

# FROM DISINTEGRATION TO REINTEGRATION: ARMENIANS AT THE START OF THE MODERN ERA

(XVIth-XVIIth CENTURIES)

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When did the Armenian nation enter the modern era? When does any nation enter the modern era? Or, better what are the criteria for a discussion of modernism with regard to the evolution of a people or nation? Modern nations are characterized in part by urbanism, trade, and industry opposed to the self-sufficient, and rural economies of the pre-industrial age.

International commerce had always existed between Armenia and the rest of the world. Individuals, however, who became rich through trade are not common before the collapse of the Greater Armenian kingdoms of the eleventh century<sup>1</sup>. The early thirteenth century merchant of Ani, Tigran Honents', is among the most striking examples of a new breed about whom firm information is available. During the Cilician period, the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, major Armenian trade activity appears at first sight to be under the control of the state, the kings. The period of the destruction of the last Armenian monarchy in Cilicia at the end of the fourteenth century, followed by a century and a half during which there is a sharp decline in the status and authority of the indigenous Armenian naxarar families, should probably be seen as the prelude to the transformation of Armenian society. At first, the aristocracy was replaced by the clergy as the most important element, in time a bourgeoisie merchant class was to rise. This class assumed the role of church patronage, and, therefore, national patronage previously reserved for the nobility. By the end of the nineteenth

1. According to the colophon of a Gospel of 988, a merchant named Kirakos commissioned it; it is now in the Matenadaran, G. YOVSEP'IAN, *Manuscript Colophons* (in Armenian), Antelias, 1951, no. 69, cf. ERROLL RHODES, *An Annotated List of Armenian New Testament Manuscripts*, Tokyo, 1959, *loc. cit.*

and the early twentieth century (perhaps already by the eighteenth century in centers like Constantinople), the bourgeoisie had become the dominant class in national affairs. Through wealth and the manipulation of national institutions, the rich were able to exert an abnormal influence on the nation through the church and the Ottoman millet system the church was part of. The Genocide and deportations of 1915-1922 froze this national structure, and at least for western Armenians, preserved it for today's diaspora.

I believe the moment that marks the beginning of the modern period in the history of the Armenian nation is the seventeenth century. A case is more often made for the second half of the sixteenth century, but I see that period rather as the proto-modern period. A case could also be made for the nineteenth century; the choice depends on the definition used to describe modernism.

As a beginning, for the purposes of this discussion, by referring to the modern era, or entry into the modern world, I speak more about the change in institutions, in the structure of Armenia society, then the actual material well-being of the Armenian people or a conscious perception of modernism. Until more detailed study is done, one must accept as accurate the impressionistic contention that the mass of Armenians — especially those living in historical Armenia — were poor peasants little affected by the attitudes and modes of their city brethren<sup>2</sup>.

When we speak of the modern world we mean a set of conditions that contrast the new with the old. Changes from one period to another, for example in the Middle East from the Middle Ages to modern times, are usually accompanied by a break with earlier traditions and the disappearance of various institutions and classes. Often the change is dramatic and violent: revolutionary. Sometimes it is evolutionary. Usually it is a mixture of the two. In the Armenian case the process was evolutionary, non-violent from within the nation, but associated with, perhaps impelled by, external disasters and aggression that destroyed the cultivable land, thus, the agricultural base, and, thereby, weakened the institutions of the nation.

I have chosen the seventeenth century, more specifically the mid-seventeenth century, as the instance when Armenia emerged into modernism

2. What the ratio of rural to urban population and farmers to non-farmers was in the period from say 1895 to 1915 can probably be determined by a careful analysis of population figures that are available. It is a question one ought to pose to Dr. Sarkis Karayan who will soon publish his vast accumulation of Armenian population figures in the period just before and after the Genocide of 1915.



for the following reasons: 1) the century long border wars between Safavid 2) the all-powerful feudal families of an earlier era had disappeared except in the remote mountains of eastern Armenia, especially the Karabagh; 3) after nearly two hundred years of stagnation, material culture — the copying of manuscripts, the printing of books, and the building of churches — had a spectacular effervescence; 4) major Armenian urban centers developed within and outside of historic Armenia; 5) a wealthy class of merchants and traders that patronized culture through the church came into being; 6) recognized minority status of Armenians as a separate religious group in the various states they found themselves in contributed to the stability of the nation; 7) Armenian colonies and individuals that prospered outside of Armenia sought to translate new ideas into the mainstream of Armenian culture. I have already discussed point one, two, three, and six in previous articles<sup>3</sup>. My interest in this paper will focus on points four and five — new urban centers and a new class of merchants.

