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The literary heritage of the philosopher, theologian and philologist Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i (18th–19th centuries)

Abstract

At the Mashtots' Matenadaran there are 14 manuscripts containing writings created, edited or compiled by Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i. The most popular among Hovsep's works was the abridged version of the *Philosophia* by the French Dominican philosopher and theologian Antoine Goudin (1639–1695), translated and edited by Father Vrt'anēs Askērean in 1750–1751 in Venice. Hovsep' vardapet abbreviated and edited the *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* by John Chrysostom, adding interpretation of some proverbs missing from the Gospel of Matthew. Hovsep's versions of Goudin's *Philosophia* and Chrysostom's interpretation had mostly practical significance and were aimed at promoting the philosophical and theological learning and teaching. The *Shield of Orthodox* (preserved in only one manuscript) by Hovsep' could be a source for studying confessional issues (between the Lutherans and the members of the Armenian Apostolic Church) in Arts'akh in the 19th century. Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i compiled a *Brief Dictionary of Classical Armenian* (published in 1830, in the Printing House of Shushi, founded by Basel Protestant Missionaries) and an elementary grammar of classical Armenian for the beginners. One of the main peculiarities of the dictionary is that very often the classical Armenian words have dialectal as well as Persian and/or Turkish explanations. Therefore, it could be a fascinating source for studying the language and dialect of Arts'akh of the time. The information provided by the colophons and inscriptions of the manuscripts (some of which are autographs) and the old-printed books, as well as the prefaces and titles of the writings are analyzed to better understand the environment where these philosophical, theological and grammatical treatises were created and spread.

My paper seeks to present the literary and manuscript heritage of an 18th–19th century Armenian scholar, teacher and vardapet Hovsep‘ Arts‘akhets‘i.¹ I will discuss his autographs housed at the Matenadaran – Mashtots‘ Institute of Ancient Manuscripts,² as well as some old-printed books, trying to observe Hovsep‘’s writings in the context of his pedagogical activity and generally the education of Arts‘akh in the 19th century.

There is not much information about Hovsep‘‘s early life.³ It is known that he was born in the city of Shushi, probably in the 60s or 70s of the 18th century. Hovsep‘ is mostly famous for his pedagogical and educational activities. A 19th century Armenian writer, traveller Mesrop T‘aghiadean, mentions in his travel notes that during his stay in Shushi in 1821 he met Hovsep‘ Vardapet, who was then called »a philosopher«.⁴ Hovsep‘ was invited by the prominent noble families of Shushi for the purpose of teaching their sons and daughters. Therefore, T‘aghiadean also took lessons of Logic and Philosophy from him. In his notes T‘aghiadean presents an interesting dialogue with Hovsep‘, characterizing him as a very patient, wise and knowledgeable person.⁵ Another Armenian traveller, bishop Sargis Jalaleants‘, who was a student of Hovsep‘ for a short period, describes him as »the first source of light of the province of Arts‘akh in the recent times«.⁶ A 19th–20th centuries Armenian historian Lēō reports the following:

»He (Hovsep‘) was a monk proficient in Theology, Logic, Rhetoric, Grammar. He was famous for his religious life in the monasteries of Gandzasar and St. Hakob«.⁷

Although Hovsep‘ was invited to Shushi for a special mission, he did not stay in the city for long and mainly carried out his scientific and educational activities in the monasteries of Gandzasar and Metsarānats‘ Surb Hakob.⁸ His fame was so great that the rich families of Shushi sent their children to live in those monasteries in order to continue the discipleship. Hovsep‘ collaborated with the Protestant Missionaries of Basel Mission in Shushi as well,

1 The Armenian names and words are transliterated according to the Library of Congress system. All translations from Armenian are mine. I preferred to make a more literal translation in order to convey the essence of the originals as accurately as possible.

