

# The Armenian Weekly

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CELEBRATING

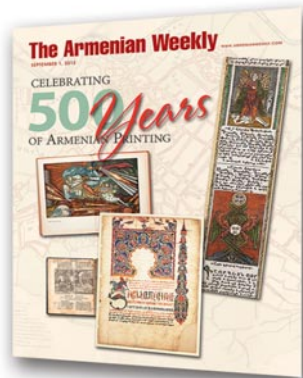
# 500 Years

OF ARMENIAN PRINTING



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# 500 Years

BY CHRIS BOHJALIAN

## A Celebration of Ink and Paper and Glue



The author (L) with Prof. Levon Avdoyan in front of the Library of Congress exhibit poster (Photo by Nareg Bostanian)

**N**o one is ever going to confuse the Madenataran with the local neighborhood bookstore. It sits on a hill in downtown Yerevan, a massive, 122-thousand-square-foot block of marble and basalt, its entrance shielded by statues of Armenian mathematicians, historians, theologians, and the creator of the Armenian alphabet, Saint Mesrob Mashdots. As many readers of this newspaper know, it's impressive and regal and—unlike a lot of mid-20th-century Soviet architectural behemoths—imposing and welcoming at once.

And yet the Madenataran is filled with nothing but books. It's Armenia's Institute for Ancient Manuscripts, a museum of very—and I mean very—old books. When I was in Armenia in May, it was the second place I visited. (The first was the Armenian Genocide Memorial, where, beside the eternal flame, I laid flowers in remembrance of our ancestors who were killed in the genocide.) I don't read Armenian and I'm certainly no scholar when it comes to illuminated manuscripts, but even now, well into the digital age, I am still drawn to the paper book. Consequently, I spent an afternoon at the Madenataran peering through glass at manuscripts and Bibles and books, some made of parchment and some made of paper, some copied by hand, and some printed by presses. I was dazzled.

This marks the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing. The first tome? The Book of Fridays, a prayer book printed using red and black inks in Venice in 1512. The second book published in Armenian? The Bible. Fittingly, UNESCO has selected Yerevan its World Book Capital for this year. Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., Levon Avdoyan prepared a magnificent exhibition of Armenian manuscripts and books—and record albums—at the Library of Congress to celebrate the Armenian literary tradition. The exhibit, “To Know Wisdom and Tradition,” is a gem. I went there, too. It runs through September 26.

The books in the Madenataran and on display at the Library of Congress are eye candy for a reader. This is true whether you prefer books made of pulp and ink or glue, or you’ve chosen instead an eReader. The reality is that anyone who loves books understands that we have a profound, totemic relationship with paper: to the book as an artifact. In the library in my house in which I write, there are two walls of books. There could easily be four, but the room is a corner that once was a living room, and so there are also two walls of windows. I can swivel in my chair and glance at the dust jacket of most of the books on those shelves and tell you where I was when I first cracked the book’s spine. Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* is the grass beneath a maple tree outside a health and fitness club in Middlebury, Vt., the leaves unfurling in the April sun; inside, my young daughter is in the midst of one of her dance classes. Henry Roth’s *Call it Sleep* is the snack bar at Smith College, where my wife went to school when we were merely boyfriend and girlfriend, and the



Bohjalian and Avdoyan exchange books. (Photo by Nareg Bostanian)

smell of the onions the cooks there placed on the hamburgers. And Franz Werfel’s magisterial epic *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* is the wood-paneled living room of my childhood home in Stamford, Conn., and my dawning awareness that there was more to my Armenian grandparents’ lives as children and young adults than they ever were likely to share. Knowing of my profound love for *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and of books made of paper, the Christmas before last, my wife found me a beautiful first edition of the novel.

The truth is, a book’s dust jacket or spine can instantly catapult us back in time. We don’t merely recall the novel’s plot or a snippet of dialogue: We remember who we were, where we were, and, perhaps, the state of our lives when we first met Atticus Finch or Daisy Buchanan or Gabriel Bagradian. A book is like music in that regard: It can resurrect memories for us.

My new novel, *The Sandcastle Girls*, is set mostly in Turkey and Syria in the midst of the Armenian Genocide in the First World War, but there are a few moments in Yerevan. The novel is a love story, but it is also the story of our diaspora—why of the

10 million Armenians in this world, only 3 million live in Armenia today.

And the physical book itself—the paper and the ink and the cloth—is beautiful. I’m not referring to the text or a single word I wrote. I’m talking about the design. The type. The feel. Doubleday designed and produced a physically alluring book. Raised lettering on the cover and the spine. An elegant juxtaposition of gold and black. Deckle edge pages. A cover image that is wistful and epic and, in my opinion, captures perfectly the sensibility of the novel. This is my 15th book, so I can be pretty jaded when my editor sends me a new one hot off the presses. Been there, done that. Nope. Not this time.

When a copy of *The Sandcastle Girls* first arrived at my house in Vermont, I found myself holding it in my hands and recalling the day I had written the book’s first sentence. And I thought of my recent visit to the Madenataran, and the spectacular care that someone had put into the production of each and every book and manuscript there. No one planned to coincide the publication of *The Sandcastle Girls* with the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing or the UNESCO selection of Yerevan as the 2012 World Book Capital.

But this novel is the most personal and the most important book I’ve written. Its arrival this year is a great, great gift. □



Bohjalian at the Madenataran in Yerevan (Photo by Movses Babayan)

# Talk to Me

BY KRISTI RENDAHL

There are people more qualified than I to write on the momentous occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armenian printing. Nonetheless, I've been given the honor of adding my two *dram* to the conversation. (As you know, they don't even make one *dram* coins, so take it for what it's worth.)



## WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

Let's start by establishing one thing: I talk a lot. And I talk to a lot of people. So, it won't surprise you that when I moved to Armenia three weeks after college graduation in 1997, I was beyond concerned about my ability to communicate.

Until a month or two before I left for Armenia, I had been slated for Albania. The Albanian language uses the Latin alphabet, which makes it more accessible than, say, Armenian. At least for the ignorant lass that I was at the time, and quite possibly still am. As

such, I'd learned useful words like *mirupafshim* (goodbye) in Albanian, which, incidentally, is the only word I can recall from my self-study.

The Peace Corps called one day, though, to say that I would not be going to Albania after all, due to instability in

the country. So much for the chest thumping I'd done in front of my father: "I will go until they tell me I cannot!" Well, they told me I cannot.

I'd lost my verve for advance preparation, having done so in vain once already. Also, I was terrified of the Armenian language. The Armenian-English/English-Armenian dictionary I special-ordered through a bookstore in Fargo, N.D. did nothing to ease my mind. The words appeared to be constructed entirely from letters that resembled m, n, and u. How in God's name would I learn this?

My dad advised me to first learn the phrase "I'm much funnier in my own language." Instead, I learned the word for bathroom. I'm still not sure if I made the right choice.

In high school, I'd taken two years of Spanish. In college, I took another semester of Spanish, and a semester of, you guessed it, Norwegian. Neither one spoke to me in a meaningful way at the time. There was no urgency for me to learn either, though I certainly could have created some of my own.

My entrée to Armenian was something altogether different. My host family spoke nary a word of English, save for a lullaby that is useful only in very specific, and obvious, settings. And, I lived in a village. Classes were four hours a day and four days a week, and that was a good start. The real work came when I got back home, where my host family had infinite patience to talk with and at me.

If it weren't for my young host brothers, I'd still be differentiating consonants in the Armenian alphabet. If it weren't for a Peace Corps colleague, I'd still be learning the alphabet. This is the colleague who taught me the beauty of mnemonic devices. Thanks to him, I saw the letter "m" (մ) as a "mud" shovel and the letter "n" (ն) as capable of holding a "nut" to the left.

This wasn't high level linguistics; this was survival.

## REWIND 15 YEARS

**F**ive hundred years is a lot to celebrate. I'm just celebrating what 15 years of progress can provide.

When I arrived, e-mail was still in its infancy stage. I had an e-mail address in college, and my second was with the American University of Armenia. At that time, there were no cell phones, let alone Skype, which even my taxi driver from today uses on a regular basis.

In fact, when I lived in the Lori province in the north of the country, I walked down the mountain village road about a mile to make \$1 per minute calls to the U.S. from a call center, where everyone listened (or tried to listen) to every word spoken. More often than not, once I'd reach the building, I'd be told, "*Gits chka*" (There are no lines).

Today, I don't need to tell you—you who are quite likely to be reading this online—that the world is a different place. I send PDF documents in Armenian to my Kindle, which holds hundreds upon hundreds of books without changing in weight. I learned recently that a new Armenian font was created for official documents. I read Facebook status messages and comments in Armenian to keep up with people's views on the latest topics of conversation. And, when in a pinch, I use Google translate to decipher a complicated sentence.

Mashdots would not believe his eyes.

## MODERN-DAY WORD ADVICE

**P**eople ask me how I learned Armenian, and occasionally they ask for advice. My stock advice is: 1) make a decision to learn it, 2) get a tutor, and 3) forget about shame. These three things, if sincerely attempted, will get you where you want to go. In the meantime, tuck these bits of unsolicited advice in your back pocket.

*Amot* and *absos*—the words for "shame" and "it's a pity"—will take you a long ways in this country. As with most things, timing is important, but usage is more important. Both, as it happens, can be used in serious

Five hundred years  
is a lot to celebrate.  
I'm just celebrating what  
15 years of progress  
can provide.



present-day boundaries of Armenia. It's as if to say, "C'mon, man!" or "Alright already!" If someone is piling food on your plate, you might try this. If they are talking your ear off and you want them to stop, shout it out and walk away. If someone budes in front of you in line, mutter it with intention.

The word *esa* is tricky to translate. When you're waiting for something to happen or someone to arrive, you will often hear "*Esa klini*" or "*Esa kga*." The implication is that "it will happen soon" or "s/he will come soon," but the reality is that it is not time-bound in any way. If someone says this to you, treat it with a healthy dose of suspicion before you find yourself waiting for a bus under the direct sun for two hours. Sure, it might come soon, but you also might be better off catching a cab.

It's useful to have a line of poetry on the tip of your tongue. One such useful line comes from the great Armenian poet Paruyr Sevak: "*Menk kich enk, bayts mez hay en asum*" (We are few, but we are Armenians). Not sure what to say in a toast? Unsure of the direction the conversation is taking? Try this line. You won't be sorry.

## LANGUAGE IN ITS ENTIRETY

**I**began by stating the fact that there are others who can speak to the noble aspects of the printing that has given us the Bible, the works of Sevak and Naregatsi, and the books that provide witness to the Armenian Genocide.

What is within my scope of knowledge and ability, though, is something more modest. My abilities lie in words, written and spoken, that help a person understand and enjoy exactly where they are. And, if you should find yourself here, Armenia is a wonderful place to be.

*Lav eli, yegek!* □

situations, or as jokes. I'll leave it to you to find the appropriate tone for each.

*Lav eli* is a phrase unique to Armenians who live in the



# “Wings on their Feet and on their Heads”

## Reflections on Port Armenians and Five Centuries of Global Armenian Print Culture



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From its origins in Venice in 1512, the history of early modern (1500–1800) Armenian print culture was closely entangled with that of port cities, initially in Europe and subsequently in Asia. In fact, virtually every Armenian printing press before 1800 was established either in or close to port cities, and the few

that were not owed their existence to on-going relations with port locations. Yet, despite the obvious relationship between ports and printers, their synergetic relationship has thus far largely eluded scholarly attention. As Armenians across the world celebrate the quincentenary of Hakob Meghapat’s printing of the first Armenian book in Venice, it will be useful for us to pause and reflect on the intimate relationship between port cities and printers in the rich history of Armenian print culture and the history of the early modern Armenian book referred to in Armenian scholarship as *hnatib girk’ē*. In the process, it will also be important to meditate on the connecting link or hinge between ports and printers, namely what I will call, following the tradition of scholars of Sephardic Jewish history, the figure of the “port Armenian.”

### An Aquacentric View of Early Modern Armenian History<sup>1</sup>

Armenian historiography and especially Armenian “historical memory” seem to be fixated on the figure of the Armenian as rooted in his or her ancestral homeland. Land, for good or for ill, has been taken as the ideal and often only matrix for Armenian history. While there are good reasons for this unexamined assumption

in Armenian historical writing (Armenia’s mostly landlocked geographical terrain and the historical bond between statehood and territorial sovereignty not being the least of which) this “terracentric” view of Armenian history does not correspond to some basic realities of the Armenian past, especially during the crucial years between 1500 and 1800 C.E., that I have come to label as the “early modern” period in Armenian history.<sup>2</sup> During this period, arguably the most momentous changes in Armenian history, including but not limited to Armenians’ early openness to and adoption of print technology, did not take place on the rugged terrain of the Armenian plateau, where perpetual wars between the two gunpowder empires of the Ottomans and Safavids had destroyed much of the region’s populations and local economies. Rather they unfolded across the slippery



surface of the world's major bodies of water and through the port cities dotting their shorelines. More particularly, the pulsating center of Armenian history during the early modern period and beyond seems to have shifted almost entirely to the port cities of the Indian Ocean rim and, to a lesser degree, the Mediterranean basin. Consider for instance the location of the first Armenian printing press in Venice in 1512 followed by a string of presses operating from the Most Serene republic (*La Serenissima*) for several centuries and the establishment of the Mkhitarist Congregation of erudite Catholic Armenian monks, a little over two centuries after Hakob Meghapart's press, in San Lazzaro in the Venetian lagoon. It would be almost impossible for us today to imagine what is often called the "Armenian renaissance" without the erudite monks who followed in the footsteps of the Congregation's founder, Abbot Mkhitar, not to mention the printing press that enabled these monks to preserve, classify, and in fact give form to the canon of Armenian literature. The same can be said of the Indian Ocean basin and its archipelago of port cities such as Surat, Madras, and Calcutta, to name a few, where the bulk of and certainly the wealthiest among port Armenians lived. What would the history of Armenian journalism be without *Azdarar*, published for two consecutive years by Harout'iwn Shmavonian in Madras from the 1794 to 1796? What of Armenian political thought and modern constitutional thinking without Shahamir Shahamirian's *Girk' anuaneal vorogayt par'ats* [Book called Snare of Glory], the first republican constitution of a future state of Armenia that saw the light of day not in Armenia but Madras around 1787? The same may be said of the first printed Armenian play in the world ("The Physiognomist of Duplicity," Calcutta, 1823) and arguably the first novel in vernacular Armenian (Mesrob Taghhiatians's *Vep Varsenkan*, 1847). All of these achievements shared three things in common. First, their existence was made possible by the modern technology of the printing press and its mechanical (re)production of books through movable metal type. True, we should withstand the temptation to exaggerate the "revolutionary" nature of the shift from manuscript to print and the latter's impact on Armenian societies across the world as has sometimes been done by those who see print technology as causing a "communications revolution." However, the recent push back to represent the appearance of the printed codex as a "blip" or "hiccup"<sup>3</sup> of continuity in the *longue durée* of the history of the book should also be avoided.<sup>4</sup> Second, they all occurred either in or near port cities or were facilitated by maritime connections to such cities. The third commonality among these accomplishments is that their very existence was predicated on the support, both intellectual and financial, of "port Armenians."<sup>5</sup> Who or what were these port Armenians and how did they differ from the run-of-the-mill Armenians who did not live in or near port cities? Are there any attributes that distinguished them, and if so what are they?

