

ԲԱՆԲԵՐ ՀԱՅԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ

ՀԱՅԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ՄԻՋԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ՀԱՆԴԵՍ



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ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

HISTORY

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THE MEANING OF THE PREFIX “KARA” OR “GHARA” IN TOPONYMS

Abstract

During the medieval times many toponyms around the area indicated by the convergence of Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan borders were given the prefix “kara” or “ghara”.

Although this prefix is understood today to mean *black* in the locally spoken variety of Turkish, scholars maintain that during the medieval period it did not signify *black* but *large*. It should further be noted that in modern standard Turkish, the word for *black* is *siyah*, a loanword of Persian origin, rather than *kara*.

With this assumption, most toponyms bearing this prefix found in many parts of the world become meaningful.

The paper explains in detail the false impression created by this mis-translation and all the toponyms find their logical explanations.

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The Meaning of the Prefix “Kara” or “Ghara” in Toponyms

Keywords: *Armenia, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Iran, Local toponyms, Cartography, “kara” or “ghara” prefix.*

Introduction

In the northwestern region of the Azerbaijan Province of Persia, once part of Greater Armenia and home to a substantial Armenian population for centuries, there are numerous toponyms bearing the Turkish (or Azerbaijani) prefix *ghara* or *kara*. If these names are interpreted literally, *Karabakh* would mean *Black Garden*, *Gharadagh Black Mountain*, *Gharakilisen* (the Monastery of St. Thaddeus) *Black Monastery*, *Karasu Black River*, and *Karateppah Black Hill*, among others. Such interpretations, however, raise an obvious question: why should the word *black* – a color traditionally associated with mourning in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Turkish, and Persian cultures – be applied to such a wide range of geographical names? This interpretation appears neither convincing nor logically consistent.

Geographical Locations

The common prefix “kara” or “ghara” is generally translated from the local Turkish as “black”, which is a direct translation of the word in the current Turkic-Azerbaijani language. However, when one considers the situation of toponyms and names with that particular prefix, they seem clearly to contradict the explanation provided by such translation of the prefix. Logically, these, should at least be related and referring to the characteristics of the place or locality bearing the given name.

The map of Fig.1 shows the region where the borders of Iran, Nakhichevan, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia meet, on which the place names with the prefix “kara” are highlighted in blue, which is supposed to mean “black”. These toponyms are more than forty. In contrast, there is only one place name with the prefix of “agh” or “akh”, which in the local Turkish means “white”.

The Question of Language

It should be remembered that the people living in the northwestern region of Iran until the 15th–16th centuries spoke versions of the middle Persian/Pahlavi language, which were the Tati and Harzandi languages. During the 10th to 14th centuries the region was occupied by Central Asian Turkic-speaking tribes, who

had invaded the whole of the Caucasus. It was during this period that the indigenous peoples gradually replaced their orally transmitted language with the language of the ruling Turkic tribes.

Such language changes have also been made in South America (except Brazil), Mexico and the Philippines, where the natives, forgetting their spoken languages, gradually became Spanish-speakers. However, in the mentioned region of Iran, under rule of the Turkic tribes there also lived a large number of Armenians and Georgians, who, having a written language, were able to preserve their native language and culture.

Regarding this mentioned prefix, Abdolali Karang, a linguist from Iranian Azerbaijan (Atropaten), in his book "Tati and Harzandi, two dialects of the ancient Azeri language" published in Tabriz in 1954–1955, states that "kale" or "kala" in these ancient dialects meant "large" in that region. In Galin-Ghaya, Kilasur, Dizmar and other villages of Iranian Azerbaijan the old Persian Azeri dialects are still use, where the word "kala" means "large". The modern Persian word "qalan" also means "large" or "huge". Karang concludes that "kara" developed from this root and the original meaning of the word was "large" or "huge quantity".

With such a new, radical explanation, the toponyms become completely logical. Using this explanation "Karabakh" becomes a "Great Garden", which it actually is, "Gharadagh" would mean a "Great Mountain", which is a large pile of mountains, "Gharakilisa" would mean "Great Church", which is the largest monastic complex of that region, and "Karasu" would mean "Great River", which is a shallow but very wide river, also "Ghara-aghaj" would mean "Big Tree", which was really the name of the biggest tree in Tabriz, aged a few hundred years or more.

In the Syunik Province of Armenia and the border of Azerbaijan there are two lakes. These have been translated into Armenian, the large one as "Black Lake" and the smaller one, as "Jan Lake". Azerbaijanis call the big lake "Kara-gyol" and the smaller one "Jan-gyol". The Azerbaijani name of large Kara Gyol, was translated into Armenian as "Black Lake", based on the meaning of the current local Turkish prefix "kara". Looking at the two lakes one cannot dismiss the fact that one is much larger than the other, so it is only logical to call the larger one "Great Lake", which has been called "Kara Gyol" in the Middle Ages, when the local language of the time "kara" would be translated as "large".

The Meaning of the Prefix “Kara” or “Ghara” in Toponyms

The author was once talking about this matter with a friend, Daryush Baybordi, an engineer from the Iranian province of Azerbaijan, to whom this explanations caused a great surprise. He said “Thinking back I remember that my grandfather was a giant of a man over two meters tall, and in the village, everyone addressed him as “Kara-Agha”. Now I realize why they did so. It seems that it was because he was actually a giant man and not dark-black-skinned one, as we originally thought”.

For further clarifying of the matter, let us have a look at the satellite image of the mentioned area.

The satellite image of the Iran-Armenia-Azerbaijan borders showing the physical attributes of the two regions of Karabakh and Karadagh. The first is a region full of greenery and the second, is a mass of mountains (Fig. 3.), which are self explanatory!

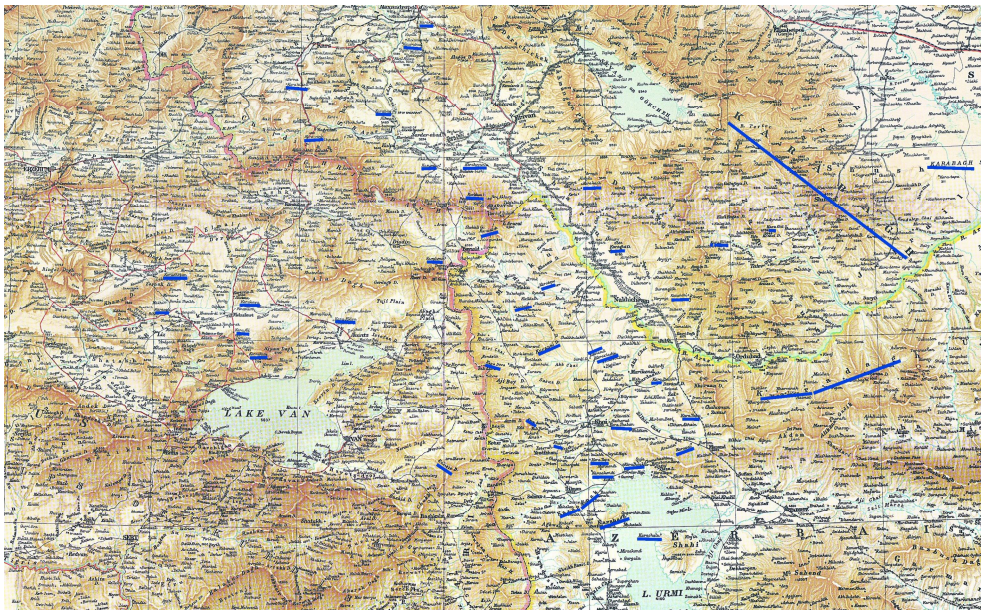


Fig. 1 – Extract from the 1901 map of Armenia, by H.F.B Lynch, where we see part of the South Caucasus. Türkiye is on the left side of the map. At map's lower part, on the southern shore of the Arax River lies the Iranian province of Azerbaijan (old Atropaten). In the center we see the territory of historic and present-day Armenia, and on the right is the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, here labeled as “Karabakh”. On this map there are more than 40 toponyms beginning with the prefix “kara”, all highlighted in blue.

Galichian (Galchian) R.

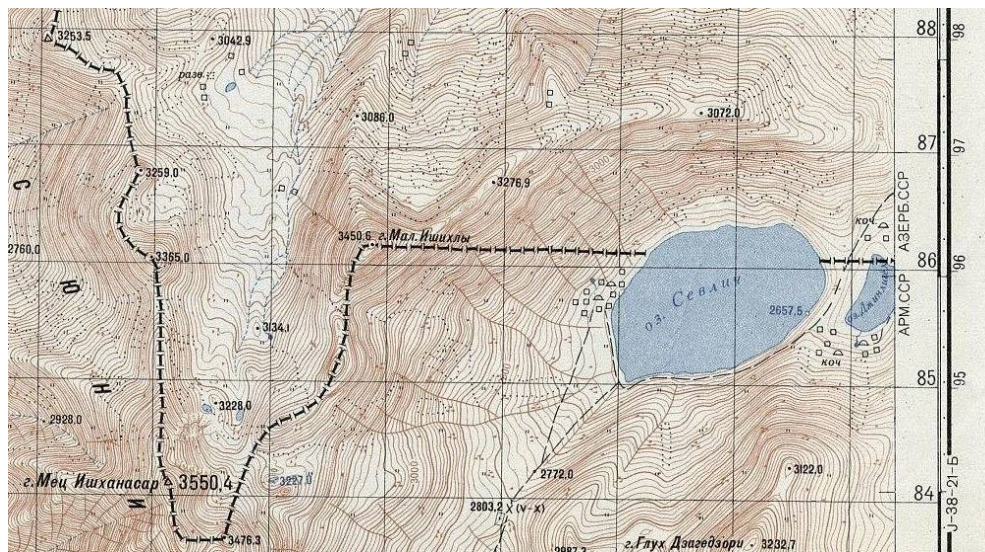


Fig. 2 – The border of Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, near Goris, with the two lakes. On the map the large lake is named “Sevlich” (Black Lake), which is the incorrect Armenian translation of “Kara Göl” (Black lake).

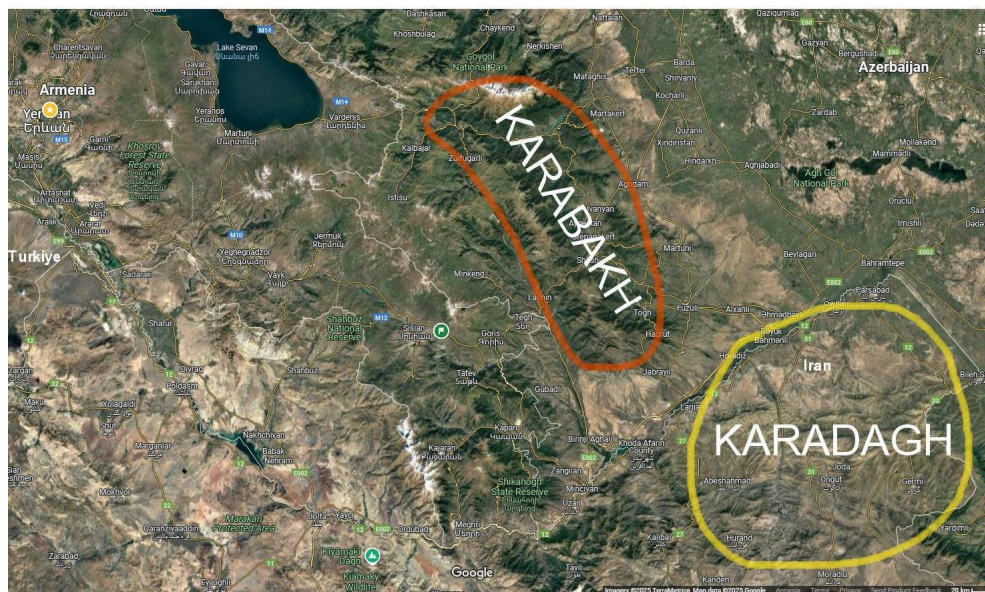


Fig. 3 – The regions of “Karabakh” (the green area encircled in red) in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and “Karadagh” (Mountainous area, encircled in yellow) located in Iran.

The Meaning of the Prefix “Kara” or “Ghara” in Toponyms

The History of the Researches

The Iranian Azerbaijani historian-linguist Ahmad Kasravi (*Articles and lectures*, Tehran 2536, p. 365/431) and Armenian historian Bagrat Ulubabyan (*Khachen's rule during the X–XVI centuries*, Yerevan 1975, p. 42) also write about the meaning of the prefix kara or ghara as “great”. Many other Persian and Iranian Azerbaijani linguists such as Hossein-Ali Katebi, Mohammad-Ali Riahi Khoi, Dr. Poor-Dawood, Reza Shoar, Hosseingholi Katebi and others are only a few. Professor Yahya Zoka even composed a brief dictionary of Harzandi dialect (1957), where he translated the word “kala” and “kara” as “large”.

Perhaps the most famous among them is Dr. Enayatullah Reza (1920–2010), who studied at the universities of Tehran, Baku and Moscow, worked in China and France, and ended up managing the library of the University of Tehran and the local Institute of Iranian Studies. He is the author of many historical and other books and articles. His most important work is called “Azerbaijan and Aran”, where he states that the name of the Republic of Azerbaijan was copied by the Turkish nationalists from the Iranian province of the same name only for political reasons. The book has been reprinted more than a dozen times in Persian, and being translated into Armenian, Russian and English.

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ՌՈՒԲԵՆ ԳԱԼՉՅԱՆ (ԳԱԼԻՉՅԱՆ)

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Ամփոփում

Միջնադարում Իրանի, Թուրքիայի և Ադրբեջանի սահմաններին կից տարածքում «կարա» կամ «ղարա» նախաձայնով առկա է ավելի քան 40 տեղանուն:

Թեև այսօր տեղացիների լեզվում այդ նախաձայնը տվյալ տարածաշրջանում գործածվող թուրքերենում նշանակում է «սև», գիտնականներից շատերը պնդում են, որ միջնադարում այս նախաձայնի իմաստը եղել է ոչ թե «սև», այլ «մեծ»:

Այս ենթադրությամբ տարածաշրջանում նույն նախաձայնը կրող տեղանունների մեծ մասի նշանակությունը դառնում է տրամաբանական:

Հոդվածը մանրամասնորեն բացատրում է այս սխալ թարգմանության արդյունքում ստեղծված թյուր տպավորությունը, և տեղանունները գտնում են իրենց տրամաբանական բացատրությունը:

Բանալի բառեր՝ Հայաստան, Թուրքիա, Ադրբեջան, Իրան, տեղանուններ, քարտեզագրություն, «կարա» քամ «ղարա» նախաձայն:

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THE TREATY OF GEORGIEVSK AND THE CRISIS OF GEORGIAN STATEHOOD: A POLITICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

Abstract

The political and legal processes that unfolded in Georgia at the end of the 18th century had a profound impact not only on the country's subsequent historical development, but also on the broader political, social, and economic transformations of the peoples of the Caucasus. Within this context, the Treaty of Georgievsk of 1783 occupies a particularly important place. The political developments surrounding the treaty, as well as the subsequent violation of its provisions, left a deep imprint on the historical fate of Georgian statehood. Furthermore, these events have retained their political and legal relevance to the present day, serving as a historical illustration of the vulnerability of small states in matters concerning security, sovereignty, and alliance relations.

It is noteworthy that the complex geopolitical environment that emerged around Georgia has, in various modified forms, persisted into the contemporary era. At the same time, the central direction of the Georgian people's civilizational and political self-determination-the aspiration toward integration into the European political and cultural sphere-has remained unchanged. Both in the late eighteenth century and during the period of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in the early twentieth century, Georgian political thought and the state elite sought to realize this strategic objective, frequently encountering external pressure and the threat of the loss of state sovereignty.

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The Treaty of Georgievsk and the Crisis of Georgian Statehood...

Keywords: *Treaty Alliance, Treaty of Georgievsk, Internal Autonomy, Imperial Manifesto, Russian Rule, National Liberation Movement, Restoration of Statehood.*

Introduction

The political and legal processes that unfolded in Georgia at the end of the eighteenth century exerted a decisive influence not only on the subsequent historical development of the country itself, but also on the broader political, social, and economic transformations of the peoples of the Caucasus. In this context, the Treaty of Georgievsk of 1783 occupies a particularly significant place. The political developments surrounding the treaty and the subsequent violation of its contractual obligations left a profound imprint on the historical fate of Georgian statehood. Moreover, these events have not lost their political and legal relevance to this day, serving as a historical example of the vulnerability of small states in matters of security, sovereignty, and alliance relations.

It is noteworthy that the complex geopolitical environment surrounding Georgia has, albeit in transformed forms, persisted into the contemporary era. At the same time, the principal civilizational and political orientation of the Georgian people has remained unchanged: the aspiration toward integration into the European political and cultural sphere. Both at the end of the eighteenth century and during the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in the early twentieth century, Georgian political thought and the state elite sought to realize this strategic objective, often encountering external pressure and the threat of the loss of state sovereignty.

The purpose of this article is to reinterpret one of the pivotal stages in the history of Georgian statehood through historical-legal and political analysis by evaluating the political and legal nature of the Treaty of Georgievsk, the consequences of its violation, and the impact of these processes on the formation of national liberation ideas. Such a study is important not only for the scholarly assessment of historical experience, but also for preventing the repetition of the strategic and military-political mistakes of the past.

The eighteenth century, particularly its second half, constituted a turning point in the history of Georgian state and national development. During this period, the alliance agreement concluded between Russia and Georgia, known as the Treaty of Georgievsk of 1783, not only transformed the military-political bala-

nance of the region, but also exerted a substantial influence on the subsequent formation of Georgian national and political consciousness. Significantly, the events that developed around the treaty later became one of the principal ideological foundations of the national liberation movement and political resistance.

This article examines the political and legal nature of the alliance treaty concluded between the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti in order to determine whether it implied a relationship of subordination or, conversely, represented an agreement of mutual protection and political cooperation concluded between sovereign entities. In this context, particular attention is devoted to the substantive analysis of the treaty provisions and their interpretation from the perspective of the historical principles of international law.

At the same time, the article evaluates the political, legal, and practical consequences of the treaty concluded by King Erekle II for the preservation of Georgian statehood, taking into account the complex geopolitical realities of the period. Particular consideration is also given to the issue of the fulfillment or non-fulfillment by Russia, as a contracting party, of its assumed obligations, as well as the impact of this factor on the fate of Georgian statehood.

One of the important directions of the study concerns the question of the legal justification for the abolition of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti through the manifesto of the Russian Emperor. In this regard, the article analyzes the political and legal views of representatives of the Georgian national liberation movement, who regarded the actions of the Russian authorities as a violation of treaty obligations and an unlawful abolition of state sovereignty. Within the framework of the international political system, the support of a powerful ally was of vital importance for the preservation of Georgia's political status and state security, both in the eighteenth century and in subsequent historical periods. Erekle II clearly understood that Georgia, surrounded by Muslim powers and exposed to constant external threats, could not preserve its sovereignty over the long term without reliable external political support.

The Search for an International Political Ally for the Preservation of Statehood

For this reason, prior to appealing to the Russian Empire, the Georgian monarch sought political and financial assistance from European states. It is noteworthy that Erekle II's foreign policy priorities were initially directed primarily toward the Christian states of Europe, from which he expected not only military but

The Treaty of Georgievsk and the Crisis of Georgian Statehood...

also financial support, including in the form of loans. In the early 1780s, through the mediation of Catholic missionaries¹ close to the royal court, Erekle II appealed to Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II,² the Senate of Venice,³ the political authorities of Venice and Naples⁴ King Louis XVI of France,⁵ as well as the Austrian Emperor, seeking to establish a system of anti-Ottoman and anti-Persian political cooperation. In order to increase European interest, the Georgian side even expressed readiness to provide military assistance in the struggle against the Ottomans in exchange for financial aid.⁶ However, the initiatives of Erekle II remained unanswered. The European powers, preoccupied with their own military-political problems and the maintenance of the balance of power, demonstrated no practical interest in Georgia.⁷ This circumstance is important to assess from the perspective of historical justice. Consequently, it would be one-sided and exaggerated to accuse Erekle II of abandoning the European orientation or of pursuing a policy of rapprochement with Russia.⁸ Rather, it should be acknowledged that the European political system of the time proved incapable of ensuring Georgia's security and providing effective political support. It must also be emphasized that the aspiration to obtain European support was not a new phenomenon in Georgian political thought. Following the fall of Constantinople, beginning with Giorgi VIII, the last king of united Georgia, and continuing through the activities of Teimuraz I, Vakhtang VI, and finally Erekle II, Georgian monarchs repeatedly attempted to secure military and political assistance from European powers, yet these initiatives failed to achieve the desired results. At the same time, during the second half of the eighteenth century, a notable convergence emerged between the military-political interests of Erekle II and those of the Russian Empress Catherine II. The Russian Empire sought to strengthen its influence in Transcaucasia and incorporate the region into its broader geopolitical strategy. Under such conditions, Erekle II's political orientation acquired special significance for St. Petersburg. After prolonged political calculations and the exhaustion of

¹ **Tamarashvili** 1902, 398–403.

² **Janashvili** 1894, 455.

³ **Tsintsadze** 1960, 88.

⁴ **Rachvelishvili** 1925, 180.

⁵ **Dumbadze** 1973, 685.

⁶ **Javakhishvili** 1919, 23–30.

⁷ **Janashvili** 1894, 456.

⁸ **Rachvelishvili** 1925, 181.

alternative foreign policy options, Erekle II chose the path of alliance relations with the Russian Empire, regarding it as a comparatively more realistic guarantee of security.⁹ In the Georgian monarch's understanding, Russia could not only protect Georgia from external threats, but also contribute to the reorganization of state governance and public life in accordance with European standards.

The logical outcome of these political processes was the treaty concluded on July 24, 1783, at Georgievsk Fortress between King Erekle II of Kartli-Kakheti and the representatives of Empress Catherine II of Russia, which became known in history as the Treaty of Georgievsk¹⁰ <http://www.amsi.ge/istoria/sab/georgievski.html>.

Particular attention should be paid to the fact that the preamble of the treaty, in which special emphasis is placed on the idea of long-standing good-neighborly and allied relations between states sharing the same Christian faith, does not contain the term "subordination," a concept that was widely employed in the Russian diplomatic vocabulary of the eighteenth century with regard to political entities dependent upon the Empire.¹¹

During that period, this concept was practically synonymous with complete political submission and a substantial limitation of sovereignty. Consequently, its absence from the text of the treaty can hardly be regarded as accidental. In our view, this reflects not merely formal diplomatic caution, but also a careful consideration of the regional balance of power. The political realities that had emerged by the second half of the eighteenth century did not yet permit Russia to act openly from a position of direct dominance over the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. This reality is likewise reflected in the very substance of the treaty itself. As Academician L. Aleksidze has noted, Georgia "was not a vassal of Russia." The political objective of Erekle II was to ensure the security of the state under Russian protection rather than to renounce state sovereignty entirely. In other words, the issue concerned the acceptance of certain limitations upon sovereignty in exchange for external protection, but not the abolition of statehood itself. This approach is clearly expressed in both the principal and the secret articles of the treaty.¹²

⁹ **Dumbadze** 1973, 688.

¹⁰ Treaty on the Recognition of the Patronage and Supreme Authority of Russia by the Tsar of Kartli and Kakheti, Irakli II (Treaty of Georgievsk), <http://www.amsi.ge/istoria/sab/georgievski.html> [20.05.2026].

¹¹ **Aleksidze** 1983, 175.

¹² **Aleksidze** 1983, 177.

The Legal Nature of the Treaty and Its Practical Consequences

According to the first article of the treaty, the King of Kartli-Kakheti, while recognizing the supremacy of the Russian Emperor, undertook not to establish foreign political relations with other states without the consent of the Russian side.¹³ At the same time, under the second article, Catherine II assumed not only the obligation to protect the borders of the country, but also the responsibility to assist the Georgian side in the restoration of territories previously lost. It is also noteworthy that the Russian side agreed to preserve one of the key elements of the Georgian monarchical tradition-the ancient rite of royal coronation-which for Kartli-Kakheti possessed not merely religious, but also state-legal significance. The third article guaranteed the preservation of the right of succession to the throne for the heirs of Erekle II¹⁴ <http://www.amsi.ge/istoria/sab/georgievski.html>.

Particular attention should also be paid to the fourth article, according to which the Georgian side was prohibited from conducting negotiations or establishing diplomatic relations with other states without the consent of the Russian resident. At the same time, the fifth article provided for the mutual exchange of official representatives, namely residents, at the two royal courts, indicating that the treaty formally preserved the interstate character of relations between the parties. It is likewise significant that the Russian court undertook to receive the representative of Erekle II with the same respect accorded to the diplomatic representatives of other states, thereby giving the treaty the external appearance of relations based upon legal equality.

The mutual and allied nature of the treaty is expressed most clearly in the sixth and seventh articles. According to the sixth article, the enemy of Georgia was also to be regarded as the enemy of the Russian Empire. Simultaneously, the Russian side undertook not to interfere in the internal administration of the allied state. Notably, Russian military and civilian officials were even prohibited from issuing independent orders within Georgia. For his part, under the seventh article, Erekle II undertook to provide military assistance to the Russian side whenever necessary. Articles eight through eleven concerned the rights and privileges of various social and ecclesiastical groups. In particular, the Georgian

¹³ **Paichadze** 1983, 30.

¹⁴ Treaty on the Recognition of the Patronage and Supreme Authority of Russia by the Tsar of Kartli and Kakheti, Irakli II (Treaty of Georgievsk), <http://www.amsi.ge/istoria/sab/georgievski.html> [20.05.2026].

nobility was placed on equal footing with the Russian nobility in terms of “privileges and advantages,” while Georgian and Russian merchants were granted preferential conditions for the conduct of free commercial activity within the territories of both states. Particular importance was also attached to the status of the Georgian Orthodox Church, thereby conferring upon the treaty not only political, but also religious and cultural significance.

As regards the secret articles, the first of these established the Russian Emperor as mediator between the rulers of Eastern and Western Georgia, namely Erekle II and Solomon II. The remaining three articles concerned military cooperation. The Russian side undertook to permanently station in Georgia two infantry battalions with artillery units for the defense of Kartli-Kakheti and, in the event of war, to dispatch additional forces if necessary. Furthermore, it was stipulated that during military operations Erekle II was to be fully informed regarding the planning and implementation of joint strategic actions. The Russian side also assumed the obligation to defend the country by armed force and to assist in the recovery of territories occupied by the enemy.

This detailed examination of the individual provisions of the Treaty of Georgievsk is far from accidental. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, up to the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, many representatives of Georgian political and national circles, including the National Democrats, viewed the legal regulation of Russian-Georgian relations precisely within the framework of this document. It is significant that this treaty, signed by both parties and possessing an international legal character, contained no provision whatsoever for the abolition of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti or for its unilateral incorporation into the Russian Empire. Consequently, the annexation of 1801 was not the logical continuation of the Treaty of Georgievsk, but rather a gross violation of its fundamental principles and contractual obligations.¹⁵

The Treaty of Georgievsk, concluded with the aim of safeguarding Georgian statehood, in practice produced the opposite result. Despite the obligations assumed by Russia, Kartli-Kakheti remained without effective military support during the 1790s. The efforts of the Islamic powers to eliminate Russian influence

¹⁵ **Paichadze** 1983, 52–54.

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in the region intensified particularly after 1793, when the Ottoman Sultan Selim III called upon Iran to restore its influence in the Caucasus.¹⁶

Erekle II repeatedly reminded Catherine II of the treaty obligations and requested military assistance; however, the Russian court not only failed to strengthen its support, but also withdrew the troops stationed in Georgia. As a consequence, during the campaign of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar in 1795, Georgia was effectively left alone. In the Battle of Krtsanisi, the Georgian army suffered defeat, and on September 11, 1795, Tbilisi was devastated and plundered. These events demonstrated that Russia failed to fulfill its allied obligations. Although Catherine II subsequently signed a decree dispatching assistance, it reached Georgia only after the events had already occurred. Moreover, during the reign of Paul I, Russian forces were ultimately withdrawn from the country, further deepening the political crisis of Kartli-Kakheti.¹⁷

Following the death of Erekle II in 1798, internal dynastic conflicts and external threats further weakened the kingdom. Under these conditions, George XII attempted to redefine relations with Russia by presenting, in 1800, the so-called "Petition Letter," which proposed declaring Kartli-Kakheti a "possession" of the Russian Empire while preserving the royal authority in a limited form. In effect, this proposal substantially restricted Georgian sovereignty. The Russian court rapidly exploited the situation that had emerged. Even during the lifetime of George XII, Paul I prepared the manifesto concerning the incorporation of Kartli-Kakheti, and immediately after the king's death, on January 18, 1801, officially proclaimed the abolition of the kingdom and its annexation to the Russian Empire. Subsequently, Alexander I confirmed this decision, presenting it as an act undertaken for the protection of a people sharing the same faith.¹⁸

However, the legal consequences of the Manifesto of 1801 sharply contradicted the principles of the Treaty of Georgievsk. The treaty did not provide for the abolition of Kartli-Kakheti or for its unilateral incorporation into Russia. Consequently, the annexation of Georgia constituted not the continuation of the treaty, but rather a violation of its fundamental provisions. Under Russian imperial policy, "Georgia's allied status was consigned to oblivion," together with the rights that, according to the treaty, were to be guaranteed, including internal autonomy,

¹⁶ **Dumbadze** 1973, 755.

¹⁷ **Javakhishvili** 1919, 42.

¹⁸ **Vachnadze, Guruli** 2009, 5.

the preservation of language, religion, customs, and limited self-government. The policy pursued by the imperial administration resulted in the gradual erosion of Georgian political and cultural identity.

It was precisely this ambiguity and historical reality that, according to Aleksandre Asatiani - one of the founders of the National Democratic Party and a member of both the National Council of Georgia and the Constituent Assembly – held decisive significance in the assessment of the treaty. In his view, the unilateral decisions adopted by the Russian side after 1783 had effectively resulted in the loss of the treaty's legal force. Moreover, he maintained that the Manifesto of 1801 ultimately released Georgia from those contractual obligations that had restricted its sovereignty.¹⁹

One of the important manifestations of the continuity of Georgian political and legal thought lies in the fact that the rights articulated in the Treaty of 1783 retained their ideological relevance in subsequent decades and became the foundation of national demands. On the basis of this legal-historical framework, as well as references to the alleged violations of these rights by the Russian imperial administration, the “Memorandum of the Georgian People” was presented to the Hague International Conference in 1907. This document, signed by thousands of inhabitants of Georgia, was addressed to the European public with the expectation that, within the framework of international law, consideration would be given to the Georgian people's demand for the restoration of the rights of which they had been deprived, as well as their national autonomy.²⁰

Conclusion

It should be noted that during the initial stage of the National Democratic movement, the idea of autonomy within the Russian Empire was advanced. Ilia Chavchavadze had been working on the development of this program as early as 1905–1906, and his ideological legacy became one of the foundations for the establishment of the National Democratic Party of Georgia in 1917. The latter, in turn, played a significant role in the development of the national liberation movement and in the process of restoring Georgian state independence at the beginning of the twentieth century.

¹⁹ **Asatiani** 1917, № 59, 4.

²⁰ **Scott** 1908, 12–15.

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The unilateral violation by the Russian Empire of the Treaty of Georgievsk, concluded in 1783 with the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, which ultimately led to the abolition of Georgian statehood, became one of the most important factors in the formation and development of the Georgian national liberation movement during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the basis of the legal analysis of the treaty and the views expressed by Georgian scholars, it may be concluded that, according to its provisions, the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti was not intended to be subordinated to the Russian Empire. Rather, the treaty provided for external protection by Russia under conditions of partial limitation of state sovereignty, while the kingdom was to preserve its independence in matters of internal governance.

The Treaty of Georgievsk constitutes the only written bilateral document that clearly defined the mutual rights and obligations of Russia and Georgia. In this sense, it also demonstrates that the abolition of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti was not envisaged by the treaty. At the beginning of the twentieth century, this document became an important point of reference for Georgian political thought, particularly among patriotic figures active in the international arena. At the Hague Peace Conference of 1907, the “Memorandum of the Georgian People” was presented precisely on the basis of the legal foundations established by the treaty, with the aim of drawing the attention of the international community to the Georgian people’s right to self-determination.

The same legal and ideological tradition was continued by representatives of the Georgian National Democratic movement in their long political struggle, which ultimately contributed to the restoration of Georgian state independence in 1918.

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Ամփոփում

XVIII դարի վերջին Վրաստանում ծավալված քաղաքական և իրավական գործընթացները վնասում ազդեցություն ունեցան ոչ միայն երկրի հետագա

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պատմական զարգացման, այլև ամբողջ Կովկասի ժողովուրդների քաղաքական, սոցիալական և տնտեսական վերափոխումների վրա: Այդ համատեքստում առանձնահատուկ նշանակություն ունի 1783 թվականի Գեորգիևսկի պայմանագիրը, որի շուրջ ձևավորված քաղաքական զարգացումները և պայմանագրային պարտավորությունների հետագա խախտումը խոր հետք թողեցին վրաց պետականության պատմական ճակատագրի վրա: Ավելին, նշված իրադարձությունները մինչ օրս չեն կորցրել իրենց քաղաքական և իրավական արդիականությունը՝ հանդես գալով որպես փոքր պետությունների անվտանգության, ինքնիշխանության և դաշնակցային հարաբերությունների խոցելիության պատմական օրինակ:

Հատկանշական է, որ Վրաստանի շուրջ ձևավորված բարդ աշխարհաքաղաքական միջավայրը տարբեր ձևափոխումներով պահպանվել է նաև արդի ժամանակաշրջանում: Միևնույն ժամանակ անփոփոխ է մնացել վրաց ժողովրդի քաղաքակրթական և քաղաքական ինքնորոշման առանցքային ուղղությունը՝ եվրոպական քաղաքական և մշակութային տարածք ինտեգրվելու ձգտումը: Ինչպես XVIII դարի վերջին, այնպես էլ XX դարի սկզբին՝ Վրաստանի ժողովրդավարական Հանրապետության գոյության տարիներին, վրաց քաղաքական միտքը և պետական վերնախավը փորձեցին իրագործել այդ ռազմավարական նպատակը՝ հաճախ բախվելով արտաքին ուժերի ճնշմանը և պետական ինքնիշխանության կորստի վտանգին:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *դաշնակցային պայմանագիր, Գեորգիևսկի պայմանագիր, ներքին ինքնավարություն, մանիֆեստ, ռուսական տիրապետություն, ազգային-ազատագրական շարժում, պետականության վերականգնում:*

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THE REFLECTION OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT ACTIVITIES OF ARTSAKH'S CULTURAL FIGURES ON THE PAGES OF THE PERIODICALS "MEGHU HAYASTANI" AND "HAYKAKAN ASHKHARH" (1850–1870)

Abstract

The article presents the activities of representatives of the culture of Artsakh in the 1850s–1870s, which were reflected in various issues of the periodicals "Meghu Hayastani" and "Haykakan Ashkharh". Having thoroughly studied the valuable materials reflected in those periodicals, we have presented them in separate sections.

Based on information from the weekly "Meghu Hayastani", we have presented the activities of Bishop Gevorg Vehapetyan, Nerses Vardapet Mirza Avagyants, Gevorg Ambrumyan, Teacher Avetik Ayvazyan, Astvatsatur Nazaryants, Hovhannes Hovnanyants, Petros Shanshiants, Mariam Hakhumyan, Archbishop Stepanos, Garegin Melikset Muradyan, Khoren Stepane and others.

The weekly "Meghu Hayastani" in its various issues covered in particular detail the work of the great spiritual and cultural figure Archbishop Sargis Jalalyants (the Primate of the Karabakh Diocese from 1865 to 1876) emphasizing his spiritual and educational activities. They were more clearly manifested during the years of the prominent clergyman's tenure as Primate of the Diocese of Georgia and Imereti (1857–1863) and Primate of the Diocese of Karabakh (1865–76).

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Particularly noteworthy is the detailed information about Saghatel Yuzbashians's will published in separate sections of the "Meghu Hayastani" newspaper with their extensive commentary.

In its various issues, the "Haykakan Ashkharh" periodical referred to the enlightening initiatives of Grigor Vardapet Aghapiryants, Nerses Bek Atabekyan, Petros Shanshian, Senior Priest Grigor Ter-Avagyants, Agha Matthew Hakhumyants, Mariam Hakhumyan, Archbishop Stepanos, Garegin Melikset Muradyan, Vasak Papajanyan, which were manifested in various ways in various spheres of the educational and cultural life of Artsakh (education, printing, art, etc.). The periodical referred to the spiritual, educational, scientific and printing activities of Khoren Stepane with special gratitude. It emphasized the importance of the role of the prominent clergyman in the publication of the "Haykakan Ashkharh" periodical.

The "Haykakan Ashkharh" periodical also mentioned the spiritual and educational activities of Father Aristakes Sedrakyan, who was appointed head of the Armenian Diocesan School of Karabakh on July 23, 1876.

Keywords: *"Haykakan Ashkharh" periodical, "Meghu Hayastani" weekly, Armenian Diocesan School of Karabakh, Mariamian School for Girls, Artsakh, Shushi Spiritual Printing House, Gandzasar Catholicosate.*

Introduction

The second half of the 19th century is considered an important period in the centuries-old history of Armenian culture. During that period, favorable socio-economic and political conditions were created, which had an impact on the regular development of the Armenian culture. It is worth noting that during the period, although Armenian culture had incorporated the favorable trends of the cultures of Russia, European countries and neighboring peoples, it had always maintained its national originality in the sphere of world culture.

Armenian cultural figures began to carry out great activities in different regions of Eastern Armenia. Their enlightening initiatives were manifested in various spheres of the Armenian culture: fine arts, painting, miniature painting, applied arts, carpet weaving, embroidery, pottery, architecture, periodicals, etc.

The activities of representatives of the Armenian culture were thoroughly reflected in the pages of both Armenian and foreign literature as well as in the periodicals of the time.

The importance of the topic: In the current geopolitical conditions, especially after the forcible seizure of the Armenian territories of Artsakh by Azerbaijan, in many foreign sources Armenian cultural values are presented as belonging to other nations. The materials reflected in the article once again prove that these cultural values were created by prominent representatives of the Armenian culture and are certainly considered Armenian.

Our main goal is to present valuable information related to the cultural figures of Artsakh published in the pages of the Eastern Armenian periodicals ("Meghu Hayastani", "Haykakan Ashkharh"), **which have not been studied in detail before.**

The main task is to emphasize the role and significance of the enlightening initiatives and charitable works of the representatives of the culture of Artsakh thanks to the use of **historical, descriptive, analytical methods.**

The Reflection of the Activities of Cultural Figures of Artsakh on the pages of the "Meghu Hayastani" weekly

One of the prominent figures in the educational and cultural life of Artsakh is the great spiritual and cultural figure **Archbishop Sargis Jalaleants** (1810–1879).¹ Jalalyants is considered a representative of the prominent Hasan-Jalalyan Dynasty that ruled in the Khachen province of Artsakh. According to tradition, the Hasan-Jalalians are the descendants of Aran, the grandson of Sisak, son of the patriarch Hayk. The name Aran gave rise to the Aranshahik Dynasty in the Middle Ages, which fought to establish power in Artsakh and Aghvangk.² According to brief information, in 1841 he was a student of Archpriest Hovsep (վարդապետ Հովսեփ) at the Gandzasar Monastery. For many years he was the abbot of the Sanahin Monastery. From 1857 to 1863 he headed the Diocese of Georgia and Imereti. From 1865 to 1876, he was the Primate of the Karabakh Diocese³ (during that period, from 1867 to 1870, he carried out other activities on the instructions of Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg IV⁴). Sargis Jalalyants took the Spiritual

¹ "Haigazian Armenological Review" 2025, № 45/2, 445–456.

² "Haigazian Armenological Review" 2025, № 45/2, 446.

³ Encyclopedia of Christian Armenia 2002, 869. **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 92. **Leo** 1914, 350.

⁴ **Abeghyan** 2014.

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Printing House of Shushi under his patronage continuing to publish educational manuals, textbooks, scientific works, school regulations and periodicals.⁵

The educational activities of the prominent clergyman were reflected in detail in the pages of the Eastern Armenian Periodical Press. The weekly "Meghu Hayastani"⁶ covered S. Jalalyants' activities. The periodical mentioning His Holiness Archbishop Sarkis Hasan Jalalyan as the leader of Georgia and Imereti,⁷ noted that while traveling to different regions of Armenia, he had acquired an ancient poem written on parchment, the date of which was unknown. Presenting some excerpts from that poem, the newspaper noted that a number of its words were incomprehensible to the readers. And before publishing the poem in the newspaper's pages, the writer of the article gave it to various language experts to decipher.⁸

In its other issues, the periodical, while appreciating and presenting the scientific activities of S. Jalalyants, emphasized the importance of his meticulous collection of stone inscriptions. The weekly "Meghu Hayastani" wrote: "Holy Archbishop Sargis, the Primate of the Armenian of Georgia and Imereti, during his abbotship, saw how the inscriptions written on the walls and khachkars of the monasteries of Sanahin, Haghpat as well as nearby monasteries had collapsed in places, and the preserved inscriptions were difficult to read... And some of the khachkars had fallen to the ground and their cuneiform inscriptions were not visible. Seeing all this, he experienced great pain, because many of the memories of our kings, princes and clergy, whose names were needed to write an accurate history, had been destroyed. During the devastation of the territories of Armenia, the Turks living in Armenian villages, had taken the stones of churches and monasteries to build houses... Seeing all this, he set off for Lori, Ghazakh, Shamshadin, Shamkhor, Gandzak and Karabakh to collect stone inscriptions..."⁹ The Spiritual Leader's goal was to collect stone inscriptions and valuable manuscripts from various Armenian regions to present the scientific heritage of Armenian ancestors and important information about the rich architectural

⁵ Avanesyan, Harutyunyan 2014, 92.

⁶ "Meghu Hayastani" – a political, philological and commercial weekly, which has been published as a daily since 1873. It was published in Tiflis from 1858 to 1886.

⁷ "Meghu Hayastani" 1858, № 52, December 27, 412. "Meghu Hayastani" 1860, № 27 (July 2), 209.

⁸ "Meghu Hayastani" 1858, № 3, January 18, 21.

⁹ "Meghu Hayastani" 1858, № 4, January 25, 28–29.

monuments of Armenia. The book of the Holy Leader was printed in 1842 at the expense of Ishxan Ghahraman Erkeynabazuk Arghuyants (Իշխան Ղահրամանյայ Երկայնաբազուկ Արղույեանց), 500 copies of which were donated to the Armenian College of Tbilisi.¹⁰

Of particular note is an excerpt from the newspaper dedicated to the geographical, political and spiritual life of Artsakh recorded by Sargis Jalalyants during his travels through various regions of Armenia. According to the newspaper, Jalalyants wrote down those data on January 20, 1856, in the city of Shushi of Artsakh.¹¹ It mentioned the Catholicosate of Gandzasar, the enlightening works of **Archpriest Hovsep** (Հովսեփ վարդապետ),¹² Khotavank, the Metropolitanate of Shushi, Archbishop Baghdasar and other events.¹³ This data was also mentioned in another issue of the “Meghu Hayastani” periodical. It mentioned that Sargis Jalaleants, in addition to his spiritual services, had performed other patriotic deeds.¹⁴ Traveling to various regions of Armenia, he had meticulously collected and classified inscriptions on monasteries, churches, fortresses, khachkars, and tombstones in Armenian cities and villages.¹⁵ Moreover, the periodical presented a list of manuscripts compiled by Sargis Jalalyants, which are of great source value.¹⁶

The newspaper also mentioned and highlighted one of the manuscripts owned by Archbishop Sargis called “The Book of the Staff”.¹⁷

We agree with the newspaper’s view that the resolution of the socio-economic problems of the society of Shushi was entrusted to Archbishop Sargis Jalalyants, who acted for the benefit of the society.¹⁸

¹⁰ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 4, January 25, 29–30.

¹¹ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 17, April 26, 132–133.

¹² The word refers to Hovsep Artsakhetsi (Ter-Avagyan). The latter was the Archpriest of the Diocese of Shushi. As a monk, he lived in the monasteries of Gandzasar and St. Hakob and engaged in educational activities. According to reliable sources, Hovsep Artsakhetsi opened schools in Gandzasar, Dadivank and elsewhere, taught rhetoric, grammar, logic, grabar, theology and other subjects. Archpriest Hovsep died in 1847 and was buried in the Gandzasar monastery of Artsakh. See **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 80–81. **Barkhuta-reants** 1895, 179.

¹³ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 17, April 26, 133.

¹⁴ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 15, April 12, 115.

¹⁵ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 15, April 12, 115.

¹⁶ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 15, April 12, 116–117.

¹⁷ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 17, April 26, 130.

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The “Meghu Hayastani” periodical mentioned the Primate of the Karabakh Diocese, **Bishop Gevorg Vehapetyan**.¹⁹ Presenting the latter's activities in another issue, it highlighted his role in the development of the educational life of Artsakh. One of the newspaper issues, mentioning the Amaras Monastery school, noted that in connection with the school's economic and educational problems, some charitable works were carried out in the form of donations at the initiative of Bishop Gevorg Vehapetyan.²⁰

In the 50s–60s of the 19th century, the role of **Archpriest Nerses Mirza Avagyants (Ներսէս վարդապետ Միրզա Ավագեանց)** was notable among the cultural figures of Artsakh. The “Meghu Hayastani” periodical mentioned him as the abbot of Amaras Monastery and a scholar of that monastery's school.²¹ On his initiative, the monastery school was improved. Nerses Vardapet Mirza Avageants being concerned about the improvement of the school's educational programs and the regulation of the school's financial situation, called the attention of several benefactors to the resolution of that issue. In this regard, he mentioned the philanthropist from Shushi, **Gevorg Ambrumyan**, who was also mentioned in the “Meghu Hayastani” periodical.²² According to the newspaper, in 1858, Gevorg Ambrumyan came to the Amaras Monastery and provided great assistance to the monastery and school with his own financial resources: “Shushi, January 14, the abbot of the Amaras Monastery and the scholar Nerses Vardapet Mirza Avagyants, the teacher of the same monastery school, announces that after the second discovery of the holy relics of Saint Grigoris the Illuminator from Agvan on April 23, 1858, the beginning of a new construction on the ark of the holy martyrs of the people of Karabakh, the city of Shushi and the villagers. Mr. Gevorg Ambrumyan, a citizen of Shushi, came to Amaras on August 13 of the same year at his own expense and began to sponsor the construction of the Holy Monastery. Noticing the progress of the students as patriots, he covered the school's shortcomings with his own funds. Mr. Ambrumyan renovated and decorated the four large rooms on the northern side of the monastery, where the students study.

¹⁸ “Meghu Hayastani” 1871, № 21, June 5, 167.

¹⁹ “Meghu Hayastani” 1858, № 52, December 27, 412.

²⁰ “Meghu Hayastani” 1859, № 35, August 29, 274.

²¹ “Meghu Hayastani” 1859, № 5, January 31, 34. “Meghu Hayastani”, 1859, № 35, August 29, 274.

²² “Meghu Hayastani” 1859, № 5, January 31, 34.

Having prepared their desks, beds for the bedroom and a dining room for meals, he presented the students with paper, pens and various writing materials...”.²³

One of the newspaper issues from 1859 mentioning the school of the Amaras Monastery, emphasized that it had begun to develop further thanks to the efforts of patriotic figures.²⁴

It should be emphasized that in addition to the cultural figures of Artsakh, the role and significance of Artsakh benefactors and devotees of the nation have also been great in the development of Armenian educational and cultural life. The newspaper briefly mentioned the national benefactor from Shushi, **Avetik Ayvazyan**. The author of the article, M. Mirzayan, presenting the biography of the benefactor, regretfully noted his death. He noted that this was the reason why Ayvazyan's patriotic activities remained unfinished.²⁵

The “Meghu Hayastani” periodical paid great attention to the charitable works of Artsakh benefactors. The newspaper, with great gratitude and in detail, included the will of **Saghatel Yuzbashyants** in one of its issues, which contains very valuable material about the patriotic and valuable deeds of the Artsakh benefactor.²⁶ According to information from one of the newspaper's issues from 1849, the benefactor made a very far-sighted will before his death, in which the mentioned huge sums of money²⁷ were to be used to realize the goals and interests of Armenian society.²⁸ The newspaper, in separate articles, presented in detail the directions and forms of use of those financial resources as well as the bodies administering them. According to these articles, universities, colleges, boarding schools, poorhouses, printing houses, churches and other public institutions were to be built and reconstructed.²⁹

²³ “Meghu Hayastani” 1859, № 5, January 31, 34. See also “Region and Mir” 2024, № 4, 53–54.

²⁴ “Meghu Hayastani” 1859, № 44, October 31, 348. “Meghu Hayastani” 1860, № 50, December 10, 395.

²⁵ “Meghu Hayastani” 1859, № 35, August 29, 277–279.

²⁶ “Meghu Hayastani” 1863, № 11, April 20, 110–114. See also “Armenological Issues” № 1 (16/19), Yerevan, 2020, 201–210.

²⁷ Saghatel Beg Yuzbashyants had invested 400 rubles of his own money in a Moscow bank and 166 pounds sterling (1,079 rubles) – in a London bank. The interest received from the banks was to be used to build numerous hospitals, schools, colleges, orphanages, poor-houses and other public institutions.

²⁸ “Meghu Hayastani” 1863, № 11, April 20, 110.

²⁹ “Meghu Hayastani” 1863, № 11, April 20, 111–114.

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The patriotic step taken by **Astvadatur Nazaryants** from Shushi deserves great attention. The "Meghu Hayastani" periodical wrote that Mr. Asdvadzatur Harutyunyan Nazareants, a postman from Shushi wishing to provide some material assistance to Western Armenians, donated a certain amount of money to the National Hospital of Constantinople through the mediation of **His Holiness Archbishop Makar**.³⁰

The newspaper also briefly but enthusiastically mentioned the patriotic step of **Hovhannes Stepanyan Hovnanyants (Յովհաննէս Ստեփանեան Յովնանեան)**, who donated much-needed new printing supplies to the printing house of Artsakh, some of which he had purchased from Paris, a large number of books to the library of the Diocesan School (Karabakh Theological School) as well as other books for the education of poor students.³¹

The "Meghu Hayastani" periodical covered the activities of **Petros Shanshants**³² with special gratitude. The newspaper wrote that in 1860, the people of Artsakh (Karabakh) invited P. Shanshants from Petersburg³³ to assume the position of superintendent of the Diocesan School³⁴ of Artsakh.³⁵ However, due to various circumstances, P. Shanshants was initially unable to fulfill this

³⁰ "Meghu Hayastani" 1867, № 21, June 10, 165.

