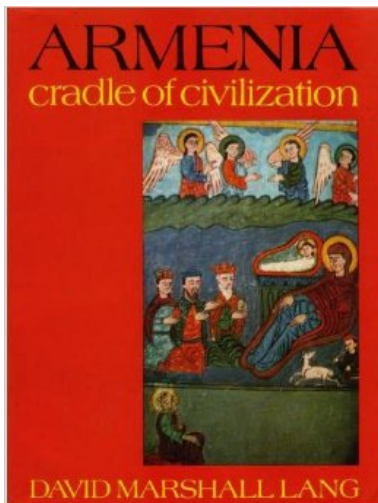


## THE CONTRIBUTION OF D. M. LANG TO THE APPRECIATION OF ARMENIA'S CIVILIZATIONAL HERITAGE

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The British Professor David Marshall Lang (1924-1991) occupies a distinct place among the Armenologists, Orientalists and Caucasiologists, dealing with the appreciation of Armenia's civilizational heritage, having authored a number of books – “The Armenians” (1976), “Armenia: Cradle of Civilization” (1970, 1978), “The Peoples of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and Caucasus” (1988). Among them the most significant is “Armenia: Cradle of Civilization”.



Having highly appreciated the civilizational significance of Armenia, D. Lang wrote: “The ancient land of Armenia is situated in the high mountains... Although Mesopotamia with its ancient civilizations of Sumeria and Babylon, is usually considered together with Egypt as the main source of civilized life in the modern sense, Armenia too has a claim to rank as one of the cradles of human culture. To begin with, Noah's Ark is stated in the Book of Genesis to have landed on the summit of Mount Ararat, in the very centre of Armenia.... Whether or not we attribute any importance to the Book of Genesis as a historical source, none can deny the symbolic importance of its account of Noah's Ark, which is cherished by both believers and unbelievers all over the world. Again, Armenia has a claim on our attention as one of the principal homes of ancient metallurgy, beginning at least five thousand years ago. Later on, Armenia became the first extensive kingdom to adopt Christianity as a state religion pioneering a style of Church architecture which anticipates our own Western Gothic”<sup>1</sup>.

Lang paid attention to the geographic, natural-climatic conditions, mineral resources and cultural factors favorable for civilizational developments in the Armenian Highland from ancient times.

Lang wrote his book in a time when the theory of Armenians' migration was predominant in archaeology and historiography. Nevertheless, the usage of the term *Armenian* in relation to various epochs is typical of his concept, based on the analysis of the archaeological data exercising a continuity. Thus he broke through the torpor of migration and with some of his methodological questions approached the concept of the Armenians' indigenoussness, which has been in the sphere of Armenological

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<sup>1</sup> David M. Lang, Armenia: Cradle of Civilization, First published in 1970, Second edition, London, 1978, p. 9.

researches<sup>2</sup> and now is reinforced by new archaeological discoveries in parallel with the linguistic developments in Indo-European studies<sup>3</sup>.



**Mt. Ararat-Masis**

David Lang widely applied the name *Armenia* in its holistic meaning. So, mentioning the chronology of the Armenian Highland's archaeological culture, from Mesolithic to Late Chalcolithic, he noted, "The southern parts of Armenia round about Lake Van benefited from contact with the sophisticated and advanced 'Halaf culture', which flourished from about 5500 to 4400 BC... In Mellart's view, the Halaf culture was produced by newcomers from the north, and its homeland probably lies in the upper valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, the region which later formed part of Great Armenia... The Halaf people were great corn growers, and built houses of an original shape, set along paved roads... Similar houses are also found in parts of Armenia. Though centered on northern Syria and Iraq, the Halaf culture had important and fruitful