First, unlike their agrarian counterparts, who for the most part lived far away from the great shorelines of the world and eked out a living by tilling the land as peasants or as small-time local merchants and artisans, port Armenians were predominantly if not almost exclusively long-distance merchants whose livelihood and

identity were largely shaped by their relationship to the sea. They made a living as long-distance merchants involved in the global trade of silk, spices, South Asian textiles, and precious stones. Constantly in motion across bodies of water to conduct what world historians call "cross-cultural trade," port Armenians, as their name implies, resided for the most part in great port cities of their age such as Amsterdam, Venice, Marseille, Saint Petersburg, Astrakhan, Madras, and Calcutta—all locations for Armenian printing presses.

From *Khwaja Nahapet Gulnazar Aguletsi, Parzabanu'iwn hogenuag Saghmosatsn Davr'i Margarein (Venice, 1687)*, 2–3.



Second, as long-distance merchants betrothed to the sea and its many ports, port Armenians, like their Sephardic counterparts in Jewish history, embodied many of the traits associated with Mercurius, the Roman god of merchants, often portrayed with "wings on his feet and head."<sup>6</sup> Mercurius's winged sandals and winged hat have come to symbolize the principal attributes of the "port Jew" according to historians Lois Dubin and David Sorkin who coined the concept of "port Jew" a little over a decade ago to distinguish mostly Sephardic Jews engaged in long-distance maritime trade from their counterparts working in European courts, often known as "court Jews." The symbolism of Mercurius's winged nature was not lost on Dubin and Sorkin, both of whom identified it with movement and flight, attributes they found present in the figure of the port Jew. The latter, because of his





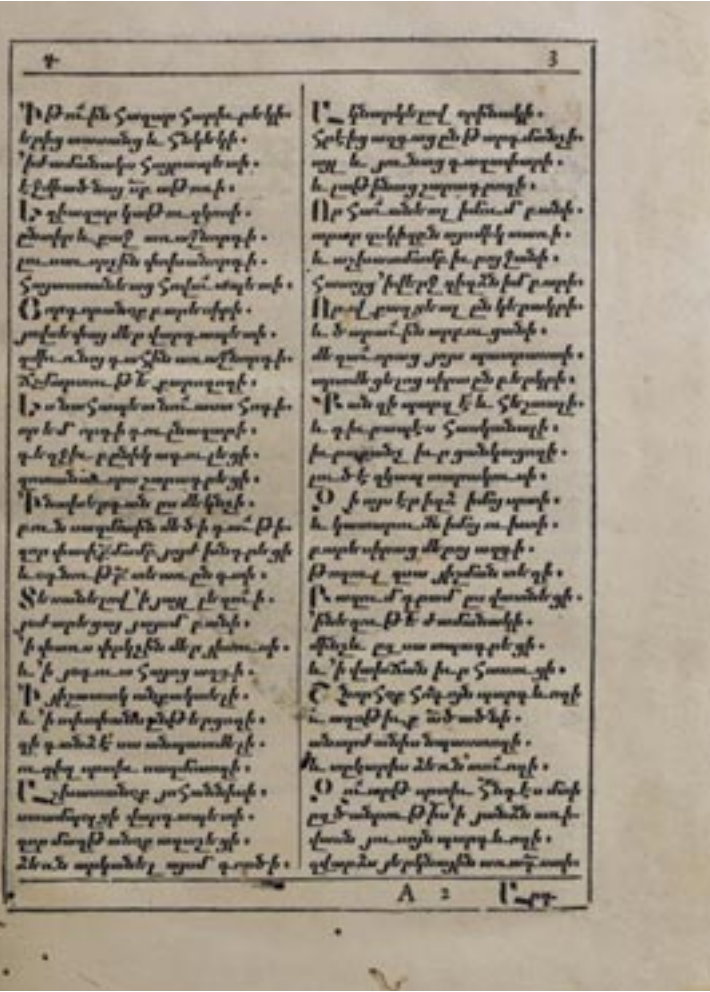
association with port cities and long-distance commerce, was a quintessential “border-crosser” who moved swiftly through and across diverse cultural zones and was no less swift, adventurous, and cosmopolitan in the flights of his imagination and thoughts. The relationship with commerce on the seas for the port Jew and, as we shall see, for the port Armenian is therefore an integral part of his identity as a “social type.” Generally speaking, individuals whose location and vocation are in ports are more likely to be open to the world around

Third, with the exception of a small minority from the mercantile town of Agulis in the Caucasus,<sup>7</sup> the overwhelming majority of these port Armenians traced their ancestry to the township of New Julfa, the prosperous suburb of the Iranian Safavid imperial capital of Isfahan where their forebears were relocated by Shah ‘Abbas I in 1604–1605 in the course of the Ottoman-Safavid wars.<sup>8</sup> Their original homeland, the town of Old Julfa in what is today the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhijevan, was probably the last place in the world to be associated with oceans and seas. Its land-locked position and inhospitable environment were traits that had caught the attention of more than one European traveler who passed through the town before its destruction in the early years of the seventeenth century. The French traveler and writer Jean Chardin, for instance, remarked “that it is not possible to find another town situated in a place that is more dry and more rocky.”<sup>9</sup> It was Shah ‘Abbas I’s razing of the town to the ground and the brutal relocation of its mercantile denizens to his newly-built capital of Isfahan that altered the future trajectory of Armenian history. The Shah’s granting of a royal protection and quasi monopoly of the Crown’s silk trade to the Julfians (1619) and subsequent unlocking of the gates of the Indian Ocean in 1622, when the fort of Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf fell from Portuguese to Iranian control, prized open the wide watery world of the Indian Ocean to merchants from New Julfa and helped transform the Julfians into port Armenians. Like some of their counterparts who had settled or were in the process of settling in the port cities of the Mediterranean world (Venice, Livorno, Marseille, Smyrna/Izmir, and Constantinople/Istanbul as well as on the Atlantic seaboard in Amsterdam), they did not take long to establish mercantile communities in most of the ocean’s important port cities. Most settled in port cities under the rule of the English East India Company such as Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay, followed by Singapore and Dutch-controlled Batavia in the nineteenth century; others resided in French and Portuguese outposts, such as Pondicherry in Southern India and Macao/Canton in China whence they plied a lucrative trade with Manila exchanging Indian textiles and spices as well as Chinese porcelain and silk for New World silver that arrived each year from Acapulco on Spanish convoys known as the Manila Galleon. But what could these port Armenians have to do with the history of the Armenian book and the printing press, which after all was almost entirely confined to its European cradle from 1512 to the late 1600s when it began to gravitate slowly to the East? This brings us to the fourth and final attribute of port Armenians, their active patronage of the arts and culture in general and of the new craft of printing in particular.

**The PPP Link: Port Armenians, Ports, and Printers**

The bonds that connected ports and port Armenians to printers across the oceans and occasionally over land were complex. First and foremost, the location of the printing establishment was crucial. Most Armenian printers in the early modern period, with a few exceptions, were members of the literati belonging to the clerical hierarchy of the Armenian Church. They usually set up their presses in the port cities in Europe that already had a substantial

them, probably more likely to experiment with the cultural practices they encounter among the peoples with whom they come into contact, and thus are likely to have cultural identities that are hybrid and enriched through sustained contact and intermingling with others from across the oceans. Also, largely as a function of their location in port cities, themselves some of the greatest hubs of information in the globally connected world that came to take shape during the early modern period, port Armenians were exposed to a greater volume and more diverse varieties of information than their land-locked counterparts. This meant that new technologies such as the printing press or inventions associated with it, such as novel papermaking techniques and so on, would be more easily accessible to port Armenians than their landlubbing counterparts.





presence of port Armenians with ties to New Julfa. The port city location was preferred for several reasons. For reasons alluded to above port cities were the most dynamic nodes of the world economy during the early modern period and therefore leading loci of technological innovation. As far as printers were concerned, port cities offered access to paper manufacturers, font casters, engravers, as well as compositors and press operators. In addition, the fact that they usually contained a substantial presence of port Armenians willing to patronize and shore up new printing presses meant that Armenian port settlements already came equipped with a diasporic community infrastructure including churches and other community institutions. Most important perhaps, port cities afforded printers with relatively cheap and efficient access to transportation. In an age when transportation by water was almost always cheaper, safer, and faster than its overland counterpart, location in a port city meant that a printer could load his newly printed commodity (books) and have it shipped to the nearest markets of consumption. In the eighteenth century, the major reading market for Armenian books was Constantinople/Istanbul, home to the largest urban population of Armenians. The city's close to 80,000 Armenians by the second half of the eighteenth century was the prized destination for printed Armenian books that were shipped there either directly to its bustling port with its minaret-studded skyline or by caravan routes once the books were unloaded in the port of Smyrna/Istanbul in the south.<sup>10</sup> A few examples of Armenian port city presses will suffice to clarify what has been said thus far.

Amsterdam, where an Armenian press was installed in 1660, and where Armenian printers were active until the second decade of the eighteenth century, was an important Armenian port city with a significant presence of Julfan merchants and two successive churches: *Surb Karapet* in 1663/64 followed by *Surb Hogi* in 1713.<sup>11</sup> In the second half of the seventeenth century, the city had clearly taken the lead as the most dynamic printing center in the world with over forty printing houses publishing in multiple languages, including Armenian and Hebrew. Partly as a result of this reputation, it attracted Armenian printers beginning with the most famous of them, Oskan Yerevantsi (originally from New Julfa) who, with the active financial support of several Julfan merchants in Livorno, printed the first Armenian bible in Amsterdam in 1666.<sup>12</sup> After Yerevantsi moved to Livorno and Marseille with his press, his place was eventually filled by members of the illustrious family of *savants* and printers, the Vanandets'is from the region of Ghoghthn in Nakhijevan, who actively published first-rate books from their settlement in the Dutch capital from 1694 to 1717, when their press was shut down due to financial troubles.<sup>13</sup> As Rene Bekius has pointed out in an insightful essay, another reason for Amsterdam's lure was its reputation for being a haven for persecuted minorities such as Sephardic Jews expelled from Iberian Peninsula and Huguenots from France as well as Armenian printers keen to avoid the tentacular reach of the censors of the *Propaganda Fide*, an organization founded by the Catholic Church in 1622 to spread Christianity in new areas and to combat the effects of the reformation and presence of what it regarded as "heresy."<sup>14</sup> In addition to having lax censorship laws and being relatively free of censors

and spies from Rome, Amsterdam with its famous stock exchange also boasted an information and transportation network second to none, as well as paper mills producing cheaper and better quality paper due to a new innovation in production techniques.<sup>15</sup> The same was true of Marseille (1670s), Livorno (1640s), Venice (1512–1513, 1564–5, 1586, 1660s to the present), Constantinople (1567, 1660s and from 1701 to the present), Saint Petersburg (1781–), Astrakhan (1796–), and especially Madras (1772) and Calcutta (1796). All these locations were port cities with impressive communities of port Armenians. They were also connected to each other and to New Julfa through networks of circulation through which capital, commodities, printers, and merchants as well as printed books, ideas, and new technologies circulated. The establishment of a press in New Julfa as early as 1638 was in many ways an exception to the port city-printers pattern discussed above.<sup>16</sup> However, this press could have hardly existed without the financial and technical support offered to it by the township's famous merchants residing abroad in one of their many port city settlements from Venice to Madras. For instance, when in 1686 the township's clerical hierarchy decided to reopen the press that had been shut down following an uprising in the 1640s of the suburb's scribes, if the French Huguenot traveler, Jean Baptist Tavernier's account is to be trusted, the primate of the time wrote a letter (stored at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze) to the most notable Julfan merchants residing in Venice asking them for assistance with the purchase of technical equipment (including new fonts and types).<sup>17</sup>

In addition to providing Armenian printers with an institutional or community infrastructure, port Armenians provided the capital investments necessary to shore up the printing activities of the clerical elite. They did this in several ways. They were directly involved in partnerships with printer-priests as a form of what has come to be known as "print Capitalism."<sup>18</sup> An example of this is the partnership contract that a Julfan merchant named Paolo Alexan (Poghos ordi Aleksani?) had entered with two Armenian priests (Oannes de Ougorlou and Matheus di Hovhannes) who ran an important press in Amsterdam from 1685 to the mid-1690s. After printing 8,300 copies of Armenians books, many of them destined for Smyrna to be sold there and, one would assume, in Constantinople, the partners had had a falling out and took their dispute to a notary public.<sup>19</sup> However, business partnerships between port Armenians and printers based exclusively on the profit motive were the exception in the history of the Armenian book, unlike its European counterpart where printing was from its origins a model of a capitalist enterprise.<sup>20</sup> The small size of the Armenian reading market, itself a function of low population numbers and even lower literacy rates, was probably the main reason why the profession of the printer was not a profitable one. Merchants were thus quick to realize that printing for capitalist motives was not a paying proposition and began supporting printing presses not necessarily with the intention of engaging in a capitalist enterprise but rather as a form of cultural patronage for both Church and "nation." They could have done this for reasons that we would today call "prestige power" or the vanity of having the names of their family members immortalized in the colophons of



the books published through their benevolence. The case of Simeon Yerevantsi's press in Ejmiatsin—the first printing press in the homeland—as far away from a port city as one could imagine—is an example of the latter. Established in 1772, this press was entirely paid for by a port Armenian residing in Madras known as Grigor Agha Chekigents (alias Mikael Khojajanian), who donated 18,000 rupees to the Catholicosate to help buy the appropriate material for casting of types and even for the establishment of a paper mill in 1775 on the grounds of the Catholicosate.<sup>21</sup> Thus when technical specialists could not be procured *in situ*, a port Armenian in Madras made sure not only to raise the required capital but also to rely on his local connections in India and dispatch to the Catholicos French technical specialists from the port settlement of Pondicherry to help the monks in their enterprise of printing. Sometimes both activities (cultural patronage and entrepreneurial investment) were combined, as was the case with Oskan Yerevantsi's press in Amsterdam, which was bought with the capital investment of Oskan's brother, Avetis Ghlijents, a merchant from New Julfa. This press was later donated by Oskan to Ejmiatsin under whose name it functioned during its various peregrinations from Amsterdam to Marseille and thence to Constantinople. Merchants also stepped in to support Armenian printers through directly commissioning important works for publication.