³¹ "Meghu Hayastani" 1859, № 27, July 4, 211.

³² "Luma" Grakan Handes, Book B, 1897, 1–51. **Bishop Melchisedek Muradyan** 1898. **Leo** 1914, 281–290. "Dpratur" № 1(4), Stepanakert, 2016, 88–94. "Education and Science in Artsakh" № 1–2, 2014, 155–161.

³³ In 1851–1857, Petros Shanshian being the superintendent of the Nersisyan School of Tiflis, improved the educational work of the school. He carried out a great deal of pedagogical work in that famous school. The pedagogical activity of Shanshian at the Nersisyan School was highly appreciated by the famous novelist Perch Proshyan, who had studied at the Nersisyan School and knew him very well. In the history of the Nersisyan School, the time of Shanshian's supervision was called the "Shanchyan Century". However, his pedagogical and organizational plans were only partially realized, as disagreements arose between the school superintendent and the head of the Georgian Diocese, Archbishop Sargis Jalalyants. Because of these disagreements, in 1857 the famous teacher left the school and left for Petersburg. "Education and Science in Artsakh" 2014, № 1–2, 156. **Yerkanyan** 1982, 34.

³⁴ For information about the Diocesan School of Artsakh (The National Spiritual School of Shushi), see also "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 29, July 25, 226. "Meghu Hayastani" 1870, № 16, June 27, 122. "Meghu Hayastani" 1871, № 16, May 1, 118–119. "Meghu Hayastani" 1871, № 21, June 5, 166–167. "Meghu Hayastani" 1871, № 40, October 30, 312–313. "Meghu Hayastani" 1872, № 40, December 2, 159. **Ter Gasparyan** 1993, 102. **Leo** 1914.

³⁵ "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 28, July 18, 219.

request of the people of Artsakh. In 1863, the people of Artsakh again turned to P. Shanshians asking him to come to Artsakh and carry out educational activities there, to which he agreed.³⁶ It is worth noting that he was appointed to the position of superintendent of the Diocesan School of Artsakh in 1863–1864³⁷, who took **Perch Proshyan** as his assistant. The latter taught Armenian language, Armenian literature and national history there. Thanks to their efforts, the educational system of the Diocesan School of Shushi had improved considerably.³⁸ It became a three-class school with its two parish schools. The name of the school was changed. The latter began to be called the “**Yeghishian National Theological School**” after the famous 5th-century historian Yeghishe.³⁹

According to an article by Alexander Manucharyants, an Armenian language teacher at the same school, published in the newspaper, thanks to P. Shanshian's educational initiatives, corporal punishment and other strict measures were eradicated at the school, internal order and discipline were established, educational work was streamlined.⁴⁰

In one of its issues, the periodical mentioned **Mariam Hakhumyan**, the superintendent of the Mariamyan Girls' School⁴¹ of Artsakh (Karabakh) and **Archbishop Stepanos**,⁴² the Primate of the Artsakh Diocese.⁴³ Their role in the opening of the girls' school and the process of publishing the charter was particularly emphasized and valued.⁴⁴ The newspaper also published a petition letter from Mariam Hakhumyan addressed to Archbishop Stepanos, the Leader of

³⁶ “Meghu Hayastani” 1864, № 28, July 18, 219.

³⁷ **Ter Gasparyan** 1993, 105–106.

³⁸ **Shanshians** 1870. **Leo** 1914.

³⁹ **Harutyunyan** 2000, 39. **Ter Gasparyan** 1993, 106. **Leo** 1914, 286–290.

⁴⁰ “Meghu Hayastani” 1864, № 28, July 18, 220.

⁴¹ The Mariamyan Girls' School of Shushi was founded in 1864 through the efforts of P. Shanshian, P. Proshyan, Garegin Melikset Muradyan, Hambardzum Hakhumyan and his wife Mariam Hakhumyan. Initially, it operated in a section of the Hakhumyans' own apartment. M. Hakhumyan was elected as the superintendent. The school's goal was to prepare enlightened teachers and mothers. See **Harutyunyan** 2000, 40–41. The Opening of the Mariamyan Girls' College of the Holy Mother of God of Karabakh 1864. **Leo** 1914, 290–301.

⁴² “Meghu Hayastani” 1864, № 27, July 11, 212. “Meghu Hayastani” 1864, № 34, August 30, 266. “Meghu Hayastani” 1865, № 25, July 10, 197.

⁴³ “Meghu Hayastani” 1864, № 11, March 14, 91.

⁴⁴ “Meghu Hayastani” 1864, № 11, March 14, 91. “Meghu Hayastani” 1865, № 25, July 10, 197–198.

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the Diocese. The petition stated: "Taking into account your love for national enlightenment and being sure that the enlightenment of the nation regarding every national matter is desirable to the patriotic heart of Your Highness, on behalf of the ladies of the city of Shushi, I appeal to you and humbly ask you to give us the order to open the St. Mariamian College for girls under the high patronage of Your Holiness..."⁴⁵

The newspaper separately published a letter from **Archbishop Stepanos** addressed to Mariam Akhumyan, which offered financial support for the education of girls' school students.⁴⁶ Archbishop Stepanos' material assistance and spiritual support to Artsakh schools was also mentioned in another issue of the newspaper.⁴⁷ The newspaper also mentioned the agreement between **Hambardzum Hakhumyan**, a wealthy and patriotic resident of Shushi and His Holiness Archbishop Stepanos on the preservation of the Artsakh (Karabakh) school and the start of renovation work on the Gandzasar Monastery.⁴⁸

In another issue of the periodical of 1864, mentioning Mariam Hakhumyan, it noted that she together with several charitable women had opened the Mariamyan School for Girls in Shushi. They presented the Charter of that school with the assistance of His Holiness Archbishop Stepanos.⁴⁹ It should be noted that Petros Shanshian, Garegin Melikset Muradyan, P. Proshyan⁵⁰ and others played a major role in the opening of the Mariamyan School for Girls.⁵¹

It is an interesting fact that on the occasion of the opening of the Mariamyan Girls' School, as the newspaper noted, the Viceroy of the Caucasus (Կովկասյան երկրների փոխարքայություն) expressed gratitude to Mariam Hakhumeants.⁵² She promised to help resolve the school's future problems.⁵³

⁴⁵ "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 14, April 4, 116.

⁴⁶ "Meghu Hayastani" 1865, № 25, July 10, 198.

⁴⁷ "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 34, August 30, 267.

⁴⁸ "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 34, August 30, 268.

⁴⁹ "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 14, April 4, 116.

⁵⁰ "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 24, June 20, 189. **Ter Gasparyan** 1993, 106.

⁵¹ The Opening of the Mariamyan Girls' College of the Holy Mother of God of Karabakh 1864.

⁵² "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 46, November 21, 363.

⁵³ "Meghu Hayastani" 1864, № 46, November 21, 363.

Khoren Stepane⁵⁴ has made a great contribution to the educational and cultural life of Artsakh. His activities were also covered by the “Meghu Hayastani” periodical. It should be emphasized that the role and significance of Khoren Stepane was valued especially in the development and implementation of educational programs at the Diocesan School of Artsakh. As M. Mkhitarian noted, Stepane came to Shushi in 1873 to assume the position of superintendent of the Diocesan Theological School of Karabakh and teacher of the Russian language. He carried out extensive pedagogical activities at that school. He improved the local girls’ school, introduced school uniforms and developed clear school curricula.⁵⁵

The role and significance of Khoren Stepane was also highly appreciated in the development of the Armenian press of Artsakh. On his initiative, in 1874, the first issue of the literary, pedagogical and religious journal “Haykakan Ashkharh” was published in the Spiritual Printing House of Shushi.⁵⁶

The “Meghu Hayastani” newspaper, in its various issues, reflecting on and appreciating Kh. Stepane’s activities, had thoroughly given the scientific and analytical assessment of the “Haykakan Ashkharh” journal.⁵⁷

The role of the library of Shushi played a significant role in the development of the educational and cultural life of Artsakh. According to the newspaper, the latter was formed at the end of 1858. The newspaper also mentioned the names of several of its directors: **Baba Baklareants, Nerses Bek Atabekeants, Petros Bek Aghsmyants (Բաբայ Բակլարեանց, Ներսէս Բեկ Աթաբեկեանց, Պետրոս Բեկ Աղսմյանց)**.⁵⁸

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⁵⁴ Khoren Stepane (Stepan Stepanyan, 1840–1900) – Armenian educator, editor, public politician, poet. For information on the life and activities of Khoren Stepane, see “Echmiadzin” 2002, № 9, 46–57. Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Art, Khoren Stepane Fund, Document 139, 404. Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran, Catholicosate Divan, Folder 236, Document 121. **Leo** 1914, 368–375.

⁵⁵ “Echmiadzin” 2002, № 9, 50.

⁵⁶ “Echmiadzin” 2002, № 9, 52.

⁵⁷ “Meghu Hayastani” 1867, № 40, October 21, 346–347. “Meghu Hayastani” 1867, № 31, August 19, 261–263. “Meghu Hayastani” 1869, 45, November 22, 353–355.

⁵⁸ “Meghu Hayastani” 1860, № 42, October 15, 331.

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The activities of some representatives of the culture of Artsakh were also reflected in the pages of the “Haykakan Ashkharh” literary and pedagogical journal. It should be noted that this periodical was published in different places in different years: in Tbilisi (1864–1871), Shushi (in 1874), Gandzak (1874–1875), Baku (1877–1878) and in Yerevan.⁵⁹

The “Haykakan Ashkharh” periodical reflecting on the activities of Artsakh schools, particularly emphasized the role and significance of the diocesan school in the education and upbringing of Armenian generations. The article by Sarkis Ter Ghazaryants (“Letter from Shushi”), which was published in the pages of the journal, is noteworthy. The author of the article noted that in 1852, the patriotic **Grigor Vardapet Aghapiriantz** re-established good order in the Diocesan School of Artsakh (Armenian Spiritual School of Karabakh⁶⁰) during his supervision. Thanks to strict supervisory work, within a year he developed the school's internal educational system, expanded the number of students and patriotic teachers. However, for some reason, he was forced to leave the school leaving great love in the hearts of students, teachers, and the public.⁶¹

The same issue of the periodical appreciated the role of **Nerses Bek Atabekyan** in the process of improving the Artsakh Diocesan School.⁶² According to the newspaper, after 1858, the benefactor of the school was the Armenian nobleman Nerses Bek Atabekian (the superintendent of the diocesan school in 1862)⁶³, who with his energetic patriotic spirit, improved the status of the school. Taking on the position of superintendent and senior teacher, he educated a large number of students.⁶⁴

The periodical highly appreciated the activities of **Petros Shanshian**⁶⁵, **Senior Priest Grigor Ter Avagyants and Agha Matthew Hakhumeants (Աղա Մադթէնս Հախումեանց)** in the progress of the education and other

⁵⁹ “Echmiadzin” 2002, № 9, 53–54. “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1879, № 1, 46. **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 139.

⁶⁰ **Leo** 1914, 253.

⁶¹ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1866, № 6–7, 229.

⁶² “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1866, № 6–7, 229.

⁶³ The 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Theological Diocesan School of Karabakh 1913, 20.

⁶⁴ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1866, № 6–7, 229.

⁶⁵ The periodical also highlighted the role and significance of Petros Shanshian in the development of the education of students in Tiflis. See “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1865, № 12, 465.

enlightenment works of Artsakh.⁶⁶ It highlighted the educational work carried out by **Agha Matthew Hakhumeants** and **His Holiness Archbishop Sarkis** in Artsakh (Karabakh). Thanks to their efforts, the 5th grade was opened at the Diocesan School of Shushi, in which many subjects began to be taught. The school already had 5 grades and 1 preparatory school, in which 200 students studied. Subjects were also taught in other languages: Russian, Georgian, Persian.⁶⁷

The “Haykakan Ashkharh” periodical mentioning with great enthusiasm the Armenian College of Shushi, emphasized the role of **his Holiness Archbishop Sargis Jalalyants**⁶⁸ (the Primate of the Artsakh Diocese⁶⁹, 1864–1878). As the periodical noted, Archbishop Sargis went from Tbilisi to Artsakh to serve as the head of the diocese, and within a few months he was able to demonstrate his sincere service to the local people. Thanks to the educational initiatives, the number of students at the Armenian school in Shushi reached about 200. The school was improved in every way. Despite his old age and illness, with his experience and constant care, the Archbishop made great efforts to ensure the internal and external well-being of the school. He frequently visited the students and teachers of the school and encouraged them. Despite his advanced age and illness, the Archbishop with his many years of experience made tremendous efforts to ensure the school’s internal and external well-being. He frequently visited the students and teachers and supported them in every way.⁷⁰

The “Haykakan Ashkharh” periodical also emphasized the enlightening activities of **Mariam Hakhumeants**. One of her notable public works was the opening of a girls’ school in Shushi, which was named after her, the “Maryamyan Girls’ School”.⁷¹ As the periodical noted, despite various difficulties, Mariam Hakhumeants opened the girls’ school, which had 17 students, 1 supervisor and 3 teachers who taught Armenian and Russian languages, drawing and needlework.⁷²

The periodical “Haykakan Ashkharh” also enthusiastically covered the enlightening initiatives of **Father Khoren Stepane (խորեն վարդապետ)**

⁶⁶ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1866, № 6–7, 229–230.

⁶⁷ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1866, № 6–7, 230.

⁶⁸ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1871, № 3, 67.

⁶⁹ **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 306.

⁷⁰ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1871, № 3, 67.

⁷¹ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1866, № 6–7, 230.

⁷² “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1866, № 6–7, 230–231.

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Սրեկիանե).⁷³ It criticized and refuted the false views that had arisen around the great clergyman.⁷⁴ In addition to his great spiritual and educational activities,⁷⁵ Khoren Stepane continued to develop Armenian printing in Artsakh.⁷⁶ The regular issues of the “Haykakan Ashkharh” periodical began to be published in Shushi, which we mentioned above. Thanks to the humanitarian steps of Khoren Stepane (the superintendent of the Shushi Diocesan School- from 1871 to 1874⁷⁷), many poor students continued to receive their education in various schools in Artsakh.⁷⁸

In its various issues, the periodical had thoroughly covered the spiritual activities of Khoren Vardapet Stepane (bishop – in 1894) in Shushi. It particularly emphasized the organization of church singing groups in the city of Shushi initiated by Khoren Stepane.⁷⁹ The author of the article wrote: “When Khoren Vardapet Stepane came to our city and formed a group of singers, the people with great enthusiasm began to attend the church where the singing group sang. Along with the beautiful singing, the people also listened to sermons from Father Khoren. And that was not all: in the church, order and deep silence were strictly defined, everyone knew their place and their time...”.⁸⁰

The “Haykakan Ashkharh” periodical mentioned the spiritual and educational activities of **Father Aristakes Sedrakyan (Արիստակես վարդապետ Սեդրակեան⁸¹)**, who on July 23, 1876, was appointed superintendent of the Armenian Diocesan School of Karabakh.⁸² This was also evidenced by the Kondak of the Catholicos of Armenia⁸³, according to which Father Aristakes was appointed the superintendent of the Armenian Theological Diocesan School of Shushi (1876–1878). He paid great attention to the improvement of the educational institution.

⁷³ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1878, № 2, 94–95.

⁷⁴ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1877(1878), № 10–12, 303–306, 311–312.

⁷⁵ “Region and Mir” 2024, № 5 (54), 55–56.

⁷⁶ **Mkhitaryan** 2002.

⁷⁷ The 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Theological Diocesan School of Karabakh 1913, 21.

⁷⁸ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1874, № 1–2, 42–43.

⁷⁹ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1874, № 8–9, 241–245.

⁸⁰ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1874, № 8–9, 241.

⁸¹ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1876, № 1–2, 29–30. “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1877, № 10–12, 306–307.

⁸² “Ararat” 1907, № 1, 52. See also The 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Diocesan Theological School of Karabakh 1913, 21. **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 125. **Leo** 1914, 378.

⁸³ Documents of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church 2011, 336, 629. National Archives of Armenia, fund. 56, list. 1, file 173.

According to other literature, by gathering around him the best teachers of the school (Hakob Ishkhanyan, Sargis Ter-Ghazaryan, G. Dovlatyan, Manuchar Pirumyan and others), **Aristakes Vardapet Sedrakyan (Father Aristakes)** had regulated school affairs, developed curricula and programs for the subjects to be taught and made certain changes to the statutes of the pedagogical assembly (which had been developed by Khoren Stepanen). He had emphasized the need to train teaching staff for parish schools.⁸⁴ Thanks to the efforts of Father Aristakes Sedrakyan, the situation of Artsakh's schools improved, especially diocesan and girls' schools.⁸⁵ He also opened a girls' school in Shushi, which along with the Mariamyan Girls' School played a major role in the education and upbringing of Armenian girls.⁸⁶ According to some information, by the convocation of Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg, he was appointed as the vicar of the Diocese of Artsakh in 1876, since the leader of the diocese, Archbishop Sarkis Hasan Jalalyants was ill. Sedrakyan led the Diocese of Artsakh in the status of vicar until 1881.⁸⁷

The "Haykakan Ashkharh" periodical referring to Vasak Papajanyan, the Superintendent of the Diocesan School of Artsakh (the Spiritual National School of Karabakh), published his lengthy speech on one of its pages.⁸⁸ As G. Harutyunyan noted, Doctor of Philosophy Vasak Papajanyan (the Superintendent of the Diocesan School of Shushi in the 1877–1878 academic year⁸⁹) had carried out fruitful pedagogical activities at the Diocesan School of Shushi.⁹⁰ In his speech, the main directions and forms of education were presented.⁹¹

Thanks to the enlightening activities of Artsakh cultural figures, schools, residential houses, churches, monasteries, bridges, monuments, hospitals and public buildings were built and reconstructed in different regions of Artsakh. We consider the construction of the hospital of Shushi (medical center) an important and necessary initiative, which was also mentioned by the "Haykakan Ashkharh"

⁸⁴ **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 306.

⁸⁵ "Haykakan Ashkharh" 1876, № 1–2, 29–30.

⁸⁶ **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 125.

⁸⁷ **Avanesyan, Harutyunyan** 2014, 306.

⁸⁸ "Haykakan Ashkharh" 1879, № 1, 1.

⁸⁹ The 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Theological Diocesan Seminary of Karabakh 2013, 21.

⁹⁰ **Harutyunyan** 2000, 39.

⁹¹ "Haykakan Ashkharh" 1879, № 1, 1–5.

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periodical in one of its issues.⁹² According to the latter, the locals wanted it to receive a legitimate direction like the Tbilisi hospital, which needed an intelligent director.⁹³

Conclusion

Thus, generalizing our study, we would like to emphasize that in the 1850s–1870s, the cultural life continued to gradually develop in various regions of Eastern Armenia as well as in Artsakh. The Representatives of the Armenian culture whose activities were thoroughly covered by the Eastern Armenian periodical press of the time made a great contribution to this long-term process. The periodicals “Meghu Hayastani” and “Haykakan Ashkharh” had thoroughly covered the activities of the representatives of the culture of Artsakh. Among them were Bishop Gevorg Vehapetyan, Nerses Vardapet Mirza Avagyants, Gevorg Ambrumyan, Teacher Avetik Ayvazyan, Astvatsatur Nazaryants, Hovhannes Hovnanyants, Petros Shanshants, Mariam Hakhumyan, Archbishop Stepanos, Garegin Melikset Muradyan, Khoren Stepane, Archbishop Sargis Jalalyants, Grigor Vardapet Aghapiryants, Nerses Bek Atabekyan, Senior Priest Grigor Ter-Avagyants, Agha Matthew Hakhumyants, Vasak Papajanyan and others.

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⁹² “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1868, № 1, 40.

⁹³ “Haykakan Ashkharh” 1868, № 1, 40.

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ՄԱՐԻՆԵ ՀԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՅԱՆ

Պատմական գիտությունների թեկնածու

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ԱՐՑԱԽԻ ՄՇԱԿՈՒՅԹԻ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑԻՉՆԵՐԻ ԼՈՒՍԱՎՈՐԱԿԱՆ ԳՈՐԾՈՒՆԵՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԱՐՏԱՑՈԼՈՒՄԸ «ՄԵՂՈՒ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ» ԵՎ «ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԱՇԽԱՐՀ» ՊԱՐԲԵՐԱԿԱՆՆԵՐԻ ԷՋԵՐՈՒՄ (1850–1870-ԱԿԱՆ ԹԹ.)

Ամփոփում

XIX դարի 50–70-ական թվականներին ինչպես Արևելյան Հայաստանի տարբեր շրջաններում, այնպես էլ Արցախում մշակութային կյանքը շարունակել է աստիճանաբար զարգանալ: Այդ երկարատև գործընթացում իրենց մեծ ավանդն են ներդրել հայ մշակույթի ներկայացուցիչները, որոնց գործունեությունը հանգամանորեն լուսաբանվել է ժամանակի արևելահայ պարբերական մամուլում:

Հիմնվելով «Մեղու Հայաստանի» շաբաթաթերթի տեղեկությունների վրա՝ ներկայացրել ենք Գևորգ Եպիսկոպոս Վեհապետյանի, Ներսես վարդապետ Միրզա Ավագեանցի, Գևորգ Ամբրումյանի, Ավետիք վարժապետ Այվազյանի, Աստվածատուր Նազարեանցի, Հովհաննես Հովնանեանցի, Պետրոս Շանշեանցի, Մարիամ Հախումյանի, Ստեփանոս արքեպիսկոպոսի, Գարեգին Մելիքսեթ Մուրադյանի, Խորեն Ստեփանեի և այլոց գործունեությունը:

«Մեղու Հայաստանի» շաբաթաթերթն իր տարբեր համարներում հանգամանորեն անդրադառնալով խոշոր հոգևոր-մշակութային գործիչ Սարգիս արքեպիսկոպոս Զալալեանցի (Ղարաբաղի թեմի առաջնորդ՝ 1865–76 թթ.)

գործունեությանը, առանձնացրել է նրա հոգևորական, կրթական ձեռնարկումները: Դրանք ավելի վառ դրսևորվեցին նշանավոր հոգևորականի՝ Վրաստանի և Իմերեթիայի թեմի առաջնորդ (1857–1863 թթ.) և Ղարաբաղի թեմի առաջնորդ (1865–76 թթ.) եղած տարիներին:

Ուշագրավ են հատկապես Սաղաթել Յուզբաշյանցի կտակի վերաբերյալ մանրակրկիտ տեղեկությունները, որոնք «Մեղու Հայաստանի» թերթում զետեղվել են առանձին բաժիններով՝ իրենց ընդարձակ մեկնաբանություններով:

«Հայկական աշխարհ» պարբերականն իր տարբեր համարներում անդրադարձել էր Գրիգոր վարդապետ Աղափիրեանցի, Ներսես բեկ Աթաբեկյանի, Պետրոս Շանշյանի, Գրիգոր ավագ քահանա Տէր Ավագեանցի, Աղա Մատթեոս Հախումեանցի, Մարիամ Հախումյանի, Ստեփանոս արքեպիսկոպոսի, Գարեգին Մելիքսեթ Մուրադյանի, Վասակ Պապաջանյանի՝ լուսավորական ձեռնարկներին, որոնք տարբեր ձևերով դրսևորվել էին Արցախի կրթամշակութային կյանքի տարբեր բնագավառներում (կրթության, տպագրության, արվեստի և այլն): Պարբերականն առանձին երախտագիտությամբ անդրադարձել է Խորեն Ստեփանեի հոգևորական, կրթական, գիտական, տպագրական գործունեությանը, ընդգծել նշանավոր հոգևորականի դերի կարևորությունը «Հայկական աշխարհ»-ի հրատարակման գործում:

«Հայկական աշխարհ» պարբերականը անդրադարձել է նաև Արիստակես վարդապետ Սեղրակյանի հոգևորական և կրթական գործունեությանը: Ըստ պարբերականի տեղեկության՝ նա, 1876 թ. հուլիսի 23-ին նշանակվելով Ղարաբաղի հայոց թեմական դպրոցի կառավարիչ, ծավալել է լայն լուսավորական գործունեություն:

Բանալի բառեր՝ «Հայկական աշխարհ», «Մեղու Հայաստանի», Ղարաբաղի հայոց թեմական դպրոց, Մարիամյան օրհորդաց դպրոց, Արցախ, Շուշիի հոգևոր տպարան, Գանձասարի կաթողիկոսություն:

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WESTERN ARMENIAN MIGRATION IN EASTERN ARMENIA IN 1894–1896 (ACCORDING TO THE “MURCH” PERIODICAL)

Abstract

In the 1890s, the Western Armenians were scattered across the world as a result of the massacres carried out by Abdul Hamid. Those who escaped the massacres initially sought refuge in the Caucasus region. Despite the difficulties and obstacles imposed by the authorities, the Murch periodical attempted to provide information on Western Armenian refugees, how they could be helped, and how they could return to their homeland. This article summarises the newspaper's coverage of refugees who found shelter in Eastern Armenia. We have included tables in the article to visually present the number of refugees in the Yerevan province.

Keywords: *Caucasus Governorate, Eastern Armenia, Murch periodical, Yerevan province, Tiflis province, Baku, Shushi.*

Introduction

In the 1890s, the Ottoman government's policy of persecuting Armenians entered a new phase. Compared to the previous period, this phase was more brutal, marked by national persecution, plundering and religious intolerance – an era of nightmarish conditions. Sultan Abdul Hamid began taking increasingly large steps towards the mass slaughter of Armenians. The Turkish government

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carefully and meticulously planned the initial attempt to exterminate the Armenians. The study of the massacres proves once again that they were carried out in a pre-planned, sequential manner.¹

Prominent British journalist E. Dillon considered the Ottoman government's genocidal policy to be the first step in implementing the Armenian extermination plan.² Even Turkish figures who witnessed the events, such as Osman Nuri and Sadik Şahid Bey, could not conceal the truth when reflecting on the massacres committed against Western Armenians in 1894–1896, despite all the justifications presented. Osman Nuri wrote, "This massacre was, under all circumstances, a terrible genocide against humanity. The cause of this genocide was undoubtedly Abdul Hamid II, who led a gang of brigands at Yildiz, massacring not only Armenians, but also leading the entire homeland towards destruction."³

The mass killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire organised by Abdul Hamid in the 1890s had irreversible consequences. More than 300,000 Armenians⁴ were killed, hundreds of settlements were depopulated, and emigration reached massive proportions. A large number of Armenians were also forcibly converted to Islam and nearly 50,000⁵ children were orphaned.

Western Armenians who escaped the massacres initially hoped to find salvation in the Caucasus Governorate. Many Armenians who remained under Ottoman rule saw the Russian Empire as their last refuge. Upon setting foot on Russian soil, refugees fleeing Kurds and Turks believed they had escaped hell and entered a realm of safety and protection.⁶

Between 1894 and 1896, an estimated 30,000–50,000 Western Armenians crossed into the Russian Empire.⁷ Around 11,000 Western Armenian refugees arrived in the South Caucasus in 1896 alone.⁸

¹ **Hambaryan** 1999, 41, **Nersisyan** 1991, 34–49.

² **Dillon** 1897, odt. II, st. 15.

³ **Papazyan** 1984, 94.

⁴ *Armenian History*, 2010, 538, **Safrastyan** 2009, 167.

⁵ **Ormanyanyan** 2001, 5474.

⁶ "Mshak" № 152, 28.12.1896.

⁷ **Ananun** 1926, 11. **Lazarev** 1972, 92.

⁸ "Mshak" № 152, 28.12.1896.

Western Armenian migration in eastern Armenia

As a border town, Kars became a major centre for refugees. Starting in 1893, there were continuous flows of refugees across the border. The refugees arrived physically exhausted and materially destitute. The local population, which had also been affected by a drought, could no longer fully meet the needs of the newcomers.⁹

Around 10,000 refugees sought shelter in Yerevan province, primarily in the districts of Surmalu, Vagharshapat and Yerevan itself.¹⁰

By mid-January 1897, the number of Western Armenian refugees in Yerevan and the surrounding provinces had increased significantly. Around 600 refugees had settled in the city itself, while approximately 1,000 had settled in the surrounding regions. During this period, the local branch of the Caucasus Armenian Charitable Society (CACS) was primarily responsible for organising assistance, with funding from the central administration in Tiflis.

The role of public initiatives in raising funds is noteworthy. For example, the charity ball organised on 31 December 1896 resulted in revenue of 1,615 roubles, which was transferred to a special committee to address the immediate needs of refugees.¹¹

The effectiveness of the humanitarian efforts carried out by the Caucasus Armenian Charitable Society (CACS) can be seen in the following data:

Food Supply: By mid-January 1897, over 10,000 food rations had been provided to around 200 families (approximately 800 people).

Material assistance: Around 3,000 items of clothing were distributed.

• Healthcare: To improve sanitary and hygienic conditions for the population, the branch invited the medical student Hayrapetyan on 1 January. He was given the necessary funds to buy medical supplies and organise treatment for 33 sick refugees.¹²

The majority of refugees who settled in the Yerevan province found shelter in the Vagharshapat region. As Archbishop Khrimyan acknowledges, the greatest and most tragic issue during his tenure as Catholicos¹³ was the problem

⁹ "Murch" № 4, 1894.

¹⁰ HAA, f. 28, ts. 1, c. 967, t. 34.

¹¹ "Murch" № 1, 1897.

¹² "Murch" № 1, 1897.

¹³ "Murch" № 4, 1894, "Ararat" № G, 1894.

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of the refugees. From autumn onwards, entire families arrived in groups at the “Hayrapetanos” in Echmiadzin,¹⁴ completely destitute and in need of food. In his decree, Khrimyan also announces that he has appealed to senior Russian imperial officials for permission to launch a fundraising campaign in Armenian-populated areas of the Russian Empire.

By the end of 1897, the number of Western Armenian refugees settled in Echmiadzin had changed significantly. Due to the arrival of refugees from Igdir, the population increased from 600 to 1,250. A census conducted by the local branch of the Caucasus Armenian Charitable Society (CACS), combined with data from the district governor, provides a clear picture of the refugees’ geographical distribution.

Table

Distribution of refugees in the Echmiadzin province by settlement, 1897

Settlement	Number of Families	Number of Individuals
Vagharshapat	66	279
Geçrlu	90	214
Talin and surrounding villages	-	200
Samaghar	10	46
Ashtarak	9	35
Zeyva	7	30 ¹⁵

Despite the efforts of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, settling the refugees proved to be a serious challenge. Father Matthew Matthewyan visited around 40 villages and urged the local population to shelter the newcomers. However, the locals, who were already struggling with difficult socio-economic conditions, were reluctant to accept the new refugees and expressed dissatisfaction with how those already settled were being fed.¹⁶

¹⁴ “Murch” № 4, 1894.

¹⁵ “Murch” № 1, 1897.

¹⁶ “Murch” № 11–12, 1897.

As a result, the auxiliary structures of the Etchmiadzin monastery were overloaded. More than 200 refugees were sheltered in the monastery's barn, while around 100 households had settled in the villages of Vagharshapat.¹⁷

The main burden of providing assistance was carried by the Caucasus Armenian Charitable Society (CACS), while the Etchmiadzin monastery took care of only 5–6 families directly. In the village of Gehrlyu, for example, the Society distributed clothing and food such as fruit, tea, sugar and beans, and 42 children received fabric for clothing.¹⁸

Dr G. Tamamshyan's selfless efforts were significant in the healthcare sector. He personally visited over 80 sick individuals sheltered in Vagharshapat and the monastery's auxiliary buildings (barns), covering their treatment costs out of his own pocket.¹⁹

At the beginning of 1897, the situation of the 25 refugee families (around 150 individuals) sheltered in Alexandropol remained deeply concerning. According to data reported by the periodical, neither the local branch of the CACS nor the community had provided them with any practical assistance by January. This was because the refugees had officially been placed under the care of the local authorities.²⁰

The refugees' social situation became even more complicated due to their lack of professional skills. As they were primarily labourers (farmers) and did not possess any trade skills necessary for urban environments, they were deprived of the opportunity to find work. This resulted in extreme poverty and dire material conditions.²¹

Many Western Armenian refugees settled along the Black Sea coast, particularly in Sukhumi and Sochi. There, they primarily worked in tobacco farming, crafts and agriculture.²² By 1896, there were 17,000 refugees scattered across the Black Sea region.²³

¹⁷ "Murch" № 4, 1898.

¹⁸ "Murch" № 1, 1897.

¹⁹ "Murch" № 4, 1898.

²⁰ "Murch" № 1, 1897.

²¹ "Murch" № 2–3, 1897.

²² "Mshak" № 42, 10.04.1897.

²³ "Mshak" № 152, 28.12.1896.

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By the end of 1895, there were around 500 Armenian refugee households in the Sukhumi region, primarily from Trabzon,²⁴ who were mainly involved in tobacco farming and simindri (corn) cultivation.²⁵ By the end of January 1896, 4,000 Western Armenian refugees were sheltering in Sukhumi, a figure which rose to 7,000 by the end of the year.²⁶ According to the writer H. Muradyan of the *Murch* magazine, women and boys over the age of 12 were mainly engaged in agriculture.²⁷ By 1899, the number of refugees in the Black Sea region had risen to around 30,000.²⁸ In September 1904, the Eastern Regional Congress of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) decided to explore the possibility of resettling the refugees in the Black Sea region in Makou Khanate or any other Armenian-inhabited area in Persia.²⁹

Some of the refugees had also migrated to Baku, the industrial centre of the Caucasus. However, many men lacked the necessary documents to find employment. Most of them were farmers and could only do manual labour. There were also a significant number of elderly people among the refugees who were unable to work.³⁰

A significant proportion of Western Armenians sought refuge in the Tiflis province, primarily in the Tiflis and Akhalkalaki districts. Initially, there were around 300 Armenian refugees in the Tiflis district. A charity kitchen was set up for them and they were provided with medical assistance. By October 1897, this figure had risen to at least 550.³¹ The local branch of the CACS organised an emergency general meeting to provide initial assistance to refugees arriving in Akhalkalaki. The meeting was attended by 30 members. A committee was elected to organise the aid. The administration allocated 115 roubles from its

²⁴ "Murch" 1895, № 12.

²⁵ "Murch" 1897, № 4. See also, E. Charents Museum of Literature and Art, "Murch" fund, b. 2, c. 203.

²⁶ "Murch" 1896, № 10–11.

²⁷ "Murch" 1897, № 4. See also, E. Charents Museum of Literature and Art, "Murch" fund, b. 2, c. 203.

²⁸ **Ruben** 1990, *Memoirs of an Armenian Revolutionary*, Volume 2, Yerevan, Adana Publishing House, 9.

²⁹ *Materials for the History of the Armenian ARF*, 2007, Volume 2, Beirut, Hamazkayin Vahe Setian Printing House, 374.

³⁰ "Murch" 1897, № 11–12.

³¹ "Murch" 1897, № 10.

funds towards medical assistance, clothing, food and work tools. Subsequently, with the support of the local authorities, the refugees were distributed across various villages.³²

By 5 January 1897, the number of refugees in Shushi had reached 25. A significant role in providing assistance to them was played by Mesrop Vartabed Melik-Parsadanyan, the inspector of the Shushi diocesan school. Along with his teaching group, he went door-to-door and managed to raise 1,000 rubles.

In early January, after receiving permission from the district governor, the local branch of the CACS in Shushi opened a free dining hall, and the archbishopric distributed clothing to the refugees.³³

The significant decline in the size of the Armenian population had a profoundly negative impact on the national identity of Western Armenians. This was an integral part of the Sultan's decrepit urban policies. In the 1890s, many formerly thriving settlements were inhabited by Muslim communities, particularly Kurds. These populations were referred to as "muhajirs" (migrants), and they established themselves firmly in Western Armenia and Cilicia.³⁴ It was crucial to take steps to facilitate the return of refugees to their homeland.

Conclusion

Abdul Hamid II's genocidal policies resulted in a mass exodus of Western Armenians. Those who survived the genocide dispersed around the globe. Despite the challenges and obstacles imposed by the authorities, *Murch* magazine made considerable efforts to raise awareness of the plight of Western Armenian refugees.

Many Western Armenian refugees sought refuge in Eastern Armenia, primarily in the Yerevan province, especially in the districts of Surmalu, Vagharshapat and Yerevan, as well as in the Kars region and the Tiflis province. As a spiritual centre of the Armenian people, Vagharshapat also opened its doors to suffering Armenian refugees within its means. The influx of Western Armenian refugees into Eastern Armenia between 1894 and 1896 represented not only a demographic shift, but also one of the greatest humanitarian crises.

³² "Mshak" № 79, 08.07.1897.

³³ "Murch" 1897, № 1.

³⁴ Armenian History, 2010, 538.

The accounts from *Murch* clearly demonstrate that Armenian societal and political thought, along with charitable organisations, managed to unite and offer support to their fellow countrymen fleeing disaster, despite the artificial barriers created by the Ottoman Empire and the restrictions imposed by the Caucasus administration.

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ԼԻԼԻԹ ՔՈՍՅԱՆ

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ԱՐԵՎՄՏԱՀԱՅԵՐԻ ԳԱՂԹԸ ԱՐԵՎԵԼՅԱՆ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ

1894–1896 ԹԹ.

ԸՍՏ «ՄՈՒՐԾ» ՊԱՐԲԵՐԱԿԱՆԻ

Ամփոփում

1890-ական թթ. Օսմանյան իշխանությունների հայահալած քաղաքականությունը թեկնածուներ մի նոր փուլ՝ նախորդի համեմատությամբ ավելի բիրտ, ազգային հալածանքների ու հարստահարության, կրոնական անհանդուրժողականության ծանր մղձավանջային մի ժամանակաշրջան: Սուլթան Աբդուլ Համիդը սկսեց նախապատրաստվել հայերի զանգվածային կոտորածներին: Թուրքական կառավարությունը հանգամանալից և մանրամասն մշակել էր հայերի բնաջնջման առաջին փորձը: Ջարդերից մազապուրծ արևմտահայերն իրենց փրկության առաջին հայացքն ուղղեցին դեպի Կովկասի կառավարչապետություն: Դարեր շարունակ Օսմանյան լուծը կրող արևմտահայերը Ռուսական կայսրությունը համարում էին իրենց փրկության հուսալի հանգրվան: «Մուրճ» պարբերականը, չնայած իշխանությունների կողմից հարուցած դժվարություններին և արգելքներին, հնարավորինս փորձել է տեղեկություններ հաղորդել արևմտահայ գաղթականների, նրանց օգնության և հայրենիք վերադառնալու խնդիրների շուրջ:

Հոդվածում ամփոփ ներկայացվում են պարբերականում հրատարակված տեղեկությունները Արևելյան Հայաստանում ապաստանած արևմտահայ գաղթականների թվաքանակի, կացության, նրանց ցուցաբերված օգնության վերաբերյալ:

Բանալի բառեր՝ Կովկասի կառավարչապետություն, Արևելյան Հայաստան, «Մուրճ», Երևանի նահանգ, Թիֆլիսի նահանգ, Բաքու, Շուշի:

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THE REFLECTION OF ARMENIAN NATIONAL AND SOCIAL SENTIMENTS IN THE PERIODICAL “HORIZON” DURING THE WORLD WAR I

Abstract

The First World War was a fateful period in Armenian national life. This world-changing event had a particularly significant impact on the Armenian people. As a result of the war, they were deprived of their historical homeland. They became victims of the world's first genocide. Millions of Armenians died and hundreds of thousands fled to Russian Armenia (Eastern Armenia), scattering them throughout the world. The First World War was fought not only in the west, but also in the east of Armenia. Armenian land became a hellscape. However, even after all this, Armenian national life continued to cherish hopes for the country's possible future revival, despite widespread anxiety and devastation. This period spanned 1914–1916. Armenian national life, in all its positive and negative aspects, was best captured in the pages of one of the most influential Armenian periodicals, “Horizon”. This periodical fully expressed the awareness of the enormity of the danger threatening the Armenian people. “Horizon” attempted to promote the ideas of revival and reconstruction of the country among broad segments of Armenian society.

Keywords: *Eastern Armenia, “Horizon”, periodical, volunteer movement, refugees, Van self-defense, Mush, Yerzrum.*

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Introduction

The most critical period of Armenian national life was the era of the First World War. This world-shaking event proved particularly fateful for the Armenian people. As a result of the war, the historic homeland of the Armenians was largely deprived of its Armenian population. The Armenian people became the first victims of genocide in the modern world. Millions of Armenians perished, while hundreds of thousands fled to Russian Armenia (Eastern Armenia) or were dispersed across the globe. Not only Western Armenia, but also Eastern Armenia became a theater of war during the First World War. The Armenian land turned into a universal inferno. Nevertheless, even after all this, Armenian national life, despite being under the weight of widespread devastation and distress, continued to nurture hopes for the country's possible future revival. During this period (1914–1916), Armenian national life, with all its essential positive and negative aspects, was most comprehensively reflected in the pages of one of the most influential Armenian periodicals, "Horizon." The awareness of the magnitude of the danger threatening the Armenian people found full expression in this publication. "Horizon" sought to conceptualize and instill the ideas of the country's revival and reconstruction among broad segments of Armenian society.

Assessment of the consequences of the war

From the very first months, the First World War placed the Armenian people in a catastrophic situation.

The first and most pressing mission was the resettlement of the many thousands of refugees and their rescue from the grip of hunger and deprivation. As early as the autumn of 1914, the periodical "Horizon" placed this fundamental issue at the center of its attention and consistently pursued its public articulation and resolution.

Moreover, even at the height of wartime brutality, the periodical raised and voiced questions that were characteristic only of a people situated on a high level of civilizational development. One such publication is the noteworthy article titled "*The Armenians and the Present Moment*", published on October 7, 1914, which emphasizes the following: "If the Armenian people had become so diminished and degraded as to understand liberation merely as the question of their physical

survival, then the dreadful massacres of the Turkish Armenians would hardly have taken place.”¹

In other words, it suggests that, like many others, Armenians could have attempted to survive through conversion or by other means; in doing so, they would not only have been permanently spared the danger of physical annihilation, but would also “likely have become recipients of the Sultan’s privileges and favors.” Thus, by “liberation,” the Turkish Armenian does not raise the issue of mere physical survival, but rather that of his national values.²

The periodical notes that the Armenian people had created such cultural values and an environment that allowed them to independently manage their national life: “Our role in the economic life of Transcaucasia and even of Turkish Armenia; our cultural institutions; the number of our intelligentsia here and there – all this, it may be said, gives us the opportunity to conduct our internal affairs and to create our own national environment. To strive only to breathe freely, to eat freely, and to have an inviolable family is shameful and insulting for a people that is already prepared to have its own homeland and to live a national life.”³

The periodical extensively covered manifestations of Armenian national, educational, and cultural life in both Eastern and Western Armenian settlements. Under the heading “*Current Life*,” correspondences were published from both large and small localities. Thus, in the summer of 1914, reports from Van described a magnificent literary and artistic event held at the Haigazian Central School, where the recitations and songs performed were “...all selected from the works of great national poets, filled with patriotic and nationally wholesome sentiments.”⁴

“Horizon” substantiates the awareness of the following: “Let it not be assumed that the great enthusiasm currently demonstrated by Russian Armenians, and the great sacrifice undertaken by all Armenian-inhabited regions, providing large numbers of volunteers who hasten headlong toward the Turkish frontiers to reinforce the ranks of Armenian units attached to the Russian army, is solely due to the fact that the issue of the liberation of Turkish Armenians has

¹ “Horizon” 1914, № 221.

² “Horizon” 1914, № 221.

³ “Horizon” 1914, № 245.

⁴ “Horizon” 1914, № 158.

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been placed on the agenda. No, alongside this, there also exists the cause of defending justice.”⁵

“Horizon” maintained that the Armenian Question had now matured for international diplomacy. However, it had matured first and foremost for us, the Armenians, who have always played an active role in the maturation and resolution of our question. Yet our question has matured through the Armenian people’s “cultural and freedom-loving ardent aspirations, and the expansion of its political horizon.” It has matured and now stands on the threshold of its resolution, above all thanks to the great struggle and the immense military efforts undertaken by the Armenian people over the course of a quarter century.⁶

The periodical firmly asserted that the ongoing world war, alongside the real interests of states, “has placed a number of just national causes that must be resolved.”⁷ Among such just causes was undoubtedly the Armenian cause, the long-suffering Armenian Question. This daily newspaper reflected the sentiments of Armenian public circles, asserting that this time the Armenian Question would receive a positive and satisfactory resolution.

On the volunteer movement, massacres and violence, and the problems of Armenian refugees...

From the very outbreak of the First World War, “Horizon” followed with focused attention the events unfolding on the Russo-Turkish front, in Western Armenia, and in its surrounding regions. The newspaper expressed an unequivocally positive attitude toward the Armenian volunteer movement that emerged at the very beginning of the war, publishing encouraging and laudatory editorials and commentaries. Moreover, according to the firm conviction of the editorial staff, regardless of the position adopted by Western Armenians, the Turkish authorities, taking advantage of the chaos of war, would resort to new, even more extensive acts of violence and massacres.

On November 10, 1914, the newspaper reported that the Ittihadist authorities were forming groups from Kurds, all kinds of bandits, and other criminals subject to legal prosecution, “they are forming bands or *chetes* (*çete*) and sending them out; the Hamidiye units are also being assembled... From Van it is reported that

⁵ “Horizon” 1914, № 31.

⁶ “Horizon” 1914, № 251.

⁷ “Horizon” 1914, № 252.

the Hamidian forces arriving in the city left not a single morsel in the fields, vegetable gardens, or orchards of the villages along the roads, they ate, devoured, trampled, and destroyed everything.”⁸

Earlier, on November 5, in the editorial titled *“Relief Efforts Must Be Organized,”* it was noted that in all Armenian-inhabited regions where military operations were taking place, the Armenian population, terrified, was fleeing toward the Russian border, and all those displaced were in an extremely poor and helpless condition. It was concluded that the persecutions and massacres would intensify further once it became clear to the Turks that Armenian volunteer detachments were also operating alongside the Russian forces, with the aim of securing the liberation of Western Armenians. All this, the periodical emphasized, “will become clear to the Armenian people, and they will deeply realize that the liberation of people cannot be achieved without bloodshed and suffering.”⁹

This constituted a clear message to Armenian socio-political circles to be prepared for increasingly perilous developments.

In subsequent issues, the daily reported that the sufferings and deprivations endured by Armenian refugees were simply indescribable. Responding to deep popular dissatisfaction, the newspaper sharply criticized the Armenian committees assisting war victims, noting that, “despite having at their disposal substantial public funds, they have nevertheless demonstrated mere negligence, slowness, and incompetence.”¹⁰

Awareness of the magnitude of the threat facing the Armenian people

Like other Armenian periodicals, “Horizon”, immediately after the outbreak of the First World War, clearly recognized the mortal danger confronting the Western Armenians, embodied in the Young Turk party ruling in Turkey, which, through its anti-Armenian policies, proved even more destructive than the bloodthirsty Sultan Hamid.¹¹

By the autumn of 1914 and the beginning of winter, massacres of the Armenian population had already taken place in certain areas of Western

⁸ “Horizon” 1914, № 251.

⁹ “Horizon” 1914, № 246.

¹⁰ “Horizon” 1915, № 34.

¹¹ **Inchikyan** 1984, 298–300.

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Armenia, at a time when there had been no uprisings or movements on the part of Western Armenians or Persian Armenians against the Turkish regime.¹²

Information about Armenian refugees who had narrowly escaped the sword of the enemy began to appear in the pages of the newspaper from the autumn of 1914 onward.¹³

On April 7, 1915, the newspaper sounded the following alarm: "From information received from reliable sources, it becomes clear that persecutions in Turkish Armenia have already begun... The only difference is that in the past it was the regime of Abdul Hamid that was in force, whereas now it is that of the Young Turks."¹⁴

On April 10, the newspaper informed its readers that one of the influential organs of the Western Armenian press in Constantinople, "*Azatomart*", had been closed: "*Azatomart* was particularly subjected to persecution, despite its correct stance; every word was misinterpreted and received as hostile."¹⁵ It is noted that the newspaper's last director, E.K. Pashayan, had been exiled.

In its April 18 issue, an article titled "*The Situation in the Country*" sounded the alarm that the regions of Vaspurakan, Bitlis, and Mush were under siege: "The Ittihadist officials have turned into beasts... The threat of a general massacre hangs over the head of the Turkish Armenian people."¹⁶

On April 19, it was reported that terrible massacres were taking place in Berkri, Abaga, and Manazkert, while "the Armenians of Van have been fighting for five days against the Turks and the Kurds."

The newspaper concluded that the dreadful condition of the Turkish Armenians had already become clear to us, as well as the unequal situation in which they were struggling against Turkish and Kurdish marauding bands.¹⁷

In the publication titled "*Delay Is a Crime*," it was announced that the system of Armenian extermination in Turkish Armenia was being carried out at the directive and with the full will of the central Turkish authorities. It emphasized that, in the face of this great tragedy, it remained for us, the Armenians, not to

¹² **Chelepyan** 1990, 291–292.

¹³ "Horizon" 1914, № 241.

¹⁴ "Horizon" 1915, № 74.

¹⁵ "Horizon" 1915, № 76.

¹⁶ "Horizon" 1915, № 83.

¹⁷ "Horizon" 1915, № 84.

sink into despair, but to gather strength and “resort to even more vigorous and decisive measures, so as to reduce, as much as possible, the number of innocent victims.”¹⁸

The newspaper consistently emphasized that the situation in Western Armenia was critical and that the entire Western Armenian population was living under the immediate threat of massacre. Telegrams published in the April 25 issue reported that Turkish forces had surrounded Van and that Aygestan was under bombardment: “Ishkhan (prince) has been killed. Mush is threatened with massacre. Let the Catholicos vigorously appeal to the neutral states.”¹⁹

Referring to the self-defense of Van, the periodical argues that it constituted the existential struggle of the Armenians of Vaspurakan: “The Armenian people are defending themselves against a government that cannot reconcile Turkish statehood with the existence of the Armenian people... This is not an uprising for any political purpose, but a struggle for the very existence of the Armenians.”²⁰

It is noteworthy that the newspaper observed that what was taking place in our neighboring country had no parallel anywhere, as Turkey, or the Young Turk government, was waging a strange and unprecedented kind of struggle.

