

## ARMENIAN COLONIES OF UKRAINE

Extracted from Arakel Gevorg Arakelyan "The History of Spiritual Culture of Armenian People", vol. 2, Yerevan, 1964 (pp.192-205).

A. Arakelyan was distinguished expert in Armenian and philology, author of fundamental studies which deal with Armenian philology and history - "The History of Spiritual Culture of Armenian People" in two volumes (Yerevan, 1959-1964), "Textbook of Classical Armenian" (Yerevan, 1944-1946). Among his studies is worth to mention those dedicated to the classical Greek and Roman literature - "History of Roman literature" (1956, Yerevan), "History of Greek literature" (Yerevan, 1968).

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As it was mentioned above, Armenian colonists had been settled in Europe still in ancient times. The colonization never stopped but continued also in succeeding period, but more intensely. Thus, in the XIII century when Tatars invaded Armenia, the Armenians left their motherland and settled down in several Russian cities – Kazan, Hashtarkhan (Astrakhan), Saray etc. In these cities they contributed in the development of trade and crafts. But it does not mean that they live comfortably in this new country. The Tatar invasions forced them to leave this new habitat and look for quiet place far in Europe. Thus, a significant portion of Armenians reached the central part of Europe – Romania, Bulgaria, and another group – Ukraine. Armenians were concentrated in the cities of Lvov, Kamenets-Podolsk, Stanislav, in Transylvania and other places. In their new habitat Armenians grew in number so that they founded an Armenian town. Here in the XVI-XVIII centuries the number of Armenian population reached 200.000, or even 400-500 thousand people according to some scholars.<sup>1</sup>

The mass of the Armenian colonists consist of different social groups – peasants, craftsmen, traders, clergymen, aristocrats. They were centered in different European cities and settlements, contributing in the development of local trade, crafts and also in economic and cultural prosperity of indigenous population.

In the XVII century were especially prosperous several groups of Armenian colonists. In this regard Lvov and Stanislav occupied central place in the history of Armenian colonies.

### The Armenian colony of Lvov

Lvov used to be one of the biggest cities of Poland. It bears also the name Lemberg (Chamchyan uses also the form Yilov). Simeon Lehatsi explains this name as originating from the Russian word *lev* "lion", and in the Armenian manuscripts sometimes appears the forms Lernapat, Leopolis.

About Lvov and the Armenian colony of Poland in general inform us also the Armenian and Polish sources. Among Armenian authors wrote about Lvov Simeon

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<sup>1</sup> A.Poghosyan, The History of Armenian people, vol.5, Yerevan, 1960, p.167.

Lehatsi ("Travel notes"), Hovhannes Avagerets, Grigor Voskerich, the XVII century authors. Minas Bzhshkyan, member of the Mechitarist Armenian congregation of Venice (XIX century) also speaks about Lvov. Armenian sources stress the prominent economic and cultural role of Lvov in Poland. For example, speaking about Lvov Simeon Lehatsi writes:

"This city is populous, filled with goods and is abundant in fruit ... There are many different artisans and craftsmen – jewelers, embroiderers in gold, sculptors, masons, marble carvers, etc. ... there are also painters, engravers and masters who print in Polish, in Russian and in Armenian .... There is also a high house made of stone which is called town hall, with big clock on top of it ... there are located Polish and Armenian courts ... All houses of the city are built of stone, expensive, wide and high, with three, four stories". Simeon Lehatsi describes also the wealth of Armenians: "they have land, gardens and orchards, fruit trees, parks, vertograds, flower gardens and rose gardens, and also high palaces, palaces and plentiful sources".<sup>2</sup>

In the manuscript ascribed to Gevorg Palatatsi is written about Lvov: "The capital city is Leopolis, famous and known for its rich market which is on the square of Saint Agnes ...".

The study by N.Krivosos and O.Grabovetsky is a valuable source for the Armenian colony of Lvov which is based upon archival materials of Lvov. We have used this article, as a newest interesting study, and sometimes we even cite it literally. (It is published in the "Teghekagir" of the Arm.SSR, N.12, 1958 and is entitled as "Armenian colony of Lvov in the XIV-XVIII centuries"). This valuable study indicates that as a result of Turkish-Seljukite invasions a portion of Armenian colonists consisting of ten thousand people, in the XIII century moved to the west and settled down in central Europe. Some of them resided in Lvov. Armenians are mentioned in the 1356 Decree of the Polish king Kazimir.

