

## INTERMEDIARY TRANSLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN ARMENIAN PERIODICALS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

VARDUHI BALOYAN\*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5018-4045>

INSTITUTE OF LITERATURE AFTER M. ABEGHYAN OF NAS RA

**Abstract:** This article is dedicated to the study of intermediary translations of children's literature into Eastern Armenian in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Juvenile Periodicals such as *Aghbyur* and *Hasker* were prominent publications during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and featured a wide range of literary works, including translations of foreign literature. This study is focused on the translations of English literature, however, other languages are also considered. These periodicals, along with others, were important sources of literature and education for Armenian children. They contributed to the development of Armenian children's literature, fostered a love for reading, and played a vital role in preserving Armenian cultural identity. Additionally, Armenian authors and educators adapted and retold European children's stories to make them more accessible and relatable to Armenian audiences. This practice allowed for the cultural exchange of ideas and the incorporation of foreign literature into the Armenian literary landscape.

**Keywords:** intermediary translations; children's literature; Armenian periodicals; *Hasker* and *Aghbyur* juvenile periodicals

### 1. Introduction

Children's press constitutes an integral component of the Armenian periodical press, with its origin and development intricately intertwined with the historical course of our nation's social and political evolution. Targeted towards children and teenagers, this press exerts its influence, permeating the spiritual and intellectual sphere of the younger generation.

English literature, alongside Russian, German, Italian and French counterparts, occupied a prominent position in Armenian periodicals. The literary works of English writers such as Dickens, Kipling, Ouida, Twain, and Wilde were extensively translated, establishing them as some of the most translated pieces in these publications. This facilitated the availability of popular stories and fairy tales to Armenian readers. Research indicated that, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, French, German, and Russian emerged

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\* [varduhi.baloyan@edu.isec.am](mailto:varduhi.baloyan@edu.isec.am)



as key intermediary languages for translating English children's literature into Eastern Armenian. The selection of intermediary language varied based on the discretion of translators, editors, and the socio-political context of specific communities.

In our current research, we primarily focus on translations of European literature done through Russian into Eastern Armenian since *Hasker* and *Aghbyur* were both published in the region under the rule of the Russian Empire and Russian, with its wide reach and influence, played a mediated role in introducing Armenian readers to the world literature. Their study offers a comprehensive opportunity to examine the evolution of juvenile literature during this period and the role of intermediary languages in this domain. Various translation techniques, such as interpretation and adaptation, as well as domestication of characters and settings into the Armenian-speaking cultural context, have found widespread use.

## 2. The Socio-Political Situation of Armenia at the Turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Armenia faced a complex socio-political situation. Eastern Armenia, under Tsarist Russian rule, experienced a mix of progress and oppression. The 1880s saw the rise of Armenian intellectual and cultural awakening, marked by the establishment of literary works and educational initiatives.

Simultaneously, in Western Armenia, which was occupied by the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian population faced discrimination and periodic violence, particularly during the Hamidian massacres in the 1890s, which resulted in widespread killings and deportations. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were marked by increasing tensions and eventually culminating in the Armenian Genocide in 1915. Over time, Western Armenia witnessed a tragic loss of its native Armenian population, Armenian identity, and historical cultural heritage.

Amid those immense challenges, Eastern Armenia experienced a brief period of independence between 1918-1920, after which it was annexed to the Soviet Union.

*Aghbyur* (1883-1918) and *Hasker* (1905-1922), both originating under the Russian Empire, held immense significance in disseminating the world literary heritage. Through both direct and indirect translations, these publications played a vital role in enriching the domain of literature, offering a diverse and expansive literary landscape to the Armenian audience.

## 3. Translation Trends of the Period

Translations were more frequent in periodicals since the establishment of the first Armenian periodical *Azdarar* (1794-1796) in Armenian community in Madras, India (now Chennai). The traditions continued in later centuries in almost all the Armenian communities and included all major periodicals, such as *Bazmavep*, *Bourastatn Mankants*, *Barekan Mankants*.

