

**PRESERVING HERITAGE: EXPLORING ARMENIAN LANGUAGE, HISTORY,
AND CULTURE THROUGH RARE BOOKS AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

Keywords: Armenian library collections in USA, Armenian studies in USA, Armenian diaspora, Armenian rare books, Armenian cultural heritage.

Indiana University (IU) is a prestigious, more than 200-year-old public university with the main campus in Bloomington, Indiana. With a student body of around 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students, IU is known for its diverse academic offerings and research initiatives. The IU library is one of the largest American academic libraries and it consists of several branches. Exceptionally globally and internationally oriented, IU is well-known across the United States for teaching numerous languages. Our libraries reflect this commitment through the Area Studies department where information specialists develop, preserve, and promote collections for all parts of the world, including Armenia. The Armenian diaspora in the United States is traditionally concentrated on the East and West Coasts, with a significantly smaller presence in the Midwest, where notable Armenian populations are located in Michigan and Chicago, leaving the state of Indiana on the periphery. Although IU never had an Armenian studies program or specialists and no librarian was engaged in systematic collecting of Armenian materials, my research uncovered numerous rare and valuable publications related to Armenia within our collections. In this article I briefly overview the IU Armenian collection and highlight some of the most exciting Armenian holdings housed in IU's Lilly Library and Herman B Wells Library.

The rare books, manuscripts, and special collections Lilly Library opened in 1960 with a core collection of 20,000 printed books and 17,000 manuscripts donated by Josiah K. Lilly Jr., at that time the owner of Lilly Pharmaceuticals. He envisioned that making his private collection public would have a transformative effect on the intellectual life of the university, and in turn, the state of Indiana. Since then, the Lilly collection has expanded significantly, and its Armenian holdings now include several manuscripts and books. Among the manuscripts, there are two separate leaves from an Armenian Bible. They both were a part of Otto F. Ege's portfolio *Original Leaves from Famous Bibles: Nine centuries, 1121 A.D. - 1935 A.D.* Ege (1888-1951) was a professor of art history and later a Dean at the Cleveland Institute of Art as well as a famous book-breaker. He systematically removed individual pages from dozens of unrelated manuscripts and incunabula in his collection, thus creating sets of leaves that he sold to libraries, museums, and private collectors. The Armenian leaves were mistakenly dated by Ege as 1121 A.D. but several researchers later corrected the date to 1671 A.D., pointing out that Ege misunderstood that the date in the original manuscript was according to the Armenian calendar, where year 1 begins on 11 July 552 of the Julian calendar [Gwara, 2013, 5]. One of the Lilly leaves contains an arabesque in the margin and a large initial formed by a bird and fish painted in red and blue, a beautiful example of medieval Armenian bird script. The letter they form is *Iu* [huti xe], which begins the word *houthguu* [he spoke]. Another Armenian holding in the Lilly manuscript collection is a book containing four Gospels. According to the description made by Avedis K. Sanjian for the Lilly Library, the codex was probably written at the end of the 15th or the early part of the 16th century. Based on some inscriptions within the book, Sanjian assumes that it was created at the Tatev Monastery by a scribe named Step'anos. The codex is not in very good shape since, also according to some inscriptions, "it had fallen in the water" and been restored "in the year 1003 of the Armenian Era (1554 A.D.)". The text of the Gospels is in bolorgir in two columns of 19-24 lines each. The codex contains some illustrations, including a full-page portrait of Luke in various colors. The manuscript was donated to the library by a couple from Northern Indiana in 1979 and thus its description was not included in Sanjian's prominent *A catalogue of medieval Armenian manuscripts in the United States*, published three years earlier.

The most treasured Armenian books at the Lilly Library are also spiritual. These are the first complete Bible in the Armenian language, printed in 1666 in Amsterdam by Archbishop Voskan Yerevantsi (1614-1674), commonly known as the "Voskanyan" Bible. It contains numerous engraved images and is considered one of the finest examples of early Armenian printing. According to WorldCat, there are only two copies of the Voskanyan Bible in the United States (the other is at the Library of Congress). The Lilly Library also holds the only American copy of *Yisus Ordi* [Jesus the Son], published in Venice in 1643, a spiritual poem written by Nerses Shnorhali (1102-1173), Catholicos of All Armenians, that summarizes the entire Bible. Bound in contemporary richly gilt Dutch morocco, the book is decorated with superb head-, side- and tail ornaments of

birds, vines and architectural details, striking large initials formed of birds, and an engraved portrait of the author by Giovanni Georgi (fl. 1617-56).

