IMPRINTS OF A CIVILIZATION

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VII. *A trifora*: Turkic Armenian Presences, Views and Writings in the Venetian Cultural Landscape

The memory re-emerges of cultural traits inscribed within the dynamic continuity in which the Armenians live, work and speak, traits that are reflected in the sources arriving in Venice from abroad, where they are re-elaborated and then spread across the world. A collection of information is presented here regarding an extensive geographical and political area, marked by Turkish-Persian and Tartar Russian hegemonies which were vital to the Venetian Republic and familiar to the Armenians, who were a distinct, inseparable factor in that societal and historical space. We therefore take the Levant as our angle of orientation, a crucial and delicate cardinal point for the Republic in the fourteenth–nineteenth centuries.

In those lands and on these pages, in the landscapes, and in our texts and contexts, shadows emerge as the projections of the vital, weighty outlines of people and ideas recorded by industrious Venetians and incorporated not only into their science and political documentation, but also into published works. These were realms mapped out by observers during the course of their travels, whether real or textual, perhaps accompanied by prejudices in vogue at the time:

“We departed in the pre-dawn hours and at around the hour of vespers on the 23rd of March in that year [1474] we entered the city of Caffa […]. In Caffa an Armenian called Morach, who was acting as the ambassador from Rome to Uzun Hassan, proposed that I go together with another aged Armenian who […] would take me down to a place known as Tuna, about one hundred miles from Trabzon (Trebizond), which was in Ottoman territory. […] The Armenian who came with me from Caffa and said he was one of Uzun Hassan’s men […] turned out to be a grand villain, and I was told that I was quite fortunate to be free of him. I took back the horse that I had given him and bade him farewell. I took an Armenian priest as my guide to take me to Tauris, finding him to be quite trustworthy” (Contarini/Lockhart 1973, p. 184–90).

Ambrogio Contarini (Venice, 1429–1499) – assigned with Josaphat Barbaro in the early 1470s on a mission to the sultan of Persia, Uzun Hassan (1435–1478) to establish a much-coveted but never achieved alliance between Venice and the Persians against the Ottomans – travelled to Iran across the Eurasian continent, i.e. via “lower Russia” and “Lesser Tartaria” (Crimea and the Transcaucasus), and returned home by the same route (1475–76). It was a winding path, which could not have failed in its maneuvering to offer opportunities for encounters with Armenians of such greatly varying temperament (as is the norm in the human race) as to allow the Venetian emissary to establish, if not an agreement with the Turkoman prince of Persia, at least a sort of reassuring entente somewhere between moral lowliness and loftiness. Others would end up regionalizing, generalizing, and “nationalizing” the characteristics of those human “types”:

“Many merchants go away from this city (Bitlis) to ply their trade in Aleppo, in Tauris and in Bursa. They leave because there are no wares to be bought or sold there (in Bitlis), given that it is full of Kurds and lowly men. There are also many Armenian Christians there; people worse than Mohammedans, and not just here, but everywhere in Persia where they are found …” (Orientali di Aleppo, 132r–133r, Viaggio d’un mercante, p. 437).

In the following passage we seem to hear the echo of and nostalgia for lost Armenian virtue:

“In days of old the nobles there (in Lesser Armenia) were valiant men, and did doughty deeds of arms; but nowadays they are poor creatures, and good at nothing, unless it be at bousing; they are great at that.” (Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by Henry Yule, Book 1, Chapter 11).
This was certainly not hypocritical flattery of a people with whom the Venetians continued to interact, providing and gaining benefits, information and knowledge. Tracks and impressions are retraced and assimilated. And they are precisely what comes back to us embossed, imbued with values and suggestions for the title that springs from the matrix of this exhibition: a memorable print (1512) literally constitutes the pretext for reviving the memory of other old texts in a multipartite context or panorama. Nourished and also dissolved by the etymon that may evoke a negative "oppression/pressure", those marked tracks and impressions return to hover distinct in the air, almost like the silhouettes of talking rocks and tombstones, coming to rest on the pages of memory, to transmit, to communicate, the features of the shadows, of the voices carved, engraved or imprinted on the pages of a Venetian, and thus European, culture — i.e. economy — that finds its outlet, as mentioned, in the publishing enterprise. The richer and more exemplary it is, the more we register inputs of different provenances, with specific, well assimilated contributions coming from or through the Armenians. And all of this takes place in the continuity of passages from one place and one time to another, in the stratification and transmission of knowledge, when memory expands, stimulated by the faintest relief and traces out a tradition.