2 The sigla M is used for the Matenadaran–Mashtots‘ Institute of Ancient Manuscripts.

3 I assume that it would be possible to get more information in the archival documents, which, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

4 Mesrovb T‘aghiadeants‘ M., Ճանապարհորդութիւն Մեսրոպբայ Թաղիադեանց Սարկաւազի Սրբոյ Էջմիածնի ի Հայս [Travel of Mesrob T‘aghiadeants‘, Deacon of Holy Etchmiadzin, to Armenia], 1, Calcutta, 1847, 292–293.

5 Ibidem, 293–295.

6 Sargis Jalaleants‘ (Archbishop), Ճանապարհորդութիւն ի Մեծն Հայաստան [Journey to Greater Armenia], Part 2, Tbilisi, 1858, 355.

7 Lēō, Պատմութիւն Դարաբաղի Հայոց Թեմական Հոգևոր դպրոցի, 1838–1913 [History of the Armenian Diocesan spiritual school of Karabakh, 1838–1913], Tbilisi, 1914, 84–85.

8 These monasteries were famous educational centers and scriptoria. See Tamara Minasyan, Արցախի գրչության կենտրոնները [Scriptoria of Arts‘akh], Yerevan, 2015, 9–26.

teaching in their school.⁹ The historian Lēō even talked to the elders of Shushi to learn more about him. According to them, Hovsep' was »extremely facetious and a wine lover«. ¹⁰

Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i passed away in 1847. By the order of the primate of the Karabakh diocese, Metropolitan Baghdasar Hasan-Jalaleants', he was buried on the northern side of the Gandzasar monastery. The versified epitaph describes him the best:

»Hovsep' was a famous scholar teacher-wardapet Avageants' of Arts'akh: O, Ark, how are you able to suffer / And carry the great teacher inside you / You wrap up an old beneficent / You leave the speechless children as orphans from their holy father. / Come, friends, o you lovely muses / Let us mourn with profuse tears the death of our father / As Jesus wept for his Lazarus/. 1847«. ¹¹

At the Mashtots' Matenadaran there are 14 manuscripts containing writings created, edited or compiled by Hovsep Arts'akhets'i. Some of the manuscripts are autographs or copied by his disciples. Below is a list of the treatises I am going to discuss in detail.

1. *Book of Theoretical Philosophy*¹² [Գիրք Տեսական փիլիսոփայութեան, Girk' Tesakan P'ilisop'ayut'ean] – M 2525 (d. 1816), M 6818 (d. 1812, 1816), M 2835 (d. 1831), M 2990 (d. 1835), M 3619 (d. 1835), M 8750 (d. 1835), M 2828 (d. 19th c.), M 4038 (d. 19th c.), M 4045 (d. 19th c.), M 6556 (d. 19th c.). As we will see, the first part of this work was published in 1840 in Shushi.
2. a. A compilation *Commentary*¹³ of the *Gospel of Matthew* created by John Chrysostom [Ծաղկաբաղ մեկնութիւն Աւետարանին Մատթէոսի, զոր արարեալ է Յօհաննու Ոսկերերանին, Tsaghkak'agh Meknut'iwn Awetaranin Matt'ēosi, zor arareal ē Yōhannu Oskeberanin].
 - b. Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i's Interpretation on the Proverbs, which are not found in the concordance of the Gospel of Matthew [Յովսէփայ Արցախեցւոյ մեկնութիւն Առակաց, որք ոչ գտանին ի համաձայնութիւնս Աւետարանին Մատթէոսի, Yovsēp'ay Arts'akhets'woy Meknut'iwn Aṙakats' ork' och' gtanin i hamadzaynut'iwns Awetaranin Mattēosi] – M 3618 (d. 1817), M 3620 (d. 19th c.).

9 More about the activity of the missionaries see Styopa Petoyan, Շուշիում բազմեցան բողոքական քարոզիչների հաստատումը և տպարանի հիմնադրումը [The Installation of Basel Protestant Missionaries in Shushi and the Foundation of the Printing House], European University: Collection of Scientific Articles, 2019, 10, 372–384. Abel Manoukian, Die Basler Missionsgesellschaft und die Armenier 1823–1835, in: M. Tamcke et al. eds., Das Armenische Kulturerbe in Berg-Karabach/Arzach und die Deutschen, Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2021, 61–84 u. 85–114. See also Manoukian's contribution to this volume.

