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## **EGYPTIAN-ARMENIAN “ARTEMIS” PERIODICAL**

**Key words:** magazine, Armenian woman, education, ignorance, self-awareness, family life, “Artemis”.

### ***Introduction***

The history of the press in Egypt dates back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Napoleon Bonaparte's French expedition brought printing equipment to Egypt. During the reign of Muhammad Ali, who was appointed governor of Egypt by the Ottoman Empire in 1805, Egypt experienced an economic, political and cultural revival, a new page was opened in the new history of Egypt, great economic progress was achieved in the country. Muhammad Ali's administrative and economic reforms had a positive impact on the Egyptian-Armenian community. Its number increased, and it reached a high level of economic, social-political-cultural life, and it was then that the Egyptian-Armenian press originated.

The industrial relations that developed in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century caused a great deal of activity in the economic life of Egypt. The Armenians who had emigrated to Egypt took an active part in the development of the economic and cultural life of the country. The Armenian periodical press occupied a worthy place in the social and political life of the Egyptian-Armenians. Among the Egyptian-Armenian periodicals of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Armenian women's family, literary “Artemis” magazine, which was published in 1902–1903, first in Cairo, then in Alexandria, had a special place,<sup>1</sup>. The founder and editor was Mary Peyleryan, who had dreamed of establishing a press body for the Armenian women

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<sup>1</sup> Կիրակոսյան 1970, 226:

since her school age<sup>2</sup>. The main goal of the Egyptian-Armenian periodical was to prepare healthy-minded Armenian mothers, girls, husbands, who would provide the Armenian nation with a new quality generation in a short time, which would contribute to raising national self-consciousness and solving problems<sup>3</sup>. "Artemis" tried to contribute to the development of Armenian female family life, to be an organ, representing all the movements and aspirations dedicated to the Armenian women's progress of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, it was engaged in women's upbringing, trying to revive conscientiousness among Armenians.

The magazine published numerous articles and correspondence from different Armenian provinces and places inhabited by Armenians, from colonies, including Kars, Tbilissi, Moscow, Baku, New Julfa, Berlin, Leipzig, Paris, etc. "Artemis" magazine aimed to awaken the soul of an Armenian woman numbed with prejudices, to get out Armenian women of the provincial misery, as well as to advocate women's rights, freedoms, and a higher position in society. In general, a girl's birth was accepted with reluctance and coldness in villages, sometimes in cities, as she probably was considered to be a burden for the parents. The magazine was determined to change this stereotype through spreading education and enlightenment in the Armenian society<sup>4</sup>.

As noted in the magazine, when the Armenian nation had no contact with civilized countries, when going to Europe was only a male monopoly, the Armenians had the idea that a European woman felt happier with the freedoms she had. The reason for this mentality was the appearance of European women in Egypt who wore fashionable clothes, ornaments, whose hair was styled, in contrast to Egyptian women, who often were not taken care of properly. The magazine thought that the Armenian woman should partially imitate the image of a European woman, preserving the national traditions<sup>5</sup>. According to the magazine, the Armenian nation imitated the worst features of the civilized nations, such as celibacy, for remaining single is equal to premediated murder of one's nation<sup>6</sup>. "Artemis" singled out celibacy as one of the causes of the nation's destruction, which began to spread widely in the Armenian society in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the

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<sup>2</sup> Թոփուզյան 1978, 323:

<sup>3</sup> Պետրոսյան 1957, 20:

<sup>4</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 2–3, 57–58:

<sup>5</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 1, 7–10:

<sup>6</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 7–8, 198–201:

Armenian provinces. At the same time, the periodical noted that some Armenian girls used to misunderstand the essence of female freedom. Freedom does not mean talking boldly with young people, traveling in a carriage, indulging in pleasures and drinking, whereas according to the magazine, many Armenian girls lead immodest lives under the guise of freedom, the traditional decency of an Armenian girl was questioned. "We even had a group of girls who mocked decency and morality"<sup>7</sup>. According to the author, if there were no changes in the behavior of the Armenian nation, it was unlikely that the Armenian nation would have a completely new generation in the near future<sup>8</sup>.