We were speaking of continuity as a fitting way to remember the centuries-long Armenian presence in Venetian spheres and documents, not only that relating to the usual stock in trade. We witness the formation of this lasting interaction, which also manifests itself in constant and reversible shifts in the forms of transmission over the course of changing times: from oral transmission, and from epistolary relations to more complex manuscripts, to printed works, to the manuscript again, as it to declare that a work or an operation is not completely finished by being crushed or suffocated under the force of the press. And we must not forget the regular rhythm of a sort of respiration: the living exchange between people of quips, phrases and opinions in a manifold relationship expressed partially through a traffic in tales that reorganize and update the views of the world, cultural discourses, and political plans in Venice.

We go back to theorizing on the tightrope of a chronological sense that links the historical period when the texts were produced to that of their discovery or rediscovery, that is, their resurfacing and reinterpretation in Venice From the perspective of a mature Humanism, we look back at the revivified centuries:

“Now, this history written more than 150 years ago in an old book having fallen into my hands, I wished to take from it only the part in which the Tartars are discussed, finding it to correspond to what is told in the book of the aforementioned Signor Marco Polo [...]. And the thing that amazes me in this Armenian writer is the division of Asia into two parts, one called deep, the other greater, similar to what we find in Strabo, dividing it into two parts with a straight line from east to west" (Ramusio 1980, pp. 304-307).

Let us also go in search of mentions of this deep Asia — the "depths" of Asia — and of Greater Asia:

“There are four kingdoms in the land of Armenia, but one monarch always holds the lordship. Lengthwise, the land of Armenia begins with the Persian kingdom and stretches west to the kingdom of the Turks. [It] begins at the city of Dariâl, called the Iron Gate. This was constructed by King Alexander [the Great] because he did not want the various and sundry peoples living in the depths of Asia to enter Greater Asia without his command [...]. The people inhabiting the land of Armenia are called by various names according to their districts and localities. They are valiant warriors, both mounted and on foot. In respect to armaments, they imitate the Tartars, under whose domination they have been for a long time. As for letters, they have [different sorts of alphabets], some Armenian and another besides, called Abovian [Ailien, Anthuanian]. In Armenia there is one mountain, commonly called Ararat, which is taller than any other. And it was on the summit of this mountain that Noah's Ark first rested after the Flood.” (modern English translation made by Robert Bedrosian from the Old English text published in Parzoum, A Lytell Cronycle; Richard Pynson's Translation c. 1520) of Hayton of Corvex, La Fleur des histoire de la terre d'Orient (c. 1307) edited by Glenn Burger, Toronto 1988, Chapter 9, “The Kingdom of Armenia”, italics added).

