

Liberated Karabakh

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edited by
Fariz Ismailzade and
Damjan Krnjević Mišković

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Statecraft, European Belonging, and the Second Karabakh War

Damjan Krnjević Mišković

“While the politician merrily plays his game from one short-lived smartness to another, trusting that he will find a way out of every mess in which he gets entangled, the real statesman is not allowed to be, like ordinary man, a short-range planner and a long-range dreamer. He is bent on shaping the future. He does not take it for granted. If he fails—there may be no future for his nation [...]. He knows his ends, he has a goal, a hierarchy of purposes, long-term and short-term; he subordinates one to the other; he has a vision of both the possible and the desirable and looks at the one under the aspect of the other; he thinks the possibilities through to their end; he follows up his actions, keeping ready a possible answer for whatever their foreseeable consequence—trying to keep his hand on the events and their interaction, flexible at short range, rigid at long range, passionately reasonable, a knower of human nature, suspicious even of his own love and hate and of the many passions that blind the children of man. His eyes are cold and hard yet the flame burns in his heart as he opposes his specific virtue to the play that necessity and chance play with each other.”

– Kurt Riezler¹

GEOPOLITICS

The Second Karabakh War came to an end on 10 November 2020 with the signing of a tripartite statement between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia. Through a sophisticated combination of strategic foresight, limited war objectives, operational artistry, active diplomacy, and impeccable geopolitical timing, Azerbaijan accomplished a feat that no other state anywhere in the

world has been able to achieve since the end of the Cold War: the restoration of its territorial integrity executed effectually without the organized commission of grievous atrocities or similar defilements. Addressing the nation from liberated Shusha in May 2021, Ilham Aliyev called this incredible accomplishment a “heroic saga;” speaking in the same city in August 2021, he stated that the Second Karabakh War’s “victory is unique in our history.”²

In some Western decisionmaking and analytical circles, this war of restoration has somehow been portrayed as an aggressive act that intrudes against what is still called by its proponents a “rules-based” international liberal order. Fantastic interpretations have even been put forward that the war was somehow in violation of international law.³ Yet given that a number of binding UN Security Council resolutions—coupled with the official position of every single sovereign state, save one (i.e., Armenia)—make it clear that the territories occupied by Armenian forces between the late 1980s and November 2020 are in fact sovereign Azerbaijani lands, it seems difficult to understand on what reasonable basis such claims are being made.

A sober, dispassionate examination of the circumstances that led to the Second Karabakh War as well as its outcome leads to the conclusion that there was nothing politically, legally, or morally wrong with Azerbaijan chosen course of action.⁴ The country acted well within its right of “inherent” self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter—and it did so in a manner that brings to mind the words of the Athenian ambassadors at Melos, as reported by Thucydides: “neither laying down the law, nor being the first to use it as laid down, but taking it as it is and will be forever when we have left it behind, we use it, knowing that you and others, if you became as powerful as we are, would do [the] same” (Thuc. V:105). These words should be seen as particularly apt given that these same Athenians had travelled to Melos with the intention to find agreement and avoid war.⁵

Now, of course, prior to the commencement of hostilities, Azerbaijan took pains to ensure the steady improvement of its military capabilities; and it worked diligently to lock in the strong, virtually unconditional support of Turkey that made it harder for other geopolitical actors to exert undue pressure on Azerbaijan to stick to evidently fruitless negotiations or renew its subscription to sterile agendas set by others,⁶ and so on. Here, words spoken by Aliyev in February 2019 can be cited:

I have always said that the force factor is coming to the fore in the world. Look at how international law is flagrantly violated in various parts of the world. Whereas earlier attempts were made to somehow conceal that, today they don’t even see the need for that. Today, the ‘might is right’ principle prevails in the world. This is a new reality. We must be ready for it. The world is changing, and we must be prepared for these changes. Fortunately, we have been building up our economic and military power for many years. We were somewhat preparing ourselves for the current situation and are now ready for it. Therefore, the force factor has always been and will remain on the agenda. We see this in the example of not only our conflict but also in many other conflicts around the world. Therefore, we will use various opportunities, and the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is our main goal. The people of Azerbaijan should know that this is the main task of every citizen and the main task of the state. We will continue our policy in this direction.⁷

None of this takes away from the fact that emphasis needs to be placed on Yerevan’s evident unwillingness to bring the occupation to an end peacefully, through negotiations. This is the fundamental point. At the same time, it is not enough to point the finger solely at Armenia. The principal outside mediators—the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Russia, France, and the United States)—are also at fault: there was a formal negotiation process, launched in 1992, that had essentially produced no concrete results on the ground, in the sense that the Armenian occupation had not come to an end, Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) had been prevented from exercising their right of return, and so on. In other words, for nearly three decades, the Minsk Group led negotiations the objectives of which were clearly and unambiguously set down on paper. The foreign mediators gave themselves the responsibility of leading a defined process to achieve a defined result, and yet the conflict remained unresolved for nearly three decades: prior to the onset of the Second Karabakh War, none of the Minsk Group’s defined objectives had been achieved—not even close.

Thus, their actions or inaction—whether by design or circumstance—resulted in the perpetuation of a status quo that was the opposite of the agreed objectives. And now, the conflict over Karabakh has been effectually resolved; to be sure, against the designs of Armenia and with no involvement by the Minsk Group. But effectually resolved, nonetheless.

With the above in mind, the following question can be raised: how then, exactly, is a state acting militarily to retake its own sovereign territories committing an act deserving of opprobrium by the most vocal proponents of a “rules-based” international liberal order, namely the United States and its allied fellow-travelers? Or, to employ a more radical formulation: how exactly did Azerbaijan commit an act of aggression by liberating its lands universally acknowledged by the proponents of such an order as having been occupied?⁸

This mystery is compounded by the fact that the state most vocally making this claim, namely Armenia, is without any doubt one of the most loyal allies of a state that the proponents of such an order consider to be one of its chief adversaries, namely Russia.⁹

To be clear: until the Second Karabakh War (and perhaps still), Yerevan’s foreign policy posture was rooted in an assessment that as ‘Artsakh’ is to Armenia, so South Ossetia (or Abkhazia, or the Donbass—take your pick) is to Russia. In other words, geopolitics in the South Caucasus will remain primarily within the referential purview of the traditional suzerain, who will remain on the side of Armenia. The national interest of Armenia consists in entrenching a posture of clientelism and supplication towards the sole arbiter that truly matters, which will engender it to demonstrate solidarity and support for a state dedicated to the expression of nearly unconditional loyalty. Thus, Yerevan must continue to rely on its great power ally to maintain the status quo of occupation while feverishly encouraging its diaspora to convince rival great powers that genuine outreach on the part of Armenia to each of them will be forthcoming shortly.

This is to be contrasted with Baku’s foreign policy posture until the Second Karabakh War (and certainly still): in continuing to reach out to the world, Azerbaijan will not allow itself to become dependent on any single line of access to the outside world. The country will strategically harness the fact that most of the world’s great powers look at the South Caucasus and

conclude that they have intrinsic national security and economic interests. And it will take advantage of the fact that there is tension between those same great powers in terms of how they each define their respective interests in this part of the world by managing relations between them in such a way as to ensure that Azerbaijan becomes a subject of the international system instead of a mere object of great power rivalry.¹⁰

STATECRAFT

From such considerations in the halls of power in Baku emerged a bedrock principle of the statecraft of Azerbaijan: to formulate and execute a strategy that ensures it becomes sovereign and strong enough so that it—and it alone—may determine the time and manner of the restoration of its territorial integrity (given the fruitlessness of negotiations). Niccolò Machiavelli, the “father of modern political philosophy,”¹¹ had written pretty much the same thing more succinctly more than five centuries ago: “one should never fall in the belief you can find someone to pick you up.” (NM, P. 24).

Accordingly, Azerbaijan’s national strategy, conceived and executed first by Heydar Aliyev and then by Ilham Aliyev, may be formulated in accordance with Machiavellian terminology thusly: only by having recourse to “one’s own arms” might *lo stato* become its own master in both peace and war; this requires the prudential execution of *virtù* (as opposed to the “profession of good”) and the opportunities provided by *fortuna*, whose vicissitudes can best be tamed or resisted by its “most excellent” prince.¹²

Machiavelli is particularly instructive here for two more reasons. First, because perhaps more than any political philosopher before or since, he understood that the sovereign part of *lo stato* is not the deliberative one, as in classical political philosophy, but rather the executive endowed with “great prudence” acting “decisively” and “alone.”¹³ Second, because he did not place much trust on institutional designs intended to domesticate the executive power of the prince.¹⁴ This development came later, first in the works of Thomas Hobbes and then, more directly, in those produced by John Locke, Montesquieu, and the authors of the Federalist Papers collectively writing under the pseudonym Publius.¹⁵

Be that as it may, no serious inquiry into the statecraft of Azerbaijan in the context of the Second Karabakh War—about how its leadership decided to fight a war of liberation, the preparations that took place, and the execution of these well-laid plans that brought about a victory that fundamentally changed the geopolitics of the Caucasus and perhaps beyond—can be complete without giving an account of the statesmanship of Ilham Aliyev, without whom the larger story of a nation’s vindication would simply not have come about. A complete account is beyond the scope of this essay, but the following summary of what is “truly virtuous” from Machiavelli’s standpoint can effectually serve as a stand in: “knowing what to do in order to achieve the common good, understood to be an aggregation of the desire of most people not to be oppressed and of the ambition of a few to rule.”¹⁶ From this same standpoint the “problem of government” is understood to consist in “rul[ing] the people without their developing the intolerable sensation that they are being ruled.”¹⁷

Moreover, one cannot speak of vindication without noting that Azerbaijan’s statecraft is predicated on a particularly sophisticated understanding of classical geopolitics, which I define as consisting of more or less prudential exercises in acceptable exceptions by major powers conducive to the continued operation of an international system. If a given international system precludes or disallows such exercises of acceptable exception—we can define these as a succession of power maneuvers understood in the context of the need to maintain equilibrium and legitimacy, operating according to a logic of restraint and proportioned reciprocity—it is either too rigid and hence ripe for renovation, or too amorphous and thus not really a system.

