



Translations from Armenian into Bulgarian, 1991 to date

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The traditional Bulgarian-Armenian cultural relations include also the translated Armenian literature in Bulgaria. The begging was after the Russian-Turkish war of 1878 and continues till today. During the 80s of XIX century some Armenian students in Sankt Petersburg translated from Bulgarian into Armenian several works of Luben Karavelov and Zahari Stoyanov on revolutionary theme, in order to raise the combat spirit of Armenian people against the Ottoman yoke.

At the same time, in Bulgaria, are translated completely or partially some works from Armenian writers such as R. Patkanyan, Raffi, Kh. Abovian on revolutionary and daily topics. After the appearance of Peyo Yavorov's elegy "Armenians", among the intellectuals was shown a big interest toward this unknown old and new Armenian literature. In 1910 Ivan St. Andreychin publishes the anthology "Flowers of all fields", which together with the world classic includes also works of Armenian poets such as Sayat-Nova, Nahapet Kuchak, Hovhannes Pluz. In 1942 Konstantin Dinolov publishes the anthology "Armenian poetry".

The second half of 20th century is more favourable for the development and the expansion of Armenian translation literature, in Bulgaria, especially during the period 1935-68. The compulsory presence of translation pieces of the SSSR's literatures obliges the publishing houses to include in their publishing plans also the Armenian literature. It appears to be very close to the taste, the intellect and the psyche of the Bulgarian reader which is proved from the big circulation. In the course of 45 years in Bulgaria are published over 48 titles of Armenian translation literature. The works of G. Sevunts, N. Zaryan, Av. Isahakyan, K. Emin, P. Sevak and others are translated from original in interlinear translations (for poetry) of G. Hayrabedian, and the poetic ones are made by the poets Bl. Dimitrova, D. Bolyarov, An. Germanov and others.

During this period in the prose field are translated and published by the publishing houses „Narodna kultura”, „G. Bakalov” - Varna, and „Hr. G. Danov” - Plovdiv 25 books of Armenian writers such as V. Totovents, Raffi, Hr. Matevosyan, V. Petrosyan, Al.



Shirvanzade, S. Khanzadyan and others. These translations are completely due to the work of the translator Agop Ormandjyan, who also published in translation the book „Armenian travels for the Balkans XVII - XIX centuries” of the publishing house „Nauka i izkustvo”, with the relative science apparatus.

These translations are accepted with interest from the Bulgarian reader, because they acquainted him with the life and psychology, the way of life and the culture of the Armenian people. Therefore the circulations of the books varied between 10 and 25 thousand. In Bulgarian periodicals appeared flattering responses for the translations as well for the contents of the books.

This “peak” of publishing activity, however, fell down after 1990 when the state publishing houses were closed. The private publishers focused on publishing slight genre and boulevard translation literature, criminal and esoteric literature, pursuing their trade and finance interests. The literatures of the small peoples such as the Armenian, Georgian, Belarusian and other remained in the background. The looking for sponsors for each translation book made it more difficult to publish Armenian literature. For 20 years in Bulgaria definitively there is no national publishing policy towards the translations. The Armenian titles, which are offered for publishing, are rejected without any reason from the private publishing houses. Their grounds are that they are hardly marketable and will not bring profit. This is not true, because there are no unsold Armenian books. The book distribution is in the hands of ignorant people, who give assessments of the books without knowing them. Things are going the way of bribes, private interests, friends’ relations and moreover with external financing. Neglected are copyright, creative and financial interests of the translators, some of who stopped to translate. The students also do not want to translate as they are cheated by the publishing houses and they are not paid.

And despite all these unpleasant conditions stopping the publishing of Armenian translation literature, separate private publishing houses, foundations and organizations



as well as private persons supported financially the translators Agop Ormandjiyan and Agop Melkonyan, who for the period 1991-2011 succeeded with big efforts to translate and issue 24 titles of Armenian fiction, popular science, historical literature in 500 to 2000 editions. Main finance stimulator was and still is the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU “Parekordzagan”) - its branch in Plovdiv and partially its branch in Sofia, as well as private contributors. Some works of H. Dashtents, Agatangelos, Nar-Dos, Nahapet Kuchak, Hovhannes Shiraz, Hr. Matevosyan - mostly prose and poetry - were published. The academic issue of the Yerevan State University “History of the Armenian people from antiquity to 1920” was published in Bulgarian, as well as the novel of Raffi “Samvel”, from “Ciela” publishing house. There exist also translations from Russian of Ar. Basmadjyan - the poem “Seven songs of Armenia” of Gevorg Emin and others. The books listed in the tables were welcomed with great interest by the Armenian and Bulgarian audience and their editions were exhausted. Each book was presented to the large audience from renowned Bulgarian and Armenian intellectuals. The books and the translations were discussed and commented in the Armenian press in Bulgaria.

Despite the difficultly achieved successes the situation of the translator in Bulgaria remains poor. They are left to work alone, not provided with funds. In principle in Bulgaria there is no law, which protects the authors’ rights of the translators and their social status. They often work without payment (this is the case also with the Armenian editions) or if they conclude an agreement with the publishing houses they obtain their recompense a year later and they are greatly disadvantaged financially.

One or two Armenian translators though still continue to work despite the hard financial conditions, thanks to the support they get from AGBU “Parekordzagan” - Plovdiv and in the next three years will be published several new books in the fields of the science, literature and history.

