

The “Asmatologika” (that is, “pertaining to song”) section of the May 1912 issue of G. D. Pachtikos’ Constantinopolitan journal *Mousikē* included a review by the editor himself (on pp. 158-159 of the journal) of a very recent concert conducted by Archimandrite Komitas (1869-1935), under the section “Music amongst the fellow peoples of [our] country”, and entitled “The great concert of the Armenians, given in support of the foundation of an Armenian Conservatoire” (one of Komitas’ many hopes to have remained unrealised).

Geōrgios Pachtikos (1869-1915) was an ethnically Greek, Ottoman ethnomusicologist, musicologist, teacher, composer and philologist, active in Constantinople and elsewhere. The disposition of this reviewer is interesting for several reasons. It constitutes a contemporaneous expert testimony – coming from an eminent authority from a neighbouring, indeed allied, tradition – to the quality of Komitas’ arrangements and of their execution. It acknowledges similarities between Armenian and Greek modality, but also serves to expose the by now rather divergent attitudes of the respective Churches towards harmonisation (against which prohibitions had been made by encyclicals issued by the Ecumenical Patriarchate),¹ and is thus suggestive of the ultimately different ways in which the Armenian and Greek Orthodox Churches had reacted to the rapid encroachment of Western musical tastes and practices by this time, perhaps also adumbrating the attendant evolutions in the aesthetics of their respective practitioners in decades to come. In our view, this review deserves the closest possible scrutiny, and can serve as an excellent point of departure for a fuller, comparative investigation.²

Archimandrite Komitas attracted considerable controversy amongst the Armenian Church hierarchy by incorporating his arrangements of selected items from the Divine Liturgy on the concert stage in Constantinople at this time. However, the melodies themselves (which he selected and substantially redacted), his arrangements thereof, and the beauty of the performances all served to inspire the greatest enthusiasm amongst Armenians (as well as others), stimulating and strengthening a sense of national identity, as well as earning accolades within the press and amongst international listeners, in

¹ We note that Encyclicals from the Greek Patriarchate dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century had strictly forbidden the practice of harmonising hymns, and condemned the performances in Greek Orthodox churches in Vienna of harmonised versions. The Encyclical of November 1846 by the Holy Synod stated: “This sinful innovation [...] is a grave mistake and dangerous and will cause greater transgressions and novelties to be introduced. It grieves our heart, as it leads to other unforeseen dangers, especially since it approaches the customs of the foreigners and heterodox [...]” To the best of our knowledge, the prohibition remains in force today.

² Hence our inclusion of a summary of the review (with selected quotations) in our discussion UTIDJIAN, Haig: “Points of interaction between Byzantine and Armenian church music: three documentary witnesses”, in: TROESLIGÅRD, Christian – WOLFRAM, Gerda (eds.): *Byzantine chant, radiation and interaction*. Leuven: Peeters, Eastern Christian Studies (accepted for publication).

HAIG UTIDJIAN

(Prague)

G. D. Pachtikos on Archimandrite Komitas

*Dedicated
to docent PhDr. Petr Daněš, Ph.D.,
on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday,
in friendship and in gratitude*

Abstract:

We present a fascinating review by the Greek musicologist Geōrgios Pachtikos (1869-1915) of a concert conducted by Archimandrite Komitas (1869-1935), published in the May 1912 issue of the Greek Constantinopolitan journal *Mousikē*, under the section “Music amongst the fellow peoples of our country”. A brief historical introduction is provided (including an account of earlier harmonisations of the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Orthodox Church), placing the review in the context of the contrasting attitudes of the Armenian and Greek Churches to the harmonisation of sacred music. A complete transcription of the Greek text and an English translation are appended.

Key words: Pachtikos, Komitas, Constantinople, Greek-Armenian cultural contacts, harmonisation of sacred music in the Christian Orthodox tradition, performance practice, westernisation, musical aesthetics

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Fig. 1: Poster advertising Archimandrite Komitas' concert at the Petits-Champs Winter Theatre, at "precisely 2 o'clock" on Sunday, 22 February, 1914 (9 February according to the old calendar), warning that the doors "are not to be opened during the singing". Komitas conducted his mixed chorus *Hay Gusan* ("Armenian Bard"), and the soloists were "Miss M. Makazean and Mr H. Sēmērcēan".



Fig. 2: A ticket (in French) for “armchair” seat at a “vocal concert” conducted by Fr. Komitas at the Petits-Champs Winter Theatre in Péra (now Beyoğlu, the then prestigious European diplomatic quarter of Constantinople) at “precisely half past two” on Sunday, 25 May, 1913 (12 May according to the old calendar). The cost was 40 piasters.