“And if you ask it what war is, it cannot say that it is a conflict between governments or a struggle between peoples. In formulating its actions and policies, it would have to admit that, for it, war is a struggle between races.”²¹ It is highly characteristic that the newspaper observed that the Turkish government appeared not to recognize state borders, having declared war not only on the countries of the Triple Entente, but also on all those who did not belong to the Turkish race or its kindred peoples: “Today it is massacring the Armenians. Tomorrow, if there is a war with Greece, it will massacre its own Greek subjects.”²²

During those ominous and grievous national days, the newspaper published an appeal by the Armenian Committee of Moscow, emphasizing that, in such a time of distress, for an Armenian there could be but one thought and one feeling: the noble duty to alleviate the suffering of the afflicted nation: “Let discord and

¹⁸ “Horizon” 1915, № 87.

¹⁹ “Horizon” 1915, № 90.

²⁰ “Horizon” 1915, № 94.

²¹ “Horizon” 1915, № 97.

²² “Horizon” 1915, № 97.

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material weakness vanish; let the living spirit emerge in all its force, the living individual with a single desire - to make sacrifices."²³

On May 14, 1915, the ultimatum, warning of the Entente powers addressed to the military-political leadership of Turkey, was published. The newspaper regarded it as a historically significant step, by which the Allies assumed the protection of the Western Armenians under their patronage. It was noted that:

*"The future political status of Turkish Armenia will depend not on any single member of the Allies, but on the collective decision of the Triple Entente. This is precisely what has, until now, been the main cause of the failure of the Armenian Question."*²⁴

The hope and prospect of the country's reconstruction

The great Armenian tragedy, the Genocide, left a heavy and grievous impact on contemporaries as well as on subsequent generations. All Armenian periodicals were under the profound shock of what had occurred and clearly recognized the unprecedented nature of the catastrophe. On February 6, 1916, "Horizon", while informing its readers that Russian forces and Armenian volunteers had captured Erzurum, simultaneously struck a mournful tone: "Ill-fated Armenian people... Only the blood-soaked stones of your land greet this new dawn, which for so long caressed and smiled upon you, nourished you with vain illusions, and flared up... today only to illuminate your vast cemetery."²⁵

Yes, the Armenian grief was immense and boundless, so great that it left no room for joy or celebration even on the occasion of the liberation of a major stronghold of the homeland.

Nevertheless, despite all this, public sentiment still held that Western Armenia, liberated by Russian forces, could be rebuilt and reconstructed by resettling it with refugees and survivors who had narrowly escaped the Genocide.

On February 20, 1916, the newspaper reported that Western Armenian refugees were arriving in Tiflis in groups from various parts of the Caucasus, "natives of Karin, Mush, Sasun, and others, who now wish to return immediately to their homes."²⁶ The newspaper's correspondents and publicists consistently

²³ "Horizon" 1915, № 103.

²⁴ "Horizon" 1915, № 104.

²⁵ "Horizon" 1916, № 28.

²⁶ "Horizon" 1916, № 39.

reminded readers that the blood-soaked people had the right “to demand action from each of us. That action will be fruitful and great if we act together, hand in hand, standing side by side, in unity.”²⁷

In the programmatic article “*The Idea of Unity*,” one of the newspaper’s prominent publicists, the historian Mikayel Varandian, noted that over the past quarter century, in the course of its unequal struggle, the Armenian people had demonstrated such “ideological discipline, organizational capacity, patriotism, and solidarity that even the most pessimistic were, at least momentarily, filled with delight at such a welcome surprise.”²⁸

So strong was the aspiration to rebuild the devastated homeland that views were expressed in the pages of the newspaper asserting that, regardless of what the future might hold, one thing was clear “for us, the people of this land: the homeland must not be left neglected even for a single month; for without this shattered homeland, bringing forth blood and tears, we become like a dry, broken reed, a plaything in the hands of the wind; without our land, we are like a trembling leaf torn from the tree.”²⁹

In the newspaper’s issues of 1916 and 1917, the idea of returning to the homeland was consistently and persistently propagated. Moreover, a dominant theme emerged that, at the present time, among our many concerns, “the greatest, undoubtedly, is the problem of the future resettlement of our homeland. It must be so that across the vast expanse of our land we may have the opportunity to carry out constructive and restorative work.”³⁰

Thus, the periodical “*Horizon*” emerges as a steadfast and uncompromising advocate of the reconstruction of the devastated homeland.

Conclusion

The First World War created a new situation and confronted the entire Armenian people with new trials and challenges. Armenian social thought, also represented by the periodical “*Horizon*”, raised in its pages numerous and diverse issues, concerns, and anxieties that preoccupied the broader public. The newspaper’s editorial board closely followed the development of public sentiments

²⁷ “*Horizon*” 1916, № 45.

²⁸ “*Horizon*” 1916, № 58.

²⁹ “*Horizon*” 1916, № 200.

³⁰ “*Horizon*” 1916, № 224.

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among wide segments of the Armenian population, presenting its own noteworthy observations, analyses, and proposals. In this regard, the central focus of the public discourse reflected in the periodical consisted of the issues of ensuring the safety of refugees who had survived the Genocide and the reconstruction of the devastated homeland.

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ԱՐՄԵՆ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ

Պատմական գիտությունների թեկնածու

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**ՀԱՅ ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԵՎ ՀԱՍԱՐԱԿԱԿԱՆ
ՏՐԱՄԱԴՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ԱՐՏԱՑՈԼՈՒՄԸ «ՀՈՐԻԶՈՆ»
ԹԵՐԹՈՒՄ ԱՌԱՋԻՆ ԱՇԽԱՐՀԱՄԱՐՏԻ ՏԱՐԻՆԵՐԻՆ**

Ամփոփում

Հայ ազգային կյանքի օրհասական շրջափուլը հանդիսանում է Առաջին համաշխարհային պատերազմի ժամանակաշրջանը: Աշխարհացունց սույն իրադարձությունը հատկապես ճակատագրական եղավ հայ ժողովրդի կյանքում: Պատերազմի հետևանքով տեղի ունեցավ հայության հայրենագրկումը: Հայ ժողովուրդը դարձավ աշխարհում առաջին ցեղասպանության զոհ: Միլիոնավոր հայեր զոհվեցին, իսկ հարյուր հազարավորներ փախան դեպի Ռուսահայաստան (Արևելյան Հայաստան) կամ սփռվեցին աշխարհով մեկ: Առաջին համաշխարհային պատերազմի ռազմաբեմ դարձավ ոչ միայն Արևմտյան, այլև Արևելյան Հայաստանը: Հայոց երկիրը դարձավ համատարած գեհեն: Այնուամենայնիվ, այս ամենից հետո էլ հայ ազգային կյանքը թեև համատարած տագնապի և ավերի պայմաններում, շարունակում էր երկրի առաջիկա հնարավոր վերածնության հույսեր փայփայել: Վերոնշյալ ժամանակաշրջանում՝ 1914–1916 թթ. հայ ազգային կյանքն իր դրական ու բացասական բոլոր էական կողմերով լավագույնս լուսաբանվել է «Հորիզոնի» էջերում: «Հորիզոնը» փորձեց իմաստավորել և արմատավորել երկրի վերածնության և վերաշինության գաղափարները հայ հասարակայնության լայն հատվածների շրջանում:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Արևելյան Հայաստան, «Հորիզոն», կամավորական շարժում, գաղթականներ, Վանի ինքնապաշտպանություն, Մուշ, Էրզրում:*

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THE DYNAMICS OF CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS IN THE INFORMATION DISCOURSE OF THE DEFENCE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH

Abstract

This article critically examines the dynamics of ceasefire violations in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and their institutional representation, drawing on materials published in *Martik*, the official newspaper of the Defence Army of the Republic of Artsakh. The study demonstrates that ceasefire violations were not confined to isolated incidents; rather, they evolved into a stabilized pattern of “protracted low-intensity conflict,” shaped by the absence of a political settlement, a structural deficit of mutual trust, and, in particular, the militarized policy pursued by the Azerbaijani side. A critical reading of the sources reveals that, within the official informational discourse, ceasefire violations were systematically attributed to the adversary’s provocative strategy, whereas the actions of the Armenian side were represented as deterrent and defensive in nature, thereby constructing a distinct normative and evaluative framework. At the same time, the official press registered a correlation between the intensification of ceasefire violations and periods of heightened international diplomatic activity, allowing the author to suggest that the instrumentalization of border tensions served

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the purpose of conveying political signals, exerting pressure on the Armenian sides, and advancing other strategic objectives. Thus, the materials published in the official newspaper *Martik* are examined not only as a documentary source, but also as a discursive platform through which the official perception of the conflict is constructed and reproduced.

Keywords: *Martik, ceasefire violations, frontline, diversionary operations, intensity, dynamics, information discourse.*

Introduction

On 12 May 1994, the ceasefire agreement entered into force, effectively bringing military operations on the territory of the Republic of Artsakh to a halt and opening the possibility for the establishment of relative stability in the region.¹ The agreement was preceded by a meeting held on 5 May 1994 in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, during which the so-called Bishkek Protocol was adopted with the participation of the parliamentary representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Republic of Artsakh, calling for the cessation of hostilities.² In the subsequent negotiation process, particularly during the meeting held in Moscow on 16 May 1994, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining the agreements that had already been reached³. The agreement differed significantly from the numerous ceasefire arrangements reached in previous years, which, as evidenced by documentary records, contemporary recollections, and mediators' assessments, had generally been short-lived and unstable in character. During 1992–1993, several attempts were made by the parties to reach ceasefire agreements; however, largely due to repeated violations by the Azerbaijani side, these efforts failed to ensure long-term stability. In this context, the ceasefire agreement of May 1994 became the first document to establish a relatively sustained cessation of hostilities along the frontline. Although the ceasefire was intended to remain in force indefinitely, the Azerbaijan–Artsakh conflict zone developed into a distinctive security environment in which the ceasefire regime was maintained without the direct presence of international peacekeeping forces. At the same time, it was consistently accompanied by violations of varying

¹ Kazimirov 2015, 158–159.

² “Martik” № 20, 1994, 1.

³ “Martik” № 21, 1994, 1.

intensity, manifested both in frontline incidents and in the form of mutual accusations articulated within the informational sphere. The only international mechanism for monitoring the ceasefire continued to be the OSCE observer mission, whose effectiveness, however, remained constrained by the limited scope of its monitoring instruments.

Under these circumstances, the study of ceasefire violations acquires particular scholarly and practical significance. An analysis of their dynamics makes it possible not only to assess the changing patterns of frontline tensions over time, but also to identify the distinctive features of informational representation constructed within official sources.

This article seeks to analyze the dynamics of ceasefire violations within the information platform of the Defence Army of the Republic of Artsakh, treating it as a primary informational source. The study is based on materials published between 2010 and 2020 in *Martik*, the official newspaper of the Defence Army, which reflect the selective and structural characteristics of official reporting on the frontline situation. It should be noted that, as the official periodical of the Defence Army, *Martik* operated under certain restrictions concerning the publication of information. Accordingly, information regarding ceasefire violations was presented selectively, with due consideration for military security requirements. Accordingly, the research takes into consideration the institutional nature of the source and its impact on the scope and content of the information it provides.

Thus, the present article seeks not only to systematise documentary evidence, but also to examine the informational representation of ceasefire violations as an important component of understanding conflict dynamics.

Patterns of Escalating Ceasefire Violations

The period between 2010 and 2013 in the Azerbaijan–Artsakh conflict zone was characterised by relative stability alongside periodic episodes of tension. Despite the series of meetings held between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan throughout 2009 (five in total), the negotiation process made no significant progress, while ceasefire violations by Azerbaijan continued periodically.

Against this backdrop, developments in 2010 unfolded without major military-political transformations and were largely anticipated; nevertheless, the pattern of ceasefire violations once again highlighted the conflict's inherent

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instability and the absence of mutual trust between the sides. Across the Defence Army's information channels, these developments were consistently portrayed as evidence of Azerbaijan's non-constructive approach, which, according to official assessments, undermined perceptions of Azerbaijan as a credible participant in the peace negotiation process.⁴

Early in 2010, the Military Council convened at the Officers' House of the Defence Army's Stepanakert Garrison to review the outcomes of the previous year's training programmes and combat readiness efforts. In his report, Major General L. Mnatsakanyan, First Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of the Defence Army, particularly noted that the adversary's actions had generally not been intended to secure territorial gains, but had persistently taken on a provocative character, eliciting proportionate responses from Armenian units stationed along the line of contact. "Throughout the year, the adversary did not even attempt to improve or move forward its positions," he stated, "presumably fully aware of the resolute and rapid response that any new provocation would encounter".⁵

In the official press, particularly in the weekly *Martik*, ceasefire violations were presented as a recurring and integral feature of everyday life along the border.⁶ At the same time, emphasis was placed on the high level of combat readiness and discipline of the servicemen, which was regarded as a key factor in ensuring stability along the border.

At the same time, *Martik* reported that ceasefire violations were predominantly of a periodic and localised nature, often involving nighttime shooting incidents, which were interpreted as manifestations of psychological pressure tactics. A military journalist noted in particular: "There is a de facto lull on the front line; no significant violations are observed. Incidents of small-arms fire by the adversary are recorded, especially at night. It gives the impression that there is a sense of fear on the other side, and by opening indiscriminate fire they are trying to signal that they are not asleep".⁷ Official assessments of these developments emphasised the systematic nature of the Armenian side's control and response mechanisms. According to the official newspaper, "The President of

⁴ Avanesyan 2010, 3.

⁵ Sarumyan 2010a, 1.

⁶ Sarukhanyan 2010, 2.

⁷ Ahyan 2010, 2.

the NKR characterised the actions of Azerbaijani groups as terrorism and a crime against humanity, and deemed it necessary to eliminate the terrorists in order to prevent such acts".⁸

A number of incidents recorded in 2010, including attempted cross-border sabotage operations, were presented in the information domain as provocative actions carried out by the adversary, during the prevention of which the effectiveness and combat capability of Defence Army units were emphasised.

In an interview with *Martik*, H. Khotanchyan, Head of the MoD ARI and Adviser to the Minister of Defence on military policy and security issues, Doctor of Political Science and Major General, commenting on the latest Azerbaijani provocation, noted that immediately after the meeting held in St Petersburg at the initiative of the Russian Federation with the participation of D. Medvedev, S. Sargsyan and I. Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan left the negotiating table, thereby avoiding questions in the territory of Russia regarding a military provocation allegedly launched a few hours earlier on his own orders. He further stressed that such actions, coinciding with peace initiatives, indicated the involvement of Azerbaijan's highest leadership, and also suggested that "armed provocations against Nagorno-Karabakh are synchronised with both the peace initiatives of the President of Russia and the message of U.S. President B. Obama, which has repeatedly been reflected in the contradictory and peace-process-resistant political behaviour of the Azerbaijani leadership".⁹

Thus, *Martik's* official publications on ceasefire violations in 2010 allow for the identification of several key trends: a) ceasefire violations are presented as a continuous and structural phenomenon, b) within the informational sphere, they are associated with Azerbaijan's political behaviour, c) Armenian actions are interpreted as defensive and stability-maintaining, and d) the military environment is portrayed as one of high readiness and controllability. Overall, based on the analysis of materials from 2010, it may be concluded that the representation of ceasefire violations within the Defence Army's informational domain was both documentary and evaluative in nature, thereby shaping a particular perception of conflict dynamics within the official information sphere.

⁸ **Sarumyan** 2010b, 1.

⁹ **Kotanjian** 2010, 4.

Relative Stability and Recurring Ceasefire Violations

The combination of relative stability and periodic violations continued in 2011 in the Azerbaijan–Artsakh conflict zone, following the trend established in previous years, characterised by the coexistence of a relatively stable ceasefire regime and recurring breaches. Ceasefire violations by Azerbaijan continued to assume an almost routine character, becoming a constant component of the conflict's ongoing dynamics.

Within the Defence Army's informational sphere, particularly in the official newspaper *Martik*, ceasefire violations were presented not only as military incidents, but also as expressions of political behaviour. Within this framework, emphasis was placed on the view that the Azerbaijani leadership's bellicose statements and actions aimed at maintaining border tensions were regarded as manifestations of a non-constructive approach towards the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Referring to the increasingly frequent violations of the ceasefire regime by the adversary, the President of the NKR stated on two occasions that such aggressive behaviour by Azerbaijan could be characterised as terrorist sabotage operations, posing a threat not only to the region but also to the broader civilised world.¹⁰

At the same time, official Defence Army statements and publications in *Martik* emphasised that the Armenian armed forces maintained a high level of combat readiness and ensured an effective system of border control. The mechanisms for responding to ceasefire violations were presented as a coordinated and purposeful set of measures aimed at stabilising the situation.

During 2011, materials published in *Martik* devoted particular attention to accounts concerning servicemen's personal qualities and conduct under conditions of border service¹¹, as well as their combat readiness. On the one hand, these materials had an informational and documentary character; on the other, they functioned as a means of reinforcing morale and psychological resilience.

Subjecting the official news coverage of the departmental press to military-political analysis, it may be observed that representative statements issued by the Defence Army Headquarters emphasised the broader background of regional instability, including developments that had emerged in the Middle East and were

¹⁰ Harutyunyan 2011, 2.

¹¹ Ed. 2011, 2.

viewed as factors potentially affecting the security environment of the South Caucasus. Within this context, the increase in Azerbaijan's military expenditures and the modernisation of its armaments were presented by the Chief of Staff of the Defence Army as indicators of potential destabilisation.¹²

An analysis of publications in *Martik* indicates that the coverage of ceasefire violations in 2011 retained the principal logic established in the previous year: they were presented as recurring yet manageable phenomena, to which the Armenian side demonstrated a proportionate and systematic response. At the same time, informational materials extensively employed an approach centred on the heroisation of border incidents, whereby the actions of military personnel were portrayed as manifestations of combat readiness and high professional competence. This mechanism was aimed not only at documentary representation but also at the ideological reinforcement of the army–society nexus. As an example, one may cite the following excerpt from one of the reports: “Senior rifleman and sniper Levon Yesayan recognises the importance of his role, particularly at the present moment, when enemy snipers continuously violate the ceasefire regime and only temporarily fall silent following retaliatory action.” As the military correspondent noted: “His task is to bring the situation under control with a single precise shot in the event of enemy provocations and compel the opposing side to adhere to the ceasefire regime. Levon performs this task effectively. The enemy has felt the impact of his accurate fire firsthand”.¹³

It is evident that violations of the ceasefire regime in the materials published by the official newspaper *Martik* are represented in a multilayered manner: (a) as an ongoing border phenomenon; (b) as an expression of political positioning; (c) as a factor of informational and psychological influence; and (d) as a setting in which the internal resilience of the military system is tested. Based on the analysis of numerous publications, it may be observed that representations of ceasefire violations within the Defence Army's information platform continued to shape a perception of the conflict as one of “managed tension”, while simultaneously emphasising a high level of military preparedness and organisational cohesion. “On 12 September, servicemen from one of the air defence units of the NKR Defence Army,” the Defence Army's official newspaper reported, “destroyed an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the Air Force of the Republic of Azerbaijan

¹² Sarumyan 2011a, 1.

¹³ Ahyan 2011, 2.

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near the village of Vazgenashen in the Martuni district after it had entered the NKR airspace for reconnaissance purposes”.¹⁴

Even the prospect of an asymmetrical war against an adversary possessing considerably greater economic resources, incomparably larger geographical dimensions and population size, as well as a higher level of militarisation, did not hinder the determined aspiration of the Armenians of Artsakh to build an independent state in their ancestral homeland. In an interview with the daily newspaper *Azg*, NKR Defence Minister M. Hakobyan emphasised that the Armenian side continuously monitors the militarisation processes taking place in Azerbaijan and assesses their potential trajectories of development. At the same time, however, it does not pursue a strategy of replicating similar measures for the purpose of maintaining the balance of power. According to Hakobyan, the Armenian side's strategic approach is grounded in its own tactical capabilities, the ultimate effectiveness of which would be determined on the battlefield. The interview also emphasised that Azerbaijan's pattern of periodically violating the ceasefire regime compels the Armenian side to implement responsive measures when necessary, while adhering to the principle of proportionality. According to the Defence Minister's assessment, escalation of tensions along the frontline does not form part of the Armenian side's strategic objectives, except in cases where such developments are precipitated by provocative actions undertaken by the opposing side. The aforementioned interview was subsequently republished in its entirety in the official newspaper *Martik*,¹⁵ indicating its informational and ideological significance within the military information space.

Also noteworthy in the context of ceasefire violations is the formulation according to which every action entails a corresponding countermeasure, while the opposing side's provocative behaviour is met with a “firm and disproportionate response” as a means of military deterrence. This approach is presented as part of a strategic toolkit aimed at maintaining situational control and preventing further hostile actions by the opposing side. During meetings held in December 2011 between representatives of the NKR Ministry of Defence and members of the media, issues relating to losses along the border were also raised. Official explanations emphasised that losses recorded on the frontline were

¹⁴ Sarumyan 2011b, 1.

¹⁵ Hakobyan 2011, 1–2.

primarily attributable to combat conditions and were not regarded as resulting from disciplinary violations.¹⁶

Overall, the 2011 publications of the official newspaper *Martik*, including interviews with military leadership and official statements, reflect several key dimensions in the perception of ceasefire violations: (a) recognition of the military asymmetry of the conflict; (b) emphasis on the autonomy of defensive strategy; (c) underscoring the recurring nature of the opposing side's actions; and (d) highlighting the restrained yet clearly defined character of responsive measures.

The analysis of published materials indicates that the coverage of ceasefire violations within the information sphere of the Artsakh Defence Army was integrated with both politico-military assessments and forms of strategic self-representation, emphasizing the stability and continuity of the Armenian side's defensive posture.

The Escalation of Reconnaissance and Sabotage Operations

Subsequent developments following the trilaterally negotiated frameworks—most notably the Bishkek Protocol—demonstrate that the ceasefire regime was not only systematically undermined but was also characterised by recurrent violations. Within this context, the 2012 publications of *Martik*, the official newspaper of the NKR Defence Army, hold significant value as primary sources, reflecting the shifting dynamics of the operational situation along the line of contact. According to data provided by the Defence Army Commander, Lieutenant General M. Hakobyan, the intensity of ceasefire violations during the first quarter of 2012 was comparable to the figures recorded throughout the entirety of 2011. On certain days, these incidents reached the dozens—with up to 51 cases documented¹⁷ —thereby underscoring their systemic nature.

Crucially, these escalatory trends correlated directly with periods of heightened international diplomatic activity. This included ongoing processes within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group as well as regional visits, most notably during Hillary Clinton's tenure or presence in the region. Concurrently, a qualitative shift occurred in early June 2012, marked by the intensification¹⁸ of sabotage and reconnaissance operations along the Berdavan, Chinari, and

¹⁶ Sarumyan 2011c, 2.

¹⁷ Sarumyan 2012a, 1.

¹⁸ Sarumyan 2012b, 2.

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Voskepar axes. This development points to a tactical deepening of the existing tensions.

In summary, the 2012 ceasefire violations are characterised not merely by a quantitative increase, but by an escalatory logic synchronized with external diplomatic developments; meanwhile, the source material from *Martik* serves as a vital primary source for reconstructing the post-ceasefire security landscape.

From Chronic Violations to Overt Military Aggression

An analytical assessment of the 2013–2016 period demonstrates that ceasefire violations in the conflict zone were not merely persistent but gained increasing intensity year after year, particularly after 2014. This timeframe can be characterized as a phase of escalation and preparation for a large-scale military confrontation.

Publications in the Defence Army's official periodical characterised the 2012–2013 period as an “era of low-intensity but persistent violations.” An increasing number of reports documented the near-daily occurrence of ceasefire infractions along the line of contact,¹⁹ primarily involving small arms and sniper fire. These reports detailed casualties and injuries on both sides, alongside recurring warnings from international monitoring bodies regarding the absence of a stable ceasefire.²⁰

Documentation of the 2014 border incidents in the official newspaper *Martik* evidenced a sharp spike in tensions, while military assessments corroborated the consensus among analysts that this particular year represented a turning point in the escalation of the conflict. Heavy weaponry was deployed with increasing frequency along the Armenian-Azerbaijani line of contact and frontier sectors. Severe clashes erupted during the summer and autumn, resulting in dozens of casualties, while the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and international stakeholders routinely issued warnings regarding the perilous trajectory of the situation. The situation on the front line continued to deteriorate throughout 2015, prompting commentators in *Martik* to analyze the deepening grid of escalation.

Between April 2 and 5, 2016, the most significant military escalation since the 1994 ceasefire took place. The hostilities saw the extensive deployment of heavy artillery, tanks, and rocket systems, alongside large-scale offensive operations.

¹⁹ Harutyunyan 2012, 1.

²⁰ “Will Arrive in the Region” 2012, 5.

One publication in *Martik* assessed the April 2 aggression not as a spontaneous spike in tensions, but rather as a “meticulously planned and prepared armed attack”.²¹ The OSCE noted that the ceasefire violations had assumed a “new quality” compared to previous years. International bodies urgently called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Following the April clashes, international mediation efforts shifted toward active discussions on expanding ceasefire monitoring mechanisms and implementing investigative mechanisms.²² Despite the agreement reached on April 5, 2016, to restore the ceasefire, intense exchange of fire persisted well into the summer, characterized by the deployment of heavy weaponry²³ and infiltration tactics employed by reconnaissance and sabotage groups. Although international mediators repeatedly emphasized that the situation was sliding toward a wider military confrontation, these warnings proved futile, primarily due to the Azerbaijani side’s obstructionist policy and other contributing factors.

Throughout the 2017–2019 period, ceasefire violations persisted unabated, as regular gunfire, localized infractions, and isolated border incidents continued to disrupt the truce.²⁴

Overall, according to the operational data summary of the Defence Army, in 2017 the ceasefire regime along the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan was violated by the opposing side approximately 14,000 times, during which more than 180,000 rounds were fired in the direction of Armenian defensive positions. In addition to small arms, the opposing side also employed Spike anti-tank guided missiles (5 rounds), 122-mm D-30 howitzers and 85-mm D-44 field guns (262 rounds), TR-107 multiple rocket launcher systems (17 rockets), 60-mm, 82-mm, and 120-mm mortars (1,042 rounds), as well as various types of grenade launchers (571 rounds).²⁵

According to summary data released by the defence authorities of Artsakh, the Azerbaijani side violated the ceasefire regime along the line of contact approximately 10,000 times in 2018, firing nearly 97,000 shots toward Armenian

²¹ RA AF MPSD 2020b, 14.

²² **Khachatryan** 2025, 484–486.

²³ **Avanesyan** 2016, 3.

²⁴ RA AF MPSD 2017, 15.

²⁵ RA MoD Press Service 2018, 2.

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positions.²⁶ Although the overall situation was officially characterized as “relatively stable,” ceasefire violations nevertheless continued. In the same year, an attempted Azerbaijani infiltration was also recorded (25 January 2018).

During 2018, particularly in the aftermath of the political transition in Armenia, military tensions declined in comparison with previous years, especially the period between 2014 and 2016. Researchers note that ceasefire violations had become less frequent and were carried out primarily with the use of light firearms; nevertheless, a complete cessation of hostilities was never achieved.

Following the meeting held in Dushanbe on 28 September 2018 between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, a period of relative calm was observed (the so-called “Dushanbe understanding”), an operational communication mechanism was established,²⁷ and tensions decreased to some extent during the final months of the year.

Ceasefire violations also persisted throughout 2019. According to the military authorities of Artsakh, approximately 9,000 violations and nearly 85,000 shots were recorded over the course of the year, although it was simultaneously noted that this represented one of the lowest levels of intensity since 2010.²⁸ In the newspaper’s official publications of 2019–2020, the relative maintenance of the ceasefire regime was attributed primarily to the combat readiness of the armed forces,²⁹ although sniper fire, border incidents, and casualties continued to indicate a situation that remained far from fully peaceful. Therefore, while the intensity of ceasefire violations declined in 2018–2019, they did not cease altogether.

Conclusion

The negotiating process established in the wake of the ceasefire—which, according to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, was intended to focus on “preparing the populations for peace” in Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Armenia—failed to manifest sustained or systemic progress on a practical level. Notwithstanding the peaceful settlement agenda regularly reaffirmed within the

²⁶ Kachar Scientific Centre Archive (KSCA), f. 192, inv. 13, fol. 43.

²⁷ Tadevosyan 2018, 4.

²⁸ Kachar Scientific Centre Archive (KSCA), f. 192, inv. 13, fol. 51.

²⁹ RA AF MPSD, 2020a, 11.

framework of international mediation, the actual dynamics of the conflict remained locked in a pattern of high tension and periodic escalation.

An analysis of the publications in the official newspaper *Martik* from 2010 to 2020 demonstrates that ceasefire violations were not accidental or episodic occurrences; rather, they manifested as a continuous and recurrent behavioral pattern, reflecting the deep-seated systemic contradictions of conflict management. Manifested in the form of border incidents, sabotage operations, and fire provocations, these violations effectively generated a state of “continuous low-intensity conflict.”

Within this context, the Azerbaijani side's behavior, as represented in official and media discourses, is characterized by a dual nature: on the one hand, declarations of readiness for a peaceful settlement on the diplomatic track; on the other, the persistence of military provocations and the demonstrative use of force along the line of contact. This contradiction underscores both the structural complexities of the negotiation process and the primacy of the power factor in regional politics.

Analytical observations indicate that the escalation in the intensity of ceasefire violations was particularly pronounced during phases of heightened international mediation initiatives. This allows for the formulation of the hypothesis that, in certain instances, the management of border tensions may also serve as a political signal aimed at reshaping negotiating positions.

At the same time, a long-term observation makes it evident that the trust deficit between the parties to the conflict remained a structural issue, one that has been overcome neither through institutional mechanisms nor via mediation formats. Under these conditions, the ceasefire regime was transformed not into a stable foundation for peace, but rather into a perpetually vulnerable instrument for maintaining a relative equilibrium.

It is also noteworthy that, according to analytical observations, the periodic intensification of military themes in Azerbaijan's domestic and foreign policy rhetoric was frequently accompanied by a logic of controlling the domestic political agenda and managing public attention. This phenomenon introduced an additional layer of domestic political influence into the dynamics of the conflict, further complicating the prospects for an exclusively negotiated settlement.

Thus, the analysis conducted on the basis of the materials published in the official newspaper *Martik* suggests that the ceasefire violations recorded between

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2010 and 2020 should be interpreted not merely as isolated military incidents, but as manifestations of the broader structural dynamics of an unresolved conflict, within which the Azerbaijani side continued to rely on coercive and militarized policy instruments. At the same time, they reflect both the limited effectiveness of the mechanisms designed to preserve the balance of power and the profound discrepancy between the political process and the military realities on the ground.

The critical analysis conducted in this study made it possible to achieve the article's primary objective: to identify the dynamics of ceasefire violations and the distinctive features of their informational representation on the basis of materials published in *Martik*, the official newspaper of the Defence Army. The present study demonstrates that the source under examination possesses not only documentary value but also enables the reconstruction of the official and institutional framework shaping perceptions of the conflict, thereby revealing its evolutionary and political dimensions.

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ՀՐԱԴԱԴԱՐԻ ԽԱԽՏՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ ԴԻՆԱՄԻԿԱՆ ԱՐՅԱԽԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՊԱՇՏՊԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԲԱՆԱԿԻ ՏԵՂԵԿԱՏՎԱԿԱՆ ԴԻՍԿՈՒՐՍՈՒՄ

Ամփոփում

Հոդվածում ուսումնասիրվում են հրադադարի ռեժիմի խախտումների դինամիկան և դրանց ինստիտուցիոնալ ներկայացվածությունը Ադրբեջան-

Արցախի հակամարտության գոտում՝ հիմնվելով ԼՂՀ Պաշտպանության բանակի պաշտոնական տպագիր օրգանի՝ «Մարտիկ» թերթի նյութերի վրա: Ցույց է տրվում, որ հրադադարի ռեժիմի խախտումները չեն սահմանափակվել առանձին միջադեպերով, այլ ձևավորել են «շարունակվող ցածր ինտենսիվության հակամարտության» կայուն մոդել, որը պայմանավորված էր քաղաքական կարգավորման բացակայությամբ, վստահության կառուցվածքային պակասով, ինչպես նաև ադրբեջանական կողմի ռազմատենչ քաղաքականությամբ:

Աղբյուրների քննադատական վերլուծությունը բացահայտել է, որ պաշտոնական տեղեկատվական դիսկուրսում խախտումները համակարգված կերպով վերագրվել են հակառակորդի սադրիչ ռազմավարությանը, մինչդեռ հայկական կողմի գործողությունները ներկայացվել են որպես զսպող և պաշտպանական բնույթի, ինչի արդյունքում ձևավորվել է հակամարտության իրադարձությունների պաշտոնական գնահատման և մեկնաբանման հստակ շրջանակ: Միաժամանակ արձանագրվում է, որ խախտումների ինտենսիվության աճը համընկնում էր միջազգային դիվանագիտական գործընթացների ակտիվացման փուլերի հետ, ինչը թույլ է տալիս ենթադրել, որ դա արվել է սահմանային լարվածության միջոցով քաղաքական ազդակներ փոխանցելու և հայկական կողմերի նկատմամբ ճնշում գործադրելու նպատակով:

Այսպիսով, «Մարտիկ» թերթի նյութերը դիտարկվում են ոչ միայն որպես փաստագրական, առաջնային սկզբնաղբյուր, այլև իբրև դիսկուրսիվ հարթակ, որի շրջանակներում ձևավորվել և վերարտադրվել է հակամարտության պաշտոնական ընկալումը:

Բանալի բառեր՝ «Մարտիկ», հրադադարի խախտումներ, շփման գիծ, դիվերսիաներ, ինտենսիվություն, դինամիկա, տեղեկատվական դիսկուրս:

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THE PECULIARITIES OF THE PEDAGOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE IRANIAN ARMENIAN SCHOOL (2000S)

Abstract

From the point of view of providing the best education available to all children, a pedagogically and psychologically healthy atmosphere and its periodic renewal are crucial. Only in conditions of a healthy pedagogical and psychological atmosphere it is possible to organize an educational process that is also capable of providing the best education for students.

The Iranian Armenian school had long-standing traditions, which nowadays are intertwined with the Iranian state educational standards. The existence of the Iranian Armenian school is primarily due to the state education system, where the Armenian community and the educational councils subordinate to its Diocesan councils try to preserve the modest place of the Iranian Armenian school whenever possible.

It is known that there are three dioceses of the Armenian Church in Iran - Atrpatakan, Tehran and Isfahan, with the diocesan councils of which have educational councils. It is the latter, as responsible structures, that are engaged in the implementation of educational functions in community schools.

In Iranian Armenian schools with a small number of Armenian and mainly Persian teaching teams and directorates, teaching teams work in conditions of

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mutual cooperation, close ties have been formed between them, and a healthy psychological atmosphere has been created in schools.

Keywords: *Iran, Armenian school, Educational Councils, pedagogical and psychological atmosphere, educational right, teaching staff, Persian teachers.*

Introduction

There are three dioceses of the Armenian Church operating on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the jurisdiction of which diocesan councils operate. The body subordinate to this council is the Council on Education, which is responsible for the internal life of Armenian national schools, educational issues, teachers, textbooks, teaching the Armenian language, student academic performance, financial support and other issues. The Armenian Diocesan Council of Tehran, which oversees the districts under the care of Arak, Qazvin, Rasht, Anzali, Sari, Gorgan and St. Karagan's the Mesrop Church Council includes the largest community in terms of population and a network of schools in Iran. Accordingly, within the framework of the Council on Education, importance is attached to the creation, maintenance of a healthy and harmonious psychological and pedagogical atmosphere in schools of Iranian Armenians and regular work with competent government agencies in this direction. To this end, back in the early 2000s, the primate of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran, Archbishop Sepuh Sargsyan, took serious steps.

In an Iranian educational environment with Islamic religious mores and ideology, it is indeed desirable to develop one's own traditions of the Armenian school. That's why an attempt is being made to synthesize traditional Armenian educational components with Iranian ones.

The need to highlight the initiatives of the Iranian Armenian community structures aimed at further improving and maintaining the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere in Iranian Armenian schools is to justify it as an important phenomenon of the educational life of the community.

The purpose of the article is to identify the pedagogical and psychological characteristics of the teaching staff of Armenian schools in the Iranian educational space, to consider their impact on the development and progress of education of the Armenian community.

The various fields of activity of the Armenian community of Iran have been examined in detail by well-known historians in the past, but this study primarily

discussed the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere of the modern school of Iranian Armenians with its subtle and sensitive features. The dedication to educating the educated generation of Persian and Armenian teachers involved in Iranian Armenian schools has created an atmosphere that is also a unique manifestation of interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

The novelty of the study should be considered the fact that at the same time cooperation is discussed in the context of the work of Armenian and Persian teaching staff as a peculiar phenomenon in the context of the Armenian Diaspora. In fact, with the involvement of the same social strata of Iranian society, educational work is being carried out for a new generation, the extension of which to other spheres of public life, such as public administration, will also be in great demand.

Pedagogical and psychological features and the resulting activities of diocesan councils indicate the goal of protecting their right to exist in difficult socio-economic conditions, which deserves to be studied as a separate topic. As part of the coverage of various issues, certain topics related to the problem were considered by Professor V. Baiburdyan, G. Iskandaryan, as well as Ed. Baghdasaryan, G. Badalyan and others. Annual reports published by the Tehran-based daily newspaper "Alik" magazine, the Council of Education of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran, and other publications were used to highlight and present the problem.

Description of the main material. A brief overview of current pedagogical and psychological issues in schools

The pedagogical and psychological atmosphere in schools or educational institutions in general is very important in the modern world, the formation of which is influenced by a number of objective and subjective factors. Obviously, some of these factors can have a positive impact on the public life of a teacher, and in some instances they can cause problems. That's why the topic under consideration has become the subject of study by many researchers. And in this context should see the reality that all this, with certain additions and transformations, finds its other expression also in educational institutions of diaspora operating in different countries. It is obvious that each community of the diaspora has its own characteristic features, which determine their identity, national traditions and psychology.

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It is worth noting that Diaspora communities use school education as a central way to reproduce their identity throughout generations. However, religious institutions, clubs and specific events can also perform a role in reproducing the groups' cultural identity, working as non-formal spaces of education.¹

The various strata of the Armenian community scattered around the world also have these peculiarities, in particular, the Armenian community of Iran, which became the topic of our research. The presence of Armenians in Iran goes back centuries and even millennia, but the subject of our research is its modern educational problems, the peculiarities of the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere of the Armenian school in Iran in the 2000s. In this study, an attempt was made to analyze pedagogical and psychological issues that are considered an integral part of modern educational processes from a scientific and critical point of view.

This study attempted to analyze from a scientific and critical point of view the pedagogical and psychological issues that are considered an integral part of the educational processes in the modern Armenian community of Iran.

Another researcher, Reza Gholami, also writes: "I regard diasporisation as a process through which educational spaces (i.e. school buildings, classrooms, staff rooms, as well as the discourses and concrete practices around curriculum and pedagogy) are critically engaged with, and as such influenced, by educators and pupils with diasporic connections. This influence can be deliberate and systematic, or it can be mundane and at times not even fully conscious".²

The next problem in the educational process is that, taking into account the various options offered in the framework of university-based teacher education, preservice teachers might miss out on some core areas of educational science depending on the classes they choose. Consequently, diagnosing preservice teachers' PPK to identify the strengths and weaknesses of university curricula seems imperative.³

It should be noted that the psychological process of students in the university environment and its study are also relevant with its inherent features.⁴ It is in the

¹ **Bogossian-Porto & Bogossian** 2021, 215–238.

² **Gholami** 2025, 89.

³ **Pollmeier** 2024, 9.

⁴ **Buttazzoni** 2022, 1–24.

context of the above and in this process that it is also relevant the systematic scoping review, which explores how Pedagogical Content Knowledge is conceptualised and investigated in peer-reviewed empirical studies within higher education.⁵

It is noteworthy that methods of improving the mental health of students during the war were considered by a number of researchers who presented the disclosure of the psychological essence of the concept of psychological stability even among young people, psychological factors of stress conditions of students and other issues. To achieve the goal, that research they considered the following questions: such as revealing the psychological essence of the concept of psychological stability even in youth, psychological factors of stressogenic factors of student youth; content-organizational aspects of the formation of psychological stability of students in the conditions of martial law and etc.⁶

As a result of the military actions recorded in recent years, serious psychological problems have also arisen among the behavior of students in the Armenian community of Ukraine, Syria back in the 2010s, and today in Iran.

In conflict situations, prolonged exposure to war-related stressors can lead to chronic anxiety. This, in turn, significantly impairs cognitive and emotional functions in adolescents.⁷

As for the Armenian community with its centuries-old past, the Iranian state acts as a sponsor of small religious minorities, but at the same time, as a rule, all schools, including Armenian ones, are dominated by state standards.

A brief overview of the modern Armenian school of Iran

The existence of an Armenian school in Iran was closely linked to the number of Armenians, for which it is important to take into account statistical data. In 1890, the number of Iranian Armenians was about 80,000⁸, in 1914 – 100,000⁹, in 1979 – 200,000¹⁰, in 2003 – 80,000¹¹, currently – 50,000. It is noteworthy that before the Genocide, the Armenian community of Iran occupied the first

⁵ **Sarkar** 2024, 1.

⁶ **Zhihaylo** 2022, 52–64.

⁷ **Abend** 2023, 2–16.

⁸ **Badalyan** 2011, 397.

⁹ **Yeghiazaryan** 2017, 121.

¹⁰ **Dallakyan** 2004, 194.

¹¹ **Pahlevanyan** 2003, 240.

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place among Armenian refugees. While it has now decreased significantly. The Armenians of Iran have come into force with major shifts in the 21st century. The arrows on these movements lead to the USA, the EU, as well as to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf and Australia. One of the main features of displacement is that Iranian Armenians are looking for an environment with better social and stable conditions.¹²

Speaking about the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere of the modern Iranian Armenian school, it is necessary to take into account a number of features.

According to the main and civil laws of Iran, the Iranian-Armenians, adhering to the laws of the country and being recognised as religious community, has the freedom of religion, beliefs and ceremonies, the rights to teach its religion, language and traditional culture, as well as to have its special representatives to the parliament. In the personal issues, it adheres to the religious and confession laws and indisputable traditions that serve as basis to manage the clerical, religious and educational affairs through relevant councils and bodies.¹³

Legally, there is no “Armenian school” in Iran, since all schools in the country are de jure included in the general public education system. There are only public schools that provide education for children from Armenian families (as communities belonging to religious minorities). At the same time, the entire process of teaching general education subjects takes place in Persian (Farsi) language. In these schools, students with a certain number of hours per week have the opportunity to study the Armenian language and literature, history and religion of the Armenian people.¹⁴

Interestingly, in 1997, there were 556,000 classes in Iran, with an average of 29 students in each class.¹⁵ Extracurricular and overtime classes in Iran are not limited by law, so they are one of the main means of Armenian education. This factor of additional classes is used as much as possible to introduce the children of the Armenian community to the native language, history and culture of the Armenian people.¹⁶

¹² **Mkrtchyan** 2024, 159–182.

¹³ **Iskandaryan** 2019, 132.

¹⁴ **Baiburtian** 2013, 95.

¹⁵ **Badalyan** 2011, 339.

¹⁶ **Baiburtian** 1999, 223.

An important feature is also that after the Islamic Revolution, all schools in Iran became single-sex.¹⁷ This includes all Armenian schools. By the way, this is an exceptional phenomenon in modern Armenian educational realities. Similarly, the teaching staff in schools, whether they are male or female, is same-sex in accordance with the Department of Education and the requirements of the school.

After the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979), a dual effort scenario in the context of the philosophy of education could be recognized. On the one hand, we recognize efforts to revive Islamic philosophy and its influence on the education and formulation of an Islamic approach to modern education under the name of “Islamic education”. These efforts marked the beginning of the Islamic new horizon in education along with various Muslim educationalists who dealt with aspects of Islamic education at “the First World Conference on Muslim Education” held in 1977.¹⁸

Perhaps it was precisely the above circumstances that led back in the early 1980s to the replacement of Armenian inspectors of Armenian schools by Persian specialists, who, naturally, were unfamiliar with the religious and national characteristics of the Armenian people.¹⁹

Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan's initiatives to strengthen the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere in Iranian Armenian schools

In 1979, after the Islamic Revolution, the community's ownership rights to its schools were abolished. The teaching staff of the Armenian schools was replaced by Persian teachers and inspectors, leaving the latter to the school directorates. However, since the 2000–2001 academic year, Armenian inspectors and deputy inspectors have also been appointed.²⁰

Iranian education features a highly centralized system under the Ministry of Education, where inspectors, or supervisors, primarily focus on controlling teacher activity, pedagogical methods, and administrative compliance. Inspectors (often called in Persian “Moallem” for teachers or “bāzras” for inspectors) evaluate classroom performance, curriculum implementation and student attainment.

¹⁷ Baiburtian 2025, 255.

¹⁸ Varaki & Chaboki 2023, 17.

¹⁹ Mkrtchyan 2025, 174.

²⁰ Baghdasarian 2015, 194.

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From the very beginning of his activity, Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan paid great attention to the Iranian Armenian school and, in order to strengthen its pedagogical and psychological atmosphere, launched a number of initiatives. This is evidenced by numerous publications published in the community newspaper "Alik" in the early 2000s.

In an interview published in July 2000 by the daily newspaper "Alik" as the newly elected primate of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran, Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan notes: "...From the first second of my arrival here, I focused my interest and attention on our national schools, and during the meetings I had with government officials, I emphasized the importance of our schools the most...".²¹ It was about the Armenian and Christian descriptions of schools, since the teaching of the Armenian language is insufficient, and the state of religious textbooks is not enviable. For this purpose, it has become relevant to organize two-day courses for teachers of the Armenian language and religion in cooperation with the Council of Education. That's why Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan, emphasizing the importance of the prerequisites necessary for Armenian education, concludes: "... In the case of lessons, this is not only a way to teach a lesson, but also to create an atmosphere so that the student is involved in this atmosphere and that his feelings about his faith and language are so strong and alive that he gets carried away and does not wait for someone to dictate to him".²² It was about increasing the number of Armenian teachers who are faithful to the Armenian traditions. In this case, a more favorable atmosphere would have been created in the schools of the Armenian community.

In order to make progress on the above-mentioned issue, Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan, together with the deputies of the Iranian Parliament from the Armenians of Northern and Southern Iran, Levon Davtyan and Zhorzhik Abrahamyan, made efforts to confirm educational rights in Armenian schools as much as possible. It was about restoring the rights they had before, but partially lost after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

This is precisely the goal pursued by Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan's pastoral visits to Armenian schools and preschools, the extensive information about which, published in print media, gives a definite idea of the directorate, teaching staff and its pedagogical and psychological atmosphere of the Iranian Armenian school

²¹ "Alik" № 136, 01.07.2000, № 143, 09.07.2000.

²² "Alik" № 104, 30.05.2001.

in the years under review, even the demography of the Armenian community. However, the same publications also consider existing problems, which are characterized as “difficulties”, rather cautiously and cursorily.

Let us note some of these visits in substance, which to one degree or another influenced the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere. Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan visited following elementary schools and preschools for boys: “Gulbenkian”, “V. Hovsepyan”, “Kushesh Davtyan” or “Mariamyan”, “N. Gulbenkian”, as well as following school for girls: “Mari Manukyan”, “Araks”.²³ However, in “Arax” school, there was a decrease in the number of Armenian students in high school in favor of the Persian school, which was related to the issue of better preparation for university entrance exams. It is noteworthy that all schools received a Bible from Bishop Sepuh as a gift. It is obvious that the religious and moral instructions, deep thoughts and dedication of the spiritual literature of Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan were useful for creating a healthy pedagogical and psychological atmosphere.

From the point of view of contributing to the creation of a psychological and pedagogical atmosphere in an Iranian school for Armenians, it should be considered useful that since 1994, the organization of Sunday classes with the participation of young people through the efforts of Priest Mesrop Ratevosyan. As of 2001, more than 150 students had participated in these courses. Obviously, due to the lack of study time devoted to Armenian studies in Armenian schools, hundreds of Armenian students were given the opportunity to fill the gap. In the schools of the Armenian community of Iran, there are deputy inspectors-Armenians, and the inspectors are mostly Persians, but the latter are simply present as people from the state in the school, if not the main work, then everything is done by deputy inspectors. The Armenian Deputy Inspector is responsible for teaching the Armenian language, Armenian history, and religion.²⁴

Conclusions

In many countries of the world, there are Armenian communities in which daily or one-day centers of education operate. Among them, the Armenian community of Iran stands out, where Armenian schools operate in the general state education system. An important feature of the Iranian Armenian school is that not only Armenian, but also Persian teachers are involved in its educational

²³ “Alik” № 129, 02.07.2001, № 124, 26.06.2001, № 119, 20.06.2001.

²⁴ Karapetyan 2018, 70.

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process. It is thanks to the joint activities and leadership of Persian teachers that the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere of the Armenian school of Iran is being formed. By the way, in practice, it is rare for foreign teachers in the Diaspora to participate in the educational process and run an Armenian school by force of law. From this point of view, it is unique both in its advantages and possible and potential nuances. It is obvious that the Persian teaching staff, along with the ability to master professional skills and activities worthy of appreciation, may be relevant to the Armenian national psychology in some matters.

Taking into account the above important circumstances the purpose of the pastoral activity of the head of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran, Bishop Sepuh Sargsyan, was to give a spiritual and moral boost to the Armenian apprenticeship and teaching staff. Thus, as a result of the activities of the head of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran, Christian morality and sermonistic speech helped to become useful for the pedagogical and psychological atmosphere, create a spiritual connection with the Armenian students, build new bridges between the Armenian and Persian teaching teams, strengthen human contacts between them, and transmit the Armenian national spirit to the younger generation. Undoubtedly, consideration of the modern requirements of secular education could also be an additional useful factor. However, within the limits of available possibilities, the education councils operating under the jurisdiction of the Armenian dioceses are not always able to develop clear educational programs.