Several other books from Italian presses represent early attempts to formally describe Armenian language. Among those are *Grammaticæ, et logicæ institutiones linguæ literalis armenicæ armenis traditæ* [Grammatical and logical principles of the traditional Armenian language], published in Rome in 1645. It is written in Latin by Clemente Galano (1611-1666), an Italian missionary and priest who spent many years in Armenia. *Alphabetum Armenum, cum Oratione Dominicali, Salutatione angelica, Initio Evangelii S. Iohannis et Cantico poenitentiae* [The Armenian Alphabet, with the Sunday Prayer, the Angelic Salutation, the Beginning of the Gospel of St. John, and the Song of Penitence] was also printed in Rome, in 1784. It was edited by Giovanni Christoforo Amaduzzi (1740-1792), a distinguished Italian philologist who edited and published books of alphabets for many languages. In Venice was printed *A grammar, Armenian and English*, penned by Paschal Aucher in 1819. This is a part of the first English-Armenian and Armenian-English grammars, written by Aucher and corrected by the celebrated English Romantic poet Lord Byron, a great admirer of Armenian culture. One can also see at the Lilly *Lord Byron's Armenian exercises and poetry*, a small bilingual book printed in 1870 on the famous island of San Lazzaro in Venice, which has been home to the monastery of the Mekhitarists, an Armenian Catholic congregation, since 1717.

In addition to overviews of the Armenian language, quite a few books at the Lilly introduce us to the Armenian land of the past as encountered by travelers from various countries. Several of them were published in London in the 1820-50s, such as *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, ancient Babylonia, during the years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820* written and beautifully illustrated by Sir Robert Ker Porter (1777–1842), a Scottish artist, author, diplomat, and traveler. Armenia is also featured in the *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus and Armenia: with some account of their antiquities and geology* published by William J. Hamilton (1805-1867), a British geologist and a fellow of the Geological Society of London who made a geological tour of the Levant continuing through Armenia and across Asia Minor. The Honorable Robert Curzon (1810-1873) describes his residence at Erzurum from 1843 to 1844 in *Armenia: a year at Erzeroum, and on the frontiers of Russia, Turkey, and Persia*. Curzon was appointed to the joint Anglo-Russian, Turkish and Persian commission charged with establishing a fixed Turkish-Persian boundary across highland Armenia. In this book Curzon left for us his interpretation of Armenian history, including details of its ecclesiastical history and religious establishments, manuscripts, and monastic libraries. Some of the travelogues are translations from other languages, like *Transcaucasia: sketches of the nations and races between the Black sea and the Caspian*, translated from the manuscript and published in English previous to its appearance in German. The author, Baron August von Haxthausen (1792-1866) was an agricultural scientist, economist, lawyer, writer, and collector of folk songs, and is well known for his travels in Russia and the Caucasus in 1842-44. His book includes a detailed description of the places he visited and people he met, including “the father of modern Armenian literature” Khachatur Abovian, who accompanied Haxthausen in his journey from Georgia to Armenia.

While this is not an exhaustive list of the Armenian holdings at the Lilly Library, let's turn our attention to the main IU library. It is named after Herman B Wells, prominent IU president in 1938-1962 who was committed to development of international studies in Indiana. The current building was constructed in 1969, although the library itself is essentially as old as the university. Unlike the Lilly Library, where one needs to request a book in advance and can access it only in the reading room, the Wells is an open stacks library and almost all materials can be checked out, although the older and less requested books are deposited in the off-campus storage facility. While the current librarians at Wells primarily focus on developing a modern collection that supports the innovative teaching and research of a major academic institution, we are fortunate that generations of our predecessor librarians have left us with collections that offer a glimpse into the history of Armenian studies.