Furthermore, within such a conception of geopolitics, distinct regional orders can be established so long as they are anchored by what Giovanni Botero, a late sixteenth century political and economic thinker and diplomat (who claimed to write in direct opposition to Machiavelli), was the first to call in his *The Reason of State* “middle powers,” which he defined as states that have “sufficient force and authority to stand on [their] own without the need of help from others” (Bot. *RS* I:2). In Botero’s telling, which is not so different from that of his declared opponent, leaders of middle powers tend to be acutely aware of the dexterity required to maintain security and project influence in a prudential manner beyond their immediate borders;

and because of that, middle powers are apt to have facility in properly managing their finances and promoting trade and connectivity with their neighbors and their neighbors’ neighbors.

Unquestionably, Azerbaijan is one such middle power—better described, given present circumstances, as a keystone state: a trusted interlocutor, reliable intermediary, and “critical mediator” between “status quo powers and revisionists.”¹⁸ This integrative power is supplemented by the fact that “an effective keystone state can serve as a pressure-release valve in the international system, particularly as the transition to conditions of non-polarity continues, by acting as a buffer and reducing the potential for conflict between major power centers.”¹⁹

The story of Azerbaijan that emerges on the basis of such an account is thus one of leadership and success, foresight and perseverance, modernization and the consolidation of power. Certainly, it is also an Armenian story about tragedy, in the original Aristotelian understanding of the term²⁰—about how the Armenian leadership committed geopolitical malpractice through a combination of strategic complacency, the blind ambition exhibited in the continued defense of maximalist goals, and both a fundamental misunderstanding and woeful underestimation of its main adversary.

Thus, for the Armenians, the outcome of the Second Karabakh War constitutes the passing of an illusion that consists primarily of a fantastic hope in the temporal sempiternity of the frozenness of the conflict. But for the Azerbaijanis, quite simply, the outcome of the war represents an exoneration. The story of Azerbaijan is truly an extraordinary one: how in less than a generation’s time, Azerbaijan was transformed from a failing if not failed state so weak that it had no choice but to accept an armistice that effectually normalized the occupation of around 20 percent of its territory by a neighbor almost three times smaller and more than three times less populated, into a victorious, exonerated, and proud state that understands the classical distinction between justice and hubris.²¹

Machiavelli, who is famous for not strictly maintaining the line between the two, is nonetheless particularly instructive here for a further reason. His most thoughtful living exegetist, Harvey Mansfield, wrote a book on manliness, which he defined alternatively as “confidence and [the ability to] command in a situation of risk” or “the assertion of meaning when meaning

is at risk,” that is to say, the necessary retention of humanity combined with the possibility of excellence, understood as prudent or courageous or spirited action.²² An aim of this book on manliness, Mansfield suggested elsewhere, was to recapture the Greek notion of spiritedness (*thumos*), which he defined as the “part of the soul that connects one’s own to the good. [...] It is first of all a wary reaction rather than eager forward movement, though it may attack if that is the best defense.”²³ Thinking through the implications of the notion of *thumos* helps to explain why politics properly understood can never simply be about self-interest and at the same why it can never be simply about altruism. *Thumos* points to statesmanship, both the Machiavellian kind and a more ancient sort. One could even say that *thumos* properly understood is the ancient virtue closest to Machiavellian *virtù*, in the sense that the effectual truth of either and thus both is shown in its effect or outcome as opposed to its intention or inherent excellence.

EUROPEAN BELONGING: JERUSALEM AND ATHENS

I intend to take a further step in coming to terms with parts of the present inquiry through an indirect approach: a discussion of the question of the European belonging of my nation—the Serb nation—which in important ways is analogous to the same question with respect to the Armenian nation as well as many others in this part of the world and elsewhere.²⁴ The outcome of such an inquiry, however preliminary, will help us return directly to some of the main issues that determined the outcome of the Second Karabakh War and in so doing revisit the question of Azerbaijani statecraft and related matters.

Here it is salutary to begin by citing Leo Strauss and Pierre Manent, two of the most important political philosophers of the past one hundred years.²⁵

First Strauss:

All the hopes that we entertain in the midst of the confusions and dangers of the present are founded positively or negatively, directly or indirectly on the experiences of the past. Of these experiences the broadest and deepest, as far as we Western men are concerned, are indicated by the names

of the two cities Jerusalem and Athens. Western man became what he is and is what he is through the coming together of biblical faith and Greek thought. In order to understand ourselves and to illuminate our trackless way into the future, we must understand Jerusalem and Athens.²⁶

Now Manent:

Europe defines itself as this ensemble of nations or peoples where the Platonic defense of philosophy was accepted *without any going back*.²⁷

On such a basis, we can put forward the following proposition: for a nation to belong fully to Europe, understood as a civilizational reality, its initial encounter between revelation (Jerusalem) and reason (Athens) must have occurred at the right time and under the right set of circumstances *and* must have been accepted as integral to its self-conception, that is, incorporated into its identity and intellectual heritage.²⁸

The Serb nation had this initial encounter only in the nineteenth century: we Serbs came to Athens via historicism, utilitarianism, and nihilism all tied together into the impossible knot that had become the culmination of the modern philosophical project. Late-modern philosophy was our first effectual exposure to philosophy. Late modern philosophy was for us first philosophy. This was neither an auspicious nor a timely start.²⁹

This start was neither auspicious nor timely for a number of reasons. For reasons of space, here I will focus on only one: by the nineteenth century, the dialogue between Jerusalem and Athens on the fundamental question of the status of wisdom and much else had moved almost entirely beyond its original and most thoughtful manifestation. In the case of Athens, such a manifestation is “of special interest to us because [it] know[s] nothing of the Bible. Hence [the] thinking [of the Greek philosophers] aims neither at advancing the cause of biblical religion nor at opposing it. [...] If one wishes to know how the world looks to unbiased and dispassionate reason, one could not do better than begin by turning to the Greek philosophers.”³⁰ An analogous argument can be made in the case of Jerusalem. To make even preliminary sense of the above requires a somewhat lengthy exegetical detour.

As originally conceived and understood, the Bible and philosophy share a concern with wisdom: the term in Greek is *sophia* and the corresponding term in Hebrew is *hochma*. Strauss differentiates philosophic wisdom and Biblical wisdom in the following way: the beginning of wisdom in the former is wonder; in the latter, it is fear.³¹ The Biblical reference is to *Proverbs* 9:10. Earlier in the same book, wisdom—which is allegorized as the Bible itself—is said to be “a tree of life to those who hold fast to her.”³² In Judaism, the ascent (*etz hayim*) to wisdom brings about *tikkun*, the correction and repair of the world. God talks to humanity through the Bible (which is said to represent His “wisdom in the eyes of the nations”³³), and humanity talks to God through observance (*avoda*) and prayer (*tefilah*). In the traditional Christian understanding, the Fall that occurs due to a combination of serpentine trickery (seduction) and human free will awakens an awareness of shame (and by extension, an awareness of good and evil) brought about by nakedness and results in the absence of the Holy Spirit in the life of humanity—a condition that is rectified through participation in the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit has the power to impart otherworldly wisdom, according to Saint Paul the Apostle,³⁴ who identifies divine wisdom with Christ and contrasts this higher “mysterious” and “hidden” wisdom with the discredited wisdom of “the wise.”³⁵ Either way (Christian Orthodoxy tends to favor the latter interpretation), the firm association of wisdom with revelation is made in contradistinction to wisdom sought or acquired with unassisted human reason.

