

# Museums and Written Communication



# Museums and Written Communication:

*Tradition and Innovation*

Edited by

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Museums and Written Communication: Tradition and Innovation

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ANI AVAGYAN

COORDINATOR OF CECA 2012 ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
HEAD OF PR & EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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# FOREWORD

DR NICK WINTERBOTHAM

MUSEUM EDUCATOR AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – WITH  
CHRISTINE WINTERBOTHAM AND DENNY PLOWMAN

In travelling to Armenia, I doubt that many of the speakers had any particular expectations of what our journeys, whether external or inward, might produce. When it came to it, not only were the welcome, the commitment and the energy of the event quite astonishing, but so was the content.

Reviewing text communication can be a tiring and stuffy pastime. However, Ani Avagyan and her conference team transformed it into a wealth of meaning, exploration, identity and a real freedom to learn. And where better to do this than in Armenia, a nation with one of the longest and richest cultural heritages the world has ever seen and with a text history to match?

To give a flavour of the papers, I have grouped them into three categories. **Context** papers are those that remind us of the media, institutions and missions in which we operate. The **Text** papers are those focusing on the nature of our texts and written interpretation materials. **Subtext** are those where the text is a part of a greater strategy of communication.

## Context

Hripsime Pikichian set the tone and context for us. In 2012, the same year as the symposium, Yerevan was announced as the World Book Capital by UNESCO. In particular she points out the significance to us all of the Matenadaran as the museum, library and study institution of some of the world's oldest texts

and the place where many of the ancient texts that survived the Genocide of 1915 are conserved and held for posterity.

With this excellent and dramatic backdrop to the staging of a timely and inspirational conference, the papers that emerged in one week in October 2012 were no less timely and inspiring.

I will not attempt to paraphrase Theo Meereboer's text here. It is an intriguing and flowing description of his experience of the Symposium alongside his interpretation of the symposium themes. It can be enjoyed at many levels.

Albert Stepanyan provokes thought and a reappraisal of the role and context of history museums. His exploration of an Urartan fortress of prehistoric Armenia and its didactic impact on school pupils is instructive in itself. He draws a useful distinction between synchronic and diachronic narratives.

In reflecting on our on-line 'voices', Gina Koutsika from the Imperial War Museum in the UK developed the First World War Centenary Partnership online community and counsels us to have realistic expectations, to make time regularly for communication and to be authentic to our own voices within our organisational styles. In a similar vein, Jenni Fuchs offers sound advice to those considering an on-line strategy on Twitter and tweeting for an organisation. The inexorable rise of social media provides us with another major dimension into which we must focus our writing and authorship skills.

We are fortunate indeed in having John Reeve's comprehensive review on how museum creation, design and texts have changed over the past thirty years. He offers distinctions between modernist and post-modernist approaches and is not persuaded that we have made consistent progress in recent years. He concludes "Our challenge is to convince our colleagues, funders and indeed many of our users that the museum as laboratory - especially for text - will provide a richer and less bloody experience for everyone."

Lana Bede outlines a delightful and child-focused approach to archaeology through book texts, maps and artefacts from

Croatia. The Karlovac City Museum's book for children, *The Touch of Idols*, interprets the museum collection, its context and history in a collage-like scrapbook with flaps, fold-outs, embossed illustrations of figurines and pockets hiding surprises.

"Surveys... let audiences speak for themselves and therefore they are a potentially emancipatory process. They are also a potential source of learning and critical reflection." In her thoughtful piece on surveys in Portugal, Maria do Rosário Azevedo encourages us to take a multi-layered view of how surveys and the language we weave into them can reveal far more than just visit statistics.

