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DOI: 10.54503/1829-4073-2024.1.42-57

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE FORMATION OF THE ARMENIAN PROTESTANT COMMUNITY (1830–1880)

KEYWORDS

American missionaries
Armenian Protestants
Western Armenia
Kharberd
Diarbekir
Ottoman Empire
Evangelical church

ABSTRACT

The research of the goals of the American missionary organizations, first of all the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the history of formation of the Armenian Protestant community are essential problems related to the activities of the missionary organizations. The aim of our research is to discuss the activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and especially in Western Armenia in 1830–1880 and its results. The neutral, and sometimes positive attitude of the Ottoman authorities to the entry of American missionaries into the borders of the Ottoman Empire, the recognition of the Protestants as a separate community contributed to the spread of Protestantism.

The activities of American missionaries were primarily evangelistic, though there were other initiatives as well. One of those initiatives was in the sphere of education, which in this period was still at the initial stage and aimed at contributing to the success of the main activity - the formation of the Armenian Protestant community.

Introduction

The study of a number of problems of the Armenian history of the XIX–XX centuries is closely related to the activities of the American missionary

* Հոդվածը ներկայացվել է 22.01.24, գրախոսվել է 24.01.24, ընդունվել է տպագրության 30.04.24:

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organizations in Western Armenia and in other parts of the Ottoman Empire inhabited by Armenians. Among those problems, the history of formation of the Protestant community in Western Armenia and the problem of clarifying the real goals of the missionaries' activities are of utmost importance.

We should note that the entry of missionaries into the territory of the Ottoman Empire, and in particular into Western Armenia, in general, had political rather than religious or propaganda reasons, and it was partly beneficial to the Ottoman government. The activities of the American mission in the territory of the Ottoman Empire mainly started with the establishment of official diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1830 when the Treaty of Navigation and Commerce was signed in Constantinople. In 1831 David Porter was appointed the American representative to the Sublime Porte¹.

Moreover, there were Turkish-American contacts even before that, in particular, American travelers and merchants often visited the Turkish ports such as Izmir (Smyrnia), Alexandria, Beirut, and other settlements. As for foreign missionary organizations before the Americans, the British Bible Society was the first to start operating in the territory of the empire and since the 1810s became interested in the spiritual condition of the non-Muslim Ottoman subjects. In 1815 the organization sent its first missionary to Egypt.

Later in 1818, the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" decided to send two missionaries to Palestine². This American organization based in Boston, declared a new direction of activity: "the evangelization of the whole world" and expanded the scope of activity. Two mentioned missionaries – Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons, were chosen to carry out the preparatory works in the territory of the Ottoman Empire and what is remarkable, their activities were not directed to the Muslims, nor to the Eastern Churches, but to the Jews, although they had to study the surrounding countries as well³.

According to F. Alpi, an armenologist and historian, initially the aim of the American mission in the Ottoman Empire was to convert Muslims and Jews, and as in a letter sent from Smyrna on February 1, 1820, the missionary Levi Parsons wrote, "Let the powerful empire of sin be completely destroyed"⁴. The attitude of

¹ Erhan 2000, 192.

² Arpee 1909, 93.

³ Erhan 2000, 192–193.

⁴ Alpi 2022, 299. See also Parsons 1824, 285.

the government and the authorities towards the missionaries was positive, because the missionaries did not have any political goals. As for preaching among the Turks, soon it became obvious that it was out of the question, and the missionaries, realizing the danger of their own situation, gave up their efforts to convert Muslims⁵.

One of the two American missionaries P. Fisk visited Beirut, Tripoli, Baalbek, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Hebron, Alexandretta, and Latakia, collecting information on the Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Druzes, Maronites, Greeks, and Armenians. He was able to convert some Armenians, including two clergymen. P. Fisk in 1822 founded a missionary printing house in Malta, where religious books were published in the regional languages: Greek, Armenian and Arabic⁶.

