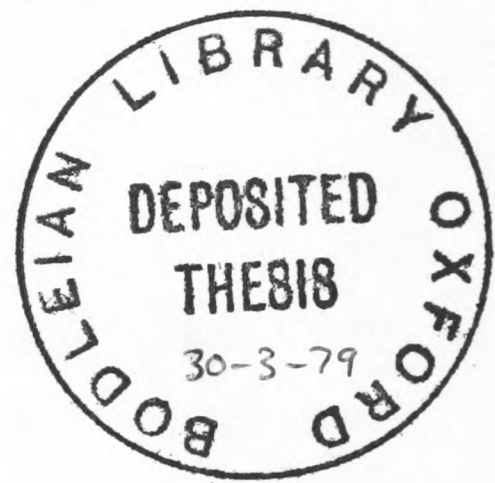


HAGOP BARONIAN'S
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SATIRE

by
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ABSTRACT

Hagop Baronian (1843-1891) was an outstanding Armenian literary figure, whose satire reflected the political and social realities of Western Armenian life in the 1870s and the 1880s. This thesis is the first systematic attempt to study his social and political views. No such studies exist in the West, and the attempts of Armenian writers are on the whole hasty, incomplete, and restricted in scope. For this thesis, extensive research has been made into the political and social realities of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century in order to analyse and evaluate Baronian's political and social ideas in their proper context.

Chapter I sketches Baronian's biography. Chapters II, III, IV and V form the first part of this thesis and deal, in chronological order, with Baronian's political views which, hitherto, have been given little attention. Chapter II is devoted to the study of Baronian's view of the Armenian Constitution which he initially supported for having introduced a large degree of secularisation and democracy to the government of the community. However, Baronian soon came to realise that the Constitution was an inadequate tool. This led him to join forces with some Armenian leaders to propose substantial amendments for the document, which was however never in fact revised.

The Polozhenie (Statute) which regulated the affairs of the Armenian Church in Russia is also discussed in Chapter II. Baronian was bitterly critical of the document as restricting the rights of the Armenian community and of the Armenian Church, and bringing the latter under strict control of the Russian government.

Chapter III analyses Baronian's criticism of Ottoman internal policy which he held responsible for misgovernment in Armenia. It emerges from Baronian's criticism that oppression in the Armenian

provinces was due to two cardinal reasons: the legal status of the Armenians as second-class citizens, and the failure of the Ottoman authorities to preserve law and order. Baronian held that the only way of rectifying the situation was by way of peaceful reform. However, he contended that the Ottoman government was at once unwilling to introduce reform in Armenia and incapable of it. Baronian also maintained that the empire lacked the expertise and financial resources to initiate an extensive programme of reorganisation.

All this led Baronian to believe that only external pressure would compel the Porte to review its internal policy (Chapter IV). Baronian expected such pressure from Europe, which, as he saw it, should also provide the Empire with the technical expertise and subsidies to modernise itself. The outbreak of hostilities in the Balkans and the subsequent reform plans for the area were regarded by Baronian as a precious opportunity to force an overall programme of reform on the Porte. However, in Baronian's view, the conflicting interests of the Powers and their self-centred ambitions prevented them from exerting effective pressure on the intransigent Ottoman administration.

Baronian dissected the activities of the Armenian leadership in his Armenian Big-Wigs, which is analysed in Chapter V. Baronian criticised most of the Armenian leaders for their lack of what he considered as the basic qualities of public leaders, namely competence, dedication, audacity and integrity. Baronian also censured the Armenian priesthood. While some prelates harassed their flock by an excess of incompetent activities, many other priests declined to assume any office in the provinces and, residing idly in Constantinople, pursued ecclesiastical preferment or other vain ambitions.

Some of the leaders of the so-called anti-Hasunist movement

within the Catholic Armenian Community were also depicted by Baronian. Since they claimed a voice for lay elements in governing the Catholic community, Baronian sympathised with their cause but found that the movement was doomed to failure, most of these leaders being motivated by personal ambitions or impractical ideas.

Part II (Chapters VI, VII and VIII) of this thesis is devoted to the study of Baronian's social views. In Chapter VI Baronian's comic characters are analysed and the social problems he raised in his comedies and his satirical novel are discussed. In his novel (The Most Honourable Beggars) Baronian dismissed many of the Armenian intelligentsia as parasites and poured contempt on the wealthy for their apathy towards culture. In his comedies Baronian illustrated the old adage concerning the limits to men's capabilities (A Servant of Two Masters) and castigated the vice of sycophancy (The Flatterer). He demonstrated that marriage uniting couples of incompatible ages resulted in immorality and the destruction of the family (The Oriental Dentist). Baronian held that the incompetence of the Armenian Judicial Council, which handled questions of marriage, was a contributory factor to the decrease in the number of marriages among Armenians. He also criticised the rigid approach of the Judicial Council (and therefore the Armenian Church) to divorce, which, Baronian contended, should be granted on valid grounds (Uncle Balthazar).

Baronian, who almost exclusively reflected the social realities of the Armenian community of Constantinople, found that this society was in rapid decline (Chapter VII). He was concerned with the institution of marriage because the family, together with morality, religion and education constituted the main pillars of a prosperous society. Despite advocating equality in marriage, Baronian manifested strong patriarchal tendencies, and held that a woman's

primary role, designed by nature, was motherhood. In Baronian's view money profoundly affected human relations and the moral cast of men who abandoned human virtues in pursuit of material gain and vain ambition. Baronian noted that men's religious zeal was also in decline due to their materialistic approach. However, the Armenian priesthood was equally to blame. The failure of many priests in their pastoral duties and their often impious conduct greatly affected the religious feelings of the congregation. Finally, Baronian maintained that the Armenians were still backward in the field of education. The national authorities failed to allocate sufficient funds and the community was reluctant to support the educational network financially.

For Baronian theatre and literature played a vital role in transforming a society in that they combined the aesthetically beautiful with the socially useful (Chapter VII). Advocating socially conscious literature he emphasised the need for a local and up to date repertoire, and criticised the romantic authors of the time, whose works failed to satisfy his aesthetic and social principles.

The conclusion to the thesis sums up Baronian's social and political ideas. Baronian believed that the well-adjusted individual was the basis for social progress, also envisaging a principal role for the family, religion and education. He recognised man as the source of legislative and political power and advocated parliamentary democracy. He illustrated the consequences of the unequal Ottoman political system with the plight of the Armenians and maintained that substantial and peaceful reform was the only way of redressing the situation.

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TRANSLITERATION

u	a	j	y
f	b	ŋ	n
q	g	ʔ	ʃ
ŋ	d	n	o
b	e	ʒ	č
q	z	u	p
t	ē	ʒ	y
ɽ	ě	n	ř
θ	t'	u	s
ɸ	ž	ɸ	v
h	i	un	t
l	l	ɽ	r
h	x	g	ç
ɸ	c	ɽ	w
ɸ	k	ɸ	p'
ʒ	h	ɸ	k'
ɸ	j	o	ō
ŋ	ʃ	ʒ	f
ɸ	č	nɽ	u
ʃ	m		

List of the Abbreviations Used in the Footnotes

- PCF Hakob Paronyan, Yerkeri liakatar ŽoĴovacu (Complete Works), vol. v, Yerevan, 1935.
- PCS Hakob Paronyan, Erkeri ŽoĴovacu (Collected Works), Erevan, 1962-
- RNA Atenagrutiwnk' azgayin ŽoĴovoy (Records of the Armenian National Assembly).
- SHAT Gaṙnik Step'anyan, Urvagic arevmtahay tatroni patmut'yan (An Outline of the History of Western Armenian Theatre).

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Long before the final and complete conquest of Western Armenia by the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the 17th century, in 1461 Mehmet II had recognised the Armenians as a religious community (millet). In the same year, he established an Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople recognising the Armenian Patriarch as the political and religious head of the Armenians.

In a way Ottoman rule proved beneficial to the Armenians in that it restored peace to the war-torn Armenian Provinces. But the Armenians had to pay a heavy price in suffering serious disabilities as second-class citizens: the political system of their new rulers was based on the tenets of Islam, an alien religion with an alien civilisation. Recovery from the deep social, political and cultural decline into which the Armenians had sunk after the fall of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia towards the end of the 14th century, was to come as a result of close contacts with the West.

By virtue of the Ottoman millet system, the newly created Armenian Patriarchate assumed the political and religious leadership of its followers. By this time the unity of the Armenian Church had been seriously weakened: there were now three catholicosates (Ējmiacin in Eastern Armenia, and Ałtamar and Sis in the Ottoman Empire), and two patriarchates (Jerusalem and Constantinople). The Catholicosate of Ējmiacin, the traditional centre of the Armenian Church, had no effective jurisdiction over the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, although its head was still nominally recognised by all the other seats as the overall spiritual leader of the Armenian Church. The Catholicosates of Sis and Ałtamar and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem had only local authority and were under the jurisdiction of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Such division was characteristic of the Armenian believers themselves, not all of whom adhered to the doctrines of the Armenian Church. The Catholicos of Sis had recognised Papal supremacy and entered into union with Rome in 1198. The union lasted for almost two centuries and began to flounder towards the end of the 14th century. A number of Armenian politicians and catholicai were later to contemplate union with Rome mainly in connection with their plans for the liberation of Armenia through the Christian West, which, however, came to naught. Therefore, although there was a large body of Catholic Armenians, there was no well organised Catholic Armenian Church until Abraham Arciwean, the Catholic Armenian bishop of Aleppo, was elected catholicos in 1742. Nevertheless, even after his election, Armenian Catholics residing in the Ottoman Empire were regarded by the Porte as the subjects of the Armenian Church, until the Porte formally recognised an independent Armenian Catholic Community in 1830. A similar recognition was extended to the Armenian Protestant Community in 1847. By the middle of the 19th century, then, the Armenian community was divided into three factions; the Orthodox, the Catholic and the Protestant.

The first signs of the 'Armenian Awakening' became perceptible in the 18th century. The seeds of the renaissance sown by the Armenian communities abroad germinated rapidly, to develop into a full renaissance in Armenia itself. The movement wrought momentous social and political changes which dominated the course of Armenian life throughout the 19th century.

The foundation in Venice of the Mechitarist Order at the very beginning of the 18th century was of remarkable importance. The assiduous Mechitarist monks embarked on a large project of translating the ancient Greek and Latin as well as Modern European Classics into Armenian. Their publication of the works of ancient

Armenian historians revived past glories and marked the beginning of the literary and historical studies by the Mechitarist Fathers. The various Mechitarist publications which were all shipped to Constantinople and Trebizond, and thence sent to Armenia proper, played a very important role in promoting knowledge and arousing consciousness among the Armenians, and the activities of the Mechitarists engaged the attention of European scholars who took an ever increasing interest in Armenian culture.

Western thought was also channelled through the extensive network of schools organised by the Mechitarists in various important Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Famous schools such as Muratean (Padua, 1834), and Rapayēlean (Venice, 1836), provided the schools in cities and provinces with qualified teachers who brought new ideas and something of the West to their fellow countrymen. No less important were some other Western Armenian schools, notably the Mesropean (Smyrna, 1795) and the Scutari College (Constantinople, 1838).

The introduction of printing in Armenia greatly enhanced the cultural revival of the Armenians. The few Armenian printing-houses established in the 16th century grew steadily, and subsequently numerous printing-houses were founded in Constantinople (1567), New Julfa (1640), Amsterdam (1660), Smyrna (1762), Ējmiacin (1771), Madras (1772), Trieste (1775), St Petersburg (1780), New Nakhijevan (1789), Calcutta (1796), Astrakhan (1796), Vienna (1811), Moscow (1820), Tiflis (1823), Shushi (1827), Van (1854) etc. The number of books increased steadily and a wider range of subjects was covered.

The first Armenian periodical, Azdarar, appeared in Madras in 1794. Although Azdarar was followed by some other periodicals it was only after the 1840s that Armenian journalism achieved a significant influential role. The Mechitarist periodical Bazmavēp

(Venice, 1843) the oldest Armenian periodical still in progress, was preceded by Aršaloys Araratean (Smyrna, 1840) and was followed by Hayastan (Constantinople, 1846), Masis (Constantinople, 1852), Meḷu (Constantinople, 1856), Hiwsisapayl (Moscow, 1858), Hayrenik (Constantinople, 1870), Mšak (Tiflis, 1870), Arewelean Mamul (Smyrna 1871), Tatron (Constantinople, 1874) and more than a hundred other periodicals in Armenian as well as in Turkish in Armenian characters

Numerous cultural societies were founded, especially after the beginning of the 19th century. These societies offered material help to schools, theatres, and printing-houses; they subsidised translations, organised public lectures, set up technical courses and organised literary debates. A great number of these societies extended their activities to the Armenian provinces, considerably contributing to the enlightenment and unity of the Armenian people.

Inevitably, the need for a common language for all Armenians emerged. Classical Armenian, which was still employed in writing, had long ceased to be the spoken language. The Armenian Church, the Mechitarists and the Conservatives strongly supported it in an attempt to retain it as the sole literary standard. The new generation, especially those who had received their education in Europe, favoured the as yet slowly emerging Modern Western Armenian which, they argued, would be the more efficient instrument for communication with the community. A bitter, passionate dispute, which had begun in the late forties, intermittently continued until the end of the century, when Modern Western Armenian finally established itself as the new national standard of the Western Armenians.

In spite of their staunch support of Classical Armenian the Mechitarists and many other authors before them had used Modern Western Armenian in some of their writings. Mechitar of Sebastia,

the founder of the Mechitarist Order, had himself written the first grammar of Modern Western Armenian. Realising that Classical Armenian was inaccessible to the community, Mechitar and his followers as well as Catholic and, later, Protestant missionaries to whom the Armenians owe a great deal in accomplishing their modern renaissance, employed the new language in their publications intended for wider circulation, thereby immensely contributing to its development.

The Mechitarists also employed Modern Western Armenian in the comedies they staged at their seminary in St Lazarus and in their schools throughout the Ottoman Empire and Europe. Their theatrical traditions were soon adopted by other Armenian schools in Constantinople and their students played a most important role in the revival of modern Armenian theatre. By the late 1850s numerous theatrical groups had mushroomed in the various quarters of the Ottoman capital inhabited by Armenians.

The Ortaköy theatre founded by Mkrtiç Pēšiktaşlean in 1856 operated for many years. By contrast the Hasköy theatre founded in 1859 was shortlived. Srapion Hekimean's Pera group founded in 1856 initially performed in Italian and Turkish (the Turkish repertoire consisted of translations from Italian, French and Armenian). Hekimean's group eventually formed the nucleus of the Oriental Theatre (1861), the first professional Armenian theatre. This theatre continued its run, somewhat irregularly, until the early 1880s.

Yakob Vardovean (also known as Güllü Agop), who had received his training in the Armenian theatres of Constantinople and Smyrna, founded the Gedikpasha Theatre in 1868. Recruiting the ablest Armenian actors, he obtained the monopoly of Turkish theatrical performances for ten years and performed Turkish and Armenian plays until the 1880s. His theatre, recognised as the birthplace

and cradle of Turkish drama, was reorganised in 1885 by another prominent Armenian actor-director, Martiros Mna^hkean. Mna^hkean, the guiding force behind Turkish theatrical life for more than three decades, played as important a role as Vardovean in laying the foundations of Turkish theatre.

While the Eastern Armenians tended to excel more in painting (the famous Yovnat^hanean family in the 18th and 19th centuries, Ayvazovski and others), the Western Armenians showed a keen interest for music. Papa Hambarjum (Hambarjum Limon^hcean, 1768-1839) invented a new system of musical notes in the 1830s which was used by the Armenians for almost a century. Limon^hcean and his students thus paved the way for a number of Armenian composers who founded the first Armenian musical society in 1857. Eminent among them was Tigran Ćuxa^hcean, who wrote music for Armenian plays from the late 1850s to the early 1870s. In 1872 Ćuxa^hcean began composing Turkish operettas and in 1874 he established the Ottoman musical theatre. In 1876 Ćuxa^hcean transferred the management of this theatre to another Armenian artist, Serovbē Pēnklean.

Modern Armenian literature was not slow to develop and flourish, particularly towards the end of the 19th century. Xa^hçatur Abovean, an Eastern Armenian writer (1805-1848?), is widely recognised as the founder of this literature, which evolved into Eastern and Western branches.

The Mechitarist Fathers, who had begun to produce their own literature (verse and drama) earlier, exercised remarkable influence on the earliest generation of Western Armenian authors, of whom many were their students. However, mediocre verse still under heavy classical influence characterised poetical products in the middle of the 19th century, although some gifted writers raised poetry to new heights. Ľewond Ali^hsan, the Mechitarist Father, wrote of the virtues of patriotism in modern Armenian; Mkrti^hç

Pēšiktašlean's romantic verse and drama contributed considerably to the growing emphasis on nationalist feelings and Armenian verse attained an unprecedented expression in Petros Durean's poetical works.

Although Pēšiktašlean's and Durean's dramatic compositions were regarded highly at the time, their dramatic heritage and that of numerous other authors (Sargis Vanandēcean, Srapion Hekimean, Tōvmas Tērzean, Narpēy, Ēmmanuēl Esayean, Sepuh Laz-Minasean, Srapion Tīlean, etc.) have not stood the test of time. The same fate befell the Mechitarist repertoire created in the 18th and 19th centuries. Prose, on the other hand, proved rather barren and it was not until the 1870s (Mattēos Mamurean, Cerenç) and the early 1880s (Srbuhi Tiwsab) that the genre was developed significantly.

Certain elements of the comic genre are found in the works of some of the Classical Armenian authors and medieval fables. Later in the 18th century it was the Mechitarist Fathers and their students who wrote, translated and performed comic scenes. A few comedies had already been produced here and there in the Armenian diaspora in the early 19th century when some authors such as Mkrtiç Pēšiktašlean, Xorēn Narpēy, Srapion Hekimean, Yarutiwn Sēvačean, and Mattēos Mamurean tried their hand at comic compositions. It was only in the 1870s, however, that Hagop Baronian, the Armenian satirist, effectively developed the genre.

Thus the cultural revival of the Armenians, after a slow start in the 18th century, gathered momentum in the 19th century. Tiflis emerged as the main centre of cultural activities for the Eastern Armenians, who were strongly influenced by Russian culture, especially after the annexation by Russia of Eastern Armenia in 1828. The Western Armenians maintained and further developed

their close links with the West, and soon the Ottoman capital became their main cultural centre.

The Armenian community of Constantinople increased in size after the establishment of the Armenian Patriarchate there. Large numbers of Armenians were brought by the Ottomans (from the Crimea, Nakhijevan, etc.) to Constantinople in the 16th and 17th centuries. The presence of the head of the Armenian millet, as well as the better material prospects Constantinople could offer, attracted the rich as well as the poor Armenians to settle in the new capital of the empire. Wealthy Armenians, known as amiras in the 18th and 19th centuries, moved to Constantinople (especially from Akn, now Kemaliye) and attained powerful positions at the Porte and in the administration of the community. At the same time the large influx from the Armenian provinces to Constantinople of immigrants seeking employment and security considerably enlarged the community which, having all the advantages for the leadership of the Armenians in the empire, assumed this role by the turn of the 19th century. Subsequently, especially after the middle of the 19th century, the community in Constantinople flourished and shaped the final stages of the so-called 'Armenian Awakening' which resulted in profound political, social and cultural changes. It was at this juncture that Baronian began his literary career.

CHAPTER ONE

A BIOGRAPHY OF HAGOP BARONIAN

Hagop Baronian (Yakob Paronean) was born in Adrianople (Edirne) in 1843.¹ The Armenian community of Edirne consisted of some 1000 households in the middle of the 19th century. They were primarily engaged in trade and crafts, and lived in the old part of the city. There were two elementary schools for boys and two for girls, two churches, and a charitable society.

The ancestors of the Baronian family were said to have emigrated from Akn.² Baronian's father, Yovhannēs Agha, was a small banker. His mother, Bempē, was the daughter of one of the richer families of the city. Baronian was the eldest of the family and had three brothers, and two sisters, of whom nothing is known. The Baronian family owned a house in the 'Panayi' Greek quarter, where Baronian was born and brought up.

Baronian received his elementary education in the 'Aršakuneaç'³ ("Arsacid") Armenian school of Edirne, where a certain Pōļos Patueli⁴ ("Reverend Paul") was one of his teachers. After finishing at the Armenian school in 1857, Pōļos Patueli took Baronian to the Greek secondary school, which he left in a year, 'having learnt only the difficulties of the Greek language'.⁵ Baronian's declaration should not be taken wholly as self-criticism, as it referred more to the narrow scholastic methods and the brief period he spent in that school. Later, he mastered both Classical and Modern Greek.

During his schooldays Baronian showed a very keen interest in languages and a complete aversion for arithmetic. So strong was this dislike that once, in the presence of the teacher, Baronian seized a suitable occasion to write on the blackboard his renunciation of 'demonology and its evil fractions'.⁶ As a consequence he was subjected to the bastinado, a favourite method of punishment

in some of the Armenian schools of the time, institutions which could hardly give children any profound knowledge. The fact remains, however, that it was in this school that Baronian received the sum total of his formal education.

Ironical as it may seem and despite his dislike of arithmetic, Baronian like so many others had to deal with figures throughout the whole of his life, and was reportedly an efficient accountant. Having left school in 1858, Baronian was first employed in a pharmacy. Here he was said to have read a great number of medical and chemical books, most of them probably in French. He also tried his hand at poetry, no examples of which are extant. After leaving the pharmacy in 1860, he was employed as an accountant in the local branch of the Régie de Tabac until 1863.⁷

There is little doubt that it was during the five years which Baronian spent in Edirne, before leaving for Constantinople, that he laid the foundation of his self-education. Baronian attached profound importance to this, and his wide general knowledge can be documented from his writings apart from being unanimously attested by his contemporaries. He was well acquainted with classical and modern literature and history. Apart from his mother tongue he knew both classical and modern Greek as we have said, and he had an excellent command of French and Turkish.⁸

'Neither his mother's tears nor the earnest supplication of his family could make him change his decision'⁹ to move to Constantinople. The lures of the capital, which undoubtedly presented more and greater opportunities to Baronian, his strong desire to lead an independent life, and, finally, the richly varied life of the Armenian community, all must have been irresistible for Baronian, who arrived in Constantinople in 1863 at about the age of 20.

For a while Baronian stayed with his first cousin, Dr. Yovhannēs Kēatīpean,¹⁰ in whose house a private room was allocated to him. Baronian benefited greatly from Kēatīpean's large personal library and had the opportunity to meet some of the leading intellectuals of the time, who often assembled at Kēatīpean's house and discussed the burning issues of the day. It is most likely that Baronian also attended these informal meetings, thus acquainting himself from his early youth with the social and political problems of the community and the country. Shortly after his arrival in Constantinople, Baronian was employed in the Telegraph Agency for a period of three years (1864-1867), but there is no available information about his work there. Subsequently he left Kēatīpean's house and rented a flat in Pera.

Baronian's first serious literary effort was a comedy entitled Erku tērov caṛay mē (A Servant of Two Masters) written in 1865 at a time when the Armenian professional theatre was flourishing. At the same time he was also engaged in acting, but we have no adequate information concerning his stage career. In 1867 he produced his second play Atamnaboyžn Areweleān (The Oriental Dentist), which was published in 1868. This comedy failed to satisfy his own demanding taste, and he reportedly collected its copies from the bookshops.

In 1868 Baronian went back to Adrianople, where he stayed until 1870. It is not known why he returned to his birthplace, where he worked with his brother, Sahak Efendi. Here, as in Constantinople, he gave himself up to a life of dissipation, which in fact damaged his health: 'He enjoyed all the charms of women and alcohol, drowning his youth's enthusiasm in intemperance'.¹¹

Baronian returned to Constantinople in 1870 and worked briefly as translator for the Constantinople correspondent of the Havas

French News Agency. Soon he was compelled to find temporary lodgings as a private tutor in the house of a certain Manukean, after his flat was devastated in the 1870 fire of Pera. In the academic year 1870-71, Baronian became a teacher in the Armenian College of Scutari,¹² where he taught book-keeping. By now, contemporaries have mentioned, his wit had already attracted a number of admirers and friends who greatly appreciated his company.¹³

On 11 November 1870, Baronian made his first debut in the periodical press, editing Poʻl aʻrawotean (The Morning Clarion).¹⁴ Very few issues of this periodical have survived and it is not possible to determine how long Baronian was its editor. It must have been for a very short time, however, as Baronian soon assumed the editorship of Epr̄at (Euphrates)¹⁵ (15 November 1871 - 27 May 1872), to which he had contributed earlier. When Epr̄at ceased publication, Baronian became assistant editor to Yarut'iwn Sěvačean,¹⁶ the editor of Meʻu (Bee), one of the most progressive periodicals of the time. It is generally assumed that his third and incomplete play Šoʻlok'ort'n (The Flatterer) was also written in this period.

Baronian must have seemed a more than competent assistant to Sěvačean, who passed on to him the editorship of Meʻu on 4 November 1872. Because of the inadequate income of his periodical, Sěvačean was happy to have found a person who was 'able to write' and was prepared at the same time 'to stay hungry'.¹⁷ Although Sěvačean had hoped to help Baronian occasionally, his health deteriorated to such an extent that he was not able to make any further contribution to Meʻu.

The pages of Meʻu gave Baronian access to a wider Armenian public and provided him with the means whereby he could criticise the various political and social problems affecting Armenians. His personal satire and caustic remarks soon earned him a large number

of enemies, especially among Armenian ecclesiastic and national authorities and other celebrities, who caused him great difficulties throughout his journalistic career. No major works were produced during this period up to March, 1874, when MeĴu was banned because of the 'treachery of enemies'.¹⁸

In April 1874, a few days before his death, Sēvačēan transferred the official publication permit he had for MeĴu to Baronian, who launched in its place a new periodical Tātron (Theatre). The new satirical was published weekly, twice weekly, or daily according to circumstances.

Baronian's talent flowered in the pages of Tātron, where he presented some of his major literary pieces. He began his famous column of political chronicles, 'Ksmiṭner' (Pinches), where current political affairs were discussed. He wrote 'Kāḷakākan ašxarhagru-ṭiwn' (Political Geography), which later became the basis for Ptoyt mē Polsoy tāḷerun mēĴ (A walk in the Quarters of Constantinople), published in 1880. In this work Baronian described almost every aspect of Armenian life in the various quarters of Constantinople. In Tātron Baronian also sketched the portraits of Armenian figures, which were revised and expanded in Loys (Light) in 1879-1880, and were published in book form in 1880.

In Tātron, as in MeĴu, Baronian attached great importance to Turkish articles printed in Armenian characters.¹⁹ Turkish was an important medium whereby to communicate with the Turkish-speaking section of the community and to some extent with Turkish intellectuals, some of whom had reportedly learnt the Armenian alphabet and could read such articles easily.²⁰ However, Baronian had established direct links with Ottoman society even before Tātron began to appear by publishing Tiyatro (Theatre), a Turkish periodical in the usual Arabic characters (1 April 1874 - 12 October 1875).²¹ The licence

for Tiyatro was obtained through the good offices of Yakob Vardovean (also known in a Turkish rendering of his name as Güllü Agop),²² the founder of the Gedikpasha Theatre.²³ Baronian supported Vardovean and his theatre, at times unjustly criticising his rivals and their theatrical groups throughout the 1870s.

Baronian's journalistic activities reached their peak during this period. The credit for editing the first Armenian periodical for children must be given to Baronian, who began to publish T'atron barekam mankanç (Theatre, Friend of Children) in 1876, which lasted in the first instance for a complete year. He was still its proprietor when it resumed publication on 1 June 1877 for about another year, ending its run in the summer of 1878.

Initially, Baronian did not find the restrictions on political and social criticism too crippling. From the beginning of 1877, however, he began to show increasing signs of dissatisfaction with the restrictions and censorship imposed on journalists throughout the Ottoman Empire. First he suspended the publication of political caricature, then omitted the 'Pinches', and finally ceased publishing T'atron altogether on 18 June 1877, almost two months after Russia had declared war on the Ottoman Empire. Seven years elapsed before Baronian could launch his next and last periodical Xikar (Ahikar) in 1884.

From the very first days of his journalistic career Baronian had to fight hard for his professional existence, and for the maintenance of moral principles in social and political criticism. Difficulties arose very early, and Baronian, 'the terror of the Patriarchate, the mirs, the editors'²⁴ soon found himself in perennial conflict with the Armenian authorities on the one hand and the Ottoman censorship on the other. The Armenian Religious Council was one of Baronian's greatest enemies, and many priests

such as Bishop Xorēn Narpēy,²⁵ whom Baronian satirised for more than fifteen years, were perhaps understandably particularly hostile to Baronian. Numerous bans were imposed on Baronian's periodicals throughout the 1870s on the recommendation of Armenian authorities and Aremnian celebrities such as Yarutiwn pasha Tatean²⁶ (Artin pasha Dadian), a very influential Ottoman politician.

Baronian's criticism of Ottoman internal policy led to several clashes with the Ottoman authorities, which again resulted in various bans. A unique protest was registered in issue number 175 of 1875, in which Baronian published a report concerning the treatment of the Armenians in the Provinces printed with black edges. The subsequent decree specified that Tatron was being banned because of inaccurate reporting, the black edges, and the commentary. After the period of the ban had expired, Baronian wrote ironically about his fear of black edges and even straight black lines. Accordingly he published Tatron without any straight lines printed in it at all, omitting even those which usually separated the columns from each other.

Baronian exhibited an extraordinary degree of determination and boldness throughout his lifetime. Neither government restrictions nor his own miserable poverty could deter him from criticising what he believed to be wrong. He laid no claim to impartiality: he always took sides, rejecting what he saw as immoral ideas and pouring contempt on unworthy people. At times his judgments were too harsh, biased or plainly wrong, and in at least one instance his criticism was clearly motivated by personal interest. Generally, however, he was fair-minded and was a very rare example of complete devotion to his self-imposed task of using satire and criticism to eradicate social and political vices root and branch. In pursuit of his own vision of a better society Baronian consistently adhered

to his lifelong motto: 'Principle is not fashion; it cannot be changed every week, every month'.²⁷

This 'tall, long-necked man, with a hellenic nose'²⁸ and 'slightly squinting'²⁹ blue eyes, who cared so much for his moral principles, was totally indifferent towards his appearance. Hrant Asatur confirmed that 'he was not at all tidy', and that his black tie, for instance, 'had become the colour of ashes, and he would not change it'.³⁰

Mattēos Mamurean³¹ wrote that 'He was inefficient in his personal affairs, as they who live in the world of ideas are'.³² Baronian was easy-going, slow in his movements, and impractical, constantly cheated whenever he made a purchase. He himself knew this and complained about it, saying that he was treated 'as if it is written on my forehead how naive I am'.³³

Baronian could not bear the criticism of incompetent critics and editors, and reacted strongly to their attempts to defame him: 'He would raise his head like a snake, whenever they stepped on his tail'.³⁴ Baronian was an extremely simple man and usually frequented the popular taverns where he played backgammon. He liked music, especially Oriental music, and played the santur or dulcimer, which was his favourite musical instrument. Baronian never outgrew the habit of drinking, though usually in moderation, and when he had been drinking 'he would grow facetious, and puns and purple passages would succeed each other',³⁵ making him an admired conversationalist and a much sought after companion. Although no cases of drunkenness were ever reported, it can be gathered from remarks by his son, Ašot, that Baronian did drink to excess in the late 1880s when he was in miserable poverty.³⁶

As a result of the Russo-Turkish war, the Russian Army occupied Adrianople on 8 January 1878, and when Baronian returned to his

birthplace that summer the Russian Army was still there. The Armenians had in general welcomed the Russians with much enthusiasm, placing in them their hopes of liberation from Ottoman rule. Baronian observed this tactless and immature Armenian behaviour with sorrow. In an answer to a letter from H. Asatur, who asked him to sketch some comic scenes from Edirne, Baronian wrote that he could see only tragic ones.³⁷

Baronian stayed in Edirne until the end of 1878, where he was employed by one of H. Asatur's relatives. He fell ill with malaria here, and this illness recurred several times. By the beginning of 1879, he was back in his room in Ortaköy, and probably was then employed in the Patriarchate as an accountant - a position which he continued to hold almost to the end of his life. In 1879 Baronian married his landlady's daughter, Sat'ënik Ēt'mek'čëan, who proved a devoted wife and bore him a son, Ašot, and a daughter, Zapēl. He in his turn was devoted to his family.

For a short period before becoming the editor of Loys³⁸ on 6 September 1879, Baronian contributed to several Armenian periodicals. The great majority of his portraits of the 'Big-wigs', later revised, were published in the pages of Loys, and the 'Pinches', now renamed 'Xt'itum' (Ticklings), were continued there. Financial difficulties prevented him from continuing as editor of Loys longer than a few months and he resigned on 5 April 1880. Later, at the beginning of 1882, he once again briefly edited Loys.³⁹

Baronian was perhaps the first Western Armenian writer whose talent was widely and enthusiastically acclaimed by the Eastern Armenians. Many Eastern Armenian periodicals, most of which were published in Tiflis and Moscow, welcomed Baronian's signature. P'orj (Test, experience)⁴⁰ offered him a good price for his contributions, and published Baronian's famous 'Im jeratetr'

(My Notebook).⁴¹ In this notebook, which appeared in numbers 6-7, 8-9, 11-12 of 1880, and number 1 of 1881, Baronian discussed the internal and external affairs of the empire, and the 'Armenian Question' after the Congress of Berlin. He also contributed from January to June 1881, to Paros Hayastani (Lighthouse of Armenia).⁴² Apart from the financial advantages they brought, these periodicals, unaffected by Abdulhamid's censorship, allowed Baronian to express his views freely.

In 1881 the representative of Edirne in the Armenian National Assembly resigned. Baronian's candidacy was proposed and he was duly elected. Baronian occupied this post for ten years, until his death in 1891, but very rarely attended its sessions.

A predilection for social problems and a heavy dependence on allegory mark Baronian's satire from the early eighties until his death. His satire of the early 1880s was weaker than his earlier work, and contained much repetition, best illustrated by Cicał (Laughter). Cicał was published in weekly instalments from January until June 1883. Here Baronian's satire was centred on the age-old device of criticising men in the guise of animals, perhaps the best way to avoid the restrictions of the censorship. However, allegory though necessary blunted the point of his satire, and the absence of political themes restricted the scope of his criticism. For a while Baronian became the editor of Erkragunt (Globe), a periodical founded in 1883, although he did not actually contribute to it.

In February 1884, Baronian obtained permission to publish Xikar, a satirical monthly. The Armenians of Edirne had expressed their wish that Xikar should be published in their city. Baronian published the first issues in Constantinople, and then in May moved to Edirne with his family. Editorial work had never paid Baronian's bills, and Xikar was no exception. Once again he was employed in

the Régie, as an accountant. However, after about a year of financial difficulties publishing Xikar, Baronian returned to Constantinople where he resumed its publication from August, 1886.⁴³

In Xikar Baronian published Pałtasar ałbar (Uncle Balthazar), his last and best comedy. The other social works published in Xikar were Kałakavarutean vnasnerě (Disadvantages of Courtesy), Artnin tesaranner (Domestic Scenes), Axtabanutiwn baroyakan (Moral Pathology), and Xōsakçutiwnk' meřeloç (Dialogues of the Dead). Parts of Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, which Baronian translated from the original Greek text, were also published in Xikar. In November 1888, for reasons of health, Baronian discontinued the publication of his last periodical.

All Baronian's periodicals were popular. Reading Xikar, for example, was a must, according to at least one important contemporary reader.⁴⁴ But the actual number of subscribers was small, and a single issue of these papers circulated from house to house. No wonder that financial difficulties sometimes caused Baronian frustration. Although he at times seriously considered retiring from journalism, he never despaired completely.

By the end of 1888 Baronian's health had much deteriorated: 'He looked a little thin, but nobody thought that the microbes of an incurable disease had already chosen the poor man's lungs as their dwelling'.⁴⁵ He was suffering from tuberculosis.

Baronian now worked as the accountant for a certain Tōvmas Kārakašean. There are conflicting reports about this man's treatment of Baronian.⁴⁶ It has been suggested that Kārakašean was unco-operative and rigid. Other sources have maintained that Kārakašean treated Baronian as a partner and lent him money to buy a house. It is not known when Baronian bought this house, but he certainly owned one in Ortaköy. While working for Kārakašean, Baronian also

taught at the Kedronakan (Central) College⁴⁷ from September 1889 to the end of 1890. Apparently his income was still insufficient for his needs, and in a letter dated 2 September 1889, he thought of resuming the publication of Xikar in Smyrna, provided some other form of employment could be found for him at the same time. He planned to contribute to Taraz⁴⁸ (Form, manner, way) and Areweleam mamul (Oriental Press).⁴⁹ Though both were prepared to pay him, Baronian was prevented from carrying out his plans by his illness.

Baronian always believed that he would recover and considered his illness a matter of no importance. He could still support himself and he sold Xikar from door to door to pay for his medicine and to earn his family's daily bread.⁵⁰ By the beginning of 1891, however, his condition grew worse. According to Hrač̣eay Ač̣aṙean,⁵¹ the famous philologist, Baronian's students at Kedronakan tried to raise funds for him. They saved what little they could from the amounts their parents gave them for bridge tolls and lunch, which meant that for his sake they made long detours round the city and went hungry. Their help was of course financially hardly sufficient, though personally encouraging. The correspondent of Arjagank⁵² (Echo) of Tiflis correctly predicted in April that Baronian was to die within a few weeks.⁵² He had seen Baronian returning from a medical examination with a prescription in his hands, but with no medicine.⁵³ Baronian had grown nervous, hypersensitive, and distrustful. He was in utter poverty, and perhaps expected, but never asked for, help from the community. T'ovmas Fasuleač̣ean⁵⁴ saw Baronian fifteen days before his death: 'What are you doing? I asked. I am living to die, he said. Even if you make your ten fingers into candles (Baronian went on), and light them, (the Armenians) would still not appreciate it'.⁵⁵

H. Ačārean, who was his student in the Kedronakan school, recalled Baronian's last lesson:

We were having the mid-year examination... Baronian noticed one of the pupils in the distance was dictating to his friend sitting beside him. He began to deliver a long speech of which I remember the following last words: "He who tells (the answers) to his friend, ruins his friend's house (and) becomes a cause of his destruction. Ah, I am going. Adieu", he said and went out of the classroom leaving us alone. Baronian never appeared again. He went home, took to his bed, and six months later he was dead.⁵⁶

Baronian died on 27 May 1891. An impressive funeral was held for him. Ironically among those who delivered funeral orations was Bishop Narpēy, whom Baronian had mercilessly criticised on numerous occasions, maintaining that money decided the quality of Narpēy's oration: the richer the dead, the better the oration. Apparently in Baronian's case an exception was made, for money now played no part. The Bishop's only difficulty was to find praise high enough for his erstwhile critic: Baronian's work, he prophesied, would live for ever.

Footnotes to Chapter One

1. Various dates have been suggested for Baronian's year of birth (1840, 1841, 1842, 1843). For instance, 1840 is mentioned in a funeral oration delivered on Baronian's death (Arewelk', 29 May, 1891). G. Step'anyan suggested 1843 on the basis of the registration of birth on 2 December, 1843, in the Armenian church of Edirne (G. Step'anyan, Hakob Paronyan, Kyank'ē ev hrparakaxosut'yunē, Erevan, 1964, pp. 264-65). However, such registrations were written on the day the child was baptized, and therefore do not always record the exact date of birth. While the Armenians usually baptize their children shortly after birth, this by no means is compulsory. The year 1843, therefore, is accepted on the assumption that Baronian was baptized not later than a year after his birth.
2. Egin, now Kemaliye, in Central Anatolia, south west of Erzindjan.
3. Named after the Aršakuneaç (Arsacid) dynasty which ruled Armenia in I-V centuries.
4. Nersēs Varžapetean, the future patriarch of Constantinople. 'Patueli' (honourable, now also Armenian Protestant Minister) was used in the sense of teacher.
5. PCS, ii, 217.
6. Hrant Asatur, Dimastuerner, (Constantinople, 1921), p. 171. The pun is on 'diwabanutiwn' (demonology) and 'tuabanutiwn' (arithmetic); in Western Armenian the initial letter of both words is pronounced t, the only difference in the two words being the first vowel (i, ē).
7. G. Step'anyan, Hakob Paronyan, Kyank'ē ev hrparakaxosut'yunē (Erevan, 1964), p. 20.
8. Some writers have suggested that he also knew Latin, Italian, English and Bulgarian, but this is not supported by the more reliable sources.
9. 'Museum of Literature and Art', Baronian archive, as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 21.
10. A popular and learned man (1821-1882), Keatipean had studied medicine in Paris.
11. Loys, 1903, p. 647, as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 25.
12. A famous Armenian college founded in Constantinople in 1838.
13. Całik, 1904, no. 1, as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 29.
14. This periodical has been unknown to all biographers and is being used for the first time. Therefore, G. Step'anyan's claim that Baronian made his debut in Mełu, under the pseudonym "Kam" (Ham, son of Noah) is incorrect.
15. An Armenian periodical (1869-1872) founded in Constantinople by Simon Felekean.
16. An Armenian journalist, writer (1831-1874); founder of the satirical periodical Mełu in 1856.
17. Mełu, 4 November, 1872.
18. G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 65.

19. Baronian was not the only journalist who published articles in Turkish. There were a number of Armenian periodicals published entirely in "Armeno-Turkish". A considerable body of Armenian literature was produced in Turkish in Armenian characters, especially in the 19th century.
20. G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 163.
21. For a detailed description of this periodical see Appendix I.
22. For his biography see Appendix III.
23. The first Turkish professional theatre founded in 1868.
24. Mesrop Čanašean, Patmut'iwn ardi hay grakanut'ean, (Venice, 1953), 394.
25. For his biography see Appendix III.
26. Tatean, Yarut'iwn, Pasha (1830-1901), a member of the famous Tatean family. For details about him, see Istanbul Ansiklopedisi, (Istanbul, 1966), t. VIII, p. 4190.
27. Meľu, 1873, no. 122.
28. Hrač'ya Ač'aryan, Kyank'is hušerič, (Erevan, 1967), p. 75.
29. Baronian's archive, as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 242.
30. Ibid.
31. Journalist, writer (1830-1901).
32. Arewmutk', 1945, no. 37, as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 239.
33. Yovhannēs Sētean, 'Paroneani mēk k'ani yatkanšakan koľmerě', Yišatakaran, (Cairo, 1933-1939), i-v, p. 44.
34. Arewmutk', 1945, no. 37, as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 241.
35. Baronian's archive, as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 240.
36. Mšakoyt', (Istanbul, 1948), pp. 93-98.
37. Tēodik, Amenun tareçoyčě, 1915, p. 154.
38. An Armenian periodical founded in Constantinople in 1872.
39. Armenpress, the official Soviet Armenian News Agency in New York, reported in July, 1977, that new works by Baronian, under the pseudonyms 'Mž'uk' (small mosquito) and 'Tmbuk' (drum) had just been published in Erevan. It would be optimistic to hope that these works (consisting of some 12 very short articles) shed any important new light on Baronian's views. Their authenticity has yet to be verified. At this period (1882) Baronian wrote social satire exclusively; he depended heavily on allegory and tended to be repetitive.
40. An Armenian monthly founded in Tiflis (1876-1881).
41. Also known as 'Hos-hosi jeratetrě' (Hos-hos's Notebook), a title given by the editor and not by Baronian. 'Hos' means 'here' in Western Armenian and 'hos-hos' was a derogatory name given to the Western Armenians by the Eastern Armenians especially in the 19th century.
42. An Armenian periodical founded in Moscow (1879-1881).

43. From then on Baronian was its editor without carrying any administrative responsibilities (cf. Gevorg Madoyan, Hakob Paronyan, (Erevan, 1960), pp. 155-156, and M. Čanašean, op.cit., p. 392).
44. Aršak Čōpanean, Dēmker, (Paris, 1929), ii, 31.
45. Hayrenik, 1893, nos. 359, 363 as quoted by G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 252.
46. G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 237.
47. A famous Armenian college founded in 1886. It was named 'central' as it was designed to prepare teachers for the Armenian Provinces.
48. An Armenian weekly founded in Tiflis (1890-1919).
49. An Armenian periodical founded by Mat'ēos Mamurean in Smyrna (1871-1909).
50. After Baronian's death funds were raised to take care of the needs of his family (cf. Arewelk, 29 May, 1891).
51. Linguist, philologist (1876-1953).
52. G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 257.
53. Ibid., p. 258.
54. Tovmas Fasuleačean (1843-1901), a famous Armenian actor-director.
55. Tēodik, Amenun tareçoyçē, 1915, p. 270.
56. H. Ač'aryan, op.cit., p. 76.

PART I

HAGOP BARONIAN'S POLITICAL SATIRE

CHAPTER II

BARONIAN AND THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

No attempt at a thorough and systematic study of Baronian's political satire has yet been made. Soviet Armenian critics have devoted some attention to Baronian's political conceptions but for the most part in a brief and superficial manner. Western Armenian critics, on the other hand, have almost completely ignored Baronian's political satire. This omission is mainly due to the fact that they have focused their attention on Baronian's major works, disregarding his shorter writings in which his political satire is to be found, on the baseless assumption that his shorter works are unimportant or mere repetitions of the basic ideas embodied in his larger works. Western critics have also relied to a large extent on the earliest, incomplete, and rather incoherent secondary evaluations of Baronian's writings, where hardly any attempt was made to analyse his political views. The Western approach has been further restricted by the fact that little research has been conducted into the political and the social characteristics of the so-called 'Constitutional Period' (1863-1891), within which the whole of Baronian's creative period (1864-1888) falls. There are as yet no detailed introductory studies of Armenian political thought of the period, which could provide us with an insight into contemporary political problems, and permit us to evaluate Baronian's political thought within the context of the political life of his time.

All these factors have contributed to the formation of the prevailing, if unfounded, conventional view (especially among Western Armenians), which holds that Baronian was a great 'comic' writer, who almost exclusively reflected and satirised the social realities of the Armenian community of Constantinople.

Throughout his life, Baronian's greatest concern was for human welfare, particularly that of his own people. This concern became an agonising obsession for him. In his passionate drive to eliminate political and social vice through the whip-lash of his words (as he believed), Baronian dealt not only with social but also with political problems, which, after all, are part and parcel of the fundamental structure of human society.

Baronian's political criticism stretched over a period of about fifteen years: from his earliest serious literary work, The Oriental Dentist in 1868, to 1884, the first year of the publication of his last periodical Xikar. During the latter part of this period (1880-1884), Baronian had no freedom of political comment; and was therefore compelled either to publish his writings abroad, in the Eastern Armenian periodical press, or to resort to the form of fables, and to wrap his political criticism in ancient mythology to outwit the censorship - a method that tended to blunt the edge of his satire. After 1884 Baronian was allowed to discuss only literary and social themes and all his manuscripts were carefully censored before publication.¹ As a result Baronian produced only social satire from 1884 onwards.

Baronian's political satire covered a wide range of topics. The problems of Armenian political life of the time, internal and external Ottoman policy, and international relations, mainly in the context of the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 and its aftermath until 1881, were all subjected to critical analysis.

Baronian closely observed and pondered Armenian political life, during its evolution through its several phases during the 'Constitutional Period'. Since the 1850s, the community had striven for the reestablishment of its rights. It was generally realised both by the Armenian nation and the Ottoman government that reforms were

needed to improve the lot of not only the Armenians, but all subject minorities of the Empire. Consequently, some efforts were made by the Ottoman authorities to introduce reforms to the Empire, but with very little success, particularly in the Eastern Provinces, where central Ottoman control was lax, and left the Armenians subject to oppression.

The main concern of the politically conscious Armenians, including Baronian, was to organise the internal administration of the community, and to destroy oppression in Armenia. In their search for ways to achieve this end, the Armenians adopted two main approaches: one was the Constitutional, which produced no material results and ended when Abdulhamid suspended the Armenian Constitution in 1891; and the other was the Revolutionary, which followed the suspension of the Constitution. Baronian witnessed the Constitutional Period, and reflected, and reflected upon, it in his political satire.

When Baronian embarked on his career in journalism in 1870, the struggle for constitutionalism within the Armenian community of Constantinople had come to an end. The Armenian National Constitution had been finally restored in 1868, and the election to the patriarchal throne of Archbishop Mkrtiç Xrimean,² a devoted constitutionalist, had eliminated ecclesiastical opposition to constitutionalism once and for all. Furthermore, the amiras, the partners of the Armenian Church in the coalition that governed the internal affairs of the community before the Constitution was promulgated, were rapidly losing their influential position at the Porte and consequently within the community - a decline that had accelerated ever since European capital had begun to penetrate the Ottoman economy from the 1850s. The amiras could no longer offer any effective resistance to constitutionalism by 1870. The amiras

were replaced by the Armenian Liberals, who had fathered the Constitution and were to lead the community throughout the Constitutional Period.

The path to constitutionalism had not been an easy one, and the Liberals had had to struggle hard to achieve their ambitions. The Constantinople community itself had supported their attempts by all possible means, especially by demonstrations throughout the turbulent 1860s. Whether Baronian himself contributed at all to the movement is impossible to say since we have no detailed information about his public activities from 1863 to 1870. It seems, however, most unlikely that he took an active part in public affairs. This reticence can be explained by his preoccupation at this period with writing and acting, and, more importantly, by observation of his later conduct, for Baronian never assumed public office willingly; and even when he was elected deputy to the National Assembly from 1881 until his death in 1891, he rarely appeared in public. Baronian's participation in political life was to be by way of journalism and literature; from the moment he began his journalism, no Armenian political issue of any importance escaped his attention. One of the major political problems that occupied Baronian's thoughts in the early 1870s was the Armenian National Constitution.

Before discussing Baronian's criticism of the Constitution a brief survey of the Armenian constitutional system is necessary. To begin with, the word 'Constitution' is misleading when applied to this Armenian document. 'Constitution' in its commonly accepted Western meaning implies the organisation of a sovereign power, whereas the Armenians were subject to an autocratic state. The use of the word 'Constitution' ("Sahmanadrutiwn") instead of 'Regulations' ("Nizamname-i"), as in the Turkish version, emphasizes the great expectations and the romantic illusions entertained by

the Armenian leaders about this set of regulations which were merely designed to order the internal affairs of the community.

The regulations established a National Assembly as a legislative power. This Assembly was to have 140 members; 80 representing Constantinople, 40 the provinces, and 20 priests. The National Assembly was to be convoked once every two years, mainly to discuss the activities of the various national councils and to make amendments to the Constitution if necessary. It could also be convened on special occasions: to elect the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople; to participate in the election of the Catholicos of Ējmiacin; to look into conflicts that might arise between the Political and Religious councils, or between them and the patriarch; and, finally, on extraordinary occasions. Nevertheless, the Assembly did meet regularly throughout the year, at times deliberately proposing the issue of introducing amendments to the Constitution as a legal pretext. The Porte was certainly aware of this pretext, but it was equally aware that the Assembly was virtually impotent.

According to the regulations, the patriarch was the head of the National Executive. Elected by and accountable to the National Assembly, he was to act in close cooperation with the national councils, and was the representative of the millet before the Ottoman government. The Political and Religious councils, elected by the National Assembly and answerable to it, were to run the civil and religious affairs of the community. The Political council was to elect four councils (Educational, Economic, Judiciary, and Monastic) and three trusteeships (Accounts, Wills, and the trustees of the St. Saviour National Hospital in Constantinople) to help organise the affairs of the community. The parish councils were to organise parochial affairs, and were supervised by the relevant national councils. These regulations applied equally to the provinces.

When the Constitution was restored in 1868, Baronian and many other Armenians firmly believed that a new era had dawned for them. There was a widespread optimism that the Constitution would not only provide the community with a just administration, but would also guarantee a secure life for the Armenians in the provinces. The day of the promulgation of the Constitution was regarded as the day of freedom that marked the end of the centuries-old slavery of the Armenians, and was commemorated every year in public celebrations. Even a constitutional anthem was written, and the Armenian leaders proudly claimed that they had achieved constitutionalism peacefully, whereas Europe had paid a very heavy price in blood to achieve it! It is not difficult to uncover the psychological reason behind these romantic expectations. The Armenians, deprived of independence for many centuries, had suffered immense oppression in their country. And now, suddenly, they were being granted a 'Constitution', a 'National Assembly', they were to have 'elections', 'deputies', 'parliamentary debates', words of enormous appeal indeed. This placed them, they thought, on an equal footing with Europe, the avant-garde of human civilisation. And who was achieving it? A small people subject to an autocratic state. It was in this jubilant atmosphere that Baronian entered the Armenian literary scene.

Baronian too had illusions about the Constitution and genuinely believed that it would prove effective if properly implemented. This belief of Baronian emanated from his general conception of political systems, which he derived from the West, though it is difficult to trace any specific sources of influence. He held that the people were the source of political power, and that the relationship between a society and its political administration should be based on a contract. Such a contract could only be realised through

a constitutional system - hence Baronian's support for the Armenian Constitution. It had provided the Armenians with a National Assembly whose members were the representatives of the people, and were given the mandate to govern the community. They were elected by the people and from the people, and were its obedient servants; they had to safeguard the people's rights; to strive for its welfare unselfishly; and to fulfil its wishes literally even if the people were wrong. Whenever the delegates of the people failed to realise their mission, the people could summarily dismiss them. This was, according to Baronian, the principle and spirit of constitutionalism. In an agitated mood, he addressed the Armenian deputies who had wished to assemble in camera, on an occasion which did not seem to him to call for such a measure:

The people can drive you out when you act illegally, but you can never drive them out, even if they act illegally. Why? Because, when the whole people are illegal that means that they are against you; and when the whole people are against you, you cease to be deputies. Although the people may be deficient, they are stronger (than you), and are therefore the victor.³

According to Baronian, only such a constitutional system as outlined above could secure equal rights for all members of a community, and preserve law, order and justice within a society. This system would also exclude the possibility of a tiny minority ruling over the community, as was the case in the pre-constitutional period: "...Injustice represented truth, tyranny ruled with rod in hand, the amiras' caprice occupied the throne of justice, law meant the kastinado..."⁴

In order to safeguard the constitutional system and its proper functioning, Baronian stressed the need for permanent public control over the political administration. There were two ways of control: public accountability, which should be compulsory for all organs of the administration and, secondly, public presence at the sessions of

the National Assembly. The latter was the more effective method of control, Baronian maintained; for public presence at the National Assembly would keep the deputies alive to their duty and would therefore prevent them from abusing law and betraying national interests. The deputies "have to fear the people, not only fear them but tremble (in their presence) and this is constitutionalism".⁵ Otherwise, the deputies were liable to abuse the law, which meant betrayal of public interests, a betrayal that could only be interpreted by Baronian as absolutism, regardless of the nominal system of administration that committed it: "...When despotism has exceeded the bounds (of Law) it has given rise to republicanism, which has in its turn given birth to despotism when it has abused law".⁶ He was aware of the danger of oligarchies: "Despotism is despotism whether exercised by one person... or by Bishop Xorēn and his few satellites".⁷

Baronian's ideas on public sessions were impracticable. It would never have been possible for the 'whole people' to attend the sessions; and any crowd attending the sessions could only be looked upon as a faction of the people, or representatives of a faction of the people, rather than the people itself. Furthermore, any such multitude, as Baronian's opponents rightly maintained, could easily become a pressure group hindering the activities of the National Assembly. Indeed, the crowds that usually attended the sessions of the National Assembly failed to comply with the regulations of the Assembly. They would boo or jeer, and interrupt the deputies, or even attack them. It is difficult to imagine an effective session under such circumstances. Baronian unceasingly dismissed these objections as unjustifiable pretexts for cheating the people. He maintained that those who behaved improperly were a few irresponsible people, whom it should always be possible to silence

through the Assembly; or, he argued further, the multitude itself would render them harmless.

The people in turn, Baronian believed, had obligations towards the National Assembly. They should support and help the Assembly to fulfil its duties; they should respect and carry out the administration's decisions if they accorded with public interests. Furthermore, Baronian appealed to the public to defend the National Assembly by all means, as a body that symbolised public power, and whose existence was a guarantee of the sovereignty of the people:

People, defend them (the deputies) and show them your courage... Defend them, for by defending them you will defend yourselves... This is your duty, people, and it is mine as well, and I consider it as a great glory for myself that I shall be with you...⁸

Religion had no fundamental place in Baronian's political system. The Constitution itself was intended to liberalise as well as secularise the government of the community: to bring the absolute powers of the patriarch and his unofficial partners, the amiras, under constitutional control. It should immediately be pointed out, however, that the exclusion of religion from the political arena did not originate from any atheistic principles held by Baronian, for he was a firm believer. But Baronian, like many before and after him, did make a clear distinction between religion and the priesthood, and their role in society. His approach was in sharp contrast with Muslim autocratic attitudes of the time. The Young Ottoman thinkers (Namik Kemal, Ziya Pasha and others) did not question the basis of the Ottoman political system though they did make mention of some purely consultative organs to control the administrative machinery. For them the Koran was still the source of political law and the sultan the absolute ruler.⁹

A religious social system would have clearly been in contradiction with Baronian's democratic views. It would have meant

placing political power in the hands of the priests, who represented only a fraction of the society. Baronian persistently denied privileges to any particular social group. Furthermore, by virtue of their vocation, the priests were supposed to abstain from worldly affairs, and to devote themselves entirely to the moral and spiritual needs of the society. Any participation on their part in political affairs would, in the first place, be inconsistent with their religious vocation. Baronian also drew conclusions from the pre-constitutional period, when the Armenian priesthood had run the political as well as religious affairs of the community. Their government, Baronian thought, had been arbitrary, incompetent, and incompatible with the political interests of the Armenian people.

In Baronian's eyes, the reign of the Armenian priesthood had been "inquisitional".¹⁰ The patriarch freely inflicted corporal punishment on the members of his community, or had them imprisoned at his discretion. Baronian himself had indirectly suffered in his elementary school, where the bastinado was part of the educational system sponsored by the Patriarchate. Further, in the name of religion the priesthood had opposed progressive ideas, and had persecuted as heretics even those who had tried to learn French. The most serious charge, however, was that the priesthood had encouraged the spirit of submission within the community. Yovhannēs Tēroyenç, for instance, a scholar of unchallenged authority in the pre-constitutional period, who favoured the religious system and acted as the mouthpiece of the Armenian conservatives and the Church, felt "proud of producing genuflecting pupils for the nation".¹¹

It may seem rather unnecessary of Baronian to recur to this theme at a time when the Armenian Constitution seemed to have introduced a remarkable degree of secularisation into the administration of the community. In reality, however, the community was still recognised as a religious one by the Ottoman authorities.

The patriarch was its virtual overall leader, and prelates headed the Armenians in the provinces. It was the activities of the Religious Council and the prelates that Baronian was particularly displeased with. The prelates, as we shall see later, had become an unbearable burden on the community in Armenia. As to the Religious Council, it failed, in Baronian's view, even to handle the religious affairs of the community, let alone the political ones, in which it had a say as a party to the Mixed Council (set up of the Religious and Political Councils), which normally handled the crucial problems of the community. Baronian's displeasure was so great that he requested the closure of all insolvent monasteries, and a substantial reduction in the ranks of the priests. He went even further and made the radical proposal that laymen "fulfil the duties of the priests".¹²

Baronian's request was of course impossible to achieve, as it would have meant complete secularisation; and Baronian himself never had recourse to this possibility later. But there can be no doubt that he would have welcomed far-reaching secularisation - that is, the occupation by laymen of the 20 seats at the National Assembly allocated to the priest-deputies who were elected by the priesthood and not the community; the strict limitation of the activities of the Religious Council to religious affairs, under the control of the national authorities; and the imposition of vigorous public control over the prelates by local civil councils, which, although envisaged by the Constitution, were not being implemented. Baronian did not go as far as requesting the replacement of the patriarch and the prelates by laymen as the community leaders. That would have been unthinkable. Firstly, the Ottoman authorities would never have permitted a complete secularisation of the community. Secondly, the majority of the Armenians would have resisted the idea, as the

Armenian Church had become a national institution and an inseparable part of the Armenian leadership, at times the only part, throughout Armenian history.

Thus, it has been demonstrated that Baronian's support of the Armenian Constitution was, first of all, a result of his firm belief that it would provide his people with a democratic system of government. A second major factor that deeply influenced his belief in the Constitution was his responsiveness to the emerging nationalist feelings amongst the Armenians. Baronian's nationalism, free from any chauvinistic touches, was embodied in the hope he cherished that the Constitution would prove an effective tool for restoring the disintegrated unity of his nation.

The Armenians had lost their last national government after the fall of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia towards the end of the 14th century. In the following centuries the endless wars to rule Armenia proper had had disastrous economic, social and cultural consequences. The flow of Armenian emigrants from their fatherland, in quest of security and employment, had reached alarming proportions and was still continuing in Baronian's day. As a result, Armenian national unity had been weakened, and their national consciousness had effectively submerged.

Baronian sided with the progressive faction of the Armenian leadership, which favoured centralisation. A second faction, consisting mainly of conservatives, advocated the decentralisation of the government of the community. The conflict between these two factions was triggered off in 1860, shortly after the death of the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. Seizing this opportunity, the central Armenian authorities wished to bring Jerusalem under their control, for the Patriarchate was heavily and perpetually in debt

and had become a burden to the nation. The Jerusalem Order, with the support of the conservative elements in Constantinople, rejected this idea and resisted it strongly. Although a compromise concerning the Jerusalem Patriarchate was reached in 1864, the problem was never solved decisively. It was on the agenda of the National Assembly for some years, and was also discussed in the Armenian press as the Armenian authorities were now and then faced with problems concerning this issue. Later the problem of centralisation took on a different, political connotation, provoking disputes in which Baronian was closely involved.

Baronian strenuously opposed decentralisation because, according to him, it would result in disunity.¹³ The provincial Armenians, who were largely a leaderless flock, badly needed a centralised government which would exercise a vigorous control over the provincial authorities. Such constitutional control would prevent the provincial authorities from abusing the law from the start. The provincial authorities would then, in conjunction with the central administration, strive to save '... our unfortunate provincial brothers ... from slavery and wicked servitude...' ¹⁴, and to guarantee security of life and property in the Armenian provinces. This would halt the flow of emigrants from Armenia; and would also induce the emigrants residing in Constantinople and elsewhere in the empire to return to the Fatherland and multiply there.

Baronian also urged the national authorities to set up and sponsor a wide network of schools in the provinces, as the prelates had, through negligence or lack of financial resources, failed to meet the educational needs of their flock. Education would wipe out the widespread illiteracy amongst the Armenians, and would enhance their national consciousness. For all these reasons Baronian favoured a centralised constitutional government, which

would preserve the political, linguistic, and consequently, the national unity of his people.

Parliamentary democracy was the system which represented best Baronian's views on what constituted just government. Baronian's deep belief in the Armenian Constitution derived from this democratic vision, as well as from his nationalist feelings. He persistently sought, throughout the first phase of his political thought from 1868 to 1872, the immediate implementation of the Constitution, which he believed would realise his dreams for the welfare of the Armenians. Understandably, then, Baronian had no initial criticism of the Constitution itself. His strictures were reserved for the Ottoman authorities, for their misgovernment; and for the Armenian leadership, which had failed to implement the Constitution effectively.

But Baronian failed, at this juncture, to see the problem in its proper perspective. He had isolated the Armenian case from its essential Ottoman context. The Constitution, in itself a formal recognition by the Porte that all was not well in Armenia, was designed to regulate the internal affairs of the community and, consequently, was insufficient to order community-government relations and inter-communal relations between the various ethnic and religious minorities of the empire. While it is true that the Constitution could prove effective in regulating the internal affairs of the Armenian community to a certain degree; what was really needed to improve the lot of the Armenians as well as the other minorities were substantial reforms in the empire as a whole.

Baronian was not slow to see that the Constitution was gravely inadequate in itself, and he embarked on a campaign for its revision. This variation in his attitude towards the Constitution, during a short period from 1872 to 1875, represented the second phase in the

development of his political views. While this shift resulted first of all from his awareness of the ineffectiveness of the Constitution throughout the years of its implementation (1860-1866, 1868-1872), there was one other, external factor that contributed to and precipitated the change in his attitude towards the character of the Armenian Constitution.

Before Baronian had finally convinced himself of the inadequacy of the Constitution, Archbishop Xrimean, the Patriarch of Constantinople, had already launched a campaign to revise it. Xrimean, who came from the provinces (Van), knew all too well where the shoe pinched. He had witnessed the misgovernment of his flock in the provinces, and had hoped, when he was elected patriarch in 1869, that he would be able to alleviate their sufferings. When he succeeded to the patriarchal throne, Xrimean was already convinced of the deficiency of the Constitution. On the day he was sworn in as patriarch, Xrimean promised to act according to the spirit rather than the letter of the Constitution, and, about a year after his election, he began to urge the national authorities to revise the Constitution itself.

Baronian soon came to support Xrimean wholeheartedly and adopted his propositions concerning the revision of the Constitution almost completely. It is beyond doubt that Xrimean influenced Baronian's political views at this period, but it is difficult to determine the precise extent of this influence. For Baronian himself was almost as deeply concerned about the welfare of the Armenians in the Eastern Provinces as Xrimean, and Baronian would no doubt have realised, sooner or later, the basic flaws in the Constitution. But the fact that Xrimean had already started his campaign before the shift in Baronian's attitude towards the Constitution occurred and, moreover, the fact that Baronian adopted

Xrimean's views in this respect almost word for word, leave no room for doubt that Xrimean's constitutional policy influenced the evolution of Baronian's political thought considerably.

Soviet Armenian critics have ignored Xrimean's influence on Baronian, and have suggested instead the formative influence of Mikayēl Nalbandean and Yarutiwn Sēvačean. The former, a brilliant Eastern Armenian political activist, held social-democratic and revolutionary views and cooperated closely with the Russian Social-Democrats and the so-called Propagandists. Nalbandean had established close contacts with Sēvačean, when he visited Constantinople twice in the early 1860s. The impact of Nalbandean's political views on Sēvačean is undeniable and, as Sēvačean sponsored Baronian in the early 1870s, Soviet Armenian critics have unanimously maintained that Nalbandean had a weighty influence on Baronian's political views either directly or through Sēvačean. This suggestion is quite without foundation.

Nalbandean was a revolutionary. He held that only a revolution staged by the Armenian peasantry, and timed to coincide with a Pan-European and Russian revolution, could put an end to the misery of the Armenians. There is some evidence, though not decisive, to show that Sēvačean adopted Nalbandean's revolutionary idea and made some efforts to pave the way for such an uprising in Western Armenia. In the early 1860s, Sēvačean, like Nalbandean, turned to the Armenian peasantry and the agrarian problem as the source for a solution to the problem of the well-being of his people. There is not even the slightest trace of Nalbandean's and Sēvačean's revolutionary concepts in Baronian's political thought. Baronian never envisaged nor advocated an Armenian uprising coordinated with a Pan-European and Russian revolution; nor did he ever incite the Armenian peasantry to revolt. The only influence Sēvačean had on

Baronian was in Baronian's attitude towards the Armenian priesthood.

After his initial period of illusion then, Baronian realised in 1872 that the Constitution was an inadequate means for improving the lot of his people. Under the impact of Xrimean's views, Baronian insisted upon the revision of the Constitution. Baronian still believed until about 1875, that a revised Constitution would prove a useful set of regulations for reform. Although Baronian simultaneously criticised Ottoman internal policy, his hopes for reform still rested with the Ottoman authorities and the Constitution granted by them. This approach indicates that Baronian had some belief in the prevailing ideas of Ottoman identity, and had no anti-Ottoman feelings in the early 1870s. Another proof is the publication of Tiyatro in 1874, where he often wrote as an Ottoman citizen. But this did not prevent Baronian from pointing out the flaws in the Constitution, and from requesting basic amendments to it.

The most important flaw was its lack of executive powers, a sine qua non in any set of effective regulations. This omission is hardly surprising. If the Ottoman authorities had granted the Armenians executive powers, it would have meant the creation of a state within a state; and this would have been unthinkable for the Ottoman autocracy. On the other hand, automatic implementation of the decisions of the Armenian national authorities would have amounted to the same thing. Consequently, the Armenian authorities had moral but no real power to enforce their decisions concerning the internal affairs of the community. And their moral authority was inadequate to effect the organisation of the administration of the community - from its smallest units, the parish councils, to the highest organ, the National Executive itself. Baronian dwelt on this subject at some length.

The national authorities failed, for instance, to impose their authority upon the parish councils, which suffered from widespread corruption. There was no other way of taking measures against corrupt parish councillors, who were reluctant to present their financial accounts, or to give up their seats at the expiry of their term of office. This situation naturally resulted in unrest in Armenian quarters, and disputes were very common within the parishes. Rivalry between candidates for the councils, and between their respective supporters, often developed into fights, and it frequently happened that the parishioners attacked the members of the council, either to drive them out or to express their discontent.

One of the basic reasons for the reluctance of the members of parish councils to give up their offices or to present their accounts stemmed from vested interests. The parish councils had several sources of income; the parish tax, the endowments of the parish church and school, the revenues of the church itself (candles etc.), the donations made for the poor, and wills. These funds were supposed to be spent on church and school maintenance, and to help the poor parishioners. But instead the parish council members often feathered their own nests. Someone, for example, who

had been long unemployed, had fallen into penury, and was about to starve to death, ... was later elected to the parish council and completely rehabilitated in a couple of years.¹⁵

Indeed, such people would certainly avoid presenting the parish accounts to the relevant national authorities, especially when these authorities had no way of forcing them to do so. Baronian cited a case where the Economic council had asked a parish council to present its accounts. This parish council answered that they were planning the accounts:

The plan will be prepared in a month or two; it will then be written in four or five months, because our clerk is ill, the ledgers too are somewhat poorly; the desk is broken... also, the days are very short now...¹⁶

The Economic council was unable to get the accounts, and was, in turn, unable to present accounts to the Political council - the result was a vicious circle that crippled the activities of the central Armenian administration.

Far more important than the parishes was the plight of the leaderless Armenians in the provinces. The Armenian authorities failed to provide the dioceses with any prelates at all, let alone competent ones, because the priests simply refused to take up office, or imposed certain conditions before doing so. At a time when thirty Armenian priests resided idly in Constantinople, Xrimean listed in 1873 fourteen important Armenian dioceses that had no prelates. Father Izmirlean, for instance, would not go unless ordained bishop. Baronian commented:

Father Mattēos Izmirlean is a child.
Usually, people give sweets to children who refuse to go to school, to persuade them to go.
Father Mattēos, who of course has once been a child, as he is now, has no wish to go to his diocese.
The Patriarch asks him:
'My son, why do you not go to your diocese?'
'... I shall not until you ordain me bishop.'
'My son, go now, and we shall ordain you later.'
'I want to be ordained now.'
'We can't now.'
'... I want to be ordained bishop.'
It is said that the patriarch is still trying to persuade this child.¹⁷

Faced with this insoluble dilemma, and possessing no power to force the priests to shepherd the community in the provinces, or to take any disciplinary measures against them, the National authorities had to conform with the wishes of the priests and to change their decisions accordingly. Baronian satirised the uncertain appointment of Archbishop Xorēn Narpēy, who first decided that he would take office at Smyrna and then that he would not, in the following way:

The National Executive has made its decisions in tune with the weather.

Last week we had fine weather, and the National Executive decided that ... Bishop Xorēn would be the primate of Izmir.