10 Lēō, Պատմութիւն Ղարաբաղի Հայոց թեմական հոգևոր դպրոցի, 1838–1913 [History of the Armenian Diocesan spiritual school of Karabakh, 1838–1913], 85.

11 Makar Barkhutareants' Արցախ [Arts'akh], Baku, 1895, 179.

12 This is not an original title, but a conventional one, used in the Manuscript Catalogues of the Matenadaran.

13 I will sometimes use the term »Florilegium« for this work.

3. *A book called Shield of the Orthodox* [Գիրք, որ կոչի Վահան ուղղափառաց, Girk' or koch'i Vahan ughghap'arats'] – M 2622 (d. 1838).
4. *This book is called a Pamphlet of Verb for the use of beginners* [Գիրքս այս կոչի տետրակ բայի ի պէտս համբակաց, Girk's ays koch'i tetrak bayi i pēt's hambakats'] – M 2563 (d. 1839), M 3620 (d. 19th c.).
5. Brief Dictionary from Grabar¹⁴ to Ashkarhabar¹⁵ for the use of beginners [Hamarot bargirk' i grabarē yashkharhabarn i pēt's hambakats']. This dictionary was published in 1830 in Shushi.

The information provided by the colophons and inscriptions of the manuscripts, as well as the prefaces and titles of the writings are very important to better understand the environment where these philosophical, theological and grammatical treatises were created and spread.

1. Antoine Goudin's *Philosophia* in the Armenian environment

The most popular among Hovsep's works was the Book by the French Dominican of *Theoretical Philosophy*. In fact, it is the abridged version of the philosophical treatise by a French Dominican philosopher and theologian Antoine Goudin (1639–1695).¹⁶ Goudin's *Philosophia* was translated into Armenian in the 18th century by the Armenian translator and philologist Father Vrt'anēs Askērean,¹⁷ a member of the Mekhitarist Congregation, and was published in 1750–1751 in Venice.¹⁸ The *Philosophia* had been translated into Armenian already in the 17th century by the theologian and translator Ghukas vardapet Kharberdts'i, who lived in Constantinople and provided translations from Latin and Italian into Armenian.¹⁹ Moreover, there are several Armenian commentaries on this treatise.²⁰

14 Classical Armenian.

15 Modern Armenian.

16 *Philosophia juxta inconcussa tutissimaque divi Thomae dogmata: blogicam, physicam, moralem & metaphysicam quatuor tomis complectens.*

17 See Asatur P'ashayan, Վրթանես Ասկերյանը և նրա թարգմանական ժառանգությունը [Vrt'anes Askeryan and his translation heritage], *Patma-banasirakan handes*, 2005, 3, 96–102.

18 Vrt'anēs Askērean, trans., *Philosophy according to the unerring and infallible doctrine of St. Thoma, divided into 4 volumes, created by Father Anton Kovdin theologian vardapet of the city of Paris...*, translated with the precaution into Armenian by Father Vrt'anēs vardapet Askērean of Constantinople... [Փիլիսոփայություն ըստ անըստերիւր և անսայթաք վարդապետութեան սրբոյն թովմայի՝ բաժանեալ ի չորս հատորս, զոր արարեալ է հօր Անտոնի Կովինոյ աստուածաբան վարդապետի Փարես քաղաքի..., թարգմանեալ զգուշութեամբ ի հայկազէան լեզուիս ոճոյ ի հայր Վրթանէս վարդապետէ Ասկերեանց Կոստանդնուպօլսեցոյ...], Venice 1750 (vol. 1–3), Venice 1751 (vol. 4).

19 See Norayr Pogharean (Tsovakani), Դուկաս վրդ. Խարբերդցի [Ghukas vardapet Kharberdts'i], Sion, 1979, March-April, 67–68.

20 Hakob Anasyan, Հայկական մատենագիտություն, Ե-ՏԸ դդ [The Armenian Bibliography, 5th–18th centuries], 1, Yerevan, 1959, 965–966.

