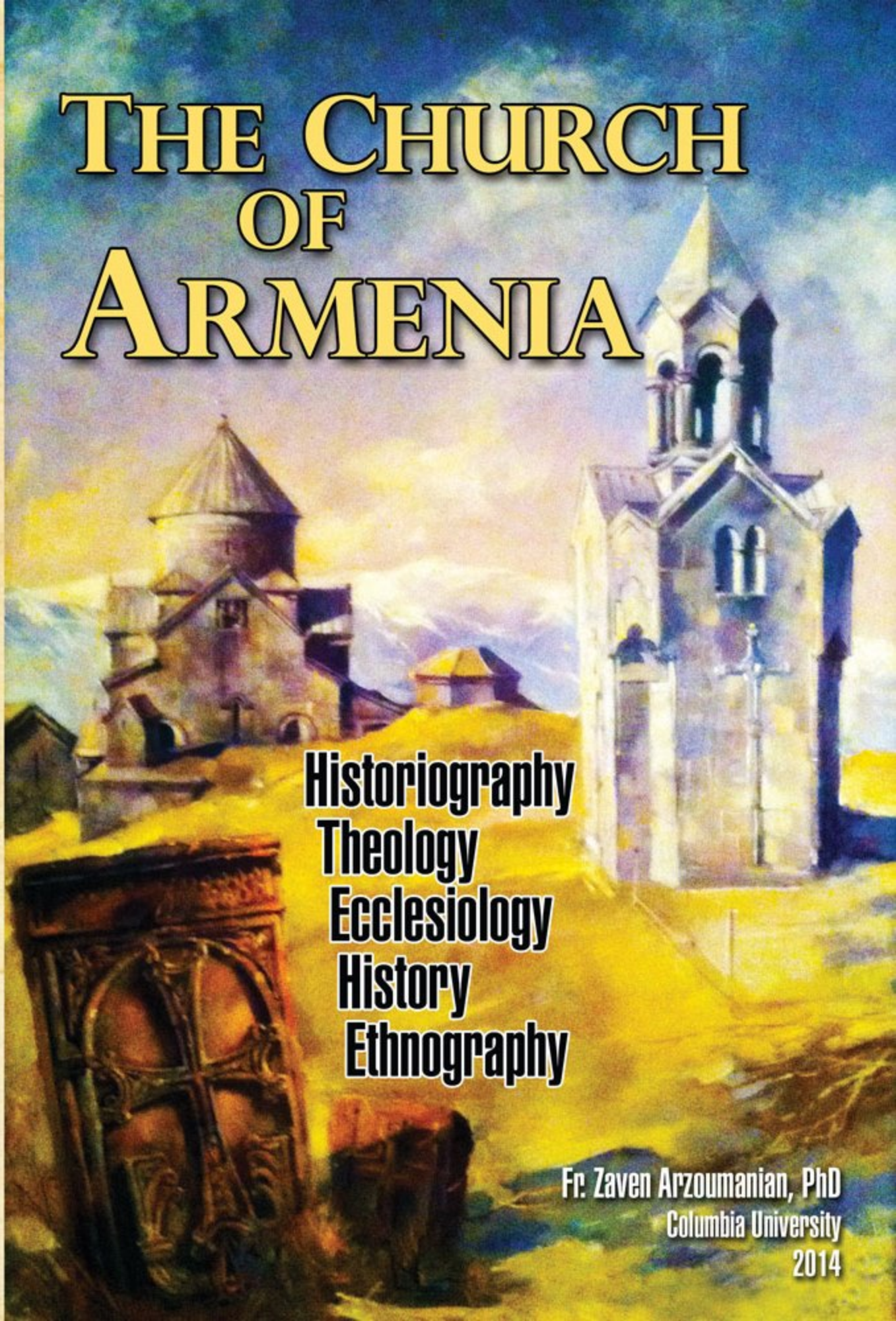
The Church of Armenia



Historiography
Theology
Ecclesiology
History
Ethnography

Fr. Zaven Arzoumanian, PhD
Columbia University
2014

The Church of Armenia

THE CHURCH OF ARMENIA

HISTORIOGRAPHY

THEOLOGY

ECCLESIOLOGY

HISTORY

ETHNOGRAPHY

By

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Publication of the Western Diocese
of the Armenian Church

2014

Cover painting by
Hakob Gasparian

During the Pontificate of

HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II

Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians

By the Order of

His Eminence

ARCHBISHOP HOVNAN DERDERIAN

Primate of the Western Diocese Of the Armenian Church of North America

To

The Mgrublians

And

The Arzoumanians

With Gratitude

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WESTERN DIOCESE OF
THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
Հայոց Սուրբ Եկեղեցւոյ Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի Արեւմտեան Թեմ
HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP HOVNAN DERDERIAN, PRIMATE

To Archpriest Fr. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian
A merited Armenian clergyman

Beloved Der Hayr,

Your selfless pastoral service has become a beacon in the life of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Blessed are you for your sacrificial spirit and enduring love that you have so willfully offered for the betterment of the faithful community. You have shared the sacred vision of our Church fathers through your masterful and captivating writings. Your newest book titled "The Church of Armenia" offers the reader a complete historiographical, theological, ecclesiological, historical and ethnographical overview of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

We pray to the Almighty God to grant you a long and a healthy life in order that you may continue to enrich the lives of the flock of Christ with renewed zeal and dedication.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian
Primate

March 5, 2014
Burbank

PREFACE

Specialized and diversified studies are included in this book from historiography to theology, and from ecclesiology to ethnography, most of them little known to the public. Sources from antiquity are explored, such as the earliest reported and verified theological source known as the *Seal of Faith* by Catholicos Komitas (7th c.). Also, the *Geography of Ancient Armenia by* Anania Shirakatsi (7th c.), the *Book of Canon Law,* by Catholicos John of Otsoon (8th c.), and the *Hymns in Five Units* of Catholicos St. Nersess the Graceful (12th c.) are reviewed. The *1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet* by St. Mesrob Mashtots, and the *500th Anniversary of the first printed Armenian books* in 1512 by Hagop Meghabard are included as important milestones in the Armenian literature, crowned with the first printed Armenian Holy Bible by Vosgan Yerevantsi in 1666.

The revival of all ancient historiography, one by one, explored by Soviet Armenian scholars in the 20th century is briefed in this volume from three dozens of such texts and their commentaries by leading historians, such as Catholicos Karekin I Hovsepiants, H. Manandyan, H. Acharyan, Y. Ter Minassian, Bishop Garabed Ter Mkrtchyan, V. Hakobyan and S. Yeremian. Church architecture focused on the famous *Zevartnots* Church built by Catholicos Nersess the Builder (7th c.), and excavated by Toros Toramanian at the dawn of the 20th c. is part of my studies, as are the 256 catalogued and forever lost manuscripts of Armash and Hakstoon. A review on the translation of St. Gregory of Narek's *Book of Lamentation* into the vernacular from the rare text of the Classical Armenian, published in 1858, is also included.

Julian (old) and Gregorian (new) calendars are treated after the New Calendar was adopted in 1923 by the Armenian Church, directed by the Encyclical of Catholicos Kevork V of All Armenians. The Return from the lengthy Peregrination of the Pontifical Seat of the Catholicos of All Armenians from Cilicia to Holy Etchmiadzin in 1441 is reported, as well as soon after the formation of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire. Both Seminaries, Kevorkian in Holy Etchmiadzin, and Armash near Cons-

tantinople, proved providential for the immediate future of the Armenian Church worldwide.

As we approach the centennial of the 1915 Genocide of the Armenian people, two studies reflect the Eastern and the Western resistance of Armenia against the Turks. The first under the Soviets during the pontificate of Catholicos of All Armenians Kevork V, and the second under the Ottomans during the pontificate of Catholicos Sahak II of Cilicia. Sahak II exiled from Cilicia, and the final evacuation of the remnants doomed on the Catholicos and his flock.

I am confident that reading the present book many relevant subjects will arouse the interest of the reader for further studies in the ancient and recent history of the Armenians.

The Author

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"New and Miraculous Offsprings"
Koriun Vardapet, historian (5th c.)

The Jubilee

The year 2006 marked the National Jubilee of the invention of the 36 Armenian letters by **St. Mesrob Mashtots**, a priest, in 406 AD. The present **Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II** issued an Encyclical in 2005 announcing the Jubilee Celebrations nationwide, underlining the preservation and the promotion of the Armenian *LETTER* and the Armenian *BOOK*. As stated by **Koriun Vardapet**, the biographer of his teacher St. Mesrob Mashtots, the Armenian letters became *"New and miraculous offsprings,"* which are still living *"miraculously"* and offering nurture to our religious, national, and cultural life for 1600 years.

Three Factors

The Armenian word for letter is *"keer" (գիր)* with its three dimensions, first as *word,* then as *book,* and ultimately as *literature*. One can imagine how grateful a task St. Mesrob has accomplished at the dawn of the 5th century, offering the Armenian nation and church, all three, which by extension comprised the Armenian religion and culture, all of them the offspring of his talent and concern at a time when the state of Armenia was on the verge of collapse. In fact, when **Catholicos Sahak Parthev**, **Mesrob Mashtots** and their **disciples** were intensely translating the Holy Bible from the Greek Septuagint to the classical Armenian, the **Armenian Arshakuni Kingdom** fell in 428 AD. The 5th century Golden Age Armenia was blessed with the replacement of the political state with spiritual and cultural revival that resisted and endured calami-ties more than any political power.

Prior to the Golden Age, Armenians possessed their speaking language for centuries. They spoke but never wrote or read any word in Armenian. The miracle performed when the *"new and miraculous offspring"* became available for the express reason of the translation of the Holy Bible into Armenian that the Catholicos Sahak called *"The Breath of God" (Asdvadzashounch).* Following the Armenian Bible, historiography emerged, and based on that *Holy Textbook par excellence*, the ancient and contemporary history of the Armenian people bloomed, arts of architecture and sculpture, manuscripts and miniatures came into life, and our nation and church validly identified as of this day. As a 1600 years old and 1600 years rich grateful people, we stand today tall in the midst of nations of the past, some of which are extinct for a long time.

"Queen of Translations"
(Taguhie Tarkmanutyants)

The 5th century original translation of the Armenian Bible hailed in the 19th century by non-Armenian biblical scholars as the *"Queen of the Translations,"* for its accuracy and faithfulness to the original text. The Bible followed immediately by our 5th century historians who learned the Classical Armenian from the Holy Bible and subsequently wrote in each century giving their contemporary accounts and rendering the Armenian history valid and reliable.

Some of our historians attracted the attention of the international scholarship as they provided data missing or lost in other contemporary sources in Greek or Syriac. The 5th century leading historian *Movses Khorenatsi* in his monumental *"History of Armenia,*" quoted by foreign historians, contain ample information collected by way of tradition and by actual events as an eyewitness. The same is true with the 7th century historian *Bishop Sebeos*, whose work known as the *"History of Emperor Heraclius,"* offers evidences not found in sources relating to Byzantium, Persia, and the Arabs.

Historiography

Fifth century Armenian historians were actually the translators of the Holy Bible who were sent by their superiors to Edessa,

Alexandria, or Constantinople, to learn the languages and return with the necessary knowledge. They were *Eznik, Yeghishe, Lazar Parbetsi, Hovhan Yegueghetsatsi* and *Koriun,* who became the first scholars of the 5th century under their teacher St. Mesrob, the inventor of the alphabet. Subsequent centuries followed suit and enriched significantly the Armenian ancient literature. They soon translated liturgical and biblical commentaries from the Greek and the early Church Fathers. Today what we have as the basic text of the Holy Eucharist is from those early translations. Obviously, the Armenian Church did not have any source of its own for daily worship until later when commentaries were written and original theological works surfaced.

Preserve the Legacy

The Armenian civilization stemmed from literacy. All we have today as original literature, religion, architecture, the arts of sculpture and manuscripts still survive, and in the last one hundred years, despite cruel calamities they speak for themselves. They are genuine witnesses of our past, not simply displayed in well equipped libraries and monasteries, but also studied by scholars who have introduced them to the outside world. Now is the time in the present materialistic world to preserve the foundations of our past by promoting the language that seems to recede quickly, but the Mother Church remains to stand as our fortress, if we keep the language and the structure firm. Armenian writers and readership are gradually lessening, and the Armenian cultural interest in general, judging from the Armenian schools and their low enrollment, are promising regress than progress.

What Gift has Armenia to Offer?

The 1600th anniversary is time to evaluate the structure of our mother language primarily. Western and Eastern Armenian dialects have lived side by side for a long time, happily and with precious literature. However, during and following the Soviet rule in Armenia and as of today, despite our independent Republic of Armenia, the Eastern dialect deteriorated alarmingly in terms of voca-

bulary and orthography when compared with the same language prior to the system. Leaders then published their valuable books in clean and clear Eastern Armenian free from foreign words and faithful to the grammar and the orthography of the Holy Bible, translated by the first translators and their teachers St. Sahak Catholicos and St. Mesrob Mashtots Vardapet.

In the West, the Armenian dialect remained faithful and produced superior literature at the end of the 19th and through the 20th centuries. Now I ask *what gift has Armenia to offer.* It is the wish of the Diaspora leaders and readers of Armenian literature to return back to the classical dictation inherited from the Golden Age Armenia and carried through the centuries. This is what the Republic of Armenia, as difficult as it is after so many decades of deviations, should offer to the Armenian people.

"ARMENIA ACCORDING TO ASHKHARHATSOUYTS" (GEOGRAPHY)
TEXT AND COMMENTARY
BY
SOOREN D. YEREMIAN
YEREVAN, 1963

The Volume

This remarkable volume with its 7th century original text in Classical Armenian translated into the modern vernacular on the facing page by Professor Sooren D. Yeremian is designated as *"An attempt to reconstruct the 7th century Map of Armenia based on contemporary geographic maps*." In 154 pages, the book contains the complete text of the 7th century *"ASHKHARHATSOUTS"* (Geography), its translation, and an Introduction with detailed annotations and indexes. The text covers the ***15 provinces of ancient Armenia*** with their respective districts, as well as the **8 provinces of Georgia,** and the **2 provinces of Caucasian Albania** with their dist-ricts.

At the end of the volume, the author has provided detailed listings of place names and their locations on his reconstructed map at the end of the volume, representing the text as a map that must have been lost. The author has drawn the map according to the written text, which as he says, was used as a textbook along with the lost map. We are indebted to Sooren Yeremian for re-drawing the most ancient map, definitely the work of a great scientist and astronomer of the 7th century **Anania Shirakatsi.**

The reader of this book will easily identify and locate all the cities, towns, and villages as references. As I have used the book for my research, I found it very useful to locate easily any place names belonging to ancient Armenia. The reconstructed widespread map is carefully drawn, folded, and placed at the end of the book bound in a belt. The book is complete and irreplaceable.

Visit to the Matenadaran

I was in the Yerevan Matenadaran in 1976 to visit the depository of the ancient manuscripts to see the earliest manuscript text of the 8th century historian *Ghevond the Priest*. I was working on the translation of this historian's *"History of the Arab Invasions"* as my thesis. While reading the 13th century manuscript with the kind permission of the Director Prof. Levon Khachikian, Babken Choukasezian, a senior scholar showed me Sooren Yeremian's book on the *Ancient Geography*, published in Yerevan in 1963, signed the book and donated to me. I was grateful for the gift, knowing nothing about it at the time. No doubt, coming home I found it very essential for my research, considering the time of the writing of the text of the "*Geography"* (7thcentury), and the text of Ghevond's "*History,"* a century later.

The Content of the Book

Greater Armenia is shown in this 7th century text with its 15 provinces with their respective districts as follows:

1. Armenian Plateaus
2. Sophene, Fourth Armenia
3. Aghdznik
4. Taron-Turuberan
5. Mokk
6. Korjayk
7. Parskahayk
8. Vaspurakan
9. Siunik
10. Artsakh-Karabagh
11. Paytakaran
12. Utik
13. Gugark
14. Tayk
15. Ayrarat

In those 15 provinces are shown 198 districts, 6 mountains, 4 plains, 6 lakes, 8 islands, 25 rivers, 22 cities, 11 towns, 3 villages, and 13 fortresses. For the country of **Georgia** the text shows 8 provinces as follows: Armenian Mdzkheta, Georgian Mdzkheta, Arguet, Bteshkhakan, Sepakanutiun of Tashir, Kakhetia, Eger, and the Gates of Alans. **Albania** is given 2 provinces with their 2 districts: the land of Albania, and the Armenian districts. In his Introduction Yeremian says that the author of *"Ashkharhatsouyts"* describes the borders of Armenia and Transcaucasia over two periods, the first up to the

partition of Armenia in 387 between Byzantium and Persia, while previously Armenia was a centralized state known as **"Greater Armenia."** The second period specifies the years from 610 to 685, the years Anania Shirakatsi, the author of the ancient text, lived.

The Author of "Ashkharhatsouyts"

The author of this 7th century document has based his ancient map on two Roman maps, especially on the map drawn by a famous scientist Claudius Ptolemy. The other map is known as "*Tabula Bevtingeriana,"* which Yeremian concludes was the only contemporary model map on which other maps were drawn. Claudius lived centuries earlier, from 90 to 168 AD, and according to Yeremian, the 7th c. Armenian map could be traced back to his map. Historian Hakob Mananyan finds this improbable and has published his own treatise in 1936 under the title *"The Main Routes of Ancient Armenia According to Tabula Bevtingeriana,"* concluding that this map was the base of the Armenian text.

Previously the text was ascribed to the 5th century historian **Movses Khorenatsi**, but later scholars in Armenia gave the credit of the *"Ashkharhatsouyts*" to the 7th century scientist and astrologer **Anania Shirakatsi**. S. Yeremian considers the switch from the 5th to the 7th century improbable. Anania Shirakatsi lived from 610 to 685 and wrote scientific works on astrology and geography, and there was no doubt that the author of such a detailed map could have been Anania himself. Whether Khorenatsi or Shirakatsi, Yeremian thinks that the text was originally a map that was lost and the text survived and used as a textbook for the students. He has this important note in the Introduction: "*The text of the Ashkharhatsouyts was survived in manuscript collections where Movses Khorenatsi's History and Shirakatsi's works were included. Therefore, the text in question was ascribed more to Khorenatsi and less to Shirakatsi."*

The Large Map

Most important for the reader is the very large and colorful map at the end of Yeremian's book that the author has drawn gen-

uinely based on the text with references in his commentary identifying every place name accordingly on the map. Greater Armenia is dominant where every name is clearly shown with corresponding information given in alphabetical order. Two examples may offer some idea of the work done by this great scholar. *"ABEGHYANK," is* the first, and the second is *"MIJERKRYAYK."* I quote:

"***Abeghyank*** *is the 3rd district of Ayrarat province, located on the left bank of river Eraskh, and between the mountains of Metzrats (Soghanlu Dagh). It lies in the region of the village Mejenkert. The dynasty of the governors of the Abeghyank district was hereditary known as a separate nakharar (princely) house. The district is approximately 1,000 sq. km."* The second is Asia Minor called by the *Ashkharhatsouyts* ***Mijerkryayk,*** which provides the actual state of affairs during 6-7 century with its political divisions as follows:

Mijerkryayk *the author of the Ashkharhatsouyts tries to find a connection based on historical evidences between the Armenian and Greek people in ancient times. It is genuine when he calls the region Mijerkryayk, as he provides the political and territorial divisions of Asia Minor which existed contemporary to his time, namely 6-7 centuries."*

I conclude my study, highly commending the achievements of geographer Sooren Yeremian, who as the first and the only scholar on the ancient *Ashkharhatsouyts,* benefited immensely the Armenian history and our national heritage.

500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN PRINTED BOOK (1512 - 2012)

By Hagop Meghabard, the Pioneer

The Jubilee

The year 2012 marked the 500th anniversary of the printing of the first six Armenian books by **Hagop Meghabard in 1512 in Venice**. We know nothing about him, but probably he was a cleric judging from the first books he had selected to print from the ancient manuscripts. Late in 1890, one of the six books, a *"Missal,"* was found in Jerusalem by Bishop Sahak Khabayan, Grand Sacristan of the Patriarchate. The tiny book is the same book the priest uses today on the Altar during the Holy Eucharist. Up to that time, almost everything was unknown about the first printed books. Bishop Khabayan, who later in 1902 was elected **Catholicos Sahak II of the Great House of Cilicia**, discovered a brief colophon at the end of the *"Missal"* which revealed for the first time the name of the printer, the place and the date it was printed. In my opinion the last century's 400th Jubilee in 1912 announced by **Catholicos Kevork V Soureniants** was in fact the first Jubilee celebrated due to the lack of earlier information on the event. The colophon reads:

"This holy book was printed in the Armenian Year 962 and in the Lord's year 1513 in the providential city of Venice by Hagop Meghabard."

From Manuscripts to Print

The renaissance of the 16th century is indebted to the invention of the printing of books in Germany by **Johan Guttenberg in 1450**. The jump from the old to the new, from the parchment to print, was bold and remarkable as it was in the case of the Armenian literary culture that began in the 5th century and survived by tens of thousands of hand written manuscripts. **Hagop Meghabard**

Open Sharagan, old book print

courageously followed the steps of Guttenberg and transferred the culture of the Armenian manuscripts into printed books some 62 years after him. The place was Venice where 250 printing presses were already operating when Hagop, the pioneer, who humbly nicknamed himself *"Meghabard," (Hagop the Sinful)* opened his own printing shop, independent from the others as it can be seen by some identifying features of style and patterns borrowed from the ancient Armenian manuscripts.

The strange case in such an important undertaking was that Meghabard was sponsored neither by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, nor was commissioned by the Catholicos or a philanthropist to embark on the printing project of 1512. We do not know how he managed to finance his invention from casting the letters to the forming of the paginations to finally put them under press and bind the first printed books as we have them today. There is the possibility as surmised by scholars that Hagop was in touch with the merchants of Venice who helped him. Unfortunately the shop was short lived, only two years, presumably for the same financial reasons.

It should be clear when we state Venice as the place of the first Armenian singlehanded printing house by Hagop Meghabard, we do not refer to the Armenian Mekhitarist Congregation. We refer to the city of Venice only. The Mekhitarist Congregation appeared in Venice 200 years later in 1717 and was established on the Island of St. Lazar.

Hagop Meghabard's Initiative

A huge step was taken from the art of manuscripts to the art of printing by *Meghabard* who kept the style and the legacy of the ancient writing, casting similar letters and designs of the opening pages with the initial ornate letters, keeping even the two colors, black and red, and displaying meticulous art as a talented clergyman. His initial six books were the following: ***"Ourpatakeerk" (Friday's Book), "Missal" (Badarakadedr), "Akhtark", "Hymnbook" (Dagharan), "Calendar Book" (Barzadomar),*** and ***"The Book of Psalms" (Saghmosaran)***. The colophon found at the end of the *"Missal,"* as said above.

As for Hagop Meghabard's identity, there remains a complete silence, other than the tiny colophon quoted above. Nothing about his provenance, names of his parents his birthplace or date of birth are known to the Armenian scholarship. At least the colophon provides slim but most essential data on this milestone undertaking. His most humble "identity" as "*Hagop the sinful*" says it all. Scholars had no choice other than reading *Meghabard* as his "surname." The specialist who studied the first Armenian printed books is **Raphael Ishkhanian,** a renowned historian and scholar, who published his *"History of Armenian Book"* in Yerevan in 1977. He researched the development of the Armenian printing from 1512 to 1680, introducing *Meghabard's* successors **Abgar Tbir of Tokat** who was commissioned by the **Catholicos of All Armenians Mikael Sebasdatsi** some 50 years later.

Ishkhanian has quoted from the six books that there was financial help given to Hagop by the merchants and that the press he started in Venice belonged to him. He quotes the following terms: *"dbaranader" (owner of the press), "dbarananisher" (copyright)* and *"mamoulanisher" (numbers for each chapter)* in Armenian numerical *letters* and not in Arabic numerals. The latter, as usual, are used for pagination. Ishkhanian says this case is a proof of independence and identity from the other local presses.

"Ourpatakeerk," which made history being the first Armenian book printed in Armenian, and the *"Akhtark,"* both have similar content. Unlike the other four books they are not religious or of Biblical context. Both have healing and astronomical nature, whereas the *"Calendar Book"* stands to confirm the date of those books indicating the first year as 1512, the year *Meghabard* started printing all six books. R. Ishkhanian and scholars in Armenia have singled out the *"Hymnbook"* as the best artistically designed in two colors black and red stating *"it is the best publication of Hagop Meghabard in printing artistry being the last of the six*." It contained medieval authors' religious songs of *St. Gregory of Narek, St. Nersess the Graceful, Hovhannes Tlkourantsi,* and *Mkrtich Naghash.* The other two, the *"Book of Psalms"* and the *"Missal,"* are obviously for church worship services.

The Legacy of Hagop Meghabard

In the 16th century, Armenia was torn between Turkey and Iran. In the past during the 5th century Golden Age Armenia, culture and literacy challenged the fall of the Arshakuni Kingdom in 428 through the miraculous invention of the Armenian letters and the translation of the Bible into Armenian. Likewise, in 1512 Hagop Meghabard embarked on the monumental task of the printing to keep up with the European Renaissance and introduce the nucleus of the Armenian ancient literature to the West. His ambition was to promote his national and religious identity. He did it with great courage and success.

Hagop's successors came late in time, first **Abgar Tbir of Tokat** 50 years later with his son **Soultanshah** who created new fonts and in 1565. They printed five more books in Venice: *"Church* Calendar*," "Breviary," "Book of Sacraments"*and a*"Grammar Book."* Later Abgar moved his printing press to Constantinople leaving his son in Rome where he formed more fonts and printed the *"Gregorian Calendar,"* known as the *New Calendar,* decreed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. The Armenian Church adopted the Gregorian Calendar much later in 1923. Abgar gratefully remembers Hagop Meghabard in a colophon whose original printings, he says, served as a basic sample for his accomplishments. Unlike Hagop, Abgar Tbir was commissioned by the Encyclical of **Catholicos Mikael of Sebastia** in 1562 who sent him to Rome first, and then to Venice where he stayed for a long time. His son Soultanshah continued his father's work until the end of the 16th century.

Counting from the earliest 1512-1586 prints the total publiccations represented 19 books. Exactly 50 years later, in 1636, **Khachadour of Guesaria** established a printing press in New Julfa, Iran where he printed with his co-workers four more books and distinguished himself as the abbot and a great educator of his school.

Khachadour of Guesaria (1590 -1646)

Khachadour of Guesaria was born in Kaiseri, Turkey, and upon arrival in New Julfa became the founder of the famous **All Savior Monastery (*Amenaprgich***). He was educated in Holy Etch-

miadzin where he learned theology and philosophy. He studied the texts of the Armenian philosopher *David the Invincible, Aristotle,* and *Plato.* Khachadour was the abbot of the Monastery since 1620 where he established the first printing press in Iran in 1638. He was the pioneer of the following publications, all published for the first time: in 1641 *"Harants Vark" (The Life of the Fathers),* a large volume with 703 pages; the next year he published the first *"Adeni Jamakeerk" (Brieviary)* and a *"Dagharan" (Book of religious songs),* besides establishing a School and a Library. He further published *"The Book of Psalms," "The Missal,"* and *"The Book of Calendars."*

Famous students learned under him, including **Catholicos of All Armenians Hagop of Julfa** and **Vosgan Vardapet of Yerevan**, both pioneers of the first publication of the Holy Bible in 1666. Prior to the printing of the Bible, Khachadour published three Christological texts, one of them a theological exposition by **Cyril Patriarch of Alexandria** (died 444), known as *"Barabmounk Giurghi Alexandratsvo" (Scholia de Incarnatione Unigenity)*. It is the Armenian version translated from the Greek, whose English translation from the classical Armenian was published in London (1907) by C.F. Conybeare under the title of "*The Armenian Version of Revelation and Cyril of Alexandria's Scholia on the Incarnation."*

The *Scholia* was the study I presented in 1967 to the University as my thesis for the Master's degree. Patriarch Cyril was present at the **Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431,** who formulated the *"One nature in the Incarnate Word"* in relation of the divine and human natures in the **One Person Jesus Christ**.

From Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin

In 1658, Catholicos Hagop of Julfa and Vosgan of Yerevan embarked on the Armenian printing in Amsterdam where Vosgan founded the St. Sarkis printing house in 1664. **In 1666, he successfully printed the first Armenian Bible**, the largest volume with 1464 pages, an amazing accomplishment as a monument dedicated to Christianity in Armenia, just as in the 5th century when St. Sahak and St. Mesrob translated the original from the Greek Septuagint.

Vosgan used the best manuscript written in Cilicia that he took with him from Etchmiadzin. We remember celebrating nationwide the 300th anniversary of this remarkable achievement in 1966 by the Encyclical issued by **Catholicos Vasken I of All Armenians.** Matthew Vardapet Dzaretsi succeeded Vosgan Vardapet, while Vosgan went to Marseille to establish another printing house. In Marseille and in Livorno Vosgan printed 17 more books.

On behalf of Holy Etchmiadzin, Vosgan and Matthew embarked on a major task in 1695 and printed in Amsterdam the *"Hamadaradz Ashkharhatsooyts" (General Geographic Map).* For the first time, they published the famous *"History of the Armenians"* by Movsess Khorenatsi (5thc.), *"Tourn Eemasdutyan" (Door of Wisdom)* school textbook, *"Gandz chapots, kshrots, tvats yev dramots bolor ashkharhi" (Treasure of measures, weights, numbers and currency worldwide.)* During 1669-1672 Vosgan and Matthew printed the Armenian Church *"Sharagnots" (Hymnbook)* for the first time, and the *"History of Tabriz"* while the historian Arakel of Tabriz was alive. Vosgan Yerevantsi passed away in 1674 in Marseille at age 60.

Vosgan Yerevantsi in Marseille

When Vosgan arrived in Marseille in 1672, he was already a bishop ordained by his classmate **Catholicos Hagop of Julfa**. Vosgan was born in New Julfa in the *Ghlijents* family. His both parents were born in Yerevan and their son received the name of Vosgan Yerevantsi. In 1604, his parents had forcefully migrated to Isfahan by Shah Abbas where Vosgan was born and learned in the *All Savior's Seminary* under the great educator **Khachadour of Guesaria**; later he went to Etchmiadzin to study theology. The following is a pontifical blessing given by our contemporary **Catholicos Vasken I of Blessed Memory.**

In 1970 His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians visited Marseille during his pontifical tour abroad where he learned that a *"Vemkar" (consecrated marble for liturgical use) belonging to Vosgan Yerevantsi, without his name on it, was treasured in the Chateaux Borelli Catholic museum for 300 years."* His Holiness wan-

ted to see the marble plaque as reported in the following eyewitness account written by Deacon Stepan Boghossian, author of *"History of the Armenian Community of Marseille":*

"In 1970 Gaston de Fere, the famous mayor of the city of Marseille presented the historic marble to Catholicos Vasken I in the City Hall during an official visit of His Holiness. The Catholicos gave the marble to the Holy Translators Armenian Cathedral of Marseille to be installed on the Altar permanently." The marble has the following inscription:

"On May 23 in the City of Amsterdam, Holland, this marble in the name of St. Garabed was donated by Zechariah son of David of Julfa, and inscribed by Garabed servant of the Lord"

In Raphael Ishkhanian's words *"The printing press established by Hagop Meghabard, after gradually developing in foreign countries for two and half centuries, in 1771 arrived in Armenia by the efforts of the* ***Catholicos of All Armenians Simeon Yerevantsi*** *and it was in Etchmiadzin that the first printing house began to operate in our country."*

A year later a prayer book called *"Zbosaran Hokevor" (Spiritual Manual)* was printed. With the words of our church historian **Patriarch Malachia Ormanian,** *"The invention of the Armenian printing proved a strong support for Armenian scholarship and resource for the eastern nations where Armenians advanced honorably."*

In Constantinople
Krikor of Marzvan

Promotion for Armenian printing needed proper environment, and the place was Constantinople where Armenians lived and flourished. The first printing press in the capital city started to operate in 1699, by **Krikor Marzvantsi** (1698-1734), with Asdvadzadour Tbir as his associate. Together they published some 20 books, among them the first publication of *"Narek" (Matyan Voghbergutyan,"* the famous 10th century prayer book by **St. Gregory of Narek** and called by the author *"Book of Lamentations."* Next, Marzvantsi

was successful in printing the large volume of *"Haysmavourk" (Menologion)* in 1706. The volume contained the lives of the Saints for daily reading giving the book the exact identification as *"Haysum avour" (This day is the feast of).* Important publications followed as first prints: *"History of Taron"* by Zenob Glak 1709, and St. Krikor Datevatsi's *"Book of Questions"* in 1720, a highly qualified, large, complete, and standard book of theology of the Armenian Church with questions and answers.

Marzvantsi's publications were very essential for the originnal history of the Armenian Christianity, one of them by Zenob Glak where we read the mission of St. Gregory the Illuminator who dedicated the first church to John the Baptist in Taron-Vaspurakan. The collection of the daily readings of the lives of the Saints was the next to be printed as the first and the largest volume. The book by St. Krikor Datevatsi provided the theological doctrines of the Armenian Church treasured and used in monasteries and universities as a textbook in the form of a manuscript, until Krikor Marzvnatsi published it for the first time.

Mekhitarist Fathers in Venice

After Constantinople, the island of St. Lazar in Venice became a center of printing for religious and historical books by the Congregation of the Mekhitarist Fathers from 1717. The same year **Abbot Mekhitar of Sebastia** founded the Congregation under the Roman Catholic Church in his name. The first publication by Abbot Mekhitar in 1733 was the second edition of the Holy Bible originally printed by Vosgan Yerevantsi in Amsterdam in 1666 as described above. I was aware of a copy of this second edition, while serving the Armenian Church in Florida. A devout lady who owned the Bible asked me if we could treasure it in the newly consecrated St. David Armenian Church in Boca Raton. The Bible was dedicated and kept in the church near the Altar in a special glass counter.

Most important was the publication of the *"Dictionary of the Armenian Language,"* two large volumes by Abbot Mekhitar of Sebastia, which became the foundation of all future dictionaries.

Both volumes spread new light and understanding of the Armenian historiography through the centuries. The vocabulary is comprehensive and complete comprising each word found in all Armenian historical texts from the 5th century on. In Venice, they published the Holy Bible on a scholarly basis in 1807, known as *"Zohrabian Text of the Bible."* Both branches of the Mekhitarist Fathers, in Venice and later in Vienna, published a long series of historic and religious texts known as *"Azgayin Matenadaran" (National Library)* gradually bringing into light almost all our ancient literature one by one.

Conclusion

The invention and the progress of the Armenian printing art encouraged our nation for greater cultural achievements. Those achievements greatly contributed to our education, spreading our literature all over the world, and above all saved our cultural treasures from extinct making them the safe property of the Armenian people.

15TH CENTURY ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPT IN PASADENA *"BOOK OF SACRAMENTS"*

The Manuscript

Harout Der Tavitian of Pasadena, Chairman of *Nor Serount Cultural Society* and a leading intellectual, owns a valuable Armenian manuscript that I had the opportunity to study and present the rare book to the scholars of our people. The manuscript is written on paper and identified by this writer as *Book of Sacraments* based on its content, since at the beginning and at the end a few pages are fallen. The book is a manual of the Sacraments of the Armenian Church used by priests only, of at least five consecutive generations. The Book of Sacraments is essential for every priest to have handy for the performance of the seven Sacraments according to the Armenian Church rites. This manuscript has two additional eulogies, titled as "*Lamentation on the Burial of the Boy,"* and *"Lamentation in memory of the deceased."*

At first, it was important for me to look for a clue to determine the date and the place where it was written as with the tens of thousands of survived manuscripts known to the scholarship as of today. They have been catalogued in various volumes, except for this one manuscript that remained to be searched by an interested scholar. Therefore, I tried to find clues for both, date and place, which were almost impossible because of the lack of the first and the last pages. Coincidently, as I was reading the manuscript, I saw the above-mentioned eulogy on the "*burial of the boy*" in the form of poetry dedicated to the young boy who had died at a very tender age.

In the lengthy eulogy given below in translation, I was surprised to see the following sentence: *"In the year eight hundred and seventy, plus eight years later"* the boy died. This brief and yet most important date can only be the accurate date of the manuscript. The years recorded are in accordance with the Armenian Calendar,

which provide the date 870+8=878. To convert the year into *Anno Domini*, we must add 551 when the Armenian Calendar began. Therefore,

The verified date of the writing of this manuscript is definitely 878+551=1429 AD.

The Content

The manuscript contains the services of *Matrimony, Burial, Blessing of Water, Washing of the Feet, and the Blessing of the Cross.* It is interesting to note that each text is written in its original and native style, quite different from the text printed later for the use of our own generations. This 15th century text is a piece of combination of church and family life, the language being Classical Armenian but sometimes local words are used to make the meaning more sensational. It is surprising however, that it does not contain the most important *Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation*. This absence is a true surprise, a case that shows the more casual use of the services, rather than purely the canonical sacraments.

The physical condition of the manuscript is poor, the binding very loose, pages missing and later written pages inserted, a case demonstrating the use by so many successive priests, passing from one hand to another for generations. The page size is 15x10 cm. and the manuscript has a value of its own with certain characteristics for being unique which qualify and even distinguish it from the later publications. It is an ancient document as a source for scholarly research. In terms of artistic illustrations, the book does not qualify, except for some bird-style colored letters here and there for decoration. The creation of the manuscript is local and higher arts of handwriting not reflected in it, unlike centuries before when the schools in Cilicia produced the highest art of manuscript illustrations on parchment.

No information of owners are found, except for one name only, added much later on the margin, namely, *"Baron Khachadour Bagh"(tasarian)*, stating also the use of the book in Tehran, Iran.

Two Important Eulogies

As said earlier two "*lamentations"* are the specifics of this manuscript: the *"Lamentation in memory of the deceased,"* and *"Lamentation for the burial of the boy."* Both of them appear for the first and the only time. No Books of Sacraments of later editions include them, which I will suggest for future studies. They are local and private and therefore no one could have been interested to include them in later publications. I believe my translation from the Armenian original stands the first for publication. Some years ago, I had sent both original texts with a lengthy description of this manuscript to the late **Patriarch Torkom Manoogian of Jerusalem** who published them for the first time in "*SION,"* the official monthly of the Armenian Patriarchate. The following are the texts in translation, and as we realize any translation cannot reflect the real emotional nature of the original language, especially when it refers to the death of a young boy.

"For the Burial of the Deceased"

Ye all priests and theologian doctors,
And the entire faithful people,
Hear my complaints all in unison,
And plead God for my salvation.

Yesterday, I thought I was immortal and sound,
Today the message of death arrived to leave,
Telling I have no part in this changing world,
Come back to your eternal paternal home.

Yesterday I was like fortress with my lavish body,
Today they took me out of my dwelling,
To bury me in the grave where dark rules forever,
Having no remedy to return back home.

"For the Burial of the Boy"

The Creator of all creatures was angry at us,
The sweet nature of divinity turned bitter to us,

The fiery sword spread down today,
The fire inflamed from the divine abode.

Woe thousand times, to what just happened,
Newlywed bride and groom separated,
Since a child sorrowfully turned to dust,
And since the dead son's mother grieved deeply.

Sinless boys are stricken by the angel,
Tumbling in front of the parent with compassion,,
Fainting pitiable in the bosom of the mother,
And fading away like a springtime flower.

The beautiful color faded from his face,
The lights of those oceanic eyes were out,
The handsome and strong arms were tied,
The gold and silver marbles of the bracelet fell,
In the year eight hundred and seventy plus eight years,
Bitter grief befell and divine devastation
Made all deeply hurt, weeping to no end.

Following the burial of the boy we see two references made among the deceased boy and those who welcomed Jesus at his final entry into Jerusalem with joy and singing, and then with those boys *"who were killed in Bethlehem by King Herod in your place."* The present manuscript makes the comparison sensationally, which is also found in the recent texts of *"Book of Sacraments."*

Conclusion

All Armenian manuscripts definitely are valuable for our history and religion. This particular one contains local characteristics and some additional material compared with the current books we use for the Church Sacraments. It is educational if someone will read it much closely and discover data which, I am sure, can be very helpful to our ethnic and religious life from the past six centuries. The classical Armenian is used with care that indicates the quality of the earlier copies wherefrom this book was copied.

PROF. HRACHYA ACHARYAN (1876-1953) AND HIS *"ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE ARMENIAN LANGUAGE"* YEREVAN, 1971-1979

The Author

The brightest scholar in the history of the Armenian language during the 20th century and for all times stands **Prof. Hrachya Acharyan**, born in Constantinople in 1876 who in 1895 studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris, specializing in linguistics, under Prof. Antoine Meillet. Soon Acharyan's fame reached Germany where a famous linguist **Heinrich Hupschmann** invited Acharyan to study under him in the University of Strazbourg.

Graduating from those two Universities, Hrachya Acharyan was invited by the Kevorkian Seminary of Holy Etchmiadzin as a lecturer where in 1909 he published his *opus magnum* titled "*Classification des dialectes armeniens."* Prof. Acharyan lived 50 years a most productive life in Armenia to the end. He died in 1953, serving as the senior Professor of the State University of Yerevan. He was also a visiting professor at the Kevorkian Seminary. His scholarly famous linguistic volumes have made him known internationally as a leading linguist.

Etymological Dictionary
Of the Armenian Language

These unique and irreplaceable four volumes comprise Acharyan's *Etymological Dictionary of the Armenian Language* next to his *Dictionary of Proper names.* Acharyan's valuable volumes are, *History of the Armenian Language,* and the *Unabridged Grammar of the Armenian Language*. The *Etymological Dictionary* is recognized internationally among the Indo-European languages.

The author defines his four volumes and divides them into five sections. First, he stresses the importance of the **vocabulary** involving the roots of the words, the declensions, the meanings, the evidences, and the variants. Next, the etymology, which he says, "*is the fundamental and the most important part of the work."* As he planned his monumental work, Acharyan excelled his predecessors in collecting all the Armenian words worthy for scientific evaluation based on the rules of their pronunciations.

At first Acharyan published his giant work in 1926 in the form of a duplicated handwritten text, to accommodate the many foreign words in their own scripts which he needed for reference and comparison. Later, from 1971, the State University published the work in four volumes including 5062 words in total, indicating the progress of the dialects of the Armenian language through various geographical locations.

Classification in Groups

His plan has proven a most organized work, starting from the history of the origin of each word, whether original or borrowed, the former being the heritage of the Indo-European origin, and the latter, according to Acharyan, are a variety in kinds: *"there are borrowed words from the ancient and modern Iranian languages, from the Syrian, Georgian and Latin languages."* The author further groups the Armenian words into four, *original sounding words, words created by Armenian way of life, uncertain words,* and *inconsistent words.* He has consulted with each of the ancient historiographies as an important reference to verify the right of existence of the words before entering into further examination.

The best example among those historiographies is the 5th century *"Refutation of the Sects"* by **Eznik of Koghb**, one of the leading translators of the Holy Bible from the *Greek Septuagint* with **St. Sahak Catholicos** and **St. Mesrob Mashtots**. Eznik's vocabulary and the grammar of the classical Armenian is unsurpassed, and his work excells in accuracy, in rich vocabulary, and in commentary. The fourth section represents the variants of the dialects where

Acharyan has classified the progress of each root of the words as they *"travelled from town to town"* and eventually completing the list of the vocabulary of the Armenian dialects. The fifth section refers to the borrowed words that indirectly are aimed at some influence of the Armenian language on the neighboring foreign languages.

