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REVIEW OF  
**ARMENIAN STUDIES**  
A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations

Issue  
**49**  
2024

Facts and Comments

**Alev KILIÇ**

Armenian Parish of the Assumption of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary in Zamość in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century

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**BOOK REVIEW**

The Memoirs of Arshavir Shiragian:  
The Life Story of an Armenian Patriot  
or the Confessions of a Terrorist?

**Ahmet Can ÖKTEM**



TERAZI  
YAYINCILIK

# REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES

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**Ambassador (R) Alev KILIÇ** graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University in 1968. The next year, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Kılıç served as Ambassador to F.R. of Yugoslavia between 1996 and 1998 and Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg between 1998 and 2001. In 2001-2004, he served as the Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs of the Ministry. He served as Ambassador to Switzerland (2004-2009) and Ambassador to Mexican United States (2009-2011). He retired from the Ministry in 2011. Ambassador (R) Kılıç has been the Director of Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) since 2013.

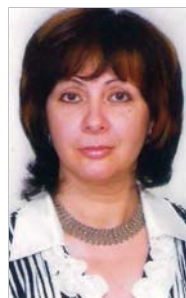


**Dr. Marcin Łukasz MAJEWSKI** is a historian and publisher of historical sources, and researches the history of cities, trade, crafts, and Polish Armenians in the early modern era.

**Lecturer Dr. Ercan Cihan ULUPINAR** graduated from the Department of Ethnology of Ankara University's Faculty of Languages and History-Geography in 2007. In 2010, he received his master's degree from the Armenian Language and Culture Program of Ankara University. He obtained his doctoral degree from the Armenian Language and Culture Program of Ankara University upon the completion of his thesis titled "Turkish Imagery in the Armenian Compiled Poetry Books of the XIX and XX. Centuries". Dr. Ulupinar served as a lecturer at Social Sciences University of Ankara between the years 2013 and 2019. Since 2019, he has been serving as a Lecturer Doctor in the Armenian Language and Culture Program of the Department of Caucasian Languages and Cultures at Ankara University's Faculty of Languages and History-Geography. His research focuses on the Armenian language and Armenian folk literature and culture.



**Dr. Hajar Yusif gyzy VERDIYEVA** graduated with honors from the Faculty of History of Baku State University (BSU) in 1986. In 1993, she defended her PhD thesis on the topic “The population of Northern Azerbaijan in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.” In 2005, she defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic “The resettlement policy of the Russian Empire in Northern Azerbaijan in the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.” For the first time in Azerbaijani historiography, she thus comprehensively studied the resettlement policy of the Russian Empire in the South Caucasus at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. As a Doctor of Historical Sciences, Verdiyeva explores current problems of the Caucasus: the multicultural layers of Azerbaijan, the ancestry of the Armenians, the history of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the problems of Muslim refugees during the First World War, and the mass extermination of Azerbaijanis at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She also studies ethno-confessional problems in the new and recent periods of the history of the South Caucasus mega-region. Since 1999, she has been a member of the International Association of Researchers of the History and Culture of Russian Germans, and since 2009, has been a member of the German-Azerbaijani Society. She took part in international conferences held in Germany, Russia, Türkiye, and Azerbaijan. Since 2015, she has been a member of the editorial board of the journal *International Academic Bulletin* (Russia). She is a member of the Expert Council on History and Anthropology of the Higher Attestation Commission (HAC) under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. She worked as a teacher at the Department of “History of Azerbaijan” at the Azerbaijan Medical University, as well as a leading researcher at the Research Center “Azerbaijan Studies” of BSU. In 2011-2015, she worked as a consultant to the Archive of Social-Political Documents of the Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2015-2017 as a senior consultant at the State Advisor Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan on interethnic issues, issues of multiculturalism and religion. Since 2017, she has been serving as the Chief Consultant of the Archive of Social-Political Documents of the Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Dr. Verdiyeva is the author of 7 monographs and 114 scientific articles. She is the co-author of 4 books and 2 textbooks, and a compiler of a collection of documents. She periodically speaks in the media on current issues of the South Caucasus.



## EDITORIAL NOTE

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**A**s always, the first article in the 49<sup>th</sup> issue of our journal is “**Facts and Comments**”. This article covers the period of November 2023-June 2024 of the internal developments in Armenia, the international relations of Armenia, the ongoing process of signing the Peace Agreement with Azerbaijan, and the bilateral relations with Türkiye considering the process of normalization of their relations. With a view to overcoming past bigoted concepts, the initiatives encouraged or condoned by Armenia’s Nikol Pashinyan administration to make changes or amends in various aspects of Armenia’s political and legal framework has led to reactions. Internal reactions have come from partisans of the former government, extreme nationalists and most importantly the Armenian Church, while external reactions have come from the militant organizations of the Armenian Diaspora who perceive their survival and livelihood in provoking radical and militant nationalism, and other countries wishing to use this as a vehicle to put political pressure on Türkiye. Following the termination of Karabakh’s occupation, the major obstacle to achieving a lasting peace with Azerbaijan has been removed, limiting the issues for negotiations to border demarcation and transport connections and facilities. Distancing itself from Russia to align with the West, Armenia has come to realize the necessity to normalize its relations with Türkiye, the neighbor to provide its connections with the West. Türkiye had been sincerely supporting the process of normalization of relations from early on. However, Türkiye has considered this in a regional perspective, to coincide with the normalization of Armenia’s relations with Azerbaijan, within the regional stability with Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

In his article titled “**Armenian Parish of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Zamość in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century**”, Marcin Łukasz Majewski delves into the details and history of the Armenian church and its parish that existed in Zamość in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Records indicate that the Armenians of this town, founded as a private enterprise and envisioned to be a center of trade with the East, originated from several places, among which were the cities of the Ottoman Empire. Majewski utilizes numerous official sources from said period to discuss the history, structure, and furnishings of the Armenian church in Zamość and the organization of its parish. The author discusses the religious and social conflict that was triggered by the unification process of this Armenian church with the Latin Church, the largest autonomous church within the Roman Catholic Church. Finally, the author narrates the gradual dissolution of the Armenian parish and the eventual demolition of their church building in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The author argues that the research of the article presents new findings and verifies some of the mistakes in the historiography of the Armenian presence in Poland.



In his article titled “**Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis of the Eighth Grade History Textbook Used in Armenia**”, Ercan Cihan Ulupınar aims to examine the historical and political discourses in the textbook titled “History of Armenians” used in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum of Armenia. The article uses a corpus-based discourse analysis method and examines the most frequently used words and their synonyms, near-synonyms, and antonyms. The article also determines the most frequently used dates and their significances. Lastly, it analyzes the words that refer to peoples other than the Armenians. Ulupınar indicates that the book makes excessive references to war and struggle (contrary to the recommendations of international education institutions) and ideologically singles out Turks as the “others” of the Armenian people. He points that words related to “Turks” and “Turkish” are used systematically with word types that create negative images. Finally, Ulupınar determines that the book makes the most emphasis on historical events and years that are meant to reinforce the idea of Armenian statehood in the minds of students.

In her article titled “**On the Level of Historical Truths: The ‘Armenian Question’ After The Potsdam Conference**”, Hajar Verdiyeva discusses how the USSR, similar to the Russian Empire before it, used the Armenian Question as a foreign policy tool to make territorial claims against the territories of Türkiye. The discourses pushed by the Soviet authorities thus favored the “Greater Armenia” narrative of Armenian historiography in a way that would favor the foreign policy objectives of the USSR. This was evident in the stubborn Soviet attitude during the Potsdam Conference of 1945. When the Soviet (and Armenian stance) failed to yield results, a change of tactics took place, and issue of Karabakh was brought up to the detriment of Azerbaijani Turks. Through this, ethnic cleansing was carried out in Soviet Armenia between the years 1948 and 1953, and Azerbaijani Turks were deported from their historical lands. In the end, however, USSR was forced to give up its territorial claims against Türkiye, and the Armenian aspirations concerning the control over Karabakh failed to yield results during the USSR period.

Our 49<sup>th</sup> issue also contains a review by Ahmet Can Öktem concerning a book from 2006 titled “**Bir Ermeni Teröristin İtirafı**” (The Confessions of an Armenian Terrorist), which is ultimately the Turkish version of a book from 1976 titled “The Legacy: Memoirs of an Armenian Patriot” by Arshavir Shiragian. Shiragian was born in the Ottoman Empire and became a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) as a youngster and took part in the assassinations carried out as part of Operation Nemesis that primarily targeted Ottoman officials. Öktem indicates that Shiragian describes the numerous struggles and dangers he faced, the various phases of his terrorist activities, his radical beliefs, and his collaborations with various ARF members. Öktem provides explanations regarding ARF and Operation Nemesis, and comments on the numerous insults and accusations against Turks and the false and controversial statements contained in Shiragian’s book.

Have a nice reading and best regards,

Editor

## EDITORIAL / BAŞYAZI

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# FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

Alev KILIÇ\*

**Abstract:** *This article covers the period of November 2023-June 2024 of the internal developments in Armenia, the foreign dynamics shaping the international relations of Armenia, the ongoing process of signing the Peace Agreement with Azerbaijan and the bilateral relations of Türkiye and Armenia in the light of the process of normalisation of their relations.*

*The period under review has been a time frame where acts have been put into motion that can be qualified as a breaking or turning point both internally and externally. The administration of the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has undertaken some courageous and risky steps, breaking with established taboos. However, words and promises have not necessarily been carried out to deeds, at least not during the period under review.*

*With a view to overcoming past bigoted concepts, the initiatives encouraged or condoned by the Pashinyan administration to make changes or amends in the Constitution, national hymn and symbols, school curriculum, and genocide narrative, which help cement the past and cause rupture with the present, has led to reactions. Internal reactions have come from partisans of the former government, extreme nationalists and most importantly the Church, while external reactions have come from the militant organizations*

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*of the Diaspora who perceive their survival and livelihood in provoking radical and militant nationalism, and third party states wishing to use this as a vehicle to put political pressure on Türkiye. On the other hand, Christian fundamentalism that appeared in the West has endeavored to project Armenians as a symbol of Christian solidarity, thus to base assistance to Armenia on ideological grounds. Some states, allowing the tail to wag the dog, have seen political advantages in fulfilling these initiatives and demands.*

*Anachronistically and in total disregard of separation of church and state, the Apostolic Church of Armenia took the lead for the opposition in the person of an archbishop, who announced his candidacy for replacing Pashinyan as Prime Minister. The support of the diaspora in the West for the opposition continued undiminished, raising the spectre for the West, running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.*

*Following the termination of the occupation of Karabakh, the major obstacle to achieving a lasting peace with Azerbaijan has been removed, limiting the issues for negotiations to border demarcation and transport connections and facilities. Türkiye has shown support for the negotiations. This has been confirmed during the period again at the highest level, in a communication between Turkish President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Pashinyan.*

*Distancing itself from Russia to align with the West as Russia was not in a position to open a second front as the war with Ukraine was going on, Armenia has come to realize the necessity to normalize its relations with Türkiye, the neighbor to provide its connections with the West. Türkiye had been sincerely supporting the process of normalization of relations from early on. However, Türkiye has considered this in a regional perspective, to coincide with the normalization of Armenia's relations with Azerbaijan, within the regional stability with Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.*

**Keywords:** Pashinyan, Mirzoyan, Putin, Lavrov, Blinken, Erdoğan, Fidan, Macron, Raisi, Karekin II, Archbishop Galstanyan, Dashnaksutyun (ARF), Zangezur corridor, CSTO, EAEU, NATO

**Öz:** *Bu incelemede Kasım 2023-Haziran 2024 tarihleri döneminde Ermenistan'daki iç gelişmeler, dış dinamikler, Azerbaycan ile Barış Anlaşması sürecindeki gelişmeler ile Türkiye-Ermenistan arasındaki ilişkiler ve normalleşme sürecinin seyri ele alınmaktadır.*

*Dönem Ermenistan'ın gerek iç, gerek dış politikası bakımından kırılma noktası veya dönüm noktası sayılabilecek bir hareketliliğin yaşandığı bir zaman dilimi olmuştur. Ermenistan Başbakanı Nikol Paşinyan'ın yönetimi yerleşik bazı*

*tabuları yıkma yönünde cesaretli ve riskli başlangıçlar yapmıştır. Ancak, hiç değilse dönem içinde, Paşinyan'ın beyanları sözde kalmış, fiiliyata geçirilememiştir.*

*Paşinyan yönetiminin geçmişin bağınazlıklarından kurtulmak üzere; geçmişe kilitlenmeye neden olan ve günümüz gerçeklerine ters düşen Anayasada, ulusal amblemde, milli marşta, okul müfredatında ve soykırım iddiasında değişiklik yapma girişimleri olmuştur. Bu girişimler içte eski rejim yanlılarını, aşırı milliyetçileri ve en önemlisi Kiliseyi; dışta ise, varlıklarını ve geçim kaynaklarını aşırı milliyetçiliği körüklemekte gören militan Ermeni diaspora örgütlerini ve bunu Türkiye üzerinde siyasi baskı aracı olarak kullanabilmeyi düşünen üçüncü devletleri harekete geçirmiştir. Ayrıca, Batı'da gündeme gelen kökten dinci Hristiyanlık akımı, Ermenileri Hristiyan dayanışmasının sembolü haline getirmeye ve Ermenistan'a yardımı ideolojik bir çerçeveye oturtmaya çalışmıştır. Bazı ülkeler, kuyruğun başı yönlendirmesine olanak sağlayan bir zafiyet içinde, bu girişim ve taleplere boyun eğmeyi siyasi kazanım tercihi olarak görebilmiştir.*

*Ermenistan Apostolik Kilisesi çağ dışı bir yaklaşımla, din ve devlet ayırımını hiçe sayarak, Başbakan Paşinyan'ı devirmek üzere Başbakanlığa adaylığını ilan eden bir başpiskoposun kimliğinde muhalefetin liderliğine öncülük yapmıştır. Batıdaki diasporanın muhalefete desteği azalmadan devam etmiş, bu durum Batı'nın tavşana kaç, tazıya tut yaklaşımı görüntüsünü vermiştir.*

*Karabağ işgalinin bütünüyle sona erdirilmesiyle Azerbaycan ile kalıcı bir barışın önündeki en büyük engel kalkmış, müzakere konuları sınır tespiti ve ulaşım bağlantı ve kolaylıklarına odaklanmıştır. Türkiye bu müzakereleri desteklemiştir. Bu yaklaşım dönem içinde bir kez daha en yüksek düzeyde, Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan-Başbakan Paşinyan görüşmesinde teyit edilmiştir.*

*Ermenistan'ın Ukrayna Savaşı nedeniyle ikinci bir cepheye mücadeleyi göze alamayan Rusya'dan uzaklaşma olanağı bulması ve Batı yanlısı bir çizgiye geçmesi, Batı ile bağlantısını oluşturan komşusu Türkiye ile ilişkilerini normalleştirme gereğini ortaya koymuştur. Türkiye normalleşme sürecini esasen baştan beri samimiyetle desteklemiştir. Bununla beraber, Türkiye bunu bölgesel bir çerçevede göre gelmiş, Ermenistan'ın Azerbaycan ile ilişkilerinin de eş zamanlı normalleşmesinde, Gürcistan-Ermenistan-Azerbaycan bölgesel istikrarında değerlendirmiştir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Paşinyan, Mirzoyan, Putin, Lavrov, Blinken, Erdoğan, Fidan, Macron, Reisi, II. Karekin, Başpiskopos Galstanyan, Daşnaksutyun (EDF), Zangezür koridoru, KGAÖ, AEB, NATO*

## 1. Domestic Developments in Armenia

During this period, the domestic developments in Armenia influenced its foreign affairs, primarily with Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan establishing its sovereignty over the remaining occupied region of Karabakh through its military operation on September 2023, the choice of the Armenian population living in the region to migrate to Armenia instead of living in Karabakh as Azerbaijani citizens under under Azerbaijani rule, the struggles that this migrating population is facing in Armenia and the failure to meet their expectations, and attempts of the opposition against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to exploit this population have caused problems for Armenia's administration. The amendments required for the Armenian legislation in order to realize the peace agreement, especially the Constitution, further aggravated the opposition. The radicalized domestic opposition, largely supported by the Armenian Diaspora and receiving the support of the Armenian Apostolic Church, went beyond calls for the resignation of the administration to accusations of treason. The fact that the opposition has become more vocal and that militant outbursts have become more rampant does not necessarily mean that their public support has increased. On the other hand, it remains to be seen whether the full-fledged support and participation of the Church in the protests with an archbishop campaigning to topple the government and to become the prime minister himself will be able to tilt the balances.

The "President of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh", who fled to Armenia in response to Azerbaijan reclaiming the rest of its occupied territories through the Operation of 19 September 2023, announced on 28 September that the so-called state had ceased to exist. However, after receiving support, and even incentive from the Diaspora, some Western countries and some pro-Russian oppositional parties, he declared on 22 December that he had canceled this decision and decided to form a "government in exile" in Yerevan. This decision put Pashinyan, who was in the midst of peace talks and attempts to normalize relations with his neighbors, in a difficult situation, and also played into the hands of the administration's opponents.

By presidential decree, the Armenian Minister of High-Tech Industry R. Kachatrian was dismissed and replaced by M. Hayrapetyan on 29 December.<sup>1</sup> The Minister of Economy V. Kerobyan was dismissed on corruption charges on 14 February and arrested afterwards.<sup>2</sup> He was replaced on 5 March by 37-year-old G. Papoyan, Deputy Chairman of Pashinyan's Civil Contract party.<sup>3</sup>

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1 "Mkhitar Hayrapetyan Appointed Minister of High-tech Industry", *ArmenPress*, December 29, 2023, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1127198.html>

2 "Armenia's Former Economy Minister Charged with Corruption", *CivilNet*, February 19, 2024, <https://eurasianet.org/armenias-former-economy-minister-charged-with-corruption>.

3 "Gevorg Papoyan Appointed Armenian Economy Minister", *ArmenPress*, March 5, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1131752.html>

On 14 February 2024, major changes were made in the Armenian military forces' upper echelons. In a statement, it was noted that the military's weapons procurement was being altered and that the previous management style would change. On 15 February, the administration decided to appoint military attachés to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) missions.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the adversity between the Pashinyan administration and the Church, instead of diminishing, turned into an open confrontation was observed once again when Catholicos of Etchmiadzin Karekin II's customary New Year's message was not allowed to be broadcasted on state television on 31 December 2023.<sup>5</sup> Speaking at the Christmas ritual celebrated by the Armenian Apostolic Church on 6 January 2024, the Catholicos emphasized that the Armenian people of "Nagorno-Karabakh" would continue to fight for their rights and would never forget the state from which they were forcibly removed. Thus, with the proclamation from the highest authority, the Church determined its position in favor of radical nationalists and against government policy.

The efforts to sign a Peace Treaty and the process of normalizing relations with its neighbors have created the need to also make changes in Armenia's domestic legislation. Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan officially announced the idea of amending the Constitution, which he had been voicing for some time, during a meeting held at the Ministry of Justice on 18 January. He stated that "Armenia needs a new Constitution, not amendments to the Constitution".<sup>6</sup> Pashinyan assigned the Ministry of Justice to work on this issue. Pashinyan reiterated the same views at the party meeting two days later.

Adopted in 1995, the current Armenian Constitution ratified the "Declaration of Independence" adopted by the Armenian parliament in 1990 as an integral part of the Constitution. The 1990 Declaration of Independence also ratifies the 1989 Unity Law adopted during the Soviet Union period, which states that the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region is part of Armenia. Thus, these documents, which are binding components of the Constitution and are still valid, deny Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in Karabakh, reject the 1921 Moscow and Kars Agreements with the territorial claim of "Western Armenia" and do not recognize the border with Türkiye. On the other hand, it stipulates

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4 "Armenia Establishes Defense Attaché Positions in NATO and OSCE Missions", *ArmenPress*, February 15, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1130398.html>

5 Shoghik Galstian, "Armenian Church Head's New Year Address Not Aired By State TV", *Azatutyun*, January 2, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32756257.html>

6 "We Must Have a Constitution that Makes the Republic of Armenia More Competitive and Viable in the New Geopolitical Conditions. Prime Minister", *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, January 19, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/01/19/Nikol-Pashinyan-Report-Ministry-of-Justice/>

the international recognition of the “1915 genocide of Armenians” as one of the main duties of Armenia.

On 10 October 2009, two protocols were signed by the foreign ministers of Türkiye and Armenia in the presence of international observers, initiating the process of normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries. According to the relevant article of the Armenian Constitution, before international agreements were submitted to the Parliament for ratification, the protocols were sent to the Constitutional Court to evaluate their constitutionality. The court approved the protocols on the condition that Armenia would not give up its efforts for the worldwide recognition of the “Armenian Genocide” and that the implementation of the protocols did not alter the non-recognition of Armenia’s existing border as established by the 1921 Treaty of Kars. Naturally, this approach resulted in the nullification of the protocols. Undoubtedly, this is now an undesirable precedent for a possible peace agreement with Azerbaijan. In fact, Pashinyan criticized the Declaration of Independence in August 2023, stating that it incited conflict with Türkiye and Azerbaijan, contradicted the government’s peace agenda, and reflected Soviet mentality aimed at spreading seeds of discord among regional neighbors.<sup>7</sup> The opposition, as usual, vigorously accused the administration of being pro-Türkiye and pro-Azerbaijan, and emphasized that Azerbaijani pressure was the reason behind the constitutional amendment initiative. Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan acknowledged at a press conference on 23 January 2024 that Azerbaijan had concerns in this regard. In a speech on state television on 1 February, Pashinyan again criticized the Declaration of Independence, emphasized the need to remove the reference to the Declaration from the Constitution, and stated that “If so, it means we will never have peace. Furthermore, it means that we will now have war”.<sup>8</sup> The issue was also brought to the parliamentary agenda, and in a Q&A session in the Parliament on 7 February, Pashinyan reiterated his views, saying that “The world changed since the adoption of the current Constitution”.

The head of the Armenian Public Radio Company also joined the opposition parties and the Church in opposing Pashinyan’s views. On 7 February, he stated “The premier wants to destroy one of the pillars of our political identity and to stop us from being who we are. We are being told that the Turks are strong and the Armenians weak, and they will massacre us when war breaks out. The natural conclusion to be derived from this assumption should have been ‘let’s get stronger,’ but what is said instead is ‘let’s stop being Armenians.’”<sup>9</sup> The radio chief was removed from his post in response to these statements.

7 “Pashinyan Criticizes Armenia’s 1990 Declaration of Independence”, *Oragark*, August 23, 2023, <https://www.oragark.com/pashinyan-criticizes-armenias-1990-declaration-of-independence/>.

8 “Pashinian Again Criticizes Armenia’s Independence Declaration”, *Azattyun*, February 1, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32801656.html>

9 Astghik Bedevian and Ruzanna Stepanian, “State Radio Chief Censured After Criticizing Pashinian”, *Azattyun*, February 7, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32809279.html>

The issue was not limited to the amendment of the Constitution. In January, the Speaker of the Parliament and the administration's authorized mouthpieces brought to the agenda proposals to change the lyrics of the national anthem, which contains the words "killing" and "death" and lacks a national character. Additionally, proposals were made to change the state emblem, which includes Ağrı Mountain (Mount Ararat), on the grounds that it does not fit the realities of the present.<sup>10</sup> As one might expect, these proposals provided the opposition with rich material for accusations of treason. Another area of controversy and accusation arose in the school curriculum. The administration proposed to change the title of history books from "the History of Armenians" to "the History of Armenia". While the administration justified this as a step to shift away from clinging to the past and towards the present, opponents perceived this as an attempt to sever ties with the past and to forget the past, including the "genocide".

The statement by a prominent member of the ruling party, the chairman of the Parliamentary Defense Committee, that the verification of the number of those who lost their lives in the "genocide" by revealing the names of the victims one by one would help to solidify the allegations further intensified the opposition's criticism and led to accusations that Turkish views were now being supported even in the Armenian parliament. Although the deputy later declared that this view was his own personal approach,<sup>11</sup> it was reported in the press that High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs under the Prime Minister's Office Zareh Sinanyan also supported this proposal with the understanding that it would lead to "a much more scientific and objective realization of the genocide discussion". Moreover, the press stated that Pashinyan was also in favor of the proposal.

Pashinyan's pose in front of the photo of "Aragats", Armenia's highest mountain at 4090 meters, which appeared on social media, was also the target of intense criticism by the opposition. It was seen as an attempt to make people forget Ağrı Mountain and another blow against the national identity.

In his response to these criticisms, Pashinyan stated that historical Armenia and real Armenia are different, even contradictory concepts, that historical Armenia does not recognize the territorial integrity of real Armenia, thus endangering its existence. He expressed that the internationally recognized territorial integrity of Armenia is 29,743 square kilometers, and that it is time

10 "Armenian Parliamentary Speaker: National Anthem, Emblem should be Replaced Sooner or Later", *InterFax*, January 30, 2024, <https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/98903/>

11 Ruzanna Stepanian, "Pashinian Ally Says Remarks on 'Listing' Genocide Victims His 'Personal Approach'", *Azatoryun*, April 16, 2024, <https://www.azatoryun.am/a/32907554.html>



for Armenians to accept this fact.<sup>12</sup> Pashinyan, likely targeting the diaspora members who intervene in Armenia's affairs without even being able to speak Armenian, explained, "You say we are renouncing our values. The greatest of our values is our language. And if someone asks me what is the reason why I continue to be the Prime Minister of Armenia after the things you mentioned, I will say, in my opinion, because I possess one of our most important national values: the Armenian language—and not only the letter, but the soul, the spirit, the emotion with which I sense the emotions of the citizens of Armenia". Referring to the Karabakh issue, Pashinyan said, "What happened in Nagorno-Karabakh was not really about Nagorno-Karabakh, but another conspiracy to bring Armenia's statehood to its knees. Russia used Nagorno-Karabakh as a leash on Armenia."

On 25 January, a Yerevan court ruled in favor of the application of four Dashnaktsutyun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation-ARF) members of French citizenship who had been prevented from entering the country and sent back from the airport in July 2022, and lifted the ban on their entry into the country.

On 29 January, the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Sinanyan announced the ten-year (2023-2033) Armenia-Diaspora Partnership Strategy. In a statement to the press, Sinanyan described the strategy's vision as a "state-centered and pro-state" diaspora. Considering that the opposition to the Pashinyan administration includes the Armenian Church as well as the radical-militant Diaspora wing, Sinanyan's following statements are noteworthy:

"We expect to work with the Diaspora based on principles of respect, based on the objective of further deepening the ideology of statehood-building and state-centeredness. Today, this is very weak in the Diaspora. Understandably, the Diaspora was formed in conditions of absence of statehood. While Armenians living in Armenia have the sense of nationhood and statehood-building, Diaspora Armenians don't necessarily have that notion. We want the Diaspora to focus exclusively on the state. This is not out of egoism or thinking only of ourselves. We see the state as a guarantee not only for Armenians in Armenia, but also for the continuity of the Armenian nation and the Diaspora. Without a strong state, nothing can happen."<sup>13</sup>

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12 "Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Speech at the National Assembly during the Discussion of the Implementation of the Government Action Plan (2021-26) for the year of 2023", *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, April 10, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2024/04/10/Nikol-Pashinyan-Speech/>

13 "Armenia Develops 2023-2033 Diaspora Partnership Strategy Ahead of 2nd Global Summit", *ArmenPress*, January 29, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1129041.html>

High Commissioner Sinanyan explained that this strategy stemmed from the first Global Diaspora Summit in 2022 and that the second Global Diaspora Summit is planned to be held in Armenia in September 2024.

The leaders of the Social Democratic Hunchak Party, the ARF, and the Armenian Democratic League (Ramgavar party), which are among the radical-militant groups of the Diaspora in the US, held a joint meeting on 22 January. At the meeting, where the situation in Armenia and Karabakh was evaluated, it was stated that the Armenian nation and homeland were in a vital struggle and pledged to serve the cause in unity and in partnership.

The ARF subsequently issued a statement on 5 February, targeting the Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization talks and a possible peace agreement, demanding the restoration of the “Nagorno-Karabakh-Artsakh republic” to its former status, which contradicts facts and reality.

The head of the ARF bureau in Armenia was received by Catholicos Karekin II in Etchmiadzin on 8 February. In a statement issued at the end of the meeting, it was noted that the two leaders highlighted the need to expand cooperation between national institutions and deepen the role of the Church in the life of the Armenian people in order to promote national unity and respond to the threats.<sup>14</sup>

The US-based ARF bureau issued a harsher statement on 28 March, claiming that the unilateral concessions of Pashinyan and his administration have not and will not end, that there is an urgent need to unite all steady forces in Armenia and the Diaspora, and that the only item on the agenda should be the salvation of the Armenian statehood.<sup>15</sup> The ARF’s “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic-Artsakh” bureau also held a regional meeting in Yerevan on 1 April and published a statement declaring its decision to continue the struggle for the return of the population of the so-called republic and the defense of their “inalienable rights”.

In a special session on 16 April, the Parliament declared 3 August as the day of commemoration of the Sinjar Yazidis, who are described as being victims of a Daesh/ISIS instigated genocide in 2014.<sup>16</sup> The media stated that Armenia was the first country in the world to adopt such a resolution. In a message

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14 “ARF Bureau Chairman Meets with Catholicos Karekin II”, *Asbarez*, February 9, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/arf-bureau-chairman-meets-with-catholicos-karekin-ii/>

15 “Declaration of the ARF-Dashnaksutyun Bureau”, *The Armenian Weekly*, March 28, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/03/28/declaration-of-the-arf-dashnaksutyun-bureau/>

16 “It is proposed to mark August 3 as a Memorial Day of Sinjar Yazidis Genocide Victims in 2014”, *National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia*, April 16, 2024, [http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat\\_id=2&NewsID=20433&year=2024&month=04&day=16&lang=eng](http://www.parliament.am/news.php?cat_id=2&NewsID=20433&year=2024&month=04&day=16&lang=eng)

posted on social media, the French Ambassador to Yerevan expressed his contentment with the decision and claimed that the “martyrdom” of the Sinjar Yazidis was a repetition of the “genocide of Armenians in 1915”, a hundred years later.

On 19 April, the decision to return four border villages in the Tovuz region to Azerbaijan in accordance with the agreement reached as a result of border negotiations with Azerbaijan turned into an anti-government demonstration. The demonstration was instigated and led by the highest religious authority of the region, Archbishop Bagrat Galstanian, who led his followers on a 170-kilometer march to Yerevan and reached the capital on 9 May.<sup>17</sup> The Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin did not hide its support for the movement. The Catholicosate of Cilicia (located in Antelias/Lebanon) came into the picture as well, and in a telephone conversation between the heads of the two catholicosates on 30 April, the necessity of firmly maintaining Armenia’s territorial integrity and the Church’s indispensable commitment to it were emphasized.

Afterwards, the Armenian Apostolic Church announced its support for one of its senior priests to lead the protests against the government’s decision to cede disputed border regions to Azerbaijan and called on Prime Minister Pashinyan to take into account the “legitimate” demands of the demonstrators. In his response statement, Pashinyan argued that the protesters’ aim was to overthrow him with the support of the opposition and “foreign powers” and that the actual leader of the process was Catholicos Karekin II himself.

At a rally in Yerevan attended by 30-40,000 people, Archbishop Galstanian demanded Pashinyan’s resignation and gave him an hour to do so. Of course, this childish approach did not bring any results. The Archbishop, who also has Canadian citizenship and previously served as Archbishop in Canada, has close ties with the ARF. As if to confirm his ties to the ARF, he posed hand in hand with the murderous terrorist Hampig Sassounian at demonstrations in Yerevan. Moreover, he described Sassounian, who assassinated Türkiye’s Consul General in Los Angeles in 1982 and settled in Armenia after his unwarranted release from a US prison, as a “hero”. Even though the movement mobilized a section of the population for a populist cause and had the Church’s support, it became clear that it would not yield results. The police arrested 171 demonstrators, including the terrorist Sassounian.

Archbishop Galstanyan’s movement, which began in late April with demands to halt the delimitation of the border, but then shifted to demanding the

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17 Karine Simonian, “Armenian Border Protesters March Toward Yerevan”, *Radio Free Europe*, March 5, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-border-protest-yerevan-kirants-galstanian/32934139.html>

resignation of the Prime Minister and the administration, despite dwindling numbers, from the peak of 30,000 of the first demonstration to 11,000 and 9,000, kept continuing with weekly demonstrations. On the eve of the Republic Day of 28 May, his movement organised another rally attended by some 23,000 people, calling for obstructing the official ceremonies the next day. The protesters led by Archbishop Galstanyan spent the night at the memorial site to disrupt the anticipated ceremony. The official ceremony, with the attendance of Pashinyan and top state officials took place, not in the morning as is the tradition, but in the afternoon, after the protesters left. Though an awkward incident happened. The head of the Apostolic Church in Armenia, Catholicos Karekin II also came to the area during this time and was stopped at the gates until the end of the official ceremony. As to be expected, this gave rise to inflammatory accusations by the Church and the protesters.<sup>18</sup> Well known radical, militant diaspora organisations did not lose time to sympathise with the Church with provocative declarations. Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) of the United States statement indicated; “When agents of state fail to respect the highest authority of their national church, this is cause for concern and an affront to all Armenians of good faith”. ARF of Western US stated;

“For the last four years our homeland and nation have been set on an unending trajectory of self-destruction by the Pashinyan regime, whose policies and approaches have systematically diminished and degraded all that is core and foundational for our entire nation [...] The ARF Western USA Central Committee strongly condemns the Pashinyan regime’s anti-democratic, unconstitutional and effectively anti-Armenian and anti-Church policies and reaffirms its total and unequivocal support to Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan and his movement”.

Archbishop Galstanyan, the movement’s candidate, also endorsed by the opposition, for prime minister, adamantly says “We will not leave the streets in the coming months. The street struggle will continue”.

In a statement released at the end of November, it was reported that remittances sent to Armenia in the first nine months of the year amounted to \$1.3 billion, indicating a 20% decrease compared to January-September 2022 net remittances of \$1.8 billion. The World Bank also reported in January that net remittances decreased by 82% in November 2023 compared to November 2022 and by 68% in November 2023 compared to October 2023, mainly due to a 29% decrease in remittances from Russia.<sup>19</sup>

18 “Worldwide Armenian Church Leaders Express Dismay In Statement”, *Armenianchurch.us*, May 29, 2024, <https://armenianchurch.us/13932-2/>

19 Robert Zargarian, “Private Remittances To Armenia Dwindle In 2023”, *Azatutyun*, November 24, 2023, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32697880.html>

Armenia's budget for 2024 was adopted on 7 December 2023 after parliamentary deliberations, with the help of the votes of the ruling party. Budget revenues are projected at 2 trillion 723 billion drams (approximately 6 billion 700 million USD) and expenditures at 3 trillion 206 billion drams (approximately 7 billion 900 million USD). The highest tax on budget revenues was again paid by the Zangezur Copper mining company. In second place was the country's tobacco company, and in third place was Gazprom-Armenia.

On 21 December, Armenian media, citing International Monetary Fund (IMF) data, reported that Armenia has the highest per capita income in the South Caucasus with \$8,280, followed by Georgia with \$8,160 and Azerbaijan with \$7,530.

The head of the Ministry of Economy's Tourism Committee stated on 8 January 2024 that the number of tourist arrivals in 2023 was 2,300,000, which is an increase of 30% compared to 2019 and 39% compared to 2022. It was explained that the majority of tourists came from Russia, followed by Georgia and Iran, and then the United States.

According to the Ministry of Economy on 15 January, Armenia's exports in January-November 2023 amounted to \$6 billion 946 million 382 thousand Dollars. This is a significant increase compared to the exports in 2022 worth 4 billion 800 million 308 thousand Dollars. More than 3.3 billion Dollars of exports were made to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The most prominent country was Russia, with a share of over 90%.<sup>20</sup> Media reports pointed out that exports to Russia were not driven by an increase in domestic traditional production, but by the export of imported goods. In particular, there has been a large increase in second-hand car exports. In January-November 2023, used car exports reached \$533 million, up from \$217 million in 2022.

According to a statement by the Minister of Finance on 31 January, Armenia's state debt was approximately 48.3% of GDP by 2023.<sup>21</sup>

In 2023, humanitarian aid to Armenia totaled \$35.6 million, a 58.8% decrease compared to 2022, with the largest amounts coming from the US (\$8.1 million), Italy (\$3.8 million), and Switzerland (\$2.8 million), followed by Germany (\$2.1 million), China (\$1.8 million) and France (\$1.3 million).

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20 "Armenian Exports to EEU hit \$3,3 Billion but Expert Warns against 'Illusions'", *ArmenPress*, January 15, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1127998.html>

21 "Debt Estimated at 48,4% of GDP", *ArmenPress*, January 31, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1129239/>

The World Bank has approved in June 40 million dollars for an energy transition project. The project aims to support Armenia's Energy Sector Development Strategy to 2040 by focusing on the rehabilitation of power transmission substations, promoting energy sector modernization, and fostering regional energy cooperation among emerging and developing economies in Europe and Central Asia.

## 2. The Peace Agreement Process between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Speaking at the 6th Paris Peace Forum on 10 November 2023, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan conveyed that Armenia hoped to sign a Peace Treaty with Azerbaijan in the coming months, based on the three principles agreed upon at the negotiations held in Brussels on 14 May and 15 July 2023. Pashinyan explained these three principles as follows:

Armenia and Azerbaijan fully recognize each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, based on the understanding that Armenia's territory covers 29,800 square kilometers and Azerbaijan's 86,600 square kilometers.

Armenia and Azerbaijan reaffirm their unconditional commitment to the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration as the political basis for the border demarcation.

Future transport regulations to unblock transport and economic ties in the region will respect the principles of sovereignty, jurisdiction, reciprocity, and equality of all countries.<sup>22</sup>

During the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly session in Yerevan on 18 November, Armenian Parliament Speaker Alen Simonyan said there was "a historic opportunity" to establish peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Pashinyan, who met with the OSCE Secretary General on the same occasion, complained that "Although we agreed on the basic principles of the peace treaty, Armenia and Azerbaijan still speak different diplomatic languages".<sup>23</sup>

Armenia accepted the US Secretary of State's invitation for the parties to visit Washington DC on 20 November to discuss and expedite the peace agreement.

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22 "Armenia Seeks to Sign Peace Treaty with Azerbaijan in Coming Months Based on Three Brussels Principles: Pashinyan", *ArmenPress*, November 10, 2023, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1123921.html>

23 "Pashinyan: Armenia, Azerbaijan Speak 'Different Diplomatic Languages'", *MassisPost*, November 20, 2023, <https://massispost.com/2023/11/pashinyan-armenia-azerbaijan-speak-different-diplomatic-languages/>

However, Azerbaijan rejected the invitation on 17 November due to the remarks against Azerbaijan by a US Department of State official in the US Congress, and the peace talks were not held.<sup>24</sup> On 21 November, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan called for direct negotiations “in a mutually acceptable venue”, including on the border between the two countries. On 22 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia responded that it was ready to resume negotiations on the basis of three basic principles. Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs also announced that it had sent its 6th proposal on 21 November in response to the proposals sent by Azerbaijan in September.<sup>25</sup>

On 7 December, an important step towards peace was taken and a joint statement was released by the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. This statement, which is the first of its kind, begins with the introduction of “The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia share the view that there is a historical chance to achieve a long-awaited peace in the region. The two countries reconfirm their intention to normalize relations and to reach the peace treaty on the basis of respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity,” and envisages mutual exchange of prisoners and military detainees as a sign of humanitarian values and goodwill. Accordingly, Azerbaijan pledged to exchange of 32 detained Armenian military servicemen for 2 Azerbaijani servicemen. As a sign of good faith, Armenia supported the bid of Azerbaijan to host the 29th Session of the UN’s Convention on Climate Change Conference (Conference of Parties - COP29) by withdrawing its own candidacy. In return, Azerbaijan supported the Armenian candidature for Eastern European Group COP Bureau membership.<sup>26</sup>

On 8 December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye released the following statement in support of this development:

“We welcome the decision announced with the joint statement by the Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan and the Office of Prime Minister of Armenia regarding the adoption of some concrete confidence building measures between two countries. We also support the decision to continue talks for introducing additional steps to build confidence.

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24 Seda Sevencen and Emre Gürkan Abay, “Azerbaijan Refuses to Take Part in Peace Talks with Armenia in US”, *Anadolu Agency*, November 17, 2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/azerbaijan-refuses-to-take-part-in-peace-talks-with-armenia-in-us/3056045>

25 Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Armenia Sends 6th Proposal to the Azerbaijani Side Regarding the Peace Treaty”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, November 21, 2023, <https://en.armradio.am/2023/11/21/armenia-sends6th-proposal-to-the-azerbaijani-side-regarding-the-peace-treaty/>

26 Heydar Isayev, “Armenia, Azerbaijan Issue Landmark Joint Statement”, *Eurasianet*, December 8, 2023, <https://eurasianet.org/armenia-azerbaijan-issue-landmark-joint-statement>

We wish the peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia be swiftly concluded, which will be one of the most significant achievements for establishing a lasting peace and stability in the South Caucasus.”<sup>27</sup>

On his visit to Baku on 14 December, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan stated his contentment with these security-building steps taken by the two countries and explained: “We wish that additional steps will be taken, and that these will pave the way for a lasting agreement between the two sides. Also, we think that these moves should also convey necessary messages to the third parties.”. The US Department of State’s spokesperson also praised Minister of Foreign Affairs Fidan’s statement in Baku on 15 December, stating that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had regularly discussed the normalization of Azerbaijan-Armenia relations with Minister Fidan and said: “We welcome Turkey playing a productive role in resolving this conflict. We agree with what the foreign minister said, that peace is possible and we would support direct talks between the two parties to achieve that.”