One of them was composed by Yakob vardapet T'op'uzeants' in the Hermitage of Lim²¹ »for the facility of the studious pupils«. ²² It is obvious that the *Philosophia* has enjoyed a great reputation among the Armenians since the 17th century and has been popular in different monasteries, educational centers, as well as in Arts'akh. In fact, Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i compiled his philosophical work from the mentioned translation and edition by Vrt'anēs Askērean. According to Askērean's translation and edition, in the manuscripts Hovsep's *Philosophy* consists of 4 parts:

- On Logic [Յաղագս տրամաբանութեան, Yaghag's Tramabanut'ean],
- On Physics [Յաղագս բնաբանութեան, Yaghag's bnabanut'ean],
- On Metaphysics [Յաղագս համաբնաբանութեան, Yaghag's hamabnabanut'ean],
- On Ethics [Յաղագս բարոյականի, Yaghag's baroyakani].²³

Already in 1840, the first (and the only) part of the *Philosophy* was published in Shushi under the title:

»The first part of Philosophy, which is said Logic, abridged from the main Logic of the theologian vardapet Goudin in 1830. Edited by the scholar vardapet Father Hovsep' Tēr-Awagean Arts'akhets'i, who is a member of the holy monastery of Gandzasar, in the Khach'en district of Arts'akh. In the days of the patriarchate of His Holiness Yovhann Karbets'i, a holy Catholicos of all Armenians and a Knight, and by the order of the lord His Holiness Metropolitan Baghtasar Hasan-Jalaleants' the high Archbishop, in the printing house of the Diocese Primate high and holy Metropolitan of Karabakh, Baghtasar, in Shushi, 1840«. ²⁴

Based on the title-page, one can say that the book published in 1840 was prepared already in 1830. At the Matenadaran, there is a manuscript containing this work, copied in 1816 »by

21 The Lim monastery was located in the island Lim in Lake Van, Western Armenia. It was a famous scriptorium. See Lusine T'umanyan L., Վանայ Լճի կղզիների վանքերի գրչության կենտրոնները [The Scriptoria of the Monasteries of the Van Lake Island] Yerevan, 2020.

22 M 5369, fol. 1r. See also M 2645, fol. 1r–164r, cf. Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean et al., eds., Մալր Յուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մաշտոցի անուան Մատենադարանի [General catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots' Matenadaran], 8, Yerevan, 2013, 911–914.

23 See e.g. M 2828, fol. 3r, 52r, 63v, 98r.

24 Առաջին մասն փիլիսոփայութեան որ ասի Տրամաբանութիւն համառոտեալ ի բուն Տրամաբանութենէ աստուածաբան վարդապետին Կովղնոյ ի 1830 ամի: Աշխատասիրութեամբ հօր Յովսէփայ գիտնական վարդապետի Տէր-Ասագեան Արցախեցոյ, որ է միաբան սրբոյ վանիցն Գանձասարու՝ եղելոյ ի Խաչէն գաւառակին Արցախայ: Ի հայրապետութեան տեսոն և տեսոն Յովհաննու Կարբեցոյ սրբազնասուրբ կաթողիկոսի ամենայն Հայոց և ասպետի, հրամանաւ տեսոն Բաղդասարայ ասպետափառ մետրապօլի և բարձր սրբազան արհիեպիսկոպոսի Հասան-Չալալեանց: Ի տպարանի վիճակաւոր առաջնորդին Ղարաբաղու բարձր սրբազան Մետրապօլիին Բաղդասարայ: 1840 ի Շուշի, ՌՄՁԹ:

the hand of Hovsep' vardapet and his disciple, a sinful priest Vardan«,²⁵ which proves that Hovsep' Arts'ahkets'i had worked on Goudin's *Philosophia* before or at least in 1816. This means that before being published, this work was used in a manuscript form, serving as a philosophy manual in the schools of Arts'akh. Manuscripts continued to be used even after the work was published. For example, M 2835, copied in 1831 in Shushi, later belonged to Arshak Ter-Mik'ēlean, a 19th century outstanding Armenian theologian, historian who studied in Germany and was a student of Heinrich Gelzer and Adolf von Harnack. According to a later colophon, after the death of Arshak Ter-Mik'ēlean his brother Sedrak Ter-Mik'ēlean donated the manuscript to the Library of the Mother See of Etchmiadzin.²⁶