Both parts of the Bible make it clear that human beings have no access to the love of wisdom outside of God, or at least outside of a strong connection to the divine. The prophet Micah says that the achievement of wisdom is predicated on listening to what God has told humanity is good: the faithful servant has no extraneous need of the quest for knowledge of the good.³⁶ Thus, the pursuit of wisdom in the context of the Bible is neither accomplished through *eros* nor is it the way to *eudaimonia* (flourishing or happiness), as it is for Socrates. It would take too long to examine the architectural, iconographic, and liturgical significance of Holy Wisdom understood as the Divine Logos who became incarnate as Jesus Christ (as well as the evolution of that tradition into an association of the Theotokos with Sophia). It is enough to say for present purposes that “sophia” (in the Slavonic rendition the word is “*премудрост*,” which can be translated as “greater wisdom”) is proclaimed aloud by the celebrant at certain key

moments of the Divine Liturgy, especially in the context of the readings of Scripture. The intent is dogmatic, not dialectical: thus, the *sophia* of the New Testament is the antithesis of the *sophia* of classical philosophy. Similarly, the *Logos* of the New Testament—particularly as pronounced in the prologue to the Gospel of Saint John the Apostle—is the antithesis of the *logos* of classical philosophy. A clear articulation of this position is made by Saint Gregory the Theologian: “I have set forth for you our love of wisdom, which is dogmatic and not dialectical, in the manner of the fishermen and not of Aristotle, spiritually and not cleverly woven, according to the rules of the Church and not of the marketplace.”³⁷

This is not to say that, like Socrates, the Church Fathers did not spend time in the marketplace. The Bible mentions Saint Paul the Apostle’s Athenian disputations with Epicureans and Stoics, his epistolary attack on those who search for mistaken wisdom, and his strict warning against being captivated by philosophy.³⁸ Each of these passages is noteworthy for the absence of textual evidence of an actual discursive engagement with philosophy. In the centuries that followed, there were attempts to make certain aspects of classical philosophy into handmaidens of theology. Much of this has to do with historical happenstance, namely the spread of Christianity into the Greek world (which became the Roman and Byzantine world, the former of which came to form the core of Europe and the West) and thus the prevalence of the Greek (and then the Latin) language. The appropriation of technical terms such as *logos*, *doxa*, *ousia*, and *hypostasis* is one example: the first is found in the New Testament; the seminal figures associated with the other terms were the Cappadocian Fathers (Saint Basil the Great in particular),³⁹ whereas Saint Clement of Alexandria focused more on propaedeutics,⁴⁰ as did Saint John Chrysostom,⁴¹ Saint Gregory of Nyssa,⁴² and Saint Cyril of Alexandria.⁴³ There are a number of other examples of Patristic Hellenism.⁴⁴ But none of them express doubt about divine wisdom or wonder about the alternative: the Biblical distinction that goes back to knowledge of good and evil is between obedient love and fear of the consequences of disobedience. This may have something to do with the fact that the New Testament is quite open about its revolutionary character⁴⁵ whereas philosophy in its original conception was either more circumspect or simply uninterested in changing the world: even in the marketplace, Socrates does not appeal to the multitude or to all humanity,⁴⁶ but instead to those who claim to be wise;

and he does so, by his own account, as a consequence of a companion of his having asked Apollo's oracle at Delphi whether there was anyone wiser than Socrates and the resulting answer by the Apollonian priestess that there was not. It is not unimportant to observe that Socrates says that he does not take the truth of the answer for granted while at the same time indicating that Apollo does not have sanction to say something false. His mission, as he suggests (in the only instance in which he addresses a multitude) is one of impious piety: in attempting to refute the oracle he ultimately vindicates it; thus unintentionally, by his own account, Socrates serves Apollo by obeying the god's command.⁴⁷ It is deeply ironic, perhaps even tragic, that his divine mission was the genesis of his conviction for capital impiety.

However that may be, the distinction between obedient love and fear of the consequences of disobedience, on the one hand, and between the antithetical understandings of *sophia* and *logos* in the New Testament and classical philosophy, on the other hand, raises the awkward fact that Aristotle nowhere lists piety as a moral virtue (all moral virtues are acquired and maintained through habituation and are thus voluntary) and that greatness of soul (*megalopsuchia*) is said to be the *kosmos* of the virtues whilst *mikropsuchia*, which is often translated as humility, is classified as a vice and labeled as erroneous conduct.⁴⁸ One could say that the analogous missing virtue in the Christian conception is *thumos*. To this one could add that without a sufficient, direct awareness of these two incompatible conceptions of moral virtue, one would be hard-pressed to understand the revolution produced by Machiavelli's presentation of his moral virtues in *Prince* 16-23 and the argument he makes in introducing them in *Prince* 15—a topic I have broached above and to which I will have recourse to return below. Here it is sufficient to point out that the revolution consists in Machiavelli's focus on the "prince's relationship with others, not on his own perfection."⁴⁹ The "effectual truth" of his focus is on statecraft, not soulcraft: Machiavellian *virtù* is primarily concerned with how the prince "should be with subjects and with friends" (NM, P. 15).⁵⁰

But to come back to Athens for a moment longer: Greek or ancient or classical philosophy makes it clear that human beings, or at least some human beings, have direct access to wisdom outside of God, or at least outside of a strong connection to the divine: "Aristotle did not leave room, intentionally or unintentionally, for a revealed teaching which could be added to his rational teaching."⁵¹ In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle describes the science or knowledge

being sought as divine⁵² and explicitly identifies it with *sophia*;⁵³ he also makes a point of saying that someone other than God, namely a human being, could come to fully possess this science or knowledge.⁵⁴ Human beings can possess (divine) wisdom without divine assistance; the scope of human knowledge encompasses the knowledge that is reserved for God; investigation of the divine by the human is not impiety but the most fully human of endeavors. This teaching appears to be fundamentally incompatible with the teaching of the Bible. The extreme consequence of Aristotle's teaching would require of a Christian to assert that human beings as human beings could themselves reverse the damage to their nature caused by the Fall: although created by God, through the divine science human beings becomes ontologically independent or free of God. Humanity could heal itself of the wounds of sin without recourse to salvation by dismissing God's prohibition against tasting the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which, when consumed together with the fruit from the Tree of Life, would endow them with wisdom and immortality: human beings that do not fear death whilst being equipped with the sort of *sophia* that would enable them independently not merely to seek but to attain knowledge about divine *ousia* would, as a matter of principle, find redundant the need for divine revelation of salvific truths (from the Incarnation of *Logos* to the Resurrection⁵⁵) that transcend what is discoverable by reason alone.⁵⁶ They would further judge this neither to constitute rebellion or disobedience, nor to be a product of self-deception. One could say that a traditional Christian taking seriously Aristotle would put himself in the untenable position of having to make the nonsensical claim that the *logos* of classical philosophy incorporates the *Logos* of the New Testament, with human beings effectively becoming God,⁵⁷ instead of an image or likeness of His inexpressible glory.⁵⁸

SEMPITERNAL OTHERNESS

The exegetical detour having been completed, as it were, we can begin again—*palin eks arches*—as Socrates says. Recall the proposition I put forward earlier with the assistance of Strauss and Manent: to belong fully to Europe, a nation's initial encounter between Jerusalem and Athens must have (i) occurred at the right time and under the right set of circumstances and (ii) effectually been accepted as an integral part of its identity.

We have seen that this had very much to do with the understanding of wisdom and love and whether this understanding could be gained in the marketplace (human guidance) or the temple (divine guidance). The initial encounter was predicated on the proposition that a life of obedient love was incompatible with a life of free inquiry (and vice versa), and its implication that a harmonization, much less a synthesis, of these two positions as originally understood was impossible: the syncretic attempt made by Philo of Alexandria and his followers is ultimately unpersuasive. Still, European civilization, which became in due course Western civilization, is at least partially if not largely the result of the dialogue between the two understandings—a dialogue replete with tension and dynamism that continued virtually unabated for a millennium or more. By the nineteenth century, this fundamental issue had been largely set aside or answered in a way that serious proponents of either Jerusalem or Athens would have found unacceptable. By the middle of the last century, much of Europe had begun to practice *en masse* what until then had been the reserve of the few: “atheistic humanism.”⁵⁹

And so we can now come directly to the matter at hand.⁶⁰ With regards to the initial encounter of the Serb nation with Jerusalem and Athens, the key seems to be whether or not Greek and its successor Latin was introduced and retained as languages accessible to educated human beings—what contemporary political science terminology would call a segment of the elite. When Christianity spread to the western Balkans thanks to the evangelization efforts of Saints Cyril and Methodius and their various disciples, the Gospel was translated into the vernacular and the liturgy was celebrated in what has come to be known as Old or Church Slavonic in various parts of the region. However, for reasons having to do largely with the Great Schism and the prevalence of Latin as the language of ecclesiastical and state administration in the areas inhabited by the Croats and Slovenes, these nations gained familiarity with the *lingua franca* of Europe and thence gained access to Greek through, *inter alia*, the penetration of various Roman Catholic religious orders and congregations. This allowed them, at least in theory, to have direct access to the original “Platonic defense of philosophy” (Manent’s term) and come to accept its legitimacy if not to be persuaded by it. Contrast this to the Serbs: choice and circumstance ensured that, by and large, we were never given the opportunity to absorb in a serious way Greek, much

less Latin. Our version of Christianity was for too long unable to meet directly with ancient philosophy, much less to take seriously its original self-defense.⁶¹

When this encounter finally did take place—in the nineteenth century—philosophy’s highest representatives were Hegel (and his pupil Marx), Mill, and Nietzsche (and not soon after, Heidegger). As a result, until almost yesterday we Serbs could hardly have been expected to be aware of—much less come to terms with—the writings originally produced in the classical languages. We failed to inherit even the echoes of the Platonic defense of philosophy that were residually present in some Byzantine circles during the centuries of national sovereignty we experienced in the medieval period: our liturgical, canonical, and theological texts were presented to us originally in such a way as to effectually cut us off from the rich diapason of the Byzantine tradition, as were our various royal charters and legal codes.⁶² There were exceptions, of course, but these by and large demonstrate the veracity of the general point: literacy in Greek was not part of the bequest of sovereignty and did not become part of the legacy of the founders of our nation, including Saint Sava, who was responsible for securing the autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church (and whose father and brother were responsible for securing the sovereignty of the Serb nation).