"Artemis" was concerned about mixed marriages, considering them a great threat to the preservation of the Armenian identity. Marriages with foreigners had already become commonplace for Egyptian-Armenians. This referred equally to both Egyptian-Armenian boys and girls. Although marriages with foreigners were not so numerous, the magazine feared that they would multiply in the future. "And what will the future of Armenian girls be? Let every young Armenian look for the answer to this terrible question in his conscience and responsibilities"<sup>9</sup>. If foreign girls beat inexperienced Armenian girls, it is only due to agility, they know how to lie, to pretend to be in love. Anti-national education is the reason for the alienation of the Armenian youth, as it can not instill national self-consciousness in the new generation<sup>10</sup>. Armenian mothers should first of all inspire their daughters with a courageous Christian spirit, and then give them a good initial education. In addition, mothers should also teach them cooking, ironing, darning socks and shirts and so on<sup>11</sup>. It is not the expensive laces, magnificent hats and luxurious clothes that make a woman beautiful and attractive, but the pleasant simplicity. Simple and pleasant, this should be the motto of an Armenian woman"<sup>12</sup>. "Artemis" singled out a woman's most important features, such as the ability to sympathize, clairvoyance, loyalty and kindness.

The magazine points out that reading is not so common among the Armenian women. Armenian women talk about gossip, food and toiletries, which is very

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<sup>7</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 9, 233–235:

<sup>8</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 9, 236:

<sup>9</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 3, 75–79:

<sup>10</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 7–8, 208–211:

<sup>11</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 2–3, 65:

<sup>12</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 7–8, 3–7:

boring. The author of the article thinks that reading should be the Armenian women's favorite and desired pastime which will help improve their taste<sup>13</sup>. The magazine urges Armenian mothers to open their eyes, slightly blinded by ignorance, to see how 3–4 year old foreign children not only learn to walk and dance gracefully in kindergartens, but also sing war songs, while the Armenian children at that age are taught only to pronounce the words “father” and “mother”<sup>14</sup>. In order for a woman to get rid of ignorance, it is necessary to create equal conditions for both sexes, opening the doors of kindergartens, schools and even high schools for them. The magazine thinks that the laws on marriage, divorce, inheritance and other rights should be reviewed<sup>15</sup>. The Egyptian-Armenian periodical insists that Armenian girls should receive full education at national schools, rather than in European countries. It is necessary to rearrange and reform the national schools, so that they can meet the Armenian girls’ desires. The periodical is against the idea of an Armenian girl being educated with European manners. “An Armenian girl should be made into a mother, a housewife, but not a salon woman looking around with her head out”<sup>16</sup>. The Egyptian-Armenian periodical is a little comforted by the fact that some Armenian girls specialize in medicine, law and pedagogy in European countries. The periodical proposes practical measures to improve women’s situation. In particular, it offers women to specialize in the profession of a carpet weaver, tailor, earning their living on their own, thus freeing themselves from dependence on their husbands<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, “Artemis” considers it necessary for the Armenian girls to get agricultural professions – dairy making, cheese making, beekeeping and other similar professions, which can improve the Armenian nature. In addition, it is necessary to import the latest equipment and tools to boost the development of different handicrafts<sup>18</sup>.

The magazine repeatedly mentions that pro-Armenian, patriotic activities are mainly carried out by Armenian women with primary and secondary education, whereas rich Armenian women, with some exceptions, spend most of their time

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<sup>13</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 10–11, 257–259:

<sup>14</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 4, 112–114:

<sup>15</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 5–6, 134–137:

<sup>16</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 5–6, 142–143:

<sup>17</sup> Հայ պարբերական մամուլի պատմություն 2017, 381:

<sup>18</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 1, 3–8:

travelling. The magazine emphasizes that the Armenian nation has a large number of orphans left defenseless, their situation would improve if the rich and comfort-seeking Armenian ladies wished to take care of the orphans<sup>19</sup>. The main guarantee of the longevity of each nation is the intellectual development of the young generation and the true national self-consciousness, without which nations will collapse into the abyss. "We, the future mothers, must prioritize and think about the self-preservation of the Armenian nation and take measures to preclude this painful phenomenon"<sup>20</sup>. It is also emphasized that a healthy life is the first condition for a nations' development, so it is a must to examine under a microscope whatever can have a slightly negative impact on a healthy and harmonious family life. In addition, spouses need to get to know each other completely, after which they will be psychologically ready to make family life happy<sup>21</sup>.

The Egyptian-Armenian periodical complains that journalists mainly focus on political issues, refer to various pieces of information about the rich, while the problems in ordinary families and the violation of women's rights have largely escaped their attention. The magazine aims to raise such issues, to present real-life stories to the reader. In the first issue, "Artemis" tells the story of an Armenian girl named Sona living in Baku, whose father remarries after her mother's death. As usual, the stepmother is always cold towards Sona. Despite the girl's complaints, the father does not take action. And when one day a young man asks for Sona's hand, the girl's parents immediately agree. Sona, unaware of the young man's intentions and wishing to get rid of her mother's unbearable attitude, appears in one of the city's brothels, thus ruining her life. The magazine reports that there are many such cases, cites Sona's life story as an example and urges the reader to spend more time with the family<sup>22</sup>.