Concluding that "The Past for Beginners ... is the future of the museum", Mette Boritz offers a Danish perspective on working with kindergarten children. A relatively new departure, this has produced great dividends in breaking down what she describes as the 'novelty effect'. Also hailing from Denmark is Michael Gyldendal's work with much older students and the innovative use of intranets and iPads. It is a detailed and highly imaginative approach, delivering many outcomes for the students, not least cognitive and technical. He warns us however that "We must focus on the activity, not the technology. The use of new technology is of course important, but all new technology will become old and obsolete, so how we use them is the essential question."

## Text

Some offer light-hearted but deeply-felt professional reactions to texts, our obligation to write them professionally: see Arja van Veldhuizen's cheerful love-hate relations with text or my own proposal that 'Less is more'.

Another refugee from *didactic, chronological, single-authoritative voice texts* is Christina Töpfer. Her book-in-the-planning became a box and enables readers, or rather explorers, to form their own impression of the subject matter. Drawing on a 'musée sentimental' notion, it can be seen as something like a 'picture

trap' not only of a single scene, but of a whole life and a series of events.

Melissa Viswani shows us specifically how the Education Team at the Asian Civilisations Museum has used a strategic approach to text creation as a basis for all interactive spaces and illustrates the interpretation that has been done for young visitors with images and diagrams.

Some of the most impactful museum texts come in the form of logos, brand scripts and straplines. Nicole Gesché-Koning offers us one of the most comprehensive reviews I have ever read of the attempts of major organisations to influence us with very few words in all sorts settings... and sometimes with no words at all.

San Francisco's Peter Samis provides a brilliant, insightful and well-illustrated masterclass in script of all different sorts – digital and non-digital. His closing comment “Whether we opt for analog or digital methods when we draw from our interpretive toolbox, we now have more ways of activating the objects we care about - meeting our visitors' desire for insight and meaning in terms that intrigue, delight, and draw them in - than ever before.” is a healthy reminder of our opportunity and obligation in how we welcome others to what we offer. Taking the mission of a museum a little further, Renata Brezinščak of the Croatian Natural History Museum, Zagreb comments “With our written materials, ranging from labels and legends in the exhibitions, to the publications for visitors, we try to inform and educate wider audiences about the important subject of nature conservation and natural heritage.”

Smadar Gafni of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, looks even further at mission in an exhibition about instructions, the results of which were both entertaining and reflective. But with a title like 'Life: A User's Manual', perhaps we should not be surprised.

Mila Skaric describes how interpretive mascots can greatly assist the interpretation powers of an institution and can also acquire a life of their own.

### Subtext

In the realms of marine archaeology and ecological batik production, Ajeng Ayu Arainikasih writes of a real research-based breakthrough in text and audience interactivity in Indonesia. The approach is fresh and the intention is almost revolutionary in the desired impact on visitors' views and behaviours.

While not strictly on the subject of museum texts or learning techniques, Alison and Roger Heath offer a close-up and personal glimpse of data gathering in the bush – and how the impact of new net-based techniques of data management has made their contribution ever more available to the world at large.

A pioneer of anthropology and its interpretation, Lev Abrahamian offers three quite separate approaches to museum displays. In describing a *tree of desire* display he offers the reflection that “Taking into account the aforementioned modern intolerance of the Church towards *trees of desire*, one may think that the museum could become not only the place where ritual objects are preserved but, also, where they are being created.” His description of the iconic Armenian film-maker Sergey Parajanov is a rare glimpse into the quirky yet inspirational world of artistic genius.

Tigranes, the King of Armenia, is the subject of Lilit Minasyan's dramatic and interactive work with students. The ideas are detailed, rooted in the peace-treaty between Armenia and the Roman Empire and offers a three-layered pedagogy alongside the contemporary parallels with Armenia and its relations in the modern world. Lilit Mkrtchyan, on the other hand, uses Easter and its symbolism to enable 12 to 17 year-olds to

explore the Armenian heritage of beliefs and social interaction during school holidays.

Korean discovery boxes are the subject of Yi Eun Mi's paper from the National Folk Museum of Korea. The purpose of the Culture Discovery Box Project goes beyond simply dealing with social conflicts in the multicultural society; it also seeks to make cultural diversity the driving force for social development and thus contributes to children's understanding and sensitivity on cultural diversity.