The publication of several trade and language manuals useful to merchants, such as the celebrated *Gants ch'ap'oy kshroy twoy ew dramits' bolor ashkhari* [A treasury of measures, numbers, and moneys of the entire world (Amsterdam, 1699) and the first Armenian book in the vernacular, *Arhest Hamaroghut'ean, amboghj ev katareal* [The art of arithmetic, complete and perfect] (Marseille, 1675), are examples of such mercantile patronage of Armenian books. The same can be said for works of translation from foreign languages, such as Charles Rollin's *Histoire Romaine* [Patmut'iwn hrovmeakan] and William Robertson's multi-volume *History of America* [Vipasanut'iwn Amerikoy], both commissioned by Julfan merchants from Madras and printed or published by Mkhitarists in Venice and Trieste,<sup>22</sup> respectively. In a few cases, merchants carried out the translations themselves and paid for the publication of their own works such as Marcara Shahrmanian's translation of Petis de la Croix's *Histoire du Grand Genghizcan*, [Patmut'iwn Metsin Gengizkhani arajin kayser nakhni mghulats ev tatarats, bazhaneal i chors girs] (Trieste, 1788).



**Portrait of Marcara Shahrmanian, from *Patmut'iwn Metsin Gengizkhani arajin kayser nakhni mghulats ev tatarats, bazhaneal i chors girs* (Trieste, 1788).**

In addition to patronizing the printing activities of priests, did port Armenians also own and operate their own printing presses? As mentioned above, the miniscule size of the Armenian reading public and the low levels of literacy made print capitalism unfeasible for port Armenians and the few cases of merchant printers were few and far in between.<sup>23</sup> In the seventeenth century, Armenian merchants operated at least two Armenian presses in Venice: Gaspar

Shahrmanian's press of 1687 and the press of Khwaja Nahapet Gulnazar Agulets'i, which published the *Psalms of David*, the second of only three printed Armenian books in the vernacular during the seventeenth century.<sup>24</sup> In the eighteenth century, it became more common perhaps to

find port Armenians who were also owners of their own printing presses. The most celebrated case of this was the merchant prince Shahamir Shahamirian, who established in Madras in 1772 the first Armenian printing press in India and printed a number of trailblazing books including in 1787–89 *Girk' anuaneal vorogayt' Parats* (Book called Snare of Glory), the republican proto-constitution for a future republic of Armenia.<sup>25</sup> Later this same press appears to have been used to print the first Armenian newspaper in the world, *Azdarar* (1794–1796). The press of Grigor Khojamal Khaldarian, a Julfan from India who had traveled to and resided in London in the 1770s<sup>26</sup> and later opened Russia's first Armenian printing press in the port city of Saint Petersburg in 1781 is another case in point. It is interesting to note that the first published work by an Armenian woman, Kleopatra Sarafian's *Banali Gitut'ean* (Key of knowledge) saw the light of day on Khaldarian's press in 1788.<sup>27</sup>

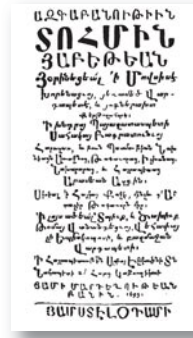
As Armenians across the world celebrate an important milestone in Armenian history, we need to remember that many important aspects of the history of the Armenian book remain to be properly scrutinized and studied. What I have sketched above in an impressionistic way is only the maritime and mercantile underpinnings of Armenian print culture. Other scholars before me have touched upon this in more or less fruitful ways but never systematically. There are entire areas of the history of the Armenian book that remain not only untouched but whose very existence has not even been properly acknowledged and therefore examined. Important questions such as how does the study of the printed book in its multifaceted dimension—from its production site in port cities or elsewhere to its destination into the hands of readers—contribute to our understanding of the *mentalité* of any given society? In other words, how do books begin to transform the mental universe of ordinary readers once they are released into a network of circulation? Who were the principal readers among the early modern Armenians, what was the literacy rate, and how does one even begin to measure it? In addition, the “history of reading” or who read what, *how*, and where is a topic that has occupied center stage in the discipline of the history of the book in Europe and North America but remains

*terra incognita* in the scholarship on the Armenian book.<sup>28</sup> As the worldwide celebrations of the quincentenary continue and exhibits and conferences are convened, one hopes that scholars of the Armenian past will pause, take critical stock of what their predecessors accomplished, and while grateful for standing tall on their shoulders will forge ahead to pose new and imaginative questions of their own. As every good historian knows, the ability to pose the right kinds of questions to the evidence one has at one's disposal is among the most important skills that members of the historian's tribe cherish. One can only wish that in the wake of the quincentenary celebrations new and theoretically vigorous studies will bloom in the study of the printed Armenian book. If we are fortunate, this crop will be conceptually informed by the most recent Euroamerican scholarship in the tradition of the post-Annales *L'histoire du Livre* while simultaneously being archivally grounded in notarial and other documents. A hundred years ago at the last centenary as Armenians in Istanbul, Tiflis, and other locations prepared to celebrate the accomplishments of Hakob Meghapart in the port city of Venice, they inspired a new generation of scholars of the book, including Teotik, and the formidable Leo (Arakel Babakhanian)<sup>29</sup> to blaze new paths of scholarship that superseded the work of Garegin Zharbanalian<sup>30</sup> and others in the generation before them. May the same happen with this centenary. □

## ENDNOTES

1. My thoughts in this section of the paper were first inspired by my reading of Jerry Bentley's "Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 2, Oceans Connect (Apr., 1999), pp. 215–224; and Kären Wigen, "AHR Forum: Oceans of History, Introduction," *American Historical Review*, (June 2006): 717–721.
2. See Sebouh D. Aslanian, "Silver, Missionaries, and Print: A Global Microhistory of Early modern Armenian Networks of Circulation and the Armenian Translation of Charles Rollin's *Histoire Romaine*," unpublished paper, 2009; idem., "Port Cities and Printers: Reflections on Five Centuries of Armenian Print Culture and Book History," (unpublished paper).
3. Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 316. I have elaborated at length on the issue of continuity versus rupture in my "Port Cities and Printers: Reflections on Five Centuries of Armenian Print Culture and Book History."
4. Thus Robert Gross writes: "The current consensus, neatly summarized by the French historian Roger Chartier, is that the change from the manuscript to the printed book was *no big deal*. In its physical design, the newcomer kept the old ways. It employed devices developed in monastic scriptoria to order the text: signatures, page numbers, columns and lines, ornaments, alphabetical tables, systematic indexes. It inherited a hierarchy of sizes, from the learned folio to the humanist quarto down to the bedside libellus. And it called upon methods of silent reading of long standing in medieval universities and popularized among aristocratic laymen in the fifteenth century. The printing press thus depended on, rather than altered, the fundamental form of the book." (Emphasis added) Robert A. Gross, "Communications Revolutions: Writing a History of the Book for an Electronic Age," *Rare Books and Manuscript Librarianship*, 13 (1998) 15.
5. My thoughts on Port Armenians have been influenced by the work of Lois Dubin and David Sorkin in Jewish Studies. See David Sorkin, "The Port Jew: Notes Toward a Social Type," *Journal of Jewish Studies* (Cambridge, England) 50 (Spring 1999): 87–97 and Lois Dubin, "Wings on their feet" and "wings on their head": Reflections on the Study of Port Jews," in David Cesarani/ Gemma Romaine, eds., *Jews and Port Cities, 1590–1990: Commerce, Community, and Cosmopolitanism* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006), 14–30.
6. See Dubin, "Wings on their Feet," 14–16.
7. Armenian merchants from Agulis were particularly active alongside Julfans in Mediterranean port cities such as Venice, Livorno, and Marseille.
8. For information on Julfa and its merchants, see Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa, Isfahan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

9. Jean Chardin, *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse, et autres lieux de l'Orient*. Ed. L. Jangles. 10 vols. Paris: Le Normant, Imprimeur-Libraire, 1811, 2: 304.
10. For a smart discussion, see the following works by Raymond H. Kévorkian, *Catalogue des 'incunables' arméniens (1511–1965) ou chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne*. (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1986); idem., "Livres imprimé et culture écrite dans l'Arménie des XVI et XVII siècles," *Revue des études arméniennes* (1982), idem., *Les imprimés arméniens des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1987); idem., *Les imprimés arméniens 1701–1850* (Paris, 1989).
11. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, 79–80.
12. For the involvement of three Julfan merchants in the printing Yerevants'is Bible, see Karapet Amatuni, *Oskan Vrd. Erevants'i ev ir Zhamanak : lusavor ej m Zh daru yekeghets'akan Patmut'enèn* [Oskan Vardapet Yerevantsi and his Time: A Luminous Page from the History of 17<sup>th</sup> century Ecclesiastical History], (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1975), 150–152, and Alessandro Orenco, "Ov Dateos dow Elkeli: Le Disavventure di un Mercante Armeno Nella Livorno del XVII Secolo," [Ov Dateos dow Elkeli: The Misadventures of an Armenian Merchant in XVII century Livorno] *Gli Armeni Lungo Le Strade d'Italia*, (Livorno, 1998), 55–68.
13. Sarukhan, Arakel, *Hollandan ew Hayer* [Holland and the Armenians] (Vienna: Mkhitarist Press, 1925); Mesrop Gregorian, *Nor Niwt'er ew Ditoghut'iwnner Hratarakich Vanantets'woh Masin* [New Materials and Observations on the Vanantetsi Family of Publishers] (Vienna: Mkhitarist Press, 1966); and Sahak Chemchemian, *Hay Tpagrut'iwn ew Hrom (ZhE. dar)* [Armenian Printing and Rome in the Seventeenth Century], (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1989)
14. René Bekius, "Polyglot Amsterdam printing presses: a comparison between Armenian and Jewish printers," (unpublished paper).
15. See Bekius and also the excellent overview in Meliné Pehlivanian, "Mesrop's Heirs: The Early Armenian Book Printers," *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution: A Cross-cultural Encounter*, eds. E.Hanebutt-Benz, D. Glass, G. Roper. Westhofen, WVA-Verlag Skulima, 2002, pp. 53–92.
16. The press in Lvov established in 1616 was also an exception to the port city pattern but it too was paid for by the town's Armenian merchants some of whom had maritime connections in the Black and Mediterranean Seas.
17. The document is a letter written by Primate Stepanos Jughayetsi in New Julfa and addressed to the "pious and Christ-loving Julfan Merchants residing in the city of Venice," dated September 27, 1686, New Julfa, Isfahan. See Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Acquisti e doni busta*123, nn. 77–7. I thank my friend Meroujan Karapetyan for placing this document at my disposal.
18. For this well-known concept, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd and revised edition (London: Verso, 1991).
19. See Sarukhan, *Hollandan ew Hayerē*, 102–103 for the translation of a notarial document where the dispute between the involved parties is discussed, and Gregorian, *Nor Niwt'er ew Ditoghut'iwnner*, 48–50 for a brief discussion.
20. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, and Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, English translation (London: Verso, 1976). This classic was originally published in French as *L'Apparition du Livre* (Paris, 1958).
21. For the Catholicosate's first printing press, see Sebouh Aslanian, *Dispersion History and the Polycentric Nation: The Role of Simeon Yerevantsi's Girk' or Kochi Partavjar in the Eighteenth Century Armenian National Revival*, (Venice: Bibliothèque d'arménologie "Bazmavep," 39, 2004), 30–31.
22. The Trieste branch of the Mkhitarists was established in 1773 by Minas Gasparian and Astuatsatur Babikian (scion of a wealthy family from New Julfa) who were exiled from the mother convent in San Lazzaro following a violent quarrel with the then reigning Abbot, Stepanos Melklonian. The Trieste branch was relocated to Vienna, where it continues to exist, in 1811. See Aslanian "Silver, Missionaries, and Print" for a detailed account of their separation from San Lazzaro.
23. I thank Meroujan Karapetyan for discussions on this matter.
24. See Pehlivanian, "Mesrop's Heirs," 62 and Jean-Pierre Mahé, "The Spirit of Early Armenian Printing: Development, Evolution, and Cultural Integration," *Catalogue des 'incunables' arméniens (1511/1695), ou, Chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne*, Raymond Kévorkian. (Genève: P. Cramer, 1986), xvi.
25. See Aslanian, *Dispersion History* and "Silver, Missionaries, and Print" for fuller discussion of these works.
26. For Khaldarian's stay in London, see Willem G. Kuiters, *The British in Bengal, 1756–1773: A Society in Transition Seen through the Biography of a Rebel, William Bolts (1739–1808)*. (Paris: Indes savants, 2002)
27. Pehlivanian, "Mesrop's Heirs," 75.
28. For an exploratory foray into this terrain, see Aslanian, "A Reader Responds to Joseph Emin's *Life and Adventures*: Notes Towards a 'History of Reading' in Late Eighteenth Century Madras." *Handes Amsoroya*, (Vienna, Yerevan: 2012) 9–65.
29. Teotik, *Tip u Tar* (Type and Font) (Istanbul, 1913); Leo [Arakel Babakhanian], *Hay kakan tpagrut'yun* [Armenian Printing] 2 vols. (Tiflis, 1901)
30. *Patmut'iwn Hay Tpagrut'ean* [History of Armenian Printing] (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1895).



# Armenian Medieval Historians in Print

## Three Centuries of Scholarship across Three Continents<sup>1</sup>

BY DR. ARA SANJIAN, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN



**H**akob Meghapat's pioneering effort exactly five centuries ago this year has made it inconceivable ever since to analyze and evaluate the worldwide dissemination of Armenian culture bypassing the medium of printing—both books and periodicals. For a people with a long diasporic tradition and, until 1918, without a state of their own, printing technology made it easier for Armenian authors and their readers to establish and maintain their own worldwide network of printing, distribution, reading and exchanging ideas. This study focuses on one particular facet of the history of Armenian printing: the editing and publication of the works of Armenian medieval historians who lived in the 5th–18th centuries. It analyzes the patterns of publication of both their original texts,



Prof. Manuk Abeghian

written overwhelmingly in Classical Armenian (*grabar*), and their more recent translations into both the Eastern and Western branches of the modern Armenian literary language (*ashkharhabar*).<sup>2</sup> It thus provides one important indicator to how the locus of Armenian Studies research activities shifted across a number of cities and institutions situated on three continents over the last 300 years. At the same time, it will be this author's humble tribute to all the prominent scholars whose efforts made medieval Armenian histories accessible to their peers and lay readers interested in the Armenian past.

