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ARSHAK SAFRASTIAN'S REPORT READ AT THE XXI CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS HELD IN PARIS

Arshak Safrastian was a national figure, vice-consul, volunteer of the Qeri Regiment, officer of the English army, founder of the Liberal Union, Secretary General of the National Delegation, official of the English Foreign Office, lecturer at the Department of Oriental Archaeology at the University of London, researcher of cuneiform, skilled in oriental languages, specialist in archaeological excavations, patriot, philologist, publicist, translator, lawyer, historian, editor, correspondent, writer.

His articles, the reports read at conferences of orientalists, and the manuscripts that remained unpublished are valuable works and the only ones of their kind. He found and collated rare historical information, published them, and when the opportunity arose, he preached Armenian writing, Armenian history to foreign orientalists.

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Armenia and the world of Armenians, the beautiful and ruined monasteries, temples, ancient manuscripts, any fragment of Armenian literature, cuneiform writings, the scenes of Armenia were the subjects of his mind, soul, and heart.

He was moved when he saw that the Turks were destroying this or that inscription, tombstone, or polar inscription, in order to lose what bears an Armenian imprint.¹

Safrastian was deeply saddened that the centuries-old history of the Armenian nation was unknown to Europeans, that they called the Armenian traditions written by Armenian chroniclers a fairy tale, while those of other nations called them truth, and those of the Jews called them the Holy Book.

Arshak Safrastian studied the cuneiform inscriptions of Van and recorded the history, civilization, and customs of the Urartian period.

"The Armenian newspapers of the time devoted a small section to the explanation of the new word "Khald" discovered by him, which has today become the most important issue at conferences of orientalists."²

Arshak Safrastian was one of the first to record that two or three thousand years before Christ, an ancient people called "Khurins" lived in Armenia, whose name, according to him, is part of the ministerial name of Khorkhorun.³

Arshak Safrastian, as an orientalist and a delegate from Great Britain, participated in the international conference of the University of Istanbul, where he presented and substantiated his important research on the Hittite royal manuscript discovered during excavations, which clarifies many issues of the history of Turkey and Armenia.⁴

He participated in the Congress of the Oriental Society held in Berlin, where he once again emphasized the importance of information about the Hittites to the history of ancient Armenia.⁵

Arshak Safrastian has numerous unpublished works that await their researchers.

¹ Ter-Mkrtichian 1966, 559.

² Ter-Mkrtichian 1966, 558.

³ Ter-Mkrtichian 1966, 559.

⁴ Aharonian 2018, 25.

⁵ Aharonian 2018, 26.

THE XXI INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS IN PARIS (23 – 31 July, 1948)

General impressions and prospects

The French authorities and scientific institutions did everything possible to make the Congress a success and welcome some 400 qualified representatives of Orientalist Research. Their receptions were brilliant and lavish, although on occasions others spoke of poverty and financial distress. I was glad to notice everywhere a distinct improvement in the Armenian intellectual and trade reputation; we are no more in need of political patronage, but as calm and self-confident as any other nationality. In private talks with Americans, Scandinavians, Arabs, etc., the facts were pointed out to me on a few occasions. The mass return of our people to the Homeland has made a great impression upon the outlook of authoritative observers.

- 1. As the official programme shows the Congress was divided into ten sections:
 - I. Egyptology
 - II. Semitic studies (see Annea)
 - III. Assyriology
 - IV. Iranian studies
 - IV. Turcology
 - V. Indology
 - VI. Indo-Chinese etc. studies
 - VII. Chinese studies
 - VIII. Islam with subsections
 - IX. Orient and Occident
 - X. Ethnology.

