

Atlaz,⁷² *Mghtesi* Mariam and *Mghtesi* Vartkhatun,⁷³ *Mahtasi* Knar,⁷⁴ *Mahtesi* Lusin,⁷⁵ and *Mahtasi* mother Vartkhatun. The enumeration is meant to demonstrate that the use of *mahtesi* by women was quite widespread, and not accidental; given the extremely limited role of women in public life, the claims made for *mahtesi* as a “class” seem very unlikely.

Furthermore, the epithet was also used by Armenian clerics: *Mghtesi* Der Maghakia,⁷⁶ *Mahtasi* Der Tavit,⁷⁷ *Mahtesi* Der Garabed and *Mahtesi* Der Hayrabed,⁷⁸ “the cleric *Mahtasi* Der Herbed,”⁷⁹ *Mahtasi* der Tavit,⁸⁰ *Mahtasi* Der Mgrditch,⁸¹ and *Mahtesi* Der Melkon⁸² are all in the records. This is the only epithet or title shared by Armenian clerics and by laymen.

Finally, whereas *hoca* and *çelebi* imply wealth and prestige, *mahtesi* was a title used by the common people, some not so well-off economically, who had been able to make the pilgrimage. In two instances *mahtesis* were simple workers,⁸³

It is likely that the custom of calling *mahtesi* a person who made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem is an imitation or adoption of the Muslim custom of calling a pilgrim to the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina a *hadjdj*; in Islam “the word [al]-*hadjdj* so often added to Muslim names is an honorific title.”⁸⁴

To ascribe social and economic status and connotation to the title *mahtesi* is sheer conjecture. The assertion that the *mahtesis* formed a separa-

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 705.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 709.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 529.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 611.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 612.

⁸² M. E. N., ed., “*Surb Hagopi Sefhakanutean Khndir*,” [“The Problem of Ownership of the Convent St. James.”] *Sion* (1942, no. 3-4): 89-91.

⁸³ Kalaydjian, “*Surb Hagopi*,” p. 253; Khatchigian, *Hayeren Dseragreri, Part Three*, p. 318.

⁸⁴ See note 60, p. 29.