## SOURCES AND STATISTICS

In addition to the histories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the few supplementary documents that have survived, the best source for a general view of Armenian life during the period of transition from the near cultural annihilation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the revitalisation of the seventeenth century and after are the colophons of Armenian manuscripts. As I have said before, the abundance of these short contemporary records — hundreds for the sixteenth century and virtually thousands for the seventeenth century — affords a mass of data susceptible to statistical analysis. With more than 80% of these resources through very adequate catalogues of Armenian colophons, interested researchers have a rare opportunity to determine more accurately the social and economic structure of Armenian society at the start of the modern period. Some years ago I presented a paper on the use of such statistics, illustrated by numerous charts and graphs, to show precisely how the colophonic material can confirm or place in doubt hypotheses arrived at by the study

3. DICKRAN KOUYMJIAN, "Sous le joug des Turcomans et des Turcs ottomans (XV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)," *Histoire des Arméniens*, G. Dédéyan ed., Toulouse, 1982, pp. 342-376, and *idem*, "Dated Armenian Manuscript as a Statistical Tool for Armenian History," *Medieval Armenian Culture*, T. Samuelian and M. Stone eds., Chico, CA, 1983, pp. 425-438.

of standard histories, and how it can could even yield new insights not apparent from traditional sources<sup>4</sup>.

The study of patronage is today a very common and fashionable way to analyze the social structure of a community or a nation with the aim of determining where the financial capacity lay to endow the construction of churches or the sponsorship of creative works. Because Armenian manuscripts almost invariably record the date and place of execution as well as the name of the scribe and patron of the work, they provide through their colophons, an excellent tool for examining the social hierarchy of the society from which they originate. In the medieval period the major sponsors of manuscript production were almost invariably — at least for the finer example — the aristocracy, the nobility, and the higher clergy (itself often from these same upper classes). Less pretentious works, needed for the daily rituals of religious life or for study, were copied by scribes usually attached to the scriptorium of a monastery. The pattern of patronage changed in the late medieval period with the destruction of the last Armenian kingdom and the gradual disappearance of the hereditary nobility in most of the land. In Greater Armenia, deprived of an indigenous monarchy since the eleventh century, a gradual change began as early as the thirteenth century and in large metropolitan areas like Ani, even earlier. The most famous example of this transformation is that of the rich merchant Tigran Honents', who, in 1215, sponsored the building of the church of St. Gregory, in Ani, an imprint construction that benefited further from Honents''s supplementary gift of an endowment of property to guarantee its maintenance<sup>5</sup>. In order that there be no confusion about the sponsorship of manuscripts, it should be said clearly that the major source of such patronage came from the clergy itself, especially those of higher rank. In the fourteenth and fifteenth century, leaders of the remnants of the hereditary families, particularly in Greater Armenia and the mountainous areas of the Arts'ak/Karabagh and Siunik', continued to support the copying of manuscripts. The colophons from eastern Armenia from the fourteenth

4. KOUYMJIAN, "Dated Armenian Manuscript as a Statistical Tool". The raw data were collected while working on the chapter for Dédéyan's history, in which I used some of conclusions derived statistically from colophons.
5. Tigran Honents' was a merchant. For the importance of this endowment see H. MANANDJIAN, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia*, trans. N. Garsoian, Lisbon, 1965, pp. 185-188. Another merchant of the same century, Sahmadin, known from an inscription at Mren of 1261, is discussed by Manandjian, p. 188. The earliest example of a merchant donation that I am aware of is the that of the Gospel of 988, Matenadaran MS 982, quoted in note 1 above.



to as late as the seventeenth century often refer to individuals bearing the title "tanuter"<sup>6</sup>.