Constantinople, Paris, Alexandria and Tiflis. His harmonisation of sacred music was itself by now accepted with little resistance;³ that battle had already been fought by others before him. Indeed, although there is evidence⁴ to suggest that the version by the “Maestro della Congregazione dei Mechitaristi”, Pietro Bianchini (published in 1877) was used by the Venetian Mekhitarist Congregation for a number of years, outside the insular confines of San Lazzaro the situation was different. When K’ristap’or Kara-Murza (1853-1902) performed his own harmonised versions in 1892, opposition within the Holy See of Ejmiacin⁵ led to his expulsion from the seminary staff;⁶ but he had already inspired Komitas (then a novice at the seminary),

³ Yet at about the same time, there were arguments in the Armenian Constantinopolitan press between those favouring traditional (“Eastern”) and Western (“modernising”) directions. (For but one example, the reader is referred to the book by Fr. Aristakēs HISARLEAN, *Պատմություն Հայ Ժայնագրութեան և կենսագրութեան երաժիշտ ազգայնաց 1768-1909* [History of Armenian musical notation and biographies of Armenian musicians 1768-1909], Constantinople, 1914, esp. pp. 127-149, where the author documents his public polemic with the operetta singer Yovhannēs Ačēmean in 1893 in the daily *Arewelk’*, which also spilt over to the pages of two Turkish newspapers). The first generation of young intellectuals educated in European universities upon returning to Constantinople preferred to hear church music performed in a “Western” manner, considering it more authentically “Armenian”. Komitas himself sought to “purify” Armenian sacred music by expunging perceived “oriental” influences. In those circumstances the jettisoning of microtonal intervals and the adoption of the equally-tempered scale seems to have crept in and been increasingly adopted. The process became more rapid after the destruction of virtually the entire Anatolian Armenian population, with survivors dispersed in many Western countries (as well as the Middle East). A fuller discussion may be found in UTIDJIAN, Haig: *The music of the Armenian Hymnal: the Intesean corpus*, doctoral dissertation, Charles University in Prague, 2016, pp. 64-65, esp. footnote 125, and the “epilogue” section in UTIDJIAN, Haig: “A brief survey of systems of musical notation in Armenian sacred music”, in: ESCHERAMSHORN, Christiane (ed.): *Reflections on Armenia and the Christian Orient: Studies in honour of Vrej Nersessian*, Yerevan: Ankyunakar, 2017, pp. 261-284.

⁴ The present author recently discovered in San Lazzaro a manuscript dated 1889 of the choral sections with the verbal underlay in Latin transliteration and with the accompaniment arranged for string orchestra. For further information on the contributions of Pietro Bianchini within the San Lazzaro tradition, see UTIDJIAN, Haig: “Les Pères mékhitaristes vénitiens et la musique sacrée arménienne: les grandes figures et leur héritage”, Chapter 10 in OUTTIER, Bernard – YEVADIAN, Maxime K. (eds.): *Jubilé de l’Ordre des Pères mékhitaristes – Tricentenaire de la maison mère, l’Abbaye de Saint-Lazare 1717-2017*, Lyon: Sources d’Arménie, 2017, pp. 145-155.

⁵ *Inter alia*, the words of the Hymn of the Kiss of Peace (attributed to St. Nersēs the Gracious) from the Divine Liturgy were cited and construed as a prohibition against any departure from singing in unison: Տո՛ւք զօրհնութիւն ի մի բերան – “Give praise with a single mouth [=unanimously, with one accord]”.

⁶ Kara-Murza’s harmonisation was considered lost until it was discovered, revived and published by



Fig. 3a-b:

and also paved the way for the acceptance of Makar Ekmalean's version⁷ (Leipzig, 1896), which was sanctioned by Catholicos Mkrtic' Xrimean – who also gave his blessing to the harmonised volumes published by Amy Apcar (transcribed by herself, but apparently harmonised by one “Dr Slater”). The acceptance of harmonised versions may also have paved the ground for the use of the organ during the Divine Liturgy.⁸

The present English translation, made from the original Greek by the present author, appears herewith for the very first time. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Alexander Lingas for his kindness in drawing my attention to Pachtikos' fascinating review, for providing me with a scan of the original publication and for valuable advice. It is a pleasure also to note that Pachtikos' review has been briefly referred to in Merih Erol's excellent new monograph (*Greek Orthodox*

