

## *Azdarar*, the First Armenian Periodical (Madras, 1794-1796)

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The paper traces the birth, aims, and contents of the first Armenian periodical, *Azdarar*, which saw the light of day in the Indian city of Madras in October 1794 and continued in existence (with 18 monthly issues) until March 1796. The key figure in this unprecedented editorial initiative in the Armenian world was the Reverend Yartut'iwn Šmawonean (1750-1824), who had been sent from Iran to Madras. He was able to create a network of contacts among the Armenian merchants of the city, which was essential for the success of the enterprise. Particular attention will be paid to the model that inspired Šmawonean, which is to be found in the lively production of contemporary English journalism in India. This model had a strong influence not only on the conception and contents of the Armenian magazine, but also on the overall organization of its editorial work. English influence acted as an essential initial impetus. Subsequently, in the selection of the texts to be published, the choice fell on works of a historical and political nature that were mainly, even if not exclusively, by Armenian authors. These texts were intimately related to the interests of the Armenian colony of Madras, to its links with Persia, and to its strong patriotic feelings towards the motherland of the Armenian plateau, which was then under Ottoman and Persian rule.

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