century will be studied separately due to a distinct methodological approach. The spelling of Armenian surnames will be used in accordance with the rules commonly used in literature.

1. KEY TERMS

In practical terms, the Armenian Apostolic Church has three degrees of “major” holy orders: diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate. Before that, “minor” or “lesser” orders (*tbir*) must be obtained: porter, reader, exorcist, acolyte, and subdeacon. Before a candidate can receive the lower orders, he must first serve as a psalmist and “sweeper” [Nersessian 2007, 38-39].

The diaconate (*sarkawag*) is the sixth degree of the holy orders and confers the right to assist a presbyter or bishop during all services and the Divine Liturgy. Deacons perform their duties by: incensing, assisting the presbyter in administering the Holy Communion under the form of bread, proclaiming the pericopes from the epistles and from the Gospel, assisting the poor, the sick, orphans, and widows. Deacons are not authorized to administer the sacraments and bless. The “lesser” holy orders are available to both men and women, but with regard to the latter, they had to be nuns (until the 20th century). A nun who received the minor orders was called an acolyte *sensu lato* [Dum-Tragut 2013, 72-73].

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE WOMEN'S DIACONATE

The historical and legal analysis seems to corroborate that the diaconate of women in the Armenian Apostolic Church developed as late as in

the 17th century and still in a rather limited way in the large centres of Armenian culture. The diaconate became a local form of admitting women to provide ecclesiastical ministry. The origin of the women's diaconate is closely and directly related to monastic life. In point of fact, first deaconesses who were not nuns were ordained only in the early 21st century [Ervine 2007, 30].

3. DEACONESSSES IN THE MONASTIC SETTING

The heyday of women's monasticism in Armenia in the 17th century manifested itself in three important religious sites: Jerusalem, Nor Julfa, and Istanbul [Ervine 1999, 124-34].

Many Armenian catholicoi and bishops founded nunneries where nuns being deaconesses resided, too. Historical records mention monasteries located in Greater Armenia, such as: Halijor, Šinuhayr, and Noratunk, with monastic communities of up to a hundred nuns. These sites became educational centres and accommodated Armenian scriptoria.¹ The existence of deaconesses in Greater Armenia in the 17th century, either living in solitude or in communities, is confirmed in the hymn (*šarakan*) from 1655. It was written to honour deaconess Hrip'simē in the village of Šnherk' in the province of Syunik'. Earlier data on deaconesses are rather poorly substantiated [Arat 1990a, 75].

Armenian culture flourished also in monastic centres outside Greater Armenia, particularly in the wealthiest and most important sites of the Armenian diaspora of the time, among them, undoubtedly Nor Julfa in Persia [Dum-Tragut 2013, 77].

3.1. St Catherine's Convent in Nor Julfa, Persia (now Iran)

In the 17th century, outside the territories of Greater Armenia, deaconesses were known to dwell in St Catherine's Convent (*Surb Katarine*)

¹ Even before the 17th century, Persia was home to female monastic foundations involved in the adorning of manuscripts. One of the most famous copyists was Deaconess 'Ustiane Sarkawag. Among other works, she copied the manuscript of MS 39: Matenadaran [Dum-Tragut 2013, 77].

in the Armenian quarter of Isfahan, Nor Julfa², which fell under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Isfahan of the Great House of Cilicia.³

The convent was founded in 1623 and organized in line with Armenian models by three nuns. They came from a nunnery in [Old] Julfa, from which they brought the relics of St Catherine. During the first 50 years of operation, the monastic community numbered about 33 nuns. In 1839, there were only sixteen of them [Arat 1990a, 78; Berberian 2005, 10-14; Vazken 2012]. The community offered various assistance and education to the local Armenian diaspora [Arat 1990a, 153-89].

In 1855, Archbishop Tadeos Begnazaryan (d. 1863) drew up new statutes for the nuns. The daily routines included mainly private and collective choir prayers three times a day. The latter was denied to outsiders. The daily prayer cycle began with a night vigil; next, the nuns gathered for laudes before dawn; they closed the day with vespers at sunset and compline before going to bed. They were also allowed to partake in services in other churches but only during the major religious festivals. Candidates were accepted after turning twenty according to the statutes [Arat 1990a, 79; Vazken et al. 2020].

