

(in print)

ENLIGHTENMENT AND NATIONAL CULTURES

THE ARMENIAN WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

The problem of the relationship of national cultures, which do not belong to the West European world, to ideas, ideologies, philosophical, literary, artistic movements, social and economical developments having West European roots, is a question of a highly topic interest.

Among Middle Eastern peoples Armenians belong to the number of those which opened to currents, trends, fashions coming from European modernity at its early stages. Hence our main purpose in this study will be an attempt to explain and understand the Armenian attitude towards Enlightenment.

To speak of “Enlightenment” in relation to any cultural area presupposes to have clearly defined what is meant by “Enlightenment”. We cannot at present go into a thorough study of the many problems concerned with Enlightenment, its origins, its nature and its eventual influences outside the West European continent. We can only assume a preliminary and common conception of the Enlightenment in its most general trends so as to have a conceptual and chronological framework in which to place its origins and evolution in the Armenian society.

I. Some preliminary observations

There is a common conviction among historians of philosophy, thought, politics, that the 18th century marks a new phase, a turning point one could say, in the development of European rationalism, and especially of its impact on the different aspects of life and action: on the tracks of England's “Glorious Revolution” it will lead to the French Revolution whose consequences will affect all of Europe, and beyond.

What happens then? It is briefly, but accurately described in these words of Robert Lavallette: «Überschwengliche Glaube an die Macht des Vernünftigen, grenzloses Vertrauen zu der Kraft des Natürlichen kennzeichnen die geistige Haltung eines Jahrhunderts, das zwischen der englischen Revolution von 1688 und der französischen von 1789 den Aufstieg Großbritanniens zur Weltmacht, die kulturelle Vorherrschaft des Frankreichs und das Emporkommen Preußens als entscheidende Geschichtereignisse sah» (1).

That le siècle des Lumières is most fittingly described in relation to concrete history, finds certainly its reason in the fact that, in a true sense, «The Enlightenment is indefinable philosophically» (2), and one of its main features is the will «auf das Leben anwenden» (3). Adorno's statement, however discussable it may be, has, no doubt, its part of truth: «Enlightenment has such a relationship to the things as a dictator to the men: he knows them in so far he is able to manipulate them» (4).

A conceptually balanced explanation of such a trend is substantially offered by the following considerations of François Chsâtelet: «Voici la nouveauté: c'est toujours la vérité qui commande, mais sa signification s'infléchit ... La raison dont il se réclame, ce n'est plus

l'incarnation ici-bas de l'entendement de Dieu: c'est la puissance critique, qui n'hésite pas faire flèche de tout bois, qui s'intéresse toutes les activités sociales ... Le rationalisme, d'administrateur qu'il était devenu, se retrouve combattant ... A l'idée de savoir, laquelle Aristote et Descartes souscrivent ensemble, commence se substituer celle de système ouvert des connaissances ... au modèle de causalité qui gouverne le jeu de billard s'oppose celui de l'action à distance ... Bref, la rationalité nouvelle, dans son combat pour la raison, entre en lutte contre le cartésianisme, au nom du cartésianisme même. Le travail idéologique des "Lumières" de Locke Diderot, détruit les principes sur quoi il se fonde» (5).

All this is in strict continuity with what has been called the ideology or the myth of progress (6) and which was expressed just as in a manifesto by one of the most fanatically enthusiastic forerunners of the movement, Pierre Bayle. He wrote in 1684: «We are living in an era which daily becomes more and more radiant, so that all former ages are but darkness in comparison with it» (7).

We can try now to identify some essential conceptual trends of the Illuministic thought, of its philosophy and ideology (8). We shall do this following Paul Tillich. Tillich speaks of "basic principles" of the Enlightenment, which he also calls the "great concepts" of the Enlightenment (9), and asserts: «The greatest part of our academic life is based on these principles» (10). These principles are: a) the Kantian definition of autonomy; b) the concept of reason; c) the concept of nature; d) the concept of harmony (11). Then Tillich makes an attempt to describe the basic attitude of the man of the Enlightenment which he sums up in four points: a) his bourgeois character; b) his ideal of a rational religion; c) his ethics of the good sense; d) his subjective feeling (12).

The object of this present study

This study does not aim to inquire in detail into some particular aspect, idea, trend of the Armenian Enlightenment as, for instance, the idea of nation in a "modern" conception, the idea of independence, democracy and so on. Nor does it aim at investigating deeper a single personality, or a defined area or "province" of the Armenian reality in connection with the Illuministic tendencies.

What the present study intends to do is: a) to point out the Illuministic trends in the Armenian society of the 18th through the 19th centuries, b) to place these trends in the framework of the geographical distribution of the Armenian population of those times through the world, c) to arrive at a conclusion in what sense, and to what extent, and for which periods it is possible to speak of an Armenian Enlightenment.

In this study I sum up once again many analyses and results of a recent research on Armenian modernity, that was presented as a "distinguished lecture" to the Tenth Anniversary Conference of AIEA (Association Internationale d'Études Arméniennes) in October 1993, in London (published first in *Armenian Perspectives*, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, ed. by Nicolas Awde, (Caucasus World), Curzon, Surrey, UK, 1977, p. 323-354, notes: p. 417-431: "Modern Armenian Culture: Some Basic Trends between Continuity and Change, Specificity and Universality", and in a more developed form in: B.L. ZEKIYAN, *The Armenian Way to Modernity*, (Eurasitica, 49), Supernova, Venice, 1997). In fact Enlightenment is a peculiar and pregnant moment of the overall process of modernity. However this process begins earlier and goes on further than the Enlightenment movement, this remains certainly

as an essential moment of that process. As it is impossible to speak of modernity in general without touching upon the subject of Enlightenment, so it is too of Armenian modernity in particular. At a given historical moment both notions become almost interchangeable. As far as Armenian Illuminism is concerned, we have to add, as we shall see later in detail, that the ideas and trends of the Enlightenment penetrate into the Armenian society neither wholly nor at once, and many of their effects as, for instance, what I call the “full secularization” process, or the revolutionary movements appear with a sensible delay in comparison with the parallel trends in Europe. This is the reason why an overall consideration of the Armenian Enlightenment covers also the entire 19th century.

On the other side I thought it necessary to give a short retrospect to the two main periods that immediately preceded those symptoms that I consider the first Armenian expressions inspired, in a stricter sense, by some aspects of the Enlightenment ideology. Such a retrospect will help for a better comprehension not only of the inner roots of those first expressions of Armenian Illuminism, but also to put in a clearer light the peculiar features and achievements of this latter within the peculiar development of Armenian modernity as well as the special trends of the evolution of the Armenian society, of its opening to and of its exchange with the contemporary European society.

A basic methodological principle

As it appears from what we have said above, Enlightenment, in the strict and technical sense of the word as used with respect to the history of European thought and civilization, has a peculiar and precise meaning related to a special period of that history in what distinguishes it, in its ideological, political, and social aspects, from other periods of European thought and civilization. Thus, the idea of “Enlightenment” used in relation to this context and in the sense proper to it, has nothing to do with other given and possible senses of the term but a common inspiration from the image of light: for instance, “enlightenment” as used in early Christian tradition as synonymous with Baptism; the various uses of the term in different theological and mystical contexts; “enlightenment” as meant in the theory of knowledge of St. Augustine, etc. To produce some examples from the Armenian context itself, nothing has, for instance, the idea of “enlightenment” as implied in the attribution of “Illuminator” given to St. Gregory, Apostle of Armenia, with the 18th century European Enlightenment. We have to say the same thing also for the attribution of “New Illuminator” (*Lusanorog*) as such, given to the Abbot Mekhitar (Mkhit‘ar), although he lived and operated in a period, the first half of the 18th century, when European Illuminism was in full blossom. This does not exclude, of course, that influences of European Enlightenment may be found in Mekhitar's work. To ascertain this fact and its dimensions is precisely one of the objects that this contribution has in view.

Confusion between the various historical and ideological meanings of the notion of “Enlightenment” has often been a trend in some Soviet historiography despite its many critical achievements of a high value, and it is still so in some expressions of Middle Eastern historiography serving, in last analysis, to assert a national or regional priority vis-à-vis of Europe in reaching “Enlightenment”. Something very similar happens also with the confusion of the idea of “renaissance” as related to the European Renaissance of the 15th-16th centuries having in Italy its prototype, and as related to any movement of “rebirth” in

whatever nation or geographical area. Such a confusion ignores or wants to ignore that European Renaissance is not simply a revival or rebirth or return to Antiquity, but it is also at the same time something explosively new and great producing a unique change of its kind in ideas, society, art, and in almost every field of life.

I have widely touched upon these questions in a recent paper entitled: "Lo studio delle interazioni politiche e culturali tra le popolazioni della Subcaucasia: alcuni problemi di metodologia e di fondo in prospettiva sincronica e diacronica", presented in 1995 to the Conference on Caucasus: "Il Caucaso: cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV-XI)", organized by the "Centro Italiano di studi sull' Alto Medioevo" of Spoleto at its "Quarantatresima Settimana di studio". Since the Proceedings of this Conference have been published in 1996 (at Spoleto, by the Press of the same Centre), I consider it sufficient for our present purpose this allusion here to what I believe to be a basic methodological principle of inquiry, referring for further details to my just mentioned paper.

Enlightenment and the Armenian identity

Another preliminary question we must face is how the Illuministic movement, essentially of European or Western origin, could be harmonized with the Armenian identity. The problem is real, of course, for whatever identity of not strictly European ascendance.

Were Armenian identity and Illuminism really harmonized, and if so, to what extent? This is, of course, a question which can only be answered at the end of our research. But I would like to make a point here with regard to the overall process of Armenian history, because it can give us a general guide in what follows to the dialectic relationship of the Armenian's self to the other.

All along its history, Armenia found itself in close contact with many and different peoples and cultures, from which it did not hesitate to take what might be useful or interesting for it, even when it was not obliged to do so. Yet it has always been strongly solicitous of its identity. In fact, Armenia is the only country of the environs of the Byzantine Empire, thoroughly subjugated by the Arabs first, and by the Turks later, whose people sustained a hard and successful struggle to keep with their Christian faith their own language, culture and national features. Armenia has indeed been a crossroad of civilizations where the contributions of each different culture, assimilated by a creative genius, concurred in the creation of a new, original synthesis.

There is no a priori reason to doubt that the dialectics between Enlightenment and Armenian identity could not obey the same pattern. Let us then, now, ascertain if things actually were like this, and if so, by which means and to what extent.

The role of the "colonies" and of the diaspora

«Few peoples have lived through the Armenian experience: colonies so numerous, so enduring, so varied in their geographical distribution and so well integrated into the social, economic, cultural and even political structures of their host countries while still retaining for many centuries the basic distinctive characteristics dating back to their origins». Thus I started an earlier contribution to a History of the Armenians (13), and I am more and more convinced that it is impossible to conceive both Armenian history and identity

disregarding the essential role played in their development by the colonies and the diaspora. If we had to indicate an analogous case to Armenian experience, I think that no other model is nearer to it, in this field of historical, social, and cultural experience than the Jewish model, and vice versa, notwithstanding the many, and important, structural and factual differences between the two.

But first it is necessary to establish what is meant by the terms Armenian diaspora and Armenian “colonies”. These latter certainly are not something very similar either to the Greek colonies of Antiquity or to the Western colonies of modern times. The ancient Greek colonies were indeed the bearers of a culture whose strength and glamour, of course in concomitance of other historical factors, supplanted at the end the local cultures originating a major process of Hellenization through Asia Minor and the Mediterranean world. The Western colonies of modern times had also a very similar cultural effect if we think, for instance, of the British impact on India or the French impact on Africa, just to mention some well-known cases. But in contrast with the Greek diffusion in Antiquity modern colonizers could impose their culture mainly by virtue of a lasting military conquest and administrative hegemony.

Armenian colonies were almost never accompanied by a military or political force (except for Tigran II's short-lived empire, 95-55 b.C.) nor were they ever able to impose a cultural supremacy. They succeeded, however, more than once to accomplish top level achievements in the most varied fields of life within the structures of a given society. They even succeeded in one of the happiest periods of their history in reaching an world-wide economical primacy as we shall see further.

As to the term Armenian “diaspora”, which had an increasing use in this century, if we accept it in its original and proper meaning of “dispersion”, we must, I think, distinguish various phases through which diaspora has become in the life of the Armenian people a more and more deep-seated reality.

The first dispersive explosion in Armenian history occurs at the end of the Armenian political power on the Armenian mainland, or Greater Armenia. We can see in the fall of the Bagratid capital Ani (1045) under Byzantine power the symbolic date for this eclipse. A further step in the Armenian process of “diasporization” is certainly represented by the end of the Cilician Kingdom (1375). The last and most radical phase in this process - the one we are actually living through - is characterized by a Diaspora in the strictest sense of the term: the entire Armenian population of the greater part of the nation's homeland (of which the actual Republic of Armenia forms only one tenth) finds itself excluded from it, without any actual possibility of returning there (14).

We can say that for almost a whole millenium Armenians have lived, outside of their homeland, on the border between “colony” and “diaspora” since their capacity for integration helped them to transform dispersion into permanent and flourishing settlements, but their deep attachment to their roots never let them forget the dream of their “Edenic” homeland (15).

II. The main phases of the Armenian Enlightenment

I think that two main phases can be distinguished in the Armenian itinerary along the ideals inspired by and inherited from the Illuministic movement. I would define as follows these two main phases:

a) the first attempts of a political thought in the sense of the ongoing political processes in Europe and in the New World. These first attempts take place, as we shall see, in India. Hence, in my opinion, it is in the Armenian colony of India of the last three decades of the 18th century, under a strong British influence, that we have to look for the first expressions of a Illuministic thought, in the proper sense of the term, among the Armenians.

b) The full secularization period, from the forties of the 19th century till the fatal date of 1915 when life stops for the Armenians. This period of secularization is better known as the age of “Awakening” (*Zart'onk'*). Constantinople (16) and Tiflis (today Tbilisi) are in this period the cultural capitals of the Armenians who live mainly in the Ottoman, Russian, and Persian Empires. This is also the period when Armenian irredentist and revolutionary movements live their full blossom, cut off by the Great Genocidal Catastrophe. As I have already pointed out, these movements were remarkably in delay in comparison with their Western parallels. Hence the necessity, I believe, of protracting the Armenian Illuministic age throughout the 19th century.

Critics, moving from strictly literary criteria, distinguish two periods in the course of these latter decades: the first one arriving at the eighties and dominated by the Neo-classical Romantic movements, while the second is dominated by the realist and symbolist currents.

Another reason of distinction between these decades is that from the eighties modern Armenian becomes the only literary language.

I do not think, however, that an analogous distinction is necessary or helpful to make ideas clearer from the viewpoint of the general world vision, and of the Enlightenment and

secularization processes. On the contrary also the last two decades of the century and the following years till the fatal date of the raging Catastrophe are essentially in line with the main characteristics and aspirations of the previous forty years. Thus, for instance, the formation of the first Armenian political parties during the last decade of the century is wholly in the spirit and in the continuity of the Awakening ideology.

This is, in outline, the Armenian Illuministic age as seen in the main phases of its evolution until the Catastrophe of the Genocide.

These phases of the Armenian Enlightenment, in the stricter sense of the word, are preceded and strongly prepared by two main factors:

a) a serious process of modernization, beginning with the very early introduction of the press into the Armenian reality. The origins of this process go back as far as the 17th, and even the 16th century for some traits, as I have widely dealt with and tried to demonstrate in my above mentioned study on Armenian modernity. Such are the achievements of this period that we can consider the 17th century, starting especially from the 1730's, as a pre-Rebirth period announcing the Rebirth that will take place in the next century thanks to the prevailing activity of the Mekhitarist Order. Different centres, both in the East and in the West, such as Etchmiadzin, New Julfa, Baghesh, Amsterdam, give a high contribution to the efforts of rebirth.

b) the humanistic blossom going from the foundation of the Mekhitarist Order to nearly 1840, generally better known as the period of “Rebirth” (*Veratznund*). Venice, followed by the Armenians of India and Constantinople, plays an extraordinary role in the Armenian culture in this period.

III. The first phase towards Enlightenment: the pre-Rebirth period. A general

movement from Etchmiadzin to Amsterdam, from Venice to New Julfa

A. The Origins of the Armenian press

Armenians create their press at a very early date: 1511/12. The man whose name is linked to this achievement is Hakob *Meghapart* (James the Sinner). Armenians are second only to the Jews among the peoples of Middle Eastern origin to organize their own press.

We assume the indicated date rather as a historic symbol than as the actual beginning of an effective development of the Armenian press. In fact, however reasonable the hypothesis may seem that the void of fifty years following this initial step till the publication of a new series of Armenian printed books should be somehow filled, there is no evidence as yet of any further Armenian printing activity till 1564/1565 when the first book appears printed by Abgar *Dpir* of Eudocia (Tokat) (17). Thus, to the best of our knowledge, we have to consider Abgar's activity as the one that has had a contextually lasting influence in effectively and gradually introducing the printing art into the Armenian reality. In fact from 1565 to the end of the century twelve titles will be printed with an average space of three years between them, while the first half of the following century will see printed twenty-five titles with an average space of two years between them.

In any case, even 1760's century are to be considered, for a culture having its cradle somewhere between the Ottoman and the Persian Empires as a relatively early date in comparison, for instance, with the year 1727 when printing made its entry into the Ottoman culture, or the year 1830 when the first book in Persian was published in Iran.

Furthermore it is right to add that an ideal link united both men, Meghapart and Abgar, the former's work functioning most likely as an inspiration source for the latter. A link that is even suggested by the choice of the city, Venice in Italy, where to pursue their aim.

A second point to take into consideration is that the pioneers and the greatest number of the planners and managers of Armenian printing are themselves Armenians, although they profit by the technical skills and professional-institutional organization of local collaborators and enterprises (18). On the contrary, this is not always the case, for instance, with the Hebrew and Greek editions just to mention the contemporary editorial activity in two outstanding languages of the Near East.