These subjects were so classified as to suit the world politics of the day and secondarily, in the interest of strict science. Some of the foremost epigraphers and scholars from Europe and America attended mainly the sections of Egyptology and of Assyriology in particular (III) because it was in the latter that problems of the origins of Indo-European languages and cultures, the oldest codified laws and history, etc. were raised and discussed, both in public sessions and private gatherings, at dinner or wine parties and so on. There were some

interesting papers in the Section of Egyptology but nothing new which had not been discussed, examined and written about before. In the XIX International Congress of Orientalists in Rome in 1935, Prof. I. Capart (Belgian), one of the founders of the branch of research, was commissioned by the Consultative Council of the Congress, to review periodically the new discoveries in Egypt and report on the research work accomplished in that field. In his report for 1938, Capart wrote that new excavations in Egypt may yet produce a good deal of new objects of art, funerary ornaments, hieroglyphs or papyri, but they will add nothing – or very little – to the knowledge of old Egypt, which has been thoroughly studied for more than a century. Ancient Egypt was a self-contained civilisation with little connections or intercourse with the Ancient East. This view holds good today, as it did in 1880 (standard work of Wiedemann on Egypt) or in 1938.

2. Foremost French, American, Belgian, British and Vatican scholars had come to the Congress; but the greatest Germans prominent in the field of Armenian Archeology were not allowed to travel at the last minute. At the opening of the session in our section of Assyriology (morning July 24) Prof. E. Dhorme, presented the programme of transactions and invited Prof. Goetze to take the chair for the day. Goetze, one of the rarest Hittite and Khurrian epigraphers, is a German by origin, but having been invited to the University of Yale since 1934, is now American. Since the beginning of the current year he had been lecturing to the Arab students in Baghdad, and arrived in Paris for the Congress.

In taking the chair Goetze protested against the absence of German scholars and spoke in favour of the cooperation of all experts for the advance of genuine knowledge of the Ancient East, which could teach some healthy lessons to modern nations in the direst moral and material distress. This declaration by Goetze was heartily cheered by all present in the crowded hall including Turkish, Persian and Arabic Government representatives. The absence of the great German epigraphers, Profs. Joh Friedrich, H.G. Guterbock, H. Otter, C.G. von Brandenstein, B. Rosenkranz, K. Bittel, Th. Bossert, A. Moortgat and others, was a great disappointment to me in particular, as they had promised to bring me their books published during the war and latest translations of Hittite and Khurrian texts in MSS. Personal exchange of views with these masters of Khurrian epigraphy would have been of great benefit on both sides. It is a

matter of regret that they are not yet allowed to send out their books to their friends.

- 3. There were some other Armenians, who read papers in the various sections of the Congress. All of them lived in Paris, except Vardapet Meserian, a padre in the Jesuit order, who read an interesting paper on the first codifier of our traditional code of Laws in the XI century (see Heading 6). Vardapet Essabalian (of the Vienna Congregation) is one of the most promising if he is guided and trained by expert hands. He read a carefully prepared and exhaustive paper on "La religion pré Iranienne des Arméniens." His theme was traditional, that is to say, drawn from Hellenic and Iranian falsehoods. Had he prepared such a paper in 1907, before the discovery of the Hittite archives, it would have been perfect. Now we know that our Khurrian mythology goes back to nearly 3000 B.C., several millennia before there were the Greeks or Persians. We now know that Kumbarbi (unreadable), was the god-head of the Khurrian pantheon: Teshub (unreadable) represents as the great-great-greatgreat-great-grandfather (6th generation) of our Ancestor Haik; was the sky-andstorm-god of our forefathers, that (unreadable) were respectively goddesses of battle and love of our Khurrian Ancestors, at least 2,500 years before the Greeks or Persians. In the discussion that followed I gave data mentioned above, and later spoke to Essabalian about it. He confessed that he never heard of these new revelations: he is willing to pursue these studies, which will require long and. Luckily he knows well the German language, without which no student can qualify as an authority in the Armenian archaeology. Another promising scholar is M. Khachatrian, who read two papers on commonplace subjects. They all need proper training and tuition, in order to acquire the right perspective of our unique culture and history in the Ancient East.
- 4. As will be seen in the official programme, only three papers dealing with the Khurrians were read and discussed in Section III those of O'Callaghan, a Vatican padre, mine and Laroche's, a young Frenchman of great promise. Had the Germans been allowed to attend, the Khurrian language, Khurrian history of Armenia, Cappadocia and Cilicia, would have dominated the Congress. It is to be noticed that not a single paper was read on the Hittites, because the authoritative scholars know well that the Hittites had learnt their language and art and mythology from the very old culture of Khurri. The other two readers mainly repeated what B. Hrozny had said between 1915–30; whereas the

