





THE PARIKIAN COLLECTION OF EARLY ARMENIAN PRINTING AT ETON COLLEGE LIBRARY



### THE PARIKIAN COLLECTION OF EARLY ARMENIAN PRINTING AT ETON COLLEGE LIBRARY



ETON COLLEGE LIBRARY IS PERHAPS AN UNEXPECTED PLACE TO FIND SIGNIFICANT HOLDINGS OF EARLY ARMENIAN PRINTING: A COLLECTION OF SOME 650 VOLUMES BEQUEATHED BY THE ANGLO-ARMENIAN VIOLINIST MANOUG PARIKIAN (1920-1987). THE COLLECTION HAD UNTIL NOW BEEN THE LARGEST UNCATALOGUED COLLECTION OF EARLY ARMENIAN PRINTING ASSEMBLED BY A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL OUTSIDE AN INSTITUTION, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COLLECTION OF ARMENIAN BOOKS PRESENTED TO WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD BY DR CARO OWEN MINASIAN OF ISFAHAN IN 1972.

In a 1988 letter to Paul Quarrie, then Eton College Librarian, C.J.F. Dowsett, the first Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at Oxford, wrote, 'I must congratulate Eton on the acquisition of Manoug's important collection. It may help some boys to get a fresh line on passages in Tacitus, Horace, Herodotus and Strabo, and encourage some to take up Oriental studies seriously.'

Nearly 30 years later, to mark the 350th anniversary of the printing of the first Armenian Bible by Oskan Erewants'i in Amsterdam in 1666-1668, the Parikian collection has now been catalogued by Dr Vrej Nerses Nersessian with the financial support of the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Bibliophiles and scholars as well as Eton boys may now explore its riches in an online catalogue available at www.etoncollege.com/CollegeLibraryParikianCollection.







#### MANOUG PARIKIAN

A British concert violinist of Armenian parentage, Manoug Parikian was born in Mersin, Turkey to Turkish Armenian parents on 15 September 1920. From 1936 to 1939 he studied with Louis Packari at Trinity College of Music, London and made his solo debut in 1947 in Liverpool. He led several orchestras including the Liverpool Philharmonic (1947-48) and London's Philharmonia Orchestra (1949-57) as well as various chamber ensembles, and formed duos with George Malcolm, Lamar Crowson and Malcolm Binns. From 1957 he enjoyed considerable success as a soloist across Europe (including the USSR), the Middle East and Canada. In 1976 he formed a piano trio for Wigmore Hall's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary series with Bernard Roberts (later replaced by Hamish Milne) and Amaryllis Fleming. The trio went on to achieve international recognition.

Parikian was an artist of wide musical sympathies, with many first performances to his credit: concertos by Gordon Crosse, Alexander Goehr and Hugh Wood were dedicated to him, as well as works by Elizabeth Maconchy and Thea Musgraver, and he inspired many younger English composers to write major works for his instrument. An exceptionally stylish violinist, he produced a tone of remarkable purity and displayed a polished technique; one critic wrote, 'The 1687 Stradivarius in the hands of Parikian revealed a breadth of concept and a freedom and authority of style which both clarified the formal and melodic outlines of the work and heightened its inner theatre.' He made many important recordings, and taught at the Royal College of Music from 1954 to 1956, and at the Royal Academy of Music from 1959.

Over a period of three decades, with the assistance of his wife Diana (née Carbutt), a musician and antiquarian bookseller, Parikian also assembled a fine collection of Armenian printed books from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Following his death in London on 24 December 1987, this collection was bequeathed to the rare book and manuscript library at Eton College, where his sons had been educated.

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Francesco Maria Maggio, *Syntagmatwn linguarum orientalium*. Rome: Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, 1670 [Parikian Collection Iaa6.1.07]

The 36-letter Armenian alphabet – described by Lord Byron as 'a Waterloo' of an alphabet – completely expresses the phonetic peculiarities of Armenian and has served the language through all stages of its development: Classical Armenian (*grabar*), Middle Armenian (*Mijin Hayeren*) and Western and Eastern modern Armenian (*Ashkharhabar*). Two additional letters were introduced in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to render the foreign sounds 'f' and 'ô'.

#### AN ENDURING CULTURE

The history of Armenian culture and printing is bound up with the history of the Armenian Church. Tertullian records that by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE Christianity had spread northwards into the region from Syriac-speaking communities to the south, and by the early 4<sup>th</sup> century the Armenians of Greater Armenia were the first to declare Christianity as their state religion. Armenian sources place the date of the conversion in 301, while many scholars prefer 314, which still accords well with the Greek sources.