What we are pointing out is of particular importance since it shows the close contact of the Armenians with the Western world and the excellent and up to date knowledge that they had maintained of it and of its recent progress, even in periods of greatest depression as the 15th and 16th centuries were for Armenia. Venice was indeed in the 16th century the greatest centre of printing in Europe and Meghapart and Abgar could have made no better choice. Following his first period of activity in Venice Abgar goes back to Constantinople where he becomes a pioneer of the nation-wide diffusion of the printing art.

B. The ascent of the Armenian capital: the widespread protagonism of the New Julfian merchants (ca. 1630-1700)

I have more than once, in earlier writings (19), considered this period as preparing that of "rebirth", i. e. a "pre-Rebirth" period. As I have already pointed out, I think that in this and similar cases the term "renaissance" is to be avoided for its extremely pregnant historical

significance, unless it is used simply in its etymological sense (preferable, in any case, to avoid even such a use in order to prevent any confusion of ideas).

The formation of Armenian capital is an enormous topic that we cannot touch upon here even incidentally. I would like only to point out how the traditional Armenian commerce is integrated in the capitalist system dominating the new European economy preparing, in its turn, European Enlightenment. A good way to do this would be, I think, to see how Fernand Braudel comments on the account book and the travel daybook going from 1682 to 1693, of an Armenian merchant, Hovhannes, a travelling salesman, son of Dawith, a sample among hundreds, perhaps thousands of merchants like him.

Hovhannes' route covers thousands of miles, travelled more than once, from Julfa to Surat and then as far as Lhasa in Tibet where he returns five times. Some of his stops are Agra and Patna in India, and Katmandu in the heart of Nepal. He deals in an extraordinary variety of wares: silver, gold, jewels, musk, indigo and other dyes, textiles, tea, etc. The volume of his trade is also extraordinary: once two tons of indigo sent from North India over Surat to Shiraz; another time one hundred kilograms of silver; again five kilograms of gold obtained from Armenian merchants in Lhasa who had traded in Sining, on the extreme side of China, silver for gold: an operation of utmost profit since silver was much better paid in China in comparison with Europe. A ratio of 1 per 7 is given by Yovhannês in his account book.

Let us hear now Braudel's comment: «Le plus curieux encore, c'est que ces affaires, il ne les réalise pas avec le seul capital lui confié par son *khoja*, bien qu'il reste lié à ce dernier et consigne toutes ses opérations ... dans son livre de comptes. Il se lie par contrat personnel avec d'autres Arméniens, utilise son propre capital (peut-être sa part de bénéfices?), plus encore emprunte, prête même l'occasion. Il passe sans fin de l'argent liquide aux marchandises et aux lettres de change qui transportent son avoir comme par voie aérienne, tantôt tarifs réduits, 0,75% par mois pour une brève distance et quand il s'agit de marchands plus ou moins associés ses affaires; tantôt tarifs très élevés quand il s'agit de longues distances, de repatriements de fonds, ainsi 20-25% pour un retour de Surate Ispahan.

«La netteté de l'exemple, sa valeur d'échantillon soulignée par la précision des détails, donne une idée inattendue des facilités de commerce et de crédit dans l'Inde, des réseaux d'échanges locaux très diversifiés auxquels Hovhannês, dévoué commis, dévoué serviteur et marchand adroit, s'intègre avec facilité, trafiquant de marchandises précieuses ou ordinaires, légères et pondéreuses. Il voyage, certes, mais qu'a-t-il du colporteur? Si l'on voulait à tout prix une comparaison, il me ferait plutôt penser à ce nouveau marchand anglais du *private market*, sans cesse en mouvement, allant d'auberge en auberge, concluant ici un marché, ailleurs un autre, selon les prix et l'occasion, s'associant avec tel ou tel compère et allant son chemin imperturbablement. Ce marchand-là, qu'on présente toujours comme le novateur qui a secoué les vieilles règles du marché médiéval anglais, c'est pour moi l'image la plus proche de ces hommes d'affaires qu'on aperçoit à travers le livre de route de Hovhannês. Avec cette différence que l'Angleterre n'a pas les dimensions additionnées de la Perse, de l'Inde du Nord, du Népal et du Tibet» (20).

Armenian capital was acting along all the routes of the old world from Novgorod to Hyderabad, from Ispahan to Cracow, from Basrah to Astrakhan, from Sining to Amsterdam and London and even to various points in Africa (21).

To give an approximate idea of this capital power it may be enough to say that the well known family Shehrimanian, settled in Venice from New Julfa, is estimated to have been one of

the the richest families in Europe in the first half of the 18th century (22).

According to Curtin, the Armenians «have been the most successful of trading groups in the broader Asian trade. and the individual fortunes they accumulated were at least as great as those of the most successful merchants in London or Amsterdam». He enumerates then some of the main reasons of their success: the choice of operating regions left empty by their stronger rivals, the masterly use of the most varied kinds of transport, the development of a communication net between their commercial diasporas, the tradition transmitted through generations of their diplomatic experience and of the skill to act as intercultural mediators, their ability to enjoy the sympathy and protection of mighty sovereigns (23).

It is interesting to mention in this context that the merchant's manual, entitled *Gandz chaphoy* and printed in Amsterdam in 1699 by Ghukas of Vanand, opens with the words of Christ: «Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them» (Mt. 7, 12). Commerce is of course the art of making profit as much as possible. But the awareness that this cannot mean a wild course to profit, that profit itself has to be submitted to a law and, especially, to an ethical law, as well as the declaration of this awareness, as a basic principle, initiating to the subject, are significant.

Here we touch upon a very interesting feature of the conception of economics held by these Armenian merchants. It lies somewhere between modernity and non-modernity, if we mean by “modernity” that process which lead to a total emancipation of all human activities (politics, economics, art) from the primacy of the religious or, even, of the purely ethical values. The Armenian merchants appear on this point as people rooted in profoundly traditional Christian or religious ethics, wisely reconciling its requirements with a very intense pursuing of economic aims and profit. We can see in this attitude something almost Kantian, and also something very actual and urgent in that, very near to the more recent conceptions of economical activity which assigns more and more importance to the necessity of respecting ethical values in order to save those activities from self-destruction (24).

I think it would not be reckless to assert, without undue generalization and false mystification, that both the attitudes of ethicity and of cosmopolitan openness have been a distinguishing feature of the behaviour of many Armenian merchants as a commercial group. The following example, although of a rare generosity, is nonetheless of a singular eloquence giving an idea of the sense of ethics, but especially of the worldwide openness of these merchants: Petros Oskan, a prominent merchant of Madras, after having built many things in the country, left in his will 60,000 rupees to the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, 60,000 rupees to the Holy See of Rome, 50,000 rupees to the Holy Saviour of Jerusalem, 30,000 rupees to the monastery of Surb Karapet in Mush, and 30,000 rupees to the Muslim sanctuaries of Mecca. Hence no wonder that these men have been so warmly appreciated by such an outstanding and rational philosopher as Kant, the most authoritative theoretician at the same time of Illuministic ethics (25).

Some Armenians of our days would perhaps even judge excessive such a magnanimity as that of Petros Oskan and of many others of those times. This is due of course to the disenchanting shock of the Catastrophe of Genocide, to the weakening of their reliance on a basic correctness of human relationship. I do not think, however, that an eventual transformation of some Armenian attitudes, subsequent to the Genocide, has involved a substantial change in the bases of the Armenian world vision. A full overcoming of the Genocide trauma will still certainly require time, and especially international understanding to heal its

wounds.

C. The capital-culture marriage

Let us mention that some of the greatest printers of the 17th century, as the Vanandian (*Vanandetsi*) brothers, were themselves dealers in capital.

Sensitivity to culture has been a real, if not always dominant feature of Armenian capitalism. The thick network of schools, institutions, charitable societies and other social works, functioning without any financial support from any State, would have been unthinkable without that sensitivity.

The example of the Vanandetsi is a paradigmatic case of the happy marriage between capital and culture. But still more emblematic was the city of New Julfa itself, recently formed by the Armenians whom Shah Abbas compelled to immigrate at the beginning of the 17th century. With its Holy Saviour monastery, theological Academy, library, its active printing press, and its legendary merchants New Julfa was more than a symbol, it was to a greater extent the reality itself of exploding Armenian capital and of its cultural engagement. The city functioned all along the 17th century and somewhat further as a control and shunting point of the world-wide Armenian commerce (26).

Other reference points for the cultural renewal that marks these decades as a “pre-rebirth” period were mainly some academic training centres in Armenia itself as those of Etchmiadzin and of Baghesh on one side, and the great printing centres abroad such as those of Livorno, Marseilles, Amsterdam, Constantinople. We must also remember that the signals of this revival were not limited to literature or, better, to the written forms of culture, but involved many other expressions, especially in the fields of the visual and plastic arts as represented in the world-famous Kütahya (Kutina) pottery, and architecture (27).

Among the many outstanding achievements of Armenian printing in this period, two deserve special mention as to our purpose of picking out signals of the close Armenian relationship to the European world and its progress. Those signals prepare at the same time the spreading of the Enlightenment trends among the Armenians.

One of those achievements is the “World atlas” (*Hamatarats ashkharhagrut'awn*) published by Thomas and Ghukas of Vanand in 1695. It is a masterpiece of its kind attesting an updated interest in the most recent attainments of the European geographical science. The motivation guiding the publishers in this difficult enterprise is also immediately related to the world of commerce. They mention it in the colophon of the manual for the use of the atlas: “to help merchants, especially the Armenian”.

The other masterpiece worth mentioning is the edition of the Bible by Oskan Vardapet of Erevan. Let us quote one of the most recent and authoritative judgements on the philological value of this work in the context of its time: «Confronted by a number of arduous critical problems ... Oskan nonetheless recognized empirically, without raising dogmatic objections, the practical difficulties involved in multilingual translations of traditional sacred texts. At the time when Richard Simon - whom he knew and who sometimes referred to him - was persecuted for having studied the problem, Oskan, despite his errors, showed an admirable constancy, energy and fixity of purpose ... Nonetheless what is most important, perhaps, is the impact that the work had throughout educated Europe. Armenian printing had surpassed the limits of the purely Armenian: for the first time Western scholars were forced to take it into

consideration» (28).

Two other publications of great meaning are yet to be mentioned here: the edition of the “History” of Movses of Khoren (Amsterdam 1695) and the “Philosophical Physics or Science of the Elements” (1702).

Two historical books were published in this period: Arak‘el of Davrezh (1669) and Movses of Khoren (1695). I think that this choice was also not fortuitous. Araquel’s edition is easily understandable as he is the main and the most complete historian relating recent events of Armenia and of the colonies from 1586 and the book was printed - the first of its kind to be so - during the author's life time. As to Movses of Khoren, this choice was due of course to the fact that Movses was the first historian to trace the origins of the Armenians, and was considered as the Father of Armenian Historiography.

I think, however, that another motivation also influenced the choice. Movses’ History was the only document to give a full witness of Armenian Antiquity, to make it real and living. In an age of great revival of Greek and Roman Antiquity as were the beginnings of the Modern era, it was fitting for these Armenians living in the heart of European humanism to go in search of something that might be able in any way to build a parallel to that. Khorenats’i’s edition also had the effect of introducing this work into the circuit of European science.

The book Philosophical Physics, although of a lesser technical perfection in content, was another attempt, like the World Geographical Atlas, to line up with the development of modern science. Other important attempts in this sense were two unpublished works by Matt‘eos of Vanand: the translation of a “Treatise of Anatomy” (1690) and the “Astrolabius” (1694).

IV. The second phase towards Enlightenment: Armenian Humanism, 1700-1840

A. Mekhitar and his work

The greatest novelty of the 18th century in Armenian culture is doubtless Abbot Mekhitar's work and foundation. This is not the proper place to recall once again the many achievements of Mekhitar and his disciples as evaluated by Armenian and foreign scholars both in terms of enthusiastic and admiring judgements as well as of reserves, doubts, and sometimes even of negative attitudes (29).

I would like, however, to point out immediately what, in my opinion, in Mekhitar's and his successors' work formed the new in the Armenian reality, and in what sense and to what extent a further impulse to approaching ancient and contemporary European culture may be seen in it.

I still believe, as I have proposed on various occasions, that the new in Mekhitar's ideals and work consist essentially of two points: a) a full Christian humanism as to their cultural content; b) an ecumenism ahead of times as to their strictly religious-theological dimension. Let us consider them as concisely as possible (for bibliography refer to notes 19 and 29).

As far the ecumenical dimension is concerned, Mekhitar tread, at least he believed to do so, on the wake of a tradition that certainly existed in the history of the Armenian Church on a larger scale than in many other ecclesial traditions, due to a particular historical situation and especially to the inspiration of such an exceptional ecumenical figure as St. Nerses Shnorhali,

absolutely transcending not only his own time and country but centuries of Christian history. With regard to their ecumenical “ideology” the best we can say of Shnorhali as well as of Mekhitar is that they did not share either in the heavy Medieval heritage nor in the not less ambiguous trends of modern times. In fact, not differently from the Middle Age, a prey to uninterminable struggles of power, also the Modern era with its accompanying movements both of the Reformation and of the Counter-Reformation has been unfortunately marked by a strongly anti-ecumenical inspiration on religious-confessional grounds. Shnorhali's and Mekhitar's ecumenical attitude share in the atemporal transcendence of the Gospel or of the greatest religious and philosophical intuitions of all ages (30).

I think we can define the substance of Mekhitar's ecumenism in that, although moving from the standpoint of a Roman Catholic ecclesiology - that of the jurisdictional primacy of the Pope -, he came to affirm without any shadow of doubt the full orthodoxy of the Armenian Church and the full legitimacy of her liturgical and canonical traditions.

Mekhitar's Christian humanism also had a very deep rooted tradition in Medieval Armenia. In this regard we should remember that European humanism had a similar rooting in a Medieval tradition too, especially kept alive in the great monastic and academic centres. But as something new, a new wind, a new spirit was born with the 14th-15th centuries' Humanism in Europe, so was it also in Mekhitar's and his successors' work.

This newness is, I believe, mainly that Mekhitar and the Mekhitarians opened up to the whole range of the European literary culture from its first mythological expressions till its most recent, contemporary creations. Some limits still remained of course, due to the monastic character of the Mekhitarist institution. However, «never had the Armenian spirit developed in its earlier history such a close, such a large and such a permanent contact with Western culture as that developed by the Mekhitarist school» (31) during the age of its highest productivity. Thus the way was cleared to all further evolution.

Just to get a general idea of the extraordinary level of achievement of the Armenians in humanistic modernity, it will be enough to mention Mekhitar's Haykazean or Thesaurus of the Armenian language whose first volume, published in 1742, follows the similar works for Latin (1541-1543), Greek (1572), French (1606), Italian (1612), and Spanish (1726-1739), preceding those for English (1755) and German (1774-1786) (32).

B. The position of Armenian capital

To say it in simplified terms, this period of full humanism in Armenian culture is also the period of the passage of Armenian capital from the khojas to the amiras and sarrafs (33); in other words this is the period when the worldwide character and role of Armenian capital, centred in the colossal trade without frontiers of the top class merchants of New Julfa, the celebrated khojas and their associates, slightly declines giving up its place to a strong local capitalism in various colonies, especially in Constantinople and in India.

Armenian capital from its dominating worldwide status passes to a more modest condition: to be present, although in prominent positions, in a more limited range of action, that is mainly within the boundaries of single States or even of more than one State, but without that worldwide network of actual relationship and mutual communication that made it effectively and compactly present almost in all the main fields of contemporary economics and commerce.

We hereby cannot analyze the factors and process of this transformation which is, I think, of great importance to understand some later evolutions of a specifically cultural nature. In any case this rising high bourgeoisie will be nearly till the mid-19th century a prominent protagonist of the Armenian social life and institutions, and an active and often illuminated supporter of culture.

C. The problem of language

One of the most decisive features of this period concerns the evolution of the Armenian language and especially its influence on the destiny both of ancient and modern Armenian.

Firstly, ancient Armenian finds again in this period the splendour of its best phases and writers, after almost three centuries of decadence and deformation due especially to the latinizing current, and better known as *latinabanut'awn* or *latinaban hayer²n*: a tendency of modeling the Armenian syntax and even morphological shapes on Latin, flourished in the late 17th century in the religious circles pushing uniatism to its most extreme consequences (34).

If the recovery of the old literary Armenian is the most evident achievement of this age in the field of language, the evolution into modern Armenian will reveal itself as no less decisive. It is during this period that the so called *ramkeren*, the vulgar or vernacular, which had made its appearance since the 14th century in mingled forms with middle Armenian, acquires its own status, its own dignity as a written language, as the language of the "world", of secular affairs, with its own denomination or qualification as *k'aghak'akan hayer²n* or *ashkharhabar*, that is "civil Armenian" or "secular language". This latter denomination will prevail in the next century.

Here there is, however, an important point to make: although the "civil" language of the 18th century and the "secular" language of the mid-19th century are of the same rank or nature as to their linguistic status, they differ as to their linguistic features.

The splitting of modern literary Armenian at the middle of the last century into two variants, the Eastern and Western, is too well known. The fact is that such a distinction is not in question in so far as the *k'aghak'akan hayer²n* is concerned. This written vernacular language, used by many an author of the Eastern and Western fractions of the Armenian population, has an almost unitary character as much as unity at a formation stage of the language is allowed. The *k'aghak'akan hayer²n* was actually a common means of literary expression for all Armenians. Hence most probably it was also, aside from the various dialects, a common means of oral communication, especially used and developed by the travelling merchants (35).

Thus we have to distinguish, also for this reason, at least a double phase in the process of affirmation of modern Armenian: *a)* a first phase, corresponding to the period which we actually are considering, when modern Armenian acquires its own status as a means of literary communication; *b)* the second phase, corresponding to the next period, when modern Armenian leads a successful struggle to monopolize the field of literary production.