On 26 December, the President of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Armenia shook hands at the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) meeting in St. Petersburg, which was viewed as a gesture towards peace. This brief meeting was the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders after the military operation of 19 September 2023.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty has given the impression of becoming a struggle between Russia and the West for power and influence in the region. In early December 2023, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned Armenia against relying on Western mediation,<sup>28</sup> while on 5 January 2024, the US Department of State’s spokesperson stated that Russia was strongly opposed to US initiatives, but would not undermine them. The US Senior Advisor for Caucasus Negotiations visited Armenia on 8 January to discuss negotiations between the parties and held high-level contacts,<sup>29</sup> while the Azerbaijani side rejected the visit “because it did not see the US as a reliable mediator”. On this occasion, the Azerbaijani side once again offered to hold bilateral talks with Armenia without a mediator.

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27 “No: 311, 8 December 2023, Press Release Regarding Adoption of Some Confidence Building Measures Between Azerbaijan and Armenia”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, December 8, 2023, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no-311-azerbaycan-ile-ermenistan-arasinda-bazi-somut-guven-artirici-adimlarin-atilmasi-karari-hk.en.mfa>

28 “Russian Foreign Ministry: Armenia should not Trust ‘Western friends’”, *Xalqgazeti*, December 6, 2023, <https://xalqgazeti.az/en/maraqli/152130-russian-foreign-ministry-armenia-should>

29 “Security Council Secretary, U.S. Senior Advisor for Caucasus Negotiations discuss Armenia-Azerbaijan Normalization”, *ArmenPress*, January 8, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1127537.html>



After Azerbaijan taking back and liberating Karabakh from occupation, some amendments to the common border demarcation came to the agenda. These changes, which the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan conveyed to the President of the European Council in a telephone conversation on 7 October 2023 and further elaborated in a statement to the press on 10 January, are related to the “eight villages still under Armenian occupation”.<sup>30</sup> In the north, 4 villages in the Tovuz district are essentially on the border with Azerbaijan and their return is not an issue. 3 villages here are across the border. Likewise, there is a village with the same status in the south, and Armenia also has a village with the same status within the borders of Azerbaijan. These demands were met with concern and opposition in Armenia, as they were seen as Azerbaijan’s unilateral demands for new concessions and the allegation that they paved the way for a new Azerbaijani military operation was spread in the public. In this context, Pashinyan made two proposals: “a mutual arms control mechanism” and “the signing of a non-aggression pact if the signature of a peace treaty encounters delays”.<sup>31</sup> Azerbaijan rejected both of these proposals. As a result of Azerbaijan’s steadfast stance and the fact that its demands were based on realistic data, Pashinyan stated in a speech on 19 March that Armenia should make some limited territorial concessions in order to prevent a new war and visited the border region villages to see and explain the situation on the ground.<sup>32</sup>

At its eighth meeting on 19 April, the Armenia-Azerbaijan border demarcation commission agreed to return 4 villages in the Tovuz district to Azerbaijan.<sup>33</sup> Pashinyan praised this decision and said, “For the first time, we have resolved an issue at the negotiation table”. Pashinyan also expressed that Russian military bases in this region would be removed. The ARF in Armenia made a statement immediately and openly threatened and warned Pashinyan and everyone involved in this process.

This development was also praised and welcomed by the Western world. The spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other hand, stated that Armenia was threatened with war and forced to make concessions. The statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye on this issue on 20 April is as follows:

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30 “President of the European Council Charles Michel Made a Phone Call to Ilham Aliyev”, *President of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, October 7, 2023, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/61511>.

31 “Armenia PM Proposes non-Aggression Pact to Azerbaijan”, *Euractiv*, January 29, 2024, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/azerbaijan/news/armenia-pm-proposes-non-aggression-pact-to-azerbaijan/>

32 “Pashinyan: Armenia Ready to Cede 4 Border Villages to ‘Prevent War’ With Azerbaijan”, *Civilnet*, March 19, 2024, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/768431/pashinyan-armenia-ready-to-cede-4-border-villages-to-prevent-war-with-azerbaijan/>

33 Ruslan Rehimov, “Armenia Agrees to Return 4 Occupied Villages to Azerbaijan”, *Anadolu Agency*, April 19, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/armenia-agrees-to-return-4-occupied-villages-to-azerbaijan/3196895>

“We welcome the agreement reached on 19 April 2024 by the Azerbaijan-Armenia Border Delimitation Commission on the return of four villages, which have been under occupation for 30 years, to Azerbaijan and on the continuation of the delimitation works.

This positive development achieved through direct negotiations is an important step towards the signing of a final peace agreement.”<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the determination of the demarcation lines, the most important issue in the negotiations on the peace treaty continued to be the definition of the “Zangezur corridor”. On this issue, Iran strongly sided with Armenia and continued to act as an obstacle in the solution of the problem. Russia also continued to pay close attention to the issue. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov stated on 18 January that Armenia was not implementing Article 9 of the Moscow ceasefire agreement, which provides for direct road and rail transport from Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan, controlled by Russia, not Armenia.

Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan met in Munich on 17 February under the mediation of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and held first trilateral and then bilateral talks.<sup>35</sup> No official statement was made after the meeting and the only concrete agreement was the decision that the foreign ministers of the two countries would meet again in Germany in a short period of time. As a matter of fact, the foreign ministers of the two countries held trilateral and bilateral talks in Berlin on 28-29 February with the participation of the Germany’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>36</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia stated that “mutual agreement was expressed to continue negotiations on the unresolved issues”. The overall impression from the third parties’ point of view was that Germany attempted to assume the role among the parties that France had lost.

The US and the European Union (EU), unwilling to be left out of the peace treaty negotiations, invited Armenia to a meeting in Brussels on 5 April, ignoring Azerbaijan, which remained distant due to their pro-Armenian stance. Although the meeting, which was attended by the US Secretary of State, the

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34 “No: 67, 20 April 2024, Regarding the Agreement Reached by Azerbaijan-Armenia Border Delimitation Commission”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, April 20, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-67\\_-azerbaycan-ermenistan-sinir-delimitasyon-komisyonu-tarafindan-varilan-uzlasma-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-67_-azerbaycan-ermenistan-sinir-delimitasyon-komisyonu-tarafindan-varilan-uzlasma-hk.en.mfa)

35 “Tripartite Meeting between Nikol Pashinyan, Olaf Scholz and İlham Aliyev Takes Place in Munich”, *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, February 17, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/02/17/Nikol-Pashinyan-trilateral-meeting/>

36 “Berlin Hosts Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan for Peace Talks”, *EuroNews*, February 28, 2024, <https://www.euronews.com/2024/02/28/berlin-hosts-foreign-ministers-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan-for-peace-talks>

European Commission President, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Pashinyan, was only intended to strengthen Armenia’s resilience and was presented as a meeting where issues related to Azerbaijan would not be discussed, it caused the reaction of Azerbaijan and Türkiye. The statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye is as follows:

“A historic opportunity for lasting peace and stability in the region has emerged as a result of Azerbaijan’s liberation of its occupied territories after the Second Karabakh War, and the restoration of its sovereignty over all its territories through the anti-terrorist operation in Karabakh on 19-20 September 2023.

At a time when the success of this historic opportunity is so close, it is even more important that third parties, especially actors from outside the region, adopt a fair and impartial approach to the process and carefully avoid any harm to it.

In this context, it is our responsibility to underline clearly that the trilateral meeting between Armenia, the EU and the USA on 5 April will undermine the neutral approach that should be the basis for the solution of the complex problems of the region.

This initiative, which excludes Azerbaijan, will pave the way for the South Caucasus to become an area of geopolitical confrontation, rather than serving peace.

We reiterate our call to third countries to take into account the parameters of the region and to approach the parties to the conflict from a position of equal distance.

We firmly believe that the South Caucasus will thrive and achieve the regional prosperity it deserves, on the basis of lasting peace and stability.

As ever, Türkiye will continue to assume its responsibilities in this regard and to encourage the use of this historic window of opportunity for lasting peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia.”<sup>37</sup>

On 12 April, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov accused the US and other Western countries of “trying to undermine agreements” aimed at

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37 “No: 55, 4 April 2024, Regarding the Trilateral Meeting Between Armenia, the USA and the EU to be Held in Brussels on 5 April 2024”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, April 4, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-55\\_-ermenistan—abd-ve-ab-arasinda-5-nisan-2024-tarihinde-bruksel-de-duzenlenecek-uclu-toplantı-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-55_-ermenistan—abd-ve-ab-arasinda-5-nisan-2024-tarihinde-bruksel-de-duzenlenecek-uclu-toplantı-hk.en.mfa)

stabilising the situation in the South Caucasus.<sup>38</sup> The opposition in Armenia accused Pashinyan of turning Armenia into an arena for “geopolitical rivalry” and Pashinyan responded by saying that Armenia had already been “flung around like a bag” in geopolitical conflicts through the OSCE Minsk Group process for thirty years.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Almaty on 10-11 May, hosted by Kazakhstan, as a new step in the peace treaty negotiations. The parties appeared to be in a positive, optimistic, and constructive mood before the meeting. A joint press release was issued after the meeting. The ministers welcomed the progress in the delimitation of borders and the agreements reached in this regard. It was reported that the ministers and their delegations continued to discuss the provisions of the draft “Bilateral Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Interstate relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia” and agreed to continue negotiations on the open issues on the remaining open issues on which there are remaining differences.<sup>39</sup>

On 6 June, the President of Azerbaijan recalled that the stipulations in the constitution of Armenia continues to be an impediment to the conclusion of the peace agreement, an issue which Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan is known to have reflected on. However, on 7 June, the Armenian Foreign Ministry published the following statement<sup>40</sup> on the subject, fully retracting from earlier understanding and common sense.

“The Republic of Armenia does not have any territorial claims towards any of its neighbors, including Azerbaijan.

The constitution of the Republic of Armenia and the amendments to it are internal affairs of Armenia, and we consider the attempts by official Baku to intervene in the internal discussions in Armenia as a gross intervention into the internal affairs of the country.

At the same time, we believe that such rhetoric torpedoes the peace process and casts doubts on the sincerity of the leadership of Azerbaijan to achieve peace.

38 “West Accused Of ‘Trying To Undermine’ Agreements On South Caucasus Stability”, *Azattyun*, April 12, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32902900.html>

39 Elena Teslalova, “Azerbaijan, Armenia End Talks in Kazakhstan with Pledge to Continue Discussing Controversial Issues”, *Anadolu Agency*, May 11, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/azerbaijan-armenia-end-talks-in-kazakhstan-with-pledge-to-continue-discussing-controversial-issues/3216657>

40 “Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia regarding statements made by the President of Azerbaijan on June 6, 2024”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, June 7, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2024/06/07/mfa\\_statement/12686](https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2024/06/07/mfa_statement/12686)

The negotiated peace agreement clearly states that the Parties recognize each other's territorial integrity and do not have territorial claims against each other. There is also an agreed provision in the draft peace agreement that neither party may invoke its domestic legislation for not implementing its obligations under the peace agreement.

The signing of the agreement and the ratification through domestic procedures will lay down these principles finally in the agreement.

Accordingly, we believe that the clearest and most direct way to address all the concerns of the Parties is to sign the agreement, which will open the door to lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan is ripe enough for signing, and the Armenian side expresses its willingness to work constructively and intensively to complete and sign it within the next month”.

The above statement unfortunately makes a mockery of intelligence in view of past experience regarding the implementation of the stipulations of the Constitution that cannot be regarded simply as domestic legislation. The statement as such dooms the signing of the agreement in a near future.

On the other hand, news items in the press on 19 June claimed that Pashinyan had ordered on 27 May the drafting of a new constitution. It was stated that Pashinyan gave the Council of Constitutional Reforms, established by a decree on 27 January 2022, until 30 December 2026 to draft and approve a new constitution. However, the next day, on 20 June, several members of the Council of Constitutional Reforms spoke to the press that they have not been informed of any drafting of a new constitution. Perplexing indeed.

### **3. Armenia's Foreign Relations**

Armenia's efforts to distance itself from Russia, the support it received from the West to loosen its strong ties with Russia, its attempts to develop relations with new powerful parties and seek alternatives to Russia, and its efforts to utilize this in its conflict with Azerbaijan have been the factors that have shaped Armenia's foreign relations during the period.

The duel of words and moderate level of confrontation with Russia continued throughout the period. On 22 November 2023, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson stated that they saw a “radical change” in Armenia's foreign policy orientation, despite Yerevan's efforts to “camouflage” it. The spokesperson also stated that Armenia not participating in the November Minsk meetings of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was not in

the interests of the Armenian people.<sup>41</sup> On the same day, Armenian Parliament Speaker Alen Simonyan announced, similarly to what Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had done previously, that he would not attend the CSTO Minsk meeting in December. On the other hand, Simonyan was careful to emphasize that Armenia had not taken a decision to leave the organization. On 24 November, Pashinyan declared his full support for Georgia's territorial integrity.<sup>42</sup> On 12 December, the Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Ukraine's and Armenia's Ministers of Foreign Affairs discussed the development of bilateral relations. On 14 December, Russia's President Vladimir Putin stated that he did not expect Armenia to withdraw from Russian-led military, political and economic organizations and that leaving these organizations was "not in Armenia's interests".

On 21 December, Armenia revoked the broadcast rights of the Russian official media outlet *Sputnik* due to statements against the administration.<sup>43</sup>

Having boycotted the EAEU and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) meetings in Bishkek in October 2023 and the CSTO in Minsk in November, Pashinyan, this time at Putin's invitation, visited Russia on 25 December to attend the EAEU and CIS summits in St. Petersburg, where he held a bilateral meeting with Putin. In accordance with the alphabetical order, Armenia assumed the EAEU presidency for 2024.<sup>44</sup>

Interestingly, also on 25 December, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Javier Colomina, made a statement on Georgian television, saying that Armenia had "decided very clearly to make a shift in its foreign policy and take some distance from Moscow". The Special Representative also explained "We support this. The Armenians are free to take their own decisions. In my opinion, Armenia has already started to get closer to us, to ask for more cooperation, more political dialogue with NATO. We encourage whatever is decided by our partners that we believe is good for the stability of the region."<sup>45</sup> In an interview on 28 December, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov expressed;

41 "Moscow Sees 'Camouflaged' Efforts by Yerevan to Change Foreign-Policy Vector", *Azatutyun*, November 22, 2023, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32695587.html>

42 "Armenia Fully and Unequivocally Defends the Territorial Integrity of Georgia, Says Prime Minister", *ArmenPress*, November 24, 2023, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1124901.html>

43 "Armenian Authorities Suspend Russian Radio Broadcast", *Azatutyun*, December 21, 2023, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32741860.html>.

44 "Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Working Visit to St. Petersburg", *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, December 26, 2023, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2023/12/25/Nikol-Pashinyan-visit-to-Saint-Petersburg/>

45 "Armenia Has Decided Very Clearly to Make a Shift in Its Foreign Policy and Take Some Distance from Moscow, NATO Representative Says", *Alpha News*, December 25, 2023, <https://alphanews.am/en/armenia-has-decided-very-clearly-to-make-a-shift-in-its-foreign-policy-and-take-some-distance-from-moscow-nato-representative-says/>

“Recently, Yerevan has been developing cooperation with NATO and some of its member states. This year, Armenia took part in several dozen events with the alliance. It continues to update its armed forces in accordance with NATO standards; the republic’s military is undergoing training in a number of NATO member states. This cannot but cause us concern. I hope that Yerevan is aware that deepening interaction with the alliance leads to a loss of sovereignty in national defence and security.”<sup>46</sup>

Colomina was received by Pashinyan in Yerevan on 19 January 2024 and the issue of Armenia-NATO cooperation was discussed. EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Toivo Käär, who was simultaneously in Yerevan, also held talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In an interview published in the Armenian press on 31 January, the Special Representative of the NATO Secretary General Colomina again praised Armenia for distancing itself from Russia and striving to establish closer ties with NATO, stating that “We are very encouraged by the decisions that Armenia has decided to take in their foreign and defense policy, the shift they have decided to implement”. Without elaborating, Colomina explained that the parties were working on an ambitious new “individually tailored partnership program” that will develop Armenia’s closer partnership with NATO.<sup>47</sup> Russia’s response was quick. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson harshly denounced these statements. In this context, the Russian spokesperson also referred to “NATO member Türkiye” and pointed out that Türkiye had provided military assistance to Azerbaijan in the 2020 Karabakh war, which affected the outcome, and that NATO did not object to Türkiye’s involvement. Colomina also commented on Türkiye’s policy in the South Caucasus, stating that;

“Well, for us Turkey is a very important ally, as you know, it is the only ally that has borders in the region and therefore is a key actor in the region. Turkey knows that we are supportive of the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey. I think Turkey is willing to make progress in this direction. I do not know if they are actually waiting for some progress in the Azerbaijan-Armenian track first. That could be probably one of the considerations, but I think they are genuinely interested in advancing on that. As you know, I cannot really go into the foreign policy, the domestic politics of our allies, but I think, and we

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46 “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s Interview with TASS News Agency, December 28, 2023”, *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*, December 28, 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/press\\_service/minister\\_speeches/1923539/](https://mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/1923539/)

47 “Principles agreed upon between Armenia and Azerbaijan until present should not be changed, says Javier Colomina”, *ArmenPress*, January 31, 2024, <https://www.armenpress.am/eng/news/1129201/>

have talked about this, it would be a very positive development whenever that happens.”

On 14 February, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan met with Colomina in Brussels, where he was in Brussels for the EU Association Council meeting. Mirzoyan wrote about the meeting on his social media account, “During my visit to Brussels, I had a fruitful exchange of ideas with Javier Colomina. I discussed the latest regional developments and attempts to destabilize the situation. I reiterated Armenia’s vision to overcome existing challenges. I also referred to our efforts to further strengthen the Armenia-NATO partnership”. At the 15 February cabinet meeting, the Armenian administration decided to appoint military attachés to NATO and OSCE missions.

On 17-19 March, the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visited three South Caucasus countries.<sup>48</sup> This was the first visit to the region by a top NATO official. The last leg of Stoltenberg’s regional visit was to Armenia on 19 March. The Secretary General met with Pashinyan and, afterwards, jointly answered questions from the press and congratulated Pashinyan for pursuing a “more independent” foreign policy and improving ties with NATO. Pashinyan stated; “Of course, we are interested in deepening our cooperation with NATO, and I hope that the Individually Tailored Partnership Program for Armenia will be accepted as soon as possible.” Stoltenberg also expressed the hope that a framework for closer NATO-Armenia cooperation will be prepared soon.

Russia responded to the NATO Secretary General’s visit to the South Caucasus. The Kremlin Spokesperson stated;

“NATO’s desire to strengthen its presence in the South Caucasus is well known to us, it can be seen with the naked eye. There is also the understanding that NATO’s attempts to expand [its] influence can hardly increase stability and predictability of the situation in the South Caucasus. Those contacts are the sovereign right of the [South] Caucasus states. We are watching carefully and mainly intend to orientate ourselves with our bilateral relations and cooperation tools that our parties have.”<sup>49</sup>

48 “Secretary General Starts South Caucasus Visit in Baku, Welcomes NATO’s Long-Standing Partnership with Azerbaijan”, *NATO*, March 17, 2024, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_223720.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_223720.htm)

49 Elena Teslova, “Russia Calls NATO Chief’s Visit to Caucasus ‘Attempt to Expand Alliance’s Presence in Region’”, *Anadolu Agency*, March 19, 2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/russia-calls-nato-chiefs-visit-to-caucasus-attempt-to-expand-alliances-presence-in-region/3168775>



On 26 December, following a telephone conversation between Pashinyan and the President of Iran Ebrahim Reisi on 20 December 2023, Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs arrived in Armenia on a working visit. On 27 December, in a joint press briefing with Mirzoyan, Iran's minister explained that during the high-level talks, they discussed what Iran's role could be in the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace talks and that Iran does not want the involvement of extra-regional countries and believes that the most appropriate mediation would be the "3+3 Consultative Regional Platform/Consultative Mechanism". The Iranian minister praised and welcomed his country's historical and close ties with neighboring Armenia, noting that Iran was interested in opening a consulate in the border town of Kapan, while Armenia agreed to open a consulate in Tabriz, the capital of Iran's East Azerbaijan Province. Touching on the issue of transportation, the Iranian minister said that Iran supported the smooth functioning of regional transportation channels, especially the north-south transit route and the Crossroads of Peace project announced by Pashinyan. On the other hand, Iran has persistently opposed the "Zangezur corridor" demanded by Azerbaijan and encouraged Armenia to do the same. Conversely, it has given the green light to a parallel route through Iran. The Azerbaijani side, while welcoming the Iranian route, emphasized that this did not mean that a route through Armenia was renounced.<sup>50</sup>

Kamal Kharrazi, advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, met with Pashinyan in Yerevan on 29 January. During the meeting, the issue of transportation routes was mainly discussed, with the Iranian side reiterating its support for the Crossroads of Peace project, the South-North corridor, and its opposition to Azerbaijan's demand for the extraterritoriality of the "Zangezur corridor".<sup>51</sup>

In a statement on 6 February, the Iranian Ambassador to Yerevan expressed that Iran wants Armenia to become stronger in the region and that they are ready to provide "any assistance" for this purpose. Regarding the "Zangezur corridor" demanded by Azerbaijan, he repeated Iran's established stance that it would not tolerate any "geopolitical changes" in the South Caucasus.<sup>52</sup> On 14 February, the 18th meeting of the intergovernmental joint commission of the two countries was held and cooperation in the fields of economy, energy and infrastructure, especially transportation, was discussed. In a statement released by Iran after the meeting, it was indicated that an agreement on

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50 "Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Iran and Their Joint Press Conference", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, December 27, 2023, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-conference/2023/12/27/armenia\\_iran/12446](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-conference/2023/12/27/armenia_iran/12446)

51 "Top Aide to Iran's Khamenei Visits Armenia", *Azattyun*, January 29, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32796805.html>

52 "Iran Ready to Help 'Strengthen' Armenia, Says Envoy", *Azattyun*, February 6, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32807979.html>

economic cooperation in 19 areas was signed and it was decided to increase the bilateral trade volume to 3 billion Dollars.

Pashinyan made the statement “Our relations with Iran are deep and Armenia remains committed to those relations. Our good relations with Iran are causing tensions in some places, while our good relations with other countries are causing tensions in Iran” in Munich on 19 February. With this explanation, he highlighted that Armenia’s close ties with Iran, which is under Western sanctions, have caused some discomfort in the West, while on the other hand, Iran has criticized Armenia’s rapprochement with the US and the EU, as it opposes the influence of extra-regional countries in the region. However, the fact that the West, which prioritizes supporting Armenia, does not perceive this as an issue and even has a tacit common interest with Iran regarding this matter allows Armenia to maintain a delicate balance.

On 6 March, the Armenia’s Minister of Defense visited Tehran and met with his Iranian counterpart and other military officials.<sup>53</sup> Once again, his interlocutors warned the Armenian minister that extra-regional powers could not bring peace and stability to the South Caucasus. Receiving the Armenian minister and his delegation, the Iranian President said that the basic principle of regional relations was respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and the prevention of foreign interference in regional affairs. The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who later met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in Tehran on 10 March, called for further expansion of relations in all fields and said that closer cooperation between the two neighbors would benefit regional peace, stability and security. Iran’s ambassador to Yerevan said on 16 April that he was briefed by officials about the trilateral meeting Pashinyan attended in Brussels on 5 April and was assured that the meeting focused only on Armenia’s economic support and that the region had not become an area of competition between foreign powers.

Iran’s acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani, who assumed office after the tragic deaths of the Iranian President and Foreign Minister in a helicopter crash on 19 May 2024, reaffirmed the importance of implementing the statements of the Iranian Supreme Leader on achieving strategic objectives of Iran and Armenia to Armenia’s Foreign Minister in a phone call on 30 May.

During the period under review, Armenia-India relations have seen significant developments in military cooperation and the South-North transportation corridor. A brief history reveals that the two countries upgraded the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation they signed in 1995 with the Comprehensive

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53 “Armenian Defense Minister Visits Iran”, *Azatutyun*, February 7, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32850808.html>

Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2019, which is a counterpart to the cooperation of Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Türkiye. India has started to compensate for the decline in Russia's military supplies to Armenia, with rocket launcher systems, anti-tank missiles, rockets, ammunition, air defense missiles, and weapon detection radars being shipped from India to Armenia since 2020. In addition, in cooperation with Iran, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INTSC) from the Iranian port of Shabahar to the Black Sea was put on the agenda, including Armenia and Georgia.

Pashinyan supported Armenia's military equipment supply agreements with France and India, stating that this was essential for the country's national security and defense. This development was interpreted in the press as "France-Armenia-India forming a Euro-Asian Strategic Alliance".<sup>54</sup>

In search of an alternative route, Armenia last year signed a 1.2 million Dollar deal with a company for a ferry service between the ports of Batumi and Novorissisk via the Black Sea, in view of the frequent closure of the mountainous section of the land route connecting Armenia to Russia via Georgia, especially in winter. The Minister of Economy announced on 10 January that the venture was unsuccessful, running for a few months but generating no interest in either exports or imports.

On 22 November 2023, Germany decided to provide 84.6 million Euros in grants and loans to Armenia. The US announced that US Agency for International Development (USAID) would provide 4.1 million Dollars for Karabakh refugees.<sup>55</sup>

On 26 November, Armenia and Saudi Arabia signed a protocol establishing diplomatic relations. On 17 April, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs paid his first official visit to Riyadh and met with his Saudi counterpart.<sup>56</sup>

The head of the German Federal Intelligence Service visited Armenia and met with Pashinyan on 24 November.

The US Secretary of State spoke with Pashinyan by phone on 27 November and reaffirmed US support for sovereignty and territorial integrity. On 5 December, Armenia's National Security Chief Armen Grigoryan met with his

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54 "France-Armenia-India: Forging a Euro-Asia Strategic Alliance: The Geopolitics", *Aravot*, February 17, 2024, <https://en.aravot.am/2024/02/17/342269/>

55 "Germany to Provide €84,6 Million in Aid to Armenia", *ArmenPress*, November 22, 2023, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1124684/>

56 "Meeting of the Foreign Minister of Armenia with the Minister of Education of Saudi Arabia", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Armenia*, April 17, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/04/17/arm\\_sa/12599](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/04/17/arm_sa/12599)

US counterpart Jake Sullivan in Washington DC. On 7 December, Louis Bono, the US envoy to the South Caucasus, visited Armenia and met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>57</sup>

On 29-30 November, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan visited Skopje to attend the 30th OSCE Ministerial Council and held talks with the US Secretary of State and Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On 4 December, it was announced that France had begun the delivery of military equipment and weapons to Armenia. The shipment started with 50 armored personnel carriers and was reported to continue with three air defense radar systems and the Mistral short-range surface-to-air missile system.<sup>58</sup> The President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan criticized France's arms sales to Armenia as a provocation. The President of Azerbaijan also harshly condemned France and India's arms sales to Armenia and accused these countries of encouraging increased tensions in the region.

On December 5, speaking at the New Regional Reality and Crossroads of Peace forum in Yerevan, the Indian Ambassador to Yerevan said that the centuries-old relations between Armenia, India and Iran are a solid basis for cooperation today, and Iran is a bridge that contributes to the development of our relations.

On 11 December, the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy announced that the number of EU mission members stationed on Armenia's border with Azerbaijan had been increased from 138 to 209.<sup>59</sup> On 20 March, the Armenian Parliament approved the administration's proposal to grant diplomatic immunity to members of EU observation missions.

On 12 December, the Armenian Minister of Defense paid an official visit to the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC). The Armenian minister then moved on to Greece on 14 December for an official visit. The Armenian and Greek ministers signed a Military-Technical Cooperation Agreement on 15 December. Afterwards, on 19 December, representatives of the Greek and GCASC ministries of defense signed in

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57 "Meeting of Foreign Minister of Armenia with Louis Bono", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Armenia*, December 7, 2023,

[https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2023/12/07/Mirzoyan\\_Bono/12400](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2023/12/07/Mirzoyan_Bono/12400)

58 "More French Arms Supplies to Armenia Revealed", *Azattyun*, December 4, 2023,

<https://www.azattyun.am/a/32713065.html>

59 "AB Ermenistan Misyonundaki Görevli Sayısını 209'a Çıkaracak", *TRT Haber*, 12 Aralık 2023,

<https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/ab-ermenistan-misyonundaki-gorevli-sayisini-209a-cikaracak-820032.html>

Yerevan the Armenia–Greece, Armenia–GCASC bilateral and Armenia, Greece, GCASC trilateral 2024 Military Cooperation protocols.

The Greek Minister of Defense paid a return visit to Armenia on 4 March. A military cooperation agreement was signed during the visit. The Greek minister argued that the trilateral defense cooperation between Armenia, Greece and the GCASC was successful and that it could be expanded to a quadrilateral or quintet format, perhaps with the participation of France and India.

Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan attended the EU Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Brussels on 12 December.

On 14 December, at a meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries in Yerevan, Pashinyan briefed on Armenia’s project for peace interchanges on the south-north and east-west routes, reiterating Armenia’s readiness to provide transport links with neighboring Azerbaijan and Türkiye, but reiterating that the rail and road routes through Armenia should be under Armenia’s full control.<sup>60</sup>

On 14 December, Pashinyan announced that an agreement had been reached with the Russian company Rosatom to extend the life of the Metsamor nuclear power plant, which provides 31% of Armenia’s electricity generation and is located about 15 km from the Turkish border, until 2036. The tender for the modernization of the plant is estimated at 65 million Dollars.

Undoubtedly to gain support from the Christian world, Catholicos Karekin II, head of the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin, announced on 13 January that he would visit the United Kingdom and the United States. Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia (located in Antelias/Lebanon) also organized a meeting with prominent figures on 19-20 January to discuss possible support for Armenia. On 30 January, Catholicos Karekin II met with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Church of England.<sup>61</sup> The issues facing Armenia, including the preservation of the Armenian spiritual and cultural presence in Karabakh, were discussed. The head of the Caucasian Muslims Bureau, Allahshukur Pashazade, was quoted as saying: “Today, the Armenian Church led by the Armenian Catholicos preaches revanchism all over the world. They still do not agree that Karabakh is Azerbaijani land. Catholicos Karekin II is not worthy of my inviting him to Baku.” Responding to the statement on 10 April, Etchmiadzin

60 Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Crossroads of Peace Project to Expand Access to The Sea for Both Armenia and Azerbaijan – PM Pashinyan”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, December 14, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2023/12/14/armenias-crossroads-of-peace-project-to-expand-access-to-thesea-for-both-armenia-and-azerbaijan-pm-pashinyan/>

61 “Armenian Church Catholicos meets with Archbishop of Canterbury in UK”, *ArmenPress*, January 30, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1129157/>

rejected the accusation of vengefulness, but insisted on its views on Karabakh. On the other hand, the head of Iran's Islamic Culture and Communication Organization visited Etchmiadzin on 2 May and met with Catholicos Karekin II. Iran's Ambassador to Yerevan also attended the meeting.

Armenian President Vahagn Khachaturyan represented Armenia at the Davos Economic Forum in January 2024 and held bilateral meetings on this occasion.

On 18 January, by 336 votes to 1, the French Senate adopted a resolution expressing support for Armenia and calling for sanctions against Azerbaijan. Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan visited France and met with his French counterpart on 9 February. The French Minister expressed his country's unconditional, absolute, and continuous support for Armenia's sovereignty and resilience. On 22 February, Pashinyan and his wife attended a memorial ceremony for a Second World War heroic resistance fighter of Armenian origin and a dinner in their honor with French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife.<sup>62</sup> On the same day, the French Prime Minister noted on social media that the two countries have special relations and will always maintain them. On this occasion, the French Minister of Defense announced that he would soon visit Armenia, which would be a first. Likewise, it was reported in the French press on 22 February that France would send weapons to Armenia for defense purposes.<sup>63</sup>

Speaking on a French TV channel during this visit, Pashinyan claimed that after Azerbaijan's Karabakh offensive in September, "Russia's highest representatives" encouraged the Armenian people to take to the streets and overthrow him. Russia's reaction was voiced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson on 28 February, who said, "The Armenian prime minister's claims [that have been mentioned] have no basis", referring to Pashinyan's rise to power through street demonstrations. On 4 March, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov also dismissed the Armenian leaders' growing criticism of Russia as "blatant lies" and "ungreatful assessments" and warned that Russia would seriously "reconsider" its relations with Armenia if Yerevan continued to distance itself from Russia and move closer to the West.<sup>64</sup> Immediately after this warning, on 5 March, Lavrov had a telephone conversation with Mirzoyan. The Russian side did not make a statement, while a very brief statement from the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the two ministers discussed "bilateral and regional issues".

62 "A Grateful France Welcomes You, Missak and M  linee,' – Macron's Tribute At Manouchian Pantheonization", *ArmenPress*, February 22, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1130863/>

63 "France to Deliver Armaments to Armenia on February 22", *ArmenPress*, February 22, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1130884.html>

64 "Moscow Hits Back At Armenian Leaders", *Azatoryun*, February 28, 2024, <https://www.azatoryun.am/a/32841177.html>

Armenian President Khachaturyan visited the Kurdish regional government of Iraq on 29 February and met with KDP Chairman Mesud Barzani. This visit followed their meeting in Davos on 18 January. In the media reports on the visit, it was reminded that Armenia opened a Consulate General in Erbil on 24 February 2021, and it was noted that there are approximately 7-8000 Armenians living in Iraq, about 3000 of them are in the Kurdish region, and the highest concentration is in the Zakho administrative unit with 850-900 Armenians.

Prime Minister Pashinyan visited Georgia on 26 January and signed a declaration on “Strategic Partnership” with his Georgian counterpart after the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation.<sup>65</sup> Regarding the declaration, which both sides described as historic, the Georgian Prime Minister said, “De facto, we were already strategic partners and friends. It can be said that this reality was formalized today”, while Pashinyan stated “This achievement is the result of several years of joint work and reflects our commonalities and intentions”.

Armenia became a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 1 February 2024.<sup>66</sup>

On 2 February, Pashinyan traveled to Kazakhstan to chair the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting and held bilateral high-level contacts.<sup>67</sup> The President of Kazakhstan visited Armenia on 15 April, indicating that peace talks with Azerbaijan could be held in his country.

President Khachaturyan visited Hungary on 6 February. The last visit at this level was in 2009. Khachaturyan stressed that he hoped that the stagnation in relations would be overcome.<sup>68</sup>

The fifth meeting of the EU-Armenia Association Council was held in Brussels on 13 February.<sup>69</sup> In a joint statement issued at the end of the meeting, the parties confirmed their intention to further strengthen and deepen relations on the basis of shared values and agreed to prepare a new

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65 “Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan Visits Georgia Signs Strategic Partnership Declaration”, *Civil.ge*, January 26, 2024, <https://civil.ge/archives/579098>

66 Elena Teslova, “Armenia officially joins International Criminal Court”, *Anadolu Agency*, February 1, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/armenia-officially-joins-international-criminal-court/3124506>

67 “Pashinyan in Kazakhstan to Chair Eurasian Intergovernmental Council Meeting”, *Hetq.am*, February 2, 2024, <https://hetq.am/en/article/163945>

68 “President Khachaturyan Considers his Visit to Hungary Historic”, *ArmenPress*, February 6, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1129710/>

69 Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Fifth Meeting of the EU-Armenia Partnership Council to Take Place in Brussels”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, February 9, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/02/09/fifth-meetingof-the-eu-armenia-partnership-council-to-take-place-in-brussels/>

Association Agenda to establish more ambitious common priorities for multidimensional cooperation.

Pashinyan attended the Munich Security Conference and held bilateral meetings on this occasion. On 16 February, he met with Richard Moore, the head of the British Secret Service.<sup>70</sup> This was the second meeting between the two. Previously, Moore had visited Yerevan in July 2022 and after his meeting with Pashinyan, the administration submitted a bill to the Parliament to establish a “Foreign Intelligence Service of Armenia”. On 17 February, he held a bilateral meeting with the US Secretary of State. In his speech on 19 February, Pashinyan stated that Armenia was not Russia’s ally on Ukraine.<sup>71</sup>

On 5 March, Pashinyan paid a two-day visit to Egypt and met with the President of Egypt. Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan also met with his Egyptian counterpart.<sup>72</sup>

South Cyprus’ Minister of Foreign Affairs paid a two-day visit to Armenia on 6-7 March. During his meeting with Pashinyan, Pashinyan said that he also attributed great importance to cooperation with Greece in the trilateral format.<sup>73</sup>

On 6 March, Armenia officially asked Russia to withdraw its border guards from the Yerevan airport and that Armenian officials would now take on this duty.<sup>74</sup> This was the first breach in the 1992 agreement with Russia, which stipulated that Russia would protect Armenia’s borders and included airport protection. Russia condemned this decision, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson saying that the Armenian government was taking a risk that would cause “irreparable damage” to bilateral relations and jeopardize the country’s security and economic development. The Russian spokesperson also opposed France’s military presence in the region, questioning its intentions and purpose. Armenia did not back down and gave a deadline of 1 August for the withdrawal of the Russian border guards at the airport. On 3 May, a spokesperson for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the intention

70 “Nikol Pashinyan Meets with Richard Moore”, *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, February 16, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/02/16/Nikol-Pashinyan-Richard-Mur/>

71 “Armenia’s PM: ‘We are not Russia’s ally’ in war against Ukraine”, *Reuters*, February 12, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/armenias-pm-we-are-not-russias-ally-war-against-ukraine-2024-02-11/>

72 “Nikol Pashinyan Meets with Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Documents Signed Between Armenia and Egypt”, *ArmenPress*, March 5, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1131789.html>

73 “Prime Minister Pashinyan Receives the Delegation Led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus”, *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, March 7, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/03/07/Nikol-Pashinyan-meeting-07-03/>

74 “Armenia Officially Asks Moscow To Remove Russian Border Troops From Yerevan Airport”, *Azatutyun*, March 6, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-russian-border-guards-remove-yerevan-airport/32850687.html>



of ending Armenia's rhetoric regarding leaving CSTO, that Armenia could leave the organization if it wanted to.<sup>75</sup>

Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was in the Antalya Diplomatic Forum, told TRT World television on 6 March that Armenia envisages applying for EU membership. On 13 March, the European Parliament adopted a pro-Armenia, anti-Azerbaijan resolution with 504 votes in favor, 4 against, and 32 abstentions on the need for closer ties between Armenia and the EU and the signing of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The resolution congratulated Armenia for freezing its membership in CSTO and opened a possible membership perspective for Armenia by stating that the EU should benefit from a pro-Western shift in Armenian foreign policy. In a statement the very next day, Pashinyan welcomed the EU parliament's decision, interpreting it as an endorsement of the administration's decision on a possible EU membership application.<sup>76</sup> The EU Commission's lead spokesperson for foreign affairs and security policy told a Russian newspaper on 15 March that Armenia had a legitimate right to apply for EU membership.<sup>77</sup>

Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan visited Argentina on 25-26 March.<sup>78</sup>

As a result of allegations that Armenia was under grave threat from Russia and Azerbaijan because of the EU and NATO initiatives, the EU and the US decided to hold a joint meeting with Armenia in Brussels on 5 April to reassure Armenia. It was announced that US Secretary of State Blinken, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell would attend the meeting to which Pashinyan was invited.<sup>79</sup> Russia and Azerbaijan responded to the meeting, which was officially stated to have the aim of unilaterally providing support and reassurance to Armenia. Russia characterized it as an attempt by the West to push the South Caucasus into a "geopolitical conflict" with Russia. Azerbaijan conveyed that the meeting was "directed against Azerbaijan", that it "aimed to create dividing lines and isolate Azerbaijan", and would negatively affect the peace process, as it would make Armenia even more intransigent

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75 "Armenia Free To Leave Russian-Led Bloc, Says Moscow", *Azattyun*, May 4, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32932373.html>

76 Shoghik Galstian, "Pashinian Buoyed by EU Parliament Resolution", *Azattyun*, March 14, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32861745.html>

77 Armen Mirzoyan, "Armenia Can Apply for EU Membership, Says European Commission Spokesperson", *Hetq.am*, March 15, 2024, <https://hetq.am/en/article/165004>

78 "Foreign Minister Mirzoyan is Paying an Official Visit to Argentina on March 25-26", *ArmenPress*, March 25, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1133168.html>

79 "Pashinyan to Meet Von der Leyen and Blinken in Brussels", *ArmenPress*, March 21, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1132886/>

with the encouragement it received from the West.<sup>80</sup> The US Department of State spokesperson felt the need to make the following statement to the press on 1 April: “The peace process is not the focus of this meeting; it’s a meeting between the US, the EU, and Armenia to discuss economic diversification, humanitarian assistance, support for refugees, and supporting Armenia’s political reforms in areas such as democracy and the rule of law”.<sup>81</sup>

“Together with our American friends, [we are] joining forces to demonstrate our strong commitment to Armenia’s sovereignty, democracy and resilience” the EU External Relations Chief Borrell told the press before the meeting.<sup>82</sup>

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced its views on this issue with a statement released on 4 April.<sup>83</sup>

Following the trilateral meeting, the parties made a joint statement to the press. Blinken and von der Leyen announced that they had decided to provide Armenia with a total of approximately 356 million Dollars in aid to increase its “resilience” and “diversify” its economy. Of the promised aid, the EU will provide 270 million Euros over the next four years, while the US will provide 65 million Dollars in “development assistance”. The EU aid is presented as a “resilience and growth plan for Armenia” and will be channeled mainly into SMEs and basic infrastructure projects. Pashinyan told the press that “Today’s high-level dialogue signifies Armenia’s expanding partnership with the United States and the European Union”. Pashinyan also met with Samantha Power, the head of USAID, who was also present at the meeting. Power expressed her intention to fund a “transport sector strategy for regional integration”, in line with the Crossroads of Peace project.<sup>84</sup>

On 12 April, Russia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov, speaking at CIS Ministerial meeting in Minsk, accused the US and other Western countries once

80 “Ermenistan-AB-ABD Toplantısına Azerbaycan, Rusya ve Türkiye’den Tepki”, *Artı Gerçek*, 6 Nisan 2024, <https://artigercek.com/dunya/ermenistan-ab-abd-toplantısına-azerbaycan-rusya-ve-turkiyeden-tepki-300044h>.