The Armenian language, an independent branch of the Indo-European language group, was at this time unwritten, and only Greek and Syriac texts and liturgies were available, both incomprehensible to the Armenian masses. To remedy this unsatisfactory situation, Catholicos Sahak Partew (387-439) and the Arsacid king Vramshapuh (r.389-417) ordered the monk Mesrop Mashtots' (355-439) to create an Armenian alphabet as a suitable vehicle for the mass conversion of the nation to the Christian faith.

The creation of the alphabet in 406 triggered an explosion of Armenian manuscript production. The Holy Translators, saints of the Armenian Church, began to translate the Bible, followed by liturgical books, patristic literature, commentaries and apologetics, church histories and canons, lives of saints: in short the entire corpus of Christian works required to meet the immediate needs of the nation and reinforce the doctrinal and liturgical identity of the church.

The creation of the alphabet and national literature did not confer political stability, however. With the loss of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia in AD 1375, Armenians were forced to leave their homeland and seek refuge in countries all over the world. By the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Armenian homeland was divided between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Iran with Armenian colonies established in most of the European cities, and concerns were growing about the scarcity of Armenian manuscripts as a result of the destruction or plunder of monastic institutions in the homeland. Wherever they went to set up home, the first concern of Armenian communities was to preserve and maintain their culture, religion and language, by building churches and founding schools and libraries.



Mechitar, *Bargirk<sup>®</sup> Haykazean Lezui*, vol. 2 [Dictionary of the Armenian Language]. Venice: Antonio Portoli, 1769. [Parikian Collection Iaa6.2.19]

The frontispiece of this dictionary of the Armenian language compiled by Mechitar, founder and first Abbot General of the Mechitarist Congregation, represents the Holy Translators sanctified by the Armenian Church: Sahak Part'ew, Mesrop Mashtots', St Nerses Shnorhali, and St Grigor Narekats'i.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF ARMENIAN PRINTING



It is therefore perhaps not so surprising that printing in Armenian began in Europe, over 250 years before the first printing press was established in the homeland. Very little is known about the first Armenian printer other than his name, Yakob meghapart ('the sinful', a common self-deprecating epithet) and what can be gleaned from the content and colophons of the five books he printed in Venice under the imprint 'DIZA' between 1512 and 1514, designed to appeal to both ecclesiastic readers and merchants. In 1565 a calendar and psalter were printed in Venice with new type by Abgar dpir ('the clerk'), who went on to set up the first Armenian press in Constaninople (Istanbul) in 1567. From these two centres, Armenian printing activity (sometimes short-lived) spread gradually to other major cities with a large Armenian presence and shipping connections to Armenian markets - Rome (1579), Lvov (Lviv, Poland, 1616), Milan (1621), New Julfa (near Isfahan, 1638), Livorno (1644), Amsterdam (1660), Marseille (1675), and London (1736) – before the first printing press in the Armenian homeland was established in Ejmiatsin (1771); Madras (1772), Trieste (1776), St Petersburg (1781), and Calcutta (1796) soon followed. The contents and titles of the first printed books reflect the preoccupation of the printers and publishers to tie Armenians living in foreign countries to their own language, literature and faith and to ensure the preservation of their religious and national identity.

The Roman Church for its part saw the Eastern Christians as a fruitful field for proselytism. There had been Catholic missionary activity among Armenians since the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the foundation of the Fratres Unitores, an Armenian branch of the Dominican order, in the 1330s. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, established by the Roman Catholic Church in 1622 as part of the Counter-Reformation, undertook a printing programme in Armenian and other languages designed to provide missionaries and new converts alike with texts to support evangelisation and Catholic devotion. Many of its publications dealt with the alphabet, language, and grammar of these vernacular languages, for example the *Dictionarium novum Latino-Armenum* of the Armenian Jesuit Jacobus [Yakob] Villotte (Rome, 1714) [Parikian Collection Iaa6.2.05].

A recurring theme in the first century of Armenian printing activity was the goal of printing the Bible in Armenian, with several fruitless attempts to gain the support of Rome. This was finally achieved in Amsterdam at the printing press of Surb Ejmiatsin



A[stua]tsashunch' Hnots'ew Norots' Ktakaranats' ner parunakogh sharakargut'eamb nakhneats'n merots'ew chshmartasirats' t'argmanch'ats' [The Oskanean Bible]. Amsterdam: Printing press of St Ejmiatsin and St Sargis 'the General', 1666 and in the Armenian era 1115. [Parikian Collection Iaa6.2.07]

The title translates as 'The Breath of God comprising the Old and New Testaments as arranged by our Fathers and truth-loving translators'. Armenians call the Bible 'The Breath of God' (2 Timothy 3:16), and the version that of 'the Translators'. The woodcuts reproduced here illustrate three of the six days of Creation in the Book of Genesis.