Similar to the Lilly Library, the Wells collection also includes historic books on the Armenian language. Among those are early academic publications in various languages, such as *Izslidovanie o sostavie armianskago iazyka* [Study on the composition of Armenian language] printed in Saint Petersburg in 1864. The author, Kerovbe Patkanian, or Kerope Petrovich Patkanov in the russified version (1833-1889), was a philologist, linguist, orientalist, and historian who served as Professor of Armenian Studies at the Saint Petersburg Imperial University. It can be compared with *Armenische Grammatik* [Armenian Grammar], written by a German philologist Heinrich Hübschmann (1848-1908), who was the first to show that the Armenian language was not a branch of the Iranian languages but an entirely separate Indo-European branch. The first comprehensive study of Armenian dialects conducted by prominent Armenian linguist and polyglot Hrachia Acharian (1876-1953) *Classification des dialectes arméniens* [Classification of Armenian dialects] was issued in 1909 in Paris. Those interested in the history of language teaching and lexicography for speakers

of English, can explore various textbooks and dictionaries, such as *Elementary modern Armenian grammar* by Kevork H. Gulian, London, New York, 1902, and *English-Armenian and Armenian-English concise dictionary* by Adour H. Yacoubian, published in Los Angeles in 1944. The Armenian alphabet and its creator, Mesrop Mashtots, are subjects of such books as *Ueber den Ursprung des armenischen Alphabets, in Verbindung mit der Biographie des heil. Mast'oc* [On the Origin of the Armenian Alphabet, in Connection with the Biography of Saint Mast'oc] published in Vienna in 1917 by a German historian and orientalist Josef Markwart (1864-1930) and a Russian translation of *Հայր Գրիգոր Մաշտոցի* [Zhitie Mashtotsa / Life of Mashtots], the biography of Mashtots created in the fifth century by his disciple vardapet Koriun, printed in Yerevan in 1962.

Another significant category of publications at Wells Library is books on the history of Armenia published in the US. The Armenian Genocide and, more broadly, the Armenian Question is the subject of many of them. Such attention of American intellectuals to this topic is not surprising: “the US response to the Armenian crisis, which began in the 1890s and continued into the 1920s, was the first international human rights movement in American history and helped to define the nation’s emerging global identity” [Balakian, 2003, xiii]. One of the earliest books on this matter is the *Story of Turkey and Armenia, with a full and accurate account of the recent massacres written by eye-witnesses*, printed in Baltimore in 1896. Edited by James Wilson Pierce, the book is based on the sketch of Clara Barton (1821-1912), the American nurse who founded the American Red Cross in 1881 and led a relief expedition after Armenian massacres. For this organization, the humanitarian intervention for the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was the first international mission. The American Red Cross was not the only organization to participate in this mission: “one of the unique dimensions of Armenian philanthropy in 1896 was the synergy between American missionaries, the Red Cross – which was a federally incorporated organization – and the American people” [Balakian, 2003, 64]. A book published in New York a year earlier than Clara Barton’s story, *The Armenian crisis in Turkey; the massacre of 1894, its antecedents and significance, with a consideration of some of the factors which enter into the solution of this phase of the Eastern question*, provides an account of events by Rev. Frederick Davis Greene (1853-1940), who served as a missionary in Turkey under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, one of the first American Christian missionary organizations. By the middle of the 19th century, American protestant missions along with the schools and colleges for Christians minorities in the Ottoman Empire were well established. The protestant missionaries often became the first witnesses and rescuers of the survivors of the Turkish atrocities against Armenians. “Through the missionaries, the events of the Armenian extermination became headline news in the United States” [Balakian, 2004, 241]. Both in the 1890s and later, the “media were more than responsive ... The *New York Times* alone ran 145 articles on the Armenian Genocide in 1915” [Balakian, 2004, 249]. Herbert Adams Gibbons (1880-1934), who was a missionary in the same organization as Greene as well as a journalist for *New York Herald*, along with his wife Helen Davenport Gibbons (1882-1960) witnessed the massacre of Armenians at Adana and Tarsus in 1909. Later, they both captured the events in their books. His book *The blackest page of modern history; events in Armenia in 1915, the facts and the responsibilities* was published in 1916; his wife’s *The red rugs of Tarsus: a woman’s record of the Armenian massacre of 1909* appeared a year later. Two other publications from the same period also have titles that speak for themselves: *Armenia, a martyr nation; a historical sketch of the Armenian people from traditional times to the present tragic days*, by M. C. Gabrielian and *The tragedy of Armenia: a brief study and interpretation* by Bertha S. Papazian.

