

STUDIES OF ARMENIAN CHRISTIAN TRADITION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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The exploration of Armenia and its civilisation has a long history, but the foundations for systematic scholarship in the fields of Armenian archaeology, language, historiography, and culture were laid only in the nineteenth century. This happened in different parts of the world almost at the same time: in Armenia itself, in the Armenian monastic academies of Venice, Vienna, and Jerusalem, in Constantinople, in Germany, in France, and in Russia. Nevertheless, only during the twentieth century were the studies of Armenia and the Caucasus elevated to the status of an internationally recognised discipline, whilst the past forty years have seen a particular growth in these fields in the Caucasus, Russia, Europe, and the USA.

We shall survey here several key developments that took place in the study of Armenian Christianity during the twentieth century, limiting ourselves to the formative period, i.e., from the establishment of the first Christian centres on the territory of the Armenian kingdom in the third century to the stabilisation of the Armenian Church's doctrine and canonical practices at the beginning of the eighth century, i.e., in the aftermath of the Islamic conquest. The past century saw a number of radical changes in Armenian geography; many eminent scholars were born at the beginning of the twentieth century in Western Armenia, a country which disappeared after the First World War. Whilst before that war the architecture, archaeology, literature, and ethnology of Western Armenia had been widely studied, the relics of Armenian civilisation on this territory were almost inaccessible in the aftermath of the war, and they remained hardly attainable even until recent times. As for Eastern Armenia, the study of Christianity there was seriously hindered during the Soviet rule. The history of scholarship in this field is therefore intrinsically linked to the biographies of Armenologists.

In spite of these difficulties, the early Christian tradition of Armenia was one of the most studied pages of Armenology during the twentieth century. Thanks to these studies, we are now able to speak of two phases in the process of the Christianisation of Armenia. In the course of the second and the third centuries AD, Christianity was introduced into the southern Armenian provinces, situated between the Upper Tigris and the Arsianias, by Aramaic-speaking missionaries from neighbouring Mesopotamia. In reference to this, mediaeval Armenian ecclesiastical writers defined their land as the "Northern country,"

whilst in some texts all the Christian nations of the Caucasus – Armenia, Georgia and Aluania (Caucasian Albania) – are defined for the same reason as “Northern countries.” The influence of the Syriac tradition of Edessa left a lasting stamp on the Armenian language, liturgy, and Church discipline, and many terms of Syriac origin are still amongst the current words of daily life in Armenian. N. Marr, P. Peeters, E. Tēr-Minaseanc’ and, in the later part of the twentieth century, G. Winkler, investigated different aspects of Syriac–Armenian relations.

The second phase of the Christianisation of Armenia was linked to the evangelising activity of Gregory the Illuminator at the beginning of the fourth century. Gregory was ordained bishop at Caesarea in Cappadocia, and his activity opened northern Armenia, especially the Araxes Valley, to the influence of the Microasiatic Christian tradition. The Greek element gradually prevailed over the Syriac in shaping the ecclesiastical culture of the Armenian kingdom. In Germany, Joseph Marquart¹ (1864–1930), an exceptional polyglot and a polyvalent scholar, studied the origins of the first Armenian bishoprics and made a major contribution to our knowledge of the historical geography of the Armenian Church. The *Life* of St Gregory, the primary source about the conversion of the Armenian kingdom at the beginning of the fourth century, has been studied by G. Tēr-Mkrtč’ean, P. Peeters, L. Mariès, Gérard Garitte² (1914–1990), P. Ananean, M. van Esbroeck, Guy Lafontaine (1938–2004), and R. Thomson.

Although Aramaic and Greek were used in Armenia for many centuries, the knowledge of these languages there was limited, and the Christian religion had to be interpreted orally by trained preachers. It could not have taken root in the country had the Bible, the liturgy, the exegetic and homiletic literature not been translated into the native speech of the inhabitants of Armenia. The invention of the Armenian alphabet by Maštoc’ towards 405 laid the foundation for a national literary tradition which initially drew on both Syriac and Greek sources, but soon produced original works. Many illustrious scholars have investigated the sources of Maštoc’'s life and contributed to reconstructing the circumstances in which the Armenian alphabet was invented; the origins of the Georgian and the Aluanian alphabets, which, according to Maštoc’'s pupil and biographer Koriwn (433), had also been invented by his teacher, have also been investigated. Our knowledge about the relations between the South Caucasian Churches in the fourth and the fifth centuries, the primacy they accorded to the see of Gregory the Illuminator, and a series of formal affinities among the three alphabets lend support to

¹ *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* [*Historico-Philological Review*] (Yerevan: Academy of Sciences of Armenia) 2 (1965): 149–156.

² *Le Muséon* 100 (1987): XI–XV; *ibid.*: 103 (1990): 201–204.