The monastic formation was largely individual, since, due to the absence of an abbess, each nun was an educator to herself. The sister superior received the “first profession” from candidates introduced by the nuns. After some time, the superior presented the soon-to-be nuns to a bishop who ordained them (lesser orders). In 1851 Archbishop Tadeos Begnazaryan “ordained” the first few nuns as deaconesses [Arat 1990a, 80], while the remaining nuns received only four lesser orders [Dum-Tragut 2013, 78].

After that, Manuk Jordananian of Java, on the initiative of Archbishop Tadeos Begnazaryan, founded the first female school operating within the convent premises in 1858. In 1892 it was incorporated into the already existing men’s school. As a result, a mixed-gender educational establishment

² Nuns’ cells adjoined the Church of St John from the east, north, and south, which made up the convent complex with a high wall. With the exception of the eastern wing, which was demolished and then rebuilt in the 20th century, the nunnery complex have survived to this day [Arat 1990, 77].

³ The foundation of the convent, which is dated to 1623, should be linked to the forced displacement of about 150,000 Armenians from [Old] Julfa, now in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, during the reign of Shah Abbas I (d. 1629) of the Safavid dynasty. Armenians settled on the right bank of the Aras [river] near Isfahan. They erected 22 of the 14 still existing churches dating back to the 17th century [Arat 1990, 76; Vazken 2012].

was set up. In 1900 the school was moved to a separate building outside the convent walls. With a view to generating extra income, the nuns started a carpet factory and an orphanage in 1907. The level of monastic life was constantly declining. The reasons for that should be sought in the neglect of formation and emphasis laid on the need to raise funds to maintain the community. In 1937 an attempt was made to revive the monastic life, but it failed [Arat 1990a, 78-79; Vazken et al. 2020]. Consequently, from the early 20th century, the number of nuns continued to decline. The last one passed away in 1954 [Arat 1990a, 77-78]. In general, there is a shortage of research on the deaconesses of St Catherine's Convent in Nor Julfa [Dum-Tragut 2013, 78].

3.2. St Stephen's Convent in Tiflis (now Tbilisi) in Georgia

Duke Aslan, the son of Melik' Ašxar Behbowteanc of a wealthy Armenian family, founded the nunnery of St Stephen (*Kusanac' Surb Step'annos*) in the district of Lower Kala in Tiflis. The new convent was based on the model of St Catherine's Convent in Nor Julfa, and its first two nuns came from Persia. Initially, only a church was built; the convent building followed and was completed around 1724-1726. Until 1801, the abbess was appointed by the founding family, which has an adverse impact on the monastic life. Later, the Armenian bishop also gained a partial influence on her appointment. The quality of cloistral life was poor. The nuns, often not familiar with the Grabar language (Old Armenian), participated in the liturgy in Georgian. The nuns were engaged in a mandatory choir prayer; they worked physically; they assisted and taught orphans (a school for orphans was founded in the convent in 1877); they made candles and comforted widows. When someone died, the day before the funeral ceremony, the nuns would visit the deceased's house to celebrate the in-house funeral rite (*hang'stean*). Next, they accompanied the mourners before the church service and the widow afterwards, which greatly added to the convent's budget. Archbishop Tadeos Pekanzarian was the first hierarch to introduce the holy orders for deaconesses in the convent. The congregation consisted of nuns (*kronaworowhi*), cantors (*dprohi*), deaconesses (*sarkawagowhi*), and an archdeaconess (*avagsarkawaghi*) who was the sister superior. Having obtained bishop's consent, the superior was allowed to wear a pectoral on her chest and a ring on the ring finger of her right

hand. The nuns approached the orders of the diaconate as the summit of monastic life, for which they had been preparing for many years. The last sister superior was Hrip'simē Tahriants. She was regarded as one of the most influential women in the Armenian Apostolic Church in the 20th century.⁴ In 1933 the convent was inhabited by 18 sisters, including 12 deaconesses; the congregation was dissolved before 1939 [Arat 1990a, 80-84; Dum-Tragut 2013, 78].⁵