Acharyan indicates on the one hand that while scholars worked on the origins and studied the progress of the Armenian language, on the other hand, however, *"no one was interested to claim the influence the Armenian language had on the other languages."* Actually, this great linguist having examined the neighboring languages, Kurdish, Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac, has found that those languages *"have been influenced by the Armenian to a certain extent."*

Acharyan's monumental work is in essence an encyclopedia of all Armenian words and illustrates their root and origin, history and the effects in general. **Edik Aghayan**, who studied under him and became a leading linguist himself, has written in the preface of Acharyan's four volumes stating, *"It is impossible to visualize an attempt to study the Armenian language without them and without giving full attention to the subjects involved."*

The Classical Mesrobian Orthography
And Hrachya Acharyan

Both Eastern and Western Armenian dialects lived together happily and with great productivity as long as they remained faithful to the classical orders of the 5th century Classical Armenian. The Holy Bible was translated into Classical Armenian and remained the most ***"honorable textbook,"*** both grammatically and by the spelling of the words and their declensions whose last champion was H. Acharyan himself. Despite the Soviet system under which he lived and composed the *Dictionary,* there is not one word distorted in the four volumes. He and his work remained above the system without any consideration or deviation. I make this comment knowing where the tragic destiny of the respectful Eastern Armenian was heading, as we realize and still lament the crippled vocabulary and the fundamental distortion of the orthography.

Mildly put, to be critical about the distortion has given no result, especially after 20 years of independence. The state language in Armenia was amended tragically the wrong way during the Soviets, one can understand, but to deny the accuracy of our language from St. Mesrob and St. Sahak who translated the Holy Bible as the first and last linguistic structure is intolerable by any means. **If H. Acharyan, the greatest linguist stood firm and kept the 5th century Golden Age Armenian intact, then any further argument remains unfounded and invalid.**

Acharyan demonstrated the historic progress of our language to the Academia of the world confirming the grammar and the spelling of the 5thcentury Classical Armenian of the Holy Bible, leaving no room for any aberration. Even the colorful Armenian dialects, which are by no means standard expressions, spoken and written in different communities, spelled the words correctly. After the 16th century Renaissance, the Armenian language adopted two directions, the Eastern and the Western dialects, the former in Armenia proper and Tbilisi, and the latter in Constantinople and abroad. Both for sure stood firm on the classical, Mesrobian, structure and no deviation at any point was seen until 1921 when the Soviets advanced aberrations in the Eastern Armenian.

If the rock foundation of the Armenian language was laid by Sts. Sahak and Mesrob, its historic progress was accomplished by Hrachya Acharyan. As much as we owe the fundamentals of the ancient Armenian language to the Holy Translators of the 5th century, from Movses Khorenatsi to Arakel of Tabriz, we are equally indebted to H. Acharyan for placing our language on the right track faithfully in its vocabulary and orthography.

REVIVAL OF ARMENIAN ANCIENT HISTORIOGRAPHY DURING THE SOVIET UNION (1930-1980)

General Review

Since the Independence of the Republic of Armenia in 1991, we constantly lament on the previous 70 years blaming the harsh system for being alarming and unproductive, ascribing our present failures to those seven decades. It is unfortunate that by surmising so comfortably and unfairly, we seem to forget the large amount of serious exploration and studies of almost all of our ancient literature, known as historiography, from **Movses Khorenatsi** to **Arakel of Tabriz**, a period over ten centuries. Our leading scholars from 1930 to 1980 studied anew, rediscovered, and published one by one the texts of our Golden Age and later Medieval historians, forming a monumental library, without which the generations following the System and those welcoming the Independence would have been mainly in the dark, ignorant and uneducated.

I was a student in the early 1950's at the Armenian Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon and remember receiving those publications of our historians, and upon the instruction of our teacher Simon Simonian we were able to find access to our ancient history, philosophy, architecture, and related fields, through individual studies by those researchers. Mr.Simonian persistently demanded that we see and read some of those historians first hand, as he carried current publications to the class in his heavy briefcase. Those historyians included in their works lengthy introductions, texts, and tedious commentaries, enabling us to learn about our past directly. Over 50 of these first hand studies I preserve in my library for reference; they are irreplaceable.

The reality is that the last 20 years very little was offered in terms of philology, leaving further studies in oblivion, as if the scholars of our previous generations completed everything we needed

and nothing was left for us to continue. We are most thankful to those who explored our history, literature, and manuscripts during the five decades of the most difficult time in our recent history. They ignored the system and its side effects and carried our history and arts genuinely and courageously, the communist ideology from the authorities notwithstanding. Today, we do not see the continuation of the first revival. Fortunately, they are still current as far as the texts and their respective political environment are concerned as part of our ancient turbulent history.

Honorable names such as *Catholicos Karekin Hovsepiants, Bishop Karapet TerMkrtchyan, Hakob Manadyan, Stepan Malkhassyan, Hrachya Acharyan, Yervant TerMinassian, Kevork Abgaryan, Aram TerGhevondyan, Vasken Hakobyan, Victor Hambartsumyan*, and many others have contributed to the revival of our ancient historiography, theology, science, and canon law. They courageously undertook to explore Armenian manuscripts and ancient rare books deposited in Yerevan's **St. Mesrob Mashtots Library of Armenian Manuscripts**, beginning in 1934 when historian Hakob Manandyan published his *"Feudalism in Ancient Armenia."* They rediscovered and revived all our literary treasures and, in the long run the Armenian philology and history came into life triumphantly.

Publications (1930-1980)

On the top of the list were two giant publications. Hrachya Acharyan's *"Armenian Etymological Dictionary,"* 4 volumes (1971-1979), unique in its kind, explores all Armenian words and their origins in a most minute and complete manner. Related languages are discussed in their original scripts, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Syriac, and each Armenian word is thus explained carefully whichever language they are possibly related to. The other huge accomplishment was the 14 volume *"Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia"* (1974-1986), an irreplaceable resource indeed for Armenian and world history, art, geography, and science. Next, colorful albums of "*Armenian Manuscripts"* and "*Khachkars," "Armenian Churches,"* and "*Treasures of Etchmiadzin,"* comprised the leading publications of the Holy See under **His Holiness Vasken I, Catholicos of All Armenians.**

More specifically the following books filled significant lacuna in various fields of Armenian studies. H. Manandyan published in 1939 his unique study on the "*Scales and Dimensions in Ancient Armenian Sources."* In 1936, he published *"The Main Highways of Armenia According to the map of Bevdingueriana.* His monumenttal work, however, comprised his four volumes known as the *"Critical Survey of the History of the Armenian People,"* a source that as of today is not compared with any similar work; it is scholarly written and supported by Greek and Latin ancient sources internationally acclaimed.

Between 1946 and 1949, most valuable volumes were published: *"History of the Armenians,"* three volumes, by Leo (Souren Babakhanian). Four volumes of "*History of Armenia,"* from prehistoric times to the present were published by Leo beginning in 1971. Hrachya Acharyan's *"Dictionary of Armenian Proper Names"* in four volumes, published in 1944, his *"History of the Armenian Language,"* two volumes in 1951, and the *"Comprehensive Grammar of the Armenian Language"* in 1955, are the leadings books published in difficult times. Academician Stepan Malkhassian published an important 7th century historian Bishop Sebeos' *"History of Bishop Sebeos,"* known also as *"History of Heraclius"*, the text with complete notes, and later his *"Dictionary of Explanation of Armenian Language,"* four volumes in 1943, which came as a complimentary source next to Acharyan's *"Dictionary."*

Classical Texts

Thanks to our past century's historians who published our classical historiography one by one, amazingly leaving no one out of reach, beginning with Koriun's *"The Life of Mashtots,"* Eznik Goghbatsi's *"Refutation of Sects,"* Movses Khorenatsi's famous *"History of Armenia,"* to name a few, with ample Introductions and complete annotations. Eznik's outstanding treatise was first published as *"Book of Defense*," *(Girk Enttimutyan),* but soon the original manuscript text was considered lost in the fire of Smyrna. Fortunately, the case was different. The manuscript was discovered 200 years later in 1902 by the leading scholar H. Acharyan, who published a revised

edition of the book with its original title of *"Yeghdz Aghantots" (Refutation of Sects)* in 1904. The manuscript was written in 1280 at the University of Gladzor in Siunik by the scribe *Luser.*

Following the Golden Age (5th century) historiographies, such as *Faustos Biuzand*, *Lazar Barpetsi*, *Yeghishe Vardapet,* and later historians were given special attention and valuable editions. They were published during Soviet Armenia, such as *Kirakos of Gandzak*, *Aristakes of Lastivert, Vartan Areveltsi*, and many more unknown to the scholarship, a series of 65 books in total that I possess in my library for reference.

Canon Law specialist Dr. Vasken Hakobyan has rendered a complete work in editing the 8th century *"Canon Law of Armenia"* by **Catholicos John of Otsoon** in two large volumes, printed in 1964 and 1971 with Introductions and *apparatus criticus,* comparing 47 manuscript texts and concluding a monumental work as the final word on the Armenian Canon Law. Another scholar M. Mkryan rendered a translation of the *"Book of Lamentation"* of St. Gregory of Narek into modern Armenian in 1970. Academician S. Malkhassian translated the famous Movses Khorenatsi's *"History of Armenia"* into the vernacular in 1968. Later, an Arabic historian Aram Ter Ghevondyan translated the 8th century *"History of Priest Ghevond"* on the Arab invasions into Armenia in 640's from the classical to the vernacular. The first and the only translation of this important text into English was accomplished by myself in 1982, a year before Ter Ghevondyan's translation.

Source Book Texts

Above all these, specialists in primary Armenian sources explored such areas as *"History of Ancient Literature,"* two volumes by Manuk Abeghyan who in 1944 and 1946, offered the complete "history" of our ancient historiography, from the very beginning to the 18th century. Both volumes were specified for students of higher education in Armenia and abroad. No book with the same caliber was published ever since. The following are the outstanding sources. *"Divan of Armenian Lithography,"* four volumes, authored

jointly by S. Avagyan and H. Janpolatyan, the *"History of Armenian Documentary Sources"* by S.T. Melik-Bakhshyan, S. Malkhassian's *"Studies in Historiography,"* 1966, *"The Georgian Inscription of Armenia"* by P.M. Mouratyan, 1977, and the *"Armenian Encyclopedia of Ancient Sources."* The latter with the first two volumes only, 1959 and 1976, by a great historian Hagop Anasyan. Three volumes of manuscript colophons by Levon Khachikyan stand lasting monuments in his memory: the *"14th and 15th Centuries Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts,"* 1950, 1955, 1967.

Conclusion

The above survey tried to prove that Soviet Armenia lived with its past history and literature honorably and faithfully. Those historians, geographers, scientists, and scholars revived our literary and academic legacy on a much higher standard than many think because of the System. Beside their publications, through their research, architecture and sculpture, hand in hand with the manuscripts, and the art of illustration of the manuscripts constituted a **"Collective Academy"** from which the future generations will learn for decades to come.

"*COLOPHONS OF MANUSCRIPTS*"
By
KAREKIN I CATHOLICOS
HOVSEPIANTS OF CILICIA
Antelias, 1951

The Passing of His Holiness

Sixty years ago, on June 21, 1952, **His Holiness Karekin I Hovsepiants Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia** passed away at age 85. He was acclaimed as the great scholar of manuscripts and architecture, a hero of both the Battle of Sartarabad in 1918, and the defense of Kars in 1920. Karekin I was among the first graduates of the Kevorkian Seminary of the Mother See, educated in Germany and upon his return was one of the pioneers of the State University of Yerevan in 1923. He became famous by his many publications on the manuscripts and the miniatures of the Armenian ancient literature. Just before his death, he saw his last large volume, *"Colophons of Manuscripts,"* a collection of colophons written between the 5th century and the year 1250. He had collected hundreds of those colophons during his last 30 years as he toured the world as Primate in Armenia, Legate of Europe, and the Primate of the Armenian Diocese of the United States, and finally at his advanced age visiting the Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate. The volume consisted of 1255 double column pages.

The Preparation of the Volume

We were studying at the Seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in 1950 when this large volume of Catholicos Hovsepiants' *"Collection of Colophons"* was printed. We were called occasionally by the Printing House to fold the large sheets of eight pages each, double column, which later became the *"Colophons of Manuscripts"* in 1951. It contained collections of colophons during the author's two periods in life, the ones he collected until 1934 and those later in 1945 and after.

As the Catholicos explains in the Introduction, the colophons represented sources equally important with the written historiographies, arts and culture, which flourished in Armenia, Cilicia, and the Armenian Diaspora. He states, *"They spread great light on the neighboring nations as well who occasionally had conflicts and wars with Armenia, or else a relationship of some kind."* The importance of colophons lies on historical events as complementary data in a personal nature, reflecting eyewitness information, otherwise unknown, but reported at the end of the manuscripts. The Catholicos resembles them *"as colorful stones of a mosaic with their various and detailed information."* To classify them in verifiable dates and place names certainly provides some lost events and unnamed places and persons considered in turn irreplaceable subjects in our history.

The volume contains 48 photos of ancient miniatures, the Catholicos' favorite subject, and enriched by many annotations where he has carefully deciphered and explained some unknown and foreign titles not found with the historians.

The Continuation of the Volume

To complete the large volume Catholicos Karekin I needed help and in 1946, he assigned our teacher of ancient literature Mr. Simon Simonian his assisting scholar who oversaw the editing and the final stage of the publication. According to Simonian, *"His Holiness was very careful in selecting the colophons. He dismissed those which had no purpose, especially seeing the lack of arts in a given manuscript and miniatures, or the lack of historical value."* This demonstrated obviously the specialist Catholicos Karekin Hovsepiants' critical approach to the work he had accomplished.

As the Legate of the **Catholicos of All Armenians Khoren I Mouradbekian**, in 1935 Karekin I toured Europe extensively and searched for Armenian manuscripts, until he became the Primate of North America. His search in those decades took him to the Middle East, Jerusalem, Paris, Vienna, Venice, New York and other Libraries in the United States. Karekin Catholicos' last trip to visit Jerusalem

one more time was to complete the colophons found in the numerous manuscripts kept in the Patriarchate.

His Holiness in Jerusalem 1947

His Holiness Karekin I Hovsepiants deemed it necessary to pay a final visit to Jerusalem in 1947 to complete his search for the colophons, accompanied by his assistant Simon Simonian, scholar, and staff bearer Father Torkom Postajian. This was his fourth visit to Jerusalem at his advanced age, this time as the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia and was officially welcomed by the **Armenian Patriarch Giuregh II Israelian of Jerusalem**. He went through selected manuscripts among the 4000 volumes kept in the St. Toros Chapel. Mr. Simonian made the selection according to the dates of the compilation of the documents, and Postajian copied the colo-phons the Catholicos needed for his work during the 40 days of their sojourn.

The Content of the Volume

"Colophons of Manuscripts" contains individual colophons of 458 Manuscripts. The colophons are added at the end of each manuscript to provide place names, names of persons and geographical data, each name entered in the extensive indexes carefully prepared by His Holiness. The selections are done personally by the 80 year-old Pontiff, after research of decades, from 1934 to 1947. This unique volume was the only publication outside Armenia of its kind. It was three years later that **Prof. Levon Khachikian**, rector of the Matenadaran of St. Mesrob Mashtots, who published in three large volumes a similar collection in Yerevan (1955-1967), compiling all the colophons from manuscripts written in the 15th and 16th centuries under the title of *"Colophons of the Manuscripts of the Matenadaran of Yerevan".* All together, they comprised a monu-men-al source for unknown and forgotten details in our history.

THEOLOGY

"SEAL OF FAITH" – "KNIK HAVADO"
A 7TH CENTURY THEOLOGICAL COLLECTION COMPILED BY CATHOLICOS KOMITAS I OF ARMENIA (615-628)

The Manuscript

In 1911, **Bishop Karapet Ter Mkrtchyan** of Holy Etchmiadzin, a renowned scholar, studied in Germany and upon his return, while teaching at the Seminary and holding the office of primate under the Holy See, discovered this unique collection of the Armen-ian Manuscript in the Armenian Church of *St. Stepanos Nakhavka* (*Protomartyr*) in Darashamb, northern Iran, in the province of Maku. Darashamb had until 1916 a population of 280 Armenians. It was a historic discovery, since the collection contained the *"Seal of Faith" (Knik Havado)* in its entirety compiled by **Catholicos Komitas Aghtsetsi** (615-628). Independently this document has its twin brother, as important, known as the *"Book of Letters" (Girk Tghtots),* both of them mentioned by Armenian historians as documents supporting the orthodox doctrine of the Armenian Church. Both were lost for many centuries. Thanks to Bishop Ter Mkrtchyan, who persistently looked for the *Seal of Faith* and found it in a large volume of manuscript collections kept in the Armenian Church in Iran. After a careful study, the Bishop published the text with ample annotations and an in-depth Introduction in 1914.

As for the *"Book of Letters,"* it is a collection of letters also originally compiled by Komitas Catholicos, but later, in the succeeding centuries, more *letters* added to make 98 letters in total. It contains letters of doctrine based on the first Three Ecumenical Councils and the following centuries, from the 5th to 13th. The opening of the *"Book of Letters"* shows a 5th century letter by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Proglus of Alexandria addressed to the **Armenian Catholicos St. Sahak Parthev**, condemning at the same time Nestorius and his heresy that was penetrating into Armenia. The

Armenian Church then, just having invented its national scripts and translated the Bible into Armenian for the first time by **St. Sahak** and **St. Mesrop**, had to defend its independence, free from further doctrines added unnecessarily since the days of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

Another significant work was also accomplished by Bishop Ter Mkrtchyan and his colleague, a well known scholar Yervant Ter Minassian, who together discovered and later published the translation into German the work of **St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons** (130-200) *"The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching,*" whose Greek original was lost and the classical Armenian translation had survived. One year later both scholars published yet another ancient source, the work of **Timothy Aelurus**, the monophysite Patriarch of Alexandria (457-477), "A *Collection of Treatises and Letters Against the Council of Chalcedon,"* in both the Armenian *"Hakajarrutyunk"* and the German versions.

Ter Mkrtchyan was ordained a celibate priest by the orders of **Catholicos Mkrtich Khrimian of All Armenians** in 1894, and served briefly as Vicar of the Ararat Diocese (1903-1905) showing brave resistance against the Russians demanding and interfering to confiscate the Armenian schools in Armenia. Later, in 1909 he was ordained a bishop by **Catholicos Matthew II Izmirlian**, holding successively the office of the primate in the dioceses of Astrakhan and Shamakh until 1914.

The Content

The *"Seal of Faith,"* as published, contains 10 chapters referring to the various doctrinal issues in each, such as, the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, the Immaculate Birth of Jesus, the relation between Christ's two natures, all supported by some 50 ancient divines. Some of those divines are mentioned by name, as *Gregory the Illuminator, Sahak Parthev Catholicos, Mesrop Mashtots*, *Eznik Koghbatsi* bishop of Bagrevand, who was the first erudite apologist of Christianity. Among them are the historians *Agathangelos, John Catholicos Mandakuni,* the Syrian theologian *Ephraem, John Chry-*

sostom, and the three Cappadocian Fathers, *Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa,* and *Gregory of Nazianzus.*

The *Seal of Faith* reflects the teachings of *"The orthodox doctrine professed* by *our forefathers,*" as the publisher specifies, pointing to the anti-Chalcedonian stand of the Armenian Church which never followed nor agreed to the Christological doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 despite persistent pressures by the Byzantines. Eventually, a few decades after the Council of Chalcedon, the Armenian Church officially rejected the doctrine and its endorsement by the *"Tome of Pope Leo."* The decision was officially adopted at the Armenian Church Council of Dvin in 506, presided over by the **Armenian Catholicos Babken I of Othmus**, who entered the resolution in the Book of the Canon Law of the Church.

Ter Mkrtchyan made the following remarks: "*This book was essential serving as evidence in case it became necessary to refute the wrong teachings of the heretics."* The Armenian Church is forever grateful to Bishop Karapet, the brilliant scholar who published the *Seal of Faith* in 1914 in Holy Etchmiadzin and which remains the oldest verifiable source of our theology, by its valid date and author.

Catholicos Komitas I Aghtsetsi
The Council of Persia in 614

Bishop Ter Mkrtchyan verifies that the present theological document was essentially the report **Bishop Komitas of the Mamikonian** dynasty, read at the Council of 614 in Ctesiphon, Capital of Sassanid Persia, convened and presided over by the **Persian King Khosrov II Parvez** (590-628). According to the Armenian historians Sebeos (7th century, and Stepanos Asoghik Taronetsi (10th century) the king had called the Council at his "*royal court"* to reach agreement among his Christian subjects who disputed among themselves in matters of faith and ended up in schisms.

Addressing the attending bishops at the Council, Bishop Komitas said, "*Ask for the Christ-loving faith of the Armenians as you have come here at the royal court,*" meaning that the bishops had come to learn about the faith of the Armenian Church. The focal

question was always on the doctrine of the Person of Christ and his two natures, divine and human. Komitas was defending the doctrine reached and proclaimed during the first Three Ecumenical Councils, especially the third Council of Ephesus in 431, where the dominant theologian was Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria (d.444), whose formula was final and accepted by all attending church representatives: *"One Nature of the Incarnate Word."*

Beside **Bishop Komitas**, soon to become the Catholicos of Armenia, **Bishop Matthew Amatouni**, and the exiled **Patriarch Zechariah of Jerusalem** were among the bishops. The first two represented the Armenian princes and the clergy, "*so that they could receive the proper protection and the confirmation of their faith by the King of Persia."* The signed document at the Persian Council of 614 stated: *"Komitas, Bishop of the Mamikonians, who succeeded as Catholicos of Greater Armenia."* Scholars further believe that later two venerable clerics have compiled this work after Komitas, namely **Hovhannes Mayragometsi** (7th century), the author of "*Havatarmat" (The Root of Faith)*, and the famous theologian **Stepanos Siunetsi** (8th century).

At the Council of 614 called by the king of Persia, Komitas read "*a lengthy*" paper which our leading church historian Patriarch Malachia Ormanian considers "*complete enough*" to warrant the compilation of the "*Seal of Faith*" by the same Bishop, now Catholicos of All Armenians. Ormanian had not read the book when completing the first volume of his "*Azgapatum,*" *(History of the Nation),* since the "*Seal of Faith*" was not published at the time. To that effect, Bishop Ter Mkrtchyan states in the Introduction, *"The basic part of the Seal of Faith stemmed from the lengthy paper he [Komitas] read at the Council on behalf of the faith and doctrine of the Armenian Church."* Ormanian's additional remark is also important: *"Catholicos Komitas began exercising his patriarchal authority even while in Persia, where at the Council he presented his lengthy paper concerning the Armenian faith."* He believes that the paper was mostly a defense of the doctrine and the rejection of the heresies of which 25 specified by name. Ormanian says that controversial bishops were also attending the Council, nine of them reported by name.

It is important what our historians say about the final document. It was handed to King Khosrov Parvez, signed by the 11 attending bishops whose names are likewise reported by them. The King soon consulted Patriarch Zechariah of Jerusalem, asking him where the truth lied regarding Christ's identity, to which the Patriarch answered: *"The truth of our faith lies in what we learn at the Council of Nicaea, called then by the blessed Constantine, and later at the Councils of Constantinople and Ephesus, where the Armenians united in the true faith*. *As for the doctrine of Chalcedon it was not in unison with the previous Councils, as it was explained to Your Majesty."*

The King reached the following conclusion: *"All those Christians who are my subjects shall hold the faith that the Armenians adhere to. He also ordered to seal with his ring the paper of the correct faith and deposit it in the royal archives."* (Cf. Sebeos, *History of Heraclius*, chapter 46. Ed. Kevork Abgaryan, Yerevan, 1979).

The Legacy of Komitas Catholicos

Beside the "*Seal of Faith"* and *"The Book of Letters,"* Catholicos Komitas has left two authentic and supreme legacies: **The Church of St. Hripsimeh** in Etchmiadzin, built by him in 618, which stands up to this date miraculously as the most authentic and unique structure of the Armenian Church architecture, and the **Hymn known as** "***Antzink nviryalk sirooyn Krisdosi,"*** *(Souls dedicated to the love of Christ).* Komitas wrote the hymn in 36 stanzas according to the alphabet of the Armenian language in memory of the Roman **Virgins Hripsimyank and Gayanyank and their companions**. They were the first martyrs to witness Christ after being persecuted by the Roman Emperor, and upon arrival to Armenia were martyred by King Trdat III Arshakuni (298-330), by the orders of the Emperor. The hymn is the oldest verifiable hymn by author and date in the *Hymnbook* of the Armenian Church, a volume gradually compiled from the 5^{th} to the 15^{th} centuries.

The Armenian Church and nation is forever grateful to Catholicos Komitas and Bishop Karapet Ter Mkrtchyan for the three-

fold legacy beyond any reservation: The *Seal of Faith*, the *Church of St. Hripsimeh*, and the *Hymn* dedicated to their memories. Recently, a musicologist Krikor Pidedjian wrote an important book on the *Hymn* giving an in-depth and complete analysis of the 36 stanzas historically and from the musical point of view. Pidedjian made an educated comparison with similar hymns, composed on the same musical mode, after the traditional style of the Armenian Church music.

ARMENIAN CHURCH HYMNS
By
ST. NERSESS CATHOLICOS THE GRACEFUL
(1103-1173)
"Armenian Church Hymnbook"
1936, Jerusalem

Catholicos Nersess the Graceful

The talented **Catholicos Nersess IV Klayetsi** (of Hromkla) lived during the 12th century (1103-1173) and earned the name *"Shnorhali"* (Graceful) for his spiritual, theological, devotional, and expressly Biblical hymns, prayers, and encyclicals. The latter are comprised of a large collection of directives on theological, ecumenical, and disciplinary addresses, published as *"Endhanrakan Toukhtk" (Universal Letters).*

The Armenian Church Hymnbook is enriched immensely by this divine leader of our church. It includes over 20 lengthy spiritual hymns with their respective original music authored and "signed" by him. In most of the hymns, his initials appear, and on others, the 36 letters of the Armenian alphabet used, from *A* to *K,* for each stanza. He has also enriched the Church *Breviary,* the Book of Daily Worship immensely, with popular prayers and hymns, especially the 24-verse personal prayer *"Havadov Khosdovanim" (In faith I confess)* for each hour of the day, a prayer very close to the heart of the faithful.

St. Nersess was so talented that his hymns carried the Gospel accounts in a unique style and poetry "on the stage" as it were. The entire **creation of the world**, the **last week of Jesus' tragic days** in their minute details, his **Resurrection** and their implications are expressed by way of poetry and music. Below classified are the hymns in five groups according to their contents:

1. *The Creation of the world and the Resurrection of Christ spread over the seven days of the week.*

2. *The Last Days of Jesus' life on earth, his entry into Jerusalem, the washing of the disciples' feet, the Last Supper, the betrayal, and the crucifixion.*
3. *The Sunrise Service, and the Services of Peace and Rest.*
4. *The Battle of the Vartanants in 451 AD, Armenia being the first nation to defend Christianity as a state.*
5. *Hymns for thos fallen asleep, and prayers for the rest of their souls.*

ONE
The Creation
Seven Days of the Week

For **Sunday** St. Nersess wrote a hymn beginning with his six initials for each stanza. It starts with "*Norasdeghdzyal,"* meaning, *"From the beginning the Word created anew the heaven and the earth from nothing."* The first two stanzas are for the Creation of the World, and the rest for the Resurrection of Christ.

For **Monday**, six verses after the first six letters of the alphabet are dedicated to the second day of the creation when God separated the waters from the land and created the Seraphim and the Cherubim, the Archangels and the Heavenly Hosts through which our supplica-tions and prayers are addressed to God.

Tuesday's six stanzas are dedicated to the third day of the Creation and to John the Baptist. They sing praises for the plantation and for Noah who saved men and animals from the flood. They also praise *"the greatest among women,"* Mary the Mother of God. Further, *"Christ, the Ineffable Light and the Holy Spirit"* are invoked together as unified deity to whom men address their prayers and blessings. St. John the Baptist, is invoked once again, who *"even from his mother's womb worshipped God and became the Forerunner (Garabed) and cleansed us from our sins."*

Wednesday's six stanzas addressed to the fourth day of the creation are dedicated to the Annunciation of St. Mary, at which time *"the hidden mystery was revealed"* by the Birth of Jesus. St. Nersess calls St. Mary *"the bride offered from earth to heaven,"*

whose intercession is beseeched before her Son Jesus Christ. St. Mary is given a special place and called *"the most holy,"* who through our supplications shall *"extinguish the fire in the furnace, and shall erase our sins by her tears."* This part of the hymn is closed with the Gospel episode and the Saint's prayer that *"Christ may save us from the sea of our sins with Peter who was pulled out of the water"* and saved from the waves of Lake Galilee.

The hymn for **Thursday** is dedicated to the fifth day of the creation and is addressed to the Apostles of Christ. The same day, as said in the Book of Genesis, God created life on earth, the animals both in the waters and in the air, and later saved the Old Israel from the calamities of the sea and the clouds and was *"baptized."* Likewise, the Apostles were *"called"* from the Sea of Galilee where they were catching fish. They were also *"baptized"* and soon founded churches on behalf of the Son and the Word of God, meaning on God's creative *"Word,"* turning them into *"New Zion."*

The six succeeding stanzas for **Friday** are dedicated to the sixth day of the creation and to the crucifixion of Christ. The sixth day God created man, Adam, in His image as the completion of His good creations, giving him his wife Eve, his helper, so that they may enjoy life in paradise. But, Eve was misled by the treacherous serpent and in turn she deceived Adam, and both were expelled from paradise and the earth was cursed. Nevertheless, says St. Nersess the Graceful, the Father of Glories expunged the sins of men by sending His Son, the Lamb of God, who went to the cross for the sake of mankind. As he says, "*He elevated us into heaven by the Cross and on the Cross he killed the sin and expunged the verdict of death."*

Saturday's stanzas are dedicated to the seventh day of the creation when God rested, calling it *"the day of rest."* Following the ordinance of the Creator, says St. Nersess, the grace of the Sabbath made us *"to rest with God."* Remembering the dead in Christ, he further beseeches that Christ may judge them with mercy, and us the living with justice. There is in the hymn the unfailing completion between the dead in Christ and those living in Christ.

TWO
The Last Days of Jesus' Life

Saint Nersess the Graceful has written this remarkable 36-verse hymn, *"Aysor anjarr lousooyn dzgumn" (Today is the rising of the ineffable light),* dedicated to the last week of Our Lord's life on earth. It begins with the first and ends with the last letters of the 36-letter alphabet, from *A* to *K,* divided into six parts, six stanzas each. The hymn depicts the sad moments of Jesus' last days, step by step, after entering Jerusalem for the last time, cleansing the Temple from the merchants, washing his disciples' feet, eating the Last Supper, and heading to his cross after being betrayed. The Gospel narratives are faithfully introduced and put on *"a sacred stage,"* with melancholic music familiar to the faithful. They are sung during midnight service on Holy Thursday.

The Armenian Church has placed the six groups of those hymns in between the lengthy corresponding readings of the Gospels alternately where related events are recorded. It has been 900 years since St. Nersess the Graceful has offered his talented hymns, including this one, to strengthen the faith of his flock which, in turn, have made them a vehicle of worship in their daily lives. As we sing the hymn, we clearly get in touch with the Lord's sufferings, trial, and crucifixion. It is important to bear in mind that the Armenian hymns can only be sung in the classical language they are written. To sing them in the vernacular or in any other language means not to sing at all. The language and the music are intertwined and harmonized reciprocally.

"Norokogh Tiezerats"
(He who renewed the universe)

This hymn comprises 15 stanzas with the author's initials: *"Nersessi eh Bans Ays" (Nersess has written this).* It is written exclusively for Good Friday where Jesus' *"voluntary crucifixion"* is repeatedly emphasized. His betrayal and arrest, the sufferings and the crucifixion are included in a different tone, words, and feelings, all of them a complete unit geared toward the salvation of mankind.

THREE
Saints Vartanank *"Norahrash Psakavor"* *"Nersessi Erg"* (Song by Nersess)

Saints Vartanank, headed by General Vartan Mamikonian defended Armenian Christianity as a state religion in 451 AD, the first among any state to do so. St. Nersess Shnorhali wrote his outstanding religious-national hymn, *"Norahrash Psakavor" (Marvelously Crowned),* and addressed to General Vartan Mamikonian and individually to his warriors. It is composed of 10 stanzas according to his initials, dedicated to the 1036 warriors who fell during the Battle of Avarair against Persia which enforced Zoroastrianism, the fire worship, in place of Christianity which had its roots in Armenia since 301 AD. In each stanza, the author recalls and praises the Generals of the troops by name invoking their virtuous dedication to Armenia and Christianity with most sensitive words, expressions, and poetry as follows. He also gave the music to this most popular hymn.

Norahrash is the first stanza dedicated to ***Vartan the Brave Martyr,*** the hero of the battle.
Yergnavor, the second, to ***Khoren the Councellor.***
Renakan, the third, to ***Artak the Brave.***
Srpapayl, the fourth, to ***Hmayak dedicated to God the Father.***
Eiakan, the fifth, to ***Tajat the Incredible.***
Estatsyal, the sixth, to **Vahan the Elegant**.
Ee hod anoush, the seventh, to ***Arsen the Desirable.***
Yerkokoumk harazatok, the eighth, to ***Karekin the Frontrunner.***
Ramkakan, the ninth, to ***1036 martyrs.***
Gohoutyamp, the tenth, to ***The Armenian Church.***

As shown above the hymn begins with **General Vartan Mamikonian** and ends with the **Mother Church of Armenia**. Saint Nersess Shnorhali ties together the Nation and the Church strongly for which Vartanank fought the battle and never accepted the fire worship. Among the names of the generals, *Nerseh Kachberouni* is missing. His name is included in both the *Historians* Yeghishe and Ghazar Parbetsi as one of the Generals on the battlefield.

Hymn of Sts. Ghevondyank
"Vor Harrachagouyn (Who from the beginning)

This hymn with six stanzas is dedicated to the Ghevondian Priests, seven of them, headed by **Catholicos Hovsep Hoghotsmetsi and Ghevond the Priest**, who took part in the battle of Avarair of 451, but three years later in 454, surviving the war they were called to Ctesiphon, capital of Persia by force and were all martyred there. The rest were **Priest Moushegh, Priest Arshen, Priest Samuel, Deacon Kachach, and Deacon Abraham.** In the second stanza among the martyred clergy are named Catholicos Hovsep and Priest Ghevond who *"enlightened the brave and valiant soldiers."*

"Anjarreli Bant Asdevadz"
(Ineffable Word of God)

This hymn with ten alphabetical stanzas, intertwined in all 36 letters, St. Nersess dedicated to the group of seven martyred Priests. St. Ghevond the Priest is singled out as *"the enlightener of all St. Ghevond vardapet,"* who persuaded with his wisdom the volunteers who *"were martyred voluntarily."* St. Nersess' favorite metaphor is *"the fire of love"* he uses often elsewhere. It is revealed here once again as *"the fire enflamed in the saints,"* through which *"the martyred priests encouraged each other and voluntarily went ahead to offer their lives even to death."* In the hymn, Catholicos Hovsep Hoghotsmetsi is distinguished as *"the first who met his death ahead of the chosen disciples as the good martyred shepherd."*

FOUR
The Sunrise, Peace and Rest Services

St. Nersess Shnorhali wrote and sang the **Sunrise Service** entirely dedicating it to the *LIGHT*. It is a journey "to find the way," and while walking the Holy Trinity is called and the Three Persons of the divinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are invoked. *"On the way"* intercession of Saints, Martyrs, Volunteers, and Ascetics is asked in prayers and songs that are addressed to the celestial elements, from the east to the west, from the north to the south,

originally geared to the sun and ultimately to the Son of God. The Sunrise Service shows the *WAY* to reach the *TRUTH* through the *LIGHT.*

As the head of the Armenian Church, St. Nersess was concerned about members of his flock which deviated from the orthodox faith and worshipped the sun, calling themselves *"sons of the sun" (Arevortik).* It is quite genius that the Great Saint chose to write this service to talk with them in their own words: east and west, north and south, sun and sunlight. The worship service enticed those misled, to return gradually to the true Light of the true Son of God. The Armenian Church sings the *Arevakal Service* during Lent in the early mornings to welcome the Light of the Son of God.

The key word is *"imanali looys"* (the rational light), the inner and spiritual light as against the physical light. Similar to the physical light which leads us safe in the dark, the rational light, Christ, is needed for our spiritual journey safely toward Him the "*Light of the World."* The central hymn begins with the light, a word repeated 32 times, 17 times only in the opening song *"Light, creator of light, First Light."* At first, the sunrise is emphasized as the creation of God. Then the physical and the natural light of the sun is acknowledged that shines equally on the righteous and the sinner, whereby our good and evil deeds are equally revealed.

The structure of this worship service has four integral parts enriched with songs, biddings, and prayers. Biblical readings are all from the Book of Psalms only. No other citations are quoted, a peculiar choice assuring the *personal* nature of the service. These are the four sections.

a) The first part has a *universal* nature, inviting *"All nations from the East to the West, from the North to the South,"* to bless the Creator of the world.

b) The second part is *intercessional* recalling the hermits, the martyrs, and the witnesses to intercede before God through the Son of God and the Holy Spirit.

c) In the third part, the *Light* reappears as the true expression of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The attributes of the Light is also specified as *justice, wisdom, mercy,* and *peace.*

d) The last section of the Sunrise Service represents its conclusion with the proclamation of the *Way,* Christ himself, identified also as the *Truth and the Life.*

Peace Service
"Nersessi Erg" (Song by Nersess)

This hymn contains ten stanzas after the numbers of his initials as spelled above. It is a popular hymn known as *"Nayats Sirov" (Watch us with Love),* the center of which is again the Life of Jesus as the *LIGHT OF THE WORLD* as seen in the Gospels. The Light is dominant *"as the rational radiant"* and the*" fire of love,"* that will cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, and instead will shine the light of knowledge on them. The next hymn is *"Ee Ken Haytsemk (We Beseech Thee)* addressed in the first three stanzas to the Three Persons of the Trinity. To the **Father of Comfort** who comforts us through the intercession of Saint Mary when we are down with our sins. To The **Son of God,** who alleviates the burden of our sins with repentance and strengthens us to carry voluntarily the sweet burden as our *CROSS.* In the third verse, St. Nersess wishes that the man-loving **Holy Spirit** renews us, asking at the same time mercy on the departed souls to be illumined in heaven.

Rest Service
"Havadov Khosdovanim" (In faith I confess)

This is a prayer of 24 stanzas, for each hour of the day St. Nersess wrote for personal use, written in the first person singular. First, he recalls the Holy Trinity to bestow upon us their respective divine gifts. The next six stanzas are specified for the remission of our sins, for the examination of our secrets, and for asking the provident Lord's fear. The believer's eyes, mouth, ears, heart, hands and feet are asked to perform truthfully, to hear and speak, to work and walk according to God's commandments. "*Have mercy on Thy creatures and upon me a manifold sinner,"* is the supplication repeated with worship and trust in God at the end of each verse.

The last three verses are addressed to the *Just Judge,* to the *all-merciful Lord,* and to the *Glorified Lord.* In the 24th verse as a conclusion the intercession of the Saints is asked, headed by **Saint Mary the Mother of God**, followed by **Saint John the Baptist**, **Saint Gregory the Illuminator**, the **Apostles**, the **Prophets,** and the **Patriarchs.**

FIVE
Hymns for the Departed

"Asdvadz Anegh" (Uncreated God)

This hymn is identified as *"Erg Nnchetselots" (Hymn for the Departed).* It has 36 stanzas dedicated to those who rest in Christ. The first stanza begins with "*Uncreated God,"* and ends with the invitation of *"Priests and People"* to sing together for the deceased. The Holy Trinity dominates in this song, God the Father as *"merciful and patient,"* the Son of God as *"Lord and Savior,"* and the Holy Spirit as *"spring of goodness."* The Three Persons are called repeatedly beseeching "*mercy for the souls of the departed who are resting with Christ in hope."*

The hymn is composed of four groups from the 36 stanzas as a chain, each four being sung according to the two church music tunes, *eight traditionally established tunes* in all, from the first tune to the eighth. St. Nersess the Graceful calls the departed in Christ as *"servants resigned from this world, whose loved ones supplicate that Christ accompany them and make them rest in the Father's dwellings."* Referring to Lazarus of Bethany's resurrection from the grave it is said, *"You called Lazarus to come out, giving hope to the departed, since giving life to the man dead for four days, so also to those departed since Adam to come to life again."*

The last stanza is very popular and the church sings it during the Requiem Service: *"Kahanayk yev Zoghovourtk"(Priests and People),* who together *"beseech the merciful Lord that he may accept us also with those who have fallen asleep in faith, and lead us to the Upper Jerusalem where the just are gathered."* St. Nersess concludes this most sensitive hymn with the *"In the Upper Jerusalem" (Ee Verin Yerusaghem),* adorned with its equally sensitive music.

"DARADZYAL" THE ARMENIAN HYMN OF THE CRUCIFIXION BY ST. NERSESS SHNORHALI THE GRACEFUL 12TH CENTURY

The Hymn of Crucifixion

The 12th century famous Armenian theologian and hymnologist, poet and **Catholicos of All Armenians St. Nersess the Graceful**, whose pontificate was at the time in Cilicia, outside Greater Armenia, has enriched the Armenian Church *Hymnbook* superbly, elevating as it were on the Holy Altar the entire life of the Lord Jesus Christ on a panoramic scene. A special hymn known as *"Aysor anjarr lousouyn dzagoumn" (Today is the rising of the ineffable Light)* which traces the last week of our Lord's life in its final and tragic details, contains 36 stanzas divided into six equal groups, following the 36 Armenian letters from *A* to *K*. The last six stanzas are dedicated to the actual Crucifixion and its spiritual and devotional implications, beginning with the words *"Daradzyal tserrk unt tserrats,"* meaning, "*Spreading his hands on the cross instead of."*

The Cross and the Crucified

By *spreading his hands, and nailing his feet on the cross,* Jesus sacrificed himself **on behalf** or **instead of** his followers who are called to live with "*working hands"* and "*walking feet,"* as St. Nersess specifies in a direct speech. The great poet and theologian is using the comparative expression *instead of (unt* in Classical Armenian), alternately between his arms and his feet and of those who will follow him. Vicariously the *Working hands* and the *walking feet* became the Lord's legacy once and for all, the ordinance coming directly from the cross. His death on the cross is transferred into life, likewise vicariously, into life beyond death.

To sing this inspiring hymn as we do with devotion, and not penetrate into the meaning of the implications made in compa-

rison with Christ, will help little, no more than enjoying the emotrional words and music, feeling the way Christ went through his last days to the cross. As said above, the *working hands* and the *walking feet* are our own hands and feet *in place of Christ's hands and feet,* commissioned to go and spread his mission on earth. Simply, we the followers of Christ are actually his hands and his feet when he worked and walked, preached and healed, leaving the continuation to us as a holy legacy. With confidence and determination, He commissioned us to be his actions in constant move as long as we live.

"Committed his spirit to the Father"

St. Nersess Shnorhali goes on singing: On the Cross *Christ committed his spirit to the Father*, so that the souls of the rest of mankind could rest *with the Father*. Here three-way encounter is realized among the Father, the Son, and those who confessed them as such, creating a lasting unity among them. **"God was crucified for me"** follows in such a direct manner in the hymn that it underlines the salvation of mankind as the sole reason for his crucifixion, rendering the tragic event not a self endured act in itself, without purpose. *"On my behalf"* is typical with St. Nersess whose vast prayers in our church literature are mostly and emphatically personal in the first person singular. Such are the 24 verses prayer, one for each hour of the day, affectionately known as *"Havadov Khosdovanim" (I confess with faith), "Arravod Louso" (Light of the morning),* and *"Ashkhar amenain" (Ye all the world).*

Jesus died on the cross for me by *"assuming our human nature,"* distinguishing Christ's human birth who descended from heaven as the true Son of God. Here obviously the Incarnation is revealed since through his human nature his crucifixion became possible while uniting his divinity to his body to make salvation possible. Here the great theologian St. Nersess the Graceful is reminiscing the *"economy,"* which meant the *"indispensable use"* of the human nature of Jesus Christ, as a means to an end, propagated in 431 by St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, at the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus. With the will and the power of God the Father,

His Son's sacrifice became all the more acceptable and eternally effective. Then, he adds, *"the Crucified is confessed God"* by humanity.

