

the ability of minority peoples to practice their religion and establish schools, media outlets, and other cultural institutions,<sup>6</sup> Turkish-Armenian intellectuals walked a tightrope, always cautious not to cross the line. And so, writers stayed away from the theme of the nation's collective suffering of the past. For decades, Istanbul Armenian literature, and poetry in particular, developed by following the path of modern international literature,<sup>7</sup> with no limits or constraints in form and content and with humanism and

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<sup>6</sup> Little is left today of the thriving Armenian cultural, religious, and educational life of pre-1915 Constantinople. The periodical press that mirrors the life of the community is comprised of *Zhamanak*, founded in 1908, *Marmara*, founded in 1940, the theatrical journal *Kulis*, founded in 1946, *Lraber*, the newsletter of the Patriarchate, *Sourb Prkich*, the organ of the Sourb Prkich Hospital, and *Agos*, the newest periodical in Armenian and Turkish. They all have continued uninterrupted. In addition, other periodicals such as *Shoghakat*, *Nor San*, and *Handes Mshakuiti* have resumed publication after decades of silence. The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul oversees the religious and cultural life of the Armenian community as before (since the fifteenth century). There are more than 35 churches in Istanbul, of which only about ten are in operation, compared to 47 functioning churches in 1915. Some of these churches have been turned into mosques. There are also two Protestant and six Catholic Armenian churches functioning. There are 18 Armenian schools, orphanages, and a hospital in operation, and seven Armenian cemeteries, Shishli being the most famous among them.

<sup>7</sup> Being cut off from the outside world, Armenian intellectuals were introduced to international trends in poetry and literary movements—surrealism in the West and social-realism in the Soviet Union—mainly through modern Turkish literature and Turkish literary journals. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that the Istanbul Armenian literature fell under the influence of contemporary Turkish literature.