3.3. Kalfayan Convent in Istanbul

Srpuhi Mayrabet Nshan Kalfayan (d. 1889) was a nun who founded an Armenian school Istanbul in 1866. The establishment has been operating ever since and is ranked among one of the finest schools in the city. The language of instruction was Armenian. The programme primarily covered arts and crafts. The school also admitted Armenian orphans from Anatolia. They were attended to by a community of nuns, also founded by Srpuhi Mairabet Nshan Kalfayan in 1866 [Büyükkarcı 2003, 42-43].⁶

The nunnery was the only Armenian centre of monastic life where each of the nuns was ordained deaconess. The first sister superior, whom Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Mesrob I Naroyan “ordained” deaconess (in the rank of protodeaconess), was Alawni Keosayan (d. 1955), the

⁴ Hrip'simē Tahriants (Princess Teirian, born around 1840) was the last sister superior of the convent (appointed in 1911); she was known for her generous donations to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Etchmiadzin monastery. Among other things, in 1889 she sponsored the wooden carved door for Etchmiadzin Cathedral. It has been there to this day. Her dedicatory inscription can be seen on the door. In the 1920s, the convent was closed in the aftermath of the persecution of Christians. The nun community was dispersed. In 1927 the sister superior fell into destitution and requested the Holy Synod of Etchmiadzin to grant her a pension. The Holy Synod agreed. She remained in Etchmiadzin until her death in 1934. She was buried in the courtyard of the Church of St Gayane. The other nuns, already deaconesses, kept serving in the Armenian parishes of Tbilisi until the 1950s [Dum-Tragut 2013, 78; Kazaryan 2022, 19].

⁵ In 1988 the abandoned church and convent complex passed into the hands of the Georgian Apostolic Orthodox Church. The church was converted into an Orthodox temple. The monuments of Armenian art were devastation, in particular the epigraphic works which allude to the works of the deaconesses; the tomb of the sister superior Euphrosyna (Princess Abamelikian, d. 1911) was also destroyed. Today, since 1993, the temple has been known as Kveda Betlemi (the Church of Bethlehem) [Kazaryan 2022, 19, note 31].

⁶ *Kalfayan Okulu Tarihesi*, <https://kalfayan.k12.tr/okulumuz/tarihce.html> [last access: 13.05.2023].

third superior of the convent. In 1933 the same patriarch administered four “lesser orders” to some nuns so that they could serve as reader and cantor. The last deaconess of monastic descent in the Armenian Apostolic Church, at least according to sources, was Hrip’simē Sasunyan (d. 2007). She was “ordained” in Istanbul in 1982 in the rite of ordination befitting deacons [Arat 1990a, 84-86; Berberian 2005, 10].

In Istanbul, she was the head of the Kalfayan orphanage, the patriarch’s book-keeper, and every Sunday she served as a deaconess during the Divine Liturgy in Istanbul parishes. In 1986 Hrip’simē Sasunyan also stayed in the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church in the United States. She served as a deaconess in several Armenian parishes during the Divine Liturgy [Meneshian 2013].

Today, the last nun of the Kalfayan congregation is Kayane Dulkadi-ryan. As an acolyte of third degree with the right to wear a stole, she serves in the Divine Liturgy and also intones the Gospel [Tchilingirian 2018a].⁷

3.4. Other monastic centres

Some of the monastic centres where deaconesses resided were also found across the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nuns of the Old Armenian tradition dwelt in three convents: Lviv, Kamenets, and Yazlovets (now Ukraine). Armenian nuns, called “devotees” in the Old Polish language, imitated the Old Armenian models of female monasticism. Polish Armenians would encounter them during numerous pilgrimages to Jerusalem, which was home to the largest and booming Armenian nunnery. Two deaconesses became prominent figures of Armenian monasticism in the 17th-century Commonwealth: Hrip’simē [Hripsime] (adopted the name of Benedicta) Spendowska (d. 1730) from Yazlovets and Maria Bohosówna from Kamenets Podolsky [Stopka 2022, 308]. Hrip’simē [Hripsime] Spendowska was “ordained” deaconesses by the Lviv bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Mikołaj Torosowicz (d. 1681) before he converted to Catholicism in 1629 [Stopka 2015]. Hrip’simē [Hripsime] Spendowska was the daughter of Stefan, the Armenian community leader in Yazlovets and probably the niece of Bogdan Spendowski; around 1670, she pilgrima-