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ԿԱՐԵՆ ՄԿՐՏՉՅԱՆ

Պատմական գիտությունների թեկնածու,

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**ԻՐԱՆԱՀԱՅ ԴՊՐՈՑԻ ՄԱՆԿԱՎԱՐԺԱԿԱՆ ԵՎ
ՀՈԳԵԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ ՄԹՆՈԼՈՐՏԻ
ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ (2000-ԱԿԱՆ ԹԹ.)**

Ամփոփում

Լավագույն կրթությունը բոլոր երեխաներին հասանելի դարձնելու առումով կարևոր նշանակություն ունի մանկավարժահոգեբանական առողջ մթնոլորտը և դրա՝ ժամանակ առ ժամանակ թարմացումը: Միայն մանկավարժական և հոգեբանական առողջ մթնոլորտի պայմաններում է, որ հնարավոր է կազմակերպել կրթական գործընթացը, որն ի զորու է ապահովել լավագույն կրթություն:

Իրանահայ դպրոցն ունի վաղեմի ավանդույթներ, որոնք մեր ժամանակներում միահյուսված են իրանական պետական կրթական չափորոշիչներին: Իրանահայ դպրոցի գոյությունը պայմանավորված է հենց պետական կրթական համակարգով, որտեղ հայ համայնքը և նրա թեմական խորհուրդներին ենթակա կրթական խորհուրդները հնարավորինս փորձում են պահպանել իրանահայ դպրոցի համեստ տեղը:

Հայտնի է, որ Իրանի տարածքում գործում են Հայոց եկեղեցու երեք՝ Ատրպատականի, Թեհրանի և Սպահանի թեմերը, որոնց թեմական խորհուրդներին կից գործում են կրթական խորհուրդները: Հենց վերջիններս էլ, որպես պատասխանատու կառույցներ, զբաղվում են համայնքի դպրոցներում կրթական գործառույթների իրականացմամբ:

Մեր ուսումնասիրության խնդիրն է ընդգծել իրանահայ համայնքային կառույցների նախաձեռնությունները, որոնք ուղղված են իրանահայ դպրոցներում մանկավարժական և հոգեբանական մթնոլորտի հետագա բարելավմանը և պահպանմանը՝ որպես համայնքի կրթական կյանքի կարևոր երևույթ: Հոգվածի նպատակն է բացահայտել Իրանի կրթական տարածքում

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գործող հայկական դպրոցների ուսուցչական կազմի մանկավարժական և հոգեբանական առանձնահատկությունները, դիտարկել դրանց ազդեցությունը հայ համայնքի կրթության զարգացման և առաջընթացի վրա:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Իրան, հայկական դպրոց, Կրթական խորհուրդներ, մանկավարժական և հոգեբանական մթնոլորտ, կրթության իրավունք, ուսուցչական անձնակազմ, պարսիկ ուսուցիչներ:*

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U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY: CURRENT CHALLENGES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND ARMENIA

Abstract

U.S. immigration policy has undergone significant transformation in recent years, reflecting global challenges related to mobility, security, labor markets, and humanitarian protection. These changes are particularly salient for Eastern Europe and the Republic of Armenia, where migration is shaped by historical legacies, post-socialist transitions, economic inequalities, and strong diasporic ties. This article examines contemporary U.S. immigration policy with a focus on legal migration pathways, asylum and refugee restrictions, and intensified enforcement measures under the second administration of President Donald Trump. Adopting an intercultural and humanistic perspective, the study analyzes the implications of these policies for Armenian and Eastern European diasporas, especially regarding family reunification, cultural transmission, and transnational belonging. Through a comparative lens that contrasts U.S. approaches with European migration frameworks, the article highlights the broader cultural, social, and geopolitical consequences of increasingly restrictive immigration governance for transatlantic relations and regional development. The analysis contributes to ongoing debates on migration policy, diaspora sustainability, and integration in pluralistic societies.

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U.S. Immigration Policy: Current Challenges in Eastern Europe and Armenia...

Keywords: *U.S. immigration policy; Trump administration; asylum and refugees; Armenian diaspora; cultural integration; Eastern Europe; migration governance.*

Introduction

In the early 2020s, U.S. immigration policy has become one of the most contested arenas of domestic and international debate, influencing not only geopolitical relationships but also cultural identities, diasporic imaginaries, and cross-cultural integration. While immigration policy is often discussed primarily through the lenses of security, border control, and economic utility, its cultural and human consequences reverberate deeply across sending societies, especially in regions such as Eastern Europe and the Republic of Armenia. Migration policies shape not only who is able to move, but also how families remain connected, how languages are transmitted across generations, and how diasporic identities are sustained or disrupted.

Armenia's historical experiences of migration, displacement, and cultural survival are closely entwined with contemporary policy shifts in the United States, which continues to play a central role in global migration governance.¹ The presence of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians in the United States² has created one of the most institutionally developed and culturally active diasporas in the world. Armenian churches, schools, media outlets, literary circles, and advocacy organizations have long functioned as bridges between homeland and diaspora, fostering a transnational cultural space that transcends borders.

This article examines current challenges in U.S. immigration policy with particular attention to administrative changes under President Donald Trump's second administration (2025–present). It situates legal and enforcement shifts within broader cultural, political, and human processes, emphasizing their implications for Armenia and Eastern European societies. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach that integrates policy analysis with cultural and diasporic perspectives, the article highlights how immigration governance affects identity formation, family networks, linguistic continuity, and diaspora engagement.

¹ Tölölyan 1996, 3–36; ID. 2007, 647–655.

² Statement by the President on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2012. The White House Office of the Press Secretary. S.Res. 150-116 th Congress (2019-2020).

U.S. Immigration Policy in Flux: Key Trends

Reorientation Toward Enforcement and Restriction

In the United States, asylum claims reached historic levels prior to recent policy tightening, with nearly 945,370 applications submitted in FY 2023, representing an 88 % increase over the previous year.³ At the same time, mounting backlogs of pending asylum cases exceeded one million by 2024, creating legal uncertainty for applicants regardless of origin.⁴

Since January 2025, U.S. immigration policy has undergone a pronounced reorientation toward enforcement, deterrence, and restriction. Through a combination of executive orders, regulatory reforms, and legislative initiatives, the Trump administration has prioritized border security and interior enforcement as central pillars of governance.

One of the most consequential measures has been the expansion of expedited removal procedures, allowing immigration authorities to deport certain non-citizens without full court hearings. This mechanism significantly limits access to legal representation and judicial review, raising concerns regarding due process and constitutional protections.

Executive Order no. 14159, titled “Protecting the American People Against Invasion”, formalized this enforcement-driven approach by broadening the scope of expedited removal and increasing penalties for unauthorized presence.⁵ The order also introduced financial consequences for so-called “sanctuary jurisdictions”, withholding federal funds from states and municipalities that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities. Critics argue that such measures strain federal–local relations and disproportionately affect immigrant-heavy urban communities.

Complementing these actions, the ***Laken Riley Act*** (2025) mandates detention without bond for certain categories of non-citizens charged with criminal offenses, including non-violent and minor crimes.⁶ While proponents frame the law as a public safety measure, legal scholars warn that it contributes

³ USA Facts, 2024.

⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2024, DHS Office of Immigration Statistics 2024.

⁵ Executive Order № 14159, 2025. *Register* 90, № 18 (January 29, 2025), 8443–8448

⁶ Laken Riley Act, Public Law (2025), United States Congress, Washington, Pub. L. 119-1, 139 Stat. 3.

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to the criminalization of non-citizen status and expands the use of prolonged detention. Together, these initiatives reflect a policy posture that prioritizes deterrence over integration and enforcement over inclusion.

In 2025 President Trump **suspended the annual Green Card (Diversity Visa) lottery**, the program that typically issues about 50,000 diversity visas each year to people from countries with low U.S. immigration rates.⁷ This pause was justified by DHS on “security concerns.” The administration has directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to **re-examine Green Cards held by people from certain “countries of concern.”** This includes about 19 countries previously targeted by travel bans and immigration pauses (e.g., Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran, Somalia, Venezuela). The goal, according to officials, is enhanced national security screening.

In January 2026, the U.S. Department of State announced an indefinite pause on issuing immigrant visas (consular processing for green cards) for nationals of 75 countries, including many from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.⁸ Armenia and similar states were explicitly listed in this framework. According to State Department communications, the pause is intended to allow a review of “public charge” determinations — assessments of whether incoming immigrants are likely to become dependent on public benefits.

Humanitarian Protections, Asylum, and Refugee Limits

Humanitarian pathways have contracted sharply under the current administration, marking a departure from long-standing U.S. engagement with international refugee protection norms.⁹ The suspension of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) represents a significant departure from decades of bipartisan support for refugee resettlement as a cornerstone of U.S. humanitarian leadership. Refugee admissions ceilings have been lowered, resettlement flights halted, and partnerships with international organizations scaled back. As of fiscal year 2024, more than 1.3 million asylum applications were pending before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, while nearly 1.5 million additional cases remained pending in immigration courts.¹⁰ The backlog

⁷ U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2025.

⁸ U.S. Department of State 2026.

⁹ Human Rights Watch 2025.

¹⁰ Migration Policy Institute 2025.

in immigration courts exceeded 3.4 million cases by late 2025, with average waiting periods surpassing four years for asylum hearings.¹¹

Combined with increased denial rates—for example, in March 2025 immigration judges denied **76 % of decided asylum cases**—these trends indicate an environment of restrictive adjudication.¹² The backlog in immigration courts exceeded **3.4 million cases by late 2025**, with average wait times surpassing four years for asylum hearings. These procedural barriers place significant legal and psychological strain on asylum seekers, who may languish in limbo for years while unable to work legally or reunite with family members.

Similarly, the dismantling of regional parole initiatives, including the Cuba–Haiti–Nicaragua–Venezuela (CHNV) program, reflects a retreat from structured migration frameworks designed to channel mobility through regulated pathways.¹³ These programs previously aimed to reduce irregular migration by providing legal entry pathways, yet their suspension has increased uncertainty and vulnerability among potential migrants.

Asylum policy has also been reshaped through regulatory measures that echo earlier pandemic-era restrictions. New administrative rules authorize the denial of asylum claims on public health grounds, reviving executive discretion reminiscent of Title 42 expulsions. Although framed as protective public health measures, such policies have been criticized for undermining international refugee law and the principle of non-refoulement.¹⁴

Legal Migration Pathways and Visa Reform

Beyond enforcement and humanitarian restrictions, the administration's agenda has also reshaped legal immigration pathways. Stricter visa interview requirements have been reinstated, reducing eligibility for interview waivers and lengthening processing times for family-based and employment-based visas.¹⁵ These administrative barriers create additional uncertainty for migrants who seek to enter the United States through lawful channels.

¹¹ The World Data 2025.

¹² Visaverge, «Asylum Denial Rates Rise in 2025», VisaVerge, 2025

¹³ U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2025, 90 Fed. Reg. 13611–13622 (Mar. 25, 2025).

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *US Immigration Enforcement and Human Rights Concerns*, cit.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State 2025, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/interview-waiver-update-feb-18-2025.html>

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At the same time, new selective pathways have emerged, such as the proposed “**Trump Gold Card**,” which offers expedited immigrant visas in exchange for substantial financial investment.¹⁶ This initiative reflects a market-oriented approach to migration policy, privileging capital mobility over family reunification and humanitarian need. Scholars have long observed the growing commodification of migration regimes in the context of globalization and neoliberal restructuring.¹⁷

Parallel restrictions on employment authorization—such as shortening the validity period of work permits for refugees and asylees—further illustrate a strategy of intensified vetting and bureaucratic control.¹⁸ These measures complicate long-term integration prospects by limiting labor market stability and economic self-sufficiency among protected populations.

Collectively, these developments narrow legal avenues for migration while reinforcing enforcement priorities. The cumulative effect is the production of a policy environment that discourages both unauthorized and lawful mobility, reshaping migration incentives at a structural level.

Armenian Migration and Asylum Claims: Recent Trends

In recent years, Armenian migration to the United States has increasingly included asylum-seeking and humanitarian pathways, particularly following periods of political instability, economic hardship, and regional conflict. Armenian asylum applications rose noticeably after the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war and again following renewed security concerns in the South Caucasus.¹⁹ According to official visa issuance statistics, Armenian nationals received 3,676 immigrant visas in 2023, reflecting the continued strength of migration ties between Armenia and the United States despite tightening controls.²⁰

¹⁶ U.S. Department of State 2025, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/visas-news/interview-waiver-update-sept-18-2025.html>.

¹⁷ Papastergiadis 2000, 54–75.

¹⁸ Migration Policy Institute 2025, 10–30.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2023, DHS Office of Immigration Statistics 2023. Table 17, “Individuals Granted Asylum Affirmatively by Region and Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2014–2023” and Table 19, “Individuals Granted Asylum Defensively by Region and Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2014–2023”.

²⁰ Schengen Visa News, 2024.

Evidence from migration advocacy networks suggests that Armenian nationals crossing the U.S.–Mexico border increased in the years following the 2020 conflict, as individuals sought asylum due to security concerns and economic disruption.²¹ Several asylum claims have centered on political persecution, military conscription pressures, and vulnerability following displacement, particularly among individuals originating from border regions. However, the tightening of U.S. asylum standards—combined with expanded expedited removal procedures—has resulted in higher rejection rates and prolonged legal uncertainty for Armenian applicants.²² These developments place additional strain on Armenian-American community organizations, which frequently provide legal assistance, housing support, and cultural mediation for newly arrived migrants.

Restrictions on family-based visas have also affected Armenian transnational families. Prolonged backlogs in family reunification cases have delayed the arrival of elderly parents and minor children, weakening intergenerational cultural transmission and intensifying emotional and economic pressures within diaspora households²³. Such disruptions affect not only individual migrants but also the broader cultural continuity of Armenian diasporic life.

Eastern European Migration: Skilled Mobility and Legal Barriers

Migration from Eastern Europe to the United States has historically followed **educational, employment-based, and diversity visa pathways**, particularly from countries such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Poland, and Romania. Highly skilled professionals, including IT specialists, engineers, and medical personnel, have used temporary work visas (H-1B, J-1) as stepping stones toward permanent residence.²⁴ However, recent U.S. policy changes—such as stricter visa interviews, reduced waivers, and increased administrative scrutiny—have disproportionately affected applicants from post-socialist states. Scholars note that Eastern European migrants increasingly perceive U.S. immigration governance as

²¹ Human Rights Watch 2023.

²² Ibid.

²³ Avagyan 2019, 45–67.

²⁴ U.S. Department of State 2024, <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/AnnualReports/FY2024AnnualReport/Table%20XVI.pdf>

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unpredictable and exclusionary, redirecting mobility aspirations toward Canada or the European Union.²⁵

A notable case concerns Ukrainian nationals who, despite ongoing armed conflict, face limited long-term protection mechanisms in the United States compared to temporary protection instruments available within the European Union framework.²⁶ The absence of durable status pathways reinforces uncertainty and weakens long-term integration prospects.

Armenian and Eastern European scholarship has further emphasized the cultural and identity-based consequences of migration, highlighting how mobility reshapes collective memory, linguistic practices, and national narratives. Migration thus operates not only as an economic strategy but also as a transformative cultural process that reconfigures belonging and transnational attachment.

Armenian and Eastern European scholarship has increasingly emphasized the cultural, literary, and identity-based consequences of migration, highlighting how mobility reshapes collective memory, language practices, and national narratives.²⁷

The Armenian Diaspora in the United States

Armenian migration to the United States is deeply rooted in historical trauma, including the Armenian Genocide, subsequent political upheavals, and post-Soviet economic transitions.²⁸

Over time, Armenian-American communities have developed robust institutional infrastructures that preserve cultural heritage and facilitate transnational engagement. Armenian language schools, Apostolic and Catholic churches, cultural associations, and diasporic media play a central role in sustaining collective memory and identity. Recent tightening of U.S. immigration policy, however, has tangible effects on these transnational communities. Restrictions on family reunification visas, prolonged processing times, and expanded detention practices disrupt kinship networks that are central to Armenian diasporic life. For Armenian migrants, these trends are not merely

²⁵ **Faist** 2013, 1637–1646; **Castles, De Haas, Miller** 2020.

²⁶ European Commission 2024, 2–5.

²⁷ **Mkrtchyan** 2017, 88–101; **Brubaker** 2011, 1–19.

²⁸ **Tölölyan** 1996, 3–36; **Kasbarian** 2018.

statistical: they reflect lived experiences of migration under increasingly constrained policy environments. Family-based migration has historically enabled cultural transmission and mutual support between generations; when such pathways are constrained, cultural continuity is weakened.²⁹

Heightened enforcement also generates fear and anxiety among mixed-status families, discouraging civic participation and limiting engagement with public institutions.³⁰ These dynamics risk eroding trust within immigrant communities and interrupting the everyday practices—language use, religious observance, community gatherings—through which culture is reproduced.

Eastern European Migration Experiences

Across Eastern Europe, migration toward Western Europe and the United States has long been driven by a combination of economic disparities, political instability, and aspirations for cultural and professional mobility.³¹ Countries in the post-socialist space have experienced significant population outflows, particularly among younger and highly educated cohorts. In the European context, Armenia's engagement with broader mobility frameworks illustrates divergent governance models. In September 2024, Armenia and the European Union launched a visa liberalization dialogue aimed at easing short-stay travel for Armenian citizens to the EU.³² This initiative reflects a commitment to managed legal mobility as a complement to security and administrative benchmarks, standing in contrast to the increasingly restrictive U.S. visa processing, where prolonged interview requirements and reduced waivers have lengthened waiting times and discouraged lawful family reunification and employment mobility.³³

In Eastern Europe more broadly, regional migration dynamics highlight the interplay between policy environments and mobility aspirations. EU data indicate that 124,000 non-EU citizens were refused entry at external borders in 2024, while hundreds of thousands remained irregularly present within member states.³⁴ Although these figures predominantly concern EU entry, they

²⁹ **Smith–Guarnizo** 1998, 316.

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, *US Immigration Enforcement and Human Rights Concerns*, cit.

³¹ **Faist** 2013, 1637–1646; **Castles–De Haas–Miller** 2020.

³² European Commission 2024

³³ **Castles–De Haas–Miller** 2020, 443.

³⁴ European Commission 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Enforcement_of_immigration_legislation_statistics

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demonstrate that citizens of post-socialist states remain embedded in complex mobility systems shaped by national policy choices.³⁵

U.S. immigration policy plays an important symbolic and practical role in shaping these migration trajectories. The narrowing of asylum access and employment-based visas affects not only migration flows but also the narratives through which migration is imagined and understood. For many Eastern Europeans, migration represents a pathway to broader cultural horizons and transnational belonging; restrictive policies, by contrast, reinforce perceptions of exclusion and marginalization.³⁶

Comparative Perspective: Western Europe and the European Union

In contrast to the U.S. enforcement-centered approach, Western European countries and the European Union have pursued a more differentiated migration strategy. While the EU has strengthened external border controls and accelerated asylum procedures, it has simultaneously expanded legal mobility frameworks, particularly for neighboring Eastern Partnership countries.

Visa liberalization agreements with Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, as well as the ongoing visa liberalization dialogue with Armenia, reflect an approach that links mobility to governance reforms rather than blanket exclusion. Although asylum systems in Western Europe face significant strain, particularly in frontline states such as Greece and Italy, EU policy continues to emphasize harmonization, burden-sharing, and legal pathways for short-term mobility.

For Armenian citizens, the EU's engagement offers an alternative model of migration governance—one that combines conditional openness with regulatory oversight. This stands in contrast to U.S. policies that increasingly rely on restriction and deterrence as primary tools.

Human Dimensions and Policy Backlash

The intensification of immigration enforcement in the United States has generated significant backlash from human rights organizations, legal scholars, and segments of civil society. Reports of increased deaths in immigration detention facilities and concerns over inadequate medical care underscore the

³⁵ Faist, *The Mobility Turn*, cit.

³⁶ Mkrtchyan 2017, 88–101.

human costs of punitive policies. These outcomes have sparked ethical debates about the balance between sovereignty, security, and human dignity.

Public opinion within the United States also reflects growing ambivalence toward extreme enforcement measures, particularly where humanitarian principles and human dignity are perceived to be compromised. While border security remains a salient concern, surveys indicate rising discomfort with policies perceived as excessively harsh or incompatible with humanitarian values³⁷. These debates reveal enduring tensions between securitization and pluralism in contemporary democratic societies.

Conclusion

The evolution of U.S. immigration policy under the Trump administration illustrates a broader global tension between restrictive enforcement and the imperatives of cultural and economic integration³⁸. EU visa liberalization agreements with Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, as well as the ongoing visa liberalization dialogue with Armenia, reflect an approach that links mobility to governance reforms rather than blanket exclusion.

For Armenia and Eastern Europe, these developments carry significant implications for migration patterns, diaspora sustainability, and transnational identities. By situating legal policy within a cultural and humanistic framework, this article demonstrates that immigration governance shapes not only the movement of people but also the preservation of language, memory, and collective belonging.

Understanding these dynamics is essential for assessing the long-term consequences of contemporary immigration policies. As global mobility continues to define the twenty-first century, policy choices in destination countries such as the United States will remain central not only to migration flows but also to the cultural, economic, and social futures of sending societies and their diasporas.

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³⁷ Pew Research Center, How Americans view key Trump administration immigration policies, January 29, 2026.

³⁸ **Castles–De Haas–Miller**, 2020, 443. **Thomas** 2013, 1637–1646.

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Ամփոփում

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ԱԹԱԹՅՈՒՐՔԻ ԿԵՐՊԱՐԸ ՀԱԿՈՒ ՄԱՐԹԱՅԱՆԻ (ԴԻԼԱԶԱՐ) ՀՈՒՇԱԳՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵՋ

Ամփոփում

Սույն հոդվածը նվիրված է Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության հիմնադիր նախագահ Մուսթաֆա Քեմալ Աթաթյուրքի (1881, Սալոնիկ – 1938, Ստամբուլ) մասին՝ պոլսահայ լեզվաբան, խմբագիր, հրապարակախոս, թարգմանիչ, ուսուցիչ Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաշար) (1895, Կ. Պոլիս – 1979, Ստամբուլ) հուշագրության քննությանը: Այն գրվել և առաջին անգամ հրատարակվել է 1954 թ. Ստամբուլի «Մարմարա» հայերեն օրաթերթում՝ ներառելով 1917 թ. Պաղեստինի ճակատում թուրքական 7-րդ բանակի հրամանատար, հետագայում հանրապետական Թուրքիայի հիմնադիր նախագահ Մուսթաֆա Քեմալ Աթաթյուրքի հետ ծանոթության և նրա կյանքի վերջին շրջանի (1932–1938) պատմությունը, այդ թվում՝ 1932 թ. Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության հիմնադրման և գործունեության մանրամասները, Աթաթյուրքի կառավարչական ու մարդկային որոշ հատկանիշները, ինչպես նաև նրա առօրյան և անձնական նախասիրությունները:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Մուսթաֆա Քեմալ Աթաթյուրք, Հակոբ Մարթայան, Առաջին աշխարհամարտ, Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերություն, լեզվական բարեփոխումներ, թուրքերենի լատինադարձում, ազգանվան վերաբերյալ օրենք:*

* Հոդվածը ներկայացվել է 10.04.2026, գրախոսվել է 20.05.2026, ընդունվել է տպագրության 30.08.2026:

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Ներածություն

Թուրքիայի հանրապետության հիմնադիր նախագահ Մուսթաֆա Քեմալ Աթաթյուրքի վերաբերյալ պոլսահայ լեզվաբան, խմբագիր, հրապարակախոս, թարգմանիչ և ուսուցիչ Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաչար) հուշագրությունը գրվել և առաջին անգամ հրատարակվել է 1954 թ. Ստամբուլում լույս տեսնող «Մարմարա» հայերեն օրաթերթում, որին երկար տարիներ թղթակցել է հեղինակը:¹ Հետագայում՝ 2021 թ., այն վերահրատարակվել է առանձին գրքով,² ինչպես նաև թարգմանվել թուրքերեն:³

Մեր ուսումնասիրության առանցքում են եղել նաև Հ. Մարթայանի՝ 1976 թ. նոյեմբերի 10-ին Աթաթյուրքի հիշատակին նվիրված «*Աթաթիւրք, հայերէնը եւ հայերը*» հոդվածը⁴ և Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության հրատարակությամբ «*Թուրքերեն*» լեզվի և գրականության ամսագրի տարբեր համարներում լույս տեսած՝ Աթաթյուրքի վերաբերյալ հուշերը,⁵ ինչպես նաև Հ. Մարթայանի կենսագիր, թուրք լեզվաբան Քայա Թյուրքայի «*Ա. Դիլաչար*» մենագրությունը, որը գրվել է Մարթայանի և նրա ընտանիքի անդամների հետ խորհրդակցությամբ:⁶ Հիշարժան է նաև իր կյանքի վերջին շրջանում Անկարայում «TRT» պետական հեռուստաալիքին Հ. Մարթայանի տված հարցազրույցը, որը թարգմանաբար հրատարակել է «Նոր Մարմարա» օրաթերթը:⁷

Հ. Մարթայանի վերոնշյալ ծավալուն հուշագրությունը ընդգրկում է 1917 թ. Պաղեստինի ճակատում թուրքական 7-րդ բանակի հրամանատար Մուսթաֆա Քեմալի հետ ծանոթության դեպքը, ինչպես նաև Մուսթաֆա Քեմալ Աթաթյուրքի կյանքի վերջին շրջանի (1932–1938) պատմությունը, մասնավորապես՝ 1932 թ. Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության հիմնադրման և գործունեության մանրամասները, Աթաթյուրքի կառավարչական ու մարդկային որոշ հատկանիշները, նրա առօրյան և անձնական նախասիրությունները:

¹ **Մարթան** 1954, Նոյեմբեր 10, 16, 19, 23, 26, Դեկտեմբեր 1, 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 1955 Կադանդի բացառիկ [1954, Դեկտեմբեր 31]:

² **Մարթան** 2021:

³ **Martayan-Dilaçar** 2021.

⁴ **Մարթան** 2000, 20–23:

⁵ **Dilâçar** 1961, 72–74, **Dilâçar** 1972, 178–181, **Dilâçar** 1973, 268–271, **Dilâçar** 1974, 872–875, **Dilâçar** 1976, 646–648.

⁶ **Türkay** 1982.

⁷ «Նոր Մարմարա», 15.09.1979:

Մանվելյան Ս.

Այնուամենայնիվ, Հ. Մարթայանը, ինչպես ինքն է նշում, նպատակ չի ունեցել Աթաթյուրքի մասին ամբողջական դիմանկար ստեղծել,⁸ սակայն նրա հաղորդած տեղեկությունները հետաքրքիր են որոշ հարցերի լուսաբանման համար, որոնց կանդրադառնանք ստորև:

Աթաթյուրքը Հ. Մարթայանի հուշերում

Հ. Մարթայանի և Մ. Քեմալի առաջին հանդիպումը տեղի է ունեցել 1917 թ. Առաջին աշխարհամարտի սիրիական ճակատում: Մինչ այդ, Հալեպում գերեվարված անգլիացի և հնդիկ սպաները դիմել էին Հ. Մարթայանի թարգմանական աջակցությանը՝ նպատակ ունենալով թուրք զինվորական հրամանատարությանը ներկայացնել պարենային պայմանների բարելավման վերաբերյալ իրենց խնդրանքը: Մարթայանի բազմալեզվյան կարողությունների պատճառով թուրք սպայակազմը նրան կասկածել է լրտեսության մեջ: Հարցաքննության ընթացքում Դամասկոսում տեղակայված «Կայծակ» («Yıldırım») բանակախմբի ներքո գործող 7-րդ բանակի հրամանատար, գեներալ (mirliya) Մուսթաֆա Քեմալ փաշային տպավորել են երիտասարդ կրտսեր լեյտենանտի (asteğmen) համարձակ պատասխանները և նրա լեզվական բազմակողմանի գիտելիքները: Հ. Մարթայանի իրերի մեջ նրա ուշադրությունը գրավել է թուրքերենի (իմա՝ օսմաներեն) քերականության վերաբերյալ երիտասարդ հունգար լեզվաբան, թուրքագետ Գյուլա Նեմեթի (1890-1976) գերմաներեն նորատիպ գրքույկը,⁹ որով Մարթայանը Դիարբեքիրում տեղակայված գերմանական փոխադրական գումարտակի (Nakliye Taburu) զինվորներին սովորեցնում էր թուրքերեն:¹⁰ Հատկանշական է, որ այդ գրքի ազատ լուսանցքներում նա լատինատառ թուրքերեն որոշ նշումներ էր արել, և Մ. Քեմալն առաջին անգամ տեսել է լատինական տառադարձությամբ թուրքերեն բառեր:¹¹ Ըստ Ք. Թյուրքայի՝ Հ. Մարթայանը

⁸ **Յ. Մարթեան** 2021, 48:

⁹ **Németh** 1916. Վերահրատարակվել է 1917 թ.:

¹⁰ **Türkay** 1982, 13.

¹¹ **Türkay** 1982, 15, 48.

Հայ հասարակական տարբեր շրջանակներում տարածված այն վարկածը, թե Հակոբ Մարթայանն է թուրքերենը արաբատարոյից դարձրել լատինատառ, անհիմն է: Ընդ որում, ինքը՝ Մարթայանը, իր հուշերում ոչ մի կերպ չի անդրադարձել այդ խնդրին: Փաստն այն է, որ թուրքերենի՝ արաբատառ գրից լատինատառ այբուբենին անցնելու օրենքն ընդունվել է Թուրքիայի Ազգային մեծ ժողովի կողմից դեռևս 1928 թ. նոյեմբերի 1-ին: Մինչդեռ Մարթայանը 1922-1932 թթ. ապրել և խմբագրական ու գիտամանկավար-

Աթաթյուրքի կերպարը Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաչար) հուշագրության մեջ

պատմել է, որ հանդիպումը վերաձվել է լեզվաբանական մի շարք հարցերի շուրջ երկարատև քննարկման,¹² որից հետո Մ. Քեմալի հրամանով Հ. Մարթայանը շարունակել է ծառայել նրա հրամանատարության ներքո (1917 թ. հուլիսի 5 – հոկտեմբերի 4, 1918 թ. օգոստոսի 7 – հոկտեմբերի 30) գործող Պաղեստինի ճակատում:

1918 թ. հոկտեմբերի 30-ին Մուդրոսի զինադադարից անմիջապես հետո Հ. Մարթայանը մեկնում է Լիբանանի Զահլե քաղաք, որտեղ հիմնում և խմբագրում է «Լոյս» շաբաթաթերթը: Այնուհետև Բեյրութում նա նշանակվում է Ս. Նշան եկեղեցուն կից Ազգային վարժարանի տնօրեն: 1919 թ. Մարթայանը վերադառնում է Կ. Պոլիս և իր հարազատ Ռոպեր քոլեջում (1971 թ.-ից՝ Բողազիչի համալսարան) դասավանդում անգլերեն: 1922 թ. ամուսնանալով՝ տեղափոխվում է Սոֆիա, որտեղ մինչև 1932 թ. Սոֆիայի Քաղաքական և տնտեսական գիտությունների ազատ համալսարանում (1990 թ.-ից՝ Ազգային և համաշխարհային տնտեսության համալսարան) դասավանդում է հին արևելյան լեզուներ և օսմաներեն: 1926 թ. Սոֆիայում նա խմբագրում է «Ռահվիրայ» մշակութային, մարմնակրթական, երիտասարդական ամսաթերթը, իսկ 1928 թ.՝ «Մշակոյթ» համամշակութային շաբաթաթերթը:

Հ. Մարթայանի և Մ. Քեմալի երկրորդ և բախտորոշ հանդիպումը տեղի է ունեցել 1932 թ.: Այդ ժամանակ Մարթայանը հրապարակում է մի հոդված, որը նվիրված էր գրավոր թուրքերենի հնագույն (VIII դար) արձանագրություններ համարվող Օրիոնյան (Կենտրոնական Մոնղոլիա, Օրիոն գետի ափ) արձանագրությունների 1200-ամյակին: Մ. Քեմալը, հիշելով 1917 թ. սիրիական ճակատում իր հրամանատարության ներքո ծառայող բազմալեզվագետ հայ երիտասարդ սպա Մարթայանին, նրան հրավիրում է մասնակցելու նորաստեղծ Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության նախաձեռնող մարմնի աշխատանքներին:

Մ. Քեմալը Հ. Մարթայանին ընդունել է Դոլմաբահչեի պալատում՝ ասելով «*հոս Կունիդ պէս նստէ*»՝ ակնարկելով արքունական պալատը կառուցած

ժական գործունեություն է ծավալել Սոֆիայում: Ավելին, օսմաներենի լատինադարձման շուրջ բարենորոգման ծրագիրը ընդմիջումներով քննարկվել է XIX դարի կեսերից սկսած, այնուհետև թափ առել 1908 թ. երիտթուրքական հեղափոխության շրջանում և, ի վերջո, կյանքի կոչվել 1923 թ. Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության հռչակումից անմիջապես հետո (տե՛ս **Dilâçar** 1977, 315–316, **Büyükböyacı** 2024, № 11, 103, **Kutluer** 2024): Մեր կարծիքով, առանձնակի կարևորություն ունի Հ. Մարթայանի հիմնարար ավանդը նոր թուրքերենի կայացման և զարգացման գործում, որը կարոտ է գիտական լուրջ քննության:

¹² **Türkay** 1982, 45.

Մանվելյան Ս.

Կարապետ և Նիկողայոս Պալյաններին, ինչպես նաև պալատի պատերը զարդարած Հովհաննես Այվազովսկու մի քանի տասնյակ կտավները:¹³ Ըստ Մարթայանի, լեզվաբան Ռազրի Հուլուսի Էոզդեմի (1893–1943) օգնությամբ Մ. Քեմալը նախաձեռնող մարմնի աշխատանքների նախօրեին արդեն ծանոթացել էր հայոց լեզվի ընդհանուր օրինաչափություններին, ինչպես նաև Պետրոս Զեքի Կարապետյանի հայերեն-օսմաներեն (Կ. Պոլիս, 1907) և օսմաներեն-հայերեն (Կ. Պոլիս, 1912) բառարաններին: Հետագայում, Հ. Մարթայանի միջոցով, Մ. Քեմալը ծանոթացել է նաև Հրաչյա Աճառյանի արմատական բառարանին (Երևան, 1926) և հայոց հին ու նոր թարգմանություններին:¹⁴

1932 թ. սեպտեմբերի 26-ին տեղի ունեցավ Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության (1934–1936 թթ. կոչվել է Թուրքերենի ուսումնասիրման ընկերություն) հիմնադիր ժողովը: Ինչպես նախատեսված էր, Հ. Մարթայանը պետք է ելույթ ունենար համաժողովի երրորդ օրը, սակայն քանի որ սեպտեմբերի 27-ին քաղաքավարական այցելությամբ նախագահական պալատ էր ժամանել ամերիկյան բանակի ընդհանուր սպայակազմի պետ (1930–1935) Դուգլաս Մաքարթուրը (1880–1964), նախագահի ցանկությամբ տպավորություն թողնելու նպատակով Հ. Մարթայանը հրավիրվեց բեմ՝ ներկայացնելու թուրքերենի և հնդեվրոպական լեզուների, այդ թվում՝ հայերենի փոխառնչություններին նվիրված իր զեկուցումը:¹⁵

Համաժողովից հետո Հ. Մարթայանն անդամակցում է լեզվաբանական ընկերության ստուգաբանության և բանասիրության բաժիններին: 1934 թ. օգոստոսի 18–25-ին կայացած Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության երկրորդ համաժողովին Մ. Քեմալը նրան նշանակել է լեզվաբանական ընկերության գլխավոր մասնագետ:¹⁶ Թուրքերենի (իմա՝ օսմաներենի) և թուրքալեզու գրավոր հուշարձանների վերաբերյալ բազմաբնույթ ուսումնասիրությունների շրջանակներում Հ. Մարթայանի բեղուն գիտահետազոտական աշխատանքն ակնառու է նաև նոր թուրքերենն արաբերեն, պարսկերեն, ֆրանսերեն և այլ լեզուներից փոխառնված բառերից մաքրելու, ինչպես նաև թուրքերեն բառարմատների հիման վրա նոր բառեր ստեղծելու ուղղությամբ:

¹³ Մարթան 2000, 21:

¹⁴ Մարթան 2021, 30, 31, Մարթան 2000, 21:

¹⁵ Մարթան 2021, 19:

¹⁶ Türkay 1982, 21.

Աթաթյուրքի կերպարը Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաչար) հուշագրության մեջ

Լեզվաբանական քննարկումներն ընթանում էին նախագահական երեք դրյակներում՝ Անկարայում գտնվող Չանքայայի պալատում (1923–2014 թթ. ծառայել է որպես նախագահական նստավայր, 2014 թ. սահմանադրական կարգի փոփոխությունից հետո՝ որպես վարչապետի, այժմ՝ փոխնախագահի նստավայր), Ստամբուլում՝ Բոսֆորի ափին տեղակայված Դոլմաբահչեի պալատում, և Մարմարա ծովի մեջ գտնվող Ֆլորիայի դրյակում:

Մ. Քեմալն այդ լեզվաբանական ժողովները անվանում էր «լեզվի դաս», որոնք հաճախ տևում էին մինչև առավոտ: Ընդունված կարգ էր, որ նախագահն ավտոմեքենա էր ուղարկում գիտնականների հետևից, իսկ քննարկումների երկարաձգման դեպքում հրահանգում էր հեռաձայնել և տեղյակ պահել նրանց ընտանիքներին:

Լեզվաբանական ժողովներից առաջ Մ. Քեմալը նախօրոք ուսումնասիրում էր գիտնականների պատրաստած զեկուցումները և նույնիսկ շտկում դրանց ուղղագրական սխալները:

Մ. Քեմալն անվերապահորեն գնահատում էր Հ. Մարթայանի մտավոր և լեզվական (լատիներեն, հունարեն, ֆրանսերեն, անգլերեն, գերմաներեն, ռուսերեն, արաբերեն, հին ու նոր թուրքերեն և այլ լեզուներ) կարողությունները: Նրա հեղինակած յուրաքանչյուր հոդված կամ զեկուցում Մ. Քեմալը ընթերցում էր և վերադարձնում գրեթե առանց փոփոխության: Ցանկացած լեզվաբանական և ստուգաբանական հարցի շուրջ նա մշտապես խորհրդակցում էր Հ. Մարթայանի հետ և ողջունում նրա քննադատական ոգին ու անաչառ կարծիքը:

1934 թ. ամռանը Դոլմաբահչեի պալատում մշակվում էր ազգանունների վերաբերյալ օրենքը («Soy Adı Kanunu»): Հայ հասարակական որոշ շրջանակներում տարածված է նաև այն վարկածը, որ Հ. Մարթայանն է Մ. Քեմալին առաջարկել «Աթաթյուրք» պատվանունը:¹⁷ Մինչդեռ Հ. Մարթայանի վկայությամբ՝ Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության առաջարկով սկզբում նախատեսված էր նրան կոչել «Թյուրք Աթա», ինչպես որ ԱՄՆ հիմնադիր նախագահ (1789–1797) Ջորջ Վաշինգտոնին (1732–1799) էին անվանում «ազգի հայր» («Father of the Nation»):¹⁸ Հ. Մարթայանն իր հուշերում չի նշում, թե Լեզվաբանական ընկերության անդամներից ով է մտահղացել Ջ.

¹⁷ Ըստ ակադեմիկոս **Ծ. Աղայանի**՝ Հ. Մարթայանն իրեն պատմել է, որ «**Թյուրք աթա**» անվանաձևը բարեհեյությունության նպատակով «**Աթաթյուրք**» դարձնելը եղել է նրա միջնորդությամբ: Տե՛ս **Աղայան** 1969, 79:

¹⁸ **Մարթաեան** 2021, 46:

Մանվելյան Ս.

Վաշինգտոնի պատվանվան նմանությամբ Թուրքիայի նախագահի նոր պատվանունը: Ըստ նրա՝ Թուրքիայի Ազգային մեծ ժողովի քոնիացի պատգամավոր Նաիմ Հազիմ Օնաթն (1889–1953) է առաջարկել այդ պատվանունը վերաձևակերպել «Աթաթյուրք» («Թուրքերի հայր»),¹⁹ որը պաշտոնապես ընդունվել է 1934 թ. նոյեմբերի 24-ի Թուրք Ազգային մեծ ժողովի («Türk Büyük Millet Meclisi») որոշմամբ և արգելվել որևէ մեկին անվանակոչել այդ պատվանմամբ:

Լեզվաբանական ժողովներից մեկի ընթացքում էլ Աթաթյուրքը նոր ազգանուններ է հորինում ներկաների համար: Օրինակ՝ ռազմական և քաղաքական գործիչ, Թուրքիայի ազգային կրթության նախարար (1935–1938) Մեհմեթ Սաֆֆեթին (1888–1947) կոչում է «Արըքան» («զտարյուն»), լեզվաբան և գրականագետ, Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության ընդհանուր քարտուղար (1933–1945) Իբրահիմ Նեջմիին (1887–1945)՝ «Դիլմեն» («լեզվաբան»), բժիշկ, լեզվաբան, Թուրքիայի Ազգային մեծ ժողովի էրզրումցի պատգամավոր (1939–1950) Սաիմ Ալին (1880–1954)՝ «Դիլեմեր» («լեզվի սիրահար») և այլն: 1934 թ. ազգանվան օրենքի ընդունումից առաջ Օսմանյան կայսրության քաղաքացիների անվան կողքին գրվում էին նրանց հոր անունը կամ մասնագիտությունը, մականունը, ծննդավայրը, պատվանունը: Սակայն քանի որ Հակոբ Մարթայանն արդեն ուներ ազգանուն, Աթաթյուրքը նրան շնորհեց «Դիլաչար» (բառացի թարգմանությամբ՝ «լեզու բացող») պատվանունը: Հ. Մարթայանն այդ «գարդանունը» թարգմանել է որպես «սպուզաբան»՝ ստուգաբանության բաժնի քարտուղարի պաշտոնում իր ծառայությունների դիմաց Աթաթյուրքի կողմից առ ի գնահատանք:²⁰ Ավելին, Աթաթյուրքի թելադրանքով Հ. Մարթայանի անձնագրում («Nüfus Cüzdanı») նշված է «Հակոբ Մարթայան-Դիլաչար» («Hagop Martayan-Dilâçar»)՝ պահպանելով նաև հայկական ազգանունը:²¹ Հետագայում, սակայն, ազգանվան հայկական բաղադրիչը դուրս մղվեց:²²

¹⁹ **Մարթեան** 2021, 46: Հ. Մարթայանն իր մահից առաջ Անկարայում «TRT» պետական հեռուստաալիքին տված հարցազրույցում ևս նշում է, որ «Աթաթյուրք» անվանաձևն առաջարկել է հիշյալ քոնիացի պատգամավորը: Տե՛ս «Նոր Մարմարա», 15.09.1979:

²⁰ **Մարթեան** 2021, 46:

²¹ **Մարթեան** 2021, 46:

²² Պոլսահայ գրող, «Մարմարա» օրաթերթի խմբագիր (1967–2025) **Ռուպեր Հատտեճյանը** (1926, Կ. Պոլիս – 2025, Ստամբուլ) գրում է, որ թուրքական «TRT» պետական հեռուստաալիքը Հակոբ Մարթայանի մահվան գույժը հայտնելիս օգտագործել է միայն «Դիլաչար» անունը. «Անուն չունէ՞ր արդեօք այն անձը, որուն մասին կը խօսուէր: Այս

Աթաթյուրքի կերպարը Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաչար) հուշագրության մեջ

1935 թ. Ֆլորիայի ծովային դղյակում կայացած ստուգաբանության բաժնի հերթական հանդիպմանը, որը նվիրված էր որոշ բժշկական եզրույթների քննարկմանը, ներկա էին նաև տարրաբաններ (իմա՝ քիմիկոս) և բժիշկներ, այդ թվում՝ մի գերմանացի բժիշկ, ինչպես նաև «*Իսթանպուլի տարբեր մէկ համայնքէն*» մի ուսուցիչ:²³ Գիշերը ժամը 3-ին ճաշի սեղանի շուրջ Աթաթյուրքն իր սեղանակիցներին խնդրել է իրենց մայրենի լեզվով որևէ բան երգել կամ արտասանել: Գերմանացի բժիշկը և Հ. Մարթայանը կատարել են նախագահի խնդրանքը, իսկ վերը նշված Ստամբուլի ազգային փոքրամասնություններից մեկի ներկայացուցիչը, որի անունը Հ. Մարթայանն, ըստ երևույթին, չի ցանկացել գրել իր հուշագրությունում, «*նախընտրեց դիմել ինքնատրացման*»՝ երգելով թուրքերեն երգ: Հ. Մարթայանի վկայությամբ՝ Աթաթյուրքը, նայելով նրան, հեզնորեն ասել է. «*Հայրենասիրական երգերը, ո՛ր ազգին ալ որ պատկանին, յարգանքի արժանի են: Յաջողիլը կամ ծախողիլը տարբեր հարց է*»:²⁴

1968 թ. սեպտեմբերի 9–23-ը պատմաբան, ՀԽՍՀ ԳԱ հասարակական գիտությունների բաժանմունքի ակադեմիկոս-քարտուղար (1968–1977), ՀԽՍՀ ԳԱ ակադեմիկոս Ծատուր Աղայանը (1912–1982) ԽՍՀՄ մի շարք հանրապետություններից ժամանած տարբեր մասնագետների՝ պատմաբանների, արևելագետների, գրականագետների, լրագրողների և բժիշկների հետ միասին Թուրքիա (Անկարա, Ստամբուլ, Բուրսա) ճանաչողական այցի ընթացքում Անկարայում հանդիպում է Հ. Մարթայանի հետ:²⁵ Վերջինս Ծ. Աղայանին է ներկայացնում նաև վերոհիշյալ պատմությունը և նշում, որ Ա-

ականջ ծակող տգեղ արտայայտության դիմաց թերեւս տասն անգամ «Անունը Յակոբ է» պոռալ ուզեցինք, բայց չկրցանք: ...Այո, անունը Յակոբ էր, բայց ո՞վ լսեց»: Տե՛ս Հ. [ատտէճեան] «Նոր Մարմարա», 14.09.1979:

Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերության տարածած մահախոսականում անգամ Հակոբ Մարթայանի անունը նշված էր «Ա. Դիլաչար» ձևով: Տե՛ս «Նոր Մարմարա», 20.09.1979:

Ի դեպ, Հակոբ Մարթայանի անունով է անվանակոչվել Շիշլիի հայոց գերեզմանատան և Գարագյոզյան վարժարանի հարևանությամբ գտնվող ավելի քան 100 մ երկարությամբ մի նեղ փողոց, սակայն առանց նրա անվան և ազգանվան հիշատակության՝ «Dilaçar sokağı» («Դիլաչարի փողոց»):

Շիշլիի հայոց գերեզմանատան «Պանթեոն մտաւորականներու եւ արուեստագէտներու» բաժնում Հակոբ Մարթայանի մահարձանի վրա թուրքերեն գրված է «Agop Martayan Dilaçar», իսկ հայերեն հատվածում՝ «Յակոբ Մարթաեան»:

²³ Մարթաեան 2021, 47:

²⁴ Մարթաեան 2021, 47:

²⁵ Հակոբ Մարթայանի հետ հանդիպման մանրամասները տե՛ս Աղայան 1969, 67–82:

թաթյուրքի խնդրանքով իր երգած երգը, որի մասին նա իր հուշագրության մեջ չէր հիշատակել, իրականում նվիրված էր Անդրանիկ զորավարին և 1904 թ. Գուսան Շերամի գրած «*Իբրև արծիվ սավառնում ես լեռ ու ժայռ*» երգն էր:²⁶ Ակադեմիկոս Ծ. Աղայանն իր ճամփորդական նոթերում նաև նշել է, որ Մարթայանի նշած «*Իսթանպուլի փարբեր մէկ համայնքէն*» ներկայացուցիչը եղել է հույն:²⁷

Ըստ Հ. Մարթայանի, Աթաթյուրքը հայերի հանդեպ «*ցմահ համակրական զգացում կը փածէր: Ան մօտէն տեղեակ էր Հայերու մշակութային կարողութեան, ինչպէս նաեւ գործնական կեանքի մէջ ցոյց տուած ձեռներեցութեան: Երկրին Հայերը կը նկատէր թուրք քաղաքացի, սակայն ծագումով Հայ*»:²⁸ Անգամ «Ermeni» («հայ») բառը Աթաթյուրքը փորձել էր ստուգաբանել որպէս «հույս», «վստահություն»՝ նշելով. «*էրմէնի բառին բուն իմաստը, Հայ ազգին ալ հիմնական բնոյթը ասիկա՛ է*»:²⁹ Պոլսահայ գրող, «Մարմարա» օրաթերթի խմբագիր (1967–2025), Հ. Մարթայանի բարեկամներից մեկը՝ Ռոպեր Հատտեջյանը (1926–2025), նշում է, որ թուրքական հանրագիտարանում Հ. Մարթայանի գրած «Ermeniler» («Հայեր») հոդվածը խիստ լարված իրադրություն էր ստեղծել իր համար:³⁰ Հարկ է նշել, որ Հ. Մարթայանը բազմաթիվ հոդվածներ է գրել թուրքական հանրագիտարանի համար, 1942–1956 թթ. եղել է հանրագիտարանի խորհրդատու, 1956–1958 թթ.՝ գլխավոր խորհրդատու, 1958–1970 թթ.՝ գլխավոր խմբագիր:

Աթաթյուրքի միջնորդությամբ և խորհրդով Հ. Մարթայանը սկսեց Անկարայի համալսարանի Լեզվի և պատմաաշխարհագրության ֆակուլտետում լեզվաբանության պատմություն և ընդհանուր լեզվաբանություն դասավանդել (1936–1950): Հատկանշական է, որ 1938 թ. մարտին Աթաթյուրքն անձամբ ներկա էր նրա դասերից մեկին՝ «*քննելու առաջին բերքին որակը*»:³¹

Աթաթյուրքը սիրում էր արվեստի և գիտության ներկայացուցիչներին դարձնել իրեն սեղանակից: Նրա խնջույքի սեղանի շուրջ հատուկ նստելու կարգ չկար՝ բացառությամբ պետական և զինվորական բարձրաստիճան

²⁶ Աղայան 1969, 77, 78:

²⁷ Աղայան 1969, 77:

²⁸ Մարթաեան 2000, 20:

²⁹ Մարթաեան 2021, 30, Մարթաեան 2000, 22:

³⁰ Հատտէճեան 2002, 119, 120:

³¹ Մարթաեան 2021, 52, 53:

Աթաթյուրքի կերպարը Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաչար) հուշագրության մեջ

ներկայացուցիչների: Սեղանին դրված էին լինում համադամ խորտիկներ, իսկ Աթաթյուրքն անձամբ նախընտրում էր ավանդական պարզ ճաշեր: Նա նաև հրաշալի թամադա էր. սիրում էր խմել, բայց ոչ հարբելու աստիճան, քանի որ դրա շուրջ բամբասանք էր տարածված թուրք ժողովրդի շրջանում: 1936 թ. աշնանը Ֆլորիայի ծովային դղյակում Հ. Մարթայանը հերթական անգամ հրավիրված էր ճաշի: Աթաթյուրքը պատմել է, թե ինչպես է 1915 թ. Չանաքքալեի ճակատամարտում 19-րդ դիվիզիայի հրամանատար եղած ժամանակ առաջին անգամ հարբած վիճակում սխալ որոշում արձակել: Նրա խորհուրդը ներկաներին հետևյալն էր. «Պաշտոնի գլուխ մի՛ խմէք»:³²

Ուշագրավ են նաև Քեմալ Աթաթյուրքի անձնական նախասիրությունները, որոնք նույնպես ներկայացված են Հ. Մարթայանի հուշագրության մեջ: Աթաթյուրքը սիրում էր խաղալ գնդամուղ (billiard) և թղթախաղ (poker): Մեծապես գնահատում էր թուրքալեզու երաժշտարվեստը, հաճախակի պալատ էր հրավիրում երգիչների ու երաժիշտ-կատարողների, ինչպես օրինակ՝ երգչուհի Սաֆիե Այլային (1918–1998), պոլսահայ ջութակահար և կոմպոզիտոր Նուբար Թեքլայ-Չյունեքճյանին (1905–1955), օսմանյան վերջին սուլթանների՝ Մեհմեդ 5-րդ Ռեշադի (1909–1918) և Մեհմեդ 6-րդ Վահիդեդդինի (1918–1922), ինչպես նաև Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության հիմնադիր նախագահ Աթաթյուրքի օրոք (1923–1938) գլխավոր մյուեզզին (էզանի՝ աղոթքի հրավիրող և երգող) Հաֆիզ Յաշար Օքուրին (1886–1966) և այլոց: Լեզվաբանական աշխատաժողովներն ընդմիջվում էին երաժշտական կատարումներով, արտասանությամբ, անգամ ըմբշամարտության տեսարաններով, որոնց ավարտին Աթաթյուրքն առատորեն վարձատրում էր ըմբիշներին:³³

Հ. Մարթայանի վկայությամբ՝ Աթաթյուրքը սիրում էր ժողովրդի հետ շփումները և հետաքրքրվում նրա առօրյա կյանքով: Նա հաճախ էր այցելում քաղաքային զբոսայգիներ, ժողովրդական հանդեսներ և հանրային ճաշարաններ, օրինակ՝ Բեյօղլուի թաղամասում գտնվող Թոքաթլյան հայկական հյուրանոցի ճաշարանը:³⁴

Հ. Մարթայանի վկայությամբ՝ Աթաթյուրքը եղել է կանոնավոր ընթերցող: Նա ընթերցելիս կատարել է գրառումներ, իսկ որոշ դեպքերում՝ հեռաձայնելով կամ պալատ հրավիրելով մասնագետների՝ քննարկել տվյալ նյութը: Աթաթյուրքը հետևողականորեն հարստացնում էր իր գրադարանը նոր

³² Մարթաեան 2021, 21–23:

³³ Մարթաեան 2021, 28, 29, 37, 60:

³⁴ Մարթաեան 2021, 17, 32–39:

Մանվելյան Ս.