In the manuscripts, Hovsep's *Philosophy* has an introduction, which is missing from the 1840 edition. The author explains the aim of his treatise and generally the relevance of philosophy and logic to theology, the importance of knowledge for faith:

»Be aware, O reader, for as the invisible beings of God are known by the visible things, so God the Creator is recognized by examining them. For instance, Abraham, the father of faith, was skilled in astronomy, that's why he recognized God easily, while his father, Tara, was not skilled in astronomy, that's why he remained in the darkness of idolatry. And although God can only be recognized by faith, it is known that anything admitted without a reliable knowledge is incomplete. Like wine is better seen from above than from outside or from the sides. And in addition to knowing God by faith with the natural light of the mind, the more the reader knows the creatures, the more skilled he will be in theology, and vice versa, the more he lacks the knowledge of beings, the more empty and devoid of theology he will be. Therefore, all the faithful readers who did wish to learn theology, first endeavoured to examine the rational beings, working to the best of their ability, and soon after they found themselves skillful in Theology«.²⁷

In this chapter, I present only a general overview of the Armenian versions of *Philosophia* by Antoine Goudin with the focus of the compilation and edition by Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i. A detailed study on the Armenian translations, commentaries, editions of *Philosophia* would be an interesting topic of further research, taking into account that Goudin's work has been widely spread and used as a logic and philosophy manual since the 17th century.

25 M 2525, fol. 1v, cf. Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean et al., eds., Մայր Ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մաշտոցի անուան Մատենադարանի [General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots' Matenadaran], 8, 362.

26 M 2835, fol. 1v, cf. Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean et al., eds., Մայր Ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մաշտոցի անուան Մատենադարանի [General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots' Matenadaran], 9, 2017, 837–840.

27 M 2990, fol. 2r.

2. Florilegium of the *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* by John Chrysostom

As indicated in the colophon (intertwined with the title) the scribe of M 3618, copied in 1617 in the monastery of St. Hacob, is Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i:

»Book of Interpretation on the Holy Gospel of Matthew, created by saint John Chrysostom, from which we have compiled and briefly collected and divided into six parts [...]«. ²⁸

Thus, Hovsep' clearly informs the reader that this manuscript represents an abridged version of Chrysostom's *Commentary*.²⁹ The manuscript has 280 folios, the first part (fol. 5r–261v) is the commentary on Matthew, the second part (fol. 261v–279r) is entitled *Hovsep' Arts'akhests'i's Interpretation on the Proverbs, which are not found in the concordance of the Gospel of Matthew*.³⁰

In the beginning (fol. 2v–4r), Hovsep' inserted a preface to the Florilegium where he explains the structure, content and the purpose it was written for. At the same time he conveys his reflections on the biblical interpretations, emphasizing their major role in theology and spiritual life:

»Be aware, O kind reader, that we have divided this book into six parts and attached a proper list to each of them, so that the philologists [lit: lovers of the word], when they have doubts about anything, do not waste effort and solve the uncertainty of their hearts. At the end of the six parts, we added the interpretation of several items that are not in the Gospel of Matthew and put it as a separate section«. ³¹

The author also explains the aim and usefulness of his version:

»[...] by compiling excerpts from the Commentary, we tried to abridge it, because those who read an extensive interpretation can hardly keep the items in mind and soon forget them. While brief things are easily impressed in the mind of a reader and are kept in the memory for a long time«. ³²

28 M 3618, fol. 2r

29 John Chrysostom's writings have been translated into Armenian in the 5th century and had a great influence on the Armenian medieval literature.

