



AELITA DOLUKHANYAN: WHEN POTENTIAL AND SPIRITUAL FLIGHT MERGE (JUBILEE)

The eminent scientist Doctor of Philology, Professor, Corresponding Member of NAS RA Aelita Gurchen Dolukhanyan turned another page in her biography celebrating her birthday of an intelligent individual. A. Dolukhanyan, being entitled as a person who is unwearied and inventive in her dedication to science and knowledge, however has never given thought to her entitlement, and this is the reason why throughout the decades of her creative life of a scholar she has enjoyed the love and respect of both her close and remote colleagues and ours, her friends who know her very well.

Few are the researchers of Armenian Studies in our Motherland who have managed to show their talent and spiritual potential in a research field that is quite large in terms of its geography. She has been able to provide a thorough philosophical analysis of a number of valuable pieces of Old Armenian and Middle Armenian literature, as well as to estimate the works of home and foreign Armenologists. The scope of her scientific interest is quite diverse, including literary critical characterization of the works of contemporary Armenian and Diaspora writers, the investigation of the translation of Old Armenian original texts from a theoretical perspective, dynamic issues of pedagogical methodology, the interconnections between public education and state systems and so on and so forth. The list, however is not complete. If it is complemented with her impartial appraisals given to her senior and fellow contemporaries, as well as her remarkable studies on European and Russian literature, we shall see that we deal with an astonishing combination of an individual, scholar, and citizen with a wide scope of scientific interests. Her works reflect the exquisite combination of unique cognitive and analytical mindset and high-born elegance.

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The scholar to be was born in Yerevan, on February 14, 1942, in the family of Gurgen Dolukhanyan, a party leader and Aghavni Sarukhanyan, a teacher. She left school No 1 in Yerevan in 1959 and entered the Faculty of History and Linguistics of the Pedagogical Institute after Kh. Abovyan in the same year.

This was followed by years of education, post-graduate studies and scientific-organizational activities at the same Institute. Her academic life at the Pedagogical Institute, first as a teacher, then an associate professor of the Department of Armenian Literature, started in 1969 and continues up until now. In 1972 she defended her PhD thesis on Medieval Armenian literature, namely – the works of Nerses Mokatsi. In 1989 A. Dolukhanyan's doctoral thesis on the research of one of her preferred issues – “The Problem of Spirit and Body in Medieval Armenian Lyric Poetry” was successfully defended, and in 1990 she was conferred the title of Professor. In the meantime, A. Dolukhanyan held different scientific-administrative positions – in 1969 she headed the Department of Post-Graduate Studies of the Pedagogical Institute. She was also the Scientific Secretary of the Specialized Research Council of Armenian Literature. In 1990 she was elected Head of the Department of Armenian Literature and Methodology at the Institute. In 2013 A. Dolukhanyan became Head of the Chair of Armenian Ancient and Medieval Literature and Its Teaching Methods at Armenian State Pedagogical University. In 2010 she was elected a Corresponding Member at NAS RA for her outstanding scientific merits. The core of A. Dolukhanyan's scientific works are her monographs which can be justly defined as the outcome of her year-long hard work and scholarly enthusiasm. Her first monograph based on the Doctoral dissertation with the same title covers a wide scope of research – including both the highlights of the philosophical premises of the issue and the evaluation of the lyrical poetry by Gr. Narekatsi and the post-Narek lyrics. The study was unique from the perspective of the significance of the combination of the aesthetics and philosophy in the context of Armenian Medieval lyrical poetry. Moreover, the research demonstrated the scholar's intention to elaborate on the issues and to make the investigation more complete, thus achieving a more comprehensive evaluation of her research field. Indeed, A. Dolukhanyan's new work with the same title (Проблема души и тела в средневековой армянской поэзии, Е., Зангак-97, 2008) was published in Russian more than two decades later.

Here, we believe, a greater emphasis was laid on the issue of Gr. Narekatsi's impact on the later medieval Armenian poetry.

However, a certain direction can be traced in A. Dolukhanyan's works – one which is utterly hers and is consistently followed: scientific works written in French as well as studies of different Armenian issues by various generations of French scholars are scrupulously studied and presented to the interested community, both local and foreign. For more than two decades A. Dolukhanyan has laid new foundations in the history of Armenian studies. In this respect her authorial dedication to the work which actually is the origin of the research direction mentioned above (*Felix Nev and Armenian Christian Chronicles*. Yerevan, "Artagers", 2001) is symbolic: "With profound love and gratitude the book is dedicated to foreign scholars in the Armenian Studies of the past, present and future". Not only is it a token of gratitude to foreign scientists of Armenian Studies for their contribution to this field, but also the author's suggestion to make the content of the work known to readers in future. In the aforementioned work A. Dolukhanyan carries out a thorough, professional analysis of the legacy left by the 19th century Belgian scholar of the Armenian Studies. To be more precise the book focuses on the results of his research on the elucidation of Ancient and Medieval Armenian literature and history as well as the Armenian statehood and church. A. Dolukhanyan's invaluable ability to show F. Nev's multi-faceted, comprehensive scientific palette to the reader also deserves appreciation.

