

HISTORIANS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

C. Kafadar H. Karateke C. Fleischer

ABRAHAM of YEREVAN

(lived in mid-18th century)

Little is known of A. of Yerevan, who lived in the 18th century. A.'s name survives mainly due to his manuscript entitled *Patmut`iwn T`agayori Parsits`* (*History of the Persian King*) written in Armenian.

A., son of Hovhannēs, lived in Yerevan (Revān), the center of the Persian defenses in eastern Armenia (Persian Armenia). Even though his literacy suggests that he was not a peasant, his awkward writing style and his use of the vernacular local dialect indicate that he was a member neither of the clergy nor of the gentry. His knowledge of firearms, his frequent use of military terms, and his detailed description of the numerous wars suggests that he may have been either a soldier or a tradesman working with the army.

Unlike other contemporary sources, which concentrate on the political and socio-economic conditions of the region during the second quarter of the 18th century, A.'s narrative is an uninterrupted account of the wars between the Persians and the Afghans, the Ottomans and the Afghans, and the Persians and the Ottomans. The narrative begins with the fall of the Safavid dynasty in (1722) and ends with the conquest of Qandahār in (1738) and the restoration of Persian suzerainty over the territories of the former Safavid Empire.

The work's greatest value is the account of the Ottoman invasion of the Khanate of Yerevan. A.'s history is the sole source detailing the events that occurred in the Khanate between Jumada II-Dhulhijja 1136/March-September 1724. The siege of Yerevan and the resistance of the people in the city are explained in detail. The Ottomans' several unsuccessful assaults on the city, many other Ottoman forces from Anatolia and Egyptian troops joining the army, the particularities of the siege, and the Armenian defence of the city until its fall on 7 June 1724 are narrated in a lively fashion.

The manuscript of *Patmut`iwn T`agayori Parsits`* which survives is in the San Lazzaro Armenian Catholic Monastery on the island of San Lazzaro in Venice. In the second half of the 18th century the manuscript was edited by Mattēos Karakashean, an Armenian monk, who called it *Patmut`iwn Paterazmats`n 1721-1736* (*The History of the Wars 1721-1736*). A copy of the said work was brought to Soviet Armenia in 1928 and was published in 1938.

① *Patmut`iwn T`agayori Parsits`*

Manuscript: (1) Venice, Biblioteca Mechitarista di San Lazzaro degli Armeni, MS 2681. (2) Venice, Biblioteca Mechitarista di San Lazzaro degli Armeni, MS 2717.

Editions and Translations: *Patmut`iwn paterazmats`n 1721-1736* (Erevan, 1938). *Istoriia Voin, 1721-1736* (Erevan, 1939) [Russian translation]. *Patmut`iwn pateraz-*

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mats`n (Venice, 1977) [Corrected and complete version]. Abraham of Erevan. *History of the Wars, 1721-1738*, trans. G. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, Ca., 1999) [Annotated English translation of the corrected version].

SIMĒON of POLAND

(b. 1584; d. ?)

S. was born in Zamoćś in present-day Poland, where he learned Armenian in the city of Lvov, a main center of Armenian life in Poland. After attaining the rank of a deacon in the Armenian Church, he decided to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to other sites revered by Armenians and Christians in general. He began his journey in 1017/1608 and returned to Poland in 1028/1619.

In his *Ughegrut`iwn* (Travel Notes) S. describes thoroughly the Hagia Sophia, the Hippodrome, the Topkapı Palace, Aslanhāne, Cebehāne, Dīvānhāne, the various bazaars, Sulumanastır, Tavuqhāne, Yedique, Tekfür Sarayı, and Ȣalata in Istanbul, and gives a superb account of the sultan's public procession to Friday prayer. S.'s work also includes accounts of locations he visited on the shores of the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea, such as Gallipoli, Tekfürdāğı, Mudanya, Bandırma, Edincik, Balıkesir, Magnisa, İzmir, Tire, Lesbos, Qaramürsel, and İzniq. After his pilgrimage to Venice and Rome, he returned to the Ottoman lands and traveled to various Armenian monasteries and described life in the Armenian communities of Toqad, Amasya, Malatya, Sebastya, Kharpert, Āmid, Balu, and Muş. He then visited Jerusalem, Alexandria, Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, Qayseri, Mar^caş, and Anqara. S. left a detailed and unique account of the social and economic conditions of Christians and Muslims in the above cities and provinces of the Ottoman Empire. He not only named various officials, regulations, tolls, and buildings, but also gave an account of the goods that were produced in these regions, as well as those goods that passed through them and were exported from them.