At the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries the major group of secular donors of manuscripts identifiable by title are the *xojas* (*khodjas*), wealthy merchants engaged in trade, often international. The title seems to have been attributed to important Armenian merchants active in historic Armenia and the immediately neighboring areas<sup>7</sup>. Though the origin and usage of this title in the Armenian context is not altogether clear either chronologically or geographically, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it became closely associated in the Lake Van area and Julfa on the Arax with the merchants who traveled regularly to Aleppo, Zeyt'un, Amida, and as far as K'afa, Constantinople, Venice, Amsterdam, and India<sup>8</sup>. It is no accident that in the following century, the largest single group of *xojas* originates from New Julfa, the Armenian suburb of Isfahan established after 1604 for the Armenians deported by Shah Abbas from Julfa on the Arax. Dozens of *xojas* from that city are mentioned in colophons between 1610 and 1670<sup>9</sup>.

Patrons with titles other than *xoja* are also known from the period. "Baron" is still found, but less frequently than in the late medieval

6. I have not systematically traced the usage of the term in the colophons, but a casual look through the Matenadaran catalogue and a selective list of manuscripts from northern and eastern Armenia yields *tanatèr* as the title of several sponsors of manuscripts.
7. See HAGOP BARSOUMIAN, "The Dual Role of the Armenian *Amira* Class with the Ottoman Government and the Armenian *Millet* (1750-1850)," in B. BRAUDE and B. LEWIS, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, 2 vols., New York, 1982, vol. I, pp. 171-2, which is based on H. ANASYAN, *XVII dari azatagrakan sharzhounern arevelyan Hayastanoum (The Seventeenth Century Freedom Movement in Eastern Armenia)*, Erevan, 1961, pp. 59-63.
8. Zeytun, 1602, RHODES, *Annotated List*, 591; Khizan, 1610, M5234, 1621, RHODES, 1139; K'afa, 1658, RHODES, 1031; Constantinople, RHODES, 25, second half of the 17th century, Vienna, Mekhitarist Library, MS 295, and RHODES, 271; Aleppo, 1581 but by someone from Julfa, Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 9876; 1623, Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 1767 (*History of Matthew of Edessa*); 1624, *xoja* of Amida for both manuscripts; 1633, *xoja* of Julfa, RHODES, 594; 1642, Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 1443.
9. Names and lists compiled from the index of names in RHODES, *Annotated List*, and from a selective examination of the Matenadaran catalogue, vol. II, nos. 5000-5400. A thorough search in the manuscript catalogues will easily double or triple the number. Rhodes contains some 1250 Gospel and Bible manuscripts; these produced 21 *xojas* even though a large number of the manuscripts listed were not fully described. I would think that we could multiply the number by twenty to approximate the number of *xojas* that would turn up if we went through all Armenian manuscripts and not just Gospels. In the summary two volume catalogue of the Matenadaran, some 120 *xojas* are listed.

period<sup>10</sup>. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century it has a more elevated rank than its modern day equivalent of mister, but is far removed from its original noble meaning. Random patrons, both lay and clergy, are also identified as "mahtesi," that is pilgrim to Jerusalem. Like pilgrimage, the paying for the copying of a Gospel was also considered a pious act.

For the *xojas*, the commission of a manuscript was almost certainly understood as a pious act. From a short list of thirty-one manuscript donations by *xojas* between 1581 and 1669, all but three are Gospels, two are collections of texts, and one, commissioned by Maxsut *xoja* of Amida, is the *History* of Matthew of Edessa<sup>11</sup>. The high proportion of Gospels to other texts holds true for the more than one hundred individual manuscripts in the Matenadaran in Erevan copied through the benevolence of the *xojas*. Though these merchants are by far the largest secular group to form a class of patrons, other elements of society were engaged in what had become by the sixteenth century a traditional way of engaging in a benevolent community action; they include a few landowners, craftsmen, and officials.