81 “Peace Process Not the Focus of Upcoming Armenia-EU-U.S. Meeting - State Department Spokesperson”, *ArmenPress*, April 2, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1133790.html>

82 “Armenia: Press Remarks By High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell Before the Joint EUUS-Armenia High-Level Meeting in Support of Armenia’s Resilience”, *European Union External Action*, April 5, 2024, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armenia-press-remarks-high-representative-vice-president-josep-borrell-joint-eu-us-armenia-high-level\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armenia-press-remarks-high-representative-vice-president-josep-borrell-joint-eu-us-armenia-high-level_en)

83 “No: 55, 4 April 2024, Regarding the Trilateral Meeting Between Armenia, the USA and the EU to be Held in Brussels on 5 April 2024”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, April 4, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-55\\_-ermenistan-abd-ve-ab-arasinda-5-nisan-2024-tarihinde-bruksel-de-duzenlenecek-uclu-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-55_-ermenistan-abd-ve-ab-arasinda-5-nisan-2024-tarihinde-bruksel-de-duzenlenecek-uclu-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa)

84 “Nikol Pashinyan, Ursula Von Der Leyen, Antony Blinken and Josep Borrell Make Statements Prior to the Armenia-EU-US High-Level Meeting”, *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, April 5, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/04/05/Nikol-Pashinyan-Announcement/>

again for their efforts to “infiltrate” the South Caucasus and Central Asia. The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs did not attend this meeting.<sup>85</sup>

The spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized Armenia for an Armenian delegation visiting the town of Bucha, a symbol of war crimes and Russian atrocities in Ukraine, in early June. The Speaker of the Armenian Parliament refuted the criticism, saying that no delegation from Armenia went to Ukraine, accusing the spokesperson with lying. Details of the visit emerged when the City Council posted images of Armenia’s Ambassador to Ukraine and the head of a Yerevan district head meeting with the Mayor of Bucha on 2 June. It was reported that the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a Protest Note on 9 June regarding the visit. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson said the visit was “an openly unfriendly step on the part of official Yerevan”. Not distraught, Armenia and Ukraine held political consultations in Kyiv on 17 June.

On 11 June, Russia criticised Armenia for refusing to financially contribute to CSTO.

Pashinyan declared in the Parliament on 12 June his intention to pull out of CSTO, accusing two members of the organization, calling Belarus by name, of having aided Azerbaijan in the war against his country. He declared “We will leave CSTO and we will decide the timing of our exit”. The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs felt the necessity, shortly afterwards, to clarify that it was not the final decision. On 13 June, Armenia and Belarus recalled their ambassadors. Pashinyan said neither himself nor Armenian officials would visit Belarus while Aleksandr Lukashenko remains the President of Belarus. Pashinyan also qualified his declaration, saying Armenia’s attitude to CSTO might change if Belarus were to leave the organization or if the President of Belarus were to apologize to the Armenian people.

Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs announced on 21 June that he would not attend the forthcoming CSTO Council of Foreign Ministers to be held in Almati.

On 17 April, information that was leaked from the EU to the press announced that the EU had decided to provide “non-lethal” military assistance to Armenia from the European Peace Facility (EPF) fund. According to the decision, 10 million Euros was allocated to Armenia for 30 months. The aim of the assistance was stated as contributing to the capability of the Armenian armed forces to enhance national security, stability, and resilience in the field of defense.<sup>86</sup>

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85 “US Trying to Spread Tentacles Into All CIS Regions, Commonwealth States See This — Lavrov”, *TASS*, April 12, 2024, <https://tass.com/politics/1774387>

86 Haghine Buniatian, “EU Set To Provide Non-Lethal Assistance To Armenia”, *Azattyun*, April 17, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32909510.html>

The Armenian Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces and First Deputy Minister of Defense of Armenia, Lieutenant General Asryan attended the Conference of Commanders of European Armies held in Germany and also met with the Chief of the French Army Staff on 11 June. The two sides are reported to have discussed issues related to the further development of cooperation, particularly in the field of exchange of experience and training of personnel.

Armenian Minister of Defense went on a working visit to France and signed with his French counterpart a deal on 18 June for France to provide Armenia with French made CAESAR self propelled howitzers. The announcement did not say the cost, the number, or the delivery date of the howitzers. Russia and Azerbaijan accused France that the arms deal would risk war in the South Caucasus.

On 8 May, Pashinyan traveled to Moscow to attend the Eurasian Economic Cooperation summit, of which Armenia is the term chair. He later held a bilateral meeting with Russian President Putin. Pashinyan did not attend Putin's inauguration ceremony following his re-election. In response to a press member's question "You attended the Turkish President's inauguration, why didn't you attend Putin's?", Pashinyan said, "I received an invitation from President Erdoğan, but not from Putin."<sup>87</sup>

After the meeting, Putin's spokesperson announced that Russia would withdraw Russian troops and border guards from certain locations, including the 2000 troops leaving Karabakh, but that troops on the border with Iran and Türkiye would remain.

On 13 May, Pashinyan visited Denmark to attend the Copenhagen Democracy Summit organized by Anders Rasmussen, the former NATO Secretary General and former Danish Prime Minister, who has been criticized for his pro-Armenian and anti-Azerbaijani rhetoric. On this occasion, Pashinyan also held a meeting with Denmark's Prime Minister.<sup>88</sup>

The Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) paid an official visit to Armenia on 7 June, the first of its kind. After the meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it was stated that the parties expressed hope that the discussions during the visit would contribute to expanding opportunities for cooperation between Armenia and the SCO.

87 "Pashinyan: I Attended Erdogan's Inauguration Because I Received Invitation, But I Didn't Get One From Putin", *News.am*, May 7, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/821924.html>

88 "The Prime Minister Leaves for the Kingdom of Denmark on a Working Visit", *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, May 13, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/05/13/Anons/>

The US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs James O'Brien visited Armenia on 11 June with an interagency government delegation. At his meeting with Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan, a detailed and multi-dimensional joint statement, charting the road map of close future relations of the parties, was released.<sup>89</sup> The parties outlined a vision for deepening ties in the coming year, to be formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding to upgrade the status of bilateral dialogue to a Strategic Partnership Commission. O'Brien also said they are working to expand economic opportunity-from Central Asia to the Mediterranean Sea. During the visit, a customs agreement was signed and pledges were made for closer defense and security ties.

Mirzoyan paid a working visit to Lithuania on 20 June and held a joint press meeting with his counterpart.

Pashinyan announced on 21 June Armenia's recognition of the State of Palestine, saying it was against "violence towards civilian populations". The same day, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed Armenia's decision to recognize the State of Palestine. The ministry spokesperson stated; "We are pleased that Armenia, following such countries as Spain, Ireland, Norway and Slovenia, has decided to recognize the State of Palestine. As we have noted before, the recognition of Palestine is the requirement of international law, justice and conscience". Palestine, Iraq, Kuwait, and Egypt are also among states that welcomed Armenia's decision. Israel on the other hand, warned Armenia of "severe long time consequences".

#### 4. Relations with Türkiye

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan, in his speech on 30 November at the 30th OSCE Ministerial Council in Skopje, in which he mainly blamed Azerbaijan, mentioned Türkiye in a section, and said;

"In this regard the opening of the Armenia-Turkey border is also of crucial importance. As you might be aware, we have reached the agreement to open the land border for 3rd country citizens and Armenian and Turkish citizens holding diplomatic passports, which was reconfirmed by my counterpart, Minister Fidan at our bilateral meeting on 23 October; even concrete timing was indicated meaning upcoming

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89 "Joint Statement on U.S.-Armenia Strategic Dialogue Capstone", *Department of State of the United States of America*, June 11, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-u-s-armenia-strategic-dialogue-capstone/>

weeks, and we hope that in the nearest future we will implement this first, but quite tangible step.”<sup>90</sup>

The news in the Armenian press that Abdulkadir Uraloğlu, Türkiye’s Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, said on 7 January that the works on the Turkish and Azerbaijani sides of the “Zangezur corridor” would be completed in 2028 created reactions and revived the issue on the agenda.<sup>91</sup>

The Chairman of Armenia’s State Revenue Committee stated on 12 January that the major renovation of the Margara border checkpoint, opposite Türkiye’s Alican border crossing, was completed and ready for crossing. He also added that “All infrastructures in terms of technical customs equipment, passport control, and for the border guards, are ready for duly implementation of the passenger service”.

At a press conference on 24 January, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan stated that Türkiye had still not taken any steps to implement interim normalization agreements reached with Armenia in 2022. Noting that one of those agreements calls for the opening of the Turkish-Armenia border for holders of Armenian or Turkish diplomatic passport as well as citizens of third countries. Another agreement envisaged air freight traffic between the two neighbouring nations. There have been no signs of its implementation, even though the Turkish government officially allowed cargo shipments by air to and from Armenia in January 2023. Mirzoyan said, “The Armenian side is ready for a quick opening of that border both in the political sense and in terms of infrastructure. The only missing component is the decision of the Turkish side. As we can see, either tangible steps in these directions have not been taken or there is no end result.” Speaking at a November summit of the leaders of Turkic states in Kazakhstan, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan again demanded that Armenia open an extraterritorial corridor to Azerbaijan’s Nakhchivan exclave and reminded that this was a precondition.<sup>92</sup>

*Armenpress*, Armenia’s news agency, interviewed Javier Colomina, the Special Representative of NATO Secretary General, in Brussels on 31 January and asked him questions related to Türkiye as well. The questions and Colomina’s answers are below:

90 “Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan at the 30th OSCE Ministerial Council”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, November 30, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/speeches/2023/11/30/Mirzoyan\\_speech/12375](https://www.mfa.am/en/speeches/2023/11/30/Mirzoyan_speech/12375)

91 Hoory Minoyan, “Turkey And Azerbaijan Announce Plans to Complete ‘Zangezur Corridor’”, *The Armenian Weekly*, January 10, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/01/10/turkey-and-azerbaijan-announce-plans-to-complete-zangezur-corridor/>

92 Hoory Minoyan, “Armenian Foreign Minister Expresses Concerns Over Azerbaijani Reversal in Peace Talks”, *The Armenian Weekly*, January 24, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/01/24/armenianforeign-minister-expresses-concerns-over-azerbaijani-reversal-in-peace-talks/>

***Question:** And what about Türkiye? As you know, Armenia is trying to normalize the relations with Türkiye as well. In your opinion, what is Türkiye's real position regarding the settlement of relations with Armenia, will it go for a real settlement of relations, or will the negotiations again be of a formal nature?*

**Answer:** Well, for us Türkiye is a very important ally, as you know, it is the only ally that has borders in the region and therefore is a key actor in the region. We have a very frank conversation with Türkiye on every topic and of course, we talk about the concourses as well. Türkiye knows that we are supportive of the normalization of relations between Armenia and Türkiye. I think Türkiye is willing to make progress in this direction. I do not know if they are actually waiting for some progress in the Azerbaijan-Armenian track first. That could be probably one of the considerations, but I think they are genuinely interested in advancing on that. As you know, I cannot really go into the foreign policy, the domestic politics of our allies, but I think, and we have talked about this, it would be a very positive development whenever that happens.

***Question:** You have mentioned the territorial integrity and sovereignty as important principles. However, NATO member Türkiye openly supported the large-scale war in the South Caucasus, unleashed by Azerbaijan. The reaction of the organization was not so strict and binding. Considering that Türkiye clearly supports Azerbaijan, do you think it is possible for Türkiye to directly intervene in the event of a new aggression by Azerbaijan against Armenia? And what will NATO's reaction be in that case? Considering that this time 'disputed territory' cannot be used as an excuse, because we are talking about an internationally recognized country and its borders.*

**Answer:** Well, it is very difficult to preempt conversations and as I said I can't really go into foreign policy decisions of my own allies. What I can tell you is that we are very attached to those two principles: sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have been very clear always that for us those are very important. The situation three years ago was different. As you said, there was a controversy in terms of how you looked at the particular enclave. In addition, even though there was recognition of the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Azerbaijan, there was a controversy, as I said. I think we are now facing a different situation and, in my opinion, and without preempting anything, the reaction I would assume would be different.

**Question:** *What is the role of Türkiye, taking into account its relations with Russia?*

**Answer:** Türkiye has a very specific regional and geographical situation and that is why their foreign policy, that I am not really allowed to talk about, is probably more complex than the one of other allies, but they are absolutely committed with our efforts on defense and deterrence. They are committed with our assessment on which are the two threats that we have, Russia and terrorism. They are contributing as much as any other ally in the efforts we are implementing.”<sup>93</sup>

The Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul, Archbishop Sahak II Maşalyan, on 20 February 2024, travelled to Armenia to attend the meeting of the Supreme Spiritual Council, convened at the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin.<sup>94</sup>

On 20 February, on the occasion of the visit of the President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev, Turkish President Erdoğan advised Azerbaijan to avoid future border flareups with Armenia, wished that the historic opportunity for peace should not be missed, and said that the signing of a permanent peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia would be a new source of hope for peace and stability in our region and the world.<sup>95</sup>

Turkish President Erdoğan stated that some Western states did not realize that after the Karabakh war a completely new era began in the region, that those who manipulate Armenia for their own interests at the cost of the suffering of the peoples of the region had caused the greatest damage to Armenia, that they were pursuing unrealistic pipedreams, and that Armenia should realise and accept this reality. Furthermore, Erdoğan stated that it would be better for the Armenian people and leadership to seek security in peace and cooperation with their neighbours rather than thousands of kilometres away, that no matter how much military ammunition came from the West, it could not replace the stability that lasting peace would provide, that he invited Armenia to take the hand of peace extended by Azerbaijan and that Türkiye was ready to take the necessary steps in cooperation with Azerbaijan for the success of this process.

Opening on 1 March, the annual Antalya Diplomacy Forum was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Mirzoyan, accompanied by the

93 “Principles Agreed Upon Between Armenia and Azerbaijan Until Present Should Not Be Changed, Says Javier Colomina”, *ArmenPress*, January 31, 2024, <https://www.armenpress.am/eng/news/1129201/>

94 “Պոպի Հայոց Պատրիարքը ժամանեց Մայր Աթոռ Սուրբ Էջմիածին. Նա կմասնակցի Գերագույն հոգևոր խորհրդի ժողովին”, *News.am*, February 20, 2024, <https://news.am/arm/news/808376.html>

95 “Erdoğan Urges Azerbaijan Leader To Avoid Armenia Tensions”, *Ahram Online*, February 19, 2024, <https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/518016.aspx>



Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and Special Representative Ruben Rubinyan. On the occasion of the Forum, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye and Armenia also met.<sup>96</sup> The meeting was also attended by the special representatives for normalization of relations between the two countries. The Ministers discussed the normalization process of relations between the two countries and reaffirmed the mutual willingness to reach full normalization of relations. The ministers exchanged views on possible concrete steps in this direction.

Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan presented Armenia's "Crossroads of Peace" project at the Forum.

Speaking on a panel at the forum, Rubinyan said that the improvement of Türkiye-Armenia relations would have a positive impact on the process of developing relations in the South Caucasus and between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Emphasising that the ultimate goal is full normalization, Türkiye's special representative Serdar Kılıç proposed that the next meeting of the two special envoys be held in Yerevan.

At a press conference on 12 March, Pashinyan gave a comprehensive answer to *Armenpress*' question on whether there is a tendency in the West to involve Türkiye in the Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement process. In his answer, Pashinyan stated that geopolitical actors must be neutral; otherwise, they cannot play a constructive role in the Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement process. He added;

"Regarding Turkey's role in the region and on the world stage, the reality is that we both observe and feel Turkey's presence. Armenia should have an agenda with Turkey and perceive it not through Azerbaijan but as a neighbouring country. We have to acknowledge that Turkey plays a significant international role. Communication with the Turkish leadership and the representatives of Turkey is natural because Armenia and Turkey are neighbours. It is neither unusual nor strange for the leaders of the two countries to have telephone conversations. I consider that we have a conversation and a dialogue with the President of Turkey, which is very complicated, not easy, but it is very important to have that conversation. Understanding the subtle layers of consciousness in the society, it was a great effort to go and participate in the inauguration ceremony of the President of Turkey."<sup>97</sup>

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96 "Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Türkiye", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, March 1, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/03/01/armenia\\_turkey/12524](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/03/01/armenia_turkey/12524)

97 "Pashinyan Refers To Turkey's Possible Involvement in Armenian-Azerbaijani Settlement", *ArmenPress*, March 12, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1132270.html>

On 15 March, at the press conference following the trilateral meeting of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye's Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Baku, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan's statement that "Türkiye expects general support for the opening of the Zangezur path" was highlighted in the Armenian press.<sup>98</sup>

At the Foreign Relations Committee of the Armenian Parliament on 15 March, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan stated that Armenia and Türkiye are exchanging protocols for the joint repair of the historical Ani bridge. Regarding the agreement on border crossings, he said "Unfortunately, this partial opening has not been implemented to this day, but I had the opportunity to confirm this agreement with the new minister."<sup>99</sup>

According to an Armenian press report, in early April, Armenia's High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Sinanyan met with the Editor-in-chief of the Istanbul-based *Jamanak* daily and discussed the current situation and the challenges facing the Armenian community, as well as the possibilities of participation in the Global Armenian Summit to be held in September.<sup>100</sup>

On 10 April, Pashinyan made a comprehensive speech during the parliamentary session, and in the context of the principles and initiatives to diversify foreign policy, he said the following about the relations with Türkiye;

"In our relations with Turkey, if we can say so, we are in the waiting mode and are waiting for the implementation of the officially recorded agreements. That is, opening of the Armenia-Turkey land border for citizens of third countries and holders of diplomatic passports. And in general, the opening of the Armenia-Turkey border will be an epoch-making event for our region, and we must continue our efforts in this direction as well."<sup>101</sup>

In April, the most prominent issue in Turkish-Armenian relations was once again the commemoration of the 109th anniversary of the claimed genocide. In a way, these events became an indicator, like litmus paper, of the attitudes of militant Armenians and third parties favouring them concerning Türkiye. A noteworthy development this year was that the Pashinyan administration,

98 "Turkey Continues To Demand Armenian 'Corridor' For Azerbaijan", *Azattyun*, March 15, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32863071.html>

99 "Armenia FM: Ultimate Goal not Materialized yet in Relations with Turkey", *News.am*, March 15, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/812470.html>

100 "Meeting with Ara Gochunyan", *Office Of The High Commissioner For Diaspora Affairs of Armenia*, April 11, 2024, <http://diaspora.gov.am/en/news/1245>

101 "Armenia Hopes for Positive Response from Azerbaijan to Peace Treaty Proposals -Pashinyan", *ArmenPress*, April 10, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1134436/>

which had taken radical steps towards independence and sovereignty, adopted a realistic and objective approach on this issue as well. Saying no to historical myths and the bigotry of the past, Pashinyan has given the green light to the idea of scientific and objective examination and research of the allegations on “genocide”, and this approach has left radical and militant groups, especially in the Diaspora, in a dilemma. Some countries and their leaders, who are under the influence of these groups or who use this excuse against Türkiye, have inevitably been in a difficult situation.

In his speech on this occasion, Pashinyan called on the people of Armenia to “overcome the trauma of the past” and asked for an end to the complaints about the “historical homeland”. Pashinyan’s efforts to translate the events into “Meds Yeghern” (Great Catastrophe) in Armenian instead of genocide did not go unnoticed.<sup>102</sup> It was pointed out that Pashinyan used the word “Meds Yeghern” 11 times and genocide 4 times in his 440-word speech. Catholicos of Etchmiadzin Karekin II, as the highest official of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Armenia, was not invited to the official ceremony this year as well.

Pashinyan departed from the established discourse and instead of blaming the Ottoman authorities during the First World War, he said that Ottoman Armenians were “victims of geopolitical intrigues and false promises”.<sup>103</sup> In his speech, Pashinyan stated;

“Never again. We should not say this to others, but to ourselves. And this is not an accusation against us at all, but a point of view where we, only we, are responsible and the director of our destiny and we are obliged to have enough mind, will, depth and knowledge to carry that responsibility in the domain of our sovereign decisions and perceptions.”

On the other hand, in the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, it was observed that the old discourse and line was maintained. The Apostolic Church was not surprising at all with the radical-militant statements of Catholicos Karekin II and Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia (located in Antelias/Lebanon).

Certain countries in the international arena did not refrain from repeating the rhetoric that has become a commonplace this year. The President of the United States Joe Biden repeated the same statement as last year. Likewise, French

102 Yavuz Aydın, “Paşinyan’ın 1915 Olaylarına İlişkin Sözleri Ermenistan’da Gündem Oldu”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 15 Nisan 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/pasinyanin-1915-olaylarina-iliskin-sozleriermenistanda-gundem-oldu/3192305>

103 Mayis Alizade, “Nikol Paşinyan ‘Soykırım’ Konusuna Yaklaşımında da Devrim Yapıyor”, *Independent Türkçe*, 19 Mayıs 2024, <https://www.indyturk.com/node/723596/t%C3%BCrki%C3%87yedensesler/nikol-pa%C5%9Finyan-soyk%C4%B1r%C4%B1m-konusuna-yakla%C5%9F%C4%B1mda-dadevrim-yap%C4%B1yor>

President Emmanuel Macron continued his provocative discourse. The Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, the President of Greece and the Minister of Defence were among those who joined the chorus. A similar statement was made on behalf of Russia by the Russian Embassy in Yerevan. The Chilean Parliament also adopted a resolution to this effect.<sup>104</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye made the following two statements on 24 and 25 April:

“We reject the one-sided statements about the events of 1915 that have been made to satisfy certain radical circles.

These statements, which distort the historical facts, are also contrary to international law. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has clearly underlined that the events of 1915 are a legitimate subject of debate.

These biased and partial statements about history undermine the reconciliation efforts between the two communities, and encourage radical groups to commit hate crimes.

We call on all parties to support our proposal for a Joint Historical Commission and the normalisation process that has been initiated with Armenia.”<sup>105</sup>

No. 71: “The resolution adopted yesterday (24 April) by the Chamber of Deputies of Chile recognizing the events of 1915 as ‘genocide’ is null and void.

Parliaments have no authority to interpret or pass a judgement on history.

This resolution also contravenes the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which states that the crime of genocide can only be ruled by a competent court.”<sup>106</sup>

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104 “Şili Temsilciler Meclisi, 24 Nisan’ı Ermeni Soykırımı Kurbanlarının Anma Günü Olarak İlan Etti”, *Ermeni Haber Ajansı*, 25 Nisan 2024, <https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2024/04/25/%C5%9EiliErmeni-Soyk%C4%B1r%C4%B1m%C4%B1/273767>

105 “No: 68, April 24, 2024, Regarding the Statements by Authorities of Some Countries”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, April 24, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-68\\_-bazi-ulkelerin-yetkililerince-yapilan-beyanlar-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-68_-bazi-ulkelerin-yetkililerince-yapilan-beyanlar-hk.en.mfa)

106 “No: 71, April 25, 2024, Regarding the Resolution Adopted by the Chamber of Deputies of Chile on the Events of 1915”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, April 25, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-71\\_-sili-temsilciler-meclisinin-1915-olaylarina-iliskin-karari-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-71_-sili-temsilciler-meclisinin-1915-olaylarina-iliskin-karari-hk.en.mfa)

On this occasion, Turkish President Erdoğan emphasised that Türkiye has never discriminated against its Armenian citizens. President Erdoğan also sent the following message to Sahak II Maşalyan of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul:

“Reverend Sahak Maşalyan, Armenian Patriarch of Türkiye,

Distinguished Members of the Armenian Community,

My Dear Citizens,

I salute you wholeheartedly, with respect and affection.

I once again remember with respect the Ottoman citizens of Armenian descent who lost their lives due to unfavorable circumstances of the First World War and extend my condolences to their descendants.

I also wish Allah Almighty’s mercy to all members of the Ottoman society who passed away or martyred as a consequence of armed conflicts, rebellions, gang violence and terrorist acts.

The devastation caused by World War I in the Ottoman Empire has opened deep wounds in our minds.

The atmosphere of peace and serenity inherited from our ancestors can only be maintained through our joint efforts.

The security, prosperity and well-being of our Armenian citizens, who enriched Anatolian lands with their cultural works and human relations, continue to be under our assurance.

We did not and will not allow even a single Armenian citizen of ours to be discriminated, alienated or feel second-class in their homeland.

It is important to address history under the guidance of wisdom, conscience, and science, instead of favoring a radical discourse, marginalization, and hate speech.

Showing empathy without discrimination among the incidents engraved in our national memory will prevent the sown seeds of hatred from taking root.

We believe that the way to protect future generations from the spiral of violence and war encircling the world is to build a future together in the light of the lessons we have learned from our common pain.

With these thoughts, I once again salute the distinguished members of the Armenian community.”<sup>107</sup>

Armenian press reported on 28 May that Türkiye’s National Security Council included in its agenda the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Turkish President Erdoğan’s address to the participants of the Efes-2024 military exercise was also highlighted in the press;

“Armenia must get rid itself of the harmful influence of third countries and its diaspora. This will bring Armenia closer and closer to peace. The Armenian people must realize that their future is tied to the countries of the region, neighbors with whom they have co-existed for centuries. This will continue in the future. Armenia must also have the courage to do what is necessary”.

In a press release by a “Geghard Foundation” on 12 June, Türkiye was accused of promoting the concept of “Western Azerbaijan”. It purported that the Chairman of the National Commission for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports of Türkiye’s Parliament met with the representatives of the “West Azerbaijan” community.

Armenia’s special representative in negotiations for the normalisation of relations with Türkiye said in a conversation with journalists on 11 June, “We do not see steps on the Turkish side to open border with Armenia”, a narrative that Türkiye is not implementing agreement on border opening with Armenia pronounced also by Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan.

On 18 June, Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan had a telephone conversation with Turkish President Erdoğan. A readout of the conversation was issued by Pashinyan’s Office. Accordingly, the Prime Minister congratulated the President on the Eid al-Adha (the Festival of Sacrifice) and the President congratulated the Prime Minister on the upcoming Vardavar Feast. President Erdoğan offered condolences to Prime Minister Pashinyan regarding recent floods in the northern regions of Armenia. The leaders underlined their will to fully normalize the relations between Armenia and Türkiye without any preconditions. In this regard, the leaders noted the importance of the continuation of meetings between the special representatives of both countries and reconfirmed the agreements reached so far. The leaders also noted with satisfaction the ongoing dialogue between high level officials of Armenia and Türkiye. They also discussed recent developments in the region and international agenda. There was no official readout from the President’s Office.

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107 “The Message President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sent to Armenian Patriarch of Türkiye, Reverend Sahak Maşalyan”, *Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye*, April 24, 2024, <https://tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/152136/the-message-president-recep-tayyip-erdogan-sent-to-armenian-patriarch-of-turkiye-reverend-sahak-masalyan>

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<https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-russian-border-guards-remove-yerevan-airport/32850687.html>

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

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# ARMENIAN PARISH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN ZAMOŚĆ IN THE 16<sup>TH</sup>-18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

(16.-18. YÜZYILLAR ARASINDA ZAMOSC'DAKİ KUTSAL MERYEM  
ANA'NIN GÖĞE YÜKSELİŞİ ERMENİ KİLİSESİ CEMAATI)

Marcin Łukasz MAJEWSKI\*

**Abstract:** *The Armenian church in Zamość was the westernmost Armenian temple in the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Even though the church was demolished in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, its history and architecture have attracted the interest of researchers and have been the subject of several valuable studies. In the previous research, focused mainly on the architecture and artistic values of the building, written sources were scarcely used. Historians limited themselves only to the analysis of the settlement privilege for Armenians from 1585 and the 19<sup>th</sup> century copy of the summary of privileges received by the Armenian church in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This contributed to an extremely cursory discussion of the history of the temple in the various periods of its existence and to the consolidation of many erroneous views in historiography. This article, based on numerous written sources from the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries (city books, books of the Armenian court, church inventories, and metrical sources), thoroughly discusses the history of the Armenian church in Zamość and its furnishings. Particular attention is paid to the circumstances of the construction of the first makeshift temple, the organization of the parish, and the construction of a new brick church and its endowment. The course*

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*of the conflict that took place in Zamość during the union between the Armenian Church and the Latin Church is also discussed. The article also presents the gradual decline of the church related to the crisis of the Armenian commune in Zamość, which at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ended with the final liquidation of the Armenian parish and a few decades later with the demolition of the temple.*

**Keywords:** *Zamość, Polish Armenians, parish, church union, clergy*

**Öz:** *Zamosc'daki Ermeni kilisesi Polonya-Litvanya Birliđi topraklarının en Batı ucundaki Ermeni ibadethanesiydi. Kilise 19'uncu yüzyılın ilk yarısında yıkılmış olsa da tarihi ve mimarisi arařtırmacıların ilgisini çekmiş ve birçok değerli çalışmaya konu olmuştur. Söz konusu yapının mimarisine ve artistik değerlerine odaklanan önceki çalışmalarda yazılı kaynaklar neredeyse hiç kullanılmamıştır. Tarihçiler, 1585'te Ermenilere verilen yerleşme imtiyazını ve 17'nci yüzyılda Ermeni kilisesine verilen imtiyazların özetinin 19'uncu yüzyıl kopyasını incelemekle yetinmişlerdir. Bu, ibadethanenin varlığının çeşitli dönemlerindeki tarihinin son derece üstünkörü bir şekilde tartışılmasına ve tarih yazımındaki birçok hatalı görüşün pekişmesine sebep olmuştur. 16'ncı ve 18'inci yüzyıllara ait çok sayıda yazılı kaynađa (şehir kitapları, Ermeni saray kayıtları, kilise malları dökümleri ve ölçüm belgeleri) dayanan bu makale, Zamosc'taki Ermeni kilisesinin tarihini ve döşemelerini kapsamlı bir şekilde tartışmaktadır. Çalışmada ilk geçici ibadethanenin inşası sırasındaki koşullara, cemaatin düzenine ve yeni bir tuđla kilisenin inşası ve bu kiliseye yapılan bađışlara özellikle dikkat edilmektedir. Ermeni Kilisesi ile Latin Kilisesi'nin birleşmesi sırasında Zamosc'ta yaşanan anlaşmazlıkların seyri de ele alınmaktadır. Makale ayrıca 19'uncu yüzyılın başında Zamosc'taki Ermeni cemaatinin nihai tasfiyesiyle ve birkaç on yıl sonra ibadethanesinin yıkılmasıyla sonuçlanan, Ermeni halkının içine girdiđi krizle bađlantılı olarak kilisenin kademeli gerilemesini anlatmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Zamosc, Polonya Ermenileri, cemaat, kilise birliđi, rahipler*

## Introduction

Located in eastern Poland, in the southern part of the Lublin Voivodeship, Zamość was a private town founded in 1580 on the initiative of the Grand Chancellor of the Crown, Jan Zamoyski. According to the original intentions detailed in the location act, only Catholics had the right to settle in the city<sup>1</sup>. However, Zamoyski's ambitious plans to make Zamość an important center of trade with the Muslim East meant that this rule was abandoned<sup>2</sup>. Soon, Armenians, Jews, and Greeks received the right to settle in the city<sup>3</sup>.

Among the mentioned peoples, a special role in the economic development of Zamość was played by the Armenians, who at that time dominated the trade of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with the Ottoman Empire and Persia<sup>4</sup>. The privilege allowing them to settle in Zamość was issued by Chancellor Zamoyski in Bełz on April 30, 1585, but the first Armenians began to appear in the city even before this document was issued<sup>5</sup>. They came mainly from cities of the Ottoman Empire, Persia, and two Polish cities where Armenian communities had existed since the Middle Ages – Lwów (Lviv) and Kamieniec Podolski (Kamianets-Podilskyi)<sup>6</sup>. The privilege for Armenians from 1585 granted the settlers of this people the right to celebrate religious services according to their own rite and to build a temple in the district of the city granted by the chancellor<sup>7</sup>. For over two centuries, this church was the most important and tangible trace of the presence of Armenians in Zamość<sup>8</sup>. It is no wonder then that already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century historians showed interest in the history of this temple. Michał Baliński and Tymoteusz Lipiński, the authors of the widely read three-volume work *Starożytna Polska pod względem historycznym, jeograficznym i statystycznym* (*Old Poland in historical,*

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1 *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego kanclerza i hetmana wielkiego koronnego*, t. 2: 1580-1582, ed. Józef Siemieński, (Warszawa: Maurycy Zamoyski, 1909), 393.

2 Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, "Polityka handlowa Jana Zamoyskiego i jego następców", *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin – Polonia* 6, XXXVIII/XXXIX, Sectio F, 1983/1984, 93.

3 Szczęsny Morawski, "Ważniejsze przywileje i dokumenty Jana i Tomasza Zamoyskich podane w streszczeniu", *Rocznik Samborski* 12, 1888-1889, 84, 86, 88.

4 Andrzej Drozd, Marcin Łukasz Majewski, "Ormianie w procesie przepływu kultury Orientu muzułmańskiego do dawnej Rzeczypospolitej", in: *Transfer kultury arabskiej w dziejach Polski*, t. II: *Ogniwa transferu. O roli pośredników między kulturą arabską a polską*, ed. Agata S. Nalborczyk, Mustafa Switat, (Warszawa: Dialog 2019), 89.

5 Marcin Łukasz Majewski, "Ormianie w Zamościu w pierwszych dekadach istnienia miasta (1580-1610)", *Lehahayer. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Ormian polskich* 7, 2020, 7.

6 Majewski, "Ormianie w Zamościu...", 8-25.

7 *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego kanclerza i hetmana wielkiego koronnego*, t. 4: 1585-1588, ed. Kazimierz Lepszy, (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1948), 405-406.

8 Zamość was founded by the Great Crown Chancellor Jan Zamoyski in 1580. The Armenians received the privilege to settle in the city five years later, but the first Armenians came to Zamość even before 1585, see: Marcin Łukasz Majewski, "Ormianie w Zamościu w pierwszych trzech dekadach istnienia miasta (1580-1610)", *Lehahayer. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Ormian polskich* 7, 2020, 7-8.

*geographical and statistical terms*) (published in 1843-1846) were the first researchers who became interested in the circumstances of the erection of an Armenian temple in Zamość.

Historians focused on discussing fragments of the settlement privilege from 1585 and providing basic facts about the construction of a brick church in the first half of the 17th century<sup>9</sup>. They based their findings entirely on an anonymous manuscript entitled *Historya Kościoła Zamojskiego Ormiańskiego z wyrażeniem przywilejów, zapisów, transakcyi do Kościoła tegoż należących summ i obligacji od R: 1585 do R: 1700* (*History of the Zamość Armenian Church, listing privileges, grants, transactions, sums and bonds belonging to this Church from 1585 to 1700*). This manuscript, currently in the collection of the National Library in Warsaw, is a copy of the original 18th century manuscript. It was prepared in September 1844 by a certain Ryszkiewicz – a legal trainee of the Department of Government Goods and Forests at the Government Revenue and Treasury Commission<sup>10</sup>. This source is in fact a summary of the most important grants received by the Armenian parish in the 17th century, preceded by a short introduction that discussed the circumstances of the Armenians' settlement in Zamość and the construction of their own temple. For the next generations of researchers, including those conducting research in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the fragment of the manuscript used by Baliński and Lipiński became the basic source of knowledge about the history of the Armenian parish in Zamość. In Armenology, the findings of these historians were popularized by a Dominican of Armenian descent and the father of Polish Armenology - Sadok Barącz. However, the monk did not limit himself to presenting the facts known to him from reading the work of Baliński and Lipiński. Thanks to the query he conducted in the files of the Armenian consistory in Lwów, he found information about the history of the Armenian parish in the last decades of the 18th century, at a time when, due to the lack of believers, the abandoned temple was falling into decline<sup>11</sup>.

Research and a short description of the history of the Armenian church in Zamość published by Barącz were the last word of historiography on this subject for over 100 years. This situation has not changed, even though the Armenian community in Zamość became the subject of in-depth research by the outstanding Armenologist Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa. Of the works published by her, undoubtedly the most important was her habilitation

9 Michał Baliński, Tymoteusz Lipiński, *Starożytna Polska pod względem historycznym, jeograficznym i statystycznym*, t. II, cz. 2 (Warszawa: Orgelbrand, 1845), 802-803.

10 Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie (hereinafter: BN), Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej (hereinafter: BOZ), sign. 1594, *Historya Kościoła Zamojskiego Ormiańskiego z wyrażeniem przywilejów, zapisów, transakcyi do Kościoła tegoż należących summ i obligacji od R: 1585 do R: 1700*, 29v.

11 Sadok Barącz, *Rys dziejów ormiańskich* (Tarnopol: Józef Pawłowski, 1869), 177-178.

dissertation, intended to be a comprehensive monographic study of the history of Zamość Armenians<sup>12</sup>. Despite its undeniable value, this book omits the issues of the construction and functioning of the Armenian church and parish. The researcher limited herself only to providing information about the founding of the church, doing so while discussing the content of the settlement privilege of 1585<sup>13</sup>. This approach was the result of the concept of the work adopted by the author, focused primarily on the organization of the Armenian community, the practical functioning of individual legal solutions, and the activities of Armenian merchants in trade with the Muslim East. The religious life of the Armenians, although it was an important element of their everyday life, was beyond the interest of the researcher. The synthesis of the history of the Armenian community in old Poland, written many years later by Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, also covers these issues in a superficial way. The researcher mentions the Armenian parish in Zamość in one short paragraph, in which she again discusses a fragment of the privilege from 1585, gives the name of the first priest and, using the study of Father Sadok Barącz, mentions the construction of a brick church and the role played in this undertaking by the Armenian merchant Warterys Kirkorowicz<sup>14</sup>. She also briefly mentions the Armenian parish in Zamość in the chapter on the union of the Armenian Church with the Latin Church<sup>15</sup>.

The reason for the low interest in the history of the Armenian parish in Zamość could also be the fact that the church was demolished in the 1820s and the limited number of accurate iconographic sources. The absence of the temple in the city space meant that it could not become a direct stimulus for undertaking research on its history, architecture, and artistic values.

A real breakthrough in the research on the church of the Zamość Armenians took place in the early 1980s thanks to the measurement plans of the temple made in 1811 that was discovered by Bogumiła Sawa in the collection of the State Archives in Lublin<sup>16</sup>. This source was of key importance for reconstructing the appearance of the church because the inventory materials, apart from the measurement drawings, also included a longitudinal and transverse section of the church and a drawing of the facade<sup>17</sup>. Thanks to the discovery by Sawa, historians were able to get acquainted with the exact

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12 Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie zamojscy i ich rola w wymianie handlowej i kulturalnej między Polską a Wschodem* (Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1965).

13 Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie zamojscy i ich rola...*, 141-142.

14 Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1982), 192-193.

15 Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce*, 278-279.