Translated works frequently underwent substantial alterations. Abridgments and cuts were commonplace, with passages often excised or adapted to conform to layout

and space constraints. Furthermore, the omission of author and translator names was a prevalent practice, either intentionally or obscured under indecipherable pseudonyms. Titles underwent frequent and sometimes drastic modifications, occasionally rendering them unrecognizable. This phenomenon was not uncommon and could also be attributed to intermediary translations in the course of the publication process.

Translated literature significantly fostered the evolution of Armenian secular literature and the establishment of independent children's literature. Studies have shown that translated literature worldwide has been utilized as a tool for shaping the mindset of future generations. This process aimed to meet specific societal and political needs. In her analyses of intermediary translations, Prof. Jivanyan writes:

Անմիջական ու միջնորդավորված թարգմանությունների քանակական հարաբերակցությունը պայմանավորվում էր տվյալ շրջանի քաղաքական, պատմական, տնտեսական և մշակութային հանգամանքներով: Մինչխորհրդային շրջանում ֆրանսերենից հայերեն գրական թարգմանությունների մի զգալի մասն արված էր արևմտահայմտավորականների, հայ թարգմանիչների այն ճյուղի կողմից, որն առանձնանում էր ֆրանսիական մշակույթի ու գրականության քաջատեղյակությամբ: XXդ. սկզբներին, անդառնալի կորուստներ կրելով, արևմտահայ մտավորական միտքը գրեթե պարալիզացվում է հայերենի լեզվական տարածքը ցավալիորեն կրճատվում: Այս շրջանում ֆրանսերենից ռուսերենով միջնորդավորված հայերեն թարգմանությունների փաստը պայմանավորված էր ռուս և արևելահայ մտավորականության գրողների, թարգմանիչների, մանկավարժների ու հրատարակիչների գրական-մշակութային սերտ առնչություններով: (Jivanyan 2010:187)

[The quantitative relations between direct and mediated translations was determined by certain political, historical, economic, and cultural circumstances prevailing in a given period. During the pre-Soviet era, a considerable portion of literary translations from French to Armenian was carried out by Western Armenian intellectuals—a branch of Armenian translators known for their profound understanding of French culture and literature. At the onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Western Armenian intellectual sphere experienced significant and irreversible setbacks, leading to a near paralysis of thought and a marked contraction of the Armenian linguistic sphere. During this phase, the occurrence of French-to-Russian mediated Armenian translations was a consequence of the close literary and cultural ties between Russian and Eastern Armenian intellectuals, writers, translators, educators, and publishers]<sup>1</sup>.

Hence, initially French held a prominent role as one of the primary intermediary languages. However, under certain political circumstances, Russian gradually emerged as the predominant intermediary language, even preceding Eastern Armenia's annexation to the USSR.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by the author.

#### 4. Translated Literary Masterpieces in Periodical *Aghbyur* (1883-1918)

The pages of *Aghbyur* featured translated and adapted works from a diverse array of genres, showcasing contributions from prominent literary figures. In doing so, *Aghbyur* played an important role in the advancement of translated literature, thereby influencing the trajectory of Armenian juvenile literature. Works of renowned authors, including Émile Zola, Jorge Sand, Chekhov, L.Tolstoy, Pushkin, Hayne, Hugo, Dickens, Daudet, Andersen, Schiller, Goethe, Tennyson, Ouida, Kipling, Cornell, Goody, Bret Harte, and others, were translated and published in Armenian. Among notable translators were featured prominent writers Toumanian, Aghayan, Raffi, Tsaturian, Papazian, who were instrumental in bringing these works to the Armenian audience.