Koriwn's words; no historical source challenges his claim. Amongst the scholars who investigated Maštoc's work the following names should be mentioned especially: J. Marquart, P. Peeters, N. Adontz, E. Tēr-Minaseanc', N. Akinean, P. Ananean, G. Winkler, and J.-P. Mahé.

At the council convened at the patriarchal see of Duin in 553, the Armenian Church confirmed its rejection of the "Definition" of the Council of Chalcedon (451), thus detaching itself from the succeeding Byzantine theological elaborations. Thereby, Armenia set off on an independent ecclesiastical history and, consequently, a door was opened to new Christological queries characteristic of the non-Chalcedonian Churches,³ as well as to independent liturgical developments, which also allowed local customs to take root within the ecclesiastical discipline. The particularism of Armenia was further accentuated at the end of the seventh century, when the caliphate established direct political control over the country, whereby Armenia was cut off from the political body of Christendom. Many studies have contributed to our better knowledge of the way in which an autonomous doctrinal tradition was shaped in Armenia after the Chalcedonian schism, notably those by H.-F. Tournebize (1856–1926), Galust Tēr-Mkrtč'ean, K. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean, E. Tēr-Minaseanc', V. Hac'uni, N. Akinean, V. Inglisian, B. Talatinian, P. Ananian, N. Garsoïan, M. Van Esbroeck, J.-P. Mahé, and Peter Cowe.

Two achievements facilitated significant development in the study of the Armenian religious tradition over the twentieth century: first, the cataloguing and the description of manuscripts; second, the editing of thitherto unknown texts. During the previous two centuries this work had already been carried out by the monks of the Armenian Mekhitarist congregation in Venice and Vienna, which saw the editing of ancient Armenian texts as one of its primary tasks; many generations of Armenologists were also educated in the Mekhitarist schools. Travelling around Western Armenia, the Middle East, and beyond, Mekhitarist monks assembled two of the most important collections of Armenian manuscripts in Venice and Vienna, and, thanks to their efforts, ancient Armenian literature also came to the attention of European scholars.

Amongst the editors of unpublished texts who were active in Armenia at the turn of the century, Galust Tēr-Mkrtč'ean⁴ (Tēr-Sargsean, 1860–1918) may be

³ I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, "Chiese non-calcedonesi," in: *Dizionario del sapere storico-religioso del Novecento*, ed. A. Melloni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), 515–534.

⁴ *K'ristonya Hayastan. Hanragitaran* [Christian Armenia: Encyclopaedic Dictionary], ed. K. Khudaverdian, M. Hasratian, and Sh. Adjemian (Yerevan: Armenian Encyclopaedia, 2002), 1008–1010.

singled out. He was born in a village in the Axalc'xa region (southern Georgia), received primary education in the Karapetean school in the town of Axalc'xa, which was followed by studies at the Gēworgean Seminary of Valaršapat (Ējmiacin) and the *École libre des sciences politiques* in Paris. In 1888, as a result of illness, his feet were paralysed and he was unable to walk for the rest of his life. Amongst the writers whom he edited are: Abraham the Confessor, Lazar P'arpec'i (in collaboration with S. Malxasean), Agat'angelos (in collaboration with S. Kanayean), and Eznik of Kolb (in collaboration with H. Ačārean). Many of his articles which touch on various aspects of Armenian religious literature and the theology of the Armenian Church were published in the Ējmiacin periodical *Ararat*, some signed with the penname 'Miaban' (i.e., friar).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Armenian studies had already been conceived of as an integral part of the studies of the Christian East. In France, a further step towards the editing of Armenian texts was taken by René Graffin⁵ (1858–1941) and his collaborators. In 1894 in Paris, Graffin founded the series *Patrologia syriaca*, initially designed to publish Syriac texts accompanied by translations. This collection was subsequently extended to become the *Patrologia Orientalis*, which was also intended to edit texts written in other languages of the Christian East. Unlike his compatriot, Jacques-Paul Migne (1800–1875), the founder of the *Patrologia latina* and the *Patrologia graeca*, who could rely on existing editions of Greek and Latin texts, Graffin, two generations after Migne, had to deal with manuscripts which had never been published. In order to copy these manuscripts, scattered around the world, he adopted, for the first time, the method of photography with the “prism with total internal reflection.” This procedure was suggested to him by his cousin, Henry Le Châtelier, a professor of physics at the Collège de France, who had applied this method to microscopic metallography. This technique, duly adopted by Graffin, was subsequently demonstrated by him at the Universal Exhibition of 1900 in Paris and was then employed by various libraries around the world. In order to print the texts, Graffin himself designed the letters for Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, and Slavic, and even directed their casting. At the Institute of the *Patrologia Orientalis*, Graffin gathered a group of collaborators, each specialising in a particular language. The editing of the Armenian texts was entrusted to Louis Mariès⁶ (1876–1958), who subsequently published many works of original research on the history of the

⁵ *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 30, no. 3–4 (1946): 225–230; *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 67 (2001): 155–178.