"His Church was founded
Cleansed with Water and his Blood"

Water and blood flew from the side of the Crucified, and the *"double issue"* as St. Nersess puts it, established the church through washing by water and by receiving the blood, obviously referring to the basic Sacraments of the Church, the **Baptism** and the **Eucharist**. St. Nersess thus realized the **foundation of the Church on the Cross,** at the earliest moment one can imagine, by the flow of both the water and the blood. It is amazing to see how the basic factors come to intertwine together to declare the *"Foundation of the Church."*

Cross and Church became one as Jesus gave his life on that cross. The Armenian Church makes this harmony meaningful and devotional as we can see from the church calendar where the days following the great feast of the Exaltation of the Cross are alternately devoted to the Cross, and to the Church. Thereafter, every other day, one by one, the Cross and the Church, are venerated to conclude in the celebration of the feast of the Holy Cross of Varak, expressly an Armenian remembrance. This implied that church cannot exist without cross, and without the church cross remains a symbol only, realizing above all the *"Living Church,"* as His Holy Body on earth. The physical structure of the church stands merely as the location of the *"Living Church,"* which is the faithful.

Two Armenian Church hymns, *"Daradzyal"* and *"Ourakh ler sourb yegueghetsi" (Be glad holy church)*, complement each other, as the latter hymn states: *"Christ crowned the church with his cross and fortified her walls with it. Christ the groom crowned his church as his bride."* Most of the hymns reflect the parallel course where the **cross** and the **church** remain inseparable and mutually effective, assuring the redemption of men.

“Preaching Through Miracles”

The last verse is the conclusion recalling Christ’s message to spread as the lasting miracle alternately, both by the preaching of the miracles and by the act preaching itself as a miracle**.** Here the performance of the miracles ends with preaching through which the Cross spread the love of God as a challenge in all directions. The Cross was not left bereft and isolated, but it was distributed without consuming. The Crucified did not stay on the Cross, but came down filling the world with his life-giving gifts of the Holy Resurrection. Both, Cross and Crucified, came to live among us indefinitely, and in return the Son was glorified by the believers with the Father. The only way to achieve this, says St. Nersess the Graceful, is to preach the Word of God.

THE ARMENIAN CHURCH *HYMNBOOK*
Translated into the Vernacular
By
Archbishop Yeprem Tabakian
Burbank, 2012

The Translation

This large volume of the Armenian Church *HYMNBOOK* was recently published for the third time by **Archbishop Yeprem Tabakian** who painstakingly for the first time devoted his time and talent to translate the text from the Classical Armenian into the vernacular. The volume contains the complete hymns as published by the Armenian Church authorities and contains 1014 facing pages, the text on the left and the translation on the right. Any translation should have the standard criteria of accuracy and clearly understandable context. Never a translation is perfect in its strict sense, since translation is not an original text. If a translation cannot be perfect, it can and should on its way aim at perfection as far as possible. The translation rendered by Archbishop Tabakian surely meets those standards, given the intricate style and literary expressions of the Classical Armenian, based on the first and most accurate translation of the Holy Bible from the Greek Septuagint in the 5th century.

The Translator

The author is one of the senior members of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, an educated theologian and a scholar, who translated also the "*Sermons"* of **Catholicos Hovhan Mandakuni**, both into modern Armenian and into French in two different volumes. His Eminence was ordained bishop in 1980 and assumed responsible positions within the Catholicosate and in its Prelacies. To complete the translation into the modern Armenian and make it effective, it requires also the reader's perfect understanding of the vernacular at the least.

I make these remarks based on my translations from the Classical to the Modern Armenian of ancient historiography, the *History of the Arab Invasions* by Ghevond the Priest (8th century), and the two volumes of historian Oukhtanes (10th century), *History of the Armenian Kings* and the *Schism of the Georgian Church from the Unity with the Armenian Church.* My experience demonstrated accuracy as far as possible, with no perfection as such for the same reason given above.

Archbishop Tabakian undertook the task encouraged by the Armenian Church authorities as he also acquired the admiration and the appreciation of the servers of the church and the faithful who are given the rare opportunity to understand, at least partially, the complex content of our Hymns. Appreciation at this publication was expressed by those eight generous members of the Western Diocese who sponsored the project requested by the Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

The Accuracy of the Translation

Having read the translation partially, my overall appreciation focused on a single virtue, its accuracy. In many instances, the text revealed inner intricacies of words and grammatical forms. They all needed to be simplified. An example shows St. Nersess Shnorhali's hymn, known as "*Daradzyal,"* poetically expressing the "*Crucified spreading his arms on the cross in place of the arms of the others."* There were two dead hands on the cross, and now in their place there are hands alive and working.

The contrast is most inspirational. Christ gave his hands so that other hands may continue His mission. The same with "*His Feet"* in the same verse, the dead feet instead of the "*walking"* feet, as clearly specified, thus "*replacing death with life."* Our faithful sing this hymn with devotion and deep emotion, and they sing it by heart, without sometimes understanding the real meaning behind it. The present volume will help them understand more and make the worship alive, more than mere sound and music; it will bring the last week's scene in the life of Christ live and complete.

Hymns Devoted To The Cross

Hymns on the Cross of Christ follow the above hymn, saying "*Christ gave His life on the cross spreading his arms, so that He might save and renew us from the heavy burden of our sins".* In the same hymn Christ was crucified "to *emancipate those estranged and bring them back to Him".* The hymnologists call the Cross *"Tree of Life"* which became the fruitful tree, the tree of knowledge. The Cross became "*The life-giving and the support for strength"* for the followers of Christ. In another context, "*the Cross was considered savior and giver of the universal light."* Or, in the precious hymn which begins with *"Barkevadoun amenetsoun"* on Good Friday is correctly translated as *"The One who gave all goodness, today is being asked from Pilate to be given [for burial by Joseph of Arimathea]."* Here again there is the hidden meaning of the hymn, otherwise, misinterpreted if not read correctly. In both cases the verbs *"tsoutsav" (was shown),* and *"khntri" (was asked)* are in the passive and not in the active modes which make the real difference.

"Today the church is overjoyed" is another masterpiece among the hymns. The author of this comprehensive hymn is a great theologian and philosopher of the 13th century, **Hovhanes Blouz of Erznga,** who wrote among others this 36-verse hymn alphabetically dedicated to the untold sufferings of **St. Gregory the Illuminator** while imprisoned in the Pit of Artashat for 13 years. His sufferings are described one by one in their minute details written poetically and with superb vocabulary, following the *History* of the 5th century historian *Agathangelos.* The historian tells that **King Terdat III of Armenia**, forced by the rulings of the Roman Emperor under whose jurisdiction he reigned, rejected Gregory's Christian faith and demanded him to relinquish it. Upon Gregory's persistence, the king imprisoned him where he remained alive until such time when the king found mentally ill for his misdeeds and for massacring the innocent Christians. The king was told that Gregory being alive in the pit could only heal him from his illness. This was not a legend but a historical sequence leading to the proclamation of Christianity as the State Religion of Armenia in 301 AD.

The Hymns are original

Because in the 5th and the following centuries liturgical and theological texts were translated from the Greek and the Syriac, one would assume that some of the Hymns also were translated. It should be emphatically stated that not one of them can fall in that category. **For sure, all the Hymns are originally and authentically written, and most of them identified by their verified authors over a period of 1000 years, from the 5th to the 15th centuries.**

Hymns are written on certain occasions and on milestones. First and foremost on the *Life and Mission of Jesus Christ* including a chain of panegyrics dedicated to *St. Mary the Mother-of-God*, and to *St. John the Baptist*. Events related to the *Holy Trinity*, the *Resurrection* and the *Pentecost* are specified. Hymns on *national milestones* in the history of the Armenian Christianity are ample and splendidly written and sung, such as relative to the *Battle of Vartanank*, the *creation of the alphabet*, the *translation of the Holy Bible*, down the centuries with praises dedicated to the *Prophets,* the *Apostles* and *Saints*, both national and international.

The hidden purpose of the Hymns in the Armenian Church has always been the *revival* of the events, bringing them to the present and making them alive, and not leaving them in oblivion. That is why the simple word *"Today"* is repeated hundreds of times to bring into life Jesus Christ and all related events and make them part in our daily lives. Many think that hymns are for singing primarily and that the meaning behind the text becomes secondary. For them the hymns are written for entertainment it seems, without purpose, to make church services ceremonial at best. This approach is often seen among priests and deacons who sing for the sake of singing. **The authors of the hymns penetrated into the theology and spirituality of the subjects they tried to sing, primarily putting the entire Gospel of Christ on a panoramic stage**. They were the advocates of the didactic nature and the orthodox teachings of the hymns to make the ceremony meaningful and purposeful. Otherwise, the selfish singing of those hymns may lead to risky self-entertainment, void of effective worship.

Hymn of the Pentecost

The midday hymn is most inspiring on the great feast of Pentecost, the **Advent of the Holy Spirit** which begins with *"the procession of the Spirit from God the Father."* The Holy Spirit is specified with four attributes: *"independently," "distinctly," "without space,"* and *"stream flowing without separating".* All four have the same meaning as translated by Archbishop Yeprem, namely "*without separation [from the Father and from the Son].* The word "*anhat"* (*independent* or *unending*) occurs twice, the last application being a solemn attribute to the Holy Spirit as an *"unending stream."* In addition, ample hymns are dedicated to the Holy Spirit all of them expressing theology and spirituality in their complete context.

Task Remaining

The field of our hymns needs cultivation in units through research and classification to reveal the message so eloquently repeated in them. Those units will classify those addressed to Our Lord and those sang to praise the Mother of God, depicting the life of Jesus and his Last Week in life. A unit should cover the *Jashu* hymns dedicated to *Christ the King* and to the *Kingdom of God*. Another unit will comprise the main hymns we sing every Sunday morning for the Resurrection of Christ with the prophesied events of the old, connecting Moses and the rest of the Prophets with the conclusive Resurrection and the Second Coming of Christ. An important unit must cover the excellent hymns written by St. Nersess the Graceful whose hymns comprise leading majority in our *Hymnbook*.

As we undertake this task, we must also be mindful of the contents of each hymn to reveal the theological, historical, national, and above all the Biblical dimensions and present the *Hymnbook* as a source of research and reference on a scholarly level.

NOTES ON
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Grace to you from Jesus Christ,
The Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler over kings of the earth.
To him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."
(Revelation 1:5)

The Conclusion of the Bible

The Book of Revelation, the last book in the Holy Bible, is the conclusion of the First Creation. The Creation was fulfilled by **Christ** who came to uplift the world which since its creation fell, and still is falling. The Book of Revelation came with Jesus Christ to conclude God the Father's Creation, which was complete and yet needed the conclusion of the times in which God's people lived and found their way according to Christ. The Lord's conclusive lesson to his followers was His Second Coming, and this Second Coming is hailed in the Book of Revelation. This is the importance of the last and conclusive Book, which is **equally to be honored as the rest of the Gospels and the Epistles of the Apostles.** The Book geared toward the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth and the lasting revelation of God.

Who is the Author?

There is no question that the Book was written by John the Evangelist, *"the Disciple loved by Jesus."* He is identified as John the brother of James and the sons of Zebedee. **He wrote the Fourth Gospel and three of the Catholic (Universal) Letters so eloquently.** He was **the only theologian among the Twelve**, deeply philosophical, who knew how to value God's Creation and Christ's mission on earth.

The Revelation is the mirror of the Kingdom of God which began in heaven but came down to earth as Jesus requested of the Father in the Lord's Prayer: *"Thy Kingdom come,"* meaning let not

Your Kingdom stay with you, but let us share it while living on earth. God's Kingdom is much more valued when people saw it, and that is why the Son of God Jesus was given to us, to bring God's people into his Kingdom in actuality. That is why Jesus resembled the Kingdom to so many living experiences taken from the immediate life of the people. Responsibility was actually included on the part of the people of God, who not only benefit from the Kingdom, but also are called to promote the same on earth in the form of the Church, the living faithful.

John was exiled to the island of Patmos where he experienced the revelation of God and wrote his experience with the recollection of the Creation, and in due time to welcome the coming of the Lord. But he did not stop there; he resolved to conclude all things so that nothing was left hanging in the air. The true conclusion of all was and is the Book of Revelation, the *"Gate for the Return of Christ"* as promised. **Geography and the names of the seven churches are clearly mentioned.** At the time, those seven churches were the centers of Christ's followers. They needed to see where they were heading, and Jesus told them about His Second Coming for which He insisted always *"to be ready, to be prepared."* His Coming is based on the Revelation given to John the Evangelist. There are many resemblances and allusions between John's Three Letters and his Book of Revelation in terms of Light, Love, and Truth.

What is the Revelation?

Remember that John did not give the revelation, but he **only received the revelation**. If this is what the Book implies why cast doubts about it and make it stay marginal. It is a weak point to say the Four Gospels are so vivid while the Revelation is not. Therefore, they say, in comparison with the Parables and the Miracles which were real and comprehensible, the Revelation remains on the background beyond our imagination. The reason must also be searched in the eschatology, which is "the events of the last times" when disturbances in the universe will give the signs as anticipated by Christ who made those events as warnings to His followers.

The Armenian Church

It is true that the First Armenian Bible in the year 430 included all the books except for the Revelation, because the Greek original (the Septuagint text) which was translated word for word did not include the Revelation of John. There was always the doubt whether it was a canonical book like the rest of the Books in the Holy Bible. While comparing the Book of Revelation with the other Books, church authorities found it incomprehensible and difficult to analyze and comment on it. It needed an in depth study with the Old Testament as the basis in order to see the connection and the continuity of God's plans and instructions.

Indifference traditionally excluded the Book of Revelation from the hand-written Bibles as canonical until the 13th century. **St. Nersess of Lambron**, the Archbishop of Tarsus in Cilicia, a highly qualified Armenian theologian, and the first to write an extensive *Commentary on the Holy Eucharist of the Armenian Church*, returned the Book of Revelation and attached it to the Armenian Bible. However, to ignore the inclusion persisted.

Armenian Bibles printed a hundred times **always included The Book of Revelation**, following St. Nersess' initiative and both the Latin and the English versions. They felt obliged to add the Last Book in the Armenian Bibles since the 13th century, failing however to select verses from it in the daily readings of the church services as they had done so diligently from the rest of the Holy Bible, equally from the Old and the New Testaments. It is time to honor **St. John's Book of Revelation** by reading selective passages on monthly basis. This is not impossibility, on the contrary, it is a necessity to live the life "in its abundance" as a Christian man and woman the way they were created in the first place, and to finally see God face to face.

THE GREAT LENT
Forty Days Prior to Easter

"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit"
(St. Paul)

What is the Great Lent?

It is a period of forty days exclusively for spiritual preparation to welcome Holy Easter worthily. Depending on the date of Easter Sunday, which is variable in each year, the **Great Lent begins on the first Monday** of that period before the **Great Feast of the Resurrection of Christ**. The forty days journey suggests fasting and staying away from excessive food and festivity. As Jesus went to the wilderness for forty days and prepared himself for his holy ministry, even tempted by Satan, Christians are reminded to be prepared for Christ's last week in life and His Resurrection. The Armenian Church has inspiring, symbolic, and meaningful hymns and rites based on the Holy Gospels with extensively selected readings from them. The period spreads over six Sundays, each with a specific message from the *Sermon on the Mount* to the *Parables* and the *commandments of Jesus*. The following are each Sunday's spiritual messages.

The first Sunday is known as the **Sunday of the Good Living.** The next day begins the fasting for the following 40 days during which the curtain before the main Altar remains drawn as a sign of depriving ourselves from communion with Christ temporarily, due to our state of repentance. It is the Sunday *"to be happy and glad"* for the grace and the opportunity given to the Christians to change their life style briefly by abstaining from eating meat and dairy products, and through prayer and self-control, trying to live a better life for a change. The **Second Sunday** is dedicated to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, reminding us to long for the mercy and the protection of God the Creator of the universe. The Calendar of the Armenian Church offers ample readings for the first two Sundays of Lent from the *Sermon on the Mount,* the entire Sermon, full of moral, social, and ethical commandments, addressed to the large crowd directly by Christ.

The **Third Sunday** is called the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, based on the familiar Parable told by Jesus where the younger son leaves his father's house and protection and goes away to uncertainty. After wasting the money taken from his father, he returns repenting on his knees for his sinful life, asking his father to receive him back as one of his servants. The father receives him as his own son. The message is quite clear. We all are sinners and ready to go astray, but repentance will show the way back to God who is always merciful.

The **Fourth Sunday** comes from another parable known as the Dishonest Steward who was shrewd for wasting his master's goods by way of stealing from the income. He is dismissed within one week, but was worried as to what to do and how to make his livelihood. During the remaining week, he took another dishonest step by calling hastily the customers of his master and cut their debts into half so that he might find favor with them when left jobless. The message is to be wise to reserve for the future, despite the mishandling and the unjust behavior. The lesson does not come from his behavior obviously, but only from his efforts to assure his immediate future. If the dishonest steward found protection by bribing, which is condemned, how much more the Heavenly Father will protect his children when they depend on Him for everything through their daily prayers.

The **Fifth Sunday** is quite similar. This time the Unjust Judge, another negative character, dismissed the widow's case repeatedly, knowing there was no profit from the poor woman who knocked on his door day in and day out. But what happened at the end was the core of the message: *he gave up, and just to get rid of the widow he took care of her case so that she would stop bothering him.* Constant prayer is the message: if the unjust judge finally helped the woman unwillingly, how much more the merciful Father in Heaven will listen to the repeated prayers of His children. Both parables are understood allegorically and not by comparison.

The **Sixth Sunday**, the last before Palm Sunday, is dedicated to the Second Coming of Christ as promised. The message sounds

complicated and incomprehensible as to when and how the Lord will appear again. The answer given by Jesus repeatedly with another message is this: *be ready and prepared for my Second Coming*, meaning you should worry about your readiness rather than about the time and the way of Christ's Second Coming.

Why Do People Fast?

This is an important question, the answer of which shall provide the religious meaning of the 40-day Lenten Season. In order to simplify the projected answer one should realize that there is a close parallel between fasting and dieting as far as the spiritual and physical health of a person is concerned. This meaningful parallel is revealed both from the purpose and from the method of fasting, which was so earnestly ordered by our forefathers. It is simply this: whatever sickness is in relation to the body, the same is the sin in relation to the soul. It can even be stated that sin is the illness of the soul, as physical illness is looked at as the sin of the body. We know well that the physical illness is derived from the disturbance of the organs; so is the sin, the result of disharmony in our spiritual life: hating, stealing, lying, and the rest of our wrong doings.

Medication Needed in Both Cases

It is an accepted fact that medication or diet, or both, are primarily applied to the sick. There are certain diseases that are cured by fasting and dieting. The same is true for our sins. A good percentage of our sins are committed because of our unlimited and uncontrolled desires. If naturally controlled, those desires not only will help us, but they will even serve the purpose of God. Men eat as a matter of necessity to keep and retain their natural health. The same is true for many other essential needs desired and required by the human body.

It is also true that desires of all sorts do not stay in their prescribed limits; they sometimes become the driving force of our mental and physical faculties, making our souls their victims. Gluttony and lust are the most obvious aberrations of natural desires which lead the person to the state of sinfulness. Such deviations,

being contagious, can only cause disaster in the individual and in the society, and not serve as examples to follow.

It is a difficult task to draw the line and fix a standard for our desires, unless we know how and why to fast meaningfully and purposefully. This is exactly what St. Paul was saying to the Galatians: *"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, so that you do not do the things that you wish."* (Galatians 5:17). The Lenten Season is therefore a period of re-examination of our desires and objectives with a clear definition of each, so that limits may be set and new avenues may be seen ahead of us.

PENTECOST
The Advent of the Holy Spirit
Sunday May 27, 2012

"The Holy Spirit came on the Disciples as a personal strength which implied a permanent effect on their souls. The Holy Spirit enlightened the mind, gave direction to the heart, strengthened the will, faded away the doubts, inspired brevity, and gave ability to become effective."

Patriarch Malachia Ormanian

The Event

The miraculous event was the greatest following the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ on the 50th day of Easter. It was also on the 10th day of the Ascension when the Holy Spirit descended in the Upper Room on the disciples where they were gathered *"all of them together"* with *"some hundred and twenty followers."* The Advent of the Holy Spirit coincided with the traditional **Feast of Pentecost**, meaning the 50th day, which commemorated the day Prophet Moses received the Ten Commandments in Sinai, 50 days after the people of Israel left Egypt.

In the Upper Room, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, all of a sudden tongues of flames descended individually upon the disciples who received strength and knowledge. They were no longer disciples; **now they were Apostles to go, as they were called disciples of Jesus in the first place.** This time they were charged "*to go henceforth,"* inspired by the Holy Spirit and Divine Power.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is the **Third Person of the Holy Trinity,** the breath of God who was with the Creation of the world as we read in the opening verse of the Holy Bible, *"The Spirit of God was around at the creation of the world."* The Holy Spirit was grad-

ually acknowledged as the*"Wisdom of God"*and the"*Power of God,"* as preached by Paul the Apostle. Whenever God revealed himself through the Prophets and later through the Apostles, the Holy Spirit was always there. At the Birth of Jesus Mary was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was confirmed as the Son of God by the Heavenly Father, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove. The Church soon recognized the Holy Spirit as *"the source of life and the giver of the divine gift,"* as we chant in our baptismal hymn. Those gifts became the *"Grace of God"* distributed indiscriminately to those who believed in the *"Breath of God"* by which the first Armenian Bible was identified as "*The Book of the Breath of God" (Asdvadzashoonch Matyan).* Furthermore, the Church repeated the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by John the Baptist as the "*Sacrament of Baptism for those who were born again by the Spirit."*

The Holy Spirit acquired **two additional attributes**: *"In communion with"* and the *"life-giving breath of Christ"* through the administration of the seven Sacraments. The Church of Christ became His Body permeated by the Holy Spirit, an Institution that went across the world empowered with the same Spirit of God, the same way as His earthly body was walking among His followers, preaching, and healing, teaching and feeding. Thus, the human Body of Christ and His Church on earth became identical and the same in nature and in action.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Jesus predicted the Advent of the Holy Spirit, saying, *"The Father will send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, in my name which will remind you and teach you all the things I have spoken to you."* Actually, fifty days after the Resurrection it happened exactly what Jesus had predicted, when on the Feast of Pentecost the Breath of God the Father descended with a loud voice and fiery tongues in the Upper Room and filled the place where the disciples and some 120 believers were praying and expecting the Advent of the Spirit. *"They all"* were enlightened and spoke different languages, ready to spread the Good News all over the world according to the last commandment Jesus gave the Eleven Disciples.

Pilgrims from Colonies

There were also Jews from different colonies who had come for the Feast. They are known in the Acts of the Apostles as *"Men filled with awe,"* whose provenance is geographically and accurately mentioned by the Evangelist Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles. The names of the districts and cities are mentioned one by one, 12 of them, from Parthia to Mesopotamia, from *"Judaea"* to Cappadocia, from Pontus to the regional towns in Asia Minor, on the way to Palestine.

Those who went from the colonies by hundreds *"each heard the utterances of the Apostles in their own tongue."* This has always been questioned whether they actually heard their colonial languages or *"translated whatever they heard from the Apostles in their native tongue."* The fact however is unambiguously recorded in the Acts, saying: *"The Apostles began to speak different languages"* and not that the visitors understood through their colonial languages by way of translation.

Colonies of "Armenia' and "Judaea"

The locations of those colonies are accurately recorded, except for *"Judaea"* which is mistakenly squeezed between Cappadocia and Mesopotamia. The country should read "*Hayastan"* in Armenian, which represented *"Armenia,"* as corrected by two ancient **Church Fathers Tertullian** and **St. Augustine**. Later **Patriarch Malachia Ormanian** was the first to reveal the case in the Armenian Church in his voluminous *"Hamabadoum,"* a tedious "*commentary on the Four Gospels*," explaining that those Jews went to Jerusalem from Armenia and not from *"Judaea"* where the Pentecost was actually being celebrated. Obviously, not two countries existed by the name of Judaea. This made a difference knowing that Jews from Armenia went to Jerusalem also and "heard" the Armenian language as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The passage reads, *"Those who came from far distances heard their own local languages uttered from the lips of the Apostles,"* which included the language of those who had gone from Armenia.

The Advent of the Holy Spirit is for all times God's effective action through the Church of Christ. Each of the seven Sacraments *"moves"* by the Holy Spirit, and anything divine springs from that same source, as Jesus had told His disciples that the Father will send the Holy Spirit in my name, and the Three, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit will be glorified as the Most Holy Trinity.

ECCLESIOLOGY

THE FORMATION OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

The Church of Armenia emerged as the genuine Church of the Armenian people only following the invention of the Armenian alphabet in 404-406 AD. The Church founded by the Apostles, and later formally established by St. Gregory the Enlightener, lacked two major and most essential factors, the Armenian letters and the translation of the Bible into Armenian.

Introduction

This study will cover the gap as well as the ultimate functional formation of the Armenian Church from the end of the 4th century to the end of the 5th. It is an attempt to treat transition of the church from the apostolic era to that of the literary expression of the established church in Armenia. All will fall under political hardship and sometimes under prosperous conditions, and yet the newly established church will survive all odds, given the God-given gift of all times, the letters and literature, through which not only the Holy Bible became "Armenian", but also the church was truly converted into an authentic Church of Armenia.

Three prominent leaders stood behind this great enlightenment. **St. Sahak the Catholicos** (387-439), whose long and productive pontificate as the Patriarch of the Armenian Church yielded much fruit in terms of the translation of the Holy Bible into Armenian. **St. Mesrob Mashtots** (born 362-440), a cleric, who invented the Armenian authentic letters, opened the earliest schools, and gathered the first Translators to translate the Bible and the earliest liturgical books into Armenian. **King Vramshapuh** of Armenia (389-414), who sponsored the entire literary work involved in the enlightenment of the Armenian nation. All three accomplished the essential task of literacy, especially when Armenia lost its political stability in 428 when the Arsacid Kingdom of Armenia ended.

The Armenian Alphabet

The Armenians rightfully proclaim the fifth century as the "Golden Age" for their nation, because at the dawn of that century a complete series of 36 Armenian letters were created by a talented priest Mesrob Mashtots in the years 404-406 AD. The task was huge and indispensable that needed skill, knowledge, patience, and prayer. Mesrob actually formed those letters after intense investigation of the Syriac and Greek letters. Independently from the above alphabets, he actually invented one letter for each sound in the spoken language of the people, who spoke the Armenian for centuries before but never wrote a single word for the lack of the letters. Mesrob, due to his deep concern for the literacy of his people, as clearly reported by his biographer Koriun Vardapet in his *Life of Mashtots,* considered it most necessary to design each letter to correspond to each sound distinctly and clearly. He was not satisfied with his first designs, but went to Edessa to have the letters reshaped, dignified, and finalized by a calligrapher.

The Translation of the Bible

Returning to Armenia, Mesrob Mashtots presented his 36 Armenian letters to his superior, the head of the Church Catholicos Sahak, who received him and the divine gifts with gratitude. Being himself a great scholar, now that the letters were available, the Catholicos embarked on the greater task of the translation of the Bible into Armenian from the Greek **Septuagint** text, brought into Armenia from Constantinople by the first students of Mesrob, who were sent to learn both the Greek and the Syriac languages in Edessa, Alexandria, and Constantinople. It took them some 30 years to accomplish the monumental work, while both Sahak and Mesrob were still living. Sahak died in 439 and Mesrob a year later in 440. Later, the Armenian version was acclaimed by foreign scholars as the ***"Queen of the Translations"*** of the Bible, following which historiography bloomed in Armenia. Schools were opened and the immediate liturgical texts for worship, theology, and commentary of the Bible were translated into Armenian, basically from the Greek language.

Thus, the Armenian Church was genuinely founded and supported, this time by written literature and documentations, rather than political power. The church was invested with spiritual and intellectual wealth that potentially yielded greatest cultural achievements for posterity in terms of literature and arts. Bear in mind Armenia had lost its political power first in 387, and finally in 428, right in the middle of the Translators activities, when the Arcasid dynasty fell and Persia dominated our land by *marzpans*. Armenia, on the one hand, lost its earthly throne, but eternally enriched by a spiritual and cultural wealth to elevate our nation yet to a much higher and imperishable pedestal, the throne of total revival and survival as the people of God.

Resistance and Defense

The newly formed church in Armenia with its authentic alphabet and the Bible was forced to meet the challenge of survival by defense of force against the neighboring Persia. The Sassanid dynasty, which came to power in 226 succeeding the Parthian dynasty, worshipped the fire, Zoroastrianism being their religion, and did not tolerate a Christian nation next to them, especially because of Armenia's Christian ally, the Byzantines, who were a real threat to Persia. The same tension had already partitioned Armenia in 387 into two between the two empires, the larger part under Persia in the east, and the smaller portion under the Byzantines in the west. Following the partition of our land, the Armenian kingdom ended as said above, and religious persecutions took their course. Persia threatened Armenia to abandon Christ and adhere to fire worship with total subjection to the Iranian power against Byzantium.

This happened right in the middle of the fifth century when the biblical, religious, and cultural awakening had just originated in Armenia with great enthusiasm. There was no choice for the Armenians, other than to defend their land, their identity, and equally their Christian religion. In 451, the General of the Armenian army Vartan Mamikonian, along with the ministers and the leaders of the church pleaded and told Persia not to enforce any such threat to convert them into fire worship, since their conviction was final and

firm. The Battle of Avarair was inevitable. On the battlefield, the Armenian army far smaller than the Persian army, headed by General Vartan and Priest Ghevond fought against the enemy. The General fell and gave his life with his warriors as our martyrs and witnesses of Christ. Eventually, in 484, the Armenians were given their right to worship Christ by signing the Treaty of Nvarsak. This was the first war ever in history waged in defense of Christianity.

It is important to learn the following lesson from history. While Armenia was successfully determined to resist and keep her language and religion up to this day, Persia not too long after the Battle of Avarair, abandoned Zoroastrianism and embraced Islam. Iran further changed its language from the Bahlav to the Persian, and abandoned their scripts and adopted the Arabic letters. The Armenians stood victorious to the last.

Religious unrest in Armenia in 451 was strongly felt from the West as an immediate reaction, this time under the continued pressure of the Byzantine Empire, under the pretext of Christological issues, aiming at religious subjugation of the Armenian Church to the Byzantine Church. The Armenian Church ignored and eventually rejected to consider any such demand, insisting on the final declaration of the Christological issue reached at the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. ***It was in 506 and under Catholicos Babken I of Othmus, when the rejection of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 AD and its resolutions became final***, and no further problems of subjection were seriously considered by the Armenian Church.

Patristic Literature

Soon after the invention of the Armenian alphabet and the translation of the Bible into Armenian, literary activities bloomed in Armenia, as the most urgent need for the formation of Armenian Christianity from its foundations. Patristic works of Greek and Syrian Church Fathers included liturgical texts as well as commentaries of the Bible. Armenian translators embarked on this task and began to read and translate the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260-c.340), his second book after the famous *Ecclesiastical History,*

which was lost but the Armenian version had survived and was found centuries later, at the beginning of the 19th century, which served as the "original" of the *Chronicle.* It was the last resort for the restoration of that particular text.

Works of Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130-c.200), which included *Against the Heresies,* were also translated into Armenian in the fifth century. It proved to be very important as some of Irenaeus' original texts were lost and the Armenian translations were indispensable. Such was *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, which was discovered in an Armenian translation in 1907 by an Armenian cleric scholar in Etchmiadzin, who translated it into German, and later into Latin in 1917, and into other languages. The point we are making is not as much to demonstrate the availability of ancient and rare translation of certain texts, but to ascertain the earliest sources and foundations on which the Armenian Church was established through literary activities by genuine translations.

The above facts demonstrate that the 3rd and 4th centuries marked a major spiritual growth of the Church by way of worship that required texts for liturgy and daily services. The emergence of liturgical texts was an integral and permanent part of the worship that the Armenian Translators, the immediate disciples of Sts. Sahak and Mesrob, took upon themselves as their primary task. Now eloquent in Greek and Syriac languages, they wasted no time in gathering and reading the existing liturgical texts extensively, especially the Liturgies of St. Athanasius, St. Basil of Caesarea, and St. John Chrysostom for the proper use of the Armenian Church worship. They translated the liturgical texts from the Greek, while the hymns during the following ten centuries remained exclusively authentic and original, written first hand in Armenian.

During the 5th century Armenia enriched by literature other than purely liturgical and devotional, which contributed in its main part to the formation of the Armenian Apostolic Church. One of them was the *Epic* of Yeghishe Vardapet, known as "*Concerning Vartan and the War of the Armenians*," which was an eyewitness account of the 451 Battle of Avarair, written in a pure classical

language and poetry. There was also the *Refutation of the Sects* by Eznik Goghpatsi, a most valuable exposition of a philosophical evaluation of God's existence by way of refuting the existing sects of the time, including Mazdeism of Persia, ancient Greek philosophy, and the sect of Marcion. His central thesis has been to defend the existence of God by the emergence of Christianity.

Eznik's classic work is unique in the ancient literature of the Armenian people with its most superb classic Armenian, shaped on the language of the Armenian Bible, translated partially by himself as one of the first disciples of Mesrob. His book contains numerous biblical citations, having in mind God's existence as against the false doctrines of his time, such as the Manichaeism, founded by Mani and known at the time as a syncretic mixture of Christianity and Iranian beliefs, powerful enough to merge the two, the Christian and the Iranian thoughts into a higher synthesis. Eznik refuted also the ancient Greek Pythagorean, Epicurean, and Stoic philosophies in defense of Christianity by way of reconciling it with the more moderate and God-centered philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

Thus, under the shadow of the Armenian Bible sources flourished and further reinforced the formation and the identity of the Armenian Church. Following the fifth century, no doubt other written sources and historiographies contributed to the stability of the Armenian Church in the subsequent centuries. There is one ascribed to St. Gregory the Illuminator, known as *Hajakhapatum Jarrk,* a collection of theological and religious sermons, and another, the *History of the Armenians* by Movses Khorenatsi "*Father of the Historians" (patmahyre)*, who combined prehistoric Armenia with the events of his own days as the continuation of the existence of the land and the Armenians. His work has served as the *magnum opus* for the next historians until the 18th century. The *History* of Agathangelos*,* the *History* of Bavstos Buzand, the *History* of Ghazar Barpetsi, and the *History* of Bishop Sebeos, added substantially to the formation of the Armenian Church.

Even though not finalized during the centuries under consideration, the Armenian Church *Sharagans,* the Hymns, had their

origin in the 5th century, even some of them authored by St. Sahak and St. Mesrob. They contained a variety of hymns related to the fundamental theological and national issues, all of them eventually forming an impressive collection of songs with their proper music. They also undoubtedly contributed considerably to the formation of the Armenian Church as an authentic church for the Armenian people exclusively.

Lastly, the *Canon Law* of the Armenian Church drew the line and controlled the discipline of this church as an established institution, beginning from the 5th century but culminating into a final compilation as a code in the 8th century by a famous **Catholicos John of Otsoon** (717-728), famed as the "philosopher" pontiff of the Armenian Church. He compiled the laws adopted by previously convened Armenian Church Councils, *"classified and finalized them chronologically and installed them permanently in his pontifical office"*, as stated by the Catholicos. He too convened a Church Council of Manazkert in 726 and established new canons concerning the person of Christ.

During the pontificate of **Catholicos Vasken I** (1955-1994) the *Canon Law* was published in its final edition in two volumes, by Vazken Hakopian, a specialist, in 1964 and 1971 with the *apparatus criticus* of the readings of 47 manuscripts, copied throughout the centuries following the original compilation. Hakopian classified the laws under 57 groups, with a total number of 1332 individual canon laws. For example, the Council of Shahapivan in 444 adopted 20 canons under political circumstances, after the fall of the Armenian Arshakuni dynasty as Armenian princes quarreled with each other. It is worth noting the laws of Shahapivan, specifically formulated and enforced by a Church Council, to judge the political leaders of Armenia in time of crises. The same was with the Church Council of Dvin in 648, presided over by Catholicos Nersess III with 17 bishops participating, that adopted 12 canons to resist the invasions of the Arabs in defense of the Armenian princes. The Council set rules to resist the Byzantine pressure.

"BOOK OF CANON LAW OF ARMENIA"
Compiled by Catholicos John III of Otsoon (717-728)
Final Edition by Dr. Vasken Hakobyan
Two Volumes, 1964 and 1971, Yerevan

The Text

It was not until the 8th century when for the first time the **Armenian Catholicos John III of Otsoon** collected all the scattered canons of the Armenian Church Councils of the previous centuries. He classified them in groups, and established in the Holy See of the Pontificate the first *"Kanonakirk Hayots"* (*Book of Canon Law of Armenia*) in one volume, including some of the canons of the Christian Church in general. The classifications by Catholicos John III were as follows:

Canons of St. Gregory the Illuminator (303-325), of St. Sahak Parthev Catholicos (387-439), of St. Hovhan Mandakuni Catholicos (478-490), and the Armenian Church Councils of Shahapivan (444), Artashat (449), Dvin I (506), Dvin II (554), Dvin III (607), Karin I (633), Dvin IV (645), Karin II (680), Dvin V (720), and Manazkert (726). The last two were convened and presided over by Catholicos John of Otsoon himself. Later, additions were made by his successors, and canons were established by the actions taken at the respective church councils, such as, the Council of Sis, Cilicia, in 1243, and the Council of Dzagavan in 1268. The last Church Council convened was in Jerusalem in 1652. The total Armenian Church Councils were 23 as reported by our historians.

It is understandable that the original *Book of Canon Law* so formed and established by Otsnetsi could not have reached us intact. Because of its importance, scribes in monasteries copied from the original version extensively. Eventually many variants emerged from those duplications, with unwarranted additions and deletions,

due to possible inaccurate readings on the part of the scribes. Later editions created additional codes of the church laws that have reached us during subsequent centuries. Presently scholars have identified over 200 survived manuscript texts of the *Book* with diverse copies written during distant periods from each other. The specialist Vasken Hakobyan painstakingly has accomplished a remarkable task, in two large volumes, by editing each of the 47 selected manuscripts and adding on each page the different readings from those 47 texts, including the important manuscript written in 1098, kept in New Julfa, Iran. **His Holiness Catholicos Vasken I** asked for the photographed pages of the 1098 AD manuscript that he received in Holy Etchmiadzin. It was indispensable for the study and for the publication by Vasken Hakobyan.

At the end of the 10th century, the *Book of Canon Law* was further developed with more canon laws. This means that until Catholicos John III, the *Book* was endowed with 24 codes, and later it was increased by an additional 15 codes. Chronologically the closest addition to Otsnetsi's compilation was made by **Catholicos Sion Bavonetsi** (767-775) some 40 years later at the Church Council of Partav in 768.

Catholicos John III of Otsoon (717-728)

The author of this valuable volume was also known as **John III Catholicos *Imastaser* (the Philosopher**), a highly learned and distinguished theologian among the hierarchs of our Church. He has made the following historical evaluation on the *Book of Canon Law: "The Holy Fathers provided the church with laws, and because those canon laws were scattered and not classified, I deemed it necessary to codify them all in one volume and establish the Book of Canon Law in our Pontifical Seat."*

The author, the Supreme Patriarch of the Armenian Church resided in the Armenian Catholicosate at Dvin, capital of Armenia, not too far from Holy Etchmiadzin, where the Seat of the Catholicos transferred since 485 to 927, a very long time, for reasons of political unrest. Catholicos John III died in 728.

The Content

Basically, the *Book of Canon Law* includes laws pertaining to the dogma and worship of the Armenian Church. In addition, laws on marriage, family life and discipline are strict and predominant. Variably, by necessity and being contemporary to compilation, the *Book* was needed at the time of political and social unrest. During the 7th century, the Byzantines and the Arabs forced Armenia to submit, thus endangering the autonomy of our church, and destroying the economy of our country. Catholicos John III Otsnetsi was able to meet personally with the Arab Caliph Umar II (717-720) in Damascus, just before 720, to rescue the imprisoned Armenian princes, as reported by contemporary Armenian historians.

Primarily the autonomy of the Armenian Church was at stake, especially when the Byzantine Greek Orthodox Church exercised pressure to submit the Armenians to their faith, demanding the adoption of the Council of Chalcedon of 451, in order to consolidate the Eastern front of the Empire against the Arabs. Byzantium was intolerant, trying to reduce Armenia into one of the eastern provinces of the Empire. The "weakening" of the Armenian Church in an attempt of submitting it to the Imperial Orthodox Patriarchate in matters of doctrine warranted the Armenians to convene Church Councils as needed, and take immediate measures by establishing sets of canon laws in defense of the independence and autonomy of the church.

According to the Armenian Church historian, **Patriarch Malachia Ormanian**, Catholicos John Otsnetsi was determined to alleviate religious pressures exerted on the Armenian Church by the Greeks, oddly *"relying on the policy of the Arab Caliphate."* The Catholicos *"forcefully kept a distance between the Armenian Church and the Greek Church regarding the Chalcedonian doctrine which had found ground during Catholicos Ezr of Parajnakert, one of his predecessors."* Ormanian has based his views on the fact that Catholicos John Otsnetsi is also believed to be the author of another theological writing known as *"Saks Jzoghovots" (Concerning Church Councils),* where he has adjusted the christological views of his six predecessors, from **Catholicos Ezr** (630-641) to **Catholicos**

Yeghia (703-717), who were blamed to have consented to the Greek doctrine. Ormanian further observes that, *"those deviations were simply because of weaknesses due to political pressures."*

Over all the main trend of the compilation of the *Book* by the Catholicos was to safeguard the traditional and legitimate law and order, bearing in mind the political stability of Armenia. **Those steps could have only been taken through the Armenian Church Councils presided over by the Catholicos,** with the participation of bishops, clergy, and lay representatives, headed variably by kings and princes wherever applicable, thus giving from the outset a democratic and more powerful nature to the councils. The Catholicos and the Church were given power alternately to overtake the governance of the nation when both the kingdom and the political power failed.

Two Volumes: Final Edition (1964, 1971)
By Vasken Hakobyan

Vasken Hakobyan, the only specialist in recent times to study the Armenian Canon Law in depth, edited and published in two volumes Otsnetsi's *Book of Canon Law of Armenia* in Yerevan. He classified tediously and completely all the canon laws of the Armenian Church. Volume I (1964) contains the canons compiled by the author **Catholicos John III of Otsoon,** and Volume II has additional codes collected by later Pontiffs of the Armenian Church.

Volume I (1964)

Hakobyan's First Volume contains the following canon laws. 30 canon laws ascribed to St. Gregory the Illuminator (pp.243-249), 55 to St. Sahak Barthev Catholicos (363-421), 20 were adopted by the Council of Shahapivan (422-466), 37 were established by Catholicos Nersess III Tayetsi and Bishop Nershapuh Mamikonian (475-490), 9 by Catholicos Hovhan Mandakuni (491-500), 3 by Bishop Abraham Mamikonian addressed to King Vachakan of Albania (501-505), 15 by Catholicos Sahak Dzoraporetsi (505-513), and 32 canon laws by Catholicos John of Otsoon (514-537).

Volume II (1971)

Volume II contains the following canon laws. 23 by Catholicos Sion Bavonetsi (pp. 3-18), 21 by King Vachakan of Albania (91-100), 12 by Catholicos Nersess III Tayetsi (Ishkhantsi) (201-215), 10 by Bishop Makarius of Jerusalem addressed to the Armenians (216-229), one group of canon law by St. Sahak Catholicos Parthev (230-238), one group by Catholicos Hovhan Mandakuni (239-243), 9 canons from the Council of Karin I (244-257), 43 by Catholicos St. Nersess the Great (258-263), 7 by Catholicos Hovhan Mandakuni (264-266), and 7 canons by Catholicos Hovhan Mandakuni on Repentance (296-304). Both volumes include a series of canons adopted at the *Three Ecumenical Councils, of Nicaea (325 AD), Constantinople (381 AD), and Ephesus (431 AD),* and of some other non-Armenian local churches. In total, 16 such codes are included in Volume I, and 20 codes in Volume II. At the end of the second volume, Vasken Hakobyan has provided comprehensive lists of all the canons emerged from all the church councils, Armenian and non-Armenian alike (pp.306-395).