After this initial period of statehood, there came five centuries of occupation by an empire that was not European. Most Serbs think of our Ottoman experience as having been almost entirely negative on the grounds that it tore us further away from Europe (a proposition predicated on the supposition that we were somehow ever a part of the European mainstream). Most of the Serb nation was entirely isolated from Europe; most of those parts that were not were allowed to settle in European lands by imperial masters based in Vienna (and elsewhere) and were treated primarily as a military shield against the Ottoman Empire: the advancement of learning, to borrow from Francis Bacon, can hardly be said to have been prioritized in circumstances in which the authorities prized *thumos* much higher than *logos*. Unsurprisingly, no *Antemurale Christianitatis* ever gained renown in the annals of history for having produced men of great learning or erudition. Neither did Rumelia, in the classical Ottoman conception of the term.

We Serbs heroically regained our liberty and our sovereignty in stages over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There were periods of truly wondrous triumphs but also moments of heartbreaking tragedy and even flashes of unbecoming cruelty and delinquency that appeared for all the world to be incompatible with the conceptions of justice of both Jerusalem and Athens. The main point here is to underline that at virtually no time did our experience with constitutional monarchy, royal dictatorship, fascist and communist totalitarianism, and ultranationalist despotism attach (or reattach) us *as a nation* to the main currents of Europe. At the same time, we were always aware of the fact that Europe was near us, that we were close to it, and that some of our nation's neighbors belonged to it.

Today we Serbs struggle with all the usual problems associated with what is called by contemporary Western political scientists a “transition to democracy” as well as a challenging set of unique problems rooted in the fact that our nation resides on the outskirts of Europe. Thus, for us the consequences of not belonging fully to Europe is that Europe in particular and the West in general is seen in the Serb lands as somehow being both attractive and foreign.⁶³ At most we can say that our nation's journey has stopped short of its destination: the sinuous road to Europe has never been paved, much less completed. A sense of exteriority—of sempiternal otherness—in relation to Europe predominates still.

PARTICULARISM AND BLINDNESS

Before proceeding to the end of these particular considerations, perhaps it may be helpful to elaborate on a distinction first suggested by Homer—a distinction between the more spiritual, Odyssean-like character of today's Europe—of the West—and the more corporeal, Iliadic-like character of the nations of not only the Balkans but the Caucasus as well.

In the Homeric works, the great poet of ancient Greece shows that the hero of the *Odyssey* is a complete man (*anthropos*) even in the *Iliad*, where his quality of making the maximum use of whatever natural aptitude for reason he has is shown not to be persuasive to Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*. Achilles' capacity to exercise reason (*logos*) is clouded by his all-

encompassing *thumos*, whereas Odysseus' strong *thumos* is kept under control by his even stronger *logos*. Odysseus is a less magnificent, less corporeal, more tamed, and more fully formed human being. The next step is made by Plato. In the *Apology of Socrates*, Socrates compares himself to Odysseus: the model for the Socratic hero is the Odyssean one.⁶⁴

Consider that in the *Iliad*, the people (*demos*) are never given the choice of whether they should follow Agamemnon, Achilles, *et. al.*, whereas the consent of the *demos* is essential to the completion of Odysseus' mission as outlined by Teiresias—still the authoritative mouthpiece of the gods even in death—when Odysseus visits him in Hades as recounted in the *Odyssey* (XI:90-151). The consent of the *demos* is the will of the gods. But who is the mouthpiece of the mouthpiece? Homer, of course. *The poet*. Homer portrays himself to be the only human being to be able to transcend the commonly-held opinions of his own time, a fundamental point in line with what Aristotle says is the task of the poet: “to speak of what sort of things would come to be, of what is possible according to the likely or the necessary” (Arist., *Poet.* 1451a36-37). Ultimately, only Homer can cause the hero—the “resourceful” and polytropic statesman Odysseus—to modify the *nomoi* of the *demos*. Only the rational poet can change the heretofore unquestioned traditions or opinions of irrational and non-poetic men. Homer is thus the first politically responsible human being. His authority moved an entire civilization: his authority established the moral distance between the Greeks and the *barbaroi*. One could say that the poet opened up the possibility for the statesman to lead responsibly a nation out of the darkness of Antigone's autochthonic path to self-destruction rooted in a sort of unchanging and ignorant particularism. In this understanding—to borrow from Alfred North Whitehead—we might characterize in a general way the philosophic tradition of statecraft as consisting of a series of footnotes to Homer.⁶⁵

Now, Homer's Teiresias was the mouthpiece of the gods of the Greeks. For us Serbs, the effectual mouthpiece of our god, of the Trinitarian God as understood by the teachings of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was for a long time Patriarch Pavle. More than almost anyone else in his time, he helped to shape responsibly and authentically the attitudes, emotions, and opinions of the Serb *demos* instead of merely reflecting them as has recently been too often the case. During the entirety of his stewardship of the throne of Saint Sava, which lasted from 1990 to 2009, the patriarch tried to moderate the

harshly Iliadic *nomoi* of the Serb nation—of the Serb *demos*—by setting the standard of right or just conduct that is not predicated on the approach taken by the likes of Antigone. To speak in political terms: properly-formed poets guide the less gifted to accept if not to understand what the more gifted understand without poetic adornment.

I remember the words he spoke in 1993 in Vienna on the centenary of the consecration of our first church in the capital of *Mittleuropa*—the same day we Serbs liturgically commemorate the martyrdom of the fallen heroes of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo: “evil men deserve not to be preserved but to perish. For according to Christ’s teaching, an evil man is dead even as he walks this ground, and the righteous man, who has laid down his life for justice, is forever alive before the living God.” His statements were consistently on the side of the good and the just. “Do not listen to one side only, give ear to all, learn the whole truth, and then judge. We must never accept a half-truth,” said the patriarch at a sermon pronounced at the Gračanica monastery in central Kosovo in 1999, an awful year for the Serb nation. “Let us not justify ourselves by blaming others,” the patriarch often repeated, including on that occasion. To put this another way: for every nation to understand itself and its place in the world, it is necessary to understand other nations as they understand themselves.

This brief examination of Patriarch Pavle’s pronouncements warrants the judgment that he would have wholly agreed that the future should lie in a moderate sort of nationalism that is not rooted in the dismal soil of suspicion but rather in what has been made on top of that soil. Additional evidence in favor of such an interpretation is provided by the condemnation of the conflation between church and nation—known as phyletism or ethnophyletism—at the 1872 Holy and Greater Synod of Constantinople, whereby it became integral to the Orthodox canonical tradition.⁶⁶ This canonical decree approaches Ernest Renan’s articulation of the distinction between the French conception of the nation as a free choice or an “everyday plebiscite” and the German conception of the nation as a community of language and race given to “ethnographic and archeological politics,” as Manent put it—a destructive notion of the nation as autochthony. However, the contrast is not simply that between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ versions of the nation, for “that which defines precisely the problem of the nation is that the nation comports at the same time the German idea and

the French idea: [the nation] is always the difficult amalgamation of birth and liberty.”⁶⁷ This in turn requires the realization that blindness to one’s errors is compatible only with barbarism. The patriarch had never wished to become like many of his flock, driven by *thumos*—whether it in various baser forms, the all-encompassing version represented by Achilles, or the versions praised by the likes of Plato and Machiavelli.

Now, amongst the Serbs as amongst the people of the Caucasus there is a long tradition of admiring thumoeidetic heroism. With regards to the former, it is enough to refer here to *The Mountain Wreath*, an epic written in 1847 in the classical style by Prince-Bishop Petar Petrović-Njegoš,⁶⁸ a masterwork both praised and disparaged for its treatment of three distinct civilizational realities: the Serb, the Ottoman, and the European. A great admirer of Njegoš was the twentieth-century Serb poet, Dušan Matić, who became friends with my father thanks to an introduction made by our Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić. Frequently my father would remind me of the title of one of Matić’s books: *The Past Last A Long Time*. My father, himself a poet, would then frequently add his own corollary: “and the future arrives with difficulty.”