16 Bogumiła Sawa, "Jeszcze o muzeum Ormian", *Tygodnik Zamojski*, 46 (1984), 260.

17 Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (hereinafter: APL), Archiwum Ordynacji Zamojskiej ze Zwierzyńca (hereinafter: AOZZ), sign. 17626/1, Plan kościoła ormiańskiego w Zamościu, 337-340.

appearance of the church in the last period of its existence, and thanks to two other preserved iconographic sources -the depiction of the first, makeshift temple on the engraving of the general view of Zamość around 1605<sup>18</sup>, and the panorama of Zamość from the painting of the church in Bukovina from 1660, on which the brick church was painted- it became possible to trace the changes that took place in the church's architecture between the beginning of the 17th and the end of the 18th century<sup>19</sup>. The inventory materials from 1811 and the aforementioned iconographic sources were used by Jerzy Kowalczyk in the first professional study of the history and, above all, the architecture of the Armenian church in Zamość<sup>20</sup>. The researcher reconstructed the appearance of the temple in a descriptive way and published its measurement plans along with sections and a drawing of the facade<sup>21</sup>. The historian not only filled a blank spot in historiography, but also significantly contributed to arousing interest among other researchers in the non-existent Armenian temple. One of them was Daniel Próchniak, who, on the basis of materials from the temple inventory, discussed in detail the influence of Armenian and Western European art on the architecture of the Zamość church<sup>22</sup>. At the same time, Jacek Chrzęszczewski -an art historian conducting research on the churches of Polish Armenians- published a paper on the history of the Armenian church in Zamość in the *Biuletyn Ormiańskiego Towarzystwa Kulturalnego (Bulletin of the Armenian Cultural Society)*<sup>23</sup>. Seven years later, this text, in a slightly changed form, was included in an important and extremely valuable dissertation by Chrzęszczewski, devoted to the history and architecture of Armenian temples in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth<sup>24</sup>. Both publications were a complete repetition of Kowalczyk's earlier findings, although the author rather referred to the sources used by Kowalczyk than to the paper published by him. An important contribution of Chrzęszczewski to the research on the Armenian church in Zamość was his drawing showing the appearance of the temple in the 18th century, certainly clearer than the published sections of the church from 1811<sup>25</sup>.

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18 Georg Braun, *Theatri praecipvarvm totivs mvndi vrbivm : liber sextvs* (Köln: Coloniae Agrippinae, 1618), 53v.

19 Jacek Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian Polskich* (Warszawa: Res Publica Multiethnica, 2001), 139.

20 Jerzy Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański w Zamościu z XVII wieku", *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki*, 25 (1980), 3-4, 215-231.

21 Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański w Zamościu z XVII wieku", 221-225.

22 Daniel Próchniak, "Cechy armeńskie i niearmeńskie w architekturze kościoła Ormian zamojskich", in: *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny 7, Pomiędzy wschodem a zachodem 3, Kultura artystyczna*, ed. Tadeusz Chrzęszczewski (Lublin: Lubelskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1992), 255-268.

23 Jacek Chrzęszczewski, "Historia kościoła ormiańskiego p.w. Chwalebego Wniebowzięcia Bogurodzicy Marii Panny w Zamościu", *Biuletyn Ormiańskiego Towarzystwa Kulturalnego* 3 (1994:), 28-39.

24 Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian...*, 138-144.

25 Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian...*, 143.

Previous research focused only on the architecture of the church, ignoring other, no less interesting threads, such as church furnishings, the organization and endowment of the parish and its place during the conflict over the church union. This approach is fully understandable if we realize the great importance of the discovery of the drawings of the temple, thanks to which it became possible to reconstruct its appearance. However, in reconstructing the history of the parish and their church, written sources from the 16th-18th centuries were insufficiently used. Researchers limited their archival queries mostly to the manuscript from the National Library in Warsaw already used by Baliński and Lipiński, omitting several other sources that significantly expand our knowledge about the Armenian parish.

First, the books of the Armenian court in Zamość from the years 1626-1700 and the books of the Zamość city bench should be mentioned here. They contain entries that enrich our knowledge about the organization of the parish, its property, the construction of the church, its appearance and furnishing. Significant information on this subject is also found in two manuscripts in the collections of the Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. The first is a manuscript from the collection of Aleksander Czołowski entitled *Zapiski, rachunki i inwentarz kościoła ormiańskiego w Zamościu z lat 1709-1710 (Notes, bills and inventory of the Armenian church in Zamość from 1709-1710)*. Jerzy Kowalczyk was already aware of the existence of this source, but having no direct access to it, he could only use a few fragments handed over to him in the form of extracts by Adam Andrzej Witusik<sup>26</sup>. For this reason, Kowalczyk could only focus on the introduction describing the destruction of the church during the fires of Zamość in 1672 and 1709 and the contract concluded between the parson and the carpenters for the repair of the roof<sup>27</sup>. However, the manuscript contains a lot of other interesting information about the temple that has not been used so far.

Another important manuscript from the collection of the Vasyl Stefanyk Library is the Metrics of the Armenian church in Zamość from 1694-1776. This source should seemingly be of marginal importance in the research on the history of the Zamość Armenian parish, but due to the chronicle notes included in it, interesting information about the church furnishing can be found on its pages<sup>28</sup>. The most complete data on the internal appearance of the temple, its altars, liturgical paraments, and elements of decor can be found in the register of property and sacral objects of the Armenian church in Zamość, written in 1753. This source (currently in the collection of the Manuscripts Department

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26 Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański...", 217.

27 Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański...", 217-218.

28 Marcin Łukasz Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej w Zamościu z lat 1694-1776", *Lehahayer. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Ormian polskich* 9, (2022), 7-68.



of the Ossolineum in Wrocław) was written after the visitation of the temple carried out in 1749 by the parson and official of Stanisławów, Rev. Jan Manugiewicz<sup>29</sup>. Although this source, interesting and fundamental for reconstructing the furnishing of the Zamość church, was known to researchers, it has not been used in any way so far<sup>30</sup>. Many interesting mentions of the Zamość Armenian parish can also be found in several other sources, e.g. the records of the Zamość Tribunal, the records of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Armenians of the city of Lwów for the years 1564-1608 and 1625-1630, and the memoirs of Martin Gruneweg and Bazyli Rudomicz. The aim of this study is to present in detail the history of the Armenian parish in Zamość and their church, supplement the current knowledge based on unused sources from the 16th-18th century, and to correct the errors existing in the literature on the subject resulting from the lack of extended archival queries.

Attention has been focused on several important and insufficiently researched issues. The first is the construction of the temple and the organization of the parish in the last decades of the 16th century, a problem that has not been given due attention so far, limited only to quoting the text of the settlement privilege from 1585. The second are the issues related to the erection of a brick temple and the role played in this project by Warterys Kirkorowicz. The third discussed problem is the issue of church furnishings, which has been overlooked in all previous studies. Based on the preserved records, this article recreates the internal appearance of the temple and present the history of the altars and other elements of church furnishing located in it. It then discusses the property status of the church. Since the construction of the brick temple took place during the schism in the Armenian Church caused by the adoption by Archbishop Mikołaj Torosowicz of the union with the Latin Church, the discussion of the course of this conflict in Zamość is one of the most important issues raised in this paper. The last discussed issue is the fate of the church in the final period of the existence of the Armenian parish in Zamość.

## **1. First Church**

Although, as we know, the Armenians of Zamość received the right to build a church under the settlement privilege of 1585, the erection of a brick temple was associated with the need to allocate significant financial resources. In the first decades after receiving the aforementioned privilege, the members of the

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29 Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu (hereinafter: BZNiO), Dział Rękopisów (hereinafter: DR), sign. 3687/II, Rejestr majątku i przedmiotów sakralnych kościoła ormiańskiego z r. 1753, l.

30 The existence of this manuscript was mentioned by Jerzy Kowalczyk, see: Kowalczyk, "Kościoł ormiański...", 219. It was also mentioned by Jacek Chrzęszczewski in his monograph devoted to the temples of Polish Armenians, see: Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian...*, 140.

young and just forming community, focused on proper development, could not afford it yet. An undated letter from an Armenian named Tobiasz Bogdanowicz, who had settled in Zamość, to his brother-in-law in Lwów shows the difficulties that the settlers faced in the first years in the newly built city. The sender asked for a sack of rye, because there was a shortage of everything in Zamość at that time, especially bread, which was the cause of riots in the city<sup>31</sup>. Such conditions were therefore not conducive to carrying out serious construction investments. The first Armenians to settle in the city, even wealthy merchants, had difficulties in building their own brick houses, not to mention allocating large funds to build a brick temple<sup>32</sup>. For this reason, the first church built by Zamość Armenians was provisional. Despite this, the Armenian settlers treated its construction as a priority. This building was mentioned as early as 1587 by a merchant from Gdańsk, Martin Gruneweg. At that time, Gruneweg apprenticed with Armenian merchants from Lwów, accompanying them on trade expeditions to the East. In June 1587, Gruneweg stayed with them at a fair in Lublin. His employers, extremely curious about the newly founded city and the Armenians settling in it, decided to deviate a bit from the route and visit Zamość on the way back to Lwów<sup>33</sup>. A merchant from Gdańsk left a description of the city, mentioning, among others, an Armenian church located at the completed fragment of the city embankment<sup>34</sup>. He also mentioned that the church was built recently and was the first place of religious worship in Zamość<sup>35</sup>. Gruneweg's remark proves that at that time at least the main construction works were completed, enabling religious services to be performed. This seems to be confirmed by another reference from that time. The records of the Armenian Clerical Court in Lwów record the arrival in April 1588 of the clergyman *der*<sup>36</sup> Łukasz (Ghukas) from Zamość, accompanied by the initiator of the Armenian settlement in this city, Murat Jakubowicz. Both Armenians asked for the loan of liturgical paraments and the liturgical vestments to the church in Zamość<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, the work on the temple must have been completed or advanced enough to make it possible to hold religious services there. At that time, the Armenian commune of Lwów gave:

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31 Majewski, "Ormianie w Zamościu...", 19.

32 Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie (hereinafter: AGAD), Archiwum Zamoyskich (hereinafter: AZ), sign. 641, Seria II korespondencji. Kontrakta i umowy prywatne Jana Zamoyskiego 1582-1605, 76.

33 Majewski, "Ormianie w Zamościu...", 16.

34 *Die Aufzeichnungen des Dominikaners Martin Gruneweg (1562-ca. 1618) über seine Familie in Danzig, seine Handelsreisen in Osteuropa und sein Klosterleben in Polen*, bd. 2, ed. Almut Bues (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 1061.

35 Bues (ed.), *Die Aufzeichnungen des Dominikaners...*

36 *Der* or *ter*: a title of Armenian clergy, which became part of the surname for their descendants, e.g. Derjakubowicz - son of *der* Jakub.

37 *Zapisy sądu duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1564-1608 w języku ormiańsko-kipczackim w opracowaniu Edwarda Tryjarskiego*, ed. Edward Tryjarski (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2017), 400.

“as a loan to the church in Zamość a liturgical vestments: 2 hasubles (copes), one festive and the other everyday, 2 stoles, a pair of *epimanikia* [cuffs], 1 amice (shawl, veil) made of lace and 1 with flowers and pearls, 1 shirt, 3 altar cloths, 1 silver chalice (box) with a cross at the bottom, chalice (box) with a bowl; the cross with the chalice weighed 4 *grzywnas* and 5 *luts* [...] [The Zamość Armenians] were obliged to return all [these items] after the liturgical year, before the next year [...]”<sup>38</sup>

The makeshift nature of the building meant that it was built in a simple technique using cheap and easily available building materials. According to Jerzy Kowalczyk and Jacek Chrzęszczewski, the first Armenian church had to be a wooden building<sup>39</sup>. This hypothesis is contradicted by the oldest depiction of the temple on the above-mentioned engraving with a view of Zamość around 1605<sup>40</sup>. Both researchers considered this depiction to be fanciful and completely unreliable because the church was presented as, according to the authors, a brick building. Kowalczyk argued that at that time the temple could have been built only of wood, because this was the only way to explain the construction of a new brick temple less than four decades later<sup>41</sup>. Chrzęszczewski accepted Kowalczyk’s arguments, additionally referring to Czesław Lechicki’s work on the Armenian Church in Poland and the encyclopedic entry *Zamość* included in the *Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego (Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland)*<sup>42</sup>. Indeed, both publications mention that the temple was originally made of wood<sup>43</sup>. However, this was only a guess, and not based on any source.

Meanwhile, the aforementioned Martin Gruneweg, describing the Armenian temple in Zamość, noted that at the city embankment there was a “new Armenian half-timbered church, the first house of God in Zamość”<sup>44</sup>. For the construction of the church, a wooden frame was used, which was then filled with brick. This explains why the image of the temple on the engraving from Braun’s work could have seemed to Kowalczyk and Chrzęszczewski to be a brick building. In the context of the mention noted by Gruneweg, it should be stated that the depiction of the appearance of the church in Zamość did not differ much from reality, at least as far as the building materials used were concerned.

38 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy sądu duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1564-1608...*, 400-401.

39 Kowalczyk, “Kościół ormiański...”, 216 ; Chrzęszczewski, “Historia kościoła...”, 30 ; Chrzęszczewski, *Kościoly Ormian...*, 139.

40 Braun, *Theatri praecipvarvm totius...*, 53v.

41 Kowalczyk, “Kościół ormiański...”, 216.

42 Chrzęszczewski, *Kościoly Ormian...*, 139.

43 *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego*, t. XIV, ed. Bronisław Chlebowski (Warszawa: Wiek, 1895), 376 ; Czesław Lechicki, *Kościół ormiański w Polsce (zarys historyczny)* (Lwów: Księgarnia Gubrynowicz i Syn, 1928), 70.

44 Bues (ed.), *Die Aufzeichnungen des Dominikaners...*, 1061.

There was probably an Armenian school at this temple, although the first direct mentions about it are very late. Rev. Grzegorz Petrowicz found the first source confirmation of the existence of the school only in a letter written in 1662 by the papal nuncio in Poland to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith<sup>45</sup>. A little earlier, the school is mentioned in the books of the Zamość Armenian court. In the register of expenses written by the caregiver of the children of the deceased Grzegorz Bartoszewicz, it was noted that at the turn of 1660 and 1661 firewood was purchased for the school<sup>46</sup>. However, there are indirect mentions to the existence of the school already in the early period of the existence of the church in Zamość. Symeon Lehacy, born in Zamość, mentioned that when he was a child his parents sent him to study there<sup>47</sup>. According to Krzysztof Stopka, the earliest this happened was in 1591, so at that time the school must have already existed in Zamość<sup>48</sup>. Also, the psalter copied by the copyist Lusig and sent from Lwów to Zamość in 1594 may confirm that teaching was conducted in Zamość. As Hripsime Mamikonyan notes, the psalters were used in school teaching<sup>49</sup>.

In the immediate vicinity of the temple, auxiliary buildings were also built, including a presbytery and a hospital with a chapel, and a cemetery was designated<sup>50</sup>. The oldest inspection of Zamość from 1591 does not yet mention the hospital, so this building must have been built only after that date. Since the hospital was depicted on the engraving with a view of Zamość, it must have been built before 1605<sup>51</sup>. Inspections of the town from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries determine the location of the hospital behind the Rynek Solny (Salty Square), right next to the buildings of the Jewish district<sup>52</sup>. A *chuc*, the seat of

45 Grzegorz Petrowicz, *L'unione degli armeni di Polonia con la Santa Sede: (1626-1686)* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1950), 151-152.

46 Национальный исторический архив Беларуси в г. Минске (hereinafter: НИАБ), Замостский Магистрат (hereinafter: ЗМ), ф. 1807, оп. 1, од. 1, Справы армянскага суда ў Замосці 1660-1668 гг, 47v.

47 Symeon Lehacy, *Zapiski podrózne w tłumaczeniu z języka ormiańskiego i w opracowaniu Hripsime Mamikonyan*, ed. Hripsime Mamikonyan (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2022), 57.

48 Krzysztof Stopka, "Nieznane karty z dziejów szkolnictwa Ormian polskich: szkoła kościelna (tybradun) do XVII wieku", in: *Virtuti et ingenio. Księga pamiątkowa dedykowana profesorowi Julianowi Dybcowi*, (Kraków: Historia Jagellonica, 2013), 494.

49 Hripsime Mamikonyan, Introduction to the book *Zapiski podrózne w tłumaczeniu z języka ormiańskiego i w opracowaniu Hripsime Mamikonyan*, Symeon Lehacy (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2022), 18.

50 Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański...", 216.

51 Braun, *Theatri praecipvarvm totius...*, 53v.

52 Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna im. Hieronima Łopacińskiego w Lublinie (hereinafter: WBPPL), Dział Rękopisów (hereinafter: DR), sign. 16, Księgi 1691 Exaktorskie Maiące W sobie Percepta I Distributa Ktore W tym Roku teraznieyszym Tysiącnym Sześćsetnym Dziewięćdziesiątym Pierszym, 39, Księgi Exaktorskie Miasta Zamoscia Zamykaiące W sobie Percepty y Expensa Na Rok Panski 1694, 24, APL, Akta Miasta Zamościa (hereinafter: AMZ), sign. 73, Księgi exaktorskie miasta Zamościa 1696, 19, sign. 74, Księgi exaktorskie 1707, 25v, sign. 75, Księgi exaktorskie miasta Zamościa 1709, 10v.

the Armenian Clerical Court, was also built near the church. It is not known whether this building existed in the first years of the commune's existence, because the first mention of it dates back to 1640<sup>53</sup>.

According to Jacek Chrząszczewski, the first Armenian church originally had a different invocation than the one known from the later time of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the researcher indicated St. Cajetan as the first patron of the temple<sup>54</sup>. Even if the church originally had a different *patrocinium*, its patron at that time could not have been the saint indicated by Chrząszczewski. St. Cajetan of Thiena was beatified in 1629 and canonized in 1671<sup>55</sup>. His cult appeared in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth only when the Theatine Order was brought to Lwów in 1664 – it was a congregation whose St. Cajetan was one of the founders. The monks engaged in missionary activity among Polish Armenians, especially educating the Armenian clergy in the Catholic spirit, contributed to the popularization of the cult of their father-founder among the Armenians<sup>56</sup>. Under the privilege of 1585, the church in Zamość also received an endowment<sup>57</sup>. The ruler of the town also granted a salary to an Armenian clergyman who was to begin his priestly service in Zamość. The recipient of the settlement privilege was priest Krzysztof Kałust, who appeared in 1585 together with Murat Jakubowicz before Chancellor Jan Zamoyski.

Knowledge on Krzysztof Kałust is limited to what is written in this document. He came to Zamość “from the land of Turkey”, but the exact region from which he came was not mentioned<sup>58</sup>. He received from the chancellor a salary of 60 *zlotys* a year for his maintenance<sup>59</sup>. The content of the document shows that Kałust was to take over the function of the parson of the Armenian parish established in Zamość. However, it is significant that no other source mentions this clergyman as a priest of Zamość Armenians. When in 1588 the Zamość Armenians borrowed liturgical vestments and liturgical paraments necessary to start celebrating religious services, the clergyman who represented them was

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53 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, Księga wójtowsko-lawnicza prawa uprzywilejowanego ormiańskiego 1626-1649, 118v.

54 Chrząszczewski, “Historia kościoła...”, 30, Idem, *Kościół Ormian...*, 139.

55 Jerzy Duchniewski, “Kajetan z Thieny”, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 8, ed: Andrzej Szostek, Bogusław Migut (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2000), 340.

56 Krzysztof Stopka and Andrzej Aleksander Zięba, *Ormiańska Polska* (Warszawa: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2018), 128. The most visible effect of the popularization of the cult of St. Cajetan was the very high popularity of the name Cajetan among Armenians. About the activities of Saint Cajetan of Thiena, see: Antonio Veny Ballester, *San Cayetano de Thiene Patriarca de los Clerigos Regulares* (Barcelona: Editorial Vicente Ferrer, 1950) ; Gabriel Llompert, *Cayetano de Thiene (1480-1547). Estudios sobre un reformador religioso* (Roma: Curia Generalicia de los Clérigos Regulares, 1998) ; Andrea Vanni, *Gaetano Thiene. Spiritualità, politica, santità* (Roma: Viella, 2016).

57 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 2.

58 Lepszy (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego...*, 405.

59 Lepszy (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego...*, 406.

not Kałust, but, as previously mentioned, *der Łukasz*. In the record of the Lwów Armenian Clerical Court, this clergyman was defined as a citizen of Zamość<sup>60</sup>. Other sources from that time mention *der Łukasz* as the only priest in Zamość. In this role, he was recorded in the two oldest town books<sup>61</sup>, dating from 1591-1593. Also, the inspection of the city from 1591 does not mention any other Armenian clergyman apart from *der Łukasz*<sup>62</sup>. The summary of the privileges of the Zamość church mentioned earlier mentions *der Łukasz* as the organizer of the parish responsible for building the temple and starting the celebration of the first religious services. After completing this task, the clergyman was to introduce Kałust to the parish<sup>63</sup>. There is no reason to doubt the tradition presented in the summary, but the complete lack of mentions of Kałust in the sources from the time when the parish was already functioning, with the frequent mentioning of *der Łukasz* as an Armenian priest in Zamość, suggests that the latter was the head of the parish.

The newly established parish was not an autonomous unit in the structure of the Armenian Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but it was subordinated to the Lwów Armenian Council of Elders<sup>64</sup>, which made the final decision on the selection of a parson. *Der Łukasz* was nicknamed Hromasiewicz, which suggests that he came to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the Ottoman Empire. This nickname was created from the word “Hrrom” (Rome), which the Armenians called the lands of ancient Byzantium<sup>65</sup>. Before *der Łukasz* appeared in Zamość, he served as a priest in Lwów<sup>66</sup>. When Chancellor Jan Zamoyski guaranteed the Armenians the right to build a church in Zamość, the Armenian Council of Elders in Lwów delegated *der Łukasz* to build a temple and found a parish, and then, according to the tradition contained in the summary of privileges, he placed priest Krzysztof Kałust there as a parson. However, Kałust probably died immediately after taking over the parish, or even before that fact, and therefore the Council of Elders appointed *der Łukasz* as parson. Another explanation can also be attempted. Perhaps *der Łukasz* was appointed priest of the Zamość parish from the very beginning, and Kałust was supposed to be his associate. However, this hypothesis is much less likely. It must be remembered that the chancellor granted Kałust, as a priest of the Zamość Armenians, a lifetime salary<sup>67</sup>. If the original plans regarding the appointment of a parson had

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60 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy sądu duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1564-1608...*, 400.

61 Majewski, “Ormianie w Zamościu...”, 17-18.

62 Bohdan Horodyski, “Najstarsza lustracja Zamościa”, *Teka Zamojska* 1, 1938, 205, 208.

63 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 2.

64 Council of Elders: An elected body exercising power in individual Armenian communes in Poland. For more information, see: Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce*, 43-71.

65 Mamikonyan, Introduction to the book..., 17.

66 Majewski, “Ormianie w Zamościu...”, 16.

67 Lepszy (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego...*, 406.

changed, there would be no basis for Kałust to receive this salary, and its beneficiary would be *der* Łukasz. However, nothing of the sort happened. Also, the mention of introducing Kałust to the parish (even for a short time) by *der* Łukasz contradicts this hypothesis.

The case of the clergy serving at the Zamość church in the first years of the parish's existence is additionally complicated by an undated letter from two Armenian clergymen from Zamość to Chancellor Jan Zamoyski. In it, the clergy asked the chancellor to exempt them from bearing municipal burdens, i.e. for such privileges as were enjoyed by the Armenian clergy in Lwów and Kamieniec Podolski<sup>68</sup>. The publisher of the letter, Kazimierz Lepszy, dated it at the turn of 1588 and 1589. The historian concluded that it happened then, "because it was then that the Armenians sought to extend their rights"<sup>69</sup>. The researcher therefore linked the request of the Armenian clergy with the judicial privilege granted to Armenians from Zamość in 1589. However, the dating of this letter proposed by Lepszy is incorrect. The privilege of 1589 dealt only with issues related to the organization of the commune and the judiciary as well as economic rights held by the Armenian nation, but did not concern church matters<sup>70</sup>. Both the sources from that time and the later ones -from the 17th century- do not confirm that in the last decades of the 16th century the Armenian clergy from Zamość received any privileges from Jan Zamoyski. In addition, since at the turn of the 1580s and 1590s the parson of the Armenian church in Zamość was *der* Łukasz, he would undoubtedly be one of the senders of the letter if it had been written at the turn of 1588 and 1589, while the authors of the letter were the clergy Agop (Jakub) and Simon (Szymon)<sup>71</sup>.

The information about Agop as the author of the letter is crucial for the proper dating of this document. Agop, son of Altun, was born in Tokat in the Ottoman Empire in 1563. In the years 1593-1595, he stayed in Jassy, from where he came to Zamość in 1595. From the colophon he wrote on November 22, 1595 in a manuscript copied, illuminated and bound by himself, it is known that at that time he served in the Armenian church in Zamość as a *dipir* (deacon)<sup>72</sup>. The letter published by Lepszy could therefore have been written in 1595 at the earliest, although it seems that it took place even later. Agop was the first to sign the letter to Chancellor Zamoyski, which suggests that he played a leading role in the parish at that time. So, he must have already been ordained a higher priesthood<sup>73</sup>. He obtained permission from the Armenian Clerical

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68 Lepszy (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego...*, 290-291.

69 Lepszy (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego...*, 291.

70 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3618/II, Akta i przywileje odnoszące się do miasta Zamościa, 65-68.

71 Lepszy (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego...*, 291.

72 Piruz Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego w dawnej Polsce" (doctoral dissertation, Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 2015), 95.

73 Lepszy (ed.), *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego...*, 291.

Court and the Armenian Council of Elders in Lwów only on September 22, 1601<sup>74</sup>. The letter must therefore have been written between the end of 1601 and the first half of 1605, when Jan Zamoyski died.

Perhaps Simon, listed next to Agop as the co-author of the letter, is identical with a student of *der* Agop, Simeon Lehacy, who at that time was serving in the church in Zamość. The translator of Lehacy's *Travel Notes* into Polish - Hripsime Mamikonyan - pointed out that Simeon, who displayed extraordinary talents, could have been ordained as a *dipir* even in 1605, i.e. before his departure from Zamość to Lwów<sup>75</sup>. This would confirm the dating of the letter to the first years of the 17th century.

*Der* Agop was an extraordinary figure - a teacher, author of poems and, above all, an extremely active copyist, who produced many manuscripts at the Zamość church<sup>76</sup>. Simeon, far surpassing his master, became famous primarily as a traveler and the most outstanding Armenian intellectual in the history of Zamość, but he never reached a higher rank in the church hierarchy<sup>77</sup>. *Der* Agop was supported in church work by a certain *der* Andreas. He must have been serving in Zamość already in the 1620s (maybe earlier), from where in May 1625 the Lwów Armenian Council of Elders sent him to the priestly ministry at the church of St. Stephen in Łuck (Lutsk)<sup>78</sup>. It was stipulated that after a year the Lwów elders would decide whether *der* Andreas would keep his position or be transferred to another Armenian parish<sup>79</sup>. It is not known how long the priest ministered in Łuck, but his stay turned out to be short-lived. In the autumn of 1629, the Armenian Council of Elders in Lwów stated "that a priest is needed for the church in Łuck", who was appointed, moreover, at the request of *der* Agop of Zamość, his son Kirkor<sup>80</sup>. *Der* Andreas returned to the service at the Zamość temple, which is indicated by the colophon from September 1630 about the arrival of an Armenian monk from Lwów, Chaczadur (Khachadur), to Zamość. Colophon mentions that this visit took place at the time when *der* Agop and *der* Andreas ministered at the church in Zamość, moreover, a monk from Lwów stayed in the house of *der* Andreas<sup>81</sup>.

74 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy sądu duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1564-1608...*, 482.

75 Mamikonyan, Introduction to the book..., 19.

76 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 95-98.

77 Mamikonyan, Introduction to the book..., 19.

78 *Zapisy Sądu Duchownego Ormian Miasta Lwowa za lata 1625-1630 w języku ormiańsko-kipczackim*, ed. Edward Tryjarski (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2010), 150.

79 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy Sądu Duchownego Ormian Miasta Lwowa za lata 1625-1630... Der* Andreas was to receive a salary of 200 *florins* a year from the Council of Elders for food and all other needs, and 30 *florins* at a time for housing. The clergyman also received 50 *florins* for expenses related to moving from Zamość.

80 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy Sądu Duchownego Ormian Miasta Lwowa za lata 1625-1630...*, 212-213.

81 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 97.



*Der Andreas* not only supported *der Agop* in his work in the church in Zamość, but was also a member of his family, because he married one of his daughters - Anna<sup>82</sup>.

*Der Agop* left a clear mark on the history of the Armenian church in Zamość not only because of his intellectual achievements. He was the longest-serving clergyman in the Zamość parish. His ministry lasted over 60 years. The last mention of the activity of *der Agop* comes from 1657. A deed from March of that year mentions him as one of the sides to a certain transaction<sup>83</sup>, and the colophon of November 9 proves that he was still an active priest at that time<sup>84</sup>. He was 94 at the time and died shortly thereafter. According to Piruz Mnatsakanyan, the clergyman certainly died before 1664<sup>85</sup>. However, the date of his death can be more precise thanks to the entry in the diary of Bazylu Rudomicz, who in October 1659 mentioned that he was a mediator between the heirs of the deceased *der Agop* and their aunt and priest Jan (Hovhannes) Kistesterowicz<sup>86</sup>. This proves that *der Agop* died between November 1657 and early October 1659. He was married to Jaghut (Agnieszka) and had several children: Kirkor, Bedros (Piotr) Stepanos (Stefan), Howhannes (Jan), Astwadzadur (Bogdan), Anna, Mariam (Maria) and Suszan (Zuzanna)<sup>87</sup>. From the mentioned children, it is known that in 1629 Kirkor, as already mentioned, became a priest in Łuck. Later, another son of *der Agop*, Bedros, became the parson of that church<sup>88</sup>. Also, the third son of *der Agop* - Stepanos chose a clerical career<sup>89</sup>. Among the daughters, apart from Anna married to *der Andreas*, it is known that Szusan married an Armenian merchant and juror from Zamość, Zachariasz Dolwatowicz<sup>90</sup>. *Der Agop* is permanently remembered by the Armenian community in Zamość also because it was during his time that the makeshift half-timbered church was replaced with an impressive brick temple combining traditional features of Armenian architecture with Western European architecture.

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82 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 139.

83 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, Akta wójtowskie prawa uprzywilejowanego ormiańskiego zamojskiego 1649-1659, 289.

84 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 98.

85 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 98.

86 Bazylu Rudomicz, *Efemeros czyli Diariusz prywatny pisany w Zamościu w latach 1656-1672*, cz. I: 1656-1664 (Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2002), 137-138.

87 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 95.

88 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 288.

89 APL, AMZ, sign. 67, Acta advocatialis et scabinalia Zamoscensia iuris priuilegiati Armenici 1643-1647, 29v.

90 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 139-139v.

## 2. Building a Brick Church

With the stabilization of the financial situation of the Armenian settlers, the makeshift temple they built was no longer sufficient. On the one hand, it did not correspond to the growing ambitions of the community, which was getting richer<sup>91</sup>, and on the other hand, the ordinances issued by the rulers of Zamość ordering the replacement of makeshift buildings with solid brick ones forced the Armenians to build a new church<sup>92</sup>. In addition, the brick temple minimized the risk of fire. The first Armenian church was affected by this natural disaster in 1603 on the feast of St. Stephen the Martyr. The temple started to burn because of a lit candle left overnight, for which *der Agop* especially blamed himself<sup>93</sup>. The priest mentioned that the fire consumed the chasuble and two liturgical books, but it is not known how much damage the building itself suffered<sup>94</sup>. However, this event may have influenced the Armenians to start efforts to build a brick temple. *Der Agop* was the main initiator of this investment<sup>95</sup>.

According to the preserved sources, the first works were undertaken at the end of 1614, when the Armenian Council of Elders in Zamość allocated the amount of 145 *zlotys* and 10 *groszys* on behalf of itself and the entire Armenian community for the construction of the belfry<sup>96</sup>. Probably at that time only a collection of money was carried out for this purpose, while the works themselves were carried out much later. This seems to be suggested by the fact that *Warterys Kirkorowicz*, who was a *jerespochan (erecpohan)*<sup>97</sup>, settled the accounts for this task before the Council of Elders only in 1640<sup>98</sup>. Not only this fact proves that the construction of the temple was sluggish. Although in 1623 *der Agop* organized a special collection for the construction of the temple, the work stood still for the next few years. In a letter sent on June 17, 1628, by *Tomasz Zamoyski*, the ruler of the town, to the Armenian commune in Zamość, he pointed out that despite having funds from the collection carried out five years ago, the Armenians refused to start construction works. The magnate accused the Armenians that “you have only built some eyesore and you are disgracing the city with it”<sup>99</sup>. The construction must indeed have been in its

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91 Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian...*, 139.

92 APL, AMZ, sign. 2, Liber actorum consularium civitatis Novae Samoscensis 1594-1600, 240.

93 Mnatsakanyan, “Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...”, 96.

94 Mnatsakanyan, “Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...”, 96.

95 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 2.

96 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 127v-128.

97 *Jerespochan (erecpohan)*: In Armenian communes in Poland, the administrator of the commune’s common property, see: Zakrzekwska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie w dawnej Polsce*, 61-62.

98 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 128.

99 AGAD, Zbiór Aleksandra Czołowskiego (hereinafter: ZACz), sign. 605, Mandat Tomasza Zamoyskiego wojewody kijowskiego nakazujący gminie ormiańskiej w Zamościu doprowadzenie do końca budowy ich kościoła, 1.

infancy, since Zamoyski felt compelled to intervene, admonishing the Armenians that “it was better not to start anything in this matter [i.e. construction of the church - M.Ł.M.], if after starting you did not intend to finish it properly”<sup>100</sup>.

The ruler of the city ordered the Armenians to finish the construction immediately and ordered Warterys Kirkorowicz to supervise the works<sup>101</sup>. The participation of this Armenian was not limited to supervising the works. It is known that it was thanks to his efforts that in 1626 the legate of the Catholicos of Echmiadzin Melchizedek and bishops Martariusz and Eliasz came to Zamość, consecrated the cornerstone for the construction of the church and gave it the invocation of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary<sup>102</sup>. Taking into account Kirkorowicz’s previous involvement in the construction of the temple and his social and financial position, it is not surprising that Tomasz Zamoyski ordered the Armenian Council of Elders to give this Armenian money from the collection for the construction of the church. From that moment, Kirkorowicz was responsible for their proper spending<sup>103</sup>. The role that Kirkorowicz played in the construction of the new temple was emphasized by a plaque placed over the gate of the fence surrounding the church<sup>104</sup> and the memory of Kirkorowicz’s activities preserved in the parish tradition<sup>105</sup>.

The entire Armenian community contributed to the construction of the church, but the list of donors written in 1623 has not survived<sup>106</sup>. The construction of the church was an extremely expensive undertaking, and it is hard to believe that the otherwise considerable sum of 2,966 *zlotys* collected in 1623 was able to cover the entire cost of the work performed. For this reason, also in the later period, the Armenians from Zamość gave donations for the construction of the temple. One of such donors were Altun Muratowicz and his wife Agnieszka Balejówna, who on January 11, 1633 donated 550 *zlotys* for the building of the church<sup>107</sup>. It was not the only donation of this couple, because the total amount they spent on construction work was 710 *zlotys* and 15 *groszys*<sup>108</sup>. In recognition of the generous donations, in 1640 the Council of Elders decided to return 400 *zlotys* from the church money to the Muratowicz family, although this was protested by the Armenian juror Gabriel Ariewowicz. The pretext for protesting the decision of the commune authorities was supposed to be the

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100 AGAD, ZACz, sign. 605, 1.

101 AGAD, ZACz, sign. 605, 1.

102 Kowalczyk, “Kościół ormiański...”, 216.

103 AGAD, ZACz, sign. 605, 1.

104 Kowalczyk, “Kościół ormiański...”, 216.

105 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 3-3v.

106 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 2.

107 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 124.

108 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 123v.

absence of all representatives of the Armenian commune, but the elders ignored this fact and the return was finally made<sup>109</sup>.

In the previous literature, Warterys Kirkorowicz was considered the main founder of the temple. Already Michał Baliński and Tymoteusz Lipiński in their book *Starożytna Polska* pointed out that Kirkorowicz, adding to the sum obtained during the collection “adding his funds, began to build” the church<sup>110</sup>. Their view was then repeated by Sadok Barącz<sup>111</sup>, and according to Jerzy Kowalczyk, the money donated by Kirkorowicz constituted “the vast majority” of the 1623 collection<sup>112</sup>. In turn, Jacek Chrząszczewski stated that Kirkorowicz undertook further financing of construction works<sup>113</sup>. Although the list of donations donated for the construction has not survived, there is no doubt that Kirkorowicz, considered one of the richest, if not the wealthiest merchant in Zamość, must have donated a considerable sum. However, it is unjustified to attribute to him the financing of the entire undertaking or even covering a significant part of the expenses. Kirkorowicz was considered the main founder by misinterpreting the content of the inscription from the commemorative plaque once placed above the church gate. Researchers suggested themselves with a fragment of the last sentence, which translated into English read: “Warterys Kirkorowicz of Tokat built this church”. However, this passage should be interpreted together with the first part of the sentence. The entire inscription read: “cura et impensis nationis armenae Warteres Kirkorowicz Torunensis [sic!] hanc ecclesiam erexit” (“by the efforts and expense of the Armenian nation, Warterys Kirkorowicz of Toruń [sic!] built this church”)<sup>114</sup>. It is clearly indicated here that the temple was built “by the efforts and at the expense of the Armenian nation”. The fragment concerning Kirkorowicz’s participation should therefore not be interpreted literally. Rather, it is not so much his financial contribution that is emphasized here as the role he played as the supervisor of works and the administrator of money belonging to the entire Armenian community and intended for the construction of the temple. This is confirmed by sources from the time the church was built. When in 1640 Kirkorowicz accounted for the sums he collected years ago for the construction

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109 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 124.

110 Baliński, Lipiński, *Starożytna Polska...*, t. II, 803.

111 Barącz, *Rys dziejów...*, 178.

112 Kowalczyk, “Kościół ormiański...”, 216.

113 Chrząszczewski, *Kościół Ormian...*, 139.

114 The content of the inscription is known from a copy made in 1834 by the archivist Mikołaj Stworzyński. The inscription must have been at least partially destroyed at that time, because Stworzyński misread the adjective *Tochatensis* as *Toruniensis*. The distortion of the inscription was probably also the reason for giving the name Kirkorowicz in the form of Kirkurowicz. Jerzy Kowalczyk has already drawn attention to the erroneous reading of the inscription by Stworzyński, see: Kowalczyk, “Kościół ormiański...”, 216.

115 BN, BOZ, sign. 1815, *Opisanie Statystyczno-Historyczne Dóbr Ordynacyi Zamoyskiej przez Mikołaja Stworzyńskiego Archiwistę 1834 Roku*, 521.

of the belfry, it was the money of the Armenian community, not Kirkorowicz's private funds<sup>116</sup>. In turn, in 1644, he complained to the Armenian court against the *jerespochans* for not returning to him the money he had spent for the community in 1635 and 1638. One of the expenses incurred by him was the construction of a house in the church cemetery<sup>117</sup>. It follows that in the lack of money, a rich Armenian paid for the work from his own pocket, but it was not a foundation, but a kind of loan, which, after collecting the appropriate amount among the Armenians, was returned by the *jerespochans*. Also, in the summary of the privileges of the Armenian church in Zamość, it was only stated that Kirkorowicz received the amount from the collection carried out among the Armenians for the construction of the temple<sup>118</sup>. The sentence appearing in the further part of the source that this Armenian "at his own expense, applying himself to work, and taking care for the construction of the house of God, in 1626 he brings from Lwów the legate of the Armenian Patriarch from Echmiadzin [...]"<sup>119</sup>, also cannot be considered as proof of Kirkorowicz's foundation activity. This fragment does not mention Kirkorowicz's participation in the construction works, it instead mentions bringing to Zamość a representative of the Catholicos, who was to consecrate the cornerstone. This note shows that Kirkorowicz was the initiator of bringing the legate, and his visit was made possible thanks to the personal efforts of this Armenian, who also financed the journey and stay of the church dignitary out of his own pocket.

Construction works ended in the 1630s. The symbolic act of completing the construction was placing an inscription in Armenian and the date "1633" over the main entrance<sup>120</sup>. Its content is unknown, but there is no doubt that it commemorated the completion of construction works<sup>121</sup>. The solemn consecration took place on September 14, 1645, and was performed by the Armenian bishop from Wallachia, Andreas<sup>122</sup>. No description of the church has survived from the 17th century. Only the notes, bills, and inventory of the Armenian church written after the fire that took place in October 1709 contain a few laconic references to its appearance. The chronicle introduction to the

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116 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 128.

117 APL, AMZ, sign. 67, 23.

118 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 3.

119 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 3-3v.

120 BN, BOZ, sign. 1815, 521.

121 Both Jerzy Kowalczyk and Jacek Chrzęszczewski indicated that the church could have been consecrated in 1635. This date was recorded in the summary of privileges of the Armenian church in Zamość. It is more likely, however, that the church was consecrated in 1633. This is indicated by an inscription dated to that year and, as Chrzęszczewski noted, the indication of this date also by Sadok Barącz, based on the acts of the Armenian Consistory in Lwów. As Kowalczyk aptly noticed, the date 1635 in the manuscript from 1844 could have been the result of a copyist's mistake, see: Barącz, *Rys dziejów*, 178 ; Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański...", 216 ; Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian...*, 139.

122 Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański...", 216.