⁶ M. Martirosyan, *Hayaget Lwi Mariès* [Armenologist Louis Mariès] (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1992).

Armenian Church; he also taught at the *Institut Catholique* of Paris, where a number of renowned scholars were trained under his guidance. Amongst them was Charles Mercier⁷ (1904–1978), who had been initiated into the study of the Christian East at the Benedictine monastery of Chèvotogne in Belgium and then studied in the pontifical academies in Rome, the *École Biblique* in Jerusalem, and the Catholic University of Leuven. Mercier published numerous studies on Armenian patristic texts, particularly those concerned with exegesis. Following in G. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean's and Adontz's footsteps, Mariès and Mercier dedicated their attention to the fifth-century Eznik of Kolb, the author of the first Armenian philosophical-doctrinal treatise (438). For ten years, Mercier collaborated with his teacher with a view to preparing a collation of the manuscripts of Eznik's "Confutation of Heresies," which he only published after Mariès' death.

In 1903 in Paris, nine years after Graffin had commenced his enterprise, Jean-Baptiste Chabot⁸ (1860–1948) founded another collection of oriental texts with translations, the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (CSCO)*. A methodological disagreement caused Chabot to part from Graffin and initiate an independent project; whilst Graffin believed that an editor could identify copyists' errors and thus, by collating manuscripts, reconstruct a text very close to the original, Chabot was convinced that the editors had to choose the best text amongst those preserved and then provide scholars with that document in the form in which it has reached us. This debate has not yet ended amongst the editors of ancient texts. Like Graffin, Chabot directed his collection until his death, acting as the general editor of the first seventy volumes. In these collections the Armenian Patristic texts acquired the rights of full citizenship and thus were included in the study of ancient Christian civilisations.

Armenian studies also developed in England, Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare⁹ (1856–1924) studied at Oxford, where his tutor in Armenian was D. S. Margoliouth (1858–1940); he edited various Armenian Biblical, apocryphal and patristic texts, liturgical books and the catalogues of manuscripts of the British Museum and the Bodleian Library; he also published a number of studies on the history of the Armenian Church and its rites. Following K. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean, Conybeare studied the dualist sect of the Paulicians, which was established in Western Armenia during the eighth and ninth centuries. The Paulicians and their offshoot, the Thondrakites, both representing one of the most intriguing cases

⁷ *Oriens Christianus* 63 (1979): 203–204.

⁸ *Le Muséon* 59, no. 1–2 (1948): 141–152.

⁹ *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 6 (1926): 185–332; *Handes Amsoreay [Monthly Review]* (Vienna: Mekhitarist Congregation) 58 (1944): 193–216.

of religious nihilism –, to use Hans Jonas' and Gershom Scholem's definition – rejected all established ecclesiastical and political institutions and were persecuted first in Armenia then in Byzantium. The canonical interdictions of communication with the Paulicians both in Byzantium and Armenia inhibited their contemporaries from close acquaintance with this movement's doctrines. Their possible relation to the rise of the Bogomils in the Balkans and, finally, of the Cathars and Albigensians in Southern France is still debated; their late branches were attested in Armenia in the nineteenth century. During the second half of the twentieth century, several scholars, such as Nina Garsoïan in the USA, Hrač' Bart'ikyan in Armenia, and Vrej Nersessian in England, have pursued the study of these enigmatic religious movements.

The beginning of the twentieth century marked the onset of the systematic exploration of Armenian ecclesiastical and monastic architecture. In 1900, the monk Xaç'ik Dadean commenced the excavation of the ruined Cathedral of the Vigilant Powers (*Zuart'noc'*), dated to the middle of the seventh century, near the patriarchal see of Ējmiacin. The excavation was continued in 1907 by T'. T'oramanean and A. Loris-K'alant'ar. T'oros T'oramanean¹⁰ (1864–1934), who was born in Şebin-Karahisar in Western Armenia, studied at the Institute of Arts in Istanbul. Having graduated with a diploma in architecture, he designed many houses, first in Istanbul, and in Bulgaria and Romania after the massacres of Armenians in 1896. Afterwards he travelled around historical Armenia for over thirty years and was able to collect detailed documentation on most of the surviving Armenian architectural monuments, many of which no longer exist. T'oramanean was the first to propose a systematic classification and periodisation of Armenian architecture.¹¹

At the beginning of the twentieth century, different scholars raised the question of possible ties among the cultures of the Christian East. In Vienna, Josef Strzygowski¹² (1862–1941) explored the interaction between the architectural and artistic traditions of different Christian traditions: Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, and Arabic. Strzygowski led several expeditions to Armenia, where he was assisted by T'oramanean, Loris-K'alant'ar, the ethnographer Step'an Lisic'ean and other local scholars who were intimately familiar with the terrain and helped him to collect new photographic and graphic material. On the eve of the First

¹⁰ *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 4 (1984): 66–76; V. Harut'yunyan, *T'oros T'oramanyan* (Yerevan: Academy of Sciences Press 1984).