EFFECTUAL TRUTH

With these words of poets in mind, we can take a few steps back and begin again for the final time, as it were, by making a restatement: to understand the outcome of the Second Karabakh War requires at least a grasp, if not an understanding, of what Machiavelli called the “effectual truth.”⁶⁹ Although Machiavelli did not phrase it this way, it seems clear to me that a necessary part of effectual truth as he sees it is that history never ends, the future is uncertain, one’s friends are always imperfect, power politics never go away, and no political cause is ever truly just. From this we can derive an important Machiavellian lesson: consistently guarding against the temptation to push aside the moderating insubordination of the ways of the world ought not to be seen as either reactionary cynicism or treason; but rather as a commonsensical and healthy caution against championing for a world as it never could be and advocating the use of all means to get there. This is effectually what happened to the Armenians, who managed to bluff themselves into a corner from which they could not extricate themselves: “Armenian statecraft [...] revealed itself

as a mix of delusional self-confidence and naive sentimentality [that led it] voluntarily to pursue self-destructive policies.”⁷⁰ This assessment is consistent with Aristotle’s understanding of tragedy.

Making use of the aforementioned commonsensical and healthy caution does not mean turning away from one’s past achievements, but rather turning to face the real prospect of being outflanked because of one’s inability to learn from past mistakes. What was required most was a clinical examination of what *could not* be achieved. It is still what is most required. And this requirement is exactly what was and is for the most part still *not* being fulfilled in too many corners of Armenian society. The national starting point for the Armenians, it seems to me, remains autochthony in combination with an allegiance to a halcyon past that fell to the wayside centuries, nay, millennia ago, and has no chance whatsoever of making a comeback. By this point in our inquiry, the tragic danger of falsely equating blind ambition with *thumos* misunderstood as *virtù* should be clear.

Perhaps the fundamental lesson that can be derived from the statecraft of Azerbaijan and the statesmanship of Ilham Aliyev is that the conquest of a nation’s past represents the liberation of its future liberty. In the case of Azerbaijan, the result is plain to see: an exonerated state and its vindicated statesman.⁷¹ And having recovered last year what had been taken nearly 30 years ago, it should come as no surprise that Aliyev has stated on various occasions that the territorial conflict over Karabakh is now resolved. In a strict sense it is but in a broader one it is not: the underlying conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains in some sense unresolved. One can say that the 10 November 2021 tripartite statement is more than a narrow ceasefire agreement but less than a general peace treaty: strictly speaking, only its first article deals with the cessation of hostilities in Karabakh; the others lay out various concrete measures aiming towards a future predicated implicitly on the establishment of peaceful relations between two sovereign states: Armenia and Azerbaijan. On the first anniversary of the end of the Second Karabakh War, a formal peace agreement remains elusive, but by no means illusive. Over the past year, Baku has made it clear that political autonomy or any other form of special status for Karabakh is no longer on the table, with Aliyev underlining, rightly, that the 10 November 2020 tripartite statement contains no reference to status.⁷² That being said, Baku has over the past year signaled at times a readiness to build a principled peace with justice by doing the thing that peace

requires: demonstrating magnanimity and goodwill and, ultimately, achieving reconciliation with one’s main adversary. His postwar rhetoric has not been flawless, but the thrust of his statements—his signaling—has been clear. For instance, on 25 June 2021, Aliyev told the foreign ministers of Austria, Lithuania, and Romania that “if we don’t have a peace agreement with Armenia that means we don’t have peace not only between the two countries but also in the South Caucasus. But we need peace and sustainable development and predictability, zero risk of war.”⁷³ On 28 September 2021, Aliyev spoke of the need to “start to work on delimitation and demarcation of the borders, to start preparing for negotiations, comprehensive negotiations on peace agreement with Armenia” whilst underlining that “autonomy” is “off the table.”⁷⁴ Until very recently, Yerevan had shown scant interest in reciprocating with similar such signals of its own: this has been perfectly understandable, given the tumultuous nature of the country’s domestic political situation, which only began to stabilize over the summer. Obviously, doing so remains perceived as being fraught with perilous difficulties. Armenian prime minister Nikol Pashinyan’s speech to a meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States on 15 October 2021 in Minsk could portend a great shift in both Yerevan’s public messaging and its policy towards Baku. If this turns out to be the case, then it will be welcomed indeed, for Armenia’s tragedy would be compounded if it were to continue choosing to meet Azerbaijan’s outstretching hand with a clenched fist.

Still, there is much talk of contestation and revenge in some Armenian circles—of rebuffing Azerbaijani overtures and instead choosing to pursue a strategy whose sole object would be to overturn the effectually definitive result of the Second Karabakh War. One intention of this essay has been to demonstrate the futility of the pursuit of that option, whose success would be predicated on the instauration of novel geopolitical circumstances that Yerevan simply does not have the capability to engender, much less set in motion.

Yet there are Armenians in positions of power or influence who nonetheless believe the opposite. By way of conclusion, we can lay out what, at a minimum, this sort of thinking would need to entail in practice. First, either the sudden discovery of massive hydrocarbon deposits (or its equivalent) in Armenia or the country’s rapid transformation into the Singapore of the Silk Road region. Second, the aptitude to safely and thus successfully push Turkey back out of the South Caucasus. Third, the ability to incentivize the West to engage in the region more seriously than it ever has.⁷⁵ And fourth, the wherewithal

to entice Russia to actively and exclusively support Armenia's maximalist position by any means necessary—up to and including a readiness to engage in an offensive military campaign against Azerbaijan (and almost certainly Turkey) for the sake of land it has consistently recognized as being Azerbaijan's sovereign territory.

We cannot leave it unsaid that a necessary prerequisite to the successful instauration of these novel geopolitical circumstances on the part of Armenia would be the wholesale political isolation, economic constriction, and military disassembly of Azerbaijan taking place more or less concurrently with the above. This is, of course, effectually impossible; frankly, it would require the sort of divine intercession that so far has been limited primarily to the works and days of Moses and David: the founder and re-founder of a nation whose uniqueness is unbreakably tied to its covenantal status as *'am 'olam*—the eternal nation—or, as Strauss once defined it, of having “one's roots deep in the oldest past and committed to a future beyond all futures.”⁷⁶ We can therefore only hope that sagacity and common sense prevail in Yerevan, for it would truly be foolhardy for Armenia henceforth to advocate, much less pursue, policies that would compound the effects of what amounts to a capitulation by burdening another generation of its citizens with the perpetuation of eschatological illusions and the reality of poverty. Verily, “it takes a particular kind of impudence to prescribe again the cure to the disease that incapacitated the patient and brought him close to death.”⁷⁷

No better way to end this essay rises to the mind than to refer to a passage in the magnum opus of the national historian of republican Rome, Titus Livy, now more often than not remembered, if at all, as a literary foil in the service of the execution of Machiavelli's *virtù*:

I would ask each of my readers to devote his earnest attention to these subjects: what life and morals were like; through what sort of men and by which sort of arts, employed both at home and in war, empire was established and enlarged. Then let him note the gradual passage of discipline, as it were, and the decaying standard of morals, at first little by little and then more and more rapidly, and finally the start of the downward plunge, until we arrive at the present-day, where we can endure neither our vices nor their remedies. What is especially salubrious and

fruitful in consuming knowledge of past deeds is that you behold, in a clear light, every sort of experience set forth as if on a conspicuous monument; from these documented examples you may choose for yourself and your state what to grasp and imitate, and also to avoid that which is marked as disgraceful in its inception and disgraceful in its result (Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* I:Pr.9-10).

NOTES

1. Kurt Riezler, “The Philosopher of History and the Modern Statesman,” *Social Research* 13, no. 3 (September 1946), 375.
2. Ilham Aliyev, “Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the opening of Kharibulbul Festival in Shusha,” May 12, 2021, <https://en.president.az/articles/51466>; Ilham Aliyev, “Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the opening of Vagif Poetry Days in Shusha,” August 30, 2021, <https://en.president.az/articles/52973>.
3. See Tom Ruys and Felipe Rodriguez Silvestre, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the Exercise of “Self-Defense” to Recover Occupied Land,” *Just Security*, November 10, 2020, <https://www.justsecurity.org/73310/the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-and-the-exercise-of-self-defense-to-recover-occupied-land/>. A convincing refutation of such farrago is provided by Dapo Akande and Antonios Tzanakopoulos, “Use of Force in Self-Defence to Recover Occupied Territory: When Is It Permissible?,” *Blog of the European Journal of International Law*, November 18, 2020, <https://www.ejiltalk.org/use-of-force-in-self-defence-to-recover-occupied-territory-when-is-it-permissible/>. Cf. *Chiragov and Others v. Armenia* [GC], no. 13216/05, ECHR 2015, paragraphs 96, 170, 180, 186, and so on. For a general primer, see, e.g., Heiko Kruger, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Legal Analysis* (Berlin: Springer, 2010) and various chapters in the present volume.
4. See my “Armenia Needs to Sue for Peace Now: The Alternative is Even Worse,” *The National Interest*, 5 October 5, 2020, www.nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/armenia-needs-sue-peace-now-alternative-even-worse-170160; and “Geopolitics and the Second Karabakh War,” *Caucasus Strategic Perspectives* 1, no. 2 (Winter 2020), 35-56. Parts of this essay draw liberally from both.
5. For an authoritative interpretation of the Melian dialogue, see Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 184-ff. Cf. Christopher Bruell, “Thucydides' View

