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A GLANCE INTO  
THE HISTORY OF  
ARMENIA



A GLANCE INTO  
THE HISTORY OF  
ARMENIA

THROUGH CARTOGRAPHIC RECORDS

ROUBEN GALICHIAN

BENNETT & BLOOM



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# Introduction

IT IS ACCEPTED THAT WE ARE ABLE TO read history through written texts, sometimes accompanied by maps or map-like sketches in order to clarify and present the reader with a more memorable format of the historical content of the book. In this book I have decided to approach the narrative in reverse order: in other words, instead of providing pages of narration, which is not my speciality, the tale of Armenian history is told through the presentation of cartographic documents, maps, produced by specialists from the widest and internationally recognized sources of the time.

In the old days, before the advent of modern electronic communication and the internet, changes in borders came to be recorded on maps with lengthy delays, and a map produced at any given point might have contained information which was valid only a couple of decades previously or even more. However, advances in communication have put this right and any changes or possible alterations to our maps appear within hours rather than years after the occurrence of a particular event.

In some respects the map has an advantage over the written word, since at a single glance the 'reader' can see the situation in a geographical layout, which otherwise would have taken pages of written text to describe. The reader is able to pick and choose any part from the presented information, in which they are interested and ignore all the other details outside their sphere of interest.

In addition to the lack of accurate information, the maps produced during the Early and Middle Ages generally did not show any borders. However, they did specifically mention the names of indigenous peoples and the name of the country in the general area where they lived, without going into details of political divisions since these were rarely long lasting.

Given the time elapsed between an event or change and when it made its appearance on a map, a particular change might already have become obsolete, so it was safer not to show borders that were political and hence inherently unreliable.

For a good example of this, we can look at the fact that while Armenia was not an independent state between 1375 and 1918, its name appears in large letters on almost all maps depicting the general area where the country had been located. Even prior to the fall of the last Armenian king in 1375, Greater Armenia and Lesser Armenia had the misfortune of being geographically located in a region which bordered two rival empires, Rome (later Byzantium) and Persia, whose battleground Armenia had become. The end result was constant waves of looting, destruction and ruin caused by the clashes of these great empires. The situation deteriorated further into disastrous proportions when the Russian Empire appeared in the Caucasus and began paying more interest in the lands of Transcaucasia.

The region historically named 'Armenia', and sometimes called 'Greater Armenia', covered the area to the east of Asia Minor (Anatolia) and south of the Caucasus, extending from Malatya and Kharbert (modern Elaziğ in Turkey) in the west to the north-east of Lake Sevan, and from Lori in the north to northern reaches of the Taurus Mountains. This geographic region is also known as the 'Armenian Highlands' or the 'Armenian Plateau'.

As we have seen above, the toponym Armenia given to this area has been in use from the sixth century BCE up to the 1920s by all geographers and historians (for exceptions, see the following paragraph). The only reason for the subsequent deletion of the name 'Armenia' from the region was that the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 perpetrated

in the territory of Turkey by its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, cleansed the land of Armenia from its indigenous people.<sup>1</sup>

This region has been continuously called Armenia by almost all Western and Eastern historians, geographers and cartographers, with the notable exception of those from the Republic of Azerbaijan and by some from modern-day Turkey. The Republic of Azerbaijan itself was founded in 1918 on the northern shores of the Arax River, borrowing its name from the Iranian province of Azerbaijan on the southern shores of the river. It now claims to have a 2000-year-old statehood and asserts that the Armenians are newcomers to the South Caucasus, having been brought there by the army of the Russian tsars in 1828-29. The Azerbaijanis' reasoning for repudiating the presence of the Armenians is to establish themselves on the Armenian territory by taking over the existing Armenian culture and history in the region for themselves. In the case of Turkey, the reason for deleting the name of Armenians from the region is to cover up the Genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Armenians perpetrated by their predecessors.<sup>2</sup>

\*

One may ask the question, why choose to recount history through maps? The answer is a simple one. If we refer to the historic borders of countries—say, as they were during the Late Middle Ages—and especially if we can select and compare maps of the same area drawn by different cartographers, then the resulting picture would be far more reliable than any similar information obtained from historical texts or books written at the time.

The history of a region is written by people who relate to it or have some sort of vested interest in the subject area. As far as the history of a small region or country is considered, in earlier times there were usually few alternative texts or books written on the matter by third, unbiased parties, and so we find that there are few alternative documents for us to compare the texts with. However, maps of any region or country are generally more plentiful than historical texts, and cartographers usually try to make the best possible and true presentation of the region shown on their maps. Incorrect maps would only bring the

cartographer uninvited criticism and an unwanted bad reputation. Therefore, by selecting unbiased maps of a region and comparing them against each other, we can obtain a relatively more accurate and clear picture of the actual situation on the ground.

At any event, the modern historian has only the old and medieval historical texts to fall back on, which in many cases are not the best and most reliable, since many historians were employed by various persons in authority who had to, at least partially, toe the lines drawn by their superiors or employers. This is particularly true for the Christian world of Europe in the Middle Ages, when the religious authorities set the rules and dogmas for all publications, especially scientific studies. These then were the dark years of Europe that lasted almost a millennium.

In this book, however, a selection of historically reliable works has been assembled to recount the historical narrative here with relative accuracy. The cartographers and writers selected are those having good knowledge and awareness of the region of Armenia and who come from medieval times<sup>3</sup> as well as modern periods.<sup>4</sup>

If we leave aside the idea of propaganda in maps, the aim of a map is to be as faithful as it can to the actual situation, particularly when it is produced by third parties who have no biased views or opinions and who are not obeying particular political or economic instructions while drawing their maps. Indeed, as we have pointed out, any cartographer would prefer to present their map as the most accurate and faithful to the true situation on the ground, on which their integrity and reputation would depend. So we see map title cartouches that make proud proclamations such as “the most accurate...”, “a new accurate map of...”, “agreeable to modern history...”, “...prepared using the most up to date methods”, the purpose of all of which is to advertise and confirm that the map is a faithful depiction of the situation on the ground.<sup>5</sup>

\*

In this small volume, aimed mainly at non-Armenians, I will try to present the important events and occurrences in Armenian history, as shown and reflected in the maps produced by mostly non-



Armenians: Greco-Roman, Western Christian and Islamic geographers and cartographers of the early and Middle Ages. Only a few maps are from modern Armenian sources, these being the depiction of the political developments from the past two centuries or so.<sup>6</sup>

A few of the maps used in this volume will also be familiar to readers of my previous cartographic works, but in this volume these appear in an entirely different context, namely used to illustrate, display and confirm the historical content linked to the period of history in the relevant texts in this narrative.

It is not a simple task to recount all the details of various events in history solely through maps, and so only the major events and drastic historical changes in borders have been chosen, shown in what maps that could be found which have been drawn by unbiased cartographers. As a result, the historical record here may at times seem a touch intermittent with periodic breaks in the narrative. Understandably, this narrative also does not seek to go into much detail about the inner workings and politics of the various countries, so long as they did not affect its borders.

\*

In 2001 the Armenian Church in Great Britain was invited by the Justice and Peace Committee of the United Kingdom to participate in an exhibition dedicated to the National Holocaust Day organized at the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Albans, north of London. It was decided that along the photographs of the Genocide of the Armenians in 1915-23, images of modern-day Armenia would also be displayed. The exhibited images would show that although Armenia and Armenians suffered great territorial and human losses during those years, today both the country and its people have survived and are thriving, and have secured their rightful place among the nations of the world.

It was decided to create a short history book, to be distributed to all visitors, whereby they could be

informed about the history of this country and its peoples. To this end I asked the historian Christopher J. Walker to write a very brief history of Armenia. He was kind enough to produce a text of twenty-odd pages of concise and all-encompassing history. The volume became very popular and soon was out of print. Adding some colour photographs to the text I had the booklet republished in 2003 under the title of *Armenia: A Very Brief History*. In 2014 I revised and updated the book bringing it up-to-date and had it republished including an additional section, 'Armenian Arts'. In the final part of this book I have taken the liberty of using selections from *Armenia: A Very Brief History*, in the hope that the reader will kindly accept the re-use of this historical material.

\*

Finally, a few words about the terminology used in the book. Whenever the country or region of Albania is mentioned, it refers to the historical Caucasian Albania, a country whose population was mainly Christian until the seventh century. Later, most of the Albanians converted to Islam and during the ninth to eleventh centuries the name Albania disappeared from the maps and historical accounts. The region was later divided into Muslim khanates and the general region was usually referred to as Shirvan. Today the Republic of Azerbaijan occupies most of this geographical region.

The name Karabagh refers to the old Armenian region of Artsakh, which during the Soviet era was named Nagorno (meaning 'Mountainous') Karabagh.

In the main text whenever the country of Turkey or Turkish Empire is mentioned, if this is prior to the 1923, then it refers to the Ottoman Empire and not the present-day republic.

In the last chapter of this book, history is presented in more detail than in the preceding chapters. This is to inform the reader about the important developments which have shaped the present-day history of Armenia, as well as being important for its future.

**Rouben Galichian, 2015**  
*London*



# General

THE ARMENIAN HOMELAND, KNOWN AS Greater Armenia, comprises a large area of mountainous territory located south of the Caucasus and east of Asia Minor, also named 'Anatolia' by the Byzantines, most of which is known as the Armenian Highlands or Plateau. It extends westward to Malatya and Kharbert (Elaziğ) in present-day Turkey, and eastward to Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh)—for almost 700 kilometres, and from the north, near Ardahan and Lake Sevan, to south beyond Lake Van about 400 kilometres.

The Armenian Plateau is on average around 1600 metres above sea level and has a dry, extreme climate. Mount Ararat is the symbol and Holy Mountain for all Armenians, with its 5166-metre peak presently located just inside the territory of Turkey.

Lesser Armenia existed in the early Middle Ages west of the Euphrates around the modern city of Erzinjan. From the eleventh to the fourteenth century the focus of Armenian kingdom moved to Cilicia, north of the Gulf of Alexandretta (Iskenderun). There the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia began as a princely fiefdom at the end of the eleventh century, becoming a kingdom in 1199 and lasted until 1375, when the Mamluks conquered it.

Turkic tribes began moving into Persia and the Armenian Highlands from around the seventh century, and the first group of Seljuk Turks from Central Asia occupied parts of Armenia during the eleventh century, followed by the Mongols, the Ak-Koyunlus, Kara-Koyunlus and finally the Ottomans.<sup>7</sup>

The Republic of Armenia today—the former Soviet Republic of Armenia—comprises 29,800 square kilometres and constitutes only ten per cent of the territory of Greater Armenia. The independent Artsakh, or Nagorno Karabagh, territories make up another 4,800 square kilometres of territory which the Armenians could call home.

Archaeologists record continuous human occupation in the plateau since the Old Stone Age. Proto Armenian states existed in the region of the Armenian Highlands since the third millennium BCE, which include ancient states such as Aratta, Carduene, Mitanni and Hayasa-Azzi, but as a unified kingdom Urartu (Armenia) only appeared during the late second millennium BCE.<sup>8</sup> Around 1000 BCE the region was dominated by Urartu—the name being interpreted as the same with 'Ararat', 'Armina' or 'Arminiya' (as proven by the Behistun inscriptions). The kingdom was overrun in around 600 BCE by various invaders, some of whom came from Central Anatolia. The language adopted by the new people was a distinctive branch of the Indo-European language group.

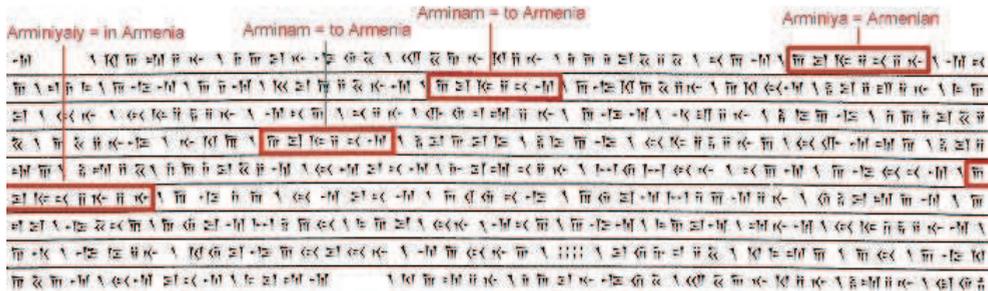
Although the proto-Armenians existed and had a history prior to the sixth century before our era, the starting point here is the time when the country was called 'Hayastan' by the Armenians and 'Ermina', 'Ermenistan' and 'Armenia' by most others. This roughly coincides with the period from which a cuneiform inscription and a world map on a clay tablet have reached us, as we shall see.



# Early Times

ARMENIA HAS BEEN REFERRED TO IN many ancient texts and records. The Persian king Darius the Great recorded the name of ‘Arminya’ in the trilingual cuneiform inscriptions that he left near the Iranian city of Kermanshah, known as the ‘Behistun Inscriptions’.

In the text Darius mentions that he sent his Armenian servant Dadarshi to Armenia in 521 BCE. In his trilingual inscription dated around the year 517 BCE, he also refers to ‘Urashtu’ (in Babylonian) as ‘Arminiya’ (in Old Persian) and ‘Harminuya’ (in Elamite).



**Figure 1:** The Behistun Inscriptions, Column 2, paragraph on Armenia.



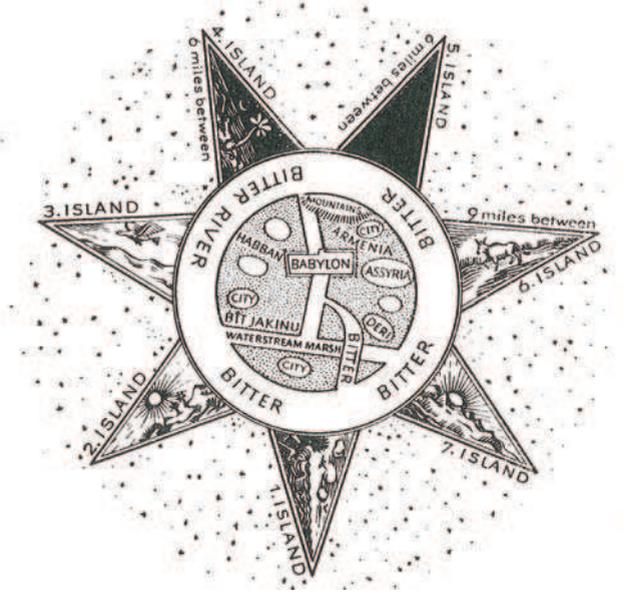
**Figure 2:** General view of the Behistun Inscriptions, dating from 517 BCE.



**Figure 3:** Babylonian clay tablet depicting the World according to the Persian cosmology of the time.

The most important and the oldest World Map discovered so far is a Babylonian clay tablet measuring about 8cm x 12.5cm, dating almost from the same period as the Behistun Inscriptions, around the sixth century BCE, kept in the British Museum.

This Babylonian cosmos dates from the Persian period, when Babylon was still a flourishing city, regarded as the centre of the universe. The chart shows the earth proper as a circular disc. At the top, in the north, are the mountains, whence the Euphrates descends, in a south-easterly direction, to flow into the marshes, near the land of Bit-Yakin or



**Figure 4:** Translation of the cuneiform text of the tablet according to Unger (Imago Mundi, Unger, 1937).

‘Sea Country’ (possibly Persia). In the centre is Babylon—the ‘hub’ of the universe, which is surrounded by ‘Earthly Ocean’ and the ‘Bitter River’. North-east of Babylon the land of Assyria is depicted and to its north the land of Urashtu or Urartu (Armenia) is shown.

The cities of Deri and Habban are also shown as well as some nameless places indicated only by ovals. The Seven Islands are shown as triangles surrounding the earth which are described in detail on the reverse of the tablet.

The tablet and its description are shown in Figures 3 & 4.