The fact is that in the early period of missionary activities, the Sublime Port made no distinction between British and American missionaries. The Americans enjoyed the same privileges as the British, as by 1830 Americans were qualified under the "British" identity as members of the English-speaking Protestant churches. Later, in 1830, US citizens lost the privileges of being "British" subjects⁷, but were considered as citizens of "the state with the greatest privileges in Turkey"⁸. It can be assumed that it was due to the above-mentioned agreement that the Americans received certain privileges, and took more special steps to carry out more active missionary activities in the territory of the empire.

So we will refer to the activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and especially in Western Armenia in 1830–1880s, and as a result of that we will consider the formation of the Armenian Protestant community and the Evangelical Union.

The Activities of the American Mission in 1830–1850s.

According to professor J. Grabil, "seeing that the millennial idea about evangelizing Muslims and Jews was for the time illusory", from 1830s the American Board focused its work first on the conversion of the "degenerate churches of the East" (it was about the Orthodox Christians, Greeks, Copts,

⁵ Колюбакинъ 1885, 128.

⁶ Erhan 2000, 193.

⁷ Erhan 2000, 195.

⁸ Ղանիբեյան 1989, 141:

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Assyrians, and most importantly, Armenians)⁹, and then in particular on Armenians. From the other point of view, as R. Danielyan asserts, the American government hoped to strengthen its influence in Western Armenia with the help of missionaries, and, in turn, hinder the development of Russian orientation in the environment of Armenians¹⁰. In order to collect information, visits were organized to Constantinople, as well as to settlements in Western Armenia. Thus, two members of the American Council, Eli Smith and Harrison Dwight, traveled to the Armenian Highlands through the Ottoman, Russian and Persian territories to gather information from the point of view of organizing missionary activities. Their tour began in 1830 and lasted more than a year. The Missionaries also arrived in Erzurum, where they were able to obtain detailed information on the number of Armenian households¹¹. Already in 1831 missionary William Goodell arrived in Constantinople, where the work of the mission began to be focused and the mission of the American Board to the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire was founded¹². In 1836 The Evangelical Union was also founded here, which initially consisted of a few members who organized weekly meetings¹³. In 1836 41 missionaries were sent to the Ottoman Empire, and in 1836–1844, 54 new missionaries were called to positions in the Levant¹⁴.

The American mission working among Armenians, according to A. Kolyubakin was a separate branch of an American organization based in Boston, apart from which other branches also operated among Armenians, such as the Women's Union, which had schools in Van and Bitlis¹⁵.

We assume that the beginning of the activities of the American mission among the Armenians in the territory of the Ottoman Empire should be considered in 1831, when W. Goodell arrived in Constantinople and met the Armenian Patriarch, presenting the plans to establish schools. In the letter on November 21, 1831 Goodell writes that during the conversation with the Armenian Patriarch, the latter spoke positively about the idea of establishing schools, and even expressed his desire that several Armenian priests or school teachers be

⁹ Grabill 1971, 8.

¹⁰ Ղանիկյան 1989, 141:

¹¹ Alpi 2022, 314.

¹² Arpee 1909, 95–96.

¹³ Arpee 1909, 99.

¹⁴ Erhan 2000, 194.

¹⁵ Колюбакинъ 1885, 105.

trained in similar schools. However, all those plans remained incomplete due to the fire and the resulting dispersion of residents in Bera district of Constantinople¹⁶. The other opinion was that according to missionary H. Dwight, this reception of the patriarch was an example of formal courtesy, thus slowing down the plans of the missionaries for some period of time¹⁷.

The spheres of activity of the American missionaries among the Armenians were first in Constantinople, then Trabzon, Smyrna, Bursa, and other settlements.

In 1830–1850s the missionary activities were primarily evangelistic, though there were other initiatives as well. One of those initiatives was in the sphere of education, which in this period was still at the initial stage and aimed at contributing to the success of the main activity – the formation of the Protestant community. In 1834 missionary school was founded in Bera district¹⁸. However, the issue of establishing a school and why not, the missionary work was quite complicated at that stage. Missionaries who worked in the 1830–1850s wrote about the complications of preaching, people's ignorance and backward ideas. Missionary C. Wheeler wrote that the goal of the preachers was to instill the spirit of Christianity among the students, then adds that after that, their biggest problem was “not to educate them too much, so as to raise them too high above their own people”¹⁹.

