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Homenetmen Glendale Ararat Chapter  
Cultural Division

*Get to Know...*

Volume 2, Issue 10

October 2009



## KHACHATOUR ABOVIAN

**October 15, 1809 – April 14, 1848**

Khachatur Abovian was an Armenian writer and national public figure of the early 19th century who mysteriously vanished in 1848 and was presumed dead. He was an educator, poet and an advocate of modernization.

Considered as the father of modern Armenian literature, he is best remembered for his novel *Verk Hayastani* (Wounds of Armenia), which set the trend in both style and genre for subsequent literature. Written in 1841 and published posthumously in 1858 it was the first novel published in the modern Armenian language utilizing the eastern Armenian dialect instead of classical Armenian.

Abovian was born in 1809 in the village of Kanakar, now a suburb of Yerevan. At the age of ten his father took him to Echmiadzin to study for priesthood at the Gevorgian seminary in Echmiadzin.

Abovian dropped out after five years and moved to Tiflis in 1822 to study Armenian studies and languages at the Nersisyan college. He graduated in 1826 and began preparing to move to Venice to further his education but the outbreak of the Russo-Persian war of 1826-1828 cut his plans. For the next three years Abovian taught briefly at Sanahin and then became employed by Catholicos Yeprem as his clerk and translator.

The turning point in his life was the arrival in Armenia of Friedrich Parrot in September 1829, a professor of natural philosophy from the University of [Dorpat](#) in Lithuania. Parrot had traveled to Armenia to climb Mount Ararat to conduct geological studies and required a local guide and a translator for the expedition. The Catholicos assigned Abovian with these tasks. With Abovian's help, Parrot became the first explorer in modern times to reach the summit of Mount Ararat.

On April 14, 1848 Abovian went out of his house for an early morning walk and was never seen again. His mysterious disappearance remains unresolved. His wife Emilia did not report him missing for a month. Numerous theories have been proposed attempting to explain his disappearance: that he committed suicide, was murdered by his Persian or Turkish enemies, arrested and exiled to Siberia by the Special Corps of [Gendarmes](#), among others.