This article covers the works of those 37 Armenian authors, who were treated in a separate chapter each in Levon

Hovhannes Babayan's trilogy on Armenian historiography, arguably the most comprehensive study in this domain to date.<sup>3</sup> To make it easier both for the reader to follow the chronological structure of this article and for the author to make comparisons and generalizations, a number of ground rules were followed during the



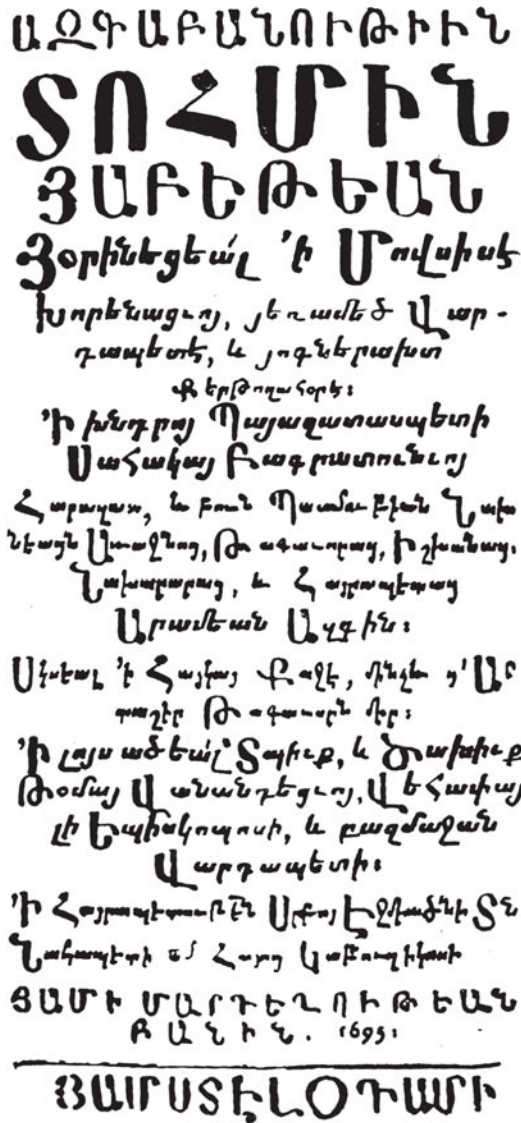
comprehensive Armenian history in modern times, only five medieval Armenian histories were in print. Chamchian mentions twelve other authors included in this survey, whose works he probably consulted in manuscript form. Indeed, he continued to receive new manuscripts as writing was in progress. He also indicates awareness of the existence of other medieval historians, whose works he did not have at his disposal. Among them, Ukhtanes, Sebeos, Ghevond, and Movses Kaghankatvatsi would be discovered and published in course of the next century.

Indeed, by 1915, all but three of the authors surveyed for this article were already in print, and many of them had had multiple—a few, even critical—editions. These new editions came out in over a dozen different cities across the Ottoman and the Russian empires, but also in Western Europe and even the British colony of India. These cities were either centers of Armenian monastic communities, both Apostolic and Roman Catholic (Venice, Vienna, Vagharshapat, and Jerusalem), or towns hosting vibrant Armenian communities (Constantinople, Smyrna, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Feodosiya, Shushi, Tiflis, and Calcutta). Paris, meanwhile, appears on this list solely because of the single-handed efforts

of Father Karapet Shahnazarians (1814–65), who set up a printing press in the French capital in the second half of the 1850’s and published the series *Shar hay patmagrats* (Armenian Historians’ Series), including the *editiones principes* of Ghevond, Stepanos Taronetsi Asoghik, Stepanos Orbelian, Kaghankatvatsi, and Tovma Metzopetsi. The 19th century is also the period when the publication of new editions of medieval histories gradually became associated with their editors, who were otherwise famous as academics or scholars, rather than with the entrepreneurs who owned and ran the printing presses, as had been the case previously.

The first ever Armenian-language book printed in Calcutta was the *editio princeps* of Abraham Kretatsi (1796). Thereafter, the printing press of Jentlum Avetian issued reprints of Hovhannes Mamikonian (1814) and Yeghishe (1816), both based on the 18th-century *editiones principes* published in Constantinople.

The Mkhitarist Congregation, founded in 1700, joined the efforts to print medieval histories relatively late. By the end of



Cover page of the first edition of Khorenatsi (Amsterdam, 1695)—source: *Hay girke 1512-1800 tvakannerin*, p. 116

the 18th century, it was still in the process of acquiring manuscripts to build up the rich library of over 4,000 Armenian manuscripts it now has on the isle of San Lazzaro. Indeed, the compilation of Chamchian’s History provided an important catalyst to that process. The History of Ghazar Parpetsi, which had been discovered in a monastery in Taron in 1782 and immediately sent to Venice, was eventually published in 1793. However, it was only after 1826 that the Mkhitarists began publishing medieval Armenian literature, including histories, in a consistent manner. The works of eleven historians included in this survey eventually came out in two parallel and long-lasting series: *Entir matenagirk* (Outstanding Medieval Authors) and *Matenagrutiunk nakhniats* (Ancient Writings). Among them, Khorenatsi and Yeghishe were printed in both series. However, there were only two *editiones principes*: Koriun and Aristakes Lastivertsi. Instead, the Mkhitarists of Venice played a pivotal role in disseminating on a wider scale works, which had been published earlier, but mostly as poor editions and with limited printruns. Altogether, between 1827 and 1914, they printed Yeghishe nine times; Khorenatsi, six; Pavstos and Koriun, three each; Agatangeghos, Parpetsi, Hovhannes Mamikonian, and Lastivertsi, twice

each; and, finally, Vardan Areveltsi and Kirakos Gandzaketsi, once each. These editions enjoyed the advantage of having been based on comparing larger number of manuscripts than the earlier editions of the same authors.

In 1773, some Mkhitarist monks broke away from the congregation in San Lazzaro and eventually settled in Vienna in 1810. However, the Vienna Mkhitarists—unlike their peers in Venice—published only one medieval Armenian history before 1914: Constantinople-based Vahram Torgomian edited and published Yeremia Chelepi Keomiurchian’s *History of Istanbul* in serialized form in the journal *Handes Amsorya* in 1909-13. Thereafter, the first volume of this work appeared under a separate cover in 1913.

Most Mkhitarist monks were from Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire, and primarily from Constantinople. Nevertheless, various printing presses in Constantinople also continued the legacy of printing medieval Armenian histories in the 19th century, including the *editiones principes* of Sebeos

(1851) and Artzruni (1852). In Smyrna reprints were issued of both Koriun and Yeghishe.

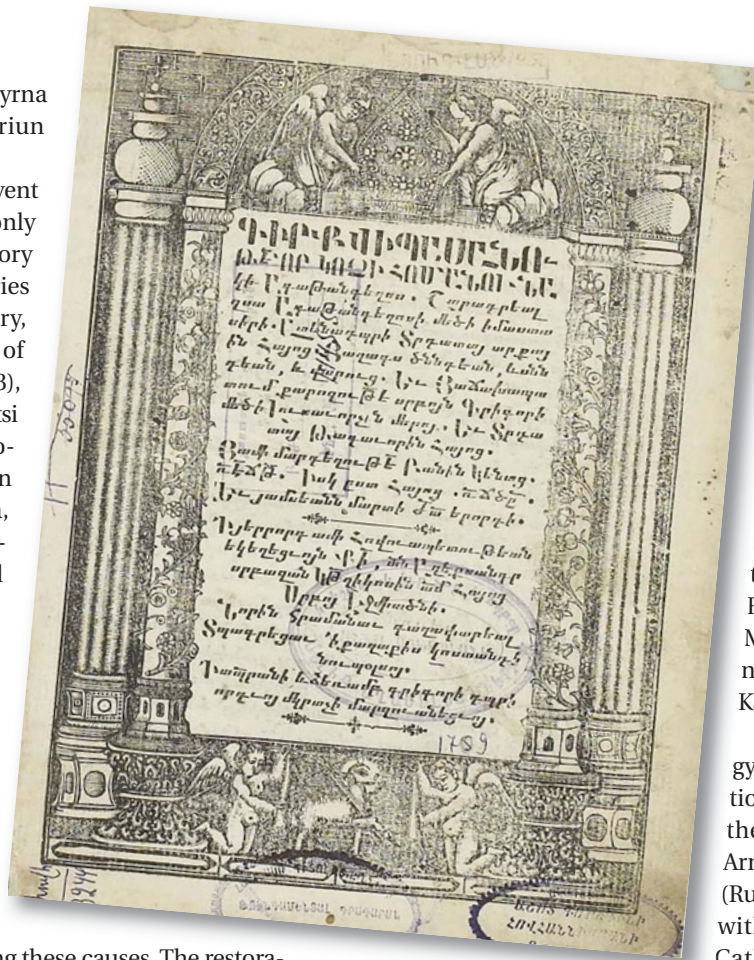
The Sts. James Armenian Convent in Jerusalem was the third and only other location on Ottoman territory where medieval Armenian histories were printed in the 19th century, including the *editiones principes* of Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi (1843), Urhayetsi (1869), and Grigor Aknertsi (1870).<sup>10</sup> Medieval Armenian histories were never printed in Western (Ottoman) Armenia and Cilicia, although limited Armenian-language printing activity occurred there after 1860.

Finally, the uncovering of the full range of reasons that put an end to the printing of medieval Armenian histories in Ottoman lands from the last quarter of the 19th century necessitates an in-depth study in the future. The steady suppression of various forms of Armenian nationalist expression under Sultan Abdülhamid II was probably among these causes. The restoration of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908 did not alter this trend; the only medieval Armenian history published in *grabar* in the Young Turk era was the *editio princeps* of Grigor Daranaghtsi in Jerusalem in 1915.

In the Russian Empire, Armenian printing developed later than under the Ottomans. Nevertheless, medieval Armenian histories were printed in the second half of the 19th and early 20th century not only in the Russian Empire's large cities with vibrant Armenian communities, like Moscow, St Petersburg, Feodosiya (Crimea), and Tiflis, but also in two other important Armenian cultural centers in Eastern Armenia, Vagharshapat (Ejmiatzin) and Shushi.

In Moscow, almost all the scholarly work in this domain is tied to the name of Mkrtych Emin, a professor of Armenian Studies at the Lazarev Institute. He published the *editiones principes* of Kaghankatvatsi (1860),<sup>11</sup> Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi (1860), and Areveltsi (1861), as well as new and better editions of Draskhanakerttsi and Orbelian. The *editiones principes* of Smbat Sparapet (1856) and Gandzaketsi (1858) also appeared in Moscow, but they are not endowed with the scholarly qualities of Emin's works.

The first medieval Armenian history printed in St. Petersburg and in the Russian Empire in general was Yeghishe's second edition (1787). The printing of medieval Armenian histories resumed in the Russian capital exactly eight decades later and, for the next 20 years, it was largely associated with the academic career of Kerovbe Patkanian, Professor of Armenian Studies at the St.



Cover page of the 1709 Constantinople edition of Agatangeghos (digitized by the National Library of Armenia)

Petersburg University. He published the *editiones principes* of Aknertsi (1870) and Mkhitar Anetsi (1879). Moreover, his new editions of Ayrivanetsi (1867), Sebeos (1879), Pavstos (1883), and Artzruni (1887) surpassed in quality earlier editions of these works. Also in the Russian capital, Stepan Malkhasiants published a new edition of Asoghik; and Karapet Yeziants, of Ghevond.

Armenian Apostolic clergymen and monastic institutions played a pivotal role in the publication of medieval Armenian histories in Eastern (Russian) Armenia, beginning with the *editio princeps* of Catholicos Yesayi Hasan-Jalalians in Shushi in 1839. The

Holy See of Ejmiatzin, in Vagharshapat, became prominent in this field beginning in 1870. Its printing press released the *editiones principes* of Zakaria Kanakertsi (1870), Ukhtanes (1871), Ghukas Sebastatsi (1871), Simeon Yerevantsi (1873), Samuel Anetsi (1893), and Khachatur Jughayetsi (1905).

In the last quarter of the 19th century, Tiflis, the administrative capital of Russian Transcaucasia, challenged and eventually surpassed Constantinople as the city where the largest number of Armenian-language books was being printed. Among the histories released in Tiflis were reprints of Yeghishe, Khorenatsi, Agatangeghos, and Pavstos, published mostly for popular consumption. More prominent among these popular reprints were the 16 volumes of the series *Ghukasian matenadaran* (Ghukasian Library), published in 1904–17 with money bequeathed by Avetis Ghukasian, an Armenian oil entrepreneur from Baku. Nevertheless, the most important, at least from an academic viewpoint, was the launching in 1903 of the series *Patmagirk hayots* (Historians of Armenia). It aimed at the preparation of critical editions of the most important medieval histories, based on all earlier printed editions and all the extant manuscripts accessible to the specialists involved in this project. Galust Ter-Mkrtychian and Malkhasians published the critical edition of Parpetsi (1904); Ter-Mkrtychian and Stepan Kanayants, of Agathanegelos (1909); and Manuk Abeghian and Set Harutiunian, of Khorenatsi (1913). The outbreak of the First World War brought this project to a



halt. However, both Malkhasiants and Abeghian continued to study and publish medieval Armenian histories in subsequent decades.

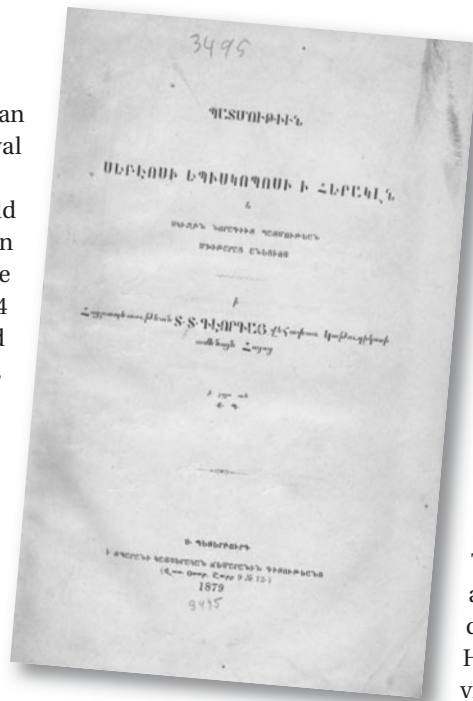
The period between 1914 and 1923 would bring dramatic changes to Armenians living in the Ottoman and Russian empires. Prior to the Sovietization of Armenia in 1920, however, 34 of the medieval Armenian historians surveyed in this article were already in print. Of these, many, especially 5th-century authors, had had numerous editions and reprints. Yeghishe was the most popular; by 1914, his *grabar* text had been printed on 27 occasions. Khorenatsi had had twelve printings; and Agatangeghos, seven. There was less interest in post-10th century historians, who only had between one and three printings each.

The genocide, followed by the Turkish Nationalist takeover of Cilicia and Smyrna, destroyed almost all of the Armenian communities across the former Ottoman world. Survivors would end up constituting the Armenian Diaspora. An important Armenian community persisted in Constantinople (now, Istanbul), but its cultural freedoms, especially overt expressions of Armenian nationalist sentiment, were severely curtailed.