S. mentions that Amasya had three Armenian churches and 200 Armenian families; Toqad had eight Armenian churches and 1000 households, which had been reduced to 500 families after the *Celālī* raids; Sebastya had two churches and 2000 households, 600 of which had remained after the *Celālī* attacks; the region of Malatya had one church and 100 Armenian families; Kharpert had three Armenian churches and 100 Armenian households; Mar^caş had only 12 Armenian households; Zeytün had originally 800 Armenian families, only 30 remaining after the *Celālī* raids; Qayseri had two churches and 500 or more Armenian households. According to S., there were no Armenians living in Alexandria. There were, however, a Greek church and communities of Greeks, Copts, and Franks. Cairo, on the other hand, had 200 Armenian households. S. vividly describes the great bazaar of Cairo (*Hān al-Ḩalīlī*) and the various artisans from Istanbul and other parts of the Ottoman Empire who

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worked there. He also details the various goods sold in that bazaar. S.'s description of the dispatching of taxes from Egypt and other provinces to the Sultan in Istanbul is interesting in that he describes the caravan and the guards which brought the tax money to Istanbul via Damascus and Aleppo.

The sole copy of his travel notes, housed at the Lvov University Library, disappeared during the German occupation of that city during World War II. Fortunately, the Mkhitarist priest, Nersēs Akinean, had made a copy of the manuscript a few years earlier and published it in Vienna in 1936. Upon Istanbul University's commissioning a Turkish translation of the work by Hrand Andreasyan appeared. The translator omitted S.'s introduction as well as the material dealing with his travels after leaving the Ottoman Empire (chapters 15-18). Moreover, Andreasyan condensed some passages and left out some anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim material. A Russian edition by Margo Darbinian appeared a year later in Moscow. The thirty-odd pages devoted to Eastern Europe were translated into Bulgarian as part of a collection of Armenian historians on the Balkans in 1984. A recent edition in modern Armenian was published in Erevan in 1997. An annotated English version by G. Bournoutian is in its final phase and will appear in 2006.

① *Ughegrut`iwn*

Manuscripts: The unique Lvov University Library copy is lost.

Editions: Nersēs Akinean. *Des Armeniers Simeon Aus Polen, Reisebeschreibung* (Vienna, 1936) [Armenian text, German summary]. *Polonyalı Simeon'un Seyahatnâmesi: 1608-1619*, trans. Hrand D. Andreasyan (Istanbul, 1964) [condensed and edited Turkish translation]. *Simeon Lekhatsi, Putevye Zametki*, trans. M. Darbinian (Moscow, 1965) [Russian edition]. Hakob Ormandjian (ed.). *Armenski ts`tepici za Balkanite XVII-XIX v.* (Sofia, 1984), 13-42 [Bulgarian translation of a section devoted to Eastern Europe]. *Ughegrut`yun* (Erevan, 1997) [modern Armenian edition]. *The Travel Notes of Simeon of Poland*, trans. G. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, Ca., 2006) [annotated English version].

ARAK`EL of TABRIZ

(ca. 1590-1670)

ZAK`ARIA of K`ANAK`ER

(1627-ca.1699)

A. and Z. were churchmen. A. was born in Tabrīz around 998/1590 and died in Ējmatsin in 1081/1670. He visited Amasya, Sebastya, Urfa, and Aleppo. Z., on the other hand, was born in 1036/1627 in the village of K`anak`er, near Erevan and probably died in 1110/1699 in the monastery of Hovhannavank` in present-day Armenia. He traveled to İzmır (1093/1682) and Istanbul (1095/1684).

The works of both figures deal with the socioeconomic history of these regions in the second half of the 17th century and describe the wars between the Safavids and

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the Ottomans in Armenia and Mesopotamia from 1012/1603 up to the Treaty of Zuhab in 1049/1639.

Z.'s account borrows heavily from A.'s work and, except for the *Celālīs* and the Perso-Ottoman wars, has little else on the Ottoman Empire. A.'s *History*, however, has much more information on the Ottoman Empire. He covers in great detail the campaigns of Shah ʻAbbās I, his defeat of Serdār Cağaloğlu Sinān Paşa at Sīs near Tabrīz (1014/1605-6), the capture, loss, and recapture of the fortress of Yerevan, the taking of Bağdād, its recapture by the Ottomans, and the Ottoman losses in Ganja and Georgia. More important are his long descriptions of the destruction caused by the *Celalis*. He lists the various *Celālī* leaders and the dates of their activities. He has an entire chapter on the Ottoman sultans and some of the important events which occurred during their reigns, beginning with ʻOsman (698-726/1299-1326) up to Mehmed IV (1058-99/ 1648-87). His chapter on the fire that burned part of Istanbul in 1070/1660 is particularly interesting as are his accounts of the numerous earthquakes and other natural phenomena that occurred in various Anatolian cities. Moreover, A. is one of the few sources of information on the messianic movement of Shabbatai Sevi. His long chapter on this movement is thus an important source on the history of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire.

① *Girk patmut`eants* (*Book of Histories*) by Arak`el of Tabriz

Manuscripts: (1) Yerevan, Matenadaran Archives, MS 1772. (2) Yerevan, Matenadaran Archives, MS 1773.