Armenian and French stubs of tickets for the same event – a concert conducted by Archimandrite Komitas on Sunday, 3 May 1914 (according to the new calendar), starting at “precisely two”; the red ticket (on the left) is for an “armchair” and bears the number 13. It is not entirely clear how much the ticket cost. The large figure “1” seems to be preceded a smaller digit “1” on the upper left and a smaller digit “2” on the lower right; the ticket would accordingly appear to cost one and a half (?) *mecitiye* (one *mecitiye* being the equivalent of twenty piasters). If, on the other hand, the small digit on the left hand side is a *šešt* sign (perhaps printed in error, instead of a *but'* sign), the cost could have been half a *mecitiye* – that is, the equivalent of ten piasters. In contrast, the ticket on the right entitled the bearer to a place in the gallery at a considerably more modest cost, at only 5 piasters.

Krikor Pidedjian in 2013; see PIDEJIAN, Krikor: *Քրիստոսափոր Կարա-Մուրզա* [K'ristap'or Kara-Murza], Yerevan, Publishing House of the Yerevan State Conservatoire, 2013.

⁷ Ekmalean's preface refers to the desire for progress and approaching perfection in musical art – harmonisation – on condition that the themes be preserved “faithfully”, and that the work be undertaken “becomingly”, and “without chromaticism”. Ekmalean was known as a member of the team who recorded Armenian sacred melodies in the Limōnčean system in the 1870s, so his Armenian credentials were strong; and the volume also displays the seal of approval of a special committee from the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, confirming the quality of the harmonisations. Ekmalean's version preceded those by his former pupil Komitas, who incidentally severely criticised his erstwhile teacher's version in the press (in the journal *Արարատ*, 3-4, 1898, pp. 111-117; for an excellent English translation see NERSESSIAN, Vrej N. (ed.): *Komitas: Armenian sacred and folk music*, transl. Edward GULBEKIAN, Richmond: Curzon, 1998, pp. 123-141), allegedly for paying insufficient attention to the flexible metre and Armenian modalities in his harmonisations.

⁸ Lewon Č'ilinkirean (1862-1932), who himself produced a somewhat errant harmonisation of the chants of the Divine Liturgy (see UTIDJIAN, Haig: *The art of the Armenian book through the ages: They who imbibed the effusions of the Spirit*, Červený Kostelec: Mervart, 2016, pp. 153-154), was probably the first to attempt the use of the organ during the Divine Liturgy in Constantinople – which provoked an act of sabotage by some monks overnight, who severed cables and pipes (the episode was personally narrated to the author by Č'ilinkirean's grandson, the violinist Levon Chilingirian). Yet, though himself a westerniser, Č'ilinkirean was involved in a public conflict with Komitas in the press – objecting to the latter's dismissive remarks against Constantinopolitan Armenian church musicians (as being excessively subjected to Turkish influences and insufficiently knowledgeable in the rules of harmony). Č'ilinkirean particularly angrily reacted (in the Constantinopolitan daily *Biwzandion*, 5397, 9 July 1914) against a eulogy of Komitas penned by the literary critic and writer Aršak Č'ōpanean (*Biwzandion*, 5384-5), who had claimed that the Archimandrite had liberated “our racial song” from the “Eastern yoke”.