հրատարակություններով, որոնց մատակարարումն իրականացվում էր նաև արտասահմանի թուրք դեսպանների միջոցով: Նա բանախոսելու աստիճանի տիրապետում էր ֆրանսերենին, ծանոթ էր անգլերենին և գերմաներենին, սակայն երբեմն զգում էր թարգմանության անհրաժեշտություն: Օտարալեզու գրքերի թարգմանության դեպքում Աթաթյուրքը դրանք բաժանում էր պրակների և հանձնարարում օտար լեզվի ուսուցիչներին, իսկ թարգմանության վերահսկողությունն իր հրահանգով իրականացնում էր Հ. Մարթայանը:³⁵

Աթաթյուրքի գրադարանը բաղկացած էր մարդաբանական, ցեղաբանական և լեզվաբանական բնույթի գրքերից: Գրադարանի մեծ մասը նա փոխադրել էր Չանքայայից՝ ռազմամթերքի սնդուկների մեջ տեղադրած: Հ. Մարթայանը նշում է. «...*ուրիշ ռազմաճակատ մը կար բացուած Աթաթիւրքի առջեւ. պատերազմ՝ տգիտութեան դէմ, պայքար՝ գիտութեան, լոյսի ու լուսաւորութեան համար, իր ժողովուրդի ծոցին: ...Այժմ իր զինուորական համագլխակցներէն մերկացած՝ քաղաքացիի տարազով ստանձնած էր նոր պայքարին ղեկավարութիւնը: Իր անձնապահ գունդի զինուորները սնտուկներու երկու ծայրի չուաններէն բռնած՝ լուսաւորութեան ռումբեր կը փոխադրէին կեդրոնէ կեդրոն»:³⁶*

Քեմալական շարժման սկզբից (1919 թ. մայիսի 19) մինչև 1927 թ. իր գրածներն ու ճառերն ամփոփող գրքից բացի Աթաթյուրքը գրել է նաև երկրաչափության տարրական դասագիրք (1937, Ստամբուլ), որի պատրաստման ժամանակ, ըստ Հ. Մարթայանի, նա օգտվել է օսմաներեն և օտարալեզու դասագրքերից:³⁷

Ուշագրավ են նաև վկայությունները նրա կյանքի վերջին շրջանից: Աթաթյուրքի անձնական բժիշկը՝ Նիհաթ Ռեշաթ Բելգերը (1882–1961), և Փարիզից ժամանած բժիշկ Նոել Ֆիսենթեն (1881–1946) նրան ախտորոշել էին լյարդի շիկախտ (ցիրոզ):³⁸ Հիվանդության բերումով նա դարձել էր ավելի դյուրագրգիռ, և մի շարք խնդիրների հետ մեկտեղ նրան մտահոգություն էր պատճառում նաև Հաթայի (Ալեքսանդրեթի սանջաք) հարցը, որը հանգուցալուծվեց իր մահից մեկ տարի անց՝ ի շահ Թուրքիայի:

³⁵ Մարթաեան 2021, 24:

³⁶ Մարթաեան 2021, 25:

³⁷ Մարթաեան 2021, 24:

³⁸ Մարթաեան 2021, 53:

Աթաթյուրքի կերպարը Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաչար) հուշագրության մեջ

Աթաթյուրքը մահվանից առաջ ցանկություն է հայտնում տեսակցել չորս լեզվաբանի, այդ թվում՝ Հակոբ Մարթայանի հետ: Նա կտակ էր պատրաստել, որով իր տարեկան եկամուտի կեսը կտակում էր Թուրք լեզվաբանական ընկերությանը: Սակայն հիվանդության սրացման պատճառով նշված հանդիպումը տեղի չունեցավ:³⁹

Ըստ Հ. Մարթայանի՝ Աթաթյուրքը որպես անձնավորություն «գերբնական նիւթէ չէր շինուած, բնական էր, սակայն ո՛չ հասարակ տեղիք»:⁴⁰ Նա «այն հերոսն էր, որ ճգնաժամային պահերու կը ծնի ժողովուրդին ծոցէն, որպէս անոր կամքին ու կարողութեան խտրացումը»:⁴¹ Իրավամբ, Մուսթաֆա Քեմալ Աթաթյուրքն իր պետականաստեղծ գործունեությամբ դարձավ Նոր Թուրքիայի ճարտարապետը և ազգային գաղափարախոսը: Մինչդեռ քեմալական շարժման տարիներին հայ ժողովուրդին վիճակված էր տարածքային, հոգևոր-մշակութային, ֆիզիկական և տնտեսական ծանրագույն կորուստներ ունենալ:⁴²

Եզրակացություն

Թուրքիայի Հանրապետության հիմնադիր նախագահ Քեմալ Աթաթյուրքի վերաբերյալ պոլսահայ լեզվաբան Հակոբ Մարթայանի հուշագրության ուսումնասիրությունը հնարավորություն է տալիս նորովի բացահայտել ոչ միայն Աթաթյուրքի և Հ. Մարթայանի բարեկամության պատմությունը, հայ ժողովուրդի և հայ մշակույթի հանդեպ Աթաթյուրքի վերաբերմունքը, այլև Հակոբ Մարթայանի նշանակալի ավանդը թուրքերենի լեզվական բարեփոխման և Թուրք լեզվագիտական ընկերության ստեղծման մեջ:

Սակայն պետք է հաշվի առնել այն հանգամանքը, որ Հ. Մարթայանն Աթաթյուրքի մասին իր հուշերը շարադրել է գերադրական մակդիրների ոչ սակավությամբ՝ տուրք տալով Աթաթյուրքի, իր կարծիքով, դրական կողմերին և հիմնվելով բացառապես իր վկայությունների վրա, որոնք Աթաթյուրքի կերպարը բացահայտում են մասնակիորեն: Բացի այդ, թուրքական կաշկանդող միջավայրը, որում Հ. Մարթայանը ստեղծագործել է, չէր կարող թույլ տալ այլ վերաբերմունք դրսևորել հանրապետության հիմնադրի նկատմամբ:

³⁹ Մարթան 2021, 55, 56, Մարթան 2000, 22, 23:

⁴⁰ Մարթան 2021, 57:

⁴¹ Մարթան 2021, 32:

⁴² Սույն թեմայի վերաբերյալ տե՛ս Սաֆրաստյան 2019, Kévorkian 2023.

Մանվելյան Ս.

Հարկ է նշել, որ Հակոբ Մարթայանը, թուրք ժողովրդին մատուցած ծանրակշիռ ծառայություններով հանդերձ, գրել է նաև հայ մշակույթի, լեզվի և պատմության ուսումնասիրությանը նվիրված բազմաթիվ արժեքավոր գրքեր և հոդվածներ: Նրա հայագիտական հետազոտությունների առանցքում շարունակում է մնալ 1960-ական թթ. «Մարմարա» օրաթերթի էջերում լույս տեսնող «Համայնապատկեր հայ մշակույթի» անավարտ մնացած հոդվածաշարը, որն ընդգրկում է հայ ժողովրդի հոգևոր-մշակութային ժառանգության ուսումնասիրությունը նախագրային շրջանից մինչև XIX դարի երկրորդ կեսը:⁴³ Ընդհանուր առմամբ, նրա հայագիտական ժառանգությունն արժանի է առանձին գիտական ուսումնասիրության:

ՄԱՏԵՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

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⁴³ Հետագայում հոդվածաշարը Թրքահայ ուսուցչաց հիմնարկի նախաձեռնությամբ և պոլսահայ բարերարների միջոցներով լույս տեսավ առանձին գրքերով: Տե՛ս **Մարթաեան 2004, Մարթաեան 2005, Մարթաեան 2009, Մարթաեան 2013, Մարթաեան 2015, Մարթաեան 2018, Մարթաեան 2019:**

Աթաթյուրքի կերպարը Հակոբ Մարթայանի (Դիլաչար) հուշագրության մեջ

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THE IMAGE OF ATATÜRK IN THE MEMOIRS OF HAGOP MARTAYAN-DILACHAR

Summary

Our article examines the memoirs of Hagop Martayan-Dilachar (1895, Constantinople – 1979, Istanbul), an Istanbul-Armenian linguist, editor, publicist, translator, and teacher, concerning Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881, Salonica – 1938, Istanbul), the founding President of the Republic of Turkey. First published in 1954 in the Armenian-language daily Marmara (Istanbul), the memoir recounts Martayan's acquaintance with Mustafa Kemal, then commander of the Seventh Army on the Palestinian front in 1917, and describes the final period of Atatürk's life (1932–1938). It provides details on the establishment and activities of the Turkish Language Association (1932), and offers insights into Atatürk's administrative and personal qualities, daily life, and preferences.

Keywords: *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Hagop Martayan-Dilachar, First World War, Turkish Language Association, language reforms, Latinization of the Turkish language, Surname Law.*

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HAYKANUSH MARK'S BIOGRAPHY IN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLICISTIC DISCOURSE

Abstract

The *aim* of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the biography, literary, journalistic, and editorial activities of Haykanush Mark, with a particular focus on the ideological, cultural, and social significance of the *Hay Kin (Armenian Woman)* journal. The *objective* of the research is to examine, through Mark's activity, the mechanisms of the development of the Western Armenian press, the formation of women's self-awareness, and the transmission of national-cultural heritage. The *scientific novelty* of the study lies in interpreting Mark's work not only as an editorial practice in women's publicism, but also as a system of intercultural and ideological communication that unites Western Armenian, Eastern Armenian, and diaspora Armenian spheres. The *relevance* of the research is conditioned by contemporary scholarly demands concerning gender equality, media history, and cultural memory studies. The

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study is *interdisciplinary*, integrating approaches from literary studies, history, press studies, sociology, and gender studies. It demonstrates that *Hay Kin* functioned not only as an informational medium, but also as an educational and ideological platform, shaping a new model of women's social engagement. As a result, the study confirms Mark's role as a key figure in the development of the Armenian women's press and an important contributor to the preservation of national cultural identity. Furthermore, the research highlights the journal's long-term impact on the self-organization of the Armenian diaspora and the formation of women's community leadership. It shows that Mark's editorial activity contributed not only to women's educational advancement but also to the strengthening of social cohesion across different countries. Thus, her legacy is regarded as an essential component of modern Armenian cultural history.

Keywords: *Haykanush Mark, Journal Hay Kin, Journal Tsaghik, print culture, feminist discourse, Armenian cultural heritage, women's education and social activism.*

Introduction

Haykanush Mark (Topuzian) was born on February 14, 1883, in Constantinople, into the family of Margar and Yeprakse Topuzian. She received her primary education at the Ayasbasha Varpet-Tutu and "Seor" schools. In 1898, she graduated from the Yesaian School, where she studied under Sipil¹ and became one of her distinguished followers. She later continued her education through private instruction. Among her teachers was Hakob Gurgen², a renowned peda-

¹ It should be noted that the distinguished figure of Armenian theatre, Vahram Papazian, during his years of study at the Yesaian School, was also a pupil of the poet Sibil. Through her multifaceted activity in literature, education, and public life, Sibil made a significant contribution to the development of the Armenian press.

² Hakob Gurgen (Piperechian) was a prominent Armenian pedagogue and editor, born in 1850 in Constantinople (Ottoman Empire). He studied at the local Translational School (*Targmanchats Varjarian*), after which he dedicated himself to teaching. In 1870, he edited the *Internal News* section of the newspaper *Pogh Arevelyan*. He pursued pedagogical work at K. Panosian's boarding school and, in 1876, founded the *Armenian Educational Institute* in Ortaköy, which operated until 1890. Between 1894 and 1896, he served at the Sanasarian School of Erzurum as a teacher of the Armenian language. Gurgen collaborated with several periodicals, including *Masis*, *Arevelyan Mamul*, *Manzume-i Efkâr*, and others. He also published under the pseudonyms *Gurgen*, *Smbat*, and *Vahe*. Between 1898 and 1904, under the pen name *Aret*, he published weekly chronicles in *Areveik*. Among his literary heritage,

gogue and scholar of Classical Armenian who played a significant role in shaping Mark's profound command of her native language and refining her language. At the same time, Haykanush Mark was engaged in pedagogical work, serving at the boarding orphanage of the National Hospital of Constantinople. Subsequently, she taught for nearly eight years at the Nikoghosian Girls' High School in Nishantagh.



Figure 1: Haykanush Mark.
1883–1966

Mark's pedagogical activity is particularly illuminated through the important testimony of her student, Arshaluis Terlemizian³, whose recollections reflect a sincere sense of admiration and deep appreciation for her teacher. In a series of *memoiristic notes* included in her album entitled *To Miss Arshaluis*, Terlemizian refers to the Nikoghosian Girls' School and to the activities of its *exceptional teachers*, describing the educational environment with special reverence. She writes: "Although I retain fond memories of the National and Dayan schools of Scutar, my Nikoghosian School remains unforgettable in its perfection. The atmosphere prevailing there in-

spired only a love of work, aspiration, and an enthusiastic striving toward beautiful and noble ideals. The principal, Hakob Nikoghosian, and his wife were educated, psychologically perceptive, and caring individuals. There was also a rare constellation of distinguished teachers: Daniel Varoujan, Tigran Chokurian, A. Barseghian, Haykanush Mark, Komitas, Sh. Kriayan, and others."⁴

the work *Journey to Athens and Smyrna* (1881), published as a separate volume, is particularly noteworthy. Between 1886 and 1888, together with Madatia Karagashian, he co-published the classical-Armenian journal *The Taste of Golden Literature*. He also compiled a two-volume reader titled *An Anthology of Secular Literature*. One of Gurgen's important works is the manual *Concise Art of Versification*, published in 1897 in Constantinople. He died in 1915. See: **Stepanyan** 1973, 272.

³ Arshaluis Terlemizian (later Sargsian) was the niece of the renowned painter Panos Terlemizian. In her album entitled *To Miss Arshaluis*, entries were left by prominent intellectuals and literary figures of the time, including Daniel Varoujan, Komitas, Yervand Otian, Vahan Tekeian, and others.

⁴ **Daniel Varoujan** 1986, 435.

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In 1903, at the age of twenty, Haykanush Mark was awarded the second literary prize⁵ of the *Masis* newspaper. Alongside her teaching career, particular significance was attached to her publishing and editorial work, as well as to her national and social activity. Haykanush Mark enjoyed widespread recognition and popularity, especially among women, as her prose works and poems expressed the subtle psychological world of women while simultaneously addressing and advocating for women's rights within the context of early twentieth-century Armenian social reality. During her youth, Mark also wrote poetry, which was published in the *Manzume-i Efkâr*⁶ newspaper.

In 1905, Haykanush Mark became engaged to the publicist Vahan Toshikian⁷, editor of the *Manzume-i Efkâr* newspaper. In the same year, she founded the journal *Tsaghik*⁸, the publication of which became one of the most significant achievements of her career⁹.

⁵ See the relevant publications in the newspaper *Masis* concerning this second literary prize.

⁶ *Manzume-i Efkâr* (Series of Opinions) was a newspaper published in Constantinople between 1866 and 1917. Until 1896, it appeared in Armenian-script Ottoman Turkish, and thereafter in Armenian. The newspaper had a democratic orientation and advocated the implementation of reforms in the Ottoman Empire. It addressed the severe social, economic, and national conditions of the Armenian population of the Empire, while also criticizing Turkish oppressors, which led to its prohibition on several occasions.

⁷ Vahan Toshikian was one of the intellectuals of Constantinople. He received his education at the renowned Perperian School and was particularly distinguished for his editorial activity, owing to his long-standing contribution to the Armenian press. In 1909, he edited the daily newspaper *Gaghapar* published in Constantinople, and between 1914 and 1930 he co-published the periodical *Verjin Lur* (*Latest News*) together with A. Galpakchian. See: **Tekeian** 1983, 707–709. **Ejmiadzin** 1954, 58.

⁸ It should be noted that several periodicals bearing the title *Tsaghik* (*Flower*) were published in different periods in Constantinople. Despite sharing the same name, they had different editorial boards and orientations. An earlier journal titled *Tsaghik* (1886–1908) was published intermittently and featured a diverse range of content, including literary-philological, pedagogical, economic, scientific, and political themes. It represented various ideological and functional platforms, reflecting the social and cultural demands of its time and serving as one of the important venues of contemporary intellectual life. In contrast, *Tsaghik Kanants Yatuk* (*Tsaghik for Women*), a weekly journal edited by Haykanush Mark between 1905 and 1907, had a more specialized and focused orientation. It was an illustrated periodical whose content included literary and artistic works, articles on household management, publications addressing women's issues, as well as materials on fashion, handicrafts, and other aspects of everyday life. In 1907, *Tsaghik Kanants Yatuk* was

Although the journal was published for only three years (1905–1907), it nevertheless succeeded in attracting considerable readership and emerged as one of the important symbols of the Armenian women's feminist movement. The journal brought together young Armenian women writers of Constantinople, who addressed a wide range of issues concerning women from literary, intellectual, and epistemological perspectives, thereby contributing to the growing awareness and reevaluation of women's issues within Armenian society.

In 1907, Haykanush Mark and Vahan Toshikian got married and moved to Smyrna (İzmir), where Toshikian had been invited to edit the periodicals *Arshaluys*¹⁰ (Shafaq) and *Ardzagank*¹¹ (Yanki), both of which included sections dedicated to women¹². From 1908 onwards, Mark also became involved in the work of these periodicals, taking charge of the women's section.

reorganized and, in 1908, continued its publication under the title *Tsaghik Tghayots* (*Tsaghik for Childrens*), thereby changing both its target readership and thematic orientation.

⁹ In certain scholarly circles, it has been argued that Haykanush Mark was the first Armenian woman to publish periodicals intended for women. However, this view does not fully correspond to historical reality. In fact, the first periodical in Armenian history dedicated to women was published as early as the second half of the nineteenth century on the initiative of Elpis Kesaratsian. In 1861–1863, she published the journal *Guitar* in Constantinople, thereby laying the foundations for the formation of the Armenian women's press. See: **Hambardzumyan 2025, 272.**

¹⁰ *Arshaluys* was a socio-literary, scientific, and commercial daily newspaper published in Smyrna between 1907 and 1908 under the editorship of B. Keshishian. The periodical contained structured sections such as *Official*, *Internal*, *External*, and others, through which it reported on both domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire and international events. At the same time, *Arshaluys* placed particular emphasis on the issues of Armenian women's education and enlightenment, addressing questions related to women's emancipation. The newspaper published works by Smyrna-Armenian authors as well as translations from European literature. In addition, it featured articles dedicated to Armenian writers and their works, thereby contributing to the development of literary life. See: **Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia 2000.**

¹¹ *Ardzagank* was a daily newspaper published in Smyrna (Izmir) in 1908 at the Mamurian printing house. Its editor-director was Vahan Toshikian (1880–1954), while the licensed proprietor was Hrant Mattheos Mamurian. The periodical had a socio-political orientation and addressed issues concerning the Armenian community of early twentieth-century Izmir (Smyrna). Haykanush Mark was among the contributors and correspondents of *Ardzagank*.

¹² These periodicals published in Smyrna between 1907 and 1908 were jointly edited by Haykanush Mark and Vahan Toshikian. See: **Armenian Periodical Press 1986, 66, 70.**

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In 1909, the couple returned to Constantinople, where Mark engaged in active public life and collaborated with a number of periodicals, including *Manzume-i Efkâr*, *Amenun Taretsuyc*, *Luys*, *Zhamanak*, *Mer Taretsuyc*, *Shant*, and other publications. Subsequently, she also contributed to the periodicals *Byurakn*, *Hayastani Kochnak*, and *Yeritasard Hayuhi*. After her return, Haykanush Mark collaborated with the *Armenian Ladies' Benevolent Association*, founded by Sipil, who invited Mark to assume the duties of secretary of the association, with the aim of further developing its activities, particularly in organizing girls' education in Constantinople and its surrounding provinces. In presenting Mark, Sipil highly praised her abilities and commitment, emphasizing her importance to the organization: "Here is a figure who we so greatly need. She is also engaged in holding secretarial positions in other organizations."¹³ Subsequently, in addition to her collaboration with the aforementioned association, Mark also served in secretarial roles in other organizations, including the *Armenian Women's Union*¹⁴ and the *Armenian Ladies' Society*¹⁵, as well as in the auxiliary committee of the *National Hospital* of Constantinople and other institutions. It should be noted that during this period, the publication of *Tsaghik* had been discontinued, although it continued to retain its ideological influence.

In 1919, after an interval of approximately fourteen years, Haykanush Mark founded and edited the journal *Hay Kin*¹⁶ (*Armenian Woman*) in Constantinople. The journal's primary aim was to enhance the role and significance of women within Armenian national life. It addressed contemporary issues concerning women and, by publishing literary, fictional, scientific, medical, and pedagogical

¹³ The *Armenian Women's National Philanthropic Association* (*Azganver Hayuheats Yngherutyun*) was founded on April 11, 1879, in Constantinople on the initiative of Zapel Asadur. It was later reorganized on October 4, 1908, continuing its educational and pedagogical activities. The main objective of the association was the organization and promotion of education for Armenian girls in the western provinces. To this end, the first school was established in Kghi in 1880. By 1912, the association maintained 23 schools across various provinces, providing education to more than 2,000 female students. Over approximately two decades, the organization played a significant role in the development of Armenian women's education, contributing to the establishment of educational institutions in Constantinople and surrounding regions, as well as to the wider dissemination of girls' schooling. See: **Poghosian** 1957, 778.

¹⁴ **Poghosian** 1957.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ **Hay Kin** 1919–1933, 16.

articles, contributed to the intellectual development of Armenian women. *Hay Kin* also maintained foreign correspondents, including contributors from Paris and the United States. Under Mark's editorship, it was published as a semi-monthly periodical until 1932, appearing twice a month. It thus became one of the most important Armenian-language journals published in the post-genocide period.

Mark regarded *Hay Kin* not only as a platform for articulating the voice of women and advocating gender equality, but also as a crucial link uniting Armenians living in Soviet Armenia, the diaspora, and Turkey. In her view, the achievement of gender equality was possible only within a framework that preserved certain continuities with national traditions. This position is clearly articulated in the editorial of *Hay Kin*, where Haykanush Mark reflected on the past and future trajectory of women's lives, writing: "Behind us we leave a path which, despite containing nothing festive or brilliant, is nevertheless a path upon which we can look without shame - a narrow village path through which we have passed, fulfilling our duties as women, as wives, and as mothers. Now we must pave a new road, one that must be a serious urban path, broader, straighter, and more firmly directed toward its goal. Upon this path we must bear our responsibility, we must create our rights, we must forge our work, without ever distancing ourselves from our feminine instincts and our home. It must lead us to a height toward which we are driven by the tense aspirations of rebirth – of our gender, our nation, and our homeland."¹⁷

These formulations clearly reveal Mark's social and civic stance, which combined progressive ideas with a conscious respect for traditional values. After the discontinuation of the journal *Hay Kin*, in 1933 Haykanush Mark collaborated with the daily newspaper *Nor Lur*¹⁸, edited by her husband Vahan Toshikian,

¹⁷ *Hay Kin* 1921, № 9, 2.

¹⁸ *Nor Lur* was a literary and political daily newspaper, which from 1945 onwards was published as a tri-weekly periodical. It appeared in Istanbul during the periods 1924–1936 and 1945–1954 under the editorship of Vahan Toshikian. The periodical covered the social and cultural life of the local Armenian community, as well as the economic and cultural achievements of Armenia and events concerning the Armenian diaspora. It also addressed international political developments, particularly the post-war relations between European countries. *Nor Lur* published works by Armenian and foreign authors, reviews, theatrical commentaries, as well as historical and pedagogical articles. In addition, it included domestic

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where she established a women's section. Within this framework, she continued to publish articles on women's education and upbringing, as well as on family and social life. At the same time, her writings also appeared in various other newspapers and journals.

In 1921, in Constantinople, she published a separate volume of prose poems entitled *Moments of Idleness*¹⁹. Her works are characterized by profound emotional depth and psychological insight, reflecting the inner world of the Armenian woman. At the same time, Mark devoted her literary and journalistic activity to the defense of women's rights and the elevation of their role in society. Haykanush Mark presented her autobiographical reminiscences in the volume entitled *Ripples of My Life*²⁰. In both her literary and journalistic works, her language is distinguished by purity and clarity, while her style is marked by simplicity - qualities that contributed to the wide dissemination and popularity of her writings. In the combined 1967–1968 issue of *Amenun Taretsuyc*, Karo Gevorgian offered an assessment of Mark's activity, highly valuing her literary and journalistic contribution. He emphasizes that, through her rich legacy devoted to the female world, the social issues of Armenian women, and especially the defense of women's rights, Mark rightfully stands as one of the most widely read authors among Armenian women readers in the first half of the twentieth century²¹.

In 1950, Mark's study *Zaruhi Galemkerian*²² was published in Istanbul. In 1954, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her literary career, a comprehensive volume entitled *Haykanush Mark: Life and Work* was published in Constantinople. The book included a selection of her literary and journalistic works, as well as valuable memoirs.

Haykanush Mark (Topuzian) formed her pen name on the basis of her father Margar's name, transforming it into the surname "Mark". In Western Armenian literary history, she occupies a firm and honorable place, standing

and health-related advice columns, as well as sports news, thereby forming a diverse and information-rich platform.

¹⁹ Mark 1921, 40.

²⁰ Mark 1954.

²¹ Gevorgyan 1967–1968, 646.

²² Mark 1950, 29.

alongside such prominent figures as *Elpis Kesaratsian*²³, *Srbuhi Tyusab*²⁴, *Sipil*²⁵, and *Zapel Yesayan*²⁶.

In the final period of her life, due to deteriorating health, Mark was admitted to the Armenian National Hospital in Constantinople, where she passed away on March 7, 1966, on the eve of International Women's Day. Haykanush Mark bequeathed her personal library, material possessions, and archival documents

²³ Elpis Kesaratsian (E.K.T. Haykuhi) was born in 1830 in Constantinople. She was educated at the Armenian schools in Ortagyugh and Peshiktash. She was the first female journalist and editor in the Armenian reality. Elpis Kesaratsian founded the Armenian-language magazine "The Guitar" with the motto "An Invitation to Armenian (Haykazn) Maidens" (*about women and for women*). As an editor, she signed her articles as "E.K.T. Haykuhi" and, throughout the seven issues of "The Guitar", published essays such as "The Spirit of Patriotism" (Imagination), "The Benefits of Friendship", "Exercising the Right is not Audacity" and "Upbringing of Maidens". Her essays, letters to Armenian women, philosophical reflections, and articles published in "The Guitar" and elsewhere were addressed not only to women of her time but also to those living and working in any era. In 1879, she published a collection titled "Collection of Letters to a Reading Armenian Woman". In 1872, she worked as a teacher at Makruhyats College and contributed to the Armenian press in Constantinople. She died in 1913. **Hambardzumyan** 2025, 272.

²⁴ Srbuhi Tyusab (Vahanian) was born in 1841. She was the first Armenian novelist. The core of her work was the issues of women's emancipation: socio-economic, legal, educational, political and national consciousness, their manifestations and protection. Throughout her literary and cultural activity Tyusab tried to substantiate one of the most important prerequisites for emancipation, the idea of occupation, which the author considered the first prerequisite for a woman's independence. Srbuhi Tyusab is the author of the novels "Mayta" (1883), "Siranush" (1884) and "Araksia or the Governess" (1887), publicistic articles and poems. Tyusab died in 1901. **Hambardzumyan** 2026, 400.

²⁵ Sipil (Zapel Khanjian) was a socially active figure, an educator, and a publicist. She authored textbooks and numerous pedagogical-methodological articles and was the first female grammarian. Her pioneering grammar textbook was published in Constantinople in 1897. Later, in collaboration with her husband Hrant Asatur, she compiled the "Modern Armenian Grammar" and "Museum" volumes, which were repeatedly revised and reprinted, serving as textbooks in Western Armenian schools for more than a quarter of a century.

²⁶ Zapel Yesayan (1878–1943) graduated from Sorbonne University, gaining a degree in literature and philosophy, which partly explains the harmonious interplay of these disciplines in her works and her interest in them. In this context, her notable works include the novellas "Twilights of Skyutar" (1905), "False Geniuses" (1905), "The Obedients and the Rebels" (1906), "People with Grace" (1907), and "The Curse" (1911), the short stories "Safieh" (1911) and "The New Bride" (1911), as well as the novels "Retreating Forces" (1923), "Shirt of Flame" (1934), "The Gardens of Silihtar" (1935), and "Uncle Khachik" (1966), etc.. In 2019, one of the streets in Paris was named after Yesayan.

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to the Holy Cross Diocesan School (*Surp Khach Dprevank*), thereby contributing to the preservation of Armenian educational and cultural heritage.

The Journal Tsaghik as Mark's First Journalistic Experiment

The most successful and influential initiatives in the field of women's periodical press are rightly associated with the name of Haykanush Mark, whose edited journals *Tsaghik* (*Flower*) and *Hay Kin* (*Armenian Woman*) have, due to their rich content, structural coherence, and high journalistic standards, retained their significance and relevance to this day. The journal *Tsaghik for Women*²⁷ (also: *Tsaghik*) aimed to unite women's literary potential and to stimulate the intellectual and creative activity of the younger generation. It brought together nearly all prominent female intellectuals of the time, including Sibil, Zaruhi Kalemkerian, Arshakouhi Teodikian, Zapel Yesayan, and others. The pages of *Tsaghik* offered readers the opportunity to become acquainted both with the social conditions of women in various provinces of Western Armenia and with the development of international women's movements. These materials were presented with the aim of fostering and consolidating the principles of rational feminism within Armenian society.

Drawing on examples from foreign experience, Haykanush Mark consistently encouraged Armenian women to take practical steps toward the defense of their rights, while simultaneously striving, through her editorials, to overcome prevailing misconceptions about feminism. Although the publication of *Tsaghik* was discontinued due to external circumstances, particularly the editor's relocation, it nevertheless represented a significant initiative. At the age of only twenty-two, issue after issue, Mark increasingly established herself as a talented publicist, a skilled organizer, and a high-level journalist.

In the founding and literary-cultural significance of *Tsaghik*²⁸, a major role was played by Mark's teacher, the poet Sipil, who highly valued this initiative and emphasized the necessity and social importance of journalistic work. She wrote in particular: "...Our talents assert themselves within us, Miss; we need to put them to use, just as a bird must move its wings. The need to work is the most powerful of human capacities, and it determines one's place in society. You, the most blossoming among our women writers, will prove yourselves to be the

²⁷ **Tsaghik for women** 1905–1907.

²⁸ **Mark** 1905–1907.

most energetic as well. Your initiative grants you the right to the support and gratitude of all of us.”²⁹

The Journal Hay Kin as a Foundational Source of Cultural Heritage

From 1919 to 1932, for approximately thirteen years, overcoming numerous temporal and contextual difficulties, Haykanush Mark published the semi-monthly journal *Hay Kin* (Armenian Woman). She was one of the few female intellectuals of her time to be engaged in long-term editorial work. Together with her husband Vahan Toshikian, she had earlier edited periodicals in the Ottoman Empire and, after the Armenian Genocide, continued to live and work in Constantinople. In this sense, she functioned as the editor of one of the few women-oriented periodicals of her time.

Hay Kin may be regarded as a unique feminist initiative that contributed to the expansion of women's social role, gradually moving her beyond the confines of the family and narrow social circles. Through its structure, ideological orien-

tation, and programmatic aims, the journal sought to reform the social position of Armenian women. This mission is also reflected in one of its editorials, which states: “The Armenian Woman is founded in order to deal specifically with all essential issues that concern the women's world. We believe that its existence is more than necessary, now that the Armenian woman also has her role to fulfill in the National Renaissance. With the support of both Armenian and even foreign competent collaborators, we dedicate ourselves to our program, striving for action to explain and realize it.”³⁰ *Hay Kin* thus func-

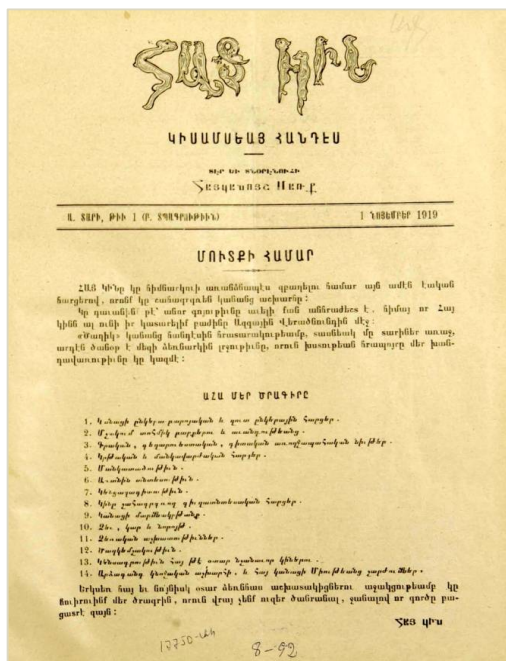


Figure 2: The journal Hay Kin: 1919-1932.

²⁹ Mark 1954, 389–390.

³⁰ Hay Kin 1919–1933, 16.

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tioned not only as a press organ but also as an important source of cultural heritage, reflecting the social, ideological, and gender transformations of its era.

At the beginning of the 20th century, only a limited number of periodicals addressed specifically to women readers were published in Eastern and Western Armenia, as well as within Armenian diasporic communities. Among them were the calendar-journal *Akhuryan*³¹, published in Alexandrapol in 1903 under the editorship of Nvard Apinian; the monthly journal *Artemis*³², issued in Cairo between 1902 and 1903 under the editorship of Mari Beylerian; the weekly newspaper *Luys Kanants Yatuk*³³ (*Special Light for Women*) (1907–1908), initially edited by Mark and later by Aram Antonian, and the semi-monthly journal *Hay Kin*³⁴ (*Armenian Woman*) (1919–1932), likewise edited and directed by Mark.

³¹ *Akhuryan* was a socio-literary daily newspaper published in Alexandropol (present-day Gyumri) from 1907 to 1915 at the *Shirak* printing house. The periodical was founded and edited by Karapet Apinian, who also served as its publisher. The newspaper had a socio-political and literary orientation, addressing contemporary public life, cultural developments, and national issues relevant to Armenian society in the early 20th century. It consisted of 4 pages and measured 42 × 30 cm. *Akhuryan* is regarded as an important example of early Armenian press in Alexandropol, reflecting the intellectual, cultural, and civic life of the Armenian community in the region during the late Ottoman and pre-Soviet periods.

³² *Artemis* was an illustrated monthly journal of family and literary content, serving as an organ of early 20th-century Armenian women. It was founded, owned, and edited by Mari Peylerian (Naghschian). The periodical was first published in Cairo in 1902 at the *Artemis* printing house, and subsequently continued in Alexandria from 1902 to 1903. It aimed to address women's intellectual, social, and familial life, promoting education, literary expression, and the active participation of women in public and cultural spheres. The journal consisted of 34 pages, included illustrations, and measured 28 × 21 cm. *Artemis* is considered one of the early and significant examples of Armenian women's press in the Eastern diaspora, closely associated with early feminist thought and women's cultural emancipation.

³³ *Luys Kanants Yatuk* (*Special Light for Women*) was an illustrated weekly journal published in Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1907 at the *Manzume* printing house. The periodical had a literary, artistic, and socio-cultural orientation and was intended for women, featuring materials on family life, education, fashion, and women's social issues. The journal was edited by Haykanoush Mark (T'opuzyan, 1885–1966). The director was Hovhannes F. Gayserian (d. 1924), and the licensed proprietor was Vahan Vardapet Ter-Minasyan. The publication consisted of 24 pages and measured 25 × 17 cm. It is regarded as one of the significant examples of early 20th-century Western Armenian women's press and an important contribution to the emerging feminist and educational discourse within the Armenian community of the Ottoman Empire.

³⁴ **Hay Kin** 1919–1933, 16.

Thus, three important women-oriented periodicals, *Tsaghik*, *Luys*, and *Hay Kin*, were edited by Haykanush Mark over the course of nearly three decades. Contemporaries characterized Haykanush Mark as a figure “endowed with a powerful individuality,” one who had transferred “the progressive advancement of the Armenian woman” onto a “practical plane.” It should be noted that the indomitable editor of *Tsaghik* and later *Hay Kin* tirelessly struggled for the strengthening of women’s social position and for the elevation of their moral and educational standards, while at the same time remaining committed to the principle that “woman belongs to the home.”³⁵

Among the aforementioned periodicals, *Hay Kin* distinguished itself not only through the longevity of its publication but also through its significant contribution to the development of the Armenian press and to the formation of Armenian national spiritual and cultural life. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the journal brought together the intellectual women of Constantinople, including the poet Sibil, Zaruhi Galemkerian, Mannig and Zapel Perperians³⁶, as well as the philologist and public figure Arshakuhi Teodik. In this respect, *Hay Kin* functioned not only as a platform that united and organized women intellectuals, but also as an influential medium for the articulation of their ideas and voices.

The journal *Hay Kin (Armenian Woman)* had a clearly formulated objective: to contribute to the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and physical development of women. Within a broader cause-and-effect framework, this objective was also directed toward addressing issues related to the education and upbringing of

³⁵ **Mark H.** 1954, 389–390.

³⁶ *Mannik and Zapel Perperians* were prominent figures in the Western Armenian educational and cultural milieu, closely associated with the pedagogical tradition of the Perperian School in Constantinople. Zapel Perperian (1853–1920) was an educator, writer, and public intellectual. She was the daughter of Mkrtich Perperian, the founder of the Perperian School, and played a significant role in the development of the institution and the formation of its educational programs. Her work was particularly important in advancing girls’ education and expanding educational opportunities for Armenian women. Mannik Perperian was also actively involved in the same educational environment, participating in the instructional and organizational activities of the school and continuing the family’s pedagogical legacy. Overall, the Perperian sisters contributed meaningfully to the development of Western Armenian educational life, particularly through their efforts to promote women’s education and introduce new pedagogical approaches within the Armenian community of Constantinople.

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Armenian women as future mothers and toward ensuring their spiritual development.

The journal *Hay Kin* had a clearly articulated objective: to promote the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, as well as physical development of women. Within a broader framework of causal reasoning, this programmatic aim was also directed toward addressing issues related to the education and upbringing of Armenian women as future mothers and toward ensuring their spiritual development. These ideas largely corresponded to the views of the publicist Grigor Artsruni, editor of the newspaper *Mshak* published in Tiflis, who had been advocating for women's education since the 1860s. This issue was repeatedly discussed in the Eastern Armenian press, and one of his earliest articles was devoted specifically to education and the women's question. In that article, he emphasizes an important idea, seeking to awaken society from indifference: "Poor Armenian women are made to believe that education is unnecessary for them; their fathers did not provide them with education and continue not to do so even now. <...> Yet they fail to consider that, upon becoming a mother, the Armenian woman cannot provide proper upbringing to her children, because she herself remains uneducated."³⁷

A similar concern is also reflected in the journal *Hay Kin*, albeit several decades later. The writer and public figure Zaruhi Galemkerian published in the journal her study entitled *The Role of the Armenian Woman as an Educational Influence*³⁸, a work that continues to retain its relevance to the present day. In this study, particular importance is attributed to the role of self-education and self-development in the formation of the family and the upbringing of the younger generation.

Later, when Zaruhi Galemkerian was already living in the United States while remaining closely connected to her homeland, she shared her admiration and confidence in Haykanush Mark and in the ideals she upheld in a letter addressed to her "very dear friend."

She wrote: "I am confident that readers welcomed with delight your solid and substantial editorials, which, like a silent and concealed police officer, search the souls of women and, whenever necessary, reprimand, and call them back to order. I would wish that this scrutiny were so powerful and intimidating

³⁷ Artsruni 1902, 231–232.

³⁸ Galemkerian 1952

that they would fear ever again being caught in the same fault.”³⁹ At the conclusion of the letter, she promises to provide Mark with “information from women’s newspapers” for publication in *Hay Kin*.

The journal *Hay Kin* (*Armenian Woman*) fulfilled not only an informational function, covering Armenian communal life and the activities of women’s organizations, but also served as a platform for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage. It presented the everyday life, way of living, character, and traditions of Armenian women, thereby contributing to the preservation of national identity. It should also be noted that it was precisely *Hay Kin* that informed the public about Hovhannes Tumanian’s visit to Constantinople in 1921, thus demonstrating the journal’s important role in documenting the cultural life of the period.

During his stay in Constantinople, Tumanian visited the orphanage-school of the *The School-Loving Ladies* (*Dprotsaser Tiknants*), where a literary-artistic event was organized in his honor. At the conclusion of the gathering, he delivered a speech in which he highly praised the institution’s mission and significance, emphasizing the moral strength of Armenian women and the importance of preserving national identity: “*The School-Loving Ladies* shall preserve the dignity of the nation. Your protection is more powerful than the force of armies, for it is not the strength of the sword, but the strength of moral fortitude. <...> Whenever testimony concerning our nation were required, I would point to the *School-Loving Ladies’* School, so that people might see the Armenian woman and the Armenian orphan girl; this would defend our cause more effectively than all diplomats taken together. One of my finest memories of Constantinople shall remain the *School-Loving Ladies’* School.”⁴⁰ From Tumanian’s remarks, it becomes evident that he regarded the *Dprotsaser Tiknants School* as an important symbol of the vitality and cultural resilience of the Armenian people.

During the same period, Hovhannes Tumanian also personally visited Haykanush Mark. Recalling this meeting in later years, Mark noted that *Hay Kin*, as an independent women’s periodical, had attracted the attention of various political circles, which sought to bring the journal within their sphere of ideological influence. Mark, however, consistently rejected such attempts, striving to preserve the journal’s ideological independence. According to her testimony,

³⁹ Ibid, 171–172.

⁴⁰ *Hay Kin* 1921, № 2, 811.

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even Tumanian, during his brief stay in Constantinople, proposed a certain form of collaboration. Mark nevertheless declined the proposal, justifying her position by the necessity of maintaining the non-political character of the journal.

She emphasizes that *Hay Kin* (*Armenian Woman*) was intended to function exclusively as an independent platform devoted to women's issues, free from political influence and directed solely toward the protection of women's interests: "*Hay Kin* became that independent women's journal whose strength, once recognized, led various political parties to propose the infusion of their own ideological color into it. My unequivocal 'no' confronted them all. Even Hovhannes Tumanian, when he stayed briefly in my city, visited me personally and requested an opportunity for his own side. Naturally, this was impossible. My aim and effort were to keep the newspaper distant from political currents and influences. Therefore, I told him - while forever carrying in my heart the pain of having perhaps offended him: 'I cannot; before this, I have already refused others as well. If there is one banner under which *Hay Kin* shall live, it is exclusively the banner of womanhood, free from every external influence and impulse.'"⁴¹ It is also necessary to emphasize that, through the journal *Hay Kin*, Haykanush Mark actively supported various national, charitable, and other humanitarian initiatives. The content of the journal and the issues addressed within its pages possessed a continuous and sustained character, reflecting the social, cultural, and educational priorities of the period.

Hay Kin was an illustrated periodical distinguished by its artistic design, nationally oriented stylistic solutions, and high-quality printing. It featured a clear structure and purposefully organized sections designed to address readers across different age and social groups. The journal adopted a comprehensive program for women's development, encompassing spiritual, moral, legal, aesthetic, health-related, and economic education.

The implementation of this program extended over approximately thirteen years, supported by a dedicated team of professionally trained collaborators. The thematic sections of the journal reflected various aspects of women's lives and activities, including:

- a. materials on women's socio-ethical and communal issues;
- b. publications aimed at preserving national traditions and inherited moral

⁴¹ Mark 1954, 57–58.

values;

- c. literary, artistic, scientific, and health-related articles;
- d. educational and pedagogical discussions;
- e. materials related to childcare and upbringing;
- f. issues of domestic economy and household management;
- g. agricultural topics relevant to women;
- h. themes on physical education and healthy lifestyle;
- i. sections on fashion, tailoring, and contemporary trends;
- j. presentations of handicrafts and artisanal work;
- k. materials related to floriculture;
- l. biographies of prominent Armenian and foreign women;
- m. reports and responses concerning women's issues and the activities of Armenian women's associations.

Owing to this multidimensional structure, *Hay Kin (Armenian Woman)* evolved into a comprehensive educational and cultural platform that contributed to the expansion of Armenian women's knowledge and to the re-evaluation of their social role.

The materials published in the journal's section entitled "*Childcare*" testify to the editorial board's profound sense of commitment and responsibility toward Armenian women and the family. The section aimed to illuminate the fundamental issues of childcare and upbringing through practical and knowledge-based materials. Within this framework, attention was devoted to such topics as the organization of an infant's bed, sleep routines, a child's first exposure to the outdoors, the importance and advantages of breastfeeding, vaccinations, the selection of toys, and related subjects. This approach corresponds closely to the observation of the distinguished educator and thinker Retheos Perperian, according to whom "childcare is a gospel for fathers and mothers," thereby emphasizing its universal and enduring significance.

The journal *Hay Kin* also played a significant role in the transmission of literary and cultural values. Its pages featured works by prominent representatives of Armenian literature, including Daniel Varoujan's "*To Miss Sunrise*", Yeghishe Duryan's "*Immortal Songs*", Vahan Tekeyan's "*Desire*", as well as works by Yervand Otyan, Anais ("*To a Woman Who Wept*"), Zaruhi Galemkerian ("*Three Temples*"), Shirvanzade, Shushanik Kurghinian, and others. In this respect, the

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journal functioned as an important medium for the preservation and transmission of spiritual and cultural heritage.

In addition, the journal familiarized its readership with foreign literature by publishing translations of Turkish and European authors. Among these were Jean Moréas's *Songs* (translated by Haykanush Mark), as well as works by other authors, including Jean Mirey's *The Magical Night*, *The Heart of the Violet*, *The Dance of the Months*, and Judith Gautier's *A Reflection...* and *The Emperor* (translated by Shakhokhram), among others. At the same time, the journal included a wide range of materials relating to women's everyday and cultural interests, extending from healthcare and education to fashion, floriculture, and culinary arts. Owing to this diversity of content, *Hay Kin* functioned not merely as an informational periodical, but also as an important educational and cultural platform.

It is particularly noteworthy that the journal contributed to the preservation and reinforcement of the spiritual and cultural continuity between pre-Genocide national values and subsequent generations. Simultaneously, it served as a medium of communication among Western Armenian, Eastern Armenian, Soviet Armenian, and diasporic Armenian communities, fostering interaction and cultural exchange among them.

In the editorial entitled "*Woman and Literature*" published in the ninth issue of 1921 (Year II, No. 9), Haykanush Mark emphasizes the role of women in the development of literature, highlighting the significance of reading and the dissemination of books. She argues that educated and financially secure women, in particular, could exert substantial influence upon literary life by stimulating the production and circulation of books through their readership and intellectual demand, thereby contributing to the vitality of national literature: "Women, especially wealthy women, have a great role in this regard. If they devote their ample leisure time to reading, they will constantly feel the need to purchase books. In doing so, they enter into communion with the nobility of intellect and simultaneously give impetus to the literature of the nation, which, in order to survive, cannot, alas, subsist on platonic sympathy alone."⁴²

After thirteen consecutive years of publication, the journal *Hay Kin* ceased its activity, causing profound sorrow both to Haykanush Mark and to its reader-

⁴² Mark 1921, № 9, 1–2.

ship. During this period, the journal had achieved wide geographical circulation, reaching virtually all centers of Armenian communal life, including Egypt, the Middle East, Europe, America, India, Japan, and elsewhere. On the occasion of the journal's closure, Vahram Papazian, in his work *The Debt of My Heart*, highly praised its significance, emphasizing that despite numerous hardships, censorship, and administrative obstacles, *Hay Kin* had managed to survive for many years and fulfill its important mission. In his assessment, among Mark's creative achievements, *Hay Kin* constituted one of her most valuable accomplishments, functioning as a symbol of Armenian women's intellectual, social, and political self-expression: "...while dying, it continued to live. Yet the work which she had sustained through a heavy chain of sacrifices for nine, or perhaps ten, I no longer clearly recall, difficult years, after being subjected countless times to the most obstructive whims of Turkish censorship, was ultimately terminated altogether through police intervention."⁴³

Papazian ultimately concluded that: "the work of her works, *Hay Kin*, is the finest and most enduring decoration that shall remain upon the breast of the Armenian woman writer, Haykanush Mark."⁴⁴ Reflecting later on the profound impact of the tragedy she had endured, Haykanush Mark wrote: "The pain of this tragedy continues to smolder within my heart."⁴⁵ These emotional experiences led her to withdraw for a certain period from the literary and public activities that had constituted an essential part of her life.