Volume II contains additional canon laws ascribed to the same Armenian Pontiffs found in the first volume. It looks like duplication of names and canons. A careful reading will conclude that those additional names are the same, unlike the canon laws that are entirely different canon laws. This also shows that after Catholicos John of Otsoon, new editions of the *Book of Canon Law* were obviously made by the orders of the contemporary Pontiffs, during the 10th and 11th centuries by scribes and compilers, with some unknown "authorization." Such examples represent Catholicos Mandakuni who has 15 additional canons, 24 in total. St. Sahak Parthev Catholicos has one (1) additional canon law, 56 in total. King Vachakan has 21 more, 24 in total. Catholicos Nersess III Ishkhantsi has 43 additional canon laws, 80 in total. Those seemingly "unauthorized" canon laws have definitely updated and enriched the codes. Independent constitutions in later years have benefited from those updated canon laws.

The Armenian Church Councils
Chronology and Classification

In total, **23 Armenian Church Councils** convened between the 4th and 7th centuries, almost one in each century on the average. Historians have recorded **one** Council in the 4th c. **two** in the 5th, **two** in the 6th, **four** in the 7th, **three** in the 8th, **one** in the 9th, **one** in the 10th, **three** in the 12th, **one** in the 13th, **three** in the 14th, **one** in the 15th, and **one** in the 17th centuries. Fourteen of those were called by the Supreme Patriarchs of the Armenian Church, one was a General Assembly to elect the Catholicos upon the return of the See from Cilicia, and nine were called by secular leaders of Armenia. The following is the concise list:

14 Councils were called as follows. The Councils of **Ashtishat in 354** by Catholicos Nersess the Great, **Shahapivan in 444** by "a group of spiritual brothers," **Artashat in 449** by Catholicos Hovsep Hoghots-metsi, **Dvin I in 506** by Catholicos Babken I of Othmus, **Dvin II in 554** by Catholicos Nersess II of Bagrevand, **Dvin III in 645** by Catholicos Nersess III Ishkhantsi, **Dvin IV in 720** by Catholicos Hovhannes Otsnetsi, **Manazkert in 726** by Catholicos Hovhannes Otsnetsi, **Partav in 768** by Catholicos Sion Bavonetsi, **Kesoon (Karmir Vank) in 1113** by Catholicos Krikor Pahlavouni, **Hromkla in 1179** by Catholicos Krikor Tgha, **Adana in 1317** by Catholicos Constantine III Kesaratsi, **Sis III in 1343** by Catholicos Mkhitar Krnertsi, **Jerusalem in 1652** by Catholicos Philibos Aghbaketsi.

A General Assembly in 1441 convened in Vagharshapat (Etchmiad-zin) by Hovhannes Vardapet Hermonetsi, an influential leader of the Armenian Church at the time and the head of the famous university of Datev in Siunik, to transfer the Seat of the Armenian Catholicos once and for all from Sis to Etchmiadzin. The Assembly elected **Catholicos Kirakos Vardapet Virapetsi** to succeed **Catholi-cos Krikor Musabekian** who remained in Sis and started the second and the limited branch of the Armenian hierarchy in Cilicia.

Nine Councils were called by secular leaders of Armenia as follows. Council of **Dvin III in 607** by Armenian princes, of **Karin I in 633** enforced by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius**,** of **Karin II in**

680, of **Yernchak in 841** by Armenian princes, given the fact that in 607 at Dvin III the election of **Catholicos Abraham Aghbatanetsi** (607-615) was held, and in 841 at Yernchak the accusation against the ousted **Catholicos Hovhannes IV Ovayetsi** was resolved. It was in **Ani in 969**, capital of the Bagratuni Kingdom that King Ashot III called a Church Council. Later Church Councils were held in **Tarsus in 1197** by King Levon I of Cilicia, of **Sis I in 1208**, by King Levon I of Cilicia, of **Sis II in 1307** by King Levon III of Cilicia, and then the Council of **Sis III in 1343** by King Constantine of Cilicia.

It is important to single out from the above the **Church Council of Karin I in 633** during the pontificate of Catholicos Ezr of Parajnakert (630-641). It dealt with doctrinal issues between the Greeks and the Armenians regarding the two natures of Christ. The Armenian Catholicos had with him four bishops and three archimandrites, whereas the Greeks came to meet with the **Emperor Heraclius** himself, and a number of bishops headed by the Greek Patriarch Sergius (610-638). To complicate matters more, a new doctrine was brought up by the Greeks, namely, the doctrine of *Monothelitism,* a term from the Greek meaning Christ had and exercised *One will, the divine will only,* next to possessing his human nature.

It is reported by historian Stephan Orbelian in his *"History of the Province of Sisakan* that in his absence an important paper was read written by an Armenian Methusala, Bishop of Siunik, who held his office from 634 to 652. Methusala, who died in 652, was a highly regarded philosopher and doctor of the Armenian Church who had studied and commented on the works of St. Sahak and St. Mesrob (5th century). In his paper, read at the Council of Karin in 633, Methusala had categorically rejected the Council of Chalcedon of 451, and with it the newly introduced *doctrine of the One Will.* He is hailed by the same historian as *"a great poet, a philosopher and orator, full of wisdom and perfect in knowledge."* The Armenians were forced by the Emperor and the Patriarch to accept the Greek Orthodox doctrine that turned out to be a temporary. At one point, they even went ahead and shared the Holy Communion with the Greeks but to no avail.

General Agenda of the Church Councils

Six of the Church Councils dealt with matters of *reformation within the Church,* four of which established specific canon laws that have entered in the two-volume edition of the *Book of Canon Law of Armenia* by V. Hakobyan. Five other Councils responded to the official correspondences addressed to the Armenian Church, and one of them aimed at establishing the relationship between the Armenian and the Syrian Orthodox Churches. Another council tried to improve the relationship between the Mother See and the See of Cilicia. One of the Councils discussed attempts to unity between the Armenian and the Greek churches, and the remaining three Councils aimed at "unity" with the Catholic Church while the Armenian Kingdom was in Cilicia (Lesser Armenia), in the territories of the northeastern tip of the Mediterranean Sea.

History testifies that Church and State in Armenia united, and that secular heads of our nation attended the Councils so that religious canon laws could have the advantage of state endorsement. Both, Church and State, were mutually supportive with the understanding that the religious heads of the national church of Armenia reached resolutions at the Councils, and that secular authorities executed them in their respective regions and districts. By virtue of her judiciary power, the church sometimes had to step in to resolve political conflicts among the secular authorities.

HOLY EASTER 2013
March 31, New (Gregorian) Calendar
May 5, Old (Julian) Calendar

Two Calendars

In this 2013 year, **Holy Easter** was celebrated twice by the Armenian Church, on March 31st, and on May 5th, five weeks apart. The question is raised as to why the difference, and why celebrating twice, especially when pilgrims who went to Jerusalem this year celebrated Easter in the United States earlier on March 31st, and again on May 5th in Jerusalem. The distance between the two is variable, given the year. Accordingly, the New and the Old Calendars observe Easter Sunday from one to five weeks period between them and sometimes, given the solar system, the celebration coincides on the same Sunday. Initially, the observance of Easter was established by the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. It sounds confusing, but the simple and not quite adequate answer is the *use of either the New (Gregorian) or the Old (Julian) Calendar*. To be sure, the canonical resolution of the date of Easter comes from the First Council of Nicaea.

What did the Church Fathers establish at Nicaea in the first place? Based on Biblical evidences they resolved that Easter, the most important feast of the Church, should be celebrated ***"On the first Sunday succeeding the full moon, right after the spring solstice."*** The decision is applied by both calendars, and not that one has honored it and the other not as some think. The problem in fact lied in the exact calculation of the days of the year. Note however that the Old Calendar, which Julius Caesar established was endorsed before Christ, in 46 BC, and called after his name. It could have no bearing whatsoever on Christianity, let alone on Easter. The Julian Calendar was a purely secular calendar while the New Calendar, which was prepared by Pope Gregory XIII (1573-1585) in 1582, and called after him, had the express purpose to calculate the days of the year correctly, by revising the Old.

The Problem

The problem therefore lies not in the accuracy of the one over the other, but in adjusting the exact days of the year by hours and minutes, and then applying it to establish Easter Sunday correctly. The adjustment completed in the 16th century by scientists under Pope Gregory XIII as said above and the western churches gradually adopted it. Soon the Church of England followed the New Calendar in the 18th century and celebrated Easter with the Latin Church.

For political reasons the Orthodox Churches hesitated and stayed with the Old Calendar, but the Armenian Church adopted the New Calendar quite late in 1923 by the Encyclical of the **Catholicos of All Armenians Kevork V Soureniants**. With the exception of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the churches under its jurisdiction (for the important reason to keep their rights and privileges in the Holy Land), the Armenian churches all over celebrated Easter according to the New Calendar ever since. Following the 1917 revolution of the Bolsheviks and the fall of the Russian Empire, the communist regime adopted the New Calendar with the Russian and Georgian Orthodox Churches agreeing with the decree, but before the end of the year both churches reneged and turned to the Old Calendar. The Armenian Church was firm ignoring the uncertain move of both churches. This indicated the independence and the self-rule of the Armenian Church from the orthodox churches, disregarding at the same time the political factor, despite being in the same region and under the same regime.

The Greek Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople being cautious stayed away from the use of the New Calendar for political reasons trying not to jeopardize the Ottoman Empire's risky relationship with the Russians. As of today, the Greeks adhere to the Old Calendar in Jerusalem.

The Calculation

The Old Calendar calculated 365 ¼ days for the year, which did not represent an accurate and final number, because the complete year calculated accurately 11 ½ minutes less than the above

figure, which in the 900-year period resulted in a difference of 10 days. To correct the mistake scientists made an unusual jump in 1582, and counted October 5th as October 15th, thus "*balancing*" by *"elimination*" the ten days of the year for the sake of absolute accuracy. This was what the New Calendar did, establishing and calculating 365 days for the year, and once every four years adding one day to the month of February, creating the "Leap Year" with February 29.

The churches that followed the dates of the Old Calendar refused to accept the "correction" and stood behind by 11 days in the year 1700, 12 days in 1800, and 13 days in 1900. This is why the feasts are observed on fixed dates according to the New Calendar, such as Armenian Christmas on January 6 and the Presentation of the Lord to the Temple on February 14, are 13 days earlier compared with the Old Calendar. Bear in mind also that those fixed dates are counted in the Old Calendar just the same, January 6 and February 14, which in the New Calendar fall on January 19 and February 27.

The Armenian Church

As stated above the Armenian Church started using the New Calendar since 1923 for the churches outside Jerusalem. The case in the Holy Land has been unique in the sense that three denominations the Catholics, the Greeks, and the Armenians have equal rights and privileges in keeping the holy shrines by the power of the decrees granted them as early as the 7thcentury. Armenians and the Greeks use the same Julian Calendar and the feasts coincide with an unnecessary "competition."

GROUPING OF THE FEASTS
In The Armenian Church
(Dates shown are for the year 2014)

Introduction

The Armenian Church yearly calendar has its special setting for the groupings of the religious feasts, cycled around the date of Easter Sunday. Some of the observances have fixed dates. They are independent from the cycle of the dominical feasts, given the fact that their dates are compatible with the data found in the Holy Scriptures. Others, specified as national or cultural feasts, emerge from the religious aspect of the life of the Armenian Church and people. Fasting days are predominant. The following study will show at a glance the variety of the observances, their groupings, and their duration through the year. Dates shown correspond to the calendar year 2014. The main source of this study is the *Tonatsooyts*, the *Church Calendar* of the Armenian Church.

Groupings

By virtue of their nature, the feasts and their observance in the Armenian Church comprise three categories:

Dominical Feasts, to commemorate the life and the ordinances of Jesus Christ, and to venerate the memory of the Mother-of-God St. Mary.

Saints Days, designated to commemorate the lives of the Biblical and historical Saints. The latter have reached the level of saint-hood by canonization. Inter-church saints are included in the Armenian Church calendar in addition to the native Saints.

Fasting Days, designated for repentance and prayer for our own souls and for those departed in Christ. The main part of the fasting is the *Great Lent*. Also, major feasts are preceded by weekly fasting days, all for the main purpose to prepare the faithful spiritually to worthily welcome the respective feasts.

Dominical Feasts

1. **Pertaining to Jesus Christ**

a. Epiphany: Nativity, January 6 (fixed date)
Baptism, January 6 (fixed date)
Naming, January 13 (fixed date)
Presentation, February 14 (fixed date)

b. Transfiguration (Vartavar) Sunday, July 27
(14 weeks after Easter)

c. All Sundays of the Year
Raising of Lazarus (Saturday April 12)
Palm Sunday (Sunday April 13)

d. Resurrection
Holy Week (April 13-19)
EASTER SUNDAY (Sunday April 20)
Ascension (Thursday May 29) 40 days after Easter
Second Palm Sunday (Sunday June 1)
Pentecost (Sunday June 8) 50 days after Easter

2. Dedicated to St. Mary Mother-of-God

Birth, September 8 (fixed date)
Annunciation, April 7 (fixed date)
Discovery of jewelry box (July 6)
Assumption Sunday (August 17)
Discovery of belt (August 31)
Presentation Nov. 21 (fixed date)

3. Dominical Commemorations

Feasts of the Cross
Apparition of the Cross (Sun. May 18)
Exaltation of the Cross (Sun. Sept. 14)
Holy Cross of Varak (Sun. Sept. 28)
Discovery of the Cross (Sun. Oct. 26)
Feasts dedicated to the Church

The six days following the Exaltation (September 15-20)
New Sunday (Sunday April 27)
World Church Sunday (Sun. May 4)
Holy Etchmiadzin (Sunday June 22)
Shoghagat (Saturday August 16), day before Assumption Sunday

Saints Days

In the Armenian Church, Saints are observed on four weekdays: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Sundays are dominical days dedicated to the resurrection of Christ. Wednesdays and Fridays are fasting days.

89 Saints are derived from the Holy Bible and are known as Biblical Saints, both from the Old and New testaments. The rest are from the first five centuries of Christianity. They represent the Apostolic Fathers of the 2nd century, and the Church fathers of the First Three Ecumenical Councils to the end of the 5th century. The Armenian Church later added more Saints through the 5th and the 14th centuries, mainly from the Fathers of the Armenian Church.

Fasting Days

According to the *Tonatsooyts* the fasting days are specified as follows:

1. All Wednesdays and Fridays of the year, except for those during the 50 days following Easter.
2. Weekdays preceding major feasts as follows. Major feasts require fasting periods for spiritual preparation. They are:

a) Holy Nativity of Jesus (6 days)
b) Great Lent (48 days including Palm Sunday and Holy Week)
c) Easter (Holy Week). Days included above.
d) Transfiguration of the Lord (5 days)
e) Assumption of St. Mary (5 days)
f) Exaltation of the Cross (5 days)
g) Fast of Catechumen (5 days)

h) Fast of Prophet Elijah (5 days. Seasonal, before summer)
i) Fast of St. Gregory the Illuminator (5 days)
j) Fast of Holy Cross of Varak (5 days. Seasonal, before fall)
k) Fast of Advent (5 days)
l) Fast of St. James of Nisibis (5 days. Seasonal, before winter)

The total of the above fasting days is 99 days. Grand total of fasting shown in the Church Calendar is 139.

Summary

Given the above distribution of the three groups (*Dominical*, *Saints,* and *fasting*), the respective figures of the days through the year stand as follows:

Fasting Days	139
Non-Fasting Days	57
Saints Days	114
Sundays	44 (excluding Lent)
Others (fixed dates)	11
TOTAL	**365 days**

Note: "Others" include 11 special days and they are:

Christmas Eve	January 5
Nativity of Jesus	January 6
6 days of Nativity	January 7-12
Naming of Jesus	January 13
Presentation of Jesus	February 14
Birth of St. Mary	September 8

Even though the present study indicates dates for the year 2014, it is applicable for other years as well, having as a necessary guide the 2-volume *Tonatsooyts* of the Armenian Church. The first volume governs the feasts, and the second calculates the dates accordingly.

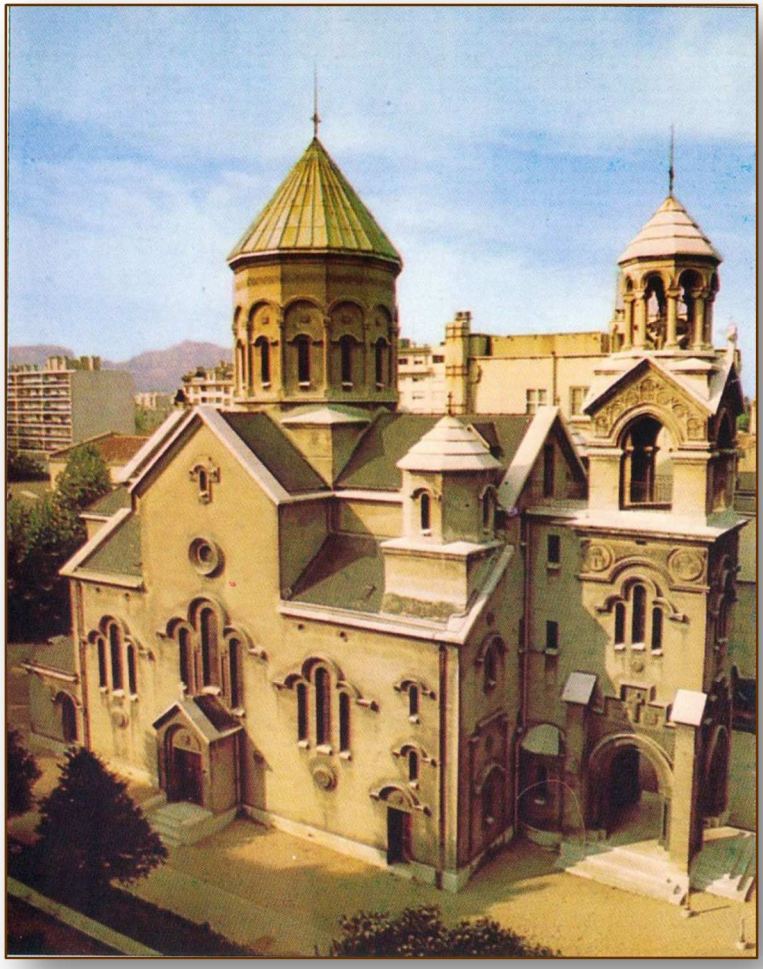
BISHOP GRIGORIS BALAKIAN
St. Tarkmanchats Cathedral
Of Marseille
Author of *"Armenian Golgotha"*

Graduate of Armash Seminary

Bishop Yeghishe Tourian, Dean, ordained 14 priests who graduated from the Seminary of Armash. Among them ten were ordained priests in 1901, one of them **Grigoris Balakian**, who was admitted in 1895 coming from Tokat. Grigoris was born in 1875 and studied at the Sanasarian High School in Erzeroum. **Bishop Malachia Ormanian**, the founder of the Seminary, was elected Patriarch of Constantinople in 1896, and the students came under the tutelage of Bishop Tourian.

Following his ordination, Grigoris Balakian went to Germany to study theology. Well educated and well equipped with the German language, he returned to Constantinople and was appointed assistant to Patriarch Ormanian; later elevated to the rank of doctorate in the Armenian Church by **Archbishop Matteos Izmirlian**, who was about to travel to Holy Etchmiadzin upon his election as Catholicos of All Armenians.

Along with **Komitas Vardapet,** Balakian was arrested in Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks on April 24, 1915 with hundreds of intellectuals and was exiled to Changheri. Balakian was taken on his way to the infamous Deir Zor to see his people perish cruelly. He was saved. In Islahieh, pretending himself a lay, and with his knowledge of German and through bribing, he was able to reach the borders of Germany and, with some help, to return to Constantinople. When the German warship *"Pacheh"* anchored in Mersin, Cilicia, the ousted **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan of Cilicia** needed Grigoris Vardapet Balakian's assistance to negotiate with the captain asking immediate help for the endangered Armenians.



Cathedral of Sts. Tarkmanchats in Marsielle

His Legacy

A heroic action was waiting Grigoris Balakian. When in 1921 Soghomon Tehlirian, the Armenian hero killed Talaat Pasha in Germany, the Interior Minister and the chief murderer of the Armenians in 1915, was tried in Berlin for his killing, Grigoris Vardapet Balakian went to witness at the court playing an important role in Tehlirian's acquittal. In Vienna in 1922, as an eyewitness, he further published his well written and documented the *"Armenian Golgotha"* in two volumes, soon after assuming his pastoral position in Manchester. Both volumes contain the Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks against the Armenians from 1915-1923. Below I have more detailed description on the book.

In 1925 His **Holiness Kevork V Catholicos of All Armenians** appreciating Grigoris Balakian's service, appointed him Pontifical Legate of Europe after ordaining him a bishop the same year. He toured Europe as needed and went to London, Brussels, Geneva and Milan, Lyons and Marseille. He was elected Primate of Southern France in Marseille, where he established his headquarters. In Paris Bishop Vramshapuh Kibarian was acting as Vicar, who was also ordained bishop by Catholicos Kevork V Soureniants in 1926.

In Marseille **Bishop Grigoris Balakian** called a Diocesan Assembly in attendance of the local priest Mampre Vardapet Kalfayan from Jerusalem who announced his resignation as he was invited by the Diocese of North America to serve as pastor. Years later **Archbishop Mampre Kalfayan** was elected Primate of the Western and the Eastern Dioceses of the United States. Balakian's tenure in Marseille unfortunately was troublesome and very trying despite his distinguished and successful church building activities.

The Holy Translators Cathedral
In Marseille

Bishop Balakian's primary task was to embark on the construction of the Cathedral for the Armenians who were increasing in number year after year following World War I. He was successful in this monumental achievement through benefactor **Asbed Vahan**

Khorasanjian, whom the Bishop met in Paris while celebrating the feast of the Holy Translators at St. John the Baptist Cathedral. The benefactor admired the Bishop's sermon and promised to allocate a large amount to be used at the Bishop's discretion. Both agreed to build a Cathedral in Marseille after the traditional church style of the Armenian Church.

In 1927, a central plot was purchased on Boulevard Prado, and the ceremony of the laying of the church foundation stones was held on February 18, 1928. Soon architect Aram Tahtajian prepared the church's plans quite similar to the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, and the building of the church began with impressive inside columns and arches, and sculptures on the outside. The consecration of the Cathedral was held on October 24-25, 1931 in the name of **Srbots Tarkmanchats (Holy Translators**,) in the presence of the benefactor, city officials, and hundreds of faithful. The Episcopal Divine Liturgy was accompanied by the chorus under the direction of Vartan Sarkisian, Gomidas Vardapet's student, and by Armenak Shahmouradian, the favorite soloist of Gomidas.

An incident occurred which became fatal for Bishop Balakian. The key to the Cathedral in his pocket, the property belonged always to the benefactor. Bishop Balakian had no say in the enhancement of the Cathedral other than performing church services. This led him to remain out of the Cathedral completely after a short while, especially when the ugly event on June 23, 1932 happened, while Bishop Balakian was delivering the sermon on the feast of the Holy Translators. Suddenly a group of people headed by their local priest rushed into the church crying that the Bishop step down because of their own church's heavy debts and the danger of being auctioned.

The event was tragic. Bishop Balakian, a humble servant of the church, stepped down from the altar to quiet the crowd, and walking out in the lobby asked for funds to satisfy the rebels. Details of this and related events are described by Deacon Stepan Boghosian in his 2005 comprehensive volume *"A Survey of the History of the Armenian Community of Marseille."* The church in question

was St. Louis Armenian church in the suburbs of the city. Balakian was hurt, and his decision not to return to the Cathedral he had just consecrated was final. He moved his office to St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Beaumont, and when he passed away in 1934, his wishes were to have his funeral in that church, having nothing to do with the Cathedral.

As for the Cathedral, it remained closed for eight months by the orders of Vahan Khorasanjian, who later appointed a *"Religious Association"* who assumed responsibility to run the Cathedral, the entire property always owned by Khorasanjian. The Cathedral reopened on February 19, 1933, by an official *communiqué* stating, "*Services were held by the Primate Bishop Grigoris Balakian on a regular basis."* The Bishop, however, "*never visited the Cathedral*" for the next two years, until his sudden death.

The Passing of Bishop Balakian

The incident of June 23, 1932 had its treacherous reaction with Khorasanjian when given the wrong version of the story, and as he hastily blamed the Bishop for the mishap, he had to close the Cathedral for eight months. Bishop Grigoris Balakian lived only three more years and passed away in October of 1934. As he had wished, the funeral and the last unction were held in St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Baumont, presided over by Bishop Vramshapuh Kibarian of Paris. On October 17, hundreds of Armenians attended the funeral along with civic and church representatives.

Bishop Balakian was only 59 years old when he died, after accomplishing greater works worth double as much as the years he lived, from Armash to Constantinople, from there to forced deportation, from Germany back to Constantinople, from Berlin to Paris, and then to Marseille, everywhere performing record service for his church and his people. Unlike his unfortunate classmates of the Seminary of Armash, he survived the Genocide and served those remnants scattered in Europe, always caring for his people.

"The Armenian Golgotha" is Bishop Balakian's unique literary work, well documented. It is called *"Hay Goghgothan" (The Ar-*

menian Golgotha) which contains personal witnesses of the Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks beginning 1915. He was arrested on April 24 as said above, and with more than 250 intellectuals was on his way to an uncertain destination. The book, first published in 1922 in Vienna, describes the exiled Armenians on their way, some on carts, and some on animals, and still others on their feet, walking in the deserts to meet their eventual death.

On his way to Changheri, the author saw many Armenians dying cruelly, through famine and disease. Bishop Balakian who had seen some of the survivors who barely escaped the tortures, had collected the civic officers' witnesses, and also recorded the good will of some Turks who had helped sporadically. He also wrote about the allied Germans and the Turks whose workers were escaping on the trains whom he joined utilizing his German, and that way saving his life. He further writes as to how as a fugitive he was able to run into the deserts and the hills under the disguise of a German soldier thereby saving his life one more time.

The two volumes, later translated into English by his grand nephew **Prof. Peter Balakian**, are the original and eyewitness descriptions of the Genocide published by Barnes & Noble. Peter Balakian published his own books following his great uncle's volumes, interviewing his family members who were survivors of the Genocide. The titles are, *Black Dog of Fate,* 2009, and *The Burning Tigris: Armenian Genocide and America's Response* 2004. Both publications acknowledged by vast educational institutions and publishers.

FOR THE HISTORY

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE NORTH AMERICAN DIOCESE AND THE PRELACY (1970-1990)

Formation of Committees

This may sound out of date and futile yet for the recent history of the North American Armenian Diocese, established by the **Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtich Khrimian** in 1898, it is educational. In those two decades, I was involved in the negotiations under Primate **Archbishop Torkom Manoogian** as the Secretary of the Diocesan Council for two terms, while the Diocese tried to bring the Prelacy back under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of All Armenians in Holy Etchmiadzin. The Prelacy in the United States as a separate administration from the Diocese began to operate in 1957 under the jurisdiction of the Cilician Catholicosate. The formation of the Prelacy was contrary to the canons of the Armenian Church and against the will of **Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians** who warned and called the Cilician See to stand back from any encroachment within the jurisdiction of the Mother See.

On April 28, 1968, His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians visited the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church to consecrate the first Armenian Cathedral in the United States. The Cathedral was built following decades of tedious efforts of the previous Primates, Diocesan Councils, and the faithful. It was ready for consecration with philanthropist Haik Kavookjian as Godfather. The Cathedral was ready by the previous Primate Archbishop Sion Manoogian. The following year, the Catholicos was invited by the next Primate Archbishop Torkom Manoogian for the consecration. The Catholicos, whom I assisted humbly on April 28 as his staff bearer, named the **Cathedral St. Vartan,** built in New York City, dedicated to the valiant **General St. Vartan Mamikonian** who defen-

ded the Armenian Christianity in 451 against Persia. Persia threatened Armenia to accept the Zoroastrian religion instead, but the Armenians resisted to the end.

Upon the request by Primate Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and the leading members of the Diocese, His Holiness agreed it was an opportune time to start negotiations, only on a diocesan level. Thus, they invited the Prelacy to appoint a committee for the express purpose of uniting the Prelacy with the Armenian Diocese under the jurisdiction of the Mother See Holy Etchmiadzin. Two committees, seven members each, were formed upon the invitation of Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate, in his September 16, 1969 letter addressed to the Prelate Archbishop Hrant Khachadourian, who responded on May 18, 1970 providing the names of the committee, and the negotiations began in good faith and lasted 20 years (1970-1990). After spending countless hours and efforts to find ways to bring the Prelacy back to the unity with the Diocese, unfortunately all attempts ended in total failure.

During the consultation, I was cautious and wary, being one of the witnesses of the 1956 events in Antelias where divisive conditions between Holy Etchmiadzin and Antelias initiated. I was one of the youngest priests ordained in 1954 and took part in the consultations as much as I was permitted. His Holiness Catholicos Vasken I was present and made every effort to preside over the election of the next Catholicos of Cilicia. Disillusioned, he left Antelias on the 7th day after his arrival seeing antagonism and division in the community. That was the reason I warned our Diocesan Committee not to waste time on a matter that was out of control, but I was told an effort was worthwhile. *"It is an attempt which is worth pursuing,"* they said. The attempt cost 20 years of futile efforts.

The Meetings

Both committees met irregularly with unnecessary postponements and hesitations on the part of the Prelacy since any outcome should be submitted to the hierarchical centers for preliminary approvals. The first meeting of the committees took place on

April 17, 1970 with seven members from each side. They agreed on the following two basic principles that "*were not negotiable,*" which was a good sign: a) *The Diocese of the Armenian Church in America remains under the jurisdiction of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.* b) *The Diocese should have one central diocesan headquarter with one Primate who will be subject to the Catholicos of All Armenians.*

On the May 22nd meeting, however, the Cilician side refrained from taking further responsible actions considering the above principles leading the negotiations *"should be acceptable by higher authorities."* Months went by and the Diocese reviewed some details and continued the negotiations. This too did not last long, and at the end of 1972, both committees agreed to draft a new set of "*Guidelines"* and present to both Diocesan Councils for approval.

The *"Guidelines"*

On April 12, 1973, the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of America went through the procedure and made suggestions to its committee to put the *"Guidelines"* on the agenda of the combined meeting and adopt it. The same was supposed to submit to the Prelacy, which in a letter dated August 20, 1973, with a strange turn of events, suggested postponement arguing that they should wait until the arrival of their new Prelate Archbishop Karekin Sarkissian. The committees had reached to a point to continue negotiations on a more solid ground by drafting the *"Guidelines."* But what the Diocese received from the Prelacy was a letter dated February 19, 1974, with a unilateral novelty, changing the *"Guidelines"* in its essence suggesting *"unity with cooperation"* which was unacceptable by the Diocesan committee, since *cooperation is not unity,* thus defeating the purpose.

The Prelacy looked for cooperation versus unity, *thinking that it was unity as long as both the Diocese and the Prelacy worked together* ***separately***. This last word was "hidden" in the proposed change since the Prelacy did not want to pursue administrative unity for which the basic principles and the negotiations were es-

tablished to begin with. Three members of the Diocesan Council, Father Zaven Arzoumanian, Father Dajad Davidian, with Chairman Judge John Najarian signed a letter inviting the Prelacy to return to the original agreement so that the initiatives taken may continue. In July 1974, both committees met to review the *"Guidelines"* one more time. It took a long time to re-write a revision for a final draft. In 1976, the Diocesan Assembly adopted the *"Guidelines"* as revised and recommended by the Diocesan Council with additional comments. The same was adopted by the National Assembly of the Prelacy, which disagreed with the "additional comments."

Bylaws for the "United" Diocese

The next crucial step to be taken would have been the editing of a set of Bylaws (Constitution) for the future united Diocese based on the final text of the *"Guidelines."* A special committee of seven from the Diocese was assigned to start working on it with their counterpart, including three clergy and four lay members in each. At first the Prelacy rejected the formation of such committee, arguing that the cooperation mentioned in the Guidelines was not honored, such as the preparation of a united educational curri-cula for Sunday and Armenian Language Schools, and the united celebration of the Armenian Martyrs on April 24. They ignored however that those actions should take place as stated in the *"Guidelines" only <u>after</u> the adoption of the New Bylaws by the Diocese and the Prelacy."*

Negotiations resumed from July 1981 to May 1982 and both committees met five times to draft amendments on the *"Guidelines"* to suit the drafting of the Bylaws and submit them to both Diocesan Councils. The Assembly of the Diocesan Delegates in 1982 adopted it, so did the Diocesan Assembly of the Prelacy, always subject to the approval of both the Catholicos of All Armenians and the Catholicos of Cilicia. The revised *"Guidelines"* had a brief preamble followed by six detailed articles for implementation. It stated that the Diocese and the Prelacy unite administratively as one unit under the Catholicos of All Armenians, as it was initiated by **Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtich I Khrimian**. The *"Guidelines"* predic-

ted the legal format for the election of the Primate along with respectful relations with the See of Cilicia. It was geared toward the formation of the unified Bylaws, and even to the last Assemblies of each Diocesan Delegates to convene separately, in the same location, before January 15, 1983, to finally adopt the By-laws yet to be drafted. All these were to submit to the Catholicos of All Armenians and the Catholicos of Cilicia for approval.

The ground was ready for writing the Bylaws for the intended "united" diocese. The committees drafted the document to finalize the editing, and upon completion presented to the Diocesan authorities. From the Bylaws, written in both Armenian and English versions as the final set of rules, the Prelacy asked for some deletions, arguing the voting delegates to be lay members only as they always had, and no diocesan priest be allowed to vote, a case totally strange to the Diocese. The Prelacy further introduced the case of the Canadian Churches under its jurisdiction choosing to remain separate, declaring nothing to do with the negotiations. Therefore, talks halted until further notice.

From the **Mother See** reservations were expressed to the delegation from the Diocese who went to meet with the Catholicos of All Armenians who praised the endless efforts, and demanded at the same time not to include questions relating to the Hierarchic Sees of Etchmiadzin and Cilicia. The problems between the hierarchic relations of the Sees were not local diocesan problems, but questions to deal with on a higher level. Catholicos Vasken I regarded some of those points important and asked firmly to remove them from the local negotiations.

The points in case were included by the Diocese of the Armenian Church purposely to ease the relationship and offer opportunities to assist the Cilician See financially. The attitude of the Mother See could in no way hinder the final adoption of the Bylaws if the document remained as drafted and not as amended unilaterally. A similar delegation went to **Antelias** for the same reason and returned with hesitation. The Bylaws were presented to the Diocesan Assemblies as drafted.

The two objections mentioned above raised the question of revising or amending the accepted Bylaws that turned the document altogether useless. Negotiations of 20 years ended with no result. What was left was the good will on both sides and the endless hours devoted to something which was out of hand from the start, as far as the Cilician See was concerned. I knew myself this would be the end of the case.

Centennial of the Armenian Diocese

It was a gratifying opportunity to celebrate the Centennial of the Armenian Diocese in 1998 presided over by **His Holiness Karekin I Sarkissian Catholicos of All Armenians.** He specifically visited New York for the celebrations. The opportunity was unique but still it was a good dream to expect the "Unified Diocese" to celebrate the event in St.Vartan Cathedral with the participation of the Catholicos of Cilicia and the Prelacy of North America to remove the barrier.

Even when ascending to the throne of the Catholicosate of All Armenians in 1995, Catholicos Karekin I Sarkissian was a key member of the division of the Armenian Church since 1956, who also assumed the office of the Prelate in New York for one term and then elected Catholicos of Cilicia in 1977. He knew too well that unity of the Armenian Dioceses of America was not possible. All were calculated dreams, and the situation did not change as long as the churches in North America, Iran, and Greece remained separated from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin through the illegal actions taken by the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

"FREE CHURCH" IN ARMENIA
NOTORIOUS ABERRATION
1924-1928
DURING CATHOLICOS KEVORK V
SOURENIANTS (1911-1930)

Destructive Movement

The infamous movement within the Armenian Church was a very short-lived aberration, worthless indeed, but still a culpable part of the Armenian history of 1920's. Entirely against the Mother See and the Catholicos of All Armenians, contrary to the canons and the Sacraments of the Orthodox Church, the *"Free Church"* in Armenia with its insignificant followers was the offshoot of the so-called *"Living Church,"* started in Russia and supported by the Soviet Union. From 1924-1928, those rebels followed their counterparts in Moscow trying to challenge **Catholicos Kevork V**, backed by the Soviet Armenian government. They were allowed to occupy some churches headed by one bishop and a couple of priests who vehemently worked against the Mother See demanding so-called *"reformation within the Armenian Church,"* by rejecting the fundamental theology, the established rules, the Eucharist and the Sacraments of the Church.

Naturally the aberration was the by-product of the atheist Soviet system, both in Russia against the Russian Orthodox Church and in Armenia against Holy Etchmiadzin. By the support of Soviet Armenia, the movement weakened the holy institution in Armenia by the support of Soviet Armenia. Those rebels came out with a *"personal revenge"* to hurt the Apostolic Foundation of the Armenian Church and to destroy the hierarchic structure denying also the authority of the Mother See, the historic site, and the position of Holy Etchmiadzin.

"Living Church" Mother of Evil

The parent of the infamous movement in Armenia was the *"Living Church"* in Russia, which began after the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917. In 1918, state and religion separated by the decree of Lenin and religious persecution immediately claimed and occupied properties of the Russian Orthodox Church. The pressure was harsh on 117 million Russian Orthodox faithful and 71,000 clergy. **Patriarch Tikhon of the Russian Orthodox Church** was arrested for his resistance and died under heavy duress in 1925 at age 60. In 1922, schism in the church took place with the *"Living Church"* and its offshoot in Soviet Armenia as the *"Free Church."*

The schismatic movement in fact was a rebellion against the Russian Orthodox Church trying to take forcefully the religious leadership from the hands of the clergy. In May 1922, the outlaws received state protection and assumed "canonical" power and right to punish, to judge and to redeem by making the *"Living Church"* the executive body of the Russian Orthodox Church replacing the Patriarchal authority. The state in Moscow forced the Church to submit; it ended with the exile of hundreds of bishops, parishes eliminated, and together with the State, the aberration destroyed temporarily the religious power of the Russian Orthodox Church. The same happened in Armenia that lasted very short and ended in 1928.

The Purpose of the Movement

The purpose of this notorious movement was to destroy the Armenian Church from its foundations, trying to bring in the laity as the *"owners"* and the *"leaders"* of the church. They were limited, insignificant and disorganized, despite the political umbrella. The Armenian people resisted vehemently with one and united fist as the defenders of the Mother Church and the custodian of the national identity. The Mother Church stood tall and the Catholicos alert, the same **Catholicos Kevork the Fifth**, who had resisted the Turks earlier in the Battle at Sartarabad, was standing in front of the Cathedral strong and determined. As mere adventurers, those treacherous schismatics had no place in the church since they were after their daily interests and against the centuries old institution.

Obviously, only a handful of clergy adhered to the movement who eventually were defrocked. In 1925, the rebels raised problems in Tbilisi where they met the intellectuals of the Armenian people from the 19th century. For the sake of "reformation," as it were, they began changing the orders of the Holy Altar, placing on it the painting of Christ only, like the Protestants, and thinking they would elevate the caliber of the clergy by eliminating celibacy and by reading the prayers entirely in the vernacular. They even rejected the use of the clerical garb. They dared to open schools and publish periodicals. The whole movement was nothing more than a commotion and confusion, an aberration indeed.

The Resolute Decree of Etchmiadzin

Seeing how close the state of Soviet Armenia was assisting the rebels, His Holiness Kevork V lamented the occupation of St. Gregory Church of Yerevan by the ministry of the interior and handing it over to the self-proclaimed group of *"Free Church Brotherhood."* Also the St. Mary Church in the region of Nork, the Holy Cross Church of Daralagyaz, as well as the cemetery of the capital Yerevan were given to *"a few defrocked clergy"* against the will of the faithful. The Catholicos protested strongly demanding the occupied sanctuaries and canonically expelling the defrocked, always with little response from the authorities.

The Catholicos made an appeal to the government of Soviet Georgia in a letter dated June 26, 1927, surfacing the danger. Receiving no response, he was obliged to make an appeal to the Transcaucasus Federal Republic *"demanding justice."* The **Supreme Spiritual Council** tried to order the rebels, headed by a certain Bishop Ashot Shakhian, to come to their senses, telling him to stay away from destructive actions against the Mother Church. Hearing no remorse the Council and the Catholicos went on to defrock them.

The Defrocked

All advice and warnings ignored, the Catholicos had the support of the entire faithful to stop the movement considering his

old age. He wanted the dangerous state of affairs to end before his demise. He took final action and in his September 5, 1924 Encyclical defrocked Bishop Ashot Shakhian *"who was fallen in conspiracy against the Armenian Church and the Mother See."* Those defrocked were Bishop Ashot, Penig vardapet who showed *"disrespectful conduct and reprehensible action overall."* Also was defrocked the editor of *"Azat Yegeghetsi" (Free Church)* periodical priest Mesrob Melian who was rebellious against the spiritual authority.

"Free Church" movement weakened and went down hill to finally die in 1928, even though the remnants tried to continue the malice after the death of Catholicos Kevork V. They even attempted to stop the forthcoming National-Ecclesiastical Assembly from convening to elect a new Catholicos, but to no avail. The reader of this article may ask, *"Why give attention to them and write an article knowing too well the movement was entirely negative and worthless."* My answer is to write and make our faithful aware once and for all of one of our infamous pages of our recent history which has been surfacing lately during the independent Republic of Armenia under foreign sects, against the established Mother Church. The Armenian Church is the national and the only Church canonically known as such, and if foreign sects with Armenian followers are trying to gain ground, they are doomed to failure, and the State of Armenia should not neglect the honorable place of their national Church in the country for any consideration.

The Outcome: State Violence

Although doomed to death the so called *"free church"* movement in Armenia and Georgia, with the leaders defrocked, the remnants were still around during the last years of Catholicos Kevork V Sou-reniants and through the years of Archbishop Khoren Mouradbek-ian, the *locum tenens.* Times were still dangerous and the authori-ties were backing what was left to continue harassing the bishops of the Mother See with arrogance and violence. They tried to revive their condemned actions. The Catholicos now aged and deeply con-cerned about the persisting evil, wrote a forceful letter of protest to the authorities in Armenia dated June 29, 1928

and addressed to the President S. Der Gabrielian on behalf of the entire population of Armenia and for the oppression exerted on the country. He had written a similar letter to Alexei Rigov in Moscow earlier in 1925 but had heard nothing from him.

The end of this aberration came soon after, and the schismatics vanished when Archbishop Mouradbekian headed the affairs of the Mother See following the passing of Catholicos Kevork the Fifth Soureniants in 1930. He was able to convene the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly in 1932 which elected him **Khoren I Catholicos of All Armenians.** With their disappearance hate and persecution persisted, and Catholicos Khoren I, the Servant of God, gave his life as communists entered his pontifical residence, demanded the keys to the Cathedral treasury, and upon refusal by His Holiness, was strangled in 1938 at age 65.