- of Athenian Imperialism,” *American Political Science Review* 68, no. 1 (March 1974), 11-17.
6. For an account of the development of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, see Cavid Veliyev, *The Strategic Partnership of Turkey and Azerbaijan: Historical and Present Dimensions* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2020).
 7. İlham Aliyev, “Real TV interview with Mirshahin Aghayev,” February 12, 2019, <https://en.president.az/articles/31826>.
 8. This could be put even more starkly: how is the case of the ‘Republic of Artsakh’ so different from that of Republika Srpska Krajina? Well, there are in fact two major differences. First, there is no evidence that Azerbaijan planned, much less carried out, a campaign of ethnic cleansing. The second difference is that there is no evidence that Azerbaijan staged or conducted military operations from foreign soil during the Second Karabakh War. Both of these differences are unequivocal points in Azerbaijan’s favor. Furthermore, with respect to the first, Croatia was awarded, effectually, unconditional support by the West prior to, during, and in the wake of Operations Winter ‘94, Flash, Summer ‘95, Storm, Phoenix, and Maestral, each of which resulted in the forcible expulsion of the local Serb population. With respect to the second difference, it is sufficient to note that the Croatian Army both staged and conducted military operations from neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period in question. Perhaps the beginning of an explanation of the difference of the Western reception of the wartime actions of Croatia and Azerbaijan could be sought in Plato’s *Gorgias*, where Socrates has Zeus explain the respective judgeship roles he assigns to two of his sons, Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, in “determining the journey for human beings” (Pl. *Gorg.* 524a5).
 9. Here one could add that Armenia “manages to enjoy as good relations with Iran as Azerbaijan does with Israel.” See Farid Shafiyev, “What Armenia Won’t Tell You About Its Occupation of Azerbaijani Land,” *The National Interest*, October 2, 2020, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/what-armenia-wont-tell-you-about-its-occupation-azerbaijani-land-170038>.
 10. This strategic takeaway can be translated into contemporary international relations terminology: careful bandwagoning, pragmatic balancing, strategic hedging, finding a balance of interests, predictability, and strategic patience. On this, see İlgar Gurbanov, “Relevance of Non-Alignment for Azerbaijan’s Foreign and Security Policy,” *Caucasus Strategic Perspectives* 1, no. 1 (Summer 2020), 16.
 11. Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958), 40. Cf. Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958), 173, where he succinctly portrays the fundamental distinction between classical or ancient philosophy and modern philosophy, again with an emphasis on Machiavelli’s parentage: “Classical political philosophy had taught that the salvation of the cities depends on the coincidence of philosophy and political power which is truly a coincidence—something for which one can wish or hope but which one cannot bring about. Machiavelli is the first philosopher who believes that the coincidence of philosophy and political power can be brought about by propaganda which wins over ever larger multitudes to the ‘new modes and orders’ and thus transforms the thought of one or a few into the opinion of the public and therewith into public power.” The term “new modes and orders” is found in NM, *D.* I:pr.
 12. See NM, *P.* 6, 13, 15, and 25. We can note further that *P.* 14 ends with a statement intimating that to tame or resist fortune’s adversities appears to be the most that can be achieved by an excellent prince: there is no catch-all remedy (*rimedio*) for accidents, much less a cure. The excellence of a prince is measured in large part by his ability to properly practice Machiavelli’s version of moral virtue: NM, *P.* 16-23 provides an account of these moral virtues. Cf. Riezler, “Philosopher of History,” 378-380. Otto von Bismarck would effectually say the same thing centuries later: fortune is a river to be tamed (and, rarely, perhaps even resisted), thanks to the virtues of an excellent prince; but there are limits: the course of a river, like the course of time itself, cannot be simply reversed. This is expressed in two statements he made 40 years apart: “The stream of time flows inexorably along. By plunging my hand into it, I am merely doing my duty. I do not expect thereby to change its course.” The second statement: “Man can neither create nor direct the stream of time. He can only travel upon it and steer with more or less skill and experience; he can suffer shipwreck and go aground and also arrive in safe harbors.” The two statements can be found in *Bismarck: Die gesammelten Werke*, ed. Herman von Petersdorff et al. (Berlin: Otto Stollberg & Co., 1923-1933), XIV:249 and XIII:558, respectively.
 13. Reference to the three terms in quotations marks can be found, respectively, in NM, *D.* II:26, II:15, and I:2 (and also NM, *D.* I:9, III:6, and elsewhere). In the original, they are written as *grandi prudenze*, *diliberazione*, and *uno solo* respectively. Aristotle made the best case for the deliberative as sovereign or authoritative (*kyrios*), which he calls “the work of political joining [or understanding]” as well as “judgments” (*kriseis*); see Arist. *Pol.* IV, in particular 1298a3-4, 1291a28, and 1299a2-3 as well as Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1112a18-1113a14.
 14. Cf. Harvey C. Mansfield, “On the Impersonality of the Modern State: A Comment on Machiavelli’s Use of *Stato*,” *American Political Science Review* 77, no. 4 (December 1983), 849-857. Mansfield concludes, rightly, with a discussion of the importance of “effectual acquisition” in coming to terms with Machiavelli’s presentation of non-institutional executive power.
 15. The lineage of executive power, including the process of its domestication, is brought to the surface brilliantly in Harvey Mansfield, *Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Modern Executive Power* (New York: The Free Press, 1989). With reference to the last sentence of the above footnote, a remark Mansfield makes in *Taming the Prince*, 25, seems warranted: “the whole story of executive power depends on understanding why it is absent in Aristotle.” Mansfield devotes two (or rather, three) chapters to this topic.
 16. Catherine H. Zuckert, *Machiavelli’s Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 476.

17. Harvey C. Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 307. As Mansfield points out, the fundamental logic of this way of thinking can be said to be encapsulated in the following passage: "Wounds and every other ill that man causes to himself spontaneously and through choice, hurt much less than those which are done to you by someone else" (NM, *D.* 1:34).
18. Gregory Gleason, "Grand Strategy Along the Silk Road: The Pivotal Role of Keystone States," *Baku Dialogues* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2020-2021), 148, 156.
19. Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "Keystone States: A New Category of Power," *Horizons* 5 (Autumn 2015), 120.
20. See Arist. *Poet.* 1455b25-ff and 1460b6-ff. Cf. 1460b22, 1461b24, and 1453a8-23.
21. Excellent book-length accounts of Azerbaijan's time as a failing state—which corresponds roughly to the period between the forced retirement of Heydar Aliyev from the posts of Full Member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and First Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union in October 1987 and his return to power in Azerbaijan in June 1993—include: Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Thomas Goltz, *Azerbaijan Diary* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998); Svante E. Cornell, *Azerbaijan Since Independence* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011); and Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Azerbaijan: Legacies of the Past and the Trials of Independence* (London: Routledge, 2015).
22. Harvey C. Mansfield, *Manliness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 216, 201.
23. Harvey C. Mansfield, "How to Understand Politics: What the Humanities Can Say to Science," *2007 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities*, <https://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/harvey-mansfield-biography>.
24. To reiterate: my position is that the Armenian experience is in important ways *analogous* to the Serb one, not that it is identical. Since I will raise the matter of autochthony and the issue of direct and continuous access to Greek in what follows, it seems useful here to mention that Herodotus (whose works and days correspond roughly to those of a generation prior to that of Socrates) mentions the presence of Armenian tribes in the highlands of Anatolia, although he seems to suggest an origin that is not strictly speaking autochthonous yet is in some ways reminiscent of the circumstances that gave birth to the myth of Cadmus—a myth that stands at the fount of the Theban understanding of autochthony. Cadmus, it should be noted, was a Phoenician king—that is to say, a foreigner. Interestingly, early Armenian dynasties were also foreign in origin, mostly Persian or Macedonian (the latter, at least, are likely to have spoken Greek—Artaxias is a representative example). Moreover, Greek was apparently the court language under Tigranes the Great, who ruled a large multiethnic empire and was a follower of Zoroastrianism. This direct access to Greek, at that time, does not seem to have produced much in the way of philosophic inquiry, much less result in a meaningful encounter between Jerusalem and Athens—the implications of which I will discuss in the present section and those that follow. In addition, the official substitution of Zoroastrianism by Christianity, which took place around the time of Constantine the Great under the direction of Saint Gregory the Illuminator during the reign of Tiridates the Great, also does not seem to have produced the aforementioned sort of encounter. In this context, the works of Grigor Pahlawuni Magistros, written hundreds of years and several imperial occupations later, seem worthy of detailed examination, although one should bear in mind the bottom-line assessment that "the major figures of the Silver Age did not seem to share the fascination of Magistros in Greek philosophers" and that "a renaissance of sorts began in Cilicia but under the circumstances, it stood no chance." The citations refer to Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries, Volume II: Armenian Realpolitik in the Islamic World and Diverging Paradigms Case of Cilicia: Eleventh to Fourteenth Centuries* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2013), 224, 263-264. Also in this context see the author's treatment of the writings of Nerses Lambronac'i and similar others in the same book and elsewhere.
25. Manent, under whom I studied, is one of the teachers who most influenced my understanding of such and similar matters. The others were, in alphabetical order, Eve Adler, Seth Benardete, Allan Bloom, Christopher Bruell, Murray Dry, Daniel J. Mahoney, Harvey C. Mansfield, Paul Nelson, Stanley Rosen, and Marc Witkin. In one way or another, each was a student of Leo Strauss.
26. Leo Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections" in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 377. Cf. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 74-75.
27. Pierre Manent, *Cours familier de philosophie politique* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), p. 274.
28. My argument stands or falls on the proposition that this initial encounter is what is most characteristic of Europe—indeed, that this epistemological relationship is most characteristic *only* of Europe. Those who wish to challenge it would first need to begin by identifying convincingly some other civilizational characteristic unique to Europe or to assert that Europe is nothing more than a geographical designation.
29. See Leo Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts" in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 450: "Why Heidegger is truly important: by uprooting and not simply rejecting the tradition of philosophy, he made it possible for the first time after many centuries—one hesitates to say how many—to see the roots of the tradition as they are and thus perhaps to know, what so many merely believe, that those roots are the only natural and healthy roots. Superficially or sociologically speaking, Heidegger was the first great German philosopher who was a Catholic by origin and by training; he thus had from the outset a premodern familiarity with Aristotle; he thus was protected against the danger of trying to modernize Aristotle. But as a philosopher Heidegger was not a Christian: he thus was not tempted to understand Aristotle in the light of Thomas Aquinas. Above all, his intention was to uproot Aristotle: he thus was compelled to disinter the roots, to bring them to light, to look at them with wonder."