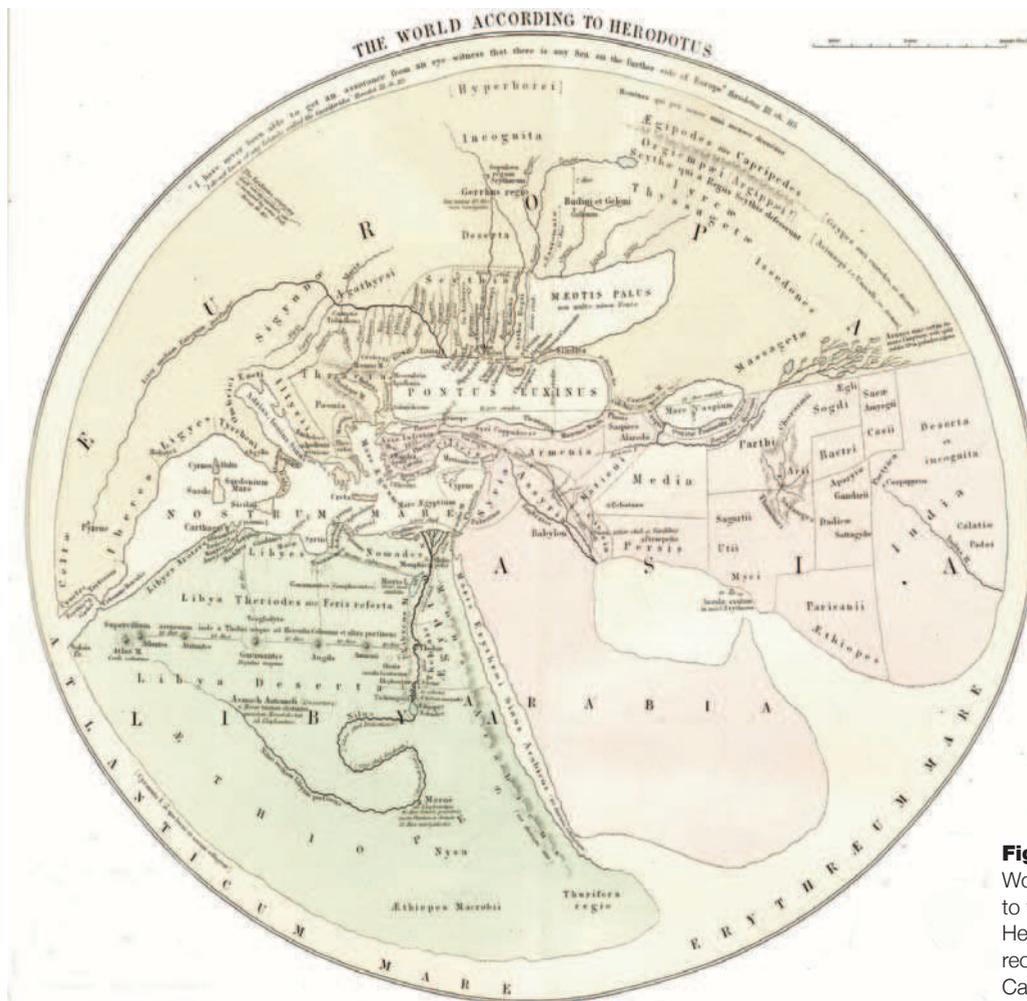


Maps and written documents from the early Greco-Roman period generally did not specify any borders. The names of lands and territories were given according to the names of the people autochthonous to the area. This practice continued well into the next millennium and the advent of printed maps. As late as the fourteenth century most manuscript maps lacked border markings. Perhaps the reason was that the borders were not everlasting but changed according to the military power and political will and plans of the ruling elite, while the indigenous population kept living and worked on their ancestral lands.

Herodotus (484-425 BCE) who is known as the founder of the science of history, in his *History* refers

to Armenia and the Armenians on eight places. Many western cartographers and geographers of the nineteenth and twentieth century have reconstructed the map of the world according to the texts of ancient geographers and historians. The most important map reconstructors of the nineteenth century were the Germans Konrad Miller and Carl Müller, the Englishman John Murray and others, whose new versions have been widely used.

In the map shown below, produced by Carl Müller, Armenia is placed in the central part of the world, south of the Black and the Caspian seas, east of Asia Minor, surrounded by the territories inhabited by the Matiens, Medians, Assyrians and Alarodis.



**Figure 5:** 'The World' according to the texts of Herodotus, reconstructed by Carl Müller in 1884.

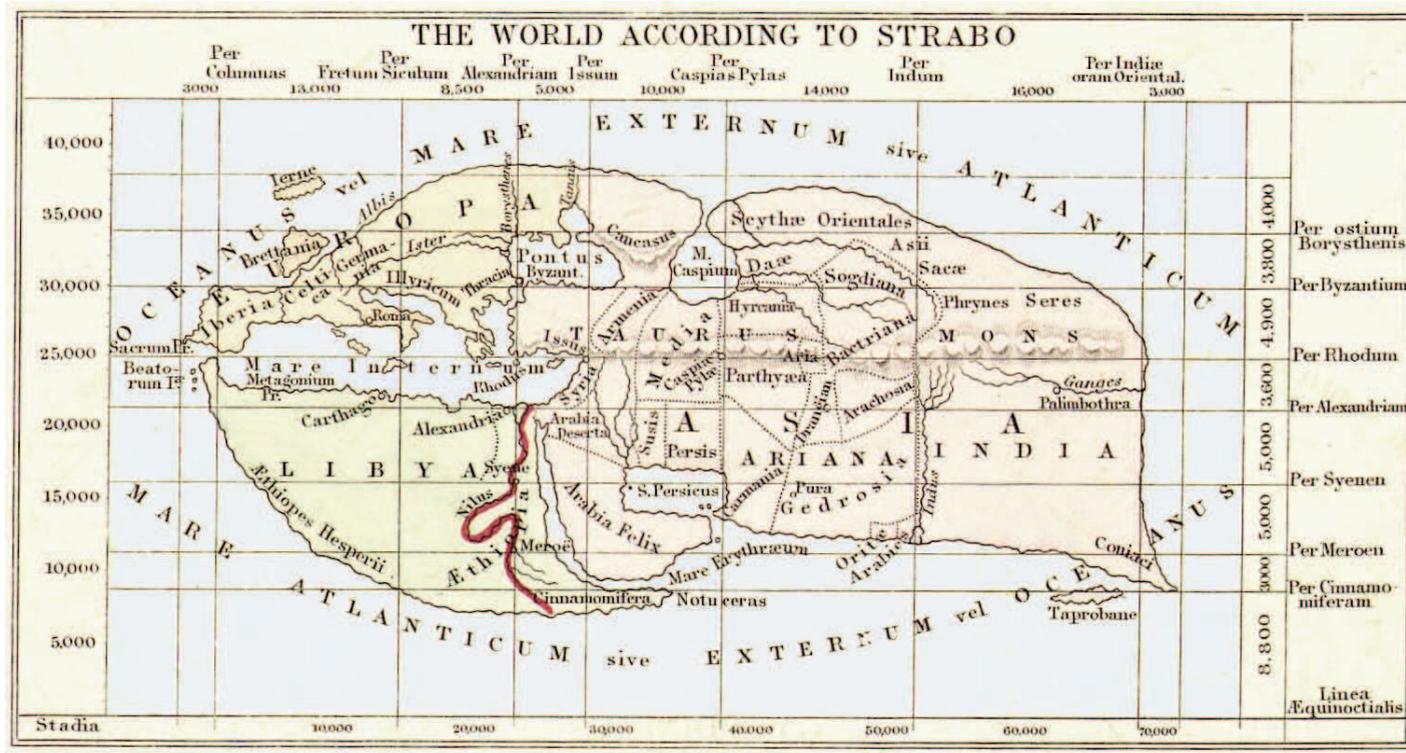
Strabo (64 BCE–25 CE), is considered to be the founder of geography, a title bestowed upon him because of his famous seventeen-volume work of the same name, *Geography*. This is the most important and detailed geographical surviving oeuvre that has reached us from the Classical world in its entirety.

Although the title is *Geography*, in addition to the geographical information, the texts contain much historic and ethnographic data as well. In his book Strabo writes about the land of the Armenians, the important geographical landmarks of the country, its rivers, lakes and mountains and the people as

well as a partial historical account of its beginnings.

In Strabo’s reconstructed map below, Armenia is shown between the Caspian and the Black seas, east of Asia Minor peninsula, next to Media. He mentions the neighbours of Armenia as being Iberia, Colchis, Albania, Media and others, while the map does not include them all, since it shows only countries deemed as prominent and being well known in Strabo’s texts.<sup>9</sup>

Book 11 of *Geography* contains no fewer than 60 references to Armenia and the Armenians, proving the important place in the Classical world that it occupied.



**Figure 6:** The Map of the World, as known to and described by Strabo during the first century of our era. The map is reconstructed by Carl Müller.



During the first century before our era, Armenia had a strong king, Tigran II, known as the Great (ruled 95 to 55 BCE), who was a member of the Artashesian (Artaxiad) royal family of Armenia. With his ally and father-in-law, Mithridates the Great (VI), king of Pontus, also known as Eupator Dionysius, Tigran created a vast empire extending from the Caspian Sea to the shores of the

Mediterranean and the Levant. He ruled over the territories of Media, Cadusia, Cappadocia, Syria, Comagene, Melitene and Cilicia.

However, Rome felt threatened by a strong Armenian king and spared no effort in trying to defeat Tigran and reduce the extent of his empire. Figure 7 shows the extent of Tigran's empire at the peak of his reign.



**Figure 7:** Armenia and territories conquered by Tigran the Great, 95-55 BCE. The map was created by Carl Müller for Smith's Atlas of 1875.



Claudius Ptolemaeus of Alexandria (ca. 90-168 CE), better known as Ptolemy, was the most important geographer of his time and his *Geographia* has been in use for almost fourteen centuries. The book describes methods of measuring the earth and mapmaking, listing around 8000 place, river and mountain names in the world with their coordinates, out of which 164

are in Armenia. The book refers to 27 maps, including one World Map. Ptolemy's texts have survived but his maps have not. During the fifteenth century the book was rediscovered and cartographers began to reconstruct his maps using the descriptions and locations of the toponyms in the book. Armenia appears in five of the maps referred in the book.



**Figure 10:** Ptolemy's map of Greater and Lesser Armenias, from his printed edition of *Geography*, Rome, 1482.

Armenia Maior and Minor (Greater and Lesser Armenia) are coloured white, extending from the Caspian in the east to Cappadocia and Taurus mountain range in the west and south, just short of the Mediterranean Sea. They are surrounded by Colchis (Abkhazia), Iberia and Albania in the north,

Media (latter day Iranian Azerbaijan) in the east, Mesopotamia, Assyria and Syria in the south and Cappadocia in the west.

All the renderings of Ptolemy's *Geographia* include the maps of Armenia Maior and Armenia Minor.<sup>10</sup>

Gregory the Illuminator preached Christianity in Armenia, for which he was imprisoned by King Trdat III of Armenia and kept in a pit in Khor Virap, by the slopes of Mount Ararat. However, after he cured the king of his disability, Trdat and his court were converted and the king announced Christianity to be the official religion of his kingdom and of all Armenians in the year 301.

Some of the maps depicting Armenia and its neighbours during the time that Christianity was adopted by the country, have been drawn showing the Biblical descriptions that refer to Armenia as the Terrestrial Paradise, Eden. The map below (Figure 11) shows these ideas, as well as the dispersal of Noah's sons, Japheth, Ham and Shem in the region.



**Figure 11:** The General Map Depicting the Early Ages of the History of the Saints, drawn by Philippe Bauche in 1783.



Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius was a Roman philosopher and writer, working around 400 CE, whose best known work is entitled *Saturnalia*. He was an adherent of the theory of the spherical earth, divided into climatic zones. *Saturnalia* contains a text entitled ‘Exposition in Somnium Scipionis ex Cicerone’ (‘Commentary on Cicero’s Dream of Scipio’, or in short ‘Scipio’s Dream’) which was extremely popular in medieval times.

Here Macrobius describes his ideas about the sphericity of the earth and based mainly on the writings of Eratosthenes, Virgil and others, who were the proponents of the Zonal division of the spherical earth. His work coincided with the period when Armenia adopted Christianity as its official religion.

The map on Figure 12 dates from the period that Armenia had just converted to Christian faith. In the majority of these printed maps, Asia, Europe and Africa are depicted as mainly situated in the northern

temperate habitable zone. Oddly, this map has been drawn as a mirror image of the real world, with east at the left and west at its right. The central zone is called ‘Perusta’, or ‘Parched’, where there is no life and the two extremes, northern and southern zones are entitled ‘Frigida’, or ‘Frozen’, which also do not support life. The southern ‘Temperate’ zone is called ‘Nobis incognita’, or ‘Unknown to Us’, and it is said to be inhabited by the Antipodes and other imaginary beings, while the only habitable zone is the northern ‘Temperate’.

On the map this zone includes *Armenia* (just outside Europe), along with the other important nations of the known world. The other countries depicted are *Britania*, *Ispania*, *Galia*, *Italia*, *Thile* (Iceland), *Aentiopia Perusta*, *Parthia* and *India*. The continents of *Evropa* and *Aphrica* are shown as well as the mountains named *Ripheimontes*, which are those in northern Russia, near the Baltic Sea, and the *Mare Rubrum* (the Red Sea).



**Figure 12:** One of Macrobius’ World Maps, which appeared in many printed editions (1528 copy).

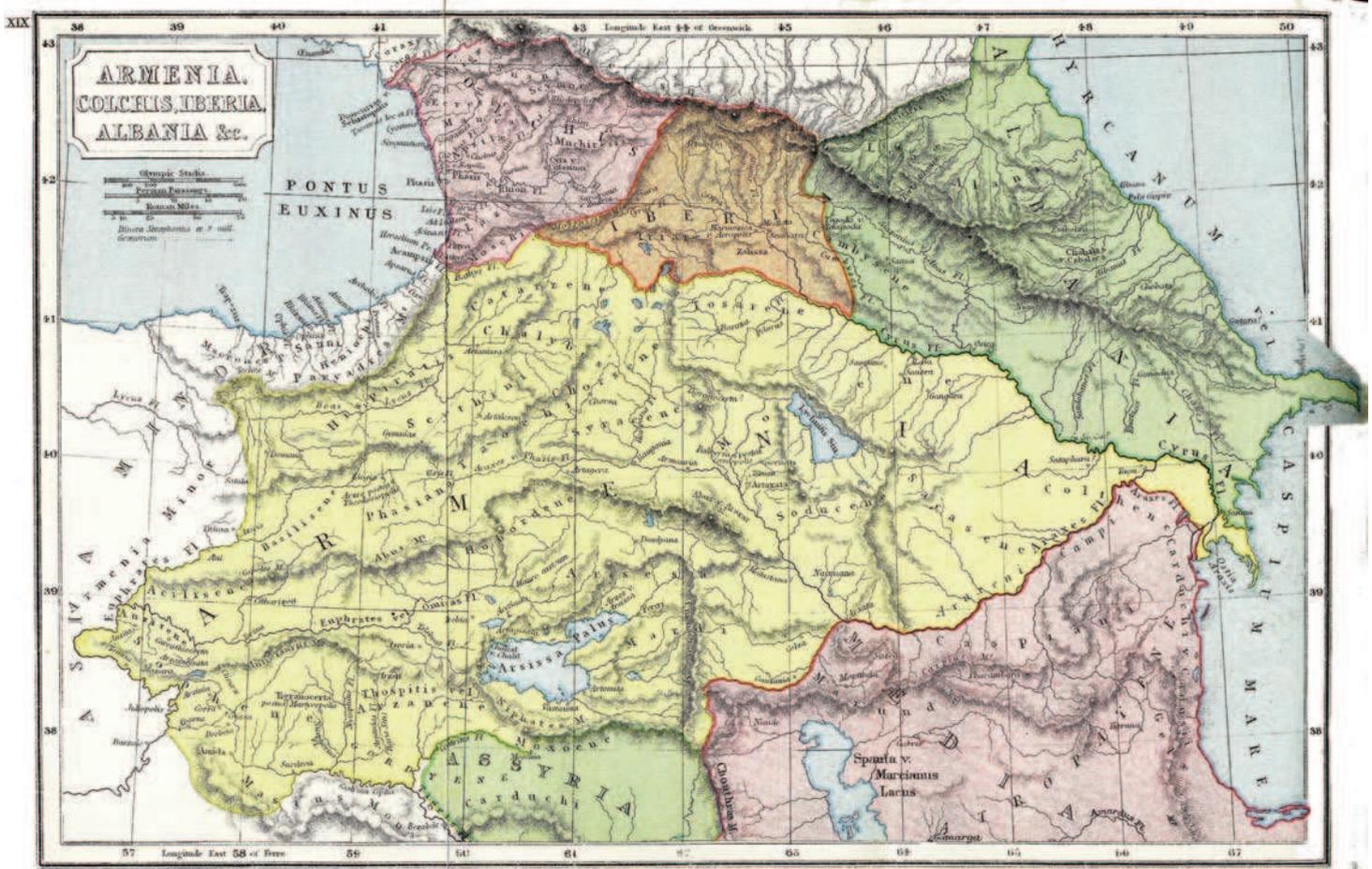
In the year 405 Mesrop Mashtots, a devout Christian who was made a saint, invented the Armenian alphabet, which, at the time had 36 letters. During the following centuries most of the important

religious and non-religious works were translated from Greek, Aramaic and Arabic into Armenian. These few centuries became to be known as the Golden Age of Armenian literature and art.

The Armenian Church eventually split from the other Christian churches due to doctrinal differences (the Armenian Church was Monophysite) and at the famed Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE there was no Armenian delegation. Another reason was that the Sassanid Persians had embarked on a campaign to wipe out the Christian faith from Armenia. The Persians faced the newly converted Christian

Armenians on the battlefield, who fiercely defended their faith.

The Armenians sustained a heavy defeat in the battle of Avarayr (near Lake Urmia) in the same year as the Council of Chalcedon, but defeat only strengthened their resolve to being faithful to their new religion, and in the end the Armenians were recognized by the Persians as a Christian people.