The journal was published continuously for thirteen years. From 1919 to 1933, Haykanush Mark served as the editor of *Hay Kin*, which she described as a periodical in which every issue concerning women could be discussed openly. For approximately fourteen years, the journal appeared twice monthly. Its publication was discontinued in 1933. Mark never explicitly disclosed the reason for the journal's closure, stating only: "Because of something known to everyone." Until 1936, her active literary activity remained interrupted.

In 1936, Haykanush Mark briefly prepared a women's column for the newspaper *Nor Lur*, published by her husband Vahan Toshikian. During the Ottoman period, the Educational Council of the Armenian community was responsible for educational matters, while the Judicial Council dealt with issues

⁴³ **Papazian** 1959, 135.

⁴⁴ **Mark** 1954, 63.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

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such as family affairs, marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Haykanush Mark advocated the view that women should also have representation within these councils and among the leadership structures of the Armenian community.

Through the pages of *Hay Kin*, she articulated the necessity of this demand and delivered persuasive speeches before both the Educational and Judicial Councils. She opposed proposals that would have admitted women merely as “auxiliary members” to the Educational Council and instead demanded full membership with equal rights. Mark even put forward her own candidacy for membership in the council. The closure of *Hay Kin* carried a profoundly personal and emotional significance for Mark, which she compared to a great personal loss, stating: “The extinction of *Hay Kin* was for me what the death of poor Dorinne had been for Srбуhi Tyusab; it was my daughter.”⁴⁶ This formulation demonstrates that, for Mark, the journal was not merely a publishing initiative, but an inseparable part of her spiritual and creative life, the loss of which she experienced as a deep personal tragedy.

Haykanush Mark distinguished herself not only through her literary talent, but also through her significant editorial and publishing activities, as well as through her highly developed sense of female individuality and national self-awareness. Her reflections, often concise and contemplative in form, convey profound ideas and a deep sense of social responsibility. The idea of systematically presenting her creative legacy may be regarded as a continuation of the very tradition that Mark herself established in *Hay Kin*, where she regularly introduced the ideas and reflections of various Armenian intellectuals. From this perspective, the collection and presentation of her own reflections constitute an attempt to reassess and preserve the same cultural and intellectual heritage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the life and work of Haykanush Mark occupy a distinctive and significant place in the history of Armenian intellectual, literary, and journalistic thought of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her multifaceted activity as a writer, editor, publicist, educator, and public figure demonstrates the emergence of a new model of Armenian womanhood grounded in education, social responsibility, and national consciousness. Through her literary and publicistic works, Mark consistently addressed issues concerning women's rights, educa-

⁴⁶ Ibid.

tion, moral development, and social participation, thereby contributing to the formation of Armenian feminist discourse within the broader context of national and cultural revival.

Particularly noteworthy is her long-standing editorial work in the journals *Tsaghik* and especially *Hay Kin*, which evolved into influential platforms for the intellectual and cultural advancement of Armenian women. These periodicals not only reflected the social and ideological transformations of their era but also functioned as important instruments for the preservation and transmission of Armenian cultural identity in the aftermath of historical upheavals, including the Armenian Genocide. Through their thematic diversity, educational orientation, and engagement with both Armenian and international literary currents, these journals contributed substantially to the modernization of Armenian women's public and intellectual life.

At the same time, Mark's activity reveal the complex interrelationship between tradition and modernity within Armenian society. While advocating women's education, civic participation, and equal representation, she simultaneously emphasized the preservation of national values, family ethics, and cultural continuity. This synthesis of progressive and traditional elements constituted one of the defining features of her worldview and editorial policy.

Moreover, *Hay Kin* should be regarded not merely as a women's journal, but as a valuable historical and cultural source that illuminates the intellectual climate, gender perceptions, educational priorities, and communal structures of Armenian society during a transformative historical period. The journal served as a unifying platform connecting Western Armenian, Eastern Armenian, Soviet Armenian, and diasporic communities, thereby reinforcing cultural solidarity across geographical and political boundaries.

Thus, the scholarly examination of Haykanush Mark's life, thought, and editorial legacy allows for a deeper understanding of the development of Armenian women's press, the evolution of Armenian feminist consciousness, and the broader processes of national and cultural self-definition in modern Armenian history. Her enduring contribution confirms her status as one of the most influential Armenian women intellectuals and public figures of the twentieth century.

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ՆԱԻՐԱ ՀԱՄԲԱՐԶՈՒՄՅԱՆ

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ՀՐԱՊԱՐԱԿԱԽՈՍԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍՏՈՒՄ

Ամփոփում

Սույն ուսումնասիրության նպատակը Հայկանուշ Մառքի կենսագրության, գրական, հրապարակախոսական և խմբագրական գործունեության համակողմանի վերլուծությունն է և առանձնահատուկ կենտրոնացումը Հայ կին հանդեսի գաղափարական, մշակութային և հասարակական նշանակության վրա: Հետազոտության խնդիրը Հ. Մառքի գործունեության միջոցով արևմտահայ մամուլի զարգացման, կանանց ինքնագիտակցության ձևավորման և ազգային-մշակութային ժառանգության փոխանցման մեխանիզմների բացահայտումն է:

Ուսումնասիրության գիտական նորույթը Հ. Մառքի գործունեության դիտարկումն է ոչ միայն որպես կանանց մամուլի խմբագրական փորձ, այլև որպես միջմշակութային և գաղափարական հաղորդակցության համակարգ, որը միավորում է արևմտահայ, արևելահայ և սփյուռքահայ տարածքները: Աշխատության արդիականությունը պայմանավորված է գենդերային հավասարության, մամուլի պատմության և մշակութային հիշողության ուսումնասիրության ժամանակակից պահանջներով:

Հետազոտությունը կրում է միջգիտակարգային բնույթ՝ համադրելով գրականագիտության, պատմագիտության, մամուլի ուսումնասիրության, սոցիոլոգիայի և գենդերային ուսումնասիրությունների մոտեցումները: Ցույց է տրվում նաև, որ Հայ կին հանդեսը գործել է որպես ոչ միայն տեղեկատվական, այլև կրթական և գաղափարական հարթակ՝ ձևավորելով կանանց հասարակական ակտիվության նոր մոդել: Արդյունքում հաստատվում է Հ. Մառքի դերը որպես հայ կանանց մամուլի զարգացման առանցքային դեմք և ազգային մշակութային ինքնության պահպանման կարևոր գործիչ:

Hambardzumyan N.

Բացի այդ, ուսումնասիրությունն ընդգծում է հանդեսի երկարաժամկետ ազդեցությունը հայկական սփյուռքի ինքնակազմակերպման և կանանց համայնքային առաջնորդության ձևավորման վրա: Այն ցույց է տալիս, որ Հ. Մառքի խմբագրական գործունեությունը նպաստել է ոչ միայն կանանց կրթական առաջընթացին, այլև տարբեր երկրներում նրանց սոցիալական համախմբվածության ամրապնդմանը: Այսպիսով, նրա ժառանգությունը դիտարկվում է որպես հայ արդի մշակութային պատմության կարևոր բաղադրիչ:

Բանալի բառեր: *Հայկանուշ Մարք, «Հայ կին» ամսագիր, «Ծաղիկ» ամսագիր, տպագիր մշակույթ, ֆեմինիստական դիսկուրս, հայկական մշակութային ժառանգություն, կանանց կրթություն և սոցիալական ակտիվություն:*

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THE IDEOLOGICAL AND LITERARY PECULARITIES OF VARDAN GRIGORYAN'S HISTORICAL NOVELS

Abstract

The literary heritage of Vardan Grigoryan occupies a distinctive place in the Armenian literature through the paradigm of the ideology of statehood and the authorial historical-philosophical attitude. In his works, the history becomes a moral judgment and a platform for examining national self-consciousness. Enhancing the course of the Armenian historical novel and providing a comprehensive manifestation of the historical facts alongside with the national identity, Grigoryan stands as a systematic interpreter of the statehood ideology. The article examines the ideological and literary peculiarities of Vardan Grigoryan's historical novels, focusing primarily on the issues of the national existence and national self-consciousness. In Grigoryan's historical novels, history is not merely an objective reverberation of the past events, but also a key to the national self-awareness, the moral responsibility of leadership, and a revelation of the destructive events or way of thinking, which become the main reasons for historical tragedies. In Grigoryan's historical novels *The Century of Perdition*, *The Eternal Return*, and *Manya Ayrk*, the characters of the leaders, as patriotic and state-minded figures, are clearly subjected to the judgment of the history and the people. Each protagonists' attitude towards national dignity, duty, responsibility and statehood is profoundly different. The purpose of the article is to reveal the ideological core of Vardan Grigoryan's literary heritage: characters, artistic peculiarities, as well as to evaluate the profound humanistic and moral lessons, through which the writer establishes a connection with contem-

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porary reality. The novelty of the article is in the study of Grigoryan's new approach to the historical events that has become known in the Armenian history as the "Ani period" – period that diversely interpreted by many historians. These events are examined from the perspective of national destiny and the ideology of statehood. The actuality of the article is in revealing the moral image of the nation that has been interpreted from the ancient times. The objective of the article is to present Grigoryan's place in the history of Armenian literary criticism and to emphasize the importance of his role in the further development in the field. Through the light of the literary-critical and ideological-analytical methods, there is an attempt to reveal Grigoryan's approach to the relationship between the history and the modern period that ensures his exceptional role in the Armenian historical prose.

Keywords: *national identity, historical memory, eternal return, divine love, Paulician movement, ontology, modernity.*

Introduction

Referring to the creativity of Vardan Grigoryan, one involuntarily remembers Hrant Matevosyan's utterance on the birth of the book. According to Matevosyan the atmosphere should be created in which the writer will be praised and honored in the country, the atmosphere where the writer may sit in front of a blank paper not as a student performing an assignment, but as a teacher aims at revealing from the oblivion the complex problems."¹

In such a way a talented and newly born historian, with amazing love and zeal, embarked into laborious work of writing a historical novel and introduced the readers the cataclysmic periods of the Armenian history, unfolding those historic facts that make the readers feel dizzy – facts that have always existed but never be so recognizable in our reality.

Vardan Grigoryan's entry into the literary world did not happen overwhelmingly. He was immediately recognized by the literary critics, but the times were turbulent, and the book lovers' society did not have time to read and understand the talent with only 10 years of the literary activity. Perhaps, it is high time to fill that gap by introducing his wonderful historical novels to the rising generation, as Vardan Grigoryan's creativity touches upon the current anxieties and agendas. He gave us the magic key to the "Eternal Return", the

¹ **Matevosyan** 2004, 34.

opportunity to cleanse ourselves from the destructive diseases of the “Century of Perdition”, and through the prism of “Manya Ayrk” made us cognate ourselves, feel the “Naregatsi-like” depth of our suffering.

The novelist referred to the turning points in the Armenian history.

The historical novels “Eternal Return”, “Century of Perdition”, “Manya Ayrk” revolve around the quintessential periods in the history: the adoption of Christianity, the Paulician movement, the fall of Ani. The historical and political events of those centuries, the protagonists fight for the faith, truth and justice, the relationship between the church and the sect transfer the reader to the current epoch – the 21st century, triggering the idea of the inevitability of the historical repetition.

The historic novels are written with the peculiar features of the “stream of consciousness”:

- a) inner speech
- b) inner analysis
- c) emotional impression

Through the paradigm of impressionistic inner analysis Vardan Grigoryan realistically described the historical periods that became crucial for the Armenian people.

The ideological and literary value of Vardan Grigoryan’s historical novels

Vardan V. Grigoryan (1950–1989), Armenian prose writer. His main thematic interests were the historical past. His works are: “Eternal Return” written in 1981 (received the annual prize of the Armenian Leninist Young Communist Union, 1982), “Century of Perdition” (received the annual prize of the Armenian Leninist Young Communist Union in 1985), “Manya Ayrk” written in 1988 (received the prize named after Derenik Demirchyan of the Writers’ Union of Armenia in 1989).

The talented Armenian novelist analyzed comprehensively the legacy of his predecessors, Raffi, Muratsan, Demirchyan, Zoryan and others adopting their caring attitude towards the Armenian history: the maintenance of historical memory, the revelation of national identity, the intertwinement of historical reality and artistic imagination, the relationship between man and time, the inner struggle of the individual and the philosophical meaning of history.

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Vardan Grigoryan's historical novels create a complete literary and ideological system, where the history, standing as the objective reverberation of the past, becomes a means of recognition of the national identity of the present and future. The author does not merely present history as a record of facts, but as a living layer of the national memory. His heroes not only live in their spatio-temporal dimension, but carry the burden of responsibility for the mistakes made by their ancestors. The starting point of Grigoryan's historical novels is the criticism of modern reality, as it is clearly emphasized the cyclic repetition of history.

Referring to Grigoryan's creativity, the literary critic Galstyan noted that Grigoryan remained faithful to a vital feature of the Armenian classical historical novel: to meet the urgent problems of the current time requirements, to ensure modernity, and to meet the needs of fulfilling the historical philosophy with modern agenda."²

He so skillfully analyzed the characteristic features of his protagonists that the reader seemingly feels the joy of their victory, suffering, self-abasement, repentance. And the author creates a very important message – the past is the moral reverberation of the present. All the heroes, created by the author, are the bearers of this ideology. The reader feels in them the ways of the search for national identity, the tragic meaning of history, and the moral struggle of the individual.

Eternal Return

Vardan Grigoryan's first historical novel "Eternal Return" was published in 1981 that unfolds the inevitable necessity to return to the national roots. The title of the novel leads us to the struggle for the justice and the victory of truth. The quotation taken from Marcus Aurelius opens the overall ideology of the novel: *He who sees the present has seen everything, that which happened in the most distant past and that which will happen in the future.* (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations)

The theme of the historical novel is one of the most analyzed themes in the Armenian historiography. The author thoroughly studied numerous works devoted to this topic with special reference to Stepan Melik-Bakhshyan's work "The Paulician Movement in Armenia". In the work we can read that the

² Galstyan 2002, 91.

Paulician movement occupied a pivotal place in the history of the class struggle of the medieval Armenia. The Paulician movement originated in Armenia but it went beyond its borders and spread widely outside Armenia particularly in the Byzantine Empire. That is why information about the Paulician movement preserved not only in Armenian, but also in Byzantine and Arab sources.”³

Remaining faithful to the historical sources, Grigoryan, with amazing descriptions and astonishing revelations, presents the protagonists of that movement, their psychological condition, the field of activity.

The structure of the historical novel is unique: each part of the four-part novel revolves around the characteristic features of one protagonist. In the fourth part, all four protagonists seem to create a special characteristic wholeness, revealing the secret of the return.

The first and last parts are dedicated to the same person, Simeon, the central ideological hero, the embodiment of the eternal return. Simeon carries the same ideology as the novelist.

Indeed, Simeon-Titus, Constantine-Silvanus, and Justus, the protagonists, are the carriers of the same ideology: they fight for freedom and law. Simeon-Titus was devoted to the Byzantine state, the emperor, and the faith. He truly believed that the Paulicians were evil, and did his best to suppress their rebellion. He kept on fighting reaching the peak of self-analysis and self-cognition, until he was haunted by the ghosts of Constantine and Justus.

Constantine is the leader of the Paulicians. The Byzantine historian and clergyman Peter of Sicily (Petrus Siculus) in his complete and valuable work “Useful History” (also mentioned in Pitani, HSR, vol. 9, 1983, p. 260) underlined that Constantine named himself Silvanus, the Paulicians honored him as equal to the Apostle Paul. He studied the ideology of the Paulicians and wrote a complete and valuable work. Silvanus in the ancient Roman mythology was considered the savior of the poor and their supreme god. It can be assumed that is the reason why Constantine called himself Silvanus.

The fate of Kibossa is at stake as the Roman army besieged the fortress. The leader perceived the end by uttering the following words: “From now on I am unable to lead the doctrine that I created. I reached my limit, but my limits

³ **Melik-Bakhshyan** 1953, 3.

are not the limits of humanity. This is my end, perhaps also the end of Kibossa, but the struggle that I began is endless.”⁴

Constantine's last utterance is amazing: “...Our sword will persecute the Evil, our shed blood will cleanse the filth of centuries, our love will become a shield and protect the souls of newborns. And when human is released from the temporary residence of the Evil, and when the voice of mankind joins our voice, come and establish your kingdom.”

...This is our last prayer in Kibossa. Go away the mountains, scatter across the land, continue the struggle so that the enemy can understand that it is easier to destroy fortresses than to crush the souls lit by the light of truth. And when you again become stronger and feel that it is high time to return, consolidate again, recreate more powerful and indomitable Kibossa.”⁵ So, the justice must always triumph, we must always believe and consolidate to save the homeland.

Being captured at the age of three, Simeon was brought up in the family of a Roman general: he worshiped the emperor, unconditionally carried out both legal and illegal orders, and for the implementation of the orders he was ready to employ false tactics and invent fabulous lies. And now the Paulicians' impregnable fortress is captured, their leader Constantine Silvianus is captivated, the community of Kibossa is dispersed, but the victorious general is not fully satisfied.

Simeon's unwavering spirit trembled during the dialogue between him and the leader of the Paulicians (his real father). He was unable to answer Constantine's accusation: “Whether your God loves man. No. God hates man buring in sins and suffering and only shows mercy and saves only suffered souls. If your God were more perfect than you, would he tolerate the violence, murders and betrayals, lies and deceit that occur every day and every hour, every minute and second”. He sought an answer, but could not find it, then uttered: “Both your words and deeds are vile.”⁶

He burned Constantine and Justus, his devoted disciple. The rebellion was no longer suppressed, no rioters remained. Three years passed Simeon again returned to Kibossa, gathered Constantine's disciples and became the leader of

⁴ Grigoryan 2018, 63–64.

⁵ Grigoryan 2018, 71–72.

⁶ Grigoryan 2018, 83.

the sect. This is the epilogue of the last part of the historical novel – “Simeon-Titus” – from the aforementioned work of Peter of Sicily (Petrus Siculus).

He is now in the palace of Philo, an enemy of the Roman Empire. He constantly remembered the farewell words: “I spared you, Simeon. But you do not know me well. I will prove that Constantine Silvanus was your father.”⁷

Before him constantly appeared the image of the manuscripts of Constantine, with charred and blackened sides that unfolded a terrifying and tempting world before him. His father’s words whispered in his ears: “No matter how much you feed a wolf cub, it will still run away into the forest. Thirty years ago, I took a three-year-old child to Constantinople, allowed him to call me father, and I called him son.”⁸

The father repeated those words many times. So, the adopted son was also convinced that it was impossible to suppress the call of blood and there was fear in his heart. But Simeon only now understood that It was the roar of the present that would become a history. It was the blurred spatio-temporal dimension – the present that became the past, the future that became the present. The wolf cub is Simeon himself, who at the end of the novel “runs to the forest” – returns to his roots.

It is today’s imperative, the call of the present and the future. Simeon, “baptized” with the Armenian blood, returned to his national roots. With the call of blood and justice he took the path of his father and became the leader of the Paulicians. He came to our spatio-temporal dimension, established the inviolable unity of the call of blood and spirit, and will be reborn hereafter. The image of the Armenian people, as dead and resurrected, goes parallel with the image of Simeon.

Century of Perdition

Vardan Grigoryan’s next historical novel “Century of Perdition” was first published in the journal “Soviet Literature” in 1983 and was republished as a separate book in 1985, and then in 2019.

The novel “Century of Perdition” presents one of the tragic events in the Armenian history - the period of the fall of Ani, the Bagratuni Kingdom. Many historians of the 10th–13th centuries like Aristakes Lastivertsi, Mkhitar Anetsi,

⁷ Grigoryan 2018, 128.

⁸ Grigoryan 2018, 187.

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Mkhitar Airivanetsi, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Matthew Urhayetsi and others referred to the theme of the fall of Ani giving various interpretations. The historian Leo wrote about Ani in his amazing work "Ani" (Impressions. Memories. The Past and the Rest)" published in 1904.

Leo noted that there were eternal states in nature that always remained, always lived. There should not be sought novelty in them. The novelty should be sought in the people who understood them as far as they could. True, there was repetition in each understanding, but each person introduced his own "sound" or "accent" that affected those repetitions."⁹

For the young writer, Ani is a pain, admiration, and contemplation. By analyzing the mysterious history of Ani, Grigoryan created his own "sound," his own "accent," and presented his own Ani, the wound of the Armenians.

The historical novel begins with prologue written in a unique style of Matthew Urkhayetsi: "This is the fruit of sin, which our ancestors sowed and reaped sevenfold." Carrying out a comprehensive study of the abundant information left by his predecessors on the political, religious and ideological conflicts of the period, as well as the moral state of the governors and their subjects, Grigoryan confirmed that each of us reaped not only the fruits of our ancestors' sin, but also, alas, we ourselves, willingly and unwillingly, sowed the seeds of sin, which our descendants would reap. We sowed and were not satisfied, because sin had sweetness that brought only an opposition and evil.

The period depicted in the historical novel is the 11th century: the loss and the destruction of the magnificent queen of a thousand churches, which was presented through the prism of the flashbacks and internal monologues of the main character, Gayl Arshavir. He was a former deacon of the Kamsarakan-Pahlavuni dynasty, who later became a soldier to save the Armenian throne. His father took him to the Hokyats Monastery to write the history of the Kamsarakan dynasty. He emphasized that they descended from the Kamsarakans, in their veins was the ancient blood of the Pahlavs, mixed with the royal blood of the Arshakunis and the military blood of the Mamikonians.¹⁰

However, he did not become a historian, he wrote the history of his nation through a struggle, because the prediction of Hovhannes Kozern become true:

⁹ **Leo** 1963, 15.

¹⁰ **Grigoryan** 2019, 9.

“The coming of the Son of God will be preceded by God’s punishment”.¹¹ Instead of God’s vision, he saw the flash of hooked swords and the lifeless bodies of his slaughtered brothers, and by God’s miracle he survived from a conquering soldier of his age, “with long hair, short stature and crooked legs urinating on the floor” and ran away “like a rabbit that had seen a fox”, as he was frightened.

His farther underlined that the pen was no less capable of deeds than the sword. Victories and power were born from the brotherhood of the pen and the sword. But he already heard the voice of an insane hermit. “God released all the wolves and broke the doors of all the barns.”¹² He bid farewell to the Hogyats Monastery, and is now a soldier with an unwavering faith to become courageous and kill the fear.

The crippled brain of a blind former soldier kept on giving the same question why occurred the fall of Ani. He had a bitter answer to his question: the destruction of national unity, the betrayal of the governors and the clergy, the greed and indifference of the society. His mind wandered in the labyrinth of events that had occurred 45 years ago, he was a beardless deacon of the Hogyats Monastery. He urged for the light and miracle and the perfectness of the world, the return of the innocent martyrs and the end of the unjust who defile the earth.

He remembered how he bid farewell to the Hogyats Monastery with the hope of return with the will and faith, but disaster stroke: God released all the wolves and broke the doors of the barns. The more the wolves devour on the slopes of Agravakar, the more insatiable and greedy they became.”

The heavy stream of memory passed through the old soldier’s mind: “Where are the chosens of the Armenians – Grigor the Illuminators and Sahak Partevs – the golden idols silenced the voice of the chosen ones. If they chose the monastery, let them believe, if they became soldiers, let them fight. They want neither faith nor fight.”¹³ The famous literary critic Suren Aghababayan formulated Grigoryan’s ideology in such a way: Gayl Arshavir, as an eyewitness and critical interpreter of the historical events comprehensively referred the entire chain of the history of Ani. The main historical chain is, of course, the

¹¹ Grigoryan 2019, 9.

¹² Grigoryan 2019, 14.

¹³ Grigoryan 2019, 16.

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warlike “feasts” of the Seljuk-Turks “tent dwellers” in the Armenian land and the treacherous policy of the governors of the Byzantine emperors.¹⁴

The greatest reason for the fall of Ani was connected with the most contradictory characters in the Armenian history: Vest Sargis and Petros Getadardz. Vest Sargis's creed was if you did not recognize me as king, so remain with it. The choice was between the Seljuks and the Byzantines. The author underlined an important historical “lesson” against the destructive way of thinking – the man could not find homeland in alien shores. “Break the stick of the refugee into several pieces and throw it throughout the earth. In other shores, a sprout may become a tree, but those trees will no longer become a forest.”¹⁵

The patriotic writer sent the best message to the Armenian people. The fall of Ani was the loss of one of the magnificent times in our history, the century of loss was the destruction of the national unity, the greed and “satiated” indifference of the society. Gayl Arshavir was the embodiment of freedom and loyalty, he clearly realized the danger that threatened the Armenian statehood from different sides. Vardan Grigoryan created the character of Gayl Arshavir similar to his way of thinking: character who awakened the memory of the homeland and prevented the spiritual decline of a man.

He disagreed with those who surrendered Ani to the Byzantines under the pretext of saving it from the Seljuks. He agreed with Vahram Pahlavuni: “The world collapsed, but Marmashen stood, silent, like faith.” Marmashen is still standing as a symbol of the people's memory and immortality, as a counterbalance to death, despair, and loss. Grigoryan murmured a prayer to save sinful souls and prevented all further horrors of destruction.

The chronicles would write that Ani was destroyed in 513, but no one would know that on the same day the heart of Gayl Arshavir exploded from a premonition of destruction.”

The pain of loss tore the heart into 100 pieces, and only the hand clung to the earth in such a way that no force was capable of tearing it away from the ground as if the whole earth was embraced by his chest and he would not give that piece of land to anyone.”¹⁶ The heart of Gayl Arshavir came through the

¹⁴ **Aghababyan** 1986, 455.

¹⁵ **Grigoryan** 2019, 52.

¹⁶ **Grigoryan** 2019, 317–318.

centuries to our days and the Armenians would come across with other cataclysm. The chronicles would write that in 1475 Artsakh was given to the enemy, emptied of its brave people and their hearts also broke into a thousand pieces from the pain of destruction.

In the 80s of the 20th century Grigoryan warned of the impending disaster, but, as always, the Armenians neglected the voice of a wise man.

Gayl Arshavir is the dream character of the author, as an entity of characteristic features of heroism.

Through the lines of the historical novel, we hear Leo's voice again: "Ani continues to protect the Armenians, not as a fortress, not from the attacks and the oppression of savages. No, from that point Ani is completely powerless. It protects the honor of the remnants of the people who built it, intercedes for them."¹⁷

The utterance is the urge to the present and future generations to worship the land, to feel the voice of the land and its immortality. Grigoryan, with pain, but with unwavering faith, perceived the "complaint-demand-eager" of Ani.

The historical novel was written with a burning soul and pen, as the author was convinced that he was capable to transfer the world with his pen.

Manya Ayrk

Grigoryan's "swan song" novel "Manya Ayrk" was published in 1988. No writer in the Armenian literature has ever presented Gregory the Illuminator with such a profound psychological side. This time Grigoryan turned to Virgil, who guided Dante: "By choosing gods for ourselves, we choose our fate."

Indeed, we choose our fate, obey or rebel against it, either cursing or blessing the choice. Gregory the Illuminator who never betrayed his God, who peacefully endured 13 years of inhuman suffering, who came with a cross to conquer the king and the people, died without a cross in a distant forest. His eyes fixed on God, he put out the light of his soul – his Mani. He confirmed that God is Love, that the spiritual state is always superior to the physical one. He carved a cross on the ground with his body, but deep inside he was in the pure days of youth, with an incorporeal and intangible love.

In the history of Agathangelos Gregory the Illuminator is a crusader of faith, a zealous destroyer of paganism, while Grigoryan's Gregory the

¹⁷ Leo 1963, 30.

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Illuminator is not only a Christian, but also a human – understandable and lovable. Perhaps that was the reason why only a sworn pagan, the priest Vruyr of Vahevuny (whose son was the follower of the Illuminator) was looking for him, to turn his bones into relics, to save the mound from the Navasard rains, from eternal sanctification of the mountain called Manya Ayrk in honor of the beautiful virgin – Mani. We feel that the Illuminator would first sow the spiritual love, and then the words. It was not in vein that Trdat the Great, adopting the new faith, confessed – the Armenian king needed such faith that he could make Armenia a kingdom equal to Rome and Persia.

Grigoryan presented the adoption of the new faith as a reconciliation between the Illuminator and the king sealed through suffering: “Without me you are nothing, not you, but I defeated you by adopting your faith.”¹⁸ That utterance haunted the Illuminator, who ascended to Manya Ayrk at the end of his life. He bitterly accepted the “indigestible” truth.

Grigor was in the court of the Armenian king Trdat to replace the enmity with kindness, to get rid of sin, to cleanse the rivers of blood shed by his ancestors. Both he and the king had the same fate: both were kidnapped and raised in an alien land. He hated violence from his childhood. When the nurses took him from village to village, hid him in the straw of a cart, descend him to the tonir at every knock on the door at night, and eventually, in the city of Caesarea in Greece people called him the son of the king-killer Anak from behind....”¹⁹ He spread his faith through violence, and now his suffering was similar to “the suffering of the one crucified on distant Golgotha.”

He left the church and was going to Manya Ayrk, where his beloved Mani devoted her heart to God and became a hermit. He listened to a piece of advice of a kind Cappadocian woman: “My poor orphan, the royal blood of the Parthians speaks inside you, suppress it”²⁰, and he did it. Now there are no temples of idols in the Armenian world, but they live in the blood and in the memory of people.

The author recorded with bitterness: “Armenia would never regain its former power, the Armenian crown would never shine with its former brilliance.” But the author did not blame Trdat the Great and Gregory the

¹⁸ Grigoryan 2019, 20.

¹⁹ Grigoryan 2019, 19.

²⁰ Grigoryan 2019, 117.

Illuminator. The fault, according to the author, was the lack of unity. In his old age King Trdat uttered in an anguish that it was enough for blood and distraction, from now on people must take care of preserving what the Armenians had, be kind to each other, love each other, unite. In such case the enemy would not dare to enter the Armenian world."²¹

The writer wanted to convey to the readers the eagerness towards victory. Grigoryan emphasized the essence of spiritual love as the cornerstone of faith. Gregory the Illuminator ascended to the Many Ayrk, the altar of purity and light. He, who filled Armenia with crosses, passed away without a cross, without a funeral ritual. He pressed to his chest only the cross of Bartholomew, which two hundred years ago the holy apostle brought to Armenia. By the power of that cross, he founded the first church in Armenia.²²

In the country that worshiped the Cross, there would be no cross to be placed on the Illuminator", but his body embodied the Cross: his head to the west, feet to the east, hands spread to the north and the south. He was unaware of his posthumous glory.²³

The talented writer gave an interesting solution to the character of King Trdat, one of the most powerful kings of Armenia. Instead of the sword and violence, the king chose the path of wisdom and morality, faith and love. He understood that the true faith of the nation had never been the prayers and sermons recited from the altars, whether it is a temple of idols or a church. The nation has one faith sung next to the cradle of children, in the language in which grandmothers speak to their grandchildren, in the traditions that grandfathers tell.²⁴

The invincible Trdat uttered his final preach that he wanted more than what the sword could give - eternal faith, unfading love and unity. A power that was more than strength, which would hold the country even in the days of poverty and misery. A power that did not get blunt like a sword, did not falter like an arm, did not age and pass away like a body....the sword would rust, but the faith

²¹ Grigoryan 2019, 377.

²² Grigoryan 2019, 7.

²³ Grigoryan 2019, 6.

²⁴ Grigoryan 2019, 383–84.

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of the cross would grow stronger. People must accept the faith of the cross with the soul.²⁵

One cannot fail to observe that lullabies and traditions also root love and kindness, awaken the faith in the native language.

This is the main protagonists' preach of the historical novel. Vardan Grigoryan creative intention is to pass the unwavering love for the homeland. He chose the cataclysmic periods in our history for his novels thus intertwining the events occurring in the past with present and future. Through the paradigm of his characters' love and deeds the author formulated his intention.

Conclusion

Hence, the comprehensive study of Vardan Grigoryan's historical novels led to the conclusion that the author is the bearer of the invincible Armenian spirit and a literary aesthete. His historical novels, intertwining the history and the modern period, pass to the present and future generation moral-philosophical preaches. The main protagonists of the historical novels are the carriers of the ideological norms and have certain aesthetic perception about history and historic epoch.

Through the main characters the author reveals socio-political, human and moral relations. Grigoryan affirmed that each writer created his own unique world, his own heroes, who struggle according to the "laws" and principles of the author. Each writer created his preferred life situations, where his pen moves more confident, where his characters act more naturally and energetically.

The reality is the homeland on which every true writer relies, but he does not force the readers to hold to it."²⁶ Choosing historical themes, he echoes to the contemporary painful questions, attempting to sober us up with the example of the past. Grigoryan's language is amazing: he masterfully combines the pictorial imagery with historical events and facts.

Grigoryan draws the complex political and psychological links. His works still await for more extensive analysis. The article merely makes a glimpse to his exceptional mindset and to his literary preaches.

²⁵ Grigoryan 2019, 387.

²⁶ Garun 1984, 6, 13.

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**ՎԱՐԴԱՆ ԳՐԻԳՈՐՅԱՆԻ ՊԱՏՄԱՎԵՊԵՐԻ
ԳԱՂԱՓԱՐԱԳԵՂԱՐՎԵՍՏԱԿԱՆ
ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ**

Ամփոփում

Վարդան Գրիգորյանը հայ գրականության մեջ առանձնանում է պետականության գաղափարի հետևողական մշակմամբ և պատմափիլիսոփայական խորությամբ: Նրա ստեղծագործություններում պատմությունը դառնում է ազգային ինքնագիտակցության քննության հարթակ, բարոյական դատաստան: Հենվելով հայ պատմավեպի զարգացման ընթացքի վրա և համապարփակ բնութագրելով ազգային բնավորության պատմական ձևավորման պատճառները՝ Վ. Գրիգորյանը ներկայանում է որպես պետականության գաղափարի համակարգային մեկնաբան: Հոդվածում ներկայացվում են Վարդան Գրիգորյանի պատմավեպերի գաղափարական և գեղարվեստական առանձնահատկությունները՝ ուշադրության կենտրոնում ունենալով ազգային գոյության և ազգային ինքնագիտակցության քննության հարցերը: Վ. Գրիգորյանի պատմավեպերում պատմությունը ոչ թե սոսկ անցյալի վերարտադրություն է, այլ ազգային ինքնագիտակցության վերլուծություն, առաջնորդի բարոյական պատասխանատվության քննություն, ներքին կործանարար պառակտման խնդիրների բացահայտում, որոնք պատմական ողբերգության հիմնական պատճառներն են: Վ. Գրիգորյանի պատմավեպերում /«Հավերժական վերադարձ», «Դար կորստյան», «Մանյա այրք»/, հստակ առանձնանում են առաջնորդների կերպարները՝ որպես պատմության և ժողովրդի արժեքային դատաստանի ենթակա անձեր, որպես հայրենասեր և պետական մտածողություն ունեցող գործիչներ: Խորապես տարբեր է յուրաքանչյուրի ազգային արժանապատվության, պարտքի և պատասխանատվության, պետական մտածողության ընկալումը: Հոդվածի նպատակն է բացահայտել Վարդան Գրիգորյանի գրական ժառանգության գաղափարական առանցքը, կերպարային համակարգը, գեղարվեստական առանձնահատ-

կությունները և արժևորել այդ ժառանգության խորապես մարդկային ու բարոյական դասերը, որոնցով գրողը ապահովում է կապը արդիականության հետ: Վերհանվում են պատմության և արդիականության կապի գրիգորյանական մոտեցումները, որոնք մշտապես ապահովելու են նրա ուրույն տեղը հայ պատմավիպասանության մեջ:

Բանալի բառեր՝ ազգային ինքնություն, պատմական հիշողություն, հավերժական վերադարձ, աստվածային սեր, պավլիկյան շարժում, գոյաբանություն, արդիականություն:

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MONUMENTAL PAINTING BY HOVHANNES MINASSIAN: ECCLESIASTICAL MURALS

Abstract

The monumental ecclesiastical painting of Hovhannes Minassian constitutes one of the most significant achievements of contemporary Armenian sacred art, in which national artistic traditions, medieval iconographic systems, and the author's individual creative worldview are harmoniously combined. The study focuses on the murals and icons created for the Church of Saint Mesrop Mashtots in Oshakan, the Convent of Saint Hripsime, and the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, in which the artist's iconographic thinking, stylistic explorations, and contemporary interpretation of national artistic tradition find their most complete expression. The analysis reveals the distinctive features of the creative assimilation, in the author's works, of the artistic-formal principles of medieval Armenian painting and sculpture, particularly the figurative system and plastic language of the Church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar. It is noteworthy that Minassian, while preserving the flat pictorial structure characteristic

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of medieval art, the principle of inverse perspective, and symbolic pictorial thinking, has formed an individual artistic language that simultaneously bears the stamp of national identity and contemporary creative understanding. Particular attention is given to the distinctive technique of executing the icons directly on the stone surface, without preliminary priming, which lends them exceptional material and aesthetic value. The research confirms that Hovhannes Minassian's monumental ecclesiastical painting not only continues the centuries-old traditions of Armenian Christian art but, by reinterpreting them, creates a highly artistic and original system of contemporary expressive forms of national spiritual culture.

Keywords: *Hovhannes Minassian, monumental painting, Oshakan Church, ecclesiastical murals, art, fresco, Armenian medieval art, iconography.*

Introduction

Hovhannes Minassian's (10.01.2028–05.06.1972) monumental art represents a truly invaluable contribution to our culture; he left a profound mark on spatial-volumetric artistic consciousness. The preceding article examined Hovhannes Minassian's monumental art in public spaces, revealing the role his works played in shaping the artistic image of the public environment. The present article constitutes a logical continuation and sequential development of that earlier study, aiming to broaden the scope of the research and to form a more complete picture of the artist's monumental legacy. A sequential examination of Minassian's creative path demonstrates that a monumental approach had already been present in his works for a considerable time, and that he was already recognized as a unique and original monumentalist-muralist. It is noteworthy that, during this same period, among those who grasped the depth and significance of art's universal value was his Holiness Vazgen I, Catholicos of All Armenians (1955–1994), of blessed memory, who became the patron commissioning the mura of the Church of St. Mesrop Mashtots in Oshakan a site of national significance. Armenia was a country that both created and preserved culture, and Vazgen I was thoroughly well-informed of all the achievements taking place in his country in the fields of music, fine art, and literature alike.

His Holiness spoke with satisfaction of Minassian's prolific activity and is recorded as having said of him: "Onik is our private painter."¹

The work in Oshakan dates to 1962–1963; thereafter, in 1966, he received the commission to paint the icon of the Holy Mother of God on stone for the altar of the Convent of St. Hripsime, as well as the icon of "The Baptism" in the Mother Cathedral. There had also been an intention that he undertake the artistic decoration of the Church of St. James (Sourp Hakobyants), but this, unfortunately, did not come to fruition owing to the war then taking place in Israel.

The Frescoes of the Church of St. Mesrop Mashtots in Oshakan

Hovhannes Minassian was to undertake the pictorial decoration of the church in Oshakan. The theme of the fresco is drawn from ancient chronicles and expresses, on the one hand, the struggle of the Armenian people against invaders, and on the other, the momentous birth of the invention of writing and script.

In this work, the artist proposed an entirely new composition and iconography for the theme, drawing on his thorough familiarity with medieval ecclesiastical art. In the Armenian medieval churches of Lmbatavank, Tatev, Gndevank, and Kobayr, the subjects of the murals are laconic and distinguished by aesthetic taste and grandeur qualities that undoubtedly served as a foundation for Minassian's adoption of this ecclesiastical style.

The church in Oshakan² is not merely an environment for the expression of faith. It also contains within it the tomb of Saint Mesrop Mashtots the founder of the Armenian alphabet, the inventor of its letters, and the "pillar of thought".³ In the year 443, the structure was built by Prince Vahan Amatuni directly above the tomb of Mesrop Mashtots himself. By the 17th century, the church had al-

¹ From the recollections of his son, Martin Minassian.

² Since 1996, the church has served as the seat (cathedra) of the Diocese of Aragatsotn.

³ Of the two entrances located on the right and left sides of the platform, the one on the right leads to the tomb of St. Mesrop Mashtots. In the inner section, beneath a high tufa-clad arch, rises a monument resembling a basalt cross-stone (khachkar), bearing upon it the Mashtotsian alphabet in erkatagir (uncial) script. The monument leaves a striking impression. A few steps down, the tomb itself comes into view. By the light of an illuminated lamp, there appears on the left, bathed in an inner radiance, the marble gravestone its marble brought from Italy, the renowned homeland of marble. Carved upon it are two lines: "Saint Mesrop Mashtots, 361–440." The walls, faced with polished basalt, impart to the setting a restrained impression, which may be considered an advantage of the renovated tomb.

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ready fallen into disrepair. The Armenian historian and ecclesiastical figure Arakel of Tabriz (Arakel Davrizhetsi) relates that the roof of this magnificent, broad-walled, lofty temple-mausoleum had collapsed and caved in from early times, and that only the main altar (Avag Khoran) had remained sheltered.⁴

In 1639–1645, Catholicos Philipos I of Aghbak (1633–1655) organized the fundamental restoration of the church, yet by the early 19th century the state of the building was once again the same deplorable. In 1850, Nerses V of Ashtarak, Patriarch of All Armenians (1843–1857), sent an encyclical letter (kondak) to the Synod (the supreme governing body of the Orthodox Church in the 18th to early 20th centuries) proposing the renovation of the church. Ultimately, the church was completely reconstructed between 1873 and 1879, with the support of the local population as well. The thoroughly renovated and rebuilt Church of St. Mesrop Mashtots was consecrated on October 21, 1879. It may be said that the church was, in effect, rebuilt according to an entirely new design. Until the 20th century, traces of the walls of the former building survived, with a polygonal main altar visible on the exterior. The new church was a vaulted hall structure with three groin-vaulted arches and a main altar of oval ground plan, and it also included rectangular side chapels ((depositor) avandatur).

During the Soviet period, in the 1960s, during the patriarchate of Vazgen I, Catholicos of All Armenians, the restoration works gained new momentum and quality, being coordinated by the Mother See. This noble and patriotic undertaking was supported by representatives of our nation scattered throughout the world. Two distinguished Armenians from Milan Hayk and Torgom Ghazarosyan, of Erzincan descent together with Petros Alexian, an Armenian from India, took it upon themselves, with great devotion, to bear the costs: the former covering the complete restoration of the mausoleum, the church, and its surroundings, and the latter covering the costs of the church's fresco.^{5,6}

When the restoration works began, the painted layers of the pilasters and the plaster of several walls were stripped away. Beneath them was discovered a

⁴ Cited from: Emma Gabrielyan, *The Mesrop Mashtots Church of Oshakan*, <https://emmagabrielyan.wordpress.com/2018/04/18/%D6%85%D5%B7%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6>

⁵ **Khanjyan**, 1968, no. III, 13–17.

⁶ Correction: **Khanjyan** 1968, no. X, 56.

very beautiful tuff-stone masonry, rich in dark grey ochres, which proved of great assistance in enriching the interior decoration.

"Glory to Armenian Writing and Education"

The work on the wall paintings of the **Oshakan Church** commenced in 1962 and was completed three years later, with the participation of the artist **H. Mamyan**.⁷ Through his mastery, Minassian brought to life his own conceptions, which found expression in creation of the Oshakan frescoes. Also taking part in the realization of Hovhannes Minassian's conception were the architect Romeo Julhakyán, and the master plasterer Aramayis Hovhannisyan. Minassian depicted their likenesses in the fresco in the guise of medieval builders. Thus, in an era of state-imposed atheism, Minassian succeeded in accomplishing the task he had set for himself. He restored the technology for preparing the pigments used in fresco painting, since, for well-known reasons, this ecclesiastical art had not been practiced during the Soviet period. Subsequently, through experimentation and painstaking labor, Minassian arrived at the requisite technique and materials. The technique of the frescoes was as follows: the images had to be executed rapidly upon wet plaster, using a special pigment composition based on raw egg and natural mineral pigments.

From the very outset, the purpose was clear: to define the significance of the Mashtotsian alphabet, as represented in the fresco, 1600 years after its creation. In examining the reinterpretation of past times and trials, what had become more important was the bringing forth and presentation of all this to the people by cultural means. From this, the creators' purpose becomes evident: to find a solution that also made use of architectural devices. Thus, a tripartite image was created in a multi-figural compositional style, the central part of which is the presentation of the alphabet to the people.

On the left side of the central, western wall (800×1200), Saint Mesrop Mashtots stands in a resolute pose, surrounded by gathered children and disciples [fig. 1]. The figure of Mashtots is presented full-length, clad in a medieval grey-greenish robe, conveying the plain and lucid essence of a scholar. Upon examining several miniatures depicting Mesrop Mashtots from the 16th–19th centuries, as well as canvas works by unknown painters, it becomes evident that H. Minassian did not attempt to replicate this established iconography; rather, the

⁷ Aivazyán 1974, 9–12.

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master created his own conception of the vardapet, envisioning him within a medieval setting and in a sanctified image consecrated in eternity. It transpires that the halos of Mashtots and Sahak Partev provoked considerable objection within the state commission; nevertheless, it proved possible to persuade its members that sanctity is an ecclesiastical category and one already accepted as a given.

The placement of the centrally located window is both fitting and elegant, above which rises the snow-capped summit of Mount Ararat. The window, illuminated by the rays of the sun, serves to divide the narrative content of the fresco. At the center is inscribed: “Let there be light, and there was light” (Եղիցի՛ լոյս և եղև լոյս). There are likewise passages in Classical Armenian (Grabar), drawn from Koryun’s “Life of Mashtots” (on the right side):⁸ “And having exchanged with one another the longed-for greeting, they returned to the city with voices of rejoicing, with spiritual hymns, and with the loftiest praise, and they passed their days in festive joy” (right side). “And thus, having endured many labors for the sake of finding some good for his own nation, he to whom indeed a portion was granted by God the all-bestowing in the fullness of a father’s measure, he brought forth, with his own holy hand, a new and wondrous offspring: the written signs of the Armenian language” (left side).⁹

On the right side of the alphabet stand King Vramshapuh, the queen, and Prince Amatuni. Seated in the first row is Catholicos Sahak, together with the nakharars (princes), while around them is gathered an exultant crowd of people and children, above whose heads rises the Cathedral of St. Hripsime. This is the most densely populated section of the image, rendered with great taste and masterful skill. The arrangement of the figures and the composition are noteworthy, as are the lavish color solutions. The decorative language is rich. In the opinion of certain specialists, particular emphasis ought to be given to the luminous and noble gaze of Vahan Amatuni, the hazarapet (chiliarch), the compassionate and admiring countenance of the queen, as well as the dreaminess, fervor, faith, and hope expressed in the other figures. Minassian succeeds in lending depth and nobility to his beloved ochre-olive color, animating its restraint. He shaded the black and green tones with flashes of lilac and silver.

⁸ **Koryun.** 225–272

⁹ See *ibid.* 240

In the frescos, particular emphasis is given to a warm grey tone, through which pale-pink, greenish, and bluish color tones make a rather beautiful transition. This rendering imparts to the pictorial decoration an encompassing warmth, which brings about a spiritual repose in perception. The placement of the Convent of St. Hripsime on the right side of the overall image, and of reddish-grey rocky masses on the left, balances the compositional solution between the two sections of the work.

The dividing window in the middle of the frescoes was not created merely as a source of light; Minassian made of it a platform for the Armenian alphabet, in both meaning and name "Light-Giving Letters." On the outer surface of the window glass, the alphabet radiates with bright light, symbolizing thought. It is, so to speak, a light that does not darken. The platform consists of four sections, its material being organic glass; there is, however, now an intention to replace it with a single piece of material in order to render it more striking, since at present the letters are "forcibly" divided into four groups.

The northern wall (418×422) [fig. 2] is adorned with a springtime scene a tree in blossom and joyful young women an Armenian spring, symbolizing peace, labor, and fruitfulness. The principal figures on this wall are three women, all three of whom direct their hands in a gesture of prayer and offering toward the central fresco. The first woman from the right wears village attire, her head inclined to the right, in contrast to the other two, whose gazes are directed toward the fresco. One of them has a biblical garb and appearance, while the other is in traditional costume and holds in her hand a branch bearing a pomegranate and grapes; in their scriptural sense, these symbolize the meaning of the Promised Land – the new paradise. There stands the Tree of Life, whose fruits are pomegranates. In Christianity, the pomegranate is the symbol of present and future life, as well as of the unity of the faithful people; it is in this sense that it has been employed in the image, as the fruit of the Tree of Life. The flowers beneath the tree and the small deer serve not merely to convey the atmosphere of the natural world, but also carry the meaning of life, gentleness, and awakening.

There follow, written in Classical Armenian (Grabar), the words of the historian Yeghishe, first: "Many winters' frosts have melted, spring has come, and the newly-arrived swallows came and were seen, and life-loving people rejoiced," and then: "Resembling Moses, the lord vardapet, bringing the book

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of the law into the land of Armenia, whereby the nation of the sons of Torgom was enlightened.”¹⁰ This pictorial narrative speaks of the spiritual and worldly harmony of mankind and nature.