The above excerpt — while not taken exactly from the “history written more than 150 years ago” it was composed actually much more than 150 years prior, almost 100 years more of that “old book” of which G.B Ramusio (Treviso 1485-1557 Padua) wrote — was distilled from strata of composite, polyphonic, precious sheaves of writings and descriptions archived in Venice. We are aided in a precise fashion here by an old vulgar translation (1357, still a neglected handwritten document) of a work which, with its repeated printings, testifies to a reiterated Venetian interest in certain tesserae in the world mosaic. This mosaic was also examined in the lagoon city through the Armenian perspective: we are talking about another manifes-
The general passage [the Crusade to liberate the Holy Land] could be undertaken via three routes. One would be via Barbary (i.e. North Africa) but I would not advise it, given the condition of the country. Another [route] would be by way of Constantinople [...]. I fully believe: that the general passage might easily reach the city of Constantinople. But going through the Bosphorus and by the Turks, the way would be uncertain, for Saracen Turks dwell in Turkey. Truly the Tartars may deliver and insure the route and might order that provisions be brought into the land of Turkey at reasonable price, sufficient for the pilgrim host and horses. As everyone knows, the other route is by sea. Therefore, if the passage will go by sea, at every port ships must be fitted, out and other necessities reached to cross over with the pilgrims. [...] the pilgrims should refresh themselves and their horses in the realm of Cyprus until Michaelmas so that they might safely cross to the realm of Armenia. There they will find whatever they need" (modern English translation made by Robert Bedrosian from the Old English text published in Hotoun, A Lytell Cronycle, Richard Pynson’s Translation (c. 1520) cit., Book 4, “The General Passage”).

Such a scheme, opposed by other proponents of the liberation of the Holy Land, was considered unfeasible and partisan because it would have been unsustainable and was marked by the machinations of the “crafty” Hayton, who sought to ensure the protection of his fatherland; in effect, the purpose of the endeavour appears to have been to sensitize Europe to the dramatic situation of Armenia. Nonetheless, while deemed absurd by strategists, this plan for the Crusade, to be conducted with the support of the Tartars and prepared by means of a preliminary expedition, was not entirely displeasing to the Pope, and the “passagium particolare” would be discussed by Marin Sanudo the Elder (Venice c. 1270–post 1343) in his Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis (presented in two copies to Pope John XXII in Avignon in September 1321). Here is another Venetian who consults this work, in addition to that of the Belucenian, makes use of it, but does not speak of the suggestion received.

Heartfelt homage seems to be made both to the Flor and to the land of Hayton (“Courc”) also by another distinguished and adroit Venetian politician, Josaphat Barbaro (Venice 1413–1494, in Persia from 1474 to 1476, after shuttling back and forth between Cyprus and the shores of Anatolia, i.e. “Armenia minor”, 1473–February 1474):

“I returned to Courc [Coruus] [...]. This Courc is on the sea. It has [...] to the west a cliff about a third of a mile around. At the top (facing the sea) there once stood a castle [...] much of it currently in ruins. On its main doors there are certain inscriptions in beautiful letters appearing to be Armenian, but not like the ones the Armenians currently use, given that the Armenians who were with me were not able to read them. [...] In this castle there is another one with imposing walls and towers, altogether about two thirds of a mile in circumference. Above its doors it too has certain inscriptions in Armenian letters” (Lockhart et al. 1973, p. 110–13, italics added).

Those letters, mysterious to the Armenians themselves, still allow us to venture an interpretation, or patchy review of another, more domestic text, conceived in Armenian, i.e. Hayton’s tale and plan as told by Josaphat. He was, in turn and in different historical conditions, sent by his Republic, thanks to his preliminary expedition to the waters of Cyprus and the shores of Coruus, to undertake a dangerous “passagium particolare” that came close to the Holy Land in search of support from the successors to the Persian Mongols against the Ottomans. The outlines of a design were being retracted (Bellingeri 2006, pp. 91–127).
Continuing our exploration of this land, we come to a passage by Giovanni M. Angiolello (Vicenza c. 1451/92-c. 1524/25) BMC, Angiolello, Historia; Donato Da Lezze-Ursi 1909). He is the famous author of Breve narrazione della vita e fatti del signor Usurcanus... (Ramusio 1980, pp. 369-420). The writer—a prisoner since 1470 of Mehmet II the Conqueror—told part in the expedition against the above-praised Uzun Hasan of Persia (summer 1473) and reported a regrettable incident that occurred on the march to Mesopotamia.