**Figure 13:** Armenia during the fourth century, towards the end of the Arshakuni period.

The oldest geographical work in Armenian is the so called *Ashkharhatsuyts* (*World Mirror*), which was originally attributed to Movses Khorenatsi, the fifth-century father of Armenian historiography, but further research relates it to Anania Shirakatsi, a seventh-century mathematician and scientist. The book covers the geography of the known world and

is based on the writings of Pappus of Alexandria, who, in turn, used Ptolemy's *Geographia* as its source. Shirakatsi's work differs from the others in that it contains much more detailed description regarding the toponyms in Armenia and its neighbourhood. Copies of the work have survived but no maps have.



The English theologian William Whiston (1667-1752), a contemporary and friend of Isaac Newton, and his brother George translated Khorenatsi's *History of the Armenians* as well the *Ashkbarhatsuyts* (at the time attributed to Khorenatsi) into Latin and published it in London, in 1736. Even in this period, Armenia interested Western scholars so much that the translators also produced a map of Armenia

according to the descriptions given in the *Ashkbarhatsuyts*, showing Greater Armenia with its fifteen administrative divisions and a table of their names.

Here Armenia's south-eastern neighbour is Media-Atropatene (Iranian Azerbaijan) with the other neighbouring countries being similar to those mentioned by Ptolemy (see Fig. 10).



**Figure 14:** Map of Greater Armenia from Whiston's translation of the *Ashkbarhatsuyts*, 1736.

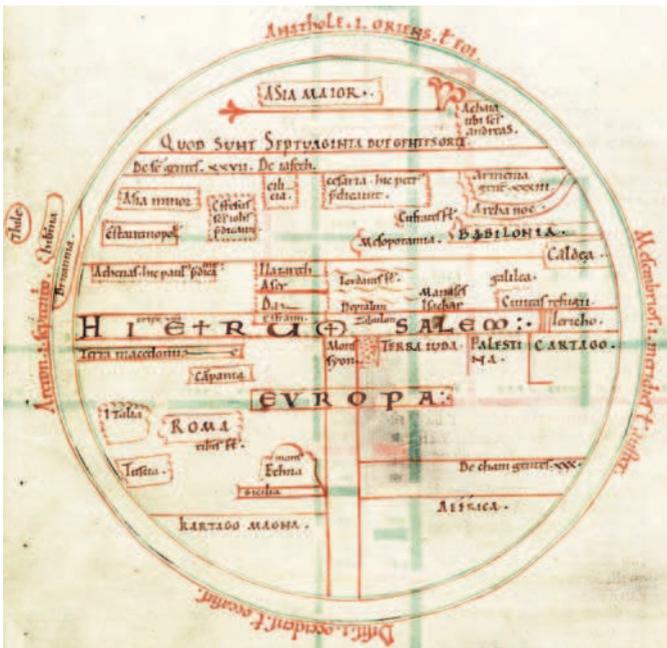
# Medieval Times

TOWARDS THE END OF THE FOURTH century Armenia was divided between the two superpowers Byzantium and Sassanid Persia. The former became known as Armenia Minor (Lesser Armenia) as opposed to the main territory known as Armenia Maior (Greater Armenia). After a period of self-rule, in 428 CE Greater Armenia was conquered by the Sassanid Persia. The Sassanids also occupied the territory of Caucasian Albania (where the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan is located) and Georgia.

During this period Europe was already becoming Christian, and European learning and science were gradually falling in line with the doctrine and teachings of the religious leaders, who, in many instances had their

own interpretations of the Bible and religious canons. In geography and cartography the Greek spherical earth gave way to the flat disc-shaped or rectangular one of the Church, around which the sun and the moon revolved. The earth was mostly presented as a disc, whose surface was divided by three watery expanses into the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa.

Figure 13 is indicative of the Christian maps of the Medieval Europe, some of which are more elaborate than the others. However, as Mount Ararat, Noah's Ark and Armenia appear in the Scriptures, they were generally present in the European world maps of the period. This type of map is better known as a 'T-O map' (see page 28).

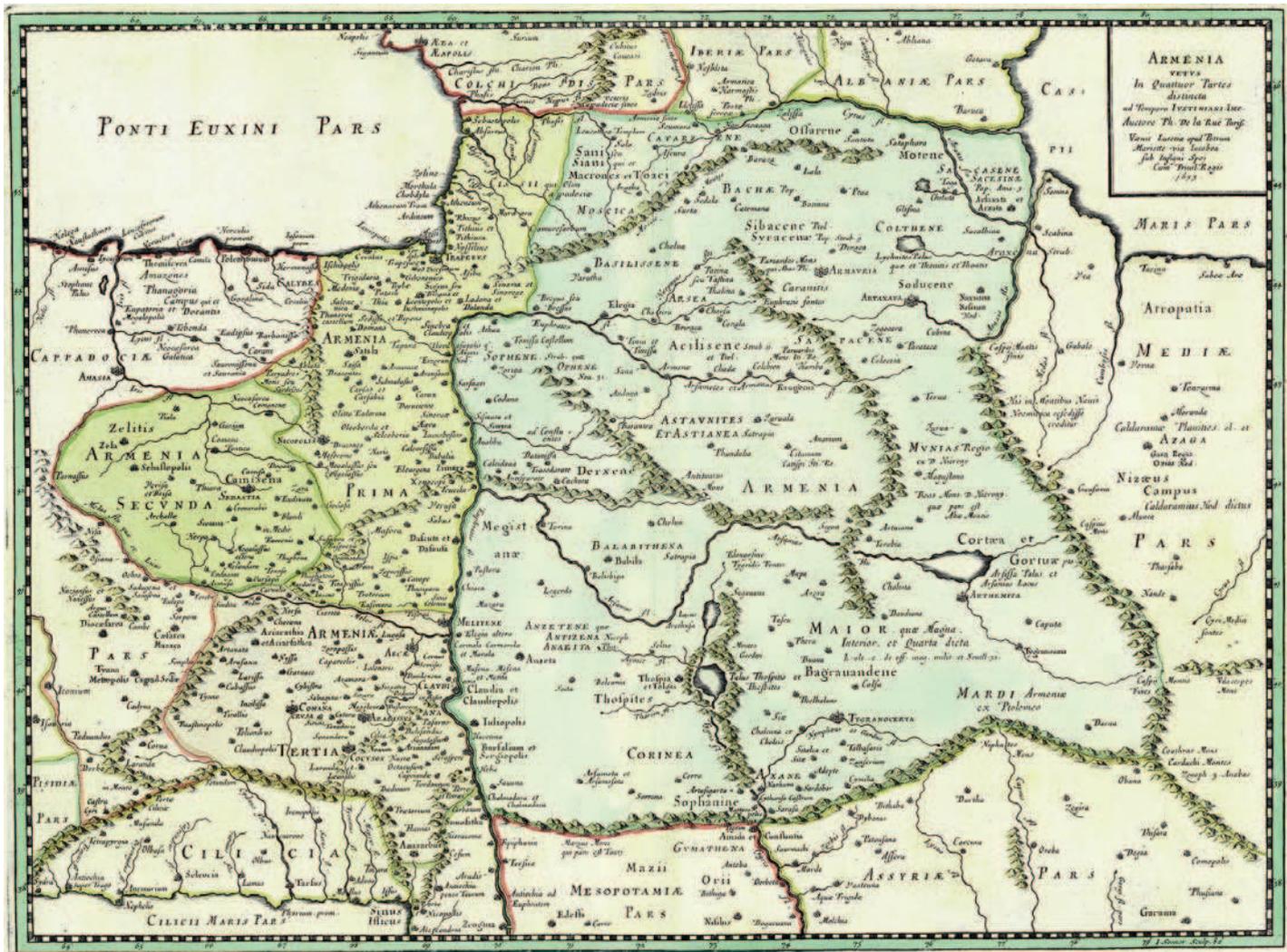


**Figure 15:** The World Map of the Venerable Bede, seventh century, taken from a manuscript of collection of his works. Here Asia is placed in the top (eastern) half of the map.

In the central regions of Asia we see *Asia Minor*, *Constantinopol*, *Effesus*, *Cilicia*, *Cesaria*, *Nazareth*, *River Iordanus*, *River Eufrates*, *Mesopotamia*, *Babilon*, *Caldea* and *Galilea*, with *Armenia* and *Archa Noe* (Noah's Ark) placed nearby (upper right side of the disc). *Jerusalem* is placed at the centre of the earth (spellings are those on the map).

The watery expanses forming the letter T and separating the three continents are the rivers Don and Nile and the Mediterranean Sea.





**Figure 16:** Armenia according to the administrative divisions enforced by Emperor Justinian I of Byzantium in 536 CE. The map was drawn by Philip de la Rue of France eleven centuries later, in 1659.

When the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I ascended the throne in 527, he brought grandiose plans for reinstating the might of the Roman Empire. With his two generals, Belisarius and Nerses (who was Armenian) he conquered parts of Africa, Spain and Italy, as well as Lesser Armenia and western part of Greater Armenia. In 536 he introduced administrative reforms, whereby the Armenian territories were divided

into four administrative regions, namely Greater Armenia and the three divisions of Lesser Armenia which were called First, Second and Third Armenia. In the map above, the French map shows these divisions according to Justinian's reforms.

The borders indicated were used only for administrative purposes and taxation by the Byzantines.



**Figure 17:** World Map from the *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* by the Benedictine monk Beatus of Liebana, eighth century.

The map in Figure 15 shows the world according to the doctrines of the Church, with east at the top, where the Earthly Paradise was believed to be located, here shown framed in a red square. *Armenia* appears at the top, between the green mountains (possibly the Taurus) and the red *Caucasus*. Near the Caucasus Mountains the legend shows *Capadocia*, *Pampilia*, *Frigia* and *Chalcedona* (spellings are those on the map). This is a T-O type map, where the earth is divided into the three known continents of *Asia* at the top, *Europe* bottom left and *Africa* bottom right, forming a T-shape surrounded by the circle of the oceans.

In 591 CE the Byzantine emperors Maurice and later Heraclius, who was Armenian, recovered Armenia from the Sassanids only to lose it to the Arab Caliphate, who overran Persia and Armenia around the year 645. During the ninth century northern

Armenia was ruled by the Bagratuni (Bagratid) dynasty and was recognized as a sovereign principedom. The creation of close links between the Bargatunis of Ani and the Adzrunis of Vaspurakan provided a century of peace, prosperity and development for the region.

The medieval capital of Ani, the ‘City of 1001 Churches’ was built during this time, when Armenia was regaining its culture and strength as a self-ruling country. During 989 to 1001, the Bagratunis built a magnificent cathedral and many other churches throughout the city, while further south, the Adzrunis built the world-famous church of the Holy Cross with its magnificent friezes of biblical scenes on the island of Aghtamar in Lake Van. The church is considered one of the most important landmarks in Eastern architecture.





**Figure 18:** Another T-O map created during the eleventh century depicting the Christian world with Jerusalem at the centre, the Red Sea coloured red, Armenia with Noah's Ark perched on top of the twin peaks of Ararat, placed near the Gates shown in the middle of the semicircular arc of the Caucasus Mountains. The map is kept in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München.

The rule of the Bagratunis coincided with the invasion of the Seljuk tribes, who reached Persia and the Caucasus during the eleventh century, defeating the Byzantine forces in the battle of Manzikert in 1071. These newcomers eventually overran the region, including much of Asia Minor, which the Byzantines had named 'Anatolia'. Thus the Christian Kingdom of Armenia ended and many Armenians living in the north-eastern regions of Greater Armenia fled over the Black Sea and took refuge on its northern shores in places such as Crimea and southern Russia, as well as further inland. Eventually a few thousand even reached Rostov, Poland, Hungary and Romania, establishing important Armenian communities in these countries.

During the rule of the Arab Caliphs, the Islamic world was given a major impetus in developing all the branches of science and medicine, which resulted in waves of pioneering work carried out by Muslim, mainly Persian scientists and thinkers. Translating and developing the geographical works of the Greeks and the Romans, the Islamic science of geography and cartography reached its apex during the tenth century. Some examples of its achievements can be seen in the following images. Their maps always show Armenia as a separate administrative region with its own ethnic Armenian population, who were Christian and spoke Armenian.



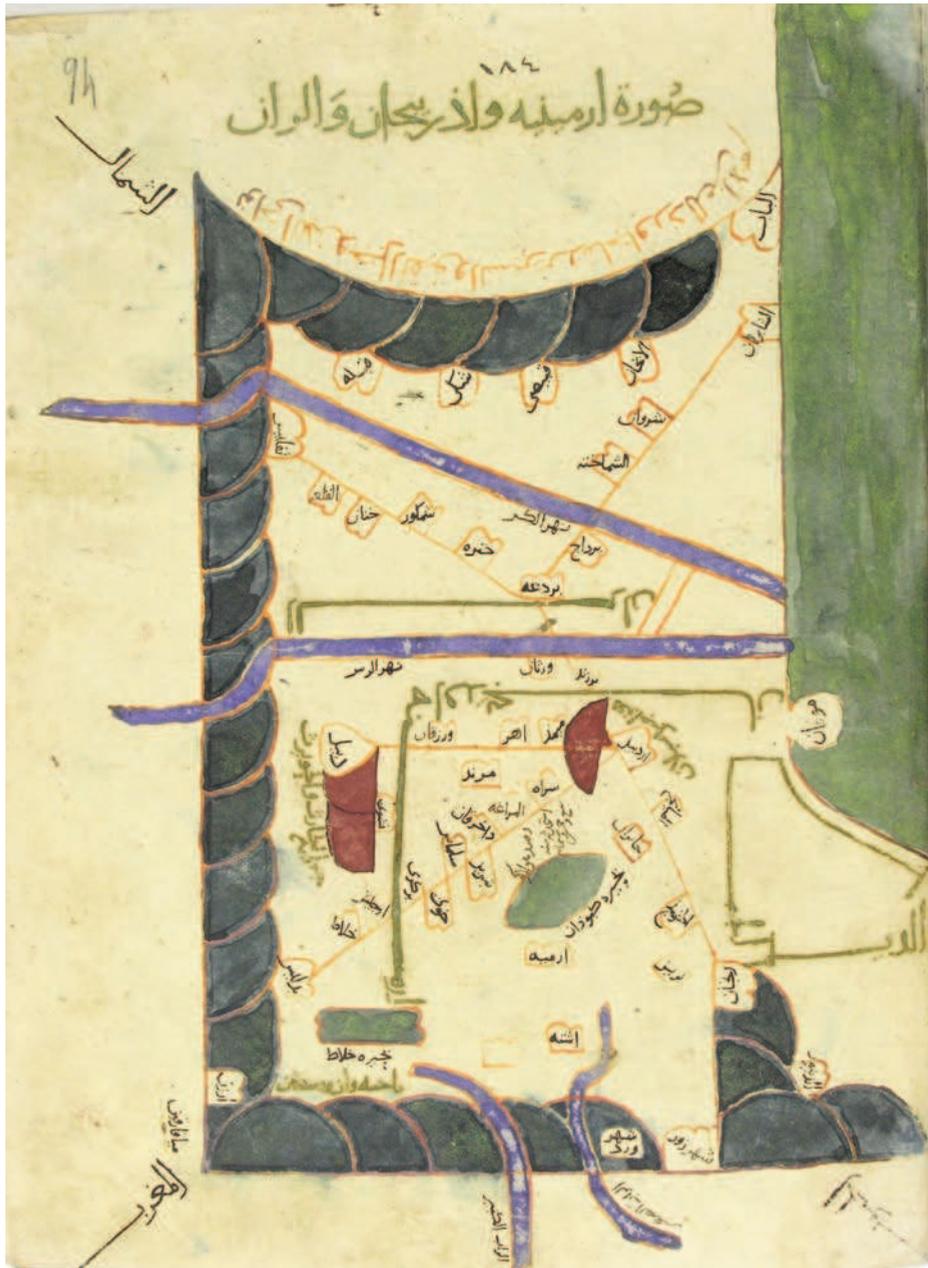
**Figure 19:** The World Map of the Persian geographer Istakhri (died in 957), from his work *Kitab al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik*, where, according to Islamic tradition, south is at the top.<sup>11</sup>

Istakhri's World Map in Figure 19 depicts the Mediterranean (right), Egypt and the Nile with its five sources emanating from the *Mountains of the Moon* (upper part). The Indian Ocean is shown with many islands (left) and the Black Sea (lower part) with *Armenia* and the Iranian province of *Azerbaijan* nearby. Most of the Islamic countries are named, as well as some of the European African and Asian countries.