### **And finally...**

Communication is hugely varied and offers a myriad of different opportunities to our audiences and to posterity, whether in text or without it.

Perhaps we should leave the last word to Hamlet Petrosyan. His exploration of the Book of Life in Armenian is thoughtful, thorough and touching. He concludes,

“Armenia is often called a museum under open skies.... hundreds of monuments with public written communication continue to stay under the open skies, as a rule forgotten and desolate. I think Armenia today does not need to continue to bring these examples to the museum thus moving them into the halls of functioning museums or adjacent open-air spaces, but initiate a policy toward cultural heritage, the aim of which will be the creation of numerous open-air museums with incomparable small expenses, improve the roads and the territories of the monuments, erect signs, create routes and thus give the status of a museum to these monuments... in other words, restore the environment of public communication.”



WRITING AND THE BOOK WITHIN THE  
GENERAL CONTEXT OF THE MUSEUM:  
SPECULATIONS ON THE PROBLEM  
OF THE SYMPOSIUM

HRIPSIME PIKICHIAN

FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE ARMENIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF MUSEUM WORKERS AND FRIENDS

It is already known that the title and thematic direction of the ICOM/CECA Yerevan Symposium on 'Museum and Written Communication. Tradition and Innovation' are closely related to the fact that in 2012 Yerevan was announced as the World Book Capital by UNESCO. This event is, of course, both honourable and obligatory for Armenia. It is a wonderful coincidence that it concurs with the 500th anniversary of the Armenian Printing as it was also celebrated in 2012. Many museums in Armenia have celebrated this anniversary with various events.

The main purpose of all these festivities is to focus public attention on the book and written culture by considering the creation of the book as a spiritual and secular activity and by taking it as one natural whole.

In the museum displays an attempt was made to introduce the multilayer entity of the technical-technological skill and decoration art of the book-making process, considering the book as a scientific storage and, certainly, as a unique way of formation and preservation of national originality as compared with the world communication, education and breeding.

An original exhibition was held at the History Museum of Armenia under the title 'The Eternity of Writing'. There, 103 exhibits were presented from Echmiadzin Cathedral Museum and the History Museum of Armenia, as well as from the collections of the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts after Mesrop Mashtots - Matenadaran, and the National Library. They included unique ancient scientific lithographic documents, exceptional displays of medieval manuscript registers and printed books. The Medieval miniatures - made of expensive metals, bones, wood, engraved, decorated with sculptures, coined either with natural stones or set in highly artistic samples - are especially distinguished among the displays of the collections representing the culture of book-making and designing. After the reconstruction The 'Matenadaran' Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts After M Mashtots was reopened with its total display. The rich collection of ancient books and written lithography represents:

Armenian manuscripts and printed books with all their variety (theology, demeanor of the saints, philosophy, cosmography, history, grammar, chronology, geography, geology, geometry, medicine, travel stories, etc.)

Armenian centers of miniature and book printing.

Collected works in foreign languages (Greek, Latin, Jewish, Assyrian, Arabic, Persian, Russian, etc.) the originals of many of which are preserved only in Armenia.

Exclusive samples of book covers.

The exhibition of ancient publications printed in different provinces of the Armenian diaspora on the territory of Historical Armenia was opened in the National Library which gave birth to the idea of opening the Museum of the Book.

In order to represent the book and the means of written communication in the museum culture in its essence it is necessary to carry out a thorough study of its role and application fields for the given society or country, from its traditional life up to the present time. Let's try to prove the

above mentioned on the basis of Armenian culture, first referring to the traditional culture.

The phenomena of the writing and the book in the traditional Armenian perception were taken in the creative and destructive inner power. The comparative study of the Christian world perception and national matter gives us evidence that at first sight these two opposite activities are the very compulsory components of the ordered universe due to which the mutual relation of the natural environment and humanity are brought to completeness and back to life.