This week the weather was rather rainy and the National Executive decided that ... Bishop Xorēn would not be the primate of Izmir.

One wonders what the National Executive will decide next week. All depends on the weather.¹⁸

The National Authorities similarly had no effective control over the prelates already in office in the provinces. The prelates declined to carry out the orders to implement the Constitution, and ran the community single-handed. The central administration was helpless to meet the complaints of the Armenian provincial population, either to replace a prelate or to force him to implement the Constitution. The prelates had become so independent, Baronian thought, that they could write reports to the Porte declaring their non-recognition of the Patriarchate. A famous case was that of a certain Father Pōḷos, the primate of Van. This 'uncouth monster',¹⁹ in Baronian's words, had become an unbearable burden on the community of Van. Pōḷos had secured the support of local Kurdish tribes by satisfying their needs at the expense of the community, and could, therefore, freely torture his flock. Pōḷos beat the members of the community, imprisoned them arbitrarily, and did anything for money. Although Pōḷos had been conducting his criminal activities since the late 1850s, the Armenian authorities were still unable to control him in the early 1870s!

According to Baronian, the second basic reason for the inadequacy of the Constitution stemmed from a lack of financial means; in turn a result of the Constitution's lack of executive powers. The main sources of the national treasury were the national tax, and the revenues from endowments, wills and charities. The national tax, which was the only regular source of income, was supposed to be levied on the community in Constantinople; and the

provinces were to pay a certain percentage of their income to the national treasury. But the national tax was never collected effectively, as the members of the community were under only a moral obligation to pay it, and they seldom fulfilled their duty, except when they needed the Patriarchate's legal assistance. On such occasions the Patriarchate, seizing the opportunity, would not extend its assistance until they had paid their national tax. The provinces hardly ever paid their share. Consequently, the national treasury was not only empty, a place where only 'mice fought'²⁰ according to Baronian, but was in perpetual debt. Although a special committee was set up to remove the debt, this committee got nowhere. Occasionally some rich Armenians repaid some of the debt; and on such occasions Baronian expressed his satisfaction at the reduction, although he believed that the debt would never be settled, and, indeed, it never was.

Obviously, the consequences of this financial crisis were manifold. First of all, there were not sufficient funds to meet the expenses of the enormous bureaucratic machinery the Constitution had set up. Secondly, the administration could not employ paid functionaries; and functionaries employed on an unpaid basis developed a sense of irresponsibility. Thus, according to Baronian, the members of the Judiciary Council replied as follows to the requests of a plaintiff to speed up the procedure of a divorce case:

... The Nation does not allocate us salaries to regulate your affairs; we have come here out of patriotism and dedication to discuss your problem. We have our businesses; we have children and we have to see to their living and clothing ... We are not your servants, do you understand that? We are not your slaves, do you understand that? We are not your serfs, do you understand that?²¹

Instead of discussing the divorce problem, the members of the council engaged in a completely irrelevant conversation:

Paylak: You did not give your opinion.

Sur: No, because we had to interrupt the discussion.

Erkat: One should not pay much attention to prejudice in such matters.

Paylak: Still, one should not make judgements based on others' opinions either.

Erkat: I am not motivated by partiality.

Paylak: Nor am I.

Erkat: Taking the problem from the point of view of principles, you had no right to get angry with me.

Paylak: But you made such innuendoes as to prejudice my dignity; you wanted to imply that I sided with the other side blindly.

Erkat: Not at all... I simply said that white wine could be drunk with apple, and that red wine with peach is more pleasant to the palate.

Paylak: And you also added that those who drank red wine with apple had no taste.

Sur: In my view, truth is elusive in matters of taste; therefore both sides can be right...

Paylak: Then I was right when I was shouting that it is childishness to pass judgements in matters relating to taste.

Erkat: No. I still insist that white wine cannot be drunk with peach.

Paylak: And I do not cease shouting that I have neither palate nor stomach willing to drink white wine with apple...²²

Baronian also found that there were serious loopholes in the election method envisaged by the Constitution, which permitted incompetent people to be elected to the National Assembly. Article 79 of the Constitution required that a candidate should be elected by a majority of votes, provided that he polled more than 50% of the votes cast (not 50% of the votes of the whole constituency). This provision permitted a candidate to be elected by very few votes. For instance, in the constituency of Pera, which included 300 voters, only 74 turned up on one occasion. In Karagömrük, which had 89 voters, out of the 33 who took part in one election 17 people turned up personally, and the rest voted by post. In Scutari, which contained 342 voters, out of the 116 participants 70 voted by post.²³ The successful deputies had only to gain more than 50% of these actual votes, which meant that the respective deputies could have been elected by mustering 38, 17 and 59 votes. Baronian was referring to such small turnouts of voters when he

suggested that the deputies would hereafter be elected 'by one vote only'.²⁴

This general indifference towards elections can be substantiated from the Records of the National Assembly, and there was a serious reason for the very light polls. Article 65 of the Constitution required that an elector should have paid his national tax in order to exercise his election rights. As the community did not take the national tax seriously, many people were not qualified to vote, although this rule was not strictly observed. But as a result of the light polls, thoroughly incompetent candidates were being elected to the National Assembly. It would sometimes be enough for an otherwise ignorant candidate to rally 20 to 30 electors to secure his election. Normally such candidates would bribe their electors, and Baronian savagely satirised the corruption of politics:

The following agreement has been concluded between the honourable Mr. Magpie and his fourteen electors:
 Article 1 - The Magpie undertakes to buy 50 drams of raki for four of his electors every night for three years.
 Article 2 - He undertakes to shoulder the coal expense of two of his electors for four years. Article 3 - He also undertakes to pay the tuition fees for five children of five of his electors for five years. Article 4 - To buy an expensive dress for the daughter of one of his electors. Article 5 - To meet the expenditure on firewood of one of his electors for three years. Article 6 - To pay the old debt of one of his electors to his barber. Article 7 - To buy four ... tins of tobacco a week for the remaining elector for two years...²⁵

Such people had material interests in being elected deputies, and were not concerned in the least about general national affairs. As Baronian demonstrated in his fable 'Magpie and Cicał',²⁶ the deputies had good opportunities for material reward, to compensate at best for their election expenses. One way of making money through the National Assembly according to Baronian was to put questions about funds embezzled by high-ranking Armenian officials. The officials concerned would then hasten to buy the silence of the questioner.

Baronian's indignation about incompetent and corrupt deputies is understandable, but one can hardly agree with him about the deficiency of the election method. The method itself could not be blamed if the public did not take advantage of their rights and fulfil their duty. Perhaps it would have been possible to impose a fine on defaulters, but Baronian envisaged no such measures.

Baronian maintained that the national administration should report their activities to the people regularly; a basic requirement which the authorities always failed to comply with, as there were no binding legal obligations to do so. Apart from that, however, there were several other reasons for the failure of the National Authorities to present their accounts regularly. Sometimes it was their unwillingness to report, because of some dubious affair or other; at other times, it was because they had nothing to report on; and sometimes it was out of sheer neglect. In all cases, however, there was no way of forcing them to public disclosure, and months would elapse before the National Executive, for instance, would present its report. Baronian satirised the National Executive by parodying the headlines in the Armenian periodical press:

The National Executive is preparing its report.
 The National Executive's report is being prepared diligently.
 Big preparations are under way for the National Executive's report.
 The National Executive is making all efforts to prepare its report speedily.²⁷

A few months later the report would still not be ready:

The National Executive will present its report in the next session of the National Assembly.
 The National Executive is preparing to present its report in the next session of the Assembly.
 The report is completed, but has not been signed.
 The report has been signed but it will not be presented in the next session because it is being bound.²⁸

In Baronian's view, important as public accountability was the necessity of conducting enquiries into any doubtful affairs, and particularly the murky ones such as embezzlement of public funds. Public accountability, useful and indispensable as it was, would not by itself be a substitute for complete public control, for the authorities could still withhold scandalous but concealed affairs from the public. To Baronian's bitter disappointment, such public enquiries were never carried out, and numerous scandals ended in 'honourable reconciliation'.²⁹ What was even more frustrating, those involved in such scandalous affairs would still hold national posts. Kristostur Ȳazarosean, to mention but one, had appropriated some of the funds of the St. Saviour National Hospital in Constantinople. Ȳazarosean not only escaped unpunished, but he continued on the trustees' board of the Hospital even after the scandal.

Finally, in Baronian's view, the Constitution had established incompetent bureaucratic procedures which further hindered the efficiency of the administration. Even in the most urgent cases, absurd bureaucratic procedures were observed meticulously. Baronian satirised the administration's bureaucracy in the case of a disaster-stricken Armenian village that needed immediate relief:

- When did the earthquake occur?
- Yesterday, but hurry up, help...
- How many hours did it last?
- One, but these questions are irrelevant now, the poor...
- Did the earthquake proceed from the East, West, South or North?
- Please, do not waste time... the poor are homeless...
- Were their houses made of stone or wood?
- ... You could have this information later; now you ought to send immediate relief.
- What did they eat, what did they do?
- ... Are you joking?
- Why should I be? How many animals were buried under the ruins? And those animals, were they wearing European or Asian clothes when they were alive?
- They are starving.
- So what? It is necessary that I have detailed information... if they are starving, they themselves are responsible for their death. Everything must be done in an orderly manner.

- If I knew that you wouldn't send immediate relief...
- ... The Assembly must decide to send relief; this decision should be registered and be sent to the Executive for disposal; the Executive should pass it on to others for implementation... Now tell me, couldn't they have prevented the earthquake?
- ...What are you talking about, are you mad?
- Have those responsible for the earthquake been found, or...?
- Patience, O Zeus.
- Whom do you suspect...?
- I'll go mad.
- What is the motive behind this misfortune? A love affair, or despondency...?^{3 0}

What annoyed Baronian most was that the administration magnified the difficulties arising from the nature of the system by an absurd attempt to add an authoritative touch to its management, instead of simplifying the whole system by flexible procedures and the reduction of officiousness to a minimum. Baronian did not acknowledge that this excessive bureaucracy was partly caused by the fact that many Armenian leaders were employees of the Porte, and consequently, would inevitably introduce some of the traditions of the notorious Ottoman bureaucracy, a worthy successor to that of the Byzantines, to the Armenian administration. It should also be borne in mind that the Armenians had little or no experience in administration, and any newly-established administration can tend to apply the regulations too literally. However, one cannot but sympathise with Baronian's indignation at the eternal problems of bureaucracy and its nightmarish procedures. Baronian produced the following parody of the procedures through which a divorce case would go, and this passage illustrates both the complexity of national administration, and Baronian's own powers of caricature:

First of all, the petition will be given to the President, who sends it to the Initiative Court. The Initiative Court sends it to the Competency Court. The Competency Court sends it to the Communication Department. The Communication Department sends it to the Secretarial Chancery, and the Secretarial Chancery sends it to the Judicial Clerk. The Judicial Clerk to the Administrative

Department, and the Administrative Department to the Educational Department, from which the petition goes to the Judicial Commission, which elects a committee to examine the case. This Committee also elects a Sub-Committee to study the case. The Sub-Committee also in its turn nominates a Sub-Division to study the case in detail and report. This Sub-Division also will have Auxiliary Divisions to help. The Auxiliary Divisions will have their branches to examine all the particulars of the case, and each of these Branches will also have their Part-Branched, who, after examining the case particularly, return their verdict to the Branches, the Branches to the Auxiliary Division, the Auxiliary Division to the Sub-Division, the Sub-Division to the Sub-Committee, and the Sub-Committee to the Committee, and thus the case returns to where it was before. After that it comes to the Judicial Clerk, where the real litigation will take place.³¹

The inadequacy of the Constitution, then, according to Baronian, resulted from five main causes: lack of executive powers; lack of financial resources; the deficiency of the electoral method; the absence of compulsory public accountability; and, finally, excessive and corrupt bureaucracy. The Armenian national authorities could have coped to some degree with the last three problems, as they were problems of internal organisation. But the problems of the lack of executive powers and finance were of a much more complicated nature, and the Armenian authorities would have been incapable of solving them without the support of the Ottoman state, which was not forthcoming.

Baronian suggested two ways of solving the financial difficulties of the community: cutting down all unnecessary expenditure, and organising the collection of the national tax. Regarding the reduction of expenditure, Baronian suggested that the administration should spend community funds more sparingly; that all insolvent monasteries should be closed down, as their debts were paid out of the National Treasury; and that the revenue from church endowments should be utilised for national purposes. Baronian thought along Xrimean's lines in respect of church revenues, but their views were, not surprisingly, not identical about closing indebted monasteries.

Xrimean, understandably, proposed the introduction of fundamental reforms to the Armenian monastic institutions and to the Armenian priesthood.

Baronian laid the blame equally on the national authorities for their negligence in collecting the national tax; for he thought the community was prepared to contribute to the national budget if properly approached. He therefore suggested, as did Xrimean, that the tax be levied effectively and regularly. Baronian was aware that the amount of tax payable should vary so as to correspond to some proportion of the income of the members of the community. But he seems to have failed to realise that only an organised state could determine the amount of taxes and levy them effectively; and that, consequently, the Armenian authorities could effectively collect the national tax only with state support. Baronian gave no thought to the abortive attempt of 1883, when the Armenian authorities negotiated an amount of 3 Kurush to be added to the military tax levied by the Porte on the Armenians, with the intention of utilising the amount raised to pay the debt of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

As to the Constitution's lack of executive powers, Baronian distinguished between two different aspects of the problem; the first relating to the internal, and the second relating to the external, affairs of the community. In order to regulate the internal affairs properly, Baronian envisaged some amendments to the Constitution. First of all it was necessary to set up a separate administrative apparatus for the Constantinople community, regarding it as a separate administrative unit like the provinces.^{3 2} For the central Armenian authorities, stationed in Constantinople, at present ran the affairs of the Constantinople community as well as the general administration of the whole community. Consequently, the central administration was overburdened by local affairs, and

no time was left to deal with provincial and general national problems. Secondly, Baronian proposed to make public accountability a compulsory requirement for the national authorities. The public would thus possess an effective means of controlling the activities of the authorities. Thirdly, Baronian planned to modify the election method so that competent and qualified people would be elected to the National Assembly. Fourthly, Baronian proposed the organisation of the national finances, which would permit the employment of paid functionaries and the allocation of sufficient funds for overall national needs, such as education. Finally, he aimed to reduce the bureaucratic procedures as far as possible. It is interesting that the first four amendments envisaged by Baronian, to grease the wheels of the Constitution as it were, were also advocated by Xrimean.

As far as the external affairs of the community are concerned, Baronian did not contemplate the Ottoman authorities granting the Armenians their own executive powers. Such a request would have been out of the question anyhow, as maintenance of law and order in Armenia was a responsibility of the Ottoman government. While incessantly criticising Ottoman internal policy, and exposing its failure to regulate inter-communal relations in the Empire, Baronian also expected the Armenian leadership, organised and unified through the medium of the Constitution, to take up the problem of oppression in Armenia and to put an end to it with the administrative authority of the Ottoman state. In other words, Baronian supported Xrimean's requests for a more 'useful and legal'³³ relationship between the Armenian and Ottoman bureaucracies, which implied that the Ottoman authorities should consider and act upon the recommendations of the Armenian leadership for restoring law and order in Armenia.

Baronian's hopes of seeing the Constitution revised began to fade after Xrimean's resignation in 1873; and he completely abandoned them by 1875, when serious events in the Balkans led to the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78. Under the impact of this Crisis, Baronian now expected the introduction of reforms to Armenia under the aegis of the Powers; for the Constitution, and particularly the Ottoman authorities, had failed to protect the rights of the Armenians. Baronian held the Ottoman government responsible for this failure, as a consequence of its internal policy.

The 'Polozhenie' (Statute), which regulated the affairs of the Armenian Church in Russia, attracted Baronian's attention on a number of occasions in the early 1870s and the early 1880s. After long and careful preparation, the 'Polozhenie' was promulgated in 1836, eight years after the Russian annexation of Eastern Armenia.

The document recognised the Catholicos of Ējmiacin as the head of the Armenian Church but decreed the formation of a Synod to assist him in governing the Church. The Russian government was represented by a 'prokuror' (procurator), who played no part in making decisions but ascertained that the activities of the Synod and Catholicos were legal and proper. The Synod consisted of eight priests chosen by the Tsar from a list of sixteen candidates submitted by the Catholicos. Eight members of the Synod, seven senior members from Ējmiacin and Armenian sees throughout the world, each represented by a priest and a layman, elected four candidates for the catholicosate. Then they voted for two representatives, one of whom would be chosen and appointed Catholicos by the Tsar. The prelates also were appointed and invested by the Tsar.

The overwhelming majority of the Western Armenians, including Baronian, regarded the 'Polozhenie' as a serious threat to the

rights and traditions of the Armenian Church and community and criticised it relentlessly. They maintained that the Statute, unlike the Constitution of the Western Armenians, abolished the substantial role the Armenian Church had always given to laymen. The 'Polozhenie' gave the priesthood a clear majority over laymen in electing candidates for the catholicosate; there were no laymen in the Synod; and the prelates were appointed by the Tsar. It brought the Church under strict state control. All decisions of the Synod minor and major, were subject to the Prokuror's approval and could go into effect only after their formal endorsement by the Russian Ministry of the Interior. These and some other restrictions the Western Armenians maintained, soundly enough, reduced the supreme Armenian Catholicosate to a mere monastery and its head to a mere Father Superior.

There was little that the Armenians could do to introduce amendments to the Statute. The Eastern Armenians, understandably given the perennial autocracy of Russian government, could not denounce the document publicly. The Western Armenians discussed the problem in the National Assembly, but were unable to exert any real pressure on Russia. There was some talk that the Western Armenians might consider transforming the Catholicosate of Sis into a universal Armenian see in order to compel the Russians to reconsider their stand towards Ējmiacin. This possibility, however, was never seriously discussed. Instead, the Western Armenians pinned their hopes on the person of the Catholicos, in the belief that he might be able to reach some sort of a compromise with the Tsar. Hence the efforts they made to introduce amendments at least to the election method, which would enable them to elect a candidate of their own, dedicated to the cause of making major changes in the statute.³⁴ Therefore, they called for the collective representation of Western Armenian sees; that is to say they sought to

empower two delegates with the entire 130 Western Armenian votes. These would give them a sweeping majority as the representatives of the Eastern Armenians commanded only 31 votes.³⁵

The Russians persistently refused to recognise the National Assembly as the collective representative of the Western Armenians. An objective observer has to admit that the first stage of the election system (the participation of each Eastern and Western see individually) was fair enough. But the Western Armenians saw no better alternative than to bring some pressure to bear on the intransigent Russians, who were determined to maintain as tight a control over the Armenian Church as they had over their own Russian hierarchy.

Baronian was profoundly opposed to the 'Polozhenie' and lost no time in denouncing the document by a series of fables in Cica and Xikar,³⁶ as soon as the election issue featured again on the agenda of the National Assembly in the wake of the death of Catholicos Gēorg IV in 1882. He also made one of his rare appearances in the Assembly to cast his vote in favour of those who opposed the election method envisaged by the 'Polozhenie'.³⁷ Baronian hoped that eventually Xrimean, in whom he had complete faith, would be elected Catholicos. In the 1870s, Baronian had been involved in bitter polemics to support Xrimean in the dispute over the centralisation of the administrative system of the Western Armenians. In a way, the issue of centralisation was an indirect confrontation with the Catholicos of Ējmiacin, who, in an apparent attempt to disrupt the opposition of the Western Armenians to the election method, had established separate contacts with Western Armenian sees, bishops and dignitaries, and had indirectly supported those who advocated a decentralised Western Armenian administration. Baronian was firmly in favour of a centralised system, as we have

seen, and unequivocally sided with its sponsors, among them the Patriarch Xrimean, whom Ējmiacin attempted to discredit for alleged anti-Ējmiacin activities. But neither Baronian's criticism nor the efforts of other Western Armenians were to prove sufficient to make any changes to the 'Polozhenie'.

Footnotes to Chapter II

1. Gevorg Madoyan, Hakob Paronyan, (Erevan 1960), p. 154.
2. For his biography see Appendix III.
3. PCS, viii, 329.
4. Ibid., ii, 86-87.
5. Ibid., viii, 329.
6. Ibid., ii, 35.
7. Ibid., viii, 330.
8. Ibid., 331-32.
9. For a detailed study of the Young Ottoman thought see Mardin, Şerif, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought (Princeton, 1962).
10. PCS, ii, 51.
11. Ibid., 43.
12. Hay nor grakanut'yan patmut'yun, (Erevan 1962), iii, 450.
13. PCS, viii, 99-100.
14. Eprat, 1872, no. 53.
15. PCS, iii, 39.
16. Ibid., viii, 125.
17. Ibid., vii, 169.
18. Ibid., viii, 232.
19. Ibid., vii, 10.
20. Ibid., vi, 223.
21. Ibid., i, 346-47.
22. Ibid., 344-45.
23. RNA, session 1, 11 March, 1879.
24. PCS, vii, 8.
25. Ibid., v, 124.
26. Ibid., 123-29.
27. Ibid., vii, 285.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., ii, 171.
30. Ibid., v, 108-109.
31. Hagop H. Baronian, Uncle Balthazar, translated from Armenian by E.D. Megerditchian (Boston 1933), pp. 46-47.
32. PCS, viii, 322-24.
33. RNA, session 64, 3 August, 1873.
34. For a description of this method see the fable entitled 'The Phylloxera Problem' and 'Three Would-be Eridegrooms', Appendix II.
35. See the fable entitled 'The Phylloxera Problem, Appendix II.
36. See the fables entitled 'The Phylloxera Problem', 'An Assembly of Gods which is and is not Postponed', and 'Three Would-be Bridegrooms', Appendix II.
37. See the fable entitled 'Three Would-be Bridegrooms', Appendix II.

CHAPTER III
HAGOP BARONIAN AND OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION
IN ARMENIA, 1872-1881

The initial development of Baronian's views concerning the administration of the Armenian community was introduced in the previous chapter. Baronian's support of the Armenian Constitution originated from his deep if temporary conviction that it would set up a democratic and organised Armenian administration capable of improving the lot of the Armenians. But as the Armenian Constitution failed to bring about the desirable results Baronian had cherished - proving a 'square wheel'¹ in the accurate words of a high-ranking Ottoman official - Baronian concentrated on criticising Ottoman internal policy, which he held responsible for misgovernment, and, therefore, in need of modification if it was to lead to the restoration of law and order. Criticism of Ottoman administration was not a new theme in itself for Baronian: he had often exposed the incompetence of the central Ottoman administration in his earlier criticism, though in a rather casual manner. But from 1875 onwards, Baronian's criticism took on a new dimension and was reshaped with unprecedented vigour. His disappointment with the Armenian Constitution, and the impact of the Balkan Crisis of 1875-78, gave a new turn to Baronian's political thought which this chapter will analyse. Before discussing Baronian's political views at this juncture, however, a survey of the circumstances under which the Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire is necessary.

The Armenians had already experienced Muslim rule when the Ottomans gradually invaded Western Armenia, completing their final and total conquest in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Almost ten centuries prior to that date the Arabs had overrun Armenia and had ruled there for more than two centuries. These

two Muslim conquests of Armenia shared certain common features, particularly with regard to the systems of government; dhimma and millet respectively applied by the Arabs and the Ottomans to their non-Muslim subjects. But there also was a striking difference between the final outcomes of these two conquests: while Armenia survived the Arab conquest, Western Armenia was wiped off the map by the Turks.

The circumstances under which these two conquests of Armenia took place were obviously not identical. First of all, when the Arabs appeared in Armenia in the 640s, the Armenians still possessed considerable political and military power, despite the fact that Armenia then was not an independent state. Consequently the Armenian political and military leadership was able to offer some resistance to the Arabs. Although they could not halt the Arab advance into Armenia, their opposition was eventually a decisive factor in terminating Arab rule in Armenia. In the second place, Armenia was at a considerable distance from the centre of the expanding Arab empire. The Arabs had to adopt a conciliatory and flexible policy towards Armenia, as one of the outlying provinces of their empire, in order to avoid political trouble, and also to lure her away from Byzantine political influence to which the Armenians, as Christians, were and had been exposed before the Arab conquest of Armenia. This position left the Armenians with considerable room for political and military manoeuvre, and greatly contributed to the restoration of Armenian independence. Finally, with the exception of the Arab garrisons, there was hardly any Muslim population in Armenia at the time of the Arab occupation. All these factors, combined with the decline of Arab power, enabled the Armenians to rid their country of the Arab conquerors.

The situation was completely different when the Ottomans arrived in Armenia. Armenian statehood in Armenia proper had vanished; Armenia now was in close proximity to the centre of the new empire; the indigenous Armenian population of the area had drastically diminished; and the country was now heavily interpopulated with Muslim elements.

The Armenian provinces had long been distracted by wars, invasions, and raids. The Selçukid invasion had been followed by the Mongol, the Mongol by that of Tîmûr. The Türkmen dynasties of the Black and White Sheep had ravaged the whole country and fought out their quarrels with grievous consequences to its prosperity. The numbers of the Armenians had been greatly depleted both by sudden death and emigration; and into the lands thus vacated enterprising Kurdish tribes from the south and south-east had pushed their way, till the more southerly parts of what had been Armenia had become as much Kurdish as Armenian in population.²

The Armenians could in no way offer effective resistance to the Ottomans when the latter established their superiority over Armenia. There was no Armenian political or military leadership to initiate such a movement; moreover, the Armenians themselves had sunk into a deep political, social, and economic decline from which they were to recover slowly. Recovery was to come as a result of new ideas from the West - now so far away from Armenia; for the Armenians had nothing to learn from their new lords, who in the course of time '...tended to develop the arbitrary ways of unchallenged power...' while the Armenians tended to develop '...the vices of servitude'.³

The establishment of Ottoman rule over Armenia marked the beginning of a long period of second-class citizenship for the Armenians under the autocratic administration of the Ottoman Empire. The sultan, the almighty head of the Ottoman state, which was governed by Islamic Law, theoretically

...did not impose uniformity, but rather ordered and regulated the various classes and elements in the empire, in such a way that they should live at peace with each

other and contribute their due share to the stability and prosperity of the whole. The government provided a framework of order, just as the Shari'a created a structure of rights and duties; within the framework, each community was free to live in accordance with its own beliefs and customs.⁴

The framework of order provided for governing the 'People of the Book' among whom the Armenians were classified, was the Ottoman millet system, a kind of contract between the Muslim ruler and his non-Muslim subjects. The Ottomans had inherited the main lines of this political system basically from the Islamic world and the Arabs, the roots of whose contract

...lay in the universal practice of the Roman and medieval empires to allow subject communities to retain their own laws and to apply them amongst themselves under the general jurisdiction of some recognized authority who was responsible to the ruling power.⁵

By the terms of the Ottoman millet system the 'People of the Book' were granted independence in their internal, civil affairs, and were allowed to practise their religion. In return

The Dimmîs...undertake to pay the special poll-tax, called Cizyâ, and the land-tax called Harâc, and agree to suffer certain restrictions that mark them out as a caste inferior to that of their Moslem fellow subjects. These restrictions are of various kinds. In the first place Dimmîs are at a disadvantage legally in comparison with Moslems: for instance, their evidence is not accepted against that of a Moslem in a Kâdi's court; the Moslem murderer of a Dimmî does not suffer the death penalty; a Dimmî man may not marry a Moslem woman, whereas a Moslem man may marry a Dimmî woman. In the second place, Dimmîs are obliged to wear distinctive clothes so that they may not be confused with true believers, and are forbidden to ride horses or to carry arms. Finally, though their churches may be, and in practice frequently have been, converted into mosques, they are not to build new ones. The most they may do is to repair those that have fallen into decay.⁶

Furthermore,

No Christian could officially serve in the armed forces... A Christian who was converted to Islam, even involuntarily as a child or as a captive, was liable to the death penalty if he reverted to his old faith... Finally, all the rights and privileges of the Christians depended on the good will of the Sultan. Even firmans signed by a Sultan, though they were held to be binding upon his successors, might be ignored. The Court lawyers could state that it had contravened Islamic law and was therefore invalid.⁷

Mehmet II recognised the Armenians as one of the three religious communities of the empire, soon after his capture of the Byzantine capital, where he established an Armenian patriarchate. Thenceforth the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople was recognised as political no less than religious head of the Armenian community. He received his official investiture from the sultan and dealt with the Ottoman administration on all matters affecting his flock. Inside the Armenian community his decisions and edicts had the force of law. In the course of time as Mehmet's successors invaded new territories, the jurisdiction of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople accordingly stretched to include the Armenian communities throughout the empire. Thus the Catholicosate of Sis and Ałtamar, and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, had only local and limited jurisdiction; and the Patriarch of Constantinople became the virtual head of the Western Armenians. This administrative system remained unchanged and unchallenged until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The millet system proved to be inadequate to organize the affairs, internal and otherwise, of the community. The patriarch's real power was in fact confined solely to matters of personal status and civil cases within his community; he could wield no effective power to safeguard the political, or for that matter the religious, rights of his flock from violations by the Muslim subjects of the empire. Moreover, although theoretically he was the actual head of the entire Armenian community throughout the empire, his restricted powers within his community hardly went beyond the borders of the city of Constantinople. Yet there was another factor which rendered the rule of the patriarch not only inefficient but also unpopular within his community, namely the charge of corruption. Some patriarchs attained high office through bribery and feathered

their own nests, neglecting even what little they could do to safeguard the interests of their flock. Some were mere tools in the hands of a handful of rich Armenians known as amiras in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These wealthy Armenians usually shouldered the expenses of the patriarchate; thanks to this, and thanks to their extremely influential position at the Porte, it was a common practice for them to enthrone or dethrone patriarchs at will. Such an incompetent and arbitrary government was bound to generate dissatisfaction within the community. Indeed, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, discontent did surface in Constantinople, directed against the incompetence of the patriarchs in dealing with the affairs of the community in Constantinople itself, let alone the provinces.

The disenchantment of the Constantinople community with the incompetence and corruption of the patriarchs increased, particularly from the 1820s; and their absolute power was seriously challenged in the late 1830s by the Armenian guilds of Constantinople. But the guilds were non-political bodies, with no immediate or detailed plans for changes within the administrative structure of the community. Discontent erupted into violence when the Armenian College of Scutari found itself on the brink of closure in 1839 because of financial difficulties caused by rivalry between two groups of amiras. The guilds wanted to keep the college going, and therefore pressed for a say in the financial affairs of the community. Their request was acceded to; but the guilds, unable to raise the necessary funds, soon ceded the financial management of the patriarchate to the amiras as before. The College, however, was closed, and popular unrest persisted for almost a decade. In 1847, the guilds and the amiras (on the initiative of the latter) reached a compromise and lodged a joint complaint against the autocratic

rule of the patriarch of the day. Following the complaint the Porte issued a ferman in 1847 whereby the formation of two councils, one political and one religious, was ordained. Thus for the first time, a political council elected from and by the community was to participate in the government of the community. However, no regulations were established to define the responsibilities and duties of the council, and its relationship to the patriarch. And the old patriarch-amira coalition continued to administer the community single-handed.

The struggle of the guilds was taken up by representatives of the young generation who had returned to Constantinople in the late forties and early fifties of the 19th century after completing their studies in Europe. Their claim for a constitutional administration, legalised by the provisions of the Hatt-i Hümayun of 1856, was realised in 1863 when the Porte officially promulgated the Armenian National Constitution. The leaders of the Armenian community, concerned as they were with the plight of their provincial brethren, could now take up the issue of misgovernment in Armenia, and explore all the peaceful means available to them.

But it was not only their own spontaneous concern that determined the course of action adopted by the Armenian leadership. There was also the mounting pressure from the provincial Armenians themselves, who now inundated the Armenian patriarchate with a constant flow of demands for reform. For they tended no longer to attribute their misery to the wrath of Providence, and would, therefore, no longer silently endure injustice. Slowly but steadily, they had begun to shake off the servile mentality which so far had shaped their attitude toward the conditions in which they lived. A sense of unity had now come to prevail among them and they looked to the very symbol of this unity, the Armenian leadership in the

capital of the empire, for the reassertion of their rights as individuals, and above all as a nation. In a word, the Armenian Awakening had begun to involve the provincial Armenians too.

Baronian himself was no less concerned than the Armenian leaders with the plight of his people. He now came to realize that the Armenian Constitution could not regulate inter-communal relations in Armenia, and that it was the duty of the Porte to reorganize its administration in the Armenian provinces. While the Armenian leadership resorted to mild exhortations addressed to the Porte for improvements in the lot of the Armenians, Baronian took a bolder course, one that came naturally to a satirist: he embarked on a systematic and merciless exposure of Ottoman internal policy. This was, in his view, one sure way of applying pressure on the Porte in order to induce her to introduce reforms in Armenia. According to Baronian, only pressure could compel the Porte to take such action, as it was not prepared to instigate a reform policy on its own. Such was his view from the very outset. His initial support of the Armenian Constitution had originated not only from his belief that it would organise the internal life of the community, but also from a firm conviction that it would create a united and organised Armenian leadership, which would exert pressure on the Ottoman authorities and secure the long overdue reforms in Armenia. But neither the Armenian National Constitution nor the pressure of the Armenian leadership had so far borne fruit. Amidst uncertain talk about reform programmes for the Balkans to be initiated under the auspices of the European Powers, Baronian now maintained that the pressure of the Armenian leadership should be coupled with that of the West. Earnest and immediate reform was badly needed in Armenia too; for as he saw it and as he depicted it, the situation there had become desperate.

Although Baronian's attention was mainly focused on the political status of his compatriots in the 1870s and early 80s, he also made a few references to the past experiences of the Armenians under Ottoman administration. For two hundred years, he declared in 1872, the Armenians had been subject to oppression.⁸ Baronian did not elaborate this statement, but the oppression he referred to clearly resulted from the political status of the Armenians, and the inefficiency of the Ottoman government. Their disability as second class citizens, in itself a high price to pay for the privilege of government, steadily grew worse as the Ottoman Empire sank into decline after a period of victorious conquests.

According to H. Inalcik, the decline of the empire had begun as early as the end of the sixteenth century, resulting in profound changes in the political, economic and social structure of the empire, and entailing certain grievous consequences which became permanent features of the system:

Amidst turmoil and confusion, and fearing for their livelihood and future, these same rulers (of the empire) began to oppose the sultan's authority, disregard the law, rob the state Treasury and plunder the property of defenceless people. As violence, profiteering, bribery and other abuses spread, civil disorders increased.⁹

According to a contemporary historian quoted by Inalcik: 'As tyranny and injustice increased, people in the provinces began to flee to Istanbul'.¹⁰ Bribery and corruption were so common that contemporary Ottoman historians considered it '...one of the chief causes in the decline of the organization and administration of the state.'¹¹ The ruling class too was contaminated with this social vice: 'Bribery and misappropriations increased among state officials, soldiers and Kâdîs'.¹² As a result of worsening economic conditions and the war with Austria in 1593,

The government increased long-standing taxes - the cizye, for example, was increased four or fivefold...Taxes which had previously been raised only as extraordinary levies called avâriz were increased and converted into regular, annual taxes, payable in cash.¹³

Civil disorder was another feature of the time: 'In the same period brigandry became widespread. Heavy taxes, corruption and insecurity led to the first large-scale rebellions of the reâyâ'.¹⁴

Militarily, however, the empire was still one of the most powerful states of the time, and such internal disturbances could not as yet be seen to constitute a serious threat to its physical unity. But its decline had begun, which in the course of time, despite some efforts on the part of the Ottoman administration to reverse its course or at least to halt it, eventually led to the collapse of this vast, multireligious and multiracial empire. Meanwhile, however, Muslims and non-Muslims alike had to endure the consequences of incompetence and inefficiency. But the burden weighed much more heavily upon the Christians, including the Armenians, who were yet to suffer under power groups active in Armenia, the rise of which was one of the inevitable results of Ottoman decline:

All over the Empire, there arose local ruling groups controlling the machinery of local Government, ultimately loyal to the Sultan but possessing a force, a stability and to some degree an autonomy of their own.¹⁵

It was at the hand of such groups that the Armenians suffered extensively; the Kurdish tribes, that had assumed permanent and hereditary positions in Western Armenia:

When this region (Armenia) was acquired by Selim he found it a prey to local feuds, and determined to reorganize it. In the anarchy much of the arable land in the valleys and plains had been abandoned by its inhabitants who had sought refuge in the mountains. The Ottoman policy was to re-people the vacant lands with Kurds; to divide the whole area up into small sancaks; and to place those that were easily accessible under the control of officials appointed by the Porte, leaving the rest in that of local chieftains. This was to favour the Kurds, who had aided Selîm against Ismâîl, because the latter had sought to control their depredations. Although, therefore, the Ottoman conquest restored some tranquillity to the region, it was in the long run deleterious to the Armenians, since it added to their disabilities as Dimmîs a dominance by their mortal enemies, the Kurds. As long as the central government remained strong enough to maintain some kind

of control through its officials, a certain balance was maintained between the two races. But in later times the Kurds had matters all their own way and the Armenians suffered accordingly.¹⁶

Turning to his own time, the 1870s, Baronian found that circumstances had not changed in the Armenian provinces. By then Mahmud II had made a major effort to subdue the Kurdish elements in the Eastern provinces; and with the active help of the local Armenian population, the Ottoman army had been able to restore central control over the region by the end of the first half of the nineteenth century. But hardly a decade later, the Kurds had again established their previous status, creating intolerable conditions in Armenia.

It was to these conditions that Baronian devoted most of his attention. He was well-informed on the situation in Armenia owing to various sources which supplied him with the necessary information about life there. He had good connections with the employees of the Armenian patriarchate which received reports and complaints from the provinces. He was in contact with the Armenian emigrants in Constantinople, estimated at 30,000 at the time, who had left their families in quest of employment and security and who provided Baronian with first-hand information on misgovernment in the Eastern Provinces. Finally, there were the accounts of freelance provincial correspondents published in the Armenian periodical press. Thus, armed with irrefutable evidence, Baronian vigorously criticised Ottoman internal policy, making a case out of every abuse. His criticism cannot be dismissed as belonging to '...the national historiographical legends of the liberated former subject peoples of the Empire in Europe and Asia'.¹⁷ His views, as those of a contemporary who based his judgment on concrete instances of misgovernment, are particularly valuable, in that they place into sharp relief the circumstances under which the Armenians lived in

the 1870s and early 80s. For it is generally held that the Armenians were a prosperous community living in peace until the 1890s, when some of them embarked on so-called revolutionary activities - a totally unwise and pernicious course, which, however, came partly as a reaction to Abdulhamid's repressive policies toward his Armenian subjects. The historical truth is that the Armenians enjoyed tolerable conditions only in the capital and in a few larger cities of the empire, where some of them had indeed attained powerful positions in the economic and political structure of the state. But the picture of the community in these few cities did not at all reflect the realities of life in Armenia proper; and their better standard of life should in no way be confused with the circumstances under which the bulk of the Armenian people lived in the provinces. It was to this greater part of the Armenian people that Baronian devoted his full attention.

Baronian demonstrates that injustice in Armenia was due to two cardinal reasons: the legal status of the non-Muslim communities in the empire; and the failure of the Ottoman administration to maintain a tight grip over the provinces and its inability to preserve law and order, especially in the Eastern Provinces where the Armenians and Muslim elements, mainly Kurds, lived side by side.

The first factor, the legal status of the non-Muslim communities in the empire, arose from the nature of the Ottoman political system itself, which was an Islamic autocracy. Such a political structure was fundamentally incompatible with Baronian's views on legitimate government. It will be remembered from the analysis in the previous chapter of his views on the administration of the Armenian community that (a) religion, any religion, had no place in Baronian's conception of political administration, and that (b) democracy and constitutionalism were at the very basis of his vision of acceptable

political systems. In the light of such views, there can be no doubt that he profoundly opposed the foundations of the Ottoman administration, which not only was an autocratic system but was also based on the tenets of one particular religion, namely Islam. Moreover, the followers of the latter constituted the politically privileged strata in the empire, a fact which had serious adverse consequences for the non-Muslim subjects of the Porte. While Baronian could openly criticise the Armenian administration in particular, he understandably could not extend his criticism, overtly at least, to the Ottoman administrative system in general. Apart from a few very cautious remarks in his articles published abroad, Baronian made no direct comments regarding the nature and structure of the Ottoman political system. He dwelt instead on the dire consequences which the inefficiency of the system and the administration had for the empire in general and his people in particular, thus implicitly but clearly rejecting the political foundations on which the empire was based.

One of the most basic terms of the sultan's contract with the non-Muslim subjects was that he guaranteed their lives. Whereas, however, the Armenians fulfilled their duties by paying a variety of extra taxes and by suffering disabilities as second-class citizens, the Ottoman government demonstrably failed to honour its commitment to guarantee their lives. The Muslims were allowed a virtually free hand in slaughtering Armenians at will or on the flimsiest of pretexts. There were three factors originating in the nature of the political system (apart from those originating in its inefficiency) that made this a common practice, particularly in the Armenian provinces: the Muslim murderer of a non-Muslim, as we have said, did not suffer the death penalty; the non-Muslims were not allowed to carry arms, which made them helpless victims

in the face of armed attack; and finally, the failure of the Ottoman government to observe its obligation to protect the lives of its non-Muslim subjects. Baronian had ample evidence with which to illustrate his accusations. In the guise of 'Home News' he published, for example, the following facts:

In Modgan the Kurds raided an Armenian village; and drove the cattle away.

In...Van the Kurd Alo forcibly took away Barefoot Sekho's oxen.

In Bitlis the Kurd Halo's son abducted Mrjo's wife, an eight-day bride.

At a two hour distance from Mush the Kurds took the horse of an Armenian. The Armenian opposed them; the Kurds shot him dead.

Haso bey of Charsanjak shot one of his Armenian workers dead.

The Kurds abducted two Armenian girls from villages around Van. Their father chased the Kurds; the latter... killed him.¹⁸

Acts of murder and rape were committed by ordinary Muslims, civilians and soldiers, as well as high-ranking Ottoman officials. Baronian reported an incident where ten Turkish soldiers abducted an 18 year old Armenian girl in Van.¹⁹ In another instance in 1876 the kaymakam of Zeytun killed an Armenian. Baronian bitterly commented:

The murder of an Armenian is not a new thing in itself; but that the murder took place in Zeytun is somewhat novel. For under our solicitous government the Armenians killed so far were all murdered around Mush and Van. How can the kaymakam dare to abolish a tradition of centuries?²⁰

It is evident from the above that human life had very little value in Armenia. Murder and abduction not only claimed lives, and left many Armenian women and girls with the indelible social stigma of rape as well as its attendant emotional disturbances, but murder ruined whole families economically by depriving them of manpower, the pillar of the family as an economic unit. It is also glaringly evident that the Ottoman administration failed to guarantee the property of the Armenians. The livestock on which the Armenians, especially the peasantry, depended for their living, including the raising of the necessary cash to pay the heavy taxes, were often

driven off by the Kurds. What must have been most frustrating for the Armenians was the fact that they were legally unable to defend their property, either through the central administration which failed to administer law and order in the region, or by their own personal efforts, since they were not allowed to bear arms. Moreover, to bring the plunderers to justice would have been largely futile, simply because any lawsuit involving a Muslim and a non-Muslim was heard in a Muslim court, where the testimony of non-Muslims was not accepted and '...few Muslim judges were prepared to give a judgment in favour of an unbeliever'.²¹ Perhaps the most eloquent testimony on inequality would be that of Capt. Burnaby, an Old Harrovian, anti-Russian, pro-Turkish, pro-Circassian, who in his journey on horseback through Asia Minor (1876-77)²² missed no opportunity to point to what he considered to be personal filthiness on the part of the Armenians and their deplorable friendship with the Russians. Yet even he could not fail to report Armenian resentment at their inequality before Ottoman law.²³

With their lives and property in jeopardy the Armenians were, not infrequently, unable to raise enough money to pay the taxes imposed on them. The primitive means of production at their disposal and the insecurity of their lives and property rendered it extremely difficult for them to pay the excessive taxes levied on them by the Ottoman authorities, the local Kurdish tribal chieftains, and the Armenian church. The excessive taxation of the Armenians by the Ottoman state was intolerable in itself; and Baronian was aware that there were some Armenian 'multezims' (tax farmers), who collaborated with their Muslim colleagues in collecting excessive taxes from the Armenians.²⁴ In addition the Armenians had to pay extra illegal taxes, such as the Kishlak and the hospitality taxes, to the local Kurdish chieftains:

No less obnoxious and far more abominable was the Kishlak, or the Kurds' seemingly prescriptive right to free winter quarters in Armenian homes...The Kurds for the most part lived in the mountains and under tents when the weather permitted, but in the winter they used to fall upon Armenian villages, demanding free quarters for themselves and for their flocks of sheep. Sometimes the winter season lasted six months, and for six months they had to be quartered. For this "right" the Kurdish chiefs paid a sum of money to the governor-general. No wonder that the latter did not interfere when the Kurds molested and mistreated and even murdered the Armenians...The same was true of the hospitality tax, which meant that the Christian was bound to offer free lodging and food for three days a year to all government officials or to all those who passed as such.²⁵

Moreover, when the Armenians failed to pay the taxes due, harsh ways of extracting them were employed by the tax collectors. In Marash, for instance, the governor had all those Armenians who could not pay the amounts due shut up in the Armenian church until they paid.²⁶ In another instance, the tax collectors forced some Armenians to sell their beds and clothes to raise cash for taxation.²⁷ Most shocking of all perhaps was the Trebizond incident, where some Armenians who had failed to pay their taxes were impaled.²⁸ This must have been one of the 'scandalous' methods of levying taxes reported by Taylor to H.M. Government.²⁹

According to Baronian, conversion to Islam was vigorously encouraged and at times it was carried out forcibly. Needless to say, this, too, constituted a violation of the contract between the state and the non-Muslim subjects, who theoretically were to enjoy the freedom of practising their own religions. Baronian related that in Sebastia (Sivas) an Armenian who had converted to Islam, a few years later wanted his wife and daughter to embrace Islam also. Since they refused to do so, the Ottoman authorities, acting in accordance with the wish of the head of the family, forcibly took the daughter to the mufti of the town although her mother managed to take refuge in an Armenian monastery. Local Armenians tried to rescue the girl from the house of the mufti,

but their efforts were unsuccessful. Within a few days, however, the girl managed to flee the house of the mufti and join her mother at the monastery. The Ottoman authorities thereupon sent cavalry troops to the monastery, who took both the mother and her daughter to the house of the mufti, who forced them to convert to Islam.³⁰ In another episode, the governor of Edirne had an Armenian boy of eleven years of age circumcised along with three hundred Muslim boys. This 'benevolent' act of circumcising three hundred and one boys was done on the occasion of the circumcision of the governor's son.³¹ In many other cases, however, the Muslims felt no need of pretexts or special occasions: 'In Segherd Derhan bey had Mrdoian Devan's son converted to Islam and circumcised.'³²

It was a common practice for the Muslims to subject the Armenian priests to humiliating insults. This could take place anywhere, even in Armenian churches, and in the most cynical fashion. Baronian's comments on such a case were brief, but telling:

A number of Turks or Kurds have entered a church with their drums; they have shaved off the officiating priest's beard and have made him dance in the middle of the church. Here is an event which cannot be called oppression, because no whipping or murder is involved, only fun and joy.³³

Sometimes not only was the sanctity of the Armenian churches violated, as in the case above, but they were plundered to boot. When in 1876 the Turks raided and plundered the Armenian monastery of Xndrakatar, Baronian sarcastically noted that: 'We have no doubt that this is a mistake. Probably the Bitlis Turks, being ill-acquainted with geography, have taken the Armenian monastery of Xndrakatar for Serbia.'³⁴

Last but not least, the government, Baronian maintained, interfered in the internal affairs of the community. According to the rights granted to the Armenians by the government and reiterated

in fermans, officially recognised in 1856, and reinforced by the Armenian Constitution, which again was promulgated by the Ottoman government, only the community could elect or dismiss the members of the national administration. But Ottoman governors felt absolutely free to dismiss or appoint new members to the various councils of the Armenian community (as in Smyrna for instance³⁵) or to imprison the members of the local Armenian administration, as in Sebastia.³⁶ The interference of the governors, however, was not the only reason for Baronian's bitter criticism of the performance of high-ranking Ottoman officials.

Not alone among contemporary observers of the Ottoman Empire, he accused them of corruption and carelessness in fulfilling their responsibilities. They were completely indifferent to injustice and abuse and neglected their duty of preserving law and order in the region they governed. Baronian claimed that this was a traditional characteristic of all governors, especially those of Armenia:

- Je mange, tu manges, il mange, nous mangeons, vous mangez, ils mangent...
- What's that, Karapet agha? Are you learning new things after the age of forty?
- What can I do, Yakob agha? It is said that reforms will be introduced in Armenia. I may get a position there...
- What are you learning?
- The French for the verb "to eat"...
- When did you start learning French?
- An hour ago.
- How did you get to that verb so soon?
- It's my first lesson, Yakob agha... Those who hold positions in Turkey learn that verb first of all.³⁷

The Armenians were helpless in the face of the misrule so grimly portrayed by Baronian. The best they could do was to report such acts to the Armenian Patriarchate, which now and then would make representations on their behalf. And literally hundreds of such representations and reports were submitted to the Porte, and invariably proved absolutely futile. The Ottoman government turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to what was going on in Armenia, ignoring

its obligation to preserve law and order there. Those who plundered, killed or abducted people, or forced conversion, and violated Ottoman law itself, for the most part escaped with impunity. Moreover, the Ottoman administration at times simply denied or even tried to justify crimes committed by its Muslim subjects, its officials or its troops. The fire in Van was a case in point.

Local troops and Muslims had set fire to the market in Van and had taken away the goods from the shops under the pretext of saving them from the fire. The Armenians protested to the central authorities and demanded that those responsible for the fire and plundering be punished. The administration's reply implied that the troops should have been decorated for self-sacrifice for saving the goods from the fire.³⁸

However, there were a few cases, like the one above, of murder and misgovernment which were investigated by the government; but then the latter were not prepared to consider the evidence produced by the Armenians. They would solely rely on the reports - partial at best - of the local Ottoman authorities, who flatly denied all allegations brought against them or against the local Muslims. Xrimean, for example, who had returned to Van after resigning his post as Patriarch in 1873, was particularly active in reporting abuse to the central authorities. But his reports, supported with detailed evidence, were bluntly dismissed by the Porte, which based its judgment on the testimony of its officials. By its refusal to consider evidence produced by the Armenians and by its reluctance to punish those responsible for violating the law, the Porte was in fact indirectly encouraging oppression in Armenia.

Thus in Baronian's view inefficiency, negligence and indifference were the salient features of Ottoman internal policy in Armenia which remained essentially unchanged up to 1878. In the years

1875-78, during which the Armenians had been particularly active in petitioning the central Ottoman administration for reform, the empire was faced with enormous problems, and had had neither will nor time to respond to the pleas of the Armenian leadership. But soon the Ottoman authorities had to reconsider their attitude toward the Armenians, when they were faced with what came to be known as the Armenian Question which arose at the end of the Russo-Turkish war. Precisely at this juncture, the Armenian leadership had taken a different course of action, making what to all appearances seemed to be a sharp departure from its traditional policy of begging the Porte for changes in Armenia. The new approach brought international recognition to the problems of the Armenians, and was, with some reservations, supported by Baronian, as he had always believed that only external pressure could force the Porte to reconsider its internal policy in the Eastern provinces. In the wake of the Congress of Berlin, however, Baronian's hopes for reform were shattered. He was appalled to see Ottoman internal policy take a new, malicious twist; he clearly discerned the beginnings of a new, deliberate policy of playing the Kurds against the Armenians, to intimidate the latter and force them to abandon their requests for reform.

A mood of desperation prevailed in Baronian's writings dealing with the prospects of reform at this juncture. He seems to have considered the reform question a lost cause. The events in the Balkans which he had thought would bring about a concerted action on the part of Europe for changes in the Armenian Provinces failed to justify his expectations. He felt as if a precious opportunity for a collective European pressure on the Porte had been lost. He never gave up hope entirely however, thinking that the Powers could perhaps still do something to help the Armenians.

That the Porte was determined not to restore law and order in the Eastern Provinces was clearly discernible in the new attitude it took towards its Armenian subjects. Its new policy was well expressed by some of the Turkish periodicals, which now embarked on an abusive campaign against the Armenians, questioning their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, threatening them and inciting the Kurds against them. The Turkish press maintained that reform should not be introduced in Armenia, simply because such measures would be damaging to the interests of the Muslim Kurds.

Tercüman-i Hakikat, Ceride-i Havadis and Vakit are

...insisting that the Kurds should not be hard pressed. We too are of the same opinion; palatial houses should be built for every single Kurd. And why should the Armenians not be subject to oppression, Tercüman-i Hakikat is shouting? Aren't they numerically inferior to the Turks? Which means that as long as we are not as numerous as the Turks, we shall not be delivered from oppression. ...But if the Kurds do not let us multiply, how do we deal with this problem? You should be oppressed, says Hakikat, thus solving the question of reform in Asia.³⁹

The Turkish press went to considerable lengths to deny the need for reform in the Asiatic dominions of the empire. By questioning the loyalty of the Armenians it at once accused the Armenians of treason and incited the Kurds against them. The Turkish press distorted facts by publishing false letters for example:

With a flame of anger the Turkish press are attacking our nation's beard, which is not flaming up. Tercüman-i Hakikat has published a false letter today signed by Daniel Baghdasarof. Daniel, who is but Midhat, the editor of Tercüman-i Hakikat, says that if the Turkish government does not give Armenia autonomy, Europe will give it to her; and if Europe doesn't, Russian ships will appear in the Black Sea in a few years. It is obvious that Midhat is trying to incite the Kurds against the Armenians through fabricated letters.⁴⁰

Tercüman-i Hakikat was particularly zealous in propagating anti-Armenian sentiment; it frequently published lengthy articles

against the Armenians. On one occasion it declared that the Kurds were utterly displeased with rumours of reform in Armenia and that only a telegram sent by the central government had pacified them,⁴¹ thereby implying that the Kurds would otherwise have gone to any length to express their disagreement with the plans for changes in the Eastern Provinces. But the Turkish press did not always resort to concealed threats. It frequently made direct threats that the Kurds would massacre the Armenians if the latter went ahead with their requests for the restoration of law and order in the Armenian provinces:

If reforms are introduced in Armenia, there will take place an unprecedented bloodshed there. The Kurds, not fearing Russia or Europe, will kill the Armenians and will eat them up like chickens. Thus speaks the Turkish press so that Europe may change the attitude she has taken to solve the pending Eastern problems.⁴²

Baronian had every reason to believe that this concerted campaign against the Armenians was being launched with the blessing if not the complicity of the central Ottoman authorities. For by 1880 Abdulhamid's censorship had a firm control over the Ottoman press, and it would not have allowed unauthorised attacks by Muslim journalists and their discussion of political issues. Besides, Abdulhamid by now had firm, if unfounded, doubts about the allegiance of the Armenians to his rule and regarded them as potential enemies. There were a few factors which made Abdulhamid believe that the Armenians were no longer trustworthy.

A major factor was Abdulhamid's character itself, which is well known. Pusillanimous, superstitious, and suspicious by nature, Abdulhamid was susceptible to the slightest doubts and unreal threats. There were also some other outwardly serious factors which disturbed his feverish imagination.

Some of the generals who had led the victorious Russian armies into Western Armenia were Eastern Armenians, who faithfully served their lord, the Tsar, enemy of the sultan. Towards the end of the war the Western Armenians had contacted Russia, and the Russians had consequently insisted on inserting a paragraph relating to reform in Armenia in the Treaty of San Stefano, thus giving the Armenian Question an official and international status. The Eastern Armenians across the border from Western Armenia sympathised with the plight of the Western Armenians; and although they had no political influence whatsoever on Russian foreign policy, they were the subjects of a Christian power, the head of which professed to be the guardian of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire. But were these a sound basis for Abdulhamid's doubts?

Baronian maintained that Abdulhamid's suspicions were unfounded. For centuries the Armenian community had served the Ottoman administration faithfully and had proved its loyalty a "thousand times".⁴³ To illustrate Baronian's view it should be pointed out that from the very first day the Armenians rendered numerous valuable services to the Ottoman state in every respect; and until the mid-1870s they were regarded as the only faithful nation in the Ottoman Empire. Their requests for reform were only made during the Eastern Crisis amidst plans for changes in the Balkans. For the Armenians had thought that they too, as an oppressed minority who, unlike the Balkan peoples, had remained loyal and faithful to the administration, deserved some measures to improve their lot. Their negotiations with Russia were a desperate move generated by the indifference of the Ottoman administration towards injustice in Armenia and were not the result of a contemplated Russophile policy. Indeed their contacts were initiated by the Armenian prelate of Edirne, who had sounded the Russians on the question of

reform in Armenia on his own and without prior instructions from the Armenian leadership in Constantinople. He then, upon the favourable reaction of the Russians, urged the leadership to approach the Russians in Edirne.

There were allegations that the Armenians, especially those close to the Russian border, had Russophile tendencies. There undoubtedly was some truth to this; in fact such a reaction was to be expected owing to the circumstances under which the Armenians lived in those provinces. Had the Ottoman administration restored law and order in Armenia it would have effectively destroyed the friendly attitude of some of the Armenians towards Russia. However, even those of the Armenians who had Russophile sentiments did not entertain separatist ideas; the best they could think of at this juncture was emigration to Eastern Armenia. A contemporary witness, Taylor, the consul in Erzurum, commented that

The advice and ostentatious leaning towards Russia of the Armenian clergy in my district, headed by the Catholicas (sic) residing at Etchmiazin in Russia, and his bishops in these parts, have naturally enough inclined the more ignorant members of their flocks - rich and poor - to adopt the same views; and considering also that a whole Christian house of ten souls in Russia pays only, for all taxes, 9 roubles (£1.10s) annually as against three times the sum here, if there has not been a general emigration, it is simply owing to the fact that disposable arable lands in Russian Armenia are scarce, while the reverse prevails in Turkey. Everywhere throughout these districts I found the Armenians bitter in their complaints against the Turkish Government, at the same time that they were unreserved in their praise of Russia, openly avowing their determination to emigrate.⁴⁴

Finally, an inevitable question springs to mind: why is it that the Armenians did not organise an armed rebellion against the administration while Armenia was under temporary Russian occupation? Although the answer to this question is a complex one, it nevertheless once more underlines the fact that the Armenians had no wish to resort to violence; and that, at the time, they had no intentions

of setting up an independent Armenian state under Russian protection.

But Abdulhamid went ahead with his policy of reprisals. He was not prepared to consider the Armenian requests for reform, nor was he prepared to yield to pressure, be it external or internal. On the one hand his ministers, in an attempt to appease the Powers, took some formal but ineffective measures to restore law and order in Armenia. On the other hand they initiated more and more repressive measures against the Armenians.

The first of these measures was an order by the Ministry of Justice forbidding the Armenian Patriarch to use the geographical term Armenia.^{4 5} The order, sent out in 1880, also requested that henceforth the Patriarch should not submit political reports or make political representations at the Porte on behalf of the community; he could only compile reports on religious matters. To Baronian's dismay Abdulhamid was depriving the head of the Armenian community from exercising one of his basic rights. But Abdulhamid had his own reasons to restrict the activities of the Patriarch.

The Patriarch Varžapetean had by then attained an influential position among the corps diplomatique in Constantinople. He now and then visited the Ambassadors of the Powers and was received by them for deliberations on the Armenian Question. His declarations, his circulars and the political reports he submitted to the Porte or the Ambassadors were often publicised by the European news agencies and the periodical press, keeping the public abreast of the developments of the Armenian Question. The problem was still very much in the air, as Britain had not as yet ceased periodically reminding the Porte of its obligations for reform in Armenia. This was indeed extremely tiresome for Abdulhamid, who, having imposed a blackout on the news from the Armenian provinces, now determined to silence the Armenian Patriarch.

Abdulhamid was concerned about European public opinion. His aim was to keep the Europeans as far away as possible from interfering in his domestic affairs. Once this goal was achieved, he would be able to settle his accounts with the Armenians who had dared to make demands for reform during the Balkan crisis. The grudge he had harboured against the Armenians gradually shaped itself into a systematic policy of annihilation. As far as the Armenians were concerned he was still the arbiter of their destinies on earth.

Baronian helplessly witnessed Abdulhamid intensify his repression as European interest in the Armenian Question rapidly faded away. In the Eastern Provinces Abdulhamid gave the Kurds a free hand in dealing with the Armenians. His administration took further repressive measures against them, some of which were regarded as absurd by Baronian in that they demonstrated the superficial manner in which Abdulhamid tried to deal with the Armenian Question, which now was not confined to the Armenian leadership alone. All over the empire, Armenians were now fully aware of their plight, and rather than suppressing their requests for reform Abdulhamid ought to have won them over by very few but fundamental changes in the Eastern Provinces. But what seemed superficial to Baronian was essential to Abdulhamid if he was to realise his plans for terminating the Armenian Question. Thus his agents began looking for the word Armenia everywhere, even in books dealing with the cultivation of potatoes. They confiscated pictures portraying Armenian national heroes:

Every day the government are looking for the Ruins of Armenia,⁴⁶ as well as all the books containing the word Armenia.

Every day the pictures of Hayk⁴⁷ and Vardan⁴⁸ are being arrested and imprisoned.

Yesterday fifty copies of the 1881 calendar which were being taken to the ship bound for Trebizond were confiscated.

The Turkish government had the pictures of King Leo VI Lusignan⁴⁹ collected from the Armenian bookshops.

It is said that the pictures will face the firing squad... The Sublime Porte with its deep political skill is

convinced that it is these pictures that are stirring the Armenian Question.⁵⁰

The government also encroached on the cultural life of the Armenians. At the time the flourishing Armenian theatre was rendering most valuable services not only to the Armenian but also to the Turkish-speaking population of the Ottoman capital. Abdulhamid was certainly aware of the important role the theatre could play in shaping the public mind and he was not at all in favour of politically or socially enlightening his subjects, and certainly not in the case of the Armenians, on whose stages plays of patriotic content were frequently staged. The government imposed an excessive tax of five liras on the theatrical groups in an attempt to bring financial distress to such groups, which were already suffering material hardship. Baronian was aware of the motive behind the move; and for the objective of the government to be achieved sooner, he wryly suggested that a similar tax be imposed on those who frequented theatres too.⁵¹ But there was no need for such a step, for soon the Armenian theatres in Stambul were closed; those in Pera functioned with great difficulty for some time and were eventually closed too.

Another aspect of Ottoman internal policy Baronian discussed and criticised continually was the repression of freedom of speech. As an ardent believer in democracy, Baronian thought that freedom of speech was one of the basic rights of an individual; and all the more so for a journalist, who, by his own definition, was the guardian of public interests. He consequently laid much emphasis on the importance of criticism which was not tolerated by the regime. And while trying not to cede an inch of his rights he was, inevitably, involved in a constant struggle with the censorship.

As a matter of fact Ottoman censorship was not too rigid in the early seventies. The Armenian periodical press in particular

enjoyed a certain freedom of criticism within reasonable boundaries. But Baronian was all for total freedom of speech and he utterly resented the restrictions imposed on him in communicating his ideas to the people. He was not allowed to criticise men of religion, religious institutions, the Ottoman administration and that of the European Powers, with which the Ottoman Empire maintained diplomatic relations. For instance, Baronian could and did constantly criticise the Carlist movement in Spain, to which the Ottoman state was totally indifferent; but a few words of criticism - the first and the last - directed against Prussia prompted a two-month ban on his Tiyatro. Baronian was unhappy with this state of affairs, and he did not hesitate to make his views public by writing a set of "Journalistic Regulations" as they appeared to him in a dream:

- Article 1 -All newspapers should be banned.
- Article 2 -Editors should be trained to withstand hunger.
- Article 3 -A special inspectorate should be set up for the eyes to prevent them from seeing injustice.
- Article 4 -A journalist may think of anything with absolute freedom so long as he does not express it.
- Article 5 -A newspaper may attack its own editor.⁵²

However most of the bans imposed on Baronian's periodicals in the early seventies were recommended either by the Armenian Religious Council or other influential Armenians, both of which groups were a constant butt for Baronian's criticism. These eminent Armenians not only resented criticism in general but were also appalled to see Baronian specifically name the objects of his attacks. They were on continual watch to see what Baronian had to say; they feared him and his pen, and some of them, seeing Baronian coming down the same street, are said to have changed their direction.

These very same people, however, encouraged those editors who followed a moderate line. K. Iwtiwčean, the editor of Masis, the most popular newspaper of the time, was one of those who received

financial and moral support, and he was therefore able to publish Masis uninterruptedly and without bans for almost three decades.

Iwtiwčean, who himself did not escape Baronian's merciless criticism, reviewed the life of the community or the affairs of the state, in general terms only, which was not Baronian's adopted method.

Obviously Baronian had to pay a high price for his outspokenness, and he suffered financial distress as a consequence of the frequent bans imposed on his periodicals. But he cared not a whit about monetary problems, nor did it matter much what the influential Armenian might think or say of him, or whatever action they might take against him. What made him furious was the fact that he was being punished for telling the truth.

The Ottoman State was not friendly toward the press, and made it increasingly difficult for the editors to exercise their profession. Already in 1874 a special tax - in the form of stamps - was imposed on periodicals. Baronian regarded this measure as a deliberate attempt to decrease the number of Ottoman periodicals. For the editors used to publish their periodicals only with considerable material difficulties (because of the small circulation), and the new tax would be an extra burden on them.

The financial aspect apart, the censorship itself was quite a problem for Baronian to deal with. Sometimes the censor imposed bans arbitrarily; at times his decisions were based on denunciations or unfounded allegations. The censor then would not take the trouble of reading the article in question, or verifying the basis of the allegations before imposing a ban. And as Baronian put it, an editor would go to his office in the morning to find a note from the Censorship to the effect that because of the publication of such and such an article in such and such an issue of his periodical, the latter was banned for such a length of time. Baronian thought

that this was unfair and that the editors should be entitled to a hearing where they could explain the article in question, its purpose and the motive behind it, and thus have a chance to protect themselves against arbitrary decisions.

Lack of impartiality on the part of the censorship further infuriated Baronian. This became clearly evident during the Hamidian regime, which, being hostile to new ideas, imposed a stricter control on the press. While the rigid regulations were applied equally to the Christian as well as the Muslim press, the latter could freely attack the Armenians and the Greeks, their institutions, their patriarchs, their religion or Jesus Christ himself. The Christian press was not allowed to make any reply, even the mildest, to such attacks.⁵³

A suggestion that all satirical periodicals be banned was made by the head of the Censorship at the time, Mejid Bey, who declared in the short-lived Ottoman Parliament in April, 1877, that such periodicals were damaging to the public as their editors only acted in their own interests.⁵⁴ Baronian sensed the approaching end, the final cessation of his periodical. He fought his last battle ferociously.

Addressing his words to Mejid Bey himself, Baronian asked why he, Mejid Bey, had in the past granted permissions for publication of periodicals that he now regarded as harmful to the public. It could be, Baronian stated, that some of the satirical periodicals had gone wrong; if so let the Censorship take the appropriate measures against those who had sinned. But he saw no reason why all the satirical periodicals should be banned. He then thanked heaven that Mejid Bey was not a general practitioner; for if he had to see him for a headache, Mejid Bey would have certainly recommended that Baronian's head be cut off to rid him of his headache.⁵⁵

As to Mejid Bey's allegations that the editors of satirical periodicals only acted in their own interests, Baronian deeply regretted that the editors could not defend themselves against such unfounded but privileged statements in Parliament. Nor could they bring those who made such declarations to Justice!⁵⁶ The editors were absolutely defenceless against the hatred of Mejid Bey who could now freely ban the satirical periodicals, justifying his action on grounds of safeguarding public and state interests. Indeed, in June 1877 Baronian's Tâtron was banned once and for all.

In Baronian's view then, the already distressing conditions of the Armenians were further aggravated under the Hamidian regime. He was particularly bitter about the harsh methods adopted by the Despot in dealing with his Armenian subjects. For he had no belief in violence as an answer to political or social problems. Nor did he advocate violence on the part of the Armenians to restore their rights. What was urgently needed was an earnest policy of fundamental reform in order for the Porte to solve the problems of both the Armenians and the empire itself satisfactorily.

It is known that some Ottomans had shown concern at the decline of the empire. Even in its glorious days of military might, there were those who voiced alarm at the rapid pace of the decline of the empire. But sounding the alarm is not the same as taking measures to remove the causes of deterioration, and the number of those Ottoman administrators who contemplated reform in practical and serious terms was small. Still smaller was the number of those who had a real understanding of the nature of reforms necessary for the Ottomans to revive their old glories.

Besides, well into the nineteenth century, those who made haphazard attempts to halt the decline of the empire laid the emphasis on the military aspects of the problem. However, a

comprehensive programme was needed, and there soon came a time when it was obvious that limited steps would not be sufficient to hold the empire together. As fundamental reform would have struck at the very roots of the political-social foundations of the empire, the reformers were caught in what proved to be - for several reasons which will be discussed presently - an insoluble dilemma; and the reform movement, with few achievements, was, on the whole, a failure.

Baronian completely disregarded the few attempts at reform which were made prior to the nineteenth century. The 1839 reforms too were left out of sight. Baronian went too far by regarding the 1856 reforms as a 'dead letter'.⁵⁷ Finally he made no mention of the attempts of Fuad and Ali in the second half of the nineteenth century, thus completely rejecting the past attempts at reform. He witnessed the subsequent phase of modernisation in the empire in the 1870s, and discussed it extensively.

Apart from the fact that earlier reform programmes had had no palpable results, particularly in Armenia, and could therefore be ignored by Baronian, he also was of the view that the Ottoman authorities had never seriously entertained the idea of reorganizing the empire. And as this was the case in the 1870s too, external pressure was deemed indispensable to force the empire to adopt a reform policy.

Abdulhamid's policy proved that Baronian's doubts were well founded. Despite great events such as the promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution, the convening of the Ottoman Parliament, the Treaty of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin, the programme of reform in Armenia, or in the empire for that matter, never got off the ground. While these events deeply impressed the Armenians and dramatically enhanced their hopes for reform in Armenia, Baronian

did not budge an inch from his conviction. Amidst rumours in the mid 1870s of a request for reform in Armenia to be submitted to the Porte by the Armenian leadership, the Armenian periodical press led the Armenians to believe that some fundamental changes in Ottoman internal policy were imminent. Baronian was of a completely different opinion. He first advised the Armenian periodicals not to discuss the unreal prospects of possible reforms in Armenia extensively, in order not to incur even more brutal reprisals by the Kurds on the Armenian population in the provinces. He then addressed the following words to the Kurds:

Noble Kurds,
Do not believe the newspapers. It is impossible to introduce reforms in Turkey. If some newspapers are repeating the word reform do not think that they are doing so to deprive you from your future barbarities. It is to lull our enemies to sleep. Noble Kurds, rest assured that you will be free for ever and ever to harness the Armenians to your ploughs to till your land, to drive away their flocks, to plunder their properties, to violate their honour and to take their lives. O Noble Kurds, do not be deceived by the newspapers. Believe me and rest assured that there will be no reforms in Turkey. If I prove wrong, sue me for damages.⁵⁸

Soon the Ottoman Constitution was promulgated. The document was warmly received by the Armenians. For it was generally held that instead of reforms limited to a certain area, the Balkans, now the entire population of the empire would benefit from the provisions of the Constitution. And they had good reason so to believe. Midhat, now famous as a reformist and experienced provincial governor, was at the head of the constitutional movement. Moreover, one of his closest collaborators, perhaps the closest, was a famous Armenian politician, G. Ōtean (Ođian Efendi). Their hopes were even further enhanced by the unprecedented move Midhat made in visiting the Armenian Patriarch at the Armenian Patriarchate. Midhat had gone formally to assure the Patriarch that the Ottoman government would do its best to redress the wrongs in Armenia. Even

in this jubilant and festive atmosphere, however, Baronian did not allow himself to be carried away. He regarded the Constitution as pure window-dressing, the provisions of which would never be translated into action: 'Up to today we had the freedom to think, but not the freedom of speech; hereafter we shall enjoy both liberties'.⁵⁹

As there can be no doubt about Midhat's serious intentions to reform the empire, so there can be no doubt whatsoever about Abdulhamid's determination to crush the reformist movement - although he had not shown his true mettle yet. He had just acceded to the throne and had had no time as yet to establish a full and tight grip on the administration of the state; on the other hand he could hardly have opposed the reformist plans of those, Midhat and his group, who had in fact brought him to power. Besides, the Ottoman administration had to take some urgent measures to end the crisis in the Balkans and to ward off a most unwelcome European interference in the internal affairs of the empire; and in the circumstances the promulgation of a Constitution perhaps seemed to be the lesser evil.