The XVII century Polish historian Zimorovich writes that in order to get free from Mongol yoke Armenians had migrated to Lvov and settled down there. Still before that date, during the Galicia-Volhynia principdom, in the oldest part of Lvov live Armenians, here was located an Armenian monastery, churches of Saint Hakob and Christ. Historical data testify that here was an Armenian bridge and a bath. In the XVII century Armenians were engaged in trade, crafts, partly in agriculture and used to have good relations with the Ukrainians. As a witness to good relations are two churches built in similar size and form, one Armenian, another Ukrainian. Both Armenians and Ukrainians were harassed by the Polish. In the XV century the number of colonists grew up; the immigration meets the interests of the Polish; the Polish government was eager to make use of the immigrants in the struggle against its opponents in the country.

For quite long period (XIV-XVIII centuries) Lvov was a big trading center; the Armenians of Lvov were involved in trading relations with distant eastern countries; the caravans of traders loaded with different goods pass through the city. The trading

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<sup>2</sup> Travel notes of the scribe Simeon Lehatsi, Vienna, 1936 (edited by N.Akinyan), p.346.

relations of Armenians were especially close with Istanbul, the capital of Turkey. Trading activities between Lvov and Istanbul were carried out via several towns. The caravans resemble groups; they had experienced leaders, literate persons fluent in eastern languages. The leader of the caravan was called “carvanbashi”. They had great authority during the journey. In the XVII century karvanbashi’s of Lvov were local Armenians. Often the caravans were attacked by Turks and wandering armed gangs. In the XVII century the trade in Lvov was centered in the hands of Armenians and was their exceptional monopoly. The tradesmen must have been proficient in Eastern as well as Western European languages. Armenians were fluent in languages and were trading mediators between European and Asiatic countries. After the conquest of Lvov the Polish government gave Armenians a right to do business, mostly for their knowledge of Eastern languages. In Lvov was established the office of translators headed by the so-called translator. The office of the chief translator almost always was at the hands of Armenians. They had great authority. None of the traders could enter the city or leave it without the permission of the chief translator or mayor. He was responsible for the perfect performance of trading rules in the markets, he even possess with political functions. The chief translator, as a responsible official, had deputies. In Lvov their number in the XVI century varies between 4 and 6 or even more people, and this office used to be held exceptionally by Armenians.

Armenians know well languages of eastern peoples, were well informed about everyday life and habits, and for this reason many of them held responsible offices. Often the royal secretaries were Armenians. Polish kings made use of abilities of Armenians in diplomacy and sent them to Turkey with diplomatic missions. Thus, Piotr Grigorovich was a renowned diplomat, well known person in the courts of Vienna, Warsaw and Istanbul, the Polish king Sigismund III called him his advisor, and the Austrian emperor Rudolf II – his judicial executor. Piotr Grigorovich actively participated in the political relations of Poland with Eastern and Western states.<sup>3</sup>

The role of Armenians of Lvov was great also in the political life of the Danubian countries. They even aided the Moldavian kings to ascend to the throne, and after becoming king they often asked the Armenians of Lvov for financial assistance.

Among the Armenians of Lvov were very skilful craftsmen, particularly specialists in making the items of silver and gold. Their products delighted the people.

Armenians of Lvov possess with great wealth. From the list of 1656 it becomes evident that the moveable property and real estate of the city of Lvov reaches 5.247.479 in gold, of which the portion of Armenians equals 1.277.000.

Armenians, as well as Ukrainians were subject to religious persecution by the Polish. They were forced to pay heavy taxes.

Until the XV century the number of Armenians in Lvov was small; to that date they comprise minority and their role was limited compared with the Ukrainians; they even

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<sup>3</sup> N.Krivosos, V.Grabovetsky, Armenian Colony of Lvov in the XIV-XVIII centuries (Teghekagir, Academy of Sciences of Arm.SSR, N.12, Yerevan, 1958), p.61.

had no right to be engaged in trading activity. In 1421 Armenians applied to the king for permission to do trading business; they were granted the right but only within the country.

Armenians and Ukrainians were not permitted to become members of workshops.