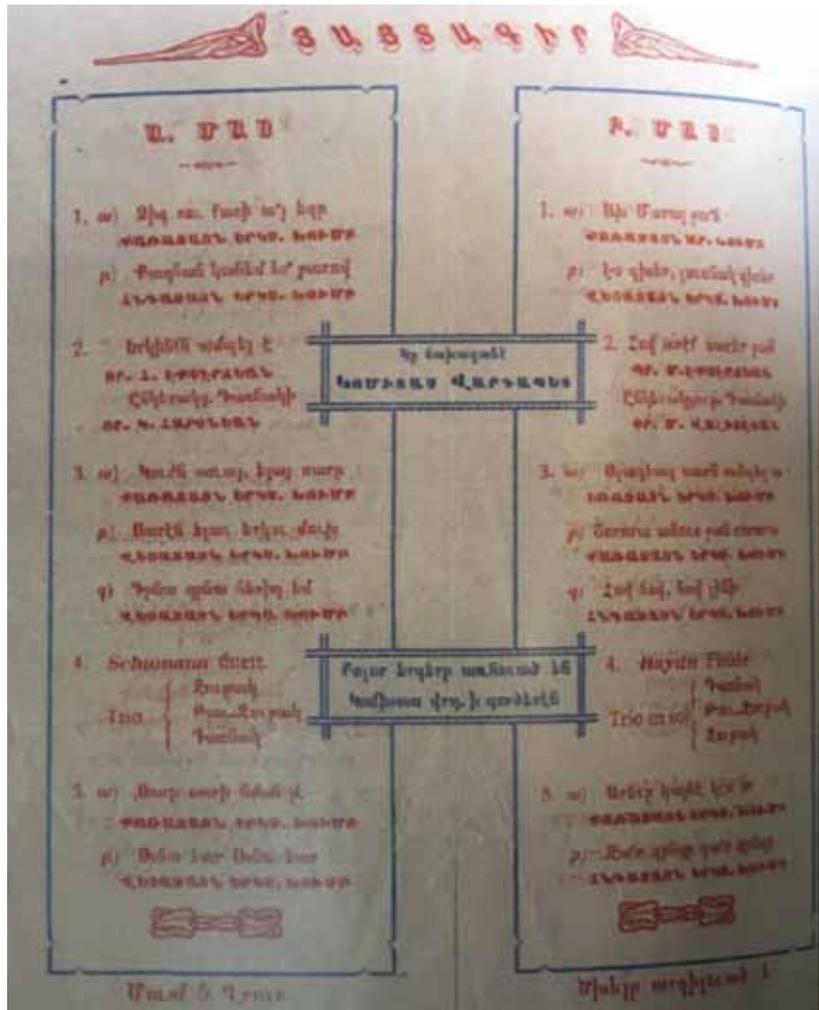
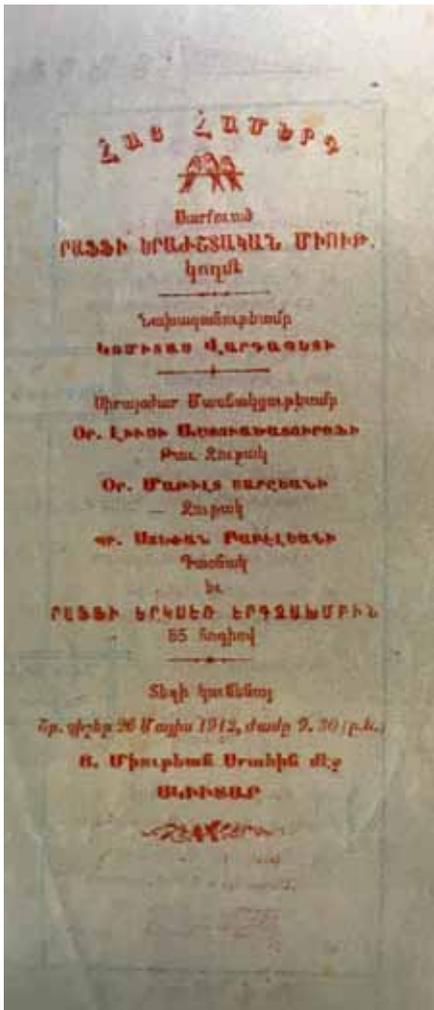


Fig. 4: A concert programme (in Armenian) for a concert arranged by the Raffi Musical Union, “presided over by” Archimandrite Komitas, with the eighty-five-strong Mixed Raffi Choir, as well as a trio composed of violin, and violoncello and piano instrumentalists. All the vocal items were arrangements for three-, four-, five- and six-part mixed chorus of Armenian folk songs by Komitas, as well as two further solo vocal items with piano accompaniment (but

the piano accompanists in either case differed from the pianist of the trio); the programme also included instrumental chamber works by Schumann (a “duet” for violin, ’cello piano – perhaps an arrangement by Hans Sitt of one of the Op. 34 duets for two solo voices with piano accompaniment?) and Haydn (the Finale of a Trio in G – could it have been the famous “Gypsy Rondo”, the Finale of the Trio No. 39 in G, Hob. XV/25?). Entrance cost 5 piasters, and smoking was forbidden.

Music in Ottoman Istanbul: Nation and Community in the Era of Reform, Indiana University Press, 2015, p. 144); I am indebted to Dr. Jiří K. Kroupa for drawing her citation to my attention, and to Dr. Jacob Olley for kindly making a scan of the relevant page available to me. I am also indebted to Mr Aris Y. H. Utidjian for his helpful advice on particular passages of the Greek text, and to Prof. Abraham Terian for his valuable comments. Figs. 1-4 show a miscellany of concert paraphernalia (tickets, programme, poster) appertaining to Komitas’ Constantinopolitan concerts in the period 1912-1914.⁹ However, we have not, alas, as yet succeeded in locating the programme of the particular event reviewed by Pachtikos, or the original of the photograph of Komitas that appeared on p. 159 of the review (which we reproduce directly from the printed article, as an inset in our transcription and translation below, adjacent to the appropriate reference in the text).