During these two phases of its progressive affirmation modern Armenian shows two different behaviours as to its linguistic features. Unitary, i.e. unique for all the Armenians in the first phase, it splits very soon in the second phase into two literary variants, already prepared or announced towards the end of the prior period. Their difference is based on the dialects of Erevan and of Constantinople, respectively for the Eastern and Western Armenian.

Such a differentiation is certainly due to some intralinguistic as well as to

literary-historical factors: as, for instance, the fact that the forerunners of the second phase in the East and in the West used respectively the dialects of revan and of Constantinople. No doubt this is a valid reason. I do not think, however, that it is sufficient. Nor can a sufficient explanation derive from the fact that Tiflis and Constantinople were already the respective social and cultural capitals of the Eastern and Western Armenians (36).

I believe that the deepest reason of this subsequent splitting is that the strength of capital and of influence of the dominating transversal class of the Armenian merchants, who had built a strong link through the various Armenian communities around the world, witnessed a gradual decline, as already mentioned, from the mid-18th century. The emerging “aristocracy” or high bourgeoisie of Constantinople, of Tiflis, and of Madras were no longer able, beginning from the end of the 18th century, to develop a functional linkage network throughout all the Armenian communities as their great forefathers had. Consequent to this lack, the somehow independent evolution of the Eastern and Western Armenians in strongly different political, social and cultural environments was more than natural. The lack of an effectively uniting function, as that which was earlier exercised by the economical factors, notwithstanding the spiritual ties of an ideal unity, strengthened the influence of the environmental factors. These same factors led hence to separate evolutions (Eastern and Western) the popular language, the ashkharhabar, according to its geographical and political collocation, precisely in the moment when it was making its own way towards acquiring the definitive standard of a written language.

D. The origins of modern Armenian theatre: Lvov, Venice, Constantinople, Tiflis

Armenian antiquity certainly knew the classical Greek theatre. It seems, however, that we cannot speak of the existence of an Armenian theatre in the real sense of the word in the period from the creation of the Armenian alphabet until 17th century (37).

The first plays in Armenian in modern times are attested to in Lvov in 1668. It is probable that this dramatic activity may have continued for some time. There is, however, no evidence of any lasting activity either in Lvov or elsewhere. Thus the Lvovian experience remains an isolated phenomenon to which goes the honour of a chronological primacy, and symbolic importance.

The real beginning of modern Armenian theatre we meet only some fifty years later in Venice, at the Mekhtarist monastery of San Lazzaro. Here the first performance is attested to in 1730 (38). From this date on we find intensively increasing dramatic activity there which will also appear at the Moorat and Raphaël Colleges of Padua and Venice soon after their foundation respectively in 1834 and 1836. The first generation of pupils of these Colleges, who later in Constantinople will act as leading figures of the *Zart'onk'*, will also be the promoters and propagators of theatre among the Armenian masses.

Theatre will soon spread, even earlier than in Constantinople, among the Armenians of India, due at the same time to the very close links of this colony with Venice and to an environment deeply permeated by the British culture. Also the Armenians of the Russian Empire, and especially those of Caucasus will develop a lively dramatic activity, influenced partly from the Mekhitarist school, whose range of influence covered all Armenians, and partly from the Russian world. After an initial period of dramatic activity among the Armenians of Crimea, rather at a level of school plays, Tiflis will be the main centre of Eastern Armenian

theatre, and will reach, as well as the Armenian theatre of Constantinople, high levels of professional performance.

We cannot go into detail here about the characteristics, quality, polyvalence of this movement, nor its importance even for the Turkish language and theatre (39). But we can affirm without hesitation that, in spite of some limits - such as the lack of actresses, due to the monastic ambiance - Mekhitarist humanism, with its interest in theatre, and especially for the choice of its subjects, including not only classical, but also modern, even contemporary plays, gave a new and, in some respects, stronger confirmation of its vital and productive contact with Europe and its ideas, and thus indirectly also to the diffusion of some new ideas and ideals resulting from the European Enlightenment.

V. The appearance of properly Illuministic trends

The last decades of the 18th century witness in some areas of the Armenian social presence, and especially among the Armenians of India, in Madras, the appearance of some trends which bear, in our opinion, clear symptoms of inspiration, at least, from some features of the ongoing processes of contemporary Western Enlightenment movements. I think that the attempts, made in India, to formulate an Armenian political thought, and the birth of the first Armenian periodical, also in India, belong to this chain of trends.

A. The "Armenian Question" and Armenian political thought. The Madras movement

Wanting to indicate a conventional date for the effective position of the Armenian Question in the modern age we could see the secret Council held at Etcmiadzin in 1677, during the catholicosate of Hakob IV of Jugha, as the first official expression, in the framework of a concerted and organized action, of Armenian aspirations towards liberation (40). In fact this Council gave the impulse for the diplomatic activity of Israyel Ori and the liberation struggle of Dawit' B²k (41).

All these attempts, as to their ideological inspiration and politological structure, were still probably in line with a Medieval world vision rather than with ideas and incentives coming either from European modernity or Enlightenment.

Their failure, however, did not put an end to the plans of the Armenians. On the contrary their increasing contact in the meanwhile with European modernity lead them, after a relatively apolitical period, to develop an initial political thought, this time under the influence of the European, and especially, the British Enlightenment.

The honour of having been the first promoters of such a political vision belongs to the Armenians of India in the second half of the 18th century. In a close contact with England and its achievements, the Armenians of India started thinking of the ways, conditions, implications, and possible geographical alliances for the building of a State, although not necessarily independent. They even started thinking about the nature and the Constitution of this future State.

Two books, published in 1772 and 1773, and two brilliant figures can be regarded as the symbols of this political movement, surrounded by a whole series of people active in various fields: merchants, printers, clergy, writers. The two leading names, although with different ideological and programmatical orientations, were Hovs²p'/Joseph Emin and Movs²s

Baghramian.

The former thought to reestablish the Armenian kingdom in some sort of alliance with the Georgian Kingdom under the Russian high protectorate. His action, consisting of much travel and “diplomatic” contact, was in line with that of Ori, although we have in Emin a major awareness of the implications of Armenia's geographical position (42). His autobiography, an account of his trips and action, written in English, was only published in 1918.

Movses Baghramian was a more rigorous intellectual and published in 1772, almost as a political pamphlet, a book with a significant title: *Nor tetrak or koch'i yordorak* (New Booklet Called Exhortation). This was the expression of a very important group of India, centred in Madras, which included such prominent personalities of the period as the printer Shahamir Shahamirian, his son Hakob, and the merchant Grigor Khochachian. Baghramian tells explicitly that the book aims to “awaken the Armenian youth from their lazy sleepy drowsiness”. After having presented a short outlook of Armenian history and geography, he concludes that the despotic rule of the old monarchy, the lack of unity, industry and intellectual pursuits of the people were among the main internal causes of the fall of the Armenian kingdom. Hence Baghramian calls for a new Armenian State with a republican constitution (43).

One year later the Madras group published an anonymous book, entitled *Orogayt' p'arats'* (Snare of Glory). Most probably this was also by Baghramian, or written perhaps by a team under his leadership. The book sets forth a detailed constitution for the proposed republic of Armenia. It is strongly influenced by Enlightenment philosophy, especially by Lock and Montesquieu. In the preface reference is made to George Washington and aspiration for freedom of the American colonists from Britain. Both books, printed in a limited number - somewhat more than one hundred copies - and with very limited printing means (44), were sent to prominent Armenians and to foreign dignitaries (45).

However these political visions, especially that of Joseph Emin, present more than one trend of a Utopian thought, they represent at the same time a good knowledge and assimilation of the main elements of the European political thought and movements. We can even consider as surprisingly progressive for their time the republican proposals of Baghramian, at a date when neither the American nor the French republican models had yet been established.

Although entirely agreeing with Louise Nalbandian that “the Madras community was the earliest and most active publisher of political propoganda for the Armenian cause”, I would like to add and stress that the Madras movement was much more than simple propoganda; it was political theory at its first steps. Unfortunately, the Madras pattern is not followed by an organic, strong, systematical development. Over the entire 19th century the Armenian political thought will express itself by novels, pamphlets, newspaper or review articles, without attaining an overall vision, analytical or synthetic, of social and political issues, some of them of vital importance, on which an often lively debate was being carried on.

B. The first Armenian periodicals. The triangle Madras-Venice-Constantinople

The birthplace of the Armenian periodical press is also Madras. The first periodical to appear is *Azdarar* (Monitor), in 1793, published by a married priest Harut'iwn K'ahanay Shmavonian. The language is grabar, old Armenian, which was still accessible to the average learned people. Although it will have a short life (1793-1796), its appearance is doubtless a fact of utmost significance.

It was completely in line with the efforts being carried on in Europe, under the influence of the Illuministic ideas, to bring culture nearer to the popular masses, to build standards of mass education.

The date of *Azdarar's* publication, 1793, is a relatively early date, indeed, not only for a Middle Eastern culture but even with respect to the European cultures (46).

Periodicals in modern Armenian followed soon. A main precursor of the periodical press, with a complexively longer life prospect, than Shahamirian's *Azdarar* was the Mekhitarist monk Fr. Ghukas Inchichian with his popular Almanachs: *Taregrut'iwink'* (Annals - 1799-1802), *Eghanak Biwzandian* (Byzantine Season - 1800-1820). *Ditak Biwzandian* (Byzantine Observer / 1812-1816), the twice weekly, was on the contrary a magazine of political actuality. All these were published in Venice, in *ashkharhabar*, and were soon spread in Constantinople, through the other Armenian colonies and the homeland. They laid solid foundations not only for the periodical and daily press (the first daily press will appear in 1840 - cf. infra), but also for the progress and definitive victory of the popular language. *Ditak Biwzandian* has been reasonably considered as the forerunner of *Pazmaveb/Bazmavep*, the Patriarch of the Armenian and Armenological press, published without interruption from 1843 till today. Initially, and for a long time a paper of popular education, it later changed into an armenological review and is actually the organ of the Mekhitarist Academy of San Lazzaro in Venice.

VI. Towards full secularization

A. The notion of "secularization"

The notion of a full secularization is, I believe, the one which can best define and in a global way the trait of the *Zart'onk'* period. The notion of "secularization" is a very complex one (47). Once again we cannot here investigate, nor even simply expose, the reasons and various aspects of this complexity. I would like only to call attention to the following points.

The secularization process in the West precedes that of modernity, and clears the way for the latter. The first phase of the Western secularization can be connected or put in parallel with the process of emancipation of the written culture from the dominion of the Latin language and of ecclesiastical-canonical topics. This happens, at least in Italy and France, in the twelfth through fourteenth centuries. We can distinguish three main results of this process:

a. the status of literary or "high" language for the vernacular and its near monopoly in the field of artistic literature;

b. the creation of a new artistic literature, also in prose, in which profane or secular topics prevail;

c. the end of the domination in literature and science of the clergy to the profit of laymen, even of modest origins.

Other parallel evolutions, during this first phase, in art, in society, in politics also form moments of the same secularization process. Thus, for instance, in Italy the revolution of Giotto's new style or the rise of the free cities, and in France the opposition of its monarchy to the Papal power.

The second great phase of the secularization process in Europe coincides with the Renaissance upheaval: the abandoning of Renaissance thought and philosophy not only of the

theocratic, but also of the theocentric and theological conception of the world, of man, of science and of polity. Machiavelli, Galileo and Hobbes can be considered as the most emblematic figures in this respect.

However, Europe will still know other and more radical phases of secularization: *a)* the refusal of any religious power, proclaimed by the French Revolution; *b)* the refusal of any religious presence in public life, proclaimed by 19th century positivist and materialist currents, but especially by the Marxist State atheism.

A last and ultimate radical phase of secularization is probably the one developed in our century, especially under the influence of neo-positivist trends of thought. If language is only the sum of conventional signs and can express but tautologies, if every human value is purely the result of a convention, there remains no basis for any absolute value, for anything sacred or transcendent in life. Only a blind, irrational jump in faith can return to these values, but there is no more place for a rational act.

B. The secularization process among the Armenians

Let us now follow in its main steps how the Armenian world proceeded towards secularization. But before let me make it immediately clear what I mean by the expression “full secularization” in connection with the Zart‘onk‘ movement. It does not correspond to any of the above mentioned phases of European secularization from the French Revolution onwards, as a prevailing ideology in Armenian life and society. It means only the end of the cultural domination of the Church and of the clergy, and consequently the intellectual emancipation of the popular masses.

This emancipation is also to be understood somewhat differently than its Western parallel which was strongly determined by anticlerical and antireligious currents. These currents in the West are to be explained, partially at least, as reactions to the centuries of dominant clericalism (48). In Armenia, on the contrary, although even in a theocratic context, the Church has distinguished herself much more for her service, especially to the survival cause of the Armenian entity, than for ambitions of dominion. She has always figured, both in the national awareness and in the collective imagery of the Armenians, as a reference point of national identity. Hence there were no such traumatic breaks and hostile attitudes to the Church, as in the West, in the Armenian secularization process (49).

We must still add in this connection that if the secularization process was carried out without a hitch, an important reason was also that this process was to a large extent brought about by clerics, especially by the Mekhitarist monks, through their schools (50).

A first step on the way towards secularization is made by the Armenians already in the 13th century when their poetry opens to all kind of profane topics and to the vernacular in its middle Armenian phase. This happens not only on the scale of the popular poetry, as in the epic of Dawit‘ of Sasun whose first developments are certainly to be traced back to much earlier periods than the 13th century.

At this first great epoch of the late Medieval Armenian poetry its opening to worldliness is carried on by such outstanding and highly learned poets as were Konstandin Erznkats‘i and Frik. The fact that they wrote in a middle Armenian, strongly influenced by the r‘amkôrên, does not mean that they were “popular” poets in the sense of a lack

of learning or of literary professionalism.

But we have also to point out, at the same time, that this phenomenon, so to say, of “poetical secularization” did not change, as it happened in the West, the status of literary language, still an exclusive privilege of grabar. This can be, of course, rather easily explained in that no new ethnicity was here on the rise as it was, on the contrary, in the West. Thus the change of the linguistic status could take place in the Armenian reality as the result of a very long process, but especially of actual necessities, not simply as a question of poetical or artistic expression. Such necessities will effectively present themselves in the context of worldwide trade of the merchants of the 17th century to whom we owe, as already said, the first recognition of the status of the vernacular Armenian.

Another much more important difference in this first phase of the Armenian secularization process from the one in the West is the following: the great innovation in poetry, in effect since the 13th century, did not influence in a parallel way literary production in general. Such an extension of the new spirit to the various literary genres will take place concurrently to the elevation of the vernacular to literary status, that is during the 17th century. The interest of this period in romantic literature is well known and the trends of modernity that this kind of literature revealed in the Armenian world have also been pointed out (51).

Thus we can say that the second half of the 16th and the 17th century form a new and more decisive phase in the process of Armenian secularization. Moreover we must recall in connection with these newly mentioned evolutions in language and literature what characterized in this period the production of the book: it ceased being a monopoly of the Church and of monastic institutions. By this I mean the production of the book both as a technical enterprise and its contents (52).

All these phenomena will not, however, be sufficient to lead contemporary Armenian culture and social reality to full secularization in the above established sense. The main reason why the 17th century could not realize this achievement is to be seen, I think, in that the cultural growth during this pre-rebirth period, notwithstanding its more than one original and modern dimension, was not of such breadth as to make possible the development of a full humanism as will occur in the next century. Nor did there yet exist the most suitable organic conditions for such a development as those created later, mainly in virtue of Mekhitar's work with the foundation of his monastic Academy.

In fact, although the secularization process had made many a meaningful step during the 17th century, Armenian society still needed the intervention of the clergy for a full cultural rebirth. This was mainly due, of course, to the lack of appropriate instruction and education for laymen. Their methodical creation will be one of the highest merits of the cultural agents of the 18th and of the first half of the next century.

C. Main achievements of the Zart'onk' period

Let us now examine as concisely as possible the main achievements of the Zart'onk'.

In an earlier article I tried to define in the following terms Zar t'onk's novelty with regard to the Veratznund: «this was the period when the accomplishments of the Rebirth left their élitist environments wherein the learned culture of the past had always been guarded, and became the common property of the whole people, in both the productive and the receptive

sense» (53).

The definitive victory of modern Armenian as the only standard literary language is certainly one of the most significant events of this period, indicative of the passage from the élitist environments to the people. This passage, however, was the result of a whole series of concurring factors and attainments.

i. Among the most basic organic or institutional factors the rapid development of a modern efficient network of schools for the people, even with special attention for its weakest classes, is to be mentioned (54). As already mentioned, this movement to create broad instruments for popular education, already underway in the prior period, was one of the main factors of the remarkable changes in Armenian society in general and especially of the extraordinary level of the average culture of the new popular masses.

To obtain a general idea of the average level of popular education among Armenians towards the end of the last century it may be enough to say that Armenian schools in the Ottoman empire could count more than two hundred thousand students, or about 10% of the whole population. Nearly one third of these pupils were female, and there were even mixed schools (55). It will be easier to realize the significance of these numbers, if we think that a ten per cent proportion is today a current percentage of the scholastic population on the whole in many developed countries (56), and that up to recent decades there was in some regions of Anatolia a forty per cent proportion of illiteracy (57).

As to their programs, they were of the highest level (58). In language training, Armenian and Ottoman Turkish were already mastered in primary school and the teaching of a foreign language, especially French, was introduced in the third year of primary school. Let us point out that the idea of teaching foreign languages at an early scholarly age has become popular in Europe only during the last decades.

ii. The quick development of the periodical and daily press is another one of the great achievements of this period. We have already spoken of the first steps of the Armenian periodical press through Madras, Venice, and Constantinople. In 1840 the first Armenian daily, *Arshaluys Arartean* (The Araratian Dawn) appeared in Smyrna (İzmir), in modern Armenian of course.