American interest in Armenia didn’t cease over time. With the growth of the Armenian diaspora and development of Armenian studies, an academic field that became permanent in the US by the 1950s [Mamigonian, 2012, 153], new original publications and translations on various Armenian topics appeared. *Armenia and the Armenian question* by Armenian politician Simon Vratzian (1882-1969) was translated into English by James G. Mandalian and published by Hairenik publishing company in Boston in 1943. Sirarpie Der Nersessian, who came to the United States in the 1930s and eventually became a chair of the Department of Art History in Wellesley College, published in 1945 her groundbreaking *Armenia and the Byzantine empire; a brief study of Armenian art and civilization*. One of the active organizations in the 1940-50s was the Armenian National Council of America that published numerous pamphlets and the book *Armenia reborn* whose author was Rev. Charles A. Vertanes (aka Yezniq Aznakian) (1905-1974).

Studies of Armenian immigration in North America started as early as the 1919 with *The Armenians in America* by M. Vartan Malcom, originally published by Pilgrim Press in Boston and reprinted in 1969 in San Francisco. *The Armenians in Massachusetts* was produced by the Armenian historical society in Boston in 1937. Hairenik Press originally published *The Armenians of the United States and Canada; a brief study* in 1947, which was reprinted in San Francisco in 1970.

As my overview has demonstrated, the IU Libraries house numerous valuable Armenian books and manuscripts that represent a unique part of the Armenian cultural and historical heritage. This article aims to

raise awareness of these valuable resources, enhance their visibility and support their preservation. While Armenian studies as an academic field is underrepresented in most of the US Midwest and the Armenian holdings at IU are “hidden”, we hope to encourage further engagement and scholarly use of these materials by academics, students, and the broader community. Sharing the significance of these resources can foster conversation about Armenian history, culture, and current issues such as the preservation of language and the Armenian diaspora. Introduction to these resources also has an interdisciplinary value – it can be crucial for those working in areas such as history, religious studies, art history, and even political science. Many of these works offer insights into broader themes like diaspora, identity, language preservation, and the effects of historical events like the Armenian Genocide. Showcasing the Armenian holdings at IU can also foster greater collaboration between domestic and international libraries, scholars, and communities that are interested in the preservation and study of Armenian heritage. IU libraries has a potential to become one of the important centers for the study and preservation of Armenian materials, especially if it continues to invest in the field and form partnerships with other institutions.

ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ

Հոդվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվում Ինդիանայի համալսարանի գրադարանների հայկական հավաքածուներին՝ ընդգծելով այդ նյութերի կարևորությունը հայկական մշակութային և պատմական ժառանգության պահպանման տեսանկյունից: Չնայած Ինդիանայի համալսարանում հայագիտության պաշտոնական ծրագրի բացակայությանը՝ համալսարանի գրադարանում, մասնավորապես «Լիլի» գրադարանում և «Հերման Բ. Ուելս» գրադարանում, պահվում են հայկական արժեքավոր հազվագյուտ գրքեր և ձեռագրեր: Դրանց թվում են այնպիսի նշանակալից կրոնական գրքեր, ինչպիսիք են 1666 թվականի Ոսկանյան Աստվածաշունչը, պատմական ուղեցույցները, վաղ լեզվաբանական ուսումնասիրությունները, Հայոց ցեղասպանության և ԱՄՆ-ի հայկական սփյուռքի վերաբերյալ աշխատությունները: Այս նյութերի մասին իրազեկվածությունը բարձրացնելով փորձ է կատարվում նպաստել դրանց պահպանմանն ու գիտական կիրառմանը հայագիտության ոլորտի մասնագետների կողմից և ոչ միայն: Սույն հոդվածը կոչ է անում նպաստել գրադարանների և գիտական հաստատությունների միջև ավելի լայն համագործակցությանը՝ ինչպես ԱՄՆ-ում, այնպես էլ արտասահմանում, հայկական մշակութային ռեսուրսների պահպանությունն ու ակադեմիական կիրառումը բարելավելու նպատակով:

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