"Since the place [Erizazar] was not secure, most of the people had escaped across the Euphrates river. Nevertheless, some had remained, among whom, when the invaders arrived, an old Armenian was found in a church, seated among many books. The invaders called to him again and again, but he refused to respond. Indeed, he stayed there carefully guarding his books, some of which were open in front of him. He was overtaken by the fury of the invaders and slain, and the books and the church were burnt. When the grand Turk learned of this he was very upset because he understood that that man was a great philosopher" (BMC, Angiolello, Historia, 21r/48-49; Da Lezze-Ursi 1909, p. 51; Ramusio 1980, p. 379).

A traditional tale leaps to mind regarding the tragic death of Savat Nova, the great eighteenth-century Armenian ashugh bard famous throughout the Transcaucasia. He was the author of the complex songbook in Armenian, Georgian and Turkish-Azerbaijan. The loss, bewailed also by Mehmet the Conqueror, was eventually followed by a rebirth, a rediscovery, supported by the many books displayed here, of that man still immersed in study.

Several decades later, the voice of another direct Armenian involvement in Middle Eastern history, couched in a geographic description, would reach Venice:

"[...] in Totovan, Vastan is an island in the sea about two miles from the mainland. The island is completely rocky and rather high. There is a small city on top, almost two miles around; the city is as big as the island. The city is called Armenino and is well populated and generally inhabited by Armenians, no Mohammedans live there. There are many churches all officiated by Christian Armenians. Among them is the Church of Saint John, bigger than all the others, and it has a towering steeple with many bells. One of them is very big and when it rings it resounds both in the city on the mainland. As you come to the island there is a large pudi, with a level area and many villas all inhabited by Christian Armenians with lots of good land and beautiful gardens with all sorts of fruit trees. There are mountains all around that look like they touch the sky, with the sea surrounding everything. [...] (After the defeat of Shahy Haydar, his third son Ismail, famous founder of the Safavid Dynasty in Azerbaijan) went to that island I described above, which is in the sea of Van and Vastan, and which is inhabited by Armenian Christians. The son of Seychadaq [Shahy Haydar] stayed here four years in the house of a priest. His name was Ismail and he was 13 or 14 years old. He was kind and courteous and it seems that the priest in whose house he was living was quite knowledgeable in astronomy, and he learned that this youth would shake the world and have great power. And so the priest honoured him greatly in secret, and pampered him as well as he could. And he introduced him to our Holy Faith and trained him in the Sacred Scriptures, and taught him that the faith of the Muslims was useless and sad. After four years, the youth manifested his desire to leave Armengil [Agh’tam Island] and went to Gihian" (BMC, Angiolello, Historia, 134r/135-289; Da Lezze-Ursi 1909, p. 51; Ramusio 1980, pp. 392-93).

There is a strong tradition in Venetian sources that has Shah Ismail I saved and raised by the monks of Lake Van. Similarly, in the most complete and well known records in Venetian archives, there are numerous reports of a certain segment of the history of Persia and Central Asia, the most meaningful passages of which we cite below:

"Please know, lord Donato (of the Lezze family), that your letters have reached my hand [carried by] my associate Vanes [Hovhannes]. […] I read that you would be happy to learn about Solifi [the Safavid leader, Shah Ismail], and because I was not informed on the matter, I did not provide a response to your lordship. But now, our Armenians having arrived […] I summoned […] one of them and enquired […] I will write about what I learned, which was as follows: regarding the king of Chigartaj (Shahy Khan) and his milita, known as tachhipchile [tashkhish], "green heads" for the colour of their headgear, Sunites, as opposed to the Shi'a qalibial, "red/crimson heads"), he came with a great force to take Shiraz, a large city under Solifi, […] then Solifi rose up quickly with an endless milita and came to Shiraz in a few days […] and Solifi defeated the lord of Chigartaj and captured him alive, and made a peace pact with him, and let him return to his lands […] Approximately one year later, the lord of Chigartaj broke
the pact [...] and Soffi moved against him [...] and defeated him and cut off his head and sent it to Constantinople. I believe that you have heard everything up to this point. Then Soffi summoned the sons of the lord of Chiagatai and told them, 'Your father did not abide by my pact [...], but if you obey us I will make you lords of your father's kingdom.' And they responded, 'We ask only that we can live in the presence of your magnificence [...]. We will be your servants.' And Soffi said, ' [...] I only want you to submit and that you bear my mark, the red and yellow crest [...]'. And they answered and swore in the name of their God and he let them leave. And Soffi made a sovereignty of the city of Khorasan, [...] but the sons of the lord of Chiagatai went all the way to the city of their father, Samarkand. Many days later, the sons’ uncle [...], who was one of the new kings of the northern part of the world, which the Turks call Douchashan, came [...] and saw them and said, 'O senseless men. [...] you have abandoned God and pledged allegiance to one who is neither Turkish nor Christian [...]. And so they resolved [...] and with great fury came to Khorasan and captured its citadel and killed many of Soffi’s men [...]'. Then, Soffi assembled and outfitted a great number of fighters and regarding what he went on to do, I shall continue writing [...] The most humble bishop of the Armenians [...] written on the sixteenth of November, fifteen hundred twelve to the reverend lord Donato Lezze. [...] (Sanudo 1866, p. 438-44; BMC, Angiolotto, Historia, 149v, 141r and 172v: 174r/307-31; Ramusio 1980, pp. 404-406).

This is a passage of strong impact that left a mark on the historiography produced in a city which, after the contribution – great and duly exalted – of Marco Polo to the history of Central, or “Middle”, Asia, would have looked to that region almost exclusively in a telescopic manner (via Muscovy, Persia, the Ottoman provinces, Cyprus, etc.). The lines just cited provide an example of the different ways of acquiring news of those lands in a lagoon often ruffled by serious concerns over the propinquity of the enormous Ottoman Empire just across its borders. In that relationship – complex yet all too easily reduced to a system of weights and counterweights in which the antagonisms between states give rise to potential alliances or ententes between Persia and Venice, and between the Ottomans and the above-mentioned Chiagatai – Venice obviously cared very much about the fate of the kingdom of the “Soffi” [the Safavids] and the friction, commitments and “distractions” between this kingdom, the Turks and the Tartars or Transoxianas; thus, the importance of the information we have just read, provided by an Armenian bishop of Cyprus to his Venetian correspondent, Donata da Lezze (Venice, 1479; Advisor to Cyprus in 1509-10; died in Cyprus as Lieutenant in 1526). We have an epistolary relationship that reveals a dense network of correspondence woven among the Armenian merchants plying their trade in an immense marketplace, who were frequent visitors to the territories of Venice (“my associate Vanez,” “our Armenians having arrived”, “I summoned one of them”) and whose visits were perhaps characterized by a sort of bond habitualness (Sanudo 1866, XX, pp. 245-47, 268-72). It was a bond habit that encompassed the intellectual, linguistic, practical and theoretical knowledge made accessible to them by the Venetians. One example was the priest Hochannes Agop, who prepared a very useful Turkological tool for the Dona family in the euphoric post-Vienna years (1685):

“Most illustrious and reverend lord. If the fall of the Ottoman Empire is close as it seems, and as promised by the many Christian armies now assembled to avenge the invaded kingdoms, it must he hoped that a good portion of that Turkish world has the good fortune to fall under the dominion of this glorious Republic and at that point it will be good, very useful, and perhaps necessary to have knowledge of languages, both for us of the Turkish world and you of Italy, for commerce between the peoples [...]. I hope [...], my booklet enjoys your benign gaze, so that it may receive light and splendour in appearing to the world, and that I too may appear as I might, Venice, 4 June 1685 [...].” (Giovanni Agop 1685, pp. 3-4)

Redirecting our gaze to Persia, the country was occupied by the Afghans in the early 1720s, bringing an end to the Safavid dynasty. Albeit indirectly, an Armenian acted again to inform Venice of the turbulent conditions of that empire. And thus we return to face an Afghan presence that is ever pertinent and even then was active on the political scene:

“The Avagani [Afghan] people are divided into two principal tribes. The most powerful lives in the Kingdom of Kandahar, and in the time of the great Shah Abbas, king of Persia, to whom they were subjected, it was composed of 50,000 families, and this tribe was called Amuqar Cluni. The other is called Abdalman and lives in the Kingdom of Herat [Herat]. At the time of the afore-mentioned Shah Abbas it was composed of 50,000 families” (ASVe, “Disserta Relazione [...] Persia” 1725; ASVe, “Relazione del Dragoman Joseph”; BMC, Relazione della Persia 1725).

After an empire lasting two centuries, the Persian dynasty on which the Venetians had staked their re-
peated hopes for a single coordinated move against the Ottomans was extinguished by an abdication. The report cited above is the fruit of direct observation by Hweyp Apisaliam, the hard working interpreter and secretary to Ange de Gardane, French consul in Isfahan; the Venetians, continuing their interest in a country that they no longer frequented as they once did, still obtained information in roundabout ways, which ended up in any case being reorganized in the particular context contemplated here.

There are also books that were translated and published in the Venetian Republic that use and reorganize the elements we have just discussed, coming from Hweyp Apisaliam, scattered in ambassadorial dispatches, or diluted in manuscripts (Soppa Perse 1730, pp. 12-13; Krusinski 1728 passim; Istoria 1728; Tàrrix 1729; BMC, Relazione delle ultime rivoluz.).

Looking back at the history of trade, we note some Armenian responsibility for the Venetian trade redirected centuries earlier first from the Black Sea, from the lesser Tartaria to the eastern Mediterranean, and then mentioned in the mid-seventeenth century by Marco Foscarini, illustrious scholar and, for a brief reign, Doge:

“This manner of communication endured between India and the northern regions of Asia into the final years of Tamerlane, who, destroying Cistrakhan, now Astrakhan, brought it to an end, or else it ended because of the industry of the Armenians, who found one route to be easier than the other, directed via Trebizond, as claimed by Ramusio, who ascribed a short duration to the other, that is, until the taking of Constantinople [...]. Whatever the case may be, as long as that route via the Tana (Tàrrix) was maintained, the Venetians used it preferably over all other, signifying that, from 1123 to the end of the century, they were able, without serious difficulties, to completely forego Egyptian traffic [...]. But after Tamerlane frightened trade off the Black Sea, the trade lost on that route was gained by the other, and especially Alexandria [...]” (Foscarini 1834, pp. 510-18).

In Foscarini’s reconstruction, we find the Armenians actively involved (as interlopers and antagonists, evidently polyglot, of the Venetians) in the theatres of trade, logistics, and probably also linguistics. We might also characterize their role as “alphabetic” (rendering literate), since they were able to re-educate the Venetians on the ranks and lines of the old interrupted trade routes with the Tartars. In the second half of the eighteenth century, when a possible trade treaty was being discussed with the Empire of the Russians, one of the recurring arguments by the patricians in favour of the plan was one that trusted in certain efficient intellectual equipment capable of exerting an impact or “impression”.
“Here in Venice we have the Rutenio Servellano S. Girillo, and Ilirico S. Girolamo characters. [...] We also have printing with Armenian characters, and this is in S. Lazzaro with the Armenian Fathers with privileges of the most excellent Senate [=], to spread their work [in the Russias] and by spreading obtaining more employment for our labour [...] in appearing that it was possible to enice the Muscovites into a second manner of commerce, using the Armenians who are not very distant from them” (ASVe. “Memoria [...] stampatori [...] 1781”).