It is to be observed that the quick development of the press, and especially of the daily one, also worked as a very influential factor for the final victory of modern Armenian as the single literary language (59). At the same time it was also a very efficient channel of communication with Europe, with all the ideal, social, political fermentations moving Europe. Thus we see, for instance, that a very young intellectual of twenty years such as Petros Durian was able to read a speech of Gambetta in French only some days after it was pronounced, and could discuss it immediately in the Armenian press of Constantinople that was read all over Anatolia by the Armenian population (60).

iii. The latter consideration leads us to the third point, that is to the very lively, strong and quick communication ties that linked the population of the *gawar*, the inner provinces of the Empire, to the Capital. This can be easily realized in the field of education, the press, political ideas, and the diffusion of the newly born theatre. So lively and immediate was this communication that often it was the *gawar* itself providing the Capital's community with ideas

and manpower as in the emblematic case of Khrimian Hayrik (61). This affirmation does not include, however, a necessarily and wholly positive evaluation of the currents of ideas and movements that animated and even agitated this rapidly developing exchange.

iv. Another important step on the way to secularization was social change: changes in habits and customs, in community affairs and administration, generally speaking in social life and behaviour, and also in the conception of human and social values. Among the changes that Armenian society went through in a remarkably short time, we must underline especially the women's emancipation movement.

a. As to how deep these changes were we can get an idea from contemporary literature. A profound difference separates, for instance, the generation of Zapel Yesayian, sent by her parents at the age of eighteen to Paris to study towards the end of the century, and that of her grandmother when we see facts of the latter's life, as the engagement preliminaries, described by Zapel in *Silihdari part²znerë* (The Gardens of Silihdar), her exquisite childhood memories.

Some other examples of changes may be the following ones: the use of a European hat (instead of the Oriental fes), very rare at mid-century, had become normal towards its end, as we can see in Yerukhan's novel *Amirayin aghjikë* (The Daughter of the Amira) (62). Also the usage of a coffin, very rare still in the Seventies, had become almost normal some decades later (63).

b. Another meaningful, but little-known and studied evolution is the formation of Armenian Freemasonry or Armenian speaking Lodges in this period. Already many Armenian merchants are mentioned, especially in the British Lodges, during the 18th century. The link between the various Lodges in the Middle East all the way to India was even called "All Armenia in the East Indies", since the Armenians formed a prominent ethnic element in the public and economical life of these countries (64). But the first official Armenian Lodges were founded in Smyrna in 1864 (*Tigran* Lodge) and in Constantinople in 1867 (*S²r* Lodge) (65). Many of the best known intellectuals of the time were among the founders or first members of these Masonic Lodges.

The diffusion of Freemasonry is certainly another trait of Armenian modernity. Freemasonry is indeed a phenomenon connected with the modern world, however ancient its remote roots may be. Also in this case, Armenian modernity and secularization behave with a great sense of measure and of a living tradition of values. The Armenian masons will never accept as a common attitude any kind of refusal of religion and of its presence in society. They were rather related, especially in the initial period, to the British Lodges. But even when they were in direct contact with the French Lodge "Grand Orient" for a choice of the founders of the Constantinopolitan Lodge *S²r*, who believed that a French dependence would better help the solution of their problems and the promotion of Armenian society, they found themselves in disagreement with the religious orientation of the French Lodge. The Grand Master of *S²r*, Serovb² Aznavour, wrote the following words to his French referee: «I wouldn't like to hide this fact from you, that if recognition of the Existence of the Almighty and the Immortality of the soul are denied and written off the Books of constitution, you will not only lose and be opposed by the whole of Ser Lodge, but you will also meet similar

opposition from many Brethren in Union d'Orient, along with the Grand Lodges in Freemasonry» (66).

c. Woman's emancipation developed in such a context of a strongly and rapidly changing society. Changes, however, generally, as one can easily realize from the different cases analyzed up to this moment, did not mean violent or radical breaks with tradition.

As to feminine emancipation, it is to be mainly understood in the sense of woman's full participation or involvement in the modernization and secularization process of Armenian society, rather than in the sense of a passage from a form of domestic slavery to a relative liberation.

In fact, there was in Armenia, as speaking in Anatolian cultures, a long and deep rooted tradition of consciousness of female dignity. I had touched upon the question in an earlier article pointing out already in pagan Armenia and onwards elements attesting to a very high consideration of the woman especially in the familiar nucleus (67). Thus, for instance, the myth of Ara the Handsome, whatever its origins and genetical evolution may be, is an eloquent witness of how highly a man considered his wife. Persistently urged by the voluptuous Queen of Assyria, Semiramis, first to marry her and then at least to satisfy her passion, Ara refused out of love for his wife Nvard and his child, and paid for it with his life (68). To evaluate such an attitude in its full dimension we must take into account that even in monogamous cultures of antiquity polygamy of sovereigns was taken for granted.

The standard-bearer of female emancipation in late 19th century Armenian society is a woman, a writer of talent, Srбуhi Vahanian, married to Dussape (Tiusab), a high-ranking French personality of Constantinople, who will fully respect Srбуhi's freedom to lead her shocking struggle and to whom Srбуhi feels grateful for this.

Once again we cannot analyze in detail the phases and contents of this impassioned polemic which saw the most qualified intellectuals of the time, led respectively by Ret`eos Perperian and Grigor Zohrap, taking sides for or against Dussape (69).

I would like, however, to call attention to the fact that probably Dussape in her most daring work, her first novel *Mayta*, goes beyond her Western colleagues and companions in the struggle by stressing the necessity of woman's economical emancipation as a condition for her social emancipation (70).

Even if not fully achieved in all its implications, we can say that Dussape's and her supporters' struggle had tangible results in Armenian society. Among other testimonies, we see them reflected, for instance, in the great difference of a young girl's destiny in the face of her father's pressure to marry some person between the 1880's and the first decade of the twentieth. In Arp`iar Arp`iarian's novel *Datapartealë* (The Condemned), of 1885, Sat`enik is the victim of her father's choice of a husband for her, a choice that will lead her to the grave. On the contrary, in *Mijnord T`r Papan* of Yervand Otian, Zaruhi is already in a position to oppose her parents' wishes for her marriage.

Finally, we have to point out that although Dussape was the chief champion of women's rights, her work was preceded by a contextual maturation. Let us remember that the great lyrical poet Petros Durian (1851-1871) was also a great champion of woman's emancipation. Already in 1871, nine years before *Mayta*'s publication, Durian had taken up a decisive and

favourable stand towards the feminist movement in an article published in the daily *Oragir Kostandnupolsoy* (18th June 1871, no. 477). On the occasion of a public speech by a young Armenian lady, Aghavni Vardanian, Durian commented: «Her words made a strong influence. She proved that woman's lips are not drawn only to smile, to kiss and to fascinate, but also, and above all, to revolutionize. I consider it an honour for me to approve of that sublime missionary of heart and mind» (71).

In any case, the fact that a young lady could speak in public presupposes a movement already under way. It seems very reasonable to think that the beginnings of the modern female movement among the Armenians goes back at least as far as the first phase of the Zart'onk' and even earlier. We see, indeed, that the first apologies for a complete and modern education of the young girls, not subject to sexual discrimination, go back to the mid-18th century, to the pedagogical treatises of the Patriarch Yakob Nalian (72).

vi. I would see a final manifestation of the process of secularization in the religious quarrels that marked nearly three decades of the 19th century. Quarrels well known under the denomination of Hasunian - anti-Hasunian disputes, so called after the Armenian Catholic Patriarch of Cilicia and Primate of Constantinople Anton Petros IX Hasun (1867-1880). The Hasunian movement was the last great attempt of latinization of the Armenian rite, particularly in the canonical field. A strong reaction was formed against it, led especially by Mkhitarian intellectuals, old pupils of the Mekhitarist schools.

One of the prominent leaders of the anti-Hasunian reaction was the poet and educator Mkrtych' P²shiktashlian, who aimed to gather all the Armenians around some common ideals independent of their religious confession. He founded for this purpose a society called *Hamazgeats'* ("National" in the sense of concerning the whole nation), with brilliant proposals for founding schools, elevating people's average education level, and promoting a closer contact with Europe (73).

P²shiktashlian's ideal was inspired by a new and, of course, secularized conception of the idea of "nation" (*azg*), different from the Ottoman idea of *millet* which necessarily included one's religious confession, but also definitely different from the Illuministic idea of "nation", embodied in the Nation-State ideology.

P²shiktashlian had for his new idea of nation, for which he was challenged, no doubt, by the various fermentations of ideas in the West, also a profoundly rooted Armenian pattern. This went back basically to the creative work of Saint Mesrop Mashtots', the inventor of the Armenian alphabet in the 5th century: he certainly contributed more than any other hero in Armenian history to the formation and consolidation of the Armenian national self-consciousness. Consequently, P²shiktashlian's pattern of nation took its roots in the historical work of Movs's Khorenats'i, the keenest interpreter of Mesrop's philosophy, whose influence and prestige we have seen working since the very beginnings of Armenian modernity. The main element determining Armenian national identity was for Khorenats'i, and is now for P²shiktashlian, the common sense, the common consciousness of a common heritage, of a common history, common values and of a common destiny. Once again we have a fine example of how modernizing and secularizing Armenians looked for models in their own history trying to reconcile new ideas coming from the West with their ancestral values and to combine them into a new and happy synthesis (74).

For his ideals P²shiktashlian was accused of religious indifference and his Association

was condemned. But the idea had already cleared its way. We can say that confessional struggle among the Armenians, which sometimes had known bloody moments and was carried out with reciprocal disdain and hate, comes to an end towards the end of the century; however, purely theological, and often violent, polemics will continue up to our day.

D. Literary, poetical and artistic renewal

We have already alluded to how Armenian literature opened to modernity already in the second half of the 16th century (see n. 51). But a full literary renovation will not take place until the second half of the 19th century starting in the 1840's.

This can be easily explained by the same reasons as to why a full secularization process did not take place before the middle of the 19th century. A full renovation of Armenian literature and its getting into line with the current trends of Western literatures required as a premise the full development of Armenian humanism, the rediscovery of Armenian classicism as well as Western classics, a scientifically based awareness of the history and nature of the Armenian language, its inalienable features, the limits of its "purity" and of eventual borrowing from other languages as happened in the past, and last but not least a development of modern Armenian as to work as a fitting and flexible instrument to express all the nuances of contemporary thought and artistic sensibility. This last point was perhaps the one which was easier to accomplish once the prior conditions existed. But to bring to fruition all these processes was the task of the Rebirth or Veratznund period.

The opening to modernity, that we realize in the Armenian narrative literature of the 16th century, and especially in the romantic poem of Paris and Vienna, was indeed the result of a transformation or a rereading of the original late Medieval romance by a particularly modern minded adaptor in his Armenian version. However, the modern trend that now distinguishes Armenian literature starting from the 1840's century is a quickly accelerating opening to all the genres and novelties of European literary and artistic thought and sensitivity, and even to rather momentaneous fashions.

The first great European current that permeated Armenian literature in the 1840s was Romanticism. Indeed, Armenian Romanticism, which through its founder Alishan and exceptionally talented followers as the aboe mentioned Durian and P²shiktashlian will reach summits, was late born in comparison with the great European literature. But this relative delay will be largely recovered in the subsequent decades, because starting with the 1880's almost all the Western literary currents will have their immediate reflection in Armenian literature, and most frequently both in its Eastern and Western variants.

A particularly important consequence of this immediate getting in line with the most advanced European currents, that we can appreciate much better today after the unthinkable break of the Genocide-Catastrophe, was the rising interest in Armenian popular culture and folklore. Indeed, to this period belongs the discovery by Garegin Sruandztiants' of the popular epos *Sasunts'i Dawit'* (David of Sasun) and the invaluable work of Komitas Vardapet in recovering authentic Armenian music from the purest sources of the popular tradition. Needless to say that without the pioneering work of these and similar researchers, a great deal of what we have today of Armenian music and of Armenia's popular culture would be for ever lost.

E. The dialectics between identity and alterity, change and continuity, tradition and

evolution

We must, however, make it clear that this up to date sensitivity did not mean a slavish imitation of the European models. On the contrary there is often a happy marriage between Western forms, patterns, technique, poetics, theories, and an exquisitely Armenian sensitivity. We can point out as paradigms of this synthesis some of the greatest poets of Armenian modernity: Alishan, Dorian, P²shiktashlian, Metsarents', Varuzhan, Terian, Charents', or the musical genius of the above mentioned Komitas Vardapet, to mention only some cases of an outstanding achievement. All of them, however deeply and consciously concerned with the trends, forms, problems of contemporary Western poetry and poetics, or music, have converted these in such a personal expression that the seal of a millenary Armenian tradition is unmistakably present and immediately transparent (75).

The problems put to the Armenian self-consciousness by its close contact with the Western culture and its patterns often implied and still imply today, apart from the more general question of the dialectics between change and continuity, innovation and identity, also a more particular question linked directly with Armenian history: in fact Armenian culture, art, and forms of life have developed along centuries besides the land of Armenia, also on foreign soils, where destiny took many Armenians to settle. This peculiar situation shows, no doubt, in a clearer light the dialectics of identity and alterity that crossed through the whole cultural history of the Armenian people both in the homeland and in diaspora.

Those Armenians dispersed all over the world succeeded, even in most difficult periods when their country was dominated by alien forces, in developing in their diasporic situation a high standard culture, marked by a clear national character. This they were able to do in virtue of a singular understanding of their national identity and of its relationship with the surrounding and dominating cultures. We can define this self-consciousness, from a philosophical point of view, as a "multidimensional identity", and its relationship to environment as a "differentiated integration". The king of the Armenian troubadour tradition Sayath-Nova, and one of his most talented admirers in our time, Sergueï Parajanov, can be regarded as chief models of this "cosmopolitan" trend of Armenian culture in a happy synthesis with its being Armenian.

Such a tradition goes back to the significant artistic achievements of the Middle Ages and continues up to our days with a long series of artists, writers, merchants, people acting in every field of life, some of whom of international importance as, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the Balian family of architects in the Ottoman Empire, the painters Bogdan Saltanaov and Yovhann²s Ayvazovski in the Russian Empire, and almost contemporary to us the well-known names of Kalust Gulbenkian, Archile Gorky, William Saroyan, Charles Aznavour, and of the late world chess champion Petros Tigranian, just to mention a few. This is the great challenge of the Armenian diaspora in the past and today. It offers a model of dialectics between identity and alterity, a pattern of both a national and a cosmopolitan culture, whose roots hold in the most genuine Armenian tradition of the homeland. It offers at the same time a message of a great topical interest to peoples and societies everywhere concerned with problems of migration (76).

F. The Armenian Question and the Catastrophe of the Genocide

After the initial developments of a political consciousness among the Armenians of

India, the Armenian Question comes up again towards the middle of the 19th century, under the influence of convergent and mutually influencing tendencies among both the Eastern and Western Armenians.

With the strong penetration of European ideas and ideologies into Armenian society, it was almost inevitable that the Armenian Question might develop in line with the other national liberation movements that permeated Europe and the Balkans from the Greek revolution to the Italian Risorgimento, to the Bulgarian independence.

To put the development of the Armenian Question during the Zart'onk' period into perspective, we must add that this development is in strict consonance with an increasing awareness of the nature, the constitution, and the requirements of a truly democratic society. Armenian aspirations for liberation, be they formulated either as a claim to reforms or for independence, comes out in this riper phase of its evolution, from the basic requirement of democracy and of social equity. It is not coincidental that the first militants for liberation planned to pursue an ideal of democracy and social welfare for all the oppressed people of the Empire: Armenians, Kurds, Turks (77).

This aspiration to a more democratic social order provided some important results within the Armenian community. The main achievement in this sense can be considered the Constitution (*Sahmanadrut'awn*) or, according to the official Ottoman Turkish version, the "Statutes" (*Nizamname*) of the Armenian nation or *millet*. Many of its articles as, for instance, the institution of the Neighborhood Committees (*T'aghakan Khorhurd*) allowing an important popular participation in Community affairs and in Church administration, were certainly ahead of the time even with regard to some parts of European society (78).

The most significant moments of Armenian aspirations were their presence at the Congress of Berlin (1878), the formation of Armenian political parties (last decade of the 19th century) and Armenian participation in the Young Turk Revolution against Sultan Abdül Hamîd in 1908.

Of course the lack of a political tradition in thought and in practice, and especially an ingenuous reliance, almost a "Messianic" hope, upon Western "Christian" powers, was felt in all these movements, since they were led by the young intellectuals who were in open conflict with the amiras and the high ranking Armenian dignitaries of the Ottoman Empire for whom an experience of the *res publica* was certainly not lacking.

Unfortunately Armenian irredentism, with scant political experience, had to face not only one of the most solid states in history, even if known at the time as the "sick man" of Europe, but above all one of the most astutely and cynically nationalist and exclusivist ideologies: the Panturkism of the Young Turks.

The result was the immense Catastrophe of the Genocide which uprooted the entire population of the Ottoman Armenians from their three thousand-year-old ancestral Homeland.

Since ethnic genocides are also a feature of modernity, in close connection especially with the typically Illuministic ideology of the Nation-State, Armenians paid an extremely dear price for the paradoxe of their advanced modernity in a Middle Eastern context. In fact, the bloody, but Islamically theocratical Abdül Hamîd, whom the Armenian revolutionaries collaborated with the revolutionary Turks to dethrone, during the thirty years of his long reign could not resolve in such a radical way the Armenian Question as the modern and "progressist" Young Turks in only seven years!. The old evangelical

parable of the new wine in the old skins once again proved to be true.

CONCLUSIONS

In the following points I would like to summarize the main conclusions which can be drawn from this inquiry into the overall field of the Armenian Enlightenment:

a. As modernity in general, also the Illuministic ideas enter into the Armenian society at a rather early date for a Middle Eastern context. The second half of the 18th century can be shown as the initial period when we can already speak of an Armenian movement of Enlightenment in a sense related to its Western models.

b. With respect to these same models, however, Armenian Enlightenment appears, on social and especially political grounds, as having a slower rhythm of evolution and rather limited to some aspects of its models.