In the book “From the Golden Ages”....to the 21<sup>st</sup>,” folklore scholar L. Karapetyan highlights a noteworthy aspect:

...և քանի որ ամսագրի երևան գալը զուգահիստում է ռեալիստական արվեստի և գրականության զարգացման նոր ժամանակաշրջանին, այդ հանգամանքը, ինչպես և կապը ռուսական, վրացական, արևմտաեվրոպական առաջադիմական գրականության և մանկական ամսագրերի հետ, իրենց դրական ներգործությունն են ունենում՝ նպաստելով «Աղբյուրի» թեմատիկայի ընդլայնմանն ու արտահայտչական միջոցների հարստացմանը: ...«Աղբյուրի» գրականոստիարակչական «դասերը» ավանդել են ոչ միայն հայ գրողները, այլև ռուս և համաշխարհային գրական երևելի դեմքերը՝ նրանց լավագույն մանկապատանեկան ստեղծագործությունների հայերեն թարգմանություններով: (Karapetyan 2008:187)

[The emergence of the periodical *Aghbyur*, coinciding with the development of realistic art and literature in the new era, along with its substantial affiliations with Russian, Georgian, and Western European progressive literature and juvenile periodicals, has had a positive impact. It played a crucial role in diversifying *Aghbyur*'s thematic content and enriching its expressive means. *Aghbyur*'s literary and educational 'lessons' have been taught not only through the contributions of Armenian writers but also through the influence of renowned Russian and global authors. This influence was facilitated through the translations of their best juvenile works into Armenian...]<sup>2</sup>.

In the Bibliography of *Aghbyur*, the section dedicated to Literature initiates with Armenian literature in its original form. Subsequently, it transitions to Foreign Literature, encompassing a diverse array of nationalities, including American, Austrian, English, Arabic, Danish, Icelandic, Spanish, Iranian, Italian, Indian, Scottish, etc. Predominantly focused on juvenile literature, these translations covered various topics ranging from science, education, arts, and culture. Our primary focus falls on the works written in English language.

Within the American Literature, *Aghbyur* introduces notable works, including Beecher Stowe's novel “Little Pussy Willow” (Our Young Folks 1866) which appeared

<sup>2</sup> Translated by the author.

in Armenian translation under the title «Դաշտային և ջերմասնոցի ծաղիկ» (“Field and Greenhouse Flowers”), translated by E. Nakhsidyan. This adaptation could be attributed to a mediated translation. A Russian rendition titled «Цветок полевой и цветок оранжерейный» (Beecher-Stowe 1870) also exists, which is equivalent to the Armenian title. We may assume, that the Armenian translation is mediated through a similar Russian source.

Subsequently, we come across a short story titled «Ծննդեան գիշերին» (On the Christmas Night) translated by P. Zakaryan. It is an adaptation of Bret Harte's short story “How Santa Claus Came to Simpson’s Bar.” The title in Armenian translation underwent modifications, making it unrecognizable. This original story first appeared in the 1872 issue of *The Atlantic* magazine (Harte 1872: 349-357).

English literature is represented by such literary giants as Dickens, Kipling, Ouida, and Tennyson. A folk story “The Girl of Tyrol” («Տիրուցի աղջիկը») is attributed to Dickens. The origin of the story has not been identified. Kipling's metaphorical tale of struggle, “Riki-Tiki-Tavi,” known to be included in the “Jungle Book” and originally published in 1895, was translated by V. Papazyan. Another interesting work was A. Tennyson's poem “Farewell” translated by H. Hovhannisyan. Ouida's (Maria Louise Ramé 1839-1908) novel “The Child of Urbino or Mouflou,” was published in *Aghbyur* in 1885. It is worth mentioning that Russian translations of Ouida's works can also be traced back to 1883, which makes it possible to trace the origin of Armenian mediated translation (Ouida 1883).

*Aghbyur* features other short stories of moral nature, such as “Giant Hands” («Հսկա ձեռքեր» [1892]), “The Little Dick” («Փոքրիկ Դիքը» [1886]), “Dreams of Manoushak” («Մանուշակի երազները»), nursery rhymes “An April Butterfly” («Ապրիլի թիթեռնիկ մը»), “If I were a Ray” («Եթե շող մը ըլլամ ես...») etc. which are not attributed to any author.