Editions: *Girk patmut`eants*, ed. by Voskan of Yerevan (Amsterdam, 1669). Marie-Felicite Brossset. “Livre d’histoires composé par le vartabied Arakel de Tauriz.” *Collection d’historiens arméniens*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1874) [French translation of the Amsterdam edition]. *Patmut’iwn Arak`el vardapeti Dawrzhets`woy* (Vagharschapat, 1884 and 1896). [Corrected editions, based on two manuscripts]. *Kniga Istorii*, trans. L. Khanlaryan (Moscow, 1973) [Russian edition based on the 1896 version]. *Patmut`yun* (Erevan, 1988) [Modern eastern Armenian edition]. *Girk patmut`eants`* (Erevan, 1990) [Critical edition based on all available manuscripts]. *The History of Vardapet Arak`el of Tabriz*, trans. G. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, Ca., 2005) [Annotated English translation of the critical edition]

① *Patmagrut`iwn* (*Chronicle*) by Zak`aria of K`anak`er

Manuscripts: (1) Yerevan, Matenadaran Archives, MS 1662. (2) Yerevan, Matenadaran Archives, MS 3024. (3) Yerevan, Matenadaran Archives, MS 8636.

Editions: *Zak`areay Sarkawagi patmagrut`iwn* (Vagharschapat, 1870). M. Brosset. “Memoires historiques sur les Sofis, par le Diacre Zakaria.” *Collection d’historiens arméniens*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1876) [French translation]. *Khronika*, trans. M. Darbinian-Melikian (Moscow, 1969) [Russian translation based on all available

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manuscripts]. *The Chronicle of Deacon Zak`aria of K`anak`er*, trans. G. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, Ca., 2004) [Annotated English translation].

ZAK`ARIA of AGULIS

(1630 - ca. 1691)

Z. was born in 1039/1630 in the town of Agulis in Nakhichevan and died there sometime after 1102/1691. He was a merchant, who took Persian silk to the Ottoman Empire and Europe and kept a *Oragrut`ium (Journal)* from 1057/1647 to 1102/1691, which is a valuable source of information about the caravan routes from Yerevan to İzmir, as well as the value of different currencies of the time. Z.'s work is of primary importance for those interested in the silk route from Asia to Europe. The distance between each *menzil* (station) is given in leagues. The topography of the entire route, including Kagizman (Karsovan), Qarakilise, Hasanqal^ce, Deveboynu, Erżurūm, Cinis, Toqad, Sürmene, Qarahisār, Kemālpasa, and İzmir is described in detail. The road tolls, the fear of the *Celālī*, the 1058/1648 Janissary revolt during the reign of Sultan İbrāhīm (1049-58/1640-48), his murder and the installation of Sultan Mehmed IV (1058-99/ 1648-87), as well as the sea route from the Ottoman Empire to Venice is also vividly portrayed.

① *Oragrut`ium (Journal)*

Manuscript: (1) Yerevan, Academy of Sciences of Armenia, MS A-II/33352.

Editions: *Zak`aria Agulets`u Oragrut`iwnē* (Erevan, 1938). *Dnevnik Zakaria Aku-lisskogo* (Erevan, 1939) [Russian edition]. *The Journal of Zak`aria of Agulis*, trans. G. Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, Ca., 2003) [Annotated English translation].

Except for Abraham of Yerevan, all of the abovementioned historians demonstrate a great fear of the *Celālī*, indicating that the rebels had truly affected the daily life in large parts of Anatolia. They also make it clear that some of the rebels continued their activities, under new leaders, during the early part of the 17th century even after the death of the infamous Qarayazıcı.

These historians also recorded the names and responsibilities of various Ottoman officials in Anatolia and the Arab provinces. Zak`aria of Agulis and Simġon of Poland describe the various Armenian villages and communities they encountered throughout Anatolia, Rumelia, and the Arab provinces. Both detail the various items that were traded and have left valuable information on the quarantine procedures of the Republic of Venice on all ships and merchandise coming from the Ottoman Empire.

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The accounts of all these historians are at times anti-Muslim. Their complaints, however, are against for the most part particular local officials rather than the Ottoman State in general.

It is interesting to note that all of the abovementioned historians use several Arabic, Persian and Turkish terms as part of their narratives. Many of these words are presented with Armenian suffixes, such as *ba-ham*, *jarīma*, *ijāra*. Words such as *bogaz*, *boylu*, *burun*, *çavuş*, *yeniçeri*, *kent* are just a small sample of more than 500 Turkish words used by these historians. This clearly demonstrates that prior to the Armenian literary Renaissance, which occurred in the 19th century in cities such as Istanbul, İzmir, Tblisi, and Moscow, Turkish and Persian terms had already become part of the daily Armenian speech and had even crept into the writings of educated Armenian clerics. Thus, in addition to their historical value, linguists dealing with the Ottoman speech of the 17th and early 18th centuries will find plenty of information.

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