We have pointed out, for instance, the relative delay of Armenian irredentism in comparison with similar movements in Europe.

As to the main differences of the Armenian Enlightenment movement with its models, the different attitudes towards religion and in the secularization process, the different conception of the idea of nation and the different sensitiveness in perceiving concretely the fact of being a nation should be pointed out.

It is not possible to indicate deism or systematical anticlericalism as general trends of the Armenian Enlightenment. What we have seen on the religious attitude of the Armenian Freemasonry is enough to confirm this point. But examples could be multiplied.

c. This latter consideration leads us to formulate a hypothesis which is widely confirmed, I think, by the overall view of the evolution of the Armenian life and culture from the 17th through the 19th century which we have outlined: Armenians are in a close contact with Europe, they assimilate, espouse many of its achievements, they are enthusiasts of many of the novelties inspired by the Enlightenment, but generally speaking they do not accept without critical approval all ideas or tendencies which may be involved by it.

d. In the prospect of such an attitude both receptive and critical at the same time, we can add, I think, that at the turn of the century the Armenians were even, to some extent, ahead of some European countries as to the contact with the leading realities in Europe. The echoes of French symbolism, for instance, are perceived in Armenian literary circles of Constantinople earlier than at some corners of Europe. Just to mention another resounding case, the futurist Manifesto of Marinetti is translated and published in Armenian only some months after its apparition in Paris (79).

e. Notwithstanding these high achievements, Armenians did not in one point understand the West at all (no more did, no doubt, other Oriental subjugated Christian peoples lacking a State structure and a State ideology). Armenians could not liberate themselves from their Medieval "Messianism" vis-à-vis Europe, and hoped against hope, that the "Christian" Europe would save them, and would, at least, not allow them to perish. They could not realize that certainly since the Renaissance, but probably even before, did not exist any more any Christian Europe in politics.

f. I spoke of assimilation of the Western models. It was indeed a question of assimilation, we could even say of "armenization". Quite as in the past, Armenians did not copy their models, they integrated and harmonized them in new and often brilliant

syntheses. The printing press, capital power, mass and female emancipation, and secularization developed without heavy conflicts or traumas. In simpler words, they could, for instance, secularize without rejecting religious faith, they could pursue women's emancipation without rejecting femininity and motherhood.

Their achievements were mostly natural, spontaneous passages, in line with the main trends of the Armenian soul and tradition, of the Armenian consciousness and imagery as these had developed over the centuries in a continuous effort and tension towards that which was thought to be better or the best, or simply to be different or new. Without any fear or complex of facing the new, but also controlling this basic instinct of renovation with a secular sense, almost a super-Ego, of a balanced tradition, of a sacred, sworn fidelity to an ancestral heritage.

We can say that the only grave inner conflicts within the Armenian society, in parallel with the modernization process, have been first of a religious nature, and of political-ideological nature later. But the deeper reasons of the dynamics generating these conflicts were not in the dialectics between modernity and tradition, change and continuity, but rather in a certain conception of identity; and the conflict rose when this conception seemed to be questioned in its compactness by the differences in the religious confession or in the party ideology. In fact, the religious quarrels, rooted in the Middle Ages, and the party quarrels came only in the latest phase of the Armenian modernity and Enlightenment movements, before the Great Catastrophe. The conception of the Armenian identity, its relationship to the religious confession as well as to political ideology are questions distinct from those we have been considering: they deserve a special study, however strictly connected they may be with the problems put by the relationship to the West, by modernity as well as by the Enlightenment ideology.

The Armenians, indeed, paid excessively dearly - as I have already remarked - for their openness towards Europe and its values - were they real or only reputed, and for their thirst for liberty and democracy, the only time when their traditional super-Ego's control did not function adequately for a series of historical factors which I alluded to speaking of the catastrophic solution of the Armenian Question.

But the survival itself, after such an absolute Catastrophe as the Genocide closing one of the most fruitful and brilliant periods of Armenian culture, in intellectual and social accomplishments, would not be comprehensible without this singular marriage between the Western influences and tradition, change and identity, universality and specificity.

As I have already pointed out, in poets such as Durian, P²shiktashlian, Varuzhan, T²rian, Charents', in a prose writer as Intra, and in a musician as Komitas and others, who can easily be compared with the most celebrated figures of contemporary European culture, we have extraordinary examples of this particularly happy marriage between Armenia and its deep-rooted Western vocation, between transformation and identity.

A last consideration, for I would not like to put an end to these words without pointing out some perspectives for further research that result from the present inquiry:

i. Fortunately, the history of Armenian printing, Armenian books and Armenian incunabula have in these last decades become the object of specialized and qualified studies.

There is still, of course, much to do. But something consistent has already been done.

I do not believe we can say that the same is the case with the history of Armenian capital, trade, and economics. This history, surely, much more complex, yet not less fascinating. Probably, it would be optimistic to say that we have at least started studying this chapter seriously and systematically.

ii. Another interesting field of research would be the effects, if any, of this worldwide trade on the subsequent Armenian generations, Armenian history and destiny.

iii. Other stimulating questions might be the following:

a) was there a lack of philosophical and generally socio-political literature in the Armenian Rebirth and Awakening? If so, for which reasons?

b) why did the ideological-theoretical attempt of the Madrasian Illuminists have no sequel? Is there any reason for that?

c) to what extent was the role, played by Fr. Alishan, as a source of inspiration for the Armenian irredentism (80), intended and wanted by him? How can an eventual misunderstanding historically be explained and evaluated?

d) how can the persistence of a strong Medieval “Messianism”, typical of Armenian political movements, be explained in the context of a society remarkably sensitive to modernity and to the Western mentality?

All these questions, and others too, lead us once again to the basic interrogatives about Armenian modernity and Enlightenment: their nature, contents, peculiarities, paradoxes, ambiguities, in one word the “armenity” itself of the Armenian modernity and Enlightenment.

The Armenian adventure in assimilating and developing these movements, as we have tried to grasp it in some of its most basic trends, has something epic. Probably at its deepest level it is also an aspect of the terrific struggle for survival that has certainly been the most distinctive feature of the Armenian being and of being Armenian. A level where epic faces tragedy and tragedy rejoins epic.

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Summary

The evolution of modern Europe had a very early impact on Armenian mind since the beginnings of the 16th century. Also the Illuministic ideas enter into the Armenian society at a rather early date for a Middle Eastern context. The second half of the 18th century can be shown as the initial period when we can already speak of an Armenian movement of Enlightenment in a sense related to its Western

models. With respect to these same models, however, Armenian Enlightenment appears, on social and especially political grounds, as having a slower rhythm of evolution and rather limited to some aspects of its models. Furthermore, quite as in the past, Armenians did not copy their models, they integrated and harmonized them in new and often brilliant syntheses. The present article is an attempt of inquiry into the basic interrogatives about Armenian modernity and Enlightenment: their nature, contents, peculiarities, paradoxes, ambiguities, in one word the “armenity” itself of the Armenian modernity and Enlightenment. It is intended also as a contribution to the study of the more general problem of the relationship of national cultures, which do not belong to the West European world, to ideas, ideologies, philosophical, literary, artistic movements, social and economical developments having West European roots.

NOTES

* For the transliteration of Armenian names I use the system adopted by the Library of Congress (see *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*). To remark: $\ddot{e} = \partial$, a short *e* as in *the*; *g* always hard as in *game*; *kh* hard guttural as Scottish *ch* in *loch* or German *ch* in *Buch*. To avoid confusion and complications (in the case, for instance, of persons having lived and produced both in East and West Armenian contexts as Komitas or Khrimean Hayrik), *all Armenian names* have been transliterated *according to the values of Classical and East Armenian phonetics*. I have written Erevan and Etchmiadzin, according to the spelling of international postal conventions. Except for bibliographical quotations, I transcribe in *-ian* the typical desinence of Armenian family names. The names of the authors of works published in the Republic of Armenia (both Soviet and actual) are transliterated in conformity with the spelling in which they were published. All other Armenian names are, on the contrary, transliterated according to classical Armenian orthography. Bibliography has been reduced to the essential.

I wish to thank Dr. Dickran Kouymjian and Mr. David Hirsch for their valuable suggestions as to the English form of this paper.

1. “Les colonies arméniennes, des origines à la fin du XVIII^e siècle”, in *Histoire des Arméniens*, ed. by Gérard DÉDÉYAN, Privat, Toulouse, 1982, p. 390 (signed Ghewont Khosdegian).

2. The by far largest part of historic Armenia is actually in Turkey, a smaller part being in North-Western Iran and in Azerbaijan according to the boundaries established in 1921-23. Some modern authors (for instance: Robert H. HEWSEN, “Introduction to Armenian Historical Geography”, *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, n.s., XIII (1978-1979), pp. 94-95; ID., “Terre, peuple ...”, in *Histoire des Arméniens*, cit., ch. 1, pp. 15-16; ID., *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhac’oyc’). The Long and Short recensions*, Introduction, translation and commentary, L. Reichert Verl., Wiesbaden, 1992, pp. 294-295) regard this concept of “historic Armenia”, as «a composite of

territories stretching from Cesarea in Cappadocia eastwards to the Caspian Sea and from just south of Tiflis to the shores of Lake Urmia and to the Mediterranean Sea. This is the “Historical” Armenia of the “nationalists” of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but which never existed as an historical reality at any one time in Armenian history save under the short-lived imperial adventure of Tigranes the Great; and even then Lesser Armenia was not included» (*Ašxarhac’oyc’*, p. 294).

In my opinion, both conceptions, that of the “nationalists”, as well as such hypercritical approaches as the one now referred to, of “historic Armenia” are victims, although on opposite directions, of a confusion of ideas. Certainly to think of a “historic Armenia”, as described by Hewsen, would be acritical for history, and utmost utopical or else, if charged of political valencies as it was also actually done. But to assert, in order to avoid such acriticism, that to speak of a “historic Armenia”, in whatever sense, is a historic non sense, seems also acritical as much as hypercritical it is. In fact, the idea of a historic Armenia must be firstly determined in an ethnical, and not political perspective, as the homeland where the identity of the Armenian people, since the oldest centuries of its presence on the scene of history, was formed and developed till those great invasions which altered remarkably the demographic configuration of the land, but where the Armenian people continued to live and to feel at best at home up to the Catastrophic Genocide of 1915. It is evident that such a homeland cannot be described with the same precision as one can trace the boundaries of a State. But this relative indetermination (between an undeniable minimum and a controversial maximum) is a vital aspect of approaching a territory in an ethnological perspective. Other critical observations would be still challenged by the author’s “conclusions” (*ibid.*, p. 295) which sometimes seem to lack somehow in clarity as to their real meaning.

I think that a main failure in these pages of such a monumental work, for too many aspects, as is Hewsen’s translation and commentary of both the recensions of the *Ashkharhats’uyts’*, is his undiscussed adhesion to the typical ideology of the traditional scholarship and policy of the West, underlying his historical criticism: the imperative of thinking of “national”, i.e. ethnical, unity (which does not mean, of course, by necessity a unity of origin of all its components since the earliest phases) in strict connection with political unity. The history of, at least, some peoples refuses such schemes.

3. “*Hayastan, yerkir drakhtavayr*” (Armenia, land of Paradise) are the first words, by Hovhan Mirza Vanandets’i (1772-1840), of a very popular song. This paradisiac, regenerative vision of the soil of Armenia seems to reach first its more articulated formulation by the Mekhitarist hieromonk Mik’ay²l Ch’amch’ean, the father of modern Armenian historiography, and finds a very favourable humus in the subsequent Romanticism. Another Mekhitarist, Fr. Ghewond Alishan, the leader of the Armenian Romantic who exercised a strong influence on the whole generation of intellectuals of the 19th century, was also one of the main representatives of the same ideology. On his theory of Armenian as the language of Paradise, see: Peter MÜLLER, “Die Suche nach der ‘lingua adamitica’ bei Lewont Ališan (1820-1901)”, *Armenisch-Deutsche Korrespondenz*, Nr. 86. Dezember 1994, p. 66-71.

4. Robert LAVALETTE, *Illustrierte Literaturgeschichte der Welt*, Zweite, durchgesehene Aufl., Südwest Verl., München, 1954, p. 212.

5. Herbert W. SCHNEIDER, *A History of American Philosophy*, The Liberal Arts Press, New York, 1957, p. 18.

6. Johannes HIRSCHBERGER, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 2, *Neuzeit und Gegenwart*, 8., verbesserte Aufl., Herder, Freiburg, 1963, p. 245.

7. Theodor W. ADORNO - Max HORKHEIMER, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, Querido Verl., Amsterdam, 1947; Ital. transl. *Dialettica dell’Illuminismo*, Einaudi, Torino, 1966, p. 17.

8. François CHÂTELET, “Avant-propos”: *Histoire de la Philosophie. Idées, doctrines*, sous la dir. de Fr. CHÂTELET, vol. 4, *Les Lumières (Le XVIIIe siècle)*, Hachette, Paris, 1972, pp. 15-16.

9. Cf. Pierre-François MOREAU, “L’idéologie du progrès”, *Histoire de la Philosophie*, cit. (n. 8), vol. 3, *Savoir et Pouvoir du XVIIIe au XXe siècle*, Hachette, Paris, 1978, pp. 19-98. On the dimension of “myth” in the Enlightenment, cf. in particular Theodor ADORNO, *op. cit.* (n. 7).

10. Cf. Rosario VILLARI, *Storia moderna*, Laterza, Roma - Bari, 9th ed., 1976, p. 246.

11. We understand “ideology” in the sense in which the term is used by François Châtelet and collaborators, in their *Histoire des Idéologies*, an equivalent almost of the German “*Weltanschauung*” (cf. n. 9, vol. 1, “Introduction générale”, pp. 10-11).

12. Paul TILLICH, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, Harper and Row, New York, 1967: Ital. transl. *Umanesimo cristiano nel XIX e XX secolo*, Ubaldini Ed.re, Roma, 1969, pp. 49, 66. A basic study on the Enlightenment, in its philosophical aspects, remains: Ernst CASSIRER, *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung*, Mohr, Tübingen, 1932.

13. Paul TILLICH, *ibid.*, p. 48.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-66.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-72.

16. The city is often named, in modern studies, ‘Istanbul with reference also to the Ottoman era. However, its official name in the Ottoman Empire was Konstantaniye/Konstantiniye. This was changed into the “vulgar” ‘Istanbul, probably of Greek etymology itself, only after the foundation of the Turkish Republic (1923) in the context of a general policy, still in progress, of “turkifying” toponymy: see Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, “Da Konstantiniye a Venezia”, *Studi Eurasiatici in onore di Mario Grignaschi*, ed. by Giampiero BELLINGERI e Giorgio VERCELLIN, (Euarasiatica, 5), Libreria Universitaria Editrice, Venezia, 1988.

17. The hypothesis has been re-proposed more than once; recently by Baykar SIVAZLIYAN, “Venezia per l’Oriente: La nascita del libro armeno”, *Armeni, ebrei, greci, stampatori a Venezia*, a cura di Scilla ABBIATI, Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1989, pp. 25, 27-29. For reasons against, see: LÊÔ, *Haykakan Tpagrut’iwn* [The Armenian Print], vol. I, *XVI-XVII dar* [the 16th-17th Centuries], Tiflis, 1904, “Herm²s” Press, pp. 76-96, where the author tries to explore the historical reasons of such a distance in time between the first and the second phase of early Armenian printing. Although some of L²e’s statements require serious reserves, the hypothesis in question still remains the same.

Meghapart’s printing activity was very probably known to Abgar: cf. Raymond H. KÉVORKIAN, *Catalogue des “Incunables” arméniens (1511-1695) ou Chronique de l’imprimerie arménienne*, préface par Jean-Pierre MAHÉ, Patrick Cramer Éd., Genève, 1986, p. 26.

On the average frequency of printing activity in the last decades of the 17th and first half of the 18th centuries cf. data given by Ninel A. OSKANYAN - K’narik A. KORKOTYAN - Ant’aram M. SAVALYAN, *Hay girkë 1512-1800 t’uakannerin. Hay hnatip grk’i matenagitut’iwn* [The Armenian Book between 1512-1800. A Bibliography of Ancient Armenian Editions], The Ministry of Culture of the Armenian SSR - The Peoples Friendship Order State Library of Miassnikian of the Armenian SSR, Erevan, 1988, pp. 7-15, 16-31.

Apart from the classical and major West European languages, and Hebrew, in which books were printed very early, we have the following chronology for the first editions in some other European

and Middle Eastern languages: Arabic 1486, Slavonian 1491, Russian 1517, Flemish 1523, Hungarian 1533, Scandinavian languages 1611, Georgian 1625: cf. *Les Arméniens et l'imprimerie. Étude comparée de l'imprimerie chez les différents peuples de l'Orient*, (Études sur la civilisation arménienne, N° 1), Imp. Kéchichian Fils, Constantinople, 1920, p. 35.

The chronology of the first Armenian printed books is slightly different (1511/12 -1513/14) according to the various authors. There is actually no possibility to determine dates more exactly.

18. Edmond SCHÜTZ, “The Oscanian and Vanandian Type-Faces of the Armenian Printing Office in Amsterdam (Christoffel van Dijk - Nikolas Kis of Tótfalu and Their Forerunners)”, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, XLII (1988), N° 2-3, pp.161-220, in part. 201-206; Raymond KÉVORKIAN, cit. (n. 17), p. 7.