## 5. Translated Literature in Hasker (1905-1922)

*Hasker* originated in 1905 and operated with some interruptions over two decades. Translations within this period covered various genres. The “Foreign Literature” chapter of *Hasker's Bibliography* encompasses American, English, Austrian, German, Italian, Irish, and Russian literature, among others. The majority of translations were mediated by Russian, which, in turn, could be either a direct or mediated translation. The identification of most works was accomplished through the availability of digital archives and network resources. Famous writers like Toumanian, Aghayan, and Khnkoyan, already known from *Aghbyur*, played active roles in the translation endeavors of *Hasker*.

Before referring to indirect translations, it should be noted that there were numerous direct translations of Russian juvenile literature, Krylov being one of the most frequently translated authors, the most prominent of his works being translated by Khnkoyan, such as “The Wolf and the Crane” («Волк и журавль,” «Գայլն ու կռունկը» [1909]), “The Wolf and the Shepherds” («Волк и пастухи,” «Գայլն ու

հովիւները» [1911]), “The Swan, Pike, and the Crayfish” («Лебедь, щука и рак», «Խեցգետինը, ձուկն ու կարապը» [1909]), “The Dragonfly and the Ant” («Стрекоза и муравей», «Ճպուռն ու մրջինը» [1909]), “The Monkey and Glasses” («Мартышка и очки», «Կապիկն ու ակնոցները» [1909]).

Toumanian translated numerous European tales through Russian, with the most noteworthy being the Italian tales “*Re Tuono*” («Որոտ թագաւորը» [1913], “La figlia dell’orco” and “Mastro acconcia-e-guasta.” The last two were merged into a single Armenian tale titled «Սարդակերի աղջիկն ու խորհրդաւոր վարպետը» (1913). Furthermore, Toumanian translated the first Irish tale into Armenian «Կախարդի քսակը» (Toumanian 1914: 73-78), from a Russian version, titled «Сумка ВЕДЬМЫ» (“The Old Hag’s Long Leather Bag”). Alvard Jivanyan’s article “On an Armenian Translation of Seumas Macmanus’s The Old Hag’s Long Leather Bag” (2021: 10-18) provides comprehensive insights. Interestingly, the Irish tale, like its Italian counterparts, went uncredited in *Hasker*. Jivanyan states: “Surprisingly, MacManus’s name was not included into the first edition of the Armenian translation. This was the result of the unaccountable editorial policy in Russian and Armenian children’s magazines of the time: children’s texts were often published anonymously” (2021: 16). Other mediated works, including Tales of Brothers Grimm, Anderson, Rudolf Erich Raspe, Edmondo de Amicis, Rosegger, Wilde, Kipling, Hugo, and more were published in the consequent years.

Given our emphasis on literature originally composed in English, our subsequent discussion will delve into specific works classified under American and English literature. American literature featured Henry Brooks Adams, Frances Burnett, Bret Harte, Ernest Seton, and Mark Twain. We were able to trace the origin of some of the works, while others remained unidentified. Frances Hodgson Burnett’s novel “Sarah Crewe,” was translated by Sh. Ter-Nikogosyan («Սարա Կրու» [1908]). Bret Harte’s “M’Liss: A Story of the Sierra Nevada” was published with the title “Mlis” («Մլիս» [1910]).

Several stories were translated from Ernest Thompson Seton’s (1860-1946) book “Wild Animals I Have Known” [1898]. The Hangman («Կախակաւանջիկը» [1910]) was translated by St. Lisitsyan. “The Lame Puppy” («Կաղիկ քոթոթը» [1913] was translated by J.Ter-Grigoryan. The Winnipeg Wolf («Վինիպեգի գայլը» [1913]) was translated by Simak and “Bingo” («Բինգո» [1914]) was rendered into Armenian by Apresyan. In all the above cases Russian was marked as the intermediate language.

Mark Twain was represented by two works, with one of them being “Death Disk” («Մահուան օղակը» [1913]), translated by Tavaqalyan. The story was first published in Harper’s Magazine in 1901 (Twain 1901). The second work was “A Fable by Mark Twain” («Պատկեր. Առակ Մարկ Տւէնի» [1910]). The translator and the source language remain uncredited.