## THE ARMENIAN CHURCH AND THE MERCHANT CLASS

By the seventeenth century Constantinople had become an important center of Armenian life. A large Armenian population had gradually settled there mostly because of the instability in the east caused by the three major Ottoman-Safavid wars of the sixteenth century. By the eighteenth century a new formation of Armenian grandees came into being, the *çelebis*, money changers (*sarrafs*) turned bankers, who eventually gave way to the powerful amiras of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The wealthy Armenian businessmen and civil servants resident in Constantinople quickly became the dominant power behind the Armenian clergy especially the office of Armenian patriarch; the church understood the importance of this class and worked closely with it. By the late eighteenth century the amiras became the major influence behind the patriarch, the official spokesman before the sultan and the authorities of the state for the entire nation, constituted as the Armenian millet. Because the office of patriarch came to have associated with it power

10. It is more common in the late fifteenth and sixteenth century rather than the seventeenth.

11. Matenadaran, MS 1769 of 1623. The same Maxsut commissioned a Gospel in the following year, Venice, Mekhitarist MS 65, RHODES, no. 299. He was obviously a merchant with intellectual pretensions.



over the community, a bitter competition ensued among the eligible clergy for appointment to it. The sultan himself chose the office holder from among the contending Armenian bishops. By the second half of the seventeenth century, the office had become vehicle of corruption and graft for various Ottoman officials who had the power to influence the sultan's decision. From 1660 to 1715 there were thirty-four patriarchs. Such a rate of change bespeaks of the fierce struggle among the competitors. A common source for money to pay the necessary bribes was the new Armenian merchant and banking class. The wedding of the wealthy to the church was consummated in Constantinople in the seventeenth century; now, three centuries later, this union it is as strong as ever with no prospect of divorce in sight. The church is the oldest, and perhaps the only surviving, national institution; controlling it is controlling the nation, at least in the diaspora. Even in Soviet Armenia, officially non-religious, the church gained special prominence, at least since the pontificate of catholicos Vazken I in 1955.

### THE XOJAS AS A CLASS

Hagop Barsoumian maintained that the amiras of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries formed a class within the Armenian millet<sup>12</sup>. Considering, however, their relative number (some 159 individuals are identified in the standard source<sup>13</sup> and their reduced geographically area of activity (almost exclusively in Constantinople), can they really be considered a class within the extended nation? In Constantinople they certainly controlled the community, but their power and activity outside the capital are not apparent. Their ascendancy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries — a time when manuscripts and, therefore, colophons are no longer produced — makes it difficult to judge their prevalence in national life through the statistical method used elsewhere in this study in discussing the xojas. On the other hand, for these later centuries we have a much more abundant reservoir of primary sources, histories and especially periodical literature, than in any previous period of Armenian history, therefore, a deeper analysis of the amiras' role as a class is possible. As endowers and philanthropists they were responsible for the construction and maintenance of a whole

12. BARSOUMIAN, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class," *op. cit.*, I, pp. 171-2.

13. M. BARSAMEAN and A. K'EC'EAN, *Akn ew Aknc'ik (Akn and Those from Akn)*, Paris, 1952, pp. 203-222; cf. BARSOUMIAN, p. 172, note 6.

network of Armenian national schools. They provided lavishly for the church, too<sup>14</sup>.

Already two centuries before the rise of the amiras the *xojas* represented an unorganized group of merchants active everywhere Armenians lived. From roughly 1400 to 1550, the *xojas* evolved into an active and wealthy middleclass<sup>15</sup>. In the later half of the sixteenth century they made the fame of Julfa on the Arax, and from there established themselves in Aleppo (where they soon controlled the Persian silk trade), in Venice, Amsterdam, and other cities of Europe and the east<sup>16</sup>. From their genesis in the mid-fifteenth century<sup>17</sup> to their decline at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, they appear to represent the only easily identifiable class — the clergy excepted — in Armenian life. There is hardly any place of Armenian inhabitation for which there is no reference to one or more *xojas*. Whether their headquarters were located in towns like Julfa, with which they are closely associated, and then later spread out, or whether they represent a generalized phenomenon of Armenian life of the sixteenth century will only become clear with more research<sup>18</sup>.