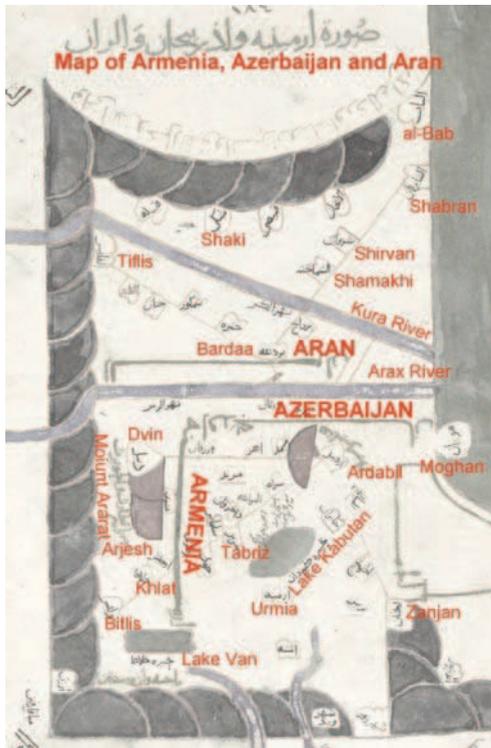


The map below depicts the South Caucasus during the tenth century. It belongs to the Islamic Balkhi School of cartography and usually includes Islamic countries only with the exception of Armenia, which, having close economic and political ties with its neighbouring, Islamic countries, always appears in the map of this area of the South Caucasus. The

circular segments represent the mountain ranges, while the brown ones are important single mountains, and the squares represent cities. The names of the countries of Aran (Caucasian Albania), Armenia and Azerbaijan are written in large lettering and light green ink (see the next page for a translation of the toponyms).



**Figure 20:** Ibn Hawqal's tenth-century map of the South Caucasus entitled The Map of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Aran, from his book *Surat al-Ard*.



In this map we can see the rivers Arax and Kura (blue) pouring into the Caspian Sea (green). The territory north of the Arax and Kura is entitled Aran (Caucasian Albania), while the region south and south-east of Arax is named Azerbaijan, which is the north-western province of Iran-Persia. Armenia straddles the River Arax and extends westward with the names of the Armenian cities strung along the road leading south-west and terminating at Bitlis.

**Figure 21:** This translation of the map in Figure 20 is a guide to the cities and regions south of the Caucasus.

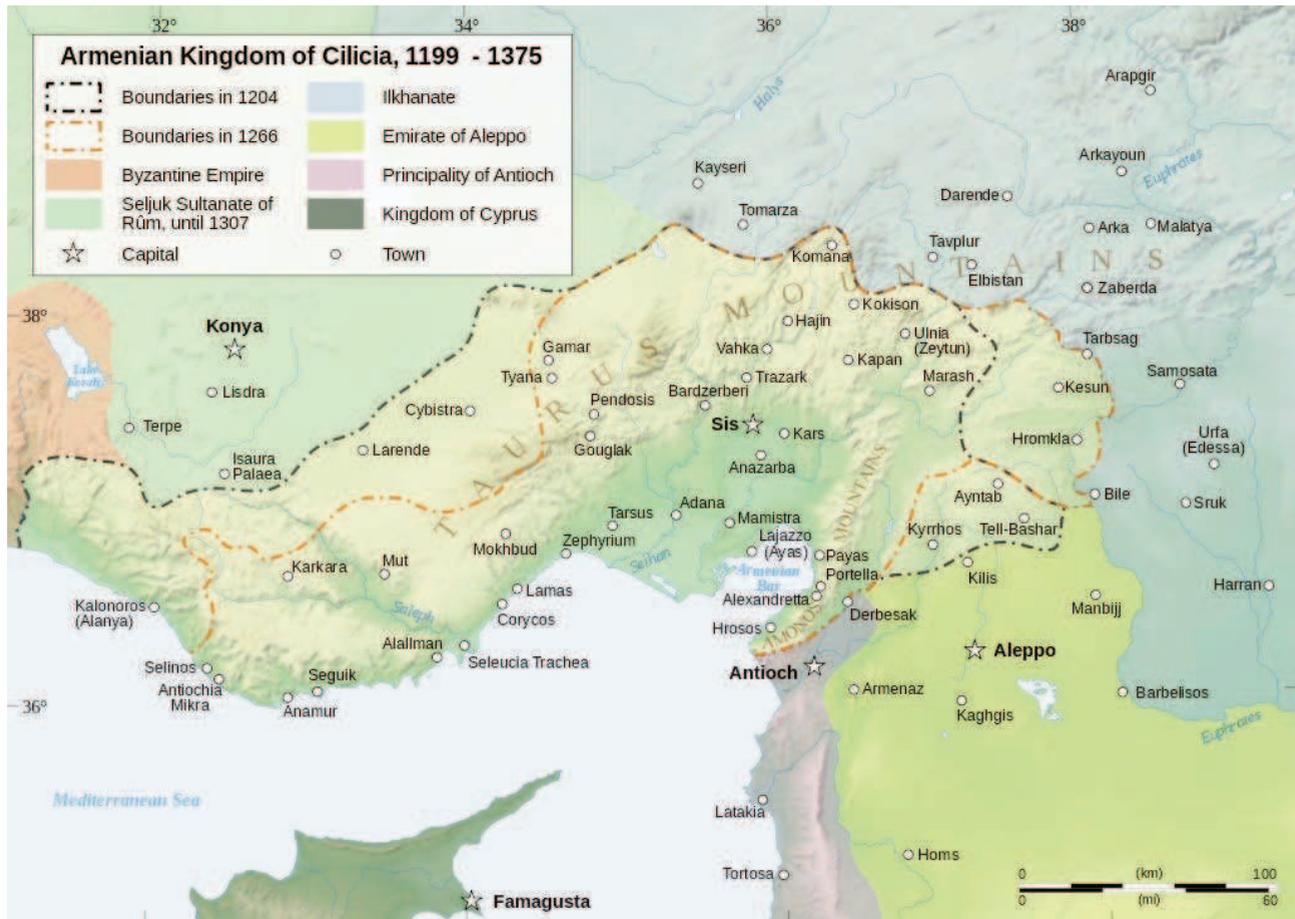


**Figure 22:** Part of the transliteration of an Arabic map drawn in 1154 by Idrisi (1099-1166), in Sicily, showing the area of Caucasus. The map shows Armenia located south (top) and west of the Arax River. North of Iranian Azerbaijan we see Greater Armenia, while Cilicia is shown near Mediterranean at the top right. In the map the name Armenia appears a number of times, indicating its various regions in the South Caucasus.



After the sack of Ani and the destruction of much of their homeland by the Seljuk and other Turkic tribes, another part of the Armenian population chose to flee southward, reaching the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean and establishing the self-ruled country of Cilicia around the end of the eleventh century. It was followed in 1199 by the establishment of the

Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, where the Armenian Rubenid and Hetumid dynasties ruled, later replaced by the Lusignans. During three centuries of independence, Armenian Cilicia was the centre of Armenian religion and art, where a plethora of scriptoria were busy producing the finest illuminated manuscripts by skilled artists.



**Figure 23:** Map of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, with its capital Sis, where the supreme head of the Armenian Church, the Catholicos, was in residence.

During the Crusades, the Armenian Christian kingdom of Cilicia became a valuable stopping point for the European knights and their armies as an island of peace in the otherwise hostile road to Jerusalem. The guests, however, on some occasions abused the hospitality of the locals by turning events to their own personal advantage and installing themselves as rulers.

In those times the production of 'portolan' sea

charts was the vogue in the trading ports of Venice, Genoa and Catalonia. These charts were produced for the seafaring sailors and showed the port towns and cities, as well as all the natural features of the seashore. They normally did not include any inland features except for obviously important places.

On many portolans of the Eastern Mediterranean the ports of Cilicia were framed in green, indicating

friendly shores for the Crusaders. Most of these portolans also included the main features of Armenia, such as its cities, Mount Ararat, Noah's Ark, the rivers Arax, Euphrates and Tigris, which was not a regular feature for other areas on this type of map (for more, see the following description for Figure 25).

During the twelfth to fourteenth centuries Armenian Cilicia developed its commercial and political ties with Venice, Genoa, Holland and France. The general mapmakers of the period, now aware of this land to their east, began showing it on their maps. One example is a T-O type map created

in France during the twelfth century for St Isidore of Seville's seventh-century encyclopaedia *Etymologiae* kept in the Mejanès library of Aix-en-Provence, as shown in Figure 24.

In this map, as in all T-O maps, Asia occupies the upper half of the circular earth, with a list of countries headed by *India* and followed by *Parthia*, *Assiria*, *Armenia*, *Media*, *Persida*, *Mesopotamia* and so on. At the third line from below is *Armenia Cilicia*, situated near the Mediterranean Sea, showing that the European mapmakers were aware of the two separate Armenias and had commercial close ties with both.

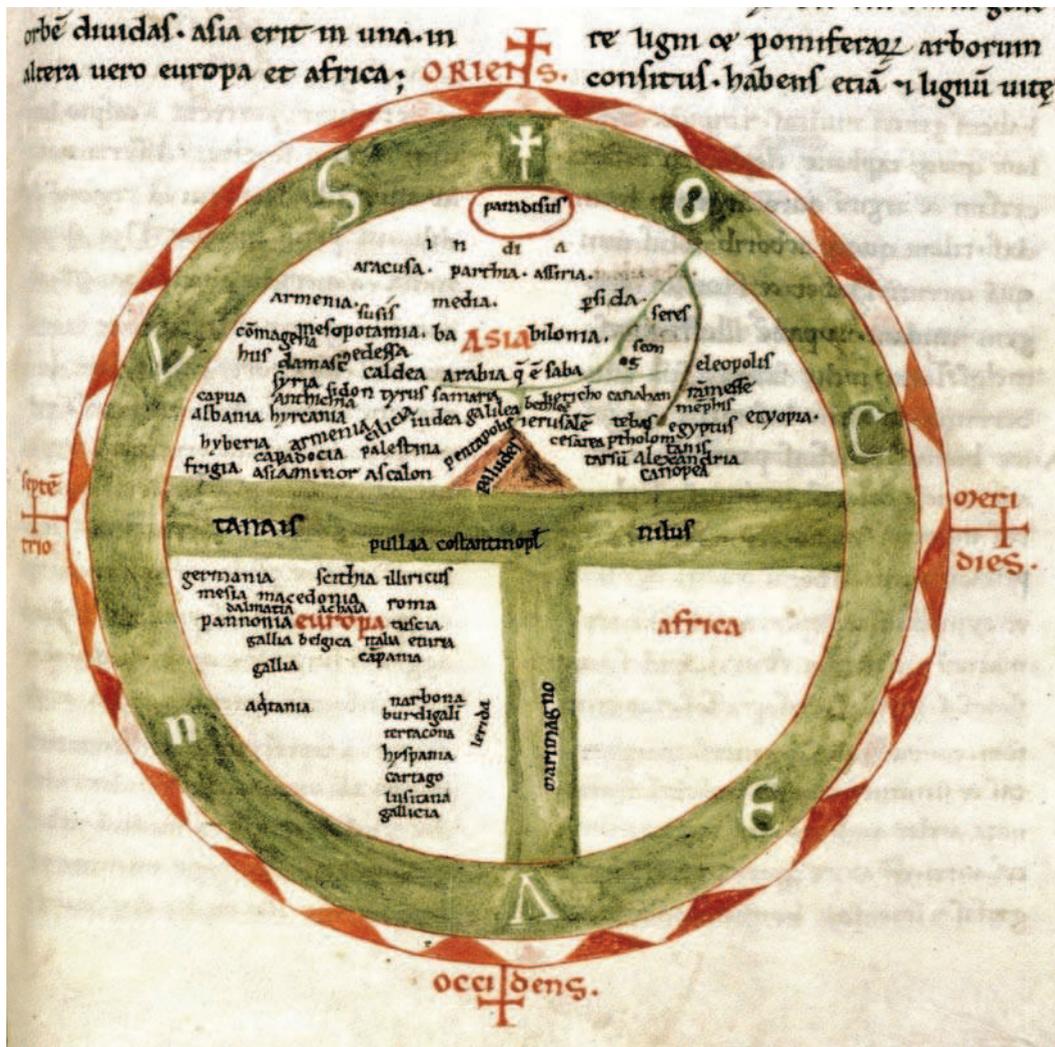


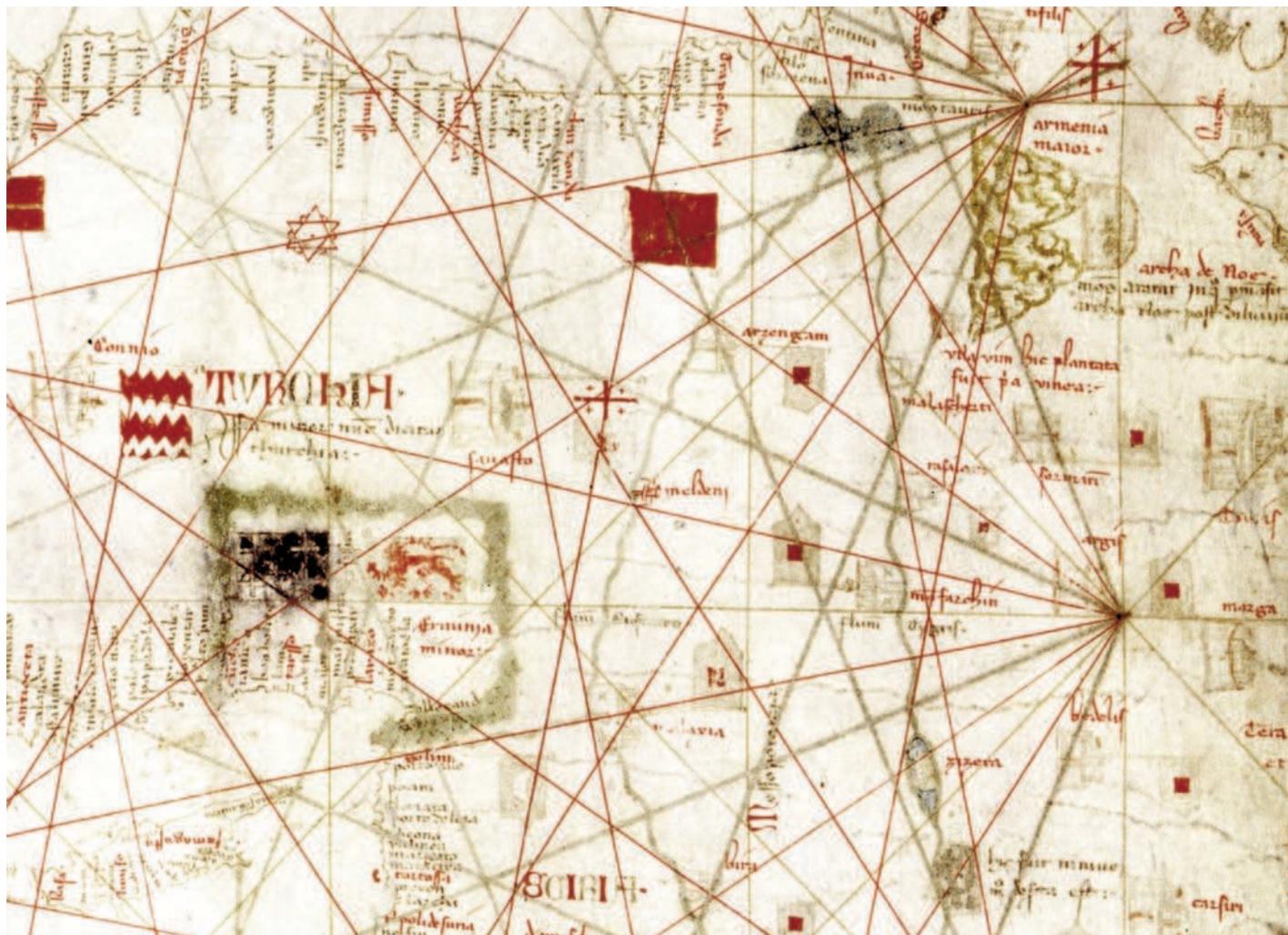
Figure 24: The T-O map from the *Etymologiae*, kept in a twelfth-century manuscript in Mejanès.



On the Dulcert portolan below, produced in 1339, in the north-east corner of the Mediterranean the chart shows the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia placed under a green arch, indicating the ports under the arch as being ‘friendly’. The two flags of royal Cilicia flags are shown in the territory, which bears the legend *Armenia Minor*.

At the top right of the map the twin green mountains represent the Armenian Highlands, shown as the source of three of the Biblical rivers: the

Euphrates and Tigris flowing south, and the Arax flowing eastwards, towards the Caspian Sea. Nearby the twin peaks of Mount Ararat are shown drawn sideways, with Noah’s Ark perched on its peaks. The legend above says *Armenia Maior* and the one below states *Noah’s Ark. Mountain of Armenia where Noah’s Ark landed after the deluge*. The presence of such detail is vivid testimony to the close affinity of Venetian, Genoese, French, Catalan and Dutch merchants with those of Armenia.