## Armenian Parish of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Zamość in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century

list of collection for the renovation of the destroyed temple begins with a description of the damage caused by the great fire of 1672:

“Our Armenian church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was also affected, because [the fire destroyed] the roof tiles that covered the church, the dome and the decorative towers, melted two large and two smaller bells and made significant holes and cracks in the walls of the church vault: priests’ houses and tenement houses of the church were burned and ruined”<sup>123</sup>.

During the renovation, the roof of the temple was covered with shingles, and the tile was replaced with sheet metal<sup>124</sup>.

### A model showing the Armenian church in Zamość in the 18th century



Source: Muzeum Zamojskie (Zamość Museum/Poland)

123 Львівська Національна Наукова Бібліотека України імені В. Стефаніка (hereinafter: ЛННБУВС), Колекція Олександра Чоловського (hereinafter: КОЧ), ф. 141, оп. 1, спр. 1995, Zapiski, rachunki i inwentarz kościoła ormiańskiego w Zamościu z lat 1709-1710, 1.

124 Ibidem.

### 3. Church furnishing

Both the description quoted above and the later ones described only the technical condition of the temple. We do not find in these descriptions any details regarding the furnishings of the church, especially the altars in it. However, information on this subject is provided by the register of property and sacral objects of the Armenian church in Zamość, written on November 14, 1753. The document presents the condition of the temple as found in 1749 by its visitor – Rev. Jakub Manugiewicz, at that time the parson and official of Stanisławów (known today as Iwano-Frankiwsk)<sup>125</sup>. Since the source mentions only the elements decorating the paintings, such as dresses or crowns, and valuable objects next to the altars, it is possible that it does not mention all the altars in the church. However, this inventory is the starting point for reconstructing the history of church furnishings.

#### 3.1. Altars

Based on the invocation of the temple, it can be assumed that the main altar was invoked by the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The date of its foundation is unknown, but the first mention of it that can be determined was recorded on May 17, 1639 in a testimony given by Krzysztof Głuszkowicz, an Armenian priest from Lwów, to the Armenian court in Zamość. The testimony concerned the last will of the clergyman's sister, Suszan, who, on her deathbed, took off a chain weighing 40 red *zlotys* from her neck and, handing it over to Gabrielowa Bartoszewicz, asked “that this chain was always on the painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Great Altar in the Armenian church in Zamość and that it should never be removed, nor should it be altered”<sup>126</sup>. According to the description from the mid-18th century, the main altar had a metal ciborium topped with a silver cross. The painting was covered with a velvet dress embroidered with gold flowers and decorated with two crowns<sup>127</sup>. There are no records of the scene depicted in the painting. It probably depicted the Mother of God at the moment of her Assumption, but it is also possible that its theme was the death of Mary. The title pages of the record baptisms and marriages of the church in Zamość suggest that the Armenians, apart from the invocation of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also used the form of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, treating the nouns “assumption” and “dormition” as synonyms<sup>128</sup>.

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125 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3697/II, 1.

126 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 110v.

127 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1.

128 Majewski, “Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...”, 11, 30v.

In the Zamość church, there were two more altars dedicated to the Mother of God. The first altar was decorated with silver gilded crowns and, as in the case of the main altar, covered with a velvet dress with golden flowers, probably depicted the Mother of God with baby Jesus<sup>129</sup>. Also in this case, the date of the altarpiece is unknown, but on the basis of the will of the Armenian Agnieszka Sislikowa, we can assume that it dates to before 1633. Already at that time, a religious confraternity bearing the call of the Blessed Virgin Mary was active at the altar<sup>130</sup>.

The second of the altars, dedicated to the Mother of God, was erected in connection with the miracle that took place in Zamość on Thursday, June 26, 1658. That day, in the home of the Armenian Martin, son of Hovhannes, the painting of Mary that he owned began to shed tears<sup>131</sup>. The priest of the Armenian parish, *der* Jan Kistesterowicz, was immediately notified of the alleged miracle. The priest, having arrived at the place, found that not only tears appeared on the painting, but also drops of sweat, which he personally wiped away. Information about the miracle spread extremely quickly and the painting was moved to the Armenian church, where it was visited by crowds of believers. In the days that followed, it was to be determined whether a supernatural phenomenon had actually taken place, or whether the alleged sweat and tears had appeared on the image of Mary due to the humidity caused by the recent heavy rains. Until then, the Armenian church had been closed to the crowds<sup>132</sup>. The inspection of the painting must have been successful, because it stayed in the church and the erection of a new altar for it began almost immediately. From the will of Anna Ariewowiczowa, written in 1709, it is known that the founder of the altar was her aunt Teofila Ariewowiczowa, widow of Garabed (Gabriel)<sup>133</sup>. In 1659, the founder, already in her old age, wrote her will, and she died in 1664 at the latest<sup>134</sup>. Thus, the altar was founded between 1658 and 1664, and it is very likely that the funds for this purpose were allocated by Ariewowiczowa in her will. However, this fact cannot be confirmed, because the content of the last will of the Armenian woman is not known in its entirety. The altar was placed in a prestigious place of the church, right next to the main altar<sup>135</sup>. It depicted Mary with the baby Jesus. At the beginning of the 18th century, the painting was covered with a dress of white silver<sup>136</sup>. This decoration was funded by Anna Ariewowiczowa - the niece of

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129 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1.

130 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 64v.

131 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 26.

132 Rudomicz, *Efemeris* ...I, 88.

133 APL, Trybunał Zamojski dla Miast (hereinafter: TZM), sign. 10, Acta Judiciorum Supremorum Trybunali Civitatum Domini Zamosceni 1713-1750, 65v.

134 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 15v, 16v.

135 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 26.

136 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1.



the founder of the altar<sup>137</sup>. The painting was also decorated with gilded crowns and four strings of small pearls. Three of them were placed around the neck of the baby Jesus, one around the neck of the Mother of God. In the middle of the 18th century, there were three silver votive offerings by the altar and double silk curtains with silver flowers embroidered as curtains for the miraculous image<sup>138</sup>.

In the temple there was another painting famous for miracles, and it was the image of St. Cajetan of Thiena<sup>139</sup>. According to Mieczysław Potocki, the painting was of great artistic value<sup>140</sup>. The painting had an oval shape and depicted a scene referring to the vision of St. Cajetan, where the Mother of God entrusted her Son to him<sup>141</sup>. The painting was covered with a silver dress, and there were 12 silver votive offerings next to it. The painting had a silk curtain interwoven with thread, and in front of it was a small silver lamp<sup>142</sup>. According to Wartan Grigorian, in 1786 the painting was taken from Zamość to the Armenian church in Żwaniec by its parson Mikołaj Hankiewicz<sup>143</sup>.

In the Armenian church in Zamość, the altars most worshiped by the faithful were the ones of the Crucifixion and St. Anna. Both had Armenian religious confraternities<sup>144</sup>. The first of these was probably founded in the first half of the 17th century, since the mention from 1669 mentions the existence of a well-organized confraternity centered around the altar<sup>145</sup>. There is no information about the appearance of the altar, apart from a note from 1749 about a linen double curtain<sup>146</sup>. Also the year of the foundation of the altar of St. Anna is unknown, although we can assume that it could have belonged to one of the oldest in the temple. This is indicated by the mention of functioning at the altar of the Confraternity of St. Anna as early as 1633<sup>147</sup>. It led a thriving activity

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137 APL, TZM, sign. 10, 65v. Anna Ariewowiczowa, née Topałowicz, was the wife of Kasper Ariewowicz, whose brother Mikołaj was a priest ministry in the Armenian parish in Zamość.

138 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1.

139 Ewaryst Andrzej Kuropatnicki, *Geographia Albo Dokładne Opisanie Krolestw Gallicyi I Lodomeryi Do Druku Podana* (Przemysł: Antoni Matyaszowski, 1786), 82.

140 Piotr Kondraciuk, "Obraz św. Kajetana z kościoła ormiańskiego w Zamościu", *Zamojski Kwartalnik Kulturalny* 1-2 (2004), 78-79: 32.

141 Kondraciuk, "Obraz św. Kajetana...", 32.

142 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1-1v.

143 Вартан Григорян, *История армянских колоний Украины и Польши*, (Ереван: Изд-во АН Армянской ССР, 1980), 140. After 1774, Mikołaj Hankiewicz was a temporary administrator of the Armenian parish in Zamość, see: Majewski, "Метрыка парафii ормянскай...", 10.

144 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сnp. 1995, 2.

145 APL, AMZ, sign. 68, Akta prawa uprzywilejowanego ormiańskiego zamojskiego 1669-1674, 16v.

146 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 2.

147 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 64-64v. The foundation of the altar of St. Anna should be connected with a strong cult in the Church of Mary's parents - Joachim and Anna. This cult was also practiced in the Armenian Church.

almost until the end of the existence of the parish<sup>148</sup>. It is likely that the altar was destroyed during the fire of Zamość in 1672<sup>149</sup>. Despite being rebuilt, it was again consumed by fire in 1709. The damage was great, because the painting of St. Anna burned down, as indicated by the information about the consecration in 1711 by the Uniate bishop Józef Lewicki of a new painting dedicated to this saint<sup>150</sup>. The painting depicted St. Anna with her daughter Mary and grandson Jesus. At an unknown time, the painting was decorated with three crowns of gilded silver. It was also adorned with necklaces - a double string of pearls and beads arranged alternately and four strings of small pearls in blue frames<sup>151</sup>.

In the temple there was also an altar of the patron saint of Armenians - St. Gregory the Illuminator. The description shows that it was one of the smaller altars, although the image of the saint presented in the painting was richly decorated. The miter on his head was made of gilded silver, and the crosier he held in his hand, with a cross hanging on a chain, was made of plain silver<sup>152</sup>. Concerning the next altar - the Transfiguration of Jesus, practically nothing is known except that it had a linen curtain comparable to that of the Altar of the Crucifixion<sup>153</sup>.

An art historian and employee of the Zamość Museum, Piotr Kondraciuk, associates two more altars with the Armenian church: St. Andrew and St. Onophrius<sup>154</sup>. In the inventory of the church from 1753, is a mention of a painting depicting St. Andrew, but it seems that the painting was not placed in a separate altar dedicated especially to this saint. This is indicated by the lack of a separate item in the inventory for this painting, but listing it together with the painting of St. Cajetan<sup>155</sup>. If the painting of St. Andrew was placed in a separate altar in the list would receive a separate item. This suggests that the painting depicting the holy apostle probably served as a curtain for the painting of St. Cajetan. However, the altar of St. Onophrius was mistakenly associated

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148 APL, AMZ, sign. 71, Akta wójtowskie prawa uprzywilejowanego ormiańskiego zamojskiego 1690-1700, 191v.

149 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 31.

150 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 34.

151 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1. The first necklace was attached to Mary's neck, the second to Jesus' neck.

152 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1.

153 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 2. Perhaps the foundation of this altar should be associated with the great popularity of the Eucharistic cult, which was the Catholic Church's response to attempts to question the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, see: Jan Tyrawa, "Kult eucharystyczny", *Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny* 8 (2000), 2: 23-36.

154 Piotr Kondraciuk, "Sztuka ormiańska w Zamościu", in: *Ars Armenica. Sztuka ormiańska ze zbiorów polskich i ukraińskich. Katalog wystawy*, ed. Waldemar Deluga (Zamość: Muzeum Zamojskie, 2010), 24.

155 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1.

with the Armenian temple in Zamość. Ewaryst Andrzej Kuropatnicki – the castellan of Belz and a geographer and heraldist of the Enlightenment era – in his description of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria published in 1786, he devoted some attention to the more important churches of Zamość. He described e.g. the Basilian church, “in which the grace-famous Image of S[aint] Onuphrius was”<sup>156</sup>. In the Armenian church, there was probably an altar dedicated to St. James the Apostle. This is indicated by a note from the register of expenses for the renovation of the church from 1710, which mentions the payment of “a bricklayer for bricking up the hole above the chapel of St. James”<sup>157</sup>. The altar of the holy apostle-martyr could be one of the oldest, because St. James the Apostle was the patron saint of merchants, and the Armenians, as a community dealing mainly in trade, may have wanted to honor the patron of their profession in this way. The fact that one of the most important temples of the Armenian Church was associated with the name of this saint, i.e. the Cathedral of St. James the Greater and the Lesser in Jerusalem, was also significant. From the indulgence granted on July 16, 1781 by Pope Pius VI to the faithful visiting the Armenian church in Zamość, it can be concluded that there was also an altar of St. Anthony the Great<sup>158</sup>.

The dates of foundation of the altars in the church (apart from the approximate date of foundation of the altar with the miraculous image of Mary) are unknown, as are the names of their founders. It is only known that three of them were founded before 1699 by the Armenian *voyt*<sup>159</sup> Stefan Altunowicz<sup>160</sup>. The Armenian mentioned it in his will, however, without specifying which were his foundations. Leaving certain sums for them, Altunowicz consistently called them tiny altars, which suggests that they were small altars<sup>161</sup>. Of the altars mentioned above, they could only be the altars of St. Anna, St. Cajetan and St. Gregory the Illuminator. Foundation of the Altar of St. Anna could be related to Altunowicz’s desire to commemorate his first wife Anna, for whom he had an exceptionally strong affection<sup>162</sup>. Apart from Altunowicz, the temple also owed much to Anna Ariewowiczowa. In addition to funding a dress for the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary, the Armenian woman spared no money to decorate the church throughout her life<sup>163</sup>. Although she proudly mentioned it in her will, she left no details of the funding she had made for the church<sup>164</sup>.

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156 Kuropatnicki, *Geographia Albo Dokładne...*, 82.

157 ЛИНБУС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, стр. 1995, 18.

158 Barącz, *Rys dziejów...*, 178.

159 Voyt (*wójt* in Polish): the leader of an Armenian commune.

160 Majewski, “Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...”, 31.

161 Majewski, “Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...”, 31.

162 APL, AMZ, sign. 70, Akta urzędu prawa uprzywilejowanego ormiańskiego zamojskiego 1685-1690, 264.

163 APL, TZM, sign. 10, 65.

164 APL, TZM, sign. 10, 65.

### 3.2. Bells

Apart from the altars, bells were an important element of church furnishings. As in other churches, they called the faithful to prayer, warned against danger, announced important events and proclaimed God's glory. The fact that the Zamość Armenians erected a belfry already at the first church suggests that the foundation of bells was planned from the very beginning of the parish. It is not known, however, whether in the first decades of the parish's existence this intention was implemented. The mentions of bell-ringers serving at the church in the sources from the first half of the 17th century prove that at that time the church must have already been equipped with bells. In the dispute that Warterys Kirkorowicz had with the Armenian Council of Elders in March 1644, he mentioned, among others, that during the six years he was a *voyt*, he had to pay the church bell ringer's wages out of his own pocket<sup>165</sup>. Therefore, this event should be related to the 1630s, when Kirkorowicz was the head of the Zamość Armenian community<sup>166</sup>. From the deed of sale of a certain house from 1639 we learn that the bell ringer at that time was Murat<sup>167</sup>. In turn, at least from 1658 to at least 1666, this function was held by Sefer Chydyrowicz<sup>168</sup>.

The first direct mention of the bells, however, is late, as they are mentioned only in the description of the damage caused to the church by the fire of 1672. It shows that there were four bells in the belfry - two large and two smaller ones, which were completely destroyed by fire<sup>169</sup>. New bells appeared in the church before 1709, as it was recorded after the fire that took place that year, the fire "burned the bell towers, miraculously without disturbing the bells"<sup>170</sup>. The new bells were probably installed in 1684 at the latest, since the information about the collection of taxes by the Armenian bell ringer Józef Seferowicz comes from that time<sup>171</sup>. It is not known how many bells were in the church belfry at that time. From the accounts for the renovation of the church from 1710, it is known that there were several of them, including one was a large bell<sup>172</sup>. One of the smaller bells was replaced at the beginning of August 1731, when the Latin bishop of Chełm and auxiliary bishop of Lwów consecrated the bell, which was given the name of St. Simon and St. Cajetan<sup>173</sup>. The great bell was replaced more than 30 years later. It happened

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165 APL, AMZ, sign. 67, 23.

166 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 56, 94, 103, 109.

167 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 112.

168 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 423; НИАБ, ЗМ, ф. 1807, оп. 1, од. 1, 175.

169 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, стр. 1995, 1.

170 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, стр. 1995, 1.

171 APL, AMZ, sign. 69, Akta urzędu prawa uprzywilejowanego ormiańskiego zamojskiego 1680-1685, 428v.

172 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, стр. 1995, 16-17.

173 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 57.

on September 14, 1763. During the consecration, which was made by the Uniate Bishop of Chełm, Maksymilian Ryłło, the bell was named after St. Clement the Bishop<sup>174</sup>. A small bell called *tintinnabulum* in Latin was consecrated in 1711 by the Uniate bishop Józef Lewicki and placed in the turret crowning the church dome<sup>175</sup>. At the beginning of August 1735, a five-voice positif organ with drums, a singing bird and figurines of bricklayers was installed in the temple<sup>176</sup>.

### 3.3. Liturgical Paraments and Elements of Decor

The furnishing of the church also included liturgical paraments, church banners, valuable objects, as well as religious paintings and figures. Some of these items were probably purchased with church funds, but some were donated by Armenians wishing to decorate their temple. Unfortunately, there are no sources that would indicate such donations. If the books of the Armenian court in Zamość recorded any donation to the church, it was usually money or land. These books provide very little information about donations of valuable items. The gold chain donated to the church by Suszan Głuszkiewiczówna in 1639 was certainly not the only gift of this kind. Precious votive offerings were made by the Armenians next to the paintings and figures that enjoyed a special cult, e.g. at the image of St. Cajetan. How precious these items were is evidenced by the mention from 1669, valuing the votive offerings by the figure of Christ at a considerable sum 1600 *zlotys*<sup>177</sup>. In 1634, Tomasz Zamoyski, mediating in the conflict over inheritance between Warterys Kirkorowicz and his sister-in-law, ordered the former to donate a silver cross worth 40 *zlotys* to the Armenian church<sup>178</sup>. In August 1640, Róża Bartoszewicz, née Głuskiewicz, donated a silver belt to the Zamość temple with the order to melt it down into a crucifix<sup>179</sup>. In turn, before 1655, Suszan -the aunt of Nikol Nersesowicz's wife- owed 400 *zlotys* for the purchase of a precious bonnet, which was to be given to the church as a safe investment, but it is not known whether her will was finally fulfilled<sup>180</sup>. Anna Ariewowicz gave the church a mirror, an ivory crucifix, two reliquaries and a painting of St. Francis of Assisi<sup>181</sup>. Bazyli Rudomicz, who in 1661 noted in his *Ephemeris* that on August 30 the

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174 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 66.

175 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 34.

176 ЛИНБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сnp. 1995, 19.

177 Rudomicz, *Efemeors...*, cz. II: 1665-1672, 233.

178 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 85v.

179 "Testament Róży Bartoszewiczowej, 22 sierpnia 1640 roku", in: Krzysztof Stopka, *Języki oswojane pismem. Alografia kipczacko-ormiańska i polsko-ormiańska w kulturze dawnej Polski* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2013) 229.

180 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 196.

181 APL, TZM, sign. 10, 65v.

Armenian church was robbed, and mentioned that gold, silver, and pearls were stolen<sup>182</sup>. However, the diarist does not mention what specific items were stolen, apart from the silver basin found during the investigation<sup>183</sup>.

We learn about the valuable items in the Armenian church from two 18th century sources. The first is the inventory and pledge of church silver written on April 1, 1710. This list does not present all the furnishings of the temple, but only a part pledged to raise funds for its renovation. The source mentions silver and sometimes gold-plated chalices, patinas, crosses, lamps, ampoules, a chain with a heart, a censer and a silver cauldron, but in most cases they are not described in detail. Only one of the silver crosses was marked with enamel angels on it, the figure of Christ was gilded, and the name of the Savior was made of paper<sup>184</sup>. There were also two Armenian votive crosses, or *khachkars*, in the church. The crosses placed in them were made of fine silver, and the frame was most likely carved in stone or wood<sup>185</sup>. An interesting element was also the so-called Moscow pictures dressed in silver dresses. They were probably Orthodox icons<sup>186</sup>. It is not known when and how they became part of the church equipment. Perhaps they were donated to the temple by one of the rulers of the city or one of the Armenians. The inventory from 1710 shows that silver plaques from the coffins of Armenian patricians were also kept in the temple. One of the items pledged at that time were two plaques “from Hadziejowicz’s coffin”<sup>187</sup>.

A better idea of the appearance of the interior of the temple is provided by the list of items belonging to the Zamość church in 1749. It included, among other things, two rugs, six carpets, and two kilims. Rugs probably covered the floor in the chancel of the church, carpets and kilims could have had a similar function or hung on the walls. In the years of splendor, they were certainly a considerable decoration of the temple, but in the middle of the 18th century they were in a deplorable condition. The rugs had holes in them and the carpets were rotten, and only the kilims seemed to retain such a glow<sup>188</sup>. These fabrics certainly gave the interior an oriental character, although it should be remembered that many contemporary churches, including Latin ones, were decorated with eastern carpets<sup>189</sup>. A cloth was

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182 Rudomicz, *Efemeros...* II, 231.

183 Rudomicz, *Efemeros...* II, 232.

184 ЛІННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сnp. 1995, 12-13. The objects pledged in 1710 included seven silver-gilded chalices, seven patinas, four silver crosses, two silver-gilded crosses, two lamps, a lightly gilded monstrance, a bowl, a censer with chains, a silver cauldron and a pair of ampoules.

185 ЛІННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сnp. 1995, 12.

186 ЛІННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сnp. 1995, 13.

187 ЛІННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сnp. 1995, 13.

188 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1v.

189 Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu w Polsce w XVII i XVIII wieku*, (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1935), 20.

lined in front of the main altar<sup>190</sup>. In the center of the temple, apart from a large bronze mirror or chandelier, a banner hung from the ceiling. The second was hanging on the wall, while the third was probably standing somewhere to the side, perhaps at one of the altars and was intended for the procession<sup>191</sup>. Probably right next to it was a canopy used in processions<sup>192</sup>. The church was also decorated with various types of curtains, which most likely hung at the door or separated some parts of the temple from each other. There were 13 of them in total, but only four of them are described in more detail in the register. The largest was made of thin Turkish silk fabric (*kitajka*) with multicolored stripes. The second curtain (in a red color) also was made from this material. The third was white silk, and the fourth was red silk<sup>193</sup>. The only thing known about the other curtains is that three were made of *haras* (light rough woolen fabric) and two of plain linen<sup>194</sup>. Among other fabrics, the list also mentions six slats decorating the walls “of various fabrics, colors and variously embroidered”<sup>195</sup>. In addition, in the temple there were two large crepes and one smaller one<sup>196</sup>. The furnishings of the temple also consisted of liturgical paraments necessary for the celebration of mass, crucifixes and candlesticks<sup>197</sup>.

The liturgical vestments were also necessary for the proper celebration of the liturgy. As previously mentioned, the Armenian Church initially had to borrow them from the Armenian Cathedral in Lwów. Certainly, their own liturgical vestments were provided very quickly. Sometimes the parishioners themselves used the materials or elements of clothing they had to sew chasubles. An example of such a donation may be the donation of the aforementioned Róża Bartoszewicz from 1640, who donated a red damask clothes to the church in Zamość, which was to be used to sew a chasuble<sup>198</sup>. In the middle of the 18th century, i.e. at the end of the existence of the Armenian parish in Zamość, there were many liturgical vestments in possession. The local clergy had everything they needed to celebrate the liturgy in sufficient quantities<sup>199</sup>.

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190 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1v.

191 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1v.

192 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1v.

193 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 2.

194 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1v.

195 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1v.

196 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 1v.

197 The equipment of the church consisted of 5 silver crosses, 7 silver chalices, 8 patens, 12 bronze candlesticks (6 larger and 6 smaller), 8 tin candlesticks (4 smaller and 4 larger), 9 bells, 2 tin jugs, 2 tin trays, 2 gilded silver cans, partly gilded monstrance, silver gilded censer, a pair of silver ampoules, a silver chain, tin tincture, tin *lawajisz* with tincture, a large tin vase for blessing water, a large iron candlestick, a small copper dropper and a copper tub with handles.

198 Stopka (ed.), “Testament Róży...”, 229.

199 There were 35 chasubles of various colors, a pair of dalmatics, 6 copes of various colors, 2 embroidered albs, 10 common albs, 11 amices, one strip of silk lined with gold, 14 simple stripes, 35 humeral veils and altar cloths, 15 hand towels during the celebration of Mass, 2 coverings, 5 simple surplices, 33 velas, 8 embroidered corporals, 12 simple corporals, and 3 cibor aprons.

### 3.4. Liturgical Books

The furnishing of the church also consisted of liturgical books. Undoubtedly, the first of them appeared in the Zamość church in the first years of its existence. It is known that on May 17, 1589, the temple received a gift of a psalter copied in Lwów in 1567 by *dipir* Minas of Tokat on the order of Atabey of Lwów<sup>200</sup>. Soon, Zamość itself became a place of writing manuscripts. At the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, the already mentioned *der* Agop and *der* Andreas were copying them<sup>201</sup>. Books used in the liturgy usually had decorated bindings. The inventory of pledged silver from 1710 lists e.g. 3 crosses from the binding of the Gospel. Rather, they were not the highest quality decorations, since it was found that it was silver of a bad quality<sup>202</sup>. In the middle of the 18th century, the church had two copies of the Gospels - both were manuscripts with bindings decorated with silver crosses. Apart from them, the clergy had at their disposal an Armenian martyrology, a great book of *lectionum*, three Armenian missals, three great Latin missals and four mourning missals, two Armenian breviaries (one printed, the other in the form of a manuscript), a printed *sharaknoc* (hymnarium) and a small Gospel in the Polish language<sup>203</sup>.

### 4. Church Property

The maintenance of the church, school, and other parish buildings, as well as the clergy serving at the temple, was the responsibility of the Armenian community. The community not only supervised the property owned by the parish, but also decided how to allocate sums for the church from taxes collected among the Armenians. For example, in 1653, the commune authorities, with the consent of the Armenian community, allocated 36 *zlotys* from public money for each Holy Mass celebrated in the church, additionally 4 *zlotys* for priests, a seminarian and a bell ringer, and 60 *zlotys* to support the poor<sup>204</sup>. The Armenian community also took care of the financial stability of the parish through proper management of church property. This property consisted of donations to the church in the form of money and landed goods. Already the privilege of 1585 endowed the Armenian church with a field, meadows, and a house with a garden<sup>205</sup>. According to the summary of the privileges granted to the church until the end of the 17th century, the house

200 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 94.

201 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 95-98.

202 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 13.

203 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 2.

204 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 97.

205 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 2.



with the garden was located in one of the suburbs, near the brickyard<sup>206</sup>. This seems to be contradicted by the first inspection of Zamość in 1591. According to this source, the house belonging to the church was located at Ormiańska Street, while the Armenian field (*lan*) i.e. arable land, was located next to the brickyard<sup>207</sup>.

The endowment of the church also consisted of donations from parishioners. These were often extremely generous donations. For example, Warterys Kirkorowicz in his will gave the church the right to 3,000 *zlotys* of debt owed to him by the Armenian nation. In addition, he donated five tenement houses to the temple, the proceeds of which he allocated to priests obliged to celebrate 40 masses a year, allocate 30 *zlotys* for the poor and 20 *zlotys* for masses for his soul<sup>208</sup>. The Armenian also expressed his willingness to donate 10,000 *zlotys* secured on his farm in Topornica to the church after his death, but this entry was not included in his will. Kirkorowicz's heirs, however, remembering his decision, decided in 1652 to make a formal donation to the parish<sup>209</sup>.

Mikołaj Hadziejowicz was also one of the most generous donors. In February 1653, he bequeathed the sum of 1,000 *zlotys* to the church, secured on his tenement house. It was to be a perpetual donation binding also Hadziejowicz's successors or any other person who would come into possession of this tenement house in the future<sup>210</sup>. From this sum, the parish was to receive 80 *zlotys* each year, of which 28 *zlotys* were to be used for the celebration of mass and salaries of the clergy, 2 *zlotys* for the seminarian and the bell ringer, and 50 *zlotys* for the needs of the poor<sup>211</sup>. Two years later, the Armenian made another bequest for the parish, this time donating a fully equipped brewery with a malt house and granaries<sup>212</sup>.

The donation made by Gabriel Bartoszewicz to the church in his will written in 1657 was also quite significant, though not comparable to the donations of Kirkorowicz and Hadziejowicz. The Armenian allocated 400 *zlotys* from his property to the clergy, who were to receive 30 *zlotys* each year. If the sum turned out to be larger, it was to be spent on the purchase of candles<sup>213</sup>. This

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206 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 2v.

207 Horodyski, "Najstarsza lustracja...", 205, 208.

208 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 3v-4.

209 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 82.

210 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 96.

211 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 96.

212 Marcin Łukasz Majewski, "Armenians in beer production in the cities of the Polish crown until the end of the 18th century", *Brewery History* 193, 2022, 32.

213 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 311. In return, the clergy were to celebrate a mass every Saturday for the soul of the deceased.

donation was accompanied by another, this time in the amount of 200 *zlotys* from a tenement house belonging to Bartoszewicz<sup>214</sup>.

One of the greatest benefactors of the church was also Stefan Altunowicz. In addition to founding three church altars, in 1699 he bequeathed the parish the sum of 8,000 *zlotys* on his tenement house, and also gave it a debt of 1,600 *zlotys* owed to him by the Armenian community for the renovation of one of the church tenement houses<sup>215</sup>. These were not the only sums donated by Altunowicz. He also bequeathed 200 *zlotys* to the church, obliging the executors of the will to allocate this sum in a good way so that it would be enough to celebrate a mass in the intention of his soul and deceased relatives. He also donated 100 *zlotys* to church confraternities<sup>216</sup>. He also donated 15 *zlotys* to a priest obliged to celebrate fifteen masses a year for Altunowicz and his deceased family members at three altars funded by him (5 *zlotys* for each altar)<sup>217</sup>. He also donated 50 *zlotys* for the purchase of sacramental wine<sup>218</sup>.

The amount of the donations of the three Armenian patricians discussed above corresponded to their financial and social position. All three held the highest positions in the Armenian community, e.g. *vojt*. Of course, the church also received much more modest donations.

Monetary donations were the main part of the parish budget, but sometimes Armenians also donated landed goods or goods they traded to it. For example, in 1653, *der* Agop bequeathed a field to the church, the proceeds of which were to be used to support clergymen<sup>219</sup>. In turn, in 1749, Antoni Balejowicz donated the land inherited from his parents to the church. The parish was to receive this donation provided that the donor was buried at the expense of the parish, otherwise the church was to receive only 100 *zlotys*<sup>220</sup>. The proceeds from the land and the tenement house were also bequeathed to the Armenian church by Jan Tatułowicz, which took place in 1757<sup>221</sup>. The goods were most often donated by Armenian merchants from other cities, who were surprised by a

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214 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 312.

215 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 29.

216 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 30. A percentage of these sums was to be used to celebrate a mass in the intention of the donor and his family. At the altar of St. Cross, two masses were to be celebrated each year - on St. Stephen and St. Jacob. At the altar of St. Anna was also to celebrate two masses - the first on St. Anna, the second on the Feast of The Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Masses at this altar were to be celebrated for the late wife of Altunowicz - Anna and his parents.

217 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 31.

218 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 32.

219 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 101.

220 APL, AMZ, sign. 47, Acta advocatialis et scabinalia Zamoscensia 1744-1751, 645. In return for the donation, the clergy from the parish were obliged to celebrate eight masses a year for Balejowicz's soul.

221 APL, AMZ, sign. 49, 227-227v.

sudden illness during their stay in Zamość or its vicinity. For example, in 1630, an unknown Armenian Toros from the city of Sis (near Kozan in Adana Province/the Ottoman Empire) fell ill during a fair in Lublin. In the will he dictated, he expressed the wish that all the things he had with him would be donated to the Armenian church in Zamość, where his body was to be buried<sup>222</sup>. A similar decision was made by the Persian Armenian Gabriel Gidzom, who was dying in Zamość in 1690<sup>223</sup>.

Another form of material support for the parish was the transfer of the right to debts to the church. The Armenian lender officially transferred his claim to the church, which then collected the money from the debtor<sup>224</sup>. The legal practice of the Armenian community in Zamość also provided for donating part of the money from the fines awarded to the church. For example, in 1643, an Armenian court ruled that if Bohdan Jolcewicz violated a certain decree, half of his property would go to the ruler of the town, and half would go to the Armenian church<sup>225</sup>.

Regardless of the value of the donation, the church did not always receive it immediately. This was especially true of sums and goods donated in wills, as overly generous bequests were sometimes challenged by heirs. This was the case, for example, with the last will of Warterys Kirkorowicz. Although in 1652 his successors agreed to donate the sums to the church, which the deceased decided to deposit on his estate in Topornica, some of them protested against this decision. The final settlement in this matter was reached on February 23, 1653. Kirkorowicz's successors confirmed their earlier donation, adding the condition that some property was purchased for this sum, which would bring income to the church<sup>226</sup>. The owners of Topornica donated some sums from this property to the church. When on March 18, 1653, they leased the property to Krzysztof Balejowicz for the sum of 440 *zlotys*, this rent was to be paid to the Armenian church<sup>227</sup>. In this case, the obligation towards the church was enforced quickly, but in some cases it dragged on for years. A donation of only 100 *zlotys*, which Zuzanna Głuszkiewiczówna bequeathed in 1639, was paid to the Zamość parish only in 1662<sup>228</sup>.

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222 APL, Akta Miasta Lublina (hereinafter: AML), sign. 127, Acta testamentorum et inventariorum iudicii civilis Lublinensis 1627-1631, 618.

223 APL, AMZ, sign. 70, 647.

224 APL, AMZ, sign. 70, 459.

225 APL, AMZ, sign. 67, 9v.

226 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 102.

227 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 105. Out of this sum, 36 *zlotys* was allocated for the celebration of Holy Masses and Armenian clergy, 2 *zlotys* for the *sargawarks* and the bell ringer, 60 *zlotys* for a dinner for the poor, and 100 *zlotys* for poor members of the Armenian community. The rest of the sum was to be spent according to emerging needs.

228 BZNiO, DR, sign. 1646/II, Dzieje Ormian lwowskich od roku 1649 aż do r. 1713, 41.

Over the years, some donations stopped being paid. This was mainly due to the financial problems of the donors and their heirs or the change of owners of the property encumbered for the benefit of the church. When the donors' situation improved, they restored their obligations, as was the case with Gabriel Bartoszewicz's son, Jan. When he was a minor, the sums from his family tenement house donated to the church by his father were not paid to the church, but when he became an adult and in 1668 he took possession of the property, he immediately renewed the donation from his father's will before the Armenian court<sup>229</sup>.

However, sometimes things were much more complicated, a good example of which is the fate of the above-mentioned donation of Mikołaj Hadziejowicz. When his descendants sold the badly damaged property to Paweł Olszewski, he refused to pay the sums owed to the church. The lawsuits dragging on for years were in vain and finally, in 1700, the ruler of the town, Anna Zamoyska, agreed to transfer this sum to other properties<sup>230</sup>. Even the property that the church received in 1585 as an endowment slipped out of its control during the 17th century. This property was returned to the church only in the years 1694-1701 after a long court battle<sup>231</sup>.

Church property was not only used to support the church and the clergy. It was also used in the credit market by offering loans to members of the Armenian community. Their amount proves that the parish had large cash resources. For example, a loan granted in 1653 to Toros Bartoszewicz amounted to 1,384 *zlotys*, and two years later Grzegorz Hadziejowicz and his mother Rozalia took out a loan from the Armenian parish in the amount of 7,875 *zlotys*<sup>232</sup>. Borrowers received a loan from the parish against their property, usually real estate<sup>233</sup>. If the sums were not repaid on time, the administrators of the church property took over the pledged property on behalf of the parish, using it until the loan was repaid.

## **5. The Armenian Church in Zamość during the Conflicts over the Union with the Latin Church**

The building of the church coincided with the ongoing conflict among the Armenians over the union with the Latin Church. Although Lwów was the main center of this conflict, the events taking place there also had effects on

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229 НИАБ, 3М, ф. 1807, оп. 1, од. 1, 237v.

230 AGAD, ZACz, sign. 232, Dokument Anny z Gnińskich Zamoyskiej dla kościoła ormiańskiego w Zamościu 1700, 76.

231 BN, BOZ, sign. 1594, 2v-3.

232 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 102, 209.

233 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 102, 209.

the Zamość parish. The agitation of the supporters of Archbishop Mikołaj Torosowicz, who was unwanted by the majority of Armenians, had already reached Zamość in the first years of the conflict. In the summer of 1630, Vardapet Khachadur, sent to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, Mowes, read a pamphlet distributed in Zamość. Its content is unknown, but from the acts of the Armenian Ecclesiastical Court in Lwów, we can conclude that it was directed against the Catholicosate and expressed support for the actions of Archbishop Torosowicz<sup>234</sup>. *Der Agop* was accused of authorship, and therefore, on September 10, 1630, he appeared before the Armenian Clerical Court in Lwów. However, the priest strongly rejected the accusations, pointing out that “neither my hand nor my name is in this letter”<sup>235</sup>. At the same time, *der Agop* declared his adherence to tradition, confessing: “oh, if [...] I said or wrote something against the temples of Armenia and the holy capital of Etchmiadzin, and it was proved in court that I am guilty, then let me fall away from the clerical state”<sup>236</sup>. The clergyman also swore that, guided by the doctrines adopted at the Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea, Istanbul, and Ephesus, he would remember about the true profession of faith and persevere in it as before, and declared absolute obedience to “Holy Etchmiadzin and Catholicos, regardless of who will sit on his see”<sup>237</sup>. *Der Agop* was therefore not one of Torosowicz’s supporters, so accusing him of favoring a disliked hierarch may seem incomprehensible. The Ecclesiastical Court could have been guided by simple pragmatism in this case. Since a pamphlet supporting Torosowicz was found in Zamość, the main suspicion fell on the parson responsible for the parish. Perhaps distrust towards *der Agop* had its source in the fact that Catholic influences were not alien to his immediate family. As mentioned, the three sons of *der Agop* chose a clerical career, but while Kirkor and Bedros became priests of the Armenian Church, Stepanos chose to serve in the Latin Church. In a deed written before the Armenian court in Zamość in September 1644, he was described as a priest of the Franciscan order. In addition to his baptismal name, the act most likely also recorded his religious name, Franciszek<sup>238</sup>. However, *der Agop* himself remained faithful to the Armenian orthodoxy throughout his life, which prevented the conflicts that took place in Lwów from taking place in the Armenian commune of Zamość at that time. The very fact that the Bishop of Wallachia, and not Torosowicz, was chosen as the consecrator of the Armenian church, seems to confirm the anti-union views of *der Agop* and Zamość Armenians. However, it should be noted that the first attempts to impose union with the Latin Church on the Zamość parish occurred while *der Agop* was still a parson. In 1655,

234 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy Sądu Duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1625-1630...*, 223.

235 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy Sądu Duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1625-1630...*, 223.

236 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy Sądu Duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1625-1630...*, 223.

237 Tryjarski (ed.), *Zapisy Sądu Duchownego Ormian miasta Lwowa za lata 1625-1630...*, 223.

238 APL, AMZ, sign. 67, 29v.

Archbishop Torosowicz came to Zamość and celebrated the funeral mass of Mikołaj Hadziejowicz, who died that year. During the celebration, he announced the introduction of church union in the Zamość parish. However, this declaration was not followed by concrete actions to introduce changes in the liturgy<sup>239</sup>. There is also a significant mention to the beginning of the church union in Zamość. It noted that the successor of *der Agop* – *der Jan Kistesterowicz* “attempts to gradually eradicate the religious errors of the Armenians”<sup>240</sup>. This mention dates from the end of 1663, i.e. the time when *der Agop* had died and his successor had managed to consolidate his position.

It was during the times of Kistesterowicz that the church union was introduced in the Zamość parish. This clergyman, born between 1617 and 1622, came from Zamość<sup>241</sup>. He was the son of Kistetor Mygyrdiczowicz, a merchant from Zamość<sup>242</sup> and Mariam Derjakubowiczówna<sup>243</sup>. On his father’s side, he was the grandson of Mygyrdicz, one of the first Armenian settlers in Zamość, mentioned in this role already in January 1586<sup>244</sup>, and on his mother’s side, he was the grandson of the Armenian parson in Zamość, *der Agop*<sup>245</sup>. He had a brother Samuel and sisters Barbara (married to Stefan Krzysztofowicz) and Róża (married to Ariew Dertatowicz)<sup>246</sup>. He declared himself a supporter of church union, and his Zamość origin could have influenced the decision of the Archbishop of Lwów to delegate him to the Zamość church. It was easier for this clergyman to find supporters than for a clergyman unrelated to the city. Perhaps it was expected that thanks to this, the introduction of the union would go smoothly. For the time being, Kistesterowicz was to support *der Agop* in his priestly duties, but due to the clergyman’s old age, it was to be expected

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239 APL, AMZ, sign. 71, 211v.