<sup>2</sup> Ալիշան Դ., Յուշիկը հայրենեաց Հայոց, հ. Ա, Վենետիկ, 1869, էջ 79-81, 94-96: Մարտիրոսեան Ն., Հայերէնի յարաբերութիւնը հեթոդերէնի հետ, Հանդէս ամսօրեայ, 1924, 9-10, էջ 453): Մարտիրոսեան Ն., Նպաստ մը հեթ և հայ բառաքնության, ՊԲՀ, 1972, 2, էջ 163-186: Капанцян Гр. Хайаса - колыбель армян. Этногенез армян и их начальная история, Ереван, 1956. Иванов Вяч. Вс., Выделение разных хронологических слоев в древнеармянском и проблема первоначальной структуры гимна Вахагн, ՊԲՀ, 1983, 4, стр. 32-33. Гамкрелидзе Т., Иванов Вяч., Индоевропейский язык и индоевропейцы, II, Тбилиси, 1984, стр. 865, 895. Kavoukjian M., Armenia, Subartu and Sumer. The Indo-European Homeland and Ancient Mesopotamia, Montreal, 1987. Պետրոսյան Լ. Ն., Հայ ժողովրդի փոխադրամիջոցներ, Հայ ազգաբնակչություն և բնահյուսություն, 1974, 6, էջ 123: Մովսիսյան Ա., Հնագույն պետությունը Հայաստանում, Արատտա, Երևան, 1992: Խաչատրյան Վ., Հայաստանը մ.թ.ա. XV-VII դարերում, Երևան, 1998: Ղազարյան Ռ., Հայաստանի քաղաքական և մշակութային պատմությունը, Երևան, 2009: Դանիելյան Է. Լ., Հայոց պատմական և քաղաքակրթական արժեքահամակարգի պաշտպանության անհրաժեշտությունը, ԼՀԳ, 2010, 3, էջ 53-74, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Խանգաղյան Է., Հայկական լեռնաշխարհի մշակույթը մ.թ.ա. III հազարամյակում, Երևան, 1967: Խանգաղյան Է., Մկրտչյան Կ. Հ., Պարսամյան Է. Ս., Մեծամոր, Երևան, 1973: Ավետիսյան Պ., Գասպարյան Բ., Ագարակի հուշարձանախմբի 2001 թ. պեղումները, Հին Հայաստանի մշակույթը, 2002, XII, էջ 9-12: Gray R. D., Atkinson Q. D., Language-tree divergence times support the Anatolian theory of Indo-European origin, Nature, vol. 426, 2003, pp. 435-438; Bouckaert R., Lemey Ph., Dunn M., Greenhill S. J., Alekseyenko A. V., Drummond A. J., Gray R. D., Suchard M. A., Atkinson Q. D., Mapping the origins and expansion of the Indo-European language Family. - www.sciencemag.org SCIENCE, VOL 337, 2012, pp. 957-960. Бадалян Р., Аветисян П., Ломбард П., Шатеньев К., Поселение Араташен (неолитический памятник в Арагатской равнине), Культура древней Армении, XIII, Материалы республиканской научной сессии, Ереван, 2005, стр. 34-41. Սիմոնյան Հ., Վերին Նավեր, գիրք Ա, Երևան, 2006: Սիմոնյան Հ., Ներքին Նավերի N 4 դամբարանը, Հուշարձան, տարեգիրք, 5, Երևան, 2010, էջ 7-20: Areshian G. E., Gasparyan B., Avetisyan P. S., Pinhasi R., Wilkinson K., Smith A., Hovsepyan R., Zardaryan D., The Chalcolithic of the Near East and south-eastern Europe: discoveries and new perspectives from the cave complex Areni-1, Armenia, - Antiquity, vol. 86, N 331, March, 2012. etc.

links with the Vannic region of Armenia"<sup>4</sup>. Taking into account the data of the Neolithic archaeological culture, Lang considered Armenia to be an international trade network node, at the same time noting: "Armenian obsidian occurs at the sites not only in western Asia Minor, but even along the Lower Volga basin..."<sup>5</sup>.

He has observed that in Armenia many villages established in the Neolithic period continued to flourish through the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age and later. Mokhrablur is one of the similar richest archaeological sites, which is situated 8 km north-east of the ancient Armenian town Nakhitjevan and it provides "a few valuable clues to the origins of copper and bronze metallurgy"<sup>6</sup>.