HISTORY

"NAREK" "BOOK OF LAMENTATION"
IN MODERN ARMENIAN
TEN CENTENNIAL
(951-1951)

Ten Centennial

The year 1951 marked the 1000th jubilee year of the birth of the leading Armenian monk **St. Gregory of Narek,** born in Vaspurakan in 951, the son of Bishop Khosrov Antsevatsi. Bishop Khosrov was a great scholar and a famous teacher who wrote the first extensive "*Commentary on the Daily Worship Services of the Armenian Church,"* published once in Constantinople in 1840. St. Gregory left his great legacy, his famous "*Book of Narek,*" better known as the "*Book of Lamentation,*" a book of personal prayers of highest integrity. The 1000th year was solemnly observed in October 1951, under the auspices of **His Holiness Karekin I Hovsepiants of the Great House of Cilicia**. I remember the celebration as a student in the Seminary of Antelias and the praiseworthy panegyrics delivered by Archbishop Yeghishe Derderian of Jerusalem (*Yeghivart),* and His Holiness the Catholicos of Cilicia.

The same year, as I recall, the **1500th anniversary of the Battle of Vartanants (451)** was also marked worldwide and upon the recommendation of Catholicos Karekin Hovsepiants a solemn oratorio, "*Khorhourt Vartanants"* (words by poet Vahan Tekeyan), was composed and conducted by the distinguished musicologist Hampartsoum Berberian, our teacher.

The Translations of *"Narek"*

In 1926, the first authentic translation of the most valuable book of St. Gregory Narekatsi, the "*Book of Lamentation*" (*Matyan Voghbergutyan),* was translated and published in Jerusalem from the classical Armenian to the vernacular by **Archbishop Torkom Koushagian**. Later, the same difficult task was undertaken in Buenos Aires by **Archbishop Karekin Khachadourian**, both well known

and brilliant graduates of the Seminary of Armash, near Constantinople. The first was published in Cairo, where Koushagian, a senior of his colleague, served as Primate of the Diocese of Egypt, and the second in Buenos Aires in 1948, where Khachadourian served as the Legate of the Catholicos of All Armenians in South America. Prior to 1926, the pioneer of the translation into modern Armenian in Constantinople was Missak Kochounian (Kassim) in 1902.

One thousand years had gone by and the most intricate *"NAREK,"* written in unusually high and literal style, was widely read in Classical Armenian, but only few understood those powerful and lengthy devotional prayers. The book was so close but still "away" from the people, the faithful, and even the scholars. The task was a delayed necessity, since the original vocabulary and the expressions in between long and poetic sentences had to be "rewritten" by qualified clerics. Both archbishops kept the standard high with competence and patience where the "*Book of Lamentation"* should stand. Both Koushagian and Khachadourian, occupied the Patriarchal Sees of Jerusalem and Constantinople respectively. Patriarch Torkom Koushagian passed away in Jerusalem in 1939, and Patriarch Karekin Khachadourian entered his eternal rest in Istanbul in 1961.

The title of Archbishop Torkom Koushagian's translation is "*Prayers of St. Gregory of Narek,"* specifying his work as *"rendering into modern Armenian,"* in a volume with 20 pages in-depth Introduction and 367 pages of the text. Archbishop Khachadourian put his talents and efforts together to translate the text in poetic verses, with facing pages in the original and the vernacular. Later translations into Eastern Armenian by scholars in Soviet Armenia, contributed to the study of "*Narek."* Translations in foreign languages were successfully done, such as French and English, following the two basic versions in the vernacular. The most recent English translation, printed in a smaller format in Armenia, was accomplished with an extensive introduction by Thomas J. Samuelian in 2002, prepared for easy reading. It is a valuable rendition with notes and bibliography.

The Content

"Narek" is a literary unit of high quality exclusively for prayers on a one to one basis with the Creator God. It is indeed a miraculous book for the Armenian Church, second only to the Holy Bible, full of deep knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, relating it to the individual on a much higher personal and psychological orders. It is addressed to God Almighty *"From the depth of the heart conversing with God,"* a repeated supplication at the opening of each prayer. The prayers are addressed to God by the individual in the first person singular as sinful and fallen creature, but with the hope of being lifted up by the mercy of God. In total, they comprise 95 lengthy prayers (chapters), some of them specifically powerful to heal, followed by the texts of the healing miracles performed by the Lord Jesus Christ, quoted from the Four Gospels.

It is amazing that a short colophon survives written by the hands of the author St. Gregory of Narek himself. The colophon is shown below with additional material and indexes added to the rare publication of 1858 which I own as the most valuable book in my library. Most probably, both translations into the vernacular were rendered from this ancient edition.

The Translators

Both eminent translators into the vernacular were admittedly masters of the Classical Armenian, especially when penetrating in the style of the author, St. Gregory, deeply religious, high in literary and poetic style. They were capable of revealing the hidden sentiments eloquently uttered by the Saint, assuring the translators not to distance themselves from the original while gradually approaching the borders of the vernacular. Both Eminent Patriarchs of the Armenian Church, have successfully translated the *"Narek,"* displaying their talent, knowledge and patience to make the book understandable, and not merely simplify it, but mostly displaying the physical and psychological relation of the believer with the Creator God.

St. Gregory had the talent to use masterfully both poetry and prose, which made the task of the translators that much intricate. The fact that both translators had already deployed the art of poetry, while separately producing lasting literary works in forms of sermons and religious poetry, were the only graceful scholars who could handle the task and promote the translation of *"Narek."*

The Old Edition of 1858

This ancient and rare edition of "*Narek"* in my library, printed in Constantinople in 1858, is enriched with a number of valuable features. The title reads *"Book of Lamentation by Gregory the monk of the Monastery of Narek."* It is in its original leather cover, printed during the pontificate of **Matthew I, Catholicos of All Armenians**, and contains 368 pages. In this edition, additional panegyric is included by *Arakel Vardapet* in the form of poetry with 36 stanzas, following the Armenian alphabets, from A to K, praising St. Gregory of Narek. This portion unfortunately is left unnoticed by the translators and therefore is unknown to the readers of the book. The text is partitioned clearly, using the finest Armenian fonts of the time. In addition, it follows by the **original colophon giving the name of the scribe, St. Gregory himself**, and the place the manuscript was written. Also, a dictionary at the end explaining over one hundred difficult words found in the book. The original colophon reads:

"I, Gregory the monastic priest, the last among the writers and the junior among the teacher [wrote these prayers] with the collaboration of my dear brother Hovhannes, a member of the eminent and glorious monastery of Narek." (pp. 296-297).

A later colophon reads:
"In memory of saintly and eloquent St. Gregory, who studied to become an ordained cleric in the monastery of Narek, where he was assigned prelate and whence he became the famous Narekatsi." (pp. 297).

In the second colophon St. Gregory's other commentaries are clearly identified as follows: *"Commentary of Solomon's Song of Songs,"*

"Sermon on the Cross", "Eulogy on St. Mary the Mother-of-God", "Eulogy on the Apostles", "Eulogy on James, Bishop of Nisibis", "Sermons and psalmodies." It continues giving more information on the Monastery and the death of St. Gregory of Narek at age 52, saying:

"Those 95 prayers he wrote eloquently upon the request of his fellow monks, and left his legacy from his immense knowledge. He passed away and returned to the Creator at his young age in the year 452 according to the Armenian Calendar (452+551)=1003 AD, and was buried in the Monastery of Narek."

"And when King Senekerim moved his domain to Lesser Armenia, the monks of the Monastery of Narek transferred the honorable body of the Saint into the region of Akn and Tiurik. As of today the site is in ruins and is called Arak, a place of pilgrimage, whence healings are reported for the Glory of God."

Additional Articles

At the end of the 1858 edition the following five articles appear:

1. *"Eulogy of St. Gregory addressed to St. Mary"* (pp. 298-314)
2. Prayer of Mkhitar Gosh (12the c.) *"On the Holy Eucharist"* (pp. 314-319)
3. *"Panegyric addressed to St. Narekatsi*" by Arakel Vardapet (pp. 319-322)
4. *Miracles from Gospel readings* (pp*. 323-350)*
5. *Dictionary of difficult words* (pp. 351-368).

ST. GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR CATHEDRAL OF ZEVARTNOTS AND CATHOLICOS NERSESS III THE BUILDER (641 - 661)

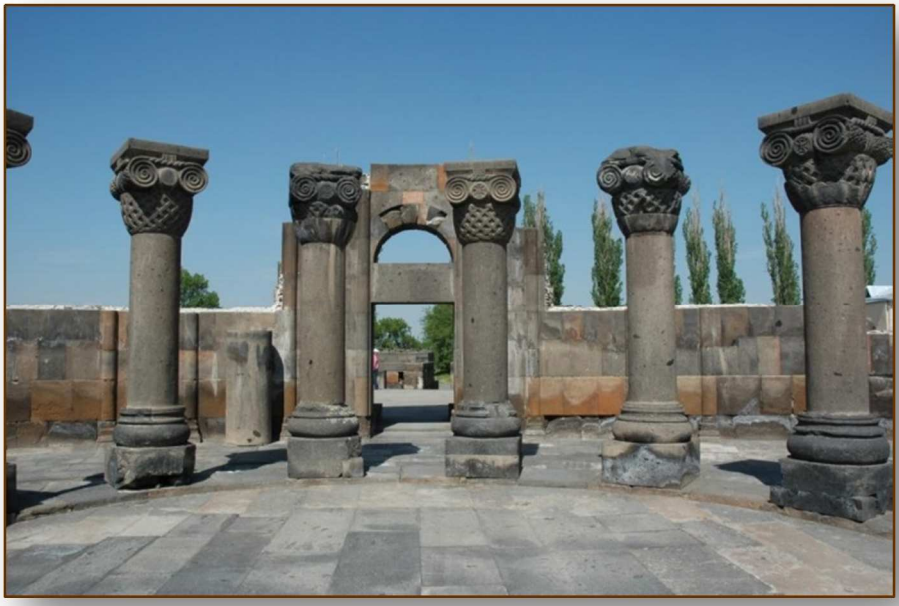
"Fortunately the excavations of the ruins of Zevartnots, its dimensions, the style and all the characteristic details offered so much data for study that today we can say we know the church entirely with all details like it was originally built at that time."

Toros Toramanian
Architect

The Special Publication

Forty years ago in 1971, the Academy of Sciences of Yerevan published a valuable volume by **Stephan Mnatsakanian**, titled *"Zevartnots and the Same-style Monuments."* **The Cathedral of Zevartnots**, now in ruins, was mostly called by our medieval historians as **St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Vagharshapat.** The church was built by **Catholicos Nersess III of Tayk** in 659**.** The 7th century contemporary historian Bishop Sebeos is the only one who named the church *"**Zevartnots,**"* a peculiar name meaning ***"Dedicated to the Angels."***

The Church was built near Dvin, capital of Armenia, and today fallen for 1000 years, yet those ruins still speak for themselves. Thanks to a great **architect Toros Toramanian** who visited Zevartnots Church in 1905 and after tedious study of the location, the floor plan, and the precious columns and arches, the stones piece by piece, was successful in "reconstructing" the cathedral on its round basis and three-story high structure, in detailed measurements and dimensions, concluding the real representation of the Church. His conclusions, as a final architectural design was entirely accepted by the Academy of the Armenian arts and architecture.



Zevartnots Cathedral

Mnatsakanian's monumental book contains 260 pages, with additional 40 pages of pictures of **all pieces** available to sustain the Church's original style after Toramanian's design. He speaks highly of architect Toramanian and praises him saying, *"Fortunately, in 1904 architect Toramanian arrived in Etchmiadzin, and started the excavations. He was able to save each stone from disappearance after studying and working on the project diligently, and published his first article with authority in 1905 of this famous monument." Cf. "Mourj"* 1905.

The photos at the end of this instructive volume are placed in succession, starting from the ground plan and the stones, the capitals with eagles sculptured on each, together witnessing the "life" of Zevartnots Church for the last 1360 years. On my visit to Holy Etchmiadzin I asked **His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians** of blessed memory if one day the Church of Zevartnots will also be rebuilt like the other fallen churches, after Toros Toramanian's findings. The Catholicos said, *"Zevartnots' ruins "stand" irreplaceable on their original site as they are, even though without being rebuilt. They are as we have them and will be preserved as they are."*

Historic Evidences

None of our historic monuments is described with great amazement and highest praises by our medieval Armenian historians than the Church of Zevartnots, which most of the time is named **St. Gregory the Illuminator Church**. The evidences of our historians verify the Church's existence up to the first quarter of the 10th century. Historian Sebeos, a contemporary of the construction of Zevartnots says, *"It was built high and amazingly superb, worthy to the glory of God."* Tenth century historian Catholicos John Draskhanakertsi describes it as *"the all-glorious large church with a variety of high elevations."* Another contemporary historian, Movses Daskhurantsi, repeats *"the all-glorious church with variety of structures."* The same qualities are given by historians Stephan Taronetsi and Mkhitar Ayrivanetsi who confirm *"the church that amazes the whole world"* built by Catholicos Nersess III. (641-661).

S. Mnatskanian's Evaluation

In his large and comprehensive volume, S. Mnatsakanian qualifies the Church as the *"Monument which offered to the future generations the soaring accomplishment of the talented architect, his bold concepts with its magnificent details."* During the excavations, while Khachik Vardapet Tatian was supervising the project before Toramanian's arrival, an inscription was discovered on one of the stones, reading ***"this was built by Nersess, remember him,"*** which was deciphered by Bishop Mesrop Ter Movsessian, a leading scholar at the turn of the century. On one of the pillars was inscribed in Greek the name **"by Nersess Catholicos."** Both inscriptions left no doubt that the Catholicos was Nersess III of Tayk, also known as **Nersess the Builder.**

Toramanian has discovered an eye-catching sculpture on one of the arches with a human figure on it wearing the hood of a celibate priest, in his one hand a spade and in the other a mattock, and on his head written ***"JOHANNA,"*** who undoubtedly, he says, was the name of the genius architect of Zevartnots Church. Again, it is the historian Bishop Sebeos, an eyewitness who actually was present when the Zevartnots Church was under construction, gives us the exact location in his *"History of Heraclius"* and says, *"Nersess built the Church of Zevartnots on the road where, they say, King Terdat III welcomed St. Gregory."* We know from our past history that after the adoption of Christianity as a national religion in 301, **Gregory Barthev** was sent to Cappadocia to be ordained **Bishop and return as the First Bishop of Armenia**. Upon his return, King Terdat III welcomed him with great celebrations on the road in Vagharshapat where Zevartnots was built.

Catholicos Nersess III Tayetsi

Nersess III the Builder led the Armenian Church as the Catholicos of Armenia during turbulent times, from 641-661. The Arabs, on the one hand, invaded Armenia in 643, and the Byzantine Empire's increasing pressures and demands on doctrinal grounds on the other hand, caused serious danger for Armenia, especially

for the capital Dvin where Nersess and the Pontifical Seat were stationed. The Greek Emperor Constantine II showed even more ill intentions by personally invading Dvin in 653 and meeting the Catholicos by force, demanding imposition of the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 on the Armenian Church, so that it became entirely subject to the Greek Orthodox Church.

In the Armenian cathedral at Dvin, not to confuse with the Church of Zevartnots which was completed later in 659, the Emperor demanded Greek liturgy to be offered by a Greek priest. He wanted Catholicos Nersess to receive communion with all his bishops in attendance, thus seemingly retrieving by force the rejection of the Council of Chalcedon, officially resolved at the **Church Council of Dvin in 506 by Catholicos Babken I**. The Emperor thought this way the Armenian Church would become subject and part of the Orthodox Church and the Empire.

In attendance among the Armenian bishops was also the 7th century Armenian historian Sebeos, Bishop of the Bagratuni dynasty. He wrote about the event in his *"History of Heraclius,"* stating that the Catholicos and all the bishops, *"except for one,"* actually did receive Communion in the presence of Constantine II, as if "denying" the faith of St. Gregory the Illuminator and his loyal successors. Our church historian Patriarch Malachia Ormanian concluded that the *"one bishop"* who stood firm and later was scolded by the Emperor was Bishop Sebeos himself, given his doctrinal stand and loyalty toward his predecessors as it can be seen in his "*History of Heraclius.*" The Greeks even tried to label the Zevartnots Church, still under construction then, as a Greek oriented church. The Emperor and the Byzantine Empire considered the **Armenian Prince Theodoros Rshtouni's** political inclinations towards them as a favorable position who, from political standpoint did not care to see any difference between the two churches. Looking through our historians' witnesses defending the "*magnificent*" Church as indeed it was, everything else, political or otherwise, remained insignificant. The ruins speak for themselves forever.

Both the Emperor and the Armenian Prince further made accusations against Catholicos Nersess III and sent him into exile, away from his Holy See to his birthplace into the district of Tayk, where he stayed for six years. Historian Catholicos John of Draskhanakert confirms in his *History*: *"Anastas was appointed to keep the Holy See as the overseer of the wonderful church by the orders of Nersess, while he was persecuted in the district of Tayk."* Thus, before leaving, he assigned Bishop Anastas Akorretsi in charge for the completion of the construction which accomplished by the time Nersess returned from exile. Catholicos Nersess III consecrated the Church Zevartnots in 659. Bishop Sebeos reports: *"Following his six years of exile Nersess returned to his seat and installed Catholicos of Armenia. He hastened to finish the construction of the church which he built on the main road of the city of Vagharshapat."*

Nersess III passed away in 661, and Anastas succeeded him on the Patriarchal Throne as **Catholicos Anastas I Akorretsi.** The same historian says, *"Nersess' body was laid to rest in the northern side of the glorious church which he himself built."*

Toros Toramanian, Architect

Undoubtedly, T. Toramanian's *magnum opus* is the *"reconstruction"* of this great monument, who most diligently studied the architectural plans and each of the surviving stones fallen 1000 years ago. The Church of Zevartnots "lived" 300 years only, with its unmatched characteristics. The Church was destroyed during the 10th century earthquake as mentioned above. The genius architect did his excavations with the permission of **Catholicos Mkrtich I Khrimian of Armenia**, and completed them in 1905. First, he published an extensive article on his findings in *"Mourj"* periodical which was recently reprinted in Yerevan in 1978. Toramanian has given this description: *"On the site the plan of the Church is partially intact, which convinced me that the existing stones should be sufficient to reconstruct the entire building."* His conclusions have offered S. Mnatskanyan historic and architectural data that he used, always crediting the architect and his findings. In his large volume, Mnatsakanian promotes Toramanian honorably, and both

authors, the historian and the architect, complement each other and provide the last word on this unique Church of Zevartnots.

When closely read the 1971 publication, one can see Toramanian's detailed measurements and calculations, such as, the four wide pillars of the Church that are built in equal distances away from the center of the church, upon which four semi-circular arches were resting. One of the columned arches *"was a closed wall representing the Altar, and the other three were for decorations."* This way, says Toramanian, the interior of the Church has assumed *"a cross shaped plan, with the Baptismal Font built at the center."*

Toramanian is amazed at the knowledge of the **architect Johanna** in many areas, whose "*artistic taste is witnessed by the refined and attractive sculptures."* Finally, Toramanian states: *"The way the architect has placed the niches and the arches so marvelously, that nothing short of surprise can one express on the architect's talent and knowledge."* Before arriving in Vagharshapat, Toramanian had visited to see the ruins of Ani, capital of the Bagratuni Kingdom, for excavation where he met archeologist **Nigolaos Marr** for excavation. He was deeply impressed with sadness and admiration, recording his following impressions:

"When I visited Ani two years ago, I was watching right and left with amazement, and did not want to believe the reality in front of my eyes. My curiosity increased day by day, and even the most insignificant piles of stones attracted my attention. Every ruined building and each hilly piles of soil kept in their bosom a good number of columns and arches, all of them beautifully sculptured, crowns and stone-crosses, in front of which our Christian mothers of the old times knelt and prayed constantly, beating their breasts."

RETURN OF THE PONTIFICAL MOTHER SEE FROM SIS TO ETCHMIADZIN (1292 - 1441)

The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly (1945)

Archbishop Kevork Chorekjian, the *locum tenens* of the Mother See convened the delayed National-Ecclesiastical Assembly in June 1945, after a long period of vacancy following the tragic death of **Catholicos Khoren I Mouradbekian**. He was strangled in 1938 in his patriarchal residence by the chief Armenian Bolsheviks for not handing over the keys of the treasures of the Holy See. The *locum tenens* of the Holy See had hard time to convene the Assembly for the election of the next Catholicos for seven years due to the harsh regime. Finally, the Assembly took place in 1945 presided over by the **Catholicos of Cilicia Karekin I Hovsepiants** and in the attendance of several bishops and lay delegates from Armenia and abroad. They elected Archbishop Kevork Chorekjian as **KEVORK VI Catholicos of All Armenians.**

The consecration of the Catholicos took place by *His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I of the Great House of Cilicia* who traveled from Antelias, Lebanon, accompanied by two archbishops and lay delegates. At the ordination of Kevork VI, the Catholicos of Cilicia Karekin I was assisted by six archbishops: *Kevork Arslanian* (Istanbul), *Garabed Mazlumian* (Greece), *Yeprem Dohmuni* (Damascus), *Ardavast Surmeyan* (Aleppo), *Mampre Sirounian* (Egypt) and *Mampre Kalfayan* (United States), all of them from abroad, "indicating" there was not a single bishop left in Holy Etchmiadzin. That was extremely alarming.

Ten new bishops were ordained at once in 1945 by the new Catholicos Kevork VI, immediately after his consecration, half of them from abroad. An urgent task was also pending and that was the Consecration of the urgent need of Holy *Miuron* (Oil) which the

Catholicos attempted to perform but was unable under the circumstances. In the Armenian Church, the Holy Oil is consecrated by the Catholicos only, every seven years.

The Special Agenda

The lengthy agenda of the Assembly included the 570th anniversary of the *Return of the Mother See of the Catholicos of All Armenians from Sis, Cilicia in 1441*, where it stayed from 1292. Given the political situations, the Patriarchal See temporarily transferred at first to Dvin, then to Aghtamar, Ani, Argina, Hromkla, and finally, to Sis, a total of 950 years before it returned to Holy Etchmiadzin in 1441. As an important remembrance, the final return to its original site Holy Etchmiadzin (Vagharshapat) was discussed, and a resolution passed on its June 19thsession of the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly to commemorate the event annually. It was resolved that each year on Thursday, on the feast of the **Ascension of Christ**, "*The year of the Return of the Pontifical See to Holy Etchmiadzin" was observed.* The return in 1441 was also on Ascension Thursday.

The First Encyclical

The newly-elected Catholicos Kevork VI of All Armenians, dispatched his First Encyclical dated April 1, 1946, mentioning the various places the Holy See had transferred for centuries, and finally returned to its original site. The Catholicos specified, "*the year 1292 as the year the Holy See was transferred to Sis, the capital of the Rubenian (Cilician) Kingdom, where it remained for 149 years."* The Catholicos described the last station of the Holy See as "*disastrous,*" since there was no political stability after the fall of the Cilician Kingdom in 1375. The final return was the only way to safeguard the Pontificate's existence and the spiritual leadership world-wide.

There was however the problem of the last **Catholicos of All Armenians Krikor Musabekian**, who was invited to return with the Holy See and preside over the Assembly of 1441 in Vagharshapat. His return would have been the natural transfer of the See, with no

reason for a new election, but because he declined, and at the same time did not object the Assembly to convene, the Assembly in Etchmiadzin took place as scheduled. Krikor stayed in Sis to safeguard the local Holy See in Cilicia. Unfortunately, the **Return of the Patriarchal See** experienced division between the two Sees. The Assembly, with some 400 religious and lay delegates, elected a new Catholicos, Kirakos of Khorvirap, who was installed as **KIRAKOS I Catholicos of All Armenians.** After the transfer and the election of his successor, Catholicos Krikor Musabekian recognized the supremacy of Holy Etchmiadzin, and the Mother See in turn recognized the Cilician See as *"limited and partial" (masnavor),* exclusively for Cilicia.

The Eastern *Vardapets* (Doctors)

Behind the historic return of the Holy See stood a group of educated and dedicated Eastern *Vardapets* (Doctors of the Armenian Church), who were keeping alive the numerous monasteries and the universities and supervising the teaching and the discipline of those schools. Such were, the Monasteries of *Datev, Glatzor* and *Noravank* in Siunik, *Haghbat* and *Sanahin* in north Armenia, the monastery of *Geghart* and *Haghardzin*, and others, all of them centers of higher education. Highly respectable educators, such as leading clerics *Yesai Nchetsi, Nersess Mshetsi, Hovhan Vorotnetsi, Krikor Datevatsi, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Vartan Areveltsi*, to name a few, were periodically in the lead for the return of the Holy See, despite politically unstable decades in Armenia under the Persian Khans.

The Celebrations

Catholicos Kevork VI directed all Armenian dioceses and churches to celebrate the historic event with elaborate religious and cultural programs. The first among them was **Giuregh II, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem** who had attended the 1945 Assembly as the elected and enthroned Patriarch, and was ordained bishop by the new Catholicos Kevork VI, heading the group of ten candidates. The Catholicos had also bestowed on him the rank

of *Archbishop*. The Patriarch, Archbishop Giuregh II wrote a lengthy article in the official monthly *SION*, reflecting on the Encyclical, the history of the Holy See, and finally on its return, which, he said, marked a great milestone in our church history.

He considered the peregrination of the Holy See in different locations forcefully applied, and for the longest time, bringing serious danger for its revival. *"The return was once and for all truly providential,"* as the Patriarch was saying. Annually, on the Feast of the Ascension, the Armenian Church as of today offers a special service following the Divine Liturgy known as "*hayrapetakan maghtank*," a *Pontifical Thanksgiving Service*, in commemoration of the final return of the Pontifical Holy See of All Armenians to its original site Holy Etchmiadzin.

KEVORK FIFTH SOURENIANTS
Catholicos of All Armenians
And
Soviet Armenia
(1912 - 1930)

The *"Sorrowful"* Catholicos

The first two decades of **His Holiness Kevork V Catholicos of All Armenians** coincided with political fatal events for all Armenians, in the west and the east. The Genocide of the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks in 1915 on the one hand, and the Russian Revolution with Soviet tyranny from 1917 on the other, covered the skies of our land with darkest clouds. The Catholicos lamented the loss of churches, schools, towns and villages, as well as the newly established **Republic of Armenia in 1918** and its sudden fall, and finally the communist regime that dominated Armenia in 1921.

The Catholicos wrote his Pontifical Encyclical in 1921, and signed it *"The sorrowful Pontiff"* with fervent prayer that God *"may accept our sacrifices in the land of Armenia"* and bring our nation together as one people of God *"leaving aside all enmity at this time of great turmoil."*

In 1918, the first Republic of Armenia was blessed and defended by Catholicos Kevork the Fifth wholeheartedly. The Battle of Sartarabad was under the immediate Pontifical Protection, and the victory in May 1918, gave the Catholicos and the nation security, and the rise of the Republic of Armenia. However, under heavy pressures his new Encyclical made him obligated to defend Armenia no matter what the circumstances were. The communist regime occupied the countries to form the Soviet Union, including Armenia. His Holiness had to exercise wisdom and diplomacy to defend whatever was left, especially both from the hands of the Turks and from their new invasions. The Catholicos had said, *"If we lose what we have, what good is it to have a homeland without people."*

Ever since, Kevork V Catholicos of All Armenians signed his Encyclicals as *"Vshdali Gatoghigos" (Sorrowful Catholicos)* because of the above political disaster one after another. He was valiant to resist the Soviet atheist system that he "welcomed" in order to save the nation. Earlier in 1918, the Armenian General approached the Catholicos in Holy Etchmiadzin asking him to leave the Holy See temporarily and move to the Monastery of Sevan for safety since the Turks were approaching Etchmiadzin and Yerevan. His answer was, *"I will stay here and be the defender of the Mother See even at the cost of my life if necessary."*

The Second Decade

The year Armenia went under the Soviet rule in 1921 Catholicos Kevork V had embarked on his second decade of pontificate. The negative trends of the new system shook the traditional and historical foundations of the Armenian Church fatally, as it did for the Russian and Georgian Orthodox Churches. Rapidly communism revealed its destructive nature, and in the extreme case even at the cost of the life of the next **Catholicos Khoren I Mouradbekian.** Catholicos Kevork V, who lived through his second decade, stood strong and unshaken, promoted some important reforms within the Armenian Church, and passed away in 1930.

Among the reforms was of prime importance the formation of the **Supreme Spiritual Council** that replaced the rules of the previously approved Russian Empire's *Synod* based on *Polozhenia (Constitution)*. It seemingly marked some "self administration" of the Armenian Church under the Soviet rule in very limited terms with the latter's obvious and intimidating control on the Armenian Church affairs. The Supreme Spiritual Council members, clergy and lay, were to be elected by the National Ecclesiastical Assembly as the Executive Council according to the **New 1925 Constitution drafted by Catholicos Kevork V**. The Constitution remains in force up to this day since it has been the Law for future elections of the Pontiffs and the members of the Supreme Spiritual Councils.

The **1925 Constitution** was drafted wisely and conclusively regarding the distribution and the election of delegates per capita from all the dioceses in Armenia and abroad. In addition five more reforms were initiated the following year by the Catholicos, including the use of the ***New (Gregorian) Calendar in 1923*** for Easter Sunday and church feasts, the use of the ***organ during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy***, and ***only the second marriage of priests whose wives had died*** during the Armenian Genocide or otherwise. This ruling, however, was not well received by the other Hierarchic Sees.

All told, the two decades following the death of Catholicos Kevork V (1930) and until the death of Stalin (1953) the Armenian Church suffered unbearable oppressions, exiles and persecution of clergy, leaving the church defenseless and isolated, cutting all contacts and communications with the Armenian churches abroad. Morally devoid, religiously bankrupt, the system exploited everything to degrade the church. The cruel assassination of the next **Catholicos Khoren I Mouradbekyan** in Etchmiadzin in 1938 stands the proof for all times.

Political and Economic Growth

In 1922, the First Assembly of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic convened in Moscow with representatives of 15 republics. Six representatives went from Armenia. The Assembly formed a Central Committee for the state infrastructure with five members from Armenia, namely Miasnikyan, Nazaretyan, Hambartsoumyan, Mirzoyan, and Der Gabrielyan. During Josef Stalin's presidency, the Shirak Dam was built in 1925, which helped the agriculture significantly. The same year factories for cotton and textile opened, production of leather, wine, and tobacco bloomed. Soon, printing presses published books and journals in Yerevan in 1926, ten times as much compared with 1913, of course all of them promoting the newly adopted communist ideology.

The economic treaty signed between Russia and Armenia in September 1921 gave boost to house constructions. On a cultural

level, the Lazarian Academy of Moscow was named *"The Cultural House of Armenia,"* and the next year ancient manuscripts belonging to Etchmiadzin, temporarily transferred to Moscow, along with printed books. Later, 4660 volumes in total were returned to the Mother See. House construction rapidly moved forward and in 1926, just about 3065 houses were built which in turn helped major cities to blossom next to the capital Yerevan, such as Leninakan, Gharakilisa, New Bayazit, Dilijan, Goris and Etchmiadzin. Soviet economy was based on the communist system which meant the economy of the Union could reach higher records at the cost of deprivation of private undertakings, which in turn applied mandatory *"brotherhood"* of the 15 republics to exchange goods even if Armenia or one of the others were deprived of its own production.

Migration to Armenia

During the pontificate of Catholicos Kevork V and the following decades a wave of migration moved tens of thousands of Armenians from the Middle East and Europe to Soviet Armenia for permanent settlement. There were two objectives in this hasty rush, first to increase the population of Armenia to meet the Soviet Union's census requirement and stability, and second, to bring economic assets in good faith, but only to be confiscated by the communist government. The false calculation cost immensely on those who migrated heeding to the loud and unreal "promises," gold plated with patriotism.

Soon enough the migrations to Soviet Armenia from Iraq, Greece, Iran, France and the Middle East proved most untimely, disappointing to say the least under tyranny and poverty. Decades later a great majority left Armenia and returned to Europe and the United States with a smile on their faces. Locally more Armenians in Armenia in bigger numbers were necessary for future perspective, but the economy and life standard were much lower than they imagined. Compatriotic suburbs were built by their original names from Turkish Armenia instead, like *New Arapkir, New Malatia, New Aintab*, and *New Kharbert,* and others, which stand today as good memorials giving lasting comfort to those who worked very hard at them while living abroad.

Bishops Ordained By Catholicos Kevork V

During his 18 turbulent years, the courageous Catholicos of All Armenians made those years fruitful as he ordained 30 bishops, from the Mother See, some from the graduates of the Seminary of Armash, and others from the Jerusalem Patriarchate, despite the unfavorable and oppressive system. Following the horrible years of World War I, the Catholicos extended his helping hand to the Hierarchic Sees outside Armenia, particularly to the ousted See of Cilicia and the defenseless incumbent **Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan** who temporarily settled in his Diocese of Aleppo. Upon the recommenddation of Catholicos Kevork and with his blessings, generous actions were taken in 1929 by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem through **Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian** and the Brotherhood. They resolved that three dioceses in Lebanon (Beirut) and Syria (Damascus-Latakia), may be turned over to Catholicos Sahag II temporarily for his flock's immediate needs. The See of Cilicia thus revived and soon settled in Antelias, Lebanon permanently. Thus, five dioceses were operating under the Catholicos of Cilicia: Dioceses of Aleppo, Beirut, Damascus, Latakia, and Cyprus.

The meritorious names of the ordained bishops included, *Mesrob Naroyan* (Patriarch), *Nersess Melik-Tangian* (Primate), *Karekin Hovsepiants* (Catholicos), *Kevork Chorekjian* (Catholicos), *Mesrob Neshanian* (Patriarch), *Grigoris Balakian* (Primate), *Karekin Khachadourian* (Patriarch), and many others. Their credentials confirm both the wisdom of Catholicos Kevork V and the worthy candidates who all, thirty Princes of the Armenian Church, became the champions of the **survival** and the **revival** of the Armenian Church through the most trying 20th century. They returned the honor they received by their ordination to their own people.

90 YEARS – December 1921
EVACUATION OF CILICIA

SAHAK II KHABAYAN CATHOLICOS OF CILICIA
Last Farewell December 1921

Farewell

His Holiness **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan** of Cilicia had returned to Adana, Cilicia in 1920 hoping to re-establish his seat in Sis, capital of Cilicia, its original site, but now occupied by the Ottoman authorities and the members of the clergy exiled. He remained in Adana one year, from November 1920 to December 1921, when the Catholicos bid farewell to Cilicia forever, caring for his flock and heading it at his advanced age of 72. Catholicos Sahak went to Aleppo, to one of his large dioceses, where Armenians from Cilicia had arrived as refugees. Sis was evacuated, and gradually Adana, Aintab, Marash, and Zeytoun, evacuated after heroic self-defense, and survivors reached Aleppo, Syria, and dispersed homeless over Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Greece, left to their fortune trying to settle under hospitable skies.

The Precedence

The reason for the evacuation of Cilicia was the treacherous political conspiracy by France and England. During the First World War, both countries met secretly on May 16, 1916 and signed a treaty in London for the partition of certain territories of the Ottoman Empire. The treaty was sanctioned by the Emperor of Russia which, accordingly turned over Cilicia to France because of its strategic position in the area. The Armenian Legion, an army of volunteers trained in Cyprus, now encouraged by the protectorate of France, volunteered to join the French expedition against the Turks in Arara, Palestine in 1918, with the understanding that Cilicia will be returned to the Armenians. The Turks were defeated, and the Armenian Legion gave 23 victims on the field.

The first signs seemed promising but they were short lived. France permitted the Armenian army with 6000 strong to enter Cilicia via Iskenderoun and Mersin where in 1919 some 120,000 Armenians were living. A year later the number reached 160,000. On the other hand, the French protectorate did not take serious responsibility to defend permanently the Armenians. France allowed certain key posts to the Turks, while at the same time Moustafa Kemal was working his way out from Cilicia to Smyrna and the Greek islands determined to invade them. Obviously, the Turks would begin from Cilicia with the tacit approval of Europe.

Self Defense in Cilicia

Armenians wasted no time but went ahead for self defense to only suffer greatly by the Turks who massacred thousands. It was in 1920 that Marash resisted for 20 days and gave 11,000 lives; the rest some 8,000 fled to Syria. Hajin was surrounded for 7 months showing heroic resistance, but on October 15, 1920 surrendered. Only 380 soldiers were able to escape. The question is: where was France? What happened to the treaty between France and the Armenian Legion?

The Armenians were victims of treacherous politics, of foul and dishonorable shame. Moustafa Kemal entered Aintab the first day in April 1920 and met with heroic resistance; 18,000 Armenians in Aintab were saved and fled to Aleppo. In 1919 a large number, exactly 1058 Zeytountsis returned to Zeytoun to meet their brutal death, and this way Armenians in Cilicia became the victims of the international politics being deceived by France and England who needed the Turks more than the native Armenians. The final result was obvious. Not only France denied its promises shamefully, but also on October 20, 1921 with the treaty of Ankara, France offered Cilicia to Turkey for good. The Armenians uprooted from their land departed mainly to Aleppo where they survived and revived under prosperous circumstances for a long time.

Last Efforts of Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan

During the same years, Catholicos Sahak II remained in Adana with his flock and ran the diocesan affairs as much as possible with the assistance of Bishops Yeghishe Garoyan and Bedros Sarajian, hoping to establish there his Pontifical Center. However, the treasons from the European countries, one after another, left little hope, and the aged Catholicos had to leave Cilicia for Europe to negotiate, arriving in Paris on March 13, 1920, in order to meet with the President and the Prime Minister of France. With no tangible results, he went to Beirut, Lebanon, to consult with the French High Commissioner, returning to Adana empty-handed on November 1, after a long absence of eight months. Bishop Garoyan was in charge while the Catholicos was abroad. With his two bishops, he stayed in Adana one whole year after his return. **Tears in his eyes, seeing the evacuation of Cilicia, the Catholicos with his flock and followers migrated to Aleppo in December, 1921. That was the final departure of Sahak II Catholicos from Cilicia.**

Sahak II Alert and Determined

Despite despair and disappointments, treason and injustice, **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan of the Great House of Cilicia** carried his cross, went ahead undertaking his arduous task. He was the last incumbent of the historic See of Cilicia in Sis. He lived long and his pontificate did not see sunset, despite heavy clouds, on the contrary, a new dawn ushered, thanks to his healthy and blessed life of 90 years. Even though far away from his original Seat, he witnessed the revival of his Catholicosate in Antelias, Lebanon, in 1930, achieved with his own hands and not with distrustful foreign help. He invited a prominent high-ranking **Archbishop Babken Gulesserian** from Jerusalem, one of the first 1895 graduates of the Seminary of Armash, to be his Catholicos coadjutor and successor.

Archbishop Babken Gulesserian was elected **Catholicos Coadjutor of the Great House of Cilicia** in Aleppo by the Assembly of the Delegates and was consecrated by **Catholicos Sahak II. Catholicos Babken I** organized the newly established See of Cilicia in An-

telias, Lebanon. His immediate attention aimed at the organization of the newly acquired dioceses, and the establishment of a Seminary to educate clergy, inviting Shahe Vardapet Kasparian, a graduate of 1904 from Armash, to assume the position of the Dean of the Seminary. **Archbishop Shahe Kasparian** was soon ordained bishop in Antelias by the newly consecrated Catholicos Babken I. Unfortunately Catholicos Babken passed away in 1936, following a brief illness, while his superior Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan was still living. He was 68. The year before Archbishop Shahe Kasparian had died suddenly while visiting Yerevan and Holy Etchmiadzin. He was only 53 years old.

Heartbroken but not desperate Catholicos Sahak II laid the foundations of the Cathedral of the Catholicosate without seeing its completion. He passed away in 1939 at age 90, leading the See of Cilicia for 39 years from Sis to Antelias, most of those years stormy and fatal. He had appointed his Vicar Archbishop Bedros Sarajian, formerly the Primate of Hajin, who successfully followed up with the construction of the Cathedral and the Chapel of the Martyrs. The Cathedral in Antelias was called after **St. Gregory the Illuminator** and was consecrated by **Archbishop Bedros Sarajian** who succeeded the Eminent Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan as **Catholicos Bedros I of the House of Cilicia.**

As a grateful 1954 graduate of the Seminary of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, I conclude this study recalling my priestly ordination at St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral, 60 years ago, by the Dean of the Seminary Bishop Terenig Poladian and joining the Brotherhood of the Cilician See until 1957.

CONTINUATION OF PATRIARCH MALACHIA ORMANIAN'S *"AZGAPATUM"* VOLUME IV THREE VOLUMES (1900 – 1995)

Planning

To continue the monumental three volumes of Patriarch Malachia Ormanian's *Azgapatum,* the *History of the Nation*, covering essentially the history of the Armenian Church and nation combined for the entire duration 20th century (1900-1995), was an important task left behind for more than half a century. To undertake the painstaking task, it needed courage, faith, and patience, considering especially the *continuation of the original three volumes,* to follow the style and the content of the greatest scholar, historian, and teacher Archbishop Malachia Ormanian. The Eminent Patriarch entered his eternal rest in 1918.

A widespread and yet centralized plan was necessary to accomplish the continuation as genuinely as possible. The task required gathering all related materials concerning persons and events with proper classification, the way Archbishop Ormanian had handed his three volumes to us. It was important however to make sure that some limits and conditions were set, so that the central theme and the main purpose of the book was not overlooked.

Both, difficulties and blessings came to the surface as I went on to do my research. The many sources that comprised the backbone of my compilation of the Armenian Church and the national issues, were of prime importance. As I read the sources, gradually other books revealed and my plan enlarged subject to variations, additions, and deletions, even to the very last article of each book. I was fortunate that my private library, rich enough, lent great help, and the "hidden" books stuck out of the shelves as supplementary sources. Additional sources from different libraries and friends definitely helped the completion of my work including documents I needed sent to me from the *Matenadaran* of Yerevan.

Volume I

For the first book of Volume IV that covered our contemporary history from 1900 to 1930, I dealt with the sad and fatal events of the first decades of the 20th century during the pontificate of **Kevork V Soureniants Catholicos of All Armenians**, including the oppressions and the massacres of the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks. The events of World War I and the Armenian genocide created deplorable conditions in Western and Eastern Armenia representing totally incoherent, unstable, and tragic chain of events resulting almost in the annihilation of the Armenian Church and nation by the fall of the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey and the destruction of Sis, the seat of the Catholicosate of Cilicia.

Soon after the ceasefire of 1918, the Battle of Sartarabad offered the first independent Republic of Armenia for a short while. The emergence of the big power of the Soviets followed, capturing our land and putting an end to the courageous efforts of the Armenian militants. Those events, squeezed within a single decade, could only strangle the small and wounded nation of Armenia. Obviously, no contemporary sources were available given the impossible conditions of the time. Later, a handful survivors, *Archbishops Zaven Der Yeghiayan, Torkom Koushagian, Papken Gulesserian, Grigoris Balakian, Ghevond Tourian*, and intellectuals *Arshak Alboyajian* and *Vahan Tekeyan*, wrote their "*Memoirs"* with first-hand documents which I was able to use as eye-witness accounts.

The centers of the Armenian Church were shaken, to say the least. The Mother See came under the tortures of the Soviets, and remained paralyzed for several decades, especially during the 28 years of Stalin, from 1925 to 1953 when he died. Instead, Jerusalem after one decade's of inaction and silence stood on its feet by the election of Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian in 1921, and by his successor Patriarch Torkom Koushagian who edited the "SION" monthly, coordinated all news from Etchmiadzin and the Diaspora. **Catholicos Sahak II of Cilicia** was homeless and determined to salvage his Holy See. St. James Patriarchate of Jerusalem transferred important dioceses of Syria and Lebanon to Catholicos Sahak II.

Volume II

The second part of my work covered the years from 1930 to 1955, during the pontificate of **Catholicoi Khoren I Mouradbekian** and **Kevork VI Chorekjian**. Comparatively it was easier to organize the material for the period because the work was focal and specific, meaning I had to deal with the Armenian Church under the Soviet regime on the one hand, and in the Diaspora on the other. For the Soviet period, biased sources were entirely out of order, and for that matter, neither "prescriptions" nor sympathetic flattery were considered as dependable sources; otherwise, no reliable history could be written. Thanks to the fall of the regime and for the rise of the Republic of Armenia in 1991, when large volumes, one after another, heavily loaded with ample documents, were published by the state to reveal the torturous events of religious persecutions from the twenties to the forties, church destruction, taxation, and assassinations.