Jean-Pierre Mahé, in his for many a reason “magistrale” (cf. “Liminaire” by *L'Éditeur*, p. V) Preface to Kévorkian’s work, asks: “Can we even be sure he was Armenian”? (p. VIII). As for me, I see no convincing reason for such a question. Meghpart was certainly, as Mahé himself admits, no clerk, no linguist, or armenologist as, for instance, Rivola, but a man of “an average level of culture”. The hypothesis that a Venitian of this level could know Armenian to such an extent to edit and publish books in Armenian, that he left no trace of himself contrary to the Western habits, mentality and the praxis of those Western editors who printed in Greek, Hebrew or other Eastern languages, and that he may have assimilated some features so typical of the traditional language of the Armenian colophons, as for instance to call himself *meghpart* (and not *meghawor* retracing Italian “peccatore”), raises much more problems than resolves, if there are any to be resolved concerning the national identity of this first editor of Armenian books. I do not think that the tendency to put everywhere question marks is necessarily a sign of keener and better criticism, especially in such a masterly work as is Mahé’s Preface.

19. See: *Mekhitar di Sebaste rinnovatore e pioniere*, Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1977, pp. 26-27; “Le colonie armene del Medio Evo in Italia e le relazioni culturali italo-armene. (Materiale per la storia degli armeni in Italia)”, *First International Symposium on Armenian Art - Bergamo, 1975. Proceedings*, ibid, 1978, pp. 918-922; “Renaissance arménienne et mouvement de libération (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)”, *Histoire des Arméniens*, cit. (n.1), pp. 415-419 (signed Ghevont Khosdegian); “A Historical Outline of the Armenian People”, *The Armenians*, ed. by Adriano ALPAGO-NOVELLO, Jaca Book: Milano, Rizzoli: New York, 1986, p. 61.

20. Fernand BRAUDEL, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XVe-XVIII^e siècle*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1980, t. 2, *Les jeux de l'échange*, pp. 101-102. This daybook was known to the Western public by a detailed account of Levon S. Khach’ikyan on two reviews: L.S. KHACHIKYAN, “The Ledger of the Merchant Hovannes Jughayetsi”, *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Calcutta, 8 (1966), pp. 153-196; “Le registre d'un marchand arménien en Perse, en Inde et en Tibet (1682 -93)”, *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 22 (1967), pp. 231-278. Later Khach’ikyan, in collaboration with Hakob D. P’ap’azyan, gave a critical edition of it preceded by a large introduction (*Yovhann’s T’r-Dawt’ean Jughayts’u hashuetumarë* [The Ledger of Y.T.-D. Jughayetsi], Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1984).

On the Armenian commerce of this period see also: Vagan A. BAJBURTJAN, *Armjanskaja kolonija Novoj Dzhul’fy v XVII veke*, Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1969; Roberto GULBENKIAN, “Philippe de Zagly, marchand arménien de Julfa, et l’établissement du commerce persan en Courland en 1696”, *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, n.s., VII (1970), pp. 361 -399; R.W. FERRIER, “The Agreement of the East India Company with the Armenian Nation, 22nd June 1688”, *RÉArm.*, n.s., VII (1970), pp. 427-443; ID., “The Armenians and the East India Company in Persia in the Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries”, *Economic History Review*, 2nd s., 26 (1973), pp. 38-62; Jean DAUVILLIER, “Les Arméniens en Chine et en Asie Centrale au Moyen Age”, *Mélanges de sinologie offerts à M. Paul*

Demiéville, vol. II, (Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, XX), Paris, 1974, pp. 1-17; Keram KÉVONIAN, "Marchands arméniens au XVII^e siècle - À propos d'un livre arménien publié à Amsterdam en 1699", in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, XVI (1975), pp. 199-244; M. AGHASSIAN - K. KÉVONIAN, "Le commerce arménien dans l'Océan indien aux 17^e et 18^e siècles", *Marchands et hommes d'affaires asiatiques*, Paris, 1987, pp. 155-181; Raymond H. KÉVORKIAN - Jean-Pierre MAHÉ, *Arménie: 3000 ans d'histoire*, Maison Arménienne de la Jeunesse et de la Culture, Marseille, 1988, pp. 223-250; Philip D. CURTIN, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, (Studies in Comparative World History), Cambridge University Press, 1984, ch. 9: "Overland trade of the seventeenth century: Armenian carriers between Europe and East Asia", pp. 179 -206.

21. Fernand BRAUDEL, *ibid.*, p. 133.

22. Giorgio BERCHET, *Del commercio dei Veneti nell'Asia*, (estratto dagli *Atti dell'Ateneo Veneto*), Venezia, 1864, p. 13. On the Shehrimanian (Shehriman, Sceriman, Seriman) family see: D. MAXWELL WHITE, *Zaccaria Seriman, 1704-1784, and The Viaggi di Enrico Wanton. A Contribution to the Study of the Enlightenment in Italy*, Manchester University Press, 1961, ch. 1, pp. 3 -20; Claudio GUGEROTTI, "Una famiglia emblematica: gli Sceriman tra Isfahan e Venezia", *Gli Armeni in Italia*, ed. by Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, De Luca, Roma, 1990, pp. 108 -109; Claudia BONARDI, "Il commercio dei preziosi", *ibid.*, pp. 110-114.

Besides the many interest-free or low-interest loans that the Shehrimans granted to the Serenissima, they still contributed to her finances on different occasions by sunk capital gifts, whose total amount was nearly two million golden ducats: cf. Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "Venezia, gli Armeni e Mechitar", *Presenze ebraico-cristiane nelle Venezie*, ed. by Giuseppe Dal Ferro, Edizioni del "Rezzara", Vicenza, 1993, p. 103.

23. Cf. Philip CURTIN, *cit.* (n. 20), pp. 203 -204.

24. See for instance: Manuel G. VELASQUESZ, *Business Ethics. Concepts and Cases*, 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1988; Ital. transl. *Etica economica*, Cafoscarina, Venezia, 1993.

25. *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, 2. Teil, C, "Der Charakter des Volks", 1. Aufl. 1798, in: Immanuel KANT, *Sämtliche Werke*, herausg. von Karl Vorländer, Vol. IV, Leipzig, 1922, p. 273: "Unter einem anderen christlichen Volk, den Armeniern, herrscht ein gewisser Handelsgeist von besonderer Art, nämlich durch Fußwanderungen von Chinas Grenzen aus bis nach Kap Corso an der Guineaküste Verkehr zu treiben, ... welches in einer Linie von NO. zu SW. beinahe die ganze Strecke des alten Kontinents durchzieht und sich friedfertige Begegnung unter allen Völkern, auf die es trifft, zu verschaffen weiß".

The testamentary gift of Petros Oskan is reported by Ghewond ALISHAN, *Sisakan*, Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1893, p. 474 (in Arm.).

26. On Armenians in Persia, especially in New Julfa, apart from bibliography cited in the n. 20, see: François TOURNEBIZE, *Shah Abbas et l'émigration forcée des Arméniens de l'Ararat*, Mechitaristen-Buchdruckerei, Vienna, 1911; John CARSWELL, *New Julfa. The Armenian and Other Buildings*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968; ID., "New Julfa and the Safavid Image of the Armenians", *The Armenian Image in History and Literature*, ed. by Richard HOVANNISIAN, Undena Public.s, Malibu, CA, 1981, pp. 83-104; Karo KARAPETIAN, *Isfahan, New Julfa: Le case degli Armeni - The Houses of the Armenians*, IsMEO, Rome, 1974; Vartan GREGORIAN, "Minorities of Isfahan: The Armenian Community of Isfahan, 1587-1722", in *Iranian Studies. Journal of the Society for Iranian Studies*, VII (1974), N° 3-4: "Studies on Isfahan", Part II, pp. 652-680; Levon B. ZEKIYAN, "Xo†a Safar ambasciatore di Sh...h Abbas a Venezia", *Oriente Moderno*, LVIII (1978), pp. 357-367; George

BOURNOUTIAN, "The Armenian Community of Isfahan in the Seventeenth Century", *The Armenian Review*, 24 (1971), pp. 27-45, 25 (1972), pp. 33-50; *Nor/Djulfa*, (Documents of Armenian Architecture/Documenti di Architettura Armena, 21), OEMME Edizioni, Venezia, 1992; Edmund HERZIG, "The Deportation of the Armenians in 1604-1605 and Europe's Myth of Sh...h 'Abb...s I'", *Pembroke Papers*, 1 (1990), pp. 59-71; ID., *The Armenian Merchants in New Julfa, of New Julfa, Isfahan. A Study in the Modern Armenian Trade*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Oriental Studies for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at University of Oxford, B. Anthony College, 1991.

27. Let us mention among many titles: John CARSWELL, *Kütahya Tiles and Pottery from the Armenian Cathedral of St. James, Jerusalem*, I-II, Oxford, 1972; Jean-Michel THIERRY - Patrick DONABEDIAN, *Les arts arméniens*, Mazenod, Paris, 1987; Paolo CUNEO, *Architettura armena dal quarto al diciannovesimo secolo*, vol. I, De Luca, Roma, 1988, pp. 45-51; Nona STEPANJAN, *Iskusstvo Armenii. Certy istoriko-hudozhestvennogo razvitija*, "Sovetskij Hudozhnik", Moscow, 1889; Claudia BONARDI, "Le ceramiche di Kütahya", *Gli Armeni in Italia*, cit. (n. 22).

28. Jean-Pierre MAHÉ, "Preface" to Raymond H. KÉVORKIAN, cit. (n. 17), p. XXVI.

29. On Mekhitar and the Mekhitarists there is a large bibliography. I shall point here to some key works which will also serve as guides to further bibliography.

On Mekhitar's life and work see: Minas NURIKHAN, *Il Servo di Dio Abate Mechitar, sua vita e suoi tempi*, Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1914; Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, *Mekhitar di Sebaste*, cit. (n. 32). Let us mention for its historical interest, and because generally remained unknown even to specialists, the following well documented article by an anonymous: "The Armenian Convent of San Lazzaro, at Venice", *Dublin Review*, 12 (1842), May, art. III, pp. 362-386. The most important biographies in Armenian are the ones by: Step'anos AGONTS' (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1810); Yovhann's T'OROSIAN (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1901, 1933); STEP'ANOS EWDOKIATS'I (posthumous in *Pazmaveb*, CXXVI (1968), pp. 404-432 - the author was an immediate disciple of Mekhitar).

On the Order, its history, spirituality, etc. see: Barsegh SARGISEAN, *Yerkhariwrameay grakan gortsun²ut'iw n yew nshanawor gortsich'k' Venetkoy Mkhitar'arean Miabanut'ean* [The Bicentennial Literary Activity of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice and Its Major Protagonists], Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1905; ID., *Yerkhariwrameay krt'akan gortsun²ut'iw n Venetkoy Mkhitar'arean Miabanut'ean* [The Bicentennial Educational Activity of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice], vol. I (1746-1901), *ibid.*, 1936 (the 2nd volume was never published); Marc-Antoine van den OUDENRIJN, *Eine armenische Insel im Abendland*, Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1941; Mesrop DJANACHIAN, "Les Arménistes et les Mékhitaristes", *Armeniaca. Mélanges d'Etudes Arméniennes*, Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1969, pp. 383-445; Kevork BARDAKJIAN, *The Mekhitarist Contributions to Armenian Culture and Scholarship. Notes to accompany an exhibit of Armenian printed books in the Widener Library displayed on the 300th anniversary of Mekhitar of Sebastia, 1676-1749*, Middle Eastern Dept. - Harvard College Library; Vartan G. MATFUNIAN, "Der Orden der Mechitaristen", *Die Kirche Armeniens*, (Die Kirchen der Welt, XVIII), ed. by F. Heyer, Evangelisches Verlagswerk, Stuttgart, 1978, pp. 175-193; Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "Mékhitar de Sébaste", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, X, 1978, coll. 940-950; Garabed AMADUNI, "Mechitar" and "Mechitaristi", *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, V, 1973, coll. 1108-1112, 1112-1123; Mari K. ARAT, *Armenische Mönche in der Diaspora*, Böhlau Verl., Wien-Köln, 1990 (with wide bibliography referring often to both the Viennese and Venetian branches of the Order); Tajat YARTĒMEAN (Dajad YARDEMIAN), "Mkhitar'arean gaghap'arakan yew Mkhitar'arean ink'nut'iw n" [The Mekhitarist ideal and identity], *Bazmavep*, CLII (1994), pp. 66-110 (an eclectic article where the sources inspiring the analysis are unfortunately not always mentioned, notwithstanding almost *ad litteram* analogies in some passages).

Some significant tokens of the general esteem among Armenians for Mekhitar and his work are quoted by Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "Il monachesimo mekhitarista a San Lazzaro e la rinascita armena del

Settecento”, *La Chiesa di Venezia nel Settecento*, (Contributi alla Storia della Chiesa Veneziana, 6), Studium Cattolico Veneziano, Venezia, 1993, pp. 221-222.

As a specimen of the debated topics on Mekhitar and the Mekhitarians see: LÊÔ, *Patmut'iwñ Hayots'* [History of the Armenians], vol. III, Erevan, 1946, pp. 979 ss., repr. in *Erkeri zhoghovatsu* [Collected Works], III, “Hayastan” Ed.s, Erevan, 1973, pp. 482-522; Biwzand EGHIAYEAN, “Mkhit'arean grakanut'iwñ” [The Mekhitarist Literature], *Hayastani Koch'nak*, 67 (1967), pp. 12 ss; Ners's TÊR-NERSESEAN (DER-NERSESIAN), “Verakaruts'ogh ashkhatank'” (Pataskhan “Hayastani Koch'nak” amsat'ert'i yoduatsagrin) [A Reconstructing Work (A Reply to the Author of the Article on “Hayastani Koch'nak”)], *Bazmavep*, CXXVI (1968), pp. 1-16; Lewon ZÊK'IEAN (Levon ZEKIYAN), *Ardi Hay t'atroni skzbnak'aylerë yew hay Veratsnundi sharzhumë (Hamadrakan hayeats'k')* [The First Steps of Modern Armenian Theatre and the Movement of Armenian Rebirth (A synthetical Approach)], (Bibliothèque d'Arménologie “Bazmavep”, 7), Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1975, pp. 38-54.

30. Cfr. Paolo ANANIAN, “Narsete IV Klayetzi”, *Biblioteca Sanctorum*, IX, 1967; Ernst SUTTNER, “Eine ‘Ökumenische Bewegung’ im 12. Jahrhundert und ihr bedeutendster Theologe, der armenische Katholikos Nerses Schnorhali”, *Kleronomia*, 7 (1975), pp. 87-97; Hrant KHATCHADOURIAN, “The Christology of St. Nerses Shnorhali in Dialogue with Byzantium”, *Miscellanea Francescana*, 78 (1978), pp. 413-434; Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, “Un dialogue œcuménique au XII^e siècle”, *Actes du XV^e Congrès International d'Études byzantines - Athènes, 1976*, publiés par le Comité d'Organisation du Congrès, Association Internationale des Études Byzantines, IV, Histoire, Athènes, 1980, pp. 420-441.

31. Exactly: “No Armenian institution had such an original, such a deep and permanent influence in spreading among Armenians the Western spirit, taste, and customs as did the House of Mekhitar” - Arshak CH'ÔPANEAN (Archag TCHOBANIAN), “Mkhit'areants' gortzë” [The Work of the Mekhitarists], *Grakan D'mk'er* [Literary Portraits], Imp. “Araxes”, Paris, 1924, p. 50, repr. in *Yerker* [Works], ed. by K. DALLAKIAN, Sovetakan Grogh, Erevan, 1988, p. 372.

32. See “Lessicografia” in *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Istituto Giovanni Treccani, vol. XX, 1933.

33. Iranian and Arabic terms usual also in Ottoman Turkish. “*Khoja*” (Iranian: lord, master) was, among Armenians, a title given to high class merchants, both in the Persian and Ottoman Empires, who soon acquired a top aristocratic status; they live their “golden age” in prestige and authority during the 17th century and in the first decades of the 18th. In Constantinople they had to face a hard struggle against the somewhat earlier aristocracy of the “*Chelebi*”s (Turkish: *çelebi*, meaning an educated and refined person, hence a title like “Sir”).

“*Amira*” (from Arabic *amīr* = superior, commander, governor) was a title that became distinctive of top Armenian aristocracy since the mid-18th century, following the decline of the *chelebis* and *khojas* in the Ottoman Empire. The “*sarrafs*” (an Arabic voice) were bankers.

See: Avedis SANJIAN, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1965, pp. 36-39; AA. VV., *Hay zhoghovrdi patmut'iwñ* [History of the Armenian People], Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, vol. IV, Part II, Erevan, 1972, ch. I, pp. 304-306, 326-328; Hakob BARSOUMIAN, “The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class with the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750-1850)”, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. by Benjamin BRAUDE and Bernard LEWIS, vol. I, Holmes & Meier, New York, 1982; Baykar SIVAZLIYAN, *Scambi culturali, economici, amministrativi tra gli Armeni e l'Impero ottomano nel XIX secolo*, con presentazione, analisi e traduzione delle fonti inerenti armene ed ottomane, Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1985, pp. 23-28; Onnig JAMGOCYAN, *Les finances de l'Empire Ottoman et les financiers de Constantinople, 1732-1853*, Sorbonne, 1987 (doctoral dissertation, yet unpublished); Abraham MARCUS, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity. Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century*, Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1989, pp. 13-72.

The decline of the amiras began by the mid-19th century. They left their place to a new ascending bourgeois class, the “*agha*”s: see Yakob Ch. SIRUNI, *Polis yew ir derë* [Constantinople and Its Role], vol. III, Armenian Catholicossate of the Great House of Cilicia, Antelias, Lebanon, 1987, pp. 418-419. Yerukhan’s famous novel *Amirayin aghjikë* [The Daughter of the Amira], a masterpiece of its kind, offers a vivid picture of this decline (see below, n. 62).