⁷ Video records: *Ortaköy Surp Asdvadzadzin Ermeni Kilisesi*, <https://www.facebook.com/ortakoymeriyemanakilisesi/videos/1033845960018183> [last access: 13.05.2023].

ged to Jerusalem with her mother, where her father, Stefan Spendowski, who had been living there for some time, died around 1671.⁸

In 1837 two deaconesses, Hrip'simē and Anna Mnatsakanyan, who served in the Armenian Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Astrakhan (now Russia), gifted diaconal stoles to the Etchmiadzin Cathedral. The inscriptions on the stoles read, "Nun deaconess in Soorp Asdvatsadzeen Cathedral, Astrakhan, 1837," followed by their names [Kazarian 2022, 20]. At the same time, two other deaconesses, Elizabeth and Catherine Sarbasyan, "ordained" in 1842, provided ministry in Astrakhan. In 1853 the Holy Synod of the Armenian Apostolic Church awarded them the right to proclaim the Gospel publicly during the Divine Liturgy and in Armenian homes in private [ibid.].

The nunnery in Suchumi (today in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region in the South Caucasus) had four to five nuns at the beginning of the 20th century [Berberian 2005, 10].

4. DEACONESSES IN THE PARISH AND PASTORAL SETTING

In the 21st century, deaconesses began to be recruited from parishes rather than from the monastic setting.

4.1. *Byblos in Lebanon*

In 1990 Catholicos Karekin I Sarbasyan (d. 1990) of the Great House of Cilicia instructed Deaconess Hrip'simē Sasunyan to establish a congregation of the Sisters of St Gayane. It was housed in the Bird's Nest orphanage in Byblos, Lebanon. The first nun, Knarik Gaypakyan, received her monastic veil on 2 June 1991 at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Antelias, Lebanon. Currently, the sisterhood numbers three sisters called "deaconesses", Knarik Gaypakyan, Shnorhig Boyadjian, and Gayane Badakian. They serve in an orphanage under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia [Meneshian 2013].

⁸ *Rypsyma Spendowska*, https://wiki.ormianie.pl/index.php?title=Rypsyma_Spendowska [last access: 13.05.2023].

4.2. Tehran

On 25 September 2017, Archbishop of Teheran Sepuh Sargsyan “ordained” 24-year-old Ani-Kristi Manvelian, an anaesthesiologist by profession, deaconess. She had been associated with the Armenian Apostolic Church since her childhood. She had already performed the ministry of an acolyte before. She read psalms and carried a candle, for example, during the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy. Ani-Kristi Christi was “ordained” deaconess along with Majs Matteosian who was ordained deacon. At the time of her ordination, she was single, but because deacons in the Armenian Apostolic Church can marry, she will be able to contract marriage in the future. She was ordained deaconess to provide pastoral ministry in the Armenian parishes of Tehran and to stress the importance of women’s ministry in the Armenian community residing in the Islamic Republic of Iran [Tchilingirian 2018b; Kazarian 2022, 21].

4.3. Other noteworthy centres

Deaconess Nazeni Geoziumian (d. 1877) was a teacher. She ran a school for girls in the village of Seolioz, in the Bursa region of Anatolia. At the same time, she served as a deaconess [Kazaryan 2022, 20].