Two dedicated servants of God and our nation, Catholicos Khoren I and Catholicos Kevork VI stand out as the true heroes and "Saints" of the 20th century, for without them the existence of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and the Armenian Church in the homeland could be in jeopardy. Catholicos Khoren I stood unshaken and defended the rights and the properties of the Church, both in Holy Etchmiadzin and Armenia at the cost of his life. He was considered a traitor, and in 1938, six years after his enthronement, he was strangled to death by the hands of the Armenian communists.

Catholicos Kevork VI, his successor, was a high diplomat and knew what to offer to Stalin and how to demand permissions from him. He was successful as he raised funds from the Armenians abroad to build and donate 22 military tanks to the Soviets in defense of the Soviet Union against the Nazi Germany. In return, Kevork VI, while still an Archbishop and *Locum Tenens* of the Catholicosate, was able to seize an interview in April of 1945 to present his demands to Stalin, face to face, *"regarding the revival of the Armenian Church."* He received permission for all his ten requests, including the return of the properties belonging to Holy Etchmiadzin, the

opening of the Seminary, the publication of *"Etchmiadzin"* the official monthly organ of the See, and the return of the three shrines of St. Hripsime, Gayane, and Shoghagat. He was permitted to operate the monastery of Khor Virap in Artashat, and to oversee the site of the ruins of Zevartnots Cathedral in Vagharshapat. Above all he was able to secure permission to convene the belated National-Ecclesiastical Assembly to elect the next **Catholicos of All Armenians on June 16, 1945.**

Volume III

The accounts of my last volume conclude the events between 1955 and 1995. The legacy left for the new **Catholicos Vasken I Baljian of All Armenians,** the illustrious leader of our times, to carry it most carefully and brighten the torch anew for the following four decades. The volume covers the Armenian Church events carried out nationally and internationally by Catholicos Vasken I, who distinguished himself illustriously, leading the headquarters of Holy Etchmiadzin and the dioceses under its jurisdiction, both in Armenia and abroad. His numerous Pontifical Visits across the oceans introduced the Armenian Church and nation to the outside world honorably. The interchurch activities created special level of exposure inviting foreign church leaders to Holy Etchmiadzin on yearly basis. Pilgrimages flourished, and due to Catholicos Vasken's high diplomacy and personality, the Soviet authorities unusually offered ways and means for the Armenian Church to progress despite the harsh regime.

The book actually reflects the life and the achievements of His Holiness Catholicos Vasken I whose unprecedented legacy of 39 years has shaped the image of the Armenian Church beyond any doubt, given the delicate decades he inherited from his predecessors. He honorably led the Armenian Church into the celebrations of the 1700th anniversary of Christianity (301-2001).

PREDICTIONS OF THE 1915 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

DREADFUL EVENTS IN 1911

Archbishop Vahram Mangouni
Patriarchal Vicar

Earlier Signs of Events

On the eve of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks in 1915, it is important to learn details leading to that horrible milestone in our recent history. In 1911, the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was vacant due to the resignation of **Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian,** and **Archbishop Vahram Mangouni** was in charge as Patriarchal Vicar. He was deeply concerned about the endangered and unsafe conditions in which his people were living under tyranny in the hinterlands of Turkey.

Reports reaching the Patriarchate confirmed the repeated horrors, kidnappings and forceful conversion into Islam, as well as the unlawful occupation of the lands by the hands of Turk terrorists. Following pensive and anxious examination of the events by the National Council of the Patriarchate protests were filed by the Armenian members of the Parliament, Vartkes, Kegham, and Dr. Daghavarian. Kegham in particular came up with documentary reports on the crimes against the Armenians, the life threats, and the attempts to occupy their lands. All protests went unheard by the authorities and the voice of some good people among them silenced who had tried to stand by the Armenians and defend their human rights, such were the governors of Sebastia Emil Bey and Jemal Bey of Kaiseri.

Appeals of the Patriarchate

After the resignation of Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian, Archbishop Mangouni, the *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate, filed protests before the Ministry of the Interior, and all he heard was fake explanations. The authorities said, "*the problems were due to the*

inadequacy of police and organized military action," while on the other hand the governor of Bistlis stated by telegrams the real crimes perpetrated by the local Turks. Yeghishe Kahana Barsamian from Mush wrote in his letter of May 29, 1911, addressed to Archbishop Mangouni reporting on *"the horrible crimes the Armenians went through in the district of Khouyt"* who had asked protection by the military, and instead they were insulted and reprimanded. Letters from Van and Sassoun reported on killings and lootings, stating, "*two to three hundred desperate peasants had fled to Bitlis and Mush."* From Siirt reports also reached the Patriarchate informing that local Armenians were held hostage by the Turks.

The Primate of Bitlis was Souren Dz. Vardapet Kalemian, a young graduate of the Armash Seminary. He cabled on May 31, 1911, reporting on the crimes, adding, *"The governor took two battalions and hastened to Khouyt for help. We are waiting for the outcome."* Deeply concerned, Archbishop Vahram Mangouni called an emergency meeting of the General Assembly of the Patriarchate on May 29 to report on the tragic events happening in Anatolia. Vramian, a delegate, made a proposal that *"The National Assembly expresses deep pain and anger for the last months' events of forceful islamization and tortures the Armenians went through in certain regions in Anatolia."*

Following the action taken by the Patriarchate, **Archbishop Hovhannes Arsharuni**, and Vardapets Ghevond Tourian and Grigoris Balakian were delegated to meet Nejmeddin, the Deputy Prime Minister, demanding a solution to the grave situation. The man again was dishonest, saying: *"Basic changes would take place in the administration within the provinces,"*warning the delegation at the same time they better not appear officially, on the contrary the Patriarchate should have confidence on what the authorities are telling.

Despite all these, news reaching from Bitlis told the *"crimes were repeatedly committed and there was no sign of arrests or punishment."* Further, the Armenian Patriarchate was informed from Karin (Erzroum) about the horrors of the Kurdish attacks, as also from Shadakh, Van, and Erzenjan. Kurdish attacks were heard from

Dikranakert where Armenians were living under tents. From Charsanjak reports revealed extortions of lands belonging to the Armenians. In desperation, the Primate of Charsanjak Hamazasp Vardapet Hazarapetian was reporting strangely that there was no other choice for the Armenians than to leave the Armenian Church and adopt Russian Orthodoxy.

The Ottoman authorities totally ignored all appeals and protests *"ignoring the atrocities and avoiding the issues,"* as stated by the Vicar Archbishop Vahram Mangouni who kept demanding solutions to the tragic events, especially for the usurpation of the properties and the committed crimes.

Patriarch Hovhannes Arsharuni

Tragic events concluded fortunately in the election of the new Patriarch of Constantinople, **Archbishop Hovhannes Arsharuni,** former Primate of Bursa, who succeeded Yeghishe Patriarch Tourian by the consistent efforts of the Vicar Archbishop Vahram Mangouni. The election took place in December 1911, after one year of vacancy. The new Patriarch brought some hope as he embarked on his demanding duties, for a very short time though, as a strong and unwavering leader. He resigned after two years in office.

The Patriarch's first task was to relieve the former **Patriarch Malachia Ormanian** from his unjust accusations, an important task the two previous Patriarchs, Matthew Izmirlian and Yeghishe Tourian, the first unwilling and the second unable, left the case unresolved for four years. **Only weeks after his election, Patriarch Arsharuni** called the National Council of the Patriarchate and by a final verdict relieved Ormanian from all faults and accusations for which the former Patriarch was secluded unjustly for four years.This was the statement worded by **Attorney Krikor Zohrab**, a member of the Parliament: ***"Considering the reports of the Committees related to the accusations made against Archbishop Malachia Ormanian, the National Assembly relieves the Archbishop from all accusations."***

In Memory of
23 Legionnaires

THE ARMENIAN LEGION
THE BATTLE OF ARARA
In Palestine
September 19, 1918

France and Boghos Noubar

In October 1917, upon the treaty signed among the European Allied Nations (the Entente), negotiations between the **French Ministry of the Exterior** and the **Armenian National Legacy** began to verify which section of Armenia's territories should be occupied by France. **Boghos Noubar Pasha**, the President of the National Legacy hastened to London to meet with George Pico, the French rep-resentative, and Sir Mark Sykes, representing Great Britain. They had prepared an agreement that Russia would occupy the northern section of Armenia, and the southern portion known as Cilicia would belong to France.

This meant *De facto* that Armenia should be divided into two, which disappointed greatly Boghos Noubar who found himself against a *fait accompli.* Consequently, Russian expansion proved dangerous as Armenia was already flooded by Russians against the diminishing numbers of the Armenians. Boghos Noubar tried his best, demanded justice for the Armenian Case, and expected independent status for Cilicia, as well as a French mandate over the Armenian provinces. Such demand required its price, and the **Armenian Legionnaires** paid the price a year later with their participation in the **Battle of Arara in Palestine, giving 23 victims**.

The Armenian Legionnaires

The Armenian Legionnaires were volunteer soldiers from different colonies including the Unites States, who were trained in Cyprus to help the French army against the Turks in Palestine. **Boghos Noubar Pasha** supported the adventure and sent messages to

the European states that the Armenians were always on the side of the Entente, and that upon the request of George Pico the **Armenian legionnaires** would get involved in the confrontation, siding with the French army, **provided their own territories of Cilicia returned to the Armenians for good.** Everyone, under the leadership of Boghos Noubar, was convinced that the action undertaken had the immediate purpose of the return of Cilicia to the Armenians, for which George Pico gave credence and assurance, warning at the same time that the condition of the Armenians living in Constantinople and Smyrna could be endangered, for whom there was no protection.

Having this in mind, a suggestion was made that the Armenians do not get involved in military actions directly, but only under the French forces as an inferior battalion. Based on the assurances given, Boghos Noubar made an appeal on October 17, 1917 for the Armenian Legionnaires to be organized. The latter, mainly from the United States, went to Cyprus for training. To clear the way to Cilicia, Palestine needed to be stabilized by the **Battle of Arara on September 19, 1918**, by which time the number of the Armenian Legionnaires amounted to 5,000 soldiers. In November and December the Legionnaires entered Cilicia and occupied military bases under the protection of the French army. This shamefully resulted in deceit as soon as France changed its policy and started negotiating with Mustafa Kemal, the leader of the Turkish army.

Before the maneuver, the Legionnaires depended on France and joined French forces having in mind the return of Cilicia to the Armenians.They wished through the Armenian National Legacy to assure the protection of the European Allied Nations. The legionnaires gathered from the United States, France and the Balkan countries, rest assured as it were that their calculation would meet their political and national aims, especially when in 1918, following the peace treaty that ended the First World War, Germany and Italy were defeated, Turkey weakened, and challenge was open before France and Great Britain. Both countries advanced toward Palestine with the intention to enter Jerusalem, but they soon met the resistance of the German army.

Great Britain Involved

Edmund Allenby, the General of the British army, having difficulty advancing to occupy Arara and continue his way, was confronted by the fallen and united German and Turkish armies against him. The Armenian Legion was there just in time to join the French forces on September 18 and 19, 1918, and following fierce invasion to capture Arara. The battle ended on the 19th of the month, and the victorious General Allenby entered Jerusalem a few weeks later. During the Battle of Arara, the Turkish *yildirim* army was attacked by France with the **Armenian Legion**, whose role was prominent and recognized by the commanders of the Allied Forces.

The victory was a good sign for the Armenians to see their immediate dream realized. Despite General Allenby's commendation regarding the Armenian Legion who fought "*with great valor,"* of whom he also had said *"I am proud to have had an Armenian battalion under my command since they have fought very brilliantly, having played a great part in the victory."* The Armenians were deceived by the British, since the means in fact served to a treacherous end. Otherwise, what business did the Armenians have fighting in Palestine to begin with? Why were there and for what reason, other than for the promised return of their land? **The Armenians paid a high price. Twenty-three volunteer Legionnaires gave their lives with 76 others wounded**, believing in the Armenian case of Cilicia by the treacherous France despite the promise given. Cilicia was not returned to the Armenians as their legitimate homeland.

Treachery and Victims

The following is an eternal record of those who valiantly gave their lives in the Battle of Arara. Their names with their native towns are given as follows: ARSHAM AMERIKIAN (Keghi), SIMON ANTARAMIAN (Kharbert), ARSHAK ASLANIAN (Sebastia), DIKRAN PEZARIAN (Kessab), SARKIS KASSABIAN (Arapkir), HOVHANNES KOUYOUMJIAN (Banderma), MELKISEDEK ZANOYAN (Chenkoush), KOURKEN ZILJIAN (Istanbul), MISSAK TASLAKIAN (Moussa Lerr), MISSAK HAVOUNJIAN (Ekbez), GHOUGAS GHOUGASIAN (Chemesh-

gadzak), MARDIROS JINGIRIAN (Huseinig), DZERON MESSERLIAN (Kessab), MARDIROS BABAYAN (Chenkoush), HAGOP BEDIGIAN (Ayntab), BOGHOS BOULOUDIAN (Dzov), MARDIROS DER KAPRIELIAN (Arapkir), MANOUG DER HAGOPIAN (Albistan), SARKIS DELLEGIAN (Moussa Ler), HAGOP KEHIAYAN (Kaiseri), SAHAG KISKANIAN (Sebastia), NIGOGHOS DERDERIAN (Sebastia), and BOGHOS TEREKJIAN (Chenkoush).

Heroes of Moussa Lerr

As I was writing this article in dedication to the heroes of the Battle of Arara, my respected friend Boghos Lakissian, an intellectual and a columnist born in Moussa Lerr, brought to my attention that Moussa Ler volunteers were in the front lines among the Armenian Legionnaires. They in fact assumed full participation in the Battle of Arara and wholeheartedly gave their full support to rescue Cilicia, their homeland, at the highest price of the 23 Legionnaires who gave their lives. Most of them survived and forever demanded the return of Cilicia to its own people. Later in 1925, a monument in their memory was transferred to Mount Zion in Jerusalem from its original location by **Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian** and erected in the Monastery of the Holy Savior of the Armenian Patriarchate.

SURRENDER OF KARS 1920
In Memory of
CATHOLICOS KAREKIN I HOVSEPIANTS
A Great Scholar and Patriot
(1867 - 1952)

The Great Patriot

In his *Memoirs* Bishop Karekin Hovsepiants, later **His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I of the Great House of Cilicia** (1945-1952), wrote about his participation in the fighting against the Turks who had advanced on Kars within the borders of Armenia in 1920. He says that with his colleagues they were working on an excavation project near Alexandrapol when news reached them about the invasion of Kars. On September 22 of the same year, the Turks having occupied Sarighamish and Sourmalou were advancing toward Kars, and the Armenians were in panic. They were trying to escape from the enemy in the direction to Alexandrapol (Giumri) finding refuge in the village called Dzor (Valley).

In those days Bishop Karekin Hovsepiants, 53 years old, hastened to Kars to join the fugitives and help them. The Bishop as a true patriot had honorably done the same two years earlier in 1918 during the Battle of Sartarabad standing beside his people, encouraging and blessing them to defend their land against the incursions of the Turks. He went to Sartarabad with the blessings of **Catholicos Kevork V Soureniants**, as the Armenians won the Battle and the enemy pushed back to its territory. The first Republic of Armenia was established two days later on May 28, 1918.

Heading to Kars

Bishop Hovsepiants stopped at the city of Alexandrapol and called the people to pray at St. Asdvadzadzin Cathedral of the city. Heading the procession he walked toward the City Hall with the participation of the clergy and the faithful of four local churches,

the clergy fully vested with their proper vestments and himself with his Episcopal staff and cross. In front of the City Hall the *Antasdan Service* (blessing of the four corners of the world) was performed, then heading to Kars, where resistance was held by General Daniel Piroumian and the Armenian army. Piroumian was hailed two years earlier at Sartarabad as the victorious *"Senior General"* against the Turks. The General at Sourmalou was Dro (Drasdamat Ganayan), both admirers of Bishop Karekin who was always prepared to stay beside them. Arriving in Kars, the Bishop performed Divine Liturgy at the Holy Apostles Church of the city *"in the presence of all military and civic officers."*

General Piroumian welcomed his compatriot Bishop Karekin both of them born in Karabagh, asking him to ride the horse and head to Sarighamish to bless and support the soldiers in the front lines where the Bishop encouraged them not to despair but to resist the enemy for an apparent victory. The case was different. Bishop Karekin witnessed the miserable Armenians arrested in the valley. The General asked the Bishop to surrender, saying: *"Srpazan, you have to try one thing, get up to the top of the fortress and declare our surrender."* Bishop Karekin followed the order most reluctantly, and taking with him Colonel Vahan Der Arakelian and a pilot officer went to the top of the fortress and flew the white flag, risking his own life. All three were arrested on the spot and taken to the Turk Colonel of the army.

Bishop Karekin had no choice but to declare that *"we are defeated and have come to surrender,"* asking at the same time to have mercy on the Armenians in the Valley, poor and defenseless, especially on the *"innocent children and orphans."* His request was honored, the shootings stopped, and both General Piroumian and Bishop Hovsepiants went down to the valley and rescued the tortured people and took them to Kars.

The Surrender of Kars

Kars was already in the hands of the Turks. Bishop Karekin did his best, but was very disillusioned for surrendering the impreg-

nable fortress to the enemy. He said, *"In the history of nations very few such defeats are recorded as this one, a most embarrassing defeat. It would have been more honorable if we were killed by thousands under the fortress and defending our country than fleeing miserably to save our skins."*

Kars surrendered on October 30, 1920, as the Turks plundered Armenian homes freely, captured the owners, forcing them to torturous labour on the streets. Many gave their lives and Bishop Karekin was there to oversee the orphanages and the hospitals. He received special permission to conduct worship services in the churches of Kars to comfort and support his people as he had done following the victory in Sartarabad two years earlier with the blessings of his superior **Catholicos Kevork V Soureniants**.

A Manuscript – *"Book of Lections"*
Risky Return to Etchmiadzin

A leading scholar in Armenian manuscripts and miniatures Bishop Karekin amazingly did not miss the opportunity to study an Armenian manuscript kept in Kars with a certain physician Dr. Erzngatsian, regardless of the unstable and perilous days he was spending in the city. What a remarkable Bishop he must have been to ignore the danger and to go after that large manuscript just to see what it was and where it was originated. The book was a *"Lectionary"* (in Armenian *"Jashots"*), inherited by the grandfather of the doctor's wife. The book contained daily readings from the Bible and texts for special services throughout the year of the Armenian Church calendar. Bishop Karekin states: *"The Jashots was decorated with colorful capital letters of birds and animals motives, with full page illustrations written probably in the 13th century."*

Bishop Karekin Hovsepiants was held captive in Kars for a while, despite his appeals to the Turkish authorities asking to be released and return to Armenia. He was investigated on November 18, and imprisoned with many others. Later, he was exiled to Sarighamish, and then escaped returning to Kars under torture. He describes his ordeal in his *Memoirs*, being beaten mercilessly and

subject to force labor for three weeks, working *"on the wagons going to Kars as a porter."* Finally, the ordeal ended with his ingenious escape on February 19, 1921, telling the head of the train station at Sarighamish he was a photographer and that his cameras were left in Kars, where he was allowed to go. The Bishop lived in Kars in the Armenian orphanage until March 21, and then returned to Holy Etchmiadzin disguised, with the entire orphanage with him.

THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1910 - 1920)

The Political Situation

During World War I, politically unsafe and uncertain situation dominated Palestine under Ottoman Turkey until 1917. The St. James Armenian Patriarchate was vacant since the passing of **Patriarch Harutiun Vehabedian** in 1910, and in 1916, the Turkish government declared the ousted **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan of Cilicia** *Patriarch-Catholicos* residing in Jerusalem as an exiled pontiff whose headquarters in Sis, capital of Cilicia, was sacked and occupied. The ruling was entirely alien and against the canons of the Armenian Church. Sahak II consented with the orders given, along with a set of ridiculous bylaws written in Turkish, dictated by the Turkish government, according to their interests. Catholicos Sahak II was in Jerusalem for only 15 months, and when the British army occupied Palestine, they expelled the Ottoman Turks. Just before leaving, the Turks ordered the "hostage" Armenian clergy headed by Sahak II, to leave Palestine immediately.

While the political scene was upside down and unstable, the St. James Armenian Patriarchate was left unattended in total uncertainty with a couple of resident bishops, Mkrtich Aghavnuni and Yeghishe Chilingirian. Mesrob Vardapet Neshanian was the only remaining faithful clergy heading those bishops at St. James to preserve the *status quo* in the international arena. The British army invaded and Mesrob Neshanian kept his documented diary as to when and what had happened between Turkey and the victorious Great Britain. His description of the events is most original, truthful and the only one reached us as an accurate chronology.

Bishop Neshanian was successively elected *Grand Sacristan* in 1922, *Locum Tenens* twice, in 1930 and 1939, and finally *Patriarch of Jerusalem* in 1939.

Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian

There was no Patriarch in Jerusalem for more than a decade and Mesrob Vardapet handled the chores and the responsibilities with the *Grand Sacristan* Tavit Vardapet Derderian. The rest of the remaining clergy undertook their duties faithfully until the vacancy was filled by **Patriarch Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian.** Above all, there was the problem of the electoral procedure for the candidate, since the Patriarchs of Jerusalem were elected by the *National Assembly of the Patriarchate of Constantinople*. Politically the case was different now and the British authorities rejected to have a Patriarch under their mandate elected in Turkey. A fast move was necessary and a request was submitted to the British authorities to have the next election as before, *"for the last and one more time*." Permission was granted, and the Eminent Archbishop Yeghishe Tourian was elected Patriarch of the Armenians in Jerusalem who was still residing in Constantinople. The election took place in 1921, and soon after the Patriarch arrived in Jerusalem.

Bishop Mesrob Neshanian

When the new Patriarch arrived, he sent to Holy Etchmiadzin three worthy candidates from among the Brotherhood, ***Mesrob Neshanian, Matteos Kayekjian*** and ***Smbat Kazazian,*** to be ordained bishop by **Kevork V Soureniants Catholicos of All Armenians** on September 21, 1924. Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian assigned the senior among the bishops, ***Archbishop Mkrtich Aghavnuni,*** Vicar of the Patriarchate.

Under the new Patriarch and with the assistance of Bishop Mesrob Neshanian two important institutions were built, the ***Tarkmanchats Armenian School*** and the ***Gulbenkian Library of Jerusalem***. The School still open as of today, has given hundreds of graduates, some of them leading professionals scattered in the west. Today the enrollment is very few due to the very small number of the Armenian community. The Library was recently updated and renovated with thousands of rare books and periodicals ready for researchers.

Literary Legacy

Bishop Mesrob Neshanian, arrived in Jerusalem from his native Constantinople as a youth. At the time, he was the only dedicated and knowledgeable clergy who had assumed responsible posts in the Patriarchate, never leaving the Patriarchate or wandering around the world as he pleased. When Grand Sacristan he undertook the study of hundreds of Manuscripts kept in the Library of St. James. He studied especially those 52 Manuscript Texts of the **Holy Bible** (*Asdvadzashounch Matyan*) which he read and described each with all details, but never published them. They were not simply New Testaments, but the entire Holy Bible, as an important part of the collections kept in St. Toros Chapel of Ancient Manuscripts, ready for publication.

About 25 years ago the late Archbishop Shahe Ajemian published a large volume of the "*Catalogue of the Manuscripts of the Armenian Holy Bibles,"* kept in the libraries of rare books worldwide, headed of course by those 52 texts in Jerusalem which were already scholarly catalogued by Patriarch Mesrob Neshanian, representing the largest collection of the Armenian manuscript Bibles. The publication was sponsored by the *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon* and was printed in Lisbon. I must say that Archbishop Ajemian used the entire work of Patriarch Mesrob that he found unpublished and ready at the Chapel. Apparently, he used it without giving any credit to the real author as I was going through the volume that he had sent to me as a gift.

Patriarch Mesrob Neshanian edited the following valuable books:

-*"Chronicle of Gregory Daranaghetsi"* in 1915,

-Tigran Savalanian's *"History of Jerusalem,"* a translation from the Classical to the vernacular in 1930

- A volume on the *"Printing Press of the Apostolic See of St. James,"* a jubilee edition in 1933

- The *"Diary of Jeremiah Keumurjian,"* 1933, *"Jerusalem During Centuries,"*

- "*Divan of St. James,*" Encyclicals and Correspondences.

The Invasion of Great Britain
Eyewitness' "*Diary 1917"*

Bishop Mesrob Neshanian wrote his valuable **"*Diary 1917"*** as an eyewitness on the conflict between the Turks and the British when the Turks were chased out of Palestine. He wrote how on Saturday November 24, 1917, the bishops and a few leading members of the Brotherhood were taken to the police station, including **Sahak II Khabayan, the Catholicos-Patriarch**, following the orders of the Ottoman Turks. Mesrob Neshanian had accompanied them to the police station, stating that *"the same evening they were taken to Damascus in three wagons,"* before he had returned back to the Patriarchate.

Fr. Mesrob Neshanian further described the fight on Sunday November 25 between the British and Turkish armies which lasted 6 days. The Ottomans, well organized, had placed tanks around the Russian Monastery. They were successful to chase back the British army taking 11 hostages, but suffering 1200 and more casualties and many more injured. On December 3, Reverend Father Neshanian was called by the Turks to appear in the municipality and was told they needed help; they needed clothing and blankets as a contribution from the Armenian Patriarchate. Mesrob Vardapet did his task and satisfied them.

As an eyewitness, Mesrob Vardapet Neshanian has written in his *"Diary"* that the British had the upper hand. In the early morning of December 8-9, they captured *Ain Kerim* as he was watching from the roof of the Patriarchate the pouring of bombs so fiercely, as if *"hellish fire was pouring down by the British coming from the top of Nebi Samuel."* On Sunday, December 9, 1917, he writes, *"Today 400 years' Turkish tyranny ended on the Holy City. No more Turks around, but only British kind people, generals and soldiers, who brought freedom to the Holy Land."*

Patriarch Torkom I Koushagian

Upon the death of **Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian** in April 1930, Bishop Mesrob Neshanian was elected *locum tenens* to arrange the

election of the next Patriarch of Jerusalem. He was the Grand Sacristan and the apparent successor, but had no ambition for the highest position. Archbishop Torkom Koushagian, the Primate of Egypt, was considered the candidate, and Bishop Mesrob humbly consented to the general wishes and helped Archbishop Koushagian's arrival in Jerusalem, even though he was not yet a member of the Brotherhood of the Patriarchate which was mandatory for his candidacy.

He was invited from Cairo to become a member of the Brotherhood, following which, they elected him Armenian Patriarch unanimously, and elevated him to the Apostolic Throne of the Patriarchate. The election took place and the enthronement followed by the goodwill of Bishop Mesrob, and **Patriarch Torkom Koushagian** ascended to the Patriarchal Throne in 1931. Because of the sudden change in the political situation, the British government required certain amendments in the Constitution of the Patriarchate.

The new Patriarch was coming from Turkish domination, but now the British had the final word for his approval from the **King of Great Britain**. The change in the Constitution needed time to get the approval of the **Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin**. The canonical "*Pontifical approval*" made the British government uneasy. Realizing that the Catholicos will approve the election first as usual, and then the King of England will grant the Royal decree, the British government rejected such protocol. The Brotherhood, now flexible, asked the Mother See to refrain for the time being and give priority to the King of England. Holy Etchmiadzin was not happy with the switch, but that was the only way out until the new Patriarch's arrangement for the change in the Constitution.

The procrastinated problem was inherited from Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian who should have made the change during his nine years of patriarchate. One may think why delay and ignore such an important –political versus pontifical- matter since the 1917 occupation of the British mandate. The lay element from the outside world made a big issue out of this, so that they might interfere in the internal affairs of the Patriarchate under the umbrella of the

United Kingdom. The Constitution had and still has as of today the Brotherhood, *bishops and priests of the Patriarchate members only*, as the sole responsible of all affairs of the Armenian Patriarchate. According to their Constitution, only two bodies exist to oversee all actions related to the holy shrines, properties, finance, and pilgrimage: the ***Brotherhood Conclave*** and the ***Executive Body*** elected by the Conclave, both presided over by the Patriarch.

Patriarch Mesrob Neshanian

In 1939, **Patriarch Torkom Koushagian** passed away suddenly, following brain stroke while presiding over the meeting of the Executive Body, after fulfilling his patriarchal duties with excellence. He was only 65. The Brotherhood had a genuine candidate who had served the Patriarchate all his life the most worthy senior member of the Brotherhood since 1910. It was the *locum tenens* Archbishop Mesrob Neshanian who was elected **Patriarch Mesrob Neshanian of the Apostolic Throne of Jerusalem** in 1939**.** He completed Patriarch Koushagian's task by ordaining six priests as members of the Brotherhood, who were instructed under him. Among them, the youngest was named after the late Patriarch and was given his new name of Torkom Manoogian. This young Priest Torkom, after exactly 50 years, was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem who previously was the Primate of both Dioceses of North America. **Patriarch Torkom II Manoogian of Jerusalem** was elected Patriarch in 1990 and after 23 years of fruitful service passed away in 2012 at age 93.

Patriarch Mesrob Neshanian was a man of letters, a leading scholar as mentioned earlier in this article. He passed away at age 72 on July 26, 1944. His death was also sudden. Archbishops from outside Jerusalem arrived for the funeral, and the eulogy was delivered by a young member of the Brotherhood **Yeghishe Vardapet Derderian** who later in 1960 was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem. He said: "*Mesrob Patriarch's life became a lit candle which illumined the Throne of St. James, overshadowed sometimes by sad and cold clouds, but was always the light and the grace of the Holy Altar of St. James."*

PATRIARCH ZAVEN DER YEGHIAYAN OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1914-1922) *"MY PATRIARCHAL MEMOIRS"* CAIRO, 1947

The Volume

The first-hand book *"My Patriarchal Memoirs"* by **Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan** is for sure indispensible, written some quarter of a century later, at age 70, based on his diary and memory, covering the most tragic years of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1922, while the Patriarch was in office. He was soon to be deported, and the **Patriarchate** and the **National Constitution** remaining in jeopardy. The book was prepared by the Patriarch, the year he passed away in Bagdad in 1947, and was published in Cairo by the *Bureau of Service of the Intellectuals*.

The final edition was done by Arshak Alboyajian, a veteran historian, educator and the acting assistant to the Patriarch while in office. The Patriarch saw his *Memoirs* and gave his approval before it was printed. The book was recently translated into English in the United States in 2002. In 1945, two years prior to his death (1947), the Patriarch did his last sacred duty and presided over the ordination and consecration of **His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I Hovsepiants of Cilicia** in Antelias, Lebanon in April. Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan was given full patriarchal honor at his funeral in Jerusalem by **Patriarch Giuregh II Israelian**, and was buried among the Patriarchs in the cemetery of the Patriarchate of St. James.

The Eyewitness Patriarch

Patriarch Zaven, one of the first graduates of the Seminary of Armash in 1895, was the youngest among his predecessors to

occupy the important Patriarchal Seat in 1914. Born in Mosul, Iraq in 1868, the Patriarch was baptized Mikayel, and was admitted by the Dean of the Seminary of Armash Bishop Malachia Ormanian who, upon graduation, ordained him a celibate priest with six of his classmates, giving him his new name **Zaven**. His patriarchate, he says, *"occurred in the most turbulent period of the Armenians in Turkey."*

The Patriarch was repeatedly asked to write his memoirs, the tragic times he went through, with the help of documents he had written while in office, including evidences, correspondences, and communiqués. *"They thought I was the only person who could write and asked me to accomplish it as my last duty,"* he recalls. His response was to write his memoirs as a *"documentary work and not as giving an account, it is a report rather than a scholarly work."* As a responsible high-ranking clergy, the former Patriarch had to travel to Jerusalem and go through the boxes of correspondences and other materials he had so wisely sent during World War I via Marseilles. They were kept in the Gulbenkian Library the way they were shipped.

The Content

Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghyaian's book *"My Patriarchal Memoirs"* contains six chapters, beginning from the first period of his patriarchal term in Constantinople, from 1914 to 1916, interrupted by the tragic events of the deportations of the million and one half of Armenians that ended in the First Genocide of the 20th century by the Ottoman Turks. Those tragic events are described first-hand by a devoted Patriarch under ten subtitles and ended in the cruel elimination both of the Patriarchate, temporarily, and the National Constitution, forever. The 4th section is about his exile to Bagdad, his birthplace, where the brave Patriarch did not stay idle, but met healing challenges of the orphans and the orphanages until 1919, the year he returned to Constantinople to resume his office, following the evacuation of the Turks from Iraq by the British army.

The 5th chapter covers the return of Patriarch Zaven back to his Eminent Office in Constantinople for his second term from 1919 to 1922. Under 15 subtitles, as we read, the Patriarch undertook hard work with full responsibility trying to bring pieces together following the disastrous Genocide against his people. He responded to the political challenges as well, after the final departure of the Armenians from Cilicia headed by **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan of Cilicia**. The Patriarch remained in touch with **Boghos Noubar Pasha,** President of the National Legate, appointed by **Catholicos Kevork V of All Armenians**. Residing in Paris Boghos Noubar was constantly in touch with the European states. This section ends with the final resignation of Patriarch Zaven, when Mustafa Kemal entered Turkey and established the Republic of Turkey. The Patriarch relates in detail all those successive tragic events with utmost caution and personal witnesses.

The last chapter of the *Memoirs* tells about the Patriarch's helpful work in Bulgaria and Cyprus, after his final departure from Constantinople in educational and humanitarian ways, seeking the completion of the bequest of **Krikor and Garabed Melkonian Brothers,** to establish an orphanage in Cyprus, which soon was turned into the famous **Melkonian Educational Institute**. No doubt, if his "*Memoirs"* was not written by the Patriarch, first-hand data on the first quarter of the last century's documented history about the Armenians in Turkey would have suffered greatly.

A case in point is the emotional words of the Patriarch when he was deposed by force in 1916, as his description of the events hour by hour, accurately, reveals the decrees issued by the government, handed to him personally to leave the country within a few days and depart from *Haidar Pasha* by train to his native country Iraq. He asked for a few more days to attend church on Sunday, greet his flock, and receive the Holy Communion before leaving. In tears, he says, he attended church, left his flock, and went to his uncertain destiny. No one else could have written the detailed accounts of his departure, a most risky journey, witnessing the marches and the deaths all over as he approached the Euphrates. Finally, arriving in Bagdad, Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan finds his

father Der Avedis Kahana Der Yeghiayan passed away, and his mother ill. Upon her death a few weeks later, the Patriarch presided quietly over his mother's funeral in the Armenian Church.

Zaven Patriarch's Appeals

In his "*Memoirs,"* one can see the Patriarch's diplomacy during those turbulent years. He was cautious and wise in taking steps while still in office as a man of high integrity, dedication, and administration that kept him unshaken even under threats on his life. All correspondences he received from the diocesan bishops left no doubt that the Turkish government had planned to eliminate the Armenians from Turkey, for which the Patriarch pleaded in person to save his flock from further massacres. All he received were promises only.

Despite all these, Patriarch Zaven, as he writes in his book, while the First World War was gradually breaking, he had sent help to show his support even to the Turkish army. He was equally critical to the extremist Armenians who were plotting unwisely and hastily against the leaders of the government. He wrote in no uncertain terms against the chiefs of the Armenian political parties to be utmost cautious and think farther for the immediate future. Unfortunately, those chiefs, as stated by the Patriarch, showed no political maturity. Despite his fears for not being heard by his own, Zaven Patriarch often met the minister of religion Ibrahim Bey and vesier Said Halim Pasha personally, and even the Foreign Minister Talaat Pasha. All he received, again, was nonsense.

The Twenty Gallows

The appeals of the Patriarch seemed to alleviate the danger when suddenly a major plot revealed from the Henchak Party, which met secretly in Constansa, Romania, and planned to assassinate Talaat Pasha. As soon as all the party members returned to Turkey, the plot reached the authorities by a certain traitor Yassian, an Armenian. A large-scale arrest of 140 members followed. Hearing the dangerous news, Patriarch Zaven pleaded personally and

approached Talaat asking to deport all of them from the country at once, rather than treat them harshly. However, the government secretly took 20 of the leaders to the gallows on Beyazit square in Constantinople and executed them. The Patriarch, as he records in his *Memoirs*, heard about it soon after the crime, not before, when a priest Der Kaloust Kahana, who was called by the authorities in the middle of the night to offer them the last prayer, walked to the Patriarchate and informed the Patriarch about the heinous crime.

The tragic event according to the Patriarch was most unwise, given the already endangered safety of the entire Armenians still living in the country. A similar unwise step was taken, as he recalls, by the Dashnak Party, who met in Karin (Erzeroum) and resisted the policy of the Ittihad Turks on political grounds.

Conclusion

The *"Memoirs"* for sure is the first dependable source registering the state decree of Turkey, dated July 28, 1915, **annulling the Armenian Patriarchate and the National Constitution**. Instead, the Turks terminated also the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Sis forever, and in 1916, they "honorably" exiled **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan** to Jerusalem, with an illegal *"constitution"* enforced by the Ottoman Turks along with an equally illegal new title, "*Catholicos-Patriarch of Turkey and Jerusalem combined."* This was totally against the Armenian Church Canon Law. Simultaneously, it terminated Patriarch Zaven's term of office forcefully, telling him to leave, and asking Catholicos Sahak II to assign a Patriarchal Vicar in Constantinople. The events carried out hastily, ridiculously, and forcefully, proved all actions taken illegal by the Turkish authorities, and of course doomed to be ephemeral.

Of importance are the developments in the Patriarchate during the second term of office of Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan, from 1919 to 1922. His efforts toward the orphans and the orphannages were the priorities on his agenda. In Constantinople alone, 16 Armenian orphanages opened under the United National Relief Organization among three Armenian denominations. The group on

March 8, 1919 reached the widows and their financial needs, even demanding retribution of the untold damages incurred on the community. Earlier the Patriarch reorganized the chancellery of the Patriarchate while in office and kept pace with international relations, headed by Arshak Alboyajian who thirty years later edited the *"Memoirs"* of the Patriarch Zaven in Cairo, Egypt.

The rest of the book reflects the difficult times and efforts to cope with, as all efforts remained local and short lived. Assistance from the Armenian National Legacy in Europe was far from indicating any source of hope and immediate remedy, as the Legacy itself was left helpless by the withdrawal of the Entente (Allied Nations). The result was the resignation of Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan in 1922. Not until five years later, in 1927, his successor **Patriarch Mesrob Naroyan's** election was allowed to take place.

PROF. HAGOP MANANDYAN
60TH YEAR OF PASSING (19 52 - 2012)

ACADEMICIAN HAGOP MANANDYAN
HISTORIAN AND THE FIRST RECTOR OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF YEREVAN
(1873 - 1952)

The Passing of a Great Historian

I was a senior at the Cilician Seminary in Antelias, when our teacher of ancient Armenian literature Simon Simonian entered the class and informed us about the passing of a leading historian of the 20th century **Professor Hagop Manandyan,** at age 79. We permanently heard his name by our teacher as to how important a legacy he had left with his numerous books covering the History of the Armenian People in various fields, enriching our knowledge immensely. The grief was verbally and emotionally felt as Mr. Simonian lamented the death of a great educator, whose four volumes of *"Critical Survey of the History of the Armenians"*as of today remains the only dependable series of our ancient and medieval history. They are internationally acclaimed, complete with Armenian and foreign sources and evidences, second to none as far as I know.

When I was ready to write my Doctoral thesis for Columbia University, working on the translation of the 8th century Armenian historian*"Ghevond the Priest"* into English for the first time, Manandyans' books and studies were most important for verification of ancient political, social, economic, geographic and of the different kinds of taxes imposed by the Arabs. His studies have always focused on the details of each period, excavating through the Armenian and foreign sources.

Four months later, in June 1952, another giant was resting in peace in the Catholicosate of Antelias, Lebanon, **His Holiness Catholicos Karekin I Hovsepiants.** Both departures weighed heavily on our teacher Simon Simonian whom the Catholicos had appoint-

ed in 1946 his "assistant scholar" in the research of the Armenian manuscripts and the colophons, the great Catholicos had collected over the decades. Simonian completed the work and published in a large volume before His Holiness' demise. Karekin I Hovsepiants saw his great volume and signed on the cover.

Manandyan's Early Life

Prof. Manandyan was born in Akhaltskha, Georgia in 1873. studied in Tbilisi and went to Germany for his higher education at Jena, Leipzig, and Strasbourg Universities to study the science of comparative languages. He further studied philology and economy, defending his thesis on Movses Daskhurantsi's 6th century *"Armenian History of Caucasian Albania,"* earning his first doctorate. Manandyan knew Russian, French, German, and Greek languages.

Returning to Armenia, Dr. Manandyan was assigned lecturer at the Kevorkian Seminary by **Catholicos Mkrtich Khrimian Hairig** from 1900 to 1905, along with his contemporary scholars Hrachia Acharyan, Manoug Abeghian, and Stepan Malkhassian. He also edited the *Ararat* monthly of the Mother See and studied the Armenian manuscripts of Holy Etchmiadzin. He published for the first time *"The Armenian New Martyrs" (Hayots Nor Vkanere)* with the famous linguist Hrachya Acharyan.

Manandyan lived and worked in Holy Etchmiadzin for 15 years as a lecturer and a leading author, where in 1911, completed *"The Commentary on Aristotle's Philosophy."* He then left Armenia and worked as an attorney. He went to study Law at the University of Dorbat, graduated, and worked in Baku as a lawyer until 1919. Following the occupation of the Soviets, he returned to Armenia in 1920, and on January 7, 1921, assigned by the state decree as the first Rector of the **State University of Yerevan,** and distinguished himself as an international historian in ancient history. His many volumes stand unmatched in terms of the inclusion of ancient sources. Other voluminous *History of Armenia* were published by the State University and/or the Academy of Yerevan by collective authors, but not in the caliber of Manadyan's work.

Rector of the State University

Prof. Hagop Manandyan's last 30 years were most productive for the **State University of Yerevan** and for the graduates, where he lectured permanently beside his administrative duties, offering to our nation generations of scholars. Above all, he wrote his monumental books, as shown below, as his permanent legacy to the Armenian history, philology, and scholarship. Those works have proven irreplaceable and of permanent value for all times, given the nature of his complete and detailed examination of ancient sources which he excavated for generations to come. No one else would have done what he did, nor would have continued his line of work since he really exhausted what the scholarship needed. Specifically items like the *"azats," "ostaniks," "lords and slaves," "peasants"* and *"clergy,"* are examined in the Armenian historiography, on the background of the economy, geography, and trade routes of Ancient Armenia in all details. The following seven volumes were published in English in Lisbon:

1. *The Foreign Trade of Armenia*
2. *Armenia's Economic Prosperity*
3. *The Development of Trade and Cities*
4. *Trade and Trade Centers in Armenia*
5. *The Commercial Importance of Armenia During Arab Invasions and Bagratuni Kingdom*
6. *The Trade and Cities After the Fall of Bagratuni Kingdom*
7. *A Brief Survey of Ancient Armenia,* New York, 1975.

Manandyan's Two Famous Works

As mentioned above, Manandyan's two works, the *"Critical Review"* and the *"Feudalism in Ancient Armenia"* are outstanding in their originality and exhaustive contents. The first in 4 volumes explore the history of Armenia beginning from prehistoric times: vol. I (1945) to the establishment of the Arshakuni Kingdom in 66 AD, volume II (1957) discusses the entire period of the Kingdom, from 66 to 428, volume III (1952) explores the invasions of the Arabs and the Seljuk Turks, and in addition the reigns of Princes

Zakareh and Ivaneh. The last volume (1960) covers the Arab invasions according to our 7th and 8th century historians Bishop Sebeos and Ghevond the Priest.