⁹ These have been reproduced from YARMAN, Arsen: “Gomidas’in son evi: saygı ile Anıyoruz...”, in *Surp Pırgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Vakfı*, March – April 2017, pp. 100-107 (in Turkish). I am most grateful to the Holy Saviour Armenian Hospital Foundation in Istanbul for kindly providing me with a copy of the journal.



Fig. 5:
Archimandrite Komitas,
1909

Η ΜΟΥΣΙΚΗ ΑΝΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΣΥΝΟΙΚΟΥΣ ΛΑΟΥΣ

Ἡ μεγάλη συναυλία τῶν Ἀρμενίων, ἡ δοθεῖσα ὑπὲρ ἰδρύσεως ἀρμενικοῦ Ὡδείου. – Συναυλία χάριν τῶν Ὀθωμανίδων.

Μετὰ τὴν μεγάλην ὄργανικὴν συναυλίαν τῆς ἱστορικῆς ὀρχήστρας τῶν Γενιτσάρων, τὴν δοθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τῶν συμπολιτῶν ἡμῶν Τούρκων ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ Μνηματακίων (ἴδε Τεῦχος Γ' ἐν σελ. 99), ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ θεάτρῳ ἔσχομεν καὶ τὴν μεγάλην τῶν συμπολιτῶν Ἀρμενίων *φωνητικὴν συναυλίαν*, ἡ ὁποία κατὰ πολὺ ἐνδιαφέρει καὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς Ἕλληνας διὰ τὸ κοινὸν μουσικὸν αὐτῆς θέμα. Μετὰ πολλῆς συμπαθείας καὶ ἐνδιαφέροντος παρηκολουθήσαμεν τὴν συναυλίαν ταύτην, διότι ἐν αὐτῇ ἐπιστοποιήσαμεν προσπάθειαν εὐγενῆ πρὸς δημιουργίαν ἀρμενικῆς μουσικῆς ἀκραιφνῶς ἐθνικῆς. Ἡ ἀχανὴς Ὀθωμανικὴ Αὐτοκρατορία, ἡ παλαιὰ καὶ ἔνδοξος τῶν παλαιῶν αὐτῆς λαῶν πατρίς, προσομοιάζει πρὸς ἀπέραντον μαγευτικὸν κήπον, ἐν ᾧ ἕκαστος λαὸς διατηρεῖ τὰ εὖσομα αὐτοῦ ἄνθη. Ἡ ἀρμενικὴ δὲ συναυλία παρουσίαζεν ἡμῖν ὡραίαν μουσικὴν ἀνθοδέσμη, ἐκ τοῦ οἰκείου τμήματος τοῦ ὡραίου ἀνθῶνος τῆς κοινῆς πατρίδος περισυλλεγεῖσαν. Περιεῖχε περὶ τὰ 20 ἐθνικὰ δημοτικὰ τῶν Ἀρμενίων ἄσματα, τὰ ὁποῖα μετὰ στοργῆς περισυνέλεξε καὶ ἐνηρμόνισεν ὁ διαπρεπὴς ἀρμένιος κληρικὸς μουσικὸς *Βαρταμπέτ Γκομιδάς*, οὗ τὴν εἰκόνα παραθέτομεν ἐνταῦθα. Τὰ ἄσματα ταῦτα ἐξετελέσθησαν ὑπὸ τὴν διεύθυνσιν τοῦ συλλογέως ὑπὸ 200 καλλιφῶνων νέων καὶ νεανίδων, ἀρμενίων *ἐρασιμόλων*, ὧν οἱ πλείστοι ἦσαν μαθηταὶ καὶ μαθήτριά ἀνωτέρων ἀρμενικῶν Γυμνασίων καὶ Παρθεναγωγείων τῆς Πόλεώς μας μετὰ τῶν διδασκάλων καὶ διδασκαλισσῶν αὐτῶν. Τὸ θέαμα τοῦ συνόλου ἦτο ὄντως συγκινητικὸν καὶ ἀξιοθαύμαστον. Ἄλλως τε δὲ ἡ ὑπὸ ἀνωτέρου κληρικοῦ περισυλλογῆ, ἐναρμόνισης, ἐξάσκησις καὶ διεύθυνσις ἐν δημοσίᾳ συναυλίᾳ ἐθνικῶν ἄσμάτων τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἀρμενικοῦ ἔθνους, ἐνεῖχεν ὄντως τὸ ἰδιότροπον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὲς ἐν τῇ πράξει. Ὑπενθύμιζεν ἡμῖν τοὺς παλαιότερους τοῦ χριστιανισμοῦ αἰῶνας, καθ' οὓς διαπρεπεῖς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Πατέρες εἶχον τὴν πρόνοιαν καὶ τὴν φροντίδα τοῦ καταρτισμοῦ *ἐκκλησιαστικῶν μουσικῶν χορῶν*, ἐξ ὅλων τῶν τάξεων τῶν πιστῶν. Ὁ δὲ Μ. Βασίλειος δὲν κατώκνει αὐτὸς οὗτος νὰ καταρτίσῃ καὶ νὰ διευθύνῃ ἐν Καισαρείᾳ μουσικοὺς χοροὺς. Καὶ οὕτω ἐκεῖνο τὸ ὁποῖον ἐν τῷ προηγουμένῳ τεύχει τοῦ ἡμετέρου Περιοδικοῦ (σελ. 107) ὁ ἱερολ. Κωδικογράφος τῶν Πατριαρχείων κ. Ἰωακεῖμ διὰ τοῦ ἄρθρου αὐτοῦ «*Θέατρον καὶ κληρὸς*» ἐπειράθη θεωρητ[**p. 159**]κῶς νὰ διαπραγματευθῇ ἤδη ὁ ἀρμενικὸς κληρὸς ἐμπράκτως ἀπεδειξε καὶ ἐφήρμωσεν αὐτό. Διότι τὴν ρηθεῖσαν συναυλίαν οὐ μόνον κληρικὸς διηύθυνεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἱκανοὶ κληρικοὶ ὑπῆρχον μετὰ τῶν θεατῶν αὐτῶν, οἱ ὁποῖοι συνεμερίζοντο τὰ συναισθήματα τοῦ πνευματικοῦ αὐτῶν ποιμνίου. Ἴδου ἀληθῆς εἰκὼν ἐθνικοῦ βίου.