Khurrian studies experience a yearly increase in momentum from 1933 onwards. Basing myself on the provisional conclusions of the great Khurrian epigraphers mentioned above, I presented our historical tradition and language as undeniable evidence of Khurri-Armenian identity. Goetze from the Chair, Cournoy (Belgian) and Jacobsen (U.S.A.) agreed with me on many points. They wanted a full and descriptive presentation on a larger scale of my thesis in print as to enable them to weigh the Armenian tradition and vocabulary in the light of Cuneiform texts. They said that the Armenian classical literature was a closed book to them.6

- 5. Seeing that Armenology did not figure in the official programme I suggested to my friend D. Tchitonny to draft a Resolution and submit it to the organising committee as a Voeu. At the closing session of the Congress Prof. R. Grousset read it out and put it to the vote of the Congress, which like some other Resolutions, was formally accepted. It proposed to create a Section of Armenology in the next Congress which will meet in Constantinople in 1951. It will be published in the Actes, but it will remain a dead letter for some time to come, until we can prove the value of our language and classics for the enlightenment of the oldest civilisation in the East.
- 6. The present stage of Khurrian studies in the Congress and in recent years in general. Their prospects shortly.

Authoritative scholars consider this problem from three interrelated standpoints:

- a) The oldest known sites of culture according to the extant cuneiform literary evidence.
- b) The oldest known sites of sacred architecture, precincts of temples, shrines and so on.
 - c) The first known codes of Law.

a) After seventy years of repeated excavations on the ruins of the oldest cities of Lagash (Tello), Uruk (Warka), Djamedt-Nasr, Ur etc. all in Iraq, and intensive study of the tablets and objects of art discovered, Profs. A. Moortgat

⁶ It will be remembered that on returning from XIX Orientalist Congress in Rome in 1935, I published a Circular early in January 1936 requesting our intelligent countrymen to take some measures for presenting a critical edition of our classical literature to Western Science. British Academy promised to patronise it; German Orientalists welcomed it as a Contribution to the accurate knowledge of the Ancient East. But the request was not accepted.

and A. Falkenstein convinced the scientific world that, according to cuneiform evidence, the Sumerian culture may be traced back to about 2800 B.C. Thousands of years before this date there must have been organized cities and peaceful growth during the so-called pre-Dynastic Age, which may go back to 6000 B.C. Ostraca and sherds were found by Prof. Langdon in Djamedt-Nasr dating from that dark age, but being recorded in pictographs, they cannot be deciphered at present. The Sumerians, the oldest known inhabitants of Southern Iraq, were not of Semitic race. Both in physical type and in language, they entirely differ from the later Accadians, Assyrians and Babylonians.

All agree that the Sumerians were not a native people and that they came to Iraq from a mountain region; but there is no agreement among the specialists as to whence they came from. Many are inclined to argue that they came from the Southern Shores of the Caspian Sea across the Zagros chain, bringing their highly developed culture with themselves. This school of research has produced strong arguments to the effect that the oldest elements of culture grew in Highland zones of Armenia, and Zagros and then descended into the plains all around, whereas many third-rate Jewish zealots are tearing themselves with a view to shifting the centre towards Palestine.

Seals and statuettes of Gilgamesh, the hero of the Sumerian Creation epics have been found in Southern Iraq, which clearly show that the dress, the headgear and weapons of Gilgamesh totally differed from those of the Sumerians. In every respect Gilgamesh is more like Teshub, the sky and storm god of the Khurrians, and Hittites, several of whose large statues have been excavated at Zinjerli, Tell-Halaf and elsewhere. This leads the discussion to the second problem, namely the problem of the oldest temples of the Ancient East.

b) The greatest specialists, like Sir John Myres (Oxford), K. Bittel, Th. Bossert, H.H. von der Osten, A. Goetze, etc., insist that no problem of a fundamental nature regarding the oldest cultures may be solved without carrying out thorough excavations on old Armenian sites. The titanic Armenian mountain fortress overtowers all the sandy deserts in the south; cultural ideas and the techniques must have radiated from our mountain valleys and river banks.