The southern wall of the church (418×422) [fig. 3] is adorned with archer-soldiers, both standing and kneeling the guardians of the kingdom. Above the archers is an eagle with outspread wings. The image embodies strength, independence, and the symbolism of the defense of national vitality. On this surface of the wall there are likewise inscriptions in Classical Armenian (Grabar) from the historian Yeghishe: “As one of the ancients has said, death not understood is death; death understood is immortality. He who understands death does not fear it. And all these evils enter into the mind of man through lack of learning. The blind man is deprived of the rays of the sun, and ignorance is deprived of perfect life. It is better to be blind in the eyes than blind in the mind. For just as the soul is greater than the body, so too is the vision of the mind greater than that of the body.”¹¹

In overall terms, the flat pictorial style of the fresco recalls medieval frescoes, miniature painting, and relief sculpture. The artist drew upon the figurative motifs and compositional principles characteristic of various schools and monuments of medieval Armenian fine art, in particular those of the high reliefs and murals of the Church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar [figs. 4, 5].¹²

***The Eastern Wall* (175×700) [fig. 6]**

To the left of the altar is depicted Saint Mesrop Mashtots. Noteworthy is the original Mashtotsian iconography, which differs from those that had existed previously. Upon examining the depictions of Mesrop Mashtots found in medieval manuscripts, we may affirm that Minassian did not simply repeat these existing models but rather created his own imagined image of Mashtots. He preserved the principles of flat pictorial representation characteristic of fresco and miniature painting yet interpreted the figure in his own manner. The father of the alphabet is depicted standing, holding in his hand a stylus and a writing implement. The gaze of the grey-haired Mashtots looks into the distance; his garment is an antique-style robe (pathmuchan) with a cloak. To his right are

¹⁰ Yeghishe 2003, 402.

¹¹ Yeghishe 2003, 534.

¹² See: Aghasyan 2009, 156.

images of a reed pen and a book. At the feet of Saint Mesrop are his two disciples, who are kneeling; one of them looks toward the other, and the right hands of both point in a given direction, as though one were indicating something to the other. Beneath the left hands of both are books, and at their feet stands a lit lamp. Inscribed on the wall are the words of Movses Khorenatsi concerning philosophy: "For though we be a small portion, and exceedingly limited in number, set within narrow bounds, and weak in power, and though we have many times been subdued by the rule of others, yet many deeds of valor are nonetheless found to have been wrought in our land as well, and worthy of being recorded in writing."¹³ In the lower section are inscribed the names of the Armenian historians: Ghazar Parpetsi, Yeghishe, Khorenatsi, Koryun, Yeznik Koghbatsi, and Pavstos Buzand. The entire fresco expresses the value placed on literacy and learning, and a love of knowledge. The form and essence of this pictorial composition characterize Minassian as a creator possessing an independent mode of thought and a "firm" hand.

On the right side of the eastern wall (175×700) is depicted an angel [fig. 7]. His kneeling posture signifies humility. His head is set within a broad, sun-colored halo. His face bears a youthful appearance and a cheerful expression. The angel's wings are beautiful sky-blue, and beneath his knee lies an open book. In the angel's hands is a green branch. Above the head of the central figure in this section are two revolving spheres of eternity. The angel's garment is likewise rendered in an antique style. As in the other frescoes, the references in Classical Armenian (Grabar) continue here as well, this time from Stepanos Asoghik: "The beginning of the literature of the Armenians was the beginning of great learning."

The Soviet Union was officially an atheist system, in which religious manifestations were categorically rejected, and the painter Minassian's detailed spiritual labor in this work is a bold and valuable achievement, one that has found its own distinct place within the art of mural painting and within his own spiritual domain. Hovhannes Minassian, by choosing the Byzantine form of icon and mural painting, imparted to this work a typically Armenian content, eloquent in the expressiveness of the figures' features and in the original

¹³ **Movses Khorenatsi** 1752

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manifestation of the depicted narrative. This is a work of world art, conceived within the framework of the Armenian national value system.

The image of the Holy Mother of God in the altar of the church in Oshakan [fig. 8] (175×105) belongs, by type, to the “Hodegetria” group of icons. Translated from the Greek, the term means “She Who Shows the Way.” It originated in Byzantine art and continues to enjoy wide circulation in our own day as well. It is the most widespread image depicting the Mother of God together with the infant Jesus, in terms of subject matter. According to tradition, this iconographic form was created by Saint Luke the Evangelist himself.¹⁴

The mural icon of the altar is painted upon marble. In the upper register is the sign of eternity, symbolizing the unending omnipotence of the divine and Christian essence. The background behind the Mother of God and the Child is entirely covered in a deep, rich blue. In Christian theological symbolism, blue is among the colors belonging to the Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. The blue depicted in the altar, in its density, recalls the heavenly bluish hues of a day rolling from evening into night. On the marble surface, it has taken on the appearance of a smooth, stretched canvas. Within the bluish background, on the left, two trees of an eastern type rise upward, terminating in finely dense leaves. The Mother of God is seated upon a backless bench (or seat), on a cushion. This variant may be encountered in early Christian miniature painting. The Infant Christ, seated in the arms of the Holy Mother, appears to be held both in His Mother's embrace and upon her lap. Christ blesses mankind and the world with His right hand a form corresponding to that of Christ Pantocrator (the Almighty) while in His left hand He holds a scroll. The Hodegetria type, a symbol of the union of Mother and Son, represents the coming into the world of the “Heavenly King and Judge,” and His submission before the Child. It achieved particularly wide dissemination in the Byzantine Empire and in Russia.¹⁵ The gazes of Mother and Son are directed in the same direction. The All-Holy One and the Divine Child are dressed in the same manner. Both their garments are divided into two colors: once again blue, of a lighter density than the same color in the background, and a brownish-purplish hue (karmrashakanakagouyn).

The complete work of the church in Oshakan may be considered a wonderful fusion of the Armenian medieval miniature-painting schools and contempo-

¹⁴ **Lidov** 273–304

¹⁵ **Ouspensky** 83–84

rary monumental art, one that produces a profound and integral impression. Here the author appears in the full charm and freedom of his creative work, a freedom that has historical foundations. His frescoes are characterized by figures drawn from Armenian miniature painting and from the relief sculptures and murals of Akhtamar [figs. 4, 5]. The painter was resolving not only a decorative-figurative problem, but also an architectural and compositional one. At the foundation of his conception lies the design principle of the ancient Armenian book: in the upper portion of the image, the arch-altar (kamar-khoran) constitutes an original architectural ornamental composition of the page. In the same manner is formed the composition of the mural on the main, western wall: the imagined line of the arch encompasses within itself the images of the archer-soldiers, the snow-covered summit of Ararat, the young women who glorify Mashtots the father and creator of the Armenian letters and the portraits of his disciples, as well as the window with its letters gleaming upon it. On the wall we may read an inscription in Old Armenian: "The blind man is deprived of the sun's rays; the ignorant man is deprived of life" (Minassian frequently incorporated texts into his works).¹⁶ The precise placement of these inscriptions further animates the work. The predominant red supports the plastic and direct composition, lending it vivacity and inner expressiveness. Set against this, power is made manifest, embodied in the eagle the embodiment of keen sight, lofty flight, and strength. Beside it stand the soldiers defending the homeland, with their rhythmically emphasized movements. In affirming the aforementioned conception, the color solution here differs from that of the previous two sections in the firmer and richer shades of its blues and greens.

In one of his articles, Hovhannes Minassian characterizes his work in Oshakan as follows: "We must, indeed, be able to cast off once and for all the touristic-admiring, fashionable, superficial view of these complex questions; we must be able to build, to paint, to sculpt in a manner befitting the dignity of our people, just as our great forebears of the past have done such that both the roots are felt and the new shoots as well, with a gaze fixed upon the present and reaching toward the future. In practical terms, this means drawing great lessons from the ancient (whether our own or that of the world at large), never repeating or merely stylizing, but speaking our own word, with Armenian accents and

¹⁶ See: **Voronova** 1976, № 4, 19–24.

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universal content. This is a complex problem, but we must strive to solve it, for we are obligated to do so before our people and before our time. If we strive, then, in the words of the poet: 'Our wheat will not fall upon the rock...'”¹⁷

In February 2020 restoration and cleaning works on the murals were being carried out in the church by a team led by Arzhanik Hovhannisyan. This was a very important initiative of Armen Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia. For decades, the murals of this church had become entirely darkened, faded, and had lost their original appearance, owing to wastewater seeping through the roof, soot from candles and the stove, and, on one occasion, a fire.¹⁸

It may be said with confidence that this work leaves a moving and impressive impression upon everyone who visits the mausoleum of Saint Mashtots, by virtue of its very effect. It must be noted that this enduring work serves to complement and continue the wonderful traditions of Armenian mural painting. We may speak with full confidence of the continuation of such a style of craftsmanship and of artistic tradition. This legacy, while preserving the old, dictates a new and contemporary interpretation and trajectory.

The Baptismal Font of the Mother Cathedral (1966)

Minassian created the mural “The Baptism” in 1966, once again commissioned by His Holiness Vazgen [fig 9]. It is installed adjoining the northern wall of the Mother Cathedral, beneath a separate architectural composition. The composition recalls the niche-shaped structure characteristic of early Christian portals, with a triangular pediment and horseshoe-shaped arch resting upon two pilasters. Beneath this structure, in the lower section, is the small marble baptismal font, while in the upper section, set somewhat into the depth, is a marble arch-shaped slab, upon which Minassian depicted the scene of Christ’s baptism. It is important to note that the artist made use of the wave-like surface of the marble as the depth of the image, without covering it with a layer of priming. Such techniques were known in medieval mural painting for example, in the cathedral of Saghmosavank. Minassian employed this same approach when decorating the main altar of the Cathedral of St. Hripsime in Etchmiadzin as well. In

¹⁷ **Minassian** 1971, № 6, 10–12.

¹⁸ With the support of President **Armen Sarkissian**, the mural “*Glory to Armenian Writing and Education*” has been restored. <https://president.am/hy/press-release/item/2020/08/22/President-Armen-Sarkissian-visited-Oshakan/>

the image at the Mother Cathedral, we may recognize the holy mystery of the Baptism of Christ: John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and two angels, set within a paradisiacal, luminous natural environment, amid greens, the gleaming blues of sky and water, in pristine nature. The baptism is performed by means of the pouring of water, with the presence above of the Hand of God and the Dove the Holy Spirit a type that has become widespread in Christian iconography. The composition of the image may be divided, by two vertical lines, into three equal sections, of which the central section has become the semantic center of the image: Jesus Christ in the waters of the Jordan, painted in darker tones. John the Baptist, his face turned upward and his right hand performing the rite of pouring water, occupies the upper left section of the composition. The right section of the composition is occupied by the figures of the two angels. Their features and bodily structures recall the angels of the murals of the Church of St. Mesrop Mashtots in Oshakan. The bodies, the garments, and the sections of water are masterfully painted. With three or four local colors, the artist achieved the folds of the garments and the natural scenery. This icon may be observed to be complete and fully realized; on the one hand it bears the distinctive features of Armenian medieval fine art, yet at the same time it is new and original. The figures of Jesus, John the Baptist, and the angels are endowed with a deep spiritual, yet also unaffected, essence; they are created according to the medieval principles of flat representation and inverse perspective, yet they evidently express the author's individual outlook. Here too, the figures are Armenian in their temperament and features.

The subject and its interpretation seem unimaginable within the Soviet Armenian milieu of the 1960s. This work stands as testimony to Hovhannes Minassian's courage and to his devotion to his native culture and to faith.

"The Icon of the Holy Mother of God" [fig. 10]

Minassian gave expression to the full immaculateness of his spiritual sensibility in another masterpiece, **"The Icon of the Holy Mother of God"** ("The Altar of the Vergin Mary") (175×78), located in the Convent of St. Hripsime in Etchmiadzin, created in that same year, 1966.¹⁹

Few are aware that, behind the present-day icon of the main altar of the Church of St. Hripsime (by the author Levon Zakyan), is to be found the image

¹⁹ "Les Muses," 1970, 343.

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created by Minassian. The replacement of icons is not an extraordinary occurrence, and over the centuries numerous icons in Armenian churches have succeeded one another. Nevertheless, this work by Minassian is, all the same, deserving of particular attention. In a certain sense, this is not a classical icon, for in the Armenian church one more frequently encounters icons painted on canvas, or, far more rarely, on wood. In Christian art generally, icons executed on sheet metal are also known, and, rarely, on stone. This particular one is painted directly upon the stone of the altar itself, meaning that, in terms of its technique of execution, it is rather a unique mural. From an iconographic standpoint, it again represents the classical "Hodegetria."

With regard to its palette, the author employed restrained colors, primarily shades of brown, which may create in the viewer an impression that the icon is considerably older than it in fact is. In this respect, certain similarities may be observed with several icons painted in medieval Italy.

The Mother of God and the Infant Christ are depicted in a frontal pose. The Child's body is inclined very slightly toward His Mother. The Infant is seated on His Mother's left knee, although the image may give the impression that the Infant Christ is held more in the Mother of God's embrace than upon her knee. With His right hand, the Infant Christ makes the sign of blessing, while in His left He holds the Gospel in the form of a scroll, upon which a small cross may be observed. Both figures are depicted with golden halos, though within Christ's halo a cross is incorporated. The gold here is not bright, but appears, as it were, "worn" by the passage of centuries. It may be assumed with confidence that, through this device, the author sought to emphasize the powerful, creative hereditary bond linking past and contemporary icon-painters. Particular attention is drawn to the peaceful smile imprinted upon the faces of both Mother and Child.

In terms of the volumetric treatment of the image, this work by Hovhannes Minassian is rather flat than volumetric, and even the folds of the garments and the folded legs of the Infant Christ do not lend the image any volume or depth. This icon bears affinities with the relief sculpture "The Mother of God with the Child Enthroned" of the Church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar (10th century).

In addition to the foregoing, it is worth noting the emotional effect this icon has upon the viewer. It calms the mind and soul of one entering God's temple, fostering a truly deep state of prayer.

I am convinced that, in the course of future restoration works, this powerful and impressive work by Minassian, presently hidden beneath the covering icon, will once again come to light, for it is a deserving creation that, in its spiritual and cultural significance, merits rediscovery.

We cannot fail to mention the apt observation made by the art historian and scholar of 20th-century Armenian art, R. Angaladian, regarding this icon: "This small work is full of strength and virtue; it is almost silent and fully expresses the immaterial nature of this eternal image. It is devoid of pathos, of being a victim-figure, of excessive sweetness. In my opinion, it is among the finest in the history of Armenian painting, in which the Mother of God appears to us outside of time, outside of narrative, purely spiritual and innocent, human and heavenly at once. This is a very complete image, endowed with manifold traits of national character. Thus, do we see the Mother of God in early Byzantine frescoes, when the painter created the image as though it were a prayer... Reinterpreting this thought, one might say that within this small image lie all the centuries."²⁰

Conclusion

Armenian monumental painting is one of the most important domains of national fine art, the course of whose development is intimately bound up with the spiritual, cultural, and artistic history of the Armenian people. Over the centuries, ecclesiastical mural painting and the art of the icon have formed a distinctive iconographic and stylistic system which, while preserving the universal principles of Christian art, has at the same time reflected the particularities of national thought and aesthetic perception. The rich legacy of Armenian medieval art has continued to serve as a source of inspiration for artists of the most recent period as well, fostering the formation of a creative dialogue between tradition and modernity.

In the Armenian fine art of the second half of the 20th century, the work of Hovhannes Minassian occupies a particular place, one of whose important directions is monumental ecclesiastical painting. His murals and icons not only attest to a profound knowledge of medieval Armenian art but also reveal the possibilities for a contemporary reinterpretation of the national artistic heritage. In Minassian's works, there are harmoniously combined an iconographic

²⁰ The Armenian Avant-Garde of the 1960s. 2006, 62–63.

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regularity, a generalized interpretation of form, a restrained approach to color expression, and the author's own original artistic language.

The purpose of the present study is to examine, from an art-historical perspective, the ecclesiastical murals and icons of Hovhannes Minassian, to reveal their iconographic, stylistic, and technical particularities, and to assess their place and significance within the context of contemporary Armenian sacred art. Within the scope of the research, particular attention is devoted to the works created for the Church of St. Mesrop Mashtots in Oshakan, the Convent of St. Hripsime, and the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, in which the artist's creative principles and the idea of the continuity of national artistic traditions found their most complete expression.

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From the recollections of his son, Martin Minassian.

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**ՀՈՎՀԱՆՆԵՍ ՄԻՆԱՍՅԱՆԻ ՄՈՆՈԻՄԵՆՏԱԼ
ԳԵՂԱՆԿԱՐԶՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ. ԵԿԵՂԵՑԱԿԱՆ
ՈՐՄՆԱՆԿԱՐՆԵՐ**

Ամփոփում

Հովհաննես Մինասյանի մոնումենտալ եկեղեցական գեղանկարչությունը հայկական արդի հոգևոր արվեստի կարևորագույն ձեռքբերումներից է, որտեղ **ներդաշնակորեն համադրվում են** ազգային գեղարվեստական ավանդույթները, միջնադարյան պատկերագրական համակարգերը և հեղինակի անհատական ստեղծագործական աշխարհընկալումը: Ուսումնասիրության առանցքում են Օշականի Սուրբ Մեսրոպ Մաշտոց եկեղեցու, Սուրբ Հռիփսիմե եկեղեցու և Մայր Աթոռ Սուրբ Էջմիածնի համար ստեղծված որմնանկարներն ու սրբապատկերները, որոնցում առավել ամբողջական դրսևորում են գտել նկարչի պատկերագրական մտածողությունը, ռեալական որոնումները և ազգային գեղարվեստական ավանդույթի մերօրյա մեկնաբանությունը: Վերլուծության արդյունքում բացահայտվում են հեղինակի ստեղծագործություններում հայկական միջնադարյան գեղանկարչության և քանդակագործության գեղարվեստական-ձևային սկզբունքների, մասնավորապես Աղթամարի Սուրբ Խաչ եկեղեցու կերպարային համակարգի և պլաստիկայի լեզվի ստեղծագործական յուրացման առանձնահատկությունները: Հատկանշական է, որ Հ. Մինասյանը, պահպանելով միջնադարյան արվեստին բնորոշ հարթապատկերային կառուցվածքը, հակադարձ հեռանկարի սկզբունքը և խորհրդանշական պատկերամտածողությունը, ձևավորել է անհատական գեղարվեստական լեզու, որը միաժամանակ կրում է ազգային ինքնության և արդիական ստեղծագործական ըմբռնման կնիքը: Առանձնակի ուշադրության է արժանացել սրբապատկերների կատարման յուրահատուկ տեխնիկան՝ անմիջապես քարի մակերեսի վրա, առանց նախաներկի իրականացված նկարագրությունը, ինչը դրանց հաղորդում է բա-

ցառիկ նյութական և գեղագիտական արժեք: Հետազոտությունը հաստատում է, որ Հովհաննես Մինասյանի մոնումենտալ եկեղեցական գեղանկարչությունը ոչ միայն շարունակում է հայկական քրիստոնեական արվեստի բազմադարյա ավանդույթները, այլև դրանք վերաիմաստավորելով՝ ստեղծում է ազգային հոգևոր մշակույթի ժամանակակից արտահայտչաձևերի բարձրարվեստ և ինքնատիպ համակարգ:

Բանալի բառեր՝ Հովհաննես Մինասյան, մոնումենտալ գեղանկարչություն, Օշականի եկեղեցի, եկեղեցական որմնանկարչություն, սրբապատկեր, հայկական միջնադարյան արվեստ, պատկերագրություն:



Fig. 1. “Glory to Armenian Writing and Education,” 1962–1965, Saint Mesrop Mashtots Church of Oshakan, central western wall, fresco, 800 × 1200 cm



Fig. 2. “Glory to Armenian Writing and Education,” 1962–1965, Saint Mesrop Mashtots Church of Oshakan, northern wall, fresco, 418 × 422 cm.

Monumental Painting by Hovhannes Minassian: Ecclesiastical Murals



Fig. 3. "Glory to Armenian Writing and Education," 1962–1965, **Saint Mesrop Mashtots Church of Oshakan**, southern wall, fresco, 418 × 422 cm.



Fig. 4. Cathedral of the Holy Cross of Aghtamar, mural painting, 10th century.



Fig. 5. "The Virgin Mary with the Child, Seated on a Throne," relief sculpture of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross of Aghtamar, 10th century



Fig. 6. "Glory to Armenian Writing and Education," 1962–1965, **Saint Mesrop Mashtots Church of Oshakan**, eastern wall, fresco, 175 × 700 cm.



Fig. 7. "Glory to Armenian Writing and Education," 1962–1965, **Saint Mesrop Mashtots Church of Oshakan**, eastern wall, fresco, 175 × 700 cm.



Fig. 8. "The Holy Mother of God," 1962–1965, apse of **Saint Mesrop Mashtots Church of Oshakan**, mural painting, 175 × 105 cm.



Fig. 9. *Baptism*," 1966, mural painting, baptismal font of **Holy Etchmiadzin**.



Fig. 10. "The Holy Mother of God," Etchmiadzin, main apse of **Saint Hripsime Church**, 175 × 78 cm.

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ARTIST MARTIROS BADALYAN

Abstract

Martiros Badalyan's artistic legacy constitutes one of the most significant chapters of contemporary Armenian visual art, distinguished by its unique artistic language. In the artist's oeuvre, painting, collage, assemblage, and scenographic thinking are integrated into a coherent artistic system. The principal sources of his creative inspiration include the surrounding environment, the beauty of nature, the human being, and his homeland.

The thematic scope of Badalyan's work encompasses depictions of his birthplace as well as the landscapes of the Armenian Highlands, chapels, churches, and historical monuments. These representations extend beyond mere documentary function, becoming reinterpretations of national memory and sacred space. The themes of the Armenian Genocide, wars, and other humanitarian tragedies acquire profound expressive power in his art. His collages inspired by music reveal the artist's attempt to translate sonic structures into visual form.

One of the central directions of Badalyan's artistic practice is the self-portrait as a form of self-dialogue. His self-portraits transcend the conventional understanding of self-representation, becoming artistic expressions of his inner world, psychological states, and existential inquiries. At the heart of these works stands the individual on the path toward self-discovery. Rather than striving for an exact physical likeness, the artist reveals his inner self through a rich visual

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Artist Martiros Badalyan

language. The city, flowers, and botanical elements function as symbols of memory, time, identity, and the continuity of life.

Keywords: *Martiros Badalyan, collage, self-portrait, artist, art, war, peace.*

Introduction

Martiros Badalyan is one of the “distinctive” representatives of contemporary Armenian fine arts, whose creative signature is determined by a combination of academic painting, national artistic tradition, and modernist thinking. In his art, painting, collage, assemblage, and scenographic thinking are united into an integrated artistic system and hold symbolic and philosophical significance.

Art historian Armen Gasparyan noted:

“In the relationship between man and the world, there is no chasm for M. Badalyan, no antagonism of opposing sides. He is within the world and carries many worlds inside himself. These are his themes. The artist exerts no effort when searching for motives; they are everywhere for him: a scene, a simple object, a memory, a dream, a state of mind, a mood, an unknown passerby, a spoken word, music, and so on...”¹

Martiros Badalyan

Martiros Khachatur Badalyan, an Honored Artist of Armenia, painter, and representative of the art of collage, was born in 1952 in the village of Banants in the Gardman world. His years of professional education (graduating from the Yerevan Ph. Terlemezyan Fine Arts College and the Yerevan State Institute of Fine Arts and Theater) shaped the necessary academic artistic foundations that later manifested in the artist’s creative thinking, imagery system, and means of expression.

His spontaneous style as a means of self-expression stands out for its originality and uniqueness. M. Badalyan’s thinking is also distinct, blended with an inexhaustible sense of humor.

The artist’s works are complex spatial objects where oil paint is combined with rusty metal, wood, mirrors, old springs, and brushes. For his work, he uses

¹ Gasparyan 2016, 3.

objects that possess a certain antiquity or history, or anything that inspires him at that given moment.

The master is not satisfied with canvas alone; he requires volume and three-dimensionality. His works break beyond the boundaries of the canvas's two-dimensional plane. The artist does not simply "place" objects, but also sculpts the form and paints on top of the objects.

The main sources of M. Badalyan's creative inspiration are the environment, the beauty of nature, man, the homeland, and so on. The artist does not equate freedom with license, but views it as a value requiring great responsibility, the meaning and price of which must be realized and appreciated.

The master-creator is convinced that love triumphs everywhere-both in life and art-and that an artist must first and foremost be honest, fair, and true to his principles. For the creator, art is an inseparable part of life-as irreplaceable as air and water. In the course of his creative activity, he resorts to various stylistic solutions that express his boundless imagination, multifaceted thinking, and the freedom of his creative mind."

It is definitely difficult to classify the artist's creative technique, as it combines the characteristics of different fields of fine arts. Notably, by M. Badalyan's own admission, he combines within himself "the painter, the sculptor, and the ceramicist." And the best testament to this is the creator's multifaceted art.²

As a pedagogue, M. Badalyan emphasizes the fact that a student must first and foremost master the rules of classical art, and only on that foundation pursue experimental searches and develop a personal style.

In the context of contemporary Armenian art, the author stands out for his experimental approach, where the two-dimensional space of the canvas acquires three-dimensional volume and theatricality.

The famous Russian journalist, TV host, and documentary filmmaker Pavel Selin,³ referring to Martiros Badalyan's work, characterizes him as an exceptional phenomenon of contemporary art, even comparing him to Salvador Dalí. According to P. Selin's assessment, M. Badalyan is a creator who stands

² "Painting in Space": Creative Principles and Rules of Life of Martiros Badalyan, February 16, 2026.

³ Arsen Arakelyan, Pavel Selin.

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out for his unique perception of the world, non-standard artistic thinking, and a singular way of perceiving reality: “He is an alien,” his creative gaze is unusual, profound, and independent, and the artist’s imagination goes beyond the limits of ordinary perceptions. Pavel Selin, together with film director Arsen Arakelyan, has initiated the creation of a documentary film dedicated to Martiros Badalyan, aiming to introduce the artist’s work to the Russian-speaking audience as well, emphasizing his unique place in contemporary Armenian fine arts. The film also addresses the question of whether there are ideological or artistic connections between M. Badalyan’s creative thinking and the art of Sergei Parajanov.

The free and unconventional use of materials allows the artist to form a structural multi-layeredness. The artist’s experience in theatrical design (more than 40 productions) and cinematographic thinking (more than 12 short films) are directly expressed in his easel painting as well. As a result, each work is constructed as an entire visual system, where color, texture, and composition act as meaningful elements, creating an artistic environment characterized by internal tension and expressiveness.

The exhibition, organized in 2022 under the title “My Environment is the Palette,”⁴ curated by Lusine Badalyan, presented M. Badalyan’s creative heritage from recent decades. The exhibition, by uniting works of various thematic directions, creates a complete understanding of the artist’s artistic thinking, creative searches, versatile interests, and stylistic diversity. Art historian Syuzanna Piloyan, in her opening speech dedicated to the exhibition, valued the mission of the artist Martiros Badalyan as follows: “Martiros Badalyan is one of those artists who enter the arena to say a new word, to form a new way of thinking.”⁵

The thematic scope of M. Badalyan’s art includes the depiction of his birthplace as well as scenes of his native highlands, chapels, churches, and historical monuments, which is not limited to a documentary function but turns into a reinterpretation of national memory and sacred space.

⁴ Martiros Badalyan 2022.

⁵ The Artist’s Stunning Exhibition: What a Flight of Imagination, What a World of Ideas... November 30, 2022.

The themes of the Armenian Genocide, wars, and other universal human catastrophes acquire an expressive resonance in his art. Collages on musical themes reveal the author's attempt to visually reproduce sound structures.

For the artist, the figure of the grandmother holds a special value, embodying the idea of family, the strength of the hearth, national memory, and moral values. A special place in M. Badalyan's art is occupied by the depiction of elderly people. Depicting ancestors, grandmothers and grandfathers, the creator raises the traditional archetype of the grandmother to a universal aesthetic and philosophical level. This is a symbolic reinterpretation of the Armenian woman as an eternal bearer of life, ancestral memory, wisdom, and suffering.

In Martiros Badalyan's works, portraits of elderly people occupy a special place, embodying the collective images of mother and father. In the creation of these characters, the artist's reverence for the art of Rembrandt van Rijn is evident. His virtuoso drawing, which was characteristic even of the artist's youth, continues the traditions of the great masters of fine arts. The artist specifically emphasizes the faces of the elderly, furrowed with wrinkles. The historical memory and destiny of the people seem to be stamped on those faces. However, the wrinkles do not diminish or fade their beauty; on the contrary, these faces are endowed with inner beauty, spiritual strength, and vitality.⁶

At the same time, the artist has created a rich series of portraits of prominent figures of Armenian culture. His portraits of Arno Babajanian, Aram Khachaturian, Ohan Duryan, Lusine Zakaryan, and Sergei Parajanov aim to reveal the essence of their character and inner world. The portrait of Henrikh Mkhitarian is unique, placed on the open-air balcony of the artist's studio. It is visible from the street and inevitably catches the attention of passersby, becoming one of the recognizable calling cards of the studio.

Collage in M. Badalyan's Art

The founders of collage are considered to be the representatives of synthetic cubism, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris, who in 1912–1913 applied the principle of combining newspapers, cardboard, posters, and other materials in fine arts, creating a new way of constructing images. This technique radically expanded the expressive possibilities of fine arts.

⁶ The Pain and Joy of the Artist, Voice of Armenia.

Artist Martiros Badalyan

In the 1930s, interest in collage decreased to some extent, but in the 1950s–1960s, it revived in connection with the development of pop art. Collage became an important means of artistic interpretation of mass culture, consumer society, and contemporary reality, and Robert Rauschenberg also made a significant contribution to the art of collage.

In the 20th century, collage became widely spread in Armenian fine arts as well, combining global artistic experience with national cultural thinking and a symbolic system. In the works of Armenian artists, it often served to express historical-cultural memory and spiritual values. In this context, a special role belongs to the art of Sergei Parajanov, whose visual thinking had a great influence on contemporary Armenian art. Within the framework of the same tradition, an important place is occupied by the collage works of Martiros Badalyan, which present an original ideological and artistic form of expression.

Characteristically, in the context of contemporary Armenian art, the author stands out for his experimental approach, where the two-dimensional space of the canvas acquires three-dimensional volume and theatricality. Collage thinking is one of the main features of M. Badalyan's art. In the artist's words: "Collage gives pause for thought: as much material as there is, that much work there is." This thought best describes the essence of his creative method. In the creator's works, everyday objects lose their functional significance and turn into symbols of memory, time, and personal experience.

One of the important originalities of the talented artist-collagist is the idea of giving material a "second life". He transforms household items into artistic means of expression, giving them a new semantic content. Paper, cloth, printed scraps, and randomly found objects become bearers of memory and time. This approach can be viewed as a reinterpretation of cultural memory, where the past is not only reproduced but reconstructed in a contemporary artistic language. The creator's collage structures are also characterized by a sense of scenic rhythm. The compositions are constructed in such a way that the viewer's gaze, moving in certain directions, pauses at key points and continues its course. This principle is due to the artist's theatrical experience, and under its influence, the organization of space resembles a stage action.

In M. Badalyan's art, painting, collage, and theatrical thinking combine into a unified artistic system. His creative signature is characterized by a free compositional structure, expressive color solutions, and an experimental

approach to materials. An internal tension is often observed in the creator's color system, expressed by the contrast of dark and bright shades.

The Theme of War and Peace in the Artist's Art

The work "The Landscape of War" (Fig. 1) is one of the expressive embodiments of the ideological opposition of war and peace in M. Badalyan's art. As the author notes, the theme of war and peace constantly accompanies him, and the material used suggests the creative solution. Refusing a flat surface, he experiments with a spherical format, which symbolizes the globe, the completeness of life, and universal human space. The work has a round (tondo) structure and is divided into two parts by a central dark, relief fissure; the latter turns not only into a compositional axis but also into a symbol of internal tension and the pain caused by war. Metal bullets contrast with the colorful surface of the work, showing the destructive impact of war. Green, yellow, blue, and red shades predominate in the upper and lower sections, embodying the vitality and tranquility of nature. The central section contrasts with them, crafted in dark brown, black, and metallic shades associated with scorched earth, explosions, and catastrophic war. "Bullets are not for shooting, but for painting and creating art," M. Badalyan said.⁷

The title "The Landscape of War" is contradictory in itself. The concept of a landscape is connected with peace, whereas here it negates its semantic meaning. The painting shows how the destructive power created by man invades the harmonious world of nature, destroying life.

Self-Portraits of Martiros Badalyan

One of the core directions of M. Badalyan's art is the self-portrait as a self-conversation. The artist consoles his longing for his beloved daughter, Lusine, who lives abroad, by interpreting his own image in a unique way, and these self-portraits (more than 600) have turned into an extensive series whose hero is love. The series of self-portraits reflects various states of mind-joy, admiration, surprise and regret, soul pain, will, grotesque, various experiences, emotions, thoughts, and ways out-embodied in one face.

⁷ "Bullets are not for shooting, but for painting," Public Television Company, 2021.

Artist Martiros Badalyan

In his works, the artist uses exclusively those objects that have their own “past.” For example, if the artist uses brushes to create a self-portrait, they must be “old, having lived their life.”⁸

M. Badalyan's self-portraits “break” the boundaries of the traditional perception of the self-image, turning into an artistic expression of the author's inner world, psychological states, and ontological searches. They are constructed through a conscious generalization of form, sharpened glances, and emphasized color contrasts, which contribute to the intensity of the character's emotional tension. The work “Self-Portrait” (Fig. 2) stands out for an imagery system characteristic of surrealist thinking, where reality and imagination merge into one symbolic space. What is depicted in the portrait is a bearer of memory, life experience, and the spiritual world. The architectural structures painted on the upper part of the head symbolize the author's past, living environment, cultural memory, and accumulated experience, turning into a visual metaphor of the inner world. The detailed linear elaboration of the painting, the subtle correlation of light and shadow, as well as the calm, balanced expression of the image, speak of the artist's profound reflections. External restraint contrasts with internal emotional saturation, giving the character psychological depth and symbolic multi-layeredness. The work prompts the viewer to reflect on the relationship between the “self” and time, emphasizing that human existence is conditioned not only by their physical presence but also by the experience of lived years, memories, and cultural self-awareness.

The work “Peace” (Fig. 3) is remarkable; the monument “We are our mountains” (“grandma-grandpa”) of Artsakh is depicted on the hat of the self-portrait, symbolizing the indissoluble connection of the Artsakh land, historical memory, and national identity. The depiction of the monument emphasizes the strength of the roots of the Armenian people, historical continuity, and spiritual unity with the native land.

In the self-portrait “Late Spring” (Fig. 4), the artist resorts to other expressive means, constructing the character from flowers, leaves, and plants. The use of plant elements creates an organic unity of man and nature, emphasizing their interconnectedness and harmony. At the same time, the combination of flat and relief structures enriches the plastic expressiveness of

⁸ Painting in Space, Creative Principles and Rules of Life of Martiros Badalyan, February 16, 2026.

the work and strengthens the artistic impact of the material. “Late Spring” is one of M. Badalyan’s warmest and most lyrical self-portraits.

In these three self-portraits, the central theme is man on the path of self-knowledge. The author does not strive for an accurate reproduction of external resemblance, but reveals his inner world by using figurative language. The city, flowers, and plant elements act as symbols of memory, time, identity, and the continuity of life.

Conclusion

M. Badalyan’s work is one of the most important pages of contemporary Armenian fine arts, standing out for its original artistic language. He has managed to create a system where national thinking and tradition are interpreted anew through innovative forms, theatricalization, and free experimentation with materials. The international resonance of the creator’s art (exhibitions in Austria, France, Germany and so on) proves that local and national themes in the author’s works have acquired universal, psychological, and philosophical quality.

Art is the meaning of his life, and his life is art. This is how one can characterize one of the significant figures of Armenian fine arts, the artist Martiros Badalyan.

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Artist Martiros Badalyan

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Fig. 1. *The Landscape of War*

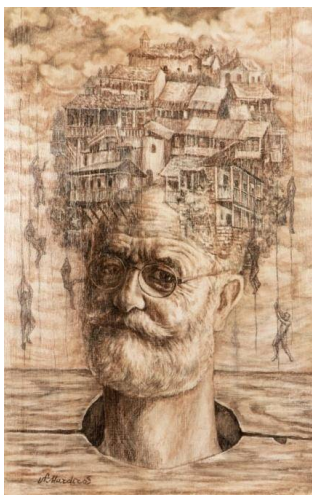


Fig. 2. *Self-portrait*



Fig. 3. *Peace*



Fig. 4. *Late spring*

ԱՐՄԻՆԵ ՊԵՏՐՈՍՅԱՆ

Կրտսեր գիտաշխատող

Արվեստի ինստիտուտ, Գիտությունների ազգային ակադեմիա

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ՆԿԱՐԻՉ ՄԱՐՏԻՐՈՍ ԲԱԴԱԼՅԱՆ

Ամփոփում

Մարտիրոս Բադալյանի ստեղծագործությունը, որն աչքի է ընկնում իր ինքնատիպ գեղարվեստական լեզվով, հայ ժամանակակից կերպարվեստի կարևորագույն էջերից է: Նկարչի արվեստում գեղանկարչությունը, կոլաժը, ասամբլյաժը և բեմանկարչական մտածողությունը միավորված են ամբողջական գեղարվեստական համակարգի մեջ: Նրա ստեղծագործական ներշնչանքի հիմնական աղբյուրներն են շրջակա միջավայրը, բնության գեղեցկությունը, մարդը, հայրենի երկիրը և այլն: Վարպետը ազատությունը չի նույնականացնում ինքնաբավության հետ, այլ դիտարկում է այն որպես մեծ պատասխանատվություն պահանջող արժեք, որի նշանակությունն ու գինը անհրաժեշտ է գիտակցել և արժևորել:

Մ. Բադալյանի արվեստի թեմատիկ շրջանակը ընդգրկում է ինչպես ծննդավայրի, այնպես էլ հայրենի լեռնաշխարհի տեսարանների, մատուռների, եկեղեցիների և պատմական հուշարձանների պատկերումը, որը չի սահմանափակվում վավերագրական գործառույթով, այլ վերածվում է ազգային հիշողության և սրբազան տարածության վերաիմաստավորման:

Հայոց ցեղասպանության, պատերազմների և համամարդկային այլ աղետների թեմաները նրա արվեստում ստանում են արտահայտչական հնչեղություն: Երաժշտական թեմաներով կոլաժները բացահայտում են հեղինակի փորձը՝ տեսողականորեն վերարտադրելու հնչյունային կառուցվածքները:

Նկարչի արվեստի առանցքային ուղղություններից մեկը ինքնադիմանկարն է՝ որպես ինքնագրույց: Մ. Բադալյանի ինքնադիմանկարները «ճեղքում են» ինքնապատկերի ավանդական ընկալման սահմանները՝ վերածվելով հեղինակի ներաշխարհի, հոգեբանական վիճակների և գոյաբանական որոնումների գեղարվեստական արտահայտության: Նրա ինքնադիմանկարների կենտրոնական թեման մարդն է՝ ինքնաճանաչման ճանապարհին: Նկարիչը

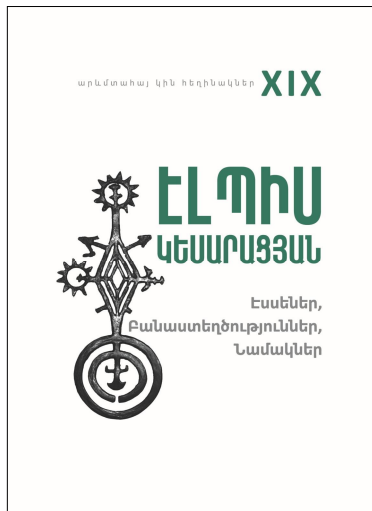
Petrosyan A.

չի ձգտում արտաքին նմանության ճշգրիտ վերարտադրմանը, այլ բացահայտում է իր ներաշխարհը՝ կիրառելով պատկերային լեզուն: Քաղաքը, ծաղիկներն ու բուսական տարրերը հանդես են գալիս որպես հիշողության, ժամանակի, ինքնության և կյանքի շարունակականության խորհրդանիշներ:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Մարտիրոս Բաղայան, կոլաժ, ինքնանկար, նկարիչ, արվեստ, պատերազմ, խաղաղություն:*

ԳՐԱԽՈՍԱԿԱՆՆԵՐ

BOOK REVIEWS



THE PUBLICISTIC LEGACY OF ELPIS KESARATSIAN, THE FIRST ARMENIAN WOMAN EDITOR

A noteworthy event in the sphere of Armenian literary and intellectual history was the publication of a collected volum¹ of the publicistic and literary works of the first Armenian woman editor, Elpis Kesaratsian (1830–1913).

The volume comprises an extensive and critical study by N. Hambardzumyan dedicated to Kesaratsian's life and her editorial and publicistic activity, articles and poetic works published in *Guitar* (Constantinople, 1861–1863), as well as her epistolary work *Letter to the Reading Armenian Woman* (*Namakani ar yntheṛtsasēr hayuhis*), published in Constantinople in 1879, together with an additional selection of poems.

Elpis Kesaratsian is presented against the broad backdrop of the Constantinopolitan Armenian milieu of the period, encompassing the political and legal conditions of Ottoman Empire, the era surrounding the formation of the Armenian National Constitution (1863), and the intellectual and public life of the Armenian people in its defining dimensions.

¹ **Kesaratsian, E.**, *Essays, Poems, Letters*. Compiled, edited, annotated, and with an introduction by Naira Hambardzumyan. Yerevan: Author's publication, 2025. 272 pp. The work was published by the decision of the Scientific Council of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. Reviewers: Corresponding Member of the NAS RA A. Kharatyan; Doctor of Historical Sciences G. Stepanyan.

The Publicistic Legacy of Elpis Kesaratsian, the First Armenian Woman Editor

The author of the introductory study is the first to undertake this subject in its entirety, pursuing an original scholarly approach - namely, examining these historical realities through the prism of the intellectual awakening of Armenian women and the emergence of their self-awareness.

From this perspective emerge two principal dimensions of Elpis Kesaratsian's activity: first, the reconsideration of women's socio-legal status, and second, the question of realizing their individual and public mission.

The author of the preface also addresses other factors that conditioned these transformations, including the significance of progressive European ideas, particularly with regard to gender equality, as well as the need to reconceptualize the role and function of national educational institutions, among other related developments.

Elpis Kesaratsian's editorial activity and life are delineated through the image of an educated and resolute Constantinopolitan Armenian woman of her era, shaped by a patriotic worldview and feminist inclinations grounded therein. Notably, such qualities in an inwardly emancipated Armenian woman were likewise envisioned by the distinguished Armenian novelist Srбуhi Tyusab, who emerged somewhat later, in the 1880s.

As intellectuals who had assimilated European modes of thought and aesthetic sensibilities, both Kesaratsian and Tyusab encountered only limited acceptance within the Armenian milieu of their time. From Stepan Voskanian to Hakob Paronian, critics largely approached literature and culture through their functional significance as direct reflections of reality and regarded the penetration of feminist ideas into national life with considerable skepticism.

However, there were also figures who welcomed or expressed sympathy toward feminist thinkers, including Grigor Chilinkirian and Harutyun Svachyan. The very existence of this relatively small circle testified to the fact that social reality was already generating demands far more mature than any rigid formulation, including the mirror theory of literature as a mere reflection of reality.

In any case, feminism remained a noteworthy phenomenon whose legitimacy derived from the growing awareness of women's disenfranchisement within both the family and society.

Here, it should be noted that N. Hambardzumyan advances convincing arguments in support of restoring to Elpis Kesaratsian the distinction of being the

founder of the idea of women's emancipation in Armenian intellectual life during the 1860s, irrespective of the amateur and often disputable counterarguments put forward by the opponents of *Guitar*.

This debate also extends to the question of *Guitar*'s relationship with the Smyrna-based periodical *Haverjahars* (1862). Despite its romantic title, the journal *Haverjahars* had no substantive connection with the issue of women's emancipation, much less any grounds for contesting the primacy of *Guitar* in advancing such ideas.

Yet the issue extends beyond the defense of women's rights alone; rather, it concerns N. Hambardzumyan's appraisal of the broader phenomenon started by Elpis Kesaratsian -namely, the emergence of a procession of women who entered the spheres of literature and journalism, including Srбуhi Tyusab, Zapel Yesayan, Sipil, Haykaush Mark, Anais, Arshakuhi Teodik, Zapel Galemkearian, and others.

Kesaratsian herself belonged to the educated intellectual circles of her time and milieu and was a figure of firm convictions. N. Hambardzumyan further explains the short-lived existence of *Guitar* through this very circumstance: the editor chose to remain steadfast in her principles, yet, yielding to mounting pressure from her opponents, was ultimately compelled to discontinue the publication of the journal.

Following the publication of *Guitar*, Elpis Kesaratsian devoted the entire proceeds generated from the publication of her 1879 collection, *Letters to the Reading Armenian Woman (Namakani ar yntheṛtsasēr hayuhis)*, to the *Patriotic Women's Society (Azgaser Hayuhyats Ynkerutyun)*, once again dedicating both her spiritual commitment and material resources to the education and upbringing of girls.

N. Hambardzumyan successfully fulfills the objectives set forth in her study by identifying the primary mission of this journal within Armenian social reality: to engage women in the processes of national awakening through enlightenment and education, to strengthen and expand the educational movement, and to enrich Armenian society with new generations of enlightened individuals. Within this distinctive mobilizing effort, a sustained struggle had to be waged against entrenched prejudices and what contemporaries perceived as *Asiatic ignorance*, while its success was to be measured through the establishment of women's human and civic rights, both within the family and in society at large.

The Publicistic Legacy of Elpis Kesaratsian, the First Armenian Woman Editor

The collection includes Elpis Kesaratsian's well-known articles and poetic works originally published in the pages of *Guitar*, followed, in the same sequence, by the materials from her book *Letters to the Reading Armenian Woman Reader* (*Namakani ar yntheṛtsasēr hayuhis*). Taken together (including the poetic compositions) these texts constitute the complete body of Kesaratsian's publicistic writings, distinguished by stylistic coherence, consistency in the treatment of subject matter, and a sustained authorial perspective. At their core, and throughout their development, stands Armenia itself – depicted in its fallen condition and weakened by the frailty, disunity, powerlessness, and servility of its divided sons.

This body of publicistic writing reflects the ideology of national awakening that took shape in the 1860s, the central axis of which became the regeneration of the homeland, particularly Western Armenia.

Most remarkably, Elpis Kesaratsian's *Letter to My Armenian Woman Reader* faithfully continues the same publicistic style, with its symbolic imagery: Armenia represented as an Edenic land and as a desolate virgin, the lyre entrusted to the author in order to awaken the "slumbering spirits" through the sounds of the homeland, the "serpent" as the embodiment of evil and oppression, and so forth.

Kesaratsian's allegorical representations recall the publicistic writings of her contemporary, the distinguished Mkrtich Mamurian, particularly the figurative devices employed in *Armenian Letters*, yet with one important distinction: Kesaratsian also associates the salvation of Armenia with the spiritual rebirth of women, a process that tyrannical forces strive relentlessly to obstruct in order to perpetuate their power.

It is worth noting the suggestive insights offered by this book regarding the nature and character of Armenian feminism. From its inception in the 1860s, it emerged with a defining feature that distinguished it from European feminism: whereas the latter championed women's unrecognized rights within the family and society on the basis of gender, in the Armenian context these rights and the very idea underlying them became closely intertwined with the deeply patriotic ideology of national enlightenment and the revitalization of the homeland.

In both *Guitar* ("Preface," "The Spirit of Patriotism," "Imagination," pp. 59–87) and *Letters* ("Preface," "Exhortation to Patriotism," pp. 167–173), Elpis Kesaratsian raises the issue of women's emancipation in conjunction with the problem of national enlightenment.

Beyond this, little can be stated, as she remains highly reticent on the subject. Nevertheless, the fact that she implies more is also evident, and the reference to the Italian unification movement in *Guitar* provides concrete confirmation of this. Through the example of that country, she encourages her readers, noting that patriots strive to secure its prosperity, while self-interested forces seek to exploit the movement for their own gain, whereby “the country groans in a bitter state of discord” (p. 93).

It should be accepted, to a certain extent, that *Guitar* was published exclusively for women. If approached from a strictly feminist perspective, the periodical sought to elevate women to the intellectual level of men, and thus its programmatic orientation could not fail to attract the interest of male readers as well. It attempted to overcome women’s social isolation by integrating them into public relations beyond the confines of the family.

However, in this regard Elpis Kesaratsian exhibits a limitation characteristic of early feminism: in the matter of women’s emancipation, she places no expectations on men and effectively disengages from them, conceiving women’s education and upbringing as achievable solely through women’s own agency, recalling the idea that the rescue of the drowning is the task of the drowning themselves. In this spirit, she regarded women’s participation in educational and charitable associations as essential.

Here, the publicist advances general and methodological approaches that reflect contemporary progressive trends in pedagogical thought regarding girls’ education. A similar conclusion can be drawn from Elpis Kesaratsian’s polemical article titled “Exercising Rights is not Audacity” (pp. 138–143), one of her most accomplished writings, in which she responds to those who “showed reluctance toward her journalism” and who, in effect, opposed civilization.

In such a case, she notes, “then let ships cease to sail, by which innumerable losses occur, and let even the inventor of the ship be cursed” (p. 140).

In a number of articles in *Letter*, Elpis Kesaratsian likewise returns to the confinement of women within the family and their alienation from public ideas and activity, identifying as the principal cause “the male sex’s being indifferent and merciless toward our (women’s) condition” (p. 180).

This constitutes one of the most enduring theses of feminism concerning the antagonism between the sexes. Much later, in the journal *Hay Kine* (Armenian Woman, 1919–1932) edited by Haykanush Mark, all misfortunes and errors

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affecting women are likewise attributed to men. At the foundation of this opposition lies a gendered division that is not inherently connected to the laws of social development, except insofar as it reflects one of the biological preconditions of societal reproduction.

It should be noted that the dominant position and role of men within the family and society was not a cause but rather a consequence, determined by the historical development of civilization, which, over time, was expected to restore to women their individual and civic rights and their place within the social sphere.

Saint-Simon had already observed that the degree of women's freedom depends on the degree of freedom in society, taking into account the level of development of that society itself.

In other cases, Elpis Kesaratsian tends to attribute the causes of women's lack of freedom to women themselves, namely to their ignorance and backwardness. Nevertheless, in *Letter*, she overcomes the abstraction and metaphorical style characteristic of her writing in the 1860s, and her publicistic narrative in these letters becomes considerably more concrete, including in her conceptions of women's activity and its forms. This extends even to the enlightenment of provincial women, which testifies to the intellectual development of the first Armenian woman editor.

A few remarks on the poetry of Elpis Kesaratsian are in order. It is entirely patriotic in character and reiterates two or three key motifs of her publicistic writing. However, whereas publicistic discourse, through the multiplicity of its conceptual articulations, may conceal its repetitiveness, poetry is unable to mask such uniformity, as it demands not only emotional depth but also richness of form and execution.

It is important to note that in both *Guitar* and her *Letters*, Elpis Kesaratsian derives the idea of women's freedom entirely from the freedom of the nation. In this sense, she employs the same formulation: "Armenians are free, and free are their maidens" ("To the Young Lady," p. 161), and again, "She (the homeland) is free, and free are her maidens" ("Invitation to the Progress of Young Women," p. 246).