And twenty years earlier it was stated:

“Most Serene Prince, [...] we believe that Your Sereneness, upon presentation of the goods in question, must limit [the principal bases for a commercial treaty with Russia] above all to the commitment, to be undertaken exclusively by Muscovy, to open a trade route for unhindered passage of various goods on the Black Sea, with some reduction in the duties imposed by the Ottomans [...], pursuant to the measures contained in the agreement regarding navigation, art, products and traffic, and particularly thanks to the opportunity of being able to trade with Greeks, and Armenians, who are present in large numbers in the Venetian domains and with whom [the Russians] are closely and intrinsically tied through shared religion, and who would be the principal tool for the new and auspicious trade” (ASVe. 3 Savi alla Mercanzia, 23 November 1761).

But in Venice, a depressed city covetous of its hard-won neutrality, approval of the trade agreement would not be given. The conditions imposed by Catherine the Great were too avaricious and demanded, in exchange for the trade agreement, that the Republic of Venice sign a treaty, termed “defensive” (but deviously purposeful and aggressive), which would have re-ignited conflict with the Ottomans. Nonetheless, a singular and “most plural” grammar would indeed have left Venice for the Black Sea Crimean and all of the Russias. It was a volume that was a vehicle for ambitions that the Most Serene Republic of Venice had abandoned, but which nevertheless were revived in the lagoon area by those who in previous centuries had contributed to the development of updated knowledge of that area that was vital to the city.

The book we are calling attention to here is the “Gnomonatica Pedigrita” by Minas Medici (Trebioud, 15 October 1777 – Venice, 26 November 1861; living in Crimea since 1825), printed in Venice by the San Lazzaro printing works in 1844. A grammar – may, a grammatical, normative panorama – by an author who, as chance would have it, was Armenian, a Mekhitarist, who had naturalized in Crimea after applying to his original surname, Babilikan, the lucid Italian overlay of “Medici” (Medici 1844). The “Gnomonatica” would have left the Venetian printing presses for the Cimmerian Bosphorus, but not by will of the lords of Venice, but in the form of an Armenian Venetian (Alshan 1893) and Armenian Kipchak hope that new conquerors would take the shores of the Black Sea. A mediated passing of the baton noted in Venetian historical records.

This compilation, which just one century earlier would still have seemed a plant emerging in a stimulating tree nursery – a guide to the Tanais, commissioned in Venice once again to the Armenians – was not addressed to the Doge or to his foreign successors. Instead it is dedicated, in French, to S.M.I. Nikolaj Pavlovic, Emperor of all the Russias, from Karassoubazar in Crimea, 15 August 1841. A logical development, and a revival: in passing the baton, it was a confirmation that left deep traces on maps of routes and itineraries, and in printed works.
Testament of "Maria annina" 1341 (2 October), Rialto - Venice
Patrician
ASVe. Notizi di Venezia. Testamenti, b. 722
Mutilation 1999; Orfali 2004

"Maria annina, massaria domini
Arminorum, de consilio Sancti
Iliaiuni" prepared her testament, naming various members of the
Armenian community living in
and around Venice at the time as heirs to her estate.
Along with legacies of money, there are bequests of other items,
such as pecorasc, "Iten desma
trees pristes dicto archiepiscopo
(domino ecclesiae)." It was previously cited in the
document. From domino sum
parvum dicto presbitero Iacob
(Eapucio de Monle, named as trustee)
from domino sum parvum
Sanci Marci. Item sum
parvum vno dato pro
ariosma aux.
Another bequest was made for
the restoration of the "house of
the Armenians" in Venice: "Iten
dominio donati nostri Anniminorum
Veneciorum florentres ostro pro
ausindo ipsam."
The testament was drawn up before the notary Iacopo
Marcussini and is conserved as a
seriously deteriorated bond on
parchment (Cassinelli Inferiore,
Notari, B. 1 66), and as a
transcription of a document
registered by the same notary,
of which a fragment remains.

