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THE PORTRAIT OF MKRTICH KHRIMYAN IN H. LYNCH'S TRAVELOGUE

Key words: Khrimyan Hayrik, Armenia, travelogue, Henry Lynch, patriotism, Consecration ceremony, the Armenian Church

Introduction

Mkrtich Khrimyan – a leader, educator, publisher and a devotee of the Armenian people, who was the Catholicos of All Armenians from 1893 to 1907, played an invaluable role in the life of the Armenian society. His prolific work was comprehensive as it covered political, religious, literary, and pedagogical spheres which created a fertile background for Armenian national awakening. One cannot fail to observe that Armenian National Liberation ideology of that period encouraged generations. As the head of Armenian delegation at the Berlin Congress (1878), Mkrtich Khrimyan visited the state officials of the great European powers and tried to gain favorable positions for the solution of the Armenian Question, hoping to resolve the issue diplomatically.

The utmost dedication of M. Khrimyan to his people made him utter his famous patriotic speech “The Paper Ladle” which had metaphoric overtones and underlined that the participating nations had taken their portion of “harissa” (an Armenian national dish) from a cauldron with iron ladles, while the Armenian delegation hadn’t been able to take anything with their paper ladle. The moral of the sermon illustrates that the efforts of the Armenians and the Armenian question of that period entered a deadlock.

Khrimyan’s wisdom and insightful works, which have undeniable merits, are on the agenda of many theorists and literary figures. M. Khrimyan emphasized

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and reinforced the significance of the cultural, historical treasures of the Armenian nation, as a representative of one of the ancient civilizations of the world, which afterwards inspired the European travellers and researchers to embark on the laborious endeavor to travel and write travelogues about Armenia and the Armenians. In this connection D.M. Lang stated, “*The ancient land of Armenia is situated in the high mountains immediately north of the great plains and rivers of Mesopotamia. Although Mesopotamia with its ancient civilizations of Sumeria and Babylon is usually considered together with Egypt as the main source of civilized life in the modern sense, Armenia too has a claim to rank as one of the cradles of human culture. To begin with, Noah's Ark is mentioned in the Book of Genesis to have landed on the slope of Mount Ararat, in the very center of Armenia*”¹.

Lynch's Travelogue and M. Khrimyan

Further observations of the travellers who were interested in the fate of the Armenian people and pursued a pro-Armenian policy discover the travelogue of the British intellectual Henry Lynch which is of particular interest. His research depicts the political, religious, cultural, national peculiarities of the Armenian people of Western and Eastern Armenia.

Henry Lynch's interest in Armenia and the Armenians was not accidental, since his maternal grandmother was Armenian, from Sivas, and his grandson was proud of it. In his biography H. Lynch underlined his Armenian roots, his love and care towards his Armenian grandmother and his utmost respect towards the Armenians. Twice he traveled to his ancestral homeland (1893–1894 and 1898), crossed the route Yerevan–Etchmiadzin–Ani–Kars–Van–Akhtamar–Baghesh–Mush–Karin–Trabzon, climbed the peaks of Ararat, Sipan, Nemrut, compiled and made the map of Armenia, commented on and interpreted instances of Armenian folklore, touched upon socio-economic and ethnographic issues. H. Lynch summarized a large-scale research and published his two-volume work on “Armenia: Travels and Studies” in London, in 1901. The valuable survey was first translated into Armenian in London, in 1902 and later in Constantinople, in 1913.

Lynch was a devoted defender of the Armenian national interests and, as a member of the British Parliament, tried to benefit and ease the burden of the

¹ David 1978/1980, 9–10.

Armenian people. In his comprehensive work, Lynch thoroughly described the character and personality of M. Khrimyan, as his visit coincided with the consecration of His Holiness. It is with these lines that Lynch refers to the upcoming pan-Armenian ceremony. *It is not only the ancient ceremony, and it is not merely the assembling of delegates from all parts of the Armenian world that appeals to the heart of the nation. It is the personality and reputation of the man*².