Baronian had nothing against the Constitution as such; what he questioned was the willingness of the Ottoman authorities to implement it. He could hardly have known Abdulhamid's concealed intentions and he could hardly have cast doubt on Midhat's aims. His scepticism stemmed from his close observation of the nature of the Ottoman political system and the mentality of the Muslim subjects of the Porte. He therefore regarded the Constitution as a sort of preemptive attempt to finish with the Balkan troubles and, what was more important still, to prevent the Powers from breathing down the neck of the sultan for reforms in the Balkans. For the Conference of the Ambassadors was in progress when the Ottoman

authorities thunderously proclaimed the Constitution, a proclamation which Baronian regarded as a purely farcical performance:

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha...

I had never laughed so much before...

Our government have presented gilded copies of the Constitution to the Ambassadors.

Of course their governments will ask them why they failed to achieve results:

-The Ottoman government gave each of us a gilded pill... what do I mean a pill...? A gilded copy of the Constitution.

-What else?

-Nothing else.

Isn't it funny that we could give these Europeans, who think themselves philosophers, copies of the Constitution and send them back? Isn't it funny...? At least temporarily?⁶⁰

If the Porte thought that it had outwitted the Ambassadors, Baronian held, it was mistaken; for Europe was as sceptical as himself about the genuineness and sincerity of the Ottoman authorities. Indeed Baronian's pessimism was totally justified. For Abdulhamid soon dismissed Midhat, shelved the Constitution, and prorogued the Ottoman Parliament. All these actions came as no surprise to Baronian, who still eagerly looked forward to concerted action on the part of the Powers to force the Porte to change the character of its internal policy.

It was at the Congress of Berlin that the Porte, once again, formally undertook obligations to restore law and order in Armenia. In the wake of the Congress Britain submitted to the Porte a programme for reforms, which called for, firstly, the formation of a gendarmerie in the Asiatic provinces to be organised and commanded by Europeans; secondly, the setting up of central tribunals with power of jurisdiction over the lower courts (with a European learned in Law); thirdly, the appointment of responsible tax-collectors in each vilayet (in most cases a European); and finally, the appointment of governors 'for a fixed number of years'.⁶¹ Further, in the course of time a number of consuls-general and military vice-consuls

were appointed to serve in the various parts of the Asiatic provinces of the empire; Christians were represented on the tribunals, and a few commissions (with Christians on them) were sent out to inquire into the grievances of the Christian subjects of the Porte.

Baronian closely followed the subsequent stages of Ottoman policy toward the Armenian Question. With deep disappointment he saw the Porte embark on a policy of procrastination despite its formal pledges to the Powers. The Porte managed to have matters all its own way, as the formal measures it introduced under pressure from Britain failed to produce fruitful results. Thus the Christian representatives on the tribunals, for instance, were understandably afraid to oppose unjust verdicts; the commissions set up to inquire into the grievances of the Christian subjects of the Porte soon ceased to exist, without producing results; no able and honest governors or judges or tax-collectors were appointed; instead of organising a gendarmerie, Abdulhamid was soon to form the Hamidie troops, the main task of which was further to oppress the Armenians; finally, the consuls-general and the military vice-consuls appointed as mere observers in 1879 left their posts in 1881, having compiled reports which in no way rectified the situation in Armenia.

It is appropriate to discuss here the case of the Armenians represented on the local councils in the Armenian provinces, most of whom were corrupt. It should at once be pointed out that they could not have been otherwise. They lacked competence, and interest in the plight of their compatriots; and their appointments to these councils were made precisely for these reasons. Even if capable people were appointed, it is most unlikely that they would have been able to restore justice in the region. The local Ottoman authorities were not at all interested in redressing wrong; but as

some Christians had to be formally represented on the councils, their choice invariably fell upon puppets who were prepared to go along with their oppressive policies:

...the subordinate officers of the local Government are aided and abetted in their disgraceful proceedings or encouraged in persistent indifference to crying wrongs, as well by the criminal assistance as wilful apathy or silence of the Armenian Medjliss members, ostensibly elected by the suffrages of their co-religionists to guard their interests...As it is, no man of wealth, influence, or character will accept a seat in any one of the Councils; he will not waste time in attending to official duties in a place where he has to put up with the contumely and impertinent insults of the Moslem members, all which are patiently borne by the fawning and obsequious Christians whose living depends upon this appointment. And even were a man of character and ability to accept a nomination at the hands of his community, the Pasha, with whom in fact the fate of such elections lies, as he has the power of rejection, would always prefer a needy, pliant member to one whose riches and position would place him beyond the reach of his menaces or influence.^{6 2}

Baronian laid the blame for the failure of the programme of reforms with the Powers, who failed to take a firm stand against the Porte. Only Britain had made some efforts to have the reform schemes implemented, though in a half-hearted manner, and the other Powers failed to join hands with her in the face of an intransigent and rigid Ottoman administration. Britain now and then reminded the sultan of his obligations; and the sultan would never deny his responsibilities. On the contrary, he even went so far as confessing that his Armenian subjects were being persecuted. This was being done against his will, he once told his "confessor", the Armenian Patriarch whom he had invited to his palace to be decorated and assured of his good will toward his Armenian subjects.^{6 3} But His Imperial Majesty never translated his words into action. On the contrary, his bureaucrats executed a well-planned policy of deliberate delay with regard to the Armenian Question.

Baronian noted that whenever the Porte was asked about the progress of reforms in Armenia, it would vaguely state its intention

to effect changes there. The Porte would speak of its plan to allocate one tenth of the revenue from the Armenian provinces to local needs, and then it would ask for more time for the proper implementation of the reorganization of its administration there.⁶⁴ Sometimes it would present the Powers with plans for extensive reforms in Armenia. At all events the Porte never questioned the need for reform, but it always spoke in terms of plans, which were not carried out. Once the Ottoman authorities actually listed the reforms introduced in Armenia in a report submitted to the Six Powers, when the latter presented the Porte with a note about the urgency of introducing reforms in Armenia. Baronian repeated the main points of the Porte's reply, immediately attaching his sarcastic comments to each point:

The Porte...says that it has introduced several reforms in Armenia; that it has sent inspectors to inquire into the conditions (in Armenia) (the sending of inspectors is a big reform for us); that it has formed a gendarmerie (and if we do not see the gendarmerie today, that is because the Porte, out of modesty, always commits acts of goodness in secret, following (the instructions of) the Bible, that the left hand should not see what the right hand is giving out); that it is thinking of dividing the provinces inhabited by Armenians into nahias, electing kaymakams to these nahias from the majority (one wonders would they allow the Armenians to form a majority?); that a tenth of taxes will be allocated to the moral and material progress of the nahias (that I believe); that mobile tribunals will be formed to reexamine the unjust verdicts in the big cities (who will examine the injustices of unjust tribunals?). Having said all this, the Porte concludes its reply with the following statistics:

79% Muslims

17% Armenians

4% Other communities.

If the Armenians form only 17% of the population in Van, Karin (Erzerum), Diyarbekir and other places, then 53% of them have lately been killed either by the Kurds or by the officials who have prepared the statistics.⁶⁵

If the figures presented by the Porte were grossly exaggerated with regard to the Muslims, so was Baronian's estimate with regard to the Armenians. In no Armenian province did the Armenians constitute 70% of the population. They may have been the largest

ethnic group in certain parts of Armenia, but as no such distinction was made between the various Muslim communities - Kurds, Turks, Circassians, etc. - the Armenians could be represented as numerically inferior to the Muslim group. However, there are no reliable statistics available, and it is impossible now to establish the exact number of Christians and Muslim elements in Armenia.

Baronian saw the question of reform in Armenia sink into total oblivion by the early months of 1881. The Porte with consistent intransigence had managed to resist British attempts to change the character of Ottoman internal policy in Armenia. Apart from unwillingness, however, there were two other cardinal reasons which led Baronian to believe firmly that unless Europe took firm action, the Porte would not willingly introduce reforms in Armenia.

One of the basic prerequisites for the effective introduction of fundamental reforms in a country as vast and as backward as the Ottoman Empire was the financial factor. Without substantial monetary resources, it was impossible for the empire even to secure its mere survival, much less to reorganize itself. And such funds could only be allocated by countries with a sound economy, which was not the case with the Ottoman Empire. Rather, the Ottoman economy was in chaos by the 1870s; in fact it then faced what can be regarded as the most serious economic crisis it ever experienced. Deteriorating economic conditions had, in the course of time, caused serious damage to the social and political fabric of the empire and had profoundly affected its military prowess. But further complications, with far more serious consequences, still lay ahead. In the middle of the nineteenth century, those at the helm of the empire found themselves compelled to borrow from the West, as their economic problems had grown to unmanageable

proportions. To the previous difficulties was thus added a new burden; a very serious one as it later appeared, with pernicious political consequences. Foreign debts and interest accumulated at too rapid a rate for the Porte to cope with; and the situation was further aggravated by the incompetence of the Ottoman government, which failed to take appropriate measures to regenerate its seriously ailing economy.

Sketching a fairly detailed picture of the financial troubles of the empire, Baronian demonstrated how hopelessly they paralyzed it as a whole, for the state and its subjects were economically in mutual dependence upon each other. And the material prosperity of the Ottoman society was to a great extent dependent on the economic efficiency of the administration, and vice versa. Baronian's criticism in this respect reflected the effects the troubled Ottoman economy was having both on the state, as an administrative body, and on the less prosperous portions of its population.

Baronian noted that unemployment was one of the vicious ills that had descended upon the Ottomans. In those days when neither social security nor any other form of state welfare was in existence, the unemployed sections of the population suffered extensively. Their savings, if any, would dwindle fast, and soon they would find themselves seriously threatened by starvation:

- Hallo, Martiros Agha.
- Hallo.
- Anything (new)?
- No. I haven't had food for two days now.
- Couldn't you find a job?
- No.
- What have you decided to do?
- ...There is a good job at which I shall work tomorrow.
- What sort of a job is it?
- I owe 1000 kurush to the butcher; yesterday I learnt that he is going to have me imprisoned. Now that's not a bad job, is it?
- What do you mean?
- What would I mean? According to a (new) law, if you have someone imprisoned, you have to supply him with his daily bread.⁶⁶

Particularly during the Balkan troubles, not only did prices rise, but also there were acute and frequent shortages of food. The government did not care about guaranteeing the constant supply of bread, for example. On the contrary, on one occasion and at a time when extensive famine had struck Anatolia, Baronian revealed that the government were hoarding wheat supplies to sell them at a higher price during the winter.⁶⁷

Even cash was of little help, as its value greatly depreciated. For as the economy was in a shambles, and as the Ottoman authorities issued huge quantities of paper money, Ottoman banknotes lost their face value. A five-kurush kayme for instance would fetch two or three kurush at the most - about half its legal value. The latter, however, varied and was uncertain, as everybody suggested his own price for transactions in kaymes. There were even those who refused to do business in banknotes. Ottoman paper money further depreciated and was discredited, as gold and silver had long disappeared from the Ottoman Treasury and the Ottoman market, where business had come to a standstill. Bankruptcy was commonplace:

-Kirakos Agha, did you hear the news? It is said that an emergency will be declared.

-So what?

-All shops will have to close at ten in the evening.

-Yesterday, I closed mine for good.⁶⁸

Baronian suggested that pumpkins be tied all around the country to keep it afloat.⁶⁹ The state itself was bankrupt and obviously could not come to the rescue of its subjects, who no longer trusted the administration's economic policies. Both its helplessness and inefficiency were well exposed when the central administration failed to organise immediate relief for the starving victims of famine in Anatolia. Baronian was extremely sensitive to this issue and his criticism was particularly bitter, as human lives were at stake:

A lottery will be drawn for the famine-stricken Anatolians ...next year.

The executive committee for the above mentioned lottery will send a circular to the provinces urging the starving population to have patience and not to die of hunger until bread is sent to them.

We hope our compatriots will conform with this circular. They know very well that had the famine occurred in Europe it would have claimed more victims. We should be grateful that our benevolent Turkish government, having anticipated the famine many years ago, has taken firm measures to train its faithful subjects (to endure) hunger.⁷⁰

According to Baronian, the empire's failure to manage its own affairs, especially matters of defence, was equally depressing. The central administration was incapable of keeping its army - the very basis of its existence - in good shape. Army salaries were always in two or three months' arrears and the troops were ill-fed; the Porte often sent hungry troops to the Balkan front. The war in the area had overburdened the Ottoman economy with enormous expenses which the administration was unable to meet. To build fortifications, for example, the central government had to raise funds from their impoverished citizens.

Most serious of all was the Porte's loss of credibility, which irreparably damaged its prestige both at home and abroad. Sometimes it was unable to raise loans even from the local bankers in Galata. As it often failed to pay the interest on bonds and shares, in which many Europeans had invested heavily, the West was at times reluctant to extend credit to the Ottoman Empire. The situation was so desperate that Baronian once went as far as requesting the liquidation of the empire. He reported that shops in Constantinople were being liquidated and added:

I can report that the word liquidation fails to appear only on the Sublime Porte itself. Would it not be better if the municipality had all the banners announcing liquidation collected and made into one huge banner bearing the inscription liquidation in gilded letters and had it unfurled as a flag on the gates of our capital?⁷¹

The empire certainly needed to be bailed out, but how? The Ottoman authorities initiated half-hearted measures, not at all to Baronian's liking. In an eleventh hour attempt to bring some order to the economic chaos they called upon German experts to remedy economic and other difficulties that faced them. Baronian was not opposed to the idea of expert help from the West, he in fact expected the Powers to lend the Porte a helping hand, but he also requested that European help should be coupled with fundamental measures on the part of the Ottoman administration also to repair the situation; otherwise, 'instead of inviting experts from Germany would it not be better to hand over all our business to Bismarck?'⁷²

For a reform programme to have any chance of success, the close cooperation of the administration and the people it governed was an indispensable necessity. The public should be receptive to the ideas of reform and, above all, be convinced that the adoption of such ideas would be in its own interests. Baronian was of the view that the Muslim population of the empire was not as yet convinced of the 'usefulness'⁷³ of reform; consequently, its opposition made it very difficult for the Ottoman bureaucratic elite to implement a serious policy of reform.

Baronian was pointing to a complex problem and, though he went too far by rejecting previous attempts at reform, his reservations - in so far as the attitude of Muslim masses was concerned - were well-founded. The Muslims considered their religion and civilisation superior to all other religions and civilisations. There had always been reluctance to adopt new ideas from the West - an alien world with a rival civilisation and a rival religion - 'which it was the sacred duty of the Islamic Empire to subjugate and convert'.⁷⁴ In the period we are concerned with, the 1870s, the might of Islam had not only seriously declined, but the very existence of the

Ottoman Empire, once the powerful symbol of Islam, was seriously threatened. Despite many setbacks, however, the Muslims still clung to the concept of the supremacy of Islam, holding that the revival of the empire could only be achieved through the revival of ancient Islamic traditions. Their ruler at the time, Abdulhamid, himself an overzealous opponent of reform, delivered the coup de grâce to the precarious reform movement, boasting the superiority of the Islamic civilisation over that of Europe, and fostering 'everything that preserved, glorified and justified tradition'.⁷⁵ The mood of the Muslim masses was responsive to Abdulhamid's illusions. Berkes maintains that Abdulhamid's regime appealed to the people, for

the people believed it to be their own. It did not appear to be sustained by external support and imported Western institutions; it appeared to be indigenous, tradition-loving, Islamic and free from the worries and discomforts of change.⁷⁶

But there was more to the problem than mere 'worries and discomforts of change'. It was generally held that any fundamental change would be for the good of the Christian subjects of the empire, and would therefore be damaging to the interests of the Muslims, who had always constituted the privileged section of the population. Moreover, the existence of the Ottoman state was totally dependent upon the supremacy of the Muslim elements and certain ethnic groups. The introduction of substantial reforms would have struck at the very roots of this supremacy and, therefore, at the foundations of the empire.

By the 1870s the Tanzimat, the unwelcome experience of half-hearted reforms, had failed to halt the deterioration of the empire. If anything, it had resulted in ever greater European interference in the internal affairs of the state. The Ottoman economy, for instance, was completely run by the West, and the very fate of the

empire was now in the hands of European statesmen. This situation intensified Muslim hatred against Western civilisation as a whole, and particularly against the Christian subjects of the Porte, and thus considerably enhanced Muslim opposition to reform.

No less influential were the Pan-Islamic sentiments which prevailed at the time. The loss to the Christians of Islamic territories in Central Asia, North Africa, Egypt, etc., had caused serious alarm to the Muslims of the world. These defeats once more demonstrated the dangerous decline of the Islamic world, and revealed the need for unity and Islamic revival among all Muslims in order to regain superiority over the West. And when, if not at this juncture, could Ottoman-Muslim opposition to reform have been stronger?

To be sure there were a number of administrators who genuinely aspired to reform. As they ran the country, and attempted to solve its immense problems, these administrators had grown aware of the need for modernisation; but their good intentions and efforts were of little help in the face of public hostility:

The Tanzimat was still born; it "stopped at the doorstep of the Sublime Porte". Good intentions were not enough; however much European liberals might applaud the manifestation of a genuine desire for reform on the part of the Ottoman statesmen, public opinion in Turkey was hostile.⁷⁷

By contrast, since he clearly separated religion from political government and looked at all mortals as equal human beings, Baronian was free from the religious and political motives that governed the attitude of the Muslim elements. He found that the circumstances under which his people lived were, to put it mildly, unjust and were therefore unacceptable. Seeing the miserable conditions into which the empire had plunged, he realised, as did a growing number of Ottoman statesmen, the need for urgent reform; but their respective views as to the nature and the extent of reform were

poles apart. True, he was mainly concerned with the fate of Armenia - and he could not have behaved otherwise, for he would not have been allowed to question the political foundations of the empire openly and directly. But he, too, was interested in the prosperity and integrity of the empire, for he believed neither in separatism nor in violence. His views inevitably led him to believe that the only way left for the empire was that of prompt and effective reform. Because the Muslims, both governors and governed, were at once undesirous and incapable of reform, he deemed it necessary for the Powers to impose reforms. There were a few precedents of successful action by the Powers in imposing their will on the Porte; and he accordingly looked forward to more action on the part of the Powers in regard to reform in the empire in general and Armenia in particular. For various reasons, which will be discussed in the following chapter, the Powers failed to live up to Baronian's expectations.

Footnotes to Chapter III

1. Arewelean Mamul, January 1871, p. 21.
2. H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, (Oxford, 1957) part II, p. 227.
3. Albert Hourani, A Vision of History, (Beirut, 1961) p. 75.
4. Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939, (Oxford, 1962) p. 29.
5. H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, op.cit., p. 212.
6. Ibid., p. 208.
7. S. Runciman, The Great Church in Captivity, (Cambridge, 1968) p. 179.
8. PCS, viii, 151.
9. Halil Inalcik, The Ottoman Empire, The Classical Age, 1300-1600, translated by Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber, (London, 1973), p. 46.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 47.
12. Ibid., p. 49.
13. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
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19. Ibid., iv, 308.
20. Ibid., p. 36.
21. S. Runciman, op.cit., p. 179.
22. Captain Fred. Burnaby, On Horseback through Asia Minor, (7th edn., London, 1878).
23. Ibid., pp. 13, 41, 60, 112, 145, 193-4. I owe these references to Professor C. Dowsett.
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25. A.O. Sarkissian, History of the Armenian Question to 1885, (Urbana, 1938), p. 34.
26. PCS, vii, 183.
27. Ibid., iv, 493.
28. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
29. As quoted by Captain Fred Burnaby, op.cit., p. 375.
30. PCS, viii, 352.
31. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
32. Ibid., p. 78.

33. Ibid., iv, 126.
34. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
35. Ibid., vii, 140-41.
36. Ibid., iv, 475.
37. Ibid., p. 426.
38. Ibid., pp. 122-23.
39. Ibid., p. 315.
40. Ibid., pp. 441-42.
41. Ibid., p. 400.
42. Ibid., p. 446.
43. Ibid., p. 492.
44. Captain Fred Burnaby, op. cit., p. 375.
45. Ōtar aḷbyurnerē Hayastani ev hayeri masin, 7; Tūrḱakan aḷbyurner (Erevan, 1972), p. 162.
46. Or Mother Armenia. A fashionable picture portraying an Armenian woman weeping over the ruins of Armenia.
47. The legendary forefather of the Armenians.
48. The Commander in Chief of the Armenian army in the battle against the Persians in Awarayr, in 451 A.D.
49. The last king of the Armenian Kigdom of Cilicia.
50. PCS, iv, 475, 460.
51. Ibid., 396.
52. Ibid., viii, 185.
53. Ibid., iv, 436.
54. Ibid., 249.
55. Ibid., 248.
56. Ibid., 249.
57. Ibid., viii, 67.
58. Ibid., iv, 99-100.
59. Ibid., 125.
60. Ibid., 152-53.
61. A.O. Sarkissian, op.cit., p. 93.
62. Captain Fred Burnaby, op.cit., p. 375.
63. RNA, session 9, 12 August, 1877.
64. PCS, iv, 452-53.
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66. Ibid., 358.
67. Ibid., 486.
68. Ibid., 232-33.
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70. Ibid., 382-83.
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72. Ibid., 453.
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CHAPTER IVBARONIAN, THE POWERS AND THE EASTERN QUESTION,
1875-1881

Baronian had paid little attention to international relations and Europe's attitude towards the Eastern Question until its resurgence as an issue in 1875. Hitherto he had been busy criticising the Armenian Constitution and Ottoman internal policy, vigorously advocating the cause of reform in Armenia. Having delivered his verdict on the Armenian Constitution, he displayed almost no interest in the document throughout the Eastern Crisis. Instead, Ottoman internal policy, which had become the main target of his criticism, continued to govern the direction of his political thought as long as its character remained unchanged, and as long as he was allowed to publish political criticism. However, the outbreak of revolts in the Balkans in 1875 transformed the reform question from an internal Ottoman issue to one of international dimensions. Baronian wholeheartedly welcomed this transformation as he had no illusions about the willingness or ability of the Porte to modernise its administration. He thought that the Armenian Question, which had not yet risen formally, would be part and parcel of an overall reform programme under the auspices of the Powers. He closely observed the conflict, and the course taken by the Powers to resolve it. This chapter will analyse Baronian's interpretation of Europe's attitude towards the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 and its aftermath to 1881. Since the Crisis will be frequently referred to throughout this chapter, it is necessary to sketch a brief outline of the main stages through which it developed into a major and complex international problem.

In the hope of improving their position the inhabitants of Herzegovina and Bosnia revolted against the Porte in the summer of 1875. During the initial phases of the hostilities the Ottoman authorities were slow to take effective action against the rebels,¹ whose military operations soon aroused uneasiness in the European capitals. Within a couple of months from the outbreak of disorder in July, European statesmen were already considering measures to deal with the problem before it grew into unmanageable proportions, threatening the peace of Europe. While the consuls of the Powers and an Ottoman commission conducted investigations into the grievances of the rebellious provinces,² the Ottoman government issued in early October, 1875, a minor programme for reform. This, and a subsequent reform firman proclaimed in December,³ were unacceptable to the rebels, who continued their revolt as vigorously as before.

The first serious external attempt to satisfy the rebels was made by Andrassy, the foreign minister of Austria. Andrassy, who was most anxious to avoid trouble in the Balkans, drafted a reform programme⁴ at the end of December, 1875. Although his Note was accepted by the Porte, it was rejected by the rebels, who insisted on European guarantees for its implementation.⁵ Soon the Bulgarian massacres added a new dimension to the problem. The Ottoman authorities had discovered the preparations of the Bulgarians who decided to rise sooner than they had originally planned. Their rebellion at the end of April, 1876, was suppressed with ferocity by the Turks and the Powers felt obliged to make a collective effort to reconcile the Porte with its discontented Balkan subjects. They issued the Berlin Memorandum of May, 1876, to which, however, the British refused to adhere.⁶

The situation took on even more dangerous proportions when in June and July, 1876, Serbia and Montenegro declared war against the Ottoman Empire, to support the rebels of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Powers made another attempt to find a peace formula acceptable to all parties concerned. The Ambassadors of the Powers convened in Constantinople,⁷ but disagreement among them was too great to make a reasonable solution possible. The Conference broke up without resolving the conflict on 20 January, 1877. One last effort was made by Britain and Russia in March, 1877. The two Powers signed the London Protocol,⁸ which, however, was rejected by the Porte in April. Thereupon Alexander II declared war against the Ottoman Empire on 24 April, 1877.

After initial successes in repelling the Russian attack the Ottoman army was eventually defeated and the Porte had to sign the Treaty of San Stefano on 3 March, 1878. However, other European Powers declined to accept the Treaty. Austria opposed the creation of a large Bulgaria as it seriously threatened Austrian influence in the area. Britain saw a threat to the routes to India and was also opposed to the idea of a large Bulgaria and to Russian gains in Armenia. Consequently, this bilateral agreement was substantially revised by an European Congress which drafted the Treaty of Berlin instead, in July, 1878. The Powers then set themselves the difficult task of implementing the articles of the agreement they had reached under the supervision of Bismarck. Among the problems pending settlement in the aftermath of the Congress of Berlin was the Armenian Question. It had arisen in the Treaty of San Stefano when the Russians, responding to the appeals of the Armenian Patriarch and some of his advisers, had insisted on the introduction of an article concerning reform in the Armenian provinces. The article was reinserted in the Treaty of Berlin and the Armenian Question was on the international agenda until the beginning of 1881.

From the very first days of the outbreak, the revolts in the Balkans were at the centre of Baronian's attention. His interest in the conflict grew even greater when it became known that the Powers were contemplating the introduction of a reform programme for the troubled area. He expected that the reform scheme would have a general character, aiming at reorganisation of the Ottoman administration for the benefit of the Christian as well as Muslim subjects of the Porte - hence his concern over the developments in the Balkans despite the exclusion of the Armenians from initial reform plans. Baronina would not tolerate partition (envisaged by some of the European States) to resolve the question. His hitherto concealed Ottoman feelings were strong enough to make him object to mutilating the Ottoman dominions. But that was not all. Dismembering the Balkan territories would, at best, be a partial solution and was, therefore, an unacceptable alternative to the overall reform scheme. Although the Christians deserved priority, the lot of all Ottoman subjects, whether or not they rose in rebellion, must be improved. Furthermore, Europe should undertake the modernisation of the empire for purely humanitarian reasons. The subsequent phases of the crisis, however, clearly indicated to Baronian that an exclusively internal reform problem was being exploited by the Powers to achieve their own ends. All these considerations and, above all, the temporary neglect of the Armenian case by the Powers, prompted Baronian to expose and criticise their policies toward the Eastern Question.

Baronian certainly sympathised with the plight of the Christians of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but disapproved of their violent course. On the whole, he had no sympathy whatever for violence in solving disputes. The spilling of human blood should by all means be avoided, especially in the case of the Christians

of the Balkans since, in Baronian's view, the Ottoman administration was unwilling to carry out reform and to yield to military pressure from its subjects. If left alone, the Porte was still powerful enough to crush its disobedient subjects. There was also the economic factor, which was always present in Baronian's mind. Military operations would further impoverish the Ottoman people, who already suffered from acute financial hardship.

However, the revolts had begun, and the news of a European initiative came as a relief to Baronian. Such mediation should terminate hostilities and, more important still, should finally guarantee the execution of an overall reform programme to the satisfaction of all minorities within the empire. But the Powers were indecisive, and conditions in the Balkans soon worsened. There were fears that Serbia and Montenegro might go to war, especially after Britain's refusal to adhere to the Berlin Memorandum of May, 1876, and the failure of Austria and Russia to take concerted action to solve the problem. Baronian was disturbed at this prospect and was completely opposed to Milan Obrenovich's and Nicholas's decision to take sides with the rebels. Baronian claimed that Milan had been preparing for war with the full knowledge and encouragement of St. Petersburg, and accused the Serbian Prince and Nicholas of expansionist ambitions in the Balkans. There is little evidence, however, to support Baronian's allegations. The two leaders may have had some far-fetched plans, but they had no wish, certainly not Milan of Serbia, to take up arms at this particular moment. In fact, under pressure from Serbian public opinion, which was strongly in favour of supporting the Christians of Herzegovina and Bosnia, Milan drifted into war to avoid internal disturbances or even deposition.⁹ Although Kartsov's advice may have been an important factor in Milan's decision in favour of

war,¹⁰ the Russian Consul's personal advice could hardly have been known to Baronian.

Thus, under the pretext of supporting the reform cause in the rebellious provinces, Baronian maintained that Serbia and Montenegro were in fact seeking territorial gains. Greek and Rumanian diplomats had similar ambitions too. Baronian's assumption led him to believe that the nature of the problem was transformed. The ambitions of the small Balkan states complicated the dispute and delayed its settlement. It was not long before Baronian concluded that the Ottoman Empire had become a helpless victim of the conflicting interests of all the parties to the conflict.

Indeed, military, economic and political fragmentation had so seriously weakened the empire that in the 1870s its fate was being decided in the European capitals. Under these circumstances the Ottoman government could not conduct an independent policy, which was a privilege of powerful states. Every time, therefore, that a domestic problem arose, the Porte found itself threatened by European intervention. The most the Ottoman politicians could do in these difficult times was to protest, to promise, or to rely on procrastination. But such methods would not always be productive for a united Europe or a combination of Western Powers could impose their will on the Ottoman government.

Baronian wrote the following dialogue between the Empire and the Powers when there were rumours in October, 1876, of the convening of a conference in Constantinople to draft a reform scheme for the Balkans. It was a peculiar situation, for the Ottoman representatives were to be excluded from the preliminary discussions:¹¹

(the Powers) -Order coffee for us all.
 (the Empire) -Very good.
 -We want cigars.
 -Here is some tobacco.

- Roll it for us.
- Very good...
- Light it for us.
- Here, I have lit it for you.
- Place it in our mouths.
- I have done so. Smoke it.
- Smoke it with us so that it burns faster.
- Good. Have you any other wishes?
- Yes, we want some food.
- (Where do I get) the money (for food)?
- We have given you a good deal of money already...
- Very good. Have you any other order?
- We want some wine.
- Bring wine. What else...?

They are acting as if they are the tyrannical Kurds who have entered an Armenian house to plunder it.

- We want you to go out and leave us alone for a while.
- Why?
- Because we want to hold a brief consultation here.
- What do you think of the requests of these people?
- What should I think? They demand, we refuse.¹²

Earlier, the Ottoman Empire had been prevented from reaping the fruits of its victory over Serbia. When the latter was defeated in September and October, 1876, the Ottoman army was not allowed to march on Belgrade and an armistice was imposed on the Porte.¹³ The Ottoman authorities were prepared to grant an armistice provided that the peace terms were known in advance.¹⁴ But their proposal was rejected and the Powers conferred among themselves to decide the length of the armistice, without consulting the Porte. The Ottoman government could do nothing but wait until the Powers decided on the issue.

The Ottoman Empire had to comply with the strangest conditions, which Baronian found intolerable. When Nicholas, Prince of Montenegro, declared in January, 1877, that he would ask for a vast sum by way of indemnity if peace were to be concluded between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire, Baronian could not conceal his anger, recognising, however, that the Porte would eventually have to pay the indemnity if the Powers so wished:

We win (the war), we pay the indemnity; they declare war against us, we pay the indemnity. What sort of a martial law is this which always makes indemnity-paying

our share?

Let the Prince of Montenegro open his purse. As soon as the armistice is over he will get the amount of indemnity he requests plus interest.¹⁵

The Powers had matters all their own way throughout the crisis. The Ottomans suffered heavy losses in the Balkans, had to bear the burden of a war with Russia they could not afford and had, in the end, to make territorial concessions in accordance with the articles of the Congress of Berlin. Yet to Baronian's constant dissatisfaction the Ottoman government failed to draw any lessons from the continual setbacks they suffered. They remained reluctant to embark on a serious policy of reform, which was the only policy to avoid such losses.

With the fate of the Ottoman Empire in the hands of the European statesmen, Baronian thought that the enforcement of the long overdue reform programme would be an easy task for a united Europe or a combination of Powers, or even for a single major Power provided it enjoyed the support of other Powers. Earlier, due to the indifference of the West, the 1856 reforms had had little effect, particularly in Armenia. Now, twenty years later, Baronian expected Europe to tackle the problem seriously and to solve it once and for all. The Eastern Crisis was an opportune moment for such an initiative. It was also time for the Powers, some of which had long since proclaimed themselves as guardians of the Christians, to translate their words into action, providing the expertise and the financial means to transform the empire into a modern state.

It did not take long for Baronian to realise that Europe had little sympathy for the reform cause. He saw an unbridgeable gap between the political creed European statesmen adhered to publicly and the actual policies they pursued. In his view, humanitarian

or, for that matter, Christian aims had little practical value for them. They sought their own interests and did not hesitate to make use of the most equivocal and even false statements to camouflage their policies. To Baronian's dismay the Powers were prepared even to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of human beings in order to promote their own political and economic interests.¹⁶ The conflicting interests of the European states further complicated the matter, and made it impossible for them to take coordinated action against the Porte. Conflict was not confined to the relations of the Powers alone. Sometimes differences among the governing circles of a given Power not only weakened its position but also damaged the chances of a concerted European course vis à vis the Porte. Most important of all, until the very conclusion of the Treaty of San Stefano, the Armenian case was excluded from the numerous reform proposals made by the Powers, their immediate concern being the Balkan Peninsula. The political conduct of all the major Powers, Great Britain, Russia, Germany and Austria was subjected to a close scrutiny by Baronian.

After humiliating France in 1871 the new united state of Germany emerged as the strongest power on the Continent. Henceforth, the preservation of peace in Europe was to be a prime objective for Bismarck, the architect of German foreign policy for a long time to come. To maintain peace he had clear-cut ideas and followed a more or less steady political line. First and foremost, France should always be diplomatically isolated so that she would be deprived of any chance of waging a war of revenge against Germany, which the German Chancellor thought likely.¹⁷ Britain and Russia, who were not prepared to see France humiliated a second time,¹⁸ should be kept as far apart as possible. By contrast,

Austria and Russia, Germany's partners in the Dreikaiserbund, should always be on cordial terms. Furthermore, having no interest in the Near East, Bismarck hoped to prevent a possible European confrontation at the expense of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹

Baronian's dissatisfaction with Bismarck's policy was based on the German Chancellor's indifference towards the plight of the Christians and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. According to Baronian, dismembering the empire would not be a substitute for a reform programme; at best it might be beneficial to the Christians of the Balkans, but not to the Armenians who lived at the other extremity of the empire. Besides, the Christians of Bosnia and Herzegovina had taken up arms with a view to improving their lot. The problem, therefore, was one of reform and not a question of partitioning the continental part of the Empire, as the 'Honest Broker' fancied.²⁰

As the crisis assumed dangerous proportions at the end of 1876, Baronian briefly believed that Bismarck had some vague ambitions in the Near East and that, by staying aloof from the Eastern Crisis, he was fishing in troubled waters. The German Chancellor was abstaining from mediation at a time when the danger of a Russo-Turkish armed conflict was growing greater. Indeed, Bismarck was prepared to give the Russians a free hand in the Balkans provided Austria remained neutral and was compensated in Bosnia.²¹ To satisfy the British, the 'Honest Broker' envisaged British control over Egypt and Suez and an Anglo-Russian agreement concerning the city of Constantinople and the Straits. By satisfying the European parties to the conflict (France could be given Syria, for example), Bismarck hoped to avert a major European confrontation, at the expense of mutilating the Ottoman Empire and of risking a Russo-Turkish war. Parodying Bismarck's equivocal

political statements, Baronian held that Bismarck was being cynically indifferent not only towards reform and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but also towards human lives to be sacrificed on the battlefields, for a conflict which could be solved peacefully if only the Powers would abandon their selfish ends:

I am not a belligerent man...I don't think that there will be a war necessarily. I shall not let England help Turkey...In the event that I am unable to do so, I shall help Russia. The beard of my sweet Austria is in my hand...If anyone says anything to her, he will have to answer to me...There will be a war, but I don't think peace will be disturbed... I shall let Russia and Turkey crush each other...It is likely that England and Russia will reach an agreement, which is unlikely...I think I expressed my views clearly...There is no problem for us... But if anyone interferes in the business of Russia and Austria, then our intervention will be needed. I don't think our intervention will be needed; if it is needed it is obvious that there has been a need for it. If it is not needed, needless to say there has been no need for it...²²

Baronian's appraisal of the basic characteristics of Bismarck's ruthlessly materialistic policy in the Eastern Question was valid. The Iron Chancellor lacked sympathy for the Christians, the reform cause, and humanitarian aims. These factors, in Baronian's view, contributed to the failure of the Powers to agree on a common course, shelved the overall reform projects, and precipitated the Russo-Ottoman war. From 1877 onwards Baronian manifested no interest in German policy as the conflict gradually grew into an essentially Anglo-Russian confrontation.

In Baronian's view, just as Bismarck had his own ends to pursue, so did Andrassy, the Austrian Foreign Minister, have his own political designs to protect the interests of the Habsburg Empire. Baronian was extremely dissatisfied with the Austrian statesmen, for he could not discern any consistency in their foreign policy. Bismarck's attitude towards France, Russia, Austria, the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Question, was more

or less clear and consistent. By contrast Francis Joseph 'exchanged kisses'²³ with whatever head of state he met. Andrassy at times maintained that he was a friend of the Ottoman Empire, at times he favoured Russian friendship, and at others he flirted with Great Britain. Baronian's explanation of the unstable and vague Austrian policy was that being the weakest of the major European Powers Austria had to change its political preferences constantly to safeguard its interests against major power alliances: '...there is no Power with which Austria has not signed a treaty (of friendship)...'²⁴ wrote Baronian with some exaggeration. But a policy of pleasing all parties had its disadvantages, Baronian warned. Britain, for instance, would be greatly displeased with too close a Russo-Austrian friendship and none of the Powers would consider Austria a reliable ally because of her unpredictable attitude:

I have said a thousand times and am saying again that Austria's attitude will depend on the circumstances. At the moment nobody knows what (political) course Austria will take, even Austria herself. Is Austria a friend of ours or a friend of Russia? At the moment this is not known either. Although Andrassy is bound with as close a friendship to both of us as he is to England and Prussia.²⁵

According to Baronian, Austria pursued an even more uncertain policy towards the Ottoman Empire and could not, therefore, be relied upon as an ally of the Empire.²⁶ In fact, the Austrians feared a united, strong Slavic state in Eastern Europe, the creation of which they thought, and with good reason, was a primary objective for the Russian diplomats. Therefore, Andrassy was, in principle, in favour of maintaining the physical unity of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the Balkans, in order to thwart the Russian plans. Andrassy himself had drafted a reform scheme (the Andrassy Note) in December, 1875, which indicated not only his desire to preserve the status quo, but also his total lack of enthusiasm for Austrian

expansion in the Balkans because he wished to avoid an increase in the number of Slavic subjects in the Austrian Empire.²⁷

Baronian was unhappy with Andrassy's plan for changes since they aimed at the immediate goal of wrapping up the Balkan troubles rather than at general reform. Nevertheless, he held that Austria's and Britain's opposition to partition would help preserve the geographical unity of the Ottoman Empire, which was an essential prerequisite if an overall reform programme were to be implemented at all. However, to Baronian's dissatisfaction, Andrassy soon changed his political course because he had to reckon with the attitudes of the other Western states. Andrassy, who was in favour of close cooperation with Germany and deeply distrusted the Russians,²⁸ was advised by Bismarck not to oppose Russian plans in the Balkans. St. Petersburg was most anxious to act in harmony with the Austrians in the Balkans, and the English at this particular period (late 1876) were not receptive to Austrian advances for an intimate diplomatic relationship. In the circumstances Andrassy signed the January Convention endorsing Russian action in the Peninsula in return for territorial compensation in Bosnia.²⁹ Given the international situation and the extremely favourable terms the Russians conceded to Austria, Andrassy could not have hoped for a better bargain.³⁰

Baronian was extremely dissatisfied with the fundamental change in Andrassy's attitude. He was giving up his former position, repudiating his alleged friendship with the Ottoman Empire, and was consenting to the much detested Russian presence in the Balkans. There was a sharp contrast between Andrassy's policy and the principles he pretended to advance. Where interests were involved, however, principles and official statements did not count. When Austria made it clear that she would occupy Bosnia if the Russians

advanced into Bulgaria and Bessarabia Baronian could not but helplessly exclaim: 'What do you think of Austria?... She is unable to occupy herself and yet she wants to occupy Bosnia'.³¹

The beginning of the Russo-Turkish war marked the end of Baronian's analysis of the policies of Germany and Austria. Without taking up arms both Powers supported Russian action in the beleaguered Peninsula in pursuit of their own interests. There remained only one of the major Powers, Britain, which was opposed to Russian presence in the Balkans. It was clear that the conflict would turn into an Anglo-Russian confrontation as Baronian had earlier predicted. Consequently he focused his attention on British and Russian policies, which he had continually discussed ever since the outbreak of revolts in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Baronian's sharpest strictures were reserved for Russia and her Near Eastern policy. From the very first days of the Balkan uprisings until the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78, Baronian consistently held that the whole problem was being stirred up by the Russians, who had the most wicked plans for the Balkans. They instigated intrigues, encouraged belligerency and supported war in the area in pursuit of their own concealed interests. Russia's goal was the partition rather than the reformation of the Ottoman Empire, and her zealous pro-Christian stand was no more than a convenient pretext for the advancement of her influence in the Balkans. The more so since the Russians made no provisions for the Armenians in their reform plans until the very conclusion of the Treaty of San Stefano.

In assessing Russia's policy, especially in the early stages of the Eastern Crisis, Baronian went too far in his scepticism about Russian ambitions. He had good reason though to question

long-term Russian intentions. Free access to the Mediterranean was an old Russian dream, and so was placing the Christian Cross on St. Sophia. In the 1870s the Panslav movement was stronger than ever. Its adherents, including Ignatiev, the Russian ambassador to Constantinople, were in favour of unequivocal support of the Slavic races of the Peninsula. As a matter of fact until the beginning of 1877 these factors had no decisive influence on Russian external policy. Besides, Russia had grave internal and economic problems which made it wise to refrain from any unilateral military solution, and Russia had to reckon with the attitude of two other Powers, England and Austria. The latter had a direct interest in the conflict and was definitely opposed to Slavic plans in the area. Great Britain had her own reasons for preserving the status quo in the European part of the Ottoman Empire. However, fundamental changes occurred in the Russian attitude towards the Eastern Question, justifying Baronian's alarm about the prospect of war.

For Baronian the Eastern Crisis was a Northern question. The Russians did their utmost to advance their interests in the Peninsula by all possible means. It was Russian encouragement, for instance, that sent Milan to war; for the young Prince, Baronian claimed, was a mere tool in the hands of Gorchakov.³² Later when Baronian became aware that Kartsov had acted independently in advising Milan to take up arms he dismissed the whole episode as nonsense.³³ Yet it is a fact that Russia warned Milan against joining the rebels.³⁴ However, by the end of October, 1876, Baronian had ample reason to believe that Russia was clearly preparing for war. The Serbian army, led by Cherniaev, had collapsed, leaving the way to Belgrade open to the Ottoman army, when Panslav agitation compelled the Tsar to action. A Russian

ultimatum demanded that the Porte grant an armistice of six weeks to Serbia. There followed the mobilisation of 160,000 Russian troops soon after the Tsar had made it clear in a speech in Moscow that Russia would act independently if the Porte failed to guarantee the implementation of reform in the Balkans.³⁵ Since he never believed that the Ottoman Empire would carry out reform anywhere in its dominions, Baronian concluded that war would be fought. The Tsar himself had expressed the same view:

Light candles...there will be no war... the Austrian newspapers which understand the Tsar's words better than we, are unanimously insisting that the declaration of the Tsar of the Russians is pacific. Here are the pacific words of the Northern Emperor: '...Oh, if the Conference of Ambassadors fails to crown my wishes with success... I shall fight'. Never has any monarch uttered more pacific words...His Majesty could not have chosen more suitable words to convey his pacifism.³⁶

Baronian held that there were two factors that might deter the Russians from going to war. The first was the economic difficulties which partly accounted for disagreement among the Russians. Baronian mocked the everchanging mood of the Imperial Family, the Tsar and his ministers,³⁷ but attached little importance to it. Of greater importance was the financial hardship which prompted Reutern to object to war plans. Economic strain was the only feature common to both the Ottomans and the Russians, which might restrain both countries from a military conflict. But this was a wishful thought rather than a belief on Baronian's part, and he dismissed the idea, maintaining that partisans of war would gain the upper hand in the Russian government. All that the head of the Russian Treasury could do would be to protest. Eventually, Reutern would have to go along with the belligerent group or else resign.³⁸

The second factor was British opposition. As long as the English were determined to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman

Empire Russian ambitions could be effectively checked. England and Russia had been drifting apart since the early 1870s. The Russians had abrogated the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of 1856 and had occupied the Khanate of Khiva in Central Asia, and Baronian had every reason to believe, for a while, that Disraeli would do his utmost to oppose Russian political plans.

It soon became clear to Baronian that, except for the Straits, Britain had little concern for the fate of the Balkans. Furthermore, neither England nor any other power was prepared to fight for the Ottoman Empire as at the time of the 1856 war. Thus, the Russians, encouraged by British indifference and German support, diligently went ahead with their preparations for a military campaign. Ignatiev, the powerful and influential Russian ambassador, was particularly active in advocating war. The presence in Constantinople of this man, who headed the list of a few politicians particularly disliked by Baronian, made a peaceful solution to the Eastern Crisis impossible:

According to the news sent to Europe from Constantinople, the Constantinople news is satisfactory...
 (According to the news) the Marquis of Salisbury and General Ignatiev are smiling at each other and, therefore both of them are inclined to make concessions... needless to say that when these two diplomats split their sides laughing peace will be complete. But when sadness spreads its wings on their faces (some poetry is needed too) then, Oh, then, rest assured that peace will shake our hands bidding us goodbye.

-Where are you going peace? Stay longer...

-I can't stay.

-When can you come again?

-When Ignatiev is gone.

-Won't it be possible for both of you to stay?

-Impossible... he dislikes me and I dislike him.³⁹

According to Baronian, the Russians stepped up their military preparations from December 1876 onwards. In February, 1877 they indirectly advised the Serbians not to conclude peace with the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁰ Gorchakov's circular meant little to Baronian, who nevertheless advised the Powers to reply to it to rob Gorchakov

of a pretext for war.⁴¹ In March he dismissed the rumours of a Russian 'honorary retreat' maintaining that Russia would not put off her war plans unless she made some palpable gains:

At this hour, the Powers...are looking for an honourable way for Russia to retreat, so that peace may not be disturbed.

-I made so many preparations, Russia is saying, incurred so many expenses, how can I retreat with empty hands? Wouldn't that be shameful? Show me an honourable way of retreat and I shall withdraw my demands.

-You can withdraw honourably, England is saying, because Turkey accepted the need for reform; because the Conference of Ambassadors was not altogether fruitless; because a Constitution was promulgated. All these 'because' bring you honour.

-Those are empty words. I want an honourable way to retreat. At least let us repudiate the 1856 Treaty...

-That can not be done...

-Why...?

-We told you that can not be done.

-If that is so, I shall not retreat.

-And I shall protect the integrity of Turkey.⁴²

In late March and early April, Baronian reiterated his views. The Russians were backing Montenegrin reluctance to make peace with the Ottoman Empire.⁴³ The London Protocol, in which Baronian had no faith, would last for only a 'few moments'⁴⁴ and the Ottoman Government would certainly not adhere to it.⁴⁵ There followed the logical conclusion that Russia would declare war. On 9 April, the Porte rejected the Protocol and Baronian declared that war would probably begin in fifteen days.⁴⁶ Indeed by this time the Russians had lost patience and could no longer disregard Panslav agitation. The Tsar formally took up arms on 24 April, 1877.

It was an unjust war. The Ottoman economy would further decline and the country would gain nothing from the war. On the contrary, it would make human sacrifices, it would lose more territories, and would have to pay war indemnities. More important still, the war would in no way serve the reform cause. The Tsar's belligerency was prompted by imperialistic ambitions and not humanitarian aims. Above all, the Tsar had no plans for the

Armenians in his reform schemes. He not only neglected them but also made ridiculous suggestions which would only worsen the situation in Armenia. The transfer of the Circassians, for instance:

(It is suggested that) the Circassians be moved to Asia... The Tsar does not forget to reiterate these words every time that he deigns to speak of improving the lot of the Christians but he forgets to tell us where the Armenians of Asia should be transferred. If the Tsar would condescend to know that the Armenians are Christians too he would not make this suggestion because he thereby would be improving the conditions of the Circassians rather than the Christians.⁴⁷

The Russians were insincere in their self-appointed sponsorship of the Christians. Gorchakov, who posed as 'the Foreign Minister of Jesus',⁴⁸ claimed that he genuinely wished and worked for the well-being of the Christians. In reality he had only certain Christian elements in mind, and Baronian was furious to learn that the Armenians were not the sort of Christians for whom the Russian statesman felt sympathy. In order for the Armenians to fit into the category of Christians favoured by Gorchakov they must be Slavs and must be living in Europe.⁴⁹ The Tsar always adhered to Gorchakov's peculiar definition and both His Imperial Majesty and his Minister excluded the Armenians from the ranks of the Christians, and consequently from their reform schemes,⁵⁰ lest their plans for the Balkans should be thwarted. Such discrimination between the Christian elements only indicated that the Russians had their own ends to further under the guise of helping the Christians.

In fact, Baronian further maintained, the Russian motive for war was Panslavism, for which he felt only disgust. Panslavism was a mere pretext for the Russians to realise their ambitions in the Balkans. For the adherents of the movement were not even interested in the Slavic peoples themselves, argued Baronian,

citing the example of Serbia.⁵¹ The shift in the Panslav attitude towards Serbia has been well described by M.S. Anderson:

...The Panslavs, irritated and disillusioned by Serb weakness, began to think increasingly of Bulgaria rather than Serbia as the main prop of future Russian influence in the Balkans. An autonomous Bulgarian state might well prove a more effective weapon against the Turks than discredited Serbia; and the Bulgars, more than any other Balkan people except the Montenegrins, were led by confirmed Russophiles and immune to west-European influences. Increasingly the idea of a big Bulgaria, to be created to some extent at the expense of Serbian territorial ambitions, gained ground.⁵²

The Panslavs, who had had a decisive influence in the Tsar's decision to go to war against the Ottoman Empire, were confirmed agitators in favour of Russian presence in the Balkans. They did not hesitate to falsify facts and to champion humanitarian aims as a disguise, or to instal themselves as protectors of Christendom to achieve their sinister ends:

Again Jesus in the Eastern Question...

A Russian newspaper has published an article entitled 'Jesus and War', in which it is claimed that if the freedom of the Slavic provinces is not achieved, Jesus will get angry at the Tsar.

The said newspaper is saying that "Jesus came to this world 1876 years ago and today all Christians are asking themselves:

Aren't we going to defend humanity?

Are we going to allow the Slav Christians to be oppressed?"

O Golos, what relation is there between Jesus's arrival in this world 1876 years earlier and the solving of the Eastern Question? Is it that Jesus came to this world for the freedom of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria?

...Prince Gorchakov, speaking in the name of Jesus, will soon start writing to us:

Jesus can not tolerate the oppression of Slav Christians; Jesus demands that privileges be given to the rebellious provinces; it is in the interests of Jesus that Turkey accept the final suggestions to be made to her and grant freedom to the Slav Christians.

And, by thus speaking, he will lead the common people to believe that Jesus discriminates between Armenian and Slav Christians, that Jesus (loves) the Armenians more... no...loves the Armenians less than the Slavs.

Slander x Slander + Injustice - Humanity = Slavism.⁵³

The Treaty of San Stefano had not yet been signed when, commenting on the protracted preliminary peace negotiations between

the Russians and the Porte, Baronian concluded that the Russians would fully accomplish their ultimate goal of partitioning the European part of the Ottoman Empire. This confirmed his long-standing view that the war would be of no benefit to the reform cause in general and the Armenians in particular:

My God, what a difficult bargaining this is? In my view bargaining must be completed in a few words.

For example:

-Independence to Montenegro.

-Very good.

-Independence to Serbia.

-I have nothing against that.

-Independence to Rumania too.

-Are we opposing that?

-Armenians to the Circassians and the Kurds.

-We have nothing against that either.

And that's all.⁵⁴

A few days later, on 3 March, 1878, the Treaty of San Stefano was concluded. Baronian seems to have been surprised by the favourable attitude the Russians had unexpectedly taken towards the Armenians by including in the Treaty an article concerning reform in Armenia. However, seeing the Armenian question in the context of international relations, Baronian disagreed with Grigor Arcruni,⁵⁵ for example, who overzealously advocated Russian orientation before and after the Treaty of San Stefano. Baronian realised that Russia did not have a free hand in solving the Eastern Question and disregarded Russian foreign policy completely after the Congress of Berlin.

While all three members of the League of Three Emperors manifested an active interest in the Eastern Question and eventually agreed on a common course in the Balkans, Britain refrained from effective measures to frustrate their plans, especially in the initial stages of the Crisis. Britain's slowness in taking action somewhat puzzled Baronian, who had, with good reason, expected more of the English than of any other power. He calculated that

Great Britain, which had a genuine interest in maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and was a traditional ally of the Porte, would act promptly to balk Russia of her prey. Although he realised that Britain, especially under Disraeli, had little concern with the fate of the Christian subjects of the Porte, Baronian nevertheless pinned on her what little hope he had for reform.

Prior to the Conservative electoral victory in 1874, the Liberals had pursued a policy of isolation,⁵⁶ avoiding continental entanglements. As long as Europe was not dominated by any one power Britain preferred abstention to active participation in continental affairs. Besides, in these years the Liberals had been absorbed by some pressing domestic problems⁵⁷ to which they attached more importance. However, there occurred a gradual shift in British foreign policy especially when the Conservatives came to power. Disraeli took a closer interest in European matters and his purchase of a controlling share of the stock of the Suez Canal Company clearly demonstrated the growing importance he attached to the Near East.⁵⁸ For Disraeli, as for some of his predecessors, the Straits too were a vital route to India and he was determined to keep the Russians out of the area.

From the outset Baronian was aware that the Balkan crisis would eventually turn into an Anglo-Russian confrontation. He distrusted the League of Three Emperors, assuming that Russia and Austria, with the blessing of Bismarck, had very dangerous ambitions in the Peninsula. Since he believed that England would not tolerate Russian control of the Straits, Baronian had no doubt that she would take steps without delay to safeguard her own interests by maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. It was this factor, more than anything else, that encouraged Baronian's

expectations for a decisive British intervention. But he was astonished to see indecision on the part of the British cabinet. The crisis had gone a long way by September, 1876, and yet Lord Derby was still losing time by making speeches. His indecision encouraged Russia to proceed with her belligerent plans and further weakened Britain's position as a world power and her influence at the Porte:

I can not say that peace is absolutely certain.

Lord Derby.

I am certain that we shall preserve peace without bloodshed.

Lord Derby.

Conclusion:

Peace may or may not be restored.

This is our humble opinion.⁵⁹

If Lord Derby was unable to make clear-cut decisions,⁶⁰ Disraeli, whose unfriendliness to Russia was well-known, also failed to translate words into deeds. In a speech made in November 1876, the British prime minister declared that his country favoured the preservation of peace⁶¹ and the introduction of a reform programme and that Britain would, if necessary, fight for justice. Looking at the situation from a purely political standpoint, Baronian thought that Disraeli could have no stronger motive for action than the removal of all threats to India. For the British prime minister had no sympathy for the Christians and no genuine interest in the reform cause:

One day Lord Beaconsfield...went out for a walk...He (sat) at the foot of a mountain in order to think a little about improving the lot of the Christians...He took off his hat ...He took too much snuff and began sneezing.

-Atishoo.

-Shoo, replied the echo.

-Atishoo oo-oo-oo...

-Oo, oo, oo, repeated the mountain.

-Who are you?

-You.

-Miserable.

-Able.

-Are you ridiculing me?

-Ing me.

-...Won't you let me think a little about the Christians?

-Ans.

-Till the end my case I shall defend.

-Defend.
 -If necessary I shall fight.
 -If necessary I shall fight.
 -For justice.
 -For your interest, replied the echo, not understanding Lord Beaconsfield's words well.⁶²

Baronian was over stressing his view of Russian belligerency. London rightly believed in the closing months of 1876 that the Tsar had as yet no intention of embarking on a violent course. Consequently, the English, except for some diplomatic moves, saw no need for immediate and drastic action. Besides, Baronian completely disregarded the enormous impact on public opinion in Britain of Gladstone's pamphlet concerning the Bulgarian massacres, which prevented the British cabinet from taking a vigorous anti-Russian course throughout the second half of 1876.

However, Baronian was aware that disagreement within the British cabinet⁶³ rendered it difficult for Disraeli to pursue a well defined policy towards the Eastern Question. The prime minister himself distrusted the Germans, the Austrians, and above all the Russians. He had no sympathy for the Balkan nationalities let alone the Armenians and hoped, until the convention of the Conference of Ambassadors, that the Porte would suppress the insurgents.⁶⁴ He was against partitioning the Ottoman Empire,⁶⁵ considering it a still viable block against Russian ambitions in the Balkans as well as in the Caucasus. Lord Derby, who had little success in piecing together a coherent British foreign policy, believed that the collapse of the empire was inevitable.⁶⁶ Salisbury thought along the same lines but had more sympathy for the Christians than Lord Beaconsfield had.⁶⁷ He did not share Disraeli's Russophobia and suggested an accommodation with Russia.⁶⁸ After the failure of the Conference of Ambassadors he favoured 'united pressure'⁶⁹ by the Powers but was opposed by the cabinet and Elliot, the British Ambassador to Constantinople. The latter thought that

Salisbury's knowledge of Near Eastern affairs was inadequate, and above all, that Salisbury had come under Ignatiev's influence in Constantinople.⁷⁰ Differences between British diplomats became clearly evident in the Ottoman capital where Salisbury and Elliot openly disagreed on a common course. As Baronian put it, in the crucial days of the Conference, Salisbury, holding British policy by its head, and Elliot by its tail, were both pulling it in opposite directions.⁷¹ Obviously, the lack of a uniform British policy undermined England's position as a world power and weakened her influence at the Porte. Salisbury's and Elliot's respective political advice to the Porte was contradictory and the Ottoman government, therefore, could not rely on Britain's friendship. What was still more important for Baronian, however, was that the Russians were soon to take advantage of Britain's indecision, declaring war against the Porte.

If dissension was one reason by which Baronian partially explained British inaction, the actual British interests as defined by London itself were another factor which soon helped Baronian solve his dilemma. Until the beginning of April, 1877, he had thought that Disraeli staunchly supported the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman empire as a solid guarantee against Russian penetration of the Straits area. In April, however, Baronian questioned London's determination to preserve the status quo in the Balkans, and a month later he concluded that Disraeli had little concern for the geographical unity of the empire.

In a short comedy⁷² written by Baronian in May, 1877, the two sole characters were Britain and Russia. In the comedy Baronian maintained that the British were primarily interested in the city of Constantinople and the Straits themselves and not in the Ottoman territories extending further West. As long as the Russians did

not occupy the Ottoman capital, the Straits, Egypt and the Suez Canal, British statesmen had no serious intention of opposing a Russian advance in the Balkans. No wonder then that London had not contemplated practical measures to forestall Russian plans, confining itself to rhetoric and meaningless warnings. British promises to preserve the physical unity of the Ottoman Empire were, therefore, baseless, and pledges for friendship to the empire later to be reiterated by 'Haji Sir Henry Layard'⁷³ could not be counted upon. Anglo-Ottoman friendship did have some value for Baronian, who was dissatisfied to see the British allow the Russians to camp on the outskirts of the Ottoman capital.

The international situation changed in 1878 when Britain scored a spectacular diplomatic victory at the Congress of Berlin, reasserting her position as a World Power. Her influence at the Porte was once more in the ascendant. Particularly by virtue of the Cyprus Convention Britain had assumed a greater share of responsibility for the introduction of reform in Armenia. In view of Britain's special relationship with the Ottoman Empire Baronian looked to her to bring about the reorganisation of the Ottoman administration of Armenia. International relations in the aftermath of the Congress of Berlin were of little interest to Baronian since the war which he had so much feared had already been fought, shelving the overall reform programme. However, the Armenian Question had risen as a separate issue absorbing most of Baronian's attention.

Soon after the delegates to the Congress had dispersed, the Powers began their onerous task of implementing the clauses of the Treaty of Berlin. Among other problems was the question of reform in the Armenian provinces. Salisbury and Layard cooperated closely to induce the Porte to meet its obligations in regard to the

Armenians. Layard conducted exasperating negotiations with the Ottoman government, which was unwilling to collaborate. Baronian expected a resolute course on the part of Salisbury but the British confined themselves to negotiation and representations. The Concert of Europe, on the other hand, was seriously weakened. Austria and Germany had no interest whatsoever in the Armenian Question and the former, particularly, was preoccupied with pressing problems in the Balkans. True, the Ambassadors now and then conferred on the Armenian Question and presented the Porte with numerous reform plans. They also held deliberations with the Patriarch Varžapetean, but no definite results emerged. The Armenian Question was not the first item on the agenda and from a European standpoint the settlement of the Balkan conflicts was far more important than the Armenian grievances. For almost two years Baronian and the Armenians anxiously waited for a favourable outcome, but Britain, like the other Powers, did not go beyond making ineffective suggestions to an intransigent Ottoman administration. Baronian was distressed with the manner in which the Powers handled the Armenian Question: 'When will words be translated into deeds, my Lord?'⁷⁴

By the second half of 1880 Baronian had given up hope for concerted European action and looked to Britain for the revival of the Armenian Question. His cautious optimism stemmed from the advent of the Liberals to power in April, 1880. Baronian was more favourably disposed to Gladstone and his cabinet than to the Conservatives. In her Opening Speech in the autumn of 1880, the Queen had stated that the fulfillment of the Treaty of Berlin would be a prime objective for her government. Baronian received her commitment with some relief but not with total conviction; for the policies of the Powers always revolved around their interests.

And Britain was no exception, even when governed by the Liberals.⁷⁵

Baronian's hope was inspired by Gladstone whose predecessors had failed to achieve palpable results in the way of reform in the Armenian provinces. Salisbury had been resolute, but his efforts had been rendered futile by the intransigence of the Porte. As long as Britain was not prepared to take coercive measures against the Porte, and Salisbury definitely had no such inclinations, the sultan was able to resist British diplomatic pressure. By contrast, Gladstone was in favour of action through a European concert and had openly denounced Salisbury's Near Eastern policy.⁷⁶ His government had already initiated (in June, 1880) a conference in Berlin to solve the pending Montenegrin problem.⁷⁷ Throughout the summer, London had been trying to enlist European support for action⁷⁸ against the Porte. Furthermore, after the failure of the naval demonstration off the coast at Dulcigno, Gladstone had suggested the occupation of the customs houses at Smyrna.⁷⁹ There was also some talk of sending the fleet to the Dardanelles.⁸⁰ Although Baronian had no faith whatsoever in naval demonstrations, he rightly believed that Gladstone was in favour of action to have the Treaty of Berlin properly implemented. This made him hope that the Armenian Question would be solved once the Montenegrin and Greek problems were settled.

Baronian related a story about this problem: a teacher assigned to teach the vernacular began his task by introducing the alphabet. He requested one of his pupils to pronounce the letter a but the pupil declined to do so for two weeks. When asked about the reason for his reluctance to read a the pupil answered that if he were to read a his teacher would make him read all the letters of the alphabet from A to Z, which he had no intention of doing. In the same fashion, maintained Baronian, the Ottoman Empire was determined

not to settle the Montenegrin problem in order to avoid the other problems (Greek and Armenian). Although, continued Baronian, he did not remember the moral lesson to be derived from this story, he remembered well enough that eventually the teacher was able to force his pupil to read the alphabet from A to Z.

And Gladstone who is more determined than that teacher, not only will make the Turkish government read the alphabet from A to Z but will make it read the whole textbook and that in the interests of the Turkish government itself.⁸¹

Encouraged by Gladstone's resolution Baronian expected the regeneration of the European Concert through British efforts. In fact Gladstone's cabinet did try to bring about collective European pressure. However, Lord Granville was not as enthusiastic about coercive measures as the prime minister. The Queen, on the other hand, was totally opposed to such action against the Ottoman Empire.⁸² Moreover, except for Russia, none of the powers was willing to participate in serious action; already, they had all grown tired of the whole Eastern Question. But Baronian waited with a gleam of hope that the powers, like himself, would grow impatient and would act. For the Balkan problem as he saw it had become a Gordian Knot which only the sword would disentangle.⁸³

At the end of 1880 Baronian was frustrated to learn that Britain would abstain from further initiatives if the other powers failed to join hands with her for coordinated action. The decision of the Berlin Conference of June, 1880 to give Dulcigno to Montenegro had not been implemented, and Greek aspirations in the provinces of Epirus and Thessaly had not yet been resolved when the British government advised the Greeks to be patient and wait. Baronian hoped that Gladstone would not give the same advice to the Armenians, who could wait no longer, having run out of patience.⁸⁴ Just after Dulcigno became a Montenegrin possession in

mid-November, 1880, Baronian noted that Britain had forgotten the Armenian Question and wished that she would revive her attempts to solve it.⁸⁵ But in January, 1881, Britain abandoned her efforts to have the Porte implement reform in Armenia. The Armenian Question was thus to be buried until the mid-1890s, by which time Baronian himself had ceased to exist.

A firm European commitment to the reform cause was the last remedy Baronian had in mind for a juster administration of the various religious and ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire. The Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 was a convenient opportunity for such a policy. But the policies of the Powers fell far short of his expectations. Contrary to their claims, they had little or no concern with humanitarian or Christian aims, and their rivalries and self-interests destroyed the chances for a harmonised European policy to reform the empire in general and to improve the lot of the Christian subjects in particular. The true nature of their interests, as well as their disunity, provided the Porte with an invaluable pretext to delay and eventually to avoid the implementation of fundamental reform, especially in Armenia.

Baronian's political criticism was not confined to the issues discussed in this and the preceding chapters. He also evaluated the performance of the Armenian leadership. Baronian's Armenian Big-wigs, a collection comprising literary portraits of some of the prominent Armenian leaders of the time, will be dealt with in the next, final chapter of the first part of this thesis.

Footnotes to Chapter IV

1. Langer, W.L., European Alliances and Alignments 1871-1890, (New York, 1931), p. 74.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 74-75.
4. Ibid., p. 75.
5. Ibid.
6. Anderson, M.S., The Eastern Question, (London, 1966), p. 183.
7. Ibid., pp. 190-192.
8. Langer, op.cit., p. 114.
9. Ibid., p. 89.
10. Ibid., pp. 89-90.
11. Anderson, op.cit., p. 191.
12. PCS, iv, 81-82.
13. Langer, op.cit., p. 103.
14. Ibid., p. 95.
15. PCS, iv, 81-82.
16. Ibid., p. 280.
17. Langer, op.cit., pp. 31-37.
18. Ibid., p. 33.
19. Ibid., p. 80.
20. Ibid., p. 101.
21. Ibid., p. 107.
22. PCS, iv, 106.
23. Ibid., 33.
24. Ibid., 74.
25. Ibid., 259.
26. Ibid., 96.
27. Langer, op.cit., p. 70.
28. Ibid., p. 20.
29. Ibid., p. 113.
30. Ibid., p. 114.
31. PCS, iv, 119.
32. Ibid., 164.
33. Ibid., pp. 58-59, 173.
34. Anderson, op.cit., p. 179.
35. Langer, op.cit., p. 104.
36. PCS, iv, 87-88.
37. Ibid., 68.
38. Ibid., 77.
39. Ibid., 114-115.
40. Ibid., 173.
41. Ibid., 194.
42. Ibid., 200-201.
43. Ibid., 209-210.
44. Ibid., 213.
45. Ibid., 218-219.
46. Ibid., 226.
47. Ibid., 105.
48. Ibid., 52.
49. Ibid., 56.
50. Ibid., 105.
51. Ibid., 158.
52. Anderson, op.cit., p. 187.
53. PCS, iv, 148.
54. Ibid., 285.
55. For his biography see Appendix III.

56. Langer, op.cit., pp. 12, 17-18.
57. Ibid., p. 12
58. Ibid., pp. 73, 76.
59. PCS, iv, 49-50.
60. Anderson, op.cit., p. 188.
61. Langer, op.cit., p. 104.
62. PCS, iv, 84-85.
63. Anderson, op.cit., p.188.
64. Langer, op.cit., p. 73.
65. Anderson, op.cit., p. 188.
66. Langer, op.cit., p. 73.
67. Ibid., p. 105.
68. Langer, op.cit., p. 105. Anderson, op.cit., p. 189.
69. Langer, op.cit., p. 107.
70. Ibid., p. 105.
71. PCS, iv, 137.
72. Ibid., 251-254.
73. Ibid., 333.
74. Ibid., 430.
75. Ibid., 465.
76. Langer, op.cit., p. 202.
77. Ibid., pp. 203-204.
78. Ibid., p. 203.
79. Ibid., p. 204.
80. Ibid.
81. PCS, iv, 447.
82. Langer, op.cit., p. 204.
83. PCS, iv, 459.
84. Ibid., 468-69.
85. Ibid., 476-77.

CHAPTER V

BARONIAN AND THE ARMENIAN LEADERSHIP

This chapter is based mainly on Baronian's Armenian Big-wigs, which includes the literary portraits of thirty two Armenian national figures of the time. Drawn with great artistic skill, these colourful sketches personify the history of Armenian life from 1850 to 1880. A most popular work, the Armenian Big-wigs has achieved an outstanding place in Armenian satire because of its pertinent, trenchant and audacious criticism.