### **Writing**

It is known that in the Christian culture writing was perceived as Divine Beginning, the most vivid evidence of which is the famous formula of "I am the alpha and omega" in the Book of Appearance expressed by the Creator. In the Armenian reality the invention of letters (5th century) is considered as a miracle, divine reward. According to Movses Khorenatsy, an Armenian chronicler of the 5th century, before having invented the Armenian alphabet Mesrop Mashtots saw its invention in his heart with a spiritual eye. That is, writing was invented by Divine Power in order to spread the Divine Speech. The true evidence of this is the fact that these letters were first used for translating the Bible and, besides, Mesrop Mashtots - the creator of the alphabet - was considered to be among the Saints.<sup>1</sup>

In the medieval ideology, writing was equivalent to the realization of the meaning of the written text. From the 15th to the beginning of the 20th century the study of the existing hand-written mascots gives evidence that in the Armenian traditional beliefs the concepts 'write-realize', 'script of life', 'script of death' have obtained material appearance through mascots.<sup>2</sup> According to the beliefs they also possess the power of bringing to life or taking away the life of human beings and have an influence on the natural development of the life process. Due to H Petrosyan's assurance in Christian images the sacred

function of bringing to life through the book and writing, overcoming death through writing was opposed to it not only by attributing the role of life register to the book but to any sacred construction or object which may bear the script of the name, such as a temple, a cross-stone, a gravestone and various objects donated to spiritual centers. Hence, the registration of the name in the life register is almost equivalent to securing salvation of the soul.<sup>3</sup>

It was quite natural that the divine origination of the writing was also to be spread over its further application. Due to the subject matter in question the supernatural power of the written script was of double nature:

- by means of writing it was possible to create, bring back to life, cure (creative power - cosmos)
- by means of writing it was possible to make a person unfortunate, destroy him - death script (destructive power - chaos).

The above said can be assured by fly-leaves-from memory or so-called 'paper-and-script' (tughtugir), the survivals of which can still be seen in Armenian reality as well as in other cultures. Nowadays the expression 'to write a script' has already lost its formal meaning, that is 'the activity of writing' and in the common language of the people it is mainly used in the meaning of 'to destroy, ruin, undo any structure or existence in the reality by means of the script'.

In the traditional beliefs the Script can also replace the author or the master overgrowing into the sign of the man or the universe. In this context the autograph and the seal, as well as passport, diary and the written passage as a piece of creation (the latter is taken in the mind-writing-business relationship) can also be considered. And, although in the traditional outlook writing was originally identified with the person, it was by all means above him as a divine power and fate (the 'chakatagir' /fate, destiny/ which literally can be translated as the script written on one's forehead, expresses within itself the way of life

the person leads from the very beginning of his/her birth to death). Besides the person, the names of his nation, country, universe were also written (these beliefs can be compared both with the image of the Writer<sup>4</sup> in the Armenian reality and with various divinities in different cultures, such as Sumerian, Urartian<sup>5</sup> or ancient<sup>6</sup> and Armenian pre-Christian traditions<sup>7</sup>).

### **The Book**

In the commentaries of the mystery of the Trinity of the Saint Book, the book was also included as a written testified environment or a matter of writing. According to it, as mentioned by H Wolflin, the letters and the text are the body of the book, the figures of speech are the spirit which takes the reader from the emotional to the mental, and the contemplation of the most majestic is the spirit. It is compared with the three-part structure of the mans. 'Apocalypse', which is the last book of the Bible, describes the world and the life as a written text according to which the life of every person is considered as a book which would be read at the advent of the Lord and on Doomsday to determine his/her status in the 'Book of Life'.<sup>9</sup>

Since the 5th century when the Bible was translated into Armenian, in the Armenian culture it was perceived as something sacred for it possesses the properties of giving prosperity - very typical of it, curing, eliminating the evil, awarding life/fruitfulness and generation-raising.