34. On the latinaban hayer²n see: Hrach’eay ACHARYAN (ADJARIAN), *Hayoc’ lezui patmut’iwn* [History of the Armenian Language], 2nd part, Haypethrat, Erevan, 1945, pp. 307-323; Gevorg JAHUKYAN, *Grabari k’erakanut’ean patmut’iwn (XVII-XIX dd.)*, Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1974, pp. 7-119; Marc NICHANIAN, *Âges et usages de la langue arménienne*, Ed.s Entente, Paris, 1989, pp. 256-257; Alessandro ORENGO, “Oskan Vardapet ed i suoi *K’erakanowt’ean Girk’* (“Libri di Grammatica”)”, *Linguistica e Letteratura*, XIII-XIV (1988-1989), pp. 269-287; ID., “Tommaso Campanella in armeno: la fonte latina dei *K’erakanowt’ean Girk’* (“Libri di Grammatica”) di Oskan Vardapet”, *Studi e Saggi Linguistici*, XXXI, Supplemento alla Rivista “L’Italia Dialettale”, vol. LIV (N.S. XXXI), 1991, Giardini Editori, Pisa, 1991, pp. 15-19; Joseph WEITENBERG, “XVII dari latinatip k’erakanut’iwnë” [The Latinizing Grammar of the 17th Century], “Patma-banasirakan Handes”, 1990, 4 (131), pp. 31-38.

35. See: Eduard AGHAYAN, *Hay lazuanut’ean patmut’iwn* [A History of Armenian Linguistics], vol. II, Erevan, 1962, p. 344; Gevorg JAHUKYAN, *Hayots’ lezui zargats’man p’ulerë* [The Phases of the Evolution of the Armenian Language], Erevan, 1964, p. 49; *Hayots’ lezui zargats’umë yew karuts’uatsk’ë* [The Evolution and the Structure of the Armenian Language], Erevan, 1969, pp. 50-51; ID., *Zroyc’ner Hayots’ lezui masin* [Conversations on the Armenian Language], “Kanch’”, Erevan, 1992, pp. 92-95; Rap’ay²l ISHKHANYAN, *Nor grakan hayer²në XVII-XVIII d.d.* [The New Literary Armenian in the 17th-18th Centuries], Erevan, 1979, pp. 112 ss.; Shushanik NAZAREAN, “ZHË dari veranoroguogh gegharuestakan grakanut’ean lezui ëndhanur patkerë” [A General Outline of the Language of the Artistic Literature of the 18th Century During Its Renovation Process], *Bazmavep*, CXLIII (1985), pp. 12-17, 27-36; Nvard PARNASSIAN, “On the Formation of Ashkharhabar”, *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 6 (1985), pp. 67-73; Marc NICHANIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 34), pp. 272-282.

36. The dialect of Erevan and not that of Tiflis prevailed among the Eastern Armenians, although the latter was the contemporary center of the Armenian social and cultural life. A main reason for this may be shown in that the founder of modern Eastern Armenian literature, Khach’atur Abovean (1809-1848), used the dialect of K’anak’er, his native village, today a suburb of Erevan. The only great writer who made use of the Tiflis dialect was the writer of comedies Gabri²l Sundukean.

37. See Henrik V. HOVHANNISYAN, *T’atrone mijnadarean Hayastanum* [Theater in Medieval Armenia], Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1978; Lewon ZËK’IEAN, *Hay t’atroni skzbnak’aylerë*, cit. (n. 29), pp. 8-12.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-20.

39. See Metin AND, *Tanzimat ve ‘stibdat döneminde Türk tiyatrosu* [The Turkish Theatre at the Age of the *Tanzimat* and of Dictatorship], 1839-1908, (Türkiye ‘s Bankas? Kültür Yay?nlar?, 118), Ankara, 1972; ID., *Mesrutiyet döneminde Türk tiyatrosu* [The Turkish Theatre at the Age of the Constitution], 1908-1923, (*ibid.*, 108), Ankara, 1971; ID., “*Osmanl? tiyatrosu*” - *Kuruluşu - Gelişimi - Katk?s?* [The “Osmanl? Theatre” - Its foundation - Its Development - Its Contribution], (Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yay?nlar?, 258), Ankara, 1976. The author concludes his first quoted book with the following words: “Türk dilinde tiyatronun gelişmesinde içten çabalar? için Ermeni sanatç?lara ne türlü teşekkür etsek azd?r” (Anyhow we may thank the Armenian artists for their

sincere efforts in the development of theater in the Turkish language, it will not be enough: p. 450).

40. Aram SISAKIAN, “‘Questione Armena’? Per puntualizzare la situazione attuale: schizzo di una sintesi storica”, *Oriente Moderno*, LXI (1981), p. 21; Ghevont KHOSDEGIAN, “Renaissance arménienne”, cit. (n. 19), pp. 419-422.

The Council of Etchmiadzin was preceded by an earlier Council, secret as well, and held also in Etchmiadzin in 1547, during the Catholicossate of Step‘anos V Salmastets‘i and as well as by various initiatives which followed that Council. Even the mission of Abgar T‘okhat‘ets‘i to the West as a printer was promoted in the context of these attempts of establishing a new cultural and political relationship with Europe in view also of a political liberation (cf. A. G. A RAK‘ELIAN, *Hay zhoghovrdi mtawor mshakoyt‘i zargats‘man patmut‘iwn*, vol. II, Haypetrhat, Erevan, 1964, pp. 58-70).

41. See Ghevont KHOSDEGIAN, *ibid.*, pp. 419-425. There is a whole literature on Isray²¹ Ôri and Dawit‘ B²k. For a detailed bibliography on their activity and the Armenian liberation movement in the 17th and 18th centuries see: *Dawit‘ B²k kam ‘Patmut‘iwn Ghap‘ants‘wots‘* [D. B. or the “History of the People of Ghap‘an], (Bibliothèque d’Arménologie “Bazmavap”, 12), ed. with Introduction and Notes by S. Aramian, Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1978, pp. 223-228.

On the Armenian liberation movements, especially in their earlier phase, see also literature cited in n. 33. Let us still mention two recent contributions in this field: G. J. LIBARIDIAN, *The Ideology of Armenian Liberation: The Development of Armenian Political Thought before the Revolutionary Movement (1639-1885)*, UCLA, Fall 1987 (doctoral dissertation, yet unpublished to the best of my knowledge); *XVI-XVIII dareri Hay azatagrakan sharzhumner yew Hay gaght‘avayrerë*, (*Hoduatsneri zhoghavatsu*), ed. by Vladimir B. BARKHUDARYAN, Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1989.

42. Joseph EMIN, *The Life and Adventures of Joseph Emin, an Armenian*, written in English by Himself, London, 1792, 2nd ed. Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1918.

43. Cfr. Louise NALBANDIAN, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement. The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1963, pp. 35-36.

44. See Garegin ZARBHANALIAN, *Patmut‘iwn haykakan tpagrut‘ean skzvbnavorut‘en²n minc‘ew ar mez* [A History of the Armenian Print from Its Beginnings up to Our Times], Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1883, pp. 278-279; Garegin LEVONYAN, *Hay girkë yew tpagrut‘ean aruestë. Patmakan tesut‘iwn skzbits‘ minc‘ew XX darë* [The Armenian Book and the Printing Art. A Historical Survey from the Beginnings up to the 20th Century], Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1947, pp. 157-160; Ninel OSKANYAN and others, *op. cit.* (n. 17), pp. 489-493.

45. Louise NALBANDIAN, cit. (n. 43). For a wider discussion of these works and, more generally, of the Armenian political literature up to the 19th century, see: A RAK‘ELIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 37), pp. 333-374.

46. The first literary periodicals appear in Europe in the course of the 18th century: in 1717 in Great Britain, in 1754 in France (cf. Claude PICHOS - André-M. ROUSSEAU, *Littérature comparée*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1967, p. 69), in 1764 in Italy (cf. Rosario VILLARI, *Storia moderna*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 1976, p. 289), in 1844 in Bulgaria (cf. *La Nuova Enciclopedia della Letteratura*, Garzanti, Milano, 1985, p. 1255). For an outline of the literary press in England and Europe see Robert LAVALETTE, *Literaturgeschichte*, cit. (n. 4), pp. 212-216; Claude PICHOS - André-M. ROUSSEAU, *ibid.*, pp. 69-72; for Italy see: Natalino SAPEGNO, *Disegno storico della letteratura italiana*, 6^a ristampa, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1953, pp. 503-504, 552-565.

47. On the concept and process of “secularization” see: Hermann LÜBBE, *Säkularisierung. Geschichte eines ideenpolitischen Begriffs*, Verl. Karl Alber GmbH, Freiburg-München, 1965: Ital. transl. *La secolarizzazione. Storia e analisi di un concetto*, Il Mulino, Milano; Ágnes HELLER, *A Reneszánsz Ember*, Budapest, 1967: Ital. transl. *L'uomo del Rinascimento*, (Il Pensiero Storico, 70), La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1977, pp. 89-127; Robert N. BELLAH, *Essays on Religion in Post-Traditional World*, Harper and Row Publishers, New York-Evanston-London, 1970: Ital. vers. *Al di là delle fedi. Le religioni in un mondo post-tradizionale*, Introduzione di D. Zadra (pp. 7-25), Morcelliana, Brescia, 1975, in part. ch. IX: “Religione e fede: il fondamento storico della ‘no n-credenza’”, pp. 229-244; R.J. WERBLOWSKY, *Beyond Tradition and Modernity. Changing Religions in a Changing World*, Jordan Lectures 1974, Univ. of London, The Athlone Press, 1976: Ital. transl. *Oltre la tradizione e la modernità. Religioni in trasformazione in un mondo che cambia*, Morcelliana, Brescia, 1978, in part. ch. I: “Secolarizzazione e secolarismo. Processo culturale e critica ideologica”, pp. 11-29; Germano PATTARO, *La svolta antropologica. Un momento forte della teologia contemporanea*, Opera postuma ... con introduzione di Romeo Cavedo, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 1990, in part. ch.s I and III, pp. 29-92, 183-279.

48. I wrote in an earlier work: “In spite of this intimate intermeshing between Christianity and national conscience, phenomena such as Caesaropapism or Papocaesarism acquired some small dimensions in Armenia [in comparison with other Churches or nations]. Generally, the Armenian clergy stood out much more for the services they provided than for their political domination” (“Religion and Spirituality”, in *The Armenians*, cit. [n. 19], p. 86).

Caesaropapism, a form of Church government much developed in the Byzantine Empire, means the subordination of the Church to the King’s or Emperor’s power; Papocaesarism is, on the contrary, that form of Church government in which the spiritual power rules at the same time as civil power or, at least, claims a real preminence on it, as Roman Popes often did.

49. For instance, in the famous short-story of Awetis Aharonean, *El mi aghot‘ir* [Do not pray any more], a cry of rebellion against the “fatalist” attitudes of many clergy men.

50. See Barsegh SARGISEAN, *Yerkhariwrameay krt‘akan gortsun²ut‘iwn*, cit. (n. 29); [Mesrop JANASHIAN], *The Colleges of the Mekhitarist Fathers in Venice and their Work*, Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1956 (published anonymous); Vahan INGLISIAN, *Hundertfünfzig Jahre Mechitaristen in Wien (1911-1961)*, Verl. der Mechitaristen-Kongregation, Vienna, 1961, pp. 174-179.

51. Jean-Pierre MAHÉ, “Preface” to Raymond KÉVORKIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 17), p. XIV; Paola MILDONIAN, “L’Occidente fantastico: note sulla tradizione orientale del ‘Paris e Vienna’”, *Studi medievali e romanzi in memoria di Alberto Limentani*, Jouvence, Roma, 1991, pp. 101-122, in part. p. 111.

52. I dealt extensively with this subject in my “distinguished” lecture delivered at the Tenth Anniversary Conference of the AIEA in London in 1993: “Modern Armenian Culture: Some Basic Trends between Continuity and Change, Specificity and Universality”, III, c, in *Armenian Perspectives*, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, ed. by Nicolas Awde, (Caucasus World), Curzon, Surrey, UK, 1997, pp. 323-354, notes: pp. 417-431. See also B.L. ZEKIYAN, *The Armenian Way to Modernity*, (Eurasitica, 49), Supernova, Venice, 1997.

53. Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, “A Historical Outline”, cit. (n. 19), p. 62. For a general outline of the 19th century Armenian society in its various aspects, presented in a popular style, see: Béatrice KASBARIAN-BRICOUT, *La société arménienne aux XIXe siècle*, La Pensée Universelle, Paris,

1981.

54. See Kevork A. SARAFIAN, *A History of Education in Armenia*, C.C. Crawford, Los Angeles, 1930; Avedis SANJIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 33), pp. 75-77; see also n. 50.

55. The following are some of the localities for which mixed schools are explicitly mentioned by Suk'ias Ep'rikean in his encyclopaedic work on Armenian toponymy and ethnography, *Bnashkharhik Bararan* (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1903-1905), left unfortunately unfinished under the letter *k*: Balu, Beria (Aleppo), Garahisar (Afyon Karahisar), Kharbert (Harput): cf. *ibid.*, I, pp. 374, 419, 484; II, p. 162. For Constantinople see Hrach'eay ACHAREAN (ADJARIAN), *Keank'is husherits'* [From the Memories of My Life], "Mitk'", Erevan, 1967, p. 59.

The average proportion of about 10 % of school population is the one resulting from the statistics on the Armenian schools given by Ep'rikean compared with the number of the Armenian population in the respective locality given by the same author. In the case of some great cities, like Zmiwrnia (Smyrne, 'zmir), in which the proportion seems to be lower, one has to take into account the presence of European schools attended also by a large number of Armenian pupils, which normally are not included in Ep'rikian's statistical data except when serving only Armenians. Here are some samples of average percentages: Balu (10 %), Garahisar (14%), Gërgaghaj (K ?rk-a°aç, by 'zmir, 16%), Z²yt'un (2,6 %), Zmiwrnia (8%), Keghi (K'eghi, K'ghi, Ki'gi, 10%), Kesaria (Kayseri, 22%), Kilikia (11,4 %), Kharberd (10,8 %).

The average proportion of girls to boys was nearly of one per three; some examples: Balu (1:2), Garahisar (1:1,25), Gërgaghaj (1:1,15), Z²yt'un (1:2,8), Keghi (city: 1:1,4, province: 1:5), Kesaria (city: 1:2,5, province: 1:3,5), Kharberd (city, neighborhood school: 1,5:1).

Family units (tun, household) include in average 8-10 members: see, for instance, (*ibid.*), Agulis, Aghek'sandrapol, Ashtarak, Balu, Bagh²sh, Getash²n, Z²yt'un, Khizan, Khlat', Kamakh, Kars.

To get data for a comparison with European education standards during the 19th century one might see among others: Dina BERTONI JOVINE, *Storia dell'educazione popolare in Italia*, Einaudi: Torino, 1954, Laterza: Bari, 1965. The proportion of analphabetism in the region of Lombardia in 1861, at the moment of Italian unity, following immediately Austrian domination, was 599 per thousand (*ibid.*, p. 151).

56. So, for instance, in Italy where student population is actually about six and half a million. The average population age is, of course, a factor to take into account while comparing percentages of school population.

57. According to official statistics normally appearing on the Turkish press in the Seventies. Cf. *Il Nuovo Atlante Storico Garzanti*, Milano, 1990, p. 666: "L'analfabetismo nel mondo".

58. See for instance: Hrach'eay ACHAREAN, *op. cit.* (n. 55), pp. 27-39, 42-48, 69-81, 94-101, 103-109.

59. Apart from studies and bibliographies of single periodicals ("Ararat", "Murj", etc.) and single figures of publicists, we have now various bibliographies of periodical and daily Armenian press, both Eastern and Western: Hovhann²s PETROSYAN, *Hay parberakan mamuli bibliografia* [A Bibliography of the Armenian Periodical Press] (1794-1955), Haypethrat, Erevan, vol. I, (1794-1900), 1956; vol. II, (1900-1956), 1957; vol. III, (1902-1920 *Hay bolshevikean mamulë* [The Armenian Bolshevik Press], 1920-1954 *Sovetahay mamulë* [The Soviet Armenian Press]), 1954 (this is a basic work since it contains a bibliography, however not complete, of the contents of the listed reviews; introductions give a brief outline of the development of the Armenian press); A. KIRAKOSYAN, *Hay parberakan mamuli matenagitut'wn* [Bibliography of the Armenian Periodical Press] (1794-

1967). *Hamahawak' ts'ank* [A General Catalogue], Ministry of Culture of ASSR, "Al. Myasnikyan" Republican Library, 1970, editing and introduction by H. KOSTIKYAN and H. SILVANYAN (the introduction offers a good outline of earlier studies and bibliographies); Manvel A. BABLOYAN, *Hay parberakan mamulë. Matenagitakan hamahawak' ts'uts'ak* [The Armenian Periodical Press. A General Bibliographical Catalogue], 1794-1980, Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1980 (Petrosyan and Babloyan introduce the titles in chronological order; Kirakosyan introduces them in alphabetical order).

For a general outline of the development of the Armenian press see also: Mesrop JANASHEAN, *Patmut'iw n ardi hay grakanut'ean (Veratsnundi shrjan²n minch'ew mer ererë)* [History of Modern Armenian Literature (From the Period of Rebirth up to Our Days)], vol. I, Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1953, p. 109-118, 342-359; James ETMEKJIAN, *The French Influence on the Western Armenian Renaissance, 1843-1915*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1964, part II, ch. IV, p. 136-149; Gabriella ULUHOGIAN, "La pubblicistica armena a Tiflis alla metà del XIX secolo", *Georgica I*, (Quaderni del Seminario di Iranistica, Uralo-Altaistica e Caucasologia dell'Università degli Studi di Venezia, 22), Arti Grafiche Scialia Ed.ce, Roma, 1985, pp. 67-81.

60. Cf. Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "Personal Tragedy and Cultural Backgrounds in the Poetry of Bedros Turian", *Review of National Literatures*, vol. 13, *Armenia*, ed. by Vahe OSHAGAN, Griffon Hous Public.s, New York, 1984, pp. 127-128: the reference is to "Yerku khosk' ar Samat'iats'is", in *Yerkeri zhoghovatsu*, ed. by Albert S. Sharuryan, Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, vol. I, Erevan, 1971, p. 137, first published in *Oragir Konstantdnupolsoy*, July 19-20, 1871, N° 502-505. See also: Simon HAKOBIAN, *Petros Durean. Nra keank'n u yerkere. Grakan-k'nnakan verlutsut'iw n* [P. D. His Life and Works. A Literary-Critical Analysis], Mechitaristen-Buchdruckerei, Vienna, 1922, p. 59-65; A. S. SHARURYAN, *Petros Durean. Keank'ë yew gortsë* [P. D. His Life and Work], State Univ. of Erevan, Erevan, 1972; and bibliography given by the latter.