A. Dolukhanyan has devoted the next work of the abovementioned series to the analysis of the eminent French scholar of Armenian Studies, Orientalist Mari Brosset's activities (*Mari Felicite Brosset as an Armenologist*. Yerevan, "Artagers", 2001). With meticulous scrutiny peculiar only to a scientist, A. Dolukhanyan has introduced the elucidation of outstanding figures in the Medieval Armenian historiography (Tovma Artsruni, Stepanos Orbelian, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Arakel Davrizhetsi and others) since among European scholars of the Armenian Studies it was M. Brosset who was the first to have referred to the majority of them. The same approach can be observed in A. Dolukhanyan's elucidation of this author's discussion of such issues as the theory of law, the numastics, and bibliography of Medieval Armenia and equally important topics of professional nature, in general.

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In the series “*European Scholars of the Armenian Studies*” A. Dolukhanyan’s other works refer to two talented eminent French scholars of Armenian Studies – V. Langlois and Ed. Dulorier (*V. Langlois as an Armenologist*. Yerevan, Lusakn, 2003 and *Ed. Dulorier as an Armenologist*. Yerevan, Lusakn, 2004). The short sequence of their publication evidences the author’s persistent and thorough work spanning through many decades. In the first work A. Dolukhanyan obviously reveals V. Langlois’ (a bright scientist who died untimely) inestimable contribution to the study of Armenian literature, historiography, numastics, particularly to the field of research on the Armenian State of Cilicia, the crusaders, the French-Armenian relationships in the Middle Ages. Almost every page of the work portrays V. Langlois as an individual, scientist and as a person who loves Armenia. A. Dolukhanyan’s evaluation of his publications on the historical and national-political state of the Armenians under the Ottoman yoke and their revolt against it is also of great interest.

In her above-mentioned work dedicated to Ed. Dulorier, A. Dolukhanyan seems to complete the peculiar depiction of French classical Armenology. In her in-depth study and evaluation of the works of this Armenologist, A. Dolukhanyan divulges his talent and uniqueness in terms of the significance and value of the Armenian primary sources. Similarly studying Ed. Dulorier’s legacy, A. Dolukhanyan has succeeded in highlighting the scope and profundity of the French Armenian Studies with their thematic diversity (the analysis of the Armenian medieval epic works, the historical and religious peculiarities of the Armenian Church, the economic and legal relationships in Medieval Armenia, etc.).

On the 100th anniversary of the French Armenologist Frederic Feydit, A. Dolukhanyan published the 5th book of the series (*Frederic Feydit as an Armenologist*). One of the highlights of the book is the revelation of the French Armenologist’s huge contribution to the studies of the Armenian epic. Frederic Feydit’s ever-lasting work as a translator of the epic “*Davit of Sasun*” and his valuable commentaries attached to the book are presented in detail. A. Dolukhanyan introduces this prolific author in the light of diverse Armenological issues of interest, portraying him as a critic of the ancient Armenian novel, a true analyst of Armenian dialects, an author of the textbook of the Armenian language and a pioneer who introduced the Western Armenian literature to the French speaking world. A. Dolukhanyan skillfully reveals the image of the

scholar as both an individual and an Armenophile when she discusses his scientifically substantiated thesis on the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide delivered in 1965 in Brussels.