Geörgios D. Pachtikos:

Music amongst the fellow peoples of [our] country

The great concert of the Armenians, given in support of the foundation of an Armenian Conservatoire. – Concert thanks to Ottoman ladies.

[*Mousikē* 5, April 1912, pp. 158-159]

Following the great *instrumental concert* of the historic orchestra of the Janissaries, given by our Turkish fellow citizens at the Mnēmatakiōn theatre (see Vol. 3, on p. 99), in the same theatre we also had the *vocal concert* of our Armenian fellow citizens, which greatly interests us Greeks too, by virtue of its common musical subject matter. We followed this same concert with great liking and interest, because in it we became aware of a noble effort towards the creation of a purely national Armenian music. The vast Ottoman Empire, the ancient and glorious fatherland of its ancient nations, is similar to an endless magical garden in which each nation preserves its fragrant flowers. The Armenian concert presented us with a beautiful musical bouquet, gathered from its very own section of the beautiful flower plot of the common fatherland. It contained around twenty national folk songs of the Armenians, which were selected and harmonised with loving care by the distinguished Armenian clergy musician, *Vartampet Gkomidas* [sic!], whose picture we have inserted herewith. These songs



ΓΚΟΜΙΔΑΣ ΒΑΡΤΑΜΠΕΤ
[Gkomidas Vartampet]

were performed under the direction of the collector himself by two hundred vocally endowed young men and women, Armenian *amateurs*, most of whom were male and female pupils of higher Armenian Gymnasia and Girls' Schools from our City, together with their men and women teachers. The overall spectacle was truly moving and worthy of admiration. Besides, the selection, harmonisation, training and direction by the aforementioned clergyman in a public concert of national songs of the brother Armenian nation, contained something truly original, but [were] also grand in realisation. It reminded us of the early centuries of Christianity, in which distinguished Church Fathers were provident and caring in

setting up *church musical choirs*, from all classes of the faithful. Basil the Great himself was unsparing in his efforts to establish and direct musical choruses in Caesaria. And so, that which in the previous issue of our magazine (p. 107) the Rev. Joachim, the Codicographer of the Patriarchate attempted to deal with theoretically by means of his article "Theatre and clergy", Armenian clergy have already proved in practice and applied. For, not only was the said concert directed by a clergyman, but there were a good many clergy amongst the audience itself who shared the sentiments of their spiritual flock. Here lies the true picture of national life.