30 M 3618, fol. 261v.

31 M 3618, fol. 2v.

32 Ibidem, fol. 3r.

In the preface, he criticizes (without specifying anyone) some contemporary theologians who did not value the *Commentary* as it deserves (it is not clear whether this refers to the commentary as a whole or to the abridged version):

»Some theologian vardapets theologian vardapets do not need this, moreover they call this a child's toy. While ignorants like me consider it as a priceless pearl and an honorable diamond«. ³³

Hovsep' highly appreciates the Bible commentary in general, characterizing it as the alphabet of theology, the lower level and a necessary stage. In this regard, he makes a beautiful comparison:

»Just as man is not a man without a rational soul, so theology is not theology without the interpretation of the Scriptures«. ³⁴

Thus, he exhorts the readers to engage in scriptural interpretation, especially in the New Testament. At the end of the preface, he asks the readers and those »who taste the fruits of this soul-sustaining tree«, to remember him in their prayers, modestly calling himself a »worthless philologist«. ³⁵

It would be interesting to compare this Florilegium with the original version to learn which verses were chosen, which passages were considered to be the most important ones to Hovsep'. I wonder whether there are any additions by the compiler to fit better to the worldview and the religious dogmatical challenges of his time. The abridged version of John Chrysostom's *Commentary* on Matthew would be relevant to the patristic studies as well, in respect of learning the perception of Chrysostom's work in the 19th century. Most probably this Florilegium was also prepared to be published, as Goudin's *Philosophia*, but the publication was not implemented. At the Matenadaran, there is another manuscript copied by Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i and an anonymous scribe (perhaps one of his disciples) containing this *Commentary*. ³⁶

33 Ibidem.

34 Ibidem.

35 Ibidem, fol. 4r.

36 M 3620, fol. 1v–260v.

3. *Shield of the Orthodox* – a source for studying confessional issues in the 19th century

In 1838, Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i wrote a dogmatic treatise *A book called Shield of the Orthodox* by the request of the primate of Karabakh diocese, Metropolitan Baghdasar Hasan-Jalaleants'. This work is preserved only in one manuscript³⁷ – M 2622, fol. 21r–42v, penned by Hovsep' in 1838, in the city of Shushi.³⁸ In the title, the author-scribe calls himself »the most humble Hovsep' the monk (lit: clothed in black) Arts'akhets'i, from the congregation of the Holy monastery of Gandzasar«. ³⁹ The *Shield* consists of three parts:

1. On fasting,
2. On intercession of saints,
3. On the love/respect and hate of images.⁴⁰

It becomes obvious from the content that these were the main issues that had been disputed between the Lutherans and the followers of the Armenian Church. The treatise is written in the form of an exhortation, with numerous references to the Holy Scriptures.⁴¹ Hovsep' speaks mainly in the second person. One can say that the addressees were the members of the Armenian Church who sympathized with or followed the Lutheran Church⁴² as well as the representatives of the Lutheran Church. The phrases »You see, o, Lutheran«, »You should know, o, Lutherans« are found in the writing, which are followed by clarifications about the confession of the Armenian Church on the mentioned topics. Hovsep' tries to justify his approach, particularly with scriptural quotations and examples (and not the Church Fathers or tradition), for:

»I know that you do not accept the testimony of the patriarchs, saying that a patriarch was a man like me«. ⁴³

37 At least this is the only example known to us at the time.

38 For the detailed description see Görg Tēr-Vardanean *et al.*, eds., Մայր Ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մատոցի անուան Մատենադարանի [General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots' Matenadaran], 8, 751–768 (the work in question 753–754).

39 M 2622, fol. 21r.

40 Rather than using the terms »iconoclasy« and »iconolatry« I present a literal translation.

41 I wonder whether some passages could had been read as sermons during the Liturgy by the commissioner Metropolitan Hasan-Jalaleants' or by Hovsep' himself.

42 The Basel missionaries were originally oriented to preach among the pagan and Muslim peoples of Transcaucasia. However, they soon focused their attention on the local Armenian population, trying to involve them in the Christianization of the Muslims. Thus, many Armenian believers began to follow them, which was negatively assessed by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. See Abel Manoukian, *Die Basler Missionsgesellschaft und die Armenier 1823–1835*, 87–93.