Relations between the Armenian clergy and the American missionaries were initially peaceful, but later the Armenian clergy changed their previous attitude. In 1839, there were already 800 Armenian converts in Constantinople alone, which was a disturbing figure for the Armenian Patriarchate. It was clear that the attitude of the Patriarchate could no longer be neutral and in 1844–48 the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Matthew called on all Armenians to cut off any kind of relations with the American missionaries and threatened to isolate from the community those who had contacts with the Americans²⁰. We think that the reasons for this contradiction could also be the sermons of the missionaries, where they presented their sermon as a return to the “true faith”, which, in their

¹⁶ Forty Years in the Turkish Empire or Memoirs of Rev. W. Goodell 1877, 128.

¹⁷ **Dwight** 1850, 20:

¹⁸ **Դանիելյան** 1989, 141:

¹⁹ **Wheeler** 1868, 176.

²⁰ **Erhan** 2000, 198.

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opinion, had been corrupted during centuries of oppression and Islamic domination²¹.

On the other hand, in this period, the people's opposition to the foreigners and to all their initiatives, first of all the construction of schools, was great. This is why the Sublime Port warned missionaries not to build schools in mountainous areas. As explained in the record to the delegation of the United States to Sublime Port, they thus attempted to protect the missionaries from any kind of attack by the locals for their educational efforts. Also the Sublime Port had stated not being in charge of the welfare of Americans who would build schools without imperial permission²². However, step by step, schools were established in different Armenian settlements of the empire.

Despite all obstacles and especially the anti-missionary efforts of the Patriarch of Constantinople Matthew, other clergymen, the settlements of Western Armenia, such as Erzurum, Arabkir, Akn, as well as the adjacent ones, Aleppo, Aintap, and other settlements, appeared within the framework of the activity of the American missionaries. In the joint letter of American missionaries of the Ottoman Empire on May 26, 1841 it was mentioned that below the Euphrates there were many large and densely populated villages, some of which had 1000 houses of Armenian inhabitants. Moreover, it was added that due to the lack of time, it was not possible to talk about Egin, Arabkir, Malatia (in the original: Mulatia), Haza, Hisar, Tams, Togat, and others²³ where they had to spread their word. Presumably, by settlements referred to above as villages, the authors meant the settlements listed by themselves.

The famous Armenian writer and publicist Raffi in one of his articles analyzing the main reasons for religious conversions in Turkey writes that the faith plays a thoroughly secondary role in this process and mostly people leave their native church due to various material needs. The author adds that the missionaries generally choose remote corners of the country where mental and material poverty prevails and the first listeners of their sermons are the people who serve in their houses²⁴.

²¹ Alpi 2022, 303.

²² Erhan 2000, 202.

²³ Missionary Herald 1841, December.

²⁴ Րաֆֆի 1991, 285–305:

The Sultan's recognition of the Protestants as a separate community, the millet, was the great impetus for the development of missionary work. The division and religious disunity of the Armenian people was favorable to the Ottoman government, therefore Sultan Abdul Mejid in 1847 issued an imperial order confirming the creation of an independent Protestant community with a spiritual leader, to which other Protestants of the empire (Assyrians, Greeks, etc.) would also be subordinate²⁵. The representatives of Great Britain had a great contribution to the implementation of this decree. Great Britain, according to C. Erhan, had declared himself as the protector of Protestants in the Ottoman Empire and sought to achieve the recognition of the status of Protestants, so it gave its support to the American missionaries. British ambassadors in Constantinople Stratford Canning and Lord Cowley, in their communications with Mustafa Reşid Pasha, the Grand Vizier, also emphasized Britain's willingness to create a Protestant community²⁶. Thus, as a result of heavy diplomatic pressure on the Sublime Port, Protestants were granted status. The importance of this intervention is evidenced by the gratitude of the missionaries to the British on the occasion of the grant of the millet, in which it was specifically stated: "Through the humane interposition of his excellency, Sir Stratford Canning, the Protestant subjects of Turkey, found substantial relief from the persecutions under which they were then suffering"²⁷. Later, already in 1850, another order was issued by the sultan that all measures be taken to facilitate the administration of the affairs of the individual Protestant community, so that they might live in peace, tranquility and security²⁸.