¹¹ *Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran* [Soviet Armenian Encyclopaedia], vol. 4 (Yerevan, 1978), 204–205.

¹² *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 28 (2001–2002): 287–307.

World War, at Strzygowski's request, T'oramanean sent him his own drawings, measurements and attempted reconstructions in view of a joint scientific project. The outbreak of the war hindered the communications between Russia and Austria, and Strzygowski published the two volumes of his famous *Architecture of the Armenians and Europe*, largely based on the results of T'oramanean's fieldwork, without consulting his colleague; nevertheless, he duly acknowledged T'oramanean's authorship. Strzygowski's writings opened a never-ending historical debate on the Oriental, notably Armenian, elements in the development of Byzantine and, later, Western European, architecture. After the war, whilst Eastern Turkey remained closed to foreigners for several decades, important fieldwork was pursued in Soviet Armenia, notably by Varazdat Harut'yunyan, Nikolaj Tokarskij, Aleksandra Eremyan, Karo Łafadaryan, Aleksandr Sahinyan, Armen Xaç'atryan, Anatolij Jakobson, Step'an Mnac'akanyan, Hovhannes Xalp'axč'yan and Murad Hasrat'yan.¹³

One of Strzygowski's collaborators during his sojourns in the Caucasus was the philologist and archaeologist Nikolazi (Nikolaj) Marr¹⁴ (1865–1934). Marr was born in 1864 in Kutaisi, western Georgia, and studied Armenian philology at the University of St. Petersburg under the guidance of the famous writer K'erovbē Patkanean. He played an active role in a series of archaeological excavations and personally guided the protracted excavations of Ani (1904–1917), the capital of the Armenian Bagratid kings, in which T'oramanean and Loris-K'alant'ar were also involved. The excavations of Ani also continued during the First World War, and only the Turkish army's invasion of Armenia in 1918 compelled Marr to abandon the site. Although he managed to rescue some objects of the newly created archaeological museum of Ani before leaving, many finds were destroyed after the occupation; during the revolutionary years, many of the rescued finds were also lost.

One of Marr's pupils at the Petersburg University was Ašxarhbek Loris-K'alant'ar (1884–1942?), a native of Ardui in northern Armenia, who tried to reconstruct the genesis and the evolution of the earliest Christian architecture in Armenia in his research. After the war, Loris-K'alant'ar was one of the founders of Yerevan University. In 1938, because of his interest in Christian buildings and his opposition to the demolition of two medieval churches in Yerevan by the Soviet

¹³ Annegret Plontke-Lüning, *Frühchristliche Architektur in Kaukasien: die Entwicklung des christlichen Sakralbaus in Lazika, Iberien, Armenien, Albanien und den Grenzregionen vom 4. bis zum 7. Jh.* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 73–76.

¹⁴ *Handes Amsōreay* 49 (1935): 139–162.

authorities, he was imprisoned, together with a group of university lecturers, as an “enemy of the people,” and he died in a labour camp near Čeljabinsk in uncertain circumstances.¹⁵

Marr was also an excellent philologist who mastered numerous languages of the region and dedicated great effort to an attentive study of various collections of Armenian manuscripts, although sometimes he advanced tendentious linguistic theories (his later scholarly activity was partially compromised because of his cooperation with the Soviet regime). He published studies dedicated to Armenian-Syriac and Armenian-Byzantine exchanges. Like his contemporaries, G. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean and J. Marquart, Marr was attracted to the enigmatic Armenian historian, Moses of Xoren, who most plausibly lived in the eighth century. Combining his vast antiquarian and geographical erudition with an imagination worthy of a brilliant novelist, Moses integrated ancient legends and traditions narrating the remote past of Armenians and their land, as well as the writings of the earliest Armenian writers in his *History of the Armenians*. All these were incorporated into the world history known to him from Josephus Flavius' *History of the Jewish Wars*, Eusebius of Caesarea's works (particularly his *Chronicle*), Socrates Scholasticus' *Church History* and the Armenian, Anania of Širak's *Geography*, as well as the Bible. Marr found several archaeological confirmations of what had been written by Moses, and his work stimulated further enquiries into Moses' personality and book, and the debates on dating Moses' writing have never ceased: Robert Thomson in the USA and England, J.-P. Mahé in France, Gagik Sargsyan and Aram T'op'č'yan in Armenia, Giusto Traina in Italy, and other philologists, historians, and archaeologists, have all endeavoured repeatedly to assess his work from different perspectives. Most recently, the Italian-German specialist in Urartian studies Mirjo Salvini, reasserted, on the basis of the results of the archaeological excavations in Van, the Urartian capital, that Moses of Xoren's account provides us with a precise description of the castle and royal palace which had been built some sixteen centuries before him. One of the Urartian irrigation canals was still used in the medieval Armenian Van, which represents an astonishing example of continuity between the Urartian and Armenian cultures.¹⁶ Moses is also one of our few sources for the Armenian pre-Christian myths narrating the origins of the Armenians, and these records continue to intrigue linguists and historians of the ancient Near East because no definitive answer has been found so far for the

¹⁵ *Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran* [Soviet Armenian Encyclopaedia], vol. 12 (Yerevan, 1986), 382.