Due to it, besides ecclesiastical regulations, it is also mentioned that the custom of laying the Holy Book under the pillow of the recently confined mother, the newly born child and the sick man is widely used.<sup>10</sup>

In many settlements of Armenia the phenomenon of worshipping the Holy Book as the Book of the Household has also been preserved<sup>11</sup> as it has the power of keeping away from the whole family, community and the given area the bad eye and misfortune, bring back to life, cure and bespeak to the Lord, often taking the oncoming danger and misfortune over itself.

In our field recordings there are several stories according to which the Holy Book has been worn out, burnt or divided into parts while 'fighting' against evil forces and has saved the people. Special rituals and ceremonies are held towards the Holy Book of the Household which are characteristic of the holy area and relic, the most widespread among which are the special care, maintenance, sacrificing, donation and confession of crimes. As a vivid example of it, it is sure to remember how the Holy Book replaces the absence of the sanctuary at present as well and the rituals and ceremonies devoted to the Book can be compared with the ones being performed in churches.

According to the tradition, at the end of hand-written books there was a colophon where the occasion of writing the particular book and its fate were given, there were also mentioned the names of the client, writer and illustrator. At the same time the main record of the most important events in the life of the people and country, such as imminent natural disasters and dangers, successes and victories, was also kept. On the pages of the Holy Book which were provided for special notes for the family life even nowadays the most important events in the family, for instance, the origination of the family, dates of birth and baptizing of the family members, their deaths and also other chronologies were registered. In fact, by means of such traditions every Armenian family was integrated into Christian, later to great Divine Family, becoming one of its inseparable components. It can be said that the Holy Book was the history of the origin and development of the universe and mankind which also held records of the main edited history of the particular family, 'the entrance and exit' of its members into this world and out of it. The book was accepted as a family relic and the lithography of the existence of the family which was handed from generation to generation. Special ceremonies were held devoted to the Book such as special care, maintenance, sacrificing, donation and confession of crimes as it was considered to be the Saint of the Household.

The above mentioned can be proved by the fact that during the drought special sanctification ceremonies were held round the fields with the Saint Book, which is considered to be the Christian variant of the ancient festivity in the honour of rain. It can be inferred from the previously said that in the folk tradition one can notice the transformation of the Book into Holiness, and the territory where the Book-holiness was found became a sanctuary. Don't you think that such a special attitude to the book has been the reason why Matenadaran After Mesrop Mashtots has become the sanctuary for all the Armenians from different parts of the world? It is revealed as a world perception in having housed the building of Matenadaran in the highland of Mashtots Avenue of Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia, an important detail that could usually be observed when Armenian churches have been built.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the selection of the main place for the symposium is very symbolic, as Matenadaran is an exceptional museum of Armenian writing culture having the richest collection of manuscripts and printed books and a worldwide scientific centre. The display of the museum of Matenadaran is constructed as an entire context, the aim of which is to represent the culture of the Armenian writing in manuscript and printed form. However, it is evident that the history of the Armenian people and universe was represented through the culture of writing since the collection of Matenadaran includes multi-language lithographic papers related to the natural and humanitarian sciences written by Armenian and foreign authors from the ancient times to the 19th century.

There was a double attitude to both writing and to the book in the traditional Armenian culture: the book was taken as a living being, having a soul which could be like the man in its fate. It was also born, had its way of life, its history, celebrations, anniversaries, it could have its material reproduction - being copied or printed, and its spiritual appearance - in the minds and essence of the reader, and could also die out. In this sense aged, worn out books with descriptions of ceremonies of death

and funerals are worth paying attention to in ethnographical field records.