W. Andrae, the excavator of the old capital Ashshur and the Keeper of the Oriental Museum in Berlin, wrote a few years ago that the Ancient Babylonians regarded Armenia as a sacred land, the abode of gods, which sent the waters of

their great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, to irrigate and fructify their sandy deserts.

Hitherto no systematic excavations have been attempted in Armenia. Scratching the (unreadable) some 60 years ago at Guli-Tapa near Keisaria, E. Chantre found some of the oldest cuneiform archives known hitherto. At Karmir Vank, near Nakhichevan, at Shahkhatkhty and Zurnabad, on the Eraskh, and at several other sites, E. Lalayan, Baiburtian and Neshchaninov just scratched the ground and brought out prehistoric tombs containing beautifully painted pottery, bone and stone axes, scrapers and daggers, which can be traced to early Neolithic Age (ca. 6000–8000 B.C.). The American Relly scratched Shamiram Hill in Van in 1937 and discovered bone and stone tools, hand made buff pottery, etc., which he dated ca. 6000 B.C. K. Bittel scratched the soil at Karmri and Shentil, in the plain of Kharberd, and as usual found bone and stone objects. But nowhere the subsoil of Armenia has been dug to the virgin soil, as it has been done on all sites in Iraq, Syria, Persia or Egypt, sometimes to depths of 20–30 feet below the surface and on large areas.

Hitherto none of the ruins of our historic temples and shrines have been touched. From the royal records of the Hittite library and on accurate topographical study, it's possible now to determine the sites of our oldest temples and palaces more or less corresponding to those mentioned by our classical historians, (unreadable) and so on.

In the absence of direct epigraphic sources and objects of art, from Armenia, almost all of the specialists mentioned in these pages, have assumed the primacy and great antiquity of Armenian culture by inference: i.e., by establishing the pervasive influences of Khurrian language, mythology, technique, epics and arts and crafts in the neighbouring countries. In their several inscriptions the old Assyrian kings Shulmanu-Ashared I (1272–1243 B.C.), Tukulti-Ninurta I (1242–1206 B.C.) and many of their successors gratefully proclaim that the first temple for their god Ashshur and the goddess Ishtar were built by priest-governors Kikia and Ushpia, ca. 2300 B.C. All Assyriologists agree that those two priest-governors of the oldest Assyria were of Khurrian-Armenian origin. This means that as early as 2300 B.C. Khurrian architects were so renowned as to be called upon to build the mother of temples of Assyria. The distinctive feature of the Sumerian and Babylonian temples was the Ziggurat, the later Minare, whereas the Khurrians and following them, the

Hittites, seem to have conceived the idea of the Dome (Գմբեթ), infaithful imitation of the celestial firmament and the rainbow. There can be little doubt that ancient Romans, Greeks and Byzantines learnt their sacred architecture from our forefathers as Prof Erust Herzfeld firmly established. Comparative philologists (Joh. Friedrich and all others mentioned) have proved that the Hittitis had borrowed all the radical cultural words, their prayers, ritual and epics from the Khurrians; oldest Persians and Greeks had borrowed theirs from our Khaldian-Haikian Ancestors (ca. 900–550 B.C.).

Specialists have keenly discussed the problem of seniority as between the Khurrian and Sumerian cultures and their zones of expansion in the Ancient East. These are highly complicated details which cannot be easily condensed in a short report. These points are covered in my book which will be ready in a few weeks.