¹⁶ M. Salvini, *Geschichte und Kultur der Urartäer* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), 120–121.

appearance of the Armenian language, and its isolated position on the Armenian plateau still remains an enigma.

In St. Petersburg, Marr founded three important periodical series dedicated to Caucasian studies. One of these, *Xristianskij Vostok* (The Christian Orient), was suppressed under Soviet rule, but has recently been re-founded in Moscow. Marr was a professor at Petersburg University, where one of his students was Nikolaj Adontz¹⁷ (1875–1942), native of a tiny village in the district of Zangezour (southeast of Lake Sevan). After the Russian conquest of 1916, Adontz participated in the excavations at Muš, Karin (Erzurum) and the Urartian capital, Van, which were led by Marr and Y. Orbeli, and in which T'oramanean and K'alant'ar also took an active part. Adontz investigated the survival of Urartian elements in the culture of Christian Armenia, as did his disciple, Cyril Toumanoff, later, in the West; a number of art historians were also interested in the question of a possible Urartian heritage transmitted by Armenian architectural techniques and forms.

Adontz became one of the most polyvalent and influential scholars in the field of Armenian studies. In 1920 he left Soviet Russia, and for ten years conducted research activity in economically precarious conditions in London and Paris. In 1930 he was invited to head the Department of Armenian Studies at the *Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves* in Brussels, but after the German occupation and the ensuing closure of the university, whose lecturers refused to collaborate with the invaders, he died in desperate conditions. One of Adontz's most eminent pupils was Cyril Toumanoff¹⁸ (1913–1997). Toumanoff was born in St. Petersburg; he lost his mother at the age of four when she was shot in front of his eyes by Bolsheviks, and was then hidden for several years by his grandparents in Astrakhan. In 1928, he was able to join his father in the USA thanks to the intercession of M. Gorky's wife. He was a professor at the Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., until 1970, when he decided to retire and return to the old continent and settled in Rome.

Urartu was but one of the factors that conditioned the formation of the earliest Armenian civilisation. After Urartu fell to the Medes at the beginning of the sixth century, the Iranian world stretching east of the Armenian plateau exercised a prevailing influence on the shaping of Armenian civilisation. Iran maintained its cultural influence on Armenia throughout ancient and medieval history, and only in 1828 did the Russians definitively oust the Persians from the plateau. Adontz and Toumanoff studied the development of Iranian elements in the social, religious and political institutions of Armenia and Georgia, Armenia's

¹⁷ *Handes Amsoreay* 61 (1947): 311–318 ; *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 4 (1962): 115–128.

¹⁸ *Bazmavep* (Venice: Mekhitarist Congregation) 155 (1997): 355–360.

northern neighbour, and also in the Armenian historiographical tradition. Later they were followed by N. Garsoïan and her pupil, James Russell, in the USA. Garsoïan has notably shown that Iranian influence is perceptible in the hereditary priesthood in the Armenian Church and that Iranian royal concepts influenced Armenian hagiography.

The Aramaic-speaking world was the southern neighbour of Armenia from the inception of the Armenian civilization (up until 1915, when the Armenian and Syriac presence in eastern Anatolia were suppressed). The early history of relations between Syriac Christianity and Armenia and the genesis of early Armenian hagiography were investigated by Paul Peeters¹⁹ (1870–1950) and the articles published in the *Analecta Bollandiana*. A polyglot who learnt Armenian without a teacher, Peeters was able to reconstruct cultural and linguistic ties between the Near Eastern Churches during Late Antiquity and to show the role of Armenia therein.