ew Surb Sargis Zoravar [St Ejmiatsin and St Sargis 'the General'], founded in 1660 by Matt'eos Tsarets'i and later headed by Oskan Erewants'i, the financial contribution of whose brother Awetis Ghlichents'i had saved the press from closure when Matt'eos died in 1661 without completing the printing of his first publication, the *Yisus Ordi* of Nerses Shnorhali [Parikian Collection Iaa5.6.14]. The Oskanean Bible, comprising 462 double-column pages with 159 illustrations, is an outstanding achievement. It is based on a single manuscript, altered in places and adjusted to the text of the Latin Vulgate, and its typography and design represent the highest standards achieved by Armenian printers to that date. The woodcuts are from a Latin Bible printed in 1657 and bear the initials of Christoffel van Sichem; twelve are based on works of Albrecht Dürer. The popularity of Oskan's Bible helped to spread the van Sichem pictures across the entire Armenian diaspora: other printers copied these illustrations and used them in their books. A section of such a woodblock survives in St James's Printing Press in Jerusalem.

Financial difficulties and legal battles forced Oskan to move his press first to Livorno and then to Marseilles, where he died in 1674. With Oskan's departure, Armenian printing

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Movses Khorenats'i, *Azgabanut'iwn Tohmin Yabetean [Genealogy of the race of Japhet]*. Amsterdam: T'ovma Vanandets'i, 1695. [Parikian Collection Iaa5.6.32]

All three styles of Armenian type newly cut for Matt'eos and Ghukas Vanandets'i are used to structure the title page. Large *erkat'gir* (iron letters) in red and black are used for the main title, followed by *bolorgir* (round hand) and *notrgir* (cursive).

in Amsterdam was interrupted. It was revived in 1684 by the Vanandets'i family, father, son, and nephew, who had worked with Oskan in Livorno and Marseille and described themselves as his pupils and followers. Aiming to capitalise on the prosperous Armenian merchant class in Amsterdam, they decided to establish a press and ordered fonts from the Hungarian punch-cutter and printer Nicholas Kis (1650-1702). His Armenian founts, sold to T'ovma Vanandets'i in 1685, were resold in the late 1720s to the Mechitarists in Venice, where they remained in use into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### ANGLO-ARMENIAN ORIENTATIONS

In the National Gallery of Armenia there is a large oil painting by the Armenian seascape painter Hovhannes Ayvazyan (Ivan Aivazovsky) titled 'The Mkhitarists receive Byron on the Island of Saint Lazzaro'. When Lord Byron first visited San Lazzaro in December 1816, the Congregation had been established on the island for exactly a century. Having closely averted Napoleon's threat of dissolution in 1810, they continued their work with added vigour, reflected in the great number of publications from their press in Armenian and other languages.

The meeting is described in the memoirs of the Mechitarist scholar Yarutiwn Awgerean: 'on the 1st of December the world famous English poet Lord Byron visited our monastery. Though lame in one foot he is a youth of bright and cheerful disposition, with fiery eyes and beautiful features.' Byron returned the next day to be shown the library and museum, and asked to be taught Armenian. His request to live on the island was turned down by the abbot, who may have been unwilling to make exceptions to their rule, and perhaps also anxious not to appear hospitable to a revolutionary who was being actively attacked and criticised in his own country. However, Byron was urged to visit the island every day to begin his studies of the Armenian language with Awgerean.

Byron wrote in a letter to his friend Thomas Moore: 'on my arrival at Venice my mind in a state which required study, and study of a nature which should leave little scope for the imagination and furnish some difficulty in the pursuit ... By the way of divertissement I am studying at an Armenian monastery the Armenian language ... It is a rich language, however, and would amply repay any one the trouble of learning it.'

It must have been a happy relationship – Awgerean in his diary refers fondly to Byron as 'the mad one' – and it was also a fruitful collaboration which was directly and



Parikian's copy of the first printed Armenian Bible, [Parikian Collection Iaa6.2.07], printed by Oskan Erewants'i in Amsterdam (1666-1668), is one of a limited number in bindings designed by the pre-eminent 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch bookbinder Albert Magnus [Pseudo-Magnus]. This book is covered with gold-tooled brown calf over wooden boards with a tooled image of the Crucifixion on the front cover and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on the lower cover, with brass clasps.

indirectly responsible for a number of valuable publications, including a *Grammar English and Armenian* first published in 1817 (Parikian Collection Iaa5.3.28), which Byron helped Awgerean (the latter using the pen name 'Paschal Aucher') to write.