Lang considered Armenia and Asia Minor the centers whence the secrets of metallurgy percolated down to the plains of Syria and Mesopotamia. He highly appreciated the origin and development of metallurgy in Armenia and with civilizational methodology of the approach to history he evaluated it as "great phase in Armenian cultural history - the so-called 'Kuro-Araxes' Early Bronze Age culture"<sup>7</sup>. It follows that Lang considered "Kuro-Araxes' Early Bronze Age culture" as a phase in "Armenian cultural history". Concerning spiritual history of that period Lang remarked: "Armenia bulked large in the consciousness of the Sumerians..."<sup>8</sup>.

A specific feature of civilizational history is the category of continuity, as follows from Lang's concept: "Comparable cultural unification was attained subsequently in Armenian history - and then for very short periods - only during the heyday of the Urartian kingdom about 750 BC, and then during the reign of King Tigranes the Great (95-55 BC)"<sup>9</sup>.

Lang has highly appreciated the constructional art of Armenia, pointing that "Shengavit, situated on the left bank of the Hrazdan River, is a good example of the so called Kur-Araxian's Armenian town planning"<sup>10</sup>. As one may see the so-called "Kur-Araxian culture" Lang has termed "Armenian Kur-Araxian culture"<sup>11</sup>. Lang has remarked that the influence of the *Armenian Kur-Araxian culture* reached the Trypollian one of the Dniester Basin; and some of the researchers distinguish features, peculiar to the Armenoid anthropological type, in the figures of feminine statuettes (associated with the soil cult) excavated in the archaeological sites of the mentioned area<sup>12</sup>.

Putting into practice his elaborated terminological criteria, Lang uses such terms as "the Armenian"<sup>13</sup> Early Bronze Age," "the Armenian Middle Bronze Age," "the

<sup>4</sup> Lang D. M., *Armenia: Cradle of Civilization*, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 64, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.76.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. "The decoration of this remarkable Delijan (Dilijan) pot brings us to another important feature of the Armenian Bronze Age - namely the country's very advanced position in the development of wheeled transport and military vehicles" (Ibid., p. 82). "Professor Stuart Piggott of Edinburgh University and Dr. Richard Barnett of the British Museum are among the Western archaeologists who have examined these Armenian Bronze Age vehicles on the spot" (Ibid, p. 83).

Armenian Middle and Late Bronze Age”, “the Armenian Iron Age”<sup>14</sup>. Thus he observes the civilizational factors in the backbone of Armenia’s ancient history. Pointing out the “Kurgan theory” of Marija Gimbutas<sup>15</sup> in relation to the theory of the Indo-Europeans’ migration to the region from the north in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia B.C., simultaneously, in ethnic terms he mentions *the ancestors of Armenians* as inventors of vehicles of Early Bronze Age<sup>16</sup>, thus using the name *Armenia* in relation to the history from the ancient times. The historical concept of Lang gives an opportunity to observe the cultural history of Armenia from the ancient times, verified with the archaeological data.

Lang paid special attention to the period of Hayasa in the Armenian history: “The Armenians term themselves *Haik’*, and their land *Hayastan*”. He noted that there are good reasons to connect this ethnic name with Hayasa (in mountainous western Armenia, along the upper reaches of the River Euphrates) mentioned in the Hittite sources<sup>17</sup>. “The Hayasa people’s language was eventually related to the ancient Indo-European languages of Asia Minor, namely Hittite, Luvian, Lydian, Lycian and Phrygian, and this is important in view of the affinities of Armenian with the other Indo-European languages...”<sup>18</sup>.



The citadel of Van of the capital of the Armenian Van (Ararat-Urartu) kingdom

Taking into consideration the viewpoint of W.F. Albright, Lang noted that the Babylonian god Ninurta could be interpreted alternatively as ‘Lord of Armenia’ (i.e. Ararat, Urartu), or as “Lord of Iron”<sup>19</sup>.