English Literature was featured by translations and adaptations of scholars Mirianyan, Simak, Sargsyan, Ghalachyan, among others. Two interesting fairy tales were translated indirectly through a Russian unpublished manuscript by Mirianyan, the

first work being the story “First Snowdrops” («Առաջին ձնծաղիկները» (1910), and the second one - “Aqua” («Արև» [1910]).

Russian-mediated translations brought forth two of Kipling’s works. “Kotuko. The Esquimau Boy,” translated by N. Sargsyan («Կոտուկո» էսկիմոսի տղա» [1914]) is from Kipling’s “Second Jungle Book” (Kipling 1895). It not only showcases Kipling’s narrative but also features a preface about Esquimaus, composed by literary critic V. Lvov-Rogachevsky. An earlier Russian translation is featured by Lyubov Khavkina (1871-1949), «Рассказ из жизни эскимосов» [1899], published in Юный Читатель (Young Reader) (Kipling 1895). The Armenian translation may refer to this rendition. Additionally, Khnkoyan translated another interesting story by Kipling, “The Cat that Walked by Himself” («Իր գլխու տեր կատուն» [1915]), adding another layer to the richness of literary translation.

South African writer Schreiner Olive’s (1855-1920) “*Janide*” («Ջանիդե» (1915) stands out as another example of indirect translation. Adapted and retold from Russian by S. Galachyan, this work demonstrates the intricate process of conveying literary nuances across languages.

Literary exchange also includes two short stories written by Canadian-English writer, Sir Charles Roberts (1860-1943), who was one of the first Canadian authors to be internationally known. The translator of the stories is Simak Sahakyan. One of the stories is Roberts’ first animal story, “Strayed,” which appeared in *Harper’s Young People* in 1889 (Roberts 1889). The Armenian story, titled “Yoke Fellows” («Լծակից երբայրներ» [1916/17]) is an adaptation from a Russian translation titled «*Братья по ярму*», emphasizing the collaborating efforts of two oxen working together. *Casual Friendship* («Պատահական ընկերություն» (1914) is another translation from Russian with its Russian source text, translated as “*Случайная Дружба*.”

Ouida’s novel “El Brug” (Ouida 1883) published in the book “*La Strega and Other Stories*” in 1889 found its place in *Hasker* with the Armenian text translated by Simak Sahakyan in 1914 from an uncredited Russian source under the title «*Степь*.” The Armenian title was directly translated from Russian as «Տափաստանը» (Steppe). The title underwent such significant alterations that, if not for the availability of digital resources allowing weeks of thorough investigation, retracing the original would have proven nearly impossible. ‘El brug’ means ‘heather’ as explained in the book; “*in the dialect of the district, el brug: the heather*” (Ouida 1889: 142). In the domain of Russian translations of English literary works, Lyubov Khavkina is known for her translations of Ouida, Kipling, Byron, Hugo. We may assume that Armenian translators had access to her renderings.

Many of Wilde’s works have been translated into Armenian in different collections through direct and indirect translations. “The Happy Prince” was published in *Hasker’s* 1909 issue as well as in a separate book with a different title, *The Prince and the Swallow* («Պրինցն ու Ծիծեռնակը» [1909]), mediated by the Russian translation «*Принц и ласточка*» (Wilde 1888). The Russian-Armenian translator was Zapel Chilingaryan.

These translations highlight the intricate play between intermediary translation and cultural adaptation, showcasing the diversity and interconnectedness of literature on a global scale.

## 6. Conclusion

In the intricate world of literary translation, intermediary languages have served as invaluable conduits, enabling the transfer of diverse literary treasures to new audiences. Sociopolitical situations made a shift in the choice of the languages. Among these intermediary languages, Russian stood as a notable force in the translation of European literature into Eastern Armenian at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Through publications like *Hasker* and *Aghbyur*, these intermediary translations played a vital role in fostering cultural and literary exchange. Additionally, periodical translations contributed to the preservation and study of foreign works and they should be made accessible to scholars researching the original works.

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**Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

**Ethical Standards**

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.