

**ANUSHAVAN ZAKARYAN, Osip Mandelstam: poet and Armenia, Yerevan,  
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In a series of studies dedicated to the talented Soviet poet, translator and art theorist Osip Mandelstam, a man with a bright but tragic fate, a book by Anushavan Zakaryan, Doctor of Philology, Editor-in-chief of the "Historical-Philological Journal" of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Senior Researcher of the Department of Art of the Armenian Diaspora and International Relations, Institute of Arts of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, author of 23 monographs and collections, more than 250 articles and publications, occupies a special place because, for the first time in the Armenian language, the life and fate of the poet connected with Armenia are presented, for which he had the most sincere feelings and which left an indelible mark on the soul and heart of the poet. This is evidenced by every page of A. Zakarian's book, written on the basis of an in-depth study of Mandelstam's creative biography (chapter "On the life, activities and creative path of O. Mandelstam"), in which Armenia played an important role as the key to world knowledge through the culture of another people in relation to universal spiritual values. Evidence of this is the thematic chapters of the book "O. Mandelstam in Armenia", "Poet in Shushi", "Cycle of poems "Armenia", essay "Travel to Armenia" and its echoes", reflecting the palette of feelings and thoughts of the poet caused by his acquaintance with Armenia and its centuries-old culture, which made an invaluable contribution to the collection of creative thought of humanity.

The author of the book, who has scrupulously studied all the milestones of the great poet's work, treats very carefully every fact of his "contact" with Armenia, not missing a single detail and building a holistic picture of Mandelstam's communication with Armenia and its people, in particular, with representatives of the Armenian intelligentsia - the key figures of Armenian history, culture and literature - Ashot Ioannisyan, Martiros Saryan, Alexander Tamanyan, Mamikon Gevorgyan and others. He was also connected by friendship with the Armenian intelligentsia of Baku and Tiflis (chapters "O. Mandelstam in Tiflis and Baku", "Tiflis Days with Yeghishe Charents").

The "Armenian" period of O. Mandelstam's work was addressed by the poet and translator Georgy Kubatyan, the famous literary critic Natalya Gonchar-Khanjyan and the literary critic M. Andreeva, Mandelstam's poetry was published in translations by Ararat Agasyan, Doctor in Art history, as well as poet and translator Hrachya Beyleryan.

However, A. Zakarian's book, as the result of painstaking research, presenting bit by bit the collected material about the life and creative quest of the poet, whose fate was intertwined with Armenia and constituted one of the best pages of his poetry, is valuable in that it highlights in the historical and literary mosaic of the Soviet era connection and mutual influence of two cultures that have enriched the history of

Russian literature. Each chapter of the book represents stages in the life and multi-layered creativity of Osip Mandelstam, who glorified Armenia with all the power of his talent. Almost six months (from May to October 1930) spent by Mandelstam in Armenia served as a new impetus for creativity. The poet traveled through the Armenian land (Leninakan [ now Gyumri], Yerevan, Sevan). He also visited the ruins of Zvartnots, Ashtarak, Byurakan, climbed Mount Aragats, and spent several unforgettable days in the Tsakhkadzor House of Writers.

Inspired by the history and culture of Armenia, O. Mandelstam intended to study the ancient Armenian language (grabar) and create a work on a historical theme, dedicated to an iconic figure - the Armenian king Arshak and the Persian Shah Shapukh. He also visited Shushi, which preserved traces of the most severe *pogroms* of the Armenian population that took place in 1920, and reflected his depressing impressions in the poem "Phaeton Driver":

*...So in Nagorno-Karabakh,  
In the predatory city of Shusha  
I've known these fears  
Consistent with the soul.*

Impressions from the trip to Armenia resulted in a piercing poetic monologue - 12 heartfelt poems about Armenia (note that he subsequently wrote 5 more poems related to Armenia), and into interesting prose as an echo of communication with this biblical land, radiating the indomitable energy of life, despite to the difficult trials that befell the Armenian people, who suffered all the bitterness of deprivation and injustice, but at the same time retained the will to live and create: "I drank in my soul to the health of young Armenia with its houses made of orange stone, to its white-toothed people's commissars, to the horse the sweat and tramp of queues and for her mighty language, which we are not worthy to speak, but should only shun in our weakness..." And for O. Mandelstam, as a representative of Russian culture, Armenia, with its unspent love for people and loyalty to age-old traditions, was surprisingly in tune.

A. Zakarian's study of Mandelstam, who by the will of fate plunged into the Armenian world, into the "Land of Drysalter fires / And dead pottery plains," allows the Armenian reader to comprehend the phenomenon of a great poet who did not remain indifferent to their homeland, its nature and cities ("Ah, Erivan, Erivan is not a hard-boiled city, / I love Babylon on your large-mouthed crooked streets") and look at your country through the prism of a poet fascinated by it.

It remains to be noted that the work done by the author of the book deserves the gratitude of both today's and future Armenian readers.

***Translated from Armenian by G. Harutyunyan***

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