At the same time, a new Communist order replaced Tsarist rule in Eastern Armenia, and an Armenian republic emerged within the new Soviet federal structure. The Soviet nationalities policy accorded this new entity and other constituent republics of the federation wide cultural privileges, and hundreds of Armenian-language titles were thereafter published in Soviet Armenia every year. However, their content was carefully censored to make sure that the guidelines of Communist ideology and Soviet foreign policy were followed. At the same time, other Armenian cultural hubs across former Russian Tsarist territory, especially Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tiflis, gradually became extinguished. Yerevan thus became the undisputed center of Armenian Studies scholarship throughout the Soviet Union and even the world.

Moreover, it was also around this period when *grabar*, having been gradually pushed out of Armenian school curricula, ceased to be a language enjoying a wide readership. With it the tradition of commercial publishers printing affordable *grabar* reprints of Armenian medieval histories faded away. All new *grabar* printings of these histories would now target a small readership of scholars and college students in the humanities and social sciences. In Yerevan, the publishers were usually the Soviet Armenian Academy of Sciences and the Matenadaran, the repository of Armenian manuscripts. The only exceptions were those few editions by the State Publishing House (*Haypethrat*) and Yerevan University Press, where the *grabar* texts were reprinted alongside the *ashkharhabar* translations of these histories.

Aside from the History of Ananun Zrutsagir, which was compiled by Galust Ter-Mkrtchian and Bishop Mesrop Ter-Movsisian



Cover page of the 1879 St Petersburg edition of Sebeos

and published by the Scientific Institute of Ejmiatzin in June 1921, just a few months after the Communist takeover of Armenia, Soviet Armenian scholars did not devote themselves to publishing new editions of medieval histories until the appearance of the *editiones principes* of Zakaria Aguletsi and Abraham Yerevantsi in 1938. Thereafter, Malkhasiants published a new edition of Sebeos (1939); and Abeghian, a critical edition of Koriun (1941). That same year, Ashot Garegin Abrahamian, a relatively young scholar, issued what he described as the critical edition of Hovhannes Mamikonian, based on all previous editions and 23 manuscripts housed in the Matenadaran. However, this edition

was heavily criticized soon after its publication and did not win acceptance from respected scholars.

After a hiatus of nearly two decades, Yervand Ter-Minasion published a critical edition of Yeghishe (1957); Karapet Melik-Ohanjanian, of Gandzaketsi (1961); and Karen Yuzbashian, of Lastivertsi (1963). Separately, the Soviet Georgian Academy of Sciences published the critical text and parallel Georgian translation of chapters XXIV–LXVII of Draskhanakerttsi by E. V. Tsagareishvili. During the next decade, Margarita (Margo) Darbinian-Melikian reissued in 1971 the original text of Ananun Zrutsagir, alongside its Russian translation. Two years later Narpey Ghorghanian published a critical text of Kretatsi and its Russian translation. A critical edition of Sebeos by Gevorg Abgarian was printed in 1979. Finally, the last decade of Soviet rule witnessed the publication by Joseph Avetisian of the *editio princeps* of Keomiurchian's *Concise Four Hundred-Year History of the Ottoman Kings* (1982). The next year, Varag Arakelian published the critical text of Kaghankatvatsi, while Hayrapet Margarian issued the first edition of Mkhitar Anetsi under a separate cover. In 1990, Lena Khanlarian published a critical edition of Davrizhetsi, while the 1913 critical edition of Khorenatsi was reprinted in 1991, with Ashot Sargsian adding collations of manuscripts in the Matenadaran, Venice, and Vienna in an appendix.

In the period of independence in the last 20 years, other reputable publishing houses from the Soviet era, plus newly established private firms, have joined the market of releasing the original *grabar* texts of medieval histories. However, the scholarship leading to these new editions is still carried largely by philologists working in the Matenadaran and trained in the late Soviet era. In 1994, the volume of Koriun in the newly established *Hayots matenagirner* (Medieval Writers of the Armenians) series, published by the *Hayastan* publishing house (the former *Haypethrat*), included a new critical text compiled by Artashes Matevosian. In 1999, *Magaghat* Publishers posthumously released

Levon Khachikian's critical text of Metzopetsi. In 2005, the *Zangak-97* Publishing House issued a reprint of the 1979 critical text of Sebeos, together with a new *ashkharhabar* translation. The next year, Darbinian-Melikian published the critical text of Artzruni, again through *Magaghat* Publishers. Finally, *Nairi* Publishers (the former *Sovetakan Grogh*) published in 2011 the critical text of Samuel Anetsi, compiled by Anahit Hayrapetian. That same year, the new *askharhabar* translation of Aknertsi also reprinted the 1974 critical text by Archbishop Norayr Pogharian, upon which it was based.

Within this context of reprints, mention should also be made of the 2007 edition of Hasan-Jalalians, which was compiled by Arto Martirosian and published by *Dizak Plus* in Stepanakert, and included a reprint of the *grabar* text of the 1868 Jerusalem edition.

The contribution of Yerevan University Press to the publication of the *grabar* texts of medieval Armenian histories has been extremely limited in both the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. This press has concentrated on the publication of the *ashkharhabar* translations of these works, initially through a series called *Usanoghi gradaran* (the Student's Library). For example, the *ashkharhabar* translations of Khorenatsi, Parpetsi, Agatangeghos, Artzruni, Pavstos, Yeghishe, Urhayetsi, and Draskhanakertts were printed in this series next to the reprints of earlier *grabar* editions. The new *ashkharhabar* translations of both Sebastatsi (1992) and Areveltsi (2001), published by Yerevan University Press as well, but outside this series, also include the *grabar* texts. Finally, the 1941 *grabar* critical text of Koriun is included in the Yerevan University Press's multi-lingual editions of 1981 and 2005.

In the post-genocide Armenian Diaspora, the publication of the original texts of medieval Armenian histories also decreased, again because of the inability of the younger generations to read *grabar*. Here, too, the realm of reading the *grabar* texts became restricted among a small community of scholars.

After 1915, the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic monastic institutions went on for some time playing an important role in the domain of publishing and disseminating medieval Armenian histories. Until 1955, the Mkhitarists of Venice periodically reissued reprints of their 19th-century editions of Agatangeghos, Parpetsi, Pavstos, Yeghishe, Koriun, and Khorenatsi. However, since then, the Mkhitarist editions of the *grabar* texts of medieval Armenian histories have all been critical editions targeting a narrow



Cover page of the 1946 *ashkharhabar* translation of Yeghishe

circle of scholars. A new edition of Smbat, edited by Father Serobe Agelian, appeared in 1956. In 1977, Father Sahak Chemchemian published a new edition of Abraham Yerevantsi, and, the next year, Father Samuel Aramian released a new edition of Sebastatsi.<sup>12</sup> Finally, Father Poghos Ananian prepared a new critical text of Koriun, which was published alongside its Italian translation in 1998.

The contributions of the Mkhitarists of Vienna to this domain remained modest even after 1915. Volumes II and III of Keomiurchian's *History of Istanbul*, prepared by Torgomian, were published in 1932 and 1938, respectively. Later, Father Nerses Akinian prepared a new critical text of Koriun (1950).

Three medieval histories surveyed in this article have been published in Jerusalem since the end of the First World War. Garnik Fntglian released a new version of Koriun in 1930, while Archbishop (later

Patriarch) Mesrop Nshanian compiled the *editio princeps* of Keomiurchian's *Diary*. Finally, the critical edition of Aknertsi was published by Archbishop Norayr Pogharian in 1974.

Outside monastic institutions, medieval Armenian histories in the post-genocide diaspora have been printed the most in the United States. Outside North America, we can only point to two cases where the *grabar* texts of medieval Armenian histories were printed outside a monastic context. Of these, the more important is the *editio princeps* of Keomiurchian's *History of the Burning of Istanbul* by Gevorg Bampukchian (1991). The other is the *grabar* text of Koriun, which appeared in the 1954 Cairo reprint of Abeghian's 1941 critical edition.

Among the numerous *grabar* texts of medieval Armenian histories printed in the United States, two were original works of scholarship. In 1951, Stepan H. Banian published in Boston a new critical text of Koriun. The second was Levon Khacherian's critical edition of Sebastatsi. The editor had compiled the text when he still lived in Yerevan, but the book was published in Los Angeles in 1988, after he had emigrated from Soviet Armenia.

All other printings of medieval Armenian histories in the United States have been reprints of earlier editions, sometimes in facsimile format. In 1949, the English translation of Aknertsi by Robert Blake and Richard Frye appeared in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, and the *grabar* text was printed alongside the translation. The same work was re-published under a separate cover in 1954. Ten years later, Abeghian's critical text of Koriun was printed alongside its new English translation by

Petros Norhat (Bedros Norehad). Robert W. Thomson's 1976 English translation of *The Teaching of St. Gregory* (which constitutes an important segment of the History by Agatangeghos) included a reprint of the 1914 *grabar* text of *Ghukasian Matenadaran*. In 1980–93, Caravan Press, in Delmar, N.Y., printed the Classical Armenian Texts Reprint Series, as many *grabar* editions from the 19th and early 20th centuries had become difficult to find for scholars engaged in research in the United States. Agatangeghos, Draskhanakertsi, Khorenatsi, Pavstos, Parpetsi, Koriun, Artzruni, Areveltsi, and Yeghishe were reprinted in this series. Finally, a facsimile reprint of the 1868 Jerusalem text of Hasan-Jalaliants was included alongside George A. Bournoutian's 2009 English translation.

The last serious effort to reprint medieval Armenian histories—as part of the Classical Armenian Literature of the 5th–18th centuries—is the series *Matenagirk Hayots* (Medieval Writers of the Armenians), a collaborative effort among the Digital Library of Armenian Classical Literature, based at the American University of Armenia (Yerevan), the Catholicosate of Cilicia (Antelias), and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon). Fifteen volumes were published in 2003–12, but all the scholarship behind this series emanates from post-Soviet Armenia. The diasporan contribution is confined to providing the money and the printing facilities to publish these volumes. The works of Koriun, Pavstos, Yeghishe, Agatangeghos, Khorenatsi, Sebeos, Hovhannes Mamikonian, Ghevond, Ananun Zrutsagir, Artzruni, Draskhanakertsi, Kaghankatvatsi, Ukhtanes and Asoghik—i.e. authors, who lived until the 11th century—have already been printed. Most of these texts are reprints of earlier critical—or what are still considered as the best—editions of these histories. However, in five cases, new critical texts were published. Gevorg Ter-Vardanian prepared the new critical texts of Ghevond, Artzruni, and Draskhanakertsi; Aleksan Hakobian, of Hovhannes Mamikonian; and Gurgen Manukian, of Asoghik. Moreover, Petros Hovhannisian and Gevorg Matoyan, the editors of the text of the History by Ukhtanes in this series, have attempted to correct the errors which had crept through the 1871 *editio princeps* of this work. The works of later historians will probably appear in the forthcoming volumes.

In the post-genocide era, Yeghishe has lost the top spot as the most frequently published medieval historian in his original, *grabar* text to Koriun. The latter's *grabar* text has had nine editions printed since 1920. Among these, no less than six are new critical texts. We can surmise that not only does the importance of Koriun's topic—the life of Mesrop Mashtots, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet—make the work attractive for new critical editions, but its relatively concise nature does not demand perseverance extending over a number of years, as would be the case with longer works.

As of now, most of the *opera magna* of medieval Armenian historians living in the 5th–10th centuries have had their critical *grabar* texts prepared. Pavstos is the only notable exception. However, more effort is needed to prepare critical editions of a number of later historians, including Urhayetsi, Areveltsi,

Ayrivanetsi, and Orbelian, particularly if the author's original manuscript has not survived and all that we have are a number of copied manuscripts independent of one another.

## 'ASHKHARHABAR' EDITIONS

The imperative of having *ashkharhabar* translations of the important works written originally in *grabar* arose in the second half of the 19th century when Armenian school curricula shifted toward a wider use of the modern vernacular as the language of instruction, and the reading public in good command of *grabar* narrowed. From then on, critical editions and reprints of the *grabar* texts targeted mainly the community of scholars, while the *ashkharhabar* translations are still primarily for the wider lay public.

The first efforts to render the medieval Armenian histories into *ashkharhabar* go back to the 1860's, and most of these translations were into the Eastern branch of the modern Armenian language. The first historian translated in full and published as a separate book was Yeghishe. Martiros Simeonians's Eastern Armenian translation was printed in 1863. Thereafter, three other *ashkharhabar* translations of Yeghishe appeared until 1914, making him a leader not only in the total number of *grabar* but also of *ashkharhabar* editions for the pre-World War I period. Among these, Hakob Varzhapetian's translation (Constantinople, 1911) was the only Western Armenian rendering of a medieval Armenian history before 1914, as well as the first medieval Armenian historian to be printed in the Ottoman Empire since the beginning of the Hamidian Era. The only other medieval historians translated into Eastern Armenian prior to 1914 were Khorenatsi, Parpetsi, and Lastivertsi. Khorenatsi had two separate *ashkharhabar* editions, both by Father Khoren Stepane, while the translations of Lastivertsi and Parpetsi were both accomplished by Rev. Minas Ter-Petrosian and published in Alexandropol.

Hereafter we observe a lull of nearly three decades during which no new *ashkharhabar* translations were published, nor earlier pre-war editions reprinted. The situation changed drastically in the 1940's, and since then many medieval Armenian histories have been translated to the modern Armenian literary language—mostly to Eastern, but in a few cases also to Western Armenian.

In Soviet and post-Soviet Armenia, all translations have been made in Eastern Armenian. In 1940, *Haypethrat* launched a series entitled *Hay patmagirneri matenashar ashkharhabar targmanutiamb* (the Armenian Historians Series in *Ashkharhabar* Translation). The translations of four medieval histories appeared in this series. The first was Malkhasiants's translation of Khorenatsi. The second, published the following year, was Abeghian's critical *grabar* text of Koriun and the accompanying *ashkharhabar* translation. Ter-Miniasian's translation of Yeghishe came out in 1946, and, finally, Malkhasiants issued a translation of Pavstos in 1947. In 1958, Ter-Miniasian revised his translation

of Yeghishe based on the new critical *grabar* text, which he had published the previous year. These four *ashkharahabar* editions have since reappeared (with small editorial changes) on a number of occasions in Armenia and the diaspora.

Following its publication of the revised *ashkharahabar* translation of Yeghishe, *Haypethrat* also reprinted in the early 1960's the 1940's translations of Khorenatsi and Koriun. In 1964, this publishing house was renamed *Hayastan* and in 1968 launched the *Hay matenagirner* (Armenian Medieval Writers) series to make the famous works of medieval Armenian authors available in Eastern Armenia. When the *Sovetakan Grogh* (Soviet Author) publishing house was separated from *Hayastan* in 1976, the task of continuing the *Hay matenagirner* series passed on to the new entity. Thirteen of the 16 volumes, published in this series between 1968 and 1989, are the works of medieval Armenian histories covered in this article: the reprints of Khorenatsi, Pavstos and Yeghishe, plus new translations of Kaghankatvatsi (by Varag Arakelian), Lastivertsi (Vazgen Gevorgian), Urhayetsi (Hrach Bartikian), Agathangelos (Aram Ter-Ghevondian), Artzruni (Vrezh Vardanian), Ghevond (Aram Ter-Ghevondian), Gandzaketsi (Varag Arakelian), Orbelian (Ashot Arsen Abrahamian), Davrizhetsi (Varag Arakelian), and Hovhannes Mamikonian (Vardan Hakob Vardanian).