It is notable that Lang considered “Urartu” as a parallel name to that of Armenia and, as a kingdom, - “Armenia’s first nation state”<sup>20</sup>. In this regard he

touched the problem of “the forging of the Armenian nation” and expressing doubts in

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 76, 78, 83.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>17</sup> The latest studies of the history of Armenia of the period of Hayasa, based on cuneiform sources, archaeological data and special literature brought R. Ghazaryan R. to the following conclusion: “During the Bronze Age the western part of Armenia entered into active economic, political and cultural relations with the countries of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. This contributed much to the formation of the state units: Hayasa (Azzi), Isuwa (Tsopk) and Alzi (Aghdznik). In the Late Bronze Age Hayasa was a powerful state of the Armenian Highland. It could fight against Hatti, one of the “great powers” of Western Asia. In the political, cultural and economic spheres there were significant interrelations between the Hittite Empire and the kingdom of Hayasa (Azzi). The kingdom of Hayasa (Azzi) due to its independent political power, economic resources and cultural values, was an integral part of the Armenian statehood contributing greatly to the history of Armenia” (Ghazaryan R. P., The development of the Armenian statehood: Kingdom of Hayasa (the 14<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cc. BC), Fundamental Armenology, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 16-20).

<sup>18</sup> Lang D. M., Armenia: Cradle of Civilization, p. 114.

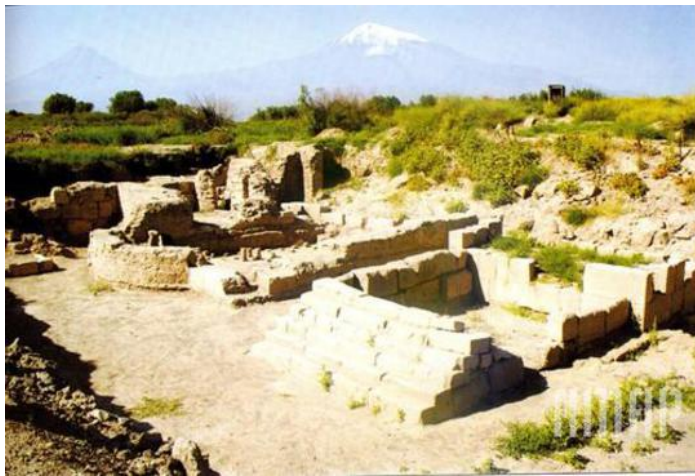
<sup>19</sup> Albright W.F., Ninib-Ninurta, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1918, pp. 197-201. Lang D. M., Armenia: Cradle of Civilization, p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 85.



the migratory theory, noted: “The findings of modern archaeology and linguistics show that a simple migratory theory cannot fit the facts. Many features of Urartian civilization in particular are perpetuated in ancient Armenian culture. The very name ‘Urartu’ lived on in various forms long after the ruin of the Vannic kingdom”. And what is important, Lang considering the name of Ararat as a primary form of “Urartu”, noted **“Indeed, ‘Urartu’ is only a different form of the name of Mount Ararat, a focal point of Armenian national consciousness to this day”**<sup>21</sup>.

A traditional approach based upon the work of Movses Khorenatsi is observed in the work of Lang in relation to the period of “foundation of Van and the Urartian kingdom”. He wrote: “Prince Ara the Fair can be identified with the historical King Arame or Aramu (c. 880-844 BC)”<sup>22</sup>.



The archaeological site of ancient Artashat

Thus, two approaches are observed in Lang's research in terms of Armenia's ancient history. First, on the basis of the civilizational methodology he researches the historical and cultural history of Armenia founded on the results of archaeological excavations, so characterizing its entity with the term **Armenian**, beginning from the Early Bronze Age. Second,

as far as it concerns the ethnic history Lang being under the pressure of the Indo-European migration theory prevailing in his times, tries to solve the problem of Armenians' ethnic background through his inquiries - not applying to, as he says “a simple migratory theory”, but, as far as it is possible, relying on the principle of ethno-cultural heredity, having distinguished, at least, the times of Hayasa in the roots.

Lang, basing on the reports of Herodotus, wrote about Armenia's relations with the Achaemenid Empire. Then he pointed especially the importance of the rise of the Yervandunis' (Orontids) capital city Armavir and the key role of Armenia in the international trade, through which were passing the major routes to the North and South. The scholar makes accents particularly on the dominance of the Armenians' hospitality.

