
CLASSICS OF ARMENOLOGY

MANUK ABEGHYAN **(1865-1944)**



M. Abeghyan was one of the classics of Armenian philology. His fundamental studies devoted to Armenian literature, language, lexicography and oral tradition paved way for the development of different areas of modern Armenian scholarship.

M. Abeghyan was born in March 17, 1865, in the village of Tazakend, near Astapat (in modern Nakhijevan), famous for its monastery of St. Stepanos (Karmirvank). After a brief study at the newly opened school of Astapat in 1876 he was selected to continue his further education at the Gevorgyan seminary in Echmiatsin. After graduating the seminary in 1887 M. Abeghyan was appointed as a teacher at the school in Shushi, Karabagh, where he works for two years.

Still in this early period were revealed M. Abeghyan's passion and abilities in the field of ancient Armenian oral tradition. In 1888 he presented a variant of the "Daredevils of Sasoon" which he had found during his travels through different parts of Karabagh. In the next year in Shushi was published the second variant of the national epos, "Davit and Mher" which the young scholar had heard from an old man still in Echmiatsin. In 1889 was published the first study of M. Abeghyan in the journal "Murch", entitled as "National novel".

In 1889 M. Abeghyan was invited to Tiflis, Georgia where he works at the Hovnanyan school as a teacher of Armenian language and literature. Here he continued his Armenological studies publishing articles in the journal "Nor Dar" dealing with medieval Armenian literature, and translating from Russian literature. During two years (1891-1892) he became the editor of this journal.

Through the financial support of Aleksander Mantashyan, the famous Armenian oil magnate, in 1893 M. Abeghyan went to Germany where at the universities of Jena, Leipzig and Berlin he studied German philology, history and philosophy (1893-1895), then to France where he attends the courses of philology at Sorbonne. Numerous studies were published in "Nor Dar" by M. Abeghyan during his education in Germany and France. Besides philological problems here he became an expert in the field of the mythology and beliefs of European peoples which gave him an opportunity to undertake studies devoted to the Armenian comparative mythology.

In 1898 M. Abeghyan completed his dissertation at the university of Jena entitled as «Armenian folk beliefs» which was published in Leipzig in German.

M. Abeghyan returned to Tiflis in 1898 and in that same year was invited to the Gevorgyan seminary as a teacher of Armenian language, literature, history, geography

and German language. During his stay at Echmiatsin (until 1914) M.Abeghyan had published numerous studies dealing with the old Armenian literature and language ("Armenian folk epic stories in the 'History of Armenia' of Movses Khorenatsi", "Armenian national epos", "Sasna Tsrer" ["Daredevils fo Sassoon"], "Grammar of modern Armenian", "Consize grammar of Old Armenian", "History of Armenia by Movses Khorenatsi" [original text compiled through all extant variants], etc.). In collaboration with Komitas, the outstanding Armenian composer, M.Abeghyan had published two volumes of Armenian folk songs (1903, 1905).

From 1916 M.Abeghyan became a teacher in Armenian language and literature at the Nersisyan school in Tiflis where he worked until August 1, 1919, when he was invited to Yerevan as a lecturer in the newly established university of Yerevan and a dean of the faculty of history and philology.

After the Sovietization of Armenia in November 1920 M.Abeghyan continued his scholarly activities. Still in 1921 he was put at the head of reforms in the orthography of the Armenian language, in order to fight against illiteracy in the republic. He successfully completed that job and the modern orthography of Armenian was established.

With the establishment of the Peoples' university, instead of the closed university of Yerevan, M.Abeghyan became lecturer of Armenian folklore, old Armenian literature and the theory of Armenian language. In 1926 M.Abeghyan became professor in the History of Armenian literature.

In 1925 M.Abeghyan was elected as a vice-president of the newly established first academic institution of the republic – Institute of Sciences and Arts. Few months later he became president of this institution and held this position until 1930.

Due to health problems from 1931 onwards M.Abeghyan quitted teaching activities, but continued his studies. With the active participation of M.Abeghyan in 1939 was published the complete original text of the "Daredevils of Sassoon", which was translated into Russian in that same year. During the last years of his life M.Abeghyan published several studies dedicated to the medieval Armenian literature ("The life of Mashtos" of Koriwn, "History of old Armenian literature, vol.I, etc.).

Selected bibliography of Manuk Abeghyan

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2. The Orthography of Armenian language, Tiflis, 1892 (146 p.).
3. Der armenische Volksglaube, Leipzig, 1899 (127 S.).
4. Armenian folk epic stories in the «History of Armenia» of Movses Khorenatsi (critics and texts), Vagharshapat, 1899 (602 p.).
5. Consise grammar of Old Armenian, Vagharshapat, 1907 (207 p.) (second edition - Yerevan, 1936).
6. Armenian national novel, Tiflis, 1908 (212 p.).
7. Russian-Armenian military dictionary, Yerevan, 1925 (724 p.).

8. Orthographic reform, Yerevan, 1925 (116 p.).
9. The theory of Armenian language, Yerevan, 1931 (378 p.).
10. Davit of Sassoon and Mher (on the dialect of Moks), Yerevan, 1931 (268 p.).
11. Daredevils of Sasoon. Armenian national epos (editor, in collaboration with K.Melik-Ohanjanyan), vol. I, Yerevan, 1936 (1128 p.), vol.II, part I, Yerevan, 1944 (404 p.), part II, Yerevan, 1951 (1005 p.).
12. Davit of Sasoon. Armenian national epos (original text) (M.Abeghyan, G.Abovyan, A.Ghanalanyan), Yerevan, 1939 (XXXI+385 p.)(Russian edition Moscow, 1939 and 1958).
13. "History of Armenia" of Movses Khorenatsi (transl. and edit. By M.Abeghyan and S.Harutyunyan), Tiflis, 1913 (396 p.).
14. Koriwn, The life of Mashtots (original text in Classical Armenian with translation and commentaries), Yerevan, 1941 (126 p.)(Russian edition – Yerevan, 1962, English edition – Boston and New York, 1964, edition in modern Armenian – Yerevan, 1962).
15. History of old Armenian literature, book I (until X century), Yerevan, 1944 (647 p.) (Beirut, 1955).
16. The history of old Armenian literature, book I (until X century), Yerevan, book II (XI century-1830s), Yerevan, 1946 (599 p.)(Russian edition – Yerevan, 1948).
17. Studies, 8 volumes, Yerevan, 1966-1985.