240 Rudomicz, *Efemerose...*, 326.

241 Alojzy Maria Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość o obecnym stanie, początkach i postępie mysi apostolskiej do Ormian w Polsce, Wołoszczyźnie i sąsiednich krajach oraz o początku i założeniu dla tychże Ormian kolegium papieżkiego we Lwowie, będącego pod kierunkiem OO. Kleryków regularnych, Teatynami zwykle zwanych, aż do I kw[ietnia]. 1669 r.”, in: *Źródła Dziejowe*, t. II: *Dzieje zjednoczenia Ormian polskich z Kościołem Rzymskim w XVII w., z dwóch rękopisów, włoskiego i łacińskiego*, ed. Adolf Pawiński (Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolf, 1876), 17. Pidou mentioned in his account written between 1664 and 1669 that Kistesterowicz was about 47 years old.

242 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 93. In the sources, Kistetor Mygyrdiczowicz was also called Krzysztof Popowicz. This family came to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from Caffa.

243 APL, AMZ, sign. 71, k. 199v, 203v. Sources mention that *der Hovhannes Kistesterowicz*’s mother was *der Agop*’s daughter, but none of them gives her name. I determined that of *der Agop*’s three daughters, Anna married *der Andreas*, and Sushan married an Armenian merchant from Zamość, Zachariasz Dolwatowicz. Therefore, the mother of *der Hovhannes Kistesterowicz* and the wife of his father Kistetor Mygyrdiczowicz could only be *der Agop*’s third daughter, Mariam.

244 Majewski, “Ormianie w Zamościu...”, 19. Mygyrdicz as a burgher of Zamość was mentioned in the prenuptial agreement of his daughter Jolmelik written in Lwów on January 12, 1586. At that time, Jolmelik was married to another citizen of Zamość - Bachsza, who in Zamość began to be called Bartosz. He was the progenitor of the Armenian Bartoszewicz family.

245 APL, AMZ, sign. 71, 203v.

246 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 93, 103.

that Kistesterowicz -a man of “very Catholic views”- would soon take over the management of the parish in Zamość<sup>247</sup>. A document from 1655 mentions Kistesterowicz as the provost of the church of St. Cross. It could have been the Armenian church in Lwów bearing this invocation, but it seems more likely that it was rather the chapel of St. Cross in the Zamość Armenian church, which in the source was mistakenly called a church<sup>248</sup>. Kistesterowicz appears as a priest serving in Zamość in 1640s. In 1645, as a priest of the Zamość church, he ordered the copying of the *mashtots* (rituals) from *dipir* Maruta of Amasya<sup>249</sup>, and three years later he appears as a witness to the settlement of expenses by *jerespochan* Gabriel Ariewowicz<sup>250</sup>. Father Alojzy Maria Pidou characterized him as a man of excellent “intellect, virtue and fluent in Latin and Armenian book language, in which he writes very learned dissertations, at the same time zealous in faith [...]”<sup>251</sup>.

Despite the death of *der* Agop, his successor initially did not achieve much success in introducing changes in the liturgy and customs, although he himself tried to set an example. When in 1663 he organized the wedding of his daughter Ewa, it took place for the first time in the history of the Armenian community on Sunday, and not on Saturday, according to the previous custom. Armenians, according to their tradition, celebrated the wedding on Saturday, recognizing that weddings should not be held on the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, “as if the wedding was not a sacrament”<sup>252</sup>. However, it was of little use, since Father Alojzy Maria Pidou, visiting the parish in 1664, noted that he had “an opportunity to see that in Zamość, according to the condition of the church and the reports of Rev. Jan Kistesterowicz, the adoption of the union by this people was clearly apparent”<sup>253</sup>. In March 1665, Archbishop Torosowicz sent letters to the clergyman, in which he demanded that he undertake more vigorous changes<sup>254</sup>. Heeding these instructions, the clergyman “began to completely eradicate errors in the ceremonies of the Armenian Rite”<sup>255</sup>.

These actions caused opposition from the faithful, so serious that Kistesterowicz was afraid that the community would seize the church property<sup>256</sup>. The resistance against the changes was led by Simon, an unknown monk from Zamość ordained in Armenia, who was embroiled in scandal

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247 Rudomicz, *Efemeoros...I*, 326.

248 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 227.

249 Mnatsakanyan, “Kultura języka ormiańskiego...”, 92.

250 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 142.

251 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 17.

252 Rudomicz, *Efemeoros...I*, 326.

253 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 29.

254 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 35.

255 Rudomicz, *Efemeoros...II*, 14.

256 Rudomicz, *Efemeoros...II*, 14.

because of the introduction of “heresy” in the church in Zamość<sup>257</sup>. The monk also gained influential supporters, including Krzysztof Balejowicz. Balejowicz was an *jerespochan* at that time, so his opposition to Kistesterowicz’s actions could have dangerous consequences for the parson, because Balejowicz could prevent him from using the church property, which the priest, as mentioned above, was very afraid of. However, Balejowicz did not take any radical steps and a month later, on April 28, 1665, he came to Kistesterowicz’s house resigning his position. More importantly, he gave the clergyman the book of church revenues and expenses and other documents<sup>258</sup>. Therefore, the clergyman was not in danger of being deprived of church property. Balejowicz’s brief resistance may be puzzling, but it seems that his relatively easy adaptation to the changing situation resulted from his belonging to the Armenian power elite in Zamość. Among them, Kistesterowicz enjoyed the support of e.g. his son-in-law Axent Owanisowicz and Stefan Altunowicz<sup>259</sup>. Already in 1666, Balejowicz was re-elected as *jerespochan*<sup>260</sup>. His resistance was related to the changes introduced in the liturgy, and not to the person of Rev. Kistesterowicz or the Archbishop of Lwów. This is evidenced by his will written in 1664, in which Balejowicz also made a donation to the Armenian archbishop<sup>261</sup>.

Having some support in high-ranking representatives of the Armenian community, Kistesterowicz proceeded to further action. First of all, he expelled from his parish the implacable monk Simon, who left for Lwów and settled there at the Church of St. Anna<sup>262</sup>. Called before the archbishop, he celebrated the Holy Mass in a Catholic spirit, which he never wanted to do in Zamość<sup>263</sup>. Thanks to this ruse, he managed to get permission to return to Zamość, where he resumed his activities. At the same time, he took advantage of the visit of the legate of the Armenian Patriarch Agop - Archbishop Bohos of Tokat<sup>264</sup>, who, with the support of the monk, began to remove the changes introduced by Kistesterowicz in the liturgy<sup>265</sup>. Bohos and Simon found fertile ground, because according to Father Pidou, the Armenians of Zamość still stubbornly stuck to “the custom of their ancestors”<sup>266</sup>. In this situation, the archbishop decided to finally solve the matter by resorting to radical measures. He not

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257 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 18, 35.

258 Rudomicz, *Efemerios...II*, 18.

259 НИАБ, 3М, ф. 1807, оп. 1, од. 1, 153v, 180v.

260 НИАБ, 3М, ф. 1807, оп. 1, од. 1, 181.

261 НИАБ, 3М, ф. 1807, оп. 1, од. 1, 144.

262 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 18.

263 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 37.

264 BZNiO, DR, sign. 1646/II, 54v.

265 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 18.

266 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 39.



only recalled Bohos from Zamość, but also ordered the closure of the local church<sup>267</sup>. When the legate wanted to go to Zamość again to collect alms, he was forbidden by Archbishop Torosowicz, so on October 29, 1665, Bohos decided to return to Tokat<sup>268</sup>. After his departure, “the issue of the union in Zamość went well”, but “it did not happen without murmuring and resistance from the people”<sup>269</sup>. Kistesterowicz’s actions actually brought the desired effect, since the apostolic nuncio in Poland, Antonio Pignatelli, applied to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to grant the Zamość parson a lifetime salary of 40 Roman *skojecs*<sup>270</sup>. Kistesterowicz’s merits in this field were also appreciated at the royal court. In June 1661, King of Poland John Casimir, probably on the advice of his wife, presented Kistesterowicz’s candidacy for the position of auxiliary bishop of the Armenian diocese of Lwów<sup>271</sup>. However, the clergyman was not elected to this position.

The consolidation of the union in the Armenian parish in Zamość is best evidenced by the wills of the Armenians from the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. In them, the testators often emphasized the importance of upbringing and attachment to the holy Roman Catholic faith<sup>272</sup>. The collection of the church library also reflected the changes that took place in the parish in the second half of the 17th century. The book collection register, written on November 16, 1753, lists as many as 100 items in Italian, Latin, Polish and Armenian, but books in the latter language constituted only 8% of the entire book collection<sup>273</sup>. They included *mashtots* (ritual) and *salmos* (psalter), as well as items for learning the Armenian language – *bargirk* (dictionary of the Armenian language) and Armenian grammar<sup>274</sup>. The latter item was in fact a Latin textbook for learning the Armenian language, which should probably be identified with the work *Grammaticae et logicae institutiones linguae literalis Armenicae Armenis traditae* (*Learning the grammar and logic of the Armenian language for Armenians*) of Father Clement Galano. The clergyman’s work also contained an Armenian-Latin dictionary, but it is not known whether the dictionary listed in the book collection list should be identified with this work or whether it was a different vocabulary. The library also contained another work by Father Galano, *The Reconciliation between the Holy Armenian Church and the Holy Roman Church*, published in 1690 in Rome. The last item in

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267 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 18.

268 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 43.

269 Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 35, 43.

270 Rudomicz, *Efemeros*...II, 71.

271 Rudomicz, *Efemeros*... I, 223 ; Pidou, “Krótka wiadomość...”, 17.

272 APL, TZM, sign. 10, 63, Majewski, “Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...”, 27.

273 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 2-2v.

274 For help in reading the Armenian titles appearing in the book collection register of 1753, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the orientalist and doyen of Polish Armenian studies, Professor Andrzej Pisowicz.

Armenian was the theological work *The Mirror of Christian Truth*. The list of Armenian books also includes a book which the author of the inventory described with the Latin term *espositor*<sup>275</sup>, and no doubt it was exegesis. Armenian books were used mainly for the proper celebration of the liturgy in the Armenian language, but the overwhelming dominance of Italian, Latin, and Polish books reflected not only the triumph of the union in Zamość, but also the progressive latinization of the Armenian rite<sup>276</sup>. Despite the conflict, the adoption of the union was much calmer in Zamość than in Lwów. This was due to the fact that the union was already well established by the mid-1660s, as the Armenians had formally joined it in 1653. Emotions related to the election of Torosowicz as archbishop, and later his submission of the Catholic confession of faith, no longer aroused such emotions as several decades earlier. In addition, as noted by Krzysztof Stopka, the Armenians realized that accession to the union also brought some measurable benefits, such as the elimination of existing economic restrictions<sup>277</sup>.

Father Alojzy Maria Pidou mentioned in his account that Rev. Kistesterowicz was supported in his priestly work by a certain Rev. Piotr<sup>278</sup>. Piruz Mnatsakanyan hypothesized that Piotr may be identified with the son of *der* Agop – Bedros<sup>279</sup>. This view is contradicted by the receipt that *der* Bedros

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275 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 2v.

276 Books in Polish consisted mainly of books helpful in church work, books on religious topics and lives of saints. The first group included collections of Sunday sermons by Rev. Jakub Wujek and Father Bielicki, *Orator polityczny, weselnym y pogrzebowym służący aktom* (*Political orator serving to wedding and funeral acts*) by Kazimierz Jan Woysznarowicz, *Uwagi duchowne albo dyskursy nabożne na tajemnice różańca świętego* (*Spiritual remarks or pious reflections on the mysteries of the Holy Rosary*) by Dominican Father Bazylusz Jastrzębski. Among other books in Polish, there were e.g. *Wojna duchowna* (*Spiritual War*) issued thanks to the efforts of Father Deodat Neresowicz – auxiliary bishop of the Armenian Archdiocese of Lwów, *Apologia przeciwko Luteranom, Zwinglianom, Kalwinistom, Nowokrzeszencom* (*Apology against Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Anabaptists*) by Rev. Andrzej Wargocki, *Rozmyślenia nabożne* (*The Meditations*) of St. Augustine, *Alphabetum hereticum*, or a collection of Polish songs. From the lives of the saints, the collection of the church library included the life of Joanna Fremoyt de Chantal and the *Ogród liliowy y cedrowy* (*Lily and cedar garden*), i.e. the life of St. Cajetan. It is worth noting that the library also had one copy of Rev. Piotr Skarga's *Roczne dzieje kościelne* (*Annual church history*) and one copy of Stanisław Bielicki's sermon delivered in 1694 in Wilno (Vilnius) for the inauguration of the Tribunal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Among the books in Latin, there were mainly works in the field of theology as well as ecclesiastical and civil law, as well as the lives of saints. An exceptional position among Latin titles was Joachim Pastorius' *Historiae Polonae* (*History of Poland*). Unfortunately, we do not know the titles of the books in Italian, because they are not listed in the register. We can only guess that these were the publications of the Theatines – an order responsible since the second half of the 17th century for educating the Armenian clergy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. All the works listed in the register were printed books. At the time of the census, they were in good condition except for the half-burned *Silva allegoriarum* (*A collection of allegories*) and the torn *Opus Divi Hyacynthi* (*Divine Work of St. Hyacinth of Poland*). In addition to printed books, the church library also contained manuscripts. However, there were few of them, and since they were considered unnecessary at the time, their titles were not listed in the list, see: BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 2-2v.

277 Stopka and Zięba, *Ormiańska Polska*, 127.

278 Pidou, "Krótka wiadomość...", 17.

279 Mnatsakanyan, "Kultura Języka Ormiańskiego...", 98.

issued for his father in Łuck on May 22, 1643<sup>280</sup>. However, Father Pidou, in his account written between 1664 and 1669, mentions that Rev. Piotr, who was serving in Zamość, was 32 years old at the time<sup>281</sup>. This clergyman must have been born between 1632 and 1637 and was still a child in 1643. We learn the true identity of Piotr from the mention in the diary of Rudomicz, who recorded on August 26, 1668, the celebration of the first mass in the Armenian church in Zamość by the Rev. Melchior Piotr Ariewowicz<sup>282</sup>. In the further part of Father Pidou's account, this clergyman appears under the names of Melchior Mikołaj<sup>283</sup>, while in sources from Zamość he was mentioned only under the latter name<sup>284</sup>. Additionally, Bazyli Rudomicz in later records, writing about the clergyman, called him Mikołaj<sup>285</sup>. This clergyman was the son of Ariew Dertatowicz and the sister of Father Kistesterowicz Róża, so he was the nephew of the Zamość parson<sup>286</sup>. He received his first education under the supervision of his uncle, and in July 1665 he was sent to the Theatine College in Lwów. There he was considered a student of mediocre abilities and after a few days he was sent back to Zamość<sup>287</sup>. For the next three years Ariewowicz, under the supervision of Kistesterowicz, perfected the use of Latin and Armenian and taught the celebration of the sacraments. In June 1668, he went back to Lwów with a letter of recommendation from his uncle and a request to ordain him as a priest as soon as possible and send him back to Zamość. This request was supported by the archbishop and Ariewowicz, who was ordained a priest, returned to Zamość in early July, where he began to help his uncle in church duties<sup>288</sup>. Occasionally, other Armenian priests, not permanently connected with the parish, performed various services in Zamość. For example, in 1656 sermons in the Zamość church were preached by the Armenian preacher Bohos, who was invited to the city probably thanks to his patrons - Krzysztof and Jakub Balejowicz. This clergyman died during his stay in Zamość<sup>289</sup>.

## **6. Armenian Church in Zamość in the Final Period of its Existence**

The great fire of Zamość in 1672 is considered by researchers as a turning point in the history of Zamość Armenians and their church. After that incident, the Armenian community was plunged into a chronic crisis, the consequence of

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280 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 288.

281 Pidou, "Krótka wiadomość...", 17.

282 Rudomicz, *Efemeros...II*, 194.

283 Pidou, "Krótka wiadomość...", 100.

284 APL, AMZ, sign. 69, 20, sign. 70, 71v, sign. 71, 33v.

285 Rudomicz, *Efemeros...II*, 348.

286 APL, AMZ, sign. 68, 16v.

287 Pidou, "Krótka wiadomość...", 100.

288 Pidou, "Krótka wiadomość...", 109.

289 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 271.

which was to be the neglect of the church and its gradual fall into ruin<sup>290</sup>. According to Jerzy Kowalczyk, it was the fault of the *jerespochans*, who in the last quarter of the 17th century performed their duties carelessly. Proof of this, according to Kowalczyk, was the appointment in 1681 by the Armenian archbishop of the second *jerespochan*<sup>291</sup>. In fact, the allegations against the administrators of church property were not unique to that time. Also, in the Armenian court books from the first half of the century, i.e. from the times of the greatest splendor of the community, we find accusations against the *jerespochans* of mishandling their duties<sup>292</sup>.

Complaints of this type were not characteristic only of Zamość and did not concern only the *jerespochans*, but all townspeople holding offices in an ethnic or urban community, a craftsman's guild or a merchant's guild. We can mention the real and alleged misconduct of officials holding important functions in the Old Polish era in many Polish cities. Also, the appointment of the second *jerespochan* was not caused by neglecting the material affairs of the parish. This decision was made by the Archbishop of Lwów in exceptional circumstances after the brutal murder of the daughter of the Armenian juror Zachariasz Browar in November 1680. Since the archbishop was not informed by the *jerespochan*, he lost confidence in him and decided to appoint a second *jerespochan*<sup>293</sup>.

The crisis of the commune, and thus also of the Armenian parish, began only in the 18th century. The driving force behind this crisis was the Great Northern War and the capture of Zamość in 1704 by the Swedish army, and then the quartering Saxon troops there. The economic crisis caused by the war hit the Zamość patriciate with great force, including the rich Armenians. In this situation, the church's income also experienced decrease, especially since fewer and fewer parishioners decided to make generous donations to the church. In addition, at the beginning of October 1709, the temple was once again consumed by fire<sup>294</sup>. The damage caused by the fire was all the more worrying

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290 Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański...", 218.

291 Kowalczyk, "Kościół ormiański...", 218.

292 APL, AMZ, sign. 64, 140, 142.

293 Marcin Łukasz Majewski, "Karta ze stosunków rodzinnych Ormian zamojskich. Morderstwo Heleny Kisterowiczowej (1680)", *Lehahayer. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Ormian polskich* 8, (2021), 37.

294 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, он. 1, смп. 1995, 1. In his study of the history of the Armenian church, Jerzy Kowalczyk gives an incorrect date of the fire, indicating that it took place on March 4, 1709, see J. Kowalczyk op.cit., p. 218. However, the source cited by the researcher, states that "in the year 1709, on Friday, October 4 (the feast of Saint Francis the Confessor), due to heavy and unbearable sins, God's justice punishing our people with great fire, during a huge fire of the whole city [...]"; see: ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, он. 1, спр. 1995, 7-8. Incorrect dating of the fire led Kowalczyk to the wrong conclusion that the renovation works would start only a year later, i.e. on March 4, 1710. Considering that the church burnt down at the beginning of October, and the winter months made it impossible to carry out construction works on such a large scale, it should be stated that the reconstruction of the church began extremely quickly.

as autumn began, and with it rainfall and higher humidity, which raised concerns about further deterioration of the damaged vaults<sup>295</sup>. The council, composed of the head of the Armenian nation, Stefan Altunowicz, the mayor of Zamość, Zachariasz Arakielewicz, the councilor of Zamość, Zachariasz Faruchowicz, as well as Paweł Derbedroszowicz, Tomasz Tumanowicz, Gabriel Derbedroszowicz, Axent Tatułowicz, and Szymon, and Eliasz Takisowicz, gathered at the presbytery to develop a reconstruction plan for the temple<sup>296</sup>. However, the times were not suitable for this, because after the Great Northern War “the [Armenian] nation became impoverished” and was unable to build a church with its own funds<sup>297</sup>. Nevertheless, a special collection of money was ordered. Among the donors, apart from the Armenians from Zamość, there were also Armenians from Kamieniec, Jazłowiec (Yazlovets) and representatives of the nobility<sup>298</sup>. Their donations accounted for as much as 38.8% of the sum collected. In total, a relatively small amount of 1,099.12 *zlotys* was collected for the renovation of the temple. According to the summary of the collection, this sum was higher by 30 *zlotys*<sup>299</sup>, but it is not known whether a donation was unregistered or whether the writer made a mistake counting individual donations. In addition to money, some Armenians also donated building materials and drinks for the repairers<sup>300</sup>. Since the amount was insufficient, the council deliberating on obtaining funds for the renovation obliged the parson to apply to the Armenian archbishop of Lwów for permission to pledge or sell church silver<sup>301</sup>. In this way, the Armenian parish managed to obtain a loan of 1,200 *zlotys* from the administrators of the property of the Lwów Armenian Cathedral<sup>302</sup>. Work on the reconstruction of the church began quickly. Only a week after the fire, the parson in Zamość concluded the first contract with craftsmen to cover the roof of the church<sup>303</sup>. Another contract

295 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 1.

296 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 1-2.

297 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 2.

298 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 2. The list of donors was as follows: Rev. Grzegorz Piotr Dawidowicz 300 *zlotys*, wife of the deputy cup-bearer Elżbieta Morelowska 200 *zlotys*, Stefan Altunowicz 118 *zlotys*, Paweł Derbedroszowicz 8 *zlotys*, Tomasz Tumanowicz 4 *zlotys*, Axent Tatułowicz 8 *zlotys*, Eliasz Takiesowicz 2 *zlotys*, oriental merchant Józef Dersukiasowicz (Derłukasowicz?) 18 *zlotys*, Jan Seferowicz 2 *zlotys* and 12 *groszys*, Jan Nikorowicz from Jazłowiec 4 *zlotys*, heirs of Paweł from Metryca 100 *zlotys*, Teodor Kirkorowicz from Kamieniec 8 *zlotys*, Toros Łazarowicz 18 *zlotys*, Zachariasz Arakielewicz 30 *zlotys*, Zachariasz Faruchowicz 40 *zlotys*, Gabriel Derbedroszowicz 10 *zlotys*, Szymon Takiesowicz 8 *zlotys*, oriental merchant Szymon Arakielewicz 18 *zlotys*, a merchant named Gabriel 18 *zlotys*, Łukasz Przyzyrwanicy 1 *zloty*, Dzarug from Kamieniec 60 *zlotys*, Walerian Chodykiewicz 20 *zlotys*, Haczyk Hagopsza 24 *zlotys*, Confraternity of St. Anna 50 *zlotys*, Confraternity of the Holy Cross 30 *zlotys*.

299 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 2.

300 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 5-6, 16-17.

301 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 2-3.

302 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 10.

303 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, сир. 1995, 4.

was signed in early March 1710<sup>304</sup>. The temple was renovated, although it cost the impoverished Armenian community a lot of effort.

In the following years, the Armenian community in Zamość failed to rebuild its economic position. Deteriorating living conditions meant that more and more Armenians were looking for better living conditions by migrating to other urban centers. This process led to the liquidation of the Armenian community in Zamość in 1738<sup>305</sup>. The crisis experienced by the parish is reflected in the data on the number of baptisms. In the years 1694-1776, 121 Armenian children received the sacrament, but since the records from the first half of the 18th century are incomplete, the number of baptisms was certainly higher. It is noteworthy, however, that in the years 1753-1776 only 10 children were baptized in the parish, and all of them came from mixed marriages<sup>306</sup>. The maintenance of the temple by such a small group of believers was therefore an increasingly difficult task.

Probably after 1710, the church was not affected by major natural disasters. Nevertheless, in the 1740s, the temple needed another roof repair, as evidenced by the registers of sheet metal intended for this purpose drawn up in June 1748<sup>307</sup>. The technical condition of the church at that time is presented in a local inspection carried out on Wednesday before the feast of St. James the Apostle, i.e. July 24, 1754. This source, unknown to researchers, is worth attention due to the fact that the Armenian parish in Zamość is thus documented in the final period of its existence. The inspection was carried out by the *vojt* Łukasz Derbedroszowicz, an Armenian by origin, the *vicevojt*<sup>308</sup> Michał Malborski and the juror Marcin Wesołowski in the presence of the scribe of the city bench. The report from the inspection was then entered into the Zamość jury book from the years 1749-1755<sup>309</sup>. The building was generally in good condition. The walls of the temple were assessed as good and not in danger of collapsing. The problem that required urgent intervention was the roofs. They were so damaged that the water entering through the holes flooded the vault, causing it to crack. The roof over the dome was not that badly damaged, but the jurors inspecting the building said it needed a whole new roof. At the same time, it was found that the vaults of the temple will remain stable and pose no danger of collapse, provided that the roofs are repaired quickly<sup>310</sup>. From the

304 ЛННБУВС, КОЧ, ф.141, оп. 1, стр. 1995, 9-12.

305 Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie zamojscy...*, 258-259.

306 Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 64-67.

307 BZNiO, DR, sign. 3687/II, 10.

308 In the case of an Armenian commune, the *vojt* (*wójt* in Polish) is the leader of the commune. In this case, *vojt/vicevojt* is the chairman/vice-chairman of the city bench (in cities under Magdeburg law, the city bench was a judicial body).

309 APL, AMZ, sign. 48, 478v-479v.

310 APL, AMZ, sign. 48, 479.

description it can be concluded that despite the purchase of materials for the renovation of the roofs in 1748, the parish with a small number of believers at that time was unable to start the necessary renovation works for the next six years.

The condition of the parish buildings was also not very good. Cracks, scratches on the walls, and holes in the roofs were noted in all of them. The condition of the corner tenement house was the worst, the roof of which had collapsed and could not be repaired. Only the roof of the presbytery was in good condition, but in the building itself, the back wall by the kitchen had collapsed, threatening to collapse the chimney<sup>311</sup>. Probably no repairs were carried out then, since in 1778 the temple still needed renovation. Again, work was not started due to high costs<sup>312</sup>. A plenary indulgence granted in 1781 by Pope Pius VI to all the faithful visiting the Armenian church in Zamość on the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Gregory, St. Anthony the Great, and St. Cajetan, and the seven-year indulgence for the faithful coming to the temple on other feasts dedicated to the Mother of God, did not help<sup>313</sup>.

The problems of the parish were also reflected in the material condition of the clergy. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, although the Armenian clergy from Zamość were not wealthy people, they were the owners of valuable items and real estate<sup>314</sup>. However, Rev. Augustyn Senni<sup>315</sup>, who died in 1753, left only clothes, spoons, a few pewter objects, kitchen utensils, and a clock<sup>316</sup>.

The Austrian authorities ruling Zamość from the First Partition of Poland ordered in 1802 the dissolution of the Armenian church. The equipment of the temple was sold at an auction, and the building itself became the property of the state. It was bought by Stanisław Kostka Zamoyski and donated to the city. The temple was in a deplorable condition at that time. Despite plans to use the building by the Tsar's military staff, the church was finally demolished in the 1820s (or early 1830s), and its existence is now commemorated by a commemorative plaque placed on the facade of the "Renesans" Hotel<sup>317</sup>.

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311 APL, AMZ, sign. 48, 479-479v.

312 Barącz, *Rys dziejów...*, 178.

313 Barącz, *Rys dziejów...*, 178.

314 APL, AMZ, sign. 66, 101, 289, 295, sign. 71, 235-235v ; Majewski, "Ormianie w Zamościu...", 18.

315 Augustyn Senni does not appear in the documentation of the Armenian Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, apart from the metrics of the Zamość parish. Perhaps he was a priest of the Latin rite, see: Majewski, "Metryka parafii ormiańskiej...", 9. Monika Agopsowicz -from The Foundation of Culture and Heritage of Polish Armenians, pointed out to me that perhaps Senni was a descendant of Axent from Jassy. The nickname used by his sons took various forms - Jaski, Ascini, Asaj and Seni (Senni).

316 APL, AMZ, sign. 48, 379v.

317 Chrząszczewski, *Kościół Ormian...*, 141.

## Conclusion

The history of the Armenian parish in Zamość has never been the subject of detailed research. Historians mainly limited themselves to discussing fragments of the privilege from 1585 regarding the construction of the Armenian church and the salary of the priest serving there. They also mentioned the circumstances of the construction of the brick church in the first half of the 17th century and discussed its architecture and artistic values. Beyond their interest were issues such as the organization of the parish, its property, and the course of the conflict over the union with the Latin Church. Historians also showed no interest in church furnishing and the clergy who served in the parish in the 16th and 18th centuries. Thanks to the research conducted, the beginnings of the parish, its organization and the construction of the first temple has been discussed in detail. Then, the process of building a brick church was discussed and the history of its furnishings was carefully reconstructed. Much space was devoted to parish property and the course of the conflict over the union in the Zamość parish. The article has introduced new, previously unknown findings and verified existing mistakes in the historiography of the Armenian presence in Poland.



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## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

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# CORPUS-BASED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE EIGHTH GRADE HISTORY TEXTBOOK USED IN ARMENIA\*

(ERMENİSTAN'DA OKUTULAN SEKİZİNCİ SINIF TARİH DERS  
KİTABININ DERLEM TEMELLİ SÖYLEM ANALİZİ)

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to examine the historical and political discourses in the textbook titled "History of Armenians" («Հայոց պատմություն») used in the eighth grade with the approval of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports in the Republic of Armenia. The study uses a corpus-based discourse analysis method for this purpose. In the textbook it examines, the study first determines the most used words, and, secondly, the words "war" and "enemy" and the frequencies of the synonyms, near-synonyms and antonyms of these words. At the third stage, it determines the most frequently used dates. It lastly analyzes the words that refer to peoples other than the Armenians. The study discusses the words "Turk" and "Ottoman" in the context of "the other", different words derived from the afore-mentioned two words with examples from concordances. It is noteworthy that the word "Turk" is among the most frequently used words in the textbook. In the textbook, which focuses on the dates of 1917 and*

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1918, it can be seen that words meaning “war” are used more than words meaning “peace”. When concordances were examined, the study determines that the “Turkish” and “Ottoman” words are used systematically with word types that create negative images.

**Keywords:** Educational Material, Armenian History, Ottoman State, “Other”, Turks

**Öz:** Bu çalışmada Ermenistan Cumhuriyeti Eğitim, Bilim, Kültür ve Spor Bakanlığının onayı ile sekizinci sınıfta okutulan “Ermenilerin Tarihi” («Հայոց պատմություն») adlı ders kitabında üretilen tarihî ve siyasi söylemleri dilbilimsel açıdan incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda derlem temelli söylem analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İncelenen ders kitabında ilk olarak en çok kullanılan kelimeler; ikinci olarak “savaş” ve “düşman” kelimeleri ve bu kelimelerin eş, yakın ve zıt anlamlılarının sıklıkları tespit edilmiştir. Üçüncü aşamada en sık kullanılan tarihler saptanmıştır. Son olarak Ermeniler dışındaki halklara gönderme yapan kelimelerin analizi yapılmıştır. “Öteki” bağlamında “Türk” ve “Osmanlı” kelimeleri ve bu kelimelerden türeyen farklı kelimeler bağlamalı dizinlerden örnekler ile gösterilmiştir. İncelenen ders kitabında en sık kullanılan kelimeler arasında “Türk” kelimesinin olması dikkat çekmektedir. 1917 ve 1918 tarihlerine odaklanan ders kitabında “savaş” anlamındaki kelimelerin “barış” anlamındaki kelimelere göre daha fazla kullanıldığı görülmüştür. Bağlamalı dizinler incelendiğinde ise “Türk” ve “Osmanlı” kelimelerinin olumsuz imge oluşturacak kelime türleri ile sistemli bir şekilde kullanıldığı belirlenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eğitim Materyali, Ermenilerin Tarihi, Osmanlı Devleti, “Öteki”, Türkler

## Introduction

Textbooks, which are part of compulsory education today, constitute an essential platform of discourse for ideologies with their visual and written content. In this discourse-based field, history textbooks are among the educational materials that are most affected by ideologies. Within the education system in Armenia, as in the rest of the world, we frequently encounter ideological discourses about ‘the other’ in history textbooks. For this reason, the textbook titled *History of Armenians* (*Հայրոց պատմություն*), which used in the eighth grade with the approval of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports in the Republic of Armenia, was chosen as the field of analysis in our study. The study has two main aims. The first aim is to analyze the most frequently used words in the textbook, the years in which historical events took place, the words referring to peoples other than the Armenians, the words “war”, “peace”, “friend”, and “enemy” through corpus-based discourse analysis. Our second aim is to identify the words derived from the words “Ottoman” and “Turk” in the context of “the other” and to conduct corpus-based discourse analysis through the concordances of these words. For these purposes, the concept of discourse, discourse analysis, and the corpus-based discourse analysis method will be discussed within the conceptual and theoretical framework of our research. In the second stage, the methodological approach of our research will be explained and then the words and sentences in the textbook will be analyzed according to corpus-based discourse analysis.

## Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Corpus-based discourse analysis, which developed in linguistics in the 1960s, is one of the methods of discourse analysis and the definition of the concept of ‘discourse’, which is one of the main discussion topics of discourse analysis, is one of the central issues of corpus-based discourse analysis. The concept of “discourse”, which is important in terms of explaining the purpose and method of our research, was first used by Zellig S. Harris in 1952. According to Harris, who established a direct relationship between language and discourse, “language is a correlative discourse” and according to him, textual analysis is considered as discourse analysis.<sup>1</sup> After Harris, in the 1950s, the discussions on the concept of discourse focused on trans-sentential structures. In the conceptual and theoretical discussions in this period, discourse is defined not only as a linguistic product, but also as an act of creating meaning in which the transmitter adds non-linguistic situations.<sup>2</sup>

1 Ahmet Kocaman, “Dilbilim Söylemi,” *Söylem Üzerine*, prepared by Ahmet Kocaman (Ankara: ODTÜ Geliştirme Vakfı Yayınları, 2003), 2.

2 V. Doğan Günay, *Söylem Çözümlemesi* (İstanbul: Papatya Yayınları, 2013), 30.

By the end of the 1960s, Michel Pêcheux (1938-1983) defined discourse as related to ideology. According to him, “discourse shows the effects of ideological struggle within the functions of language”.<sup>3</sup> Pêcheux emphasises the existence and meaning of language and ideology in a close relationship and that words are not static but dynamic, and defines discourse as the most fundamental and concrete linguistic form of ideology.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s, discourse began to be analyzed in detail based on its place in history in addition to its context and ideology under the pioneering work of Michel Foucault (1926-1984). In recent years, especially after the 1990s, when the Internet started to enter the life of society, discourse has gone beyond the word with the neo-Marxist approach, and gained a different dimension with technological developments and became a communication activity. Teun A. van Dijk, who stands out with his views on this subject, states that discourse is of great importance in the reproduction of ideologies and daily expressions.<sup>5</sup> Van Dijk defines discourse as a communication activity that includes spoken interaction, written text, signs, overlays, typographic layout, images, and other semiotic or multimedia dimensions of interpretation.<sup>6</sup>

The above definitions on discourse show that discourse analysis can provide important data to understand the ideology in a text. Corpus-based discourse analysis, as one of the methods of discourse analysis, reveals the ideological structure by giving us a detailed breakdown of words through computer programs. As Valentin Nikolayevich Voloshinov states, “the word provides us with sufficient material to reveal the basic-general ideological forms of semiotic communication”.<sup>7</sup>

3 Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) as cited in Ömer Özer, *Haber Söylem İdeoloji, Eleştirel Haber Çözümlemeleri* (Konya: Literatür, 2011), 34. Michel Pêcheux was one of the most important representatives of discourse analysis in the two decades from the 1960s to the 1980s. His major contribution to discourse analysis was to develop tools for conducting empirical discourse studies. His work *Automatic Discourse Analysis* was the beginning of a reconsideration of the principles of discourse analysis and discourse theory and was the source of many works in the 1980s. Tolga Elbirlik ve Ferhat Karabulut, “Söylem Kuramları: Bir Sınıflandırma Çalışması”, *Dil Araştırmaları*, no. 17 (2015): 31-50, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/dilarastirmalari/issue/59738/867745>, accessed January 26, 2021. See also, Niels Helsloot, Tony Hak, “Pêcheux’s Contribution to Discourse Analysis”, *Qualitative-Research.net*, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/242>, accessed January 26, 2021.

4 Lütfiye Oktar, “Bilimsel Söylem ve Toplumsal Değişim”, Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi İngiliz Dilbilimi Bölümü Yayınları, issue: 2 (2001): 71-80, cited from Funda Uzdu Yıldız ve V. Doğan Günay, “Yazımsal Söylemin İdeolojik Boyutu,” *Synergies-Turquie*, no. 4 (2011): 153-167, <https://gerflint.fr/Base/Turquie4/yildiz.pdf>, accessed January 26, 2021.

5 İbrahim Toruk ve Rengim Sine, “Haber Söylem Üretimindeki İdeolojik Etki: Wikileaks Haberleri,” *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 31 (2012): 351-378, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/sutad/issue/26302/277195>, accessed January 4, 2021.

6 Michael Meyer, “Between Theory, Method, And Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA,” *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage, 2001), 20, cited from Tuğrul Çomu, “Video Paylaşım Ağlarında Nefret Söylemi: Youtube Örneği” (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2012).

7 Tezcan Durna ve Çağla Kubilay, “Söylem Kuramları ve Eleştirel Söylem Çözümlemeleri,” *Medyadan Söylemler*, ed. Tezcan Durna (İstanbul: Libra Yayıncılık, 2010), 51.

In this context, the process of analyzing the (interdependent or independent) words and sentences in the text(s) we analyze through computer programs and bringing them together in a systematic way is called “corpus”. The discourse analysis carried out on the corpus of a particular text(s) is called “corpus-based discourse analysis”. As mentioned before, words or sentences can be analyzed within the context of the text(s). In this respect, “dependents/concordances” are created with the help of a computer program. “Dependents/concordances” list the words of a text in such a way as to show their place, context, and frequency of use.<sup>8</sup>

The definitions on “discourse” have also determined the framework of corpus-based discourse research. For example, corpus-based discourse studies conducted on textbooks outside Türkiye can be generally categorized into two groups when considering their subject of focus. The first group is the studies that reveal the ideological implications of textbooks through discourse analysis.<sup>9</sup> The second group is the descriptive studies examining the frequency of words in the sources used in foreign language education.<sup>10</sup> In Türkiye, corpus-based studies are not widespread, and are generally conducted in the fields of linguistics and language education. According to our research in the Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Centre, there are 22 corpus-based doctoral theses. 15 of these theses are conducted in linguistics, 3 in education and training, 2 in computer engineering, and 1 in translation and interpreting.<sup>11</sup> In addition to doctoral theses, 54 master’s theses have been identified in this field. Of these theses, 30 are in linguistics/philology, 15 in education and training, and 7 in computer engineering.<sup>12</sup> In Türkiye, the number of corpus-based doctoral and master’s theses on textbooks is only 5.<sup>13</sup> Analyzing the theses and other scientific studies conducted in Türkiye reveals that there is no corpus-based research on Armenian textbooks.

8 Özer Şenödeyici, “Üslûp Araştırmaları Açısından Bağlamlı Dizin ve İşlevsel Sözlük Çalışmaları Nâilî Örneği”, *Littera Turca Journal of Turkish Language and Literature* 3, no. 1 (2017): 282-306, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/277185>, accessed January 26, 2021.

9 For a reference article on the subject, see Ray C.H. Leung, “A Corpus-Based Analysis of Textbooks Used in the Orientation Course for Immigrants in Germany: Ideological and Pedagogic Implications”, *Journal of Language and Cultural Education* 4, no. 3 (2016): 154-177, <https://content.sciendo.com/view/journals/jolace/4/3/article-p154.xml?language=en>, accessed December 28, 2020.

10 For a reference article on the subject, see Hang Chan and Hiu Ngai Jessica Cheuk, “Revisiting The Notion of ESL: A Corpus-Based Analysis Of English Textbook Instructional Language,” *Ampersand* 7 (2020): 1-10, accessed January 28, 2020.

11 Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Tez Merkezi (Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Centre), <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/>, accessed December 26, 2022.

12 Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Tez Merkezi, <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/>, accessed December 26, 2022.

13 Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı Tez Merkezi, <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/>, accessed December 26, 2022.

**Methodology**

The textbook titled *History of Armenians*, prepared for eighth graders in Armenia, was selected to conduct a corpus-based discourse analysis in our study.<sup>14</sup> Considering the course of history, the process of Armenia becoming a state is a recent development. Therefore, the title of history textbooks in Armenia do not refer to a specific state, but to an ethnic group. This situation was officially opened for discussion in Armenia on 22 January 2024.<sup>15</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia submitted for public discussion a proposal to rename the “History of Armenians” course in schools as “History of Armenia”. According to the Ministry, the new name is more appropriate, and the aim of this proposal is to strengthen the idea of statehood among students in Armenia and to protect the interests of their own country. However, opponents criticized this initiative, arguing that the name “History of Armenians” includes both the history of the state and the history of the people, and that the name change may exclude important parts of the history and geography (especially Diaspora Armenians).<sup>16</sup> In an online public poll, 51% of the population voted against the name change. Due to the controversy, as of the writing of our study, no changes have been made to the education curriculum in 2024.