**Figure 25:** Partial detail from the Dulcert portolan of 1339 (BNP, Paris). Here Armenian Cilicia can be seen under a green arc north-east of the Mediterranean, as a safe haven for the Crusaders. Further north-east, just south of the Black Sea, the Armenian Plateau, Mount Ararat, Noah's Ark and Armenia Maior are also depicted, showing the importance of this country for European traders.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Armenian monks and priests travelled to Germany, France, Netherlands and England, spreading tales about their land and people. Western European chroniclers have written about these visits, an

example of which comes from the English chronicler Matthew of Paris (1200-1259) in whose *Chronica Maiora* we encounter the story of Armenian monks visiting the abbey at St Albans on two occasions. In the text he observes:

*“At this time some Armenians came to St Albans . . . The pale faces of these men, with their long beards and their austere life-style, bore witness to their sanctity and the rigour of their discipline.”*<sup>12</sup>

He even drew a map of the area of the Holy Land, extending it to cover Mt Ararat and providing a

lengthy legend describing the land of Armenia and Mount Ararat and included the following in his text:



*“Towards these regions, that is to say, to the north, twenty days distant from Jerusalem is Armenia, which is Christian, where Noah’s Ark perched after the flood and still rests there in the wild mountain. No one can approach the Ark on account of the desert and vermin and it is well known that this land extends to India.”*<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 26:** Map of the Holy Land from Matthew of Paris’ *Chronica Maiora*, 1252, where the legend near Mount Ararat reads as in the text given above on this page.



On the upper part of the map the twin peaks of Mount Ararat are depicted with the Ark sitting on them while the slopes of the mountain are shown protected by serpents, as described in the text.

During the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, Greater Armenia had lost its independence and become the battleground of the Seljuks, Mongols, Ak-Koyunlus, Kara-Koyunlus and other Turkic tribes. During this period the country was variously divided amongst the victors and the ruling powers. Despite this, on all the 'mappae mundi', or world maps, of the period Armenia's name and features continued to be omnipresent. This could be explained by the fact that

although the country was occupied by others, the people, the Armenians, still lived in the territory, hence the region merited the legend *Armenia*.

The most important and large mappae mundi of the period are the Vercelli *Mappa Mundi* (1191-1218), the Edstorf *Mappa Mundi* (c. 1232), the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* (c. 1290), the Borgia *Mappa Mundi* (1410-1458), the Laerdo *Mappa Mundi* (1452) and the Fra Mauro *Mappa Mundi* (1460). For an example of the lay-out of these maps, see Figure 27 below, a section of the Ebstorf Map, the original of which was destroyed during an Allied air raid on Hanover during World War II.

Important details on the map are as follows:

At the centre of the world (bottom right corner of the detail) surrounded by golden walls is the city of *Jerusalem*.

The crescent-shaped brown boat centre-left of the map is *Noah's Ark*, witting on the twin peaks on mountain named *Ararat*.

To the upper left of the Ark, beyond the curved mountain range, the red castle is named *ARMENIA stretching from Cappadocia to the Caspian*.

The sideways shown building to the right of the Ark is named *Artaxata, capital of Armenia*.



**Figure 27:** Detail of the region of Armenia from the Ebstorf Map of 1232. The map is oriented with east at the top. The section depicted is north-east of Jerusalem (the golden square at the bottom right), which includes Armenia in the centre-left of the image.<sup>14</sup>

The Fra Mauro mappa mundi of 1460 is one of the last world maps drawn before America was discovered. It was created for King Alfonso V of Portugal by the monk Fra Mauro. This is the only map produced before 1700 which mysteriously shows the Caspian Sea in its true shape. All other maps of the period, well into the 1600s show the Caspian in the shape of an oval, a form originally drawn by Ptolemy during the second century.

South and west of the Caspian, the country of Armenia is shown five times, one part as Greater

Armenia and the others as Armenia and Lesser Armenia, with Armenian Cilicia by the Mediterranean, while the legend in large lettering covers them all jointly. As a relic of the older T-O maps, the map also shows Mount Ararat with Noah's Ark perched on its top.

As mentioned earlier, at this juncture of history Armenia did not exist as an independent country, but as the Armenians lived in the particular region shown, the name of the country remained on these geographical areas.



**Figure 28:** The World Map of Fra Mauro produced in the Venetian island of Murano in 1460. The map has a diameter of almost two metres and depicts the world then known in much correct detail.







**Figure 30 (above):** The World Map from Ortelius' atlas of 1595.



**Figure 31 (left):** Detail from the above world map, showing the region of Armenia.

As seen in the details, the only country mentioned in the Caucasus is *Armenia*, above which the city of *Derbent* is shown. To the south there are the cities of *Aleppo*, *Trabizonda*, *Mosul*, *Soura* (Shusha), *Siras* (Shiraz). Other neighbouring countries are *Persia* and *Soria* (Syria).





This map depicts Armenia in the Middle Ages, prior to its division between the Persian and Ottoman Empires, when Armenian merchants were still very active in the trading cities of Italy and their legacy persisted.

By this time the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (outside the range of this map) had already ceased to exist. However, due to the importance of the Armenian merchants and their continued trade with the Italian city-states, the Florentines chose to include a map of Armenia as one of the fifty-three maps displayed in this collection.

On this image, in order to highlight the name of *Armenia Maggiore* extending from Taurus Mountains to the region of Shamakhi in the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan, this legend has been underlined red.

**Figure 32:** Map in oil paint of Armenia from the Stanza della Guardaroba in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, painted by Stefano Buonsignori in 1575.

# Late Medieval Period

THE EARLY MODERN HISTORY OF THE Armenians begins with the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 or perhaps with the ascendancy of the Safavids to the Persian throne in 1502. The Shi'i Safavids were the sworn enemies of the Sunni Ottomans for almost 150 years, and for the Armenians, who were situated on the borderlands between the two enemies, the situation was perilous.

When Shah Abbas became the ruler of Iran (Persia) in 1588, the wars with the Ottomans and the Uzbeks were raging. He would go on to create the flourishing cultured state which so impressed the Europeans, but first, as part of his policy of waging war with Ottoman Turkey, Abbas forcefully depopulated the frontier that lay between them of its Armenians. During the first decade of the seventeenth century he compelled the Armenian population of the region on both the northern and southern banks of the Arax River to move

to the interior of Iran, thus ethnically cleansing this region of Armenians.

This was a time of immense suffering for Armenians, and many thousands died on their way to enforced exile. But once they were in Iran, Abbas treated them well, setting them up in communities. Most notable was the city of New Julfa, near his capital Isfahan, where he resettled most of the merchants who came from Julfa, back in Armenia.

In fact, Abbas' masterplan was to put the Armenians in charge of the commerce of his nation, and so he gave them special powers and monopolies to conduct their commercial operations. He appointed Armenians as his emissaries to the European and Russian courts, while the merchants of New Julfa also started business activities with India, Burma and other countries both east and west, justifying Shah Abbas' vision for expanding exports of Persian-produced goods.



**Figure 33:** The Turkish Empire according to Gerard Mercator, redrawn by Hondius and Jansson, and published in his atlas of 1619. See detail on next page.





**Figure 34:** Detail from the previous map. Enlarged part of the land of the Armenians described variously as Armenia and Turcomania.<sup>15</sup>

The detail in Figure 34 above shows the Armenian homeland divided mainly between Persian and Ottoman Empires. The region east of the Lakes Van and Sevan is occupied by Persia (green) and western Armenia is under the yoke of the Ottomans, with its name changed to *Turcomania* (Turkish Armenia), which, during the seventeenth century, was sometimes used to indicate Turkish Armenia.

Although Shah Abbas left much of the Armenian lands empty of its indigenous population, small groups were left in many secluded areas and lived more or less autonomously up to the middle of the nineteenth century. These included the Meliks of Artsakh (landowning families in Karabagh), Zangezur and Siunik, some of whose great houses are still standing.

When Peter the Great of Russia invaded Persia, the Armenians hoped that the tsar, in liberating part

of their ancestral lands, would endeavour to establish a friendly Armenian state. But this did not come about and the Russians withdrew, leaving the situation unchanged.

This was a period of history that saw the beginnings of independence movements in Armenia, headed by Israel Ori (1659-1711) and later by Joseph Emin (1726-1809), who pinned their hopes on the support of Russia and Great Britain. Neither empire appears to have paid any attention to these Armenian patriots, and so their appeals never came to fruition. In a more realistic plan, in the Siunik region of Armenia, a short-lived Armenian independent region was established by one of the meliks, Davit Bek (died 1728), with the help of local Armenian forces. However, unable to ward off its twin enemies Persia and Ottoman Turkey, Siunik fell to Tahmasp II, one of the last Safavid shahs of Persia.



**Figure 35:** Katib Chelebi's 'Map of the Vilayat of Van'.  
From his *Cihan-Numa* manuscript of 1653.



**Figure 36:** Translation of Figure 33 by Chelebi.

The map above is by the Ottoman Katib Chelebi, whose *Cihan-Numa* (*Mirror of the World*) is the first geographical work in Ottoman Turkish. The manuscript map is oriented with north at the top. It shows the Armenian vilayet, or province, of Van with its important cities, seen in the translation of the map.<sup>15</sup>

Chelebi was an avid traveller and began writing down his travel notes during the 1630-40s, and continued them between 1648 and 1653. Unfortunately he died before he could finish his last

edition. His *Cihan-Numa* extends to 41 chapters, and the last chapter is entitled 'Armenia'. He describes two Armenias, Lesser and Greater. Lesser Armenia is under Turkish occupation and Greater Armenia is in Persian territory.

He then goes on to recount the history of Armenia, beginning with Haik, the mythical forefather of the Armenians, the capitals Van and Khlai, the country's occupation by the Seljuk Turks and the escape of the Armenians to Cilicia, transferring their capital to Sis.<sup>16</sup>







**Figure 38:** The Country of Iran according to Katib Chelebi, printed in 1732.

In this map of Iran, showing the political situation around the year 1732, the territory of Armenia has once again changed hands, and the Iranian-Persian border has extended westward, reaching the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. This is a complete reversal of the situation shown in the map of Figure 37, where the Ottomans occupy most of Armenia as well as parts of Persia.

The map was based on Chelebi's work but was extensively revised by the publisher Ibrahim

Mutefferrika. According to the cartouche, the map shows the status during the reign of the late Safavid kings. The vilayets of *Van*, *Erzurum*, *Irevan (Yerevan)*, *Azerbaijan*, as well as the country of *Georgia* are considered as part of the Iranian Safavid empire, a further indication of how Armenia, being the battleground of the two neighbours, was alternatively occupied by Iran and Turkey as they played tug-of-war with the border territories.





**Figure 39:** The border of Iran-Turkey and Russia around the year 1740, by the Dutch cartographer Ottens.

In this period all of Eastern Armenia along with the easternmost part of Western Armenia were ruled by Iran.

The map shows that the region of *Erivan*, *Moghan*, *Chirvan* (*Shirvan*) and part of *Georgia*, all of which were inside the territory of Iran.



**Figure 40:** Detail from the New Map of the Persian Empire by d'Anville, drawn in 1790.

In the map above, the borders of Persia, Turkey and Russia are depicted as they were towards the end of the eighteenth century when the situation was still

to the advantage of Persia. The regions of *Erivan*, *Moghan*, *Shirvan*, most of *Georgia* and part of *Western Armenia* are still under the rule of Persia.



Meanwhile the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire as well as those in Iran and elsewhere were gradually modernizing their lifestyle and importing European machinery, equipment and art to the Middle East. While Shah Abbas was waging war against the Ottomans, in Iran he continued with his favourable treatment of the Armenians he had resettled in New Julfa (Nor Jugha). There the Armenians built churches and in 1638, for the first time in the Middle East, they established a printing house where the first book was published.

In Italy, the Armenian Mkhitarist monks in 1715 were given the island of San Lazzaro (Sourb Ghazar), an abandoned leper colony in the lagoon of Venice, where they established a monastery and a publishing house. It was here that the most important early books in Armenian were printed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The poet Lord Byron spent some time there, studying the Armenian language and literature. Today the monastery boasts the largest collection of medieval manuscripts outside Armenia, and its library and museum are important Armenian cultural landmarks in Europe.

While the life of Armenians in New Julfa and

Venice was being modernized, Eastern Armenia suffered under the yoke of the Iran shah Nadir Shah (ruled 1736-47), who extended conquered Iranian territories in the north to Daghestan, Georgia, Armenia and the wider Caucasus. This did bring a form of stability, however, and so one of the early steps of modernization of Eastern Armenia was the establishment in 1771 of a printing press in Echmiadzin, the religious centre for all Armenians. Meanwhile the first Armenian periodical *Azdarar* was printed in the Indian city of Madras in 1794-6.

Not having an independent country, the Armenians even during the eighteenth to twentieth centuries still fell victim to the rivalry of regional superpowers. The European Great Powers competed to woo Turkey, and during the eighteenth century France was the ally of the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain the ally of Russia. Then Britain supported the Ottomans against Russia by sending a fleet to the Black Sea. This alliance of the Ottomans and Britain in effect removed British support for the Armenians, resulting a harsher policies by the Turkish authorities towards its Armenian population.

# Recent Period

DURING THE LATE EIGHTEENTH AND early nineteenth century the expanded Iranian (Persian) territories in the Caucasus included Eastern Armenia, Karabagh (Artsakh), Shirvan, Shamakhi and

Quba. In the map of Figure 41 these borders are marked in yellow. Russian borders are marked in green and those under Turkish occupation are marked in red.



**Figure 41:** Map of the South Caucasus during 1801-1813, when Persia ruled most of the region. From a map produced by the Military Government of the Transcaucasia in 1901.



During the early part of the eighteenth century three centuries of Persian occupation of the south Caucasus was ended by tsarist Russia, which was concentrating efforts in expanding the southern borders of its empire.

After almost three hundred years of intermittent occupation, Iran's weakened Qajar dynasty lost the

Caucasus (present-day Georgia, Armenia and Republic of Azerbaijan) to the Russians in two separate treaties. Figure 42 shows the border between Russia and Persia after the Treaty of Gulistan (1813), when the Khanate of Karabagh, Shirvan, Shaki, Talish and the region of Daghestan were ceded to Russia.



**Figure 42:** Theatre of the War with the Persians in 1827. The borders of Persia are shown with a red line.

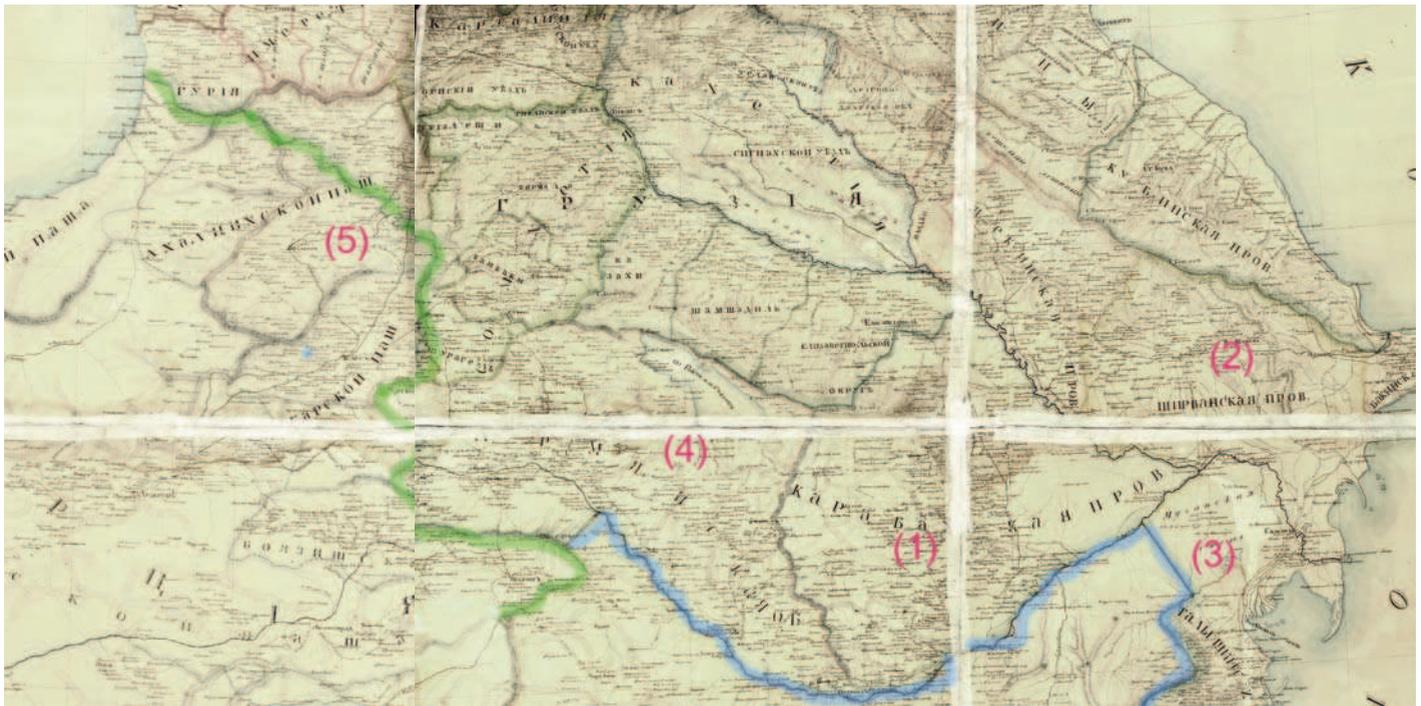
At this time the Khanate of Yerevan was the only one of the South Caucasian regions or khanates still left under Persian occupation. Based on the fact that the khanate of Yerevan was the only territory that belonged

to Armenia and at the time was separated from the rest of Eastern Armenia, the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan claims that this small khanate, which includes Nakhijevan, is the only territory that could be called

Armenia and that the remaining area of present-day Armenia is in fact Azerbaijan.