On 9 December 1984, Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of the United States “ordained” Seta Simonian Atamian, lesser acolyte at the Church of St Andrew in Cupertino, California. She was the first adult woman to be ordained. Her duties included ministry during the Divine Liturgy and assistance to presbyters during baptisms, weddings, and funerals. However, when she moved to the vicinity of Boston in 1986, the local Armenian bishop refused her the right to provide ministry at the altar [Knarik 1988].⁹

On the Feast of St Stephen on 29 December 2002, Archbishop of the Armenian Dioceses of Argentina and Chile, Kissag Mouradian, falling under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, “ordained” a woman, who had not been a nun before, as deaconess for the first time in centuries. The ordained was Maria del Carmen Ozkul, aged 17. She received her holy orders together with three men (Marcel Kechian, Ale-

⁹ An interesting video material on the ministry of this acolyte woman can be found at: *The Byzantine Forum*, <https://www.byzcath.org/forums/ubbthreads.php/ubb/printthread/Board/28/main/31178/type/thread> [last access: 13.05.2023].

jandro Avedikian, and Carlos Ozkul). The men were ordained deacons at the Cathedral of St Gregory the Illuminator. Soon, the archbishop also “ordained” Mara Pedicino Keuroghlian as deaconess to provide ministry at the Armenian Apostolic Church in Cordoba. The “ordination” of a deaconess, although falling within his authority, was assessed negatively by the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin. Consequently, the archbishop was requested to suspend the two deaconesses without undue delay. The controversy erupted when he refused to abide by the decision of the catholicos. Finally, the deaconesses were prohibited from approaching the altar and serving in the Divine Liturgy. Deaconess Maria del Carmen Ozkul even ceased to go to church; deaconess Mara Pedicino Keuroghlian continues to serve in Cordoba. She sings in the church choir and serves in the chancel, however, she must not come close to the altar [Meneshian 2014].

5. ORDINATION OF A DEACONESS

During the “ordination” of Hrip’simē Sasunyan in 1982, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Catholicos Shenork I Kaloustian (d. 1990), chose the rite of ordination befitting a male deacon without changing the male suffix corresponding to the masculine gender [Meneshian 2013]. Moreover, in a letter to this deaconess, the patriarch said that she belonged to the clergy and performed the same duties as a male deacon [Arat 1990b, 67-76; Meneshian, 2013].

6. VESTMENT

Photographic records of the 21st-century deaconesses performing ministry gives an idea of the types of vestment wore during the liturgy; deaconess wears a white veil covering her from head to toe [Oghlukian 1994, 40]. In contrast, deaconesses who are nuns wear a monastic veil on their heads [Nersessian 2007, 39].

6.1. *Orarion*

At the end of the rite of “ordination,” the bishop gives the deaconess an orarion (stole). Because her head and shoulders are covered with a veil, the

orarion is hung over her left arm, so that it can be seen on her front and back. The custom of using an orarion by deaconess binds her with deacon because it is *par excellence* the token of the diaconal ministry [Traunecker 1981, 717-35; Vagaggini 2016, 138-39]. The Synod of Laodicea (late 4th c.) banned subdeacons, readers, and psalmists from wearing an orarion as it was considered a special sign of the diaconal dignity;¹⁰ the same was iterated in the Armenian reception of Can. 23 from Laodicea [Mardirossian 2004, 122]. Although it is not known whether the “minor” clergy was actually divided into different degrees as sources only mention *tbir* [ibid.].

6.2. Ripidion

There is a unique photograph of Archdeaconess Hrip’simē Tahiriants from 1892. It shows her donning diaconal vestment and holding a ripidion in her right hand. Already in ancient times, fans were used in the Middle East to cool oneself, drive away insects, protect oneself from the sun, or to fan fire. In the liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, liturgical fans (ripidion) have been used to date, however, only symbolically. Typically, a ripidion resembles a flat metal disc with bells. It represents the head of Seraphim surrounded by six vertically set wings. Most ripidions have handles [Wasilewska 2019, 359].

CONCLUSIONS

The scope of duties and rights of deaconesses has been limited compared to those of deacons, despite the same ritual practices during the administration of “holy orders.” This scope is rather closer to the duties and rights of subdeacons. Only in Istanbul did deaconesses enjoy a broader range of duties and rights, which was due to the local conditions. Historically, deaconesses developed autonomously in relation to the male diaconate [Oghlukian 1994, 41].