Armenians, Ukrainians, Jews, all non-Catholics were exempted from the rights that were given to major Polish and German tradesmen who represent patricians of the city – a privileged layer. They did not permit Armenians and Ukrainians who comprise half of the population, to participate in the works of the city administration. And this persecuted status forced them to join forces against the urban elites and leaders of the Catholic Church who oppress Armenian and Orthodox churches. As a result of the struggle of Armenians in the XVII century they were granted a limited right to have 73 houses in Lvov, but not on the market square, and those who live there obliged to sell their houses. In addition, besides these 20 Armenian traders of cloth, they were permitted to have two storehouses, two shops of wine, three shops of honey and four bear houses. Armenians were deprived of a right to make bear, this right was granted only to Catholics; Armenians could only buy the ready bear and sell it. Besides that, Armenians could have own two workshops of tailors, two shops of fur and one of fillers. But these privileges were insufficient and they continued their struggle along with the Ukrainians to get more rights.

The Armenian colony had its governing body council of elders consisting of 6 people which was reelected yearly. But the wealthiest Armenians by their will added 6 more people and organized a new council of 12 people. In 1563 the Polish king Sigismund Augustus made changes in the council; every elder remains in the office for life and perform his duties alternately. The elders deal with the court cases of Armenians, defend their political, religious, and economic interests in the administration of Lvov. Armenians had commission of juries which included Armenian elders headed by the scribe of the city. By the order of Kazimir in 1367 national minorities of Poland granted the right to have their own court under the governorship of the supreme body - *voyt* where the procedure should have performed in the national language. The court cases of the Armenians were given to Armenian court consisting of Armenian elders; the chief of the court was the *voyt* of the city; the scribe was also present who prepares the court protocol. The trial in the court follows according to the old Armenian canons which were called “The Book of Armenian Law”; in this law code were not neglected also local habits of Lvov and several judicial laws of Magdeburg.

Among the functions of Armenian court were many topics except four general spheres: 1. Real estate, 2. Actions against the city administration and court, 3. Assault with intent to kill or rob, and 4. Murder and physical injury.

Polish historian Lozinsky rightfully underestimates the “privileges” given to Armenians and assumes that this was most likely a state body which dealt with inheritance and family affairs, but not a real tribunal. Armenian court possessed with limited rights. All criminal, police and important civilian cases were under the jurisdiction

of Polish court which was trying to extend its authority upon Armenians and thus motivates them to oppose.

The Armenian colony of Lvov was located around the Armenian Church; it was regarded as a small section of Asia on Ukrainian soil.

Armenians of Lvov strongly preserve Armenian habits and law and did not forget about their “great Armenian country”. Armenian laws were severe and were used during the trials. They have preserved Armenian habits in courts and everyday life as well; “the love towards their native land, their habits, constant connections with the East and particularly with Byzantium always remind the Armenians of Lvov their motherland”, writes the author, “one could confidently state that among foreign colonies of Lvov none of the nations did caress its nation, its habits and culture as Armenians. They diligently kept their habits and worthy lived for centuries. For Armenians was not easy to keep their laws under the conditions of strict Magdeburg law and law code of Polish gentry”.<sup>4</sup>

Armenians of Lvov had preserved their religion. They live around the church, built churches still in the XIII-XIV centuries. Armenian masters had built their church on the Armenian street; it is remarkable that it was erected according to the architecture of the Cathedral of Ani. “This architectural-historical monument” notable for its beauty – wrote the authors – was the pride of Lvov and attracts the sight of every traveler”.<sup>5</sup> The Romanian author, academician Kamilar Eusebik, who observed this church says that he had seen different architectural monuments of the feudal period but never met such a star. What kind of luxury. The people who built such wonderwork in foreign country is very talented”.<sup>6</sup>

In the church were four religious congregations consisting of males and females. Their profit reaches 236.034 golden coins. None of the other national congregation had such profit. By the order of the Armenian Catholicos in Echmiatsin in 1364 in Poland was established Armenian episcopate and was elected primate of the diocese. The authority of the Armenian primate extends not only on the territory of Poland but also on the Armenians of Valachia. The Armenian religious leader of Poland dwells six months in Lvov which was his seat and six months in Kamenets, the second important city of the diocese.<sup>7</sup>

In the XVII century a fierce struggle burst between the Apostolic and Catholic Armenians of Lvov. After the death of archbishop Mesrop two families opposed each other for the office of archbishop – Torosoviches and Goluboviches. Torosoviches were successful. In 1626 the Armenian Catholicos Melkisedek arrived in Lvov, received 300

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<sup>4</sup> N.Krivosos, V.Grabovetsky, Armenian Colony of Lvov in the XIV-XVIII centuries (Teghekagir, Academy of Sciences of Arm.SSR, N.12, Yerevan, 1958).

<sup>5</sup> Idem.

