

ARMENIA IN V. BRYUSOV'S LITERARY-SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

A. H. Zakaryan

Doctor of Sciences (Philology)

SUMMARY

The Russian outstanding poet, translator, literary critic and historian Valery Bryusov (1873-1924), at the request of the Moscow Armenian Committee's Commission initiated to form and edit the works of the collection "The Poetry of Armenia" in the middle of 1915. In parallel he had large activities in the field of spreading the Armenian literature, culture, history in the Russian and Armenian societies. To that purpose in 1915-1917 he delivered numerous lectures not only in Moscow, Petrograd, but also in Transcaucasia - Baku, Tiflis, Etchmiadzin and Yerevan.

On the invitation of the council of "Society of Armenian Bibliophiles" V. Bryusov arrived in Baku on January 7, 1916. On January 8 he delivered a lecture on the theme "Armenian Poem" at the Mayilyan overcrowded theatre. Then, on January 13 the same lecture was delivered in the hall of the Tiflis Artistic Society, on January 17 - in Teachers' hall of the Etchmiadzin Gevorgyan Seminary, on January 18 in the hall of the Yerevan town club. Returning to Tiflis on January 22 Valery Bryusov delivered a lecture on the theme "Historical Regions of Armenia and the Development of Armenian Poem" in the hall of Artistic Society. On January 24 he left for Moscow.

V. Bryusov's lectures were the most important events not only in the cultural, social-political life of the Armenian, but also of the Russian people and deserved warm acceptance. He communicated with the widest strata of Armenian literary-social society in Transcaucasia, got acquainted with various figures, mainly Hovhannes Hovhannisyan, Hovhannes Tumanyan, Garegin Hovsepian, Alexander Shirvanzade, Srбуhi Lisitsyan, Derenik Demirchyan, Stepan Zoryan and others. It gave V. Bryusov opportunity to specify his estimations about this or that phenomenon concerning Armenian literature and history.

At the beginning of July 1916, in Moscow, the collection, "The Poetry of Armenia," was published edited by V. Bryusov. Its initiator, as it was mentioned, was the Moscow Armenian Committee, represented by outstanding literary-cultural figures K. Mikayelyan, P. Makintsyian, V. Teryan, K. Kusikyan and Al. Tsaturyan. The translators, besides V. Bryusov, were Russian famous poets Al. Blok, I. Bunin, V. Ivanov, F. Sologub, K. Balmont and others.

The collection became an original *monument* in memory of the Armenian Genocide victims.

In January 1917, again on the invitation of the council of "Society of Armenian Bibliophiles" V. Bryusov arrived in Transcaucasia - Baku, for the second time. On January 19 he delivered a lecture on the theme "Emil Verham and Heroic Belgium" at

Taghiev theatre. On January 24, again at the same theatre he read a lecture on the theme "The Teachers of Teachers (on ancient cultures of humanity)". On January 29 the Russian poet gave a lecture in the hall of Social chapel, dedicated to Al. S. Pushkin's social views, on his 80th death anniversary.

On those days V. Bryusov communicated widely with different strata of Armenian society of Baku. The foreseen trip to Tiflis didn't take place for some reasons, and the poet returned to Moscow at the end of January.

On the historical mission and importance of the collection, "The Poetry of Armenia," the famous Armenian poet Paruyr Sevak, in the article titled "Let be Grateful Till the End" has written: "The Poetry of Armenia", published in 1916, wasn't only a volume, bulky and magnificent. It was the diploma of our honesty, directed to the bloodthirsty face of the world, the passport of the people, who had achieved the right of living not only by struggle of centuries, but by that spiritual resource, which they had carried into the storage of the world civilization and culture. Bryusov's "The Poetry of Armenia" exploded as a sheaf of bombs in the chaos of the World War I. ...

Fascinated by Armenian poetry and Armenian history, on the whole, Bryusov, having a habitual role of translator and editor, grew and became the godfather of the resurrection of our centuries-old culture. He has done for our poetry somewhat more than Strzhigovsky for our architecture, Marr - for our archaeology".

In 1918, again by the Moscow Armenian Committee's initiative V. Bryusov's book "Chronicle of the Armenian Peoples' Historical Fate from Ancient Times to Our Days" was published, as an addition or appendix to the "The Poetry of Armenia."

Thereby, in all his activities concerning Armenia, V. Bryusov was true to the work of defense of the rights of the Armenian people, Armenian literature, particularly, poetry, the issue of popularization of the history and culture of Armenia, to which he had devotedly served to the end of his life.