Lynch describes the image of M. Khrimyan with great reverence, emphasizing that Armenians were filled with enthusiasm towards his personality and fame and waited for the anticipated ceremony as an exclusive and nationwide event. Moreover, the author gradually unfolded M. Khrimyan's personality with impeccable praise, like: *The imagination of the race still sees in the holder of the pontifical office not alone or so much an archbishop or Katholikos – the keystone of the edifice of the Church – as a high priest in the old Biblical sense. Khrimean is the ideal of a high priest. He is a figure, who steps straight out of the Old Testament with all the fire and all the poetry. At the ceremony of his consecration it seemed as if at the foot of Ararat the ancient spirits were still alive, and that the holy oil, which descended upon that venerable head from the beak of the golden dove anointed a law-giver to the people who announced the Divine Word*³.

According to the author, the Armenian nation perceived M. Khrimyan as a bishop or Catholicos, the founder and pillar of the Armenian Church and as a “High priest” in the old Biblical sense. Mkrtich Khrimyan's image is described not only by chronological faithfulness, but also by the motives of the liberation of the Armenian people, where the character of the guardian “father” of the Armenian nation and the unique features of M. Khrimyan's personality are revealed. It is not in vain that according to Lynch, the image of M. Khrimyan, full of spiritual richness, comes out of the Old Testament, embodying fire and poetry. Lynch truthfully points out that for Khrimyan Hayrik the notions of religion and patriotism are in dialectical unity and are almost interchangeable. This phenomenon is more than evident, because for centuries the Armenian nation has fought for the independence of Armenia and, of course, the fact of

² Lynch 1901, 236.

³ Lynch 1901, 237.

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the invention of the Armenian alphabet in the 5th century, contributing to the translation of the Holy Book and the enlightenment of the Armenian people strengthens the significance of Armenia as a cradle of world civilization. Moreover, Lynch objectively perceives the relevant role assigned to the Catholicos in the Armenian reality, as the authority and the embodiment of national, spiritual and physical power.

With the confidence of an eyewitness Lynch describes the hometown of M. Khrimyan, which was located in Van. The author tries to present as accurately as possible the atmosphere in which M. Khrimyan lived and found his spiritual balance by qualifying it as the place with *magnetic influence*. When the route-traveller was walking along the slopes of Mount Varag, reaching Hankusner Monastery, where M. Khrimyan lived and taught for many years, he noticed the point where, according to some sources, the hired killer was waiting for M. Khrimyan. But when the killer noticed him and raised his gun, a shiver went over his body, his hands trembled, and he knelt in front of his victim, as he did not dare look at Khrimyan's face⁴.

Lynch introduced a brief description of Khrimyan's life, which reveals his tireless and unwavering devotion to the welfare of the Armenian nation, moreover the research-traveller studied the etymology of the surname of Khrimyan's father by illustrating that *his (Khrimyan's) father and uncle were well-to-do citizens of Van, who had come to be known under the name of Khrimean because of a trade which they had conducted with the Crimea*⁵. He married at the age of twenty-five, but unfortunately the woman died after giving birth to a baby girl, and the child died before the age of six or seven.

With great enthusiasm and positive feelings did Lynch describe in his travelogue the establishment of a printing house and the revelation of the newspaper entitled as *Artsiv Vaspurakani* by Khrimyan: *The proceeds of the sale of this periodical, which was at first printed on Constantinople, whither he had returned in 1855, enabled him to purchase an instrument of great rareness in Turkey, which the Armenians prize with the same childish affection and reverence as the Persian highlanders value a rifle or a sporting gun*⁶.

Evidently, Lynch captures the quintessential psychological nuance; for

⁴ Lynch 1901, 238.

⁵ Lynch 1901, 239.

⁶ Lynch 1901, 240.

Armenians literacy, intellect and background knowledge make the embodiment of spiritual power. Lynch accurately describes Khrimyan's perceptions of time and the relevance of national-political, historical awakening. One of his key goals was to raise the living standards of Armenians in the coming era, because, according to Khrimyan, there would be a tangible decrease of the Muslim people's geopolitical influence in the next era.

It should be noted that Lynch comprehensively described and illustrated the geopolitical, national, religious and cultural peculiarities of the Armenian people of the time. As an interpreter and expert Lynch flavoured his travelogue with detailed descriptions and illustrated photographs, trying to objectively reproduce the collective portrait of the Armenian people of the era and their destiny.