*Ashkharahabar* translations of medieval Armenian histories also appeared as part of the Yerevan University Press's *Usanoghi gradaran* series, launched in 1981. Khorenatsi, Pavstos, Yeghishe, and Urhayetsi were reprints, but the translations of Parpetsi (by Bagrat Ulubabian) and Draskhanakerttsi (Gevorg Tosunian) were new. The *Usanoghi gradaran* edition of Agatangeghos (1983) also included the *ashkharahabar* translation of the section known as *The Teaching of St. Gregory*, which had been omitted in the 1977 *Sovetakan Grogh* edition. Moreover, Vrezh Vardanian reportedly introduced important improvements in the 1985 *Usanoghi gradaran* edition of Artzruni to the *ashkharahabar* translation, which he had first published in 1978. Finally, it should be added that two separate editions of Khorenatsi were released in 1981 as part of *Usanoghi gradaran*. One was simply another reprint of the 1940 Malkhasiants translation; the other, however, printed in parallel both the 1913 *grabar* critical text and Malkhasiants's *ashkharahabar* translation. This last approach was later followed for the *Usanoghi gradaran* editions of Parpetsi, Agatangeghos, Artzruni, Pavstos, Yeghishe, Urhayetsi, and Draskhanakerttsi.

Efforts toward producing new *ashkharahabar* translations of medieval Armenian histories have continued in the independence period. Yerevan University Press and *Hayastan* continue to remain the most consistent publishers in this domain, although they have been joined by a few newly established private publishing firms.

Almost two decades after yielding the privilege of publishing the *ashkharahabar* translations of medieval Armenian authors to *Sovetakan Grogh*, the *Hayastan* publishers returned to this domain in the early 1990's with an ambitious new series, *Hayots matenagirner* (Medieval Writers of the Armenians). However, economic difficulties after the disintegration of the Soviet system limited the total number of volumes eventually published in this

series to just four. The *ashkharahabar* translations of Yeghishe and Khorenatsi were reprints, but Koriun's new translation by Artashes Matevosian (1994) was based on significant amendments the latter had proposed to Abeghian's 1941 critical text. Varag Arakelian's 2006 *ashkharahabar* translation of Ukhtanes was also entirely new.

In addition to publishing a new trilingual edition of Koriun (2005), Yerevan University Press printed in the independence period new *ashkharahabar* translations of Sebastatsi (by Arshak Madoyan), Asoghik (Vardan Hakob Vardanian), Arelveltsi (Gevorg Tosunian), and Metzopetsi (Arshak Madoyan).

The other new *ashkharahabar* translations released by various private publishing firms in Armenia and Mountainous Karabagh in the 21st century are Mkhitar Anetsi (by Vano Yeghiazarian, *Van Arian* Publishers, 2001), Simeon Yerevantsi's *Jambr* (by Vazgen Hambardzumian, *Mughni* Publishers, 2003), Sebeos (by Gurgen Khachatrian and Vano Yeghiazarian, *Zangak-97* Publishers, 2005), Hasan-Jalalians (by Eduard Mkrtchian, *Dizak Plus* Publishers, 2007), Ananun Zrutsagir (by Varag Arakelian, *Viamir* Publishers, 2011), and Aknertsi (by Gurgen Khachatrian and Vano Yeghiazarian, *Voskan Yerevantsi* Publishers, 2011). Finally, a new translation of Khorenatsi by Bagrat Ulubabian was published posthumously by "Gasprint" Publishers in 2003.

In the domain of *ashkharahabar* translations, too, the overwhelming majority of the work published in Armenia, even in the independence period, is the output of scholars trained in the Soviet era. Among them, Varag Arakelian tops the list, with the translation of five medieval histories to his credit. However, at the other end of the age spectrum is Vano Yeghiazaryan, who was still in college when the Soviet Union disintegrated. He has since been involved in the translation of three medieval histories.

New *ashkharahabar* translations have been much rarer in the diaspora and mostly in Western Armenia. In 1949, Karo Sasuni translated a large excerpt from Hovhannes Mamikonian and published it as a book in Beirut. Two years later, Stepan H. Banian included a parallel Western Armenian translation of his critical text of Koriun. Another Western Armenian translation of Koriun by Zulal Gazanchian was published in the periodical *Bazmavep* in 2005. The celebrations marking the 1500th anniversary of the Battle of Avarayr were the main motive behind the publication of a new edition of Yeghishe in New York in 1952. It included a Western Armenian translation by Hovhannes Tsovikian (Zovickian) and an English translation by Dickran H. Boyajian. Both were independent of the 1946 Eastern Armenian translation printed in Yerevan. This 1952 edition of Yeghishe was reprinted in two separate volumes—Western Armenian and English—in 1975. More important is Very Rev. Arshavir Gabuchian's Western Armenian translation of Sebeos, printed in Antelias in 1990. It marked the first occasion when the Western Armenian translation of a medieval Armenian historian predated its Eastern Armenian version. Finally, a new Eastern Armenian translation of Sebastatsi was published by Khacherian in Los Angeles in 1988, alongside his critical text. Khacherian's Eastern Armenian translation predated Arshak Madoyan's translation of the same work, which would appear in Yerevan in 1992,

but, as mentioned above, Khacherian had completed most of this work prior to his emigration from Soviet Armenia.

Finally, two other separate projects of *ashkharhabar* translation in the diaspora should also be mentioned. The first was the reprinting by the *Husaber* Press in Cairo in 1950–54 of earlier Eastern Armenian translations of Yeghishe, Khorenatsi, Koriun, and Pavstos, which had appeared in Yerevan in the 1940's. The only change was the adoption of Classical Armenian orthography, instead of the reformed Soviet orthography used in the original Yerevan editions. Four decades later, the works of Agatangeghos, Khorenatsi, Yeghishe, and Koriun were printed again in Western Armenian translation in Beirut in 1995–96 as part of the *Hayogi* (Armenian spirit) series. These translations are not made directly from the *grabar* texts, as is the case with all other *ashkharhabar* translations, but from earlier Eastern Armenian translations.

Yeghishe's History again leads the pack in the number of separate *ashkharhabar* translations it has had.<sup>13</sup> It has been translated on six separate occasions—four times to Eastern and twice to Western Armenian. Altogether, different *ashkharhabar* translations of Yeghishe have been printed on 12 occasions—four of them prior to 1914 and the rest, since 1946. Ter-Minasian's 1946 Eastern Armenian translation (amended in 1958) has had six different printings. Koriun has had four separate translations—two of them into Eastern Armenian—and nine editions overall, all since 1941. Of these, Abeghian's Eastern Armenian version has been published six times. Khorenatsi has had three separate translations—all into Eastern Armenian—and its *ashkharhabar* versions have been printed twelve times overall, sharing the top spot in this category with Yeghishe. Malkhasiants's translation has had nine editions, the most for any *ashkharhabar* translation. Yet, there are still no *ashkharhabar* translations for 10 out of the 37 medieval Armenian historians surveyed in this article. All of these yet-to-be-translated authors lived in the 12th century or later. □

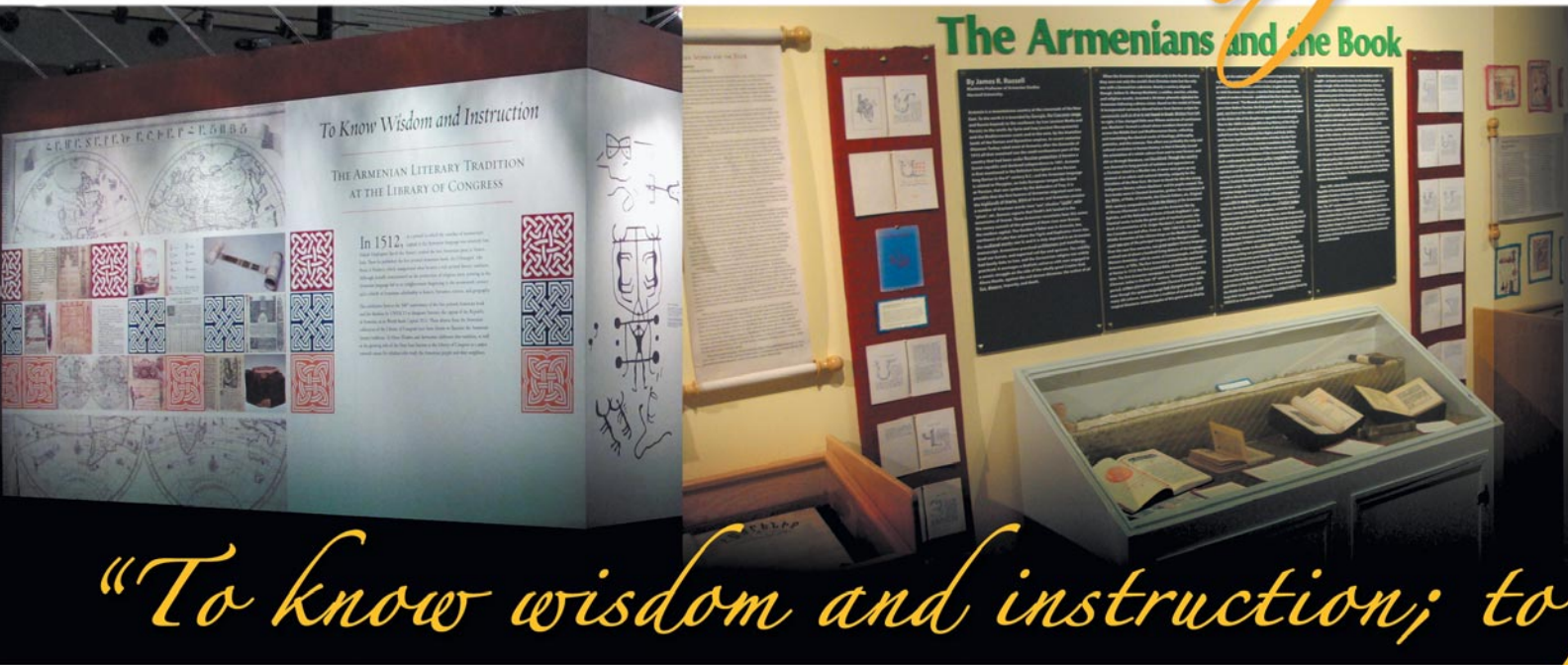
## ENDNOTES

1. The author wishes to thank Artzvi Bakhchinian, George A. Bournoutian, the Rev. Father Serob Chamurlian, Zhirayr Danielian, Karen Matevosian, and the Rev. Father Vahan Ohanian for providing some of the data used in this study. The article follows *The Armenian Review* Transliteration Key, based on the phonetic values of Classical and Eastern Armenian, and omits the use of diacritics. For the sake of consistency, even the names of Western Armenian scholars are transliterated according to Eastern Armenian pronunciation. A more detailed version of this study will be submitted to the journal *Bazmavep* (Venice).
2. In order to keep it within a manageable size, the article does not cover the translations of these works into foreign languages, despite the undeniable fact that many of these translations, together with the accompanying introductory chapters and annotations penned by their scholar-translators, have made these works accessible to the international scholarly community, clarified many of the difficult terms and passages in these texts, and, more recently, provided a gateway to ethnic Armenians in the diaspora who can no longer read

in Armenian, to connect with these texts through the languages of their adopted countries.

3. See *Drvagner Hayastani vagh feodalizmi darashrjani patmagrutian (V–VIII darer)* (1977); *Drvagner Hayastani zargatsats feodalizmi darashrjani patmagrutian (IX–XIII darer)* (1981); and *Drvagner Hayastani XIV–XVIII dareri patmagrutian* (1984). All three volumes were published by the Soviet Armenian Academy of Sciences in Yerevan. The only medieval historian analyzed by Babayan in detail, but excluded from this article, is Hetum Korikostsi (13th century), as his *magnum opus*, *La flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient*, was written in medieval French and *not* in Armenian. Consistent with the approach adopted toward the other historians covered in this article (see note 6), the author did not take into consideration Hetum's lesser known chronologies, written in Armenian.
4. For example, all editions of the *History of Taron* are listed under Hovhan Mamikonian (and *not* under Zenob Glak) and those of the *History of Aghvank*, under Movses Kaghankatvatsi (and *not* Daskhurantsi). The same principle is followed in relation to the Histories of Ananun Zrutsagir, Vardan Areveltsi, Grigor Aknertsi, and Ghukas Sebastatsi, which were initially attributed, respectively, to Shapuh Bagratuni, Vardan Bardzrberdtsi, Maghakia Abegha or Vardan Patmich, and Stepannos Vrdanisian Shahumian.
5. For example, all other works attributed to Movses Khorenatsi and Yeghishe, and those authored by Areveltsi and Simeon Yerevantsi, which do not fall into the medieval genre of history, are excluded.
6. Thus, Ghazar Parpetsi's *Letter to Vahan Mamikonian*, the *List of Catholicoi* by Hovhannes Draskhankertsi, the *Chronology* attributed to Stepanos Orbelian, Tovma Metzopetsi's *Colophon*, and the *Journal* by Simeon Yerevantsi are excluded if they were published under a separate cover.
7. The only exception is Yeremia Chelepi Keomiurchian, of whom four works of history have been published, each of them having a single edition to date. It would have been overambitious to go ahead and single-handedly accord to any of these works the status of Keomiurchian's *magnum opus*, without an already established consensus among the community of scholars.
8. Among the 37 medieval historians surveyed, only two others had their works printed during their own lifetime: Keomiurchian, a contemporary of Davrizhetsi, and Simeon Yerevantsi, who lived over a century later. However their historical works, covered here, were not among these publications; they were printed posthumously. Khachatur Jughayetsi's *History of the Persians* was published in installments in the first-ever Armenian-language periodical *Azdarar* (but not as a separate book) in 1795, the year, it is thought, the author died.
9. In classical scholarship, *editio princeps* (plural: *editiones principes*) means the first printed edition of a work that previously had existed only in manuscripts.
10. Indeed, two separate editions of Aknertsi were printed in 1870. Because the efforts toward these two editions were carried independently, this article considers both to be *editiones principes*.
11. In the case of Kaghankatvatsi, too, there were two *editiones principes* in 1860, the other by Shahnazariants.
12. Aramian's edition of Sebastatsi was earlier published in installments in *Bazmavep* from 1972.
13. The Western Armenian translations, made from Eastern Armenian, in the *Hayogi* series have not been considered as separate translations when compiling the data used in this paragraph.