61. On the literary contribution and importance of the *gawar* see: Hakob OSHAKAN, *Hamapatker arewmtahay grakanut'ean* [A General Outline of Western Armenian Literature], vol. VII, *Aruestag²t serund* [The Aestheticist Generation], Armenian Catholicossate of Cilicia, Antelias, Lebanon, 1979, in part. ch.s 2, 4; Arshak CH'ÔPANEAN, "Hamastegh yew giwghë Hay grakanut'ean m²j" [H. and the Village in Armenian Literature], *Grakan Demk'er*, repr. in *Yerker*, cit. (n. 31), pp. 747-757; Hakob SIRUNI, *op. cit.* (n. 33), pp. 218-221, 460-464; Vahe OSHAGAN, "A Brief Survey of Armenian Literature", *Review of National Literatures*, cit. (n. 60), pp. 40-41.

On Khrimian Hayrik see: Arshak CH'ÔPANEAN, "N. V. Mkrtich' Khrimian", *ibid.*, pp. 435-455; Hakob OSHAKAN, *ibid.*, pp. 244-247; Arshak MATOYAN - Hakob PETROSYAN, "Gaghap'ari yew azatut'ean jahakirë" [The Torchbearer of Idea and Freedom], in KHRIMIAN HAYRIK, *Yerker* [Works], State Univ. of Erevan, 1992, pp. 5-18.

62. The novel was first published serially on "Vipat'ert'" (Varna, 1903-1905) under the title *Merzhuats s²r* [Rejected Love]; it was printed again, in instalments and in a revised form, under a new title *Amirayin aghjikë* (see above, n. 33), on "Arewelk'" (Constantinople, 1910). On Yerukhan see Hakob OSHAKAN, *ibid.*, ch. 3.

63. Barsegh EK'SERJEAN, *Ëndarjak kensagrut'iw n Petros Dureani* [A Detailed Biography of Petros Durean], Constantinople, 1893, pp. 132-134.

64. Cfr. Babg²n TÔP'CHEAN, *Hay arhestakts'akan yew hayets'oghakan ormnadrut'iw n* [The Armenian Corporative and Theoretical Masonry], Publication of Lodge Ani, N° 11, Beyruth, 1967, p. 164.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237. See pp. 142-219 for a general outline of Armenian Masonry. An English

summary: pp. 236-238. See also Hakob SIRUNI, *op. cit.* (n. 33), pp. 197-217.

66. Babg²n TÔP²CHEAN, *op. cit.* (n. 64), p. 237.

67. “Religion and Spirituality”, *cit.* (n. 48), pp. 83 -84. The basic research on the subject is that of Fr. Vardan HATS²UNI, *Hayuhin patmut²ean arjew* [The Armenian Woman in Front of History], Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1936, which keeps up to now its value for the author’s rare command of existing historical literature; see in part. “*Verjaban*” [Epilogue] (p. 431-435) and its references to the various chapters of the work. Hats²uni points rightly to the role of the political context in the development of some involutive processes.

A very dark picture of woman’s position in Armenian society, without any distinction of its various ages and any reference to the various political contexts, is painted by Avétis AHARONIAN: *Les anciennes croyances arméniennes*, Dissertation présentée à la Faculté des Lettres de l’Université de Lausanne ... en 1913, Ed.s Parenthèses, Roquevaire, 1980, pp. 17 -21. Certainly, woman’s position in Armenian society, especially in its evolutions and involutions in the course of centuries, still needs deeper study. I would like, in any case, to point at two basic methodological principles in such researches: a) to pay due attention to gather the evolutive or involutive processes of the Armenian society in corespondance with the different political contexts, following a path already shown by Hats²uni (see for instance: Chiara MEGIGHIAN, *Le risonanze nella società armena del XIX secolo dei movimenti culturali europei: Srpuhi Diusap*, tesi di laurea, Univ. di Venezia, Fac. di Lingue e Letterature Straniere, Corso di Laurea in Lingue e Letterature Orientali, an. accad. 1986/87, pp. 132 -134, 151-157); b) to realize the possibility of co-existence, in different moments of history, of some social and cultural trends which may seem to us to be with each other in a paradoxal relationship or, even, incompatible.

68. MOVSËS KHORENATS²I, *Patmut²iwn Hayots²*, I, xv - Engl. vers. with commentary by Robert W. THOMSON: MOSES KHORENATS²I, *History of the Armenians*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1978.

On the myth of Ara and Shamiram see: Heinrich GELZER, “Zur armenischen Götterlehre”, Sonderdruck a. d. Berichten der Königl. Sächs. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, Sitzung vom 7. Dec. 1895, pp. 128-130; Avétis AHARONIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 96), pp. 56-57; Yeghish² DUREAN, *Amboghj yerker* [Complete Works], II, *Hayots² hin krôn kam haykakan dits²abanut²iwn* [The Ancient Religion of the Armenians or Armenian Mythology], Srbot² Yakobeants² Press, Jerusalem, 1933, pp. 79 -87; Manuk ABEGHYAN, *Hay vipakan banahiwsut²wn* [Armenian Oral Narrative Poetry], in *Yerker* [Works], vol. I, Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1966, pp. 62 -68; Shavigh S. GRIGORYAN, *Hayots² hin gusanakan ergerë* [The Ancient Armenian Minstrel Songs], Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1971, pp. 37, 42; James RUSSELL, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, (Harvard Iranian Series, 5), Cambridge, MA, 1987, pp. 415-417. The authors generally take into consideration Ara’s and Shamiram’s behaviour in their mutual relationship. Ara’s attitude towards Nuard is almost absent from their horizon. If such an approach is certainly justified from a genetic point of view, it appears however insufficient to gather the whole meaning that the myth was given in the Armenian tradition. While in the Assyrian versions of the myth the denial that Ishtar meets is due to the insolence of whom she loves (cf. Mircea ELIADE, *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses*, 1, Payot, Paris, 1976, 1980, pp. 89-90), Ara’s refusal to Shamiram is due to his love for Nuard and his child.

69. See Arshak ALPÔYACHEAN, *Usumnasirut²iwn Srpuhi Tiwsabi* [A Study of S. Tiwsab], offprint from *Pazmaveb*, Venezia: Mekhitarian Press, 1901, in part. pp. 38 -56; Mesrop JANASHEAN, “Srpuhi Tiwsab”, *Pazmaveb*, CVII (1949), pp. 102-111, CVIII (1950), 3-10; ID., *Patmut²iwn ardi*, *cit.* (n. 59), pp. 251-255; James ETMEKJIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 59), pp. 183-191, 212, 242-244; Srpuhi P. HAYRAPETYAN, *Hrant Asatur. Keank²ë yew gortsë* [H. A. His Life and Work], “Gramartik” Press, Los Angeles, 1979, pp. 55-59, 120-121; Chiara MEGIGHIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 67), in part. pp. 121-131;

Alek'sandr M. T'EVOSYAN, *Retêos P²rp²rian. P'ilisop'ayakan yew hasarakakan-k'aghak'akan hayats k'nerë* [R. P. His Philosophical and Socio-Political Views], Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan, 1989, pp. 71-80, in part. 78-80.

70. Cf. Chiara MEGIGHIAN, *ibid.*, pp. 148-149.

71. "Banasirakan" in *Yerkeri zhoghovatsu*, cit. (n. 60), I, p. 133, first published in *Oragir Konstantnupolsoy*, May 24, 1871, N° 451: cf. Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "Personal Tragedy", cit. (n. 60), p. 128, nn. 26 and 29.

72. Cf. Shushanik NAZARIAN, *art. cit.* (n. 35), pp. 29-30; the reference is to: Yakob NALIAN, *Girk' koch'ets'eal gandzaran tsanuts'mants'* [A Book Called Thesaurus of Instructions], Constantinople (?), 1758, pp. 81-83.

73. On P²shiktashlean's social activity, the Hamazgeats' and other Associations of the period see: Arshak CH'ÔPANEAN (Archag TCHOBANIAN), *Mkrtich' P²shiktashleani keank'n u gortsë* [The Life and Work of M. Pêshiktashlean], Paris, 1907; A. PIPÊRCHEAN, *Husharjan Mkrtich' P²shiktashliani. Mets banasteghtsin keank'n u gortserë* [In Memory of M. P. The Life and Works of the Great Poet], Arshak Karoyan Press, Constantinople, 1914, pp. 23-27; Yep'rem POGHOSIAN, *Patmut'iwn Hay mshakut'ayin ënkerut'iwnneru* [A History of the Armenian Cultural Associations], vol. I, (Az gayin Matenadaran, 185), Vienna, 1957; Louise NALBANDIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 43), p. 71-72.

74. See Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "L' 'idéologie' nationale de Movs²s Xorenac'i et sa conception de l'histoire", *Handes Amsorya*, CI (1987), pp. 471-485; ID., "Ellenismo, ebraismo e cristianesimo in Mosé di Corene (Movs²s Xorenac'i). Elementi per una teologia dell'etnia", *XVI. Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana. Cristianesimo e Giudaismo: eredità e confronti*, in *Augustinianum*, XXVIII (1988), fasc. 1-2, pp. 381-390; ID., "Das Verhältnis zwischen Sprache und Identität in der Entwicklung der armenischen Nationalbewußtseins. Versuch einer begrifflichen Formulierung aus geschichtlicher Erfahrung", *Über Muttersprachen und Vaterländer. Zur Entwicklung von Standardsprachen und Nationen in Europa*, G. Hentschel (Hrsg.), Frankfurt am M.-Berlin-Bern-New York-Paris-Wien (Peter Lang), 1997, pp. 277-297; G. TRAINA, *Il complesso di Trimalcione. Movsés Xorenac'i e le origini del pensiero storico armeno*, (Eurasistica. Quaderni del Dipartimento di Studi Eurasiatici, Università degli Studi di Venezia, 27), Casa Editrice Armena, Venezia 1991; J.-P. MAHÉ, "Entre Moïse et Mahomet: réflexions sur l'historiographie arménienne", *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, pp. 1221-153.

75. See in general: James ETMEKJIAN, "Western European and Modern Armenian Literary Relations up to 1915", *Review of National Literatures*, cit. (n. 60), pp. 64-92. See in part.: Y. A., *Metsarents'i grakan nakhak'aylerë* [The First Steps of Metsarents' in Literature], Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1965, p. 15-25 (the author is Yusik Achrafian, alias known in Italian literary and film criticism as Glauco Viazzi, a highly appreciated specialist of Futurism and avant-garde movements); K. V., "Mkrtich' P²shiktashlian dasakanut'en²n d²pi Romant'izm. Verlutsakan nkatoghut'iwnner mahuan hariwrameakin arit'ov (1868-1968)" [M. P. From Clacissism to Romantism. Critical Observations on the Occasion of the Centenary of His Death], *Pazmaveb*, CXXVI (1968), pp. 330-356, in part. 333-336, 353-356 (the author's initials mean Glauco [K = West Arm. G] Viazzi); ID., "T²rian, Verl²n yew urishner" [T., Verlaine, and Others], *ibid.*, CXXVII (1969), pp. 313-321, CXXVIII (1970), 127-140, in part. 133 sq.; Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "Personal Tragedy", cit. (n. 60); ID., "Dall'epos al sogno", *In Forma di Parole*, n.s., I (1990), N° 3, p. 155-181; M. VERDONE, "Introduzione" to ELISE CIARENZ, *Odi armene a coloro che verranno*, nella interpretazione di Mario Verdone, Ed.ce Ceschina, Milano, 1968, pp. 7-16, in part. 14-16.

For a partial bibliography of modern Armenian literature see: A. NAZIGIAN - Ts. KHATCHATRIAN - A. TSITSINIAN, *The Armenian Literature in Foreign Languages*, ed. and foreworded by R. ISHKHANIAN, Armenian SSR Ministry of Culture, Erevan, 1971.

On Komitas Vardapet see: T'oros AZATEAN, *Komitas Vardapet*, Constantinople, 1931; Ghewond TAYEAN, *Komitas Vardapet (Usumnasirakan tesut'iwñ)* [K. V. (A Critical Study)], Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1936; Nikoghos K. T'AHMIZIAN, "Komitas yew Hay geghjuk yergë", in *Choral Concert. Komitas, Rustic Scenes - May 16, 1992*, Hamazkayin Arm. Educational and Cultural Soc.; Bernard OUTTIER, "La musique arménienne", *Paris Tête d'Affiche*, Numéro hors-série: *Arménie. Il y a mille ans, Ani*, 1992, p. 95. Komitas' work and talent were highly appreciated by such contemporary composers and musicologists as Claude Debussy, Louis Laloy, Oskar Fleischer, Max Seifert, Gnesin, and others.

Problems concerning continuity and change, tradition and innovation have been insistently debated in these last decades among Armenian intellectuals; see for example: *La struttura negata: cultura armena nella diaspora*, vol. 1, ed. by M. Nichanian - R. Pomponio, ICOM, Milano, 1979, vol. 2, ed. by M. Nichanian, *ibid.*, 1981; *Dissonanze. Images pour une culture arménienne*, ed. by A. Manoukian - H. Vahramian, I/COM/International, Milano, 1984.

76. There is today an increasing interest in the so-called "ethnic" or "ethnicity" studies. As especially to the Armenian case, both from a historic and philosophical standpoint, we can point at the following studies besides those mentioned in n. 74: Viada A. ARUTJUNOVA -FIDANJAN, "The Ethno-confessional Self-Awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians", *Revue des Études Arméniennes.*, n.s., XXI (1988-89), pp. 345-363; Aleksej LIDOV, "L'art des Arméniens chalcédoniens", *Atti del V Simposio Internazionale di Arte Armena (Venice 1988)*, ed. by Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, Venice: Mekhitarian Press, 1992, pp. 479-495; Boghos L. ZEKIYAN, "Prémises pour une méthodologie critique dans les études arméno-géorgiennes", *Bazmavep*, CXXXIX (1981), p. 460-469; ID., "Le croisement culturel dans les régions limitrophes de Géorgie, d'Arménie et de Byzance. Prémises méthodologiques pour une lecture sociographique", *Annali di Ca' Foscari*, (Serie Orientale 17), XXV, 3 (1986), pp. 81-96; ID., "Da Konstantiniye a Venezia", *cit.* (n. 16); ID., "Hrand Nazariantz e la migrazione armena in Italia. Un tentativo di ricostruzione tipologica del contesto interculturale", *Hrand Nazariantz tra Oriente e Occidente, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Conversano, Nov. 1987)*, Fasano, Brindisi, 1990, pp. 21-38; ID., "Les identités polyvalentes et Sergue Paradzvanov. La situation emblématique de l'artiste et le problème de a polyvalence ethnique et culturelle", *Filosofia Oggi*, XVI (1993), pp. 217-231; ID., "In margine alla storia. Dal fenomeno dell'emigrazione verso un nuovo concetto dell'identità e dell'integrazione etnoculturale", *Ad limina Italiae. In viaggio per l'Italia con mercanti e monaci armeni*, ed. by B.L. Zekiyana, (*Eurasiatica*, 37), Editoriale Programma, Padova, 1996, pp. 267-286.

77. Louise NALBANDIAN, *op. cit.* (n. 43), pp. 111, 114, 171-172.

78. Baykar SIVAZLIYAN, *Scambi culturali*, *cit.* (n. 33), pp. 36, 72-73.

79. Grigor PĒLTEAN (Krikor BELEDIAN), "'Haykakan apagayapashtut'iwñ' yew Hrant Nazariants'", *Bazmavep*, CXLVIII (1990), pp. 379-411.

80. We point here only to a few writings, of different intellectual and political derivation, as samples, dealing with Alishan's influence on Armenian irredentism: Martiros Y. ANANIKEAN, "Venetik yew ardi hay grakanut'iwñë" [Venice and Modern Armenian Literature], *K'nnakan usumnasirut'iwñner (Patmakan - Lezuakan - Grakan)* [Critical Studies (Historical - Linguistical - Literary)], Koch'nak Press, New York, 1932, p. 232; ID., "T'rk'ahay grakanut'iwñë 19rd darun m'j" [The Armenian Literature in Turkey in the 19th Century], *ibid.*, pp. 235-236; Suren SHTIKYAN, *Alishani hayrenasirakan banasteghsut'iwñë* [Alishan's Patriotic Poetry], Acad. of Sc. of ASSR, Erevan,

1959; Sak'o SARGSYAN, Alishan. Patkerner keank'its' [A. Images From His Life], "Sovetakan Grogh", Erevan, 1978 (a novalized biography of Alishan, but meaningful for people's general estimation of him). For an anthology of current evaluations of Alishan's figure, also for its patriotic influence, see also: *Hay Endanik*, 1970, N° 7-8, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Alishan's birth.

Awetik' Isahakian, a well known and celebrated poet (1875, Aleksandapol, later Leninakan and now Gyumri, † 1957 in Erevan, emigrated to Armenia in 1936), tells in his memories (*Yerkeri zhovovatsu*, Erevan, vol 5) that when he visited in his youth the island of San Lazzaro of the Mekhitarist monks in Venice and greeted the *Nahapet* ("Patriarch") as the young intellectuals and revolutionaries of his generation called the old Fr. Alishan (1820-1901) with a sense of fond veneration, he saw the *Nahapet* disappointed by their political activity and methodology. Alishan surprisingly suggested to Isahakian to follow the advice of the "wise" Patriarch of Constantinople, the famous Maghak'ia Ôrmanian, considered as a reactionary by the young generation. He would be deposed by them soon after the proclamation of the 2nd Ottoman Constitution in 1908. During that conversation Alishan added also not to trust the so called Christian Europe, because such a Europe did not exist any more.