The portraits of the so-called Armenian big-wigs were published in 1874-1875 and 1879-1880 in Tatron and Loys. In the years 1879-1880 Baronian supervised the first edition of his work, in three parts, under the title of Azgayin Joĵer (National Big-wigs), while continuing to publish new biographies in the periodical press.¹ I have translated the title into English as 'Armenian Big-wigs' for additional clarity. The word big-wig stands for the Armenian Joĵ which means as an adjective: 'big, large, old, elderly'; and is used as a noun to denote a celebrity with a certain social position. Its derogatory connotation has grown stronger ever since Baronian used it to describe the Armenian leaders. Some of the dignitaries portrayed by Baronian did not engage in political activities, and have been considered elsewhere in this thesis. Baronian also made numerous remarks on some leaders whose portraits he has not fully drawn. These casual remarks have been brought together to complement Baronian's views on the major Armenian figures.

There have been only a few, incomplete studies of Baronian's Armenian Big-wigs, and even less on the literary influences on this work. Even the histories of modern Armenian literature,²

while listing an endless chain of ancient and European influences on Baronian's plays and other works, include only a few phrases of effusive admiration for the Armenian Big-wigs, with no mention of specific sources at all.

Only two suggestions have been made about literary influences on this book. The first, by an unnamed author quoted by G. Step'anyan and unavailable to us, maintained that Baronian conceived the Armenian Big-wigs while 'reading Plutarch'³ Certainly Baronian was acquainted with Plutarch's works. Baronian drew a parallel between the Armenian Big-wigs and Plutarch's Lives. But whereas Baronian's aim is censure, Plutarch's was praise. Baronian begins Varžapetean's portrait with a direct appeal to Plutarch for help, for he has undertaken the unusual task of praising one of his characters:

Plutarch, would that I might have your pen for a few minutes to write the life of the brave shepherd ... O, you, famous biographer, you have been immortalised in your Lives, but I will be buried in my big-wigs by trying to teach my pen to weave wreaths ... my pen that pierces ... vices, and is blind to virtues. But would you be able to make me this loan or would you dismiss me saying: Plutarch cannot give you what nature has not bestowed on you?⁴

Indeed, as has been suggested in an introduction to Plutarch's Lives, Plutarch was a 'backward-looking writer', whose 'prime object was at once to cherish the greatness of the past and to re-assert it as a living ideal'.⁵ In contrast, Baronian confined himself exclusively to contemporary figures. True, he praised a few characters, but the vast majority of the big-wigs were portrayed to serve his critical ends. Baronian in most cases emphasised their shortcomings and turned a blind eye to their virtues. He closely examined and dissected their activities, taking a diametrically opposite stand to Plutarch's, which was not so much to evaluate facts as to create an inspiring portrait. And so, like a portrait painter, we find him choosing a characteristic yet possibly

idealized pose for his subjects'.⁶ Such was decidedly not Baronian's way.

Plutarch's Lives consisted of detailed historical biographies. In this his work was similar to that of other early historians, who were also biographers to a great extent. Why, then, should Plutarch alone, whose biographies differed so much in object and in method from Baronian's portraits, be singled out as a source of influence? It would perhaps have been possible to find technical similarity between the two authors, had Plutarch himself created the biographical genre. But:

By Plutarch's time a conventional form of biography already existed. It began with an account of the subject's birth, family and education, went on to delineate his character and recount the most important and typical events of his career, and concluded with an account of his posterity and influence. Plutarch followed this organization of his material fairly closely...⁷

Baronian's portraits included no accounts of the family, the descendants, or the influence of a given leader. Even if they had, however, the employment of the same genre by different writers could hardly serve as sufficient ground for seeing an influence of one on the other.

A second suggestion, by H. ʎazaryan, that Baronian's Armenian Big-wigs came under the formative influence of M. Mamurean's Armenian Letters, does not stand serious analysis. In an article entitled 'Interrelations between Mamuryan and Paronyan'⁸ ʎazaryan reached the conclusion that Baronian conceived the Armenian Big-wigs 'only when the Armenian Letters was published', and 'under its influence'.⁹ ʎazaryan repeated this view in his introduction to M. Mamurean's Works published in 1966.¹⁰

Mamurean's Armenian Letters consisted of letters containing his views on contemporary Armenian reality. In the last part of his letters, Mamurean passed judgment on some famous Armenian figures of the time. Among others were Tēroyenç, Narpēy and

Bishop M. Tigranean, whom Baronian later depicted in his Armenian Big-wigs. ʒazaryan compared these three characters portrayed by both authors, and found sufficient correspondence between them to substantiate his claim. ʒazaryan also found that the portraits of N. ʔusinean and Barunak Fēruhyan, also drawn by the two authors, bore close resemblances, but he did not demonstrate their similarities in any detail.

The similarities ʒazaryan noted were secondary, and related to external, physical appearance, occupation, or certain historical facts, which every biographer would have inevitably mentioned. For instance, ʒazaryan observed that both authors had found Tēroyenç's voice stentorian, and that he was a theologian; and that Tēroyenç headed the conservatives. ʒazaryan also observed that both authors had mentioned Narpēy's feminine mannerisms, and his return to the Armenian Church from Catholicism.¹¹ And, finally, that Baronian had named Bishop Tigranean as the 'miracle-worker' as Mamurean had done before him. Of course, one would not expect Baronian to credit Tēroyenç with a mild voice or to change his profession. That Tēroyenç headed the conservatives was well known to his contemporaries and mentioned by all biographers. In the same way, Narpēy's feminine manners were the talk of Constantinople in Narpēy's own lifetime, and Baronian certainly met Narpēy quite often in Constantinople. Bishop Tigranean was branded as the 'miracle-worker' by the Constantinople Armenians for the miracles he worked with holy water. Furthermore, ʒazaryan has confused two different personalities bearing the same christian name: Barunak Bey Fēruhyan¹² and Barunak Bey Iwtiwčean. The first was depicted by Mamurean, but never by Baronian, and the second by Baronian but never by Mamurean. When Baronian portrayed Iwtiwčean in 1874 - the first portrait ever drawn by Baronian - Barunak Fēruhyan had been dead for six years. ʒazaryan's arguments, therefore, are insuffi-

cient to prove any strong influence by Mamurean on Baronian, though it is most likely that Baronian read the Armenian Letters.

It is certain that Baronian derived his inspiration for the Armenian Big-wigs from the French press. In the very first issue of Tatron, Baronian announced that he would publish biographies of eminent figures of 'foreign nations', translated from French.¹³ Unfortunately, when he did so, he did not specify his French sources. Only one portrait, that of Manas, was translated from Le Polichinelle.¹⁴ This was sufficient for G. Stepanyan to claim that some of these biographies were translated from Le Polichinelle.¹⁵ Yet the few surviving issues of Le Polichinelle contain none of the biographies translated by Baronian, although they do contain two other biographies written in a similar mould. Nevertheless, we do have Baronian's declaration that the biographies were translated from French, and we have no reason whatever to disbelieve him. After publishing fifteen or so biographies, Baronian announced that he, too, would depict Armenian national figures, as they did in 'foreign nations'.¹⁶ Baronian's declaration is unambiguous and indicates how the Armenian Big-wigs were first conceived.¹⁷

Although all the big-wigs depicted by Baronian had played some part in communal affairs, a few 'celebrities' sketched in the first series in 1874-1875 were politically unimportant personalities. It is to be regretted that Baronian did not sketch the portraits of such prominent leaders as Grigor Ōtean (Krikor Odian Efendi), Yovhannēs Nurean, Serviçen (Serovbē Viçenean), Yarutiwn Tatean (Artin Pasha Dadian) and others, who were highly influential Porte employees. There is no convincing explanation for this exclusion, and it certainly can not be attributed to a lack of courage on Baronian's part. When Baronian attacked Y. Tatean, for instance, he was summoned by the censor and warned that his periodical would be banned for good if he ever again attacked the Pasha.¹⁸ Perhaps

Baronian reasoned that it would be unwise to satirise these figures as the censor would not have allowed the publication of their portraits. While this may have been a factor, such an explanation would still be inadequate since Baronian criticised Stepan Pasha Aslanean, an equally high-ranking Ottoman official. On the other hand Baronian had to abandon his original intention to continue his portraits after 1880 as the censorship prohibited him from all criticism.

Baronian's main criterion for assessing the real value of a big-wig was the degree of his usefulness to his community. He was not, as G. Stepanyan maintained, a class-conscious critic;¹⁹ his satire touched everybody, regardless of their class. The Armenian satirist Eruand Ōtean²⁰ and a number of other Armenian writers, Grigor Zōhrap²¹ for instance, took the same attitude in their satirical and non-satirical, critical biographies. Baronian often overlooked the personal defects of leaders who sincerely served their community, an attitude which was also followed by Ōtean. Father Partizakçi, a heavy drinker and a rather worldly priest, won himself a place among the big-wigs for his willingness to undertake whatever task he might be asked to do.

The Armenian Big-wigs stirred the Armenian community, for it succeeded in mirroring the big-wigs as they were and not as they wished to appear. Father Eremean attested that the Armenian Big-wigs was read with great eagerness, and that 'the glee of the big-wigs would change to wrath when suddenly Baronian showed them their bizarre images in a mirror'.²² Some leaders reacted violently; Xačatur Misakean was terribly angry and 'swore';²³ Karapet Iwtiwčean, the editor of Masis, which had the largest periodical circulation, attacked Baronian as a 'drunkard' and an 'adventurer',²⁴ whose contribution to Masis, however, Iwtiwčean had most eagerly sought earlier.

The biographies in the Armenian Big-wigs can be divided into six groups: (a) individuals of various occupations who participated in Armenian public life, (b) priests, (c) editors, (d) artists, (e) writers and (f) celebrities. In order to obtain as accurate a picture of the big-wigs as possible, and to avoid repetition, I have regrouped the leaders according to the qualities they shared rather than their social status. Furthermore, relevant background material has been supplied at the appropriate points - without such information the analysis of this work would be too abstract and perhaps incomprehensible, as Baronian interpreted the activities of the leadership in the light of contemporary Armenian political and social affairs. With regard to reflecting contemporary realities, it has been suggested that Ōtean's

...heroes are really deputies, who have been depicted mainly in connexion with their speeches and activities in the National Assembly. In this fashion, Ōtyan has given an idea about the activities of the National Assembly, the groupings of the deputies, the partisan factions ... Neither Paronyan nor Zohrap have undertaken such a task. Ōtyan's embrace is wider and the picture of the time and environment has come out more completely in his Our Deputies.²⁵

This statement is unfounded and misleading. Both Baronian and Ōtean reflected the realities of their times - totally different epochs - more deeply and faithfully than any Armenian historian. It is this factor, coupled with their technique and the virtues they advocated, that extend the importance of their works beyond the immediate Armenian scene. Their criticism of the Armenian leaders applies to any unworthy public figure, past and present, in any part of the world.

If we were to sketch the profile of an ideal leader as seen by Baronian, competence, dedication, audacity, integrity and mature conduct would constitute his main characteristics. That very few people anywhere at any time can possess such qualities is a fact of which Baronian must have been aware. With the exception of one

or two celebrities none of the Armenian leaders was lucky enough to boast of many of these virtues and Baronian certainly did not expect them to be examples of perfection. However, he believed in the ability of human beings to correct themselves, continually striving for further improvements. His role, as he saw it, was that of an impartial biographer who faithfully drew factual portraits. If, therefore, the reader was presented with unpleasant facts, Baronian stated in his introduction to the Armenian Big-wigs, he was not to blame for them; for 'which mirror reflects a dwarf as Achilles, and which mountain echoes a saint as devil?'²⁶. There were a few instances, however, when Baronian lost his temper and failed to adhere to his pledge not to insult his characters. Baronian's unfeeling reference to Arcruni's hunchback²⁷ is perhaps the most outstanding example of such intolerance.

Baronian accused a host of Armenian leaders of immature behaviour, with all its undesirable ramifications. Most of these figures belonged to the so-called Leftist faction within the Armenian National Assembly, whose partisanship and opposition adversely affected the smooth flow of national affairs. It is necessary, therefore, to sketch the background and the reasons which led to the emergence of the Leftist and Rightist factions within the Assembly, if we are to understand Baronian's writing in the Armenian Big-wigs.

The two rival factions were by no means organised parties; rather, two informal and very loose groups of small numbers of deputies who happened broadly to share certain views on some basic issues. Contrary to the conventional definition of the Left, the Leftists held rather conservative views in that they adhered to traditions and overemphasised the role of the Armenian Church in leading the nation.²⁸ The Rightists tended, though very moderately and irresolutely, to secularise the community and were vigorously

opposed by the Leftists. Of the two, the Leftists were more active and, relatively speaking, better organized than the Rightists. On certain occasions the Leftists met in a house in Galata to lay out their strategy on an issue prior to its debate in the Assembly.²⁹ They also rallied support by converting uncommitted deputies to their views and were thus able, more often than not, to have matters all their own way in the Assembly.

When Xrimean was elected patriarch in 1869 there were as yet no Leftist and Rightist factions within the Assembly. Hitherto the conflict had raged between the Church and the Conservatives on the one hand and those who favoured constitutionalism on the other. Xrimean's election had marked the final victory of the Constitution-
alists (who assumed the leadership of the community), whose ranks included future Rightists as well as Leftists. The Patriarch's conduct, however, soon disrupted the ranks of the new leadership. His insistence on having the Constitution revised seems to have been one of the major factors leading to the emergence of the Left. Prominent Leftists such as S. Aslanean and S. Papazean and others who shared their views considered the Constitution a sacred dogma and consequently opposed its revision. This issue sparked off the rivals between the two groups. At times the Leftists buried the hatchet but invariably marked the place. Their rivalries thus continued until the late 1880s.

The major argument of the Leftists for opposing amendments to the Constitution was that the Rightists, many of whom were Porte employees (G. Ōtean and others), represented the interests of the autocratic state they served and not those of the Armenian community, which was governed by a constitutional system.³⁰ They imagined behind-the-scenes machinations on the part of the Rightists to encroach on the rights of the community under the disguise of introducing amendments to the Constitution.³¹ A second major

reason for distrusting the Rightists was the Leftists' conviction that the Rightists had some wicked plan to destroy the unity of the Armenian church and to abolish its traditions.³² This was why, the Leftists maintained, the Rightists and Xrimean devised plans to make the Catholicosate of Sis, then a secondary seat of no national importance, into a major catholicosate to rival and, perhaps, to replace Eĵmiacin, the traditional spiritual centre of all Armenians.³³

Baronian belonged to neither party and criticised them both as the need arose. However, he often found himself siding with the Right since he disagreed with the Left on at least one major issue, the Constitution, which he, in common with Patriarch Xrimean and certain Rightists, found inadequate. The arguments of the Leftists, Baronian maintained, were invalid, their allegations unfounded, their motives selfishly personal and their methods of opposition bizarre.

Any amendments to the Constitution, for example, would have been discussed in the National Assembly and if, as the Leftists feared, such alterations in any way threatened the rights of the community, the Leftists and all those concerned could easily block such changes. While it is difficult to justify the conduct of the Leftists, mention should be made of an incident which may have partly accounted for the policy of the Left. In 1866 the Porte suspended the Constitution in circumstances which are still hidden in mystery. However, there were remarks in the periodical press of the time that the suspension was brought about under the influence of the 'efendis', a nickname for the Armenian officials of the Porte and, later, for the Rightists, and particularly at the urging of Serviĉen Efendi, an influential Ottoman employee. This episode may have still been vivid in the memory of the Leftists who were determined to prevent its recurrence. Despite this precedent, it

is highly unlikely that certain individuals or efendis would have been able to have the Constitution suspended or to infringe on the rights of the community. In the 1870s the political consciousness of the community was too mature to allow such conduct. Besides, the Rightists were convinced constitutionalists, who would hardly ever contemplate anti-constitutional moves; G. Ōtean, for one, was soon to become a close collaborator of Midhat, in introducing constitutionalism to the Empire.

Furthermore, practice had long since proved the inadequacy of the regulations, a fact which the Leftists adamantly continued to disregard. At one point in 1879 Aslanean, who was a prominent Leftist and a high-ranking Porte official totally loyal to his sultan, himself suggested the introduction of 'special laws in order to oil the wheels of the intractable points of the Constitution'.³⁴ Clearly, Aslanean was not only contradicting himself but also admitting the inadequacy of the Constitution. Nevertheless the Leftists agreed to only minor and formal changes which in no way contributed to the proper functioning of the Constitution. And since Xrimean and certain Rightists favoured fundamental revision, the Leftists began opposing the Rightists bluntly and decided that the Patriarch, whom they had earlier recognized as the 'Angel of Armenia',³⁵ must go. This irresponsible course, as he saw it, irritated Baronian, who complained bitterly that Aslanean and company 'succeeded in dethroning Xrimean for not implementing the dots and commas ... of the Constitution'.³⁶

Baronian dismissed as a pretext the Leftist charges brought against Xrimean concerning dictatorial procedures in running community affairs. An objective observer would have to admit, however, that Xrimean conducted certain secondary matters independently. Baronian also refuted the accusations of the Leftists that Xrimean embezzled national funds. The allegation was certainly

untrue, though Xrimean had left room for speculation by delaying the publication of his financial accounts. The Leftists also accused Xrimean of incompetence and of hindering the activities of the national authorities by demanding the revision of the Constitution.³⁷ Baronian held that the state of community affairs was unsatisfactory precisely because the Constitution was inadequate, and it was the Leftists, therefore, who complicated matters by opposing its revision.

It is beyond any doubt that until the very end of his life, Baronian enthusiastically admired Xrimean, whom he considered the ablest and worthiest of all to head the nation, not only as Patriarch but also as Catholicos. In 1883 when candidates were being considered for the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin, Baronian staunchly supported Xrimean's candidacy and wrote a fable to air his disappointment at the small number of votes the former Patriarch had received from the Religious Council in the primary elections of candidates.³⁸ Throughout his life Baronian also shared Xrimean's political views almost completely. Obviously Baronian's deep admiration for Xrimean resulted in his personal involvement in his criticism of the Leftists; making his criticism passionately acerbic.

Xrimean was a man of established rectitude with considerable administrative abilities. His somewhat unsophisticated manners and blunt, if frank, criticism, seem to have antagonised some of the deputies. Frankness was a primary virtue for Baronian, who maintained that the Leftists, by forcing Xrimean to resign, deprived the community of the services of an able and dedicated leader. Their opposition was against personalities and certain social groups rather than ideas. Therefore, their campaign against the Patriarch and the Rightists was motivated by purely personal reasons. For 'all those who had a hand in overthrowing Xrimean',³⁹

claimed Baronian, profited by receiving posts in the national administration. For instance, K. Țazarosean, Baronian maintained, was given a post on the Economic Council;⁴⁰ and Bishop Narpēy was made head of the Religious Council.⁴¹

To Baronian's dismay, the Leftists, having toppled Xrimean, continued to act from self-centred prejudice. With no evidence for questioning the loyalty of the Rightists to their community, certain Leftists embarked on an absurd course of automatic opposition to them. For instance, it was Păpăzean's 'principle to call white what was called black by the "Right"',⁴² and no Leftist deputy condescended 'to approve the suggestion of a "Rightist"'.⁴³ In an outstanding manifestation of absurd partisanship, Țazarosean, who as eldest member of the Assembly was often called to preside over it, refused to give the floor to those who did not belong to his party.⁴⁴

Certain preposterous innovations introduced by the Leftists further annoyed Baronian. In order to secure a favourable outcome for their suggestions and to block opposition from the Rightists and other quarters, the Leftists advocated premature voting. It did not matter whether or not the problem was thoroughly discussed, nor did the opinion of others, nor the possibility of a third solution even better than that of the two sides. Hence Păpăzean's cynical conviction that in order to further a cause 'one should possess majority rather than reason'.⁴⁵ Once, according to Baronian, he approached two quarrelling pupils:

- Master, he maintains that four times one is one.
- And he says that four times one is four.
- Is that worth a fight?
- But, master, is it possible that four times one be one?
- It is ...
- How can we decide ...?
- Put it to the vote, suggested Păpăzean, a majority will decide the right answer.⁴⁶

Baronian contended that certain Leftists adopted false slogans, thereby misleading the community. Ō. Xōčasarean, the 'theorist' of the Leftists, provided the theoretical argument that the Rightists were 'hired'⁴⁷ by the Porte to serve its interests. His son, H. Xōčasarean who later became a deputy, belonged to the so-called Liberal wing in the Assembly but, unlike his father, was no blind partisan. Ōtean tells us that he was a quiet person who did his utmost to reconcile the opposing factions.⁴⁸ His father, however, and Łazarosean and Paṗazean, always claimed that their conduct, however senseless it might appear to others, was motivated by the interests of the Armenian people. Every single word uttered by Paṗazean, therefore, was in the name of the people and for the people. The rising trend of patriotic feelings among the Armenians provided a suitable milieu for such marvellous slogans, and Paṗazean was well aware of the advantages of declaiming 'oh people, ah people',⁴⁹ - a phrase which he abused skilfully.

This boy fell into a coma as soon as he was born. He showed no signs of life and the obstetrician was about to declare him dead, when suddenly he noted that the child's tongue was moving. This tongue, which grew bigger as it moved, in three minutes became as large as the slipper of the archpriest of the (Armenian) Cathedral (in Constantinople). Those present were stupefied ... amazed, they saw the child's tongue give birth to a handsome boy. At first, the obstetrician was terrified, but on remembering that the Almighty, who had created a woman from Adam's rib, could also create a human being from Paṗazean's tongue, he suppressed his horror and wrapped the tongue-born child in swaddling-clothes. Needless to say, popularity was the name of that tongue-born, attractive child.....⁵⁰

The use of false slogans was also fashionable in Ōtean's days. Times had changed, however, and new convenient conceptions such as 'heroism' replaced 'popularism', especially when the Armenian political parties came into existence. Ōtean depicted a number of Armenian 'revolutionary activists', who masterfully employed heroic phrases in pursuit of their own personal ends.⁵¹

According to Baronian one of T. Eusufean's main principles in life was 'talk much, listen little'.⁵² This was best manifested in his long, 'perspiring'⁵³ speeches at the National Assembly. The records of the Assembly reveal that Eusufean repeatedly quoted what the other deputies had already said; he often digressed from the subject under discussion, and philosophized on matters that bore no relation to the problem. Little wonder then that his 'six thousand eight hundred and ninety six'⁵⁴ speeches delivered in the Assembly had little or no effect.

In fact rhetoric was developed considerably by the Armenian deputies, some of whom demonstrated their skill on public occasions too. Furthermore, speechmaking divorced from action seems to have become a tradition for the next generation of Armenian deputies portrayed by Ōtean. A certain G. Nemçē, for instance, talked, it seemed, mainly to demonstrate his command of the Armenian language, using classical tags and rhyming his sentences.⁵⁵

Baronian maintained that those who held public offices should have the decency to abstain from areas which were beyond their competence. Eusufean held so many responsible positions within the National Assembly and numerous societies that it was impossible for him to attend to any of his duties satisfactorily: 'As there is no rose without a thorn, so no society can exist without Eusufean'.⁵⁶ S. Aslanean accepted the presidency of the National Assembly despite his awareness that he had to travel extensively on duty for the Porte and could not attend the sessions regularly. Aslanean's case reminds us of Ōtean's criticism of Gabriēl Noratunkean, the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs, who conducted the presidency of the National Assembly '...from Constantinople for one month, and from Paris for twenty three months'⁵⁷ in two years. Aslanean's activities, therefore, and those of many others, were as fruitless as those of Eusufean, whose '...face reminds us of

that of a man, who carefully aiming at a bird at thirty yards, and firing, finds that the bird has not even budged'.⁵⁸

There were those who were absolutely unqualified for their posts. K^t. Vazarosean agreed to serve on the Economic Council despite his notorious lack of economic experience. With no administrative skill whatever, Vazarosean also 'honoured the nation' by agreeing to join the trustees' board of the St Saviour Hospital where fundamental reforms were urgently needed. Wishing, for instance, to confer some prestige on the Hospital school, he renamed it a college and had the furniture of the prestigious Scutari College moved there. The St Saviour was in a most miserable condition when in 1867 Panosean, an editor, publicly proposed that he would restore order there if he was given a free hand. The situation was so desperate that he was granted the opportunity. His prodigal and extravagant 'reforms' soon overburdened the budget with the result that Panosean had to resign with debts amounting to 1000 liras. Baronian's verdict on Vazarosean's incompetence may be considered equally applicable to all others who undertook tasks beyond their competence:

If there are people who wish to make his acquaintance, they are invited to imagine the face of a man who, in a hurry to get to his business, takes an unknown turning and after a walk of 500 yards finds himself in a cul-de-sac.⁵⁹

Unimpeachable integrity was perhaps the most cherished virtue for Baronian. Although most of the characters he depicted were of established rectitude there were a few whom Baronian accused of appropriating public funds or receiving bribes to support a certain cause. When K^t. Vazarosean was on the trustees' board of the St Saviour Hospital, he

set himself to put in order the ledgers of the Hospital, but he was unskilled in accountancy so the ledgers played him false, and he was blamed for it ... numerous people claimed ... that many accounts went down Vazarosean's throat rather than entering the ledgers...⁶⁰

Baronian's allegations were indirectly supported by official and reliable sources, which stated that when Զazarosean and his colleagues resigned: 'the budget of the Hospital was muddled and a debt of 1000 liras had accumulated'.⁶¹

Baronian claimed that some deputies received bribes for their services to certain personalities or other quarters. There were those who received material compensation for holding their tongues about the embezzlement of public funds by high-ranking Armenian leaders. Others, Baronian maintained, received money to further a cause. Archbishop Narpēy won over a number of deputies who agreed to support the Archbishop's motions in the Assembly or to vote for his favourite candidate for the Catholicosate of Էջմիացի.⁶² Օ. Խօճասարեան, Baronian alleged, 'bulged his purse by plotting against the nation' and by supporting 'the policy blowing from the North'.⁶³ Baronian accused Խօճասարեան of receiving material compensation on numerous occasions, especially in the early 1870s when certain Leftists, including Խօճասարեան, overzealously defended Էջմիացի and its policy toward the Western Armenians.⁶⁴

Baronian held that political leaders should act flexibly, adapting themselves and their decisions to unforeseen difficulties and circumstances. Undue formality, therefore, unnecessarily slowed down the activities of the authorities; at times it even had tragic consequences. A famous case in point was the Տատախ disaster,⁶⁵ when the authorities insisted on complying with absurd formalities and bureaucratic procedures, refusing to organize immediate relief. When Mereēm-Giwli was on the Famine Committee, he opposed the sending of immediate relief to disaster-stricken areas: 'he would reflect, reason and deliberate for a year ... to reach a decision, and would send flour to the famished only when they had starved to death'.⁶⁶

Flexibility, however, should not imply uncertain attitudes. Ō. Xōčasarean changed his views so rapidly that his readers were unable to catch up with them.⁶⁷ With the accession of a new patriarch, Iwtiwčean automatically changed his views.⁶⁸ This mercurial editor, who according to Baronian had had to live on fox milk in his childhood,⁶⁹ had no respect for principles or truth:

When he thinks that truth is favourable for him, he supports it. If he thinks that truth is against his interests, he fights it with all his power. He is right in behaving in this way though; for self-defence too is permitted by law.⁷⁰

If Xōčasarean's and Iwtiwčean's attitudes misled the public, Aslanean's changing views directly influenced the course of national affairs, especially with regard to the revision of the Constitution. Aslanean's attitude on this issue veered between extremes; at times he found the instrument adequate, at others he found it inadequate. Instability of principles was characteristic of Aslanean, a 'Proteus ... in changing colours':⁷¹

When he became a member of the Political Council in 1863, he suggested bridling the Armenian periodicals. Many people were surprised at this suggestion made by a supporter of the Constitution. However, he justified himself by arguing that he had said to bridle the periodicals but not to harness them to a cart. At the time this objection was found satisfactory, but Stepan Pasha was unable to dispel the prevalent conviction that his views were not as yet based on solid foundations and that they were subject to change...⁷²

Baronian was greatly disturbed by the apathy of certain big-wigs. Since a leader was elected to a post on his own volition, he should be actively involved in communal affairs, boldly upholding the public interest. Eusufean never paid 'attention to the harm arising from failure to fulfil his undertakings'.⁷³ Aslanean, who held the presidency of the National Assembly in the fateful 1870s, when efforts were being made to improve the lot of the Armenians in the provinces, was very anxious that no criticism of the Porte

should be expressed in the Assembly, and no decision that might invite suspicion should be reached. He would, therefore, according to Baronian, remind the deputies of the right words to say, 'like a prompter'.⁷⁴

Baronian had particularly bitter criticism for Catholicos Gēorg IV of Ējmiacin, whose term of catholicosate some have found fruitful, while others, among them Baronian, have criticized it as incompetent. Gēorg did nothing to stop the triumvirate of bishops who stole precious chalices and ornaments, and virtually plundered the monastery in broad daylight.⁷⁵ More important still, the Catholicos refused to interfere to stop emigration from Western Armenia into Eastern Armenia in the wake of the Russo-Turkish war - an issue which was crucial in view of the alarming proportions emigration had assumed by then. Partizakçi, who had gone to seek the Catholicos's help, awakened 'the Catholicos, who having asked 'who is that' turned over and went to sleep again'.⁷⁷

Two other factors may have further embittered Baronian. Gēorg had been elected Patriarch on the understanding that he would support constitutionalism. After initial support, Gēorg had turned against it when he had realised that it was devised to curb his powers. Secondly, Gēorg had made some attempts to discredit Xrimean and to have him overthrown⁷⁸ for alleged conspiracy to undermine the role of Ējmiacin and to make Sis into a rival seat. While these two factors do help us to understand Baronian's wrath, his overriding concern was Gēorg's passive attitude toward the 'Polozhenie'.

When Gēorg had emerged as the sole candidate of the Western Armenians for the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin, he had promised, upon being elected Catholicos, to do his best to have the 'Polozhenie' modified so as to accord with the rights and traditions of the Armenian church. Gēorg failed to fulfil his promise, manifesting

no reaction to the restrictions imposed on him and his church - restrictions which turned Ējmiacin into a mere monastery, like hundreds of other Armenian monasteries. Baronian expected Gēorg to fight for the rights of his flock, like Xrimean, who submitted a documented report on misgovernment in Armenia, and like Varžapetean, who continued Xrimean's line and made the Armenian Question into an international issue. Instead, Gēorg obsequiously succumbed to the Tsar's government, giving, according to Baronian, an oath

...To be a faithful and obedient subject ... to the last moment of my life ... not to talk, not to hold my tongue, not to sleep, not to wake up, not to laugh, not to cry, not to sit down, not to stand up, not to sneeze, not to cough, and not even to comb my beard without the sublime permission and decree of His Imperial Majesty...⁷⁹

Audacity was a highly esteemed quality for Ōtean too, who praised a number of Armenian deputies (G. Zōhrap and others) at the Ottoman Parliament, for their valiant defence of the rights of the Armenian community.⁸⁰ Only dedicated leaders could disregard risks and measure up to the expectations of both satirists.

Baronian found no consolation in the performance of certain other priests who, by virtue of the Ottoman political system, were entrusted with the actual leadership of the community. Money motivated the activities of Bishop Tigranean, something of an adventurer. When Baronian wrote Tigranean's biography, the latter was sixty-five years old. Baronian divided Tigranean's life into four quarters: one quarter Tigranean had spent in travelling; the second in prison; the third 'stirring up ashes';⁸¹ and the fourth collecting funds. The nominal reason for his travels was to raise money for setting up schools and promoting education among the Armenians. But he unscrupulously appropriated the funds raised. Of course, this situation could not last long and soon he had to

think of other ways of making money. So he began working miracles: 'He cured the lame, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the possessed, the palsied'⁸² by sprinkling holy water on them. Finally, by the time Tigranean's biography was written, his last resort for raising money was by ordination of priests: Tigranean had assiduously ordained 'more than four thousand'⁸³ priests. In Tigranean's portrait, Baronian drew two miniature caricatures of this swindler for whom money was the ultimate meaning of life:

Bishop Mkrtič Tigranean is of middle height; he has a dark face and small eyes. When he walks in a street, he looks at people so attentively that one feels obliged to feel one's pocket to make sure one's watch is still there.

If we were to paint his face ... we would have a picture saying: Would you please, with no fuss, give me your purse so that I can ordain you priest.⁸⁴

Archbishop Narpēy was a much more 'sophisticated' character. He was well known as a writer, and a brilliant orator; and his active participation on behalf of the Armenian Question had brought him massive popularity. He was an 'honorary member of French literary clubs',⁸⁵ was decorated by 'several European States',⁸⁶ and had won the 'sympathy of the corps diplomatique in Constantinople'.⁸⁷ Yet Baronian presented to the Armenian public an entirely different picture of Narpēy, who was known for his staunch support of the 'Polozhenie' and for his consistent anti-Xrimean line.

As a celibate priest Narpēy was supposed to be an example of chastity and to conduct a simple life devoted to his flock. But Narpēy was far from being such a paragon: he used face-powder and hair-oil and paid excessive attention to his attire. Baronian was also displeased by the effeminate manners of this weak-willed character, whose other weakness was womanising, although Narpēy, shyly, never looked at women 'when in a crowd' or '...if they were old'.⁸⁸ His character was entirely devoid of any virtue for Baronian and all his principles were dominated by money:

Love your father and mother ... if they are rich.
 Love your enemies ... outwardly.
 Do not lie ... if it serves no purpose.⁸⁹

One of the major and insoluble problems that always faced the Patriarchate was the problem of providing the Armenian provinces with suitable prelates. Life was rather rigorous there and the members of the Armenian hierarchy were reluctant to take assignments there. The Patriarchate could exercise only moral pressure in such cases, which would not always produce desirable results. Archbishop Narpēy was one of those bishops who would not move an inch from Constantinople, where, he thought, he would always be in the limelight, could move in the fast set of Armenians, and would be more able to realize his plan to be elected Patriarch. Several Armenian communities invited him to be their pastor but he always found pretexts for declining their requests. Once, for instance, Narpēy demanded so much in travel expenses that, according to Baronian, it would have been enough to move the whole community⁹⁰ to Constantinople. Later, in the wake of the Russo-Ottoman war, when the national authorities were seriously concerned about the preservation of the ever-decreasing number of the Armenian population in the provinces, and were badly in need of missions in Armenia for this purpose, Narpēy demanded the impossible sum of three thousand liras, 'four horses, two carts and twelve bottles of eau de lavande'⁹¹ to undertake this important task. By contrast, another priest, Vahan Partizakçi, readily agreed to go on the mission, demanding only 'a rifle and twelve bottles of raki'.⁹²

Narpēy had a strong urge to ennoble himself by linking his ancestors with the Armenian royal lineage. This vain desire developed into ridiculous political ambitions when the Armenian Question arose. First, Narpēy changed his surname from Galfayean⁹³ to Narpēy (Narbey) after 'a beautiful royal dream'⁹⁴ in which Narbey Lusinian visited the Archbishop: 'I am Narpēy Lusinean.

To escape Muslim oppression in Cyprus, I fled to Egypt in 1798, where Napoleon received me with great honour. You descend from me. Hurry up, get up, put on your clothes and change your surname'.⁹⁵ Narpēy did so, but only for a few years, until 1878, when he adopted the surname 'Lusinean' (Lusignan). That was on the eve of the Armenian Question, when Narpēy's political plans had already matured. His political plan was first to come to terms with Russia for the establishment of Russian administration in Armenia.⁹⁶ This done, Narpēy would try to create an independent Armenian administration in Cilicia 'through Russian moral and military support';⁹⁷ then Narpēy's brother would ascend the Cilician throne and he would become the Catholicos of Cilicia.⁹⁸ In Berlin, when he went as a member of the Armenian Delegation, Narpēy wrote numerous letters to the representatives of the Powers and met with them to further his personal plans, rather than those with which he was entrusted by the leadership in Constantinople. But the Cyprus Convention dealt a serious blow to Narpēy's plans and caused him great anxiety. Nevertheless, ridiculed Baronian, Narpēy was 'a great man' and would be 'still greater'⁹⁹ if he succeeded in claiming back from Britain the Lusignan rights in Cyprus.

If Narpēy exemplified the bad priests, Nersēs Varžapetean, the celebrated Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, was among the very few characters who won words of praise from Baronian. Two characteristics of Varžapetean were particularly dwelt on by Baronian: his spotless character and his complete devotion to his people. His numerous offers of resignation on health grounds were refused by the Assembly. Yet everyone was aware that Varžapetean's illness was eating him up, and that he carried on at the expense of his health. This self-sacrifice had already added a touch of martyrdom to his name when he was overpowered by his illness at the early age of 47.

Baronian gave Varžapetean the credit for raising the Armenian Question. Varžapetean's efforts to bring the Question into the international arena came only after his numerous attempts to introduce reforms into Armenia through the Porte had failed. Similar efforts in the past had also proved fruitless. It was therefore necessary to act independently of the Porte and look elsewhere for effective results, - a course which was supported by Baronian. Varžapetean took the first suitable occasion, the Russo-Turkish war, and worked 'self-denyingly to improve the position of his nation. It was at his time that the Patriarchate established relations with the embassies; and had all Patriarchs worked like Nersēs we would not have had the misfortune of seeing the nation suffering excessively...'¹⁰⁰

Besides praise, Baronian also had a few critical words for Varžapetean. Baronian was particularly displeased with the frequent bans imposed by Varžapetean on periodicals criticising his actions. Baronian's Tatron was one of the numerous victims. However, having made this point, Baronian immediately generously stated that, on the other hand, Varžapetean was so good-hearted that he would regret his action and would soon intervene to lift the bans.¹⁰¹

Varžapetean had been Baronian's teacher in Adrianople, and it has been suggested that Baronian's praise, to 'some extent',¹⁰² resulted from this fact. There is no evidence to support this view. Baronian, on the contrary, did not hesitate to criticise his master before and after portraying him. Varžapetean's circular, for instance, released at the heat of the Balkan crises, was angrily criticised by Baronian.¹⁰³ Varžapetean, in an effort not to antagonise the Sultan and in the hope of securing reforms, had sought not to blame the Ottoman authorities for misgovernment in Armenia. The circular was widely publicised by the Ottoman and Western press, infuriating Baronian, who found it ill-timed. What

was more important still, the circular, contrary to the wish of the Patriarch and the Armenians, could be interpreted as a denial of the need for reform. Following Baronian's attack an immediate ban was imposed on Tatron. After 1880, Baronian continually ridiculed Varžapetean's numerous resignations, which busied the National Assembly for long periods of time. If the Patriarch seriously intended to resign, then he should stick to his guns, or else he should not submit resignations, since he knew they would be refused outright. Baronian's criticism was somewhat unfair. Varžapetean was kept in office against his will and against the advice of his doctors; every time he resigned he came under tremendous pressure from the national authorities and, paradoxically, from Abdulhamid, to withdraw his resignation.

Baronian also composed portraits for three celebrities who held no public offices within the community. Two of these were straight biographies of Sargis Palean, the celebrated imperial architect, and Y. Miwhentisean, a famous designer, engraver and publisher. Both were ideal men for Baronian: they were assiduous and gifted persons, humble and virtuous, who had devoted themselves and their skills to the service of their society.

Like Baronian, Ōtean too was all praise for Oskan Martikean, the Ottoman Minister for Communications. Martikean did his utmost honestly and competently to serve his own community as well as Ottoman society.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Ōtean annihilated G. Noratunkean, who had held high positions in the Ottoman government (Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) for his aloofness from his own people - an attitude which Ōtean found 'damnable'.¹⁰⁵ Almost three decades earlier, Baronian had condemned another celebrity, K. Eramean, for the same reasons.

In contrast to Palean and Miwhentisean, Karapet Eramean was subjected by Baronian to devastating criticism. Eramean conducted

a secluded life away from any kind of socially beneficial activities. His huge capital secured him a luxurious life and provided for his lavish hobbies: horticulture and music, innocent enough pursuits in themselves, perhaps, but carried to extremes and, in the circumstances, somewhat shocking, at least to Baronian. He is said to have had a floral collection surpassing even that of the Sultan, and a passionate love for Oriental music.¹⁰⁶ He generously rewarded a Turkish male singer with a beautiful voice who used to sing for him. It was said that Eramean once asked the Turkish singer why he did not sing in a mosque. The singer answered simply that there was no mosque in the quarter. Eramean had a mosque built immediately.¹⁰⁷ No other details are known about the life of this man, for whom the world did not exist beyond his personal pleasures. Equally, Eramean did not exist for Baronian, who punctured him in a few words, creating a masterpiece of brief but annihilating satire:

Karapet Bey Eramean was born in 1830. A man of graceful appearance, he has black eyes and black eyebrows. He built a mosque.¹⁰⁸

When Baronian published his portraits, the Western Armenians were already divided into three religious factions: the Orthodox, the Catholic, and the Protestant. The former had just emerged from a long period of conflict over the issue of the Constitution, and was far from stable. The Armenian Catholics had their own internal troubles and the relationship between the three factions was delicately balanced. In the past, this relationship had been less than satisfactory, which had had an adverse effect on the Armenian nation. By now, however, the Catholics and the Protestants formed independent religious communities and Baronian was anxious that past rivalries should not be revived. Old wounds must be healed through fruitful and cordial cooperation between the three factions, with the supreme object of preserving the fragile unity

of the Armenian people. Yet there were those, who irresponsibly and at times, deliberately, stirred up enmity, thereby troubling the community and damaging the cause of unity, so dearly cherished by Baronian.

Tēroyenç, who had been very active in religious polemics in the past, had drastically reduced his public activities when Baronian portrayed him in 1879. Tēroyenç had given up his teaching posts, had ceased the publication of his periodicals and was no longer a deputy to the National Assembly. His staunch supporters, the amiras, had lost their powerful status, while the Armenian Church, which sponsored Tēroyenç in the past, had admitted constitutionalism, yielding to pressure from the community. Tēroyenç had thus lost all the means of practical influence, which he had wielded against the constitutionalists in a consistent, if futile, attempt to put the clock back. Undoubtedly this was one of the major reasons for Baronian's devastating satire of Tēroyenç. However, an equally important factor was Tēroyenç's continuing attacks on the Armenian Protestants, which he launched whenever a religious issue was publicly discussed. Almost every single article Tēroyenç wrote in the 1870s began with a standard pattern: 'Since efforts are being made to introduce Protestantism into the community...' ¹⁰⁹ followed by an attack on the Protestants. Baronian requested that an end should be put to these attacks which, incidentally, were being made in the name of the Armenian Church and with a view to protecting it against 'heresies'. Whether due to sheer coincidence or to Baronian's criticism, Tēroyenç lived the life of a recluse from about the time of the publication of his portrait until his death in 1888.

Baronian again returned to this topic in the portrait of Misakean, whose prestige as a 'poet' still lingered on, somewhat inexplicably. Misakean's attack on the Armenian Protestants was

occasioned by the so-called Mirik⁴elam episode,¹¹⁰ concerning whether or not an Armenian Protestant could be buried in an Armenian Orthodox cemetery. The problem had already been settled when, two months later, Misak⁴ean's article appeared in the press. Baronian criticised its humourous style, which did not befit such a serious problem. He also satirised Misak⁴ean's narrowmindedness. According to Misak⁴ean a cemetery was virtually a church and, as a Protestant could not praise God in an Orthodox Church so he could not be buried in an Orthodox cemetery. Baronian did not share Misak⁴ean's exclusive views and his fanaticism which troubled the community, and quite groundlessly since the problem had been solved.

Baronian was much concerned with the Armenian Catholics, who formed an old and well-established community. Not surprisingly, the Armenian hierarchy had strongly resented the defection of its members to Catholicism, and adopted an uncompromising stand towards them. At times, its persecution had gone too far, with tragic consequences for the Armenian Catholics. The problem was complicated by the fact that the Armenian community was regarded as a religious millet by the Ottoman authorities. Hence the concern of the Armenian hierarchy and the leadership about proselytisation, which, in their view, threatened the unity of the Armenian Church and consequently that of the Armenian nation. For them loyalty to the Armenian Church meant loyalty to the Armenian nation and vice versa. This problem had also been faced by Mxit⁴ar, founder of the Mechitarist Order in Venice, who had been able to strike a balance between his ethnic and religious loyalties.

A more or less similar balance had been maintained by the Armenian Catholic community until it was recognized as an independent community in 1830; most of the Armenian Catholics had frequented the Orthodox churches, adhering to their Catholic doctrines but remaining an integral part of the community. There arose, however,

a difficult problem for the Armenian Catholics after 1830, namely, the government of the community. There were those who favoured a centralised religious system and those who argued that the community should have a say in running its affairs and in electing its religious heads. The disagreement between the two factions, known as the Hasunists and the anti-Hasunists, developed into a conflict which lasted until the late 1880s, when the anti-Hasunist movement collapsed.

Baronian was against proselytisation and preferred the existence of a united Armenian community, faithful to the Armenian Church. He was all too aware that the separation of the Armenian Catholics was final, and had no inimical sentiments against them. Baronian's attitude was governed by his political convictions as well as his concern for the unity of the Armenian people as a whole, and not by religious-doctrinal principles. He had originally fiercely opposed the Armenian hierarchy and its absolute control of the government of the community, supporting constitutionalism and gradual secularisation. Obviously, Baronian and those Armenian Catholics who favoured a religious system were in two different camps. Since he believed that religion bore no relation to political affairs, Baronian found himself sympathising with the anti-Hasunist minority, who envisaged a certain share for the lay elements in governing the community. Furthermore, Baronian maintained that religious loyalties should not impede the unity of the Armenian community. Therefore disagreement and any non-doctrinal differences between the Catholics and the rest of the Armenians should be reduced as much as possible. This was his point of departure in his criticism of Hasunean, the leader of the Armenian Catholic community, and the Hasunists, the anti-Hasunists and their leaders.

According to Baronian, Hasunean was an ambitious priest, who went to considerable lengths to achieve his ends. Hasunean had demonstrated his great love for high positions as soon as he was born. At his baptism when his godfather was supposed to ask God for 'Faith, Hope and Love' on his behalf, Hasunean anticipated him and stated his request for 'Patriarchate, Hope and Catholicosate'.¹¹¹ Hasunean disregarded the requests of his flock for a share in governing the community, and did not hesitate to stir up his own community in order to assume full control of it:

Tears flowed from his eyes in torrents, when he saw the Patriarch subjected to the increasing complaints which were of his (Hasunean's) own making; his heart broke at the sight of the unsuccessful course of national affairs, which he stirred up; he wept ... to get the patriarchal throne and heal the people's wounds.¹¹²

In Baronian's view, Hasunean, having consolidated his power, set himself the ultimate aim of separating the Armenian Catholics from the rest of the Armenians, turning them into a religious community devoid of national features. Baronian claimed that Hasunean was inclined to do away with the rights of the Armenian Catholics, who like some other Eastern Catholics, enjoyed certain privileges granted by the Vatican, to suit their own circumstances. Hasunean's goal, to isolate his community, was illustrated by his fierce fight against the 'Hamazgeac'¹¹³ society, the membership of which was open to all Armenians. The society, which was in fact founded by Armenian Catholics, had the modest aim of promoting national advancement in arts, crafts, science, agriculture etc. Hasunean was able to destroy this useful society,¹¹⁴ justifying his conduct as motivated by the interests of the Armenian Catholic community - a justification which, Baronian maintained, was completely specious.

Opposition to Hasunean, Baronian held, was ineffective and doomed to failure, since three out of the four eminent anti-Hasunist

leaders had either impracticable ideas or acted out of personal ambition. Cerenç, for instance, an active lay anti-Hasunist leader, attacked the Popes to discredit them and thereby to discourage the Armenian Catholics from recognising their authority. Baronian found that Cerenç missed the point, as 'the people (the Armenian Catholics) are bound to the religion and not to priests'.¹¹⁵ Baronian also ridiculed Cerenç's highly unrealistic conception of the way to bridge the gap between the Catholic and Orthodox Armenians, which stemmed from his extreme patriotism.

Cerenç's reasoning went like this: unity between the Catholic minority and the Orthodox majority would only be possible if one group followed the other, in other words one or the other had to be converted. And, as he found it impossible for the majority to be converted to Catholicism, he maintained that the minority should follow the majority: '... he wished to glue the small part ... to the bigger part'.¹¹⁶ Baronian found this conception impracticable. However, if in any way possible, it needed time and careful preparation of the community, for it was not easy to uproot beliefs:

He dismissed time and wanted to take on its function: and when it was necessary to remain a tortoise, he ran like a rabbit. He thought that convictions were like people and that, when a little annoyed, convictions could immediately and collectively emigrate from one religion to another, as people do from one city to another...¹¹⁷

For a while Cerenç believed in the possibility of introducing reforms into the Catholic Church itself, to make it compatible with Armenian national requirements - that is, an Armenian independent community, Catholic only in belief, and forming an integral part of the Armenian people. The community would be run not by spiritual leaders appointed by Rome, but by leaders elected by the community from both the clergy and laymen. This conception of Cerenç's was deemed unrealistic by Baronian, who maintained that the Vatican would not consent to such suggestions.

Father Kāzančean and Father Ēnfieēčean, the famous leaders of the anti-Hasunist faction, both fell far short of Baronian's expectations. Their opposition to Hasunean, a strong-willed, consistent character, was passive, irresolute and motivated by personal and material ends. They both envied Hasunean's position and wanted to replace him as the religious leader of the Armenian Catholic Community. Hence, Baronian held, their opposition was directed against Hasunean's person and not his plans, the real problem, in order to preserve the rights of the community.

Kāzančean was timid and inconsistent. At times he changed his views to adjust to the circumstances: the views he adhered to in Rome he disclaimed in Constantinople. At other times he simply withdrew from the struggle and remained aloof for long stretches of time. In 1880 he finally disassociated himself from the anti-Hasunists, despite the fact that the movement, although on the brink of collapse, still existed.

Ēnfieēčean's passion for the dignity he coveted drove him to rash extremes. He was aware that Kāzančean, his ally in the struggle against Hasunean, was also his rival; his antagonism to Kāzančean, and his machinations, considerably weakened the anti-Hasunist movement: 'The anti-Hasunists were divided into two, the priesthood antagonised each other, and Hasunean was amused'.¹¹⁸ 'When the priests were legislating useful rules for the nation, Ēnfieēčean, backed by a few amiras, would uproot what had been laboriously constructed'.¹¹⁹ Obviously a movement headed by such incompetent leaders could have no chances of success.

Baronian enthusiastically praised Father Pōynuēyriean, another prominent anti-Hasunist leader. Baronian underlined Pōynuēyriean's integrity and self-denial; he was a simple, modest priest, devoid of vain ambition and sincerely devoted to his flock. He was a pure and gentle soul, who offered any kind of help he could, material

and otherwise. The poor and the rich were all alike to him, and were subject to his tender love. All this made him the beloved of the Constantinople community.

There was one other reason for Pōynuēyrieian's popularity, and that was his healthy patriotism. A convinced Catholic, he did his best for the realisation of the 'Renaissance of Armenia'.¹²⁰ He preached unity between the two communities, for the difference between them was only doctrinal. Pōynuēyrieian's attitude to this matter was best illustrated in his book, 'Hasunian Policy',¹²¹ where he documented his criticism of Hasunean. Father Pōynuēyrieian, unlike other leaders, translated his words into actions, and actually headed the anti-Hasunist movement - although Kāzančean and Ēnfieēčean always stole the show.

Footnotes to Chapter V

1. For the individual biographies of the big-wigs see Appendix III.
2. cf. Eremean, Simēon, Father, Azgayin dēmker, gragēt hayer, (Venice, 1913), vol. ii; Pāpazean, Vrtānēs, Patmutiwn hay grakanutean, (Constantinople, 1914), vol. ii; Ošakan, Yakob, Hamapatker, (Jerusalem, 1956), vol. iv; Arsen Terteryan's essay in A. Terteryan, Erker, (Erevan, 1960); Čanašean, Mesrop, Father, Patmutiwn ardi hay grakanutean (Venice, 1953).
3. Gaṛnik Stepānyan's unnamed source is only available in Erevan, cf. Teḷekagir (Erevan, 1965), no. 8, p. 26. Also M. Pasmaĵean's article 'Usumnasirutiwn Paroneani erkasiruteanč', Bazmavēp, 1900, nos. 5,6,7.
4. Loys, 1880, no. 55.
5. Plutarch, Lives, translated as The Rise and Fall of Athens, with an introduction by Ian Scott-Kilvert, Penguin Books, 1971, p. 7.
6. Ibid. p. 10.
7. Ibid. p. 9.
8. Grakan tert', 1961, no. 15 (1083).
9. Ibid.
10. Matteos Mamuryan, Erker, (Erevan, 1966), p. 27.
11. Narpēy was a member of the Mechitarist Order in Venice and returned to the Armenian Church in 1857.
12. A doctor by profession, Barunak Bey Fēruhxan (also Kṛt'ikean), (1824-1868), occupied several important posts in the national administration.
13. Tātron, 1874, no. 2.
14. Ibid. no. 13.
15. Teḷekagir (Erevan), 1965, no. 8, p. 30.
16. Tātron, 1874, no. 42.
17. A close examination of the biographies Baronian translated from French, and the ones he wrote in Tātron, reveals the close resemblance between them. Baronian moulded his portraits on the French pattern: an account of the date of birth, occupation and activities of the figure; followed by a description of his physiognomy; and a conclusion on the outstanding feature of the hero's character. Baronian also described his hero's childhood. Although this description was missing in the first ten French biographies, the subsequent ones equally mentioned the figure's childhood and education.
18. Tātron, 1875, no. 81.
19. Teḷekagir (Erevan), 1965, no. 9, pp. 104, 107.
20. A famous Armenian novelist, satirist, and journalist (1869-1926), nephew of Grigor Ōtean.
21. A famous Armenian writer (1861-1915).
22. Eremean, Simēon, op.cit., ii. 425.

23. Mrmĕrean, Y.G., Hin ōrer puet Xačatur Misak'ean ew iren žamanakakič imačakanin vray hayeačkner, (Constantinople, 1907), p. 111.
24. PCS, ii. 349.
25. A. Makaryan, Ervand Ōtyan, (Erevan, 1965) p. 326.
26. PCS, ii, 7.
27. Ibid. p. 168.
28. This conversion came as a result of the 'Rightists' sitting in the left half of the Assembly and the 'Leftists' sitting in its right half.
29. Whence the hard core of the Leftists was also known as the Galata House or Group.
30. Ōragir, 1873, no. 1062.
31. Ibid. no. 1100.
32. Ibid. no. 1162.
33. Ibid. no. 1060.
34. RNA, session 12, 19 October, 1879.
35. Loys, 1880, no. 35.
36. Ibid. 1879, no. 23.
37. Ōragir, 1873, no. 991.
38. cf. the fable entitled 'The Assembly of the Heathen Priests, the Eagle and H... S...' (PCS, v, 333-335), which has been explained in the 'Notes on Baronian's Cicał', Appendix II.
39. Loys, 1880, no. 41.
40. Ibid.
41. PCS, ii. 15.
42. Loys, 1880, no. 35.
43. Ibid. no. 41.
44. PCS, ii. 173.
45. Loys, 1880, no. 35.
46. Ibid.
47. Ōragir, 1874, no. 1131, and 1875, no. 1672.
48. Ervand Ōtyan, Erker, (Erevan, 1956), pp. 676-678.
49. PCS, ii, 119.
50. Ibid. p. 118.
51. E. Ōtean, 'Our Deputies' and 'The Parasites of Revolution' (E. Ōtyan, Erker, Erevan, 1956, pp. 666-696 and pp. 599-635 respectively).
52. PCS, ii. 28.
53. Ibid. p. 25.
54. Ibid.
55. E. Ōtyan, Erker, (Erevan, 1956) pp. 679-681.
56. PCS, ii, 29.
57. E. Ōtyan, Erker, (Erevan, 1956) p. 689.

58. PCS, ii. 29.
59. Ibid. p. 177.
60. Ibid. p. 170.
61. Ēndarjak ōraçoyç azgayin hiwandanoçi (Constantinople), 1900, p. 115.
62. cf. the fable 'Three Would-be-Bridegrooms', in the 'Notes on Baronian's Cicał', Appendix II.
63. PCS, viii, 332.
64. In the early 1870s Baronian often bickered with a fanatical Leftist, Ōgsēn Xōčasarean, the editor of Ōragir. Xōčasarean, in his turn, indirectly accused Baronian of receiving financial compensation for his defence of Xrimean and for his anti-Ējmiacin line. He claimed that a sum of 500 liras was deposited with Iwtiwčean, the editor of Masis, to finance and orchestrate the campaign against the Left and Ējmiacin. Allegedly, the sum was raised by some Rightist 'efendis'. Now, while it is impossible to verify the allegations of either side, it is highly unlikely that Baronian received subsidies for his favourable stand towards Xrimean and for his anti-Ējmiacin course. Refuting Baronian's allegations, Xōčasarean made a significant confession that he '... refused the money offered to him officially and individually ...' (Ōragir, 1873, no. 1105) for his anti-Xrimean campaign. He then stated that he received only two liras from Ējmiacin, the annual subscription fee of Catholicos Gēorg IV to his periodical Ōragir (Ibid.). With no evidence to support his allegation, Xōčasarean implied that Baronian must have received a share from the sum deposited with Iwtiwčean. Xōčasarean's assertion is unconvincing. Throughout his life, Baronian's stand towards Xrimean and Ējmiacin was the result of his political convictions.
65. cf. the fable 'The Owl and the Monkey' explained in the 'Notes on Baronian's Cicał', Appendix II.
66. PCS, ii, 102.
67. Ibid. p. 250.
68. Ibid. p. 58.
69. Ibid. p. 52.
70. Ibid. p. 56.
71. Ibid. p. 37.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid. p. 27.
74. Ibid. p. 33.
75. Ibid. v, 113-117.
76. Ibid. ii, 154-155.
77. Ibid. p. 154.
78. Tatron, 1875, no. 170.
79. Poł aṙawōtean, 1870, no. 22.
80. E. Ōtyan, Erker (Erevan, 1956) pp. 666-696.

81. It was said that Satan stirred the fire place of the Monastery of St Karapet in Mush, several times a year; and this was why the monastery was always disturbed. Tigranean had disturbed all the monasteries he inhabited.
82. PCS, ii, 68.
83. Ibid. p. 73.
84. Ibid.
85. Araks, 1892, book I, p. 14.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. PCS, ii, 9.
89. Ibid. p. 17.
90. Ibid. p. 14.
91. Ibid. p. 153.
92. Ibid. p. 154.
93. From the Turkish word 'kalfa': qualified workman; master builder.
94. PCS, ii, 14.
95. Ibid.
96. Anahit, 1907, no. 6-7-8-9, pp. 150-154.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. PCS, ii, 18.
100. Ibid. pp. 221-222.
101. Ibid. p. 222.
102. Teġekagir (Erevan), 1965, no. 9, p. 83.
103. Tatron, 1876, no. 192.
104. A. Makaryan, Ervand Ōtyan, (Erevan, 1965) pp. 317-319.
105. E. Ōtyan, Erker, (Erevan, 1956), p. 689.
106. Minas Çeraz, Kensagrakan miwsionner, (Paris, 1929), p. 57.
107. Ibid. pp. 58-59.
108. PCS, ii, 224.
109. Ibid. p. 47.
110. Karapet Mirik⁴elam was an Armenian Protestant who died in 1860. The Armenians did not agree to his burial in an Armenian cemetery, for he had bitterly criticised the Armenian Church. Only after the mediation of the British and American ambassadors was he buried in an Armenian cemetery, six days after his death.
111. PCS, ii, 107.
112. Ibid. p. 109.
113. Founded in 1846.
114. PCS, ii, 113.

115. Tatron, 1874, no. 18.
116. PCS, ii, 78.
117. Ibid. pp. 78-79.
118. Ibid. p. 184.
119. Ibid. p. 183.
120. Ibid. p. 191.
121. Published under pseudonym, Askerean, Y., Hasunean
Kaḷakakanutiwn, (Tiflis, 1868).

Conclusion to Part I

The major stimulus for Baronian's critique of the Armenian leadership clearly was his own political and social views. Baronian was the son of a subject people, which had just embarked on earnest efforts to improve its lot. There were many difficulties, internal as well as external, for the Armenians to overcome. Without exception, all the contemporary political problems which faced the Western Armenians were deeply reflected in Baronian's political satire.

A convinced democrat, Baronian staunchly supported constitutionalism against the despotism exercised by the Armenian Patriarchs and the amiras until the promulgation of the Armenian Constitution. For him this was the fairest of all political systems, since it allowed the government of the people through its elected representatives. The people was the source of power and law; no individual, therefore, and no group of human beings, social, political, religious or otherwise, should have a privileged status. Equality was a fundamental prerequisite for a society to flourish.

Such prosperity could only be brought about if certain requirements, besides equality, were met. Fruitful cooperation between a society and its political administration was an important factor. Both parties had rights and duties to fulfil. The leaders were mere servants of the people, elected to promote, first and foremost, the interests of the majority. Baronian was much more demanding towards those who held more sensitive positions; his views on Xrimean, Varžapetean and Catholicos Gēorg IV, attest to this. The people, on the other hand, were bound to carry out the policies of the administration, whose activities should always be under close scrutiny. He envisaged a greater, though somewhat excessive (and therefore impractical) control by the people over the executive,

than any of his contemporaries, including N. Rusinean, the principal author of the Armenian Constitution. Of course, there were thinkers with far more radical ideas at the time; M. Nalbandean, for instance, who was a revolutionary democrat. Nevertheless, none of them suggested as vigorous a control as that advocated by Baronian.

Equally important was the framework of laws which regulated the government of a society. Such a set of regulations should be as perfect as possible. It should be flexible to suit the changing needs of a society and should be coupled with executive power and financial resources to be properly implemented. Precisely because its lack of these qualities, Baronian found the Armenian Constitution inadequate. For a while, therefore, he insisted on its revision; but he soon disregarded the document, since he realized that, while it brought some order to the internal government of the Armenians, it could in no way regulate inter-communal relations in the empire. He began to see the problem in its wider context, that is in terms of the political structure of the Ottoman Empire.

The autocratic Ottoman political system was a far cry from Baronian's ideal political vision. He could not criticise the system openly, but his views on the Armenian political system can be applied equally to the Ottoman. The Ottoman political system was in conflict with Baronian's political conceptions in that it was based on religious principles - an alien religion, to boot - and on the supremacy of certain ethnic elements. Baronian was in favour of constitutionalism and secularism, and his ideas in this respect were more radical than those of the Young Ottomans. Baronian was a Christian and was more receptive to Western ideas than the Young Ottomans, who could not abandon Islamic civilization overnight. The diverse cultural-religious backgrounds of the Young

Ottomans and of Baronian were certainly largely responsible for their respective attitudes. The Ottoman political system was based on inequality, which Baronian could not tolerate. If he could not criticise the source of this inequality, he pinpointed its disastrous results. Confining himself to Armenia, Baronian demonstrated that inequality, negligence and incompetence accounted for misgovernment in the Armenian provinces. No other Armenian journalist was as consistent and as bold as Baronian in exposing Ottoman internal policy.

Peaceful reform was Baronian's solution for restoring order and justice. He did not advocate separatism, nor violence - though he did encourage self-defence by the individual. He believed that minorities of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds could live together under a just administration. The government, however, should guarantee at least the basic human rights for its subjects: security of life and property, for instance. The Ottoman government failed to comply with this requirement in Armenia. This fact partly explains Baronian's abstention from even lip service to the modest achievements of the Ottoman reformers, since reform had had very little or no effect in the Armenian Provinces. Besides, social and political reform should be given priority over the military aspects of modernisation. Furthermore, he found that the overwhelming majority of Ottoman subjects were unconvinced of the usefulness of reform, which hindered the half-hearted efforts of the administration and accounted for its unwillingness to reorganise the empire. In addition, the empire still lacked the expertise and the financial resources to implement reform. External help and pressure, therefore, were deemed necessary by Baronian to compel an unwilling and incapable administration to introduce fundamental reform to the weakened empire, whose fate was now at the mercy of Europe.

The advanced West was the only source which could help modernise the empire. But, to Baronian's disappointment, Europe was governed by political and economic interests rather than humanitarian goals. Baronian was much concerned with the fate of the entire Ottoman population, but his concern for his people and other non-Muslim minorities, understandably, was greater. Their plight was worse, and, consequently, needed urgent attention. Hence Baronian's support for the Armenian Question and his praise for Varžapetean for making it an international issue; the Christian West might be interested in the fate of other Christians. Many European states, however, manifested little or no concern particularly with the plight of the Armenians; and Baronian became aware that their rivalries, their selfish ends and their disunity prevented them from applying effective pressure upon the Porte.

Baronian was one of the outstanding representatives of emerging Armenian nationalism. However, his nationalism was healthy and devoid of any chauvinistic or fanatical elements. His support for the Armenian Constitution was also motivated by his concern for a united nation. His religious tolerance and preoccupation with a cordial relationship between the religious factions of the community also point to the emphasis he laid on the idea of unity. On the other hand, his concern for the entire Ottoman population indicated the humanitarian aspects of his political views. His political criticism, which deeply reflected the realities of Armenian life, illustrated the dire consequences an unjust and incompetent administration could impose on its subjects, exemplified by the case of the Armenians.

PART II

HAGOP BARONIAN'S SOCIAL SATIRE

CHAPTER VI

BARONIAN'S COMEDIES AND HIS SATIRICAL

NOVEL 'THE MOST HONOURABLE BEGGARS'

At their seminary on the Island of St Lazarus, the Mechitarist Fathers often encouraged their students to perform comic scenes for recreational purposes. Such performances usually followed a tragedy to dispel its heavy impact on the audience. Not surprisingly, comedy was regarded as a 'low' genre in St Lazarus. Conversely, tragedy was taken much more seriously as an effective visual and emotional means of instilling religious and moral values in the characters of the future monks. Although only a few samples of the Mechitarist comic heritage are extant, it is doubtful that their comic scenes, farces and comedies had any remarkable artistic merit. Nevertheless, their comic performances, begun in the second half of the eighteenth century, greatly contributed to the formation of the Modern Western Armenian language, and marked the rise of a new genre in the history of modern Armenian literature: comedy.

Theatrical performances were not confined to the monastery of St Lazarus. As the Mechitarists began to organise an extensive educational network, their theatrical traditions were transplanted and developed in the schools they set up in the Armenian communities. Two such schools were founded in Constantinople in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The theatrical performances of the students from these schools seem to have had a rapid success, as other Armenian schools soon followed their example. By the 1850s local talents had organised a number of theatrical groups in the Armenian quarters of Constantinople. In less than a decade the first Armenian professional troupe had come into being. Throughout,

the Mechitarists played a most important role in the rise of modern Armenian theatre. Of course, it was beyond the objectives of a religious order to establish professional theatres; but it did provide the élan and the cadre. Indeed, the majority of the founders of modern Armenian theatre (playwrights and actors as well as directors) were Mechitarist students, who had acquired their training and their taste for the art of the stage in the Mechitarist schools.

No less important was the political consciousness of the Armenians in the 1850s, which was greatly enhanced by the promulgation of the Constitution and the Zeytun events in the early 1860s. The playwrights of the time echoed the prevalent patriotic sentiments, invoking and incarnating glorious national moments and heroes on stage. Naturally, greater emphasis was laid upon tragedy; and comedy, as a genre, attracted little attention. The vacuum was admirably filled by visiting Western troupes, notably Italian and French companies, by translations, and by some original Armenian comic writings of no lasting importance. An Armenian comedy was published in Calcutta in 1821, reflecting certain aspects of the life of the community in India. The English theatre there must have inspired the anonymous author, who attested that in writing his comedy he took 'example from English authors'.¹ A few Armenian comedies also appeared elsewhere, but Archbishop Narpēy's comedy entitled Alafranka, published in 1862, stands head and shoulders above all his predecessors.

Alafranka is a comedy in five acts with twenty-one characters. It is written in modern Western Armenian, peppered with dialogues in dialect and some French for characterisation purposes. Narpēy, a former Mechitarist, has no female characters in his play. Whether he was following the Mechitarist tradition in this respect or was restricted by his religious outlook is a difficult question

to answer.

Blind imitation of Western manners is Narpēy's subject in Alafranka. The influence of Molière, especially his Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, is discernible, though Narpēy has been able to develop a basically original plot. His characters are provincial Armenians some of whom have moved to Constantinople, where they have adopted 'frankish' manners. Eventually, Narpēy has them renounce their acquired habits and sends them back to the Armenian provinces. The structure of the play is reasonably successful and a few characters are notable for their local flavour. The comedy enjoyed wide popularity at the time but has been totally forgotten since.

Barely a year elapsed after the publication of Alafranka, before Gabriēl Sundukean² produced his first vaudeville in Tiflis in 1863. This was subsequently followed by a number of comedies which brought Sundukean universal acclaim as the founder of modern Armenian drama. Baronian wrote his first play in 1865.

Both Baronian and Sundukean had no extensive native Armenian tradition to assimilate or to draw on. Sundukean chose to mirror the everyday life of the community in Tiflis, writing his comedies in the Armenian dialect of the Georgian capital. Sundukean's exclusive depiction of local life is perhaps the major reason which accounts for the absence of formative influences from abroad in his work. Sundukean was particularly absorbed by the social conflicts which had afflicted the community: the effects of money on human relations and especially, marriage; the relentless struggle between traditional and new concepts and moral standards; the mechanical imitation of the West, and other social issues reflected against the background of local life. So faithfully and vividly did Sundukean reflect the social realities of colourful Tiflis that the Georgians have considered him as one of their own

writers. His comedies have been translated into Georgian (and some other languages) and the best of his comic inventions have constantly been on the Georgian stage ever since their creation.

Baronian looked westward for the source of his artistic inspiration. At first, he satirised universal human flaws rather than particular social problems related to a specific society. Gradually, he injected the realities of Armenian life into his comedies, creating unsurpassed plays in modern Western Armenian literature. His social criticism has numerous common thematic points with that of Sundukean, as both authors reflected some mutual social concerns. However, the dissimilarity of their styles, of their comic heroes, the different sources of the comic effects, the structure and other details of technical execution demonstrate that they are two altogether individual dramatic writers.

Baronian became involved in acting and writing comic plays as soon as he moved from Adrianople to Constantinople in the early 1860s. None of his first experiments are extant. His first comedy, A Servant of Two Masters written in 1865, was published for the first time in 1911, twenty years after his death. This play may serve us as a representative example, and might possibly be the best example, of his early comedies. Baronian's second comedy, The Oriental Dentist, was made available to the public in 1869. Baronian seems to have been dissatisfied with its literary quality as he reportedly withdrew copies from the bookshops. For artistic reasons, which will be discussed later, Baronian never completed his third comedy The Flatterer, written in 1872-73, and published only in 1920. Almost fifteen years elapsed before Baronian produced his fourth and major comedy Uncle Balthazar, which appeared in instalments in his satirical periodical Xikar in 1886-87. In the interim Baronian wrote his satirical novel The Most

Honourable Beggars, and had it published in 1880-81. In 1887, Baronian notified the readers of Xikar that he would soon publish a new comedy, entitled 'Dowry'. But he never published this comedy, and a preliminary and incomplete draft (eight scenes and some fragments) was found in his papers and published posthumously.

While Sundukean's comedies were performed following their composition, none of Baronian's works was staged in his lifetime; yet they were to become very popular particularly after the 1890s. Baronian did not wish to submit his first three comedies to public scrutiny; and when Uncle Balthazar was published the Armenian theatre had already been closed by Abdulhamid's censorship. On the whole, Baronian was a good judge of the public value of his works, but he may be held to have committed a serious error of judgment in not having his second and third comedies staged (The Flatterer needed only a scene or two to be completed). They would almost certainly have been received with acclamation. More important still, he would have benefited immensely from the opportunity of putting his works to the test - actual performance would have revealed any technical flaws in his comic writings, for to write a comedy on paper is one thing, and to judge its artistic merits and technical suitability on the stage quite another. It was in the light of the actual production of his plays that Sundukean, for instance, constantly introduced improvements to his works. Last but not least, favourable public reaction would have induced Baronian to produce a greater number of comedies.

