

*How Harut'awn Shmavonian, an Armenian Printer-publisher, impacted the Arabic-Script
Printing in Madras*

Dr. Hasmik Krakosyan

In 1795, the Shbat (May to June) month's edition of *Azdarar* published a document titled “*The copy of the document of Mahmat 'Ali Khan Varaji here is written by Armenian script. I hope this is pleasant for readers concerning their desires.*” This document contains Muhamad 'Ali Khan Varaji's, the Nawab of Madras and Arcot of India, order to open publishing houses for printing books using Arabic typography. Interestingly, the Persian version of the lithographed document is attached to the magazine, while the published version is in Armenian print letters. Moreover, further analysis of the document indicates that Muhamad 'Ali Khan Varaji appointed the assignment of Arabic script publication to Shmavon's son Harutyun. He was better known as Priest Harutyun Shmavonian, the editor of *Azdarar* magazine in eighteenth century Madras. This same document is vital in the specific biographical facts of the Armenian publisher and the context of Arabic publication discovery history in Madras. A question then arises: what role did the Armenian publisher play in circulating the knowledge of Arabic script printing in India, and why did the Nawab of Arcot entrust the assignment to the Armenian publisher? Furthermore, how willing was Harutyun Shmavonian to carry out the assignment of Arabic printing? We will also try to answer why the Armenian publisher printed the document in Armenian print: was it due to technical reasons only (such as the lack of Persian print letters), or was it for pleasing the Armenian reader audience, who might have favored only seeing Armenian print in an Armenian magazine?

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