

THE SELECTIVE WORKS BY THE SCHOLAR WHO USED TO GO DEEP IN HISTORY

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The distinguished historian Petros Hovhannisyan (1944–2016) of Yerevan State University, as well as of Vazgeneyan and Gevorgyan seminaries was an eminent and outstanding lecturer also involved in Beirut's elaborate, national courses. He educated thousands of students, instilling spiritual and moral values in them. Petros Hovhannisyan has left a reputable and lasting name in the scientific arena as well. The selection of his scientific heritage entitled "Historical Studies" has been recently published by the publishing house "Hayagitak."

In the preface of the book ("The Great Devotee of Science and Education") the renowned publisher A. Isoyan introduces P. Hovhannisyan's infatuation with books and his worshipping attitude towards them in exceptional subtleties. As A. Isoyan justly mentions, P. Hovhannisyan had converted his house into an unassailable castle of books.

The anthology, under review, indubitably testifies to the fact that the scope of P. Hovhannisyan's scientific interests and preferences is quite comprehensive and diverse in terms of content.

It should first of all be emphasized that P. Hovhannisyan's scientific interests have always revolved on the axis of Movses Khorenatsi (Moses of Khoren), the founder of the classical Armenian historiography and a landmark of historical studies at large.

Generally speaking, P. Hovhannisyan's attitude towards the life and work of Armenian historians is almost that of sacred piety. He perfectly understands, evaluates and interprets the scientific heritage of the medieval Armenian historians in terms of their contribution to the intellectual, spiritual and cultural progress of Armenians. This must be one of the reasons why P. Hovhannisyan, the well-known Armenian scholar, devoted a substantial part of his life to the in-depth investigation of the Armenian historians and the historical thought of Armenia. In his works, the writings of the outstanding medieval Armenian and Cilician historians like Koryun Vardapet, Agathangeghos (Agathangelos), Pavstos Pyuzand (Faustus of Byzantium), Yeghishe Vardapet, GhazarParpetsi (Ghazar of

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Parpi), Sebeos, Hovhan Mamikonyan, Ghevond Vardapet, Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi (John of Drasxanakert), the Unknown historian, Tovma Artsruni, Aristakes Vardapet Lastivertsi, Davit Alavkavordi have been thoroughly analysed and presented anew.

His main focus was, undoubtedly, on Movses Khorenatsi, and this is vividly testified by the notable number of works included in the anthology in question, namely – “The First Translation of Movses Khorantsi’s “The History of Armenia’ into Ashkharabar (Modern Armenian)”, “The French Translations of Movses Khorantsi’s “The History of Armenia”, “Henrik Brenner and the First Abridged Latin Translation of Movses Khorantsi’s ‘The History of Armenia’”, “Movses Khorenatsi in Foreign Translations”. P. Hovhannisyan’s careful observations concerning the exceptionally enormous influence Khorenatsi’s “The History of Armenia” has made on the Armenian historical and social thought are well-grounded. He is quite just to note that Khorenatsi’s work has so far educated many generations.

P. Hovhannisyan’s works dedicated to Armenian historians are identified by his comprehensive knowledge of source documents, deep understanding of cause-consequence interconnections, as well as his distinct characterizations and clear-cut application of historic-contrastive methods.

However, it was not only the medieval Armenian historians that were chosen by P. Hovhannisyan as “target” for his studies. Within the scope of his scientific research, he also focused on the Armenian historians from the New and the Newest eras (Ghevond Alishan, Astvatsatur Khachatryan (Khach), Avetis Perperyan, Hakob Manandyan, Hovhannes Hakobyan (Vard Shaheni), Garnik Gyozyan, Rouben Abrahamyan, Grigor Mikayelyan, Haykaz Zhamkochyan, Ashot Abrahamyan, Hrant Armen, Hakob Zoryan, Ashot Hovhannisyan). The third section of the anthology is dedicated to the study of the aforementioned historians’ life and work. Thanks to his observations grounded by numerous facts, P. Hovhannisyan managed to create the true portrait of historians that are more or less known to the reading community.

The fourth section is entirely dedicated to the eminent Armenian historian of the 20th century Nikoghayos Adonts. P. Hovhannisyan portrays the latter as an outstanding individuality and as the founder of the Armenian Byzantine studies. A number of articles (“The Study of Tigran the Great’s Activities in N. Adonts’

Works”, “Movses Khorenatsi and Nikoghayos Adonts”, “N. Adonts’ Theory on the Reassessment of Governor Vasak Syuni’s Activities”, “The Fate of ‘The Armenian Investigative History’ by N. Adonts”, “Nikoghayos Adonts’ Heritage of Religious Studies”, “Nikoghayos Adonts’ Collection of Letters”, “The Topicality of Nikoghayos Adonts’ Life Narratives”, etc.) comprehensively cover the most important stages of the eminent scientist’s creative trajectory in the Armenian studies. None of us managed to carry out such an in-depth study of N. Adonts’ scientific heritage as P. Hovhannisyan did.

The fifth section of the anthology includes studies on the Armenian Apostolic Church and its outstanding figures (Pilipos A. Aghbaketsi, Archbishop Vahram Maknuni, Karaped Ter-Mkrtchyan, Catholicos of All Armenians George of Constantinople (Gevorg Costantnupolsetsi), Archbishop Sukias Parzyants, Sahak Vardapet Amatuni, Vahan XIV Vardapet Bastamyants, Catholicos of All Armenians Makar I Teghuttsi Ter-Petrosyan, Archbishop Tirayr Ter-Hovhannisyan).

In the sixth section of the selection, under the headline “Bibliography” the list of P. Hovhannisyan’s works are properly arranged and introduced. These works are dedicated to the study of diverse issues like Movses Khorenatsi, the Armenian Question and the history of Genocide, the life of the Catholicos of all Armenians’ Karekin II, etc.

For all that, with high estimation and approbation we should state that the best works by P. Hovhannisyan the scholar and P. Hovhannisyan the educationalist are devoted to the study of the Armenian national liberation movement, its interpretation and significance. Albeit a great number of works have been written along the lines of the Armenian liberation movement, P. Hovhannisyan was able to contribute to the given voluminous literature, interpreting the issue from new perspectives and supporting his standpoint. The reader in fact drinks in the pages of P. Hovhannisyan’s large-scale research “The Armenian Liberation Movements from the 15th up to the End of the 17th Centuries” as the scholar here sheds a completely new light on the preliminary steps of the Armenian liberation movement and its prerequisites. In this work, P. Hovhannisyan covers the century-long legend of the Armenian liberation movement with persuasive arguments.

To sum up, we would like to add that the selection of works by the talented professor of history P. Hovhannisyan includes decade-long series of research. He is distinguished by elaborate scientific insight, where the scholar’s all-embracing

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competence to analyze, clarify and re-interpret historical phenomena is quite obvious.

The materials, articles, essays, and studies included in the present anthology clearly testify to the researcher's exceptional and profound knowledge of the Armenian history, its different stages, and diverse phenomena of historical significance.

The given selection can indeed be regarded as a special monument to commemorate the late scholar, the laborious and prolific researcher, the great patriot, and exceptional teacher.