If the Armenian Great Genocide (1915) were considered as an existing fact beyond boundaries of life in the context of Genocide-Hell-Death it would be possible to prove that the fate of the people having created them was also repeated in the life of hand-written registers. As for example, the return of the tortured, held to ransom or left out in different countries part by part books which have finally been united in their Motherland<sup>13</sup> at Matenadaran After Mesrop Mashtots can be compared with the repatriation of the Armenian people who found shelter in Eastern Armenia.

Many cases of book burning are also known (such as during the first years of establishing Soviet power when religious literature was burnt in fires), captivating, imprisoning/forbidding (for example, prohibition and punishment for having dissimilar literature) holding to ransom or exchanging books.<sup>14</sup>

The book was also considered to be the second self of the man, which could accompany him to the other world (for example, at the request of the troubadour Rumanu, his saz (the Armenian national stringed musical instrument), nacreous and decorated with precious stones, and his harp-book<sup>15</sup> were buried together with him) becoming the matter transformation of the man's, its master's, soul and surviving after his physical death. And, when the book was damaged or burnt, it could risk the life of its master or expose him to death. It was not accidental that in the colophons of the books the book writers asked not to sell, not to put in pledge but to read it instead, and always keep it open for the volunteers and give them opportunity to copy and spread it, so that life will also continue.

## The Writing

In the museum display there are two activities which are characteristic of writing: on the one hand, it is represented as an exhibit, on the other hand, writing is transformed to label,

annotation text or longwise explanation playing the role of a solicitor or translator between the object and the visitor. In both cases the writing and the book are directly or interchangeably presented as lithographical realities of the development process of the nature and human relations and the biography of individuals.

It is a common knowledge that the written text is first used in museums as a message conveying to the visitor the main aim and true subject matter of the exhibition and giving them primary information about the exhibits. According to this it is customary to see any type of written correspondence at any museum, from the simplest label to annotation text or explanation, any popular expression or wingéd word in calligraphic form or any saying in handwritten or printed form. By means of these written texts, introduced in traditional forms or by various modern memory and other new technological devices, the museum tries to supply different groups of visitors with brief or concise information about the general display, key topics and exhibits. As a matter of fact, these are the most common ways to communicate with the visitor which have been used from the start of spreading written culture and first established museums through 'read' books. In this case *The Impression Book* in museums will be considered as a museum-book recollection the author of which is the visitor.

The exhibits or displays which introduce the field in question are quite numerous: different objects and means of writing and printing, nominal letters and records made on different natural raw materials (such as stone, clay, wood, bones, etc.) as well as various objects. Henceforth, we can pass onto the main problem of our symposium, that is, to introduce handwritten and printed culture as a multilayer store of museum educational programs. In this context during the historical development and different levels of civilization we'll consider both folk skills and crafts related to writing and script (from ancient matters and facilities of writing to printing and illustration, from modern technologies to the creation of the virtual book) and beliefs,

religion, as well as key problems which are related to all spheres of science and art.

And now let's imagine that on the basis of museum display and the design worked out by museum specialists (teachers, historians, ethnologists, art critics, psychologists) a new educational program has been invented the aim of which is to teach school children skills of making a book characteristic of various periods of time. During the program the children were divided into groups and appear in the period of time according to their preferences. They become specialists who made books of the given period in the very area (author, master, painter, publisher) and produce a book of the field and topic they are interested in, trying to introduce its aim and peculiarities of its existence. Naturally, for the desired result, it will be inevitable to obtain current knowledge on the historical-cultural peculiarities of the preferable field as well, which will make it possible to give more precise knowledge and skills. In case of success it would be possible to teach more profoundly and give identical knowledge to the participants through step-by-step complicated assignments. As a complex result, the participants will expose their own works in the display, mastering the principles and methods of displaying museum exhibits. They will try to introduce their new books in a corresponding cultural environment and, changing into excursion guides, will tell about their aims and working activities. This design can also be transferred into a virtual educational game based on museum displays.