There is little doubt that Awgerean's association with Lord Byron greatly encouraged the Mechitarists' interest in English literature, including translations of John Milton, Edward Young, and later Byron's own works.

#### THE PARIKIAN COLLECTION

Parikian's outstanding collection of Armenian books printed from the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to 1850 and beyond covers the principal centres of Armenian printing. The majority of the books are in classical Armenian, and some of the earliest texts printed in modern Armenian as well as texts in Turkish printed with Armenian letters are also represented. Of particular interest is a small selection of 16<sup>th</sup>-century western publications, mostly in Latin, introducing the use of Armenian founts prior to the emergence of Armenian printing.

The majority of the books are in good original or contemporary bindings from the countries of origin, and there are a number by important Dutch binders of the 17<sup>th</sup> century including presentation bindings. The library also holds Parikian's bibliographical aids relating to his collecting activity, published bibliographies, dictionaries and reference works.

The collection covers a wide range of subjects of interest to Armenologists and bibliophiles. Many of the books are enhanced by inscriptions by previous owners and most contain bibliographical annotations by Parikian inside the lower covers, often including the date and source of acquisition. Possibly the largest single source of the collection appears to be a purchase from Van Gendt in 1972, and there is evidence of purchases at antiquarian and orientalist bookshops in London, Paris, Vienna and Istanbul. Many books are stamped with the seals of Armenian clerics or bear the inscriptions or bookplates of previous owners and institutions, including a number of distinguished collectors, scholars and libraries, among them William Beckford, Hamilton Palace Library, Sotheby's Bute sale, the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Matenadaran (Armenia), Yarutiwn Awgerean, Solomon Caesar Malan, L.G. Minasian, J.S.G. Simmons, and John Sparrow. The presence of such copy-specific

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Armenian popular songs translated into English by Leo M. Alishan [Ghewond Alishan]. Venice: Mechitarist Press, 1852. [Parikian Collection Iaa6.4.33]

A presentation copy from the translator to Sir Robert Curzon; a letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 1853 tipped inside the front cover refers to Alishan's visit to Parham House in Sussex to translate into Italian the apocryphal text of Joseph and Asenath from a complete Bible in Curzon's possession, which Curzon himself then rendered into English.

information is recorded in the catalogue, with particular attention to notes of names, dates and places, building up a picture of the circulation of Armenian books in the west. Although there is little correspondence accompanying the collection, there is evidence of Parikian's acquisition of books by exchange, as gifts or as duplicates.

The core of the collection consists of publications from the Mechitarist Fathers of Venice, Vienna, and Trieste, who in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries made outstanding contributions to Armenian culture. Mechitar of Sebastia (Mkhit'ar Sebastats'i) was born to Armenian parents in Sebastia (Sivas) in 1676 and embraced Catholicism in Aleppo in 1695. In 1705 Mechitar sought the Holy See's recognition to set up his Armenian Benedictine Order, and the congregation settled in its present home on the small island of San Lazzaro in the Venetian lagoon in 1717. In 1773 a split led a



Movses Khorenats'i, *Patmut'iwn ew Ashkharagrut'iwn = Mosis Chorenensis Historiae Armeniacae libri III*. London: C. Ackers for J. Whiston, 1736. [Parikian Collection Iaa6.2.16]

This map illustrates the first printed book in Armenian published in England, with a parallel translation into Latin by G. and W. Whiston. Armenians call themselves *Hay*, their country *Hayastan* and their language *Hayeren*, from the name of their ancestor 'Hayk', while western sources use the name *Armenoi*, which occurs in the writings of the Greek historian Hecataeus of Miletus (*c*.550 BC). Greater Armenia consisted of 15 provinces; separated from it by the Euphrates to the west is Armenia Minor.



Shek 'spir [William Shakespeare], *Hamlet ishkhan Danemark 'ayi*, translated by Yovhannes Masehean. Vienna: Mechitarist Press, 1921. [Parikian Collection Iaa7.4.14] The popularity of Shakespeare among Armenians is tantamount to idolatry, and survived under the Soviet regime. Masehean, who also translated Byron's works, made a lifelong study of Shakespeare. This edition is illustrated by the Anglo-Armenian artist Zabelle Boyadjian.

branch of the congregation to settle in Trieste, declaring themselves a separate order in 1803 and later fleeing to Vienna when Trieste was absorbed into Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy. Both branches set up their own printing houses, which in both quantity and quality of publications became the leading printers of Armenian books. (The two foundations were reunited in 2000.)