Analyzing the notes made during numerous visits, the editor of the periodical comes to the conclusion that beginning from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of Armenian prostitutes in Yerevan, Alexandropol, Kars and Tbilissi was increasing year by year. This phenomenon was mainly spread among the Armenian emigrants, who tried to survive in that way. The magazine notes that although the number of prostitutes in Armenian society is significantly lower than in other nationalities, the

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<sup>19</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 3, 72–75:

<sup>20</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 3, 75–76:

<sup>21</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 4, 107–109:

<sup>22</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 1, 13–15:

possibility of spreading this phenomenon among Armenians should be reduced by all possible means. As a solution, the magazine proposes to create an organization for "unfortunate" Armenian women, which will protect their rights and take them under its auspices. The magazine thinks that "It is a more honorable job than building a church, because without a clean body, the existence of a pure soul is not accepted"<sup>23</sup>.

The Egyptian-Armenian periodical makes haste to expand the violated rights of the Armenian women, to raise the level of their education, their role in the Armenian society. According to the magazine, women's education was successfully established in the United States, where the inequality between men and women had gradually disappeared since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, girls outnumbered boys in American high schools. This was partly due to the fact that school-age boys often quitted school to earn a living. In European countries, particularly in England and France, women's rights had expanded in the field of education, and various women's educational associations had been established since the 1970s<sup>24</sup>. The number of female schools in Russia was lower than the number of schools in the United States, England, and France, but at the same time exceeded the number of schools in many European countries<sup>25</sup>.

The Egyptian-Armenian periodical presents the increase of the number and percentage of males and females in the leading European countries, in the USA, the degree of involvement of women in various positions<sup>26</sup>, it draws parallels between educational institutions in the United States and different European countries, presents statistics on the number of educational institutions in different countries<sup>27</sup>. The magazine notes that in many European countries, women work on an equal footing with men in almost all positions, except in jobs that require hard physical work. However, unlike men, women are paid less, so they have to form labor organizations and protest, demanding an equal pay with men<sup>28</sup>.

Referring to French newspapers, the magazine reports on women's role in the French society. In the past, a single woman in France had an absolute right to her

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<sup>23</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 4, 104–107:

<sup>24</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 4–5, 105–109:

<sup>25</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 7–8, 148–150:

<sup>26</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 12, 310–314:

<sup>27</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 7–8, 150–153:

<sup>28</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 7–8, 154–156:

property. However, after the marriage, her status changed and she could not sell or pledge her property without her husband's consent. Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women's rights had expanded not only in France, but also in other European countries and United States, and women had gradually begun to occupy high positions in the social and political life of their countries<sup>29</sup>.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a remarkable success was registered in the expansion of women's rights for all Armenians of Eastern Armenia. Eastern Armenian women already had an honorable place in public and political life, and a number of women's institutions were established. As an embodiment of Russian-Armenian women's activities, the magazine singles out Princess Mariam Tumanyan, a member of the board of the Armenian Benevolent Society of the Caucasus, who was active in the public life of all Armenians, holding administrative positions in various Armenian non-governmental organizations. During the years of the Armenian massacres in 1894–1896 Mariam Tumanyan established a carpet factory in Tbilissi at her own expenses for Western Armenian migrants, providing jobs for a large number of Western Armenian migrants for many years<sup>30</sup>.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many scientists, publicists, writers, raised their humanitarian voice in favor of increasing women's role in public and political life in Europe and the USA, seeing women's unbearable situation, which would affect the whole humanity, including the new generation. Since then, women's rights had gradually expanded in Europe, the United States and Russia. From the 1870s until the closure of the Armenian schools in 1888, national mixed schools were constantly opened to educate the younger generation. However, the joy of the Armenian nation did not last long, the schools were closed, and hundreds of young Armenians were left with incomplete education. It is true that some were admitted to Russian schools, but most were permanently deprived of the right to education due to lack of financial resources<sup>31</sup>. The city and region of Kars revived shortly after it came under the Russian rule. Luxurious buildings, houses, kiosks, various commercial enterprises were built. However, the issue of educational institutions in Kars was constantly postponed. Eventually, the authorities realized that in order to have children useful for the homeland, it was necessary to prepare good mothers. The Egyptian-Armenian magazine expresses an opinion that realizing the importance of

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<sup>29</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 3, 69–72:

<sup>30</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 4–5, 109–112:

<sup>31</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 1, 16–21:

this fact Russian authorities sponsored and opened the girls' gymnasium in Kars on September 8 in 1902, where about a hundred Armenian, Russian and Greek girls were to study. The periodical reports that people's joy was infinite<sup>32</sup>.