Karapet Tēr-Mkrtč'ean (Ter-Mekerttschian; 1866–1915) was born in a village near the monastery of Clnay in the province of Golt'n (in the territory of today's Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan). He studied in the Gēworgean Seminary of Valaršapat (Ējmiacin) and at the universities of Leipzig, Halle, Berlin, Marburg and Paris. During the years 1907 to 1912, whilst acting as the head of the Armenian diocese of Atrpatakan in Iran, he succeeded in collecting numerous dispersed manuscripts which were then brought together in the patriarchal library of Ējmiacin (the collection that later constituted the main holdings of the Matenadaran library of Yerevan). K. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean discovered two Armenian translations of works whose Greek originals have been lost: Irenaeus of Lyons's "Demonstration of Apostolic Teaching" (in association with E. Tēr-Minaseanc') and Timothy Aeluros' main work, "Refutation of the Council of Chalcedon." Timothy Aeluros (d. 477) organised resistance to the council of Chalcedon in Egypt and his work was also decisive in determining the Armenian Church's doctrinal orientation. His reception in Armenia was also studied by Galust Tēr-Mkrtč'ean. Karapet Tēr-Mkrtč'ean's third discovery was the collection of doctrinal texts called the "Seal of Faith," edited in Armenian c. 614. These texts were published by K. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean in association with E. Tēr-Minaseanc'. K. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean also published a number of studies on Armenian doctrinal writers of the fifth to the eighth centuries and the first volume of an unfinished *History of the Armenian Church*.²⁰

¹⁹ *Analecta Bollandiana* 119 (1951): I–LIX.

²⁰ S. Stephan, *Karapet Episkopos Ter-Mkertschjan* [Karapet Bishop Ter-Mkrttschjan] (Halle: University of Halle-Wittenberg, 1983).

A number of studies have been dedicated to the Armenian Church's relations with its neighbours: the Aluanian, Georgian, Byzantine, and Western Syriac Churches, as well as the Church of the East. Eruand Tēr-Minaseanc' (Erwand Ter-Minassiantz; 1879–1974)²¹ is the author of the only monograph on the relations between the Armenian and the Syriac Churches. He dedicated a number of studies to the shaping of the Armenian Church's doctrine and the history of Armenian synods. Tēr-Minaseanc' was born in ancient Hafič (east of Ani) and educated at the Gēworgean Seminary of Valaršapat (Ējmiacin) and at the universities of Leipzig and Berlin (where he was A. von Harnack's pupil). He spent the rest of his long life almost entirely in Armenia, first as a teacher at the Seminary of the Patriarchate in Ējmiacin and then in Yerevan, where he died at the age of ninety-five. The Soviet regime inhibited studies of theology and two generations after Tēr-Minaseanc' Kim Muradyan (1938–1991), who first studied at Yerevan University and then specialised in Armenian-Syriac literary relations in Petersburg (then Leningrad) under N. V. Pigulevskaja's guidance, was the first Armenian philologist of the Soviet era to dare to focus his research on religious literature. He published monographs on the reception of the works of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory the Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa in Armenia, as well as on Eznik of Kolb.

One of the finest Armenian philologists was Nersēs Akinean²² (1883–1963). He was born in 1883 in Artvin (Western Armenia), and after having been trained by the Mekhitarists of Vienna, studied at Vienna University, where he was Strzygowski's student. He published several monographs and about four hundred articles on different aspects of Armenian Christianity. Akinean investigated Timothy Aeluros' importance for the articulation of Armenian Church's teaching, as well as the relations between the Armenian and the Georgian churches in the seventh century and the history of the schism between them. Before the First World War, he was able to make many journeys to Western Armenia and to the Armenian churches spread over Anatolia to collect dispersed manuscripts; he described collections of Armenian manuscripts in Cyprus, Poland, and Ukraine. In 1928, during his work in Armenia, he was arrested and spent nine months in different Soviet prisons, which damaged his health irreversibly. He was set free in February 1929, thanks to the intervention of the minister of culture, A. Lunačarskij, several weeks before Lunačarskij resigned from his post, finding himself in sharp disagreement with Soviet cultural politics.

²¹ *Ējmiacin* 2–3 (1980): 115–118.

²² *Handēs Amsōreay* 68 (1954): 353–414; *ibid.* 77 (1963): 449–468.

Amongst Akinian's disciples at the Mekhitarist monastery of Vienna was Hamazasp Oskean²³ (1895–1968), a native of the region of Karin (Erzurum in Turkey). Oskean studied at the University of Vienna and for several decades worked on a monumental series devoted to the study of Armenian monasteries and their traditions. Each of the ten volumes that he produced is dedicated to one particular region of historical Armenia, from Sebastia in the west to Artsakh (or Karabagh) in the northeast; other volumes remained unpublished. Another of Akinian's illustrious pupils was Vahan Inglisian²⁴ (1897–1968), a native of Artvin like Akinian himself. In 1912, during one of his visits home, Akinian aroused interest in the fifteen-year old boy in studying Armenian antiquity and took him to Vienna. Inglisian thus left his homeland three years before the Genocide and was never to see it again. He first studied under Akinian's direction and then at the University of Vienna. During National Socialism, when a number of monasteries were closed, he managed to obtain a writ of protection for his congregation by invoking its scientific importance; within the walls of the monastery he offered refuge to a number of displaced persons. Inglisian made the first systematic analysis of the Christological conceptions of the major figures responsible for stabilising the Armenian Church's doctrine after the Arab conquest: Theodore K'rt'enawor, John of Öjun and Xosrovik the Translator.