Vivid dialogues and animated scenes are characteristic of, and ever-present in Baronian's works, minor and major, and clearly attest to his natural bent for dramatic composition. He must have cultivated his inherent interest in the theatre while devouring the dramatic works of the Greek, Latin (through French translations, as F. Feydit has suggested³), French and Italian literatures. To

all appearances a theatrical career was his first choice; he indulged his passion for acting and creating plays immediately on arrival in Constantinople. His obsession, so manifest in all his writings, to destroy human vices root and branch, could best be achieved through derision and laughter. Baronian had no fondness for tragedy; it was incompatible with his artistic preferences, his social aims, and his own nature, which instinctively inclined to satire and comedy. Yet Baronian had to be practical; in his time no Armenian author could make a living by writing. He had to earn his family's daily bread and to satisfy his intellectual aspirations by journalism. He was thus unable to exploit his talent fully and wrote comedies only when his part-time journalistic career allowed him some free time. In a way, and from a twentieth century perspective, journalism was a wasteful occupation for Baronian, as a considerable amount of material dealing with day-to-day affairs of the time is of little or no value today. However, even if Baronian had been given the opportunity of full-time writing, he would not have given up journalism. He always sought immediate and direct access to the public, since not all social-political issues could be made into comedies. Besides, as a satirist he was too involved to let such day-to-day issues slip by. But we can only regret that he did not find time to enrich the Armenian comic genre with a few more brilliant comedies like Uncle Balthazar.

A Servant of Two Masters

A Servant of Two Masters is Baronian's first extant dramatic experiment. Reportedly, there are a few pencilled remarks on Baronian's manuscript,⁴ which suggest that he never put the final touches to his play. The theme he chose was not new, and the title of his comedy immediately suggests that Baronian derived his inspiration from the '...good, gay, sunniest of souls...'⁵ Goldoni,

and particularly from one of his earliest plays, The Servant of Two Masters. Goldoni's complicated plot, with three love affairs and many comic adventures and intrigues, was replaced by a simpler plot by Baronian, who drew mainly on the second and third Acts of Goldoni's work.

To look for characters with flesh and blood in Baronian's first comedy would be a fruitless search. Birab, Komik's mother, is a mere puppet, created primarily to complement Komik's matrimonial plans (as Komik is contemplating marriage with Margrit, he decides that Eruand can marry his mother). If Birab's foolish and absurd phrases provoke some laughter, Eruand has even less to contribute to the comedy by way of comic features. He is an episodic character like Birab; bold, rather lustful, and with some determination to achieve his end either by disregarding Anton's opposition (Act I, scene XII) or pleasing Komik (Act I, scene XIII).

Anton and Tēopilē are dull and gullible characters. Of the two Tēopilē seems to have more nerve and a vague goal to motivate his conduct: he is worried about his nephew's fortune, which might be jeopardised if Eruand continues to flirt with Margrit. Anton is senile, and is very passive especially in the initial scenes of the comedy. He becomes more active and shows some intelligence as Komik puts into practice his machinations to thwart Eruand's and Margrit's union.

Margrit is a more complex, living character compared with the minor players. She is resolute, tactful, has a sound judgement, and some social consciousness. Her main object is to marry Eruand. Margrit is aware that her father might object to her plans but is not seriously worried about the obstacles he might place in her way. When she becomes aware that Komik is not indifferent towards her and that he has been deliberately disrupting her meetings with Eruand, she immediately resorts to a calculated offensive; she

depicts Komik as a monster to her father, thus paving the way for Komik's ultimate dismissal. She abandons prudence and counter-attacks when she learns that her father has been contemplating her marriage to Komik. Margrit makes it clear, there and then, that her marriage with Komik is out of the question and that Eruand is her choice.

Komik is the main character, and has been delineated in more detail than the rest. Somewhat sluggish and apparently slow-witted in the opening scenes, Komik is gradually given the opportunity to show his mettle. He is boastful, not without reason and looks down on his masters as stupid fellows: 'In fact I do have two masters; but I would hardly have one complete master if I mixed them both together'.⁶ He also derives pride from his ability to have been able to dupe his masters for such a long time. Komik does not lack courage either; he twice attacks Eruand and warns and bullies him. Komik is capable of flattery, of cynical repartee, and of finding his way out of a difficult situation when cornered by his masters. His comicality arises from his love for Margrit, an instant infatuation which he justifies by reasoning that if Eruand, a stranger, can love Margrit, why should he, her servant, not do so. Komik's stratagem is a simple one: to persuade both his masters that he must substitute for Eruand for the good of both Eruand and Margrit. Thus he offers his services to Tēopīlē first:

Komik. What advice could I give you? Until the love Eruand has in his heart is not transferred to mine, it will be impossible to save him.

Tēopīlē. What do you mean?

Komik. In order to demonstrate my loyalty to you,... I will have to love Margrit so that Eruand is saved (from Margrit). And we must hurry, as Eruand may well be on his way to his grave in a few weeks' time.

Tēopīlē. Really?

Komik. Yes, sir...⁷

Next, Komik talks with Anton:

Komik. She loves Eruand very much. She always thinks of him, talks of him and is living almost exclusively for him. But the problem is that Eruand doesn't love her.

Anton. Eruand doesn't love her?

Komik. No. On the contrary, he hates her.

Anton. Then we must find a way of disengaging her.

Komik. That's the object of my thoughts, day and night; but I haven't been able to find any (solution). You are her father; you should advise her privately to refrain from such childish pastimes. If she wants to love someone, here, I'm ready (for her). As Eruand has no love for her, your daughter is falling into the abyss of misery and is growing weaker day by day. For, as (our) ancestors used to say, love should be mutual. This is what I think.

Anton. But would Margrit love you?

Komik. Why shouldn't she love me; aren't I a man?

Anton. You are a man all right; but ...

Komik, Sir, I'm undertaking this enormous task only to do your daughter a favour. If you don't want me to... that's your business...⁸

Contrary to the conventional happy conclusion, A Servant of Two Masters (except for the Eruand-Margrit marriage) ends on a rather sad note; Komik is dismissed by both his masters and the gloomy prospect of unemployment and hunger looms large. At least one critic has found that this play has some social connotations,⁹ because Baronian has depicted a poor servant who has had to serve two masters in order to make a living. Komik does complain of his miserable life, but his protest does not rise to the level of general social concerns. Baronian's message refers basically to the wise old adage concerning the limits to men's capabilities.

The Oriental Dentist

Baronian wrote and published his next comedy, The Oriental Dentist, in 1868. The work, original in many respects, was superior to all Armenian comedies extant at the time, and certainly was a new achievement in the history of the Armenian comic genre. Yet it has been attested that Baronian retrieved copies from the bookshops. The particular flaws which displeased him in this comedy are unknown, and there is now no way of running them to earth. The play remained unnoticed and, to my knowledge, no reviews, favourable

or unfavourable, appeared in the contemporary Armenian periodical press. The most plausible explanation of Baronian's conduct would be that it was a typical example of perfectionism on the part of the young author. Baronian was twenty-five years of age when he published this comedy.

The factors which led to the genesis of this comedy were essentially social. Baronian observed some social behaviour that struck at the very roots of the smallest cell of society: the family. He chose a local dentist as his protagonist, thereby playing upon a time-honoured theme - the ridicule of quacks. But the dentist was not criticised just for his ludicrous professional incompetence; the dentist and the rest of the cast represent a variety of the follies and the social vices Baronian had perceived in Armenian society.

Baronian achieved remarkable progress since his first play in moulding some of the characters in The Oriental Dentist. The least active character is Kirakos, with a small, circumstantial role. Margar is too sensible to arouse much audience interest; he is a passive person, honest and straightforward, who has been created primarily as a foil to contrast and set off the qualities of the rest. To some extent, Margar also served as Baronian's mouthpiece in criticising the Constitution, the National Assembly and the periodical press of the time. However, Margar is a fairly insipid character; and Markos, Tápárníkos's unfortunate client, has much more substance. Tóvmas, the uxorious but senile husband of Sofi, still considers himself full of natural vigour. He is a now retired adulterer, who is made to wear the horns by his wife and her accomplice, Tápárníkos.

Lewon is a clever, cunning, lustful lover, with a streak of frivolity in his character. He excels in eloquence and adulation. Throughout, the reader cannot help questioning the sincerity of

his feelings for Eraneak; he has no plans to marry her and is somewhat distrustful of her. His encouragement of Eraneak to disregard her parents' opposition is motivated by lust rather than genuine love; and he asks for Eraneak's hand only when she has already fought her battles all alone. Eraneak is a snobbish young lady with remarkable will power. She has fallen in love with Lewon after being engaged to Margar. Her yearning for Lewon generates in her a strong determination to oppose her parent-arranged marriage with Margar. In this respect she is one of the earliest Armenian women 'rebels', the bearers of the ideas of emancipation. But Baronian has neither sympathy nor time for her, as her conduct is motivated by vulgar imitation and voguish trends. She has fallen for a fop, who is '...attractive, puts on new clothes, has a sensitive heart, small feet and soft hands...' ¹⁰ Baronian seems to have deliberately stripped Margar of outward charm to underline his preference for a virtuous character against an immoral, albeit attractive, person.

Niko is Baronian's best servant-character. It is very difficult to agree that he is 'un vrai Scapin Arménien'. ¹¹ Although Scapin and Niko share certain common features, they are two very different characters. Scapin, a central hero, dominates Molière's play (Les Fourberies de Scapin) by his contrivances, which are a source of pleasure for him. Niko, who is depicted in a secondary role, does not provide the main springs of action in Baronian's play. He is utterly delighted to see his masters in awkward positions but such situations are not of his own making. For example, when Taparnikos ties up his wife with a rope and heads for the ball Niko, who is beside his mistress, shouts for help rather than untying Martha himself. Earlier, Niko has his master, Taparnikos, tied up too; but he does so under duress, held at gunpoint by Markos. An extremely lively presence throughout, Niko is bold enough to seize

opportune occasions to satisfy his dislike of his masters, yet is cautious enough not to forfeit his humble position. He is volatile, clever, capable of flattery, but can also be very cynical. He is aware of Tapárnikos's incompetence but is delighted to assist him in his sham dentistry. He has a good working relationship with his master and knows how to make himself indispensable:

Tapárnikos. Do you know Mrs Margrit's house?

Niko. The one who was here the day before yesterday?

Tapárnikos. Yes.

Niko. (The one who) had toothache.

Tapárnikos. That's her.

Niko. (The one who) gave me money too.

Tapárnikos. Right.

Niko. (The one) whose cheeks you caressed.

Tapárnikos. How dare you, miserable wretch!

Niko. I'm only making sure I don't go to the wrong place, sir!¹²

If Sofi is notable for her romantic enthusiasm and her gift of deception and putting on shows, Martha, if not already senile, is well on her way to senility. Despite her awareness that her husband has married her for her money, and that she has grown too old for him, she is full of determination to get her money's worth from a man who looks upon her as his mother. Hitherto she has put up with his immoral conduct, but is no longer willing to overlook it. In the first scene of Act I, she undertakes a solemn pledge to teach her husband a lesson and to put things right; her vow directs her future conduct:

But let's leave all this aside. Didn't he know that I would grow old before him? Is this my fault or nature's, which he calls Fatura or Natura or something? To hell with him and with his Natura. For a husband, who has become rich thanks to his wife's money, to behave like this ... What insensibility...! What barbarity...! Thank God, I am not blind, I'm not hunchbacked, I have no physical defect; (she looks in the mirror) what's wrong with me...? Why doesn't he like me? My hair has grown a little grey, what's wrong with that? As each season of the year has its own beauty and merit, doesn't age, likewise, have its own? For instance, a mountain covered with greenery in the springtime offers our eyes a splendid view; doesn't the same mountain look nice to us when it is covered with snow in the winter? I'm not saying this to win applause from elderly women; I'm not a flatterer, I'm telling the truth. Oh... Husbands,

everywhere you humiliate women... But lo and behold; the time has come. I'll avenge myself on you, avenge I will. (She takes a bottle from off the table and breaks it striking it on the floor).¹³

Martha then tries every possible means to regain her husband's attention as his wife. Without attaching any serious thought to her words, she threatens to divorce him; but Tap̄arnikos would be only too glad to be free again. Tap̄arnikos takes full advantage of his wife's awkward predicament. He has never loved Martha and admits that he married her for her wealth. He treats her as a fool and is aware that she has no choice but to stomach his prodigal conduct. He derives sadistic pleasure from offending his wife and reminding her of her old age, thereby justifying his unscrupulous immoral conduct:

Tap̄arnikos. Ti-ra-ra; hello, my sweetheart.

Martha. (aside) His sweetheart!

Tap̄arnikos. Why are you alone, love?

Martha. (angrily) I don't know.

Tap̄arnikos. The madam is angry today; ha, ha, ha, old lady.

Martha. Old lady! How dare you!

Tap̄arnikos. Why shouldn't I?

Martha. Do you want me to open my mouth (and talk)?

Tap̄arnikos. Open it, so that you can get some air in.

Martha. Where were you on Monday night?

Tap̄arnikos. I'd gone to see a patient.

Martha. Tuesday?

Tap̄arnikos. To pull out someone's tooth.

Martha. Wednesday?

Tap̄arnikos. To fill a tooth.

Martha. Thursday?

Tap̄arnikos. To empty a tooth; ha, ha, ha, M'Lady is a calendar, showing the weekdays correctly.

Martha. Yes, Sir, I am... Where were you last night...?

Tap̄arnikos. Last night... I was at the theatre, where a national performance was given. Every Armenian should attend such patriotic performances.

Martha. How dare you go to the theatre without me?

Tap̄arnikos. The theatre is not for the old 'uns.¹⁴

Baronian had a clear social message to convey to his readers: that happiness cannot be bought by money. Both couples (Martha-Tap̄arnikos and Sofi-Tovmas) have concluded their marriages on monetary considerations rather than mutual sentiments. They are incompatible couples in terms of age too, which could not contribute to a harmonious marriage, as it would inevitably lead to infidelity.

The Flatterer

The Oriental Dentist seems to have been Baronian's final attempt to carve out a theatrical career for himself. He must have realised that the future of the Armenian theatre was uncertain (the Armenian theatres were closed briefly in the late 1860s), and that he could not depend on drama as a profession. However, he had to satisfy his urge for satire, which grew greater as he observed the social troubles of the community more carefully. In private life, Baronian has been reported as being rather solemn and reticent; his suppressed emotions and views found a public outlet through journalism, which he began writing in 1870.

Within a short period of time, Baronian became familiar with the Armenian journalists' world; and what he found there fell far short of his principles and expectations. He did not hesitate to air his dissatisfaction from the very outset of his career. Baronian's savage attacks on the Armenian editors run like a red thread through his writings. Some of these editors were sycophants par excellence; and flattery was one of the vices Baronian detested most. This particular moral flaw prompted Baronian to try his hand again at the genre of comedy, producing his third play The Flatterer in the early 1870s.

A number of similarities suggest that Baronian has benefited from Molière's L'Avare in creating the structure of his new comedy. Avarice has been replaced by flattery in the title and as the main object of criticism in The Flatterer. Harpagon's personality has been divided between two characters in Baronian's comedy: Yovsēp' as the bearer of Harpagon's avarice, and Tādē who reflects Harpagon's tyrannical inclinations and his marital plans at an advanced age. Cléante and Élise, Harpagon's son and daughter, have been substituted by Aršak and Tereza as Tādē's nephew and sister. Sofi has been made Marianne's counterpart, and Papik,

the flatterer, is a remote echo of Maître Jacques.

The plot of The Flatterer too is quite reminiscent of L'Avare. Tādē (Harpagon) would like to marry Sofi (Marianne). He has a rival in the person of his nephew, Aršak (Cléante) whom he has made his adopted son. Tigran (he and Aršak are Cléante split in two) is forced to resort to intrigue to marry Sofi. As a false creditor, Tigran claims that Yovsēp' owes him 1000 liras; the claim can be settled if Yovsēp' agrees to Tigran's marriage with Sofi. This enormous debt and the blackmail, reflect Harpagon's 'chère cassette' and the choice he is left to make between Marianne and his fortune.

Molière owes the structural details of his L'Avare almost completely to Plautus's Aulularia (The Pot of Gold) and some other sources. Undoubtedly, Baronian was familiar with Plautus's and other Latin comedians' works through French translations and could also read the Greek masters in the original, but he seems to have relied on Molière's play. While Baronian's technical debt to Molière is obvious and must be unambiguously acknowledged, it should also be noted that The Flatterer is not a replica of L'Avare, especially in so far as the substance of the two plays is concerned. Baronian has made certain alterations in The Flatterer which distinguish his work clearly from those of his master, Molière, and Molière's Latin masters. Most importantly, Baronian's characters are Oriental types with their own mentality, local manners, and problems, just as Molière's Frenchmen are a far cry from Plautus's Romans.¹⁵

Most of the characters have been drawn with broad strokes and play complementary roles to the major trio of personalities: Papik, Aršak and Tādē. Tigran's role is too small to justify any comment. Yovsēp' is senile, overwhelmed by the thought of the non-existent debt. In this respect he personifies one of Harpagon's qualities: passion for money and readiness to sacrifice anything for it. The

two servants, Gēorg and Bartēm, provoke a good deal of laughter by their untutored, comic thoughts and conduct. Těreza is droll, imagining that Aršak is not indifferent towards her, and has serious, albeit absurd, plans to marry the 20-year old poet. Sofi draws some attention by her determination and for aggressively ridiculing Tādē and Aršak.

Tādē shares two features with Harpagon. We are told by Aršak and Těreza that he has a tyrannical attitude towards them - which, however, has not been demonstrated in action. The second similar characteristic of Harpagon and Tādē is their wish to set up families in their old age. Unlike Harpagon, Tādē has no material expectations and is motivated by genuine love for a virtuous young lady. Tādē unfolds his future plans to his sister, Těreza, in a manner reminiscent of Harpagon communicating his nuptial designs to his son and daughter:¹⁶

Tādē. It's about a marriage (that I would like to talk to you).
Těreza. About a marriage...? (Aside) I wonder if he has found out about my love for Aršak and has decided to marry me to him!

Tādē. Although I could have decided the matter by myself, I decided to consult you too.

Těreza. Of course...

Tādē. And you can rest assured that I'm not mistaken in my choice.

Těreza. No, my brother.

Tādē. And the one I have chosen is not a stranger...

Těreza. ...(aside) it's Aršak. (Aloud) Your choice is acceptable to me too, brother.

Tādē. ...And the one I have chosen will enhance the honour of our family.

Těreza. Yes.

Tādē. A modest soul, a fine character.

Těreza. Yes.

Tādē. Reasonably educated... affable.

Těreza. Yes.

Tādē. Barely twenty years old.

Těreza. Yes; (aside) there can be no further doubt, it's Aršak.

Tādē. How do you like my choice?

Těreza. It's very good, brother, very good.

Tādē. ...God bless you, dear sister; now I can tell you all about the affair with an easy mind... Taking all this into account, I have decided to get married.

Těreza. What are you saying?

Tādē. I have decided to get married, dear sister.

Těreza. You...?

Tādē. Yes, me (looking around) Is there anybody else here?

Tereza. You are going to get married?

Tadē. Yes.

Tereza. You are going to take a wife?

Tadē. Yes.

Tereza. You are going to get engaged?

Tadē. Yes.

Tereza. You?

Tadē. Me!¹⁷

The poet is comical both as an artist and as a lover. He is passionately in love with Sofi, yet Sofi is not even aware of his sentiments. Aršak makes no effort to win the young lady's affection; he believes that Sofi is bound to love him because he is a poet - and a great one for that matter. In the following quotation, which is also a parody of the Romantic mediocrities of the time, Baronian has underlined Aršak's impracticality as his passionate feelings are poured out to Bartēm, the servant, rather than to Sofi, the object of his love:

Aršak. Ah, Bartēm (taking him by the arm). When I close my eyes I see Sofi, when I open my eyes I look for her; and this is the reason for my weakness. Let the Fatal Sisters cut the thread of my life if I am never to be Sofi's husband; let Implacable Time reap my life with its sharp sickle if fate is deceiving me; and you, O gods, at the summit of Olympus (Bartēm looks up) pour down your lightnings upon me (Bartēm is scared and wants to run away); strike me with your thunders if you are not to grant me the object of my love...¹⁸

Aršak is a self-conceited and an alienated individual, looking down upon society as an ignorant mob incapable either of understanding or appreciating his literary output and his aesthetic principles. He, therefore, thinks of himself as a tragic person, secluded in a world of his own, a world of forms, rhymes, sounds and grammatical rules and patterns,¹⁹ which, in Baronian's view bear no relation to reality or art. Aršak's sufferings and literary achievement have been immortalised in an excellent parody. His 'poem' is nonsensical; it sounds beautiful in the original with Classical Armenian elements and some 'tragic' interjections:

While the Sun heaped up at dawn,
Oh! Ouch! Human griefs stumbling along,
Alas! Fy! Mercy! Woe on me,
Oscillating. drop by drop. ripple by ripple.²⁰

If Aršak is one of Baronian's most remarkable characters, Papik is his best achievement in this comedy. From the situations resulting from Papik's misleading mediations, there emerges an original type, that of the toady, unique in the history of Armenian literature.

According to Theophrastus, "Flattery may be thought of as an attitude or relationship which is degrading in itself, but profitable to the one who flatters".²¹ Baronian's Papik lacks motive; a factor which has rendered his flatterer somewhat abstract. Baronian has condensed the vice in his protagonist, implying that it is an inherent quality of his hero. Nevertheless, Papik is an extremely typical embodiment of a widespread vice, particularly observable in Middle Eastern social life.

Papik's conduct throughout the comedy exemplifies the main ingredients of flattery as Baronian saw it: not to disagree with anyone; to magnify out of proportion any commendable qualities someone may have; to ascribe virtues to those who do not possess them; and, finally, to tell blatant lies to gratify others' egos. In the following scene Papik is seen reconciling Tādē and Aršak; the dialogue does not exhaust the full range of Papik's artistic flattery, yet it is typical of him. The quotation is also significant in that it embodies the only scene which stimulated Baronian's imagination to mould this character: Maître Jacques's mediation (considerably abridged in this quotation) to reconcile Harpagon and Cléante:

Tādē

Look how impudently he is talking to a philosopher like me.

Papik (to Tādē in a low voice)

He is indeed impudent.

Aršak

Did you see how shamelessly he insulted me, a poet?

Maître Jacques

Eh! eh! eh! messieurs, qu'est ceci? à quoi songez-vous?

Cléante

Je me moque de cela.

Maître Jacques, à Cléante

Ah! monsieur, doucement.

Harpagon

Me parler avec cette impudence!

Papik (to Aršak in a low voice)

He is shameless.

Tādē

Isn't it childishness to try to steal the girl I want to marry?

Papik (to Tādē in a low voice)

He is just a boy.

Aršak

Isn't it insane to think of marriage at his age?

Papik (to Aršak in a low voice)

He is insane.

Tādē

Shut up, impudent, the girl is dying for me.

Papik (to Tādē in a low voice)

She is dying for you.

Aršak

She loves me.

Papik (to Aršak in a low voice)

She is going crazy for you.

Tādē

Sofi will be my wife.

Papik (to Tādē in a low voice)

She is already yours; let him shout as much as he wants.

Aršak

Sofi will be mine.

Papik (to Aršak in a low voice)

Of course she will be yours; don't listen to him, just tell him that you don't want her.

Aršak

I don't want her, you take her.

Papik (to Tādē in a low voice)

Didn't I tell you that he was a boy; the girl will be yours.

Tādē

You should be grateful to Papik... I could have thrown you out for talking so boldly to me. You take the girl, I don't want her.

Papik (to Aršak in a low voice)

I was right, wasn't I?

Aršak

I don't want her, you take her.

Maître Jacques, à Harpagon

Ah! monsieur, de grâce.

Cléante

Je n'en démordrai point.

Maître Jacques, à Cléante

Hé quoi! à votre père?

Harpagon

Laisse-moi faire.

Maître Jacques, à Harpagon

Hé quoi! à votre fils? Encore passe pour moi.

Harpagon

Je te veux faire toi-même, maître Jacques, juge de cette affaire

Maître Jacques

J'y consens. (à Cléante) Éloignez-vous un peu.

Harpagon

J'aime une fille...et le pendard a l'insolence de l'aimer avec moi...

Maître Jacques

Ah! il a tort.

Harpagon

N'est-ce pas une chose épouvantable...?..

Maître Jacques

Vous avez raison. Laissez-moi lui parler et demeurez là.

(Il vient trouver Cléante à l'autre bout du théâtre.)

Cléante

Je veux bien aussi me rapporter à toi, maître Jacques, de notre différend.

Maître Jacques

C'est beaucoup d'honneur que vous me faites.

Cléante

Je suis épris d'une jeune personne... et mon père s'avise de venir troubler notre amour...

Maître Jacques

Il a tort assurément.

Cléante

N'a-t-il point de honte, à son âge, de songer à se marier?...

Maître Jacques

Vous avez raison, il se moque. Laissez-moi lui dire deux mots. (Il revient à Harpagon)... votre fils n'est pas si étrange que vous le dites, et il se met à la raison. Il dit qu'il sait le respect qu'il vous doit... et qu'il ne fera point refus de se soumettre à ce qu'il vous plaira, pourvu que vous vouliez le traiter mieux que vous ne faites et lui donner quelque personne en mariage dont il ait lieu d'être content.

Harpagon

Ah! dis-lui, maître Jacques,... que, hors Marianne, je lui laisse la liberté de choisir celle qu'il voudra.

Papik (to Aršak in a low voice)

He doesn't want her, she is yours...

Tādē

I don't want her.

Papik (to Tādē in a low voice)

Sofi is yours.

Aršak

O, my father, let me kiss your hand (to apologise) for having offended you.

(aside) We changed his mind.

Tādē

I forgive you...(aside)

Sofi will be mine.(Aloud)

O, Papik, thank you for preventing a fight between us.

Papik

My mediation to reconcile you is a great honour for me.

Tādē (to Papik in a low voice)

Let's get ready to go to Sofi's house.

Papik (to Tādē in a low voice)

Yes, we shall go together.

Aršak

Let me shake your hand, you kind man.

Papik

It is my duty, (to Aršak in a low voice) Sofi is yours now; (to Tādē in a low voice) I persuaded him to leave Sofi to you.

Tādē

Thank you, Papik (shakes his left hand).

Aršak

I'm grateful too (shakes his right hand).

Papik

I only did my duty.²

Maître Jacques

Laissez-moi faire. (il va au fils)...

vote père n'est si déraisonnable que vous le faites, et il m'a témoigné que ce sont vos emportements qui l'ont mis en colère; qu'il n'en veut seulement qu'à votre manière d'agir, et qu'il sera fort disposé à vous accorder ce que vous souhaitez, pourvu que vous vouliez vous y prendre par la douceur et lui rendre les déférences, les respects et les soumissions qu'un fils doit à son père.

Cléante

Ah! maître Jacques, tu lui peux assurer que, s'il m'accorde Marianne, il me verra toujours le plus soumis de tous les hommes...

Maître Jacques, à Harpagon

Cela est fait. Il consent à ce que vous dites.

Harpagon

Voilà qui va le mieux du monde.

Maître Jacques, à Cléante

Tout est conclu. Il est content de vos promesses.

Cléante

Le ciel en soit loué!

Maître Jacques

Messieurs, vous n'avez qu'à parler ensemble; vous voila d'accord maintenant, et vous alliez vous quereller faute de vous entendre.

Cléante

Mon pauvre maître Jacques, je te serai obligé toute ma vie.

Maître Jacques

Il n'y a pas de quoi, monsieur.

Harpagon

Tu m'as fait plaisir, maître Jacques, et cela mérite une récompense. Va, je m'en souviendrai, je t'assure.

(Il tire son mouchoir de sa poche...)

Maître Jacques

Je vous baise les mains.

Scène V. -Cléante, Harpagon.

Cléante

Je vous demande pardon, mon père, de l'emportement que j'ai fait paraître.

Harpagon

Cela n'est rien...²³

Baronian's artistic goal in this comedy has been to represent a flatterer at work, thereby ridiculing this human flaw. Papik, unlike Komik, captures our attention by his manipulations of the other characters, which account for the misunderstandings throughout the play. His character is established in revealing situations and by a distinctive style, also typical of the rest of Baronian's

heroes. Vividly depicted as he is, Papik is not the product of a concrete social milieu; and he also lacks motive - two factors which render him a somewhat abstract personification of Baronian's social concepts. In this respect, Baronian achieved more in his second comedy The Oriental Dentist, where local social realities provided the background for his characters.

The Flatterer marked the final stage of Baronian's experimental dramatic period. His next, and last, comedy, 'sa grande pièce, celle qui contribuera à immortaliser son nom...',²⁴ was produced some fifteen years later. By that time, Fr. Feydit has suggested, Baronian had become 'maître de son art', and his new work could compare with Molière's works.²⁵

Uncle Balthazar

By the mid-1880s Baronian, the literary supervisor of morals, was at the peak of his enthusiasm for his self-appointed task. By then he had also realised, with bitter frustration, that the society was not sensible enough to follow his moral advice. His disappointment never entirely dominated his outlook; if anything, it intensified his obsession to improve his society through literary work - a goal which inspired him till the very end of his life.

The major stimulus for the emergence of Uncle Balthazar was Baronian's desire to expose the incompetence of the Armenian Judicial Council, as he was utterly displeased with the irresponsible manner in which divorce and problems of personal status were handled by these authorities. His intention was realised in a plot which bears resemblances to Molière's Georges Dandin. Georges and Balthazar are in the same boat; they are betrayed by their wives and are, in the end, incapable of getting rid of them. Besides the corresponding characters in these two plays: Balthazar-Georges, Kipar-Clitandre, Anuš-Angélique, and Sołomē-Claudine, the

members of the Judicial Council at times remind us of the Sotenvilles.

Despite these similarities, Baronian's work is an original comedy. His heroes are Armenians from Constantinople, with their own distinct character and problems. Baronian's Kipar is a historical type, the product of certain social conditions observed by Baronian. Balthazar, unlike Dandin, had no social ambitions in marrying Anuš; the latter's infidelity is eventually proved, but she escapes responsibility due to the bias of the representatives of Justice. The existence of the Judicial Council is a historical fact; it was one of the numerous councils sanctioned by the Constitution to look into matters of personal status. In this particular work Baronian is no less if no more original than the French genius, who also created some of his chefs d'oeuvre by borrowing plot details, at times almost completely, from earlier writers.

This brilliant comedy has been continually on stage for more than seventy years now. It has become one of the most, if not the most, popular plays in the Armenian comic repertoire. Little wonder then that a range of extremely diverse interpretations have been offered. However, what is impermissible is the occasional tampering with the original text - a practice which seems to have been discontinued in recent times. In some productions entire scenes were left out or new scenes added in a most arbitrary fashion. Any valid analysis of this play should be based on the fact that we are dealing with an author, with a certain social outlook, whose actual comedy reflects realities and characters of a certain social environment at a certain epoch.

The characters in Uncle Balthazar have all been drawn with great verve. Vivid, vigorous and sometimes passionate, they are immeasurably more human and credible than some of Baronian's

previous characters. They are the products of the local community, a microcosm very familiar to Baronian. Even Tāguhi and Martha who are minor characters, quarrelsome and garrulous, with small but important contributions to the plot, are memorably active and colourful participants.

If Niko is Baronian's best servant, Soļomē is his best maid. She has a complex character of her own: somewhat vulgar - reflected in her style, aggressive, and firmly committed. She is devoted, body and soul, to her mistress, Anuš. Soļomē's unquestioning loyalty is, however, dependent upon a certain lack of morality and truthfulness. She has witnessed and facilitated Anuš's adultery very much like Claudine, Angélique's maid-servant in Molière's Georges Dandin. In Soļomē's view her mistress's conduct is justified since her husband is a fussy 'mad cow'.²⁶ Soļomē has always provided Balthazar with clean, ironed sheets and has prepared his meals on time - what else does Balthazar need, she wonders. Why doesn't Balthazar leave his wife alone? Sympathising with her mistress's 'plight', Soļomē performs all sorts of tricks to help Anuš vindicate herself. Soļomē's master stroke comes when, acting upon instructions from Kipar and Anuš, she accuses Balthazar of making passes at her. This scene takes place when the members of the Judicial Committee have hardly recovered from a show put on by Anuš claiming that Balthazar has just attempted to strangle her. Soļomē subtly develops the occasion into another major scandal:

Soļomē. What is it? What happened? What has happened?

Balthazar. Nothing.

Soļomē. What do you mean nothing?... Our neighbours all gathered... in the kitchen to know who had fainted. Alas, nothing can be heard from our kitchen...who fainted...? Don't tell me it was my Mistress... Where is my Mistress...? My Mistress, where is she...? Why don't you answer? I want my Mistress...

Balthazar. You and your Mistress...

Soļomē. Where is my Mistress?

Balthazar. Go about your business; (otherwise) I'll trample your head under my feet...

Sołomē. You can't do anything.
 Balthazar. Go about your business, I tell you...
 Sołomē. No (I won't).
 Balthazar. (aloud) Are you going to do what I'm telling you or not?
 Sołomē. (shouting) Aren't you embarrassed, aren't you ashamed...?

Scene VII

Enter Pāylak, Erkat', Sur, Kipar, Anuś.

Sur. Whatever happened again...?
 Sołomē. Why, look at your grey hair for once...
 Pāylak. What happened?
 Sołomē. (always to Balthazar) I'm not one of those women; come to your senses, you shameless fellow. You have a wife as beautiful as a picture, yet you fondle other women. Who did you think I was...?
 Erkat'. What's (all) this (about), master Balthazar?
 Sołomē. There are women and women, shameless; they are not all the same.
 Sur. Here is a new scene.
 Balthazar. ...(to Sołomē), Who fondled you, you wicked woman!
 Sołomē. Who else would? Why did you pinch my arm...?
 Balthazar. Shut up, liar; and leave my house at once. I don't want you any more.
 Sołomē. I won't go anywhere; I obey my Mistress's orders only. This is happening every day, every single day, I can't bear it any more... "Sołomē, I'm mad for you; Sołomē, I love you very much; Sołomē, I'll buy you new shoes; Sołomē, I'll increase your wages..." I don't want shoes and I don't want you, I tell him and run away; he comes after me and takes my arm. I concealed this till today...
 Balthazar. What sort of intrigues are these?
 Sołomē. I didn't say anything to anyone. But now that I saw you torturing your poor wife, I lost my patience, you shameless man!²⁷

Anuś, an attractive, educated orphan, married Balthazar of her own free will but has been betraying him for ten years. She has no scruples about her immoral conduct which, in her view, is in harmony with the 'spirit of enlightenment of the present century'.²⁸ Anuś is also a coquette deriving extreme pleasure from moving in the fast set. As for cuckolded husbands, Anuś believes that they should show nobility of mind and be able to condone their wives' infidelity. Instead of filing a divorce suit, Anuś explains to her husband, he should have forgiven her in order not to stain the honour and reputation of their family. Hypocrisy is also a major failing of Anuś. While practising profligacy she is extremely concerned that she should retain a

reputation of immaculate chastity. Therefore, she is prepared to go along with any plans Kipar might have to frustrate Balthazar's divorce attempts, reminding her lover time and again of the necessity to avoid scandal:

Anuš. Although, by loving you, I have only succumbed to my rebellious sentiments; although I know that it is impossible to resist the promptings of the heart; although I am convinced that I am innocent in this affair, I still want everybody to believe that I have never loved you and that I have always been faithful to my husband.²⁹

She is haunted not only by the prospect of scandal but also by that of separation. For although she never expresses it, she is aware in her heart of hearts that Kipar is as immoral as herself, and that he would never marry her if her husband were to divorce her. The likelihood, therefore, of a destitute, lonely life with the stigma of immorality upon her is the main reason for Anuš's deep distress throughout the first scene of Act I. Her subsequent conduct reveals yet another element in her character: impudence, reminiscent of that of Angélique, wife of Georges Dandin. Before resorting to intrigue, she counter-attacks with unparalleled effrontery in an effort to discourage Balthazar from taking the problem to the authorities. Her dialogue with Balthazar also reveals her social creed, her interpretation of progress and of her role as a wife:

Anuš. I can no longer bear your insults...

Balthazar. Do you still have the cheek to face me?

Anuš. I would like to divorce you immediately.

Balthazar. If you had any decency you would tear out your hair...

Anuš. Why should I...?... I will apply fragrant ointments to my hair as thanks for having been delivered from an ungrateful man like you. I regret, a thousand times do I regret, having introduced you to high society. You could not even greet (people) properly when we got married. Alas, the pains I took to have you dressed properly like a man. Alas, the trouble I took to teach you to dance. You couldn't even walk properly when we got married... You looked like a cook in your large trousers and long coat, so that everybody called you "Uncle Balthazar". Now that you have become

something of a man you are calling me licentious, dishonourable...?

Balthazar. Our kind is a bit ungrateful...

Anuš. I knew that a woman like me would be too much for you... because you had no comprehension of the spirit of enlightenment of this century; because you looked upon women as slaves. I knew all this, but I put up with it, only cursing the day on which I promised to marry you.

Balthazar. I wish you hadn't...

Anuš. My neighbours tried to persuade me not to marry you, how would you be able to live with that wood-block, they would say. I would reply that my fiancé was a good man.

Balthazar. I wish I weren't...

Anuš. After our marriage innumerable people asked me how do you spend your time with that donkey...³⁰

Kipar is an interesting type first introduced into Armenian drama by Baronian. Echoing the progressive ideas flowing from the West, Kipar and his ilk developed their own social principles, distorting the essence of the imported concepts. Anuš also belongs to this generation. Women, however, were still economically dependent on men; hence a fundamental difference between Anuš and Kipar. Anuš is subdued and upset until she is assured of Kipar's support. By contrast, Kipar is unruffled and confident throughout. True, it is not his problem; ultimately Anuš would have to bear the main responsibility for her infidelity. But it is in Kipar's interests to disrupt Balthazar's divorce plans, since he has no intention of marrying Anuš and is anxious to avoid possible damage to his reputation. Obviously the best solution would be to patch up the whole affair. Kipar has definite ideas to thwart the divorce, not without some help from Anuš. He first restores the self-confidence of a despondent Anuš, by some 'theoretical' arguments which, however cynical, constitute the framework of his social beliefs:

Kipar. I can not discern the slightest trace of immorality (in your conduct). God forbid; have you done injustice to the orphan? Have you seized the inheritance of others? Have you engaged in theft? Have you committed murder?... Not at all; God forbid... it's simply that you don't love your husband and you love me instead; isn't that your only fault, if it can be counted as a fault...?

Anuš. Yes, you, only you have I loved...

Kipar. How could you love an ugly, ignorant, disfigured and rough man like Uncle Balthazar, with whom you have nothing in common? You would have committed a terrible injustice against logic, public opinion, taste, sentiments and Nature had you thought that you were born for Uncle Balthazar... No, no, Madame, those blue eyes (of yours)... have not been created for the use and enjoyment of a rude man like Uncle Balthazar. Nature predestined you for me, but chance has given you to Balthazar... Balthazar is a ravisher, a thief, who has stolen you away - you, who are mine... ³¹

When Balthazar reveals to Kipar that he has sent someone to the house of ill-repute to verify the identity of his wife's lover, Kipar is more than a trifle displeased. However minor his discomfort, it enhances his determination to frustrate Balthazar's decision. The real identity of Kipar, 'un Tartuffe de la pire espèce', ³² unfolds as soon as Balthazar is told that his closest friend is the seducer of his wife. Hereafter, Kipar 'devient d'un cynisme révoltant' ³³ playing a key role through the stratagems he master-minds. Before implementing his intrigues Kipar tries to reconcile Balthazar with Anuš, as the whole affair will be an unpleasant headache for him. Having failed in his attempt Kipar continues with his contrivances unperturbed. Kipar and Anuš are about to celebrate a bizarre victory, when the sub-committee, which has been investigating the matter, confirms their adultery. Thereupon Kipar makes another attempt at reconciliation with Balthazar. His effrontery, his concepts of friendship, love, indeed his entire social outlook are exposed in the following excerpt from his conversation with Balthazar:

Kipar. You are grossly mistaken, if you are still thinking that I am the author of the imagined sin. You seem never to think that facts will come to light putting you to shame.

Balthazar. Yes, it will indeed come to light.

Kipar. And you will be convinced that Kipar is innocent.

Balthazar. And everybody will know that there is not as guilty a man in the world as Kipar.

Kipar. According to you I deserve to be beheaded, don't I..?

Balthazar. You are a beast to be thrown alive into fire...

Kipar. I'm sorry your ideas are old-fashioned. They do not at all correspond to the spirit of enlightenment of this century. Uncle Balthazar, even if I were your wife's lover I would not have to put up with your words, which injure my dignity. Let's suppose that I've loved your wife; what have I done to you to damage my personality? You should know that the spirit of this century condemns hurting a man's feelings. I have always respected you; and I wish our friendship would be indissoluble.

Balthazar. You destroy my family, and respect me...!

Kipar. Who says that I'm destroying your family? Let's assume that I love your wife; by doing so I've done nothing but adhere to a principle. Now this principle of mine happens to be incompatible with yours! Never mind, let our principles clash...

Balthazar. Principles!

Kipar. Yes, it is necessary, Uncle Balthazar, it is absolutely necessary for us to drift down the current of progress of our times if we want to live comfortably. The nineteenth century does not condemn a young man, who has been forced by Nature to love the wife of his close friend, to be burnt alive in a fire. The civilisation of our century seeks out the reasons, which compel a young man to love the wife of his friend...³⁴

The formidable Anuš-Kipar couple are helped along by a trio of free-lance judges: Sur(sword), Erkat' (iron), and Paylak (lightning). Baronian considered the disastrous performance of the Armenian Judicial Council a major contributory factor to the decrease in the number of marriages among Armenians. The Judicial Council normally handled the disputed personal affairs of the members of the community. The guidelines to be followed were provided by the Armenian Church and its traditions. As far as the issue of divorce is concerned, the Armenian Church was almost as strict as the Catholic Church. Except for a few compelling reasons, separation was categorically ruled out. Baronian was not advocating automatic, free divorce; rather he was requesting that unhappy couples be given a fair chance to get redress - in other words, divorce on valid grounds accepted by the Armenian Church. Such grounds were often overlooked by over-zealous priests and laymen with a view to saving marriages. His criticism was directed primarily against the incompetence of the Judicial Council and their abuse of the traditions of the Armenian Church. The

inefficiency of the Armenian authorities had many repercussions. In the first place some couples gave up their marital plans to avoid the possible prospect of an unsuccessful and indissoluble marriage. This appalled Baronian as the family was at the very basis of his vision of a harmonious society. On the personal level, the Judicial Council's inefficiency only aggravated the plight of disenchanted couples, indirectly encouraging illicit sexual relations. On the communal level, it often compelled the desperate divorce-seekers to convert to Catholicism, Protestantism or Greek Orthodoxy to settle their marital difficulties.

The three members of the Judicial Committee are the quintessence of incompetence, ignorance and corruption. They all share an appalling apathy (they do not care a whit about Balthazar's plight); they are corrupt (they have been bribed by Kipar) and they are a pack of pitiable nonentities. With a false air of formality and earnestness in order to impress Balthazar, they humiliate and bully him throughout. Their prejudiced attitude and their determination to suppress Balthazar's divorce request are evident from their very first session. So excessive is their bias that a question has been raised about the dramatic authenticity of the judges:

La caricature en est si poussée que l'on se demande à un moment s'il s'agit bien de juges ou si ce ne sont pas plutôt des amis que Guibar a amenés chez Balthazar pour simuler une réunion de tribunal.³⁵

Baronian has fully exploited the element of exaggeration in depicting these ignorant judges. The traditional reluctance of the Armenian Church to grant divorce is a major argument for them to oppose separation. They constantly attempt to counter-balance Anuš's adultery by Balthazar's immorality, fabricated and testified to by Anuš, Sołomē, Taguhi and Martha. They do not give Balthazar any real chance to prove his case. Throughout, taking

for granted that Balthazar is guilty of illicit relations, they suggest reconciliation, shamefully disregarding truth and evidence even when the sub-committee appointed by them testify to Anuš's adultery. Their final blow to Balthazar comes when they subscribe to Kipar's view that Balthazar has gone insane and that he should be confined to an asylum - a suggestion which finally overpowers their helpless victim. Baronian has in fact charged them of condoning immorality. The following passage reflects one of their attempts to mitigate Kipar's guilt, to play down the whole affair as an insignificant incident which should end in reconciliation:

- Kipar. ...Withdraw your words and apologise.
 Balthazar. No (I won't).
 Kipar. You must know, however, that the honour of others is not a plaything for you.
 Balthazar. Nor is mine for others.
 Erkat. Let's not lose time with meaningless words. We have our own businesses to attend to... our children demand to be fed in the evenings too.
 Paylak. Yes, yes, get yourselves reconciled quickly and let's wrap it up.
 Kipar. I demand the restitution of my honour.
 Balthazar. I demand the restitution of my honour.
 Erkat. It's getting late.
 Paylak. (Come on), kiss his forehead and let him kiss your hand; let's cut it short.
 Balthazar. My wife has been unfaithful.
 Sur. We are talking of Kipar now.
 Erkat. Kipar is not a bad boy... I have known him from his childhood; his father is a fine man too, Derenik is his name.
 Paylak. Really? Is he Derenik's son?
 Erkat. Yes.
 Paylak. I know (him). (What) an excellent family. His mother comes of a noble family too.
 Erkat. It's a most select family.
 Paylak. What is your father doing? Is he well?
 Kipar. He is. He sends you his regards.
 Paylak. What did he do with his horse?
 Kipar. He still has it.
 Paylak. (To Erkat). His horse is something to see; a marvellous horse, a beautiful horse that is as fast as a train. (To Kipar) How old is that horse now?
 Kipar. Eight...
 Paylak. Does it still buck as it walks?
 Kipar. Yes.
 Paylak. It is a rather difficult horse to ride. But it's the easiest thing in the world for your father. Honestly, I wouldn't dare (ride it). (To Sur) It jumps ten yards high and twenty yards long. It's a very good horse. (To Kipar) How much did he pay for that horse?

- Kipar. Twenty-five liras.
- Paylak. It would fetch forty liras if he were to sell it now. Master Balthazar, have you seen that horse?
- Balthazar. I have. (Aside) To hell with it! Whoever started talking about it.
- Paylak. How do you like it?
- Balthazar. It's a good one. (Aside) Let the devil take it!
- Paylak. (It would be wonderful) to ride that horse rabbit-hunting. (To Balthazar) Have you eaten rabbit?
- Balthazar. No.
- Paylak. (To Erkat) Some people say that their meat is sour.
- Erkat. Yes, it's insipid. But it can be eaten if it's well-spiced.
- Sur. I have never eaten rabbit. Have you, Mr Erkat?
- Erkat. No, I have tried quail.
- Kipar. Quail is excellent.
- Paylak. It all depends on how you cook it.
- Sur. Of course if you prepare it with care...
- Erkat. (To Balthazar) Let's not lose time. What will you reply? Will you still insist on your demands or will you please resolve this problem in reconciliation?
- Kipar. I have nothing against his person. I respect him as a good and an honourable man. Nevertheless I request that the problem be examined and resolved according to law.
- Sur. Master Balthazar is a good man and respects you too. It must have been a misunderstanding.
- Balthazar. What do you mean a misunderstanding...? I saw (her) with my own eyes.
- Sur. A mis-seeing, then...
- Paylak. I think some people sprinkle wine on it, while it's cooking.
- Erkat. Make it up, make it up, Master Balthazar.^{3 6}

Ögsen, the counterpart of these amateur judges, is a professional man of law. Baronian had little admiration for pedantic lawyers and regarded most of them as swindlers. He was particularly hostile towards their detached professionalism; their readiness to use their legal skills in favour of the guilty often distorting truth and benefiting from legal loopholes, stretching the law, pleading mitigating circumstances, using rhetoric and the rest. However, Ögsen is called upon to uphold a just cause. His manners and vocabulary are those of a lawyer capable of making mountains out of molehills and of speaking endlessly on insignificant topics. A man full of conceit, he regards himself as well above ordinary mortals, requesting due respect as a representative of justice. His professional identity has completely submerged his original

human character and he always talks and behaves as if he is in a court. The following is an example of irrelevant application of Ōgsēn's technical knowledge to impress his client, a man with at most an elementary education:

- Ōgsēn. Did she force that ... door open, or did she find it open and walk in?
- Balthazar. What do I care? It is enough that she walked into that house.
- Ōgsēn. This detail is important to me; I beg you to tell me about it.
- Balthazar. God have mercy! How would I know...? But there is no need to break or force the door.
- Ōgsēn. Then she found the door open and walked in; here is a mitigating circumstance... you see...?
- Balthazar. What is it...? Who is a mitigating circumstance...?
- Ōgsēn. That is a circumstance which makes an offence smaller, lesser...
- Balthazar. What do they do with that lesser offence...?
- Ōgsēn. A lesser offence incurs a smaller penalty.
- Balthazar. I can't make out the small offence from the greater.
- Ōgsēn. In juridical terms this is known as mitigating circumstances.
- Balthazar. I don't get it.
- Ōgsēn. Circonstances atténuantes, in French.
- Balthazar. I can't comprehend it.
- Ōgsēn. Circostanza attenuante, in Italian.
- Balthazar. I don't know Italian.
- Ōgsēn. Milderungsgrund, in German.
- Balthazar. Try another way of explaining it.
- Ōgsēn. Elaphryntikai peristaseis, in Greek.
- Balthazar. I know something of Peristasis; I have heard (it) many times. But I don't remember what it means.
- Ōgsēn. Circumstance attenuant, in English.
- Balthazar. Why don't you explain the wretched thing in Armenian?
- Ōgsēn. Mitigating circumstances, that is to say circumstances, conditions which render an offence milder, lighter, smaller. Extenuating circumstances or reasons which the guilty seek...³⁷

Despite his technical phrases, legal analyses, pretensions, and his detailed, albeit ludicrous, investigations (has AnuŠ fallen in love with the good intention of promoting 'national advancement and enlightenment'³⁸ for instance, sacrificing her personal interests to those of the public?), Ōgsēn is a mediocrity who must shoulder a good deal of responsibility for Balthazar's disastrous performance during his trial. Instead of giving his client practical advice Ōgsēn teaches him a short speech to be repeated mechanically. Later he gives Balthazar lessons in intonation,

mimicry and gesture so that he can more effectively implore the judges for justice. This is a significant detail: no matter how just one's cause is, one still has to supplicate high officials in certain areas of the Middle East for fair treatment. Last but not least, Ōgsēn is a rather unscrupulous lawyer, whose ultimate goal is to extort enormous sums for insignificant and impractical advice. He manipulates the situation with a magnificent yet grotesque performance: firstly by establishing himself as a competent, knowledgeable lawyer and, secondly, by magnifying the difficulties of Balthazar's case out of proportion. Having thus paved the way, he asks for an exorbitant sum of money (150 liras) for services to be rendered. And his client is too desperate to decline his legal aid at any cost.

The triangle Balthazar-Anuš[✓]-Kipar which is at the basis of action in this comedy has led many to believe that Baronian has only created an imitative farce. The Western Armenians and, later, those of the diaspora, have construed Balthazar's character as if he were a dull replica of Georges Dandin: an ignorant, provincial senile old man, who is condemned to a comic purgatory for his incompatible marriage to an attractive, educated wife. This interpretation would justify the Kipar-Anuš[✓] adultery and their social beliefs. Nothing could be farther from Baronian's clear intention and dramatic achievement.

No references whatsoever are to be found in Baronian's text relating to Balthazar's provincial background. He is neither illiterate (Balthazar makes references to books he has read), nor has he married Anuš[✓] out of social-status ambitions. He has fallen in love with her (and she has married him by her own free will) and has loved her 'like a madman'³⁹ until he discovered her betrayal. A clear distinction must, therefore, be drawn between Balthazar and Georges Dandin. Both of them share the same plight, but they

are two different comic characters. Georges Dandin has concluded a marriage of convenience (against his wife's will), and 'se trouve puni de son ambition'⁴⁰ throughout the comedy. The audience roar with laughter at Georges Dandin shouldering the responsibilities of his ambitious marriage; and no one takes him seriously when he concludes the comedy with his professed resolve: 'Lorsqu'on a, comme moi, épousé une méchante femme, le meilleur parti qu'on puisse prendre, c'est de s'aller jeter dans l'eau, la tête la première'.⁴¹

Few actors and readers from the outset probed the depths of Balthazar's character. Some Eastern Armenian actors did poke fun at Balthazar; after all, Balthazar is a comic person. But they also gave weight to the other ingredients constituting his character. They perceived the tragic streaks Baronian had blended in the composition of Balthazar's character. This interpretation gradually developed into a tradition, though the transition was not smooth as some ideological motives were added in. Eventually, however, it was the down-to-earth approach of the Eastern Armenians that helped shape Balthazar into a lively, ever-interesting character, corresponding to Baronian's literary vision.

Balthazar has some education (to elementary level) and is certainly not in dire need of financial resources. Baronian was not in the habit of saying much about the background of his heroes. We do not know what Balthazar's profession is and it need not concern us as it bears no relation to his character or to the plot of the comedy. His intelligence is not above average, but he definitely is not an idiot. He has no taste for newfangled fashions, no sophisticated manners and no inclination to mince matters. Balthazar is a fastidious man in every respect, and an extremely honest individual with dearly cherished moral values.

But his social creed is out-dated; the society he lives in no longer upholds the moral principles Balthazar believes in - hence the first comic element in his character. The second element in Act I is his boisterous nature. The first words he ever utters in this comedy are 'They call me Pałtik...',⁴² that is 'quite a person'. He has some justification for such a declaration as he has just unmasked his hypocritical wife, and the measures he has taken to divorce her bolster up his self-confidence. He believes that Anuś's affair is a recent story - a few weeks old at most - whereas he has been duped for ten years. After his first session with Ōgsēn, who confuses him with his absurd analyses casting doubt on the favourable outcome of the case, Balthazar bursts into a fit of anger, when Ōgsēn has already left:

...Intelligent you are, Mr Lawyer! we too understand something of the law; we too have leafed through "Sword of the Spirit"⁴³ as you have. We are not of those who swallow 'mitigating' things... My father was like that too, many people came to consult him. My grandfather was intelligent too - and our entire race is. We are born lawyers, and we immediately know who is right...⁴⁴

Balthazar's bragging diminishes as soon as he is told that Kipar has been flirting with Anuś for ten years. Hereafter his main comic feature is his naivety; exemplified by his inability to grasp the course of events and the shift in moral standards; his old-fashioned convictions and, finally, his readiness to go to ridiculous lengths to obtain divorce. In view of Balthazar's performance one might well ask whether he is not a stupid caricature. The answer to this question is clearly no. Balthazar's is the conduct of a man who is in a state of shock, which has almost driven him out of his wits. Balthazar is profoundly agitated and is in mental agony throughout. Of course this is not the tragedy of a great man, but that of an ordinary mortal whose moral vision has been shattered. With traditional concepts firmly dominating his mentality and outlook, Balthazar is simply

unable to comprehend how the wife of a faithful and loving husband can ever betray him. He also receives a second blow, which stuns him - when did intimate friends begin to abuse their friendship so unscrupulously? In the following scene, where Ōgsēn is reprimanding Kipar (who has already left) for his immoral conduct, Balthazar is incapable of believing what Ōgsēn has to say:

Balthazar. Please, it's enough...the important revelations...

Ōgsēn. If I had authority, I would annihilate...young people like you, you immoral...for ten years you have loved your intimate friend's, Balthazar's wife; for ten years.

Balthazar. Balthazar's...? What do I hear...?.. for ten years!!!

Ōgsēn. You have duped a poor man, you treacherous fellow.

Balthazar. It's another Balthazar... for a moment I thought it was me...

Ōgsēn. If I were Uncle Balthazar, I would tear you to pieces...

Balthazar. He said Uncle Balthazar... what does that mean...?

Ōgsēn. It is not difficult to deceive a dotard; can you deceive me? You wretch!

Balthazar. I wonder who this Uncle Balthazar is...? What an ass he must be...

Ōgsēn. But... I will have you condemned as a criminal...

Balthazar. Enough, Mr Lawyer...enough; come on...let's have your important revelations.

Ōgsēn. There are no revelations left to make... everything has been revealed; Kipar is your wife's lover...

Balthazar. Did you say Kipar?

Ōgsēn. Yes, Kipar. But rest assured, I'll make him regret his conduct... let's get down to business. First of all let's decide the fees for my future services. We lawyers are in the habit of receiving our fees in three instalments: the first instalment is paid when the litigation has been initiated, the second when it's in progress, and the third when it's completed...

Balthazar. Did you say it's Kipar?

Ōgsēn. Therefore, you must pay me fifty liras now, fifty liras when the litigation is half-way through, and fifty liras when it's over, a total sum of 150 liras which is an insignificant amount for someone divorcing an unfaithful wife. I hope... that your opponent will be justly punished. If, despite all my efforts, the outcome is unfavourable, I must still be paid the amount of 150 liras; labour is always labour...

Balthazar. Let me not get it wrong. I think you said Kipar, didn't you?

Ōgsēn. Yes; K, i, Ki; p, a, r, par; Kipar...

Balthazar. O, wretched man... it is unthinkable... and he has loved her for ten years...?

Ōgsēn. Yes.

Balthazar. Who could believe it?

Ōgsēn. What are you going to reply to my suggestion?

Balthazar. What would I reply?... God bless you, Kipar, well done ...

Ögsen. You must reply...

Balthazar. Beautiful, excellent Kipar.⁴⁵

An honest man at his wits' end, Balthazar earnestly pursues his attempts to rid himself of a 'lecher', a 'snake', an 'infernal' wife. The audience cannot fail to sympathise with him in his just cause and desire not to live in disgrace. Although his wife's adultery is irrefutably proved, he is treated with great injustice. The contrast between Balthazar's plight and his comic reactions is brilliantly sustained throughout. On the one hand Balthazar is a simple soul waiting for justice to reveal itself; on the other he is a ridiculous character in many respects. He has decided to offer the members of the Judicial Committee 'Coffee, wine, sweets, raki, fruit juice...' ⁴⁶ for them to examine his case justly! His naivety is matched by his traditional understanding of punishment. Divorce alone would not satisfy him. As his wife has committed a crime she should, according to his notions, suffer the ultimate penalty: 'She should be sent to the National Hospital (where) she should be chained, starved, beaten every night till her bones are smashed into pieces. Such wanton and immoral women should be wiped out'.⁴⁷ His out-dated views are coupled with his zeal for revenge, in pursuit of which he goes to ridiculous lengths, as in the scenes in which he memorises his speech; his lessons in intonation, mimicry and gesture; his inability to state his case clearly and to realise that the committee are determined not to grant him divorce; the exorbitant sum he pays to his lawyer. Balthazar finally comes to his senses when he, the accuser, is made the culprit. The judges decide that he has gone mad:

Balthazar. I'm not mad.

Sur. All mad people say that.

Kipar. If he is not mad, he is a villain.

Erkat. Let's go, my Uncle Balthazar, let's go. (Pulls his right arm)

- Paylak. Let's go, my dear fellow, let's go. (Pulls his left arm)
- Sur. I'm glad that Uncle Balthazar did not force us to take rigorous measures.
- Balthazar. Why are you pulling my arms? (He resists, refusing to go). What inhumanity is this...?
- Erkat. Uncle Balthazar is a good man (steadily pulling him).
- Paylak. Uncle Balthazar is a sensible man (pulling his arm).
- Balthazar. Leave me alone. What have I done to you...? What tyranny is this?... What injustice is this...? What brutality is this...?
- Sur. Our committee is glad to note that Uncle Balthazar is not raising difficulties...
- Balthazar. You exonerate an immoral wife and bully an honest husband! Where are we going...? Why are you pushing me around...? Aren't you ashamed...?
- Erkat. One more step.
- Paylak. Walk on my brother, walk on.⁴⁸

Balthazar is told in plain terms that he cannot divorce his wife. Moreover, he must forgive her and apologise to her. The alternative is confinement in an asylum. Haunted by this frightful prospect and realising that once in an asylum nobody and nothing could get him out, Balthazar chooses the lesser of the two evils. He agrees with them all that the whole affair is the result of a misunderstanding and that nobody, neither he, nor his wife, nor Kipar, are to blame. Balthazar only seemingly abandons his request for divorce, as he is full of determination to seek alternative measures. Already he has seriously contemplated two solutions: either to change his religious loyalty, or to flee to America. Baronian has not provided a definite solution; but the reader is left with no doubt that Balthazar will soon make up his mind, choosing either alternative, once he has disposed of his business properly.

Baronian was forty four years of age when he wrote Uncle Balthazar, which was to be his last major dramatic work. The comedy is conclusive evidence that his artistic creativity and outlook had matured. Skilfully employed stylistic nuances are one of the main artistic devices which help Baronian define his fully developed characters. All the heroes are distinguished by their

particular expressions: Sołomē, Taguhi and Martha, the garrulous women, with their colloquial phrases; Ōgsēn, with his legal terms and absurd rhetoric; the judges with their 'parliamentary' language; Kipar and Anuš with their pompous eloquence, and Balthazar with his terse, direct style. Balthazar is Baronian's mouthpiece for his harsh, pungent attacks against the like of Anuš, Kipar and the Judicial committee. Baronian's bitter expressions greatly contribute to the intense, uneasy atmosphere, sustained throughout. The boundaries of the comic and the tragic often intermingle. It was one of Baronian's lifelong principles not to despair at vice and corruption but to chastise them by derision and satire. Uncle Balthazar is his finest comic drama, with a secure place in Armenian theatre and culture.

The Most Honourable Beggars

The circumstances which gave rise to this novel were formulated by Baronian in the last paragraph of his work: '...to present to future generations the lamentable situation of the men of letters of our times and the appalling apathy of wealthy Armenians towards literature.'⁴⁹ Baronian himself had to endure tremendous difficulties and to accept material sacrifices to satisfy his artistic drive. However, his concern for the security of Armenian culture and sympathy for his serious literary colleagues was the major stimulus, rather than personal interest, for Baronian's attack on the wealthy. While sympathising with the plight of the intelligentsia, who found little support from the public and still less from the well-to-do, Baronian also had some criticism for them, though in a milder tone compared to his ruthless derision of Absalom.

The novel has a rather peculiar structure. All the characters, with few exceptions, appear in the work only once. The novel is composed of a series of scenes with no complications of plot. Baronian argued that the form of his novel was dictated by its subject. Elaborating a little on this topic in one of his numerous digressions throughout the novel, Baronian cited Molière's Le Misanthrope and Les Fâcheux to justify the form of his own work.⁵⁰ Although Molière's works were comedies, and despite certain similarities between them (abundance of portraits, for instance), Molière, Baronian maintained, correctly chose two different forms and the specific structure of Les Fâcheux could not have been applied to Le Misanthrope and vice versa. In the same fashion, the nature of Baronian's theme suggested the manner of representation of The Most Honourable Beggars. His intellectual types are called upon to encounter Absalom, giving us an insight into their inner world, and must disappear.

Molière's Les Fâcheux undoubtedly served Baronian as a model for the literary pattern of his novel. In that both works are galleries of portraits. But the gallery, the portraits and the painters are totally dissimilar. It emerges from one of Baronian's remarks in his novel that he would have much preferred to present his work in the shape of a comedy rather than a novel. Horace, Baronian said, would have made his theme into a fine satire, and Molière would have made a comedy out of it,⁵¹ implying that his work fell short of his own standards. Time has proved that Baronian's modesty was unnecessary, as his novel in no way suffered from its form and remains as popular as ever. With a little effort and a more sophisticated plot, Baronian could have transformed The Most Honourable Beggars into a comedy, as the novel consists almost entirely of scenes based on dialogues. But financial and other

troubles never allowed Baronian enough time to devote himself entirely to literature. Obviously a straightforward narrative account would be simpler than constructing a play. This then is how the first Armenian satirical novel was conceived.

The abundant dramatic elements of this work, then, have facilitated its conversion into a comedy. The Western Armenians simply divided it into Acts and scenes with relevant stage directions. The Eastern Armenians have gone further. The lack of a complicated plot and action have been one of the justifications for them to tamper with the text; ideological interests have been another. They have made Absalom into a ferocious bourgeois, aware of, and skilfully exploiting, the miraculous power of money. They have also found a wife for Absalom, whose character undergoes a sudden transformation as he distributes money willingly to further his economic and political influence; for Absalom aspires to become a deputy.⁵² Clearly, this is not Baronian's Absalom.

Baronian's Absalom is a historical type. Not only did the Armenians of the provinces seek wives in Constantinople, but so did those who had settled in Europe. Until very recently it was by no means uncommon for American Armenians to make special trips to the Middle East, particularly to Beirut, with the sole intention of marrying Middle Eastern Armenian girls. Absalom, too, had come to Constantinople to find a wife and to return to his birthplace, Trebizond; he had no other plans or ambitions whatsoever. Baronian's major concern was to underline his crass ignorance and apathy towards the non-material aspects of life, and to criticise the capital's parasites. Absalom is a provincial bourgeois, or rather, as Feydit has acutely observed, '*... le type idéal du parvenu mal dégrossi...*'.⁵³ By Trebizond standards he must have been a respectable and successful businessman. But he is a fool

by city standards, especially in a city like Constantinople. There is something of Strepsiades's ignorance and bewilderment, and something of Monsieur Jourdain's naive vanity about him. He could not have been a greenhorn in his proper provincial context, but is made a 'vache à lait' in Constantinople, as he proves no match for the intelligent beggars of the capital.

Baronian offers us the first definite hint about the intellectual qualities of his hero while describing his appearance in the opening lines of the novel. Absalom is a medium-sized, fat man, with disproportionate features. If Y. Vardovean⁵⁴ had met him, he would have asked how much he would take 'to play the role of idiot'⁵⁵ in his theatre. Soon, as the comic situations develop, Absalom's ignorant, vain, and dim-witted character gradually emerges. Most significant is Absalom's first encounter with the editor, the key to Absalom's future conduct. The editor's flattery arouses Absalom's dormant vanity: 'I did not reckon myself as great a man as this editor does; but of course he knows better than I how great I am...'.⁵⁶ Absalom is also pleased with the publicity he will receive in the newspapers: everybody would like a great man like him to marry their daughter. It is significant that the editor concludes his article about Absalom as follows: 'The arrival in our capital of a person such as Abisoghom Efendi will certainly cause delight to our ingenuous nationals'.⁵⁷

Indeed a priest, a writer, a photographer, a marriage broker, a doctor, a teacher, a lawyer, an actor, a barber and others fall like a pack of wolves on Absalom. Most of them get some money out of him, but not without difficulty; unlike Monsieur Jourdain, Absalom is reluctant to part with cash. He haggles with the editor over the subscription fee, which is indicative of Absalom's business-sense and his lack of interest in intellectual concerns.

Ironically, however, the writer receives the largest material reward. All his initial attempts to arouse Absalom's literary taste prove futile, until the crucial moment when the poet declares that he will dedicate his book to Absalom, publishing his name on the title-page. Absalom agrees to pay but his wealth must also be mentioned. The poet promises to write a 'pastoral' poem about Absalom's cows, sheep, donkeys and farms, which could then be published in the newspapers. Absalom would like to have the poem the next day, but the poet, sensing the chance of earning more money, objects that his artistic talents could not be forced by undue haste. This time Absalom himself offers the poet extra:

- I shall wait two months for my Muse to come and inspire me to write. Poetry cannot be composed without the Muse.
- And if the Muse does not come?
- She will come.
- Could you not write her a letter asking her to come soon?
- She will come on her own, without a letter.
- Where does she live, is it very far?
- Yes, it is very far, but she will come.
- Overland or from the sea?
- No, honourable sir...
- ...If we pay a couple of gold coins, will she come this week?
- Yes,... then she will...⁵⁸

Absalom's aspirations to eminence reminds us of Monsieur Jourdain's delightful imitation of 'les gens de qualité'. The photographer has enormous difficulties in persuading Absalom to have his photograph taken. Absalom finds no practical reason for being photographed until he is told that all 'great men' do it. No matter how reluctantly, Absalom pays all those who, in one way or another, gratify his ego or contribute to his personal ambitions. Conversely, Absalom categorically declines to assign a farthing to education, literature, the theatre or to any intellectual-artistic spheres. Baronian had good reason to make him a gross figure of ridicule.

Second in importance to Absalom is Manuk Agha, a work-shy, parochial type. Manuk is portrayed in a few strokes as the personification of garrulousness, of gargantuan proportions. He can talk for hours on end with all sorts of ramifications and digressions from his major theme. For he knows the latest news, he knows every member of the parish and everything of their past, their relatives and even about the friends of their relatives. Indeed talking is mental food for Manuk, a psychological necessity to fill the appalling vacuum of his social life. Although he is involved in parish affairs in his own way (he votes for those who buy him drinks regularly), loquacity is his uncontrollable mania. He falls into a spell of anger every time an honourable beggar calls on Absalom, interrupting their conversation. The following dialogue between Manuk and Absalom takes place after his joint efforts with the photographer to persuade Absalom to have his photograph taken. Absalom is astray in a world of blissful fantasies, searching for a suitable position for his portrait, while Manuk is trying to relate his important role in the parish council elections. No doubt, when the echoes of this affair die away, gossip will again become Manuk Agha's major occupation:

- ...Let us now resume yesterday's story...Melk'ōn Agha, as soon as he saw me...
- Or I lie on my back and my attendants help me with my trousers...
- ...As soon as he saw me he approached me and...
- Wouldn't it be more impressive with a hookah?
- Approached me and taking me by my hands he said...
- Say with a tube ten yards long...
- Those are for tomorrow, Abisoghom Agha, let me finish my story. Melk'ōn Agha...pulled me...
- I think that the tube would look better in the picture if it were short.
- ...You are right, answered Manuk Agha, a short tube would look very good in the picture, nevertheless a man who is being elected to the parish council should be honest and straightforward.
- Do you know enough?
- My knowledge by itself is of no use, one is elected by voting.
- Voting?

-Yes, according to the Constitution it goes to a vote.
 -What? Are the parishioners going to vote for a good tube?^{5 9}

The central feature of the remaining characters is their mendacity. They all have their professions, but are unable to earn their daily bread. R. Simonov, a celebrated director of Armenian origin and a student of Vakhtangov, analysed his production of The Most Honourable Beggars for the Armenian studio in Moscow in the 1920s thus:

For us the events of this play are taking place in our own days. Today's honourable beggars are the multinational emigrés, all sorts of adventurers and people incapable of constructive work, who spend hours in the cafés of Constantinople, Paris and Berlin with the hope of tracking down light jobs or making loans they cannot repay.^{6 0}

One of Simonov's talented students, V. Ačemyan, recalled his role as the priest in this particular production: '...a beardless priest with a hat, I went on stage with my belly bulging, crossing myself and singing to rhythmic music'.^{6 1} Later V. Ačemyan tried his hand directing the play in Armenia. He presented Absalom as a cunning bourgeois, and made Manuk a more conscious personality with well defined socio-political ambitions.