After those orders, the number of Armenian Protestants began to increase in almost all areas. Even in an area as far away as Aintap, the number of Protestant Armenians increased dramatically in about twenty years (1848–1869), from eight to 350²⁹.

The first American missionary who visited Diarbekir (Tigranakert) was Dr. Grand in 1839. In 1848 an Armenian bookseller who was from Karin and sold Bibles, visited Tigranakert, which "became the first seeds of the Evangelical

²⁵ Erhan 2000, 200.

²⁶ Erhan 2000, 200.

²⁷ Erhan 2000, 201.

²⁸ Forty Years in the Turkish Empire or Memoirs of Rev. W. Goodell 1877, 484.

²⁹ Alpi 2022, 302.

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movement in that city". Since 1851 Mr. Dunmore worked in Tigranakert for several years and in 1853 A. Walker came to Diarbekir station with his wife³⁰. Due to the activities of those missionaries in the early 1860s, there were about 600 Protestants in Tigranakert and in the nearby village of Gytyrpe³¹.

The work was more complicated in Sebastia, which, although had a missionary station, but because of the frequent change of missionaries, the work could not be carried out as expected. Just when the missionaries were getting to know the vast suburban area in which they were to work, they usually had to return home or to another area³².

One of the important stations of the American mission, maybe the most important one, was Kharberd. Missionary C. Wheeler writes that the cause that Kharberd became a central station was facilitated by the fact that the city was the center of trade for a very large surrounding region, also, it was surrounded by rich and extensive plains, and had a healthy climate³³. The Kharberd station was established and developed rapidly during the 1850–1860s. Missionary Rev. Dunmore settled in Kharberd with his wife in 1855 and founded a protestant school³⁴. According to the latter, "Kharberd is the most promising missionary field that I have ever met in Turkey"³⁵. The Missionary work was also carried out here by missionaries O. Allen, H. Barnum and C. Wheeler, their wives, as well as the headmistress of the female academy, Miss M. West. Messrs. Clark, Pollard and Richardson worked for several years in Arabkir area³⁶.

The Activities of the American Missionaries in 1860–1880s

Already at the beginning of the 1860s the entire area of eastern Asia Minor was covered by the network of missionary centers, from which American missionaries spread their sphere of influence more and more among Christians. A hundred cities and villages near Aintap, Marash, Urfa, Diarbekir, Arabkir, Akn,

³⁰ Greene 1916, 93.

³¹ Աւետաքեր 11.01.1876:

³² Wheeler, Letters from the Eden, 1868, 43.

³³ Wheeler, Letters from Eden 1868, 219–220.

³⁴ Great need Over The Water 1999, 51:

³⁵ Յիշատակարան Եփրատ գոլէճի 1947, 37:

³⁶ Wheeler, Ten Years on the Euphrates 1868, 61-62.

Sebastia, Caesarea, Togat and Marzvan began to request missionaries to preach the Gospel in their remote areas³⁷.

From the 1860s American missionaries initiated the establishment of high schools and colleges in the urban centers of the Ottoman Empire, where mostly non-Muslim students attended. Four theological seminaries were founded in Marzvan, Kharberd, Marash and Mardin³⁸. In this period, the importance of Kharberd station increased significantly. It is noteworthy that on October 17, 1865, a large gathering of evangelicals took place in Kharberd, and the Evangelical Union of Kharberd was established³⁹. In 1866 the Evangelical Union gathered in Arabkir, which was perhaps one of the central Protestant settlements in this region. The Protestants from the surrounding villages, from Malatia, Balu and other settlements participated in the gathering⁴⁰. Until 1860 there were already 49 churches and 114 schools in the territory of Kharberd station, in 1880 – 97 churches and 331 schools⁴¹. In 1875 the “Armenia College” was founded in Kharberd, which in 1888 was renamed as “Euphrate College”. It played a significant role among the educational institutions. The founder and first president of the college was Crosby Wheeler⁴². In the following years, American missionaries Henry Riggs and James Barton were presidents of the college⁴³.