Indeed, what emerges before us is a female public intellectual deeply concerned with the present and future of her nation, characterized by an original mode of thought and principled positions.

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All of this has been convincingly elucidated in the introductory section by Naira Hambardzumyan, with the perseverance and dedication of a pioneer. It is by no means an easy task, one that invariably entails unexpected findings and debatable formulations.

Accurately assessing Stepan Voskanian's intolerant attitude toward *Guitar*, N. Hambardzumyan reaches a somewhat unexpected conclusion: she notes, "It was evident, that the mentality of a society governed by patriarchal laws prevailed; by criticizing Kesaratsian's editorial activity, men affirmed their own primacy" (p. 43).

But this line of argument could be countered by any feminist writer, including Elpis Kesaratsian herself. The underlying cause, in my view, was far more profound than a mere gender antagonism, especially given that Armenian democratic thought in the 1860s - and long thereafter - was not yet prepared to accept the European concept of women's emancipation as an external ideological import.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that through this publication and its evaluative-critical analysis, N. Hambardzumyan has retrieved from the mists of oblivion a highly significant work for scholarly understanding: the intellectual heritage of the Armenian woman. She accomplishes this with factually substantiated argumentation, refined scholarly judgment, and a high level of literary criticism.

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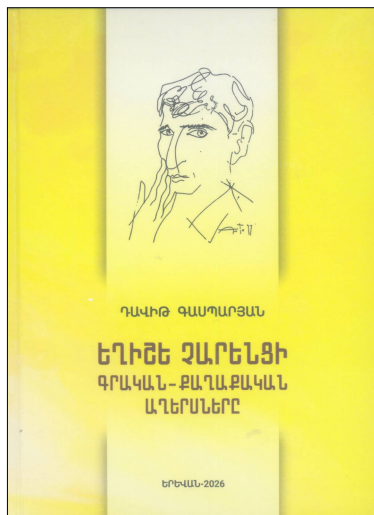
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CHARENTS IN THE COURSE OF HISTORY

Davit Gasparyan, *THE LITERARY AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS OF YEGHISHE CHARENTS.*

(Yerevan: Gitutyun Publishing House, 2026, 692 pp.)

With the sponsorship of the Pan-Armenian Educational and Cultural Association, Gitutyun Publishing House of the NAS RA, has published

The Literary and Political Connections of Yeghishe Charents (692 pp.), a monograph by the distinguished literary scholar, Doctor of Philological Sciences and Professor Davit Gasparyan. The publication was recommended for print by the Academic Council of the Institute of History of the NAS RA.

Although Davit Gasparyan is a distinguished literary scholar, he is best known for his contributions to Charents studies. Alongside his numerous monographs, collections of scholarly articles, literary histories, and textbooks for both higher and general education, a special place is occupied by his publications devoted to Yeghishe Charents, whose number, according to the bibliography appended to the volume, reaches fifty-three. These include ten monographs, two editions of Charents's unpublished writings, two volumes of memoirs about the poet, and a four-volume selected edition of Charents's works compiled by Gasparyan.

It is therefore only natural that he should undertake the demanding task of preparing an encyclopedia devoted to Yeghishe Charents and assume the position of chief editor of a new thirteen-volume collected edition of the poet's works. Two volumes of this edition had already appeared by 2022 and 2025.

By scholarly orientation and intellectual disposition, Davit Gasparyan is fundamentally a historian of literature. Literary history can not be written without a comprehensive understanding of the historical period in which literature emerges and develops. A historical perspective is evident not only in his works devoted specifically to literary history, such as *A History of Ancient and Medieval Armenian Literature* (2009) and *A History of Soviet Armenian Poetry* (1987), but also in his

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monographs on individual authors, including *Aksel Bakunts* (2009), *Gurgen Mahari* (2013), *Hamo Sahyan* (2003, 2024), and *Paruyr Sevak* (2001, 2025). The same perspective characterizes his scholarly and popular-science articles, published in the seven volumes of the *Armenian Literature* series (2000–2023), as well as in the collection *Heavenly Lily* (2004).

A historical approach also characterizes the methods underlying Gasparyan's scholarly analyses, including the historical-comparative, historical-biographical, and systemic-comparative methods. In the case of Charents, the historical-biographical method proves particularly productive, since the poet's life and work constitute a closely integrated whole. Moreover, his life itself formed part of history or, more precisely, was history in the making, unfolding day by day.

Historicism lies at the core of Gasparyan's contribution to Charents studies. As noted above, the bibliography of his relevant publications appended to the volume provides ample evidence for this assessment.

Gasparyan is a literary scholar of broad intellectual range: not only a historian of literature, but also a literary theorist, textual scholar, and critic. These various dimensions of his scholarship find particularly clear expression in his most recent works devoted to Charents, *The Life and Times of Yeghishe Charents* (2022), *Charents* (2023), and the present monograph, which continues and complements these earlier studies as part of a coherent scholarly undertaking.

The volume consists of a "Preface," twenty-one chapters, a "Conclusion," "Appendices," a "Bibliography," and supplementary indexes. Central to the study are the presence and rivalry of two political forces, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Communist Party of Armenia, and the ways in which Charents's life and literary career evolved through his ideological and personal relationships with them.

Within the extensive body of scholarship devoted to Charents, *The Literary and Political Interrelations of Yeghishe Charents* represents a substantial contribution not only to Charents studies but also to contemporary Armenian literary scholarship more broadly. The monograph is distinguished by the significance of its subject matter, the originality of its research questions, the organization and presentation of its material, and the breadth and evidentiary basis of its factual findings.

It is evident that Gasparyan's study is based on a substantial body of documentary and historical material assembled over decades of sustained research. His sources include the holdings of the National Archives of Armenia, the

Museum of Literature and Art, the Yeghishe Charents House-Museum, collections of periodicals published between the 1900s and the 1930s, all editions of Charents's works published during and after his lifetime, published and unpublished memoirs concerning the poet, as well as a wide range of studies in literary scholarship and historiography. The monograph also draws on materials preserved in private archives.

The value of such sources lies not only in their availability but also in their effective use, and in this respect the author demonstrates considerable skill. Gasparyan succeeds in reconstructing the historical context, integrating literary analysis, presenting the writer's biography, and examining his political, literary, and cultural interactions with contemporaries in a manner that produces a coherent and closely interconnected narrative.

One of the key features of Gasparyan's scholarly style is his holistic approach to the research problem: he consistently addresses the subject as a whole, rather than isolating its parts, situating it within its historical background, providing detailed documentary analysis, and drawing comprehensive conclusions. This principle underlies both his earlier works and the monograph under review.

Charents's literary and political interrelations are examined in depth and breadth, encompassing his historical period and contemporaries, including the volunteer movement, the First Republic of Armenia, and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, as well as a range of political figures. In the first case, these include representatives of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, prime ministers, ministers, and other state officials; in the second, figures associated with the Communist Party of Armenia, including first secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Armenia and heads of various party departments. Among the individuals closely connected with Charents are Hovhannes Kachaznuni, Hamo Ohanjanyan, Nikol Aghbalyan, and Levon Shant, followed by Aleksandr Miasnikian, Aghasi Khanjian, Amatuni, and even leading figures of the USSR and the Transcaucasian Federation, including Stalin and Beria.

For Charents, time was shaped primarily by the presence of literary figures and by his own position among them - as a poet and literary actor, as a devoted son of the homeland, a volunteer soldier of the nation, and a literary leader engaged in the cultural construction of country and state, which itself defined his life and creative trajectory.

The stable reference points of this trajectory include the homeland, the revolutionary ethos, creative inspiration, his birthplace Kars, the capital Yerevan,

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and “Moscow as the center of the world,” as well as his gradual and ultimately decisive disillusionment with the revolution, his turn toward national values and the medieval past, and the growing party and administrative distrust directed against him, accompanied by increasingly intensified literary and political persecution.

Charents thus moved through these historical periods and political regimes, as well as through the provincial moral conditions and ethical decline associated with the era, yet under the most difficult circumstances he retained his dignity as a writer and sustained the standing and reputation of Armenian literary culture.

The first chapter of the monograph is entitled “Yeghishe Charents as a Volunteer,” and the second “Yeghishe Charents during the Years of the First Republic.” These chapters, complementing one another, present the poet’s early life and activity, covering the period from 1914 to 1920.

In 1914, Charents published his first book, *Three Songs for a Sad Girl*, followed by the poem *Blue-Eyed Homeland*, marking the beginning of his literary and civic trajectory within a broader life devoted to art and public engagement. In 1915, he volunteered for military service and went to the front with arms in hand. In 1917, he participated in the battles of Erzurum. Through his poems and verse, he welcomed the rebirth of Armenian statehood. In his novel *Yerkir Nairi*, he portrayed the tragic fall of Kars while also giving expression to the final locus of hope, which he associated with the Second Republic succeeding the First Republic of Armenia, i.e. Soviet Armenia.

In October 1919, Charents was appointed Minister of Arts and Education and President of the Armenian Literary Society by the prominent literary scholar, critic, and political figure Nikol Aghbalyan. At that time, Charents himself was unaware of Aghbalyan’s lecture and was working as a teacher in the village of Bashkyadiklar near Kars. He arrived in Yerevan and met Aghbalyan approximately three months later, after which he received an official post in the ministry.

Charents served as an official within the Dashnak administration, yet he also participated in the May 1920 demonstrations. As a result, he was dismissed from his position and, in order to avoid starvation, turned to teaching work in orphanages.

Charents later assumed the same post of Commissar of Arts during the early years of Soviet Armenia as well. From that point onward, his life became closely tied to the Soviet reality, marked by intensive literary and organizational activity and productive editorial and publishing work. However, following the publication

and subsequent prohibition of the collection *Book of the Road*, Charents came to be regarded by the Bolshevik authorities as a politically unreliable figure.

Within this complex trajectory of life marked by multiple historical transitions, in the subsequent chapters of the monograph Gasparyan examines Charents's literary and political interrelations, namely, his engagements and connections with the figures who shaped Armenian intellectual and cultural life.

Separate chapters are devoted to the relationships between Yeghishe Charents and Vahan Teryan, Hovhannes Tumanyan, Avetik Aharonyan, Atom Yarjanian (Siamanto), Daniel Varoujan, Nikol Aghbalyan, Arshak Chopanyan, Armenouhi Tigranyan, Vardges Aharonyan, Avetik Isahakyan, Vahan Navassardian, Hakob Oshakan, Kostan Zarian, Aksel Bakunts, Yervand Kochar, and Komitas-like military figure Shavarch (Shavarsh). This circle also includes Harutyun Surkhatian, Derenik Demirchian, Stepan Zoryan, Vahan Totovents, Azat Vshturni, Gevorg Abov, Mkrtich Armen, Vahram Alazan, Khachik Dashtents, as well as an entire association of proletarian writers who stood in opposition to Charents. Among them, key negative roles in shaping the ideological opposition to Charents were played by Nairi Zaryan, Hrachya Kochar, Guren Vanandetsi, Norayr Dabaghyan, Harutyun Mkrtchyan, and others, including Valery Kirpotin, the Moscow-based literary critic associated with the Kremlin cultural establishment, who assigned Charents the role of a political adversary within Soviet Armenian literary discourse.

The primary novelty of Davit Gasparyan's study stems, first, from the significance of its central research question and, second, from the abundance of newly uncovered material, as well as from its systematic elucidation of the visible and latent connections between Charents and history.

For example, while the relationship between Charents and Teryan has been widely addressed in scholarship, Gasparyan's treatment of the subject is both novel and profoundly analytical. As he convincingly argues, in April 1914 Teryan delivered a lecture entitled "The Future of Armenian Literature" at the hall of the Tiflis Musical Society, in the presence of an audience of 200 listeners, outlining a conceptual boundary between the old and the new in Armenian cultural and historical consciousness. At almost the same time, in Kars, Charents published his first book, *Three Songs for a Sad Girl*, marking an initial step across that same historical threshold. This coincidence is interpreted not as accidental, but as a manifestation of a broader lawfulness within literary history.

A similar kind of literary-historical regularity is also observed in the parallels between the Declaration of the "Group of Three," created under Charents's

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leadership, and Teryan's aforementioned lecture. In the Declaration, Charents appears to reject Teryan; yet, in a deeper sense, he continues to orient literary development precisely along the trajectory outlined by his senior predecessor. This externally paradoxical phenomenon is convincingly demonstrated by Gasparyan through a parallel and rigorous analysis of both texts and contexts.

Charents's literary and political interrelations also extended to various levels of the contemporary political leadership, including the four prime ministers of the First Republic of Armenia, individual ministers, and the Republic's Prosecutor Vardges Aharonyan, as well as, among Soviet leaders, Aleksandr Miasnikian and Aghasi Khanjyan. Among the figures who had a particularly destructive impact on Charents's life, Amatuni occupies a central place.

Gasparyan further addresses the September 1937 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Armenia and Stalin's well-known letter to the Armenian Communists as pivotal historical events. He carefully examines the dismissal and arrest of Amatuni and Mughduzian and the subsequent political developments that followed.

Amatuni was replaced by Grigor Artemi Harutyunov, who was brought from Tiflis and later referred to in Yerevan as Harutyunyan. Charents was arrested under Amatuni's authority on 27 July 1937; however, he died in the Yerevan prison at the end of the second month of Harutyunov's leadership. During this period of more than sixty days, Gasparyan raises the question of whether intervention might have been possible on behalf of the imprisoned poet, yet no such action was taken, a circumstance the author associates with the broader logic of the repressive system attributed to Beria's political directives.

According to Gasparyan's interpretation, this sequence of events reflects a staged political process in which, first, supporters of Khanjyan were arrested, followed by the removal of Amatuni's circle, and ultimately the systematic consolidation of control over Armenia's political and cultural sphere.

In this reconstruction, Gasparyan demonstrates that, regardless of whether Amatuni or Harutyunov held formal authority, Charents found himself without protection within a repressive structure defined by Stalin, Beria, and the leadership of the Communist Party of Armenia, from which, in this interpretive framework, no escape was possible.

Chapters 18–21 of the monograph are devoted to the clarifications and re-evaluations of Charents's political stance as reflected in his collections *Epic Dawn* and *Book of the Road*, as well as in his unpublished writings from 1935–1937. The

poet who once denounced the Dashnaktsutyun, in the poem "Vision of Death" constructs representations of prominent Dashnak figures, strengthens a national ideological framework in opposition to proletarian interpretations that negate national values, and ultimately introduces a vision of God as a response to the imposed culture of universal apostasy.

In conditions of state-imposed disbelief, amid the ruins of demolished churches, fallen crosses, and the devastation of human spirit, Charents in his final years turns his gaze toward God, thereby opening a vital intellectual and spiritual space within a period suffocated by ideological rigidity. Through the invocation of the divine, he composed his "Mountain Prayers," the sonnet cycles of the tetradic notebook in dialogue with Narekatsi, and poems dedicated to Grigor Khlatetsi, Tserents, and Komitas.

In this way, Gasparyan demonstrates how, along the gradual path of the creative spirit's transformation, the poet ultimately reaches its highest stage.

Thus, according to Gasparyan, at the end of his creative trajectory Charents also arrived at the idea of the revelation of God and composed his *Mountain Prayers*. The question of "Charents and God" represents, in this interpretation, a new and significant analytical perspective in Charents studies. The juxtaposition of the poet of the Revolution and the idea of God constitutes a genuinely novel research problem, which Gasparyan introduces and substantiates through concrete literary examples and newly uncovered documentary material.

In Gasparyan's view, Charents was a poet of continuous development and inner reconfiguration. Beginning in 1927, after the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, he entered a period of profound disillusionment, which is reflected most clearly in *Book of the Road* and in his unpublished works. Under conditions of nationalist accusations and persecution, the national dimension of his thought became more pronounced, leading him to critically reassess the literary principles and aesthetic functions imposed by proletarian literary doctrine.

For Charents, party affiliation functioned as a means of addressing the country's suffering. As early as 1918, he expressed concern over how his "red songs" would sound in his blood-soaked and devastated homeland. Over time, these songs were received in increasingly sorrowful tones. During this period, Charents gradually became aware of the illusory nature of revolutionary promises, the exploitation of Armenia within the Transcaucasian Federation, and found himself once again alone with the pain of the homeland.

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At this juncture, the national past acquired new meaning for him, a dimension from which he sought to distance himself under the influence of Bolshevik ideological pressure. National history and national heroes, among them the military leader Shavarch, who stood before his eyes and became the protagonist of the eponymous poem, became central motifs. He also turned to the broader history of the Armenian national liberation struggle, whose trajectory he embodied figuratively in the poem *Vision of Death*.

The national dimension in Charents's work was further deepened by a renewed engagement with the medieval heritage. Narekatsi appears before him in the image of a spiritual savior, and he repeatedly invokes the names of Shnorhali, Kuchak, and Sayat-Nova. Grigor Khatetsi and Tserents are also present, while Khorenatsi, Yeghishe, and other medieval historians are fully integrated into the philosophical structure of his poem *The Book of Histories*. This period is also marked by his growing interest in Old Armenian (Grabar), accompanied by significant scholarly notes.

These values as the author notes, were defended by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), while being opposed by Bolshevik propaganda. It is from this ideological opposition that labels such as "nationalist" and "Dashnak sympathizer" were attributed to him by Bolshevik critics, terms that, in the political context of the time, carried fatal consequences and ultimately led to the designation of a devoted son of the people as an "enemy of the people."

Against this background of arguments and scholarly findings, Gasparyan's interpretation becomes clear from the perspective of a historian of literature. According to the official Soviet version, most explicitly articulated by the Moscow Kremlin critic Valery Kirpotin, Charents was no longer aligned with the Revolution but had become its adversary. In the same interpretative framework, his well-known poems *Soma* and *The Masses Gone Mad* are presented not as expressions of revolutionary enthusiasm, but as manifestations of the "blind impulses" of a petty-bourgeois intellectual mentality.

Within the dense pages of the monograph lies, in effect, the historical time of Charents's life, that is, the decades of the 1910s to the 1930s, encompassing everything that was directly or indirectly connected with him. Among the many named and unnamed individuals, as well as the multitude of referenced and unreferenced political events, nothing is absent, since Charents is portrayed as living a fully engaged and uncompromising life. In Gasparyan's richly constructed

scholarly narrative, no one is missing: both allies and opponents are present within the same interpretive space.

From the standpoint of scholarly integrity, Gasparyan's impartial approach toward all participants in this literary discourse is particularly striking, as his perspective is fundamentally historical, grounded in factual evidence and precision of expression. This also accounts for the appeal of his scholarly style.

Once the book is opened, the reader is drawn into a narrative that resists interruption, as an engaging plot emerges around the central figure of Charents. Real historical actors are introduced, conflicts of varying scale unfold, tensions rise to a climax, and the narrative trajectory moves toward a tragic resolution, culminating in the execution or exile of the protagonist and his literary contemporaries, including Bakunts, Mahari, Totovents, Surkhadian, Makintyan, and many others.

At the same time, the clarity and accessibility of the author's language significantly enhance the reading experience. Gasparyan's work represents the creation of a scholarly study that is not written for scholarship alone, but rather for the advancement of Armenian studies as a field, which also implies an orientation toward the reader.

Overall, Gasparyan's monograph has a broad scope and, like his earlier works, is likely to provide new impetus for research into Charents's legacy and the literary-cultural history of the 1910s–1930s.

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THE ARTICLE, “THE SOURCES OF ARMENIAN HISTORY” BY A. SAFRASTYAN

The study of Armenian history has long been shaped by competing interpretations of its origins, historical development, and cultural identity. Among the most significant contributions to this field is A. Safrastian's discussion of the sources of Armenian history, which critically examines the literary traditions that have preserved the historical memory of the Armenian people. Rather than accepting conventional historical narratives based primarily on Greek and Roman classical writers, Safrastian argues that Armenian historical traditions possess an independent and authentic foundation rooted in native sources. His work challenges long-established assumptions regarding the origins of Armenian civilization and highlights the importance of Armenian literary and historical records in reconstructing the nation's past.¹

A central theme of the article is the significance of indigenous Armenian historical sources, particularly the writings of the fifth-century historian Movses

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¹ Safrastian A., NAA 412 f, l. 1, pp. 1–2.

The article, “The sources of Armenian history” by A. Safrastyan

Khorenatsi, who is widely regarded as the “Father of Armenian History.” Safrastian emphasizes that although the Armenian alphabet was officially created by Mesrob Mashots in the early fifth century A.D., Armenia already possessed a rich oral and written tradition before that period. Epic poems, temple records, royal chronicles, and national songs formed an extensive body of historical knowledge that preserved the collective memory of the Armenian people across generations. According to the author, these sources demonstrate that Armenian civilization was neither culturally dependent upon Greece nor merely an extension of Persian influence, as many earlier European scholars had claimed.²

The article also explores how historical misconceptions developed over time. Safrastian argues that many classical Greek and Roman historians lacked direct access to the original cuneiform records of the ancient Near East and therefore relied on legends, myths, and second-hand accounts. As a result, inaccurate narratives concerning Armenia became widely accepted throughout Europe and continued to influence modern scholarship. By comparing Armenian historical traditions with archaeological discoveries and cuneiform inscriptions uncovered during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the author seeks to demonstrate that many native Armenian accounts are supported by independent historical evidence. This comparison serves to reinforce the credibility of Armenian historical traditions while encouraging a reassessment of long-held historical interpretations.³

Another important aspect of the article is its examination of the legendary figure of Haik, the traditional ancestor of the Armenian nation. Safrastian discusses how Khorenatsi presents Haik not merely as a mythical hero but as a central symbol of Armenian national identity whose story reflects the early political and cultural development of Armenia. Through the narratives surrounding Haik, King Aram, and other early rulers, the article illustrates the close relationship between history, legend, and national consciousness. Rather than dismissing these accounts as fiction, the author argues that they preserve valuable historical traditions that deserve careful scholarly investigation alongside archaeological and linguistic evidence.⁴

² **Safrastian A.**, NAA 412 f, l. 1, pp. 1–3.

³ **Safrastian A.**, NAA 412 f, l. 1, pp. 2–5.

⁴ **Safrastian A.**, NAA 412 f, l. 1, pp. 4–7.

Furthermore, the article highlights the remarkable continuity of Armenian historical writing from the fifth century onward. Later historians built upon Khorenatsi's work, preserving and expanding earlier traditions while documenting the political, religious, and cultural transformations of Armenia. Safrastian concludes that this continuous literary tradition, together with the discovery and decipherment of ancient cuneiform inscriptions, provides strong support for the authenticity and depth of Armenian historical memory. The preservation of these sources reflects the resilience of Armenian culture despite centuries of political upheaval and foreign domination.⁵

Overall, this article provides a comprehensive examination of the principal sources of Armenian history while questioning traditional interpretations that rely exclusively on classical Western authors. By emphasizing indigenous literary traditions, archaeological discoveries, and critical historical analysis, Safrastian presents a compelling argument for recognizing the richness and independence of Armenian historiography. The article contributes significantly to the understanding of Armenia's historical heritage and encourages readers to evaluate historical evidence from multiple perspectives in order to gain a more balanced and accurate understanding of the Armenian past.

IV. Sources of the History of Armenia.

The attempt which offers an entirely new etymology of the national eponym Haik necessitates immediately a glance at the literary sources as recorded in purely national alphabet and preserved faithfully for the last fifteen centuries. In an introduction to the History of Armenia a full list of its sources and a critical review is obviously essential. This task would call for a separate study and for special qualifications. Many of these sources, however, will occasionally be referred to and the main lines of Armenian historical tradition in connection with the origins of the race will be shown below in a concise form. As this study aims primarily at pointing out and correcting some of the most obvious errors of historical science, a short enumeration of the sources will serve that purpose.

Even to-day it is generally thought (not excluding some Armenian scholars) that before the invention of the national Alphabet by Mesrob Mashots during the years 404–412 A.D., Armenia had not known the art of writing and had possessed no

⁵ **Safrastian A.**, NAA 412 f, I. 1, pp. 8–10.

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literature to speak of. It is still believed that Armenia had learnt the elements of civilization from Greeks and Macedonians, and that the language – at least the most important portions of the vocabulary – was derived from Persian and Greek. These deductions, drawn from classical philology and formulated long before the disclosure of the Khaldian-Haikian cuneiforms, seemed reasonable enough for the greater part of the last century. They have now been exposed as being based on totally false premises.

Alluding to various historical events of pre-Christian Armenia, Movses Khorenatsi quotes several extracts from epic poems which popular bards used to sing even in his own day; and in his various chapters he mentions at least seven categories of literary records which existed in Armenia during the pagan period. He names them as the Books of Temples, the Histories of Temples, the Books of Kings, the Books of Poems, the Ancient Mythical Tales, the Songs of Epic Poets and the Songs of Enumeration. (This last category of literature seems to have consisted of national annals). It cannot be denied, on the other hand, that Khorenatsi himself, while extolling the military skill and building achievements of the kings and the people of his country, ascribes the construction of some of the monumental masterpieces to "Semiramis-Shamiram, the Queen of Assyria" which of course is pure misunderstanding, as the cuneiform inscriptions of both Assyria and Khaldia-Haik have clearly shown.

Now in the full light of reliable contemporary information, this and many erroneous notions have proved to be unfounded. In spite of a century of positive research these misconceptions are still held by European scholarship in unquestioning obedience to all Greek and Roman classical writers.

The origins of these historical distortions which have been piled up by centuries of mental inertia can now be explained easily and the whole course of the false tradition can be traced back to its fountainhead; with the fall of ancient monarchies not only cuneiform writing but the art of truthful learning seems to have gone overboard. The true position prevailing in the Ancient East, was forgotten because the Persians and Greeks who succeeded the old priestly Scribes could not and did not trouble to read the ancient records. The historian Herodotus reliably reputed to have been a dealer in precious stones, Ctesias, Diodoros of Sicily, Strabo, to mention only a few, felt it their duty to fill up the vacuum. They were ordinary men seeking personal fortune and position. As the monarchical scribes of Ancient East they did not look upon the art of writing as a divine gift granted to human beings for the pursuit of lofty ends and honest practical use. The royal scribe or temple priest in the East employed this sacred trust to glorify the national gods, who, as they unquestioningly believed, rules the universe, controlled the destiny of men and their daily life. They praised and

glorified also their kings, because they firmly believed that the monarch was the earthly representative of the gods and the shepherd of the people. Throughout the ancient and medieval literature of the civilized East it is difficult to discover any doubting suggestion as to the creation of the earth and man, any indecorous twaddle, jealousy, immorality or treacheries among the divinities; no word or vestige of a line which may suggest any degree of pornography. Every age has its own literary style and conception; if the Eastern Monarchs often uniformly described their wars and conquests, the booty they carried off, the cruelties they committed against the vanquished and so forth, at least they honestly said so and did not attempt to make the black look like white. Whatever excesses they were guilty of, they confessed it in a manly and dignified manner. They did not fabricate fables of or idolize immoral men and women. Anyhow Greek classical authors and a host of followers and exegetists in subsequent centuries popularized their faked stories, the later ones vying with the former in adding still more repulsive details. By dint of repetition, they scattered round the world those tendentious tales to such an extent as to leave little opportunity for ascertaining the historical truth in respect of the past.

To mention only a few, Juvenal⁶ and Martialis⁷, the Roman satirists of the Imperial age, as eyewitnesses some eighteen centuries ago, have put in a nutshell the estimate in which those Greek and Hellenistic writers were held in the world of those days “The legends of Heracles and Centaurs, the Argonautic expedition, the death of Achilles and such like, were constantly dinned into their ears, and at every turn poets, good and bad, still harped on those few strings...”

Those Greek writers harped in a still more raucous tune on “the ideal kingship of Cyrus”, on the “Median empire”, which had never existed, the alleged Kimmerian and Scythian invasions, an Iranian army five million strong invading Greece, on Amazones and many other absurdities in addition to Heracles, Jason and Medea, the Golden Fleece and the invasion of India by Queen Semiramis.

In the 5th Century A.D., when Movses Khorenatsi wrote his History of the Haik, these legends of doubtful morality, totally incomparable with the oral epic poems of Eastern nations and alien to the established order of the Ancient East, had been current for nearly a thousand years. By constant repetition they had vitiated the mental atmosphere of the world, from Britain and Spain to Rome and Persia. It was impossible to counter the weight of these absurd stories. Manetho, the Egyptian priest, and Berosos, the Babylonian priest, both living in the third century B.C. and therefore

⁶ Juvenal: I lines 7 – 14, 162. III 77 ff et passim.

⁷ Martialis.

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still able to avail themselves of cuneiform sources, wrote the histories of their countries in Greek with a view to counteracting the legends which then flooded the known world. But the Armenian historian, in the 5th century A.D. was at a great disadvantage in this respect. Although he saw with his own eyes some of the masterpieces of old Armenian historical literature, as recorded on rock slabs of Van and elsewhere, he could not make any use of them as the knowledge of cuneiform script was altogether forgotten. The Greek logographers mentioned above, some of whose works are either lost altogether or exist in fragments, had written at great length of the building activities of Queen Semiramis as extending over all Western Asia;⁸ the Armenian historian had no other choice but to adopt the false information in regard to the erection of the rock castle, as well as some other assertions, which were the stock-stories inherited from Hellenism.

On the advent of Armenian literature which followed the newly discovered alphabet in the first half of the 5th century, the Byzantine Empire was only a century old. That empire had not then, if ever, acquired a well-defined character or ethnical outlook; it was composed of a medley of nondescript peoples with conflicting traditions and of countries which harbored long memories of mutual animosities and blood feuds. In the early part of the 5th century the Christian theology of Byzantium was not sympathetic to the literary and historical heritage of Hellenism, although it took over the language, stamped new interpretations on the important parts of its vocabulary, borrowed and perverted many of its ancient philosophical views. It hated and suppressed "the heroic age" cult of Hellas, and through the handbook of one Sulpicus Severus it substituted the four world empires of the Prophet Daniel for the ancient history of Greece. The calamitous decline in historical thought produced by the Byzantine theology, extinguished the light of true knowledge throughout the Middle Ages, until the Papacy, supported by the Italian city republics, revived learning and research in the early 16th century.⁹

In Armenia, on the contrary, the fervour of Christian teaching marched hand in hand with the study of the pagan past. The Church of Armenia hallowed and sanctioned the old pagan tradition of the country. In liturgy and prayer it glorified the ancient greatness, the nobility of the dynasties which had worshipped idols and had knelt before metal or other material deities. It did something much more conspicuous than has been tried in any other country. The fathers of the Armenian Church, fully aware of the value of secular cults and beliefs, simply rebaptized the oldest temples in

⁸ Cf. for instance Diodorus (of Siculus)

⁹ Robert V. Pohlmann: *Griechische Geschichte and Hellenkunde*. V. edition (1912) p. 1.

the country and, in accordance with the Christian teaching, adapted the old religious ritual, ceremonial feasts and national festivals.

The great reverence shown to – and the pious worship of – the godmother in all Eastern Christian, and particularly in the Armenian Church, is a direct continuation of the worship of god-mother Khepat,¹⁰ the sun-goddess of the Khurrian people. The worship of Khepat was borrowed by the Hittites, and under various names, by the neighboring peoples. Misled by Hellenistic legends, historians and scholars not long ago thought that the goddesses Anahita, Nana and Astghik, a combination symbolizing the principles of fertility, love and battle, were of Persian origin, and that Armenians had borrowed them from that country. Since the revelation of Assyrian and Hittite royal archives, however, and especially in the last twenty years, it has been proved, on the contrary, that it is the Persians who have borrowed together with many cultural ideas and words from Armenia, Elam and Babylonia. Scholars like P. Kretschmer, A. Meillet, H. Hubschmann, J. Markwart and others, who wrote their authoritative books on these problems before these revelations, naturally could not have known the actual relationships in western Asia.

There may be some doubt as to the origins of goddess Nana, known in the oldest Sumerian religious texts under the form Innini, Ninlil etc., and mentioned in innumerable tablets of the new Babylonian empire as Nana. The question as to the priority of these cults between the Sumerian city-states and the monarchy of Khurri must hang over until the oldest written documents of the latter have been discovered.

Against such a national background were surging Persian, Hellenistic and Biblical legends from every side. In cardinal problems of ancient history they were in open conflict with what Khorenatsi knew from native sources and believed them to be the facts. Taking in hand the first set of literary sources from Herodotos down to Strabo the Armenian historian declares with conviction: “As to what has been written (by Greeks and Chaldeans in regard to Armenia) does not please us in the least. Let others take or accept them as they will...” (Khorenatsi I. 14).

Looking back nearly 3,000 years from his own time Khorenatsi presents the oldest traditions of the country as they were known in the fifth century A.D. as much as he had been able to verify; these were the origins of the race, the oldest settlements and sites, the constructive achievements of Haik and all the circumstances connected with the first organized state. He introduces the heroic figure of Haik, the

¹⁰ The name Eva, the first woman according to the original Septuagint, seems to have been derived from this Khurrian goddess Khepat. Cf. A. Goetze: *Hethiter, Churriter und Assyrier*, p. 66.

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eponymous ancestor of the Armenian race, and tells his history in an epic style. At first, he presents the genealogy of Haik as a direct descendant of Japhet, one of the sons of Noah. (It is to be observed that his story as to the genealogy of Japhet differs considerably from the story of the Biblical tradition). In this connection the point to be underlined is that twice the historian adds the patronymic laphetoste to the personal name of the ancestor Haik "famed for his valour, hard-hitting and the strength of his bow."

In subsequent paragraphs the national historian tries to interpret the Biblical genealogy of Noah in terms of Armenian homonymy; he mentions first laphetoste as identical with Japhet. The historian feels obliged to resort to this play on patronymics merely in order not to appear in contradiction with the Biblical text. It is now impossible to ascertain what exactly the historian had in mind as to the term laphetoste, (in apposition to Japhet) an eponym which hitherto was considered totally inexplicable and therefore "worthless" even by most Armenian philologists, who naturally could not have known anything in regard to Teshup, the principal divinity of the Khurrian peoples, fully revealed only in the last few years, and consequently the patronymic Japetoste had to be discarded as a misunderstanding or a mistake of the copyists.

In vivid colors and martial spirit Khorenatsi proceeds to extol the personality of Haik and his physical characteristics: "...a virile figure with wavy hair and fiery eyes, handsomely built and strong-armed, the bravest and the most distinguished among the Titans, defying all who raised their hands to dominate over Giants and Heroes" (Khor. I ch. 9).

After the birth of his son Aramaneak "at Babylon", (1) Haik "marched to the North with his sons and grandsons, their families and relations and those who came to join him."

(1) This assertion of the national historian in regard to the presence of Ancestor Haik "in Babylon" and the birth of his son Aramaneak in that famous city, had naturally occasioned a great deal of hesitation and not unreasonable doubt in the minds of investigators from the outset. Indeed, it looked most strange that the proud national historian should ever have conceived the idea of making the national Ancestor Haik originate in "Babylon". This riddle of any ethnic connection of ancestor Haik with "Babylon" can now be solved on cuneiform evidence in a satisfactory manner. Here Babylon is not the famous city, but Bnabegh of old-Armenian classics, the city Babilu of the Khaldian-Haikian cuneiforms, a fortress-city in the southern slope of the Taurus, where kings of Armenia stored their treasures and where lay their graves. Just like the laphetoste-Japhet parallel and some other historical statements by Khorenatsi,

this “Babylon” in Armenia turns out to be of great historical value. These confident affirmations by Khorenatsi were considered as “discoveries” or simply as “falsehoods” by

- (a) Theodor Mommsen: *Römische Geschichte* (ed. 1855) Vol II p.759 Vol III p. 310, (note)
- (b) Alfred von Gutschmid: in ZDMG (1885) p.....
- (c) B. Niese: *Geschichte des griech und Makedonischen Staaten*
- (d) A. Carrière: *Les nouvelles sources de Moïse de Chorenè*
- (e) J. Markwart: *Die Genealogie der Bagratiden*
- (f) V. Daghpashian: *Die Entstehung der Bagratiden* in Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie:

He carried out vast constructive works in the land of Ararat, “assigned the estates to his sons and their children, which facts are attested by very old unwritten poems. With all his army and equipment, he himself moved to the northeast of our country to a tableland which he named Hark”....

The growing power of Haik, however, roused the jealousy of Bel, the King of Assyria, who, relying on his powerful army, started from his country to attack Haik. In epic language, for which the classical Armenian is a particularly well-fitted medium of expression, the historian depicts in the minutest detail the strength and composition of the rival armies, their armour, mail-coats, weapons and strategy, almost completely in harmony with the discoveries of modern archaeology (see Rusa I and Sharukin of Assyria...); the scene of the battle “on the shores of the salt sea”, the exhortations of Haik to his sons and troops etc. Finally, Bel is killed in battle by Haik’s own bow, and the valorous Assyrian army is dispersed. “.... And our land is named Haik () from the name of the Ancestor Haik”.

Khorenatsi continues the history of the successors of Haik often by the bare mention of their names and attempts etymologies with a view to linking the geographical divisions of Armenia with the names of the Haikian Kings. He lays special emphasis on the warlike exploits of King Aram, the sixth descendant of the Ancestor Haik in direct line, who conquered “the Medes”, Cappadocia and Assyria. “All other nations call our country by the name of Aram, just as the Greeks call us Armen, Persians and Syrians, Armnik...”

It is evident from Khorenatsi’s History that the origin of the appellative “Armenia” was as much a puzzle in his times as it is to-day to historical science.

Khorenatsi’s king Aram fully corresponds with the king Arame of Khaldia-Armenia (Urartu, Ca. 860 B.C.) whom Shulmanu-Ashared III of Assyria (858– 826 B.C.) boasts of having attacked in three different campaigns. In chronological order

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an attempt will be made to interpret (1) Cf. B. Hrozný: *Archiv Orientalni*. I (1929) p. 71 f. "Naramsin et ses ennemis d'après un texte Hittite", Hrozný examines the great inscriptions by Naram-Sin, the King of Akkad (Ca. 2200 B.C.?) first transcribed by E. Forrer (in *Boghezkoï texte in Umschrift* Vol II (1926) No. 3) Naram-Sin tells of his wars against a coalition of seventeen kings whom, he claims, to have defeated one after the other. Among the seventeen countries those which may have some relation with southern Armenia are: "Lapanaila, king of the country of city Uulini".

Combined with later information supplied by kings of Assyria, there can be little doubt that the land Uulini is Erevard the green and wooded valley immediately south-east of modern city of Bitlis, washed by the headwaters of Eastern Tigris (Cf. the *Armenian Geographie*, translated into French by Father Arsene Soukry (1881 Venice) p. 32).

The eleventh country in Naram-Sin's list is "Madakina, the king of the country of city Armani". "Armani n'a probablement rien à faire avec le nom de l'Arménie, qui n'est pas encore expliqué et dont la plus ancienne forme est Armina dans les inscriptions achéménides", concludes Hrozný.

The archives of old-Armenian kings lie still buried in the subsoil; many tablets dealing with this problem, although excavated in the course of the past century, probably lie buried also in some museum or private collection; therefore, no judgment on the problem can be final as yet. Moreover, it is to be noted that besides the Akkadian-Assyrian Armani, the Persian Armina or Arminiya, there is also Urmeni, mentioned by king Menua (Ca. 810–775 B.C.) and his successors. Taking together the order and place of city names mentioned by the Hittite king Murshilish II (ca) the Assyrian king Tukulti-apil-Eshshara I (1114–1075 B.C.) and others, the Khaldian Urmeni may be identified with the city of Nariman or Nermian in the valley of middle Jorokh river, in the old-Armenian province of Taik, on the road to the Black Sea. The topographical problem is exceedingly complicated and should be discussed separately. Hence follows that it is another misunderstanding of ancient history when it is asserted that the Armenian monarchy did not reach or rule on the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea.

The Armenian text as to the greatness of Aram and compare it with the inscriptions of the Assyrian king, as well as the war of Haik against Bel; a problem of great historical interest demonstrating the authenticity of the whole historical tradition of Armenia.

After recounting the heroic deeds of king Aram, Khorenatsi abruptly assumes a tone of anger and revolt at the false historiography of the Chaldaeans and Greeks. "....As to why these exploits and acts of martial courage are not mentioned in the

books of Kings and in the Temple histories no one should be astonished or harbour any misgivings about them; because there was neither any obligation nor any dire necessity for them (Greeks and Chaldaeans) to write of the old fame of foreign nations and of the oldest heroic poems of distant lands in their temple or royal archives; the more so, as it was neither to their own glory nor to their advantage to record the acts of valour and heroism of foreign nations", i.e. Armenians.¹¹

Quoting as his sources first Marabas Katinay "the wise Syriac writer" then Berossos, the Babylonian priest, Abydenos, Alexander Polyhistor, Eusebios and a large number of other Chroniclers, all of them Western Asians to be noted, though all writing in the Greek languages, Khorenatsi does not mention any Hellenic author as a source, neither Xenophon or even Strabo; only once does he refer to Herodotos in connection with the division of the world into three continents (Her. IV. 42).

It would have been logical for the Armenian historian to gather information from Strabo, who was of Pontic origin and probably not an admirer of the fantastic Greek fables, and could be relied upon to furnish much more valuable data on all Western Asia than all the Greek logographers of the classical age put together. Not once does Khorenatsi or any other Armenian historian mention Strabo; because it is to be presumed, they abhorred his statement that the Armenian race, "the noblest of the Northerns"¹² was descended from a fictitious Thessalian adventurer, Armenios.¹³

A proud autochthonous race conscious of its glorious past and multi-millenary greatness and well-being would presumably never have brooked any kind of ethnological relationship with desperate adventurers whom they knew as a conglomerate without national gods, hereditary monarchy, aristocracy, national army or all those symbols of sovereign power which Eastern states considered as prerequisites of international recognition.

In the latter part of his first and the following two books, Khorenatsi presents the history of the Armenian pagan Arshakuni (Arsacid) Dynasty down to king Trdat (Tiridates) at the end of the third and the beginning of the 4th century A.D., the conversion to Christianity under his reign and the discovery of the Armenian alphabet and the beginnings of literature, often supplementing and amplifying the course of events as recorded by previous historians, such as Agathangeghos and Phavstos Buzand, and winds up his *History of the Haik* (Armenia) by a lament on the decline of the country in consequence of the extinction of the Arshakuni Monarchy (A.D. 428)

¹¹ Khorenatsi.

¹² idem III

¹³ Strabo, X II

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and of the ecclesiastical Hierarchy as founded by St. Grigor Lussaworich the Illuminator and Apostle:

"I lament thee, land of Armenia" says the historian in an epilogue,
"I lament thee, the noblest of all the Northerns, as no more king and
"pontiff rule over thee, thy advisors and teachers; thy peace is
"disturbed, disorder is spreading and deepening; thy holy Faith is
"shaken and, in prevailing ignorance evil is on the increase."

An ethnological type of man, assumed by archaeologists to have been in the highlands from the upper Paleolithic age, its physical fibre bred and consolidated by countless centuries of nutrition of rich variety, its spirit forged in an invigorating climate and mountain scenery of unrivalled beauty, that type of man can look upon disasters with equanimity, convinced in his inner consciousness that such disasters were due "to our many sins." In fact, mediaeval Armenian literature, up to modern times, contains literally hundreds of such confessions where the finger of Providence is pointed out as overtaking a "sinful generation"; yet the historical reality is that few other nations in the world have a cleaner national history than Armenia, exhibiting in comparison less crime and very few heinous national treacheries, civil wars or internal malice. On the contrary, an inbred national loyalty and strong racial sentiment cemented through centuries of common glory, power and well-being form the outstanding features of its character throughout the ages.

Owing to one cause or another large or small Armenian communities may have scattered from Java to the North Pole, yet the link with the Mother land has survived from generation to generation in surprising manifestations.

This historical tradition of the remotest ages with all their interesting details, have come down to us intact and in unbroken continuity in Khorenatsi's *History of the Haik*. For the sake of clarity it is as well to repeat in brief those traditions which relate to the national eponym, the origins of the race, the names and the acts of the earliest Kings, the geographical nomenclature of the whole land, the names and sites of the great ruling families holding hereditary offices and functions as well as duties; the vicissitudes of national and political life through many centuries down to the discovery of the alphabet and the translation of the Bible (A.D. 407–435).

The firm moral and cultural foundation of Armenian nationality, as known ever since, was laid down before the Arshakuni monarchy was overthrown by the Sasanian and Byzantine upstarts.

In the centuries following the fifth many other Armenian historians wrote mainly the history of their own times; but until the thirteenth century A.D. some of them began their works by recording first a summary of the most ancient ages, faithfully

following the literary tradition laid down by Khorenatsi. For instance, Bishop Sebeos (7th Century) transmits the tradition as to the origins and additional features and aspects, the circumstances of the Haik-Bel battle, most illuminating in its facts and in several respects in striking concordance with the cuneiform inscriptions of Sharukin III of Assyria (722–705 B.C.) This additional material respecting the Haik-Bel war can be explained by the fact that Sebeos, the author, being the Diocesan Bishop of the great Bagratuni family, possessed such sources of information from written records as were not available two centuries earlier to Khorenatsi. Other historians, Thovma Ardsruni and Katholicos Iohannes (both of the tenth century) while referring to the main lines of the original tradition in strict loyalty, have preserved other minor details in regard to Armenian-Assyrian relations and the Persians, enlarging upon the intercourse of Haikazunk (Khaldia-Urartu) with Assyria and the “Medes”; the names and events in respect of the successors of Haik, which bear further corroborative evidence to the cuneiform records.

Step'anos Asoghik (of Taron), Samuel Anetsi and Mkhithar Airevantsi (11th and 12th centuries) gradually built up a chronological canon, thus clothing the oldest history of Armenia as a living organism.

Movses Kaghankaituatsi (7th century) wrote a *History of Aghuank* (i.e. the Caucasian Albania, to-day the Republic of Azerbaijan) which is the unique oldest records of a neighbouring country.

Archbishop Step'anos Orbelian (12th century) wrote an invaluable *History of Siunik*, the north-eastern province of Armenia, which contains not only a wealth of facts on earlier ages, but illustrations of social life and economic life and topography as well.

In his prologue Sebeos had already supplied a chronology of five Armenian and Parthian kings, which does not accord with the chronicle of Eusebios. This fact coupled with other similar records proves that Armenian classical writers possessed independent native sources of information and did not swallow anything and everything written by Greeks or in Greek language.

Finally, Father Chamchian, in 1788, issued his monumental three volumes of the *History of Armenia*, in Venice, in a strictly traditional style as was to be expected. The pioneer of modern Armenian historical research made full use of the Scriptures, of ancient Greek and Roman literature, sacred or profane, and rejected outright all the data from those foreign sources which did not harmonize with the information derived from national classics.

In scholarly classical language Chamchian describes the Garden of Eden, the Fall of man, the Flood, the Patriarch Noah and his three sons, “who lived in the land of

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Ararat." After the dispersal of Noah's sons, the historian adds: "... they all spoke one language, and it seems likely that that was the Armenian language." In unwavering loyalty, he follows Khorenatsi and begins the national history with Haik. As chronology Chamchian combined the canon of the Scriptures and of various calendars; he puts the Flood at 2540 B.C. and Haik the eponymous hero at 2247 B.C.

At a time in which national critical histories had hardly taken shape in other countries the volumes of Father Chamchian produced a keen national awakening in the Armenian people.

Some sixty years later, in 1849 Father J. Gatherjants, another Mephistarist from Vienna, published also two volumes of a *Universal History* in the style fashionable in Europe at that time. In these volumes the author assumes a critical note on the history of Armenia in the framework of the Ancient East. He detects many chronological errors as well as historical misconceptions in the work of Khorenatsi and draws valuable information particularly from the Roman classics. He was the first to propound the view that the supplementing and correcting of national history through contemporary foreign sources by no means lessens the immense value of Khorenatsi and other ancient authors.

Both Chamchian and Gatherjants, however, definitely and categorically rejected any ethnical kinship or racial connection with the Phrygians, Thessalians or Greeks in any form or shape; in numerous quotations they repudiate information from Herodotos, Strabo and others in respect of Armenia by textual criticism and historical illustrations.

This modern reassertion of the ancient national faith in the first half of the last century was soon followed by the discoveries of the Khaldian-Armenian, Old-Persian, Assyrian, Babylonian and other cuneiform inscriptions. The interest and enthusiasm which these discoveries aroused among the Armenians was something more than academic. In the fifth century A.D. Khorenatsi had described in wonderment those wedge-shaped engravings on the rock-walls of the city of Van. Convinced of the reality and the existence of wedge-shaped records on the rock-castle of Van, as depicted by Khorenatsi, H. Saint-Martin,¹⁴ an Armenian by origin, had been able to induce the French Government to send out someone to make a survey of Van and the surrounding regions.

As a result C.F.E. Schulz was sent out by the French Government in 1827 for that purpose. The young German scholar found the account of Khorenatsi as to cuneiform inscriptions at Van of greater importance than anybody had suspected. He made

¹⁴ *Journal Asiatique*, 1825

copies not only of the rock inscriptions in the city but also many others in the vicinity of Van, recorded on special stela and polished stone slabs, some forty-two in all of various sizes and lengths.

Unfortunately, in consequence of some tribal suspicion the young talented scholar was murdered in 1828 on the frontiers of Persia. His copies of old Armenian inscriptions, however, were rescued and published in originals in the *Journal Asiatique* in 1840.

At the time of publication no one was able to decipher those inscriptions, and their meaning remained an impenetrable secret. The riddle of cuneiform script was solved not many years later mainly through the untiring efforts of Sir Henry Rawlinson, starting with the Persian inscription on the Rock of Behistun. But Armenian scholars never doubted that they could only contain the old national language and history, the more so as Khorenatsi had vouched for their existence in the fifth century A.D. These inscriptions were hailed as a triumphant vindication of the entire national tradition. Historical research was stimulated also on a political basis, as the cuneiform epigraphy was making progress in Europe. The attempts of Edward L. Hincks, H. Rawlinson and others to decipher the interpret these old records were eagerly translated into Armenian and, not unnaturally, relationships were sought with old historical figures and events.

NAA fond 412, list 1, work 196, pp. 1–16.

Գիտական խորհուրդ

Աղասյան Արարատ
Ավագյան Արծրուն
Ավետիսյան Պավել
Բարդակչյան Գևորգ
Դեդեյան Ժիրայր
Դում-Թրագուտ Յասմին
Զեքիյան Լևոն
Իսահակյան Ավետիք
Կատվայան Վիկտոր
Հայրապետյան Սերգո
Հովհաննիսյան Լավրենտի
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