Within the frames of the article an attempt has been made to introduce the key problems discussed at our symposium into one general system. The represented reports and ideas will give us opportunity to get acquainted with the best experiences of the museums in different countries related to the problem mentioned, which will enrich all of us, and finally, the museum will become a most desired and competitive cultural area for all the layers of the society in any part of the world.

## Notes

1. It should be noted that besides awarding M Mashtots the honour of being a saint of the Armenian church, Mashtots's grave has been a national sanctuary for 1600 years and the alphabet an object of worship.
2. See Одабашян А. А., Народные верования армян (по материалам рукописных талисманов XV-XIX вв.), КЭС т. 6 , М., 1976, стр. 121-130 for more details on mascots.
3. Petrosyan H, Writing and the Book //Armenian Folk Arts, Culture and Identity, Ed. L Abrahamian and N Sweezy, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana Univ. Press, 2001, pp.52-59.
4. See about the activity Writer-torturer in Armenian folk beliefs in Srvandztyan G Manana, С Polis, 1876, p.80. Mikayelyan G H Nor Bayazet:// Armenian Ethnography and Folklore (henceforth AEF), book 11, Yerevan, 1980, page 141. Lalayan E Nor Bayazet, Ethnographic Journal (henceforth EJ), book 17, Tiflis, 1908, page 108. Lalayan ., Vaspurakan, EJ, book 26, page 205. Харатьян З. В., Культурные мотивы семейных обычаев и обрядов у армян., AEF, book 17, Yerevan, 1989, p.33.
5. Hmayakyan S. The State Religion of Van Kingdom, 1990, pp.47-48.
6. Hermes Trismegistos was the God of Writing and Wisdom in Ancient Greece, See Словарь Античности, М.,1989, стр. 133.
7. In Armenian pagan mythology Tyr, the son of Aramazd, was the patron of education, science, clergy, oratory, dreams and the clerk of gods and corresponds to the Egyptian Tot, Accadian Nabu, Greek Apollon, Hermes and Roman Mercury. About Pre-Christian worship see Alishan Gh, Ancient Belief or Pagan Religion of Armenians, Venice, St Ghazar, 1895, p.p.284-285. Вардумян Г. Д., До христианские культы армян. //AEF, book 18, Yerevan, 1991, pp.119-120.
8. See Zavadskaya E, The World as a Book, Culture, Yerevan 1989, No.2-3, pp.74-84: Wolflin H, ed. Die Bamberger Apocalypse. Munich,1981.
9. In the above mentioned article E. Zavadskaya describes all the contexts concerning the Book in detail. The symbolization of the written text and picturesque description are considered in the 'Apocalypse'. According to him, in the 20th century one of the best expressionists of world perception is Khorkhe Louise Borkhes. In his short stories the world is also an open book and the universe is a library. See also essays on 'Babylonian Library', 'Sand Book', 'On the Worship of the Book'.
10. The Bible or the book called 'Register of Tragedy' by Grigor Narekatsy (10th century) which in its essence is a prayer-dialogue directed to God.
11. See for Saint of the Household in Marutyan H, Home as the World. Armenian Folk Arts, Culture and Identity. pp.73-97.
12. For these questions See A Stepanyan, T Simyan, To Semiotic Code of Modern City (Yerevan, Mashtots Avenue), «Museum», Research-Methodical Annual, Yerevan, 2011, pp. 36-45.
13. Here is an example of the biggest manuscript 'The best speeches of Mush' (Msho Charyntir having the size of 55.3 x 70.5cm, weighs about 27.5kg, its pages were made of calf skin). It was written in 1200-1202 in the

Monastery of Avak in Daranaghyats province of Historical Armenia. In 1202 it happened to be with Moslem judge Alladin who had raided on Khlat but after that it was bought back and brought to the Apostle Monastery of Mush by 1915. It was transferred to Yerevan thanks to two Armenian women who during the migration divided the huge book into two parts, tied them to their bodies and saved it from the horrors of the Genocide. Later, the two parts were put together in Matenadaran. Traces of blood and fire still remain on the manuscript. Of the book, 607 pages have been preserved which are displayed at the exhibition of Matenadaran and another 17 pages have found shelter in Mechitarist Congregation on St Ghazar Island of Venice.