The textbook titled *History of Armenians* consists of three chapters. The first part covers the period from the second half of the XVII. century to the first half of the XIX. century, the second part covers the historical process from the second half of the XIX. century to the beginning of the XX. century, and the third part covers the history of the Armenian diaspora in the recent period. Detailed information about the imprint of the textbook is presented below.

| Textbook Title       | Grade | Publisher | Place of Publication | Date | Number of Pages | Number of Words |
|----------------------|-------|-----------|----------------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|
| History of Armenians | 8     | Zangak    | Yerevan              | 2013 | 192             | 32327           |

14 Աշոտ Մելքոնյան, Արամ Սիմոնյան, Արամ Նազարյան, Հակոբ Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն: Դասագիրք 8-րդ դասարանի համար* (Երևան. «Զանգակ» հրատ., 2013), 192 էջ:

15 Իրավական ակտերի նախագծերի հրապարակման միասնական կայք, Հայաստանի հանրապետության կառավարության 2010 թվականի ապրիլի 8-ի N 439-ն որոշման մեջ փոփոխություն կատարելու մասին, <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/6771>, accessed June 5, 2024.

16 “Հայոց, թե՛ Հայաստանի պատմություն”, *Ազատություն Ռադիոկայան*, January 23, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32788551.html>, accessed June 5, 2024.

For the corpus-based discourse analysis in our research, firstly the digital format of the textbook was converted into a text that could be analyzed. The textbook was analyzed in “Voyant Tools”,<sup>17</sup> a web-based reading and analysis program for digital texts. In the second stage, the number of words was checked manually through the program called “Foxit Reader”.

In our study, a contextual analysis method was applied while examining the frequency of words. This is because there are two methods in corpus-based studies. The first one is to measure the frequency of the words determined by the researcher or all the words in the text, and the second one is to create a contextual index. In this study, the most frequently used words in the textbook were determined in the first stage through “Voyant Tools”. Then, the frequently used words “war” and “enemy” and the frequency of the use of their synonyms, near-synonyms, and antonyms were analyzed. In the third stage, the frequency of the dates mentioned in the text were analyzed to determine the historical periods focused on in the textbook. The number of words referring to other peoples were also analyzed to compare them with the words “Turk” («թուրք») and “Ottoman” («օսմանյան»). Finally, the frequency of the words “Turk” and “Ottoman” and the words derived from them were determined, and examples of contextualized indexes containing the words “Turk” and “Ottoman” were presented at this stage. Since the electronic tools we used during the analysis in our research only recognize texts, the words in maps or pictures were not included in the analysis. The corpus-based discourse analysis at hand is not only a descriptive research but also a relational research. Accordingly, examples containing the words “Turk” and “Ottoman” were analyzed within the context of the text.

## Analysis

The top ten most frequently used words in the corpus created to analyze the historical and political discourses in the textbook titled *History of Armenians* are presented in Table 1. The first ten most frequently used words are the words found in the textbook in the nominative form and these words do not include personal pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs. When Table 1 is examined, the word “Armenian” («հայ»), which is used as an adjective and noun, ranks first. The frequency of the word “national” («ազգային») is also noteworthy. In fact, “Armenian national movements” and the establishment of “Armenian national parties” are frequently mentioned

17 Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, “Voyant Tools,” *VoyantTools.org*, <https://voyant-tools.org/?panels=corpusterm%2Creader%2Ctrends%2Csummary%2Ccontexts&corpus=c1318cceb5eb5be75db658d1ed899334>, accessed February 11, 2023.

throughout the textbook. The presence of the word “Turk” («թուրք/թուրքական») as a noun and adjective in the top ten most frequently used words is just one of the important pieces of evidence showing that the discursive basis of the textbook is based on the Turk as “the other”. The analysis of the word “Turk” and the words derived from this word will be analyzed in detail in the following sections.

**Table 1.** List and Number of the Most Frequently Used Words in the Textbook titled *History of Armenians*

| Row | Armenian Original | English Translation and Parts of Speech <sup>18</sup> | Number of Words |
|-----|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1   | հայ               | Armenian ( <i>Noun, Adjective</i> )                   | 437             |
| 2   | հայկական          | Armenian ( <i>Adjective</i> )                         | 312             |
| 3   | ազգային           | national ( <i>Adjective</i> )                         | 201             |
| 4   | նոր               | new ( <i>Adjective</i> )                              | 170             |
| 5   | ի՞նչ              | what? ( <i>Pronoun</i> )                              | 140             |
| 6   | մեծ               | great ( <i>Adjective</i> )                            | 130             |
| 7   | թուրքական         | Turk/Turkish ( <i>Adjective</i> )                     | 125             |
| 8   | այդ               | that ( <i>Pronoun</i> )                               | 119             |
| 9   | հայոց             | Armenians' ( <i>Noun, Adjective</i> )                 | 109             |
| 10  | հայաստանի         | Armenia's ( <i>Noun</i> )                             | 106             |

In the second stage of our study, we analyzed the terms “struggle” («պայքար/պայքարել»), “war” («պատերազմ»), “peace” («հաշտություն»), “battle/heroic battle” («մարտ/հերոսամարտ»), “enemy” («ընդհամար»), “opposing” («հակառակորդ»), “ally” («դաշնակից»), “opponent/dissident” («ընդդիմադիր»), and “supporter” («համակիր») used in the textbook titled *History of Armenians*. In line with the decisions taken by international institutions and organizations (UNESCO, the European Union, the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media/Georg Eckert Institute (GEI)), there are recommendations that the discourses of peace and tolerance should be brought to the forefront in textbooks instead of war and conflict.<sup>19</sup> However,

18 Word types differ between Turkish (the language this research was originally conducted in) and Armenian. The word types mentioned in the article are prepared in accordance with the syntax of Armenian.

19 For detailed information, see Falk Pingel, *Ders Kitaplarını Araştırma ve Düzeltme Rehberi*, translated by Nurettin Elhüseyni (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2004) ; Laurent Wirth, *Tarihin Kötüye Kullanımı*, translated by Nurettin Elhüseyni (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003) ; Henry Frendo, *Tarih Öğretiminde Çoğulcu ve Hoşgörülü Bir Yaklaşım Doğru*, prepared by Özgür Sevgi Göral (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003).

our analyses revealed that the word “struggle” is the most frequently used word in this category. The word “struggle” is used in 26 different places as the Armenians’ “freedom struggle” («ազատագրական պայքար») and in 20 different places as the Armenians’ “armed struggle” («զինված պայքար»).

**Table 2.** List and Number of the Words “War” and “Enemy” and Their Synonyms, Near-Synonyms and Antonyms Used in the Textbook Titled *History of Armenians*<sup>20</sup>

| Row | Armenian Original | English Translation and Parts of Speech          | Number of Words |
|-----|-------------------|--|-----------------|
| 1   | պայքար   պայքարել | struggle (Noun, Verb)                            | 132             |
| 2   | պատերազմ          | war (Noun)                                       | 116             |
| 3   | հաշտություն       | peace (Noun)                                     | 41              |
| 4   | մարտ   հերոսամարտ | battle, clash, war (Noun)   heroic battle (Noun) | 69              |
| 5   | թշնամի            | enemy (Noun)                                     | 38              |
| 6   | հակառակորդ        | opponent, enemy, (Noun)                          | 8               |
| 7   | դաշնակից          | ally (Noun, Adjective)                           | 8               |
| 8   | ընդդիմադիր        | opposing, dissident (Adjective)                  | 2               |
| 9   | Համակիր           | support, supporter (Adjective)                   | 1               |

In the third stage of our research, the frequency of dates used in the textbook was evaluated. In primary and secondary school history textbooks, it is preferred that events are told in chronological order. The textbook we analyzed, *History of Armenians*, also tells the events in chronological order, but some dates stand out in this chronological order. The year ‘1917’, which is used 44 times in the textbook, stands out. The year ‘1917’ is often repeated in the fifth heading of the sixth chapter “The Rise of Armenian National - Political Life in 1917”<sup>21</sup> («Հայ ազգային-քաղաքական կյանքի վերելքը 1917 թվականին») within the context of the political structures established in Transcaucasia, the Caucasian Front, the Bolshevik Revolution, and Soviet Russia. The year ‘1918’ is repeated 41 times in the textbook because of its importance in the establishment of the Republic of Armenia. The year ‘1915’ is used to explain the events on the Caucasus front and the activities of the “Armenian Volunteer Units”. The year ‘1915’ is often found under the headings “The Great Catastrophe of the Armenians”<sup>22</sup> («Հայոց մեծ եղեռնը») and “The Heroic Battles of Self-Defense in 1915”<sup>23</sup> («Ինքնապաշտպանական

20 In this table, the plural form of nouns is included in the total number of words.

21 Մելքոնյան, Միմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 134.

22 Մելքոնյան, Միմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 122.

23 Մելքոնյան, Միմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 129.



հերոսամարտերը 1915 թ.»). The words “Great Catastrophe” («Մեծ եղեռն») and “genocide” («ցեղասպանություն») as synonyms of “Great Catastrophe” are frequently repeated in the textbook. In the entire textbook, the word “Great Catastrophe” appears in 25 different places and the word “genocide” in 35 different places. The analysis reveals that the textbook emphasizes the years 1917 and 1918 more than 1915. However, in the international political and cultural arena, it is seen that the year ‘1915’ takes center place in the historical narrative of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. The textbook we examined aims to create the consciousness of being a “state” in the minds of students in Armenia, and for this reason, more emphasis is placed on the process of becoming a state in the textbook. This situation does not show that the history of 1915 is pushed into the background in the Armenian education system; rather, it shows that the priority in the textbook is different. In addition, the year 1915 should not be evaluated independently from 1914 in Armenian historiography. The year ‘1914’ is presented as the first stage of the “Great Catastrophe” in the sixth chapter titled “Armenia and the Armenian People in the Years of the First World War”<sup>24</sup> («Հայաստանը և հայ ժողովուրդը առաջին աշխարհամարտի տարիներին»). The year “1828” is referred to in the second part of the textbook under the sub-headings of “The Russo-Iranian War of 1826-1828”<sup>25</sup> («1826–1828 թթ. ռուս–պարսկական պատերազմը») and “1828-1829 Russo-Turkish War and Western Armenians”<sup>26</sup> («1828–1829 թթ. ռուս–թուրքական պատերազմը արևմտահայությունը»). In the textbook, the year “1890” is often referred to as “the 1890s” («1890–ական թթ.»). This phrase appears especially in the fourth chapter, under the heading “Massacres and Self-Defense Wars of Western Armenians in the 1890s”<sup>27</sup> («Արևմտահայերի կոտորածները և ինքնապաշտպանական մարտերը 1890–ական թվականներին»).

24 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 112-146.

25 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 31.

26 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 39.

27 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 91.

**Table 3.** List and Number of the Most Frequently Used Years in the Textbook Titled *History of Armenians*

| Row | Most Frequently Used Years | Number of Words |
|-----|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | 1917                       | 44              |
| 2   | 1918                       | 41              |
| 3   | 1915                       | 33              |
| 4   | 1914                       | 29              |
| 5   | 1828                       | 18              |
| 6   | 1890                       | 18              |

In the fourth stage of the research, words referring to peoples other than Armenians in the textbook titled *History of Armenians* were analyzed. While this analysis shows “the others” that are centered according to the Armenian identity in the textbook, it also helps us to reach the positive or negative discourses about “the others”. When the words referring (directly or indirectly) to the peoples mentioned in the textbook are analyzed, it is found that the most frequently used word other than “Armenian” («հայ/հայկական») as a noun and adjective is “Turk/Turkish” («թուրք/թուրքական»). As can be seen in the table below, as a noun and adjective, “Turk/Turkish” is followed by “Russian” («ռուս/ռուսական»), “Persian” («պարսիկ/պարսկական»), “Kurd/Kurdish” («քուրդ/քրդական»), and “Tatar [Azerbaijani Turk]” («թաթար/թաթարական/ադրբեջանցի»). The reason for the prominence of the word “Turk” in the textbook is due to the ideological approach of presenting Turks as “the other”. It is noteworthy that the words “Kurd” and “Tatar”, the names of people who live or lived in the same geography with Armenians and therefore expected to be repeated frequently in the textbook, are used less frequently than the words “Russian” and “Persian”. This shows that there is an ideological selectivity towards certain peoples in the content of the textbook and that the “Turk” is targeted as “the other”. The ranking of the analyzed words according to their frequency of use is shown in the table below.

**Table 4.** List and Number of Words Referring to People Other Than Armenians in the Textbook Titled *History of Armenians*<sup>28</sup>

| Row | Armenian Original                               | English Translation and Word Type   | Number of Words |
|-----|---|---|-----------------|
| 1   | թուրք*   թուրքական                              | Turk (Noun, Adjective)   Turkish (Adjective)                              | 213             |
| 2   | ռուս*   ռուսական                                | Russian (Noun, Adjective)   Russian (Adjective)                           | 166             |
| 3   | պարսիկ*   պարսկական                             | Persian (Noun)   Persian (Adjective)                                      | 34              |
| 4   | քուրդ*   քրդական                                | Kurd (Noun, Adjective)   Kurdish (Adjective)                              | 26              |
| 5   | թաթար*<br>թաթարական<br>աղբբեջանցի*              | Tatar [Azerbaijani Turk] (Noun)  <br>Tatar [Azerbaijani Turk] (Adjective) | 22              |
| 6   | վրաց   վրացի*  <br>վրացական  <br>արևելավրացական | Georgian (Adjective)   Georgian (Noun)  <br>Eastern Georgian (Adjective)  | 16              |
| 7   | հույն*  | Greek/Rum (Noun)  | 2               |
| 8   | ասորի*  | Assyrian/Syriac (Noun)  | 2               |
| 9   | արաբական  | Arab (Adjective)  | 1               |

One of the main objectives of our study is to observe the discourses regarding Turks in the book titled *History of Armenians* through the corpus-based analysis method. For this purpose, at the first stage, the frequency of “Turk” («թուրք») and words derived from the word “Turk” were analyzed. It was found that the word “Turk” («թուրք» and «թուրքական») is most frequently used as a noun and adjective in subjects describing the historical events of 1915 and 1917. The action of “Turkification” («թուրքացնել»), which is used once in the textbook, is used under the heading “The Great Catastrophe of the Armenians”<sup>29</sup> in the sub-heading “State Plan of the Young Turks on the Armenian Genocide”<sup>30</sup> («Հայերի ցեղասպանության երիտթուրքական պետական ծրագիրը»):

“The Young Turks continued Abdul Hamid’s plan to exterminate the Armenians. The ‘Committee of Union and Progress’ Party approved this program at secret meetings in Thessaloniki in 1910-1911. It was decided [in this program] that the Greeks and Assyrians would also be exterminated and that non-Turkish Muslims would be Turkified.”<sup>31</sup>

28 In this table, the plurals of the words marked with an asterix (\*) were included to the number of words.

29 Մելքոնյան, Միմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 122

30 Մելքոնյան, Միմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 122.

31 Մելքոնյան, Միմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 122.

**Table 5.** The Word “Turk” and the Number of Words Derived from the Word “Turk” in the Textbook Titled *History of Armenians*<sup>32</sup>

| Row | Armenian Original | Turkish Translation and Word Type                     | Number of Words |
|-----|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1   | Թուրքական         | Turkish [referring to a person] (Adjective)           | 125             |
| 2   | Թուրք*            | Turk (Noun, Adjective)                                | 88              |
| 3   | Թուրքիա*          | Turkey/Türkiye (Noun)                                 | 32              |
| 4   | Թուրքահայաստան*   | Turkish Armenia (Noun)                                | 6               |
| 5   | Թուրքերեն*        | Turkish [referring to the language] (Noun, Adjective) | 3               |
| 6   | Թուրքալեզու       | Turkish language (Adjective)                          | 2               |
| 7   | Թուրքահպատակ      | Subject to the Turks (Noun, Adjective)                | 1               |
| 8   | Թուրքացնել*       | Turkification (Verb)                                  | 1               |

The frequency of “Turk” and words derived from the word “Turk” in the text proves that there is a discursive space in the textbook that focuses on “Turk”. However, this information does not provide data regarding the context of the discourse on “Turk” in the textbook. For this reason, example sentences were found based on the contextualized indexes containing the words “Turk” and the words derived from the word “Turk”. Additionally, due to the limitations of our research, four examples that drew attention were translated into English and presented below together with the Armenian original text.

- Original text:** «Արևմտյան Հայաստանում և կայսրության հայկական մի շարք բնակավայրերում հայերը կարողացան համախմբվել ու զենքը ձեռքին արժանապատվորեն պայքարել **թուրք** և քուրդ ջարդարարների դեմ:»<sup>33</sup>

**Translation:** “In Western Armenia and in a number of Armenian settlements in the Empire, Armenians were able to organize and fight with their guns and dignity against the **Turkish** and Kurdish massacrists.”

- Original text:** «Այն դժնդակ օրերին հայ ժողովուրդը, զենքի դիմելով, կարողացավ պայքարել **թուրք** ոճրագործների դեմ նաև Մուշում, Սասունում և բազմաթիվ այլ վայրերում:»<sup>34</sup>

**Translation:** “During these brutal days, the Armenian people were able to take up arms and fight against the **Turkish** murderers in Moush, Sasun and elsewhere.”

32 In this table, the forms of the noun with inflectional or derivational suffixes of the words marked with an asterisk (\*) were included to the number of words.

33 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 129.

34 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 132.

3. **Original text:** «1729–1731 թթ. **Թուրքական նվաճողների** դեմ պայքարի վերջին օջախներից էր Գյուլիստանի սղնախը՝ Աբրահամ սպարապետի գլխավորությամբ:»<sup>35</sup>

**Translation:** “The Gulistan Fortress was one of the epicenters of the struggle against the **Turkish** conquests in 1729-1731, led by Commander Abraham.”

4. **Original text:** «Ո՞ր վայրերում տեղի ունեցան **կոտորածներ**: Ինչի՞ հետ էր կապված Մայիսյան բարենորոգումների ծրագրի ի հայտ գալը: Ինչո՞վ պատասխանեց սուլթանը այդ ծրագրին: Հայերը որտե՞ղ դիմադրություն ցույց տվեցին **թուրք** ջարդարարներին:»<sup>36</sup>

**Translation:** “In which places did massacres take place? What was the emergence of the ‘May’ reforms associated with? How did the Sultan respond to this program? Where did Armenians fight back against the **Turkish** massacrists?”

When we examine the sample sentences above, it is seen that the word “Turk” is used especially with word types such as nouns, adjectives or verbs that can create negative opinions. The first and second sentences given in the examples are found in the chapter titled “Heroic Self-Defense Struggles of 1915”<sup>37</sup> («Ինքնապաշտպանական հերոսամարտերը 1915 թ.»), under the sub-heading “Van’s Glorious Victory”<sup>38</sup> («Վանի փառապանծ հաղթանակը»). The word “massacrist” in the first sentence, which creates a negative discourse regarding Turks and Kurds, and the word “thug/murderer” in the second sentence are not words required to be in a textbook to ensure integrity of meaning. However, throughout the textbook, like in these example sentences, words that create negative images are preferred to deepen negative discourses regarding Turks. In addition, when the titles of the example sentences are evaluated in terms of objective historiography, the fact that Armenians took up arms aiming for an independent Armenian state in 1915 and attacked the soldiers and citizens of the country they were citizens of is, by definition, considered as rebellion. However, as an expression of ideological discourse in the book, these acts of rebellion are presented as “self-defense and heroic struggle”. In accordance with the same ideological discourse, the siege of Van by Russian troops with the support of Armenian gangs is described as the “Glorious Victory of Van”. The third sentence is found in the second chapter

35 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 16.

36 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 96.

37 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 129.

38 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 129.

of the first part of the book, titled “Armed Struggle in Artsakh [Karabakh]”<sup>39</sup> («Ձինված պայքարը Արցախում»). This chapter describes the battles fought in 1729-1731 at the Gulistan Fortress at the mountainside of Murovdag. In these sentences referring to the Turkish conquests, the word “Artsakh” (“Արցախ”) is preferred to “Karabakh” (“Դարաբաղ”), the official name of the region. The fourth sentence is included at the end of the fourth chapter, in the questions and homework section for students to answer.<sup>40</sup> In this sentence, the word “massacrist” is repeated, which creates a negative opinion of Turks in the minds of the students and is not required for ensuring the integrity of meaning of the book.

Lastly, the frequency of the words “Ottoman” («Օսմանյան») and “subject to the Ottomans” («Օսմանահպատակ») was analyzed. In the textbook, the word “Ottoman” is used as a proper noun “Ottoman Empire” (“Օսմանյանյան կայսրություն») in 46 different places. The term “Ottoman Empire” is preferred instead of “Ottoman State”, which creates the perception of an “imperialist” political entity. The word “Ottoman subjects” (“օսմանահպատակ») appears in the first unit under the title “The Rise of the Armenian Freedom Struggle”<sup>41</sup> («Հայ ազատագրական պայքարի վերելքը»). In this section, the view of the Turks being a threat and the perspective of some of the European states and peoples subject to the Ottoman Empire being potential supporters of the “Armenian freedom struggle” are expressed as such:

“Some European countries, realizing the expected danger from the Ottoman Turks, were seen as possible allies of Armenia. The willingness of Ottoman subjects -Greeks, Assyrians, Georgians, even Kurds and Yezidis- to fight together was also important.”<sup>42</sup>

39 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 12.

40 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 96.

41 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 7.

42 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 7.

**Table 6.** The List and the Number of the Words “Ottoman” and “Subject to the Ottomans “ in the Textbook Titled *History of Armenians*

| Row | Armenian Original | Turkish Translation and Word Type         | Number of Words |
|-----|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1   | Օսմանյան          | Ottoman (Adjective)                       | 73              |
| 2   | Օսմանահպատակ      | Subject to the Ottomans (Noun, Adjective) | 1               |

Only four of the contextual indexes containing the word “Ottoman” have been translated from Armenian into English and are presented below:

- Original text:** «Օսմանյան գերիշխանության տակ ավելի ծանր էր արևմտահայության վիճակը: Ազգային, կրոնական ու սոցիալական դաժան հալածանքների դեմ արևմտահայերի պայքարի առաջին խոշոր կենտրոնը 1862 թ. դառնում է Զեյթունը:»<sup>43</sup>

**Translation:** “Under **Ottoman** rule, the situation of Western Armenians was more severe. In 1862, Zeytun became the epicenter of the struggle against brutal national, religious, and social persecution.”

- Original text:** «Օսմանյան կայսրության և Սեֆյան Իրանի թուլացումն ազատագրման իրական հույս էր ներշնչում: Եվրոպական առանձին երկրներ, որոնք հասկացել էին **օսմանյան** թուրքերից սպասվող վտանգը, համարվում էին Հայաստանի հնարավոր դաշնակիցներ:»<sup>44</sup>

**Translation:** “The weakening of the **Ottoman** Empire and Safavid Iran gave rise to a real hope for liberation. Some European countries, realizing the expected danger from the **Ottoman** Turks, were considered as possible allies of Armenia.”

- Original text:** «Օսմանյան տիրապետության տակ գտնվող Արևմտյան Հայաստանը բաժանված էր Էրզրումի (Կարին), Վանի, Կարսի, Ախալցխայի, Դիարբեքիի և Սեբաստիայի նահանգների (վիլայեթ, Փաշայություն):»<sup>45</sup>

**Translation:** “Western Armenia under **Ottoman** rule was divided into the provinces of Erzurum (Karin), Van, Kars, Ahıska, Diyarbakir and Sivas (Vilayet, Pashalik).”

43 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 4.

44 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 7.

45 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 38.

4. **Original text:** «1726 թ. օսմանյան զինուժի՝ Շուշին գրավելու փորձերը հաջողություն չունեցան:»<sup>46</sup>

**Translation:** “In 1726, attempts by **Ottoman** military forces to besiege Shushi were unsuccessful.”

The first of the example sentences we chose is found in the textbook’s introduction.<sup>47</sup> In this example, the Armenian discourse of struggling against “brutal persecution” stands out.<sup>48</sup> The second example sentence is found in the textbook under the heading “The Rise of the Armenian Freedom Struggle”<sup>49</sup> and the word “Ottoman” here is used as a word characterizing “Turks”. The third example is found in the subject “Western Armenia in the First Half of the XIX. Century”<sup>50</sup> («Արևմտյան Հայաստանը XIX դարի առաջին կեսին»). This subject mentions the organization of the provinces inhabited by Armenians under the rule of the Ottoman State. The sentence in the fourth example appears under the heading “Armed Struggle in Artsakh [Karabakh]”<sup>51</sup> and creates the impression of an enemy. According to the numerical data above, a comparison of the words “Ottoman” and “Turk” reveals that the word “Turk” is repeated more often in ideological terms and is used with words that have negative meanings compared to the word “Ottoman”. This supports the idea that the textbook is written from an ideological perspective and that this perspective creates a negative image of the Turk in the minds of 8th grade students.

### Conclusion/Evaluation

In our research that prefers the use of the corpus-based discourse analysis method, we demonstrate the influence of discourse in education through the textbook titled *History of Armenians* and accordingly the linguistic form of ideology. Through this method, firstly, the most frequently used words were identified. It was observed that the word “Turk” was among the top 10 most frequently repeated words in the textbook (excluding personal pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs). Secondly, when the words referring to peoples in the textbook are analyzed, the word “Turk” is in the first place. This situation is part of the important evidence demonstrating that the textbook is based on the discourse of the “Turk” as the “other”.

46 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 15.

47 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 3-4.

48 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 4.

49 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 7.

50 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 38.

51 Մելքոնյան, Սիմոնյան, Նազարյան, Մուրադյան, *Հայոց պատմություն*, 15.



The frequently used “1917” and “1918” years indicate which historical periods are focused on in the textbook. It is seen that this textbook, when focusing on these years, attaches importance to the Caucasus Front, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the actions taken towards the establishment of the Republic of Armenia. The word “peace” was used much less in the textbook compared to the words “war”, “struggle”, and “enemy”. In this respect, the textbook does not comply with the recommendations and decisions of international institutions and organizations on the teaching of history lessons.

Lastly, the frequency of the words “Ottoman” and “Turk” were analyzed during our research. Events that occurred during the period of the Ottoman State are mentioned in the textbook. However, it was observed that the word “Turk” and words of “Turkish” origin were used 246 times, while the word “Ottoman” was repeated 74 times. This situation indicates that the word “Turk” is deliberately preferred in the textbook instead of the word “Ottoman”, which does not refer to a particular people. It was also found that the words “Turk” and “Ottoman” are used systematically and with a specific purpose and with nouns, adjectives, and verbs that create negative thoughts or opinions.

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

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# ON THE LEVEL OF HISTORICAL TRUTHS: THE “ARMENIAN QUESTION” AFTER THE POTSDAM CONFERENCE

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POTSDAM KONFERANSI SONRASINDA “ERMENİ MESELESİ”)

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**Abstract:** *The object of this research is to emphasize the fact that the Russian Empire and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) leadership, which purposefully continued the imperial policy of the Russian Empire in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, used the “Armenian card” from time to time to make groundless territorial claims against Turkey. After the victory over Hitler’s Germany, USSR used the “Armenian Question” as a priority issue in its foreign policy. The article notes that, on the eve of the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the legend of “Great Armenia” coincided with the contours of the foreign policy of the USSR, and Moscow created fertile conditions for the development of the concept of “Urartu” created by the Armenian historian Kerope Patkanov at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Joseph Stalin government of USSR’s emphasis on the concept of “Urartu” was related to the initiative to scientifically substantiate the baseless territorial claims on Eastern Anatolia. Moscow, acting in tandem with Armenia, brought up other aspects of the “Armenian Question” when it failed to achieve its goals. One of the new foreign policy directions was the issue of Karabakh. As a result of the decisive and principled position of Mirjafar Bagirov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan K(b), Armenians could not realize their claims to Karabakh. However,*

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*because of the pro-Armenian position of Stalin's government and the special activity of G. Arutyunov, the First secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, ethnic cleansing was carried out in the Armenian SSR in 1948-1953, and Azerbaijani Turks were deported from their historical lands. At this time, despite the serious efforts of the Armenian lobby, the expected large migration of Armenians from abroad did not take place. The article notes that, although ethnic cleansing was carried out in the Armenian SSR during the investigated period, USSR was forced to give up its groundless territorial claims against Türkiye, and the Armenian claims to Karabakh were wasted.*

**Keywords:** *Potsdam Conference, Turkey, USSR, Germany, Armenian Narrative, Eastern Anatolia, Karabakh, İsmet İnönü*

**Öz:** *Bu araştırmanın amacı, 20'nci yüzyılda Rus İmparatorluğunun ve onun emperyal politikasını bilinçli olarak sürdüren Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliği (SSCB) liderliğinin zaman zaman "Ermeni kartını" Türkiye'ye karşı asılsız toprak iddialarında bulunmak için kullandığını vurgulamaktır. Hitler'in Almanyasına karşı kazanılan zaferin ardından SSCB dış politikasında "Ermeni Sorununu" öncelikli bir konu olarak kullanmıştır. Makale, 1945 Potsdam Konferansı arifesinde "Büyük Ermenistan" efsanesinin SSCB'nin dış politikasının ana hatlarıyla örtüştüğünü ve Moskova'nın 19'uncu yüzyılın sonlarında Ermeni tarihçi Kerope Patkanov tarafından yaratılan "Urartu" kavramının gelişimi için verimli koşullar yarattığını belirtmektedir. SSCB'nin Joseph Stalin hükümetinin "Urartu" kavramına vurgu yapması, Doğu Anadolu'ya ilişkin asılsız toprak iddialarını bilimsel olarak kanıtlama girişimiyle ilgiliydi. Moskova, Ermenistan ile birlikte hareket ederek hedeflerine ulaşamayınca "Ermeni Sorununun" başka boyutlarını gündeme getirmiştir. Yeni dış politika istikametlerinden biri de Karabağ meselesi olmuştur. Azerbaycan K(b) Merkez Komitesi Birinci Sekreteri Mirjafar Bagirov'un kararlı ve ilkeli tutumu sonucunda Ermeniler Karabağ üzerindeki iddialarında başarısız olmuşlardır. Ancak Stalin hükümetinin Ermeni yanlısı tutumu ve Ermenistan Komünist Partisi Merkez Komitesi Birinci Sekreteri G. Arutyunov'un özel faaliyetleri nedeniyle 1948-1953 yıllarında Ermeni SSC'de etnik temizlik yapılmış ve Azerbaycan Türkleri tarihi topraklarından sürülmüştür. Bu dönemde Ermeni lobisinin ciddi çabalarına rağmen yurt dışından beklenen Ermenilerin büyük göçü gerçekleşmemiştir. Makalede, incelenen dönemde Ermenistan SSR'sinde etnik temizlik yapılmasına rağmen, SSCB'nin Türkiye'ye yönelik asılsız toprak iddialarından vazgeçmek zorunda kaldığı ve Ermenilerin Karabağ üzerindeki iddialarının boşa çıktığı belirtilmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Potsdam Konferansı, Türkiye, SSCB, Almanya, Ermeni Anlatısı, Doğu Anadolu, Karabağ, İsmet İnönü*

## **Introduction**

For many years, the “Armenian Question” has become the object of research of scholars of various countries. Several scholars have tried to study this problem according to the concept of their historiography. The peculiarity of the problem is that both Soviet and Western historiography did not delve into the essence of the “Armenian Question” invented by the Armenian Gregorian Church<sup>1</sup> in the Middle Ages when investigating the issue. They supported the legend of “Great Armenia”, the myth that the monophysite Armenian church later invented in cooperation with the Armenian lobby groups in Europe, Russia, and India (and which is the cornerstone of the “Armenian Question”) and attributed the essence of Armenianness and past misdeeds to the classification of “closed” topics.

At the same time, both the Western countries and Russia skillfully used the “Armenian Question” for their own geopolitical goals and used it in their foreign policy plans. In particular, the Tsarist Russian Empire and the leadership of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, Soviet Union), which purposefully continued its imperial policy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, used the “Armenian card” from time to time to realize groundless territorial claims against Turkey, and after the victory over Adolf Hitler’s Germany, it took the “Armenian Question” as the priority direction of its foreign policy.

Based on the above, in order to reveal the historical truths and investigate the problem from an objective position, the current research aims to show the historical reality based on the principle of historicity and evidence.

At the end of the Second World War, the leadership of the USSR, which switched to a policy of confrontation with Turkey, denounced the Soviet-Turkish agreement of December 17, 1925 “On Friendship and Neutrality” on March 19, 1945. By doing this, Joseph Stalin’s government demonstrated its radical steps in relation to Turkey and showed that adopted a position questioning the nature of Soviet-Turkish relations. Moscow clearly demonstrated that it was proceeding from the level of territorial claims against Turkey.

In this situation, Soviet-Turkish negotiations began in Moscow in June 1945. During the negotiations, the representatives of the USSR took the position that

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1 The Armenian Church was founded in the first quarter of the 4th century, no earlier than 318, by the Parthian Gregory (252-336), the first Catholicos of the Armenians, and not by the apostles, because Gregory the Parthian had no relation to the apostles. This reality was confirmed by the Soviet Historical Encyclopedia, published in 1961. On the 750th page of the Soviet Historical Encyclopedia it is indicated: “The spread of the new religion in Armenia was connected with the name of Grigoriy Parfyanin. In his name, the Armenian Church received the name Gregorian”. Armenian religious officials and scholars, ignoring these historical facts about the church, claim that the correct name for the church is the “Armenian Apostolic Church”.



the Soviet-Turkish agreement of December 17, 1925 did not meet the requirements of the conditions that had arisen and needed serious changes<sup>2</sup>. During the negotiations, the Soviet leadership, which expressed its desire to change the relations between the USSR and Turkey, did not hide its dissatisfaction with Turkey's foreign policy in recent years. Thus, on the eve of the Second World War and during the war years, in the complex and contradictory situation created in the system of international relations, Turkish diplomacy carried out a policy of balancing both the Western countries and the USSR. At that time, the İsmet İnönü government, acting from the level of actual alliance with France and the United Kingdom (the UK), tried to maintain friendly relations with the USSR at the same time.

### **Turkey in the System of International Relations during the Second World War**

After the start of the Second World War, in September 1939, Turkish Foreign Minister Şükrü Saracoglu proposed the conclusion of the Turkey-USSR pact on mutual assistance during his visit to Moscow. Dissatisfied with the terms of the Montreux Convention, during the negotiations, the USSR proposed to Turkey the conclusion of a pact on mutual bilateral security limited to the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and the Dardanelles<sup>3</sup>. At that time, Moscow wanted a guarantee that the warships of non-Black Sea states would not pass through the Turkish Straits if there was a threat of war. Of course, conducting negotiations in this thread made it impossible to conclude a pact.

The leadership of the USSR, which did not achieve its goal, did not hide its territorial claims against Turkey. After the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Nazi Germany, Stalin's government, which was not satisfied with seizing the Baltic countries, Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and Bessarabia, wanted to achieve territorial changes on the southern borders as well. At that time, the Dashnaks, who had high hopes for the start of the Berlin negotiations between the USSR and Germany in 1940, strengthened their territorial claims against Turkey. However, in the Berlin negotiations, Hitler's Germany did not accept the claim of the USSR to control the territories from Batumi to the Black Sea Straits, from Baku to the Persian Gulf, and the conflict in Soviet-German relations began to grow rapidly.

In that situation, Turkey adopted a policy of rapprochement with the Western countries. Turkey's negotiations with the UK and France resulted in a positive

2 *Советский Союз на международных конференциях периода Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг.*, т. VI. Сборник документов (Москва: Publishing House of Political Literature, 1980), 514.

3 Б. Данциг, *Турция* (Москва: Military Publishing House of Ministry of the Armed Forces of the USSR, 1949), 277, 278.

outcome, and on October 19, 1939, a pact on mutual assistance was signed between all three countries. There was also a note in the signed pact that Turkey was not obliged to join the actions that could lead to a military conflict with the USSR. After the conclusion of this agreement, the coldness in the USSR-Turkey relations began to manifest itself, and during the Soviet-Finnish war, this coldness became even more acute<sup>4</sup>. After the fall of France, Turkey did not abandon its pro-Western policy. In his speech on November 17, 1940, President Inonu stated that “the bonds of alliance between Turkey and England [the UK] are strong and unbreakable”<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, Turkish diplomacy was successfully carried out in the Balkans, and during this period, a declaration of friendship and neutrality with Bulgaria was signed.

During this period, the process of Turkey’s rapprochement with Germany was on the rise since the spring of 1941, and the development of German-Turkish relations on a fertile ground resulted in the “Friendship and Non-aggression” agreement signed on June 18, 1941. Following the ongoing processes, the USSR approached this agreement with concern and the Soviet leadership formed the opinion that Turkey had taken an anti-Soviet direction in its foreign policy. At that time, there was no tension in the relations between the UK and Turkey, and a meeting was held in Adana with Winston Churchill and the Turkish leadership in early 1943. It showed that Turkey-the UK relations were moving in a positive direction, and it was pointed out that Turkey did not give up the direction of the West in its foreign policy.

Parallely, in the course of the Second World War, Turkey made changes in its foreign policy and broke off diplomatic relations with Germany on August 2, 1944, and then on February 23, 1945, Turkey declared war on Germany and Japan. However, in the spring of 1945, the USSR, which was very close to victory over Hitler’s Germany and expanded its sphere of influence in several countries of Eastern Europe, prioritized the restoration of the borders of the First World War and made territorial claims against Turkey, bringing up the “Armenian Question”.

After the success of the battles for Stalingrad, starting from the beginning of 1943, the Soviet leadership began to show its imperialist ambition and the “Armenian Question” was brought to the level of the foreign policy of the USSR. At that time, Stalin, who took into account the intricacies of the “Armenian Question” and the Armenian-Grigorian Church, received Archbishop Gevorg Chorekchyan of the Armenian-Gregorian Church in Moscow on April 19, 1945. Stalin in this meeting expressed his hope that the

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4 Данциг, *Турция*, 279.

5 Данциг, *Турция*, 282.

Armenian Church would help them settle Armenians scattered around the world in the lands that the USSR wanted to take from Turkey. In this meeting, Stalin accepted several requests of Chorekchyan: opening the Theological Seminary, returning the Matenadaran Library to the Church, restoring the Mathenadaran press, expanding the relations of the Uchkilesa (Echmiadzin) church with the Armenian Diaspora (*spurk/spürk*), opening a currency account of the Armenian-Gregorian Church in the Soviet bank, restoring the activities of the closed churches and monasteries<sup>6</sup>.

After the USSR's victory over Hitler's Germany, Turkey took the initiative and offered to conclude an alliance agreement with the USSR, and in May 1945, the Turkish Ambassador Selim Sarper brought this proposal to the attention of Moscow. At the beginning of June 1945, the Turkish ambassador and the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Vyacheslav Molotov had two meetings and USSR side gave the answer to this proposal of the Turkish government that the Soviet government considered it possible to conclude such an agreement on the condition that mutual claims between the two states were regulated. Molotov pointed out that there were 2 issues at the source of this condition. The first was the territorial-border issue. At the insistence of the Soviets, both states should jointly protect the borders, and in 1921, some parts of the USSR-Turkey border that were unfairly drawn, namely Kars, Artvin, and Ardahan, should be given to the USSR. The second issue was the issue of the usage of the seas. Thus, the leadership of the USSR did not want to accept the terms of the Montreux Convention and stated that this convention was an agreement directed against the USSR. Molotov, showing Moscow's position, informed the Ambassador Sarper during the negotiations that if Turkey was ready to resolve the disputed issues, it was possible to conclude this agreement<sup>7</sup>.

### The “Armenian Question” during the Second World War

It should be noted, during the Second World War, in order to realize the territorial ambitions of the Armenians, the Armenian Bolshevik leaders continued the Mkhitar<sup>8</sup> traditions, based on fabricated legends, did not give up groundless territorial claims and continuously propagated the aspirations for “Greater Armenia”, and tried to raise the authority of the Armenian-Gregorian

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6 «В борьбе за существование», *Armenian Vestnik*, No. 9(56), September 1993.

7 *Советский Союз на международных конференциях периода Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг.*, т. VI, 144.

8 Mkhitar of Sevestia (1676–1749) - a Catholic priest, who in 1717 requested the Lazarus Island from the Venetian Senate for the establishment of a monastery. Having formed a consistory -a brotherhood of Armenian Catholics, he persistently propagated the “Armenian Question” in the countries of the West and the East. Mkhitar's successors were called the Mkhitarists.

Church (the creator of the “Armenian Question”) before the leadership of the USSR.

In this direction, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia G. Arutyunov was important due to his special activities. During his meeting with Stalin in October 1943, Arutyunov informed about the struggle of the Armenian-Gregorian Church against fascism and its assistance to the Armenian SSR, and Stalin requested the establishment of the Council for the Affairs of the Armenian-Gregorian Church, and the Council began its work in November 1943<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, Arutyunov, who had dedicated himself to the aspects of the “Armenian Question”, invited the well-known Soviet historian and academician Yevgeny Tarlen to Yerevan in June 1944 and discussed the issue of the unification of Eastern Anatolia with Soviet Armenia. However, this discussion did not give the result expected by the Armenians, and Moscow did not make any decisions<sup>10</sup>.