43 M 2622, fol. 24v–25r.

In the first part, he explains in detail the importance of fasting, what is allowed to eat and what is not, lists the types and talks about both physical and spiritual fasting. This also suggests that he aimed to present the tradition of the Armenian Church to the ignorant. He often refers directly to the Lutherans somehow criticising them, but trying to explain his considerations:

»Lutherans repeat many times that food does not defile a person [...], We really wonder at the thinking of the Lutherans [...], The Lutherans argue that the saints, being in their immaterial stations, are far away from us, so people's supplications do not reach them [...].«⁴⁴

When talking about the types of prayer, the author mentions not only the Lutherans, but also the Muslims.

S. Petoyan unearthed some archival documents according to which Metropolitan Baghdasar sent the *Shield* to the Synod of Etchmiadzin to get the permission for printing.⁴⁵ On November 30, 1838 the censorship of this work was assigned to bishop Hovhannes Shahkhat'unyants',⁴⁶ who had a great experience in censoring similar works. As we learn from the answer of Shahkhat'unyants', although the *Shield* was acceptable from the point of view of the doctrine and rituals of the Armenian Church, he noticed some contradictions on pages 36 and 37. As a result, the Synod did not authorize the printing of the book, handing it over to the library of the Mother See (as a prohibited book).⁴⁷ The content of relevant pages is a matter for further investigation, but it is surprising that in the manuscript, there was not any note by the censor (as usually the censors of the time simply crossed out a word or phrase that seemed suspicious, or replaced them with new ones). On the other hand, the question arises whether it was not possible to simply edit those problematic passages and publish the *Shield*. Or perhaps the Synod had a reserved approach to it from the beginning?

This work would be very useful to find out the perception of the followers of the Lutheran Church regarding the confession of the Armenian Church and vice versa. Of course, these issues should be considered in the context of the Basel missionaries' establishment in Arts'akh, the development and cessation of their activities.⁴⁸

44 M 2622, fol. 27v, 28v, 30r.

45 Styopa Petoyan, Բաղդասար Եպիսկոպոս Հասան-Ջալալյանցը և Շուշիի հայկական տպագրությունը [Bishop Baghdasar Hasan-Jalalyants' and the printing of Shushi], Etchmiadzin, 2021, 7, 101.

46 Shahkhat'unyants' (1799–1849) was an outstanding historian, archaeologist, member of Synod, the director of the printing house of the Mother See.

47 Ibidem, 102. This is the manuscript now hosted in Matenadaran under the number 2922.

48 In the near future we intend to publish and study this treatise in more detail.

4. Hovsep' the philologist

In 1830, Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i's *Brief Dictionary of Classical Armenian* was published by the Printing House of Shushi, founded by Basel Protestant Missionaries.⁴⁹ According to the title, the dictionary was intended for beginners, for pupils. It includes a translation and explanation of more than 8000 words. Comparing with other dictionaries of the 18th–19th centuries, N. Poghosyan evaluates Hovsep' 's dictionary as an independent work, which differs in a number of features.⁵⁰ It contains many words which are missing in the preceding or succeeding dictionaries or have new, completely different meanings. One of the main peculiarities of this dictionary is that very often the classical Armenian words have dialectal as well as Persian and/or Turkish explanations. For example, the word »Աճապարել« [achaparel]⁵¹ which means ›to hasten, to hurry‹ is described »տեղէն կանուխ շարժիլ« [teghēn kanukh sharzhil] ›to move quickly from a place‹. This explanation is then followed by a Turkish expression (in Armenian letters) »շուտ թերփէնմիշ լինիլ« [shut t'ērp'ēnmish linil], lit.: ›to be terpenmish quickly‹. To bring another example: The Armenian word »անընտրաբար« [anēntrabar],⁵² meaning ›imprudently‹, is explained as »ստանց մտածելու« [arants' mtatselu], ›without considering‹, after which the Turkish word »թևեքելի« [t'evək'eli], ›teveküllü« (of Arabic origin tevekül) was added, which means ›naive, simple-minded‹. This proves that the dictionary was used for educational purposes among the people who communicated in the dialect of the time. Therefore, it was necessary to include such explanations in the dictionary to make it more comprehensible to the users. In this regard, Hovsep' 's dictionary would greatly contribute to understanding the dialect of Arts'akh in the 19th century.