Harvat of Cercovy (Herurtam
Ponrich), Le Flor des Estrees de la Terre d'Orient, Italian
translation, Histoire des partie
de momie
Heib c. cope
Manuscrit
Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale
Marciana, MS it., cl. VI, n. 141a
(1476)
Bibliography: Hainsh 1912,
pp. 4 19-481; Historia s. incipita
da Bambone 1662, Bergogno
1719, Kohler 1806, pp. 113-230,
124-126; Marco Polo 1298,
pp. XXXV-XXXVII, XXVII,
CV., CXXVI, Yole 1967,
pp. CXXVII-CXXX, CXXX,
Pelesya 1997

Harvat of Cercovy (Herurtam
Ponrich) was the governor of the
city of Cercovy (Corinica) and

no show of Herurtam I (Hellen I),
ruler of the Armenian Kingdom
of Cilicia. Hayton was exiled from
Cilicia after competing against
his cousin Herurtam I and
became a monk in Cyprus. He
travelled to France and
promoted plans for a new
Crusade at the Pope's court
in Pavia. His dream was to
raid the Holy Land with the help of
the Mongols. In 1357, still in
Pavia, he composed Le Flor des
Estrees de la Terre d'Orient, a
work he dedicated to Nicolas
Falcon, who immediately
translated it into Latin. What we
here have is an overbooked
and previous translation into
Italian, dating to 1357 by
"Don Clemente da Ragusa" (Don
Clemente da Ragusa Dabrowski)
Venice still held dominion over
Ragusa (Dubrovnik) in 1357 the
Venetians would hold power
there until 1380 when Don
Clemente da Ragusa wrote that
he had completed the translation
of "il libro della storia delle
parte de oriente." We may thus
have a copy of the translation
from Latin to vulgar Italian of
"Le Flor des Estrees de la Terre d'Orient," whose original proclaims the
translation into French from
Latin, made in 1354 by Joan le
Long (Jean d'Ypres, abbot of
Saint Bertin). Joan erroneously
dated the work to after 1350
and was perhaps unaware of the
existence of the older "original"
French text, which was less
widely circulated than its Latin
counterpart. A number of copies
of the French version by Jean
d'Ypres/Joan le Long executed in
the fourteenth and fifteenth
centuries are found in a number
of thematic collections, such as
the Encyclopaedia of\nBoccaccio's Diceloce, Odo de
Pordicour, the Histoire de
Wilhelm von Bodeisen, the
"Lettres" of the Great Khan of
Cathay, and the Christians of
Cracow to Pope Benedict XII
(1338, the Pontifical Responsum," and the "State and government
of the Great Khan of Cathay"
by Joan de Cor, archbishop of
Sofia, etc. This is one of the first
words of oriental history written
in medieval Europe. Hayton
describes the districts and
histories of Asia - based on his
own direct experiences and also
referring to Marco Polo - and
explains with particular emphasis
the alliances between the
Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia,
Antioch, and the Mongols in
1257-40.

G.B.
One of the versions of the Latin translations of the "History of Armenia" by Robert of跳跃, was published in 1532 as part of the collection edited by Jean Hurich, titled "Noues Ordains Regnantes en Estampe Volvinges Llorentlant," with a preface by Simon Grohern. In 1539, Hurich's text was cited in part by Ramusio, a polyglot diplomat and noted Venetian geographer, in his "Delle Navigationi e Viaggi," vol. II. Ramusio published only the second part (corresponding to the Third Book), however part of the passage has been moved to the final chapter (XXXIII).

Summing up with his "Discourse on the History of Armenia," Ramusio observes that "the thing that impressed me in this Armenian writer was his division of Asia into two parts: one called the other greater, as 'Arabo also di.' And the first ones to write about these Tartars and this deep, or inner, Asia, as far as I have been able to read, are just the above-mentioned Sig. Marco Polo and this Armenian gentleman..." to specify his predecessors and his erudite research. In the same piece, Ramusio also wrote: "Having come into possession of this history written over 150 years ago in an old book, I chose to take only the part that speaks of the Tartars, judging it to correspond to what is narrated in the book by the afore-mentioned Sig. Marco (Polo) and leaving the text, it being very long and far removed from the present subject," alluding to handwritten versions circulating in Venice in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.
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