The scrutinized study of the travelogue has revealed that Lynch not only was aware of the historical and political conditions of the Armenians, but also had a deep sympathy towards the civilized Armenian people; the fact is reflected in the following lines; *The Armenians have a long history, and that their progress, to be solid and permanent, must be based on a revival of consciousness in the dignity of their past*⁷. The traveler interpreted M. Khrimyan's vision and aspirations for the rise of the national self-consciousness of the Armenian people and the desire to create an independent state and country. Thus, H. Morgenthau's statement of Armenians being indigenous and native to the region was not accidental as the ambassador proceeded from facts presented in Herodotus' historical works which are a reliable source: *In the north-eastern part of Asia Minor, bordering on Russia, there were six provinces in which the Armenians formed the largest element in the population. From the time of Herodotus this portion of Asia has borne the name of Armenia. The Armenians of the present day are the direct descendants of the people who inhabited the country for three thousand years*⁸.

In that era, the political atmosphere was gradually filled with the Armenians' respect for Khrimyan enthusiastic activity of his supporters'. Lynch not only represents the factual and trustworthy information, but also gently and subtly tries to analyze the external and internal policy tendency and positions on

⁷ Lynch 1901, 241.

⁸ Morgenthau 1974.

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the Armenian people, thus emphasizing that the Turkish government had an evident disfavour towards M. Khrimyan's ambitious desire and a freedom-oriented posture. The Russian-Turkish unfavourable relations caused difficulty for Armenians and the further solution of the Armenian question. In 1889 the Turkish government exiled M. Khrimyan to Jerusalem. However, thanks to the efforts of the Russian diplomats, M. Khrimyan assumed the patriarchal position of the Armenian Church. For two years the Turkish government prevented the return of M. Khrimyan, however, due to the efficient negotiations of the Russian diplomats, the Armenian Father was anointed as Catholicos of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin. Lynch qualifies and evaluates the abovementioned negotiations with positive expressive-evaluative-emotional overtones by using the qualitative adjective *shrewd* (*shrewd diplomats*) as well as emphasizing that *one must admire the extraordinary cleverness of those Russian bureaucrats*⁹.

The brief presentation of Khrimyan's biography is followed by a vivid description of the magnificent and spectacular architecture of Etchmiadzin and the astounding consecration ceremony of M. Khrimyan. The description of sanctuary-monuments in the travelogue is unique and rationalistic, as Lynch draws parallels with the University of Trinity College, Cambridge when describing and outlining the marvelous landscape of Etchmiadzin and the surrounding area, so that the English-speaking reader can imagine the majestic sanctuary and envisage its construction in his mind, thus, pointing out that *the great court of Edchmiadzin perhaps already makes the record*¹⁰.

Having had an exceptional opportunity to witness the consecration ceremony in Etchmiadzin, the traveller truthfully assures that the image of M. Khrimyan was central and pivotal for the Armenian people. He mentions all the saints who played a quintessential role in the adoption of Christianity by Armenia, and Khrimyan ascended their respectable and honorable throne (*It is therefore in his seventy-fourth year that he ascends the throne of St. Thaddeus and of St. Gregory*)¹¹.

In general, Lynch was interested in Khrimyan's moral and psychological portrait. He also briefly referred to his lifestyle, health condition and other minor peculiarities which could comprehensively outline the character of the

⁹ Lynch 1901, 242.

¹⁰ Lynch 1901, 243–245.

¹¹ Lynch 1901, 239.

Catholicos of All Armenians. He emphasized that Khrimyan Hayrik had no other weakness than the inclination to hard breathing.

In his survey, Lynch completely condensed the characteristic features of M. Khrimyan, noting that the Armenian people added the diminutive unit *Hayrik* to his name, trying to enhance the idea that Khrimyan Hayrik was the embodiment of faith and truth, he was the pan-Armenian protector and honorable savior. Moreover, in the text of his travelogue Lynch introduced the element *Hayrik* in capital letters, interpreting its meaning and positive emotional overtones: *Even the garden had been invaded by the peasants, who would wait for hours to catch a glimpse of their Hayrik – a term of endearment, signifying little father, under which Khrimean is very generally known*¹².