With the change of geopolitical situation in Anterior Asia from the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Lang remarked that Armenia was outside the conquests of Alexander the Great, but soon it couldn't escape from the influence of the Hellenism, a new, Greek-Eastern world's civilization, and lived a new economic and social phase, getting in touch with a number of neighboring Hellenistic countries. Lang considered as

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 85-86.

an important feature of the history of Armenia of the period of the Yervandunis' kingdoms (Great Armenia, its natural part - Tsopk) the foundation of new cities and restoration of old ones. The town planning continued during the reign of the Artaxiad (Artashesian) line, too. Lang distinguished the fact of assistance referred by Carthaginian Hannibal to Artaxias I (Artashes) during the foundation of Artashat capital city.

The following thought of Lang deserves a particular attention from the viewpoint of incessant development of Armenian statehood, **“Artaxias was the founder of the third and greatest Armenian monarchy, continuing the Urartian kingdom founded by Arame as the first (as does Moses of Khorene<sup>23</sup>), and the Orontids as the second”<sup>24</sup>.**

The period of Tigran the Great's reign is described by Lang in the following way, “Armenia briefly attained a lofty pinnacle of imperial might and achievement during the reign of Tigranes (Tigran) the Great (95-55 BC)... Armenian domination was in many ways preferable to that of Rome, which brought - along with good roads and general efficiency - economic exploitation, slavery and political subjugation. **The domains of Tigranes the Great stretched from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the**



Tigran the Great

**Mediterranean, from Mesopotamia to the Pontic Alps...** The neighbouring countries which acknowledged the suzerainty of Tigranes as “King of Kings” were compelled to pay him a fixed tribute and send auxiliary troops in time of war...”<sup>25</sup>. In the center of the Empire of Tigran the Great was the capital city Tigranakert, built by himself<sup>26</sup>.



The Temple of Garni

In terms of studying the history of Great Armenia of the Arsacid (Arshakuni) period Lang has given an importance to the excavations of Garni, particularly, appreciating highly its classical temple<sup>27</sup>. He considered the nature of the Armenian paganism as “one of the most fascinating problems of Armenian civilization in the pre-Christian period”<sup>28</sup>. Describing the images of Ara, Astghik, Anahit, Tir, Aramazd, the scholar particularly touched the view, characterizing Vahagn as a solar deity, based on the song of Vahagn<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Movses of Khorene (Movses Khorenatsi).

<sup>24</sup> Lang D. M., Armenia: Cradle of Civilization, p. 125.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp. 130-131.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pp. 123.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 144.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Observing that the story of Christian conversion is one of the most cherished traditions of the Armenian nation, Lang noted: “Knowledge of these hallowed traditions is necessary for understanding the iconography of Armenian fresco and miniature paintings”<sup>30</sup>.



**St. Ejmiatsin Cathedral**

Among royal and spiritual foundations Lang recalled “the most holy city of Armenia, Echmiadzin (Ejmiatsin), residence of the supreme catholicos<sup>31</sup> and within sight of Ararat, was originally called Vagharshapat, after Valarsh I (AD 117-140), himself a permanent member of the Arsacid dynasty which succeeded the house of Artaxias”<sup>32</sup>.



**Amberd castle**

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>31</sup> All Armenian Catholicos.

<sup>32</sup> Lang D. M., Armenia: Cradle of Civilization, p. 123.



In the section dedicated to the Armenian arts and architecture Lang pointed out that the Armenians were great masters in construction of fortresses and military buildings. Amberd and the fortifications of Cilicia affirm this fact.



**The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, castles and fortress**

The Cathedral of Ani, constructed by architect Tiridates (Trdat), is considered as a masterpiece of Armenian architecture by him<sup>33</sup>.



**The Cathedral of Ani, 1001 AD**

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 223.



Lang assessed carved cross-stones (khachkar) or memorial stones as “one of the glories of medieval Armenian sculpture”<sup>34</sup>.



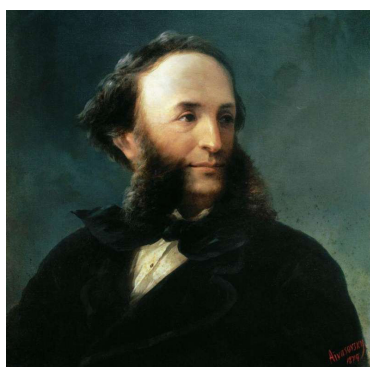
Armenian khachkars - cross stones

Lang admired the jewelry, made by the Armenian jewelers, still enjoying great reputation, as well as expressed a high opinion of the Armenian medieval miniature and wall painting<sup>35</sup>.