<sup>6</sup> N.Krivosos, V.Grabovetsky, p.58.

<sup>7</sup> “The forced union of Polish Armenians against the Roman church”, p.9-11.

thalers from Nikol Torosovich,<sup>8</sup> ordained him as episcope and appointed as the primate of Polish Armenians. Nikol Torosovich did dirty work in the Armenian colony of Lvov which led to turmoil; the Polish king protected him against the attacks of Armenians. His opponents – Apostolic Armenians did not allow him to enter the Armenian Church, but through the assistance of the city administration he captured the church. Thus, in this struggle which lasted until 1646, Nikol Torosovich came out as a winner by the assistance of the government.

Besides Lvov, in Poland were established numerous Armenian colonies in a number of cities – in Kamenets-Podolsk, Akkerman, Stanislav, Polish Rashkov, Transylvania, Elizavetopolis, Kerla, Chernovits of Bukovina, Moldavian Kishinev, Suchava etc. In the cities mostly live migrants – traders and craftsmen. Besides cities, a considerable number of Armenians live in the countryside; hence were established Armenian villages; here people were involved in agriculture, animal husbandry, kitchengardening, and in the cities they mostly deal with trade and crafts.

### Armenian colony of Kamenets

It is believed that the Armenian colony of Kamenets was established in 1331 and was one of the biggest among Armenian colonies. Armenians of Kamenets are regarded as being the former population of Ani who during the Tatar invasions left Armenia and settled down in Russia, some of them in the Polish city of Kamenets. Local authorities demonstrated kind attitude and granted them “great privileges”. Here Armenians also multiplied, constructed big buildings, fortified the city with walls, established their national court whose authority extended upon all Armenians. By the order of the Polish king Albertos Hovhan (John I Albert – transl.) issued in 1496 Armenians “should not apply to foreign judges”.<sup>9</sup> Until 1766 Polish kings recognize the judicial privileges given to Armenians.

Armenians had autonomous rights in Kamenets, like in Lvov. The supreme leader was called *voyt*; he had 8 assistants. Among them his deputy was dominant who was called *yeretspokhan*. Besides them, there was also a council of 40 whose members were elected and who were called “friends or brothers”. Court procedures were held in their presence and advice, and the secretary recorded their decisions. Yeretspokhan, the leader of 8 assistants was responsible for national, religious and school affairs.

In the XVI-XVII centuries Armenians were famous as major traders who built schools, public buildings, fortified the citadel, laid water pipes etc. Armenians had separate schools for girls and boys. Armenians were financially secured and the local population called them half-ironically *kapzan* which means rich, wealthy. The number of

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<sup>8</sup> The Catholicos Melkisedek arrived in Lvov in order to ask money from wealthy Armenians to quit the debt of Echmiatsin. “which troubled Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin” and the Catholicos personally. Nikol abundantly awarded Catholicos with money. This explains the weakness of Catholicos.

<sup>9</sup> H.Q.V.Kushneryan, History of the Armenian colony of Crimea, Venice, 1895, p.190.

the Kamenets Armenians reaches 1200 houses. They spoke Armenian but by the time lost their language in favor of Polish and were assimilated.

### **The Colony of Stanislav**

It is worth to mention the Armenian colony of Stanislav (western Ukraine) which appeared to be a “complete example of autonomy” of Armenians.<sup>10</sup> It was one of the biggest among Armenian colonies. “Who even once visited the western Ukrainian city of Stanislav could not bypass the street which bears the name ‘Armenian’. On this street eye-catches the glorious Armenian church, most beautiful monument of Armenian culture of the XVIII century.<sup>11</sup> Armenians had settled in the western Ukraine still in the XII-XIV centuries, during the period of Galicia-Volhynia principedom. Later this “state” was attacked by enemies, economically disintegrated, lost its political independence and fall under the Polish rule. The western Ukraine remained under the rule of Polish *pans* very long, from XIV until XVII centuries.

During this period Stanislav was one of the leading economic and cultural colonies of Armenians. Armenians preserved their rights, customs and habits. Here the Armenian colony had reached great achievements in the field of economy and culture and served as an example for other peoples who migrated into Poland.