14. An examination of some 400 pages of indexes of the Matenadaran catalogues volumes I and II does not provide a single reference to the title *amira* among the 10,500 manuscripts included. Is it possible that the indexers and the preparers of the catalogues did not consider that title productive? Or rather is it that the commissioning of manuscripts as a pious act had gone out of fashion simply because the manuscript as such had become an arcane curiosity, replaced at the end of the seventeenth century by the printed book available in abundance in Armenia.
15. A search of the primary sources has uncovered some thirty reference by name to *xojas* active in the first half of the fifteenth century. From then on the frequency continues to increase until the late seventeenth century when there is a sharp decline. The author is compiling a comprehensive list of *xojas* that will be published in a future study.
16. For details on the history of Julfa see JURGIS BALTRUSAITIS and DICKRAN KOUYMJIAN, "Julfa on the Arax and Its Funerary Monuments," in D. Kouymjian, ed., *Armenian Studies / Etudes Arméniennes: In Memorial Haig Berbérian*, Lisbon, 1986, pp. 9-53.
17. Thus far the earliest references I have uncovered to *xojas* are 1457, a certain Xac'atur *xoja* commissioned a *Yajsmavurk'*, but the place is not preserved (Mat. MS 4755); 1459 Aslan *xoja* commissioned a manuscript at Ejmiacin (Mat. MS 9385); others are recorded for 1462 (Arčēš), 1466 (Arčké), 1477 (Yovannavank'), 1493 (Aght'amar). In the sixteenth century, *xojas* are known from Van to Julfa on the Arax and south to Aleppo. All are cited as commissioners of manuscripts. A careful search through the corpus of lapidary inscriptions will probably produce even more of their class.
18. For example *xoja* Sarukhan from Julfa in 1633 commissioned a Gospel in Aleppo now in the collection of the church of the Forty Martyrs in Aleppo (MS 41), cf. RHODES, *Annotated List*, no. 594. There are other examples.



Whatever role a dying nobility, the *naxarars*, may have had in the second half of the fifteenth century in Siunik', Lori, and Ayrarat<sup>19</sup>, by the sixteenth century their presence is not strongly felt in Armenian national life. The clergy seem to keep the nation together; it is they who sponsored the early missions to the west to seek help for the Armenians<sup>20</sup>. The later nobility, represented by the *maliks* of Karabagh of the eighteenth century and after, are too geographically restricted in their activities to represent a movement or even a class throughout the whole of Armenian society.

On the other hand the *xojas* seemed to have all the attributes of a broadly based class, active wherever trade could turn a profit. As might be expected, very few references are found to them in Siunik' and the Arts'ax/Karabagh, where wealth was probably still closely associated with land holding. They seem to be connected with localities dense in population and of a certain size. One hesitates to use the word *urban*, because we are not certain of the relative size of some of the towns they are allied to. But the ones most often mentioned — Julfa, whether on the Arax or later New Julfa at Isfahan, Aleppo, Van, Amida/Tigranakert, Khizan, K'afa — can be called *urban* in the context of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The existence of a middleclass of merchants engaged in international trade is an important criterion in the process of modernization. They reinforced communications between Armenians and the advanced commercial centers of the west. As a group the *xojas* were responsible for the accumulation of wealth, the importation of luxury items<sup>21</sup>, the adoption and banalization of new inventions such as printing, the creation of a reserve of individuals competent in commercial relations and versed in foreign languages, and the channel for enterprising persons to seek their fortunes in an Armenian world where the traditional base of power — land ownership — was no longer a productive possibility.

Armenians had been living in an active diaspora since the immigrations of the eleventh century. The gradual, but unrelenting, destruction of agricultural lands in the Seljuk, Mongol, Timurid, and Türkmen periods (eleventh to the sixteenth centuries) insured a continued migration out of those parts of Armenia directly in the path of invading armies or in the war

19. Some details of their activities can be found in KOUYMJIAN, "Sous le juge des Turcomans," *op. cit.*, for instance that of Baron Beshken Orbelian, p. 347.

20. Details can be found in DÉDÉYAN, *op. cit.*

21. The best example of how this process changed the social attitudes of at least that class of Armenians and, through their patronage, the surface appearance — at least from the point of view of decoration — of churches and homes is still available for examination at New Julfa, a city of *xojas* par excellence: JOHN CARSWELL, *The Armenian Churches in New Julfa*, Isfahan, Oxford, 1970.

zones during the successive Turko-Persian wars of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The major centers of Armenian life were shifting, in the early decades of the seventeenth century the most flourishing centers were Constantinople, New Julfa, Aleppo, K'afa, Lvov, and Kamenitz, all outside of Armenia. This effervescence was to reassert itself in Armenia proper as the century progressed, at least from the point of view of patronage. Khizan, Moks, Lim, Van, Bitlis in the area around Lake Van, and Erzerum, Tiflis, Tigranakert-Amida, Zeyt'un, Kayseri, T'okat, and Sebastia-Siva, shared in the prosperity brought about by commerce.