30. James Carey, "Liberal Education and the Orthodox Church" in *Liberal Learning and the Great Christian Traditions*, eds. Gary W. Jenkins and Jonathan Yonan (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 12. Much of what follows in this section is the product of reflection on the basis of this invaluable essay.
31. Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections" in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 379-380.
32. Prov. 3:18. See also Prov. 1:20-33 and 8:22-31, Wis. 7:22-8:1 and 8:2 and 8:4-6 and 9:9-10, as well as Sir. 1:4 and 1:9. Cf. Job 28:12-27 and Bar. 3:36-37 and Sir. 24:1-12. The allegorical tree of life recalls the original tree of life. Eating the fruit from this original tree, which was allowed (Gen. 2:16), would have presumably granted immortality. In combination with tasting fruit from the other named tree in the Garden, which was forbidden, Adam and Eve would have presumably received *hochma*.
33. Deut. 4:6
34. 1Cor. 12:8 and 1Cor. 2:6. Note that these passages ultimately lead back to *Proverbs*. Note also that in the first of the cited Pauline passages the provision of divine wisdom by the Holy Spirit is limited to "some." The context makes it clear that the choice to provide wisdom is accorded to the Holy Spirit, not by human beings. See Saint Irenaeus of Lyon *Adversus Haereses* 4.7.3 and 4.20.3; cf. 3.24.2.
35. 1Cor. 1:17-2:13 and 1Cor.2:6-7.
36. Mic. 6:8-9.
37. See Saint Gregory the Theologian, *Orationes* XXII:143-146. Cf. his *Carmen 4. Nicobuli filii ad patrem*, PG 37, 1510A-1511A. But consider *Orationes* XXVII:10, which is a general call to arms against philosophy: "attack the ideas of Plato, and the transmigrations and courses of our souls, and the unlovely loves of the soul for lovely bodies [...]; Aristotle's petty Providence, and his artificial system, and his discourses about the mortality of the soul, and the humanitarianism of his doctrine."
38. See, respectively, Acts 17:18, 1Cor 1:18-31, and Col 2:3-8.
39. See Saint Justin the Philosopher, *Apologia II* 13, 4, PG 6, 465D.
40. Consider Saint Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1:5.28, PG 8, 717D: "Philosophy acts as a schoolmaster to the Greek, preparing them for Christ." Earlier (I:3.5), Clement had gone further, arguing that the Old Testament and Greek philosophy are two great tributaries of the same stream leading to closeness with God. Cf. *Stromata* VII:16.96.
41. Saint John Chrysostom, *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* I, PG 47, 321A-D and *In epistulam II ad Thessalonicenses hom. 2, 1*, PG 62, 472A.
42. Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis* II 11-37, PG 44, 329B-D: "For truly barren is profane education, which is always in labor but never gives birth. For what fruit worthy of such pangs does philosophy show for being so long in labor? Do not all who are full of wind and never come to terms miscarry before they come to the light of the knowledge of God, although they could as well become men if they were not altogether hidden in the womb of barren wisdom? [...] Indeed, moral and natural philosophy may become at certain times a comrade, friend, and companion of life to the higher way, provided that the offspring of this union introduces nothing of a foreign defilement."
43. Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *Adversus Julianum* VII, PG 76, 857C, 857D, and 860A.
44. For a survey, see John Zizioulas, *Hellenism and Christianity: The Meeting of Two Worlds* (Apostolike Diakonia: Athens, 2003). Attention should also be paid to Saint Augustine's *City of God*, especially VIII and X.
45. Compare Mk. 1:1-ff with Verg., *Aen.* 6.791-793 and with the text of the Priene Calendar Inscription in honor of Caesar Augustus (II.30-41). The Roman emperor is referred to as "theos" (god) and "soter" (savior), his "appearance" (*phainein*) is said to have excelled all anticipations and surpassed all those previously sent by Providence to "end war and arrange all things," with his birthday being described as the cause of the "archein of the evangelion for the kosmos." See Craig A. Evans, "Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, 1 (2000), 67-81. The essay argues, convincingly, that Saint Mark is "deliberately echo[ing] an important theme [and the language] of the Roman imperial cult," thus "boldly announc[ing] to the Roman world that the good news for the world began not with Julius Caesar and his descendants, but with Jesus Christ, the true son of God." The essay concludes that "one very important aspect of the Markan evangelist's portrait of Jesus is comparison to the Roman emperor and the emperor cult."
46. In a letter to Alexandre Kojève, Leo Strauss writes: "I do not believe in the possibility of a conversation of Socrates with the people [...]; the relation of the philosopher to the people is mediated by a certain kind of rhetoricians who arouse fear of punishment after death; the philosopher can guide the rhetoricians but cannot do their work (this is the meaning of the *Gorgias*)." One must also be mindful of the fact that Socrates was condemned to death on largely theological grounds: on the charge that he did not believe in the existence of the gods worshipped by the city of Athens and the related charge that he corrupted the young (see Diog. Laert. II.40; cf. Pl., *Ap.* 24b8-c1). Cf. Yehuda Halevi, *Kuzari* 4.13 (repeated almost *verbatim* at 5.14): "Socrates said to the people: 'I do not deny your divine wisdom, but I say that I do not understand it; I am wise only in human wisdom.'" This is a sort of paraphrase of Pl., *Ap.* 20d6-e3. The text of the letter to Kojève may be found in Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny: Revised and Expanded Edition*, eds. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 274-276.
47. Pl., *Ap.* 20e4-23c1.
48. Arist., *Eth. Nic.* 1103a14-26 and 1109b30-35; 1123a35-1125a35; 1124a1; 1125a17-27.
49. Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue*, 20.
50. Cf. Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, 262: "Machiavelli in effect makes a distinction between republican virtue and moral virtue, and sees in republican virtue 'the factual [effectual] truth' of moral virtue. Republican virtue as dedication to the common

good includes all habits which are conducive to the common good and in particular it includes opposite habits (e.g., severity and gentleness) to the extent to which each is conducive to the common good.” This passage and what follows should be read in light of the Zuckert passage cited above and the various references to the Machiavellian texts contained therein.

51. Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*, 285.
52. Arist., *Metaph.* 982b29, which points back in a series of steps to previous passages (e.g. back to 982b21 and in turn back to 982b8; cf. 983a11-12 which also refers back to its preceding sentence).
53. Arist., *Metaph.* 982a3 (and 983a21) together with 982a6-19 (cf. 981b25-982a2).
54. Arist., *Metaph.* 983a9-10.
55. The truth of the Old Testament stands or falls on the Commandments; the truth of the New Testament and thus Christianity stands or falls on the Resurrection. With respect to the latter, see 1Cor. 15:14.
56. See Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia Metaphysicae* I.3.64 where the term “mutuatum” or “borrowed” is used instead of one that would show strict fidelity to the original Greek. I am grateful to James Carey’s review of Christopher Bruell’s *Aristotle as Teacher: His Introduction to a Philosophic Science* (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2014) in *St. John’s Review* 57, no. 1 (Fall 2015), 120-148, for this observation. One could point to numerous passages in the *Metaphysics* devoted to the divine science in which he makes it plain that even if there were any reason to believe in the existence of God, there would be no reason to believe that God could be capable of self-revealing. For instance: Arist. *Metaph.* 995a3-8; but also 983a3-4, 983b33-984a2, 989a9-12, 997b8-12, 1000a9-19, 1023a19-21, 1074b3-8, and 1091b4-8. Carey writes that Bruell infers that Aristotle thinks that there are “no separate *ousiai*, which is to say, there is no God and there are no gods.” Carey later softens this: “since there is no way of actually demonstrating that there are no separate *ousiai*, a less strident version of this thesis would be simply that there is nothing in our experience of, and thoughtful reflection on, the given world that enables us to reasonably infer that separate *ousiai* exist. This version may be closer to what Bruell discerns in the *Metaphysics*.” See Carey, “Liberal Education,” 133, 134.
57. Plato’s Socrates could call the process by which this might occur “noetic apprehension:” an intuitive grasping of true knowledge by the intellect (*nous*) as a culmination of discursive dialectic. See Pl., *Rep.* 511d9 and context.
58. See Gen. 1:26: “Let us create man in our image, after our likeness.” See also Matt. 19:13-14 and 25:35-45. What is of course missing from the above account is love, as understood by both Jerusalem and Athens. It is hardly sufficient, even for present purposes, to note that *eros* (and somewhat to a lesser extent *philia*) is foreign to the New Testament as much as *agape* is to classical philosophy. But we should leave it at that for reasons of space.
59. See Henri de Lubac, *Le drame de l’humanité athée* (Paris: Éditions Spes, 1944).

60. The remainder of this section is the product of reflection on the argument set out in Rémi Brague, *Europe, la voie romaine* (Paris: Criterion, 1992)—an invaluable book.
61. Cf. Am. 3:3: “can two walk together without having met?”
62. The Nomokanon and the Synodikon, the two original Hilandar charters, and the various versions of Emperor Dušan the Great’s constitution appear to have all been written in the vernacular.
63. An integral part of the contemporary understanding of the European mainstream involves belonging to a nation whose regime is understood to fall within the institutional framework of representative democracy. If that is so, then there is a prevalent sense of sempiternal otherness characterizes the Orthodox world’s disposition towards the institutions of representative democracy, for they are in truth allochthonic to our traditions of statecraft. As a matter of historical fact, we played no part in their original conception, initial construction, and subsequent development. We can go still further: no Orthodox country is today a representative democracy. The objection on constitutional grounds—namely that the nations in question operate politically with institutional frameworks characteristic of democracies—is rooted in either sophistry or ignorance. Either way, this (and any similar) objection is evidently dismissible on the basis of an examination of, *inter alia*, the substance of parliamentary conduct and discourse, the state of press freedom, the protections accorded to individual rights, and the level of corruption in the West and making the appropriate comparisons *vis à vis* the Orthodox world. The best that can be said is that these institutions may be formally democratic, but our nations effectually are not. In fact, they may never have been.
64. The key to uncovering this requires an exegetical treatment of the phrase “from an oak or a rock” as employed by Socrates (Pl., *Ap.* 34d2-4), which is found twice in Homer: once in the *Iliad* (Hom., *Il.* XXII:126), and once in the *Odyssey* (Hom., *Od.* XIX:163). A full treatment is beyond the scope of this essay. Here it is enough to say that in the *Iliad*, the phrase is uttered by Hector near the end of a soliloquy that precedes his battle with Achilles in which he is killed. In the *Odyssey*, Penelope employs the phrase during a coded conversation with a man she strongly suspects, rightly, to be her long-lost husband Odysseus in disguise. Socrates rejects the Achillean model whilst portraying himself as being closer to the Odyssean one. Both Odysseus and Socrates are resourceful in speech, and both are unsuccessful in their attempts to reason with those who look up to the heroic ideals of the *Iliad*. Both possess virtue or excellence independently of their reputations and, in the end, independently of the gods. Both lived unhappy lives before they discovered a way of life that allowed them to seek knowledge about the true nature of things. Both reject love of one’s own as the principle which formulates just actions. Both redefine what constitutes a noble and a courageous act. Finally, both Socrates and Odysseus piously respect the supremacy of the good over the just and the noble, and both behave in a way which is respectful of the human situation and its place in the natural order of things (the *kosmos*). What is arguably most Socratic about Odysseus is his *polutropia*: in Plato’s *Lesser Hippias*,

- Socrates defends Odysseus on the grounds that he is a *polutropos*—a man of many ways. On this, see Michael Davis, “Lies Like the Truth: On Plato’s Lesser Hippias,” *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 3, no. 1 (January 2016), 1-19.
65. What Whitehead said of Plato can in this context be said of Homer: “I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through [his writings]. His personal endowments, his wide opportunities for experience at a great period of civilization, his inheritance of an intellectual tradition not yet stiffened by excessive systematization, have made his writings an inexhaustible mine of suggestion.” See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: Corrected Edition*, eds. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 39.
66. See *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta, Editio Critica, IV/1: The Great Councils of the Orthodox Churches: Decisions and Synodika From Constantinople 861 to Constantinople 1872*, ed. Alberto Melloni (Turhout: Brepols Publishers, 2016), 360-373.
67. Manent, *Cours familier*, 99, 133, 99.
68. Njegoš’s influence as a national poet parallels that of Homer in classical Greece, Shakespeare in the English-speaking world, Goethe in the German-speaking one, and Pushkin in the Russian.
69. As noted earlier, the expression *verità effettuale* is originally found in NM., P. 15. Here is the expression in context: “But since my intent is to write something useful to whoever understands it, it has appeared to me more fitting to go directly to the effectual truth of the thing than to the imagination of it. And many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in truth; for it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation. For a man who wants to make a profession of good in all regards must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary to a prince, if he wants to maintain himself, to learn to be able not to be good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity.” Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* aph. 136: one cannot be a statesman in the full Machiavellian sense without coming to terms with the implications of the meaning of this Nietzschean aphorism.
70. Michael R. Reynolds, “Confidence and Catastrophe: Armenia and the Second Karabakh War,” *War on the Rocks*, January 11, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/01/confidence-and-catastrophe-armenia-and-the-second-nagorno-karabakh-war/>.
71. Earlier in this essay I referred to the classical distinction between justice and hubris. One could say that the middle ground between these constitutes the sort of statesmanship that can result in exoneration and vindication, all of which presupposes the possession by the statesman of the right combination of *logos* and *thumos*. In the context of the Second Karabakh War, a representative example of this is Ilham Aliyev’s address to the American and French Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group on 12 December 2020, which was delivered, in English, in the presence of the Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan. The text is available online at <https://en.president.az/articles/48908>. To my mind, this speech, properly understood in its geopolitical context, is reminiscent of more than one speech contained in Thucydides and constitutes a good example of one aspect of the practice of Machiavellian *virtù*.
72. The status issue was a cornerstone of the Minsk Group negotiation parameters. Cf. Thomas de Waal, “Unfinished Business in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict,” *Carnegie Europe*, February 11, 2021, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/02/11/unfinished-business-in-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict-pub-83844>: “The OSCE’s Basic Principles framework document, which was the basis for negotiations since 2006, looks even less viable than before. The Armenian side did not embrace it strongly before the conflict and the Azerbaijani side has disavowed it as a result of the conflict.”
73. Ilham Aliyev, “Ilham Aliyev received Romanian, Austrian, Lithuanian FMs and European Union delegation,” June 25, 2021, <https://en.president.az/articles/52310>.
74. Ilham Aliyev, “Interview to France24,” September 28, 2021, <https://en.president.az/articles/53255>.
75. Cf. Mike Pompeo, “Secretary Michael R. Pompeo With Amy Kellogg of FOX News,” October 1, 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-with-amy-kellogg-of-fox-news/index.html>: “So our view is that this has been a longstanding conflict between these two countries in this particular piece of real estate. We’re discouraging internationalization of this. We think outsiders ought to stay out. We’re urging a ceasefire. We want them both to back up. We’ve spoken to the leadership in each of the two countries, asking them to do just that. We’re hopeful that in the days ahead they’ll see that violence won’t resolve the conflicts that are there, the ethnic and political conflicts and strife that are there, and having third parties—other nations—join in that only exacerbates the problem.”
76. Strauss, “Memorial Remarks for Jason Aronson,” in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 475. It almost goes without saying that neither political Zionism nor Israeli statecraft take much stock in the likelihood of miracles. Cf. Ps. 137. The best response to the tendency in some Armenian circles to compare what their country ought to become with what Israel has been and remains is that of Jirair Libaridian, who quotes a phrase Saul Bellow wrote of Jean-Paul Sartre in *From Jerusalem and Back*: “a great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep.” I was reminded of the existence of this sentence upon reading the missive written by the author referenced in the succeeding footnote.
77. Jirair Libaridian, “Response to Vahan Zanoian,” *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, February 7, 2021, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2021/02/07/jirair-libaridians-response-to-vahan-zanoian/>.