In the article "Women's Education of New Julfa" the author Tigranuhi Abgaryan mentions that the education in New Julfa started in 1858, when a school for Girls was established in St. Katarina nunnery with the help of Manuk Yordanyan and other benefactors. The aim of the school was to prepare educated mothers to give sensible members to the Armenian nation. The author of the article claims that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the women of New Julfa were able to read and write old Armenian quite fluently. Over the years, the number of students in the school increased, but the school income remained the same, which was not even enough to hire teachers to teach all the students. Taking this fact into account, the local diocesan leader, Archbishop Isaiah Astvatsatryan, combined the Girls' School with the Boys' Central School and called it the national mixed school. The author of the article expresses his dissatisfaction with the fact that most residents of New Julfa cannot distinguish the beautiful and ugly and send their daughters to the Protestant school in good faith instead of sending them to the national school<sup>33</sup>.

Referring to the article in the 270<sup>th</sup> issue of the "Mshak" newspaper, the magazine notes that until the 80s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century both Armenian boys and girls mainly studied in national church schools and were at the same educational level as in Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe. However, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this equilibrium was broken. The magazine notes that the Armenians considered having secondary and higher education for women a luxury and focused all their attention only on boys. In particular, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of Armenians, studying in various educational institutions in Tbilissi were boys. The magazine regrets that this one-sided attitude will have a negative impact on the family life of the Armenians of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe<sup>34</sup>.

### ***Conclusions***

One of the most famous Egyptian-Armenian periodicals of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is Armenian women's family, literary magazine "Artemis". The sad life of a provincial Armenian woman became a subject for discussion in the magazine,

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<sup>32</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 7–8, 202–205:

<sup>33</sup> Արտեմիս 1903, № 2–3, 55–58:

<sup>34</sup> Արտեմիս 1902, № 2, 41–42:



revealing the shortcomings and showing reliable ways to correct them. In fact, it played the role of an educator. The main goal of the Egyptian-Armenian periodical was to train the Armenian mothers, girls and husbands with a healthy mindset. "Artemis" tried to contribute to the development of the Armenian female family life, to be an organ representing all the movements and aspirations dedicated to the Armenian women's progress of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Besides, "Artemis" magazine aimed to awaken the Armenian women's prejudiced soul, consciousness, to get them out of the provincial misery, as well as to advocate for women's rights, freedoms, and a higher position in society.

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### ԵԳԻՊՏԱՀԱՅ «ԱՐՏԵՄԻՍ» ՊԱՐԲԵՐԱԿԱՆԸ

ԵՍՈՅԱՆ Մ.

Ամփոփում

**Քանալի բառեր**<sup>1</sup> ամսագիր, հայ կին, կրթություն, տգիտություն, ինքնագիտակցություն, ընտանեկան կյանք, «Արտեմիս»:

XX դարասկզբի եգիպտահայ նշանավոր պարբերականներից է կանանց համար հրատարակված «Արտեմիս» ամսագիրը: Պարբերականի էջերում հրատարակվել են հայ կնոջ կյանքին ու կենսագործունեությանը վերաբերող հոդվածներ:

Պարբերականը փորձել է դրական ներդրում ունենալ հայ կնոջ ընտանեկան կյանքի զարգացման գործում, վերաիմաստավորել վերջինիս գիտակ-

ցույթունը, օգնել ձերբազատվելու նախապաշարումներից, հանդես գալ իրավունքների պաշտպանի դերում:

## АРМЯНО-ЕГИПЕТСКОЕ ПЕРИОДИЧЕСКОЕ ИЗДАНИЕ «АРТЕМИС»

ЕСОЯН М.

### Резюме

**Ключевые слова:** журнал, армянка, образование, невежество, самосознание, семейная жизнь, «Артемис».

Одним из известных армяно-египетских периодических изданий начала XX века является женский журнал «Артемис» (1902–1903, Каир-Александрия). На страницах журнала печатались материалы, освещающие жизнь и быт провинциальных армянских женщин.

Журнал пытался внести свой позитивный вклад в развитие семейной жизни армянской женщины, «пробудить» ее сознание, помочь избавиться от предрассудков, стать защитником её прав.