By the early 1880s, the American missionary network already had 15 main and 254 secondary stations, and was divided into three missions: Western with the center Constantinople, Central with the centers Aintap and Marash and the Eastern. The latter was the most significant in its size, including the territories of Western Armenia: it had 5 main (Kharberd, Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Mardin) and 110 secondary stations. There was one higher, 12 secondary institutions for boys and 5 for girls, it had also 36 churches. The preaching was carried out among the Armenians and in Mardin – also among the Assyrians⁴⁴.

However, the missionary work did not have the expected results. The reasons for that were various, including the underdevelopment of telecommunications in

³⁷ **Arpee** 1909, 146.

³⁸ **Richter** 1910, 125–126:

³⁹ Wheeler, Ten Years on the Euphrates 1868, 238.

⁴⁰ Wheeler, Ten Years on the Euphrates 1868, 257–261.

⁴¹ **Erhan** 2000, 194.

⁴² Յիշատակարան Եփրատ գոլէճի 1947, 118:

⁴³ **Peterson** 2004, 51.

⁴⁴ **Колюбакинъ** 1885, 107.

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the area, the backwardness of the population, and also the efforts of the Armenian clergy against the expansion of missionary work. Missionary Wheeler writes that they thanked God "that the power in this land is in the hands of the Turks, for, were it in the hands of any of the sects of nominal Christians, we should soon be driven out, and the poor misguided people would remain in their condition of ignorance and degradation"⁴⁵. Wheeler mentioned the Armenian clergy, whose spiritual condition and educational level, according to the missionaries, led to the degradation of the people. In reality, the Armenian clergy was considered the main obstacle for the American missionaries, to improve the results of their activities. And first, the agreement of 1830 and the intensification of the work of the Constantinople station contributed somewhat to the invigoration of missionary activities among the Armenians. The recognition of the Protestant community by the Sultan made them even more active, then the weakening of the anti-missionary efforts of the Armenian church and clergy finally removed obstacles for missionaries and contributed to spreading the Protestantism among the Armenians.

Along with the opening of schools and revitalization of educational life, anxiety began to grow among the authorities. One of the reasons for this concern was the fear that after the opening of American educational institutions, the European powers such as France and Russia could follow. Second, Sublime Port was concerned that the new curricula would have "negative" effects on non-Muslim subjects. Many Western values, such as liberalism and nationalism, could have a "devastating" effect on the subjects of a multinational empire⁴⁶. Thus, the attitudes of the Ottoman authorities, who were initially neutral towards the activities of the missionaries among the non-Muslim subjects, gradually began to change for the negative when it came to the educational activities carried out by the missionaries. According to C. Erhan, the Sublime Port was incited against the missionaries also by the fact that more estates that belonged to the Ottoman subjects were gradually coming under the control of the American missionaries⁴⁷. It can be assumed that the Ottoman authorities did not see a serious danger in the purely propaganda and educational activities of the missionaries among Armenians, but there was already a fear that the ideas spread by the missionaries

⁴⁵ Wheeler, Letters from Eden 1868, 199.

⁴⁶ **Erhan** 2000, 203.

⁴⁷ **Erhan** 2000, 202

might reach the Muslim population as well. They were also worried about the transfer of the right to own estates to the Americans.

In 1876 coming to power, Sultan Abdul Hamid concentrated all the power in his hands. New laws then prescribed circulated for schools that defined teacher certification standards, curriculum, and school physical facilities. According to the new law, some American schools had to be closed because the teachers could not submit the necessary documents⁴⁸.