Λεπτομερή ἀνάλυσιν τῶν ψαλέντων ἁσμάτων δὲν θὰ ἐπιχειρήσωμεν, διότι τὸ τοιοῦτον θὰ ἀπῆτει ἐπαρκῆ χωρὸν καὶ χρόνον. Ἄλλ' ἐν συντόμῳ λέγομεν ὅτι τὰ ψαλέντα ἁσματα ἦσαν πολυποίκιλα εἰς ρυθμούς καὶ ἤχους, ὑπενθυμίζοντα ζωηρῶς τοὺς ἐκκλησιαστικούς ἠμῶν Ἦχους. Ἐν γένει ὁμως δυνάμεθα νὰ εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἡ συγγένεια τῶν ἀρμενικῶν ἁσμάτων μετὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων δημοτικῶν καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῶν εἶνε μεγίστη. Ἐν μάλιστα χορικὸν ἁσμα (τὸ ὑπ' ἀρ. 3 τοῦ Γ' Μέρους) παρωμοίαζε πολὺ τὴν μελωδίαν τοῦ «Κύριε τῶν δυνάμεων, μεθ' ἡμῶν γενοῦ», ἕτερον δὲ ὑπενθύμιζε τὸν ἡμέτερον *Κασάπικον* καὶ ἄλλο πάλιν τὸ *λάγι ἀρνί*. Μόνον εἰς τὰ ἁσματα τοῦ Καυκάσου παρετηρήσαμεν ἐπίδρασιν τινα τῆς ρωσικῆς μουσικῆς. Καὶ ὑπὸ ρυθμικὴν ἐπίσης ἔποψιν παρετηρήσαμεν οὐ σμικρὰς ὁμοιότητας πρὸς τὰ ἡμέτερα. Δὲν ἔλειπε δὲ οὔτε ὁ ἑλληνικὸς *ἑπτάσημος* ($7/8$), ὁ χαρακτηριστικὸς οὔτος ρυθμὸς τῆς ἀρχαίας μουσικῆς.

Τὰ ἐκτελεσθέντα ταῦτα ἀρμενικὰ ἁσματα ἐψάλησαν ὅλα ἀνεξαιρέτως μὲ *πολυφωνικὴν ἀρμονίαν*, ἣν ἐφιλοτέχνησεν αὐτὸς ὁ Πανιερώτατος Γκομιδᾶς, τυγχάνων ἀπόφοιτος τοῦ Βερολινείου Ὡδείου. Αἱ ἀρχικαὶ μελωδίαί, ἀνεπαφοὶ οὔσαι, ἐξετελοῦντο κυρίως ἀπὸ τὰς γυναικείας φωνάς. Ἄλλ' ἡ πολυφωνικὴ αὐτῶν περιβολὴ ἦτο μεγαλοπρεπὴς καὶ λίαν τεχνικὴ, καὶ τόσον μάλιστα τεχνικὴ, ὥστε πρὸς στιγμὴν ἐνομίσαμεν, ὅτι τὰ ἐνηρμονισμένα ταῦτα ἁσματα θὰ κατέλιπον τὸν πολὺν λαὸν ψυχρὸν εἰς τὰς καλλονὰς τῆς ἀρχικῆς μελωδίας. Πόσον ὁμως ἠπατώμεθα! Τὸ τέλος ἐκάστου ἁσματος ἐπεστέφετο διὰ ραγδαίων χειροκροτημάτων καὶ ἐπευφημιῶν καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀκόμη τῶν ἀκροατῶν τοῦ Ὑπερώου. Ἄς λάβωμεν ὑπὸ σπουδαίαν ὄψιν τὸ φαινόμενον τοῦτο οἱ ἀμείλικτοι τῆς πολυφωνίας πολέμιοι, οἱ διῶσχυριζόμενοι τὸ ἀδύνατον τῆς ἀρμονικῆς περιβολῆς τῶν δημοτικῶν καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἠμῶν ἁσμάτων.

Ἡ ἐκτέλεσις τῶν ἁσμάτων ἦτο ἀρκούντως ἐπιτυχής. Οἱ χρωματισμοὶ ἰδίως ἦσαν θαυμάσιοι ἂν καὶ μουσικὰ ὄργανα δὲν συνώδευον αὐτά. Ἄλλ' αἱ μονωδίαί καὶ αἱ τετραωδίαί εἶχον κάποιαν ἀτονίαν περὶ τὴν ἔκφρασιν. Ἡ συναυλία εἶχε καὶ μίαν ἀνέλπιστον ἐκπληξιν. Αὐτὸς ὁ διευθύνων ἔμελψε διὰ λαμπρᾶς βαρυτόνου φωνῆς ἐν ἱστορικὸν ἁσμα, τὰ ραγδαῖα δὲ χειροκροτήματα ἠνάγκασαν αὐτὸν νὰ μέλψῃ καὶ δεῦτερον καὶ τρίτον ἁσμα.