Armenian bracelet (from the 3rd-1st century BC), medallion (2nd c. BC), antique necklace and woman's belt (from Van, the end of the 19th c.)

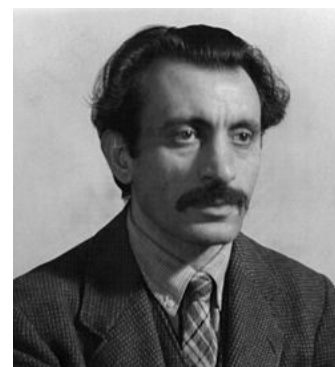
Lang gave great importance to Hovhannes Aivazovsky, Martiros Saryan and Arshile Gorky from amongst the Armenian painters of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and to Komitas, Alexander Spendiaryan and Aram Khachaturyan among composers.



Hovhannes Aivazovsky (1817-1900)



Martiros Saryan (1880-1972)



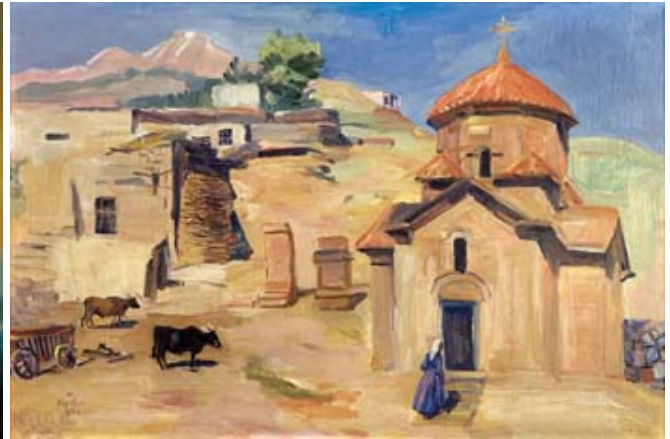
Arshile Gorky (1904-1948)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 228.



H. Aivazovsky. The Ninth Wave



M. Saryan, Karmravor Church (VII c. AD) of Ashtarak



A. Gorky, "The Artist and His Mother"

Lang wrote about Komitas, "The vocal works of Komitas never cease to amaze and impress by their nobility of style, rich harmony, and sublime musical inspiration"<sup>36</sup>.



Komitas (1869-1935)



Komitas' "Gusan" choir in 1910

Lang paid special attention to the history of Armenian carpet weaving art and the fact that Armenian carpets having been overspread in the world.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 261.





Aram Khachaturyan (1903-1978)



Alexander Spendiaryan (1871-1928)



Armenian carpet

Thus, approaching to the archaeological, historiographic and culturological data with the civilizational criteria, the culture-shaping activities of Armenian people in the ancient and medieval Armenia (Great Armenia, Armenia Minor and Cilician Armenia) and the outcomes, invested in the treasury of the world culture, that is, the achievements in the fields of metallurgy, architecture (the construction of towns and cities, strongholds, temples and churches), cross-stone art, miniature, carpet weaving art, numismatics, education, as well as in different areas of science (historiography, philosophy, cosmography, geography, astronomy and mathematics) are of principal importance in the book of Lang.

Along with the ancient and medieval history of the Armenian people he dealt with the modern and contemporary periods, emphasizing especially the tragic consequences of foreign invasions and rule, particularly those of 1915 Armenian Genocide<sup>37</sup>, which was catastrophic for the Armenian people and civilization.

In 1968 the Armenian people celebrated the 2,750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of Erevan. D.M.Lang wrote about this great event "This jubilee was attended by many thousands of Armenians from all over the world, and turned into a spontaneous demonstration of national pride and solidarity. All this augurs for the future destiny of this remarkable people and their much ravaged but ever hallowed land - a veritable cradle of human civilization"<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> D. M. Lang noted that about one and half million Western Armenians were physically eliminated of the pre-war total of nearly three million (Ibid., p. 289).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 296.