In his earliest book, published in 1934, *"Feudalism in Ancient Armenia,"* Manandyan has explored the *Nakharar* (Princely) system in our history in their political structure and differences, by name and location, usually known as "Houses", the *Mamikoniank,* the *Kamsarakank*, the *Amatunik,* the *Ardzrunik,* and their possessions with political responsibilities when kingdoms failed and they confronted the surrounding nations. Social and economic terminologies are explained as used in ancient Armenia.

There is no question that Prof. Hagop Manandyan remains as one of the unique giants to explore the history of Armenia with full documentations.

CATHOLICOS KAREKIN I HOVSEPIANTS OF THE GREAT HOUSE OF CILICIA TRIPLE JUBILEE CELEBRATION

January 12, 1947

Three Distinguished Armenian Scholars

Three great scholars of Armenian history and manuscript art, **His Holiness Karekin I Hovsepiants of Cilicia**, **Prof. Sirarpi Der Nersessian of Harvard University**, and **Prof. Henri Gregoire of the Royal Academy of Brussels**, placed the Armenian scholarship on an international pedestal. They met each other in New York in 1943, while the Catholicos was still the Primate of the Eastern Diocese since 1938. He was elected to the Holy See of Cilicia in 1943. At his advanced age, the Catholicos-Elect left New York two years later, due to World War II, and boarded the ship heading to Antelias, Lebanon for his Pontifical Consecration and Enthronement. He was accompanied by Terenig Vardapet Poladian who had completed his studies at the General Theological Seminary.

As I write this article, I remember being a student at Kaloustian Elementary School in Cairo, when in March 1945, we were told to welcome the Catholicos-Elect at the entrance of the Armenian Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Cairo. I remember singing "*Yerbor batsveen,*" the official hymn of Cilicia. On his way to Lebanon, he had stopped briefly in Alexandria and Cairo. Entering the church with his entourage, His Holiness was welcomed by the **Primate Archbishop Mampre Sirounian** who invited his Eminent Guest to give his message. I was impressed at my tender age to see a great churchman in a small stature on the stage with his fiery message spreading his arms and words to the entire congregation, no matter how tired he was after the lengthy and risky trip across the ocean. How could I imagine that four years later I would be traveling to Antelias to study under the blessings of this Great Catholicos of Cilicia?

The Jubilee Celebrations

Combined, triple jubilees of Karekin Catholicos Hovsepiants were observed on January 12, 1947 in the Hall of the American University of Beirut: his **80th birthday,** the **50th year of his ordination into the priesthood,** and **the 60th anniversary of his academic and scholarly achievements**. His Holiness **Kevork VI Catholicos of All Armenians** was the first to congratulate his long time classmate in Holy Etchmiadzin to send Karekin Catholicos an Encyclical dated December 20, 1946 addressed to *"Our Dear Brother and the member of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin His Holiness Karekin I."* It was written with love and affection reminiscing the old memories and praising his Brother in Christ for his great achievements as a primate, literary and scholarly giant who left a remarkable legacy, being also *"a brave patriot and defender of our homeland beside proving his leadership as a great teacher of our nation's history and literature."*

The Catholicos of All Armenians in his same Encyclical was awarding Karekin Catholicos an unprecedented honor to wear on his *veghar* (clerical hood) a diamond cross which alone is the privilege of the Head of the Armenian Church. He was gladly bestowing the special honor *"as a personal tribute for your highly praised virtues to wear on your hood the diamond cross as a personal right, stating thereby that we are honoring you on behalf of our entire people and the clergy."* Obviously, that was a **personal right** belonged to him only, to **Karekin I Hovsepiants**, and not to his successors.

The Catholicos of Cilicia Karekin I was born in Karabagh in 1867, and before serving in Holy Etchmiadzin and Armenia as one of the first lecturers of the State University in 1923, defended the Armenian troops during the battle of Sartarapat in 1918. He was honored as "*the valiant son of Karabagh's mountains"* who visited Armenians in the four continents untiringly, from Europe to the Middle East and North America, after the search of Armenian manuscripts. He published valuable volumes as shown below. *"Everywhere he visited the Armenian Church shined and was given new progress and new life,"* as stated by Catholicos Kevork VI.

An honorable and large representation from the intellectuals and clergy attended the celebrations in the Hall of the American University, with Riad Solh, the Prime Minister of Lebanon and leading clergy from different denominations. Because of the Arab-Israeli war in Palestine, **Patriarch Giuregh II Israelian of Jerusalem** could not attend, and had sent his deputy the Rt. Rev. Yeghishe Vartabed Derderian, the Grand Sacristan, to represent him, who also became the keynote speaker. He spoke on the great achievements of **Catholicos Karekin I,** especially on his superb scholarly works over 60 years.

His Legacy

Catholicos Karekin I of Cilicia has left an outstanding legacy during his 60 years of scholarly achievements. The following are the leading works of his constant research.

As resourceful materials these four historiographies came early in his life as irreplaceable works: "*Khosrovik the Translator and his work", "Mkhitar of Ayrivank", "The life of Tovma Medzopetsi, and the Church Council of Dzagavank,"* all four offering sources for our church's history and doctrine. In the realm of manuscript art, the Catholicos had written the following monumental volumes culminated in the Collection of "*Colophons of Manuscripts from the 13th to 15th centuries."*

1. "*Subjects and Study of the history of the Armenian art"*
2. *"Ptghavank and the churches with cupolas"*
3. *"Monuments in cemeteries and their archeological importance"*
4. *"Vakhtank, son of Oumeka"*
5. *"Ignatius, the miniature artist and the ancestors of Shorotgants"*
6. *"A giant book written in Haghbat"*
7. *" Khaghbakyank and Proshyank in the Armenian history"*
8. *"The church of All Savior in Havutstarr and similar monuments"*
9. *"The Aghibekiank and their building activities"*
10. *"Colophons of manuscripts, volume one".*

Significant philological studies on church architecture and miniatures appeared in the Armenian and international journals.

Professor Sirarpi Der Nersessian

Sirarpi Der Nersessian was the niece of the great Patriarch and the leading church historian **Patriarch Malachia Ormanian of Constantinople (1896-1908)**, who distinguished herself as a leading historian in the Armenian and Byzantine studies. She is known as a great art teacher and an authority in manuscripts and miniatures, professor at Sorbonne and at Harvard Universities. In 1946, she became the first admitted by the *Dumbarton Oaks Research Center* at Harvard University, earning her professorship. Her works are extensive in both English and French, all pertaining to Armenian history and manuscripts. Earlier, from 1914-1919, she studied languages and Byzantine history under Andre Grabar, Charles Dill, and Gabriel Mileh. In 1930, S. Der Nersessian was invited as professor at Wesley College in the United States. She lived a long and most productive life and died in Paris at an advanced age. She was born in Constantinople in 1896.

Prof. Sirarpi Der Nersessian is recognized as an international historian, who introduced Armenian studies to the western scholarship honorably and with authority. Among her leading publications are her outstanding commentary on the illustrations of Byzantine art known as "*Baragham and Joasaph,"* an award winning presentation by the French Academy of literature and history. Der Nersessian's leading works include, *"The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia," "History of the Crusades,"* and the *"History of the Later Crusades (1184-1311).*

In 1930's Der Nersessian published the large volume describing the 10-14th centuries Armenian manuscripts, kept in the library of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice, which stands as of today the forerunner of such research. She was the first how to teach to follow up with ancient manuscripts and describe the miniatures, coming from different centers of ancient education of Armenia and Cilicia. She even went to search for the manuscripts originated in Erzeroum, Kharbert, Glatzor, and Cilicia where the manuscript and miniature art flourished at its highest level.

Prof. S. Der Nersessian worked in the United States extensively, as a lecturer and researcher. Among her studies published under separate covers include *"Armenia and the Byzantine Empire,"* (English) 1945, *"Chester Beatty Armenian Manuscripts"* with an introduction to the history of Armenian art, 1958, *"The Holy Cross Church of Aghtamar"* 1965, *"Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery"* 1963, *"Studies in Byzantine and Armenian History"* 1973, two volumes, and over sixty articles in French and English. Der Nersessian's monumental work remains to be the large volume of *"The Armenian Art"* published French in 1977.

Professor Henri Gregoire

Henri Gregoire was an outstanding scholar in Armenian studies and the President of the Royal Academy of Brussels. A graduate from the universities of Liege and Sorbonne, he was a lecturer in 1909 at the University of Brussels and founder of the *"Byzantion"* journal. In 1930, he established in the same university the Chair of Eastern Philology and History, and was successful to introduce Armenian history and the science of manuscript with collaboration of another distinguished historian **Nicolaos Atonts**. Atonts is a well known Armenian and Byzantine historian with his famous *"Armenia in the Period of Justinian"* in Russian, later translated into English by Prof. Nina Garsoian. Atonts remains outstanding in his specialized field with many other distinguished volumes.

H. Gregoire's articles on Byzantium and the Byzantine history have spread new light on the Armenian origin of the Byzantine Emperors Nicephorus Phocas and Heraclius, as also in connection with the 9th century Byzantine leaders of Armenian origin. His leading works are known as *"Les Armeniens Byzantines entre Byzance et l'Islam"* (1935), *"An Armenian Dynasty on the Throne* (1946). Following Catholicos Karekin Hovsepiants' earlier work in Germany, Henri Gregoire wrote his important treatise on *"Precisions geographiques et chronologiques sure les Pauliciens"* (1947).

Hearing about the Jubilee Celebrations honoring Catholicos Hovsepiants, H. Gregoire sent a message from Brussels where he

had delivered a lecture praising Catholicos Karekin I in 1947. He asserted that *"The entire University and the Academy of Brussels are with you on this auspicious occasion as you honor an Eminent and High Ranking Clergy in the person of Catholicos Karekin. He was a man of letters, a great churchman, and also a man of scholarly research with deep sense of the values of his national arts."*

Professor Gregoire acknowledged in the person of the Honoree *"The hero of an international value,"* who studied in Germany *"for some very productive years, gained fame, writing his doctoral thesis in German on the origins of the doctrine of Monothelitism* (*The One Will in the Person of Jesus Christ*) *and publishing it in Leipzig in 1897."* He further called him "*Inventor and Historian"*, alluding to the thousand year old Armenian history which was unexplored, and which was about to be discovered through the evidences of church monuments and manuscript. Catholicos Hovsepiants accomplished this thankful task honorably and introduced to the world with its unquestionable values, as was stated by H. Gregoire. He wished the Catholicos would create "*Spiritual Cilicia"* as His Holiness had prophesied.

"ARMENIAN-GREEK MILITARY RELATIONS AND HISTORY OF COOPERATION"

By Colonel Samuel Ramazian
Translation into Greek by Yeranouhi Ghazarian
Athens, 2010

The Volume

Impressive, comprehensive, and documentary is this volume in its Eastern Armenian and the facing Greek translation published by the Consulate of the Republic of Armenia in Greece. It contains more than 100 unpublished photos and documents beginning from the ancient Byzantine era to the 20th century, reflecting the military relations between Armenia and Greece. It is written by **Col. Samuel Ramazian** in Eastern Armenian, in vivid style and language, which is professionally translated into Greek by **Yeranouhi Ghazarian**, placing this large volume on the international stage with a corresponding value and significance.

The book is unprecedented and *"dedicated to the memory of those martyrs who fell for their faith, nation, and motherland, both Armenian and Greek military officers and soldiers."* Essentially the volume includes data from before Christianity and later Byzantine historic relations between the two nations, reaching Cilicia and Cyprus, and culminating in World War I, and its immediate Turkish successor Mustafa Kemal who proclaimed the Republic of Turkey in 1923.

The volume brings honor to both nations, Greece and Armenia and to their people, whose valiant representatives emerged in defense of their motherland from ancient times to the modern notorious invasions of Mustafa Kemal who put Smyrna up in flames in 1922, and later in 1974 his successors occupied northern Cyprus. Col. Ramazian, the author of this well documented book, is to be congratulated for this unique historic publication. Ramazian was

born in 1971 who served in the army, studied at the Military College under NATO in Italy, and following his successful graduation was assigned in 2003 as the deputy of the Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Greece.

It is also equally commended the Greek translation of the entire volume in terms of international relations accomplished tediously by a well known scholar and linguist Yeranouhi Ghazarian, a graduate of the Melkonian Armenian Institute of Cyprus. The Greek version presents expressly the valuable content of the book to the state authorities of Greece and makes the military activities of those brave generals and soldiers, both Armenian and Greek, distinguished and honorable, for which the author has called many documentary evidences from the archives of both nations to be able to compose this comprehensive volume. The available sources comprise Greek, Armenian, and English studies on the military field, most of them from the 20th century scholars, Byzantine and Armenian, as well as from contemporary Greek specialist professors in political science.

The Content

As we read the book, we are amazed to realize how the political and military relations, back from the depth of centuries between the Byzantine-Armenian era down to the present, are carefully explored. Sometimes those relations are very sensitive and unstable, all of them capably and skillfully coordinated, concise and documented in 140 pages in Armenian, 280 pages in total, equally with the Greek text along with numerous unpublished photographs at the end.

The parallel line begins from the **Armenian King Tigran the Great** before the Christian era, and passes through the Byzantine centuries with Emperors of Armenian origin with Greek Orthodox adherence. Prof. Peter Charanis, Rutgers University, has written an important book on the "*The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire"* in 1961, with due compliments to Armenia and the Emperors of Armenian origin. We studied this concise book closely during our

sessions at Columbia University as an addendum to the larger volume of George Ostrogorsky's *"History of the Byzantine State,"* (1957).

As early as the 10th century the Byzantine **Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus** had written in his book, known as *"De Administrando Imperio,"* information on the Eastern Provinces of the Empire, including the Province of the Armenian Bagratuni Kingdom with its territorial and military conditions with personal and place names. Chapter 83 of this imperial document is important for us to verify the name of King Ashot II Smbat, informing that in 914 the King had gone to Constantinople to consult with the Emperor, the author of the book himself.

I have done research on *"De Administrando Imperio"* as an important source for the Armenian connection recently published by the Western Diocese in a second edition. My studies for chapters 43-46 of the Imperial Book concerning the Province of Taron and the Armenian Bagratuni Kingdom in general, have noted that King Ashot II while in Constantinople had assumed power and authority from the Emperor and returned to Armenia. He was *"accompanied by imperial troops to reestablish his throne in Ani, the capital city of the Bagratuni Kingdom,"* as reported by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.

Chapter 7 of this imperial book is in support of the Cilician Armenian Kingdom at the time when Princes Toros I and Toros II were awarded imperial honors, while the Emperor's successors were trying treacherously to eliminate the Armenian principality. Constantine VII records the following regarding the unwise policy: *"The way the Byzantine Empire treated the Armenians opened the gates to the Seljuks and the Islams to enter the territories."* It is curious to learn from Col. Ramazian's book, chapter 8 that during the Cilician Armenian Kingdom the military cooperation between Armenia and Cyprus grew stronger for the first time in the 12th century. It was something new to learn that King Bedros I of Cyprus, later in 1267 hailed as the Armenian King, was able to secure Ayas, the seaport city of Cilicia, from the attacking Turks.

In chapter 8, Col. Ramazian writes about further coordinated military activities between the two nations during the 17th century with the tacit approval of Louis XIV of France which lasted until the 20th century. In the sphere of political activities, Armenians living in Greece took position against the oppression of the Turkish Ottoman Empire which ended in the 1821 revolution of the Greek people where the Armenians are mentioned as *"the allied brother people"* who obviously stood side by side during the subsequent centuries.

Recent Times

Names like *Hambartsum Boyajian (Mourad*), *General Andranik Ozanian*, *General Torkom* and *Karekin Njdeh* are heroic names of our recent past, all of whom are part of this book for their brevity and resistance against the Turks beginning 1877. That was the year when Armenian and Greek Members of the Parliament of the Ottoman Empire raised their protests openly and in unison for the massacres perpetrated in the provinces of the country. Later, in 1895 as Sultan Hamid planned and executed the massacres against the Armenians, and in 1909 the massacres of Adana were cruelly carried out by the Turks, Greek clergy and political members of the community offered a helping hand to the Armenians securing them with lodging and food.

During World War I, as written by Col. Ramazian under the heading of *"Military cooperation of the Greeks and the Armenians,"* from among the population of Pontus during 1916-1922, Greco-Armenian united allied military troops were formed between both nations so that *"they could provide food and ammunitions to the Armenians for self-defense."* In return, the Armenian warriors at the cost of numerous victims from their ranks were able to rescue 200 Greek families and send them to the Russian zone for safety. The author states that most probably *"many Greeks"* participated in 1918 when the Armenians were fighting the Battle of Sartarabad against the invading Turks. This important note sounds as welcomeing news to us since our records otherwise have not revealed it, a case which helped the rescue of Yerevan, capital of Armenia from

apparent invasion. Also in 1918 Greece was the first to recognize the proclamation of the Republic of Armenia by the verdict of King Alexandros.

The Treaty of Sevr (1920)

The outcome of the 1920 Treaty of Sevr in France developed closer relations between the two countries as allied states while Prime Ministers Venizelos and Alexander Khatisian were in office. Khatisian paid an official visit to Athens and met with the Armenians in Athens and Smyrna. They tried to establish diplomatic missions but it was still immature for proper application given the Turk-Soviet alliance in 1919-1920 and the Soviet occupation of Armenia, which forced the fall of the Republic of Armenia in 1921.

Official Dedication of the Book

On December 10, 2010, Col. Samuel Ramazian's book was officially dedicated in Athens by the **Consulate of the Republic of Armenia** at the reception hall of the Old Parliament House. Present were the author Col. Ramazian, Yeranouhi Ghazarian, translator of the book into Greek, military representatives, and members of the Greek Parliament. Awards were given to the authors and to those who had assisted in the publication. For us, living in Pasadena, California, it is an honor to recognize the translator Yeranouhi Ghazarian, who lives in Pasadena and whose work presented the volume an international resource beyond Greece, her native land.

ETHNOGRAPHY

VARTANANTS BATTLE OF AVARAIR 451 AD

Armenia the First Nation Defending Christianity

Address delivered at the Glendale Public Library on February 23, 2010, on the annual observance of Vartanants by the "Organization of the Liberation of Western Armenia"

The Background

It is our national task to commemorate jointly the **Battle of St. Vartan and his warriors** in its religious and national aspects, a battle waged against the Sassanid Persia in 451 AD, soon after the fall of the **Armenian Arshakuni Kingdom** in 428. Following the end of the Armenian kingdom, Persian governors were assigned to reign in Armenia for a long time. The entire cycle from the adoption of Christianity in 301 AD, to the fall of the Kingdom in 428, and from the invention of the Armenian letters in 406, to the translation of the Holy Bible into Armenian in 435, became the most fundamental factor for survival. All three prompted the defense of our land and Christianity by military resistence imposed upon Armenia by Persia for the express demand of denying Christianity and adhering to the Zoroastrian (fire-worshipping) religion.

There was no king in Armenia. **General Vartan Mamikonian**, the grandson of **St. Sahak Barthev Catholicos-Patriarch of Armenia,** was the commander of the army who after lengthy negotiations with Persia, requesting not to interfere in matters of Christian Armenia, was obligated to gather his army against the adamant Persia to defend his country and Christianity. Ever since **St. Gregory the Illuminator** and **King Trdat III Arshakuni** proclaimed Christianity as the state religion of Armenia, the first state to adopt Christianity, it was again the first among the nations of the world to ***defend*** Christianity on the battlefield in 451 AD.

The Alphabet and the Armenian Bible

Three Divine Visitations to Armenia became providential: (a) the *Adoption of Christianity by St. Gregory*; (b) the *Invention of the Alphabet* and the *Translation of the Holy Bible* by St. Mesrob and St. Sahak; (c) the *Defense of Christianity* by St. Vartan. With His first visitation, God called **St. Gregory** who became the Illuminator of Armenia giving him the greatest gifts ever, the adoption of Christianity and the building of the First Cathedral in Armenia. Then, God called **Sts. Mesrob** and **Sahak** and gave them the second precious gift of the Armenian letters and the Armenian Holy Bible. Finally, God called **St. Vartan Mamikonian** to offer him this time no gifts, but to remind him to defend the previous gifts already given. He was ready to respond at the cost of his precious life, *"by shedding his blood on the battle of Avarair"* where he fell along with 1036 warriors, as said by contemporary historians.

Those three divine gifts were definitely the prerequisites to warrant the purposeful victory, not necessarily on the battlefield, which actually was a defeat for the Armenian army, but a lasting victory by the **Treaty of Nvarsak in 484** signed between Persia and **Prince Vahan Mamikonian,** nephew of St. Vartan. The Treaty of Nvarsak tolerated freedom of worship to continue in the land of Christian Armenia.

In retrospect, the Armenians resisted the decree of **King Yazdegert II** of Persia who forced to assimilate them in an attempt to make them part of his country politically, considering the Christian West, the Byzantines, who could use Armenia as a buffer state against Persia. We sometimes digress from this major political issue and turn to those local feudal problems, such as, why Prince Vasak of Siunik became a traitor against General Vartan Mamikonian thus creating as it were a "*local case in the court*" between them. The Battle of Avarair *was not a case between Vartan and Vasak*; it was a national crisis, a greater challenge far and beyond feudal issues that the history of Armenia had been familiar with all along. It was a victory in terms of national solidarity with political, national, and religious aspects, all supporting each other forever.

The Council of Artashat in 449 AD

Based on such critical times in our history, the **Church Council of Artashat** convened in 449 to officially alert Persia not to exert pressure trying to convert Armenians into the Zoroastrian religion. The Council had no doubts, and in full confidence gave Persia the critical answer to get involved, if necessary, with military action on the field of Avarair after consuming all possible negotiations. Present were at the Council 17 bishops, headed by the **Catholicos Hovsep Hoghotsmetsi**, all of them named one by one by the contemporary historian **Yeghishe Vardapet**. The historian adds that *"present were also many suffragan bishops and venerable priests*," with the names of 18 *nakharars* (Princes) recorded by the next 5th century historian **Ghazar Parbetsi**, both of them stating clearly that the decision reached was canonical and final. The Council convened under the threat of Persia which had planned to eliminate Armenia politically which was impossible for the Armenians to overlook, in view of the fact that Armenia was already divided between Byzantium and Persia since 387, and four decades later the Armenian Kingdom had fallen in 428.

Survival and revival were the answers granted providentially through the 5th century intellectual activities, honoring the century as ***The Golden Age Armenia*** in the annals of the Armenian history. As said above, letters and literature came to our rescue when military support failed. The Armenian alphabet made the Holy Bible *"Armenian"* as a prime necessity, followed by the 5th century historians who captured the traditionally received history of Armenia and recorded them for posterity. Each century afterward gave one or two historians whose original works survived by way of copied manuscripts, generations after generations. The earliest survived copies proved the foundation of our existence, and we learned through them what we know today. Thanks to the great vision and the untiring efforts of **Sts. Sahak and Mesrob**, the pioneers of the Armenian Academia, that bridged the ancient Armenian literature as a living and productive vehicle throughout the centuries. The Classical Armenian starting from the Holy Bible became the foundation of the vernacular.

The Legacy of St. Vartan Mamikonian

The Battle of Avarair gave our nation the right to exist, albeit with a military defeat. But above all the battle ensured and fortified a greater victory for a cultured and civilized nation for posterity, one of the miraculous signs being the fruits of Christianity and the persistence of the same Armenian Church confessed by St. Vartan. He made it clear even before the Battle of Avarair and identified that, *"The Gospel is our Father, and the Apostolic Church of Armenian our Mother,"* for 1700 years. Some think why celebrate defeat as it was the case, and not a victory achieved at the end. Why talk more about Vartan Mamikonian and less about Vahan Mamikonian who concluded the victory? It was with the treaty of Nvarsak in 484 that the Armenians regained their freedom of religion as the result of those *"who took their crosses and followed Christ."* The proclamation of resurrection from Avarair to Nvarsak, from Nvarsak to Arara, from Arara to Sartarabad, and from Sartarabad to Artsakh, and finally to the independent Republic of Armenia in 1991, constituted the chain of victories against the defeat in Avarair.

Two Historians

The two contemporary historians who report on the Battle of Avarair are **Yeghishe Vardapet** and **Ghazar Parbetsi**. The first a superb epic: *"I write the history of the heroes,"*as he specifies, and the second, a detailed history of the event. The first is purely poetic and in classical Armenian, written with emotion and personal feelings, and at times with strong resistance and anger. His epic is an indispensable eyewitness whose aim it is, as he says, *"that you may read over and over again, hearing the brevity of the virtuous leaders, and at the same time, the coward deeds of the traitors."*

Ghazar Parbetsi, on the other hand praises the House of the Mamikonians unilaterally and lavishly, revealing his childhood when he was the protégée of **Princess Tzouik**, the widow of the martyred Hmayak Mamikonian (Vartan's brother) and the mother of Vahan Mamikonian. She tutored in Tsurtav, a city in Georgia, both Ghazar

Parbetsi and Vahan, her son, along with other boys of the Mamikonian House. Historian Yeghishe is regarded the *sculptor* of the Battle of Avarair, and historian Ggazar its *architect.*

The Aftermath: Survival

Generations ever since renewed the spirit of St. Vartan and sealed the event as a lasting milestone in the Armenian history. A single year did not pass without the commemoration of Avarair and every Armenian worldwide recalls from childhood how impressive the remembrance has taken place at churches and at schools. The Battle of Vartanank symbolizes two things: conviction and challenge, even at the price of martyrdom, since we know they were victorious for being the source of vital inspiration. The evidence has been the inseparable revival of the Armenian nation and church, both gaining big despite the many odds through our history, political upheavals, and persecutions. For our people martyrdom was part of our lives as Vartanank "revisited" in our times one hundred years ago in 1915, when the Genocide against the Armenian nation was perpetrated by the Turks.

The real question is this: did we survive? Yes indeed, unlike other nations, bigger and stronger than the Armenians, who vanished or changed their identity. Even Persia, our enemy at that time, became subject to the Arabs some two hundred years after the Battle of Avarair. They also lost their native language, their national scripts and literature, their religion extinguished, and Islam dominated. This is the answer coming as an eternal echo from the battlefield: **Armenia survived with its original religion, alphabet, and literature, with its history written genuinely inherited from the Golden Age Armenia (5th c.).** The Legacy of St. Vartan Mamikonian belonged to all generations as a timely legacy.

Therefore, our annual celebrations do not represent mere tribute to the past; rather, Vartanank illustrated true values for survival of a nation, *confessing the Armenian Church as their mother, and the Gospel of Christ as their father*. I conclude my speech quoting from the eloquent address of the late Prof. James Etmekjian:

"Upon the shoulders of the Armenians spread all over the Diaspora two major tasks are pressing these days. On the one hand to stand beside our small and precious Armenia, our Fatherland, to the best of our abilities, so that it may stay forever the House of our religion and culture shedding light and spreading their rays toward us. On the other hand, we may contribute to that same radiance through our constant dedication and sacrifice to assure the permanence of that light over the Armenians, primarily by keeping alive the spirit of Vartanank. That way indeed we assure we can rightfully reminisce the international contribution of the Armenians, initiated in the 4th century and glorified in the 5th century. This should be indeed the drive and the true purpose of our annual celebrations."

"FOURTEEN GENERATIONS"
The Silver Star on the Spot of the Manger in Bethlehem With Its 14 Points

The Star on the Manger

Curiosity sometimes proves educational. In this case, it was for sure. Recently, I learned something important when Mr. Harold Mgrublian, a dedicated member of the Los Angeles Armenian community and the Vice-Chairman of the Ararat Home for the Aged for many years asked these questions: *Why the Star of the Manger in Bethlehem had 14 points or rays, and why that number and not less or more?* My answer was simple: "*I have been in Bethlehem and even performed Holy Mass exactly over the Manger many years ago on Christmas Eve of 1955, on the orders of the Acting Patriarch, Archbishop Yeghishe Derderian, and had seen the wide spread impressive Star, but never thought about counting the points."* Harold, a retired engineer of metallurgy, while visiting Bethlehem with his wife Alice was impressed by the Star and its points. He was curious to know why fourteen. I would imagine nobody in the Patriarchate was interested to know or to count the points.

Asking the question to the local Armenian and Greek priests in Bethlehem if they knew the answer, he was hopeless. They had no idea, nor were they interested in it. Upon his return to the hotel in Jerusalem, Mgrublian asked about the "number." He was advised to see a certain historian who could help him. The answer he gathered was the *"Fourteen Generations,"* repeated three times in the opening chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, marking the descendants from Abraham to King David 14 generations, and from David to the Babylonian Exile 14 generations, and from the Exile to the Birth of Jesus 14 generations.

Harold, the grandson of an Armenian priest, Der Garabed Kahana Mgrublian of Aintab, is an intelligent, interesting, and inte-

Star of Manger in Bethlehem

rested person with a sharp memory at his age of 88. He was always involved in many Armenian activities in southern California. He told me about his grandfather's ordination into the priesthood in 1905 when he went to Sis, Cilicia, with other candidates to be ordained by **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan of Cilicia**, and upon his return to serve the Armenian Church near Aintab. Harold told me he visited Aintab and went to the village his grandfather Der Garabed Kahana served as a parish priest, and reported with exact locations and names. Harold, an American born Armenian, is fluent in Turkish and that made his inquiries easier.

Biblical Evidence

Fourteen generations are recorded in the Gospels from the Babylonian Exile to the Birth of Jesus. What is the history behind it? Jews were exiled to Babylon three times: in 598 BC, centuries after the Davidic Kingdom, in 587 BC, and finally in 582 BC, with a deportation 10,000 people total. We read about the exile from Jerusalem to Babylon in Kings II chapters 24 and 25, leaving behind a ruined Temple by the fire, and city's walls ruined. It was only by the orders of Cyrus II of Assyria that the exiled returned to Jerusalem and restored the Temple in the year 515 BC, marking the end of the exile.

Among those returned was Zerubabbel, a descendant of King David, who assumed the governorate of Jerusalem. He was the grandson of king Jechonia and the son of Salathiel, as we read in the Gospels of Matthew (1:12) and Luke (3:27). He was assisted by Joshua, the high priest. Zerubabbel is known as the ancestor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Prophets were also instrumental in the establishment of the lineage from King David down to Jesus, who prophesied saying*: "A virgin will bear a son whose name shall be called Immanuel, meaning God with us."* Among the prophets are prominent Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah who proclaimed the revelation of God, thus paving the way to the Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

The closing verse in Matthew's Gospel says it all. *"Thus, from Abraham to David 14 generations, from David to the Babylonian exile 14 generations, and from the exile in Babylon to Christ 14 generations."* The Evangelist adds immediately the announcement of the Birth of Jesus, saying, *"And the Birth of Jesus was as follows."*

Three times fourteen generations shine through the fourteen rays of the Star of the Manger. Here is a lesson to learn.

RENOVATION OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE CATHEDRAL IN JERUSALEM (1962 - 1972)

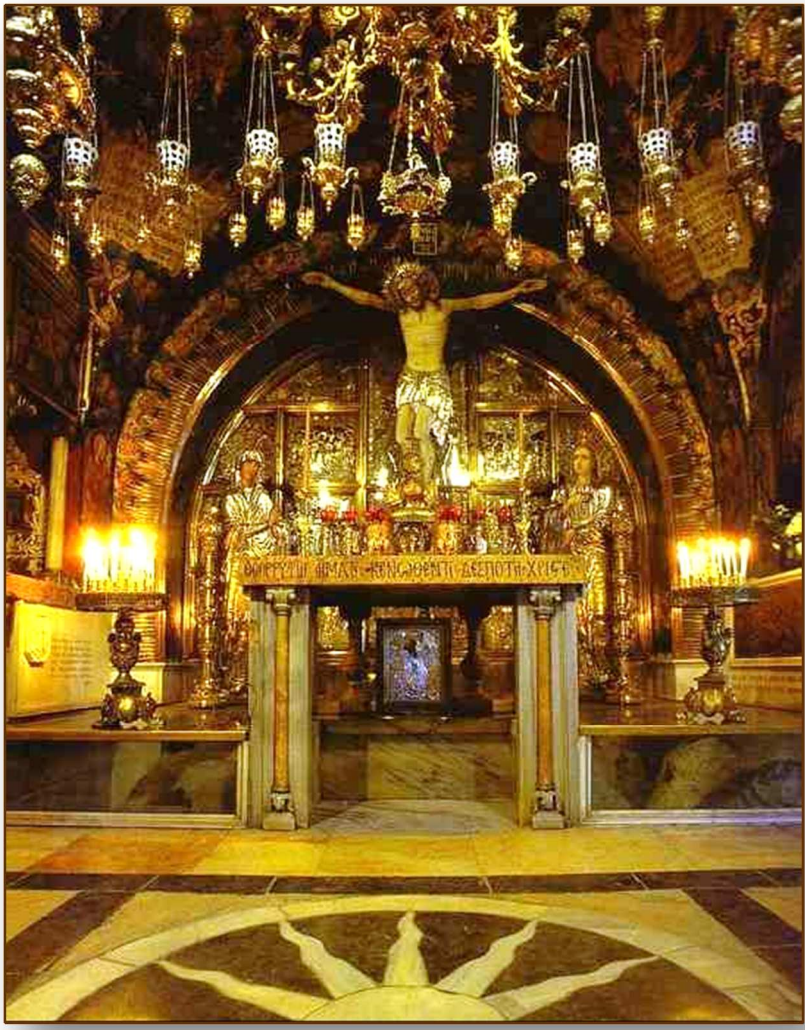
International Project

Pilgrimages to the Holy Land have led Christians down the centuries to Jerusalem where the Main Sanctuary is shown as the **Cathedral of the Holy Sepulchre** that enshrines the **Tomb of Christ.** Pilgrims from the Armenian Dioceses of America take the trip every year from New York and Los Angeles to participate in the celebrations of the Holy Week at the **Armenian Cathedrals of St. James and the Holy Sepulchre.** The Holy Week in Jerusalem is observed according to the Julian Calendar that usually dates Easter Sunday after the celebration in the West.

All sanctuaries in Jerusalem have three custodians, the Catholics, the Greeks, and the Armenians, who equally keep the holy places for centuries according to their rights and privileges. The International Cathedral is the Holy Sepulchre originally built in its primitive style by Byzantine Emperor Heraclius in 626 AD. The Cathedral went into renovation through the centuries many times, and presently it took ten years for complete renovation, from 1962 to 1972. The three custodian denominations were responsible for the fundraising, which started and ended with success.

Historic Review

The 7th century Armenian historian Bishop Sebeos has written an internationally acclaimed book, titled *"History of Heraclius,"* where the invasion of Persia against Jerusalem in 614 is reported. The Holy City demolished and the site of the Tomb of Christ desecrated, and finally the "Triumphant Cross" taken into captivity. In 626, Heraclius waged war against Persia, invaded Ctesiphon, capital of Persia, and returned the Holy Relic to Jerusalem.



Cathedral of the Holy Sepulchre

The Emperor also restored the Tomb of Christ. Later, in 1050, a Sanctuary was built on the Tomb, and the following century the Crusaders built the present Cathedral in 1130 with the interior chapels, including Golgotha. Later in 1310, the Cathedral was renovated which 500 years later in 1808 was partially destroyed when it was engulfed in flames. The present Cathedral stands from the 1810 renovation, which needed fundamental repair in the 20th century. This was the case when the three Patriarchs undertook the costly project in 1962. It was naturally the duty of our past generation to embark on the fundraising project to be able to provide one-third of the total cost of 900,000 British Pounds on behalf of the Armenian Patriarchate. **Patriarch Yeghishe Derderian** headed the responsible project as the joint committee of the three denominations signed on April 18, 1962 the construction contract with the French firm *Dechan,* which began the work on June 1st, based on the previously designed architectural plans.

The Armenian Portion

The first message of appeal arrived from Holy Etchmiadzin by **His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians** through his Encyclical dated April 30, 1962, where request and duty were specified and addressed at every Armenian individual to participate in donations, large or small. He stated that the *"project and the fundraising cannot be postponed given the renovation of the pan-Christian Cathedral of the Holy Sepulchre which should begin without delay, and that a united effort on our part was essential."*

"SION," the official magazine of the Armenian Patriarchate came with a special appeal by Patriarch Yeghishe Derderian, saying: *"Although a great project without precedence, it is by no means an impossible project indeed, given the preservation of the Armenian Jerusalem in the Universal Jerusalem as our supreme and national duty."* The message was well received by the Armenian media and the respective communities, as seen in the successful result of the fundraising efforts in general. Initially major contributions were anticipated to move the fundraising campaign more effectively. The first signal arrived from Portugal.

The Gulbenkian Foundation

The first to respond to the appeal generously was the honorable **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon** in Portugal, which pledged the one-third of the Armenian Patriarchate's commitment with a special communiqué, marking the endangered ancient Cathedral and donating 100,000 British Pounds, with an attached note that *"the Armenian communities are responsible to raise the balance."* The large contribution was specified to be paid over six years, considering the duration of the renovation as announced, and soon 16,666 Pounds was ordered to send annually, the first of which was sent at once. The Foundation pledged to pay also the Armenian share of the huge cupola's renovation as shown below.

The Dioceses of North America

New York was the first to be involved in the fund raising activities headed by the Primate **Archbishop Sion Manoogian** and benefactor Haik Kavookjian who called for the formation of a Central Committee, with Charles Karageuzian as treasurer. Archbishop Sion made the petition in the official announcement of the project, saying: *"The Cathedral of the Holy Sepulchre was last renovated in 1808, and today it is in dire need to be renovated again."* With preliminary donations $383,000 were raised from the Eastern Diocese, and the grateful Patriarch Yeghishe Derderian came in person to New York to thank the Diocese for the prompt action.

His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians Visits Jerusalem

To place the fundraising on a national scale, **His Holiness Catholicos Vasken I** paid his first official visit to the Holy Land to preside over the National Fund Raising for the great project. His first step was to form a **National Central Commission.** With his entourage the Catholicos arrived in Jerusalem on October 15, 1963, for the main purpose of the project. Present were to welcome the Pontiff and take part in the deliberations were Archbishops Sion Manoogian, New York, Serovbe Manoogian, Paris, Papken Abadian,

Buenos Aires, Torkom Manoogian, California, Haigazoun Abrahamian, Holy Etchmiadzin, benefactors Alex Manoogian, Sarkis Zartarian, John Kurkjian, Yervant Husisian, and three prominent architects.

The Central Committee under the presidency of His Holiness Vasken I, chaired by Archbishop Sion Manoogian from the outset made two important decisions:

1. *All contributions must be centralized with the Treasurer Charles Karageuzian in New York.*

2. *Payments for the construction shall be paid gradually upon the invoices issued by the united office of the three denominations, the Catholics, the Greeks and the Armenians."*

The presiding Catholicos adjourned the meeting with his message informing the members of his eyewitness accounts while visiting the Cathedral of the Holy Sepulchre: "*Under the three rightful denominations' responsibility the huge task shall be carried out through the specialist architects whose wisdom and talent will oversee the renovations."* By the end of 1967, the fundraising had reached $500,000.

The Actual Renovations

Obviously, the renovations were both from the exterior and the interior of the Cathedral, including the huge cupola, for which the three nations were responsible. As for the repairs of the chapels inside the church that belonged to each of the three Patriarchates, were the responsibility of each owner, especially if we bear in mind that through the centuries and up to this day *"to have the right and the privilege"* has always been strictly enforced by each. Sometimes ugly events have even occurred due to unnecessary trespassing. Despite the fact, the entire renovation was accomplished in ten years without hindrances, with checks and balances under control.

The large dome of the Cathedral rests high on 24 columns and definitely needed fundamental repair. It was the last part of the construction work which ended in 1980 with the funds of the

three denominations equally $500,000 from each. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, as said earlier, came up with an additional $180,000 to meet the expenses for the cupola. The balance was raised, and the entire project on behalf of the Armenian Patriarchate reached TWO MILLION DOLLARS, adding the last 500,000 to the previously collected and spent $1,500,000.

Chapels Belonging to the Armenian Patriarchate

The Armenian chapels and the respective responsibilities comprised as follows. St.Gregory the Illuminator church, the church in the Upper Room of Golgotha, the chapel of St. Mary the Mother of God, the chapel of the oil bearing women to the Tomb, the Place where Jesus fainted, the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, the chapel of St. John the Evangelist, the chapel of the Distribution of the Garments, as well as the special rights related to the Luminous Tomb of Christ. The remaining 20 chapels inside the Cathedral, belonging to each of the three denominations, began renovations by their own individual funds in 1964 and completed through the following decade. As planned, the exterior of the Cathedral was renovated and completed first in 1966, as reported in the "*SION,"* the official monthly of the Patriarchate. One decade of duration for the renovation of the Holy Sepulchre Cathedral proved honorable accomplishment, both for the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Armenian Church, and the nation.

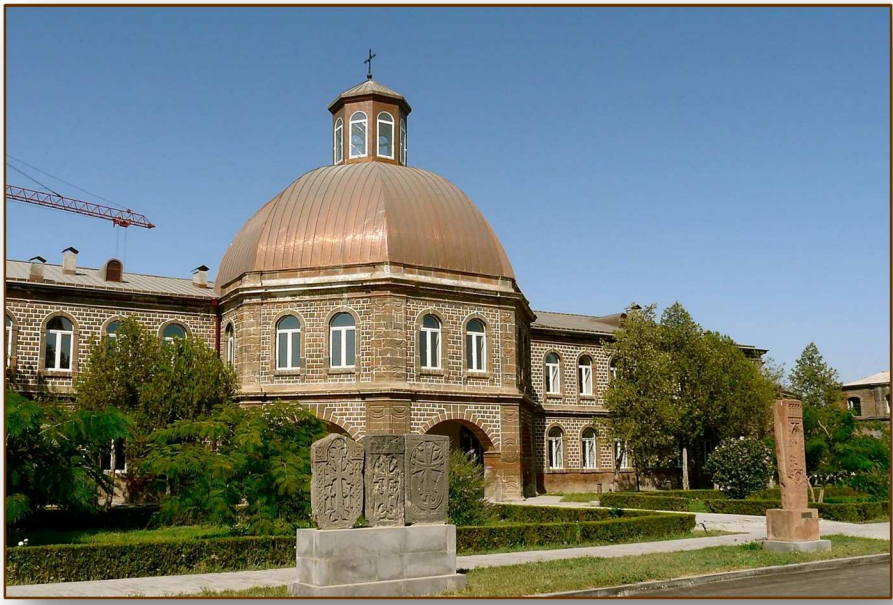
KEVORIAN SEMINARY
OF THE MOTHER SEE OF
HOLY ETCHMIADZIN (1874 - PRESENT)
THE SEMINARY OF ARMASH
NEAR CONSTANTINOPLE (1889 - 1915)

Three Institutions

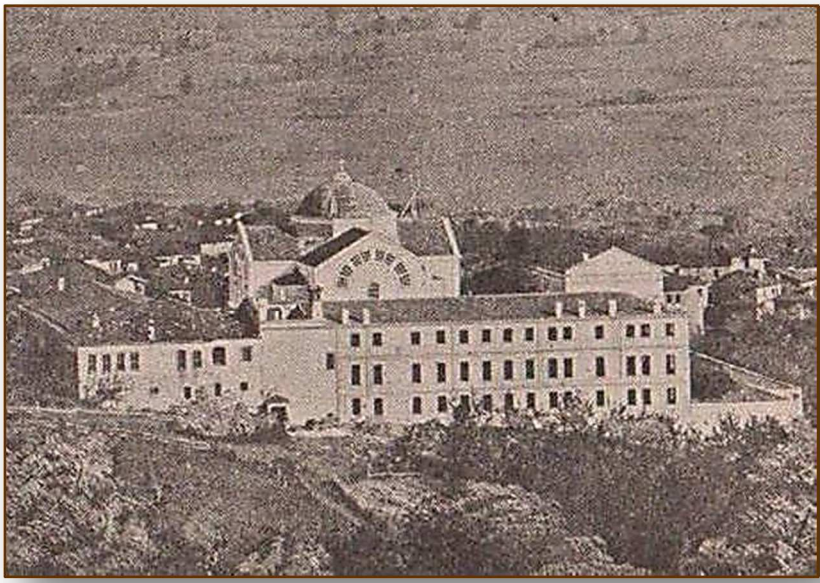
The Kevorkian Seminary of Holy Etchmiadzin, founded by **Catholicos Kevork IV in 1874**, and the **Seminary of Armash in 1889,** under **Patriarch Khoren Ashekian of Constantinople** became the twin centers for preparation of the leading clergy of the Armenian Church in the East and the West at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The **Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem** was established earlier in 1843, by **Patriarch Zechariah Kopetsi** (1833-1846). The seminary played an important role, providing high-ranking clergy, especially during **Patriarchs of Jerusalem Yesayi Garabedian** (1864-1885), and **Harutiun Vehabedian** (1889-1910).