This ideologically modernised interpretation is incompatible with the essence of Baronian's work. Baronian had no anti-religious intentions, nor did he saturate his work with political doctrines. Much more complicated factors gave shape to the matrix of his characters. Baronian unambiguously stated that his main objective was to demonstrate the apathy of the rich and the misery of the men of letters. On the whole he had an extremely unfavourable view of the egotistical rich in his writings, symbolised in the person of Absalom in this particular work. But Baronian also praised those who sponsored the arts and contributed to the welfare of the community. The clear implication is that Baronian considered

the attitude of the apathetic wealthy Armenians a major factor in the sorry plight of the men of literature. Absalom and his like would have made a name for themselves and would truly have generated gratitude from the community had they allocated some funds for intellectual purposes rather than absurdly selfish ends.

Although generally sympathetic, the degree of Baronian's sympathy varied from one intellectual to another. For various reasons, he also blamed some of these literati for their plight. For example, he had no sympathy for the writer as such ('he looked like something, which bore no resemblance to anything'⁶²), those ungifted and foolishly sentimental popular authors of the time who have left no trace in the history of Armenian literature. By contrast, he had immense sympathy for the actor whose only fault was that he had chosen to become an actor. Baronian had both sympathy and criticism for the teacher - a man worn to a shadow, shabbily dressed. Baronian always esteemed the vocation of the teacher, appreciating the immense difficulties he had to endure. This particular teacher in the novel has also been ridiculed for his bragging and for undertaking a task beyond his abilities: the preparation of textbooks. Thus, each beggar is an individual case and some of them are certainly partially responsible for their own humiliation.

Last but not least, the socio-political conditions under which the intelligentsia lived should not be overlooked. The economic pressures, Abdulhamid's repressive policy towards the Armenians, the suppression of freedom of speech and political freedoms, the closure of the Armenian theatres, all had a demoralising effect on the intelligentsia.

Each of the beggars, not all of whom by the way are intellectuals, is an accomplished character, drawn in bright colours in the

course of their one encounter with Absalom. There are two priests - the first, expressing himself in Classical Armenian phrases and Biblical quotations, is a vivid personification of the typical Armenian priest of the time. He reminds Absalom of the Last Judgment and the need to distribute alms and to remember the dead. The first priest has decided to celebrate a mass in memory of Absalom's dead relatives, for which Absalom, following the convention, pays him willingly. The second priest is the bearer of another role which was characteristic of certain Armenian priests: the arrangement of suitable marriages for their parish members. As usual, Baronian has portrayed both of them in a mildly bantering way; the greed of the married priests continually attracted his attention, but not his more savage satire, which was for the celibate priests.

Matching couples is a business transaction for the marriage broker, who advises Absalom to 'consult his wallet'⁶³ before deciding the social class from which he wishes to choose a wife. A well-informed, talkative woman, capable of appealing to Absalom's basic instincts, the marriage broker also serves Baronian's purpose by revealing Absalom's dismal taste (he wants a wife whose 'flesh ripples as she walks'⁶⁴). No less interesting is the photographer, who likes to think of himself as an artist with modern ideas, and with an air of artificial politeness and sensitivity about him. Effrontery, however, is his most outstanding feature.

The doctor, a quack, is clever enough to read Absalom's mind. He is portrayed as ridiculous not only for wearing the mask of patriotism but also for ascribing his failure to a lack of such feelings among the Armenians:

- I have been here for two years now and have so far hardly seen four patients. You can imagine...
- It's regrettable...aren't the local inhabitants in the habit of falling ill...?
- They are, but here the patients have no national feelings, they have no idea about Armenia.
- Really?
- ...When an Armenian falls ill he sends for a foreign doctor, disregarding the fact that only an Armenian doctor can cure an Armenian... and that a foreign doctor cannot heal an Armenian...
- Too bad.
- What would you expect the national doctors to do, when (our) national patients consult foreign (doctors)...?^{6 5}

The editor excels in dishonesty, flattery, and is distinguished for his lack of moral standards. He has come specifically to meet Absalom at the port. After a barrage of conventional questions he praises Absalom as a charming, magnanimous, civilised young man of noble mind and fine aspect, like his late father (may his soul rest in peace'^{6 6}) who was one of his subscribers. The editor is prepared to go to any lengths to secure Absalom's subscription or to get some money out of him - an immoral attitude which always enraged Baronian. In the following scene the flattery is grotesque yet typical:

- I suppose you know Turkish?
- No.
- French?
- No.
- English?
- No.
- German?
- No.
- Nevertheless, I shall call you a polyglot and shall sing your praises.^{6 7}

The Most Honourable Beggars, one of the ever-popular Armenian novels, is a most important work, a landmark in the history of Western Armenian literature. Baronian's numerous theoretical digressions throughout the book, his subject-matter, and his artistic principles laid down the guidelines along which the genre developed in the future. For almost a decade prior to the appearance of The Most Honourable Beggars, Baronian had been

consistently advocating the need for a national literature which would reflect Armenian realities in a realistic manner. He made relentless attacks - which he continued after this work too, as we shall see - against the romantic and sentimental writers of the time, who cut themselves off from the life of the Armenian people. His work was not only the first satirical novel but also the most significant and influential literary Armenian prototype, which paved the way for the so-called Armenian Realist Writers such as A. Arpiarean, T. Kamsarakan, L. Bašalean, G. Zōhrap and others.

Of similar importance were Baronian's comedies, which were also an expression of his social concerns and considerable literary achievements. Learning a great deal from his Western European masters, Baronian developed his own artistic approach, creating Uncle Balthazar which is both one of the unsurpassed masterpieces of Armenian comedy and a work of notable universal value. His plays have been on stage continuously (in 1976, The Flatterer, The Oriental Dentist, and Uncle Balthazar were simultaneously on stage in Armenia). Little wonder then, that the term 'Baronian's Theatre' (which includes his novel too) has been in circulation for many decades now.

Footnotes to Chapter VI

1. V. T'ertzibašyan, Hay dramaturgiayi patmut'yun 1668-1868, (Erevan, 1959), i, 195.
2. A gifted Eastern Armenian playwright (1825-1912).
3. Frédéric Feydit, 'La Comédie et la Satire en Arménie, Baronian et Odian', in Bazmavēp, no. 7-8 (July-August), 1960, p. 168.
4. PCS, i, 449-450.
5. Robert Browning (as quoted in The Comedies of Carlo Goldoni, Edited with an introduction by Helen Zimmern (London, David Stott, 1892), p. 5.
6. H. Baronian, A Servant of Two Masters, Act II, scene I.
7. Ibid. Act II, scene II.
8. Ibid. Act II, scene III.
9. G. Step'anyan, Urvagic arevmtahay t'atroni patmut'yan, (Erevan, 1962), i, 433.
10. H. Baronian, The Oriental Dentist, Act II, scene V.
11. Fr. Feydit, op.cit. p. 170.
12. H. Baronian, The Oriental Dentist, Act II, scene IV.
13. Ibid. Act I, scene I.
14. Ibid. Act I, scene III.
15. Baronian has interrupted his manuscript without providing a final solution. Clearly he has tried to avoid Molière's dénouement and was probably at a loss for an original ending to wrap up the comedy. Perhaps he was concerned at the numerous similarities in structure between his play and that of Molière, and was disenchanted with his comedy - in any case he never published it. Ōtean, who completed the work in 1920, adopted, whether knowingly or unknowingly, Molière's recipe: Sofi and Tigran are to be married, while all the rest give up their conjugal intentions. Ōtean suggested in his introduction to the 1920 edition of The Flatterer that Baronian might have offered a better formula had he completed his comedy. Perhaps - by sending Tigran and Sofi to church and by having Papik, the chief culprit, battered by the disillusioned lovers, for example.
16. cf. Molière, L'Avare, Act I, scene IV.
17. H. Baronian, The Flatterer, Act I, scene I.
18. Ibid. Act I, scene IV.
19. Aršak's rage over linguistic mistakes and his grammatical comments are reminiscent of Martine's grammatical error and Philaminte's fury (Molière, Les Femmes Savantes, Act II, scene VI).
20. H. Baronian, The Flatterer, Act I, scene III. The original reads as follows:
Minč aršaloyšin arewn bard i bard
Oh, uh, višt'k mardkayink' gayt' i gayt',
Awał, babē, ełuk, vaš inj
Mēt i mēt, siť ar siť, vēt i vēt.

21. Theophrastus, The Characters, Menander, Plays and Fragments, translated by Philip Vellacott, Second Edition, Penguin Books, 1973, p. 33.
22. H. Baronian, The Flatterer, Act I, scene X.
23. Molière, L'Avare, Act IV, scenes IV-V.
24. Fr. Feydit, op.cit. p. 170.
25. Ibid.
26. H. Baronian, Uncle Balthazar, Act I, scene I.
27. Ibid. Act II, scenes VI-VII.
28. Ibid. Act I, scene VI.
29. Ibid. Act I, scene I.
30. Ibid. Act I, scene VI.
31. Ibid. Act I, scene I.
32. Fr. Feydit, op.cit. p. 172.
33. Ibid.
34. H. Baronian, Uncle Balthazar, Act III, scene I.
35. Fr. Feydit, op.cit. p. 171.
36. H. Baronian, Uncle Balthazar, Act II, scene VIII.
37. Ibid. Act I, scene IV.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Molière, Georges Dandin ou le Mari Confondu, avec une Notice biographique, une Notice historique ... par Claude Jodry, (Paris, Classiques Larousse), p. 6.
41. Molière, Georges Dandin ou le Mari Confondu, Act III, scene XV.
42. H. Baronian, Uncle Balthazar, Act I, scene II. (Pałtik, diminutive for Pałtasar = Balthazar).
43. Girk' kočeçal zēn hogewor, (A religious book) by Patriarch Yakob Nalean (1701-1764) of Constantinople, published in 1757.
44. H. Baronian, Uncle Balthazar, Act I, scene V.
45. Ibid. Act I, scene XI.
46. Ibid. Act II, scene I.
47. Ibid. Act I, scene IV.
48. Ibid. Act III, scene VI.
49. H. Baronian, The Most Honourable Beggars, PCS, iii, 101.
50. Ibid. p. 83.
51. Ibid.
52. For a detailed account see L. Haxverdyan, Klasikan ev mer ōrerē, (Erevan, 1962), pp. 9-35.
53. Fr. Feydit, op.cit. p. 176.
54. For his biography see Appendix III.
55. H. Baronian, The Most Honourable Beggars, PCS, iii, 7.

56. Ibid. p. 14.
57. Ibid. p. 65.
58. Ibid. pp. 35-36.
59. Ibid. pp. 57-58.
60. Hay sovetakan t'atroni patmut'yun, (Erevan, 1967), p. 217.
61. S. Rizaev, Vardan Ačemyan, (Erevan, 1972), p. 168.
62. H. Baronian, The Most Honourable Beggars, PCS, iii, 30.
63. Ibid. p. 63.
64. Ibid. p. 64.
65. Ibid. p. 70.
66. Ibid. p. 10.
67. Ibid. pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER VII

BARONIAN'S VIEW OF ARMENIAN SOCIETY IN THE 1880S

The 1880s were a most fruitful period in Baronian's literary career. Apart from The Most Honourable Beggars and Uncle Balthazar, he wrote A Walk in the Quarters of Constantinople (1880), Cicał (1883), Moral Pathology (1884-87), Disadvantages of Courtesy (1886-88), and Dialogues of the Dead (1887-88) in this decade. These and other minor works of the 1880s were primarily concerned with Armenian society.

Baronian was commissioned by S. Partizpaneian, an Armenian publisher, to write The Most Honourable Beggars, Cicał and A Walk in the Quarters of Constantinople. In the Walk Baronian painted a detailed portrait of the Armenian community of Constantinople. Describing 34 city districts, Baronian touched upon nearly all the social realities of the community: hygienic conditions, schools, churches, societies, theatres, the social classes and their occupations, youth, women, and many other aspects of everyday life.

Cicał was a collection of fables the conception of which has been attributed to the influence of Casti's Gli Animali Parlanti, written in 1802. Baronian may or may not have been familiar with this work, but it is in any case very different in form and substance from Cicał. The only resemblance between the two works is a technical one; both Casti's heroes (personifying the European nations), and some of Baronian's characters were animals. While Casti's satirical poem contrasted the monarchical concept with the republican spirit, Baronian's prose fables raised social and moral issues against an exclusively Armenian background. Given also the structure of his fables, it is more likely that Baronian benefited from the model of Armenian medieval fables rather than Casti's The Court and Parliament of Beasts.

Dialogues of the Dead bears no relation to Lucian's work - parts of which were earlier translated by Baronian - as far as the subject matter is concerned, though Baronian did draw on the Greek author for the literary structure. Baronian's heroes are not human beings but personified virtues, such as Conscience, Compassion, Truthfulness, Sincerity, Charity, Merit, etc. They have assembled in the World of the Dead, where they analyse aspects of moral decline, with special emphasis on the reasons for their death or banishment by men from the World of the Living.

In Moral Pathology Baronian depicted the portraits of Hypoptos, Stenokardos and Philargyros. Baronian derived some inspiration from Theophrastus's characters, but not from those of La Bruyère. As the title suggests, unlike Theophrastus, Baronian followed the pathologist's procedure, under the sub-titles 'symptoms', 'cause', 'preliminary diagnosis' and 'cure', in depicting his characters, tracing the deviations to their causes and suggesting semi-comic cures. Baronian also interspersed his portraits with dialogues in characteristic fashion.

Baronian's extensive criticism of Armenian social institutions, education, women, marriage, moral topics, religion, and etiquette, and a number of other social problems is of significant historical value, and permits us a deep insight into Baronian's own vision of a prosperous society. With the exception of a small number of references to the plight of Armenian immigrants from Armenia proper, Baronian's observations were confined exclusively to the realities of the Armenian community of Constantinople.

However, two aspects of Baronian's social criticism concerned the Ottoman public in general. His first criticism was of the inadequacy of public health and social and municipal services in Constantinople. The sun could not penetrate into many houses in

the narrow streets, some of which, Baronian claimed, had not been repaired since the conquest of Constantinople.¹ Malodorous public conveniences were badly maintained and corpses of dogs lay along the beaches.² Polluted streams and drains were a source of cholera, for which the quarter of Kasim Pasha was particularly notorious. The streets were filthy, and full of large holes. Pera, for instance, was especially famous for its '...lake, which forms in the winter between Taksim and Galataseray. A company applied for but was denied permission to operate boats (on this lake)'.³ Assaults, robberies, and theft, extensively reported by Baronian, were also common. Baronian thus introduced Kadiköy, one of the districts in A Walk in the Quarters of Constantinople:

First of all one should know that it is very difficult to enter this quarter... It is even more difficult to come out of it as it is (as convoluted as) the Eastern Question. If one were to enter it from the Port, the smell of six 'magnificent' public conveniences would fill one's nose... If one were to enter it from the side of the hill one should have his ransom ready for the robbers. If one were to enter it from Beshiktash, one should be blindfolded... so that the wind would not blow into one's eyes the ashes of last year's fire. It is said that the safest way of entering this quarter is by balloon; but, in my view, it is safer not to go there at all.⁴

A serious problem was the acute shortage of accommodation. Baronian reported that as many as three families often lived in a single house.⁵ Baronian wrote a good deal about the inefficient public transport system, especially the steamboats. It was by no means uncommon for boats to run out of coal in the middle of the sea and to arrive at unscheduled destinations.

The second more general aspect presented by Baronian was his view of the Armenian community as an independent but integral part of the Ottoman public and the world at large. His concern for courteous relations between the Armenian religious factions, and for general political reform for the benefit of the entire Ottoman population, has already been mentioned. Baronian was also

preoccupied with the unsatisfactory relations of the various ethnic and religious groups in Ottoman society, which could and should coexist cordially. Tension between these groups at times ran very high, for example between the Armenian and Greek communities, concerning disputes over the Holy Places, or bickerings about whether the Greek Patriarch should visit the Armenian Patriarch first on Easter, or vice versa. Perhaps the most bizarre episode was a wrestling match between a Greek and an Armenian, criticised by Baronian in his fable The Invincible, Achilles and Cical.⁶ The Armenian and Greek periodicals published 'philosophical, historical, critical, literary and commercial'⁷ articles, which often turned into racialism in an attempt to establish the superiority of one race over the other. Baronian condemned both sides for arousing the feelings of the Armenian and Greek nations, who 'lit candles day and night' and consumed 'skins of oil'⁸ praying for their respective wrestlers. Hatred was generated between the two communities by entirely false and trivial considerations. Baronian maintained that both worthy and unworthy individuals were to be found in any nation - the worthy were its pride and the unworthy its disgrace. Moreover, physical prowess, an invaluable personal treasure, was of little or no benefit to one's fellow men.

The general relations of multi-national and multi-religious groups formed only an occasional topic for Baronian, whose attention was engaged overwhelmingly by the problems of the Armenian community which, he held, was in decline. Morality, religion, education and marriage, the very pillars of a society and the bases for its prosperity, were seriously endangered.

For fourteen years, Baronian averred in 1884, he had suffered setbacks in his fight against moral and social decline.⁹ The more vigorously he castigated the vices, the more rapidly they spread.

This was however not in the least surprising, since from time immemorial 'bitter satire, well-composed comedies and moral preaching'¹⁰ had failed to have much preventive effect. Although personally bitter and somewhat disappointed, Baronian had no intention of conceding final defeat. He did, however, grow increasingly impatient, and a harsher and more passionate moral style characterised his writings throughout the 1880s.

Almost all satirists have found an occasional vent for their frustrations in unrestrainedly coarse invective. Baronian was no exception, and although he made no attempt to conceal the pleasure he derived from such a style, he also tried to justify it. In a conversation with Fame, a very common malady according to Baronian, the dog Cica~~l~~ (Baronian's mouthpiece) expressed its wish to destroy this vice: 'You know how much I detest you and how much I wish to pull out your intestines through your throat with my claws'.¹¹ Mat^{te}os Mamurean,¹² a highly regarded personal friend of Baronian, suggested he might employ a 'less bitter style'¹³ towards his fellow-countrymen, but Baronian refused, maintaining that men had been flattered for too long to deserve gentle treatment. He was determined to speak his mind. His style would have 'neither moderation, nor... politeness',¹⁴ since an honest man had 'to do his duty or else resign without compromising his original pledge'.¹⁵

Stealing frequent, albeit cursory glances at the past, Baronian would frequently be tempted to draw parallels with his own time. If he had no idealised vision of antiquity, he was far less favourably disposed to his own era, characterised by hypocrisy and deceit: 'In the Golden Age they adulterated milk with a little water; in the nineteenth century a little milk is added to the water'.¹⁶ In the past, moral corruption and ignorance made people neglect their Creator and worship the sun, the moon, the stars and

fire instead.¹⁷ Moral decline led many individuals to proclaim themselves gods, to be worshipped by men. In the 'legendary' nineteenth century, Baronian argued further, a more formidable combination of 'progress' and moral corruption was at work.¹⁸ Men's vain desires had grown even greater.

The lust for Fame was only one of the vices. Men found Truth contrary to their interests, and those few who spoke it or upheld justice were ridiculed or persecuted. Compassion was most appreciated as a symbol, but was not overly practised. Philanthropy was considered idiocy, and outspoken Sincerity mere rudeness, though Baronian's interpretation of candour was rather exaggerated and in at least one example insensitive: he complained that people declined to call a blind man blind. An old dramatic device of Greek actors, wearing masks to personify certain characters, had gradually developed into a widespread practice - for Baronian all the members of his society wore 'gaseous' (invisible) masks.¹⁹ Indeed, so alarming was moral decline because of the degrading lust for money that Baronian felt obliged to call upon animals to teach his compatriots a lesson in virtue:

You cannot imagine how much I respect you, O donkeys, not only for your renowned humility, patience and other praiseworthy qualities but particularly for your sincerity ... O venerable donkeys, you are the preachers of truth... you never oppose truth and that's why you never dispute or have quarrels... You never kick each other in the name of free speech, nor do you need to know the meaning of advocacy, money, jurisprudence, money, litigation, money, registration, money, protest, money, deadline, money... You trust each other, and if one of you has to raise a loan, he is not obliged to sign a receipt, nor to seal an agreement or have guarantors if he wants to enter into a business partnership.²⁰

Men's insatiable greed for material gain was in clear contrast with Baronian's vision of true human goals. Any honest and diligent individual could find a piece of bread for survival. There was no need to cringe, to be unjust to others, to distort

truth or to flatter, for everyone should reap the fruits of his own work. Paying little attention to the complexity of human nature, Baronian maintained that moral integrity should be the noblest goal, even before one thought of his daily bread. Baronian sentimentiously invited his readers to get 'used to misery and to find means to escape it'.²¹

If Baronian expected endurance from the poor, he requested much more than that from the well-to-do. In her conversation with Compassion, Conscience related that a few compassionate merchants and bankers suffered considerable financial losses or even went bankrupt because of their charitable acts.²² Baronian found this normal, maintaining that the rich should 'enjoy their gold by acts of charity'.²³ Instead, the wealthy Armenians of Pera, for example, in practice indulged in extravagance and immorality, and failed to fulfil their human and national responsibilities:

How many Armenian families are there in Pera?... Some think that there are two thousand Armenian families there. Others insist that there are two thousand five hundred families. There are also those who claim that there are one thousand five hundred... Exaggeration... exaggeration... exaggeration... in my view there are hardly three Armenian families in Pera.²⁴

Baronian himself showed little compassion towards beggars in his essay on 'The Reason for Begging'.²⁵ He laid the blame for their plight essentially on themselves: drinking, gambling, avarice and laziness were the most common reasons. There were also beggars by profession, and others who had lost their fortune and possessions to satisfy their wives' and fiancées' fashionable whims. But, one must object, surely economic hardship, unemployment or sheer misfortune must have forced some unfortunate people to the streets or to the church door; Baronian's criticism is too sweeping and too insensitive to the unfortunate and marginal people.

According to Baronian, apart from self-restraint, the only way of abandoning vices was to practise virtues, making them into habits. Truthfulness, for example, was a language which 'resembled neither Ancient Greek, nor German, nor Ancient Armenian, nor Modern Armenian... it was a peculiar language, the phonetics, the syntax, and the spelling of which were difficult'.²⁶ Many people knew German but could not speak it because they had not practised it, and any unused language was bound to be forgotten. This was true of virtues too.

Baronian also urged his fellow-countrymen to expose the indulgers in vice - a task which he considered a social obligation. Silence amounted to consent or even encouragement. Baronian deeply regretted not having encountered a single soul who would tell a rich man practising unorthodox ways of earning money: 'Wretch, you are a shameless impudent fellow. You have accumulated millions by a million immoral means. You have no place among the honest...'²⁷

A number of quotations from Baronian's works have been cited in a recently published Soviet anti-religious collection.²⁸ The compiler could have found numerous other references which would not have served his atheistic purposes so well. More than a hundred years ago some Armenian priests and the Religious Council also confused the issue, misinterpreting, for their own purposes, Baronian's criticism as anti-religious. Despite warnings from the Censorship and the numerous bans imposed on his periodicals, Baronian persisted in his ridicule because he clearly distinguished between true religion on the one hand, and the Religious Council and the priests on the other:

-MeYu, some priests are cursing you.
-I don't mind, the Church will bless me.²⁹

One need not be an acute observer to perceive Baronian's goal

in criticising the bad priests, who failed to become 'faithful disciples of Jesus'.³⁰ Certain aspects of Baronian's disappointment with the performance of the Armenian priesthood have already been analysed. These critical ideas were an expression of concern on Baronian's part at the decline in religious zeal, for which he blamed his contemporaries and the priests, whose unpious conduct greatly affected the religious feelings of the community.

A most serious misconduct was the constant violation of the vow of celibacy. Baronian compiled an impressive list of celibate priests, young and old, and made their illicit relations public, infuriating them and the Religious Council. He devoted numerous pages to a certain Father Ambrosios Iskenterean, whose relations with his brother's wife were the talk of Constantinople. Another priest, Bishop Mkrtič Tigranean, had a female ecclesiastic attendant, who wore trousers as a disguise. When this was discovered and publicised, Tigranean, according to Baronian, refuted the allegations by declaring that since only men could wear trousers his attendant could not have been a female.³¹ The religious authorities were helpless, and rather than take disciplinary action they often tried to patch up the scandals, thus outraging Baronian.

Recognising the weaknesses of human nature, Baronian had a practical idea to solve the problem. It was a common practice for parents to send their children at a very young age (usually under ten) to monasteries eventually to become celibate priests. Naturally, the tendencies and preferences of children were not always identical with the vocation chosen for them by their parents. Baronian therefore preferred that only mature men undertake celibacy:

Everybody knows that taking the vow of celibacy is not the same as studying physics, chemistry, medicine or law.

A fourteen-year-old boy begins studying law and becomes a lawyer for life. (When) a fourteen-year-old boy undertakes celibacy, at eighteen... he sings of love, at twenty-five he shies away from celibacy and at thirty, instead of becoming a holy father, he becomes a father of children.³²

If some priests could not serve the congregation as paragons of chastity, others lacked faith in God and in their mission. A case in point was that of Father Mattēos Izmirlean, the future Catholicos of Ējmiacin. A parish council suggested the ordination of a priest for their congregation. When the Patriarchate (i.e. the Religious Council) commented that the Parish would be unable to meet the material needs of the priest, the council replied that Jesus who had fed so many thousands with two fish could also look after his servant. Thereupon, Izmirlean cynically commented that 'such miracles took place 1873 years ago'.³³ Baronian reacted strongly: 'If Jesus were to visit Constantinople with his whip, we would see few priests without wounds on their backs...'³⁴

Money could buy religious titles, prelacies and other offices. Many priests unscrupulously plundered churches and monasteries, which, Baronian claimed, were looked upon as though they were profitable farms, and they bought houses or shops in remote areas, and amassed enormous wealth. The Armenian priesthood offered nothing in return for their luxurious life at the expense of the community. They 'devoured' lambs and drank old wine when their flock was starving;³⁵ 'clad in exquisite clothes' they 'read the news from America' when their congregation had no clothes to wear;³⁶ they 'played cards with young ladies' when prisoners were in need of consolation;³⁷ they refused to bury the poor unless the expenses and fees were paid in advance;³⁸ they allowed the rich what they disallowed the poor;³⁹ and they persecuted and denied divorce to innocent husbands whose 'wives had plunged into the mire of immorality'.⁴⁰

Baronian was in favour of closing insolvent monasteries and reducing the size of the Armenian priesthood. He urged an Eastern Armenian benefactor to have a factory or a school built instead of a seminary. There were two seminaries (in Jerusalem and at Armaş, a village near Izmit) which could easily provide the entire nation with a sufficient number of decent priests. 'In my view' Baronian commented, 'a factory is a thousand times more useful than a thousand seminaries',⁴¹ since there were thousands of uneducated and unemployed youths unable to make a living.

Baronian was also displeased with the flexibility - which one might regard as no more than moderate - of the Armenian hierarchy, which, reckoning with the pressures of life, changed the hours of daily prayers and the liturgy so as to conform with the busy schedule of the congregation, composed for the most part of working men and women. Once upon a time, Baronian complained, liturgy was said daily in the Armenian Cathedral of Constantinople, whereas now it was celebrated only once a week.⁴² Nocturnal rites were performed in the daytime and not at the usual hour as 'in the days of our ancestors'⁴³ and so on. 'Our Father, whom we ought to supplicate, is in no way obliged to wait for us to finish our business, buy our fish and eggs and gulp down a few glasses of raki before going to church'.⁴⁴ Nor had the Lord to wait for '...ladies to admire their beauty for hours in the mirror, to apply fragrant oils, have their breakfast and play... the piano before going to church'.⁴⁵

Baronian regarded such compromise as a sign of decline of belief and insisted that the church retain its 'independence and grandeur'.⁴⁶ He often criticised the Armenian hierarchy for deviations from the canons of the Church Fathers, a practice he found unacceptable. It was not uncommon for priests to abbreviate

the liturgy and readings from the Gospels.⁴⁷ Vergers conversed with the celebrating priest - an interruption which Baronian considered an insult to God and the believers. Despite his frequent requests, 'forty times'⁴⁸ at least, the sextons persevered in their ugly habit. Baronian was so disturbed by such interruptions, he told his readers, that many a time he walked out of the church in anger. All these practices were a source of concern for Baronian, who was greatly distressed at the sight of dozens of empty and ill-maintained churches.

If Baronian placed much of the blame on the priests, repeatedly urging them to do their best to revive piety, he also blamed the community for their ever-decreasing religious zeal. Essentially, Baronian maintained, this was due to material expectations, which had such an overriding concern that they led men away from true religion. A bankrupt businessman, for instance, would ask for loans from the church, another one would request that the church stood as his guarantor; and a third would seek references from the church in order to secure high positions.⁴⁹ Thus, religion had become a question of 'pure business' for many, 'who adhered to that religion, which seemed profitable to them and which they abandoned when they found a more profitable one'.⁵⁰ As a true believer, Baronian regretted that people failed to comprehend the essence of religion, which, to his mind, was a spiritual need, calling for inner conviction and complete trust in God. At the very least, it was an indispensable tool for instilling in men virtues and moral values, the absence of which he so genuinely lamented.

An extensive network of Armenian schools had been set up by the 1870s, especially in Constantinople and in other large cities such as Smyrna. The Armenian authorities, and more specifically the numerous societies which had mushroomed after the middle of

the century, made considerable efforts to improve the standards of education and to extend the network into Armenia proper. Despite the remarkable progress achieved within a few decades Baronian, with good reason, found that the Armenians were still very backward⁵¹ in the field of education due to serious basic flaws in their educational system.

Lack of adequate funds was a major, if not the major, problem. As usual, Baronian was bitter against the apathetic rich who rarely supported schools, and only after having built '...grand stables for their horses...'.⁵² The burden was shouldered mainly by the middle and lower classes, by those diligent, rough-diamond Armenian fishermen for example, who drank excessively, cursed liberally but contributed generously to schools. Yet their support proved insufficient, and the reluctance of some parents to pay tuition fees further aggravated the situation.

Such apathy indicated that the Armenians were unable to appreciate the importance of education. This was amply illustrated in the portrait of Hambarjum Ipek'čean,⁵³ a professional teacher who, despite his great ability and energy, failed to render correspondingly great services to the community. Ipek'čean's attempts to set up schools complying with contemporary educational requirements ended in failure, since nobody was interested in his plans and no one extended him any help, financial or otherwise. All his efforts to find a proper post in a proper school proved unsuccessful, and, consequently, he had to travel widely in search of a job. Certainly, Ipek'čean could not teach under the generally humiliating conditions of teachers in Armenia and Constantinople. The trustees in Constantinople used to regard teachers as their servants; a teacher 'should light their cigarette';⁵⁴ if he met a 'trustee carrying meat, he should take it home for him';⁵⁵ he could

not dare claim his salary - always in arrears - fearing he might antagonize the trustees who could expel him at will. Indeed, such was the plight of these utterly humiliated creatures, that one of Baronian's heroes cursed an enemy of his saying: 'May you become a ...teacher...',⁵⁶ the worst possible status in life. Furthermore, Ipekčean's serious approach to his profession and his strict discipline antagonised his colleagues. His open and frank remarks in public on the standard of his pupils considerably reduced his chances of a successful career, for parents would not accept anything but praise for their children.

But Ipekčean himself was also blamed by Baronian for his failure. He was too demanding and fastidious. If he were appointed headmaster of a school that had an income of 15 liras per month, he would, first, insist on rebuilding the school to a German model; secondly, he would demand that 'public conveniences near the school should be moved outside the city';⁵⁷ thirdly, if he thought the climate unhealthy for his pupils, he would ask 'the trustees to bring about the change of the city's climate';⁵⁸ and, finally, he would demand a monthly budget of 100 liras. If the school accepted his 'suggestions, well enough; if not, adieu'.⁵⁹ Baronian regretfully remarked that Ipekčean, very obstinately, would never adapt his plans to local needs:

We thought that, knowing the people and the school income, he would change his mind. But we were greatly astonished to see that instead of changing his mind, he had changed his hat.⁶⁰

There were a large number of unqualified teachers. Some of them were the proteges of influential officials, others were celebrities who were entrusted with teaching positions such as Yovhannēs Tēroyenç, Xaçatur Misakean and Křistostur Łazarosean.⁶¹ Tēroyenç taught 'subjects that he himself had no knowledge of',⁶²

and Misakean 'beat his students instead of teaching them'.⁶³

Baronian's verdict on Vazarosean's activities, including his teaching career in schools and societies, was fair:

He has rendered great services in the "Anjnanuēr" society by lecturing to our immigrant brothers, but he has rendered a still greater service, which is undeniable and for which the nation is grateful to him: he is unmarried and has no children.⁶⁴

Often, the scarcity of competent teachers left the school trustees with little choice. The need for qualified teachers was urgent, yet the Armenian authorities showed little enthusiasm for redressing the situation. It took them sixteen years to inaugurate the Kedronakan (central) school designed to train teachers. The plan for this school was adopted in 1870 but became a reality only in 1886. During this long period several plans were suggested for the school,⁶⁵ and Baronian criticised the irresponsible dilatoriness of the Armenian authorities, particularly that of the Economic Council (personified as Economos):

- Did you receive a plan?
- How old a plan?
- What do you mean, how old...?
- How tall a plan?
- Does a plan have age, height?
- Why not?... I can show you... plans that are forty years old... and three and a half yards high... That's why I'm asking you how old is your plan?
- Ours is three months old.
- A suckling ... !
- Yes.
- What is it about?
- A normal school, to train teachers...
- That's a very good idea.
- Did you receive such a plan?
- We can find out from the clerk. Clerk, did we receive that plan?
- Yes, we did, replies the clerk.
- Yes, we did, repeats Economos.
- What did you do about it?
- Clerk, what did I do about it? asks Economos.
- It was taken into consideration, replies the clerk.
- It was taken into consideration, repeats Economos.
- For how long will it be considered?
- We'll think about it.
- When?
- We'll do something about it.

- When?
- As soon as possible.
- How soon?
- We'll let those concerned know about it.
- I don't get you.
- We're telling you this for your information.
- What do you mean for your information?
- And we humbly request...
- What do you request?
- ... that you accept our deep and true respect...⁶⁶

Some radical changes had been introduced to the curriculum which, however, still dissatisfied Baronian. In the past, Tēroyenç had taught his pupils basically the right position for prayer: 'how to prostrate and kiss the earth carefully',⁶⁷ until the knees of their trousers were worn out. Misake'an's pupils had to translate Télémaque into Classical Armenian and to learn both the French original and the Armenian version by heart...'.⁶⁸ Grammar, the Psalms and the Acts of the Apostles were also among the main subjects in the old curriculum and the bastinado was an essential part of the teaching method. Some of these features were discarded later, but the curriculum was unduly overburdened, as illustrated in the following exaggerated list by Baronian:

Armenian, Turkish, Persian, Arabic, English, French; bookkeeping, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, geography, cosmography; chemistry, physics; universal, Armenian and religious history; religion, ethics and philosophy; drawing, calligraphy; tonic sol-fa, piano, dancing and gymnastics; hygiene, embroidery, sewing...⁶⁹

Baronian complained that important and practical subjects such as ethics, arithmetic and geography were sometimes disregarded by schools. There was also an acute shortage of adequate textbooks. Step'an Pápazean,⁷⁰ for example, wrote a concise history of Armenia, in which only the 'visiting cards'⁷¹ of kings were to be found. He merely listed the names of kings, princes, governors; and a certain 'Mrs. Martha, sitting in front of her window could give us more information about a passer-by than Pápazean's history could give us on Armenian heroes'.⁷²

In one of the schools, even before French was taught as a foreign language, courses such as chemistry, political economy and French history were taught in French; and when some pupils protested, they were expelled from the school.⁷³ Baronian paid particular attention to some of Karapet P'anoSean's⁷⁴ innovations, averring that his readers dismissed his initial criticism of P'anoSean's methods, but that they later agreed with him.⁷⁵ It is difficult for us, however, to justify his attacks against P'anoSean completely.

P'anoSean used to send his female pupils shopping to train them in household economy.⁷⁶ Perhaps this was too bold an idea at the time. According to Baronian, P'anoSean also taught his pupils to disobey their parents, those 'old-fashioned brutes'.⁷⁷ But it is hardly possible to agree with Baronian's criticism of P'anoSean asking his pupils to bring to the community 'love and light...by all possible means'.⁷⁸ The latter words, underlined by Baronian were misinterpreted; P'anoSean certainly had no immoral or wicked advice for his pupils.

In 1869 P'anoSean set up the Agapean School for Girls, a name which, it might be thought, since Armenian might not easily distinguish Agape from Eros, was especially designed to invite ribald comment from those possessed of an esprit mal tourné. Here he introduced some imaginative innovations to the curriculum, namely dancing, singing, and music. The school had a successful start and won popular support. As long as the new subjects were only part of the educational programme there were no complaints against him. But P'anoSean soon organised concerts for private audiences, where his pupils sang and danced to raise funds for the school. Later his pupils appeared in public on the 'Constitution' anniversary, which was again tolerated in part by the public, according to Baronian. But when P'anoSean organised official

concerts in theatres: 'The public, which had not seen and heard of such astonishing methods of education, was not pleased',⁷⁹ and many complaints were heard. But P'ānosean paid scant attention to this, and answered with a marked lack of courtesy; whereupon long disputes arose, centred upon his concept of education.

It was generally accepted that P'ānosean had neglected the more traditional subjects, and had focused too much attention on music, singing, and dancing. The public were also disenchanted by the small number of songs in Armenian at such concerts. In a concert in 1873, for instance, ten out of the thirteen songs in the programme were in English, two in Turkish, and only one in Armenian. Consequently public support declined gradually, the number of students decreased rapidly, and P'ānosean had to close his school. Later P'ānosean set up the P'ānosean school for boys. His second attempt also ended in failure, and he had to close this school in two years.

Baronian's campaign must have played an important but unjust role in P'ānosean's failure. P'ānosean was committing no moral or ethical offence by having his pupils sing on stage in a civilised manner, or by passionately struggling against ignorance - a social evil equally strongly fought by Baronian. Even if the public had little tolerance, Baronian could have helped P'ānosean's somewhat overzealous but sincere efforts by calling for moderation.

The Armenians were entering upon an experimental period in education, searching for new methods and a practical curriculum for which they looked to the West for inspiration. The number of public schools sponsored by the Armenian authorities and financed and run by parish councils was still small. This fact distressed Baronian because the flourishing private schools were not accessible to all sections of the community, owing to their high tuition fees.

The school authorities, private and public, were still undecided as to the nature and extent of changes to be introduced, and opted at random for the English, French, German or other educational system. None of these, Baronian maintained, suited the Armenian reality, which required special treatment based on its particular needs. According to Baronian, Ipek'cean for instance preferred the so-called German school of education to other systems, for no more substantial reason than that which might lead one to prefer a certain meal to another as a matter of taste.⁸⁰ Some headmasters frequently changed their preferences, which according to Baronian were often based on absurd reasons such as the military might of a European state. Thus, before the Franco-Prussian war the French system was more fashionable. It was later abandoned by many, however, 'because, in the last war, Napoleon was taken prisoner, Bazaine betrayed (the French) and the Germans occupied Alsace and Lorraine'.⁸¹ But, one must object, there is little doubt that prestige plays a part in the influence of one nation upon another, and military prowess is part of such prestige.

The family was regarded by Baronian as the basic human cell on which society was founded. Marriage controlled the follies and instincts of individuals and was an ultimate source of happiness for them. It assured the continuity of mankind and provided, together with religion and education, the roof under which virtuous generations would be raised.

However, forming a family was not an easy task and posed a number of problems. Baronian disagreed with the young who, in view of such difficulties, were inclined to celibacy. Life was rigorous and there were no ideal situations, and both the married and unmarried states had their advantages and disadvantages: 'If there is unhappiness in marriage, there is no happiness in celibacy..

.. If married life has its inconveniences, celibate life is unpleasant'.⁸² Baronian urged his readers to set up families. After all, those who wished to contract a marriage were supposed to be mature and their desire indicated that they were ready to enter upon a new phase in their lives, that of wisdom. Provided certain basic conditions were met, such people could certainly overcome the complications of marital life, which was, however, '...inseparable from sorrow, its attendant'.⁸³

Not all men could or should be married. An individual should be responsible enough to require his marriage to be beneficial for him and his partner and for society. Sound health was of utmost importance, lest a morbid person should give birth to an unhealthy child. Medical examination to verify one's physical fitness was deemed necessary by Baronian.⁸⁴ He also warned against incompatibility of age, which he illustrated in his comedy The Oriental Dentist. Without detailing any particular advantages Baronian maintained that a husband should be slightly older than his wife. He expressed serious concern about old and physically unfit men wedding young girls. It was not only a question of virility but also one of passion: 'An indifferent man beside a love-sick woman is like wet wood for a stove. Not only does it not catch fire, it also extinguishes the fire in the stove'.⁸⁵

Love, the purest of human feelings, was the indispensable bond of unity between two individuals. Lasting happiness could be achieved only by continuing love which, like wine, flourished as time went by if it was genuine and honest and deteriorated if it was dishonest.⁸⁶ According to Baronian affection between a man and a woman was generated by both physical and moral qualities. If Grigor Zōhrap's heroines found the meaning of their life and their strongest asset in their physical charm, Baronian attached much

less importance to it, as it often concealed, like a gown, a woman's 'ugly habits'.⁸⁷ According to his somewhat platitudinous remarks beauty, although highly desirable, was not a lasting feature. By contrast, mental and moral qualities could stand the gruelling test of time and it was these aspects that made an individual interesting and admirable:

Physical beauty is worthless without moral beauty.
 ...A woman can be beautiful in a monotonous way; she can be a rose, but she cannot simultaneously be a violet, a lily...
 It is moral beauty that is (attractive). It is reborn every day with a new charm, a new colour, a new aroma; it grows more beautiful day by day, attracts, fascinates... dominates and reigns supreme.⁸⁸

'Marriage is a cart to which a man and a woman yoke themselves willingly'.⁸⁹ No extraneous factors should interfere with the free will of individuals. Although a traditionalist in many ways, Baronian was opposed to parental marriage arrangements. There were instances where beautiful and marriageable young women became old maids because of the excessive fastidiousness of parents, especially mothers, who always found faults with suitors. One mother, for example, declined to marry her daughter because one of her admirers had 'a crooked nose', the second had 'blue eyes', the third wore a 'red fez' and the fourth had a 'talkative father'.⁹⁰

...A long time passed, and ... defects came to be noted also in this perfect girl. One day it was noted that her nose had grown longer. Some time later it was seen that her teeth appeared whenever she laughed. Then the rosy hue of her face began to fade and she grew shorter and thinner. She spent all her money on clothes. Young men no longer looked up (at her window)... Finally, she turned 29, according to her mother; though her neighbours and relatives (claim) - I don't know whether this is just gossip or the plain truth - that she is 34.
 ...Now mother and daughter roam even the market. If a shopkeeper watches the daughter with some attention, they do business with him. They keep losing money.⁹¹

Parent-arranged marriages were by no means uncommon at the time. More often than not these were purely financial transactions between families who seldom ever consulted their children.

Usually, such marriages were arranged through marriage-brokers - a practice to which Baronian was strongly opposed. Baronian contended that although marriage brokers were employed to avoid deception (girls could make artificial changes in their appearance to meet the particular requirements of respective suitors) this was not always true, as marriage-brokers often misled their clients for material rewards from one of the parties.

Baronian was among the earliest Armenian authors to observe that money had begun to influence the institution of marriage profoundly. Under the impact of unemployment and economic difficulties young men sought marriage to girls with a dowry (usually, apart from clothing, a shop or a house or cash to launch a business), or gave up marriage plans altogether. Similarly, young ladies were interested in partners sufficiently well-to-do to meet their extravagant spending. Although Baronian was aware that from time immemorial marriage had been one of the main branches of trade,⁹² he was dismayed at the rapidly increasing rate of 'contract' marriages, for any such contract was the 'grave of love'.⁹³

According to Baronian marrying a wealthy partner was not a solution to any problem as it entailed a number of undesirable consequences. Such a marriage was bound to fail in the absence of mutual sentiments. In most cases, the wealth of a bride was wasted by her without her husband benefitting by a penny. Wives with a dowry also tended to dominate their husbands, since a dowry was nothing but '...buying a husband'.⁹⁴ But most of all Baronian was concerned about the prospects of immorality; such couples would generally indulge in illicit relations.

A married couple had a number of mutual obligations and responsibilities. Baronian vigorously denounced some characteristic

habits of his society and felt obliged to remind his male readers that their wives were not their slaves. Men exploited the obedience of their wives and drank excessively, or returned home late at night or beat their wives - widespread practices which Baronian could not tolerate. Drinking had become a very serious problem; the quarter of Kum Kapu was 'bounded by raki to the East, wine to the West, cognac to the North, and rum to the South. It is thought that Noah was a native of Kum Kapu'.⁹⁵ In the midst of economic hardship there were a great number of irresponsible fathers who spent their time drinking, ostensibly to drown their sorrows (debts to the landlord, the butcher, the baker, the grocer, the shoemaker etc.), or reading newspapers while their families starved at home. If a wife was supposed to spend all her time attending to the children and the house, a husband was supposed to pursue all job opportunities, taking any employment for the sake of his family.

Baronian held that falling in love meant a 'guarantee for love ... after marriage'.⁹⁶ Husband and wife had to be loving partners, attentive and devoted, fulfilling each other's wishes. Moral rectitude and faithfulness were an absolute necessity. No other women should attract the husband's attention; in accordance with Mt. V, 28 Baronian held that he was not supposed even to look at other women, let alone committing more serious moral offences. The wife had to obey her husband's restrictions. She should not, for instance, make provocative hip movements or cast inviting glances behind her; she should not go for walks by herself, or to 'soirées dansantes',⁹⁷ or visit families which her husband forbade her to.⁹⁸ For, despite the prevalent customs in Armenian families, where husbands were 'lords' and wives were 'slaves',⁹⁹ marriage for Baronian was the union of two individuals with equal rights but with different and often with unequal duties.

Although Baronian advocated equality in marriage he gave men the right of moral control over their wives. This was part and parcel of what he considered his theory of equality though this showed his strong patriarchal tendencies. He believed quite without foundation that women were more open to temptation than men: 'As far as decency is concerned, giving freedom to women is like opening the door of a cage to a bird; it flies away'.¹⁰⁰ As a preventive measure, therefore, it was a husband's duty to forestall all possibilities of sin by wisely 'governing' his wife.¹⁰¹ One should not expose his wife to temptation even if she was educated, honest and absolutely reliable; did anyone set fire to his stone-built house because it was fire-resistant?¹⁰²

Baronian also defined women's position in the broader society. This topic attracted his attention particularly in the early 1880s when a number of changes were taking place within the Armenian community. An important question was that of emancipation, which arose when Srбуhi Tiwsab,¹⁰³ an Armenian woman writer, raised the issue in her novel Mayta, published in 1883. The novel was received warmly, particularly by women, who enthusiastically reacted to the ideas of equality propagated by Tiwsab. Some intellectuals became greatly concerned with the problem, and Baronian immediately wrote a review of the book. This was not the only occasion on which Baronian discussed women's social role, and the following analysis is a summary of his views on this subject.

Essentially, Baronian's opinion conformed to the mentality of the time: the family was the woman's world. Although he was receptive to the movement for emancipation, his attitude was ambiguous and contradictory. Analysing Tiwsab's work, Baronian maintained that emancipation was not a question of pronouncing the magic formula 'let there be emancipation' and there would be

emancipation overnight. The society and women themselves, held Baronian, were not yet ready for such a sudden transformation, which needed time and careful preparation.¹⁰⁴ In the meantime he was not prepared to uproot the existing social laws and traditions, and regarded the substantial social changes as a threat to the stability and moral standards of a society. His view was shared by Grigor Zōhrap, who also wrote a review of Tiwsab's work fiercely attacking her ideas on emancipation. Zōhrap found that such new concepts would have a negative impact on the Armenian family and its traditions; women were destined for motherhood, and Zōhrap would not even speak of any social role or equality for women.

Baronian realised that he was reflecting the prevailing social concepts about women. He was aware that subsequent generations might find his and his contemporaries' opinions ridiculous and that fundamental shifts in the society and human values might occur in the future. 'But we are not to blame' he argued, we ought to obey 'the prevailing social laws'¹⁰⁵ until time and education and advanced social sciences, which should always take into account local conditions, bring about the necessary changes. Baronian's theory had serious flaws from a modern European viewpoint, but coherence and consistency for his own time.

The first limitation concerns his vision of final laws which would govern human society for ever. While he advocated gradual transformation for his society, which in his view was in decline, he failed to foresee that new social relationships would entail new problems which would require a fresh look at the existing social conventions; and that, therefore, no matter how slowly, social ideas were in perpetual change.

Secondly, his theory of gradual transformation was limited even where the process of natural evolution was concerned. Was Baronian aware that every social movement had its pioneers who paved the way for changes in a society? Nowhere in his writings did Baronian elaborate on this point. The bitter reality for him was that women who adhered to emancipation or adopted 'alafranca' customs interpreted the new concepts in a distorted and vulgar way. Since this entailed deviations from his strict moral standards Baronian could in no way tolerate their attitude. His complaint that '...Armenian decency was abandoned by many... ever since enlightenment was introduced into our nation...' ¹⁰⁶ was a protest against this interpretation, clearly revealing his rather conservative outlook.

Baronian was not free of prejudice. This was not due to any misogynistic attitudes but a result of his outlook, limited by the paramount role he ascribed to nature in defining the social position of both sexes. Rather than viewing men and women as social beings, he based his judgement on their physical features. Accordingly, he maintained that men and women had their specific social roles, designed by nature, in which they could not substitute one for the other. He genuinely regretted that women were and would always be inferior to men in physical strength. ¹⁰⁷ Women could and should work but within the limitations of their natural duties and abilities: sewing, embroidery, indeed any other occupation which was 'suitable to the constitution of the fair sex'. ¹⁰⁸ He consistently insisted that unequal division of duties did not at all imply unequal rights and his opinion varied as he came to grips with changing local conditions. In rural areas, Baronian wrote, women helped their parents and husbands in their agricultural business (sowing, reaping the harvest etc.), which

was by no means a light occupation. They were used to this kind of work and their society had no reservations about their physical contribution. This was not as yet the case in urban areas, and Baronian could not reconcile himself to the idea of women filling positions traditionally held by men.

Arguing along the same lines, Baronian found that women were also inferior to men intellectually. According to biologists, Baronian contended, a woman's brain was smaller in size and lighter in weight than a man's brain,¹⁰⁹ though whether size and weight is the deciding factor, rather than, say, intricacy of structure, is open to doubt. In Baronian's society women were certainly intellectually less trained than men. Despite his belief that education would help women to find their appropriate place in society, Baronian, once again, ascribed their intellectual inferiority to their biological make-up rather than to any question of environment. He almost totally overlooked the enormous role social laws, traditions, and prejudice had played in obstructing the intellectual development of women.

Baronian was convinced that a woman's primary role was motherhood. Once a girl reached the age of 14-15 she should be taught and trained in the basic domestic skills and the principles of behaviour towards her future husband, which, unfortunately, Baronian did not elaborate.¹¹⁰ Apart from these practical considerations, Baronian held that a girl should be taught her mother tongue, her national history, some arithmetic, geography and ethics.¹¹¹ If a girl mastered these basic requirements she was free to learn anything else she desired.¹¹² But those who pursued their education further were instilled with new ideas which allowed women a broader field of social activities than confinement within the walls of their houses. This Baronian was

not prepared to accept, although he sang the praises of women who supported or founded educational, religious and benevolent societies. In his view education was basically meant to help women better understand their role in the family. Above all education should help them abandon their numerous follies.

A notable part of Baronian's social criticism concerned women as individuals. His public letters to women, patronising in tone and often cutting in expression, at times provoked angry reactions from his female readers, who accused him of bias and old-fashioned views. Baronian considered this a good sign; it gratified his ego since, in his view, the agitation shown by the women suggested that his efforts to bring them to their senses were bearing fruit.

According to Baronian, a woman's follies stemmed from her coquettishness and affectation, and her deep-rooted desire to please everybody. Therefore, he maintained that finery was an outstanding characteristic of women. Their luxurious hobbies, Baronian believed, were enhanced by the new ideas of emancipation and 'alafranca' customs. He was extremely disturbed at the sight of excessive use of powder and oil among other things, and although he was aware that almost all men welcomed women's efforts to beautify themselves, he was as consistent and as stubborn in his criticism as were those women who defied him and his grossly exaggerated theory of the simple life.

Instead of spending their days in front of the mirror women had better keep their hands full with useful duties. A woman should always be busy, Baronian maintained, because flirtation was the ideal pastime of idle women. Reminding his readers of the wisdom of Solomon, Baronian sang the praises of diligent women. Excessive adornment was unjustified not only on financial but also on aesthetic grounds: artificial effects, Baronian held, often

made women look ridiculous; and his relentless criticism and abhorrence of unnatural beauty, he argued further, was prompted by his 'love and worship for the beautiful'.¹¹³

Baronian's Moral Pathology remained incomplete. Perhaps his original intention was to incorporate other moral issues into his work, in addition to the three portraits he depicted. Hypoptos (suspicious), Stenokardos ("narrow-hearted", impatient, fretful), and Philargyros (avaricious) are a detailed study of deviations from standard behaviour but not a systematic explanation of basic moral problems.

According to Baronian a suspicious man imagines that everyone is born to harm him. This definition is almost identical with Theophrastus's: 'Lack of trust is the assumption that everyone is cheating you'.¹¹⁴ There are a few instances of behaviour where Baronian benefitted from Theophrastus's examples (both characters distrust their servants, for example). Baronian's detailed portrait, however, gives us a deeper insight into the mental agony of a suspicious man.

The basic characteristic of Baronian's hero is his distrust of himself. This is clearly evident in the episode where he, like Theophrastus's character, checks the locks and bolts of his house. Theophrastus's Distrustful Man 'asks his wife if she locked the safe, if the sideboard is sealed, and the front door bolted. If she says Yes, he none the less gets out of bed ... and trots round checking everything; and finally with some difficulty gets to sleep again'.¹¹⁵ Baronian's Hypoptos's conduct is characteristic, with its typical, albeit absurd, details:

Hypoptos, who is a bachelor, examines with great care the boxes and the cupboards...before leaving home to make sure that they are locked properly. He locks them, unlocks them, he locks and unlocks them again, he tries again and again, because, he thinks to himself, I may

have inadvertantly left them unlocked... After numerous checks he locks the doors of the rooms, the kitchen and the garden with extreme care and leaves the house having ordered his servant to keep his eyes wide open in order not to have anything stolen. He walks a few paces but returns and once again checks the locks extremely carefully. He does not forget to repeat once more his orders to his servant.¹¹⁶

Hypoptos is in constant mental agony; his mind, always suspicious, is at work anticipating unreal dangers. Distrust, Baronian averred, robbed one of reason and made him behave in a most absurd fashion, such as looking for his lost horse in the pockets of one's friends' jackets.¹¹⁷ Hypoptos has no friends and trusts no one to conduct any business on his behalf. His servant's only task is to look after the cleanliness of the house, and to serve as a 'guinea-pig': if Hypoptos is prescribed medical tablets he has his servant take them first. His extreme precaution is also manifest in his burning desire to have the reputation of a destitute man in order to avoid attention.

Baronian attributed distrust to social reasons. In his view it was the result of impressions one received at a young age. Having been deceived a few times, a person became suspicious and resorted to precautionary measures, which would develop into a permanent characteristic if there were no trustworthy people to counterbalance earlier impressions.

Stenokardos is perhaps the most interesting of the three portraits. As defined by Baronian, he is a man who believes that everyone and everything moves slowly. He is, therefore, in a perennially agitated mood, complaining and wailing impatiently as if people had nothing else to do but conspire behind his back to annoy him and to obstruct his plans. Stenokardos's irritation with people reminds us of Menander's Cnemon; and Stenokardos's perfectionist tendencies echo a similar ingredient in Baronian's character. Baronian's perfectionism accounted for his notable

intolerance, particularly toward the imperfections of human beings.

Baronian's bad-tempered man is also talkative. In fact, he thinks aloud about the difficulties his confused mind creates. A fertile imagination can sometimes be very helpful to understand and appreciate a comic situation, but it is certainly a torment for the paranoiac illustrated in the following passage. As usual, Stenokardos expects every single soul to anticipate his moves and whims. He has woken early in the morning before his wife or servants have had time to prepare his breakfast. After much fuss and nagging he left the house without breakfast, but has returned:

-You said breakfast was ready, where is it?
 -It's upstairs, let Toros bring it downstairs.
 -Upstairs...? Oh... Toros will climb up the stairs, will open the door of the room, will walk in, will pick up (the) breakfast (tray), will climb down the stairs, will bring it here, will place it on the table, then he will bring me a chair, I'll sit down, I'll eat my breakfast... then will go to work and earn money... this is a full year's work... I don't want any breakfast.¹¹⁸

Avarice, Baronian maintained in the portrait of Philargyros, resulted from the disastrous consequences of extravagant spending. Its bearer, therefore, went to the opposite extreme. Philargyros, Baronian concluded, satiated his belly by hunger. His definition complements that of Theophrastus's: 'Avarice is the craving for sordid gain'.¹¹⁹

As his formula suggests, Theophrastus depicted a parasite who saved money at the expense of others. This is typical of Baronian's avaricious man, who also shares certain characteristics with Harpagon: his passion for gold and the immense pleasure he derives from watching it; his painstaking efforts to appear destitute; and his suspicion and searching of strangers as Harpagon searches La Flèche, for example.¹²⁰ In addition Philargyros is insensitive to the basic needs of his family. His daughter is already an old maid, because Philargyros has no intention of

providing her with the traditional dowry. When she has a critically high temperature Philargyros suggests pouring cold water on her, declining to summon a doctor whose fees would be enough to cover the family's expenses for a year. Philargyros's absurd logic is manifest in his dialogue with a cook he wants to hire - a rather untypical luxury on the part of an avaricious man, yet indicative of the strong influence of Theophrastus (his character had a slave) and Molière (Harpagon had a cook and three attendants) on Baronian's portrait:

- ... Are you a cook?
- Yes, (I am).
- How old are you?
- Forty.
- Where have you learnt cooking?
- In houses.
- Which means that you can cook delicious meals with little expense.
- Yes.
- I suppose you can wash...clean...with little soap and water.
- Yes, but I'm a cook.
- I suppose you know embroidery too.
- A little, honourable sir.
- I'm not an honourable sir, and I don't like such phrases. Can you teach piano lessons to a beginner?
- No, sir.
- What does 'sir' mean? Who am I to be a 'sir'? The rich are 'sirs'. Can you write and read bills in Turkish?
- No, I'm a cook...
- Then can you not sew clothes for men?
- I'm not a tailor.
- Then can you not teach Armenian to my small boy?
- I'm not a teacher.
- All right, all right, do you know some French?
- No, I don't.
- ...Never mind, do you know gymnastics?
- No.
- What sort of a cook are you? You know nothing, we don't need you.¹²¹

Some problems of manners, tact and politeness were explored by Baronian in his Disadvantages of Courtesy, which comprises scenes consisting almost entirely of dialogues. In general, the work is a vigorous protest against prevalent local standards of conduct and a merciless criticism of the discourteous.

In his brief introduction Baronian stated that the social restrictions imposed by politeness were intolerable as they enslaved the individual, robbing him of his personal and natural privileges. For example, if someone felt sleepy in the company of others he was not allowed to take a nap; or, if he felt uncomfortable he could not loosen his belt. This interpretation, illustrated only in the first scene, indicates some of Baronian's unsophisticated views of social behaviour and his blanket application of an exaggerated theory of 'naturalness'. Curiously, the introduction seems to have been tailored for this particular scene, since his views in the remaining dialogues - written with no a priori thoughts - differ fundamentally.

Baronian laid special critical emphasis on some peculiar Oriental traditions regarded by many as embodying the principles of politeness. A hostess, for example, with the tray of drinks in her hands, had to go round from one guest to another silently, while each guest declined to take the drink first, addressing pompous phrases of respect to each other and making endless 'appropriate' greetings.^{1 2 2} Baronian also depicted an interesting type who would compel a polite victim to accompany him to his destination while he greeted and talked to innumerable acquaintances.^{1 2 3} A recurrent theme is the habit of insisting, which was interpreted as a sign of courtesy and intimacy. The victims, especially the shy, were so overwhelmed that they had to oblige willy-nilly or else they would be branded as impolite. According to Baronian this was a senselessly polite attitude. Thus, Gamik Agha, who has a prior engagement for supper, is forced by Markos Agha to dine with him and is taken to a bar first, against his will:

- Would you like to drink mastika?
- No.
- How about raki?

-No.
 -Rum?
 -No.
 -...Cognac...?
 -No.
 -What would you like to drink then?
 -Nothing. Don't you know, that... I've given up drinking?
 -You don't drink?
 -No.
 -...Are you serious?
 -Yes, I am.
 -For God's sake.
 -I don't drink.
 -Are you joking?
 -Why should I?
 -You mean you don't drink mastika?
 -No.
 -Raki?
 -No.
 -Rum?
 -No.
 -Cognac?
 -No.
 -Why are you living, then? shouts one of the clients...
 -He drinks all right; he's just joking, replies Markos Agha.
 -I don't drink, Markos Agha.
 -It's a shame, brother, it's a shame, you must drink. Come now, we're not going to let the customers laugh at us.
 -I'm not in the habit, brother, why are you insisting?
 -You aren't a woman, are you? My dear fellow, how can you refuse to drink? says one of the clients.
 -...He is an unsophisticated man...
 -A hermit, shouts another client.
 -Ha, ha, ha, he doesn't drink raki! What an idiot he is...
 -Please, Gamik Agha, let's put an end to this joke, says Markos Agha.
 -What do you want me to do?
 -Have a drink...
 -All right...¹²⁴

The abuse of hospitality was also common. A self-invited guest, for example, has a magnificent supper and later invites some of his friends to play cards till late at night in the house of his subdued, reluctant host.¹²⁵ In another instance, a family spends several days with friends, who are in dire financial hardship.¹²⁶ In the following passage a 'polite' merchant, who has just finished haggling with a client, suffers considerable financial loss:

The time has arrived to conclude an agreement... Therefore, you make a brief but impressive speech agreeing to certain concessions. Precisely at this moment a short but energetic man walks into your store:

- Christ is risen from the dead.
- Blessed is Christ's rising.
- How are you, are you well?
- Thank God (we are well), Enovk' Agha.
- How is your wife?
- She is well.
- How are your daughters?
- They're well.
- God bless them. How is your son?
- He is very well.
- Your mother?
- Not bad.
- Your grandma?
- She is all right.
- What is your son-in-law doing?
- Nothing special.
- Is he staying with you?
- No.
- Are you staying with him?
- No.
- Where are you staying, then?
- In our house.
- Very good, very good... could you offer me coffee...?
- Certainly.
- I say, our little dog had puppies last night.
- Is that so?
- We'll give you one of the puppies.
- Thank you.
- Of course when they're grown up a little.
- Very good.

...Your client grows impatient... you grow angry, but politeness does not permit you to drive out Enovk' Agha from your shop.

- They're so nice, the puppies.
- Yes, they must be...
- I was wondering how one should rear them. Their mother is weak and sick, and has no milk... Don't you know of a dog to stay with us and rear the puppies?... I don't like the idea of feeding them with a bottle. I wish you'd find out about such a dog.
- Very good, I will.
- Couldn't you do it now?
- It's impossible, I'm busy now.
- This is business too... one of them will be yours.
- I'll be back in fifteen minutes, says your client and leaves the store.
- Devils that they are, those puppies. They're something to see... we couldn't feed them with a bottle, could we?
- No.
- We must find another bitch to suckle them.
- Yes.
- No other way.
- No.
- Is there any other way (of feeding them)?
- No.
- If there is, tell me.

-There isn't, Enovk Agha, there isn't, there isn't,
there isn't...
-Why are you angry?
-I am not...
-You have no right to get angry, I'm not your servant,
and I have no material expectations from you... and
I'd be pleased to pay for the coffee if you want...
-No.
-Knowing that you like dogs, I wanted to offer you one...
everyone is not at your service, do you understand?
Enovk Agha walks out in anger.
And you wait for your client to return...¹²⁷

Baronian also protested against invasion of privacy. For example, a man already in bed had to get up or was made to wake up by insensitive guests, as visits without prior notice were very common at the time.¹²⁸ An ugly habit rejected by Baronian was the custom of talking with gestures; an 'Armenian' habit, Baronian maintained, of pulling hands, pushing, hitting on the chest, or trampling the feet of others to make a point.¹²⁹

Baronian complained bitterly that his society unjustly condemned as impolite not only those who failed to endure such inconveniences, but also those who declined to adopt new ideas and fashionable trends. Sedrak Agha, who is unable to wear tight, fashionable shoes, is labelled a 'silly fool', unworthy of civilised circles.¹³⁰ Atanas Agha is judged to be a boor on account of his intolerance of young men who indiscreetly pay excessive court to his wife.¹³¹

A social being for Baronian then had responsibilities towards himself, his family and society. Moral and social flaws were acquired qualities, which could be overcome if the individual so wished. Men should be self-supporting and considerate, and should strive for a virtuous life, their ultimate goal. They had commitments towards their families, which they should fulfil satisfactorily. They had to contribute to their ethnic group, to its welfare and culture, and to their religion, the echo of their conscience. For men were dependent upon each other, and a progressive society

Footnotes to Chapter VII

1. PCS, iii, 134.
2. Ibid., 111.
3. Ibid., 181.
4. Ibid., 105.
5. Ibid.
6. See 'Notes on Baronian's Cicał', Appendix II.
7. PCS, v, 97.
8. Ibid., 98.
9. Ibid., 302.
10. Ibid., 299.
11. Ibid., 74.
12. Journalist, writer (1830-1901).
13. PCS, v, 81.
14. Ibid., 228.
15. Ibid., 82.
16. Ibid., 80.
17. Ibid., 357.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 62-63.
20. Ibid., 61.
21. Ibid., 159.
22. Ibid., 361.
23. Ibid., 166.
24. Ibid., iii, 190.
25. Ibid., v, 214-224.
26. Ibid., 66.
27. Ibid., 64.
28. Hay grołnerě ev banahyusut'yuně ěnddem kroni (Erevan, 1976)
pp. 180, 358, 362, 394, 534, 536, 539, 621.
29. PCS, vii, 65.
30. Ibid., viii, 225.
31. Ibid., ii, 72.
32. Ibid., ix, 264.
33. Ibid., vii, 74.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., v, 368.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., 367-368.
41. Ibid., ix, 265.
42. Ibid., iii, 114.
43. Ibid., vii, 302.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., iii, 134.
48. Ibid., vii, 273.
49. Ibid., v, 366-367.
50. Ibid., 367.
51. Ibid., ii, 197.
52. Ibid., 11.
53. For his biography see Appendix III.
54. PCS, ii, 200.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., v, 217.
57. Ibid., ii, 199.

58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., 200.
60. Ibid., 204.
61. For their biographies see Appendix III.
62. PCS, ii, 43.
63. Ibid., 131.
64. Ibid., 177.
65. See Appendix II, 'Notes on Baronian's Cica~~l~~', the paragraph entitled 'Consideration'.
66. PCS, v, 119-120.
67. Ibid., ii, 43.
68. Ibid., 134.
69. Ibid., vii, 57-58.
70. For his biography see Appendix III.
71. PCS, ii, 122.
72. Ibid., 123.
73. Ibid., viii, 38-40.
74. For his biography see Appendix III.
75. PCS, viii, 256.
76. Ibid., 50.
77. Ibid., 52.
78. Ibid., 53.
79. Ibid., ii, 93.
80. Ibid., 204.
81. Ibid., ix, 129.
82. Ibid., vi, 214.
83. Ibid., ix, 303.
84. Ibid., v, 94.
85. Ibid., ix, 302.
86. Ibid., 305.
87. Ibid., v, 113.
88. Ibid., vi, 330-331.
89. Ibid., v, 244.
90. Ibid., vi, 204.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., 243.
93. Ibid., v, 252.
94. Ibid., 150.
95. Ibid., iii, 119.
96. Ibid., vii, 212.
97. Ibid., ix, 292.
98. Ibid., 291.
99. Ibid., vi, 17.
100. Ibid., ix, 300.
101. Ibid., 291.
102. Ibid., 292.
103. An Armenian woman writer (1841-1901).
104. PCS, v, 270.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid., ix, 291.
107. Ibid., v, 270.
108. Ibid., 246.
109. Ibid., 270.
110. Ibid., vi, 217.
111. Ibid., 288-289.
112. Ibid., 289.
113. Ibid., vi, 278.
114. Theophrastus, The Characters, Menander, Plays and Fragments translated by Philip Vellacott (Penguin Books 1973), p. 48.

115. Ibid.
116. PCS, v, 306.
117. Ibid., 311.
118. Ibid., 315.
119. Theophrastus, op.cit., p. 59.
120. Molière, l'Avare, Act I, scene III.
121. PCS, v, 323-324.
122. Ibid., iii, 269-273.
123. Ibid., 280-284.
124. Ibid., 284-295.
125. Ibid., 304-317.
126. Ibid., 381-386.
127. Ibid., 276-279.
128. Ibid., 251-254.
129. Ibid., 262-265.
130. Ibid., 265-269.
131. Ibid., 334-346.

CHAPTER VIII
BARONIAN AND CONTEMPORARY ARMENIAN LITERATURE
AND THEATRE

Like many before and after him, Baronian regarded the theatre as a school of morals, where the audience was instructed by 'laughter' or by the 'pain' it felt and the 'tears' it shed.¹ On many occasions Baronian encouraged actors, praised the rich who supported theatre, and urged his readers to take an interest in drama. He advertised theatrical programmes, wrote numerous reviews, and was involved in passionate disputes over theatre in general and the Gedikpasha Theatre in particular.

The Armenians had developed considerable expertise in the theatre since the first Western Armenian professional theatre of 1861. Artists trained in the Armenian theatres were later recruited into the Gedikpasha Theatre, 'the birthplace and cradle of Turkish drama'² established in 1868 by Yakob Vardovean³ (also known as Güllü Agop), who was granted the monopoly of Turkish performances for ten years. Agop lacked no material resources to attract most of the best Armenian actors and the multinational audiences of Constantinople. In his admirable efforts to organise the theatre, Agop was wholeheartedly supported by Baronian.

Teodor Kasab Efendi, the editor of Hayal, intensified his attacks on the Gedikpasha Theatre, especially from 1872 onwards, when Agop published a pamphlet containing the programme of the Gedikpasha Theatre for the 1873-74 season. In this pamphlet Agop also complained in general terms that 'many people were envious'⁴ of him and his theatre. 'Kasab Efendi took this personally'⁵ and unleashed a wave of rather untoward attacks against Agop and his theatre. Baronian's Tiyatro equally came under attack as the

mouthpiece of Agop. As Baronian's polemic with Kasab reveals some of his theatrical views it will be dealt with at some length.

According to Hayal, Agop was not competent to run the Gedikpasha Theatre because he lacked the artistic background: he was a plasterer who set up a theatre with 'pupils who were unacquainted with Ottoman and European morals'.⁶ Agop was ignorant not only of European languages but also of Turkish. Furthermore, Kasab questioned Agop's moral rectitude and saw Agop as a 'conceited, impudent and giddy' man, who had 'bad morals'.⁷ Agop's programme was asserted to be inordinately ambitious and his cast was artistically incapable of performing these plays adequately. Hayal also accused Agop of plagiarism.