The consecutive 6th volume of the series “*European Armenologists*” is the Armenian scientist’s tribute to one of the distinguished French Armenologists – Frederic Macler (*Frederic Macler as an Armenologist*. Yerevan, 2011, Zangak-97). In this work F. Macler is presented as a scholar with versatile scientific interests. As we learn from A. Dolukhanyan’s narrative, he occupies a unique place in the French school of Armenology thanks to his initiative of founding and leading the activity of Armenological organizations. In cooperation with the prominent scholar A. Meillet and others F. Macler founded the “The Society of Armenian Studies” (1919) and again together with the latter started the edition and publication of the Armenological journal “*Revue des etudes armennienes*” (1920). He also taught Armenian at the School of Oriental Languages in Paris. In the aforementioned book it is clearly shown that in the French school of Armenian Studies Macler should also be merited with his contribution to the translation of Armenian historiography (he translated Sebeos, Stepanos Taronatsi), his serious and valid commentaries on Khorenatsi’s and other historians’ works, as well as introduction of his well-founded evaluation of Medieval Armenian literature, architecture and ashugh songs (bard music). A. Dolukhanyan makes relevant characterizations in regard to F. Macler’s contribution to the studies of Modern Armenian literature, very often making the latter quite obvious through her detailed analysis, particularly in the second chapter of her book (*“Armenian Literature and Culture in Macler’s Research*). Given A. Dolukhanyan’s estimable capabilities of discovering new layers in this field of study, and her infinite diligence, the series “*European Armenologists*” seems to be an inexhaustible topic for her. The comprehensive work of the same series (*French Armenologists in the 19th, 20th Centuries*. Yerevan, 2008, “Gitutjun” publishing house, NAS RA) along with the consecutive publication (*Jean Pierre Mahe as an Armenologist*. Yerevan, 2020, NAS RA) confirm the idea stated. The first work is of summarizing significance as it highlights A. J. San Martin’s (the founder of the Armenian Studies), V. Langlois’, M. Brosset’s, Ed. Dulongier’s, F. Macler’s, F. Feydit’s Armenological research to which the author attaches some additional data, fresh materials or facts which substantiate A. Dolukhanyan’s reference to these Armenologists anew. In the aforementioned

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work completely novel is the elucidation of J. P. Mahe's (a representative of the French Armenological School) activities and unique contribution to the European Armenological Studies, particularly thanks to his new translation of M. Khorenatsi which he had accomplished in cooperation with his wife Ani Mahe – another committed Armenologist. A. Dolukhanyan's book lays emphasis on the preface of Khorenatsi's translation and the significance the latter has in the field of research on Khorenatsi in general. Moreover, a reference is made to Mahe's translations of Koryun's and Narekatsi's works. Other new achievements such as his critical analysis of the works by Ghevond and Vardan Areveltsi, his appraisals on outstanding Armenologists, Orientalists, scholars of Byzantine Studies, etc. recorded by Mahe are also thoroughly considered by A. Dolukhanyan in her book. In the concluding section of her book entitled "The Ceremony of Conferring the Academician's Title on J. P. Mahe", the author expresses her gratitude to the eminent figure of Armenian Studies. This gives us ground to hope that A. Dolukhanyan's righteous and honest mission will proceed, and she will continue dwelling on the legacy of European Armenologists. Still seventeen years ago the celebrant published a work entitled "*The Armenologists on M. Mashtots and the Armenian Alphabet*" (St. Etchmiadzin, Mother See of Etchmiadzin, 2005) where she provided appropriate information and estimation of the valuable thoughts of the European authors on the above-mentioned topic.

With regard to the aforementioned, I would like to single out two essential features of the series "*European Armenologists*": A. Dolukhanyan first of all does not look at those Armenologists in terms of their individual activities, but rather introduces them in their scientific and public framework. This has enabled her to highlight all the Armenological schools in Europe and Russia, introducing the reader to the general values of the topic in question.

Secondly, in the volumes of the series A. Dolukhanyan does not only act as a linguist and historian of foreign Armenology, but also as a scholar specialized in cultural studies which is expressed in her discussions of a wide range of pivotal issues (the national church and religion, topics related to various branches of art).

In no way do the above-mentioned limit the scope of A. Dolukhanyan's scientific interests. With her articles and other publications over the years, she has proved herself as a historian of Ancient and Modern Armenian literature and a researcher in the field of text criticism and folklore studies. Of special

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interest are her works on methods of teaching, which enrich the Armenian pedagogical thought, as well as her essays and unbiased characterizations dedicated to our intellectuals. Her activity is highly appreciated by the state as she has been awarded various medals, prizes and honors by state and creative institutions in homage to her talent and multi-polar accomplishments which are noted on the pages of her aesthetically compiled and tastefully published biography “*Aelita Dolukhanyan – a Philologist, Scientist and Pedagogue*” (Yerevan, 2017, “Zangak” Publishing House,). It should be stated, however, that this biography has an inevitable drawback as it ends the chronology of her activity with the date of the publication of the book. Writing dozens of valuable works over the past five years, the celebrant herself vigorously refutes this involuntary inaction, thus proving that she still continues her meaningful life and activity, full of zeal, notwithstanding any records.

We would like to congratulate the celebrant from the bottom of our hearts, wishing her longevity and endless years of creative activity.

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