The Mechitarists took the lead in the publication of Armenian historical texts with the publication of the series *Matenagrut'iwnk' Nakhneats'* ('Literature of our Predecessors'), intended to make old Armenian manuscript sources available to western readers: Ghazar P'arp'ets'i, Agat'angeghos, Movses Khorenats'i (Moses of Khoren), Eghishe, P'awstos Biwzand, Koriwn and Eznik. These ancient and medieval Armenian sources are of great importance for the study of world civilization, and many Greek and Syriac works whose originals are now lost were preserved in Armenian. One of the most important of these is the critical edition by Mkrtich' Awgerean of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius of Caesarea (Venice, 1818), which has come down to us through a 5<sup>th</sup> century Armenian translation. Equally, eight of the works to Philo of Alexandria survive only through their translations into Armenian, two of which (*De providentia* and *De animalibus* (Venice, 1822, 1826) [Parikian Collection Iaa6.1.16(01-02)] were also edited by Mkrtich' Awgerean.

In the Parikian Collection there are also odd numbers of Armenian periodicals (*Banber Matenadarani, Ejmiatsin, Bazmavep, Handes Amsorya*), evidently collected for the sake of articles on early Armenian printing. The most interesting of these are first 13 numbers of *Bazmavep* (the fourth periodical publication of the Venice Mechitarists), the first issue of *Ditak Biwzandean* (Venice, 1812-1813), and a complete bound set of *Nor keank*, the official organ of the Armenian Democratic Party (London, 1898-1902).

The post-1900 collection consists primarily of dictionaries and reference books supporting Parikian's book collecting. The main bibliographies by Anasyan, Ghazikean, Kévorkian, Levonyan, Nersessian, Voskanyan and Davt'yan are included; the copies of Nersessian and Davt'yan are marked up by Parikian to indicate the titles present in his collection. The library also holds Parikian's card indexes and marked catalogues of Venice and Vienna booksellers.

#### FURTHER READING

Lint, T. M. van and Myer, R. (eds.), *Armenia: masterpieces from an enduring culture*. Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015. Exhibition catalogue.

Nersessian, V., *Catalogue of early Armenian books 1512-1850*. London: British Library, 1980. Descriptions of the collections in the British Library and the Bodleian Library, Oxford, preceded by a brief history of the printing centres in the diaspora.

Nersessian, V., The Bible in the Armenian tradition. London: British Library, 2001.

Nersessian, V., *Treasures from the Ark: 1700 years of Armenian Christianity*. London: British Library, 2001.

The text of this booklet was written by Revd Dr Vrej Nerses Nersessian, former curator in charge of the Christian Middle East Section of the British Library (1975-2012), and edited by Dr Stephanie Coane, Deputy Curator of Modern Collections, Eton College Library.

#### CATALOGUE PROJECT NOTES

Scholarly catalogue entries for the materials in the Parikian Collection were created between July and December 2016 by Dr Vrej Nerses Nersessian, former curator in charge of the Christian Middle East Section of the British Library. These were converted and enhanced to produce electronic catalogue records which conform to international library cataloguing standards by Eton College Library staff. As the production of the electronic records was carried out by non-Armenian speakers, it is possible that conversion errors in transcription or Romanization have escaped our notice. Any such errors may be reported to collections@etoncollege.org.uk.

References are provided to the standard Armenian bibliographies (Davt'yan, Kévorkian, Nersessian and Voskanyan). The complete colophons of the books printed between 1512-1800 are reproduced in the Armenian national union catalogue by [V]Oskanyan, N.A. et al., *Hay Girk'e 1512-1800 t'vakannerin: Hay hnatip grk'i matenagitut'yun*, Erevan: Aleksander Myasnikyan National Library, 1988, and the colophons of books printed between 1511-1695 in Kévorkian, R.H., *Catalogue des 'incunables' arméniens (1511/1695) ou, Chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne*, Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1986.

For accessibility using western keyboards, the main fields of the catalogue entries in the Eton College Library online catalogue use phonetic transcription. Local cataloguing standards and technical constraints have dictated the use of the Library of Congress Romanization table in place of the Hübschmann-Meillet-Benveniste transliteration system, without diacritical marks. See www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/ armenian.pdf. Title and imprint in Armenian characters are also provided in alternate fields, and selectively for personal and corporate names. (It is hoped this provision will be improved as resources permit.)

The dates of publication supplied by the printers of early Armenian books follow the scribal tradition of Armenian manuscripts: according to the Armenian era in Armenian letters. The 'Great Armenian Era' referred to in the titles and colophons as 'i t'uin Hayots'' commenced in AD 552, the difference between the Armenian era and the Christian era being 551 years.

The online catalogue may be accessed at www.etoncollege.com/CollegeLibrary ParikianCollection.

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