In 1628 Armenians settled in Snyatin, and from 1662 the colony became bigger; then in 1669 Armenians moved further and settled in Lipets, Tismenitsa (1678), towards the end of the XVII century - in Gorodenko and Obertene etc. At the end of the XVII – early XVIII centuries in Galicia live numerous Armenians. When Stanislav came into existence, Armenians migrated from Moldavia and finally settled in Stanislav since the magnates of the city, in order to extend and improve it, promised the citizens to exempt them from taxes during 20 years. Here Armenians received from the Polish government estates, built houses, a church and participated in the building of the city. Besides Armenians, here live other migrant peoples, but the Polish historian stresses the devotion only of Armenian community towards socially useful activity.

He wrote that in 1858 “Armenian community introduced into that boiler an example of compact organization and social willingness”.<sup>12</sup>

Armenians migrated to Stanislav during the Polish-Turkish war, when the Turks conquered Kamenets-Podolsk. In 1672-1676 Armenians who experienced the hardships of Turkish rule in Kamenets-Podolsk moved to other cities, among them to Stanislav. The Polish government which was concerned with the prosperity and extension of the city reciprocated Armenians and kindly provided place in the city. The

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<sup>10</sup> V.Grabovetskiy, *Armyanskaya koloniya v Stanislave in the XVII-XVIII centuries*, Teghekgir of the Academy of Sciences of ArmSSR, N.6, 1958, p.43.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*, p.49.

migrants were wealthy people; they bought houses, fulvarks,<sup>13</sup> grow in number and were included among the urban “patricians”, that is those who have privileges.

The main business of Armenians was trade and crafts. Here Armenian craftsmen united and organized a guild. Every 12 craftsmen were united in a workshop which was ratified by the government. Every year they could elect the master of their workshop. Every workshop donated to the church, mostly candles. These unions were organized, besides the principle of comprising the same craft but also by religious-confessional one. “Armenian craftsmen were distinguished from other craftsmen by their exceptional industriousness. Their textiles are of highest quality and could not be equaled with that in the XVII-XVIII century markets of Stanislav, Kalum, Galich, Kutah, Stri, and Lvov, but also in Moldavia, Hungary and other European countries”.

Armenian craftsmen mostly were involved in tannery which was absent in the city and still unknown here. From goatskin and sheepskin they produce different items. In February 14, 1678, Armenian craftsmen were granted from the city administration the right to organize their workshops similar to Lvov.

Armenians of Stanislav were busy with selling bread, cattle, fish, and horses. They trade also with foreign countries; from Moldavia, Bessarabia they buy horses, oxen, feed them and bring to domestic markets and abroad. They did not fear local and European rivalry. They know well foreign languages and often work as translators in the markets and auctions. Being experienced merchants many of them were becoming rich; are well known Amiroviches, Sultans, Theodorovices, Vartanoviches and others who together with other workshop masters comprised the so-called “Armenian patricians” which had important role in the trade and crafts and urban autonomy as well.

Armenian merchants held the whole trade of Stanislav. They owned numerous shops which sell different goods. It could be boldly stated, writes V.Grabovetskiy, that due to the Armenians Stanislav remained as a developed city even when cities like Krakow and Lvov were degrading.

Armenians of Stanislav were granted autonomy and later, in January 14, 1677, Andrey Pototsky, the ruler of the city, gave them special privileges. Armenians received such wide privileges which Armenians of Lvov and other cities never had.<sup>14</sup> Due to these privileges “Armenians established their autonomous community”. Polish historian Khovanets writes that for John Sobieski, the Polish king was of particular relevance the Armenian question. His aim was to make use also of Armenians in his project to destroy the Ottoman Empire since they were its enemies. Taking into account that political perspective the Polish Seim approved the granted privileges of Andrey Pototsky in 1677 which formed basis for the Armenian autonomy in Stanislav.<sup>15</sup> Through these privileges Armenians of Stanislav were granted with autonomy.

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<sup>13</sup> Polish word which means estate with agricultural facilities.

<sup>14</sup> V.Grabovetskiy, p.45.

<sup>15</sup> Idem, p.46.



The administrative unity of Armenians initially was organized as workshops of craftsmen or church fraternity by means of which Armenians managed their internal affairs. But after receiving autonomy these organizations were replaced by the *rada* (council) consisting of 40 people which at the end of the XVII century was called “Fortybrothers”. In this council were included representatives of most wealthy families. Later they occupied leading positions in the council then the “Fortybrothers” acted as Seim in the community. Members of the council occupy the best and responsible posts; the council organized its meetings once during six months. The sessions discussed financial, disciplinary and statistical problems.