The Jerusalem Seminary closed its doors during the first two decades of the 20th century due to the First World War and started its mission successfully after 1921 when **Patriarchs Yeghishe Tourian** (1921-1930) and **Torkom Koushagian** (1931-1939) gave the Seminary first priority, both of them leading clergy from the Seminary of Armash who revived their *Alma Mater* in Jerusalem. Armash lived a short time, 25 years only, after offering our church and nation remarkable leaders, and was desecrated by the Turks in 1915. Presently, the Kevorkian Seminary is granted University status by the State of Armenia, and is providing clergy in considerable number.

When we learn about our eminent clergy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, we think about their religious education, their *alma maters,* the seminaries where they were trained during the most turbulent times of the Russian Emperors' oppressions. To cope with the Russian oppressions, on the one hand, **Catholicos**



Kevorkian Seminary of Etchmiadzin



The Seminary of Armash

Mkrtich I Khrimian of All Armenians, was concerned and persistant not to surrender any property to the Russians belonging to the Mother See. Simultaneously, endless persecutions and massacres by the Ottoman Turks, on the other hand, culminated in the Genocide of the Armenian race in 1915. World Wars I and II, followed by the Soviet anti-religious harsh policy in Armenia made matters worse. Against those calamities, the three Seminaries in Etchmiadzin, Armash, and Jerusalem, struggled hard to educate church leaders and save the Armenian Church and religion from total collapse in Eastern and Western Armenia.

Kevorkian Seminary

The founder of the Kevorkian Seminary in Etchmiadzin was **Catholicos Kevork IV of All Armenians** (1866-1882) in whose name the school opened its doors in 1874. It took a long time for graduates to be ordained. The founder did not see the first fruits of his labor, but only during his successors, **Catholicos Magar I** (1885-1891) and **Mkrtich I Khrimian** (1892-1907) graduates came to fill important posts in the dioceses in Armenia, such as Houssig Zohrabian, Tirayr Ter Hovhannessian, Karekin Hovsepiants (Catholicos), Kevork Chorekjian (Catholicos), Gomidas Vartabed Soghomonian (musicologist), Garabed Ter Mkrtchyan, and others. All the above were sent by their superiors to Germany to further their higher education in German Universities. They faithfully completed their studies, wrote their theses on Armenian Church theology and history, and returned to Holy Etchmiadzin as lecturers and later served as diocesan bishops.

Beside those leading clergy, Kevorkian Seminary offered lay graduates in greater numbers and quality, who studied the Armenian ancient history and literature, and re-edited those valuable medieval texts and revived them as historical, linguistic, theological, liturgical, and biblical sources. Among them Academicians Stepan Malkhassian, Hrachia Acharyan, Hakob Manandian, Manoog Abeghian, Yervant Ter Minassian, Hagop Topjian, just to name a few, who became the pioneers in their respective fields. Their publications, original, complete, and irreplaceable, still are of great use in today's

scholarship. They also edited the *Ararat* monthly of the Mother See with their religious colleagues and turned it into a unique source of research. Some of the clergy and lay graduates named above became the founders of the **State University of Yerevan** in 1923. **Professor Hakob Manandian** was the first Rector of the University.

Seminary of Armash

Not far from Armenia, near Constantinople, the Seminary of Armash was inaugurated under Abbot Superior **Patriarch Khoren Ashekian of Constantinople** in 1889 by **Bishop Malachia Ormanian,** Dean, a learned cleric, who previously lectured at the Kevorkian Seminary during Catholicos Magar I, who ordained him a bishop. Ormanian, however, was not permitted to stay in Armenia by the Russian authorities. The Patriarch being *ex officio* the Abbot of the Seminary, Malachia Ormanian was assigned as the first Dean who most capably founded the educational system with a set of bylaws and detailed curriculum. In 1896, upon his election as Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Malachia Ormanian was succeeded by **Bishop Yeghishe Tourian** as Dean of the Seminary.

Bishop Ormanian was a convert from the Armenian Catholic faith to the Mother Church of Armenia, who, a decade earlier in 1879, during the patriarchate of **Archbishop Nersess Varjabedian,** was admitted as a clergy of the Armenian Church with his 75 followers, 45 men, and 30 women. The same day the Patriarch had granted him the degree of *dzayrakooyn vardapet* (Doctor of Theology), and assigned him preacher in the metropolitan churches. Later, Bishop Ormanian was elected primate of the important Diocese of Erzeroum.

The Seminary offered the Armenian Church 37 clergy in 25 years. While just starting their services in the Armenian Dioceses of Anatolia, some of them martyred at the beginning of the Genocide of 1915. They were summoned for no reason and killed following untold tortures. Bishops Ormanian and Tourian ordained 14 clergy each over the first two decades. In the final year, the remaining graduates were ordained by Archbishop Stepanos Hovagimian of

Nicomedia, and by Bishop Mesrob Naroyan, Dean, a 1901 graduate of Armash. Naroyan was ordained a bishop by **Catholicos Kevork V Soureniants** in 1913. He was the last Dean of the Armash Seminary when the Turks attacked the church and the seminary early in 1915 and scattered the seminarians. The students of the last class were expelled with the Dean to Constantinople, where the last two graduates were ordained priests. They soon joined the marches to an uncertain destination as part of the Armenian Genocide.

Bishop Ormanian ordained the first seven in 1895, and the second four while in Armash. He was elected Patriarch of Constantinople in 1896, where he ordained three more of the graduates and assigned them in the metropolitan churches as preachers. His successor Bishop Yeghishe Tourian ordained his pupils, first in 1901 ten candidates at once, and in 1904, while serving as the primate of the diocese of Smyrna, when he visited Armash and ordained four more of his students. The graduates, well prepared, spread all over the dioceses under the Patriarchate of Constantinople and revived the communities as educated leaders bringing a new and unified quality of service. Unfortunately, the genocide demolished everything, monasteries, churches, monks, clergy, and students, leaving behind death and destruction.

The Aftermath

Survival followed. The dark clouds overshadowed by the terrible persecutions on both fronts, as the Soviets invaded and religion in Armenia suffered just as the Western front did by the massacres. Those dedicated members of the Seminaries who survived clung to their sacred mission and established “new” seminaries in Jerusalem and the Cilician See in Antelias, Lebanon. Leaders like *Archbishops Yeghishe Tourian, Torkom Koushagian*, *Babken Gulesserian, Shahe Kasparian*, and *Paren Melkonian*, revived those centers of education and new generations of clergy emerged in those two locations, while the Mother See and the Kevorkian Seminary remained totally in the brink of collapse, just for a while.

After 1945, the new **Catholicos Kevork VI Chorekjian** (1945-1954) sparked the candle courageously in the midst of a dangerous turmoil, and especially after a decade when **Catholicos Vasken I Baljian** (1955-1994) ascended to the Throne, the Armenian Church experienced revival in its full sense. Tolerance earned from the authorities through high diplomacy on the part of Kevork VI and Vasken I, led the church to greater heights. The Armenians in the dispersion saw for the first time a Catholicos from Armenia, Vasken I, to visit his flock ten times during his long pontificate of 39 years.

The State of Armenia showed respect toward the Supreme Patriarch and numerous confiscations removed, among them, the resuming of the Kevorkian Seminary, the publication of the *"Etchmiadzin"* monthly replacing the old *"Ararat"* periodical, and above all the return of the Patriarchal Palace (the *Veharan)* in 1957, after an abuse of 35 years by the Soviet army. Many renovations took place steadily and consistent achievements were accomplished by Catholicos Vasken I. He ushered in a new and productive era in the Armenian Church at home and abroad. Many benefactors were personally in contact with the Catholicos as he, for the first time, embarked in his numerous Pontifical Visits to the farthest corners of the world and met those noble souls in person.

The Present

The 20th century experienced tragic upheavals, but wise leaders "transferred" the old institutions into the new: Etchmiadzin, Jerusalem, Antelias, and briefly the Holy Cross Seminary in Istanbul by **Patriarch Karekin Khachadourian**, a 1901 graduate of the Seminary of Armash. Presently the first three are functioning and clergy are forthcoming, especially from Kevorkian Seminary, and later in 1992, from the Vaskenian Seminary in Sevan, inaugurated through the efforts of the present incumbent **His Holiness Karekin II Nersissian of All Armenians.**

Vaskenian Seminary

The Vicar of the Ararat Diocese in Yerevan, Archbishop Karekin Nersissian, embarked on this most worthy task, to open a semi-

nary in Sevan in the name of his Superior Catholicos Vasken I, while still living. With his blessings and in his presence the Seminary opened its doors on the shores of Lake Sevan in 1992. It began in modest conditions in the existing old premises, but soon, by the steady efforts of the Archbishop of Yerevan, (soon the head of the Armenian Church), built a monumental complex with a chapel, dormitory and classrooms by generous donors from Damascus, Syria, Mr. and Mrs. Karnig and Anahid Yacoubians. At the entrance of the Vaskenian Seminary, the full size statue of **Catholicos Vasken I of All Armenians** stands tall as a memorial to His Holiness**.**

The Seminary is planned as a preparatory for the students who after graduation are qualified to enter Kevorkian Seminary for their remaining studies, following which they are ordained deacons. Upon their final graduation, if the Catholicos and the Dean of Kevorkian Seminary see fit, candidates upon their wishes are ordained either celibate or married priests. The former join the Brotherhood of the Mother See, and the latter are assigned parish priests under diocesan primates.

EXPEDITION TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT ARAGADZ "For Search of the Illuminator's Lantern" Catholicos Karekin I Hovsepiants (1867 - 1952)

The Great Patriot

Catholicos Karekin I of the Great House of Cilicia (1945-1952) passed away peacefully in his pontifical residence in Antelias, Lebanon on June 22, 1952, at age 85, the year I was a senior at the Seminary. We took turns reading from the Gospels while His Holiness was lying in state at the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

The nationally famed Pontiff had a remarkable life as a great patriot and a distinguished scholar who participated in two consecutive battles against the invading Turks with the blessing of **His Holiness Kevork V Soureniants Catholicos of All Armenians** who had ordained Karekin a bishop in 1917. In May 1918, Bishop Karekin Hovsepiants was among the army at Sartarabad where Armenians fought valiantly and drew the enemy back from the borders of Armenia. As the outcome of the battle, two days later on **May 28, 1918, the Republic of Armenia** was proclaimed in Tiflis and moved to Yerevan. Unfortunately, the Republic was short-lived as the 1917 Revolution in Russia toppled the Russian Empire, and Lenin proclaimed the Soviet Socialist Union. In 1921, the Soviet army invaded Caucasia and the Bolsheviks took control over Armenia and the two neighboring countries.

In 1920, Bishop Karekin Hovsepiants volunteered to help the Armenian army engaged in a similar battle to defend Kars, a fortress city on the border of Turkey. He was there with a procession of priests and faithful following a Divine Liturgy he had performed in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Kars. Upon his arrival, he found the army trapped and the Armenian General helpless who asked

the Bishop to surrender by raising the white flag, so that he could save those Armenians captured in the gorges. Risking his life, he did everything to help. He found a way to escape under disguise via Alexandrapol back to Etchmiadzin.

On The Way to Mount Aragadz

Bishop Karekin Hovsepiants undertook his second expedition to the summit of Aragadz in 1925 at age 58. He was 23 when he climbed the mountain as a deacon in 1890. This time he took the journey as a scholar stopping at each monument on his way from **Biurakan**, **Oshagan**, and **Ashtarak**, after paying a visit to the tomb of the great **Saint, Mesrob Mashtots**, in the church built in Oshagan by **Catholicos Kevork IV**. The Bishop made a remark on the construction of the church as "*architecturally very poor.*" He was accompanied by two physicians an engineer and *"a happy humorist young man"* who was always by his side as his helper.

The group of five visited **St. Kevork Church of Mughni**, went through Ashtarak to visit **Hovhanna Vank** and **Garpi**, *"all of which famous in our church and cultural history."* In Mughni, as stated by Bishop Karekin, were kept manuscripts written in the 15th century, *"enriched with valuable miniature illustrations."* In Garpi *"the ruins of a basilica church, as well as sculptured monuments of graves were seen, which had prime importance in our studies of ancient arts of architecture and sculpture."* In his opinion, the architecture of Hovhanna Vank *"represented the most glorious cathedral of the Vachutian princes."*

As I write on both Hovhanna Vank and St. Kevork Church of Mughni, I recall my visit to those same shrines in 1976 by the permission of our beloved **Catholicos Vasken I** of Blessed Memory. Hovhanna Vank, described by Bishop Hovsepiants in his memoirs as an important center of education from the 13th to the 17th centuries, has been *"a center of learning institution of the Pontifical See,"* where numerous manuscripts were written under Bishop Hamazasp Mamikonian, the Abbot (1279-1311).

During my recent studies on the English translation of the 8th century historian *Ghevond the Priest* who wrote on the Arab Invasions into Armenia, I came across the name of Bishop Hamazasp who had sponsored the earliest available manuscript of the Historian *Ghevond*, presently kept in the **Yerevan Matenadaran of St. Mesrob Mashtots**, bearing the catalogue number 1902. In the colophon of the manuscript I read, *"With his own expenses Lord Hamazasp of the House of Mamikoniank had the manuscript copied by the scribe Sarkis during the years Hamazasp was the Abbot of the Monastery."*

The pilgrims continued their expedition trip to **Talish** to visit the oldest Armenian **Church of Aruj built in 668**. Then the upward adventure toward the summit resumed on horseback and by foot, since the carts could not pass the gorges. Historian Bishop Karekin indicated that they were just across *"the ancient artificial irrigation canals which required further studies because Mount Aragadz was truly the basin of Central Armenia, the Ararat Valley, Shirak, and Aparan, along with numerous springs and brooks."* The group of five rested for a while *"under the leafy tall and thick trees,"* had their dinner, drank from the water of Dzophanes, a tribute to the Ambert River.

Climbing further uphill they stopped at Ambert, one of the most ancient fortresses of Armenia, *"which had survived three periods in our history, the Urartian, the Bagratids, and the Zacharids."* There was the church built by Vahram Pahlavuni in 1026, *"that was revealed recently through our (Bishop Karekin) research."* Vahram was known as the builder of the **Marmashen Church** in 1029, which as of today stands intact in its original structure. The walls of Ambert are from the Zacharid times with an inscription by Vatche Vatchutian who has built the **Church of Saghmosavank** and the **Church of Tegher**, both standing intact as of today.

While climbing Mount Aragadz, the 58-year young Bishop Karekin Hovsepiants and his followers were looking at Mount Ararat and Massis from the opposite side. Amazed, the Bishop stated, *"Our fatherland should have been truly a country of fine arts and*

poetry." The following day "*some of us"* had already reached the summit, passing through the narrow paths, *"upward by the abysses of the open gorges of Ambert,"* always on horseback until they arrived to the *Black Lake* where icy streams accumulated from the snow. There the Bishop amused watching *"a pleasant scene for us as the chain of the sheep entered the Lake and crossed the other side all washed and clean."*

At the Summit of Aragadz

He wrote in his *Memoirs*, *"My purpose was to isolate myself and meditate as soon as I reached the peak of the Mountain, lonely within my inner solitude and bring my superb impressions into life."* As they finally arrived at the top of the "*Four Summit Aragadz*" *(Karagagat Aragadz)*, the group was already divided into four, since both, Badvakan and Arakel Honhannissians, could not continue due to their painful feet. Bishop Karekin witnessed with his penetrating eyes the sight of *"the three deep valleys and the heights of Ambert, Kasakh, and Mantash with their same name rivers."*

Distinguishing the *River Kasakh,* Bishop Karekin was noting the sources of the river that sprang from *Aparan,* home of princes *Gntunik*. Aparan was famous with its 5th century very ancient churches and the sculptures on the walls. There was another even more ancient monument with its Greek inscription, which also "*through our [the Bishop's] research was known to the scholars."*

"I was on the highest southern summit of Aragadz," Bishop Karekin wrote in his memoirs, who was watching with his spiritual eyes the *"four summits and the Lantern of the Illuminator hanging on them,"* stating at once that the memory of the miracle of the Lantern of the Illuminator had been transferred to us by the Historian Vartan. *"Oil is not poured in the Lantern, but only the tears of the Illuminator that gives light as darkness falls on our land of Armenia."* Back from Aragadz they spent the night on the shores of the Lake. The next day the group returned safely to Holy Etchmiadzin deeply comforted and greatly accomplished a lifetime sacred pilgrimage.

On the Top of the Pyramids

The reader of this epilogue will say surprisingly what a weird contrast from Mount Aragadz in Armenia to the Pyramids in Egypt. *"This is a most strange epilogue,"* the reader will say rightfully. What do the Pyramids have to do with Aragadz? I can say simply *"a stupid heroism,"* an adventure whose responsibility fell neither on me nor on my colleague Noubar Kupelian, presently the Chancellor of the Eastern Diocese in New York. It was totally against our will to climb the Pyramids most reluctantly and fearfully climbing the huge rocks following the steps of Bishop Terenig Poladian, the Dean of the Seminary. Both Noubar and I were admitted to the Seminary and had traveled by sea in September, 1949. We were back for the 1950 summer vacation to be with our families.

On vacation was also in August of 1950 the Most Eminent scholar **Catholicos His Holiness Karekin I Hovsepiants**, the same Bishop Karekin who had reached the summit of Aragadz 25 years earlier in August 1925. His Holiness was accompanied by Bishop Terenig Poladian, who called both of us, 17-year old students, to pay our respects to the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia at the *Mina House* Hotel, at the foot of the Pyramids and receive his blessings. We respectfully did. When His Holiness the Catholicos asked questions as to how we were doing at the Seminary, I humbly responded that I had written a study on his voluminous book *"The Khaghbakyank and the Proshyank"* as my first elementary attempt required by our teacher of ancient literature Simon Simonian. The Catholicos was happy and curious to know if I remembered anything from the book.

So far so good, but the rest was a risky and the unwise attempt when we followed Bishop Poladian to climb the Pyramids. We did fearfully rock after rock, each one of them as tall as myself and fin-ally reached the pick of the Pyramids where we found absolutely nothing inspiring, but only expressing our fear disillusioned for our safe descend in one piece and return to our parents. I said, *"What business did we have to place ourselves somewhere where eagles and ravens landed from the times of the Pharaohs."*

THE SEMINARY OF ARMASH
223 MANUSCRIPTS
ST. GARABED OF HAKSDOON
33 MANUSCRIPTS
ALL VICTIMS OF THE 1915 GENOCIDE

The Manuscripts of Armash

Armash, a town near Constantinople, was famous with its *St. Charkhapan* (Defender against the Evil) *St. Mary Mother-of-God* Monastery and the *Seminary* established in 1889 by **Bishop Malachia Ormanian** and with the blessings of **Patriarch Khoren Ashekian**. The Seminary lasted 25 years and was sacked and destroyed by the Ottoman Turks in 1915. The last class of the Seminary was dismissed and expelled to Constantinople.

The ancient Monastery revived with the Seminary, where 223 Armenian manuscripts were treasured until 1915. **Dr. Hakob Topjian**, a graduate of the Kevorkian Seminary of Holy Etchmiadzin, was invited to Armash to study the manuscripts and prepare a catalogue describing each collection. The catalogue was published by the Seminary; the catalogue survived but the manuscripts were lost forever. Thanks to Dr. Topjian's tedious work through which we now know what kind of manuscripts were kept and what they actually represented. The same unfortunate fate fell on St. Garabed Monastery of Hakstoon, south of Erzerum, along with its 33 Armenian manuscripts, catalogued by one of the leading graduates of the Seminary of Armash **Besak Dz. Vardapet Der Khorenian**. Here again the catalogue is available but the manuscripts are lost. I have presented them listed below.

The 223 Armenian manuscripts were treasured in Armash since the 18th century under the guidance of **Patriarch Zechariah of Gaghzevan**, who was at the same time the Abbot of the Monastery. He had commissioned Bishop Bartholimeos Gaputikian to restore the Cathedral and establish the Seminary, where he classified the manuscripts. Today both listings of Armash and Hakstoon and their

proper description speak about the 256 volumes forever lost, victims of Turkish vandalism. The Armenian Church and the Academia are forever indebted to both researchers, to Dr. Topjian and the Archimandrite Besag Der Khorenian, for providing us with the catalogues and the identification of each book.

Donors and Content
Of the Manuscripts

As soon as **Bishop Malachia Ormanian** and **Yeghishe Vardapet Tourian** organized the Seminary in Armash, no later than 1890 they established the Library of the manuscripts donated in the past. New manuscripts were donated totaling 223 according to the catalogue studied by Dr. Topjian. Most of the collections were received by the donors of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. A good number of the manuscripts were donated in the 19th century by **Patriarchs of Constantinople Stepanos Aghavni** and **Stepanos Maghakian**. Archbishop Boghos Taktakian, Bishop Kevork Alexanian, the Kirejian family, and Vardapets Boghos and Tateos, Yeghishe Tourian and Krikor of Alemdagh further enriched the Library of the Manuscripts with their valuable donations.

The oldest among the volumes are considered the *"Commentary of the Gospel of John*" by Nana (1351), the *"Commentary of Luke"* (1354), a *"Gospel Book"* (1433), *"Book of the Sacrament of Ordinations"* (1449). Manuscripts written on vellum were the *"Unabridged Canon Book"*, and four books by Epiphanus of Cyprus: *"On the Songs of the Book of Psalms", "Church Calendar", "Hymnbook",* and the *"Prayerbook of St. Cyprian."*

Among them were famous for their art of miniature a *"Book of Psalms"* dated 1607, discovered by Hovhannes Vardapet in the Monastery of Haghbat. As noted by H. Topjian, it contained the illustrations of *David the Prophet*, harp in his hand, the figures of Prophets *Moses, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Joachim and Anna "illustrated with excellent artwork."* The *"Prayerbook"* of Cyprian dated 1652 contained numerous miniatures representing *St. Nersess the Graceful, St. Gregory of Narek, St. James the Brother of the Lord,*

Stephen the Protomartyr, and St. Mary the Mother-of-God, all of them enriched with *"marvelous miniatures and illustrations."*

The Manuscripts of Armash are catalogued in groups by the earliest dates of the *Four Gospels*, the oldest among them written in 1433, *Hymnbooks* and *Books of Melodies* from 1590, five *Books of Holy Sacraments* from the 16th century, a *Book of the Sacrament of Ordinations of priests* in 1449. There are numerous *Commentaries*, which were actually sermons on the Books of the Holy Bible whose authors are indicated individually. The Catalogue shows a series of sermons by **Patriarch Hakob Nalian of Constantinople, Catholicos of All Armenians Simeon of Yerevan, and Bishops Bedros Aghamalian** and **Kevork of Smyrna.** Many more manuscripts of greater importance represented the *"Canon Law"* of Mkhitar Gosh, *"Canons of Cyril of Alexandria,""Canons of John Chrysostom",* Krikor Datevatsi's *"Book of Questions"* which *"in this volume is divided into ten volumes,"* as verified by Dr. Hakob Topjian.

Among the lost manuscripts were some important theological and historic original texts, such as *"History of Armenia"* by **Movses Khoranatsi**, two copies, which were seen and studied by Manoug Abeghian and Set Harutiunian who together published it in 1913. Similar texts existed in the catalogue but none of them treated by scholars before they were lost. Also listed are philosophical and astronomical works related to church calendars by the 7th century scientist and geographer **Anania Shirakatsi**, known as *"Lousantsooyts."* Further, three books by **Hakob of Crimea**: *"Commentary on Church Calendar," "On Yearly Cycles of the Calendar,"* and *"The Status of the Armenian Era,"* which began in 551 AD where the author specifies **Hovhannes Sarkavak Vardapet's** source as to how to find the seven cycles of the year calendar and the identity of each *Letter of the Year [Kir Darvo]*.

Apart from the above, the *Catalogue* included the lost manuscripts of medical, scientific, linguistic and musical sources, wishing had they were seen by specialists before they were gone forever, they could have been studied and published for the sake of the future scholarship. There is no doubt if Armash, the Seminary, and

the educated clergy were saved, how much the Armenian Church would have been enriched by those lost sources, and the graduates of the Seminary would have benefited through those valuable books. The chain of destructions by the Ottoman Turks eliminated everything and the remnant were able to rejuvenate religion and culture elsewhere, in Jerusalem and in Antelias.

Among the survivors were Bishops Yeghishe Tourian, Papken Gulesserian, Torkom Koushagian, Shahe Kasparian, Paren Melkonian, who directly arrived from Armash to Jerusalem and Antelias in the 20's and 30's to establish academic centers in both centers of the Armenian Church in the Diaspora. After a decline of ten years, **Tourian and Koushagian became Patriarchs of Jerusalem,** saving the ancient Patriarchate and reviving the Seminary of the Holy Land honorably under the supervision of Gulesserian. **Bishop Papken Gulesserian was consecrated Catholicos Coadjutor of The House of Cilicia**, the most senior of the graduates of the Seminary of Armash, to succeed the aged **Catholicos Sahak II Khabayan**. Unfortunately, Catholicos Papken I passed away in 1936 before Catholicos Sahak II. Sahak II passed away in 1939.

The 33 Manuscripts of St. Garabed Church of Hakstoon, Near Erzeroum

Another brilliant graduate of the Seminary was **Besag Vardapet Der Khorenian,** the young Primate of Kharbert who was martyred by the Turks in 1915. While in office, he visited St. Garabed Church in nearby Hakstoon to study the 33 Armenian manuscripts. He published his review of those volumes when the *Year Book* of the Monastery and the Seminary of Armash was published in 1914, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the famous educational institution. The following is the headlines of his extensive article dated February 22, 1914 in Memuret-ul-aziz (Kharpert).

Hakstoon, written elsewhere also *Hankstoon,* was in the district of *Khortsian*, south of Erzeroum and north of Keghi *"on the top of Aryudz Mountain, far from Keghi for about an hour and a half."* This eminent Primate, and archimandrite, has written the catalogue

and saved the listings for us, but none of the manuscripts survived. Primate Besag Der Khorenian has grouped those 33 manuscripts by their dates while he was the Pastor of the Keghi Armenian community from 1907 to 1912. The Manuscripts are as follows:

Gospel Books	13 units	Dated	1547-1664
Books of Sacraments	six		1682-1703
Missal	one		1786
Collections of Sermons	two		1688-1702
Menologions	five		1682-1702
Daily Bible Readings	four		1576-1702
Breviary-Calendar	one		1750
Church Calendar	one		1750

Our readers may ask *who had heard the name of Hakstoon?* Completely a strange name where there was an Armenian Church with 33 Armenian important manuscripts. Here we have a dedicated *Armashagan Vardapet* **Besag Der Khorenian**, a martyr, whose legacy included the catalogue of those volumes, the description of the books only, but as for the manuscripts, God knows what happened to them.

GOOD TIDINGS OF OUR MARTYRS
THE LUMINOUS TOMB OF CHRIST
EASTER, APRIL 24, 2011

"Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem"
"In the Upper Jerusalem"

It is not the Requiem on Easter Sunday that will mark April 24, but it is the Feast of the Holy Resurrection that will elegantly embrace in its celebration the Genocide and the hymn of "Upper Jerusalem."

Two Inspiring Hymns

In these two inspiring hymns Jerusalem is specifically proclaimed on this year's celebration of Easter on April 24, independent from each other and yet miraculously inherent within themselves. There is no higher witness for the Armenian nation than this year's celebration as the Armenian Church and the entire Christian world led the faithful to praise the Lord recalling the everlasting Resurrection and the Armenian Martyrs memory on the same day. **April 24 is the Feast of the Resurrection and the Memorial Day of the 1915 martyrs of the Armenian people.**

From the Tomb of Christ to the unknown graves, *"neither a dream nor vision,"* but a silent witness of the Armenian Genocide which is singing this year the victory of the Resurrection of Christ and the Armenian nation at the same time. **A supreme coincidence, not only going parallel, but significantly complementing each other, not necessarily a course of sadness and mourning, but a progress toward resurrection and hope, not a way hiding in darkness and injustice perpetrated against a nation, but a revelation of the light and truth, not a verdict of death, but a proclamation of life. We have before us the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide as the witness to all above.**

"Kovia Yerusaghem Uzder"
(Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem)

As on every Easter Sunday, this year also we proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ loudly, and gloriously, by singing the special hymn *"Kovia Yerusaghem uzDer" (Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem)* this time not only dedicated to the Holy Resurrection, but also offering a standing witness of our million and one half Martyrs, even if we do not sing on this festive day the hymn of the departed in Christ, the hymn of *"Ee verin Yerusaghem."* It is a providential coincidence, graceful and hopeful, with abundant blessings sealed by divine justice. Even if we do not sing this second hymn on this Easter Sunday because of the pre-eminence of the Feast, we have already sung it silently and with all justice while singing the first hymn. The second hymn is the conclusion of the first, since Christ was raised from the dead, and the Armenian martyrs along with Christ *"defeated death by their own martyrdom."*

How to Celebrate Easter and April 24
The Same Day

Question may rise in the minds of some, *how celebrate Easter and the same day, April 24, denying the annual requiem in memory of our martyrs?* It is for sure divine ordinance not to distance one from the other and receive the coincidence as the gift of God. Singing the hymns proper for the Holy Resurrection will mean singing just the same, the other hymn proper for the repose of the soul after Christ's promise that "*With His Resurrection He gave us life in abundance."*

It is the victorious crucifixion that the Armenian Church will celebrate this year on April 24 with Easter bells tolling all over the Christian nations. Likewise, our ancient monasteries will join to toll their chimes victoriously to spread the good tidings along with our new churches at home and abroad to silently witness the centenary of the Armenian Genocide, singing, *"Blessed is the Resurrection of Christ."* Our martyrs are the true witnesses of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection as they marched *en masse* to their tragic destiny.

Victory and Observance

This year's April 24 will prove exceptional as we humble ourselves before the victory of both the Holy Resurrection of Christ and the Martyrs of 1915. The Risen Lord summoned our martyrs to Him because He paid the price of their lives on the Cross, giving the hope of a luminous and renewed life for the subsequent five or more generations following the massacres. *It is not the requiem on Easter Sunday that will mark April 24, but it is the Feast of the Holy Resurrection that will elegantly embrace in its celebration the Genocide the hymn "Upper Jerusalem."*

From Orphanages to Schools

Armenian orphanages turned into venerable schools, children of the martyrs stood tall as scientists and specialists in different fields. Graduates of the famous Seminary of Armash were succeeded by those in the Mother See, Jerusalem, and the Catholicosate of Cilicia. Finally, the silent voice of the Mother Church during the first decades of the century was heard anew with new bells, louder and promising. Even though many churches in Anatolia and Armenia, in Ani and Vaspurakan, were destroyed under horrible persecutions, devoted clergy, filled with the grace of the Holy Resurrection, undertook the task for the preparation of future generations of clergy along with the organization of the new dioceses, especially those lost after the exile of the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Sis.

Such were the eminent leaders of the Armenian Church who courageously intertwined church, benevolence, and education in such a way that the revival of the nation welcomed the second half of the century. Even on a political level the Holy Resurrection yielded the assurance of renewal and progress, this time under the guidance of a new Pontiff, **His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians,** elected providentially in 1955.

THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF EGYPT
In the 20th Century
A Tribute to Primate
Archbishop Torkom Koushagian
(1874 - 1939)

Berdj Terzian's
Recent Publication

Berdj Terzian, a prominent leader and an intellectual, a life-long native and a resident of Cairo, Egypt, published a comprehensive volume in Cairo in 2010, entitled *"Reflections of the Past."* Both of us are natives of Cairo, Egypt, Berdj a distinguished leader in the Armenian Church Diocese, in the AGBU local chapter, in the schools and sports activities, while myself, upon graduation from Kaloustian Azgayin Varjaran's 8th grade, was admitted by the Theological Seminary of Antelias, Lebanon in September 1949. I left Cairo at age 16, and by now, Berdj and I have gone through five decades of service, keeping alive the legacy we inherited from our elders since the middle of the last century.

Mr. Terzian has written his *"Reflections"* in a clear and organized manner, bringing the immediate past into life with contemporary and conclusive events regarding the Armenian community in Egypt which has a record of a glorious past since the 13th century. His accurate and penetrating observations and analyses are first hand, since he was always involved with devotion and sense of responsibility in all phases of the panoramic life, covering realistically the history of some 50 years of the community in terms of religious, national, cultural and educational achievements. At times, he has been critical for the lack of discipline and cooperation in general, but always positive and optimistic. Before his publication **Dr. Souren Bairamian** had compiled an important reference book regarding the *"Armenian Printing Press"* from ancient times in a documented large volume, the first of its kind, published also in Cairo.

St. Gregory Cathedral of Cairo

St. Asdvadzadzin Church of Cairo

My Reflections: Tribute to
Archbishop Torkom Koushagian, Primate

On my part the following is another reflection in honor of **Archbishop Torkom Koushagian**, the prominent Primate of the Diocese of Egypt, whose dedication and hard work during the First World War upheld and enriched immensely the famous Diocese of Egypt from 1914 to 1931. Under his leadership, the elegant **Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator** was built, and the impressive *Diocesan building* was added; next to the *Kaloustian School* the *Noubarian School in Heliopolis* and the *Boghossian School in Alexandria* were inaugurated; a *Chapel in the town of Zagazig* was built. Archbishop Koushagian was among the most learned and experienced clerics who graduated from the Seminary of Armash, near Constantinople, who before assuming his post in Egypt was the Primate of the Diocese of Sebastia. He was ordained a bishop by **Catholicos Matthew II Izmirlian of All Armenians** in 1910.

I present two pictures of the old **Sourp Asdvadzadzin** and the new **St. Gregory the Illuminator** Armenian churches in Cairo. The first was built in the old section of Cairo in 1839 by **Bishop Gabriel of Marash**, a member of the Jerusalem Patriarchate. The new Cathedral was built in 1928 by Archbishop Torkom Koushagian. The ancient church was in my neighborhood since my childhood where I attended as an acolyte. In the summer of 1954, soon after my ordination in Antelias, Lebanon, on my visit to my family, I was invited by the Primate **Archbishop Mampre Sirounian** to perform Divine Liturgy at St. Asdvadzadzin church. That was a most memorable event during my life. The church was soon demolished in 1958 by the authorities due to the construction of a highway.

The photo representing the ancient church shows on the Altar three priests, Father Sahak Shakarian, Vicar of the Diocese, Father Nersess Papazian, celebrant, and Father Housig Nishanian. Serving at the Altar included Deacon Onnig Kaloustian, censor in his hand, presently in Montreal and the donor of the picture, and Deacon Simon Jerrahian, now serving in the Western Diocese. The second photo represents St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral of Cairo taken

by this writer three years ago while visiting his native country. His memoirs go back when Primate Archbishop Mampre Sirounian led the Diocese in the same Cathedral where students from Kaloustian School attended church ceremonies on festive oc-casions by the orders of the Archbishop.

The Diocese in Its Glories

It was during the World War I when on May 3, 1914, Archbishop Torkom Koushagian arrived in Cairo from Constantinople as the designated candidate by the Patriarchate to be elected soon Primate of the Diocese of Egypt. He was at the same time elected Primate of Diarbekir, but preferred Egypt which became providential; he was saved from the massacres which took a good number of youthful lives of his clergy colleagues. Archbishop Koushagian was welcomed at St. Asdvadzadzin Church in Bein-el-Sourein, *"escorted by an impressive procession headed by mounted soldiers."* In Cairo the Archbishop first met **Boghos Noubar Pasha**, a highly respected member of the community who had earlier in 1906 founded the Armenian General Benevolent Union and was the leading member of the Diocese, being at the same time the President of the *Armenian National Legacy in Paris* on behalf of **Catholicos Kevork V of All Armenians.**

Election of the Primate

At the request of Boghos Noubar Pasha a Diocesan Assembly called to elect the Primate in Alexandria on June 28, 1914. Archbishop Torkom Koushagian was elected and his election was confirmed by **Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan** and the Patriarchal Executive Council of Constantinople on August 14. At the beginning of the 20th century, Egypt was not an independent country; it was under the domination of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, and the Armenian community had adopted the *National Constitution of 1863*, approved by the government for the Armenian Patriarchate. Unlike the Turkish oppressions against the native Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, those in Egypt enjoyed tolerance and justice until the armistice of 1918, when the Ottoman domination ended.

The Primate's Initial Accomplishments

Archbishop Torkom Koushagian's intention was foremost to construct a new Cathedral, following the bequest made earlier by **Krikor Yeghiayan**, a prominent benefactor who had died in 1911. The Primate was able to activate the will and in 1924, he undertook the great task. Architect Levon Nafilian designed a beautiful cathedral totally in authentic Armenian Church style implemented by the funds of the benefactor's bequest. On one of the main boulevards of the capital of Egypt, the foundations were laid in 1924, and when the construction completed four years later, the Primate consecrated the Cathedral in 1928 in the name of **Saint Krikor Loussavorich**, *St. Gregory the Illuminator*, honoring the benefactor's name and wishes.

An eyewitness historian and a prominent intellectual Arshak Alboyajian had stated: *"This great construction which began almost four years ago should definitely be considered the personal accomplishment of Archbishop Torkom Koushagian through his talent and efforts."* Great poet Vahan Tekeyan, at the time the editor of *"Arev"* daily, wrote, *"The church physically was his own construction, wherever you turn your eyes you see him everywhere."*

The Archbishop built also a chapel in the town of Zagazig, in between Cairo and Alexandria, where Armenians lived. He named the church *Soorp Khach (Holy Cross)* after the name of the benefactor **Khachadour Kamsarakan.** In Alexandria, the Primate built an impressive church and named it *Soorp Boghos Bedros (St. Paul and Peter)* in memory of **Boghos Bey Yousoufian**, the benefactor. Upon Archbishop T. Koushagian's request, the *Noubarian National School* in the suburban Heliopolis was built, through the funds of **Boghos Noubar Pasha,** the leading school as of today, next to the *Kaloustian School* in Cairo. The Primate's concern was specifically *"to build the much needed school in memory of his [Boghos Noubar's] ancestors on the property already acquired by the community that had a deadline for a charitable use."* The school was built in 1924 as *Noubarian National School,* named after his father a former Prime Minister of Egypt **Noubar Pasha.**

Finally, at the end of Primate Archbishop Torkom Koushagian's tenure, he was successful to build the elegant Diocesan Center across from the Cathedral, two storeys high, with offices and a reception hall through the funds bequeathed by **Dikran D'abro** and by additional funds by Boghos Noubar Pasha. Subsequently he was **elected Patriarch of the Armenians in Jerusalem in 1931.**

Educational Achievements

Archbishop Torkom Koushagian, an illustrious and highly revered literary author of the century, pursued education and inaugurated the transfer of the famous *Berberian High School of Constantinople*, founded by **Reteos Berberian**, whose son Shahan Berberian was assigned rector of the new branch in Cairo with full support of the Archbishop. The school offered qualified graduates in the 30's of the 20th century. He also established scholarships to assist students to pursue their higher education in Paris and return to Cairo to assume responsible posts in education. One of them, Dikran Babikian, was the long time rector of the Kaloustian School while studying during our elementary and high school years.

Under Archbishop Torkom Koushagian's leadership a host of intellectuals from previous generations were still at the helm of the educational system. Names such as *Arshak Alboyajian, Vahan Tekeyan, Karekin Dulguerian, Levon Tashjian, Krikor Giragossian, Shahan* and *Onnig Berberian,* and later*, Dikran Babikian, Kerovbe Gosdantian, Arsham Dadrian, Ghazaros Ghazarossian* and *Sarkis Sahagian,* were authorities and leaders of higher education in the healthy and prosperous Armenian community of Egypt.

Hand in hand with the education, Archbishop T. Koushagian realized the publications of important research in history and culture. First, Arshak Alboyajian's *"History of Armenian Colonies"* in two volumes were published, along with his large volume of *"The Frontiers of Historic Armenia,"* made those publications irreplaceable as voluminous as they are. He was also the author of another valuable volume dedicated to Archbishop Torkom Koushagian, entitled *"Torkom Patriarch Koushagian."* Later, a final documentary vol-

ume, *"My Patriarchal Memoirs,"* written by **Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan** was edited by Alboyajian and published in 1947.

Upon the Archbishop's election to the **Patriarchal Throne of Jerusalem in 1931**, a fertile land was already cultivated when his successor the **Very Reverend Mampre Dz.V. Sirounian**, in fact the very last graduate of the Seminary of Armash, moved to Cairo from Alexandria where he was the acting Vicar of Archbishop Koushagian. He later in 1933 was ordained bishop in Holy Etchmiadzin and eventually elected Primate of the Diocese of Egypt from 1945 to 1966. He passed away at age 77. In Jerusalem **Patriarch Torkom Koushagian** succeeded his teacher **Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian**, and led the Congregation of St. James Patriarchate remarkably as an administrator, editor of the monthly *SION,* which reached its peak, and as a great educator. Numerous priests were instructed under him and ordained by him despite the short period of his tenure, from 1931 to 1939, when he suddenly succumbed at his early age of 65.

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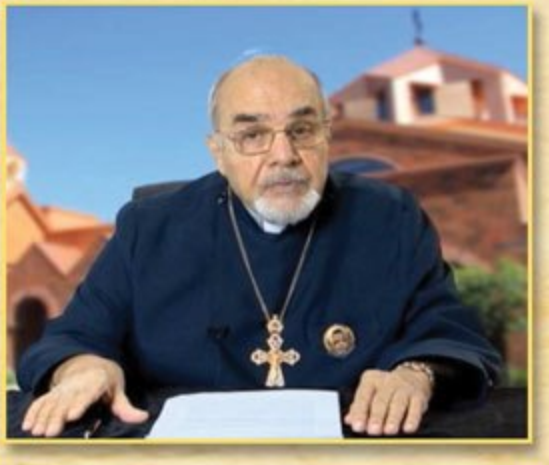

A graduate of the Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon, Fr. Zaven Arzoumanian studied theology for three years at the University of London, England, completing his post graduate work first at Temple University in Philadelphia, earning a Master of Arts degree in theology. He later attended Columbia University in New York and earned Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the Department of History and Middle East Language and Culture.

Father Arzoumanian, a priest in the Armenian Apostolic Church for 60 years, was ordained in 1954 and served the Armenian Churches in Ethiopia, Europe, and for the last 40 years in the Eastern, and 10 years in the Western Dioceses of North America. In 2004, Fr. Arzoumanian was awarded the Pontifical Encyclical with the Medal of St. Sahak and St. Mesrob by His Holiness Karekin II Catholicos of All Armenians, in recognition of his 50-year service and for his literary achievements.

The author has published a number of books in Armenian and in English, including two translations into English for the first time: the *History of Priest Ghevond* (8th c.) and the *History of Bishop Ukhtanes of Sebastia* (10th c.). His important three volumes of *Azgapatum,* the continuation Patriarch Malachia Ormanian's *opus magnum,* covers the history of the Armenian Church and Nation of the entire 20th century, from the events where Ormanian had concluded his three magnificent volumes in 1910.