Τὸ θέατρον ἦτο ἀσφυκτικῶς πλήρες. Ἄπασαι αἱ κοινωνικαὶ τῆς ἀρμενικῆς κοινότητος τάξεις ἀντεπροσωπεύοντο, μὲ δικαίαν χαρὰν καὶ ἐθνικὴν ὑψηροφάνειαν χειροκροτοῦσαι τὰ ἐθνικὰ αὐτῶν ἁσματα, τὰ ὅποια ἀνεπὸλουν συγκινητικὰς ἀναμνήσεις ἐκ τοῦ ἐθνικοῦ αὐτῶν βίου καὶ τῆς ἐθνικῆς ἱστορίας. Διεκρίνοντο μεταξὺ τῶν παρόντων καὶ ξένοι τινὲς φυσιογνομῖαι, ἐν αἷς ἐξείχεν ὁ συμπαθὴς καὶ ἀγαπητὸς Τελετάρχης τῶν Ἀνακτόρων Ismaïl Djénany βέης, εὐγενῆς θιασώτης καὶ ὑποστηρικτῆς πάσης μουσικῆς παρ' ἡμῖν κινήσεως καὶ προσπαθείας.

Συγχαίρομεν θερμῶς τὸν διαπρεπῆ μουσικολόγον κληρικὸν Παν. Γκομιδᾶς διὰ τὰς εὐγενεῖς αὐτοῦ μουσικὰς προσπαθείας, αἱ ὅποια οὕτως ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐξαίρουσι τὰς προοδευτικὰς τάσεις τῶν ἀδελφῶν Ἀρμενίων.

Γ. Δ. Π.

We shall not attempt a detailed analysis of the hymns chanted, as anything of the sort would demand sufficient space and time. But we briefly state that the hymns chanted were manifold in their rhythms and modes, vividly reminiscent of our own church Modes. But in general we are able to say that the kinship of the Armenian songs with our own folk and church songs is very great. Indeed, one choral song (no. 3 in Part III) was very similar to the melody of "*Kyrie tōn dynamēōn, meth' hēmōn genou* [Lord of hosts, abide with us]", whilst another was reminiscent of our own *Kasapikon*, and yet another of the *lagi arni*. Only in the Caucasian songs did we observe any Russian musical influence. And from the point of view of rhythm also, we noticed no small similarity to our own. Nor was the Greek *heptasēmos* ($7/8$) missing – this characteristic rhythm of ancient music.

The Armenian hymns performed were all sung without exception in *polyphonic harmonisation*, which was arranged by the Very Rev. Gkomidas himself, who happens to be a graduate of the Berlin Conservatoire. The original melodies, which were left untouched, were performed mainly by the female voices; but their polyphonic context was grand and very technical, and indeed was so technical that for a moment we thought that these harmonised songs would have left the greater part of the audience cold towards the beauties of the original melody itself. But how we were deceived! The conclusion of each song would be crowned with intense applause and ovation, and even by the listeners of the Gallery. Let those of us keenly take this phenomenon into account who are implacable opponents of polyphony, who insist on the impossibility of the harmonised arrangement of our folk and church melodies.

The performance of the songs was successful enough. The colours were especially wonderful, even though they were unaccompanied by musical instruments. But the monodies and the four-part pieces had a certain weakness of expression. The concert also included an unhoped-for surprise: the conductor himself sang an historical song in a bright baritone voice, whilst the intense applause forced him to sing yet a second and a third song.

The theatre was suffocatingly full. All the social classes of the Armenian community were represented, and with justified joy and national pride applauded their national songs, which evoked moving reminiscences of their national life and national history. Amongst those present, some foreign personages could also be discerned, of whom the foremost was the amiable and well-loved Master of Ceremonies of the Palace, Ismaïl Djénany Bey, noble patron and supporter of all our musical activity and endeavour.

We warmly congratulate the distinguished musician clergyman, the Very Rev. Gkomidas for his noble musical efforts, which thus further enhance the progressive tendencies of brother Armenians.

G. D. P.

(Translated from the Greek original by Haig Utidjian)