Armenian nationalist historiography of the modern era (pursued jointly by the Armenian-Gregorian church and Armenian lobby groups and political organizations) has frequently resorted to distorting historical facts and relies on the concept of K. Patkanov, a Russian orientalist and Armenian scholar of the 19th century. According to this concept, the ancestors of the Armenians, the Musks, whom the ancient Greek sources show as Armens, came from the Balkans to the East, as written by ancient authors, not in the 8th-7th centuries B.C., but in the 12th century B.C., before the creation of the state of Urartu. In the 11th-10th centuries B.C., Armenians mingled with Hurrians -Alaroids in the Nairi region, who settled in the territory of Asia Minor and were the main population of Urartu<sup>11</sup>.

Historical falsifiers based on Patkanov’s concept that the area of Asia Minor is the “motherland” of Armenians also stated that Urartu, one of the powerful states of the ancient world, was an Armenian state. The main purpose of this concept was to “scientifically” justify the territorial claims of the Armenians to Eastern Anatolia. It should be noted that the famous Soviet historians B.B. Piotrovsky and G. Kapansyan stand out among the defenders of the “Urartu” concept. They claimed that Armenians were the heirs of Urartu culture, linking the ancestors of Armenians to the Hayk tribes from the Hurri tribes<sup>12</sup>. During the Second World War, the concept of “Urartu” was very important for Armenians who wanted to exact revenge from Turkey. Since the concept of

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9 *Ноев Ковчег*, No. 3 (138), March 2009.

10 *Ноев Ковчег*, No. 3 (138), March 2009.

11 К. Патканов, *Ванские надписи и значение их для истории Передней Азии* (СПб: В.С Balasheva, 1881), 148,149.

12 Б.Б. Пиотровский, *О происхождении армянского народа* (Ереван, 1946), 25 ; Г.А. Капанян, *Хаяса – колыбель армян* (Ереван: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences Armenian SSR, 1947), 236.

“Urartu” was fully in line with the interests of the leadership of the USSR, which wanted territory from Turkey, this concept found a fertile ground in Soviet historiography and began to develop. Thus, the USSR government, which was very close to victory in the war with Hitler’s Germany, set the goal of restoring the southern borders of Tsarist Russia on the eve of the First World War, claimed the Kars and Ardahan provinces from Turkey, and this policy coincided with the main line of the “Armenian Question” -its claim to Eastern Anatolia, and it was an urgent issue to collect Armenians scattered around the world into the Armenian SSR.

Although the discussion of the transfer of Armenians living abroad to the Armenian SSR began in 1944, practical steps were taken in April 1945. In their turn, the Armenian organizations representing the Armenian Diaspora appealed to the United Nations (the UN) conference convened on April 25-26, 1945, forgetting the services rendered by the Armenian extremists Garegin Njdeh, Drastamat “Dro” Kanayan, and other Dashnaks to Hitler’s Germany, and stated in their appeal that “Armenians acted together with the Allies, and therefore the Armenian lands on the territory of Turkey should be united to Soviet Armenia<sup>13</sup>.

### **Historical Background: The Activities of the Armenian Lobby on the Eve of the Second World War**

It should be noted that the “Armenian Question” was raised in the USSR long before the Second World War, and the Communist Party of Armenia showed special zeal in this regard. During this period, the “Armenian Aid Committee”, which was established at the initiative of the leadership of the Communist Party of Armenia, opened representations in the territory of the USSR, Central Asian republics, and various regions of Russia, which had no territorial connection with the Armenian SSR, and tried to keep the “Armenian Question” on the agenda. At the same time, representatives of Armenian organizations operating in foreign countries made trips to the Armenian SSR in the name of visiting orphanages, relying on Mkhitarist tactics while “inciting feelings of hostility towards neighboring nations, propagating territorial claims, sowing seeds of hatred in the minds of the youth” of Armenia<sup>14</sup>.

On the eve of the Second World War, Armenian lobby groups and the Armenian Diaspora did not promote groundless territorial claims against Turkey only in

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13 M. Qasımlı, *Ermənistanın sovetləşdirilməsindən Azərbaycan ərazilərinin işğalınadək erməni iddiaları: tarix-olduğu kimi (1920-1994-cü illər)* (Bakı: Science Development Fund, 2016), 227.

14 Qasımlı, *Ermənistanın sovetləşdirilməsindən Azərbaycan ərazilərinin işğalınadək erməni iddiaları*, 218.

the territory of the USSR. Nationalist Armenians trying to keep the “Armenian Question” on the agenda published anti-Turkish literature in various foreign countries, made territorial claims against Turkey, which prompted the Turkish government to ban such literature. For example, the book *Armenian Issue* published in Beirut by Masheh Seropyan was directed against the territorial integrity of Turkey, according to Article 51 of the Press Law of Turkey and to the letter No. 1975/3 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs dated May 3, 1939, its import and sale to Turkey was banned<sup>15</sup>. In those years as well, articles published by Hayastan Gochank (“Call of Armenia”), a press organ of the Armenian society “Yerpar” (“Approach”) operating in the United States, voiced unfounded territorial claims against Turkey, propagated the claim of “Greater Armenia”. The said group carried out anti-Turkish propaganda within Turkey as well. To prevent such conspiratorial moves, the Turkish government banned the import and sale of this collection in accordance with Article 51 of the Press Law on February 5, 1941<sup>16</sup>.

Even after the start of the Second World War, Armenian lobby groups continued their territorial claims against Turkey. At that time, these organizations were drawing up fake maps and showing fictitious “Armenia” and “Kurdistan” on the territory of Turkey. One such map, “Der Grosse Weltatlas” (“The Great Atlas of the World”), was published in Leipzig, Germany. According to Article 51 of the Law on the Press of Turkey, this map was also prohibited from being imported into the country<sup>17</sup>.

### **The “Armenian Card” at the Potsdam Conference**

The Potsdam Conference, organized in the summer of 1945 in Germany, was a meeting of the Allied Powers during the Second World War for discussions on how to establish peace and Allied control over Europe and the Pacific upon the defeat of the Axis Powers, highlighted the increasing assertiveness of the USSR. The USSR, as the winning side, left its position mentioned in the previous section and put the “Armenian card” on the table while openly asserting its territorial claims against Turkey. Thus, at the evening meeting of July 16, 1945, the People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR V. Molotov told the British Foreign Minister E. Eden that the Turks took advantage of the weakness of the Soviet government in 1921 and captured a part of the territory of the Armenians and the Soviet Union Armenians were

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15 Qasımlı, *Ermənistanın sovetləşdirilməsindən Azərbaycan ərazilərinin işğalınadək erməni iddiaları*, 224. Also see: Republic of Turkey General Office. Resolution T.C.BCA 030.18.01.02.86.40.18.

16 Republic of Turkey General Office. Resolution T.C.BCA 030.18.01.02.93.129.20.

17 Qasımlı, *Ermənistanın sovetləşdirilməsindən Azərbaycan ərazilərinin işğalınadək erməni iddiaları*, 224.

offended because of this. Molotov, who did not agree with British Foreign Minister Eden's opinion that "the Turks will not accept the territorial claims of the USSR", insisted that 400,000-500,000 Armenians should live in Turkey. At that time, their number had reached 1 million in the Armenian SSR, and more than 1 million Armenians were living in foreign countries. So, if the territory of the Armenians expanded, many Armenians would have liked to come to the Armenian SSR, and for the sake of justice, Turkey had to give the land of the Armenians to the Soviet Union<sup>18</sup>.

At the seventh evening meeting of the heads of state on July 23, 1945, Stalin also put this position on the table and told the heads of state that the issue of changing the borders with Turkey was primarily the borders before the First World War, which meant the "restoration of historic borders", and which meant that the Kars region belonged to the Armenians and the Ardahan region belonged to the Georgians<sup>19</sup>. It should be noted here that Stalin falsified history in order to achieve his goal in the Potsdam Conference on the territory-border issue. Because the Kars province, which joined the Russian Empire after the San Stefano Peace Treaty, was not part of Armenia, which did not exist at that time, and Ardahan had nothing to do with the Georgians.

### **"Armenian Question" after the Potsdam Conference**

Despite its assertiveness at the Potsdam Conference, the USSR failed to acquire territory from Turkey. Yet, using Moscow's Armenophile policy to its advantage, the Armenian nationalist agenda did not give up on its aim of territorial expansion and brought up the "Karabakh Issue" by focusing the contours of the "Armenian Question" to the historical lands of Azerbaijan. In this context, on October 27, 1945, Stalin told G. Arutyunov that the USSR had not given up its territorial claims to Turkey and that the "Armenian Question" remained on the agenda, and that the Armenian factor was important for the USSR. Arutyunov said that more than 300,000 Armenians aspired to the "historic" Armenian homeland and asked Stalin to solve the Karabakh and Nakhchivan issues in favor of the Armenians<sup>20</sup>.

With this, G. Arutyunov ignored the historical facts that neither Karabakh nor Nakhchivan were originally related to the history of the Armenian people and that Armenians were mostly a non-ethnic population in the Caucasus, including Azerbaijan. Thus, after the Turkmenchay and Edirne Treaties were concluded,

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18 *Советский Союз на международных конференциях в период Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг.*, т. VI, 39, 40.

19 *Советский Союз на международных конференциях в период Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг.*, т. VI, 158.

20 *Ноев Ковчег*, No. 3 (138), March 2009.

the Armenian-Gregorian Church was able to convince the Romanov rulers of Tsarist Russia that Armenians had an exceptional place in the establishment of the political power of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus mega region, including the lands of Azerbaijan north of Araz, which Russia occupied. Massively resettled, the migration of Armenians to the country continued in the later stages of history, as a result, the weight of the Orthodox Armenians (adherents to the Gregorian Church), who made up 9.37% of the Azerbaijan's population in the first thirty years of the 19th century, increased to 32.8% at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>21</sup>. After settling in the historical lands of Azerbaijan, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians, who were not satisfied with establishing Armenian statehood only in Yerevan, continued their territorial claims against Azerbaijan and brought the "Nagorno-Karabakh problem" into the history of Azerbaijan.

### **Armenian Territorial Claims Concerning Karabakh after the Second World War**

In the autumn of 1945, G. Arutyunov relied on this outline of the "Armenian Question" and put the "Karabakh card" on the table before the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (b) Party (AUC(b)P) about the annexation of a part of Azerbaijani lands -the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province (NAGO) to the Armenian SSR. In his letter dated November 28, 1945, written to Mirjafar Baghirov, the 1st secretary of the Central Committee of the AUC(b)P Secretary K.M. Malenkov expressed the desire of the Armenians regarding this issue and wanted to know his opinion<sup>22</sup>. At that moment Bagirov showed that the claims of the Armenian SSR had no scientific and historical basis and also stated that, with the exception of Shusha, the majority of whose population were Azerbaijanis, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province (NKAR) could be given to the Armenian SSR in the event that Azizbeyov (the majority of whose population was Azerbaijani Turkish), the Vedi and Karabakhlar regions should be returned to the Azerbaijan SSR as a whole<sup>23</sup>.

Neither the Soviet central government nor the leadership of the Armenian SSR agreed to this proposal, because in this case, the fictitious "Armenian state" created at the expense of the historical Azerbaijani lands would become meaningless in terms of Armenian aspirations due to the potential territorial

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21 Х.Ю. Вердиева, *Переселенческая политика Российской империи в Северном Азербайджане (XIX-начале XXвв.) Историко-демографическое исследование (II издание, с изменениями, дополнениями)* (Баку: "Ecoprint", 2016), 320.

22 Archive of Social-Political Documents of the Affairs Department of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (hereinafter - ASPD ADPR), F.1. List. 31. Case no 186a, p. 3.

23 ASPD ADPR, F.1. List. 31. Case no 186a, p. 5.



compromises. However, Bagirov's firm position regarding Azerbaijan's territorial integrity did not stop Armenian territorial claims. In order not to diminish the "Armenian Question", the leadership of the Armenian SSR acted in tandem with Armenian lobby groups, took another direction for the "Armenian Question", and prepared a project related to the repatriation of Armenians living abroad in November 1945 with the aim of gathering Armenians scattered around the world in Yerevan. Based on this project, on November 21, 1945, Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars of the USSR Stalin and the head of affairs of the SSR M. Smirtykov adopted the decision No. 2947 consisting of four points "On practical measures for the resettlement of Armenians living abroad to Soviet Armenia" and the Armenian SSR and the Council of People's Commissars were allowed to organize the bringing of Armenians who wanted to come from abroad<sup>24</sup>.

After this decision, the Armenian lobby in the United States (the US) became more active. The said lobby made groundless territorial claims, and the "Committee of the American Struggle for Fair Treatment of Armenians", in its appeal sent to the UN delegation on February 1, 1946, stated that the "Armenian National Council of America" supported the repatriation of Armenians and defended the decision to give the lands of Eastern Anatolia<sup>25</sup>. Later, at the beginning of May 1946, 16 Armenian organizations in the US appealed to the Secretary General of the UN Trygve Lee, drawing attention to the inclusion of the "Armenian Question" on the agenda of the UN Security Council, and stated that the Armenians scattered around the world demanded the transfer of Kars, Ardahan, Erzurum, Trabzon, Bitlis and Van to the Armenian SSR<sup>26</sup>. At that time, the Chairman of the Philadelphia (in the US) branch of the "Armenian National Council of America" Shahinyan, who insisted on the territorial claims, also stated that "the 10,000-strong Armenian colony of Philadelphia unanimously supports the program of joining the lands of Eastern Anatolia to Armenia"<sup>27</sup>.

It should be noted that the "American Committee for the Fair Treatment of Armenians" and the "Armenian National Council of America" organizations were not satisfied only with appeals. These organizations organized a rally in New York City on April 28, 1946, in order to attract the attention of the American public to the "Armenian Question" and stated in their adopted resolution that the return of Armenians to the Armenian SSR was possible only

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24 Н.Н. Аблажей, "Репатриация и депортация армян во второй половине 1940-х годов", *Вестник НГУ*. Серия: История, филология, 2011, Том 10, выпуск 1: История: 230.

25 *Коммунист* (published in the Armenian SSR in Russian), February 6, 1946.

26 *Коммунист*, May 9, 1946.

27 *Коммунист*, May 15, 1946.

if the provinces of Eastern Anatolia were given up by Turkey<sup>28</sup>. The “Armenian National Council of Lebanon” made a similar request, sending a telegram to the UN Security Council on May 15, 1946, demanding a positive solution to the “Armenian Question”.<sup>29</sup>

After the Potsdam Conference, several representatives of the political circles of the US also supported the demands of the Armenian Diaspora, and the US State of California was particularly noteworthy in this regard. Thus, the territorial demands of the “Committee for the Fair Treatment of Armenians” and the “Armenian National Council of America” to Turkey were defended by Senator Downey, a member of the Democratic Party from California, and Girhard, a Republican member of the House of Representatives from California, and the latter stated that, “the solution of the “Armenian Question” in this direction should form the main principles of the foreign policy of the United States”<sup>30</sup>.

Armenian lobby groups, which did not give up their territorial claims against Turkey, were bearing their fruits. Armenian caravans heading to the Armenian SSR departed from various parts of the world. On June 27, 1946, 1,806 Armenians from Damascus and Beirut arrived at the port of Batumi on the “Transylvania” ship<sup>31</sup>. On July 28, 1946, 789 Armenians from Bulgaria came to the Armenian SSR<sup>32</sup>. In August 1946, the first Armenian caravan consisting of 1742 people from Romania arrived in the Armenian SSR<sup>33</sup>. Concerning the widespread diaspora in Arab countries, on September 19, 1946, 2427 Armenians from Syria and Lebanon arrived in Batumi on the ship “Vyacheslav Molotov” to go to the Armenian SSR<sup>34</sup>.

It should be noted that Armenian organizations aiming at territorial claims also worked in the 1920s to transfer scattered Armenians from various countries to the South Caucasus mega region, primarily to the lands of Azerbaijan, as a result of the efforts of the Armenian diaspora organization and more than 8000 Armenians were relocated from the Iraqi city of Mosul to different regions of

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28 *Коммунист*, May 1, 1946.

29 *Коммунист*, May 17, 1946.

30 *Коммунист*, June 6, 1946

31 H., Verdiyeva and C. Əlizadə, *İrəvan məkanında azərbaycanlılara qarşı etnik təmizləmə: tarixi və hüquqi aspektlərdə* (Baku: “Science and Education”, 2020), 63. Also see: *Ноев Ковчег*, No. 3 (138), March 2009.

32 Verdiyeva and Əlizadə, *İrəvan məkanında azərbaycanlılara qarşı etnik təmizləmə*, 63. Also see: *Коммунист*, July 30, 1946.

33 Verdiyeva and Əlizadə, *İrəvan məkanında azərbaycanlılara qarşı etnik təmizləmə*, 63-64. Also see: *Коммунист*, August 11, 1946.

34 Verdiyeva and Əlizadə, *İrəvan məkanında azərbaycanlılara qarşı etnik təmizləmə*, 64. Also see: *Коммунист*, September 21, 1946

the Azerbaijan SSR”<sup>35</sup>. During these years, the “Organization of Armenians of Iran”, which was active in Pahlavi Iran, managed to relocate several thousand Armenian families to the territories of Azerbaijan<sup>36</sup>. However, after the Potsdam Conference, the Armenian caravans from abroad did not show the expected result. So, although the immigration of 63,000 Armenians to the Armenian SSR was planned for 1947, in practice only 35,400 Armenians came to the Armenian SSR. According to the indicators of June 1948, 86,346 Armenians had come to the USSR from abroad<sup>37</sup>. These indicators did not coincide with the claim made by G. Arutyunov on October 27, 1945 to Stalin that “more than 300,000 Armenians aspired to join the Armenian SSR”.

After Turkey became one of the main subjects of the “Marshall Plan” and became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on February 18, 1952, the Soviet government informed the Turkish government on May 30 that “for the protection of friendly neighborly relations, strengthening of peace and security, the governments of Armenia and Georgia found it expedient to give up their territorial claims against Turkey”<sup>38</sup>. So, USSR was forced to give up its territorial claims against Turkey. Of course, this was also related to the internal power struggle within the Communist Party at that time. Capitalizing on this, Armenian nationalists brought up the plan to carry out ethnic cleansing in the historical land of Azerbaijan, Yerevan, and the next stage of expulsion of Azerbaijani Turks from their historical lands in the territory of the Armenian SSR began. The implementation of the resettlement was formalized by the decision No. 4083 of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR “On the resettlement of collective farmers and other Azerbaijani population from the Armenian SSR to the Kur-Araz lowland of the Azerbaijan SSR” on December 23, 1947<sup>39</sup>.

According to this decision, 100,000 Azerbaijanis were to be transferred “on a voluntary basis” to the Azerbaijan SSR in 1948-1950, 10,000 in 1948, 40,000 in 1949, and 50,000 in 1950. To speed up the implementation of this process, the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR prepared a concrete action plan with the decision of March 10, 1948 “On the measures related to the transfer of collective farmers and other Azerbaijani population from the Armenian SSR to the Kur-Araz plain of the Azerbaijan SSR”<sup>40</sup>. In total, 37,387 Azerbaijanis

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35 Qasımlı, *Ermənistanın sovetləşdirilməsindən Azərbaycan ərazilərinin işğalnadək erməni iddiaları*, 218.

36 Qasımlı, *Ermənistanın sovetləşdirilməsindən Azərbaycan ərazilərinin işğalnadək erməni iddiaları*, 219.

37 Аблажей, “Репатриация и депортация армян во второй половине 1940-х годов”, 118.

38 *Советский Союз на международных конференциях в период Великой Отечественной войны 1941-1945 гг.*, т. VI, 514.

39 ASPD ADPR, F.1. List.33. Case no 227, p. 14.

40 ASPD ADPR, F.1. List. 33. Case no 227, p.1.

were transferred from the Armenian SSR to the Azerbaijan SSR in 1948-1951<sup>41</sup>. The deportation continued in the following years and by 1956, the number of people transferred from the Armenian SSR to the Kur-Araz plain of the Azerbaijan SSR and other regions had reached 58,421 people.<sup>42</sup>

Since the conducted statistics face several errors, the final indicator can only be accepted conditionally. However, as a result of the implementation of the decisions dated December 23, 1947, and March 10, 1948, the number of Azerbaijani Turks in the Armenian SSR without a doubt decreased sharply. At the same time, the plan of the Armenian nationalists to collect the Armenians living abroad did not give the expected result. After the Potsdam Conference, the Azerbaijani Turks, who had to experience the bitter truth of the Armenian territorial ambitions, were deported from the Armenian SSR in 1948-1953, and no legal assessments to this criminal act based on the accepted conventions were delivered by the relevant institutes of international law. Decades later, it was Azerbaijan's National Leader Heydar Aliyev who first systematically highlighted the tragedy of Azerbaijanis living in Yerevan. On December 18, 1997, he signed the decree "On the mass deportation of Azerbaijanis from their historical and ethnic lands in the territory of the Armenian SSR in 1948-1953" and the criminal nature of the policy of ethnic cleansing and extermination against the Azerbaijanis in the territory of the Armenian SSR in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was brought to the attention of the international community.<sup>43</sup>

## **Conclusion**

As a result, based on the above, it should be stated that after the Potsdam Conference, the "Armenian Question" was brought up by the leadership of the USSR, and Stalin's government acted in tandem with the Armenian nationalists and pursued Armenian territorial ambitions in three directions: First, an unfounded territorial claim was made against Turkey and the concept of "Urartu" was developed; second, claims to Karabakh were brought up; third, ethnic cleansing was carried out in the Armenian SSR in 1948-1953 when the migration caravans of small Armenians living abroad headed to the territory of the USSR and Azerbaijani Turks were deported. Ultimately, however, the USSR was forced to give up its groundless territorial claims against Turkey, and Armenia's claims for Karabakh were pushed to the sidelines.

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41 ASPD ADPR, F. 1. List 33. Case no 230, p. 10.

42 B. Nəcəfov, *Deportasiya*, Part III (Baku: Çashioğlu, 2006), 208.

43 "1948-1953-cü illərdə Qərbi Azərbaycan torpaqlarından deportasiya", *1905.az*, December 27, 2023, <https://1905.az/1948-1953-cu-ill%C9%99rd%C9%99-q%C9%99rbi-az%C9%99rbaycan-torpaqlarından-deportasiya/>

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## BOOK REVIEW / KİTAP İNCELEMESİ

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### THE MEMOIRS OF ARSHAVIR SHIRAGIAN: THE LIFE STORY OF AN ARMENIAN PATRIOT OR THE CONFESSIONS OF A TERRORIST?\*

(ARSHAVIR SHIRAGIAN'IN ANILARI: BİR ERMENİ VATANSEVERİN  
HAYAT HİKÂYESİ Mİ, YOKSA BİR TERÖRİSTİN İTİRAFLARI MI?)

**Title:** Bir Ermeni Teröristin İtirafları (The Confessions of an Armenian Terrorist)

**Author:** Arşavir Şıracıyan (Arshavir Shiragian)

**Published:** Kastaş Yayınları, 1997

**ISBN:** 975-7639-66-X

**Language:** Turkish

**Number of pages:** 329

**Abstract:** *Born in Istanbul in 1900, Arshavir Shiragian was an Armenian who closely witnessed and participated in the activities of the Dashnaktsutyun as a youngster. In his book, Shiragian narrates his memoirs before and after the assassinations he carried out as part of Operation*

\* This is the revised English translation of a Turkish-language book review titled “Bir Ermeni Teröristin İtirafları” (“The Confessions of an Armenian Terrorist”) that was originally published in the 75th issue of the *Ermeni Araştırmaları* journal: Ahmet Can Öktem, “Bir Ermeni Teröristin İtirafları”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 75 (2024), 189-197.

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*Nemesis. He began writing his memoirs in 1965 and his book was published in English by his daughter Sonia Shiragian three years after his death in 1976 with the title “The Legacy: Memoirs of an Armenian Patriot”. Shiragian’s memoirs were translated to Turkish from the 1982 French edition titled “La Dette de sang: Un Arménien traque les responsables du génocide 1921-1922” (“The Blood Debt: An Armenian Tracks Down Those Responsible for the Genocide, 1921-1922”) and published in 1997 and 2006. The writer describes the numerous struggles and dangers he faced, the various phases within his tasks, his radical beliefs, and the different Dashnak members he worked with. In this book review, explanations will be made regarding the Dashnaksutyun and Operation Nemesis. Additionally, there will be comments on some examples of the numerous slurs and accusations against Turks, false and controversial statements, and striking parts of the memoirs.*

**Keywords:** *Arshavir Shiragian, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun-ARF), Operation Nemesis, Terrorism, Anti-Turkish Propaganda, Blue Book, Vahé (İhsan) Essayan, Sait Halim, Bahattin Şakir, Cemal Azmi*

**Öz:** *1900 İstanbul doğumlu bir Ermeni olan ve Taşnaksutyun’un faaliyetlerine gençlik yıllarında yakından tanıklık eden ve katılan Arşavir Şıracıyan, kitabında Nemesis Operasyonu kapsamında gerçekleştirmiş olduğu suikastların öncesi ve sonrasındaki anılarını anlatmaktadır. Şıracıyan hatıratını 1965 yılında yazmaya başlamış, kitabı ise ölümünden üç yıl sonra, 1976’da kızı Sonia Şıracıyan tarafından İngilizce “The Legacy: Memoirs of an Armenian Patriot” (“Miras: Bir Ermeni Vatanseverin Hatıratı”) başlığıyla yayınlanmıştır. Söz konusu hatıra kitabı, 1982 tarihli ve “La Dette de sang: Un Arménien traque les responsables du génocide 1921-1922” (“Kan Borcu: Bir Ermeni Soykırımdan Sorumlu Olanların İzini Bulup Yakalıyor, 1921-1922”) başlıklı Fransızca baskısından Türkçeye çevrilerek, 1997 ve 2006 yıllarında yayınlanmıştır. Yazar kitabında karşılaşmış olduğu birçok zorluğu ve tehlikeyi, görevlerindeki çeşitli süreçleri, radikal inançlarını ve birlikte çalışmış olduğu değişik Taşnak üyelerini anlatmaktadır. Bu kitap tahlilinde Taşnaksutyun örgütü ve Nemesis Operasyonu konusunda açıklamalara yer verilecek, ayrıca kitapta Türklere yönelik çok sayıda göze çarpan hakaret ve ithamların, yalan ve tartışılır açıklamaların, hatıratların dikkat çeken kısımlarının bazı örnekleri verilir, üzerinde yorum yapılacaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Arşavir Şıracıyan, Ermeni Devrimci Federasyonu (Taşnaksutyun-EDF), Nemesis Operasyonu, Terör, Türk Karşıtı Propaganda, Mavi Kitap, Vahe İhsan Eseyan, Sait Halim, Bahattin Şakir, Cemal Azmi*

## Introduction

Born in Istanbul in 1900, Arshavir Shiragian was an Armenian who closely witnessed and participated in the activities of the Dashnaktsutyun as a youngster. In his book, Shiragian narrates his memoirs before and after the assassinations he carried out as part of Operation Nemesis. He began writing his memoirs in 1965 and his book was published in English by his daughter Sonia Shiragian three years after his death in 1976 with the title “The Legacy: Memoirs of an Armenian Patriot”. Shiragian’s memoirs were translated to Turkish from the 1982 French edition titled “La Dette de sang: Un Arménien traque les responsables du génocide 1921-1922” (“The Blood Debt: An Armenian Tracks Down Those Responsible for the Genocide, 1921-1922”) and published in 1997 and 2006.

The reader could initially think of this book as a classic detective story. However, Shiragian, who carried out arms procurement, espionage, and assassination missions on behalf of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun-ARF), presented himself in his book as determined, resourceful, cunning, fast-adapting, well-acting, and elusive, as if he was the protagonist of a spy thriller. This spy will have many encounters with security staff in different places and circumstances, both from afar and up close. The reader will repeatedly feel the presence of ambition, duty, struggle against difficulties, national pride, anxiety, risk, danger, luck, drama, and similar attention-grabbing themes in various situations. It is conceivable that such passages could have been written to stir sympathy and excitement in the reader, as well as to legitimize political assassination.

In addition to the author’s radical beliefs, the different experiences, circumstances, difficulties, and dangers in his memoirs will probably lead to confusion and skepticism for some readers. It is stated that Shiragian began writing his memoirs in 1965. The timing of the book is noteworthy, as it coincides with the re-emergence of the Armenian Question on the agenda of world public opinion. If Shiragian did not start writing his memoirs during the Operation Nemesis period and did not use reliable sources in the preparation of his memoirs, this would be grounds for doubts regarding the book’s reliability.

## The Dashnaktsutyun and Operation Nemesis

When Arshavir Shiragian was a young boy, the Shiragian family home became a meeting place for Dashnak leaders. As a child, he was given tasks of transporting and storing weapons and gathering information from outside sources (p. 45). Within the scope of Operation Nemesis, he was the murderer who carried out the assassinations of Vahé (İhsan) Essayan, Sait Halim Pasha,

Dr. Bahattin Şakir and Cemal Azmi. In the relevant literature, the acts of Operation Nemesis are referred to as the “Second Wave of Armenian Terrorism”. These “revenge” attacks of the Dashnaksutyun were executed to “punish those responsible” for the decisions taken on 24 April and 27 May 1915, which the Armenian people claim constituted genocide.

Having closely followed Dashnak beliefs and practices at a young age, Shiragian became a defender of the radical Armenian cause and an enemy of the Turks. He shared his beliefs about the Dashnaksutyun and the Turks with the reader in many passages. One of his comments provides insight into these beliefs:

“During the war, we had hidden a certain amount of weapons. The leaders of the Dashnak Party wanted us to take them out of the places they were stashed, clean them, and transfer them to safer locations. We had to do this secretly. The newspapers were already looking for ways to justify the massacres. If the Turks caught us red-handed while transporting the weapons, they would, as usual, distort the facts and declare that the Dashnak Party’s antagonistic stance had forced them to commit these massacres. Of course, they would never take into account the fact that these weapons had been kept in Constantinople [İstanbul] throughout an entire war without being used even once. In fact, even today, they deny responsibility for the massacres. They seem to have forgotten the events that took place during the war. Official Turkish History, on the other hand, makes absolutely no mention of the extermination of one million two hundred thousand unarmed and apolitical Armenians, the vast majority of whom were farmers, artisans, and merchants, who were massacred along with their women and children as an atrocious price for being Christian Armenians.” (p. 88)

Considering the manifesto of the Dashnaksutyun, the past activities of its members, the content of its newspapers, as well as the military and economic conditions in the Ottoman Empire at the time, it would be unreasonable to believe Shiragian’s view that the Dashnaks from Istanbul had never used the weapons they had hidden and would never use them. It is clear that the Manifesto of the Dashnaksutyun, published in 1891, was a declaration of war against the Ottoman Turkish authorities. The Dashnaks’ acts of terrorism were motivated both by the perceived need for revenge and self-defense, but also by a desire to provoke retaliation by the Turks in order to encourage Armenian support and the intervention of the Western great powers.<sup>1</sup> Karekin

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1 Michael M. Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 61-62. For more information on the Dashnaksutyun’s program and bylaws, see Halil Özşavlı, “Ermeni Milliyetçilik Hareketlerinin Doğuşu Taşnak-İttihat Ve Terakki İttifakı”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 41 (2012), 160-170.

Pastermadjian, one of the terrorists involved in the attack on the Ottoman Bank in 1896, led Operation Nemesis in the early 1920s. The official news outlet of the Dashnaksutyun, the *Droshak* (Flag) newspaper, openly supported terrorism.<sup>2</sup> The “Execution Bureau”, with which Shiragian was in contact during his assassination missions, was established in the building of the Dashnak newspaper *Djagadamard* (War Front) (p. 87). The author was also convinced that the Dashnaks had set up their own tribunals and sentenced alleged criminals to death, since no other body similar to the post-Second World War era Nuremberg Tribunal was organized at the time (p. 141).

The author wrote that he was considered public enemy number one by the Turkish police, yet even in times of danger, he never thought of using his gun against innocents. He claimed that he never wanted to be a murderer and that he never shot law enforcement officials simply for doing their duty, including the Turkish police. He also alleged that the Dashnaksutyun, of which he was a member, did not have a total extermination plan akin to the alleged Ottoman Turkish plan (pp. 221-222). Considering the actions of Dashnaksutyun against Armenians who did not support them and dissident Dashnak members, such statements, which may arouse sympathy in some readers, will raise suspicion. For example, some Armenian clergymen, such as Priest Der Kasbar Vartanian, were killed for opposing the Dashnaks’ activities. On the other hand, other Armenian clergymen, such as Bishop Mesrop Ter Movsesian, were involved in extortion and massacres of Turkish police and gendarmes, and ordinary Armenians who did not follow the Dashnaks’ instructions.<sup>3</sup>

### Various Slurs and Accusations Against The Turks

In many pages of this book, written by a Dashnak terrorist, one will find harsh insults and slander against the Turkish people as a whole. In a comment he made about Policeman Eşref, one of the interesting characters in his book, he noted that Eşref was “unusually intelligent for a Turk”. He wrote that although Eşref had been following Shiragian for years and had set traps for him, he was always on the losing side (p. 207). It can be said that Shiragian portrayed himself in his book as a prey with a superior intellect to that of his hunter. According to the author, he had a strange and even condescending relationship

2 For more information on the *Droshak* (Flag) newspaper, see Jean-Louis Mattei, “‘Droshak’ Newspaper: A Newspaper That Openly Supported Terrorism”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 31 (2015), 232-237.

3 For more information, “The Roots Of ‘Nemesis’ And The Background Of Radical Armenian Nationalist Terrorism”, *Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Analysis No: 2023/11, March 11, 2023, <https://avim.org.tr/en/Analiz/THE-ROOTS-OF-NEMESIS-AND-THE-BACKGROUND-OF-RADICAL-ARMENIAN-NATIONALIST-TERRORISM>

with Eşref. He also wrote that he had spent a lot of time with Eşref and that he always treated him “like a little sister” (p. 207). Considering that traditional Turkish and Armenian family structures (which resemble each other) attribute a protective status to (especially young) female members of the family, Shiragian’s view of himself as a “big brother” in relation to the “little sister” Eşref tells a lot about Shiragian's opinion of himself and Turks in general. The author was also aware of his reputation among the Turkish police, stating that he had repeatedly baffled them (p. 116) and that it would take an ingenious trap to catch him (p. 222).

The author also referred to the “Blue Book”, which was prepared by the British Propaganda Office during the First World War by James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, and contains a significant degree of anti-Turkism and historical distortion. When mentioning the Blue Book, Shiragian propounded the methodology of the “horrors and atrocities” inflicted on Armenians by the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Ottoman Special Organization), which he claimed was composed of “thousands of sadists who knew neither conscience nor law”. Although the narratives in the Blue Book contained some important details about the Armenian Relocation and Resettlement and the 1915 Events, the majority of the atrocities described were based on hearsay. The Blue Book does not contain any evidence to prove the responsibility of the Ottoman Turkish government for the massacres that took place. Moreover, in a private letter written in 1966, Toynbee admitted that “the British Government’s purpose in asking Lord Bryce to compile the Blue Book was propaganda”.<sup>4</sup>

### Sections That May Cause Suspicion for the Reader

The author’s use of a bloody handkerchief hidden in his pocket to pretend to have tuberculosis and escape a police interrogation (pp. 143- 144), and the section where Tefvik Azmi, Rüstem Recep, and Münir Bey were sitting on a bench in Italy and talking, while the author managed to sneak very close to the bench in order to follow and listen to them (p. 156) are examples of various parts with questionable realism.

One of the sections that may seem surprising, suspicious, and even familiar to some readers will be found in the pages regarding the assassination of Sait Halim. According to the author, when Sait Halim Pasha’s horse carriage stopped, Shiragian entered the carriage, shot the Pasha, and when the horses start running, Shiragian hit the Italian coachman with the butt of his pistol (p. 185). However, Italian newspapers on the assassination wrote that the

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4 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey – A Disputed Genocide* (London: The University of Utah Press, 2005), 137-139.

coachman Guglielmo Fiori testified that Shiragian fled the scene immediately after the assassination.<sup>5</sup>

As noted in the introduction, the reader will find that Shiragian had multiple encounters (sometimes up close, sometimes at a distance) with security staff on various occasions and in different circumstances. These encounters include a police station, a port, his departure from a crime scene and subsequent return to the scene of the assassination, and various police checkpoints. For example, in Germany, the author rented a room close to Cemal Azmi's house, only to find out afterwards that the landlady's son was the Deputy Chief of the German Secret Service. Although he felt fear and misfortune at first, he thought that being a tenant in the house of an intelligence officer would be useful to him (p. 237). Despite his poor German, the author gained the confidence of the Deputy Chief, Herr Sack, by using a dictionary. They spent a lot of time together and became friends. Herr Sack took part in the investigations into the assassinations of Bahattin Şakir and Cemal Azmi. He informed Shiragian that an Armenian named Berberian with an extensive file was arrested as a prime suspect. Shiragian learned from his Dashnak friends that Berberian's face was very similar to his. Interestingly, according to the author's account, Shiragian left Berlin a month after the assassination and before that, Sack did not see either Berberian at the police station or the photograph of Shiragian brought to Germany from the Ottoman Empire by the Turkish Secret Service (pp. 288-289, 294, 302). The passages about the German Sack in the memoir bring to mind the scenarios of detective/espionage movies (like a detective character who does not suspect the criminal under his nose) and raise the reader's suspicion.

Two incidents that occurred between the author and Policeman Eşref will raise eyebrows. In the first one, a police patrol, in which Eşref takes part, arrives at the Shiragian house and starts to search for fugitive Armenians hiding in the house. After a long search, the officers leave the house without any results. However, Eşref returned to the house on the same day and entered the room where the secret room of the house was located. While Eşref was looking at the wall, behind which the fugitive Armenians were hiding, the author dropped a crate in the room on his foot and pretended that his foot was broken, thus dissuading Eşref from his mission (pp. 75-83). In the second one, the author, during a time after the murder of Vahé (İhsan) Essayan, who was considered a traitor by the Dashnaks, saw Eşref in the next seat while shaving at the barbershop. After they greeted each other, the author drew his pistol and ensured that Eşref did not move from his seat until the end of the shaving, and paid for them both after the shaving was over. An interesting dialogue took

5 Mevlüt Çelebi, "İtalya'da Ermeni Terörü: İtalyan Basınında Sait Halim Paşa Suikastı", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Güz 2022, Sayı 106: 499.

place between them and the author asked Eşref not to leave the barbershop for five more minutes and to go straight home without visiting the police station (pp. 207-209).

Another surprising part is the one in which the author was about to be arrested or killed by the Turkish Secret Service members he encountered in Bulgaria. Coincidentally, the police inspector who arrived on the scene and later helped the author to escape was a member of the Revolutionary Macedonian Party, a friend of the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Dashnaktsutyun, and someone who had worked with one of the founders of the Dashnaktsutyun, Kristapor Mikaelyan<sup>6</sup> (pp. 308-319). Thanks to the help of this policeman, who was a Macedonian nationalist, opposed to the Ottoman Turkish rule and sympathetic to the Armenian cause, the author managed to escape from the hands of the Turkish Secret Service.

### Several Impressions

Although this book, written by a Dashnak terrorist, contains false, one-sided, and controversial information, it is a useful source of first-hand accounts of the Dashnak movement, the radical Armenian nationalist mindset, and some details of the murders perpetrated by these radicals.

The reader who first reads the words “confessions” and “terrorist” in the Turkish title may be misled into thinking that the author regretted his past activities. Shiragian, a radical Armenian nationalist terrorist, made it clear to the reader that he was proud of his assassinations and other activities. For example, he confessed that when he left Berlin he had to lie to the German family he had lived with and use the people he loved. However, he then brushed off the sentimentality and wrote that his only regret was that he was not able to assassinate Enver and Cemal Pasha as well (p. 305). It should be kept in mind that the book may have served as an inspiration for the third wave of radical Armenian nationalist terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s against Turkish diplomats and family members for the purpose of promoting the Armenian genocide claims in the world public opinion.

When one thinks of the unveiling of the monument dedicated to the Nemesis terrorists in Yerevan on 25 April 2023, this book written by an obvious terrorist will come to mind. The fact that such a monument was inaugurated, that the

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6 For more information on Kristapor Mikaelyan, see Ahmet Can Öktem, “Co-Founder of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and One of the Precursors of Armenian Terrorism: Kristapor Mikaelyan”, *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Commentary No: 2021/34, April 14, 2021, <https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/CO-FOUNDER-OF-THE-ARMENIAN-REVOLUTIONARY-FEDERATION-AND-ONE-OF-THE-PRECURSORS-OF-ARMENIAN-TERRORISM-KRISTAPOR-MIKAELYAN>

ceremony was attended by artists, academics, and descendants of the Operation Nemesis terrorists, and that it took place during the period of the Türkiye-Armenia normalization process, indicates that sympathy towards terrorism among radical Armenians still persists at a dangerous level.

Initiatives such as the construction of monuments in memory of terrorists are a reflection of the fact that the perception of the “enemy” and the feeling of hatred in Armenia and the Armenian diaspora are deeply rooted in the consciousness of the Armenian people. These ingrained beliefs of radical Armenians make Armenia stand out among the examples in the world with regards to the establishment of national identity based on hatred.



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