Baronian defended Agop against these criticisms. No man was perfect, and besides people would learn from the plays Agop directed if not from their director. As for Agop's former occupation, if anything it only testified to Agop's ability. Indeed Agop was a capable man, who rose from his modest occupation to be the founder of the first Turkish theatre. Agop's repertoire should make everyone feel proud, continued Baronian in Tiyatro. Good plays performed in Europe should also be staged in 'Turkestan'. Who told Hayal that 'Turkestan would always fall short of Europe'?⁸ How did Hayal, which always claimed 'to serve the millet',⁹ (i.e. the Ottoman "nation" in general) dare to insult Agop and attack his theatre at a time when Agop's group performed plays even more difficult than those attacked by Hayal, winning admiration from the Europeans? True, the acting was not perfect, conceded Baronian, but was that sufficient grounds for Hayal to label the actors as 'shameless'?¹⁰

In reply, Hayal published some clarifications and further criticism. Kasab Efendi had not suggested that the Ottomans

should remain inferior to Europe, but that they should not 'imitate' Europe, for 'European morals and habits' were 'diametrically opposed'¹¹ to Ottoman standards. Also, Hayal did not believe a man's reach should exceed his grasp; great authors (Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Dumas, etc.) should only be staged when the Gedikpasha Theatre had made some progress. The admiration of the European press was not for Güllü and his cast, but for Çuxačean's music. Kasab Efendi also produced evidence proving that Agop had claimed the authorship of some plays which were in fact written by others.

Turning to Baronian, Kasab revealed that permission for the publication of Tiyatro was obtained through the good offices of Agop. Therefore, Tiyatro was an advocate of Agop's ideas.¹² According to Hayal, Baronian was contradicting himself. Kasab published evidence from Meju of Baronian's former criticism of Agop, and maintained that it was clearly in contradiction with Baronian's present attitude. Kasab concluded that Baronian was a former actor who had become an editor, implying that Baronian was an incompetent editor who should have stuck to the stage.

Baronian agreed that the Ottomans should not imitate Europe. But this was not Hayal's point when it first attacked Agop. Kasab had labelled Agop as conceited because of his wish to perform the works of great authors, maintaining that Agop should at this stage perform minor works. But Baronian wondered whether European works would at all suit Ottoman social norms even if the Gedikpasha Theatre improved its artistic standards. Why had Kasab Efendi translated Molière's l'Avare (Pinti Hamid), a play based on European morals, to be performed in the Gedikpasha Theatre? Why did he try to translate Sganarelle to be performed in 'orta oyunu' (open air show)? Was it because these plays were suitable for Ottoman

audiences formerly, but not now? Were the actors well acquainted with European morals and ethics when acting in Pinti Hamid but now ignorant of these morals and ethics? Why had Kasab not discussed Agop's background as a plasterer then, but emphasised this aspect now? Why had Kasab permitted his translation of l'Avare to be performed in the very same theatre which he now attacked as a 'source of corruption'?¹³ Was not Kasab Efendi corrupting the nation's morals by translating French plays to be performed in 'orta oyunu'?

Baronian was satisfied with the evidence produced by Kasab concerning Agop's literary piracy. He vigorously condemned Agop's plagiarism, as to steal the fruits of others' minds was the 'worst'¹⁴ thing in the world. Plagiarists were like crows who decorated themselves with peacock feathers. The feathers would soon come off, and the bearer reveal his real identity.

Baronian also defended his own position, arguing that there were no inconsistencies in his views. He had certainly expressed hopes that the Gedikpasha Theatre would make progress. This was not a contradiction as there were no limits to progress. His criticism of Agop in Mezu only proved his unbiased attitude towards Agop, and was a refutation in itself of Kasab's allegations that Baronian was hand in glove with Agop. Baronian indirectly denied Agop's assistance in obtaining official permission for publication of Tiyatro, and asserted somewhat unconvincingly that Tiyatro was not and would not be an 'instrument for anyone's personal interests'.¹⁵ He had criticised and would continue to criticise Agop whenever appropriate, for his sole aim was to serve the public. Molière, whom Kasab Efendi admired, had also been an actor. If Baronian was an actor who had become an editor, Kasab Efendi was an editor who would soon become a grocer!

Clearly Agop was an able organiser who managed the Gedikpasha Theatre extremely competently. Baronian did criticise him on a number of occasions. However, Baronian chose not to impugn Agop's dubious morals.¹⁶ Baronian also failed to reply convincingly to Kasab's allegation that permission to publish Tiyatro was obtained with the help of Güllü Agop - a claim which is also attested to by the contemporary periodical press.¹⁷ Furthermore, Güllü Agop organised a charity performance to compensate for the financial losses Baronian suffered when a ban was imposed on his periodical.¹⁸ Baronian's gratitude to Agop for his legal and material assistance coloured his attitude towards Kasab Efendi, and also motivated his unjust criticism of Çuxačean¹⁹ and Maḵakean²⁰ throughout the 1870s.

Baronian was very hostile towards Çuxačean, who composed and staged the first Turkish musicals. Baronian was displeased with what he saw as indecent love scenes in Çuxačean's 'Arif', his first operetta. A second source of Baronian's dissatisfaction was a character Köse Zakar in Çuxačean's second operetta 'Köse Kâhya'. Zakar occasionally expressed himself in dialectal Armenian, making the audience roar with laughter. In Baronian's view this was a grave insult to the Armenians. His criticism in Tâtron and Tiyatro was not disregarded; and the love scene was removed and Zakar's Armenian phrases were subsequently dropped from 'Arif' and 'Köse Kâhya'.²¹

But Baronian persevered in his criticisms, finding fault with Çuxačean's successful attempts to create a blend of Oriental and Western music (more accurately, the arrangement of Oriental melodies for Western instruments). He stated that the public was 'tired' with Çuxačean's 'boring'²² performances. Baronian had no taste for Western music and instruments, and his statement was

simply untrue. At the time, while the Gedikpasha Theatre was suffering setbacks, Çuxačean's operettas were scoring an unprecedented success. He performed to full houses and his melodies were sung and whistled everywhere in Constantinople. What Baronian was later to say of Çuxačean's third operetta, 'Leblebici Hor-Hor Agha', was equally true of Çuxačean's former operettas, especially 'Arif': 'Here parts of "Leblebici Hor-Hor Agha" are sung in every house; if one walks from one end of the (district of) Selamsiz to the other he can hear the entire operetta'.²³

Baronian missed no opportunity to humiliate Petros Małakean who made earnest efforts to revive the successful past of the Oriental Theatre.²⁴ The overwhelming majority of Armenian intellectuals supported Małakean, particularly after Güllü Agop obtained the monopoly for Turkish performances. They saw a serious threat to the Armenian national theatre in that the professional actors were recruited by Agop. It should be noted that alongside Turkish performances Agop also staged Armenian plays of even more patriotic content than those performed in the Armenian theatres. Małakean had to overcome formidable difficulties to maintain an exclusively Armenian theatre as before, since he had neither the artistic cast, nor the financial resources, nor the multinational audience of Güllü Agop. Nevertheless, he persisted and was encouraged in his efforts by the Armenian intelligentsia, who were determined to prevent the collapse of the Armenian theatre. The relentless rivalry between Agop and Małakean and others raged for a number of years.

Baronian accused Małakean of attempting to destroy Agop's theatre by poaching actors; and he ceaselessly criticised Małakean's performances, which he found unsuccessful at a time when Małakean's activities were unanimously, if with some exaggeration, judged to

be the Golden Age of Armenian theatre.²⁵ Baronian became very personal in his attacks, referring to Małakean's profession as a shoemaker, 'forgetting' that Agop was a former plasterer; and disregarding Agop's own poaching activities, his attacks, legal threats and his covert activities to disrupt rival theatrical groups. Despite his public declarations that the two groups could coexist if they competed in an honest fashion, Baronian did not publish a single example of constructive criticism of either Małakean or Ćuxaĉean. His polemics with Gēorg Ayvazean, the editor of Mamul and an old rival, included many unethical and personal attacks (e.g. calling him a 'donkey'). Ayvazean, a supporter of Małakean, was not averse to vulgarity and invariably branded Baronian as a drunkard, so nettling Baronian that he always lost his temper when dealing with this adversary, which placed him at a distinct disadvantage.

It has been argued that Baronian's passionate support of Agop was prompted by his belief that the Ottoman authorities would eventually close Armenian theatres. Therefore, it was in the interest of the Armenian theatre to be part of Agop's bilingual theatre, and survive for as long as his theatre continued.²⁶ There was some truth to this, but one can not help wondering why an exclusively Armenian theatre should not have operated if the Armenians so desired, and so long as the Ottoman authorities tolerated its existence. Baronian's attacks against Ćuxaĉean and Małakean were certainly motivated by his prejudice for Agop. He openly declared that if the Armenians were ill-disposed towards Agop, he would see to it that their enmity would turn into sympathy.²⁷ His criticism of Agop was almost exclusively of an artistic nature, and he discontinued even this kind of criticism on the grounds that the public owed the survival of theatre precisely to Agop's shortcomings.²⁸

'Orta oyunu' posed another threat to serious theatre, and Baronian was fundamentally opposed to any suggestions by Kasab and others for developing it into a theatre which would meet modern theatrical requirements.²⁹ 'Orta oyunu', despite its theatrical elements, could not replace theatre. Plays could not be performed in 'orta oyunu', nor could the small 'orta oyunu' scenes be staged in a modern theatre. For Baronian it was only a form of traditional popular entertainment which could convey no ideas whatsoever, and, most important, had become a rather indecent spectacle. Those who performed in it were a group of 'perverted' people, who wore 'ragged robes'³⁰ and slippers; they uttered nonsense and behaved impudently, with obscene gestures.

Baronian's major criticism of Agop whom he characterised as a man of "little intelligence", lacking a "generous spirit",³¹ concerned his repertoire, which consisted almost entirely of translations. Baronian repeatedly emphasized the importance of local repertoire but was also aware that there were as yet no authentic Turkish plays. Manastirli Rifat Bey's Feyz-i Aşk³² ("Abundant Love") was a Turkish version of La Dame aux Camélias. Kaza vü Kader³³ ("Mischance and Fate") by an unknown author was unsuitable for performance, mainly due to its grandiloquent and rhymed style. Baronian believed that Şair Evlenmesi ("The Poet's Marriage"), (Aşık Evlenmesi, "The Lover's Marriage", according to him) was not a product of Şinasi's. While his respect for Şinasi partly accounted for his doubts, Baronian forwarded some strong arguments to prove that this comedy, of poor artistic standards, was not written by Şinasi.³⁴ Baronian congratulated Şemsettin Sami and praised his play Besa Yahut Ahde Vefa ("Truce or Loyalty to an Oath").³⁵ Only two good 'national' (i.e. Turkish) plays had been written so far, and this was one of them.³⁶ The play was

successful because it concerned typical characters growing out of typical circumstances. Its well-built structure testified to the competence of the author. Baronian expressed hopes that new plays pertaining to Ottoman society would be composed soon, gradually replacing the European repertoire.

There was a vast Armenian dramatic literature at the time. Tragedies alone were numbered by hundreds, most of which have not survived. Glorious figures and moments of the Armenian past, and biblical themes, were the dominant subjects for almost three decades from the 1850s to 1880s. With the notable exception of Mkrtič Pēšiktašlean³⁷ and Petros Durean, these dramatic writers and their works enjoyed immense popularity, especially in the 1850s and 1860s, playing an important role in enhancing Armenian nationalistic feelings which is now largely forgotten. Baronian found both the artistic standard and the themes of these plays inadequate. The past could indeed be drawn on, but he demanded that playwrights also focus their attention on the contemporary realities of Armenian life. He could no longer tolerate the Classical and Romantic repertoire, because of its 'highfalutin' style, puppet-characters and fantastic elements:

We all know that there are (invariably) an angel and a ghost in Armenian tragedies.
 ...In my dream last night God was looking for an angel to take someone's life. "We have no angels" the Archangel said, "they are all (engaged) in Armenian tragedies".
 I woke up and said to myself:
 "Doubtless to kill off Armenian tragedy..."
 Our tragedians are employing spirits with a view to injecting spirit into their plays. Unfortunately, they are also employing angels, who are taking away the spirit (of their plays)...³⁸

Romanticism was the most striking characteristic of Western Armenian drama, verse and prose from the 1850s to the early 1880s. In this period prose writing was at a low ebb and, with the

exception of Cerenç,³⁹ the founder of the Armenian historical novel, and Mattheos Mamurean,⁴⁰ a journalist-novelist, hardly any significant author can be singled out. Baronian was silent about Mamurean - which should be interpreted as a sign of respect - but criticised Cerenç and Tiwsab,⁴¹ the first modern Armenian female writer who published her three novels in the 1880s. Since Baronian's criticism of Tiwsab's and Cerenç's works reveal some of his literary views, this criticism will be dealt with at some length.

According to Baronian a literary piece had to serve both aesthetic and practical goals. It should be concerned with topics of general interest, and the mingling of personal affairs in literary writings was, according to Baronian's pseudo-classical viewpoint, impermissible. The form of a work was dictated by its content, both of which formed an inseparable unity. In Tiwsab's novel Mayta,⁴² the flow of events is interrupted by the Count's life story, which Baronian found a tedious and unconvincing diversion, indicating the Count's insensitivity to a woman suffering physically and mentally.⁴³ No doubt, Tiwsab wished to demonstrate the immense love of Mayta for Tigran by creating the character of the Count. Mayta declines to marry the wealthy Count who descended from a noble family with an impressive past in the service of France. Nevertheless, the entire episode is indeed rather tiresome and Baronian's comment is fully justified. Baronian himself violated this technical canon in The Most Honourable Beggars by making a number of digressions which were unrelated to the plot. Baronian recognized his flaw which, so he somewhat hypocritically maintained, was 'a flaw to correct flaws'⁴⁴ to explain the basic rules of good literature in plain terms.

In Baronian's view perhaps the greatest merit of a novel was its power to convince of its authenticity; every element in it should serve its credibility. Baronian considered Tiwsab's introduction to Mayta one of the greatest defects of this novel, because it informed the readers in advance that the plot was entirely fictitious.⁴⁵ Baronian referred to Dumas and others in order to illustrate his point. He told his readers that in order to render his account "authentic" Alexandre Dumas films made a significant but untrue statement in his introduction to La Dame aux Camélias: 'N'ayant pas encore l'âge où l'on invente, je me contente de raconter'.⁴⁶ Baronian concluded that had Lamartine's Raphaël, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's Paul et Virginie, Chateaubriand's Atala, Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther, and Abbé Prévost's Manon Lescaut been preceded by an introduction like Tiwsab's, their credibility would have suffered immensely.⁴⁷

Provided they were genuinely and skilfully devised, Baronian allowed an author to resort to every possible artistic effect 'to move the hearts and minds'⁴⁸ of the readers. Many Armenian novels, however, began with strong winds or a downpour of rain, or crowds flocking to famous squares, or the police arresting girls⁴⁹ - impoverished clichés which bore no relation to the theme of the novel. The element of surprise and suspense was very important, but should be applied sparingly and properly. Also, something should be left to the readers' imagination, as too many details overburdened the text and rendered the plot predictable and, therefore, dull. Apart from the appropriateness of artistic effects, events in a literary narrative should be justified and typical. Baronian correctly observed that Tiwsab's novel was full of unjustified details and coincidences.

Credible characters grew out of typical circumstances. Characterisation was a most difficult art, as subtle and 'sophisticated' characters confused their creators. (Such characters) can (alternately) be naive, cunning, ignorant, knowledgeable, biased, unbiased, insincere or sincere...'⁵⁰ and should therefore develop independently of the author. Baronian himself 'jumped a thousand times'⁵¹ every time he wrote a scene, recording his heroes' statements 'word for word, without adding a dot'.⁵² Cerenç, the founder of the historical novel in Armenian literature, was yet 'manukenç'⁵³ in the art of creating types. Indeed, Cerenç's heroes frequently share the same characteristics, and at times their names are the only difference between them. They are invincible heroes: one of his central characters overpowers eight adversaries; another, with a group of forty soldiers, defeats 1000 Muslim Arabs. Difficulties vanish miraculously and all the characters emerge successful in their enterprises. In most cases they are no more than mouthpieces of Cerenç's social and political ideas.

Commenting on some of Tiwsab's characters, Baronian maintained that heroes should have sound motives for action. Baronian held that Herigay's promise to love Petros, if he carried out her plans to disrupt Tigran's happiness, was unconvincing. One could hire a murderer, he argued, but not love him; it was the same as telling a young lady:

O, you are as charming as Helen (of Troy) and as beautiful as an angel. You are the only object of my love. I shall be unable to live without you in the event you ask your father to give me 5000 liras.⁵⁴

But, one must object, one certainly expects as wicked a character as Herigay to go to any lengths, including making false promises, to achieve her aim.

Most of all, Baronian commented, it was Mayta's character that raised a number of questions. Tiwsab's descriptions imply

that Mayta is aware of Herigay's sinister plan. Tigran has ceased writing to Mayta; the ring he had given her has long since been stolen, and there are a host of other ominous signs pointing to Herigay's plots. Yet Mayta does not even conceive the slightest suspicion that her happiness is being destroyed by Herigay. She is as slow to take action, as the novel to depict action, especially in its initial stages. Furthermore, Mayta is a somewhat abstract type. She complains in her letters that she is extremely distressed, absolutely alone in an unfeeling society. Baronian demanded concrete examples to illustrate Mayta's sorrows. For example, Baronian suggested that Tiwsab could have sent Mayta to a particular rock on the beach, where she and her husband used to go before his death, thus reviving painful memories; or made Mayta read the family Bible where her husband had recorded in his own handwriting their daughter's birth.⁵⁵ In a word, credible characters evolved in characteristic action rather than abstract rhetoric.

Appropriate style was also an essential artistic device to create authentic types. Baronian amassed some of Mayta's favourite phrases in her letters to Sira:

The horizon of the future...black patch...luminous speck
...the vault of the future...darkness...myriads of stars
of hope...balmy light...the splendour of life...mist...
light...night... I think she is talking of astronomy.⁵⁶

Baronian found, though unconvincingly, that this figurative style was not typical of a sorrowful widow who normally would express herself in a more realistic and vigorous tone, giving no thought to literary imagery or ornate style.⁵⁷

An author's style ought to vary and, usually, be simple and direct, according to Baronian. Rhetoric should be used sparingly and appositely for it to make the necessary impression. It was typical of some writers to expand an idea needlessly, employing

incredible imagery without rhyme or reason, as Baronian parodied:

While the queen of heaven was packing her beams before
ceding her place to the Sun, which was to come out
through the gates opened by the rosy-fingered dawn; while
the cocks had only just begun to crow; while the vendors
were shouting "good onions and excellent garlic" in the
streets; while the baker was quarrelling with his client
and refusing to give him bread on credit; while the
milkman was flirting with a maid in a doorway; while the
dustmen drowned the passers-by in dust; while a woman
stole a few liras from the pocket of her husband, to
have a velvet coat made... at this moment I took off
my clothes and plunged into an immense, blue, liquid
sheet. As soon as I plunged into it the sheet produced
foams which, long ago, had given birth to Aphrodite...
I shivered... I crept a little on that sheet till the
Sun came out of its palace and its first ray fell into
my eye. O, that first ray, I thought it was the first
glance of a virgin smiling to a poet. I was agitated
and so was the sea; were you not agitated, O virgin...?
Virgin, O, agitated were you not? Virgin, not agitated
were you, O...? I came out of the sea trembling. I put
on my clothes and bade farewell to the sea, the sun and
the virgin...⁵⁸

For Baronian 'Genius has no nationality, no religion; it is
valued, like gold, everywhere. A poem of genius is appreciated
in England, no matter whether its author is Slav'.⁵⁹ Contemporary
Armenian poets, with few exceptions, had produced little poetry
of any worth and therefore Baronian could have no words of praise
for them. He missed no opportunity to castigate the whole swarm
of talentless poets who dominated the field with their mediocre
poetry. Misakean,⁶⁰ for instance, was falsely honoured as a poet
and enjoyed a general reputation as teacher, philologist, and
gifted writer. Baronian dissipated the myth woven around Misakean
with the harsh judgment:

Once upon a time people worshipped (animal) gods, whom
we now slaughter... grill and eat with excellent wine...
Have no fear, O friends of the Poet. I will not slaughter
him... but will simply narrate his life and praise his
talent, if he has any.⁶¹

He then explained how Misakean came to be known as a poet: 'I
declare that Misakean did not himself earn the name poet but

inherited it from someone else'.⁶² Misakean 'has looked for a witness to prove he is a poet, but has not succeeded in finding one so far'.⁶³ On what grounds then could he, Baronian, acknowledge Misakean as poet - for his 'single poem inspired by hunger rather than the Muses'?⁶⁴

Baronian went too far in his bitter criticism of Misakean. One has to agree with Čōpaneān⁶⁵ that, although Misakean's portrait is artistically one of the brilliant pages in Baronian's Armenian Big-wigs, Baronian unjustly belittled Misakean's role. There was no personal enmity between Baronian and Misakean, but it seems likely that Baronian was rather envious of Misakean, a secondary literary figure, who was greatly lionised, though quite without foundation. Baronian wished to annihilate, it seems, not only Misakean's art but also his person; and his devastating satire was one of the rare examples of glaring harsh sarcasm to be found in Baronian's works:

If you wish to acquaint yourselves with his visage,
 imagine the countenance of those who, hearing one day
 that Diogenes was calling for "Men, men" in the Agora
 encircled Diogenes only to receive the following remark:
 -I called for men; why have you come?⁶⁶

The products of many contemporary Armenian poets were a meaningless mass of words and rhymes, monotonous, maudlin, and completely divorced from reality. Some of them 'correct their writings a thousand times, in order to find a rhyme...and when they succeed in finding what they want, one finds that they are sailing on the earth and galloping on the sea'.⁶⁷ After labouring for two months, Baronian commented, Narpēy composed the following couplet:

The appeal of his name
 Do you know? O, nay.⁶⁸

These talentless literati made 'many things out of "hope"', for example, 'a breeze of hope', 'an angel of hope', 'a bud of

hope', 'a star of hope'.⁶⁹ The words 'tender, moon, flute, meadow, nightingale and especially virgin'⁷⁰ were to be found abundantly in their poems.

When one reads a verse book, one notices that its pages turn by themselves, for zephyrs blow in every single page of it... if you read it without a sunshade you turn into an Egyptian, you are so burnt by the Sun... Praise God if you don't catch a cold from all the breezes blowing there.⁷¹

The periodical press of the time teemed with evanescent eulogies, and elegies dedicated to the rich. To Baronian's regret no poet paid attention to the poor, for example, and their social conditions. Simon Fēlēkean,⁷² whom Baronian criticised banteringly, would for a time sing of nothing but 'nature, the trees, the brooks, the shepherds, the flute, the cows, the horses, the donkeys and the geese...'.⁷³ Fēlēkean also personified the mawkishness of the mediocre band (he 'lamented Armenia although his situation was not any better'⁷⁴), whose foolish sentimentality Baronian illustrated in the person of the poet in The Most Honourable Beggars. The poet cries throughout his interview with Absalom, feigning hypersensitivity and lamenting the lack of national feelings on the part of the Armenians, and their apathy towards men of literature.⁷⁵

Many of these authors, some of whom were Mechitarist students, were under the heavy influence of French or Mechitarist Classicism, or French Romanticism. Their 'Art for Art's Sake' approach, as in French lyric poetry, sharply contrasted with the down-to-earth attitude of Eastern Armenian writers who, under the influence of Russian literature, regarded literature as an important tool for social progress. Although Baronian believed that fine literature combined good form with useful content, he flatly rejected the 'Art for Art's Sake' approach and subordinated art to social progress. He carried his theory to extremes as did those Western Armenian authors, who indulged in sentimental literary exercises

at a time when profound political and social changes were taking place within the community. In so far as artistic achievement is concerned, however, his criticism of the second-rate is still valid. His judgment of Narpēy, proclaimed as the 'Lamartine of Armenia'⁷⁶ by the French press, sums up his general view:

We would not be exaggerating if we said that he has served the nation more as a writer than as a celibate priest. Some of his works were burnt to ashes in the 1870 fire of Pera, as are, unfortunately, all those works which...have never been written. This was, of course, a great loss for the nation; but we can console ourselves by his published works which, with few exceptions, deserve... to be burnt to ashes.⁷⁷

Baronian reserved a major role for the critics in the creation of good literature. Their main function was 'to show the bad side'⁷⁸ of a literary piece, making sound judgments and speaking the truth impartially, though Baronian himself did not always adhere to this principle. Even the smallest flaws should be pointed out, since at times they marred 'the greater merits of a novel'.⁷⁹ Parodying Tiwsab's mixed metaphors and imagery, Baronian punctured the Armenian critics who invariably received any work with overzealous acclaim, disregarding its faults:

(Armenian) literature is developing day by day; it is progressing, flourishing ... like an idea, which resembles a boy, who resembles a plant, which resembles a river, which overflows its banks... uprooting oaks... and flooding plains and (towns). Therefore, it is necessary to encourage young authors, allowing them to make posies even out of tortoises.⁸⁰

Little wonder then that instead of 'killing ugly works',⁸¹ Armenian critics wore, in Baronian's words, 'eye-glasses upon eye-glasses to look for beautiful passages'⁸² whereas what was conspicuously beautiful would not have to be searched out. Those writers whose first works were constructively criticised were fortunate, as such criticism would doubtless help them avoid mistakes in their subsequent works. The flattery of Armenian critics had produced many so-called tragedians for the Armenian

people, who still could not boast of a single genuine tragedian.

Baronian recognized the importance of the works of Western masters in refining the literary taste of Armenians. The Armenians translated a great number of Western authors in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some of these translations were inadequate and inferior to the original. Baronian noted two basic flaws: translation mistakes, and the unintelligibility of the Armenian texts.

Tēroyenç's translation of

Pascal's Pensées is famous ... for its mistakes... though Tēroyenç insists that he has remained faithful to the original and that the few mistakes he has made in his translation (faithfully) reflect those of the original.⁸⁴

If Baronian commended Iwtiwčean's successful renderings, particularly from French, he sarcastically criticised Narpēy, who, like several other translators, was unqualified in the difficult art of translation. To interpret Narpēy's translation into Classical Armenian of Lamartine's Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses:

...a sub-committee of four was formed which, being unable to interpret it, sought the help of the translator, who regretted that he too was unable to understand his rendering, as a long time had passed since he made it.⁸⁵

Footnotes to Chapter VIII

1. PCS, viii, 41
2. And, Metin, A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey (Ankara, 1863-64), p. 69.
3. For his biography see Appendix III.
4. And, Metin, op.cit., p. 70.
5. Ibid.
6. Tiyatro, 1874, no. 36.
7. Ibid., no. 34.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., no. 36.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., no. 38.
15. Ibid., no. 36.
16. Agop abandoned his wife and four children for an affair with one of his Armenian actresses. Later, when the actress left Constantinople, he married a Greek woman briefly. He was married a third time to an 18-year old Armenian girl in about 1890 (cf. SHAT, ii, 176).
17. SHAT, ii, 94.
18. Ibid., 95.
19. Tigran Çuxačean (1837-1898) was the founder of Armenian musical theatre and the composer of the first Armenian opera 'Aršak II' in 1868.
20. Petros Małakean (1826-1891). An able stage-director and actor, who was active in Armenian theatrical life from the 1850s to the 1880s.
21. SHAT, ii, 210.
22. Tiyatro, 1874, no. 68.
23. PCS, iii, 160.
24. The Oriental Theatre was the first Armenian professional theatre founded in 1861. It continued to operate until the early 1880s.
25. SHAT, i, 322.
26. Ibid., ii, 92.
27. Tatron, 1875, no. 167.
28. PCS, vii, 112.
29. Sevengil Refik Ahmet, Türk Tiyatrosu Tarihi (Istanbul, 1961), p. 258.
30. Tiyatro, 1874, no. 58.

31. PCS, ii, 255.
32. Tiyatro, 1874, no. 2.
33. Ibid., no. 52.
34. Baronian remarked that this comedy lacked comic elements and was too short to be performed. It simply conveyed advice, without actually developing the theme and its consequences through action. Şinasi was not the author of this comedy because: 1) its style was unnatural and vulgar, 2) question marks were misplaced - Şinasi, who had first employed these marks in Turkish, could not have committed such an error, 3) Şinasi had a great passion for printing and, had he written this comedy, he would have published it himself, 4) normally an author's name is mentioned only once, on the front cover. Şinasi's name was printed on both the front and back covers, which was an attempt to deceive the reader, 5) if it were by Şinasi, the original manuscript should be revealed. There were still many people around who recognized Şinasi's handwriting and signature (Tiyatro, 1874, no. 50).
35. Tiyatro, 1874, no. 4.
36. Ibid.
37. Poet, playwright (1828-1868).
38. PCS, vii, 139.
39. A doctor by profession, Cerenç (Yovsēp' Šišmanean, 1822-1888) was the author of the first three historical novels in modern Armenian literature.
40. Founder and editor of Arewelian Mamul. A highly regarded intellectual, Matīēos Mamurean (1830-1901) also wrote a number of novels and comedies.
41. Srбуhi Vahanean (1842-1901). She adopted her French husband's surname (Dusap?) and devoted her attention to the problems of Armenian women.
42. For details of the plot see Appendix IV.
43. PCS, v, 261, 266.
44. Ibid., iii, 73.
45. Ibid., v, 234-235.
46. Alexandre Dumas fils, La Dame aux Camélias (Paris, 1883) p.1.
47. PCS, v, 235.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., iii, 7.
50. Ibid., 71.
51. Ibid., 257.
52. Ibid., 73.
53. Ibid., 71. The pun is on 'cer' (aged, elderly) and 'manuk' (child). 'Enç' is the contracted form of 'eanç' (the Classical Armenian genitive-dative-ablative plural ending). Thus Cerenç (elderly, "wise", "experienced") was Manukenç (childish, "inexperienced") in the art of creating characters.
54. Ibid., v, 252.

55. Ibid., 242.
56. Ibid., 238.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 228.
59. Ibid., ii, 129.
60. For his biography see Appendix III.
61. PCS, ii, 127.
62. Ibid., 129.
63. Ibid., 128.
64. Ibid., 130.
65. Aršak Čōpaneān; journalist, critic, writer (1872-1954).
66. PCS, ii, 137.
67. Ibid., 129.
68. Ibid., 11. The original reads as follows:
 Ziwr anuan koč
 Gites? Oh, oč.
69. Ibid., v, 273.
70. Ibid., ii, 130.
71. Ibid.
72. Teacher, poet (1835-1904).
73. PCS, ii, 263.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., iii, 29-34.
76. Mesrop Čanašēan, Patmutiwn ardi hay grakanutean, (Venice, 1953), p. 203.
77. PCS, ii, 16-17.
78. Ibid., v, 226.
79. Ibid., 235.
80. Ibid., 237.
81. Ibid., iii, 72.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., v, 275.
84. Ibid., ii, 48.
85. Ibid., 17.

CONCLUSION

Baronian was one of the dominant figures in Western Armenian literature in the 1870s and the 1880s. Armenian critics have recognised the period as one of transition from Romanticism to Realism. Simultaneously, a similar transformation took place within the Armenian community under the impact of Western ideas and local economic and political conditions. The so-called Armenian Awakening was in full swing, and the momentous changes it wrought were at the centre of Baronian's attention. As one of the outstanding proponents of emerging Armenian nationalism, Baronian echoed the aspirations and concerns of his fellow countrymen and offered his own remedies to the social and political problems that they faced.

The Armenian community, Baronian held rather pessimistically, was in moral deterioration owing to the decline of the institutions of marriage, education and religion under the impact of the degrading power of money and self-centred interest. He was aware that human character was greatly influenced by social and moral environment, and though he entertained some notions about the role of the social sciences, he envisaged no changes in the existing economic and social structures and relationships. Rather, reform began with and within the individual. All it took was common sense, an ability and willingness to realise that one had responsibilities towards oneself, one's immediate society, mankind and God. Paying but scant attention to the complexity of human behaviour and basic human needs, Baronian carried to extremes his theory of moral rectitude as the ultimate goal for men to aspire to, even before they thought of their daily bread. He hoped, rather optimistically, that acceptance of his principles would eliminate most of the social

and moral vices and regulate human relationships on a basis free from petty personal interest, which largely accounted for the moral decline in his society. His theory seemed viable to him as he envisaged, very much in the spirit of 'One for all and all for one', considerate, mutual cooperation on the part of all social beings on all social matters.

According to Baronian, no less important than individual efforts was the role of the family, religion and education in shaping character from early childhood as human abilities and instincts needed to be controlled and directed. If education developed the mental and moral powers of men, preparing them for practical life full of difficulties, responsible parents and, above all, religion, instilled in them true virtue which Baronian recommended wholeheartedly; though if one can judge him solely by his writings, charity, for instance, was not one of his conspicuous virtues.

Closer contacts with the West had introduced not only political ideas but also what amounted to Western social norms into Armenian society. Although Baronian disliked some of the innovations (those connected with fashion, for example), on the whole it was not so much the social concepts as their indiscreet application and distorted interpretation that dissatisfied Baronian and most subsequent Armenian writers. For example, Baronian violently disagreed with the more Westernised, and thereby somewhat alienated, section of the community, which looked down upon the rest of the Armenians as a backward society, and with those who adopted French in place of their mother tongue. He held that borrowing did not imply renouncing one's social and cultural background and that the particular aspects of Armenian culture, such as one's own language, for example, should be fostered in order to enhance the unity of the Armenians

and to reassert their distinct identity. Besides, he maintained, local conditions should always be taken into account before benefiting from the experience of others further afield. The West, therefore, could be a model, but not one that should be copied blindly. He abstained from entering a verdict on what some Armenians considered corrupt Western ideas, and argued that one should study every issue thoroughly and in its proper context before making a judgment.

Although Baronian categorically rejected the 'master-servant' relationship in Armenian families and advocated equal rights within this smallest but most vital human cell, his vision of the family was still largely patriarchal. Baronian overlooked the deep-rooted prejudice of society against women and attributed an excessive role to Nature and the biological make-up of men and women in defining their social position and relationship. He was receptive to the movement of emancipation in so much as it conformed to the principles of his theory of gradual transformation, as he believed that sudden and radical changes would throw a society into moral disorder. He maintained, however, that women's major role, designed by nature, was motherhood, allowing them but limited social activities. This attitude, however restricted it may appear from a European point of view, ranked him among the earliest Armenian authors to make such 'concessions'.

For Baronian, then, the prosperity of a society and, consequently, that of mankind, depended upon the individual as a social being. He accordingly maintained that individuals should earnestly strive for self-improvement. No doubt his view reflected his genuine concern for the human race, but it also reflected the strong influence of contemporary Armenian realities: comprising first and foremost the earnest struggle of the community for social progress

and for the reassertion of its political rights as a distinct ethnic and cultural entity.

Baronian's overriding political concern was the plight of his fellow Armenians in Armenia proper. He rightly maintained that injustice originated in the nature of the Ottoman political system, which was in sharp contrast with his conception of sound government. As a democrat, as a Christian, and as the representative of a subject people, Baronian was receptive to the West, whence he derived his political concepts, though it is difficult to pinpoint any specific sources of influence. It would be wrong to assume, however, that Baronian was a mere opportunist who advocated democracy to the sole advantage of his own people. Like the views of the Armenian Liberals, who had fathered the Constitution, his political vision was the fruit of deep political convictions. As an example of his willingness to consider all sides of the 'Armenian Question' one may cite his fierce denunciation of the arbitrary government of the community by the Armenian hierarchy. But while some Liberals considered the Constitution a major victory and an end in itself, Baronian insisted that, in view of the politically disadvantaged situation of the Armenians, the document and all other possible means should be further exploited to improve the lot of the community. Consequently, he insisted on the revision of the Constitution, in order to make it function more properly, and urged its proper implementation in the hope that it would prove an important tool for organising the Armenians politically and rallying them round a competent Armenian leadership. He maintained that only a politically conscious and united community could successfully strive for the reassertion of its basic political rights.

According to Baronian, the task of the Armenians was twofold: to organise themselves politically, and at the same time to apply

rigorous though constructive pressure on the Porte to compel it to review its internal policy. He would certainly have welcomed substantial changes in the nature of the Ottoman political system, which would have been to the benefit of both the Christian and Muslim elements of the Empire, but he was aware that it was rather premature to hope for such a transformation. His total rejection of the modest achievements of Ottoman reformers was exaggerated, but his scepticism of Abdulhamid's regime and of its willingness and ability to implement reform proved in the event to be well-founded. In the circumstances, he was prepared, realistically enough, to settle for minimum though basic measures of reform, such as security of life and property.

Although Baronian advocated legitimate self-defence on the part of the threatened individual, he was totally opposed to organised, large-scale violence and nurtured no separatist tendencies, maintaining that minorities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds could well coexist, and peacefully, under a just government. However, as he became aware that the pressure applied by the Armenian leadership and by himself (by way of merciless exposure of Ottoman internal policy) was likely to prove insufficient, his pacific views led him to advocate political interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire on the part of the European Powers. Despite his initial disappointment during the Balkan crisis of 1875-78 Baronian looked, once again, to a united Europe, motivated by purely humanitarian aims, for effective reform in Armenia. His views concerning international politics were perhaps too idealistic, but his balanced, peaceful political concepts deserved to be taken more seriously by some of his fellow-countrymen. No doubt their violent course was totally unwise; but it is impossible even for the best-intentioned observer to justify the ruthlessness with which the Armenians were later treated.

APPENDIX I

BARONIAN'S TIYATRO

As the Ottomans established themselves in Western Armenia, Turkish steadily gained ground, and was later spoken by a large number of Armenians. As a result, the Armenians created a considerable literature in Turkish with Armenian characters. The number of these writings greatly increased from the 1850s to the 1880s when, as the Armenian Awakening flourished, Armenian writers realised that Turkish was an important medium through which to communicate their ideas to the people. Apart from a large number of books and pamphlets, about 30 periodicals (almost a third of all Armenian periodical publications in Constantinople at the time) were published in Turkish with Armenian characters in Constantinople alone.¹ The remaining fifty or so periodicals were published in Armenian, with occasional articles in Turkish. Many Armenian editors contributed to the Turkish press itself; and H. Baronian published a satirical periodical, Tiyatro, in Turkish with Arabic characters for the Ottoman public.

Until very recently little was known about Tiyatro. Although there can be no doubt that contemporaries knew of its existence, nevertheless there are very few references to it in the Armenian press of the time.² The earlier biographers of Baronian, as well as those who wrote reminiscences about him, have made no mention of Tiyatro.³ Apparently they assumed that Tiyatro was a mere translation of T'atron, its Armenian namesake, and disregarded it. This, however, is not in the least surprising. On the contrary, it provides us with supplementary evidence that Tiyatro was published for, and read by, the Turkish-speaking Ottoman public.

There are several references to Tiyatro in Turkish sources. Selim Nüzhet Gerçek,⁴ Refik Ahmet Sevengil,⁵ Metin And,⁶ Fuat Süreyya Oral,⁷ Enver Behnan Şapolyo⁸ and others referred to Tiyatro in their works dealing with the history of Turkish press and theatre. But these were brief general references and, as far as I know, the Turks, like the Armenians, have not yet studied the contents of Tiyatro.

The Armenians had already published a number of satirical periodicals⁹ before the first Turkish satirical periodical, Diyojen, appeared in 1869. Until 1869 Diyojen was published in French and Greek.¹⁰ Teodor Kasab, the owner of Diyojen, launched a second satirical periodical, Hayal, in 1872.¹¹ Zakarya Efendi was the founder of the third major Turkish satirical periodical, Lâtime, in 1873.¹² Meanwhile, a few Turkish periodicals also published satirical supplements: Terakki¹³ (weekly satirical supplements called Letaif-i Asar 1868?); Asir¹⁴ (satirical supplements, 1870); and Çingirakli Tatar, which was published for a short while in 1872 by Teodor Kasab, when a ban had been imposed on Hayal.¹⁵

The fourth major Turkish satirical periodical, Tiyatro, was launched on 1 April, 1874. The last issue of Tiyatro which I have been able to trace is dated 12 October 1875, although it may have continued its run longer. Thus Tiyatro's publication stretches over a period of about eighteen months. But Tiyatro was banned twice for two months, and after the expiry of the second ban Baronian was unable to publish it for a further month. All in all, then, Tiyatro was actually published for about thirteen months.

Except for the last four issues, Tiyatro was published twice a week (Wednesdays and Saturdays), each issue being of four pages and costing 40 paras. From the nineteenth issue onwards, Baronian introduced some alterations to Tiyatro. He enlarged Tiyatro's size,

and printed it on better paper employing the gracefully designed Mühendisian letters. Also, a theatrical drawing was placed as part of the heading. Later, after the eighty seventh issue, further alterations were introduced to Tiyatro. Baronian changed the arrangement of its columns and introduced a new theatrical drawing, representing different scenes from current social life. The last four issues of Tiyatro were published daily on the occasion of Ramaḡān. By this time Baronian had reduced Tiyatro's size and price by half, and had abolished the first-page drawing.

Tiyatro contained short comedies, scenes, dialogues, descriptions, letters, notices, telegrams, jokes and riddles and cartoons. On the whole it featured short pieces, and the longest serialized material was usually published in two but not more than three consecutive issues. Unfortunately, no major works by Baronian are to be found in Tiyatro.

The themes discussed in Tiyatro were mainly of a social nature. Baronian might well have wished to raise political issues as he did in Tatron. In fact such a tendency is noticeable in the last period of Tiyatro. But, as Tiyatro was being published in Turkish, it came under stricter control than Tatron. On one occasion, for instance, Baronian's pungent remarks about Germany's conduct towards Belgium incurred a two months ban on Tiyatro; as the censors were displeased with Baronian's criticism of a European Power.¹⁶ This ban was imposed at a time when Baronian was publishing political criticism more freely in Tatron. Obviously, Baronian realized that it would be risky to get involved in political matters, as the censorship increasingly tightened its grip on the Ottoman press. It may well be that this was one of the main reasons for the discontinuation of Tiyatro.

Baronian's aim in publishing Tiyatro was to establish contacts with the multinational public of the Ottoman capital, and he accordingly focused his major attention on Tiyatro rather than Tatron. He twice abandoned the editorship of Tatron, undoubtedly to busy himself with Tiyatro. On 13 July, 1874, the editorship of Tatron was given to S. Tërzean. Baronian declared that he was 'unable to look after the contents'¹⁷ of Tatron, but promised to help Tërzean in editing it, and also, to complete his serial contributions. Tërzean edited Tatron for more than two months, until, on 25 September 1874, Baronian once again took over as editor. Next, Baronian passed the editorship of Tatron to G.M. Ēzačean, who became his partner and edited it from 11 January until 9 April 1875. On this occasion, Baronian listed the pseudonyms of six contributors to Tatron, 'editors' as he termed them, implying that they would run the periodical together with G.M. Ēzačean.¹⁸ Baronian thus tactfully freed himself from editing Tatron, and turned his full attention to Tiyatro. When Baronian resumed the publication of Tiyatro after the expiry of a ban of 2 August 1875, Tatron, which was being published three times a week, was turned into a weekly,¹⁹ whereas Tiyatro continued to be published twice a week. These details confirm the idea that Baronian was more concerned with Tiyatro, through which he channelled his views to the general public of the Ottoman capital.

Indeed, Baronian totally devoted himself to Tiyatro and filled its pages single-handed. Apart from some insignificant contributions, in the form of a few telegrams (signed 'Bēliar' in Tatron, but unsigned in Tiyatro), no one else contributed to Tiyatro. No signatures or pseudonyms are to be found in Tiyatro except Baronian's own signature which appeared in every issue, just before the advertisements. Another unmistakable proof in support of this

view is Baronian's style, which is plainly present throughout the issues of Tiyatro.

Tiyatro and Tatron shared certain similarities in form and content. For a while, they were published twice a week and on the same days; the main contents were placed in the first three pages, the fourth being reserved for cartoons and advertisements. The same cartoons were reproduced, and many a time the same articles were published in both periodicals. But they were also different in many ways. Firstly, certain modifications were introduced into items published simultaneously in Tiyatro and Tatron, so as to fit the Armenian or the Ottoman context. Secondly, although the same cartoons appeared in both periodicals, their captions, except when of general interest, varied so as to suit the Armenian or the general public. Thirdly, and most important, a considerable part of the material in Tiyatro was original.

Despite the differences between Tiyatro and Tatron, however, Baronian's views were very much the same in both periodicals; and this, at first glance, may leave Tiyatro's special importance open to question. But only at first glance, for Baronian was simply conveying his ideas to a larger audience. Baronian's general social views were both valid for and applicable to the different ethnic groups in the Ottoman Capital, where all the minorities, and the dominant ethnic element, were living more or less under the same social, economic and political conditions, and were undergoing almost the same external influences. However, Tiyatro assumes importance in some other aspects as well.

Firstly, the publication of Tiyatro reveals a new dimension of Baronian's social concepts and, especially, his humanism. He had no nationalistic prejudices and regarded the Ottoman community in Constantinople as one society, all the components of which were

equally in need of reforms. If reforms were to be introduced into the Ottoman community, they should equally apply to all elements of society, regardless of their ethnic differences. In this manner only, it would be possible to create the suitable conditions of a harmonious life for a multinational society.

Secondly, by publishing Tiyatro Baronian made his contribution to the genre of mensur mizah in Turkish literature – a genre which was in its early stages of formation in the 1870s.²⁰ The founders of the genre of mizah, editors as well as writers, were also the forerunners, who paved the way with others, for Turkish social criticism in the later part of the Tanzimat period.

Thirdly, as Baronian considered theatre a most effective instrument for social reforms, he actively advertised it through the pages of Tiyatro. Little wonder, then, that the newly born Turkish theatre, and its problems, were at the very centre of Baronian's attention. Baronian also cultivated his readers' theatrical taste by publishing reviews, short comedies, and innumerable dialogues. His reviews – written in a fashion intelligible to the general public, were among the earliest such attempts in the history of the Turkish theatre.²¹

Finally, Baronian was among the first authors to employ the spoken form of Turkish in their writings.²² It may well be argued that the employment of the spoken language forms was necessitated by the genre itself, that the genre of comedy required a colloquial language. But comedy apart, Baronian had always maintained that language is not an end in itself but a means for communication. Literature is produced for the public and the language should, therefore, be comprehensible to, or be the language of, the people itself; rather than in the prevailing archaic and ornate style. Baronian always remained faithful to this principle, both in his

Armenian and in his Turkish writings. In both cases his style was as simple and as free from loan words as possible.

R.E. Koçu has made some remarks on Baronian's Tiyatro in Istanbul Ansiklopedisi.²³ It is beyond my immediate scope here to deal with his uninformed remarks on Baronian as a satirist. But Koçu has also stated that Baronian's Turkish was 'bozuk' and, basing his judgment largely on a verse criticism by Baronian, Koçu has concluded that Baronian did not know Turkish.²⁴

Baronian had as good a command of Turkish as of his mother tongue. If Koçu had taken the trouble to read carefully the passage on the basis of which he condemns him, he would have realised that the lines he quotes from Tiyatro are deliberate parody. Baronian never wrote seriously in verse, and the ten or so short poems he wrote were all parodies. He himself always criticised the mediocre poets who sacrificed content to form, paying but little attention to the sense of what they wrote so long as it rhymed.

The material in Tiyatro is overwhelmingly of a social nature. Baronian's short writings in Tiyatro embody almost the same ideas as in Tâtron, expressed in different words. Baronian's political criticism in Tiyatro was exclusively confined to the Carlist movement in Spain.²⁵ He parodied Don Carlos's speeches, wrote a comedy about him, and caustically criticized him as an incompetent, and a timid and talkative leader.

Footnotes to Appendix I

1. G. Stepanyan's article 'Hayataŕ tŕkŕen hay mamulĕ' in Hay parberakan mamuli patmutyuniĉ, (Erevan, 1963), i. 239-274; and Hay parberakan mamuli bibliografia, compiled by H. Petrosyan (Erevan, 1956).
2. Asia welcomed the publication of Tiyatro (see Asia 1874 no.20) and Masis reported a ban on Tiyatro (see Masis, 1875 no.1673).
3. According to G. Stepanyan, one of Baronian's biographers briefly referred to Tiyatro's publication (cf. G. Stepanyan, op.cit., p. 260).
4. Selim Nŕzhet (Gerĉek), Tŕrk Gazeteciliĝi, (Istanbul, 1931), pp. 65-66.
5. Refik Ahmed (sic) (Sevengil), Yakin ĉaĝlarda tŕrk tiyatrosu, (Istanbul, 1934), i, 42-43, as quoted by G. Stepanyan op.cit. p. 260.
6. Metin And, A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey, (Ankara, 1963-64), p. 70.
7. Fuat Sŕreyya Oral, Tŕrk Basın Tarihi, (Ankara, 1967), i, 117.
8. Enver Behnan Ŗapolyo, Tŕrk Gazeteciliĝi Tarihi, her yŕniyle basin, (Ankara, 1969), p. 154.
9. Zuarĉaxŕs, 1855; Meĭu, 1856; Mamul, 1869.
10. Selim Nŕzhet (Gerĉek), op.cit., p. 52.
11. Ibid., p. 60.
12. Ibid., p. 62.
13. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
14. Ibid., p. 55.
15. Ibid., p. 61.
16. Tatron, 1875, no. 129.
17. Ibid., 1874, no. 27.
18. Ibid., 1875, no. 85.
19. Ibid., 1875, no. 158.
20. Ismail Habib (Sevŕk), Tanzimattanberi Edebiyat Tarihi, (Istanbul, 1942), p. 203.
21. Only a few reviews had appeared in the Turkish press until then (cf. Sevengil Refik Ahmet, Tŕrk Tiyatrosu Tarihi, Istanbul, 1961, iii, 258-264).
22. With very few exceptions, the overwhelming majority of Turkish writers employed an ornate Ottoman style, full of Arabic and Persian loan words (cf. Ismail Habib Sevŕk, Dil Da'vasi, Istanbul, 1949, pp. 13-15). The periodical publications played an important role in simplifying Turkish (cf. Agĝh Sirri Levend, Tŕrk Dilinde GeliŖme ve SadeleŖme Evreleri, Ankara, 1960, p. 82).
23. ReŖad Ekrem Koĉu, Istanbul Ansiklopedisi, (Istanbul, 1960), iv, 2124.
24. Ibid.,
25. Tiyatro, 1874, nos. 12, 18, 19, 38, 56, 63, 65.

APPENDIX II

NOTES ON BARONIAN'S CICAŁ

Baronian ceased the publication of his Tatron on 18 June, 1877. Almost seven years elapsed before he could launch his next and last periodical, Xikar, in February 1884. In the interim, however, Baronian contributed to various Western and Eastern Armenian periodicals. Masis welcomed Baronian's signature almost immediately after the discontinuation of Tatron. In the seven months from 6 September, 1879, to 5 April, 1880, he edited M. Kaṣamačean's Loys. He contributed to Porj of Tiflis (numbers 6-7, 8-9, 11-12, 1880; and 1, 1881), and to Paṛos Hayastani of Moscow (January-June, 1881). Finally from January to June 1883 Baronian published a weekly, Cicał.

As Baronian had not obtained permission to publish a periodical, the weekly instalments of Cicał bore no dates; and, according to Ottoman regulations, Cicał could not, therefore, be considered a periodical.¹ Cicał must have been popular, for it reappeared in the same year (1883) in book form. The printer was S. Partizpaneian, who had totally subsidised the original issues of Cicał.² In 1899 the priest G. Ałaneanç reprinted Cicał in Tiflis.³ It was then published in Erevan in 1935, 1955 and 1965. A selected translation of Cicał in Hungarian appeared in 1914.⁴

By 1883 Abdulhamid had imposed strict censorship on the press and, consequently, it was virtually impossible to express any kind of criticism. To avoid censorship, therefore, Baronian had to disguise his criticism with antique mythology and animal allegory. If in Mełu and Tatron he had occasionally employed this method to create variety, it was now necessary for literary survival. In a brief introduction to Cicał Baronian declared that his work would be concerned with animals, with the exception of 'that animal, whom

in the 19th century they call man'.⁵ In case the reader might deduce the contrary, Baronian expressed his subject more plainly: his characters are 'begowned monkeys, crows who are candidates for ecclesiastical preferment...',⁶ the real identity of whom was unmistakable. Undoubtedly, those who were criticized recognised themselves, and were identified by other contemporary readers. However, what was plainly visible and understandable to the late 19th century reader is now much more obscure to us. A reading of Cica without relevant annotation is very difficult and limited, and prevents any real appreciation of Baronian's satire.

The 1883 edition of Cica by Partizpaneane understandably did not contain annotations, nor did the 1899 Tiflis edition by Ałaneanc. Most likely Ałaneanc himself understood the work only in very general terms, without being able to specify the actual personalities and the events. Otherwise he would not have dared to publish Cica at all, for it was not free from some criticism of Russia's policy towards its Armenian subjects (e.g. the article on 'The Phylloxera Problem'). Further, it is not at all surprising that Ałaneanc could not fully understand Cica, since in less than ten years it had become largely unintelligible in Constantinople itself, where the events depicted in this work took place and where its heroes lived.

The first attempt to 'decipher' Cica was made immediately after Baronian's death in 1891, by H. Asatur,⁷ Baronian's first biographer. It is surprising that one so closely connected with Armenian life in Constantinople should in fact fail to understand Cica⁸ and felt obliged to write to Baronian's nephew M. Santalčean to seek his help. It is more striking still that the nephew himself, who witnessed the creation of many of Baronian's works, was unable to shed light on Cica: 'It is really to be regretted that I did not ask Baronian

any question about this Cicaŀ'.⁹

It was not until 1935 that the first attempt was made to remove the animal mask from the characters in Cicaŀ by Prof. S. Manukyan, one of the editors of Baronian's collected works then being published in Erevan.¹⁰ Prof. Manukyan was assisted in his task by H. Aĉaŀean¹¹ and others, including a personal friend of Baronian's.¹² Their achievement was considerable, and so far remains the only published attempt. With very few exceptions their notes are acceptable if not entirely exhaustive. The last edition of Cicaŀ was annotated by A.S. Manukyan,¹³ with hardly anything added to Prof. Manukyan's earlier notes. There is sufficient material available, however, from which to formulate additional notes on Baronian's Cicaŀ.

The difficulties in explaining Cicaŀ are numerous. Baronian did not merely represent human beings as animals. Nor did the same animal always represent the same person. For instance Baronian branded K. Iwtiŀĉean, the editor of Masis, as a fox. But it would be wrong to identify every fox automatically by Iwtiŀĉean. In Cicaŀ, for example, the fox represented Bishop M. Izmirlean as well as K. Iwtiŀĉean. Baronian always paraphrased the actual words of his characters, and it is often very difficult to identify his version with the original. Frequently, for artistic reasons, Baronian reduced the speeches of his heroes very considerably. Also, on the other hand, he often added lines and even whole scenes for the same reasons. Sometimes, again for artistic effect, he brought together scenes taken from different sessions of the National Assembly. 'The Phylloxera Problem' serves as a good example for all three cases.

Cicaŀ is a collection of fables each consisting of a dialogue and a moral conclusion. Some fables have an introduction as well. The central hero is Cicaŀ the dog: who represents the author himself.

The dialogues are either between Cical and another animal, or between two other animals, or Cical and antique heroes and gods. The themes discussed are mainly concerned with Armenian life, or raise moral and social issues.

The Owl and the Monkey

'The Owl and the Monkey' is a dialogue between these two animals.¹⁴ The Owl has some very bad news to impart: an earthquake has destroyed a whole animal village. The Monkey questions the Owl: when did the earthquake take place? how long did it last? did it proceed from the East, West, South or North? what were the houses of these animals made of? what did they eat? what did they do? were the animals wearing European or Asian clothes before they were killed? etc. Although the Owl urges that immediate relief is needed and that the survivors are starving, the Monkey rattles on: who cares that they are starving? and even if they are, they themselves are responsible for their death; nowadays everything is done in an orderly manner - the issue should be brought to the Assembly of the Animals and debated for several sessions, and only then can the Assembly's decision be sent to the relevant committee for implementation. The Monkey takes up the questioning again: could they not have prevented the earthquake? have they found those responsible for it? who do they suspect? what is the motive behind this disaster? is it a love affair or a disappointment, and so on. A moral conclusion pointing to the damage of such delay ends the dialogue.

There was no annotation to this story in the 1935 edition of Cical; in the 1965 edition the Patriarch (the President of the Animals) and the Armenian National Assembly (the Assembly of the Animals) have been identified. The details of the earthquake, the

animal characters in the dialogue, and its original source, have until now been left unspecified.

In fact the earthquake in question took place in the village of Šatax in the vilayet of Van. The relief to the disaster area was discussed in three sessions in the Armenian National Assembly. Baronian was a deputy himself at the time and attended the first two sessions. He was not present at the third, where the speeches that gave rise to his criticism were delivered. In the 18th session of the Assembly¹⁵ a deputy, K. Pānosean, suggested that the sum of 50 liras allocated by the Famine Committee for the villagers in Šatax was too small an amount and that a further 200 liras should be sent. The Assembly passed a resolution instructing the relative committees to take the necessary steps. In the next session¹⁶ another deputy, A. Tēnkērean, wanted to know what had been done to implement the decision taken by the National Assembly in its previous session. It was announced that the Famine Committee had not yet reported concerning the measures it had taken in this regard. The Assembly passed another resolution urging the implementation of its first decision immediately. The Famine Committee reported to the Assembly in its 21st session.¹⁷ It said that: a) the Committee had sent 50 liras to Šatax; b) the Government of the Vilayet of Van had sent a surgeon and 36 liras to the disaster area; c) a sum of 100 liras had been raised by the people; and d) for the time being the Committee considered these measures satisfactory. However, the Committee had also instructed a certain Kālēčean efendi to report to the Committee on the plight of the villagers, and had put a further sum of 50 liras at his disposal to be spent on the villagers if necessity arose. Tēnkērean found the measures taken by the Committee unsatisfactory. The Patriarch, Nersēs Varžapetean, and a deputy, K. Sēvačean, defended and praised

the Committee. Sēvačēan said in his speech that the Assembly, before reaching any decision on the subject, should have asked 'how many people are there in Šatax, how many are wounded and how many dead, what is their plight etc.',¹⁸ and he considered this criticism the result of a grudge against the Committee. The Patriarch made a more elaborate speech. He first rebuked Tēnkērean, then asked his audience not to be ungrateful towards a Committee whose members 'toiled day and night, saved thousands of people from certain death and provided remedies against an extensive famine'.¹⁹ The Patriarch related that those asked to form a committee to face the famine had not responded, while the present members had spontaneously offered their services and formed the Committee three years ago. 'The Committee', the Patriarch went on, 'is ready to help the people of Šatax but it wants first to verify the local needs, the number of the wounded, the damage inflicted etc. and send money accordingly.'²⁰

It is not difficult then to trace the origin of Baronian's criticism in the above mentioned speeches. Baronian developed them into a bitter criticism of the bureaucracy of the Armenian National Authorities, collectively represented by the Monkey. The 'prophet of mischief' symbolized the disaster itself.

Elegant Names

Contrary to G. Step'anyan's belief,²¹ 'Elegant Names'²² is based on a true story. Baronian himself mentioned this fact twice in his introduction to the work. He stated that he would only relate facts, and he concluded his introduction thus: 'Let us now go back and narrate the debate which one day took place in the Assembly of the Frogs on the issue of the names which raised much ado'.²³

In his introduction Baronian talked of the varying impressions made by the visages of strangers, both pleasant and unpleasant.

One often tried to guess their occupation from their faces, and never agreed that the owner of an unpleasant visage could be a poet, a painter or a sculptor. The same applied to the names of people. There were young ladies, for example, who had refused to be married to young men who did not have two-syllabled and soft-sounding names. And as one tried to guess the occupation of strangers from their visages and names, so one often tried to guess their names from their visages and to imagine their visages according to their names. Elegant and short names were very helpful in this respect.

Once a Frog called Rěkněťosios asked the Assembly of Frogs whether it was true that the frogs of a village were without food for two days, and that the Committee for Feeding the Hungry had remained indifferent. At this question the President of the Assembly grew angry. He rebuked Rěkněťosios and praised the Committee for Feeding the Hungry. He also said that he was not personally acquainted with Rěkněťosios; and how could a Frog whom he did not know be right? Was not this Frog, with such a name, ashamed to come to the Assembly? Could a Rěkněťosios have the ability to take part in debates? If he had, he would not offend the feelings of the Committee for Feeding the Hungry with such an ugly, deformed, ignorant, invalid and meaningless question. The stupefied Frog could not understand why his name should cause him such humiliation. Presently another question, the same as that of Rěkněťosios, was submitted to the Assembly. The President wanted to know who had put the question. It was Aļewrik,²⁴ whom the President knew had a pleasant name, and he did not anger the President. Although it was pointed out to the President that the two questions were identical, he maintained that there was an enormous difference between them: whereas Rěkněťosios accused the Committee for Feeding the Hungry, Aļewrik criticised those who attacked the Committee. Moreover, if

the question was asked by Aļewrik, then it was bound to be a fair one; if it was asked by Rěkněťosios, an unbecoming one. For the President knew Aļewrik intimately, whereas he did not know Rěkněťosios at all.

The first half of this fable, until the introduction of the second question by Aļewrik, is based on what happened in the 21st session of the National Assembly²⁵ when relief to Šatax was being debated. We already know that Těnkěrean Awetis found the measures taken by the Famine Committee in this respect unsatisfactory. The Patriarch himself answered this criticism:

His Holiness the Patriarch (directing his words to Těnkěrean efendi):

I do not know this gentleman, but it is my duty to request him to be grateful to the Famine Committee. This is the first time since the foundation of the Patriarchate in Constantinople that a sum of more than thirty thousand liras has been collected by a national committee.

I said I did not know this gentleman, ... let us not be so ungrateful towards that Committee, the members of which worked without rest day and night, saved thousands of people from certain death and provided remedy for an extensive famine.²⁶

Těnkěrean protested against the 'aspersions' by the Patriarch, but in the quoted speech of the Patriarch it is difficult to find anything specific. This is because the Records were edited and insulting remarks often omitted. In spite of this, it is obvious that a) the Patriarch (the President of the Assembly of the Frogs) did not know Těnkěrean Awetis (Rěkněťosios); b) the Patriarch rebuked Těnkěrean (thus the latter's protests against aspersions by the Patriarch), and c) the Patriarch praised the Committee for Feeding the Hungry (the Famine Committee). If the os and ios suffixes are removed and Rěkněť inversed, and ean, the Armenian gentile suffix, is added, the name Těnkěrean²⁷ is reconstituted. We can also reasonably assume that the Patriarch insulted Těnkěrean's name and that his actual words were carefully omitted from the official records.

A second question, the equivalent of that of Aļewrik, is not traceable in the Records. But K. Sěvačean's speech²⁸ in defence of the Famine Committee corresponds with what the Patriarch said when comparing the two questions - that whereas Rěknět'osios accused the Committee for Feeding the Hungry, Aļewrik criticised those who attacked the Committee. There can be little doubt that Baronian used Sěvačean's defence, and made up the second part to emphasize the absurd approach of the Patriarch.

The Lion and Cronos

Cronos is a fat animal with no fixed principles. He is a skilled rhetorician. Once he was the favourite of the Lion. At present they are not so intimate as they used to be. Baronian describes the quarrel between them which took place in the Assembly of the Animals.²⁹

Once the Ants were asked to repay an enormous debt, which the Cicadas had accumulated by spending all their time in song. Cronos thought that the Working Committee was supposed to bring the matter first to the Animal Assembly for discussion. After that the Committee could devise ways of implementing the Assembly's decision. Hereupon the Lion accused Cronos of being unscrupulous: Cronos wished to destroy the Nest of the Cicadas, Cronos was a wicked animal, and he did all this to win popularity. Having said this, the Lion ordered that his words should not appear in the minutes of the session: otherwise he would resign.

In the 'Lion and Cronos' the Lion represented the Patriarch Varžapetean; and Cronos was Step'an P'ap'azean, a deputy to the National Assembly. The argument between them was over the debt of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. The Patriarch's threat to resign was too serious to be ignored and his words were expunged from the records. Prof. Manukyan rightly recognised the Ants as

the great mass of Armenians, and the debt as that of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. However, his assumption that Cronos was the chairman of the Assembly is wrong.

The perpetual debts of Jerusalem had risen to about 35,000 liras by the early eighties. As usual Jerusalem had sought the help of the Centre, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, to repay its debts. Since the efforts of the various national committees to remove this debt had proved fruitless, it was decided to seek the Porte's help. An amount of 3 kurush was to be added to the military tax levied by the Porte on the Armenians, and the amount raised would be used to pay the debt. This, however, was being planned outside the Assembly by the Patriarchate and the Political Council. As soon as the plan became known, a question was put to the National Authorities in the 16th session of the Assembly.³⁰ In the next session, held on 11 March 1883, the Political Council confirmed that negotiations were being conducted with the Porte about the proposed plan, and that for the time being the Council had no further statement to make on the subject. During the debate on the issue, the Patriarch was in favour of the plan which would save that 'wonderful and centuries-old institution, the religious pride of the Armenians', the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. A deputy, Stepan Papazean, thought that it was a very serious matter and suggested that the report on the previous decision of the Assembly on the matter should be brought to the Assembly. Only then, in the light of the report, could the issue be discussed. Thereupon: 'His holiness the Patriarch leaves - there is uproar for a while'.

What Baronian represented as Cronos's plan exactly corresponds to Papazean's motion. And whereas the Records state that His Holiness left the Assembly in uproar after Papazean's suggestion, Baronian described an actual dispute which was omitted from the

Records on the Patriarch's demand. This dispute was referred to by the Chairman of the Assembly in the next session.³² He warned that he would discontinue the session if there were 'interruptions', 'personal innuendoes' or 'aspersions against political personalities'. However, the Records provide further evidence of the dispute. When confirming the minutes of the 17th session, in which the disputes took place, P'ap'azean remarked that 'on the same day, His Holiness the Patriarch addressed to me words which have not been recorded'.³³

Cronos was fat, said the fable, and so was P'ap'azean: 'P'ap'azean is a plump and handsome man...'.³⁴ Cronos was a good rhetorician, as was P'ap'azean: 'He wished...to display his tongue's genius', '...he could unendingly talk for a month...'.³⁵ The good relationship between the Lion and Cronos had deteriorated, stated the fable. P'ap'azean himself had once been on very good terms with Patriarch Varžapetean. Indeed, so much so that Varžapetean sent him to the Congress of Berlin to ensure that the Armenian Delegation pursued Varžapetean's policy on the Armenian Question. But from the early eighties their relationship deteriorated. This was reflected in their recurrent arguments in the Assembly. As examples we can point to their disputes on the issue of education;³⁶ and their disagreement over the number of Armenians in Armenia;³⁷ and Patriarch Varžapetean's own words when resigning his post were: '... and also I have many shortcomings which P'ap'azean efendi can number for you one by one'³⁸ etc.

The Phylloxera Problem

Once the problem of this 'calamitous Worm' was discussed in the Animal Assembly.³⁹ The Chairman demanded that the animals who wanted to talk, and talk at length, should devote their speeches to Phylloxera only and avoid making remarks about other animals.

The Fox was the first of the speakers. He reminded the Assembly that this problem was not a new one. Many had carefully studied the problem and had reported on it. Some had even treatises devoted to it in foreign tongues. In spite of this, the Fox went on, the Worm continued to harm the Vineyard, to suck the sap of the vine, and to destroy its roots, whereupon its leaves dried up. The Vine was prevented from thinking and talking and from bearing fruit. The only remedy was to do away with the Worm. But how? Phylloxera would not leave the Vineyard when summoned to do so. Therefore, concluded the Fox, the Parents of Phylloxera should be told that its existence contravened the rights of the Vineyard, and that it should be eliminated.

Cronos thought that the suggestion made by the Fox was impracticable. It would be wiser to amend it on suitable occasions, he said. The Magpie opposed Cronos's suggestion, and thought that the Assembly must choose between the Vineyard and Phylloxera. Here, the Assembly was confused for a while. Then the Silkworm suggested that they appeal to the Parents of Phylloxera to wipe this cursed Worm away. And again there was confusion for a while.

Presently the Chairman praised the Crow as their best rhetorician; she could explain the problem and suggest a remedy for it; the Assembly should listen to her attentively.

The Crow took the floor. She was very sorry, she said, that some of the animals pronounced the name of the Worm wrongly: Phylloxera instead of Phallaxara. Indeed it was spelt Phylloxera, but the letters y, o and e were pronounced a in that language.⁴⁰ Therefore, it was Phallaxara and not Phylloxera. Y, o and e were vowels; letters formed words and words formed phrases; y, o and e were part of the word Phallaxara. And since, for the sake of harmony some letters had different pronunciations in different positions, it

was decided that the letters y, o and e were sometimes to be pronounced a. Consequently Phylloxera was pronounced Phallaxara; this was a polysyllabic, common noun belonging to the -a Declension. After declining the word in singular and plural the Crow drew the attention of the Assembly to the dire consequences of incorrect pronunciation. Incorrect pronunciation made the problem all the more delicate and complex. The only way to get rid of the Worm, the Crow concluded, was to pronounce the word Phallaxara and not Phylloxera.

The Crow, the Magpie and the Wolf said that they would dispose of the Worm were they appointed as wardens for the Vineyard.

Finally the Lion stepped in. He said that he had been listening to the animals for two hours and that he would speak briefly. According to the Lion it would be best to form a plenipotentiary committee to solve the problem in the most convenient fashion. Although the Elephant opposed the idea, the Lion was insistent and his suggestion was accepted by a majority of four and a half votes. As usual a moral 'lesson' brought the fable to a close.

G. Step'anyan recognised the Bishop Narpēy and the National Assembly in this tale. But he wrongly assumed that the debate in the Assembly was about a person 'harmful' to the Armenian nation. And he regretted that the fable had become unintelligible.⁴¹ To my knowledge no one else has suggested any explanation of the Phylloxera Problem.

What Baronian called Phylloxera is the so called Polozhenie ('statute') designed to regulate 'the affairs of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Russia'. This was promulgated in 1836, eight years after the annexation of Eastern Armenia by Russia. The Polozhenie was being imposed on the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin, the spiritual centre of all Armenians. The Patriarchate of Constantinople also recognised the Catholicos of Ējmiacin as the head of

the Armenian Church: hence its concern over the restrictions placed on the latter. But the Patriarchate and its flock, the Western Armenians, could exert little pressure on Russia to introduce amendments to the Polozhenie. Moreover, the political situation in the wake of the Russo-Turkish war did not permit the Western Armenians to busy themselves with the Polozhenie.