In the second half of the century, a number of studies contributed to better understanding of the stages in the long process of separation between the Armenian Church and the Church of the empire, as well as of the ensuing split between the Armenian and the Georgian Churches. Pōlos (Anton) Ananean²⁵ (1922–1998), who was born in Constantinople and educated at the Mekhitarist academy in Venice and at the Gregorian University in Rome, published important studies on the circumstances of the Christianisation of Armenia, the history of Armenian Church councils and the Armenian Church's relations with the Church of the empire in the Venice Mekhitarist periodical *Bazmavep* (Erudite). N. Garsoïan dedicated a long study to the transformation of the Armenian Church between the third and the sixth centuries and the history of the schism between the Armenian and the Byzantine Churches. Jean-Pierre Mahé investigated the Armenian Church's relations with the Georgian and the Aluanian Churches and the role of religious confession in the formation of national identity in Armenia during the early Middle Ages.

²³ *Handes Amsoreay* 82 (1968): 21–48.

²⁴ *Handes Amsoreay* 82 (1968): 1–20.

²⁵ *Bazmavep* 156 (1998): 317–321.

The publication of the Armenian *anaphoras* by Y. Gat'ricean and Y. Tašean in 1897 was followed by other studies of liturgical texts: Vardan Hac'uni²⁶ (1879–1944), who was born in the region of Nikomedia (Izmit in today's Turkey) and who studied at the Mekhitarist academy in Venice, investigated the eucharistic liturgy and rites of the election and enthronement of the *catholicos*; Karapet Amatuni (1900–1984), another Mekhitarist from Venice, studied Armenian monastic institutions; Yovhannēs (Jean) Mécérian²⁷ (1888–1965) published fundamental studies on the history of the institutions of the Armenian Church, on canon law and the liturgy. Mécérian was a native of the region of Sebastia (Sivas in today's Turkey); he finished his studies in the Jesuit academies of France and spent most of his later life in the Middle East, where he was also involved in archaeological excavations. In the second half of the century, Charles Athanase Renoux published numerous studies dedicated to various aspects of the Armenian liturgy in different periodicals.

With the growing number of edited texts in the twentieth century, we observe a growing specialisation and fragmentation of the studies of the Christian East. In the USSR, despite its internationalist programmes, Soviet rule failed to create conditions for collaboration between the Armenian and Georgian academies and nationalistic tendencies grew even stronger. There has been, however, a limited number of scholars of almost universal erudition who were able to overcome this compartmentalisation and to appraise the interaction between different traditions. In Germany, during the first half of the twentieth century, amongst such erudites we may single out Carl Anton Baumstark²⁸ (1872–1948), who introduced new methods into the study of liturgical rites and ceremonies (the fact that, in spite of his erudition, he was able to become Hitler's enduring adherent is also part of the history of scholarship). Baumstark elaborated a methodology for the comparative study of liturgies, conceiving of them as changing languages, and formulated several laws for the development of rites. Most of the contemporary scholars of Oriental liturgies, such as Robert Taft, and Gabriele Winkler, who has studied the survival of ancient Syriac elements in the Armenian liturgy in particular, have applied and developed Baumstark's methods in their work. In the second half

²⁶ *Handēs Amsōreay* 61 (1947): 245–247.

²⁷ *Handēs Amsōreay* 79 (1965): 495–502.

²⁸ *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 63, no. 2 (1949): 185–207; *Oriens Christianus* 82 (1998): 1–52; E. Lanne, "Les dix leçons de liturgie comparée," in *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (1872–1948)*: Acts of the International Congress, Rome, 25–29 September 1998, *Orientalia Christiana analecta* 265 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2001), 145–161.

of the twentieth century, Michel Van Esbroeck²⁹ (1934–2003) was amongst such polyvalent philologists; he studied at the University of Leuven. In his confrere Peeters' footsteps, Van Esbroeck analysed hagiographic and doctrinal Armenian texts in the context of Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopian, Georgian, and Greek sources, all accessible to him in the original. Hundreds of his articles are scattered in various periodicals.

The cataloguing and description of manuscripts offered new opportunities to art historians. One of the most remarkable scholars of Armenian miniature painting was Sirarpie Der-Nersessian³⁰ (1896–1989). She was born in 1896 in Constantinople, where she was orphaned at an early age and then brought up by her uncle, the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Malak'ea Örmanean, a famous Church historian and author of a classic, *National History*. In 1915, during the Genocide, she found refuge in Europe, where she studied at the University of Geneva and the Sorbonne. She subsequently worked in France and the USA and prepared a dozen volumes of studies concerned with the history of Armenian and Byzantine art. From 1981 until her death she was the director of the periodical *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, the chief reference in the field of Armenian Studies.