- c) While in Baghdad, Goetze had found in the Iraq Museum a tablet which contained the code of laws of the city of Eshnunna, the modern Tell Asmar, some 30 miles north-east of Baghdad. He read a paper at the Congress with his most interesting Commentary on the Codes of the Ancient East. Hitherto the following law codes have been discovered and translated:
- (1) The laws of Khammurabi, the great king of Babylon (1792–1750 B.C.), excavated and published by I. de Morgan in 1901.
- (2) While the law code of the Hittitis, recorded about 1460 B.C. discovered by H. Winckler in 1907 and translated twice.
- 5. The code of law of Eshnuna, just translated by Goetze contains clauses which are similar to both Khammurabi and the Hittite Codes. Goetze thinks that the Eshnunna code is about two centuries older than that of Khammurabi, and has served as a prototype for the latter. He concluded that those codes must have originated from a much older archetype which had not yet been discovered. He surmised that the archetype could be lying buried somewhere in the region of Aleppo or North Syria. In the course of discussion I put the question as follows: Thor. Jacobsen (see my paper p.9 footnote 31) had shown that the people of Eshnuna had borrowed the Khurrian sky and storm god Teshub and worshiped him as Tishpek: If Eshnuna borrowed a Khurrian divinity, it is more likely that it borrowed the Khurrian Code of Laws, the original of which must be lying buried somewhere in the subsoil of Armenia.

He wound up the discussion by saying that only excavations in the future would show the whereabouts of the cradle of oldest codified law, the highest test of a really civilised society. A reliable scholar is an ordinary pedestrian advancing warily and surely in the research worlk; In his book or public speech he scarcely goes even one step beyond what cuneiform tablet says, or tangible objects of art are believed to yield. He may sometimes err in his interpretation of texts or in his judgement of the relative date or value of objects, or of a historical problem; however he has the courage to admit his mistake when somebody else can prove the contrary. The great disadvantage facing Armenian archaeology will continue as long as we cannot produce the vast royal libraries of our Khurrian and Khaldian Dynasties buried in Khorkhorunik, Vaspurakan, Daranghik, or Parskaha, anticipating that they would not be invited to the Paris Congress. The great disadvantage facing Armenian archaeology will continue as long as we cannot produce the vast royal libraries of our Khurrian and Khaldian Dynasties buried in Khorkhorunik, Vaspurakan, Daranghik or Parskaha Anticipating that they would not be invited to the Paris Congress. German scholars in the Western Zones held their own orientalist congress last June in Mainz. I have just received the summer number of the Bibliotheca Orientalis, the organ of the Dutch Oriental Society, which contains a short report on the German congresses. Prof. K. Bittel, who for the last 20 years was the Director of German excavations in Turkey, read a paper on Die Kultur des Vorhethitischen und Hititeschen Kleinasien. This is a most authoritative statement as to the relative antiquity of the Khurrian and Sumerian civilisations.

As Bittel mentioned, formerly it was believed that Naram-Sin, king of Akkad had invaded Cappadocia and Lykaonia in the second half of the third millennium (2500–2000 B.C.) and bearing in mind the Cappadocian Commercial tablets of Gul-tapa recorded in old-Assyrian language (c. 2000–1900 B.C.) might have thought that the purely Northern character of the pre- Hittite people of Cappadocia had undergone profound Semitic influences and that they had been semitised. However, Bittel insisted that the permanence of the physical type and the identity of old Asia Minor culture were clearly demonstrated by his excavations in many graveyards dating back to the centuries before 2000 B.C. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the old Assyrian Colonies conducted their trading businesses with privileged ruling princes and only local Dynasts were essentially interested in that Commerce. The self existing

individuality of the region is proved by the architectural styles of temples, which have nothing to do with those of Mesopotamia, only the Khurrian far-reaching influences spanning a large area have left their mark on both the sacred architecture and the pantheon of Asia Minor. As will be noticed, Bittel does not identify the Khurrian culture with Armenia, as he had done in his many books published before 1945. To their great honour and credit German scholars in the field of historical research (except many German Jews) have always upheld the highest standards of intellectual integrity and courage, remaining unaffected by their country's politics since 1945. However, they feel uncertain of their future and of their daily bread. For the furtherance of archeological research on scientific lines, it would be wise to help them to publish their studies on Armenian cuneiform texts, particularly Prof. Joh. Friedrich of Leipzig, who just before the war was commissioned by the Berlin Academy of Sciences to collect and edit Khaldian-Haikian texts. I requested the late Yervant Agathon Bey in 1926 to collect a sum for subsidizing such German scholars; he did it, and we helped Friedrich, Forrer, etc. to publish their books. It was this small help that encouraged the foremost epigraphers to promote Khurrian and Khaldian studies in that country and bring our country to the forefront of the Ancient East. I have already written letters to our competitors in U.S.A. in the same sense.