After occupying the South Caucasus, the tsarist administration began to divide the newly gained

territories into ‘gubernias’, provinces and districts according to their own plans, without little consideration paid to the ethnicity of the inhabitants of the various areas.



**Figure 43:** Borders of Iran, Turkey and Russia after the 1828 Treaty of Turkmanchay.

Referring to the map in Figure 43, we can see that after losing Karabagh (1), Shirvan (2) and Talish (3) during 1813, by the Treaty of Turkmanchay in 1828 Iran also ceded the Khanate of Yerevan (4) to Russia. Meanwhile the Armenian-Turkish border can be seen

passing through the peaks of Mount Ararat, with Nakhijevan as part of the Armenian gubernia. The Russian borders with Turkey are marked in green and those with Persia, in blue. Kars (5) is still in the hands of the Ottoman Empire.





**Figure 44:** The Armenian oblast (region) of the Russian Empire in 1830.

The above map shows the status of the region of Armenia after the Treaty of Turkmanchay. Here Armenia borders Iran to the south, the Russian province of Karabakh to the east, Elizavetpol and Pambak and Georgia to the north.

During the initial years of occupation, the region,

which included Nakhijevan, was called the Armenian oblast, which was an arbitrary demarcation based on the territory having been recently ceded by Persia. Later the name changed and was named the Erivan oblast after the capital city Yerevan.



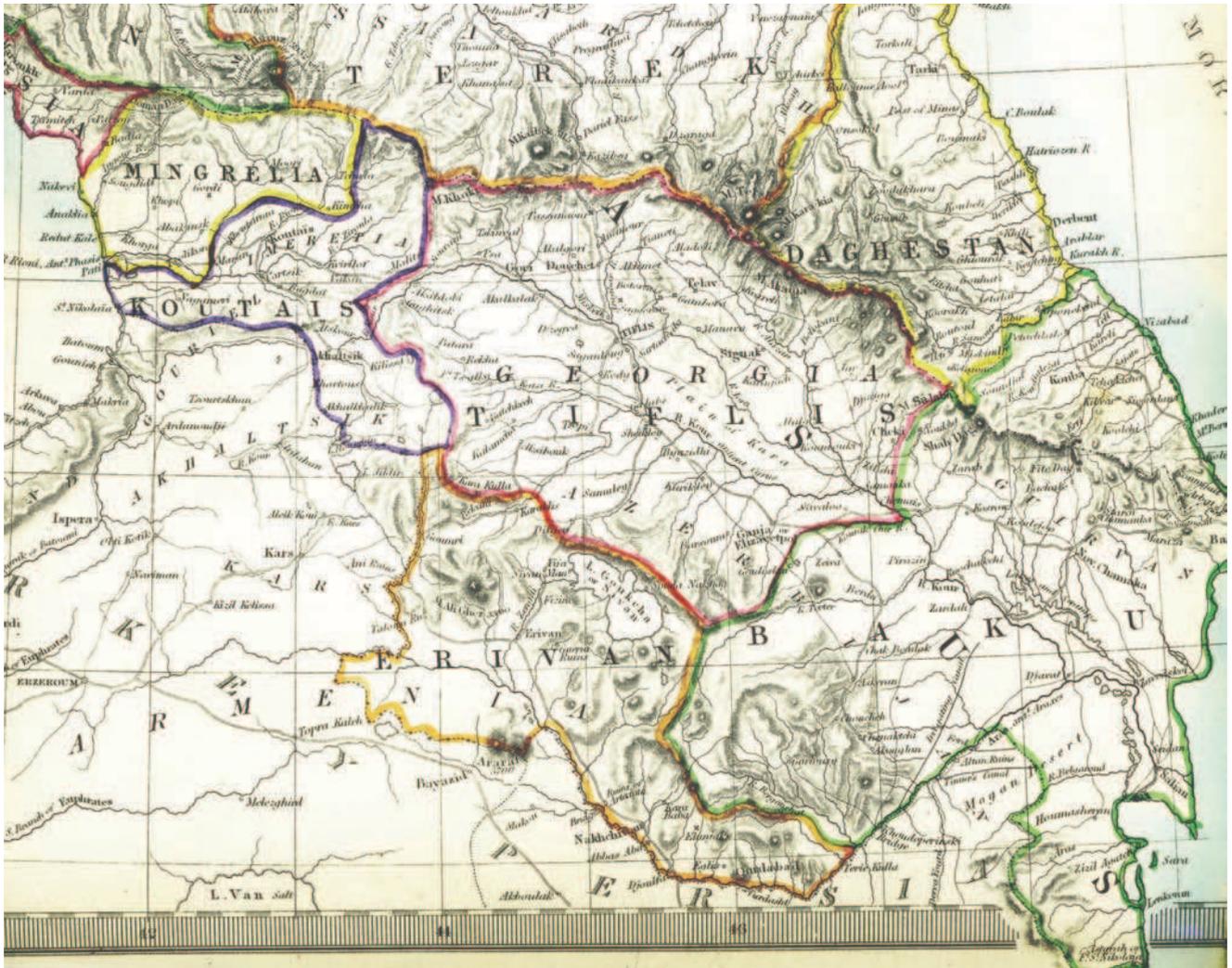
**Figure 45:** Map of the north-western province of Iran, Azerbaijan, drawn by Qarachedaghi in 1869, Tehran.

The first printed map to be printed in the Persian language, above, shows that the territory north of the Arax River was at the time occupied by Russia and the country therein was named *Armenia*, with the neighbouring Russian-occupied provinces of *Karabagh*, *Shirvan* and *Ganja*.

The border situation between Iran and Russia has not changed since this period, but the border with

Turkey changed when, after the 1877-1878 war between the Ottomans and Russia in the region of Kars, the Russian forces, led by two Armenian generals, Loris-Melikov and Lazarev, conquered Kars. As a consequence, according to the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878, Kars together with Ardahan, İğdir and Ani as well as Mount Ararat were ceded to Russia.





**Figure 46:** Map of the Russian South Caucasus during the 1860s.

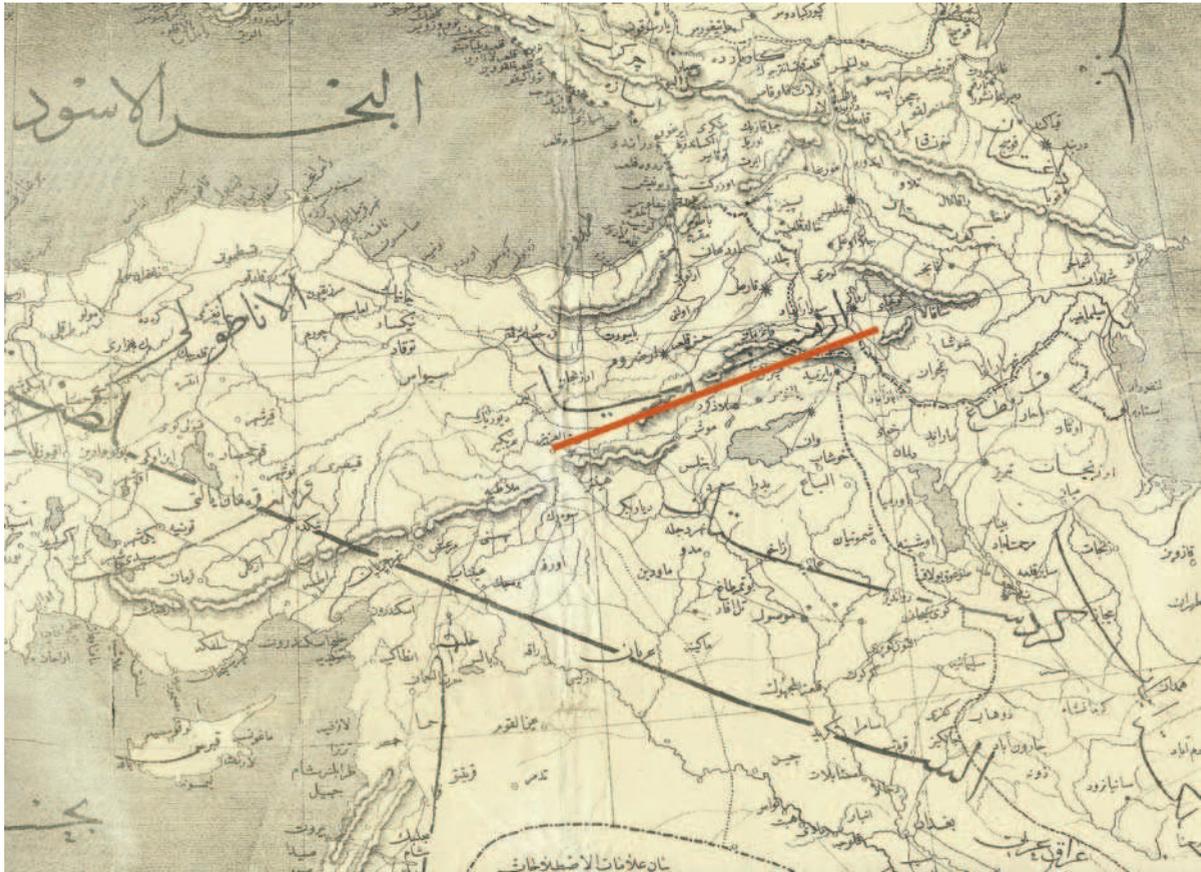
After this latest conquest, the Russians divided the region into various administrative provinces, subsequently altering the divisions according to their needs. Between 1829 and 1918 the administrative provinces (gubernias) of the Russian occupied South Caucasus were periodically redefined and renamed. For example the Armenian populated region of Artsakh/Karabagh was first placed in the ‘Karabagh province’ of the ‘military district of the Muslim province’ (1829-1839, see map of Fig. 43), then in ‘Shamakha province’ (1840-1859), followed by ‘Baku province’ (1860-

1865) and finally ‘Elizavetpol province’ (1865-1918).<sup>18</sup>

In the above map the main Armenian-populated province of Erivan includes the region of Nakhijevan, while Georgia has been divided into Abkhazia, Mingrelia, Kutais and Tiflis provinces. The province of Baku includes Artsakh, Siunik and Zangezur regions of Armenia. The toponym ‘Armenia’ appears on the territory of north-eastern Turkey and extends to Lake Sevan, confirming that the population of that region was Armenian. The border between the Russian province of Erivan and Turkey passes over the peaks of the Ararat mountains.

The map in Figure 47 is the *War Map of 1877-1878* was produced for the war between the Ottomans and Russia and drawn by the War Office in Istanbul. On this map the region from Erzurum in the north to Van in the south, extending from Malatya in the west to

Lake Sevan in the Russian occupied Eastern Armenia, straddling the border of the Russian and the Ottoman Empires (i.e. historic Armenia) is named *Ermenistan* (Armenia, underlined in red) by the Ottoman authorities of the time.



**Figure 47:** War map of the conflict between Turkey and Russia, whereby this region was occupied by the Russians and was considered as part of Armenia during the short-lived Armenian Republic until it was gifted to Atatürk's Turkey by Communist Russia.

According to Article 16 of the Treaty of San Stefano, the defeated Ottoman Empire undertook to relieve the Armenians from its persecution of them. European representatives were to be sent to the Armenian provinces of Turkey to ensure that the promised reforms would actually be carried out by the Sublime Porte. This treaty however was not to the liking of Britain's prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, who called another conference, this time in Berlin, to revise the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano. His reason was that the previous treaty

allowed Russia to have access to warm water ports, which was not acceptable to the British Empire.

The terms of San Stefano were therefore altered and in the new Treaty of Berlin the article regarding the destiny of the Armenian provinces was diluted, once again leaving the destiny of the Armenians to the mercies of the Sultan. By way of acknowledgement, the Ottomans ceded Cyprus to Britain to be used as a military base in the eastern Mediterranean. Thus, Cyprus was the price of Armenian blood bartered between the Ottoman Sultan and Disraeli.



After the 1877 war between the Ottomans and Russia, the region of Kars annexed to Russia can be

seen in the map below, as well as other maps produced between the years of 1878 and 1917.



**Figure 48:** Russian-Turkish border from 1878 until World War I. Map drawn by K. Johnston.

In the above map which shows the situation of the region during the 1878-81, the province of Erivan (Yerevan) neighbours on the newly annexed region of Kars, which was under Russian rule, until 1922. The tsarist Russian administration after its occupation of the region of Yerevan in 1828 had included

Nakhijevan and part of the region of Kars inside the *Erivan Gubernia*. Meanwhile the earlier (1813) occupied region of Karabagh and Siunik were left in the old 'khanate of Karabagh', which was renamed as 'Karabagh province' (see Figure 42).

Within the Ottoman Empire widespread

oppression and injustice continued and local resistance began to take shape. Some Armenians formed political parties, which started defying the Ottoman government in demanding their rights. A number of demonstrations in the early 1890s culminated in full-scale socio-economic protests in the Sasun region (west of Lake Van), where the Armenian villagers of the area co-existed with Kurdish armed clans, albeit as second-class citizens, and were forced to pay many types of taxes,

including even a marriage tax. Many villagers were unable to pay these exorbitant taxes and refused to do so.

As a result the Ottoman government sent troops to the villages in order to slaughter them to submission. Wholesale massacres of villagers followed and, as the news of the Sasun massacres leaked out at the end of 1894, in Europe and America campaigns were started to force Turkey to halt the massacres and to help the survivors.

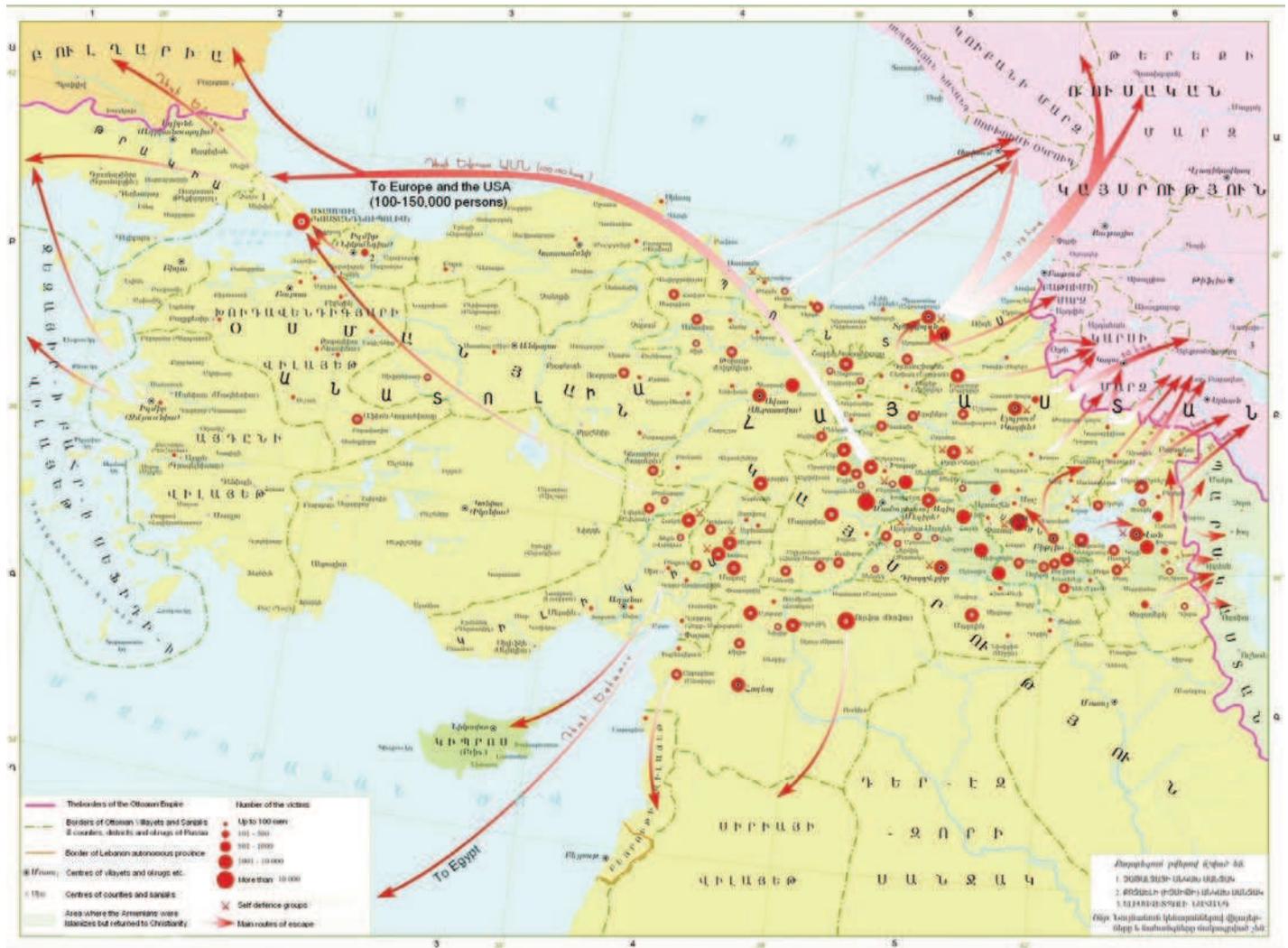


Figure 49: The Massacres of 1894-6 and the escape route of some of the refugees. From the *Atlas of Armenia, Volume 2*.