For many decades after the Genocide, the former Western Armenia remained closed to researchers and the conditions of numerous monuments described on the eve of the First World War deteriorated rapidly; no restoration was ever undertaken, some semi-ruined buildings were dismantled and the stones reused by local populations, whereas other monuments were demolished by the authorities. Amongst the historians of Armenian ecclesiastic and monastic architecture who undertook to explore the Armenian heritage of Eastern Turkey during the later part of the twentieth century, often exposing themselves to personal risk, two names should be singled out. Jean-Michel Thierry (1916–2011), a physician, conducted many expeditions to historical Armenia from the 1950s until the 1990s. His works were published in the *Revue des Études Arméniennes* from 1965 onwards. Paolo Cuneo³¹ (1936–1995), an architect, nourished an interest in the arts of the Near East from 1965. His numerous archaeological expeditions to historical Armenia, Anatolia, and Cilicia enabled him to prepare scholarly descriptions of hundreds of monuments, some of which had never been described before. He subsequently directed the preparation of a comprehensive

²⁹ *Oriens Christianus* 88 (2004): 257–261.

³⁰ J. Stanojevich Allen, "Sirarpie Der Nersessian: Educator and Scholar in Byzantine and Armenian Art," in: *Women as Interpreters of the Visual Arts (1829–1979)*, ed. C. Richter Sherman and A. M. Holcomb (West Port: Greenwood Press, 1981), 329–355.

³¹ *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 25 (1994–95): 500–501.

catalogue of Armenian ecclesiastical architecture, in which 461 monuments are described, 134 of them pre-dating the Arab period. Thomas F. Mathews has made a major contribution to liturgical contextualization and exegetical interpretation of Armenian architectural and artistic forms.³²

The work of textual editors and art historians has depended upon the work of the authors of catalogues who described unknown manuscripts. We should at least mention two figures, one from Western and the other from Eastern Armenia. Norayr Polarean (Covakan; Vanatur; 1914–1996)³³ was born in 1914 in Antep (Gaziantep in today's Turkey), where he also studied at the Vardanean seminary. He pursued his theological education at the seminary of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, and after studies at King's College and the Universities of London and Manchester, he spent most of his long life in the convent of St. James of Jerusalem, the most ancient community of the Armenian Diaspora. For several decades he worked on the eleven volumes of a detailed catalogue of the manuscripts preserved at his monastery, one of the richest collections of Armenian manuscripts. Furthermore, he prepared valuable studies on Armenian ecclesiastical culture.

After the Second World War, several collections of Armenian manuscripts were assembled at *Matenadaran*, the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, which thus became the richest collection of Armenian manuscripts in the world. This created unique conditions for scholarly work in different branches of Armenian studies. Levon Xaç'ikyan (1918–1982),³⁴ born in Yerevan, was the key figure in establishing and directing the *Matenadaran*. During Stalin's rule he was able to use his position to save many of his colleagues from persecution. In the words of N. Garsoïan, who came to know him personally during her research sojourns in Armenia, "the only mediaeval church in Erevan still stands, although damaged, as a testimonial to his opposition to the general order to dynamite all religious buildings."³⁵ Xaç'ikyan's colleague, Artašēs Mat'evosyan (1922–2004), worked uninterruptedly for 45 years at the *Matenadaran*, where he described thousands of manuscripts and on this basis was able to reconstruct the history of various scriptoria in medieval Armenia.

One of the peculiarities of Armenian manuscripts is the extensive colophons, the marginal notes made by the mediaeval copyists. These notes often represent

³² Plontke-Lüning, *Frühchristliche Architektur in Kaukasien*, 77–79.

³³ *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 18 (1984): 9–22; *Sion [Zion]* (Jerusalem: Patriarchate of St. James) NS 71 (1997): 263–377.

³⁴ *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 1 (1982): 233–234; *Oriens Christianus* 66 (1982): 233.

³⁵ Nina Garsoïan, *De vita sua* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Pub, 2011), 137–138.

unique sources for historical events, written directly by eye-witnesses. In company with his colleagues, L. Xaç'ikyan published a long series of unedited sources and, notably, a collection of colophons of the Armenian manuscripts preserved in the Matenadaran. He elaborated theoretical principles for the editing of colophons. This and other collections of Armenian colophons represent a priceless resource. To give an example: recently, the Italian Institute of Geophysics³⁶ published a history of earthquakes in the Mediterranean area reconstructed on the basis of ancient witnesses, in which references to Armenian colophons appear frequently. This valuable data may enable us to foresee future seismic events. The study of the heritage of Christian Armenia thus also contributes to the reconstruction of the physical history of the Near East.

³⁶ *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes in the Mediterranean Area up to the 10th Century*, ed. E. Guidoboni et al., (Bologna: Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica, 1994); *Catalogue of Earthquakes and Tsunamis in the Mediterranean Area from the 11th to the 15th Century*, ed. E. Guidoboni and A. Comastri (Bologna: Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica, 2005).