Based on preserved historical sources (18th-21st c.), the duties of deaconesses were limited to leading the Liturgy of the Hours in the convent;

¹⁰ Synod of Laodicea in Phrygia (late 4th c.), Can. 23-24: A. Baron, H. Pietras, *Dokumenty synodów od 381 do 431 roku (Synody i kolekcje praw*, vol. 4), Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2010, pp. 114-14*.

assisting priests at baptism ceremonies; proclaiming the Gospel; singing; carrying the chalice during the Grand Entrance in the Divine Liturgy; raising the chalice together with the celebrant during the Divine Liturgy; and using incense during the liturgy [Arat 2000, 110].

However, it was only in the 20th century in Istanbul that deaconesses began to devote themselves to pastoral activity. Soon, it became a distinguishing feature of the current trends in the Armenian Apostolic Church. For this reason, present-day initiatives to restore the diaconate of women are driven by the pastoral and charitable needs of parishes [Kazaryan 2022, 21].

The restored female diaconate would likely contribute to the revival of Armenian female monasticism, which has been in a serious crisis since the beginning of the 20th century. Deaconesses would be able to teach religion to children and youth in parishes, prepare adults for baptism, and assist women, children, and the elderly in their partaking in the Holy Communion. They could also return to their historical role of carrying the Holy Communion to the sick and elderly who cannot join the Divine Liturgy. Apparently, the life of deaconesses should be governed by the rules of monastic life, including the obligation to observe celibacy. Otherwise, a deaconess will not differ much from a regular female teacher in a “parish school.” It should also be stressed that the Armenian Apostolic Church draws a dividing line between deaconess and deacon in order to avoid confusion. On the other hand, the revival and development of an authentic women’s diaconate could afford a great opportunity for women assisting in the Church ministry, thus contributing to the enriching of parish life and showing women the beautiful ideal of consecrated life [Der-Ghazarian 2023].

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**Rights and Duties of the Deaconesses
of the Armenian Apostolic Church.
A Historical and Legal Perspective of the 17th to the 21st Century**

Abstract

Deaconesses have been developing autonomously from the male diaconate in the Armenian Apostolic Church from the 9th to the 21st century. The duties of deaconesses are limited to assisting in the Liturgy of the Hours in the convent, assisting the presbyter at baptism, proclaiming the Gospel, directing church singing, carrying the chalice during the Grand Entrance in the Divine Liturgy, raising the chalice with the celebrant during the Divine Liturgy, and using incense during the liturgy. Deaconesses have been associated with parish ministry since the 20th century. The renewal of deaconesses could contribute to the revival of Armenian monasticism and parish ministry, as well as emphasizing the value of the “feminine element” in the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Keywords: nun; minor orders; major orders; Armenian monasticism; Nor Julfa; orarion; Kalfayan; Etchmiadzin

**Obowiązki i prawa diakonis w ujęciu historyczno-prawnym
w Apostolskim Kościele Ormiańskim.
Perspektywa historyczno-prawna od XVII do XXI wieku**

Abstrakt

Diakonisy w Apostolskim Kościele Ormiańskim rozwijały się niezależnie od diakonatu męskiego od IX do XXI w. Obowiązki diakonis ograniczają się do przewodniczenia w klasztorze liturgii godzin, asystowania prezbiterowi przy chrzcie, proklamacji Ewangelii, animowania śpiewu kościelnego, wnoszenia kielicha podczas Wielkiego Wejścia podczas Boskiej Liturgii, podnoszenia kielicha z celebransem podczas Boskiej Liturgii oraz okadzania podczas liturgii. Diakonisy od XX w. zostały związane z parafialnym duszpasterstwem. Odnowa diakonis mogłaby przyczynić się do odrodzenia ormiańskiego monastycyzmu oraz duszpasterstwa parafialnego, jak również podkreślenia wartości „pierwiastka kobiecego” obecnego w Apostolskim Kościele Ormiańskim.

Słowa kluczowe: mniszka; święcenia niższe; święcenia wyższe; ormiański monastycyzm; Nowa Dżulfa; orarion; Kalfayan; Eczmiadzyn

Informacje o Autorze: KS. DR MARCIN BIDER – Uniwersytet w Siedlcach; adres do korespondencji: ul. Konarskiego 2, 08-110 Siedlce, Polska; e-mail: marcin.bider@uws.edu.pl; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9446-1753>