To sum up this heading, the problem stands today as follows:

6. Beginning with the most elemental bone and stone tools, three great cultural-historical magnitudes slowly shaped themselves between 8000–6000 B.C. Leaving aside Egypt, Sumeria and Khurri loom on the historical horizon about 3000 B.C. Sumeria with its successors Akkad, Babylonia, and Assyria in the Alluvial plains of Iraq, and Khurri with its neighbour, the Hittites, and its successors Khaldian–Haikeans held the Highlands between Cappadocia and the Lake of Urmia, and the Southern fringe of the Armenian Taurus and the Caucasus chain. At the present stage of knowledge it cannot be definitely stated which of the two magnitudes, Sumeria and Khurri influenced the other, or what they learnt from each other. The scientific pointers are in occur of the Khurrian primacy. No one has yet shown that Khurri learnt or borrowed from Sumeria, but dozens of specialists have produced proofs to show that the city of Eshnuna, near Baghdad, borrowed the Khurrian divinity Teshub. Khurrian kings and Chariot-fighters ruled in (unreadable) and in other Syrian cities; Khurrian language, culture, and personal names dominated all over Palestine and in the

Syrian city-states. Full details of these scientific affirmations of recent years have been quoted in my book which is nearing completion.

7. While archaeological discoveries and research of recent years have raised Armenia to the forefront of the Ancient Civilised East, in inverse ratio Armenian scholarly participation in this work of enlightenment has almost disappeared in the last 30 years. Our language and old literature, which even 30 years ago were utilised by scholars as the keynote of Orientalist sciences, have yielded now to the Turkish (oh! Heavens!) and the Georgian.

In spite of their intense interest in national history and archaeology, our intellectuals and youth are totally out of touch with the scientific revelations of recent years. Roused by the news of the Congress, several of our intelligent young men and women came to me in Paris for advice and guidance. They desire to learn cuneiform epigraphy under competent teacher and devote themselves to the study of Khurrian texts and Armenian archaeology in general. I told them that this was not paying career, unless they had their own means of livelihood. Some said that they would be satisfied with very little, if they were enabled to take a course of training in epigraphy.

There are one or two epigraphers in Armenia, who for the last ten years have hardly shown any sign of life, firstly because they are politically covered and secondly, because they are not all in line with the vast literature which has grown up in recent years. In the Dispersion there is not one who can raise their head in the circle of specialists, except perhaps Sirarpie der Nersessian, only in respect of a limited subject of mediaeval Armeno-Byzantinian architecture. Up to 1930 Armenia figured large in the official programmes of these International Congresses - since then Turcology has replaced Armenia studies. It is maddening to see in scientific orientalist literature Turks and Georgians trained under German specialists, to trot out their concocted languages as etymologically relevant for Khurrian words or grammar, the Khurrian, which is the pure ancestor of our Grabar and our dialects. The Turkish language has been in the doldrums from the outset. As to the Georgian, experts like G. Deeters, and M. Bleichsteiner, have shown in the last 15 years that the seven tribes of Georgians have had no genuine literature before the IX century - the whole was copied and adapted from the Armenian.

We have not got an appropriate journal or publication for tactfully ventilating this deplorable state of Armenology, which in fact amounts to a

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betrayal of the noble heritage preserved by our brave ancestors at the cost of rivers of blood.

Turks had sent 12–13 professors and students to the Congress; the official programme shows some of their names and themes. They are being trained from early youth to learn and deal with specialists. One Dr. Bahadir Alkman of the Government Delegation, approached and congratulated me for my paper but was sorry that I did not mention the modern Turkish place-names together with Khurrian and Classical Armenian names. I told him that long before the XVI century A.D. there were no Turkish placenames in the Ancient East and therefore they did not enter into the framework of the Ancient East.

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