At first the Ottomans categorically denied any such massacres, but eventually, after impartial observers were sent in, the true scale of the officially organized killings were revealed. Armenian citizens in the capital Istanbul demonstrated against the official policies, resulting in the government's further hardened reprisals. In late 1895, as punishment, the government instigated brutal massacres of the Armenians in towns and villages of the eastern vilayets. An estimated 300,000 or more Armenians perished and, in reaction, members of an Armenian political party occupied the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul.

As a result of such controlled violence, many Armenians and their families left Turkey, seeking safer shores abroad. France and the United States were the main destinations, where the modern Armenian Diaspora began to take shape. In these two countries, today's communities number around 400,000 and about 1.5 million respectively.

After 1896 there was an uneasy truce in Turkey with its Armenian population, but it became increasingly clear there was no one to protect them from the pressures of the governing elite. Although the situation was calmer in Russian Armenia the situation was not much better. The tsar grew more autocratic and in the 1880s he closed Armenian schools and in 1903 confiscated all its church properties, with soldiers occupying the seat of the Catholicos in Holy Echmiadzin. Coming from a proudly Orthodox Christian leader like the tsar, this was too much and the Armenian clergy rebelled and even the Armenian bourgeoisie rose up against the Russians. There were Russian-instigated pogroms against the Armenians in Karabagh and Baku in 1905 aimed at suppressing the will of the Armenian people with threats of killings and further pogroms. It was only in 1912 that the repressions against Armenians were halted in the Russian-occupied territories.

Meanwhile, in the Ottoman Empire the central power was weakening and in 1908 a group of young and ambitious Turkish officers, who had organized themselves under the banner of the Committee of Union and Progress, better known as the Young Turks, toppled the sultan and reintroduced the 1876 constitution. The Armenian political parties

supported the Young Turks, who had promised them democracy and limited autonomy. After a short-lived period of quiet in 1909 there was a counter-revolution with the aim of introducing Sharia law and the absolute power of the sultan. This was crushed and the Young Turks took power, whose policies were now gradually moving towards its extreme nationalistic goal.

In the same year there were government-organized pogroms in the vilayets of Adana and Aleppo, during which some 30,000 Armenians were killed. The main reason for organizing these massacres was, that during the 1905 massacres Adana Armenians had put up resistance and the rulers of Turkey believed that they would, in the future, plan the revival of the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia, where Adana was located. To allow the massacres, weapons were distributed among the local Turkish population and the Kurds, while hundreds of criminals were released from prisons and given the freedom to kill and pillage.

\*

In historical Armenia under Ottoman occupation, the standards of living for Armenians were extremely varied. Those villagers living in the east who farmed the land and tended their herds survived in near medieval conditions and abject poverty. Taxation under the Ottomans was high and Christians were charged an additional tax per person. They were forbidden to carry arms and were unable to protect themselves against threats such as the marauding bands of armed Kurds who regularly raided the villages, looting supplies and abducting girls.

The Armenian communities in the large towns and cities, particularly Istanbul, did have a wealthy merchant and professional class who lived comfortably. In fact, most of the Ottoman infrastructure relied on Armenians when it came to professional services such as architecture, photography, medicine, banking, accounting, law, manufacturing, trade, teaching, arts and music.

Four generations of the Balian family were the sultan's chief architects, who built palaces, mosques and public buildings.<sup>19</sup> Most painters, sculptors,

photographers, musicians and composers, lawyers, teachers, industrialists, doctors and many senior civil servants of the Ottoman administration were Armenians.<sup>20</sup> Major carpet weaving workshops were run and owned by Armenians, who laid the foundation for this and similar industries throughout the Ottoman Empire. These professional and mainly well-to-do Armenians lived comfortably in European-style houses filled with imported European furniture and housewares.

It is notable that elsewhere in the world where self-exiled Armenians ended up, they similarly undertook to build, modernise and work for their host communities and countries. They usually began with the construction of churches, schools and cultural establishments. In the larger cities Armenian merchants undertook the construction of large and modern buildings. In Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, where they constituted a large part of the population, from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries 40 out of a total of 41 city mayors were Armenian.<sup>21</sup> The buildings on the city's main thoroughfare, Rustaveli Avenue, were mainly built and owned by Tbilisi's Armenian merchants. In Baku the contribution and presence of Armenians was a similar one.

The situation in the Ottoman Empire, which had lost much of its Balkan states, now seemed precarious for the dominant group of the population, the Turks. On the one hand they felt their absolute power being threatened by the introduction of democracy and local autonomy given to the minorities. On the other hand the positions held by the indigenous non-Muslim Armenians, as well as Greeks in the empire caused the relatively later newcomers, the Turkic people, to feel uneasy and threatened. These feelings created a strong resentment and animosity among the ruling parties towards anything and anyone non-Turkish. Moreover, Armenians living in the eastern vilayets were also seen as blocking the eastward expansion of the empire contemplated by the leaders of the Young Turks and encouraged by the kaiser's Germany. These feelings later manifested themselves in the motto used by the Young Turks leader Kemal Atatürk: "Turkey for the Turks!"

At the beginning of World War I the Turks sided with Germany and Austria-Hungary, and in an

operation to carry out their pan-Turkic scheme, they attacked the Russian army at Sarikamish. Being ill-prepared, Turkey suffered huge losses in the battles of 1914-1915, and their campaigns in north-west Iran also failed. These failures were partly blamed on the Armenians, a small number of whom had been conscripted into Russia's army. It seemed as though these few 'rebels' were being made into a scapegoat for Ottoman defeats, for which the government decided to punish the whole Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire.

In March 1915 Armenian members of the Ottoman armies were disarmed and sent to labour battalions, where most of these ex-soldiers perished, worked to death. In Van, the Ottoman governor undertook the mass killing of Armenians in the local villages, an action which alerted the Van Armenians to the fate that awaited them all, and they realised that if they were going to stay alive they had to organize self-defence groups. When the local governor demanded the community leaders to surrender, the city population disobeyed. Organizing defensive lines and equipped with mostly ancient arms and home-made ammunition, they defended themselves against the Turkish army called in by the governor.

This was not a revolt against the government, an accusation that the Ottomans later made, but a clear act of self-defence. The Armenians resisted the might of the Ottoman army until the approach of Russian forces, upon which the Ottomans retreated, leaving Van unconquered. The Russians soon decided to retreat leaving the citizens of Van with no choice but to abandon their homes and follow the Russians in order to escape complete annihilation. In revenge, the inner city of Van was razed to the ground by the returning Ottomans, as can be still seen today (see Figures 50-53).

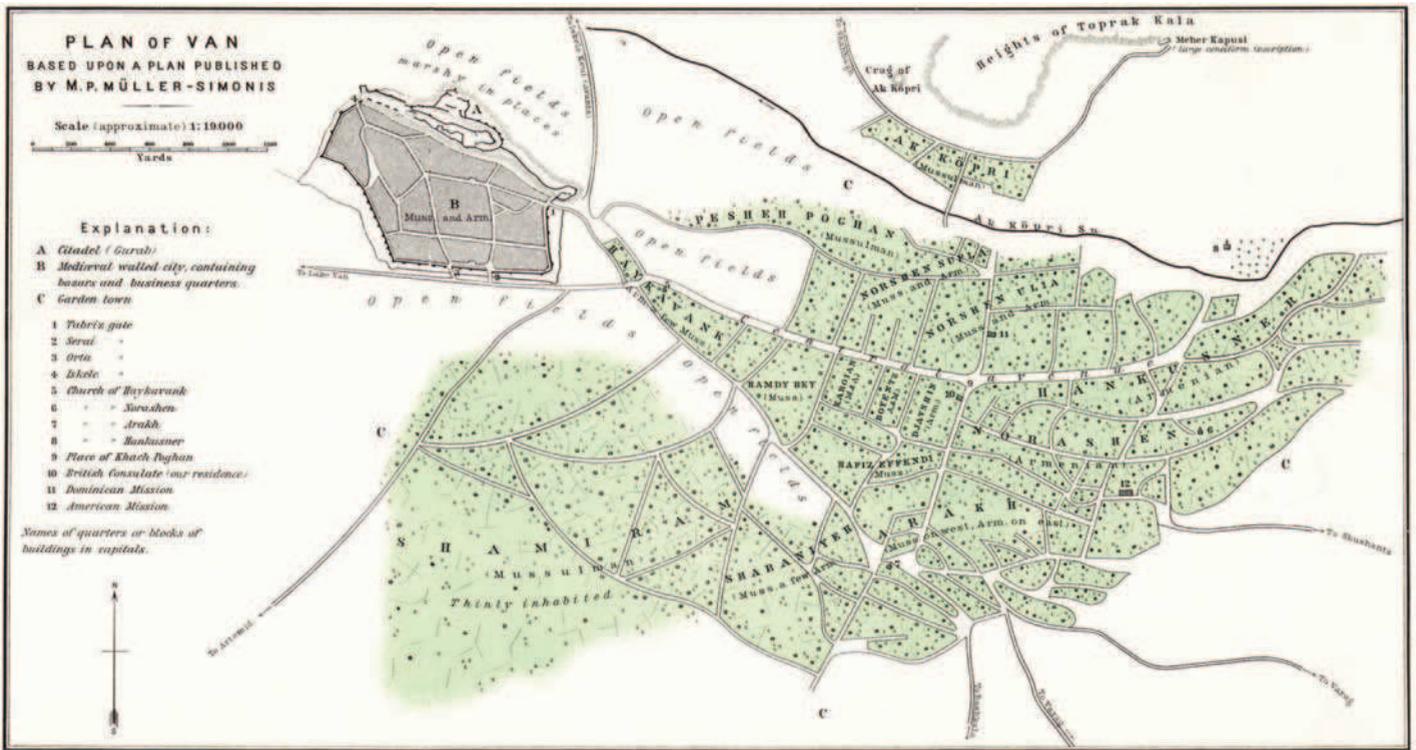
Today, many descendants of the Van Armenians can be seen actively in all sorts of walks of life from the West Coast of the United States to Europe and Armenia. Their high proportion of survival owes its debt to the heroism of their forefathers, who refused to submit to the Turkish demand for 'surrender' and to be slaughtered. Instead they chose to resist this injustice, and so survived in greater numbers than the Armenians citizens of other towns in the Ottoman Empire.



In April 1915 almost all the leaders of the Armenian community in Istanbul were arrested and taken into the Anatolian hinterland where they were mostly killed. This loss included politicians, lawyers, artists,

teachers and writers, and left the Armenians in limbo. This date is the one that has now come to be considered as the starting point of the Armenian Genocide. According to Christopher J. Walker:

*“What followed in the subsequent months or so was the Genocide of the Armenian people. From almost all centres of the Armenian population, right across Asia Minor, east of Anatolia and even in locations far from any the war zone, Armenian men, women and children were identified, taken out of their home town and villages, and ordered to walk without food or water along pre-selected routes until they dropped. Some were killed a short way out of their villages.”*



**Figure 50:** Plan of the city of Van, with the inner city on the left and Aygestan, the Garden City in green. Map produced by Müller-Simonis,

Representatives of the neutral European powers were not allowed to offer water or food to the starving deportees, devastating proof that the authorities planned to kill rather than merely deport them.

The survivors of the death marches were gathered together in vast open-air concentration camps in the desert until they died from exposure and starvation. It

was a huge act of premeditated governmental mass murder.

Some of the clearest evidence for the deeds which made up this appalling picture of slaughter came from American consuls, especially Leslie Davis of Kharbert (present-day Elazığ), who was actually well-disposed towards the Turks.

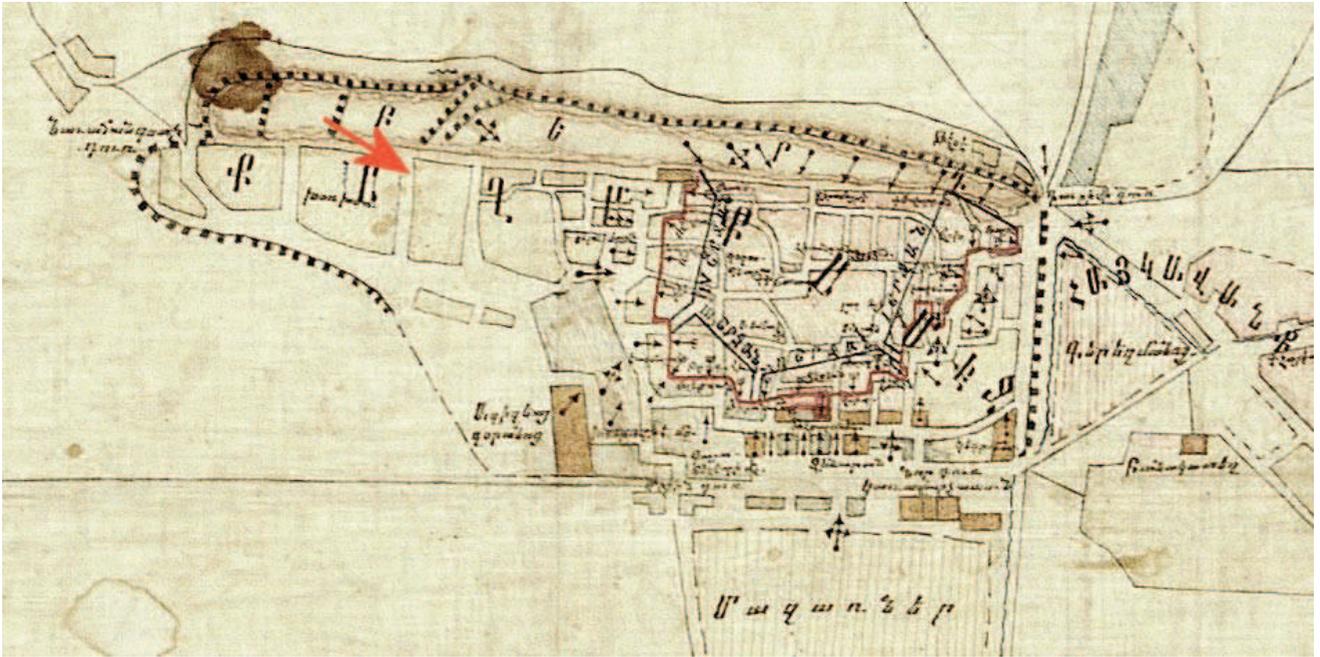
Davis' travels on horseback around his consulate in the summer months of 1915 gave him evidence of the most shocking mass murder: hundreds, even thousands, of bodies of Armenians dumped in ravines, and in a nearby lake. Individual Armenians who, having escaped the initial round-up, were later caught were stigmatized as *firarilar*, or 'deserters', and treated accordingly. He saw this happening well into 1916.

It was a pattern that was repeated in hundreds of towns and villages across the empire. Evidence from German and Turkish sources adds to a conclusive picture of a planned genocide. Even Armenians who spoke only Turkish, such as the assimilated Catholic Armenians of central Anatolia, were taken from their homes in the following years and driven into the desert to die.

**Figure 51:** Plan of the city of Van and its surrounding area before the events of 1915. Drawn by M. Kheranian on silk.







**Figure 52:** The inner city, located under the ancient fort of Van, with the defensive lines of the Armenians (brown line) and the Turkish cannon pointing at them (➡) from the heights of the castle of Van.



**Figure 53:** Remains of the Inner city today, viewed from the castle, marked by the red arrow in the map above. Author's photo, 2009.





**Figure 54:** Massacre centres in the Ottoman Empire, during the Genocide of 1915-1923.

The events were also witnessed and photographed by the German officer Armin Wegner<sup>22</sup> as well as by Wilhelm Litten, the German consul of Tabriz who was returning from Iran to Germany via Baghdad and Aleppo.<sup>23</sup>

Many local non-Armenians, especially Kurds died too, and the Turks have tried to justify their actions by pointing to these deaths. But the Kurds and others died as a result of the large number of unburied Armenian corpses left by the acts of the Ottoman government's genocide against that people and diseases caused by the rotting of those bodies. Another reason was that the main agricultural workers were the Armenians and, having perished or having been exiled, this meant that their fields were left unattended which caused a serious shortage of

food resulting in famine and death among the remaining populace.