Objectives and Results of the Missionary Activities

The primary goal of the American missionaries in Western Armenia, as well as among the Armenians of the entire Ottoman Empire, was to convert Armenians to Protestantism. By the 1880s, the number of Protestants was about 45,000, while this, according to A. Kolyubakin, was an insignificant number, even if it were doubled⁴⁹. And this is in the case when the Armenian clergy, who was the main contender against the activities of the missionaries, who not only had the right, but was obliged to counter the missionaries, according to the author, did not always stand in high positions, although it was growing intellectually, and morally was always in high positions⁵⁰.

The educational activities carried out by the missionaries during the campaign aimed at the formation of the Protestant community had more significant results. As J. Grabil writes "Being teachers gave the Americans status, which they could not easily get by being preachers whom almost no one wanted to hear"⁵¹. It is worth mentioning that the establishment and operation of these schools was very important and appropriate, because it was a new level in educational life. In addition to providing primary education, many school and college graduates were able to continue their studies in other countries.

Missionaries' activities aimed at revitalizing educational life, however, also had negative consequences. Of course in these schools, the national ideas and everything related to the Apostolic Church was pushed into the background, instead the universal and the foreign were preached. In one of the articles of the "Ardzagank" newspaper the author, referring to the real goals of the

⁴⁸ Cagri 2000, 205.

⁴⁹ Колюбакинъ 1885, 130.

⁵⁰ Колюбакинъ 1885, 132.

⁵¹ Grabil 1971, 20.

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missionaries' activities, writes: "The missionaries are trying in every possible way to kill the natural feelings of loving the motherland and the nation. They have printed more than 300 books for us in Armenian letters, but none of them contain the words "nation" and "homeland"⁵².

That is the reason why the Armenian clergy and the church also had to activate their work and emphasize the imperatives that stood in the way of the preservation and development of their nation and faith, both in Western Armenia and in other settlements of the Ottoman Empire. The need for education and the national school became of utmost importance for the Armenian clergy. The establishment and operation of national schools was due to the influence of the missionaries, for a few years ago public education was an unknown field in these settlements. The emergence of national schools caused great sympathy not only among Armenians of Apostolic Church, but also among Protestants. Moreover, only Sanasaryan College in Erzurum became a powerful counterweight to the higher educational institutions of the mission⁵³.

The activities of the missionaries also had some effect on raising the role of the woman in society, according to the missionaries, that is, from slavery to her true place as a person loved and respected by her husband⁵⁴. This was possible because a large part of the missionary work was done by the female missionaries who went around the villages and organized gatherings and courses for women.

At the same time, during those gatherings and sermons, perhaps unintentionally, they talked about the missionaries' homeland, the USA, and about the freedoms and opportunities that prevailed there. Among the graduates of schools and also colleges, this was perhaps already done purposefully, bringing great enthusiasm among young people and contributing to the emigration to the land of freedom and justice, to the USA. As for emigration to the USA, it increased especially from Kharberd and a number of neighboring settlements, which was not accidental, because, as we have already mentioned, Kharberd had been an important center of American mission since the 1860s. Thus, the activities of the missionaries, including various educational initiatives, beautiful sermons, bright images and freedom in a foreign country, resulted in a formation of a new community, which made a new split between the Armenians.

⁵² Դանիելյան 1989, 144:

⁵³ Колюбакинъ 1885, 136.

⁵⁴ Wheeler, Ten Years on the Euphrates 1868, 230.

Conclusion

We conventionally divided the activities of the American missionaries in the 1830–1880s into periods, trying to distinguish them as continuous episodes of development and growth. An attempt was made to present this activity in a non-unilateral way, to introduce both negative and positive effects of missionaries' activities in that period.