Ep'rem I, the Catholicos of Ējmiacin, resigned on 6 March, 1831. According to the traditions of the Armenian Church, Armenian communities throughout the world would elect the new Catholicos. But the Western Armenians were not invited to participate in this first election after the Russian annexation of Eastern Armenia. When, however, Yovhannēs VIII Karbeçi, Ep'rem's successor, died on 26 March, 1842, the Synod of Ējmiacin invited the Patriarchate of Constantinople to take part in the election of the new Catholicos according to the provisions of the Polozhenie. The Western Armenians simply placed their confidence in the members of the Ējmiacin Order and sent out one delegate to represent them in the election. The new Catholicos, Nersēs V Aštarakeçi, died on 13 February 1857. The Ējmiacin Synod sent to the Patriarchate of Constantinople an invitation similar to the previous one. The 13th clause of the Polozhenie decreed that each prelacy should send two delegates to the election, a priest and a layman. The Western Armenians now decided that the Patriarchate of Constantinople comprised 45 dioceses, a total of 90 votes. This would give them an overwhelming majority in the elections, since the Eastern Armenians (together with the Armenian community of Persia) had a maximum of 31 votes. The Western Armenians also prepared a list of candidates. And on this basis they authorised the Deputy-Governor of the Caucasus, Prince Vasily Behboutean, to vote for them. The Prince died before the election and two dignitaries

from Tiflis were authorised by the Western Armenians to represent them. But they had two votes and not 90 as decided by the Western Armenians.

The 'Constitution' of the Western Armenians was promulgated in 1863. When Mat̄ēos I died on 22 August 1865, the participation of the Western Armenians in the election of the new Catholicos was discussed by the National Assembly. The Committee specially formed for this purpose bitterly criticised the Polozhenie. It also found that the Patriarchate of Constantinople comprised 65 dioceses and not 45 as decided in 1857. Furthermore, the National Assembly should choose only one candidate for the Catholicosate and send two delegates empowered to represent 130 votes. The Assembly chose Gēorg Kērestēčean, the prelate of Bursa, as its candidate and sent the Bishop N. Varžapetean and Y. Noratunkean as representatives. These two voted 'for the prelacies' they represented without mentioning the number of the votes. They were told that the National Assembly's candidate was Ējmiacin's as well. Apparently a compromise was reached thereupon, for Gēorg was elected Catholicos on 17 September 1866. But the problem of votes remained unsolved; the official result indicated that the Western delegates had only had two votes.

The problem was once again on the agenda of the National Assembly in 1883, soon after the death of Gēorg IV on 6 December 1882. And it was on this occasion that Baronian wrote the 'Phylloxera Problem'.

A suggestion that the Assembly should occupy itself with the approaching election of the Catholicos of Ējmiacin was made in the 16th session. It was repeated in the 18th and finally the Assembly began the debate in the 19th session. The discussion was continued in the 20th session but the Assembly had no quorum to make a decision.

In the 21st session it was decided that a Committee should look into the matter and report to the Assembly. 'The Phylloxera Problem' before the appearance of the Crow is based on the 19th, and the rest is based on the 21st, session. Baronian attended the 19th but was absent from the 21st session.

The Fox is the Bishop Mat̄ēos Izmirlean. He was the first to speak on the 'Catholicosate Problem' in the 19th session.⁴² He said that this was the second time that the Assembly occupied itself with the problem of electing the Catholicos. He criticised the Polozhenie; it restricted the authority of the Catholicos and contravened the traditions of the Armenian Church. The Assembly, went on Izmirlean, decided in 1866 to participate in the election and to leave it to the newly elected Catholicos to struggle for amendments to the Polozhenie. Instead, Izmirlean thought, the Assembly itself should have pursued the matter. He criticised the Synod for making decisions without consulting Constantinople. All this made one think what course one should follow. This time he would not be content with mere criticism of the Polozhenie. A committee should be formed in order to suggest amendments, etc. It can be seen that Izmirlean's speech corresponds to that of the Fox.

Cronos is Stepan Pápazean, who talked immediately after Izmirlean. His speech was long, and rather than paraphrase it, Baronian gave the gist of it. Pápazean said that they were dealing with a powerful government and all efforts had so far proved fruitless. He thought that the Catholicos of Ējmiacin had two functions; he was the Patriarch of the Eastern Armenians and the Catholicos of all Armenians. Therefore they should try to amend those clauses that concerned the Catholicos as the head of the Armenian Church. This corresponds to Cronos's call to be wise and make amendments on suitable occasions.

I have not been able to identify the Magpie. But he must be a priest for, as we already know, he, the Crow and the Wolf expressed their wish to become the superintendent of the Vineyard, in other words the Catholicos of Ējmiacin.

The Silkworm is Minas Čeraz.⁴³ He repeated what had already been suggested by Noratunkean, that the Assembly's suggestions about the Polozhenie should be forwarded to the Russian Government on the occasion of the coronation of the Tsar. On such days problems would have a better chance of being solved. This exactly corresponds to the Silkworm's suggestion to '...appeal to the Parents of Phylloxera to wipe this cursed Worm away'.

As has already been said, the second part of the story is built on the 21st session.⁴⁴ The Crow is the Bishop Xorēn Narpēy. In his speech Narpēy felt it necessary to suggest a correction to the word that had attracted the Assembly's attention. It was wrong to spell 'Balazhenia' or 'Bolozhenia',⁴⁵ it should be pronounced Palazhenia as the Russians did. The Chairman of the Assembly remarked that these were 'linguistic' matters and had no relation to the discussion. To this Narpēy answered that he did not want to teach the Assembly a lesson; he only wanted to correct the pronunciation of the word - so that nobody would think that the Armenian National Assembly did not know how to pronounce correctly the word that it wanted to criticise, or that it did not grasp its meaning. Baronian made up the rest when the Patriarch stepped in. It is now obvious that Phylloxera stood for Polozhenie.

The Lion represented the Patriarch N. Varžapetean. When Narpēy completed his speech many deputies wished to discontinue the discussion and vote a decision. Varžapetean shared this view. He said it was getting late and that it was necessary to reach a decision on this important subject. Almost all deputies had expressed their

opinions and were all for the formation of a Committee, he said. Many speeches were delivered (which Baronian omitted from the fable) before the Patriarch could again urge the Assembly to put an end to the discussion and appoint a committee. 42 deputies attended the session and they had to vote on three suggestions. The first won 3 votes, the second also won 3 votes, and the Patriarch's suggestion won 11 votes! Thus the Assembly adopted the Patriarch's suggestion by a majority of 5 votes (the difference between the total of votes given to the first and second suggestions and those given to the Patriarch's) which Baronian interpreted as four and a half votes.

The Cicada and the Monkey

The Cicada has a debt of 35,000 liras and has come to ask the Monkey's advice as to how to find funds to pay this debt.^{4 6}

This is, again, a reference to the debts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Cicada is the Patriarch Esayi himself, who left Jerusalem for Constantinople on 12 April 1882 to raise funds for Jerusalem. He spent almost three years in Constantinople and left it for Jerusalem on 21 February 1885. As for the Monkey, he symbolizes a personality holding an important post within the National Authorities (whom I have not been able to identify).

The Invincible, Achilles and Cicaḷ^{4 7}

The Invincible and Achilles were in passionate disagreement, each claiming victory over the other. The Armenian and Greek press were also involved in the dispute: the Armenian press proclaiming the Invincible as the victor, and the Greek press giving the victory to Achilles. In order to determine the winner, Cicaḷ suggested that he put questions to both the Invincible and Achilles, and the one who could provide him with positive answers would be the winner. Both sides agreed to this suggestion, and Cicaḷ questioned the Invincible first:

...Your compatriots...declared that you could walk for ten days with a three-masted ship laden with wheat on your head... Sir Invincible, you who are used to lifting such heavy things, tell me could you lift the debt of the black-begowned folk at present under debate at the Animal Assembly?

Invincible: That is very heavy.

Cicał: ...the avarice of the rich, slaves of their gold?

Invincible: No.⁴⁸

To these and a number of further questions the Invincible had only negative replies, whereupon Cicał ordered him to stand aside, and began questioning Achilles:

Cicał: ...It is said that you could shake the earth if you sneezed...and that you could pull down the most solid buildings thanks to your prowess; tell me, could you uproot hatred among nations?

Achilles: That is beyond my prowess.⁴⁹

Like the Invincible, Achilles too had only negative replies to Cicał's questions. Thereupon, Cicał concluded that both adversaries were weak, and scolded them for having aroused the emotions of the two nations in vain. Then, as usual, Cicał drew a moral conclusion concerning competition, strength, wisdom and human relations.

The disputes over the Holy Places, and the occasional Armenian-Greek, Greek-Armenian conversions, beside other secondary factors, gave rise to frequent and serious tensions between the Armenian and Greek communities in the Ottoman capital. Sometimes trifling episodes, such as the one described in this fable, intensified the tension between the two communities even further.

In the early months of 1883 a Greek wrestler, Panayi, who called himself the 'New Heracles of Hellas', arrived in Constantinople.⁵⁰ According to Masis, the European press had praised this wrestler for his extraordinary prowess, claiming that he was capable of killing tigers and other beasts. Panayi, having now arrived in Constantinople, was to give a few exhibitions in the public park at Tepebashi.⁵¹

During his exhibitions at Tepebashi Panayi offered a prize of 50 liras to any wrestler who would fight and beat him. An Armenian porter from Sebastia, Simon, who had acquired wide fame after having beaten a famous French wrestler, Antoine Doublier, took up Panayi's challenge. The two adversaries agreed to meet on 6 March 1883.⁵²

Thousands of spectators, Armenians as well as Greeks, hurried to Tepebashi to witness the wrestling. But the authorities, in a thoughtful attempt to avoid a very likely clash between the Armenian and Greek supporters of the two wrestlers, prohibited the match at the last moment.⁵³ Thus Simon and Panayi never met, at least by the time the fable was written.⁵⁴ The cancellation of the match resulted in fruitless speculations in the Armenian and Greek press about who would have won had the two wrestlers met.

It is beyond any doubt that in 'The Invincible, Achilles and Cicał' the Simon-Panayi episode has been described and satirised. At various junctures throughout the fable Baronian represented his Armenian and Greek heroes as symbols of strength, and once even named them as wrestlers. He scolded them for having aroused the feelings of the Armenian and Greek nations, who 'lit candles day and night' and consumed 'skins of oil'⁵⁵ praying for their compatriot wrestlers. Finally, Baronian ridiculed the Armenian and Greek press for their useless speculations on a match which had not even taken place: 'But let us suppose that you did wrestle...',⁵⁶ wrote Baronian in the fable. All these features are obviously identical with the details of the historical Simon-Panayi episode.

The 'Invincible' represents Simon, the porter from Sebastia. If we reread the dialogue between Cicał and the Invincible we can readily perceive that the questions were being put to a porter of great strength. Baronian named him the Invincible after David the

Invincible,⁵⁷ the Armenian philosopher, who traditionally outwitted Greek bishops and philosophers in disputes over religious matters.⁵⁸

Baronian's choice of Achilles for Panayi was both clever and justified. For not only was Achilles one of the best representatives of Greek prowess but the warriors of his camp had also killed Zarmayr, an Armenian hero, who was fighting with Priam, King of Troy, against the Greeks.⁵⁹

The Turbot's Election as Deputy⁶⁰

The fish had elected the Turbot as deputy to the Animal Assembly. But the Fox found the Turbot's election inappropriate on moral grounds and objected to its ratification by the Assembly. The Fox's secret motive behind this objection was the fact that he had not been receiving provincial information from the Turbot as previously. On his objection the Assembly referred the matter to the Working Committee, requesting its opinion on it.

The Working Committee sent the Assembly a report whereby it attested to the moral integrity of the Turbot. But the report did not satisfy the Fox who insisted that the matter be referred to the Lion, to see whether the Turbot was or was not guilty of frequent drunkenness. After a while a second report from the Working Committee vindicated the Turbot. This second report, however, also failed to satisfy the Fox, who was determined to prevent the Turbot's election by all means, especially by attacking his moral integrity. The Fox also warned the Assembly against the unpleasant consequences of the Turbot's election to the Assembly; the Turbot had an upright character and would speak up for his ideas and express criticism freely. But this time the Assembly disregarded the Fox's objections and ratified the Turbot's election.

In the first annotations to Cical, Prof. Manukyan correctly identified the Turbot as Father Vahan Partizakçi, and the Fox as

Karapet Iwtiwčean.⁶¹ There is, however, actual documentation to support Prof. Manukyan's identification.

Father Partizakçi was elected to the National Assembly towards the end of 1882. At the debate on ratification of his election in the 12th session of the National Assembly,⁶² a deputy, P. Ēksērčean, reminded the Assembly of a complaint made some time ago by the Armenian community of Eudokia (Tokat) against their primate at the time, Father Partizakçi. Thereupon, another deputy, G. Ayvazean, the editor of Mamul, suggested that the matter be referred to the relevant committees for 'necessary explanations'. The Assembly then decided to refer the case to the Religious Council.⁶³

The Religious Council's report on Partizakçi's case was presented to the Assembly in its 15th session. The report declared that Partizakçi had never been indicted for any kind of charge. But K. Iwtiwčean, the editor of Masis, T. Eusufean, and particularly H. Alačāčean, the editor of Pūnj, insisted that the case be referred to the Political Council. The Assembly adopted their suggestion.⁶⁴

The Political Council's report vindicating Partizakçi was received in the 17th session of the National Assembly. This report failed to satisfy Iwtiwčean alone, who argued that Partizakçi was under heavy charges on moral grounds. This time, however, the Assembly disregarded K. Iwtiwčean's objections, and, on H. Alačāčean's suggestion, ratified Partizakçi's election.⁶⁵ The history of Partizakçi's election, and the details of the fable, as we can see, are identical.

As to the Fox's identity, Baronian's assertion that the Turbot had not been providing the Fox with 'provincial information'⁶⁶ for a while implied that the Fox represented an editor. We have already seen that three editors opposed the Turbot's election: G. Ayvazean, the editor of Mamul, H. Alačāčean, the editor of Pūnj, and

K. Iwt'iwčean, the editor of Masis. The Fox could not have been G. Ayvazean as he was under arrest awaiting trial soon after the 12th session of the National Assembly, and could not attend the subsequent sessions of the National Assembly. The 15th session does not help us much in determining the Fox's identity; both H. Alačāčean and K. Iwt'iwčean insisted on having the case referred to the Political Council. But in the 17th session their attitudes were completely different. Whereas K. Iwt'iwčean was dissatisfied with the Political Council's report and opposed Partizakçi's election, arguing that the case needed further investigation; H. Alačāčean approved the report and suggested that Partizakçi's election should be ratified. The National Assembly followed Alačāčean's recommendation and ratified Partizakçi's election, despite Iwt'iwčean's opposition.⁶⁷ Thus it is obvious that the Fox symbolised K. Iwt'iwčean.

Consideration⁶⁸

The 'Matic Council' of the Frogs had submitted to the Working Committee a plan for a school to prepare teachers. Having received the plan the Working Committee announced that it had already taken it into consideration. Several months elapsed and as nothing emerged, the Matic Council grew impatient and wished to find out what had happened to its plan. Baronian attacked the inefficiency of the Matic Council and Ekonomos, who, while taking the plan 'into consideration', had taken no practical steps to realise it.

It is obvious that the Matic Council stood for Educational,⁶⁹ and Ekonomos for the Economic,⁷⁰ Councils. The school in question was the Kedronakan (central) school, which was to be set up in Constantinople to prepare teachers for Armenian schools. The plan was first introduced in 1870,⁷¹ but the school was only inaugurated in 1886.⁷² During this long period several plans were suggested

for the school, one of which was the plan mentioned in this fable. Most probably this was the one presented to the Patriarch at the beginning of 1883⁷³ by the Educational Council of the time.

Magpie and Cicaḷ⁷⁴

Magpie has just been elected deputy to the Animal Assembly and Cicaḷ is conducting a conversation with him about his future activities in the Assembly. Magpie reveals that to be a deputy in the Assembly is a very profitable job. All he has to do is simply to put questions to the Assembly about embezzled funds; certainly those who have embezzled the funds in question will have to buy his silence. For example, Magpie will question the Assembly about the benefits of the Economos from a will, or how funds raised for burnt animals have been distributed to unburnt animals, etc. Baronian then elaborated how the animals concerned will hurry to buy the silence of Magpie and others of his type.

I have not been able to identify the Magpie historically, but he most probably symbolizes a group of deputies of little importance. The embezzlements discussed in the fable have, however, been traced to their sources. The first is the story of the Mnaķean will. A certain Manuk Mnaķean died in 1879 leaving about 8500 liras in his will. Part of the sum was left to 'the nation' and the other part was to be distributed to some of Mnaķean's close relatives.⁷⁵ Two different groups presented themselves as Mnaķean's relatives and demanded their share from G. Mēlikēan (Economos), the economic adviser of the Patriarchate. G. Mēlikēan gave a sum of 1500 liras to one of the groups, which consequently dropped its claim. But after a while it was discovered that none of the groups was related to Mnaķean. It also became known that the Patriarchate had not named Mnaķean's true relatives.⁷⁶ There were widespread and strong

rumours that G. Mēlikēan had embezzled some of the amount by bribing a 'high ranking national'⁷⁷ personality. In the 16th session of the National Assembly⁷⁸ a deputy requested explanations from the relevant national committees, whereupon this scandalous affair was discussed in several sessions of the National Assembly.

The second source concerns the fire that devastated Pera on 25 May, 1870. The Ottoman authorities formed an official committee, including representatives of the various communities, to raise funds for those affected by the fire. The amount of money that was allocated for the Armenian victims of the fire was not definitely disclosed; some believed it amounted up to 18,000 liras, some thought it was 14,000 liras, and according to others it was 8,000 - 10,000 liras. However, the sum, whatever its quantity, was not delivered to the Patriarchate but to Noratunkean Y. efendi, who was to distribute it to those who had suffered from the fire.⁷⁹

Seven years later, on 25 February, 1877, S. Pāpāzean demanded that an account of the distribution of the sum be presented to the National Assembly.⁸⁰ The Political Council replied that the Ottoman Committee had not provided the Patriarchate with any account of the allocation and the distribution of the sum and that, consequently, the Council was unable to satisfy Pāpāzean's demand.⁸¹

Thirteen years later, on 28 January 1883, the issue was again raised - this time by K. Pānosean.⁸² Pānosean said that the Armenian committee formed to distribute the amount had withheld a sum of 7000 liras, with the intention of allocating it to the Holy Trinity church in Pera. But no account of the withheld sum was still presented to the National Assembly, and Pānosean demanded that the relevant committees should do so. The Political Council's reply was the same as in 1877: it had no official knowledge of the case.⁸³ Outside the National Assembly, however, it was widely believed that Noratunkean had embezzled some part of the money.

The Assembly of the Heathen Priests, the Eagle and H... S...⁸⁴

The Assembly of Heathen Priests was convened to elect a list of candidates for the supreme chair of the priesthood. The list was to be presented to the Assembly of Gods.

The Assembly began with hymns sung by the heathen priests. Then they invited H... S... to attend the meeting and to guide them. The invitation was not made sincerely and H... S... declined to attend the meeting. A large number of the multitude was present at the Assembly.

After a few speeches made by heathen priests, the voting took place. When the results were read out the first and third candidates were applauded; nobody applauded for the second. But the multitude was anxious to hear the Eagle's name and, when it was read, they regretted that Eagle had won such a small number of votes. The heathen priests maintained that in giving the Eagle such a small number of votes they were inspired by H... S... and public opinion. The multitude, however, hoped that the Assembly of Gods would appreciate the merits of the Eagle. Baronian himself wished that H... S... would attend the Assembly of Gods which was to elect one candidate out of the list.

In this and in the fables which will follow Baronian dealt with the approaching election of the Catholicos of Ējmiacin. In this particular fable Baronian described an assembly of the Armenian priesthood, convened on 12 March 1884⁸⁵ to elect a list of seven candidates out of which the National Assembly would elect the only candidate of the Western Armenians for the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin. Baronian's account corresponds exactly to that of Arewelk' published on the day following the assembly.⁸⁶ The result of the voting was as follows:⁸⁷

1 N. Varžapetean	the Patriarch of Constantinople	63 votes
2 Bishop Makar	from the Ejmiacin Order	53 votes
3 M. Muratean	the Primate of Izmir	51 votes
4 M. Izmirlean	Constantinople	48 votes
5 Archbishop Esayi	the Patriarch of Jerusalem	39 votes
6 M. Xrimean	the former Patriarch of Constantinople	38 votes
7 Y. Vehapetean and X. Ašēgean		

The Eagle represented M. Xrimean, who, besides 'hayrik' (father) was sometimes named 'arciw' (eagle), after the periodical Arciw Vaspurakani (the Eagle of Vaspurakan) which he published in Van. Baronian regretted that Xrimena only won 38 votes, and wished that the National Assembly would elect him as the sole candidate of the Western Armenians for the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin.

The initials H... S... stood, I believe, for 'Hogin Surb', the Holy Ghost, from whom the priesthood normally seeks guidance and inspiration.

An Assembly of Gods which is and is not Postponed⁸⁸

The goldsmith-god-president of the Supreme Assembly of the gods had invited the gods to elect their heathen pontiff. But in the evening of the very same day on which the invitation was issued, it was announced that the session was being postponed until further notice.

Nevertheless the gods came together to hold the session. The secretary-god removed the notice announcing the postponement and declared that the session was to be held as first decided. Meanwhile a banker-god came in, and hit two gods, who were in favour of holding the session, with a large stick. One of the victims was the god who, some years earlier, had represented the vital interests of the nation of the gods; and the other was the secretary-god. After a while, when the gods had barely managed to assemble in camera to decide what to do, a crowd of mortals threatened to break in. The crowd insisted that the session should not be held in camera. The

gods gave way to this demand and resumed the session. They decided to hold a second session in two days, for the election of the heathen pontiff.

The events described in this fable are not registered in the Records of the National Assembly. But a detailed account of them has been preserved in the contemporary Armenian press.⁸⁹

The National Assembly had decided to meet on 30 March 1884, to elect its candidate for the Catholicosate of E^Yjmiacin from the list of the seven candidates elected by the priesthood. K. Vazarosean, the president of the Assembly, officially announced in the press on 29 March, 1884 that the session was to be held, as decided, on 30 March 1884.⁹⁰ But on the very same day (29 March), Vazarosean postponed this session.⁹¹ He sent out the ushers of the Patriarchate to inform the deputies of the postponement and placed a notice to this effect on the door of the Assembly. Vazarosean later explained that he had taken this decision after having met Y. Nurean, the vice-president of the Committee for Electing the Catholicos.⁹² Nurean had thought that the 'Polozhenie' might possibly be discussed in the session and that, therefore, it would be necessary to take precautions and hold the session in camera. Vazarosean found that he could not take these measures at such short notice, and decided to postpone the session.

On 30 March, however, the deputies arrived at the Assembly. The secretary of the Assembly, Y. Gurgēn, tore down the notice and announced that the session was to be held as previously decided. Shortly afterwards a deputy, Margar Kulaksēzean, who was in favour of postponing the session, declared to the public and the deputies that the session should not take place. Some deputies argued against Kulaksēzean and the dispute soon grew into a fight. Kulaksēzean then attacked S. Pāpāzean and Y. Gurgēn and hit them with a large stick.⁹³

As soon as the proceedings had calmed down, the deputies were able to come together in order to decide what to do. When the crowd realised that the deputies were to hold the session in camera, they threatened to break in unless they were permitted to attend. The deputies yielded to this demand and resumed the session;⁹⁴ and decided to postpone the election for two days.⁹⁵

Clearly, Arewelk''s account literally corresponds to Baronian's fable. The goldsmith-god-president symbolized K'. Lazarosean, who presided over the National Assembly at the time and was a goldsmith by profession. The beaten deputy, who had represented the vital interests of the nation some years ago, was S. Pápazean, who accompanied the Armenian Delegation to the Congress of Berlin. The secretary-god was the secretary of the Assembly, Y. Gurgēn. The banker-god, who beat the deputies, was a certain M. Kūlak'sēzean.

Three Would-be-Bridegrooms⁹⁶

This is a short comedy in one act, with four scenes.

Characters:	Secretariat	Seļenē
	Matt'	Krōnos
	Pirigļēn	Šeras
	Ak'illēs Ovtotmētos	Boreas
	Public Opinion	Right
	Majority	People's Interest
	People	Justice
	97 gods, silent ushers, servants, etc., etc.	

Scene I: All the characters are present in a magnificent hall. Secretariat opens the session, and Seļenē is the first of the speakers. Seļenē first thanks the members of the Committee for naming him as their spokesman. Then he reveals to the Assembly that the Committee, contrary to its belief until two days ago, has now found that the election method of 66 absolutely contravenes the national interests as well as Seļenē's... It contravenes the national interests because it contravenes the public interests, and, as it contravenes public interests, it cannot but contravene public

interests! Therefore, the Committee has decided to adopt a new method which does not contravene public interests... 'Indeed'

Seļenē continues,

to compel our brothers living in Boreas to give their votes to the would-be-groom who gains the majority of our votes means to snatch, to take away, to rob them of their rights. Justice demands that he who wins the majority of our and our far-off brothers' votes occupies the bridegroom's chair; and this can only be done by adding our far-off brothers' votes to ours... If we adopt this new method we can have the right to hope that Boreas shall not insist on his decision to consider our numerous votes as two votes...⁹⁷

Seļenē also explains that the new method is fair and that any of the three would-be-grooms can become the real bridegroom.

Seļenē's speech is interrupted several times by a number of gods; Pirigļēn and Křonos urging him to talk quickly. It is also interrupted by Šeras, People's Interest, Public Opinion, Right, Majority and People, who support Seļenē's proposal. Křonos interrupts Seļenē's speech and maintains that Seļenē is being deliberately talkative, so that no time is left for other gods to speak. Thereupon Akillēs Ovtotmētos steps in and threatens Křonos, who withdraws his words in order not to be beaten again.

Pirigļēn regrets that a traditional method, so far observed by the Assembly of Gods, is now being regarded as harmful and opposes Seļenē's suggestion. Šeras supports it. According to Matť if there was any breach of the rights of the brothers in Boreas by the 66 method, they themselves would protest against it. Their silence means that, for valid reasons, they approve the method even if their rights are being breached. Therefore Matť is against Seļenē's suggestion.

Meanwhile Secretariat makes it known that a crowd of mortals had demanded to hold the session downstairs. They all go down.

Scene II: In a street.

A mortal is seen demanding that Majority pay for the coffee he has been drinking so far. They dispute for a long time, as Majority is reluctant to pay for the coffees. Then Seļenē steps in and promises to pay the mortal for the coffees so far consumed by Majority. The dispute comes to an end.

Another mortal is seen demanding his coat back from People's Interest. People's Interest is reluctant to return the coat. As they dispute, Seļenē approaches them, and once again the problem is solved.

Scene III: A magnificent building where, apart from the characters, a crowd of 4000 is present.

Secretariat opens the session, but Seļenē orders it closed. Seļenē wants to invite H... S... before resuming the session. Thereupon the heathen priests sing. Šeras, Pirigļēn, and Křonos wish to suggest amendments. But voting is urged and they take the vote on Seļenē's suggestion. 63 people agree to Seļenē's proposal and 30 oppose it. Křonos, being denied the right to speak, protests and walks out.

The gods now have to elect three would-be-bridegrooms. People's Interest, Right, Public Opinion, People, and Majority only vote for Seļenē's candidate, in return for rewards. A rich god buys the vote of a poor god, and 14 other gods change side for promised rewards.

Presently the result of the voting is read:

1 Narkis	62 votes
2 Arcuecaļik	50 votes
3 Zmuřnacaļik	42 votes

Scene IV: Boreas declares that he is the father of the girl, and that it is his right to choose her a bridegroom. According to Boreas the gods are only his daughter's relatives and as such they can only have two votes.

(The gods are stupefied).

This fable is based on the 25th session of the National Assembly, which, as we remember from the fable 'An Assembly of Gods which is and is not Postponed', was to be held on 30 March 1884, but was actually convened on 2 April 1884 instead, to elect the Western Armenians' candidate for the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin.

There is a brief description of the 25th session in the Records of the National Assembly.⁹⁸ First of the speakers was Archbishop X. Narpēy, the spokesman for the Committee for Electing the Catholicos. Narpēy, in the name of the Committee, opposed the method of electing the Catholicos adopted by the National Assembly in 1866. According to the 1866 method the National Assembly would only elect one candidate for the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin, which in fact meant that this sole candidate would be the actual Catholicos, as the Western Armenians had an overwhelming majority of votes over the Eastern Armenians. Instead, Narpēy suggested that the National Assembly should elect three candidates and the votes of the Eastern Armenians should be added to the votes of the Western Armenians given to them. This in fact would mean that any of the three candidates could have a chance of being elected Catholicos. Narpēy's long speech advocating the new proposal was frequently interrupted by many deputies. Several other speeches were delivered before the crowd insisted on attending the session, which was being held in camera. The Assembly yielded to this demand and the priests sang a hymn before the session was resumed. Further speeches were delivered before the vote on the new proposal was taken. It was carried by a

majority of 62 to 32 votes (Baronian being one of the 32), with 8 abstentions. Then the Assembly elected the three candidates:

- 1) N. Varžapetean, the Patriarch of Constantinople, 62 votes,
- 2) M. Xrimean, the former Patriarch of Constantinople, 50 votes, and
- 3) M. Muratean, the primate of Izmir, 42 votes. These details correspond to Baronian's narration in scenes I and III. Scenes II and IV are not to be found in the Records and will be dealt with later.

Seļenē represented Archbishop Narpēy. As Seļenē in the fable, so Narpēy in reality was the spokesman for the Committee for Electing the Catholicos and warmly advocated the Committee's proposal: their speeches are identical. Furthermore, Baronian's choice of Seļenē, the moon-goddess of the Greeks, to represent Narpēy was a clever and meaningful one. Narpēy was well known for his feminine manners, and that is why Baronian often represented him as a feminine creature (in 'Phylloxera' for instance). Here too Baronian underlined the similarity between Narpēy and Seļenē on sex grounds. Secondly, one of the several surnames Narpēy assumed was Lusinean: Lusin (moon in Armenian) + ean (gentile suffix)

Matt' (the first four letters of Mattēos) was Bishop Mattēos Izmirlean. In the comedy Matt' opposed Seļenē's suggestion and maintained that the silence of the brothers in Boreas (the Eastern Armenians) meant that they approved the 1866 method even if it breached their rights. So did M. Izmirlean in the Assembly. He opposed the new suggestion and read a letter from Eastern Armenian notables who approved the 1866 election method.⁹⁹

M. Čeraz's attitude in the Assembly is identical to that of Šeras in Baronian's comedy. Apart from the unmistakable resemblance between their names, Čeraz had a suggestion to make, and supported the Committee's proposal in the Assembly¹⁰⁰ as Šeras did in the comedy.

Pirigĭlĕn symbolised Ė. Pĕrpĕrean. I have not been able to find any connexion between these two names, Pirigĭlĕn and Pĕrpĕrean, but their speeches are identical. As Pirigĭlĕn asked in the comedy, so did Pĕrpĕrean speak in the Assembly,¹⁰¹ regretting that the traditional method of electing the Catholicos was now being abandoned, and voting against the new proposal.

We have already met Kĕronos in the 'Lion and Kĕronos', where Kĕronos, as in this comedy, represented S. Păpăzean. There are two main episodes in this present fable concerning Kĕronos. In the first, Kĕronos, who had commented on Seĭenĕ's deliberate talkativeness, was threatened by Akĭllĕs Ovtotmĕtos and had thereupon withdrawn his words in order not to be beaten again. Indeed (as we have seen in the previous fable 'An Assembly of Gods which is and is not Postponed') only two days earlier, Păpăzean was beaten by a certain Margar Kŭlak'sĕzean, whom Baronian now transparently disguised as Akĭllĕs Ovtotmĕtos. It is not difficult to perceive the correspondence between the Greek word ὠτοτύπτος and the Turkish word 'Kulaksiz' included in 'Kŭlak'sĕzean'. In the second episode, Kĕronos, who was denied the right to speak, protested and walked out of the Assembly. For the same reason and after a similar protest Păpăzean walked out of the 25th session of the National Assembly.¹⁰²

Public Opinion, Majority, People, Right, People's Interest, and Justice were slogans very much used by orators in the National Assembly. But in this comedy they most likely symbolised certain insignificant deputies, whom I have not been able to identify individually.

Baronian represented the three elected candidates as flowers: Narkis, Arcuecaĭik, and Zmuĕnacaĭik. 'Narkis' (or narkĕs, nargĕs) is the Armenian for narcissus; but 'arcuecaĭik' and 'zmuĕnacaĭik' are artificial compound words made up by Baronian. 'Arcuecaĭik'

(arciw + caġik = eagle + flower) represented M. Xrimean, who was often called 'arciw' (eagle) after the periodical Arciw Vaspurakani he published in Van. As in the comedy, in the 25th session Xrimean came second and won 50 votes.

'Zmuṛnacajik' (Zmiwṛn + caġik = Smyrna + flower) symbolised M. Muratean, the primate of Smyrna, who came third and won 42 votes. Finally, 'Narkis' represented N. Varžapetean, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who came first and won 62 votes.

The initials H... S... as in 'The Assembly of Heathen Priests, the Eagle and H... S...' stood for 'Hogin Surb', the Holy Ghost. In the comedy Seġenē wished to invite H... S... before resuming the session interrupted by the mortals. Similarly, when the 25th session of the National Assembly was interrupted by the crowd, the priesthood sang a hymn before resuming the session,¹⁰³ undoubtedly to seek divine guidance.

In scene II Baronian revealed how matters were being settled behind the scenes. Archbishop Narpēy is seen bribing certain deputies in an attempt to attract their votes.

Scene IV is devoted to Boreas (the North Wind) who represented Russia. Baronian paraphrased here Russia's policy in the elections, which was outlined in a telegram sent to the Patriarch just before the National Assembly was convened. The telegram¹⁰⁴ clearly stated that any delegation representing the National Assembly would only have two votes as the representatives of the Constantinople community and not the Western Armenians as a whole.

Footnotes to Cicaĭ

1. G. Step'anyan, Hakob Paronyan, kyank'ë ev hrparakaxosut'yunë, (Erevan, 1964) p. 195.
2. PCS, v. 376.
3. Yakob Paroneani erkerë, A. Cicaĭ, (Tiflis, 1899).
4. Hágop H. Báronián, Szatirák. Örményből Iorditotta: Kapatân V. Mârton. Szamosújvárt, 'Aurora', 1914, as quoted by A.S. Manukyan in PCS, v, 376.
5. PCS, v, 7.
6. Ibid.
7. A lawyer by profession, and also a historian (1862-1928). He also engaged in teaching and journalism.
8. Baronian's archive as quoted by A.S. Manukyan in PCS, v, 375.
9. Ibid.
10. PCS, v, 271-278.
11. A distinguished philologist (1876-1953).
12. PCS, v, 271.
13. PCS, v, 375-394.
14. Ibid., 107-110.
15. RNA, session 18, 18 March 1883.
16. Ibid., session 19, 1 April 1883.
17. Ibid., session 21, 8 April 1883.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. G. Step'anyan, op.cit., p. 210.
22. PCS, v, 141-145.
23. Ibid., 142.
24. From the Armenian word 'aĭewrel': to supplicate, entreat.
25. RNA, session 21, 8 April 1883.
26. Ibid.
27. Although his name was T'ënk'ërean he often signed T'nk'ër (cf. RNA, session 3, 10 June 1883, p. 70).
28. RNA, session 21, 8 April, 1883.
29. PCS, v, 110-111.
30. RNA, session 16, 25 February, 1883.
31. Ibid., session 17, 11 March 1883.
32. Ibid., session 18, 18 March 1883.
33. Ibid., session 3, 10 June 1883.
34. PCS, ii, 126.
35. Ibid., 125, 122.

36. RNA, session 16, 19 December 1880.
37. Ibid., session 9, 15 October, 1881.
38. Ibid., session 4, 25 June 1881.
39. PCS, v, 159-164.
40. For the sake of convenience I have preserved the English and not the Armenian form (Filok'sēra) of the name of the Worm. Therefore I have replaced the Armenian letters i, o, e in the original text by y, o, and e respectively.
41. G. Step'anyan, op.cit., 205-206.
42. RNA, session 19, 1 April 1883.
43. The Armenian word for silkworm is 'šeram', quite similar to 'čeraz'.
44. RNA, session 21, 8 April 1883.
45. This is how the Western Armenians pronounced the word.
46. PCS, v, 100-103.
47. Ibid., 96-100.
48. Ibid., 97.
49. Ibid., 97, 98.
50. Masis, 1883, no. 3406.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., no. 3424.
53. Ibid., no. 3425.
54. Almost 32 years later, Tēodik claimed that Simon Pehlivan, a porter, was among the spectators when Panayi announced his challenge, and that, accepting Panayi's challenge, Simon immediately beat him on the spot (Tēodik, Amenun tareçoyçē, Constantinople, 1915, pp. 130-31). There was to be a return match, Tēodik continued, but the authorities prohibited it in order to avoid 'altercation' between the two communities. Unfortunately Tēodik has not indicated his sources, and it seems likely that his information was based on common talk and oral reports of contemporaries rather than real evidence. There were rumours after the cancellation of the match in 1883 that Simon and Panayi had met secretly, and that the Armenian wrestler had beaten his adversary. But Simon himself denied this allegation, in an interview for Masis (Masis, 1883 no. 3429). On the other hand, 'It is said' reported Masis later, 'that...Mr. Panayi has left the city' (Masis, 1883, no. 3430). It also reported (Masis, nos. 3431, 3434) that pressure was being exerted on Simon by the authorities to compel him to return to his birthplace, Sebastia (Sivas), and that as Simon had no financial means and was heavily indebted, funds were being raised by the Armenian community to facilitate his return home. In the light of this information we can safely conclude that Simon and Panayi never met. However, our prime objective here is to demonstrate that they had not met by the time this fable was written.
55. PCS, v, 98.
56. Ibid., 99.

57. Dawit' Hark'aci, anyaIt' pilisopay, (630-720?).
58. Namely over the Council of Chalcedon, which is not recognised by the Armenian Orthodox Church.
59. Srboy hōrn meroy Movsēsi Xorenaçwoy, matenagrutiwnk', (Venice, 1865), (I, 32), p. 61.
60. PCS. v, 105-107.
61. PCS, v, 275. The Armenian for turbot is a compound word 'vahanajuk' (vahan + juk = shield + fish). 'Vahan' is also employed as a proper name, and it was Father Partizakçi's first name. On the other hand, Partizakçi was known for his activities in the National Assembly and as a consumer of a good deal of alcoholic drinks.
62. RNA, session 12, 4 November, 1882.
63. Ibid.
64. RNA, session 15, 28 January, 1883.
65. Ibid., session 17, 11 March 1883.
66. PCS, v, 105.
67. RNA, session 17, 11 March 1883.
68. PCS, v, 118-120.
69. This was first identified by Prof. Manukyan (cf. PCF, v, 276).
70. This was first identified by A.S. Manukyan (cf. PCS, v, 384).
71. RNA, session 17, 28 January 1877.
72. Ėndarjak oraçoyç azgayin hiwandanoçi, 1900, pp. 209-211.
73. Masis, 1883, no. 3419.
74. PCS, v, 123-129.
75. RNA, session 16, 25 February 1883.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. RNA, session 19, 25 February, 1877.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid., session 20, 11 March 1877.
82. Ibid., session 15, 28 January 1883.
83. Ibid., session 4, 24 June 1883.
84. PCS, v, 333-335.
85. Arewelk', 1884, no. 59.
86. Ibid.
87. RNA, session 25, 2 April 1884; and Arewelk', 1884, no. 59.
88. PCS, v, 341-346.
89. Arewelk', 1884, nos. 73-76.
90. Ibid., no. 73.
91. Ibid., no. 74.

92. Ibid., no. 75.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. RNA, session 24, 30 March 1884.
96. Xikar, April, 1884.
97. Ibid.
98. RNA, session 25, 2 April 1884.
99. Arewelk⁶, 1884, no. 77.
100. RNA, session 25, 2 April 1884.
101. Ibid.
102. Arewelk⁶, 1884, no. 77.
103. RNA, session 25, 2 April 1884.
104. Arewelk⁶, 1884, no. 76.

APPENDIX III

Brief Biographies of Leading Armenians

This Appendix contains the biographies of the Armenian 'Big-wigs' discussed in Chapter V, and those of some other public figures as indicated in footnotes in the various other chapters.

ARCRUNI, Grigor (1845-1892) was an outstanding Eastern Armenian journalist educated in Germany. He was the founder-editor of Mšak (Tiflis, 1872), one of the most influential Armenian periodicals of all time.

ASLANEAN, Stepan, Pasha (1822-1901) was educated in the Scutari Armenian College of Constantinople. Upon graduation from the Ottoman Medical School, he was sent to Vienna for further specialisation. As a surgeon he served in the Ottoman Army and was promoted pasha for his outstanding services. Aslanean held sensitive positions within the community, notably the presidency of the Armenian National Assembly.

CERENÇ (Yovsēp' Šišmanean, 1822-1888), was the founder of the genre of historical novel in Armenian literature. He studied medicine in Italy and was very active in communal affairs, especially as one of the lay leaders of the anti-Hasunist movement.

ĒNFIEĒČEAN, Grigor, Father (1840-1886) was educated and ordained priest in Bzommar, Lebanon. He was one of the anti-Hasunist leaders.

EUSUFEAN, Tigran (1835-1900) actively participated in Armenian social and political affairs. He was educated in Paris and served as a judge in Ottoman commercial courts.

GĒORG IV, (Kerestečean), Catholicos of Ējmiacin (1812-1882). He had been the primate of Bursa and the Patriarch of Constantinople before being elected Catholicos in 1866. He founded the famous

Gēorgian seminary and Museum in Ējmiacin, the periodical Ararat and initiated and sponsored the compilation of the first catalogue of Armenian manuscripts held at Ējmiacin.

HASUNEAN (Hasun), Anton, Cardinal (1810-1884), was educated in Rome. He was one of the most prominent leaders of the Catholic Armenian community and became its patriarch in 1845 and 1879. He died in Rome, where he had been residing since the early 1880s.

İPEKĀNEAN, Hambarjum (1837-1883), was a famous professional teacher, author of numerous pedagogical studies and articles. He was also active in communal affairs.

İWTİWĀNEAN, Karapet (1823-1904). He belonged to the Liberal group which fathered the Armenian Constitution. He was also known for his communal activities mainly as a deputy in the Armenian National Assembly. İwtiwānean was the founder-editor of Masis (1852-1884) the most popular Western Armenian periodical with the largest circulation at the time. He translated a number of books especially from French.

LAZAROSEAN, Kristostur (1816-1891). A minor public figure, who belonged to the Leftist faction and held a number of positions in the administration of the community. He was very active in organising courses and lectures for the Armenian immigrants residing in Constantinople.

MEREĒM-GIWLI, Yarutiwn (1840-1899). He was an active public figure and a deputy to the Armenian Assembly. He is mainly remembered for his participation in organising the Armenian theatre in Constantinople.

MISAKEAN, Xaçatur (1815-1891). A minor literary figure, whose literary achievement consisted of some verse, a number of incomplete novelettes and some polemical articles.

MIWHENTISEAN, Yovhannēs (1810-1891). A famous engraver, designer and publisher in whose printing-house (established in 1839) many Armenian as well as Turkish periodicals were printed. He was also known for his graceful designs of Ottoman-Arabic types, banknotes and bonds.

NARPĒY, Xorēn, Bishop (1831-1892). In his own day, Narpēy was a highly acclaimed poet, playwright and rhetorician. He played an important role in communal affairs and was one of the two principal delegates to the Congress of Berlin. Narpēy had some vain political ambitions and was said to have developed some rather worldly habits incompatible with his religious vocation. He lived almost in total oblivion after the mid-1880s when Abdulhamid's spies discovered that Narpēy had been supplying the European press with non-political Palace secrets confided to the Bishop by a certain doctor Mavroyani, one of Abdulhamid's doctors.

NUREAN, Yovhannēs (1839-1900). A public figure and a Porte employee, who held a number of administrative positions in the community, particularly the chairmanship of the Armenian Political Council.

ŌTEAN, Grigor (1834-1886). A famous political and cultural figure and one of the outstanding liberals who fathered the Armenian Constitution. Ōtean entered the service of the Porte in the mid-1860s and became a close collaborator of Midhat. After the suspension of the Ottoman Constitution and the exile of Midhat, Ōtean fled to Paris and devoted himself to literary activities until his death.

PALEAN, Sargis (1834-1899), was educated in Paris and became the Imperial Architect after the death of his father, Karapet Palean (1800-1866) who was the Imperial Architect from 1823 to 1866.

P'ANOSEAN, Karapet (1826-1905) was a teacher, writer and journalist. He founded and edited a number of periodicals in Armenian as well as in 'Armeno-Turkish', established two schools and translated a number of books from French.

P'APAZEAN, Stepan (1839-1888). A very active public figure who was also engaged in teaching and, briefly, in journalism. He was a staunch Leftist and held many sensitive positions in the administration of the community.

PARTIZAKÇI, (Tēr Minasean), Vahan, Father (1850-1909), was active in Armenian national affairs. During his many tours in Armenia proper, Partizakçi collected highly valuable folklore material which he published in three books.

PŌYNUĒYRIEAN, PŌĬos, Father (1805-1885?). An immensely popular figure for his spotless character and dedication. Pōynuēyrieian was educated and ordained a Catholic priest in Lebanon. He wrote three books devoted to the social problems of the community.

SERVIÇEN (Serovbē Viçenean, 1815-1887). A doctor by profession and a Porte official, Viçenean played an influential role in communal affairs, especially in the 1850s and 1860s, by virtue of his connections with numerous high-ranking Porte officials.

TĒROYENÇ, Yovhannēs (1801-1884). A journalist, teacher, and author of numerous books and translations, most of which are unpublished. Tēroyenç was known for his conservative outlook. He enjoyed wide fame as a learned man and was said to have known more than ten languages including Greek, Latin, Persian, Arabic, French and German.

TIGRANEAN, Mkrtiç, Bishop (1815-1884). A rather adventurous, worldly priest, who served as prelate for a number of Armenian sees in Armenia proper.

VARDOVEAN, Yakob (also known as Güllü Agop, 1838-1901?).

Vardovean began his theatrical career as an actor in the Oriental Theatre in the early 1860s. In 1868 he founded the "Osmaniye" (Gedikpasha) Theatre, which is recognised as the birthplace of Turkish drama. From the early 1880s he organised private performances in Abdulhamid's palace. He died in total obscurity.

VARŽAPETEAN, Nersēs, Patriarch of Constantinople (1837-1884).

Varžapetean held many sensitive positions within the religious administrative system of the community before he was elected patriarch in 1874. Shortly before his death, the Western Armenians elected him as their principal candidate for the Catholicosate of Ējmiacin. He is remembered mainly for making the Armenian Question into an international issue.

XŌČASAREAN, Ōgsēn, (1838-1878), belonged to the Leftist faction and was a deputy to the Armenian Assembly. He founded and edited Ōragir and a number of other periodicals.

XRIMEAN, Mkrtič, Catholicos of Ējmiacin (1820-1907). Xrimean was an extremely popular figure, who was also called 'hayrik' (father) by all Armenians. He was born in Van and was known for his social, political, religious and literary activities. He became a celibate priest in 1854, and set up the first printing-house and periodical (Arciw Vaspurakani - The Eagle of Vaspurakan) in Armenia proper (Van). He was the patriarch of Constantinople (1869-1873) and headed the Armenian delegation to the Congress of Berlin (1878). In 1892, Xrimean was elected Catholicos of Ējmiacin.

APPENDIX IV

I: SYNOPSES OF BARONIAN'S COMEDIES AND HIS SATIRICAL NOVEL 'THE MOST HONOURABLE BEGGARS'

1) A SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS: A Comedy in Two Acts.

Dramatis Personae:

Anton, a merchant.

Tēopīlē, a banker.

Margrit, Anton's daughter.

Eruand, Tēopīlē's nephew.

Birab, Komik's mother.

Komik, servant to Anton and Tēopīlē.

Act I:

Anton, a widower, is highly appreciative of the personal qualities and professional skills of Komik, who was in the service of Anton long before Anton's marriage some twenty-five years ago (Scenes I-III). Tēopīlē, Komik's second master (unknown to Anton), is told by his servant that Eruand is in love with Margrit and that the two lovers have been meeting frequently (Scene IV). While Komik is lamenting his miserable life (Scene V), Margrit joins him and requests that she be left alone. Komik hides in a corner of the room and listens to Margrit's monologue unfolding her love for Eruand, whom she is expecting shortly. Her father, Anton, is unaware of her secret love story (Scene VI). As the two lovers meet and Eruand is about to embrace Margrit, Komik steps out of his hiding place. He requests Eruand to leave immediately, threatening that otherwise he will betray their love affair to Anton. As soon as Eruand reluctantly takes his leave (Scene VII), Komik declares his love for Margrit, who dismisses him as an idiot (Scene VIII). Komik relates his unfortunate love story to his mother, Birab (Scene IX), and threatens to beat Eruand, who, with Margrit,

makes a laughing-stock of him (Scene X). Meeting her father, Margrit bitterly complains of Komik's ill-manners. Anton, who is favourably disposed towards his servant, defends him and reveals his intention of marrying her to Komik. Shocked, Margrit betrays her secret feelings for Eruand (Scene XI). Eruand is also annoyed by Komik (Scene XII), who requests his rival to behave himself and to please him if he wants to marry Margrit (Scene XIII). The last scene (XIV) of Act I concludes with Komik and Birab taking home some food from the kitchen of Komik's masters.

Act II:

Tēopilē is upset about Eruand's love affair. His nephew was entrusted to his care by his brother on his deathbed. Komik tells Tēopilē that all his efforts to dissuade Eruand from courting Margrit have proved futile; and he volunteers to replace Eruand as Margrit's lover, to save Eruand. But Tēopilē decides to write to Anton to stop the affair (Scenes I-II). Komik takes the same attitude when talking to Anton, and, to 'save' Margrit, offers himself as a substitute for Eruand, arguing that the young man has no genuine feelings for her. Anton, however, chooses to discuss the matter with the lovers (Scene III) as he grows sceptical about his servant's implausible accounts (Scene IV). Having talked to Eruand (Scene V) and Margrit, Anton realizes that he has been deceived by Komik; he approves his daughter's marriage to Eruand and vows to dismiss Komik after beating him (Scene VI). Meanwhile Komik believes that he is to marry Margrit soon, but feels some remorse about Eruand's fate. He happily concludes that if Eruand has to marry someone he can marry his mother, Birab (Scene VII), and communicates to Birab his matrimonial plans for them both. Barely has Birab departed to purchase sweetmeats in preparation for the weddings (Scene IX) when Anton, Eruand and Margrit appear on the scene and reprimand Komik for his intrigues. Anton finds

Tēopilē's letter (which in Scene VIII, Tēopilē had left on the table for Komik to deliver to Anton) asking him not to admit Eruand to his house any more, to deliver the young man of the misery in which he has fallen because of his love for Margrit (Scene X). Presently, Tēopilē joins the group and he and Anton discover that Komik has been serving them both. The two masters dismiss Komik, and Tēopilē also blesses the union of the two lovers (Scene XI). Komik is left to ponder his misery (Scene XII) and, having told his mother of his dismissal wonders how he will be able to earn their living thereafter. Birab replies that they will have to endure hunger, concluding that this is the end of those who serve two masters (Scene XIII).

2) THE ORIENTAL DENTIST: A Comedy in Five Acts

Dramatis Personae:

Tapaṛnikos, a dentist, 45 years old.

Martha, his wife, 60 years old.

Eraneak, his daughter.

Tovmas, a merchant, 70 years old.

Sofi, his wife, 40 years old.

Margar, Eraneak's fiancé.

Lewon, Eraneak's lover.

Niko, servant to Tapaṛnikos.

Kirakos, servant to Tovmas.

Markos, a poor worker.

Dancers at the ball.

Act I:

Martha is unhappy with her conjugal life. Her husband is having affairs under the pretext of attending to patients almost six nights a week. She is aware that Tapaṛnikos has married her for her wealth and that he bears no love for her whatsoever; and

she decides to avenge herself on him (Scene I). Their daughter, Eraneak, is displeased with the arrangement her parents have made for her future life with Margar. She confides to the audience the name of a certain Lewon, whom she loves (Scene II). Following bitter arguments between Martha and Tapařnikos (Scene III), Tapařnikos and his servant, Niko, display their skill at extracting teeth with pistols, binoculars, ropes, etc. (Scenes IV-VI). The unfortunate patient, Markos, loses a healthy tooth and ties up Tapařnikos with a rope in retaliation (Scenes VII-VIII). Lewon, who has come to meet Eraneak stealthily, feigns toothache on seeing Tapařnikos, whom he unties (Scene IX). Having been informed by Eraneak of the opposition of her parents to their love, Lewon barely manages to flee before Tapařnikos can get hold of him to extract his teeth (Scenes X-XII).

Act II:

As Martha and Tapařnikos are reconciled through the mediation of Margar (Scenes I-II), Niko finds a letter in the kitchen and delivers it to his master. It is a note from Lewon to Eraneak to arrange for their next secret meeting. Tapařnikos decides to teach Lewon a lesson and replies on his daughter's behalf inviting him to their house early the next morning (Scenes III-IV). Having delivered the forged letter, Niko hands his master a letter from one of his admirers, Sofi, inviting the dentist to a ball the same night. Unnoticed by Tapařnikos, Eraneak listens to her father read out Sofi's invitation. She then reveals to him her decision not to marry Margar since she is in love with Lewon. Tapařnikos violently disagrees with his daughter (Scene V), dresses up (Scene VI), ties up his wife, who tries to prevent him from going out, and heads for the ball (Scene VII). Eraneak tells her mother of her father's whereabouts, whereupon Martha, disguised in men's clothes (Scene VIII), and Niko and Margar go out in pursuit of Tapařnikos

and Sofi (Scenes IX-X).

Act III:

Taparnikos and Sofi, who has feigned toothache, manage to make Tovmas drunk and put him to bed (Scenes I-IV). While putting on fancy dresses and masks, Taparnikos inadvertently drops two letters from his pocket before departure for the ball (Scene V). Meanwhile Martha, Margar and Niko arrive in Tovmas's house and disclose his wife's adultery to him (Scenes VI-VIII). We learn that Tovmas has had, some time ago, an affair with the dentist's wife, Martha, whom Tovmas is unable to recognise initially because of her disguise. Margar finds the two letters: the first Sofi's addressed to Taparnikos, and the second from Lewon addressed to Eraneak (Scene IX). In view of Eraneak's feelings for Lewon, Margar decides there and then to cancel his engagement to her (Scene X). Tovmas wears some old clothes to conceal his identity before joining Martha in search of his wife. He places Sofi's letter in his pocket; in his other pocket he finds an old letter from Martha which he reinserts in its old place (Scene XI).

Act IV:

Taparnikos, Sofi, Martha and her group are all at the ball. Martha and Tovmas agree to conceal their past affair and to punish Taparnikos physically. Niko locates Taparnikos and, not recognising him, tells him the plot to batter him. Thereupon Taparnikos and Sofi decide that Sofi's letter must be stolen from Tovmas's pocket - a task which Sofi accomplishes skilfully (Scenes I-V). They realize that Sofi has stolen a different letter, but they have no chance to read it. As Tovmas and Martha spot them, Taparnikos and Sofi flee the ball-room (Scenes VI-XII).

Act V:

Taparnikos and Sofi arrive in Taparnikos's house out of breath. Sofi hides herself in a wardrobe (Scenes I-V). Tovmas has an angry

exchange with Tapānikos (Scene VI), before Martha returns home. Martha finds Sofi in the wardrobe with a letter in her hand. It is an old note written by Martha asking Tovmas to come and see her in the mornings in her house (Scene VII). The two couples (Tovmas-Sofi and Tapānikos-Martha) reach a compromise, agreeing to cover up their scandalous affairs (Scene VIII). The undertake pledges of fidelity. Lewon is to marry Eraneak (Scene IX).

3) THE FLATTERER: A Comedy in Three Acts.

Dramatis Personae:

Tādē, sixty years old, in love with Sofi.

Tereza, Tādē's sister.

Aršak, Tādē's nephew, in love with Sofi.

Bartem, servant (to Tādē).

Papik, a flatterer.

Yovsēp, Sofi's father.

Sofi, Yovsēp's daughter.

Tigran, Sofi's lover.

Gēorg, servant (to Yovsēp).

Act I:

Tādē has fallen in love with Sofi and would like to marry her. His sister, Tereza, has amorous feelings towards Aršak and is making plans to conclude a marriage with him. Papik approves Tādē's nuptial intentions, and the two decide to discuss the matter with Sofi's father, Yovsēp (Scenes I-II). Aršak, a poet, also has passionate feelings for Sofi (Scenes III-IV). Tereza confesses to Tādē her affection for Aršak and her wish to be his wife. Tādē promises to discuss the issue with Aršak (Scenes V-VIII). There follow quarrelsome exchanges between Tādē and Aršak when they discover that they both love the same young lady. Papik, however, manages skilfully to reconcile the zealous lovers by leading each

of them to believe that Sofi will be their wife (Scenes IX-X).

Act II:

Tigran and Sofi, mutually attracted, are compelled to resort to intrigue as Yovsēp⁶ has refused to consent to their marriage. Tigran has anonymously brought a legal action against Yovsēp⁶, claiming that Yovsēp⁶ owes him 1000 liras. Implementing the second stage of the stratagem, Sofi tells her father that a certain lawyer would guarantee a favourable outcome in defending the case if Yovsēp⁶ were to agree to her marriage to the lawyer. Yovsēp⁶ delightedly accepts the offer and is told by Sofi that the lawyer will come and see him shortly (Scenes I-II). Before Tigran has time to present himself as the lawyer-saviour, Tādē and Papik call upon Yovsēp⁶ to ask for Sofi's hand (Scenes III-IV). Tādē, mistaken for Tigran by Yovsēp⁶, assures Sofi's father that he will win the case for him; whereupon Yovsēp⁶ gladly promises his daughter to Tādē (Scene V). Tigran, the original impostor, is then driven out by Yovsēp⁶ (Scene VI). Some comic scenes develop before Sofi is informed by Tigran of his dismissal by her father. Seeing Aršak in their house, Sofi assumes that it is Aršak who has outwitted Tigran; and believes that her father has promised her to the poet (Scenes VII-XIII).

Act III:

Tereza, who believes that Aršak is not indifferent to her, learns from Tādē that the man of her dreams is an admirer of Sofi - a fact which is confirmed by Aršak himself (Scenes I-III). Soon Sofi and Tigran discover that it is Tādē and not Aršak that Yovsēp⁶ has in mind as Sofi's would-be-groom. The two lovers, Tereza and Bartem, make Tādē a laughing-stock (Scenes IV-VII). While Tādē threatens to bring a court action against them (Scene VIII), Yovsēp⁶, made aware of Tigran's specious claim, gives his consent to his daughter's marriage to Tigran (Scenes IX-X). The course of events

proves an unbearable strain for Tādē, who faints (Scene XI).

Baronian's manuscript is interrupted here. He never completed this comedy, which was brought to a conclusion by E. Ōtean in 1920. Ōtean wrote three scenes (XII-XIV) in which everybody agrees that Tigran should marry Sofi and Tādē suggests that he, Tēreza, and Aršak give up their conjugal plans.

4) UNCLE BALTHAZAR: A Comedy in Three Acts

Dramatis Personae:

Uncle Balthazar, Anuš's husband.

Anuš, Balthazar's wife.

Kipar, Anuš's lover.

Ōgsēn, a lawyer.

P'aylak	}	Members of the Judicial Committee
Erkat'		
Sur		

T'aguhi	}	neighbours of Balthazar
Martha		

Soļomē, maid-servant to Balthazar.

Act I:

Anuš is extremely upset; she has been seen coming out of a house of ill-repute. The news has reached her husband, who has decided to divorce her. Kipar, her lover for ten years, reassures Anus of his eternal fidelity and promises to help her out of her plight, doing his utmost to frustrate Balthazar's plans for divorce. All she has to do is to follow his instructions (Scene I). A shocked Balthazar communicates the distressing information about Anus to his closest friend, Kipar. Although Balthazar has sent someone to the house of ill-repute to verify the identity of his wife's lover, he implores Kipar to discover from his wife the name of her accomplice (Scene II). In the course of his consultation

with his lawyer, Ōgsēn, we are told that Balthazar met his wife, an orphan, in a theatre, fell in love with her, and soon married her after making extensive inquiries and receiving excellent recommendations about her. Balthazar now wants to have Anuš punished for her adultery and to divorce her (Scenes III-IV). Balthazar, who has himself seen his wife leaving the house, rejects Kipar's mediation to achieve reconciliation, and refuses his wife's and Kipar's pleas to forgive Anuš (Scenes V-VII). As Anuš and Kipar (the very person who has met Anuš in the house) decide to thwart Balthazar's plan through intrigues, Ōgsēn informs his client that Kipar is his wife's seducer (Scenes VIII-XI).

Act II:

Balthazar is seen memorising his speech, written by Ōgsēn, to be addressed to the members of the Judicial Committee (Scene I), as the latter arrive and decide on the three items of the agenda. The first plea is from Kipar protesting against Balthazar's unfounded allegations of his being Anuš's lover, and requesting the restoration of his honour. The second plea is from Anuš accusing Balthazar of beating her constantly and requesting guarantees that he will not kill her. The third is from Balthazar demanding divorce on grounds of adultery. Since Anuš's life is in danger, the committee decide to give her case priority (Scene II). While the committee questions Balthazar, they witness a whole series of excellently executed intrigues. Anuš starts off the chain by claiming that her husband has just tried to strangle her (Scenes III-V). Then it is Soḷomē's turn to accuse her master of amorous advances (Scenes VI-VII). The committee, who know Kipar's father, suggest reconciliation but their suggestion is turned down by Balthazar (Scene VIII). The committee members ask for some food and witness a third scene: Martha, a neighbour of Balthazar's, claims that he has promised to marry her, while Balthazar's other

neighbour, Taguhi, contends that Balthazar has asked for her daughter's hand (Scenes IX-X). The committee find that Balthazar is unable to prove his allegations; they declare Kipar innocent and call it a day. Since there are four women and four men (Balthazar is considered a spectator), the committee hold a dancing-party. Balthazar is aware that the false testimony is of Kipar's and Anuš's making, but is rendered helpless by a hostile and biased committee. He is even accused of insanity. However, his lawyer has a good piece of news for him; the sub-committee, who have investigated the details of the case, will testify that Kipar and Anuš have met in the house of ill-repute (Scenes XI-XVI).

Act III:

The Committee reconvene to deliver their verdict based on the findings of the sub-committee. They decide to separate Balthazar from his wife on the following conditions: 1) Balthazar will no longer stay in his house, relinquishing it to his wife; 2) Balthazar will allocate Anuš thirty liras a month as indemnity; 3) If, for one reason or another, Anuš decides to re-admit her husband into the house, Balthazar will have to comply with her decision. While Balthazar vigorously objects to the committee's verdict (Scenes I-IV), Anuš performs her second and last intrigue. Disguised as another woman, she declares to the committee that it was she, and not Anuš, that was seen with Kipar. She also alleges that Balthazar has seduced her; as irrefutable evidence she suggests that the committee verify a red mole on Balthazar's right arm - which is found. Furthermore, the disguised Anuš declares that Kipar loves her and that he will marry her soon. Kipar, therefore, could not have met Anuš; and since she looks like Anuš, Balthazar must have taken her for Anuš. Kipar supports her explanation and agrees that Balthazar has gone insane and that he should be sent to an asylum. The committee agrees with him (Scenes V-VI). Kipar, who

has promised rewards to the members of the Judicial Committee and the others who have helped him frustrate Balthazar's plans, decides that Balthazar must cough up the money. Having realized the hopelessness of his case and to avoid confinement in an asylum, Balthazar agrees to be reunited with his wife seemingly and temporarily (Scenes VII-X). He promises to make compensation to Martha and Taguhi, as he ponders alternatives to get rid of his wife. Earlier he had contemplated converting to Catholicism or Protestantism, now he toys with the idea of fleeing to America (Scenes XI-XV). The comedy comes to an end with Anuš and Kipar caught embracing and Anuš openly declaring to her husband that she loves Kipar; she has never loved Balthazar and will never love him (Scenes XVI-XVII).

5) THE MOST HONOURABLE BEGGARS: A Satirical Novel

Absalom, a native of Trebizond, arrives in Constantinople on a brief visit intending to find a wife. At the port, he is met by an editor who tricks money from him to announce his arrival in the city. Absalom finds his way to the house of his host, Manuk Agha, an extremely garrulous man, and has hardly settled when he is 'welcomed' by unknown visitors, mostly intellectuals, who call upon him with the sole intention of extracting money from him.

First to greet the provincial bourgeois is a priest, who has decided to celebrate a mass for the dead relatives of Absalom. Absalom agrees to the proposal and advances some money. The priest is followed by a poet who asks for money to publish the products of his inspiration; Absalom obliges the poet, since his name will appear on the title-page of the book. Absalom then has an exhausting session with Manuk Agha, who is anxious to tell him all about the parish council elections and endless other topics.

Early the next morning a photographer arrives to take Absalom's picture. He manages to persuade Absalom to have his photograph

taken and receives an advance payment. The photographer is followed by a marriage broker, who offers her services to find Absalom a suitable bride. Absalom's residence gradually turns into a virtual library as editors send newspapers, and poets and writers send books, with requests for money. Next to call upon Absalom is a quack doctor. Absalom feigns illness as soon as he becomes aware that the doctor will also have his name published in the newspapers.

Having spent the first days of his arrival receiving guests, Absalom decides to avoid his well-wishers who are swarming over his residence, and heads for a restaurant. On the way he is met by a teacher proposing to sell him copies of his text-book. In the restaurant, Absalom is joined by a playwright, a tragedian, a lawyer and a number of other self-invited guests, who offer him their books or services. They all have a good meal and Absalom foots the exorbitant bill.

Absalom has hardly returned home when an actor presents him with two tickets for a performance. The actor is followed by a printer, whom the actor owes some money for printing the tickets. Staging a fight the actor and the printer manage to extract money from Absalom, who orders Manuk Agha to lock the doors and not to admit visitors any more.

The next morning Absalom hastens to the photographer, who sends for a barber to trim Absalom's hair and moustache before taking his picture. The barber is interested in raising a loan from Absalom to subsidise his son's studies in Paris. In the meantime another priest greets Absalom and volunteers to find him a wife. The marriage broker reappears and argues with the priest about the privilege of introducing Absalom to his potential bride. Manuk Agha follows suit and requests fifty liras from Absalom for services rendered. Absalom flees Constantinople to Trebizond without being able to accomplish his marital plans.

II: SYNOPSIS OF SRBUHI TIWSAB'S NOVEL 'MAYTA'

(Srbuhi Tiwsab, Mayta, 2nd edition, Constantinople, 1924)

Mayta, the central heroine of this novel, is a widow with a daughter. Mayta was married to Tēodosean when she was fifteen (he was forty years old at the time), and bore him a daughter Yulianē after a year. After the death of her parents, Mayta lost her husband in about the fifteenth year of their marriage. With a sufficient income from her husband's business, Mayta and her daughter retired to Hisar on the Asiatic coast of Constantinople.

Mayta had always relied on her husband, and was uncertain and without self-confidence and experience in running her own life after her husband's death. She corresponded with Mrs Sira who gave her moral support and advice to deal with her new situation. Mrs Sira was a lonely, middle-aged woman, of rather poor health, living in Corfu.

An Armenian family, the Tōrgomatunis, move to Hisar and settle in the house next to Mayta's. Mrs Tōrgomatuni has two sons; the elder is in poor health, and is married to Herigay, an extremely beautiful but arrogant and tyrannical woman. The youngest son, Lewon, is a healthy, good-looking young man, whom Mayta admires immensely. Friendly relations develop between the two families, who visit each other very frequently.

Tigran, a cousin of Mrs Tōrgomatuni, arrives from Paris on a short visit to Constantinople. He and Mayta soon fall in love and pledge their faithfulness to each other after a dive by Tigran to retrieve Mayta's fan from the sea. Before his return to Paris Tigran gives Mayta a ring as a symbol of their mutual devotion.

Meanwhile Lewon and Yulianē also fall in love and are engaged. Mayta and her newly engaged daughter meet an incurably ill girl, Hranoyš, whose mother is dead. A very intimate friendship develops

with Hranoyš, and Mayta and Yulianē do their best to comfort their unfortunate new acquaintance, as everybody, including Hranoyš, is aware that she is to die soon.

Mayta's ring, which she had lent to Hranoyš, mysteriously disappears immediately after Hranoyš's death. The disappearance of the ring is the first stage of an intrigue masterminded by Herigay, who passionately loves, but is not loved by Tigran. Herigay, who has stolen the ring, is determined to disrupt the happiness of Mayta and Tigran, through an obedient tool, Petros T..., Hranoyš's father, who has fallen in love with Herigay. In return for Herigay's love, Petros agrees to take the ring to Paris and to show it to Tigran as irrefutable evidence of Mayta's betrayal and consent to marry Petros. Petros accomplishes his mission successfully.

As Tigran terminates their correspondence, Mayta leaves for Paris after Yulianē's marriage to Lewon. She learns from the porter that Tigran is in England where he has found a wife. Stunned, she walks away, faints and falls in the front door of a house. It is the house of a certain Count B..., who helps Mayta recuperate. The Count is an unhappy man, descending from an old family with an impressive, though tedious, record of service and devotion to Napoleon and France. The Count once fell in love with a girl whose father had promised her to someone else, in order to secure his business and the future of his children. The girl, who reciprocated the Count's love, would not disobey her father's will and committed suicide on the day of her marriage. The Count has since suffered emotionally a great deal, and now falls in love with Mayta, who gracefully declines his offer of love, declaring that her heart still belongs to Tigran.

In Paris Mayta witnesses the ordination of a nun in a church, where she sees Tigran and faints. Tigran hurries to her help, pays the sexton to look after Mayta, and leaves before she recovers

consciousness. Mayta then returns to Constantinople and decides to become a nun in Tiflis.

In pursuit of her revenge Herigay organises a second plot. Acting on her instructions, Petros writes Yulianē a letter expressing his regret for failing to meet her on that particular day. The letter will be left in a conspicuous place for Lewon to find, and to follow his wife the next day. The following day a disguised Petros will run away on seeing Lewon returning home from work, leaving the impression that he has just been to see Yulianē again. This plan is executed successfully, and Lewon abandons his wife. Yulianē falls ill; Lewon, convinced of his wife's innocence, returns to her and pledges to unmask the villain.

Faithful to her promise, Herigay is to meet Petros, who arrives earlier than the scheduled appointment and finds her in the arms of a certain general Amatuni. Petros attacks Herigay, whereupon the general fires on him and flees. Before dying Petros informs Mayta, Lewon and Yulianē that the wicked intrigues were organised by Herigay. Herigay is imprisoned in a hospital while Amatuni awaits trial.

In the meantime the Count still seeks marriage with Mayta. When Mayta reveals her intention to become a nun, the Count decides to devote his life to God too. Mayta then gives up her monastic plans, in order to dissuade the Count from becoming a monk. Without hope of marrying Mayta, the Count becomes a missionary.

Herigay manages to escape from prison and is at large. Meanwhile, Tigran's child and first wife die immediately after labour. Tigran returns to Mayta, and their marriage is delayed in memory of his deceased wife. But Herigay is not idle. She arrives in Corfu, becomes the second wife of a Muslim and, together with her husband and his other wife, lives next door to Mrs Sira, from whom Herigay learns of the forthcoming marriage of Tigran and Mayta.

Herigay returns to Constantinople, disguises herself in Oriental attire and attacks Mayta with a dagger while she is walking with Tigran. Tigran disarms Herigay and kills her with her own dagger. Mayta falls ill and dies a few days after Tigran's release from prison.

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