# CELEBRATING 500 *Years*



*“To know wisdom and instruction; to*

BY LILLY TOROSYAN

These were the first words translated into Armenian upon the creation of the Armenian alphabet in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century by St. Mesrob Mashdots. This year marks UNESCO’s selection of Yerevan as the World Book Capital of 2012, corresponding with the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first printed book in Armenian. The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. has inaugurated an exhibition—which runs from April 19 to September 26—that features 76 items from Armenian print throughout the centuries.

Curator Dr. Levon Avdoyan authored the 100-page illustrated catalogue titled “To Know Wisdom and Instruction: 500 Years of Armenian Printing,” which describes the items on display at the Library of Congress. He stresses that although the celebration of the anniversary is important, its main goal is to illustrate the ancient literary tradition of the

Armenian people. “We did not plan a beautiful exhibit, although there is plenty of beauty in it. We designed the exhibition to educate in a non-didactic way about all aspects of that tradition—including its musical extension.” The presentation, he added, “was fashioned to showcase the growth of the Armenian-language collections from some 7,000 items in 1992 to an estimated 45,000 today.”

The exhibition at the Library of Congress, through its various books, poems, and maps, represents large elements of Armenian history and culture since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Avdoyan’s dedication to the exhibition has been instrumental in both its inception and continuation over the past several months. Two smaller exhibitions in the Greater Boston area also celebrated the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armenian printing this year.

Harvard University, with the assistance of several Armenian organizations such

as the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF), held its own exhibit in April featuring the first Armenian printed book, *Urbatagirk* (“The Book of Friday”) by Jacob the Sinner. The director of NAASR, Marc Mamigonian, considers the exhibition both celebratory and educational. “The primary mission of the exhibition was to educate Harvard students who might otherwise be unaware of Armenian history and culture. Thus, the exhibition covered a lot of ground in a relatively succinct manner. I think the celebratory aspect of the exhibition is implied—we did not set out to make this a ‘hooray for the Armenians’ exhibition, but the texts and materials included testify



# rs OF ARMENIAN PRINTING



*perceive the words of understanding”*

to a book culture of which Armenians can be proud.”

As the principle organizer of the event, Prof. James Russell of Harvard University reached out to Armenian groups in the area, as well as his colleagues at Boston University and Tufts for cooperation. This milestone is an opportunity for Armenians and non-Armenians to appreciate the antiquity and perseverance of the Armenian alphabet, he says.



**On top: A montage of the exhibits at the Library of Congress, ALMA, and NAASR**

**On left: Items from the Library of Congress exhibit**

“The Armenian alphabet was essential to the survival of the Armenian language, culture, and tradition. I think this story of cultural survival against unbelievable odds should be of interest to any person aware that cultural diversity is as vital as biodiversity, not only to the quality of life, but to life itself,” notes Russell, who holds the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies. He is very pleased with the popularity of the Harvard exhibit, and hopes for similar presentations that raise interest in the culture of Armenian print.

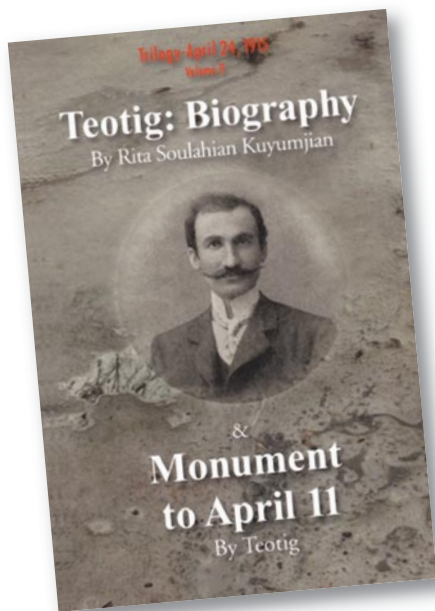
Shortly after the conclusion of the exhibit at Harvard, another opened at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) in Watertown, featuring a larger collection of books on display, which will be shown through November 30. This exhibition focuses on similar aspects of the occasion, such as the creation of the Armenian alphabet, and the subsequent development of Armenian printing over the centuries. Many questions are addressed about Armenian history and the legacy of the manuscripts.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a day-long symposium at ALMA on Sat., Sept. 15, featuring several guest lecturers. □



**T**he name Teotig meant little to the English reader until the recent publication of the volume II of Rita Soulahian Kuyumdjian's *Trilogy—April 24, 1915*, which includes Teotig's biography and Soulahian Kuyumdjian's translation of *Monument to April 11*, Teotig's compilation of biographies of intellectuals who were victims of the Genocide.

Himself a survivor, Teotig (Teotoros Lapjinjian, 1873–1928) was a prolific editor, author, and publisher. A native of Scutari (Constantinople), he started his literary career in the late 1890's. His name has become synonymous with his almanac, *Amenun Daretsuytse* ("Everyone's Almanac"; 1907–29), an encyclopedic undertaking of well over 10,000 pages, which today stands as an inexhaustible reference for anyone interested in Armenian life in the first quarter of the 20th century.



Teotig was assisted in his enterprise by his British-educated wife, Arshaguhi Teotig (1875–1921)—herself a writer and educator—until her untimely death. He fled from Constantinople in 1922 on the eve of its occupation by the army of Mustafa Kemal. He lived a wandering life for the next six years, in Corfu, Nicosia, and Paris, with the last yearbooks being printed in Venice, Vienna, and Paris. He passed away in May

1928 in Paris, when the 18th volume of his yearbooks (his “paper children,” as he called them) was in press. His son Vahakn Teotig died in the United States sometime in the 1960's.

The yearbook contains a huge array of diverse material, ranging from poetry and

The rich contents of the book has stood the test of the time as the product of a single-handed effort by an indefatigable amateur and connoisseur of Armenian books (he called himself *madenamol*, “bibliomaniac”) that paved the ground for the next generation of trained scholars and bibliographers.

# The First Historian of Armenian Printing

BY DR. VARTAN MATIOSSIAN

fiction to scholarship and yearly chronicles and obituaries. It has become a classic, both because of its well-crafted editions, profusely illustrated, and its extensive contents, which included, in addition to Teotig's enormous output, contributions by many writers and scholars of the time—from poets Taniel Varoujan and Vahan Tekeyan to women writers Zabel Essayan and Shushanik Kurghinian, to historians Arshag Alboyadjian and Garabed Basmadjian.

Among Teotig's many published and unpublished works—one of them, *Koghkoto hay hokevoraganutian* (“The Golgotha of the Armenian Clergy”), was painstakingly edited by Ara Kalaydjian, recently deceased, and first published in 1985 by St. Vartan Press in New York—his lavish *Dib u darr* (“Type and Letter”), published in 1912 by V. and H. Nersessian Press in Constantinople on the 400th anniversary of Armenian printing, stands out. It is an outline of the history of Armenian printing since the beginnings, and until his time. After an introduction of the history of printing since Gutenberg's time, Teotig also surveyed, for the first time, Armenian books published all around the world, from Turkey (and Western Armenia) and Russia (and Eastern Armenia) to Asia, Europe, and the New World. He gleaned information from various reference sources, as well as his own library, which contained well over 4,000 volumes.

On the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing, we offer for the first time in English a translation of the brief chapter of the book devoted to Armenian printing in the United States (pp. 186–8), enriched with some footnotes (the title is ours). Despite its shortcomings, it is a pioneering and neglected source for the study of Armenian American culture, written at a time when the East Coast, particularly New York, was the hub of Armenian American life (a position that has been mostly ceded to the West Coast in the past four decades). It is a memory of a bygone time when printing in Armenian flourished in the area, before the period of major expansion between both World Wars. Today, a few generations later, some relics of that time (books, newspapers, and journals) have been painstakingly gathered, albeit not completely, in the main Armenian and non-Armenian research libraries of the area. Some may also turn up in church or club libraries, private collections, or even basements and attics.

This translation may also serve as a timely reminder. In the last decade, the name of Teotig experienced a rebirth among Armenian-language readers in the diaspora (despite their dwindling numbers) because of the enterprising spirit of publisher Matig Eblighatian from Aleppo (Syria), the owner of the Armenian bookstore-press “Cilicia.” The first 15 volumes



# Armenian Printing in America (1857–1912)

BY TEOTIG

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY DR. VARTAN MATIOSSIAN

## New York

The first Armenian to set foot in this populous metropolis of the United States was a teenager called Khachadour Vosgianian, who arrived in 1834 to pursue higher education. Back in Constantinople, he had published the newspaper *Ազգարար Բուզանդեան* (Aztarar Puzantian,<sup>1</sup> “Byzantine Monitor,” 1840). Following his steps, many Armenians immigrated to the New World to study in the universities.

The Protestant missions—just like they did in Calcutta, London, Malta, Smyrna, and Constantinople—established Armenian typography in the land discovered by Columbus to promote the Bible among Armenians too, particularly with publications in modern Armenian. In this way, half a century ago, Armenian-smelted letters entered New York, and the following two printing houses were established:

1. Bible Society (*Աստուածաբանչի Ընկերություն*): It printed *Ապաշխարացոյց* (Atlas of the Repentant) in 1857 (first printing, Smyrna, 1839); the Ancient and the New Testament altogether in 1859 (second printing in New York, 1867); the New Testament in 1862 (reprinted in 1864, 1866, and 1867); the Book of Psalms in 1864; and the Gospel of St. Mark in 1868 (in modern Armenian).
2. Book Society of America (*Ամերիգայի Տեսարակի Ընկերություն*): It published *Հաւաքումն փկայութեանց Ս. Գրոց* (Collection of Testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, first printed twice in Smyrna in 1849 and 1852) twice, in 1860 and 1879; *Քրիստոնէական վարդապետութիւն* (Christian Doctrine, 1862); *Քրիստիանոսին եւ Քրիստինէին համբարարութիւնը* (The Journey of Christian and Christine, first printed in Smyrna, 1843);<sup>2</sup> *Առաջին դասագիրք մանկանց* (First Textbook for Children, 1869); *Աւետարանական Բարոզներ* (Evangelical Sermons); advices related to natural health; *Սիրայ յրատներ Տանկատանի Բրիտանեայ կնիկներուն համար* (Love Advice for Christian Women in Turkey), authored by teacher M. E. West, in fluent modern Armenian, a respectable book of morals, large fonts, 230 pages (1874); *Քրիստիան Թալիմարի* (Christian Teaching, 1877);<sup>3</sup> and *Բանալի Ս Գիրքը բանալու կամ դիւրին դասեր* (Key to Open the Holy Bible or Easy Lessons, 1879; second printing, 1886).

The number of Armenian-Americans continued to grow year after year. Following, especially, the Armenian massacres of 1895–1896 in the Ottoman Empire, a big wave rushed to the New World to ensure their life, property, and honor. Naturally, that wandering mass included representatives of the various revolutionary parties that had already started elsewhere the task of Armenian liberation, and would have their organs in various cities in America.

Before the emigration of the 1890’s, Haigag Eginian opened a print shop in Jersey City and published the paper *Արեգակ* (Arekag, “Sun,” 1888), the first in Armenian-American journalism. In 1889, he published *Սուրբանդակ*



Teotig in 1905

of Teotig’s *Amenun taretsuytse* (up to the 1925 issue) have already been reprinted since 2007 in careful photographic editions that also include much-needed indexes, patiently prepared by another intellectual from Aleppo, Levon Sharoyan. The reprint is sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

In 2006, Eblighatian had reprinted Teotig’s landmark *Dib u darr*, again with the sponsorship of the Gulbenkian Foundation. I have used this second photographic reprint for the translation, as a testament to the cultural renaissance that the Syrian-Armenian community experienced over the past two decades, in these critical days when both our brothers and sisters in Syria, former Syrian-Armenians scattered around the world, and any concerned Armenian anxiously follow the developments of a country practically engulfed in a civil war. □

(*Surhantag*, “Messenger”), which a year later changed its name and became *Ազատություն* (*Azadutiun*, “Liberty”), resuming publication, after a brief pause, until 1892. Eginian’s print shop also printed the newspapers *Հայֆ* (Haik, 1891–98, edited by M. S. Gabrielian), *Եփրատ* (Yeprad, 1897; edited by B. S. Shaghayan), and *Տիգրիս* (Tigris, 1897; edited by Eginian and Tovmas Charsafjian). There were several mimeographed bulletins in New York, including *Լուսնակ* (*Lusnak*, “Little Moon”); *Կայծակ* (*Gaidzag*, “Lightning”); *Շանթ* (*Shant*, “Bolt”); and *Հարված* (*Harvadz*, “Strike”). Among the books printed by Eginian were *Կսկծակ* (Sorrow), vol. 1; *Դալարիկ* (Tweeter, 1890); and *Լոյս և խուսար* (Light and Darkness, 1891). H. Kaftanian recorded *Մարգարակ* (Gymnasium), published the same year, in his handwritten catalogue.

“Araratian” Press: From 1891–92, Parnag Ayvadian published the newspaper *Արարատ* (Ararat), continuing the homonymous paper published by his father Mateos in Constantinople (1876), which had been shut down by Turkish authorities. The same press published *Բանալի անգլիերէն լեզուի* (Key to English Language) in 1892 and *Գրպանի բառարան* (Pocket Dictionary) in 1905.

M. S. Gabrielian: Ayvazian, Gabrielian, Arshaguni, and others were among the capable doctors well known in New York and famed as public figures.

Together with his professional career, Gabrielian fervently pursued Armenian literature. He published the following books from his own press: *Արուեստ աստեղծութեան* (Art of Public Speech, 1891); *Խրիմեան Հայրիկ* (Khrimian Hayrig, 1892); *Աստեղծութիւնք* (Speeches, 1893); *Ազգային քաղաքականութիւն հայոց* (Armenian National Policy, 1893); *Հայկական հոգեբանութիւն* (Armenian Psychology, 1894); *Քրիստոնեայ Հայաստան և քրիստոնեայ տէրութիւնք* (Christian Armenia and Christian States, 1897, in Armenian and English);<sup>4</sup> and *Հայ ցեղը* (The Armenian Race, 1911). Beginning on Jan. 1, 1891, he was the editor of “Haik,” which ceased publication on April 1, 1898.

Elias Khalav and Son: They published *Պիտանի գիտելիքներ* (Useful Knowledge, 1897); *Ինքնուսուցիչ անգլիերէն լեզուի* (Self-Teacher of English Language; they also published the same in English); and *Մեր վարդագոյն տետրակը* (Our Pink Notebook, 1899), all of which were by Bedros R. Torosian, who published *Ո՞վ է Մկրտիչ Փորրուզալեանը* (Who is Mgrdich Portugalian?) in 1912. They also published *Առձեռն Ամերիկեան բառարան անգլիերէնէ հայերէն* (English-Armenian American Pocket Dictionary) in 1898.