The neutral and sometimes positive attitude of the Ottoman authorities towards the entry of the American missionaries into the borders of the Ottoman Empire, the recognition of the Protestants as a separate community, contributed to the success of the mission's main goal, the spread of Protestantism. Unfortunately, apart from the Armenian Apostolic church, the population made only disorganized attempts of opposition in various settlements to the activities of missionaries and spread of the Protestantism. Meanwhile, there was no clear opposition from the national elite or any establishment. As publicist S. Gulamiryants wrote: "The activity of predatory missionaries is causing blows to the existence of the national church and, consequently, the nation... and there is nothing, no means, and no resistance to this"⁵⁵. Due to the efforts of the American missionaries aimed at the formation of the Armenian Protestant community, it became possible to make a split between the followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

On the other hand, as one of the methods of opposition to the Protestants were efforts of the church and national institutions to reform the national school, which became a serious counterweight to missionary schools and one of the obstacles to the spread of Protestantism.

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⁵⁵ **Գուլամիրեանց** 1887, 11:

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ԲԱԲԼՈՒՄՅԱՆ Ա.

Ամփոփում

Քանալի բառեր՝ ամերիկացի միսիոներներ, հայ բողոքականներ, Արևմտյան Հայաստան, Խարբերդ, Դիարբեքիր, Օսմանյան կայսրություն, ավետարանական եկեղեցի:

Ամերիկյան միսիոներական կազմակերպությունների՝ Արևմտյան Հայաստանում և Օսմանյան տերության հայաբնակ այլ հատվածներում ծավալած գործունեության հետ կապված խնդիրների մեջ կարևորվում է արևմտահայ բողոքական համայնքի ձևավորման պատմությունն ու միսիոներների գործունեության իրական նպատակների վերհանումը: Սույն հոդվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվել Արտասահմանյան առաքելությունների հանձնակատարների ամերիկյան խորհրդի (American Board of Commissioners For Foreign Missions) գործունեությանն Օսմանյան տերության և հատկապես Արևմտյան Հայաստանի սահմաններում՝ 1830–1880-ական թթ., ինչը պայմանականորեն բաժանել ենք ժամանակաշրջանների՝ փորձելով տարբերակել դրանք, որպես զարգացման ու աճի շարունակական դրվագներ:

Օսմանյան իշխանությունների չեզոք, երբեմն նաև՝ դրական դիրքորոշումն ամերիկյան միսիոներության մուտքին Օսմանյան տերության սահմաններ և բողոքական համայնքի ճանաչումը որպես առանձին միլլեթի նպաստեցին բողոքականության տարածմանը: Հայ եկեղեցու ու ժամանակ առ ժամանակ տեղի բնակչության հակազդեցությունն այն եզակի խոչընդոտներն էին, որոնք զսպում էին բողոքականության տարածումը: Հայ բողոքական համայնքի ձևավորմամբ հնարավոր եղավ պառակտում մտցնել Հայ Առաքելական եկեղեցու հետևորդների մեջ:

ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ АМЕРИКАНСКИХ МИССИОНЕРОВ В ОСМАНСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ И ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ АРМЯНСКОЙ ПРОТЕСТАНТСКОЙ ОБЩИНЫ (1830–1880-ЫЕ ГГ.)

БАБЛУМЯН А.

Резюме

Ключевые слова: американские миссионеры, армяне - протестанты, Западная Армения, Харберд, Диарбекир, Османская империя, евангелическая церковь.

В числе вопросов, связанных с деятельностью американской миссионерской организации в Западной Армении и на других армянонаселенных территориях Османской империи, особую значимость имели вопрос формирования западноармянской протестантской общины и проблема выяснения истинных целей деятельности миссионеров. Речь идет о деятельности американской миссионерской организации (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions) на территории Османской империи и особенно в Западной Армении в 1830–1880-х годах.

Лояльное, а иногда и положительное отношение османских властей к деятельности американских миссионеров на территории Османской империи, признание протестантской общины в качестве отдельной способствовали распространению протестантизма среди армян, чему противостояли лишь Армянская церковь и местное население, пытаясь предотвратить распространение протестантизма. Образование армянской протестантской общины внесло раскол в ряды прихожан Армянской апостольской церкви.