By the early seventeenth century, when Shah Abbas forced the population of Julfa on the Arax and the surrounding areas to migrate deep into Iran, an Armenian middleclass represented by *xojas* was already in place. That is why after 1604 the merchants and craftsmen of New Julfa, with skills developed in the second half of the sixteenth century in Armenia, fueled by the wealth acquired by old Julfa's itinerant traders, were able in such a short time to prosper. Not only had a new class come into being, but it had become accepted by the nation through the only surviving and valid national institution, the Armenian church. To patronize the church was to patronize the nation. And in time even the fittings of a nation were to become available to the Armenians through 1) the Ottoman millet system, though it only displayed a clearly defined structure after the late seventeenth century<sup>22</sup>, 2) similar protection given to the Armenians of Iran, and, eventually, 3) their countrymen living under the Czars.

## CONCLUSIONS

The formation of a merchant class of is a symbol of the transformation of, and the social mobility within, society. The role of *xoja*-merchants in, or at least their association with, the new Armenian urban centers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries strengthens the argument for choosing that period as the moment of change in Armenian life from the late medieval world to the modern one. This picture of a restructured Armenia functioning according to a new, but, by the end of the seventeenth century, clearly understood set of rules, is further reinforced by the extraordinary renaissance in the arts as demonstrated by the building of new churches,

22. New attitudes on the part of scholars toward the *millet* system have developed in the past two decades. They are the result of a fresh reexamination of the sources and are presented in detail in the proceedings of the Princeton colloquium of 1978 on the *millet* system. BRAUDE and LEWIS, *op. cit.*, see especially the overview of Braude in the introduction to volume I.



the renovation of many others, the lavish ornamentation with frescoes and ceramics of church and home interiors, and the commissioning of luxurious manuscripts. A further sign of the rise in material culture is the quantity of books printed in Armenian and the diversity of their titles.

If the mission of Mekhitar of Sebastia had such a phenomenal success at the beginning of the following century, it is because the enlightenment propagated by the Mekhitarists' pursuit of scholarship and its dissemination had a constituency of merchants ready and willing to embrace it. A portion of the nation was now prepared to receive the message brought wholesale by Armenian monks from the West because it had already entered the modern era in the previous century.

It is often said that from every bad there comes some good. The centuries of devastation following immediately after the fall of the last Armenian kingdom produced a near permanent state of despair among those remaining in historical Armenia. In the first decades of the sixteenth century material culture had so declined that those concerned with the fate of the Armenians might have seriously asked if the nation would be able to endure in the homeland, or would it only survive as diasporan communities that appeared to offer hope of a tolerable life. The irony of history is that such a near total destruction of a society sometimes provides the surviving members with a clean slate, and freed from the past, and free to redefine its future structure and the place of citizens within it. Such flexibility in the Armenian social system, just as it was about to actively encounter western societies, produced, by the seventeenth century, a change in the national profile, one that has remained essentially the same up to the present century. Ferdinand Braudel has suggested that the price Armenians had to pay for their sophisticated commercial success was the abandoning of any dream to reconstitute its own territorial state<sup>23</sup>. But of course our modern sense of territorial nationalism developed well after the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What became of the restructured Armenian society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the subsequent period is the subject for another study, but one thing is certain, the dream of a territorial homeland was never abandoned.

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23. "Cette émigration de la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et du début du XVII<sup>e</sup> explique, en Arménie, une Renaissance de couleur Venitienne. Mais n'est-ce pas pour avoir outrepassé si largement ses limites, à son avantage comme à son détriment, que l'Arménie a cessé, dès le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, de former un Etat, sinon un milieu humain de haut potentiel? Elle s'est perdue dans sa réussite même;" F. BRAUDEL, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, sixième éd., Paris, 1985, vol. I, pp. 45-6.