“Gochnag” Press: The late Herbert M. Allen started the publication of the newspaper *Կոչնակ* (*Gochnag*, “Church Bell”) on Dec. 15, 1900. When he was called to the editorship of the newspaper *Աւետարներ* (Avedaper, “Good Messenger”) in Constantinople, Protestant Armenians continued publishing “Gochnag,” which in 1912 began linotype printing, the first novelty in the world of Armenian typography.<sup>5</sup>

“Yeritasard Hayastan” Press: The newspaper *Երիտասարդ Հայաստան* (Yeridasart Hayastan, “Young Armenia”) was started by Stepan Sabah-Gulian in 1903 as the organ of the Social Democratic Hnchakian Party.<sup>6</sup> Its press also published *Գործադուր դասակարգը* (The Working Class, 1905); *Հաստ* (Have, 1907), *Կարմիր օրեր* (Red Days, 1909); and *Սահմանադրութիւն Հայ Թառաջիկաներու*

(Bylaws of the Armenian Progressive Society). The presses are currently in Providence, R.I.

The presses of the newspaper *Արաքս* (Arax, edited by Hovhannes Hagopian from October 1905 to March 1907) published *Ատրպատ Մարասպանտա Անդարձ* (Adarbad Mahraspandan: Andarz) in 1909.<sup>7</sup>

Arshag Der Mahdesian published the newspaper *Արծիւ* (*Ardziv*, “Eagle”) in July 1905, which continued until 1908, with an interruption in 1906. During the last year, the young editor, using his own resources, published the English monthly “Armenia”—illustrated and with very fine printing—in New York. The monthly, which previously (1904) was the organ of the U.S. Hnchakian Committee, featured translations from well-known Armenian writers.<sup>8</sup>

The Reorganized Hnchakian Party published the illustrated weekly *Արաքաձ* (Arakadz) in 1911, with lavish printing and rich contents. It only printed 20 issues, however, since the press was burned by a fire.

## Boston

The presses of *Հայրենիք* (*Hairenik*, “Fatherland”), the organ of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), were founded in Boston. The *Hairenik* was first published on May 1, 1899 in New York by Mr. Charshafjian, who afterwards transferred it to the Hnchakians and finally to the ARF. The presses of the *Hairenik* have published the following books, among many: *Անդրոնիկէ* (Andronike); *Արեւոլոյս* (Dawn); *Մօսունի և Զօրի արշաւանները* (The Campaigns of Mosun and Zor); *Յեղափոխական վիպակներ* (Revolutionary Novellas); *Սահմանադրական կառավարութիւններ* (Constitutional Governments); *Yergaran* (Song Book); *Ռուսական Սօցիալ-Յեղափոխականների ծրագիրը* (Program of the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries); *Միութեան խնդիրը* (The Problem of Unity); *Սօցիալիզմ* (Socialism); *Իմ եղբայր գիւղացիին* (To My Peasant Brother); *Երկրագործութիւնը որպէս ուղիղ հասնապարհ* (Agriculture as the Right Way, second printing); *Քրիստոսի սօցիալական ուսմունքը* (The Social Teachings of Christ); *Կրեմլըբիլ* (Craingeville);<sup>9</sup> *Զայրոյթի օրը* (Day of Fury); *Իզմիրլեան ախարալայրին սէջ* (Izmirlian in Exile); *Երագս* (My Dream); *Դէպի երկիր* (Towards the Country, by E. Agnuni); *Այդպէս էր* (It Was Like That); *Կանոնադրութիւն Վանի ուսումնասիրաց ընկերութեան* (Bylaws of the Philomathic Society of Van); *Շանթեր* (Lightnings); and *Օրէնքի և ընկերութեան զոհերէն* (Among the Victims of Law and Society).

Twenty issues of *Զայն Հայրենեաց* (*Tsayn Hayreneats*, “Voice of the Fatherland”) were published by [Kurken] Chiftjian in New York.<sup>10</sup> *Tsayn Hayreneats* first moved to Worcester, Mass., and then to Boston. This newspaper, the organ of the Hnchakian U.S. Committee, was published until 1906. After the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution of 1908, Levon Larents edited it for about two years in Constantinople. In America, its presses published *Զնտանները* (The Dungeons, 1904); *Գործնական կեանքը* (The Practical Life, 1905); and *Լուծին տակ* (Beneath the Yoke, 1906).

*Ազգ* (*Azk*, “Nation,” 1907) is the follow-up to *Tsayn Hayreneats*. Its editor was Suren Bartevian. After the fracture of the Reorganized Hnchakians, *Azk* became the organ of the new Democratic

Constitutional party.<sup>11</sup> The presses of Azk published *Փտուրեանի օճախը* (The Hearth of Corruption, 1908); *Հայրուկիին աղօթքը* (The Prayer of the Freedom Fighter); *Իննսուներեք* (Ninety-Three, 1910); and *Մեր բողոքներն ու Դաճակացիքեան ուժը աննոց հանդէպ* (Our Protests and the Power of the [Armenian Revolutionary] Federation Against Them, 1911).

The newspaper *Լոյս* (*Luys*, “Light”) was published by [Mikayel] Minasian from 1901–06). Its distribution in Turkey was not forbidden during the old regime because of its educational and agricultural contents.

The “Pilibosian and Dikranian” Press published *Աստղիկ* (Asdghig) in 1904 and also *Պատկեր հայ յեղափոխութեան* (Image of the Armenian Revolution).

“Atlantian” Press published the following books between 1905 and 1909: *Հայկական եզրաժամը եւ վերածնութիւն* (The Armenian Crisis and Renaissance); *Պատանեկան յոյզեր* (Youth Emotions); and *Կրթական սկզբունքներ եւ իտէալներ* (Educational Principles and Ideals).

I. A. Yeran (Yeran Press) published in recent years *Բառարան անգլիերէնէ հայերէն* (Armenian-English Dictionary); *Բառարան անգլիերէնէ հայերէն* (English-Armenian Dictionary); *Պատկերազարդ գրուցատարութիւն հայերէնէ անգլիերէն* (Armenian-English Illustrated Phrase Book); *Գործնական առողջաբանութիւն* (Practical Health); *Սեռային առողջաբանութիւն* (Sexual Health); and *Ժողովրդային երգարան* (Popular Song Book).

“Guilligua” Press belongs to Bishop Mushegh Seropian and has published *Ամերիկահայ տարեցոյց* (Armenian-American Yearbook) and *Բանախօսութիւններ* (Speeches, 1912).

### Other cities

The following newspapers have been published in Fresno: *Քաղաքացի* (*Kaghakatsi*, “Citizen,” 1902, edited by H. Eginian) and *Ասպարէզ* (*Asbarez*, “Arena,” published for the last five years and edited by S. G. Seklemian).<sup>12</sup> *Պահակ* (*Bahag*, “Guard”) has been published since 1912 in Providence by the Reorganized Hinchakian Party. This newspaper was the first published in Boston since January 1911, successively edited by Hrach Yervant, Yervant Mesaiyan, and Dr. Arshag Der Margosian.<sup>13</sup>

Many of the American presses did not have printing machines, and thus various Armenian books and newspapers were printed by the foreign presses. □

### Translator’s Notes

1. Given the nature of the article, the transliteration of names is based on Western Armenian phonetic values.
2. This is the Armenian translation of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.
3. This book was published in Turkish with Armenian characters.
4. The English version is probably included in Rev. A. W. Williams’ *Bleeding Armenia: Its History and Horrors under the Curse of Islam* (Chicago: Publishers Union, 1896).
5. “*Gochnag*” was published in New York until 1968.
6. “*Yeridasart Hayastan*” was published until the late 1990’s (in New Jersey, in its last years).
7. This is the translation of the wisdom sayings (*andarz*) of a 4th-century Zoroastrian priest, made by a noted Armenian Iranist, Harutiun Tiryakian.
8. “*Armenia*” was continued by “*New Armenia*” and published until 1929.
9. This is the translation of *L’affaire Crainquebille*, by French novelist Anatole France.
10. The first issue of “*Tzayn Haireniats*” appeared in 1899.
11. The Armenian Democratic Constitutional Party was founded in 1908 in Constantinople and lasted until its merging with the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party in 1921.
12. “*Asbarez*” was founded in 1908.
13. “*Azk*” and “*Bahag*” became forerunners to “*Baikar*,” the organ of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party since 1922.

Cyrillic fonts, and in 1818 he had his masterpiece, the first Serbian dictionary, published there. Karadzic’s dictionary was the first Serbian book in history that was written following new grammatical rules, and in the vernacular. It was also the first Serbian, and in fact Slavic, book that was printed by Vienna’s Mkhitarists.

Following the publication of Karadzic’s work, the Mkhitarists also published the first Serbian Alphabet book (1827); the philosophical work, *The Mountain Wreath* (1841), by the Serbian Orthodox Prince-Bishop of Montenegro Petar II Petrovic-Njegos, as well as his other work, *Three days in Trieste in the Month of January in 1844* (1844).

In the history of Moldovan printing, Akim Ivanovich Popov (most likely Papiian) has left his mark, as Chisinau’s first publisher. He was an Armenian from the city of Grigoriopol. In June of 1840, Popov began his publishing work, printing books in Moldovan, French, Russian, and Armenian. He published *Normal Contact* (1846), *The Book of Armenopulo-Donic* (1850), as well as an alphabet book and elementary level books, the works of Ion Sirbu. Popov died in 1885.

Even in the 20th century, when most people already had a printing press, Armenians continued their pioneering work in the field. In Addis Ababa, due to the efforts of the president of the Publishing House of Fine Arts G. Jerahian, for the first time in history the ancient Ethiopian language of Amharic appeared in print in 1956; the printed work was the Gospel According to St. John.

This brief account paid homage to eight Armenians who contributed to the field of publishing in Europe, Asia, and Africa between the 16th and 20th centuries. Their work impacted nine peoples (Polish, Moldovan, Bulgarian, Turkish, Lebanese, Georgian, Ethiopian, and also Serb), not mentioning Anton the Armenian who observed the printing process in China. For Armenians, interest in the printing press was a reflection of their gravitation toward modernity. As Father Levon Zekiyian had rightfully noted, “I consider the very quick assimilation by Armenians of the printing as a signal of ‘modernization’ not only for the technical change in the way of producing books, but for a series of circumstances which show that we find ourselves before a changing social and economic reality.” □

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—(TRANSLATED BY NANORE BARSOUMIAN)

# A World History of Armenian Printers

BY ARTSVI BAKHCHINYAN

Scholars studying the early history of the printing press have noted the role played by the Catholic Armenian Archbishop Anton Sultaniatsi of Venice. In the 1330s, Sultaniatsi traveled to China and wrote, *Information on the Great Khan's State in China*, in Latin. Anton's name was forgotten for centuries. In the 17th century his name resurfaced, particularly in the works of the Ambassador of the Russian Empire to Beijing, Nicolae Milescu Spatarul (1638-1708), who wrote in his *Travel Notes and Description of China*, "It is true. Other countries learned about the production of real silk from the Chinese. Not only that. Also, how to cast canons and sail in a raft. Similarly, the Europeans learned about **printing** from the Chinese. Because when the Tatars came to China, with them came Father Odoric. Anton the Armenian, and Marco Polo the Venetian; in truth, it was they who brought these skills to Europe." (The emphasis is mine—A. B.)

In the 16th century, when Armenian printing was already an established reality, Armenian printers came onto the scene in various Armenian communities. During the first century of printing in Poland, Lazar Andrisowicz, whose Armenian name was most likely Ghazar Andreasian, left his mark. In 1550, Andrisowicz founded a printing house, which he managed until 1577. After his death, his son, Jan Januszewski, took over his publishing business.

Armenian printers in the Ottoman Empire played a particularly significant role. They contributed not only to Armenian and Turkish printing, but also to other nations that were part of the Empire. Among them, the most famous was Boghos Arabian (1742, Apucheh, near Agn—1835, Constantinople). He worked in printing in Constantinople and became the best known printer in the Empire. He created Armenian typefaces, and founded Armenian printing houses. He

**On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing, it is worth remembering Armenian printers who were pioneers in publishing in various countries. Driven by a yearning for enlightenment, a curiosity for what was new, and a mission to spread the products of modern civilization to populations in their region, these Armenians appreciated the printing press, the new revolutionary invention, and worked towards its development in different countries and cultures.**

also created the Turkish "Nesih" and "Taliq" fonts, which were named "Arab Oglu" after him. In 1770 he traveled to Tbilisi on the invitation of King Erekle, where he created Georgian fonts, established printing houses, and published Georgian language books. He also contributed to perfecting the newly founded printing house in Echmiadzin.

Beginning in 1839, Hovhannes Mouhendisian (1810–1891) worked on the creation and casting of various fonts for the press. He was a well-known engraver and musician, who studied under the renowned Hampartsoum Limonciyan. His work began in the creation of Armenian fonts, but in 1843 he began designing also Turkish and Arabic typefaces, which were later known as "Mouhendisian letters." He published Armenian and Turkish language books and newspapers, and also designed and illustrated some Turkish banknotes. He was called "The Turkish Gutenberg."

One of the pioneers of the Bulgarian printing press is Tatevos Divitjian (1810 Constantinople—died in Bulgaria). In 1841, with his help, Constantine Ognyanovitch founded the first Bulgarian publishing house, "The Hardworking Bee," in Constantinople. Divitjian molded Bulgarian fonts, and published 77 books in Bulgaria—some original, while others translations. For his activities, he was arrested numerous

times, until he finally sought refuge in Bulgaria. His student A. Minasian published 97 books in Bulgarian in Constantinople between 1856 and 1873. It is noteworthy that out of the 452 Bulgarian language books published in Constantinople—until Bulgaria gained independence in 1908—221 of them were published at the initiative of Armenian publishers.

Publisher George Meger (Kevork Megerian) was a descendent of the Meger family in Constantinople. He lived in Beirut from his childhood, and later studied printing with the Jesuit Fathers. He traveled to France, then to Tunisia, where he published an Arabic language newspaper to counter Italian propaganda. In France, he met with Prime Minister [Léon] Gambetta (who served as Prime Minister from Nov. 1881 to Jan. 1882) to discuss the creation of a print media in Arabic. After moving to Leiden (Holland) he preoccupied himself with printing books in Arabic. He purchased a printing press in France, and brought it with him to Lebanon, where he founded an Arabic printing house. Later, he also acquired Armenian fonts, and published Armenian language books.

Armenians also contributed to Serbian culture and language. Renowned Serbian enlightener, philologist, and founder of the modern Serbian language Stefanovic Karadzic (1787–1864) had his historical dictionary published at the Mkhitarist printing house in Vienna. His first books were published in Serbia, without permission from a Serbian metropolitan. That had greatly angered the Serbian religious leaders, because at that time they had tight control over the printing press. Karadzic moved the operation to Vienna, which was away from the metropolitan's reach. He discovered that the Mkhitarist printing house possessed

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