The air of calmness, equilibrium and dignity of Khrimyan Hayrik made an enormous impact on the traveller, and the private dialogue with *Hayrik* was characterized by simple yet reinforcing overtones: *I do not remember having ever seen a more handsome and engaging face. I experienced a thrill of pleasure at the mere fact of sitting beside him.* In answer to Lynch's question about Khrimyan's life in Turkish provinces, flavoured with negative overtones, the Catholicos frowned and after a deep sigh, replied, *"I have come," he said, "to the land of Forgetfulness"*¹³.

For Lynch everything connected with Armenia and Armenians was specifically fascinating and of great interest; he unwrapped and illustrated the unique social and cultural features with admiration and simple devotion. For instance, the traveller described the dishes typical of Armenian clergy who during the Great Lent served him lentils and peas, but a few days later a big party was held and Lynch tasted the salmon trout of Lake Sevan and delicious dolma. Moreover, for preserving the culturally marked elements Lynch transliterated the name of the dish and presented its ingredients: *delicious dolmas of minced meat and rice bound together by tender cabbage leaves*¹⁴.

Our further observations of Lynch's travelogue reveal that during the consecration of the Catholicos, many pilgrims from different regions of Armenia, wearing either fashionably designed modern costumes or national *taraz* (Armenian authentic national costumes) and speaking the dialect, peculiar

¹² Lynch 1901, 246.

¹³ Lynch 1901, 248.

¹⁴ Lynch 1901, 248.

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to the region, attended and honoured the national ceremony. Thus, Lynch compiled the mosaic portrait of the ethnographic regions of Armenia.

Here are some extracts from his narrative:

“Was there ever collected together a more motley crowd? They must have come great distances. There were ladies from Akhaltsykh, with the pretty fillets across the brow; there were frock-coats and uniforms. The bright calicoes of peasant women enlivened the scene; some of the men, the poorest class, wore their rough sheepskin hats, while the better-to-do had donned low caps with a peak, like that of a naval officer”¹⁵.

Lynch first depicted the style and costumes observed in the street during the consecration, and afterwards he minutely described one of the national taraz during the banquet, illustrating the image of a delegate from Karabagh:

“A single exception to this dark apparel was furnished by a delegate from Karabagh, who seated next myself. He wore his national dress – a spare black tunic, fastened at the neck, displaying the front and the sleeves of a light blue silken vest. His face was large and expressive of great resolution, especially the chin, which, like the cheeks, was shaved. The bronze complexion heightened the whiteness of the bold moustache. One was reminded of the best type of peasant properties in Europe”¹⁶.

The consecration ceremony of Khrimyan Hayrik was on the agenda of the whole Armenian nation and the cornerstone of the travelogue. Russian soldiers lined up in front of the church's front door and did not allow the enthusiastic crowd to enter. The decision was made to perform the consecration ceremony right on the doorway of the church, with a large inscription at the top; *The Only-Begotten has descended from the Father, and the light of glorification with Him*¹⁷.

The historical facts provided by Lynch are relevant and undeniable sources for the Armenian people, and on the basis of his valuable observations and faithfulness to the research he could outline the whole portrait of Armenians in general, and Khrimyan Hayrik, in particular. In his narration he writes:

“Next a bishop advances, bearing in his hands the image of a dove, wrought in gold. It is the receptacle of the holy oil. In the southern apse of the cathedral stands a chest containing a vase, in which is preserved oil blessed by

¹⁵ Lynch 1901, 251.

¹⁶ Lynch 1901, 254.

¹⁷ Lynch 1901, 252.

St. Gregory. It is nothing, they say, but a mass of dry material. Of this substance they take a pinch and mix it with consecrated oil, specially prepared and scented with essence of flowers. Such is the liquid which is allowed to flow from the beak of the dove upon the head of the father of the nation. The bishops gather round, and each with his thumb spreads the oil over the scalp, making the figure of a cross at the same time. Then a mass of wool is applied to the crown of the head, in the folds of a muslin veil, which is adjusted to fall over the face. The Catholicos rises after a brief interval, places his feet in his embroidered slippers and with the bishops re-enters the church. The ceremony has occupied a quarter of an hour”¹⁸.