14. Due to H Petrosian's above mentioned paper here is a passage from one of the colophons of 1041: "Me, Sarkis, found the present book in one of the corners of the royal treasure house. It was fallen down on the ground without visitors as if on the verge of death and was silently crying... It was far from its friends and was missing hands directed towards it, so I took it with me, setting it free from that prison". (Colophons,1988, p.87). The living evidence of the above said is the return of the books, which had been saved from the Genocide and migration. as holy relics and symbols of their self-being Ergir, to their Motherland and donated to Matenadaran After Mesrop Mashtots, as well as perceiving matenadarans as a sanctuary - religious temple. During the years of 1894-1915 of Armenian Genocide, 911 new and very valuable manuscripts were saved from destruction and brought to Echmiadzin book-house. The number of the manuscripts of 1915 is about 4,660. See the Annual of matenadaran ancient manuscripts after M Mashtots, Yerevan, 2004, p.2-3. Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia, v.7, Yerean, 1981, pp.284-285.

15. Levonian G. Armenian Troubadours, AE, Book 12, Tiflis, 1905, p.86.

## MORE OR LESS

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On Saturday October 20th 2012 I arrived in Yerevan for the ICOM CECA conference where, the same afternoon, I facilitated a workshop on writing for digital media. The conference took place at the Matenadaran, Armenia's state repository of ancient manuscripts, where we received an exceptionally warm welcome. Even though the conference was well organised, there were some minor technical issues when connecting my laptop to the beautiful screen in the presentation room in the old building of the Matenadaran. I decided to make a PDF of the presentation and show it via the computer which was already connected to the screen. Then it turned out that the computer could not show a PDF (yet), therefore Adobe Acrobat was downloaded and installed. Easy for me to watch this being installed, but if this website had been in the Armenian language I would have had a difficult time understanding how to proceed and where to click.

Why do I mention this? It illustrates perfectly that we cannot assume that the same standards are being used all the time throughout the world. When we talk about the use of digital media worldwide, we must acknowledge the fact that we still have to deal with different standards, budgets, infrastructure, culture and also language differences.

These differences surfaced again the moment we introduced ourselves to each other. We are all more or less involved in digital media, but that may mean various things; for instance that we are creating an audio tour, developing a game, designing a multi-touch table, that we want to use social media,

augmented reality, open data, or are involved in creating a virtual museum or an app for various smartphones. Those are separate things that each require a different approach and specific technical knowledge. And of course all these applications also require different usages of text. Before we can start writing for digital media, there are many different challenges we have to face and overcome.

At the start of the workshop the attendees were invited to briefly introduce themselves by telling who they are, where they are from, what their connection is to the subject, what their challenges are, what they expect to learn that day and how we could learn from each other.

We talked about the success factors, the obstacles and how this all fits (or doesn't fit) within the organization. Then we discussed a number of criteria that all such texts must meet and how taking the role of the educator is changing. Given the diversity within the group, it took us quite a while to make this inventory though this was instructive as there was a lot of valuable input from the group. Perhaps it would have been better to have divided this topic into several sub-topics and to have discussed each of them separately during several sessions. We would have had more time to do some assignments (which I had conceived, but omitted due to time constraints), so there would have been more time for reflection and exchange.

We are used to thinking about in-situ and ex-situ. For the second option, we have developed tools to present an object in a museum context, to provide texts and make it accessible through various (educational) resources. Then new media were introduced and nowadays everyone can use these media; where, when and for whatever they want. This means that a text can no longer be static, but constantly location, medium, perspective and context will change. In that case, information and meaning are continuously on the move and in transition. That is when I speak of 'trans-situ'.

Many museums are strongly object-oriented, but there are also those that supply enormous amounts of text, which almost