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cultural preferences and tastes of the time, new understandings and the growing influence of the European culture, especially of the printed book and its dissemination.

The European printed books decorated with etchings, engravings and woodcuts were the main sources for images used in the religious books produced by Armenian artists in different parts of the world. These woodcut illustrations were seen as new interpretations of Christian themes and were to have an important impact on Armenian art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, providing inspiration for Armenian masters in different fields of art. In this way, new Christian iconography and decorative motifs were disseminated in various media in the Armenian centers all over the world and especially in the Near East.

The spread of printing art among Armenians has been defined as a by-product of Armenian merchants, who played a significant role in nearly all centers of Armenian publication. Due to Armenian commercial agents, dealing with a large-scale trade, the Armenian art goes beyond national borders and gets a new chance to be revived. Being aware of the latest development of the world art tendencies, they begin to dictate tastes by purchasing, ordering and donating samples of art presenting their preferences.

This paper aims to discuss the main iconographic features as well as the iconographic transformations and innovations typical for the time on the examples of the collection of wood-block printed and painted altar curtains from the Armenian museum in Bucharest.

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The Collection of Silver Book Bindings of the Armenian Museum in Bucharest and their Relationship to Eastern and Western Arts

Between the early eighteenth and the end of the nineteenth centuries in the Ottoman Empire, and especially, in Istanbul the so called “Constantinople Style” became the prevailing style in culture. That unique style was the product of mixture of local Armenian and European Baroque, later Rococo, and the later neo-classical styles.

This phenomenon is represented by the iconographical changes with western ascents, also new scenes, rich floral ornaments and an extravagant use of precious metal and gem stones.

The appearance of “Constantinople Style” was result of various reasons. First of all, on 1720 Ahmed III Sultan sent a group of people to France to be introduced to the achievements of art and techniques, and the members of this group brought the “French Royal Styles” to Constantinople. Also, the activities of Armenian merchants from Ottoman Empire to Eastern and Western Europe were very important, as they played great role in introduction, importation and exportation of cultural innovations.

We are going to discuss all these changes by representing the examples of silver book binding collection of the Armenian Museum in Bucharest. The collection belongs to the 18th-19th centuries, with a large part of items made in Ottoman Empire, particularly by the Armenian masters of Constantinople.