*Voyt* and elders were the supreme body; that was the so-called magistrate and the court of the Armenian community which governs all affairs of the city community.<sup>16</sup> The magistrate consists of 12 people who were called *raits* (elder). Elders were the wealthiest people of the city, poor citizens had no place in the council. They were elected every year but later this law was changed and they held their position for lifetime. Elections were organized as the next; “Fortybrothers” nominated candidates from among themselves, then *voyt* and the elders selected the needed number of people. Elders were headed by *voyt*; he also was elected by popular wealthy people. The election of *voyt* was held in January with special ceremony. After church service, under the ringing of bells the elders and “Fortybrothers” were gathered in the city council and make decision, and the attending people wait in the market. In the city council (*Ratusha*), in the court hall was performed the election of the *voyt*. The latter swears an oath, and the magistrate approves the election. Then by the order of the *voyt* took place the election of the chiefs of the *Rada*. They were called *marshaks*. One of them who was called “elder” governed affairs related to the Armenians, and another one whose office bears the name “junior” – the suburbs of the city. The “elder” and “junior” *marshaks* managed finances and were liable with their personal property.

The Armenian and Polish *voyts* jointly decided important affairs related to the city, along with city deputies. Minor criminal cases were studied and dealt by *voyts* of national minorities, mostly the Armenian one, but the most important cases were resolved by the Polish and Armenian *voyts* together.

At first sight, the structure of the Armenian autonomy (*voyt, rada* etc.) reminds that of the German colony which is known under the name of Magdeburg law code, but when gets into that autonomy it appears that the legal norms which were adopted by the Armenians of Stanislav, completely preserved Armenian spirit and had nothing to do with the German one, except some terms. Like in all other Armenian communities, here in Stanislav the old Armenian law code, that of Mkhitar Gosh and Smbat Gundstabl, was obligatory. Armenian communities of Poland in Lvov, Elizavetopolis, Kamenets-Podolsk etc. perform judicial cases according to Armenian habits and law code. We know that in 1519 the Polish king Sigismund requested from Armenians to submit their law code. Armenians compiled that law code making use of the canons of the Armenian

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<sup>16</sup> Idem, p.47.

church and the law code of Mkhitar Gosh and submitted it in Latin translation. The king approved it and authorized to follow that law code which was entitled as “The laws of the Armenian law code approved by the order of the Polish pious king Sigismund I (Sigismund the Old – transl.) and translated by the order of His Majesty from the native language into Latin and copied from the original”.

Armenians of Stanislav and Lvov (Lemberg) did not remain apart from the struggle against the infringement of the Catholic Church. Rome was trying to dominate the Armenian church; its agents act not only in Armenia but also in the Armenian colonies. In Stanislav Catholics were aided by the magnate Andrey Pototsky who was Catholic himself and he spared no efforts to spread Catholicism among local national minorities. For this purpose he invited from Lvov the Armenian clergyman Hovsep (Armenian Catholic from Stanislav) in order to convert Armenians into Catholicism. In March 18, 1669, he arrived in Stanislav, propagated in the Armenian Apostolic colony and was awarded by Pototsky for his efforts. But the agent of Catholics did not succeed; Armenians did not accept Catholicism, and they even applied to Rome against the forced union. Pototsky interfered in favor of Rome but Armenians never obeyed; for this reason Pototsky threatened to expel Armenians from the city if they fail to fulfill his desire. Realizing that this action could have negative effect on himself he made concessions to the Armenians and Hovsep went back to Lvov empty-handed. But later Pototsky succeeded to make Armenians of Stanislav Catholics through vile frauds.<sup>17</sup>

In the cities listed above Armenians of Poland who were engaged in trade and reached a prosperous life did not stay aside of cultural life of the time. Not only in Lvov but also in other cities of Poland – Kamenets-Podolsk, Rashkov, Elizavetopolis, Kerla, Suchava, Stanislav, Armenians had their own educational, cultural institutions; they established schools, printing houses, seminary, churches, monasteries, print books, copied manuscripts etc. The colonies of Poland kept close relations with their motherland, live with its life, even participated in the struggle for liberation. In the revolt of Davit-Bek participated volunteers from Lvov and other cities of Poland which had Armenian colonies. Armenian schoolchildren of Lvov established the first Armenian theatre in the XVII century. Here was put on a play entitled as “Hripsime”.

Poland could not be mother’s womb and feeding land for Armenians. It became as such when Armenians lost their language, habits, mode of life and were assimilated with the Polish people.

***Translated from the Armenian by Aram Kosyan***

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<sup>17</sup> Grabovetskiy, p.45.