The pre-planned policy was all too apparent in the implementation of the mass murder of the Armenians. The fate of the Armenian population was in the hands of the police and the provincial governors. The Turkish authorities even set up a 'Special Organisation', which in Anatolia was made up of common criminals, whose job it was to do the dirty work of the actual killing and looting. The attempt by Turkish apologists to claim that the events of 1915 constituted a civil war between Turks and Armenians is absurd since one side had a government which issued orders for its police, army and other agents—all the parts of a working state; whereas the Armenians had none of these—only a few old flintlocks used for self-defence.

The Ottomans appear to have understood that their anti-Armenian policies went far beyond what was acceptable in time of war, and that their actions constituted the gravest criminality (a point which had been made in an Allied declaration of May 1915, which threatened to pursue and capture individually the perpetrators of mass murder), since the orders for deportation were often issued in a double format: the first orders would have been in the open, and have been mild and restrained, but the hidden, or secondary, orders were brutal and uncompromising in their proposals.

A vast number of Armenians perished. Speaking in the House of Lords in October 1915, Lord Bryce put the figure at 800,000. Many more went on to die in the following years, and there were further deaths in the Ottoman invasion of Transcaucasia in October 1918. The Kemalist attack on Cilicia brought further deaths. The figure of 1.5 million is usually accepted as a total, and is a reasonable estimate.

With the collapse of the Russian Empire (and the Russian army) in 1917, first Georgia and Azerbaijan and then Armenia gained independence, the latter occurring in May 1918. The Ottoman army was invading at the time, and was only kept from the Armenian heartland around the village of Sardarabad, near Echmiadzin by a massive act of defensive bravery in which the whole Armenian population participated. These events are usually known as the Battle of Sardarabad.

The Turkish army went on to capture Baku and to kill almost all of the Armenians there, but the war was ending, and British officers were now appearing in Transcaucasia. They appeared to give the region an appearance of stability, but in the total picture they leant more to the east Transcaucasian Muslim population, the Tatars or Turks who today call themselves Azerbaijanis. They only reluctantly supported the Armenians, despite the closeness of the Azerbaijani Turks to the Ittihadist Turks and the practical help offered by Armenians to the Allied war effort over a crucial few months in 1917, after the defection of Russia.

The British refused to hand over Nagorno Karabagh to Armenia, even though 90 per cent of its inhabitants were Armenian and who had requested

many times that their land be designated part of Armenia. The British preferred to keep a local big Turkish landlord in control—one of ‘our traditional friends’, similar to a landlord in Scotland or Ireland—therefore his links with the ousted murderers who had run the Ottoman Empire were overlooked.

Meanwhile, conditions in Armenia were ground down by extreme deprivation and the country had also to care for an army of refugees from across the frontier. Armenia was virtually kept alive by charitable donations. Most of the Allied leaders had made grand and posturing statements about its sufferings, but in the light of day these melted into the sand, proving to be entirely insubstantial. It has to be said that the British prime minister Lloyd George was one the worst offenders: grandiloquently posturing in favour of the Armenians when the mood suited, but devious and negative in the privacy of a committee room. The non-political Americans were by contrast limitlessly generous in making donations to funds which guaranteed food for Armenians.

Gradually lost territory was added to Armenia throughout 1919, and the country started to operate as a state. But the victorious European powers (with Lloyd George at the helm) were incredibly slow in providing a Turkish treaty. When they did so, in the form of the treaty of Sevres of August 1920, the situation on the ground had made their considerations entirely out of date; the Turks had regrouped as Turkish Nationalists under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) and the treaty proposed became un-implementable.

Bolshevism and Turkish Nationalism had come together to create an informal alliance aimed at squeezing out Allied influence. President Wilson was charged in the Sevres treaty with the task of delineating the Armeno-Turkish frontier, and he did so in an award which was in the main fair, although over-generous in awarding to Armenia much of Trebizond province. But it was right to see Van, Bitlis, Moush and Erzurum included in the proposed Armenia—especially after the massive war crime to which the Armenian people had been subjected.

This, however, was not to be. The Ottoman army had not been disarmed at the time of its defeat in 1918, and it quickly regrouped and created the basis of the Nationalist army.





**Figure 55:** Boundary Between Turkey and Armenia with a map of the Treaty of Sevres and President Wilson's signature, 1920.



**Figure 56:** The First Republic of Armenia 1918-1920. The dark yellow area shows the northern territories according to the Treaty of Sevres. The lighter yellow area is the region of Kars, later ceded to Turkey by the Communist regime. The light yellow area is the southern border according to the treaty, which was never implemented.

By late 1920, defeated Turkey was able to impose its will on Armenia. Kars fell on 30 October 1920, and the rest of Armenia was on the brink of extinction. The Communists offered a very ambiguous hand to Armenia, and the introduction of Soviet rule into the country at least forestalled a complete Turkish take-over of Armenia. There was an anti-Communist revolt; but Soviet rule was fully imposed in April 1921.

After the takeover of Armenia by the Soviets, the country became known as the Soviet Republic of Armenia, established on only about ten per cent of the

original territory of Greater Armenia (Figures 56 & 57).

During the last months of the first republic and after the establishment of Soviet rule a large portion of the Armenian territories were lost to neighbouring countries. Figure 57 shows the territory of Armenia in orange and the lost territories are encircled with different coloured lines. The Treaties of Alexandropol (2 December 1920) and of Kars, signed by the provisional government of Turkey in 1922, ceded the territories of Kars, Ardahan, Iğdir, Ani and Mount Ararat to Turkey. These are circled in green on the map in Figure 57.







**Figure 58:** The official borders of Soviet Armenia during 1928. On the eastern and northern borders, Armenian territory was gradually ceded to neighbouring Azerbaijan by the Soviet elite, who had a closer connection with that republic.



Soviet Armenia was now a part of the one-party state of the USSR, backed by the secret police, where dissidents were apt to disappear into grim political gulags or simply exterminated. But for those who remained outside critical politics, it was possible to survive and even, in later years, to prosper during a relatively calm period.

There were a number of distinctive periods in Soviet Armenia's seventy-year existence: the early years of the New Economic Plan, characterised by a mixed communist-capitalist economy; the forced collectivization from about 1930; the purges from 1936, which severely affected the whole of Transcaucasia and the rest of the Soviet Union; the wartime hardships and the opening to the Armenian diaspora; a time

which included a re-dedication of the Catholicosate of Echmiadzin; and the immense loss of life suffered by the Armenians (roughly ten percent of the population) in World War II, known as the 'Great Patriotic War'; the Stalinist paranoia of the immediate post-1945 years; the immigration of Armenians from the Diaspora, who were encouraged to settle in Armenia, yet most were destined to suffer great hardship; the Khrushchev years leading to a great opening to the Diaspora, especially in the years 1960-80; followed by a slowing down in the years of post-Brezhnev sterility.

The large demand for manufactured goods and human skills that the USSR offered meant that, with some flair and imagination, a reasonable standard of living could be found in Soviet Armenia.



**Figure 59:** Tamanyan's master plan for Yerevan, designed in 1920 and finalised in 1932.

During a quiet and relatively uneventful period between the two World Wars, the Armenians of the newly founded republic did get a chance to create and build. This also gave the opportunity for education, science and the arts to develop rapidly, so much so that Armenia soon came to have the highest per capita number of researchers, scientists and musicians in the whole of the USSR.

During these early decades of Soviet rule, while the West suffered economic depression, a number of important building projects were undertaken in Armenia. Yerevan State University was established in 1921, the great opera and concert halls currently named after the classical composers Alexander Spendiarian and Aram Khachaturian were built in the 1930s and a series of beautifully apartment buildings with carved stone facades were constructed in Yerevan. Most of these buildings as well as a central city plan of Yerevan was developed by Tamanyan (1920), which the latterday city architects of Independent Armenia blatantly overlooked and disregarded (see Figure 59).

In Nagorno Karabagh the situation was somewhat different. Due to the repression and hardships suffered by the Armenian population and tight control by the Azerbaijani government, dissent and protests there were on the increase. The fate of the majority of the population, the Karabagh Armenians, was common knowledge. The inhabitants of the autonomous oblast (region) had repeatedly petitioned the Soviet authorities for a change in status in 1963, 1965, 1966 and 1977. The movement for the return of Nagorno Karabagh (which was still 75 per cent Armenian in 1987) to Armenia gained mass support throughout Armenia and Karabagh in late 1987 and throughout 1988. In 1987 they appeared to have received some recognition.

In Armenia Gorbachev's determination to criticize the methods of the local Communist Party was also one of the elements, which led to that party's demise, as was the emphasis on 'green' issues, since the country bore many scars of industrial pollution. A demonstration in Yerevan on green issues in October 1987 turned into a demand for the return of the disputed territories to Armenian sovereignty.

The initiative was then seized by the people of Nagorno Karabagh themselves. In February 1988 mass demonstrations took place there and the local soviet (council) of Stepanakert, the region's capital, passed a resolution for Nagorno Karabagh to secede from Azerbaijan and join Armenia. Moscow rejected the resolution.

Armenia itself became the scene of immense non-violent million-strong demonstrations. Violence intruded when the Armenians of Sumgait in Azerbaijan, were subjected to a murderous assault in the last days of February 1988. Several hundred died. The official Soviet Azerbaijani figure of 32 was an intentional underestimate in order to cover up the scale of the tragedy. The message seemed to be Armenians must stop making demands or else be killed. Strikes and demonstrations in both Armenia and Karabagh continued for most of 1988.

The situation was compounded by ethnic flight: ethnic Azerbaijanis fled from Armenia, and ethnic Armenians from Azerbaijan. In the following months the Supreme Soviet in Moscow reiterated that Nagorno Karabagh could not change its status. Despite the Soviet leader Gorbachev's call for openness and re-structuring, it was apparent that any change in boundaries, even for sake of righting a Stalinist wrong, was off limits. As Nagorno Karabagh voted to rename itself Artsakh, taken from early medieval Armenia, Azerbaijani violence against Armenians grew in intensity after a guilty verdict on one of the killers of Sumgait (18 November 1988).

On 7 December 1988 a devastating earthquake struck Armenia with its epicentre in Leninakan (modern Gumri). Twenty-five thousand people were killed, and almost half a million made homeless. Armenia became the focus of world sympathy and a huge relief operation got under way, despite inept handling by the Soviet authorities.

From January to November 1989 Nagorno Karabagh was governed directly from Moscow and the region experienced a period of calm. The return of it to Azerbaijan saw an upsurge in Azerbaijani militancy, and the imposition of Turkish/Azerbaijani blockades around Armenia and Karabagh. The mood became focused in an assault on the remaining Armenians of Baku in January 1990, some of whom





**Figure 60:** Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region with their Soviet-era borders. The mainly Armenian population of Karabagh was intentionally physically isolated from Armenia. Map by Vardan Mkhitarian.

were violently pursued all the way to Baku airport. The disturbances led to the entry of Soviet tanks which was heavy-handedly mismanaged.

During the Soviet perestroika years in mid-1990 the Communists were defeated and lost power in Armenia. The country was confronted by a Moscow-Baku axis, an alliance which focused on attacking the borders of Armenia and ethnically cleansing Armenians from Karabagh and Shahumian district (the Armenian-inhabited region to the north of Karabagh). Twenty thousand Armenians became refugees.

Armenia became independent in 1991, and the

USSR ceased to exist in December of that year, being replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a voluntary union. Infrastructures collapsed and economic conditions deteriorated severely. The following three winters were characterised by a lack of fuel amid sub-zero temperatures. Only with the recommissioning of the Metsamor nuclear power plant in 1994-5 did Armenia begin again to have access to adequate power.

War continued between Armenia and Azerbaijan throughout 1992 and early 1993. Karabagh Armenians liberated Shusha—from where the Azerbaijani army

was launching Grad missiles towards Stepanakert. The Lachin corridor, which connects Karabagh to Armenia, was also liberated, opening the road between the two. In April/May 1993 the Azerbaijani army collapsed owing to internal factors, and the regime in Baku changed to a two-man leadership of Surat Husseinov and Haidar Aliev. The Armenians took advantage of the situation, liberating Karabagh and securing substantial areas beyond the former autonomous region, the Karabagh plains.

A ceasefire, arranged in 1994, has in general held

up to the present day. Negotiations, however, have proved fruitless on the political future of the territory, despite the active intervention of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

In June 2004 the European Union included Armenia in the eastern initiative of its European Neighbourhood Policy, which was intended to have its logical conclusion by the year 2013, culminating with the signature of an association agreement with the European Union.



**Figure 61:** Present-day Armenia and the Republic of Karabagh (Artsakh) with the liberated territories, where all the population is also Armenian. The map is by the cartographer Vardan Mkhitarian of Yerevan State University.



The basics of the Madrid Initiative for the resolution of the Karabagh conflict, which included three major international norms—the right of self-determination of the people, territorial integrity and exclusion of military force—was introduced in 2007. Since 2010 the revised version of this initiative has been in circulation. As a result of the July meeting of the Group of Eight superpowers the three joint presidents of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, USA, Russian Federation and France, announced their joint proposal regarding the Karabagh issue, which became a recurring event.

In 2015 Armenia and Armenians all over the world commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the Genocide in the Ottoman Empire perpetrated in 1915-1923, during which the vast majority of the population of western Armenia was liquidated.

Some Armenians living in the eastern parts of the

Armenian Plateau, who had managed to escape to the fledgling Republic of Armenia, encountered famine and epidemics, rife amongst the hundreds of thousands of refugees. Those who managed to reach European countries and America had to scrape a living and somehow survived.

Now, one hundred years on, the Armenians have an independent country, which has taken its place amongst the international family of nations and is becoming known widely as a centre of science, art, culture and music. Armenia dominates the world of chess. Its musicians are much in demand on the stages all over the world, and many of its scientists are working in various institutions in other countries across the world.

Some eighty years ago William Saroyan, the famed Armenian-American writer, summed up the Armenian resilience and spirit with the following lines:

*“I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race, this small tribe of unimportant people, whose wars have all been fought and lost, whose structures have crumbled, literature is unread, music is unheard, and prayers are no more answered. Go ahead, destroy Armenia. See if you can do it. Send them into the desert without bread or water. Burn their homes and churches, then see if they will not laugh, sing and pray again. For when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia.”*<sup>25</sup>





# Notes

## Introduction

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- 25 William Saroyan, *Inhale, Exhale: The Armenian and the Armenian*. New York: August 1935. The original text (with two minor modifications) is the subject of recordings made by Saroyan himself in a three-disc LP set issued by Listening Library in 1973 under the title *Here's William Saroyan Reading His Own Stuff and Talking*.



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## **R o u b e n G a l i c h i a n**

(Galchian) was born in Tabriz, Iran, to a family of immigrant Armenians who fled Van in 1915 to escape the Genocide, arriving in Iran via Armenia,



Georgia and France. After attending school in Tehran, Galichian received a scholarship to study in the UK and graduated with a degree in Engineering from the University of Aston, Birmingham, in 1963.

His books include *Historic Maps of Armenia: The Cartographic Heritage* (2004, plus an expanded version in English, Russian and Armenian, 2005 and an updated, abridged version in 2014), *Countries South of the Caucasus in Medieval Maps: Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan* (2007), *The Invention of History: Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Showcasing of Imaginations* (2009/2010), which documents the culture and history of Nagorno-Karabakh through the centuries, and *Clash of Histories in the South Caucasus: Redrawing the Map of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Iran* (2014).

For his services to Armenian historical cartography, Galichian was awarded in 2008 an Honorary Doctorate by the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. In 2009 he was the recipient of Armenia's Vazgen I Cultural Achievements Medal, and in 2013 the Movses Khorenatsi Medal for Outstanding Achievements in the Sphere of Culture.

He is married and shares his time between London and Yerevan.

Front cover: Detail from Region of Armenia, taken from J.B. Homann's map of the Turkish Empire, 1737.

Back cover: Armenian T-O map from the 13th-14th century, Matenadaran, Yerevan, MS-1242.

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***A Glance into the History of Armenia: Through Cartographic Records*** is the catalogue designed to accompany Rouben Galichian's international exhibition of cartographic texts and images of Armenia. The exhibition's aim is to make public a selection of cartographic images in which snippets of the history of Armenia are viewed through the eyes of the Ancient, Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Western geographers and cartographers.

In ancient and medieval times maps were rare documents, and so in many cases maps depicting significant moments and events in history have not always been available to us. Sometimes historical and political events took place in such quick succession that it was not possible for maps to capture them within their real timescale. Nevertheless, this catalogue sets out to present the sequence of events that have determined the course of Armenian history as far as possible through the maps created around the actual time of their occurrence.

The examples depicted here are sourced from major collections of texts, atlases and individual maps created by masters of the craft, and are considered to form an essential part of world cartographic heritage.

This volume is the second in the series of which the first volume is *Historical Maps of Armenia: Updated and Abridged*



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