The main procedure of anointing is presented in the passage. The bishop held the golden dove in his hand, which is the receptacle of the holy oil. In the southern apse of the cathedral there was a vase in which the same oil blessed by St. Gregory was preserved. Lynch was told it was a mass of dry material. The bishop took a pinch of oil, mixed it with the consecrated oil prepared and scented with essence of flowers, later from the beak of the dove the mixture streamed upon the head of the father of the nation. The bishops gathered round, and each with his thumb spread the oil in cross-like movements over the scalp of the Catholicos.

The banquet accompanied with greetings and toasts followed the consecration ceremony:

“The health of the Emperor is received with cries of Hooray; but the remaining toasts without exception with the Armenian cheer of Ketsze! the equivalent of the French Vive!”¹⁹

In the extract, the toast devoted to Tsar's had Russian greetings, like *Oura – Ypa*: For natural perception of the atmosphere Lynch gave the Armenian and French equivalent versions of the greetings: *Ketsze!* and *Vive!*.

Conclusion

Lynch's travelogue is descriptive-informative. Its main features are accuracy, textual integrity, completeness and the reliability of facts and data. However, the cognitive value of the narrative is also there. Presenting an elegant mixture of facts and emotions, the narrator achieves quite an original impact on

¹⁸ Lynch 1901, 253–254.

¹⁹ Lynch 1901, 255.

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the reader, anchored in the cultural and historical heritage of the Armenian nation.

His information on the era of hope and anticipated enlightenment sounds very reliable and convincing. The odyssey of the traveler proves once again that Armenia and the Armenian nation are an indispensable part of the ancient civilization and still have an important role to play on the world stage.

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ԳԱՍՊԱՐՅԱՆ Լ.

Ամփոփում

Քանալի քաներ՝ Խրիմյան Հայրիկ, Հայաստան, տրավելոգ, Հենրի Լինչ, ուղեգրություն, հայրենասիրություն, օժման արարողություն, Հայոց եկեղեցի:

Հայաստանի և հայ ժողովրդի ազգային ինքնության առանձնահատկությունների ուսումնասիրությունը առանցքային դարձավ եվրոպացի ուղեգիրների համար: Այս առումով հետաքրքրական են, մասնավորապես, անգլիացի ուղեգիր Հենրի Լինչի (1862–1913)՝ Արևմտյան և Արևելյան Հայաստանի, հայ ժողովրդի քաղաքական, կրոնական, մշակութային և ազգային ըմբռնումների մասին դիտարկումները, որոնք զետեղվել են նրա “Armenia; Travels and Studies (1901) 2 Volumes” (Հայաստան ուղևորություններ և ուսումնասիրություններ) երկհատոր լայնածավալ աշխատության մեջ:

Լինչի՝ Մ. Խրիմյանի կերպարին նվիրված հատվածները բացահայտում են XIX դարի վերջին և XX դարի սկզբին հայ հասարակության կյանքում անգնահատելի դերակատարություն ունեցող նվիրյալին: Լինչը նկարագրում

է Մ. Խրիմյանի բեղմնավոր գործունեությունը քաղաքական, կրոնական, գրական և մանկավարժական բնագավառներում, որոնք նոր սերնդին համակեցին հայ ազգային ինքնության գաղափարներով և նպաստեցին ազգային-ազատագրական զարթոնքին:

ПОРТРЕТ М. ХРИМЯНА В ТРАВЕЛОГЕ Г. ЛИНЧА

ГАСПАРЯН Л.

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Хримян Айрик, Армения, травелог, Генри Линч, патриотизм, церемония освящения, Армянская церковь.

Изучение Армении и национальных особенностей армянского народа стало ключевым для европейских путешественников. В связи со сказанным особый интерес представляют материалы английского путешественника Генри Линча (1862–1913), собранные им во время двух путешествий в Армению (1893–1894, 1898). Путешествие Линча в Армению завершилось созданием двухтомного труда, озаглавленного «Армения» (1901). В нем содержатся сведения по истории, этнографии, фольклору армянского народа, географии и демографии Армении, а также статистические данные по Западной и Восточной Армении.

Особую ценность представляют отрывки, посвященные образу М. Хримяна. Линч описывает плодотворную деятельность М. Хримяна в сфере политики, религии, литературы и педагогики, способствовавшую пробуждению национального самосознания.