In addition to the dictionary, Hovsep' compiled an elementary grammar of classical Armenian for educational purposes, entitled *This book is called a Pamphlet of Verb for the use of beginners*.⁵³ The manual was written in a very simple and understandable style, many examples are provided to explain the grammatical rules.⁵⁴

49 The printing house was established in 1827. See Styopa Petoyan, Բազելյան բողոքական քարոզիչների Շուշիում հիմնադրած տպարանի պատմությունը (1827–1835) [History of the Printing House in Shushi, Founded by Basel Protestant Missionaries (1827–1835)], *Hayagitut'yan harts'er* [Armenological issues. Bulletin], 2021, 1, 45–65.

50 Norayr Poghosyan, Հայ բառարանագրության պատմության դրվագներ. Պրակ Ա (ԺԷ–ԺԹ դարեր) [Episodes of history of Armenian Lexicography. Part 1 (17th–19th centuries)], Yerevan, 2016, 96–97.

51 Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i, Համառոտ բառգիրք ի գրաբառէ յաշխարհաբառն ի պէտս համբակաց [Brief Dictionary from Grabar to Ashkarhabar for the use of beginners], Shushi, 1830, 6.

52 *Ibidem*, 12.

53 M 2563 (d. 1839, fol. 1r–89r), M 3620 (d. 19th century, fol. 372r–411r).

54 A brief analysis of the Grammar, see Norayr Poghosyan, Հայ բառարանագրության պատմության դրվագներ [Episodes of history of Armenian Lexicography], 92–100.

5. Concluding remarks

It is obvious that the literary-manuscripts heritage of Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i includes three main aspects: philosophy, theology and grammar. Certainly, all these disciplines are closely related and should be discussed in the scope of his multifaceted, especially educational career. Hovsep's abbreviations of Antoine Goudin's *Philosophia* and John Chrysostom's interpretation on Matthew had mostly practical significance and were aimed at promoting the philosophical and theological learning and teaching. On the other hand, these works would be interesting for observing the trajectory and perception of Chrysostom's Exegesis and Goudin's *Philosophia* in the 19th century Armenian scholarly environment. As to the grammar and the dictionary compiled by Hovsep', they are fascinating sources for studying the language and dialect of Arts'akh of the time. Among his works, the *Shield of the Orthodox* is of different character which reflects the confessional encounters in Arts'akh in the first half of the 19th century. The current chapter represents only a general overview, while each of the presented writings deserve a separate and profound study.

6. Instead of an epilogue

I usually don't confuse emotions and research, but in M 3619, copied by Hovsep' Arts'akhets'i and his disciple, I came across a letter that couldn't be ignored. It is entitled *A letter of congratulation by a friend to a friend on the occasion of returning with success from abroad to his homeland*.⁵⁵ The letter begins and ends with the following phrases:

»For everyone his homeland is sweet and so sweet that I dare to say that there are very few sweet things on the face of the earth that can be compared to it... I wish from God that you live a peaceful life in your homeland and do not return to a foreign country, so that you do not take me away from the joy that I have for my relatives (lit.: those who are mine)«.⁵⁶

By this contribution I express my support to the people of Arts'akh (and other war-zones) who lost their loved ones, were forced to abandon their houses and leave their homeland. Although the current situation in the world is not that encouraging, I do believe that due to political, diplomatic efforts, as well as cultural and scholarly activities⁵⁷ these people will

55 M 3619, fol. 16r.

56 Ibidem, fol. 16r–17r.

57 In this regard I really appreciate this conference and deeply thank the organizers for having me in.

get the opportunity to return to their homes and continue a peaceful life in their homeland, for as it is said in the mentioned letter:

»The only day the life seemed to me immortal, was the day I was back to my homeland.«⁵⁸

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